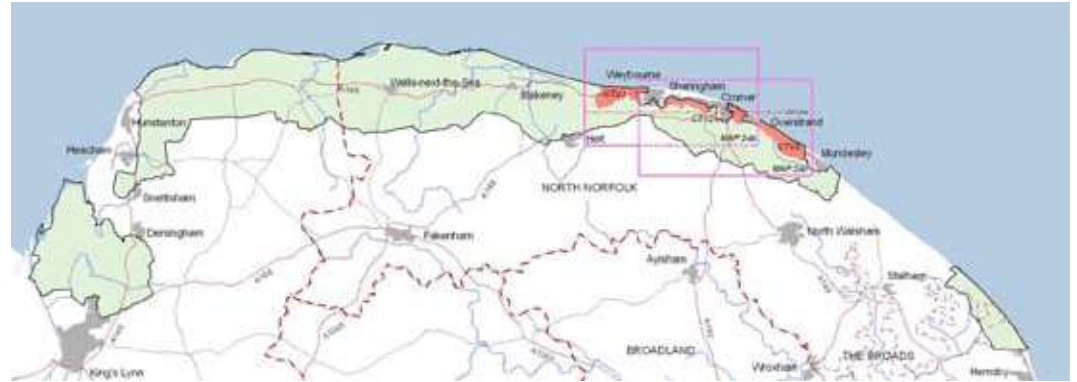




coastal towns & villages



Integrated landscape character



MAP 24a - Coastal Towns & Villages Key Plan

The Coastal Towns and Villages includes a wide diversity of landscapes, ranging from busy towns to more open and quiet arable rolling cliff tops. However, the proximity of the different landscape types, and the way in which they have become integrated over very short distances, means that for practical purposes - and particularly in a 'usage' term - the area is one Type. The use of the area is its critical defining element; it is a leisure / holiday landscape and most of its development, and much of its use, is directed to this end.

Topographically, the Coastal Towns and Villages type is highly defined by its landform. To the west of Cromer, between the Runtons and Sheringham, the landscape type follows a ledge on the seaward side of the Cromer Ridge terminal moraine (consisting of contorted layers of mixed glacial deposits). The soil type is predominantly sand and gravels and this is reflected in the easily eroded cliffs which are a major feature of this coast. To the east of Cromer the landscape type extends upwards onto the tail end of the Cromer Ridge as it meets the coast and then continues along the gradually declining land towards Mundesley. Land use to the west of Overstrand is predominantly developed settlement with smaller areas of arable fields between settlements. To the east of Overstrand there are areas of open fields up to and along the cliff edge, giving some impression of what the area might have looked like when Clement Scott wrote Poppyland in the late 1800s.

Most of the farmland is arable, but there are some smaller pastures and fields especially around and between settlements. Many of these have been turned into camping fields or pony paddocks which give a distinct leisure character to this land. The fields are divided by hedged and frequently banked field boundaries. Hedge size varies but can be tall and thick. The dense networks of tracks and paths in the Sheringham - Cromer area, which are extensively used by walkers, are also often bounded by banks and hedges.

Woodland cover in this type is lower than average (for Norfolk) but the wooded landscapes of the Cromer Ridge in the adjoining Wooded with Parkland landscape type are a strong visual influence. Older tree assemblages, older field boundaries with multi-species hedges/ground flora, coppiced woodland areas, veteran trees, remnant small areas of heathland and ponds are all found in occasional 'pockets'. Much of the leisure use of the area devolves into the wooded ridge (Roman Camp, Felbrigg, Northrepps and Sheringham Park) and for practical purposes people use this as one landscape unit albeit with two very distinctive characters.

Integrated landscape character (continued)

The sea is the major constant defining visual element throughout the Coastal Towns & Villages. The steep, eroding cliff edge is highly distinctive and varied - the ecology of the cliff represents a completely natural transition, without any direct man-made intervention and the majority of it is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Views from the cliffs are a highly distinctive feature, heavily coloured by the use of extensive areas for golf courses (old and well established) and caravan parks.

Settlement is highly varied with the two main towns being very different in character. Cromer developed during the C19th as a resort, while Sheringham developed as a fishing village to become a distinctly different type of resort with a distinct architectural style. Cromer appears to have been more distinctly 'planned' (especially the western grid streets), whereas Sheringham has a consciously 'more vernacular' appearance - reflecting the frequent combination of fishing and guesthouse proprietor businesses under one roof in the late C19th to mid C20th. Most of the villages were involved in the fishing industry and had/have a core of older small cottages and often an 'off centre' church - the cottages would have been dispersed and included smallholdings. These have been augmented, either en block by a consciously grand plan (in the case of Mundesley, Cromer and Sheringham to a lesser extent) where large landowners saw a development opportunity. Or there have been piecemeal developments as a result of smaller landowners gradually disposing of land - over a longer period causing different styles and ages of properties to predominate. All the settlements in the Coastal Towns & Villages share a similar heritage of development and the coastal railway loop (from North Walsham to Mundesley and on to Cromer via Overstrand, which opened in the late 1880s, would have been a catalyst for development of all the coastal resorts.

The area to the south east of Trimmingham has been a site of radar transmitters since the War and quite extensive areas of hilltop contain abandoned block houses and high security fencing. The Trimmingham Radome is visible for many miles to the south and west.

The road network works in two main directions, along the coast and at right angles to it - effectively providing a major link between the major settlements which are along the coast but also providing links into the land behind the settlements - both to connect with villages to the rear of the coast and as a result of the historical land use and parish distribution (tending to incorporate land over and onto the ridge to the south). The roads are busy and there are few places where road noise and visual disturbance are not omnipresent.

Landscape sensitivity and change

Parts of the Coastal Towns & Villages landscape are within the Norfolk Coast AONB but the more densely settled parts were specifically excluded from the designation due to development. Key environmental assets which are sensitive to change are:

- The steep, sandy eroding cliffs, together with the cliff-tops and their wider landscape setting, which forms the foreground to the characteristic seaward views. These are of national and international importance for their geology, palaeontology and wildlife.
- The remaining areas of undeveloped, rural countryside which separate the principal settlements and contribute to the distinctive landscape character for each.
- Networks of hedgerows, hedged tracks and hedgerow trees which are of ecological value but which also serve to accentuate the rural character of parts of the Coastal Towns & Villages landscape.
- The diverse but distinctive assemblages of landscape elements within key views from coastal viewpoints and public rights of way – distinctive buildings, hillocks, woodlands, mature trees and hedgerows, which are characteristic of the landscape type.
- Remnant heathland, woodlands, mature (species-rich) hedgerows, ponds and veteran trees, which are of relatively high ecological value.
- The adjacent Wooded with Parkland landscape, which has a strong influence on the character (and sense of enclosure) of the Coastal Towns & Villages landscape type.



Variations in character

Variations in character and inherent landscape sensitivities are highlighted in the following distinctive landscape character areas within the Coastal Towns & Villages landscape type. Although areas within the settlements are excluded from the AONB area, these settlements function as key gateways to the AONB and their character is a significant influence on the AONB landscapes:

Landscape character area	Distinctive character	Inherent sensitivity
Weybourne to Sheringham - CTV1	Small discrete area, dominated by views to the sea and sandwiched between the scarp of Kelling Heath and the town of Sheringham. Relatively undeveloped landscape which is strongly influenced by and has influences on the setting of Sheringham Park. Quintessentially English coastal landscape with small fields, wooded copses, heathy boundaries, a steam railway, nestling village with church and windmill all set within a gently rolling landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views to Sheringham Park and landscape setting of the parkland • Small fields, hedgerows and woodland, which provide an enclosed structure for this intimately scaled rural landscape • Landscape setting of Weybourne • Coastal views • Remnant heathland

Landscape character area	Distinctive character	Inherent sensitivity
Sheringham to Overstrand - CTV2	Original settlements grew where there was relatively easy access between the cliffs to the sea. Development has grown inland as a series of concentric rings – caravan parks are also a significant influence on cliffs between and around the settlements. Settlement structure is orientated around commons, which run north-south along very small water courses. These commons provide a distinctive open space in the centre of settlements. Settlements focused around holiday resort development – includes larger houses with mature gardens and trees (1890-1940) built away from the town centre for middle class holiday makers. All settlements have generic estates on their fringes which erode the inherent character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remaining undeveloped rural areas, which are found within an otherwise developed coastline and which separate and provide a strong landscape setting for the settlements • Cliff area and the small, prominent hills – Beeston Bump and Inceborough Hill - which are a strong visual and separating element between settlements • Beeston Common SSSI and East & West Runton Commons – distinctive open spaces with ecological value
Sidestrand to Mundesley - CTV3	Landform is effectively a cliff ridge sloping north-south and backed by the valley of the River Mun. Settlement pattern is semi-nucleated, with Sidestrand, Trimingham and Mundesley as the three centres – some post C19th individual houses on intervening land (originating as holiday homes) and small static caravan sites on the clifftops near Mundesley. Large holiday complex and the RAG radiodome station are prominent at Trimingham. Field and hedgerow patterns eroded due to hedgerow removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remaining network of hedgerows and small woodlands, which has been eroded due to hedgerow removal • Cliff tops and immediate landscape setting to the cliffs • Connections to networks of hedgerows and woodlands in the neighbouring Mun Valley (Small Valleys landscape type)

INCREMENTAL DEVELOPMENT ON THE EDGES OF SETTLEMENT DEGRADES CHARACTER AND VIEWS



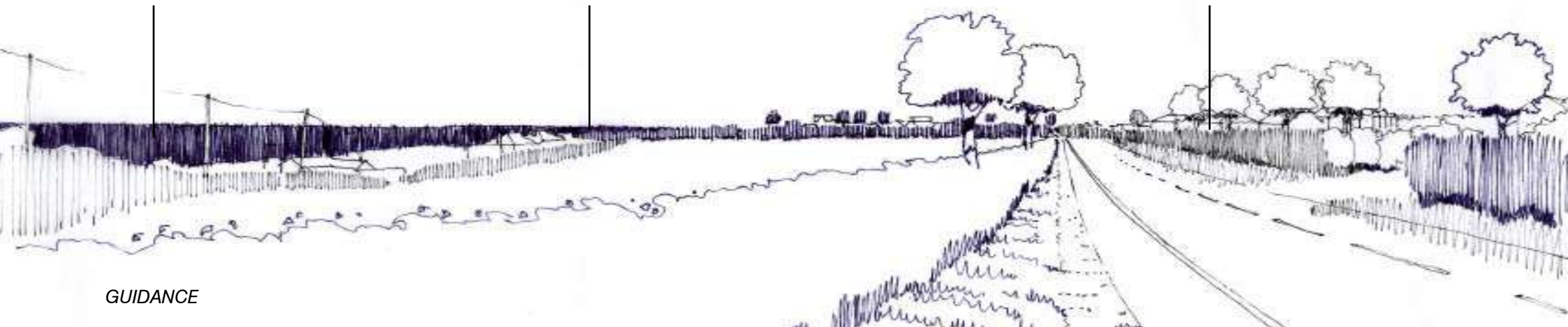
Key forces for change

- Coastal erosion – particularly its influence on settlements and pressures to ‘roll back.’
- Increasing infill development which may remove opportunities for open space and other prominent features within settlements and degrade the quality of views (both externally looking into settlements and internally looking out).
- Increasing sub-urbanisation of settlement fringe areas (especially the large and extensive industrial and retail developments on the edge of Cromer) and the gradual changes of land use between the settlements – to garden centres, car boot sale fields, playing fields etc).
- Further development of cliff-top caravan parks, which are very dominant landscape features.
- Loss of woodlands and hedgerow field boundaries as a result of agricultural intensification, development or urban fringe land uses (as above).

conserve open view to sea

design new native planting to screen and integrate caravan park

re-introduce native hedgerow and trees along coastal road to create distinctive character



GUIDANCE

Key forces for change (continued)

- Changes to and development of the road network.
- Increased street and outdoor lighting, which would erode the remaining rural character of the landscape between settlements.
- Introduction of new agricultural buildings, which are increasingly replacing older barns and the conversion of barns and agricultural shed for a range of urban fringe uses which erode the rural character of the area due to access driveways, vehicle parking, caravans, external lighting, security fencing etc.
- New telecom masts, wind turbines and other upstanding features – which cannot easily be accommodated in the characteristic small-scale rural landscape between densely populated settlements.

20 year vision

conserve and enhance

Villages and towns are separated by areas of high quality undeveloped countryside; landscapes on the fringes of settlements have a relatively high proportion of small pastures. Tracks and paths are bounded by banks and hedges which form a network, interspersed with woodlands, leading out from and connecting to the wooded ridge to the south.



Integrated landscape guidance

- 1 Conserve and enhance the remaining areas of undeveloped countryside between settlements which provide a setting for settlements and separation between them**
- Avoid further development on the fringes of settlements which will erode the critically important areas of countryside separating the settlements.
 - Conserve and enhance all hedgerows, hedged tracks and hedgerow trees, which provide an enclosed structure and rural character to undeveloped areas of countryside between settlements – carefully designed hedgerow and woodland planting or heathland creation may enhance the rural character of critically important narrow strips of countryside which separate settlements.
 - Identify the specific characteristics which contribute to the distinctive character of individual settlements and give priority to the conservation and enhancement of these.
 - Give priority to the conservation and enhancement of trees, hedgerows and rural features on rising land on the fringes of settlements, at the gateways to settlements (along principal roads) and in key views.
 - Conserve the character of rural roads, avoiding improvements (kerbs, signage, access roads with wide sight-lines, standard road widths etc) which will erode the rural character of the landscape and encouraging hedgerow conservation and replanting along roads.
 - Avoid development of agricultural buildings for urban fringe uses or conversion to residential uses in order to retain the rural character of the countryside.
 - Avoid the development of major, prominent elements such as wind turbines or telecom masts which cannot easily be accommodated in this relatively small-scale, intimate rural landscape which remains in narrow strips between towns and villages.
 - Aim to increase connectivity between networks of hedgerows generally and particularly with hedgerows and woodlands in adjacent landscape types.
 - Encourage wide field margins within arable fields to enhance the ecological value of the hedgerows as corridors for the movement of wildlife through intensively farmed areas.

Integrated landscape guidance (continued)

- 2 Conserve the character and quality of cliff-top landscapes and the views from vantage points such as Beeston Bump, Ingleborough Hill and parts of the Cromer Ridge**
- Give priority to the conservation and enhancement of undeveloped rural land on or close to the cliff-tops.
 - Initiate new planting of native species designed to integrate existing caravan parks and other prominent cliff-top development with existing belts of trees and hedgerows. The existing disused railway line, which currently provides a boundary to the coastal development, could provide opportunities for enhanced ecological value, access and amenity.
 - Introduce design guidance for external lighting at caravan parks and major commercial developments to reduce the impact and suburbanising effect of lighting.
 - Retain the diversity of cliff types and characters – which is of visual and ecological value.
 - Give priority to the conservation of key views to the countryside from within settlements – eg areas such as West Runton Common, are critically important in retaining the relationship between town and countryside setting as it is still possible to look out from the centre of a settlement and see countryside beyond.
 - Consider the introduction of small tree belts designed to compartmentalise and limit views over large expanses of development and to reflect and enhance existing woodland fringes extending down from the Cromer Ridge. But such woodlands should be relatively small in scale to reflect the characteristic intimacy of the rural landscapes surrounding the Coastal Towns & Villages.

Integrated landscape guidance (continued)

3 Conserve the character and landscape setting of all settlements within the Coastal Towns & Villages landscape

- Wherever possible conserve larger gardens and mature trees within and on the outskirts of settlements – a particularly important characteristic of parts of Cromer, Sheringham, Overstrand and the Runtons.
- New built development (or replacement development) should be designed to incorporate new tree and hedgerow planting so that settlements are integrated within the landscape in an organic way, with trees 'anchoring' and connecting the buildings to existing mature hedgerows and small woodlands. In most cases, hedgerows and tree belts are more appropriate boundaries for development plots than fences or walls.
- Ensure all new built development is consistent with existing settlement pattern, density and traditional built form - the gradual re-development of existing areas of housing (usually former holiday houses often of a pre fabricated or timber / brick skin construction) for larger properties has a detrimental effect on character due to the considerable change in the scale and character of the buildings. A more sensitive approach to re-development would retain character and amenity (restricting building size to 'like for like' and not allowing subdivision of gardens for additional plots).
- Encourage carefully designed small-scale new tree planting on the fringes of settlements which is designed to replace existing trees, screen locally intrusive structures and frame views to the surrounding countryside, whilst retaining the characteristic intimate scale of this landscape type.
- Develop positive new planting to integrate existing and extended industrial areas on the fringes of settlements.

Detailed maps

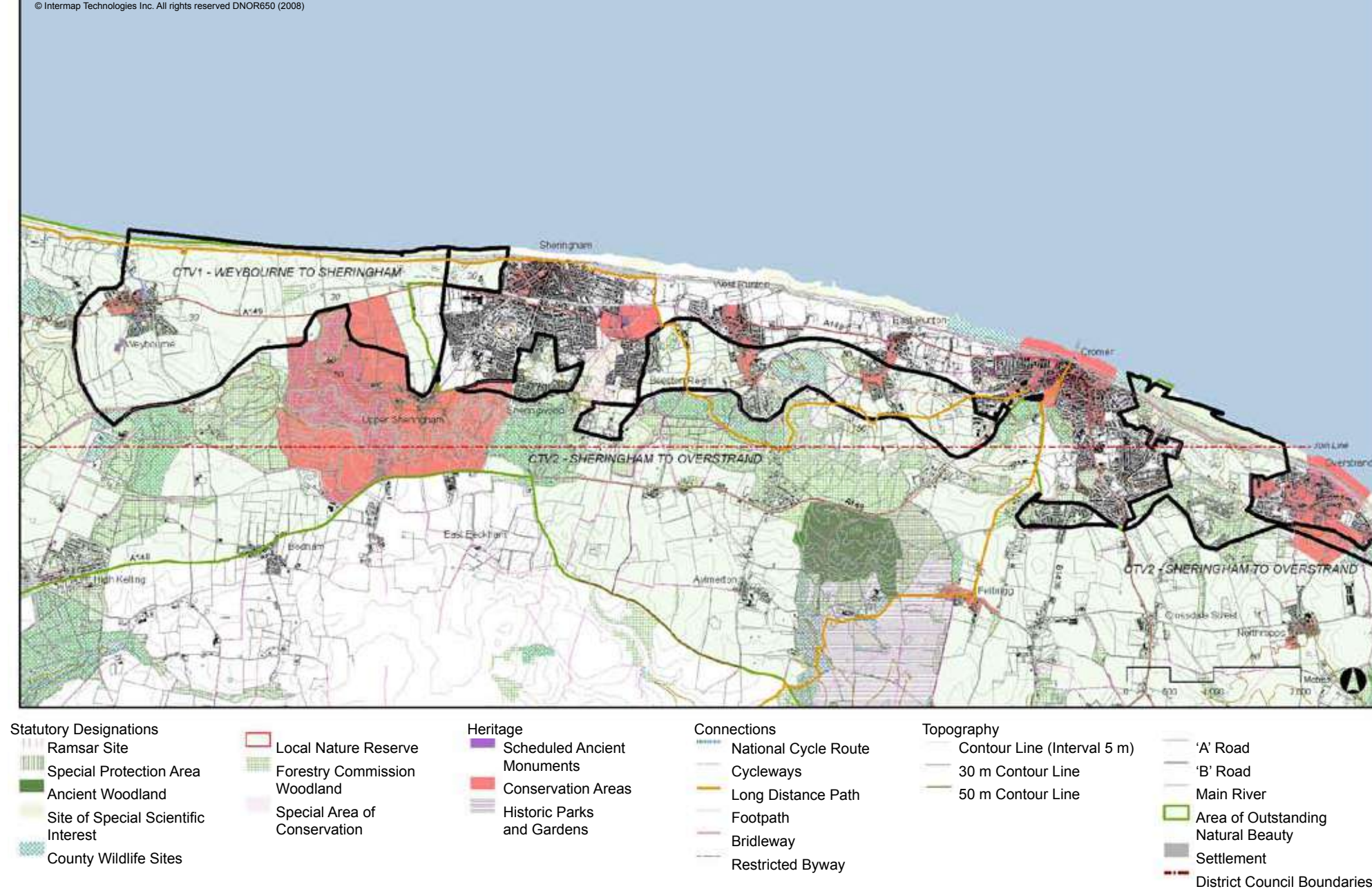
- **Standard** - landform, drainage, rights of way and statutory designations
- **Biodiversity** - ecological networks ¹
- **Historic landscapes** - broad historic landscape character types ² and data from the Historic Environment Record ³

¹ *Norfolk Wildlife Trust on behalf of the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership, July 2006, Ecological Network Mapping Project for Norfolk*

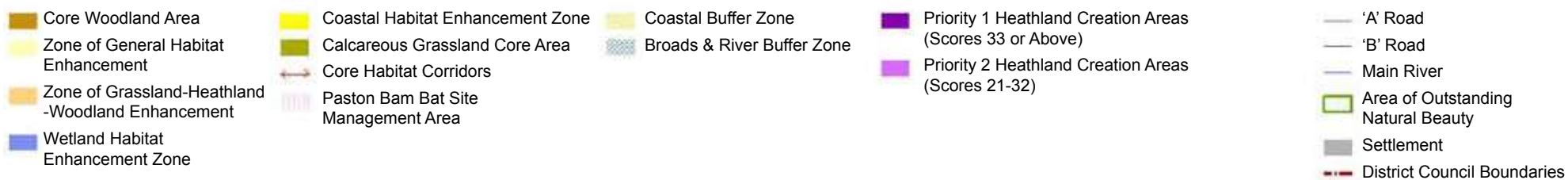
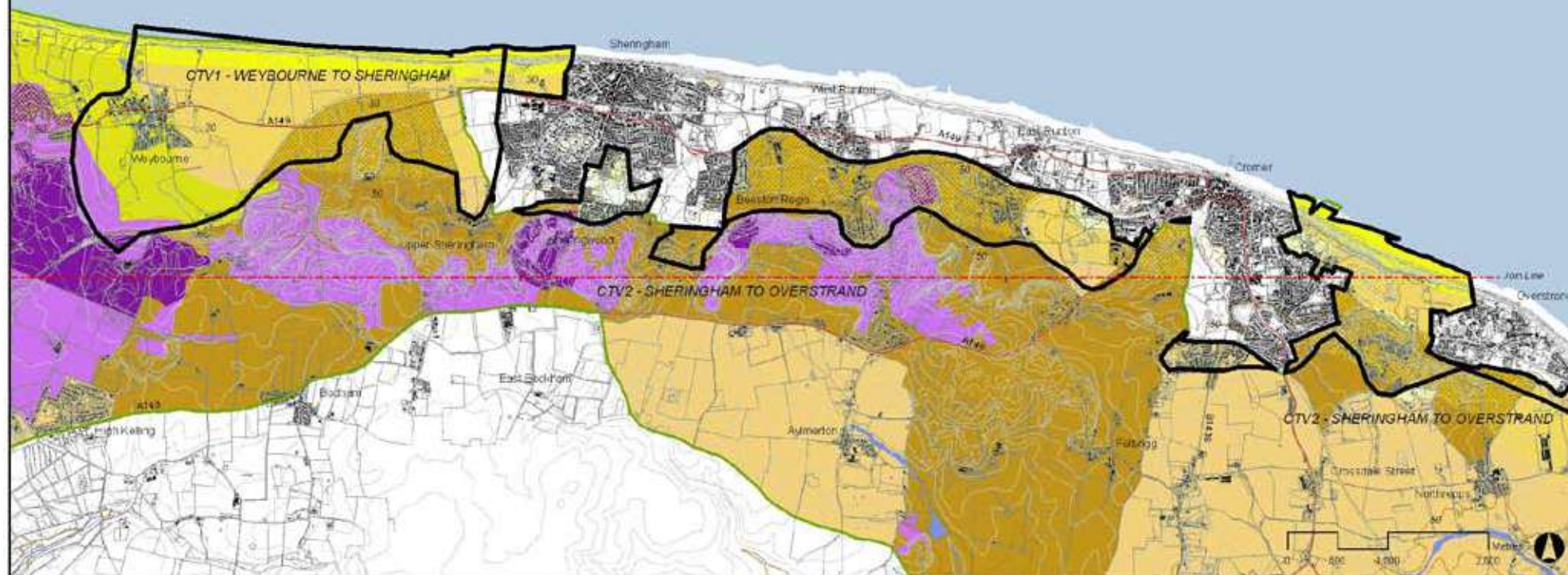
² *Norfolk Landscape Archaeology, January 2009, Norfolk Historic Landscape Character - a report on the Norfolk Landscape Characterisation (HLC) Project*

³ *www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk - provides a computerised, searchable database (with integrated digital mapping) of all areas of known archaeological activity, sites, finds, cropmarks, earthworks, industrial remains, structures and historic buildings in the county*

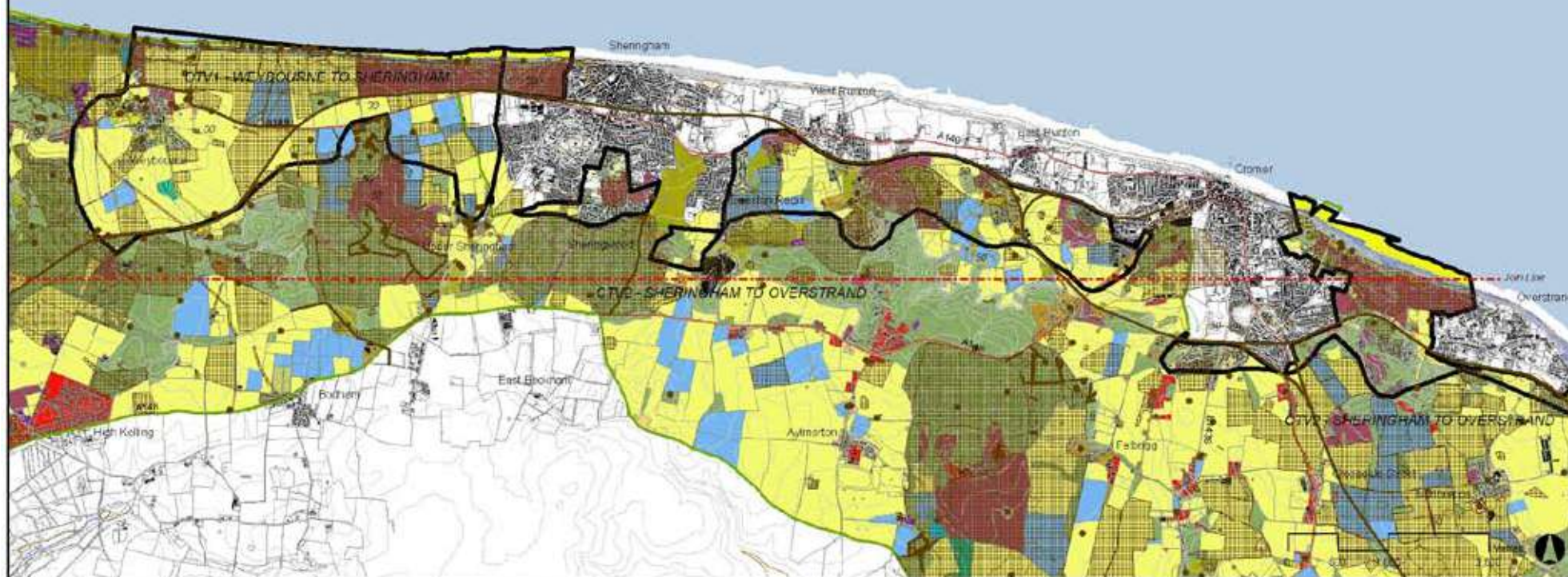
MAP 24b (i) - STANDARD MAP - COASTAL TOWNS AND VILLAGES (WEST)



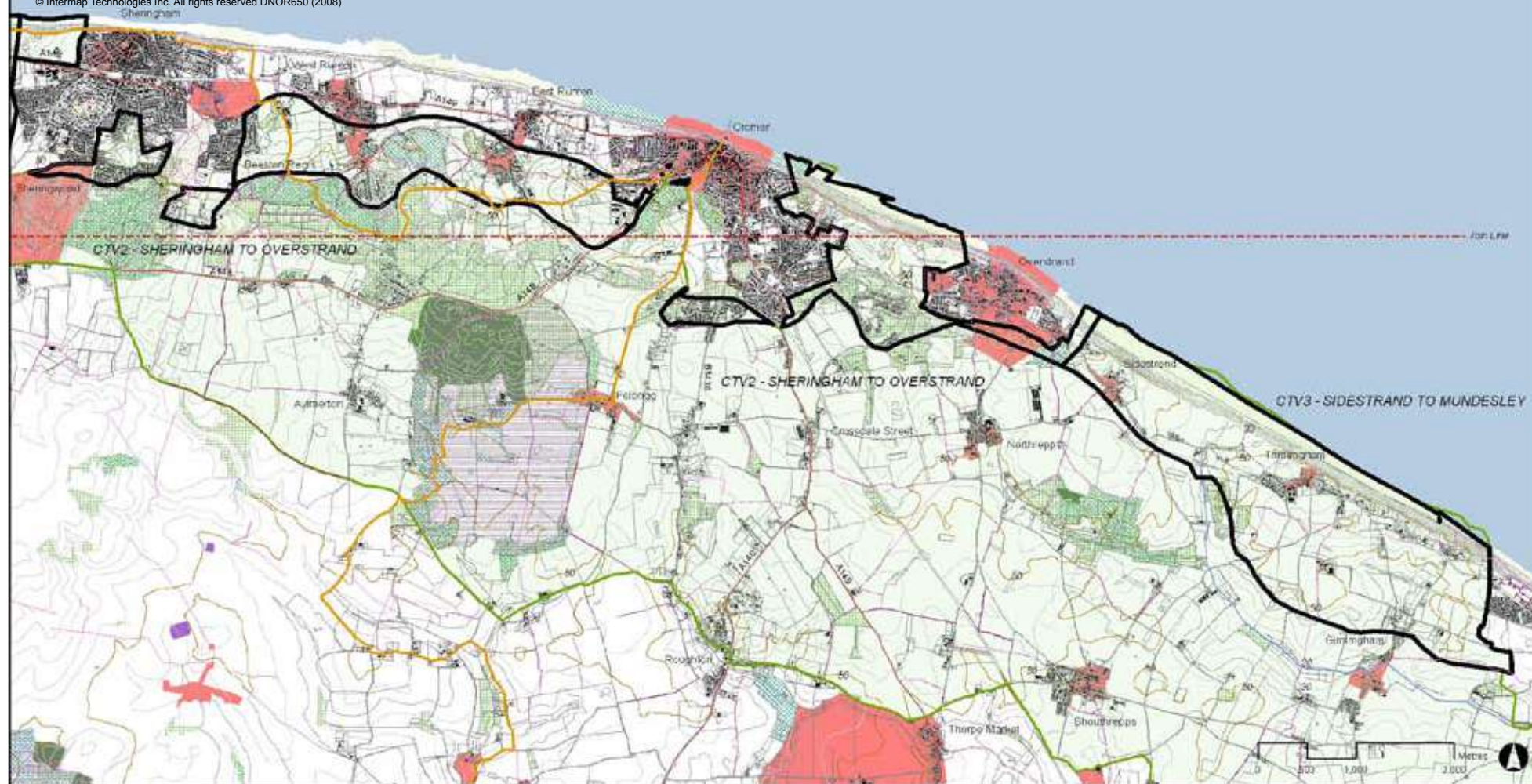
MAP 24b (ii) - BIODIVERSITY MAP - COASTAL TOWNS AND VILLAGES



MAP 24b (iii) - HISTORIC LANDSCAPES MAP - COASTAL TOWNS AND VILLAGES (WEST)



MAP 24c (i) - STANDARD MAP - COASTAL TOWNS AND VILLAGES (EAST)



Statutory Designations

- Ramsar Site
- Special Protection Area
- Ancient Woodland
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- County Wildlife Sites

Local Nature Reserve

- Forestry Commission Woodland
- Special Area of Conservation

Heritage

- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Conservation Areas
- Historic Parks and Gardens

Connections

- National Cycle Route
- Cycleways
- Long Distance Path
- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Restricted Byway

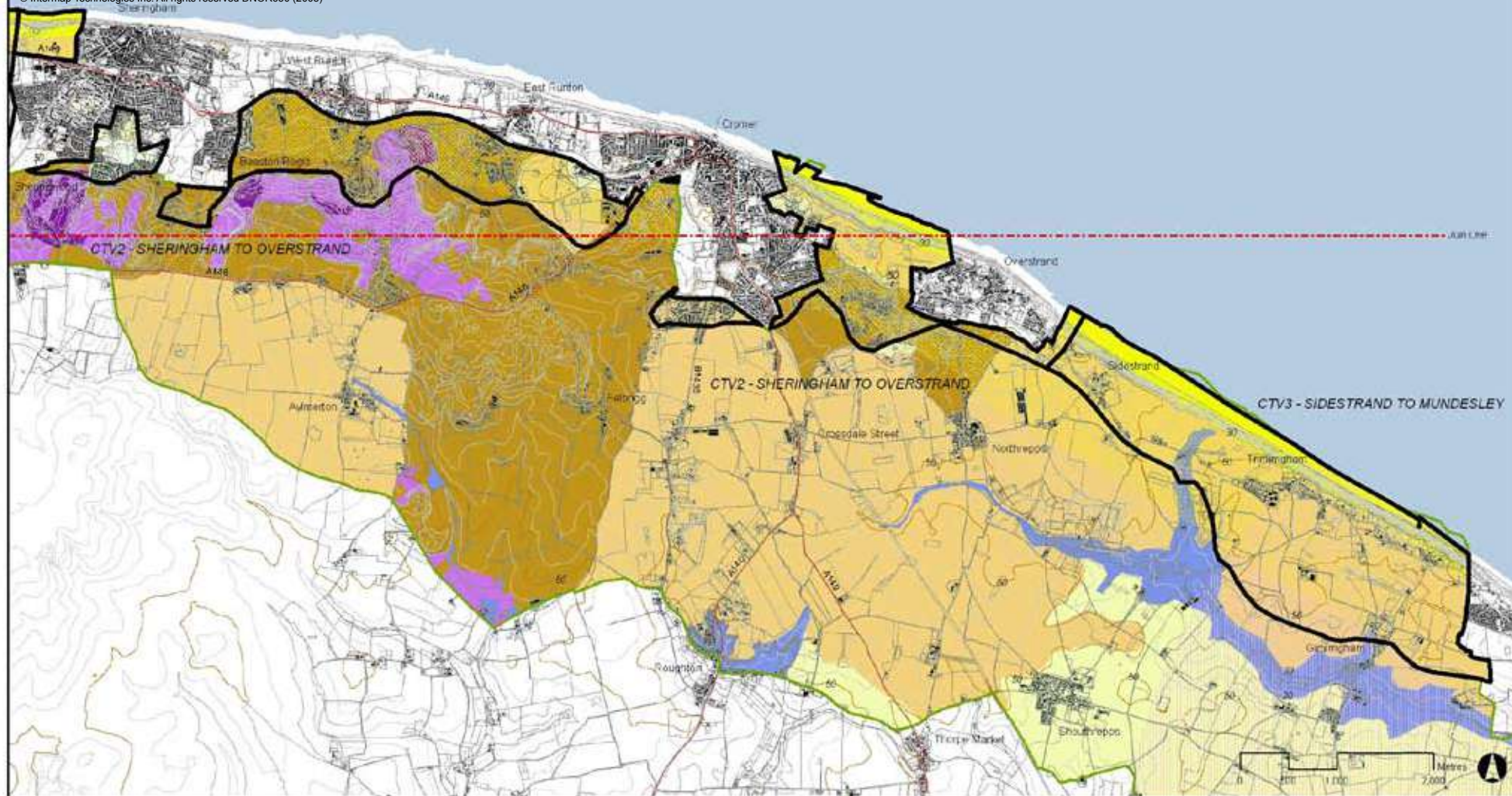
Topography

- Contour Line (Interval 5 m)
- 30 m Contour Line
- 50 m Contour Line

Roads

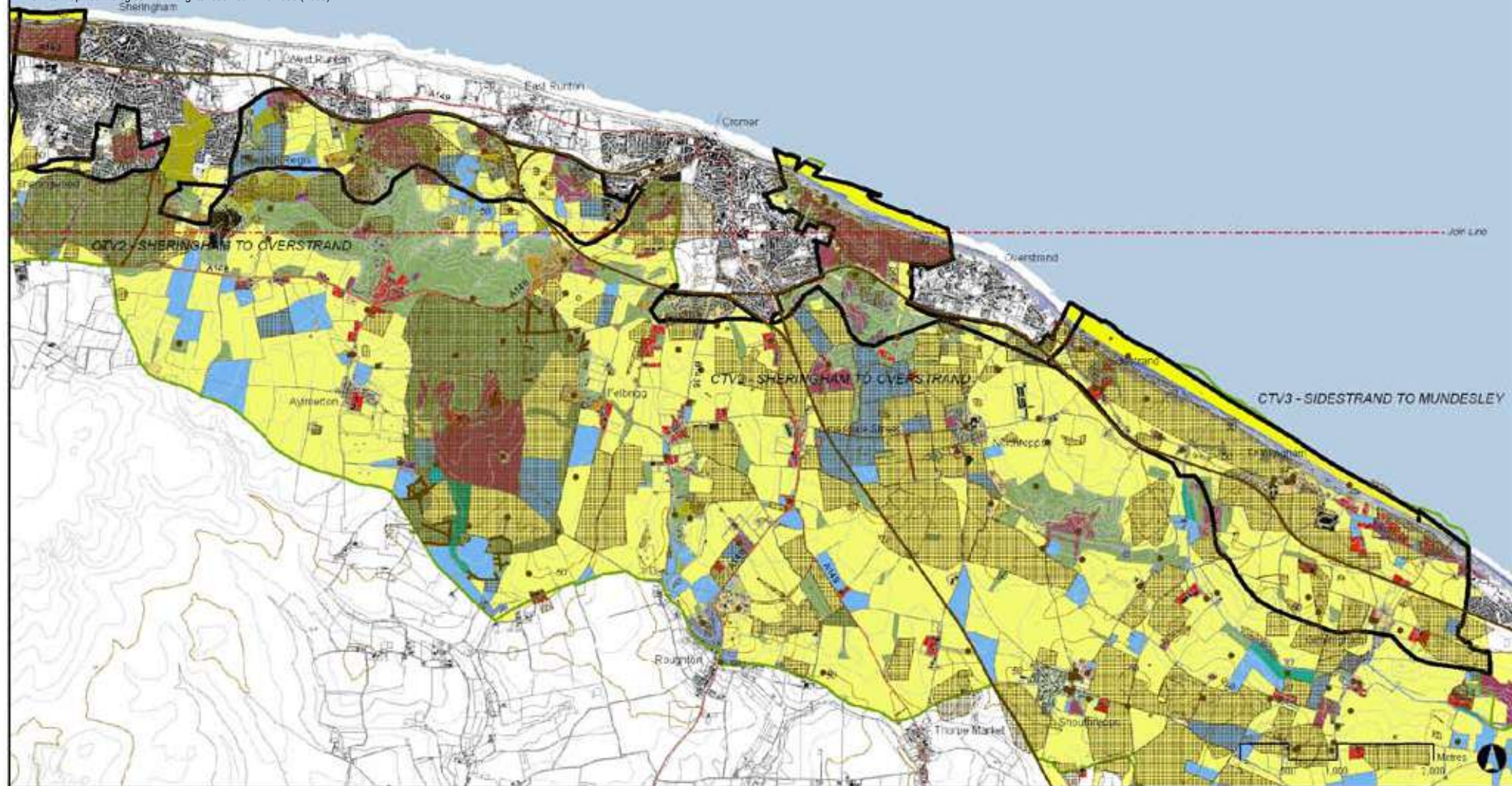
- 'A' Road
- 'B' Road
- Main River
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Settlement
- District Council Boundaries

MAP 24c (ii) - BIODIVERSITY MAP - COASTAL TOWNS AND VILLAGES (EAST)



- | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Core Woodland Area | Coastal Habitat Enhancement Zone | Coastal Buffer Zone | Priority 1 Heathland Creation Areas (Scores 33 or Above) | 'A' Road |
| Zone of General Habitat Enhancement | Calcareous Grassland Core Area | Broads & River Buffer Zone | Priority 2 Heathland Creation Areas (Scores 21-32) | 'B' Road |
| Zone of Grassland-Heathland-Woodland Enhancement | Core Habitat Corridors | Paston Bam Bat Site Management Area | | Main River |
| Wetland Habitat Enhancement Zone | | | | Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty |
| | | | | Settlement |
| | | | | District Council Boundaries |

MAP 24c (iii) - HISTORIC LANDSCAPES MAP - COASTAL TOWNS AND VILLAGES (EAST)



- | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|-------------|------------------------------------|
| 18th-19th Century Enclosure | Commons, Wastes, Heaths | Marginal | Water Features | HER 'point' | 'A' Road |
| 20th Century Agriculture | Communications | Military | Woodland | HER 'line' | 'B' Road |
| Built up Areas - Historic | Historic Earthwork | Mineral | | HER 'area' | Main River |
| Built up Areas - Modern | Horticulture | Miscellaneous | | | Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty |
| Coastal - Drainage Enclosure | Industry | Parks, Gardens, Recreation | | | Settlement |
| Coastal - Managed Wetland | Inland - Managed Wetland | Pre- 18th Century Enclosure | | | District Council Boundaries |