



# dunes, coastal levels and resorts



## Integrated landscape character



MAP 28a - Dunes, Coastal Levels and Resorts Key Plan

The northern part of the Dunes, Coastal Levels & Resorts landscape type is within the AONB. This area is defined by acidic sandy soils and rolling coastal dunes, which at this part of the coastline, overlie the Norwich Crag bedrock. The dunes slope down to long, windswept sandy beaches. The mosaic of dunes, dune heath and tussocky acidic grassland habitats merge into the scrub and the grassland communities on the fringes of the fens and transitional carr woodland inland.

Faden's 1797 Map of Norfolk identifies a larger area of common land along the coast that has since been lost because of coastal change – only a small strip now remains and much of it has been absorbed by the beach and sand dunes.

There are panoramic expansive views along the entire coastline. The offshore wind turbines at Scroby Sands dominate views from many points. The Winterton dunes form a key natural defence and are considerably more stable than shifting coastlines elsewhere on the North Sea Coast.

This is a relatively tranquil, remote area. It is very open and proximity to the coastline brings strong winds and an added sense of exposure. There is a complete absence of any significant built development.

# Landscape sensitivity and change

A small part of the Dunes, Coastal Levels and Resorts landscape is within the eastern outlier of the Norfolk Coast AONB and forms part of the landscape setting to the Broads. Key environmental assets which are sensitive to change are:

- Dunes, dune heath and associated acidic grasslands, which are valuable habitats and form a key part of the setting for the Broads. The Winterton dunes are designated as SSSI, SAC and SPA for their habitat value in relation to bird nesting and breeding, as well as for their diverse flora. The acidic soils at Winterton are unusual within this predominantly calcareous area and support plants, including a variety of rare grasses, such as Grey Hair Grass and Rush-leaved Fescue, as well as bryophytes and lichens only found in such acidic soils.
- The 'wild', unspoiled character of the coastal landscape, which acts as a valuable 'buffer' between the sea/beach and settlement edge.
- Strong sense of tranquillity especially outside the peak summer tourism season.



# Variations in character

Variations in character and inherent landscape sensitivities are highlighted in the following distinctive landscape character areas within the Dunes, Coastal Levels and Resorts landscape type (AONB area).

Landscape character area	Distinctive character	Inherent sensitivity
<b>Winterton Dunes - DCR1</b>	<p>Low topography (compared to further south) – no cliffs and rolling dunes gradually merge with acidic scrub. Highly valuable ecological habitats – tussocky rough grass forms a unique habitat supporting a range of flora, as well as habitats for overwintering birds and butterflies. Raptors such as Hen Harrier, Barn Owls and Sparrowhawks are regularly recorded hunting over the dunes during the winter months. Landform variation is provided by the low ridge and valley to the edge of Winterton, known locally as Winterton Valley. Winterton-on-Sea is a compact nucleated village, around a central village green and demonstrates traditional building materials and styles, such as red brick and pantiles, and thatch and lime plaster rendered with traditional coloured finishes eg ‘oxblood’. Expansion of resort development on the fringes of Winterton has a potentially strong influence on the character of the area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in scale between the open windswept sandy beaches and the intimate mosaic of grasslands and scrub inland</li> <li>• Valuable ecological habitats – acidic grassland, dune heath and dune communities</li> <li>• Wild, exposed character – long panoramic coastal views</li> </ul>



## Key forces for change

- Sea level rise as a result of climate change – potential for brackish water intrusion.
- Coastal erosion – this stretch of coastline is particularly vulnerable to erosion due to the exposed situation of the crumbly bedrock and drift geology.
- New built development on the fringes of larger villages, such as Winterton, to cater for the holiday/tourism industry.
- Pressures for leisure and tourism related development – due to proximity to the Broads and sandy beaches.
- Wind turbines.



*THIS STRETCH OF COASTLINE IS PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TO SEA LEVEL  
RISE AND COASTAL EROSION*

## 20 year vision

managed change

A distinctive, simple landscape with panoramic coastal views and a structured transition from woodland carr to tussocky heath to rolling dunes to beach and sea.



# Integrated landscape guidance

- 1 Conserve, enhance and manage the valuable dune, dune heath and acidic grassland habitats and the transitions between them**
  - Give priority to the conservation and enhancement of the valuable acidic grassland and dune heath communities of the Winterton Dunes.
- 2 Manage any inevitable coastal change in a long term, sustainable way**
  - Understand, monitor and assess the impacts of coastal erosion and leaching in order to plan for future adaptation to coastal change.
  - Seek to accommodate future pressures (such as intensification of sea defences) while safeguarding visual sensitivities and intrinsic coastal character.
  - The Shoreline Management Plan recognizes the importance of managing coastal change as an ongoing natural process and strategies should consider long term sustainable solutions that accommodate the sediment systems that operate along the coast without increased dependence on constructed defences.
  - Use 'soft' engineering solutions for any intervention deemed necessary to manage the processes of coastal change.
- 3 Conserve and enhance the distinctive visual qualities of the dunes and the inherent sense of 'wildness'**
  - Maintain the 'wild' nature of these coastal areas, including the dunes and beaches
  - Avoid encroachment by settlement – in particular consider the scale of existing features and skylines in relation to development
  - Control future wind turbine development in order to avoid further visual disturbance on the North Sea horizon line and detracting from the cohesive sculptural nature of the existing turbine group.

## Detailed maps

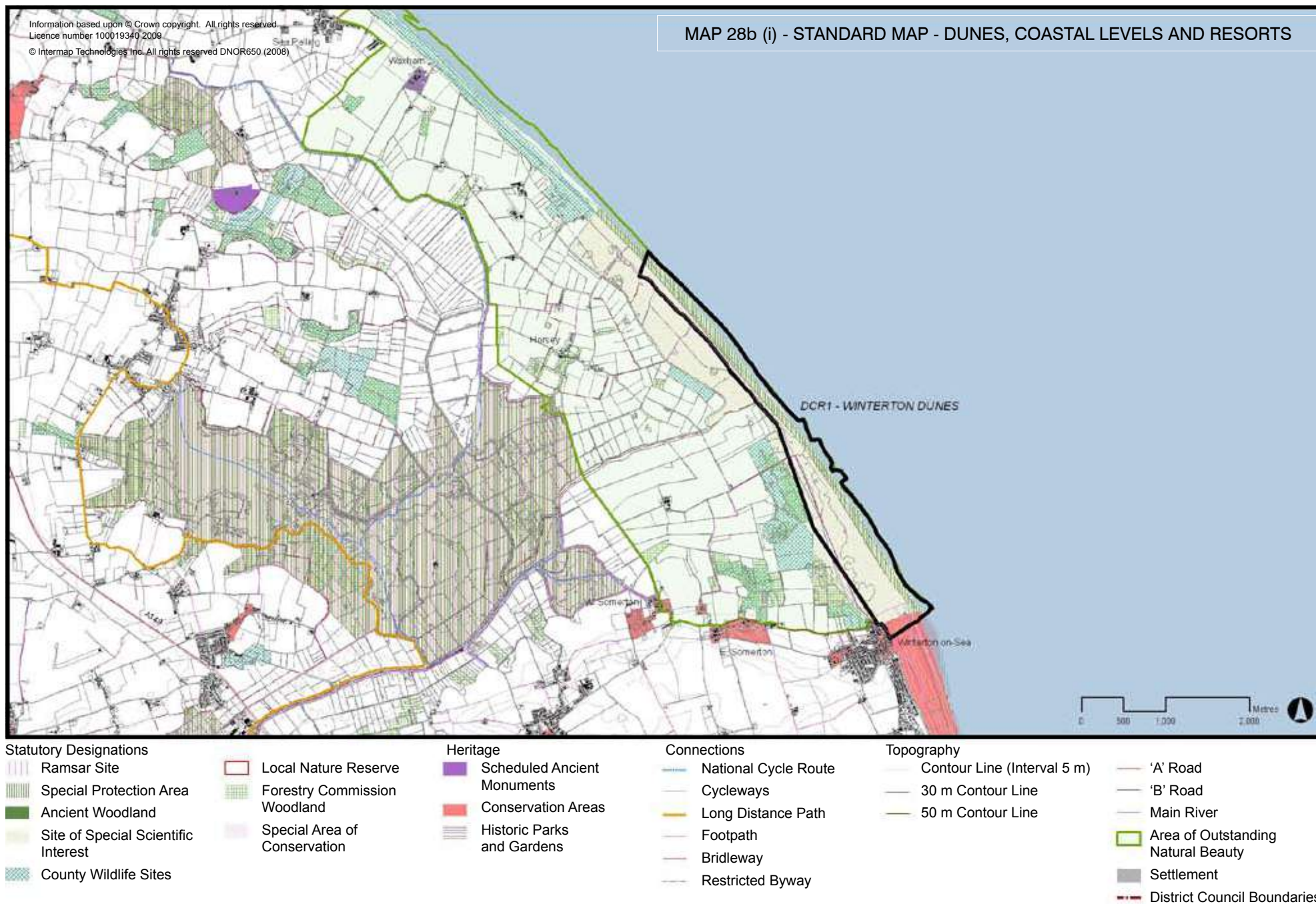
- **Standard** - landform, drainage, rights of way and statutory designations
- **Biodiversity** - ecological networks <sup>1</sup>
- **Historic landscapes** - broad historic landscape character types <sup>2</sup> and data from the Historic Environment Record <sup>3</sup>

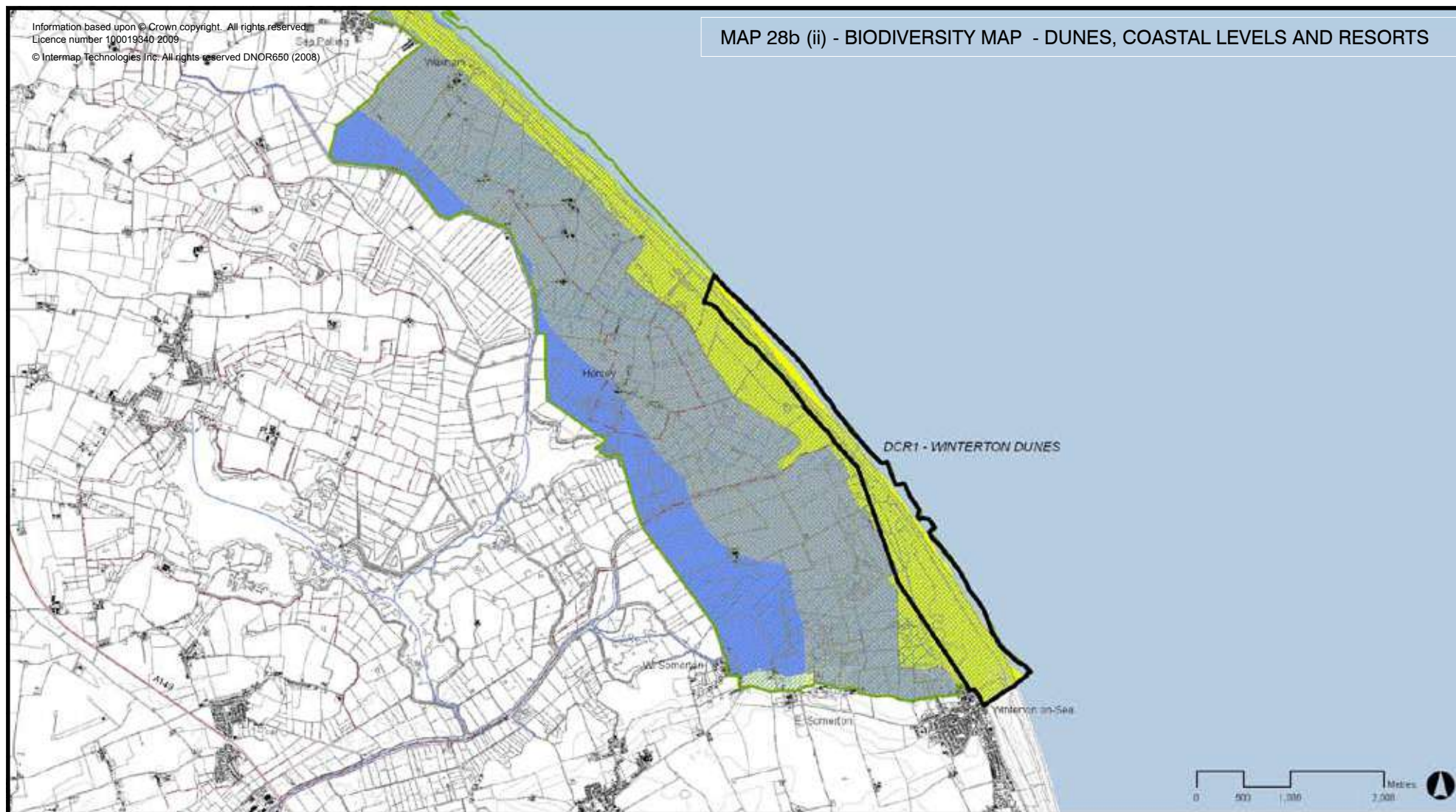
<sup>1</sup> Norfolk Wildlife Trust on behalf of the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership, July 2006, *Ecological Network Mapping Project for Norfolk*

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

<sup>3</sup> [www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk](http://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







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|--|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Core Woodland Area                               | Coastal Habitat Enhancement Zone    | Coastal Buffer Zone        | 'A' Road                           |
| Zone of General Habitat Enhancement              | Calcareous Grassland Core Area      | Broads & River Buffer Zone | 'B' Road                           |
| Zone of Grassland-Heathland-Woodland Enhancement | Core Habitat Corridors              |                            | Main River                         |
| Wetland Habitat Enhancement Zone                 | Paston Bam Bat Site Management Area |                            | Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty |
|  |                                     |                            | Settlement                         |
|  |                                     |                            | District Council Boundaries        |



# MAP 28b (iii) - HISTORIC LANDSCAPES MAP - DUNES, COASTAL LEVELS AND RESORTS

