



wooded slopes with estate land



Integrated landscape character



MAP 16a - Wooded Slopes with Estate Land Key Plan

The Wooded Slopes with Estate Land is an undulating landscape on the lower slopes of the west-facing dipslope of the gentle chalk escarpment to the east. Heathy acid soils have developed on outcrops of Sandringham Sands and Carstone, sandy sediments from the Lower Cretaceous Period, which are exposed on the lower chalk dipslope and a number of mires and bogs have developed where there are springlines at the base of the chalk. The characteristic lowland heath and bog habitats are ecologically valuable and some (such as Dersingham Bog) are protected by nationally important designations. The slopes are drained by creeks meandering westwards towards the Wash.

The gently undulating slopes of the Wooded Slopes with Estate Land are planted with conifer and mixed plantation woodlands, which often disguise local changes in topography. Due to the former proximity of the sea and the combination of fertile soils and spring lines, this area has long been attractive to settlers. There is much evidence of early settlers from the Palaeolithic period onwards, with evidence of a Mesolithic flint industry near Dersingham. Late Neolithic and early Bronze age settlement was concentrated along river valleys and the great Iron Age hoards uncovered near Snettisham form the richest Iron Age treasure ever discovered in this country. Settlement continued to be concentrated in this area throughout Roman times (many 'villa' sites and farmsteads are recorded in the Snettisham area) and thereafter in the Saxon period.

The Norman fortress at Castle Rising was built around 1140, covering an area of 4.9 hectares: parts of the great tower, gatehouse, fine Norman arches and vaulting still remain. In medieval times there was a partly wooded private forest in the area, as well as a medieval chase or deer park. The Nomina Villarum, which records the Norfolk Manorial tenancies in 1316, shows that this part of North West Norfolk was owned and managed by relatively few lordships.

The 16th century saw the commencement of two centuries of estate enlargement and concentration, founded on post-Restoration political stability and agricultural improvement. By the second half of the 19th century, continued economic growth encouraged non-landed entrepreneurs into the area. One of the new houses built at this time was Sandringham House, by the Prince of Wales.

Continuing political and socio-economic change in the 20th century undermined the landed estate – the largest proved most resilient and the Sandringham Estate became the dominant influence. Much of the area was drained and planted, transforming it from open heathland and grassland to a mix of dense woodland and open arable fields. The heathlands were a source of wood and peat for fuel, bedding for animals and grazing for stock. The great diversity of heathland habitats in this area is a by-product of years of management by local communities. Remnant pockets of heathland, acid grassland and

Integrated landscape character (continued)

wood pasture provide a clue to the original landcover and are valuable ecological habitats. The landscape remains centred on Sandringham House, a Grade II* listed property, and its surrounding estate, which imparts a well managed character over the wider area - estate villages, such as West Newton, have an organised picturesque layout and the long straight roads are neatly edged on either side by wide close-cut grass verges.

There are strong contrasts in character and enclosure between the dark, enclosed woodlands and open views across undivided arable fields, but all views are ultimately contained by a dark wooded horizon. Within arable areas, hedgerows are limited and most fields are bordered by ditches, dykes and wire fencing. The lack of vertical or divisionary elements in the arable areas tends to exaggerate the scale of the open farmland.

The main A149 road runs north-south through the area and is the main channel of movement. Away from this busy corridor, the landscape is quiet. Although the landscape has a large scale overall, the settings of small villages on the edge of the wooded areas have a more intimate character. Throughout the area, local vernacular buildings are constructed of carstone (an orange-brown ferruginous sandstone) and flint and the villages have a distinctive and unified character.

Landscape sensitivity and change

This is a landscape of strong contrasts in character and landscape sensitivity, reflecting the contrasting degrees of enclosure between the blocks of arable land and woodland. Key environmental assets which are sensitive to change are:

- Remnant lowland heathland, lowland dry acid grassland, purple moor grass & rush pastures and lowland raised bog (BAP Habitats);
- Veteran trees and areas of semi-natural ancient woodland.
- Important ecological corridors - the creeks, hedgerows and the mature shelterbelts which subdivide some fields and connect mixed woodlands.
- The characteristic small-scale landscapes within and on the fringes of settlements are more sensitive to change, although this is a relatively mature landscape structure and built development may be integrated into the landscape by carefully designed tree planting which links into the surrounding woodland framework.
- Specific components of designed historic estate landscapes are also sensitive to change and conservation of the historic landscape pattern requires proactive ongoing management.
- Framed views to landmark churches, historic buildings or landscape patterns, which merit careful identification and conservation within the overall landscape pattern.



Variations in character

Variations in character and inherent landscape sensitivities are highlighted in the following distinctive landscape character areas within the Wooded Slopes with Estate Land (AONB area):

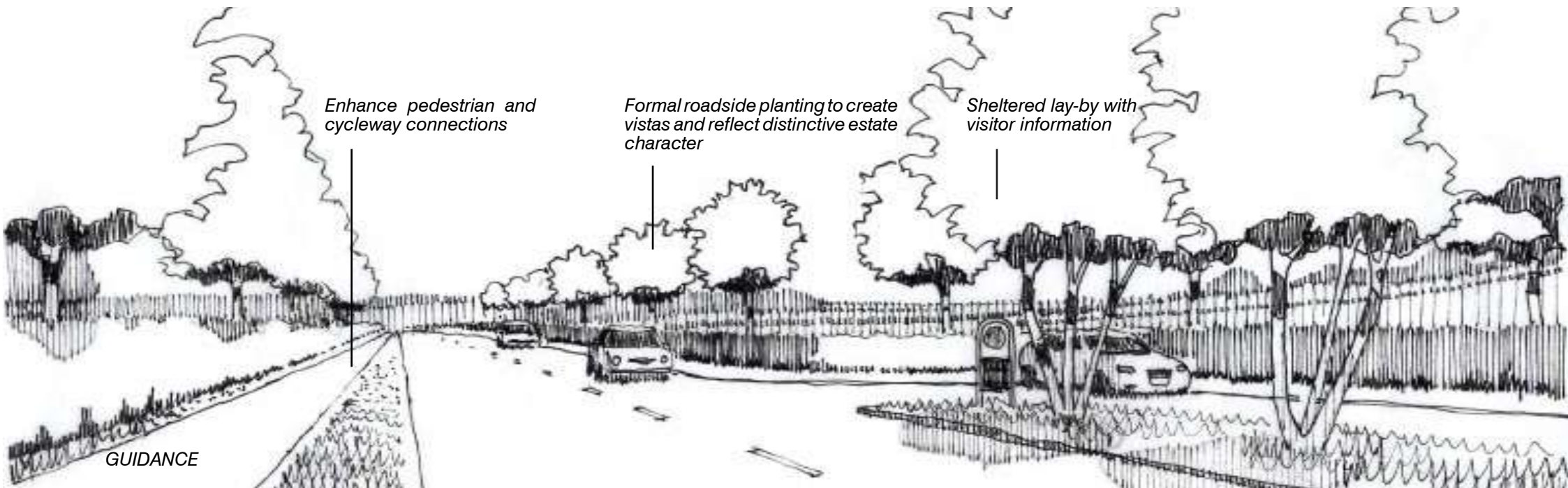
Landscape character area	Distinctive character	Inherent sensitivity
Snettisham & Dersingham - WSE1	<p>Generally flat to slightly sloping (east to west. River Ingol is a landscape feature towards the east, where the valley has relatively steep sides. Woodlands of the Sandringham Estate provide wooded backdrop to the south. There are pockets of development along the Lynn road corridor.</p> <p>Typical land use is small enclosed horse pasture and medium-sized arable fields with copses and dispersed blocks of deciduous woodland. Carstone is a key influence on the built character of local villages.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scattered landscape pattern is generally less sensitive than the larger scale estate woodlands to the south • Copses eg Life Wood and larger areas of woodland eg Ken Hill Wood & Lodge Hill Plantations are key landscape features • Mature hedgerows are valuable and sensitive to change as they determine the structure of the landscape • Traditional vernacular buildings within the villages contribute to the distinctive sense of place • Open views to landmark churches are particularly sensitive to change • Inherent sense of tranquillity disturbed by proximity to the main road corridors and settlement edges

Landscape character area	Distinctive character	Inherent sensitivity
Sandringham - WSE2	Gently rolling landform. Landscape is speckled with small ponds and pools. Land use dominated by the predominantly coniferous woodland surrounding Sandringham Royal Estate and the Sandringham Country Park. Mature trees create canopies over the minor roads, creating a strong sense of enclosure. Low brick walls and characteristic black metal railings mark the boundaries of the Sandringham Estate. Sandringham House is surrounded by extensive mature parkland, with specimen parkland trees, long drives and framed views. The Norwich gates (wrought ironwork) are a distinctive local feature. Roads are lined with wide grass verges, tall mature Scots Pines, mature hedgerows or other coniferous trees. The area attracts many visitors, but this relatively wooded landscape has the capacity to absorb large numbers of people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mature historic parkland features and estate villages are distinctive and valuable components of the landscape which are inherently sensitive to change • Distinctive combinations of building materials and building layout in West Newton and Wolferton • Small ponds and areas of heathland are locally important • Acid bogs and mires eg Dersingham Bog NNR • Mature trees, hedgerows and shelterbelts along road corridors • Strong sense of place and tranquillity
Hillington & Congham - WSE3	Sparsely populated mature landscape of gently undulating woodland, plantation and arable farmland. Scattered mature deciduous trees throughout hedgerows and within fields. Rectangular artificial ponds and lakes punctuate parts of the landscape, contributing to a strong landscape pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predominantly isolated and rural character • Long open countryside views across fields towards a wooded backdrop are distinctive within the area • Coherent and distinctive small-scale settlement pattern – villages have traditional building materials and layouts • The local landscape setting of villages is important within the wider landscape, particularly views to historic buildings and landmark churches

Landscape character area	Distinctive character	Inherent sensitivity
North & South Wootton & Castle Rising - WSE4	<p>Mixed woodland on common land with a patchwork of arable and pastoral fields around Castle Rising, North Wootton & South Wootton. The castle of Castle Rising is prominent on the side of a hill and the village church is also a prominent local landmark.</p> <p>To the west of North Wootton there is a more open mosaic of small regular pasture and arable fields delineated by an intricate ditch network.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mature structuring landscape elements – trees, hedgerows, shelterbelts and individual mature trees are important local landscape features which are vulnerable to change • The landscape setting of Castle Rising (castle village and church) is exceptionally sensitive and the pattern of the landscape in this area should be a priority for conservation and enhancement • Open views across fields are inherently sensitive to change • Overall the area has a strong sense of tranquillity

Key forces for change

- Loss of hedgerow field boundaries as a result of agricultural intensification.
- Small-scale or incremental development within villages, which may be inconsistent with local built character and materials (such as carstone, clunch and flint).
- Changes in woodland cover and loss of lowland heathland habitat as a result of changes in management.
- Increased parking associated with the potential expansion of villages and tourist attractions.
- Potential further built development around the eastern and northern fringes of North and South Wootton.



20 year vision

restore and enhance

An extended mosaic of inter-connected heathland, acid grassland, wetland, bog and wood pasture habitats within a matrix of historic parkland, woodland and farmland. Composed framed views to distinctive historic features and landmarks provide elements of contrast and surprise



Integrated landscape guidance

- 1 The heathy soils of the Sandringham Sands and Carstone are identified as an area of high biodiversity importance with a wide range of BAP priority habitats¹. Future management should aim to extend and connect lowland heathland, wood pasture and associated wetland habitats**
 - Give priority to the conservation and enhancement of existing lowland heathland habitats – where possible expand lowland heathland to a minimum of 50ha per site.
 - Buffer existing heathlands by restoring or creating new semi-natural habitats on adjacent sites or by encouraging low input agricultural systems².
 - Encourage connectivity by creating new links between semi-natural habitats – heathland, acid grassland, wet grassland and wood pasture. The district Econet Report and the AONB's Nature Conservation Vision³ highlight the need to make connections between existing lowland heathland habitat on the Plateau Farmland and the cluster of heathland habitats within the Wooded Slopes with Estate Land and on to the Brecks to the south. Heathland species are relatively mobile and can travel some distance if they have 'stepping stone' habitats to cross.
 - Encourage traditional woodland management practices such as coppicing and the management of wood pasture by encouraging the co-existence of trees and grazing animals.
 - Create & enhance the wetland habitats associated with the corridor of the Babingley River and its tributaries; buffer the river floodplain by encouraging low input agricultural systems and creation or enhancement of semi-natural habitats in areas alongside the river corridor
- 2 Conserve and enhance the character, quality and connectivity of the mature structuring elements within the landscape type as a whole ie the pattern of large woodlands, shelterbelts and field hedgerows**
 - Maintain the overall balance between open fields and enclosed woodlands and plantations, but aim to increase the diversity of landscape elements and habitats within each component
 - Conserve and manage the age-structure and species composition of large areas of plantation and estate woodlands as striking landscape features and wildlife areas

¹ Norfolk Wildlife Trust on behalf of the Ecological Network Topic Group, April 2007, West Norfolk District Ecological Network Mapping

² English Nature, 2002, North Norfolk Heathland Re-Creation Strategy

³ Norfolk Coast Partnership, 1998, A Vision for Nature Conservation in the Norfolk Coast AONB

Integrated landscape guidance (continued)

- Conserve and (where necessary) replant the distinctive Scots Pine shelterbelts, ensuring the structure of the belt remains intact and designing new planting to create or enhance connections with the existing matrix of existing woodlands and hedgerows
- Manage and where possible replant hedgerows to maintain the scale and pattern of the landscape and enhance ecological connectivity
- Replace mature specimen hedgerow trees so that they are conserved as positive local landscape features
- Planting deciduous native trees on the fringes of woodlands and plantations will enhance the ecological value and visual character of the woodland fringe
- The creation of buffer zones on the fringes of native woodland blocks will help to protect the existing woodland edges from damage by agricultural machinery

3 Conserve and enhance the unique historic features of the landscape, which include historic parklands, specimen trees, vistas, drives, walls, gateways, railings and estate buildings

- Research the history and design of historic parkland landscapes and develop appropriate management strategies to facilitate the renewal of distinctive features such as individual specimen trees, the composition of views, distinctive groups of trees and grazed parkland areas
- Research, identify and conserve the setting of important historic features such as Castle Rising, historic houses
- Enhance the management, presentation, interpretation and accessibility of the area for its historic value

4 Identify and conserve the characteristic features and landscape settings of villages

- Ensure that any new development in or on the edges of settlements is of small scale and responds to the existing settlement pattern, incorporating tree and woodland planting designed to integrate built development within the overall pattern of woodlands and fields
- The siting and design of new development should take account of the setting of historic parkland landscapes and the many individual landmarks that are characteristic of the area
- New buildings and the conversion or restoration of existing buildings should reflect the distinctive character, style and building materials of the existing local settlements, including flint, chalk clunch and pantiles
- Identify and conserve views to landmark buildings, particularly village churches

Integrated landscape guidance (continued)

5 Conserve and enhance the character and quality of local roads

- Enhance the corridor of the A149 and the former main north-south (Lynn Road) corridor with a co-ordinated strategy for tree planting, hedgerow management and signage which should be designed to take account of key views and the gateways to settlements
- Conserve the characteristic straight alignment and wide open verges associated with the estate roads. New tree planting should be in hedgerows rather than on verges

6 Conserve the generally undeveloped, rural character of the area and related strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity

7 Identify and conserve open views across the adjacent Drained Coastal Marshes

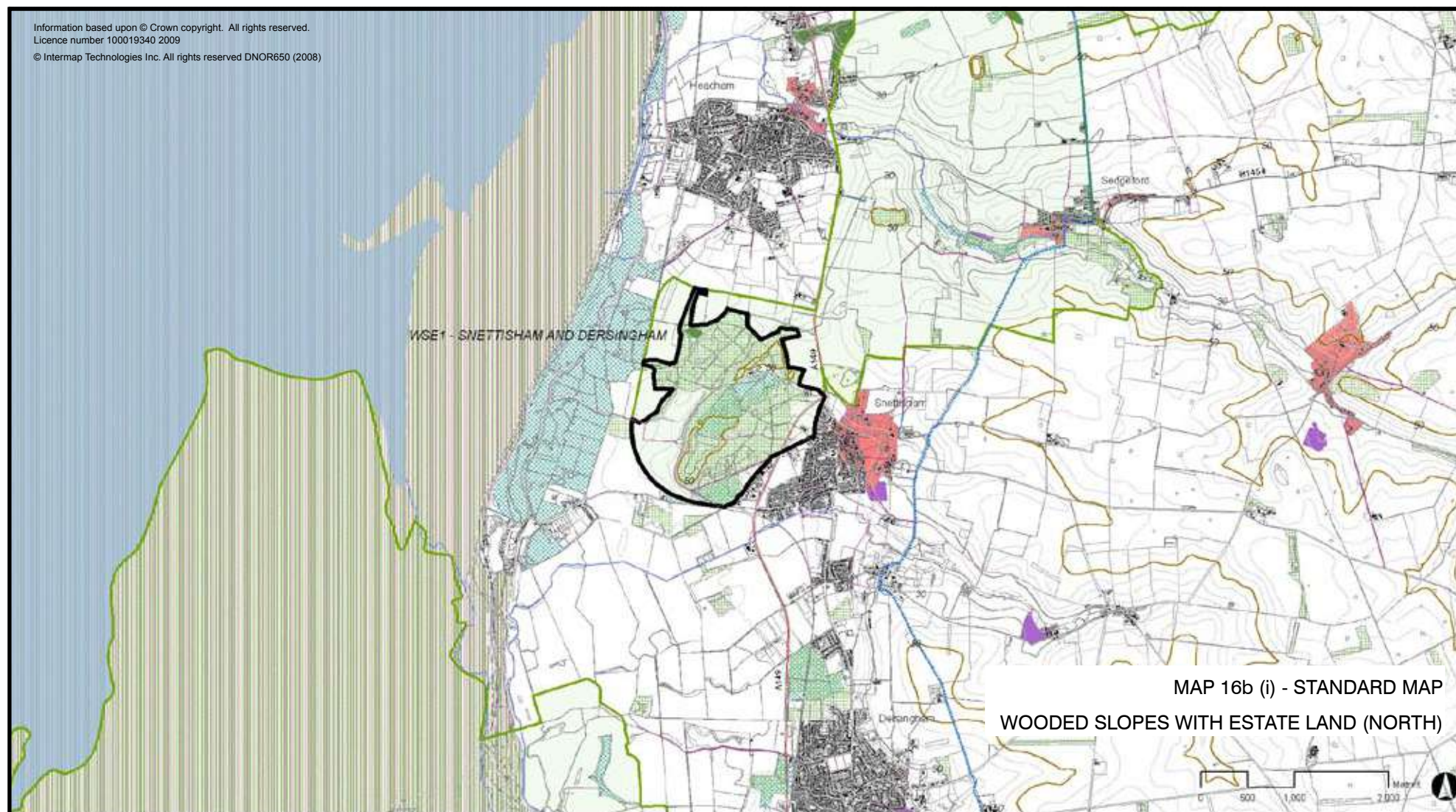
Detailed maps

- **Standard** - landform, drainage, rights of way and statutory designations
- **Biodiversity** - ecological networks ⁴
- **Historic landscapes** - broad historic landscape character types ⁵ and data from the Historic Environment Record ⁶

⁴ Norfolk Wildlife Trust on behalf of the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership, July 2006, *Ecological Network Mapping Project for Norfolk*

⁵ Norfolk Landscape Archaeology, January 2009, *Norfolk Historic Landscape Character - a report on the Norfolk Landscape Characterisation (HLC) Project*

⁶ 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 16b (i) - STANDARD MAP
 WOODED SLOPES WITH ESTATE LAND (NORTH)

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

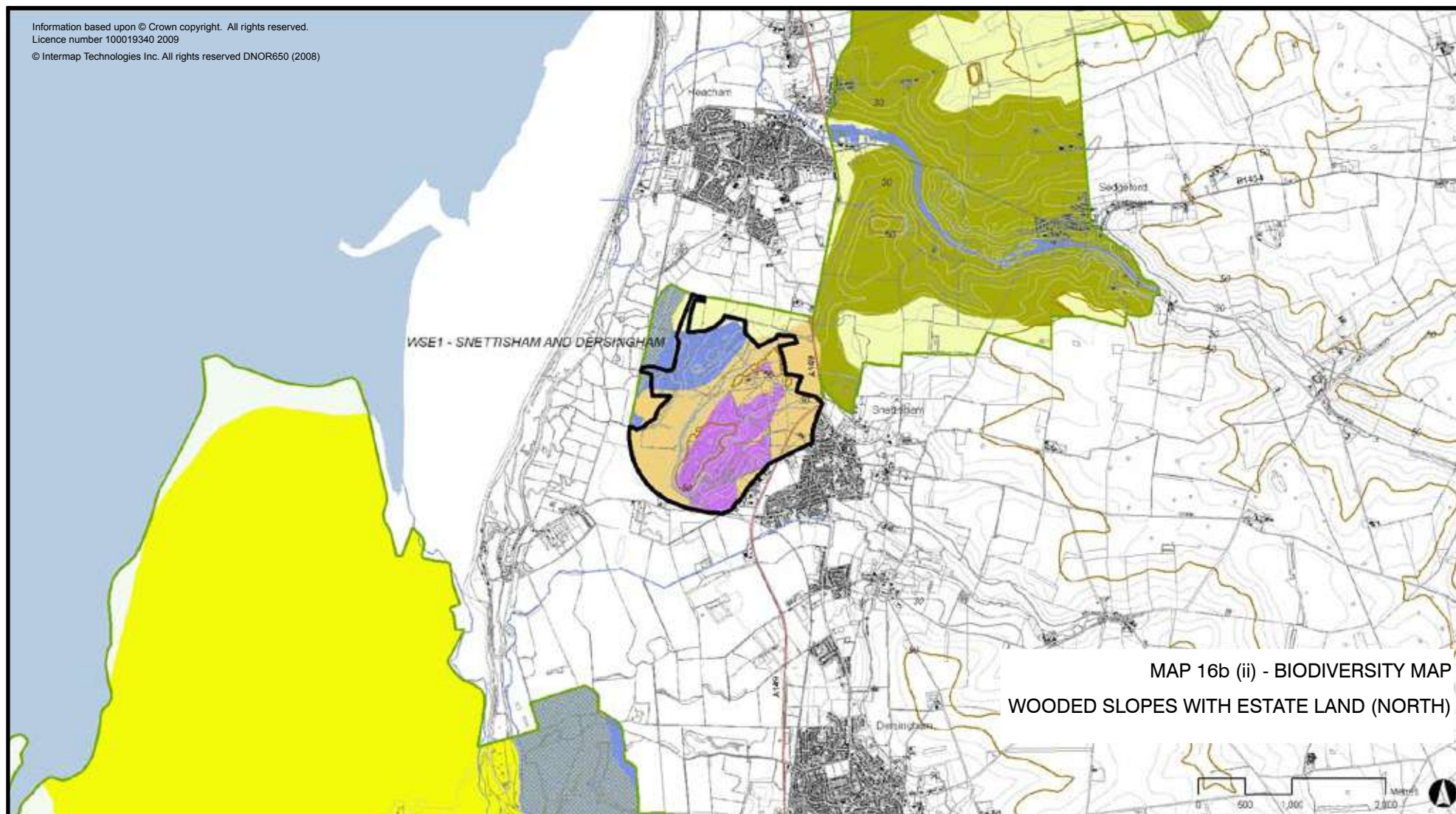
Connections

- 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

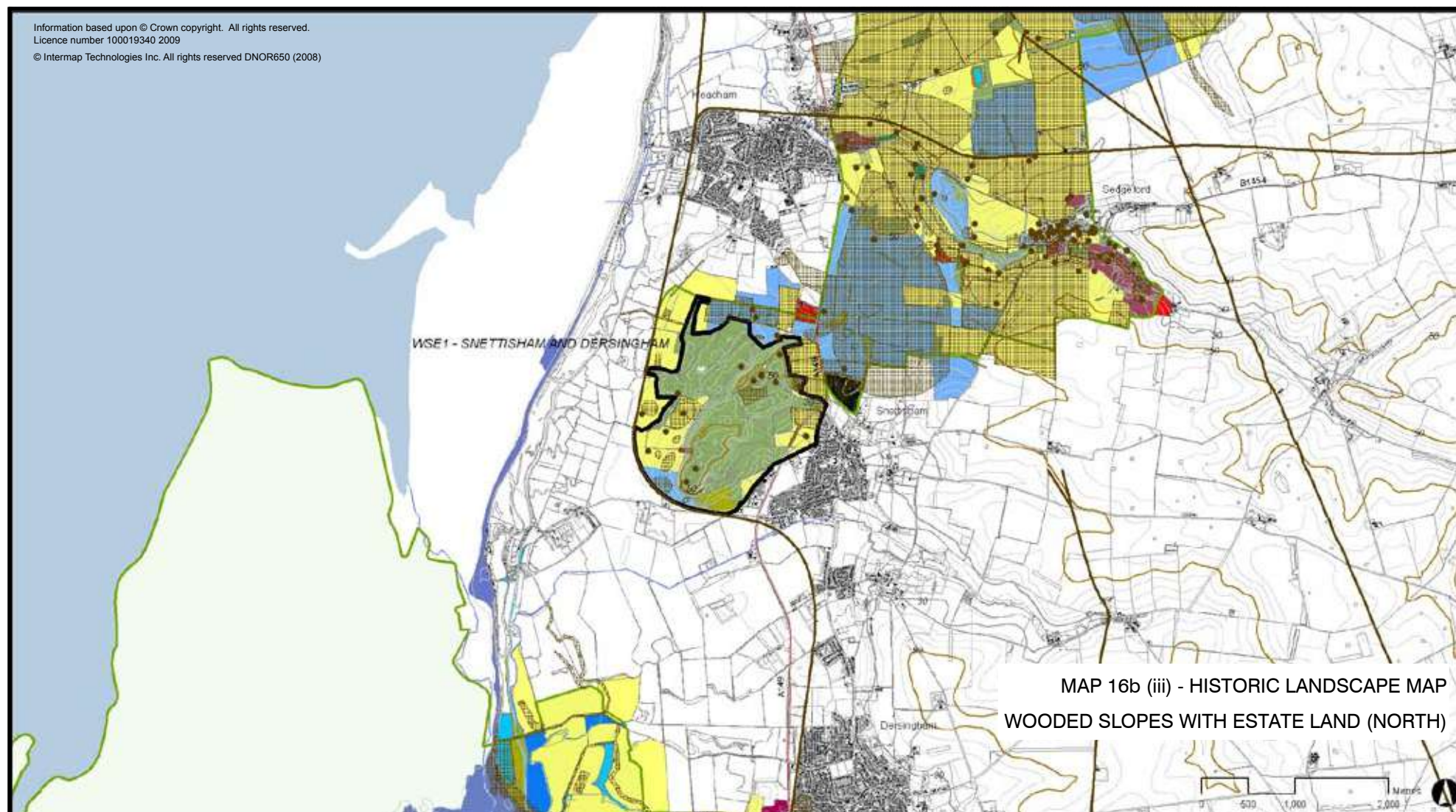
- 'A' Road
- 'B' Road
- Main River
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Settlement
- District Council Boundaries



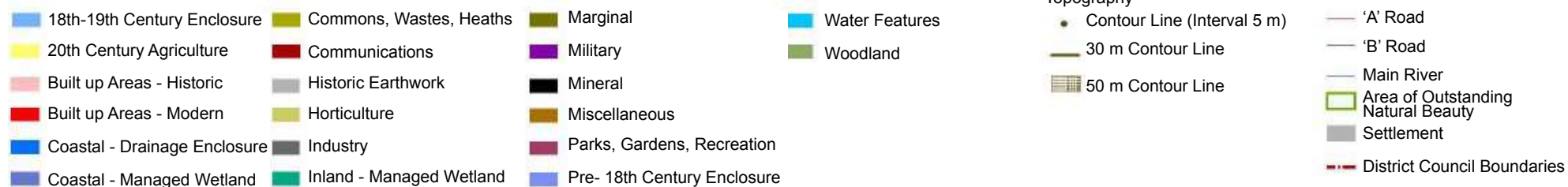
MAP 16b (ii) - BIODIVERSITY MAP
 WOODED SLOPES WITH ESTATE LAND (NORTH)

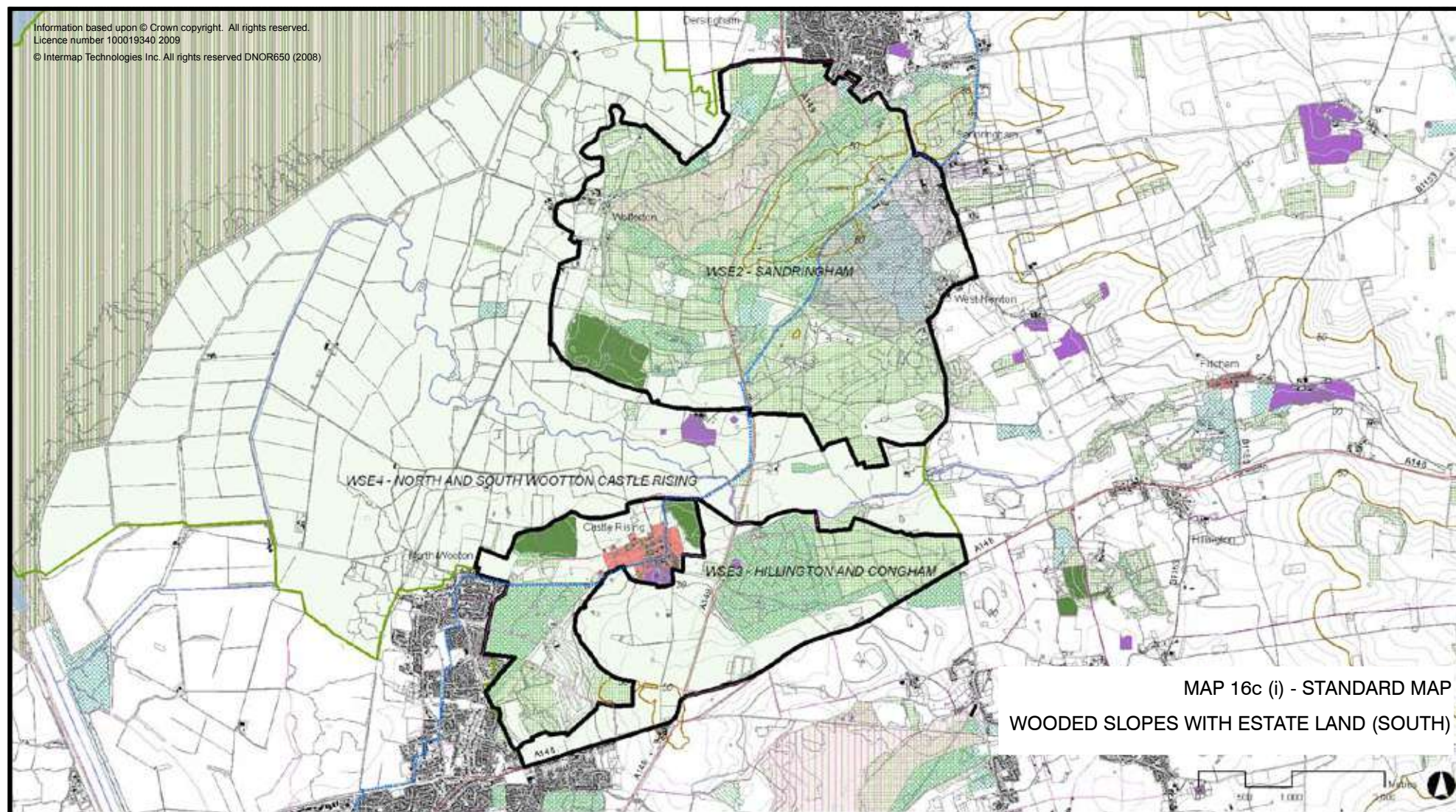
Ecological Network - (in WES area only)

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|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| 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 | Broad & River Buffer Zone | Priority 2 Heathland Creation Areas (Scores 21-32) | '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 |



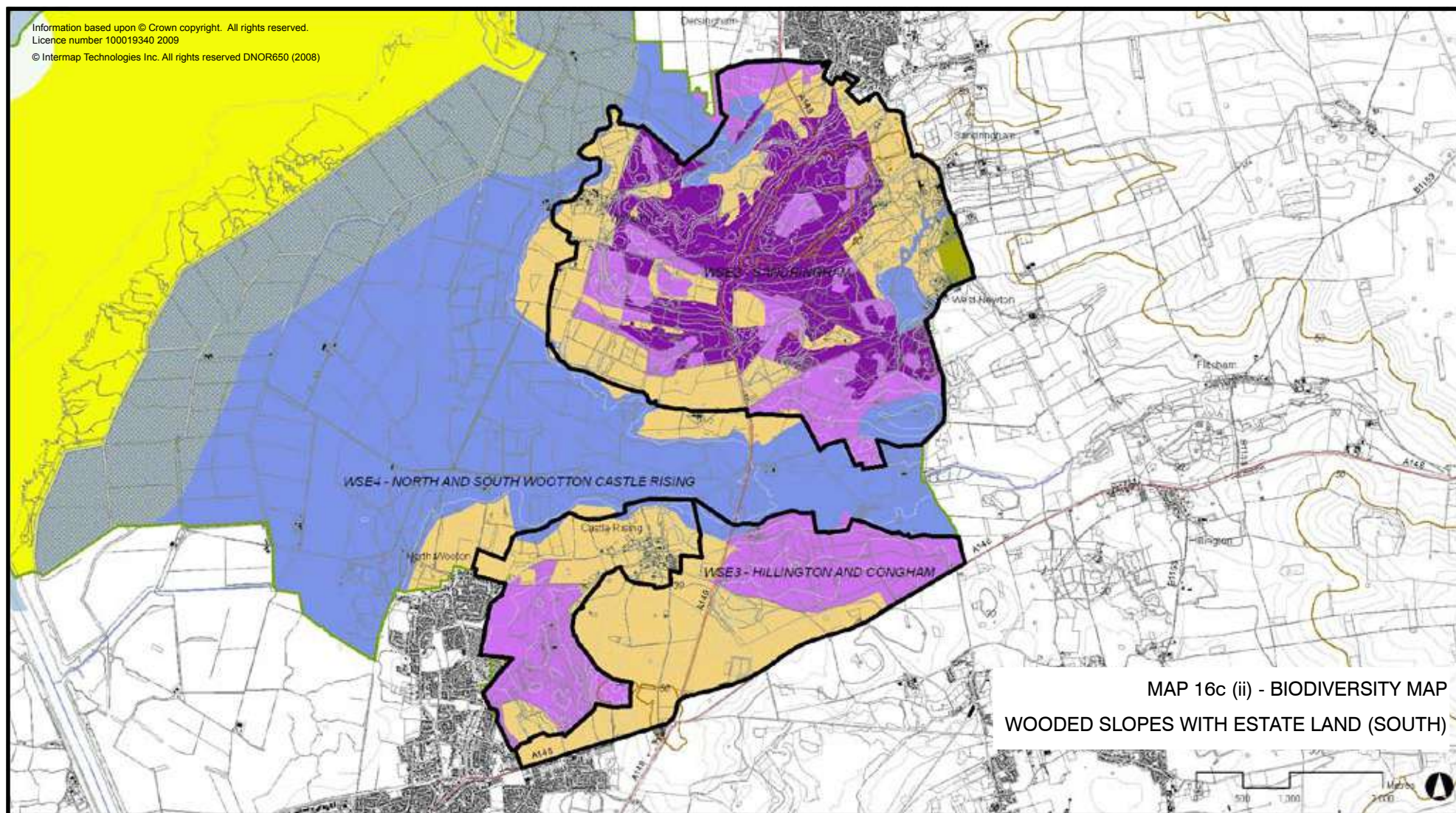
MAP 16b (iii) - HISTORIC LANDSCAPE MAP
 WOODED SLOPES WITH ESTATE LAND (NORTH)





MAP 16c (i) - STANDARD MAP
 WOODED SLOPES WITH ESTATE LAND (SOUTH)

Statutory Designations		Heritage	Connections	Topography	
Ramsar Site	Local Nature Reserve	Scheduled Ancient Monuments	National Cycle Route	Contour Line (Interval 5 m)	'A' Road
Special Protection Area	Forestry Commission Woodland	Conservation Areas	Cycleways	30 m Contour Line	'B' Road
Ancient Woodland	Special Area of Conservation	Historic Parks and Gardens	Long Distance Path	50 m Contour Line	Main River
Site of Special Scientific Interest			Footpath		Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
County Wildlife Sites			Bridleway		Settlement
			Restricted Byway		District Council Boundaries



MAP 16c (ii) - BIODIVERSITY MAP
 WOODED SLOPES WITH ESTATE LAND (SOUTH)

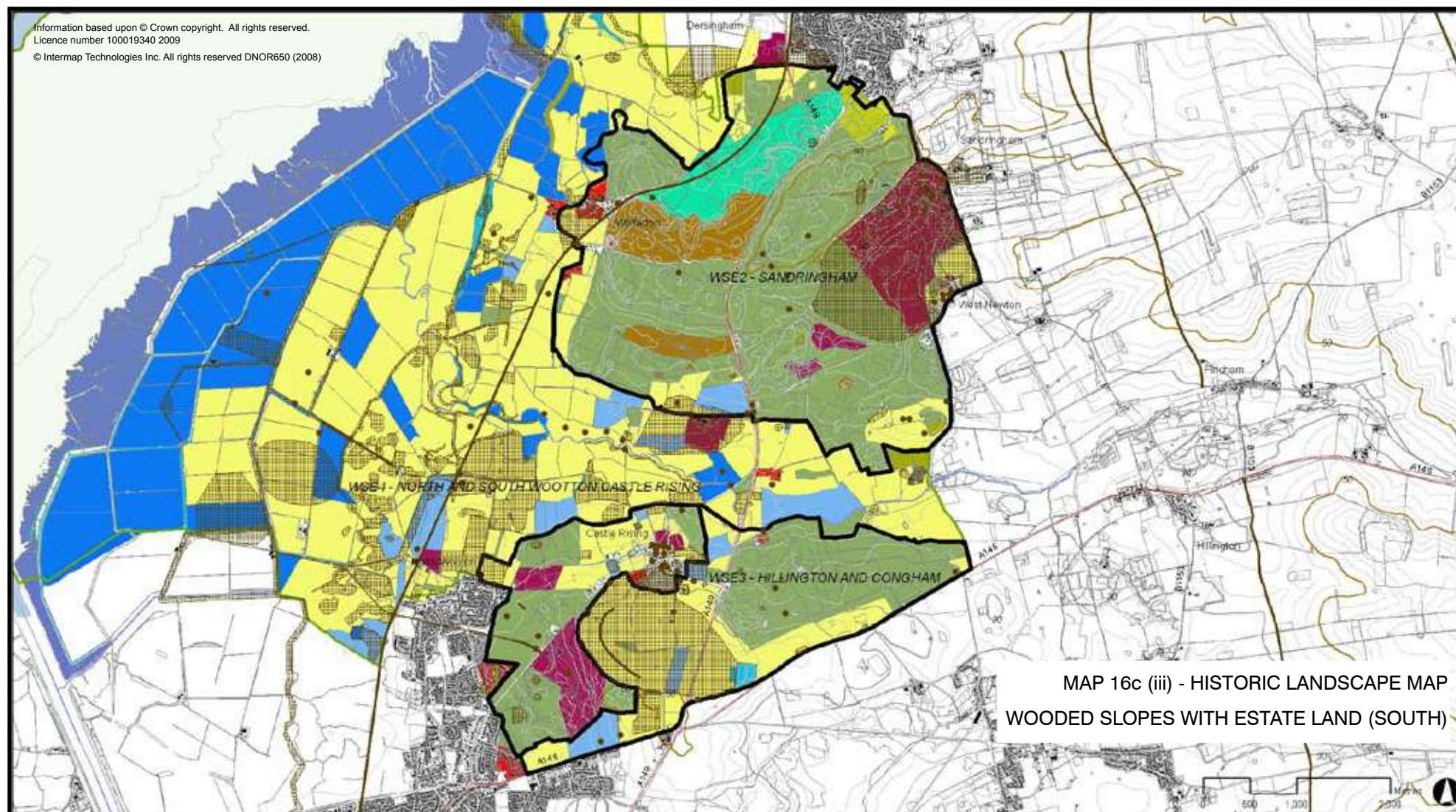
Ecological Network - (in WSE area only)

- | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Core Woodland Area | Coastal Habitat Enhancement Zone | Coastal Buffer Zone |
| Zone of General Habitat Enhancement | Calcareous Grassland Core Area | Broads & River Buffer Zone |
| Zone of Grassland-Heathland-Woodland Enhancement | Core Habitat Corridors | Paston Bam Bat Site Management Area |
| Wetland Habitat Enhancement Zone | | |

Priority Heathland Creation Areas Data (All in core area)

- Priority 1 Heathland Creation Areas (Scores 33 or Above)
- Priority 2 Heathland Creation Areas (Scores 21-32)

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



MAP 16c (iii) - HISTORIC LANDSCAPE MAP
 WOODED SLOPES WITH ESTATE LAND (SOUTH)

