

Hellesdon Views Assessment 2024



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Introduction

The parish falls within National Character Area (NCA) 78: Central North Norfolk¹. *The gently undulating rural landscape of the Central North Norfolk National Character Area (NCA) stretches from the slightly flatter, more open land of Mid Norfolk NCA, to the prominent glacial landform of the Cromer Ridge and the dynamic exposed coastline of coastal cliffs, where large storm events dramatically shape its character. This is ancient countryside with a long-settled agricultural character, where arable land is enclosed by winding lanes and hedgerows, interspersed with woodland and remnant heath, and dissected by lush pastoral river valleys. A patchwork of cultivated land, numerous church spires, distant wooded horizons and big skies dominates the landscape.*

The main pressure relevant to Hellesdon is change to the area are posed for growth, and a need to accommodate increased development, especially around Norwich. The parish falls into one character area within the Broadland Landscape Character Assessment, **Urban CA**, **Figure 1** marks with a red X where the neighbourhood area is within the context of the Broadland Landscape Character areas².

As stated in the assessment, the pressures of built development are a result of locally generated needs for requirements such as a strong housing market, jobs, and transport. Urban development has placed an increasing pressure on all aspects of the landscape, over the last fifty years in particular. This has resulted in urban expansion into undeveloped rural areas, redevelopment, and intensification of urban areas, increasing urbanisation and development of rural villages.

The urban fringe is often used to locate access roads, sewage works, waste disposal facilities and intensive recreation uses. However, the urban fringe also provides a setting for urban areas, and often contains important landscape features and/or habitats. Relatively high levels of development have been absorbed by Norwich and the other smaller towns in the Study Area, but there is a constant need for the provision of new houses and services.

The key issues affecting landscape character include:

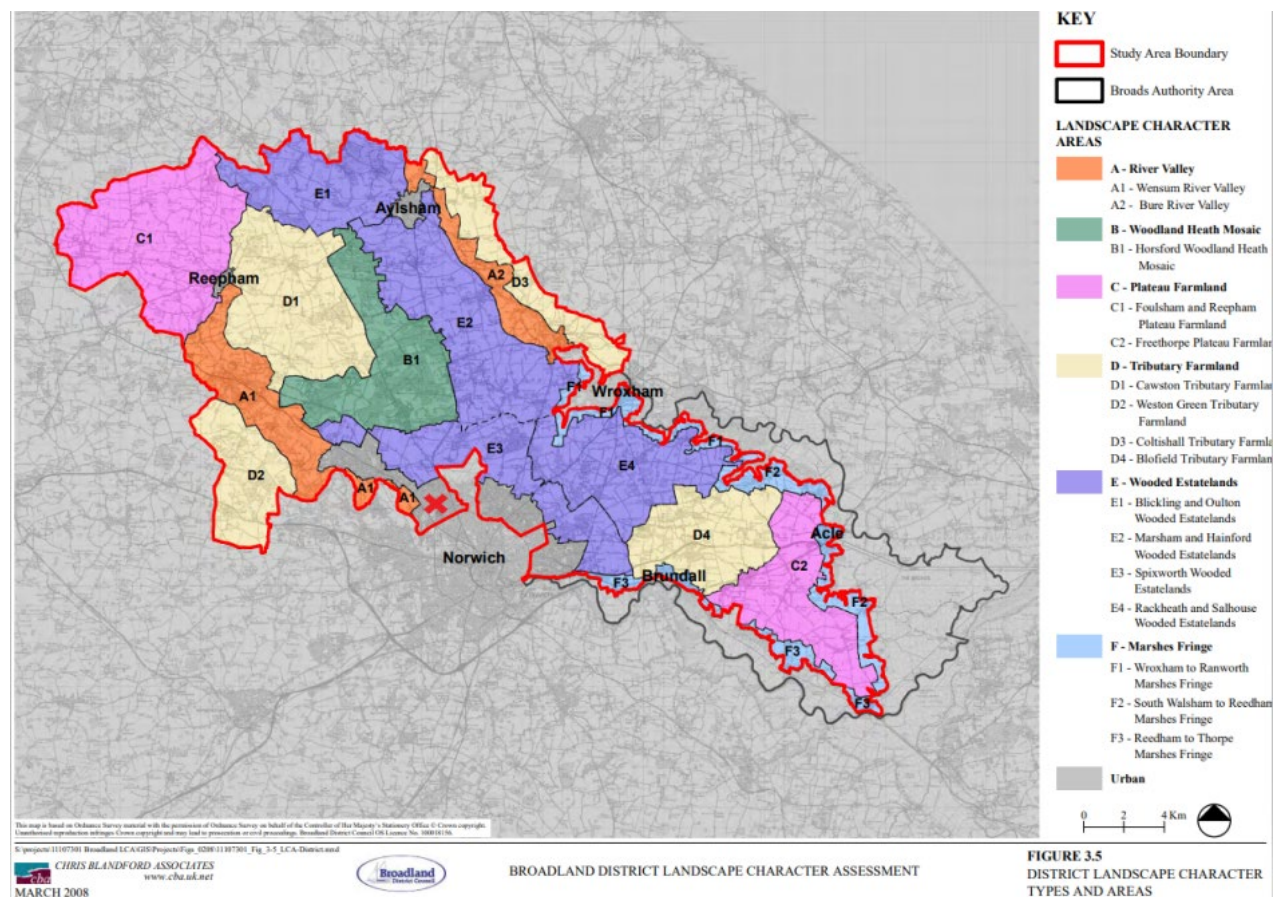
- Quality of built environment;
- Loss/erosion of urban open spaces and of tree cover (such as the golf course locally);
- Loss of night-time remoteness by lighting at urban fringes and street lights;
- Planting of non-native species;
- Decline in the condition of landscapes in the urban fringe, with problems such as lack of management of hedgerows/trees, poorly managed horse paddocks and fly-tipping;
- Loss of domestic gardens and hedges;

¹ [NCA Profile: 78 Central North Norfolk - NE526 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/nca-profiles/78-central-north-norfolk)

² [Broadland District Council, Landscape Character Assessment SPD 2013.](#)

- Housing growth at the periphery of towns can extend the urban character of these areas into the landscape, as increased noise and light pollution and development leads to an urbanising effect on the rural landscape and loss of tranquillity;
- New strategic initiatives to maintain and enhance existing green spaces and corridors while creating a new provision of green infrastructure, as an integral part of new development.

Figure 1-Hellesdon location within the urban character area of Broadlands Landscape Character Assessment (Source: Broadland District Council, Landscape Character Assessment SPD 2013)



Hellesdon Assessment

As highlighted in the **Hellesdon Evidence Base Paper 2024** a summary of issues related to landscape and important local views include:

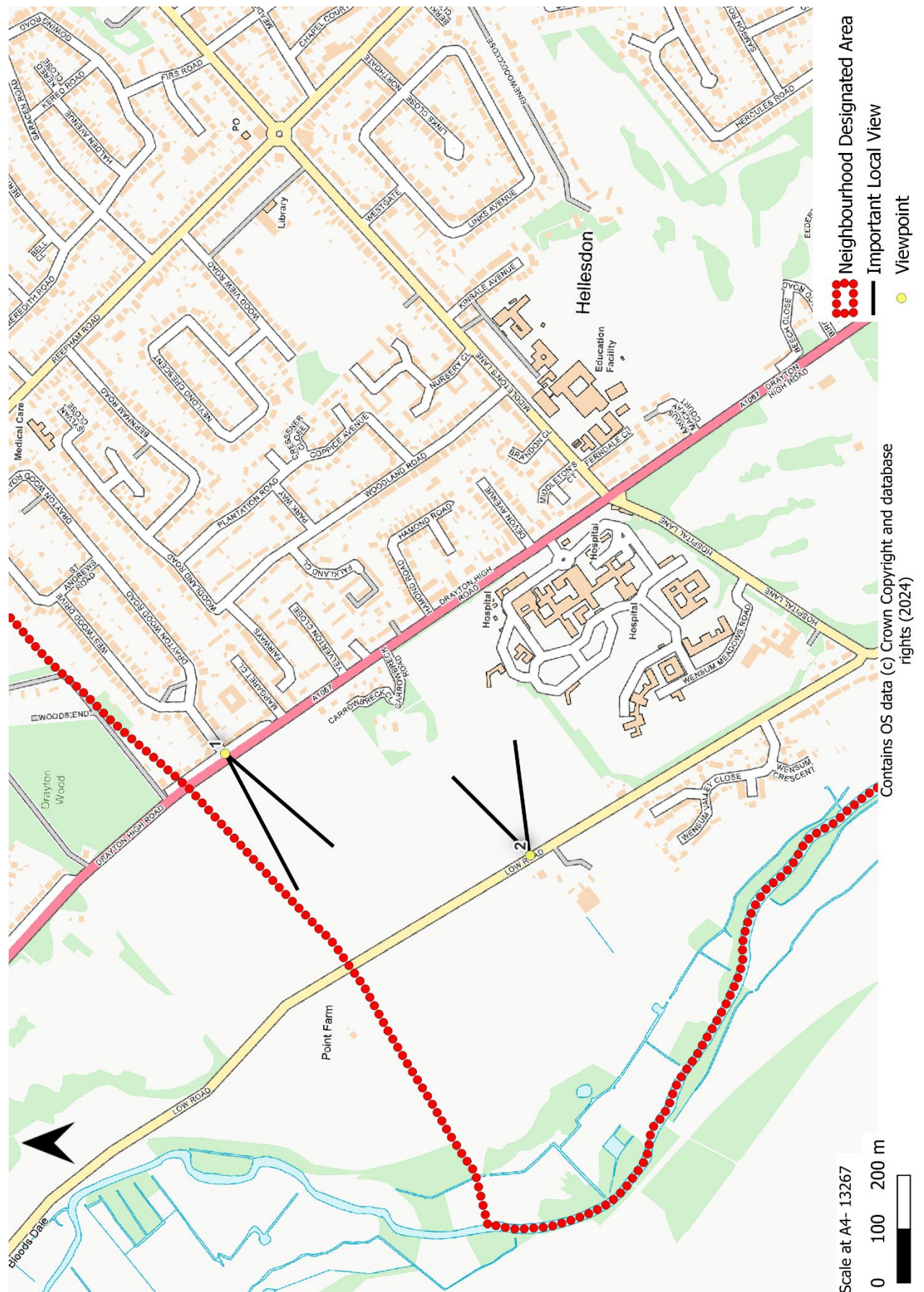
- There are no nationally protected landscape designations.
- Landscape has been Impacted by housing development and the loss of landscape structures such as trees and hedgerows.
- There has been a loss of urban green space (such as the golf course)
- Open views across the landscape, such as to the west of Drayton High Rd, are an important feature of the area and could be harmed by inappropriate development.
- Development on the edge of Hellesdon could cause an intrusion into the open countryside.

For this reason, the parish council and neighbourhood plan steering group wanted to investigate locally important views they can protect from adverse impacts. Since a large proportion of the parish is built up only two views were considered by the steering group and explored on the outskirts of the built-up area. This document provides the evidence to support the views being included within the neighbourhood plan. A set of criteria was used to identify such views:

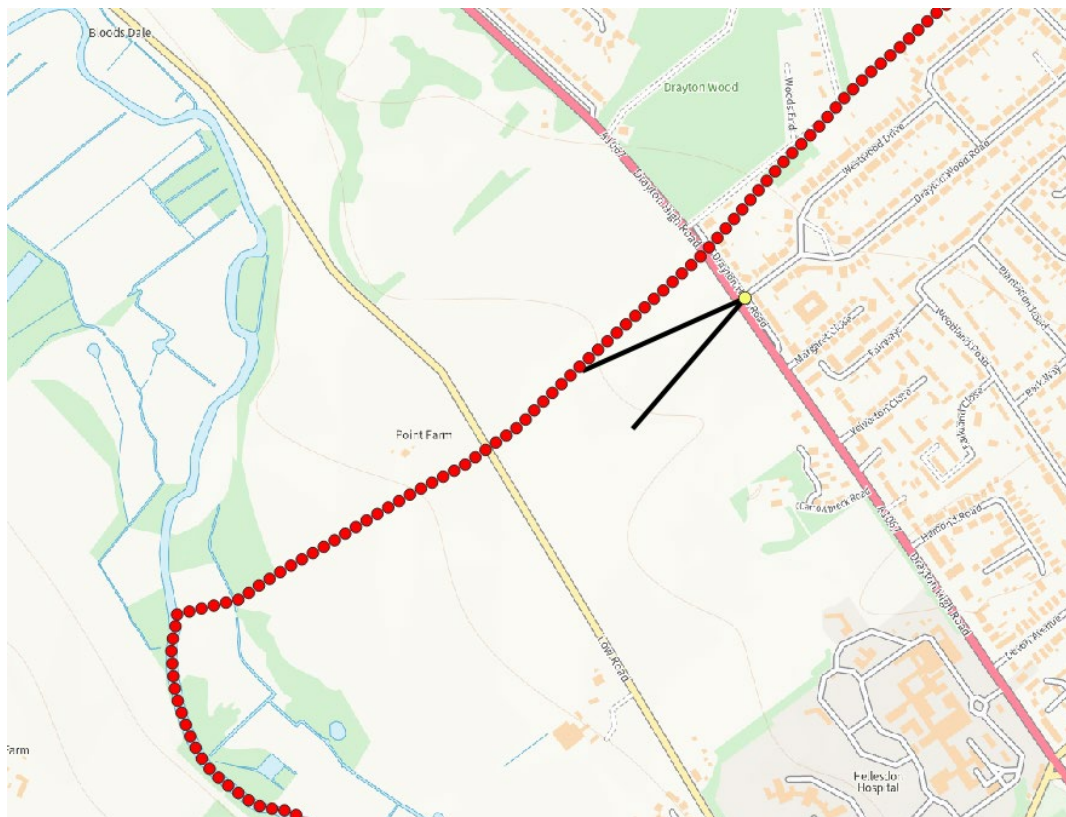
- a) Accessible from a public space;
- b) A good reason for its inclusion within the Neighbourhood Plan which may relate to its recreational value, conservation interest, scenic quality, rarity or planning history; and
- c) Have a specific reason for being important to the community.

In the next section is the views assessments and detail given for each of the 2 views identified on **Figure 2**. Whilst the arrows of the views should not be taken as an indicative length it gives the understanding that from each standpoint the view can be seen from either a short or long distance.

Figure 2- Important Local Views

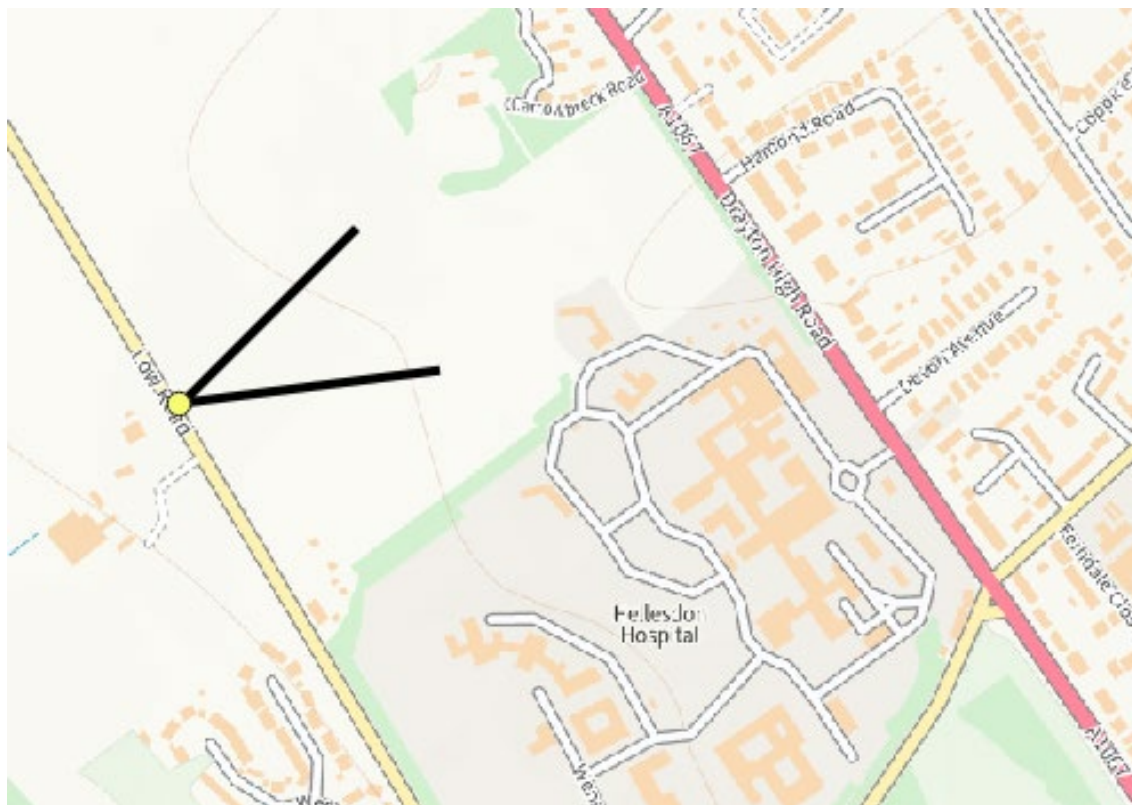


View 1: View from Drayton High Road, opposite the junction of Drayton Wood Road



| Criteria | Description |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Specific location of the viewpoint | Facing southwest and the specific location w3w: ///fast.shield.homes |
| Description of the view | Viewpoint is on high ground and overlooks arable land and the Wensum Valley. The view is approximately 1.1km and is primarily within the parish of Hellesdon. The view changes seasonally as crops are grown and harvested. |
| It the view publicly accessible? | View accessible from Drayton High Road. |
| Value of the view locally (scenic quality, recreational value, historic value, rarity, conservation interest) | <p>The view falls under Natural England's National Character Area 78 (Central north Norfolk), part of the patchwork of cultivated land.</p> <p>Under Broadland Council's Landscape Character Assessment SPD (2013) the parish of Hellesdon is predominantly defined as urban, so views across open fields are rare within the parish. This area is defined under the SPD as a River and Broads Buffer (figure 3.4 Ecological Network) and part of the Wensum River Valley (figure 3.5 Types and Areas).</p> <p>The view takes in the Wensum Valley. The River Wensum The river was designated a SSSI in 1993 and a Special Area of Conservation SAC in 2000.</p> |
| Relevant planning history | No relevant planning history. |

View 2: View from Low Road opposite the entrance to Wensum Mount business centre



| Criteria | Description |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Specific location of the viewpoint | Facing north-east at the specific location w3w: /// ///singer.cove.wants |
| Description of the view | <p>Short view over arable land bordered by mature trees to the northeast, east and southeast. The highway boundary consists of wildflowers. The viewpoint is low as it is descending into the Wensum Valley, and the viewed land gradually rises.</p> <p>The view is approximately 250m and is entirely within the parish of Hellesdon. The view changes seasonally as crops are grown and harvested.</p> |
| It the view publicly accessible? | The view is available to the general public via Low Road. |
| Value of the view locally (scenic quality, recreational value, historic value, rarity, conservation interest) | <p>The view falls under Natural England's National Character Area 78 (Central north Norfolk), part of the patchwork of cultivated land.</p> <p>Under Broadland Council's Landscape Character Assessment SPD (2013) the parish of Hellesdon is predominantly defined as urban, so views across open fields are rare within the parish. This area is defined under the SPD as a River and Broads Buffer (figure 3.4 Ecological Network) and part of the Wensum River Valley (figure 3.5 Types and Areas).</p> |
| Relevant planning history | There is no planning history on this land, however land to the east and south is allocated under the GNLP as a mixed-use allocation (B.HD.1). Enhanced screening would protect this view. |