



Sproughton Neighbourhood Plan Review
landscape capacity assessment

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01 LANDSCAPE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Introduction

1. Sproughton Parish Council are currently carrying out a review of the *Sproughton Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2037, Referendum Plan* (October 2023). As part of this process, Sproughton Parish Council have commissioned a Landscape Capacity Assessment to provide a robust evidence base to act as a practical reference document for planners and developers. To continue to protect, conserve and enhance the landscape around Sproughton, decisions regarding the location and scale of new development should take into consideration the relative ability of the landscape to accommodate new development. The assessment comprises the following:
 - Summary of Sproughton's landscape character area sensitivity, visual sensitivity & landscape value
 - Assessment of landscape capacity to determine the village's/parish's ability to accommodate different amounts of change or development of a specific type
 - General Landscape Suitability/Design Principles
2. The document also provides broad design guidance for incorporating development into the landscape which should be read in conjunction with the more detailed advice for landscape character areas to ensure all developments retain and enhance the unique landscape character of Sproughton.

Key Objectives and the Scope of the Study

3. The key objectives of this concise study are to:
 - Provide a transparent, consistent and objective assessment of the landscape capacity of the land around Sproughton to accommodate housing, employment, agriculture, and other forms of development (e.g solar & wind farms, composting facilities, storage facilities, infrastructure, tourism, recreation, biomass, forestry, woodland)
 - Identify areas where new development could best be accommodated without unacceptable adverse landscape and visual impacts
 - Enable assessment of development to be tailored to particular sensitivities
 - Support and enable sustainable and non-damaging development
 - Reflect the national and regional framework and the emerging local vision for the area

- Protect, conserve and enhance the varied landscape character within the Parish, reflecting landscape sensitivity and promoting local distinctiveness
 - Promote a high quality of design, taking account of site context and location
4. The scope of the study is to assess **landscape capacity only**. Ultimately, the overall suitability of a site for development will depend on a range of other considerations including access, infrastructure constraints, and other environmental considerations including flood risk, ecology, heritage, archaeology and air quality.
 5. **NOTE:** The levels of landscape sensitivity and capacity that are identified as part of the study are generalised statements across each area, and indicate detailed landscape and visual issues that would need to be addressed in a site allocation or development management context. Landscape sensitivity and capacity levels are not absolute, and it is expected that further analysis would need to be carried out in relation to specific applications with significant landscape and visual effects, or where there are cumulative impacts of several developments. In this respect, the identification of an area as having a moderate or greater capacity should not be taken to mean the whole area has potential for development. Reference should be made to both the definitions given in Table 6 in respect of capacity levels and the specific commentary regarding capacity provided for each local landscape character area in Section 3.
 6. Where land/sites have been assessed in terms of sensitivity and capacity it is from a landscape perspective only and no consideration has been given to matters such as access or land ownership. It is possible, therefore, that land identified as suitable for development without significant adverse landscape effects may subsequently be discounted for reasons other than landscape.

Professional Credentials

7. This report was undertaken by Jane Fitzgerald White, Chartered Landscape Architect and member of the Landscape Institute since 2009 (Mem.No. 21001), with over 30 years experience of working as a landscape professional in the UK and Ireland, including over 13 years specialising in landscape character assessment, Neighbourhood Development Plans, Landscape Assessments for protected landscapes (heritage assets, National Landscapes, SSSIs, The Broads and New Forest National Park).

02 APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

Assessment Methodology, Key Assessment Stages & Definitions

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2.1 Assessment Methodology

- This assessment has been carried out in accordance with best practice guidance including:
 - *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* (Natural England, October 2014)
 - *An approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management* (Natural England, June 2019)
 - *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity* (The Countryside Agency, 2002)
- This study has used the following methodology:
 - **Desk top review:** As a baseline, the following information was reviewed:
 - *Sproughton Neighbourhood Plan, Landscape Appraisal, Final Report* (Alison Farmer Associates, February 2021)
 - *Settlement Sensitivity Assessment, Volume 1: Landscape Fringes of Ipswich* (Alison Farmer Associates, July 2018)
 - *Land at Red House, Chantry Vale, Sproughton: Landscape Appraisal, Final Report* (Alison Farmer Associates, September 2019)
 - *Proof of Evidence of Roy M Lewis BA (Hons), MA (Arch Cons), MRTPI, IHBC on Heritage* (November 2020)
 - *Landscape Response to application by Taylor Wimpey DC/21/02671 for Sproughton Parish Council* (Lucy Batchelor-Wylam, July 2021)
 - *Proposed Sproughton Conservation Area Appraisal* (Sproughton Parish Council, April 2025)
 - *Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment* (<https://suffolklandscape.org.uk>)
 - Aerial photography, OS and Parish Online mapping
 - **Site visits:** The desk top review has been supported by a visual assessment in the form of site visits carried out during 2025. Observations made on site visits were documented to assess Landscape Sensitivity.
 - **Consultation:** This assessment, when published, will provide the opportunity for Sproughton Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Review Group to review and provide their comments. Feedback and advice from both parties will then be incorporated into this study.

2.2 Key Assessment Stages

- The technique adopted to assess landscape capacity involves two main stages:
 - **Stage 1: Assess Overall Landscape Sensitivity:**
The overall sensitivity of an area of land to a particular type of development. This is defined in terms of Landscape Character, the interactions between the landscape itself (landscape character), the way it is viewed (visibility), and the particular scale and character of the development type in question (e.g. employment or housing development).
Overall Landscape Sensitivity = Landscape Character Sensitivity + Visual sensitivity
Landscape sensitivity has been assessed by grading the landscape on aspects such as sensitivity of individual elements, and aesthetic and visual sensitivity, in order to give an Overall Landscape Sensitivity for each area. Sensitivity has been measured as high, moderate to high, moderate, low to moderate or low.
 - **Stage 2: Assess Landscape Value:**
This considers landscape designations, tranquillity¹, and the historic and ecological interest of an area of land.
- Landscape Value is then combined with Overall Landscape Sensitivity to provide an overall assessment of the ability or capacity of the landscape to accommodate a specific type of development.
Landscape Capacity = Overall Landscape Sensitivity + Landscape Value

2.3 Landscape & Visual Sensitivity Definitions

- The following definitions of terms are used in this assessment:
 - **Sensitivity** is defined as the ability of the landscape to accommodate a particular type of change without adverse effect and is determined by consideration of local character and visual sensitivity.
 - **Value** is defined as the relative value that is attached to different landscape by society².

¹ In this study, tranquillity has been assessed with reference to *Tranquillity - An Overview, Technical Information Note 01/2017* (Revised) (Landscape Institute, March 2017)

² In this study, value has been assessed with reference to *Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment - 3rd Edition* (Landscape Institute & IEMA, 2013)

02 APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

Landscape Character Sensitivity

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- **Capacity** of an area considers the extent and nature of development which may be accommodated and includes consideration of opportunities for enhancement or mitigation, which may improve the degree of fit and increase capacity of the landscape to accommodate change.
- Development is assessed in terms of:
 - **Housing:**
 - Minor = less than 10 dwellings
 - Major = 10+ dwellings
 - Large scale major/strategic = 200+ dwellings
 - **Employment:** Business, general industrial and storage/distribution
 - **Agricultural:** Buildings, facilities, support structures, land use requiring planning consent
 - **Other:** Solar/wind farms, composting facilities, storage facilities, infrastructure, tourism, recreation, biomass, forestry, woodland

2.4 Assumptions

- When assessing landscape capacity it has been assumed that built form will be sensitively designed and that any development would include a strong framework of structural planting (i.e. woodland, trees, hedgerows, hedges, shrubs) at an appropriate scale, area, design and species composition, and takes account of local settlement/open space pattern, character and distinctiveness to ensure that development integrates harmoniously with the surrounding landscape.

2.5 Landscape Character Sensitivity

- Landscape character sensitivity assessment considers the impact of development upon overall character, especially landscape characteristics including landform, vegetation cover, land use, scale, field pattern, enclosure and complexity of the landscape settlement pattern, together with the quality and condition of the landscape.
- This study considered the following factors:

- **Extent, pattern and variety of semi-natural habitat:** includes woodland, hedgerows, grassland, river valleys and heath. Areas with an extensive, connected and a large variety of semi-natural habitat are likely to be more sensitive to the impact of development compared with land parcels with very limited coverage, variety or denuded agricultural monoculture.
- **Historic landscape features/character:** areas with many historic landscape features, especially those with a sense of time depth (i.e. covering a wide span of history), and strong historic landscape character that has been present for an extended period of time (e.g. predominantly medieval in origin), are likely to be more sensitive to development compared with those manifesting few historic elements or dominated by modern, large scale expansion.
- **Scale/Field pattern:** areas with a complex, intimate and small scale, irregular field pattern are likely to be more sensitive to disruption of field pattern by large scale development, compared with a simple, more uniform or eroded/fragmented field pattern. Small scale landscapes are particularly sensitive to large scale development.
- **Landform:** areas with a very varied/complex land form or strong topographic features (e.g. strongly rolling landform or moderate to steeply sloping valley sides) are likely to be more sensitive to large scale development, compared with those with a simple, predominantly flat landform.
- **Landscape Condition/Quality:** Assessment of landscape condition is based upon judgements about the physical state of the landscape, and about its intactness from visual, functional and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements which make up character in any one place. A range of issues such as how intact the hedgerows are, whether the characteristic tree cover is declining, the landscape is being damaged by intensive agricultural practices, suburban features are being introduced or fly tipping is present are considered. Areas with well managed landscape features in good condition are likely to be more sensitive to development compared with those in poor condition where there may be an opportunity to enhance landscape character in association with new development.
- **Settlement Pattern:** areas with a dispersed settlement pattern and an absence of modern development and settlements characterised by small scale historic or vernacular buildings are more likely to be sensitive to housing and employment

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Landscape Character Sensitivity

development compared with those without.

- **Settlement edges:** Landscapes with existing harsh, abrupt and unattractive settlement edges are less likely to be sensitive to development compared to those with an attractive settlement edge characterised by a well-integrated transition between the built environment and the surrounding landscape.
 - **Settlement Setting:** Landscape areas that contribute to the setting of a town or village or that provide a distinctive break between the settlement and the countryside are more likely to be sensitive to development compared to areas that do not perform this function.
 - **Settlement Separation:** Areas that contribute to a larger area of open land between settlements are more likely to be sensitive to large scale development than those that do not provide this function.
 - **Rural Character:** Areas with a strong unspoilt rural character with an absence of contemporary structures such as transport corridors and utility structures (e.g. electricity substations, mobile phone masts), are more likely to be sensitive to housing and employment development compared with areas where they are present.
3. This assessment uses the criteria outlined within *Table 1 (see right)* to determine landscape character sensitivity, based on the considerations set out in the preceding paragraphs. Each area was assessed using professional judgement, taking into account the assumptions of sensitive design and landscape (*refer to Section 2.4 of this report*). **NOTE:** in some local landscape areas, certain landscape features/qualities will be more important than others in different areas as a result of the contribution they make to the specific character of an area.

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Definition
Low	Key characteristics/features are less likely to be sensitive to the type of development. Development can potentially be more easily accommodated without significantly altering the character of the landscape.
Low to Moderate	The majority of the landscape characteristics/ features are less likely to be sensitive to this development type. Although development can potentially be more easily accommodated, care would still be needed in locating and designing development in the landscape.
Moderate	Some of the key landscape characteristics/features are sensitive to the type of development. Although the landscape may have some ability to absorb development it is likely some change in character would result. Considerable care would be needed in locating any development within the landscape.
Moderate to High	Many key landscape characteristics/features are vulnerable to development of this type with such change likely to result in a significant change in character. Great care would be needed in locating and designing any development within the landscape.
High	Key landscape characteristics/features are highly vulnerable to the development type.

TABLE 1 - Landscape Character Sensitivity Definitions

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Visual Sensitivity

2.6 Visual Sensitivity

1. The assessment of visual sensitivity examines how the visual effects of development would impact on the obstruction of views; how conspicuous/prominent built form may be within its surroundings, whether it would affect important skylines or views, and the extent this might impact the setting of a settlement.
2. Elements and factors considered to be important in the assessment of visual sensitivity are:
 - The general potential visibility of development within the area, considering influences of enclosing or screening elements such as landform, hedgerows, trees, woodlands and existing built development.
 - Views into the area and views of the approaches to settlements from surrounding roads and public rights of way.
 - Outward views from a settlement and the impact where these are strategically significant or distinctive.
 - Ridges and other areas of high ground: examining the potential effects of development on distinctive ridges and other areas of rising/high ground or where a settlement avoids such elevated positions.
 - ‘Conspicuity’: consideration as to whether development would be located in a visually conspicuous location, such as open flat ground or on open high or rising ground.
3. Visibility of development is not necessarily always an adverse effect, even where it would be conspicuous. Consideration is given to whether development is likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view or where development would enhance existing views or elements within the existing view.
4. This assessment uses the criteria outlined within *Table 2 (see right)* to determine visual sensitivity, based on the considerations set out in the preceding paragraphs. Each area was assessed using professional judgement. Assessment of an area did not require all the factors defined in individual criteria to be met, but rather a balanced professional view has been taken about the relative proportion of factors that are relevant.

Visual Sensitivity	Definition
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General visibility of potential development is low as it would be enclosed, well screened by existing features (e.g. trees/topography) and only visible from short distances. • Development would not be discernible or would enhance views. • Of little importance to views to and from settlement; development would not lead to unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside with or without mitigation.
Low to Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General visibility of potential development is between low and moderate. It would be mostly well screened by existing features (e.g. trees, topography), or would be relatively easy to visually mitigate. • Development may be discernible, but impacts would be limited. • Limited contribution to views to and from settlement.
Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General visibility of potential development is moderate, with partial enclosure or screening by existing features (e.g. trees/topography), but with some scope for mitigation of any adverse effects. • Whilst development may be perceptible it would not significantly alter the balance of features or landscape elements within the view. • Views into and out of settlement are of some importance, but there is likely to be some scope for mitigating impacts.
Moderate to High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited enclosure, screening or elevated slopes/ridgeline means any development would be quite visible in the landscape, and would be difficult to mitigate. • Development would be perceptible and would alter the balance of features or elements in the view. • Provides views of some importance into and out of settlement, which are difficult to mitigate.
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General visibility of the potential development is high due to very limited enclosure, screening or elevated slopes/ridgelines. • Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous and could not be successfully mitigated. • Provides important views into and out of settlements that could not be mitigated.

TABLE 2 - Visual Sensitivity Definitions

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Visual Sensitivity & Landscape Character Sensitivity

5. Once the individual assessment of landscape character sensitivity and visual sensitivity had been made, the results were combined to give an overall assessment of landscape character sensitivity (*refer to Table 3, see right*).

Landscape Character Sensitivity	High	High	High	High	High	High
	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	High
	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to High	High
	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to High	High
	Low	Low	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to High	High
	Low	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to High	High	
	Visual Sensitivity					

TABLE 3: Combining Landscape Character Sensitivity & Visual Sensitivity to establish Overall Landscape Sensitivity

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Landscape Value

2.7 Landscape Value

- Landscape value is the relative value attached to different landscapes. The assessment of landscape value considers the following aspects relating to each landscape character area:
 - National and/or local designations
 - Experiential/perceptual qualities, such as tranquillity, scenic beauty, historic and ecological interest
- Tranquillity is assessed by considering noise, perceived wildness and connection with nature (e.g. bird song), naturalness of the landscape, visible and overt human influence (e.g. traffic noise, presence of pylons and wind turbines, density of settlement, extent of light pollution). More tranquil landscapes have a higher degree of naturalness, lower noise levels and limited human impacts.
- Policy recognises specific highly valued landscapes through formal designation at a national or local level. However, non-designated landscapes may be recognised for perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity, cultural association, conservation interest, or of national/local significance. This study makes a professional judgement regarding landscape value and considers the experiential/perceptual aspects identified above.
- Ecological interest is derived from the landscape contribution made by designated nature conservation sites, ancient woodland, deciduous woodland, species-rich hedgerows, veteran trees, floodplains and river valleys.
- Historic interest considers the contribution heritage assets, conservation areas, designated parks and gardens, the strong presence/prominence of historic farmsteads and cottages make to the landscape.
- The definitions of landscape value used in this assessment are set out in *Table 4 (see right)*.

Landscape Value	Definition
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within, or adjacent to, a designated landscape where scenic value and localised character are very distinctive; or is important to the setting of a designated landscape with significant intervisibility between the two. • Presents locally distinctive landscape characteristics of considerable scenic value, or provides important amenity value via views and countryside access. • Presents prominent features of historic or ecological interest (e.g. taking into account the intactness and integrity of historic landscape features/patterns and nature conservation designations) that contribute to landscape setting and character of the area. • Tranquil with a strong sense of naturalness.
Moderate to High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within a designated landscape where localised character and scenic value is less distinctive, or has become degraded, or; lies adjacent to a designated landscape. • Provides some amenity value through views and countryside access (takes into account the intactness and integrity of historic landscape patterns and ecological designations). • Presents locally distinctive landscape characteristics of scenic value. • Relatively tranquil with a fairly strong sense of naturalness and only distant detractors from this.
Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not within, or lies adjacent to a designated landscape where localised character and scenic value is less distinctive or has become degraded. • Presents limited locally distinctive landscape characteristics of some scenic value or provides some amenity value by way of views and countryside access. • Presents some features of historic or ecological interest that contribute to landscape setting and character of the area. (This takes into account the intactness and integrity of historic landscape features/ patterns and ecological designations). • Some detractors affecting tranquillity, but also with some sense of naturalness.
Low to Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not within or adjacent to a designated landscape. • Presents very limited locally distinctive landscape characteristics with some scenic interest, or presents limited amenity value by way of views and countryside access. • Presents very few features of historic or ecological interest that contribute to landscape setting and character of the area (This takes into account the intactness and integrity of historic landscape features/ patterns and ecological designations). • Limited tranquillity, significant human detractors from naturalness
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not within or adjacent to a designated landscape. • Does not present locally distinctive landscape characteristics with some scenic interest or does not provide some amenity value by way of views and countryside access. • Does not presents features of historic or ecological interest that contribute to landscape setting and character of the area. (This takes into account the intactness and integrity of historic landscape features/ patterns and ecological designations).Not tranquil, much human activity, limited naturalness.

TABLE 4 - Landscape Value Definitions

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02 APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

Landscape Capacity

2.8 Landscape Capacity

1. Once the Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Value were determined, an assessment of Landscape Capacity was made (see Table 5 below). A definition of Landscape Capacity is set out in Table 6 (see right).

Overall Landscape Sensitivity	High	Moderate	Low to Moderate	No/Low	No/Low	No/Low
	Moderate to High	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	No/Low
	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	No/Low
	Low to Moderate	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate
	Low	Low	Moderate to High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
	Low	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to High	High	
	Landscape Value					

TABLE 5: Combining Overall Landscape Sensitivity & Landscape Value to give Landscape Capacity

Landscape Capacity	Definition
No/Low	The area is unable or only has very limited potential to be able to accommodate the specified type and scale of development without unacceptable adverse landscape and visual effects or compromising the values attached to it, taking account of any appropriate mitigation
Low-Moderate	The area only has potential to be able to accommodate development in limited locations without unacceptable adverse landscape and visual impacts or compromising the values attached to it, taking account of any appropriate mitigation.
Moderate	The area has an ability to accommodate development in some parts without unacceptable adverse landscape and visual impacts or compromising the values attached to it, taking account of any appropriate mitigation. There is a need for each proposal to be considered on its individual merits to ensure there are no unacceptable adverse impacts.
Moderate-High	The area is likely to be able accommodate a significant proportion of development without unacceptable adverse landscape and visual impacts or compromising the values attached to it, taking account of any appropriate mitigation.
High	The area is in principle likely to be able to accommodate the specified type and scale of development without unacceptable landscape and visual impacts or compromising the values attached to it taking account of appropriate mitigation.

TABLE 6 - Definitions of Landscape Capacity

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03 LANDSCAPE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Landscape Capacity of Local Landscape Character Areas For Development Plan

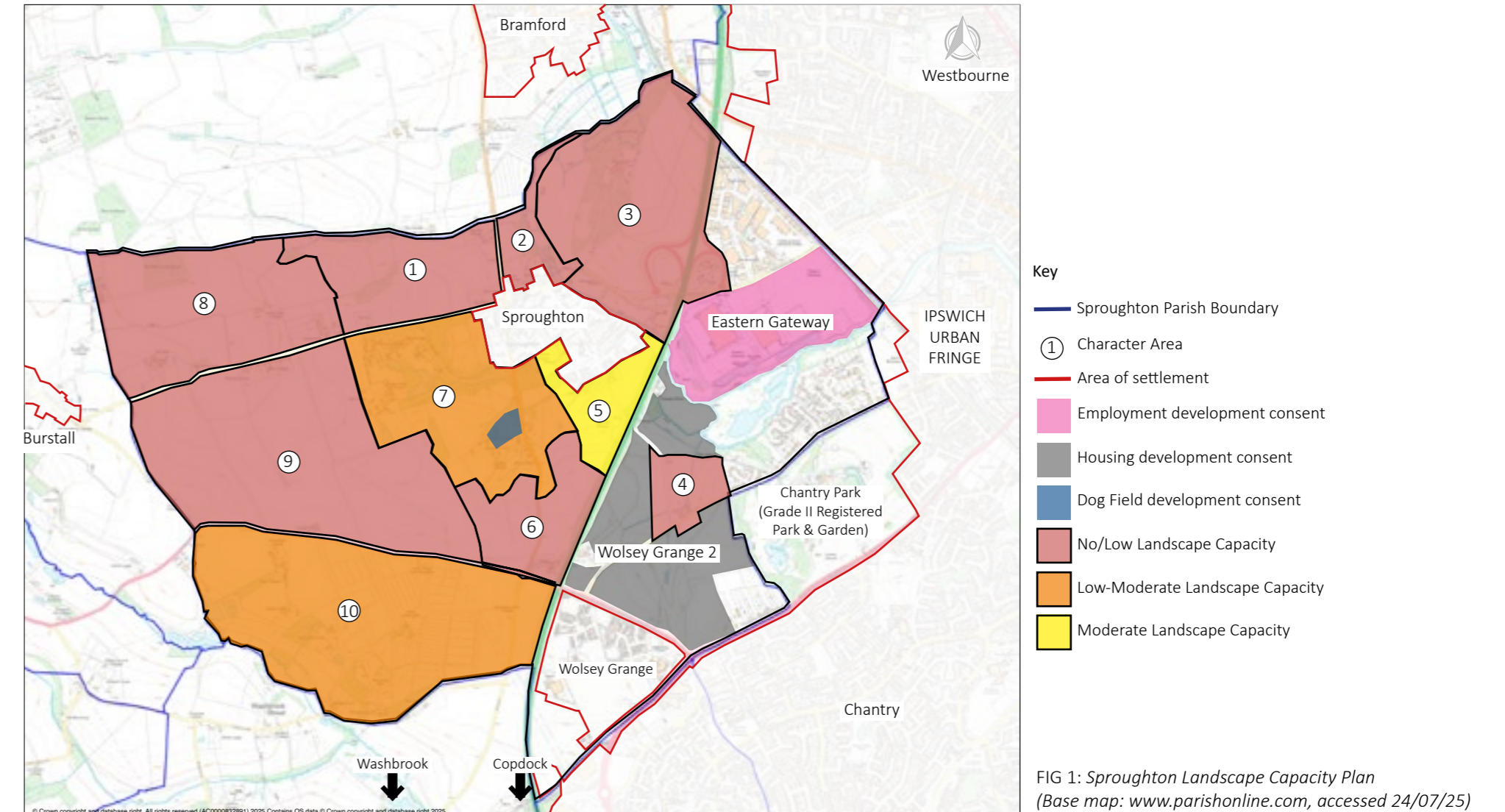


FIG 1: Sproughton Landscape Capacity Plan (Base map: www.parishonline.com, accessed 24/07/25)

03 LANDSCAPE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Landscape Character Area 1: West of Bramford Road (B1113)

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Landscape Character Sensitivity

- Generally large scale, amalgamated pattern of arable; more intimate small scale pasture present within the northeastern fringes & adjacent to woodland pockets.
- Pronounced sloping valley landform characteristic of the Rolling Valley Farmland landscape type.
- Woodland and vegetated lanes frame arable and enclose intimate pasture within the northwest; some notable / veteran trees within the south and northwest.
- Pylons are a prominent feature within the open arable.
- Open agrarian character with a distinctly rural feel; the village settlement fringe is nestled within the backdrop of the mature wooded valley floor; settlement is dispersed; the storage site introduces an urban fringe influence adjacent to the allotments.
- Area contributes to the settlement gap between Sproughton and Bramford villages.
- The descent along the sunken Burstall Lane has a distinctly rural character.
- Landscape generally in good condition; notable loss and fragmentation of boundary hedgerows due to intensive agriculture; declining elm is present within hedgerows; equine use in northeast corner.

Visual Sensitivity

This area is contained by the wooded skyline and provides the setting for the village's northwestern fringe. Long distance views across the wooded river valley towards the commercial fringes of Ipswich are available from elevated sections of Burstall Lane. Some visual enclosure associated with linked woodland pockets and wooded edges to parts of Burstall Lane. The open valley side is of high visual sensitivity to major/strategic housing, employment and infrastructure development, such as solar farms; vertical elements (e.g. windturbines, pylons) and buildings of greater height and scale would be intrusive within open views.

Landscape Value

- Ecological interest of stream along The Grindle, the linked woodlands, hedgerows, notable and veteran trees.
- Public Rights of Way provide access between the village and wider countryside; the allotments are a valuable community asset.

- Sense of time depth provided by Grindle Farm (Grade II), intimate pasture at junction of The Grindle with public footpath and notable/veteran trees.
- Moderate to high tranquillity due to dispersed settlement.
- Opportunities to extend existing woodland and enhance their connectivity, to reinstate lost and restore fragmented hedgerows, and enhance vegetative screening to the storage yard.

Landscape Capacity

The highly sensitive landscape character of this area arises from its open valley slopes which provide the simple rural setting for the village and offer long distance views across the Gipping Valley. The wooded skyline, rural agrarian character and semi-natural features provide the attractive setting to the village's western fringe, although intensive agricultural practices have undermined landscape condition in parts. Development would erode the pronounced, visually open slopes defining the approach to the village. Lower lying, areas closest to the village's settlement fringe would be least sensitive and would require significant mitigation (i.e. structural planting) to integrate development into the wooded valley floor setting.

This means there is **NO** or **VERY LOW CAPACITY** for the area to accommodate development.

Assessment Summary

	Housing	Employment	Agriculture	Other
Landscape Character Sensitivity	Moderate to High	High	High	High
Visual Sensitivity	High	High	High	High
Combined Landscape Sensitivity	High	High	High	High
Landscape Value	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
OVERALL LANDSCAPE CAPACITY	No/Low	No/Low	No/Low	No/Low

03 LANDSCAPE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Landscape Character Area 2: East of Bramford Road (B1113)

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Landscape Character Sensitivity

- Small scale, fine grained pattern of relatively intact valley floor meadows and gently rolling wooded valley sides form the intimate setting and backdrop for the river.
- Woodland defines the river corridor and mature vegetated edges enclose the meadows; breaks in this vegetation provide open, longer distance views southeastwards from Bramford Road towards Sproughton's historic core.
- The land parcel has a distinctly undeveloped character with an unspoilt, mature rural feel
- Valley floor meadows form the setting for the cluster of historic buildings (Sproughton Hall, the Root Barn, Tithe Barn & All Saints Church) and define the northeast fringe of the village and Sproughton Conservation Area.
- Area contributes to the settlement gaps between Sproughton and Bramford villages.
- Landscape generally in good condition, with intact hedgerows, TPO trees and well-established woodland defining the riparian corridor and valleyside.

Visual Sensitivity

The area provides the setting for the River Gipping and the village's northern fringe. Visual enclosure associated with riparian woodland and mature vegetation to Bramford Road. Intimate and scenic views along the river. Visual permeability along the north edge of the historic building cluster provides framed view across the meadows from Lower Street. Breaks in vegetation allow long distance views to the village's historic core from Bramford Road and to the wider landscape. Meadows are sensitive to any form of development or encroachment by the village's settlement area.

Landscape Value

- Ecological interest of the River Gipping and associated Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat, meadows, hedgerows, mature and protected trees.
- Public Rights of Way provide a locally valued recreational route along the river and connect with the recreation ground to the south and open green space to the north.
- Largely intact meadows form the setting and outlook for the cluster of listed buildings defining the village's northern edge and provide a sense of time depth.
- High tranquillity along the river and lower valley slopes due to the absence of built form;

sense of tranquillity diminishes moving towards junction of Bramford Road and Lower Street due to traffic congestion during peak hours.

- Retain the open character of the meadows and explore opportunities to enhance the adjacent riparian wooded corridor and setting of the village's heritage assets.

Landscape Capacity

The highly sensitive landscape character of this area arises from its important role in providing the rural setting for the village's settlement fringe and heritage assets in key views on the approaches from the north and east. The intimate wooded river valley, pastoral character, and attractive semi-natural features give it a strong sense of place and good landscape condition. Key features and qualities of this area are highly sensitive to any form of development or proposed extension of the village's settlement area. There is limited capacity for some low level development within the wooded valleyside, but this should avoid visibly encroaching on the upper slopes which are not characterised by settlement.

This means there is **NO** or **VERY LOW CAPACITY** for the area to accommodate development.

Assessment Summary

	Housing	Employment	Agriculture	Other
Landscape Character Sensitivity	High	High	High	High
Visual Sensitivity	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High
Combined Landscape Sensitivity	High	High	High	High
Landscape Value	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
OVERALL LANDSCAPE CAPACITY	No/Low	No/Low	No/Low	No/Low

03 LANDSCAPE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Landscape Character Area 3: Sproughton Manor

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Landscape Character Sensitivity

- Gently rolling valley sides of remnant historic parkland and arable associated with Sproughton Manor.
- Sloping valley landform characteristic of the Rolling Estate Farmland landscape type forms the backdrop to the River Gipping, the village's north and east settlement fringes and the eastern approach to the village.
- Mature parkland forms the wooded skyline and frames areas of open, valley-side arable.
- The historic and undeveloped character of the wooded parkland contrasts with the industrial and urban settlement of Ipswich to the east.
- Area contributes to the wider important and distinct sense of separation between Sproughton and the western urban fringes of Ipswich.
- Landscape in good condition, with Hazel Wood (Ancient Woodland and County Wildlife Site), Parkland BAP Priority Habitat, Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitats, and ancient/veteran/notable trees; fragmented hedgerows are associated with larger arable parcels.

Visual Sensitivity

The area provides the backdrop for the River Gipping and rural context characterising Sproughton's northern and eastern settlement fringes. Arable west of Sproughton Manor is visually prominent from the PRoW network to the west and from Burstall Lane, looking east, due to its elevated and open character, distinguishing it from the surrounding valley-side woodland visually enclosing it. This open valley side is of high visual sensitivity to any housing, employment and infrastructure development, such as solar farms; vertical elements (e.g. windturbines, pylons) and buildings of greater height and scale would be intrusive within views from elevated slopes to the west. Mature vegetation encloses the arable east of Sproughton Manor and obscures views of the village from Sproughton Road.

Landscape Value

- Ecological interest of the Ancient Woodland/CWS, Priority Habitats, Millennium Green (Local Green Space), and mature network of trees, hedgerows, ancient/veteran/notable trees, many of which are protected by TPO.
- Sense of time depth provided by the wooded parkland landscape which forms the setting for Sproughton Manor (Grade II) and for listed buildings within the village's northern fringe.

- High tranquillity associated with the absence of settlement and presence of mature and ancient woodland; sense of tranquillity decreases moving east towards the A14.
- Preserve the open character of the rolling estate farmland and the existing connection with the wooded parkland at Sproughton Manor and the wider agrarian landscape. Opportunities to enhance the mature vegetated character of the village's eastern approach and connectivity between Priority Habitats and hedgerow networks.

Landscape Capacity

The highly sensitive landscape character of this area arises from its undeveloped valley slopes which provide the former parkland setting for the designated heritage asset, the prevailing rural agrarian character defining the village's north and east settlement fringes and sense of separation from the urban edges of Ipswich. The wooded skyline, parkland character and extensive attractive semi-natural features give it a strong sense of place, history and good landscape condition. Key features and qualities of this area are highly sensitive to housing developments, larger scale facilities, tall buildings/structures and wind/solar farms, due to the area's visual openness.

This means there is **NO** or **VERY LOW CAPACITY** for the area to accommodate development.

Assessment Summary

	Housing	Employment	Agriculture	Other
Landscape Character Sensitivity	High	High	High	High
Visual Sensitivity	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High
Combined Landscape Sensitivity	High	High	High	High
Landscape Value	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
OVERALL LANDSCAPE CAPACITY	No/Low	No/Low	No/Low	No/Low

03 LANDSCAPE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Landscape Character Area 4: Hadleigh Road

Jane Fitzgerald White
landscape architect

Landscape Character Sensitivity

- Parcel of gently rolling valley landscape characterised by tracts of open arable, with a notable area of woodland at Chantry Park defining the skyline.
- Rolling valley side provides the rural agrarian setting for Red House (Grade II) and contributes to the wider setting for Chantry Park, Grade II Registered Park & Garden, and Conservation Area, and the western arrival to Ipswich.
- Mature parkland at Chantry Park forms the wooded skyline and frames the open arable.
- The unaltered historic patterns and associated historic farmsteads sit distinctly separate from modern urban development to the south and west.
- An attractive and intact piece of countryside, contributing to the distinct sense of rural separation between the urban fringes of Ipswich and the Gipping Valley.
- Landscape in good condition with network of mature hedgerows and trees.

Visual Sensitivity

Due to the general absence of hedgerow boundaries to the sloping valley sides, the open arable farmland is visually attractive and prominent, playing an important role in contributing to the sense of physical separation between the western urban fringe of Ipswich and the Gipping Valley. The open valley side is of high visual sensitivity to housing, employment and infrastructure development, such as solar farms; vertical elements (e.g. windturbines, pylons) and buildings of greater height and scale would introduce jarring urban influences to the rural valley and would intrusively block important views across it.

Landscape Value

- Ecological interest of the mature trees and hedgerows which connect with the wider tree/hedgerow network and to Chantry Cut Island (Local Green Space) to the northeast.
- Sense of time depth provided by the wooded parkland landscape at Chantry Park which forms the setting for Red House (Grade II) and the adjacent Grade II listed barn.
- High tranquillity and sense of place associated with dispersed settlement and intact rural landscape.
- Preserve the area's prevailing open and strong rural agrarian character; opportunities to reinstate lost hedgerows and restore fragmented ones to form robust connections with the

wider ecological network.

- This north and east sections of this parcel have been proposed for off-site biodiversity improvements.

Landscape Capacity

The highly sensitive landscape character of this area arises from its undeveloped valley slope which contributes to the prevailing rural agrarian setting for the designated heritage assets, Chantry Park, and the western approach to Ipswich. The area reinforces the sense of rural separation between Ipswich's urban edges and the Gipping Valley. The wooded skyline, open agrarian character, intact historic pattern and extensive attractive semi-natural features give it a strong sense of place, history and good landscape condition. Key features and qualities of this area are highly sensitive to housing developments of all scales, larger scale facilities, tall buildings/structures and wind/solar farms, due to the area's visual prominence and openness. The zones surrounding this parcel have been approved for large scale housing development associated with Wolsey Grange 2 and associated proposed off-site biodiversity improvements.

This means there is **NO** or **VERY LOW CAPACITY** for the area to accommodate development.

Assessment Summary

	Housing	Employment	Agriculture	Other
Landscape Character Sensitivity	High	High	High	High
Visual Sensitivity	High	High	High	High
Combined Landscape Sensitivity	High	High	High	High
Landscape Value	High	High	High	High
OVERALL LANDSCAPE CAPACITY	No/Low	No/Low	No/Low	No/Low

03 LANDSCAPE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Landscape Character Area 5: Church Lane

Jane Fitzgerald White
landscape architect

Landscape Character Sensitivity

- Small to medium pattern of irregular valley floor meadows and gently rolling wooded valley sides characterised by arable form the rural setting for the village's southern edge.
- Area is severed from the wider valley floor by the A14 and the village's historic core by late 20C housing development.
- Grove Wood, the wooded embankment to the A14 and surrounding network of mature trees and hedgerows enclose the area and define the wooded skyline.
- Church Lane is a Quiet Lane providing a recreational route to Hadleigh Road; historically Church Lane was one of the primary southern approaches to the village and is now severed by the A14.
- Area contributes to the distinct sense of separation between Sproughton and the urban fringes of Ipswich and Wolsey Grange.
- Landscape in good condition, with Sproughton Playing Fields, the burial ground (both Open Green Spaces), Oak Pit (Local Green Space), Parkland BAP Priority Habitat, Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitats, and notable oak; fragmented hedgerows are associated with larger arable parcels.

Visual Sensitivity

Due to its lower lying position within the valley and its enclosure with mature woodland and trees, the area is generally visually contained from the wider landscape. The area forms the setting for the Quiet Lane, a well-used route valued by the local community which connects to the wider Public Rights of Way network to the south. Sensitivity to minor housing development is lower close to the village's settlement fringes.

Landscape Value

- Ecological interest of the network of mature trees and hedgerows which connect with Deciduous Woodland and Woodpasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitats, the notable oak, the Playing Fields, burial ground and Oak Pit (Local Green Space).
- The Quiet Lane provides access between the village, Public Rights of Way and the wider countryside; the Playing Fields, burial ground and Oak Pit are valued community assets.
- General experience of tranquillity is undermined by road noise associated with the A14 and abrupt edges associated with late 20C housing development defining the village's settlement edge.

- Protect the more visually prominent arable characterising the village's southern fringe and the southern approach along the Quiet Lane; opportunities to reinstate lost hedgerows, restore fragmented ones, and extend the existing woodland defining the A14 corridor to strengthen existing vegetation defining the village's southern edge and connections with Priority Habitats and the wider hedgerow network.

Landscape Capacity

The area's landscape character sensitivity arises from the more open arable defining the setting for the village's southern fringe and the southern approach along the Quiet Lane. The area contributes to the sense of rural separation between Sproughton, Wolsey Grange and Ipswich's urban edges. Due to the area's general containment by mature woodland and trees, there is capacity for minor housing development west of Ladder Field, if well-integrated into the village's mature vegetated southwestern edge. The residential fringe character is sensitive to larger scale or taller buildings/structures/facilities associated with other land uses.

This means there is **MODERATE CAPACITY** for the area to accommodate minor housing development, and **LOW TO MODERATE CAPACITY** for employment, agriculture or other development.

Assessment Summary

	Housing	Employment	Agriculture	Other
Landscape Character Sensitivity	Moderate	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High
Visual Sensitivity	Low to Moderate	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High
Combined Landscape Sensitivity	Moderate	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High
Landscape Value	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
OVERALL LANDSCAPE CAPACITY	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate

03 LANDSCAPE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Landscape Character Area 6: B1113 (South)

Jane Fitzgerald White
landscape architect

Landscape Character Sensitivity

- Large scale, irregular shaped open arable farmland characterises the plateau landscape.
- The plateau landscape provides expansive views north and northeastward across the wooded rolling valley farmland and urban fringes of Ipswich.
- The elevated and open arable farmland descends to the intimate and sinuous Gipping Valley defining the setting of Sproughton's south approach.
- The area contributes to the distinct sense of physical and perceptual separation between Sproughton, Wolsey Grange and Ipswich.
- Landscape in degraded condition due to intensive arable, field amalgamation and subsequent absence or fragmentation of hedgerow boundaries.

Visual Sensitivity

The open arable farmland is visually prominent and plays an important role in communicating Sproughton's concealed valley floor location within the Gipping Valley and its physical separation from Ipswich. Elevation and absent hedgerows provide open, long distance views to the wooded, rolling valley farmland to the north and west.

Landscape Value

- Intensive agriculture has eroded historic field boundary vegetation; some ecological interest provided by wooded edges of the A14 corridor to the east.
- Sense of tranquillity is noticeably undermined by traffic congestion at peak hours.
- Preserve the open character of plateau farmland by avoiding development which blocks key views as these elevated land parcels play an important role in communicating the village's tucked away position within the Gipping Valley.
- Opportunities to reinstate lost hedgerows and manage to preserve important long distance views; restore fragmented hedgerows to form robust connections to existing wooded slopes of the A14 and the wider hedgerow network.

Landscape Capacity

The landscape character sensitivity of this area arises from the open and undeveloped plateau farmland which provides expansive views north and northeastward towards the wooded rolling valley farmland and urban fringes of Ipswich. The area communicates Sproughton's discrete location within the Gipping Valley, defines the village's southern approach and contributes to the sense of rural separation between Ipswich's urban edges, Sproughton and the Gipping Valley. Key features and qualities of this area, especially on the eastern side of the B1113 are highly sensitive to housing developments of all scales, larger scale facilities, tall buildings/structures and wind/solar farms, due to the area's visual prominence and openness.

This means there is **NO** or **VERY LOW CAPACITY** for the area to accommodate development.

Assessment Summary

	Housing	Employment	Agriculture	Other
Landscape Character Sensitivity	High	High	High	High
Visual Sensitivity	High	High	High	High
Combined Landscape Sensitivity	High	High	High	High
Landscape Value	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
OVERALL LANDSCAPE CAPACITY	No/Low	No/Low	No/Low	No/Low

03 LANDSCAPE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Landscape Character Area 7: Abbey Oaks

Jane Fitzgerald White
landscape architect

Landscape Character Sensitivity

- Rolling valley farmland characterised by mature oaks and intimate tributary valley pasture.
- The B1113 provides the wooded parkland setting for the Sproughton Conservation Area, Prynck's Lodge (Grade II) and Abbey Oaks Gatehouse (non-designated heritage asset); Burstall Lane provides the leafy setting for The Wildman (Grade II).
- The area's wooded parkland character defines the village's western and southern settlement fringes and contributes to Sproughton's distinctive western and southern approaches.
- On the approaches to the village, small clusters of settlement and scattered dwellings are generally nestled within groups of mature trees and vegetation.
- The area provides the sense of distinct rural separation between Sproughton and Ipswich, and contributes to the wider physical separation between the village and Burstall.
- Parkland landscapes in good condition with Grove Wood (Local Green Space), Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitats, Woodpasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitats, ancient/veteran trees, TPO trees and hedgerows.

Visual Sensitivity

Views into the area are generally obscured due to its enclosure with mature woodland, trees and boundary vegetation. Views out from settlement are generally contained, with limited views access Abbey Oaks wooded parkland available from the village's western edge. The southern and western approaches to the village are framed by mature woodland and trees and visual sensitivity lessens adjacent to the village fringes.

Landscape Value

- Ecological interest of the extensive network of mature woodland, trees and hedgerows which connect with Deciduous Woodland and Woodpasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitats at Abbey Oaks and Grove Wood, a Local Green Space.
- A sense of time depth provided by the wooded parkland landscape at Abbey Oaks and south of Grove Wood which form the setting for the Sproughton Conservation Area, Prynck's Lodge (Grade II), The Wildman (Grade II) and Abbey Oaks Gatehouse.
- Sense of tranquillity is noticeably undermined by traffic congestion at the junction near The Wildman during peak hours
- Public Rights of Way provide access between the village and wider countryside; Grove Wood is a privately owned, publicly accessible Local Green Space.
- Preserve the intimate wooded character of the village's southern and western approaches to

maintain the sense of separation between settlement clusters and the village; opportunities to enhance the pervading wooded parkland character and increase public access.

Landscape Capacity

The area's landscape character sensitivity derives from its wooded slopes which provide the setting for the Conservation Area, heritage assets, and the southern and western approaches to Sproughton. The area contributes to the strong sense of rural separation between Wolsey Grange, Ipswich's urban edges and the Gipping Valley. The wooded character and extensive attractive semi-natural features give it a strong sense of place, history and good landscape condition. Key features and qualities of this area are highly sensitive to incremental development which reduces or undermines the landscape character and erodes the sense of separation between the village and settlements to the west. Due to its enclosed character there is some scope for minor housing development within the land parcel to the west of Sproughton Court, if well-integrated into the wooded parkland edge. The residential fringe character is sensitive to larger scale or taller buildings/structures/facilities associated with other land uses.

This means there is **LOW TO MODERATE CAPACITY** for the area to accommodate minor housing development, and **NO** or **VERY LOW CAPACITY** for the area to accommodate employment, agriculture or other development.

Assessment Summary

	Housing	Employment	Agriculture	Other
Landscape Character Sensitivity	Moderate to High	High	High	High
Visual Sensitivity	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Combined Landscape Sensitivity	Moderate to High	High	High	High
Landscape Value	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
OVERALL LANDSCAPE CAPACITY	Low to Moderate	No/Low	No/Low	No/Low

03 LANDSCAPE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Landscape Character Area 8: Burstall Lane North

Jane Fitzgerald White
landscape architect

Landscape Character Sensitivity

- Medium to large scale open arable interspersed with parcels of woodland; more intimate smaller scale enclosed pasture and arable adjacent to Burstall Lane.
- Gently rolling ancient plateau clayland has a undeveloped and rural agrarian character, with scattered settlement.
- The area provides the setting for the strongly rural western approach to Sproughton and the open agrarian context for Burstall Long Wood (Ancient Woodland) which defines the skyline
- The area possesses an important role in separating small settlement clusters situated between Sproughton and Burstall .
- Landscape in generally good condition with Burstall Long Wood (Ancient Woodland & County Wildlife Site), Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitats, ancient/notable trees, and hedgerows; absent and fragmented hedgerows associated with intensive arable and field amalgamation.

Visual Sensitivity

Due to this section of Burstall Lane's elevated plateau location combined with the absence of hedgerow boundaries, the open tracts of undeveloped arable farmland are visually prominent. Long distance views across the plateau reinforce the distinct sense of separation between Sproughton and Burstall. Scattered settlement clusters nestled within groups of mature trees and vegetation are highly noticeable features on the horizon. This area is of high visual sensitivity to any housing, employment and infrastructure development, such as solar farms; vertical elements (e.g. windturbines, pylons) and buildings of greater height and scale would be intrusive within views across the plateau.

Landscape Value

- Ecological interest of Burstall Long Wood (Ancient Woodland & CWS), Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitats, mature woodland parcels, veteran/notable oaks and hedgerow boundaries.
- Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitats at Abbey Oaks and Grove Wood, a Local Green Space.
- Public Rights of Way provide access between the village and wider countryside.

- High tranquillity due to dispersed settlement and extensive agrarian character.
- Opportunities to extend existing woodland and enhance their connectivity, and to reinstate lost hedgerows and restore fragmented ones.

Landscape Capacity

The highly sensitive landscape character of this area arises from its open plateau which provides the rural agrarian setting for the village's western approach and offers long distance views across the landscape. The wooded skyline, rural agrarian character and semi-natural features provide the strong sense of separation between Sproughton and Burstall, although intensive agricultural practices have undermined landscape condition in parts. Development which irreversibly alters the current land uses and introduces noticeable urban influences would erode the visually open and elevated landscape defining the approach to the village. Key features and qualities of this area are highly sensitive to housing developments of all scales, larger scale facilities, tall buildings/structures and wind/solar farms, due to the area's visual prominence and openness.

This means there is **NO** or **VERY LOW CAPACITY** for the area to accommodate development.

Assessment Summary

	Housing	Employment	Agriculture	Other
Landscape Character Sensitivity	High	High	High	High
Visual Sensitivity	High	High	High	High
Combined Landscape Sensitivity	High	High	High	High
Landscape Value	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High
OVERALL LANDSCAPE CAPACITY	No/Low	No/Low	No/Low	No/Low

03 LANDSCAPE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Landscape Character Area 9: Burstall Lane South

Jane Fitzgerald White
landscape architect

Landscape Character Sensitivity

- Large scale open arable with notable absence and fragmentation of hedgerow boundaries.
- Gently rolling ancient and plateau clayland has a undeveloped and rural agrarian character, with scattered settlement.
- The area provides the setting for the strongly rural western approach to Sproughton and the open agrarian context for the wooded parkland at Abbey Oaks which defines the skyline.
- The area possesses an important role in separating small settlement clusters situated between Sproughton and Burstall.
- Intensive arable and field amalgamation has eroded the landscape condition and hedgerow network.

Visual Sensitivity

Due to this section of Burstall Lane's elevated plateau location combined with the absence of hedgerow boundaries, the open tracts of undeveloped arable farmland are visually prominent. Long distance views across the plateau reinforce the distinct sense of separation between Sproughton and Burstall. Open views south are towards the more intricate and contrasting wooded rolling valley farmland surrounding Sproughton Park. Scattered settlement clusters nestled within groups of mature trees and vegetation are highly noticeable features on the horizon. This area is of high visual sensitivity to any housing, employment and infrastructure development, such as solar farms; vertical elements (e.g. windturbines, pylons) and buildings of greater height and scale would be intrusive within views across the plateau.

Landscape Value

- Ecological interest is limited to fragmented hedgerow boundaries and the mature trees and garden vegetation associated with the small settlement cluster around Cherwell House on Burstall Lane.
- Public Rights of Way provide access between the village and wider countryside.
- High tranquillity due to dispersed settlement and extensive agrarian character.
- Opportunities to introduce woodland and extensive scope to reinstate lost hedgerows and restore fragmented ones.

Landscape Capacity

The highly sensitive landscape character of this area arises from its open plateau which provides the rural agrarian setting for the village's western approach and offers long distance views across the landscape. The wooded skyline, rural agrarian character and semi-natural features provide the strong sense of separation between Sproughton and Burstall, although intensive agricultural practices have undermined landscape condition in parts. Development which irreversibly alters the current land uses and introduces noticeable urban influences would erode the visually open and elevated landscape defining the approach to the village. Key features and qualities of this area are highly sensitive to housing developments of all scales, larger scale facilities, tall buildings/structures and wind/solar farms, due to the area's visual prominence and openness.

This means there is **NO** or **VERY LOW CAPACITY** for the area to accommodate development.

Assessment Summary

	Housing	Employment	Agriculture	Other
Landscape Character Sensitivity	High	High	High	High
Visual Sensitivity	High	High	High	High
Combined Landscape Sensitivity	High	High	High	High
Landscape Value	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High
OVERALL LANDSCAPE CAPACITY	No/Low	No/Low	No/Low	No/Low

03 LANDSCAPE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Landscape Character Area 10: Sproughton Park

Jane Fitzgerald White
landscape architect

Landscape Character Sensitivity

- Complex pattern comprising medium scale pasture and arable which transitions to a finer grain of small irregular shaped pasture enclosed with hedgerows and woodland.
- The upper plateau farmland and gently rolling valley has an undeveloped and wooded character, with scattered settlement and ponds.
- The area provides the setting for remnant historic parkland associated with Sproughton Park and defines the wooded horizon in views south across the plateau from Burstall Lane.
- The area contributes to the rural separation between Sproughton and the villages of Washbrook and Copdock.
- Landscape in generally good condition with Sproughton Park CWS, Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitats, an extensive network of hedgerows, scattered ponds, fishing lakes and a stream.

Visual Sensitivity

The area provides the setting for Sproughton Park and the wooded horizon characterising long distance views south from Burstall Lane. The rolling topography, woodland and hedgerows visually enclose this area. Scattered settlement is generally concealed / nestled amidst mature vegetation. Breaks in hedgerow boundaries allow framed views out to the intimate rolling valley landscape from the public footpath. The wooded and rolling landscape character of the area is evident in long distance views looking northwards across the rolling valley from the western end of Pigeon's Lane (outside of the parish).

Landscape Value

- Ecological interest of Sproughton Park CWS, alder carr, Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitats, mature woodland parcels, hedgerow network, ponds, springs, fishing lakes and stream.
- Public Right of Way provides access between the parish and wider countryside.
- High tranquillity due to dispersed settlement and well-established wooded character.
- Preserve the area's intimate and historic rural agrarian character and the remnant parkland at Sproughton Park. Opportunities to reinstate absent and restore fragmented hedgerows within amalgamated fields and to enhance the mature vegetated character of the area and connectivity between Priority Habitats and hedgerow networks.

Landscape Capacity

The highly sensitive landscape character of this area arises from its undeveloped, wooded valley slope which provide the former parkland setting for Sproughton Park and the prevailing rural agrarian character defining the southern extent of the parish. The area reinforces the sense of rural separation between Sproughton and Washbrook / Copdock. The wooded character, intact historic pattern and extensive attractive semi-natural features give it a strong sense of place, history and good landscape condition. The area's general containment by mature woodland presents limited capacity for some minor, low level development, if it responds sensitively to the area's rural unspoilt character, does not undermine the existing sense of tranquillity, erode the area's key qualities and features, and is well-integrated into the mature vegetated setting. Such development should avoid encroaching on areas which are not already characterised by settlement. Infrastructure development, such as solar farms, vertical elements (e.g. windturbines, pylons) and buildings of greater height and scale would be intrusive.

This means there is **LOW TO MODERATE CAPACITY** for the area to accommodate minor, low level development.

Assessment Summary

	Housing	Employment	Agriculture	Other
Landscape Character Sensitivity	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	High
Visual Sensitivity	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	High
Combined Landscape Sensitivity	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	High
Landscape Value	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High
OVERALL LANDSCAPE CAPACITY	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	No/Low

04 LANDSCAPE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

General Guidance & Recommendations

Jane Fitzgerald White
landscape architect

Landscape Strategies for New Developments

Landscape strategies should seek to ensure that new developments integrate harmoniously with the surrounding landscape while preserving and enhancing its character and ecological value. The recommended strategies are:

- **Strengthen:** Sensitively enhance existing landscape elements and ecological habitats that positively contribute to landscape character and biodiversity.
- **Create:** Introduce new landscape elements and ecological habitats, ensuring these integrate sensitively with adjacent distinctive landscape character areas and ecological habitats.
- **Conserve:** Retain and protect existing landscape elements and character, avoiding fragmentation.
- **Restore:** Improve the condition of existing distinctive landscape elements and character whilst protecting them from loss or fragmentation.

Landscape Design Proposals

Development Proposals

- Seek to preserve the existing gaps in settlement within the village environs which allow views out across the wider landscape to maintain the existing visual relationship and connection between the village with its agricultural setting.
- Consider relationship with immediate setting and key views:
 - i) Reduce massing or provide screening where sensitive views are identified.
 - ii) Place ground-based ancillary/support facilities (e.g. storage tanks/electricity substations) behind main facades or in screened locations.
 - iii) Where setting sensitivity is less of an issue consider whether development could provide a positive ‘sculptural’ addition or visual reference point.
- Where recommended by the Local Planning Authority, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)¹ should be undertaken according to Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management guidelines. An LVIA should consider the following:

¹ *Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (‘GLVIA3’)* (2013) published by the Landscape Institute & Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment states: “*the approach to, and scope of, the assessment / appraisal should be ‘proportional to the scale and nature of the proposed development.’*”(GLVIA3 para. 6.2).

- Demonstrate how the proposal can be accommodated in the countryside without having a significant adverse impact, by reason of the buildings' scale, materials and location, on the character and appearance of the countryside and its distinction from the built-up area.

On-site landscape mitigation proposals, seeking to reflect and reinforce distinctive local character through use of locally native plant species and vegetation habitats (e.g. woodland, hedgerow, hedgerow trees, scrub) which are characteristic of the surrounding landscape.

- Off-site landscape proposals, which provide layered screening and reinforce landscape character through plant species selection (e.g. roadsides, hedgerows, watercourses, settlement edges, field boundaries, footpaths).

- New development should be well-related to the main village settlement. Detailed analysis of the potential landscape impacts of any proposals should be subject to site specific assessment.
- Infill residential development should be delivered with layouts and densities that reflect those found in neighbouring areas. Building set-backs should be slightly irregular; plot size and pattern should be varied to positively contribute to the rural character of the village.
- New farm buildings should not be located close to roads- they are characteristically placed back from roads and seen in the middle distance, backed by trees.
- Prominent new rooflines of inappropriate steeply pitched roofs must be avoided by generally limiting development height to preserve skylines. The scale of new buildings must not be noticeably greater than in neighbouring areas.
- Rigorously applied highway standards can have a sizeable adverse impact in rural areas. Use discretion to limit their application particularly where new access points are created onto existing roads. A minimal approach to lighting, signage, concrete kerbing, and safety railings is recommended.
- New development should be designed to the highest standards, using local materials that fit sympathetically with the local vernacular. Durable materials create long lasting landscapes that are resistant to weather, disease, wear and vandalism. Hard and soft landscape palettes and construction methods should be appropriate to local conditions to maximise their life span in new landscapes. Easy to maintain planting and materials should be used to support realistic long term maintenance budgets and local skill sets.
- Sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) should be incorporated wherever possible using a range of techniques including permeable surfacing of hard surfaces, swales, grey

04 LANDSCAPE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

General Guidance & Recommendations

Jane Fitzgerald White
landscape architect

water recycling and appropriate vegetation types.

- Control the use of visually intrusive and unnecessary lighting or signage. Design any needed with simple forms and appropriate local materials so that they are well integrated within the surrounding landscape. Lighting should consider Dark Skies and nocturnal wildlife.
- A locally appropriate ‘Sense of Place’ and recognisable, attractive character should be created throughout individual new development sites. Type, colour and texture of materials should be selected to blend with those found naturally occurring within the landscape. Where hedgerow restoration and enhancement are required, native hedgerow mixes should reflect species observed locally and use traditional Suffolk laying patterns and management techniques.

Ecological Habitats

- Protect existing valuable habitats during and post development operations. Development proposals should include a landscape management plan that clearly identifies habitat constraints and methodologies for safeguarding them throughout development and beyond.
- Provide new habitats for wildlife and increase local biodiversity. Development proposals should include appropriate designs including planting schedules and pay due regard to the vegetation characteristic of that Landscape Character Area and the habitat creation recommendations made within the Local Biodiversity Action Plan. Planting schedules should specify plant species that are locally appropriate wherever possible.
- Field amalgamation and subsequent large scale arable has resulted in fragmentation and loss of hedgerow habitats. Protect and enhance existing habitats, and seek opportunities to reinstate lost hedgerows and reconnect fragmented ones. Identify potential areas to connect habitats to form meaningful ecological corridors and to enhance visual amenity. Support farmers with agri-environment schemes targeting biodiversity improvements. Explore opportunities for field margin wildflower meadow zones and “Wild Edges” - 10m width native hedgerow/scrub buffer zones in arable margins/ leftover zones not easy to farm.
- Manage and enhance woodland and BAP habitats for their contribution to sense of place, history and biodiversity value. Maintain the extent, and improve the condition, of woodland cover with effective management. Seek opportunities to create new woodland on plateau

edges and in areas adjacent to existing woods. Refer to Suffolk County Council guidance on protecting archaeology and landscape character when planting new woodland.

- Protect water quality and support restoration of wildlife habitats associated with the River Gipping by supporting farmers with Water Sensitive Farming initiatives.
- There is a good stock of scattered ponds and aquatic habitats across the parish. These have potential to provide valuable ecological habitats for wildlife, act as storage for carbon and offer amenity value. Protect and enhance existing habitats, seek opportunities to reinstate lost wetlands and identify areas suitable to create new ones. Support farmers with GCN pond restoration/creation initiatives.

Planting

- Provide buffer planting proposals where necessary that specify tree and shrub planting at a very early phase in the development to allow establishment of plants before works commence.
- Avoid standardised residential plot planting schemes with excessive use of ornamental species. Propose boundary treatments (walls, fences and hedges) that reflect the local character, inappropriate boundary treatments can have a substantial negative effect.
- Ensure new development proposals make provision for the successful establishment of structural planting schemes (i.e. trees, hedgerows, hedges) to enhance landscape character and provide Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). In residential schemes of two houses or more, do not allow structural boundary planting to be conveyed to new residents (i.e. be within private ownership). It should be managed strategically on an ongoing basis in tandem with other publicly accessible/communal landscape zones within the scheme, to ensure biodiversity commitments are achieved.
- Retain and enhance existing vegetative features as much as possible, particularly intact hedgerows and trees, as well as existing features such as ditches and ponds. Any unavoidable loss of trees or hedgerows must be more than adequately offset by new native species-rich planting which should seek to restore local landscape character.
- Consider the perimeter of new developments very carefully. Avoid hard edges directly onto open farmland which create a stark interface. Soft landscape buffers are generally desirable to help developments integrate and are expected to be substantial enough to mitigate negative impacts. They should comprise predominantly native species. However,

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General Guidance & Recommendations

screening planting should not be regarded as a substitute for well-designed developments.

- Ensure new structural vegetation (i.e. tree, hedgerows, hedges, shrubs) is locally appropriate to landscape character, species-rich and considers disease/pest resilience and climate change.
- Identify sites of high biodiversity value and plan for meaningful links to create larger, contiguous networks. The delivery of meaningful Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) should be a primary aspiration for development, as opposed to a tokenistic afterthought. Where this is not achievable on site, opportunities for off-setting Biodiversity Net Gain² within the wider parish should be identified.
- Seek opportunities to form partnerships with local landowners to plant woodland, develop wildflower meadows, community orchards, and create “wild edges” (ecological buffer zones generally associated with hedgerows).

² Off-site biodiversity units are standardised measurements of habitat creation or enhancement that occur on land separate from a development site, but are legally secured and used to compensate for the development's unavoidable negative impacts on biodiversity. Developers purchase these units from a registered "Biodiversity Gain Site" (sometimes called "habitat bank") to meet mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements.