

January  
2020

# DDNP Evidence Base



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## 2 SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

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### 2.1 PLANNED HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

1. Suitable and available sites with no obvious constraints only deliver 35 dwellings in the South Norfolk part of the neighbourhood plan area, which is significantly below the required housing targets. However, assuming issues and constraints can be overcome, there should be ample land available to deliver the necessary housing growth
2. All the planned growth through new allocations is in South Norfolk, mainly Diss. The expectation is that Diss town will need to provide most of the new housing.

### 2.2 ACCOMMODATION PROFILE

3. The housing profile of the area is different from that of South Norfolk and Mid-Suffolk, with proportionately more terrace properties and flats, with a good number of these situated in Diss. The age profile is broadly similar to that of South Norfolk, though there is a slightly higher proportion of older people, and this is increasing over time. The housing profile would appear to cater well for this. There is a large and increasing proportion of families with non-dependent children, which could indicate difficulties experienced by younger people in buying locally or remaining in the area. Analysis completed as part of the Housing Needs Assessment (AECOM) indicates that the housing profile could usefully include proportionately fewer small properties and more medium to large 3-bedroom properties.

### 2.3 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

4. Although there is a need to provide affordable housing, this is not overwhelming and perhaps reduces the need for a Rural Exception site
5. The focus should be on affordable/ social rented, but there is also a need for more shared equity/ shared home ownership provision.
6. As well as social/ affordable rent, there is a significant need for many new homes to be available to rent to cater for new households

### 2.4 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

7. The presence of the River Waveney increases the likelihood of flooding and parts of the settlement area in Diss fall within Flood Zones 2 and 3. This will constrain the location of future development within the town. It should also be considered that as a consequence of climate change, peak rainfall intensity and peak river flow are expected to increase by up to 40%. Surface water flooding is an issue in some parts of the main settlement areas, it will be important to ensure this is not worsened through new development.

8. Dark skies at night are a feature of the smaller rural settlements including Burston and Shimpling and Palgrave, giving them a tranquil, peaceful character. Light spills out beyond the urban areas, impacting upon smaller settlements which are nearby.
9. The impact of development on dark night skies, including related infrastructure improvements, may want to be considered.
10. There are a number of priority habitats across the area which could be sensitive to development. The area has a number of county wildlife sites, which whilst considered as part of determining planning applications, are not protected in legislative terms. The working group could consider designating these as Local Green Spaces if they are of demonstrable community value.

## 2.5 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

11. Diss is characterised as a compact market town and large-scale future development could erode this.
12. Any development located in the river valley, to the south of Diss, should be designed and sited sensitively to ensure retention of the character of the Waveney Valley.
13. The rural part of the neighbourhood plan area is peaceful in its character, with a pattern of small villages set within the agricultural landscape. Future development in the villages could erode this character if not planned and designed sensitively. Likewise, it is possible that as Diss expands it encroaches upon these rural villages, impacting on their character.
14. Burston is unique in its setting around a village green and infilling or extension of the village could change its character.
15. Mature hedgerows are a key feature of the landscape, providing pattern and variety. These could be sensitive to development proposals, depending upon where they come forward.
16. The surrounding agricultural land continues to be productive and part of it is considered to be of high value, this could be lost to new development depending on where it is located.

## 2.6 TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

17. Analysis of road traffic collisions has not identified road safety to be a particular issue in Diss, though there are areas in the town where interventions could be considered.
18. A study undertaken in the last five years does not indicate that public car parking is a particular constraint within Diss.
19. Road traffic congestion is an issue within Diss town centre and A1066, this could be exacerbated through housing development. Not all of this can be mitigated through highway improvements and so care is needed when deciding where growth goes and the scale of growth.

20. Diss is a fairly compact market town meaning that the town centre is easily accessible by walking or cycling. Some improvements to walking and cycle infrastructure are needed.

## 2.7 TRAVEL TO WORK AND CAR OWNERSHIP

21. As the car remains the dominant mode of travel, home based parking will be an important consideration for any new development.
22. A relatively high proportion of people work from home, so could be more likely to use local services or those in neighbouring communities, and rely on good technological infrastructure.

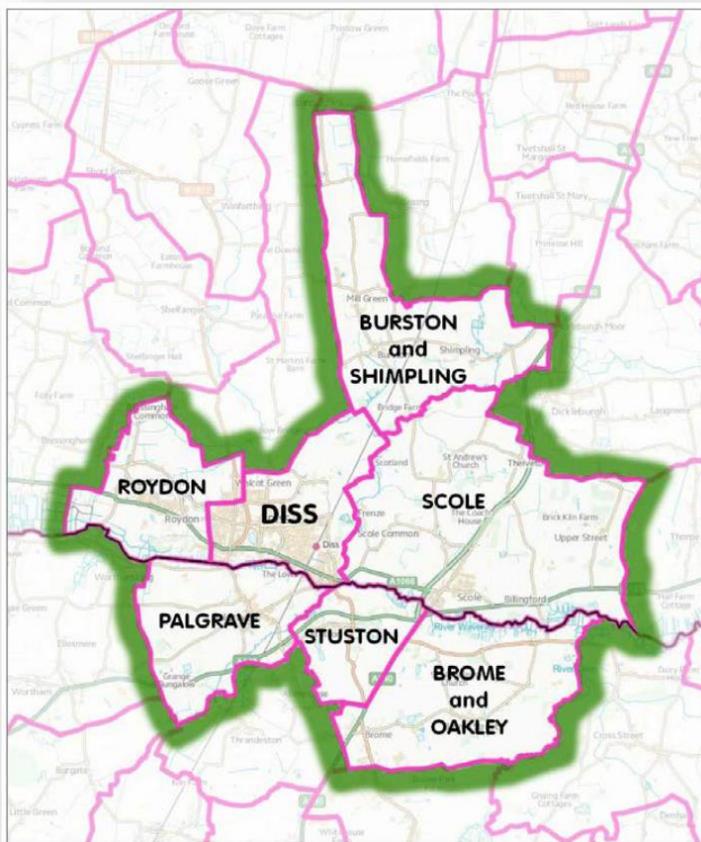
## 2.8 THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

23. The neighbourhood plan area is one of some historical importance with many listed buildings and the Scole Roman Settlement scheduled monument. There are three conservation areas, in Diss, Scole and Palgrave. Effort should be made to retain both the character of these and their setting, ensuring that it is not diluted through new development.
24. The neighbourhood plan is an opportunity to identify and protect non-designated heritage assets, such as buildings of local historical importance which are not listed.

### 3 INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF KEY SETTLEMENTS

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25. The Diss and District Neighbourhood Plan is a joint neighbourhood plan between Diss Town Council and six surrounding parish councils: Roydon, Burston and Shimpling, and Scole in South Norfolk; and Palgrave, Stuston, and Brome and Oakley in Mid-Suffolk. The partnership was formed in July 2017. The planning period for the Diss and District Neighbourhood Plan will be 2019-2036. **Figure 1** shows the designated area for the Neighbourhood Plan. It can be seen that Diss is the main settlement, whilst the surrounding parishes are generally rural with small villages and some scattered development and farm buildings. Housing growth will generally be expected to focus on the more sustainable locations such as Diss first and foremost as well as those villages with day to day services.



26. Figure 1 Map showing the outline of the DDNP area

### 3.1 DISS

28. Diss is a market town located in the Waveney Valley on the Norfolk/Suffolk border in South Norfolk. The town is connected by the A140, A1066 and regular rail services on the Norwich to London railway line. Diss has a wide selection of shops ranging from small local businesses to large superstores, meaning it not only serves its residents but the surrounding rural catchment. The recently announced loss of the Beales department store will be a loss to the town. The town centre has a mixture of attractions including Georgian and Edwardian buildings, a public park, the Mere, auction rooms, the Diss Corn Hall Theatre, and a marketplace with a regular Friday market. The Norfolk Market Town Centre Report 2019 found that Diss has 160 town centre retail and business units. Most town centre units are comparison retailers, which include clothing and charity shops. Vacant units have reduced in the town centre by 7 units since 2018, in 2019 4 vacant units were recorded.
29. Diss is identified as a Main Town in the 2014 Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (JCS) and emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) for the same districts. The town has a wide range of services and facilities available, and is therefore seen as suitable for significant housing and employment growth. In addition to having a good range of shops and facilities in the town centre, there is a concentration of commercial and industrial businesses to the east of the town (located either side of the railway), with further land allocated for expansion. Further afield, approximately three miles from the town, near Eye, is the Mid Suffolk Business Park which also offers significant employment opportunities. This falls just outside the neighbourhood plan area.
30. The town is located to the north west of the junction of the A140 and A143 and is on the main Norwich-Ipswich-London rail line. As such, the town is well located for new development. There are particular vehicular pressures on the A1066 Victoria Road and B1077 Denmark Street as they pass through the town, with congestion, especially at key junctions such as the Morrison's roundabout, considered a barrier to significant growth.
31. There is an attractive historic town centre within an extensive conservation area, that extends to Sunnyside at the north and Park Road to the south. The historic core of Diss is formed by the Market Place, Market Hill, and St Nicholas Street and the town includes an exceptional concentration of listed buildings. A number of open spaces are located within the heart of the town, including The Mere and adjacent park, as well as private open land that contributes significantly to the character and which are protected as Important Local Open Spaces.

32. Employment uses in the town are mostly located to the east of the town centre accessed by the A1066, residential areas are concentrated to the north of the A1066. The high street is located in the centre of the town around the Mere.
33. The 2015 South Norfolk Local Plan (SNLP) and emerging GNLP seek to avoid the coalescence of Diss with the nearby villages, particularly Roydon to the west. As such, the scope for expansion of the town through the local plan is seen to be constrained.

## 4 SOUTH NORFOLK VILLAGES

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35. Both Roydon and Scole have been designated Service Villages in the JCS and therefore able to accommodate small scale growth through site allocations, and in-fill. The village in Burston and Shimpling is designated as an 'Other Village' in the JCS and so suitable for small-scale infill development only.

### 4.1 ROYDON

36. The main development in the parish is concentrated in three areas. There is the main village of Roydon; an area of settlement around Baynards Green; and parts of the settlement of Diss to the west of Shelfanger Road and north of Factory Lane, and along Tottington Lane west of Fair Green (both of which are within Diss development boundary and considered with Diss). The parish also contains clusters of development around Brewers Green and part of Bressingham Common along Bressingham Road.
37. Roydon village is located on the A1066 overlooking the Waveney Valley, and comprises several residential estates to the north of the road and a ribbon of development along its south side. To the east, an area of open fields containing an isolated row of dwellings on Factory Lane separates Roydon from the developed area of Diss. Elsewhere, the village is surrounded by open farmland affording attractive views to Snow Street and a shallow valley to the north, and across the larger Waveney Valley to the south.
- 38.
39. At Baynards Green, development is of a linear nature along Snow Street, Baynards Lane and Hall Lane. These combine to create an attractive environment, where trees are integral to the setting of the dwellings. The A1066 provides Roydon with a direct east-west link to Diss and other settlements along the Waveney Valley. Old High Road provides a further link to the centre of Diss via Roydon Road. The B1077 Shelfanger Road links northward to Shelfanger and Attleborough.
40. The village contains a range of facilities including a primary school, service station, village hall and pub.

### 4.2 SCOLE

41. The village is located partly on the edge of the Waveney Valley. The village is centred around the junction of the former routes of the A140 and A143. The village contains extensive frontage development to the north and east of this junction backed by several large housing estates. Relatively little development is located on the western side of the former A140, except for some limited frontage development along The Street and a small housing estate to the south of Diss Road.

The area around the junction forms the village core and includes a variety of buildings of considerable historical significance.

42. Approximately half of the village consists of relatively modern dwellings of which many are detached, and the village is characterised by several open spaces near the centre, some of which afford views over the surrounding countryside. The A140 and A143, which both bypass the village, provide direct links to Norwich and Ipswich and to towns along the Waveney Valley. The A1066 to the west of the village links Scole to Diss, with Diss railway station around 2.5km from the village.
43. The settlement has a range of social and community facilities including a primary school, shop and playing field pavilion. The village has the benefit of mains sewerage.

#### **4.3 BURSTON AND SHIMPLING**

44. Development is focused around the Diss Road/Rectory Road crossroads. The village has limited services such as Burston primary School, the church and the Crown public House.

## 5 MID-SUFFOLK VILLAGES

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46. The adopted 2008 Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (MSCS) defines Palgrave as one of 26 'Secondary Villages' in the settlement hierarchy. Stuston and Brome and Oakley are not listed in the Settlement Hierarchy and as such are designated as 'countryside villages'. The Core Strategy Focussed Review (2012) does not require Secondary Villages and countryside villages to accommodate development over the period 2012 to 2027. Emerging policy in the Joint Local Plan to 2036 (July 2019 Pre-Submission Consultation) placed all three parishes in the 'Mid-Suffolk Hinterland Villages' category.

### 5.1 PALGRAVE

47. Palgrave is located south of Diss and the South Norfolk District Boundary and is identified as a Hinterland Village. The settlement consists of primarily 20th century residential development with several listed buildings mainly located around the triangular green around The Parish Church of Saint Peter. The Green is also the core of the settlement and the Conservation Area. The landscape in Palgrave and the immediate surrounding area is characterised primarily as Ancient Plateau Claylands with a band that wraps around from the north to the east and the south characterised as Rolling Valley Farmlands and Furze. Palgrave lies within the Protected Habitats Mitigation Zone.

### 5.2 STUSTON

48. Stuston is located west of the A140, south-east of Diss and the South Norfolk District Boundary and is identified as a Hinterland Village. The linear settlement pattern is concentrated along the Old Bury Road and consists of primarily listed buildings with a small number of 20th century residential development. The landscape in Stuston and the immediate surrounding area is characterised primarily as Rolling Valley Farmlands and Furze with the western aspect of the settlement characterised as Rolling Valley Claylands.

### 5.3 BROME AND OAKLEY

49. Brome is located west of the A140, north of the Eye Airfield Site and is identified as a Hinterland Village. The settlement consists of primarily linear 20th century residential development along the Rectory Road with a number of dispersed individual listed buildings and a small cluster of listed buildings in Brome Street. The landscape in Brome and the immediate surrounding area is characterised as Rolling Valley Claylands. Within the parish of Brome & Oakley, Oakley is classified as a Hamlet Village. The village consists of largely linear development, and includes some listed buildings, including the Grade II\* listed Poplar Farmhouse.

## 6 PLANNED HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

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### 6.1 DISS

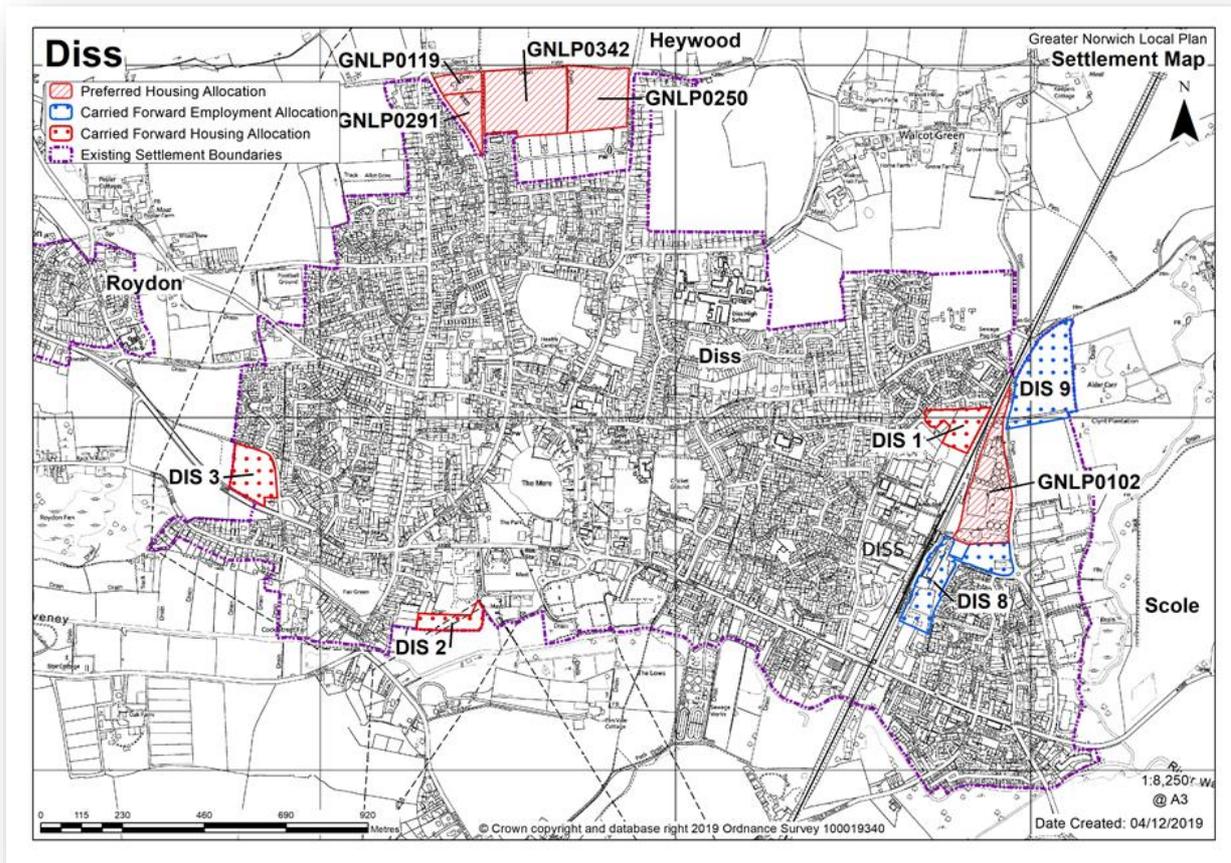
50. The adopted development plan allocates five sites in Diss for housing growth which could accommodate up to 300 dwellings and 15 hectares of land for employment uses. The emerging GNLP, a joint local plan between Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council and South Norfolk Council, will plan to 2038. The emerging GNLP has identified two preferred housing sites in Diss for 400 dwellings. The sites are land north of the Cemetery including the delivery of a link road to connect Heywood Road and Shelfanger Road, for 200 dwellings, and the Frontier Agriculture Ltd Site, Sandy Lane, for 200 dwellings.
51. There are three carried forward allocations providing for 87 new homes and a total of 256 additional dwellings with planning permission. This gives a total deliverable housing commitment for Diss (including part of Roydon) of 743 homes between 2018 – 2038. In the emerging GNLP there are no additional employment land identified in Diss on top of the employment allocations (10.8 hectares) carried forward from the previous Local Plan.
52. In terms of new housing, amongst the schemes currently under construction is the DIS 4 allocation on Frenze Hall Lane. Since 2001 689 new homes have been built in Diss (as of 2019).
- 53.

### 6.2 SETTLEMENTS IN SOUTH NORFOLK

54. Although Roydon was designated as a service village in the JCS, due to various constraints no sites were allocated for development in the SNLP 2015. Nor was there any allocation in Burston, as would be expected given its designation as ‘other villages’. The plan however included one allocation in Scole (Policy SCO 1: Land to the north of Ransome Avenue) for around 15 dwellings. This has not been delivered as yet.
55. The GNLP consulted in early 2020 on the Regulation 18 version of the emerging GNLP. This included proposed sites for housing and employment in Diss (see **Figure 2**). It is not fully clear yet what level of growth will be sought in the villages within South Norfolk going forward as this will be part of a separate part of the local plan for South Norfolk rather than the GNLP.
56. However, South Norfolk Council has provided indicative housing growth figures to 2036 of:

- Diss and Roydon - 300 dwellings (although the emerging GNLP is proposing allocations to accommodate at least 400)
- Burston and Shimpling - 35 dwellings
- Scale – 35 dwellings

57. Figure 2: Preferred Sites for Residential Development in Diss – Emerging Local Plan (Reg 18 Consultation)



58. In addition, Policy 7.5 of the emerging GNLP allows for further limited windfall development on small sites up to 3 dwellings in each parish during the plan period. These may be permitted adjacent but outside of the development boundary.

59. More detail on the two proposed housing allocations in Diss is shown below from the draft GNLP (January 2020).

61. POLICY GNLP0102: Land at Frontier Agriculture Ltd, Sandy Lane, Diss (approx. 3.61 ha) is allocated for residential development. The site is likely to accommodate at least 200 homes, 33% of which will be affordable.

62. More homes may be accommodated, subject to an acceptable design and layout  
63. being achieved.

64. The development will be expected to address the following specific matters:

- Assessment of site contamination with subsequent mitigation if required.
- Assessment and mitigation measures to address adverse impacts from the railway and neighbouring employment uses on residential amenity.
- Consider and mitigate surface water flood risk.
- In liaison with relevant rail companies and the highways authority, safeguard land to expand the car parking facility at the train station.
- Road widening of Sandy Lane to a minimum of 5.5 metres for the extent of frontage.
- Provision of a 2.0metre wide footway at the site frontage,
- extending northwards to connect with existing facility at Frenze Hall Lane
- Lane.
- The trees/hedgerows surrounding the site will be protected, enhanced and incorporated into the scheme.
- Historic Environment Record to be consulted to determine any need for archaeological surveys prior to development.

65. GNLP0102: This site is preferred for allocation as it is a brownfield site close to the railway station. Its location means that medium to high density development is likely to be achievable. The timing of site development will be dependent on the relocation of existing employment uses.

67. POLICY GNLP0250/0342/0119/0291, land north of the Cemetery, west of Shelfanger Road and East of Heywood Road, Diss (approx. 8.91 ha) is allocated for residential development. The site is likely to accommodate at least 200 homes, 33% of which will be affordable.

- More homes may be accommodated, subject to an acceptable design and layout being achieved and relevant infrastructure issues being addressed.
- The development will be expected to address the following specific matters:
- Four individual sites are included in this allocation and will need a co-ordinated approach to design, layout, landscaping, infrastructure provision and delivery. This may require a masterplan to demonstrate how this will be achieved.
- Provision of a road linking Shelfanger Road with Heywood Road, including frontage footways to connect with existing facilities and connection with/improvements to the existing public right of way.
- Submission of a Transport Assessment for the whole allocation and provision of any identified mitigation measures.
- At nil cost to the town council, safeguard land for an extension to the cemetery.
- Consider and mitigate surface water flood risk.
- The trees/hedgerows surrounding the site will be protected, enhanced and incorporated into the scheme.
- Design of development to take into account the presence of a high- pressure pipeline located adjacent to the northern boundary of the site.
- Protection of the existing Public Rights of Ways (PROWs) located to the north and west of the site.

68. GNLP0250/0342/0119/0291: According to the draft GNLP, this combination of sites is preferred for allocation as they are well related in form and character terms to the existing built up area of Diss and would enable the provision of a link road to connect Heywood Road and Shelfanger Road, which may alleviate some existing traffic problems.

69. There were a number of reasonable alternatives that are *not preferred* as part of the GNLP, although these have been further considered through the AECOM Sites Assessment.

### 6.3 SITES ASSESSMENT BY AECOM

71. All of the 35 sites considered by AECOM are in South Norfolk. Most of the sites are in and immediately adjacent to Diss town (22), although there were also some in or adjacent to the villages of Burston (seven), Scole (five) and Roydon (one). The Mid Suffolk villages contain no sites included in this assessment.
72. 30 of the 35 sites were previously assessed by SNC/ GNDP as suitable or not suitable for allocation are part of the HELAA (Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment) for South Norfolk. One was identified as part of the GNDP process but was not assessed by the HELAA as it was too small. The other four were put forward by the neighbourhood plan group.
73. Of the 30 sites previously subject to the HELAA, 24 were assessed in the HELAA as suitable and six as unsuitable.
74. From AECOM's assessment, only 3 of the 31 HELAA sites were rated green, being suitable *and* available (GNLP0338R in Scole, GNLP0349 in Burston, and GNLP0104 in Diss).
75. Twenty one of the 31 HELAA sites were considered by AECOM as available as well as *potentially suitable* (rated orange) for allocation within the DDNP, subject to the mitigation of constraints such as highway access or flood risk (sites GNLP0527, GNLP0339, GNLP2066, GNLP1028, GNLP0386, GNLP0561, GNLP0562, GNLP0291, GNLP0342, GNLP0362, GNLP0119, GNLP0250, GNLP0606, GNLP2104, GNLP0526, GNLP1038, GNLP0599R, GNLP0112, GNLP0102, GNLP2067 and GNLP0005). The significance of these constraints varies from site to site. Four of these sites combined (GNLP0250 GNLP0291 GNLP0342 and GNLP0119) make up one of the preferred allocation options in the GNLP Regulation 18 consultation, whilst the other preferred option in the Regulation 18 consultation is GNLP0102).
76. Seven of the 31 HELAA sites were deemed to be available but *unsuitable* for allocation in the DDNP, either due to insurmountable constraints (GNLP0560, GNLP0341, GNLP1044, and GNLP1003) or because they are already allocated in the Local Plan (GNLP0511 in Scole and GNLP0185 in Diss for housing, and GNLP1045 in Diss for employment) and which will be carried forward to the GNLP.
77. Finally, of the four sites identified by the neighbourhood plan group without confirmation of availability, two are suitable (DISS0001 and DISS0002) and two are potentially suitable subject to mitigation of constraints (DISS0003 and DIS2/DIS7). Two have potential viability issues as they include brownfield land. All of these were in Diss. Together, these have a theoretical capacity of 178 dwellings.

78. Together, the 24 sites that are judged to be available as well as suitable or potentially suitable should have more than sufficient combined indicative capacity (based on an indicative density of 25 dwellings per hectare, to be consistent with the Greater Norwich HELAA) to meet the indicative housing figures for the South Norfolk part of the Diss and District area. However, the majority of these sites (21 out of 24) are only potentially and/or partially suitable for allocation subject to mitigation of constraints. Constraints relate to a number of potential issues such as access and flood risk. In many cases, only parts of identified sites are found to be potentially suitable for allocation. This is either due to the threat of coalescence, visual sensitivity or other constraints, or due to the fact that certain sites, if developed in their entirety, would significantly alter the character of the settlement, due to their size. The latter is particularly true for those smaller settlements such as Scole that are considered to be suitable in the JCS for only modest development. Because of this, the likely realistic capacities of many of the identified sites will be significantly lower than their full theoretical capacity.

79. **Figure 3** below shows the theoretical capacity of the HELLA sites and compares it with the indicative planned housing growth figures provided by South Norfolk.

80. Figure 3: Capacity of HELAA sites to deliver planned growth

Settlement	Indicative housing figures to 2036*	Capacity of the 24 HELAA sites assessed as suitable or potentially suitable by AECOM	Capacity of the three HELAA sites assessed as suitable and available (green)	Sites put forward by DDNP
Diss	300	1,470	10	178
Scole	35	84 (plus 35 = 119)	10	0
Burston and Shimpling	35	97	(green) = 15	0
Roydon	0	89	0	0
Total	370	1,740	35	178

\*Figures provided by South Norfolk Council/ GNDP

\*\* Site GNLP0511 is already allocated for 15 dwellings in the adopted SNLP. There have been suggestions that this could be increased to 35, which would provide the required planned growth in Scole up to 2036

81. Overall, and despite any constraints on specific sites, there should be, though this is not certain, ample land to deliver the indicative growth.

## 6.4 SETTLEMENTS IN MID-SUFFOLK

83. The indicative figure provided by Mid-Suffolk Council is for 48 dwellings for the parishes of Brome and Oakley, Stuston and Palgrave, which contrasts with AECOM's own calculation of 154 dwellings in its Local Housing Needs Assessment. The higher figure equates to 9 dwellings per year between 2019 and 2036.
84. The difference between the two figures may be explained by the fact that Mid Suffolk's calculation builds in supply-side factors/constraints (as appropriate for a Local Plan), whereas AECOM's (as appropriate for a housing needs assessment) was calculated in line with the government's standard method for assessing housing need, with much greater weight on demand-side factors, and fewer supply-side considerations.
85. It is important to recognise, however, in line with the NPPF, that Mid Suffolk's figure definitively supersedes AECOM's own calculation and therefore should be considered the minimum housing requirement for the Mid Suffolk part of the Neighbourhood Plan Area. The larger figure is still a helpful indication of what the unconstrained (i.e. demand-side) housing need might be in this part of the Neighbourhood Plan area if the neighbourhood plan decided to support a higher level of development than that proposed by Mid-Suffolk.
86. In recent years, the Mid-Suffolk parishes have accommodated only very small numbers of new dwellings, with Palgrave accommodating most of these; six between 2011/12 and 2017/18.
87. The emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Regulation 18 Preferred Options Draft
88. was published in July 2019. The emerging Plan designates Palgrave, Brome and Stuston as "Mid-Suffolk Hinterland Villages" and Oakley as a "Hamlet Village". The plan makes a housing allocation to these villages in draft Policy SP04 - Housing Spatial Distribution. The minimum requirement housing figure shown for the Mid-Suffolk part of the Diss and District Neighbourhood Plan including Palgrave parish, is 64 dwellings, comprising 49 in Palgrave and 15 in Brome which already have planning permission (these had planning permission as of April 2018). There is no expectation from Stuston although some windfall sites may emerge.

## 6.5 ISSUES

90. Suitable and available sites with no obvious constraints only deliver 35 dwellings in the South Norfolk part of the neighbourhood plan area, which is significantly below the required housing targets. However, assuming issues and constraints can be overcome, there should be ample land available to deliver the necessary housing growth.
91. All the planned growth through new allocations is in South Norfolk, mainly Diss. The expectation is that Diss town will need to provide most of the new housing.

## 7 ACCOMMODATION PROFILE

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92. Census data shows that there are proportionally more terraces and flats in the combined parishes than across the local authorities, with many of these in Diss rather than the rural villages. Although the proportion of detached homes is lower than observed across the District, it is still significantly higher than the average for England.
93. The neighbourhood plan area differs significantly from the Local Authority areas in that it has more very small homes, a larger proportion of 4 room properties and fewer very large properties of 8 rooms or more. Nevertheless, this is a relative assessment- the neighbourhood plan area still has a large proportion of properties with 5 rooms or more (70.8%). (Analysis taken from the Housing Needs Assessment document drafted by AECOM).
94. The 2011 Census data reveals that the age profile of Diss and District is very similar to that of South Norfolk. We do note, however, a slightly larger proportion of residents in the older age brackets. For example, 20% of Diss and District NA residents are aged between 65 and 84, compared with 18% across the District. The proportion of younger residents aged between 0 and 15 is one percentage point lower than the District. Both areas are characterised by a larger number of residents in the older brackets compared to the England average.
95. Between the two Censuses, the number of residents aged 85 and over is the age group that has increased the most (30.2%).
96. The ONS population projections also reveal that, by 2036, people aged over 65 will be the single largest group in South Norfolk and Mid Suffolk. Therefore, there will be a significant increase in the demand for housing related support services. The ageing of the population currently aged 45-64 thus has major implications for the neighbourhood plan over the Plan period.
97. Household composition in Diss and District is not dissimilar to the District as a whole. The main difference is the higher proportion of one-person households, which is increasing.
98. A large and increasing proportion of families with non-dependent children, as is the case in Diss and District, can sometimes indicate difficulties experienced by younger residents in forming their own households, possibly due to a lack of suitable dwellings.

99. Through a life-stage modelling exercise, the HNA concluded that by the end of the neighbourhood plan period, the distribution of dwellings should ideally be only slightly different from that of today; proportionally there should be slightly fewer homes of 1 and 2 bedrooms, and slightly more homes of 3, 4 and 5+ bedrooms.
100. These findings indicate that the smaller average size of homes in Diss and District compared to the Local Authority averages means that Diss and District is, broadly speaking, well-placed already to cope with the forecast ageing of the population and their consequent demand for smaller homes as they downsize.
101. However, it is important to caveat the result of this model, because it is based on past trends and issues of supply. Supply, not just demographic profile, can influence occupancy patterns. For this reason, AECOM verified the results further with respect to occupancy trends at the national level. This recommended split implies more demand for one and three-bedroom dwellings, and less for those with two bedrooms and four or more bedrooms.
102. To reflect this, the LHNA advises taking the average of the life stage modelling and the national occupancy trends, meaning the final recommendation for the dwelling mix is as follows (all figures rounded and approximate):
- 15% one bedroom dwellings;
  - 15% two bedroom dwellings;
  - 50% three bedroom dwellings; and
  - 20% four or more bedroom dwellings.

## 7.1 ISSUES

103. The housing profile of the area is different from that of South Norfolk and Mid-Suffolk, with proportionately more terrace properties and flats, with a good number of these situated in Diss.
104. The age profile is broadly similar to that of South Norfolk, though there is a slightly higher proportion of older people, and this is increasing over time. The housing profile would appear to cater well for this.
105. There is a large and increasing proportion of families with non-dependent children, which could indicate difficulties experienced by younger people in buying locally or remaining in the area.
106. Analysis completed as part of the Housing Needs Assessment (AECOM) indicates that the housing profile could usefully include proportionately fewer small properties and more medium to large 3-bedroom properties.

## 8 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

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### 8.1 OVERVIEW

Affordable housing comprises:

- Affordable housing to rent from a registered provider
- Starter homes
- Discounted market sales housing
- Other affordable routes to home ownership – such as rent to buy

107. All of these types are available as entry-level homes, so restricted to people whose first house it will be.

108. The Government's definition of affordable rental homes is that they should cost no more than 80% of the average local market rent. In terms of home ownership, it must be provided at a level at which the mortgage payments on the property should be more than would be paid on council housing, but below market levels. It must also remain affordable for eligible future occupants although there is a right to buy scheme.

### 8.2 LOCAL HOUSING NEED

109. The AECOM Local Housing Needs Assessment considered the requirement for affordable housing. It reported that the South Norfolk SHMA concluded that 15% of affordable housing need in South Norfolk should be met through the provision of 1 bed flats, 43% by 2 bed properties, 36% by 3 bed houses and 7% by 4+ bed houses. This does not, however, align with the current housing waiting list for the South Norfolk part of the Diss and District Neighbourhood Area, which suggests a much higher need for one bed properties and that the types of housing most suitable are likely therefore to tend more towards bungalows, flats and smaller (i.e. terraced and semi-detached rather than detached) house types.

110. Overall, the SHMA considers that the dwellings needed across South Norfolk between now and the end of the Local Plan period would comprise 80% market housing and 20% affordable housing. As such, neither the SHMA nor the snapshot of the current affordable waiting list suggest there is any overwhelming need for the neighbourhood plan to provide a housing rural exception site, at least not early in the Plan period, and the Mid Suffolk SHMA comes to a similar conclusion.

111. Affordability thresholds calculated as part of the AECOM LHNA study show that the income required to buy an entry-level market home for sale (i.e. the Purchase Threshold) exceeds what is available to those on median household incomes and lower quartile household incomes.
112. For the Starter Homes and Shared Ownership tenures, i.e. those aimed at people on lower quartile incomes, average lower quartile incomes are insufficient to access any of these tenures, although shared ownership at 50% or less is within reach for those on average incomes.
113. The LHNA concluded that future provision should focus on social and affordable rented housing where possible. Also appropriate locally would be shared ownership which, at a 25% or 50% share, remains significantly more affordable than starter homes. The fact that shared ownership is more affordable than entry-level market rent, and within reach for those on median incomes, represents a clear opportunity for the increased provision of this tenure (which is poorly represented in the current dwelling mix) to facilitate access to home ownership for those on average incomes who wish to attain it.
114. The comparison of tenures between the Local Authorities and the neighbourhood plan area strongly suggests that Diss and District is less affordable than its wider area, and potentially also becoming less affordable over time as house prices steadily rise.

### 8.3 HOUSING FOR FIRST TIME BUYERS

115. There were 2,548 individuals aged between 18 and 35 in Diss and District in 2011. This represents 18.8% of the population (13,531). These individuals may or may not have formed their own households.
- 116.
117. Based on Census 2011 data, it is estimated that there are 470 households that could potentially be formed that had not yet done so. AECOM assumed these households are still living with their parents. They will not have formed their own household for several reasons including the absence of suitable affordable tenures (though there will be other reasons, too, such as saving money). Census data about household composition shows that 502 households have non-dependent children living in them. The figure of 470 above can therefore be seen as a broadly reasonable estimate.
- 118.
119. Rental is by far the most commonly occupied tenure among Household Reference Person (HRPs) under the age of 49, although it is clear that rental decreases and ownership increased with advancing age. This is a common pattern seen across the country and is likely linked to increasing income and savings over time.

120. However, the tenures occupied by different households can vary significantly between the ages of 25 and 49. Data interrogated for households under the age of 35 specifically shows the importance of the private and social rented sectors at present for younger households, although it does show that after the age of 30, more HRPs are able to afford to own their own house than rent, helped by mortgages, loans or shared ownership schemes.

121. Based on the average of the datasets interrogated by AECOM, an estimated tenure split of new-build homes has been developed, bearing in mind the needs of newly forming households specifically. This tenure split emphasizes the importance to these households of both entry-level market sales (including affordable routes to home ownership) and private rent, and is as follows:

- Home ownership 4%
- Entry-level market sales/intermediate ownership product 10%
- Social rent 33%
- Private rent 53%

#### 8.4 ISSUES:

122. Although there is a need to provide affordable housing, this is not overwhelming and perhaps reduces the need for a Rural Exception site

123. The focus should be on affordable/ social rented, but there is also a need for more shared equity/ shared home ownership provision.

124. As well as social/ affordable rent, there is a significant need for many new homes to be available to rent to cater for new households

## 9 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

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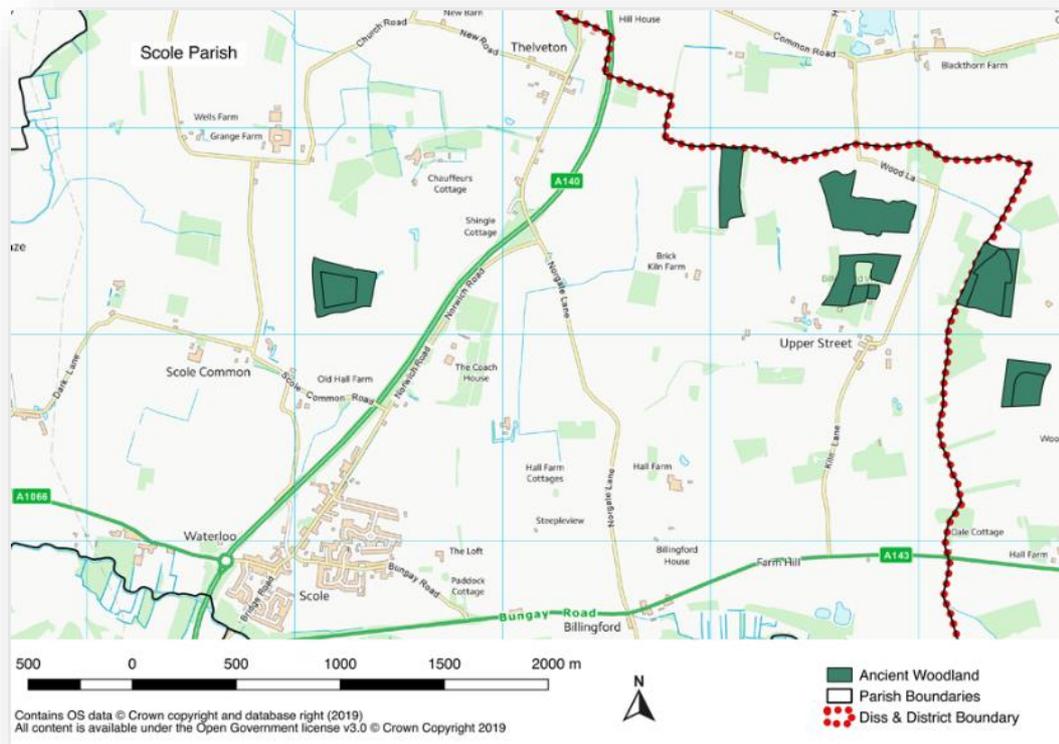
### 9.1 WILDLIFE DESIGNATIONS

126. There are no European Wildlife Sites within the Diss and District neighbourhood plan area. The nearest, Waveney and Little Ouse Valley Fens, is around 2.5km west. Breckland Special Protection Area lies 9.5km away. Wortham Ling and Gypsy Camp Meadows Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lie adjacent the plan area and there are a number of other SSSI designations within fairly close proximity. There are no national designations within the plan boundary.

127. There are a number of designated ancient woodlands in Scole Parish, some of which are locally identified as county wildlife sites. Ancient woods are areas of woodland that have persisted since 1600 in England and Wales. This is when maps started to be reasonably accurate so we can tell that these areas have had tree cover for hundreds of years. They are relatively undisturbed by human development. As a result, they are unique and complex communities of plants, fungi, insects and other microorganisms. In Scole, it includes Great Wood, Billingford Wood (N&S) and Brickiln Farm Wood, the other areas are unnamed, see **Figure 4**.

128. **Figure 5** shows that there are 21 County Wildlife Sites within the Diss and District area, one of which, Roydon Fen, is also designated as a Local Nature Reserve. At the time of writing, only Norfolk data on the location of County Wildlife Sites is publicly available. There is also a site directly adjacent. The sites are a mix of privately or publicly owned and vary in size and shape from small meadows, green lanes and hedges to much larger areas of ancient woodland. County Wildlife Sites are often recognised as being high value for wildlife, sometimes because they support characteristic or threatened species or habitat. They are however non-statutory designations and whilst there should be a presumption against granting permission for development that would have an adverse impact, they are not protected by legislation.

Figure 4: Ancient Woodland



130. Roydon Fen Local Nature Reserve is situated on the edge of the Waveney Valley, part of a chain of fens that are strung like jewels along the Norfolk and Suffolk border. The reserve is tucked away down a small lane within a mile or so of Diss, offering a sense of the wildness and extensive wetland. Like all valley fens Roydon is incredibly wet most of the year, with spring-fed, deep peat soils permanently water-logged. Walking trails, including a boardwalk, run through the fen, as can be seen at <https://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/roydonfen>

Figure 5: County Wildlife Sites

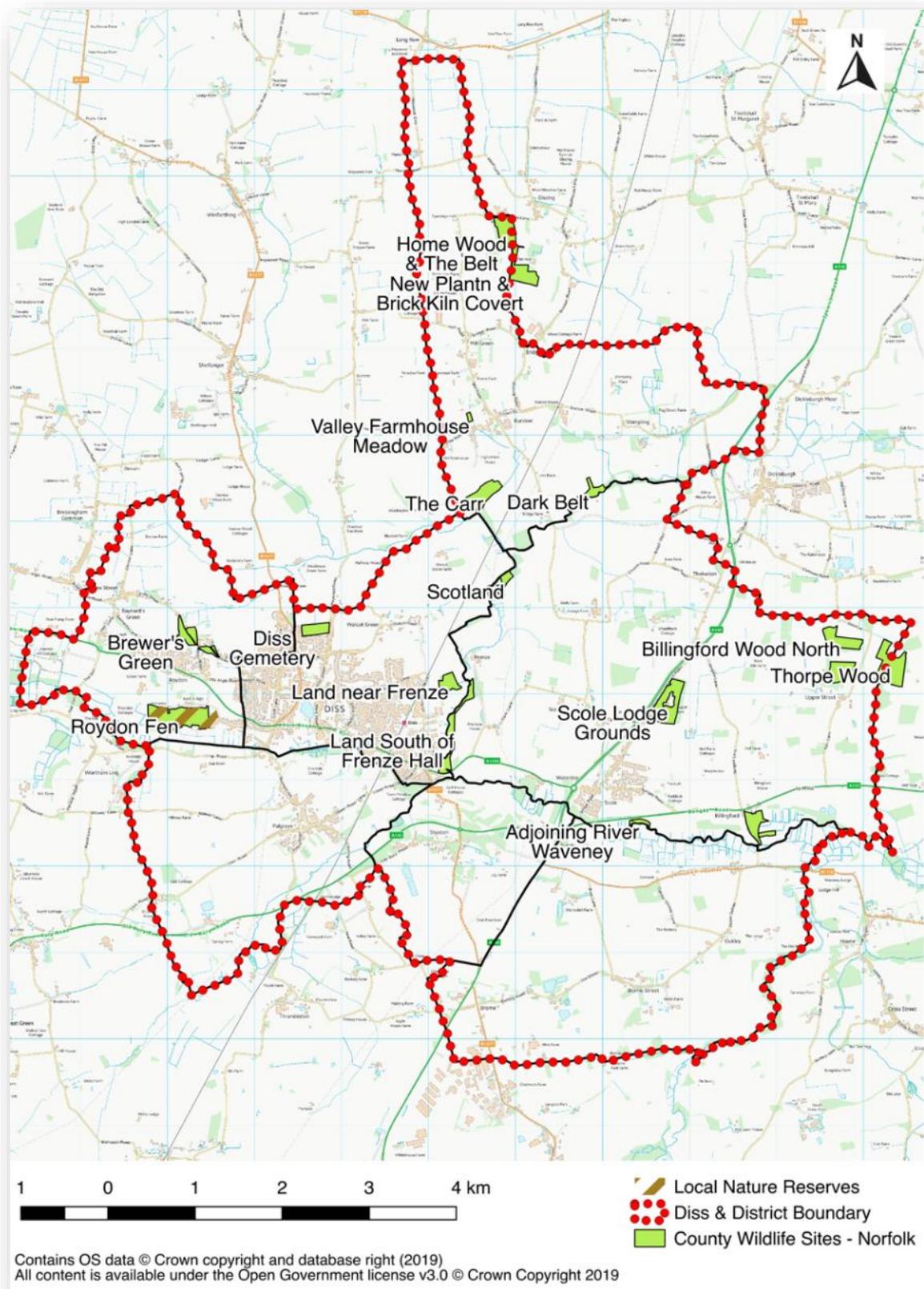
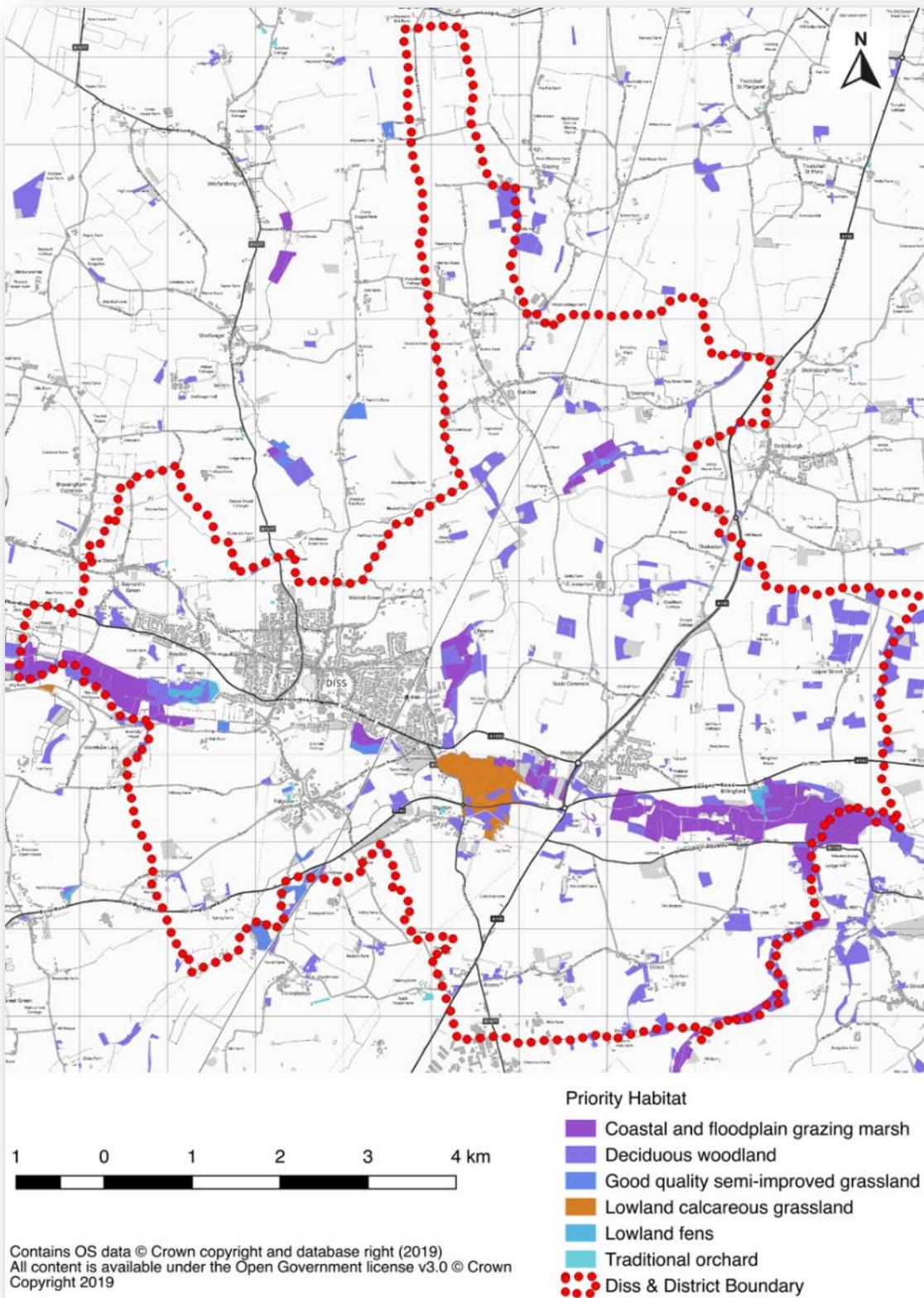


Figure 6: Priority Habitat



132. The neighbourhood plan area contains a range of habitats identified as ‘priority habitats’, those designated as being the most threatened (see Figure 6), and requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP). The purpose of UKBAP is to promote the conservation of these habitats and species, which includes making effective use of the planning system for this purpose. Priority habitats that feature strongly in this area include deciduous woodland and coastal and floodplain grazing marsh.

## 9.2 DARK SKIES

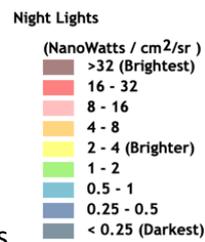
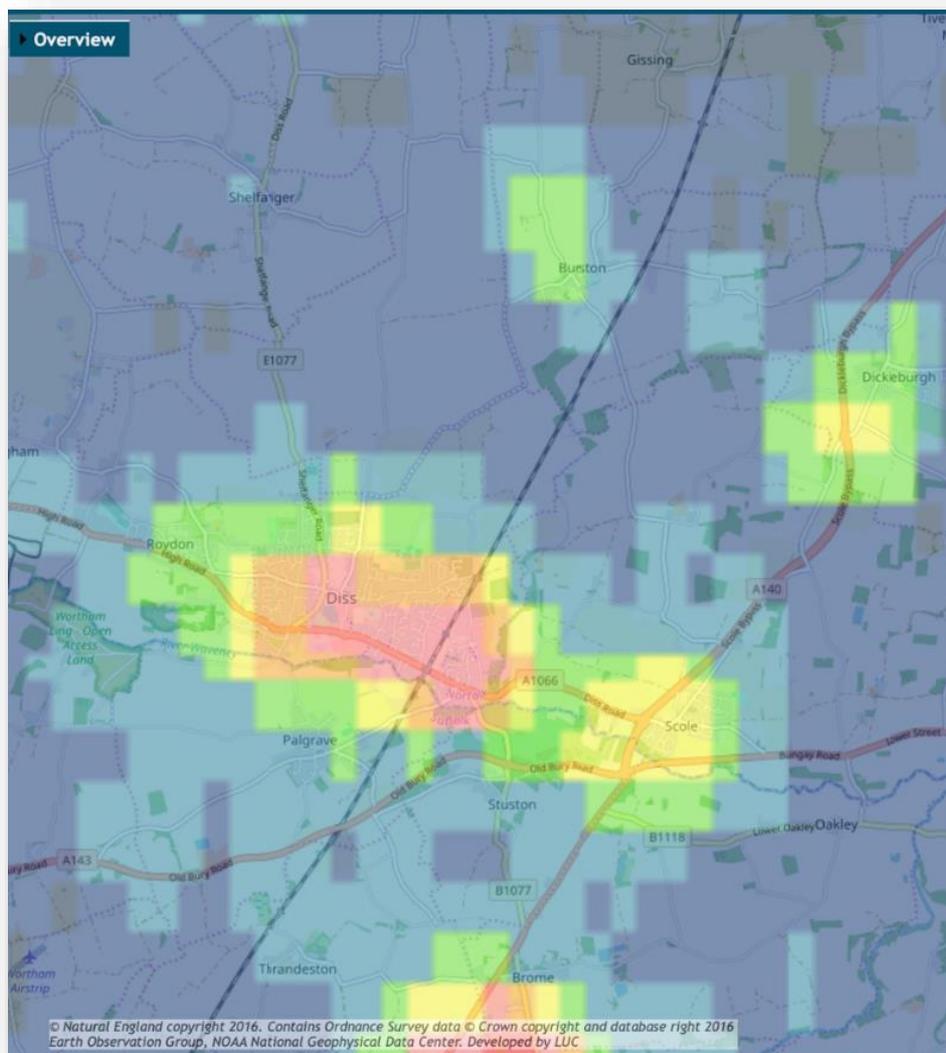


Figure 7: England’s Light Pollution & Dark Skies



133. **Figure 7** show real variation across the neighbourhood plan area. The urban area of Diss with its streetlighting and night-time economy falls into one of the brightest categories, with light effects spilling out beyond the settlement. Some parts of Brome and Oakley, Burston and Shimpling, Palgrave and Stuston, which are much more rural in their character, register as having some of the darkest skies. The night sky in Brome is affected by its proximity to the Eye Airfield Industrial Estate and lighting schemes along the main roads also impacts upon darkness.

134. The Campaign to Protect Rural England considers that darkness at night is one of the key characteristics of rural areas and it represents a major difference between what is rural and what is urban. Security lights, floodlights and street lights all break into darkness and create a veil of light across the night sky. There is increasing awareness of the impact that light pollution can have on wildlife, by interrupting natural rhythms including migration, reproduction and feeding patterns. Manmade light is known to cause confusion to migrating birds and many of us will have heard birds singing late into the night in trees lit by a streetlight.

### 9.3 FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT

135. The River Waveney which runs through the neighbourhood plan area is a key feature of both the landscape and water management. Low lying areas adjacent the river are at risk of both fluvial and tidal flooding.

136. The Environment Agency has devised a set of flood zones for guidance by developers, councils and communities to explain the probability of river and sea flooding. Flood Zone 1 is low probability, land having less than a 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding, shown as clear on the flood map, all land outside Zones 2 and 3. Flood Zone 2 is Medium probability, land having between a 1 in 100 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river flooding. Flood Zone 3a is land having 1 in 100 or greater annual probability, and Flood Zone 3b which is the functional floodplain. Zones 3a and 3b are not separately distinguished on Flood Maps. Development should be located in areas of lowest risk from flooding in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. **Figure 8** provides the extent of Flood Zones across the neighbourhood plan area.

Figure 8: Flood Risk from Rivers

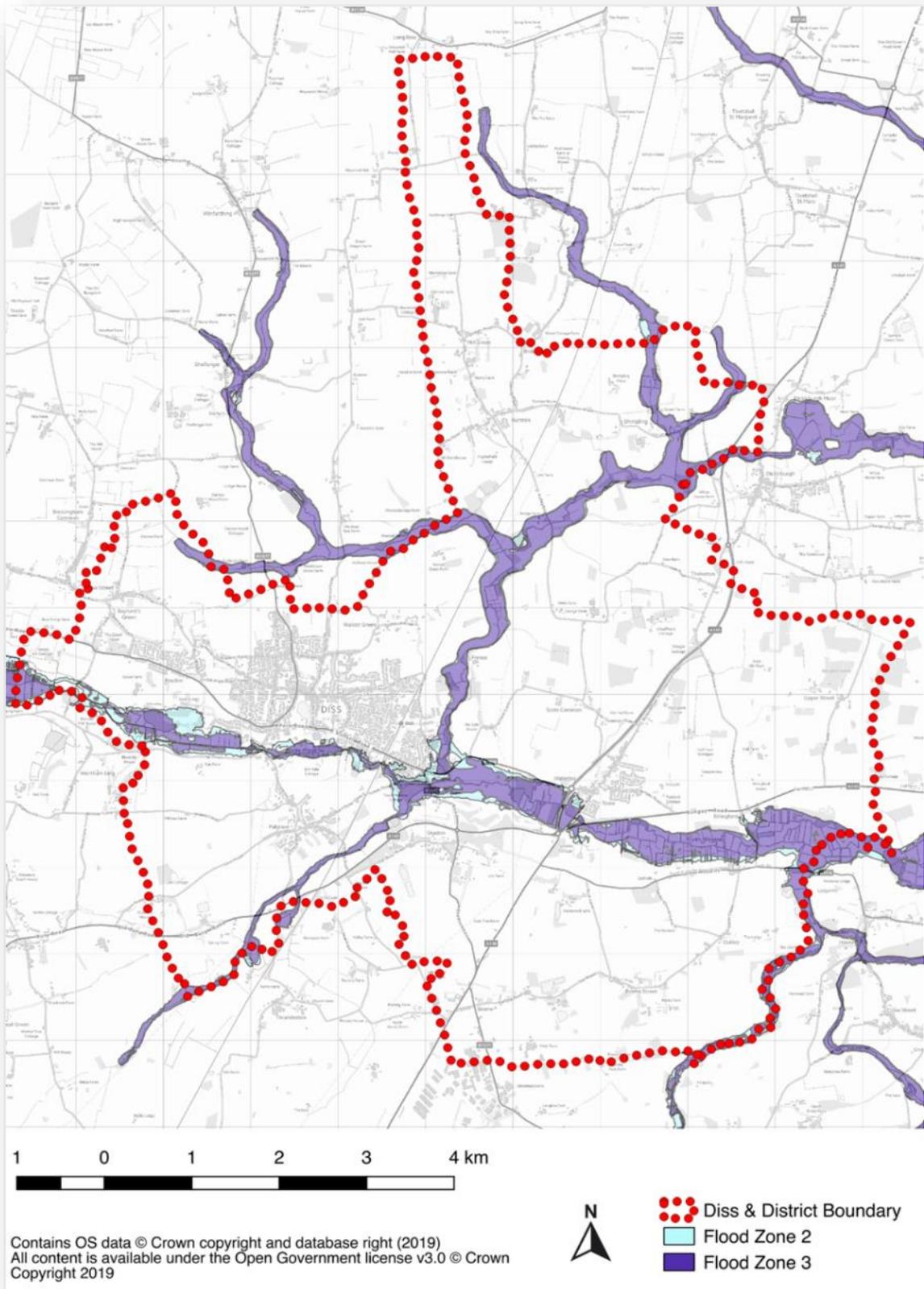
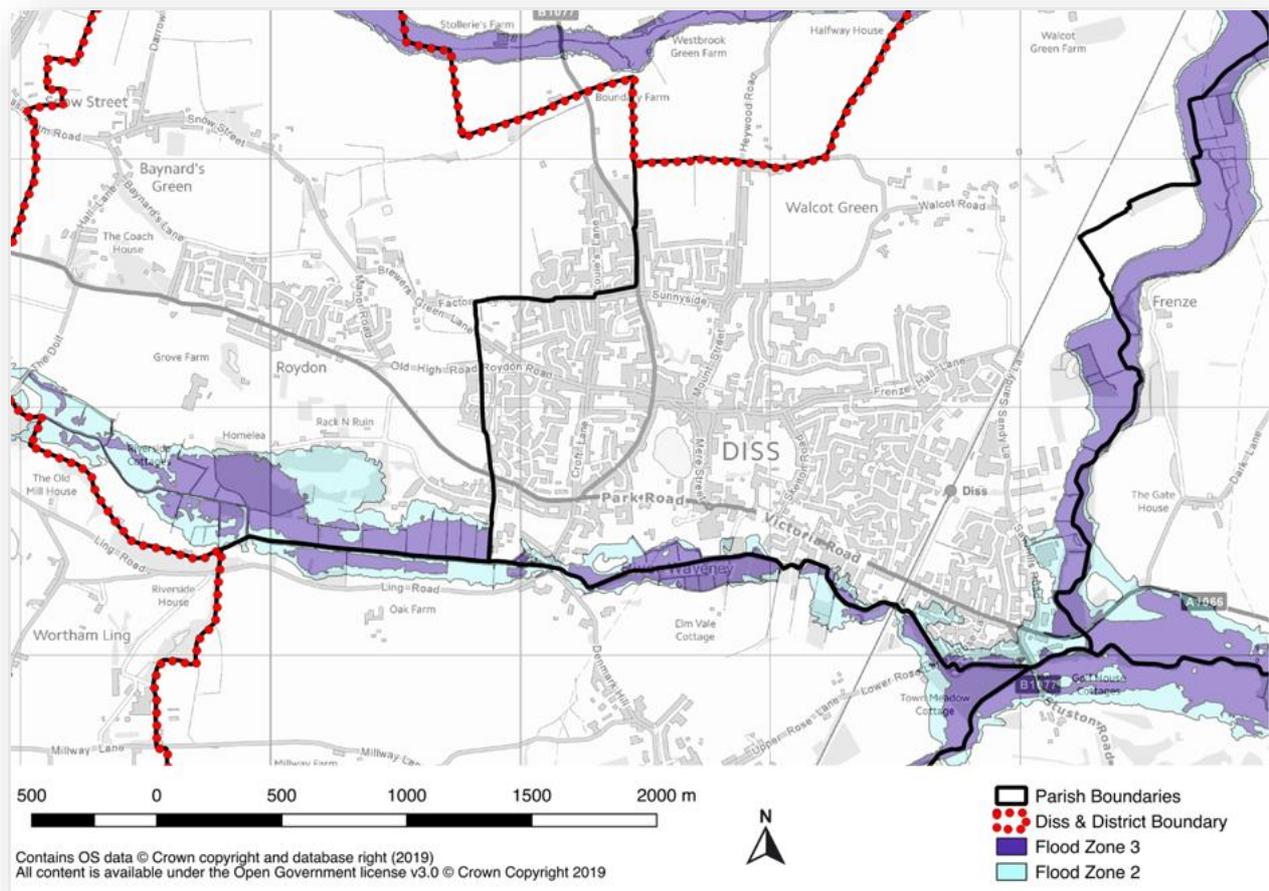


Figure 9: Flood Risk around Diss



138. **Figure 9** provides more detail of the flood constraints that exist in and around Diss, which is where much of the housing growth will be delivered. Flood risk is greatest to the south, following the River Waveney, and to the east. A number of properties between Rose Lane and Stuston Road are shown to be within Flood Zone 3. Further properties to the north of Ling Road, south of Victoria Road, in the vicinity of Rose Lane, London Road/Whitehorse Street junction are within Flood Zone 2.

139. Environment Agency mapping (**Figure 10**) shows the extent of surface water flooding in the main settlement areas of Diss, Roydon and Scole. Diss is at risk from surface water flooding, however it is mostly confined to gardens and the road network as well as the flood plain of the existing watercourse. There is significant flooding to property from overland flow routes originating from the vicinity of Mount Street and extending in a south-east direction towards Victoria Street and the River Waveney. Heavy rain has been known to cause flash flooding in parts of Diss and Scole, where in 2016 Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service had to attend a number of incidents. The Norfolk Local Flood Risk Management Strategy identifies that there are 90 properties at risk of surface water flooding in Diss and 20 in Scole.

Figure 10: Surface Water Flood Risk



- High risk: each year, the area has a chance of flooding of greater than 1 in 30 (3.3%)
- Medium risk: each year, the area has a chance of flooding of between 1 in 100 (1%) and 1 in 30 (3.3%)
- Low risk: each year, the area has a chance of flooding of between 1 in 1,000 (0.1%) and a 1 in 100 (1%)
- Very low risk: each year, the area has a chance of flooding of less than 1 in 1,000 (<0.1%)

Source: Environment Agency

<https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk/map>

#### 9.4 ISSUES:

140. The presence of the River Waveney increases the likelihood of flooding and parts of the settlement area in Diss fall within Flood Zones 2 and 3. This will constrain the location of future development within the town. It should also be considered that as a consequence of climate change, peak rainfall intensity and peak river flow are expected to increase by up to 40%.

141. Surface water flooding is an issue in some parts of the main settlement areas, it will be important to ensure this is not worsened through new development.

142. Dark skies at night are a feature of the smaller rural settlements including Burston and Shimpling and Palgrave, giving them a tranquil, peaceful character. Light spills out beyond the urban areas, impacting upon smaller settlements which are nearby.
143. The impact of development on dark night skies, including related infrastructure improvements, may want to be considered.
144. There are a number of priority habitats across the area which could be sensitive to development.
145. The area has a number of county wildlife sites, which whilst considered as part of determining planning applications, are not protected in legislative terms. The working group could consider designating these as Local Green Spaces if they are of demonstrable community value.

## 10 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

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### 10.1 CHARACTER AREAS

146. The countryside around Diss is characterised by gently sloping valley side rising from the flood plain of the river, joining a gently undulating plain extending to the north. To the east the land rises from the river to the railway line. This gives a reasonably pleasant approach from the south and north, although later development has affected the setting from east and west.
147. Rising ground within the town has created some spectacular viewpoints and townscapes within the streets and across to the Mere and park. The trees along Park Road are a significant element in the views from the north, while the church tower dominates the view from the south.
148. Scole is one of the largest parishes in South Norfolk, with much of its character to the south dominated by the landscape of the Waveney Valley, with the A143 providing a platform from where extensive views can be enjoyed.
149. The neighbourhood plan area falls into five Landscape Character Areas:
- Waveney Rural River Valley – Diss, Scole and Roydon
  - Waveney Tributary Farmland – Burston, Shimpling,
  - Rolling Valley Claylands – Brome
  - Rolling Valley Farmlands & Furze – Oakley, Stuston
  - Ancient Plateau Claylands - Palgrave

### **Waveney rural River Valley - Diss, Scole and Roydon**

150. The area includes the settlements of Diss, Roydon and Scole. Key characteristics include its flat, wide floodplain with gently sloping valley sites, relatively large-scale open valley landscape, arable and pastoral farming, discrete woodland blocks, mills, churches and strong market town character. Away from the main roads a peaceful and tranquil character is retained.

Development considerations include:

- Maintaining the character of the rural land network;
- Conserving views to landmark churches on valley crests;
- Conserve and enhance the compact character of the market towns;
- Ensure main roads do not provide a catalyst for further linear development;
- Protect the rural character of the river valley;
- Consider the impact of potential infrastructure projects.

### **Waveney Tributary Farmland – Burston and Shimpling**

151. This is considered to be a peaceful rural landscape, with arable farmland the dominant land use. Key characteristics include an undulating landform, where it is dissected by tributaries, a large-scale open landscape on higher ground with some distant views, narrow streams and drainage channels, ponds and moats, mature hedgerows including hawthorn / blackthorn, scattered blocks of woodland and some large farm units. The small pockets of woodland are particularly characteristic in the area south of Burston, towards the River Waveney. The hedgerows and woodlands, create pattern and variety in the landscape and contribute to a more intimate and enclosed feel in some areas.

**Development considerations include:**

- Conserve the rural peaceful character, with the pattern of small villages set within the agricultural landscape;
- Conserve the character and individual identity of villages set around greens, including Burston. Infilling or extension of settlements could result in a change to a more compact character and loss of individual identity;
- Seek to maintain soft grass verges and open frontages;
- Conserve village greens and commons;
- Conserve the local vernacular features that contribute to the rural character – including distinctive road signs, road names and narrow lanes;
- Consider potential effects of large-scale developments, for example relating to airfield sites.

### **Rolling Valley Claylands – Brome**

152. The landscape here is found on the sides of the valleys that cut through the central clay plateau of Suffolk. Key land uses include farming, with some substantial and long-established hedges which have a visual impact within a landscape of valleys.

#### **Development considerations include:**

- Maintain and enhance the distinctive landscape and settlement pattern
- Safeguard and increase woodland and hedge cover

### **Rolling Valley Farmlands & Furze – Oakley and Stuston**

153. Due to the geological background there are frequent occurrences of dry heaths such as at Stuston Common. The landscape has good tree cover and a few fragmented woodlands and hedgerows. There are numerous villages and hamlets, with these tending to be tightly clustered. As a valley side landscape, new buildings are likely to have a significant impact on the character and visual impact of the landscape.

#### **Development considerations include:**

- Maintain and enhance the distinctive landscape and settlement pattern;
- Safeguard the historic features;
- Minimise the visual intrusion on the landscape including impact on the skyline;
- Safeguard the heathland and open space areas;
- Safeguard and increase the woodland, tree and hedgerow cover.

### **Ancient Plateau Claylands - Palgrave**

154. Characterised by arable farmland retaining much of the older field patterns of irregular partitions, some substantial blocks of woodland and established hedgerows. Airfields are a regular feature, with Eye Airfield having a significant visual impact due to the level of topography.

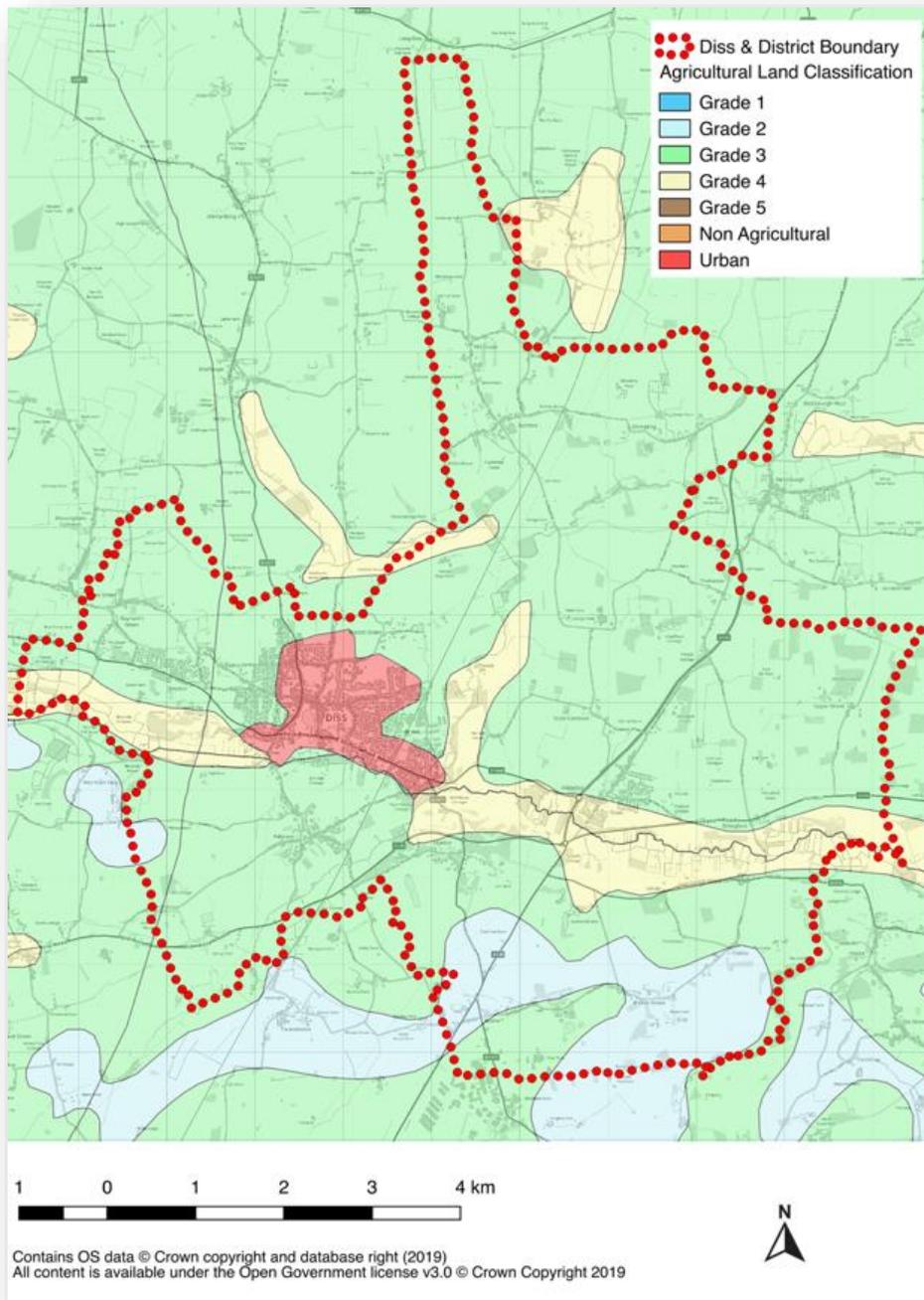
#### **Development considerations relevant to the neighbourhood plan area include:**

- Maintain and enhance the settlement pattern, ensuring a sense of separation between settlements;
- Reinforce and enhance existing field boundaries;

## 10.2 AGRICULTURAL LAND

155. Farming is a key land use across the rural parts of the neighbourhood plan area. Much of the land is graded as good to moderate (Grade 3) in quality, with some high value agricultural land (Grade 2) existing in the south around Stuston and Brome. See **Figure 11**.

Figure 11: Agricultural Land Classification



### 10.3 ISSUES

156. Diss is characterised as a compact market town and large-scale future development could erode this.
157. Any development located in the river valley, to the south of Diss, should be designed and sited sensitively to ensure retention of the character of the Waveney Valley.
158. The rural part of the neighbourhood plan area is peaceful in its character, with a pattern of small villages set within the agricultural landscape. Future development in the villages could erode this character if not planned and designed sensitively. Likewise, it is possible that as Diss expands it encroaches upon these rural villages, impacting on their character.
159. Burston is unique in its setting around a village green and infilling or extension of the village could change its character.
160. Mature hedgerows are a key feature of the landscape, providing pattern and variety. These could be sensitive to development proposals, depending upon where they come forward.
161. The surrounding agricultural land continues to be productive and part of it is considered to be of high value, this could be lost to new development depending on where it is located.

# 11 TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

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163. Diss and District is connected by the A140, A1066 and regular rail services from Diss town on the Norwich to London railway line. The A143 to Great Yarmouth and Bury St Edmunds runs east to west through the neighbourhood plan area, just south of the town. The town itself is around 22/ 23 miles south of Norwich, depending on which route is taken.

164. Norfolk County Council published in February 2020 a Diss Network Improvement Strategy for the town. This assessed a range of highway matters including safety and congestion.

## 11.1 HIGHWAY SAFETY

165. Amongst other things, this provides information on cyclist, motor vehicle and pedestrian collisions where these resulted in an injury, between July 2014 and July 2019, see **Figure 12**.

Figure 12: Injury accidents in Diss

Accident Type	Slight Injury	Serious Injury	Fatal Accident
Cyclists	9	2	0
Vehicles	32	3	0
Pedestrians	7	4	1

**Figure 12** shows that there has been a total of 11 accidents involving cyclists over a five-year period. There is no single hotspot for collisions but there is a concentration of cyclist collisions located at junctions along the A1066.

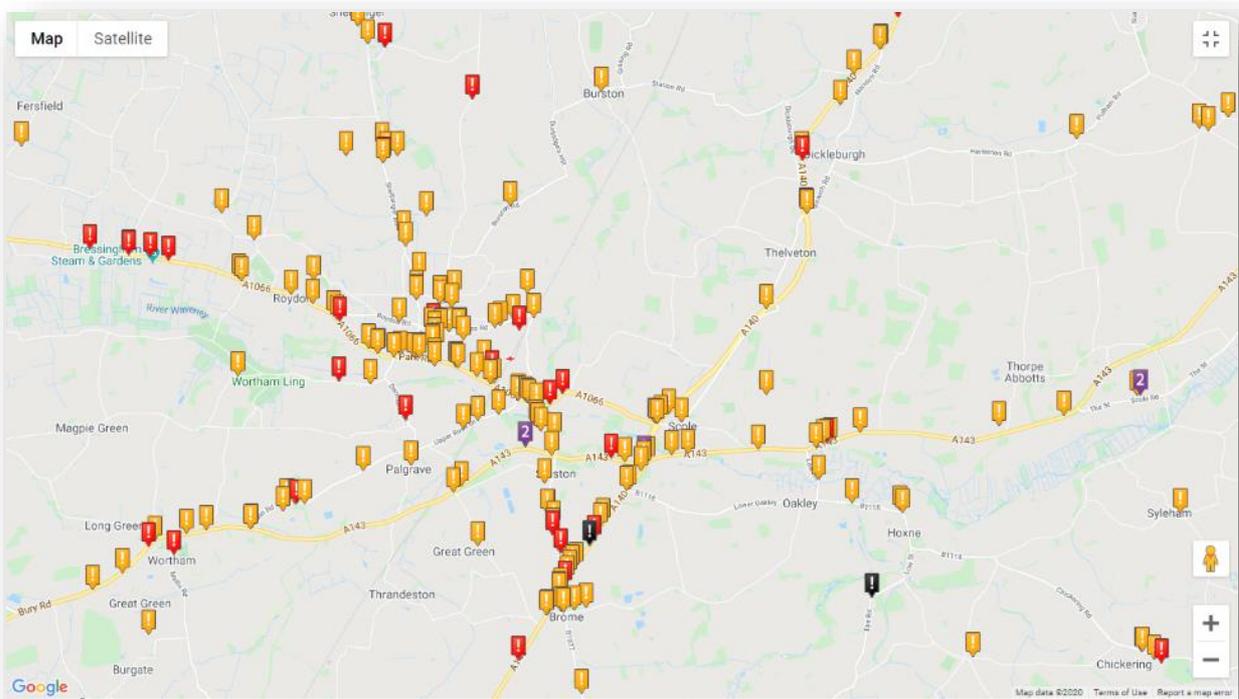
166. As expected, there are more collisions involving motor vehicles, **Figure 12** displays that there have been 35 accidents involving vehicles. Whilst there is no single hotspot of collisions they are concentrated along the key routes in and out of the town along the A1066.

167. Collisions involving pedestrians are concentrated mostly in the centre of the town, near to or at the High Street. This concentration of collisions is consistent with there

being a larger concentration of pedestrians in the area. **Figure 12** displays that there have been 12 accidents involving pedestrians, with one accident in July 2019 that resulted in a fatality.

168. In summary, the casualty data for Diss is typical for a market town. The analysis has identified areas where collisions have occurred more frequently. These concentrations are along the A1066, which is consistent with the road being the major route in and out of the town. The analysis has not identified road safety as a particular issue in Diss but has identified areas within the town where interventions could be considered.

Figure 13: Location of Injury accidents



Key: orange = slight injuries, red – Serious injuries, black = fatal injuries

**Figure 13** above indicates that accidents are mainly prevalent in Diss and along the main routes such as the A140 and A1066.

## 11.2 PUBLIC CAR PARKING

169. Diss Town Council published a Car Parking report in 2015. The study aimed to understand parking behaviour in Diss. The study confirmed that there were adequate parking provisions in Diss as most drivers were able to park at their first-choice car park. The car parks in Diss are: Chapel Street Lower, Chapel Street Upper, Church Street Car Park, Mount Street Car Park, Park Road Car Park, Heritage Triangle Car Park, Shelfanger Road Car Park and Weavers Car Park additionally there are two large private car parks for customers of Morrisons and Tesco. The study found that most car park users parked for less than one hour. Of those surveyed, almost 60% of people lived in Diss and only 7% were visiting the town. Parking has not been identified as a major issue for the town, although there could be better signage.
170. There have been recent changes to car parking pricing, in South Norfolk Council owned car parks, and this had led to some increase in on-street parking.

## 11.3 CONGESTION AND NETWORK EFFICIENCY

171. Congestion is a known issue in Diss, especially along the A1066 and Vince's Road. Norfolk County Council has already implemented initiatives to reduce the congestion along Vince's Road by installing cameras and is working on a scheme to improve the Vince's Road/A1066 roundabout to further improve access. As part of the report, the county council looked at the amount of through traffic in the town, the capacity at a few key junctions and the impact future growth could have on the congestion issues.
172. The through traffic assessment shows that only 17% of existing movements within Diss are through traffic and therefore a high proportion of traffic in Diss has a purpose related to the town. The through traffic movement of greatest significance is to/from the west and south of Diss.
173. It is estimated that traffic levels during the AM and PM peak periods, in Diss town, will increase by approximately 24% by 2036, assuming no additional allocations over and above existing commitments. Whilst the proportion of through traffic is forecast to remain at 17% the total quantum of traffic trips will increase, creating additional pressures and demands on the strategic transport network surrounding the town.
174. The report looked at three growth scenarios for the town and surrounding area.

Three indicative scenarios were tested:

- Town centre growth of 300 dwellings (although this was actually east of the town near the industrial area and station)
- Growth to the north of 2000 dwellings
- Growth to the south of 2000 dwellings

175. The assessment considered key junctions as this is where the congestion is often a problem. The junction impact of the increased traffic from the town centre scenario would have an increase of 1% in both the AM and PM peak hour. The junction impact of the increased traffic from the north scenario would have an increase of 13% in the AM peak hour and an increase of 10% in the PM peak hour. Finally, the junction impact of the increased traffic from the south scenario would have an increase of 7% in the AM peak hour and an increase of 5% in the PM peak hour.

176. This shows that pro-rata the impact of Southern development on junctions is less than the impact from development to the north, and similar to the town centre/ east development scenario. In terms of the impact on junctions, development to the north is the worst option. However, the southern option actually generates most traffic pro-rata, which of course is worse for CO<sub>2</sub> and air pollution emissions.

177. The A1066 Morrisons Roundabout Junction provides access to a Morrisons supermarket. There are already lengthy delays in the AM and PM peak periods and it is forecast to operate over-capacity even without new allocations. So, this junction will require improvement whatever the growth scenario. The analysis in the report shows that the most constrained junction is the Morrisons Roundabout. Under all growth scenarios it would require improvement. The work that has been done has identified potential options for mitigation of the congestion.

178. The A1066/ Sawmills signalised junction operates within capacity at the moment, but would operate very close to capacity under the town centre growth scenario and would require improvement to maintain its reliability. The improvement would also be sufficient to cater for the impact of the other scenarios.

179. Denmark St mini-roundabout is currently within capacity, but both larger growth scenarios take it over capacity and there are no meaningful improvement options.

180. In summary, the only deliverable option in terms of the capacity of key junctions is the town centre growth scenario. The other scenarios have adverse impacts on one or more of the key junctions for which no mitigation has been identified.

181. The report also looked at northern and southern links roads. Large-scale growth to the north (2,000 dwellings) to deliver a link road (from A1066 to A140) would not bring any strategic traffic benefits to the town as the additional traffic would be greater than any traffic relief. As a stand-alone scheme (without growth) the northern link only reduced through-traffic by 13%, and so would not be value for money.

182. A southern link road has greater traffic reduction benefits, but not so great as to outweigh the costs and the impacts on the river valley. An analysis was carried out looking at the growth scenario of 2,000 homes to the south of Diss. The analysis found that a southern link would also re-route some development traffic. However, the development impacts within the town centre would be greater than the benefits of a southern link road and therefore delivering a link with growth would not bring strategic transport benefits to Diss.

## 12 CYCLING AND WALKING

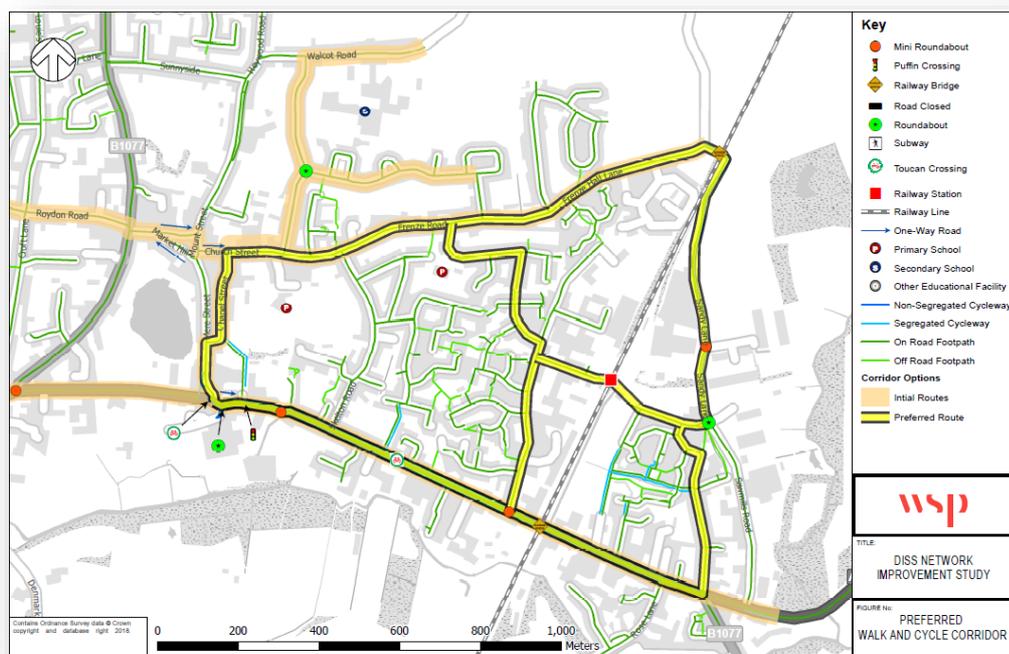
184. Given the potential opportunities to increase walking and cycling, this was also considered in the report. Cycling and walking bring enormous benefits in terms of physical and mental well-being. If greater cycling and walking resulted in people leaving their cars at home more often, this could also reduce congestion in the town.

185. The Sustrans National Cycle Route 30 (NCN 30) passes the outskirts of Diss, and there is an on-road link to Diss Railway Station. NCN 30 connect cyclists with Thetford, Diss and Harleston and provides access to other Sustrans cycle routes in Norfolk and Suffolk.

186. Walking infrastructure within Diss is of a good standard and currently 19% of people walk to work. Most of the urban area of Diss is accessible within a 25-minute walk, this illustrates the potential for encouraging walking as a prominent mode of travel for short trips within the town. Most of the urban area of Diss has ample provision of footpaths on both sides of the road, with multiple pedestrian crossings. Cycling infrastructure within Diss is of a good standard, but improvements are needed.

187. The Network Improvement Strategy has identified key cycle and walk routes. The document also provides a list of improvement schemes for these routes.

Figure 14: Diss Walking and Cycling Network



188. There are a number of Public Rights of Way across the neighbourhood plan area, providing access into the countryside.

### 12.1 ISSUES:

189. Analysis of road traffic collisions has not identified road safety to be a particular issue in Diss, though there are areas in the town where interventions could be considered. A study undertaken in the last five years does not indicate that public car parking is a particular constraint within Diss.

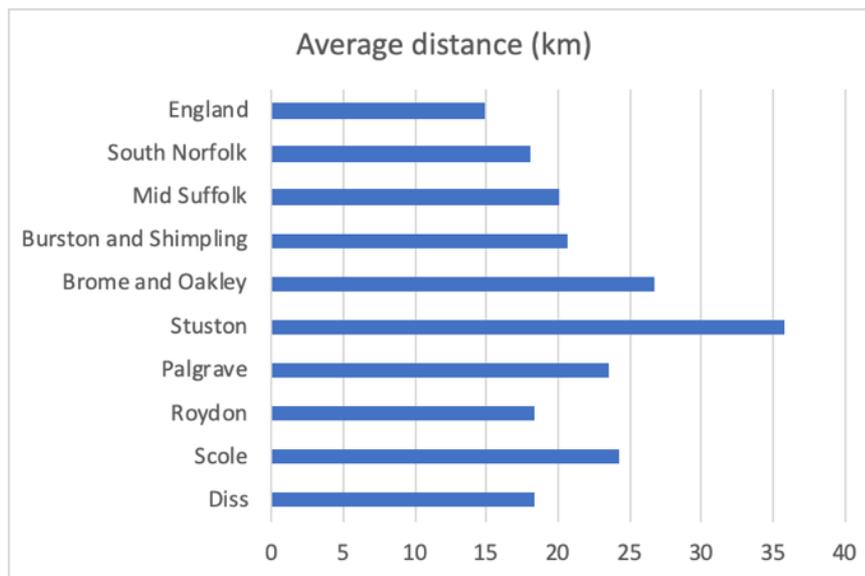
190. Road traffic congestion is an issue within Diss town centre and A1066, this could be exacerbated through housing development. Not all of this can be mitigated through highway improvements and so care is needed when deciding where growth goes and the scale of growth  
Diss is a fairly compact market town meaning that the town centre is easily accessible by walking or cycling. Some improvements to walking and cycle infrastructure are needed.

## 13 TRAVEL TO WORK AND CAR OWNERSHIP

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192. The car remains the dominant mode of travel to work across all communities in the neighbourhood plan area. Even in Diss, where 19% of people walk to work and 6% travel by bike, 63% of people either drive or travel as a passenger. Stuston has an interesting travel to work profile, 10% travel by train, 60% car and 7% walk. Population numbers are low, just 81 people in employment at the time of the last Census. Travel by train is also relatively high in Palgrave – 6% of people in employment.

Figure 15: Distance Travelled to Work



Source: Census 2011, Nomisweb

193. **Figure 15** highlights that the average distance travelled to work varies significantly by parish. As may be expected distances are lower for people living in Diss and Roydon, 18km, compared to the rural communities, 36km in Stuston and 27km in Brome and Oakley. Many of the distances are higher than the district and national averages.

194. The data demonstrates that although Diss, and nearby Eye, will be centres of employment many people travel further afield, potentially to London using the rail line. The proportion of people who work from home is comparatively high in some of the rural areas.

195. The national average is 10% compared to 27% in Stuston, 18% in Palgrave, 19% in Brome and Oakley and 19% in Burston and Shimpling.

196. Figures on car ownership show that almost a quarter of households in Diss do not own a car or van, which is just below the national average of 26%. This is reflective of the availability of public transport and local services in the town. Over 10% of households do not have a car in the smaller villages of Burston and Shimpling and Roydon. Given its remoteness from the town this is somewhat surprising for Burston and Shimpling.

Figure 16: Car Ownership (Source: Census 2011).

Parish	Number of cars or vans
Brome & Oakley	8%
Burston & Shimpling	11%
Diss	24%
Roydon	11%
Palgrave	8%
Scole	8%
Stuston	4%
National Average	26%

### 13.1 ISSUES:

197. As the car remains the dominant mode of travel, home based parking will be an important consideration for any new development.

198. A relatively high proportion of people work from home, so could be more likely to use local services or those in neighbouring communities, and rely on good technological infrastructure.

## 14 THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

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### 14.1 OVERVIEW

199. This area around the Waveney Valley was one of the first to be settled and by Roman times it had been extensively settled, a general trend which continued with the Saxons. Villages are typically linear, occurring along roads or crossroads. Figure 17 provides an overview of listed buildings across the neighbourhood plan area, in total there are 354.

Figure 17: Listed buildings

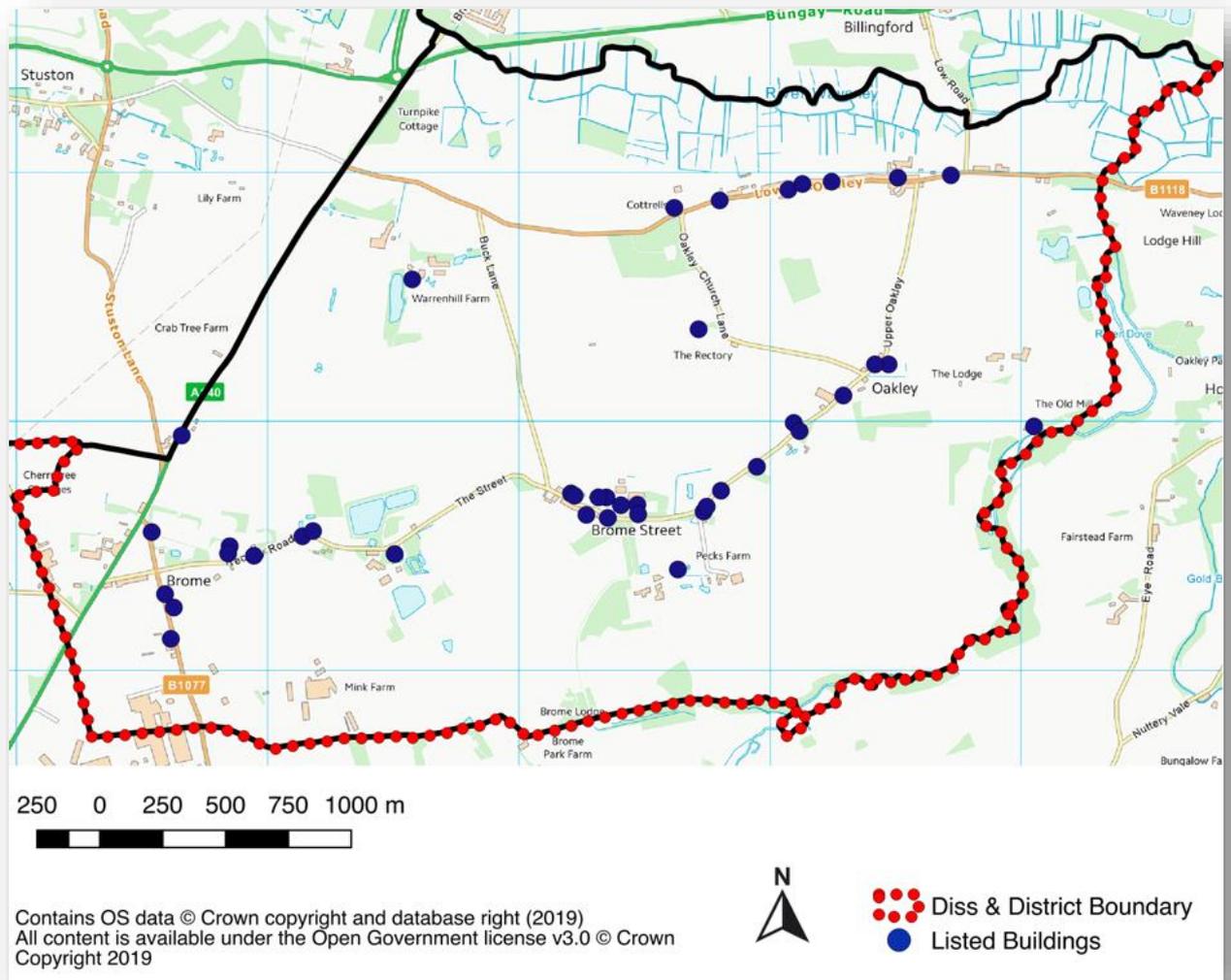
Parish	Listed Buildings	Scheduled Monuments
Brome and Oakley	40: 4 Grade II*	
Burston and Shimpling	26: 1 Grade I,	
Diss	157: 1 Grade I, 2 Grade II*	
Palgrave	41: 1 Grade I, 1 Grade II*	
Roydon	27: 1 Grade I	
Scole	48: 3 Grade I, 4 Grade II*	1: Scole Roman Settlement
Stuston	17: 1 Grade II*	
Total	356	

200. Diss, Scole, Palgrave and Burston and Shimpling have Conservation Areas. These exist to manage and protect the special architectural and historic interest of a place, the features which make it unique. They are designated by the local planning authority and result in some extra planning controls and considerations.

## 14.2 BROME AND OAKLEY

201. There are 40 listed buildings in Brome and Oakley including the Church of St Mary, Poplar Farmhouse, Church of St Nicolas and Park Farmhouse which are all Grade II\*. **Figure 18** shows they are spread out over the parish area.

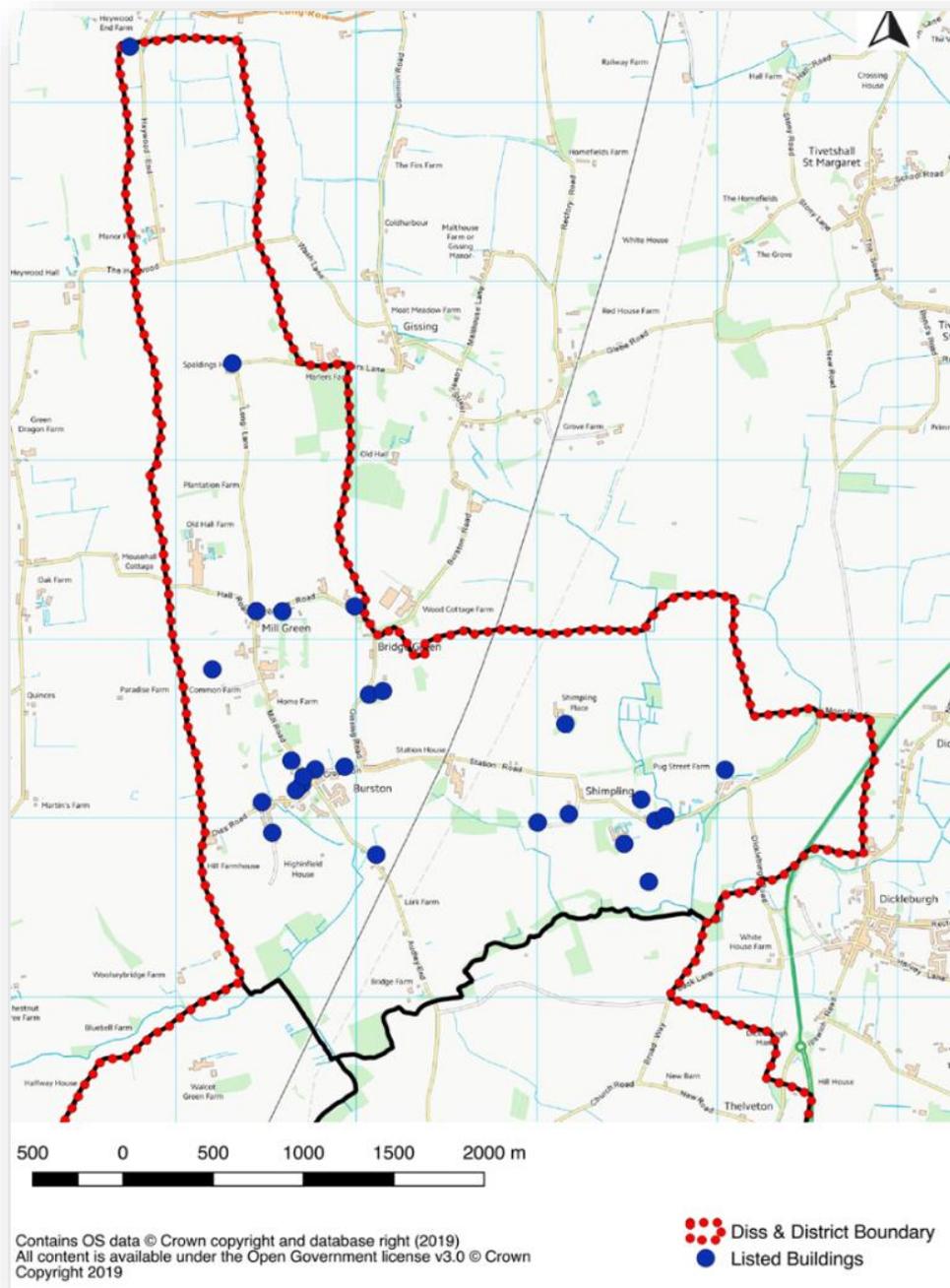
Figure 18: Brome and Oakley Listed Buildings



### 14.3 BURSTON AND SHIMPLING

202. Burston and Shimpling parish has 26 listed buildings including the Church of St George in Shimpling which is grade I listed and dates back to the 12th Century. The Church of St Mary in Burston and Shimpling Place are both grade II\* listed. The village of Burston is situated around a village green, which is identified as unique in the landscape character area.

Figure 19: Burston Listed Buildings



## 14.4 DISS

- 203.** Diss is a historic market town with a Conservation Area and 157 listed buildings (see **Figure 20**). The Conservation Area was initially designated in 1974 and later reviewed in 1994. It includes the historic core, but also the important spaces at Fair Green, the Mere and Park, Rectory meadows, and the Parish Fields. The designated area is shown in **Figure 21**.
- 204.** The parish church dates from the medieval period and many buildings survive from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Fine examples of Georgian and Victorian buildings can be found on every street. Many buildings retain architectural details and elements from these times, with sash windows, chimneys, shop fronts and door cases. Traditional materials include clay pantiles, black and red, with roofs steeply pitched. There is an unusually high proportion of timber-framed building remains in the narrow streets around the church. The roof scape is important in Diss where some streets are seen from various view points, and the significance of chimneys cannot be underestimated. The quality of brickwork is high, rendered and colour washed buildings are notable along Mount Street and Fair Green.
- 205.** In Diss, the contribution trees and open spaces make to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is perhaps more significant than any other across South Norfolk. Trees are important in their own right, but also as a backdrop or screen.
- 206.** A key feature of the town is how spaces are linked by a network of alleys, back courts and thorough fares, which add significantly to the character and appeal of the town.
- 207.** The character of the area can be eroded by minor, often well intentioned, home improvements such as the replacement of windows and doors with ones of an inappropriate design or material. There is concern about the impact these can have on unlisted buildings, especially those in terraces or small groups, which make a contribution to the area.

Figure 20: Diss Listed Buildings

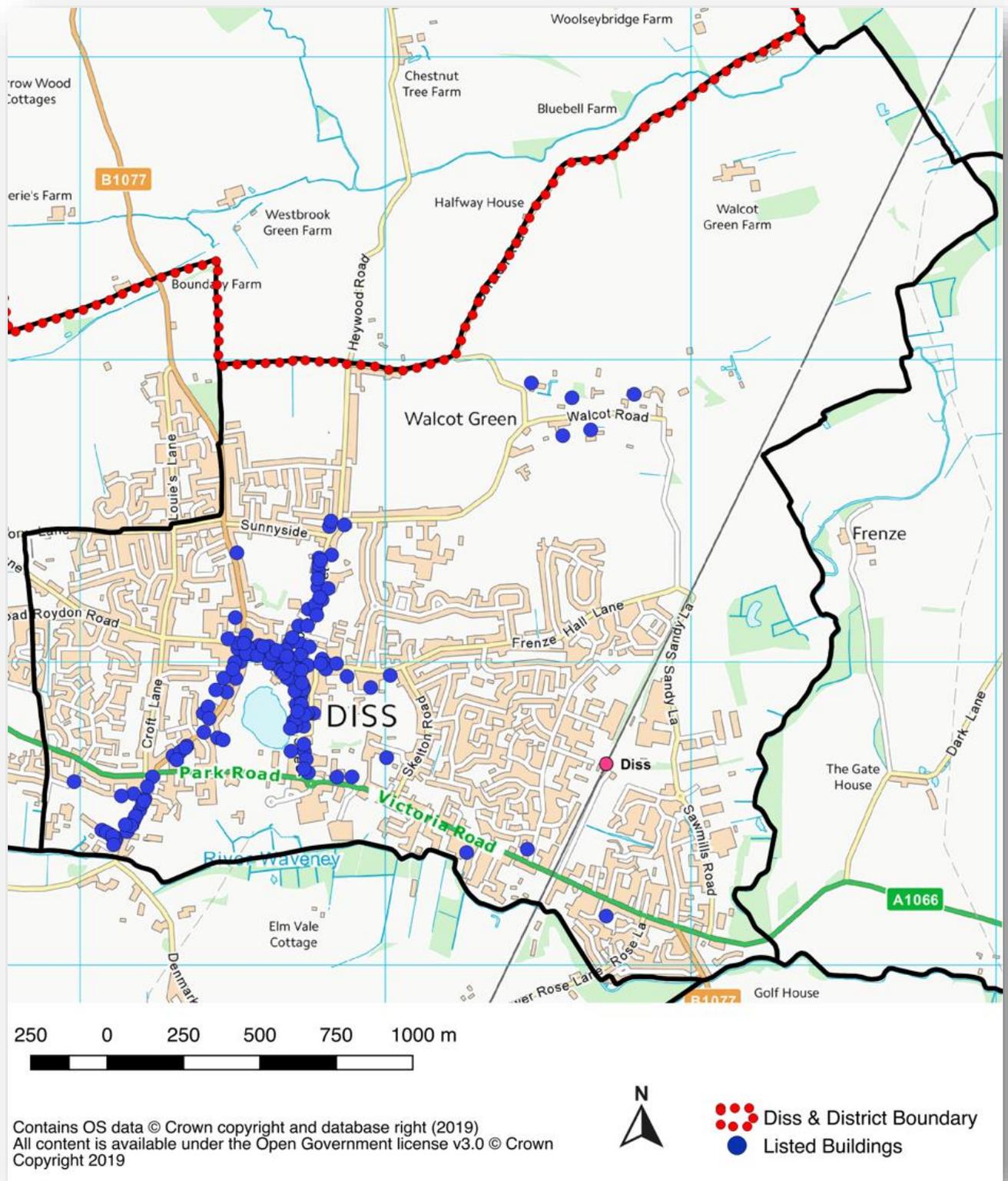
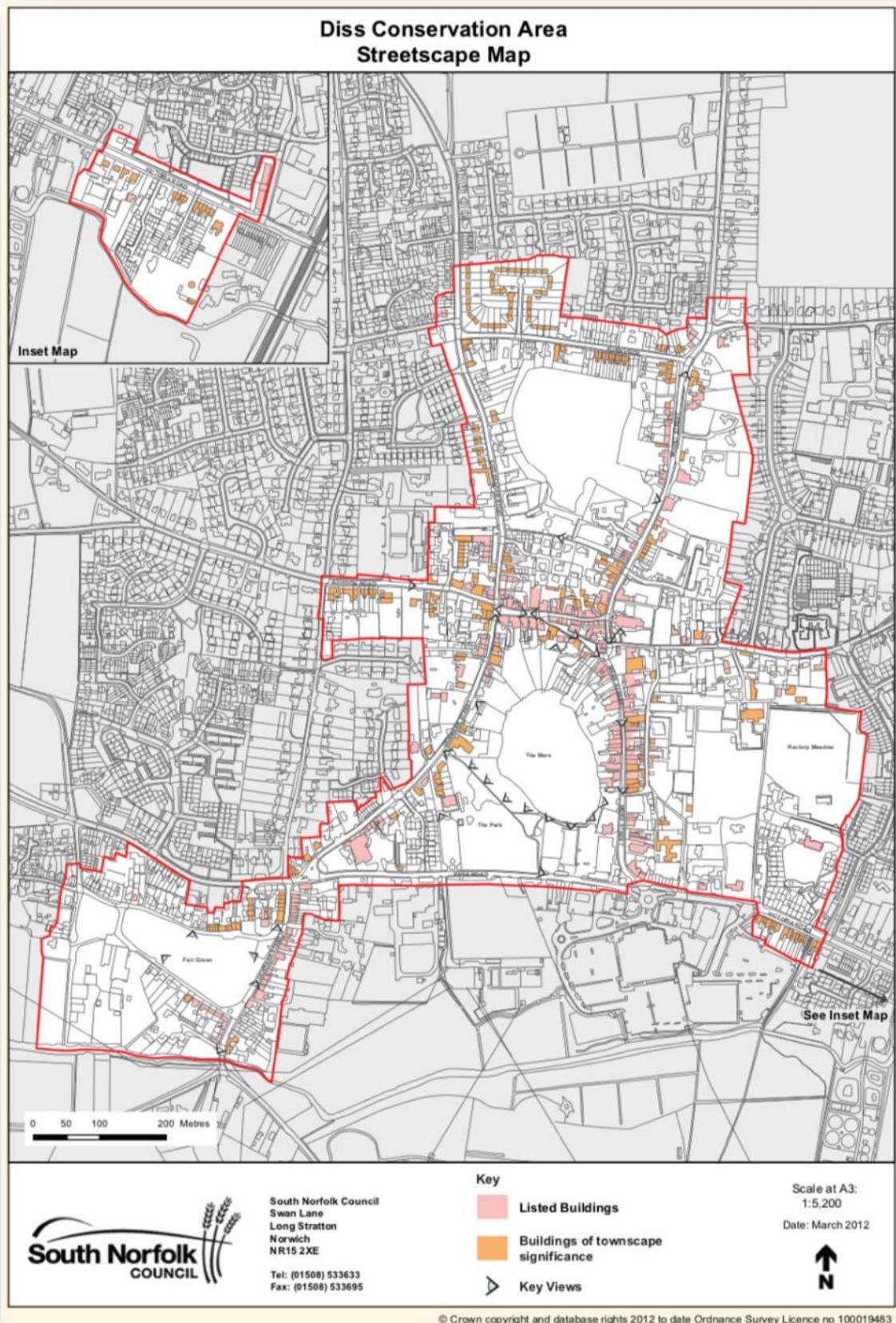


Figure 21: Diss Conservation Area



## 14.5 PALGRAVE

210. Palgrave sits on slightly higher ground between the southern bank of the river Waveney that here forms the county boundary and a tributary joining the river. The Suffolk Historic Environment Record lists over 20 sites of archaeological interest from all periods, including some crop marks and ring ditches, reflecting its agricultural importance.
211. There are 41 listed buildings, half of which fall within a Conservation Area (see **Figures 22 & 23**). The older buildings are predominantly domestic in scale, a few having former commercial uses, and mostly timber framed and plastered with pantile roofs. The grade I listed Church of St Peter provides the exception with flint rubble walls and plain tile roof. It is mostly 15<sup>th</sup> Century and perpendicular in style. Another building of note is the grade II\* former guildhall, opposite the church, now called Brackendale. This is timber framed and plastered with some exposed timbers and a jettied first floor.

Figure 22: Palgrave Listed Buildings

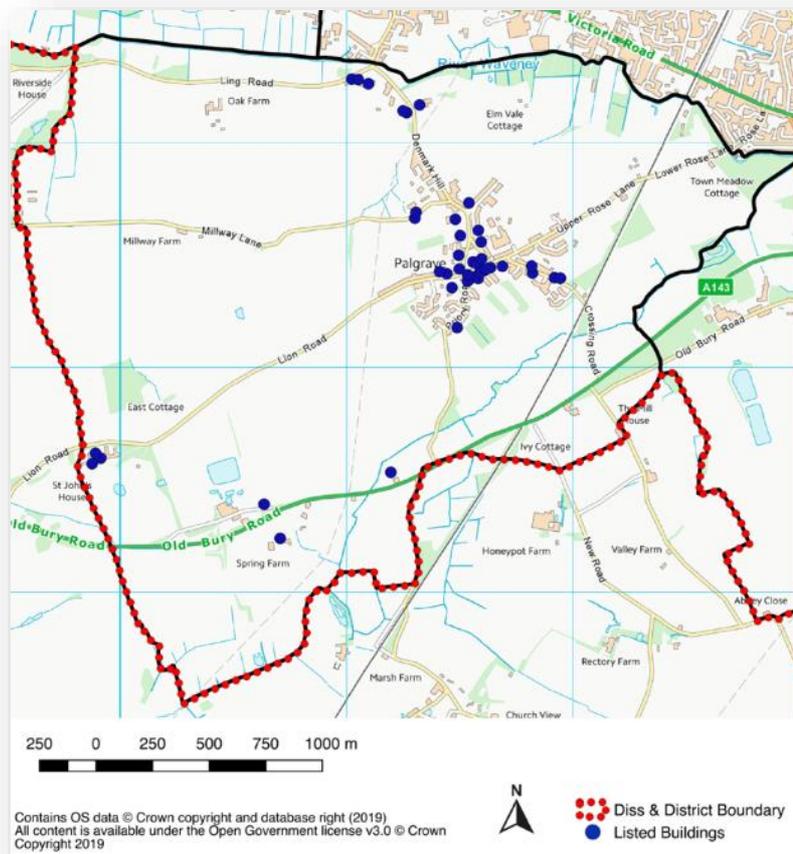
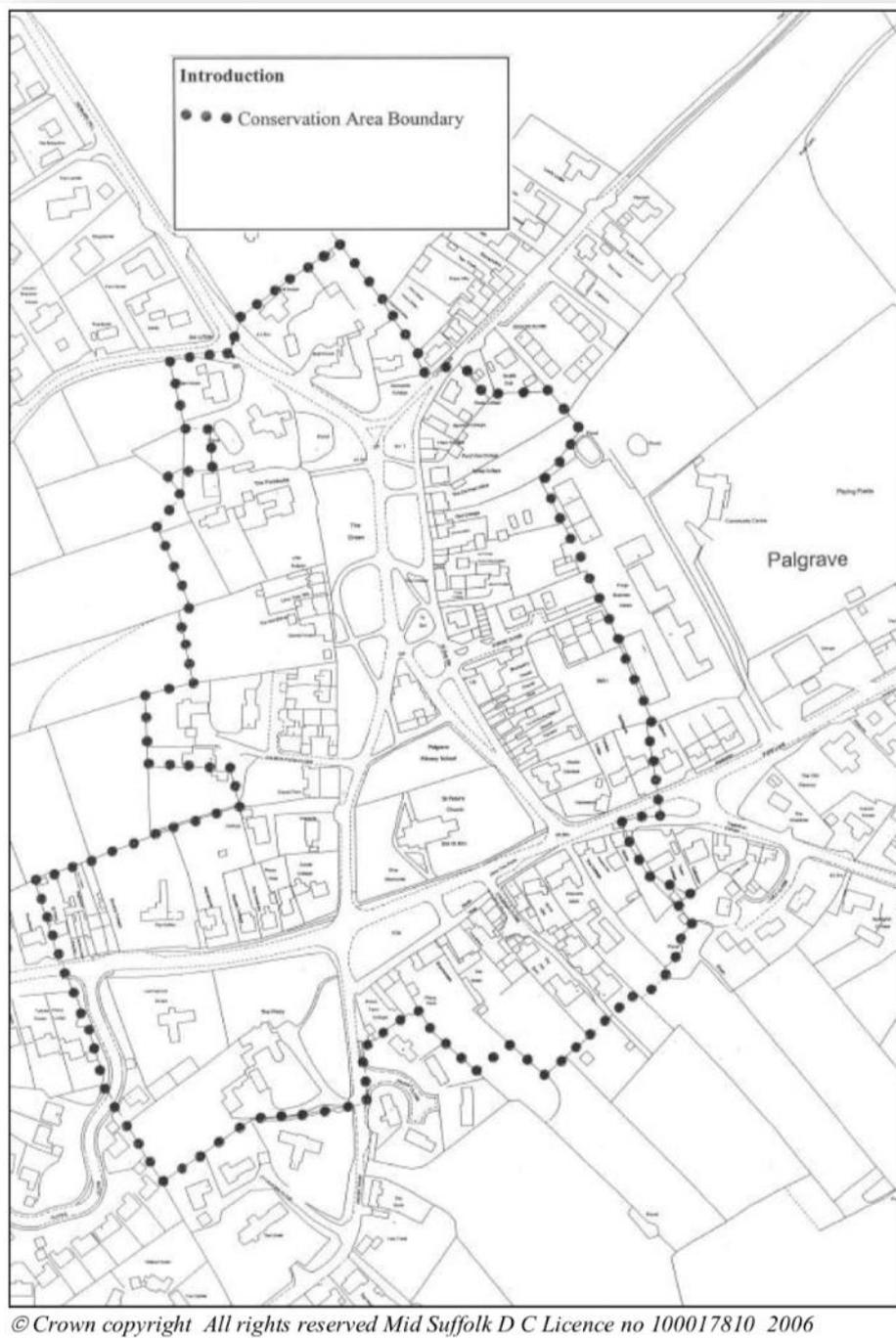


Figure 23: Palgrave Conservation Area

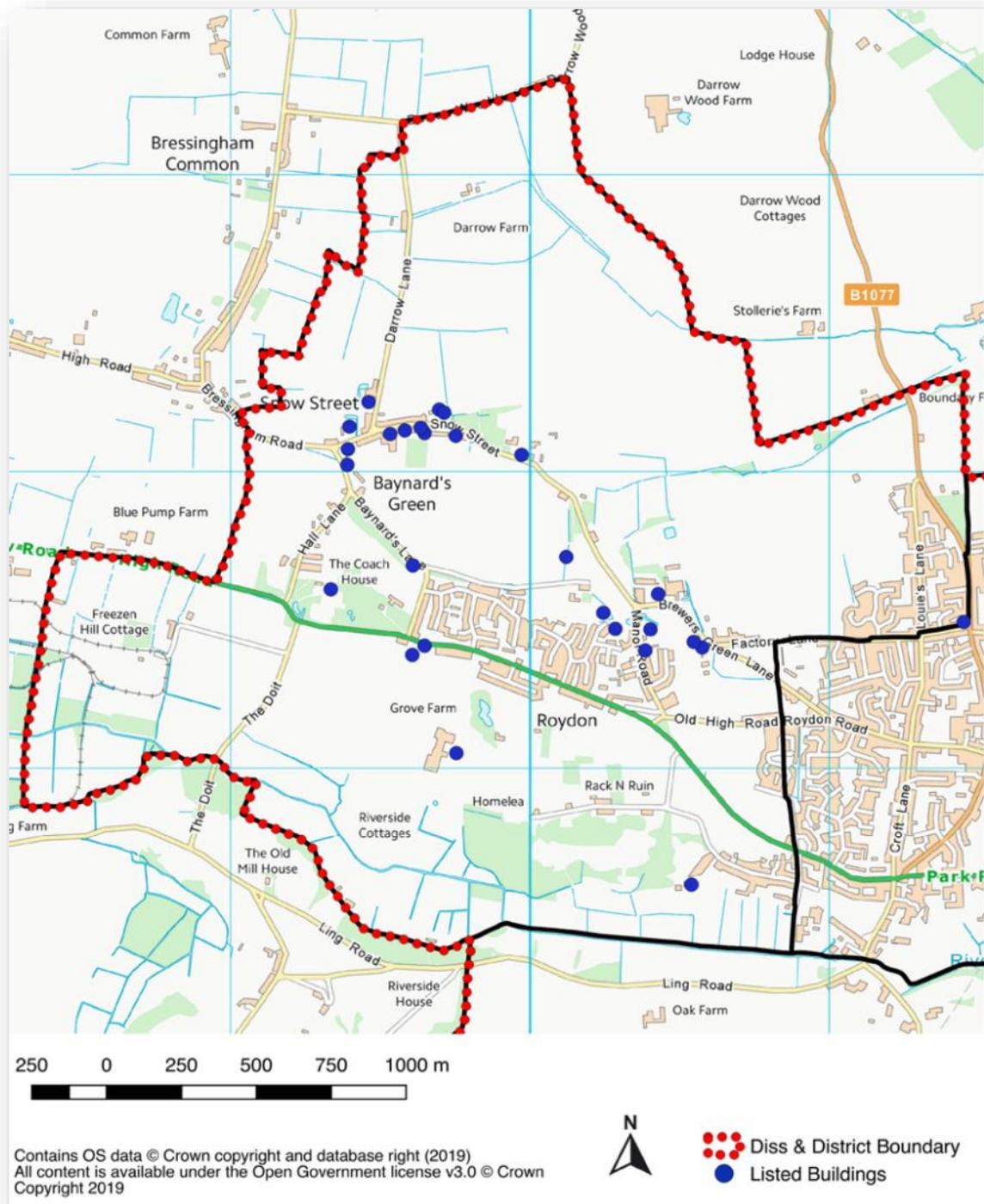


213. Many of the unlisted buildings in Palgrave are of a traditional form and grouping and although not up to listing quality as individual buildings, still have interest for their visual impact. Local red brick features throughout the village and principally on cottages dating from Victorian times and on the school.

## 14.6 ROYDON

Roydon has 27 listed buildings including the Church of Remigius which is grade I listed.

Figure 24: Roydon Listed Buildings

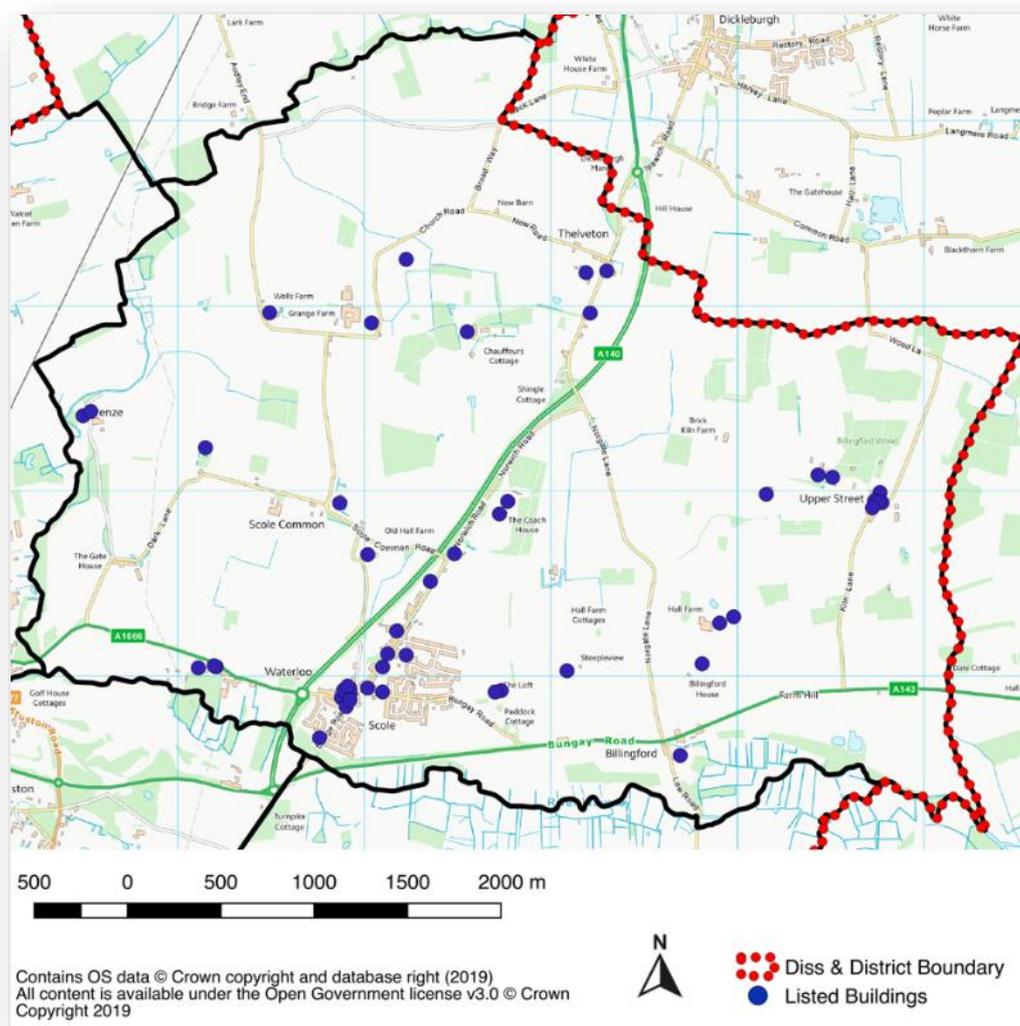


## 14.7 SCOLE

214. While the parish of Scole comprises five settlements (Frenze, Thorpe Parva, Billingford, Thelveton and Scole), the historic core developed on the main Norwich to Ipswich Road where it meets the road from Bury to Harleston. Here the Scole Inn still dominates the centre with the Church of St Andrew to the north set above the street.

215. There are 48 listed buildings across the parish as a whole, three of which are Grade I listed which means they are of exceptional interest. This includes Scole Inn, The Church of St Andrew in Frenze and the Church of St Leonard in Billingford. Only 2.5% of listed buildings in England are Grade I. There is also a Scheduled Monument, Scole Roman Settlement. This is the site of a Roman road and buildings, possibly a town or a fort. Excavations have revealed Prehistoric hut circles, timber buildings, wells, enclosures, a road and evidence of iron working.

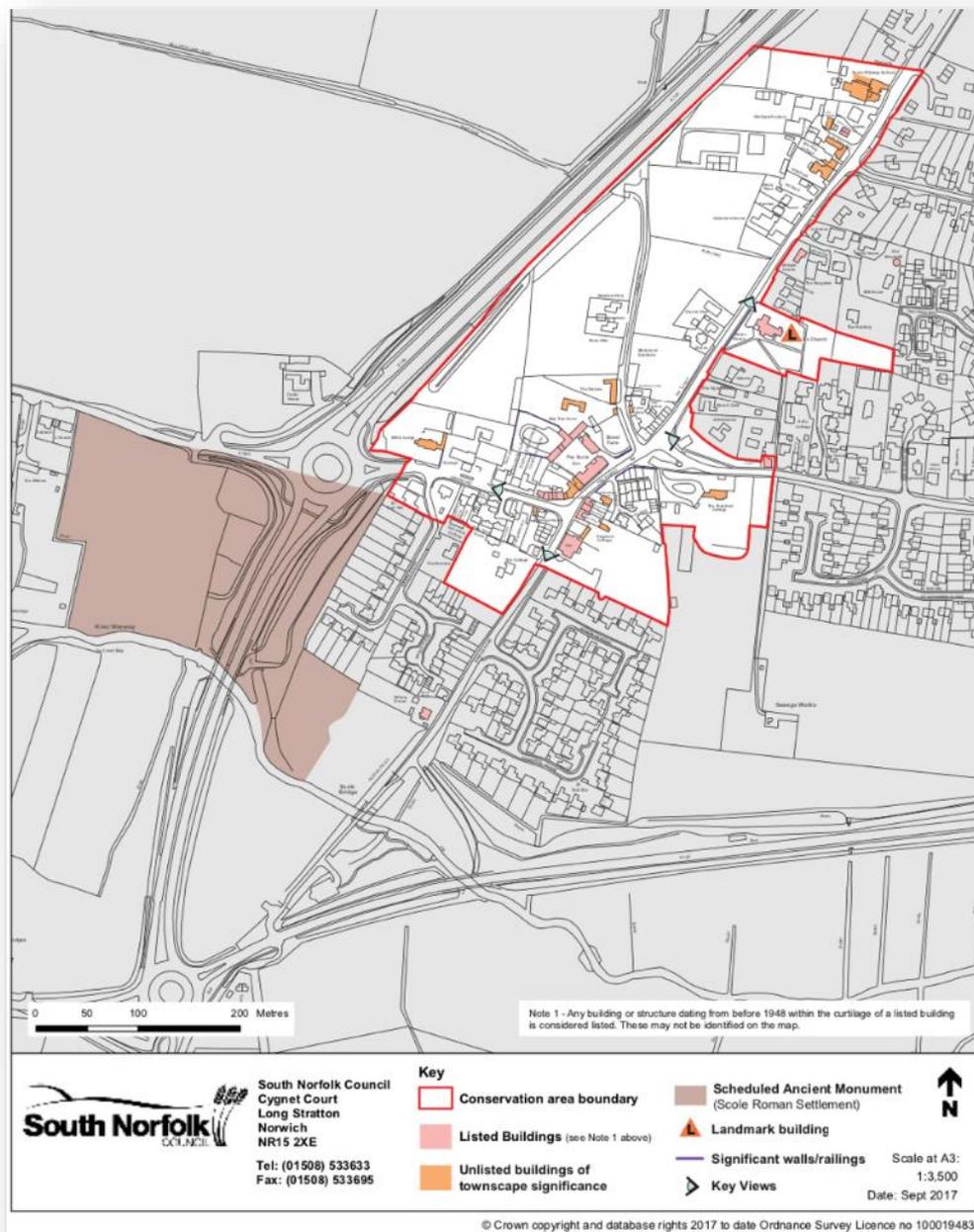
Figure 25: Scole Listed Buildings



The Conservation Area falls within the village of Scole itself, adjacent Scole Roman Settlement, its location is outlined in **Figure 26**. Key characteristics include:

- Concentration of built form at historic crossroads dominated by the Scole Inn
- Important C14 church, (despite damage in 1960s,) on raised platform
- Key contribution of trees and open spaces/recreation areas to the south
- Modern expansion and development to east and south.

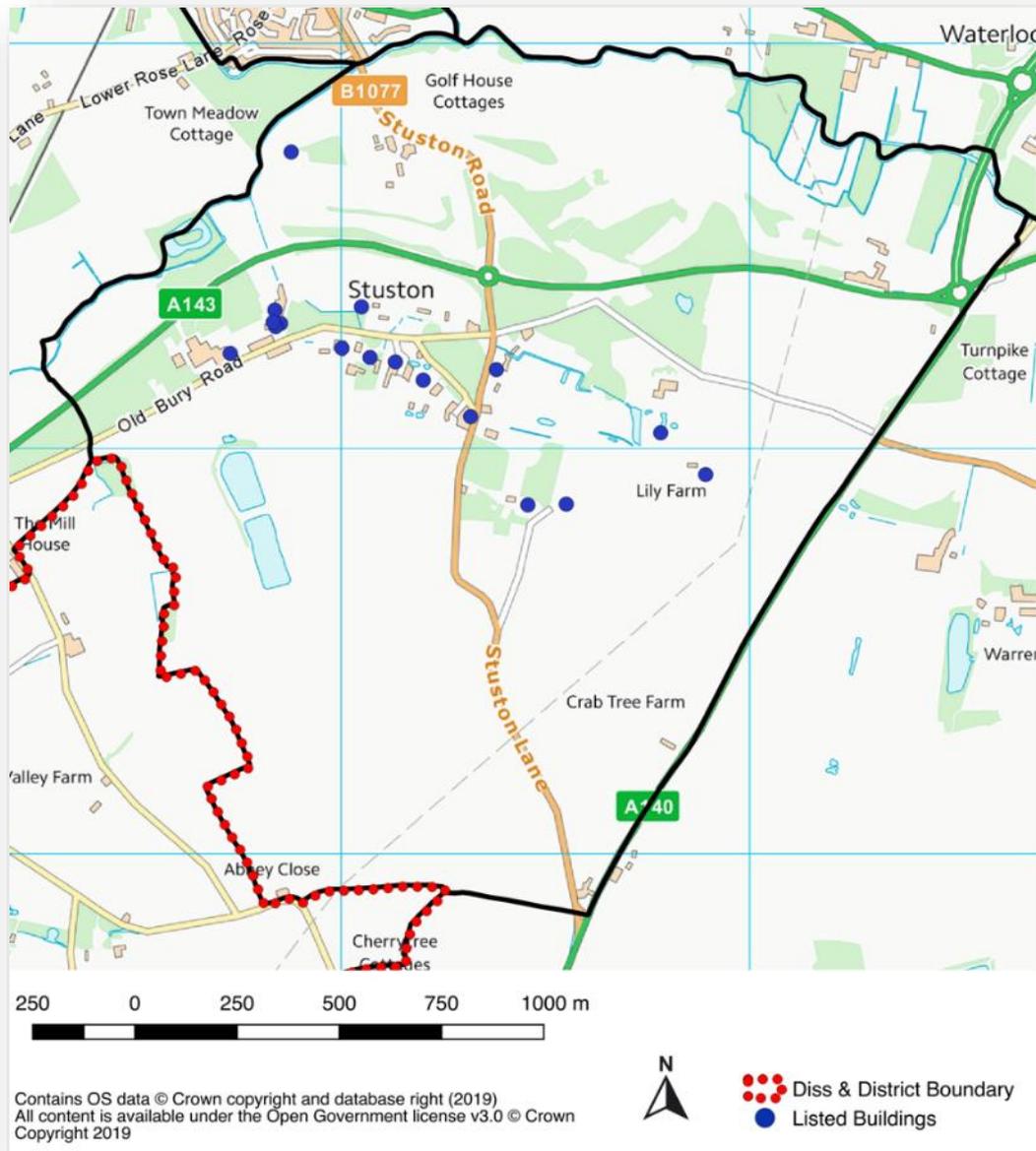
Figure 26: Scole Conservation Area



## 14.8 STUSTON

216. Stuston has 17 listed buildings, one of which, the Church of All Saints is a Grade II\*, which means that it is a particularly important building of *more than* special interest.

Figure 27: Stuston Listed Building



#### 14.9 ISSUES:

218. The neighbourhood plan area is one of some historical importance with many listed buildings and the Scole Roman Settlement scheduled monument. There are three conservation areas, in Diss, Scole and Palgrave. Effort should be made to retain both the character of these and their setting, ensuring that it is not diluted through new development.
219. The neighbourhood plan is an opportunity to identify and protect non-designated heritage assets, such as buildings of local historical importance which are not listed.

**END OF EVIDENCE BASE**

**DRAFTED BY MARK THOMPSON, CONSULTANT, AT Collective Community Planning  
January 2020**