

Little Bealings Landscape Value Statement

for

Little Bealings Parish Council's
Neighbourhood Plan

May 2025



Contents:

This report was undertaken by Lucy Batchelor-Wylam, Chartered Landscape Architect and member of the Landscape Institute since 2006 (Mem.No. 16639). I have 20 years experience of working as a landscape professional in Suffolk and East Anglia in both multi-disciplinary private practice and, for the last 12 years, as a freelance consultant. I specialise in LVA and LVIA for all types of land use applications as well as character and sensitivity assessment at both district and parish level. I have undertaken landscape and sensitivity assessment to support Neighbourhood Plan groups in Suffolk, Norfolk, and Cambridgeshire in recent years.



Lucy Batchelor-Wylam
Landscape architecture LucyBW@outlook.com

Report written by chartered Landscape Architect Jane Fitzgerald White CMLI

Landscape planning and landscape architecture services.

Tel: 07905 791207

email: LucyBW@outlook.com

Section 1: Introduction	3
Section 2: Landscape context and history	6
Section 3: Landscape character	11
Section 4: Photographic record	17
Section 5: Landscape value criteria	24
Section 6: Summary and Area of Greater Landscape Value (AGLV)	25
Appendix and Glossary	30

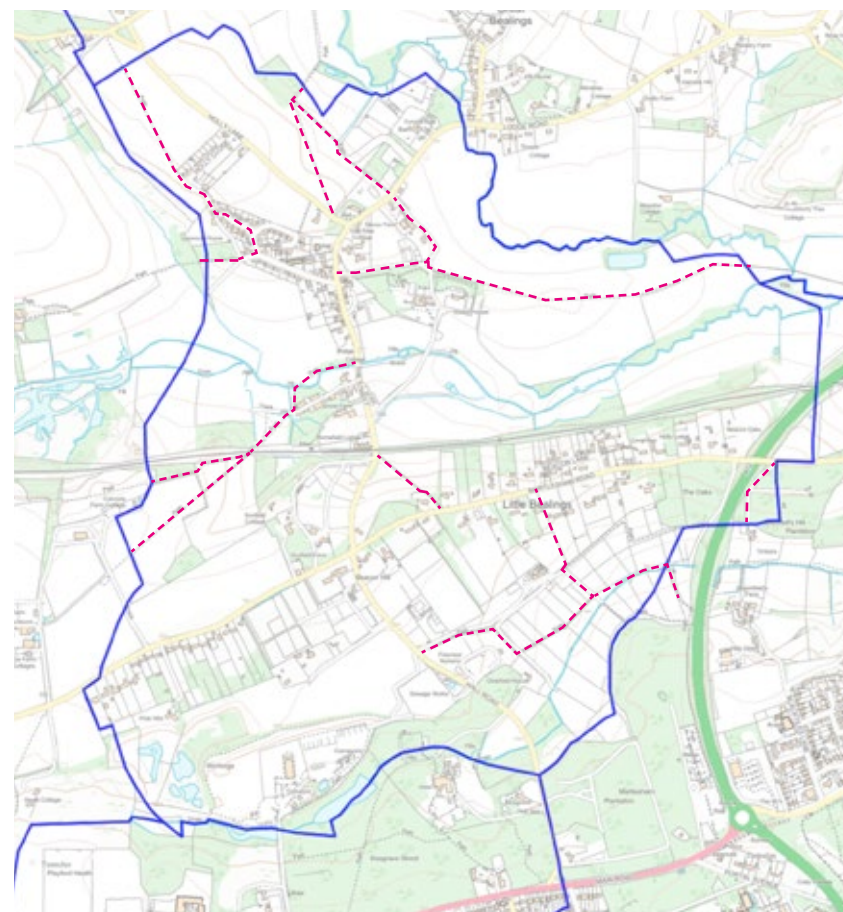
Ref: Version Distribution Date:

- 7th September 2025

1. Introduction

1. I am a Chartered Landscape Architect with 15+ years experience of working in the field of landscape assessment and appraisal in East Anglia. I was appointed in Autumn 2023 to provide a landscape value statement for Little Bealings Neighbourhood Plan.
2. The Parish Council commissioned this report to help them identify policy opportunities and to manage change so that the special character of the village is recognised, conserved and enhanced. The study was directed to identify the more valued and sensitive areas of the landscape, and underpin a mechanism for their protection.
3. In the past, the low-lying Fynn valley was subject to a Suffolk Coastal Local Plan policy designation called a 'Special Landscape Area' (SLA). This policy fell away in 2020 with the adoption of the new East Suffolk Council- Suffolk Coastal Local Plan. The ultimate objective of this report is to review the area previously defined, to consider whether this area, or a similar area, would meet the Landscape Institute's criteria for 'Valued' landscape and could be considered for a protective designation in the Neighbourhood Plan.
4. The secondary purpose of the statement is as a future reference tool for the Parish and District Councils in managing future applications for development, to landowners to understand the parameters which might limit changes in land use, and to householders or developers considering development options.
5. Ultimately, both purposes aim to protect against inappropriate development causing harm to the distinctive setting of the Fynn Valley.
6. The report's specific objectives are, therefore, to:
 - Review the extent of the old SLA
 - Define and map aspects of value in the landscape within the Neighbourhood Plan area;
 - Provide understanding about the area's special qualities, scenic value, biodiversity assets and cultural features which contribute to the value of the landscape;
 - Identify the sensitivities of the landscape to future development or change management.

Figure 1. Parish boundary and public rights of way



1. Introduction continued:-

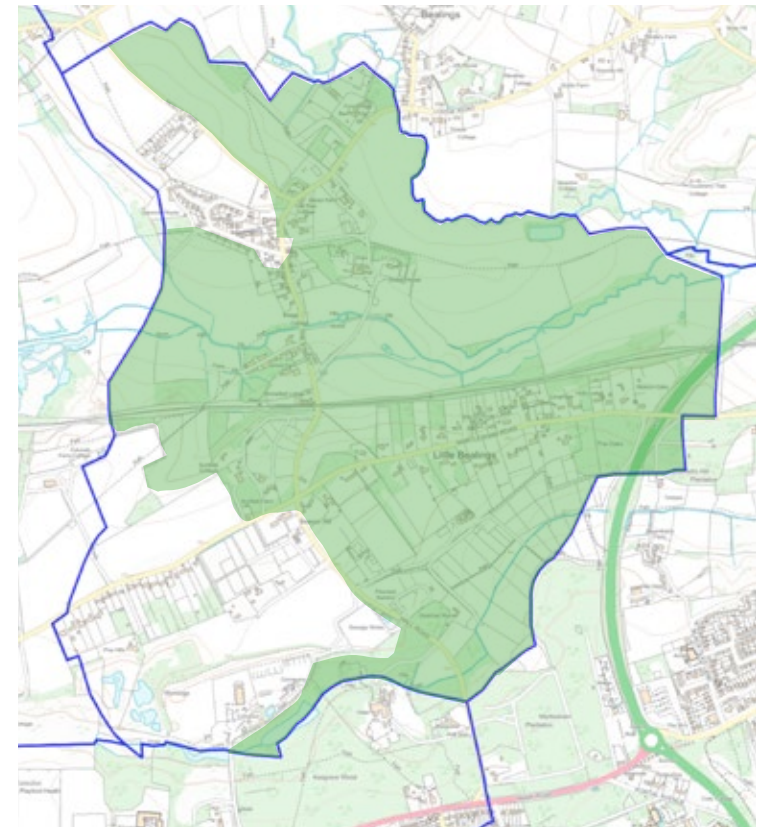
Evaluating landscape value and sensitivity

7. The old 'Special Landscape Area' is mapped on figure 2. Special Landscape Areas were first proposed in the 1980 and 90s, to provide an additional layer of protection for landscapes of higher value, and the principles were set out at County level in the Suffolk Structure Plan. This defined SLA criteria broadly as:
 - River valleys which still possess traditional grazing meadows with their hedgerows, dykes, and associated flora and fauna;
 - Historic parklands and gardens;
 - Other areas of countryside where undulating topography and natural vegetation, particularly broad-leaved woodland, combine to produce an area of special landscape quality and character.
8. The SLA designation was attached to a district planning policy that guided how development in these defined areas was to be approached. Policy stated that development proposals in Special Landscape Areas would only be permitted where they 'maintain or enhance the special landscape qualities of the area' and ensure that the proposal is designed and sited so as to 'harmonise' with the landscape setting
9. The district councils were tasked with defining the geographical areas of SLAs and providing accompanying policy wording. Suffolk Coastal District Council mapped a number of SLAs that included the Fynn Valley.
10. One reason SLAs have now been discontinued in Local Plans across Suffolk is they were not evidenced by detailed published assessment. Whilst SLA policies are no longer in use, the removal of this locally defined landscape policy does not mean that the qualities of the landscape that led to designation have somehow changed. The past inclusion of part of the study area within a Special Landscape Area is therefore relevant to this study and forms part of the area's designation history.
11. In place of the policy the local plan now protects landscape character under a more generic landscape policy- 'Policy SCLP10.4: Landscape Character'. This requires proposals for development to be informed by, and sympathetic to, the special qualities and features of landscape in all circumstances. See the text for SCLP10.4 in appendix 1.

The NPPF and valued landscapes

12. National Planning Policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 180 (Dec. 23 version) of the NPPF states: 'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and

Figure 2. The Special Landscape Area



1. Introduction continued:-

enhance the natural and local environment by...protecting and enhancing valued landscapes...'

13. However, the definition of a 'Valued Landscape' is not provided in the NPPF. It has consequently been the subject of various well documented planning appeals and inquiries which have sought to test and unpick how the definition of landscape value should be applied outside of designated landscapes.
14. To help address this grey area, the Landscape Institute have recently published new guidance to help clarify how landscapes of greater value than the 'everyday' should be defined. Guidance Note TG02/21 'Assessing landscape value outside national designations' (published in 2019) states that a 'valued landscape' is an area identified as having 'sufficient landscape qualities to elevate it above other more everyday landscapes'. However, it states 'it is not possible to set a definitive threshold ... It is a judgment that must be made on a case-by-case basis, based on the evidence. There should be a weight of evidence that supports the recognition of a landscape as valued above more everyday landscapes.'
15. The approach in TG02/21 is also in line with accepted national guidance on:
 - Landscape Character Assessment (Natural England, 2014)
 - Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (Natural England, 2019)
 - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment)
16. The guidance supports identification of higher value landscapes at the Neighbourhood Plan level. It advises, in paragraph 2.2.1; '*Landscape value at the local authority or neighbourhood level can be assessed and mapped spatially, i.e. through identifying areas for local landscape designation. Studies to support spatial designations should identify the landscape qualities of each area of landscape proposed for designation.*'
17. It gives guidance on the approach, in paragraph 2.3.2 it states; '*In undesignated areas, landscape value should be determined through a review of existing assessments, policies, strategies and guidelines and, where appropriate, by new survey and analysis*' and suggests assessing value under the following 8 headings:
 - Natural heritage
 - Cultural heritage

- Landscape condition
- Associations
- Distinctiveness
- Perceptual (Scenic)
- Perceptual (Wildness and tranquillity)
- Functional aspects.

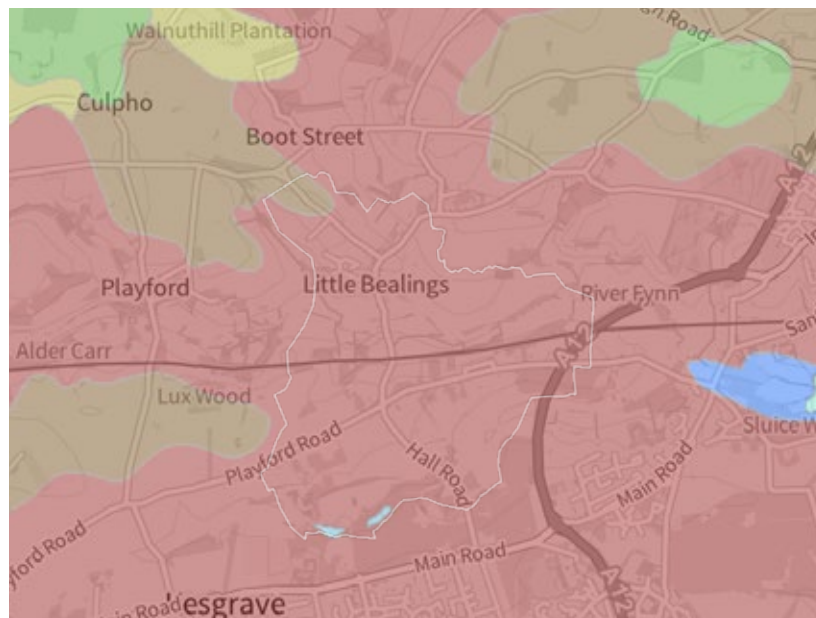
18. This appraisal, therefore, takes this approach and provides evidence of landscape value under each heading. A table summarising a response to each heading is provided later in the report (see table 5).
19. It should also be mentioned that due regard has been given to the Playford Neighbourhood Plan which adjoins Little Bealings, and designates an Area of Greater Landscape Value and Sensitivity along the Fynn Valley up to the Parish Boundary to the west. The study to define that area was undertaken by this author and the continuity of the area downstream into Little Bealings is logical, necessary and justified.

Method of appraisal

20. The appraisal was approached in the following order:
 - a) A 'desktop' review was undertaken of available information relating to landscape value. These included:
 - Designations on GIS website (www.magic.gov.uk) including heritage, SSSIs, Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites.
 - Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment (SCC, 2011) (www.suffolklandscape.org.uk)
 - Suffolk Coastal Landscape Character Assessment (AFA, 2018)
 - Ipswich Fringe Sensitivity Assessment (AFA, 2018)
 - CWS Review by Suffolk Wildlife Trust consultancy (2009)
 - Aerial photography and historic maps.
 - b) A site visit was undertaken to assess the landscape 'on the ground' and to identify any important views within the study area.
 - c) Finally, the findings of the study were written up.

2. Landscape context and history

1. Little Bealings is a small village of some 470 residents situated in the Fynn Valley in the jurisdiction of East Suffolk Council. It lies three miles west of Woodbridge and six miles from the centre of Ipswich. The main A12 trunk road clips its eastern boundaries, and it is bisected by the Ipswich- Woodbridge-Lowestoft train line. But despite these major infrastructure features, the older parts of the village have a quiet, tucked away feel.
2. The character of Little Bealings is dominated by its position spread across three shallow valleys which converge just to the east, in Martlesham parish, beyond the elevated carriageway of the A12. The main water course is the east-west Fynn which passes through the centre of the parish. It is a small river that rises near Witnesham and winds its way east to flow into the Deben at Martlesham Creek, where the landscape becomes a National Landscape (formerly known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty).
3. The historic settlement cluster of Little Bealings is located here on the northern side of the Fynn. 'The Street' is the focus of the historic settlement, and sits between about 10 and 30m AOD, placed close to a medieval fording point.
4. After passing through the centre of the parish, the Fynn is joined from the north by the larger of two tributaries, a small river called the Lark, which rises in Clopton, and forms the northern boundary of the parish for a short stretch. Its confluence with the Fynn is just west of the parish boundary. From the south a smaller tributary also heads towards the creek, its shallow valley forming a third basin of low-lying land in the far south of the parish.
5. The highest point in the parish, is the low interfluvial finger that is marked out by the Playford/Martlesham Road. Settlement is also found here, in a second grouping, in a long linear arrangement along this route. The dwellings here tend to be large, set within deep plots and spacious grounds and well vegetated, with a wooded feel. These are relatively modern in origin. These properties sit between around 30 and 40m AOD.



- Soil type 10: freely draining slightly acid sandy soils
- Soil type 8: Slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage

Figure 3. Soils map

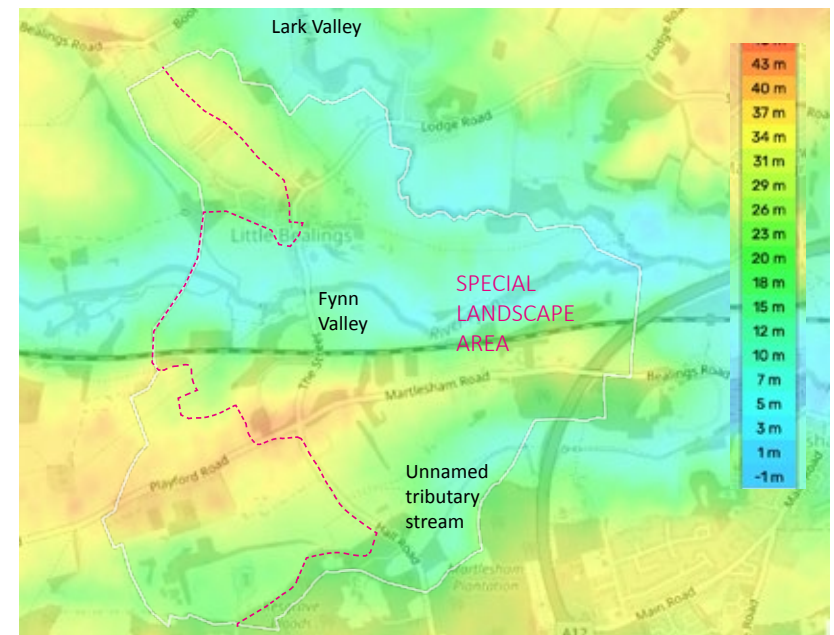


Figure 4. Topography

2. Landscape context and history continued:-

History and identity

6. Bealings is believed to be of Saxon origin, meaning the area where the Beda or Bela people lived. The earliest recorded name for Little Bealings was 'Belinges Parva' which is thought to be derived from the old English words for a glade or piece of dry land within marshy countryside. Great Bealings was known as Belinges Magna until 1674 when the current spelling appeared, although Magna remained until much more recently.
7. As well as its neighbour Great Bealings to the north, Little Bealings identity is also closely related to Playford. All three villages are similar geographically and share the same valley systems, water meadows, heathland fringes and farmlands. They also share some facilities - the Village Hall, for example, is shared between Great and Little Bealings, but located in Little Bealings. Little Bealings also has the only Primary School and had the last pub in the three parishes (The Admiral's Head closed 2012). Areas of greater landscape value are therefore likely to link across these three parishes.
8. Early settlement is recorded on these valleys which perhaps once had navigable water ways. Barrows and other archaeological finds in the area date from the Bronze Age (1700 BC) and Iron Age. Roman artefacts have also been found but Anglo Saxon artefacts give confirmation of settlements here at that time. Documents from the 14th and 15th centuries show a prosperous village consisting of small farms (dairy and arable), with woodland harvested for building, and rivers and marshes used for fishing and reed gathering. Most recently a mediaeval settlement was found on the field to the east of Holly Lane- the archaeological finds are still being analysed.
9. The ancient small village had established around a manor hall, the church, and some dispersed farmsteads and cottages. There are two properties with some significant history although All Saints Church is, surprisingly, the parish's only listed building. All Saints sits on a fairly steep slope and was built at the end of the 13th century. At first it comprised a chancel and small nave. The tower and the porch were added later in the 15th century and the north aisle was added in the middle of the 19th century.
10. The village continued as a small settlement for hundreds of years, and by 19th century Little Bealings had small mixed farms, small holdings for vegetables, fruit and pig production- overall a very rural, farming based community.
11. The construction of the East Suffolk railway line through the landscape in the mid 19th century would have had a big impact on the parish, cutting it in half almost exactly. The line was opened in 1859 and Little Bealings had its own station until the lack of patronage saw it close in 1956. Closure of the goods yard, which was the rail head for Martlesham Heath airfield from 1916, followed in April 1965. The station building and platforms still survive.
12. The title to Home Farm speaks of manorial times from the late 1400s, when it was identified as an 'open hall' by Sylvia Coleman, a noted historian and authority on old timber buildings. But the building is not heritage listed so it's likely today's structure is modern in origin. Further down The Street is the imposing old Grove Farmhouse, which is thought to have a history dating from the early 16th Century, but again, the current house is not listed. Other old houses - Manor House and The Grove also seem to have undergone various reinventions and insufficient historic material survives for them to be Listed by Historic England today.
13. The Grove is perhaps the most documented house in the village, and sits with grounds much reduced from two centuries ago, as shown on the historic maps on page 8. The current house was designed and built by its outgoing owner Perry Nursey in 1827, after he was forced to sell the estate to James Colvin. Perry had designed the preceding house for his wife Anne Simpson, whose family had owned the estate. Nursey also "*landscaped the meadows around 'The Grove', creating gardens and parkland, all laid out in the best Picturesque fashion. Building on Price and Gilpin's ideas, he published 'An Essay on Picturesque Gardening' in The East Anglian Magazine in 1814. In his article, he slated the 'vapid' landscapes of Capability Brown and his 'tasteless herds' of followers who, he asserted, had ruined so many picturesque old parks.*" Nursey believed strongly in painting in the open air, something which was seen as avant garde in his day. Source (<https://anthonyadolph.co.uk/>).

2. Landscape context and history *continued:-*

14. Baznett David Colvin inherited the estate from his father in 1847 and during his time the east coast railway line to Woodbridge and Lowestoft was constructed across the estate. The Grove remained in the Colvin family and was the home of Sidney Colvin, the curator, critic, and great friend of Robert Louis Stevenson in the early 20th century.

Twentieth Century Little Bealings

15. In the 20th century the parish began to see a good deal of change and today's maps look very different to those dating from the end of the 19th century. Inter-war, a second area of settlement started to develop along the Martlesham Road. These houses, added in a piecemeal way, were built on what was once the old heathlands. The vast majority of these fragile heathland ecosystems west of Ipswich have now been lost to settlement and infrastructure. To the south, the sandy nature of the soils have been a past focus for sand and gravel extraction.
16. In 1938 the Angela Cobbold Hall in the Street was erected in memory of Angela Cobbold who did much charity work in the village. In the early 1950s the village hall was deemed too small and the land was sold. Later a new hall was built on the sand quarry site and serves both Great and Little Bealings. Land at the rear of the hall was made into a playing field which now houses the John Belstead Field.
17. The 20th century also saw modern farming methods come to the valley and hedges were removed to make way for larger, more easily farmed units. Soils in the valley bottoms are light and easily worked and became valuable for vegetable growing, alongside traditional cereal crops. Single trees standing in fields show where ancient hedgerow boundaries used to be.
18. Little Bealings changed again in the 1960s. Richard's Drive and Michael's Mount came into being and some very old cottages in the Street were demolished and land formally used as allotments in Sandy Lane was developed for housing- mostly detached bungalows. Bealings School is also located here, opened in 1877. The junction with Sandy Lane and The Street

now forms the 'centre' of the village, marked by the (now closed) Admiral's Head pub. This cluster is the only defined area of settlement in the parish according to the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan. The settlement scattered along Martlesham Road is in 'countryside' in planning terms.

19. The A12 Martlesham bypass was completed in 1987/1988, raised on embankments, clipping the eastern edge of the parish and rather reducing the sense of rural tranquillity in the east side of the parish. However, despite all the changes, the strong rural character and slightly off the beaten track feel of the parish prevails, despite the proximity of transport infrastructure and the edge of Kesgrave to the south.

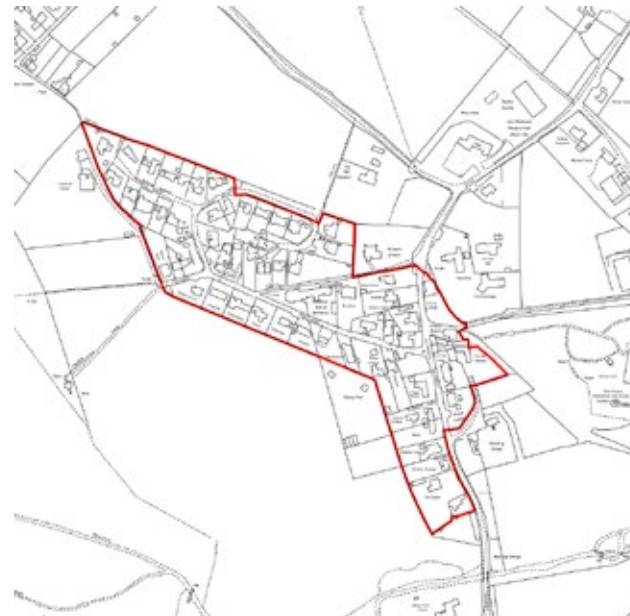


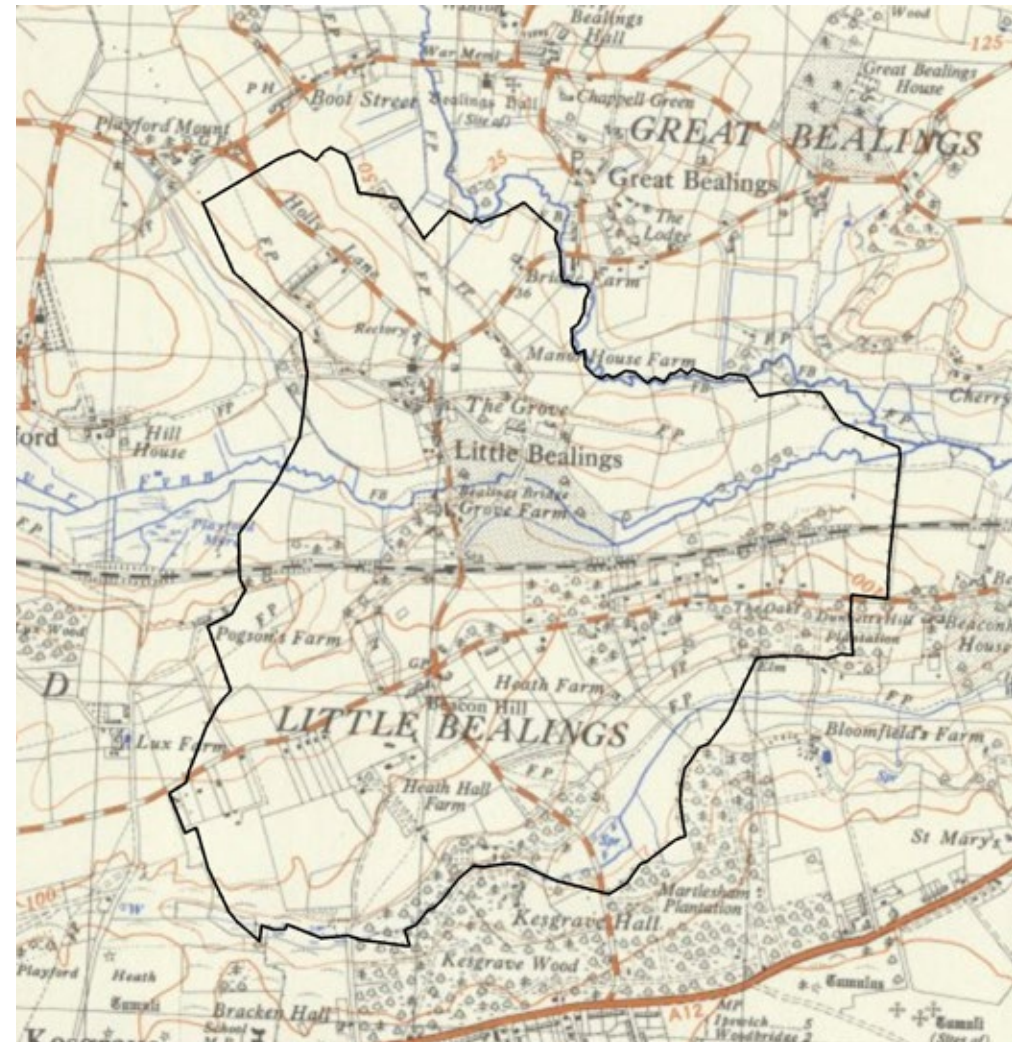
Figure 5. For planning purposes, Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (2020) defines a single settlement boundary for Little Bealings around the traditional village centre.

2. Landscape context and history continued:-

Figure 6. OS map 1905



Figure 7. OS map 1955



2. Landscape context and history continued:-

Figure 8. Designations



Key

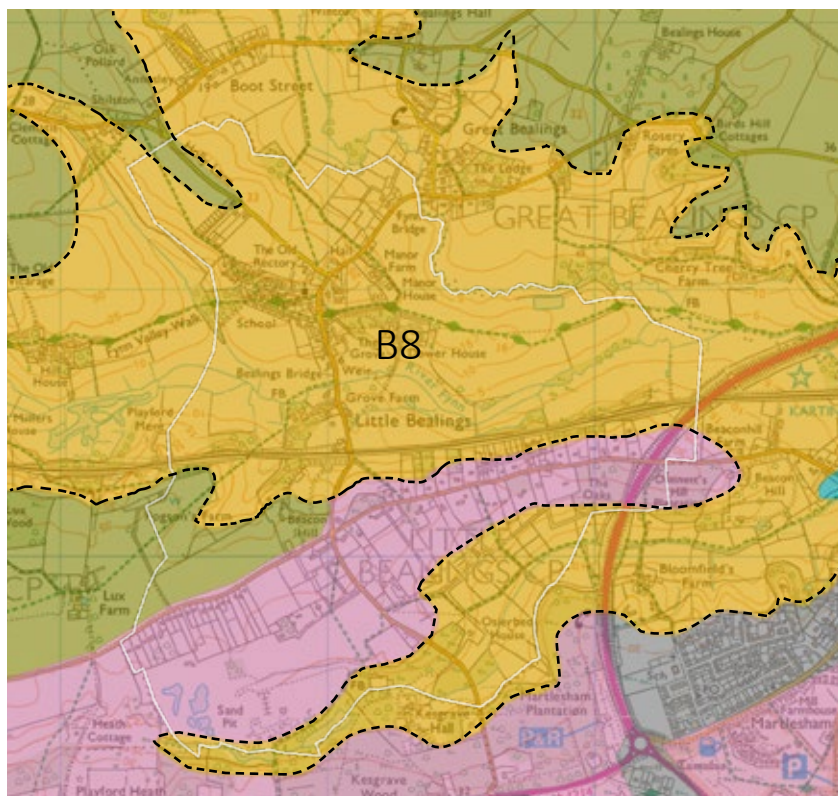
-  Settlement boundary
-  Approximate boundary of the 'historic' Special Landscape Area.
-  Suffolk and Essex Coast and Heath NL
-  County Wildlife Sites in or adjacent to Little Bealings
 1. Playford Mere
 2. Lux Wood
 3. Podgson's Meadow
 4. Kesgrave Wood
 5. Osier bed and Martlesham Plantation Meadows*
 6. Martlesham Plantation Acid grassland
-  Sites of Special Scientific Interest
 - A. Sinks Valley, Kesgrave **
-  Playford Area of Greater Landscape Value

* A small area of deciduous and wet woodland and meadow maintained by a stream and natural springs.

**Sinks Valley is a 25 hectare biological Site of Special Scientific Interest, predominantly in Kesgrave. It is a range of semi-natural habitats, with alder and oak woodland, a brook with fringing swamp, wet and dry grassland, spring fed fen and heath.

3. Landscape Character and sensitivity

Figure 9. Landscape character - county and district level assessments



Suffolk LCA types:

 Rolling Valley Farmlands and Furze	 Ancient Rolling Farmlands	 Estate sandlands
---	---	---

Suffolk Coastal LCA areas:

 B8	B8: Fynn Valley
--	-----------------

1. Landscape protection and management through the planning system is now focused on an understanding of landscape character at all spatial scales. NPPF polices through to Neighbourhood Plan policies now base landscape protection on analysis of local character and distinctiveness. Published Landscape Character Assessments provide mapping and descriptions of landscapes sharing similar characteristics and qualities and these are available at various spatial scales.
2. At the national scale, Little Bealings just falls inside National Character Area Profile: '82 Suffolk Coast and Heaths'. Text from the profile is not replicated here as it is a broad study but it can be accessed at: <https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/Suffolk-Coast-and-Heaths/>
3. Suffolk has a county level landscape character assessment which is very comprehensive. Little Bealings parish sits across three character types of the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment, as shown in figure 9. The assessment can be accessed here: <https://suffolklandscape.org.uk/>
4. Figure 9 shows the lower lying parts of the parish are defined by the 'Rolling Valley Farmlands and Furze' landscape type. The elevated finger to the south, above the (approx) 20m contour, is Rolling Estate Sandlands type. Two further small areas of Ancient Rolling Farmlands are found on the west side. Summaries of the text are provided on pages 13-15.

District- Landscape Character

5. In 2018 Suffolk Coastal District Council commissioned a district level Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). It was undertaken by Alison Farmer Associates and this author. It generally used the Suffolk LCA type boundaries, and developed these into geographically discrete character areas. Little Bealings is in one of the river valley character areas- B8 Fynn Valley- which covers an area from Witnesham through to the edge of the Deben estuary at Martlesham creek. The study also looked at the sensitivities of parts of the Ipswich rural fringe in relation to future expansion. Little Bealings parish was assessed as part of these studies¹. They were commissioned as evidence base documents for the 2020 Suffolk Coastal Local Plan and can be accessed here: <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy-and-local-plans/local-plans/local-plan-evidence-base/>

¹ Settlement Sensitivity Assessment Volume 1; Landscape Fringes of Ipswich, AFA, 2018

3. Landscape Character and sensitivity continued:-

6. The following is a summary of the character description for B8.

Area B8 is a narrow inland valley landscape, with a highly rural character. Its valley sides, which are often steep, are dotted with settlement, at points where the small rivers were forded or bridged. The valley sits over outwash deposits so overlying soils are sandy and better drained than the clay plateaux to the north. Peaty, seasonally wet soils can be found along the very base of the valley. The landform can be complex where similarly steeply sloped tributary slope streams join the main valley. Regular patches of woodland can provide a tunnel-like experience to the narrow lanes, which are often steep and sunken owing to the soft, soils which have been eroded down over the centuries.

Small enclosure patterns endure along the valley bottom, often with pasture dominating, and interspersed with woodland. These historic traditionally managed landscapes have an intimate character and views are often contained by hedges or woodland. Hedges are hawthorn and elder and elm, with trees of oak, ash and field maple. The feel can be quite a rural backwater despite the proximity of Ipswich and Woodbridge and the A12 trunk road.

Farmsteads were scarce, instead focused on the more fertile clay plateau landscapes to the north. Vernacular building materials are red brick, which has sometimes been painted. Black weatherboarding is seen on 19th and 19th century outbuildings. Bargeboards are often white and pantiles, sometime the distinctive east Suffolk black type, dominate the roofscape, with occasional slate.

Of note are the remnant patches of heathland still seen to the south. Also mentioned is the Fynn Valley Long distance walk which goes from Witnesham to Woodbridge. It offers long and attractive views of tree fringed meadows as it passes through the villages.

7. The description clearly indicates a landscape with many positive contributing features, natural habitats and an overall sense of ruralness and tranquillity. But it also warns of a vulnerable landscape, given its proximity to Ipswich and Woodbridge, and provides the following advice points:

B8 Strategies for protection:

- *Protect the settlement patterns of the villages along the valley side. Avoid ad hoc change through increases in signage, boundary treatments, and lighting.*
- *Protect the RAMSAR wetlands and SPA habitats for wild birds at Martlesham Creek.*
- *Protect the fine grained enclosure patterns and drainage ditch networks and provide sympathetic management for ecological benefits.*

Strategies for management:

- *Manage land use in the floodplain in favour of traditional management practices such as grazing by cattle or sheep, and resist conversion to equestrianism, intake to domestic curtilage.*
- *Manage areas of woodland to maintain native woodland cover, and avoid proliferation of timber plantations. Coppice Elm hedges.*

Strategies for planning:

- *Plan for any future expansion of the larger villages such as Westerfield to be highly sympathetic to landscape character.*
- *Plan for the special qualities of each village to be articulated so that new development can be integrated sensitively, e.g. through village design statements.*

3. Landscape Character and sensitivity continued:-

Suffolk LCA: Rolling Valley Farmlands and Furze

Key Characteristics

Found in south-east Suffolk in the Fynn valley eastward from Witnesham to Woodbridge and in the valley of the (east Suffolk) Lark southward from Grundisburgh to its confluence with the Fynn.

Valleys with prominent river terraces of sandy soil

Small areas of gorse heathland in a clayland setting

Straight boundaries associated with late enclosure

Co- axial field systems

Mixed hedgerows of hawthorn, dogwood and blackthorn with oak, ash and field maple

Fragmentary cover of woodland

Sand and gravel extraction

Golf courses

Focus for larger settlements

Forces for change and sensitivities:

- Expansion of settlements.
- Construction of large agricultural buildings. Expansion of garden curtilage.
- Change of land use, especially the creation of horse paddocks.
- Mineral extraction.
- The introduction of new agricultural techniques.
- Recreation pressure on the poorest land.

• Land Management Guidelines

- Reinforce the historic pattern which is a mix of sinuous and regular hedge boundaries.
- Carry out coppice management of elm dominated hedgerows.
- Maintain and increase the stock of hedgerow trees.
- Maintain the area of woodland cover; siting of any new woodland should be based on information from the Historic Landscape Characterisation and in consultation with the Archaeological Service.
- Maintain a mosaic of bare ground and varying sward heights and scrub on the small heathland sites.

3. Landscape Character and sensitivity continued:-

Suffolk LCA: Estate Sandlands

Key Characteristics

Found in south-east Suffolk taking in a large part of the area known as the Sandlings including the central spine of the Felixstowe peninsula, running from Nacton Heath eastwards to Levington Heath. It then occupies a series of almost contiguous areas stretching eastward from Rushmere to Martlesham and Waldringfield (but excluding the built-up areas of Kesgrave and Martlesham Heath)

Flat or very gently rolling plateaux of free-draining sandy soils, overlying drift deposits of either glacial or fluvial origin
Chalky in parts of the Brecks, but uniformly acid and sandy in the south-east

Absence of watercourses

Extensive areas of heathland or acid grassland

Strongly geometric structure of fields enclosed in the 18th & 19th century.

Large continuous blocks of commercial forestry

Characteristic 'pine lines' especially, but not solely, in the Brecks

Widespread planting of tree belts and rectilinear plantations

Generally a landscape without ancient woodland, but there are some isolated and very significant exceptions

High incidence of relatively late, estate type, brick buildings

North-west slate roofs with white or yellow bricks. Flint is also widely used as a walling material

On the coast red brick with pan-tiled roofs, often black-glazed

Forces for change and sensitivities

- Expansion of existing settlements into this landscape and creation of new settlement patterns and clusters associated with infrastructure development
- Changes in the management and use of landscape parklands
- Conversion and expansion of farmsteads for residential uses
- Large-scale agricultural buildings in open countryside.
- Redevelopment of former airfield sites to new uses
- The introduction of new agricultural techniques
- Leisure as a driving force for changes in economic activity
- Mineral extraction

Land Management Guidelines

- Reinforce the historic pattern of regular boundaries.
- Restore, maintain and enhance the pattern of locally distinctive "pine lines".
- Restore, maintain and enhance the network of tree belts and pattern of small plantations found across much of this landscape type.
- Extend the cover of heathland paying particular attention to areas of commercial forestry as these have lower nutrients and a residual seed bank.
- Develop opportunities for locally distinctive species such as the rare Brecks plants.
- Protect distinctive geomorphology such as patterned ground.

3. Landscape Character and sensitivity continued:-

Suffolk LCA: Ancient Rolling Farmland

Key Characteristics

Lies in fragmentary areas to the north of Ipswich and Woodbridge.

Rolling arable landscape of chalky clays and loams

Dissected widely, and sometimes deeply, by river valleys. Dissection action has produced a variety of soil types including patches of sands and gravels resulting in small heaths.

Organic pattern of species-rich hedgerows and associated ditches demonstrating ancient random enclosure. The hedges are frequently high and wide and have a strong visual impact- hawthorn and elm with oak, ash and field maple as hedgerow trees.

Substantial open areas between the river valleys were used for military airfields.

Scattered with ancient woodland parcels containing a mix of oak, lime, cherry, hazel, hornbeam, ash and holly

Dispersed settlement pattern of loosely clustered villages, hamlets and isolated farmsteads of mediaeval origin

Farmstead buildings are predominantly timber-framed, the houses colour-washed and the barns blackened with tar. Roofs are frequently tiled, though thatched houses can be locally significant

Villages often associated with village greens or the remains of greens

This area has a network of winding lanes and paths often associated with hedges that, together with the rolling countryside, can give a feeling of intimacy. However, the areas of field amalgamation have also created longer views of a rolling lightly wooded countryside.

Forces for change and sensitivities

- Historic patterns within parishes are easily lost to infill and ribbon development.
- The recurring airfields are often the focus of industrial and transport orientated development that can have a considerable local visual impact.
- Ancient woodland can be at risk from inappropriate management and neglect including a lack of deer control.
- Important array of moated sites and farmsteads which are often the focus for redevelopment and modification. Includes potential loss of individual buildings/features, development of garden curtilages. Cumulative effects can result as pattern repeats.
- Intake of greens commons and tyes into domestic curtilages has a detrimental effect.
- Potential for considerable visual intrusion from modern day agricultural sheds if the siting, finish, and planting is not appropriate.

Land Management Guidelines

- Reinforce the historic pattern of sinuous field boundaries
- Recognise localised areas of late enclosure hedges when restoring and planting hedgerows
- Maintain and restore greens commons and tyes
- Maintain and increase the stock of hedgerow trees
- Maintain the extent, and improve the condition, of woodland cover with effective management
- Maintain and restore the stock of moats and ponds in this landscape

3. Landscape Character and sensitivity continued:-

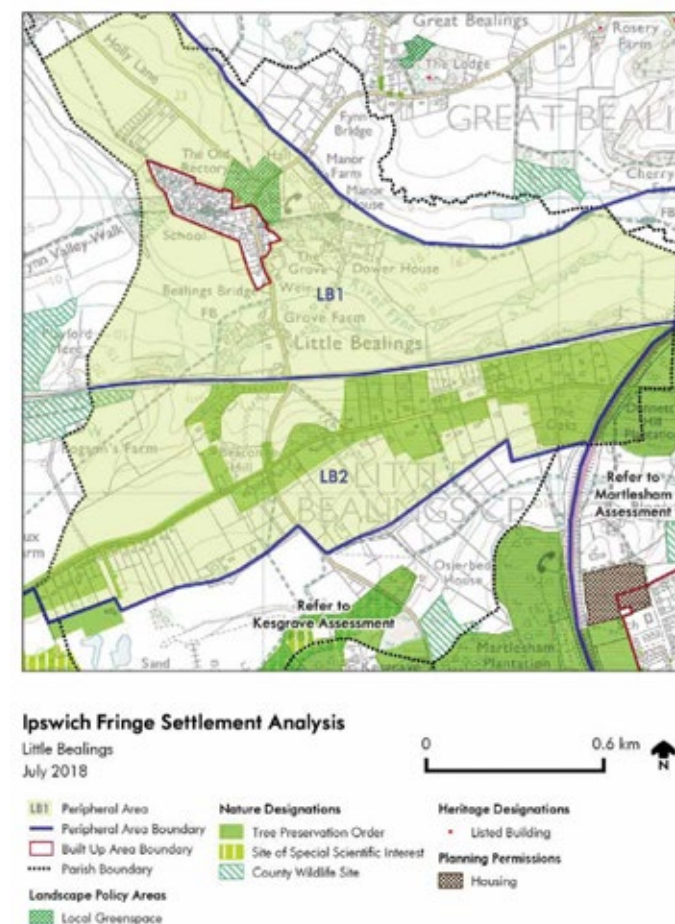
Landscape Sensitivity

8. There is one final useful piece of evidence to review. In 2018 the Ipswich Fringe Sensitivity Assessment looked at landscape sensitivity within parishes around the periphery of Ipswich which included Little Bealings (see page 53). The study does not include the whole parish, but a large central swathe that contains both areas of settlement. Refer to Appendix 3 for full text.
9. The study summarised the aspects of sensitivity and value in Little Bealings's rural area thus; *'The sensitivity of this area lies in its small scale intimate character, cultural and natural heritage interest. Its value lies in its role as a recreational corridor close to Ipswich and in its intact landscape patterns'.*
10. Specific qualities/aspects value were listed as:
 - The intactness of the landscape;
 - Settlement edges are well assimilated into the landscape by vegetation- the village is unobtrusive within the landscape allowing the rural character to be pervasive;
 - A sense of remoteness; an off the beaten track feel;
 - The railway line is unobtrusive;
 - Views are intimate and contained by the valley form and by regular woodland;
 - Wealth of natural and cultural heritage including Little Bealings Hall, winding ancient lanes, intact historic field enclosure patterns

- Five County Wildlife Sites including ancient woodland;
- High biodiversity value from the combination of habitats. Records of protected species.
- Important recreational routes including the Fynn Valley Long Distance footpath.

11. The study goes on to state; *'This landscape is highly sensitive to residential / commercial development.'*
12. In summary, the district council's evidence base documents relating to landscape character and sensitivity are very useful in helping identify the Fynn Valley as an area with noteworthy aspects of value.
13. The combination of the wealth of natural habitats, intact historic landscape patterns and vegetative features, the strong role of the topography in distinctiveness, the landscape's role as setting to important heritage features and the general feeling of remoteness and tranquillity combine to indicate a landscape of higher value. The landscape would be highly sensitive to disruption and change from development, with resulting adverse impacts on character. Therefore, providing an additional layer of protection through policy at the Neighbourhood and district scale is justifiable and recommended.

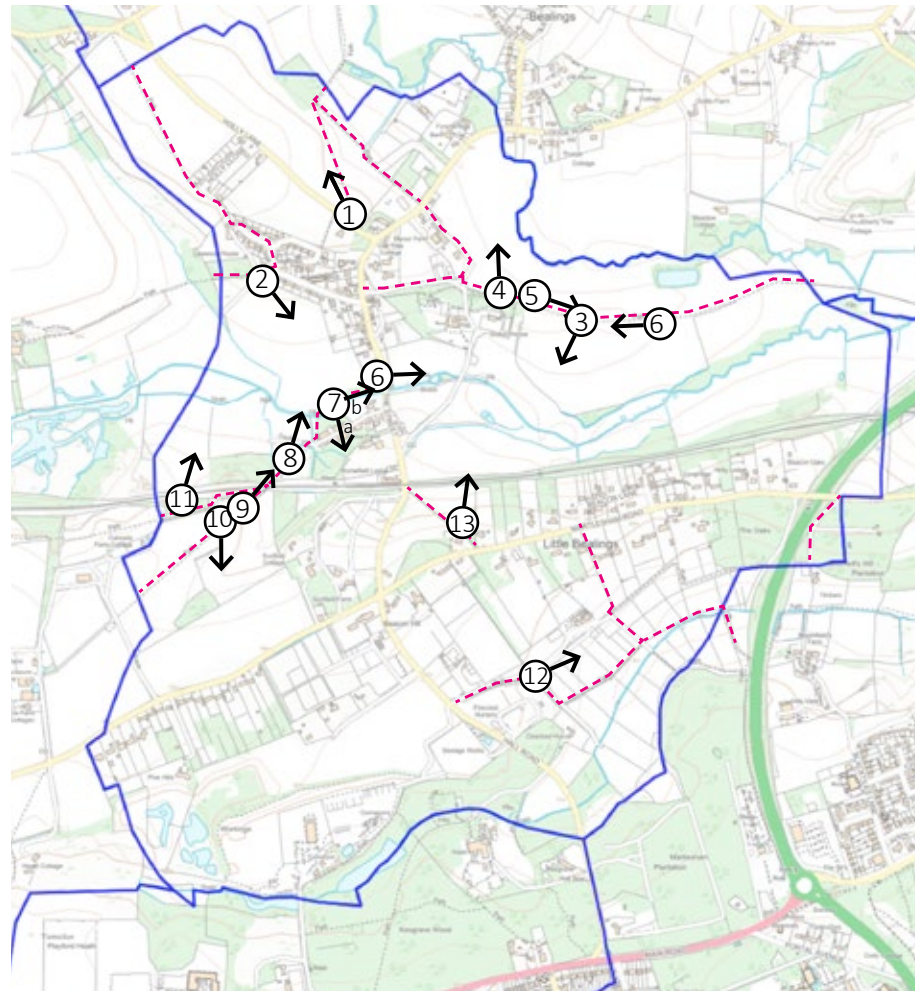
Figure 10. Reproduced from Ipswich Fringe Sensitivity Assessment by Alison Farmer Associates- refer also to appendix 3.



4. Photographic record

1. To support the desktop studies, two site visits were undertaken in late January 2024 in the company of the Neighbourhood Plan group, and a solo visit was made on 30th April 2024. A number of footpaths were walked and photographs and notes were made.
2. A selection of views showing valued features or scenic compositions are shown here and commented upon briefly. These photos are included to show the qualities of the landscape, the visual experience from some of the public rights of way, and to identify points where particularly scenic views are experienced.
3. The photos shown were taken with a Canon 700D SLR camera. The panoramic photos presented on the following pages are made up from two or three consecutive images, with approx. a 50% overlap. They are Type 1 Visual Representation (for illustrative purposes and not be treated as 'verifiable'). This level of accuracy was sufficient for a project of this scale/nature.
4. A final point to make is that these are views within the landscape only- there may well be distinct views within the built-up area of the village, not included in this study, that are considered a vital part of local identity and distinctiveness.

Figure 11. Photo locations and rights of way





Long views are experienced over the sometimes steeply rolling valley sides of the Lark towards Great Bealings whose parish church is seen in the valley bottom, its tower emerging from the tree tops. The combination of unspoilt and scenic rolling river valley topography, historic landmarks and the high degree of tree cover makes the case for a valued landscape.



The Fynn Valley Long distance walk passes through pleasant areas of farmland and woodland, on the edge of the parish, offering residents long scenic views, as here, to the southeast. ↓

A new neo-classical house is nearing completion on the brow of the hill, north of the railway line forming an imposing new landmark. The ridgeline ↓ is wooded and specimen oak trees dot the route of the tributary stream.



4. Photographic record continued:-



View over the wooded parish edge and from the well used footpath.

This oak tree is a well known land mark on the Fynn Valley footpath.



4. Photographic record continued:-



Three photos of the valley bottom of the river Fynn. Traditional sheep grazing takes place on a limited area along the village edge but otherwise land use is generally arable farming. The valley bottom landscape is not always in good condition.

4. Photographic record continued:-



View of the main village cluster from just south of the railway line. The linear settlement is well integrated by trees and the skyline is well treed.



View from higher up the valley side, over the railway line, just catching a glimpse of the buildings at Grove farm. This site is expected to be developed in the near future.

10



The rolling valleyside has a distinctive character and provides scenic compositions, in association with woodland, specimen oak trees and scattered houses.

11



View over the Fynn valley between Playford to the west and Little Bealings to the east. Playford have defined the valley bottom and sides as an Area of Greater Landscape Value (see figure 4), three County Wildlife Sites are located here.



The valley bottom of the tributary that joins the Fynn just east of Martlesham, which forms a large equestrian land holding. Despite interventions such as the menage and stud railings, the character is pleasant and well looked after. Road noise can be a detractor in the eastern parts of the parish.

From this slightly elevated footpath route long views are possible northward, over the valley, towards Gt. Bealings. Country properties are lightly scattered across the well wooded valleyside in the middle distance.



TABLE 5: To help identify the extent of an area of greater value, the current set of criteria for judging landscape value, (as set out in Landscape Institute TGN02/21 Table 1- p7) are tabulated below. The guidance states (p42) 'It would be expected that a 'valued landscape' would demonstrate the presence of a number of indicators of landscape value, as set out in Table 1.'

5. Landscape Value Criteria

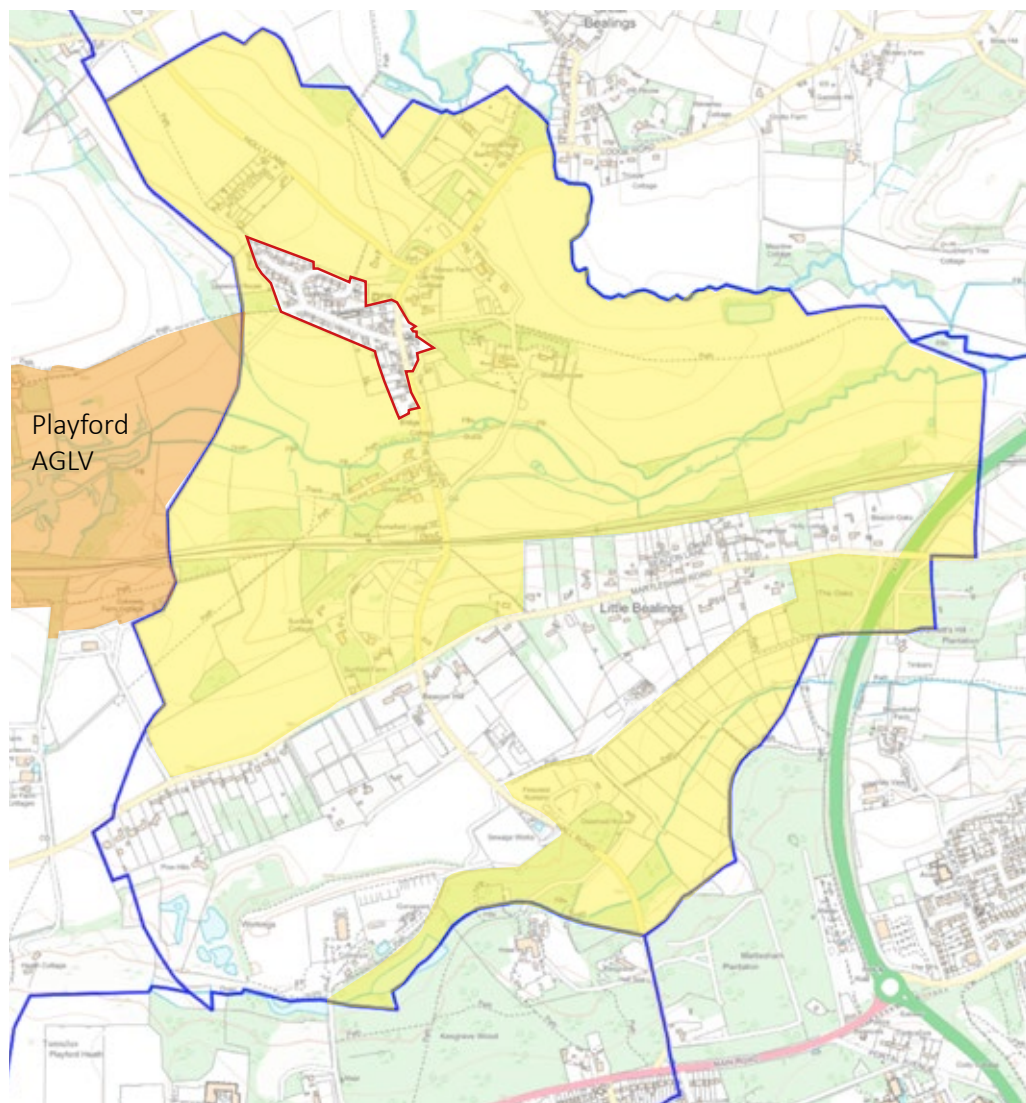
Criteria (from TGN1 02/21):	Evidence - designation or policy see mapped on figure 6	Comment
1. Natural heritage	There is one County Wildlife Site (CWS)- Osier bed and Martlesham Plantation Meadows. A small part of a biological SSSI (Sinks Valley) also falls inside the parish. There are further County Wildlife Sites in Playford, close to the parish boundary- Playford Mere, Lux Wood and Podgson's Meadow. Kesgrave Wood just outside the parish boundary to the south is also a CWS.	The tributary valleys support a number of important natural and created habitats that individually and together make an ecological contribution at the county level. The value of the sites individually is boosted by the proximity of other sites and this adds value to the river valley landscape as a whole, especially as further downstream, at a distance of only c.1.8km, the rivers drain into the edge of the Deben Estuary a set of SSSI, RAMSAR, and SPA sites with importance at international level.
2. Cultural heritage	1 Listed asset- All Saints church AONB /NL lies 840m to the east of the parish boundary. Implied value from previous designation of Special Landscape Area. Remnant parkland at the Grove. Intact landscape patterns generally.	The church sits on higher ground than most of the village houses, but its tower is not prominent owing to the high degree of tree cover. Remnant parkland landscape at The Grove. Strong sense of time-depth where small-scale pattern of enclosures endures in a few places. Long standing traditional land management where grazed meadows are found.
3. Landscape condition	Refer to B8: Fynn Valley Landscape Character Area description	Condition is mixed. Some scope for better management along parts of the river where ruderals like nettles are becoming established.
4. Associations	Refer to extensive historical record on www.littlebealings.org.uk	Illustrious village residents lived at the Grove. It was the childhood home of Sidney Colvin, the curator, critic, and great friend of Robert Louis Stevenson.
5. Distinctiveness	Refer to B8: Fynn Valley Landscape Character Area description and 2018 AFA study 'Ipswich Fringe Sensitivity Assessment'.	The sudden change of slope when descending from the plateau into the village from the north is distinctive and common to a number of villages on the Fynn. The isolated oak tree is a distinctive feature along the long distance footpath.
6. Perceptual (Scenic)	Refer to B8: Fynn Valley Landscape Character Area description and 2018 AFA study 'Ipswich Fringe Sensitivity Assessment'.	The three tributary stream valleys that converge in the east of the parish, and the fingers of higher land between them, create a distinctive and scenic lightly rolling landscape. A long distance footpath passes along the valley bottom, and a good network of other footpaths connect into it- the valley offers notable visual amenity to walkers and visitors.
7. Perceptual (Wildness and tranquillity)	Refer to B8: Fynn Valley Landscape Character Area description and 2018 AFA study 'Ipswich Fringe Sensitivity Assessment'.	The village has an 'off the beaten track' feel as a result of the topography and wooded and winding lanes which belie the proximity of the edge of Ipswich.
8. Functional	Definitive footpath map	Network of rights of way across and along the main valley including long distance walk. These provide access to rich natural environments. Some of the lowest lying meadow has a function as flood plain. The valley also has a function in that is provided a green gap and separation between Little Bealings's rural setting and the suburban edge of Kesgrave to the south.

6. Summary

1. This report assesses the landscape of Little Bealings to see what extent the Landscape Institute's criteria for 'valued landscape' is met, now that the policy has been dropped from the East Suffolk Local Plan. This comprises a review of the available desk-top evidence and application of professional judgement following site visits.
2. The landscape character of the parish is varied in direct relation to its topographic character and soils. It features three shallow east-west valleys, which comprise lightly wooded farmland, and two wooded ridges that contain and separate them. The slopes that connect them can be surprisingly steep for Suffolk. The landscape is scenic, because of the variation in topography and the frequency of the woodland. From elevated points, views over the valley are often very scenic and long ranging. The tree cover is often dominated by pines to the south, indicating the sandier soils on what was the edge of a once extensive heath, with jagged canopies shaping the skyline and adding to local distinctiveness.
3. The parish has fewer designated sites for wildlife than its neighbour Playford to the west. Land use along the river is often arable farming, and there is less wet woodland and fewer traditional grazed meadows here. It is perhaps because soils are lighter in Little Bealings, avoiding the peaty tracts found higher up the valley, and so have proved more valuable for farming over the centuries. Fewer natural habitats have had the opportunity to establish on these less marginal soils.
4. The area offers notable amenity and recreation opportunity from the walks available through this scenic landscape. There is a reasonably good network of footpaths and narrow lanes, providing access through the countryside, including the 10 mile route of the 'Fynn valley path'. The isolated oak east of the main village is a well known marker along this route.
5. It is described on the Discover Suffolk page as;
Winding its way between Woodbridge and Westerfield, the Fynn Valley Path takes in some of Suffolk's most picturesque countryside. Passing through lovely villages such as Little Bealings, Playford and Tuddenham St Martin along the way, the Fynn Valley Path makes a really fabulous day's gentle walking, with some great places to stop and eat as you go!
6. The area also offers recreation opportunity from National Cycle Route #51 that goes through the parish and on to Great Bealings and beyond, connecting Ipswich and Felixstowe, in this section of its route.
7. In terms of settlement, there are two distinct areas. The historic linear village has grown up between the medieval river ford and the church. Traditionally the village services were found here and today there is still a school and two community halls. The church is tucked into the valley side and is not visually prominent. Churches do not tend to be prominently located in villages in this area. The edges of the historic settlement are generally well assimilated within vegetation, perhaps slightly less so along the more modern village edges on Sandy lane.
8. The other focus for settlement is along the ridge to the south where old heathland has been turned into an expansive residential area within oak woodland and coniferous plantation. Large houses with large gardens line the Martlesham Road for almost a mile, with an area of smaller bungalows along Beacon Lane to the north side. These are modern in origin and have been added in a piecemeal fashion during the 20th century. The experience of passing through this area is distinctive and feels somewhat modern. Views out to the wider landscape here are rarely possible, views tend to be longitudinal, along the tight Martlesham Road corridor. Pedestrian links between the two settlement clusters are generally limited and walking along the road seems to be the only option- the railway line bisecting the landscape is a limiting factor in connecting the two areas.
9. The published character assessments and sensitivity assessments by AFA referred to earlier in this report provided a good summary of the value and sensitivities of the Fynn valley landscape and should be referenced by the parish council in the Neighbourhood Plan and used in future, for example, when consulting on planning applications.

6. Summary continued:-

Figure 12. Proposed AGLV- Area of Greater Landscape Value



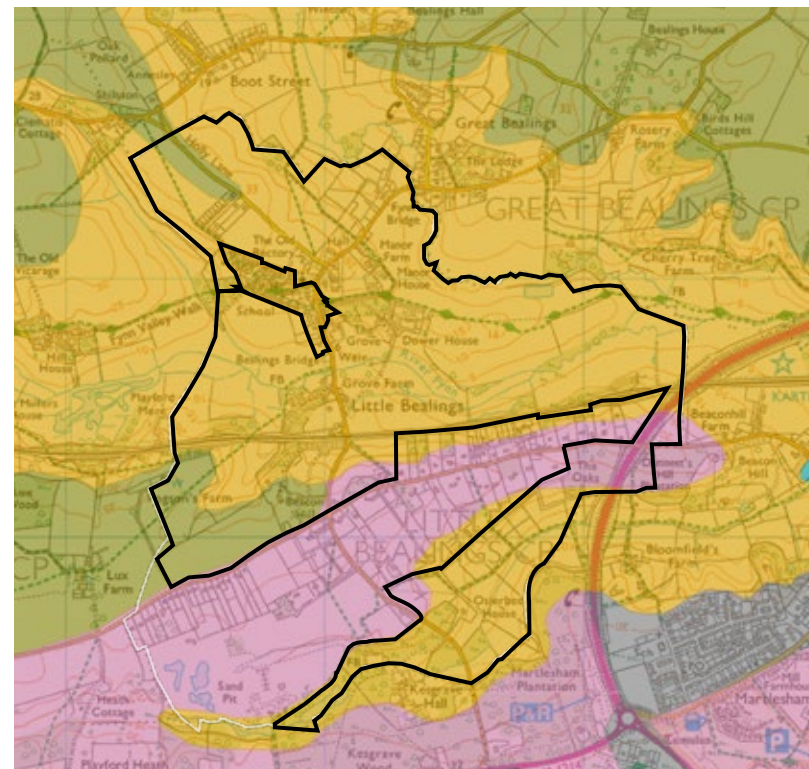
The proposed Area of Greater Landscape Value

10. It is considered much of Little Bealings should be defined as an area with greater landscape value and higher sensitivity, more specifically, most of the area defined as the Rolling Valley Farmlands and Furze' landscape type. A recommended boundary line for the AGLV is shown in Figure 12, drawn along physical lines in the landscape. It is asserted that this meets the Landscape Institute's guidance for landscapes of higher value as evidenced by a number of indicators as set out in the table on page 23.
11. Like the (now historic) Special Landscape Area, the proposed AGLV continues to include the three shallow valleys, which define the essence of the lowland character of Little Bealings. The narrow Fynn Valley, and its tributaries that join from the north (the Lark) and the south (unnamed), come together on the west side of the parish. This valley system, with often complex topography, feeds into Martlesham Creek, to the east, where the boundaries of the European designated sites are defined and where the landscape is designated as the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape. The Fynn valley is therefore adjacent to and contiguous with this ecologically important catchment and nationally valued landscape. Cultural heritage is also found here such as the remnant parkland, once more extensive, associated with The Grove. However, it is recommended to make some changes to the SLA defined area. The following is proposed:
 - To include all land around the Little Bealings settlement boundary. The rolling countryside here includes the distinctive steep slopes, plenty of wooded skylines, and scenic rural views towards either Playford to the west or Great Bealings and its isolated church to the north. Areas that are sensitive because of their elevation, and therefore visual prominence, where changes to the skyline would have far reaching impacts, are also included.
 - To ensure the boundary on the west side is contiguous with the Playford AGLV (also defined by this author), so that the larger defined area makes sense on a valley landscape scale, not just at an individual parish scale.

6. Summary continued:-

- To exclude the modern settled area along Martlesham Road. (A notable exception is the new neo-classical house that sits overlooking the Fynn valley at the west end of the Martlesham Road cluster. Unlike the rest of the houses here, it is visible from the village to the north, and reads as part of the valley landscape. It perhaps appears, to the uninitiated eye, as a historic house with a parkland-style setting, even though is very recent in origin.)
12. Otherwise, much of the landscape is privately owned, tucked away as garden curtilage, and public views into much of this area are difficult to achieve. The area offers less public amenity, it is a road dominated settlement cluster and footpaths are scarce. As there is little heath or farmland left, any development pressure would likely arise from plans to increase the number of houses within the individually owned plots. The area is much less sensitive to change as the tree cover would absorb small developments, with little impacts on the wider landscape. A policy relating to the principle of this type of infilling could be addressed in the Neighbourhood Plan, but because so much of the area is visually contained, and set within trees, it has more capacity for change than the open river valleys.
 13. The Little Bealings Neighbourhood Plan should direct additional policy protection to the AGLV area. The parish will need to define the detail of the policy but one tool that could be employed could be that Landscape and Visual Appraisal could be a requirement for any development of more than, for example, 2 houses.
 14. It should also be noted development outside this area could still have adverse effects on the AGLV and appropriate appraisal might still be recommended on adjoining land where adverse impacts on landscape character, visual amenity, or on skylines could result. The parish should consult a landscape planner or landscape architect on any proposals where they feel uncertain of the magnitude of landscape or visual impacts, and how to request appropriate mitigation.
 15. A footnote is that the river corridors are not always in good condition. The channel of the Fynn rather lacks tree cover and is sometime overgrown with nettles in places too, and is lacking traditional land management where high value arable land use dominates. It is better where there is a greater sense of naturalness along the water courses, such as along the Lark where trees are planted along the banks. Landscape enhancement plans could be

Figure 13. The AGLV overlaid on the Rolling Valley and Furze type



The AGLV shown in black broadly reflects the defined area of the 'Rolling Valley Farmlands and Furze' landscape type of the Suffolk Character Assessment.

a future project for the parish, in partnership with the local landowners, using agri-environment schemes or community funds, for example.

16. AECOM have prepared Design Guidance and Codes but there may be further opportunities for environmental improvements or initiatives led by the community.



Views westwards from Holly Lane. Land in the foreground is now included in the AGLV as it forms part of the scenic rolling valley of the Fynn, this little tributary valley joins the Fynn to the south



Views east from Holly Lane include Great Bealings church sitting in the valley bottom.

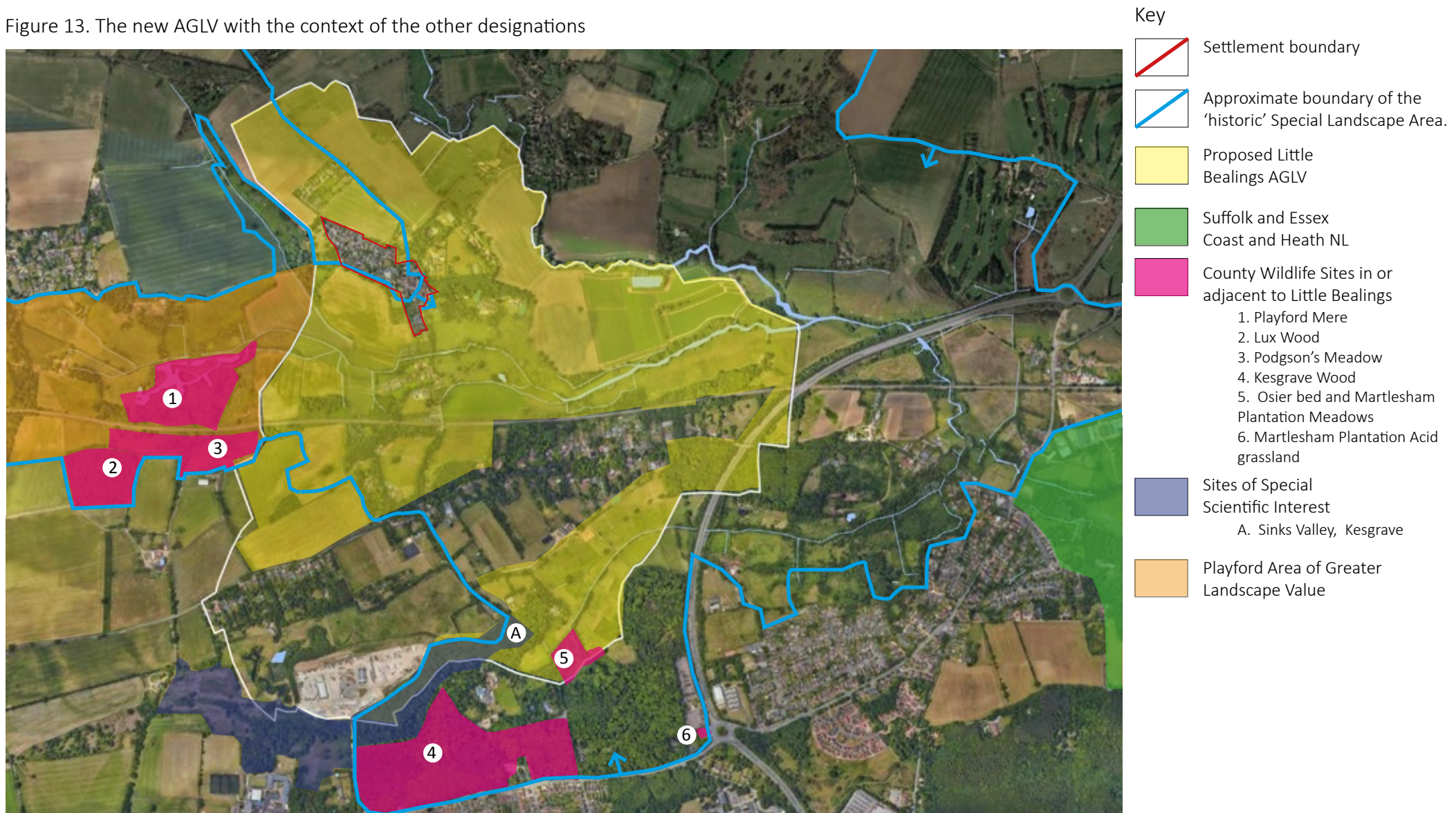


The new house overlooking the valley is included in the AGLV but the remainder of the houses along the ridge (out of sight within the trees) are not included. Although the tree-clad ridge itself is less visually sensitive, it has an important function as setting and backdrop to the village.



The tributary valley furthest south is scenic and included in the AGLV although tranquillity is limited owing to the corridor of the A12 just beyond.

Figure 13. The new AGLV with the context of the other designations



Appendix

& Glossary:

AGLV	Area of Greater Landscape Value
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
CWS	County Wildlife Site
GIS	Geographic Information System
LCA	Landscape Character Assessment
LI	Landscape Institute
LVIA/LVA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment/ Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal
NL	National Landscape (new name for AONB)
NP	Neighbourhood Plan
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
RAMSAR	Not an acronym - represents a Wetland of International Importance
SCLP	Suffolk Coastal Local Plan
SLA	Special Landscape Area
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest

Appendix 1: Suffolk Coastal Local Plan 2020 - Landscape policy full text

Policy SCLP10.4: Landscape Character

Proposals for development should be informed by, and sympathetic to, the special qualities and features as described in the Suffolk Coastal Landscape Character Assessment (2018), the Settlement Sensitivity Assessment (2018), or successor and updated landscape evidence.

Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate their location, scale, form, design and materials will protect and enhance:

- a) The special qualities and features of the area;
- b) The visual relationship and environment around settlements and their landscape settings;
- c) Distinctive landscape elements including but not limited to watercourses, commons, woodland trees, hedgerows and field boundaries, and their function as ecological corridors;
- d) Visually sensitive skylines, seascapes, river valleys and significant views towards key landscapes and cultural features; and
- e) The growing network of green infrastructure supporting health, wellbeing and social interaction.

Development will not be permitted where it will have a significant adverse impact on rural river valleys, historic park and gardens, coastal, estuary, heathland and other very sensitive landscapes.

Proposals for development will be required to secure the preservation and appropriate restoration or enhancement of natural, historic or man made features across the plan area as identified in the Landscape Character Assessment, Settlement Sensitivity Assessment and successor landscape evidence.

.....

Proposals should include measures that enable a scheme to be well integrated into the landscape and enhance connectivity to the surrounding green infrastructure and Public Rights of Way network. Development proposals which have the potential to impact upon the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or other sensitive landscapes should be informed by landscape appraisal, landscape and visual impact assessment and landscape mitigation.

Proposals for development should protect and enhance the tranquillity and dark skies across the plan area.

Exterior lighting in development should be appropriate and sensitive to protecting the intrinsic darkness of rural and tranquil estuary, heathland and river valley landscape character.

Neighbourhood Plans may include local policies related to protecting and enhancing landscape character and protecting and enhancing tranquillity and dark skies.

B8 Fynn Valley

Location

The Area comprises the floor and sides of the Fynn Valley, and its minor tributaries, and the lower part of the River Lark valley, south of Grundisburgh. The valley winds from Winesham in the west, through Playford to Bealings where the two rivers converge, to join the Deben Estuary at Martlesham Creek, just south of Woodbridge.

Constituent Types

This area is almost entirely Rolling Valley Farmlands and Furze, with a small area of Valley Meadowlands.



Summary Description

The Fynn is a narrow inland valley landscape of undeveloped flood plain, its sides dotted with settlement. The often steep, well vegetated valley sides help define its character, along with the sandlands feel to the tree species. Initially more gentle in the upper reaches, where the river often feels no more than a broad stream, the valley sides get steeper closer to the mouth of the river at Martlesham Creek.

The small river has eroded a gently winding route through the surrounding clayland plateau. The geology is outwash deposits - principally silts, sands and gravels, from the great Anglian Glaciation. The valley sides have sandy acid soils, and are better drained than the undenuded claylands to either side. The valley bottoms are seasonally wet, peaty alluvial deposits.

The valley bottom lies between 40 and 30m AOD in the upper reaches of the valley in the west, falling to almost sea level in the east where it adjoins the Deben Estuary at the head of Martlesham Creek. Small tributaries with similarly steeply denuded valleysides, join the Fynn, adding complexity to the landform where they converge and giving a scenic, rolling character.

The valley bottom is grassland, in small-scale, organic-shaped longitudinal fields which, together with fragments of woodland, form a mosaic in the valley bottom. The pastoral land use and small scale enclosure patterns show considerable time-depth and create an intimate feel. Trees on the valley side and plateau edge play a regular and definitive part of its character.

39

Patches of heathland still remain in the east of the area around Martlesham, on the steeper valleysides, where modern agriculture has not proven feasible. The remnant heaths are dominated by poor dry grassland, with gorse (or furze) often in abundance, reflecting the underlying sandy soils. The Golf courses at Winesham and Seckford Hall utilise the free-draining soils.

Such free draining valley sides were a focus for settlement where soils could be easily farmed, while providing close proximity to sources of water and woodland on the adjacent clay plateau edges. Bronze Age finds in Tuddenham, for example, indicate the long settled nature of this landscape.

The main roads, radiating out from the edge of Ipswich, cross the valleyside at intervals, with linear Medieval villages at the points they ford the river. The principal roads are linked by a network of narrow lanes along which are scattered houses and cottages in well vegetated plots. Piecemeal settlement from the 20th century is found loosely arranged along particularly narrow lanes that peter out into countryside. Farmsteads are scarce – these are instead located on the adjacent plateau edge above the valley.

The area has a highly rural character and away from the villages the river corridor feels isolated and tranquil, for example in parts of Playford which have a quiet 'back water' feel despite the frequency of settlement and the relative close proximity of Ipswich.

Views within the narrow valley are intimate. They are contained by the steep slopes and woodland that is scattered along the water course, and fragmented along the valley side. Woodlands are small, but their vertical impact makes them a prominent part of any view. There are some very statuesque individual oak trees, and distinctive lines of pines on the valley sides, highlighting the sandy soils beneath. Roadside hedgerows are of hawthorn, elder with oak, ash and field maple. Views become more open in the transition between the valley and the plateaux landscapes.

Vernacular building materials are dominated by red brick, which is sometimes painted. Timber boarding sometime provides infilling in gable ends and barge boards are common and often painted white and sometimes elaborately carved. Roofs are tiled, pantile dominating, with occasional slate. A few examples remain of the East Suffolk vernacular of black glazed pantile roofs. Weatherboarding is a prominent feature amongst the village's eighteenth and early nineteenth century barns and outbuildings. White paint forms a unifying element in the street scene, such as in Tuddenham where the pub has white painted hand railings.

The Ipswich-Lowestoft railway line enters the Character Area south of Tuddenham, and runs along the southern boundary before turning north and entering Woodbridge from the south. It is not a prominent feature as it is located away from the main routes and villages and is frequently in cutting and or flanked by strips of woodland.

Particularly distinctive to the experience of the area is the sudden change to the character of the roads and lanes as they descend from the more open plateau landscape into the valley. The transition is marked by the descent through densely vegetated, ivy covered embankments which, together with trees overhead, form dramatic, tunnel-like entrances to the villages.

This is a vulnerable landscape under considerable development pressure because of the good connections and proximity to Ipswich and Woodbridge.

Special Qualities and Features

- Much of the village of Tuddenham St. Martin has a Conservation Area which recognises the core of historic buildings that span the valley side. The slopes on either side providing a dramatic setting for the village and the openness of water meadows provides contrast.
- The Fynn Valley Long distance footpath follows the course of the river from Winesham to the centre of Woodbridge, approaching the town along the banks of the Deben from its confluence with the Fynn at Martlesham Creek. This is supported by a dense network of further footpaths that traverse the valley side, providing an important local recreational network.
- Scattering of impressive Elizabethan mansions such as Playford Hall, Seckford Hall and Winesham Hall in mature landscaped gardens.
- The countryside comes right through the villages along the floodplains, offering opportunities for long and attractive views of tree fringed meadows and providing an attractive setting for the villages.

Condition

These meadowlands have generally changed little over the centuries and most continue being managed for grazing and hay making. Some are managed under traditional grazing, such as around Tuddenham, but in other areas, the meadows are not grazed or are divided up for paddocks and poached by horses. There is some inappropriate planting of conifer lines.

Strategy Objectives

Protect
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protect the settlement patterns of the villages along the valley side. Avoid ad hoc change through increases in signage, boundary treatments, and lighting.• Protect the RAMSAR wetlands and SPA habitats for wild birds at Martlesham Creek.• Protect the fine grained enclosure patterns and drainage ditch networks and provide sympathetic management for ecological benefits.
Manage
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manage land use in the floodplain in favour of traditional management practices such as grazing by cattle or sheep, and resist conversion to equestrianism, intake to domestic curtilage.• Manage areas of woodland to maintain native woodland cover, and avoid proliferation of timber plantations. Coppice Elm hedges.
Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan for any future expansion of the larger villages such as Westerfield to be highly sympathetic to landscape character.• Plan for the special qualities of each village to be articulated so that new development can be integrated sensitively, e.g. through village design statements.

6.4 Little Bealings

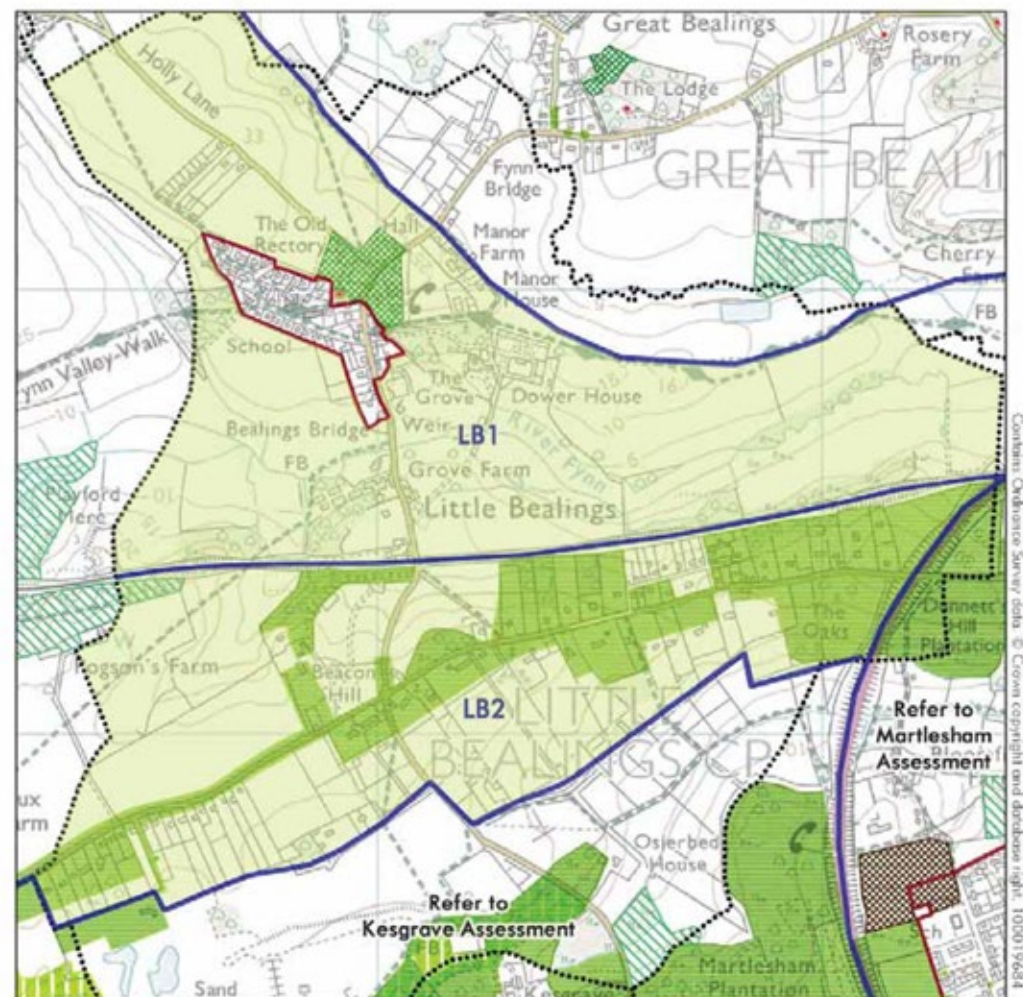
Little Bealings comprises two clusters of development, firstly the original village (located within the Fynn Valley character area defined in the Suffolk Coastal LCA) and a second area to the south on the higher sandlings landscape (along Playford Road and Martlesham Road within the Kesgrave Sandlands character area).

The original village was first recorded in Domesday and comprised the typical loose arrangement of manor house, church, dispersed farmsteads and cottages. Historic maps from the late 19th century show a loose arrangement of dwellings within the valley including a smithy and inn. Later infill housing at Michael's Mount and Richards Drive occurred in the latter half of the 20th century.

Housing along Playford Road and Martlesham Road dates to the latter half of the 20th century and comprises large properties set within generous grounds on an area of marginal land/remnant heath.

Between these two areas of settlement runs the Westerfield to Woodbridge railway. A station existed at Little Bealings and was closed in 1956, although the station building and platform remain.

For the purposes of the sensitivity assessment, the landscape fringes of Little Bealings have been divided into two peripheral areas reflecting variations in landscape character and factors which contribute to sensitivity. The peripheral areas are illustrated below.



Ipswich Fringe Settlement Analysis

Little Bealings
July 2018



Peripheral Area: LB1

The sensitivity of this area lies in its small scale intimate character, cultural and natural heritage interest and the loose arrangement of dwellings reflecting the evolution of the settlement. It is valued as a recreational corridor close to Ipswich and for its intact landscape patterns.

The landscape is highly sensitive to residential or commercial development. However, it would be less sensitive to one off bespoke dwellings which are carefully sited in the valley (e.g. south of the school). Development should avoid visual conflict with the landmark quality of the church and should in general sit below the c.25m contour.

Physical Character
Rolling Valley Farmlands with Furze landscape type. The Fynn valley forms a gentle valley context ranging from c. 30m AOD on the valley slopes to 5m AOD on the valley floor.
Landscape Patterns/Condition
Intact landscape with strong landscape patterns created by landuse (pasture on the valley floor and lower slopes with arable above), high concentration of woodlands especially on the upper slopes creating treed horizons, and cultural heritage features including church and other vernacular buildings and narrow winding lanes. Railway on southern valley sides is unobtrusive but urbanisation of lanes due to property curtilage treatment has resulted in some loss of integrity and character.
Existing Settlement Edge
Existing urban edge is well vegetated resulting in only glimpses to properties. Settlement occurs between the c. 10m and 25m contours on the mid to upper slopes of the valley (with the exception of areas of more modern housing) with the church sitting on a slightly higher shoulder of land.
Views and Visibility
The church sits on higher land above the houses within the main village and acts as a local landmark although adjacent trees can screen views of the tower.
Cultural and Natural Heritage
Remnant parkland associated with the manor house on the south side of the river includes pasture and veteran trees. Woodlands on the mid and upper valley slopes have a nature conservation value as do the valley floor pastures and network of wide hedgerows. Village church is a listed building and land to the north is an area of local greenspace providing a rural meadow setting.
Perceptual qualities
The Fynn valley has a remote and tranquil character which feels off the beaten track. The small rural lanes which descend into the valley and enclosure created by vegetation and topography give rise to a landscape which is perceived as small scale and intimate.
Function
Fynn Valley Walk long distance route and connections into Ipswich North.
Opportunities
Opportunities exist to conserve and enhance the role of the church as a local landmark though selective tree works and avoidance of development on upper slopes which visually competes with the building. Opportunities to improve the central space within the village around the local pub.

Peripheral Area: LB2

The sensitivity of this area lies in its proximity and potential visibility from the Fynn Valley and narrow historic lanes which access the area. Its value is in its role as a setting to the valley and as an area with potential for heathland re-creation. This landscape is relatively simple in terms of topography, landscape patterns and woodland cover.

This landscape is sensitive to residential development as a result of its valued narrow rural lanes which are a key constraint. Nevertheless, in the vicinity of Beacon Hill and in areas between existing development, the landscape is less sensitive and topography flatter such that development could be mitigated with appropriate planting. The landscape around the station may accommodate small scale commercial development. In all cases great care should be taken to avoid visual and physical intrusion into the Fynn Valley and urbanisation of the historic lane which leads to Little Bealings in the valley.

Physical Character
Estate Sandlands and Ancient Rolling Farmlands landscape types. Landform ranges from c. 20 to 35m AOD. Relatively flat landscape and upper slopes of the Fynn Valley south of the railway line.
Landscape Patterns/Condition
Predominately intact pre-18th century enclosure pattern with re-organisation resulting from linear housing development along the main roads. Significant woodland and tree cover giving a leafy and blocky character to the landscape.
Existing Settlement Edge
This is a well-spaced linear settlement which runs along the road, to the east the A1214 provides an abrupt boundary as does the railway line to the north. Properties are set back from the road within extensive grounds and therefore with the exception of access driveways the rural vegetated character of Playford Road and Martlesham Road remains unaltered. As such the development in this area is not visually dominant.
Views and Visibility
There are views across this elevated and relatively flat landscape with some views across and into the Fynn Valley. Otherwise the relatively flat topography on the higher land is screened by areas of woodland and vegetation and has a more inward looking character and is not widely visible from the surrounding landscape. No landmarks.
Cultural and Natural Heritage
Relatively recent built environment from post 1950' housing but underlying pattern of lanes still evident. Remnant heath vegetation in lane verges. Listed building and setting of Kesgrave Hall to the south. High concentration of TPOs within the area.
Perceptual qualities
This landscape feels rural and agricultural in character with evidence of the sandy soils manifest in verge vegetation and areas of conifer plantation.
Function
Important area of higher land between the Fynn Valley and Butler's Brook to the south.
Opportunities
Opportunities to recreate areas of heathland and acid grassland in association with restoration of sand and gravel pits to the south.