

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL
DRAFT LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT
AND ACTION PROGRAMME

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A landscape assessment of the majority of the Babergh District has been carried out using advice made available by the Countryside Commission, (1). This has enabled a descriptive account to be given of the District's landscape, based on established methods of assessment. Some parts of the Babergh District are already covered by separate landscape assessments, such as the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB and project area, and part of Gipping Valley Countryside project area. Reference is made to these documents where appropriate, as there is no need to duplicate much of the work already carried out for these localities. (Map 1 shows the component parts of the assessments).
- 1.2 The survey stage of the landscape assessment has been helpful in identifying the type of action that might be required in the protection and enhancement of the Babergh landscape. The limited resources available for the carrying out of the exercise and the implementation of possible future measures, has to be borne in mind. This has resulted in the production of a series of Action Points. They will be used to guide the Council and its partners' countryside activities and will also be used as a basis for a future Action Programme.
- 1.3 The Babergh District Landscape Assessment will become an integral part of the Council's Countryside Strategy (2). It provides a framework to secure the protection and enhancement of the District's landscape. Further information on the implementation of the Action Points in this landscape assessment will be included in the Countryside Strategy, and in the detailed Action Programme itself. The landscape assessment will be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

2. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The Babergh District Landscape Assessment aims to:
- describe the landscape characteristics of the Babergh District
 - provide a framework to assist in development control and in giving advice, and to identify a future programme of action for the protection and enhancement of the Babergh countryside
- 2.2 The objectives are to:
- raise awareness of the particular characteristics and issues affecting the Babergh countryside, for the benefit of the public and the Council's countryside partners
 - assist in the review and implementation of the Babergh Countryside Strategy
 - assist in the protection and enhancement of the Babergh landscape, including the use of the Babergh Local Plan

- aid the protection and enhancement of the Babergh countryside, through the development control process

3. **METHOD OF OPERATION**

- 3.1. Most of the practical guidance can be found in the Countryside Commission, (now the Countryside Agency), publication CCP423, which was used to enable the landscape assessment to be carried out in-house. The landscape assessment relied on familiarisation with both the subject and the geographical area. This proved to be useful given the finite staff resources available, and which had to compete with other significant workload demands.
- 3.2. Landscape zones were identified from an initial desk exercise, and used as a starting point for field studies. Familiarity with the Babergh District assisted with the definition of these zones in the first instance. The approximate boundaries of the landscape zones were largely based on physical features, eg river valleys and higher land. (Map 1). Each landscape zone was identifiable as a physical unit, defined by these broad topographical boundaries.
- 3.3. Initial site surveys were then used to develop a feel for each landscape zone, as objectively as possible. More detailed field studies were then carried out, over a short period of time, so that a reasonably consistent approach to visual appraisal could be achieved. Aerial photographs were also used at the early stage, and referred to again as necessary, for checking out the results of the field studies and aiding the drawing up of descriptive accounts. The findings of the field studies were applied to information gained at the desk study stage, and a descriptive account for each landscape zone was achieved. Apart from the AONBs, which were subject to separate landscape assessments, other protected locations in the district, designated as Special Landscape Areas, were noted.
- 3.4. The landscape assessment largely disregarded these protective designations to prevent undue bias in reaching conclusions. Map 2 shows the protected areas in the Babergh District, together with the boundaries of countryside management project areas, and Countryside Character Areas.
- 3.5. At all stages of the landscape assessment, desk and field notes were made of matters that might need to be addressed, such as the scope for new planting, screening of eyesores etc. Positive features were also noted, both for the descriptions and to include in the Action Points. The recommendations in the Action Points are illustrated in Map 3.

4. **CONSTRAINTS**

- 4.1. The Countryside Agency landscape assessment guidance (2) goes to some lengths to encourage identification of Landscape Character types, where the same range of features generate a common feel about a given area. This can mean similar classifications and hence the same kind of landscape characteristics being identified throughout different parts of the Babergh District. For example, large open arable landscapes or small-scale river valley locations are found in more than one location. In view of the likely generation of detailed and overlapping descriptions for a large number of localities, this course of action was not considered to be pragmatic.
- 4.2. At the present time, survey work is being undertaken to progress Landscape Character assessments throughout the whole of Suffolk. This will be used at a later stage to guide the work of the Babergh District landscape assessment. It is anticipated that Landscape Character Guidelines for the Babergh District may become available during the summer of 2005.

- 4.3 The chosen approach was to use the landscape zones as a means of describing in general terms the landscape character of different parts of the district. This method enabled reasonably good descriptive accounts to be given of the Babergh countryside, which are important to providing a landscape assessment. The need for much detailed and time-consuming survey work was also avoided at this early stage.
- 4.4 Reference was made to the landscape assessments for the project areas during the desk study, to ensure that a consistent approach was followed, and that issues common to the Babergh countryside, were identified. Reference will also be made to them in the future Action Programme.

5. **THE BABERGH LANDSCAPE**

- 5.1 **Character** - a number of features are used to describe the landscape character of a given area. Landscape zones derived from the desk study stage have turned out to be suitable units for this kind of landscape assessment. Little adjustment to the boundaries first drawn up prior to the field studies, was found to be necessary following the survey work on the ground, see Map 1. Topography, as indicated by contour lines, greatly assisted in defining the physical limits of the landscape zones. The boundaries between the landscape zones are transitions rather than specifically identifiable lines. Land use, vegetation, scale and the landscape characteristics of the area were used to complete the description. Detrimental features are also identified, in addition to positive ones, as these could assist in any future work programme.
- 5.2 The Babergh District falls into parts of two Countryside Character Areas identified by the Countryside Agency, (3). The Shotley Peninsula, including parts of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB is within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Character Area. The boundary of this Character Area is much larger than the AONB itself, and includes an area in that part of the Babergh District traditionally known as Dodnash. The remainder of the District is within the South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands Character Area. Reference has been made to the profile descriptions prepared by the Countryside Agency, (3). As the majority of the countryside the subject of this landscape assessment falls within the latter Countryside Character Area, there is limited reference to the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Countryside Character Area, (Map 2). The Dedham Vale AONB is completely within the South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands Countryside Character Area.
- 5.3 The South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands are characterised as broadly flat, chalky, boulder clay plateau dissected by river valleys. The area is predominantly arable with good woodland cover, and having some pasture on the valley floors. Field rationalisation has been irregular, with remnants of Ancient Countryside in places. Scattered settlements, often based on tyes or greens are found, as are concentrations of isolated, moated sites. Oak and ash are the main hedgerow trees in Suffolk, which in general has few large woods. However, it has important ancient coppice woods connected by equally important hedgerows. Sunken hollow lanes are a feature of an overall, winding road pattern, where the impact of Dutch elm disease is clearly seen in hedgerows.
- 5.4 These key characteristics have been used as an aide memoire for the landscape assessment. It can be particularly useful in the formulation of the future Action Programme.

Analysis

- 5.5 Even with the exclusion of those designated areas covered by other landscape assessments, the Babergh landscape remains varied and interesting. The topography of the District has presented a varied number of landscape zones, each with their own characteristics. To a large

extent these are focussed on the courses of rivers, and have a varied relief with relatively few large areas of flat land, compared to many other parts of East Anglia.

5.6 A number of issues have arisen from the assessment of the Babergh landscape. Many of the points raised have conformed to the recommendations for the future, including those identified in the South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands Countryside Character Area profile:

- Those localities found to be in need of landscape improvement have experienced the most agricultural intensification, e.g. hedgerow removal, loss of woodland cover, ploughing up of meadows, loss or deterioration of ponds.
- Existing development can have a significant adverse impact on the Babergh countryside. Large-scale, post-war farm buildings of inferior design have an adverse impact on the countryside where they are poorly sited or lack natural screening. Consideration should be given to screening existing as well as proposed development, through the planning process or by positive means.
- Many historic settlements, including small ones such as farms and moated sites, contribute to landscape character. In such locations, there will not normally be a need to consider tree planting for screening of development.
- There are a large number of pastoral river valley locations, which add to the variety of the Babergh landscape. These warrant continued protection, and enhancement, through appropriate measures, particularly if they are not within a countryside management project area.
- Where possible, the restoration of river valley landscapes in locations where traditional features have been lost, such as meadows, riverside trees and drainage channels, should be encouraged.
- Lack of tree or hedgerow cover in the Babergh District tends to be localised, usually on the basis of an individual farm holding. In spite of this restricted problem, targeted remedial action is needed in such locations.
- Parklands and woodlands have a considerable and positive impact on the Babergh landscape. Their continued retention and suitable management is important. Although much of this work is undertaken by other agencies, the District Council will support this where appropriate.
- The loss of large numbers of historic trees such as elm is still felt in some locations, e.g. Little Cornard and Elmsett. Where possible, historical replacement by other, appropriate trees should be contemplated.
- Some locations covering more than one farm-holding are devoid of woodland, tree and/or hedgerow cover, e.g. around the north of Hadleigh. They should be targeted for landscape improvement through a comprehensive scheme of planting.
- A higher level of countryside management resources are found in areas of better landscape quality, i.e., Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Special Landscape Areas and Historic Parklands. These are usually in the form of countryside management projects, and although important, can be at the expense of non-designated areas in real need of landscape improvement. The landscape assessments carried out for those designated areas have raised their profiles and identified appropriate steps to be taken in their protection and enhancement.

- The increasing trend for extending domestic curtilages is having an adverse effect on the landscape, leading to a change in character due to unsuitable planting and the introduction of sheds, car parking areas etc. Greater planning control is needed in such cases, including appropriate landscaping treatment. An existing Local Plan policy covers this issue, but there is a need for greater awareness on this topic.
- The planting of exotic and inappropriate trees in existing private curtilages can have an adverse effect on the landscape. Advice on the planting of more suitable species is needed, as this is often outside of the control of the planning system. Consideration should also be given to the scope for appropriate financial assistance to deal with this problem.
- The countryside around Dodnash and parts of the Burstall Brook and Gipping Valleys are identified as being of high landscape quality. The Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2 process will pursue Special Landscape Area designation in order to ensure their continued protection.
- A wide range of activities can have adverse effects on the landscape, mainly through a lack of appreciation of their impact on the countryside. The introduction of horse paddocks with their associated apparel can create visual intrusion, and often is outside the scope of the development control system. This is one example of how activities can adversely affect the landscape characteristics of an area.
- Further advice in the form of Landscape Character Guidelines will be incorporated in this Assessment when they become available.

5.7 A range of measures is needed to protect and enhance the Babergh landscape, and based on the findings of the desk and field studies carried out. The descriptions of the landscape zones and the conclusions drawn in this analysis will form the basis for future action.

6. LANDSCAPE ZONES

Action Points

6.1 In addition to the descriptions of each locality in the following paragraphs, a suggested list of Action Points has been drawn up for the Babergh countryside as a whole. The list tries to assume a practical and realistic approach. In particular, the provisions of the two Countryside Character Area profiles will be used as a checklist, to ensure that the character of the District is fully taken into account. The Action Programme will be based on the type of format recommended by the Countryside Agency, in its work on Countryside Character Areas. The District Council will do what it can with the limited resources available, and will encourage other organisations in schemes which help in the protection and enhancement of the Babergh countryside. This will involve consultation with them on the drafting of the Action Programme. Reference to the work of other agencies and organisations can be found in the Babergh Countryside Strategy, for the purpose of identifying those resources and bodies, which might be able to assist in implementing the recommendations of the Action Programme.

General

6.2 *Action Points:*

- The Landscape Assessment and Action Programme will be made available to Members and officers of the District Council, and to other organisations with whom the District Council works, or who have an interest in, the Babergh countryside.
- The District Council will carry out annual reviews of the Action Programme, which will run for five years, to ensure that the principles are being applied, and to secure implementation.
- The Countryside Character profiles relating to the Suffolk Coast and Heaths and the South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands Countryside Character Areas will form a baseline for the drawing up of the Action Programme. These will take the form of Landscape Character Guidelines.
- The conclusions of landscape assessments carried out for the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Project area, the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Gipping Valley Countryside project area, will be considered in drawing up the Action Programme.
- The District Council's Countryside Fund will be revised and reviewed from time to time on the basis of the recommendations contained in the Action Programme.
- Consideration will be given to screening existing farm buildings, utilities sites and intrusive development, where they have an adverse impact on the landscape.
- Natural features will be used, where possible, as a foundation for landscape improvement, e.g. water courses can help to dictate new hedgerow planting patterns.
- The Landscape Assessment and Action Programme will be used as a basis for considering the impact of new development and for policy formulation in the Babergh Local Plan process and in the determination of planning applications.
- Good quality advice is needed on the choice of suitable tree and shrub/hedging species, in locations which can impact on the countryside.
- Appropriate species will be expected in planting schemes, e.g. waterside trees in river valley locations, and which pay due regard to the descriptions for landscape zones.
- New woodland planting on open grassland sites within river valleys will not be encouraged, and alternative sites on valley sides will be suggested.
- The important parklands and woodlands in the District will be protected and enhanced, using available resources. Re-creation of these features will be encouraged where appropriate.
- Roadside landscaping schemes will be pursued on existing highways in areas where landscape improvement is needed.
- The effect of leisure activities, such as horse riding and show-jumping, will be monitored, to assess the need for further action, given the potentially adverse impact of such activities on the landscape.

- 6.3 **North Cosford** - this large area extends from Lawshall in the west via Cockfield to Thorpe Morieux and Brettenham, ending up at Hitcham and Wattisham on the eastern boundary of the district. It is essentially rural, and does not have any large settlements that greatly impact on the landscape. Those locations near the boundaries with St Edmundsbury and Mid Suffolk Districts tend to be quite flat, but the relief becomes more varied further south. On the whole, the landscape is one of rolling, large scale arable farmland, but small pockets of interest abound. A particularly good example is the location of Thorpe Morieux in a small pastoral valley. There are many opportunities for tree planting to screen buildings, particularly modern agricultural ones. Apart from an area immediately to the south of Cockfield, woodland cover is good, such as in Brettenham and Hitcham.
- 6.4 The general landform is broken up by streams flowing south from Cockfield to Lavenham, Thorpe Morieux to Kettlebaston and from Hitcham to Bildeston. Except for a section immediately to the north of Lavenham, which is essentially devoid of typical river valley features such as meadows and riverside trees, the well covered areas along the stream courses contrast pleasantly with the more open, higher land around, and have particular landscape value.
- 6.5 Some locations are very open and in need of more tree and hedgerow cover, including the locality of the former Lavenham airfield. There are other similar instances but these tend to be on a farm holding basis, and are localised. An interesting aspect of the landscape in this part of the district is the large number of viewpoints, which can be gained from higher ground, and offer good views of the countryside, in particular of those areas to the south.

Action Points:

- The river valley from Cockfield to Lavenham will be targeted for landscape improvement. Features which have been lost, such as riverside trees and grassland, will be considered for inclusion in such schemes.
- The locality of Lavenham Airfield would benefit from a comprehensive programme of tree and hedgerow planting.
- Hedgerow planting will be sought in Hitcham and Wattisham, north of Great Green, Cockfield and in the higher areas of Nedging and Bildeston.

- 6.6 **Glem Valley** - in the western part of the district is the Glem Valley, extending from Somerton and Hartest south to Boxted and Glemsford, with the River Glem joining the River Stour to the west of Long Melford. It is largely made up of the Glem Valley Special Landscape Area, and contrasts considerably with North Cosford, being smaller in scale and having more varied relief. It has a pastoral floor for much of the length from the boundary with Hawkedon parish, and is well served with woodland cover on both sides. The more intimate character of the valley contrasts with the open field systems on the higher land, from which excellent views can be derived. The setting of Hartest village is quite exceptional, and the presence of Boxted Park does much to enhance the area in visual terms. Further south the river becomes less visible due to arable cultivation taking the place of the traditional pastures, resulting in the loss of riverside trees and shrubs. To compound the situation, the village of Glemsford stands on top of the slope looking over the valley to the east, with little attempt having been made at softening the impact of development. It is probably the only main debit feature in this landscape zone. The presence of the woodlands to the east helps to screen Glemsford from long distance views. As with most river valley situations, the appropriate kind of tree cover for the setting, such as willow, alder and poplar, contributes greatly to the landscape quality.

Action Points:

- Hedgerow planting will be followed up on the higher land, and in particular to the east of Glemsford village where screening of existing development is needed.
- Re-creation of the river valley landscape features, such as meadows and riverside, will be sought, south of Boxted Park, to the east of Glemsford and towards the River Stour.

6.7 ***Chad Brook*** - the area takes in a wide sweep of countryside starting in Shimpling, passing south through Bridge Street, Alpheton and joining the River Stour at Long Melford. Much of this landscape zone is within the Chad Brook Special Landscape Area. It begins in Chadacre Park which is of high scenic quality and flows south east towards Bridge Street. It is similar in scale to the Glem Valley, but is more open particularly on the north side. Woodlands help to break up the open countryside which otherwise does not enjoy significant vegetation cover. The large number of woodlands to the west form a threshold between Chad Brook and the Glem Valley. Below Bridge Street the countryside is open and rolling, but is dominated by the conifer outlines of Lineage and Spelthorn Woods. The well-treed presence of Kentwell and Melford Parks are welcome deviations from the large-scale field systems found in this area. Chad Brook finds its way into the River Stour having passed through the built-up part of Long Melford, and gives rise to a distinctive river valley setting with poplar and willow plantations and meadows.

Action points:

- The replacement of conifer trees in woodlands by suitable broad-leaved species will be sought.
- Hedgerow planting will be encouraged up on the higher land, particularly to the east.

6.8 ***Western Stour Valley*** - this includes the locality from the western district boundary at Glemsford, down to Sudbury, and including part of the Stour Valley Special Landscape Area. It is wider than the Glem Valley, but has more evidence of human impact. This includes factories, old mineral workings and the former railway line. The built up area of Long Melford has a considerable impact on the countryside to the west. To some extent this could be as a result of loss of vegetation due to changes in agricultural practice. There has been little recent development on the west side of the village, although the newer houses on the high land to the east can be seen from the west. The countryside between Long Melford and Sudbury is an important visual gap, which should continue to be retained. While existing planning policy is geared to retaining this open feature, change can take place as a result of the influx of activities often found in urban fringe locations, such as horse paddocks. This aspect will need to be monitored, and where possible, strictly controlled.

6.9 As the valley continues to Sudbury, the evidence of human impact becomes more considerable, so that in effect there is an urban fringe type of landscape. This has seen some degradation, in particular with new development overlooking the valley, and as a result of road building. There is little vegetation cover of merit on the east side, but the area to the west compensates for this. The lack of development on the west side, especially in the Essex part, has ensured a high landscape quality has prevailed.

6.10 An exception to this pattern is in the immediate vicinity of Sudbury, generally known as the Sudbury Riverside, which possesses large areas of meadows backed by riverside trees, contributing to an attractive pastoral scene. Even here the older part of the town is well screened from the riverside, such is the maturity of the landscape here.

Action Points:

- Encourage new hedgerow planting west of Long Melford, with particular regard to higher land.
- Consideration should be given to reducing the impact of the Long Melford and Sudbury bypasses, and the proposed Sudbury Western bypass.
- The impact of development on the Stour Valley landscape, as seen from the western side, should be taken into account in the Local Plan and development control processes. Structural landscaping will be sought in the Chilton Woods development, with the intention of screening it from the general countryside as well as providing a new amenity for residents of that locality.
- The pressure for new development and changes of use in the urban fringe of Sudbury may require further input by the Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Project. This can include advice and assistance on a range of schemes, i.e. tree and hedgerow planting.

6.11 ***Middle Stour Valley*** - this comprises the Stour Valley south from Sudbury to Bures St Mary, and is a continuation of the Stour Valley Special Landscape Area. From Sudbury the wide valley setting continues, with some industrial development in Great Cornard having a limited impact on the landscape. Both sides of the valley are equally as attractive. In Little Cornard it is more open, but documentary evidence shows a considerable loss of mature trees in the 1970's due to the ravages of Dutch Elm disease.

6.12 The valley floor is wide and pastoral over a large part. The railway line is an important, linear feature, and in parts the River Stour dominates the scene. This is not true for the entire length of this section, mainly where trees and hedgerows have been removed. There are a large number of poplar and willow plantations, which are appropriate in this riverside setting. Apart from the sewage treatment works at Great Cornard and a number of farm buildings, there is little significant human impact further south. The exceptions would be the overhead electricity lines across the valley, and the television transmitter east of Yorley Farm, Little Cornard. The village of Bures St Mary is largely hidden from the north, but the parkland areas on that side are significant and attractive aspects in the valley. As with most river valley locations, the higher land becomes more open but very good views are afforded across the valley from these points.

Action Points:

- The pressure for new development and changes of use in the urban fringe of Great Cornard may require further input by the Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Project. This can include advice and assistance on a range of schemes, i.e. tree and hedgerow planting.
- Strengthening of the river valley landscape by introducing traditional features such as riverside tree planting and encouraging reversion from arable cultivation to grassland, is suggested for the area from south of Great Cornard Sewage Treatment Works to Bures St Mary.
- The replacement of hedgerow trees lost to Dutch Elm disease in Little Cornard, which has been pursued in previous years, should be continued.

- 6.13 **Upper Brett Valley** - from Lavenham to Chelsworth, this landscape zone also covers the parishes of Brent Eleigh, Monks Eleigh and Milden. On leaving Lavenham, the open valley flows east until the well-treed vicinity of Brent Eleigh is reached. A typical feature is the concentration of vegetation lower down, with less cover on the slopes or the high land. At times the valley floor is very narrow, but irrespective of the width at the bottom, the scene is set for a quite different kind of landscape to that found in other parts of the district. In both Brent Eleigh and Monks Eleigh, the riverside locations are of the highest visual quality, with small-scale, well-treed pastures reminiscent of landscapes long gone from many lowland river valleys. The Brett Valley Special Landscape Area makes up a considerable portion of this landscape zone.
- 6.14 The Brett Valley is dominated by the open higher land all around, but where woodlands occur, these contribute greatly to the visual quality even if they are some distance away. The setting of Chelsworth village is unique, as if it is within a parkland location, which is not found anywhere else in the Babergh District. There is little impact from buildings here, and the built up areas of Lavenham, Brent Eleigh and Monks Eleigh seem at ease in the landscape. This is due largely to the human scale and local materials used in much of the older buildings. Lavenham Church is a dominant feature in the landscape, and in spite of its size, rests comfortably on the edge of the built up area. It is such an important landmark, and offers many fine glimpses of the tower, from most points of the compass, including from large distances. The road from Brent Eleigh approaches Lavenham head on, but the historic feel of the built up area means that the impact of development on the landscape is pleasantly limited.

Action Points:

- New hedgerow planting on the higher land will be encouraged, particularly where it is visible from the other side of the valley.
 - The important views of Lavenham Church will be taken into consideration in the design of new development and in new planting schemes.
- 6.15 **Middle Brett Valley** - the area from Hitcham down to Bildeston is one of good landscape quality, with unspoilt river meadows, good woodland cover and rolling open farmland higher up. Bildeston interrupts the flow, but the village nestles in the valley and contributes positively with the possible exception of some post-war housing development high up on the east side of the valley. From Bildeston southwards, the Brett Valley is more dramatic, which is due largely to the curving path of the River Brett. This section is within the Brett Valley Special Landscape Area. Open, arable farmland occurs in the higher areas, with significant woodland cover on the valley sides. The valley floor is wide, with large expanses of meadow and plantations and little development. The higher land on both sides probably has no equal in the district in terms of providing many good views along the valley.
- 6.16 The wide valley landscape continues almost until Hadleigh is reached, although the higher land gives way at the last minute in the town itself. Unfortunately, very little tree and hedgerow cover now exists on the valley sides to the north of the town, which has resulted in very open areas and a significant visual impact of the town on the countryside to the north. The wide expanse of the valley improves in quality and vegetation cover where it meets the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty at Raydon.

Action Point:

- A comprehensive tree and hedgerow planting scheme is needed in the area to the north of the Hadleigh Bypass.

6.17 **Box Valley** - this is the area from Acton to Boxford, and includes the Box Valley Special Landscape Area. The river valley is rich in landscape terms, although in places it is narrow. On the downside, the upper parts of the valley have been subject to significant agricultural change, resulting in a much more open landscape. Where they occur, woodlands provide strong visual features and wide panoramic views are offered in all directions of the compass from this landscape zone. The landscape is undulating away from the valley proper, and the Brett and Stour Valleys can be seen in the distance.

6.18 The re-creation of traditional valley features such as meadows and riverside tree planting should be pursued. The valley needs to be made stronger as landscape element, and planting on the sides can go a long way to achieving this effect. As well as considering suitable schemes for the lower parts of the landscape zone, measures on the higher land can also benefit the landscape.

Action Point:

- Strengthening of the river valley landscape can be assisted by appropriate planting to focus attention on the valley floor, including schemes on the valley sides.

6.19 **Burstall and Belstead Brook Valleys** - the landscape to the east of the Brett Valley and Hadleigh retains much of the older field patterns, and has particular value. It is proposed in the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2 as a Special Landscape Area. The topography is more varied, and attractive small valleys with considerable areas of pasture run in an easterly direction. Woodland cover is generous, and hedgerow provision is excellent. The setting of Hintlesham Hall and the parkland remnants, carried over in the recently completed golf course, have a strong and positive impact in this landscape zone. Hedgerow removal has badly affected the landscape in parts of Burstall north of the A1071 road, and west of the B1113. The landscape of the Belstead Brook Valley, which fringes the built-up area of Ipswich on its south side is of good quality. The proximity of the town is a detracting feature in this landscape zone.

Action Points:

- A comprehensive scheme for hedgerow planting is needed in part of Burstall, north of the A1071 and west of the B1113 road, and overlooking the Gipping Valley.
- Special Landscape Area designation will be sought for the countryside based on the Burstall Brook.

6.20 **Gipping Valley** - this smaller area is part of a larger landscape zone, extending beyond the District into the Mid Suffolk District. It has been the subject of a separate landscape assessment (4). There is much more evidence of human activity, although agriculture has not seen many detrimental landscape effects. The impact of new development is a particular issue in this locality, as is the need to strengthen the visual role played by the river. Sproughton Manor still carries a parkland aura about it, while the topography does much to hide the large urban expanse of Ipswich from the valley floor. The landscape in parts of the river valley are of particular value, and is proposed in the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2 as a Special Landscape Area.

Action Points:

- Screening of the built-up part of Ipswich will be a prime objective of new planting schemes.

- Special Landscape Area designation will be sought for the area based on the river at Sproughton, in conjunction with the Burstall Brook locality.
- The Gipping Valley Landscape Assessment and Strategy Report will be taken into account, as appropriate.

6.21 ***Capel St Mary*** – this landscape zone is generally flat, but enjoys good tree and hedgerow cover. In particular, the area around Capel St Mary is well treed, which helps considerably in screening this large village. The location around Raydon airfield is lacking in tree cover, compounded by a lack of variation in topography. This is in spite of the existence of the large Raydon Great Wood nearby. The southern parts of this landscape zone give way to the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, of which good views can be obtained from the higher land.

Action Points:

- The locality of Raydon Airfield and in particular the Notley Enterprise Park would benefit from a comprehensive programme of tree and hedgerow planting.

6.22 ***Dodnash***– this valley location is one of considerable scenic value. It has considerable variations in land relief, which is complemented by a mosaic of pasture, heath and woodlands, resulting in a particularly rich landscape have a high level of vegetation. This locality is considered to be of suitable quality for designation as a Special Landscape Area, in order to ensure that its special characteristics are retained.

Action Point:

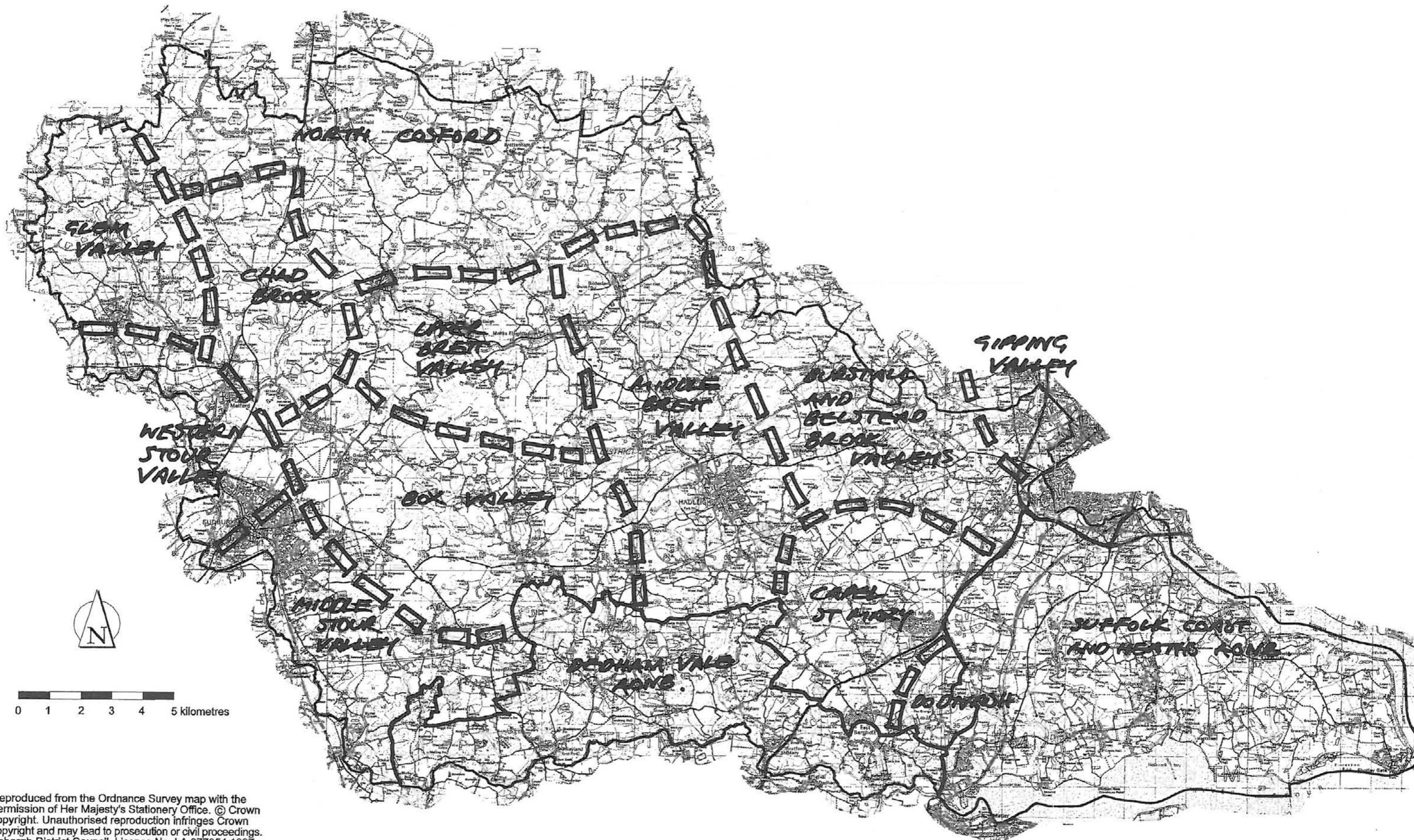
- Special Landscape Area designation will be sought for the countryside based on the Dodnash valley.

Peter Berry, Countryside Officer
Babergh District Council

References:

- (1) Landscape Assessment Guidance (CCP423), Countryside Commission
- (2) Babergh Countryside Strategy (Unpublished), Babergh District Council
- (3) South Suffolk & North Essex Claylands, and Suffolk Coast & Heaths Countryside Character Areas : Key Characteristics, Countryside Agency – www.countryside.org.uk
- (4) Gipping Valley Project Area – Landscape Assessment, Suffolk County Council

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MAP 1: LANDSCAPE ZONES



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MAP 2: DESIGNATED AREAS

Hedgerow planting will be followed up on the higher land, and in particular to the east of Glemford village.

Recreation of the river valley landscape will be sought, south of Boxted Park.

The replacement of conifer trees in woodlands by broadleaved species will be followed up.

The river valley from Cockfield to Lavenham will be targeted for landscape improvement.

Lavenham Airfield would benefit from major tree and hedgerow planting.

New hedgerow planting on the higher land will be encouraged.

The view of Lavenham Church will be respected in the design of new schemes.

Major hedgerow planting is needed in Bursall, west of the A1100 road and overlooking the Gipping Valley.

Major tree and hedgerow planting is needed in the area to the north of the Hadleigh bypass.

Major tree and hedgerow planting can help to lessen the considerable impact of recent development on the edge of the Ipswich built up area.

Raydon Airfield will benefit from significant tree and hedgerow planting.

Special Landscape Area designation will be considered for the Dodnash landscape zone.

Screening of the built up part of Ipswich will be a major objective of new planting schemes.

Special Landscape Area designation will be considered for parts of this landscape zone.

Consider new hedgerow planting west of Long Melford, with particular regard to higher land.

Consideration should be given to reducing the impact of the Long Melford and Sudbury bypasses, and the proposed Sudbury Western bypass.

The impact of development on the Stour Valley landscape, as seen from the western side, will be taken into account.

Strengthening of the river valley landscape is proposed for the area south of Great Cornard Sewage Treatment Works, down to Little Cornard.

The replacement of hedgerow trees lost to Dutch Elm disease in Little Cornard should be continued.

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MAP 3: ACTION PROGRAMME.

