

Copdock and Washbrook Neighbourhood Plan
Landscape Appraisal

Final Report Update



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Appendix 1: Extract from LUC Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2020: Detailed assessment of Sites for Copdock and Washbrook

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Alison Farmer Associates was appointed by Copdock and Washbrook Neighbourhood Plan Group to undertake a landscape appraisal of the Parish, in order to provide a robust evidence base to support the development of policy within the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. In particular, the Neighbourhood Plan Group required land surrounding the settlement of the Parish to be assessed in detail to establish the sensitivity and capacity of these areas to accommodate housing and employment development. This assessment was initially undertaken in 2019 and subsequently updated in 2023.

1.1.2 Copdock and Washbrook Neighbourhood Plan area covers the same area as the Parish and stretches from the A14 in the north east, southwards following the A12 from the Copdock Interchange, which forms its boundary. Capel St Mary to the south lies just outside the Parish, as does Chattisham to the north west. The main settlements within the Parish are Washbrook, positioned on the valley sides of Belstead Brook and Copdock holding an elevated position on the plateau. A further cluster of development is found in the south of the Parish close to the A12 junction. Elsewhere the pattern of settlement is dispersed, comprising small hamlets at Mace Green and Washbrook Street and farms.

1.2 Objectives

1.2.1 The key objective of this study is to provide a robust understanding of the character and qualities of the Neighbourhood Plan Area in order to make sound judgements as to the sensitivity and capacity of land to accommodate housing/employment development. This study also presents guidance on opportunities for landscape enhancement and green infrastructure which collectively help to shape a vision for the Parish. During the course of this study it became apparent that additional highways advice was required in relation to London Road, in part due to its current character and influence on local sense of place, and also because of its role in facilitating access to potential development sites.

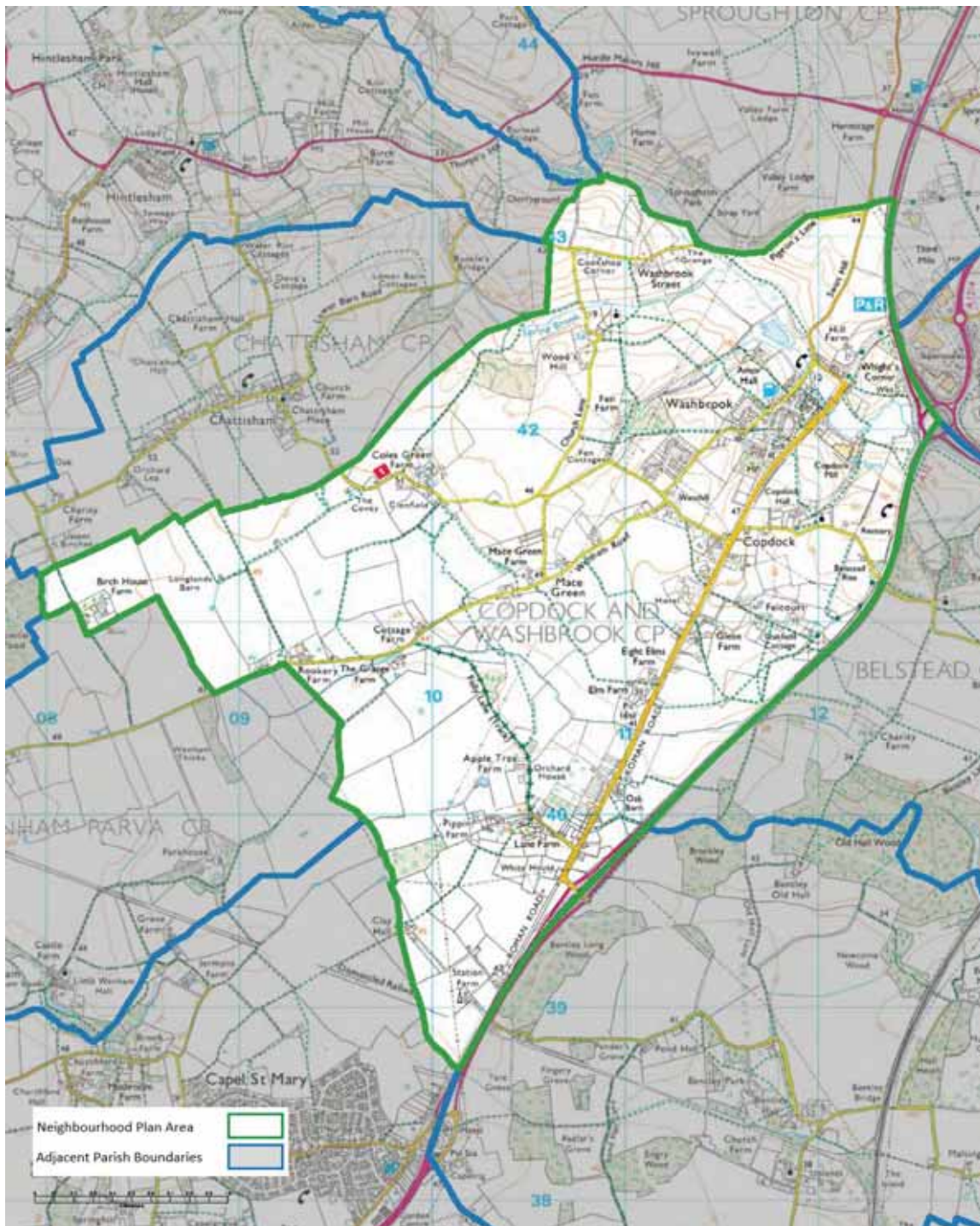
1.3 Methodology and Approach

1.3.1 This assessment has been carried out in accordance with Guidelines on Landscape Character Assessment¹ and Guidelines in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment². Reference has also been made to other recent sensitivity and

¹ Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (2002) The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage and An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (2014) Natural England.

² Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013 (third edition).

capacity assessments which reflect best practice. The approach has included a client meeting and familiarisation site visit, desk study and further detailed site assessment during May 2019.



Washbrook and Copdock Neighbourhood Plan Area (Source: Babergh District Council Website)

- 1.3.2 This assessment is a landscape capacity-led approach which considers the settlement within Copdock and Washbrook Parish holistically and within its landscape setting. The approach also adopts emerging thinking on ecosystem services and the benefits which are afforded by the special qualities of the area and opportunities to enhance and develop these further. Analysis is used to provide robust evidence to support judgements on the sensitivity of land and its capacity to accommodate housing development from a landscape/settlement perspective.
- 1.3.3 The appraisal reviews existing documentary evidence on the settlement and its landscape and considers the historic evolution, describes landscape setting, key views, gateways and landmarks as well as valued characteristics and spaces. An earlier Settlement Sensitivity Study³ divided the landscape surrounding the main settlement into discrete areas and the conclusions reached in the sensitivity have informed this work for the whole Parish. Opportunities for environmental initiatives which seek to enhance local identity and settlement distinctiveness are highlighted where relevant.
- 1.3.4 The following definitions of terms are used in this study:
- Sensitivity** is defined as the ability of the landscape to accommodate a particular type of change (in this case housing or employment development) without adverse effect and is determined by consideration of local character and visual sensitivity.
- Value** is defined as the relative value that is attached to different landscape by society. In this study, value has been assessed with reference to Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA 3rd edition), in the context of Washbrook and Copdock settlements.
- Capacity** of an area considers the extent and nature of development which may be accommodated and includes consideration of opportunities for enhancement or mitigation which may improve the degree of fit and increase capacity of the landscape to accommodate change.
- 1.3.5 Where land/sites have been assessed in terms of sensitivity and capacity it is from a landscape perspective only and no consideration has been given to matters such as access or land ownership. It is possible therefore that, land identified as suitable for development without significant adverse landscape effects, may subsequently be discounted for reasons other than landscape.

³ Settlement Sensitivity Assessment Volume 1: Landscape Fringes of Ipswich, Alison Farmer Associates, July 2018

1.4 The Neighbourhood Plan

1.4.1 Under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), Babergh confirmed the Neighbourhood Plan Area for Copdock and Washbrook on 16 July 2018.

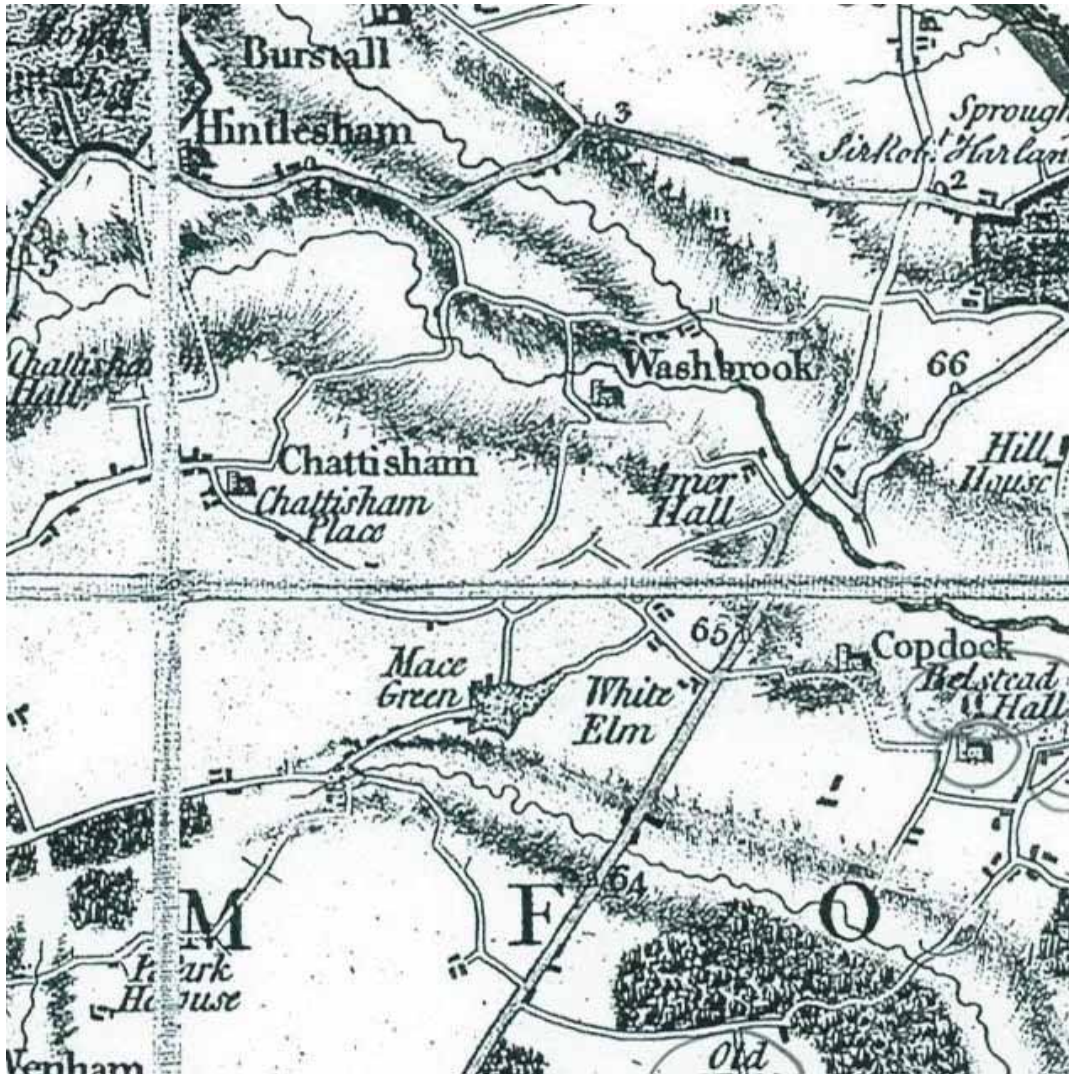
1.4.2 The Copdock and Washbrook Neighbourhood Plan Working Group was subsequently established, and a questionnaire survey undertaken which sought the views of the local community. The following results are relevant to this study:

- The majority of respondents would prefer to see infill or small housing developments between 4-50 houses rather than a single large housing development
- Approximately 50% of respondents did not feel there was a need for new workshops/commercial units or office space
- A majority of respondents felt that pavements, pedestrian safety and cycle paths needed improvement
- A significant majority felt there was traffic congestion and heavy goods vehicles should be restricted from using Swan Hill
- A significant majority were happy with the amount of greenspace
- A significant majority placed a high value on the existing footpath network and a majority felt there was room for some improvement to footpaths and bridleways
- Over 90% wished to see open views across fields and woods preserved and hedgerows and mature trees protected as well as wildlife and biodiversity and heritage retained.

2: The Evolution of Copdock and Washbrook

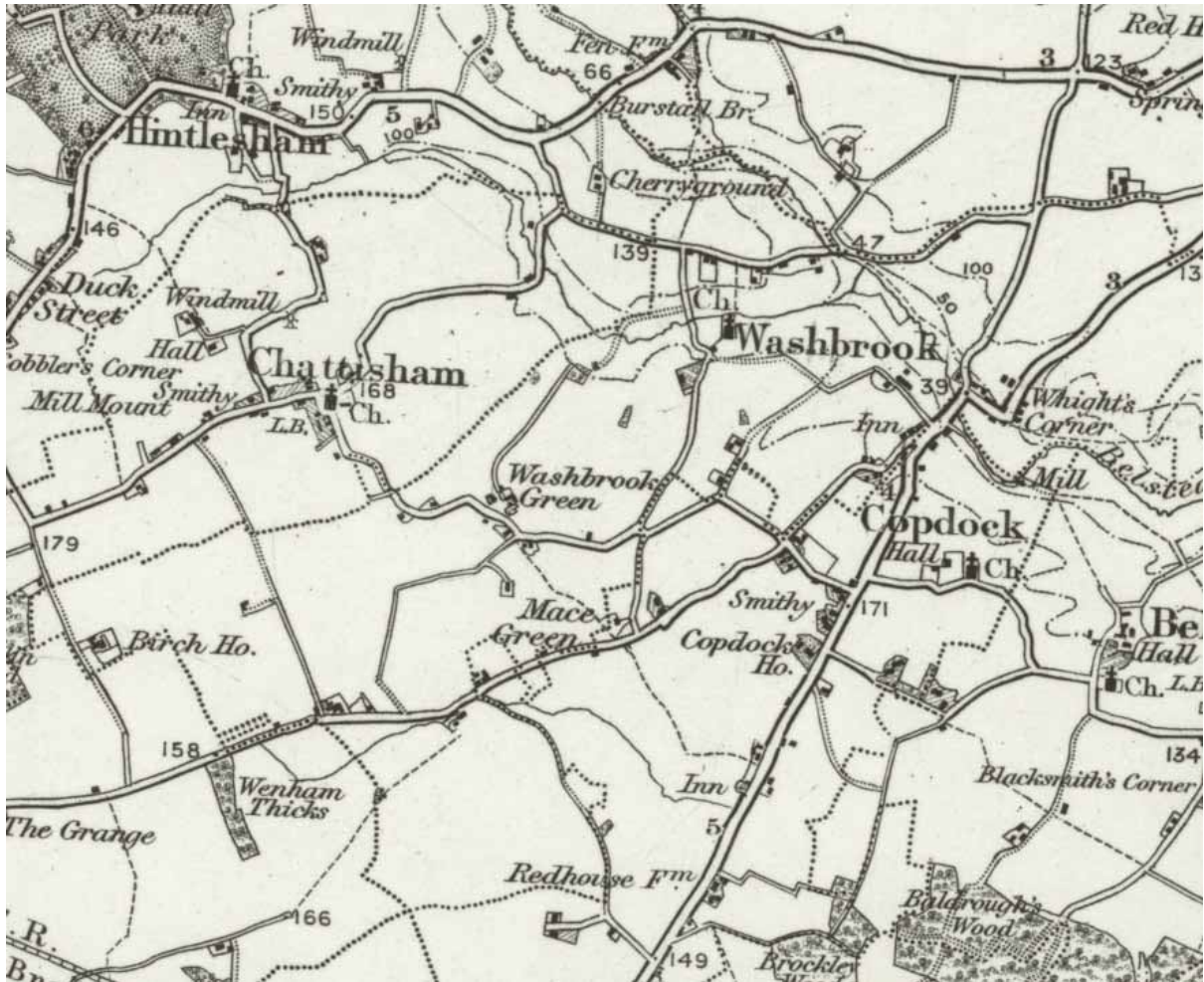
2.1 Early Origins and Evolution

- 2.1.1 The early origins of settlement within the Parish have been influenced by the underlying geology and drainage system. The higher parts of the Parish have an underlying geology of Red Crag Formation giving rise to sandy light draining soils. These become heavier clay soils to the west where the geology changes to the Thames Group. The valley sides of the Belstead Brook are mainly sand and gravel deposits associated with the Red Crag Group.
- 2.1.2 The primary watercourse is the Belstead Brook in the north of the Parish which flows through well-defined valley sides. There are a couple of tributary streams which feed into the Brook – one south of Washbrook Street (Spring Brook) which forms a tributary valley, and the other at Amor Hall, which forms gentle undulations in the valley sides. To the south and cutting across the Parish in a west-east direction is a further small stream which create a gentle but notable depression in the more elevated farmland plateau.
- 2.1.3 Settlement pattern has been significantly influenced by transport routes. London Road and The Street (running through Washbrook) was the route of a Roman Road and crossing point of the Belstead Brook. In the Medieval Period the route connected Ipswich with London. Domesday records the village (Washbrook) as consisting of the Church of St Mary's, located to the east of the settlement on a tributary stream (Spring Brook), a manor house (Amor Hall - also to the west of the village), dwellings around the crossing both sides of the Brook, as well as a dispersed pattern of farmsteads (e.g. Fen Farm), and a mill (Copdock Mill). Early maps also show the establishment of settlement around Felcourt, a smithy at the junction with Elm Lane and St Peter's church to the north.
- 2.1.4 The sequence of maps below illustrates how settlement has evolved over the 19th and 20th centuries.



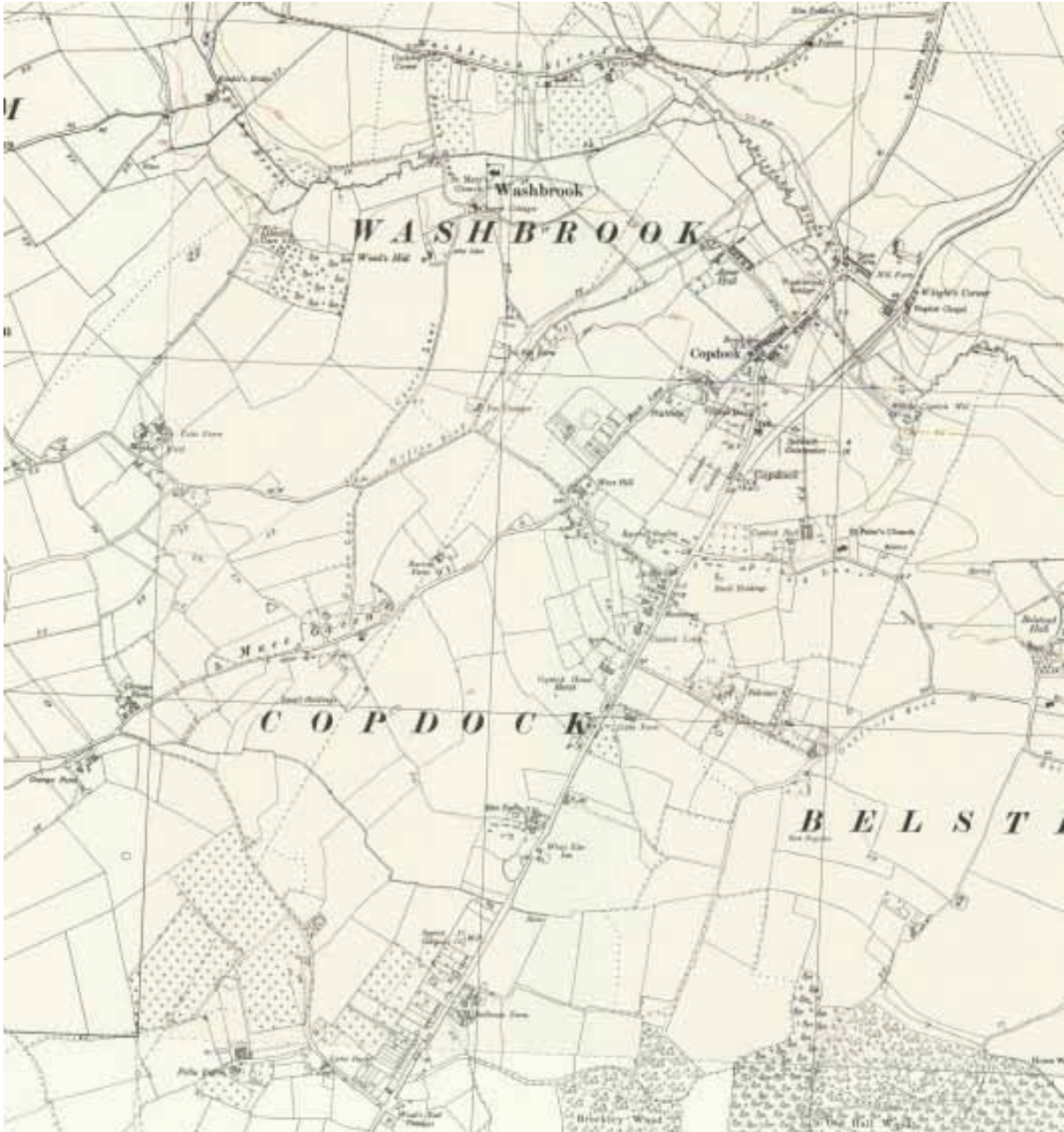
Map 1: Extract from Hodkinson's 1783 map of Suffolk

Settlement is dispersed – small concentrations along Elm Lane and along main Roman Road. Mace Green shown with a green. Tributary valley running west to east south of Mace Green is evident as are woodland blocks to the south. Washbrook and Copdock churches, along with Amor Hall are located within the Belstead Valley in the north. The network of rural lanes seen on this map remain almost unaltered today.



Map 2: Extract from 1885 map. (source – Historic Maps Scotland)

Increased development along Elm Lane and Felcourt with smithy and Copdock House. Also dispersed development along the Roman Road to the south with an Inn and farms and further development within Belstead Valley at Whight's Corner. The churches remain isolated and the Green at Mace Green is no longer annotated.

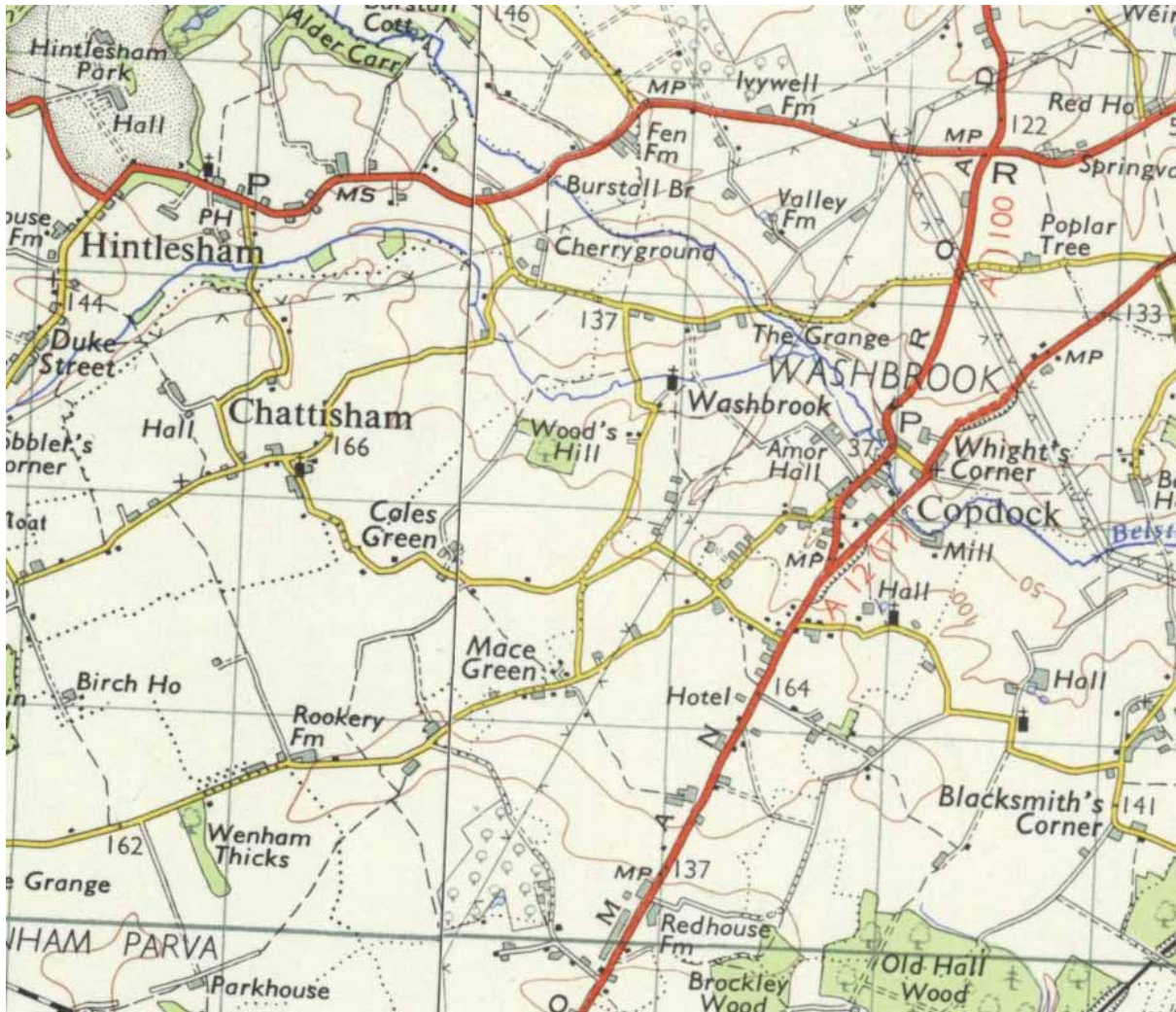


Map 3: Extract from 1958 Map. (source – Historic Maps Scotland)

Groups of development more evident on the lower slopes within Belstead Brook (note road alignment has altered to take traffic away from settlement to east). Concentration around Elm Lane remains and increases. New development along Roman Road in the south and continuation of dispersed farms associated with Folly Lane.

Notable orchards in the south and small-scale enclosures evident around Mace Green and southwest of Elm Lane.

In the 1950's new housing was built off Back Lane separately from Washbrook village on the higher valley slopes. This was followed in the 1960's and 70's by further housing estates at Charlottes and Pheasant Rise.



Map 4: Extract from 1960 map. (source – Historic Maps Scotland)

Note A12 marked along Roman Road into Ipswich and linear development along the route and concentration of development along Elm Lane and lower slopes and Whight's Corner.

The route of the A12 was altered again in the 1980's with the construction of the current A12, further to the southeast, and the construction of the A14, forming a substantial barrier between Washbrook/Belstead Brook valley and the fringes of Ipswich. The former A12 was blocked to traffic at Whight's Corner, although pedestrian and cycle links remain via an underpass.

Today Washbrook nestles on the middle to lower slopes of the Belstead Brook while Copdock retains a predominately linear character along the London Road on higher land to the south of the valley. In the south of the Parish, close to Red House Farm and Folly Lane there is still a pattern of dispersed farms with infill development and some employment.

London Road, although no longer forming the main arterial route into Ipswich has remained as a dual carriageway complete with urban lighting columns, road markings and signage. This vestige of the former A12 sits at odds with the predominantly rural character of settlement in the Parish.

3: Landscape Character

3.1 National Character Area 86: South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland

3.1.1 Copdock and Washbrook Parish is covered by National Character Area - NCA 86 South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands, with the A12 forming the boundary to NCA 82 Suffolk Coast and Heaths. The boundaries between these character areas are not abrupt but transitional and although both are relevant to the Parish NCA 86 is most strongly expressed.

3.1.2 This assessment notes the following:

'The area's open yet wooded character is sufficiently endowed with copses and small woods to have wooded horizons, which give a large, distinctly wooded character to the landscape'

'It is ancient countryside, and appears in many areas to have undergone little 20th-century rationalisation to excessively large fields. Close-grained irregular medieval enclosures, bounded by ancient, species-rich high hedgerows'

'The strong sense of history is reinforced by the dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and small villages near the top of the valley slopes. They are often located around 'tyes' (commons) or strip greens, with isolated hamlets linked by an intricate maze of narrow, often sunken lanes with wide verges, deep ditches and strong hedgerows'

3.2 Suffolk County Landscape Character and Guidance

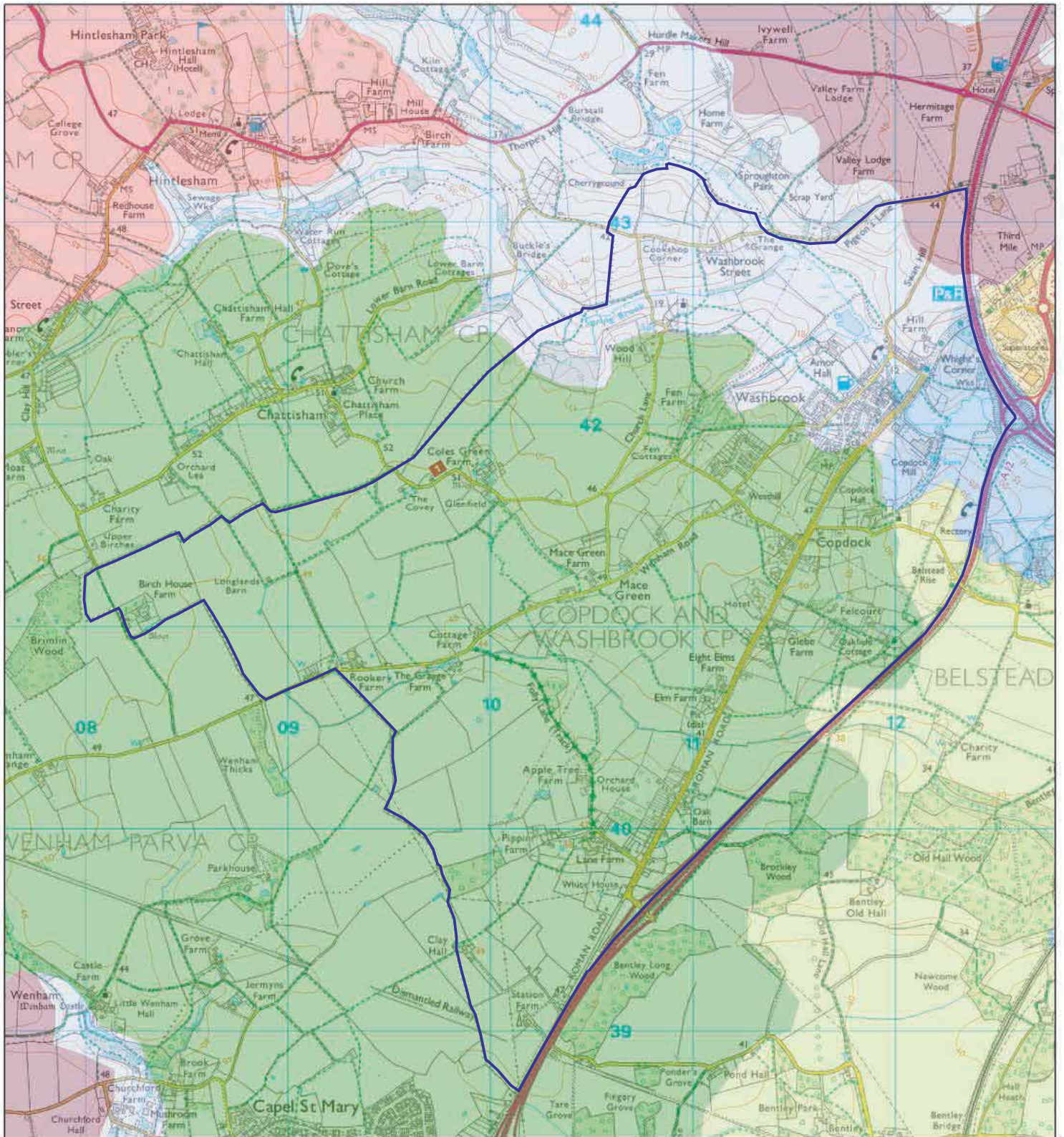
3.2.1 The landscape of Copdock and Washbrook Parish is also described in the Suffolk County Assessment which identified four character types as illustrated on Figure 1. The two predominate landscape types in the Parish are Rolling Valley Farmlands along the Belstead Valley and Ancient Estate Claylands which forms the higher plateau landscape in the central and southern parts of the Parish. Key characteristics relating to these two main character types are provided below.

Rolling Valley Farmlands






3.2.2 The description for this landscape type highlights the following:

'This landscape has small and medium sized fields on the valley sides with an organic form which was created by the piecemeal enclosure of common arable and pasture lands... the field size tends to increase on the upper sides and plateau edges of these valleys. The overall impression in the landscape is of sinuous and organic boundaries around the anciently enclosed fields'

'This is a rich and varied landscape with its concentration of prosperous mediaeval towns and villages, contrasting with the smaller and less glamorous settlements of the surrounding plateaux. The steeper valleys and sunken



Key

-  Neighbourhood Plan Area
-  Rolling Valley Farlands
-  Rolling Estate Farlands
-  Ancient Estate Claylands
-  Ancient Estate Farlands

**Copdock and Washbrook Neighbourhood Plan
Landscape Assessment**

Figure 1: Landscape Character



*lanes contrast clearly to most of the other valley networks in the county...
Much of this landscape retains its historic patterns, of both the agricultural and built environment'*

- 3.2.3 Management Guidelines for the landscape type note that this landscape is particularly sensitive due to its topography and rich cultural heritage. More specifically:

'In these valley side landscapes, the visual impact of new vertical elements is increased by the landform. Therefore, new buildings are likely to have a significant impact on both the character and visual amenity of valley floor and valley side landscape types. The setting of specific features and elements of these landscapes, such as small-scale enclosure patterns or historic buildings and monuments, can also be significantly damaged'

'Valley side landscapes have historically been a focus for settlement. However, large-scale expansion should be confined to the adjacent plateau. In this location the landscape and visual impact can be more easily mitigated with effective planting and design'

'Settlement extension in a valley side landscape is likely to have a significant visual impact and adversely affect the character of the landscape, including that of the adjoining valley floor..... These developments tend to create a highly visible new "roofscape" on the sides of valleys. The effect of this can be partially mitigated by planting within the development as well as on the perimeter and offsite'

- 3.2.4 In relation to large scale buildings on or near the valley sides it stated that:

'The siting, form, orientation and colour of these buildings make a considerable contribution to mitigating their impact. However, in a valley side situation, especially if located on the skyline, they will have a considerable visual impact. It is preferable to seek a location outside the valley where the visual impact of this type of development can be mitigated much more effectively'

Ancient Estate Claylands

- 3.2.5 The description for this character type highlights the following:

'The enclosure pattern is generally ancient and organic in appearance'

'The settlement pattern consists of occasional villages and numerous dispersed hamlets and farmsteads. Many of the farmsteads are medieval in origin and some are surrounded by moats'

'Blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland are scattered throughout the area, made up of oak, ash, field maple, hornbeam and small-leaved lime. Hedgerow trees are ubiquitous and in many places this landscape can feel well wooded'

'Despite the reasonably well-wooded landscape, the plateau landform means that the views are open and can be long. However, the comprehensive network of winding lanes and tall hedges means that other areas can be much more intimate'

These landscapes are subject to considerable change which is promoted by their relationship to the A12 trunk road... there is considerable intrusion of suburbanisation with horse paddocks, barn conversions and ranch-style fencing. As on other parts of the plateau claylands, industrial agricultural buildings make a significant impact, especially where there is inadequate screening'

3.2.6 Management Guidelines for the landscape type note that:

'Parishes in this landscape tend to consist of multiple clusters of varying sizes. The release of land for development should, if at all possible, reflect the local pattern. Ribbon development destroys this pattern and can have a considerable impact on the wider landscape'

3.3 Special Landscape Area

3.3.1 Land in the north of the Parish is associated with the Belstead Brook valley and was formerly designated a Special Landscape Areas (SLA), (refer to Figure 2). An SLA is a local landscape designation identified in the 1980's, reflecting attractive combinations of landscape elements. Although the original assessment which lead to these areas being designated is not available, the following types of landscape are known to be included:

- 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 broadleaved woodland, combine to produce an area of special landscape quality and character.

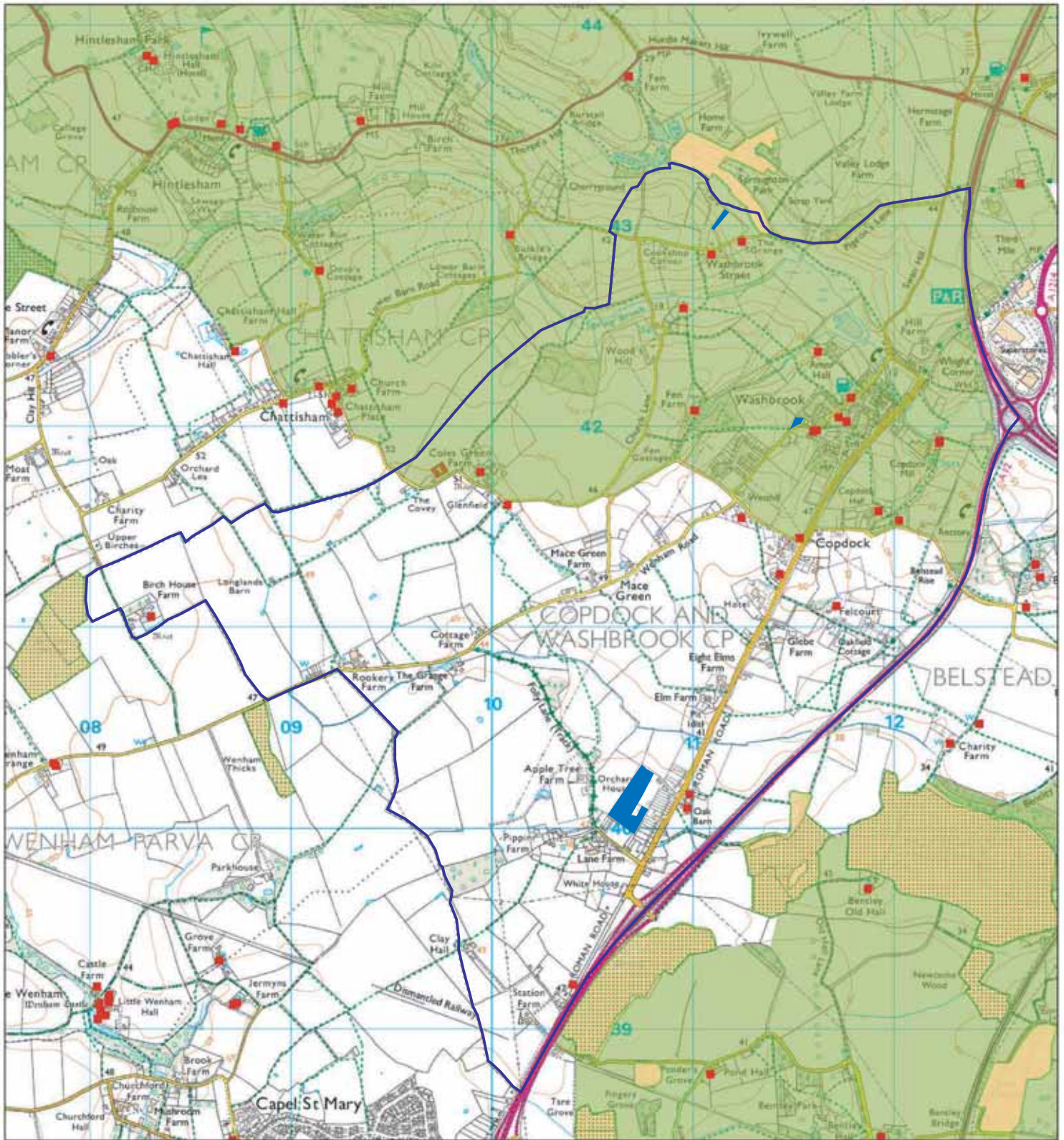
3.3.2 Nevertheless, no detailed evaluation of the SLAs was undertaken and policy relating to the SLA has not been carried through into the emerging Local Plan.

3.3.3 The NPPF (Sept 2023) para 174 states that:

Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)*

3.3.4 It does not define what is meant by a Valued Landscape. However, the Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) defines landscape value as:



Key

-  Neighbourhood Plan Area
-  Listed Buildings
-  Special Landscape Area
-  Ancient Woodland
-  Local Wildlife Site
-  Traditional Orchard

**Copdock and Washbrook Neighbourhood Plan
Landscape Assessment**

Figure 2: Designations



‘The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons’.

3.3.5 Box 5.1 on page 84 of GLVIA sets out the criteria used to assist in defining a valued landscape. The criteria include landscape quality (condition), scenic quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interests, recreational value, perceptual aspects and associations. Importantly the guidance notes that the criteria are not comprehensive and other factors may also be considered important in specific areas.

3.3.6 This is considered further in section 4.7 below.

3.4 Settlement Sensitivity Assessment

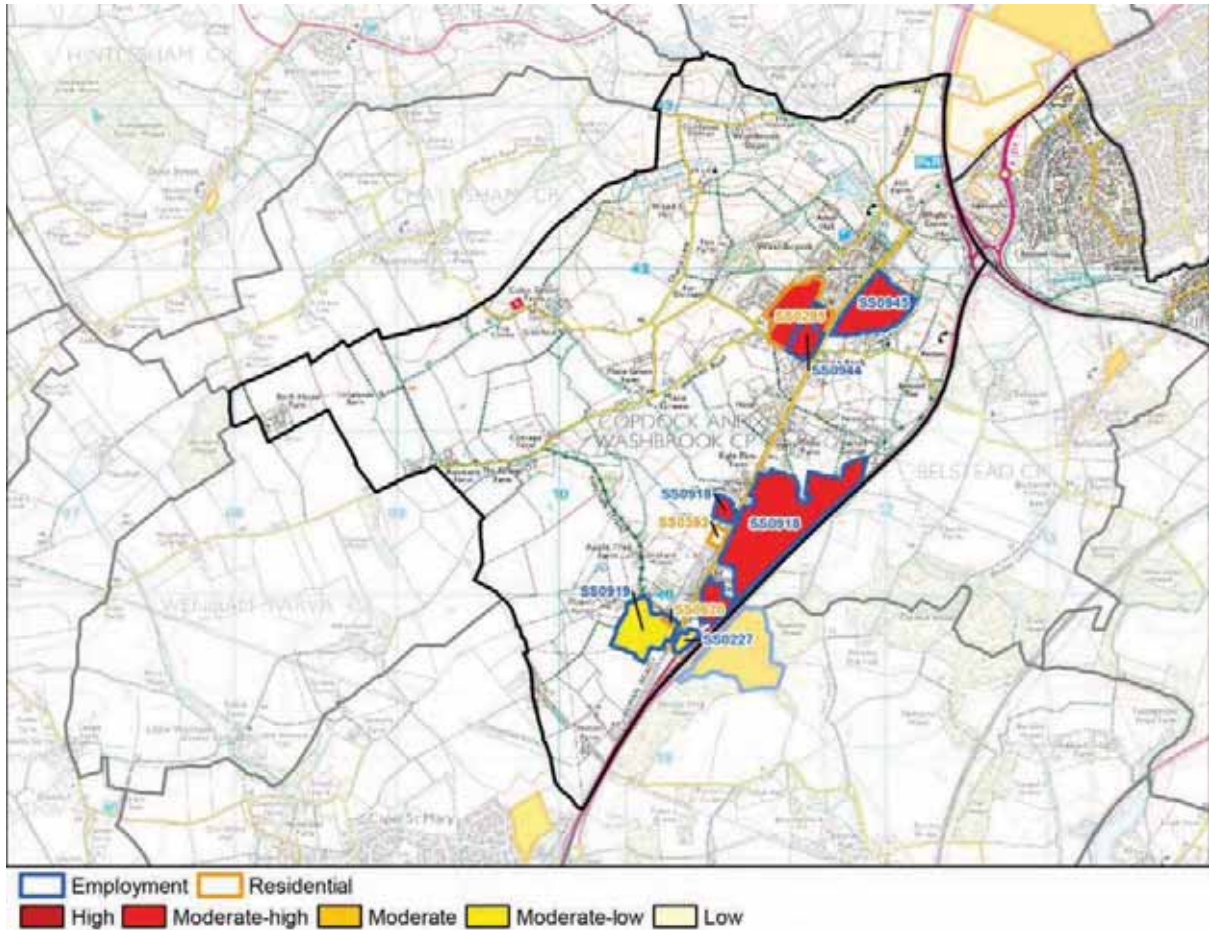
3.4.1 In 2020 a Landscape Sensitivity Assessment⁴ was undertaken by LUC to inform the allocation and assessment of sites as proposed in the emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan. The assessment specifically reviewed Suitable Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) Sites identified through the Joint Local Plan process. Within the Parish of Copdock and Washbrook the following SHELAA Sites were assessed and sensitivities identified:

SHELAA Reference Code	Development Type	Landscape Sensitivity Score
SS0227	Residential	Moderate-low
SS0620	Residential	Moderate-low
SS0919	Employment	Moderate-low
SS0295	Residential	Moderate-high
SS0944	Employment	High
SS0593	Residential	Low
SS0918	Employment	Moderate-high
SS0945	Employment	Moderate-high

3.4.2 The location of these sites is illustrated on the plan below. Where sites were found to be Moderate-High or High sensitivity the following reasons were given:

- rural, undeveloped and relatively tranquil landscape
- contribution to the rural setting of Copdock and Washbrook including separation between these low-density linear settlements
- dispersed settlement pattern
- possible cumulative landscape sensitivities and impact of development in association with other potential development sites within the Parish.

⁴ Babergh and Mid Suffolk Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of SHELAA Sites, LUC, Sept 2020



3.4.3 The land to the south was considered to have greatest capacity to accommodate development although a number of sensitive features were nonetheless identified in this area such as proximity to listed buildings. The full findings of this assessment for the Parish can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.

3.5 Areas of Open Space

3.5.1 The Parish contains a number of Areas of Open Space as defined in local development plan documents and these are illustrated on Figure 3. They include:

- Playing field and cricket pitches east of London Road
- Allotments west of London Road
- Open space at Fen View housing
- Woodland associated with Washbrook Primary School
- Linear area of woodland along Belstead Brook west of the A12

3.5.2 NPPF (2023) Section 8 enables local communities, through the development of the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans, to identify green areas for special protection that are particularly important to them.

3.5.3 Local Green Space (LGS) designation must include land which is locally special offering unique benefits to the local community. It may not be appropriate for some areas or open space to be designated. The NPPF sets out the criteria for designating LGS Sites which can include areas which are:

- a. *in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
- b. *demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and*
- c. *local in character and is not an extensive tract of land'.*

4: Detailed Analysis

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This section builds on previous sections of this report and seeks to establish more detailed baseline data on settlement character and landscape context. Consideration is given to identifying key landmarks and key views in and out of the settlement as well as gateways. It has also considered areas of Open Green Space, valued landscape.

4.2 Built Landmarks and Landscape Features

4.2.1 Key built landmarks which contribute to sense of place and orientation have been identified and are illustrated on Figure 3. They include the following:

- Washbrook Church of St Mary, Grade II*
- Amor Hall, Grade II, located off The Street Washbrook
- Copdock Primary School, a Victorian red brick school located on The Street, Washbrook
- Copdock Mill and Mill House, both Grade II
- Copdock Church of St Peter, Grade II* and Tithe Barn (16th Century), Grade II

4.2.2 A number of landscape features have also been identified as important elements contributing to local sense of place. These include:

- Woods Hill – distinctive hillside and woodland
- Church Lane, sunken lane
- Hollow Road, sunken lane
- Lime avenue associated with Felcourt
- Folly Lane ancient track
- Pigeon Lane, sunken lane

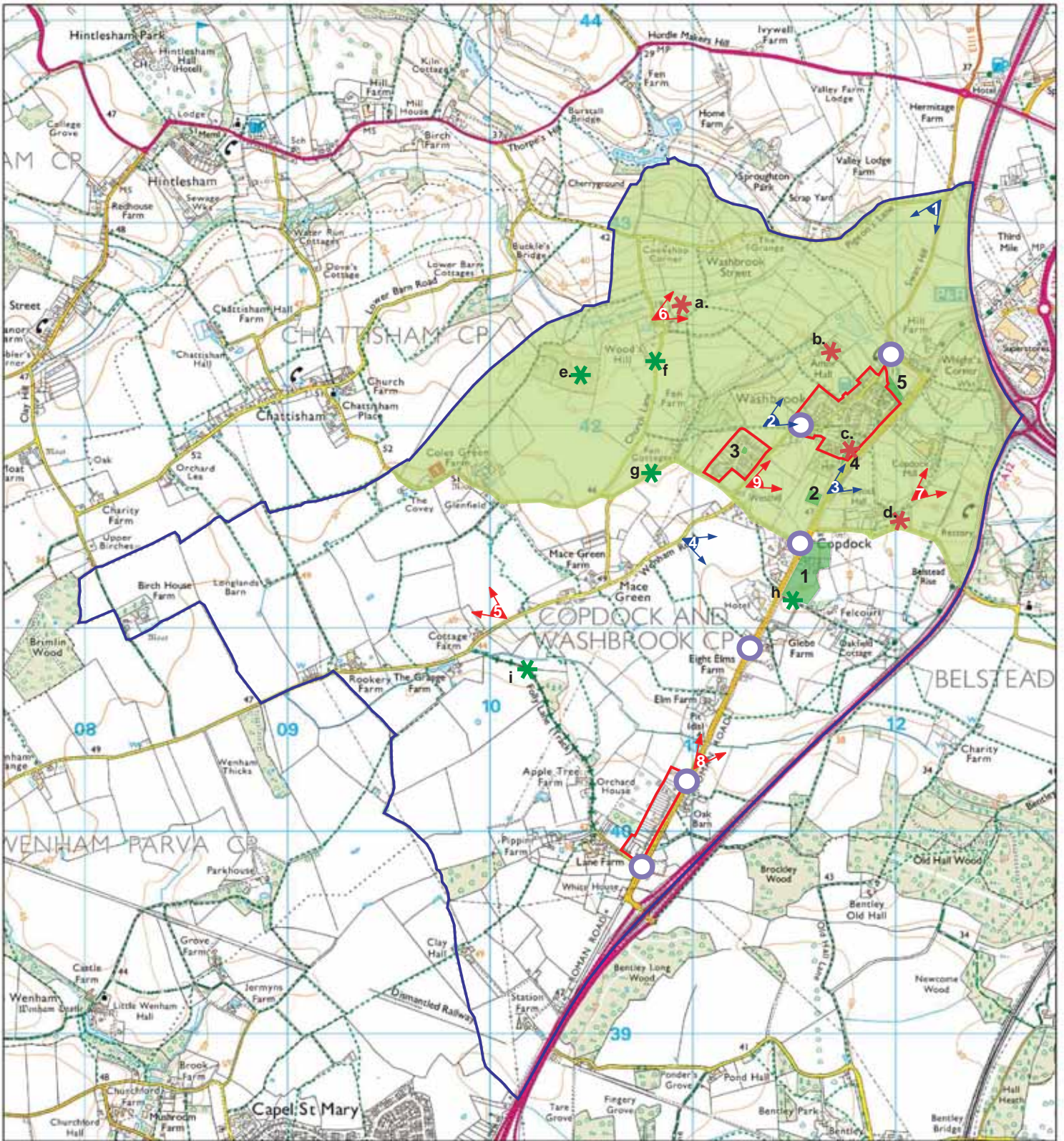
4.3 Important Views

4.3.1 Views are critical in defining and reinforcing sense of place and local distinctiveness, connecting places where people live with the wider environment, providing opportunities to appreciate special qualities and connecting to local landmarks which can aid orientation.

4.3.2 Key views are illustrated on Figure 3 and described briefly below:

Viewpoint 1 - Views from the north looking towards Washbrook (Pigeon Lane)

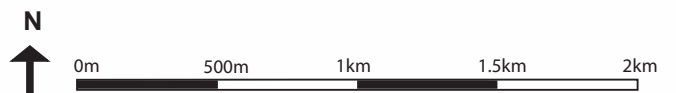
4.3.3 This view is representative of views from the northern slopes of the Belstead Valley looking south towards Washbrook. In these views the settlement appears heavily vegetated on the lower slopes with veteran oaks and mature mixed species



Key		Landscape Features
	e. Woods Hill	
	f. Church Lane	
	g. Hollow Lane	
	h. Lime Avenue	
	i. Folly Lane	
		Built Landmarks
	a. St Mary's Church	
	b. Amor Hall	
	c. Primary School	
	d. Mill	
		Views Towards Settlement
		Views to Wider Landscape

Copdock and Washbrook Neighbourhood Plan
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Figure 3: Analysis



hedgerows. Fields on the mid and upper valley sides define and embrace the settlement and in general includes land above of the 35m contour. These open valley slopes form a setting or backdrop to historic assets such as St Peter's Church and Amor Hall.



Viewpoint 1: View from Pigeon's Lane looking southwest towards Washbrook

Viewpoint 2: Views from the west towards Washbrook

- 4.3.4 This view is representative of elevated views looking north across Belstead Brook and over Washbrook. Mid-century housing developments on the edge of the settlement at Charlotte's form an abrupt edge to the village. Beyond, the fields on Whight's Corner and Swan Hill define the valley and setting to Washbrook and provide physical separation from the visual influences of commercial development on the edge of Ipswich.



Viewpoint 2: View looking east towards bungalows at Charlottes with green separation to Ipswich beyond

Viewpoint 3: Views from London Road looking north

- 4.3.5 This view is representative of the approach towards Washbrook. Only development at Wright's Corner can be seen as the main village is screened by topography and mature vegetation. Views are elevated on the slopes of the Belstead Valley. The width of London Road, road markings, lighting columns and signage have an urbanising influence. Nevertheless, views across to the undeveloped northern valley slopes provide a rural context and sense of separation from Ipswich.



Viewpoint 3: View looking north along London Road towards Washbrook gateway

Viewpoint 4: Views from Wenham Road looking east

- 4.3.6 This view looks towards the western edge of Copdock across relatively flat agricultural land. The edge of the settlement is not visually obvious in the landscape concealed by mature vegetation in property boundaries and hedgerows. As a result, there are only glimpsed views to individual properties. Field sizes close to the settlement edge are medium/small scale and increase in size towards Wenham Road.



Viewpoint 4: Views looking east towards dwellings on the edge of Copdock

Viewpoint 5: Views from Wenham Road looking north

- 4.3.7 This view is representative of views across the plateau farmland around 45-50m. Views north are across open agricultural land to a treed horizon formed by overlapping lines of hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The landscape is broad and rural, development comprising isolated dwellings or farms.



Viewpoint 5: View looking north west across plateau farmland to wooded skyline

Viewpoint 6: Views from Church Lane looking east

- 4.3.8 This viewpoint is representative of views across the intimate tributary valley of Spring Brook from Church Lane. Here landuse is predominately pastoral in small to medium scale enclosures defined by mature hedges and areas of woodland including alder carr. There are glimpsed views to rural cottages or the Church of St Mary. Along the lane are mature lime trees and former coppiced hazel stools which add to the sense of history in this landscape.



Viewpoint 6: View looking east towards the isolated church of Washbrook within the valley setting

Viewpoint 7: Views from the east towards Ipswich

- 4.3.9 This viewpoint is representative of northerly views from the elevated slopes of Belstead Brook in the vicinity of a number of heritage assets such as Copdock Hall, St Peter's Church and Copdock Mill. The foreground emphasises the small to medium scale enclosure supporting pasture and defined by mature hedgerows/oaks.



Viewpoint 7: View looking north east from St Peter's Church towards the commercial development on edge of Ipswich

Viewpoint 8: Views along London Road looking north

- 4.4.12 This viewpoint is representative of views on leaving the cluster of development in the southern part of the Parish and on approaching Copdock. The gentle depression created by the tributary stream is readily perceived. The edge of Copdock is not apparent in views and those buildings that exist appear clustered around farmsteads or as isolated cottages on the road, set in a wider agricultural context. In places views open up across the wider rural landscape, to the east and west, over medium scale arable fields defined by thick hedgerows.



Viewpoint 8: Shows gentle change in topography and views to wider landscape

Viewpoint 9: View northwest from Back Lane (opposite Fen Lane) looking east

- 4.4.12 This is an elevated viewpoint from Back Lane looking across open fields towards the allotments on the south side of Washbrook. Housing within Washbrook is not visible due to the vegetated built edge and housing being set at a lower elevation. As a result, views from this location are over the top of the settlement towards Tesco superstore on the southwest side of Ipswich on the east side of the A14.



Viewpoint 9: View looking east from Back Lane towards the commercial development on edge of Ipswich in the distance and vegetation and allotments on southern edge of Washbrook in middle ground

4.5 Gateways

- 4.5.1 Due to the linear and relatively dispersed pattern of development within the Parish of Copdock and Washbrook and the strong urban character exerted by London Road (former A12), gateway points are often weakly defined and historic gateways have become redundant e.g. former route of Roman Road into Washbrook close to the Primary School.
- 4.5.2 Nevertheless, along London Road there are a sequence of arrival and departure points as one enters into an area of development and leaves it again. These gateway points are identified on Figure 3 and illustrate the three clusters of development along/adjacent to the London Road within the Parish.
- 4.5.3 The location of the gateways relates to arrival at development often associated with road junctions but also importantly where there are changes in topography which allow views across open landscape – such views enhance perceptions of leaving development. This analysis reveals that the rural landscape which comprises the gentle dip in landform around Elm Farm, and the slopes that descend into Belstead Brook, are important in influencing sense of arrival and departure. They raise issues in relation to the importance of retaining discrete clusters of development along London Road and of the need to strengthen sense of arrival and sense of place through improvements to the existing character of the dual carriageway.

4.6 Local Green Space

- 4.6.1 This assessment has consider opportunities for the designation of additional areas of local green space which fit the criteria as set out in paragraph 3.5.3 above. No additional areas of Local Green Space have been identified.

4.7 Valued Landscape

- 4.7.1 In the context of the Parish the former Special Landscape Area comprises a river valley landscape associated with Belstead Brook. There is a strong correlation between the valley slopes and the extent of the former SLA.
- 4.7.2 The former SLA, where it falls within Copdock and Washbrook Parish, was reviewed as part of this landscape assessment. The landscape was tested against the relevant criteria set out in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA 3rd Edition). The results of this assessment are set out in the table below:

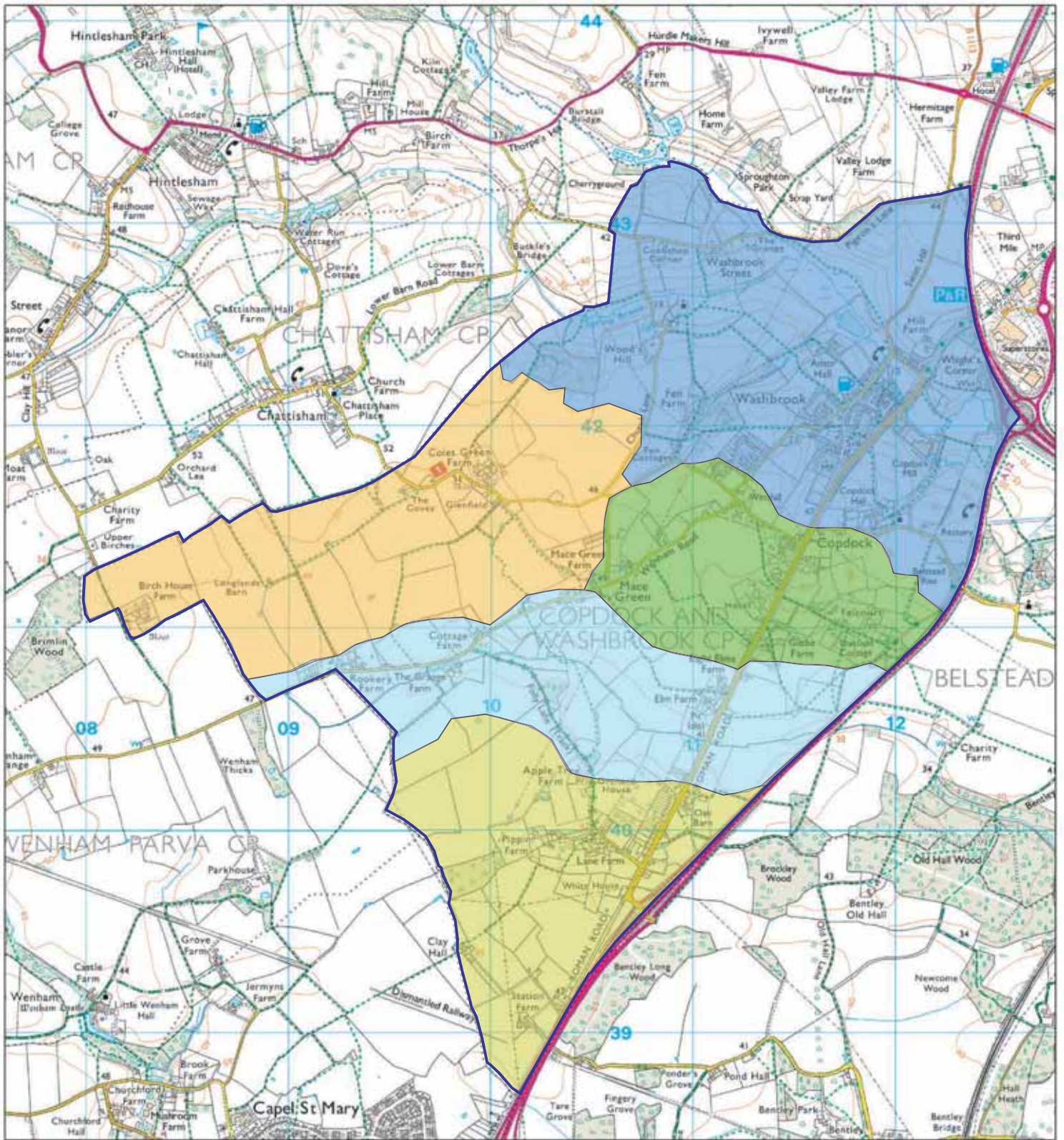
Criteria	Assessment
Landscape Quality (condition): A measure of the physical state of the landscape.	The landscape of the Belstead Brook is in good condition with an intact pattern of historic enclosures defining small to medium scale fields on the valley sides. The pattern of rural lanes and valley floor pastures also remain intact and legible. There is some loss of landscape quality where arable land uses have come close to the valley floor or where there has been more extensive hedgerow removal.
Scenic Quality: The term used to describe landscapes that appeal primarily to the senses.	This landscape has a high scenic quality derived from its valley topography and the undulations created by small tributary stream valleys that cut into the valley sides. These changes in landform coupled with landuse, woodland and historic features of interest give rise to views and vistas which are pleasing to the senses. In the northwest part of the former SLA the landscape is in transition rising up onto the plateau landscape. Here the landscape becomes more open with larger scale arable fields and there is evidence of some hedgerow loss and fewer features of interest. As a result landscape quality is declining.
Rarity: The presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare landscape type.	This landscape contains a number of habitats namely wet pastures and wet woodlands as well as veteran trees and old coppiced hazel which are rare in the context of the Parish. The high concentration of designated and non-designated heritage assets in this area and their tangible interrelationships is also rare.
Representativeness: Whether the landscape contains a particular character and/or	This landscape is typical of the river valley landscape found within Suffolk where the key characteristics of the Rolling Valley Farmlands landscape type are well

features or elements which are considered particularly important.	represented.
Conservation Interest: The presence of features of wildlife, earth science or archaeological or historical and cultural interest can add to the value of the landscape.	The natural and cultural heritage found in this landscape is highly valued. The area also has high potential for archaeological sites and finds. Upstanding built heritage and the pattern of semi natural habitats are tangible and make a particular contribution to the qualities of the area. Listed buildings include the churches of St Mary and St Peter, Copdock Hall, Coles Green Farm moated manor house, Amor Hall and many other rural vernacular buildings. Wet pastures can be found along Spring Brook and Belstead Brook and add visual and biodiversity interest. Incised lanes can be found at Church Lane and Hollow Lane.
Recreational Value: Evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important.	This landscape is highly valued by the local community for informal outdoor recreation. There are a high concentration of public rights of way and rural quiet lanes through this area. Many publicised circular routes pass thorough this landscape and are enjoyed by local residents. This area includes National Cycle Route 1 which passes along Chattisham Road.
Perceptual aspects: A landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities, notably wildness and or tranquillity.	Away from the A14 and A12 and the centre of Washbrook this landscape has a rural and tranquil character with many factors present which contribute to tranquillity including running water, birdsong, lack of built development and closeness to nature. This landscape often has a small scale and intimate character in places feeling secretive and unchanged.
Associations: Some landscapes are associated with particular people, such as artists or writers or events in history that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area.	There are no known associations with this landscape.

- 4.7.3 In addition to the above criteria this landscape is also valued for its function as a setting to the settlement of Washbrook and in maintaining a sense of separation from Ipswich despite its close proximity.
- 4.7.4 The majority of the former SLA is considered to constitute a valued landscape and is recommended for designation within the Neighbourhood Plan. The proposed extent of the area within the Parish is shown on Figure 3. It was noted that the quality and condition of the landscape is transitional to the southwest where the land rises up onto the more open plateau landscape. Consideration was given to drawing a boundary conservatively along hedgerow and woodland boundaries to exclude this area however hedgerow boundaries were found to be gappy. On this basis it was considered appropriate to adopt a pragmatic boundary which follows the lanes

including Chattisham Road. As a result the proposed extent of valued landscape is the same as the former SLA⁵.

⁵ Note that land beyond the Parish has not been assessed and it is likely that the valued landscape extends beyond the Parish following the Belstead Brook valley.

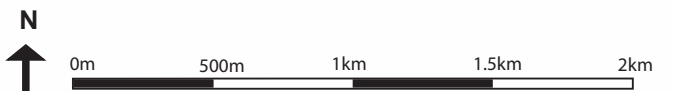


Key

-  Neighbourhood Plan Area
-  Belstead Brook Valley
-  Copdock and Mace Green
-  Copdock Clay Plateau
-  Elm Farm Stream Valley
-  Lane Farm Plateau

Copdock and Washbrook Neighbourhood Plan Landscape Assessment

Figure 4: Assessment Areas



5: Assessment of Local Landscape Areas

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This section of the report considers the landscape in detail and especially its sensitivity and capacity to accommodate development. The Local Landscape Areas are defined on Figure 4. Within each of the areas there may be sites which have already been approved for development, including housing or are associated with planning applications current at the time of originally preparing this Appraisal. This assessment is from a landscape perspective and does not take account of other issues or constraints which will also affect an area's ability to accommodate housing/employment.
- 5.1.2 The Local Landscape Areas are described in terms of character and context followed by an evaluation of sensitivity and capacity to accommodate housing/employment growth in the context of existing settlement and its setting. The assessment draws on all baseline data set out in this report.
- 5.1.3 Where it is concluded that areas have some capacity for development it should not be assumed that these areas are free of sensitivity. The detailed assessment for each area, contained in the tables below, sets out the sensitivities relating to each area and highlights opportunities for mitigation and wider landscape enhancement. In this way information is provided on how development may deliver positive environmental gain in accordance with the Government's Environment Strategy, 25 Year Plan which states the clear objective to '*embed an environmental net gain principle for development, including housing and infrastructure*'. In particular this approach avoids the consideration of individual sites in isolation but looks at a broader context within which development can deliver positive change of benefit to the wider Parish and local community and at a landscape scale.

5.2 Local Landscape Areas Sensitivity Assessment Tables

Local Character Area 1: Belstead Brook Valley

<p>Relevant Planning Sites</p>	<p>Sites SS1175, SS0295, SS0944, SS1129, SS2045 and SS0945 in SHELAA.</p>
<p>Physical Character</p>	<p>This character area lies in the north of the Parish and forms the valley sides of Belstead Brook. It plays a valued role in providing a rural pastoral setting to Washbrook, the rounded upper slopes reinforcing the position and small-scale character of the village and the treed horizon providing visual containment and definition to the crest of the valley slopes. Key characteristics relevant to this area include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinct valley slopes ranging from 10-45m AOD • Small streams including Belstead Brook and Spring Brook and others which have influenced the siting of Amor Hall and Copdock Mill • Notable isolated historic buildings such as Copdock Hall, St Mary's Church, St Peter's Church, and Copdock Mill • Small scale meadows/wet pastures defined by mature hedgerows with trees • Mixture of arable and pasture on valley slopes • Notable veteran trees and areas of former coppiced hazel • Areas of alder carr and linear woodland • Areas of wet ground and pastures reflecting natural spring lines along the valley sides • Network of narrow lanes, including enclosed / sunken lanes such as Pigeon's Lane • Rural and tranquil area although some noise intrusion from major trunk roads • Washbrook comprises a mix of building ages and styles with some small scale infill/housing estates • Commercial development at A14 / A12 Copdock Interchange visually intrudes in places • Some larger scale commercial/employment development on valley slopes and along London Road.
<p>Existing Settlement Edge</p>	<p>The northwestern edge of Washbrook includes a number of mid-late 20th century housing comprising single and two storey detached housing. The edge of these housing estates is generally open with no strong boundary vegetation. As a result, the urban edge can appear abrupt in places when viewed from the surrounding landscape. Elsewhere the settlement edge of Washbrook is well contained by mature vegetation and topography. The north facing and south facing open rural valley sides are important in providing a setting to the settlement.</p>
<p>Views and Visibility</p>	<p>There are elevated views northwards from London Road across the cluster of development at Whight's Corner to the open valley slopes beyond. In these views the top of Tesco and other commercial development on the edge of Ipswich visually intrudes. In views from the northern valley slopes looking south across the valley, Washbrook is visible on the mid and lower slopes. Where</p>

	<p>development has extended onto higher slopes it is broken up by mature vegetation, appearing small in scale and does not break the skyline. There are still notable areas of open valley slope above the village which reinforces its mid slope location and provide a rural setting. The village appears small in scale and rural in character.</p>
Designation/Condition	<p>The whole of this area lies within an area noted for its landscape value. The quality of this area is derived from its notable topography, distinct valley character, mature trees and sinuous field boundary enclosures, small scale wet pastures on the valley floor and notable areas of woodland. The landscape has a deeply rural and unspoilt character with a high concentration of historic buildings which add time depth. The buildings of St Peter's Church (14-15th century) and Copdock Hall a 16th century threshing barn form an exceptional group overlooking the valley and Ipswich. The landscape also has a high archaeological potential particularly to the west of the village.</p>
Perceptual Qualities	<p>Throughout much of this area there is a strong perception of tranquility as a result of its rural and unspoilt character. Where development on the edge of Ipswich visually intrudes and where there is noise intrusion in close proximity to the Copdock interchange this is less prevalent. Washbrook has a local pub, school, church room and open space/play areas which give it a community focus and recognisable identity.</p>
Function	<p>This landscape performs an important function in providing a physical gap and perceptual separation between Washbrook and Ipswich. The open agricultural valley sides are vulnerable to development which erodes the separate identity and rural character of Washbrook. The valley landscape forms an important corridor for recreation and enjoyment with a good network of footpaths from the settlement edge into the wider landscape. A number of these routes are publicised walks for local residents⁶.</p>
Sensitivity/Capacity	<p>This area has a high sensitivity to residential and employment development due to its visibility and high quality and also because it performs a particular function as a setting and gap between Washbrook and Ipswich. For this reason, development in this area is very constrained. This area is unlikely to accommodate more than small scale infill developments which strengthen gateways. Due to the visual sensitivity of the valley slopes and rural character of the settlement further employment development in this area is not considered in keeping with landscape or settlement character or quality.</p>
Mitigation	<p>Particular care will need to be taken to avoid development breaking the skyline, appearing to extend the village and erode its</p>

⁶ Copdock and Washbrook Footpath Guide, Copdock and Washbrook Parish Council, 2001

	<p>position on the lower/middle valley slopes and giving rise to development with prominent roofscapes. This will require careful siting of development and avoidance of materials which are light or bright in colour and or reflective, as well as the creation of well vegetated urban edges.</p>
<p>Guidance</p>	<p>Seek to screen views towards commercial development on the edge of Ipswich and reduce noise and air pollution through carefully sited woodland planting.</p> <p>Seek to link existing footpaths along the urban edge adjacent to housing development at Charlotte's and to reinstate hedgerow boundaries and the creation of small woodland copses at the corner of fields to soften the existing urban edge.</p> <p>Seek to reduce the urbanising influence of London Road and improve the junction with Chapel Lane to create a stronger gateway and arrival at the village of Washbrook and Wright's Corner.</p> <p>Ensure appropriate management of areas of wet pasture and woodland along the valley floor and lower valley slopes to enhance biodiversity interest.</p> <p>Manage woodland in and around key historic buildings and retain reinstate views to and from these landmarks.</p>

Local Character Areas 2: Copdock Clay Plateau

Relevant Planning Sites	There are no SHELAA sites within this area
Physical Character	<p>This character area lies to the west and south west of the Parish. It comprises open elevated plateau. Notable characteristics relevant to this landscape area include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large to medium scale arable fields defined by hedges • Open, longer distance, views across the fields and to areas of woodland which form a treed horizon • Relatively flat landscape at c. 45-50m AOD • Narrow single-track roads defined by mature hedgerows often with veteran oak trees • Sparse dispersed settlement, consisting of farmsteads and red brick Victorian detached cottages • Frequent in-field ponds reflecting clay soils • Historic moated manor site at Coles Green Farm
Existing Settlement Edge	There are no distinct settlements within this area. Farms and isolated cottages are associated with boundary vegetation and appear as isolated features in a wider rural landscape.
Views and Visibility	This landscape offers open views sometimes to areas beyond the Parish. Due to the nature of the topography and field enclosure pattern views are predominately focused in a northerly direction. To the south of this area the enclosure pattern is smaller scale and the plateau is dissected by a small stream valley which restricts views (see Elm Farm Stream Valley).
Designation/Condition	The northern part of this landscape falls within a valued landscape which extends as far as Chattisham Lane. In the wider area the landscape is in reasonable condition although there has been some loss of field ponds and field boundaries and the introduction of some non-native planting.
Perceptual Qualities	This landscape has a deeply rural character and feels remote from settlement.
Function	This landscape forms the wider rural setting to settlement within the Parish and to the north at Chattisham. It offers opportunities for outdoor recreation along public rights of way and rural lanes. The footpaths in this area form part of those publicised as local walks and Chattisham Lane forms part of the Sustrans Cycle Route 1.
Sensitivity/Capacity	This landscape is sensitive to development which has an urbanising influence on the rural character of the lanes as a result of new buildings which do not reflect the scale and character of local vernacular or are associated with curtilage treatments which adversely affects the lane verge or hedgerow character. This landscape is also sensitive to large scale farm buildings which may be visible on the skyline over considerable distances.

	<p>On this basis this landscape has little to no capacity for residential development except single dwellings which are small scale and rural in character. Similarly there is little capacity for employment development except small scale enterprises associated with existing farm business/farmsteads.</p>
<p>Mitigation</p>	<p>Mitigation of new development should include careful siting and consideration of mass, form, scale, colour and character of new development ensuring that it relates to traditional styles typically found in the area. Mitigation may also include the planting of new woodland copses/hedgerows to help visually anchor new and existing development.</p>
<p>Guidance</p>	<p>Seek to avoid residential and employment development in this landscape and retain its rural character. Manage existing in-field ponds and create new ones where feasible. Undertake a veteran tree survey and plant new hedgerow oaks to continue this characteristic feature. Improve habitat networks through the planting of new woodland copses and hedgerows especially where they have been lost along rural lanes. Take care to avoid visual clutter from ancillary development associated with horses. Avoid urban curtilage treatment to properties such as close board fencing, brick walls/gateposts and conifer planting.</p>

Local Character Area 3: Copdock and Mace Green

Relevant Planning Sites	Sites SS0295, SS0944, SS1129 and SS1080 in SHELAA.
Physical Character	<p>This character area straddles London Road including Elm Lane and Wenham Road and forms the immediate setting to Copdock and the hamlet at Mace Green. It forms an area of raised land above and adjacent to the Belstead Brook. Key characteristics relevant to this landscape area include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intimate landscape of small-scale arable fields, defined by hedgerows, often 2m high, with veteran oaks • Enclosed, short to mid distance views, curtailed by vegetation • Topography typically ranges from 45-50m AOD • Network of narrow lanes and historic routes e.g. Wenham Road and Oakfield Road • Loose cluster of development at Copdock and associated with Felcourt often comprising large scale properties set within grounds • Brick walls along lanes and defining property boundaries • Notable areas of small woodland copses and lines of trees • Built form focuses along London Road including hotel with some areas of development set back from the road e.g. Felcourt and Glebe Farm • Public open space – football and cricket pitches and village hall • London Road is a strong, linear feature which has an urbanising influence on the settlement
Existing Settlement Edge	<p>The loose arrangement of development and associated vegetation means that in general only glimpsed views to development are possible from the surrounding landscape. Along London Road buildings are often set back from the road, within large grounds and behind boundary vegetation or brick walls. Along Elm Lane there are smaller scale dwellings comprising cottages and houses. Development is mixed and includes a hotel. The area lacks a central focus. There are often smaller scale enclosures and pastures at the back of development which reinforce the rural character of the settlement and form a transition to the wider agricultural landscape.</p>
Views and Visibility	<p>There are views out from the edges of settlement to the wider rural landscape. Views are generally elevated across Belstead Brook to Ipswich to the north and across the undulating plateau landscape to the west. To the south views are across the gentle depression associated with the stream course and to the east are cut short by vegetation along the existing A12. From Wenham Road there are more open views to the north over wider countryside.</p>
Designation/Condition	<p>This area lies adjacent to a valued landscape its northern fringe forming the crest of the valley slopes and the distinctive wooded skyline which defines the valley. There are a mix of building types and ages. This, along with the informal layout of dwellings and</p>

	<p>the trunk road character of London Road, give rise to a lack of visual and physical cohesiveness. Playing fields on the eastern side of the London Road are poorly related to areas of residential development to the west for example. This area contains a high concentration of mature and veteran trees which add an established character especially to the east of London Road where a number of the trees are likely to be remnants from the former parkland associated with Felcourt. This area contains a number of listed buildings.</p>
<p>Perceptual Qualities</p>	<p>This part of Copdock is distinct from Washbrook and from other linear development to the south around the junction with the A12. Nevertheless, as noted above, it lacks a strong sense of place in part due to organic form and eclectic mix of buildings but also due to fragmentation caused by the scale of London Road relative to the built character. The village hall and playing fields associated with mature trees reflecting former association with Felcourt give this part of the village a more distinct character. To the east the landscape has a strong historic character comprising remnant parkland landscape associated with Felcourt and the historic lane of Oakfield Road.</p>
<p>Function</p>	<p>The landscapes forms a setting to the settlement, listed buildings and Belstead Valley.</p>
<p>Sensitivity/Capacity</p>	<p>Land in the vicinity of Wenham Road and Elm Lane is physically linked to the settlement but is open to the wider landscape and visually sensitive to housing or employment development. It could however accommodate open space or playing fields. This landscape has capacity to accommodate small scale residential development and some small-scale commercial development related to local community facilities. Care will need to be taken to avoid new development breaking the skyline and appearing to intrude on the Belstead Brook or wider rural landscape to the west. The relatively flat topography lends itself to achieving mitigation of new housing with appropriate landscape infrastructure.</p> <p>Areas with some capacity include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small scale residential development in the vicinity of Elm Lane and London Road junction as long as it is set back from the main valley slopes on flatter land and associated with a strong landscape edge to the north – this could be achieved through the reinstatement of the former hedgerow now marked by mature trees. • Small scale residential development at the junction between Back Lane and Elm Lane – this site is well defined by mature hedgerows and is not visually sensitive and is closely related to existing development. • Small scale residential development south of Church Lane as long as it is associated with a strong landscape edge to the north to prevent visual intrusion into the Belstead Brook Valley and the rural character of the lane can be retained. • Small scale residential development on the existing recreation field north of the village hall with the relocation of recreation field to west side of village at junction with Elm Lane and Wenham Road or to the south of The Avenue. Development here will need to strengthen the central focus of the settlement and gateway opposite the junction with Elm Lane. • Small to medium scale housing development south of The Avenue which provides access to Felcourt. Any development here should have a strong landscape buffer to the south and reflect the dispersed pattern of development and single properties set within grounds or parkland. <p>Due to the character of existing settlement and the need to create a stronger central focus to the settlement and associated</p>

	<p>improvements to the London Road dual carriageway, employment development is unlikely to achieve a good fit in this area.</p>
<p>Mitigation</p>	<p>Any development should form part of a broader master plan which seeks to consider positive changes to the settlement as a whole, reinforcing sense of place and community. Mitigation may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing the scale of London Road within the settlement area reinforcing and strengthening gateways and sense of place and enabling better east west connections. • Ensuring new development reflects the eclectic and loose arrangement of existing buildings form and includes individual properties set within grounds. • Improve footpath and cycleway links between Copdock and Washbrook school, enhancing the character of the route on the west side of London Road as part of road enhancements. • Enhancing gateways and sense of arrival with particular attention to key views at road junctions and the provision of community facilities such as a village shop.
<p>Guidance</p>	<p>Avoid large scale employment development which is out of keeping with the settlement character and gives rise to increased HGV movements.</p> <p>Avoid large scale residential estates which are out of character with the settlement form and pattern.</p> <p>Avoid development which sits on the upper slopes of the Belstead Valley and is visually intrusive on the valley landscape.</p> <p>Mitigate any development with strong landscape buffers to retain the typical wooded skyline of the valley.</p> <p>Retain the small scale narrow character of the rural lanes in the area especially Elm Lane, Wenham Road and Church Lane.</p>

Local Landscape Area 4: Elm Farm Stream Valley

Relevant Planning Sites	Sites SS0624, SS0918, SS0593, SS0624, SS0918 and SS0824 in SHELAA.
Physical Character	<p>This character area straddles London Road and is associated with a small west-east stream valley which forms a gentle and shallow depression in the plateau landscape. Key characteristics relevant to this landscape area include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gently undulating topography ranging from c.40-45m AOD • Historic lanes and tracks including Folly Lane (bridleway) • Dispersed pattern of farms including Rookery Farm, The Grange and Elm Farm • Evidence of past small-scale quarrying • Occasional ponds and waterbodies associated with the stream course • Small scale enclosure pattern in western half of area reflecting earlier field pattern defined by mature hedgerows and trees giving rise to an intimate landscape with strong time depth • London Road is a strong, linear feature which has an urbanising influence on the area
Existing Settlement Edge	This area contains a dispersed pattern of farmsteads, namely Elm Farm and Tomcat Farm on London Road (the latter being a caravan and camping site) and Cottage Farm, The Grange Farm and Rookery Farm on Wenham Road. As a result, it has a strongly rural character. Some linear housing development along London Road has extended into this area onto the north facing valley slopes and coupled with associated development at Elm Farm, has started to undermine the more rural character of this subtle valley.
Views and Visibility	The gentle change in topography associated with the stream valley enables views from the upper slopes at the southern edge of Copdock across open countryside. There are also important views across open countryside just north of Oak Barn. Within the lower parts of the valley views out are contained by vegetation and topography such that development is not evident and the valley appear rural and remote from settlement.
Designation/Condition	There are no listed buildings or nature conservation sites within this area. However, the course of the river is a valuable ecological corridor. This area contains the historic track Folly Lane which is a valued heritage asset and bridleway. The enclosure patterns in the western part of the area along Wenham Road are small in scale and comprise semi-improved pastures defined by mature hedges with veteran trees.
Perceptual Qualities	This area is perceived as a shallow stream valley and open countryside. The pattern of dispersed farms reinforces the rural character.
Function	The shallow valley and countryside character of this landscape means that it provides an important function in separating the

	cluster of development close to the A12 junction and that of Copdock to the north.
Sensitivity/Capacity	<p>This landscape currently forms a valuable break in development along London Road and is therefore sensitive to residential and employment development along London Road which elongates existing loose clusters of development and reduces perceptions of rural gaps between them. Whilst the lowest lying areas are visually more contained with greater capacity to accommodate development, any development here is likely to give rise to a linear pattern of development from the junction of the A12 northwards as far as Elm Lane. Existing development and small scale employment sites have already stated to undermine the rural character including the introduction of urban style access, signage and conifer planting. Further development here is also likely to poorly relate to existing clusters of built form within the Parish.</p> <p>The rural lane of Wenham Road is sensitive to development which has an urbanising effect and alters the dispersed pattern of existing farm related development. Any development along this lane should be kept to a minimum and would need to comprise single/detached cottages or dwellings laid out in a 'farm' arrangement.</p>
Mitigation	Ensure any development reflects the rural character of the area and local vernacular styles and avoids urbanising rural lanes or creating linear corridors of development along London Road.
Guidance	<p>Ensure the sensitive management of areas of wet pasture</p> <p>Strengthen the line of the water course through linear waterside tree plating of species such as alder and willow</p> <p>Encourage the creation of a wider nature conservation strip along the course of the stream, improving biodiversity and ecological corridors.</p> <p>Protect the character and appearance of the historic route of Folly Lane as a valued recreational route</p> <p>Seek the removal of non-native conifer planting and reinstatement of native hedgerows.</p>

Local Landscape Area 5: Lane Farm Plateau

Relevant Planning Sites	Sites SS1040, SS0595, SS0620, SS0919, SS0589, SS0878, SS0227c and c in SHELAA
Physical Character	<p>This character area lies in the southern part of the Parish close to the junction with the A12. Key characteristics relevant to this landscape area include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevated plateau landscape • Relatively flat topography at c. 45-50m AOD • Medium to large scale fields as a result of field boundary amalgamation • Linear housing development dating to latter half of 20th century along London Road • Historic farmsteads at Apple Tree Farm, Oak Barn, Pipin Farm and Lane Farm • Veteran oaks along lanes and within hedgerows • Field ponds are common
Existing Settlement Edge	Settlement in this area comprises linear development set back along London Road and Folly Lane. To the rear of this development is woodland and scrub which was formerly an orchard. As a result, this housing development is not readily visible from the surrounding landscape to the west although it is visible from London Road. Elsewhere there are glimpsed views to farmsteads and some small-scale employment development at Apple Tree Farm. The settlement has a loose arrangement, and save for the 20 th century development along London Road, is focused on historic farmstead clusters.
Views and Visibility	From the wider landscape views are open and across relatively flat medium scale fields defined by hedgerows. The skyline often appears wooded/vegetated such that views are contained. South of this area beyond the Parish there is a higher concentration of woodland many of which are ancient and local wildlife sites.
Designation/Condition	There are listed buildings at Oak Barn and White House. There are a number of in field ponds through this area which have a nature conservation value. Folly Lane is suffering from verge erosion and urbanisation from infill development and signage. There are relatively high volumes of traffic accessing employment at Apple Tree Farm.
Perceptual Qualities	The cluster of development in this area has an organic character, and whilst linear along London Road, it also forms a loose arrangement along Folly Lane reflecting rural origins as a collection of farms.
Function	The southern parts of this area form a setting to Chapel St Mary which lies beyond the Parish to the south.
Sensitivity/Capacity	This area has some capacity for employment and residential development, clustered around the London Road/Folly Lane junction and to the south of Lane Farm and west of White House. There is also some capacity for development south of Oak Barn. Care

	would need to be taken to avoid adverse effects on the setting of this listed building.
Mitigation	<p>Any development should form part of a broader master plan for the whole of the area which seeks to consider positive changes to this cluster of settlement as a whole, reinforcing sense of place and community. Mitigation may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional woodland blocks and new/reinstated hedgerow corridors as part of green infrastructure/habitat networks and in providing net environmental gain associated with any proposed development. • Substantial improvements to the gateway and sense of arrival through reconfiguration of London Road and development at key junctions and vistas which help to create definition and local distinctiveness. • Avoidance of development which is over 2 storeys in height in order to ensure new development has a good fit and can be effectively mitigated in the medium term. • Consideration of a new access to Apple Tree Farm through potential new development in order to reduce pressure on Folly Lane.
Guidance	<p>Manage existing in-field ponds and the creation of new waterbodies where feasible. Undertake a veteran tree survey and plant new hedgerow oaks to continue this characteristic feature. Improve habitat networks through the planting of new woodland copses and hedgerows especially where they have been lost. Protect the rural character of Folly Lane.</p>

6: Summary of Findings

6.1 Special Qualities to Conserve and Enhance

6.1.1 The following conclusions can be reached as to the special qualities of Copdock and Washbrook Parish which, wherever possible, should be retained and enhanced. Special qualities include:

- Deeply rural high quality countryside surrounding the settled areas especially Belstead Valley
- Historic buildings within unspoilt rural settings
- Network of rural narrow sunken lanes
- Mature veteran oaks in hedgerows and along lanes
- Elevated expansive views across wider countryside
- Eclectic mix of built housing styles within the settlement
- Open space, woodland and mature trees within the settlements which reinforce sense of place
- Importance of topography in defining clusters in development and distinctive places
- Subtle undulations in topography giving rise to important views, influencing gateways and sense of place

6.2 Changes to Avoid

6.2.1 This detailed analysis has noted some changes which have resulted in loss of the distinctive qualities of the settlement. It is useful to highlight these as it may inform decisions regarding any future development or environmental initiatives/management of the settlement setting.

- Creation of abrupt edges to development with little vegetation or landscape on the edge of settlement
- Housing estates with single housing types which contrast with the eclectic mix of housing styles in the settlements
- Linear development along lanes which causes urbanization of rural lanes
- Loss of distinct areas of settlement as a result of ill sited new development
- Continued presence of trunk road characteristics of London Road at odds with the rural settlement
- Development which, due to its location, alters the traditional position of Washbrook on the mid to lower slopes of the Belstead Brook
- Change which visually intrudes upon or physically undermines the sense of separation between Washbrook and Ipswich
- Development which masks the subtle changes in topography

- Additional signage or urban curtilage treatment on rural lanes
- Introduction of individual dwellings which do not reflect the scale or detailing of traditional properties in the area
- Development on the edge of Ipswich which visually intrudes into the Belstead Brook and wider landscape of the Parish

6.3 Management and Development Guidelines

6.3.1 The Joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council Landscape Guidance (Aug 2015), aims to safeguard the character of both districts countryside by ensuring new development integrates positively with the existing character. The Landscape Guidance, therefore, outlines the main elements of the existing character and provides a framework of broad principles that all development in the countryside will be required to follow.

6.3.2 Alongside the above guidance, the following management and development guidelines have been identified as a result of this detailed settlement and landscape analysis. These guidelines are provided to inform land management decisions, inspire local community initiatives and to inform the development of proposals by developers and to assist decision makers.

6.3.3 Management guidelines seek to reinforce local character and improve legibility. They include:

- Reinstatement and management of field ponds
- Undertaking a veteran tree survey to better understand this important characteristic of the parish and to effectively plan their management and prioritise areas for new planting.
- and plant new hedgerow trees to ensure continuity of this characteristic
- Manage trees and woodland to retain and open up views to churches
- Enhance biodiversity of lane verges through appropriate management in collaboration with landowners and highways
- Plant new woodland blocks in the southern part of the parish to mitigate and integrate new development and connect to existing woodland in the wider area
- Retain the pattern of smaller scale pastures on the edges of settlements and the transition they provide between urban edges and wider farmland.

6.3.4 Development guidelines seek to inform new development and include:

- Preparation of a design guide for highway improvements to London Road which strengthen settlement gateways, reinforce settlement character, improve east west connections and enhance sense of place.
- Avoidance of ad hoc development along London Road which connects clusters of development

- Ensure new development reflects the dispersed and varied vernacular of the area, including a mix of farm buildings, larger properties within grounds or small-scale terraced cottages
- Retain open valley sides which form a setting to Washbrook and reinforce its small scale rural character
- Pay particular attention to curtilage treatment and avoid urbanisation of rural lanes

6.4 Conclusions

6.4.1 The Parish of Copdock and Washbrook has inherited a number of key issues which, going forward, have the potential to be addressed as part of the neighbourhood plan. These include:

- The urban character of London Road and the vestiges of its function as a major trunk road which still remain manifest in signage, road markings, width of carriageway and which are at odds with the otherwise relatively small scale and rural character of the Parish especially at Copdock in the vicinity of Elm Lane and Whight's Corner.
- Development which has occurred along London Road in the latter half of the 20th and early 21st centuries, which has given rise to a dispersed and somewhat sporadic pattern of development. This has resulted in a dilution of sense of place, weak gateways and a lack of strong focal points within the settlement.

6.4.2 Modern housing estate development has been modest and concentrates as housing estates on the fringes of Washbrook e.g. Dales View and Fen View. The analysis has shown that Washbrook has limited scope for further housing development as a result of its location on the slopes of the Belstead Brook, which have a high landscape quality, and which are visually sensitive and form a rural and distinctive setting to the village and to Amor Farm. The surrounding landscape to the village also performs a valued function in maintaining a physical and perceptual separation from Ipswich. Development on the edges of Ipswich has already started to visually intrude into the valley and any further encroachment should be avoided. The junction of the London Road with the village is currently unsatisfactory resulting in a poor gateway and sense of arrival. There is scope for this to be enhanced and strengthened as a result of a reconfiguration of London Road. Overall this area has capacity to accommodate only small scale infill residential development.

6.4.3 The analysis has also shown that from a landscape perspective the flatter land in the south of the Parish close to the junction with the existing A12 has greatest capacity to accommodate employment development and some residential. Here larger scale buildings, in association with appropriate landscape mitigation, could be accommodated along with increased traffic movement without disruption to the smaller rural lanes to the north and west. Care would be needed to ensure an appropriate relationship to existing and new areas of residential development and to

strengthen the sense of arrival in this part of the Parish. Any residential development should also seek to create a small local centre.

- 6.4.4 Settlement in the central section of the Parish at Copdock is perhaps the most challenging area in terms of accommodating appropriate development. Whilst from a landscape perspective there is some scope to accommodate development in this area there is also a need to ensure that it creates a stronger sense of place within Copdock. The areas which have the greatest capacity lie in the vicinity of the existing sports pitches/playing fields and junction with Elm Lane and Church Lane. Development could comprise small scale housing schemes rather than a single large-scale estate development. Development should seek to fit with the existing pattern of built form and strengthen gateways. Any development in this area would need to give consideration to improvements to London Road, such as reducing its width and developing a more central 'village' character.
- 6.4.5 The results from this assessment point to the identification of a number of smaller housing schemes rather than one large housing development site within the Parish. The study has also identified that the flatter plateau landscape close to the junction with the A12 has greatest capacity to accommodate employment development. However, the study has also highlighted the need to address the current character of London Road and the negative influence it has on sense of place and cohesiveness of existing settlement clusters. Improvements to London Road, in association with small scale development, may strengthen gateways and focal points.
- 6.4.6 In this context it is likely that the development of broader masterplans would be beneficial. Without this sort of overview or vision, individual housing or employment schemes may not address infrastructure improvements and cumulatively they may further erode local distinctiveness.