

Sproughton Neighbourhood Plan *Landscape Appraisal*

Final Report



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Appendix 1: Extracts from Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment

Appendix 2 - Figures

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Alison Farmer Associates was appointed by Sproughton Neighbourhood Plan Committee to undertake a landscape appraisal of the Parish, in order to provide a robust evidence base to support policy development 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 its sensitivity and capacity to accommodate housing / employment related development.
- 1.1.2 Sproughton Neighbourhood Plan area covers the whole Parish and it extends across open farmland and into the Gipping Valley. The main settlement, Sproughton village, nestles on the lower valley slopes and along the River Gipping, its historic core comprising distinct buildings such as the church, Sproughton Hall, Root Barn, Tithe Barn, and Sproughton Mill.
- 1.1.3 The Parish's location on the fringes of Ipswich remains predominately rural, despite the presence of the A14 (which cuts across the Parish) and some encroachment of Ipswich north of Hadleigh Road, Sproughton Road and on the former sugar beet factory site. The rising farmed slopes of the Gipping Valley provide a distinctive setting to Sproughton village, but also play a significant role in providing a rural context and approach to Ipswich along Hadleigh Road and in Chantry Vale.

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.

1.3 Methodology and Approach

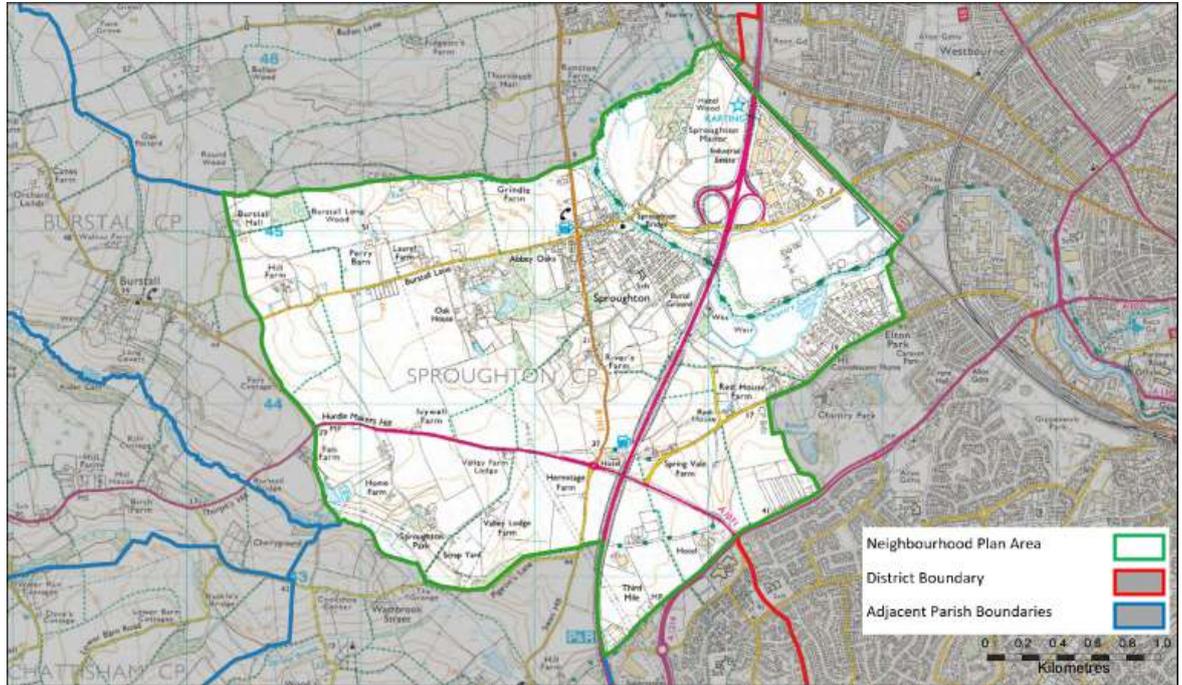
- 1.3.1 This assessment has been carried out in accordance with Guidelines on Landscape Character Assessment¹ and Guidelines in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment² and recently published guidance on Landscape Sensitivity³. Reference

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).

³ An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management, Natural England, June 2019

has also been made to other recent sensitivity and 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 October 2020.



Sproughton Neighbourhood Plan Area (Source: Babergh District Council Website)

- 1.3.2 This assessment is a landscape capacity-led approach which considers the settlement within Sproughton 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. 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 tourism related 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).

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.

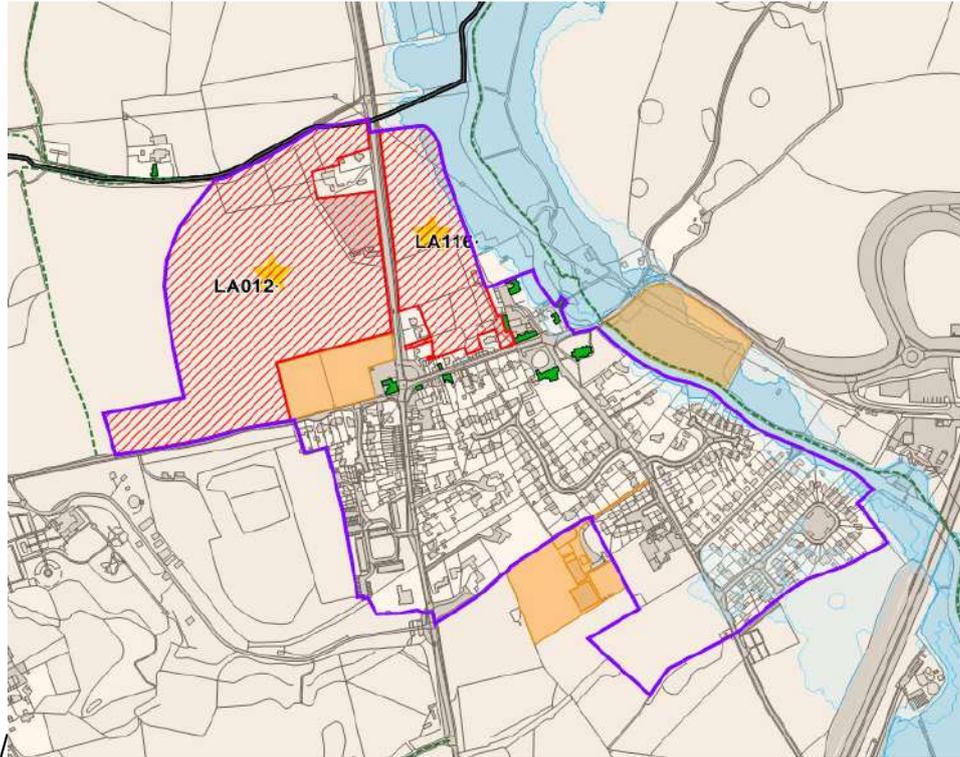
- 1.3.5 Where land/sites have been assessed in terms of sensitivity and capacity it is from a landscape perspective only and no consideration has been given to matters such as access or land ownership. It is possible therefore that, land identified as suitable for development without significant adverse landscape effects, may subsequently be discounted for reasons other than landscape.

1.4 The Neighbourhood Plan

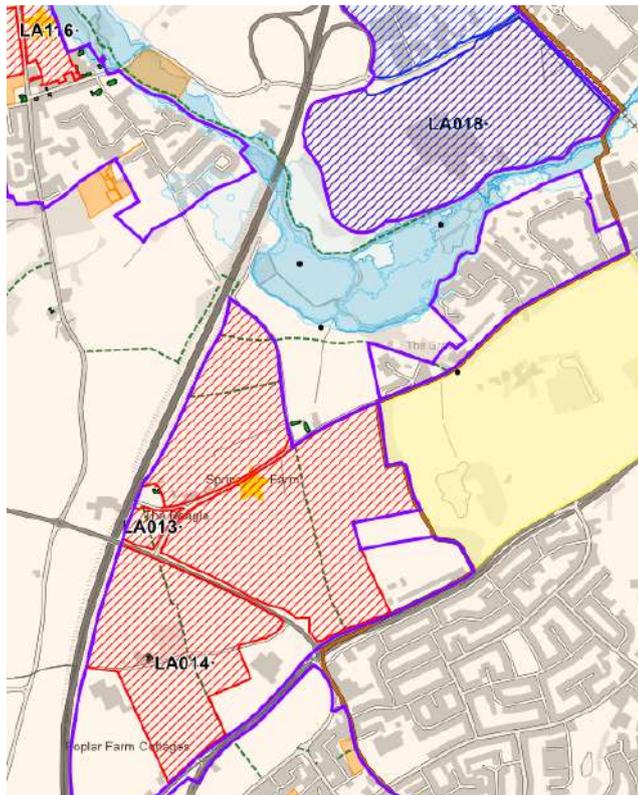
- 1.4.1 Under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), Babergh District Council confirmed the Neighbourhood Development Plan Area for Sroughton on 16th April 2020.
- 1.4.2 The Sroughton Neighbourhood Plan Working Group was subsequently established, and a questionnaire survey undertaken in the summer of 2020 which sought the views of the local community.
- 1.4.3 The survey included questions relating to the environment, green spaces, and renewable energy. The top environmental features of the village valued by respondents included open and green fields, rural character yet proximity to Ipswich, local village shop and local wildlife and habitats. The greatest weaknesses identified for the village were associated with traffic including volume, speed, and car parking.
- 1.4.4 Of the open spaces listed in the questionnaire the Gipping River Path, Millennium Green and playing fields were all used predominately on a weekly basis or less while the local footpaths and bridleways were used both daily and weekly and Hazel Woods, although frequented, was also not known to a number of respondents. Overall, most respondents felt they had sufficient access to the countryside and that the greatest barriers were poor quality or lack of footpaths.

1.5 Local Plan Context

- 1.5.1 The Babergh Local Plan Alternation No. 2 was adopted by the Council in June 2006. In this plan Sroughton was identified as a Hinterland Village. However, the emerging Local Plan is at an advanced stage, with the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Local Plan Pre-Submission documents (Regulation 19) currently out to consultation, and within this document, Sroughton is identified as a Core Village within the Ipswich Fringe. A housing requirement of 1,514 dwellings has been defined to be accommodated within the Sroughton Neighbourhood Plan area within the lifetime of the plan (of which 84 dwellings relate to outstanding permissions).
- 1.5.2 The map extracts below illustrate the location of housing and employment allocations within the emerging Local Plan and the table provides further details on associated planning applications.



Extract from Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Regulation 19 Consultation showing allocation associated with Sproughton village (orange area show designated open space)



Extract from Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Regulation 19 Consultation showing allocation associated with land east of A14/Chantry Vale

Table 1: Housing allocations and planning permissions

Housing Allocation		No of dwellings	Comments
LA012 Land north of Burstall Lane	DC/19/00567	105	Planning application approved Pending Legal agreement
LA116 Land east of Lorraine Way	DC/18/02010 DC/18/02412	54	Appeal dismissed
LA013 Land north of A1071 Wolsey Grange 2	DC/19/00454	800	Environmental Impact Assessment
LA014 Land at Poplar Lane	DC/15/00993	475	Planning application granted
LA018 Former Sugar Beet Factory Site	DC/17/06235 DC/17/06058 DC/17/05687	Employment	Planning application granted
LA019 Sproughton Enterprise Park	DC/19/03371	Employment	Planning application granted

- 1.5.3 Beyond the Parish the housing allocation LA006 in the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Regulations 19 is also relevant to Sproughton Parish. This site located off Fitzgerald Road has recently been given permission for 100 dwellings. This and other developments which have been approved in adjacent Parishes are detailed in the table below.

LA006	Fitzgerald Road	Bramford	DC/19/01649 DC/19/01401	100	Planning Application Approved
	Willow Brook	Bramford		115	Approved under construction
LA007	Cemex	Bramford	DC/18/00233	190	Approved
LA107	Clarice House	Bramford		14	
LA008	Back Lane Copdock & Washbrook	Copdock/Washbrook	DC/20/04147	226	Outline Planning
LA009	London Road	Copdock/Washbrook		12	

1.6 Relief Road

- 1.6.1 There have been past discussions regarding a potential relief road to Sproughton to reduce traffic issues currently being felt along the B1113 and staggered junction with Burstall Lane and Lower Street. There is currently no identified preferred route and either a west or east route is likely to give rise to significant impacts on environmental assets.

1.7 Green Infrastructure

- 1.7.1 The Haven Gateway Green Infrastructure prepared in 2008 was updated in August 2015 by the relevant councils. It highlighted several environmental initiatives. Those that are relevant to Sproughton include:
- Gipping Valley corridor restoration and cycle provision including several new bridges – supported by Sustrans as part of the Ipswich ‘green rim’ initiative⁴
 - Hazel Wood identified as natural greenspace
- 1.7.2 More recently as part of the redevelopment of the old Sugar Beet factory, Ipswich Borough Council Greenways project is managing the Chantry Cut Island as a nature area with restricted access, in association with the river path and valley. This initiative will also contribute to the wider green infrastructure in the Parish and is subject to an Ecological Development Plan.

⁴ This initiative of the Gipping river restoration is underway at Stowmarket

2: The Evolution of Sproughton Parish

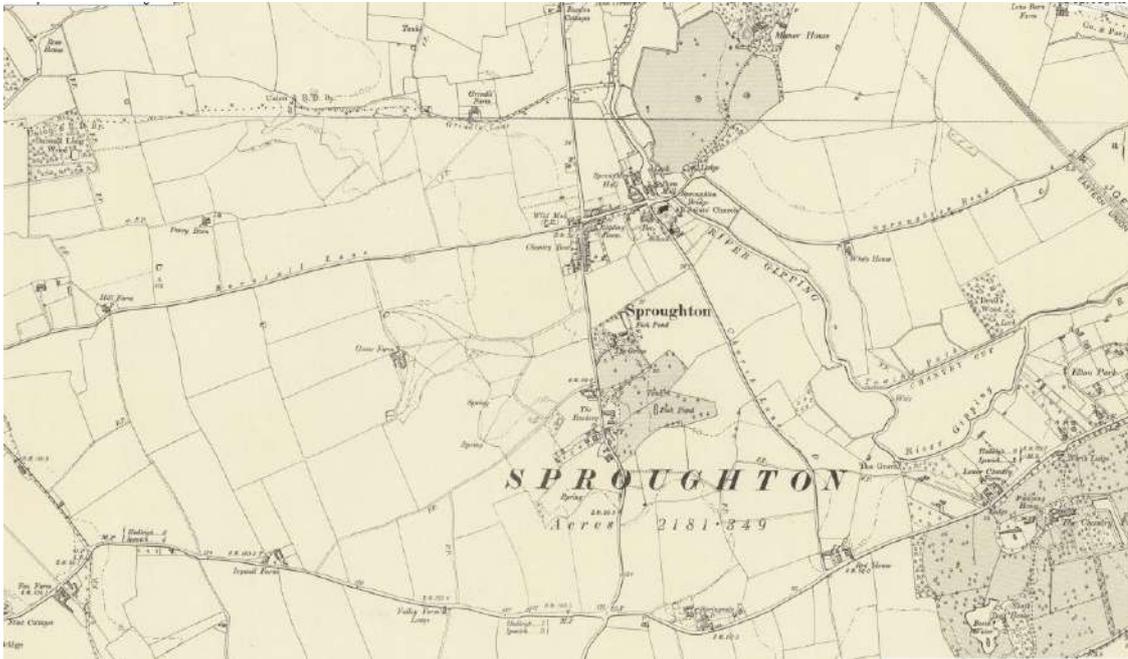
2.1 Early Origins and Evolution

- 2.1.1 The village of Sproughton is thought to have its origins in the medieval period, associated with a river crossing over the Gipping. The road that led up the valley slopes formed the main street – Lower Street. Today the historic character of this area remains relatively intact with a high concentration of listed buildings including thatched tithe barn, the church and mill which form an attractive cluster close to the river crossing.
- 2.1.2 The historic maps below trace the evolution of the village from the late 19th century.
- 2.1.3 In this first map the pattern of development focuses on the church close to the river and spreads west along Lower Street and with the junction with the B1113. A separate cluster of development can be seen to the south associated with The Rookery. Also of note are the areas of parkland. Chanty Park is seen in the southeast corner of the map while parkland associated with The Rookery extends east of the B1113 and with Sproughton Manor House on rising land to the north of the village. The route of Church Lane connecting to the Hadleigh Road, and the historic lane The Grindle, can also be discerned.



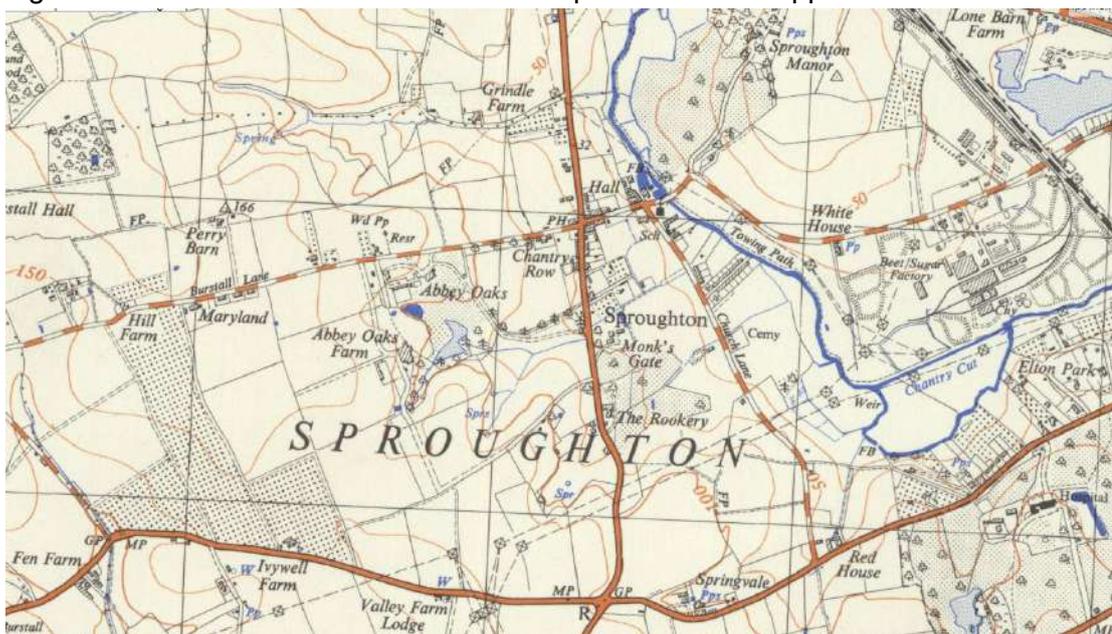
Map 1: Extract from 1896 map. (source – Historic Maps Scotland)

- 2.1.4 This map is similar to that from 1896 showing little has changed at the turn of the century. It does however illustrate the pattern of natural springs which occur on the valley sides to the west of the village.



Map 2: Extract from 1905 map. (source – Historic Maps Scotland)

- 2.1.5 By the middle of the 20th century the settlement and its setting had experienced several changes. Housing development established off Church Lane at Broomfield Common and a new house and parkland appeared at Abbey Oaks, including the creation of water bodies and mixed deciduous and conifer planting west of the B1113. This map also shows the introduction of lines of pylons between Valley Farm Lodge and the new sugar beet factory. Small scale orchards close to the edge of the settlement and more significant orchards in the southwest of the parish are also apparent.



Map 3: Extract from 1955 map. (source – Historic Maps Scotland)



Aerial photograph of present-day village

- 2.1.6 The present-day aerial photograph shows the extent of late 20th and early 21st century infill development within the village which has occurred south of Lower Street, along Church Lane and the B1113. The remnants of the parkland landscapes can also be discerned. Infrastructure has also had a major influence on the parish with the construction of the A14 in the 1980's which severed Church Lane. The installation of new powerlines has also occurred and most recently the demolition of the former sugar beet factory and the construction of large-scale warehouses.

3: Landscape Character

3.1 Existing Character Assessments

3.1.1 The Parish of Sproughton is included within two landscape character assessments namely National Character Area 86 South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland and the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment. Relevant key characteristics of NCA 86 include:

- Undulating chalky boulder clay plateau dissected by numerous river valleys giving a topography of gentle slopes in the lower, wider valleys and steeper slopes in the narrower upper parts
- Watercourses wind slowly across flood plains, supporting wet, fen-type habitats; grazing marsh; and blocks of cricket-bat willows, poplars, and old willow pollards.
- Lowland wood pasture and ancient woodland support the dormouse and a rich diversity of flowering plants on the clay plateau.
- Large, often ancient hedgerows link woods and copses, forming wooded skylines.
- The agricultural landscape is predominately arable with a wooded appearance with some pasture on the valley floors.
- Field patterns are irregular despite rationalisation, with much ancient countryside surviving.
- Impressive churches, large barns, and substantial country house estates...form historical resources.
- Winding narrow and sometimes sunken lanes are bounded by deep ditches, wide verges, and strong hedgerows
- Strong network of public rights of way provide access to the area's archetypal lowland English countryside.

3.1.2 The Suffolk Landscape Character assessment divides the Parish into five landscape types namely:

- Rolling Estate Farmland
- Rolling Valley Farmlands
- Valley Meadowlands
- Plateau Farmland and
- Ancient Plateau Claylands

3.1.3 The former two landscape types make up the valley sides to the River Gipping and along with the Valley Meadowlands, on the valley floor, form the immediate setting to the village of Sproughton. Land rises to an elevated ridge running northwest to



Plateau Farmlands: Open arable farmland forming a ridge of higher land to the south of the Parish. Large scale fields, gappy hedgerows and individual trees, extensive views and lines of pylons are characteristic



Rolling Valley Sides: Sproughton nestles within the lower valley slopes of the Gipping Valley with rising farmland and wooded tributary valleys forming a backdrop



Rolling Valley Farmlands: Small scale valley side pastures with mature hedgerows and trees



Valley Meadowlands: Small scale valley floor pastures, meandering watercourse, willows and poplars with a backdrop of woodland on rising valley slopes comprising Rolling Estate Farmlands



Ancient Plateau Claylands: Open arable plateau farmland forms a ridge of higher land to southwest of Sproughton with blocks of ancient woodland forming a treed horizon

Landscape Character

southeast across the Parish which comprises the Plateau Farmlands and Ancient Plateau Claylands – an area of more open and intensively farmed arable. This ridge then drops in elevation in the southwestern fringes of the Parish into a further river valley of the Belstead Brook. These character types are illustrated on Figure 1 and photographs reflecting landscape character shown on the photos panels below.

- 3.1.4 Extracts of the character assessment including information on characteristics, sensitivities and management guidance for each landscape types can be found in appendix 1 of this report.

3.2 Cultural and Natural Assets

- 3.2.1 As noted above, the village of Sproughton contains several listed buildings which cluster around the church and Sproughton Hall, and extend along Lower Street, reflecting the origins and oldest parts of the settlement close to the river. There is also a cluster of historic buildings (albeit undesignated) which contribute to local sense of place around River's Farm and The Rookery. These buildings are associated with former parkland and small-scale pastures along the B1113 when approaching the village from the south.
- 3.2.2 Beyond Sproughton village and just beyond the Parish there are further listed buildings associated with a dispersed pattern of historic farms including Red House and Grindle Farm.
- 3.2.3 The Historic Landscape Characterisation illustrated on Figure 2, shows that much of the enclosure pattern within the Parish comprises pre 18th century enclosures which are relatively intact. In only two areas the field patterns have been altered and enlarged post 1950's namely along the northern edge of the Parish and in the area around the A1071. Immediately adjacent to the Parish is the Registered Park and Garden of Chantry Park.
- 3.2.4 Other discernible historical land use patterns and features include meadows along the valley floor and small pastures along streamlines which extend from natural springs around the 35m contour. There are also areas of former parkland associated with Sproughton Manor, Abbey Oaks, and The Rookery. Of note are the mature oaks in grassland associated with the former parkland of Abbey Oaks, boundary oaks in hedgerows north of Sproughton Road and mature oaks in the land adjacent to Church Meadows.
- 3.2.5 There are also several narrow rural lanes which have become abandoned due to changes in the road network and therefore still retain their rural character e.g. The Grindle⁵, Burtsall Lane and Church Lane. These lanes have an incised character in places and are occasionally associated with stretches of coppiced hazel stools.

⁵ The Grindle forms the Parish boundary and District boundary between Babergh and Mid Suffolk. It was also the original watercourse for Sproughton village.

- 3.2.6 In terms of natural heritage the greatest concentration of features/habitats occur on the valley sides, associated with natural springs that feed small stream watercourses and waterbodies, including meadow grassland, and woodland associated with former parkland. The more elevated and intensively farmed plateau landscapes have less nature conservation interest although the heavy clay soils in the north of the parish support several ancient woodlands.

3.3 Areas of Open Space

- 3.3.1 The emerging Local Plan defines Areas of Open Space within the Parish – these are illustrated on Figures 4 and 5 and includes The Allotments, Millennium Green (recreation ground) and playing fields to the southwest of the primary school off Church Lane.
- 3.3.2 NPPF (2018) 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.
- 3.3.3 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’.*
- 3.3.4 As part of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan the Neighbourhood Plan sub-committee has prepared a Local Green Space Assessment (Feb 2021). This identified areas of open space which qualify against the criteria above for Local Green Space Designation within the Neighbourhood Plan. These are considered in more detail in section 4.6 below).

4: Detailed Analysis

4.1 Introduction

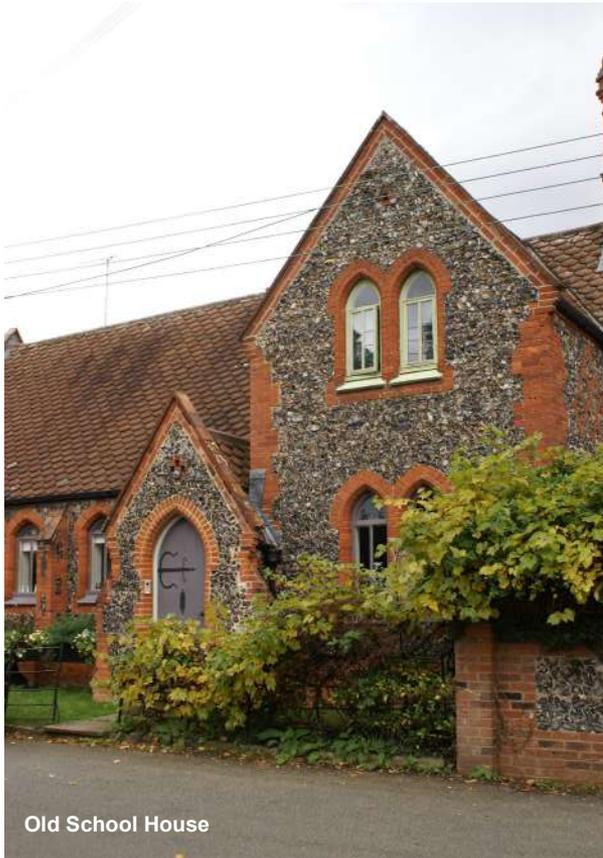
- 4.1.1 This section builds on previous sections of this report and seeks to establish more detailed baseline data and analysis on settlement character and landscape context.
- 4.1.2 Consideration is given to identifying key landmarks and key views in and out of the settlement as well as gateways. It has also considered areas suitable for Local Green Space, important gaps, areas of distinctive character and landscape corridors. The analysis of the Parish is illustrated on Figures 4 and 5.

4.2 Topography and Settlement Pattern

- 4.2.1 The topography of the Parish reflects the subtle topography of Suffolk with land rising to its highest point in the North West of the Parish around Burstall Long Wood c. 51m AOD (refer to Figure 1).
- 4.2.2 In general the settlement sits below the 25m contour on the lower slopes of the Gipping Valley and on the southern side of the river. Land between the 25m and 35m contours is visually significant in wider elevated views and forms a backdrop to the village. Above this and in the wider agricultural plateau landscape the settlement pattern is dispersed comprising individual dwellings scattered along the rural lanes and isolated farms e.g. Burstall Lane.

4.3 Built Landmarks and Landscape Features

- 4.3.1 Key built landmarks which contribute to sense of place and orientation have been identified and are illustrated on Figures 4 and 5. They include the following:
- a) Victorian terraced cottages along Lorraine Way
 - b) Wild Man Public House (Grade II)
 - c) Lower Street (concentration of listed and unlisted buildings which create a distinctive streetscape)
 - d) Sproughton Hall Barn (Grade II)
 - e) Sproughton Hall (Grade II)
 - f) Sproughton Mill (Grade II)
 - g) All Saints Church (Grade II *)
 - h) Old School House
 - i) The Lodge on B1113
 - j) The Rookery



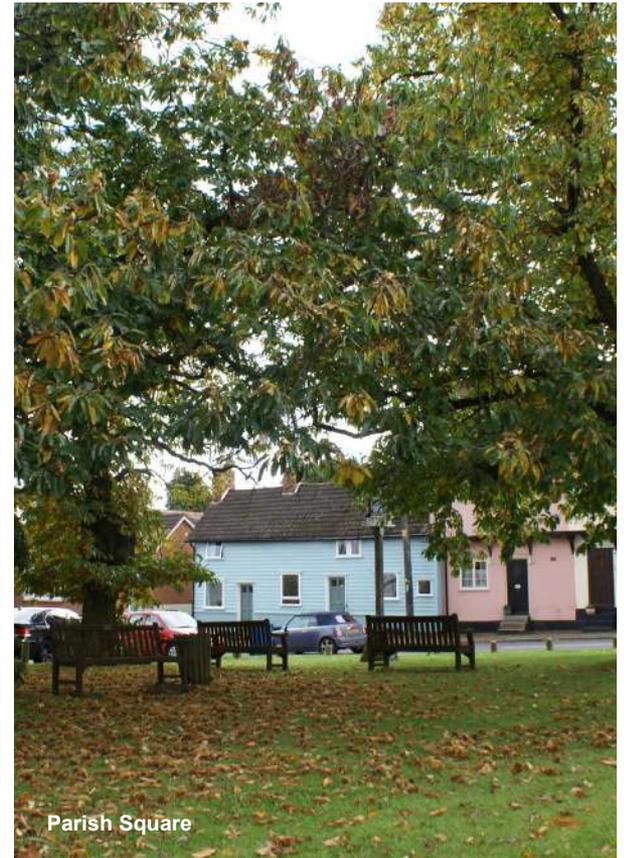
Old School House



All Saint's Church



Sproughton Mill



Parish Square



Farm Buildings – Tithe Barn

Streetscape Character Historic Core



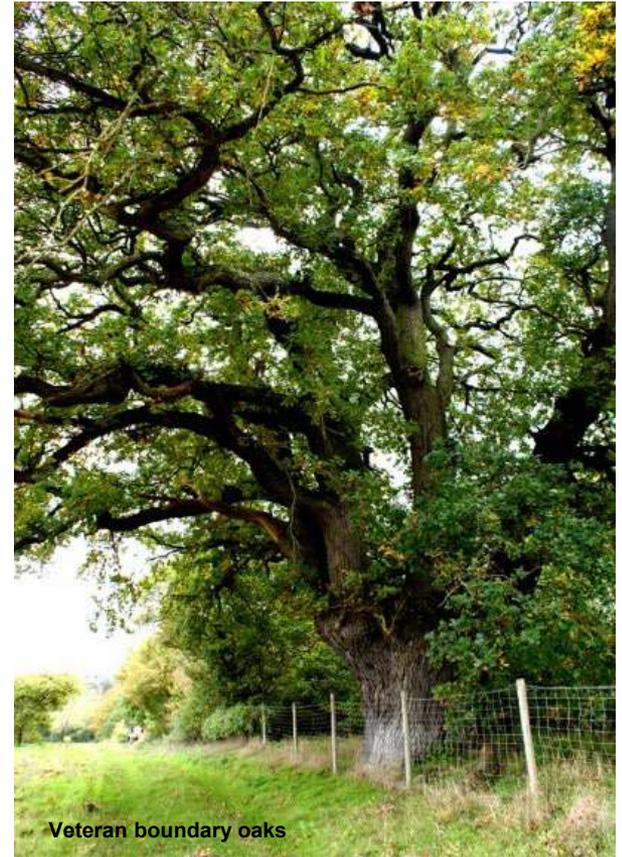
The Grindle



Parkland trees Abbey Oaks



Oak at eastern gateway



Veteran boundary oaks



Horse Chestnut trees – Church Lane

Parish Landscape Features

4.3.2 Several landscape features have also been identified as important elements contributing to local sense of place. These include:

1. Village Green
2. Allotments
3. The Grindle⁶
4. Valley floor meadows and River Gipping Valley Long Distance Path
5. Oak and green at Manor lodge
6. Millennium Park
7. Horse Chestnuts and associated grass verge on Church Lane
8. Hazel Woods
9. The Grove Wood
10. Parkland associated with The Rookery and Sproughton Manor

4.3.3 These built and natural landmark features are important as they provide orientation and reinforce sense of identity.

4.4 Important Views

4.4.1 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. They also help express the relationship between settlement and wider landscape setting and on sense of arrival and gateways.

4.4.2 Important views towards Sproughton village and out of the settlement to the surrounding landscape have been identified during site assessment and are illustrated on Figures 4 and 5.

4.4.3 A number of these views are also illustrated in the photographs below. In views from the public right of way north of Burstall Lane there are elevated views east across the Gipping Valley where the village is seen to nestle down within the valley backed by the slopes associated with Sproughton Manor. Ipswich is seen in the far distance although the white cube of the distribution building on the former Sugar Beet Factory site appears large and imposing. From this elevated footpath there are also open views northeast towards Bramford village and its church tower with Ipswich seen in the far distance.

4.4.4 Similarly, there are views from elevated land above Hallfield Cottage looking west and southwest across the Gipping Valley. The roofs of houses within Sproughton village are visible nestled amongst the trees on the valley floor and lower valley sides. Open pasture and arable fields extend up the wider valley sides providing a rural backdrop to the village along with substantial areas of woodland reflecting the concentration of mature trees in former parkland character and along stream valleys.

⁶ Whilst this feature lies on the Parish boundary it nonetheless contributes to the character of the Parish and is worthy of mention.



View looking west from footpath above Hallfield Cottage



View looking east from Birstall Lane footpath



View looking northeast across Bramford with church seen in the mid ground and with Ipswich beyond

Views Across Gipping Valley

Views across Chantry Vale

- 4.4.5 There are also distinctive views from Chantry Vale. Whilst these do not relate so closely to the village of Sproughton, (due to its position within the valley and the presence of the A14 which passes through the valley on an embankment), they are particularly valuable in providing a setting and approach to Ipswich. Here there are elevated views across the vale as one approaches Ipswich along the Hadleigh Road. The historic cluster of red brick buildings associated with Red House Farm form a focal point within the undulating valley sides and the pattern of mature trees and hedgerows gives a mature and established character. There are views to Ipswich, but these appear distant. New development on elevated slopes above the Vale appear on the skyline. These views are reflected in the photo panel below.

4.5 Approaches and Gateways

- 4.5.1 The approaches and gateways into Sproughton village occur along the main roads. There are four main approach routes into Sproughton. The first is from the north along Lorraine Way, the second from the west along Burstall Lane, the third from the east along Sproughton Road and the fourth from the south along the B1113. It is notable that where there are views across rural farmland or valley pastures as well as the presence of landmark buildings, these add to the distinctiveness of each approach. The main approaches are described below, and a number illustrated on the photo panel below.

Northern Approach

- 4.5.2 When approaching from the north along Lorraine Way the valley setting of Sproughton is evident as a result of the valley floor pastures to the east set within rising land of the valley sides to the east and west. Development along the road is intermittent and rural in character. Through gaps in the hedgerow there are views across the meadows to the church tower and historic buildings of the Tithe Barn and Sproughton Hall which form a distinctive group. The approach is rural in character and a sense of arrival is not reached until just beyond the Old Police House where the Wild Man pub and village green are reached at the staggered crossroad junction.

Western Approach

- 4.5.3 The approach from the west along Burstall lane is also rural, defined by the narrowness of the lane, flanked by a grass embankment and mature trees/woodland. The road extends down the valley sides, affording views across arable farmland to the edge of the village with the wooded slopes of parkland associated with Sproughton Manor forming a backdrop. To the south the white mass of the warehouse on the former sugar beet factory site is visible against the sky. Development first occurs to the south of the road, but it is set back and not immediately evident. The gateway occurs at the junction with Ransome Close prior to reaching the Wild Man Pub and T- junction with the B1113.



View looking east across Red House from the Hadleigh Road



View looking west across Red House from the Hadleigh Road

Views across Chantry Vale



Views towards The Lodge on B1113



Views from Loraine Way looking towards village historic core – this view reinforces the rural character of Sproughton and builds anticipation on approaching the village



Views east from Burstall Lane towards the wooded and open farmed slopes associated with Sproughton Manor. These slopes separate Sproughton from Ipswich beyond and form a backdrop to the village

Views on Approaching Village

Southern Approach

- 4.5.4 When approaching from the south the road descends from the plateau landscape into the Gipping Valley. The sinuous character of the road and mature hedgerows give it a rural character. The first view of built form is towards the former redbrick farm buildings at Rivers Court which are now used for employment but are nestled within the folds of a pastoral tributary valley and associated with mature oak trees. Beyond this there are a couple of cottages and brick walling followed by glimpsed views towards The Rookery (a large house set within grounds used for employment). The nature of the built form and the mature established vegetation and pastures give rise to a strongly rural character and a sense that the village of Sproughton has not yet been reached. This is further reinforced by the Gatehouse building which formed the historic entrance to Abbey Oaks. Beyond this the true gateway into the village is reached with development occurring on both sides of the road.

Eastern Approach

- 4.5.5 From the east the approach is from within the valley floor. Vegetation along the road and along the river screens views into the village. On reaching Lower Street the road bends sharply to the left. The small green and mature oak at the entrance to Sproughton Lodge is distinctive. Sproughton bridge marks the gateway into the settlement with views opening up to the church and Lower Street beyond.

4.6 Important Open Space

- 4.6.1 Areas of Designated Open Space defined within the emerging Local Plan include the allotments, Millennium Green, and recreation ground and playing fields to the west of the school. A more detailed Local Green Space assessment has also been undertaken by the Neighbourhood Plan Sub-Committee. Open spaces were divided into three groups as follows:

Green Spaces:

- a. Millennium Green
- b. Parish Square
- c. Sproughton Court
- d. Glebe Close
- e. Gipping Way
- f. Church Meadow
- g. Oak triangle by Manor Lodge
- h. Allotments
- i. Ransome Close
- j. All Saints Churchyard

Recreational Sports Facilities:

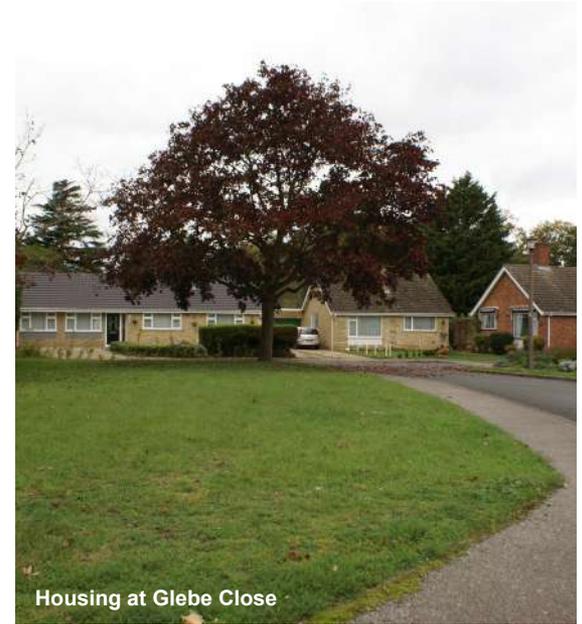
- a. Playing fields
- b. Children's Play Area at Sproughton playing fields
- c. Outdoor Gym at Sproughton playing fields
- d. Tennis Courts at Sproughton playing fields
- e. Bowling Green at Sproughton playing fields



Housing at Sproughton Court



Housing at Meadow Close



Housing at Glebe Close



Housing on Gipping Way

Open Spaces - Recent Housing

Wooded Areas:

- a. Chantry Cut Island
- b. The Grove Wood
- c. Oak Pit

4.6.2 All of these areas of open space were considered suitable for Local Green Space designation. It is notable that most green spaces are associated with 20th century housing estates and they are often characterised by open featureless areas of grass. There is scope for these areas of open space to be enhanced in terms of their biodiversity value through sowing of wildflowers and tree planting. This could also be a project with which the local community could be actively involved, achieving benefits for wildlife as well as enhancing local distinctiveness.

4.7 Important Gaps

4.7.1 An important characteristic of Sproughton Parish is its perceived rural character and separation from Ipswich and Bramford. The presence and character of rural lanes in and around the village is a valued characteristic which reinforces these perceptions and offers quiet recreational routes for residents to easily connect to the wider landscape. Examples of rural lanes include The Grindle and Church Lane (which was severed by the A14 - although a pedestrian link exists as an underpass).

4.7.2 Sproughton lies in relatively close proximity to Bramford which in recent years has expanded to the south. Further development to the south of Bramford coupled with proposals to extend development to the northwest of Sproughton will result in a narrowing of the gap to c. 500m between these two villages. The open meadow landscape along the River Gipping and rural character of Loraine Way is of critical importance in helping to retain a sense of separation. Similarly, the rural character of Sproughton Road between Sproughton Bridge and the roundabout to the A14 helps to reinforce a sense of separation between the village and Ipswich – the latter having extended over recent decades into the northeast of the parish. In both instances the open rural character of the rising land associated with Sproughton Manor also reinforces this sense of separation as it defines the valley and provides a rural context and backdrop to the village. It therefore physically, visually, and perceptually separates the village from Ipswich. Collectively retaining these areas (valley sides, valley floor and road network, as open and rural in character is therefore important, if Sproughton's individual identity is to be conserved. The area where an open gap is important to retain a sense of separation is illustrated on Figure 4. Incremental development which substantially reduces or undermines this gap, blocks important views to the surrounding landscape or intensifies urban character should be avoided.

4.8.1 Areas of Distinct Character and Landscape Corridors

4.8.1 The Babergh Adopted Local Plan defines Special Landscape Areas and included the whole of Sproughton Parish within the designation.

- 4.8.2 Policy CR04 of the local plan states that: ‘Development proposals in Special Landscape Areas will only be permitted where they:
- maintain or enhance the special landscape qualities of the area, identified in the relevant landscape appraisal; and
 - are designed and sited to harmonise with the landscape setting.’
- 4.8.3 However, the emerging Local Plan no longer supports the Special Landscape Area designation, instead it acknowledges that all landscapes have characteristics which are worthy of recognition and conservation. This detailed assessment has however identified areas which impart a strong sense of place and have a particular value within the context of the parish for reasons of built heritage features which cluster together, associated natural heritage features and landscapes which contribute to setting. Two areas have been identified and mapped on figures 4 and 5 as Areas of Distinct Character namely Sproughton Historic Village Core and Sproughton Manor Parkland.
- 4.8.4 Furthermore, the spring fed stream valleys which occur on the valley sides as well as the main Gipping Valley floor, form intact corridors which have a high cultural, ecological and recreation value. Four landscape corridors have been identified and include The Grindle, The Gipping Valley Floor, Abbey Oaks, and The Rookery. These are also mapped on figures 4 and 5.

5: Assessment of Local Areas

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 In 2018 a Settlement Sensitivity Assessment⁷ was undertaken which included Sproughton as part of an assessment of the fringes of Ipswich. Although the whole of the Parish was not assessed the study identified several sensitivities in relation to the landscape which surrounds the existing settlement. It highlighted:

- the visual sensitivity of the open valley slopes
- the importance of distinctive parkland character to the southwestern fringes of the village
- the importance of the meadowlands on the valley floor coupled with heritage assets influencing local identity when approaching from the north.

5.1.2 Low lying land to the south of Sproughton and areas which are more wooded were considered to have greatest capacity to accommodate development.

5.1.3 As part of this detailed assessment for the neighbourhood Plan, the previous Settlement Sensitivity Assessment has been reviewed and built upon, looking in more detail at the village and its setting and drawing on all baseline data set out in this report. The assessment is from a landscape perspective - it does not take account of other issues or constraints which will also affect an area's ability to accommodate housing/employment development. It adopts similar assessment areas to the settlement fringe study, dividing the landscape surrounding the village into three areas and considering the land east of the A14, which is subject to development proposals associated with Red House and Chantry Vale (and including land at Hermitage Farm). Land in the southwest and west of the Parish has not been assessed as it is unlikely to suffer the same development pressures. On this basis four Local Landscape Areas have been assessed and are defined on Figure 1.

5.1.4 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*'. 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.

⁷ Settlement Sensitivity Assessment Volume 1: Landscape Fringes of Ipswich (Babergh, Mid Suffolk, Suffolk Coastal District Councils, and Ipswich Borough Council) July 2018

5.2 Local Landscape Areas Sensitivity Assessment Tables

Local Area 1: Burstall Lane

This area includes open valley slopes between The Grindle and Burstall Lane, existing development on the edge of Sproughton including Ransome Close and Sproughton Close and woodland and pasture fields to the west of this.

Relevant Planning Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SHELLA site SS1085 • SHELAA site SS0223, Local Plan allocation LA0116 and planning application DC/19/00567 • Planning application DC/20/04221
Physical Character	Rolling Valley Farmland landscape type comprising valley sides which are gently undulating as a result of small spring fed streams that flow into the River Gipping. Within the stream valley in the north of this area, there are smaller scale pasture fields defined by mature hedges and oaks. On the wider open slopes arable land use predominates. Contours rise from about 10m AOD along the B1113/Lorraine Way to around 35m AOD. Woodland is found on the mid and upper slopes creating a wooded skyline and reinforcing the valley context/containing development. The area has a rural feel.
Existing Settlement Edge	Wild Man pub sits on the edge of the village, enclosed to the west and north by allotments which soften the interface with the wider countryside. Development along Burstall Lane occurs on the lower slopes, close to the pub, while 20 th century housing estates occur at Ransome Close and Sproughton Court. The latter comprises 3 storey buildings which are uncharacteristic of the village. To the west of the development the rising valley slopes are heavily wooded.
Views and Visibility	From elevated points on the Burstall Lane and public rights of way mid slopes, there are long views over the valley and village towards Bramford, and to Ipswich. In these views Sproughton village is seen sitting on the lower slopes of the valley and is framed by rising land associated with Sproughton Manor to the north. In certain light conditions the large warehouse on the former Sugar Beet Factory site is evident on the skyline beyond the village. The descent into the village, along Burstall Lane is distinctive, the narrow width, incised character and mature trees give it a rural feel.
Designation/Condition	<p>This area has seen some loss of structure due to agricultural improvement and loss of small-scale enclosures. This has resulted in more open arable fields on the mid and lower slopes outside of the small stream valleys/undulations. The caravan storage along Lorraine Way is not well screened.</p> <p>Local features of interest and value include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The allotments (designated open space), • Listed farmhouse at Grindle Farm, associated pre 18th enclosure pattern, historic lane (The Grindle) and small stream valley pastures. • Public rights of way connect Burstall Lane with The Grindle and wider footpath network • Wild Man Pub listed building and local landmark

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TPO group on the south side of Burstall Lane
Perceptual Qualities	This landscape has an open character due to arable farmland which allows views across the Gipping Valley. Woodland on the mid and upper slopes provides some visual containment and the small-scale pastoral character of the spring valley has a strong time depth and scenic qualities. The area has a rural feel despite views to Ipswich in the distance.
Function	This landscape provides an open, rural backdrop to the village. The pastures and woodland within the stream valley are particularly valued in terms of their contribution to carbon capture, water quality, habitat networks and recreation.
Sensitivity/Capacity	<p>The sensitivity of this area lies in its pronounced valley slopes which are open and highly visible. Development which extends up the valley slopes above the 20m contour would be more visually prominent and would alter the perception of the village form siting within the valley. Land below the 20m contour, and closest to the existing urban edge, would be least sensitive. Development here would nevertheless impact on the experience of approaching the village from the north and would need to be carefully designed particularly in relation to access arrangements, to reinforce a positive sense of arrival into the village. Substantial structural planting would be required to create a soft western edge to any new development with the aim of replicating the character of the wooded slopes south of Burstall Lane. Development should be kept back and away from the spring valley which has an intact character and is valued for its scenic qualities and function as a habitat and recreation corridor.</p> <p>Development of the small fields west of Sproughton and Ransome Close could be accommodated without significant visual effect, although access into this area off Burstall Lane would need to be carefully designed to ensure an appropriate gateway. Development in this area provides opportunities to improve the permeability and connectivity between existing housing and providing a footpath link between Burstall Lane and the A1113.</p>
Environmental Opportunities	<p>Opportunities for environmental enhancement in this area include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinstatement of field boundary vegetation on the mid slopes, whilst retaining elevated views from public rights of way. • Improve the screening of the caravan storage site. • Reinstatement of the hedgerow along Burstall Lane and avoid development which will fragment its verges or have an urbanising influence • Avoid linear development onto higher slopes, and creation of multiple new access points • Improve footpath connections between Burstall Lane and B1113 to the south • Enhance the habitat network and recreation route along The Grindle and extend access across the B1113 to connect with footpath network along the River Gipping.

Local Area 2: Abbey Oaks to The Grove

This area includes the wooded and parkland landscapes associated with Abbey Oaks and The Rookery which lie to the south of Sproughton Village. It also includes the school playing fields, Grove Wood, and recent development at Church Meadows.

Relevant Planning Sites	SHELAA sites SS0740, SS0224 and SS0725 Land identified in Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites (southern fringe development)
Physical Character	Rolling Valley Farmlands landscape comprising valley side, with spring fed stream valley which create local undulations and have historically been part of parkland landscapes and wood pasture. This is a well wooded landscape with notable veteran trees and historic buildings. Topography ranges from c. 10m to c. 35-40m AOD.
Existing Settlement Edge	The existing settlement edge is well wooded and not visually evident from the wider landscape due to mature trees and topography. Settlement pattern in this landscape is distinct from the wider village in that it comprises larger scale properties set in grounds and farm buildings which are loosely arranged. It also includes a small area of linear development along West View Abbey Oaks which feels remote from the main village. Buildings along the B1113, coupled with mature trees and pasture create a distinctive character and approach to Sproughton.
Views and Visibility	Views into this area are not easily experienced owing to screening by wooded and limited public access. Trees and woodland constrain views from the B1113 on approaching the settlement and provide a context for the distinctive buildings such as vernacular farm buildings at Rivers Court, The Rookery, and the gatehouse. Views from the east are towards The Rookery with vistas to the main house sitting within a remnant parkland context with a wooded backdrop. Much of this area of landscape is highly visible when viewed from the opposite side of the River Gipping above Sproughton Road. From here the concentration of woodland forms a backdrop to the village as do the more open farmed slopes adjacent to the A14 especially between the 15m and 35m contours.
Designation/Condition	This area has a substantial stock of mature trees as belts and as specimens within grassland, the majority of which are covered by TPOs. Spring fed streams create local undulations and areas of wet pasture. Water bodies associated with areas of former designed landscape are common features. There is a public right of way along the driveway leading to Bungalow Farm and onto the plateau farmland beyond. Listed buildings include Prynck's Lodge, and there are also unlisted buildings which add to local distinctiveness such as the gatehouse serving the large house at Abbey Oaks. The prevailing parkland character of grassland and trees is relatively intact and in good condition. There is evidence of some lack of woodland, hedgerow, and pasture management especially to the east of the B1113. There is also a lack of new tree and woodland planting to retain parkland character in the longer term.

	The parkland associated with The Rookery and cluster of historic buildings around the B1113 have been identified as an Area of Distinctive Quality in this assessment.
Perceptual Qualities	Distinctive heavily wooded and historic feel, creating an inward looking and intimate landscape.
Function	Provides wooded setting to the west and south side of the village. Roadside trees create containment along both the Burstall Lane and the B1113 southern approach. The spring fed streams, along with areas of pasture and woodland provide important wildlife corridors as well as continuing to carbon capture, water quality and habitat networks.
Sensitivity/Capacity	<p>The sensitivity of this area lies in its contribution to the wooded 'parkland' character on the western and southern edge of Sproughton, its tree stock and ecological value, and its role in providing a distinctive approach to Sproughton village.</p> <p>This area is valuable for its parkland character which conveys a sense of heritage and contributes to local distinctiveness forming a memorable approach and gateway to the settlement. The land adjacent to the B1113 and to the west is also relatively elevated and visually sensitive, particularly in views from above Sproughton Road. Nevertheless, the high concentration of tree cover in areas below 20-25m AOD makes areas adjacent to the village edge, less visually sensitive.</p> <p>There are opportunities for small scale development and expansion of the existing urban edge in areas such as west of Church Meadow and between Grove Wood and The Rookery. Such development would need to remain close to the existing urban edge and on the lower slopes and should reflect local patterns of development and local vernacular. New development should seek to strengthen the parkland landscape and adjacent small-scale pastures east of The Rookery. There is also an opportunity to provide a vehicular and pedestrian link through Church Meadows to the B1113 between The Rookery and Grove Wood. If a new access is provided off the B1113 care should be taken to keep it close to the existing settlement edge, avoiding undermining the distinct qualities of vernacular buildings on the approach to the village and avoiding pushing the gateway to the village out to beyond Rivers Court.</p>
Environmental Opportunities	<p>Opportunities for environmental enhancement in this area include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening of parkland character, especially east of the B1113, through improved management of pastures, hedgerows, and veteran trees. • Improved management of Hazel Woods and increased access (possible use as a forest school) • Creation of new recreational route connecting Church Lane with the B1113 and the public right of way which leads to Bungalow Farm.

Local Area 3: Gipping Valley Floor and Sproughton Manor

This area includes most of the existing village including the historic core centred around the church and hall and distinctive streetscape of Lower Street as well as the notable buildings of Wild Man pub, the Victorian terrace along the B1113 and more recent development along the river and Church Lane.

Relevant Planning Sites	SHELAA site SS0711, allocated site LA116 and Planning Application DC/18/02010 and DC/18/02412 (dismissed at appeal). SHELLA site SS0775, SS1177 and SS0206
Physical Character	Gently rolling lower valley sides and valley bottom meadowlands. Topography ranges from 5m AOD on the valley floor to 27m AOD on the eastern valley sides.
Existing Settlement Edge	<p>The village has extended up to the River Gipping along its eastern side and is well vegetated. On the northern edge of the village the built edge is more broken comprising historic buildings and small-scale pastures/grounds to Sproughton Hall. The most abrupt edges are found along Gipping Way in the southeast, but this edge of the village lies close to the road embankments of the A14 and is not easily perceived from the wider landscape.</p> <p>Development associated with the Anglian Water site off Sproughton Road is visually concealed from the surrounding landscape due to vegetation cover and topography. It remains visually and perceptually separate from the village.</p>
Views and Visibility	<p>Views along the river are intimate and scenic. Close to the river crossing, views focus on the built form of the old mill, the church, and the historic thatched barns at Sproughton Hall. The meadows (and paddocks) stretching north from the village edge are more open and are perceived as a setting to the historic farmstead at Sproughton Hall and as part of the approach to the settlement from the north.</p> <p>The church tower acts as a local landmark from the wider landscape to the north and east and within the village streetscapes.</p>
Designation/Condition	<p>This area contains several features of interest including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footpath along the eastern bank of the River Gipping provides recreation opportunities in association with open space at Millennium Green. • Remnant historic parkland associated with Sproughton Manor on rising valley sides to northeast, containing numerous veteran trees. • High concentration of listed buildings, several which sit close to the edge of the village and are associated with the valley floor meadows. • Cluster of historic buildings, distinctive streetscape along Lower Street and Church lane, Wild Man Pub and immediately associated valley floor pastures which have been identified as an area of distinctive character in this assessment. <p>The river meadows provide a physical and visual separation between Sproughton and Bramford to the north. The landscape is in generally reasonably good condition, but equine land use dominates the meadows north of Sproughton and Sproughton Road as it approaches the A14 slip roads has a more urban character due to verge management, lighting, and signage.</p>

Perceptual Qualities	Along the valley meadows and within the historic parts of the village there is a strong rural character and tangible time depth. Along the Sroughton Road closer to the A14 and Ipswich this character has diminished in part due to more urban road infrastructure, signage, and lighting but also noise intrusion from the A14 and pylons. Despite its proximity to the A14 the wooded embankments of the A14 help to screen and filter effects along Church Lane.
Function	The river and its meadows provide an undeveloped setting to the northern approaches to the village. The historic core and its associated meadows have been defined as an area of distinctive landscape. This area also performs an important function in providing a sense of separation between Sroughton and Bramford/Ipswich – it has been identified as an important gap. The meadows along the River Gipping provide a landscape corridor valued for its habitat networks and recreational opportunities.
Sensitivity/Capacity	<p>The sensitivity of this area lies in its relatively intact network of small fields along the valley bottom, and value lies in its heritage, scenic quality and role and function.</p> <p>The meadowlands along the valley floor are particularly sensitive where they function as a setting to the historic buildings on the northern edge of the village.</p> <p>To the south of the village, along Church Lane, the low-lying fields are isolated from the wider valley floor by the A14 and are contained on either side by rising land and A14 embankments, and are not easily seen from the wider landscape. Here sensitivity to development is lower. There is some scope for some linear development along Church Lane close to the existing village edge. Development in this location should reflect the edge of village location and comprise buildings which reflect the rural vernacular. Tall buildings and cu- de-sac in depth development, should be avoided. Care should be taken to retain the rural character of Church Lane.</p>
Environmental Opportunities	<p>Opportunities for environmental enhancement in this area include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention and enhancement of the historic open and pastoral setting along northern edge of the village. • Retention and enhancement of views towards the church and listed buildings on the norther edge of the settlement on approaching the village • Avoidance of linear development along Lorraine Way which blocks views into and out of the settlement and undermines the gap between Sroughton and Bramford. • Provision of new river crossings connecting public rights of way and built-up areas with the River Gipping e.g. east of The Grindle and between Broomfield Common and Sroughton Millennium Green • Improved landscape structure to the existing built edge at Gipping Way. • Planting of new specimen street trees to ensure succession of existing street trees and enhancement of existing streets in 20th century housing estates. • Establishment of wildflower grasslands and nature conservation sites on areas of open space within cul-de-sac housing areas.

Local Area 4: Chantry Vale and Hermitage Farm

Relevant Planning Sites	SHELAA site SS0299, Local Plan allocation LA014 and Planning Application DC/20/04177 (under construction) SHELAA site SS0954, SS0191, and SS1024, Local Plan allocation LA013 SHELLA site SS1124
Physical Character	Valley side and valley floor landscapes ranging from c. 10m AOD to c. 30m AOD to the east of the A14 and slightly higher plateau landscape c. 40m AOD to the west at Hermitage Farm. There is a notable break in slope around the 35m contour below which the valley sides are steeper. The valley sides are predominately arable in medium scale fields, whereas on the plateau field sizes are larger. As with the valley side landscape around Sproughton village this area is also characterised by the presence of natural spring fed streams which have influenced the location of Red House Farm.
Existing Settlement Edge	<p>From this landscape there are distant views across the Gipping Valley towards Ipswich on the opposite valley sides. South of the Gipping the existing urban edge of Ipswich is well vegetated or set back on higher land beyond the valley. However, new development associated with Worsely Grange to the south of the A1071 is visible on the skyline. The High Bay Distribution Unit on the valley floor appears out of scale with the landscape, but its light colour and simple form mean it many lighting conditions, it does not stand out against the sky. This landscape offers one of the most attractive approaches to Ipswich along the Hadleigh Road.</p> <p>Development west of the A14 comprises a hotel which is located on the upper slopes of the valley and partially screened by vegetation. South of Hermitage Farm there are a line of pylons.</p>
Views and Visibility	<p>The valley side topography makes much of this area highly visible. The open agricultural southern valley slopes in the vicinity of The Red House, between the A14 and existing urban edge of Ipswich are visually prominent giving rise to a rural context to Ipswich and the River Gipping as well as reinforcing perceptions that this section of the Gipping Valley is separate from Ipswich, the urban edge of which lies beyond.</p> <p>West of the A14 the land around Hermitage Farm forms part of a ridge of higher plateau farmland. The edges of this landscape north of the A1071 are visually sensitive when viewed from the north and from the Belstead Brook to the south.</p>
Designation/Condition	The buildings at Red House Farm are listed and this landscape is largely intact comprising pre 18 th century enclosures. The topographic variation across the valley sides coupled with historic character and rural land uses gives rise to a distinctive sense of place which has a coherence and physical intactness. Although the A14 cuts through this area it is in cutting and its margins are well vegetated such that it does not visually intrude, although it is audible. Fragmentation occurs at its margins as a result of infrastructure and new housing development which has an urbanising influence.
Perceptual Qualities	Some noise intrusion from the A14 and some urbanisation through signage, linear development, A14 junctions, pylons, and road infrastructure. Away from these influences there is a sense of tranquillity and strong sense of place. The Hadleigh Road has been noted as 'one of the most attractive approaches into Ipswich'.

Function	Important rural setting to Ipswich suburbs. Important physical and perceptual gap between the valley landscape and Ipswich. Important habitat network along river. Gipping Way Long Distance Route.
Sensitivity/Capacity	<p>The valley sides around The Red House have a high sensitivity (despite being east of the A14 and in close proximity to the existing urban edge of Ipswich) due to their intact rural character, setting to historic buildings at Red House, visual connectivity to the wider landscape to the west and high visibility. The proximity of this area of countryside, close to Ipswich is in easy reach of the local population and forms valued access to natural greenspace as well as a distinctive and high-quality approach to Ipswich. This landscape has little to no capacity for further development without loss of these qualities. Furthermore, farmland immediately surrounding Red House Farm is covenanted, restricting its use other than as agricultural land.</p> <p>Land on the plateau around Heritage Farm and junction of the A1071 and B1113 has some scope for employment development associated with road infrastructure although it is separated from Ipswich by the A14 and isolated from other settlement within the Parish. The relatively flat topography would in combination with new woodland planting help to mitigate new development so long as it was set back away from the upper valley slopes.</p>
Environmental Opportunities	<p>Opportunities for landscape enhancement of the river valley reinforcing its role as a recreational and ecological corridor linking along the River Gipping and under the A14 to connect with steam valleys associated with Sproughton.</p> <p>There is scope for the retention of the rural valley sides which form the setting to Ipswich with improved wildlife and recreation corridors.</p> <p>New woodland planting on the upper valley slopes and on the plateau around Hermitage Farm would enhance the characteristic wooded skylines and frame the valley, screening existing and new development which is located on the plateau or lip of the valley. Planting on the upper slopes of the valley sides will help to define and emphasise the valley landform and mitigate visual and noise intrusion from the A14 and edge of Ipswich.</p>

6: Summary of Findings

6.1 Special Qualities to Conserve and Enhance

6.1.1 The following special qualities of Sproughton Parish have been identified. Wherever possible, they should be retained and enhanced. Special qualities include:

- Village set on lower valley slopes of the River Gipping with valley floor pastures/meadowlands contributing to sense of place
- Nature conservation interest within the valley including Chantry island Nature Reserve
- Historic buildings in core of the village lie at the edge of the village retaining a close association with the open rural valley floor pastures and river.
- Extensive areas of open arable farming on valley slopes providing a rural setting to Sproughton Village and Ipswich (e.g. Chantry Vale)
- Distinctive farm buildings (e.g. Red House and Grindle Farm) nestled within the folds of undulating valley sides
- Veteran trees and tree groups reflect areas of former parkland adding time depth and structure to the landscape and village streets
- Network of historic routes and narrow lanes, often sunken and flanked by hazel coppice
- Small woodland copses and overlapping lines of vegetation/ancient hedgerows create wooded skylines, reinforce valley context, and create important habitat networks especially when associated with spring fed watercourses
- Collection of historic buildings within the village provide landmarks and distinctive streetscape
- Ecclesiastical Priory connections Abbey oaks

6.2 Changes to Avoid

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

- Housing estates with single housing types which contrast with the organic and eclectic styles and orientation of buildings in the village
- New development which lacks rural streetscape with limited open space, grass verges or distinctive vistas
- Use of close board fencing to define property curtilage where this abuts roads/lanes or the open countryside
- Loss of open valley sides which form a setting to settlement

- Development and land use change which causes fragmentation of wildlife corridors
- Loss of areas of open space within the fabric of the settlement which add to local sense of place and streetscape
- Proliferation of pylons and overhead wires which interrupt views and create visual clutter
- Ad hoc incremental development along rural lanes, including urbanization through street lighting, especially in areas identified as important gaps between settlements
- Development within the setting of important heritage assets which undermines the landscape setting and significance of these features and their contribution to local distinctiveness
- Loss of mature street trees as a result of lack of management and no succession planting

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 should include:

- Protection of landscape corridors and enhancement of biodiversity and recreation opportunity – improved connections
- 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.
- Manage trees and woodland to retain and open up views to All Saints church when approaching the village from the east and north.
- Enhance biodiversity of lane verges through appropriate management in collaboration with landowners and highways
- Retain the pattern of smaller scale pastures along the River Gipping and tributary valleys especially where they provide a transition between built edges and wider farmland.

- Retain and enhance the valley floor pastures along the River Gipping as part of the valued setting to the settlement.

6.3.4 Development guidelines seek to inform new development and include:

- 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 Sproughton and reinforce its small-scale rural character
- Pay particular attention to curtilage treatment and avoid urbanisation of rural lanes or loss of character along village streets.

6.4 Conclusions

- 6.4.1 This assessment has highlighted the special qualities of Sproughton Parish including its historic buildings, distinctive character, and its perceived rural setting despite its proximity to Ipswich. In terms of future housing growth, the sensitivity assessment points to the identification of several smaller housing schemes within the Parish close to the existing built edge of the village, rather than a single large development site. It has also highlighted that larger scale developments, with an urban estate character, risk creating new gateways into the settlement and undermining rural village characteristics.
- 6.4.2 This assessment has also highlighted the importance of land east of the A14 in providing a setting to Ipswich and the Gipping Valley, easily accessible natural greenspace and a rural approach to the town. Any release of land for development should seek to deliver environmental enhancements wherever possible. Opportunities exist to enhance ecological networks particularly along the spring fed stream valleys and River Gipping and to create a wooded skyline to define the rim of the valley.
- 6.4.3 Within the existing urban fabric of Sproughton village there is scope to define areas of open green space and to enhance their ecological value as well as create distinctive streetscapes through the planting of new trees where feasible.

Appendix 1:

Extract from Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment

Appendix 2:

Figures

Figure 1 – Landscape Character Types

Figure 2 – Cultural Heritage

Figure 3 – Natural Heritage

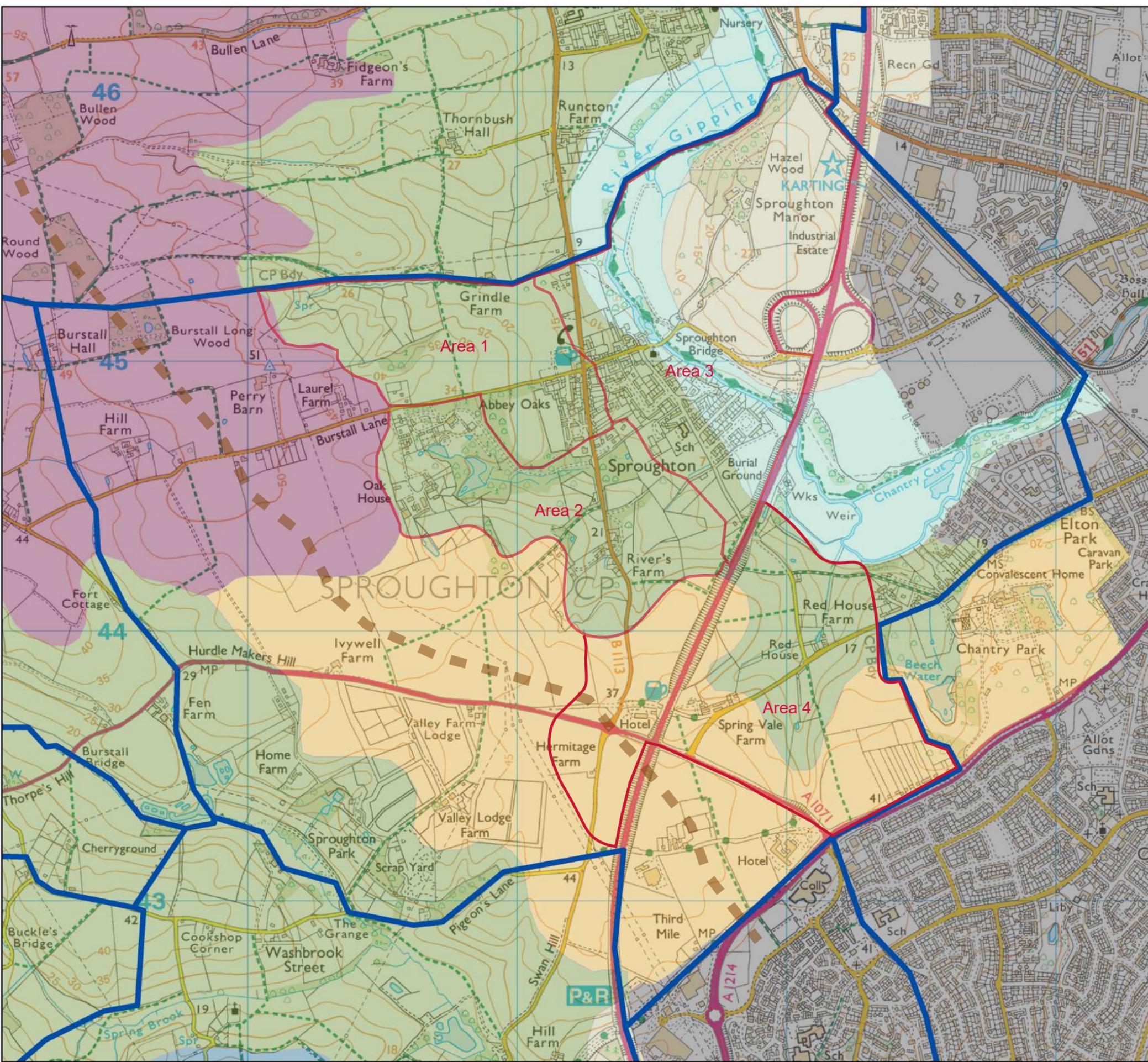
Figure 4 – Analysis North

Figure 5 – Analysis South

Figure 6 – Assessment Areas

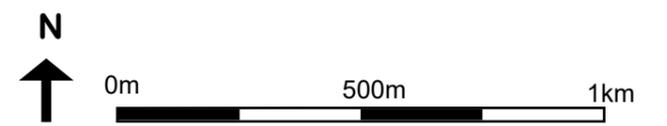
Sproughton Neighbourhood Plan

Figure 1: Landscape Character Types



Key

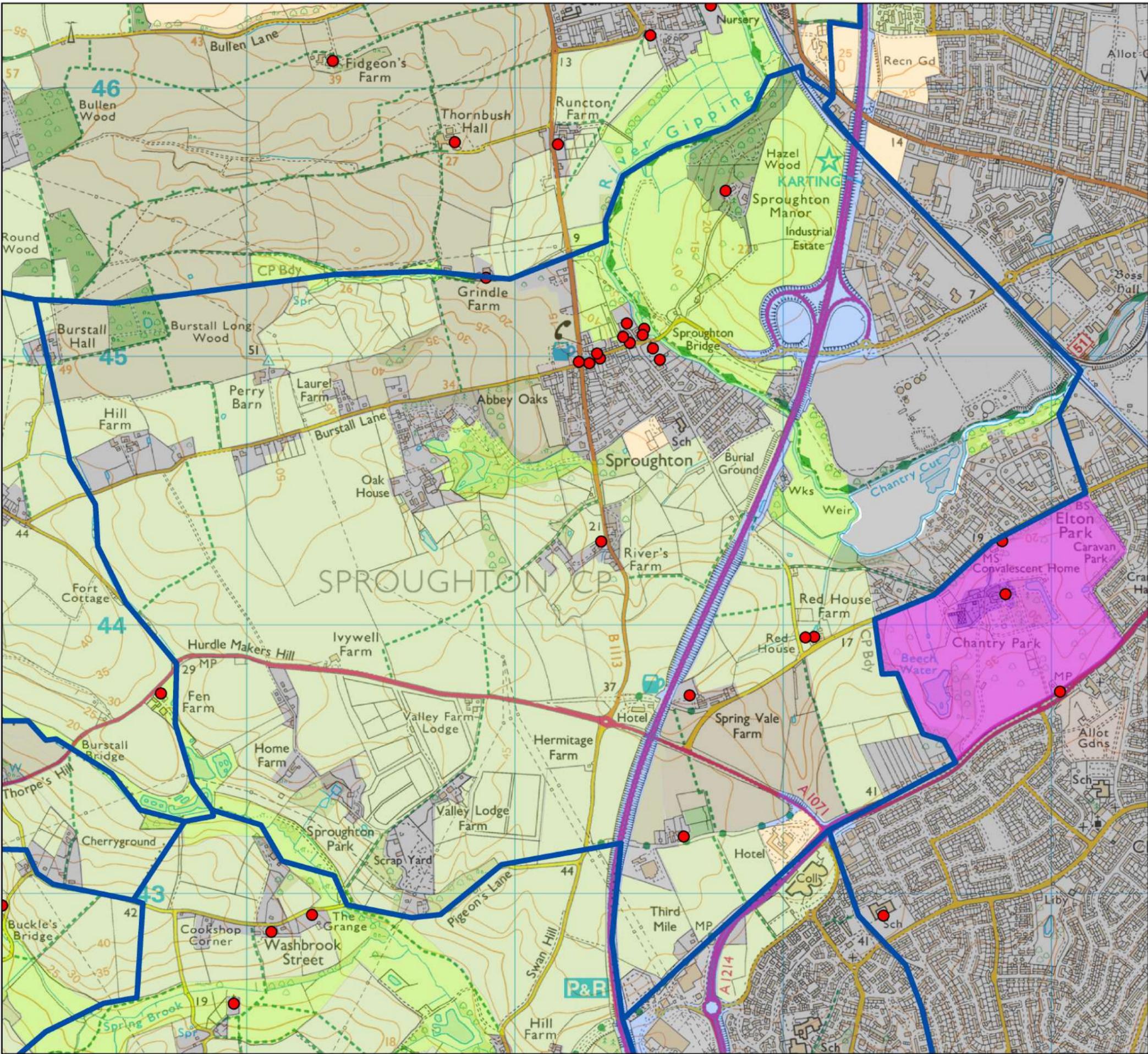
-  Parish Boundaries
-  Rolling Estate Farmlands
-  Valley Meadowlands
-  Rolling Valley Farmlands
-  Plateau Farmlands
-  Ancient Plateau Claylands
-  Urban
-  Visually Significant Ridge separating Gipping Valley from Belstead Brook
-  Local Assessment Areas (refer to section 5 of report)



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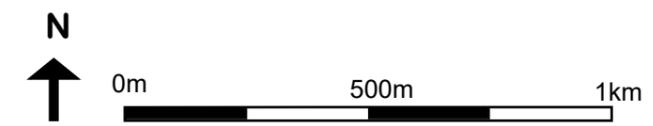
Sproughton Neighbourhood Plan

Figure 2: Cultural Heritage



Key

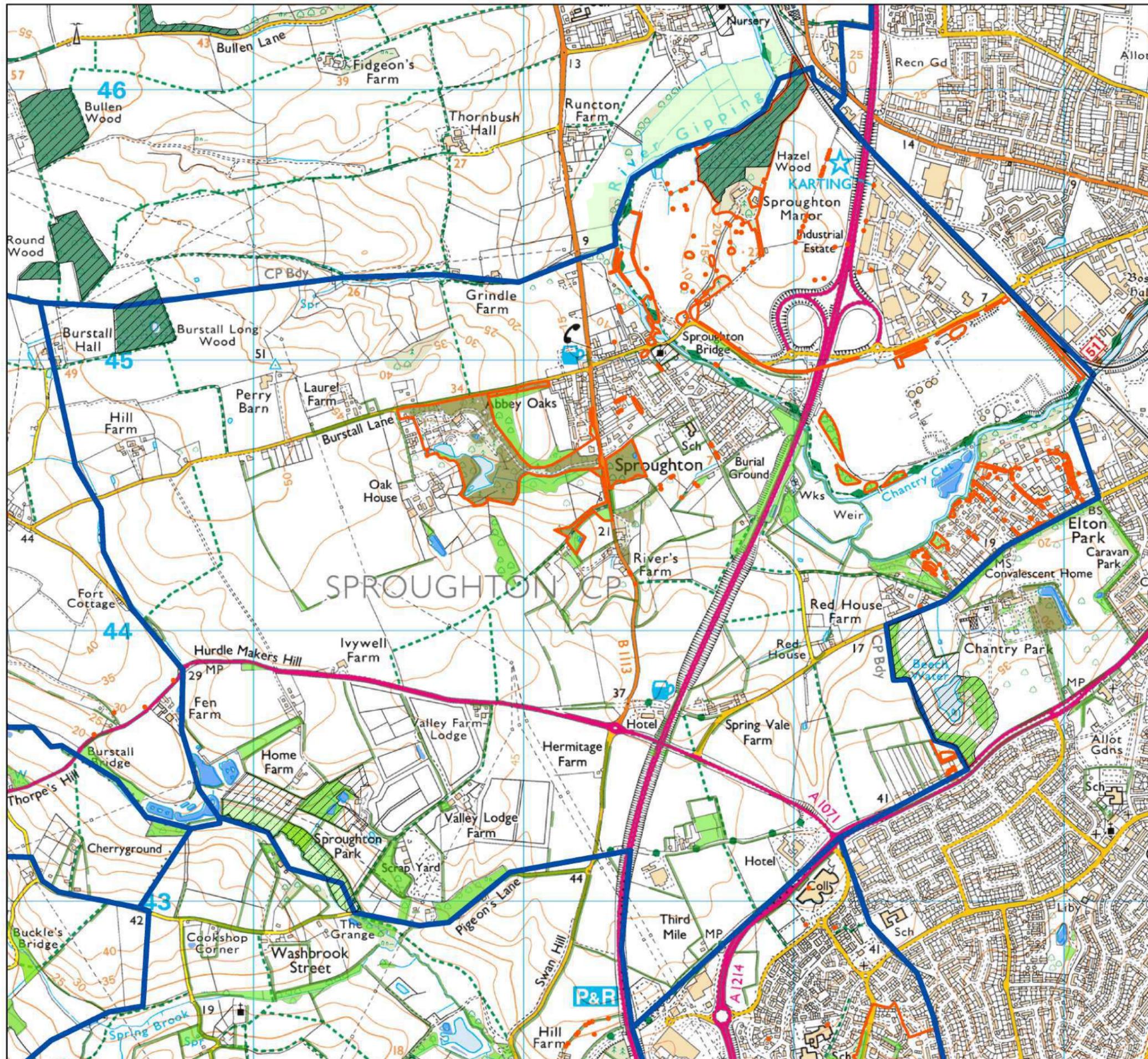
- Parish Boundaries
- Meadow or Managed Wetland
- Post 1950 Agricultural Landscape
- Pre 18th Century Enclosure
- Woodland
- Recreation
- Registered Park and Garden
- Listed Building
- Urban
- Communications



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Sproughton Neighbourhood Plan

Figure 3: Natural Heritage



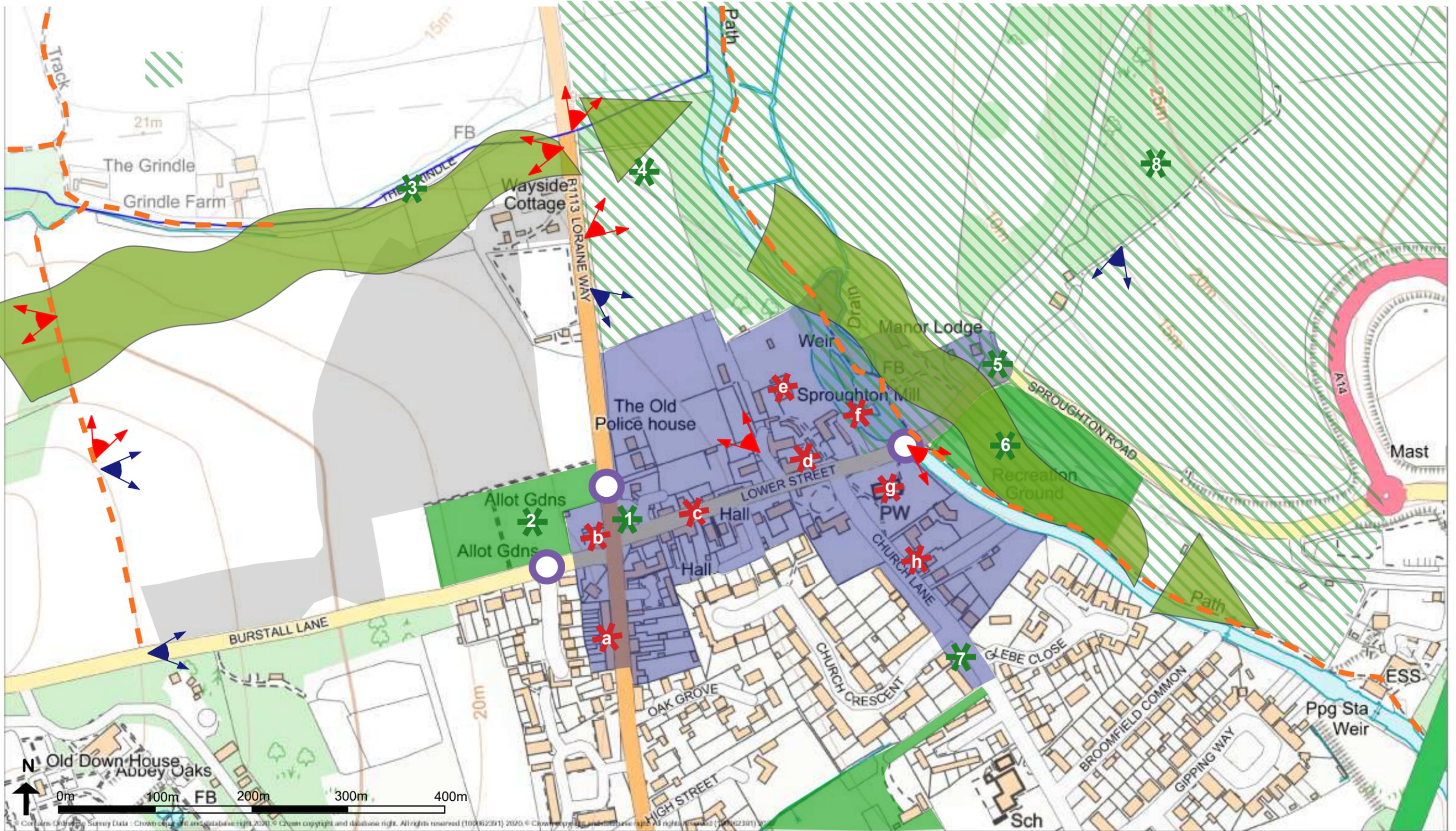
Key

-  Parish Boundaries
-  Ancient Woodland
-  County Wildlife Site
-  Mixed Woodland
-  Deciduous Woodland
-  Tree Preservation Orders
-  Floodplain Grazing
-  Hedgelines
-  Waterbodies
-  Urban



0m 500m 1km

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Key

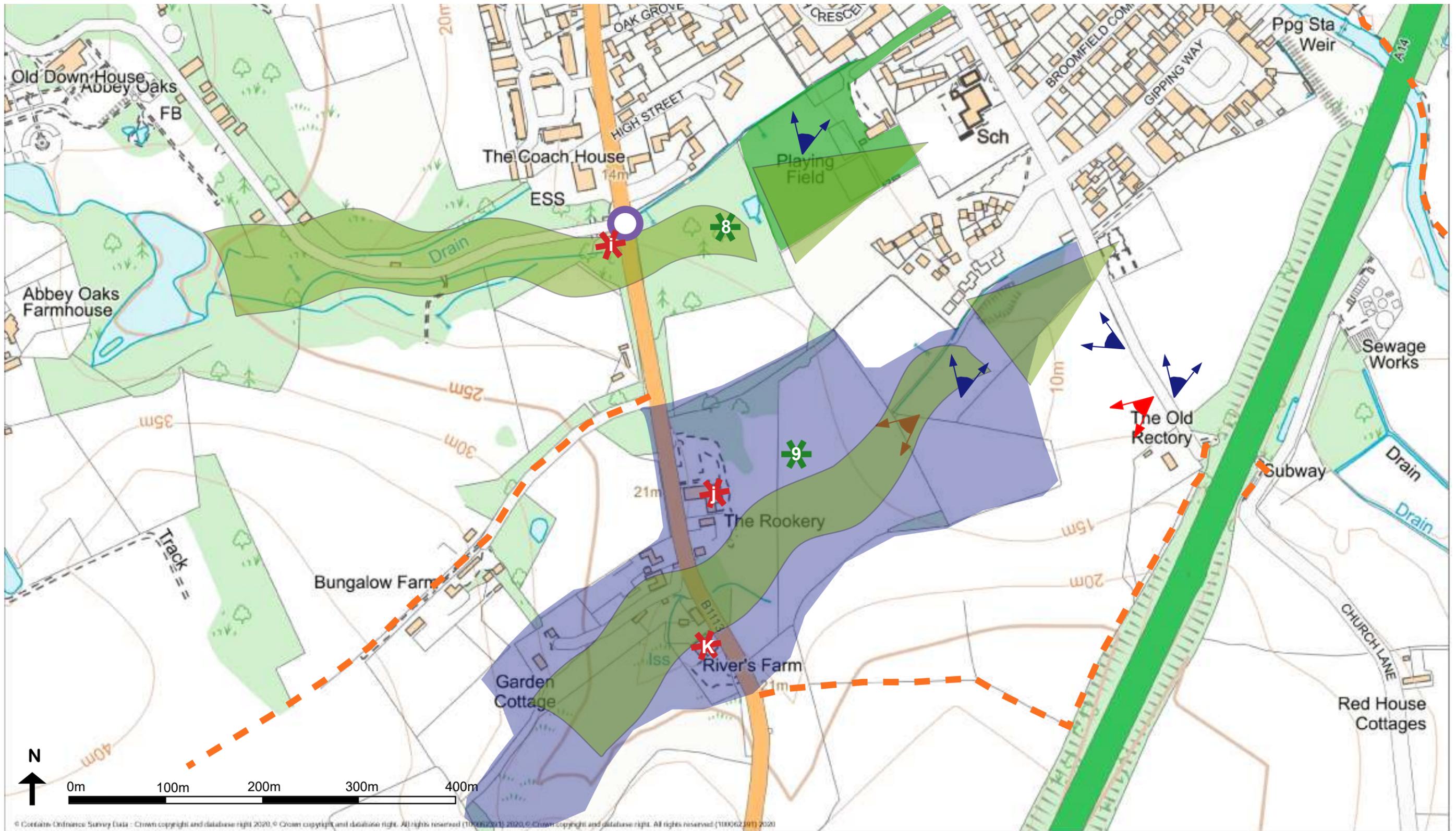
-  Gateway
-  Views Towards the Settlement
-  Views to Wider Landscape
-  Public Rights of Way

-  Designated Open Space
-  Area of Distictive Character
-  Important Gap
-  Important Landscape Corridor

-  Landscape Features
 1. Village Green
 2. Allotments
 3. The Grindle
 4. Valley floor meadows
 5. Oak and Green at Manor Lodge
 6. Millenium Park
 7. Mature trees and grass verge
 8. Hazel Woods
-  Built Landmarks
 - a. Victorian Terrace
 - b. Wild Man Public House
 - c. Lower Street
 - d. Sproughton Hall Barn
 - e. Sproughton Hall
 - f. Sproughton Mill
 - g. All Saints Church
 - h. Old School House

**Sproughton Neighbourhood Plan
Landscape Assessment**

Figure 4 Analysis North



Key

- | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|---|---|---------------------------------|
|  | Gateway |  | Designated Open Space |  | Landscape Features
8. The Grove Wood |  | Built Landmarks
i. The Lodge |
|  | Views Towards the Settlement |  | Area of Distinctive Character |  | 9. Parkland associated with The Rookery | | j. The Rookery |
|  | Views to Wider Landscape |  | Important Landscape Corridor |  | k. Rivers Court (Farm) | | |

Sproughton Neighbourhood Plan
Landscape Assessment

Figure 5 Analysis South