9 Landscape and Character
1. Kelling to Mundesley

The stretch of the north Norfolk coastline is an AONB, the boundary of which skirts around the town of Sheringham and the resorts of Overstrand and Mundesley. The Cromer Ridge, a glacial feature constituting the highest ground in Norfolk, dominates this stretch of the coast and it is recognised as a distinct Landscape Character Area (North Norfolk Local Plan, 1998). This dominant physical feature is formed by a glacial terminal moraine, which rises up to form a line of impressive low cliffs along the coast. The cliff height peaks to 65m around Trimingham. The irregular hummocks present a landform typical of such glacial features. Many of the wooded areas are part of the 18th century parklands, which are associated with established country houses. Areas of heathland are still found throughout this character area with the flowering gorse being a particularly spectacular feature. Much of the heathland has been turned into enclosed farmland. These landscapes have more visual interest than the expansive open arable farmland, which occurs around Mundesley.

Overstrand Cliffs are one of the best examples of unprotected vegetated soft cliffs on the North Sea coast in the most easterly part of the UK. Numerous caravan sites are located on the cliff tops along Cromer ridge. Although the North Norfolk Local Plan (Policy 115) seeks to promote the development of tourism in North Norfolk, the District Council is concerned about the visual impact of existing cliff top caravan sites in the Sheringham to Overstrand coastline.
2. Mundesley to Bacton Green

This area falls within the Cromer Ridge Landscape Character Area but the cliffs become sandier, better drained, vegetated and more stable, and their height decreases to almost half of that at Timmington. The cliffs are fronted by sandstone single beaches. This stretch of coast contains the popular resort of Mundesley, with important tourist accommodation and facilities including a promenade, car parking and beach access areas. The AONB boundary skirts the resort of Mundesley and rejoins the coastline further south.

3. Bacton Green to Winterton Ness (including the Broads)

This coastal stretch falls within the Ferring Levels (or margins) Landscape Character Area, which forms the landscape setting for the Norfolk Broads. The coastal area changes from low-lying cliffs in the north to low-lying flood plain to the south, with the coastline in retreat throughout. Inland, the area is very low-lying, with most of the land being below 10m. The most dominant landscape type is a wide tranquil, pastoral landscape (mainly inland) with long views looking towards a line of sand dunes along the coastline. In the western parts of the valley floor, the landscape takes on fenland characteristics. On drier, rising land around the fenland there are areas of heathland with birch and gorse scrub. These landscapes are of nature conservation and historical significance, and their intricate detail has a high level of visual interest. Marginal coastal farmlands are found along the coastline, usually separated from the sea by a line of sand dunes and a seawall. The northern part of the coastal area is mainly agricultural land with the exception of the village of Happisburgh. The sand dunes are a distinct landscape type, their marram grass sometimes being followed in natural succession by extensive coniferous woodland.

Part of this coastal area falls within the Norfolk Coast AONB. All human development between Happisburgh and Winterton is located landward of the sand dune ridge and is not visible from the beach or sea. Inland, the area between Eccles and Sea Palling has been designated as an Area of High Landscape Value (local landscape designation). It presents a view of flat, open, farmland with isolated settlements, church towers, woodland and dykes, resulting in a peaceful landscape character. The rural areas, excluding the villages of Sea Palling, Leaslangham and Eccles on Sea, are designated as an integral part of the undeveloped coast.

The broad also enjoy a status equivalent to a National Park and shares the same protection as National Parks. The only point where the Broads ‘National Park’ reaches the coast is the section of the coast north of Winterton Ness covering Bramble Hill to Horseby Gap.
The coastline from Hemsby to Great Yarmouth is composed of substantial vegetated dunes, which become the preservation and enhancement of this area is important. Inland from here are the Norfolk Broads, an environmentally sensitive area, large areas of which would be flooded by any breach of defences. The beach morphology changes along this stretch of coastline from a relatively narrow foreshore and backshore to a slightly wider backshore. This backshore is composed of substantial vegetated dunes, which become increasingly wider, up to 500m. The foreshore is steeply dipping. This coastal morphology contributes to the tourist and recreational value of the area due to good beach access and by virtue of the beach size.

4. Winterton Ness to Hemsby

5. Hemsby to Great Yarmouth

The coastline from Hemsby to Great Yarmouth is developed almost continuously with a mixture of residential properties, holiday accommodation and recreational facilities. There are no landscaped designations in this area.
Although there are no national landscape designations in this area, the GYBC Local Plan recognises areas of 'landscape important to the coast scene', i.e. the remaining unspoilt coastal areas that separate the settlements between Great Yarmouth and Corton. The Local Plan states that within these areas the council will only permit development that would not significantly detract from the essential open character of the area with objective to protect the remaining open coast (Policy NNV3). Similarly, the WDC Local Plan identifies 'strategic gaps and open breaks' between Corton and Lowestoft Ness.

6. Great Yarmouth to Lowestoft Ness

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