

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. These shapes are primarily located on the left and right sides of the slide, framing the central white area where the text is placed.

Biodiversity by Planning and Design

Lindsey Wilkinson

Who am I?

- ▶ I am a Chartered Landscape Architect, and Fellow of the Landscape Institute, and the Royal Geographical Society
- ▶ Freelance practitioner with over twenty years' experience specialising as a green space and green infrastructure consultant
- ▶ Diverse range of project scales and scenarios, from Green Grids to Pocket Parks
- ▶ Design Review for Design South East, CABE, OPUN and Cambridgeshire Quality Panel
- ▶ Review development schemes of all shapes and sizes across the country, looking for schemes that properly take into account their natural value, contributions and potential



What do I do?

- ▶ Background in private practice consultancy specialising in green space design
- ▶ Design new parks eg Gunpowder Park, and restored historic parks eg Hershel Park
- ▶ Develop green infrastructure networks eg South Essex Green Grid



What do I do?

- ▶ Landscape-led design advice to planners, design teams and developers on embedding natural assets into their schemes, not adding as an afterthought
- ▶ Committed to promoting landscape design as an essential component of sustainable and successful schemes for people and for nature



This talk

- ▶ How can biodiversity and green infrastructure objectives be embedded in the planning and design process?
- ▶ Suffolk Design Initiative
- ▶ Suffolk Natural Character
- ▶ Process
- ▶ Summary



Suffolk Design Initiative

Image © Suffolk Design Initiative

Suffolk Design Initiative

Suffolk Design is an initiative to ensure the quality of new buildings, public spaces and neighbourhoods throughout the county meets today's needs and tomorrow's challenges

- ▶ Emphasise Suffolk's unique assets and challenges
- ▶ Inspire quality placemaking so new developments complement their surroundings
- ▶ Improve collaboration in planning and design between environment disciplines
- ▶ Offer practical tools and resources - on line resource and desk top companion
- ▶ Addresses all aspects of environmental input to the development process
 - ▶ Design quality
 - ▶ Sustainability
 - ▶ Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure
 - ▶ Health and wellbeing

Suffolk Design Initiative

- ▶ Suffolk Design Initiative looks to provide Design Guidance to ensure that new development schemes contribute to (rather than detract from) Suffolk's unique character and identity
- ▶ The Design Guidance will:
 - ▶ Create new and consolidate existing guidance, collate local and national guidance
 - ▶ Interrogate current policies and procedures for emphasis on design quality
 - ▶ Deliver a programme of CPD events based on design guidance

Suffolk Design Initiative

▶ Design Guidance Objectives

- ▶ Encourage better dialogue so planning and design decisions are not made in isolation from environmental issues
- ▶ Consider relationships to the Suffolk landscape character, identity and environment from the outset of schemes
- ▶ Offer relevant advice to developers and designers developing and designing in Suffolk so that schemes fit to their local context and environment
- ▶ Integrate strategies for green infrastructure and biodiversity into Masterplanning at the beginning of the planning and design process
- ▶ Encourage better collaborative design practice, through early engagement and integration between planners, discipline experts, designers, developers and stakeholders

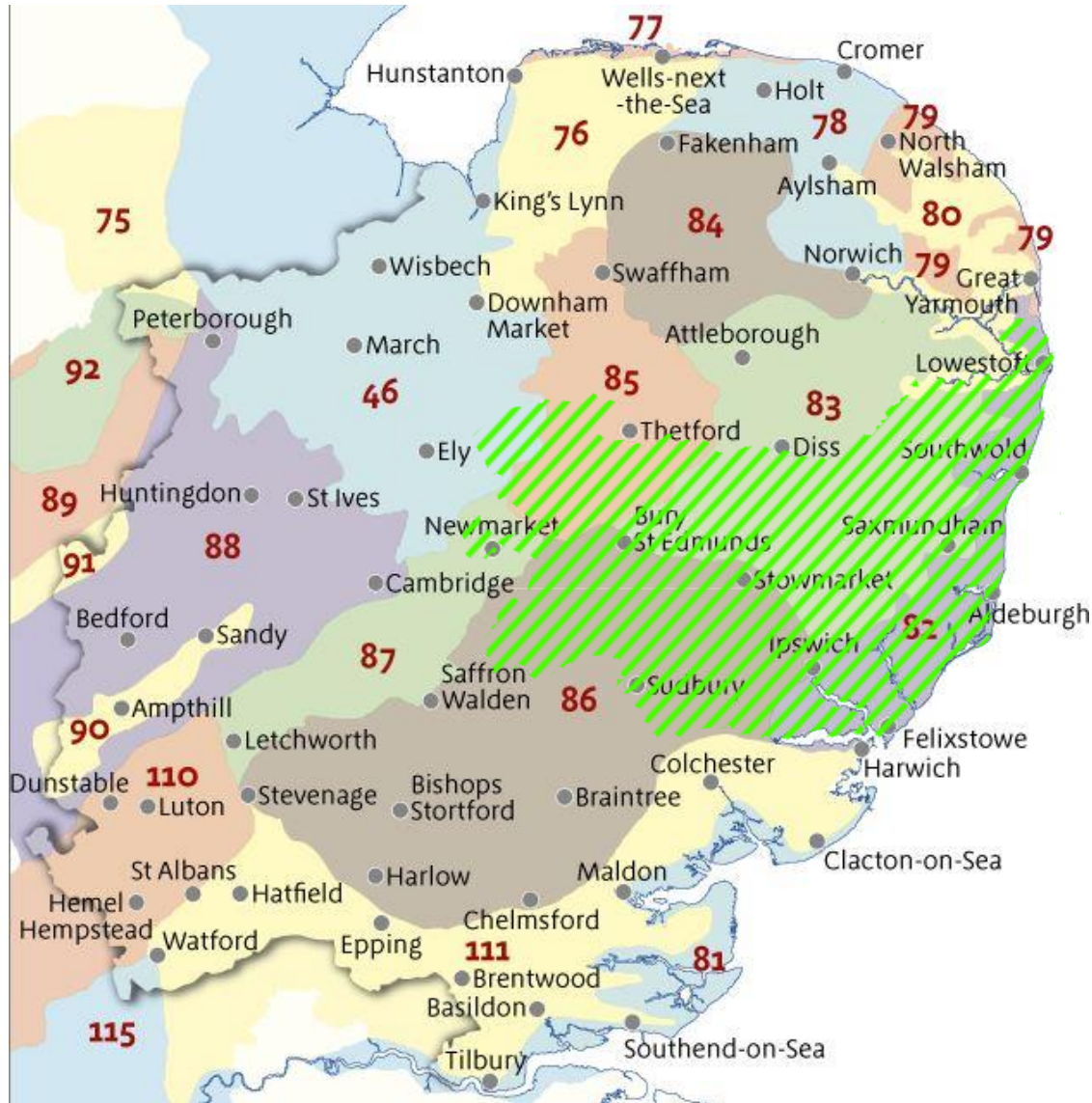
▶ Outcomes

- ▶ Access to tools and resources
- ▶ Ongoing engagement and living resources
- ▶ Design Guidance promoting a positive vision for future development in Suffolk



Suffolk's Natural Character

Suffolk's Natural Character



Natural England Profiles

- ▶ 82 - Suffolk Coast and Heaths
Diverse coastal habitats incorporating Sandlings Forests
- ▶ 83 - South Norfolk and High Suffolk Clayland
Largely flat clay plateau
- ▶ 86 - South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland
Gently undulating clay plateau
- ▶ 85 - The Brecks
Chalk plateau incorporating Thetford Forest

Suffolk's Natural Character

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Ipswich natural character

National Character
Area profile:

86. South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland

Supporting documents

Introduction & Summary

Description

Opportunities

Key facts
and data

Landscape
change

Analysis

Key characteristics



Large, often ancient hedgerows link woods and copses to form wooded skylines, that are a key characteristic of the area.

- An undulating chalky boulder clay plateau is dissected by numerous river valleys, giving a topography of gentle slopes in the lower, wider valleys and steeper slopes in the narrower upper parts.
- Fragments of chalk give many of the soils a calcareous character, which also influences the character of the semi-natural vegetation cover.
- South-east-flowing streams and rivers drain the clay plateau. Watercourses wind slowly across flood plains, supporting wet, fen-type habitats; grazing marsh; and blocks of cricket-bat willows, poplars and old willow pollards. Navigation locks are present on some rivers.
- Lowland wood pasture and ancient woodlands 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 predominantly arable with a wooded appearance. There is some pasture on the valley floors. Field patterns are irregular despite rationalisation, with much ancient countryside surviving. Field margins support corn bunting, cornflower and brown hare.
- Roman sites, medieval monasteries and castles and ancient woodlands contribute to a rich archaeology. Impressive churches, large barns, substantial country house estates and Second World War airfields dot the landscape, forming historical resources.

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Ipswich natural character

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SEO 2: Protect and enhance the area's ancient woodland cover, parkland trees, river valley plantations and ancient hedgerows, through the management of existing woods and the planting of new woods, hedgerows and hedgerow trees to benefit landscape character, habitat connectivity and a range of ecosystem services, including timber provision, the regulation of soil erosion and the strengthening of the sense of place and history.

For example, by:

- Seeking opportunities to restore and enhance ancient woodland habitats, particularly using techniques such as coppicing, to enhance landscape character and biodiversity, especially assemblages of flora, invertebrates and woodland birds.
- Encouraging the reinstatement of active management of existing farm woodlands where they have been neglected, re-introducing sustainable traditional management techniques such as selective felling, pollarding and coppicing, to strengthen the historic landscape character and support biodiversity. Where appropriate, exploit commercial opportunities for resulting wood fuel.
- Encouraging local businesses to increase appropriate-scale generation of heat, utilising woody biomass for woodchip boilers, where it is sustainable to do so. This will in turn bring further opportunities for improved woodland management, while being mindful of locally valued landscape characteristics, habitats and species.
- Encouraging the planting of new woodlands on former woodland sites or adjacent to existing sites using local native species, where this results in enhanced ecological connectivity and benefit to the traditional wooded appearance and character.
- Encouraging communities and schools to become involved in creating, conserving and enhancing local woods and orchards, by working with partners to promote volunteering opportunities.

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Conserving historic parklands, with their important veteran trees with ancient woodland habitats is particularly important for saproxylic species and hole-nesting birds.

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Process

Promoting Biodiversity objectives

- ▶ Promoting Biodiversity objectives

*Biodiversity is the variety of wildlife, plants and habitats
which promote healthy sustainable ecosystems*

- ▶ Issues are the general decline in species and habitats

And particularly the impacts of development pressures on biodiversity

- ▶ Turn that scenario around:

- ▶ To protect, conserve, minimise and mitigate impacts on natural assets

- ▶ Ideally increase and enhance natural assets and ecological value
across all project scenarios

Principles

- ▶ Putting biodiversity at the core of the planning and design process
- ▶ Recognising the development process is based on viability and deadlines
- ▶ Principles
 - ▶ Respect for the unique aspects of Suffolk's natural environment
 - ▶ Understanding and valuing natural assets
 - ▶ Building natural assets into a scheme, rather than designing them out
 - ▶ Integrating natural assets into the design framework of a scheme eg GI
 - ▶ Green solutions that are manageable and sustainable
 - ▶ Awareness of the challenges facing Suffolk greenspaces
 - ▶ Climate change, coastal erosion, habitat loss

Promoting biodiversity through the design process

- ▶ Understanding and valuing what you have as natural assets
 - ▶ Initial survey and analysis both ecological and character based eg LVIA
 - ▶ Consultation - recognise alternative values- social, cultural, heritage, local
- ▶ Integrating natural assets into the design framework of a scheme eg GI
- ▶ Work with the natural characteristics of the site
- ▶ Identify what contributes to uniqueness of character and sense of place
- ▶ Design Process- landscape led design shapes a holistic layout
- ▶ Recognise site constraints, add value, realise site potential
- ▶ Shape natural assets into spaces for people and/ or nature
- ▶ Create a sense of place

Promoting biodiversity through the planning process

▶ Formal

- ▶ Planning process should allow balance between development and biodiversity
- ▶ Based on appropriate Survey and Analysis
- ▶ Adhere to Design Guidance such as the Suffolk Design Initiative
- ▶ Design Review, offering a spectrum of expert advice
- ▶ Public consultation

▶ Informal

- ▶ Encourage a holistic and long term approach to development planning
- ▶ Outreach to interested stakeholders and local communities

Design Review

- ▶ Developers often prefer a blank slate site to present Wow! Factor solutions
- ▶ Encourage early involvement of environmental experts in the design process
- ▶ See natural character and assets as pointers to the identity of a scheme, not as a hindrance

- ▶ Embed natural assets into the design framework of the scheme
- ▶ Early dialogue discussions that involve landscape and ecological issues alongside viability/ density issues



Summary

Summary

- ▶ How can biodiversity objectives be embedded in the planning and design process?
- ▶ Putting biodiversity at the core of the planning and design process
- ▶ Building natural assets into a scheme, rather than designing them out
- ▶ Early engagement of ecological and design experts
- ▶ Embed natural assets into the design framework

Summary

- ▶ Promote collaboration, dialogue and integration between planners, design team, developers and stakeholders
- ▶ Expert review, Design Review based on best practice
- ▶ Encourage creativity to solve issues - be bespoke and site specific
 - ▶ Don't rely on this is what we always do
 - ▶ Don't revert to ad hoc after thought interventions as better than nothing
 - ▶ Don't let development aims overshadow natural asset potential
- ▶ Foster commitment to biodiversity from all participants from the outset