

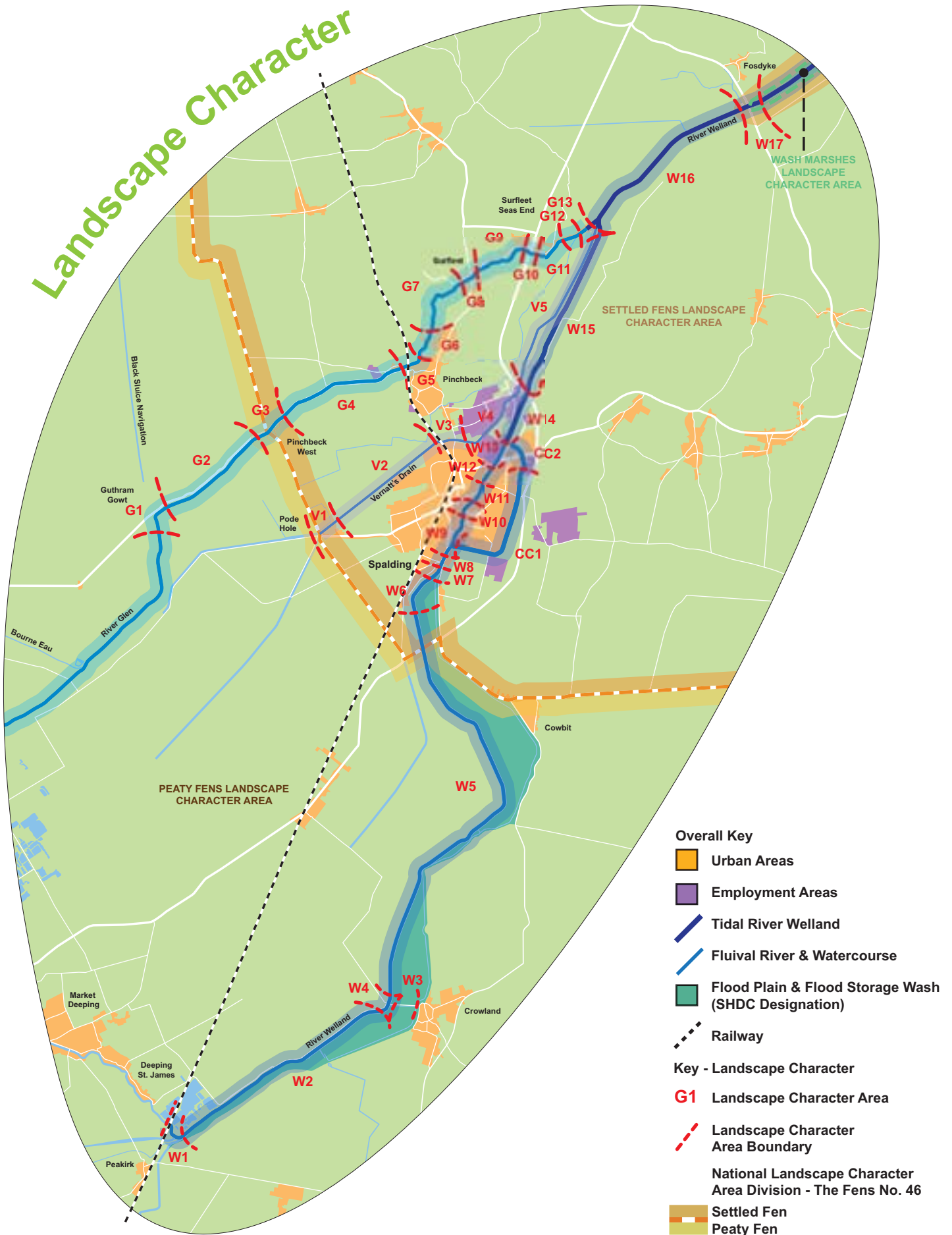
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Landscape Character
B

Landscape Character





Wet Fenland has become a scarce resource



The large open rectilinear field pattern dominate the area



The straightened rivers now flow high above the Washlands

Introduction

Waterways, drains, ditches, and their associated remnant wetland habitats, are one of the defining elements of the Fens. The courses of the Rivers Welland and Glen have been largely altered for drainage, which together with the network of drains form important links for wildlife in a landscape extensively modified for intensive agriculture.

The following maps describe the area's landscape character and make recommendations regarding enhancements.

The study area spans three distinct landscape character types as defined by Natural England's National Character Map:

The Fens No. 46.

1. **The 'Settled Fen' or 'Townlands'**, an area of historic settlements including Spalding surrounded by ancient medieval smaller-scale fields, on the slightly raised, silt arc around the Wash.
2. **The 'Peaty Fen'**, an extensive area drained long ago for farming, with geometric fields and major high-level drains and washlands.
3. **The 'Wash Marshes'**, an area dissected by winding creeks, drainage channels and ditches. Wide uninterrupted horizon with expansive views.

The network of rivers and drains has the potential to extend the experience of the landscape, by boat, bike or on foot. In a large-scale, flat landscape with huge skies and extensive views to the level horizon, the small-scale detail within the waterway corridors of native marginal vegetation, wildlife, heritage and human activity take on a greater significance.



The drainage network under a huge sky



Agriculture extends right to the waters edge



Existing 'rise and fall' moorings on the Tidal River Glen



Chalets set within the Reservoir, Surfleet Seas End



Willow Tree Fen Nature Reserve, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

There is huge opportunity for ecological enhancement, particularly wetland creation ('Wet Fens for the Future' project), to be focused on the waterways as an integral part of leisure, economic development and flood alleviation. Wetland creation through 'soft' engineering techniques can be designed into flood alleviation projects and marina development as well as waterway management. Starting from a low base, wetland is flagged as a priority for protection and especially for major enhancement (A Biodiversity Strategy for the East Midlands, East Midlands Biodiversity Forum 2006). Areas recently being developed such as Willow Tree Fen Nature Reserve could be linked to more ecological enhancement and education along the waterways.

Predicted rising sea levels and the probability of more frequent inundation in some areas (River Welland Catchment Management Plan 'Managing Flood Risk', Environment Agency, June 2008)) point to the sense of combining wetland creation and marina development with flood alleviation measures in holistic landscape scale projects. Relaxing intensive agriculture in these areas could allow wetland development as important wildlife habitat whilst also providing a distinctive Fenland landscape setting for leisure activities along the waterways.



Traditionally grazed Washlands along the River Glen, Guthram Gowt



The River Glen meanders towards the ancient village of Pinchbeck



Opportunities for ecological enhancement such as hedgerow re-establishment and woodland planting



The restoration of old wharves provides an opportunity to create a positive river frontage

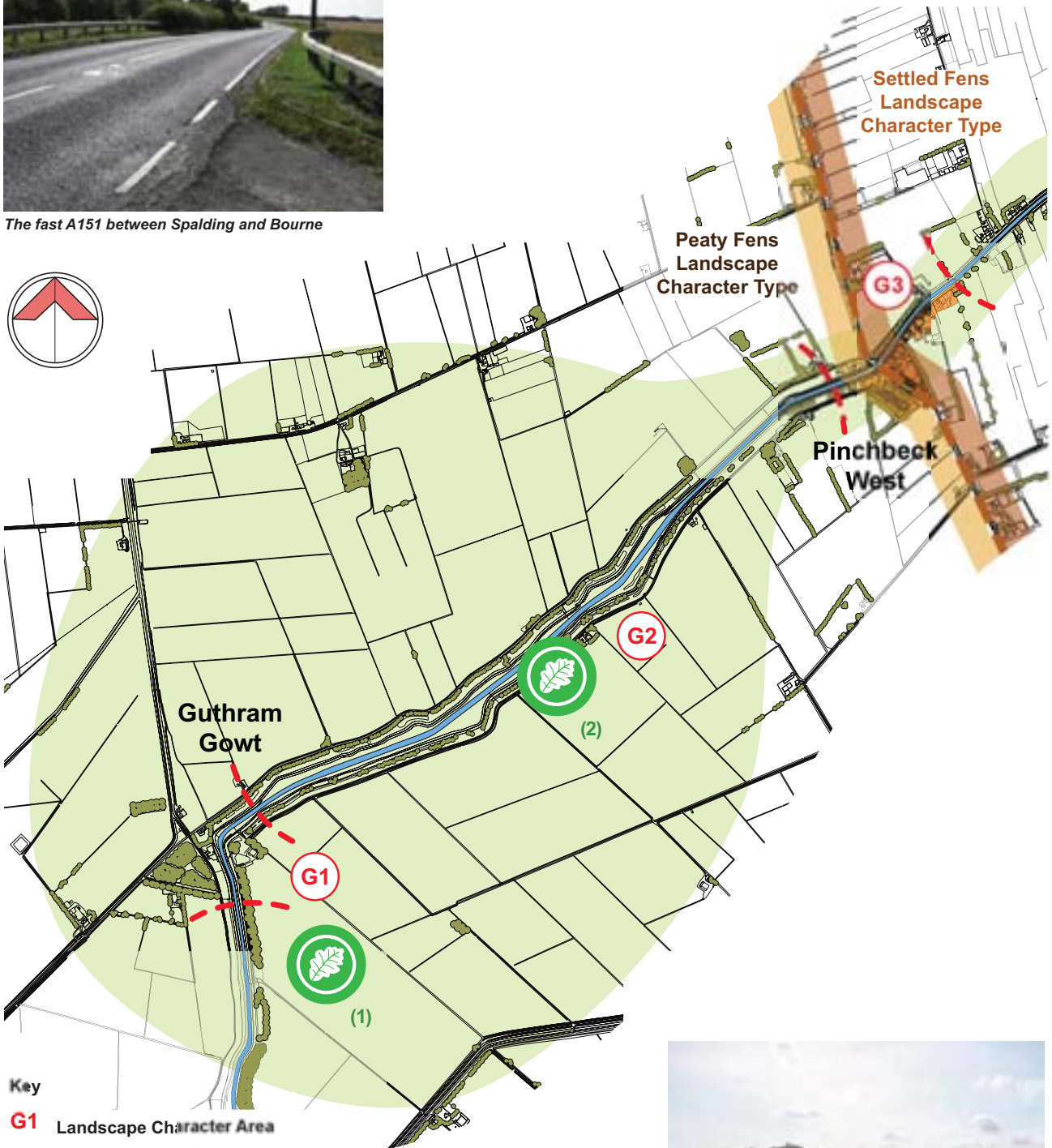
Embankments, washlands and margins to the waterways have historically provided grassland managed as traditional grazing, forming an important part of the landscape as well as diverse grassland habitat for wildlife. Washland provides a striking contrast to the mainly arable farmland, retaining the 'wild qualities of earlier times' ('Wet Fens for the Future').

Woodland is sparse in the Fens. The Settled Fens on the higher silt land and 'islands' have an ancient, smaller-scale field pattern with associated hedgerows and trees. Here, the waterway corridors can form the thread for many small-scale ecological and landscape enhancements such as hedgerow re-establishment, woodland planting in the corners of fields and native wet woodland the natural succession to the wet fen. The more open, larger-scale rectilinear field pattern of the more recently drained fen forms a man-made agricultural landscape where the ecological potential of the network of waterways and their associated washlands are even more important. Management of the washlands for traditional grazing, planting native willows and bringing existing trees back into management as pollards, could be encouraged for the benefit of wildlife and the landscape.

The development of settlements has responded to the waterways in a direct, functional way. Fine Georgian buildings point to a prosperous past based around trade on the waterways particularly in the historic core of Spalding. This historic relationship of the town to its waterway frontages should be more clearly expressed where possible. New moorings and other facilities create opportunities to restore old wharves using traditional materials and to contribute to a distinctive riverside environment.



The fast A151 between Spalding and Bourne



Key

- G1** Landscape Character Area
- Landscape Character Area Boundary
- Lincolnshire Trust Nature Reserves
 - (1) Willow Tree Fen (SLNCI)
 - (2) Slipe Drove (SLNCI)
- Visual Envelope



Bars Bridge carries the A151 over the River Glen, Pinchbeck West

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G1 Guthram Gowt



Guthram Gowt Sluice



The Black Sluice Navigation north of the A151

G2 Guthram Gowt to Pinchbeck West



Long distant views to the south across the rural Fenland landscape

G3 Pinchbeck West



The 24 hour moorings downstream of Bars Bridge

General Landscape Character Type: Peaty Fens

The River Glen is high above the surrounding land with views over the Fenland landscape from the top of the flood banks. The area is remote and wild in character, with the land to the south under less intensive agriculture. Willow Tree Fen Nature Reserve, managed by the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, is traditionally grazed with native willows containing views. To the north along the Black Sluice Navigation, the more recently drained fen is stark, open and intensively farmed, making the river and its washlands all the more important, both visually and for wildlife.

Recommendations:

- Educational & recreational links to include new moorings to Willow Tree Fen Nature Reserve.
- Manage willow trees on the banks for wildlife.
- Opportunity for significant woodland planting to the north, especially in the environs of the Black Sluice Navigation.
- Retain and enhance bio-diverse fen: continue traditional grazing regime on banks and washes.
- Explore opportunities for planting new native emergent planting as natural bank protection.
- Potential for canoeist, pedestrian and cycle access.

General Landscape Character Type: Peaty Fens

The River Glen is high above the surrounding land with views to a rural fenland landscape. Traditionally grazed banks with native willow trees containing views. Hedgerow and trees along the Bourne Road (A151) are important. There are few pylons or other visual intrusions.

Recommendations:

- A semi natural man-made agricultural landscape where artificial elements such as pylons, road or navigational infrastructure could significantly detract. Seek opportunities for more native tree planting.

General Landscape Character Type: Settled Fens

The River Glen is below the road and settlement, with buildings of the village glimpsed over the bank, including the New Bridge Inn (closed). Moorings have been developed at this first point of activity on the river, with the crossing point of the long distance footpath The Macmillan Way. A busy concrete bridge and road infrastructure detract.

Recommendations:

- Encourage emergent planting and bank vegetation to soften the piling of the new moorings

The precise route of the FWL connection between the River Glen and the Black Sluice Navigation is yet to be decided. Its final location will potentially influence the issues and recommendations along this section.



Fine Georgian houses, River Glen



Attractive waterside to Ship Inn, Pinchbeck provides an opportunity for visitor moorings



Attractive downstream approach of Pinchbeck, Bars Bridge, Ship Inn and water tower

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G4 Bars Bridge to the Ship Inn

River Glen constrained by Glenside north & south

General Landscape Character Type: Settled Fens

The River Glen appears more like an artificial drain set below tight banks with roads on both sides. The corridor has a domestic scale, with attractive isolated Georgian houses, farm buildings, Glen Mill (former windmill) and hedgerows, punctuated with mature hedgerow or 'parkland' trees. Emergent plants fringe the water's edge.

Recommendations:

- There is no footpath or pavement: review traffic priorities on roads either side of the river and investigate feasibility of developing one side where pedestrians and cyclists have priority. The Macmillan Way is routed along the north side of the river.

G5 The Ship Inn to east of Pinchbeck

Improve accessibility of Macmillan Way across the railway crossing

General Landscape Character Type: Settled Fens

Shelterbelt trees and gardens enclose the river corridor, with a dominant water tower. The derelict site of village quay and pedestrian railway crossing of the Macmillan Way create an intimidating feel. Weeping willows overhang private moorings to the rear of the Ship Inn. The inn and former mill buildings are positive features at a busy waterway/road meeting point, with road, car park and signage clutter detracting.

Recommendations:

- Improve accessibility of the Macmillan Way across the level crossing. This will be increasingly dangerous if the line does take more freight in the future. Investigate feasibility of constructing riverside path under railway bridge (cantilever or pontoons with flood cut-off system).
- Legibility of the Macmillan Way route around derelict boundary and hidden corners.
- Confusion of signage clutter: Review signage to be clearer and more visually attractive.

G6 Pinchbeck to Crossgate Bridge

The River Glen skirts the northern boundary of Pinchbeck, the water tower provides a prominent landmark

General Landscape Character Type: Settled Fens

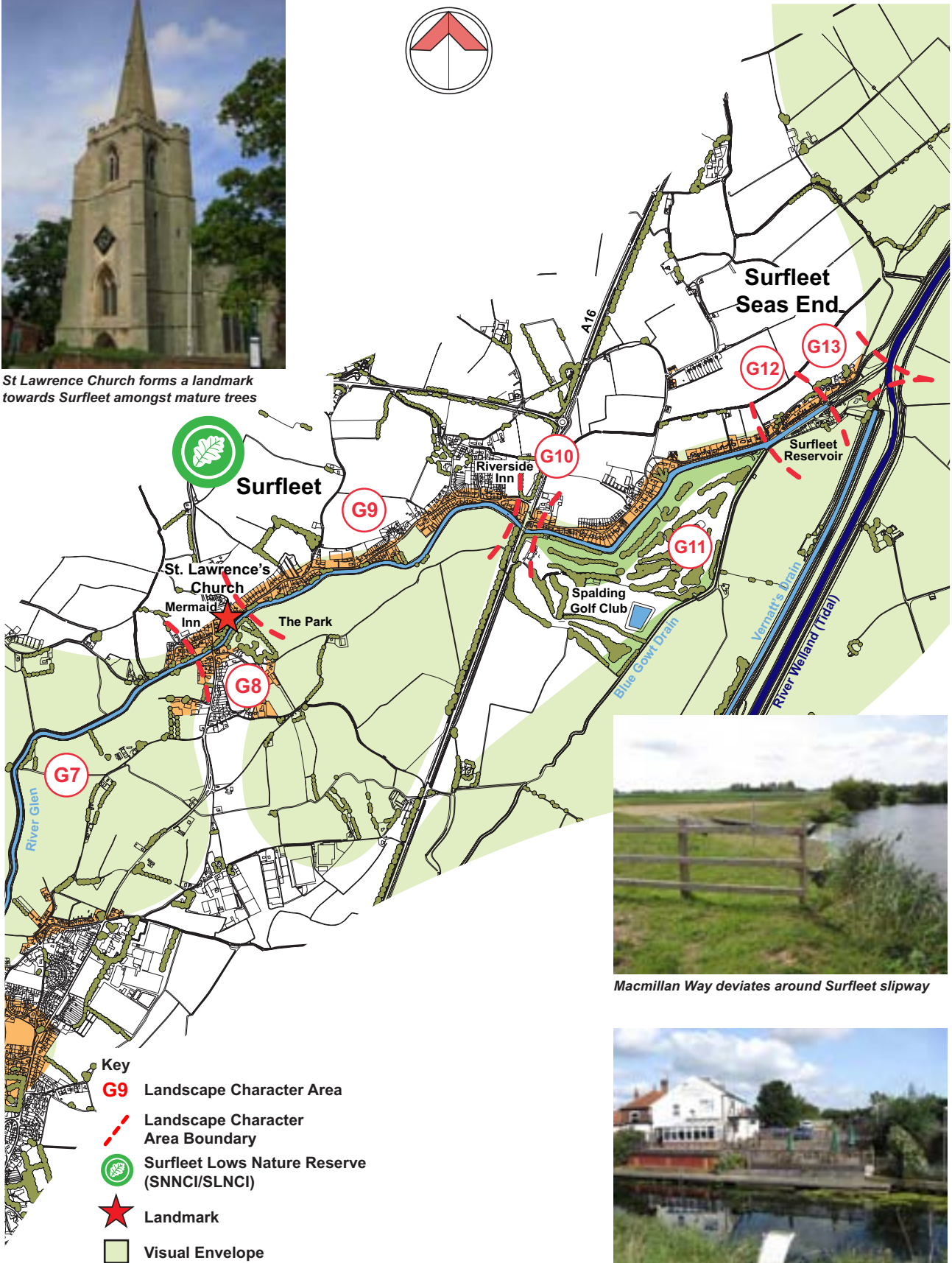
An open, naturalistic stretch of river, winding through small-scale fields of flowers under cultivation and fringed with reed. Views to the edge of Pinchbeck village with the water tower a prominent landmark. A low stone flood wall follows the river bank from the edge of Pinchbeck.

Recommendations:

- Management of the riverbank path to facilitate access whilst encouraging native flora.
- Conserving and enhancing the fringing emergent vegetation with greater future boat traffic.



St Lawrence Church forms a landmark towards Surfleet amongst mature trees



Macmillan Way deviates around Surfleet slipway



Riverside Inn moorings will need to be upgraded to cater for the expected increase in boating

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G7 Crossgate Bridge to Mermaid Inn

The River Glen meanders through open landscape where views are not restricted by flood banks

General Landscape Character Type: Settled Fens

The river corridor opens out to a more 'natural' river corridor with low flood banks and a sinuous course through arable fields fringed with occasional cricket bat willows. Manor Farm buildings to the north of the river at Crossgate are a positive feature of the landscape.

Recommendations:

Elements of the landscape such as Manor Farm are semi-derelict.

- Conserve and enhance the fringing emergent vegetation in advance of an increase in future boat traffic.
- Maintain and enhance the 'natural' river character with establishment of fringing emergent planting and where possible continue the cycle of pollarding the cricket bat willow.
- Establish moorings & canoe access at Crossgate Bridge.
- Investigate feasibility of location for farm-based, low-key visitor accommodation e.g. Bunkhouse, camping or shepherd's huts.

G8 Surfleet & The Park

Private mooring, Surfleet

General Landscape Character Type: Settled Fens

Mature trees such as weeping willow enclose and overhang the river corridor, private gardens run down to the river with impromptu moorings. A 'secret' footpath route and narrow, tranquil river corridor emerge at the Iron Bridge and attractive Mermaid Inn at Surfleet. A key 'destination' for visitors to the river.

Recommendations:

- Improve the legibility of the Macmillan Way route to the rear of private gardens, stiles create access issues for the route.
- The future provision for visiting boats will need to maintain the tranquil hidden character of this stretch of the river.

G9 Surfleet to Riverside Inn

Manage river bank to increase wildlife margin

General Landscape Character Type: Settled Fens

The open arable landscape to the south with views to Spalding Power Station is broken by poplars and shelter belts. St Lawrence Church forms a landmark towards Surfleet amongst mature trees ('The Park'). New housing, agricultural sheds and the road infrastructure (e.g. Armco barrier) detract on the north bank.

Recommendations:

- Ploughed land right up to the riverbank, including the footpath route, eroding any refuge for wildlife at the field margin. Increase 'wild' margin to riverbank – e.g. Allow grass to grow longer and manage to encourage a varied native flora.
- Enhance the new Surfleet slipway with native tree and shrub planting to create a more attractive location for picnic benches etc.

G10 A16 Crossing



A16 Bypass road bridge

General Landscape Character Type: Settled Fens

Large concrete road bridge and highway infrastructure dominate the scene. Intimidating entrance to underpass and the visually hard river frontage to the Inn detract at a key destination on the river.

Recommendations:

- Underpass and legibility of footpath crossing to the inn needs to be improved, better maintenance and signage required.
- Enhance river frontage with tree planting and extend moorings.
- Re-design footpath routes associated with the bridge to be more legible and accessible.

G11 Spalding Golf Course & Surfleet Seas End



Predominant houses line the River Glen



Golf Course Tees established right up to the river



End of garden moorings, Surfleet Seas End

General Landscape Character Type: Settled Fens

A more suburban character with modern housing, sheds, and a varied built river frontage, including piling, slipways and landing stages. Managed, manicured riverside along the golf course. Ornamental trees e.g. Weeping willow punctuate this stretch.

Recommendations:

- Increase 'wild' margin to riverbank – e.g. Allow grass to grow longer and manage to encourage a varied native flora.
- Establish a clear 'code' of riverbank treatment for riparian owners to encourage a more ecological approach: reduce hard landscape/ engineering elements and introduce native emergent planting and 'green engineering' solutions.



The Reservoir, a traditional venue for water sports, Surfleet Seas End

G12 Surfleet Reservoir



A variety of small craft on the reservoir

General landscape character type: Settled Fens

An enclosed area of 'plot lands' with chalets and houses on both sides of the river creating a domestic character. The river banks include a variety of moorings, slipways and piled edges, with some areas of reed fringe. Increase in the size and impact of new and replacement dwellings, creating a change to a more urban character and loss of the more ephemeral 'living on the edge', timber home-made chalet character.

Recommendations:

- Establish a clear 'code' of riverbank treatment for riparian owners to encourage a more ecological approach: Introduce native emergent planting and 'green engineering' solutions.
- Design guidelines to recognise the ephemeral nature of area.

G13 Surfleet Sluice & Tidal Moorings



Rise and Fall Moorings on the Tidal River Glen below Surfleet Sluice

General Landscape Character Type: Settled Fens

Below the sluice, a changing tidal creek of mud banks, moored boats and timber guide piles of moorings set amongst tall reeds combine to create a distinctly 'wild' coastal character. Set below the sea bank, the Ship Inn and housing have a suburban character with managed gardens and evergreen hedges.

Recommendations:

- A sharp contrast between the 'untamed' reed-fringed creek and the very close-mown, improved grass of the sea bank.