

NCA 42 Lincolnshire Coast and Marshes

Overview

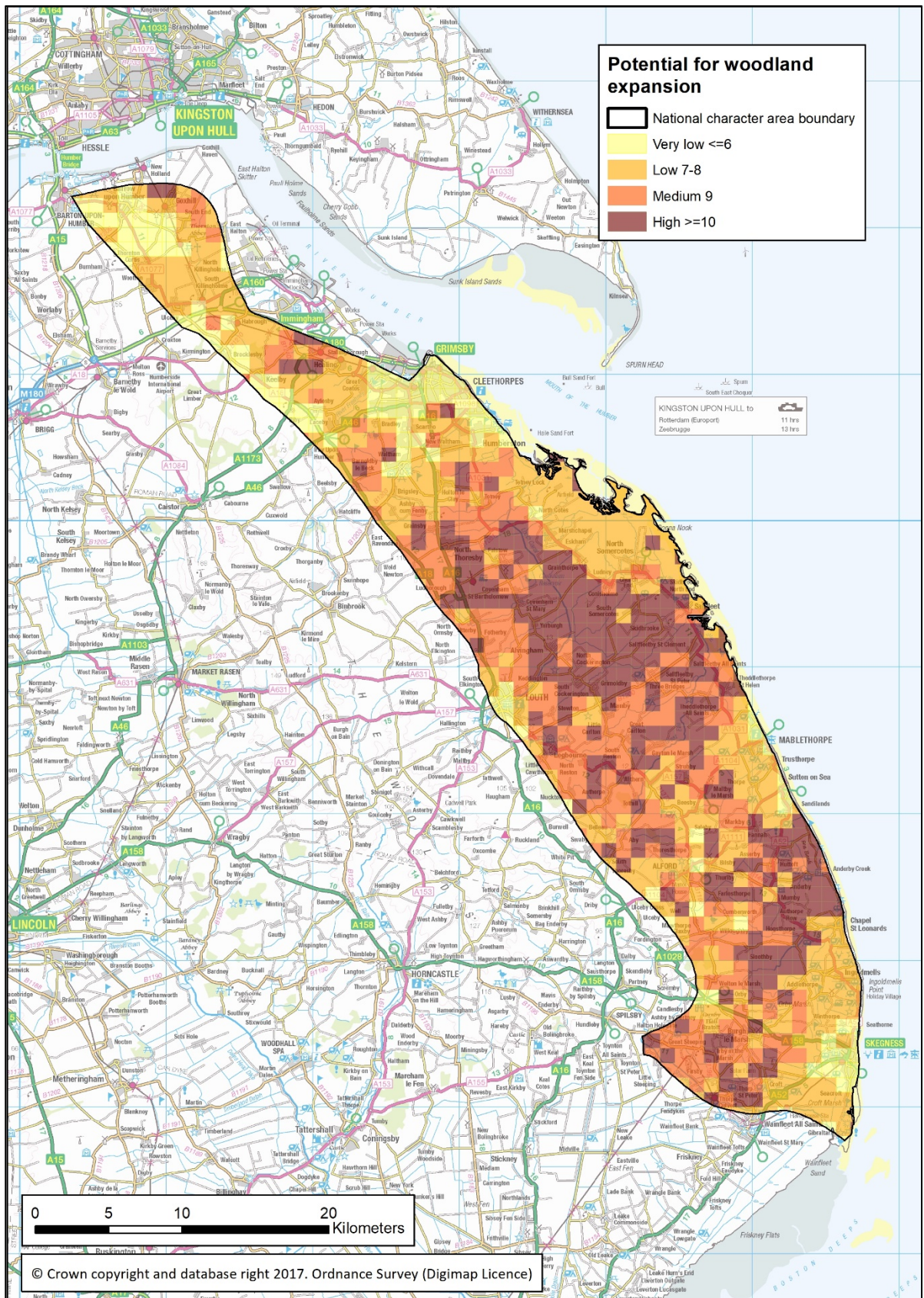
The area is a long, narrow band of low-lying coastal plain between the Lincolnshire Wolds and the North Sea, and it is included within the Eastern Arable Agricultural Landscape Type. It is predominantly rural in character, with productive arable agriculture. The NCA profile defines three distinct landscapes: the Middle Marsh, the Outmarsh, and the coast. The Middle Marsh is a predominantly arable landscape at the foot of the Lincolnshire Wolds and is more enclosed than the other areas, with a mixture of small irregular fields around settlements and larger regular fields in areas of former common fields and common grazing. The settlement pattern here is nucleated, with a mix of towns and villages. The Outmarsh has smaller fields in anciently drained land with a mix of arable and improved pasture. The settlement pattern in the Outmarsh is one of linear villages and scattered farmsteads. The coastal strip is dominated by larger nucleated settlements that originated as fishing villages and hamlets, and which have grown subsequently as coastal resorts. The road network is mainly a local one, with some main roads linking towns but predominantly of minor roads and lanes. The key routes provide access to Grimsby and Cleethorpes in the north, and Skegness in the south of the NCA. Woodland is extremely scarce in the area, covering only 2% of the NCA. Of this, around 23% is ancient woodland. Ancient woodlands are located on the Wolds Edge. Woodland in the Outmarsh is almost non-existent except around farmsteads and settlement edges where there are small plantations.

The Historic Environment Character

Early settlement was concentrated on the higher ground of the Middle Marsh, where there were settlements from prehistory. From here, the wetlands of the Outmarsh would have been exploited for hunting and fishing. There was salt making in the Middle Marsh and Out Marsh in the Roman period, an industry which was also important in the later medieval period. Drainage and reclamation of the wetlands began in the Roman period and continued throughout the Middle Ages, creating fertile pasture lands for stock grazing. The process of reclamation was one carried out on a large scale by several monastic houses in the area. Settlement in the later medieval period was also concentrated on the higher land, at the foot of the Lincolnshire Wolds. In the post medieval period, there was large-scale landscape change, with fields reorganised, settlements rebuilt and farmsteads relocated. Salt marsh continued to be reclaimed, with new sea banks built to prevent inundation. The coast began to develop resorts for sea bathing from the later 18th century, though this expanded greatly in the 19th century. Grimsby developed, too, become a major fishing port.

Opportunities for Woodland Expansion

The mapping of historic and natural environment attributes indicates that there is high potential for new woodland in the NCA, perhaps reflecting the very low baseline level. The areas of greatest opportunity, as defined by the mapping, lie in a broad band to the east of Louth, and further north of Chapel St Leonards. These areas cover the historic Middle Marsh and Out Marsh, and new planting here would complement the opportunities highlighted by the NCA profile to link fragmented woodland habitats, and to plant new woodlands to reduce flooding. Care should be taken, however, to respect historic field and settlement patterns, and to avoid areas of known and potential archaeological remains.



NCA 042 Lincolnshire Coast and Marshes