

Protected Lane Assessment Chelmsford City (Additional Lanes)



Client

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1 Introduction

Essex County Council's Place Services Historic Environment Team was commissioned by Chelmsford City Council to undertake an assessment of six lanes within the district in October 2017. Of the six lanes assessed three were new and had not been assessed before, while the remaining three were originally assessed as part of the project in 2009-2010. The proposed lanes were assessed using the Protected Lanes criteria developed by the County Council (ECC 2009) for Chelmsford Borough Council and used across Essex on the existing Protected Lanes originally identified in the 1970's.

As with the original 2009 assessments the work was undertaken in two stages, comprising an initial stage of desk-based assessment followed by field survey. Following the assessment, the scores for each Candidate Lane were checked against the threshold for determining Protected Lane status. The assessed lanes that have met the minimum threshold will be adopted by Chelmsford City Council and be given Protected Lane status. This report summarises the methodology and results of the project and is an appendix to the 2009 report.

2 Background

2.1 Historic Lanes in Essex

The greater part of the road network in the Essex countryside derives from at least as far back as the medieval period. Much of it undoubtedly existed in Saxon times and it is likely that many roads and lanes were formed long before that. These lanes are part of what was once an immense mileage of minor roads and track-ways connecting villages, hamlets and scattered farms and cottages throughout the county. Many were used for agricultural purposes, linking settlements to arable fields, grazing on pasture, heaths and greens; and other resources such as woodland and coastal marsh. Generally these roads were not deliberately designed and constructed; written records of the establishment of roads during the medieval period are rare (Rackham, 1986, 264). Instead they would have started life as track-ways without a bearing surface, although often with defined boundaries including hedgerows, ditches and banks.

The width of ancient roads depended then, as now, on the traffic using them but historic lanes tend to be very variable in width, often within a short distance. Before

metalling the roads became rutted in wet weather and the traffic would move over less rutted areas to the sides. Principal roads between towns tended to be wide for this reason. Wide verges and linear roadside greens were also grazed by cattle, sheep and geese being driven through the countryside to market. Roadsides often had ponds associated with them for watering livestock, although it is clear from The Court Rolls that these frequently began life as extraction pits for clay and gravel (Emmison, 1991, 287). Many lanes had ditches along one or both sides of the lane to demarcate the highway and to assist drainage. These boundaries are frequently even more sinuous than the road itself. On the clay lands, the roads inevitably became water courses during heavy rain; the water would pour off the fields and wash away the muddy surface. They were also eroded through continuous use; over the centuries lanes on hillsides tended to become sunken. Lanes with marked differences in the level between two sides of a lane are also apparent on sloping ground, caused by lynchet formation – the gradual shift of soil down-slope caused by ploughing over hundreds of years. When roads became properly metalled in the 19th century and 20th centuries they became in a sense fossilised; the carriageways were fixed as metalled strips and the verges were formed from the marginal land between the carriageway and the highway boundary (Hunter, 1999).

Today, historic lanes are an important feature in our landscape: they continue to have an articulating role, providing insights into past communities and their activities through direct experience of a lanes historic fabric; contain the archaeological potential to yield evidence about these past human activities and to provide insights into the development of a landscape and the relationship of features within it over time; have considerable ecological value as habitats for plants and animals, serving as corridors for movement and dispersal for some species and acting as vital connections between other habitats; and allow people to enrich their daily lives by accessing cherished historic landmarks and landscapes, encouraging recreation within the countryside, thereby promoting well-being.

2.2 Protected Lanes Policy in Essex

The policy to preserve Essex historic lanes has been in operation for over a quarter of a century and is summarised in a document prepared by Essex County Council (ECC, 1998). However when Local Authorities decided to re-assess their existing Protected Lanes as part of the evidence base for the Local Development Frameworks, precise

information on the criteria used to assess historic lanes for Protected Lane status and the original survey guidelines for making this assessment were found to be no longer available. Essex County Council's Historic Environment Specialists were commissioned by Chelmsford Borough Council to develop robust and defensible criteria for its Local Development Framework, Core Strategy and Development Control Policies (Policy DC 15) on Protected Lanes (CBC, 2008, 75) and then to apply these criteria to Protected Lanes in the Borough (ECC, 2009). The criteria used for Chelmsford was found to work well and therefore has been used to assess those lanes across the rest of the county.

2.3 Protected Lanes Policy in Chelmsford City Council

Chelmsford City Council seeks to protect lanes and byways through the new Local Plan with a new policy approach of identifying Protected Lanes as non-designated heritage assets through Strategic Policy S5 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment and Policy HE2 – Non-designated Heritage Assets. The Chelmsford City Council Pre-Submission Local Plan contains the following policy and explanatory text in regard to Protected Lanes.

POLICY HE2 – NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

Proposals will be permitted where they retain the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, including its setting. Where proposals would lead to harm to the significance of a non-designated heritage asset or its loss, proposals should demonstrate that:

- i. the level of harm or loss is justified following a balanced judgement of harm and the significance of the asset; and**
- ii. harm is minimised through retention of features of significance and/or good design and/or mitigation measures.**

There are a number of country lanes and byways which are of historic and landscape value, and which make an important contribution to the rural character of certain areas, as set out in the Essex County Council Protected Lanes Studies. The Council intends to protect these lanes and byways by preserving, as far as possible, the trees and hedgerows, banks, ditches and verges which contribute to their character, and by resisting development proposals which have a detrimental effect upon them.

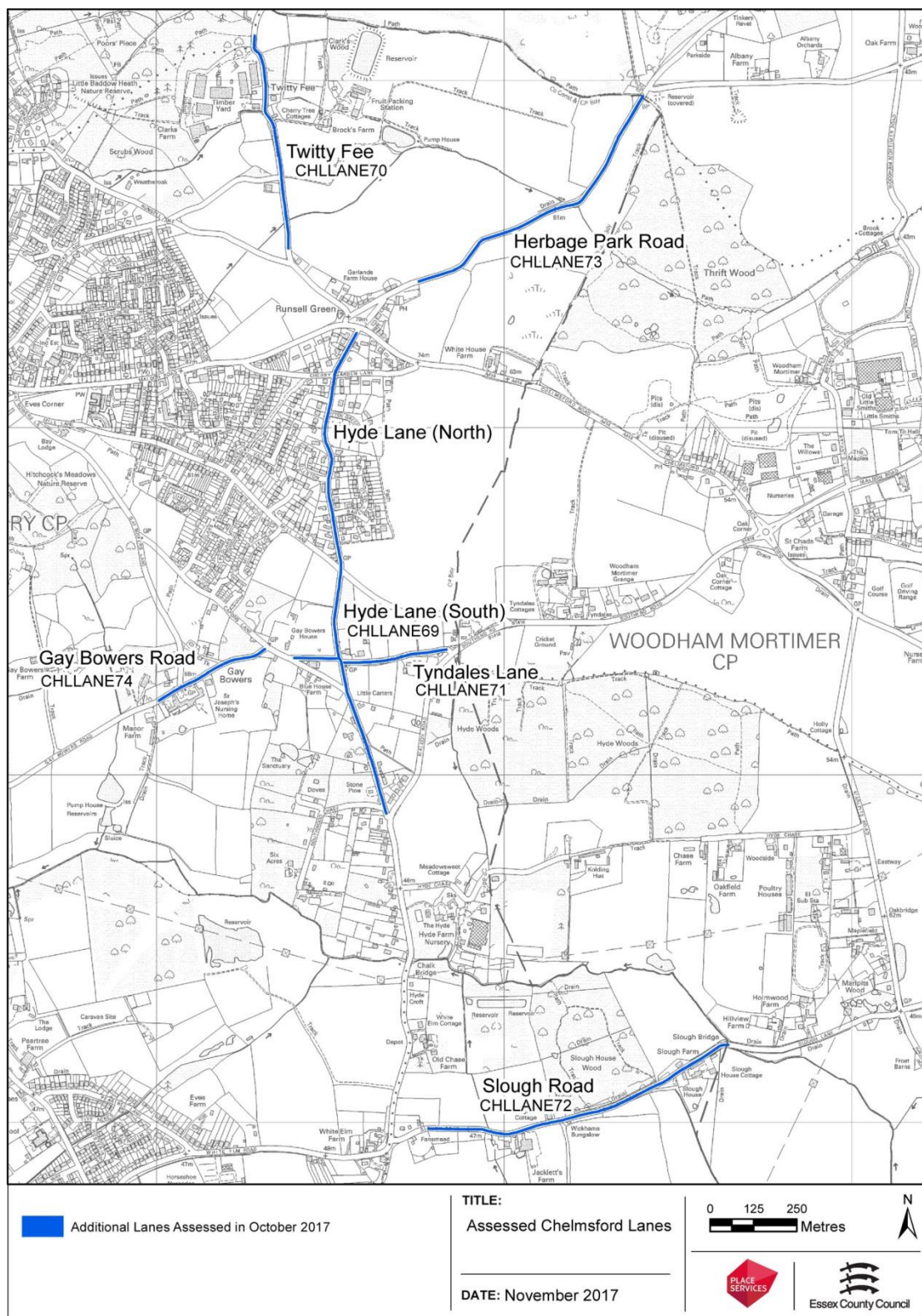


Figure 1 - Location of the Lanes assessed during the survey

3 Reason for the project

Development Policies can have significant effects and so it is important that the criteria for decision making and the evidence base on which decisions are made is comprehensive, robust and defensible. Consistency and transparency of judgment is crucial to public acceptability and fairness of the process. Detailed criteria for Protected Lane status and a methodical articulation of how a lane does or does not meet such criteria, which clearly illustrates the rationale behind a lanes selection, will make a major contribution to achieving that acceptability.

4 Protected Lanes Assessment Procedure Criteria and Scoring System

The following section describes the processes undertaken in the assessment of each Candidate Lane. This comprised both office based and on site assessment with all of the lanes visited. Figure 1 shows the location of all of the Candidate lanes.

4.1 Units of Assessment

During the original project each lane was identified by Street Name. However, subsequent projects have assigned a unique number to each lane and the Chelmsford Lanes have since used this system to ensure consistency across the county. All Chelmsford lanes have a unique lane ID, such as CHLLANE 1, along with the National Street Gazetteer (NSG) name which has been used to identify them.

A desk based assessment using Google Earth and Google Earth Streetview, Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER), and GIS data relevant to the criteria was undertaken. The GIS data used includes Ancient Woodland, Special Verges, Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS), heritage assets including designated sites, and SSSI's. The use of Google Earth Streetview allowed a detailed assessment to be made along the length of the lane as part of the desk based assessment.

As part of this initial assessment the lane names were identified by the National Street Gazetteer. Where more than one section of lane was identified with the same National Street Gazetteer name these were merged to form a single unit, unless the separate

lengths were of significant difference. In some cases the lane had two street names but was a single lane, in which case both names were added to the recording sheet.

For the purposes of the field assessment, further details were added to the sheets undertaken for the desk based phase of assessment. These forms were completed in digital format being based on individual **units of assessment**. For a lane which was largely intact along the whole of its historic length (as identified on the first edition OS map), a single **unit of assessment** was identified and only one form completed. However, there were cases where extensive alterations had occurred along a historic lane, or where a lane had been broken by a new road which meant that these lengths of lane automatically fell out of the criteria and as such either the lane was broken into separate units or were reduced in length. So for each named lane, one or more assessment forms had to be completed.

4.2 Field Assessment

Each historic lane was assessed by a team of two historic environment specialists. Digital assessment sheets were updated as each lane was inspected. As the lanes assessed for this most recent project the details of each lane assessment can be found in Section 5.

4.2.1 Photographic Record

Each unit of assessment had a colour digital image taken of it and the photo stored within the unit assessment folder. Photographs were taken which illustrated the range of forms that a lane took and its historic features e.g. banks, ditches, veteran pollards, hedges etc.

4.2.2 Data Fields:

For each unit of assessment, the following data fields were completed:

- *Name* – name of historic lane
- *Unit* – the number of the unit of assessment

- *Highway / Byway Classification* – Class III, Unclassified or Byway Open to all Traffic (BOAT)
- *NGRs* – X and Y numbers for each end of the units of assessment. These were generated from the GIS after completion of the assessment. To allow this, the assessment maps (one for each historic lane) were marked at the beginning and end points of each unit of assessment during the field visit and the map annotated with the number of the unit.

4.2.3 Diversity

Description of form and features – this was a description of the historic lane for the length of the unit of assessment. The description included information on the following where possible:

- Form(s) that the lane took e.g. sunken, flat, raised, or lynchet (positive lynchet on uphill side and/or negative lynchet on downhill side)
- Carriageway surface(s) e.g. tarmac, stone, dirt, road planings etc.
- Verges – width, flat, sloping etc.
- Banks and ditches including approximate dimensions and profiles
- If sunken – depth of sunken lane and amount of variation etc.
- Associated vegetation e.g. hedgerows (with an indication of species mix i.e. largely single species, large variety of woody species etc., veteran trees (including pollards, coppice stools), mature trees, grass / flowering plants on verges and banks.

4.2.4 Historic Integrity

Description of erosion damage – this was a description of erosion damage to the structure of the lane from vehicular traffic along the length of the unit of assessment. The description included information on damage to banks, verges and surfaces.

Description of improvements – this was a description of any significant improvements that had been made to a lane along the length of the unit of assessment. The description included information on the type and extent of traffic calming measures and other ‘improvements’ such as widening, kerbing etc.

4.2.5 Archaeological Potential

Archaeological potential of the lane and its associated features such as the ditches, banks and greens etc. These features can all contain important archaeological remains that relate to the development and human interaction with the landscape.

4.2.6 Aesthetic Value

Views – notable views, which are particularly scenic, unusual or which include contemporary historic features of note e.g. a parish church, listed building, farm complex or landscape that are framed by the lane and/or its associated vegetation were identified.

4.3 Protected Lane Scoring System

The criteria and associated scoring system that were developed during the initial Chelmsford Protected Lanes project have been used to evaluate existing Protected Lanes across the county through a combination of desk based and field assessment. The criteria and associated scoring system have been used to assess the Candidate Lanes during this project and are set out below. Information regarding the development of the scoring system can be found in the original report.

PROTECTED LANES SCORING SYSTEM			
Criterion	Type of assessment	Description	Score
Historic Integrity	Field assessment	Significant improvements or damage evident; erosion of historic fabric affecting significant length of the lane (excluding significant hedgerow loss)	1
		Moderate improvements or loss to historic fabric of the lane (excluding significant hedgerow loss)	2

		Limited or discrete erosion/damage to the historic fabric of the lane and/or significant hedgerow loss	4
		No improvements to the lane and well preserved historic fabric	6
Diversity	Field assessment	The lane has limited diversity of features, form, alignment, depth and width	1
		The lane has a moderate range of features but limited form, alignment, depth and width or vice versa	2
		The lane has a moderate range of features and form, alignment, depth and width	3
		The lane has a wide range of features, form, alignment, depth and width	4
Group Value (Association)	Desk-based assessment	The lane has limited association with historic landscape features and other heritage assets of broadly the same date	1
		The lane has direct association with one or more historic settlements or other significant heritage assets of broadly the same date	2
		The lane has association with a moderate range of contemporary historic landscape features and other heritage assets	3
		The lane has a strong association with numerous and/or designated historic landscape features/other heritage assets of broadly the same date	4
Archaeological Association	Desk-based assessment	The lane has no known association with a non-contemporary archaeological feature	0
		The lane has a single association with a non-contemporary archaeological feature	1
		The lane has limited association with non-	2

		contemporary archaeological features	
		The lane has a strong association with non-contemporary archaeological features	3
Archaeological Potential	Field assessment	The lane has limited potential for archaeological evidence	1
		The lane includes components which have the potential to contain archaeological evidence	2
		The lane contains a wide range of components with potential to contain archaeological evidence	3
Biodiversity	Field and desk based assessment	The lane has limited biodiversity assets e.g. grass verge or bank, single species hedge e.g. garden hedge or has suffered significant hedgerow loss	1
		The lane has significant lengths of intermittent hedge (with or without occasional mature trees) and verge surviving and single non-designated assets e.g. pond, or lane or is adjacent/connected to designated asset e.g. Ancient Woodland, SSSI	2
		Non-designated assets including continuous mixed species hedgerows, mature trees (including TPOs), grass verge with flowering plants, ponds etc.	3
		Designated assets e.g. LOWS, Special Verge, veteran pollards, Ancient Species Rich hedgerow(s) associated with the lane or its component parts	4
Aesthetic Value	Field assessment	The lane has limited variety of aesthetic features, or forms/alignment and no significant views	1

		The lane has a variety of aesthetic features or forms/alignment and / or a significant view	2
		The lane has a wide variety of aesthetic features or forms/alignment and / or more than one significant views	3

5 Assessed Lanes

In October 2017 six lanes (Figure 1) were assessed using the established methodology.

NSG Name	Lane ID	Previously Assessed
Twitty Fee	CHLLANE70	No
Slough Road	CHLLANE72	No
Herbage Park Road (Old London Road)	CHLLANE73	No
Gay Bowers Road	CHLLANE74	Yes
Hyde Lane	CHLLANE69	Yes
Tyndales Lane	CHLLANE71	Yes

5.1 Hyde Lane (CHLLANE69)

The NSG shows that Hyde Lane is over 2km long and crosses several junctions. The northern end of the lane, starting at the junction with the A414 and continuing to the junction with the Maldon Road (B1418) was assessed (see Figure 1). While the NSG name continues onto the B1418 the road is Class II so not within the scope of this study. A section of this lane (From the junction of Mill Lane to the junction with the B1418) was assessed as a potential candidate lane in 2010.

While the lane is a historic route its historic integrity is no longer intact due to the extensive highway improvements and property entrances that have been put in place (Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4). Many of the garden boundaries abut the lane and the historic verges, ditches and hedgerows have been removed and replaced with kerbs and block paving (Figure 2).



Figure 2 - Property entrances along Hyde Lane



Figure 3 - New Road junction along Hyde Lane



Figure 4 - Driveway, verge and new road junction along Hyde Lane

To the south of the housing development the lane passes through a more rural landscape with open farmland views. The junction with Mill Lane is marked on the first edition OS mapping and is a historic part of this lane. There have only been a limited number of highway improvements along its length.

However, once south of the junction with Capons Lane, there are several widened driveways with kerb stones, some areas of erosion in passing places and removal of traditional hedgerows. The number of property entrances (properties that are more recent than the 1st Edition OS mapping), increase towards the road junction and these have again cut through and removed the historic boundaries, ditches and verges (Figure 5).

There is an area where the road has been widened that has a bank with coppiced stools. This area may have formed part of a linear green and is clearly marked on the 1st edition OS mapping; although only a short section now survives.



Figure 5 - Property entrances at the south end of Hyde Lane

5.2 Twitty Fee (CHLLANE 70)

This lane is just over 650m long and is a no-through road. The entrance has been widened with road markings, kerb stones and fencing around a modern property (Figure 6). The lane is narrow and while there has been major hedgerow loss on the right hand side this has been replanted. The lane is both undulating and sinuous in places.

There has been some widening of field entrances that has resulted in erosion, along with some erosion in passing places along the lane (Figure 7); although this is limited along its length.

Some highway improvements (kerb stones) have been put in place where the entrance to the wood yard has been widened and this also has some modern fencing and signage (Figure 8), but it is relatively unobtrusive and limited.

The lane narrows after the wood yard and property with an overhanging canopy, banks, multispecies hedgerow in places and veteran pollards (Figure 9).



Figure 6 - Southern end (start) of Twitty Fee



Figure 7 - Erosion in passing/parking space on bend



Figure 8 - Entrance to wood yard with new fencing and kerb stones



Figure 9 - Veteran pollard on woodland bank

5.3 Tyndales Lane (CHLLANE 71)

Tyndales Lane was originally assessed in 2010. This lane is just over 460m long and is in two sections with Hyde Lane crossing it. The junction of the two sections of Tyndales Lane is staggered. The western end of the lane is short (c. 145m), although it is open with wide, well-kept grass verges on both sides and the lane itself is narrow (Figure 10). The lane is very straight with little diversity of features (similar width, form and direction) and much of the historic integrity has been lost due to property entrances.



Figure 10 - Western end of Tyndales Lane

After the junction with Hyde Lane the lane remains narrow, but has several property entrances with some erosion on either side of the lane.

There are good examples of coppiced stools on a low level bank at the eastern end of the lane, but opposite this a new modern fence and laurel hedging has replaced any historic features that may have existed (Figure 11).



Figure 11 - Coppiced stools on low level bank with modern fencing opposite

5.4 Slough Road (CHLLANE 72)

Slough Road was a new proposed lane and had not been previously assessed. As it was a new lane the full length of the lane (approximately 1km) was assessed. However, it was found that the initial 100m of the western end have many highway improvements (kerb stones, signage) and a property entrance (Figure 12) so it was decided to begin the lane assessment at the end of the property boundary.

While the lane is quite wide (two lanes in places), its width changes along the length and it has reasonable historic integrity because of the small number of properties along its length, the historic farm complexes, green lane and well preserved banks, ditches and verges.

The farm entrances have been widened and show some evidence of erosion (Figure 13), however, these farm complexes with their Listed Buildings contribute to the overall group value and aesthetics of the lane.

The assessment of the lane was ended at the district border.



Figure 12 - Western end of Slough Road with property entrance



Figure 13 - Erosion and widening at farm entrance

5.5 Herbage Park Road (or Old London Road, CHLLANE73)

Herbage Park road is identified on the NSG as Old London Road up to the District border where the name changes to Herbage Park Road, although there are no changes in the road to show this name change. The full length of Herbage Park Road was assessed from the A414 in Runsell Green to the district border. However, while the green at the southern end of the road is historic there have been considerable highway improvements and modern development so it was decided to start the assessment at the property boundary of the public house, which is marked on the 1st edition OS mapping.

At the start of this road there is a large area of erosion and modern road signs on a wide and very busy road (Figure 14).



Figure 14 - Start of Herbage Park Road

Despite how busy the road is it does retain some of its historic integrity, with banks, verges and ditches visible along much of its length. There is limited hedgerow loss along the length and there is only erosion in a limited number of places (Figure 15).

However, there is only very limited Archaeological Potential, Group Value and Aesthetic Value as there are no historic features such as farm complexes and the views along the lane are limited.



Figure 15 - Erosion and kerb stones on corner of Herbage Park Road

5.6 Gay Bowers Road (CHLLANE 74)

Gay Bowers Road was fully assessed in 2010, but was divided into two lanes at a suitable point on the lane. The south-west end met the criteria and was recommended for protected lane status, but a short section (approximately 350m) at the north-east end was discounted. This end of the lane was reassessed in 2017.

The north-eastern end of the lane, at the junction with Capons Lane, has kerb stones and a narrow sloping verge (Figure 16). The lane is narrow and has some oak pollards along the verge. These verges, with banks and ditches in places, continue for c. 50-60m. The lane has several driveways many of which are not marked on the 1st edition OS mapping. While the nursing home is historic (some of the buildings are listed), the entrance has been improved (Figure 17) and the historic boundary features (such as hedgerows) have been removed.

After the nursing home there is a single further property entrance (Figure 18) before the start of the Protect Lane. The new driveways, signage, hedgerow removal and new entrances to the nursing home all reduce the historic integrity of this section of the lane. The historic integrity of the south-west end of the lane is good, with limited highway improvements and little loss to the historic fabric of the lane.



Figure 16 - Start of Gay Bowers Road (north east end)



Figure 17 - Driveways and entrance to nursing home



Figure 18 - Property entrance at western end of assessed lane

6 Application of the threshold for Protected Lane Status

After completion of the assessment and scoring of the Candidate Lanes, the final step in determining whether assessed lanes should be designated as Protected Lanes was to apply a threshold score (the threshold score of 14 was established in the original Chelmsford project) to each of the historic lanes to identify lanes that were deemed worthy of Protected Lane status.

The threshold score was determined by the following method:

- *Stage 1 – The lane must score a minimum of 2 for integrity.*

If a lane fails to score 2 for integrity it is not taken forward to the next stage.

- *Stage 2 – The combined score for integrity and diversity must be 5 or more.*

If a lane fails to score 5 for its combined integrity and diversity scores it is not taken forward to the next stage.

- *Stage 3 – The sub total for integrity and diversity (5 or more) from Stage 2, when combined with the scores for group value, archaeological association, archaeological potential, aesthetic value and biodiversity value must be 14 or more.*

The threshold score of 14 was arrived at by adding the minimum score of 5 points from Stage 2 to a score of 9 which is equal to the combined total of the second highest scores attainable for each of the remaining criteria i.e. Group Value score of 2, Archaeological Association score of 1, Archaeological Potential score of 2, Aesthetic Value score of 2 and Biodiversity score of 2. A lane which scores the maximum score of 10 during Stage 2, from a combination of the maximum integrity and diversity scores, must score the second highest score on at least one of the remaining criteria to qualify.

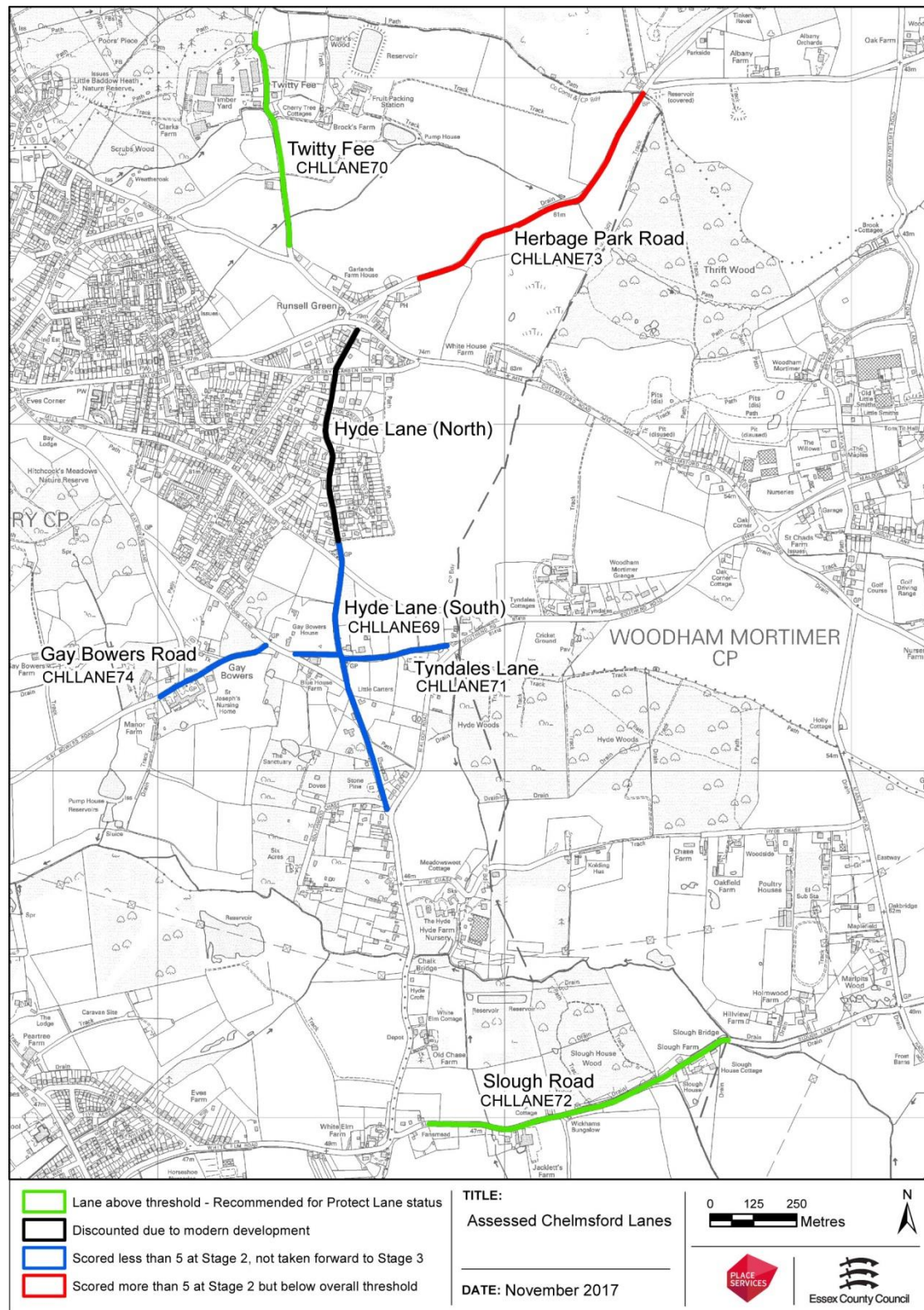


Figure 19 - Lanes which meet the criteria and score above 14 (green) and those which failed at Stages 1 and 2 (blue and red)

LANE ID	National Street Gazetteer Name (NSG)	Diversity	Integrity	Potential	Aesthetic	Biodiversity	Group Value	Archaeol. Assoc.	Stage 2 total	TOTAL
CHLLANE69	Hyde Lane (South)	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	4	-
CHLLANE70	Twitty Fee	2	4	1	2	3	1	1	6	14
CHLLANE71	Tyndales Lane	2	1	1	1	2	1	0	3	-
CHLLANE72	Slough Road	2	4	2	2	4	2	2	6	18
CHLLANE74	Gay Bowers Road	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	4	-
CHLLANE73	Herbage Park Road	2	4	1	1	2	1	1	6	12

Table 1 Scores for all the lanes assessed. Lane below the threshold are highlighted in red

Table 1 shows that two of the six lanes meet the criteria (Twitty Fee and Slough Road) and are recommended for Protected Lane status (Figure 19). Of the four lanes that did not meet the criteria, three were rejected at Stage 2 because their combined Diversity and Historic Integrity scores were below 5. Herbage Park Road was taken forward to Stage 3, but due to a lack archaeological potential, limited Aesthetic and Group Value and limited archaeological associations the lane does not reach the Threshold of 14 and therefore is not recommended for Protected Lane Status.

7 Conclusions

The project has applied robust and defensible criteria consistently and methodically to the six lanes assessed in order to determine lanes that are worthy of Protected Lanes status.

Of the six lanes assessed only two have fulfilled the criteria to become Protected Lanes. The lanes that were assessed but did not meet the minimum threshold failed because of the nature of road use and highway improvements/changes. Road improvements, such as widening and driveways were found in a number of areas along the length of the lanes, resulting in damage and loss of verges and associated historic assets, which then affects the historic integrity score.

This suggests that, with the ever increasing rise in the number, size and diversity of motorised vehicles using minor rural roads (CPRE, 1996), Protected Lane status may not in itself be enough to secure the long term future of these important historic landscape features. Consideration should therefore be given to exploring options and partnerships for influencing user behaviour and applying intelligent and positive measures of highway management that will serve to encourage local journeys to be made on bicycle or foot, and for recreation, and reduce the impact of vehicles on the historic fabric of lanes, whilst maintaining their local character (e.g. CPRE, 2003).

The two lanes will be also added to the Essex County Council layer of Lanes and the digital layer has been supplied to Chelmsford City Council.

8 References

Chelmsford Borough Council	2008	'Our Planning Strategy for the Future: Core Strategy and Development Control Policies'
CPRE	1996	'Lost Lanes: An investigation into the impact of rising traffic levels on England's country lanes'
CPRE	2003	CPRE's guide to Quiet Lanes
Department of Transport	2006	'The Quiet Lanes and Home zones (England) Regulations'
Essex County Council	1998	'Protected Lanes'
Essex County Council	2009	'Protected Lanes Study for Chelmsford Borough Council: Summary Report'
Emmison, F G	1991	'Elizabethan Life: Home, Work and Land'
Hunter, J	1999	'The Essex Landscape'
Rackham, O	1986	'The History of the Countryside'

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