EX HS066E


SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH D


SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH E


SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH F

SANDFORD PARK,
GREAT BADDOW

SITE APPRAISAL
PHOTOGRAPHS: D - F

RECOMMENDED VIEWING
DISTANCE: 20CM @A1

DATE TAKEN: APR 2018

PROJECT NUMBER: 28953

BARTON WILLMORE


**SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH G**


**SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH H**


**SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH I**

**SANDFORD PARK,**
**GREAT BADDOW**

**SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPHS: G - I**

**RECOMMENDED VIEWING DISTANCE: 20CM @A1**

**DATE TAKEN: APR 2018**

**PROJECT NUMBER: 28953**

BARTON WILLMORE


SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH J

SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH K

SANDFORD PARK,
GREAT BADDOW

SITE APPRAISAL
PHOTOGRAPHS: J & K

RECOMMENDED VIEWING
DISTANCE: 20CM @A1

DATE TAKEN: APR 2018

PROJECT NUMBER: 28953

BARTON
WILLMORE

# APPENDIX A.1: MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT TABLES

# Sandford Park:
# Appendix A.1 Management Tables

Prepared on behalf of Hopkins Homes

November 2018

# A1.0 LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT COMPONENTS & PRESCRIPTIONS

A1.1 The landscape features of the Proposed Development have been divided into a number of different Landscape Management Components, relating to **Figure 5: Landscape Strategy Plan**. To achieve the overarching objectives for the landscape strategy, maintenance recommendations and tasks have been identified for each Landscape Management Component.

**Landscape Management Components**

A1.2 The Landscape Management Components are outlined as follows:

- Component 1: Existing Tree Belts and Trees
- Component 2: Proposed Tree Belts, Wet Woodland and Individual Trees
- Component 3: Existing and Proposed Hedgerows
- Component 4: Existing Standing Water and Marginal/Aquatic Vegetation
- Component 5: Existing Watercourses
- Component 6: Proposed Wildflower Grassland
- Component 7: Proposed Meadow Grassland

**Component 1: Existing Tree Belts and Trees**

A1.3 A yearly routine inspection will be undertaken by a qualified arboriculturist appointed by the management company, in addition to ad hoc inspections following extreme weather events, with provision to engage the expertise of a qualified arboricultural consultant where necessary, dependent on the condition of the trees at the time of inspection.

**Table 1.1: Summary of Maintenance Tasks - Existing Tree Belts and Trees**

| Task | Frequency / Timing |
|---|---|
| Safety inspections and report on condition of trees by arboricultural advisor. | Once a year and after severe weather |
| Report to landscape manager, following routine maintenance visits, on the existence and location of any trees or parts of trees which are suffering from visible defects likely to cause danger, potential danger, obstruction or nuisance to users of adjoining properties, pathways and roadways. | As required following maintenance inspection. |
| Works recommended following inspection typically include the removal of fallen, diseased, dead, dying or dangerous trees and damaged or crossing branches. Removed timber should be used for the creation of deadwood habitat in local areas. | As recommended by annual inspection. |

**Component 2: Proposed Tree Belts, Wet Woodland and Individual Trees**

A1.4 Areas of proposed planting of specimen trees and tree belts occur throughout the Proposal Site and include planting of street trees, parkland trees in open spaces, wet woodland and indigenous trees as tree belts and hedgerow trees. The proposed trees enhance biodiversity opportunities as part of a mosaic of habitats and provide structural diversity, complementing the existing structural vegetation surrounding the Site. Tree species to be planted include field maple, common alder, silver birch, common oak and rowan.

A1.5 A summary of maintenance tasks and their frequency is set out below:

**Table 1.2: Trees**

| Task | Frequency / Timing |
|---|---|
| Maintenance of a 1m 80% weed-free area to the base of each tree for five years – this can be achieved through the application of a 50-75 mm mulch in this area. | Once or twice a year and as required, for 5 years |
| Maintenance of rabbit guards and other forms of protection. | Monthly until removal |
| Maintenance of stakes and ties, including loosening as necessary. | Monthly until removal |
| Maintenance of good levels of soil fertility and moisture. Irrigation may be required during dry periods. A 5075 mm mulch for 1.0m around the base of each tree will increase soil moisture retention. | Watering to field capacity min. 8 times monthly in dry months |
| Treatment of pests and diseases and repair of any damage from vandalism. | Monthly |
| Check for root firmness and upright alignment of tree after high winds, frost heave and in spring and autumn until trees are considered to be wind firm. | Twice annually and as required |
| Formative pruning to avoid future structural problems and to remedy disease and vandalism problems. | As required following maintenance visits |
| Removal of guards, stakes and ties. | After 2 years, subject to inspection |

**Table 1.3: Street Trees**

| Task | Frequency / Timing |
|---|---|
| Create clear stem to street trees, removing epicormic growth and suckers. | As required |
| Lift tree canopies to minimum height of 2m, maintaining balanced canopy as tree matures. | Annually |
| Reduce crown to maintain canopies clear of buildings and lighting, maintaining a balanced form. | As required |

**Component 3: Existing and Proposed Hedgerows**

A1.6 The existing native hedgerows should be allowed to develop a tall, dense, bushy structure although they may require trimming outside the bird breeding season from late February/

March to August inclusive, to prevent encroachment over any adjacent footpaths and roadways, and to promote new growth. Trimming of hedgerows should manage an 'A' or domed shape, with no vertical sides. Heights of hedgerows will vary, in accordance with their location, species and function. Canopy trees within hedgerows are to be maintained in accordance with the prescriptions for existing trees.

A1.7 Best practice horticultural techniques should be used in the planting of hedgerow vegetation to ensure rapid early growth. Rapid attainment of effective physical enclosure would be achieved through the autumn planting of both hedgerows and hedgerows with trees. The ground beneath hedgerow planting will be maintained as bare ground in the first 2 to 3 years after establishment. Depending upon establishment of hedgerow trees, these areas would then be seeded with a low-vigour native wildflower seed mix suitable for hedgerows. The ground flora should be maintained through annual cutting and manual removal of vigorous weed species. Once established, new hedgerow planting should be subject to the same maintenance work as for the existing hedgerows.

A1.8 Specific management tasks and their frequencies are set out below:

**Table 1.4: Summary of Maintenance Tasks - Existing Hedgerows**

| Task | Frequency / Timing |
|---|---|
| Trim outside the bird breeding season from late February/March to August inclusive, on a rotational basis. | Once every three years |
| If managed by laying, this should be on a rotational basis. This is a traditional management technique and seeks to retain the structural integrity of hedgerows and maintain connections with other habitats. Cutting carried out at the end of the winter, thereby retaining berries through the winter months for wildlife, and avoiding the bird breeding season. | Approximately 10-yearly rotation, in February or March. |
| Retain dead, over-mature or dying hedgerow trees wherever possible, but those which are considered dangerous for health and safety reasons, for example adjacent to public footpaths or residences, to be felled or lopped as appropriate to maintain safety, and in accordance with protected species constraints. | As recommended by annual inspection. |

**Table 1.5: Summary of Maintenance Tasks - Proposed Hedgerows**

| Task | Frequency / Timing |
|---|---|
| Undertake routine maintenance visits identifying any hedgerow plants which are suffering from visible defects likely to cause danger, potential danger, obstruction or nuisance to users of adjoining properties, pathways and roadways. | Monthly |
| Non-desirable woody species should be removed during management operations and at other times as necessary, where this does not prejudice screening requirements. | Monthly |

| | |
|---|---|
| Cut back undergrowth, overgrowing or overhanging hedgerow shrubs and minor tree branches from any pathways to maintain an unobstructed width of at least 2m or the existing width of the pathway, whichever is the greater. | Monthly |
| In the interests of wildlife, hand weeding, where feasible, should take precedence over the use of herbicides in hedgerows. However, in certain instances, herbicide may be the most effective measure to take against unwanted species. Where herbicide application is needed this should be in small controlled areas around the tree base. Herbicides should comply with the Plant Protection Product Regulations 2011 and Plant Protection Products (Sustainable Use) Regulations 2012 and the HSE Pesticides Register of UK Authorised Products. | Hand weeding: As required by maintenance visits.<br><br>Herbicide application: July - August |
| If managed by laying, this should be on a rotational basis. This is a traditional management technique and seeks to retain the structural integrity of hedgerows and maintain connections with other habitats. Cutting carried out at the end of the winter, thereby retaining berries through the winter months for wildlife, and avoiding the bird breeding season. | Approximately 10-yearly rotation, in February or March. |

**Component 4: Existing Standing Water and Marginal/Aquatic Vegetation**

A1.9 At present, vegetation at the margin of the central and eastern lakes is limited, and it is the intention that, through further sympathetic planting, new plant species will begin to colonise the area and complement the nature reserve.

A1.10 Monitoring will assess the following:

**Table 1.6: Existing Standing Water and Marginal/Aquatic Vegetation**

| Task | Frequency / Timing |
|---|---|
| Monitor water quality and take appropriate preventative/remedial action | Monthly, and as necessary |
| Manual removal of invasive/exotic species | Yearly, in autumn or winter |
| Cutting back 10-20% of reedbed and associated marginal vegetation to 75mm on long rotation to maximise biodiversity. | Yearly, between September and January, on a 7-year rotation |
| De-silting and clearance of litter and leaf-fall. Remove no more than 50% of bottom muck, silt or dense strands of dominant vegetation within any calendar year. | Every 4 years, as required, December to January |
| Assess extent of shading from trees and shrubs. Prune as necessary | Every 4 years in late winter, as required |

**Component 5: Existing and Proposed Watercourses**

A1.11 The proposed water bodies within the Proposed Development will be managed to enhance value to wildlife. The proposed water bodies will be seeded with an appropriate seed mix for the moisture content of the soil, relating to their function, which will enable an appropriate interface with adjacent grassland or planted areas.

A1.12 Specific maintenance details should include:

**Table 1.7: Summary of Maintenance Tasks - Existing Watercourses**

| Task | Frequency / Timing |
|---|---|
| Removal of litter | Weekly |
| Monitor to assess the condition in both amenity and ecological terms including the success of aquatic plant colonisation; condition and diversity of banks, including presence of scrub; maintenance of open and shaded sections; water quality; and the spread of any invasive species which will be controlled, ideally by hand, to ensure the growth of other species is not suppressed. | Annually |
| Maintain a balance between open and shaded areas to vary the encouragement and suppression of aquatic plant growth. | Annually |
| Provide for invertebrates and other organisms and allow a wider range of plants to grow by cutting reeds and removing arisings every summer, in rotation to enable continuity of habitat. | 3-year rotation |
| Cut back bankside herbaceous plants and grasses in late summer before they set seed to promote a diverse, tussocky growth. Leave uncut the strip at the base of the banks of water bodies to avoid disturbing the marginal and leave occasional strips uncut from the top of the bank to the base, to maintain a diversity of habitats associated with the water body. | Annually |
| Carry out operations on waterside trees between October and May to avoid disturbance to breeding birds and invertebrates. | When required |
| Remove rubbish and pollutants, especially in the bottom sediments. | Annually |
| Monitor and control the growth of invasive weeds including Giant hogweed (Heracleum mantegazzianum) and Japanese knotweed (Polygonum cuspidatum), prevention of the spread of which is required under the Wildlife and Countryside Management Act 1981. | Monthly |
| Confine movement channels for maintenance to the minimum number of routes to avoid excessive trampling of the habitat. | |
| Pond banks shall be checked for erosion and stabilisation of eroded side slopes to be carried out. | Annually |
| Shallow slopes (1 in 3 or less) to be maintained to ensure safety, allow people to enter or leave a SUDS feature safely and for ease of maintenance | Annually |

**Component 6: Proposed Wildflower Grassland**

A1.13 Areas of wildflower grassland will provide areas for habitat connectivity and foraging as well as visual appreciation of native wildflower species and associated fauna. Wildflower grassland will be managed to encourage communities of high nature conservation value, both in terms of floral diversity and in the provision of habitat and foraging.

A1.14 A summary of maintenance tasks and their frequency is set out below:

**Table 1.8: Proposed Wildflower Grassland**

| Task | Frequency / Timing |
|---|---|
| Remove any litter or debris. | Weekly |
| In the first year after planting, wildflower grassland will be cut regularly to a height of 50mm, stopping in June-August and a final cut in September/October.<br>Thereafter the grassland will be managed as hay meadows, with two annual cuts. The first cut to 150mm in late July to late August and the second cut to 75mm in September.<br>Arisings will be left in situ for 2 to 3 days before removing and disposing off site. | Frequent cuts during first year, thereafter twice annually, spring and autumn. |
| 0.5m wide margins alongside pathways will be mown to a height of 35mm with the first spring cut and all cuts thereafter whenever the sward reaches a height of 100mm. | Allow up to 16 cuts per season |
| If competitive grasses become prominent in the wildflower grassland areas, consideration should be given to the over-sowing of Yellow Rattle Rhinanthus minor, as this species can help to control the coverage of vigorous grasses. As Yellow Rattle sets seed in July, cutting or grazing between April and mid-July should be avoided as this will prevent the plant seeding and therefore eliminate it. A late July hay cut then supports the propagation of the species within the sward by scattering the seed. | Late July |
| Additional seeding, to maintain sward diversity | Every 5 years, autumn, as required. |

**Component 7: Proposed Meadow Grassland**

A1.15 The areas of grassland not allocated for wildflower meadow on Figure 5: Landscape Strategy will be maintained as meadow grassland.

A1.16 A summary of maintenance tasks and their frequency is set out below:

**Table 1.9: Proposed Meadow Grassland**

| Task | Frequency / Timing |
|---|---|
| Remove any litter or debris. | Weekly |
| The grassland will be managed as hay meadow, with two annual cuts. The first cut to 150mm in late July to late August and the second cut to 75mm in September. Arisings will be left in situ for 2 to 3 days before removing and disposing off site. | Twice annually, late summer and autumn. |
| Removal of colonising Buddleia via spot treatment of freshly pruned stumps (large shrubs) or leaves (small shrubs) with non-residual herbicide, or digging up, as required. Arisings to be disposed of offsite to an authorised green waste facility. | Once a year |
| Rotational coppicing of colonising scrub, excepting Buddleia. Coppiced stems and uprooted shrubs removed to local areas to be used as habitat refugia. | 7-yearly rotation, in January to March |

| | |
|---|---|
| Mechanical or manual excavation tools to be used as required to create, extend and maintain a complex of permanent and ephemeral pools with bare margins and bare ground within areas of grassland. All landforming works to be undertaken between July and February to avoid the bird nesting season. | Once a year, in winter |

## APPENDIX A.2: EXTRACTS FROM PUBLISHED LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS

National Character Area Profile 86: South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands (2014)

National Character Area Profile 111: Northern Thames Basin (2013)

Essex Landscape Character Assessment (2003)

Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford LCA (2006)

Chelmsford Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity Assessment (2017)

Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation Conservation Area – Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2009)

National Character Area profile:

# 111: Northern Thames Basin

Supporting documents



NATURAL ENGLAND

www.naturalengland.org.uk

## Statements of Environmental Opportunity

**SEO 1:** Manage rivers and river valleys to protect and improve water quality and help to alleviate flooding in the downstream urban areas, while also helping to improve aquifer recharge and provide a sufficient store of water to meet future need, especially with predicted climatic changes. Conserve the riparian landscapes and habitats, for their recreational and educational amenity for their internationally significant ecological value.

**SEO 2:** Manage the agricultural landscape and diverse range of soils which allow the Northern Thames Basin to be a major food provider, using methods and crops that retain and improve soil quality, water availability and biodiversity.

**SEO 3:** Protect and appropriately manage the historic environment for its contribution to local character and sense of identity and as a framework for habitat restoration and sustainable development, ensuring high design standards (particularly in the London Green Belt) which respect the open and built character of the Thames Basin. Enhance and increase access between rural and urban areas through good green infrastructure links to allow local communities recreational, health and wellbeing benefits.

**SEO 4:** Manage and expand the significant areas of broadleaf woodland and wood pasture, and increase tree cover within urban areas, for the green infrastructure links and important habitats that they provide, for the sense of tranquillity they bring, their ability to screen urban influences and their role in reducing heat island effect and sequestering and storing carbon.

**Ancient woodland at Pound Wood in Benfleet, Essex.**

# Description

## Physical and functional links to other National Character Areas

The Northern Thames Basin forms the rising land above the low-lying marshy landscapes adjoining the coast and estuaries of the Greater Thames Estuary and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths National Character Areas (NCAs) to its east and south-east extent and enjoys associated views of these areas. Chalk geology commonly underpins this NCA and the neighbouring Chilterns and South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands NCAs to the west and north; The Chilterns, a formation of chalk hills and plateaux with a prominent escarpment, offers views across to this similarly elevated NCA. To the south-west the Thames Valley NCA forms a wedge-shaped area containing the open Thames flood plain surrounded by rolling clay farmland. Directly south is the Inner London NCA on the banks of the Thames where the river valley widens out into a broad flood plain.

The London Basin Chalk aquifer, which underlies much of the western section of the Northern Thames Basin NCA, is the principal aquifer supplying water to Inner London. The Chalk is confined in the basin by the overlying Tertiary formations of London Clay, which means recharge largely occurs in the extensive Chalk outcrop of the Northern Thames Basin and into the Chilterns NCA to the north and the North Downs to the south.

A small part of the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) straddles the eastern edge of this NCA, the more northerly South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands and the south- western tip of the Suffolk Coast and

**Major transport links include the M25 motorway.**

Heaths NCA. The urban character in the south of the Northern Thames Basin continues into the Thames Valley and Greater Thames Estuary NCAs.

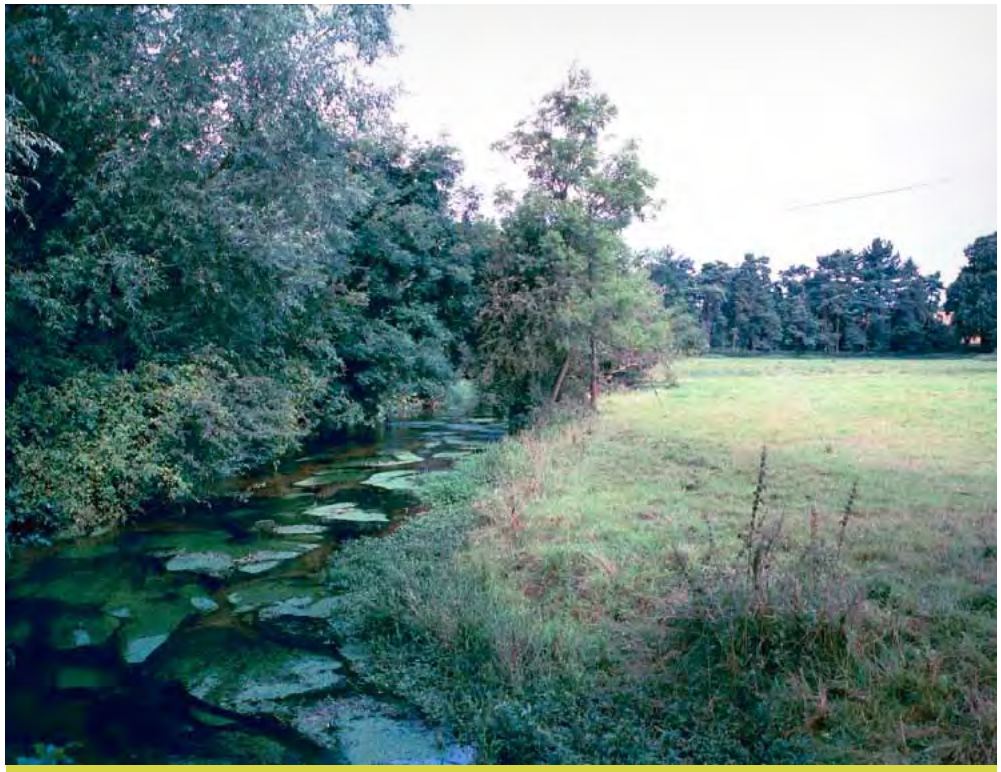
The landscape becomes extensively urbanised towards the Inner London NCA and includes major transport links from outside the area such as the East Coast mainline railway, M11 which connects to London and Cambridgeshire, the M1 which passes north-west through the Chilterns to the Midlands beyond, and

the M25 which provides circular access to all parts of London and the south. Important A roads providing wide physical links include the A12 and A120 and the A1(M), which has a similar route to the M1 but diverts towards the East Anglian Chalk and Bedfordshire Claylands NCAs.

Many watercourses feed in or flow from surrounding areas, often along courses incised into boulder clays or tills, for instance the Blackwater and Colne flowing from the South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands and the Ver and Lea from the westerly Chilterns NCA which flow into Hertfordshire before joining the Thames in inner London. These, along with others, form a series of river valleys draining south to the Thames and east to the North Sea and Thames Estuary, including the Roding, Wid, Chelmer, Roach and Crouch. Also notable is the Grand Union Canal, which runs from here through several other NCAs northwards to Birmingham.

## Distinct areas

- Hertfordshire plateaux and river valleys
- Essex wooded hills and ridges
- London Clay lowlands
- Essex heathlands



**River Mimram valley flood plain, Hertfordshire.**

## Key characteristics

- The landform is varied with a wide plateau divided by river valleys. The prominent hills and ridges of the 'Bagshot Hills' are notable to the north-west and extensive tracts of flat land are found in the south.
- Characteristic of the area is a layer of thick clay producing heavy, acidic soils, resulting in retention of considerable areas of ancient woodland.
- Areas capped by glacial sands and gravels have resulted in nutrient-poor, free-draining soils which support remnant lowland heathlands, although these are now small. Areas that have alluvial deposits present are well drained and fertile.
- The water bearing underlying Chalk beds are a main source of recharge for the principal London Basin Chalk aquifer.
- A diverse landscape with a series of broad valleys containing the major rivers Ver, Colne and Lea, and slightly steeper valleys of the rivers Stour, Colne and Roman. Numerous springs rise at the base of the Bagshot Beds and several reservoirs are dotted throughout the area
- The pattern of woodlands is varied across the area and includes considerable ancient semi-natural woodland. Hertfordshire is heavily wooded in some areas as are parts of Essex, while other areas within Essex are more open in character. Significant areas of wood pasture and pollarded veteran trees are also present.
- The field pattern is very varied across the basin reflecting historical activity. Informal patterns of 18th-century or earlier enclosure reflect medieval colonisation of the heaths. Regular planned enclosures dating from the Romano-British period are a subtle but nationally important feature on the flat land to the south-east of the area. In the Essex heathlands 18th- and 19th-century enclosure of heathlands and commons followed by extensive 20th-century field enlargement is dominant.
- Mixed farming, with arable land predominating in the Hertfordshire plateaux, parts of the London Clay lowlands and Essex heathlands. Grasslands are characteristic of the river valleys throughout. Horticulture and market gardening are found on the light, sandy soils of former heaths in Essex, particularly around Colchester, along with orchards, meadow pasture and leys following numerous narrow rivers and streams.
- The diverse range of semi-natural habitats include ancient woodland, lowland heath and floodplain grazing marsh and provide important habitats for a wide range of species including great crested newt, water vole, dormouse and otter.
- Rich archaeology including sites related to Roman occupation, with the Roman capital at Colchester and City of St Albans (Verulamium) and links to London. Landscape parklands surrounding 16th- and 17th-century rural estates and country houses built for London merchants are a particular feature in Hertfordshire.
- The medieval pattern of small villages and dispersed farming settlement remains central to the character of parts of Hertfordshire and Essex. Market towns have expanded over time as have the London suburbs and commuter settlements, with the creation of new settlements such as the pioneering garden city at Welwyn and the planned town at Basildon.
- Brick-built dwellings are characteristic from the late 17th century onwards. Prior to this dwellings and farm buildings tended to be timber built with weatherboarding, now mainly painted white but traditionally black or tarred, and whitewashed plaster walls.

## Landscape opportunities

- Protect and enhance the character of 'undeveloped' countryside on the edge of London, much assisted by significant areas of woodland cover, which retains a strong sense of tranquillity and aids the retention of a clear distinction and separation between different settlements.

- Protect the overall agricultural diversity of the wider countryside with areas of arable, intensive horticulture and pasture, encouraging sustainable management to protect agricultural soils and enhance farmland biodiversity.

- Protect the underlying dispersed medieval settlement pattern characteristic of much of the NCA with attractive hamlets and villages with their distinctive vernacular, (including timber-framed houses often with timber weatherboard and small parish churches with timber spires and shingle cladding) important historic towns (including Colchester and St Albans - Verulamium) of Roman origin, and the more recent garden city of Welwyn and the plotlands of the 1920s and 1930s.

- Protect and appropriately manage the rich archaeology of the area including buried archaeology, iron-age hill forts and the sites of abandoned prehistoric settlements (especially found on the Hertfordshire plateaux and Essex heathlands), and the rich heritage of designed parklands associated with estates of Hertfordshire and Essex, while also conserving landscapes linked to the arts – most notably Dedham Vale, the inspiration for the painter, Constable.

- Protect and appropriately manage important exposures of the Tertiary and Quaternary sedimentary deposits with the latter demonstrating the close inter-relationship between geological history and human development.

- Manage and significantly reinforce the distinctive and varied hedgerow pattern with medieval enclosures contributing to the enclosed and wooded character of the Hertfordshire plateaux and river valleys, the Essex wooded hills and ridges and river valleys elsewhere. Replace lost hedgerows to reinforce field pattern in the Essex heathlands and London Clay lowlands. Significantly increase the population of hedgerow trees that were once a common feature across the NCA before the onset of Dutch elm disease.

- Manage and significantly expand areas of remnant wood pasture that was once a dominant feature of this NCA, providing the interlinking fabric between the wooded and open commons and areas of ancient woodland and royal hunting forests in the Essex wooded hills and ridges and the Essex heathlands. Re-link remaining fragments of wood pasture where possible and create new areas where this can contribute to enhancing recreational opportunities and biodiversity and can provide appropriate restoration of past mineral workings.

- Manage, restore and re-link areas of remnant lowland heathland found on areas capped by glacial sands and gravels, notably within the Essex heathlands and Essex wooded hills and ridges sub-areas, through localised restoration of agricultural land, conversion of conifer plantations and the sympathetic management of recreation facilities, especially golf courses.

- Manage, restore and significantly expand the wetlands of the river valleys of the NCA including wet grassland, valley woodlands, flood plain woodlands, non-coastal grazing marsh, fens, rush pasture, swamp and valley mires which, with their high water tables are important sites for over-wintering wildfowl, adding significantly to biodiversity and landscape character. Restore river valley minerals sites to wetlands and washlands and seek

opportunities to restore the natural geomorphology of rivers where this will significantly enhance their biodiversity and landscape contribution, including the conservation and planting of a new generation of riverside willows.

- Manage water quality impacts to the principal chalk aquifer by implementing land management practices to reduce sources of pollution, and to improve recharge.

- Plan for a significant expansion in the woodland cover of this NCA, conserving and re-linking areas of ancient woodland, bringing enhanced landscape structure to the open landscapes of the NCA, and providing new woodland as a recreational resource close to settlements. This will provide a means of creating a clear division between expanding settlements, building on proposals for the Green Grid and of the Community Forests of the area, and through the restoration of mineral workings, potentially providing a mosaic with wetland habitats.

**Photo credits**

Front cover: Ancient woodland at Bencroft Wood in the Hertfordshire plateau.
© Hertfordshire County Council
Page 4, 14: © Jana Ehrhardt, Essex Wildlife Trust
Page 5: © Essex Wildlife Trust
Page 6, 7, 9, 11, 16, 35, 39 & 42: © Hertfordshire County Council
Page 15: © Chris Huggins, Essex Wildlife Trust
Page 37: © Essex Biodiversity Project, Essex Wildlife Trust

NATURAL ENGLAND

**Natural England is here to secure a healthy natural environment for people to enjoy, where wildlife is protected and England's traditional landscapes are safeguarded for future generations.**

Catalogue Code: NE466
ISBN: 978-1-78367-023-9

Should an alternative format of this publication be required, please contact our enquiries line for more information: 0845 600 3078 or email enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

**www.naturalengland.org.uk**

National Character Area profile:

# 86. South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland

Supporting documents



www.naturalengland.org.uk

NATURAL ENGLAND

## Statements of Environmental Opportunity

- **SEO 1:** Maintain and enhance the character of this gently undulating, rural landscape by maintaining agricultural productivity and encouraging sustainable land management practices that protect and enhance the landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity assets and benefit carbon storage and water quality, as well as the over-riding sense of place.

- **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.

- **SEO 3:** Enhance the slow-flowing, winding rivers and their pastoral valley flood plains that provide linkages through the landscape, including redundant sand and gravel extraction sites, for their ecological, historical and recreational importance. This will support the operation of natural processes and their contribution to biodiversity, geodiversity, soil quality, water availability, regulating water flow and the character of the area.

- **SEO 4:** Conserve and enhance the distinctive character of the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with its much-visited 'Constable Country' and improve opportunities for people to enjoy and understand the distinctive assemblage of historic landscapes outside the AONB. Ensure that access and recreational resources are managed to be compatible with the tranquillity of the area and the special qualities of protected landscapes, while providing a valuable health, education and access resource.

**The gently undulating rural landcape characterised by arable fields within a network of hedgerows, copses, fragmented woodlands and isolated farmsteads.**

# Description

## Physical and functional links to other National Character Areas

The South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland National Character Area (NCA) shares a boundary with six other NCAs: Suffolk Coast and Heaths, South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands, The Brecks, East Anglian Chalk, Chilterns and the Northern Thames Basin. They all share a generally flat topography, with underlying bedrock geology of Late Cretaceous Chalk overlain by sand and gravel deposits as well as glacial tills. The underlying chalk aquifer supplies the population of East Anglia, functionally linking these areas.

To the north-east the landscape flows seamlessly into the flatter and more open South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands NCA, which forms part of the same boulder clay arable plateau. Intervisibility between the NCAs is varied due to the claylands' low, undulating nature. Transport links include the A140 to Norwich and the Great Eastern Main Line between London and Norwich.

To the north-west the NCA abuts the dry, open landscape of the Brecks. Views from the elevated plateau extend across the Brecks to 'the ship of the Fens', Ely Cathedral. In dry years the rivers in the Ely Ouse catchment supply water via the Ely Ouse to Essex Transfer Scheme to the headwaters of the Suffolk and Essex rivers, the Stour and the Pant/Blackwater. Water is then abstracted from the rivers to the reservoirs of Abberton and Hanningfield in the Northern Thames Basin NCA, to supply the increasing demand for potable water from south Essex and London.

To the west, the broad-scale character of the East Anglian Chalk NCA rises away from the claylands. Intervisibility is often framed by beech shelterbelts, although generally views are open and panoramic. The Wadlow Wind Farm, north of Balsham, is a prominent feature across the NCAs' dividing boundary. The River Granta flows westwards from the claylands, forming the River Cam in Cambridge. The M11 and A10 dissect the western claylands, linking the East Anglian Chalk to the Northern Thames Basin, while in the north the A14 and the Ipswich to Cambridge rail line create functional links.

Links to the Northern Thames Basin NCA are created by the rivers Rib, Ash and Stort, which flow south along watercourses incised into heavy boulder clays, while to the south-east the rivers Colne, Blackwater, Brain, Ter and Chelmer flow from the clay plateau eastwards to the North Sea. Flood storage areas such as the Sible Hedingham lagoons ease flood risk further downstream in the Northern Thames Basin and Greater Thames Estuary NCAs. Views extend to the shallow wooded ridgeline that swings round in an arc from Tiptree to Epping Forest, enclosing the area.

In the east along the lower part of the Stour Valley, the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) extends into the adjoining Suffolk Coast and Heaths and Northern Thames Basin NCAs. The River Gipping flows into the River Orwell at Ipswich, which straddles the boundary between the NCAs. The East Coast Main Line and the A14 and A12 trunk roads also create functional links.

## Distinct areas

- The lower half of the Stour Valley – the Dedham Vale.

## 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.

**Continued on next page...**

## Key characteristics continued...

- There is a dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, parishes and small settlements around 'tyes' (commons) or strip greens and isolated hamlets. The NCA features a concentration of isolated moated farmsteads and numerous well-preserved medieval towns and large villages.
- Larger 20th-century development has taken place to the south and east around Chelmsford, Ipswich and the new towns of Harlow and Stevenage.
- Traditional timber-frame, often elaborate buildings with exposed timbers, colour-washed render, pargeting and steeply pitched roofs with pegtiles or long straw thatch. Sometimes they have been refronted with Georgian red brick or Victorian cream-coloured bricks ('Suffolk whites'). Clay lump is often used in cottages and farm buildings.
- Winding, narrow and sometimes sunken lanes are bounded by deep ditches, wide verges and strong hedgerows. Transport infrastructure includes the A14, A12, M11 and Stansted Airport.
- A strong network of public rights of way provides access to the area's archetypal lowland English countryside.

## Landscape opportunities

- Carefully manage the extraction of sand and gravel deposits so that damage to archaeology, geodiversity and existing habitats is minimised and that geodiversity and biodiversity enhancements are maximised, through the creation of new wetland habitats and site restoration.
- Encourage sustainable land management practices that do not detract from existing character, benefit agricultural production for local markets, reduce soil erosion and diffuse pollution and enables landscape and habitat enhancement.
- Enhance the character and the mosaic of habitat networks within the farmed landscape by maximising agricultural diversity where appropriate.
- Manage and enhance the deciduous ancient woodlands and wood pasture including designed parkland landscapes, for their contribution to the sense of place, sense of history, biodiversity value and recreational value, as well as their retention of greenhouse gases. This is particularly important in view of the threat from ash die-back, as ash is a common hedgerow and woodland species across the NCA.
- Plan for a landscape depleted of ash by planting replacement hedgerow tree species such as oak, which is also characteristic of the area.
- Enhance the species rich hedgerow network, encouraging the uptake of agri-environment options that aid replanting where they have been lost. Positively manage and maintain those which have become neglected, to strengthen the historical field patterns, improve wildlife networks and enhance landscape character.
- Protect the pastoral river valley landscape from further fragmentation by resisting inappropriate use and development, promoting traditional management practices, protecting existing pasture from conversion to arable use (especially those containing archaeological features), and seeking opportunities to create more permanent grassland as appropriate, through the uptake of agri environment options.
- Strengthen the historic character of the river valley landscape, encouraging traditional management methods, including willow pollarding along river banks, and the planting of native rare black poplar.
- Reconnect rivers with their flood plains as part of integrated flood management and wildlife enhancement schemes by supporting the operation of natural processes. Link and extend existing habitats and restore or create new river valley grasslands, fens, reedbeds and wet woodland where possible, for their contribution to the historic record of traditional landscapes, their biodiversity value and contribution to the sense of place.
- Maintain the quality and knowledge of archaeological evidence and historic built features and enhance public awareness of the breadth of historic wealth by conserving in context or, where this is impossible, rescue and record and interpret the historic landscape features.
- Conserve the rural settlement pattern by ensuring that new development is complementary to intrinsic local character.

**Continued on next page...**

## Landscape opportunities continued...

- Conserve rural settlement character by using traditional materials in new developments especially the use of colour-washed render and pegtiles.
- Conserve the strongly nucleated character of settlements by encouraging new development to take place within the existing curtilage of settlements.
- Protect and sustainably manage the rich heritage of country houses with designed parklands, while also conserving landscapes linked to the arts – most notably the Lower Stour Valley Dedham Vale AONB.
- Work in partnership with the AONB partnership, following guidance set out within the AONB Management Plan, to protect the tranquillity of The Dedham Vale and its setting, from intrusive communication and utility infrastructure, noisy recreational pursuits, air traffic and light pollution.
- Promote best practice and the development of a high quality visitor experience through sustainable management of visitor levels at popular sites so as not to detract from their special qualities.
- Raise the design quality of new and existing development. Incorporate green infrastructure that provides opportunities for wildlife and public access within urban areas and screens intrusive urban influence (especially on the periphery of settlements), with the use of substantial and appropriate landscaping, such as woodland planting, earthworks and green roofs.

**The well preserved medieval small town of Lavenham with its distinctive timber-framed, colour-washed buildings, that contribute to the rural sense of place, is a popular visitor destination.**

**Photo credits**

Front cover: The characteristic arable farmed landscape of the Stour Valley near Cavendish, in the heart of the NCA.

All images © Natural England/Jonathan Dix

**Natural England is here to secure a healthy natural environment for people to enjoy, where wildlife is protected and England's traditional landscapes are safeguarded for future generations.**

Catalogue Code: NE515 ISBN 978-1-78367-075-8

Should an alternative format of this publication be required, please contact our enquiries line for more information: 0845 600 3078 or email enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

www.naturalengland.org.uk

# Essex & Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan Review

# ESSEX LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

**Final Report**

**2003**









***CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES***

*Environment Landscape Planning*


Key

- The Study Area
- District / Borough Boundary
- **A- Chalk Uplands**
  - A1 - NW Essex Chalk Farmland
- **B - Glacial Till Plateau**
  - B1 - Central Essex Farmland
  - B2 - Central Essex Farmland
  - B3 - Blackwater/Stour Farmland
  - B4 - Gosfield Wooded Farmland
- **C - River Valley Landscapes**
  - C1 - Cam Valley
  - C2 - Stort Valley
  - C3 - Lee Valley
  - C4 - Roding Valley
  - C5 - Chelmer Valley
  - C6 - Blackwater and Brain Valley
  - C7 - Colne Valley
  - C8 - Stour Valley
- **D - Wooded Hills/Ridges**
  - D1 - Epping Forest and Ridges
  - D2 - Brentwood Hills
  - D3 - Danbury Hills
  - D4 - Tiptree Ridge
- **E - London Clay Landscapes**
  - E1 - South Essex Farmlands
  - E2 - South Colchester Farmlands
  - E3 - Tendring Plain
  - E4 - North Colchester Farmlands
- **F - Coastal Landscapes**
  - F1 - Thames Estuary
  - F2 - Crouch and Roach Farmland
  - F3 - Dengie and Foulness Coast
  - F4 - Blackwater Estuary
  - F5 - North Blackwater and Colne Coastal Farmlands
  - F6 - Mersea Island
  - F7 - Brightlingsea-Clacton-Frinton Coast
  - F8 - Hamford Water
  - F9 - Stour Estuary Slopes
  - F10 - Stour Estuary
- **G - Urban Landscapes**

0 5 10km

Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessments

CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES

August 2006

**Figure 2.7**

County Landscape Character Types and Areas

## 4.8 Urban Landscapes (G)

4.8.1 These are extensive areas that are dominated by urban land uses so that they can be recognised as a distinct landscape division. They are not completely built-up, and include distinctive, but fragmented, areas of open space that help break up and give character and structure to the surrounding built form, such as formal parks and gardens, allotments, playing fields and, areas of 'encapsulated countryside'. Urban fringe countryside of mixed land use around the settlements is also included.

4.8.2 The key characteristics of this division can be summarised as:

- Very large areas of 20th century residential and commercial developments, usually surrounding a historic core, and/or enveloping former villages.
- Visual dominance of an urban skyline.
- Integral open spaces important for informal/formal recreation and/or wildlife, and which act as green lungs.
- Influence of water, with river valley or large coastal estuary locations, often with an associated gently undulating landform.

4.8.3 The Urban Landscapes comprise four Landscape Character Areas within the study area:

- Harlow & Environs (G1)
- Chelmsford & Environs (G2)
- South Essex Coastal Towns (G3)
- Colchester & Environs (G4)

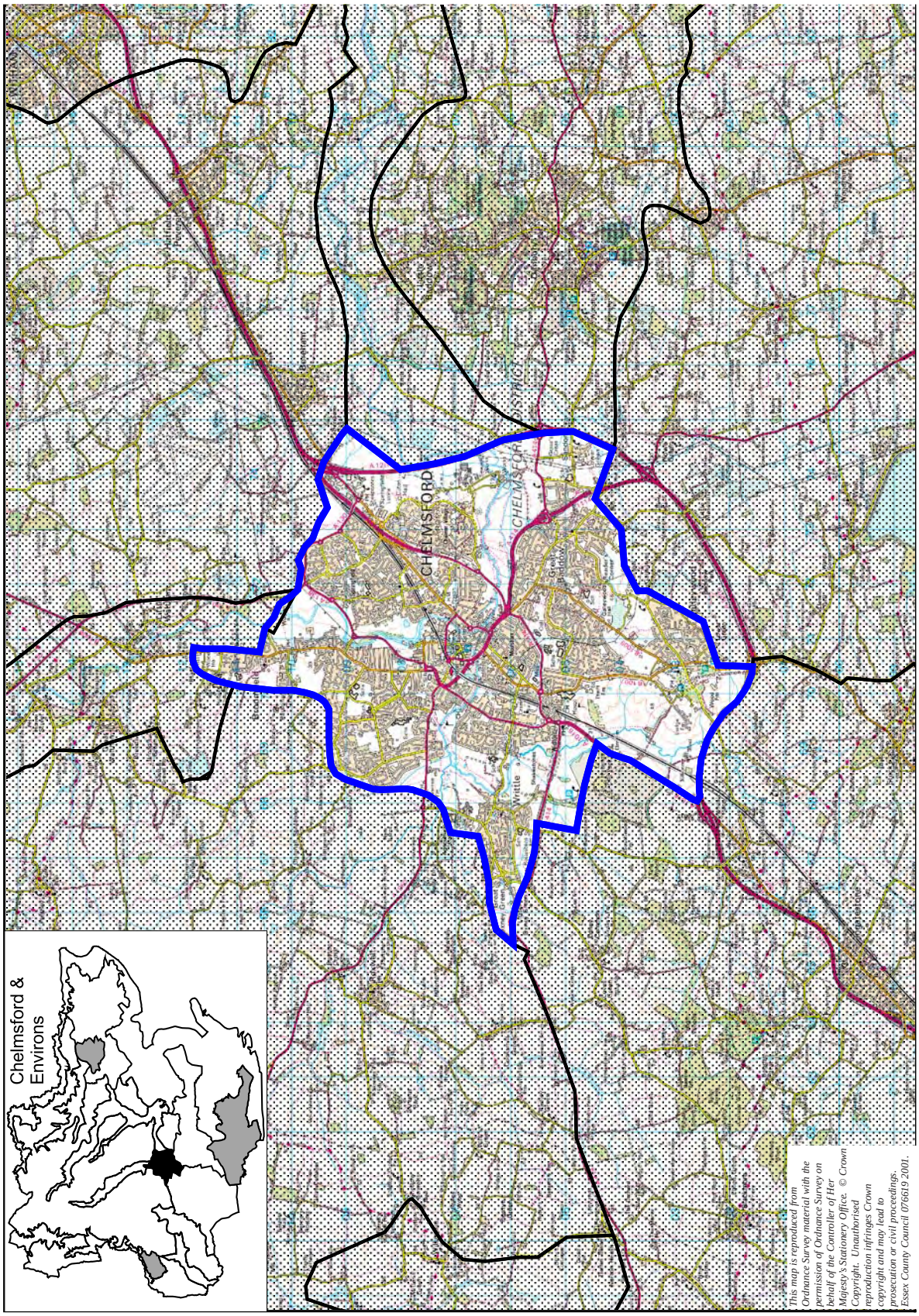
### 4.8.5 *Chelmsford and Environs (G2)*

***Key Characteristics***

- Historic town with extensive residential estate development spreading over a gently sloping valleyside landform.
- Wide riverside corridors of green space except in the town centre.
- Fringe of mixed farmland with variable size hedgerowed fields, with few woods or copses.
- Large villages of Writtle and Galleywood physically separated from the town, but with much development of an urban character.

***Overall Character***

Chelmsford lies at the confluence of the Chelmer and Can Rivers with the River Wid on its western boundary. In the town centre dense urban development directly adjoins the rivers, but to the north, west and east, there are wide riverside corridors of green space comprised of a patchwork of small to medium size damp meadows, and land in a variety of other recreational uses. Their character varies from very open to fairly enclosed with dense riverside trees. Between the rivers large areas of 20th century residential development on gentle slopes extend to a narrow farmland fringe. The farmland has a varied character with both large arable fields with few hedgerows, and contrasting areas with a smaller scale pattern


CHELMSFORD
Chelmsford &
Environs
This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Essex County Council 076619 2001.

of pasture and arable fields. The character area is crossed by many major roads with the A12 visually prominent on embankment to the north east. Overhead lines and a tall mast also visually interrupt the landscape in the south.

***Character Profile***

*Geology*

- London Clay, Glacial Tills, Sand and Gravels, Alluvium

*Soils*

- Wide range of soil types. Deep well drained and slowly permeable calcareous clay soils, well drained fine, coarse loamy and sandy soils and deep stoneless alluvial soils.

*Landform*

- Mostly gently undulating.
- Gentle shallow valleys of the Rivers Chelmer, Can and Wid cut through/bound the area. Chelmer and the Can, have narrow flat valley floors to the north and west, widening out to the east.
- Relatively higher ground around Galleywood up to 70 m elevation.

*Semi-natural vegetation*

- Pockets of alder carr, ancient woodland of mixed species.

*Pattern of field enclosure*

- Irregular field pattern of small, medium and large hedged fields, some on the valley floor bounded by ditches.

*Farming pattern*

- Both arable and pasture farmland.
- Valley floors have extensive horse grazing.
- Orchards around Galleywood.

*Woodland/tree cover*

- A few scattered copses/tree belts/plantations within the urban area, in the valleys or at the edges of the area.
- Variable ornamental tree cover. Some of the main approaches to the town/associated older residential neighbourhoods have a higher tree cover compared with more recent development.

S*ettlement pattern and built form*

- Dense historic town centre of Chelmsford occupies a slightly elevated position above the Can and Chelmer. Mixed skyline including some larger tower blocks.
- Variable width of undeveloped open spaces and fields adjacent to the rivers create green corridors dividing and softening the urban form. Only within the town core are the valley floors fully developed.
- Modern residential development has spread absorbing some former villages.
- The large villages of Galleywood and Writtle retain strong historic cores but have much modern development.

*Communications*

- The main A12(T) forms part of the eastern boundary to the area.
- Major ring road around the town centre.
- Railway principally on embankment acts through the area southwest-northeast.

Other landscape features

- Pylon routes in the north east and south of the area.
- High mast at Great Baddow.
- Golf courses near Widford and the Can Valley.
- Partly canalised course of the River Chelmer with locks.

***Landscape Condition***

- Hedgerows in the farmland are in mixed condition, some fragmented.

- The public open spaces within the valleys are in good condition. However, the condition of the meadows/pasture is very mixed. Along the Chelmer Valley some are overgrazed by horses.

***Past, Present and Future Trends for Change***

- The town of Chelmsford has grown very significantly in the 20th Century.

- Riverside open spaces have been retained but are under pressure from a variety of urban fringe activities including the expansion of horse grazing.

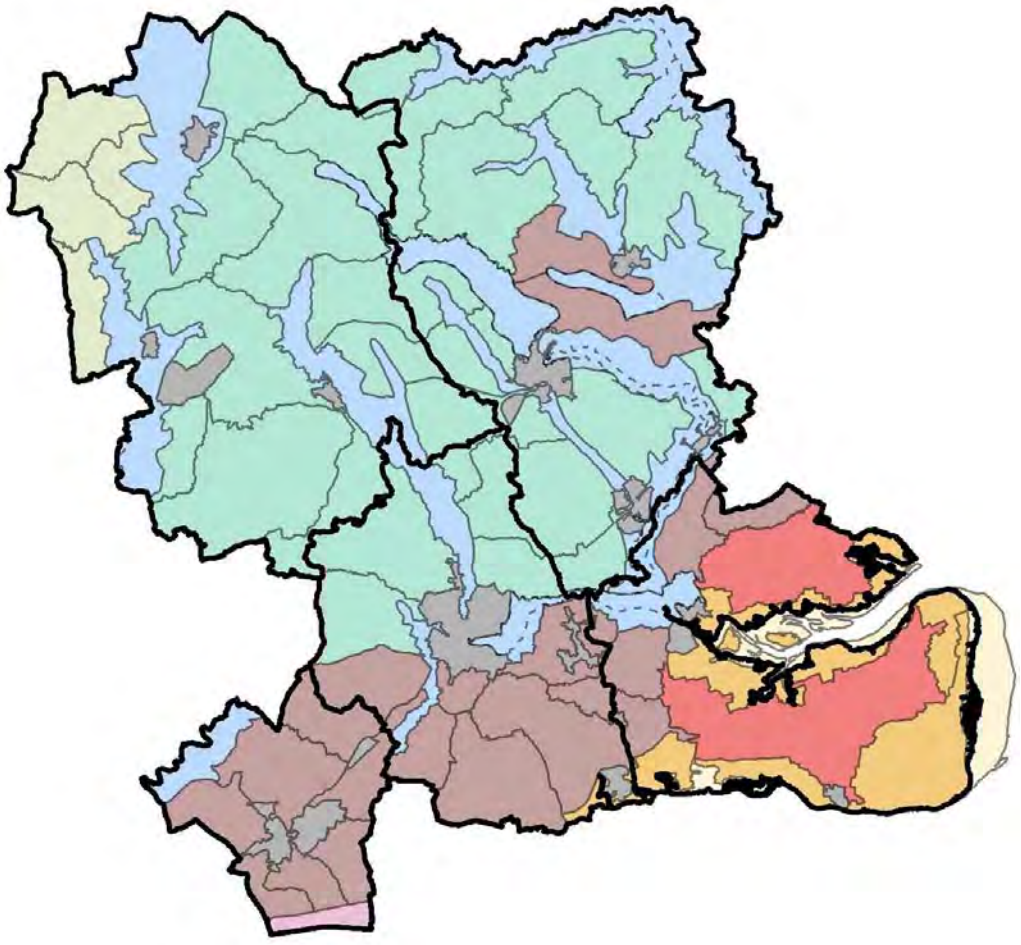
- Additional urban development on the urban fringe is likely to be an ongoing trend, as well as transportation improvements.

## CHELMSFORD & ENVIRONS (G2)
## SENSITIVITY EVALUATION

| TYPE/SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT/CHANGE | KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND ACCOMMODATION OF CHANGE ISSUES | LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY LEVEL |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Major urban extensions (>5 ha) and new settlements | • Integrity of river valley corridors.<br>• Moderate to high intervisibility.<br>• Some visually exposed valleysides.<br>• Coalescence.<br><br>*Any new development should include strong new woodland/hedgerow framework planting particularly where arable farmland is in poor condition.* | M |
| 2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha) | • Moderate to high intervisibility.<br>• Integrity of river valley corridors.<br><br>*Possible opportunities to improve some existing urban edges.* | L |
| 3. Major transportation developments/improvements | • Integrity of river valley corridors.<br>• Moderate to high intervisibility. | M |
| 4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development | • Integrity of river valley corridors.<br>• Moderate to high intervisibility.<br><br>*Siting, massing, form and colour and appropriate woodland, hedgerowed framework are critical.* | M |
| 5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings | • Some visually exposed valleysides.<br>• Moderate to high intervisibility.<br><br>*Siting, massing, form and colour are critical.* | M |
| 6. Large scale 'open uses' | • Integrity of river valley corridors.<br>• Integrity of hedgerow field pattern.<br><br>*Possible opportunities to create new woodlands within surrounding farmland.* | M |
| 7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal | • Moderate to high intervisibility.<br>• Integrity of river valley corridors. | H |
| 8. Incremental small scale developments | • Urban character. | L |
| 9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons | • Moderate to high intervisibility.<br>• Urban character. | M |
| 10. Decline in traditional countryside management | • Urban character. | L |

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

# BRAINTREE, BRENTWOOD, CHELMSFORD, MALDON AND UTTLESFORD LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS



**September 2006**

***CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES***

*Environment Landscape Planning*

- *Proposals Map* - expresses geographically the adopted development plan policies, including locations and sites for particular land use and development proposals, and areas of protection.

- *Supplementary Planning Documents* – provide detailed guidance to elaborate upon the core policies and proposals, e.g. design guides, site development briefs or topic based guidance. SPDs are capable of being updated regularly making them more able to respond to changing circumstances. They do not have Development Plan Document status, but are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

1.4.10 The Core Strategy, Development Control Policies, Site Specific Allocations, Proposals Map and any Area Action Plans, together with the RSS, comprise the statutory Development Plan Documents against which all planning decisions will normally need to be made. It is intended that this Landscape Character Assessment will be used as part of the evidence base of technical studies to inform the preparation of the LDFs within the Study Area.

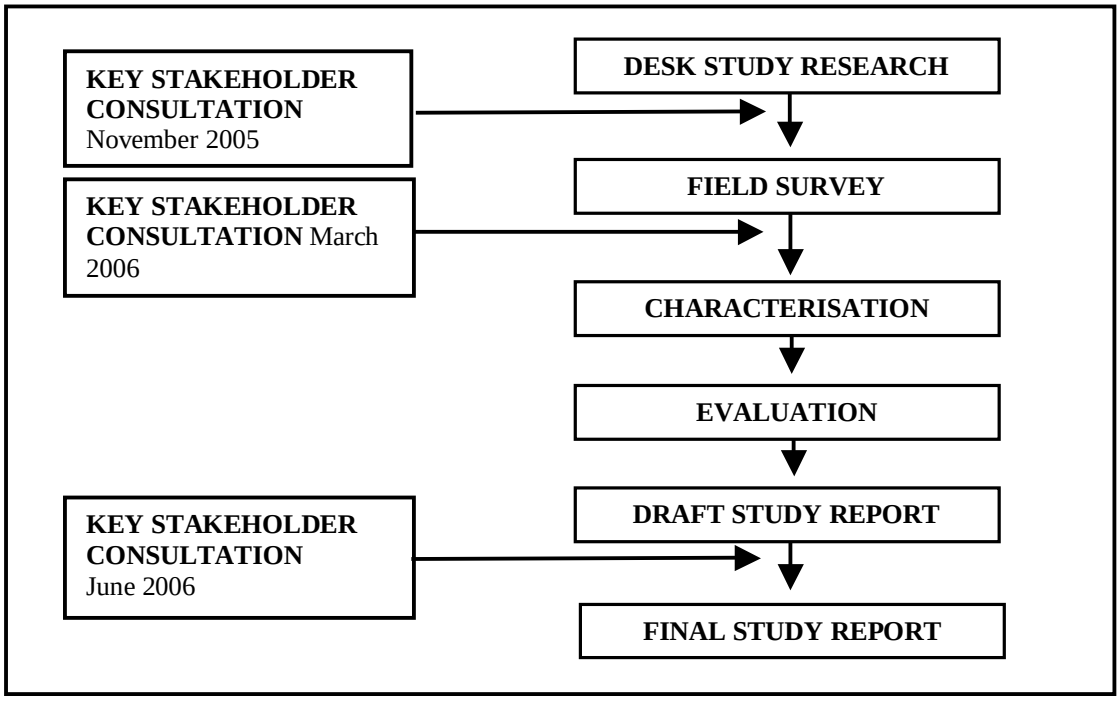
1.4.11 The current local planning situation in each of the respective authority areas is set out in Appendix E.

## 1.5 Approach and Methodology

1.5.1 The overall approach for undertaking the Landscape Character Assessment is based on the latest guidance published by the Countryside Agency[5], taking into account current best practice. Landscape Character Assessment addresses both the relatively objective process of landscape characterisation, which involves identifying, mapping, classifying and describing 'landscape character', and the more subjective process of evaluating landscape character to inform planning and land management decisions.

1.5.2 The study process is illustrated in Box 1, and described below.

**Box 1 – Landscape Character Assessment Process**




[5] Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland (Countryside Agency/Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002).

***Desk Study Research***

1.5.3 This stage involved desk-based research to identify physical and historical factors that have influenced the shape and use of the landscape. This work drew on a variety of documents and maps that describe the physical geography and cultural history of the Study Area (see Appendix C for details). The desk research also identified the forces for change affecting the character of the landscape within the Study Area.

1.5.4 In summary, the desk work involved:

- A review of existing national and local character assessments relating to the Study Area, including the Countryside Agency's Character of England Map/Countryside Character descriptions and National Landscape Typology; Essex Landscape Character Assessment; and existing assessments for neighbouring areas in Essex, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Thurrock.

- Production and analysis of map overlays of surface geology, landform and drainage, and nature conservation designations.

- Analysis of air photos.

- Identification of draft Landscape Character Types and draft Landscape Character Areas.

1.5.5 In recognition of the important contribution that historic patterns and features make to the character of the current landscape in this part of Essex, information from the Essex Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) Study dataset was incorporated into the Landscape Character Assessment using a methodology developed and agreed with Essex County Council Historic Environment Unit and English Heritage (see Appendix D for details). 'Historic Landscape Character Areas' were derived from amalgamation of the HLC typology, and used to (i) inform the definition of the Landscape Character Areas defined in this report, and (ii) to identify the key historic land use features in the present-day landscape (see the Landscape Character Area profiles in Sections 3.0 to 7.0).

***Field Survey***

1.5.6 Field surveys were undertaken between November 2005 and April 2006 to allow consideration of seasonal variations. The aim of the surveys was to undertake a visual analysis of how different features and elements combined to create distinctive patterns in the landscape. The surveys were undertaken from key viewpoints within each draft Landscape Character Area by a team of field assessors. The checklist included:

- Landform
- Rivers/drainage
- Land cover
- Field pattern and field boundaries
- Communication routes
- Settlement form/pattern
- Building styles
- Scale
- Texture
- Enclosure
- Stimuli
- Sense of tranquillity
- Movement

- View types and composition
- Landmarks

1.5.7 The survey information (including photographs) was used to (i) inform the descriptions of landscape character and (ii) to test and refine the draft Landscape Character Area boundaries.

***Characterisation***

1.5.8 The characterisation stage involved the combination of the desk study research and field survey analysis to identify and map generic Landscape Character Types and geographically unique Landscape Character Areas at 1:25,000 scale (see Section 2.5 for details).

1.5.9 For each generic Landscape Character Type, its boundaries were mapped and its key characteristics described. For each unique Landscape Character Area, its boundaries were mapped and the following characterisation information was recorded:

- Key Characteristics
- Overall Character Description
- Visual Characteristics
- Historic Land Use
- Ecological Features

***Evaluation***

1.5.10 This stage involved making the following judgements about each Landscape Character Area:

- Key Planning and Land Management Issues
- Sensitivities to Change
- Proposed landscape Strategy Objectives
- Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines
- Suggested Land Management Guidelines

*Evaluation of Landscape Sensitivity*

1.5.11 The methodology for evaluating the intrinsic sensitivities of each Landscape Character Area to change is based on the criteria for judging sensitivity set out in an accompanying paper to the *Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland*[6], taking into account current best practice.

1.5.12 It should be noted that the evaluation is based on the relatively broad-brush analysis undertaken at 1:25,000 scale for this Study. The degree of sensitivity is not absolute. It is likely to vary according to the nature of change under consideration, and is therefore only indicative. This evaluation should be read in conjunction with the more strategic evaluation of landscape sensitivity set out in the Essex Landscape Character Assessment[7].

1.5.13 The criteria used to evaluate the relative sensitivities of each Landscape Character Area are defined in Box 2.

[6] Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland : Topic Paper 8 – Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity (Swanwick, 2004).

[7] Essex County Council and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council (July 2002).

**Box 2 - Landscape Sensitivity Evaluation Criteria**

***Intrinsic Landscape Qualities***

- The number and contribution of positive visual qualities/characteristics to landscape value/sense of place.

***Biodiversity Value***

- The contribution of positive ecological elements or features to landscape value/sense of place.

***Visual Characteristics (Intervisibility and Visual Prominence)***

- The degree to which an area is widely visible from, and positively influences the character of, surrounding areas.

***Historic Integrity***

- The contribution of positive visible historic elements within the area, taking into account the intactness and integrity of historic landscape patterns and the presence of valued historic features within the area.

***Re-creatabililty***

- The degree to which the *intrinsic landscape qualities, biodiversity value* and *historic integrity* of an area can be re-created if eroded or lost.

*Landscape Strategy Objectives and Guidelines*

1.5.14 This stage also involved identifying proposed broad strategy objectives and suggested guidelines for each Landscape Character Area. Taking into account the condition and sensitivities of the particular Landscape Character Area, one or more of the following strategy objectives was identified:

- ***Conserve*** - seek to protect and enhance positive features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.

- ***Enhance*** - seek to improve the integrity of the landscape, and reinforce its character, by introducing new elements where distinctive features or characteristics are absent.

- ***Restore*** - seek to reinforce and/or reinstate historic landscape patterns and features that contribute to sense of place and time depth, by repairing distinctive elements that have been lost or degraded.

1.5.15 The sensitivity analysis, together with the proposed strategy objectives and suggested guidelines for each Landscape Character Area, can be used to inform:

- the identification of spatial development options within the District/Borough Local Development Frameworks.
- Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment of Local Development Framework site allocations.

- the highlighting of landscape issues that may need to be considered in greater detail in relation to development control decisions for major schemes.
- the application of criteria-based landscape protection and enhancement policies within Local Development Frameworks.

***Key Stakeholder Consultation***

1.5.16 Consultation with key stakeholder organisations was an important and integral element of the Study. The purpose of the stakeholder consultation was to strengthen the evidence base by gathering opinions about landscape character from the key stakeholders, and to promote the value of the Study as a tool for informing planning and land management decisions in rural areas.

1.5.17 The first stage of consultation in November 2005 involved a workshop to explore stakeholder's views on what gives different places within each of the authority areas their local identity and distinctive character (see Appendix A for further details). This information was fed into the desk study research and field survey stages of the Study to refine and validate the preliminary draft mapping of Landscape Character Types and Areas by the Consultant Team.

1.5.18 The second stage of consultation in March 2006 involved a further workshop to: explore stakeholder's views on the refined Landscape Character Types and Areas identified following field survey work; identify key threats to valued landscape characteristics/areas; and identify opportunities to enhance landscape character and sense of place (see Appendix A for further details). This information was fed into the characterisation and evaluation stages of the Study to inform: (i) the descriptions of landscape character; (ii) judgements about the sensitivities of different Landscape Character Areas to change; and (iii) the development of strategy objectives and guidelines for guiding change within different areas.

1.5.19 The findings of the Draft Report were presented to and discussed with the key stakeholders at a third workshop held in early June 2006, and their comments incorporated into the final version.

1.5.20 As a technical study, local community and special interest groups were not consulted on the Study at this preparatory stage. However, it is anticipated (see Section 8.0) that community involvement in the future application of the Landscape Character Assessment will be encouraged through development of character-based design guidance at the local level (e.g. Village Design Statements, Town Design Statements, Parish Plans etc.).

## 1.6 Structure of the Report

1.6.1 The study report is structured as follows.

1.6.2 ***Section 1.0*** sets out the context for the Study. It explains the background to the Study, its aims and objectives, and highlights the importance of landscape character. It also describes the planning policy framework for the Study, and outlines the approach and process behind the assessment methodology.

1.6.3 ***Section 2.0*** provides an overview of the Study Area. It describes the physical and historical influences on the landscape, and identifies the key forces for change affecting landscape character today. This section also provides an overview of landscape character across the Study Area as a whole in its national and county context. The descriptions of individual Landscape Character Areas in Sections 3.0 to 7.0 (see below), should be read in conjunction with this information to ensure that the contextual relationship with the wider landscape is understood.

1.6.4 ***Sections 3.0 to 7.0*** of the report provide the detailed 'profiles' of Landscape Character Areas within Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford respectively. The profiles are structured as follows:

- Location of character area (map)
- Boundaries of character area (map)
- Photograph
- Key characteristics
- Overall character description
- Visual characteristics
- Historic land use
- Ecological features
- Key planning and land management issues
- Sensitivities to change
- Proposed landscape strategy objectives
- Suggested landscape planning guidelines
- Suggested land management guidelines

Where Landscape Character Areas fall within two or more adjacent District/Borough areas included within this Study report, the same profile has been included within the respective section. For example, the profile for Landscape Character Area *B16 – Felsted Farmland Plateau* is 'shared' by Braintree District (Section 3.0), Chelmsford Borough (Section 5.0) and Uttlesford District (Section 7.0). In such instances, a cross-reference is noted in the respective Character Area profile(s). References to other studies in neighbouring authority areas is facilitated by signposts to relevant documents as appropriate within each Section.

1.6.5 ***Section 8.0*** sets out the consultant's recommendations to the commissioning authorities for their consideration and action as appropriate. Recommendations are provided for the application of the Landscape Character Assessment including its use in relation to informing Local Development Framework policies for protecting and enhancing landscape character, and in providing a baseline and framework for monitoring landscape change. Recommendations for further work required to enhance the evidence base on the landscape and settlement character of the Study Area are also included.

## A7 LOWER CHELMER RIVER VALLEY (shared with Maldon District)


**Key Characteristics**

- Shallow valley.
- Predominantly arable farmland on the valley slopes.
- The Lower Chelmer where it meets the River Blackwater has gentle valley sides.
- Overall strong sense of place and tranquillity away from Maldon and the A12 and the railway line.

*(Sub-Unit A7a)*

- Mixture of arable and pastoral fields on the valley floor.
- The Lower Chelmer where it meets the River Blackwater has a wide flat valley floor
- Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive feature in close proximity to the river.

**Overall Character**

The lower reaches of the River Chelmer between Chelmsford and Maldon are open in character, with a wide floodplain and gently sloping valley sides. South of Langford the narrower meandering River Blackwater joins the wider more mature River Chelmer to flow towards Maldon. Medium to large scale arable and pastoral fields with a regular pattern dominate its length. Hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees delineate their boundaries. In places the hedgerows are thick but fragmented. Where roads cross the river valley ditches with banks that are often vegetated with hedgerows bound them. Tree cover is high along the banks of the river with willow and poplar plantations common as well as pockets of wet alder/willow woodland. The majority of the river valley floor is sparsely populated adding to its open character. Small settlements are dispersed along valleysides or clustered around the few bridging points. Maldon occupies a valley-side location at the mouth of the river, but along with major roads that cross the area there is a limited impact on character. Within the valley floor are a

series of reservoirs in proximity to the river. There is an overall sense of tranquillity throughout the character area, with several quiet rural lanes winding through the landscape.

**Visual Characteristics**
- The views are open and occasionally panoramic in the lower reaches of the river valley where they are unconstrained by hedgerow trees.
- Views along the valley corridor are framed.

**Historic Land Use**

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by a predominance of medium to large pre-18th century fields with straight boundaries, including 18th to 19th-century enclosure in the south of the area, and with a pocket of small irregular fields to the northeast. On a micro-scale there is a considerable degree of co-axiality in their layout, usually relating directly to the immediate topography. The river valleys are marked by enclosed water meadows. Historic dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, isolated manors with some nucleated hamlets.

**Ecological Features**

This Character Area is dominated by intensive and widespread arable agriculture. The area contains 10 sites of nature conservation value, including:
- Ten CWS along and including the River Chelmer of running water, wetland, grassland and semi-natural woodland habitats.
- Four areas of ancient woodland.

**Key Planning and Land Management Issues**
- Potential for pollution of the ditches and the River Chelmer from fertiliser and pesticide run-off from the surrounding agricultural fields.
- Potential for erection of new farm buildings and houses within the open landscape, which would be conspicuous on the skyline.
- Increasing traffic on minor roads including large lorries and HGVs.
- Potential further decline in condition of field boundaries through further agricultural intensification.

**Sensitivities to Change**

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include linear poplar and willow plantations and pockets of wet alder/willow woodland, which are sensitive to changes in land management. The overall sense of tranquillity throughout the character area would potentially be affected by new development. The skyline of the slopes of the lower valley are moderately visually sensitive, with open (and occasionally panoramic views) gained to and from the river corridor, which could be affected by new development. There is a sense of historic continuity resulting from water meadows along the river valley and a historic dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and isolated manors with some isolated hamlets. Wildlife habitats are scattered throughout the area (including 10 sites of importance for nature conservation, comprising ancient woodland, running water, wetland and grassland). Overall, this area has relatively high sensitivity to change.

**Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives**

***Conserve*** **-** seek to protect and enhance positive features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.

***Enhance*** - seek to improve the integrity of the landscape, and reinforce its character, by introducing new and/or enhanced elements where distinctive features or characteristics are absent.

**Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines**

- Manage the traffic flows along the minor roads especially those not suitable for HGVs and lorries due to narrow bridges.
- Ensure that new built development is in keeping landscape character.
- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of settlements.
- Enhance the screening of the A12 and the railway line.

**Suggested Land Management Guidelines**

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern, and strengthen through planting where appropriate to local landscape character.
- Conserve and manage the ecological structure of hedges and ditches within the character area.
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials, which area in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character.

Chelmsford City Council

# Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment

## Report

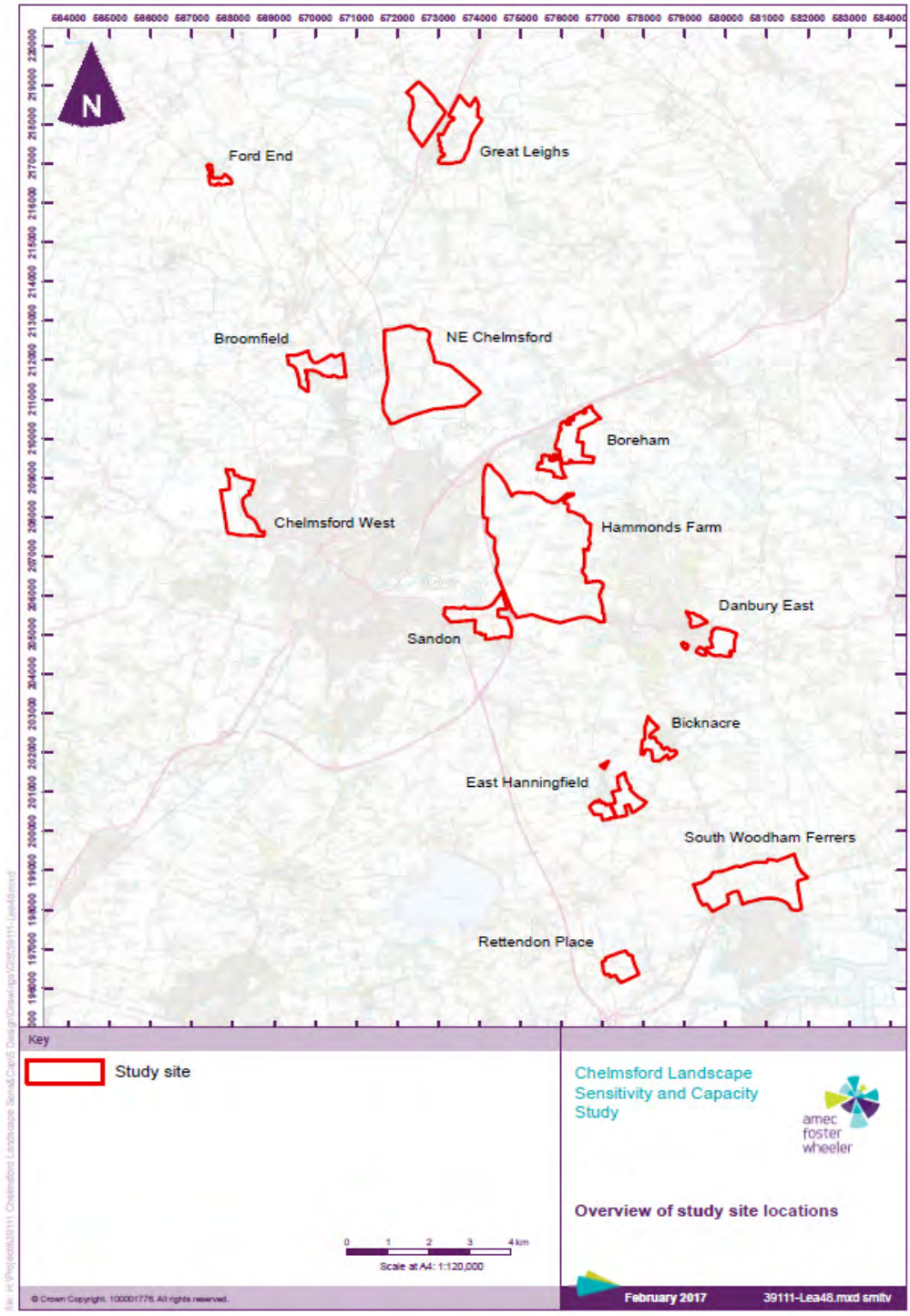
March 2017

Amec Foster Wheeler Environment
& Infrastructure UK Limited

# Executive summary

This report has been produced for the purpose of presenting an analysis of the sensitivity and capacity for development of land across the Chelmsford City Council area. This is a summary of the principal findings of the assessment of landscape sensitivity and capacity of a number of survey locations across the City of Chelmsford. The formal methodology is set out in a separate paper, but for the purposes of this summary, the following precis guides how the assessment values have been derived.

The study locations, identified in consultation with Chelmsford City Council officers, which are considered in this report are shown below.



The study accords with best practice guidance and methodology and follows the techniques and criteria set out in *'Topic Paper 6: Techniques for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity*[1]*'* (The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage joint Landscape Character Assessment Study, 2002). The Study is also consistent with the impact assessment guidance and methodology set out within the '*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*[2]*'* (Third Edition, 2013) (GLVIA3) and '*An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*'[3]. The methodology has also been developed to reflect the body of recent work and approaches undertaken to judge sensitivity and capacity for development relating to settlement expansion within England (typically low rise residential and commercial). In accordance with Topic Paper 6[4], the assessment of overall sensitivity of a landscape to a particular type of change or development is based on the following relationship:

***Overall Landscape Sensitivity = Landscape Character Sensitivity + Visual Sensitivity***

The ability or capacity of the landscape to accommodate change or development (defined in terms of type and scale) is based on the following relationship:

***Landscape Capacity (to accommodate specific type and scale of change) = Overall Landscape Sensitivity + Landscape Value***

The terminology defining these relationships is defined as follows:

*Landscape Character Sensitivity*
The susceptibility and vulnerability of a landscape to residential and employment development as defined above. A judgement about how well development might fit within a landscape without altering (or harming) its essential character. It is based upon judgements about the robustness/ strength of the existing character. An assessment is made on the presence or absence of distinctive physical elements/characteristics and aesthetic factors, whether these could be replaced and whether these make a positive contribution to character and sense of place.

*Visual Sensitivity*
A judgement about the susceptibility and vulnerability of the visual characteristics of the area to the residential and employment development as defined above. This includes general visibility (based particularly on landform and tree/woodland cover), the numbers and types of people likely to view the development (i.e. residents, travellers passing through and recreational users) and the likelihood that change could be mitigated without mitigation measures having an adverse effects on prevailing character.

*Overall Landscape Sensitivity*
A combination of the sensitivity of the landscape resource (both its character as a whole and the individual elements contributing to character) and the visual sensitivity assessed in terms of factors such as views, visibility and the number and nature of people perceiving the landscape and the scope to mitigate visual impact.

*Landscape Value*
Aspects of landscape character with formal protection by designation or other protective policy, and other aspects of value, such as scenic quality / interest, conservation interests and associations, landscape quality/ condition, recreation value and opportunity for quiet enjoyment (tranquillity).

[1] Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage. *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (2002) Topic Paper 6.*
[2] Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment. *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (2013)*
[3] Natural England. *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* (October 2014)
[4] Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage's in: Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (2002) Topic Paper 6. Figure 1(b), page 5.

*Landscape Capacity*
The capacity of a specific landscape to accommodate a particular type of change through judgement on the interaction between the sensitivity of the landscape, the type and amount of change, and the way that the landscape is valued.

Those locations where the landscape, with or without appropriate mitigation, appears to have capacity to accommodate development (i.e. medium, medium to high and high landscape capacity) would be more favourable locations to be taken forward in the Local Plan process in landscape terms than those in which development would be less appropriate or difficult to accommodate within the landscape (i.e. low and low to medium landscape capacity).

The ratings applied to the judgements on overall landscape sensitivity and landscape capacity are determined as follows:

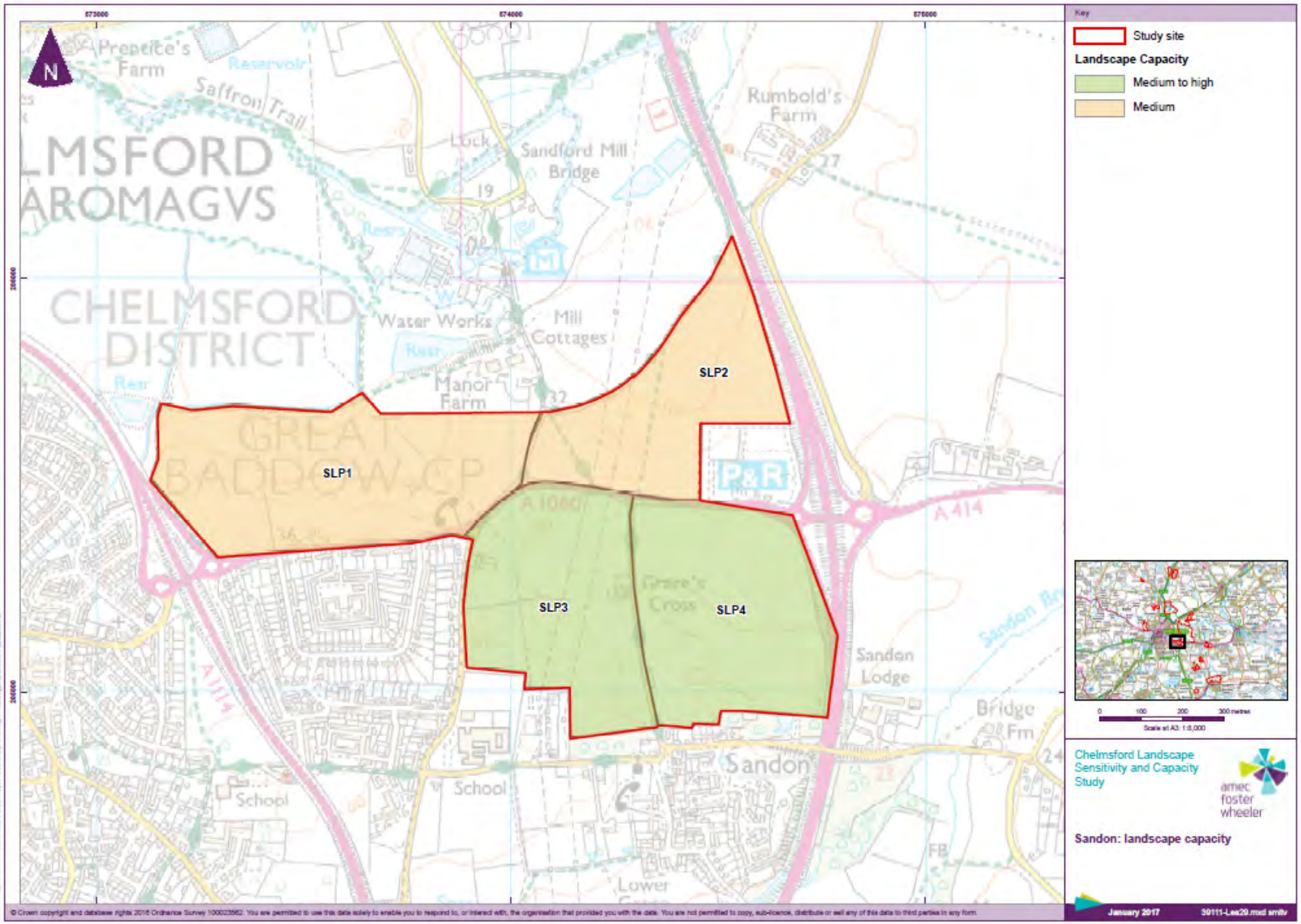
Figure 1 Overall Landscape Sensitivity

| Landscape Character Sensitivity | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | High | HIGH | HIGH | HIGH |
| | Moderate | MODERATE | MODERATE | HIGH |
| | Low | LOW | MODERATE | HIGH |
| | | Low | Moderate | High |
| | | Visual Sensitivity | | |

Figure 2 Landscape Capacity

| Overall Landscape Sensitivity | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | High | MEDIUM | LOW TO MEDIUM | LOW |
| | Moderate | MEDIUM TO HIGH | MEDIUM | LOW TO MEDIUM |
| | Low | HIGH | MEDIUM TO HIGH | MEDIUM |
| | | Low | Moderate | High |
| | | Landscape Value | | |

| Settlement/ Locality | Parcel | Overall Landscape Sensitivity Rating | Landscape Value Rating | Landscape Capacity Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| NE Chelmsford | NECLP1 | Moderate | Low | Medium to High |
| | NECLP2 | Moderate | Low | Medium to High |
| | NECLP3 | Moderate | Moderate | Medium |
| | NECLP4 | Moderate | Moderate | Medium |
| | NECLP5 | Moderate | Moderate | Medium |
| Rettendon Place | RLP1 | High | Moderate | Low to Medium |
| | RLP2 | Moderate | Low | Medium to High |
| | RLP3 | High | Moderate | Low to Medium |
| | RLP4 | High | Moderate | Low to Medium |
| Sandon | SLP1 | High | Low | Medium |
| | SLP2 | Moderate | Moderate | Medium |
| | SLP3 | Moderate | Low | Medium to High |
| | SLP4 | Moderate | Low | Medium to High |
| South Woodham Ferrers | SWFLP1 | Moderate | Low | Medium to High |
| | SWFLP2 | Moderate | Moderate | Medium |
| | SWFLP3 | Moderate | Low | Medium to High |
| | SWFLP4 | High | Moderate | Low to Medium |
| | SWFLP5 | High | Moderate | Low to Medium |
| | SWFLP6 | High | Low | Medium |



# 14. Sandon

## 14.1 Local landscape character context

The Study Site is located on the eastern edges of Chelmsford and to the west of the A12. The eastern part of the site occupies the southern part of the Lower Chelmer Valley Floor Landscape Character Area (A7) as described by the Chelmsford LCA 2006 (Chelmsford LCA). This character area has been further subdivided and the western part of the site lies within Sub-Unit A7a of the Lower Chelmer River Valley Floor.

Figure 14.1 illustrates the landscape and visual context of the Study Site. This Study Site has been sub-divided into 4 Land Parcels.

### Lower Chelmer River Valley Landscape Character Area (A7)

Key characteristics of relevance to this Area are:

- Shallow valley.
- Predominantly large scale farmland on valley slopes.
- The Lower Chelmer where is meets the River Blackwater has gentle valley sides.
- Overall strong sense of place and tranquillity away from Maldon and the A12 and the railway line.

Key characteristics of relevance to the Sub-Unit A7a are:

- Mixture of arable and pastoral fields on the valley floor.
- The Lower Chelmer where it meets the River Blackwater has a wide and flat valley floor.
- Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive feature in close proximity to the river.

The Chelmsford LCA describes the lower reaches of the River Chelmer, between Chelmsford and Maldon, as open in character with a wider floodplain, gently sloping/flat valley floor and a series of reservoirs. Medium to large sized fields form a regular pattern along the valley corridor. Hedgerows that delineate the boundaries are described as thick in places, but fragmented, and with frequent hedgerow trees. There is a high presence of tree cover along the banks of the river with willow/poplar plantations as well as pockets of wet alder/willow woodland. The Chelmsford LCA also notes that this is a sparsely populated area (small settlements dispersed along its valley-side) which adds to its open character. Maldon to the east, and major roads are noted as having limited impact on character. Views are described as open and occasionally panoramic in the lower reaches of the river valley where they are unconstrained by hedgerow trees; and views along the valley corridor are framed. The Chelmsford LCA describes the following planning and land management issues of relevance to the Area of Search:

- Potential for the erection of new farm buildings and houses within the open landscape, which would be conspicuous on the skyline.
- Increasing traffic on minor roads including large lorries and HGVs.

The Chelmsford LCA sets out the following sensitivities to change of relevance to the Areas of Search:

- Linear poplar and willow plantations and pockets of wet alder/willow woodland which are sensitive to changes in land management.
- Overall sense of tranquillity throughout the character area would potentially be affected by new development.

- The skyline of the slopes of the lower river valley are moderately visually sensitive, with open (and occasionally panoramic) views to be gained to and from the river corridor, which could be affected by new development.
- Sense of historic integrity resulting from water meadows along the river valley and a historic dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and isolated manors with some isolated hamlets.

The Chelmsford LCA Landscape Strategy Guidelines sets out to conserve and enhance the landscape through seeking to:

- Protect and enhance positive features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures; and
- Improve the integrity of the landscape and reinforce its character by introducing new/and or enhanced elements where distinctive features or characteristics are absent.

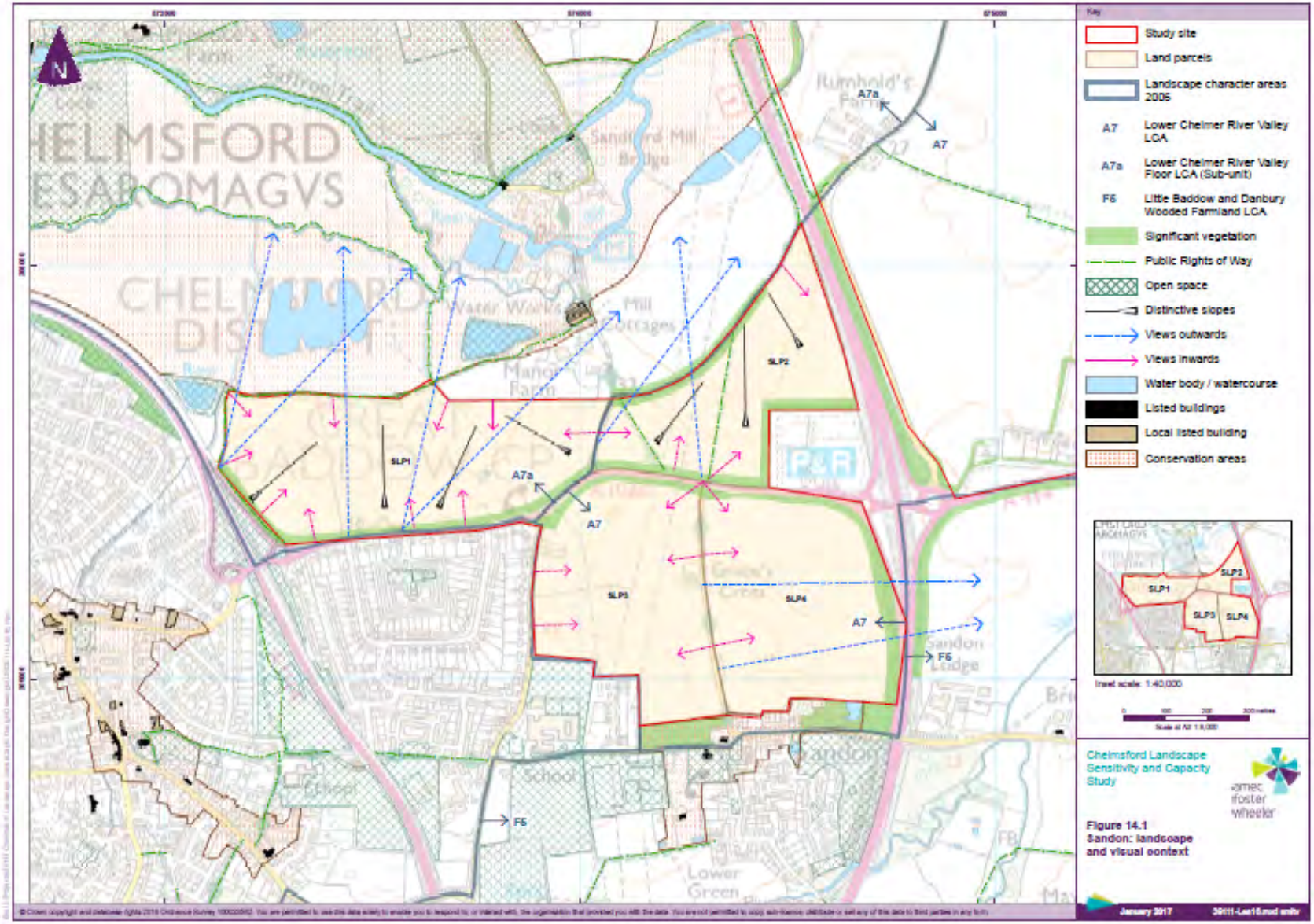
Suggested Planning Guidelines of the Chelmsford LCA of relevance include:

- Manage the traffic flows along the minor roads especially those not suitable for HGVs and lorries due to narrow bridges.
- Ensure new built development is in keeping with landscape character.
- Conserve and enhance the landscape settings of settlements.
- Enhance the screening of the A12 and the railway line.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines of relevance include:

- Conserve and manage the existing hedgerow pattern and strengthen through planting where appropriate to local landscape character.
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials, which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character.

Figure 14.1 Sandon Landscape and Visual Context



## 14.2 Land Parcel SLP1

### Land Parcel Location

Land to the north of the A1060 Maldon Road, west of Sandford Mill Lane, Great Baddow.

### Local Landscape Character Description

Characteristic of local landscape character, comprising a shallow valley and predominantly large scale farmland on valley slopes.

### Visual Context and Characteristics

An exposed north-facing slope, (plateauing out towards the A1060) which forms part of the southern valley side of the River Chelmer. The sense of exposure is increased by the absence of hedgerows (aside from that bordering the A1060 Maldon Road) or other vegetation which might interrupt middle and long-distance views to the west, north and east. Private and public views are available from the A1060 and development to the south, PRoWs and development across the Chelmer Valley to the north.

### Landscape Sensitivity to Development

The parcel shares some characteristics with the wider valley to the north, notably arable land use and being part of the wider visual context for the River Valley in this location where development has been kept back from the valley sides thereby containing its visibility. Land use and hence character is typical of open arable farming associated with land in the vicinity of the River Chelmer, having an open aspect with limited boundary definition, the land does not exhibit any particularly special qualities *per se* and lies outside the designated Conservation Area of the Chelmer Valley. Whilst the field pattern has remained unchanged, the boundary hedgerows are weak and the overall character is weakening. Development at Great Baddow immediately to the south and noise intrusion from the A1060 further compromises character. Nevertheless, the parcel is part of the Chelmer Valley.

### Visual Sensitivity to Development

The parcel is largely contained visually from the north by a substantial hedgerow bordering the A1060, but exposed from the south due to its falling landform and absence of any substantive vegetation. There is some scrubby woodland to the west of the parcel but this has a limited effect on enclosure of the parcel as a whole. Residential properties along the A1060 have views across the land from their upper windows, although the land quickly falls away from the plateau adjacent to the A1060 limiting exposure of the land from this perspective. Aside from the PRoW immediately to the north, the greatest exposure of the land is from PRoW running alongside the River Chelmer, although these are long distance views.

### Landscape Value

Whilst there is a peripheral PRoW, there are no features of particular value, being of relatively ordinary aesthetic appeal (notwithstanding the character and visual connection of the land with the wider Chelmer Valley). There is some visual intrusion from the edge of Great Baddow across the A1060, and aural intrusion from the A1060 and to a lesser extent the A12.

### Table 14.1 Overall Sensitivity and Value Summary Table for Land Parcel SLP1

| **Landscape Character Sensitivity** | |
|---|---|
| 1 Representativeness of character | Moderate – contains some landscape elements/features that are representative of typical character, largely remnant hedgerows, but these are limited to the boundaries. |
| 2 Condition of elements and features | Low – elements/features are in poor, declining or degraded condition and would benefit from enhancement. |
| 3 Nature and complexity of landform | Moderate – rolling landform as part of the valley edge. |
| 4 Scale and pattern of landscape | Moderate – medium/large scale landscape with open and simple pattern. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 Historic features and sense of time-depth | Moderate – limited presence of historic landscape elements and some sense of time-depth. |
| 6 Presence of natural elements | Low – no semi-natural habitat. |
| 7 Type of existing development | Moderate – development is present on the southern fringes (road and urban edge of Great Baddow) but is sufficiently set back not to have a detracting influence on character. |
| 8 Relationship to settlement edge | High – adjoining the settlement edge but separated by the clearly defined boundary of the A1060 and boundary hedge. |
| **Visual Sensitivity** | |
| 1 Openness and inter-visibility | High – very open landform to the north, being the valley side of the Chelmer, with a high degree of visibility. |
| 2 Views available | High - high numbers of public and moderate numbers of private views are available in a context where views of open countryside (Chelmer Valley) are important. |
| 3 Potential for mitigation | Moderate to High – development would be conspicuous but would not fundamentally alter the balance of elements and could be mitigated with careful siting and design. |
| **Landscape Value** | |
| 1 Distinctiveness of character | Low – contains some features that are typical of character, largely remnant hedgerows. |
| 2 Quality and condition of elements and features | Low – landscape features in poor condition, in a declining state. |
| 3 Scenic value and aesthetic appeal | Moderate – has ordinary aesthetic appeal (part of Chelmer river valley landscape) with detracting road noise to the south and intrusion of the urban edge at Great Baddow. |
| 4 Presence of cultural, historic or nature conservation associations | Low – possesses no cultural or nature conservation features. |
| 5 Recreational opportunities | Moderate – recreational value through peripheral PRoW. |
| 6 Levels of tranquillity | Moderate – visual and noise intrusion, from the A1060 and the built edge of Great Baddow. |

### Conclusions on Overall Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity

Overall this parcel is judged to have a moderate to high landscape sensitivity, low value and a moderate landscape capacity for low rise residential/employment development, but with the caveat that particularly sensitive mitigation would be required in respect of the massing, density, architectural design, layout and soft landscaping of any development in a way which works with and complements aspects of valley character. Mitigation of development on this land would need to pay special attention to the visual exposure of this part of the valley side and seek to create a new landscape which does not detract from the fragmented settlement pattern associated with Sandford Mill and Manor Farm and is also part of the significant potential for Green Infrastructure enhancement in the locality through, for example, the restoration, enhancement and management of woodland and hedgerows, habitat creation and access enhancement. Key characteristics/qualities to be safeguarded, recommendations for mitigation and guidelines are:

- Maintenance and strengthening of existing hedgerows external to the parcel.
- Introduction of structural planting to help soften introduced built form.
- Careful attention to the density massing and orientation of built form.

Table 14.2 Summary Table for Land Parcel SLP1

| Land Parcel | Landscape Character Sensitivity | Visual Sensitivity | Overall Landscape Sensitivity | Landscape Value | Overall Landscape Capacity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SLP1 | M | M - H | H | L | M |

## 14.3 Land Parcel SLP2

### Land Parcel Location

Land to the north of the A1060 Maldon Road, west of the A12.

### Local Landscape Character Description

Characteristic of local landscape character, comprising a shallow valley and predominantly large-scale farmland on valley slopes.

### Visual Context and Characteristics

Part of the southern slopes of the Chelmer Valley, exposed (variably) to the north, with boundary hedgerows intercepting views from adjacent PRoWs. Exposure increases towards the north east as the land falls away

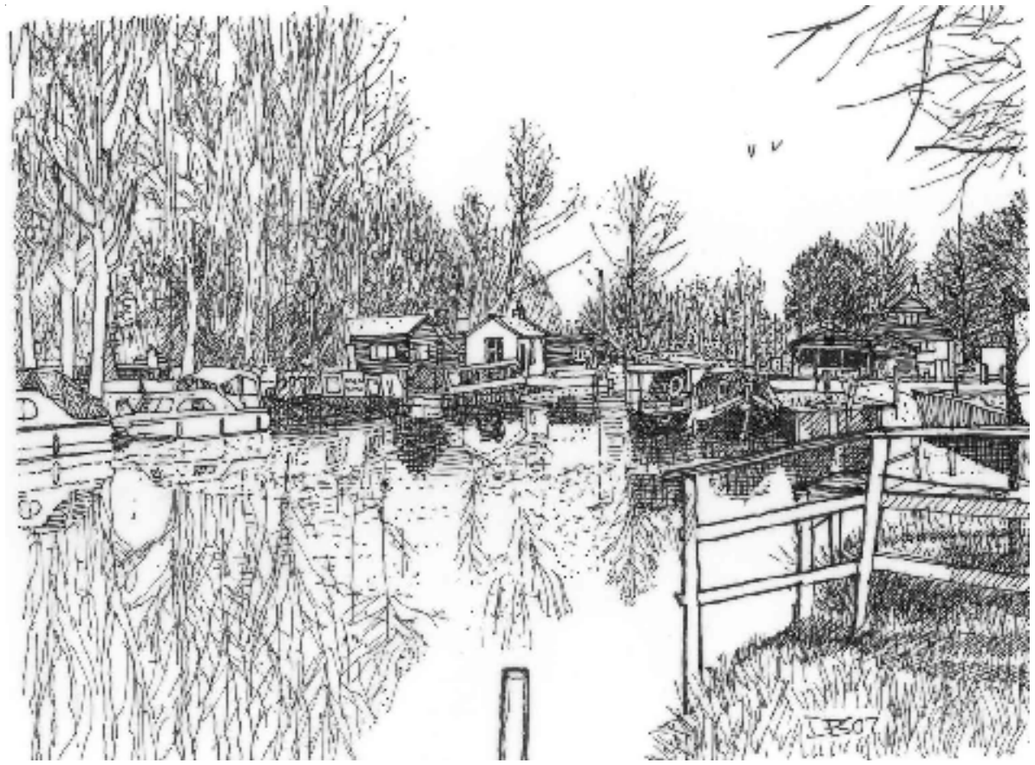
March 2017
Doc Ref. L39111

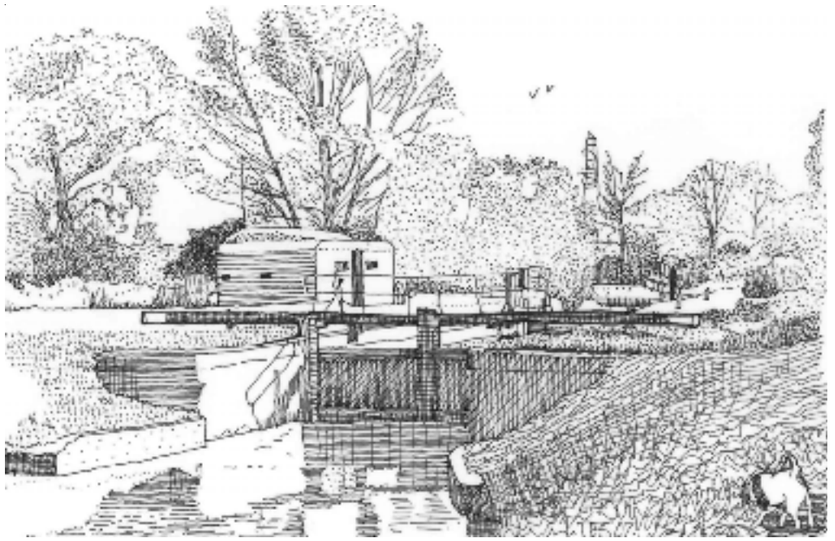
Borough Heritage

# Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation Conservation Area

**Conservation area character appraisal**

**Consultation draft**

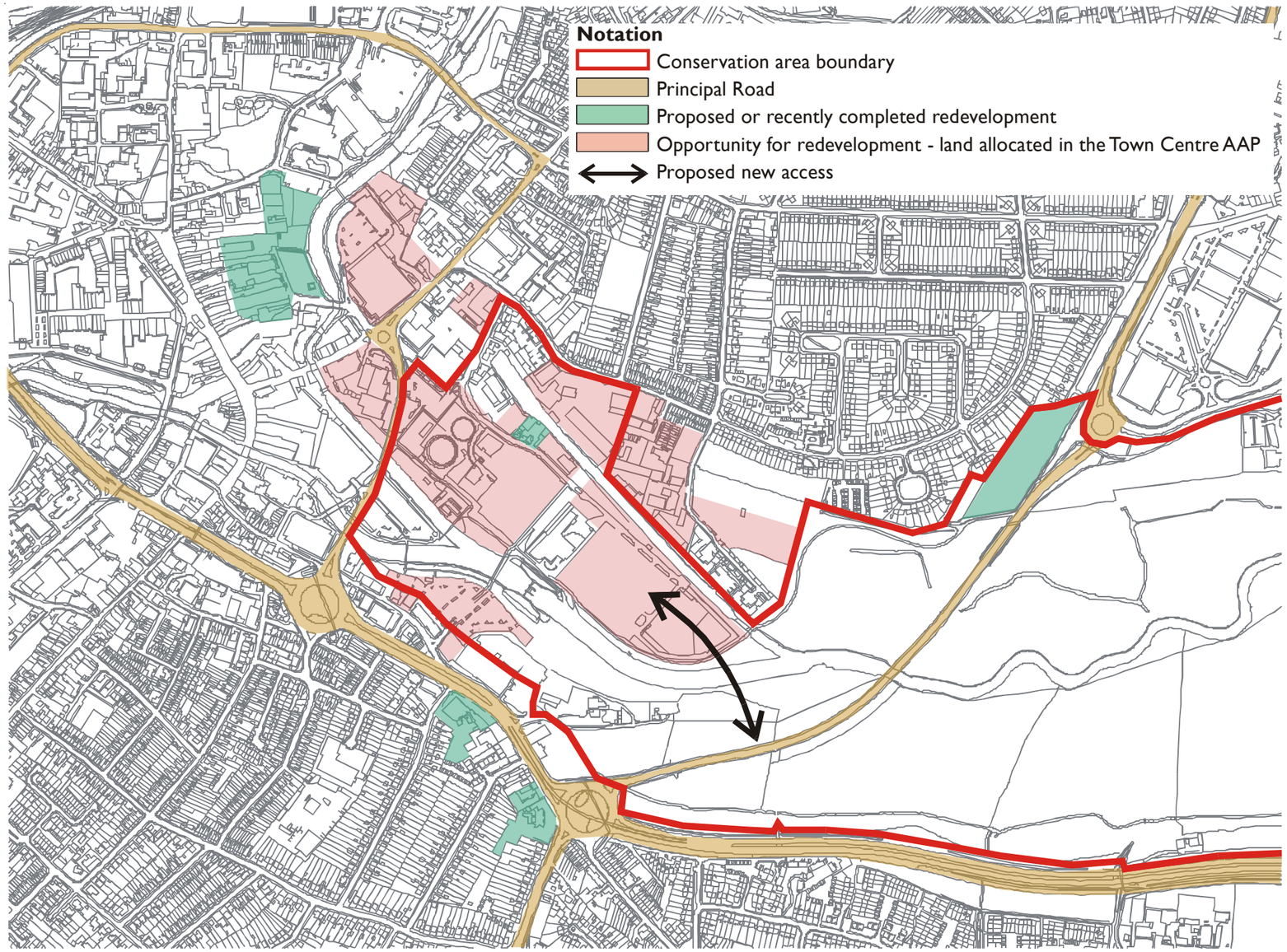




michael.hurst@chelmsford.gov.uk
01245 606294

Chelmsford BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Figure 1**
Planning and development issues affecting the conservation area




## Chelmer and Balckwater Navigation Conservation Area

The Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation conservation area (Fig.2) was designated on 24th September 1991.There was a short report prepared for committee at this time, however there has been no comprehensive review of the area or its boundaries since its first designation.

At the time of designation Braintree and Maldon District Councils also designated their sections of the navigation as conservation areas, giving the full length of the navigation conservation area status.

The present conservation area in Chelmsford Borough (Fig.3) extends from High Bridge Road east following the line of the navigation and the extent of the valley floor to Paper Mill Lock, then beyond to Heybridge Sea Basin - a total length of 22.1 km.

### Significance

In the context of Essex, the Chelmer and Blackwater navigation is of considerable architectural, historic and scenic interest. Since its opening in 1797 the influence of the canal has been considerable, revolutionising industrial transport.

The development of Springfield Basin also fundamentally influenced Chelmsford's historic industrial development.

### Special Interest

The special interest which justifies the designation of the Chelmer and Blackwater navigation as a conservation area derives from the following:

- Its economic significance as part of the late eighteenth century canal network for urban and rural areas;
- Its importance as a legacy of the dominant form of pre-railway industrial transport;
- Its contribution to the growth of Chelmsford in the nineteenth century;
- The architectural and historic interest of Springfield Basin;
- The architectural and historic interest of the historic buildings, some of which are listed buildings;

**Figure 2.** The Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation conservation area

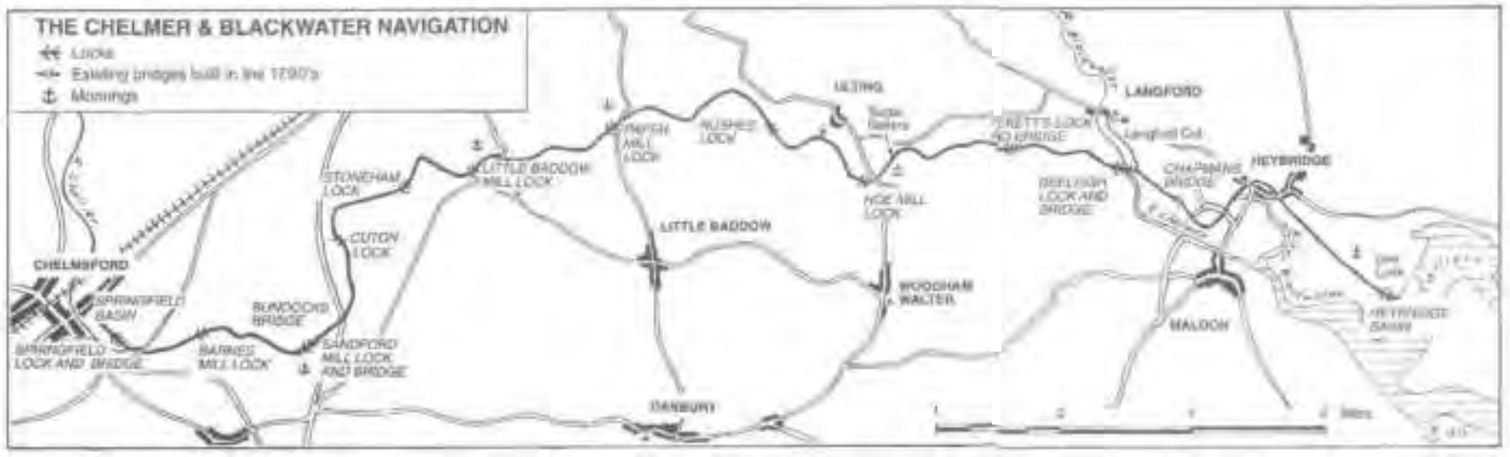
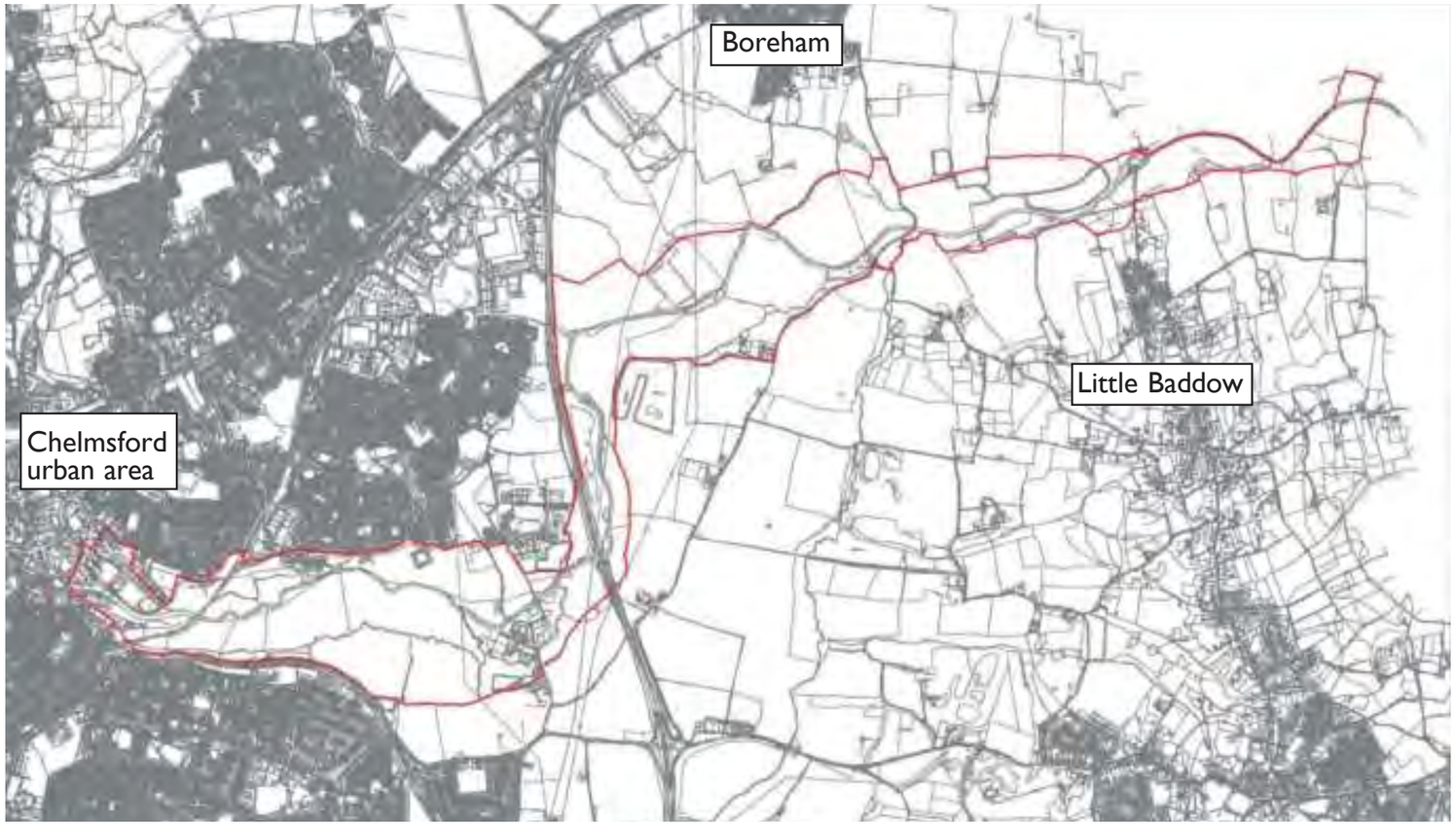



**Figure 3.** Area of Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation conservation area within the Borough of Chelmsford




- The technological interest of the navigations locks and bridges;
- The topography of the surrounding landscape, including the flood plain water meadows and agricultural land;
- Views of surrounding churches, including St Mary's Cathedral, Holy Trinity Church, Danbury St John the Baptist, Little Baddow St Mary the Virgin and Boreham St Andrew;
- Views to the navigation-related structures, including the bridges, warehouses, gas holders and mills;
- Trees and hedgerows;
- The area's ecological value;
- The changing setting of the navigation from urban to rural in the waterside area.
- Its present use for pleasure boats, walkers, cyclists and anglers.

## Character Statement

The character of the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation conservation area is a mature river valley whose landscape has been modelled by commercial navigation and waterway activity.

The character of the west part, where the river valley flood plain continues into the heart of Chelmsford, is derived from its physical relationship with the town and surrounding landscape, its historic economic function and transport. The navigation is contained by the built form of the urban area, including the industry which grew around the navigation after the river was made navigable. The waterway network is therefore key to the town's identity and provides an integral link to the river valley, countryside and agricultural hinterland. This is now important to recreation as well as ecology.

The open setting provided by most of the river valley and flood plain contrasts with the urban edge of the town centre. The remaining historic buildings, including the industrial structures, define the character of the area.

## Origins and Historic Development

The Moulsham Street bridging of the River Can provided a commercially viable site for the medieval settlement at Chelmsford to be founded on higher ground to the north of Moulsham between the Rivers Can and Chelmer.

but the area between this and the riverside is open in character and forms the important setting to the listed Mill, Mill house and the adjacent cottage. Regeneration will entail creating new road access, which needs to be managed very carefully to minimise the impact on the landscape setting.

## Enhancement and Management Recommendations

- Retain and protect historic buildings and their setting in development proposals.
- Improve river access beyond the sluice gates and visual continuity between river and basin
- Increase use of the navigable waterway by means of moorings in Springfield Basin and developments around it.
- Prevent further urban expansion into the meadows.
- Retain views across the area to Chelmsford Cathedral, Holy Trinity Church, Moulsham Mill, Danbury Church and other significant features.
- Retain riverside functions relating to river and navigation use.
- Reintroduce grazing of the northern meadows.
- Extend and re-establish the towpath along the riverside and the navigation.
- Protect mature and semi mature trees.
- Instigate a programme of phased planting of trees to provide trees where none currently exist.
- Instigate a programme of phased planting of trees to ensure continuity of mature trees.

## Character Area 2 – The Rural areas

The second broad Character area covers the rural part of the navigation from Chelmer Road (A138) to Paper Mill Lock. For ease of description this area is described in 4 zones. At the end of the character area section a general description is given for the common building types within the area.

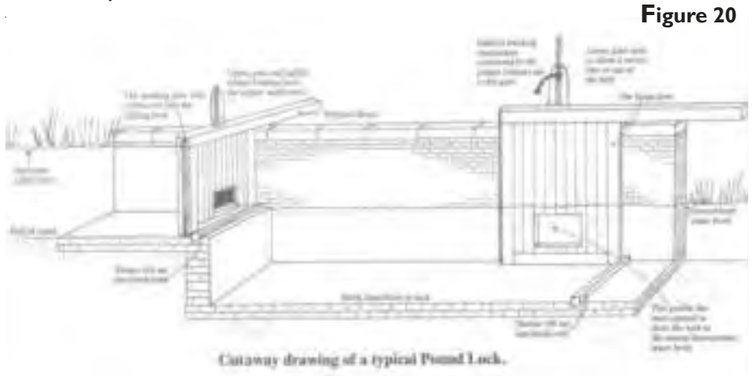
## Building Groups - Area 2

### Locks

There are 11 locks and a further sea lock at Heybridge, which in all give a fall of 76'11" over the length of the navigation. The locks were constructed to larger dimensions than was common elsewhere in the country, to allow existing barges used at the port of Maldon to travel to Chelmsford. The locks (figures 20 and 21 below) are constructed of brick with hard Dundee stone copings. The gates are made of oak and elm, which require regular maintenance and replacement.

The locks provide important focal points along the navigation, offering elevated positions with views out into the surrounding landscape.

**Figure 20**



Cutaway drawing of a typical Pound Lock.

**Figure 21**

### Mills

The area originally had numerous mills, now few survive, although good examples remain at Moulsham and Barnes, representing both timber framed and brick examples. Archaeological and documentary evidence is available for mills along the river at Little Baddow, Sandford and Paper Mill.

### Farmsteads

The river valley provides fertile agricultural land, which has been farmed for many centuries. Farmhouses (see figure 28, Barnes Farm), barns, granaries, stables and other traditional farm buildings are found throughout the area, which add to its character and significance. Large modern agricultural buildings detract from the appearance of the area where they are prominently sited, due to their wide span, scale, form and materials.

### Cottages

Individual cottages and groups of cottages (figure 22 below) are important features in the landscape dispersed throughout the area, although infrequently and with suttle but positive impact on the wider landscape. The majority are modest in scale, 1 ½ or 2 storeys, with steep plain tiled roofs and weatherboard, render or brick walls.

**Figure 22**

**WWII Defences**

The Chelmer valley formed part of the general headquarters defence line at Sandford and Cuton locks during WWII, much evidence remains for this, most visibly in the remaining pill boxes (see figure 39, Cuton Lock). These defences serve as a strong historic feature and are integral to the character of the area. See survey of WWII defences in the Borough of Chelmsford (Essex County Council 2008) for further information

**Zone 2 – Chelmer Road – Barnes Mill**

Figure 23, Zone 2, Landscape Assessment
Figure 24, Zones 2,3 & 4 Contribution of individual buildings
Figure 25, Zone 5, Contribution of individual buildings

**Spatial Analysis**

The valley is very broad and shallow, with the view eastward dominated by the distant Danbury Hill (figure 26), with Danbury church as the primary focal point. The view westwards is terminated by the tree planted edge of the Chelmsford town centre and its skyline, spreading across the valley floor (figure 27). To the south, spreading over the bounding hill, is the urban area of Great Baddow, with a few tall constructions acting as focal points and the primary focal point being the radio mast. To the north the urban area of Springfield and Chelmer Village spreads over the bounding hill.

*The River Valley towards Danbury* **Figure 26**

The overall quality of the valley landscape is high and has a significant impact on the observer. The key feature of the landscape is rough pasture, which is grazed on the south bank of the river, therefore retaining its character, visual quality and ecology resulting from the retention of its management regime,but ungrazed and left rough on the north bank (figure 28) and thus losing its character and visual quality and ecology resulting from the loss of the management regime.

*The river valley towards Chelmsford* **Figure 27**

**Figure 28**

Fields of arable crops are encroaching down onto the valley floor on the south side as meadowland is improved and fields enlarged. On the north side there is development pressure to encroach onto the valley floor and the meadows, in order to expand Chelmer Village southwards. Much of the meadow land on the north bank outside flood zones 2 and 3 but the existing urban edge defines the valley floor and any further development would diminish the urban/rural boundary and valley floor definition. Similarly on the southern meadows the existing urban edge defines the valley floor.

There is sparse tree planting alongside the river at the western end of this part of the valley. The trees that are there are individual trees, a few rows of trees and the fragmented remains of hedgerows, the quality of which overall is good, but due to their sparseness have a low impact in the landscape. Between Barnes Lock and Sandford Mill, to the rear of the towpath, there is considerable tree planting in rows, which individually are of a good or very good quality and collectively have a positive high impact on the character of the valley. Further west the hedgerows are fragmented and of a poor or good individual quality, but positively contribute to the overall strength of tree planting in this part of the valley.

At the western end of this part of the valley the urban edges of Springfield and Great Baddow are clearly defined, with some softening from trees along the urban edge. Further east the urban/rural fringe is defined primarily by screening tree belts, through breaks in which, the urban development can be glimpsed. Above this edge, especially to Great Baddow, the urban area rising over the hill is broken by widespread mature tree planting, which softens the urban form and aids in the visual integration of the urban form into it's rural setting. Other buildings are isolated. Overall buildings have a medium impact on the landscape character and generally present an appearance of good quality.

At the western end of this part of the valley the A138 crossing the valley on its causeway and bridge and the A414 climbing the southern valley side intrude into the landscape, both visually and aurally, respectively through the movement and noise of traffic. Roads other than these are few and quiet, therefore having little impact on the valley character.

Barnes Farm is a prominent feature within the landscape and provides a strong focal point. The open setting with a treed enclosure provides an important setting to the historic buildings. Beyond, the housing is small scale and unobtrusive.

West of Barnes Mill the main footpath diverges from the river edge cutting across the meadow, resulting in the loss of the towpath, which has become virtually unused. Barnes Mill within its wooded setting and historic mill building provides a strong positive visual focal point for views along the valley in both directions and a high quality interest group of buildings at close quarters (figure 29). Between Barnes Mill and Prentices Farm land has been fenced to provide paddocks for horses. This is out of character with the open meadow, but is in a separately defined area contained between two building and tree groups and

# Figure 23
# Character Area 2
Zone 2

Barnes Mill Lock

Sandford Lock

**See Zone 1 plan**

B

B

B

E

E

E

**Notation**

- Conservation Area Boundary
- View (to & from)
- Panoramic views
- Trees of significance
- Enhancement or opportunity site
  - **B**: Design brief
  - **E**: Landscape character enhancement opportunity
- Current or previously developed land
- Intrusive feature
- Listed Buildings
- Water meadows
- Agricultural land
- Main Road
- Secondary Road
- Track
- Water: river, navigation or reservoir
- Recreational moorings
- Sub area of distinct character
- Public Footpath

therefore is not a major intrusion into the overall valley landscape and provides additional visual interest for the rambler. However the paddocks are bounded by timber post and rail fences, which are alien features in the landscape.

The treed and wooded developments around Sandford Mill provide a strong visual stop to the eastward view in this part of the valley (figure 30). The trees are of good or very good individual quality and collectively have a high beneficial impact on the valley character.

Figure 29

Figure 30

The arable fields on the higher valley slopes rising to the south, up to the A414, are outside the boundary of the study area but are visually of major importance to this section of the valley, being the visibly bounding valley side and could therefore be included within the protection of the Conservation Area. There are few views into this section of the valley from Great Baddow, Springfield and Chelmer Village. The primary views into and across the valley are from the A138, crossing the valley; the A414 following the southern edge of the valley, which is on the valley floor to the west and higher up the valley sides to the east; and Chelmer Village Way on the northern edge of the valley floor.

South of Manor Farm adjacent to the A414 is a large area of rough grass across which the valley and the town centre are viewed by traffic travelling westwards along the A414 and which consequently detracts from this overall good view of the valley. Similarly north-west of this area on the valley floor is a large area of rough grassland around a modern agricultural reservoir, which detracts from the overall good quality view of the valley from upon the valley sides. Both these areas of grassland should be managed to improve the valley landscape.

**Enhancement and Management Recommendations**

- Prevent further urban encroachment onto the valley floor.
- Prevent further loss of grazing on the valley floor meadows.
- Retain historic buildings and protect their setting.
- Retain important views to key historic landmarks.
- Reintroduce grazing of the northern meadows.
- Reinstate arable land to meadows on the valley floor, especially the first 100m alongside the river to protect the character of the valley.
- Plant native trees to strengthen and extend the tree belts to strengthen the definition of the urban/rural edge, ensuring a continuity of mature trees.
- Protect mature trees in the urban areas that are visible from the valley floor and encourage other tree planting in those urban areas.
- Instigate a programme of native tree planting alongside the river west of Barnes Lock.
- Instigate a programme of native tree planting along the riverside to ensure the continuity of mature trees.
- Protect the trees around Barnes Mill.
- Reinstate the towpath along the northern bank of the river.
- Seek to replace the paddock fences with hedges more in keeping with the character of the valley.
- Seek improvements to the perimeter of the reservoir area.
- Consider extending the boundary of the conservation area to the A414 to include visually important agricultural valley sides.

**Zone 3 – Sandford Mill**

Figure 31 – Zone 3, Landscape Assessment

**Spatial Analysis**

Overall, the area around Sandford Mill and the premises along Sandford Mill Road, south of the river, in comparison to the open valley landscape to the west, is one of small scale and enclosed development. There is extensive tree planting around this building group creating the impression, from a distance, of a wood on the valley floor. This is of major visual importance for the Chelmer valley assisting in its legibility, dividing the valley into definable visual areas.

Within this area is the historic building group of the old pumping station, which provides additional historic interest. The buildings in the Sandford Mill area are isolated or in small groups, with the largest group being the historic pumping station buildings (figure 32). They are generally of good quality and due to being hidden by the trees only have a moderate impact on the wider landscape, with their impact being restricted to their immediate surroundings.

Figure 32

South of the river at Sandford Lock is a disused compound, which is unkempt, of poor quality and detracts from the visual quality and character of the valley.

**Bibliography**


Came, P. (undated)
The Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation

Cramphorn, J. F. & J. (c.1993)
The storey of the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation through 200 years.

Bettley, J & Pevsner, N (2007)
The Buildings of England: Essex

Essex County Council (1997)
Landscape Character Assessment

Essex County Council (2001)
Comparative survey of industrial monument, 2 volumes.

Essex County Council (2008)
Survey of WWII defences for the Borough of Chelmsford


**Annex A** – Planning Policy Comparison

| 1997 Local Plan Policy | 2006 Core Policy | 2006 Development Control Policy |
|---|---|---|
| ENV6 Conservation Areas | CP9 | DC19 |
| ENV7 Enhancement Schemes | CP9 | DC19, AAP* |
| EHV8 Maintaining Conservation Areas | CP9 | DC19, AAP* |
| ENV9-11 Listed Buildings | CP9 | DC20 |
| ENV16 Shop fronts | | DC49, AAP* |
| ENV17-18 Advertising | CP9 | DC49, AAP* |
| ENV19 Security Shutters | CP9 | DC46, DC49, AAP* |
| SHP4 Core Retail Area | CP7, CP22, CP23 | DC5, DC63, AAP* |
| EMP1-4 | CP13, CP15 | DC4, DC31, DC36, DC52, DC55-57 |
| CSU8 Flood Risk | CP10 | DC23 |
| Dev Adj watercourses | CP9 | DC18 |
| EMP17 Farm diversification | CP9 | DC60 |
| EMP17 Re-use of rural buildings | CP9 | DC61 |
| REC8 Access to rivers | | DC18, DC40, DC41 |
| REC9 Restoration Springfield Basin | | DC18, DC40, DC42, AAP* |
| REC10 River activities | CP2 | |

*The Area Aaction Plan (AAP) only relates to the Chelmer Waterside area.

# APPENDIX A.3: EXTRACTS FROM EVIDENCE BASE DOCUMENTS

Chelmsford City Council Draft Local Plan Pre-Submission Document (January 2018)

Chelmsford Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan 2018-2036 (January 2018)

Green Wedges and Green Corridors: Defining Chelmsford's River Valleys Review Report (February 2017)

SD 001

# Chelmsford Draft Local Plan

## Pre-Submission Document

(Regulation 19 - Publication Draft)

January 2018

*Our Planning Strategy to 2036*

Chelmsford Local Plan

# The Spatial Strategy

**6.28** In order to meet identified development needs, the Spatial Strategy sets out the scale and distribution of new development across Chelmsford during the Local Plan period up to 2036. It is based on a number of considerations including national planning policy, the Local Plan's Strategic Priorities, Vision and Spatial Principles, environmental constraints, and the availability and viability of land for development.

**STRATEGIC POLICY S9 – THE SPATIAL STRATEGY**

**The Spatial Strategy applies the Spatial Principles to focus new housing and employment growth to the most sustainable locations by making the best use of previously developed land in Chelmsford Urban Area; sustainable urban extensions around Chelmsford and South Woodham Ferrers; and development around Key Service Settlements outside the Green Belt in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy set out below:**

**Settlement Hierarchy**

| **Category** | **Settlement** | |
|---|---|---|
| **1. City or Town** | Chelmsford, South Woodham Ferrers | |
| **2. Key Service Settlements** | **Outside Green Belt** | **Within Green Belt** |
| | Bicknacre, Boreham, Broomfield, Danbury and Great Leighs | Galleywood, Runwell, Stock and Writtle |
| **3. Service Settlements** | **Outside Green Belt** | **Within Green Belt** |
| | East Hanningfield, Ford End, Great Waltham, Little Waltham, Rettendon Place and Woodham Ferrers | Highwood, Margaretting, Ramsden Heath/Downham, Roxwell and West Hanningfield |
| **4. Small Settlements** | Chatham Green, Good Easter, Howe Green, Howe Street, Little Baddow, Rettendon Common and Sandon | Edney Common |

**In addition, at any of the Settlement categories, new growth sites which are in accordance with the Local Plan Spatial Principles and Strategic Policies can be allocated through relevant Neighbourhood Plans.**

**New development allocations will be focused on the three Growth Areas of Central and Urban Chelmsford, North Chelmsford, and South and East Chelmsford using the distribution set out in the Key Diagram (Figure 8), Policies Map, and tables below:**

**Spatial Strategy - Development Locations and Allocations**

| Development Allocations to 2036 | | New Homes | Traveller Pitches | Travelling Showpeople Plots | Net New Employment Floorspace |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Growth Area 1 - Central and Urban Chelmsford** | | | | | |
| **Status** | **Existing Commitments** | | | | |
| With Planning Permission | Peninsula Site, Wharf Road | 421 | | | |
| Without Planning Permission (re-allocations) | Lockside, Navigation Road Waterhouse Lane, Writtle Telephone Exchange, Galleywood Reservoir | 188 | | | |
| **Sub Total** | | **609** | | | |
| **Location/Site** | **New Local Plan Allocations** | | | | |
| 1 | Previously developed sites in Chelmsford Urban Area | 2,205 | | | 4,000sqm Office, 11,500sqm Food Retail |
| 2 | West Chelmsford | 800 | | 5 | |
| 3a | East Chelmsford - Manor Farm | 250 | | | |

**7.121** Layout should incorporate compensation measures for landscape impact from the development including lower dwelling densities, appropriate tree and hedge planting along countryside edges, and to protect important views into the site from the north and west. The design is also expected to ensure that the development achieves an attractive and well-planned gateway into Chelmsford. Layout should also positively use existing topographical, heritage, ecological and landscape site features such as shallow valleys, established field boundaries, mature trees and vegetation, and nearby Local Wildlife Sites. For these reasons, the land to the west of the site is allocated for future recreation use/SuDS.

**7.122** The development is expected to promote the highest standards of design to ensure inclusive and high quality buildings and spaces. This shall include comprehensive and coherent network of green infrastructure, formal and informal recreation and community spaces.

**7.123** The site may contain archaeological deposits which will need to be considered by future development proposals, through an archaeological evaluation.

## Location 3 - East Chelmsford

**7.124** This broad location for growth, as shown on the Key Diagram (Figure 8), comprises the following four Strategic Growth Sites:

- 3a: East Chelmsford – Manor Farm
- 3b: East Chelmsford – Land North of Maldon Road (Employment Site)
- 3c: East Chelmsford – Land South of Maldon Road
- 3d: East Chelmsford – Land North of Maldon Road (Residential Site)

**STRATEGIC GROWTH SITE 3a – EAST CHELMSFORD (MANOR FARM)**

**Land to the north of Great Baddow (Manor Farm) adjacent to Chelmsford's Urban Area as shown on the Policies Map, is allocated for a landscape-led, high-quality comprehensively-planned new sustainable neighbourhood that maximises opportunities for sustainable travel as well as a new Country Park. Development proposals will accord with a masterplan approved by the Council to provide:**

**Amount and type of development:**

- **Around 250 new homes of mixed size and type to include affordable housing.**

**Supporting on-site development:**

- **A new Country Park**
- **New vehicular access road from Maldon Road into Sandford Mill.**

**Site masterplanning principles:**

**Movement and Access**

- **Main vehicular access to the site will be from a new junction at Maldon Road/Sandford Mill Lane**
- **Provide pedestrian and cycle connections**
- **Provide a well connected internal road layout.**

**Historic and Natural Environment**

- **Conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Chelmer and Blackwater Conservation Area**
- **Protect the nationally significant Bronze Age monument and its setting**
- **Protect important views into and through the site from across the Chelmer Valley**
- **Enhance the historic and natural environment**
- **Create a network of green infrastructure**
- **Provide suitable SuDs and flood risk management**
- **Ensure appropriate habitat mitigation and creation is provided**
- **Retain the WWII pillbox in the eastern part of the site and provide interpretation boards**
- **Undertake a Minerals Resource Assessment**
- **Undertake an Archaeological Assessment.**

**Design and Layout**

- **Provide a coherent network of public open space, formal and informal sport, recreation and community space within the site**
- **Remove electricity lines and pylons from the site and install electricity cables underground.**

**Site infrastructure requirements:**

- **Provision of a new Country Park and Visitors Centre at Sandford Mill with a landscape strategy and a delivery mechanism to provide for their long-term management and maintenance.**
- **Heritage interpretation, including information boards and public art**
- **Provide appropriate improvements, as necessary, to the local and strategic road network as required by the Local Highways Authority**
- **Appropriate measures to promote and sustain travel through sustainable modes of transport**
- **Provide new and enhanced cycle routes, footpaths, Public Rights of Way and where appropriate bridleways within and between the sites and the surrounding area to enable the development to integrate with existing development areas and to provide links into City Centre, the wider countryside beyond**
- **Financial contributions to early years, primary and secondary education provision as required by the Local Education Authority**
- **Financial contributions towards other community facilities such as healthcare provision as required by the NHS/CCG**
- **Provide, or make financial contributions to, new or enhanced sport, leisure and recreation facilities.**

**Where appropriate, contributions will be collected towards recreation disturbance avoidance and mitigation measures for European designated sites.**

Reasoned Justification

**7.125** This site allocation will provide a high-quality landscape-led residential development of around 250 new homes expected to be delivered between 2020/21 and 2024/25. This location represents an opportunity for a landscape-led development that maximises opportunities for travel by sustainable modes. It is one of four development sites in East Chelmsford, adjacent to Chelmsford Urban Area and close to local services and facilities in Great Baddow and Sandon. Due to the heritage, landscape and utility constraints at this site, proposals significantly in excess of 250 homes are unlikely to be acceptable.

**7.126** Infrastructure required for this site is in addition to relevant requirements of Policy S11.

**7.127** The development should provide a mix of size and types of homes. The development is expected to promote the highest standard of design with dwelling heights, density and massing of new development which responds positively to the historic environment and the local landscape context. Affordable, self-build and custom-build, appropriately accessible and adaptable housing, as well as other types of specialist housing should be provided in accordance with the Council's policy requirements.

**7.128** The development will provide an opportunity to provide a high-quality residential development and new Country Park to the north of the residential development. It will also provide an opportunity to provide an improved access to Sandford Mill which is an important community asset and a focus for regeneration through the delivery of a new road link from Maldon Road/Sandford Mill Lane. It is envisaged that the new Visitors Centre will be located at Sandford Mill.

**7.129** The Country Park will be expected to provide a high-quality context for the residential development and protect and enhance the character and appearance of the adjoining Green Wedge and Conservation Area, retain and improve habitats for wildlife and provide new and enhanced recreational opportunities for local people. Appropriate and sustainable long-term management and maintenance arrangements for the new Country Park and Visitor Centre will also be required.

**7.130** The development will be expected to promote the highest standards of design to ensure that it works in sympathy with the local landscape and provides a strong sense of place. The design and layout of proposals will need to incorporate landscape compensation measures including the provision of suitable planting belts and buffers, restricting dwelling heights to a maximum of two-stories, protection of key views, promoting non-standard housing types and requiring lower dwelling densities at the most visually sensitive locations. The layout of the development will also need to reflect and incorporate a safeguard corridor around the high pressure gas line that crosses the eastern part of the site. It is expected that the electricity pylons and lines that also crosses the eastern part of the site will be removed and installed underground.

**7.131** These measures will help to protect important views into and across the site from the north-west. Robust tree and hedge planting will also be expected to include at least heavy standard appropriate native species. Development will be considered in the context of an approved masterplan.

**7.132** Opportunities for sustainable transport modes should be maximised to create neighbourhoods where alternative forms of transport to the private car (walking, cycling and public transport) are prioritised.

**7.133** The development will be expected to improve connections for cycling, walking and horse riding including connections into the existing networks and providing links to the City Centre, Chelmer East Green Wedge and nearby services and facilities such as the Vineyards Neighbourhood Centre, Sandon Secondary School and Baddow Hall Primary School. Cycle paths from the site should connect with National Cycle Network Route 1 to the north-east which connects with Chelmer Village, the City Centre and Hammonds Road.

**7.134** The development will be required to provide direct, safe and convenient access to existing bus stops on Maldon Road in addition to providing a safe multi-use crossing at Maldon Road.

**7.135** The area has a fragmented bridleway network but there are opportunities within these four site allocations to provide bridleway connections within the site and to the countryside beyond.

**7.136** A residential travel plan will be required for the development to include a package of measures to ensure sustainable means of travel are available to all new residents, to promote the benefits of sustainable transport and secure a modal shift from the private car.

**7.137** The southern part of the site contains the remains of a Bronze Age enclosure, in the area north of the Manor Farm shop. Although the remains are not scheduled, previous excavation has revealed evidence of Bronze Age and later use of the site and its environs. The feature is considered of national importance and therefore in accordance with paragraph 139 of the NPPF it should be treated as if it were a Scheduled Monument. An appropriate buffer will be required around the site and a green link to the river valley maintained, which is fundamental to the siting of the monument. Other significant archaeological remains and their settings should also be identified and protected.

**7.138** The development should seek to protect and enhance heritage assets including retaining the WWII pillbox in the eastern part of the site. This is part of a group of WWII pillboxes which form part of the General Headquarters defence line running north-south and skirting the east side of Chelmsford, forming part of a stop line in the event of invasion. These are an interesting feature and contribute to the heritage of the area. It is, therefore, expected that the development should retain, protect and provide interpretation and information boards for the WWII pillbox.

**7.139** The site lies within a Minerals Safeguarding Area. The developer will be required to undertake a Minerals Resource Assessment to assess if the site contains a viable minerals resource that would require extraction prior to development.

**7.140** The site may contain archaeological deposits which will need to be considered by future development proposals, through an archaeological evaluation.

**7.141** This site is within a 10km zone of influence of the Crouch and Roach Estuaries Special Protection Area, Ramsar site and Site of Special Scientific Interest near South Woodham Ferrers. These European designated sites are particularly sensitive to increased visitor pressure, which may be caused by new residential development within the zone of influence.

**7.142** Following consultation with Natural England, an Essex-wide Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) is being prepared to include all coastal European Sites. The strategy will identify where recreational disturbance is happening and the main recreational uses causing the disturbance. New residential development that is likely to affect the integrity of the European Sites will be required to contribute towards the implementation of the mitigation. At this stage, it is considered that this development allocation will be required to pay for the implementation of mitigation measures to protect the Crouch and Roach Estuaries Special Protection Area, Ramsar site and Site of Special Scientific Interest, and potentially the Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation. The appropriate mechanisms will be identified in the RAMS.

This publication is available in alternative formats including large print, audio and other languages

Please call 01245 606330

Planning and Housing Policy
Directorate for Sustainable Communities
Chelmsford City Council
Civic Centre
Duke Street
Chelmsford
Essex
CM1 1JE

Telephone 01245 606330
planning.policy@chelmsford.gov.uk
www.chelmsford.gov.uk

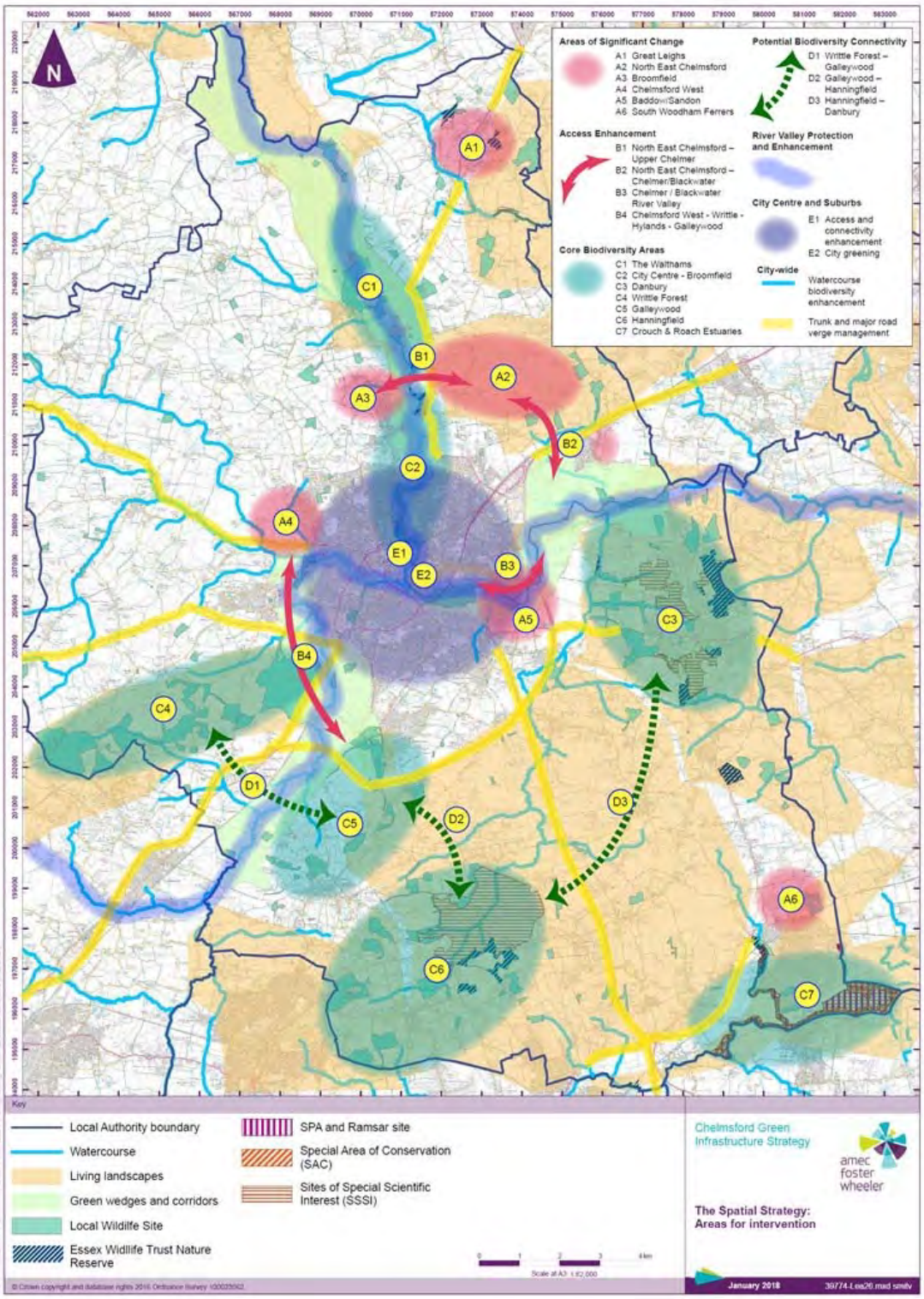
Document published by
Planning and Housing Policy


Chelmsford City Council


# Chelmsford Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan 2018 - 2036

# 3. The City-Wide Strategy: Areas for Intervention

A strategy for Green Infrastructure planning and management is summarised in the figure below, Areas for intervention relating to the protection, enhancement and creation of Green Infrastructure assets are identified as the reference point for a detailed Action Plan which sets out area and topic-based work.



**Water management – to ensure that the City's watercourses are healthy and can help to provide a response to the challenges of climate change.**

- Use the City's River Valleys (Green Wedges and Green Corridors) as a focus for securing multifunctional benefits.
- Incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems into new development, and retrofit existing development where appropriate.
- Use green spaces to provide a flood storage/management role where appropriate.

**Example projects and lead partners**

| | |
|---|---|
| River restoration at Chelmer Valley Local Nature Reserve and Admirals Park to increase wildlife value. | Chelmsford City Council<br>Essex Wildlife Trust<br>Environment Agency |
| River corridor/floodplain management to meet Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives (e.g. tree/woodland management, pollution and flooding management, access) through actions in Catchment Flood Management Plans and River Basin Management Plans. | Essex Wildlife Trust<br>Environment Agency (Catchment Partnerships),<br>Natural England (Catchment Sensitive Farming) |
| Address river access which is hampered by old weirs and structures that disrupt river flow rates. | Environment Agency |
| Link SuDS and biodiversity, particularly at new developments. | Developers |
| Extend the reach and scope of activities of the Catchment Partnership. | Environment Agency |

# 5. Delivering Green Infrastructure in New Development

New development across the City Council area will require particular attention to ensure that Green Infrastructure is an integral part of its character which is used to form strong connections with surrounding areas. The scale of some developments is such that they will incorporate Green Infrastructure resources of City-wide significance. The following guidance sets out the expectations for how Green Infrastructure should be delivered to help meet the wider aspirations across Chelmsford and its hinterland.

| Green Infrastructure Theme | Guidance |
|---|---|
| **LANDSCAPE SETTING AND QUALITY OF PLACE**<br>**Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan objective: Heritage, landscape and townscape** – to protect and enhance the City's heritage, landscape and sense of place. | ► Fit into the surrounding landscape setting, referencing the local vernacular where appropriate.<br>e.g. attention to topography, the relationship between plateaus and river valleys, the context for heritage assets, views from PRoW, and gateway sites.<br>e.g. use of local design cues and local materials. |
| **HABITAT PROVISION AND CONNECTIVITY**<br>**Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan objective: Biodiversity** – to create a well-connected network of healthy ecosystems through protection, | ► Protect, enhance and create habitats, particularly where greater connectivity can be achieved.<br>e.g. protection of existing key structural features (trees and hedgerows), and provision of new habitats using principles of multifunctionality. |

| Green Infrastructure Theme | Guidance |
|---|---|
| enhancement and where possible restoration. | e.g. demonstrate habitat connectivity within the development and with surrounding biodiversity resources. |
| **GREENSPACE PROVISION AND CONNECTIVITY**<br><br>**Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan objective: Communities and health** – to support the development of thriving communities, local engagement and the promotion of healthy lifestyles.<br><br>**Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan objective: Access and recreation** – to promote opportunities for recreation, play and everyday transport through an accessible and attractive network of open spaces, footpaths and cycleways. | ► Provide amenity greenspace of at least 0.1ha within a 5 minute walk (300m) of all dwellings.<br>► Provide accessible natural greenspace of at least 0.1ha within a 15 minute (900m) walk of all dwellings.<br>► Achieve provision of at least 40% open spaces of various kinds.<br>► Create and integrate open space provision with a planned network of walking and cycling routes.<br>► Incorporation of a diverse range of recreational opportunities which meet the needs of all residents.<br>e.g. develop a hierarchy, by type and size, of appropriate facilities<br>► Develop and connect to sustainable transport routes which help to form part of the City's strategic network.<br>► Demonstrate how recreational pressure on external resources will be managed.<br>e.g. provision of sites within the development that can intercept recreational requirements, otherwise/in addition to enhancement of the capacity of destination sites. |
| **SUSTAINABLE ENERGY USE**<br><br>**Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan objective: Economy** – to support the development of a more robust and diverse economy and contribute to sectors such as tourism. | ► Exemplar development, or wider scale schemes, which clearly show how green infrastructure is part of the intrinsic design approach.<br>e.g. green roofs/walls; open spaces as focal points not incidental land use; generous structural tree planting as part of the public realm. |
| **FLOOD ATTENUATION AND WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**<br><br>**Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan objective: Water management** – to ensure that the City's watercourses are healthy and can help to provide a response to the challenges of climate change. | ► Provision of SuDS and other water management measures.<br>e.g. stormwater ponds, swales, street trees, permeable paving.<br>► Demonstrate the use of multifunctional approaches to the planning and management of open spaces within the development. |

**Figure 4.2: Chelmsford Local Plan Proposed Spatial Strategy**


8. The spatial strategy includes a series of strategic housing allocations which will incorporate Green Infrastructure as a core principle of their development form, including links to the wider landscape context in which they will be located. The scale of these developments is such that they will exert a considerable influence on the localities in which they are located, introducing significant built form into primarily agricultural landscapes. The opportunities associated with masterplanning are potentially significant, both on- and off-site, through connections to the surrounding Green Infrastructure resource.

**Figure 4.12: Connectivity - River Valleys**

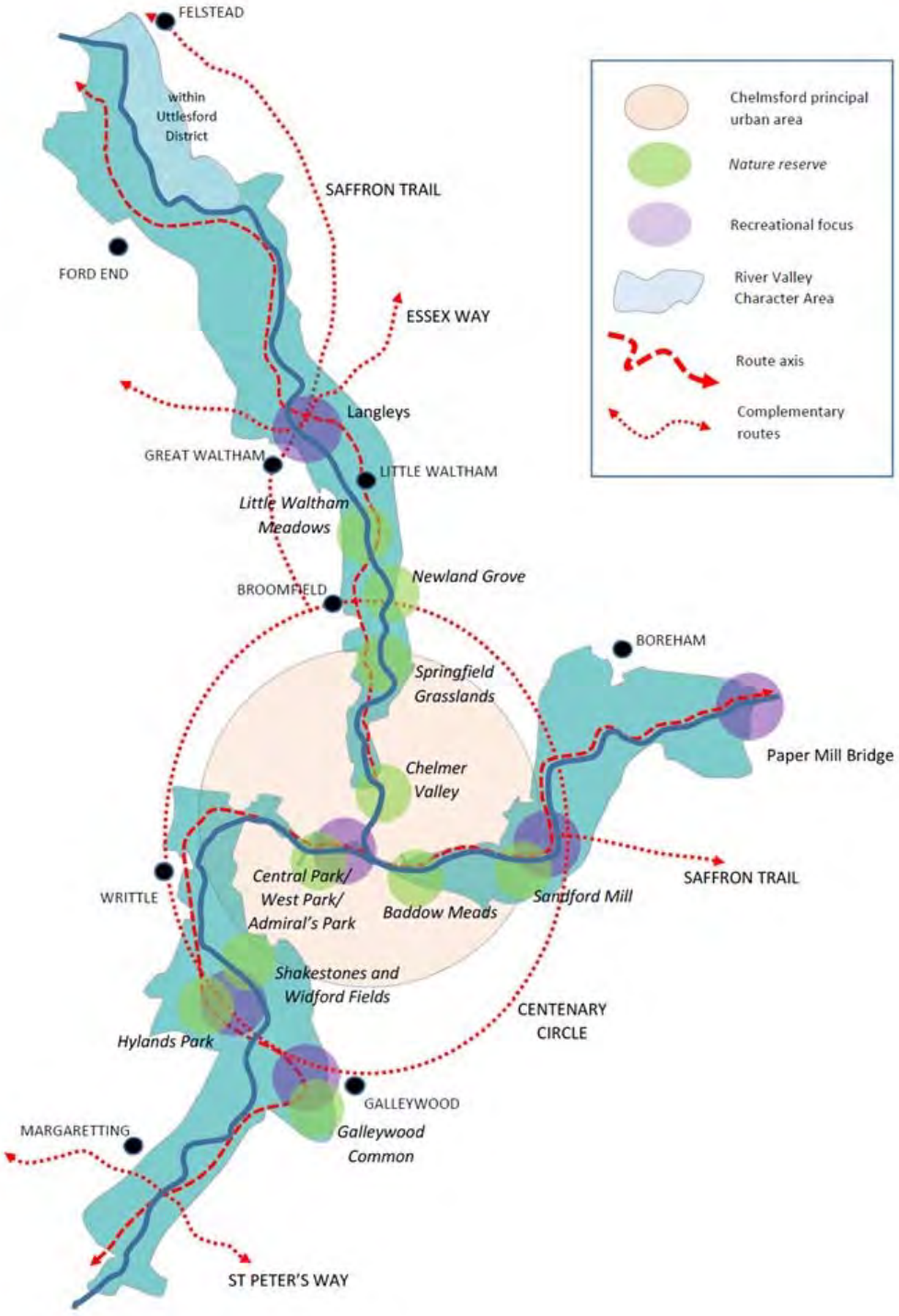
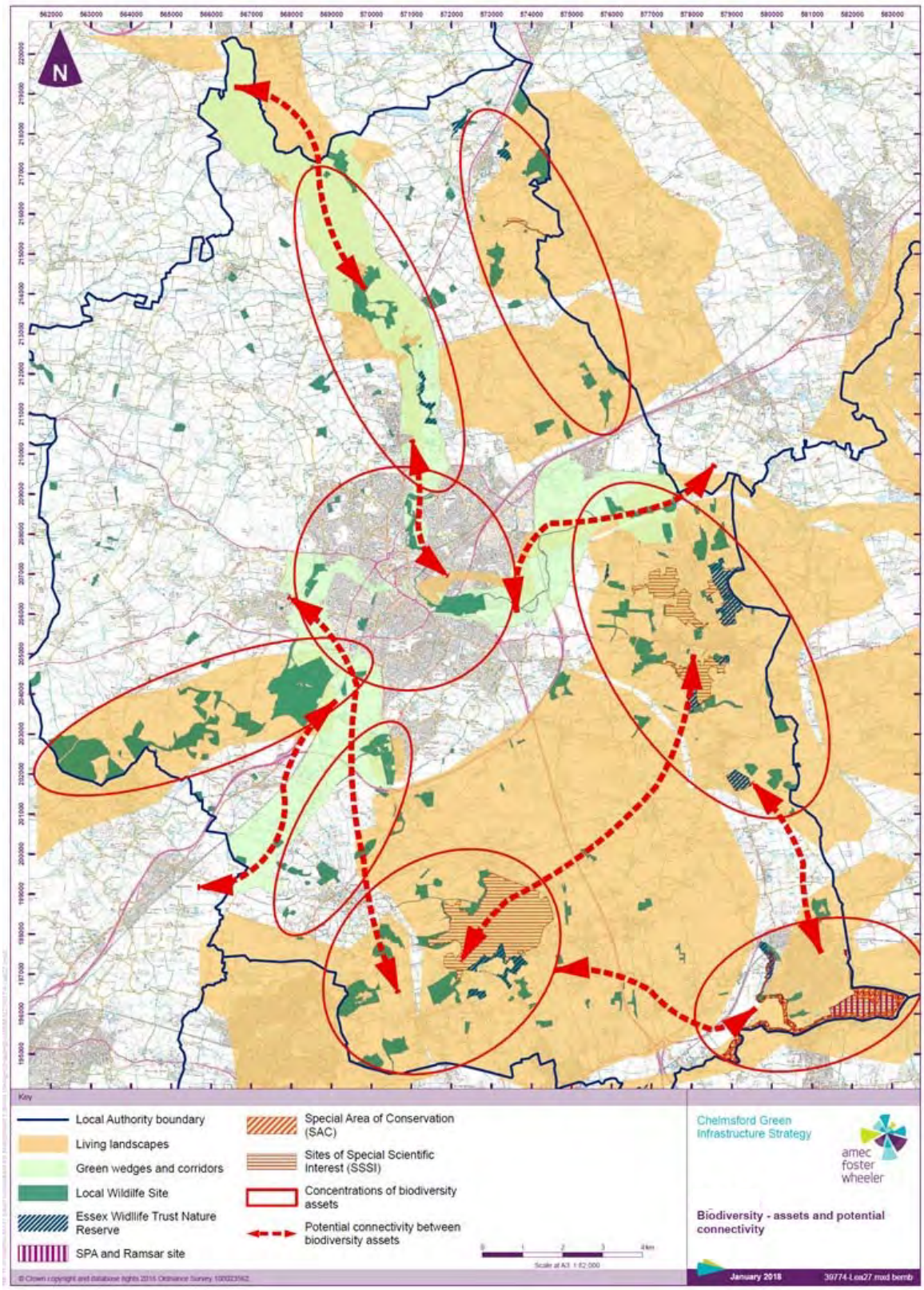


**Figure 4.13: Potential Connectivity - Biodiversity**



## 4.6 Issues Arising from the Analysis of Chelmsford's Green Infrastructure

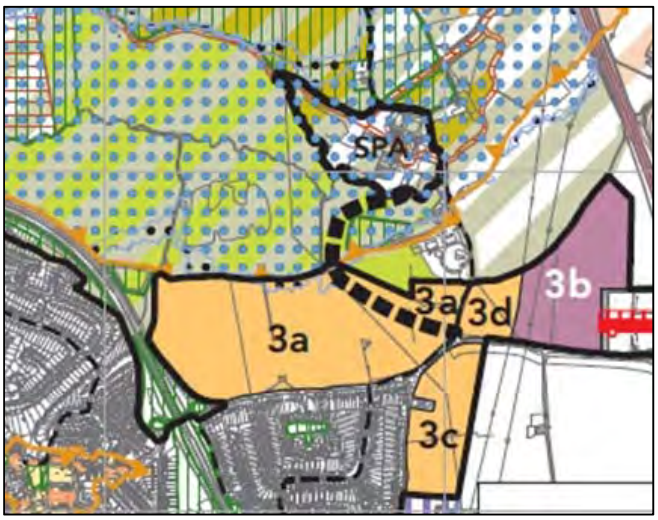
21. The Research and Evidence base analyses the character of Green Infrastructure assets and across the City and its hinterland. Key messages from the analysis centre on the importance of, and opportunities associated with:

- **Reinforcing and extending the connectivity of, and accessibility to, Green Infrastructure resources** to create a robust network for the benefit of people and wildlife, which is integrated with the networks in adjacent authorities and contributes to realising the aims and objectives of the Chelmsford Local Plan.
- **Protecting and enhancing Green Infrastructure assets** focusing on maximising the functioning and quality of existing assets before embarking on any ambitious extension of the network.
- **Protecting and enhancing key cultural heritage assets** (including buildings, places, settings and landscapes) which are part of the character of Green Infrastructure in particular localities and City-wide.
- **Recognising the critical role that the river valleys play as a focus for the Green Infrastructure assets across the City and its hinterland**, forming the basis of a connected and robust network which reflects the interests of biodiversity, landscape management, recreational opportunity and water management.
- **Paying particular attention to the integrity of protected areas** such that they are fundamental to enhancing biodiversity throughout Chelmsford.
- **Ensuring that existing Green Infrastructure resources are used to their best advantage**, increasing their multifunctional role where appropriate and in doing so meeting the needs and aspirations of residents.
- **Enhancing the quality and accessibility of Green Infrastructure resources** such that they are attractive to use for recreation and sustainable travel.
- **Promoting Green Infrastructure as central to the character and well-being of local communities**, encouraging greater engagement in management and local 'ownership' where appropriate.
- **Ensuring that new development at all scales and in all locations addresses the needs and opportunities associated with the planning and management of Green Infrastructure**, in particular creating sustainable places which add to the Green Infrastructure resource, fulfil community aspirations for high quality environments and contribute to the coherence of the wider network.
- **Using the Green Infrastructure resource to help promote the City economically**, as part of its overall image as an attractive and thriving place to live, work and visit and as a source of new employment opportunities.
- **Addressing and preparing for the effects of climate change** through using Green Infrastructure resources such as flood management, urban cooling, air quality enhancement and opportunities for sustainable travel.
- **Using Green Infrastructure to advance health and well-being for residents** through access to high quality open spaces which are connected and provide a diverse range of recreational and amenity benefits.

22. These issues can be translated into aspirations for how the interests of the Green Infrastructure resource are protected, used and advanced, and in turn into specific objectives for their delivery.

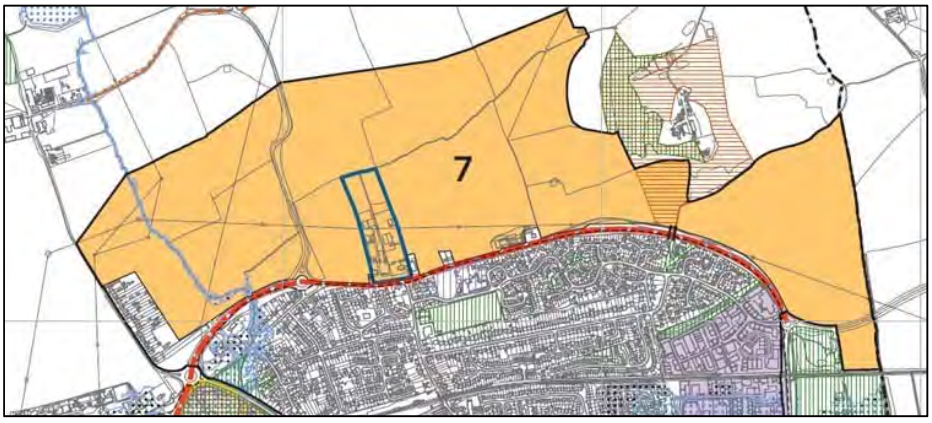
*Sandon/Great Baddow*

21. Development here is intended to be accompanied by creation of a new Country Park in the valley floor of the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation. This will be a significant new recreational focal point for local communities and the City as a whole, being part of a wider network of resources to the east of Chelmsford. A principal theme of development in this location will be connectivity, ensuring integration between the new and existing community, enhancing links within and between the River Valley, using existing and new recreational resources (PRoW and cycleways) to achieve this. Detailed planning of the Country Park will need to pay particular attention to finding an appropriate balance between the increased recreational pressures and protection of existing and enhanced biodiversity assets. There are existing models of good practice in the open space from Admirals Park to Writtle, where a variety of multifunctional spaces have been secured.




*South Woodham Ferrers*

22. The scale of proposed development lends itself to substantial interventions in respect of the provision of Green Infrastructure as part of internal landscaping and broader fit with the receiving landscape.




In addition to the implementation of generic guidelines on site design, specific opportunities include:

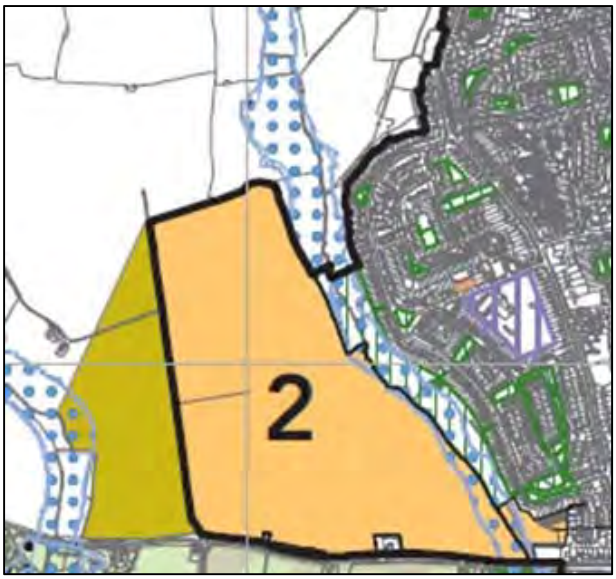
- Developing a green buffer along the northern and eastern edges of the site, using existing hedgerow lines and creating new hedge and treelines where the site connects to Bushy Hill. In both instances, a soft built edge should be created which forms a transition to the wider countryside context.

- Creating gateways to the north along the B1418 Main Road and Willow Road, and to the east along the Maldon Road, using Green Infrastructure as a means of defining local character and integrating new development with its local context.
- Conserving and enhancing the landscape and semi-natural habitats associated with Bushy Hill, enhancing access where possible as part of broad natural greenspace provision.
- Ensuring permeable routes through the development which connect with the existing urban area and the open countryside to the north.

*Chelmsford West*

23. Development is proposed to extend from the urban edge of the City westward towards the River Can. There are opportunities to create a significant westerly edge to the City, using Green Infrastructure to integrate built form into the wider countryside to the west. In addition to the implementation of generic guidelines on site design, there are specific opportunities to:

- Reinforce the existing Green Corridor to the west and north and access enhancements to the wider countryside to the north and northwest.
- Create substantial Green Infrastructure to the west, using enhancement of the corridor of the River Can as a starting point.
- Create a gateway to the southwest of the development, at the junction between the A1060 Roxwell Road and Lordship Road.
- Ensure significant pedestrian/ cycleway links across the A1060 Roxwell Road, into the Green Wedge, thereby encouraging sustainable travel opportunities.
- Enhance Green Infrastructure to the east, capitalising on its quality and potential as a multifunctional resource.



EB 094A

Chelmsford City Council

# Green Wedges and Green Corridors: Defining Chelmsford's River Valleys

## Review Report

February 2017

Amec Foster Wheeler Environment
& Infrastructure UK Limited

# 1. Background to the Study and Key Issues

## 1.1 Study Remit

1. Amec Foster Wheeler was commissioned by Chelmsford City Council to undertake a review of the extent and rationale for the existing Green Wedges and to assess the potential extension of the Green Wedges along the valleys of the Rivers Chelmer, Can and Wid. The study will form part of the evidence base helping to underpin the emerging Local Plan and in particular the references in the Issues and Options Consultation[2] to the use of Green Wedges as components of the City's spatial planning strategy.
2. The study will provide up-to-date and robust evidence to accompany consultation on the Preferred Options Local Plan scheduled for early 2017. This report relates to requirement a) i.e. the analysis of the potential extension of Green Wedges within the City boundary.
3. The overall aim of this study is to provide a review of the existing Green Wedge designation to assess whether they are suitable for protecting the land for various reasons and whether the boundaries of the Green Wedges should be extended along the river valleys. The report provides a reasoned justification for the decisions taken to identify areas which are currently:
    - Within the Green Wedge network which should remain designated;
    - Within the Green Wedge network which should be removed; and
    - Not within the Green Wedge network which should be included.
4. Precise boundaries are outlined and mapped, together with details of the characteristics and features of each Green Wedge such as areas of informal and formal open space, important heritage and landscape features, nature conservation sites, cross-valley views, existing hedgerows patterns and cycle and footpath routes.

## 1.2 Chelmsford's Green Wedges

5. The valleys of the River Wid, River Can and River Chelmer form an important part of Chelmsford's landscape and natural environment. Their designation as Green Wedges is to maintain and protect the open character of the landscape of the river valleys, to provide physical links between the urban area of Chelmsford and the countryside beyond, to provide an important network of natural habitats and various formal and informal leisure and recreation uses.
6. The current Green Wedge designations have been successful in protecting the River Valleys in the vicinity of the urban area from unsustainable development and maintaining the character of Chelmsford as seen through unsuccessful planning applications and appeals for development. The principle and practice of Green Wedge designation in Chelmsford have been supported at Examination[3].
7. The Issues and Options Local Plan consultation states that the Council believes that the general extent of the existing Green Wedges should be maintained and further extensions along the river valleys should be promoted, subject to review of the precise boundaries.
8. In addition to Chelmsford City Council, a number of authorities within Essex, Yorkshire, Leicestershire, Devon and Derbyshire use Green Wedges as a policy tool to protect land (and to a lesser extent help shape growth). These have generally been supported at Examination as a legitimate means of organising and systematically protecting crucial green infrastructure assets.

[2] Chelmsford City Council (November 2015) **Chelmsford Local Plan: Issues and Options Consultation Document**
[3] Chelmsford Borough Council (2008) **Core Strategy Inspector's Report** & Chelmsford Borough Council (2011) **North Chelmsford Area Action Plan Inspector's Report**

Figure 2.1 Existing Green Wedges, Parcels for Survey and Landscape Character Areas

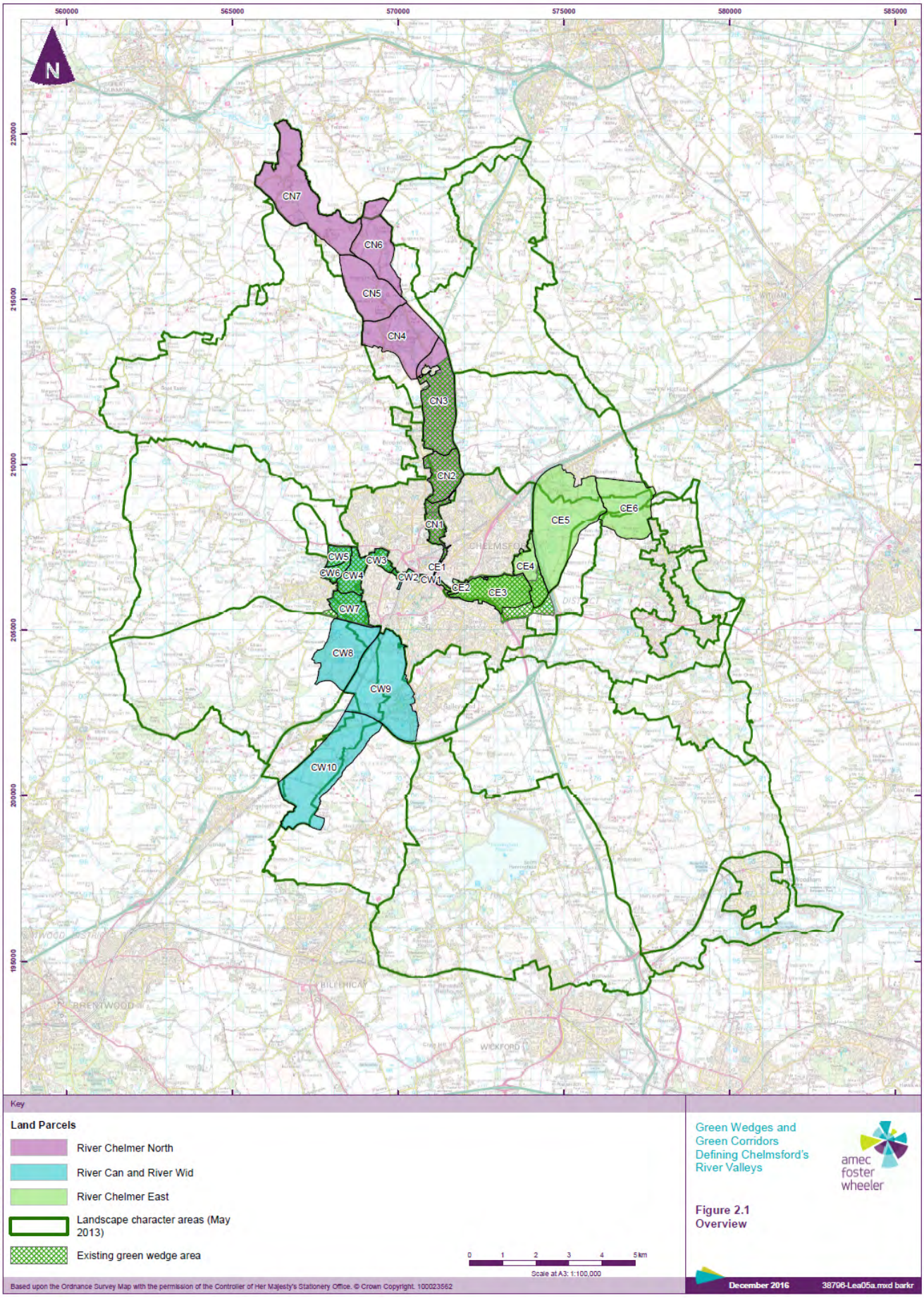
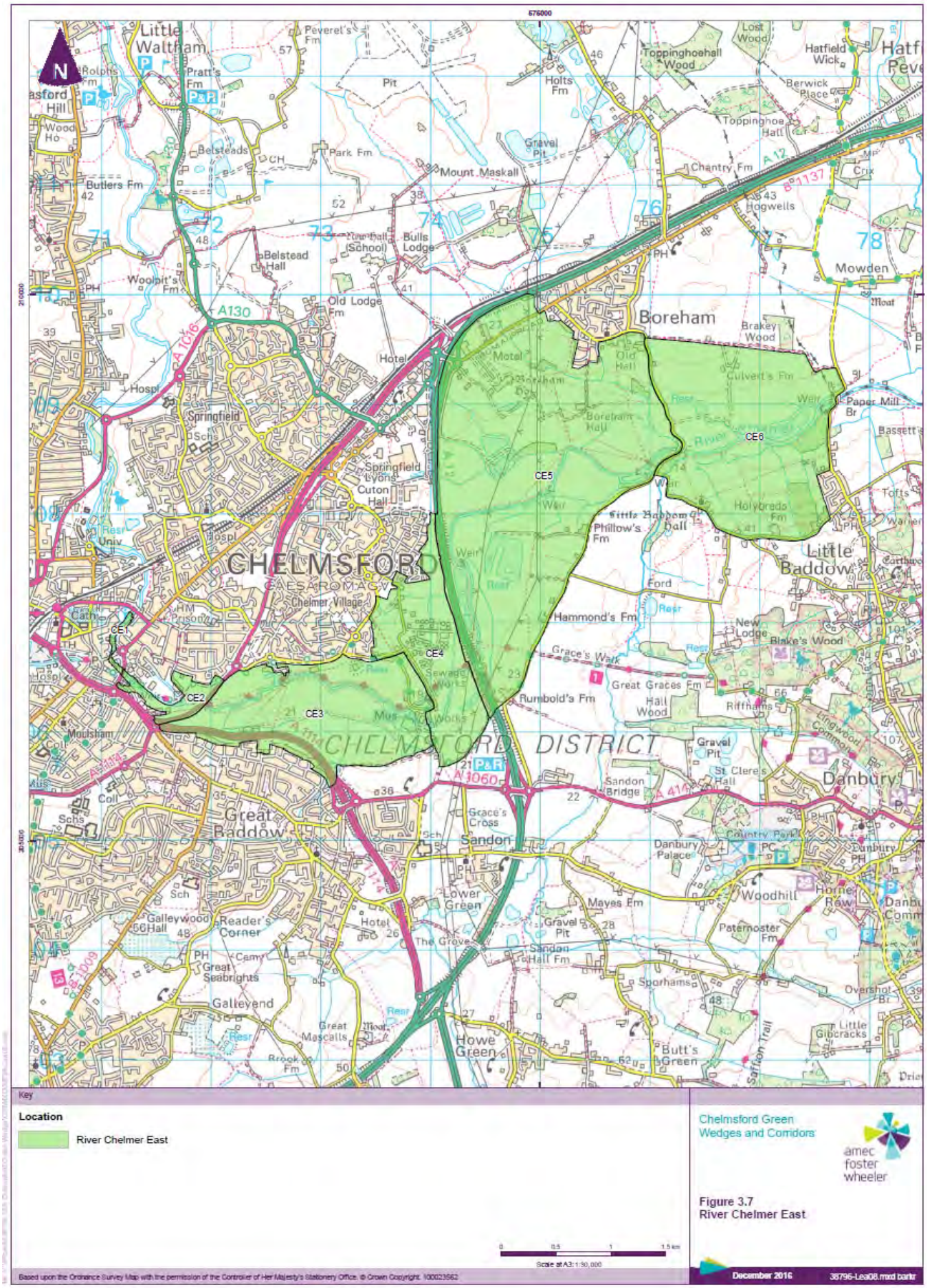


Figure 3.7 River Chelmer (East & Blackwater Navigation): Component Parcels



## Table 3.4 Chelmer East Parcel Character Analysis

| Parcel | Character |
|---|---|
| **Parcel CE1: Land between the A1099 Victoria Road and the A1099 High Bridge Road** | *Location:* This parcel comprises the City Centre stretch of the River Chelmer extending from the A1099 Victoria Road southwards to the A1099 High Bridge Road.<br><br>*Land Use:* Limited to the River Chelmer and proximate land containing variously a footpath/cycleway and between The A1099 Victoria Road and the A1099 High Bridge Road town centre uses abutting the River.<br><br>*Vegetation:* Variously mature trees and understorey along the course of the River, hard standing and urban landscaping centred on City Centre environs.<br><br>*Nature Conservation/Cultural Heritage:* The southern reaches of the parcel are part of the River Chelmer Conservation Area.<br><br>*Landscape Character:* The parcel comprises a section of the town centre and is of generally high quality forming a focus for movement through the town centre and the context for retail and commercial uses. The River corridor provides visual continuity and is the focus for numerous and diverse long, medium and short vistas. The parcel has no visual connection with the open countryside, but forms the linkage between the River Chelmer's northern and southern extent.<br><br>*Access:* Confined to dual use pathway/cycleway adjacent to the River. Multiple connections exist along its extent, part of a highly permeable space which is heavily used by walkers and cyclists. |
| **Parcel CE2: Land between the A1099 High Bridge Road and the A138 Chelmer Road** | *Location:* Starting with the confluence of the River Chelmer and River Wid, the parcel forms the bridge between the city centre setting of both rivers and the wider flood plain of the River Chelmer to the east.<br><br>*Land Use:* Rough grazing and a sports pitch associated with a floodplain function to the south of the River Chelmer, rough grassland and allotments to the north, with access by footpath and cycleway (Saffron Trail/Kings Head Walk) to the north of the River Chelmer and then to the River Wid. Other footpaths (largely informal) cross the parcel.<br><br>*Vegetation:* Diverse assemblage of boundary vegetation of varying robustness, pockets of woodland and scrub, but predominantly an open landscape with short and middle-distance views to and from the town centre.<br><br>*Nature Conservation/Cultural Heritage:* The parcel is covered by the River Chelmer Conservation Area designation.<br><br>*Landscape Character:* Landscape character reflects the urban edge location of the parcel which quickly shades changes from dense built form into open rough grassland which is part of the floodplain of the River Chelmer. The land, because of its open character, is sensitive to change, with various short, medium and longer distance views across its extent. The A138 Chelmer Road is a significant intrusion, visually and aurally. Glimpsed visual connections with land beyond the A138 which presents a significant physical and visual barrier, with access limited to a riverside footpath under the road or via a cyclepath/footpath along Mill Vue Road.<br><br>*Access:* Access is by paved cycleway/footpath which extends to the A138, canal towpath and various informal routes across rough grassland. |
| **Parcel CE3: Land between the A138 Chelmer Road and the water treatment works at Sandford Mill Bridge** | *Location:* Comprising the flood plain of the River Chelmer, separating the outer suburbs of Chelmsford, fringed by major roads and built development to the north, south and west.<br><br>*Land Use:* Predominantly rough grazing associated with its flood plain function, also quarry and water treatment works uses. Some isolated dwellings and clusters of development to the east along Sanford Mill Lane/Sandford Mill Road and the north off Chelmer Village Way.<br><br>*Vegetation:* Predominantly open in aspect but intermittent hedgerows associated with some field boundaries, field size diminishing west to east.<br><br>*Nature Conservation/Cultural Heritage:* Largely covered by the Chelmer River Conservation Area designation.<br><br>*Landscape Character:* Comprising open countryside, mixed arable and rough grassland there are extensive medium and long distance views across the parcel towards the built edges of Chelmsford and eastward towards Sandford Milll and the A12. However, along the River Chelmer there is a more intimate landscape created by the bankside vegetation creating and enclosed, tranquil feeling, particularly away from intrusive traffic noise. Generally, however, the parcel has the character of open countryside with links to the rural areas to the east (notwithstanding the barrier of the A12).<br><br>*Access:* Complex network of public rights of way, centred on a riverbank path along the River Chelmer, along with various informal paths, particularly to the north of the River south of Chelmer Village. |

## Green Wedges and Green Corridors

5. Having established the strategic and local coherence of the River Valleys, their role as a spatial planning instrument requires scrutiny. Their unity is expressed through a number of complementary dimensions which act together to create distinctive assets. Whilst the boundaries of the character areas can be determined with a high degree of confidence, reflecting visual unity and overall character, their function varies considerably. In terms of a planning role as an instrument for keeping land open as a landscape, recreational and biodiversity resource, this varies spatially.

6. The term 'Green Wedges' is appropriate to use in the context of where there is a clear separation role between built development. In addition, because of their proximity to the urban edge, these areas are often the focus for recreational activity, contribute aesthetically to the townscape by providing open areas amongst built-up areas and are often a biodiversity resource. Consequently they have been and should continue to be reflected in a specific policy which is used as a material consideration in wider planning strategy and the determination of planning applications. To date the extent of the Green Wedges has been broadly defined though indicative maps in the Core Strategy and the North Chelmsford Area Action Plan (CNAAP). In light of this survey and detailed analysis of local character, their extent needs to be modified slightly to better fit the role of a wedge in certain localities, reflecting both the evolution of the built form of the City and the need for a defensible designation.

7. For the river valleys beyond the City's built edge, the term 'Green Corridors' is a more appropriate label, reflecting their different character and function. At the urban edge and beyond into open countryside locations, there is no function as a wedge (i.e. separating built form) and the role transforms into that of a corridor, reflecting a unity of landscape character, visual connectivity and recreational and biodiversity focus. The definition of river corridors through policy is equally important to establish their role as a material consideration in decision making and, in conjunction with the Green Wedges, as a focus for Green Infrastructure planning.

8. The identification of separate character areas along the length of the rivers enables their division, for policy purposes, into Green Wedges and Green Corridors (Figure 4.4).

9. Section 4.3 sets out a proposed local plan policy which would address the specific requirements of the Green Wedges and Green Corridors, in form and function, their relationship with the Green Corridors and the connections to other policy areas.

## Green Wedges

10. It is proposed that the current extent of the Green Wedges is refined to more directly meet their purposes, and complement the proposed Green Corridors which would comprise the remainder of the River Valley within the jurisdiction of the City Council. The detailed profiles boundaries of each parcel are set out in section 3.

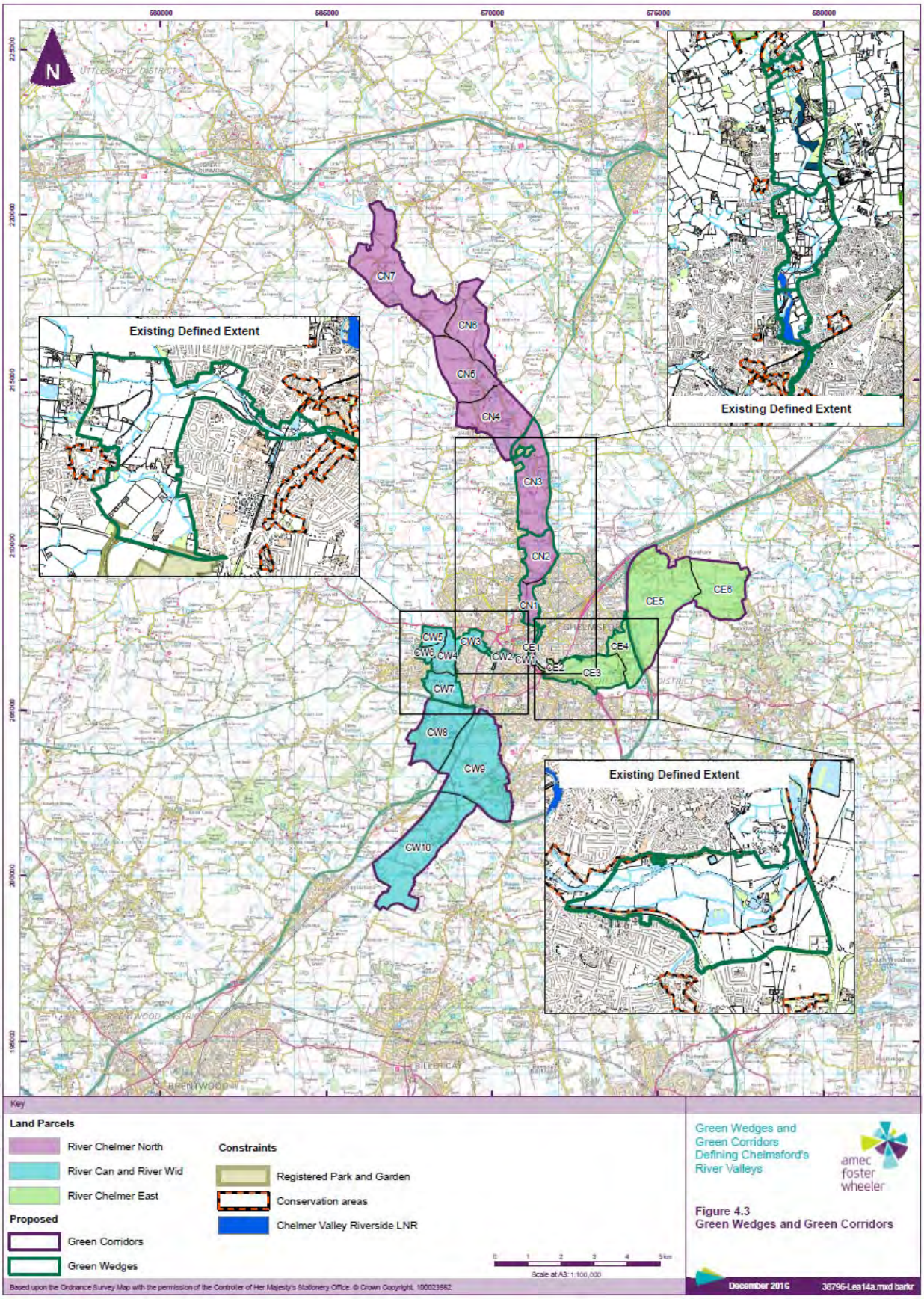
    - For Chelmer north, parcels CN1, CN2 and CN3 (City Centre through to the Braintree Road, Little Waltham)
    - For Chelmer east, parcels CE1, CE2, CE3 & CE4 (City Centre to the A12)
    - For Can and Wid, parcels CW1, CW2, CW3, CW4, CW5, CW6 and CW7 (City Centre to the A414)

11. The principal differences between the existing Wedges and their boundaries are:

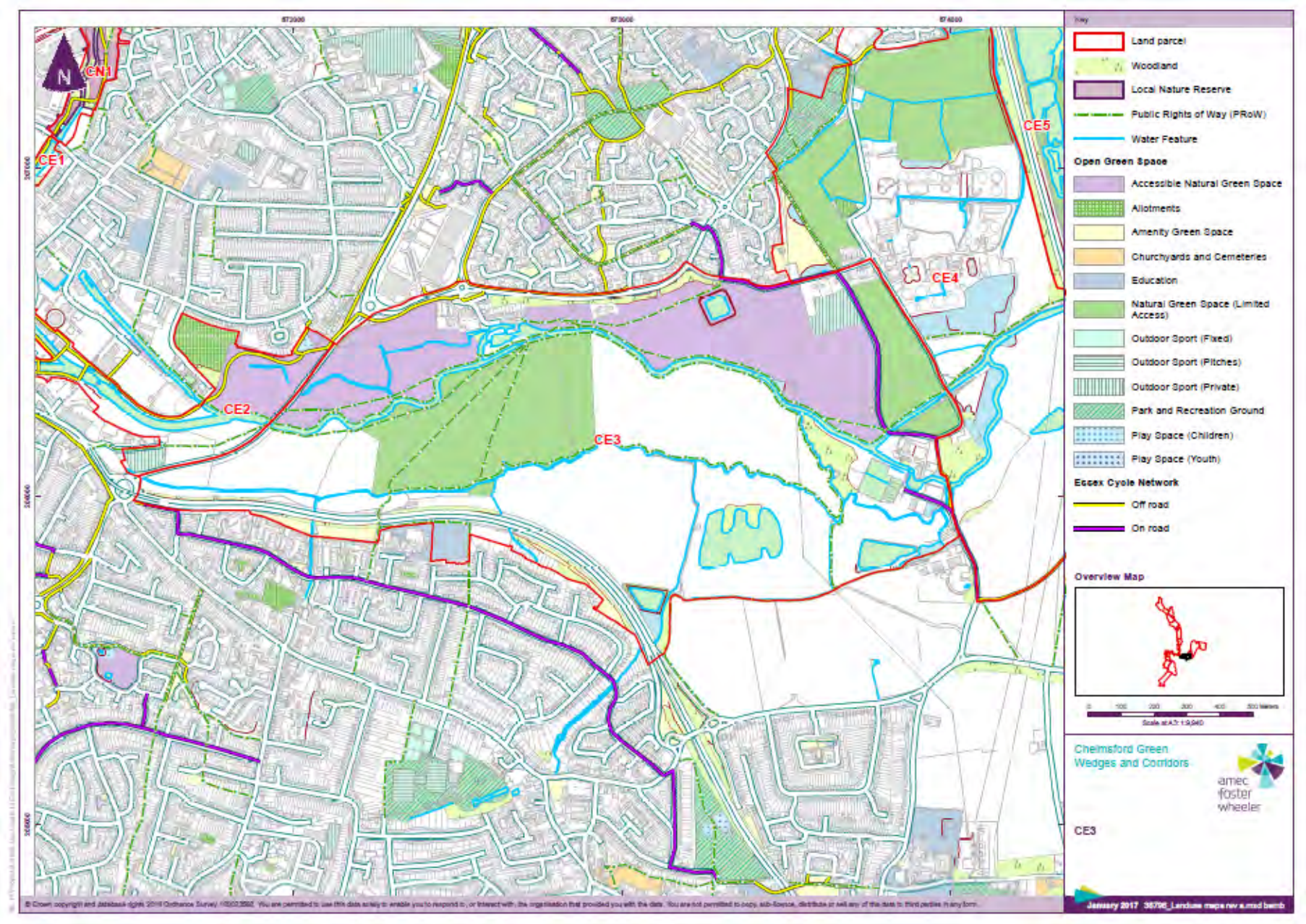
    - For Chelmer North, extending the Wedge designation to Braintree Road, Little Waltham which presents a more logical outer boundary, compared to the current CNAAP extent which runs to Sheepcotes Lane, Little Waltham. Proposals for development of land to the east of the A130 make a Green Wedge in this location critical to ensuring the long-term integrity of the river valley character.
    - For Chelmer East, extending the Green Wedge from Sandford Mill to the southern extent of the new development at Chelmer Village and pulling its extent to align with the course of the declassified Hammonds Road at Sandon (between Sandford Mill Lane and the A12).

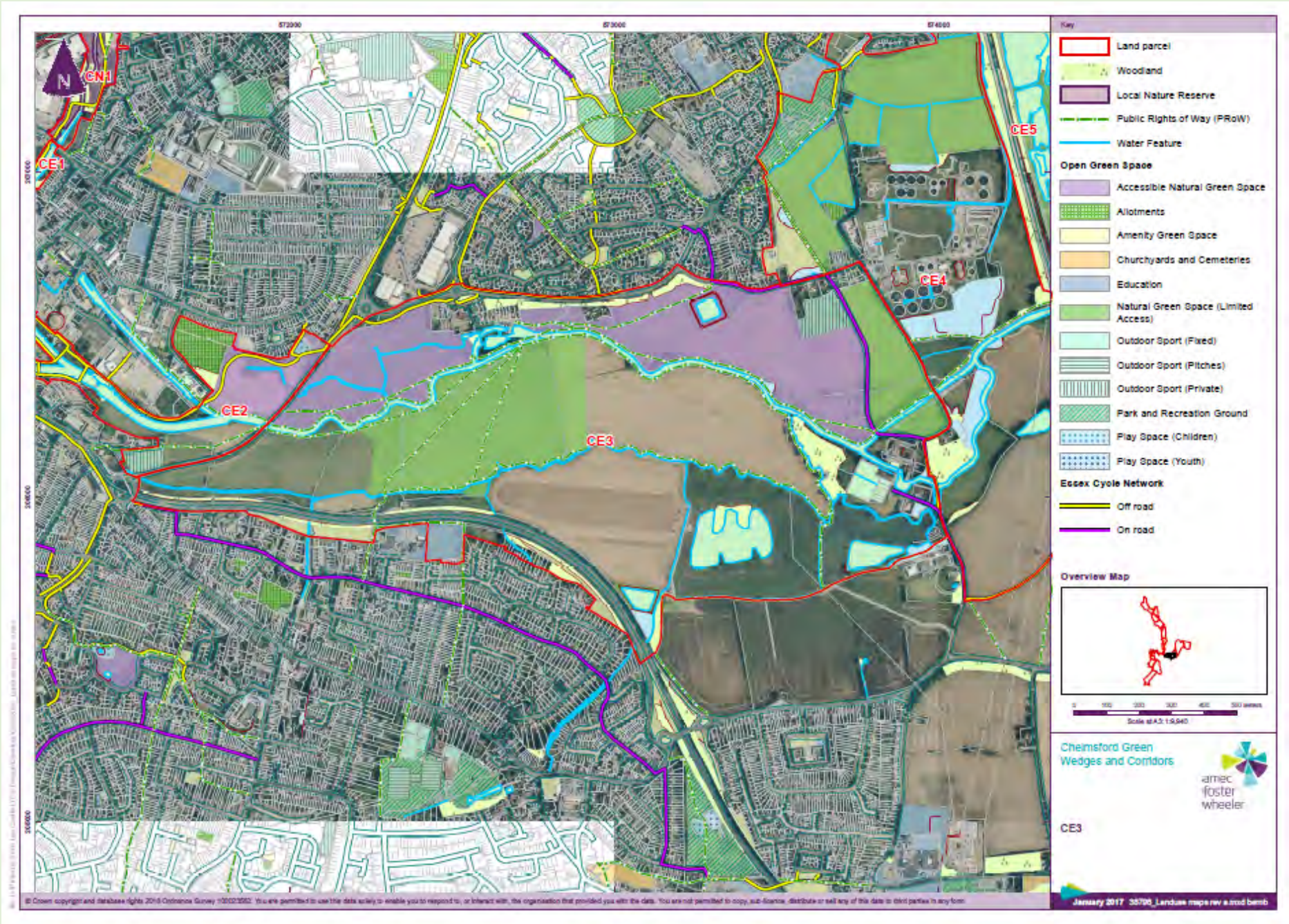
- For the Can & Wid, limiting the extent of the Green Wedge to Paradise Road Writtle where it currently extends into open fields between the southern edge of Writtle and the A414.

Figure 4.3 Green Wedges and Green Corridors: Proposed Extent



## Parcel CE3: Land between the A138 Chelmer Road and the water treatment works at Sandford Mill Bridge




572000
573000
574000
N
CN1
CE1
CE2
CE3
CE4
CE5
Key
Land parcel
Woodland
Local Nature Reserve
Public Rights of Way (PRoW)
Water Feature
Open Green Space
Accessible Natural Green Space
Allotments
Amenity Green Space
Churchyards and Cemeteries
Education
Natural Green Space (Limited Access)
Outdoor Sport (Fixed)
Outdoor Sport (Pitches)
Outdoor Sport (Private)
Park and Recreation Ground
Play Space (Children)
Play Space (Youth)
Essex Cycle Network
Off road
On road
Overview Map
Chelmsford Green Wedges and Corridors
amec foster wheeler
CE3
January 2017 35798_Landuse maps rev a mod bamb

## Parcel geography and character

*Location:* Comprising the flood plain of the River Chelmer, separating the outer suburbs of Chelmsford, fringed by major roads and built development to the north, south and west.

*Land Use:* Predominantly rough grazing associated with its flood plain function, also quarry and water treatment works uses. Some isolated dwellings and clusters of development to the east along Sanford Mill Lane/Sandford Mill Road and the north off Chelmer Village Way.

*Vegetation:* Predominantly open in aspect but intermittent hedgerows associated with some field boundaries, field size diminishing west to east.

*Nature Conservation/Cultural Heritage:* Largely covered by the Chelmer River Conservation Area designation.

*Landscape Character:* Comprising open countryside, mixed arable and rough grassland there are extensive medium and long distance views across the parcel towards the built edges of Chelmsford and eastward towards Sandford Milll and the A12. However, along the River Chelmer there is a more intimate landscape created by the bankside vegetation creating and enclosed, tranquil feeling, particularly away from intrusive traffic noise. Generally, however, the parcel has the character of open countryside with links to the rural areas to the east (notwithstanding the barrier of the A12).

*Access:* Complex network of public rights of way, centred on a riverbank path along the River Chelmer, along with various informal paths, particularly to the north of the River south of Chelmer Village.

## Parcel boundaries

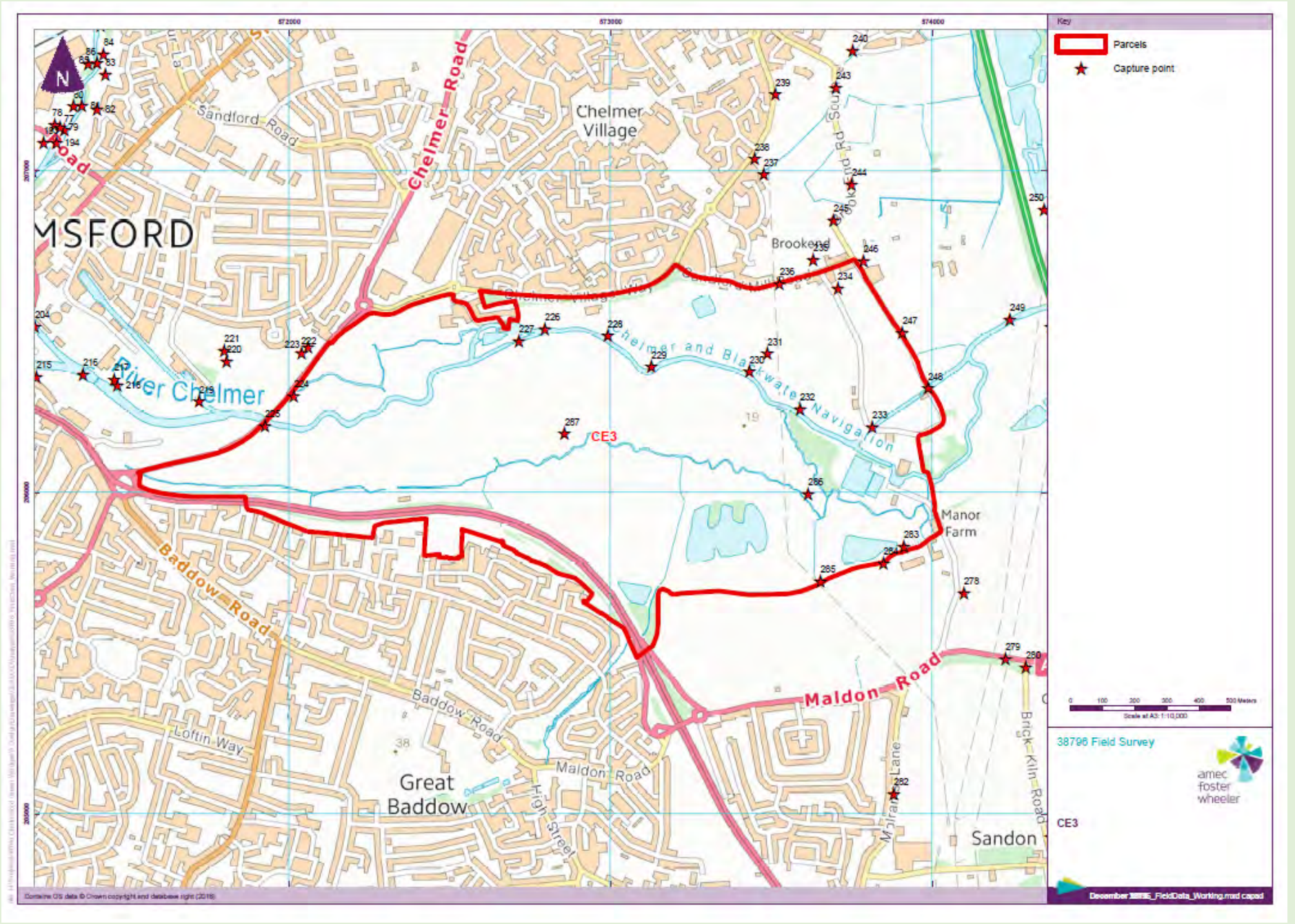
Green Wedge boundary set to the built edge/road line to north and a PRoW to the south. Eastern boundary is more complex but defined by Sandford Mill Lane and Brook End Road South. Land to the south and east of Manor Farm, bordered by the A1060 and Public Rights of Way (PRoW) is part of the valley side containing the floodplain of the River Chelmer. As such there is a visual connection between the two, particularly when observed from PRoW alongside the River Chelmer, where the land which rises over approximately 15m forms part of the backdrop to the valley bottom. Urban development at Baddow is visible as rooflines, being set back behind the A1060. Nevertheless, the connection between this land and the river corridor proper is one of context, and makes an important, but not significant, contribution in this respect. On this basis, the land between the PRoW and the A1060 can be reasonably excluded from the Green Wedge. This would be consistent with exclusion of land between Sandford Mill Lane and the Park and Ride which exhibits similar characteristics. As with land adjacent to Green Wedges in this and other parts of the City, particular care would need to be paid to the type and quality of any development proposed such that the character of the river valley in this location is not compromised.

## Observations on parcel extent, function and management

Considerable tracts of the parcel are floodplain which to a degree detracts from active land management (where not used for cropping), but equally further tree planting and biodiversity management (such as the creation of permanent semi-wet areas) could hold potential.

The parcel creates a clear division between the built edge of Chelmsford to the north of the River Chelmer in particular, but also providing the context for the scattered dwellings in the vicinity of Sandford Mill.

Chelmer East




ID_CE3_225_Photo1


ID_CE3_225_Photo2


ID_CE3_225_Photo3


ID_CE3_225_Photo4


ID_CE3_226_Photo1


ID_CE3_226_Photo2


ID_CE3_226_Photo3


ID_CE3_227_Photo1


ID_CE3_227_Photo2


ID_CE3_227_Photo3


ID_CE3_227_Photo4


ID_CE3_227_Photo5


ID_CE3_228_Photo1


ID_CE3_228_Photo2


ID_CE3_228_Photo3


ID_CE3_228_Photo4

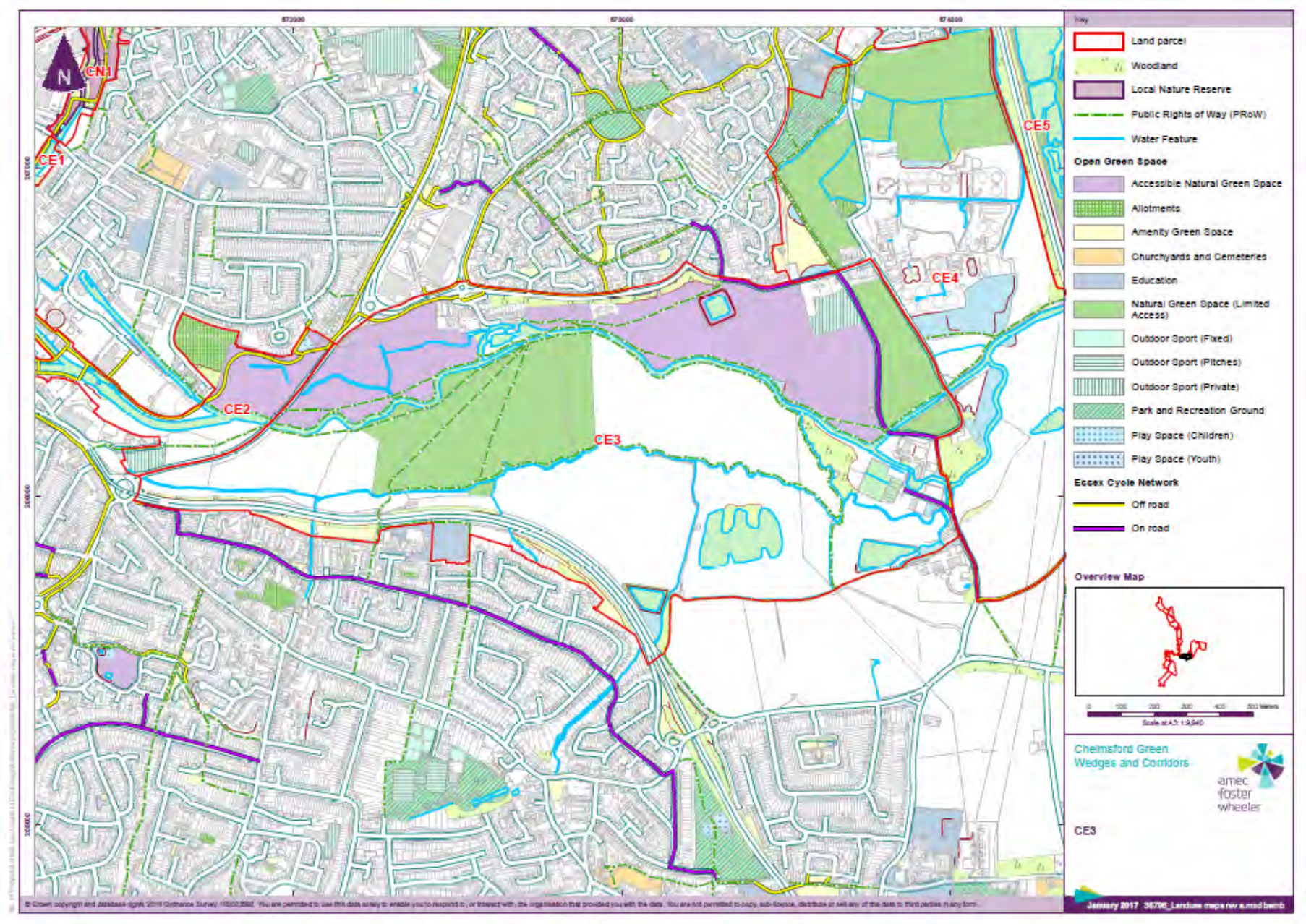

ID_CE3_224_Photo1

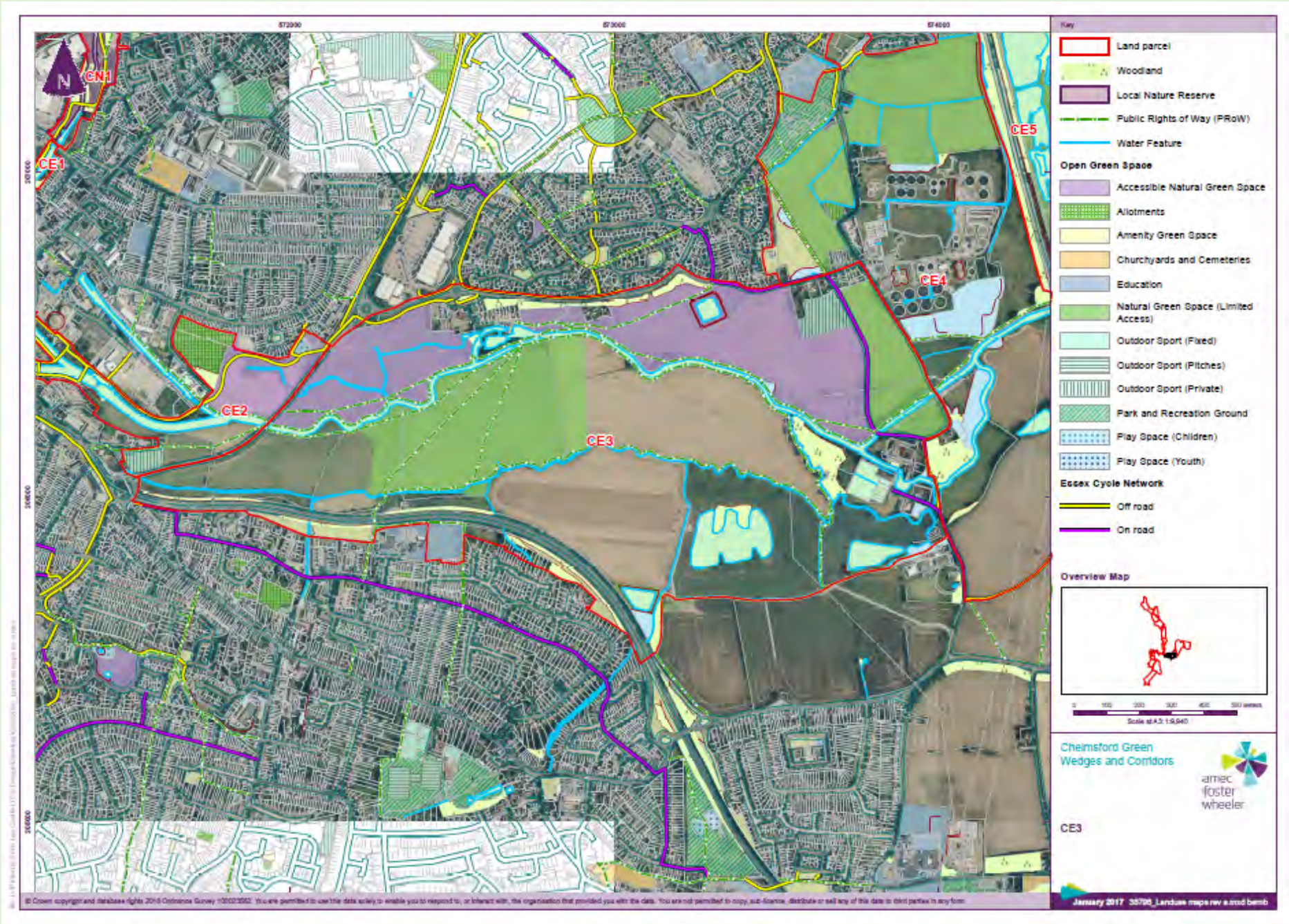

ID_CE3_224_Photo2


ID_CE3_224_Photo3


ID_CE3_224_Photo4

## Parcel CE3: Land between the A138 Chelmer Road and the water treatment works at Sandford Mill Bridge




572000
573000
574000
N
CN1
CE1
CE2
CE3
CE4
CE5
Key
Land parcel
Woodland
Local Nature Reserve
Public Rights of Way (PRoW)
Water Feature
Open Green Space
Accessible Natural Green Space
Allotments
Amenity Green Space
Churchyards and Cemeteries
Education
Natural Green Space (Limited Access)
Outdoor Sport (Fixed)
Outdoor Sport (Pitches)
Outdoor Sport (Private)
Park and Recreation Ground
Play Space (Children)
Play Space (Youth)
Essex Cycle Network
Off road
On road
Overview Map
Chelmsford Green Wedges and Corridors
amec foster wheeler
CE3
January 2017 35798_Landuse maps rev a mod bamb

## Parcel geography and character

*Location:* Comprising the flood plain of the River Chelmer, separating the outer suburbs of Chelmsford, fringed by major roads and built development to the north, south and west.

*Land Use:* Predominantly rough grazing associated with its flood plain function, also quarry and water treatment works uses. Some isolated dwellings and clusters of development to the east along Sanford Mill Lane/Sandford Mill Road and the north off Chelmer Village Way.

*Vegetation:* Predominantly open in aspect but intermittent hedgerows associated with some field boundaries, field size diminishing west to east.

*Nature Conservation/Cultural Heritage:* Largely covered by the Chelmer River Conservation Area designation.

*Landscape Character:* Comprising open countryside, mixed arable and rough grassland there are extensive medium and long distance views across the parcel towards the built edges of Chelmsford and eastward towards Sandford Milll and the A12. However, along the River Chelmer there is a more intimate landscape created by the bankside vegetation creating and enclosed, tranquil feeling, particularly away from intrusive traffic noise. Generally, however, the parcel has the character of open countryside with links to the rural areas to the east (notwithstanding the barrier of the A12).

*Access:* Complex network of public rights of way, centred on a riverbank path along the River Chelmer, along with various informal paths, particularly to the north of the River south of Chelmer Village.

## Parcel boundaries

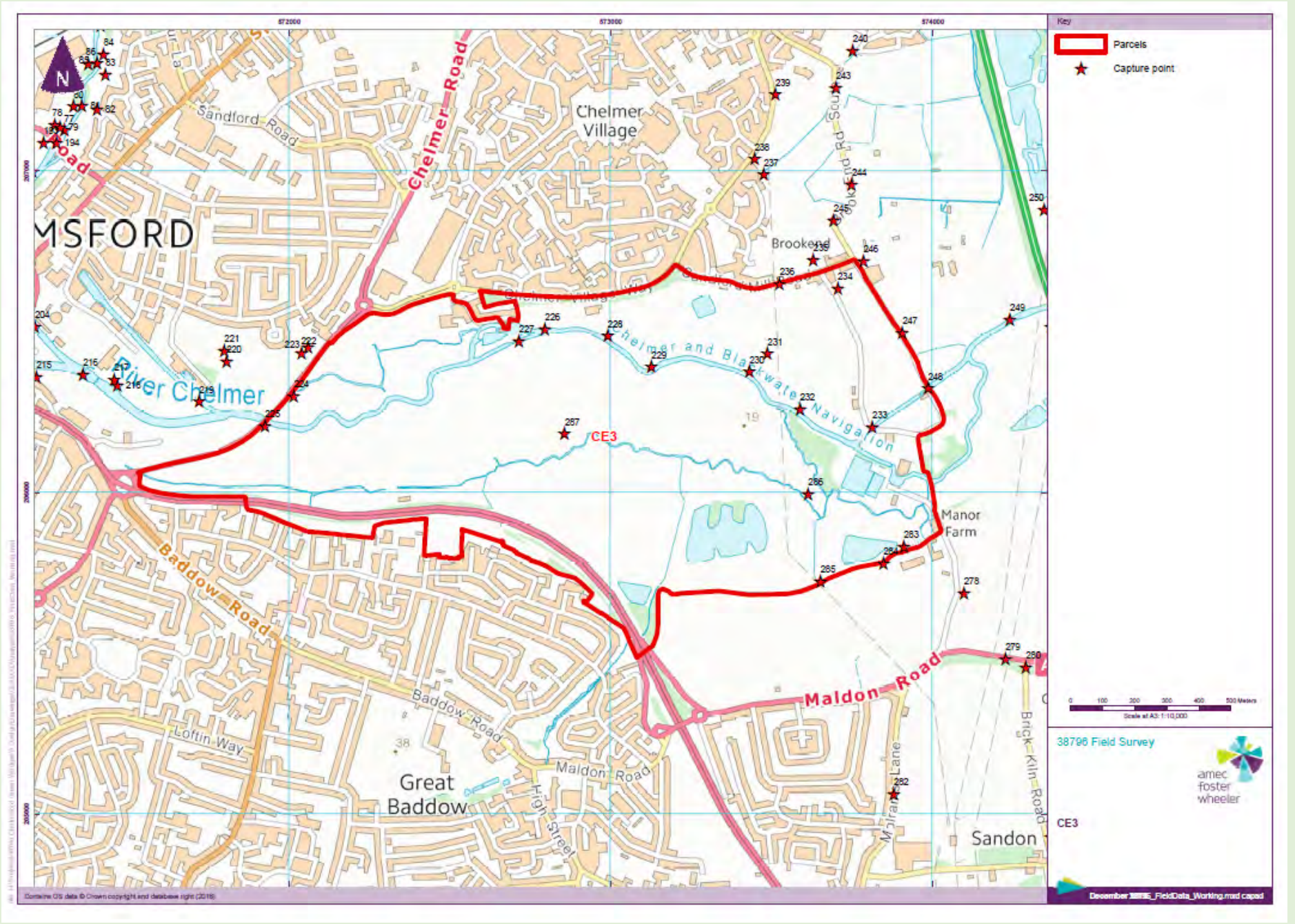
Green Wedge boundary set to the built edge/road line to north and a PRoW to the south. Eastern boundary is more complex but defined by Sandford Mill Lane and Brook End Road South. Land to the south and east of Manor Farm, bordered by the A1060 and Public Rights of Way (PRoW) is part of the valley side containing the floodplain of the River Chelmer. As such there is a visual connection between the two, particularly when observed from PRoW alongside the River Chelmer, where the land which rises over approximately 15m forms part of the backdrop to the valley bottom. Urban development at Baddow is visible as rooflines, being set back behind the A1060. Nevertheless, the connection between this land and the river corridor proper is one of context, and makes an important, but not significant, contribution in this respect. On this basis, the land between the PRoW and the A1060 can be reasonably excluded from the Green Wedge. This would be consistent with exclusion of land between Sandford Mill Lane and the Park and Ride which exhibits similar characteristics. As with land adjacent to Green Wedges in this and other parts of the City, particular care would need to be paid to the type and quality of any development proposed such that the character of the river valley in this location is not compromised.

## Observations on parcel extent, function and management

Considerable tracts of the parcel are floodplain which to a degree detracts from active land management (where not used for cropping), but equally further tree planting and biodiversity management (such as the creation of permanent semi-wet areas) could hold potential.

The parcel creates a clear division between the built edge of Chelmsford to the north of the River Chelmer in particular, but also providing the context for the scattered dwellings in the vicinity of Sandford Mill.

Chelmer East




ID_CE3_225_Photo1


ID_CE3_225_Photo2


ID_CE3_225_Photo3


ID_CE3_225_Photo4


ID_CE3_226_Photo1


ID_CE3_226_Photo2


ID_CE3_226_Photo3


ID_CE3_227_Photo1


ID_CE3_227_Photo2


ID_CE3_227_Photo3


ID_CE3_227_Photo4


ID_CE3_227_Photo5


ID_CE3_228_Photo1


ID_CE3_228_Photo2


ID_CE3_228_Photo3


ID_CE3_228_Photo4


ID_CE3_224_Photo1


ID_CE3_224_Photo2


ID_CE3_224_Photo3


ID_CE3_224_Photo4


ID_CE3_229_Photo1


ID_CE3_229_Photo2


ID_CE3_229_Photo3


ID_CE3_229_Photo4


ID_CE3_230_Photo1


ID_CE3_230_Photo2


ID_CE3_230_Photo3


ID_CE3_230_Photo4


ID_CE3_230_Photo5


ID_CE3_230_Photo6


ID_CE3_230_Photo7


ID_CE3_231_Photo1


ID_CE3_231_Photo2


ID_CE3_231_Photo3


ID_CE3_232_Photo1


ID_CE3_232_Photo2


ID_CE3_233_Photo1


ID_CE3_233_Photo2


ID_CE3_233_Photo3


ID_CE3_248_Photo2


ID_CE3_283_Photo1


ID_CE3_283_Photo2


ID_CE3_234_Photo1


ID_CE3_234_Photo2


ID_CE3_235_Photo1


ID_CE3_235_Photo2


ID_CE3_235_Photo3


ID_CE3_235_Photo4


ID_CE3_235_Photo5


ID_CE3_235_Photo6


ID_CE3_235_Photo7


ID_CE3_236_Photo1


ID_CE3_236_Photo2


ID_CE3_236_Photo3


ID_CE3_236_Photo4


ID_CE3_236_Photo5


ID_CE3_248_Photo1


ID_CE3_284_Photo1


ID_CE3_284_Photo2


ID_CE3_285_Photo1


ID_CE3_285_Photo2


ID_CE3_285_Photo3


ID_CE3_286_Photo1


ID_CE3_286_Photo2


ID_CE3_286_Photo3


ID_CE3_287_Photo1


ID_CE3_287_Photo2


ID_CE3_287_Photo3


ID_CE3_287_Photo4


ID_CE3_287_Photo5


ID_CE3_287_Photo6