



Technical note: Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity - Additional Site Assessments

1. Background

This Technical Note is an Addendum to the Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment for Chelmsford City Council (March 2017). The Note considers land in three locations or 'Study Sites': Great Leighs, Chelmsford West and North-East Chelmsford (Boreham Airfield), all of which are extensions of the land assessed in March 2017. The methodology employed is the same as that used in the March 2017 study, and the outputs have been added to those of the original Assessment to ensure that they are placed in context.

2. Summary of Approach

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 6⁴, the assessment of overall sensitivity of a landscape to a particular type of change or development is based on the following relationship:

$$\text{Overall Landscape Sensitivity} = \text{Landscape Character Sensitivity} + \text{Visual Sensitivity}$$

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:

$$\text{Landscape Capacity (to accommodate specific type and scale of change)} = \text{Overall Landscape Sensitivity} + \text{Landscape Value}$$

The terminology defining these relationships is 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

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.*

altering (or harming) its essential physical and perceptual character. It is based upon judgements about the robustness/ strength of the existing landscape 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 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 adverse effects on prevailing visual 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).

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		

Defining Land Parcels

Each Study Site is subdivided into Land Parcels that display shared and similar characteristics, based upon the following factors: field boundary pattern, land-use, level of tree cover, topography and presence within a host Landscape Character Area (LCA). Land Parcels were drawn to adjoin the settlement boundary and/or to be contained by some recognisable landscape features such as woodland, hedgerow or watercourse. This was based upon review of OS mapping and aerial photography and, where publicly accessible, review and refinement in the field.

Field Work

Field work was undertaken in August 2017 by two consultants with extensive experience in landscape policy and landscape assessment work, one a Chartered Landscape Architect and one a Chartered Town Planner. Field notes and a photographic record was made of each Land Parcel. All work was undertaken from publicly accessible locations only, or by special arrangement with the landowner. Where access into a Land Parcel was not possible, this was noted.

3. Great Leighs

3.1 Local landscape character context

This Study Site is associated with the village of Great Leighs. It divides into two geographically separate areas, one located to the west of the village (and adjoining the A131) and the other located on the eastern edges of village. The entire Study Site lies within the north-western edge of the Terling Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Area (B17) as described by the Chelmsford LCA 2006 (Chelmsford LCA).

Figure 3.1 illustrates the landscape and visual context of the Study Site. This Study Site has been sub-divided into 17 Land Parcels; nine to the east of Great Leighs, six to the west of Great Leighs and two to the south.

This Technical Note presents the assessment of Land Parcels GLP11 to GLP17.

Terling Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Area (B17)

Key characteristics of relevance to this Study Site and the Land Parcels described below, are:

- ▶ Rolling arable farmland.
- ▶ Irregular pattern of medium to large scale arable fields.
- ▶ Scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small hamlets, typically with greens and ponds.
- ▶ Network of narrow winding lanes.
- ▶ Mostly tranquil away from the A12 and A131.

The Chelmsford LCA describes a farmland plateau landscape that extends across rolling hills and valleys. There are often ponds and depressions in the middle of large fields that tend to be surrounded by trees. It notes the presence of thick but intermittent hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees and many pockets (small woods and copses) of predominantly deciduous woodland (with occasional mixed woodland). These are described as coalescing in long views to create the illusion of a wooded horizon. It also notes a variation between open and panoramic views depending on locality and the density of tree cover. The settlement pattern is dispersed and characterised by small isolated hamlets and farmsteads that are occasionally moated and often dispersed along lanes.

The Chelmsford LCA describes the following planning and land management issues of relevance to the Study Site:

- ▶ Potential for erection of new farm buildings and residential dwellings on the edge of settlements, which would be conspicuous on the skyline.
- ▶ Potential further decline in condition of field boundaries through agricultural intensification.

The Chelmsford LCA does not separately cite any sensitivities to change.

The Chelmsford LCA Landscape Strategy Guidelines sets out to conserve and enhance the landscape in the Landscape Character Area B17 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:

- ▶ Ensure that new build is in keeping with character.
- ▶ Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of settlements.

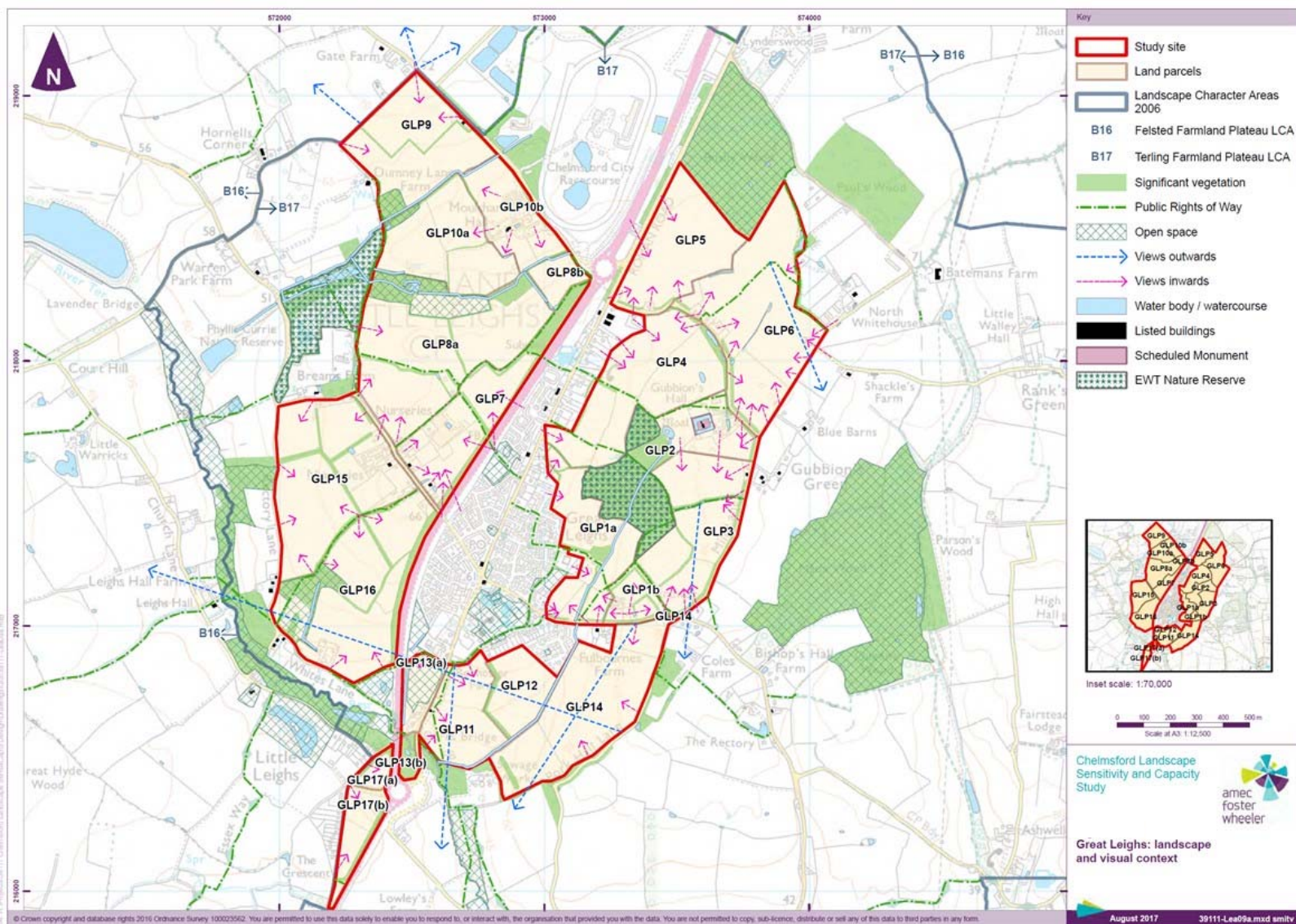
- ▶ Ensure any new development within farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines of relevance include:

- ▶ Conserve and enhance existing hedgerow network and strengthen through planting appropriate to local landscape character.
- ▶ Conserve and manage areas of semi-natural woodland as important historical, landscape and nature conservation features.
- ▶ Conserve and promote the use of building materials, which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character.

The following sections record the assessment and analysis of the seven Land Parcels (GLP11 – GLP17) which form the additional areas surveyed in the Great Leighs Study Site.

Figure 3.1 Great Leigs Landscape and Visual Context



3.2 Land Parcel GLP11

Land Parcel Location

Land to the east of Main Road, Great Leighs.



Local Landscape Character Description

The area forms a part of the Terling Farmland Plateau landscape character area (B17), as defined by the Chelmsford LCA. It has typical characteristics in common with the LCA such as its rolling landform, being one of a number of medium to large scale fields and a high presence of hedgerow trees and pockets of woodland, that in this vicinity are principally associated with the course of the River Ter to the south.

Visual Context and Characteristics

An arable field rising broadly south-east to north-west over around 10m from the course of the River Ter to the south, the Land Parcel GLP11 is partially enclosed by peripheral woodland and mature hedgerows to the south, east and north. There are public views across from peripheral public rights of way, including the Essex Way to the south. There are public and private views across the Land Parcel towards the east and south from properties along Main Road and glimpsed views from Main Road, and also from Paulk Hall Lane towards Main Road. There is limited visual intrusion from built development, with glimpsed views of the southern edge of Great Leighs which is generally screened by a substantial hedgerow.

Landscape Sensitivity to Development

Land Parcel GLP11 is typical of the character of the wider landscape of this locality, with mature vegetation creating a moderate sense of enclosure, whilst retaining short and medium views south and east. Overall the GLP11 is judged to be of high to moderate landscape sensitivity forming part of the southerly entrance to Great Leighs from the A131.

Visual Sensitivity to Development

The overall visual sensitivity is judged to be high to moderate, reflecting the location and orientation of GLP11, and the presence of residential and recreational visual receptors on its periphery. Development could not effectively be mitigated without altering the intrinsic character of the landscape in this location.

Landscape Value

Landscape value is judged to be moderate to high, reflecting the presence of well-used peripheral public rights of way, visual receptors along Main Road and from users of Main Road and Paulk Hall Lane. Generally, GLP11 is of ordinary aesthetic appeal, but it is in good condition with detractive elements comprising road noise from the A131 to the east and aircraft noise.

Table 3.1 Overall Sensitivity and Value Summary Table for Land Parcel GLP11

Landscape Character Sensitivity	
1 Representativeness of character	Moderate – presence of landscape elements/features that are representative of typical character.
2 Condition of elements and features	Moderate – majority of landscape elements/features are in moderate to good condition.
3 Nature and complexity of landform	Moderate – gently rising landform of 10m from south-east to north-west.
4 Scale and pattern of landscape	Moderate – medium to large scale landscape with a simple pattern.
5 Historic features and sense of time depth	Moderate to High – limited presence of historic landscape elements/features, although vernacular properties along Main Road form the western boundary.
6 Presence of natural elements	Moderate – remaining hedgerows and ditches, particularly to the south.
7 Type of existing development	High – fringing vernacular properties overlooking the Land Parcel make a significant contribution to local character.
8 Relationship to settlement edge	High – contributes to the southerly entrance to Great Leighs.
Visual Sensitivity	
1 Openness and inter-visibility	Moderate to High – generally open aspect, greater on high land towards the north-west, enclosed to the north and south by substantial peripheral vegetation.
2 Views available	High – short and medium distance views available from peripheral public rights of way to the south and west, including the Essex Way to the south. Views from the western edge to the wooded horizon to the east. Private views from peripheral properties and from users of Main Road and Paulk Hall Lane.

3 Potential for mitigation	Low – reflecting the open aspect of the land, south-easterly aspect and views from peripheral public rights of way and Main Road.
Landscape Value	
1 Distinctiveness of character	Moderate – landscape elements/features that are typical of character at scale of LCA B17, but not particularly valued or supported through designation.
2 Quality and condition of elements and features	Moderate – landscape elements/features are of reasonable quality and condition with strong and recognisable character, albeit in a mature state with opportunities for conservation and enhancement.
3 Scenic value and aesthetic appeal	Moderate to High – reasonably attractive countryside typical of the locality, with short and medium distance views to wooded horizons to the east, and to a lesser degree to the south. Contributes to the southerly landscape context for Great Leighs.
4 Presence of cultural, historic or nature conservation associations	Moderate to High – limited to hedgerows and peripheral woodland associated with the course of the River Ter to the south. Series of vernacular properties along Main Road set in relatively large plots providing glimpsed views through, which have a visual relationship with the landscape to the east.
5 Recreational opportunities	Moderate to High – peripheral public rights of way, including the Essex Way to the south. Well-used by dog walkers.
6 Levels of tranquillity	Moderate – despite noise intrusion from the A131 and to a lesser degree aircraft noise, retains a reasonable degree of tranquillity and sense of open countryside, with development at Great Leighs reasonably well screened to the north.

Conclusions on Overall Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity

Overall the parcel is judged to be of high landscape sensitivity and low to medium capacity for development. Key characteristics/qualities to be safeguarded are:

- Maintenance and strengthening of existing hedgerows which border the Land Parcel to the east.
- Retain and strengthen woodland associated with the course of the River Ter to the south.

Table 3.2 Summary table for Land Parcel GLP11

Land Parcel	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
GLP11	H - M	H - M	H	M - H	L - M

3.3 Land Parcel GLP12

Land Parcel Location

Land to the south of Beadle Way/Castle Close, Great Leighs



Local Landscape Character Description

The area forms a part of the Terling Farmland Plateau landscape character area (B17), as defined by the Chelmsford LCA. It has typical characteristics in common with the LCA such as its rolling landform and presence of hedgerow trees.

Visual Context and Characteristics

An arable field rising broadly south-east to north-west, GLP12 is partially enclosed by mature hedgerows to the east and west, and abutting development at Great Leighs to the north. There are public views across from peripheral public rights of way, including the Essex Way to the south. There are also public and private views across GLP12 towards the east and south from some properties at Castle Close, Beadle Way and Catherines Close. In addition, there are glimpsed eastern views from Main Road, and also from Paulk Hall Lane towards Main Road to the west.

Landscape Sensitivity to Development

GLP12 is typical of the character of the wider landscape of this locality, with a moderate sense of enclosure created by peripheral hedgerows. Overall GLP12 is judged to be of moderate landscape sensitivity, reflecting the availability of views across it from public rights of way, Main Road and Paulk Hall Lane.

Visual Sensitivity to Development

The overall visual sensitivity of GLP12 is judged to be moderate reflecting its location, the aspect of the landform, and the presence of visual receptors on its periphery. Development could potentially be mitigated through extensive planting and the creation of a new south-eastern edge to the Great Leighs, although any such development and extensive perimeter planting would not necessarily extend across the whole of GLP12.

Landscape Value

Landscape value is judged to be moderate, reflecting the presence of well-used public rights of way to the west and south providing users with glimpsed views across GLP11, visual receptors along Main Road and

from users of Main Road and Paulk Hall Lane. Generally, GLP12 is of ordinary aesthetic appeal, but abuts an unsympathetic edge created by modern development on the south-eastern edge of Great Leighs.

Table 3.1 Overall Sensitivity and Value Summary Table for Land Parcel GLP12

Landscape Character Sensitivity	
1 Representativeness of character	Moderate – presence of landscape elements/features that are representative of typical character.
2 Condition of elements and features	Moderate – peripheral hedgerows appear to be in moderate to good condition.
3 Nature and complexity of landform	Moderate – gently rising landform from south-east to north-west.
4 Scale and pattern of landscape	Moderate – part of a medium to large scale landscape with a simple pattern.
5 Historic features and sense of time depth	Low – limited presence of historic landscape elements/features.
6 Presence of natural elements	Low to Moderate – remaining hedgerows and ditches.
7 Type of existing development	Low – properties at Beadle Way, Catherines Close and Castle Close form the northerly development context.
8 Relationship to settlement edge	Moderate – forms the context for development at Beadle Way, Catherines Close and Castle Close, although has no strong relationship with the edge.
Visual Sensitivity	
1 Openness and inter-visibility	Moderate to High – generally open aspect, greater on high land towards the north-west, enclosed to the north by development in Great Leighs and to the south by a reasonably strong hedgerow.
2 Views available	Low – no public access. Some private views from overlooking properties at Beadle Way, Catherines Close and Castle Close.
3 Potential for mitigation	Low – reflecting the open aspect of the land, south easterly orientation and views from rights of way to the west and south, Main Road and Paulk Hall Lane.
Landscape Value	
1 Distinctiveness of character	Moderate – landscape elements/features that are typical of character, but not particularly valued or supported through designation.
2 Quality and condition of elements and features	Moderate – landscape elements/features are of reasonable quality and condition with strong and recognisable character, albeit in a mature state with opportunities for conservation and enhancement.
3 Scenic value and aesthetic appeal	Moderate – reasonably attractive countryside typical of the locality, with short and medium distance views to wooded horizons to the east, and to a lesser degree to the south.
4 Presence of cultural, historic or nature conservation associations	Low to Moderate – limited to peripheral hedgerows to the south.

5 Recreational opportunities	Low – no public access; some glimpsed views from public rights of way to the west and south and from Main Road and Paulk Hall Road.
6 Levels of tranquillity	Moderate to low – some noise intrusion from the A131 and to a lesser degree aircraft, retains a reasonable degree of tranquillity, although adjacent to modern development at Great Leighs which is visually intrusive on the parcel's northern edge.

Conclusions on Overall Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity

Overall GLP12 is judged to be of moderate landscape sensitivity and medium capacity for development. Key characteristics/qualities to be safeguarded are:

- Maintenance and strengthening of existing hedgerows which border the Land Parcel to the east and west.
- Creation of a more sympathetic edge to the settlement of Great Leighs using a combination of the landform and planting.

Table 3.4 Summary table for Land Parcel GLP12

Land Parcel	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
GLP12	M	M	M	M	M

3.4 Land Parcel GLP13

Land Parcel Location

Land between Main Road and the A131.

Parcel GLP13(a)



Parcel GLP13(b)



Local Landscape Character Description

Comprising two sub-parcels, both of which appear have been created as part of the construction of the A131, the northern sub-parcel (GLP13a) has a constructed landform under rough pasture and scrub vegetation (both of which are managed) which forms a transitional area between Main Road and the A131. The southern sub-parcel (GLP13b) adjoins the culverted course of the River Ter but largely comprises scrub woodland adjoining the A131 Deres Bridge roundabout.

Visual Context and Characteristics

GLP13a and 13b have been the location of extensive planting to screen the A131 (visually and aurally) from the southerly approach to Great Leighs along Main Road and from associated residential properties. As such the sub-parcels have a separate character from the land to the west of which they were once part. Public views are available from a declassified road/bridleway to the north and adjacent to the culverted River Ter under the A131 (Essex Way) along a section of bridleway that extends east from Whites Lane. Views from the northern bridleway are of medium-distance southward, variously filtered by peripheral vegetation, which also limits the visual connection of GLP13a with properties along Main Road to its east.

Landscape Sensitivity to Development

The atypical character of both sub-parcels and their role as buffers between the A131 and Great Leighs means that they bear only a limited relationship to the intrinsic character of the surrounding landscape. Nevertheless, the transitional role of sub-parcel GLP13(a) and its restored state means that it has a low to moderate degree of sensitivity.

Visual Sensitivity to Development

Whilst being closely associated with the A131 and heavily intruded by road noise, the parcel retains a degree of visual sensitivity in relation to their exposure to receptors along Main Road and the A131, the Essex Way and the bridleway to the north of sub-parcel GLP13a. GLP13a, sited on rising land from the A131, has a heightened degree of visual sensitivity, overlooked by the bridleway to the north and with glimpsed views available to northbound receptors using the A131.

Landscape Value

Whilst GLP13 is part of the A131 corridor, with associated intrusion from road noise and consequent loss of tranquillity, it is bordered by public rights of way and lesser roads, which imparts a relationship and hence value. Potential nature conservation value is unknown, but there is an absence of public access, periodic management of the rough pasture to the north and the presence of scrub woodland to the south is apparent.

Table 3.5 Overall Sensitivity and Value Summary Table for Land Parcel GLP13

	GLP13a	GLP13b
Landscape Character Sensitivity		
1 Representativeness of character	Low - atypical, being associated with construction and operation of the A131. Enclosed pasture/scrub woodland separated from the wider arable context.	Low - atypical, being associated with construction and operation of the A131.
2 Condition of elements and features	Moderate - managed rough grassland with peripheral vegetation;	Low - dense scrub woodland (likely to have been planted as part of the construction of the A131) to the south.
3 Nature and complexity of landform	Moderate - broadly sloping south to north over 10m, in part modelled as part of construction of the A131.	Low – incidental land associated with construction of the A131.
4 Scale and pattern of landscape	Moderate - simple scale and pattern related to location between the A131 and Main Road	Low - incidental land associated with construction of the A131.
5 Historic features and sense of time depth	Low – very limited, being re-modelled landform.	Low - incidental land associated with construction of the A131.
6 Presence of natural elements	Moderate – restoration and management to include vegetation type and structure in sympathy with surrounding landscape.	Moderate – wet woodland associated with the River Ter and introduced planting.
7 Type of existing development	Moderate – forms a transition/buffer between the A131 and properties along Main Road.	Low – none present.
8 Relationship to settlement edge	Moderate to High – forms part of the southerly context for Great Leighs.	Moderate to High – forms part of the southerly context for Great Leighs.
Visual Sensitivity		
1 Openness and inter-visibility	Moderate – partially enclosed by maturing vegetation and open semi-managed grassland.	Moderate – largely enclosed, but part of the southerly context for Great Leighs.

2 Views available	Moderate - middle-distance views southward from the northern edge.	Low - enclosed by dense vegetation.
3 Potential for mitigation	Moderate - existing and new vegetation would help to screen development.	Low – small-scale wet woodland.
Landscape Value		
1 Distinctiveness of character	Low – atypical and the product of the construction of the A131.	Moderate – wet woodland associated with the valley of the River Ter.
2 Quality and condition of elements and features	Moderate – appears to be semi-managed.	Low – uncertain management
3 Scenic value and aesthetic appeal	Low to Moderate – forms part of the context for Great Leighs and a buffer between the A131 and the village.	Low to Moderate - forms part of the context for Great Leighs and a buffer between the A131 and the village.
4 Presence of cultural, historic or nature conservation associations	Low – remodelled land.	Low – remodelled land.
5 Recreational opportunities	Moderate – peripheral rights of way; potential for public access on northern sub-parcel.	Low – no access.
6 Levels of tranquillity	Low – adjacent to the A131.	Low – adjacent to the A131

Conclusions on Overall Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity

Overall parcel GLP13a is judged to have a moderate landscape sensitivity and low to moderate landscape value, leading to a medium landscape capacity for development. For sub-parcel 13b, overall landscape sensitivity is low and landscape value low to moderate, which leads to a judgement of medium to high landscape capacity. However, for both sub-parcels, other qualities/functions (such as water management associated with the A131 and their proximity to the A131) are likely to make them unsuitable for development.

Table 3.6 Summary table for Land Parcel GLP13

Land Parcel	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
GLP13a	M	M	M	L - M	M
GLP13b	L	L - M	L	L - M	M - H

3.5 Land Parcel GLP14

Land Parcel Location

Land to the west of Paulk Hall Lane, south of Boreham Road.



Local Landscape Character Description

The area forms a part of the Terling Farmland Plateau landscape character area (B17), as defined by the Chelmsford LCA. It has typical characteristics in common with the LCA such as its rolling landform, small to large scale fields and a high presence of hedgerow trees and pockets of woodland, in this Land Parcel associated with the course of the River Ter and the sewage farm to the south-west and alongside Paulk Hall Lane to the south and east.

Visual Context and Characteristics

The two southern fields (one large and one medium in size) are under arable cropping, with the three smaller northern fields being pasture. The Land Parcel's landform rises south-west to north-east over 20m. GLP14 is partially enclosed by mature hedgerows to the west associated with a peripheral drainage ditch and alongside Paulk Hall Lane to the east and south. Part of the south-eastern edge of Great Leighs abuts the Land Parcel to the north-west. There are public views across from Paulk Hall Lane, from Boreham Lane and from Main Road and public rights of way, including a short section of the Essex Way to the south-west. There are also both public and private views across GLP14 towards the east and south from properties at Castle Close, Beadle Way and Catherines Close, as well as Fulbourne's Farm off Boreham Road.

Landscape Sensitivity to Development

GLP14 is typical of the character of the wider landscape of this locality, with a moderate sense of enclosure created by peripheral hedgerows and nearby tree cover. Overall GLP14 is judged to be of high landscape

sensitivity, reflecting the availability of views across from Paulk Hall Lane, Boreham Road, Main Road and public rights of way to the west and south-west. GLP14 forms the short and middle ground to longer distance views available periodically from Main Road eastwards and Paulk Hall Lane westwards.

Visual Sensitivity to Development

The overall visual sensitivity of GLP14 is judged to be moderate to high, reflecting its location and aspect, and the presence of visual receptors on its periphery. Development could probably be mitigated to some degree through extensive planting and the creation of a new edge to the settlement, although this be limited to land abutting the edge of the settlement. The two medium-scale arable fields provide the visual context to the south of Great Leighs.

Landscape Value

Landscape value is judged to be moderate reflecting the various surrounding visual receptors. Generally, the parcel is of ordinary aesthetic appeal, but abuts an unsympathetic edge created by modern development at Great Leighs (Catherines Close).

Table 3.7 Overall Sensitivity and Value Summary Table for Land Parcel GLP14

Landscape Character Sensitivity	
1 Representativeness of character	Moderate to High – whilst being part of an ordinary landscape, the Land Parcel forms a transition to wider open countryside to the east and south-east, away from the A131 Corridor, and particularly along Paulk Hall Lane has a relatively strong rural character which extends northwards towards Gubbion's Green.
2 Condition of elements and features	Moderate – elements and features are in generally well-managed condition, typical of the farmed landscape of the locality.
3 Nature and complexity of landform	Moderate to High – on sloping landform rising from the River Ter to the south-west, presenting an open aspect which forms part of the wider context for Great Leighs and surrounding open countryside.
4 Scale and pattern of landscape	Moderate – medium to small-scale landscape which together with adjacent parcels and the wider landscape.
5 Historic features and sense of time depth	Moderate to Low – largely retains enclosure pattern of field boundaries, although there has been some internal hedgerow removal in the largest field and the pasture fields are bounded by post and wire fencing.
6 Presence of natural elements	Low to Moderate – typical urban fringe farmed landscape, with stronger presence of hedgerows and tree cover to the south and east.
7 Type of existing development	Moderate – farm and dwelling along Boreham Road and abuts Great Leighs at Catherines Close but no nearby development alongside other boundaries except for sewage treatment plant to south-west (alongside River Ter).
8 Relationship to settlement edge	Moderate - abuts the south-eastern edge of Great Leighs with an abrupt edge between development and the start of open countryside. To the south and east, forms the transition to open countryside.
Visual Sensitivity	
1 Openness and inter-visibility	Moderate to High – typical semi-open aspect, slightly elevated, offering filtered short and middle-distance views to east and west. Forms the easterly context for Great Leighs.

2 Views available	Moderate to High – various views, often glimpsed and filtered, across from peripheral public rights of way and roads.
3 Potential for mitigation	Moderate – reflecting the open aspect of central and southern parts of GLP14, but more potential in the northern parts that have stronger visual links with existing adjacent development in this part of Great Leighs
Landscape Value	
1 Distinctiveness of character	Moderate – an ordinary landscape, typical of the locality, with representative elements.
2 Quality and condition of elements and features	Moderate – appear to be in reasonable condition, with management typical of the wider farmed landscape.
3 Scenic value and aesthetic appeal	Moderate – an ordinary landscape but part of a transition to wider open countryside to the east and south.
4 Presence of cultural, historic or nature conservation associations	Moderate - enclosure pattern largely intact, with only limited hedgerow removal.
5 Recreational opportunities	Low to moderate - peripheral rights of way and roads.
6 Levels of tranquillity	Moderate to High - reflecting the Land Parcel's mostly rural orientation, although there is some visual and aural intrusion, the latter from the A131 and overflying aircraft.

Conclusions on Overall Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity

Overall, landscape capacity is low to moderate, primarily reflecting the visual sensitivity of GLP14 as part of the context for both easterly and westerly middle and long-distance views. Development would undermine the rural character of both the parcel and the wider landscape.

Table 3.8 Summary table for Land Parcel GLP14

Land Parcel	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
GLP14	M - H	M - H	H	M	L - M

3.6 Land Parcel GLP15

Land Parcel Location

Land to the southeast of School Lane/Felsted Road and Rectory Lane.



Local Landscape Character Description

Open agricultural land in arable use gently rising west to east from the valley of the River Ter. This is part of the broader landscape character which extends north of School Lane, and which largely retains the field pattern of enclosure. The area forms a part of the Terling Farmland Plateau landscape character area (B17), as defined by the Chelmsford LCA. It has typical characteristics in common with the LCA such as its rolling landform, medium to large scale fields and a high presence of hedgerow trees and pockets of woodland.

Visual Context and Characteristics

GLP15 maintains a generally open internal aspect with framed views created by substantial hedgerows and woodland blocks, particularly towards the west, where there are medium-distance views across the valley of the River Ter. To the east, substantial hedgerows and planting associated with the A131 limit views.

Landscape Sensitivity to Development

GLP15 overall has a high landscape sensitivity, reflecting its generally intact character with individual landscape elements managed for agriculture and evidence of hedgerow reinstatement. Consequently, it has retained reasonably strong sense of landscape character and time-depth and provides a sense of transition to wider, open countryside to the west.

Visual Sensitivity to Development

Visual sensitivity is moderate to high, reflecting moderate levels of intervisibility within the Land Parcel, with enclosure provided by substantial hedgerows and woodland on the Land Parcel's periphery. The main exception is a more open aspect shared with the area to the north-east beyond School Lane. Development would be reasonably conspicuous (partially screened by vegetation) but generally incongruous with the open countryside character that is present within this Land Parcel.

Landscape Value

The landscape in GLP15 is judged to be of moderate value. This judgement reflects the presence of peripheral roads and public rights of way, and isolated properties arranged along School Lane/Felsted Road. Detractive elements comprise road noise from the A131 to the east, aircraft noise, and glimpsed views of the modern development on the western side of Great Leighs where it abuts the A131.

Table 3.9 Overall Sensitivity and Value Summary Table for Land Parcel GLP15

Landscape Character Sensitivity	
1 Representativeness of character	Moderate to High – reasonable presence of typical landscape features, notably hedgerows and woodland blocks, with some evidence of hedgerow re-planting.
2 Condition of elements and features	Moderate – maintenance associated with intensive arable operations.
3 Nature and complexity of landform	Moderate – simple landform, being part of rising land from the River Ter to the west.
4 Scale and pattern of landscape	Moderate – medium/large-scale landscape, with some finer-grained elements, representative of wider landscape character.
5 Historic features and sense of time depth	Moderate to High – enclosure field pattern has largely been retained, creating a sense of time-depth, notwithstanding the intrusion of the A131.
6 Presence of natural elements	Moderate – woodland edges and hedgerow trees
7 Type of existing development	Moderate to High – typical of scattered farmsteads and isolated dwellings of the host landscape character area, with some more recent expansion along School Lane.
8 Relationship to settlement edge	Moderate to High – the land is separate from the settlement edge which is defined by the A131 although this is weakened by the ribbon development alongside School Lane.

Visual Sensitivity	
1 Openness and inter-visibility	Moderate to High – reflecting the partial enclosure of the Land Parcel by hedgerows and woodland, with intermittent intervisibility from the outside.
2 Views available	Moderate to High – some expansive views, particularly along School Lane to the north-east and south-west, over the Ter Valley.
3 Potential for mitigation	Moderate – gentle topography and peripheral vegetation limits views from outside GLP15, but development would be conspicuous within the Land Parcel.
Landscape Value	
1 Distinctiveness of character	Moderate – whilst the Land Parcel's landscape features are typical of the wider landscape, GLP15 possesses no particular qualities to distinguish it from surrounding areas, although the open countryside is visually attractive.
2 Quality and condition of elements and features	Moderate – elements appear to be reasonable condition, although these are managed as part of intensive arable cultivation.
3 Scenic value and aesthetic appeal	Moderate – generally attractive farmed landscape.
4 Presence of cultural, historic or nature conservation associations	Moderate – none designated, although evidence of ditch and hedge (estate?) boundary to the east of the parcel.
5 Recreational opportunities	Low to Moderate – rural lanes and public rights of way define the outer edges of the Land Parcel but do not extend into it
6 Levels of tranquillity	Moderate – rural quality, but some noise intrusion from the A131 and aircraft.

Conclusions on Overall Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity

Overall landscape capacity is low to moderate, reflecting an overall high landscape sensitivity and moderate landscape value. Whilst planting could be used to mitigate visual intrusion to some degree, large scale development would be incongruous with the open countryside character of this Land Parcel.

Table 3.10 Summary table for Land Parcel GLP15

Land Parcel	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
GLP15	M - H	H - M	H	M	L - M

3.7 Land Parcel GLP16

Land Parcel Location

Land to the west of the A131, between Whites Lane and School Lane.



Local Landscape Character Description

Open agricultural land in arable use gently rising west to east from the valley of the River Ter. This is part of the broader landscape character which extends north of School Lane and westward into open countryside, and which largely retains the field pattern of enclosure. The area forms a part of the Terling Farmland Plateau landscape character area (B17), as defined by the Chelmsford LCA. It has typical characteristics in common with the LCA such as its rolling landform, medium to large scale fields and a high presence of hedgerow trees and pockets of woodland.

Visual Context and Characteristics

GLP16 is of generally open aspect with framed views created by substantial hedgerows and woodland to the south-west. To the east, substantial hedgerows and planting associated with the A131 limit views, although the rooftops of Great Leighs are clearly visible on the easterly horizon.

Landscape Sensitivity to Development

GLP16 has a moderate landscape sensitivity, reflecting its generally intact character with individual landscape elements managed for agriculture and evidence of hedgerow reinstatement. Consequently, it has retained a reasonably strong sense of landscape character, time-depth and provides a sense of transition to wider open countryside to the west, although the presence of the A131 and development at Great Leighs is influential.

Visual Sensitivity to Development

Visual sensitivity is moderate to high, reflecting moderate levels of intervisibility within the Land Parcel, with enclosure provided by substantial hedgerows and woodland on the Land Parcel's periphery. To the north of the Parcel, the land has a more open aspect, shared with land to the west and to the north across School Lane. Development would be reasonably conspicuous (partially screened by vegetation) but generally incongruous with the open countryside character of the land, particularly to the south of the Land Parcel where the visual and landscape character merges with the separate visual and landscape characteristics of the River Ter valley and the hamlet of Little Leighs.

Landscape Value

The landscape is judged to be of moderate value, reflecting the presence of peripheral roads and public rights of way, and isolated properties sited along School Lane and Whites Lane. The Essex Way long distance path runs along Whites Lane. Detracting elements comprise road noise from the A131 to the east, aircraft noise, and glimpsed eastern views of the modern development at Great Leighs which abuts the A131.

Table 3.11 Overall Sensitivity and Value Summary Table for Land Parcel GLP16

Landscape Character Sensitivity	
1 Representativeness of character	Moderate – reasonable presence of typical landscape features, notably hedgerows and woodland blocks, with evidence of hedgerow re-planting.
2 Condition of elements and features	Moderate – maintenance associated with intensive arable operations.
3 Nature and complexity of landform	Moderate – simple landform, being part of rising land from the River Ter to the south and west.
4 Scale and pattern of landscape	Moderate – medium-scale landscape, with some finer-grained elements, representative of wider landscape character.
5 Historic features and sense of time depth	Moderate to High – enclosure field pattern has largely been retained, creating a sense of time-depth, notwithstanding the intrusion of the A131.
6 Presence of natural elements	Moderate – woodland alongside some edges and older hedgerows
7 Type of existing development	Moderate to High – typical of scattered farmsteads and isolated dwellings of the wider landscape character areas are located on the Land Parcel's north-eastern and south-western edges, with some more recent development sited along School Lane.

8 Relationship to settlement edge	Moderate – whilst GLP16 is separate from the settlement edge, defined by the A131, there is a clear visual connection with it due to the visibility of rooftops in Great Leighs.
Visual Sensitivity	
1 Openness and inter-visibility	Moderate to High – reflecting the partial enclosure by hedgerows and woodland, with intermittent intervisibility.
2 Views available	Moderate to High – some expansive views to the south-east across the A131.
3 Potential for mitigation	Moderate – gently sloping topography and relatively high levels of peripheral vegetation limits views in to the Land Parcel, but relatively open and compartmentalised internal views have the consequence that development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous over the Land Parcel as a whole.
Landscape Value	
1 Distinctiveness of character	Moderate – whilst the landscape within GLP16 is typical of the wider landscape character, it possesses no particular qualities to distinguish it from surrounding areas, although the Land Parcel is visually attractive.
2 Quality and condition of elements and features	Moderate – elements appear to be in reasonable condition, although these are managed as part of intensive arable cultivation of the land.
3 Scenic value and aesthetic appeal	Moderate – generally attractive farmed landscape.
4 Presence of cultural, historic or nature conservation associations	Low to Moderate – none designated, although evidence of ditch and hedge (estate?) boundary sited along the western side of the Land Parcel.
5 Recreational opportunities	Moderate – rural lanes and public rights of way define the edges of GLP16 to the west and south (Essex Way along Whites Lane).
6 Levels of tranquillity	Moderate – rural quality, but some noise intrusion from the A131 and aircraft.

Conclusions on Overall Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity

Whilst GLP16 has been intruded by the development of the A131 and some built development on the western side of Great Leighs, with consequent effects on aspects of its landscape character, the Land Parcel's overall landscape sensitivity is moderate. Landscape value is enhanced by the presence of the Essex Way, a public right of way on its western edge and properties along Whites Lane. These considerations result in a medium capacity to accommodate sympathetically designed development without undermining GLP16's key landscape characteristics.

Table 3.12 Summary table for Land Parcel GLP16

Land Parcel	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
GLP16	M	M - H	M	M	M

3.8 Land Parcel GLP17

Land Parcel Location

Land to the south-west of the A131 Deres Bridge roundabout, east of The Crescent and Main Road.

GLP17(a)



GLP17(b)



Local Landscape Character Description

GLP17 comprises two sub-parcels that have been created as a result of the construction of the A131. The smaller northerly sub-parcel (GLP17a) has a land-use of rough grassland (periodically managed?) and is fringed to the west by a maturing hedgerow, abutting the Deres Bridge roundabout to the east. The larger southerly sub-parcel (GLP17b) is under arable cultivation. It is enclosed by a substantial hedgerow to the east alongside the A131, but its western boundary is open allowing views for residents of properties sited along The Crescent.

Visual Context and Characteristics

GLP17 forms the visual context for development at Little Leighs, providing a visual buffer to the A131. Planting associated with the A131 has created a degree of enclosure, but views are available across GLP17b from The Crescent and both sub- parcels form part of the context for properties sited along the western side of The Crescent.

Landscape Sensitivity to Development

The physical and visual severance of GLP17 from the wider landscape and its size means that its landscape sensitivity is limited, although the connection to development at Little Leighs does slightly increase an otherwise low sensitivity. GLP17's small size and simple land-use pattern result in weak landscape character which in addition to its proximity to the A131 and a major junction (with associated tall lighting columns and signage) means that it has acquired some characteristics associated with urban fringe landscapes.

Visual Sensitivity to Development

The partial openness of the Land Parcel does impart a degree of visual sensitivity but this is limited, and related primarily to the relationship with properties along the western side of The Crescent. Otherwise, the visual connections to the wider landscape are limited to some glimpsed middle-distance views to the east and north, interrupted by road lighting columns.

Landscape Value

The principal landscape value of GLP17 is its relationship with the properties set along The Crescent whose residents overlook both sub-parcels, especially GLP17b which provides a buffer to the A131 to the east.

Table 3.13 Overall Sensitivity and Value Summary Table for Land Parcel GLP17a and GLP17b

	GLP71a	GLP17b
Landscape Character Sensitivity		
1 Representativeness of character	Low – atypical, largely related to the construction and operation of the A131, especially Deres Bridge roundabout.	Low – atypical, largely related to the construction and operation of the A131.
2 Condition of elements and features	Low – managed for highways purposes.	Moderate – managed for agricultural purposes.
3 Nature and complexity of landform	Low – simple.	Low – simple.
4 Scale and pattern of landscape	Low – small-scale, remnant.	Low – formerly part of the wider arable land to the east of the current A131.
5 Historic features and sense of time depth	Low – none apparent.	Low – none apparent.
6 Presence of natural elements	Low – limited to maturing vegetation along some of the boundaries.	Low – limited to maturing vegetation along some of the boundaries.
7 Type of existing development	Low – none sited within the parcel.	Low – none sited within the parcel.
8 Relationship to settlement edge	Moderate – adjacent to development at Little Leighs off Main Road.	Moderate – adjacent to development at Little Leighs off The Crescent.
Visual Sensitivity		
1 Openness and inter-visibility	High – open aspect.	Moderate – generally open aspect, with some intervisibility with surrounding areas
2 Views available	Moderate – primarily northward; maturing boundary planting is enclosing views to the west.	Moderate – maturing boundary planting is enclosing views across to the north and east; the primary visual relationship is with properties along The Crescent.
3 Potential for mitigation	Moderate – further planting, would contribute to screening low-rise development.	Moderate – further planting, would contribute to screening low-rise development.
Landscape Value		

1 Distinctiveness of character	Low – of undistinctive character, strongly influenced by the presence of the A131.	Low – of undistinctive character, strongly influenced by the presence of the A131.
2 Quality and condition of elements and features	Moderate – maturing peripheral hedgerows planted as part of the construction of the A131. Management uncertain.	Moderate – maturing peripheral hedgerows planted as part of the construction of the A131 on eastern boundary but along other boundaries features are post and wire fencing or absent. Under arable cultivation.
3 Scenic value and aesthetic appeal	Low – of limited aesthetic quality.	Low – of limited aesthetic quality.
4 Presence of cultural, historic or nature conservation associations	Low – none identifiable.	Low – none identifiable.
5 Recreational opportunities	Low – no public rights of way or public open space.	Low – no public rights of way or public open space.
6 Levels of tranquillity	Low – high noise intrusion from the adjacent A131 plus likely light intrusion.	Low – high noise intrusion from the adjacent A131 plus likely light intrusion.

Conclusions on Overall Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity

Notwithstanding proximity to the A131 and attendant significant road noise, the limited degree of enclosure, limited sensitivity and likely landscape value of the land parcels mean that there is a medium to high capacity for development.

Table 3.14 Summary table for Land Parcel GLP17

Land Parcel	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
GLP17a	L	M	M	L	M - H
GLP17b	L	M	M	L	M - H

Figure 3.2 Great Leigs: Landscape Sensitivity

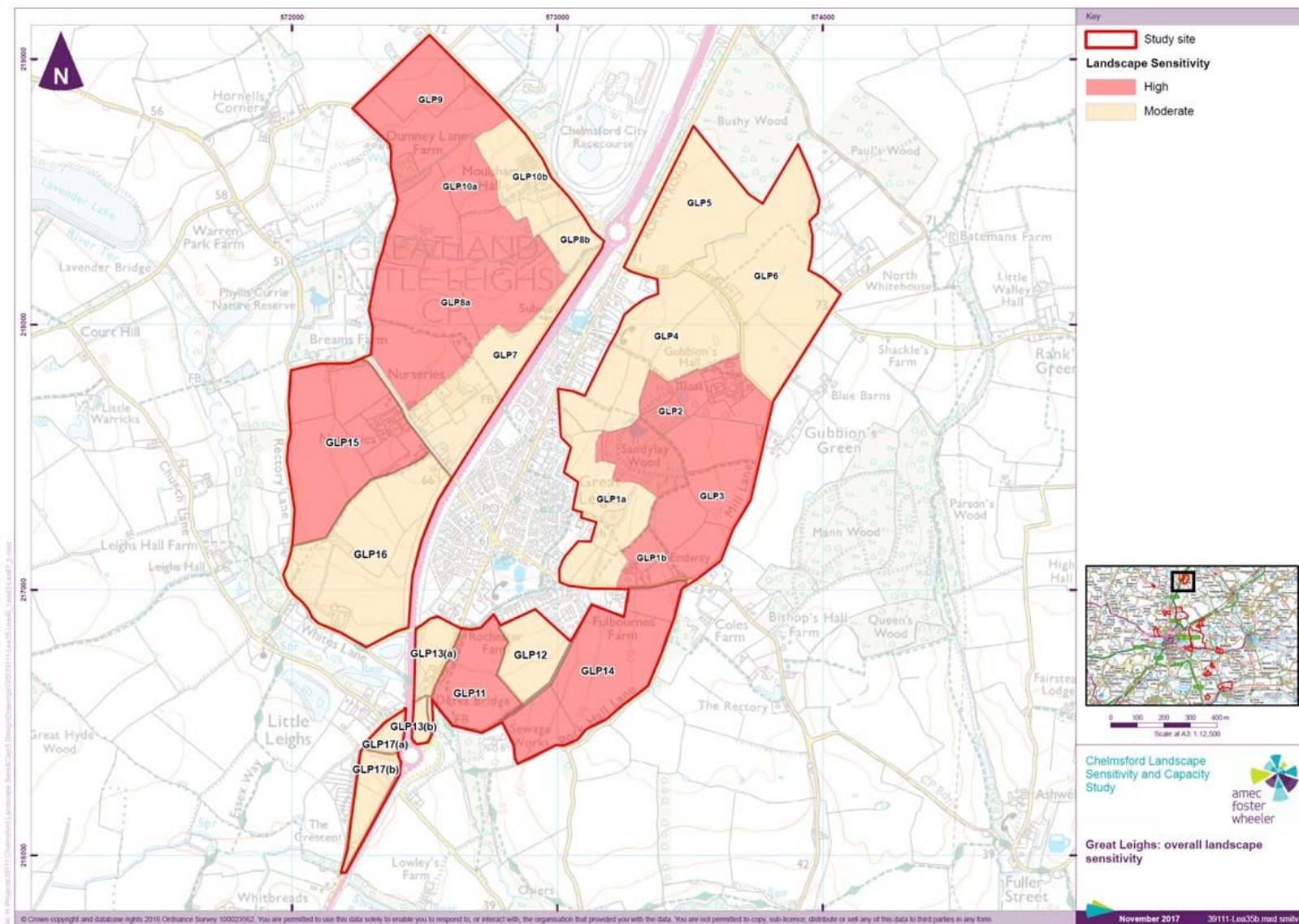
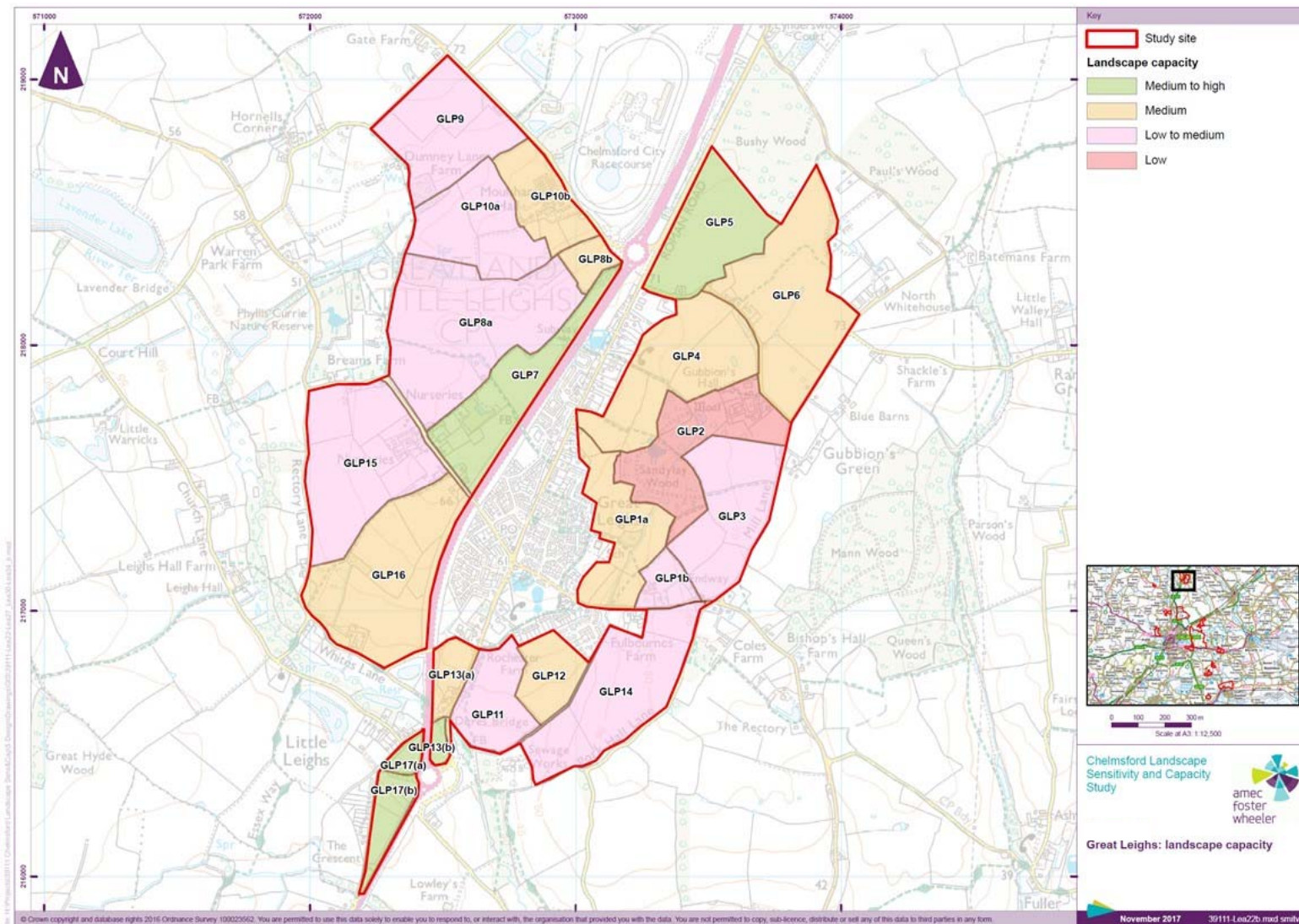


Figure 3.3 Great Leigs: Landscape Capacity



4. Chelmsford West

4.1 Local landscape character context

This Study Site is located on the western edge of Chelmsford and north of the A1060. The majority of the Study Site lies within the eastern edges of the Writtle Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Area (B20) as described by the Chelmsford LCA 2006 (Chelmsford LCA); the northern tip lies within the Pleshey Farmland Plateau LCA (B15), whilst the western edge lies within the Can and Wid River Valley LCA (A8).

Figure 4.1 illustrates the landscape and visual context of the Study Site. This Study Site has been sub-divided into seven Land Parcels. This Technical Note presents the assessment of Land Parcels CWLP4 to CWLP7.

Writtle Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Area (B20)

Key characteristics of relevance to this Study Site and the Land Parcels described below, are:

- ▶ Gently undulating farmland plateau landscape.
- ▶ Predominantly arable farmland with patches of pasture in close proximity to settlements.
- ▶ Predominantly irregular field pattern.
- ▶ Field generally delineated by gappy hedges, often containing single mature deciduous trees.
- ▶ Scattered settlement pattern, dominated by Writtle in the east.
- ▶ Network of narrow, winding lanes.

The Chelmsford LCA describes the settlement of Writtle (located 1 km to the south of the Study Site) as *'separated from Chelmsford further to the east by the floodplains of the Rivers Can and Wid.'* It notes that away from the main roads (including the A1060) there is a sense of tranquillity. It describes *'open views into the floodplain of the River Can'* and *'open views to the western urban edge of Chelmsford'* available from the eastern edges of area. Church spires within Writtle form landmarks visible across the farmland plateau.

The Chelmsford LCA describes the following planning and land management issues of relevance to the Study Site:

- ▶ Ensure any extensions to existing housing developments avoid visual intrusion.
- ▶ Highways improvements or potential widening of the A1060.
- ▶ Disturbance of sense of tranquillity as a result of noise and traffic associated with the A1060.
- ▶ Increased pressure on minor roads and lanes.
- ▶ Potential future decline and loss of field boundaries through lack of management and further introduction of intensive agricultural practices.

The Chelmsford LCA describes the following sensitivities to change of relevance to the Study Site:

- ▶ Single mature trees within hedgerows and ditches at field boundaries are sensitive to changes in land management.
- ▶ The open nature of the skyline of several areas of the plateau is visually sensitive with new development potentially visible within expansive views across the plateau.
- ▶ Strong sense of historic integrity, resulting from a dispersed settlement pattern of small hamlets and villages and several visible historic features (i.e. halls).
- ▶ Comprehensive network of quiet rural lanes potentially sensitive to increased traffic flow.
- ▶ Important wildlife habitats.

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 within the Chelmsford LCA of relevance include:

- ▶ Protect the setting of Writtle (including the floodplains of the River Can and Wid to the east) which separates the settlement from Chelmsford.
- ▶ Ensure that any appropriate new development responds to the historic settlement pattern and uses materials that are appropriate to local landscape character.
- ▶ Conserve views into the Can and Wid valleys from the eastern edge of LCA B20.
- ▶ Conserve the mostly rural character of LCA B20.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines of relevance include:

- ▶ Conserve and enhance existing hedgerow network.
- ▶ Seeks ways to reduce the visual impact of the main road corridors (including the A1060) through introducing new and strengthening existing parallel shelterbelts where appropriate.
- ▶ Conserve historic lanes.

Pleshey Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Area (B15)

The northern part of the Study Site lies within the southern part of this LCA. Whilst also a predominantly gently undulating arable landscape, LCA B15's key characteristics vary from those associated with the neighbouring Writtle Farmland Plateau LCA (B20). These include:

- ▶ Irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable fields marked by sinuous hedgerows and ditches.
- ▶ Small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape.
- ▶ Scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small hamlets, typically with greens and ponds.
- ▶ Comprehensive network of narrow, winding lanes.
- ▶ Strong sense of tranquillity.

Whilst there is a higher presence of woodland and tree cover in LCA B15; with settlements and isolated farmsteads screened from the surrounding open farmland, the LCA describes more open views across the patchwork of fields on higher land located in the middle and eastern parts of the LCA where there are fewer trees and woodlands. LCA B15 is also characterised by the presence of small fields and paddocks (with improved grassland and wooden or white tape fencing) that cluster around farmsteads and hamlets.

The Chelmsford LCA describes the following planning and land management issues for LCA B15 that are of relevance to the Study Site:

- ▶ Potential for erection of new farm buildings on higher areas, which could be conspicuous on the skyline.
- ▶ Potential further decline in condition of field boundaries through agricultural intensification.

The Chelmsford LCA describes the following sensitivities to change of relevance to the Study Site:

- ▶ Sinuous hedgerows and ditches and small pockets of deciduous woodland are sensitive to changes in land management.

- ▶ Strong sense of historic integrity, resulting from a dispersed historic settlement pattern and several large halls.
- ▶ Comprehensive network of quiet rural lanes and byways potentially sensitive to increased traffic flow associated with new development.
- ▶ Important wildlife habitats.
- ▶ Overall sense of tranquillity.

The Chelmsford LCA Landscape Strategy Guidelines sets out to conserve and enhance the landscape in a similar way to that identified for the neighbouring Writtle Farmland Plateau LCA (B20). Suggested Planning Guidelines of the Chelmsford LCA of relevance to LCA B15 include:

- ▶ Consider the visual impact of new residential development and farm buildings upon the surrounding landscape.
- ▶ Maintain mixture of open and enclosed views across hills and valley.
- ▶ Ensure any new development is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines of relevance include:

- ▶ Conserve and enhance existing hedgerow network.
- ▶ Conserve and manage areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland as important historical, landscape and nature conservation features.
- ▶ Conserve and promote the use of building materials, which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character.

Can and Wid River Valley Landscape Character Area (A8)

The western part of the Study Site lies within the northern extent of this LCA. Key characteristics are:

- ▶ Patchwork of riverside habitats, including pasture and arable fields, interspersed with riverside poplars and other patches of vegetation.
- ▶ River valleys overlooked by Chelmsford's urban edge.
- ▶ Dispersed settlement pattern, with occasional single farmsteads within the floodplain and on the slopes.

The LCA describes the Can Valley as entering through farmland plateau to the north-west, where the course of the river does not dominate the character of the landscape. South of the Roxwell Road, the River Can joins the River Wid and as the river valley gently meanders into the fabric of Chelmsford urban area to the east, the character of the valley is more greatly influenced by human interaction as it flows through Admiral's Park). There are open views to the wooded horizons of farmland to the west of LCA A8, to the urban edges of Chelmsford and to the farmland plateau to the north of the River Can.

The Chelmsford LCA describes the following planning and land management issues of relevance to the Study Site:

- ▶ Potential western expansion of the Chelmsford urban edge.
- ▶ Management and maintenance of the Can river corridor as a recreational and leisure resource (particularly along stretches within the urban area).

The Chelmsford LCA describes the following sensitivities to change of relevance to the Study Site:

- ▶ Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within LCA A8 include mature vegetation lining the River Can, and a patchwork of riverside habitats, including pasture and arable fields, interspersed with riverside poplars, which are sensitive to changes in land management.

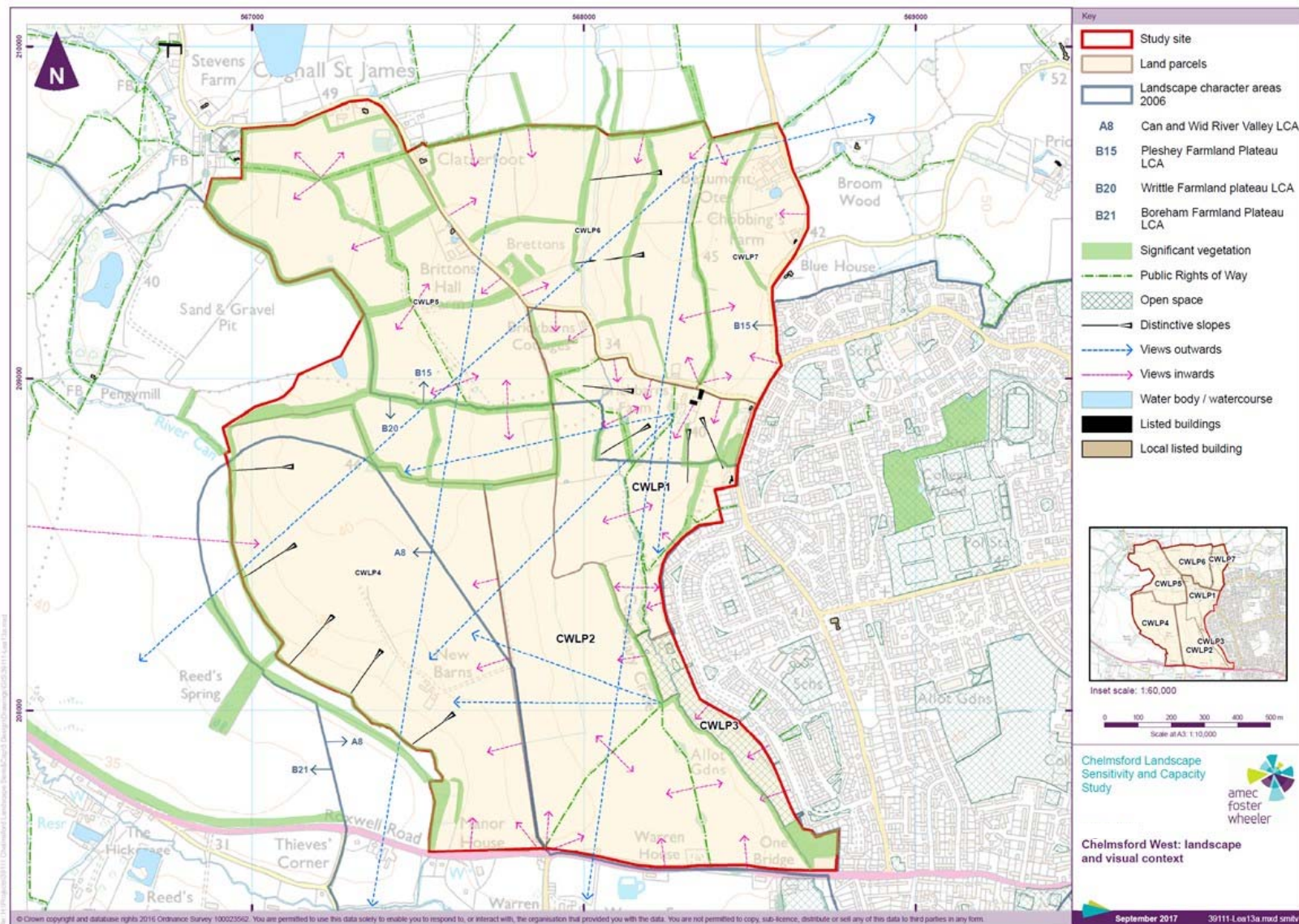
The relevant Chelmsford LCA Landscape Strategy Guidelines to conserve and enhance the landscape are:

- ▶ 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.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Ensure any new development on valley sides is small-scale and responds to historic settlement pattern, form and building materials.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines of relevance include:

- ▶ Conserve and manage existing hedgerows.
- ▶ Seek to manage and control potential fertiliser run-off from nearby farmland.
- ▶ Seek to enhance existing floodplain habitats.
- ▶ Encourage the planting of native alder, willow, ash and oak in groups along the riverside where appropriate.

Figure 4.1 Chelmsford West Landscape and Visual Context



4.2 Land Parcel CWLP4

Land Parcel Location

Land to the north of the Roxwell Road, Writtle.



Local Landscape Character Description

CWLP4 is predominantly part of the Can and Wid River Valley landscape character area (A8), but also strongly related in character to the adjacent Writtle Farmland Plateau landscape character area (B20). Comprising large scale arable fields bordered to the west by the course of the River Can which is defined by scrub woodland and unmanaged grassland.

Visual Context and Characteristics

CWLP4 is of an open aspect, with expansive views to the east and north in particular, more filtered to the west and south by hedgerow vegetation along the A1060 Roxwell Road and scrub vegetation in the Can Valley. Away from the course of the River Can, there is highly limited visual enclosure, with vistas opening up towards the west and south as the land rises towards Mashbury Road.

Landscape Sensitivity to Development

Whilst CWLP4 exhibits some characteristics associated with the Can and Wid River Valley landscape character area, these are predominantly to the south of the Roxwell Road and CWLP4 is more properly an extension of the land adjacent to the urban edge of Chelmsford. As such, CWLP4 is part of an intensively farmed arable landscape of a singular character and representative of it.

Visual Sensitivity to Development

CWLP4 rises 15m south to north from the valley of the River Can, increasing in visual exposure as it does so, with views to and from the Roxwell Road and beyond to Writtle becoming apparent. Visual sensitivity is therefore moderate to high, reflecting both the topography and absence of landscape features with the potential to help screen development which would consequently alter the character of the landscape by reducing its openness.

Landscape Value

This is an intensively farmed landscape which has undergone significant field amalgamation, which combined with the absence of public access lowers its intrinsic value. Nevertheless, there are views across the parcel from Roxwell Road and Centenary Way which ascribe the Land Parcel with some value as part of the scenic context for the east of Chelmsford.

Table 4.1 Overall Sensitivity and Value Summary Table for Land Parcel CWLP4

Landscape Character Sensitivity	
1 Representativeness of character	Moderate – typical large scale agricultural landscape, being part of the context for the upper reaches of the River Can.
2 Condition of elements and features	Low – maintained as part of agricultural use.
3 Nature and complexity of landform	Moderate – simple, open landform rising northward over 15m from the River Can.
4 Scale and pattern of landscape	Moderate – of large scale and simple pattern, creating an open vista to the west of Chelmsford.
5 Historic features and sense of time depth	Low to Moderate – some sense of time-depth as part of the farmed landscape of the locality (albeit much modified through field boundary removal associated with current agricultural practices).
6 Presence of natural elements	Low – generally absent, although fringed by wetland scrub and grassland in the valley of the River Can on western edge.
7 Type of existing development	Low – one isolated farmstead.
8 Relationship to settlement edge	Low to Moderate – whilst divorced from the edge of Chelmsford, CWLP4 forms part of the landscape context for the settlement's western edge.

Visual Sensitivity	
1 Openness and inter-visibility	Moderate to High – generally open landform, becoming less prominent as the topography falls away towards the River Can.
2 Views available	Moderate – public views across from the Roxwell Road and public rights of way to the east.
3 Potential for mitigation	Moderate – development would be conspicuous but would not alter the balance of features within the Land Parcel and could be mitigated to some degree.
Landscape Value	
1 Distinctiveness of character	Moderate – of typical character, being a large scale agricultural landscape.
2 Quality and condition of elements and features	Low – hedges removed and agricultural management of fringe vegetation.
3 Scenic value and aesthetic appeal	Moderate – reflecting medium-distance views to the west/north-west and the role of the land as part of the western context of Chelmsford. Overlooked by users of the Centenary Way and Roxwell Road.
4 Presence of cultural, historic or nature conservation associations	Low to Moderate – largely absent across the majority of the Land Parcel, potentially higher within the River Can Valley due to wetland scrub and wet grassland.
5 Recreational opportunities	Low – no public access.
6 Levels of tranquillity	Moderate – some road noise and visual intrusion from western edge of Chelmsford.

Conclusions on Overall Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity

Overall, CWLP4 is judged to be of moderate landscape sensitivity and medium landscape capacity, recognising the need to strengthen the few existing landscape elements and re-introduce those that have been removed to enhance landscape character. Development on CWLP4 would need to be considered in the context of broader development to the east where visual sensitivity is slightly lower.

Table 4.2 Summary table for Land Parcel CWLP4

Land Parcel	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
CWLP4	M - L	M	M	M - L	M

4.3 Land Parcel CWLP5

Land Parcel Location

Land to the south of Chignall St James, west of Mashbury Road.



Local Landscape Character Description

The majority of CWLP5 falls within the Pleshey Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Area (B15) which is characterised by an irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable fields bounded by sinuous hedgerows and ditches, with the presence of small woods and copses, a scattered settlement pattern, and possessing a moderately strong sense of tranquillity. CWLP5 broadly accords with this characterisation, being the southerly edge of the Pleshey Plateau at elevations of around 45- 50m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), under generally intensive arable use within a largely intact field pattern.

Visual Context and Characteristics

CWLP5 is a recognisable part of the wider plateau landscape sitting to the north of the Can and Wid Valleys. It exhibits a moderate sense of unity due to its elevation and relatively dense hedgerow and tree cover that limits the availability of views in and out. These elements appear to be in moderate but declining condition being managed for agricultural purposes. There are peripheral farmsteads (one with large amounts of clutter and dereliction) and isolated properties to the north arranged along Mashbury Road, from which public rights of way cross the Land Parcel offering a variety of internal views that rarely extend within the Land Parcel beyond the field boundary.

Landscape Sensitivity to Development

This is assessed as being moderate to high, reflecting the Land Parcel's broadly intact landscape character (notwithstanding some field amalgamation, the presence of a large, unkempt nursery in its eastern part and limited boundary management), along with the predominant settlement pattern being of isolated farmsteads and dwellings and scattered hamlets such as Chignall St James.

Visual Sensitivity to Development

There is a moderate degree of enclosure reflecting the presence of hedgerows and the plateau topography which limits exposure within and into the Land Parcel. Whilst enclosure could be strengthened through additional planting, this would alter the Land Parcel's overall landscape character and the current balance between open and enclosed views.

Landscape Value

The moderate sense of time-depth and the presence of visual receptors along its northern periphery and within the Land Parcel as a result of well-used public rights of way, provide CWLP5 with moderate landscape value which is typical of the wider LCA B15. Extensive development would compromise the current landscape character and reduce the sense of remoteness from built-up areas.

Table 4.3 Overall Sensitivity and Value Summary Table for Land Parcel CWLP5

Landscape Character Sensitivity	
1 Representativeness of character	Moderate to High – being typical of the wider plateau landscape, but with some evidence of the erosion of landscape elements and peripheral incursions such as the quarry to the south-west and the unkempt nursery.
2 Condition of elements and features	Moderate – reasonably intact, but managed for agricultural purposes with evidence of loss and decline particularly around Brittons Hall Farm.
3 Nature and complexity of landform	Moderate – arable enclosure landscape on a plateau at 45-50m AOD.
4 Scale and pattern of landscape	Moderate to High – small/medium scale, with irregular field pattern, with a reasonably strong presence of landscape elements (predominantly hedgerows, but also hedgerow trees and copses). There is agricultural-led management of hedgerows, some of which are over-mature and, typically for the areas, suffering from the loss (historic and contemporary) of hedgerow trees. The public house of the hamlet of Chignall St James is called The Elms.
5 Historic features and sense of time depth	Moderate to High – original enclosure field pattern has largely been retained, with limited field amalgamation to accommodate modern agriculture, which combined with the peripheral settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and dwellings alongside the winding Mashbury Road, imparts a moderate sense of time-depth.
6 Presence of natural elements	Moderate – hedgerows and copses.

7 Type of existing development	Moderate – peripheral, scattered dwellings along Mashbury Road.
8 Relationship to settlement edge	High – forms the southerly context for Chignall St James. Glimpsed views of the western edge of Chelmsford, but these are not significant and there is a sense of relative remoteness from Chelmsford.
Visual Sensitivity	
1 Openness and inter-visibility	Moderate – reflecting the presence of hedgerows between medium/small fields, creating a mix of openness and more enclosed views. The cumulative effect of hedgerows is to create a moderately wooded appearance which limits intervisibility in views to and from surrounding areas.
2 Views available	Moderate – there is a balance between enclosure and openness, within internal views across and to a more limited degree outward views.
3 Potential for mitigation	Moderate – opportunities for strengthening of landscape elements but the introduction of significant screening planting, for example, would disrupt the balance between enclosure and openness, and be untypical of the wider landscape character area.
Landscape Value	
1 Distinctiveness of character	Moderate – distinctive plateau landscape, contrasting with the lower lying, open arable landscape to the south.
2 Quality and condition of elements and features	Low to Moderate – hedgerows and copses appear to be declining, being over-mature and losing hedgerow trees, reflecting management for agriculture.
3 Scenic value and aesthetic appeal	Moderate – generally attractive with a balance between enclosure and openness, views across and to a limited degree outward. Some parts are of noticeably reduced aesthetic appeal.
4 Presence of cultural, historic or nature conservation associations	Low – no apparent associations.
5 Recreational opportunities	Moderate – two public rights of way are routed through CWLP5.
6 Levels of tranquillity	Moderate to High – reasonably strong sense of tranquillity, with limited visual or aural intrusion. Glimpsed views of the western edge of Chelmsford.

Conclusions on Overall Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity

Overall landscape capacity of CWLP5 is assessed to be low to medium, reflecting the combination of a moderate to high sensitivity to change and moderate landscape value. The relatively high degree of enclosure provides some scope for very limited development, although the predominant settlement pattern focused alongside Mashbury Road would quickly become compromised. More generally, the Land Parcel has a reasonably strong sense of time-depth which is being eroded through limited management of boundary features.

Table 4.4 Summary table for Land Parcel CWLP5

Land Parcel	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
CWLP5	M – H	M	M – H	M	L – M

4.4 Land Parcel CWLP6

Land Parcel Location

Land to the north-east of Mashbury Road.



Local Landscape Character Description

CWLP6 is part of the Pleshey Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Area (B15) which is characterised by an irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable fields bounded by sinuous hedgerows and ditches, interspersed with small woods and copses, with a scattered settlement pattern, and strong sense of tranquillity. CWLP6 broadly accords with this characterisation, having elevations of 35 - 45m AOD, and land-use dominated by intensive arable cropping undertaken within a largely intact field pattern.

Visual Context and Characteristics

There is a reasonable sense of unity provided by the Land Parcel's minimal variation in elevation and its relatively dense hedgerow pattern, especially in its eastern part. The hedgerows appear to be in moderate condition despite the dominance of arable cropping. There are peripheral farmsteads and isolated properties to the south distributed along Mashbury Road, from which public rights of way cross the Land Parcel providing access to the wider countryside to the north, offering various internal and external views, particularly from the more elevated north-eastern corner of CWLP6 from where long distance views to Writtle and Hylands Park are available.

Landscape Sensitivity to Development

This is assessed as being moderate to high, reflecting the mainly intact character of CWLP6 (notwithstanding some field amalgamation and limited boundary management), along with the predominant settlement pattern being of isolated farmsteads and dwellings and scattered hamlets such as Chignall St James.

Visual Sensitivity to Development

Visual sensitivity is assessed as being moderate, reflecting a balance between enclosure and openness created by hedgerow boundaries to small and medium-scale fields. The moderate degree of enclosure partly restricts visual exposure and could be strengthened through additional planting. However, such planting would have the potential to alter the existing landscape character by changing the current balance between open and enclosed views.

Landscape Value

CWLP6 possesses a moderate sense of time-depth due to the partial survival of its hedgerow pattern. Landscape value is likewise enhanced by the presence of visual receptors along its southern and western peripheries and of the presence of several well-used public rights of way. These factors coalesce to create a landscape of moderate value which is typical of the broader plateau landscape. Significant development would compromise the current landscape character and sense of remoteness from a built-up area.

Table 4.5 Overall Sensitivity and Value Summary Table for Land Parcel CWLP6

Landscape Character Sensitivity	
1 Representativeness of character	Moderate to High – being typical of the wider plateau landscape, but with some evidence of the erosion of landscape elements though limited management and hedgerow loss to allow field amalgamation.
2 Condition of elements and features	Moderate – reasonably intact, but managed for agricultural purposes with evidence of loss and decline.
3 Nature and complexity of landform	Moderate – plateau at 35-45m AOD that is gently incised by the upper reaches of a tributary stream of the River Can.
4 Scale and pattern of landscape	Moderate to High – medium scale with a semi-regular field pattern, with a reasonably strong presence of landscape elements (predominantly hedgerows, but also hedgerow trees). There is agricultural-led management of hedgerows, some of which are over-mature and, typically for the Study Site, suffering from the loss (historic and contemporary) of hedgerow trees.
5 Historic features and sense of time depth	Moderate to High – original enclosure field pattern has largely been retained, with limited field amalgamation to accommodate modern agriculture, which combined with the peripheral settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and dwellings, imparts a moderately strong sense of time-depth.

6 Presence of natural elements	Low to Moderate – hedgerows and field ditches; also the tributary stream course and associated vegetation running north-south.
7 Type of existing development	Moderate – peripheral, scattered dwellings along Mashbury Road.
8 Relationship to settlement edge	High – forms part of the context for Chignall St James. Glimpsed views of the western edge of Chelmsford from the eastern side of the Land Parcel, and there is a sense of relative remoteness from Chelmsford.
Visual Sensitivity	
1 Openness and inter-visibility	Moderate – reflecting the presence of hedgerows between medium and small fields, creating a mix of openness and more enclosed internal and external views with the latter becoming more extensive in the more elevated north-east corner where there are expansive views towards Writtle and Hylands Park.
2 Views available	Moderate – there is a balance between enclosure and openness, with views across the Land Parcel and to a more limited degree outward.
3 Potential for mitigation	Moderate – opportunities for strengthening of landscape elements but the introduction of significant screening planting, for example, would disrupt the balance between enclosure and openness, and be untypical of the wider host landscape character area.
Landscape Value	
1 Distinctiveness of character	Moderate – distinctive incised plateau landscape, contrasting with the lower lying, open arable landscape to the south.
2 Quality and condition of elements and features	Low to Moderate – hedgerows and copses appear to be declining, being over-mature and over-mature hedgerow trees, reflecting paucity of management.
3 Scenic value and aesthetic appeal	Moderate – generally attractive with a balance between enclosure and openness, views across and to a limited degree outward. Moderate sense of tranquillity especially in the gentle incised valley.
4 Presence of cultural, historic or nature conservation associations	Low – no apparent associations.
5 Recreational opportunities	Moderate – several public rights of way are routed through CWLP6, including a section of the Centenary Way which forms the easterly edge.
6 Levels of tranquillity	Moderate – reasonably strong sense of tranquillity, with limited visual or aural intrusion, especially in the lower central part close to tributary stream. Glimpsed views of the north-western edge of Chelmsford particularly from the Land Parcel's more elevated eastern edge.

Conclusions on Overall Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity

Overall landscape capacity is judged to be low to medium, reflecting the combination of a moderate to high sensitivity to change and moderate landscape value. The Land Parcel has a moderately strong sense of time-depth which is being eroded through agricultural-led management of boundary features.

Table 4.6 Summary table for Land Parcel CWLP6

Land Parcel	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
CWLP6	M – H	M	M – H	M	L – M

4.5 Land Parcel CWLP7

Land Parcel Location

Land to the north of Mashbury Road, west of Chignal Road.



Local Landscape Character Description

CWLP7 is part of the Pleshey Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Area (B15) which is characterised by an irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable fields bounded by sinuous hedgerows and ditches, interspersed with small woods and copses, with a scattered settlement pattern, and strong sense of tranquillity. This parcel broadly accords with this characterisation, being at an elevation of around 40 - 45m AOD. Nevertheless, there are factors that are not accordant with the host LCA B15 including extensive hedgerow removal and decay and reduced levels of tranquillity due to its proximity to the north-western edge of Chelmsford.

Visual Context and Characteristics

CWLP7 exhibits a moderate sense of visual unity provided by its elevation and visual connection with land to the north and west. There are peripheral properties to the east along Chignal Road and Mashbury Road, but the built edge of Chelmsford across the Chignal Road is the most influential built development. The Centenary Way promoted path forms the western edge of the Land Parcel, from which there are long distance views southwards towards Writtle and Hylands Park.

Landscape Sensitivity to Development

This is assessed as being moderate to high. This assessment reflects the relatively intact character of CWLP7 (notwithstanding field amalgamation and limited management of remaining field boundaries), and its visual and landscape character connection to land to the west and north (notwithstanding the visual connection to the built edge of Chelmsford).

Visual Sensitivity to Development

The paucity of visually effective boundaries and the gently rising landform from Mashbury Road means that CWLP7 has a moderate degree of visual sensitivity, particularly given its relationship with land to the west and north.

Landscape Value

The presence of visual receptors along its southern and western periphery and the well-used Centenary Way, allied with the proximity of north-western Chelmsford and the Land Parcel's potential use for informal recreation for this area's residents combine to create a landscape of moderate value.

Table 4.7 Overall Sensitivity and Value Summary Table for Land Parcel CWLP7

Landscape Character Sensitivity	
1 Representativeness of character	Moderate – being broadly typical of the more extensive host LCA, but with evidence of the loss of landscape elements though limited management.
2 Condition of elements and features	Moderate – moderately intact, with evidence of loss and decline, particularly of hedgerows.
3 Nature and complexity of landform	Moderate – gently incised plateau at 40-45m AOD resulting in a simple landform.
4 Scale and pattern of landscape	Moderate to High – medium scale, with a semi-regular field pattern, with some presence of landscape elements (hedgerows and hedgerow trees).
5 Historic features and sense of time depth	Moderate to High– original enclosure field pattern has been partly retained, with some amalgamation to accommodate modern agriculture, which combined with the peripheral settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and dwellings, imparts a reasonably strong sense of time-depth. There are visible Listed Buildings of the Blue House, Chobbings Farm and Brickbarns Farm to the east and south.
6 Presence of natural elements	Moderate – hedgerows and field ditches; also stream course and associated riparian vegetation running north-south.
7 Type of existing development	Moderate – peripheral, scattered dwellings along Mashbury Road and Chignal Road.
8 Relationship to settlement edge	Moderate – forms part of the context for the north-western edge of Chelmsford across the Chignal Road.
Visual Sensitivity	
1 Openness and inter-visibility	Moderate – reflecting the presence of surviving hedgerows, particularly to the north, creating a mix of openness and some enclosed views within and outside the Land Parcel. From the northern edge there are expansive views towards Writtle and Hylands Park.
2 Views available	Moderate – generally near and middle distance, but also longer distance southern view towards Hyland Park.

3 Potential for mitigation	Moderate – opportunities for strengthening of landscape elements. However, the introduction of significant screening planting, for example, would disrupt the balance between enclosure and openness, and be untypical of the wider character area.
Landscape Value	
1 Distinctiveness of character	Moderate – distinctive gently incised plateau landscape, contrasting with the lower lying, open arable landscape to the south.
2 Quality and condition of elements and features	Low to Moderate – hedgerows and remnant hedgerow trees appear to be declining, the latter being over-mature, reflecting management for agriculture.
3 Scenic value and aesthetic appeal	Moderate – generally attractive with a balance between enclosure and openness, with views across the Land Parcel and to a limited degree outward to the south and CWLP6.
4 Presence of cultural, historic or nature conservation associations	Moderate – listed buildings of the Blue House, Chobbings Farm and Brickbarns Farm to the east and south.
5 Recreational opportunities	Moderate to High – public rights of way traverse CWLP7 including the Centenary Way which runs along the interfluvium between the two north-south gentle valleys formed by the tributary streams.
6 Levels of tranquillity	Moderate – some sense of tranquillity, with some visual or aural intrusion. Influence of the north-western edge of Chelmsford, particularly towards south-eastern corner at the junction between Mashbury Road and Chignal Road.

Conclusions on Overall Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity

CWLP7 is assessed as possessing a low to moderate landscape capacity. This assessment reflects the combination of a moderate to high sensitivity to change and moderate landscape value. The presence of the built edge of Chelmsford to the south-east of the Land Parcel exerts a moderate visual and perceptual influence, although CWLP7's predominant landscape and visual characteristics are more related to the wider host LCA B15 located to the north and west.

Table 4.8 Summary table for Land Parcel CWLP7

Land Parcel	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
CWLP7	M	M	M - H	M	L - M

Figure 4.2 Chelmsford West: Landscape Sensitivity

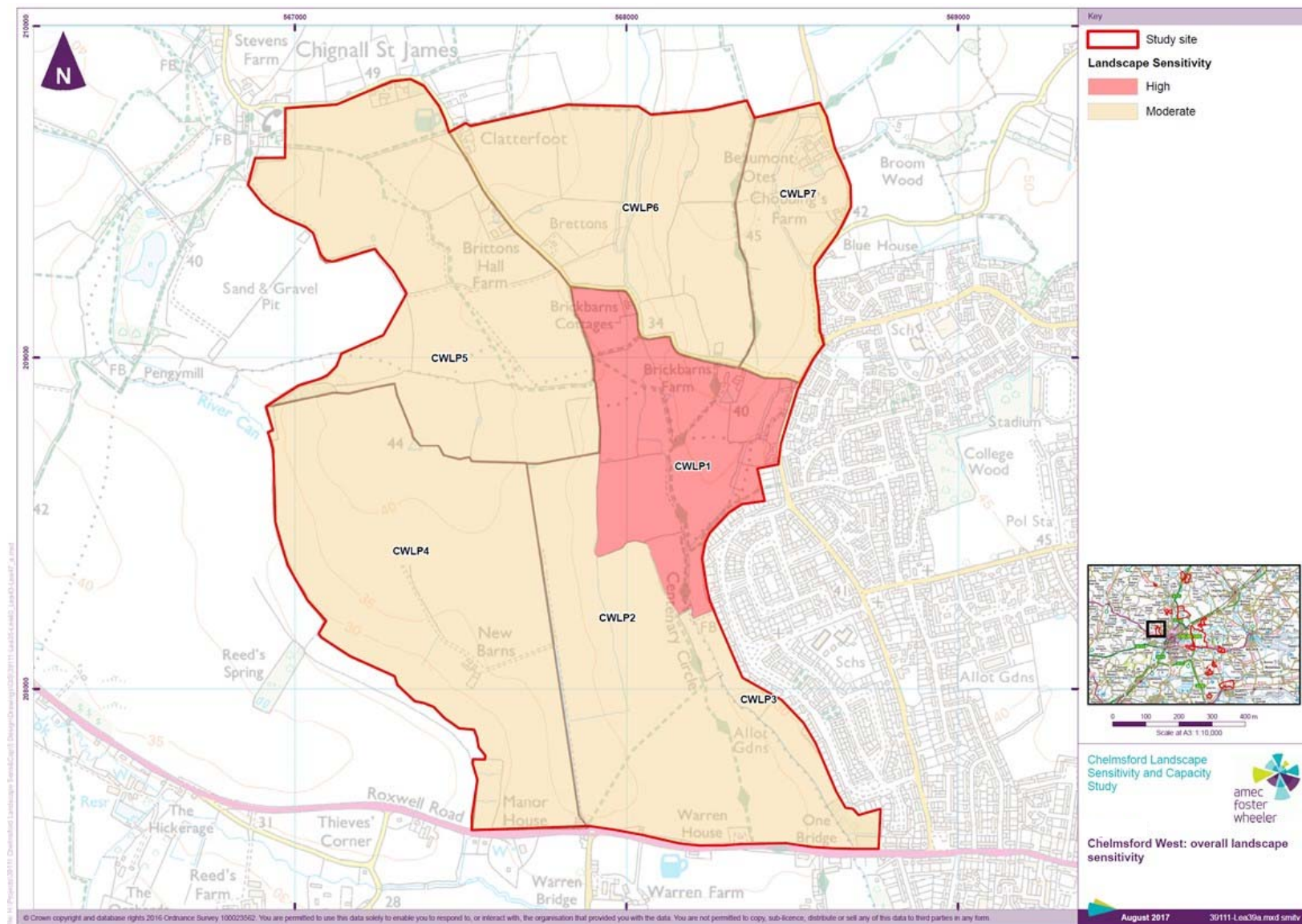
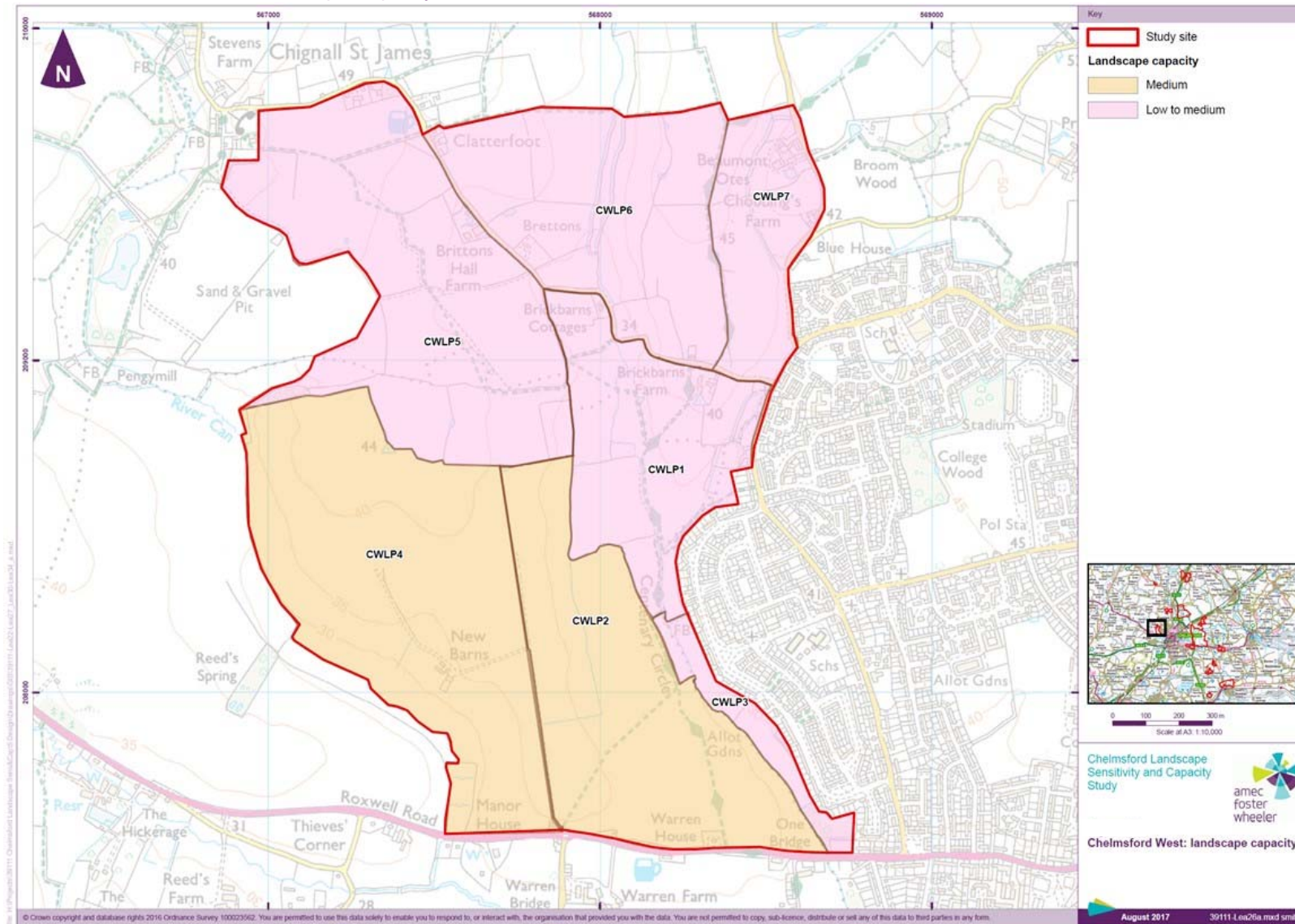


Figure 4.3 Chelmsford West: Landscape Capacity



5. North East Chelmsford

5.1 Local landscape character context

This Study Site is located to the north-east of Chelmsford and east of the A130. The entire Study Site lies within the south-west part of the Boreham Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Area (B21) as described by the Chelmsford LCA 2006 (Chelmsford LCA). The LCA is centred on Boreham and the A12 dual carriageway.

Figure 5.1 illustrates the landscape and visual context of the Study Site. This Area of Search has been sub-divided into six Land Parcels (NECLP1 - 6). This Assessment covers NECLP6 which covers the former Boreham Airfield.

Boreham Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Area (B21)

Key characteristics of relevance to this Study Site and the Land Parcel described below, are:

- ▶ Irregular pattern of mainly medium size arable and pastoral fields marked by hedgerows and ditches.
- ▶ Small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape.
- ▶ Scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small hamlets.
- ▶ Concentration of isolated farmsteads.
- ▶ Network of narrow and winding lanes.

The Chelmsford LCA describes a gently undulating landscape that is moderately densely populated with the large settlements (Boreham and Hatfield Peverel), scattered smaller villages and hamlets, and farmsteads that line the roads outside main settlements. The pastoral fields around settlements are notably smaller in scale (small to medium sized) with fragmented and gappy hedgerow boundaries (with hedgerow trees).

The A12 dual carriageway forms the key landmark in the LCA. Its raised construction is described as visually splitting the LCA in two, it is highly visible and audible across parts of the LCA reducing the sense of tranquillity. Other roads are described as sunk below adjoining fields and lined with tall hedge banks (with hedgerow trees). Overall whilst views in LCA B21 are described as short distance and restricted by tall hedgerows and small woodland, the presence of large arable fields separated by banks and ditches provide extensive long distance views across the River Chelmer valley (to the west)

The Chelmsford LCA describes the following planning and land management issues of relevance to the Study Site:

- ▶ Potential for erection of new farm buildings in the open agricultural land, which would be conspicuous on the skyline.
- ▶ Potential residential expansion of villages and towns, which would be conspicuous in the surrounding rural landscape.
- ▶ Increasing traffic on minor roads, especially during rush hour.
- ▶ Potential further decline in condition of field boundaries through agricultural intensification.

The Chelmsford LCA sets out the following sensitivities to change of relevance to the Study Site:

- ▶ Hedgerows, banks and ditches at field boundaries are sensitive to changes in land management.
- ▶ Strong sense of historic integrity resulting from a dispersed historic settlement pattern visible in places and occasional historic features such as New Hall and/or Boreham House and historic parks and gardens.

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.

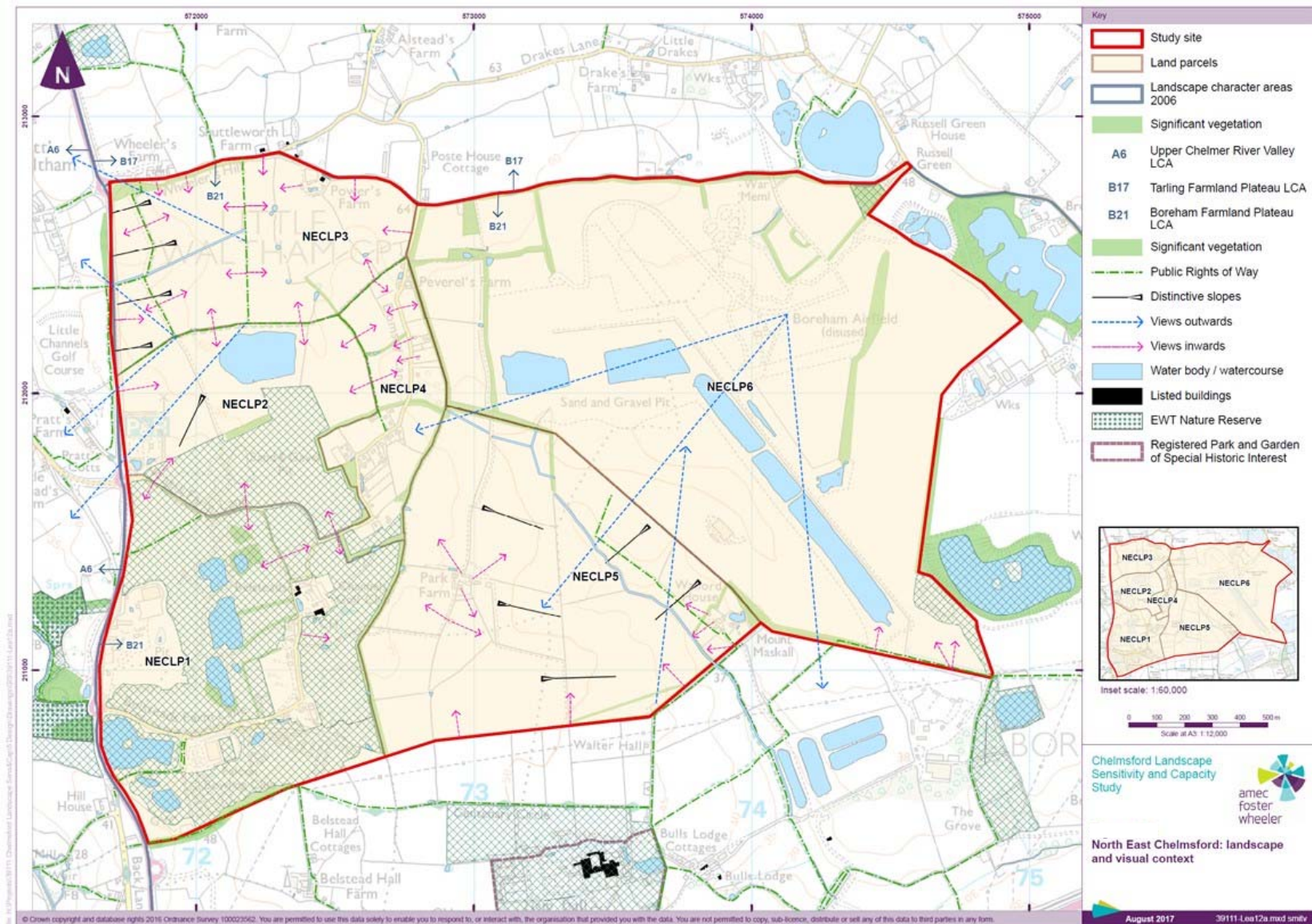
Suggested Planning Guidelines of the Chelmsford LCA of relevance include:

- ▶ Consider the visual impact of new residential development and farm buildings in the surrounding agricultural fields.
- ▶ Ensure any new development within farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines of relevance include:

- ▶ Conserve and enhance existing hedgerow network and strengthen through planting appropriate to local landscape character.
- ▶ Conserve and manage areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland as important historical, landscape and nature conservation features.
- ▶ Strengthen the recreational role of water filled sand and gravel pits.
- ▶ Conserve and promote the use of building materials, which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character.

Figure 5.1 North East Chelmsford Landscape and Visual Context



5.2 Land Parcel NECLP6

Land Parcel Location

Land at the former Boreham Airfield, south of Cranham Road, west of Waltham Road.



Local Landscape Character Description

Part of the Boreham Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Area (B21) which has been much modified though Second World War airfield operations and lately quarrying. These land-uses have created a discontinuous character with pockets of plantation woodland, a fishing lake, arable agriculture, deep surface quarries for sand extraction, commercial properties and thick peripheral woodland. There is limited, if any, association with the character of the host LCA apart from its elevated position and exhibits some characteristics that are usually associated with urban fringe locations.

Visual Context and Characteristics

Overall, NECLP6 is visually well enclosed, reflecting its elevated character and long-established, deep peripheral woodland to the north and east, with some more recent boundary planting to the south. From inside the Land Parcel, however, there are expansive views to the south across the Chelmer Valley towards the elevated Danbury Ridge, and to the south-west towards the emerging Beaulieu Park development to the north of Chelmsford. Despite the scale, openness and elevated character of NECLP6, it nevertheless retains a sense of separation from the wider surrounding landscape. There are limited views into the Land Parcel, primarily from a public right of way to the south, and glimpsed views from Generals Lane as it approaches isolated properties to the west. NECLP6 is part of the long-distance northerly context beyond the A12 when viewed from locations on the Danbury Ridge, for example from Hurrells Lane.

Landscape Sensitivity to Development

As noted above, NECLP6 is a highly disrupted landscape, which retains limited remnants of the original character, due to the loss of the original field pattern and associated vegetation and the track of public rights of way and their replacement by a complex juxtaposition of land-uses and introduced planting.

Consequently, the landscape has a strong sense of impermanence and has minimal association with the surrounding, longer-established landscape pattern. Consequently, NECLP6 is assessed to possess low landscape sensitivity.

Visual Sensitivity to Development

Notwithstanding the disrupted character of the landscape of NECLP6, its elevated position and consequent visual exposure, especially to the south increases the Land Parcel's visual sensitivity. The introduction of significant amounts of built form within the Land Parcel will alter some aspects of its urban fringe landscape character, although they also have the potential to provide a sense of place that is currently weak.

Landscape Value

Notwithstanding the historical associations of the airfield and the presence of some structures from that era, the scale of recent change has been such that these are much diminished, which combined with an absence of public access and severely limited close distance views combine to substantially reduce the landscape value of NECLP6.

Table 5.1 Overall Sensitivity and Value Summary Table for Land Parcel NECLP6

Landscape Character Sensitivity	
1 Representativeness of character	Low - largely atypical of character of host LCA B21, being substantially altered though airfield and subsequent quarrying land-uses.
2 Condition of elements and features	Low/Moderate - generally unmanaged peripheral woodland, although evidence of recent planting.
3 Nature and complexity of landform	Low - simple, open and comparatively elevated.
4 Scale and pattern of landscape	Low - complex, reflecting quarrying operations and presence of a variety of incidental land uses (remnant agriculture, commercial units etc).
5 Historic features and sense of time depth	Low - largely relayed to remnant structures from wartime airfield use. Loss of most pre-WW2 landscape elements and features has minimised the Land Parcel's time depth
6 Presence of natural elements	Low/Moderate - limited to peripheral woodland.
7 Type of existing development	Low – small number of industrial/commercial units.
8 Relationship to settlement edge	Moderate - set apart from Chelmsford and Boreham, although there is a visual connection to the developing urban edge at Beaulieu Park to the south-west.
Visual Sensitivity	
1 Openness and inter-visibility	Moderate - open, expansive plateau landscape although perimeter vegetation cover severely restricts inter-visibility from immediate surrounding areas.
2 Views available	Moderate - middle and long-distance views to the south, south-east and west. Enclosed by significant vegetation to the east and north.

3 Potential for mitigation	Moderate/High - significant opportunities for widespread structural planting.
Landscape Value	
1 Distinctiveness of character	Low - of a distinct character by virtue of the nature and extent of land-use change, but of limited value in its current, partly quarried state.
2 Quality and condition of elements and features	Low - substantial peripheral vegetation to the north and east, likely to be unmanaged. Internal elements have been largely removed.
3 Scenic value and aesthetic appeal	Low - of limited scenic value/aesthetic appeal per se in its current state, but the elevation of the Land Parcel means that it possesses potential as a visual focus in longer distance views.
4 Presence of cultural, historic or nature conservation associations	Low - remnants of WW2 airfield operations (hangars and other structures) otherwise devoid of features.
5 Recreational opportunities	Low - currently peripheral Public Rights of Way only to the south which is dominated by ongoing quarrying activities outside the Land Parcel. Private angling.
6 Levels of tranquillity	Low - at present of an untranquil character, being the focus for quarrying operations and a police driver training facility and to the south, proximity to the A12.

Conclusions on Overall Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity

Whilst the plateau location of NECLP6 means that it has a degree of sensitivity by virtue of its elevation, the nature and extent of land-use change means that there are opportunities for large-scale restoration which could include new development based around the establishment of extensive green infrastructure. It is impractical to seek to restore the original landscape pattern, but key elements such as substantial woodland screening creating progressively filtered near, mid and long distance horizons can be established as part of a new infrastructure.

Table 5.2 Summary table for Land Parcel NECLP6

Land Parcel	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
NECLP6	L	M	M	L	M - H

Figure 5.2 North East Chelmsford: Landscape Sensitivity

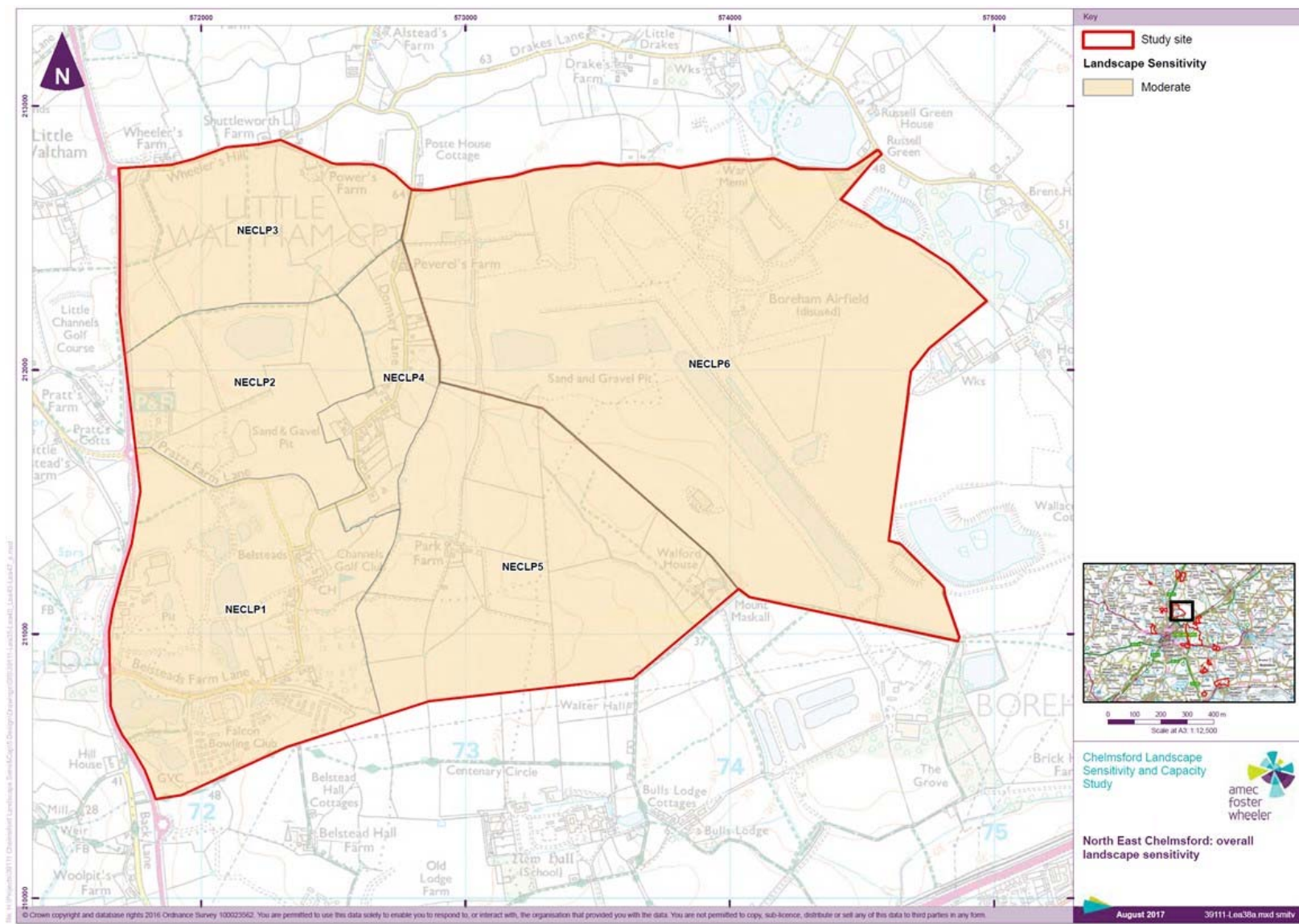
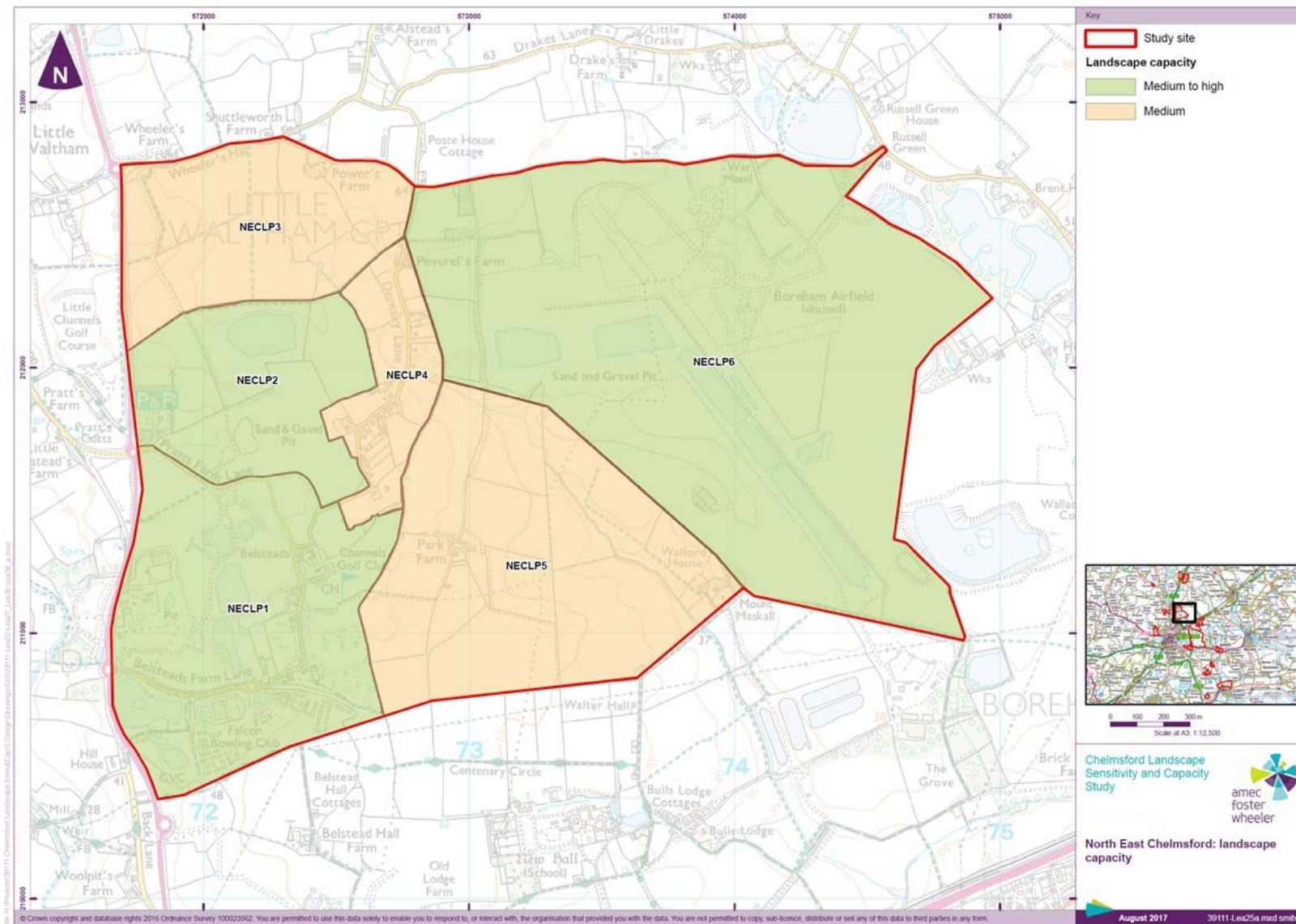


Figure 5.3 North East Chelmsford: Landscape Capacity



Author.....
Robert Deanwood/Ian Gates**Reviewer**.....
Ian Gates**Copyright and non-disclosure notice**

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