

# BROOMFIELD

## Village Design Statement

2011

### The village of Five Greens



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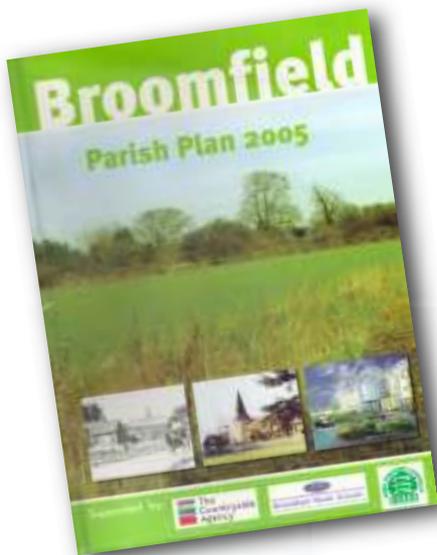
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# Section 1

## Introduction

### Purpose:

The Broomfield Village Design Statement (VDS) aims to help ensure that future development or modification of existing buildings and open spaces in the Parish of Broomfield should integrate as well as possible with the best our village has to offer. The VDS also encourages everyone who lives and works in Broomfield to play their part in caring for our village, taking opportunities to enhance it still further. It builds on the Broomfield Parish Plan, which sets out our vision for the future of our village, based on the views of residents. That vision is for Broomfield to “keep its sense of identity and to have an even stronger sense of community, making it an even better place to live” (Broomfield Parish Plan 2005, p.2).



### Status of the VDS for future planning

The VDS applies to our entire parish, not just the Defined Settlement Area (the existing built up area as shown in official planning documents).

As guidance issued by Chelmsford Borough Council in September 2005 states, a Village Design Statement cannot either generate or prevent future development by itself. Nor can it take away people’s right to develop and improve their homes and gardens. However, it is a public document which – once adopted by the Parish and Borough Councils, as expected – “can carry weight in the determination of planning applications”. This includes development of existing or future brownfield (e.g., previously developed) sites, as well as adaptations to existing buildings.

Alongside other planning guidance – which includes policies covering Listed Buildings (of which there are 29 in Broomfield Parish), Chelmsford Borough Council’s Local Development Framework, the North Chelmsford Area Action Plan, and the Broomfield Conservation Area guidance – this VDS will act as a supplementary planning document to help to ensure that any future development proposed for Broomfield integrates with what our residents have identified as the most attractive, distinctive, and desirable features of our village.

### Relationship of VDS to Community Landscape Character Statement (CLCS)

The VDS Committee has also published a Community Landscape Character Statement. It is a separate document but with strong links to this VDS and is based on the same consultation processes, so should be considered alongside our VDS for future planning purposes.

The Committee decided to produce a CLCS alongside the VDS because of the high proportion of greenfield, rural agricultural land within Broomfield parish and the significance residents have placed on its protection. This is largely comprised of Grade II agricultural land and is used primarily for growing wheat and barley, beans, and rapeseed. This is an important local food resource, given the concerns many people have about the distance our food travels, as well as the growing use of food crops for the manufacture of biofuels worldwide. The Community Landscape Character Statement provides further details. It is available from the Committee and the Parish Office.



View over the Chelmer valley

## Section 2

# Background to Broomfield

The village of Broomfield lies some 2.5 miles north of the county town of Chelmsford, Essex. The parish covers seven hundred and forty-seven hectares, and is deceptively rural, surprisingly so to the many motorists who pass through our village every day. The main settlement area of Broomfield – containing dozens of historic buildings, twenty-nine of them listed – is surrounded by open countryside. It contains arable fields, meadows, hedges, specimen trees, woods, the River Chelmer, several lakes and ponds, a nature reserve and five village greens within its boundaries. The parish is criss-crossed by a network of footpaths, bridleways and other rights of way, some of these many centuries old. These natural features and access points combine to offer pleasant walking with views across open countryside – an aspect much valued by Broomfield residents.

In a community-wide consultation exercise undertaken in the development of the Broomfield Parish Plan, published in 2005, over 90% of respondents said that its tranquility, open aspects, wildlife, opportunities for recreation, and the natural break between Broomfield and Chelmsford were important contributors to its attractiveness as a place to live.



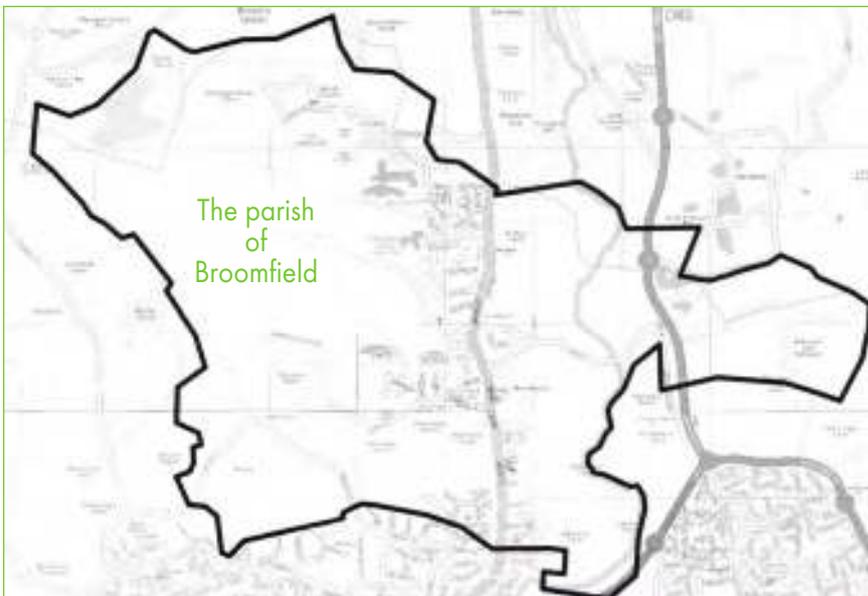
Easy access to a country walk

While Broomfield is not without its problems, such as the lack of certain core services and concerns about traffic, lack of parking provision, low-level crime, and proposals



for hundreds of new homes within the parish, our strong sense of community is revealed by the statistic that 94% of residents would like to stay here. Our local clubs and organisations are well-supported, and people like the sense of identity that comes from living in a smaller community.

Broomfield has seen many changes in its history, which predates Roman times. It has more or less successfully absorbed a wide variety of domestic and commercial architectural styles over the centuries. In some areas – in particular those in the Conservation Area surrounding Church Green, as well as Angel Green and Parsonage Green – it has successfully retained its attractive village character.



Broomfield also contains the Borough of Chelmsford’s single biggest employer, Broomfield Hospital, as well as one of Chelmsford’s largest secondary schools, both of which are built to an entirely different scale. Both generate considerable traffic, particularly at rush hour, and in the case of the Hospital, ambulances at all times of the day and night. There are also some commercial sites on Main Road which, although they provide useful amenities, are not in character with surrounding homes and other properties.

In June 2010, Chelmsford Borough Council submitted its North Chelmsford Area Action Plan (NCAAP) to the government. The NCAAP allocates up to 800 dwellings in north-west Chelmsford and Broomfield for the period up to 2021. These are divided between 4 locations in the Parish, 2 adjoining the current settlement area (north of Hospital Approach and around Broomfield Place) and 2 adjoining north-west Chelmsford (north of Essex Avenue and north of Copperfield Road). In addition, the eastern part of the Parish, east of Essex Regiment Way, will be subsumed within the north-east Springfield neighbourhoods, the much larger development within the NCAAP.



# Section 3

## The village of Five Greens

Broomfield boasts five greens: Angel, Church, Parsonage, Partridge and Scots, of which the first three are registered village greens. The greens were probably created in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as new areas were taken into cultivation to support a growing population. However, Church Green, next to the ancient church and manor house (Broomfield Hall), is probably earlier and may once have been stockaded.

It is even suggested that the whole pattern of polyfocal greens in Essex dates back to Roman times and is a feature of areas where the transition from Roman Britain to Anglo-Saxon England was earlier and less disruptive.



Parsonage Green



Scots Green



Angel Green

For more details, see John Hunter's *The Essex Landscape: A Study of its Form and History* published by the Essex Record Office (1999), especially pages 95 – 104.

Settlements based on greens are a feature of Essex north of the A12. Felsted has the most, with eleven greens named in the Chapman and Andre map of 1777.

Map drawn by Sheila Haster



Church Green

Standing on the edge of modern Chelmsford with its pattern of 'onion-ring' sub-urban development, the Parish of Broomfield marks a change in the landscape to this much older pattern of rural settlement. The greens are therefore

an important feature of the Parish and the wider area. Guidance is set out on following pages to ensure that this feature is protected and enhanced.

## Buildings in Broomfield

Mentioned in the Domesday Book, Broomfield's origins date back several centuries earlier, to the Romano-British period. Fragments of building materials from a villa dating to this period have been found in the fields alongside New Barn Lane, behind Broomfield Parish Church. One of the oldest buildings in the village, the church is of mainly Norman fabric, but was built on an earlier Saxon site and contains Roman building materials, most likely taken from the villa. It is one of only six round towered churches in Essex. Main Road, the primary route through the village, almost certainly follows the line of the Roman road between Chelmsford and Braintree.



The Broomfield jewel

Saxon finds of national importance, now in the British Museum, were discovered east of Main Road, in what is now known as Saxon Way, in the nineteenth century. While little apart from the Church survives from the middle ages, a few of Broomfield's existing

residential buildings date back to the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, as do the Angel and Kings Arms public houses. Broomfield's twenty-nine listed buildings include five on Church Green, two on Hollow Lane, eleven on Main Road, and nine on School Lane.



The Angel public house has sat at the heart of the village since medieval times

Gradual development has taken place over the years, most extensively during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries along Main Road, New Road, and School Lane, including Broomfield Primary School. The latter half of the twentieth century saw Broomfield's population expand considerably with the building of a number of sizeable housing developments, notably those at Church Avenue and surrounds, Longshots, Erick Avenue and surrounds, Court Road, some of which included social housing.

Other twentieth century developments include Berwick Avenue, Glebe Crescent, Cricketers Close, Mandeville Way, Willow Close, Williams Road, and Ayletts. Outside the Defined Settlement area, Broomfield Hospital was opened in the nineteen thirties and has been developing ever since, with a massive expansion programme



Nineteen sixties housing in Glebe Crescent

begun in the late nineteen nineties. At the rear of the site are the Linden Centre and the Crystal Centre, facilities maintained by the North Essex Partnership, and Broomfield Grange, a private nursing home. Near Broomfield Hospital is Farleigh Hospice, a much valued



The latest extension to Broomfield Hospital

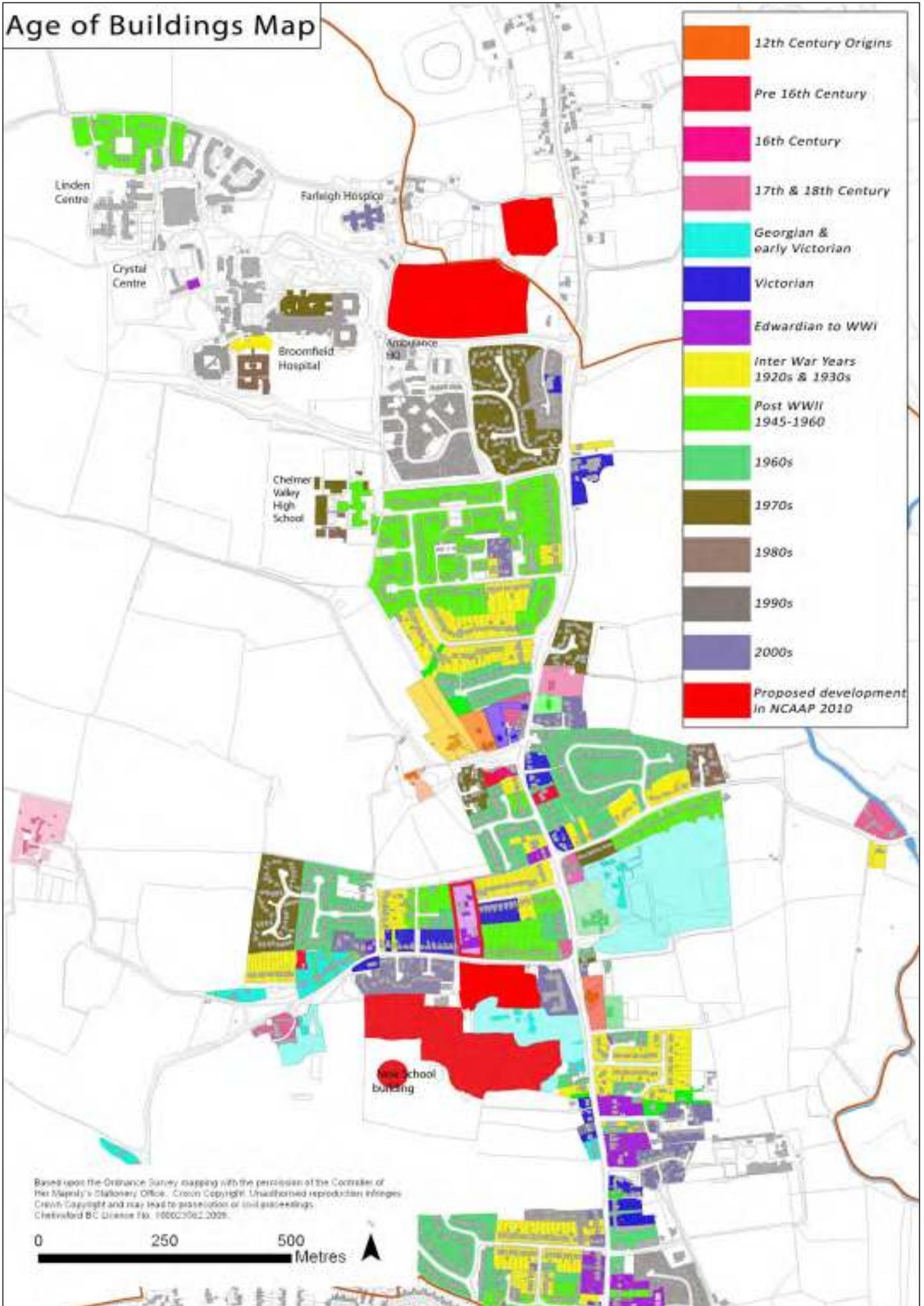
facility which provides care and support for terminally ill people and their families. Other facilities for elderly people are located across the village - Madelayne Court, Glovershots, Ayletts - and Bridgemarsh, a facility for people with learning difficulties. The local secondary school, Chelmer Valley High School, is largely of nineteen sixties construction, with later additions.

Some of Broomfield's commercial properties also date from the nineteen sixties. The Community Centre was built in 1970 and is due to be modernised shortly, in response to a demand for new facilities, as seen for instance in the Parish Plan consultation (Parish Plan, section A2, page 9).



Broomfield community centre near The Angel

# Age of Buildings Map



## Getting Around in Broomfield

### Main roads

Broomfield is linked to Chelmsford via Broomfield Road – the B1008 – which runs throughout the length of the village. At Broomfield's boundary with Chelmsford, marked by a small sign, it becomes known as Main Road. There is a weight restriction of 7.5 tons. Valley Bridge joins the B1008 just south of the Parish boundary to provide access to the village from Springfield and other points east of the River Chelmer. The B1008 is also the primary access point to Broomfield from the north, carrying traffic from Braintree, the Walthams, Great Dunmow and beyond. The other main access points to Broomfield Parish are from the west and southwest via Hollow Lane and Patching Hall Lane respectively. These two lanes meet at Scots Green to become School Lane, which eventually joins Main Road at Angel Green. A previous study identified that traffic on Main Road can be divided into three groups: one third local, one third hospital-related (staff, patients and visitors), with through traffic the remaining third. While recognising that local and hospital traffic are both inevitable and necessary, through traffic continues to use Main Road, despite the presence of the Essex Regiment Way bypass, and speeding is a growing problem at certain times of day.



View across the Chelmer valley dominated by the new Park and Ride facility on Essex Regiment Way

Broomfield is well served by a number of bus routes which connect the village to Chelmsford town centre, two miles away, and to Broomfield Hospital and points north, including Stansted Airport. Mile for mile, however, bus journeys are expensive compared to the cost of a return off-peak travel card to London, which includes rail transport to and from London Liverpool Street station (35 miles away), and the use of London's entire public transport network. The new Park and Ride facility on the A130 near Little Waltham may help to address some of the local congestion problems.



Traffic in School Lane

### Cycling

Cycle access to Broomfield is facilitated by cycle lanes from Springfield and Chelmsford town centre. However, the cycle lanes stop before the Broomfield Parish boundary, and therefore cycling within Broomfield itself is hazardous, due to the narrowness of Main Road (the B1008) and the volume of traffic. Recreational cycling, however, can still be enjoyed in Hollow Lane, and the quieter country lanes and byways in and around Broomfield.

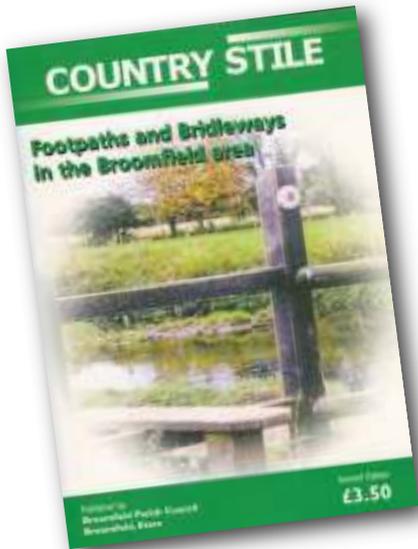
The Parish Council and a number of residents have also put forward representations on the siting and surfacing of proposed cycle paths in the village, as part of the North Chelmsford Area Action Plan consultation exercise. Potential locations were displayed at the April 2009 Open Day. Options include directing cyclists to Goulton Road, and developing the existing footpath that runs north from there towards Chelmer Valley High School and Broomfield Hospital as a path for both cyclists and pedestrians.



The lack of suitable cycle paths leads to pavements being used instead

## Footpaths

As mentioned earlier, Broomfield parish is criss-crossed by a number of footpaths providing easy access to and from the open countryside on both sides of the village, although there is no footpath along/near the river from Valley Bridge to Mill Lane (see CLCS, Area D). They are by and large well-maintained and well used. The Parish Council has recently published a revised version of ‘Country Stile’, a booklet setting out a number of local walks (available from the Parish Council office and other outlets at a modest price!).



## Parking

There is very limited roadside parking adjacent to Broomfield’s shops and businesses. There is some off-road parking at the Community Centre, at the village’s two pubs, and at the churches. The lack of convenient off-road parking does not encourage motorists passing through Broomfield to “stop and shop” locally.

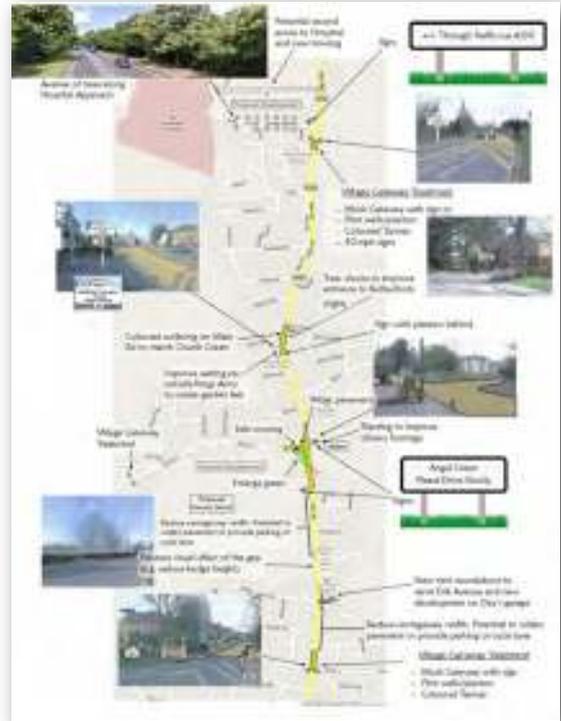


Limited customer parking for an important local facility



## A village dominated by a busy main road

Consultation for the Parish Plan showed that the level of traffic is the most unpopular aspect of village life, with 82% of those who responded saying they disliked it or disliked it a lot. 58% thought the level of traffic is too heavy most of the time and a further 36% thought it was too heavy at peak times, though satisfactory most of the time.



A larger version of this map can be seen in Annex one

Reducing traffic is beyond the remit of a VDS, but it can propose designs for road and pavement layout that would reduce the impact of traffic, so making the village feel less dominated by it. The current layout of Main Road emphasises the village’s ribbon development. With the high traffic volume using it, Main Road tends to separate the east and the west sides of the village, with just a few safe crossing points spread along the Road. Focal points, such as Angel Green and Church Green, sit **alongside** Main Road rather than sitting **astride** it - which would help to join the two sides of the village together.

The map in Annex one sets out some proposals to make Broomfield feel more like a community and less like a busy main road with some side roads tagged on. Some of the proposals are also designed to boost the attractiveness of the Greens. For the visitor and passing motorist, it should signal that they are entering an historic village that is more than just an appendage of Chelmsford. If that means that some through traffic feels less comfortable driving through our village and prefers to use the A130, that would be a very satisfactory by-product!

## Section 4

# Broomfield's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

### Strengths and special features

Broomfield's strengths include its five village greens, together with a range of well used facilities such as the Community Centre, library, football club (which also



Parsonage Green, mostly now vanished

houses a youth club), Scout hut, cricket club, several shops, two historic pubs, two churches and garden allotments. It

also includes four residential

facilities for the elderly: Madelayne Court, Ayletts, Broomfield Grange and Glovershots. The Community Centre and two church halls are used by a number of village clubs and organisations throughout the year.

For its size, Broomfield supports a wide range of active local clubs and societies including the Broomfield Footpath Society, Cottage Garden Society, Darby and Joan, and church-related activities, as well as local branches of national institutions such as the Royal British Legion, the Women's Institute, Scouts and Guides. All of these help to develop and sustain the community spirit that helped to contribute to the Parish Plan. Since its publication, the Parish Council has been using the Plan to help give direction to its work on behalf of local residents.



Footpaths are close to homes

Broomfield's rural nature and layout – primarily as a “ribbon village” with developments either side of Main Road – mean that there is easy access to fresh air and open countryside. Nearly every house in the village is within a ten minute walk of the rural footpath network, which provides many opportunities for short strolls and longer rambles. Research has shown that regular low-impact exercise such as walking reduces stress and contributes to a generally healthy life-style.

### Weaknesses

Broomfield lacks certain key services and facilities which residents have indicated they would welcome in the Parish



Plan. These include a doctors' surgery, more facilities for young people, a chemist, and a post office which, despite local opposition, was closed in 2003. The loss of a much-used post box in the centre of the village soon followed.

Broomfield already suffers from growing noise pollution and other difficulties associated with a near-doubling of traffic levels in the past fifteen years, partly related to the growth of Broomfield Hospital. Car park charging at the Hospital inevitably results in some hospital traffic using nearby residential streets for parking. Light pollution is also growing, due to the increased use of external lighting – some of it badly directed - in both village and rural properties and in construction areas. Litter is a constant problem, not only in the village itself but along its country lanes, footpaths and other byways such as North Court Road (which has become the Hospital “smokers' corner” since the no smoking policy was introduced on site).

Over the years, buildings of clashing architectural styles have been constructed, detracting from an otherwise harmonious streetscape. A number of later developments and adaptations do not harmonise aesthetically with the older built environment, and some more recent housing developments have not provided front gardens or street-side landscaping. There are some exceptions, however: the development at Vellacotts has preserved an ancient oak within a central green open space.



A new development but hardly a leaf in sight!

## Opportunities

Where future development is involved, inevitably there are tensions between the competing interests of developers, Chelmsford Borough Council and the wishes of local residents. However, the production of this Village Design Statement provides us with a unique opportunity to further inform future development within the Parish, ensuring that it both respects and reflects the most desirable features of our existing built environment and that it avoids clashing architectural styles in the future.

There might also be opportunities to redress the lack of facilities mentioned in 'Weaknesses', above, within the context of Chelmsford Borough Council's North Chelmsford Area Action Plan, although much will depend on the detail. There may be scope for the Parish Council to influence more detailed planning decisions given the strength of our existing Parish Plan as well as this VDS, reflecting the wishes of local residents. Other possibilities include the opportunity to extend the Church Green conservation area into Night Pasture, and possibly into Potash Field behind the churchyard.

### Broomfield Place – a future opportunity?

The sale of Broomfield Place was a unique opportunity for Broomfield. The Parish Council and residents fought hard during 2007 and 2008 to obtain this fine Georgian



Broomfield Place, sold by the County Council

building, formerly owned by Essex County Council. Had Broomfield succeeded in purchasing Broomfield Place, it could have provided scope for an attractive community hub, accommodating much needed local amenities and recreational facilities right at the heart of the village. At a stroke, this would have turned one of Broomfield's weaknesses into one of its major strengths.

A purpose-built school, to replace the existing Broomfield Primary School, is currently proposed in the area around Broomfield Place. If additional building proposals are realised, with 200 houses on its grounds, the opportunity for Broomfield's community hub will be lost for the foreseeable future. For the sake of future generations of Broomfield residents, we hope that Broomfield Place becomes available to the village at some later date.

## Threats

Chelmsford's northern boundaries have advanced considerably in the past 30 years both east and west of the River Chelmer. As Chelmsford's expansion has continued northwards, Broomfield Parish's southern boundary has receded. Only a small road sign indicates to northbound



Broomfield's Southern boundary

motorists on the B1008 – which links Broomfield to Chelmsford – that they have arrived in Broomfield. Approximately half a mile north of the sign, a field to the west of Main Road opposite Saxon Way provides a more obvious visual gap between the Broomfield and the County Town.

Chelmsford Borough Council is under pressure to meet housing development targets. It must find ways to incorporate thousands of new houses within the Borough. As indicated earlier, up to eight hundred new dwellings are proposed in north-west Chelmsford and Broomfield. We are working with Chelmsford Borough Council to ensure that the rural character of Broomfield is not substantially changed for the worse.

In recent years, there have been uncertainties about the degree of future development in and around Broomfield Hospital, which already dominates the landscape, especially when viewed across the Chelmer Valley. However, the expansion of the Hospital is not as great as originally planned and the numbers of both beds and staff is set to decline slightly in the future. It is also hoped that the expansion of the Hospital buildings and the adjacent development north of Hospital Approach will help to support amenities that Broomfield residents have already said they would welcome, e.g. a chemist and other shops.



Broomfield's rural aspects under threat

## Section 5

# The consultation process

Discussions about a Village Design Statement began in 2003. However, the Broomfield Parish Plan was developed first – a move that proved constructive in helping to bring Broomfield residents together to consider the future of their village. Our Plan was published in the Spring of 2005.

Planning for our VDS began in 2006, when volunteers were sought to form a Committee. The Broomfield Village Design Statement Association was formally constituted on 11th November 2006. Two village-wide consultation events took place in the Spring of 2007. Both events were well advertised in the award-winning Broomfield Times – a quarterly publication delivered to every household – and via leaflet drops and posters displayed in the village.

The village-wide “photo shoot day” took place on Saturday 21st April 2007. Forty-five residents of all age groups took part. Divided into teams, each team walked a pre-determined route, taking and recording pictures of “the good, the bad and the ugly”. Later in the day, the teams prepared displays of their findings, using their photos with suitable commentary.



On 19th May, a hundred and sixty-five people attended an Open Day in the Community Centre, where they saw the displays and could add their own comments. Also on view was an exhibition of the history of the village and a display of village publications such as Broomfield Magazine – from the nineteen seventies to eighties – and back issues of the Broomfield Times. Following this event, the photos and comments were placed in display folders for further exhibition and comment.

Those attending the Open Day completed questionnaires.



The findings indicated that the majority of

Broomfield’s residents were supportive of modest developments and home improvements, designed to accommodate the demands of modern living – e.g. cars and wheelie bins. However, to be acceptable, these would need to be small in scale, and would need to be designed to blend seamlessly into the historic village, enhancing – if that can be possible – rather than detracting from the proximity of and easy access to the countryside that the people of Broomfield value so highly. The development of large housing estates eating up huge swathes of Broomfield’s open spaces would be incompatible with the rural nature of Broomfield as a community. This confirmed that opinions had not changed in the three years since the consultation activities that had informed our Parish Plan.

A full report on the views expressed at the Open Day has been compiled and is available from the Committee.

Five key principles regarding future development have emerged:

### Guidance

- Any new development within the parish boundaries must be in keeping with the size and scale of buildings already within the Defined Settlement Area of our village. Any development outside the Defined Settlement Area should not be exempted from the principles in this guidance.
- We do not want any more new “landmark” buildings of the type that are becoming common in new developments in and around Chelmsford town centre. These would be intrusive and detract from Broomfield’s village nature; indeed, Broomfield’s historic buildings are landmarks in themselves and need to be preserved.
- Residential buildings should normally be restricted to two storeys, characteristic of Broomfield’s village status.
- Any new development should incorporate public open green spaces, in effect, new village greens;
- Every effort should be made to retain the surrounding countryside, with preservation prioritised as set out in the Broomfield Parish Plan and Landscape Character Statement.

# Section 6

## Guidance

In this section, we consider the features of particular character areas of Broomfield identified in a series of routes walked and photographed by local residents at our Photo Shoot day in April 2007. Several common themes

emerged which apply to the village as a whole, however, and they are listed here as village-wide guidance. After that is area-specific guidance. This is set out underneath the description of the relevant character area of Broomfield.

### 6a Village-wide

#### (i) General

##### Guidance

- ❑ The village nature of Broomfield should be reflected in the size and scale of buildings, e.g., the number of storeys should be sympathetic with surrounding buildings and the wider landscape.
- ❑ Any new building needs to include development of public green spaces, to include active play areas, benches and landscaping.
- ❑ Exterior walls of new buildings should be constructed from traditional materials wherever possible, e.g., Essex or London stock brick, plain or pargetted rendering, flint, decorative brick coursing, to harmonise with its neighbours.
- ❑ Sympathetic landscaping needs to feature in new build, e.g., trees, shrubs and verges.
- ❑ Replacement windows, roofs and additions to existing buildings should reflect the building's age and construction, e.g., Victorian style windows on Victorian buildings, Georgian style windows on Georgian buildings, etc. .
- ❑ Extensions to existing buildings, including porches, dormers and loft conversions, should feature pitched roofs depending on context.
- ❑ We would like to see a mix of property boundaries, to include walls, fences, hedges, in keeping with the age of the building.
- ❑ New build needs to include street furniture, e.g., lampposts, benches, other hard landscaping including paving, kerbs, etc., appropriate to the village.
- ❑ Measures to minimise light and noise pollution and other environmental degradation should feature in any new build or plans for renovation.
- ❑ Residential properties should provide external access to electric, gas and water meters but not to the detriment of the façade of the property.
- ❑ Commercial development, or redevelopment, should include space for off-street parking.
- ❑ Broomfield's cycle path strategy (Annex 2) should be taken into account in plans for each new development.



Examples of traditional and sympathetic contemporary boundaries, treatments and materials

## (ii) Open Space

During the VDS consultations the committee was surprised by the quantity of negative comments relating to open space in the village. These comments were mainly related to four things, litter, anti-social behaviour, lack of maintenance and lack of purpose.

In certain cases residents considered areas of open space near their houses actually damaged the amenity of the area.

Open space has an important role to play in enhancing the quality of life in our community but it clearly needs to be well designed to fulfil this role.

Open space should be planned for a purpose, - play, nature conservation, visual amenity etc. It should not simply be provided in a random manner in order to tick the box of a planning or housing density requirement. The space should be located and designed with the specified purpose in mind. Consideration must be given at the design stage to the effectiveness for purpose and long-term maintenance of the space.

### Guidance:

- ❑ Open spaces should have a clear purpose e.g. village green/open space, play area for younger children, play area for older children and be planned accordingly. For instance, play area for older children needs to be larger, may need to be marked out for more formal sports and should not be located where accidental damage could be caused to adjoining property.
- ❑ The VDS Committee or the Parish Council should carry out an audit of all existing open spaces within the village. This should form the basis of an integrated plan to ensure, as far as possible, that all areas of the village are within reasonable distance of each type of open space.
- ❑ Any open space deficiencies should be addressed as opportunities arise



Play equipment has been removed from this area near Chelmer Valley School and there is now just rough grass.



Area by secondary school designed for younger children



Area by Nash Drive has no clear purpose and is badly maintained





In Vellacotts the open space is attractive but not suited to ball games

### (iii) Village Greens

#### Guidance:

- ❑ The five existing greens should continue to be protected.
- ❑ The architecture (including scale, layout, form, height, massing and materials) of any new or extended buildings around the greens should be in keeping, with the Essex vernacular rather than modernist styles (Madelayne Court on Angel Green is a good example of a style to be avoided!).
- ❑ Where possible greens should be enhanced or enlarged. For instance, Angel Green could be enlarged by grassing over the slip road (see our guidance on Main Road).
- ❑ Where any groups of new houses are built, consideration should be given to centering them around a new village green. A good example of where this has occurred (though not in name) is in the nineteen-nineties extension to Vellacotts. Promoting new village greens as centres of housing would both link with an ancient of the feature of the Parish and promote the concept of small communities with a focal point and a distinct identity, making them more attractive places to live.
- ❑ New greens should be attractively designed, with planting, seating, clear arrangements for future management and by-laws setting out permitted activities (to prevent lack of clarity, e.g. about ball games or parking, leading to disputes).
- ❑ New greens should be named, with names based on local or historical features or on existing field names – e.g. Days Green or Saxon Green if the former Days Garage site is developed – or on existing field names.

### (iv) Cyclepaths

Proposals for new cyclepaths are set out in map form in Annex two

### (v) Lamp posts and other street furniture

The sky line of the main part of Broomfield, especially along Main Road, is dominated by overhead wires - the



The "wirescape" of Broomfield with ivy growing up a lamp post

"wirescape" of the village; and until these can be replaced by buried cables, it is not possible for lamp posts, however elegant, to enhance the street scene. The lamp posts along Main Road are simple, tall, painted metal poles which

support long sodium orange lights with white lights at main junctions and crossing points. Many of these posts show signs of rusting where the paint has peeled away and one supports a large growth of ivy. Repainting or replacement with galvanised steel or stainless steel poles of perhaps a more elegant design would enhance the street scene. In the side roads, the lamp posts reflect the age of the housing with mainly small simple concrete or metal lamp posts; the older ones being concrete and the newer ones galvanised steel. We particularly liked the intricate curved metal street lamps in New Road which were one of the few examples of the lamps enhancing the street scene. On Church Green, in the conservation area, we would like to see lamp posts of a more appropriate character rather than the simple concrete poles that are there at present.



The curved lamp posts in New Road, with a lot of character

One newer development has more individual globe shaped lights both on posts and pillars at the entrance to the development, which produce an integrated feel. Another new development does not have any street lamps and relies on lamps on individual houses.

Bollards are used in this development to control vehicle movement and parking, but as the bollards are black and not illuminated and are below the height of car windows, they provide more of a hazard and are often backed into.



Individual globe shaped lamps in Ayletts



These bollards in The Square, Post Office Road are easily backed into

To reduce the number of separate poles, in places the telegraph/ electric wire poles have street lamps fixed to them eg. along School lane where they are placed along the inside of the pavement to reduce the clutter along the pavement, thus easing the passage of children and parents with buggies walking to and from the school. In other places various signs are fixed to lamp posts to reduce clutter, but elsewhere there seemed to be forests of poles, so perhaps some more thought could go into reducing the street clutter.



Forests of poles

### Guidance:

- Encourage alternatives to overhead wires and replace existing ones as opportunities arise.
- Reduce street clutter by multiple use of poles.
- Use attractively designed street lamps that are in keeping with a vernacular style in new developments.
- Paint rusting poles along Main Road or replace them with more elegant ones.
- In the conservation area, replace existing concrete lamp posts with ones of a more appropriate style.
- Replace sodium lamps with low energy white down-lighters.
- Switch off lights in side roads between 1 am and 5 am.
- Advertising signs should respect their setting in terms of size and character.
- Phone masts should be camouflaged or hidden or sited in positions where their visual impact is limited. Sharing of masts is encouraged.

### (vi) Bus Shelters

There are five bus shelters in Broomfield, four owned and maintained by the parish council and the other is an advertising shelter at the junction of Main Road and Court Road, owned and maintained by Clear Channel.



The design of the newly installed bus shelter is a popular choice

The bus shelter opposite this has just been replaced as it was in very bad repair and had an asbestos roof. The parish council has obtained a grant through the "New Passenger Shelter and Shelter Improvement Grant Scheme" This shelter has been replaced by Essex County Council but will be maintained by the parish council. We were given a small choice of shelters to choose from. The one that was chosen, pictured above, was popular with most people.

The other three shelters are all differing designs. The shelters in Court Road have been subjected to repeated vandalism and any glass panels have been removed or



replaced with non-breakable materials. Litter around the shelters is also a problem.

The picture alongside is of the shelter by the Angel Pub. This shelter most closely resembles the design we feel suits the village. It would be very much better if we could have some uniformity in the design

of the bus shelters as they are replaced as this would look more attractive.

### Recommendation:

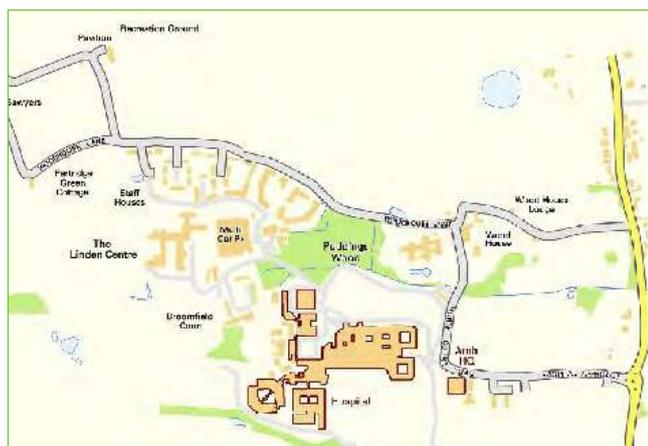
- ❑ As opportunities arise to replace existing, increase the number of robust wooden shelters to match the style of the two new shelters.

## 6b Character area descriptions and guidance

Each area is based on a route walked on the Photo Day.

### Hospital environs and Woodhouse Lane

This area includes Hospital Approach, Woodhouse Lane, and Farleigh Hospice, as well as staff housing for hospital employees. The buildings are a mix of old and new; Southwood House and nearby cottages seem to blend most successfully into their surrounds, while a multi-story car park, staff housing and other more recent developments associated with Broomfield Hospital do not.



Farleigh Hospice is a better example of recent development, as it attempts to blend into the landscape with attractive gardens.



The North Chelmsford

Area Action Plan proposes

new housing on land bounded by North Court Road to the West, by North

Court Road/Hospital Approach

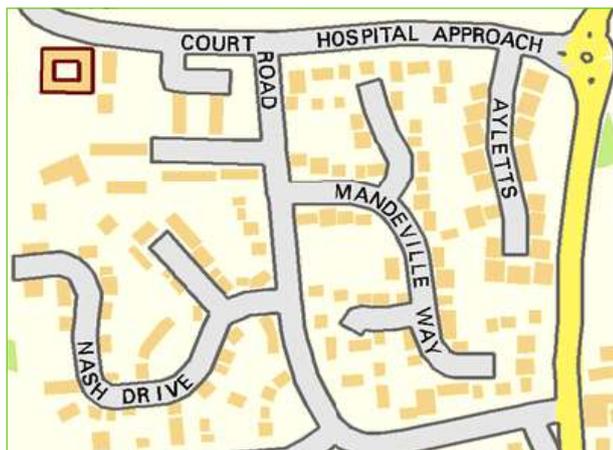
to the South, by Main Road/Blasford Hill to the East, and by Woodhouse Lane to the North. This lane could be incorporated into the site itself, as the final boundary may extend into the neighbouring parish of Little Waltham. If planning permission is granted, we make the following guidance:

Farleigh Hospice is an attractive modern building

### Guidance:

- ❑ Retain all existing trees and hedgerows.
- ❑ Retain the rural undulating nature of the topography and its stream, and views across the river valley.
- ❑ Retain rural nature of Woodhouse Lane and North Court Road. These roads could also be incorporated into the national Sustrans cycling network.
- ❑ Access to the site should be from Main Road/Blasford Hill.
- ❑ A second, parallel, entrance/exit road to the hospital to relieve pressure on Hospital Approach - currently the only access road - should be positively encouraged. The new housing site should be accessed from this road
- ❑ Additional trees should be planted as a buffer zone around new development, to reduce traffic noise and encourage wildlife.
- ❑ An avenue of trees along Hospital Approach would help to define the entrance to the Hospital.
- ❑ The mobile telephone mast in the valley bottom, near Farleigh Hospice, should ideally be relocated.
- ❑ Restricted parking should be introduced into new development to prevent visitors, staff and patients using residential areas as hospital parking. Parking facilities on the Hospital site should be both attractive and affordable.

## Ayletts, Hospital Approach, Nash Drive, Constance Close and surrounding streets



The recent conversion of Ayletts to a residential home for the elderly was commended by residents as a tasteful development. Surrounding houses, however, are close to each other, with small gardens disproportionate to the size of the houses. The retention of mature trees and shrubs was a welcome feature. Hospital Approach, however, contains broken fencing, a bus stop without any shelter or indeed any bus timetable information. The green area on Mandeville Way was the only open space amongst the many family houses nearby. We noted the absence of large trees in Warren Close, and although there was an access path to a bus stop on Main Road, it was hard to see. Two developments of former hospital housing – the Windmills and Millars – have been empty for some while and but have now been re-furbished for sale on the general market. Nearby Nash Drive and Constance Close have been developed with families in mind. There is an interesting use of old (or old style) bricks.

### Guidance:

- Ensure any future redevelopment of Windmills and Millars follows the example of nearby Nash Drive and Constance Close in building styles and provision of landscaped open spaces.
- Encourage provision of a new bus shelter of an attractive though vandal-proof design sympathetic to its location, with space for timetabling information.
- See also [Hospital Environs and Woodhouse Lane], earlier in this section.



## Main Road north of Church Green, Butlers Close, Jubilee Avenue & Broomhall Road, Court Road, and Church Avenue

Apart from some historic buildings on Main Road near to Church Green, on the south side of Butlers Close and on the corner of Mill Lane, most of the buildings in this area are nineteen thirties ribbon development and later. There are occasional views through to open countryside between the houses but the area would benefit from additional roadside trees, and places to store wheelie bins.



A large rectangular grassy space to the north of Court Road - the approach road to Chelmer Valley High School - is bordered by hedges but is otherwise featureless. It was felt that some landscaping to include shrubs and flowerbeds, a path and benches would enhance this area considerably.

The near-derelict bus shelter in Court Road has now been replaced, but the area still suffers from a collection of recycling bins placed on an unpaved and overly worn patch of verge whose grass had long since disappeared. It becomes very rutted in the wet winter months. Some sympathetic hard and soft landscaping and perhaps a bin shelter, would improve the approach to Chelmer Valley High School considerably.

### Guidance:

- Provide additional hard landscaping and planting around recycling bins.

## East of Essex Regiment Way

This area of Broomfield is the easternmost section of the Parish. It includes Mid Essex Gravel, former gravel pits, a fishing lake (formerly a gravel pit), a large, flat-roofed indoor bowls club, part of Channels Golf course and Belstead Hall Farm. It is bisected by Essex Regiment Way, the main approach to Chelmsford from the North and



North-West. In the NCAAP, Chelmsford Borough Council is proposing to develop this area as part of the master-planned North-East Springfield neighbourhood.

**Guidance:**

- If developed as indicated in the NCAAP, there needs to be an appropriate landscaped edge to the developed area to limit the impact of suburbanisation on the Chelmer Valley (e.g. tree belts).
- This needs to take account not just of the buildings and roads themselves, but also of light and noise pollution.

**New Road to Church Green - including Main Road, the Kings Arms, Williams Road, Julian Close and Willow Close**



Generally speaking, there was favourable comment about the colour-wash houses and the juxtaposition of fencing,

hedging and the proportion of houses to garden size in these areas. Among the detracting features observed on this route were a broken road sign and kerbstone, a broken fence, and litter along a footpath running between roads in this area. There was some criticism of replacement windows and, in some cases, home improvements being out of character in relation to nearby properties.

Church Green, the historic heart of Broomfield, incorporates some of the oldest properties in the village, notably Woollards, the Vineries, Bromfields, Broomfield Hall, and the parish church itself. The church hall, added in the late nineteen nineties, is a sympathetically-designed extension that blends in well with the construction and fabric of the main church, and provides a welcome place to meet and socialise.



The modern church hall fits well with the historic building

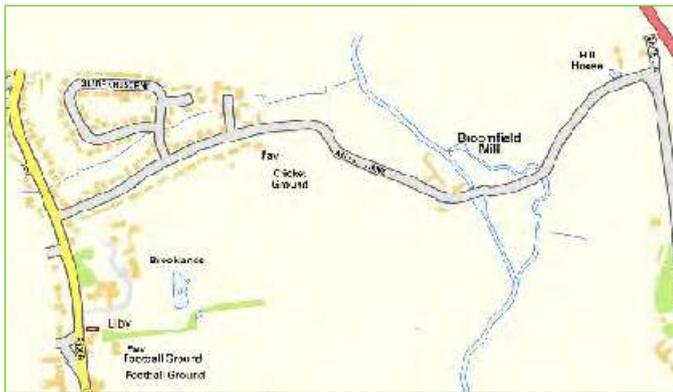
New Barn Lane is an ancient and attractive footpath leading north from Church Green into the open countryside, much improved by the recent demolition of adjacent derelict farm buildings visible from Broomfield's conservation area and the churchyard.

Opposite the church is a small residential development built in the nineteen eighties on the site of Broomfield House, which overlooks Night Pasture. The houses here are of a more contemporary style, but successfully manage to reflect the size and scale of other houses in the village, retaining several large mature trees.

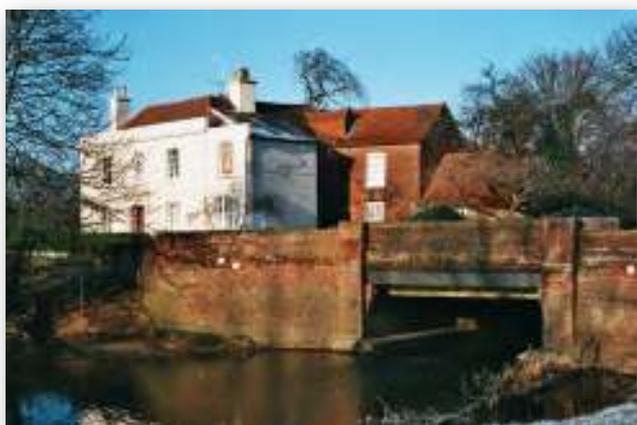
**Guidance:**

- Preservation of the Victorian villa frontages in New Road, through encouragement of like-for-like replacement of doors, windows and decorative features when required.
- Maintain the integrity of Church Green conservation area.
- Consider the inclusion of Night Pasture, Broom Pightle and Potash Field into the Church Green conservation area as these small fields form a vital part of the setting of the Green and its historic buildings.
- Protect key existing views of the Church, Church Green and Broomfield Hall.

## Angel Green to Mill Lane, Glebe Crescent and Back Lane



A contrasting mix of desirable features and those requiring improvement are evident on this particular route. Traditional features – such as older doors, windows and chimneys – were valued by those taking part in the Photo Shoot, but other aspects came in for criticism: broken road signs, graffiti on a garage, and damaged kerbs along Glebe Crescent (now replaced).



The Mill House is all that remains of Broomfield Mill

The area around Mill House, the river, and the footpaths across the river and along Back Lane were noted for their attractiveness, already mentioned in an earlier section. Flat roofed dormers came in for some criticism where the pitch of the main roof is not in proportion with the dormers themselves. Care needs to be taken in future so that individual homeowners' improvements support an overarching need for greater architectural harmony.

### Guidance:

- Any new build or renovation should respect historic nature and attractiveness of existing older properties, and take into account the village-wide guidance.
- Any future shop front renovations should aim to harmonise with its surroundings, including size and colour of signage.

## Community Centre to the Nature Reserves

This rural walking route runs from the Community Centre past the sports fields, to Centenary Wood, Sweeps Walk, and thence along footpaths leading to the easternmost areas of the Parish and along the River Chelmer. Areas needing improvement include litter along Sweeps Walk, together with broken fencing. Apart from that, this route includes some of Broomfield's most attractive areas: Mill Lane, now closed to traffic beyond the Georgian-built Mill House, the River Chelmer, the cricket ground, and two Nature Reserves managed by Essex Wildlife Trust. World War II pill-boxes remain in some of the fields alongside the River Chelmer.



The two nature reserves, managed by Essex Wildlife Trust, provide important refuges for native flora and fauna. However, the peace of these areas is compromised by the heavy traffic along Essex Regiment Way. There is also an area being used for motorbike scrambling which has made the approach to the more southern of the two reserves not only unsightly and rutted, but has also obliterated natural vegetation and wildlife habitats. We hope that restrictions for motorbike and mountain bike scrambling can be introduced to halt further damage, and that the area can be restored in due course.



## School Lane and adjoining developments



School Lane is mostly residential in nature and is typified by a mix of Victorian semi-detached and terraced cottages, some newer houses of a similar scale, and several nineteen sixties built detached houses near Angel Green. Although there are noticeably different exterior finishes and roof treatments, and some over-development near the Scout HQ, there is an overall consistency of scale.

However, where the older Victorian cottages houses are closer to the road, front gardens have had to be adapted for cars and wheelie bins, detracting from an otherwise attractive village streetscape.

A notable exception is Madelayne Court, a large several-storey care home for the elderly at the corner of Main Road and School Lane, described at the time as a “landmark building”. Its size and scale, however, are typical of the kind of development that is out of scale in a village context, both inappropriate for its location and insensitive in its alignment to Angel Green, a historic feature of Broomfield.

Further along the south side of School Lane are the primary school playing fields, the Scout headquarters, a telephone



Three storey Madelayne Court towers over historic Angel Green exchange, and several nearby houses. Continuing westward are several late twentieth century developments including Clark Way, St. Mary’s Mead and Parsonage Close.

There are attractive views over the water meadows at the western end of School Lane near Parsonage House, where there is also a large pond. Parsonage Green – one of the larger of Broomfield’s five greens – abuts a small orchard, and has views of open countryside to the west, where Priors, Scravels and Staceys can all be seen.

To the north of School Lane, off Goulton Road, is the large Longshots housing development, built in various phases from the nineteen sixties to eighties. The development is a mix of rectangular and rounded cul-de-sacs, and includes a wide variety of house styles, finishes, and later extensions. Although there are pleasant views across open countryside from the outer fringes of this development, there is a notable lack of large mature trees within it. Private gardens in Longshots contain most of the landscaping in this area. Also off the north side of School Lane (Nos. 76-78) is a small, recent development of several larger detached houses, built around existing large mature trees.

**Guidance:**

- Preserve Broomfield Primary School facade in the event of redevelopment.
- Ensure any new build respects scale and bulk of existing residential buildings, with off-street parking for cars and space for wheelie bins.
- Preserve Parsonage Green and views to open countryside.
- In the event of relocating the School, ensure sufficient drop-off and off-road parking spaces for staff and families that need to drive to school.

## Priors, Scravels and Staceys

Three of Broomfield’s most historic large farmhouses, Priors, Scravels and Staceys, punctuate this rural area. Priors is a triple-gabled Tudor-built farm house with distinctive brick chimneys set in agricultural land abutting Hollow Lane. It is said that ship timbers from Henry VIII’s navy were used in its construction.



Staceys is a double-fronted Queen Anne house of red brick with surrounding barns and outbuildings, approached from School Lane; Scravels is characterised by a Victorian facade with two pargetted gables, although its origins are much earlier. Next to the house is a listed traditional Essex barn, thatched until the late 1970s but since re-roofed using old clay tiles. Scravels faces Hollow Lane and sits within 9 acres of gardens, paddocks and pastures, one of which includes a large, recently dug lake. All three properties are surrounded by agricultural land and linked by rural footpaths.



Priors, viewed across fields from Hollow Lane

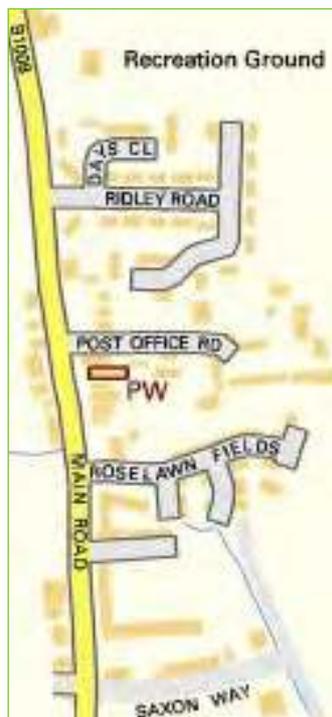
Elsewhere on Hollow Lane are two pairs of semi-detached Victorian farm cottages; a detached cottage believed to date from the fifteen hundreds; a double-fronted Victorian house; a house converted from a pair of semi-detached cottages; and a nineteen-sixties built bungalow with recent conservatory extension. Most of these properties have generous gardens bordered by hedges or iron railings, or a combination. This area is also characterised by a number of mature trees along field edges, hedgerows and in private gardens, and an ancient green lane.

The only obvious visual obstruction in this area is a long hedge of leylandi cypress between Priors and the Newlands Spring development built in the early nineteen-eighties. Estimated at thirty feet high, the hedge was planted to provide privacy to Priors, but it is out of scale with the mixed species hedgerows in the area that serve the same purpose, as effectively.

### Guidance:

- Retain this area's rural aspects, hedgerows, footpaths, and mature trees.
- Any building repair or improvement to respect the size and scale of existing dwellings, taking any listed building restrictions into account.
- The leylandi hedge could be replaced with trees and hedgerows more in keeping with the natural species.

## East side of Main Road from the Community Centre to Days garage



Main elements of this route are Main Road, Clobbs Yard, Roselawn Fields, Post Office Road, Broomfield Square, Ridley Road, Days Close, and the Community Centre approach. The Days car dealership at the start of this route has now closed. The buildings themselves are being used by another car dealership, but the site could yet be acquired for redevelopment, providing an opportunity for any new homes there to reflect more closely the size, scale and general character of nearby older properties.

Parked cars and visible wheelie bins detract from the otherwise attractive rows of Victorian cottages along Clobbs Yard and Main Road. The development at Roselawn Fields has some good examples of planting and landscaping in designated open areas, but no front gardens or trees alongside the pavement. These are more suitable to townscapes than to a village. By contrast, Broomfield Square is a recent development with co-ordinated boundaries and house finishes, which has managed to retain a number of mature trees along with small front gardens, a better example of village planning.



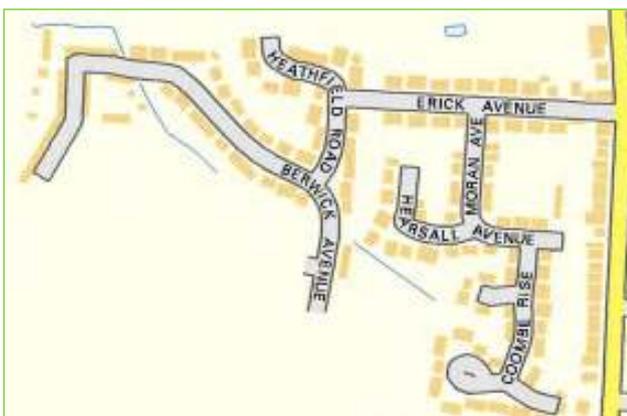
Attractive features in this section of Broomfield include old boundary walls in some areas, co-ordinated exterior house finishes, and a number of attractive well-kept gardens. Some fences in the Wheelie bins spoil the look of Clobbs Yard benefit from better maintenance, as could roadside verges on Main Road near Days. A roundabout at the junction of Erick Avenue and Main Road would ease the flow of traffic and improve access to and from Erick Avenue and Saxon Way. As it is likely that the Day's Garage site will be re-developed during the lifetime of this VDS, we recommend that the following guidance is followed:

### Guidance:

- ❑ The Co-op and butcher's shop could be relocated to this site, providing increased store space and better parking. Any proposal along these lines would be positively encouraged.
- ❑ The Saxon Burial Ground should be made into a countryside feature for walkers and cyclists, with a new cycle path joining to Valley Bridge and onwards into Chelmsford town centre.
- ❑ Areas susceptible to flooding could be made into wildlife conservation areas if appropriate.
- ❑ Housing on Main Road should be kept low level, and in keeping with neighbouring properties. Any higher-level build (e.g., townhouses), should be placed further back from the road, where the land drops away into the Chelmer Valley, thereby not destroying the scale of the village.
- ❑ Trees, shrubs and green areas to be included into any new build.

### Erick Avenue, Berwick Avenue and surrounds

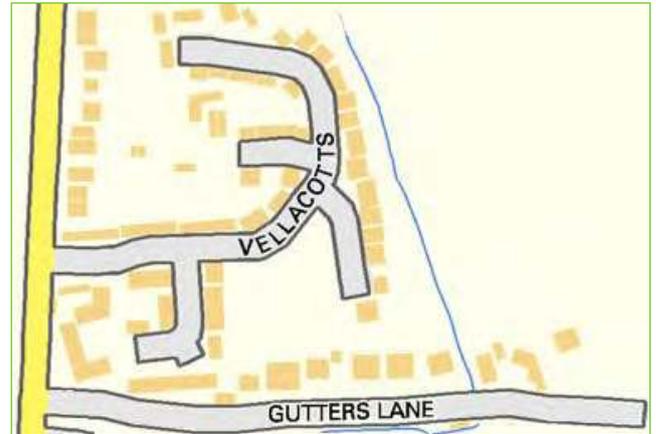
This area is almost entirely residential, with most houses built during the nineteen thirties to nineteen sixties. When first built, there was a certain uniformity of style to the bungalows along Erick Avenue. However, over the years there have been changes to external treatments, frontages, windows, the addition of extensions and other changes. Once on Berwick Avenue it is not obvious whether one is in Chelmsford or Broomfield, as only a change in the road surface indicates the boundary. Heathfield Road contains a development of nineteen sixties houses, to which similar changes have taken place.



### Guidance:

- ❑ Prevent further erosion of the character of this neighbourhood by encouraging residents to consider the impact of proposed home improvements on nearby properties, and respecting the scale and original design.

### East side of Main Road from Days garage to Vellacotts, Roland Close and Gutters Lane



After the break in housing formed by the car dealership and petrol station, the row of Victorian/Edwardian style houses is re-established south to Vellacotts, though set back further from the road and with slightly larger semi-detached properties. South of Vellacotts is Little Orchards (the surviving partner of Orchards, which was once adjacent). Greatly extended in 2005, it is now made up of several apartments for the over fifties. Finally, just before the parish boundary, is Gutters Lane, a long narrow road with large houses on substantial plots (though some sub-division and re-development has taken place). Part of Vellacotts and Roland Close are a classic nineteen sixties style development. In the early nineteen-nineties, Vellacotts was extended by a new development of forty plus houses built in a more vernacular style, mostly large detached houses but with some smaller properties at the northern end. The development contains an attractive 'unofficial village green' which could be a model for village greens in other new developments.

### Guidance:

- ❑ Any extensions need to respect the specific style of the road.
- ❑ Any further development should avoid introducing yet another architectural style but should blend with the adjoining style(s).
- ❑ Any further sub-division of the plots in Gutters Lane must respect the rural character of the Lane in terms of style and density.
- ❑ The northern end of Vellacotts could benefit from a short footpath to Main Road if the opportunity arises. It is currently rather isolated due to lack of such access, despite being very close to Main Road.

### 6c Guidance about Main Road and the School Lane junction

Guidance is set out in map form in Annex one



Avenue of trees along Hospital Approach

Potential second access to Hospital and new housing

Sign:



Village Gateway Treatment

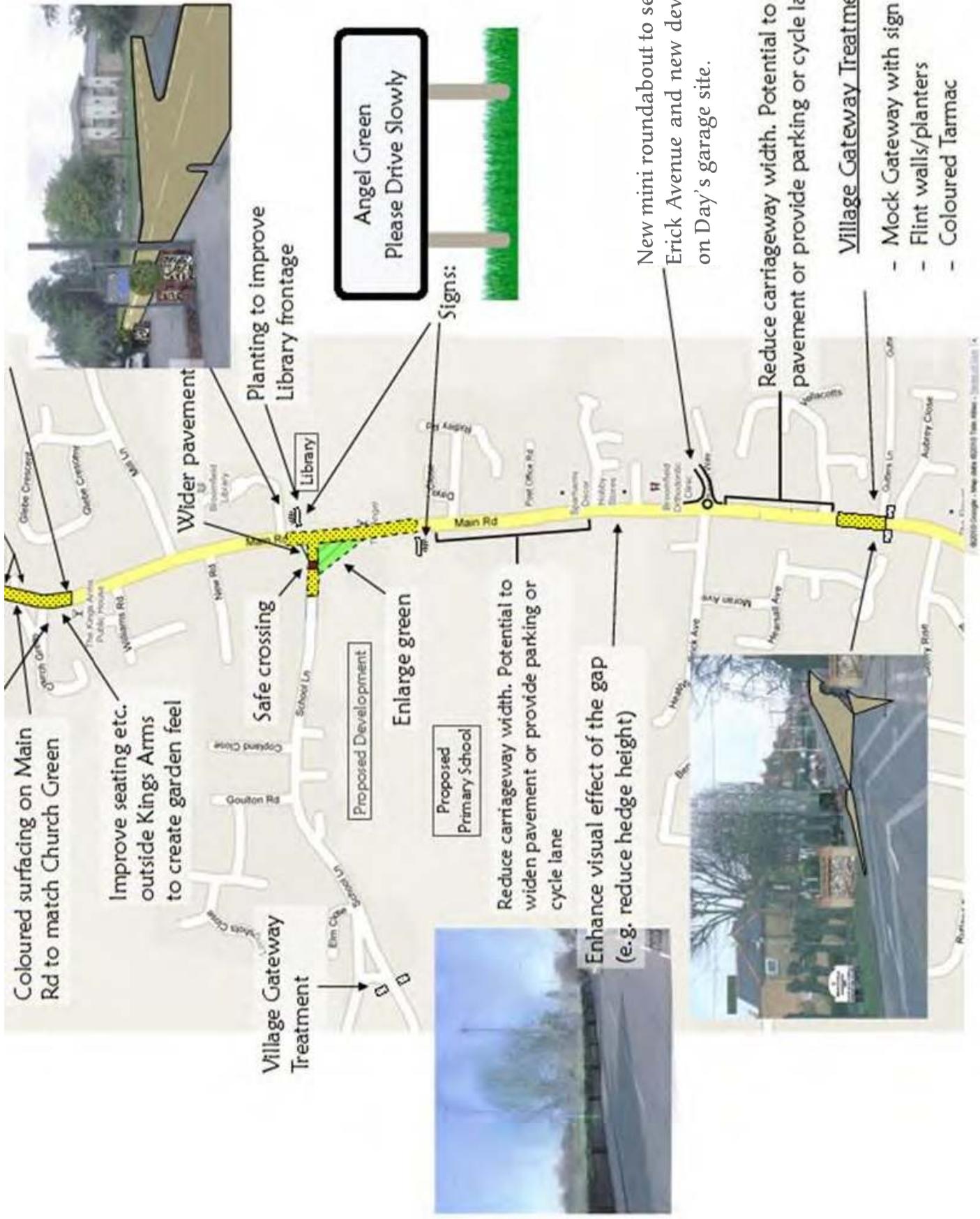
- Mock Gateway with sign or
- Flint walls/planters
- Coloured Tarmac
- 30 mph signs

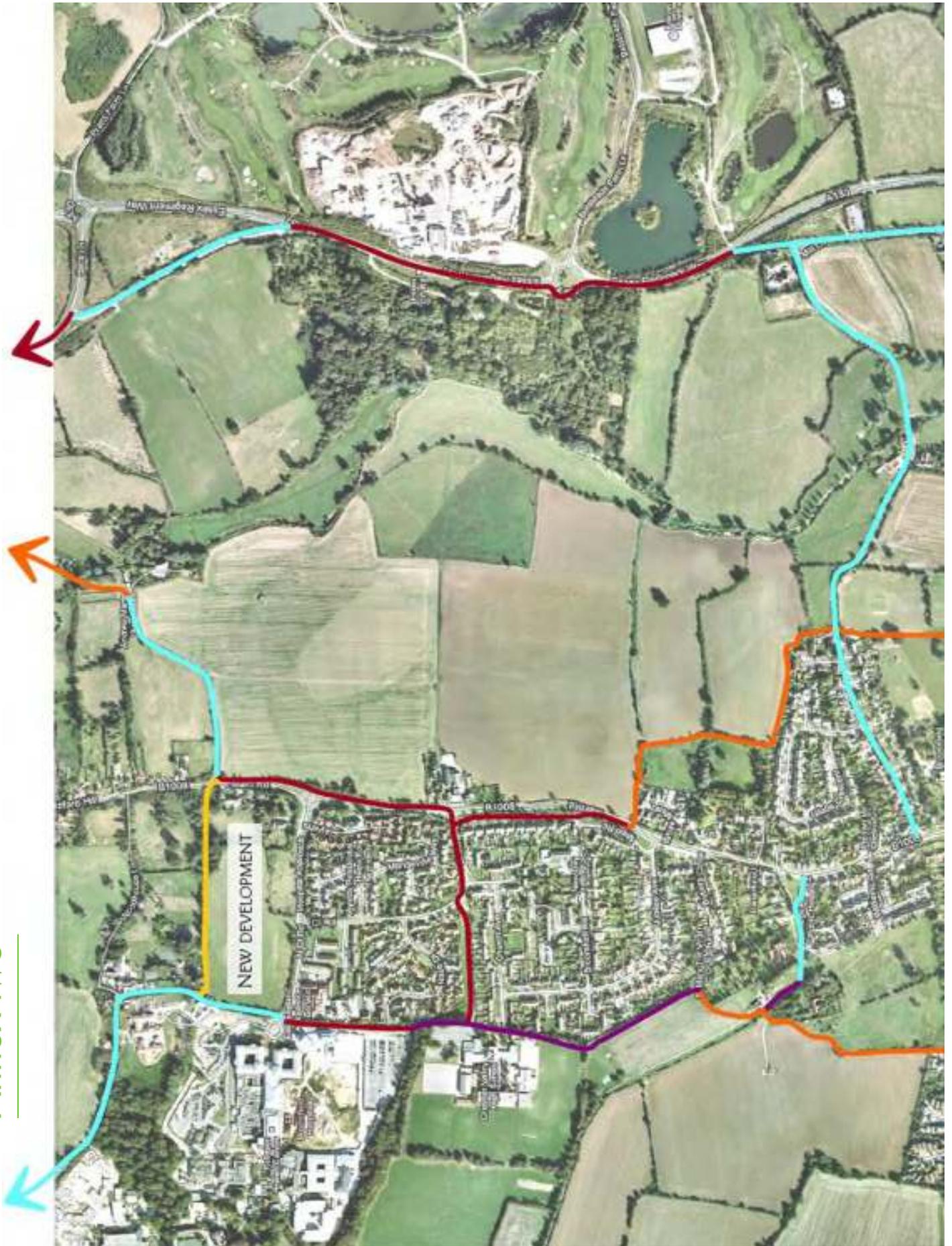


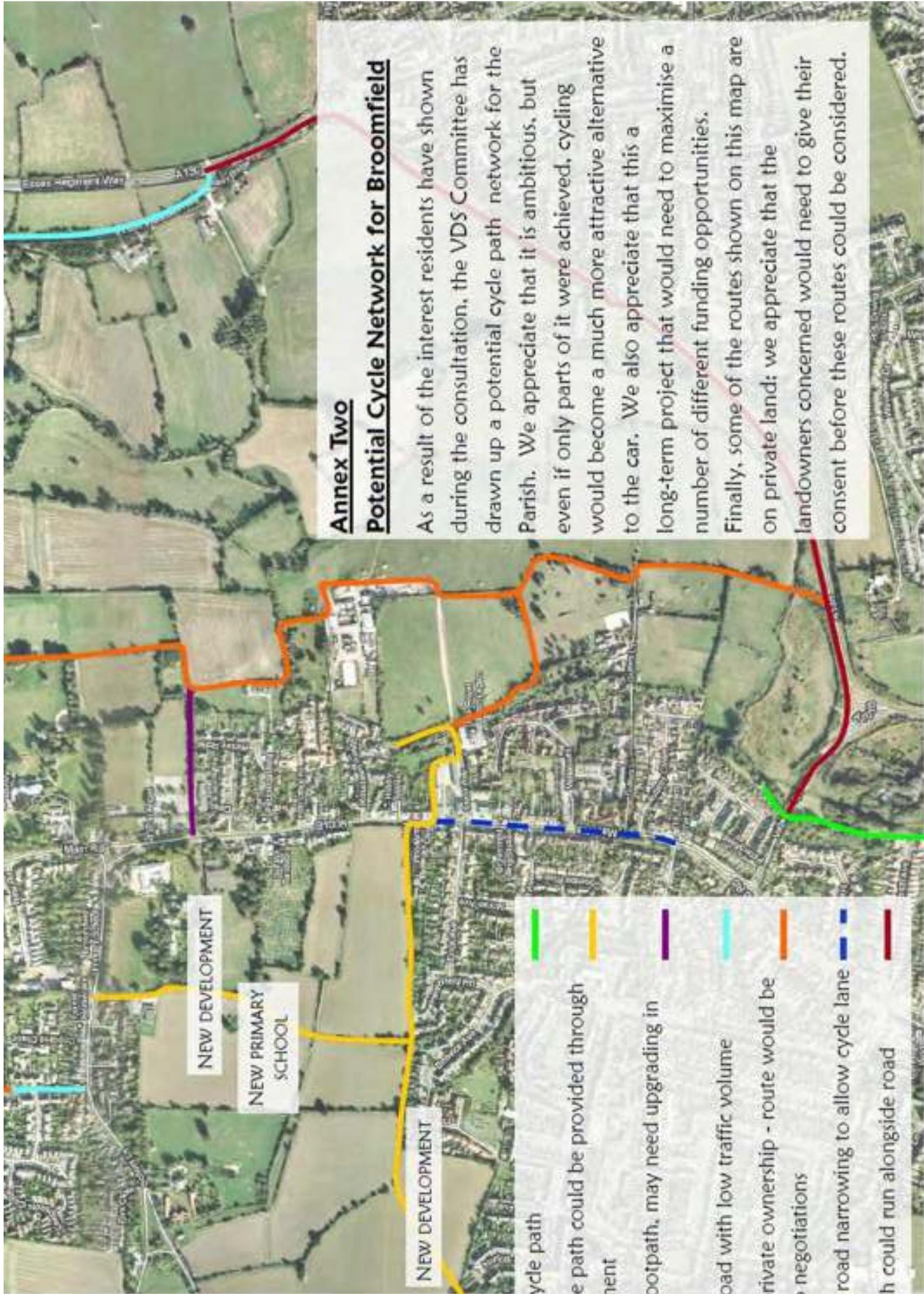
Trees shrubs to improve entrance to Rutherford (right)



Sign with planters behind







**Annex Two**

**Potential Cycle Network for Broomfield**

As a result of the interest residents have shown during the consultation, the VDS Committee has drawn up a potential cycle path network for the Parish. We appreciate that it is ambitious, but even if only parts of it were achieved, cycling would become a much more attractive alternative to the car. We also appreciate that this a long-term project that would need to maximise a number of different funding opportunities. Finally, some of the routes shown on this map are on private land; we appreciate that the landowners concerned would need to give their consent before these routes could be considered.

- Existing cycle path
- New cycle path could be provided through development
- Existing footpath, may need upgrading in places
- Existing road with low traffic volume
- Land in private ownership - route would be subject to negotiations
- Potential road narrowing to allow cycle lane
- Cycle path could run alongside road

# Section 7

## Summary

In preparing this document, we have appreciated that Chelmsford Borough has gone through numerous changes in recent decades and will almost certainly continue to grow as external pressures increase. However, despite its close proximity to the County Town, Broomfield has nonetheless managed to preserve its integrity as an historic village set within a rural parish. This is one of the features that Broomfield residents value most about their village and wish to retain in future.

We recognise that some development within our village is inevitable, and even desirable, particularly if it provides

the amenities Broomfield lacks. However, any development must respect and complement Broomfield's rural village nature. While Broomfield residents accept the need for change, the dramatic increase in traffic and noise pollution is already a major issue, much of this arising from the expansion of Broomfield Hospital. Therefore, as well as respecting the design principles and guidelines within this VDS, Chelmsford Borough Council and Essex County Council should support creative noise and traffic calming measures to help reduce this problem.



### Acknowledgements

This document was produced by the Broomfield Village Design Statement Association Committee, with welcome financial assistance from the Rural Community Council of Essex and Broomfield Parish Council. We are very grateful to the dozens of Broomfield residents who took part in the Photo Shoot and the hundreds who attended the Open Days. Their continuing support has been invaluable. We are also grateful to Chelmsford Borough Council who provided constructive feedback on earlier drafts.

Maps from Google and Ordnance Survey open data.  
[www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/opendata/viewer](http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/opendata/viewer)

Photographs provided by Peter Marriage, Faith Marchal, Wendy Talley.

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