

Chelmsford Local Plan
Evidence Base Document
Topic Paper 5:
Natural Environment and
Green Belt

June 2018



Chelmsford Local Plan Topic Paper: Natural Environment and Green Belt

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This Topic Paper is one of a number produced by Chelmsford City Council to set out how it has developed the new Local Plan. This paper covers the natural environment and how the role of the countryside, landscape, biodiversity and Protected/Designated Sites, Green Infrastructure Strategy, and policies for the management of development affecting the natural environment will be provided for within the Local Plan.
- 1.2 The Topic Paper provides background information and provides context of how the Local Plan has been formulated. This Topic Paper should be read alongside the other Topic Papers produced, in particular:
- The Infrastructure Update Topic Paper (TP 002) which sets out how any relevant infrastructure required to mitigation the impact of development on the natural environment will be secured through the Local Plan
 - The Spatial Strategy and Strategic Sites Update Topic Paper (TP 001) which covers the steps, processes and evidence that have guided and informed the formulation of the Spatial Strategy and the selection of strategic development sites. This includes consideration of Chelmsford's landscape and natural environment when developing the Spatial Strategy
 - The Summary of Key Supporting Evidence Base Studies Topic Paper (TP 007) which summarises the Local Plan key evidence base studies.
- 1.3 It also reflects suggested additional changes to the Pre-Submission Local Plan as set out in the 'Pre-Submission Local Plan Schedule of Suggested Additional Changes, June 2018' (SD 002). These changes do not affect the soundness of the Plan and are in response to representations made to the Pre-Submission Local Plan, and to ensure that it reflects the latest position and is consistent.
- 1.4 The main issues covered by this Topic Paper are:
- National planning policies covering the natural environment
 - The Local Plans approach to the natural environment
 - The evidence base to support the Local Plan approach
 - Local Plan policies to manage and protect the natural environment
 - Key considerations used to inform the Pre-Submission Local Plan

- 1.5 A key component of the Council's overall approach in formulating the Local Plan has been to protect and enhance the natural environment. Chelmsford has a wide range of designations which relate to the natural environment, including SSSI's, local landscape designations, wildlife habitats and woodlands, and water courses. The Council's area also contains land designated as Green Belt. This is a national policy designation which seeks to retain the openness of the Green Belt by protecting land from development.
- 1.6 The Local Plan's Strategic Priorities, Vision and Spatial Principles set out the Council's approach to the natural environment. Strategic Priority 7 specifically seeks to protect and enhance the natural environment, Green Belt and valued landscapes, while delivering the growth required. It sets out that this will be achieved through the promotion of development on previously developed land in the Chelmsford Urban Area, as well as through the protection and enhancement of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure in line with the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy. It also seeks to minimise the loss of the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land, and recognises the river valleys as an important asset which offer natural flood protection but also contribute significantly to the local landscape and character of the area. The need to address climate change and minimise pollution is also set out.
- 1.7 This, alongside the other Spatial Principles have in turn have closely informed the Local Plan's Vision and subsequent Spatial Principles. Of specific relevance to this topic paper are the following Spatial Principles:
- Maximise the use of previously developed land for development
 - Locate development to avoid or manage flood risk
 - Protect the Green Belt
 - Protect and enhance the character of valued landscapes, heritage and biodiversity.
- 1.8 These, along with the other Spatial Principles, have led to the Spatial Strategy which directs development to appropriate locations.
- 1.9 Overall the Pre-Submission Local Plan sets out an extensive package of mitigation measures and opportunities to enhance and protect the natural environment which is supported by an extensive evidence base.

2. Policy Context

National Context

- 2.1 All policies in the Local Plan must be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the overarching planning policy framework, supported by the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

- 2.2 Of specific relevance to this topic paper are the following paragraphs of the NPPF: Paragraphs 79 to 86 cover the protection of the Green Belt and how it should be considered in the context of the Local Plan. Paragraphs 87 to 92 then set out what forms of development may be acceptable within the Green Belt.
- 2.3 Paragraphs 93 to 95 cover climate change, flooding and coastal change. They require local authorities to set out proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, taking account of flood risk, coastal change, water supply and demand. Paragraphs 96 to 108 then cover the more detailed considerations to planning applications in respect of climate change, flooding and coastal change.
- 2.4 Paragraph 109 states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment in a number of ways, including protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, minimising impacts on and providing net gains in biodiversity, and minimising pollution.
- 2.5 Paragraphs 110 to 117 cover issues concerning the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. They require contributions to be made to the enhancement and protection of landscapes, ecosystems, biodiversity and to minimise pollution.
- 2.6 Paragraphs 118 to 125 then cover the more detailed considerations to planning applications in respect of conserving and enhancing biodiversity, minimising risks to pollution and impact on the natural environment.
- 2.7 The PPG further clarifies these issues in the approach to the natural environment.

3. Local Plan Approach

- 3.1 This topic paper sets out how the natural environment has been considered throughout the Local Plan, including within its evidence base, planning policies and site allocations, and representations received to the Pre-Submission Local Plan consultation. The main natural environment topics for consideration are:
- The role of the countryside and landscape designations
 - Biodiversity and Protected/Designated sites
 - Green Infrastructure Strategy
 - Climate Change and Flood Risk

4. Evidence Base

4.1 In accordance with the requirements of the NPPF, policies and their requirements should be based on up to date evidence. A full list of evidence based documents used to support the Local Plan can be found in Appendix E of the published Pre-Submission Local Plan Document. The following documents are of particular relevance to the protection of the natural environment in the Plan:

- EB 094 Green Wedge and Green Corridor Assessment – Identifies these local valued landscapes as areas for protection.
- EB 021 Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan – Provides a framework for the planning and management of Chelmsford's green and blue infrastructure resources, including parks, river valleys, green spaces and gardens, some of which are within the countryside. Development effecting Nationally Designated Sites may be required to contribute towards appropriate mitigation measures outlined in this plan.
- EB 100 Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Character – Assesses the landscape character of an area and its likely sensitivity to change.
- Essex Recreational Disturbance Avoidance Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) project – Being led by ECC to assess the mitigation measures required for European Designated Sites impacted upon by development from across Essex. Once completed, expected to be adopted as SPD and will set out where new development is required to contribute towards implementation of the Strategy.
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 – Lists priority habitats and species which should be considered as part of planning applications.
- EB 113 Essex Biodiversity Action Plan – Local evidence base covering specific biodiversity issues in Essex.
- EB 103 Local Wildlife Sites Review – Recognises sites of wildlife importance in the area.
- EB 106 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – Identifies and assessed areas of flood risk in the area.
- EB 107 Chelmsford Water Cycle Study – Considers the water needs of the area including supply and waste water recycling.
- EB 095 Air Quality Management Assessment – Assesses the impact of development on the air quality of the area and any mitigation required.
- EB 001 Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report 2015
- EB 003 Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal 2015
- EB 006 Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal 2017
- SD 004 Pre-Submission Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal 2018
- SD 005 Pre-Submission Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Addendum 2018
- EB 009 Habitats Regulations Assessment: Initial Scoping Report 2015
- EB 010 Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment 2017
- SD 006 Pre-Submission Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment January 2018
- SD 007 Pre-Submission Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment (Updated) June 2018

- Issues and Options Consultation – You said, we did February 2017 (included within SD 009 Regulation 22 Consultation Statement)
- Preferred Options Consultation – You said, we did January 2018 (included within SD 009 Regulation 22 Consultation Statement)

5. Local Plan Policy Requirements

- 5.1 As a result of the evidence base documents set out above the following notations are identified on the Local Plan Proposals Map:

Policy Designations:

- Green Belt
- Land allocated for future recreation use and/or SuDS
- Open Space
- Air Quality Management Area

Nature Conservation:

- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Wildlife Site (LoWS)
- Essex Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve

Water Management:

- Marine Conservation Zone
- Flood Zone (Grade 2 and Grade 3)
- Flood Alleviation Scheme

Landscape:

- Green Corridor
- Green Wedge
- Area for Conservation/Strategic Landscape Enhancement

- 5.2 These notations are areas for protection, but also identify opportunities for appropriate enhancement, as set out in the Local Plan policies. Throughout the Local Plan there are numerous references, policies and requirements which collectively seek to ensure the natural environment is protected, enhanced and where necessary appropriate mitigation measures are put in place. The tables below set out the key policies which deal with the main natural environment topics.
- 5.3 It should be noted that this is a high-level summary of the parts of the policies which are relevant to each topic. Full detailed requirements are set out in the policies themselves and their supporting reasoned justifications in the Local Plan.

Role of the countryside (Green Belt, Green Wedges, Green Corridors, Rural Area)
Strategic Policies <p>S1 – Spatial Principles Guiding Spatial Principles of relevance to this topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise the use of suitable previously developed land for development • Protect the Green Belt • Protect and enhance the character of valued landscapes, heritage and biodiversity <p>S9 – Spatial Strategy Directs development away from the Green Belt, Green Wedges and Green Corridors. Loss of grade 2 and 3 agricultural land kept to a minimum (Covered in more detail in the Spatial Strategy and Strategic Sites Topic Paper).</p> <p>S13 – The role of the Countryside Sets out the Council’s approach to protecting the Green Belt and local designations of Green Wedges, Green Corridors and the Rural Area, how they have been derived, and their role and function.</p>
Local Policies <p>CO1 – Green Belt, Green Wedges, Green Corridors and Rural Areas Sets out the planning objectives for each of the countryside designations.</p> <p>CO2 – New buildings and structures in the Green Belt Sets out the forms of development which will be acceptable in the Green Belt.</p> <p>CO3 – New buildings and structures in Green Wedges and Green Corridors Sets out the forms of development which will be acceptable in Green Wedges and Green Corridors.</p> <p>CO4 – New buildings and structures in the Rural Area Sets out the forms of development which will be acceptable in the Rural Area.</p> <p>CO5 – Infilling in the Green Belt, Green Wedges, Green Corridors and Rural Areas Sets out the criteria in which infilling will be acceptable in the Green Belt, Green Wedges, Green Corridors and Rural Area.</p> <p>CO6 – Change of use (land and buildings) and engineering operations Sets out the criteria in which changes of use and engineering operations will be acceptable in the Green Belt, Green Wedges, Green Corridors and Rural Area.</p> <p>CO7 – Extensions to existing buildings within the Green Belt, Green Wedges, Green Corridors and Rural Area Sets out the criteria in which extensions to existing buildings will be acceptable in the Green Belt, Green Wedges, Green Corridors and Rural Area.</p>

- 5.4 While the Green Belt is a national planning policy designation, the Green Wedges and Green Corridors are a local landscape designation covering the river valleys of the Rivers Chelmer, Can and Wid, which are included within the Local Plan. The principle of Green Wedges was previously established as a local landscape designation in the Local Development Framework. The rationale for them has been reviewed and where appropriate amendments made in accordance with the Green Wedges and Green Corridors Review Report 2017 (EB 094), which are reflected in the Pre-Submission Local Plan.
- 5.6 Green Wedges are an established element of Chelmsford's Strategy having been adopted in the Council's Local Development Framework which covers the period from 2001.
- 5.7 The purpose of Green Wedges is to maintain and protect the open character of the landscape of the river valleys, to provide physical links between the urban area of Chelmsford and the countryside beyond, to provide an important network of natural habitats and various formal and informal leisure and recreation uses. The Green Wedge designations have previously been successful in protecting harmful development and maintaining the character of Chelmsford. The City Council has successfully defended these principles at appeals for development in the Green Wedge. Their continued protection is seen as a key structural element of the new Local Plan.
- 5.8 Additionally, the Green Wedges and Green Corridors Review Report 2017 (EB 094), also identified 'Green Corridors' which have been included as a local landscape designation within the Pre-Submission Local Plan. These areas are identified for the protection of the special qualities of their landscapes, recognising their role as working landscapes and that some development will occur, but this should be particularly sensitive to the River Valley landscape.

Biodiversity and Protected/Designated sites
Strategic Policies
<p>S1 – Spatial Principles</p> <p>Guiding Spatial Principles of relevance to this topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise the use of suitable previously developed land for development • Protect the Green Belt • Protect and enhance the character of valued landscapes, heritage and biodiversity. <p>S6 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment</p> <p>Commitment to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment.</p> <p>Of relevance to this topic through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of designated sites and species • Planning for biodiversity networks and minimising pollution • Planning for multifunctional network of green infrastructure • Securing management, mitigation and compensation measures through planning conditions/obligations.

S11 – Infrastructure Requirements

Infrastructure necessary to support new development must provide or contribute towards ensuring a range of green and natural infrastructure improvements, including:

- Provision of a wide range of open space
- Contributing towards a multifunctional network of green infrastructure and enhanced biodiversity
- Contributions towards recreation disturbance avoidance and mitigation measures for European designated sites

(Covered in more detail in the Infrastructure Update Topic Paper (TP 002)).

Local Policies

NE1 – Ecology and Biodiversity

Sets out the criteria for considering planning applications in relation to the following:

- Internationally Designated Sites
- Nationally Designated Sites
- Locally Designated Sites
- Biodiversity and Geodiversity in development.

NE2 – Trees, Woodland and Landscape Features

Sets out how trees will be protected and also covers non-protected landscape features, ensuring development does not result in unacceptable harm to natural landscape features which do not benefit from an international, national or local designation.

Green Infrastructure Strategy

Strategic Policies

S1 – Spatial Principles

Guiding Spatial Principles of relevance to this topic:

- Protect and enhance the character of valued landscapes, heritage and biodiversity.

S3 -Addressing Climate Change and Flood Risk

Seeks for development to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Of relevance to this topic through encouraging development to:

- Provide opportunities for green infrastructure including city greening and new habitat creation.

S6 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Commitment to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment.

Of relevance to this topic through:

- Planning for biodiversity networks and minimising pollution
- Planning for multifunctional network of green infrastructure
- Securing management, mitigation and compensation measures through planning conditions/obligations.

S11 – Infrastructure Requirements

Infrastructure necessary to support new development must provide or contribute towards ensuring a range of green and natural infrastructure improvements, including:

- Provision of a wide range of open space
- Contributing towards a multifunctional network of green infrastructure and enhanced biodiversity
- Contributions towards recreation disturbance avoidance and mitigation measures for European designated sites

(Covered in more detail in the Infrastructure Update Topic Paper (TP 002)).

Local Policies

MP2 – Design and place shaping principles in major new developments

Requires all major new developments to include public open space or larger green infrastructure.

Climate change and flood risk

Strategic Policies

S1 – Spatial Principles

Guiding Spatial Principles of relevance to this topic:

- Locate development to avoid or manage flood risk

S3 -Addressing Climate Change and Flood Risk

Seeks for development to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Of relevance to this topic through encouraging development to:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Promote the efficient use of natural resources such as water
- Provide opportunities for decentralised energy and heating systems
- Encourage design and construction techniques which contribute to climate change mitigation and adaption
- Minimise impact on flooding.

S9 – Spatial Strategy

Directs development away from areas of high flood risk, or ensure that any flood risk is managed (Covered in more detail in the Spatial Strategy and Strategic Sites Update Topic Paper (TP 001)).

S11 – Infrastructure Requirements

New development must be safe from all types of flooding and provide appropriate flood risk management including:

- Strategic flood defence measures to protect Chelmsford City Centre
- Local flood mitigation measures.

(Covered in more detail in the Infrastructure Update Topic Paper (TP 002)).

Local Policies
<p>NE3 – Flooding/SuDS Requires all development to be safe from flood risk and to ensure it does not worsen flood risk itself. In areas of flood risk further site requirements are set out, and all major developments are required to provide appropriate water management measures.</p> <p>NE4 – Renewable and low carbon energy Supports low carbon energy developments subject to a number of requirements, including ensuring they have no adverse effect on the natural environment.</p> <p>MP2 – Design and place shaping principles in major new developments Requires all major new developments to minimise the use of natural resources.</p> <p>MP3 – Sustainable Buildings Expects all new buildings to reduce their impact on the environment through the following methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-residential development over a certain threshold should reduce carbon dioxide emissions above the requirements of building regulations, and achieve a minimum BREEAM rating of 'Very Good' • New dwellings should meet the optional building regulations requirement for water efficiency of 110 litres/person/day • Both should include access to EV charging point infrastructure. <p>PA2 – Contamination and Pollution Seeks to ensure that appropriate air quality is maintained alongside new development through any required mitigation measures.</p>

- 5.9 In addition, site allocation policies cover the relevant requirements and any necessary mitigation measures necessary to protect the natural environment in accordance with the Strategic and Local Policies listed above. For example, sites will ensure appropriate SuDS are in put in place to reduce flood risk, make the necessary financial contributions towards the requirements of the RAMS, and ensure important nearby wildlife areas are protected. In addition, specific sites will provide strategic measures, such as sites 3a and 4 providing new country parks as part of the development.
- 5.10 These requirements will be secured through a mixture of direct on and off-site requirements and mitigation measures, and financial contributions via Section 106 Agreements and/or CIL.

6. Key Considerations used to inform the Pre-Submission Local Plan

6.1 The main issues raised in the consultation responses to the Preferred Options Consultation Document are summarised in the Regulation 22 Consultation Statement published in May 2018.

6.2 The following issues raised by key bodies to the Pre-Submission Regulation 19 Consultation Document have been taken into account in formulating the policy approach towards the natural environment:

Natural England

6.3 Welcomed the reference to the RAMS but suggested reference to it should be within the Policy text of S6, NE1 and specific site policies.

6.4 Had concern over the capacity of water treatment works and Great Leighs and South Woodham Ferrers in ensuring they did not give rise to water quality issues downstream. As a result, amendments were suggested to ensure planning permission would not be granted ahead of this issue being resolved.

Environment Agency

6.5 Requested further enhancements to water related biodiversity for developments adjacent to the main rivers to be included in respect of Policy NE1 and further strengthening to policy NE3 to cover pollution prevention measures in respect of the water environment.

Essex County Council

6.6 Minor wording changes/updates to clarify the position in respect of transportation, planning obligations, surface water drainage.

Essex Wildlife Trust

6.7 Further clarity requested to wording covering Essex Wildlife Trust sites near Great Leighs.

Green Wedges and Green Corridors

6.8 Appendix 1 of this Topic Paper sets out those representations made specifically about the proposed boundaries of the Green Wedges and Green Corridors, and also the methodology used, which have been considered by 'Wood', the authors of this evidence base report. This includes an analysis of representations submitted by Hammond Estates Ltd in respect of the assessment of the Green Corridor boundary within their site. Other than one amendment to the Defined Settlement Boundary of Little Waltham, which had the knock-on effect of moving the boundary of the Green Wedge, Appendix 1 sets out that there is no justification for amending any Green Wedge or Green Corridor boundaries.

- 6.9 As set out in the 'Pre-Submission Local Plan Schedule of Suggested Additional Changes, June 2018' (SD 002) additional changes to the Pre-Submission Local Plan are proposed, where necessary, to reflect these comments and satisfy the issues raised. The changes do not affect the soundness of the Plan but ensure the Plan reflects the latest position and is consistent.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The rationale for City Council's approach to protecting and enhancing the natural environment to support the Local Plan is clear, compliant with national policy and well informed.
- 7.2 The relevant supporting evidence base studies and documents set out that while Chelmsford faces some constraints there are suitable means to protect and enhance the natural environment alongside providing the required development in the Local Plan. The Council's approach is to:
- Protect the Green Belt
 - Identify and protect valued landscapes through the designation and protection of Green Wedges and Green Corridors
 - Protect sites which are important for wildlife and habitat conservation
 - Provide opportunities for a net increase in biodiversity
 - Provide a network of Strategic Green Infrastructure including the creation of new Country Parks
 - Mitigate any impacts on the natural environment.



Technical note:

Chelmsford Local Plan Pre-Submission Document

Responses to Representations on the Green Wedges and Green Corridors: Defining Chelmsford's River Valleys Review Report

1. Purpose of the Report

This Technical Note sets out responses to Representations made to the Pre-Submission Local Plan in respect of the proposed designation of Green Wedges and Green Corridors, supported by Policies CO1 to CO7 in the Pre-Submission Local Plan. It should be noted that the principle of the designation of Green Wedges was scrutinised as part of the Examination of the current Core Strategy, and furthermore, there have been no substantive challenges to the principle of the designation of either Green Wedges or Green Corridors. The representations below relate to challenges to the proposed boundaries of the Green Wedges and/or Green Corridors.

2. Green Wedges and Green Corridors: Summary Issues and Responses

Representation	Issue	Response
Duncan Coles (PS480)	<p>The Green Wedges in Chelmer Valley in Broomfield are supported, but minor boundary alterations should be allowed to support recreation access/cycle ways and development of any adjoining brown field sites.</p> <p>Green Buffers (as seen in eastern river valley) should also be allowed to the south and</p>	<p>Potential for recreation/access enhancements are noted.</p> <p>The concept of Green Buffers has been analysed and found not to be a feasible planning instrument in the proposed locations around Broomfield due to the absence of clear boundaries and the lack of physical continuity with wider areas of restraint. Reliance will therefore remain on open countryside policy which restricts inappropriate development, including that which compromises the quality of countryside, agricultural land and settlement identity.</p>

Representation	Issue	Response
	northwest of Broomfield, to protect some outstanding countryside and high grade agricultural land around Broomfield village, such that village identity remains separate from north west Chelmsford.	
Gerald Malton (PS376)	23 The Street, Little Waltham should be included within the DSB.	Following re-evaluation, the DSB for Little Waltham is to be amended to include the built extent and curtilage of 23 The Street. This ensures that a consistent approach is taken to the definition of the DSB. The Green Wedge will remain wrapped around the western fringe of the property, bounded by the B1008.
Great Baddow Parish Council (PS845)	Allocation 3a should not be removed from the Green Wedge as this area makes an important contribution [SIC] to the Green Wedge, to the character of the river valley and to the separation of Great Baddow from the river and Chelmer Village.	The extent of the Green Wedge has been defined using a range of measures. In this instance an appropriate boundary was determined to be along a well-defined track north of the A1060 Maldon Road. The physical and visual separation between Great Baddow and Chelmer Village will remain.
Claire Benbrook (PS2025)	Land north of Mill Road, North End should be removed from the proposed Green Corridor as it doesn't meet the requirements for inclusion.	Definition of the Green Corridor in this locality reflects the broader landscape context of the River Chelmer of which the settlement of North End is clearly a part. The Green Corridor designation which covers this land is therefore appropriate. However, Policies CO1 – CO7 apply.
Shyy Sachdev (PS1197/PS1199)	Land at Rembrandt House, Broomfield does not perform the functions of the Green Wedge and should be allocated for development.	The property sits with a number of others along Main Road which together form the westerly edge of the Green Wedge. These properties do not form a contiguous block of development which would merit exclusion from the Green Wedge; indeed, many have an extensive curtilage to the rear which forms part of the character of the Green Wedge. The proposed Green Wedge policy does not seek to prohibit development <i>per se</i> but demands a high standard of evidence that a change is consistent with maintaining the integrity of the river valley landscape such that its character is not undermined through intrusive development.
Hammonds Estates (PS1277)	Parcel CE5 does not accord with the boundaries identified for the Chelmer & Blackwater Conservation Area	Section 2ii in the Study Methodology clearly explains how the boundaries of the component parcels were defined prior to field survey work being undertaken and that main roads were top of the five-step hierarchy that was used. Under this methodology the selection of Hammonds Road as the eastern boundary of CE5 was logical and correct.

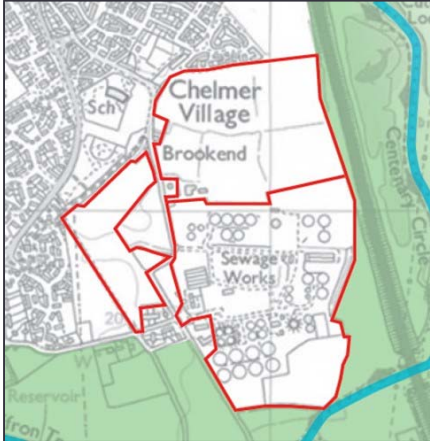
Representation	Issue	Response
		<p>The definition of the Conservation Area boundary was undertaken with different criteria and for a different purpose.</p> <p>The Proposed Policy on Green Corridors is “to ensure the retention of the open character of the valley’s landscape” as stated in the emerging Local Plan. The review of western views from Hammonds Road demonstrates that this role would not be provided by the Green Corridor were the eastern boundary of CE5 to be fixed closer to the River Chelmer.</p> <p>SEE DETAILED RESPONSE SET OUT IN SECTION 3 BELOW</p>
<p>Land to the south of Writtle (Bovis Homes PS2036/PS2039/PS2041/PS2042/PS2043)</p>	<p>Challenge the proposal to define a Green Wedge across an extensive area of land between Chelmsford and Writtle.</p> <p>The Green Wedge Policy area should be redrawn and the consultee offer a suggested revised boundary on Plan EDP4 in their representation PS2041 which focuses the designation on those areas along the river corridors which align with objectives of the proposed policy. Areas excluded include visually contained and intensively managed agricultural fields with low biodiversity and limited public access, which are uncharacteristic of the landscape character of the river valley corridors.</p> <p><i>Bovis Homes Representation to Policy CO1 2.7 “... there are clearly some parts of each Green Wedge parcel that could be considered of less value than others, namely those areas which lie adjacent to the existing areas of Chelmsford and Writtle.</i></p> <p><i>3.2 The policy wording proposes designation of vast areas of agricultural land parcels as a ‘valued landscape’ based on a range of factors; openness; green networks; wildlife conservation;</i></p>	<p>The representation and proposed re-definition of Green Wedge boundaries in the vicinity of Writtle does not challenge the principle of designation of Green Wedges and Green Corridors. The proposed spatial extent of the Green Wedges and Green Corridors was established with reference to the definition of reasonable boundaries. In most instances these comprise the built edge of urban area which forms the wider context of the river valleys within which there are typically complex land use divisions with a range of boundaries of varying quality. The Green Wedges and Green Corridors Review Report established that a variety of boundaries were appropriate, depending upon local circumstances, and in many instances, this includes the current built edge in preference to a feature created by buffer planting (as is the case of proposed development land to the west of Beeches Road, Chelmsford). Some of these are clearer than others; such as the land between Paradise Road and Chelmsford Road, Writtle, which comprises a single large field between the built edge of Writtle and the River Wid. The debate revolves around about matters beyond openness and appearance. As the Environment Dimension Partnership (EDP) state in their Appendix 3.3 submissions:</p> <p>3.19 The concept of ‘landscape’ embraces much more than its openness and appearance. The European Landscape Convention (ELC), to which the UK is a signatory, defines landscape thus: “Landscape is an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”.</p> <p>3.20 The paragraph 2.4 in GLVIA3, states that the importance of the ELC definition is that it: “...moves beyond the idea that landscape is only a matter of aesthetics and visual amenity”.</p> <p>Detailed analysis of potential boundaries configured according to land ownership patterns (in turn in this instance part of a broader masterplan) inevitably challenges where appropriate boundaries are, and might be, drawn.</p> <p>In the absence of challenges to the principle of Green Wedges and Green Corridors as a policy instrument, proposed change needs to set against the criteria presented in Policies CO1 – CO7 of the</p>

Representation	Issue	Response
	<p><i>leisure and recreation; and character and appearance. It is clear from both EDPs assessment submitted previously as part of the consultation process, and, as identified within the emerging evidence base that there are areas within the proposed 'Green Wedge' which are of less value, and, importantly well below the threshold of paragraph 109.</i></p> <p><i>3.3 It seems clear from the wholesale designation of land, that this policy does not constitute the protection of a local 'valued' space, its implementation is to act as a spatial planning tool. In landscape terms, many of the parcels abut commercial development and the settlement edge. Furthermore, other parcels are well contained by maturing strategic landscaping which would provide a defensible boundary to any development and separation from the more valued river corridors, whilst acting to preserve both the separation and individual characteristics of Chelmsford and Writtle. Furthermore, as illustrated on Plan EDP 1, much of the land is devoid of any public access and therefore does contribute to any recreational enjoyment or public access (a key facet of Green Belt land).</i></p> <p><i>3.4 Arguments relating to the importance of the landscape setting and an elevated value due to the contrast of built form and countryside at the settlement edge are considered to be illogical. As almost any greenfield development is likely to be at the settlement edge, and therefore, will be located within the 'setting' of the settlement, the suggestion that development in such</i></p>	<p>Pre-Submission Local Plan to prove that development is both compatible with, and would contribute to, river corridor character and condition. Thus, contrary to the statement in para 3.4 of the EDP Report, Policy CO1 does not suggest that development is in principle unacceptable, but rather that:</p> <p><i>"Development which materially harms the role, function, character and appearance of this valued landscape will be resisted."</i></p>

Representation	Issue	Response
	<i>locations is, in principle, 'unacceptable' is non-sequitur.</i>	
NW Parishes (PS1831)	The River Can Green Wedge should be extended upstream.	Land to the north of Roxwell Road was considered for an extension of the Green Wedge or establishment of a Green Corridor, but has not been taken further because clear boundaries could not be identified in this area of open countryside.
Clifford Ltd (PS1943)	Object to the inclusion of land at Saxon Way, Broomfield in the Green Wedge. The land does not perform any of the specified roles of the Green Wedge and its removal will not cause material harm to the role, function, character and appearance of this part of the landscape.	The land in question lies outside the DSB of Broomfield and is connected spatially and visually with the wider Green Wedge in this location. The Green Wedge designation is appropriate and consistent with the Green Wedge boundaries at Broomfield established in the Chelmsford Core Strategy and the North Chelmsford Area Action Plan. However, Policies CO1 – CO7 in the Pre-Submission Local Plan apply.
Generals Farm (Aquila Developments PS507)	Disagree with the inclusion of land to the north of Main Road in the Green Corridor.	<p>The land, whilst separated by the B1137 Main Road from the wider river valley to the south, nevertheless retains a fundamental connection to it through shared landform (centred on a tributary of the River Chelmer), visual continuity across Main Road and the presence of two PRoW which run north – south. In addition, the land forms part of the context for Boreham House. The importance of the wider landscape setting of Boreham House and associated Registered Park and Garden has been supported at Appeal as follows:</p> <p>Appeal Decision APP/W1525/W/14/300177 (8/3/2016) Land South East of The Lion Inn, Main Road, Boreham</p> <p>Para 67 <i>"The character of these two heritage assets [Boreham House, a Grade I listed building set within a Grade II Registered Park and Garden] is, in part, derived from their rural location and their setting in this wider landscape. It is undeniable that this setting has been compromised by recent developments to the north of the B1137 and by infrastructure associated with the A12. The junction between the A12 and the B1137 lies a short distance to the west, beyond this junction lie the outskirts of Chelmsford. The proximity of this junction, the development around it and its urban characteristics have all reduced the scale of the rural setting for the House and the RPG. Further harm, albeit rather more limited in scale, has been caused to their setting by the pylons and overhead wires to the east. <u>It is clear that the existing harm to their setting does not mean that further harm is justified...</u>" [emphasis added]</i></p> <p>Para 69 <i>"The character and, more importantly, the appearance of this part of the valley would undergo further change with the built form encroaching closer to these assets. This would result in some harm to the setting of this Grade I listed building and its Grade II RPG."</i></p>

Representation	Issue	Response
		<p>The matter of damage to the setting of Boreham House and its associated Registered Park and Garden, was also addressed in a refusal of planning permission (14/01425/FUL Full Application, January 2015) for development on land to the northwest of Millmead Cottages, Paynes Lane. Part of the reason for refusal, drawing on advice from English Heritage, was that: <i>“the proposed development would cause some harm to the setting of Boreham House and its designated landscape and through that some harm to their significance. English Heritage has concluded that the level of harm would, in the language of the NPPF, be ‘less than substantial’. It is therefore appropriate to consider the application in accordance with paragraph 134. English Heritage advises that given the importance of the house and the designated landscape any harm ‘must be a serious matter’ and that planning permission should not be granted unless the harm that would be caused to the significance of Boreham House and its designed landscape would be outweighed by the public benefits arising from the development.”</i></p>
Cogent Land (PS2050/PS2051)	Disagree with the inclusion of land to the south west of the Lion Inn, Boreham Road in the Green Corridor.	<p>The land is physically and visually part of the Green Corridor, running down to the un-named tributary of the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation. There are extensive views across this land across the Chelmer Valley from the B1137 Main Road at the built edge of Boreham and land further west is part of the wider context for Boreham House. The importance of the wider landscape setting of Boreham House and associated Registered Park and Garden has been supported at Appeal as follows:</p> <p>Appeal Decision APP/W1525/W/14/300177 (8/3/2016) Land South East of The Lion Inn, Main Road, Boreham</p> <p>Para 42 <i>“The whole site is clearly visible from the public footpaths, which are not bounded by fences or hedges, and there are open views of the site from Main Road. Views from the public footpaths are inevitably dependent upon the direction of travel but the site appears contiguous with the open countryside to the south and west.”</i></p> <p>Para 46 <i>“The BVDS (Boreham Village Design Statement) identifies that one of the main strengths of the village are the outstanding views to the south over the Chelmer Valley. From this vantage point in Main Road such views would be harmfully diminished.”</i></p> <p>Para 49. <i>“While the landscape has no specific designations, it contributes to the rural setting of Boreham and to the separation of the village from Chelmsford. This contribution includes allowing views over the built form of the village to the hills beyond.”</i></p> <p>Para 52 <i>“The development on the current appeal site would not only be contrary to the cited development plan policies but would also result in some visual harm to the amenity of the area.”</i></p>

Representation	Issue	Response
		<p>Para 67 <i>"The character of these two heritage assets [Boreham House, a Grade I listed building set within a Grade II Registered Park and Garden] is, in part, derived from their rural location and their setting in this wider landscape. It is undeniable that this setting has been compromised by recent developments to the north of the B1137 and by infrastructure associated with the A12. The junction between the A12 and the B1137 lies a short distance to the west, beyond this junction lie the outskirts of Chelmsford. The proximity of this junction, the development around it and its urban characteristics have all reduced the scale of the rural setting for the House and the RPG. Further harm, albeit rather more limited in scale, has been caused to their setting by the pylons and overhead wires to the east. <u>It is clear that the existing harm to their setting does not mean that further harm is justified...</u>" [emphasis added]</i></p> <p>Para 69 <i>"The assets, however, are set within a designed, rural setting. They were designed to relate to their surroundings and the current proposals would further encroach into their setting and would increase the cumulative change to their designed setting. This change would further harm their setting. The elevated location of the new housing and the likely scale and height of the buildings would inevitably make them conspicuous in the landscape. While additional planting would, in time, be likely to reduce this impact the new housing would make it more difficult to read the history of the House and its RPG within their designed setting. The character and, more importantly, the appearance of this part of the valley would undergo further change with the built form encroaching closer to these assets. This would result in some harm to the setting of this Grade I listed building and its Grade II RPG."</i></p>
Anglian Water (PS1246)	Disagree with Green Wedge designation covering Anglian Water assets which could result in an unintended barrier to water recycling investment and operation.	<p>To remove a large site (virtually the whole of parcel CE4) from the Green Wedge would undermine its integrity as a linear landscape feature. Part of the purpose of designation is to help ensure that there is a consistent framework, spatially and in policy, against which development applications can be judged. Gaps in the Wedge or wider Corridor would undermine this and lead to a fragmented and therefore weakened designation. The Green Wedge designation needs to be considered as a landscape, biodiversity, cultural heritage and recreational resource which depends upon geographical continuity for its rationale and effectiveness.</p> <p>Proposed policies CO1 – CO7 do not inhibit development in principle, only inappropriate development. Policy CO3 in particular makes explicit reference to essential infrastructure being acceptable in the Green Wedges and Green Corridors. The supporting text defines these and includes Waste Water Treatment Works.</p> <p>The contents of the Landscape Partnership Report (February 2018) are acknowledged, although proposed boundaries appear to be based around property boundaries rather than the physical extent, visually and spatially, of the Chelmer Valley in this location and the relationship between built form and</p>

Representation	Issue	Response
		<p>open land (see: Extent of land required to fulfil the function of Green Wedge: Appendix 1 Figure 07 – extract below).</p> <p>The conclusions to the Report concede the following:</p> <p><i>5.7.3 The small areas of public open space bordering Chelmer Village might be considered to make a contribution to Objectives 3 and 5, and arguably Objective 4; however, given their discrete nature and their lack of physical connectivity with the river corridor itself, it is doubtful whether their inclusion in a Green Wedge would afford them any greater protection than their status as established public open space.</i></p>  <p>The case for excluding land within Anglian Water's control, by their own admission, is therefore not clear-cut.</p>
New Hall Properties (PS2071/PS2072)	Object to inclusion of land to the west of Seven Ash Green in the Green Wedge.	<p>The boundary set for the Green Wedge in this location clearly uses the line of the contiguous built-up area to the east. The land in question is of an open semi-rural character and visually forms part of the open land which constitutes the Green Wedge. Development in this location would compromise the open character of the land precisely at the point where the river valley opens out from the constrained river corridor immediately to the south. The importance of the contiguous character of the Green Wedge in this location has been supported at Appeal, as follows:</p> <p>Appeal Decision APP/W1525/15/3003304 (14/09/2016) The Lower Garden, Rear of 21 Seven Ash Green</p> <p>Para 38. <i>"The appeal site contributes to the openness of the Green Wedge and is designated as a site of environmental value by the Essex Wildlife Trust. In its present form it makes a significant contribution to the character of the Green Wedge, and the proposed dwellings, together with the access road and associated engineering works represent far more than a definitional breach to the Green Wedge. I</i></p>

Representation	Issue	Response
		<p>therefore conclude that the proposal would considerably harm the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside contrary to policies DC2 and DC9 of the Core Strategy."</p> <p>Appeal Decision APP/W1525/1/96/262003/P7 (16/12/1996) Land between 21 and 31 Seven Ash Green</p> <p>Para 14. "This area of the valley is characterised in part by views of the edge of the housing area which surrounds it at the top of gently sloping valley sides, and this forms a clearly defined boundary between the quiet rural atmosphere of the valley and the urban area beyond. Given the open aspect and rural character of the appeal site, its depth from the road frontage, and its visibility from the valley, I consider that the site has a stronger affinity with the open land to the west than with the housing in Seven Ash Green. For these reasons, I consider that the site is essentially rural in character ..."</p> <p>Para 15. "... bearing in mind the shape, size, location and prominence of the land, my view is that any form of residential development on the land would amount to a significant and intrusive feature of the local landscape."</p>
Hill Farm Chelmsford Ltd (PS1930/PS1932)	Object to the inclusion of Hill Farm, Essex Regiment Way in the Green Wedge.	The extent of the Green Wedge includes a variety of properties and adjacent land, in various land uses. All are part of the broader character of the Green Wedge which would in principle be changed by further development. The land lies outside a defined settlement boundary and as part of the undeveloped context contributes to the openness of the Green Wedge. However, Policies CO1 – CO7 apply.
Eastern Approaches Investments Ltd (PS1867)	Object to the inclusion of land west of Farrow Road, Widford in the Green Wedge. Development of the land would result in employment land being identified to help provide additional jobs and the settlement boundary being "rounded off" in this location.	Part of this land forms the easterly context for the River Can. The extent of the Green Wedge in this location abuts the industrial area and, and its undeveloped context contributes to the openness of the Green Wedge. However, Policies CO1 – CO7 apply.
Miscoe Enterprises (PS1906)	Land to the north of Brooklands should be removed from the Green Wedge and designated as an employment area.	The extent of the Green Wedge in this location includes a variety of properties and adjacent land, in various land uses. All are part of the broader character of the Green Wedge which would in principle be changed by further development. The land lies outside the DSB of Broomfield and as part of the undeveloped context contributes to the openness of the Green Wedge. However, Policies CO1 – CO7 apply.

Representation	Issue	Response
Paul Hopkins (PS1697/PS1698/ PS1694)	148 The Street, Little Waltham (CFS272) should be removed from Green Wedge designation and allocated for development.	The extent of the Green Wedge in this location includes a variety of properties and adjacent land, in various land uses. All are part of the broader character of the Green Wedge which would in principle be changed by further development. The land clearly lies outside the DSB of Little Waltham and is part of the undeveloped context that contributes to the openness of the Green Wedge.
Stonebond Properties Ltd (PS1712)	Object to promoted site (Brooklands, Main Road Broomfield) being included within the Green Wedge.	The property in question forms part of the wider Green Wedge to the east due to its setting within, and transition to, that wider context. Definition of the boundary to the Green Wedge used contiguous development (in this location defined by the settlement boundary of Little Waltham) to exclude clearly built-up areas. Properties set in ample grounds which make a contribution to their wider context have been included. This includes properties such as Brooklands. Consideration of the mixture of built development and open character of the curtilage of properties, which to a greater or lesser extent contributes to the character of the Green Wedge, is consistent with the approach taken elsewhere in defining the extent of the Green Wedge.
David Bolton (PS1784)	Green Wedge/Green Corridor restrictions are akin to Green Belt, which is contrary to national policy.	<p>Disagree. Green Wedge/Green Corridor policies are designed to secure appropriate development, not restrict it in principle (which is the function of the Green Belt). The provision of Policies CO1 -CO7 apply and the rationale for the Green Wedges and Green Corridors is clearly set out in Policy CO1 as follows:</p> <p>Policy CO1</p> <p><i>B) Green Wedges</i></p> <p>The crucial role of the main river valleys is where they permeate into the existing or proposed urban areas as Green Wedges. These form part of the wider river valley network which connects a suite of Green Infrastructure assets. They will be protected and enhanced as valued and multi-faceted landscapes for their openness and function as important green networks for wildlife, leisure and recreation, and for increased public access and enjoyment. Development which materially harms the role, function, character and appearance of this valued landscape will be resisted.</p> <p><i>C) Green Corridors</i></p> <p>The distinctive and valued landscape character of the main river valleys where they extend into the countryside beyond the existing or proposed urban areas and form part of the wider river valley network which connects a suite of Green Infrastructure assets will be protected as Green Corridors. Development which materially harms the character and appearance of this valued landscape will be resisted.</p>

3. Response to Hammond's Farm Representation (PS1277)

Issue Raised

Terence O'Rourke on behalf of Hammonds Estates propose that the boundary of the Green Corridor should be amended as follows:

Appendix 6:

1.11 Our analysis of Hammonds Farm (parcel CE5) concurs with the assessment in the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation conservation area appraisal. The visual connection of the river corridor to the wider area is more limited than the Green Wedges and Green Corridors report suggests. The boundary of the proposed Green Corridor through parcel CE5 should be drawn broadly in line with the conservation area boundary, flood zone and the 18m contour.

Response

Introduction

The validity of the eastern boundary of Green Corridor Parcel CE5 as defined in the *Green Wedges and Green Corridor: Defining Chelmsford's River Valleys Review Report* (March 2017) (the Review Report) has been challenged in the response provided on behalf of Hammonds Estates by Terence O'Rourke (May 2017 and March 2018). A re-examination of the proposed boundary has been undertaken by a senior member of Wood's landscape team which draws upon information contained in the Review Report, a site visit and the Terence O'Rourke response as well as the *Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessments* prepared by Chris Blandford Associates in September 2006 (the 2006 CBA LCA) which is the current landscape character assessment for the area covered by the Review Report.

The key consideration has been to ascertain if the present position of the eastern boundary of CE5 along the route of Hammond's Road is justified as opposed to the proposition advanced by Terence O'Rourke which is that the eastern boundary of CE5 should be relocated further to the west. This proposed relocation would have the consequence of the proposed 'green village' development at Hammond's Farm being sited outside Green Corridor CE5.

Review Report Methodology Comments

It is important to keep in mind the purpose of the designation of Chelmsford's Green Wedges and Green Corridors as summarised in paragraph 4 of the Executive Summary of the Review Report. This is a summary of the more detailed definition provided in paragraphs 1.3 - 1.5 in the methodology section of the Review Report which quote extensively from the emerging Local Plan for Chelmsford. Amongst of the purposes of their designation are to ensure the retention of the open character of the Chelmer Valley's landscape. Also crucial is the endorsement of the principle of Green Wedges and Green Corridors as designations that *"recognise and protect important river valleys and flood plains."*

Section 2ii in the Study Methodology clearly explains how the boundaries of the component parcels were defined prior to field survey work being undertaken and that main roads were top of the five-step hierarchy that was used. Under this approach the selection of Hammonds Road as the eastern boundary of CE5 is logical and correct. There are no other main roads east of the A12 nor are there building lines or other recognisable physical features as specified for items 2 and 3 in the five-step hierarchy. Section 2iii in the Study Methodology is concerned with the field survey proforma, but it states that it was devised amongst other reasons, to determine the *"appropriate boundaries of each parcel, describing their character and fitness for purpose ..."* (emphasis added). This sentence is used in the Terence O'Rourke response as the basis for the argument that the fieldwork should have led to observations that resulted in the initial Hammonds Road CE5 eastern boundary being refined and that it is consequently not appropriate.

In addition to the selection of Hammonds Road as the eastern boundary of CE5 according with the methodology for parcel definition in Section 2ii, it also closely conforms to the boundary that was defined between the two sub-units of Landscape Character Area A7 in the 2006 CBA LCA. These LCA and LCA sub-unit boundaries are shown on Figure 3.3: Chelmsford's Designated Natural and Cultural Assets, in the Review Report. It is noted that in the key for Figure 3.3. (and for Figures 2.1 & 3.2) that the boundaries for the LCAs and LCA sub-units refer to the Landscape Character Areas (May 2013) although no mention of any landscape character assessment undertaken in 2013 is present in the text which only refers to the 2006 CBA LCA.

Terence O'Rourke Response Comments

The Terence O'Rourke Response adopts a reasonable initial approach by stating that it supports the concept of Green Wedges and Green Corridors and accepts the initial use of Hammonds Road as the boundary of CE5. It then applies selected and nuanced analysis of the 2009 Conservation Area appraisal and desktop baseline study to argue that the result of the field study for CE5 in the Review Report should have been to move the eastern boundary of CE5 further west to the 18m contour line which forms the eastern edge of the River Chelmer's flood zone and aligns with a tree lined drainage ditch. This proposed boundary is also closely aligned with the boundary of the Conservation Area. Emphasis is placed on a claim that there is *"clearly a shallow ridgeline visually separating the river valley from the road"*. It is notable that

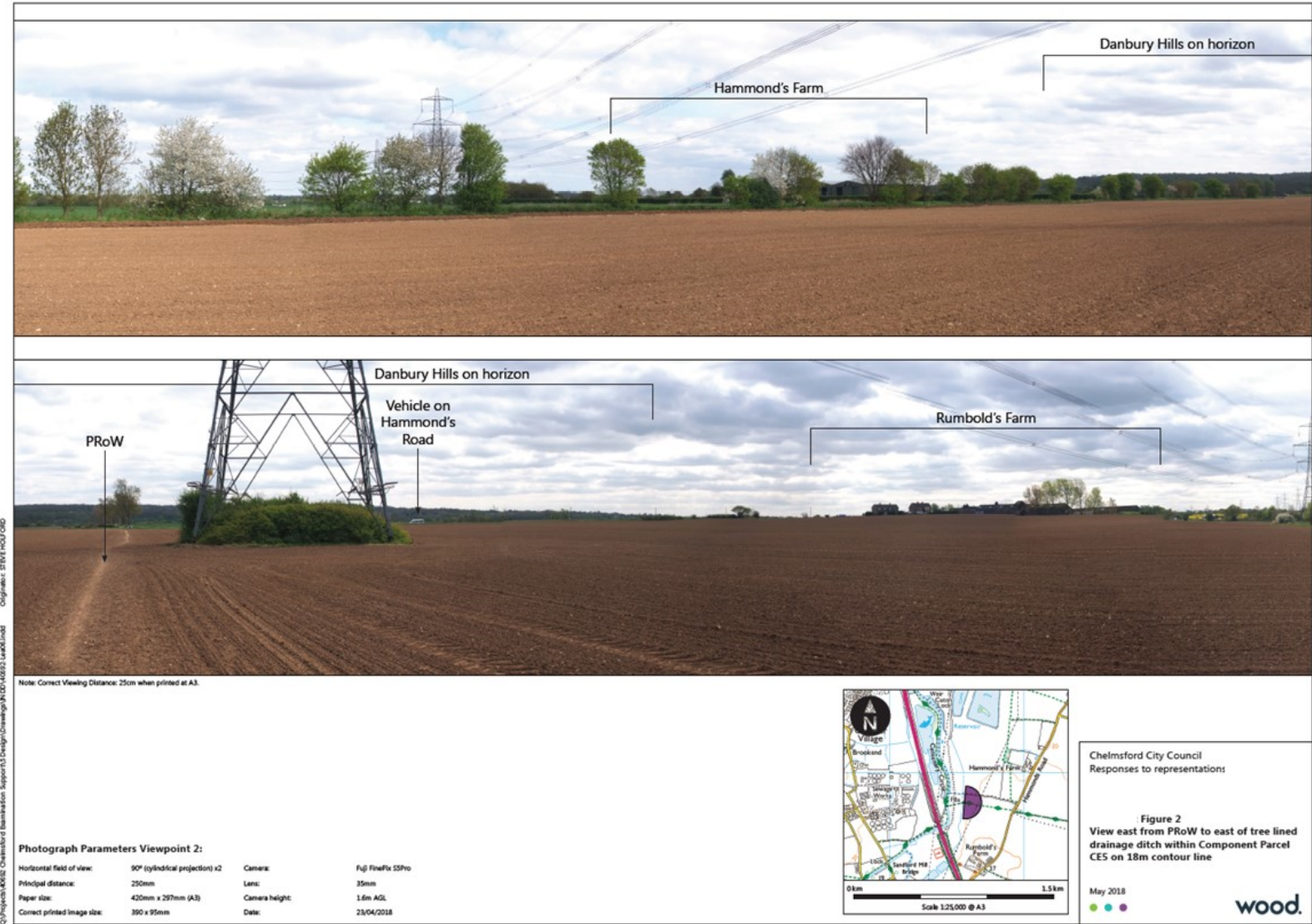
Terence O'Rourke do not state that they undertook any additional fieldwork when undertaking their response and they do not present any photography with which to illustrate their points, including the claimed existence of the shallow ridgeline.

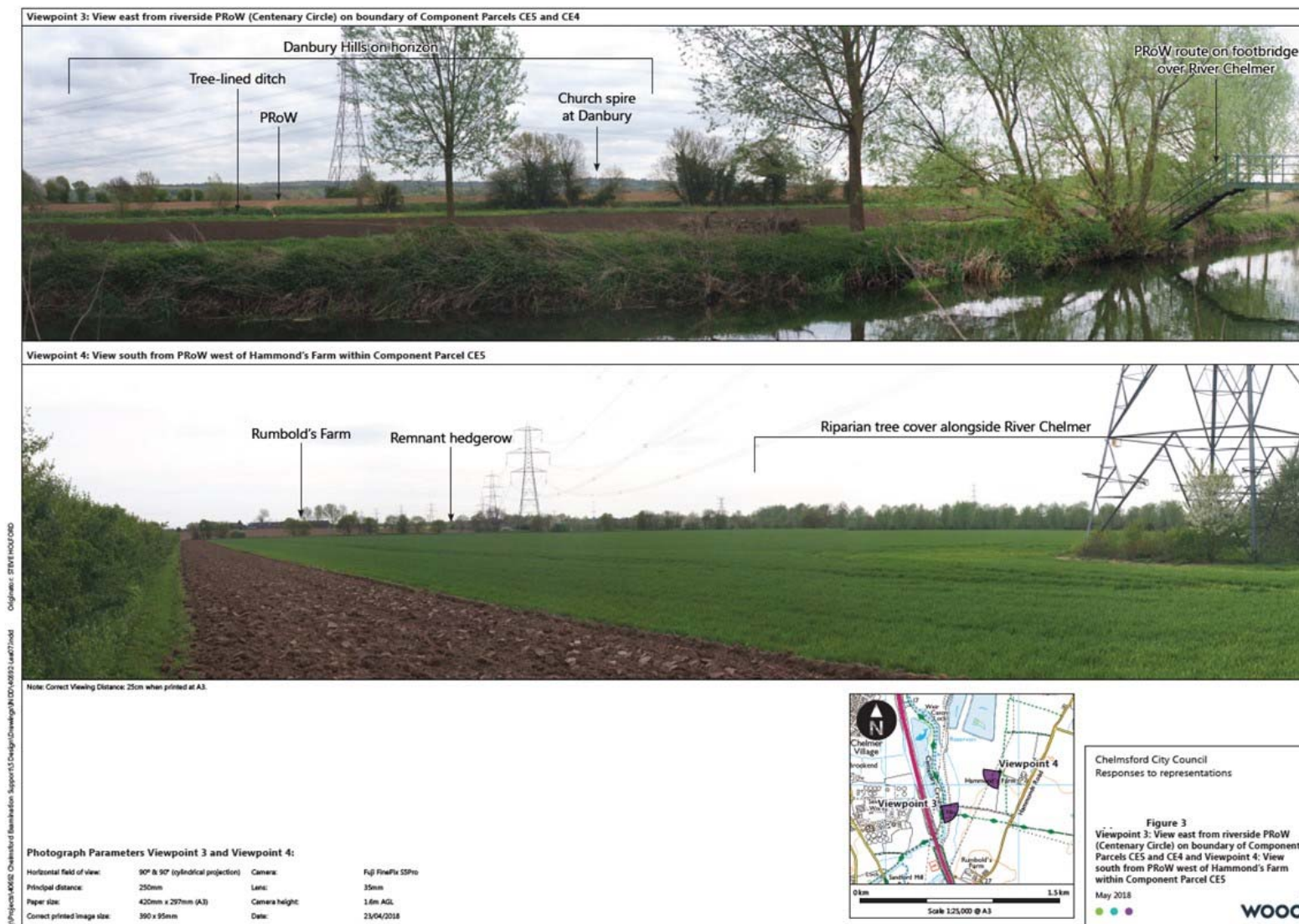
Re-Examination of the Use of Hammonds Road as the Appropriate Green Corridor Boundary

Hammonds Road is routed along the western edge of a low, broad plateau located between the River Chelmer and Sandon Brook. The area to the west of Hammonds Road has an almost imperceptible slope towards the course of the River Chelmer. Hammond's Farm is located alongside the 20m AOD contour and alongside the River Chelmer there are spot heights of 19m AOD at Sanford Mill Bridge and 17m AOD close to the weir at Cuton Lock. Consequently, in topographical terms there is minimal distinction between the valley bottom and flood plain and the valley sides and low plateau. This is demonstrated in the panoramic photographs taken during a site visit in April 2018 (see below). These photographs from within CE5 show that there is no "shallow ridgeline" that separates the River Chelmer from Hammonds Road in CE5. The topography and the photographs lends support to the selection of Hammonds Road as the eastern boundary of CE5 as it is the most readily discernible and substantive landscape feature. This is reinforced by the presence of sporadic remnant hedgerow vegetation and overgrown verges alongside much of its length and by the location of the limited number of farmsteads and associated built development alongside Hammonds Road with no built development located away from Hammonds Road.

Photographic Viewpoints







It is acknowledged that there are few, if any, views of the River Chelmer itself available from Hammonds Road. This is due to the tree cover close to the River that is noted as a key characteristic of LCA A7a. However, there are filtered western views available across the riparian tree cover to the eastern parts of Chelmsford. These views provide a consistent sense that from Hammonds Road the viewer is looking westwards across a shallow river valley, that the valley is a coherent landscape unit and that there is visual link with Chelmsford. This situation accords with the requirements for Green Corridors *"to ensure the retention of the open character of the valleys' landscape"* as stated in the emerging Local Plan. The review of western views from Hammonds Road demonstrates that this role would not be provided by the Green Corridor were the eastern boundary of CE5 to be fixed closer to the River Chelmer as recommended by the Terence O'Rourke Response.

It is also relevant to note that the selection of Hammonds Road as the eastern boundary means that the eastern part of CE5 incorporates the network of PROWs on the western side of Hammonds Road. These PROWs would be located outside of the Green Corridor under the Terence O'Rourke Response. This reduced CE5 would not include any PROWs east of the River Chelmer except for a short section of the west-east aligned Grace's Walk bridleway. The reduced CE5 would therefore be weakened in its ability to fulfil one of its principle roles in the provision of protection for leisure and recreational activities.

The observations on component parcel extent, function and management in the appendix of the Review Report notes that CE5 *"forms a significant river valley landscape that is part of the wider arc of open countryside to the east of Chelmsford beyond the A12."* The adoption of the proposed Green Corridor along the Lower River Chelmer Valley including CE3 – CE6 would make a large contribution to the protection and enhancement of this wider arc of open countryside. CE5's contribution is largely dependent upon the selection of Hammonds Road as its eastern boundary which ensures that the open fields and limited vegetation cover around the roadside buildings on the eastern shallow valley slope are retained and incorporated in the Green Corridor, as demonstrated in the photographic evidence above. If the eastern boundary of CE5 were to be relocated close to the River Chelmer, the role of the Green Corridor in protecting and enhancing the wider arc of open countryside would be undermined.

Summary

The re-examination of the validity of the selection of Hammonds Road as the eastern boundary for Green Corridor parcel CE5 has concluded that its selection can be defended by use of a combination of landscape and visual assessment and a review of how it facilitates component parcel CE5 to achieve the wider multifunctional role ascribed to Green Wedges and Green Corridors. The re-examination has included consideration of the arguments presented in the Terence O'Rourke response that attempt to provide justification for the repositioning of the eastern boundary closer to the River Chelmer at the edge of the flood plain as opposed to its present location towards the top of the eastern side of the wide, shallow Chelmer Valley. It is concluded that the removal of the open, large-scale fields to the west of Hammonds Road would

weaken the ability of CE5 to attain some of the functions of Green Corridors. The attainment of these functions is supported by the designation of the wider river valley and not just the narrow bottom of this section of the Valley.

This conclusion is supported by the fact that the 2006 CBA LCA concluded that the boundary of sub-unit A7a of the host River Valley LCA 7A that differentiated the valley floor from the remainder LCA A7 was aligned with Hammonds Road as opposed to the edge of the flood plain and the other features that are identified in the Terence O'Rourke response.

Key landscape characteristics of LCA A7 that are reiterated in the more detailed analysis provided in the recent Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study are supportive. These are primarily the presence of large arable fields, the fragmentation and decline of the hedgerow network and the low level of tree cover (away from the floodplain) that result in a landscape that is open in character allied with the sparse settlement and road pattern. Consequently, there are few landscape elements that could be utilised to define the eastern edge of CE5 beyond the edge of the floodplain with its tree-lined drainage ditch. Hence it should be accepted that to maximise CE5's potential to fulfil the multifunctional role of a Green Corridor, and in accordance with the overarching hierarchical methodology set out in the Review Report for selection of parcel boundaries, the selection of Hammonds Road is logical and defensible.

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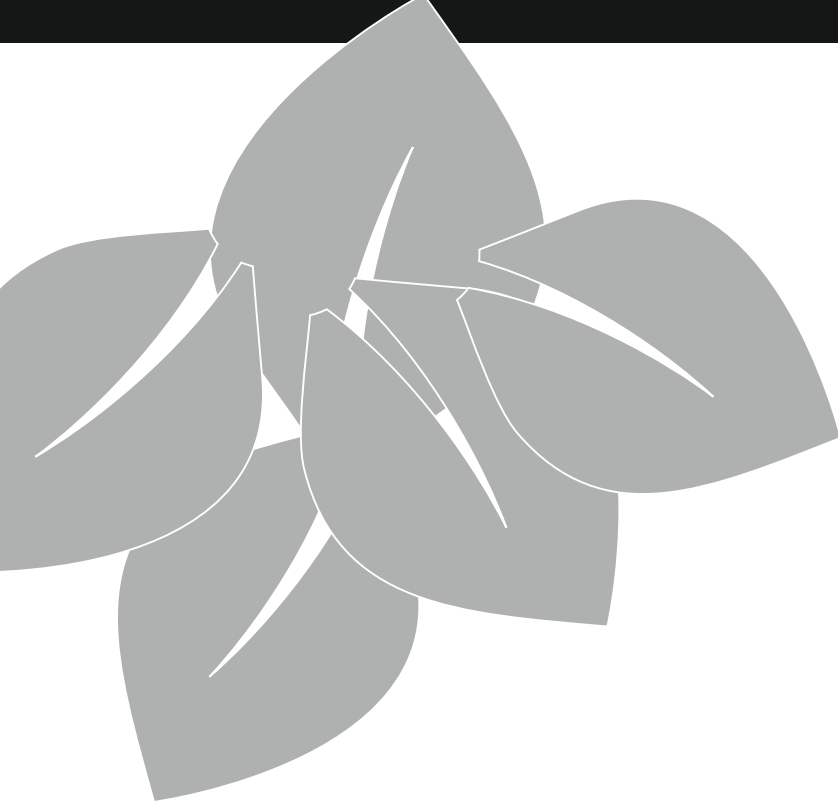
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