

# Matters and Issues for the Chelmsford Draft Local Plan Examination

## Hearing Statement

Matter 6 - Housing Provision  
Matter 6b - Housing Provision in Growth Area 2 – North Chelmsford

November 2018

**Matters and Issues for the Chelmsford  
Draft Local Plan Examination**

**Matter 6 - Housing Provision  
Matter 6b - Housing Provision in Growth Area 2 – North Chelmsford**

<b>Project Ref:</b>	25746/A5/P8/JT/SO		
<b>Status:</b>	Draft		
<b>Issue/Rev:</b>	01		
<b>Date:</b>	November		
<b>Prepared by:</b>	James Tipping		
<b>Checked by:</b>	Gareth Wilson		
<b>Authorised by:</b>	Gareth Wilson		

Barton Willmore  
St Andrews House  
St Andrews Road  
Cambridge  
CB4 1WB

Tel: 01223 345 555

Ref: 25746/A5/P8/JT/SO  
File Ref: 25746.P8.MS.JT  
Date: November 2018

**COPYRIGHT**

**The contents of this document must not be copied or reproduced in whole or in part without the written consent of Barton Willmore Planning LLP.**

**All Barton Willmore stationery is produced using recycled or FSC paper and vegetable oil based inks.**

**CONTENTS**

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Matter 6 – Housing Provision

3.0 Matter 6b - Housing Provision in Growth Area 2 – North Chelmsford

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **Chelmsford Draft Local Plan Examination, November 2018**

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared by Barton Willmore on behalf of Bloor Homes Eastern, pursuant to Matters 6: Housing Provision, and 6b: Housing Provision in Growth Area 2 – North Chelmsford. This follows representations to the Regulation 19 pre-submission consultation (reference PS1248, PS1250, PS1251, PS1252, and PS1253).

## 2.0 MATTER 6 – HOUSING PROVISION

***Main issue** – Whether the identified housing requirement is sound and whether the Plan sets out a positively prepared strategy for the supply and delivery of housing development that is justified, effective and consistent with national policy.*

*Question 55. Is the methodology for housing site assessment and selection as set out in the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) documents EB072A to EB072G sound?*

- a. Do the ‘absolute constraints’ and criteria for suitability, deliverability and achievability accord with national planning policy and guidance and are they justified (EB072B and EB072C)?*
- b. Are the SLAA site assessments robustly evidenced?*
- c. Are the reasons for selecting sites and rejecting others clear?*
- d. How has the SA informed the site selection decisions?*

2.1 We consider that the methodology for housing site assessment and selection as set out in the Council’s SLAA is considered sound. However, there are specific concerns over how the Council has assessed capacity, giving consideration to constraints. This point specifically refers to draft allocation Site 6 (North of Broomfield), which is supported by draft policy SGS6.

2.2 The SLAA methodology identified at Appendix 2 of the SLAA (document reference EB072B) sets out the Council’s approach to assessing sites that are to be included as draft allocations. Within this document, dated 15 September 2017, the draft allocation of Site 6 is identified as ‘Council reference’ CF185 (SLAA ref. 177), providing a yield of 483 dwellings, and at a density of 35 dph. The Site Assessment states that the ‘*Site performs well against suitability, availability and achievability criteria*’ (against absolute constraints). However, it is clear that the same site assessment approach was undertaken as part of the Council’s Preferred Options Consultation Document, dated March 2017, which identifies SGS6 as delivering 800 homes. The Preferred Options document, states under the rationale for including SGS6 as a draft allocation (page 90), that the site ‘*Complies well with Strategic Priorities, Vision, Spatial Principles and Spatial Strategy in particular by focussing development at well-connected locations and in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy, utilising Garden Community Principles, delivering new and improved infrastructure including a new school, neighbourhood centre and contributions towards the Chelmsford North-East Bypass.*’ In addition, the same rationale refers to the

site as being '*Viable and available*', and that there is '*No overriding physical constraints to bringing forward the allocation in this location.*'

- 2.3 Moreover, the Council's Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report, also dated March 2017, which supports the draft Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation Document, and explicitly refers to SGS 6 as part of the 'Preferred Spatial Strategy'. It refers to SGS 6 (North of Broomfield) as delivering 800 homes (see table 1.42). This reiterates the comments provided within the Preferred Options Document, as referenced within paragraph 2.2 above. In addition to this, page 127 and 128 of the SA, dated March 2017, refers to the policy requirements in support of 800 dwellings at SGS6, requiring a 'new neighbourhood centre, primary school and nursery and contributions to secondary education provision'. The SA further states that *"In consequence, the appraisal of the associated site against SA Objective 4 (Urban Renaissance) (see Appendix G) has moved from a minor positive effect to a significant positive effect (positive effects on SA Objective 3 are also expected to be further strengthened)."*
- 2.4 Accordingly, whilst the methodology for selecting sites is considered 'sound', there is little or no evidence provided by the Council in determining changes to site capacity at draft allocation Site 6 (SGS6).

***Question 58. It is not clear whether some of the site allocations within the Plan are 'policies' as they are not referred to as such, except Policy GR1. Should all the site allocations clearly state that they are policies for clarity and effectiveness?***

- 2.5 At pages 3 to 5 of the draft Local Plan there is an 'Index' to policies, which sets out the Strategic, Site, and Local Policies. Under the 'Index of Site Policies' are the site allocations. This infers that these site allocations (including strategic growth and growth sites) are policies.
- 2.6 In addition, Paragraph 7.3, which supports Table 3 (Types of Site Allocations), states that 'the site policies are set out in the sections dealing with each Growth Area with a policy for each site allocation. These policies set out the amount and type of development expected to be provided within each of the site allocations. They also set out what specific supporting infrastructure and other requirements are needed for each site.'
- 2.7 However, to aid clarity and consistency, all 'Site Policies' should be labelled as policies.

### 3.0 MATTER 6b – HOUSING PROVISION IN GROWTH AREA 2 – NORTH CHELMSFORD

***Main issue – Whether the supply of housing development in Growth Area 2 – North Chelmsford (GA2) is sound.***

***Question 65. Are the housing site allocations in GA2 within Location 4: North East Chelmsford, Location 5: Great Leighs and Location 6: North of Broomfield justified and deliverable? In particular:***

- a. Is the scale of housing for each site allocation, particularly the large new Garden Community for North East Chelmsford and the other Strategic Growth Sites, justified having regard to any constraints, existing local infrastructure and the provision of necessary additional infrastructure?***
- b. Is the housing trajectory realistic and are there any sites which might not be delivered in accordance with the timescale set?***
- c. Are the planning and masterplanning principles justified?***
- d. Are the specific development and site infrastructure requirements clearly identified for each site allocation, are they necessary and are they justified by robust evidence? Is any other infrastructure necessary for site delivery?***
- e. Are the site boundaries justified?***
- f. Will the site allocations in these locations achieve sustainable development?***
- g. Are any amendments necessary to ensure soundness?***

3.1 Our response to this question relates to the draft allocation land as controlled by Bloor Homes Eastern (SGS6). To reiterate, we consider that the allocation is justified and deliverable, and is therefore sound. There are no planning reasons why 'Location 6' should not be allocated.

- a. Is the scale of housing for each site allocation, particularly the large new Garden Community for North East Chelmsford and the other Strategic Growth Sites, justified having regard to any constraints, existing local infrastructure and the provision of necessary additional infrastructure?***

3.2 In response to question a, the Council's evidence is not clear as to site capacity. Accordingly, the reduction from 800 units to 450 units is not explained or justified by the Council. In addition, it is clearly identified that the methodology contained within the

Council's SLAA have been consistently applied throughout the draft Local Plan process, though has resulted in two differing yields for the site.

- 3.3 We support the 'Supporting on-site development' forming part of the SGS6, which includes a neighbourhood Centre and a new stand-alone early years and childcare nursery. It should be noted that irrespective of whether a neighbourhood centre or local centre is required, its success and necessity depends on viability. The capacity of the site should be determined through supporting evidence, including landscape, highways, ecology and education considerations. This would demonstrate that the proposed 450 dwellings within SGS6 is an arbitrary number. Without repeating commentary at Matter 6, paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3 of this hearing statement are clear that sustainable development can be achieved on SGS6, providing a development of around 750 dwellings, primary school and other associated infrastructure as described within the draft supporting policy, SGS6. It is also clear that the provision of a primary school on-site will aid the measure of overall sustainability.
- 3.4 In particular, we have concerns around the evidence base informing the primary school infrastructure requirements. The Chelmsford area has delivered new housing in the period since the millennium in relatively large parcels that has permitted detailed monitoring of its population in real time and in significant detail. The evidence is that in respect of non-urban areas of Chelmsford, the child yield is significantly greater than that assumed in the Essex County Council Developer Guide. The evidence suggests a shortfall against the provision identified. As a consequence, Location 6 North of Broomfield, as described in the Council's Preferred Options Consultation Document, dated March 2017, which identifies SGS6 as delivering 800 homes with a primary school is a more reliable provision of primary school infrastructure.
- 3.5 An updated Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA), dated November 2018, has been undertaken by Barton Willmore on behalf of Bloor Homes (**Appendix A**). Within the LVA and associated appendices, the Site has been assessed in terms of landscape character and visual impact. The report notes that 'the Site is relatively visually well contained'. From the limited number of locations where the majority of the Site is seen, it is mainly viewed within the context of the surrounding development, including the hospital buildings south of Woodhouse Lane. The LVA also identifies the existing landscape features and areas of character within the Site that should be protected as part of any future design, as well as demonstrating how these features may be incorporated into a future masterplan design as part of an enhanced green infrastructure. The LVA identifies opportunities for mitigation and enhancement, including the retention and enhancement of the existing green infrastructure within the Site, the enhancement of the planting along

the northern boundary to reduce visual impact and improve the field boundary, and the protection of the character of Woodhouse Lane, particularly in the east.

- 3.6 Ecological assessments have also been undertaken in respect of SGS6. The findings of the ecological assessment, dated November 2018 (**attached at Appendix B**), identifies areas for mitigation and enhancements, which include, for example, retention and reinforcing of existing hedgerows; creating green corridors that could potentially link to Sparrowhawk Wood and Puddings Wood; tree/woodland planting; and enhance the network of SuDS to benefit wildlife. This can be incorporated into a well-planned and sustainable development whilst still supporting an overall capacity greater than claimed in the current draft SGS6
- 3.7 An assessment of surface water (SW) drainage has been carried out, which demonstrates that the existing excavated area to the eastern part of the site can be utilised, in principle, for SW attenuation and discharge. Further SW attenuation is required to the south of the site. SuDs treatment trains will be developed to control water at source, and convey flows to the proposed outfalls. These elements will treat the post development flows before final discharge to the dis-used agricultural reservoir. Again, this demonstrates the site is relatively unconstrained in terms of delivering a higher quantum of development. To that end, SGS6 can achieve the aims of the policy requirements, which can include a higher threshold of housing of round 750 dwellings.
- 3.8 In transport terms, the modelling work undertaken within Essex Highways Pre-Submission Strategic & Local Junction Modelling (dated January 2018) considers the draft allocation of 800 homes within North of Broomfield. The same modelling work within the document has assessed the downward revised dwellings numbers. Overall, from the initial modelling work of 800 homes, now down to 450 dwellings, has resulted in a reduced trip generation and is deemed positive in terms of traffic flows for the proposed development. Nevertheless, it should be highlighted that the SA, dated March 2017, tests for 800 units for SGS6, resulting in a 'positive' effect in transport terms.

***b. Is the housing trajectory realistic and are there any sites which might not be delivered in accordance with the timescale set?***

- 3.9 For question b, it is considered the housing trajectory, specifically for Site 6 (North of Broomfield), is considered appropriate and realistic – commencing in 2021 and up to 2028. This would ensure full flexibility (20% buffer) in terms of the planned supply in the short-medium term. The overall delivery of the site could still be achieved within the

housing trajectory period for a 750 unit scheme. It should be made clear that Bloor Homes are committed to an early delivery of housing as identified within the Council's housing trajectory.

***c. Are the planning and masterplanning principles justified?***

- 3.10 A Statement of Common Ground acknowledges that principles are referred to within the Policy SGS6. Inevitably there are matters of detail which policy cannot ever prejudge. Delivering spatial plans or masterplans requires 'objectives' to be considered. Whilst it may sound like semantics, masterplanning principles ought to emerge from consideration of site characteristics and a due process of consideration.
- 3.11 For question c, under 'movement and access' to draft policy SGS6, second bullet point refers to the need to 'provide access' to Broomfield hospital. This can only be considered in the context of the relationship between SPA1 and SGS6. This matter is addressed in a Statement of Common Ground.

***d. Are the specific development and site infrastructure requirements clearly identified for each site allocation, are they necessary and are they justified by robust evidence? Is any other infrastructure necessary for site delivery?***

- 3.12 For question d, the education report undertaken by EFM, dated August 2018 (attached at **Appendix C**) supports the provision of a primary school on site. This is based on the capacity of existing schools; that the local primary school at Broomfield is physically closer to Chelmsford; and that the indicated child yield from new housing in the area is substantially higher than the County Council's standard methodology. Paragraph 162 of the NPPF (2012) is clear that Local Planning Authorities should assess the "*capacity of infrastructure*" for matters such as education. It is considered that the Council have not fully considered the capacity of education provision for the North of Chelmsford, and in turn, what could be provided on-site at SGS6 to support the wider catchment.
- 3.13 In addition to the above, the infrastructure requirements as set out within SGS6 are clearly identified in most cases, though there are certain specific infrastructure items that need further consideration. We have made clear within our representations to the Draft Local Plan (attached at **Appendix D**) that the connection from the SGS6 site boundary to Broomfield Hospital is beyond the scope of SGS6. SGS6 would facilitate a new access road from Main Road (B1008) providing the opportunity for the Hospital to extend this road across safeguarded land within the Hospital campus, ensuring successful integration with the existing internal road network of the Hospital. The suggested amendments to

policy SGS6 made within our representations have not been taken onboard by the Council, and therefore do not feature within the Council's Schedule of Additional Changes document (ref. SD002). The Council has clarified at paragraph 7.282 of the draft Local Plan the change from a 'multi secondary purpose link' to a 'new vehicular access', which clearly does not address the concerns raised within our representations.

- 3.14 Our proposed changes to draft policy SGS6 suggest we 'facilitate' only access to Broomfield Hospital and Farleigh Hospice, removing the word 'provide'. In support of this approach, we recommend removing supporting paragraph 7.288 of the draft Local Plan and replaced with the following: 'The opportunity for Broomfield Hospital to have a Secondary Access Road is facilitated by the development of the site. The Policy SPA1 looks to the further development of Broomfield Hospital incorporating a safeguarded corridor linking the Hospital campus roads with the B1008. The opportunity also exists for improved access to Farleigh Hospice and the King Edward VI Grammar School playing fields through the downgrading of Woodhouse Lane and North Court Road to routes for local access only.' The SoCG makes clear that the road is a staff access only.
- 3.15 The Council considers that policies SGS6 and SPA1 are interlinked by virtue of the proposed road that will potentially connect from SGS6 to Broomfield hospital. However, we have made clear at paragraph 3.14, and within the SoCG, that SGS6 and Bloor Homes, can only facilitate access to the hospital across that land. And it is for the hospital and Policy SPA1 to safeguard a route.

***e. Are the site boundaries justified?***

- 3.16 We consider that the site boundaries are justified, having been assessed through the Council's HELAA and updated SA.

***f. Will the site allocations in these locations achieve sustainable development?***

- 3.17 For question f, it has been demonstrated through the Council's updated SA that the proposed allocation at SGS6 will achieve sustainable development, in accordance with the NPPF (2012). We also consider that a great capacity of development of around 750 dwellings, with a primary school, local centre and associated infrastructure will also provide a 'sustainable development', as suggested within the Council's SA, dated March 2017.

***g. Are any amendments necessary to ensure soundness?***

3.18 For question g, we would suggest changes are made in respect of the following:

- a) Remove reference to 450 units, and allow for a quantum of development that reflects an appropriate capacity analysis of the site for around 750 dwellings with land for a 2FE primary school;
- b) The requirement that the development shall 'provide' an access road to Broomfield hospital should be amended and reflect the proposed wording as suggested within our representations (**Appendix D**) alongside those matters set out in the Statement of Common Ground; and
- c) clarification within either SGS6 or the supporting text as to the requirement for bus priority measures.

---

# Land at Broomfield: Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Prepared on behalf of Bloor Homes Eastern

November 2018



# Land at Broomfield: Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Prepared on behalf of Bloor Homes Eastern

<b>Project Ref:</b>	<b>25746/A5</b>
<b>Status:</b>	Final
<b>Issue/ Rev:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	November 2018
<b>Prepared by:</b>	WL
<b>Checked by:</b>	WL/JT
<b>Authorised by:</b>	MDC

Barton Willmore LLP  
7 Soho Square  
London  
W1D 3QB

Tel: 020 7446 6888  
Fax: 020 7446 6889  
Email: [wendy.lancaster@bartonwillmore.co.uk](mailto:wendy.lancaster@bartonwillmore.co.uk)

Ref: 25746/A5  
Date: November 2018  
Status: Final

## COPYRIGHT

The contents of this document must not be copied or reproduced in whole or in part without the written consent of Barton Willmore LLP.

All Barton Willmore stationery is produced using recycled or FSC paper and vegetation oil-based inks.



**CONTENTS**

1.0 Introduction ..... 1

2.0 Landscape Baseline ..... 4

3.0 Landscape Planning Policy ..... 8

4.0 Landscape Character Baseline ..... 19

5.0 Visual Appraisal ..... 31

6.0 Opportunities and Constraints ..... 34

7.0 Summary and Conclusion ..... 35

**ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL**

- Figure 1: Site Context Plan
- Figure 2: Topographical Features Plan
- Figure 3: Site Appraisal Plan
- Figure 4: Landscape Character Plan
- Figure 5: Visual Appraisal Plan
- Figure 6: Opportunities and Constraints Plan
- Site Context Photographs
- Site Appraisal Photographs

**APPENDICES**

- Appendix A.1: Extracts from Published Documents



---

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Barton Willmore Landscape Planning and Design (BWLPD) was commissioned in February 2018 by Bloor Homes Eastern to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) on land at Broomfield, north of Chelmsford. The land is allocated as Strategic Area 6 in the emerging Chelmsford City Local Plan.
- 1.2 The land being considered for future development is referred to as 'the Site'. The location of the Site is demonstrated on Figure 1: Site Context Plan and Figure 3: Site Appraisal Plan. The 'Study Area' broadly reflects the area of land shown on Figure 1: Site Context Plan.
- 1.3 This report comprises the following elements:
- A study of the Site and its landscape context, combined with an analysis of the relevant published landscape character assessments, to understand the degree to which the Site reflects local landscape character and its contribution to the landscape character of the Study Area.
  - A visual analysis of the Site to understand its visibility and its role within views of the Study Area.
  - The identification of the landscape and visual opportunities and constraints to development within the Site, and recommendations for landscape enhancement measures that may be implemented as part of any future development proposals. This information will be used to inform the emerging masterplan for the Site.
- 1.4 Supporting illustrative information is presented in the following accompanying plans and photographs:
- **Figure 1: Site Context Plan** - demonstrating the location of the Site in relation to areas of settlement, key areas of vegetation and landscape and cultural heritage designations within the Study Area.
  - **Figure 2: Topographical Features Plan** - demonstrating the topography of the Site and Study Area to aid the understanding of the visual envelope of the Site.
  - **Figure 3: Site Appraisal Plan** - demonstrating key landscape and built features around the Site and the locations of the Site Appraisal Photographs.
  - **Figure 4: Landscape Character Plan** - demonstrating the location of the character areas set out within published landscape character assessments.
  - **Figure 5: Visual Appraisal Plan** - demonstrating the areas from which the Site is visible as well as the locations of the Site Context Photographs.
  - **Site Context Photographs** - illustrating key views towards the Site and the role that the Site plays in those views.
-

- 
- **Site Appraisal Photographs** - illustrating the character of the different areas of the Site and the landscape features within it.

1.5 In addition, the extracts from the relevant landscape character assessments are included within Appendix A.1 of this report.

### **Methodology**

- 1.6 The methodology employed in carrying out the LVA of the Proposed Development has been drawn from the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment's Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' 3rd Edition<sup>1</sup> (2013) also referred to the 'the GLVIA3'. The aim of these guidelines is to set high-standards for the scope and content of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) and to establish certain principles that will help to achieve consistency, credibility, transparency and effectiveness throughout the assessment.
- 1.7 The GLVIA3 sets out the difference between Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA). The preparation of an LVA has the rigour of the EIA process but looks to identify issues of possible harm that might arise from the development proposal and offset them through change and modification of the proposals before a fix of the final design scheme. This LVA has been used as a tool to inform the design process, rather than an assessment of a final proposal.
- 1.8 The assessment of landscape and visual effects, in common with any assessment of environmental effects, includes a combination of objective and subjective judgements. It is, therefore, important that a structured and consistent approach is adopted to ensure that the assessment undertaken is as objective as possible.
- 1.9 A landscape appraisal is the systematic description and analysis of the features within the landscape, such as landform, vegetation cover, settlement and transport patterns and land use which create a particular sense of place. A visual appraisal assesses visual receptors, which are the viewers of the landscape, and could include locations such as residential or business properties, public buildings, public open space and Public Rights of Way (PRoW).
- 1.10 A desktop assessment of the Study Area was undertaken, including an assessment of landscape character, landform, landscape features, historic evolution, policy and designations. This information was used as a basis against which to compare the findings of the Site assessment.

---

<sup>1</sup> Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition

---

- 
- 1.11 The Study Area has been confined to an area approximately 3km from the Site. This distance from the Site was chosen based on existing features such as landform and vegetation; settlement morphology and land use patterns. This is considered a sufficient area to establish the landscape and visual baseline and to allow the appraisal of the Site and its context.
- 1.12 A brief description of the existing land use of the Study Area is provided and includes reference to existing settlement, transport routes and vegetation cover, as well as local landscape designations, elements of cultural and heritage value and local landmarks or tourist destinations. These factors combine to provide an understanding of landscape value and sensitivity, and an indication of key views and viewpoints that are available to visual receptors, which are then considered in the visual appraisal.
- 1.13 The Site has been considered in terms of the following:
- i) Landscape Character  
i.e. land form, vegetation cover, land use, scale, state of repair of individual elements, representation of typological character, enclosure pattern, form/line and movement
  - ii) Visual Influence  
i.e. land form influences, tree and woodland cover, numbers and types of residents, numbers and types of visitors and scope for mitigating potential for visual impacts
  - iii) Landscape Value  
i.e. national designations, local designations, tranquillity / remoteness, scenic beauty and cultural associations
-

---

## 2.0 LANDSCAPE BASELINE

- 2.1 This Chapter should be read in conjunction with the visual material included within this document, including the series of plans, Site Appraisal Photographs demonstrating the character and features of the Site, and the Site Context Photographs, demonstrating the context of the Site and views towards it.

### Site and its Location

- 2.2 The Site is 27.5 ha in size and is situated on the northern edge of Broomfield, to the east of Blasford Hill (B1008) and to the north of Woodhouse Lane, on the east facing slopes of the Chelmer Valley, as shown on **Figure 1: Site Context Plan**.
- 2.3 The Site adjoins the northern extent of the Broomfield Defined Settlement Limit (Policy CP5 of the North Chelmsford Area Action Plan (NCAAP)). The land south of Woodhouse Lane to the south-east of the Site has recently been granted permission under planning reference 13/00409/FUL, for 188 dwellings, 90 care homes, GP and a retail store.
- 2.4 The Site comprises three irregularly shaped fields, separated by mature hedgerows and trees in varying condition, as shown on **Figure 3: Site Appraisal Plan**. The westernmost and largest field is in use for arable farming, as shown on **Site Appraisal Photograph D**. The north-eastern field is also mainly in use as arable farmland but also contains a large water-filled gravel pit, a number of industrial type sheds and an area of hardstanding, as shown on **Site Appraisal Photograph E**. The south-eastern field is the smallest of all and comprises an area of pastoral grassland containing individual specimen trees, some of which are remnant hedgerow trees and one of which is a conifer that is present on the 1921 OS map, see **Site Appraisal Photograph H** and **Site Context Photograph 8**. Several of the mature trees are covered by a Tree Preservation Order (reference 2004/065).
- 2.5 The northern boundary is formed by a hedgerow with trees, which is in poor condition and in need of maintenance and management, and a small copse of trees and scrub at the junction with a further central hedgerow and tree belt, see **Site Appraisal Photographs C and I**. The land to the north of this comprises open arable farmland. The western boundary is formed by a concrete post and wire fence that separates the Site from the adjacent sports fields, seen as being more open on the right side of **Site Appraisal Photograph D**. The southern boundary is marked by sporadic hedgerow and tree planting extending along the northern edge of Woodhouse Lane, which is a sunken lane for much of its length, see **Site Appraisal Photograph F**. Woodhouse Lane separates the Site from buildings to the south associated with Broomfield Hospital and an area of woodland (Puddings Wood) in the west, a hospice and residential properties in the centre and paddocks in the east, as seen on **Site Appraisal**
-

---

**Photograph D.** The northern part of the eastern boundary is formed by the B1008 Blasford Hill, as shown on **Site Context Photograph 4** and the remainder is formed by the rear boundaries of residential and commercial properties facing Blasford Hill, including Montpellier Farm, and an area of allotments.

- 2.6 A Public Right of Way (PRoW 25) extends northwards through the approximate centre of the Site, providing connectivity between Woodhouse Lane to the south of the Site and Lark's Lane to the north, via a parcel of ancient woodland (Sparrowhawk Wood) that is present within the field to the north of the Site.

### **Designations**

- 2.7 There are no national level landscape designations within the Study Area, e.g. an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as demonstrated by **Figure 1: Site Context Plan**.
- 2.8 Areas of Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland occur sporadically throughout the Study Area, the closest to the Site being Sparrowhawk Wood, 100m to the north of the north-western corner of the Site.
- 2.9 There are Conservation Areas at Little Waltham, located 350m to the north of the north-eastern corner of the Site, and at Great Waltham, 750m to the north of the northern boundary. There is a Grade II Registered Parkland at Langleys, 1km to the north of the northern boundary and a Scheduled Monument (SM) 500m to the north. Listed buildings occur throughout the Study Area but are generally focussed towards the historic settlements within the river valley. The closest listed buildings to the Site are those along Blasford Hill, approximately 100m away from the south-eastern corner of the Site.
- 2.10 The Site is not subject to any landscape related designations and is not within or adjoining a Conservation Area. Whilst the Site is not covered by any landscape designations, it is situated immediately to the west of the River Chelmer Green Wedge. More detail regarding the Green Wedge is included in Chapter 3: Planning Policy.
- 2.11 Chelmsford City Council has deemed it appropriate to provide statutory protection to trees on and/or neighbouring this site through the serving of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), ref no TPO/2004/065, TPO/2003/055, and TPO/2001/107. An arboricultural assessment of all trees and hedgerows associated with the site were undertaken by Hayden's Arboricultural Consultants, report dated 27<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

### **Settlement and Land Use**

- 2.12 The Site is situated on the northern edge of Broomfield, which forms part of an almost continuous area of development extending north from Chelmsford along the B1008 and
-

---

Chelmer Valley. Broomfield has extended north and south from its historic core until it has effectively merged with the low-density development associated with Blasford Hill to the east of the Site. Little Waltham, a small village to the north-east of the Site, has expanded towards the south at Merefields until the settlements are almost contiguous when travelling along the B1008.

2.13 The Site is situated to the immediate north of development within Broomfield Hospital and other associated uses. It is bordered to the immediate east by existing residential and commercial development facing onto Blasford Hill, including Montpelier Farm. The north-eastern corner of the Site forms part of the separation between the northern edge of Broomfield at Blasford Hill with Little Waltham to the north.

2.14 Away from the river valleys, development is sporadic, mainly comprising individual farmsteads.

### **Access and Rights of Way**

2.15 The main vehicular routes within the Study Area comprise the B1008, which extends north to south along the eastern boundary of the Site, and the A130, which extends approximately parallel with the B1008 but on the opposite (eastern) side of the Chelmer Valley. The Study Area is crossed by frequent winding, and often sunken, roads, many of which make frequent 90-degree bends.

2.16 The Centenary Circle National Trail extends east to west through the southern part of the Study Area, joining the Saffron Trail, which extends approximately north to south, 400m to the west of the Site. The remainder of the Study Area is crossed by a dense network of frequent Public Rights of Way.

### **Vegetation and Field Pattern**

2.17 The landscape typically has an open, yet wooded character, with copses and small woods resulting in wooded horizons despite the loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The valley floors tend to be more wooded in character with greater instances of tree planting. Willow and poplar are planted within valley floors and sides.

2.18 Fields are small to medium in size and irregular in shape. Field rationalisation has been extensive throughout the Study Area, resulting in larger fields, particularly to the north of the Site. The Site itself is shown as comprising 11 fields on the 1875 OS map. Sparrowhawk Wood, situated approximately 100m to the north of the north-western corner of the Site, historically extended as far as the Site boundary. Puddings Wood is located to the immediate south of the Site but is now approximately one third of the size as shown on the 1875 OS map.

---

- 
- 2.19 Where hedgerows remain, these are often overgrown and contain mature trees. The two main tree belts within the Site that separate the three fields contain frequent instances of mature trees and are shown as containing trees on the 1875 OS map.

### **Topography and Hydrology**

- 2.20 The Chelmer Valley forms a distinct depression in the landscape, extending north to south through the centre of the Study Area, as shown on **Figure 2: Topographical Features Plan**. The land rises up to the east and west to wide ridges of 65-70m Above Ordnance Datum (mAOD). These ridges fall away to the south towards the centre of Chelmsford.
- 2.21 Smaller valleys occur in the south-east and south-west of the Study Area, housing tributaries to the River Chelmer.
- 2.22 The Site is situated on the western edge of the Chelmer Valley, rising from approximately 10mAOD at the eastern boundary with Blasford Hill to nearly 60mAOD at the western boundary with the playing fields.
-

---

## 3.0 LANDSCAPE PLANNING POLICY

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012)

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was first published in March 2012 has been updated and published in July 2018. However, there is currently a period of grace under which Local Plans are examined against the 2012 NPPF, the relevant extracts of which are included below.
- 3.1 The NPPF aims to provide one concise document which sets out the Government's planning policies for England by replacing previous Planning Policy Guidance (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). It aims to provide a planning framework within which the local community and local authorities can produce distinctive local plans which respond to local needs and priorities.
- 3.2 The NPPF promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, defined as *"meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"*, and providing it is in accordance with the relevant up-to-date Local Plan and policies set out in the NPPF, including those identifying restrictions with regard to designated areas.
- 3.3 Paragraph 14 describes the key theme throughout the Framework is that of 'Achieving Sustainable Development' and confirms that the *"presumption in favour of sustainable development"* should be seen as a *"golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking."*
- 3.4 The NPPF identifies thirteen aspects which should be considered in developing local plans and reviewing planning applications. Those of relevance to the landscape and visual considerations of the Site and proposed development include Section 7: Requiring good design. Paragraph 58 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments, inter alia:
- *"...Establish a strong sense of place,*
  - *...respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings*
  - *...are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping."*
- 3.5 Paragraph 61 states that:
- "planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment."*
-

---

3.6 Section 11: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment notes in paragraph 109 that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by inter alia *"protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils"*.

3.7 Paragraph 110 sets out that the aim, in preparing plans for development, should be to minimise adverse effects on the local and natural environment, and that plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value.

3.8 Paragraph 114 notes that furthermore, local planning authorities should:

*"set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure."*

3.9 Paragraph 125 states that:

*"By encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation."*

### **Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)**

3.10 Under the heading of Natural Environment, sub-heading Landscape, paragraph 001, PPG supports the use of landscape character assessment as a tool for understanding the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identifying the features that give it a sense of place, as a means to informing, planning and managing change. PPG makes reference to Natural England guidance on landscape character assessment.

3.11 Under the heading of Natural Environment, sub-heading Green Infrastructure (GI), paragraph 027 and 28 state that GI is a network of multifunctional green space and is important to the delivery of high-quality sustainable development and provide multiple benefits. Paragraph 30 states that GI should be well designed to create a sense of place by responding to local landscape character and help create safe and accessible environments and regeneration of brownfield Sites in existing built up areas.

### **Chelmsford City Council Planning Policy**

3.12 The existing Chelmsford Local Plan comprises five key documents of which the following are relevant to this Appraisal:

- Chelmsford Core Strategy and Development Control Policies (2008)
-

- 
- North Chelmsford Area Action Plan (2011)

3.13 A new Local Plan is being developed and the pre-submission draft is currently out to consultation until 14 March 2018. This document is supported by a number of evidence base documents which are also set out further below within this chapter.

*Chelmsford Core Strategy and Development Control Policies (2008)*

3.14 The Chelmsford Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan document (Core Strategy) sets out the long-term vision and objectives for the Borough as a whole, for the plan period up to 2021. Strategic Objectives and Development Control Policies are set out based on Themes, which include Managing Growth and Environmental Protection and Enhancement.

3.15 With respect to Theme 1: Managing Growth, Policy CP1 - Securing Sustainable Development seeks to promote and secure sustainable development. Policy CP2 - The Borough-wide Spatial Strategy provides the framework for growth and identifies the potential for growth in the Broomfield area, which is defined as a Key Defined Settlement within the settlement hierarchy. The Site lies immediately adjacent to the Broomfield Special Policy Area.

3.16 Policy CP5 - Containing urban growth states that urban growth will be contained by defining the physical limit of the urban areas of Chelmsford, South Woodham Ferrers and the Defined Settlements, which includes Broomfield. Beyond these areas, the Borough council will protect and enhance the character and openness of the countryside. The south-eastern boundary of the Site is adjacent to the Broomfield Defined Settlement Boundary.

3.17 Policy CP7 - Area Action Plans commits the Borough Council to preparing and implementing an Area Action Plans (AAP) for North Chelmsford, which includes Broomfield.

3.18 Policy CP9 - Protecting Areas of Natural and Built Heritage and Archaeological Importance falls under Theme 2: Environmental Protection and Enhancement. Policy CP9 seeks to sustain biodiversity, historic landscape character, archaeological and geological conservation by ensuring sites of international, national, regional and local importance are protected and enhanced. This includes Conservation Areas, the character and setting of Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens and Protected Lanes; as well as the open character, nature conservation importance and function of Green Wedges.

3.19 To the east of the Site, the River Chelmer Green Wedge is described as playing a *"major role in shaping the form and character of urban Chelmsford providing physical links between the urban areas of Chelmsford and the countryside beyond and providing important amenity, recreation and nature conservation resources"*.

---

- 
- 3.20 Policy CP13 - Minimising Environmental Impact seeks to ensure that development proposals minimise their impact on the environment, and do not give rise to significant and adverse impacts on health, amenity and the wider environment.
- 3.21 Policy CP14 - Environmental Quality and Landscape Character seeks the enhancement of the environmental quality of the countryside and settlements, informed by the preparation of a Landscape Character Assessment and Village Design Statements.
- 3.22 Policy CP20 - Achieving Well Designed High Quality Places requires the layout and design of all new development to create well designed high-quality successful places; and should be based on thorough site appraisal and be sensitive to its context.
- 3.23 With respect to Development Control Policies, Policy DC2 - Controlling Development in the Countryside beyond the Metropolitan Green Belt states that "the countryside within the Rural Area beyond the Metropolitan Green Belt as identified on the Proposals Map will be protected for its own sake, particularly for its landscapes, natural resources and areas of ecological, historic, archaeological, agricultural and recreational value" and limits new development within the countryside. The Site lies immediately adjacent to the Defined Settlement Boundary of Broomfield, and the Special Policy Area at Broomfield Hospital.
- 3.24 Policy DC4 - Protecting Existing Amenity safeguards the amenities of occupiers of nearby properties.
- 3.25 Policy DC9 - Green Wedges seeks to protect and enhance the open character of the river valleys and associated floodplains, providing a network of natural habitats and areas of informal recreation. The Site is outwith but adjacent to the River Chelmer Green Wedge.
- 3.26 Policy DC14 - Protecting Trees and Hedges affords protection to woodland, trees and hedgerows, and usually requires the replacement of trees and hedge of an appropriate type, size and in a suitable location should felling or removal be permitted.
- 3.27 Policy DC15 - Protected Lanes identifies country lanes and byways of historic and landscape value, which make an important contribution to the rural character of certain areas. These are protected by preserving, as far as possible, the trees, hedgerows, banks, ditches and verges which contribute to their character, and by resisting development proposals which have a detrimental effect on them. There are no protected lanes within the Site, although a protected lane, Lark's Lane, is located 500m to the north of the Site.
- 3.28 Policy DC18 - Listed Buildings protects listed buildings and their special character and setting. There are no listed buildings within the Site, however a cluster of listed buildings on the Roman Road are located adjacent to the south-eastern boundary of the Site.
-

- 
- 3.29 Policy DC40 - Public Open Space for New Residential Developments sets out the local standards for the provision and distribution of local and strategic open space for all new residential developments.
- 3.30 Policy DC42 - Site Planning requires that the site planning of development proposals has a spatially coherent and attractive layout and incorporates existing site features of value. The "Making Places" SPD provides further guidance.
- 3.31 Policy DC45 - Achieving High Quality Development requires that the siting, scale, form, massing, materials and detail of proposed buildings have an appropriate relationship with the character and appearance of development in the surrounding area.

*North Chelmsford Area Action Plan (2011)*

- 3.32 The North Chelmsford AAP (NCAAP) sets out a strategy for managing development growth within North Chelmsford up to 2021, and then beyond. The NCAAP area includes North West Chelmsford, Springfield / North East Chelmsford, as well as the villages of Broomfield, Little Waltham and Great Waltham.
- 3.33 Strategic Objectives for environmental protection and enhancement include EPE3: protection and enhancement of the landscape which seeks to ensure that the landscape is one of the principal influences shaping development.
- 3.34 Strategic Objectives for Quality of Life include QL4: Place-making strategy which seeks to ensure that "the layout of development relates to the physical form and locations of activity to the landscape, topography and historic heritage, drawing out and consolidating local distinctiveness".
- 3.35 The NCAAP identifies land to the north of Hospital Approach and south of Woodhouse Lane as Site Allocation 1 for a local neighbourhood centre providing 150 - 200 new homes, convenience retail and healthcare related uses. Planning permission has recently been granted for 188 homes, 90 care home units, a GP and retail store.

*Chelmsford City Council Draft Local Plan Pre-Submission Document (Regulation 19 – Publication Draft) (January 2018)*

- 3.36 Strategic Policy 7 of the document is title 'Protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the Green Belt and valued landscapes'. The subsequent paragraphs make reference to the protection of the local distinctiveness of the area and the protection of river valleys.
-

---

3.37 Strategic Policy 8 refers to the design of new developments and makes reference to the creation of new green infrastructure within new development.

3.38 The following Strategic Policies are of relevance to this Appraisal:

- S1 – Spatial Principles – includes reference to protecting and enhancing the character of valued landscapes, and the respect of the pattern and hierarchy of existing settlements.
- S3 – Addressing Climate Change and Flood Risk – Promotes the creation of green infrastructure.
- S6 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment – Sets out the intention to plan for 'multifunctional network of green infrastructure which protects, enhances and...restores natural ecosystem'.
- S11 – Infrastructure Requirements – includes the need for the provision of new green and natural infrastructure within new development, including the contribution to a multifunctional network of green infrastructure.
- S13 – The Role of the Countryside – refers to the designation of Green Wedges and Green Corridors.

3.39 The Site is identified as Strategic Growth Area 6 – North of Broomfield. The allocation has been reduced to 'around 450 homes' with a new neighbourhood centre and early year and children's nursery. Under the heading of 'Historic and Natural Environment', the Policy sets out a number of obligations, including the following:

- Protect the setting of historic properties and the scheduled monument surrounding the site;
- Mitigate the visual impact of the development;
- Enhance the historic environment;
- Create a network of green infrastructure;
- Provide suitable SuDS and flood risk management; and
- Ensure appropriate habitat mitigation and creation is provided.

3.40 Under the heading of 'Design and Layout', the Policy states that the development should ***"Provide a coherent network of public open space, formal and informal sport, recreation and community space within the site"***.

3.41 The Draft Local Plan sets out a series of more specific policies, of which the following are relevant:

- CO1 – Green Belt, Green Wedges, Green Corridors and Rural Areas – Green Wedges form part of the river valleys which themselves form a connected green infrastructure
-

---

network. The policy states that *"development which materially harms the role, function, character and appearance of this valued landscape will be resisted"*.

- NE1 – Ecology and Biodiversity – All development should conserve and enhance the network of habitats, avoid negative impacts on biodiversity and deliver a net gain in biodiversity where possible.
- NE2 – Trees, Woodland and Landscape Features – Development must not result in unacceptable harm to natural landscape features that are important to the character and appearance of the area unless a landscape strategy demonstrates the loss would be compensated.
- MP1 – High Quality Design – Development will respond to its context through the use of materials, scale, siting and form.
- MP2 – Design and Place Shaping Principles in Major Developments – All major new developments should respond positively to local character and presence and enhance the quality of existing communities.
- PA1 – Protecting Amenity – Development must respect the amenity of occupiers of nearby properties.

### **Evidence Base**

*Chelmsford City Council, Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment Report (2018)*

- 3.42 As part of the evidence base to inform the emerging Local Plan, Chelmsford City Council have prepared a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment, which assesses the landscape sensitivity and capacity of a number of survey locations across Chelmsford.
- 3.43 The eastern part of the Site comprises the majority of parcel BFLP1 and the remainder of the Site forms approximately one third of BFLP2, both of which form part of a tract of land to the north of Broomfield.

#### Parcel BFLP1

- 3.44 Parcel BFLP1 is noted for its:
- *"Irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable fields marked by sinuous hedgerows and ditches;*
  - *Small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape;*
  - *Network of narrow, winding lanes; and*
  - *Strong sense of tranquillity."*
- 3.45 With regards to the visual context and characteristics, the report notes that there are limited private views, public views are from Woodhouse Lane and peripheral PRow and there are long distance views to the east of the parcel, across the River Chelmer.
-

---

3.46 The landscape sensitivity is assessed by the report as moderate, as a balance between the landscape character of the Site being largely typical of the published LCA, with the declining condition of the hedgerows. The moderate landscape sensitivity definition is:

***"Areas of landscape with reasonably strong characteristics with some evidence of alteration or degradation of character of features. These areas are potentially tolerant of some change as a result of new residential/ employment development."***

3.47 The visual sensitivity to development notes that Parcel BFLP1 is generally well contained, although there are views to the west and across the Chelmer Valley; making the edge of the parcel relatively sensitive and thus requiring mitigation. The Report notes that through such mitigation the harsh edge of Broomfield Hospital could be softened.

3.48 The landscape value of Parcel BFLP1 is assessed as moderate by the Report, as a balance between the Parcel's ordinary aesthetic appeal, recreational access and moderate sense of tranquillity.

3.49 From the above, the Report assesses the overall landscape capacity of Parcel BFLP1 as medium:

***"reflecting the ordinary character and sensitivity of the land, although careful attention to mitigation measures would be required to ensure that any development respects the particular visual sensitivity of the parcel's northern extent. Key characteristics/qualities to be safeguarded, recommendations for mitigation and guidelines are:***

- ***Maintenance and strengthening of existing hedgerows within and external to the parcel."***

3.50 The Report's methodology also notes that medium landscape capacity locations would be:

***"more favourable locations to be taken forward in the Local Plan process in landscape terms than those in which development would be less appropriate or difficult to accommodate within the landscape."***

#### Parcel BFLP2

3.51 All three parcels to the north of Broomfield are rated as having moderate overall landscape sensitivity, moderate landscape value and medium landscape capacity. Locations with medium to high landscape capacity are considered to be "locations where the landscape, with or without appropriate mitigation, appears to have capacity to accommodate development" and would be the most favourable locations to be taken forward in the Local Plan process in landscape terms.

---

- 3.52 The Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy states that strategic housing allocations will incorporate GI as a core principle of their development form, including links to the wider landscape context in which they will be located. This is because the housing allocations are acknowledged as exerting considerable influence on the locality include the introduction of significant built form into agricultural landscapes.
- 3.53 The Strategy sets out the evidence base and proposed strategy for the City's GI based upon a set of overall priorities, including:
- *"Reinforcing and extending the connectivity of, and accessibility to, Green Infrastructure resources;*
  - *Protecting and enhancing Green Infrastructure assets;*
  - *Recognising the critical role that the river valleys play as a focus for the Green Infrastructure assets across the City and its hinterland;*
  - *Paying particular attention to the integrity of protected areas;*
  - *Ensuring that existing Green Infrastructure resources are used to their best advantage;*
  - *Enhancing the quality and accessibility of Green Infrastructure resources; and*
  - *Promoting Green Infrastructure as central to the character and well-being of local communities."*
- 3.54 The GI strategy includes an analysis of the current level of access to natural greenspace and woodlands in the context of the Natural England Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) and the Woodland Trust Woodland Access Standards. The *Accessible Natural Green Space Across Chelmsford Plan* identifies the Site as being within 2km of Accessible Natural Green Space with an area of between 20 and 100ha. The *Woodland Accessibility Across Chelmsford Plan* identifies the Site as being within 500m of woodland between 2 and 19ha, namely Sparrowhawk Wood, located to the north of the Site.
- 3.55 The GI Strategy includes a *Spatial Strategy: Areas for Intervention Plan* which illustrates a series of broad, loosely defined zones and symbols in and around the Chelmsford area. The Site is identified as being located within *Area of Significant Change A3: Broomfield*, and the plan also identifies a swathe of land along the route of the River Chelmer in the vicinity of the Site as *Core Biodiversity Area C2: City Centre – Broomfield* and *River Valley Protection and Enhancement*. The Site is also located near Strategic Plan reference identified as *Access Enhancement B1: North East Chelmsford – Upper Chelmer*.
- 3.56 In relation to Strategic Plan References B1 and C2, the GI Strategy includes the following opportunities for enhancement:
-

- 
- *"Targeting specific areas for promoting specific aspects of Green Infrastructure, notably tree planting;*
  - *Developing initiatives across the hinterland such as community orchards which have proven worth as focal points for community identity and biodiversity enhancement; and*
  - *Systematically reviewing access provision and opportunities for specific landscapes, such as the River Valleys, and between key destinations".*

3.57 In relation to Area of Significant Change A3, the GI Strategy includes the following design principles:

- *"Landscape character – Green Infrastructure should contribute to the management, conservation and improvement of the local landscape;*
- *Biodiversity - Green Infrastructure should maintain and enhance biodiversity to ensure that development and implementation results in a net gain of Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and species;*
- *Woodland - Green Infrastructure should be delivered through the enhancement of existing woodlands and also by the creation of new woodlands and forest areas and linking existing woodlands;*
- *Waterways - Green Infrastructure should improve corridors along waterways and encourage increased access both on and by the water;*
- *Sport and recreation - Green Infrastructure should create new recreational facilities, particularly those that present opportunities to link urban and countryside areas;*
- *Natural process and environmental systems - Green Infrastructure should take account of and integrate with natural processes and systems;*
- *Managing urban greenspaces - Green Infrastructure should be managed and funded in urban areas to accommodate nature, wildlife and historic and cultural assets, and provide for sport and recreation; and*
- *Design - Green Infrastructure should be designed to high standards of quality and sustainability to deliver social and economic, as well as environmental benefits."*

3.58 The GI Strategy includes a series of best-practice guidelines to incorporate principles of GI and Biodiversity in new development, including the following:

- *"Create natural green spaces and wild or free play areas in the urban setting;*
  - *Create a range of sports facilities and pitches designed and maintained for use by the whole community, as part of the use of the principles of Active Design;*
  - *Create larger-scale natural habitat within informal open spaces, country parks and play areas;*
  - *Ensure that semi-natural spaces, including designated nature reserves, combine passive recreational access and activities with biodiversity value and a variety of habitats;*
-

- 
- *Create an extensive viable network of green and blue corridors and natural habitat throughout the development which connects larger or more expansive open spaces for both people and wildlife;*
  - *Create a network of streets, open spaces and parks, with safe routes linking them to homes and schools;*
  - *Enhance the transport system and help further reduce the effects of air pollution through the provision of verges of priority habitat, hedgerow, wildflower-rich or rough grassland along railway lines, roads, streets, and pedestrian and cycle networks;*
  - *Provide wildlife-friendly allotments, community meadows, orchards and woodlands, a series of community gardens offering social and amenity space; and*
  - *Provide public access to Green Infrastructure, except where there are sound reasons to restrict this, and facilities and services to enable”.*
-

---

## 4.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER BASELINE

- 4.1 Landscape character assessment is a descriptive approach that seeks to identify and define the distinct character of landscapes that make up the country. It also ensures that account is taken of the different roles and character of different areas. The description of each landscape character area is used as a basis for evaluation in order to make judgements to guide, for example, development or landscape management and as a basis against which to assess the character of the Site. The different layers of character are used to identify areas of land which are not reflective of wider landscape character. The extent of published landscape character areas in the vicinity of the Site are illustrated on **Figure 4: Landscape Character Plan**.

### Published Landscape Character Assessment

*National - National Character Area 86: South Suffolk & North Essex Clayland (2014)*

- 4.2 The Site is situated in National Character Area (NCA) 86: South Suffolk & North Essex Clayland within Natural England's Countryside Character Map of England, extracts of which are included in **Appendix A.1**. Whilst this is a very broad scale of assessment, the key characteristics of relevance to the Site and Proposed Development are identified below:

- *"An undulating chalky boulder clay plateau is dissected by numerous river valleys, ... gentle slopes in the lower, wider valleys and steeper slopes in the narrower upper parts.*
  - *Lowland wood pasture and ancient woodlands ... on the clay plateau. Large, often ancient hedgerows link woods and copses, forming wooded skylines.*
  - *... Predominantly arable with a wooded appearance. ... Some pasture on the valley floors. Field patterns are irregular despite rationalisation, with much ancient countryside surviving.*
  - *... Rich archaeology. Impressive churches, large barns, substantial country house estates and Second World War airfields dot the landscape...*
  - *... Dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, parishes and small settlements around 'tyes' (commons) or strip greens and isolated hamlets. ... Isolated moated farmsteads and numerous well-preserved medieval towns and large villages.*
  - *Larger 20th-century development has taken place to the south and east around Chelmsford...*
  - *Traditional timber-frame... buildings with exposed timbers, colour-washed render, pargeting and steeply pitched roofs with pegtiles or long straw thatch. Sometimes ... refronted with Georgian red brick or Victorian cream-coloured bricks ('Suffolk whites'). Clay lump is often used in cottages and farm buildings.*
  - *Winding, narrow and sometimes sunken lanes are bounded by deep ditches, wide verges and strong hedgerows...*
  - *A strong network of public rights of way... "*
-

- 
- 4.3 The NCA has a long history of settlement, with some 6.5% of the NCA being urban. Most major settlements within the NCA are located along the southern border, including Chelmsford, making the boundaries of the NCA less tranquil than its centre.

*County - Essex County Council & Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Essex Landscape Character Assessment (2003)*

- 4.4 At a county scale, the majority of the Site falls within the River Valley County Landscape Type, and Landscape Character Area (LCA) C5: Chelmer Valley. The LCA forms a long narrow area extending north from the edge of Chelmsford. The key characteristics of the County LCA are described as:

- *"Narrow valley, with a restricted valley bottom.*
- *Dense riverside trees.*
- *Arable valleysides with a fairly open character.*
- *Small linear settlements occupy the upper valleysides or straggle down to a few bridging points*
- *Historic watermills and Second World War pillboxes are distinctive features.*
- *Mostly tranquil character."*

- 4.5 The valleyside vegetation is considered to be of mixed condition, with many fragmented hedgerows and the loss of hedgerows due to agricultural intensification; on the valley floor there is evidence of abandonment of grazing of valley floor meadows.
- 4.6 Development pressures near Chelmsford and transportation improvements are identified as possible future trends for change. The finding of alternative uses for less viable agricultural land is identified as an opportunity of landscape enhancement.
- 4.7 Key landscape sensitivity issues are identified as including the protection of the small-scale character of the valley, the integrity of the valley bottom, and the valley's mostly tranquil nature. This is assessed as rendering the LCA generally highly susceptible to major urban extensions or incremental developments. The landscape sensitivity assessment was undertaken at a scale of 1:50,000, and the levels of sensitivity identified are generalised statements, identifying potential issues at a strategic level, and further analysis would be required at a district level.
- 4.8 The south-eastern part of the Site is located within LCA G2: Chelmsford and Environs, which includes the settlement of Broomfield. The LCA principally comprises the historic city core with extensive residential estate development spreading over the sloping valleyside landform, wide riverside corridors of green space except in the town centre, and fringes of mixed farmland with variable size hedgerowed fields.
-

- 4.9 Chris Blandford Associates were commissioned to undertake a comprehensive combined Landscape Character Assessment for Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford districts. The Landscape Character Assessment, and evaluation of landscape sensitivity, was based on the relatively broad-brush analysis undertaken at a 1:25,000 scale.
- 4.10 As illustrated on **Figure 4: Landscape Character Plan**, the north-eastern portion of the Site lies within Landscape Character Type (LCT) A: River Valley, whilst the southern and western portion of the Site lies within LCT B: Farmland Plateau. It should be noted, however, that the Landscape Character Assessment states that *"landscape is a continuum and character does not in general change abruptly on the ground. The boundaries between Landscape Character Types and Areas should be considered to reflect zones of transitions in many cases"*.
- 4.11 The Landscape Character Types are based on broadly similar patterns. Key characteristics of LCT A: River Valley are:
- *"V-shaped or u-shaped landform which dissects Boulder Clay/Chalky Till plateau*
  - *Main river valley served by several tributaries*
  - *Flat or gently undulating valley floor*
  - *Intimate character in places*
  - *Wooded character in places"*
- 4.12 LCT B: Farmland Plateau Landscapes are characterised by:
- *"Elevated gently rolling Boulder Clay/Chalky Till plateau landscape which is incised by river valleys*
  - *Network of winding lanes and minor roads*
  - *Medium to large-scale enclosed predominantly arable fields*
  - *Long distance views across valleys from certain locations*
  - *Well wooded in places (with several areas of semi-natural and ancient woodland)"*
- 4.13 Within the LCTs, Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) have been identified at 1:25,000 scale, reflective of distinctive variations in local character based on visual analysis of how different combinations of physical features and perceptual qualities create areas of distinctive landscape character. The north-eastern portion of the Site falls within LCA A6: Upper Chelmer River Valley; with the southern and western portions of the Site within LCA B15: Pleshey Farmland Plateau.
- 4.14 LCA A6: Upper Chelmer River Valley is a linear LCA extending from Thaxted to the north down to the urban edge of Chelmsford to the south, defined by the narrow valley set within the
-

---

surrounding gently undulating boulder clay plateau. The valley floor is described as gently undulating with an enclosed character and restricted views, often framed by riverside and hedgerow trees, wet woodlands and the sloping valley sides. The valley sides tend to have a more open character, with low but fragmented hedgerows, scattered hedgerow trees and only occasional woods.

4.15 To the west of the river, the fields tend to be smaller pastoral fields or areas of rough pasture or wet meadow, with larger arable fields on the valley sides. Near to Chelmsford, the river becomes more sinuous.

4.16 The key characteristics of LCA A6: Upper Chelmer River Valley of relevance to the Site include:

- *"Narrow valley, with a restricted valley floor.*
- *Small meandering river channel on the left side of the valley close to the rising ground of the valley side.*
- *Dense riverside trees.*
- *Arable valley sides with a fairly open character.*
- *Small linear settlements occupy the upper valley sides or straggle down to a few bridging points.*
- *Historic watermills and Second World War pillboxes are distinctive features.*
- *Mostly tranquil away from Great Dunmow, Chelmsford and the A120."*

4.17 The skyline of the valley slopes is identified as being visually sensitive, as are views to the valley sides from the adjacent LCAs. Overall, the LCA is considered to have relatively high sensitivity to change, with strong historic integrity and several important wildlife habitats scattered throughout the area.

4.18 The B15: Pleshey Farmland Plateau LCA extends from the north-western edge of Chelmsford and continues into the neighbouring Uttlesford District. The A130 forms the eastern boundary along the River Chelmer and its valley; and to the north-west and south the LCA lies adjacent to the Farmland Plateau LCA. The LCA is described as an extensive area of gently undulating farmland, dissected by small streams and their valleys.

4.19 Fields are typically medium-sized, irregular and in arable use, bound by hedgerows and ditches, with hedgerow condition varied across the LCA. Pockets of deciduous copses and small woods are present, as are scattered ponds, lakes and reservoirs. Trees generally screen settlements, with the spires or towers of churches at Pleshey, High Easter and Good Easter key landmarks within the surrounding farmland. Views within the area vary from open views on the highest land to enclosed views in the valleys in the south of the LCA.

4.20 The key characteristics of LCA B15: Pleshey Farmland Plateau are summarised as:

---

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

4.21 Sensitivities to Change for LCA B15 include the sinuous hedgerows and ditches and small pockets of deciduous woodland which are sensitive to changes in land management. The network of quiet rural lanes and byways are sensitive to potential increased traffic flow associated with new development; and the overall sense of tranquillity within the area is sensitive to change as a result. The LCA is considered to have moderate sensitivity to change, with a sense of historic integrity and several important wildlife habitats within the area.

*Chelmsford Borough Historic Environment Characterisation Project*

4.22 The Historic Environment Characterisation Project identifies Historic Environment Character Areas (HECA), Zones (HECZ) and Historic Landscape Character Areas (HLCA) within Chelmsford Borough. The Project describes the historic environment as a central resource for modern life, contributing to the character and 'sense of place' of rural and urban environments.

4.23 The Site is located within Chelmsford's HLCA 3: North of Chelmsford, encompassing the Upper Chelmer and Ter valleys. The characteristics of this historic landscape include:

- *"Undulating countryside forming the Chelmer and Ter valleys.*
- *The historic pattern of dispersed settlements and scattered farmsteads survive. Some settlements would have been focussed on greens.*
- *There are several areas of ancient woodlands, particularly in the Ter valley.*
- *A historic pattern of irregular fields of various sizes exists across the area.*
- *There is low to moderate boundary loss, allowing the essence of the boundary pattern to survive.*
- *Modern uses appear to have cut across the landscape, with a major road running north from Chelmsford, two golf courses, the Essex show ground, areas of gravel extraction and an airfield.*
- *Much 20th century development has occurred in the south of the area, particularly in and around Broomfield, Little Waltham, and Boreham."*

4.24 With respect to the HECAs, the Site is located within HECA 13: The Upper Chelmer Valley. HECA 13 is described as a narrow valley and floodplain containing arable and pasture, and some parkland elements. The historic settlement pattern was dispersed, but modern

---

---

development has created nucleated villages at Great Waltham and Little Waltham, and extensive ribbon development at Broomfield.

- 4.25 The historic landscape character historically comprised a dispersed settlement pattern. Settlement expansion has focussed on Broomfield in particular, although Little Waltham and Great Waltham have also grown. The historic landscape pattern was of small fields often of regular shape, with long narrow fields running alongside the river, and valley bottom pasture on the banks of the River Chelmer. The area has suffered a varying amount of boundary loss.
- 4.26 At a more detailed scale, Broomfield lies within HECZ 13.1: Broomfield, which is described as encompassing a medieval core and modern built-up area. Historically the settlement pattern was dispersed, with the church and hall forming the centre. The historic core of Broomfield comprises the church/hall complex and other listed buildings set around the Green, and this is protected by a conservation area. The urban area of Broomfield has developed as ribbon development along the old Roman Road from Chelmsford to Braintree, and a large part of this zone is now the modern settlement of Broomfield.
- 4.27 The Site, the land surrounding Little Waltham and land within the river valley to the east of Broomfield are within HECZ 13.3: Chelmer Valley, north of Chelmsford. This zone comprises meadow pasture in the valley bottom adjacent to the River Chelmer, and the rising ground to the east and west, including Little Waltham.
- 4.28 HECZ 13.3 has a historic settlement pattern of dispersed farmsteads either on or set back from the Blasford Hill frontage or on the valley slope above the river Chelmer. Little Waltham comprises a settlement focus within this zone, having developed from a polyfocal village, and now extending on both sides of the River Chelmer. A series of listed buildings are situated on either side of The Street, with a second focus of listed buildings concentrated around the church/hall complex; both of which are contained within the conservation area.
- 4.29 The grain of the historic field pattern, in terms of field boundaries, meadow pasture, valley bottom woodland and settlement pattern, is described as being well-preserved in much of this zone, and it is recommended that this be conserved.
- 4.30 The Historic Land Characterisation includes an assessment of Little Waltham Village, the parish of which is considered to contain a landscape character and archaeological resource of importance. Whilst the village is described as having experienced little development pressure and likely to have high archaeological survival, the study observes that post war development has occurred to the south of the village at Chelmer Avenue.
-

---

*Broomfield Village Design Statement (2011)*

- 4.31 The Broomfield Village Design Statement (VDS) identifies 'greens' as being a key characteristic of the village, including Partridge Green at the western end of Woodhouse Lane. Within the SWOT analysis in Section 4, the document states that the five village greens are one of the strengths of the village. Any new development should incorporate a series of greens, around which development is focused.
- 4.32 The Site lies partially within and to the north of the area described as "Hospital environs and Woodhouse Lane". This area is described as having a mix of old and new buildings, with a great degree of contrast between buildings that blend into their surroundings successfully (Southwood House and nearby cottage) and those that do not (staff housing, multi-storey car park and other more recent hospital buildings).

*Broomfield Community Landscape Character Statement (undated)*

- 4.33 The community landscape character statement sets out the considerations of local people with regard to the landscape character of the area in which they reside. It sets out the views of the local community with respect to where development can be accommodated. Land included within the statement is broken down into nine character areas, which were each assigned a level of priority for protection relative to the other character areas, and then described in landscape character terms.
- 4.34 Only the western field of the Site is located within the boundary of the Landscape Character Statement, falling within Character Area H, which is noted as being third of nine in terms of priority for protection. The area is described as follows:
- *"Classic Pleshey Farmland Plateau;*
  - *Containing medium/large fields with pockets of woodland;*
  - *As the highest land in the Parish, it offers good views eastwards, towards the village and beyond and it can be seen clearly from the other side of the Chelmer Valley*
  - *As the current settlement sits comfortably in the gentle 'dip' of the valley, the views are not obstructed by buildings;*
  - *Recent construction in Broomfield Hospital is noticeable due to its scale and design;*
  - *Rising above the B1008 corridor, it has a strong sense of tranquillity;*
  - *Well-served by a network of footpaths; and*
  - *Several small pockets of woodland (the largest being Border Wood) help to frame the wide views to the north and west".*
-

---

*Contribution of the Site to Local Landscape Character*

- 4.35 The Site contains the following key types of landscape:
- Medium to large scale arable fields that have been subject to field rationalisation and hedgerow removal, separated by large hedgerows with trees;
  - Semi degraded land in the east around the agricultural field pond and the outbuildings of Montpellier Farm; and
  - An area of paddock that is more intimate in nature and which is characterised by the surrounding trees and vegetation.
- 4.36 The Site broadly reflects the wider landscape, particularly B15: Pleshey Farmland Plateau, with its large to medium-sized arable fields and hedgerow loss. It is possible to see the lines of the removed hedgerows through the study of historic mapping and the marks visible on aerial photographs. These reflect the extensive field rationalisation within the Site.
- 4.37 The Chelmer Valley is a beneficial feature within the local area and forms part of a wider green infrastructure network. Its designation relates more to the protection of its open character and public access, rather than its landscape quality per se, and it is of local value. Areas of Ancient Woodland occur within the Study Area but sporadically. The Registered Parkland at Langleys in the north of the Study Area and the Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings demonstrate a historic time depth in the north of the Study Area.
- 4.38 The landscape of the Study Area does broadly reflect the published descriptions, comprising a medium to large scale arable landscape on the upper slopes and a more intimate pastoral character in the valley floor, marked by a partially degraded field pattern and ribbon development extending north from Chelmsford. The development within and associated with Broomfield Hospital, together with post-war development in Broomfield, does not reflect local vernacular and creates a semi-fringe suburban character, particularly along the western side of the Chelmer Valley and the route of the B1008.
- 4.39 None of the Site area is covered by a landscape designation and contains no features above and beyond the ordinary. The Site comprises three fields, two of which (the western and north-eastern fields) are rationalised arable prairie type fields and one of which (the south-eastern field) is a more intimate and vegetated pastoral landscape, possibly relating to historic parkland around Wood House. Visually incongruous and visually intrusive sheds and the engineered character of the large field pond create a dilapidated character in the east of the Site. Woodhouse Lane retains its rural character in the east but is more influenced by the development within Broomfield Hospital in the west. The majority of the Site would be able to accommodate development without undue consequences on its overall integrity. The western
-

---

and north-eastern fields are of lower sensitivity to change whereas the south-eastern field is of medium sensitivity to change.

### **Landscape Character Guidance**

*National - Countryside Character Map of England and National Character Area 86: South Suffolk & North Essex Clayland (2014)*

4.40 The Statements of Environmental Opportunity for NCA 86: South Suffolk & North Essex Clayland are to:

- *"SEO 1: Maintain and enhance the character of this gently undulating, rural landscape by maintaining agricultural productivity and encouraging sustainable land management practices that protect and enhance the landscape..."*
- *SEO 2: Protect and enhance the area's ancient woodland cover, parkland trees, river valley plantations and ancient hedgerows, through the management of existing woods and the planting of new woods, hedgerows and hedgerow trees to benefit landscape character, habitat connectivity and a range of ecosystem services..."*

4.41 Specific landscape opportunities relevant to the Site include:

- Planting characteristic hedgerow trees, such as oak, to enhance landscape diversity and offset the loss of ash due to die-back;
- Planting characteristic hedgerow species mixes to support biodiversity, ensuring that new hedgerow planting does not block important views;
- Creating new multifunctional landscapes and habitats, extending existing networks; and
- Incorporating green infrastructure within new development which promotes space for wildlife and outdoor recreation and enhances landscape features to reduce the potential negative impacts of new development.

*County - Essex County Council & Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Essex Landscape Character Assessment (2003)*

4.42 With respect to County LCA G2: Chelmsford & Environs, some guidance has been included in the Sensitivity Evaluation table. This includes a recommendation that new developments should include strong new woodland / hedgerow framework planting, particularly where arable farmland is in poor condition; and that opportunities exist to improve some existing urban edges.

---

- 4.43 Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives for LCA A6: Upper Chelmer River Valley are to conserve: *"seek to protect and enhance positive features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures"* and enhance: *"seek to improve the integrity of the landscape, and reinforce its character, by introducing new and/or enhanced elements where distinctive features or characteristics are absent"*.
- 4.44 The Landscape Character Assessment includes the following Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines for LCA A6:
- *"Consider the visual impact of new residential development and farm buildings upon valley sides.*
  - *Conserve and enhance cross-valley views and characteristic views across and along the valley.*
  - *Ensure any new development on valley sides is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles.*
  - *Protect and enhance the role of the river valley in providing a network of informal open space and nature conservation sites."*
- 4.45 Land Management Guidelines suggested for A6 include:
- *"Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern and strengthen through planting where appropriate to local landscape character.*
  - *Conserve and manage areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland as important historical, landscape and nature conservation features.*
  - *Conserve and manage the ecological structure of woodland, copses and hedges within the character area.*
  - *Strengthen the recreational role of the woodland resource."*
- 4.46 Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives for LCA B15: Pleshey Farmland Plateau are to conserve: *"seek to protect and enhance positive features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures"* and enhance: *"seek to improve the integrity of the landscape, and reinforce its character, by introducing new and/or enhanced elements where distinctive features or characteristics are absent"*.
- 4.47 The Landscape Character Assessment includes the following 'Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines' for LCA B15:
-

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

4.48 Land Management Guidelines suggested for B15 include:

- *"Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern and strengthen through planting species which are appropriate to local landscape character such as blackthorn.*
- *Conserve and manage areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland as important historical, landscape and nature conservation features.*
- *Conserve and manage the ecological structure of woodland, copses and hedges within the character area.*
- *Conserve and promote the use of building materials, which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character."*

*Broomfield Village Design Statement (2011)*

4.49 The Broomfield Village Design Statement sets out five key principles to guide future development:

- Development must be in keeping with the size and scale of buildings within the village;
- 'Landmark' buildings are not desirable, and existing historic buildings should be preserved as landmarks;
- Residential buildings should normally be restricted to two storeys;
- New development should incorporate public open green spaces, to reflect the village greens of Broomfield; and
- Every effort should be made to retain the surrounding countryside, with preservation prioritised.

4.50 Section 6a (i) sets out village-wide guidance, which includes the following with respect to new development:

- *"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...*
- *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...*
- *Broomfield's cycle path strategy (Annex 2) should be taken into account in plans for each new development."*

4.51 Section 6b includes character area descriptions and guidance. Whilst the 'Hospital Environs and Woodhouse Lane' local character area guidance relates specifically to proposed development bound by North Court Road / Hospital Approach Road, it is recognised that the final boundary could extend to the north of Woodhouse Lane, into the Site, and therefore is of some relevance:

- *"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...*
  - *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...*
  - *The mobile telephone mast in the valley bottom, near Farleigh Hospice, should ideally be relocated."*
-

---

## 5.0 VISUAL APPRAISAL

- 5.1 A visual appraisal of the Site and its surroundings was undertaken in March 2016, March 2018 and January 2018, when there were no leaves on the trees, taking into account the worst case with regard to the potential visibility of any development on the Site. Seventeen viewpoint locations were identified in agreement with the Local Authority and these are illustrated by Site Context Photographs 1-18 in the accompanying visual material. An additional viewpoint has been identified due to local concerns, taking in views from Pleshey, 4.7km to the north-west.
- 5.2 Site Context Photograph 1 demonstrates the views from the junction of Woodhouse Lane with the footpath network, 460m to the west. From this point it is possible to see the westernmost edge of the Site, filtered through two layers of hedgerow.
- 5.3 Site Context Photograph 2 is taken from footpath 222\_77, 420m to the north-west of the Site. As with Site Context Photograph 1, it is possible to see the westernmost edge of the Site filtered by a layer of hedgerow.
- 5.4 Site Context Photograph 3 is taken from footpath 225-29, 150m north of the northern edge of the Site. It is possible to see across the Site towards the taller hospital buildings.
- 5.5 Site Context Photograph 4 looks directly into the north-eastern corner of the Site from the B1008 Blasford Hill. It is possible to see the north-eastern part of the Site as far as the central tree belt. The south-eastern corner is screened behind Montpellier Farm.
- 5.6 Site Context Photograph 5 is taken from footpath 225-27, 540m west on the opposite side of the Chelmer Valley. It is possible to see into the north-eastern part of the Site. The south-eastern part of the Site is screened behind Montpellier Farm and the development along Blasford Hill. The western part of the Site is screened by the curve of the landform.
- 5.7 Site Context Photograph 6 is taken from footpath 225\_33 on the higher ground, 1.7km away on the eastern side of the Chelmer Valley. From This point it is possible to see the south-western area of the Site, set in front of the hospital buildings south of Woodhouse Lane.
- 5.8 Site Context Photograph 7 is taken from Woodhouse Lane immediately adjacent to the Site. It demonstrates the open nature of the southern boundary of the Site.
- 5.9 Site Context Photograph 8 is also taken from Woodhouse Lane, looking into the south-eastern most field. It is possible to see the overgrown tree and hedgerow belt separating the two eastern fields. The conifer to the left of centre in the view is present on the 1921 historic OS map and the individual trees to the right of this are remnant hedgerow trees.
-

- 
- 5.10 Site Context Photograph 9 is taken from Hospital Approach, 270m to the south, and demonstrates how views towards the Site have been interrupted by the recent residential development between the viewpoint and the Site.
- 5.11 Site Context Photograph 10 is taken from Mill Lane, 1.5km to the south-east. From this location, the majority of the Site is screened behind Puddings Wood and the development and vegetation along Blasford Hill.
- 5.12 Site Context Photograph 11 is taken from footpath 222\_75, approximately 800m to the north of the Site. It is possible to see the houses on Lark's Lane and Sparrowhawk Wood. It is also possible to see the hedgerow along the western part of the northern boundary.
- 5.13 Site Context Photograph 12 is taken from footpath 225\_35, 1km to the east of the Site on the opposite side of the Chelmer Valley. From this point, it is possible to see almost all of the Site, although it is foreshortened in the view. The southern parts of the Site are viewed within the context of the existing development on Blasford Hill and south of Woodhouse Lane whereas the northern parts of the Site are viewed within the context of the surrounding vegetation and countryside.
- 5.14 Site Context Photograph 13 is taken from less than 100m to the east of the Site, on footpath 225\_25, on the southern edge of Little Waltham. It is possible to see directly into the north-eastern corner of the Site from this point.
- 5.15 Site Context Photograph 14 is also taken from the south-western edge of Little Waltham, 185m from the north-eastern edge of the Site. The north-eastern area of the Site is mainly screened by the layers of tree planting in between but the frontage with the B1008 is visible in front of the conifer planting by Montpellier Farm.
- 5.16 Site Context Photograph 15 is taken from Lark's Lane, approximately 515m to the north of the northern boundary of the Site. It is possible to see the northern boundary of the Site, although the majority of the Site is hidden behind the curve of the landform and Sparrowhawk Wood.
- 5.17 Site Context Photograph 16 is taken from footpath 225\_40 by Croxton's Mill, 480m to the south-east of the Site. From this location, the Site is screened by the planting and built form along Blasford Hill and south of Woodhouse Lane, as well as the curve in the landform.
- 5.18 Site Context Photograph 18 is taken from the B1008 Blasford Hill, less than 100m from the south-eastern corner of the Site. The majority of the Site is screened from this point, although the frontage with the B1008, north of Montpellier Farm, may be visible from this point.
- 5.19 Site Context Photograph 18 is taken from the top of the bailey at Pleshey, a Scheduled Monument 4.7km to the north-west of the Site. It is possible to see the chimney within the
-

---

hospital site and the housing on the opposite (eastern) side of the Chelmer Valley. These form negligible elements within the view. The Site, however, is screened by the intervening topography and vegetation. There were no views towards the area of Site identified from the surrounding PRoW.

5.20 In summary, the following points are made with regard to views towards the Site:

- With regard to views from roads, views into the Site are obtained from roads immediately adjoining the Site, namely Woodhouse Lane to the south of the Site and a short stretch of Blasford Hill where it adjoins the north-eastern part of the Site. Filtered views into the Site are possible from Larks Lane to the north, a designated 'rural lane'.
- With regard to views from Public Rights of Way (PRoW), PRoW 225 extends through the Site and northwards to Sparrowhawk Wood. Views from the PRoW north of the Site are possible from the stretch to the south of Sparrowhawk Wood. Views into the Site from the PRoWs to the east and south-east, from within and across the Chelmer Valley, are largely restricted to partial views of the north-eastern part of the Site. Beyond this, views into the Site are largely screened by intervening topography, vegetation and built form. Where the Site is visible, it is generally seen in the context of the neighbouring development within the hospital to the south and along Blasford Hill to the east.
- With regard to views from properties, views are likely to be obtained primarily from adjoining properties, namely along Woodhouse Lane and Blasford Hill. Where views are obtained, these are in the context of adjoining buildings, including the large structures associated with Broomfield Hospital.

5.21 Due to the topography of the Study Area, views towards the Site are mainly achieved from the roads immediately adjacent to the Site, or from the footpaths on the eastern side of the Chelmer Valley. Views from the south-east tend to be obscured by vegetation and existing development. Views from the north and west are limited to glimpsed views of the extreme north and west of the Site, although these areas are not seen in the context of existing development. The north-eastern corner of the Site is the most visually sensitive, appearing in most views in which the Site is visible, and forming part of the frontage to Blasford Hill. Viewpoint 12 is the only location from where the majority of the Site is visible. Where the Site is visible across the Chelmer Valley, it is seen in the context of the existing development within the hospital to the south and along Blasford Hill to the east.

---

---

## 6.0 OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

6.1 Opportunities and constraints to development are set out within **Figure 6: Opportunities and Constraints Plan**.

6.2 The following opportunities and constraints to development should be incorporated into the design of any emerging masterplan for the Site:

- Retain and enhance the existing landscape structure through the Site, including the protection and enhancement of the central vegetation belt through the Site, as part of a cohesive and multifunctional green infrastructure network.
  - Retain all trees and hedgerow structure where practicable.
  - Enhance the planting along the northern boundary and recreate new planting along the western boundary to contribute to the green infrastructure network, contribute to local landscape character and soften views towards the development from the west and north.
  - Incorporate new green infrastructure through the Site, to provide a network of new amenity space, biodiversity habitat and accessible routes through the Site, and connect to the existing PRow within the Site.
  - Incorporate tree planting within the Proposed Development to soften and filter views of development from the east.
  - Retain the former quarry feature as part of the open space and drainage strategy for the Site, creating a large village green with a unique feature.
  - Incorporate principles from the Broomfield Village Design Statement.
  - Protect and enhance local character through the use of scale, massing and materials.
  - Where practicable, key roads within the Site should be tree-lined.
  - The most visually sensitive parts of the Site are the north-eastern corner and the far northern boundary. Development in the north of the Site should be of lower density with more opportunities for open space and vegetation, including native broad-leaved trees, to create a softer transitional edge with the countryside to the north, as well as softening the development as it appears in views from the north.
  - Reinforce the landscape structure along Woodhouse Lane and introduce new hedgerow and trees to provide a soft edge to the development along this lane.
  - Protect the sense of separation between development on Blasford Hill and the southern edge of Little Waltham to the north.
  - There is the opportunity to create new footpath and cycle links, particularly where these connect to the pedestrian link from Puddings Wood, south of Woodhouse Lane.
  - Consider the amenity and setting of the properties on the northern edge of Woodhouse Lane and the western side of Blasford Hill.
-

---

## 7.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

### Summary

- 7.1 The Site is situated on the northern edge of Broomfield to the north of Chelmsford in Essex, immediately north of development within the Broomfield Hospital along Woodhouse Lane. It is situated on the western side of the Chelmer Valley, to the immediate west of Green Wedge CN2. There are no landscape or heritage designations within the Site, but it is situated close to Sparrowhawk Wood, an area of ancient woodland, and listed buildings along Blasford Hill to the east.
- 7.2 The Site comprises three fields (two arable and one pastoral), separated and surrounded by mature hedgerows with trees in varying states of maintenance. The western boundary, in particular, is almost entirely denuded of vegetation. There is a former gravel extraction pond in the eastern part of the Site that has been planted with vegetation which has started to mature.
- 7.3 Despite its location on the edge of the river valley, the Site is relatively visually well contained. From the south, views towards the Site are limited to those from the immediate southern boundary, due to the presence of built development and Puddings Wood to the south. From the west, views are limited to the westernmost area of the Site with the remainder of the Site is screened by the fall in the landform when viewed from the west. From the north, the northern boundary of the Site is visible from Lark's Lane and footpaths within approximately 1km. The majority of the Site is screened from these locations due to the topography and the presence of Sparrowhawk Wood. The greatest visibility is from the east, from Blasford Hill which extends along the north-eastern boundary, and from footpaths on the opposite side of the Chelmer Valley. From most of these locations, it is the north-eastern area of the Site that is visible, with much of the remainder of the Site screened by the topography and development along Blasford Hill. The north-eastern corner of the Site also forms an important part of the perceived separation of development on Blasford Hill within Broomfield and development within Little Waltham to the north. From the limited number of locations where the majority of the Site is seen, it is viewed within the context of the surrounding development, including the hospital buildings south of Woodhouse Lane.

### Conclusion

- 7.4 Development could be accommodated within the Site assuming the following main principles are incorporated within any emerging masterplan:
-

- 
- Protect and enhance existing landscape features and create new hedgerows and tree planting, particularly on the boundaries, as part of an integrated and multi-functional green infrastructure network.
  - Preserve the openness of the north-eastern corner of the Site, due to both its visual sensitivity and its role in the separation of Broomfield and Little Waltham.
  - Create lower density development along the northern boundary, providing space for additional vegetation, including native broad-leaved trees.

---

**ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL**

Figure 1: Site Context Plan

Figure 2: Topographical Features Plan

Figure 3: Site Appraisal Plan

Figure 4: Landscape Character Plan

Figure 5: Visual Appraisal Plan

Figure 6: Opportunities and Constraints Plan

Site Context Photographs

Site Appraisal Photographs

---

---

---





Date Drn Ckd

 Site Boundary Site Boundary

Existing Water Courses ^

Contours/Spot Heights (Metres AOD) ^

Public Rights of Way \*

Listed Buildings ~

 Conservation Area ##

Ancient Woodland #

☐ Protected Lane (Policy CP9, DC39) ~ ~

Site Allocation for Masterplanning (Policy CP7) ~ ~

 Special Policy Area (Policy CP2) \*\*

 Open Space (Policy CP12, DC39) \*\*

 Green Wedge (Policy CP9, DC9) \*\*

Defined Settlement Boundary (Policy CP5) \*\*

Local Wildlife Site (LoWS) \*\*

Location of Photographic Viewpoints

# FIGURE 3

Project  
North Broomfield  
Chelmsford, Essex

Drawing Title

## Site Appraisal Plan

[illegible]

Date	Scale	Drawn by	Check by
01-08-2010	1:5000	TR/CC	WJ

Project No	Drawing No	Revision
------------	------------	----------

25746 12



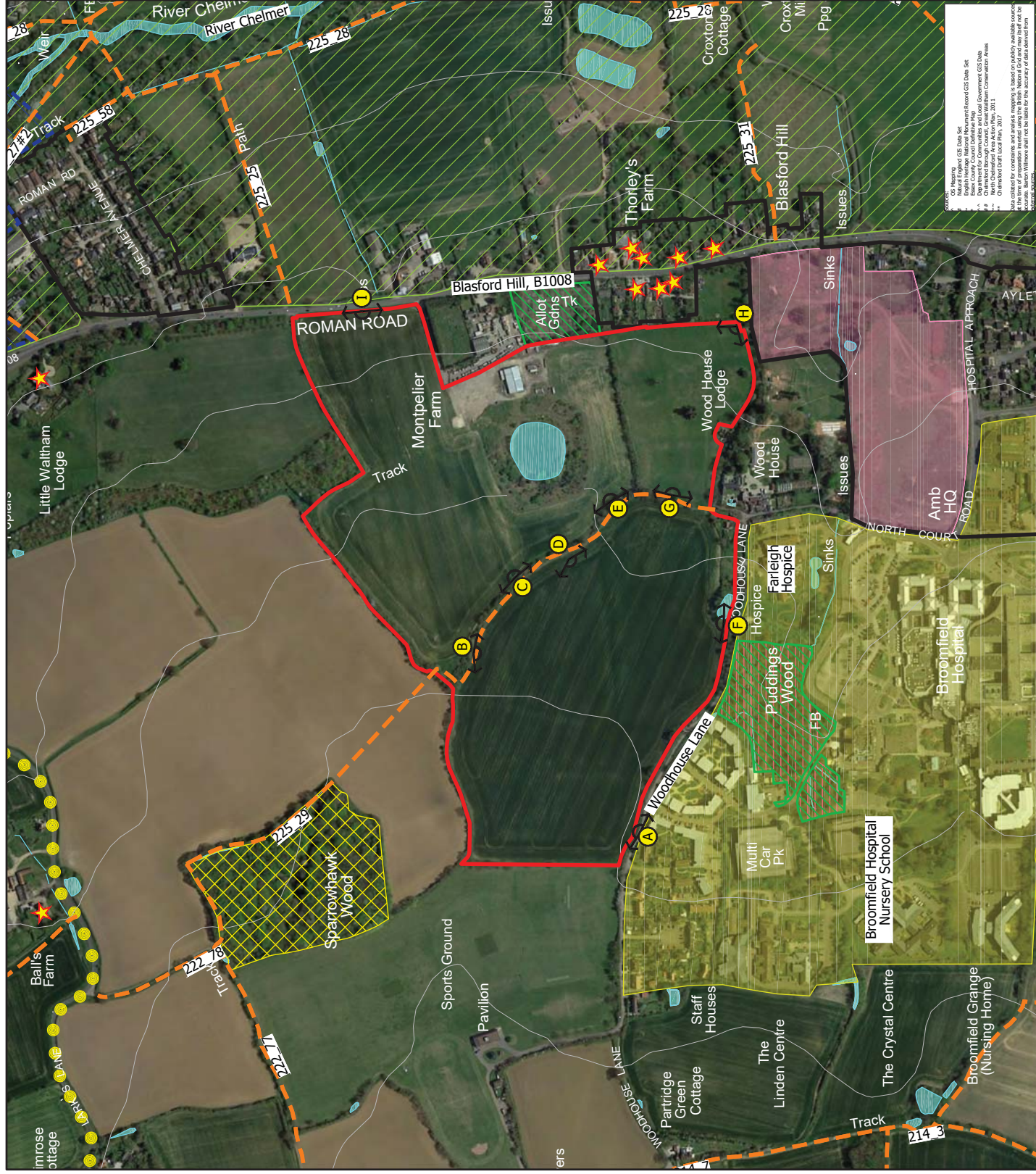
**BARTON  
WILLMORE**

Planning • Master Planning & Urban Design • Architecture • Landscape Planning & Design • Environmental Planning • Graphic Communication • Public Engagement • Development Economics

[bartonwillmore.co.uk](http://bartonwillmore.co.uk)



Offices at Birmingham Bristol Cambridge Cardiff Ebbsfleet Edinburgh  
Leeds London Manchester Newcastle Reading Southampton



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Map with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. Crown Copyright Reserved. Licence No 100019279.

1:\25.000-259.99\25.700-25.799\25746 - Broomfield\44 - Dwos &amp; Registers\1 andscan\25746 | 2 Site Appraisal Plan.dwg - A3

The scaling of this drawing cannot be assured

Revision

Date

Drawn by

Checked by

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Legend

Site boundary

Existing Water Course

Contours/Spot Heights (Metres AOD)

N

0 100m

100m

National Character Area Profiles

Chelmsford and North Essex

County Landscape Character Types Areas

B1 - Central Essex Farmland

C - River Valley Landscape

G - Urban Landscapes

Urban Landscapes

Chelmsford and Environs

District Landscape Character Areas

A - River Valley Landscapes

A6 - Upper Chelmer River Valley

B - Farmland Plateau Landscapes

B15 - Healey Farmland Plateau

B17 - Teasing Farmland Plateau

BD0 - White Farmland Plateau

BD1 - Boreham Farmland Plateau

Broomfield Community Landscape Character Areas

Through a questionnaire local people have been asked to say what they think the most important landscape character areas are for the development. For this purpose, the Parish has been divided in 9 areas of countryside.

Results:

1 - should be most protected

9 - least protected

A

Area

Ranking

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

The scaling of this drawing cannot be assured

Revision

Date

Drawn by

Checked by

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL

Project No

25/46

Drawing No

L7

Revision

25/46

Scale

1:10,000 @ A1

GS

WL







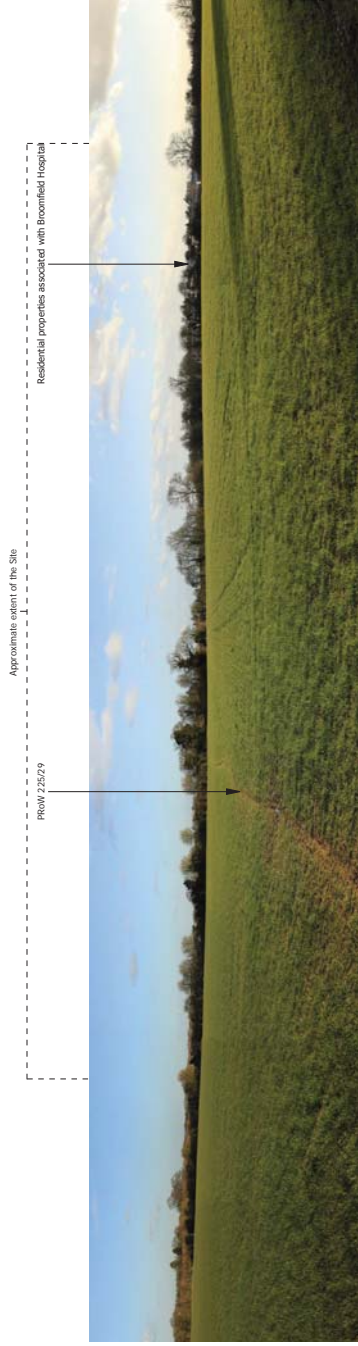
**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 1: VIEW EAST FROM JUNCTION OF PROW 214/7 AND WOODHOUSE LANE**

Distance: 460m



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 2: VIEW EAST FROM PROW 222/77**

Distance: 420m



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 3: VIEW SOUTH-EAST FROM PROW 225/29**

Distance: 150m

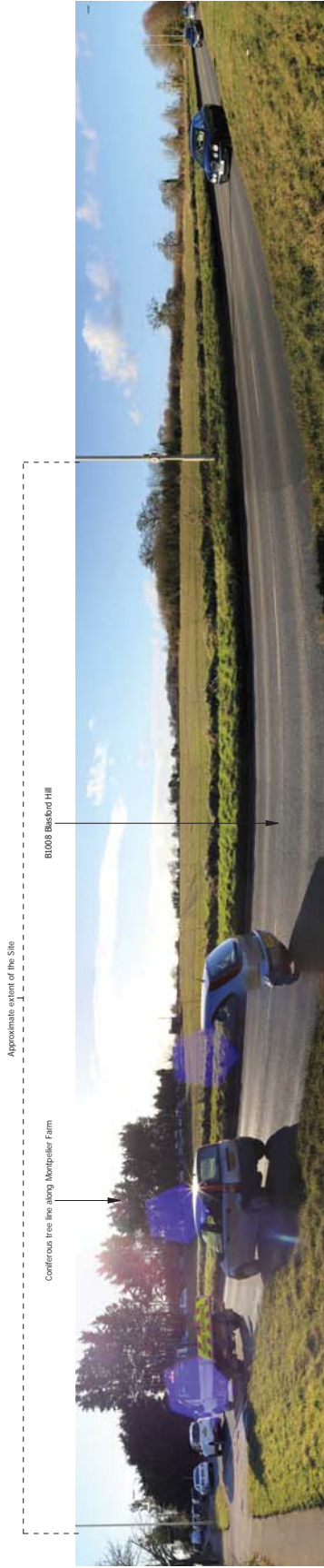
NORTH BROOMFIELD  
CHELMSFORD, ESSEX

SITE CONTEXT  
PHOTOGRAPHS: 1 - 3  
RECOMMENDED VIEWING  
DISTANCE: 200M @A1

DATE TAKEN: JAN & FEB 2018

PROJECT NUMBER: 25746

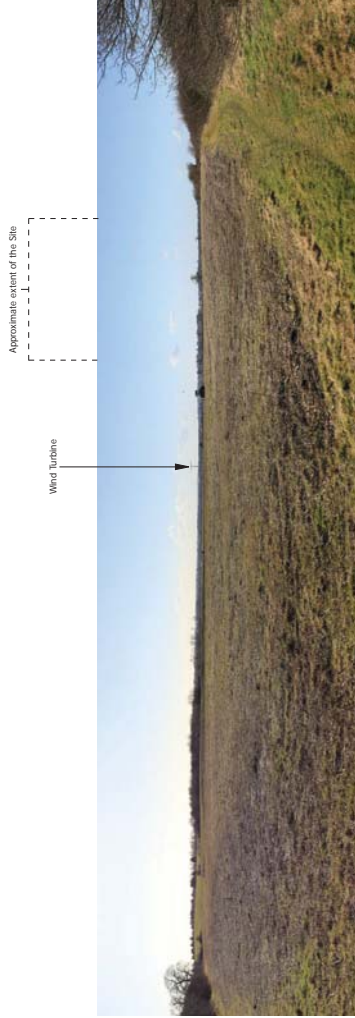
**BARTON  
WILLMORE**



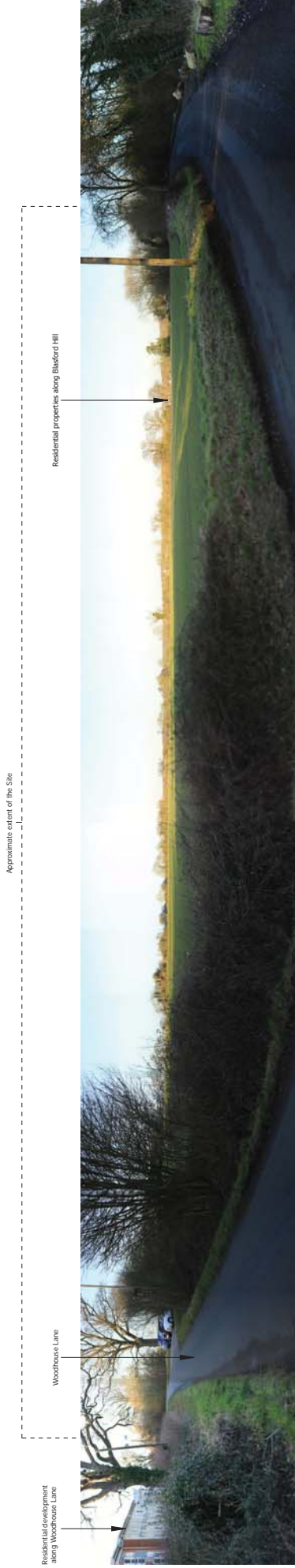
**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 4: VIEW WEST FROM B1008 BLASFORD HILL**  
Distance: 20m



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 5: VIEW WEST FROM PROW 225/27**  
Distance: 540m



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 6: VIEW WEST FROM PROW 225/33**  
Distance: 1.7km



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 7: VIEW NORTH-EAST FROM WOODHOUSE LANE**

Distance: 10m



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 8: VIEW NORTH-EAST FROM WOODHOUSE LANE**

Distance: 10m



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 9: VIEW NORTH FROM JUNCTION OF HOSPITAL APPROACH AND COURT ROAD**

Distance: 309m

NORTH BROOMFIELD  
CHELMSFORD, ESSEX

SITE CONTEXT  
PHOTOGRAPHS: 7 -9  
RECOMMENDED VIEWING  
DISTANCE: 200M @A1  
DATE TAKEN: JAN & FEB 2018  
PROJECT NUMBER: 25746

**BARTON  
WILLMORE**



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 10: VIEW NORTH-WEST FROM MILL LANE**

Distance: 1.5km



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 11: VIEW SOUTH-EAST FROM PROW 222/75**

Distance: 750m



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 12: VIEW WEST FROM PROW 225/35**

Distance: 1km

NORTH BROOMFIELD  
CHELMSFORD, ESSEX

SITE CONTEXT  
PHOTOGRAPHS: 10 - 12  
RECOMMENDED VIEWING  
DISTANCE: 200M @A1  
DATE TAKEN: JAN & FEB 2018  
PROJECT NUMBER: 25746

**BARTON  
WILLMORE**



PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN MARCH 2017

**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 13: VIEW WEST FROM PROW 225/25**

Distance: 100m



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 14: VIEW WEST FROM B1008 BLASFORD HILL**

Distance: 160m



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 15: VIEW SOUTH-EAST FROM LARK'S LANE**

Distance: 515m

NORTH BROOMFIELD  
CHELMSFORD, ESSEX

SITE CONTEXT  
PHOTOGRAPHS: 13 - 15  
RECOMMENDED VIEWING  
DISTANCE: 200M @A1

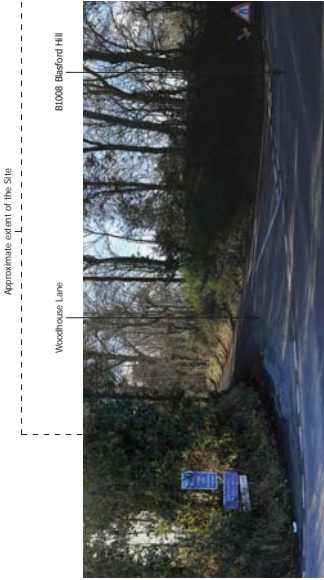
DATE TAKEN: JAN & FEB 2018

PROJECT NUMBER: 25746

**BARTON  
WILLMORE**



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 16: VIEW NORTH-WEST FROM PROW 225/40**  
Distance: 450m



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 17: VIEW WEST FROM B1008 BLASFORD HILL**  
Distance: 90m



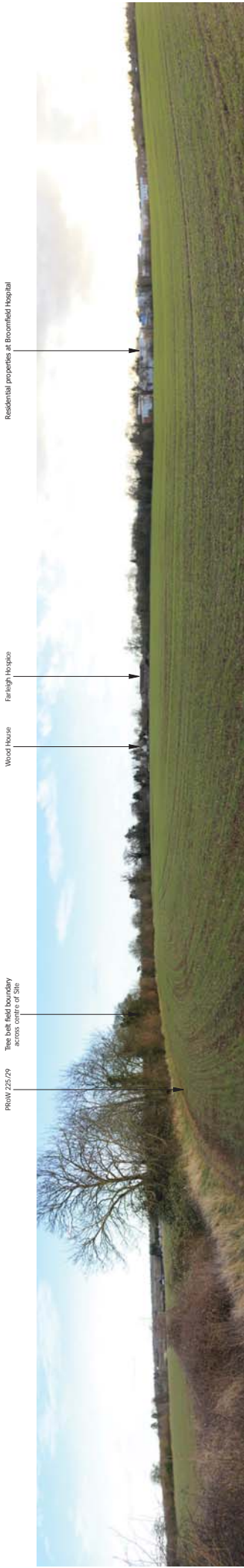
Lodge Farm



**SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 18: VIEW PLESHEY CASTEL**  
Distance: 4.28km



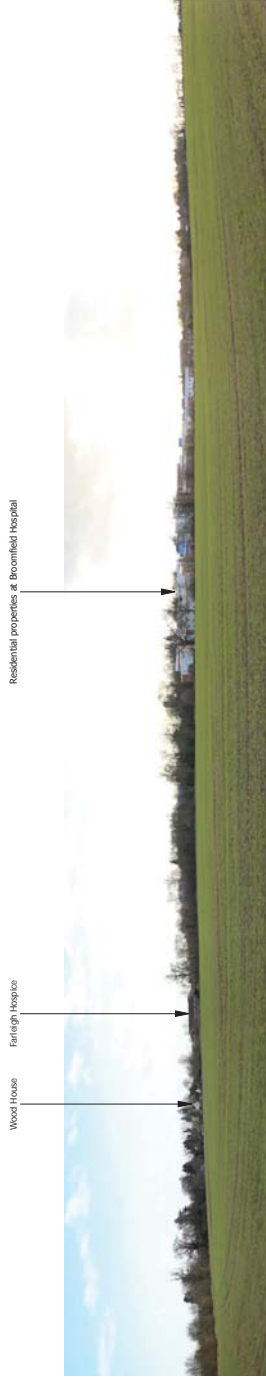
SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH A



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH B



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH C



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH D



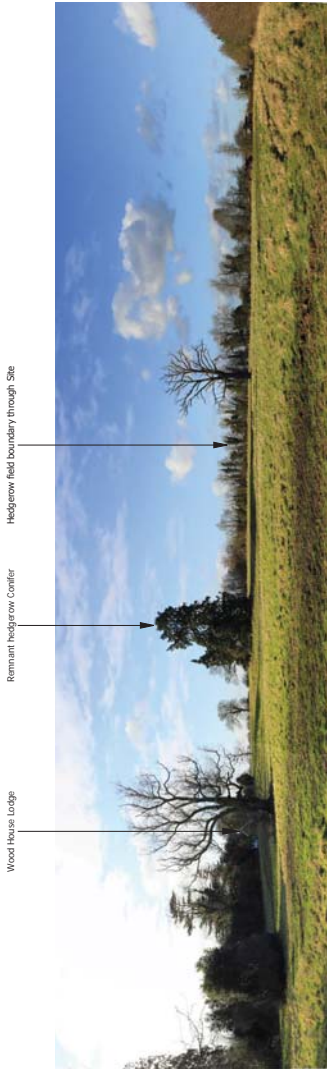
SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH E



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH F



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH G



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH H



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH I

---

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A.1: Extracts from Published Documents

---

---

# 86. South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland

Supporting documents

Introduction & Summary

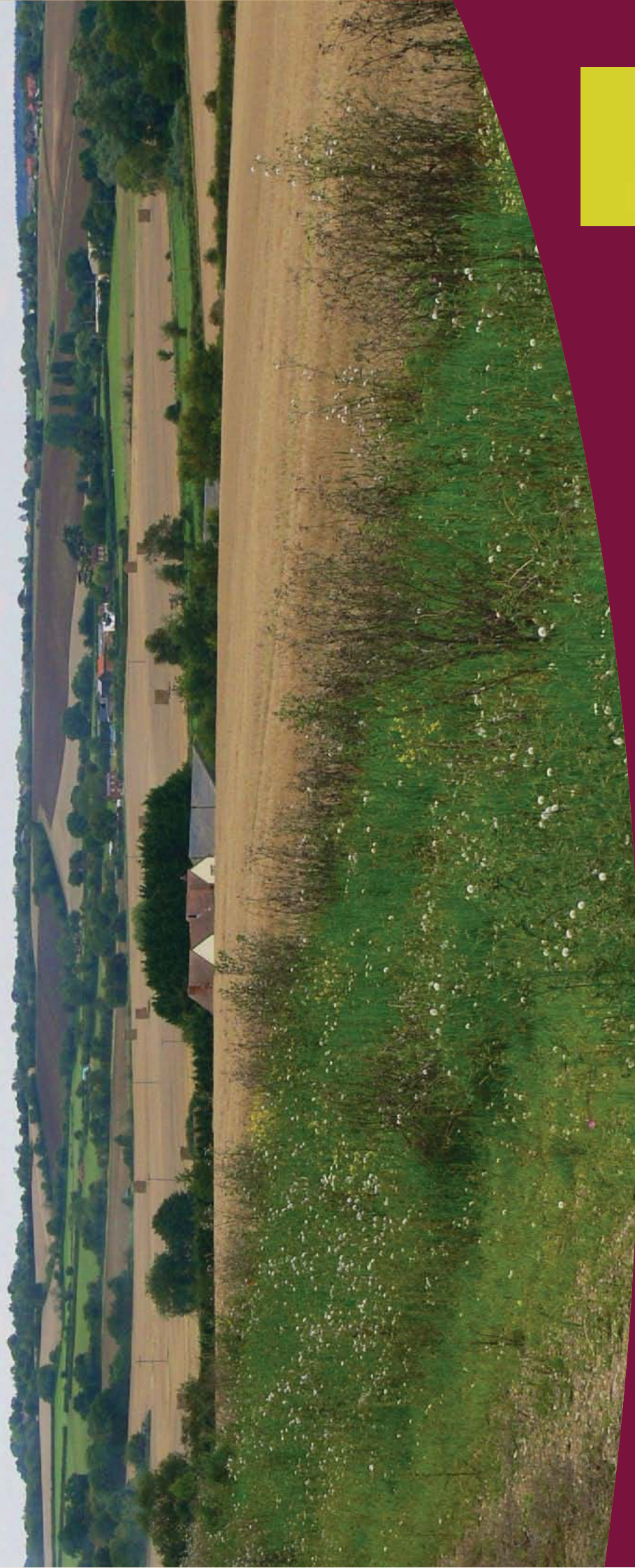
Description

Opportunities

Key facts  
and data

Landscape  
change

Analysis

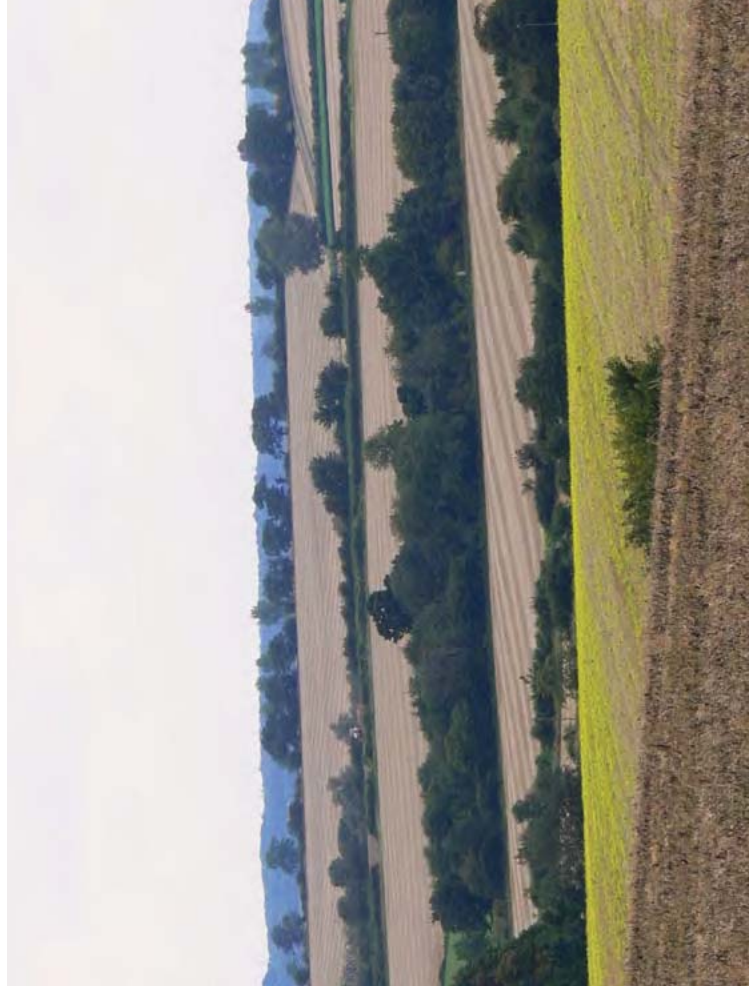


[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

NATURAL  
ENGLAND

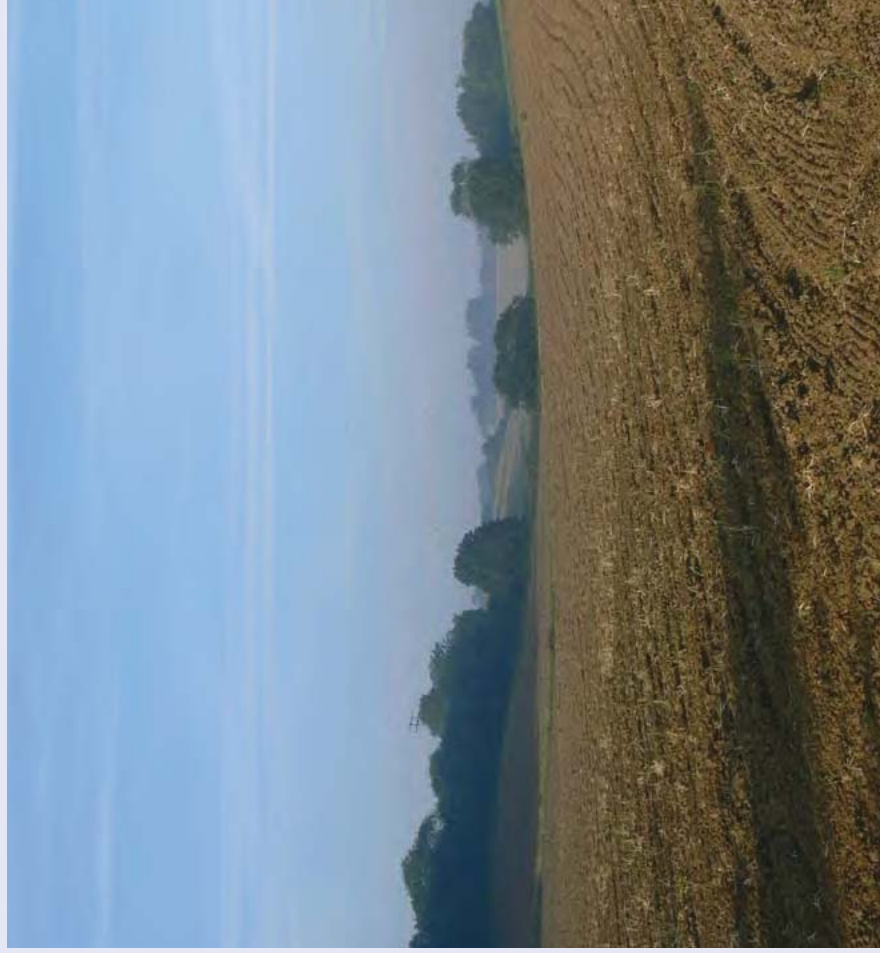
## Statements of Environmental Opportunity

- **SEO 1:** Maintain and enhance the character of this gently undulating, rural landscape by maintaining agricultural productivity and encouraging sustainable land management practices that protect and enhance the landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity assets and benefit carbon storage and water quality, as well as the over-riding sense of place.
- **SEO 2:** Protect and enhance the area's ancient woodland cover, parkland trees, river valley plantations and ancient hedgerows, through the management of existing woods and the planting of new woods, hedgerows and hedgerow trees to benefit landscape character, habitat connectivity and a range of ecosystem services, including timber provision, the regulation of soil erosion and the strengthening of the sense of place and history.
- **SEO 3:** Enhance the slow-flowing, winding rivers and their pastoral valley flood plains that provide linkages through the landscape, including redundant sand and gravel extraction sites, for their ecological, historical and recreational importance. This will support the operation of natural processes and their contribution to biodiversity, geodiversity, soil quality, water availability, regulating water flow and the character of the area.
- **SEO 4:** Conserve and enhance the distinctive character of the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with its much-visited 'Constable Country' and improve opportunities for people to enjoy and understand the distinctive assemblage of historic landscapes outside the AONB. Ensure that access and recreational resources are managed to be compatible with the tranquillity of the area and the special qualities of protected landscapes, while providing a valuable health, education and access resource.



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

## Key characteristics



Large, often ancient hedgerows link woods and copses to form wooded skylines, that are a key characteristic of the area.

- An undulating chalky boulder clay plateau is dissected by numerous river valleys, giving a topography of gentle slopes in the lower, wider valleys and steeper slopes in the narrower upper parts.
- Fragments of chalk give many of the soils a calcareous character, which also influences the character of the semi-natural vegetation cover.
- South-east-flowing streams and rivers drain the clay plateau. Watercourses wind slowly across flood plains, supporting wet, fen-type habitats; grazing marsh; and blocks of cricket-bat willows, poplars and old willow pollards. Navigation locks are present on some rivers.
- Lowland wood pasture and ancient woodlands support the dormouse and a rich diversity of flowering plants on the clay plateau. Large, often ancient hedgerows link woods and copses, forming wooded skylines.
- The agricultural landscape is predominantly arable with a wooded appearance. There is some pasture on the valley floors. Field patterns are irregular despite rationalisation, with much ancient countryside surviving. Field margins support corn bunting, cornflower and brown hare.
- Roman sites, medieval monasteries and castles and ancient woodlands contribute to a rich archaeology. Impressive churches, large barns, substantial country house estates and Second World War airfields dot the landscape, forming historical resources.

**Continued on next page...**

## Key characteristics continued...

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

## Landscape opportunities

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

**Continued on next page...**

## Landscape opportunities continued...

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



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

## Photo credits

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

All images © Natural England/Jonathan Dix



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

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

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

[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

This note/report/publication is published by Natural England under the Open Government Licence - OGLv2.0 for public sector information. You are encouraged to use, and reuse, information subject to certain conditions.

For details of the licence visit [www.naturalengland.org.uk/copyright](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/copyright)

Natural England images are only available for non commercial purposes. If any other information such as maps or data cannot be used commercially this will be made clear within the note/report/publication.

© Natural England 2014

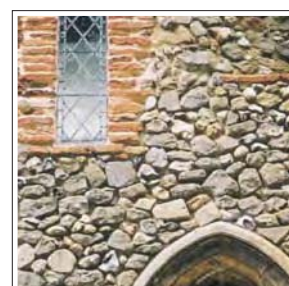
# Essex & Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan Review

---

## ESSEX LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Final Report

2003



---

**CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES**

*Environment Landscape Planning*

#### 4.4 River Valley Landscapes (C)

- 4.4.1 The River Valleys are a significant component of the county's topography, character and identity. The valleys to the north are steeper and more deeply cut, becoming shallower as the rivers flow either south into the Thames or east into the North Sea. Only the Cam flows northwards. The Stour, Colne, Blackwater, Chelmer and their tributaries rise in the Glacial Till Plateau to the north, and flow east to form extensive estuaries at the coast. The Crouch flows east across the south of the county, and joins the Roach to form a further estuary. The Rivers Lee, Mardyke and Roding flow southwards into the River Thames estuary. The valleys contain river corridors that are frequently of landscape, nature conservation and heritage value.



- 4.4.2 The key characteristics of this division can be summarised as:

- The river valleys dissect the boulder clay plateau. They are smaller and steeper in the upper valley reaches, revealing underlying gravel and sand deposits on the valley sides.
- Parts of the valleys are extensively modified by reservoirs, current and reclaimed gravel pits, landfill sites, artificial wetlands, river realignments and canals.
- Smaller, intimate tree-lined valleys with small rural settlements contrast with the more developed major river valley floodplains.

- Organic field shapes are common as they are defined by the valley topography.
- The high ground of the plateau allows ‘tunnelled’ views through deciduous woodland to the valley bottom.
- The river courses are often marked by their associated vegetation.
- Settlements along the valleys reflect the historic use of them for access into the county.

4.4.3 Typical hedgerow species are Hawthorn, Oak, Ash, with occasional White Poplar, Crack Willow, White Willow, Alder, Oak, Field Maple, Goat Willow, Black Poplar, Elm.



4.4.4 The River Valleys comprise eight Landscape Character Areas within the study area:

- Cam Valley (C1)
- Stort Valley (C2)
- Lee Valley (C3)
- Roding Valley (C4)
- Chelmer Valley (C5)
- Blackwater & Brain Valley (C6)
- Colne Valley (C7)
- Stour Valley (C8)

#### 4.4.9 *Chelmer Valley (C5)*

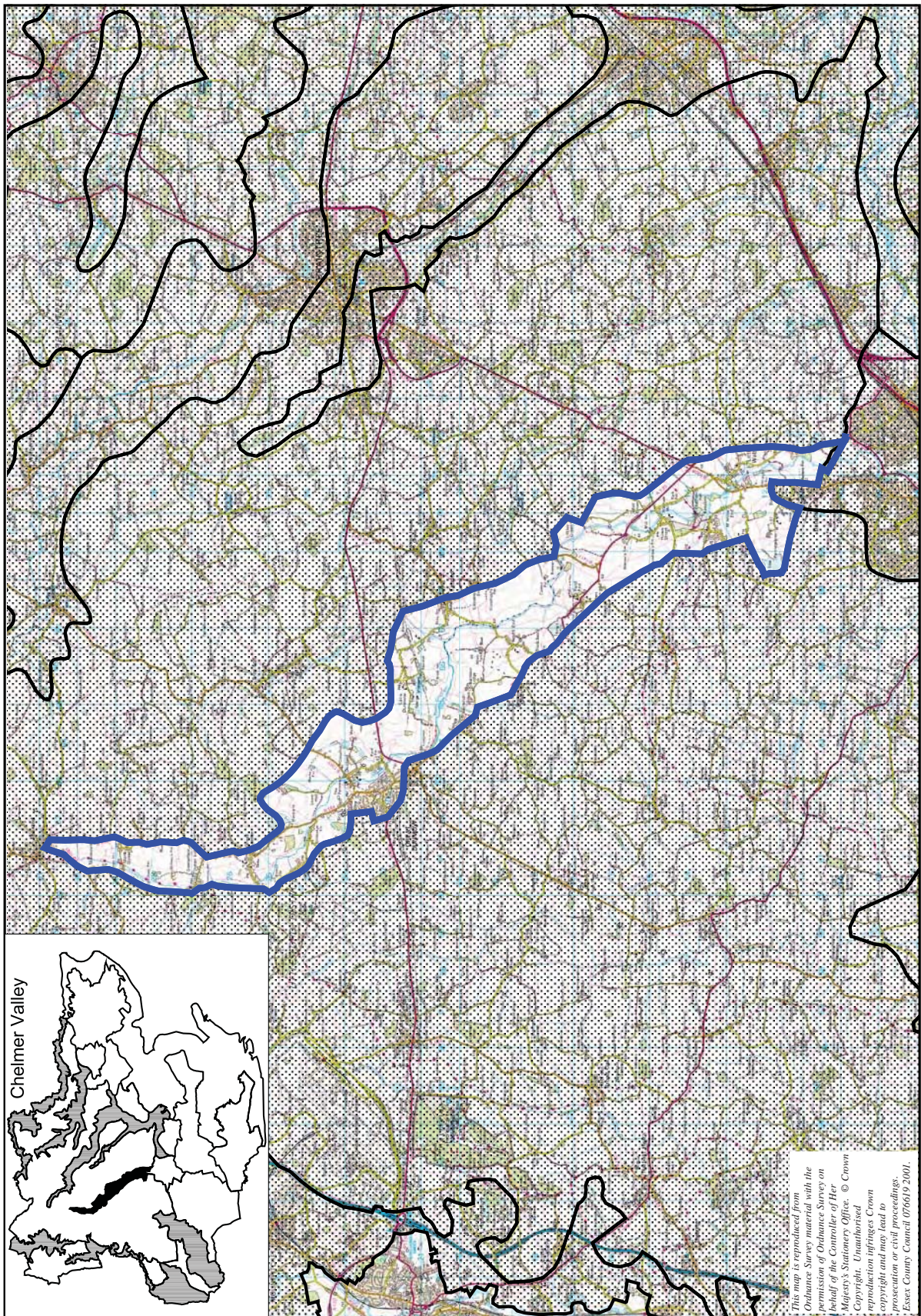


##### ***Key Characteristics***

- Narrow valley, with a restricted valley bottom.
- Dense riverside trees.
- Arable valleysides with a fairly open character.
- Small linear settlements occupy the upper valleysides or straggle down to a few bridging points.
- Historic watermills and Second World War pillboxes are distinctive features.
- Mostly tranquil character.

##### ***Overall Character***

The Chelmer Valley character area extends from the north west of Essex to the edge of Chelmsford. It is a narrow valley within the surrounding very gently undulating glacial clay plateau. The valley bottom has an enclosed character with many riverside and hedgerow trees and a string of small wet woodlands. As a result available views are quite confined and often framed. The valleysides have a more open character with low gappy hedgerows, scattered hedgerow trees and only occasional woods. The majority of the settlements are small with very limited modern development. Only a few major roads cross the valley so this contributes to its substantially tranquil character.



## ***Character Profile***

### *Geology*

- Glacial Till (Chalky Boulder Clay), London Clay, Sands and Gravels

### *Soils*

- Deep well drained fine loamy, coarse loamy and sandy soils, slowly permeable calcareous clay soils.

### *Landform*

- Narrow and shallow valley.
- Moderately sloped valleysides in the north, becoming more gentle south of Great Dunmow.
- Narrow valley floor.

### *Semi-natural vegetation*

- Flood meadows, valley fen.
- A few ancient woodlands.

### *Pattern of field enclosure*

- Small to medium size irregular often gappy hedged fields on valleysides.
- Linear fields divided by drainage ditches and hedges on valley floor.

### *Farming pattern*

- Mainly arable, some pasture on valley floor.

### *Woodland/tree cover*

- Occasional small woods/copses on valleysides.
- Localised concentrations of wet woodland with poplar plantations on the valley floor, e.g. near Little Waltham.
- Dense riverside trees.

### *Settlement pattern and built form*

- Dispersed small villages and hamlets on valleysides often associated with bridging points, e.g. Duton Hill.
- A small number of isolated farmsteads on the valleysides.
- Market town of Gt Dunmow.
- Local vernacular of half timber, colour wash plaster with some decorative pargetting, thatch and pantile roofs.

### *Communications*

- A130 skirts the edge of the valley and crosses it in a few places.
- A120 traverses the valley at Great Dunmow.

### *Other landscape features*

- Langleys Historic Park.
- Historic watermills.
- Small humpbacked bridges.
- Brewery at Hartford End.
- Second World War pillboxes.
- Sand and Gravel Pits near Belstead.

### *Landscape Condition*

- The condition of valleyside vegetation is mixed with many fragmented hedgerows.
- On the valley floor there is some evidence of abandonment of grazing of valley floor meadows.

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

- The landscape has remained relatively stable over long periods of time. Agricultural intensification since the Second World War has resulted in the loss of some valleyside hedgerows.
- Future trends for change may include urban development pressures near Great Dunmow and Chelmsford, and transportation improvements. Agricultural change may lead to alternative uses being sought for less viable agricultural land in valley bottom, although there may also be opportunities for landscape enhancement as a result of alterations to subsidy regimes.

**CHELMER VALLEY (C5)  
SENSITIVITY EVALUATION**

<b>TYPE/SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT/CHANGE</b>	<b>KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND ACCOMMODATION OF CHANGE ISSUES</b>	<b>LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY LEVEL</b>
1. Major urban extensions (>5 ha) and new settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intrinsic small scale character of the valley.</li> <li>• Integrity of valley bottom.</li> <li>• Mostly tranquil character.</li> </ul>	H
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visual exposure of some valleysides.</li> </ul>	M
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intrinsic small scale character of valley.</li> <li>• Integrity of valley bottom.</li> <li>• Mostly tranquil character.</li> </ul>	H
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intrinsic small scale character of valley.</li> <li>• Integrity of valley bottom.</li> </ul>	H
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intrinsic small scale character of valley.</li> </ul>	H
6. Large scale 'open uses'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrity of valley bottom.</li> <li>• Small scale character.</li> </ul>	M
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intrinsic small scale character of the valley.</li> <li>• Integrity of valley bottom.</li> <li>• Mostly tranquil character.</li> </ul>	H
8. Incremental small scale developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intrinsic character of settlement and narrow lanes.</li> </ul>	H
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intrinsic small scale character of the valley.</li> <li>• Mostly tranquil character.</li> </ul>	H
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Condition of valley bottom meadows/vegetation and valleyside hedgerows, woodlands.</li> </ul>	M

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

## 4.8 Urban Landscapes (G)

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



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

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



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

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

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

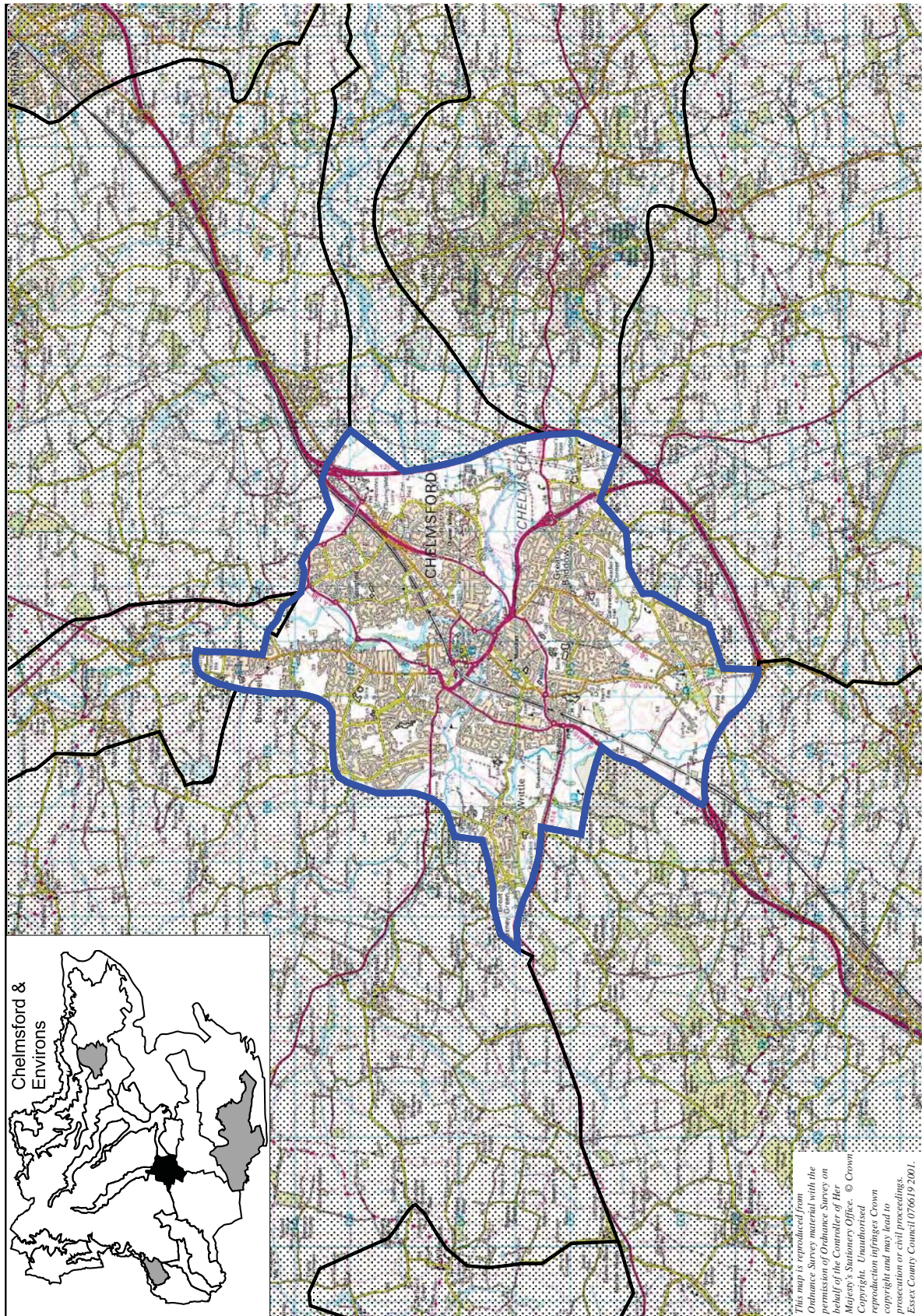


##### ***Key Characteristics***

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

##### ***Overall Character***

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



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

### ***Character Profile***

#### *Geology*

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

#### *Soils*

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

#### *Landform*

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

#### *Semi-natural vegetation*

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

#### *Pattern of field enclosure*

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

#### *Farming pattern*

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

#### *Woodland/tree cover*

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

### *Settlement pattern and built form*

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

### *Communications*

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

### *Other landscape features*

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

### *Landscape Condition*

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

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

- The town of Chelmsford has grown very significantly in the 20th Century.
- Riverside open spaces have been retained but are under pressure from a variety of urban fringe activities including the expansion of horse grazing.
- Additional urban development on the urban fringe is likely to be an ongoing trend, as well as transportation improvements.

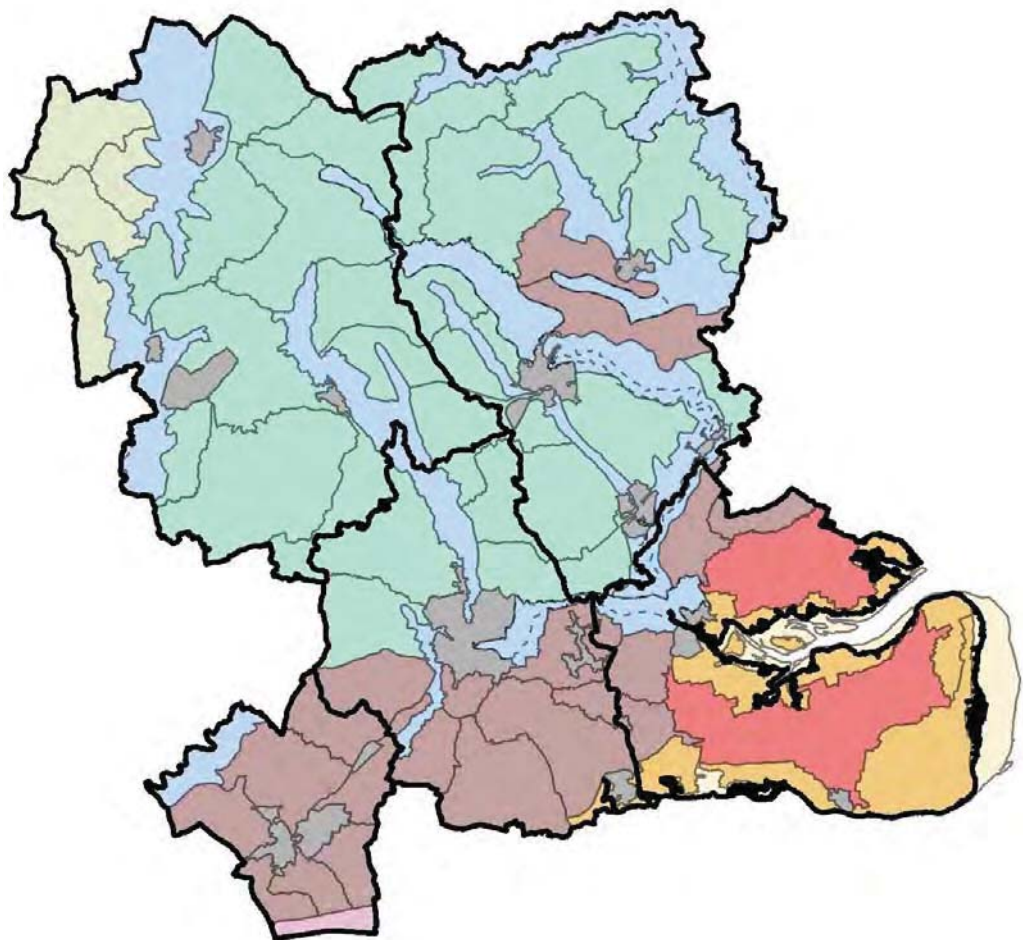
## CHELMSFORD & ENVIRONS (G2) SENSITIVITY EVALUATION

TYPE/SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT/CHANGE	KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND ACCOMMODATION OF CHANGE ISSUES	LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY LEVEL
1. Major urban extensions (>5 ha) and new settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrity of river valley corridors.</li> <li>Moderate to high intervisibility.</li> <li>Some visually exposed valleysides.</li> <li>Coalescence.</li> </ul> <p><i>Any new development should include strong new woodland/hedgerow framework planting particularly where arable farmland is in poor condition.</i></p>	M
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moderate to high intervisibility.</li> <li>Integrity of river valley corridors.</li> </ul> <p><i>Possible opportunities to improve some existing urban edges.</i></p>	L
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrity of river valley corridors.</li> <li>Moderate to high intervisibility.</li> </ul>	M
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrity of river valley corridors.</li> <li>Moderate to high intervisibility.</li> </ul> <p><i>Siting, massing, form and colour and appropriate woodland, hedgerowed framework are critical.</i></p>	M
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some visually exposed valleysides.</li> <li>Moderate to high intervisibility.</li> </ul> <p><i>Siting, massing, form and colour are critical.</i></p>	M
6. Large scale 'open uses'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrity of river valley corridors.</li> <li>Integrity of hedgerow field pattern.</li> </ul> <p><i>Possible opportunities to create new woodlands within surrounding farmland.</i></p>	M
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moderate to high intervisibility.</li> <li>Integrity of river valley corridors.</li> </ul>	H
8. Incremental small scale developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Urban character.</li> </ul>	L
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moderate to high intervisibility.</li> <li>Urban character.</li> </ul>	M
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Urban character.</li> </ul>	L

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

---

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



September 2006

***CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES***

---

*Environment   Landscape   Planning*

## **5.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF CHELMSFORD BOROUGH**

### **5.1 General**

5.1.1 This section of the report provides the detailed ‘profiles’ of Landscape Character Areas within Chelmsford Borough, structured as follows:

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

The profiles should be read as a whole when used to inform decision making. Where Landscape Character Areas fall within two or more adjacent District/Borough areas included in this Study report, the same profile has been included within the respective section. In such instances, a cross-reference is noted in the respective Character Area profile(s).

5.1.2 The following Landscape Character Types and Areas have been identified within Chelmsford Borough (see Figure 5.1), and are described in the following sections:

#### **A - River Valley**

A6 - Upper Chelmer River Valley  
 A7 - Lower Chelmer River Valley  
 A8 - Can and Wid River Valley

#### **B - Farmland Plateau**

B15 - Pleshey Farmland Plateau  
 B16 - Felsted Farmland Plateau  
 B17 - Terling Farmland Plateau  
 B20 - Writtle Farmland Plateau  
 B21 - Boreham Farmland Plateau

#### **D - Drained Estuarine Marsh**

D9 - Fambridge Drained Estuarine Marsh

#### **F - Wooded Farmland**

F5 - Little Baddow and Danbury Wooded Farmland  
 F6 - Woodham Wooded Farmland  
 F7 - Blackmore Wooded Farmland  
 F10 - Heybridge Wooded Farmland  
 F11 - South Hanningfield Wooded Farmland  
 F12 - East Hanningfield Wooded Farmland  
 F16 - Galleywood Wooded Farmland

## **5.2 River Valley Landscapes**

5.2.1 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

- V-shaped or u-shaped landform which dissects Boulder Clay/Chalky Till plateau
- Main river valley served by several tributaries
- Flat or gently undulating valley floor
- Intimate character in places
- Wooded character in places

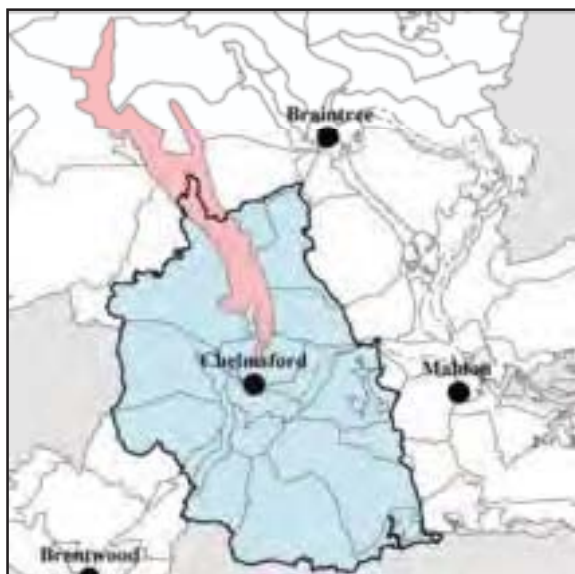
5.2.2 This Landscape Character Type contains the following Landscape Character Areas:

A6 - Upper Chelmer River Valley

A7 - Lower Chelmer River Valley

A8 - Can and Wid River Valley

## A6 UPPER CHELMER RIVER VALLEY (shared with Uttlesford District)

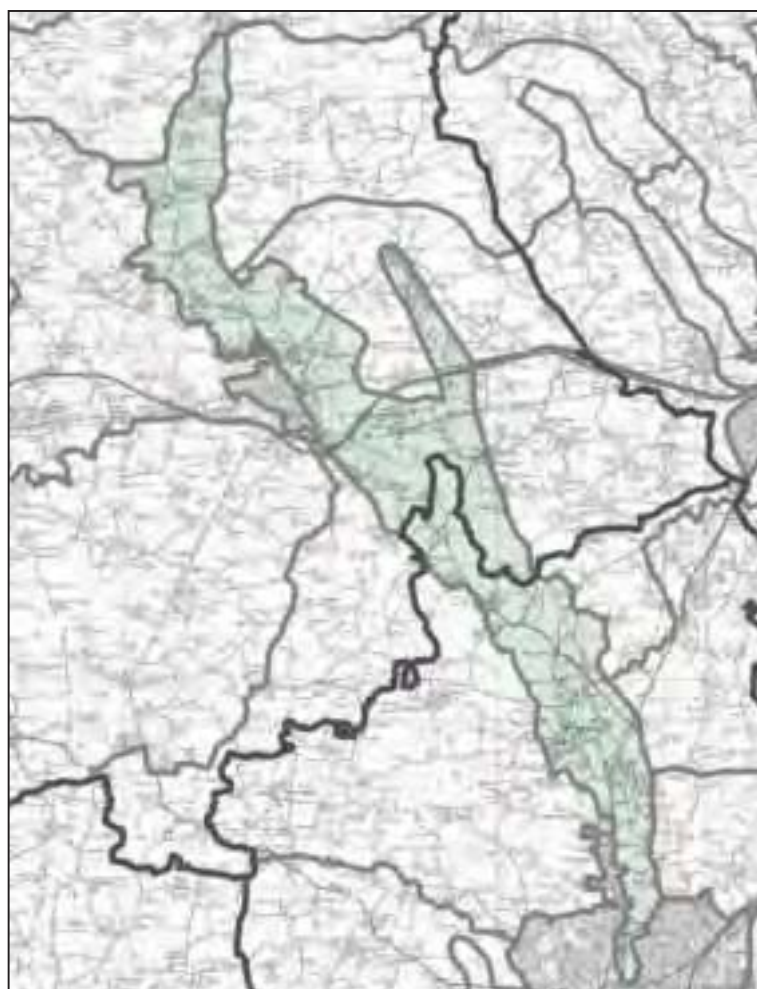


### Key Characteristics

- Narrow valley, with a restricted valley floor.
- Small meandering river channel on the left side of the valley close to the rising ground of the valley side.
- Dense riverside trees.
- Arable valley sides with a fairly open character.
- Small linear settlements occupy the upper valley sides or straggle down to a few bridging points.
- Historic watermills and Second World War pillboxes are distinctive features.
- Mostly tranquil away from Great Dunmow, Chelmsford and the A120.

### Overall Character

The River Chelmer and its valley stretches from the southern edge of the historic town of Thaxted with its tall church spire and wind mill, southwards to the point at which the river meets the urban edge of Chelmsford. It is a narrow valley within the surrounding gently undulating boulder clay plateau. There are several small tributary streams that form valley sides such as the Stebbing Brook that joins the River Chelmer north of Felsted. The gently undulating valley floor has an enclosed character and restricted views often framed by the many riverside and hedgerow



trees, a string of small wet woodlands and the sloping valley sides. The undulating valley sides which are steep in places, have a more open character with low thick but fragmented hedgerows, scattered hedgerow trees and only occasional woods separating the large arable fields that line the valley sides meeting at the river. The fields to the east of the River Chelmer tend to be larger and more regular in shape. Those to west of the river tend to be smaller pastoral fields or areas of rough pasture or wet meadow in the small floodplain with larger arable fields dominating the valley sides. As the River Chelmer approaches Chelmsford it becomes more sinuous and meanders further from the east valley side. The majority of the settlements excluding Great Dunmow are situated high on the valley sides with very limited modern development. Great Dunmow is located within the western side of the river valley with the urban edge crossing the river and forming a finger of new development on the east side of the valley to the south of the main town. The new development dominates views across the valley south of the town. The river valley is lined by roads running parallel to the valley along the top of the valley sides. There are also a few small narrow lanes that cross the river before joining the road on the opposite valley side. Variety and interest is provided by the presence of a number of local vernacular buildings with timber-frames, bright colour washed walls and thatched roofs. Examples of such houses include a group of 17<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed houses clustered around the Manor in Little Easton. The motte and ditch of Great Easton castle with the ground so Easton Hall also provides a visible landmark. Barnson Hall and Lodge, Liberty Hall, Chatham Hall and associated deer park also contribute to the character and overall strong sense of place. There is an overall sense of tranquillity within the river valley, with a comprehensive network of public rights of way and narrow lanes winding through the landscape. The river valley permeates Chelmsford introducing an important green corridor of ‘natural’ character into the urban fabric of the town.

### **Visual Characteristics**

- The church tower at Great Easton (St. John and St. Giles), Little Easton (St Mary the Virgin), Little Dunmow (St. Mary the Virgin) and Barnston (St. Andrews) and the spire of the church in Thaxted form landmarks within views into and across the valley slopes.
- Generally open views from the valley sides into the gently meandering valley floodplain, which are framed in places by small patches of woodland.
- Enclosed and framed views along the valley corridor.

### **Historic Land Use**

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by extensive enclosed meadow pastures along the river valley floodplains and pre-18<sup>th</sup> century generally irregular fields, probably of medieval origin and some maybe even older. Whilst much 20<sup>th</sup> century development has occurred, particularly in and around Little Waltham, the original medieval pattern of dispersed settlements and scattered farmsteads largely survives, with isolated farms, moated sites, and small hamlets strung out along linear greens. The main historic landscape features include:

- Several areas of Ancient woodlands, particularly in the Ter valley.
- A limited number of small historic parklands.
- Occasional common fields, which has been later enclosed piecemeal by agreement.
- A number of parks or former parks including Little Easton, which subsequently became a World War II airfield.
- The line of the Roman road from Chelmsford to Braintree, which effectively bisects the area.

### **Ecological Features**

This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable agriculture within the valley of the River Chelmer. The area contains 23 sites of nature conservation value. These include:

- Nine CWSs with ancient and semi-natural woodland habitats including: Eseley Wood, Home Wood, Bush Wood, Hoglands Wood/Frederick's Spring, Markshill Wood, Clobbs Wood.
- Three CWSs of woodland habitats to the south.

- Fourteen CWSs with unimproved grassland, scrub and wetland habitat including Flitch Way and Felsted Fen.
- Twelve CWSs with species-rich hedgerows and copses; and along the River Chelmer and its tributaries including Stebbing Brook.

### **Key Planning and Land Management Issues**

- Potential for pollution of the River Chelmer and its tributaries from fertilizer and pesticide run-off from agricultural valley slopes and floor.
- Potential for erection of new farm buildings on the valley slopes, which would be conspicuous on the skyline.
- Potential residential expansion of villages onto valley slopes, which would be conspicuous on the skyline.
- Increasing traffic on minor roads, especially during busy tourist periods.
- Potential further decline in condition of field boundaries through further agriculture intensification.

### **Sensitivities to Change**

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include dense riverside trees and a string of small wet woodland on the sloping valley sides, which are sensitive to changes in land management. The skyline of the valley slopes is visually sensitive, with open and framed cross-valley views and long views along the river corridor potentially affected by new tall or non-screened new development. Views to the valley sides from adjacent Landscape Character Areas are also sensitive. Historic integrity is strong, with a largely surviving pattern of medieval dispersed settlements, isolated farms, moated sites and small hamlets strung out along linear greens, small historic parklands and a number of churches and local vernacular buildings with timber-frames, bright colour-washed walls and thatched roofs. Several important wildlife habitats are scattered throughout the area (including 23 sites of importance for nature conservation, comprising ancient woodland, unimproved grassland, species-rich hedgerows and copses). Overall this character area has relatively high sensitivity to change.

### **Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives**

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

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

### **Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines**

- Consider the visual impact of new residential development and farm buildings upon valley sides.
- Conserve and enhance cross-valley views and characteristic views across and along the valley.
- Ensure any new development on valley sides is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles.
- Protect and enhance the role of the river valley in providing a network of informal open space and nature conservation sites.

### **Suggested Land Management Guidelines**

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern, and strengthen through planting where appropriate to local landscape character.
- Conserve and manage areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland as important historical, landscape and nature conservation features.
- Conserve and manage the ecological structure of woodland, copses and hedges within the character area.
- Strengthen the recreational role of the woodland resource.

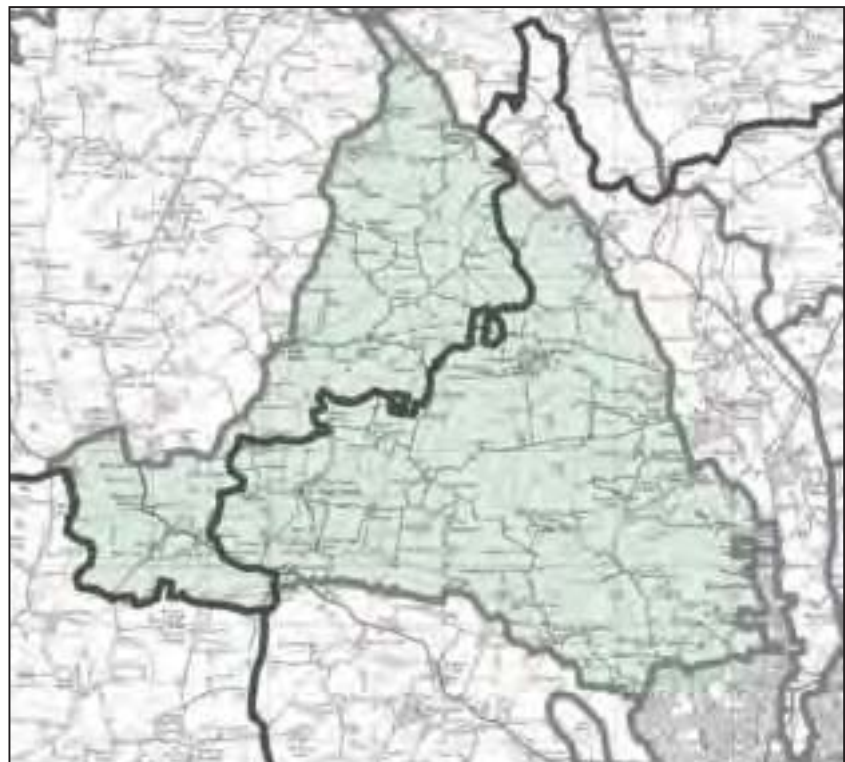
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials, which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character.
- Conserve and enhance the green ‘natural’ character of the river valley through appropriate management of wildlife habitats.

### B15 PLESHEY FARMLAND PLATEAU (shared with Uttlesford District)



#### Key Characteristics

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



#### Overall Character

Pleshey Farmland Plateau is located south of Barnston near Great Dunmow where it stretches to the edge of Chelmsford. The area's eastern boundary along the A130 abuts the River Chelmer and its valley and to the west the boundary follows narrow country lanes from Barnston to west of Leaden Roding. The area is characterised by the extensive area of gently undulating farmland on the boulder clay plateau dissected by several small streams and their valleys. Irregular medium sized arable fields bound by hedgerows and ditches dominate the farmland. The condition of the hedgerows varies across the area with some thick and continuous, some fragmented and gappy and others with mature hedgerow trees. Amongst the arable land are small pockets of deciduous copses and small woods which when added to hedgerow trees and tall hedgerows in some areas form more intimate landscapes. These areas are found particularly in the south west of the area around Mashbury

and Good Easter in the lower lying areas surrounding the River Can and its tributaries. On the higher land in the middle and to the east there are fewer trees or woodland pockets providing more open views across the patchwork of fields. In addition to the arable farmland there are clusters of smaller fields and paddocks with improved grassland and bounded by wooden or white tape fencing. These are generally located around the hamlets or farmsteads and are used to graze horses. Other medium sized pastoral fields are located in the lower regions of the area around Mashbury and Good Easter in the floodplains of the watercourses. Throughout the area are scattered ponds, lakes and reservoirs. There is a concentration of these to the south east of the area. Some of these water bodies are the result of filling disused sand and gravel pits with water. Local vernacular buildings are found dispersed across the area concentrating in the hamlets and small villages that are scattered throughout the area. These buildings are generally colour washed with tiled or thatched roofs. There are several large halls in the area including Mashbury Hall and Pleshey Grange. Trees generally screen settlements and isolated dwellings from the surrounding open farmland. There is an overall sense of tranquillity throughout the character area with several quiet, rural lanes winding through the landscape.

### **Visual Characteristics.**

- The key landmarks within the Pleshey Farmland are the water tower northwest of Greenstreet and the spires or towers of the churches at Pleshey, High Easter and Good Easter from the surrounding farmland.
- The views within the area vary from open views over the arable farmland on the highest land to the enclosed views in the valleys in the south of the area.

### **Historic Land Use**

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by small irregular fields of ancient origin across the area, with pockets of sinuous co-axial fields. Historic dispersed settlement pattern, often originally focussed on greens, with scattered farmsteads survives. The main historic landscape features include:

- Small roads and green lanes linking settlements, many of which have survived.
- A few, small woods of ancient origin surviving.

### **Ecological Features**

This Character Area is dominated by intensive and widespread arable agriculture. The area contains 16 sites of nature conservation value. These include

- Seven CWSs with ancient and semi-natural woodland habitats including Margaret Roding Wood, Garnetts Wood, Crows Wood.
- Four small areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland further south.
- Nine CWSs with unimproved grassland, scrub and wetland habitats including Leaden Roding Marsh/Longstead Lane, Barnston/High Easter - Onslow Green, part of Hounslow Green and six CWS sites further south.

### **Key Planning and Land Management Issues**

- Potential for pollution of the ditches and streams that cross the arable farmland from fertilizer and pesticide run-off from the fields.
- Potential for erection of new farm buildings on the higher areas, which could be conspicuous on the skyline.
- Potential further decline in condition of field boundaries through further agricultural intensification.
- Increase noise disturbance in the northern part of the area from airplanes taking off and landing at Stansted Airport if the airport expands.

## Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include sinuous hedgerows and ditches and small pockets of deciduous woodland, (which are sensitive to changes in land management). The comprehensive network of quiet rural lanes and byways, which cross the landscape are sensitive to potential increased traffic flow, associated with new development. In association with this, the overall sense of tranquillity within the area is sensitive to change. There is a sense of historic integrity, resulting from a dispersed historic settlement pattern and several large halls (including Mashbury Hall and Pleshey Grange). There are also several important wildlife habitats within the area (including 16 sites of importance for nature conservation, comprising ancient woodland, unimproved grassland, scrub and wetland habitats) which are sensitive to changes in land management. Overall, this character area has moderate sensitivity to change.

## Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

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

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

## Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

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

## Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern, and strengthen through planting species which are appropriate to local landscape character such as blackthorn.
- Conserve and manage areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland as important historical, landscape and nature conservation features.
- Conserve and manage the ecological structure of woodland, copses and hedges within the character area.
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials, which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character.



[www.cba.uk.net](http://www.cba.uk.net)

**London Office**

*Swan Court 9 Tanner Street London SE1 3LE  
Tel: 0207 089 6480 Fax: 0207 089 9260 Email: [mail@cba.uk.net](mailto:mail@cba.uk.net)*

**South East Office**

*The Old Crown High Street Blackboys Uckfield East Sussex TN22 5JR  
Tel: 01825 891071 Fax: 01825 891075 Email: [mail@cba.uk.net](mailto:mail@cba.uk.net)*

# BROOMFIELD

## COMMUNITY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER STATEMENT



### Acknowledgements

This Community Landscape Character Assessment has been produced by the Broomfield Village Design Statement (VDS) Association. All Broomfield residents are members. The Committee members are:

John Blake (Chair)  
Heather Bray (Secretary)  
Sue Browning  
Geof Garwood  
Dudley Holmes (Vice-Chair and Treasurer)  
Ian Hughes  
Faith Marchal  
Robin Marchal  
Angela Marriage  
Peter Marriage  
Chris Marten  
Ros Smith  
Les Steed  
Wendy Talley

The Committee would like to thank:

- Ken Newman for contributing the geology section in this booklet
- Gareth Gunning for contributing the section on landscape history
- Broomfield Parish Council and the Rural Community Council of Essex for funding the VDS activities that have contributed to the Landscape Character Assessment.

October 2010

The Landscape is the most popular reason for living in Broomfield. It defines the village, supporting its sense of identity as a village community.

Produced by Broomfield Village Design Statement Association  
October 2010

## Broomfield and the Wider Landscape

In the Chelmsford Landscape Character Assessment, Broomfield is made up of three landscape areas, Pleshey Farmland Plateau, the Upper Chelmer River Valley and Boreham Farmland Plateau. All three extend beyond the Parish into the surrounding parishes.



The text on this page gives a very brief summary of the key characteristics of each type of landscape. The full document gives much more information, for instance on, historic land use, ecological features and sensitivities to change. It can be found on the Chelmsford Borough Council website at planning and building control/ LDF/LDF evidence base (item 28).

### Boreham Farmland Plateau

- Irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable and pastoral fields, marked by hedgerows, banks and ditches
- Small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape
- Scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small hamlets
- A concentration of isolated farmsteads
- Network of narrow winding lanes
- Sense of tranquillity reduced by traffic noise.

### Upper Chelmer River Valley

- Narrow valley, with a restricted valley floor
- Small meandering river channel
- Dense riverside trees
- Arable valley sides with a fairly open character
- Small linear settlements occupy the upper valley sides or straggle down to a few bridging points
- Historic watermills and Second World War pillboxes are distinctive features
- Mostly tranquil away from Chelmsford
- Introduces an important green corridor into Chelmsford

### Pleshey Farmland Plateau

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

### What the letters mean

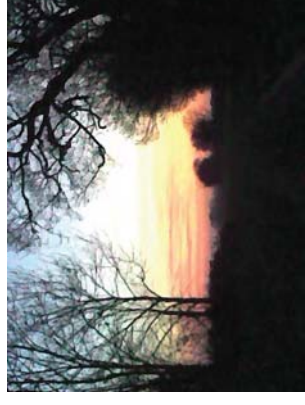
The Broomfield Parish Plan questionnaire asked local people to say which areas of countryside should be protected from large scale development. For this purpose, the Parish was divided into 9 areas (A to I), as shown on the map above

The maps and text on the following pages sets out the local community's views, as revealed through the Parish Plan questionnaire, on the priority for protecting each area (1<sup>st</sup> = should be most protected, 9<sup>th</sup> = least protected). It also includes:

- a short description of the land and why it is distinctive or significant
- any special features, for instance archaeological sites
- how the area could be improved.



Broom Pightle and Night Pasture



New Barn Lane

## Area H

### Priority for Protection - 3rd (out of 9)

**Description:** This area is classic Pleshey Farmland Plateau (see above), containing medium/large fields with pockets of woodland. As the highest land in the Parish, it offers good views eastwards, towards the village and beyond and it can be seen clearly from the other side of the Chelmer Valley. As the current settlement sits comfortably in the gentle 'dip' of the valley, the views are not obstructed by buildings (although some recent construction on the Broomfield Hospital site is noticeable because of its height and futuristic design).

**Significance:** Rising above the Bioo8 corridor, it has a strong sense of tranquillity so offers a fairly immediate contrast with settlements around the edge of Chelmsford. The area is well-served by a network of footpaths, with several paths coming out of the village (for instance New Barn Lane).

**Special features:** Stacey's Farmhouse, Partridge Green and the site of Broomfield's Roman villa. Several small pockets of woodland (the largest being Border Wood) help to frame the wide views to the north and west. A large lake in a former gravel pit near Border Wood also provides an interesting feature and is a haven for wildlife and anglers.

**Possible improvements:** although the Hospital buildings are well-screened by trees from the south, greater tree cover could be provided along its western boundary, particularly with the intensification of the site.

## Area G

### Priority for Protection - 1st (out of 9)

**Description:** This area mostly contains medium sized arable fields with some meadowland (Night Pasture and Broom Pightle) around Broomfield Hall. It is well-served by footpaths which follow around the edge of this area, making it a popular circular route for walkers.

**Significance:** This area serves as a 'funnel' linking historic Church Green and the Churchyard with wider countryside to the west.

**Special features:** Broomfield's manor house, Broomfield Hall, which sits within the Church Green conservation area. Night Pasture and Broom Pightle, which are still grazed, are the only meadowland on this side of the village and contain several old oaks. They provide an interesting contrast with the otherwise arable character and offer views of the Church from the south and west, particularly attractive in late spring.

**Possible improvements:** The derelict farm building adjoining the churchyard was demolished in 2009 - a definite improvement! The Church Green conservation area could be extended to include Night Pasture and Broom Pightle, as they are an essential part of its setting.



The churchyard in all weathers

