

Technical note:

Chelmsford Local Plan Pre-Submission Document – Annex to the Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Evidence Base Report: Corrections to Summary Tables

1. Purpose of this Technical Note

This Technical Note sets out corrections to the Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Report (March 2017) and Addendum (September 2017) arising from observations made as part of Representations made on the Pre-submission Local Plan (Terence O'Rourke on behalf of Hammonds Farm Estates: Appendix 3 – Review of Landscape Capacity March 2018). The Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Report was commissioned by Chelmsford City Council to help inform planning judgements as part of the development of the emerging Local Plan and specifically proposed development sites within the Plan.

2. Methodology

The full methodology is set out in the Technical Report, but includes the translation of ratings on the professional judgements on landscape character sensitivity, visual sensitivity, overall landscape sensitivity and landscape value into a summary table. At no point has the methodology been questioned; the only comments have been concerned with a small proportion of the professional judgements made in evaluating these component factors. It is worth re-iterating that the derivation of landscape capacity has to be based upon application of professional judgement guided by a framework which helps to order those judgements. The following definitions are included within the methodology:

Landscape Character Sensitivity

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

Visual Sensitivity

This includes judgements on the general visibility of the land parcel (based particularly on landform and tree/ woodland cover), the numbers and types of people likely to view the development (i.e. residents, travellers passing through and recreational users) and the likelihood that change could be mitigated without mitigation measures having adverse effects on prevailing character. Elements considered to be important in the assessment of visual sensitivity include:

- Views within, into and across the land parcel and on approaches to settlements i.e. from roads, public footpath network and other viewpoints within or close to the land parcel.
- Views from the settlement edge i.e. suburbs and outlying settlements of Chelmsford, outwards across/ towards the land parcel where these are strategically important and distinctive and an important part of settlement character.

- Potential for development to occupy skylines (ridgelines, hills and other high ground) or where any proposed development should avoid high ground.
- Potential for development to be within a visually conspicuous location e.g. open and flat ground or on open, high and rising landscape where it is not already a key positive landscape characteristic.

Overall Landscape Sensitivity

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

Landscape Value

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

Landscape Capacity

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

3. Suggested Errors and Responses

The following errors in the translation of these ratings have been suggested as part of the Representations made by Terence O'Rourke (TOR) on behalf of Hammonds Farm Estates (Appendix 3 – Review of Landscape Capacity March 2018).

3.1 North East Chelmsford

Table 3.1 North East Chelmsford - suggested errors and responses

Land Parcel	Suggested Error by TOR	Response
NECLP1	Underestimation of landscape value – five scores of 'moderate' one of low, yet the overall landscape value is rated as low. The score should be moderate which would give a medium landscape capacity.	Agreed.
NECLP2	Underestimation of landscape character sensitivity – four scores of moderate, one of high and three of low yet the overall score for landscape is low. The landscape sensitivity should be moderate.	Disagree. The balance of landscape character sensitivity ratings should be: Low to Moderate. The overall Landscape Capacity should remain at: Medium to High.
NECLP3	The visual sensitivity and therefore the overall landscape sensitivity has been underestimated. The visual sensitivity should have scored on the higher side of moderate to high or at a minimum moderate to high. This would then give a low to medium capacity not a medium capacity.	Disagree. The Visual Sensitivity rating is Moderate to High, reflecting the parcel's elevated location. The overall Landscape Capacity should remain at Medium.

Land Parcel	Suggested Error by TOR	Response
NECLP4	The visual sensitivity and therefore overall landscape sensitivity has been underestimated. The visual sensitivity should have scored on the higher side of moderate to high based on two highs and a moderate. This would then give a low to medium capacity and not a medium capacity.	Agreed.
NECLP5	The visual sensitivity and therefore overall landscape sensitivity has been underestimated. The visual sensitivity should have scored on the higher side of moderate to high making the overall landscape sensitivity high or at a minimum moderate to high. This would then give a low to medium capacity not a medium capacity.	Disagree. Whilst the landscape is open, with middle and longer distance views available, there are few receptors and potential for mitigation. The overall landscape sensitivity remains at Moderate and the Landscape Capacity at Medium.

Existing and Amended Landscape Assessment Summaries

Table 3.2 North East Chelmsford – Existing Parcel Summaries

Land Parcel	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
NECLP1	M	M	M	L	M - H
NECLP2	L	M	M	L	M - H
NECLP3	M	M - H	M	M	M
NECLP4	M	M - H	M	M	M
NECLP5	M	M - H	M	M	M
NECLP6	L	M	M	L	M - H

Table 3.3 North East Chelmsford – Amended Parcel Summaries

Land Parcel	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
NECLP1	M	M	M	M	M
NECLP2	L - M	M	M	L	M - H
NECLP3	M	M - H	M	M	M
NECLP4	M	M - H	M - H	M	L - M
NECLP5	M	M - H	M	M	M
NECLP6	L	M	M	L	M - H

The changes to the summary ratings are illustrated in Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.1 North East Chelmsford - Existing Landscape Capacity Gradings

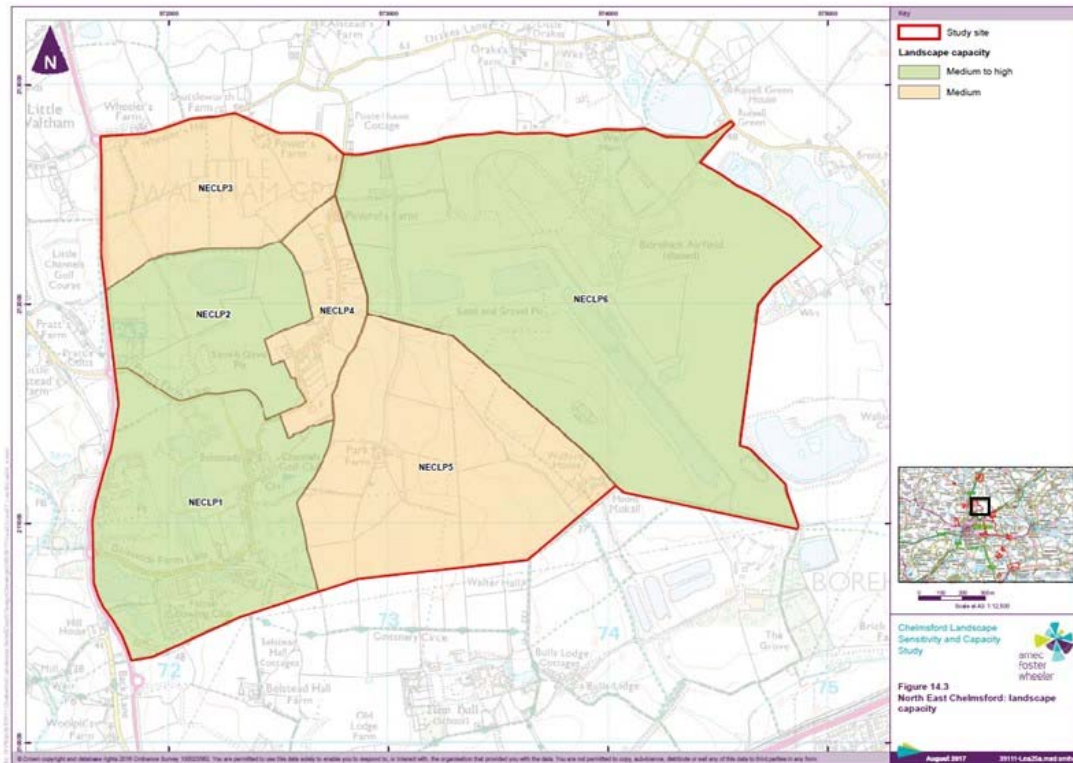
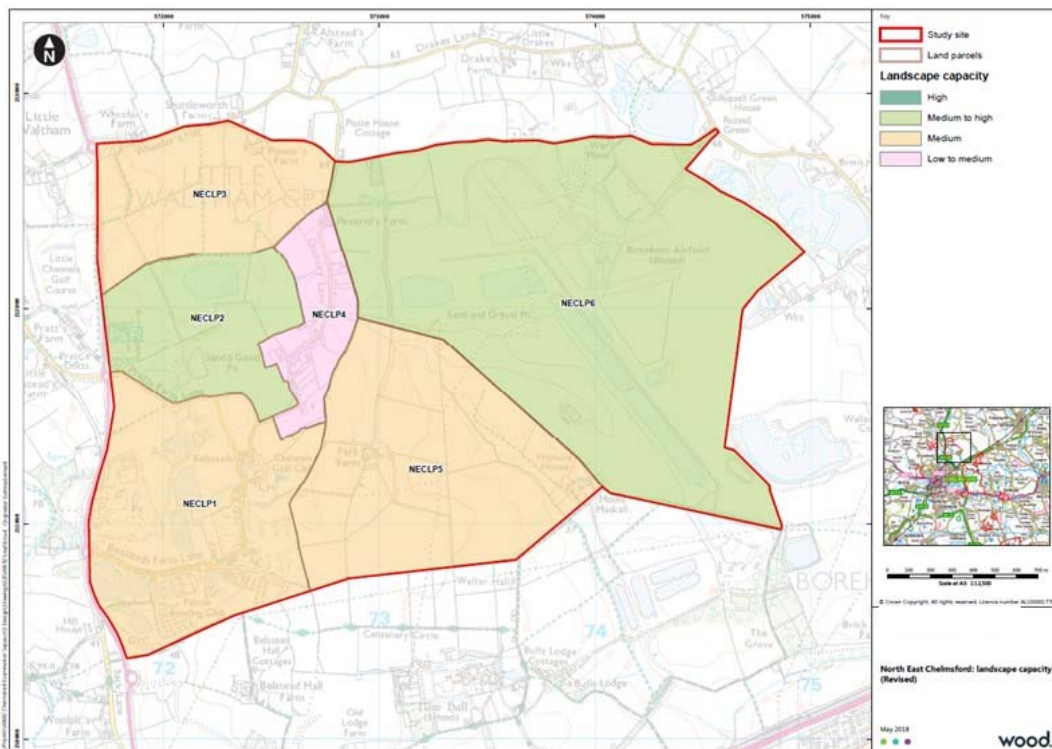


Figure 3.2 North East Chelmsford - Amended Landscape Capacity Gradings



3.2 Great Leighs

Table 3.4 Great Leighs - suggested errors and responses

Parcel	Suggested Error by TOR	Response
GLP7	The landscape value has been underestimated. The landscape value should be low to moderate and therefore the overall landscape capacity would be moderate and not moderate to high.	The judgements made on Landscape Value reflect the diverse qualities of the land parcel (see table below). The landscape value rating can be adjusted to Low to Moderate, in order to reflect the presence of some Moderate criteria assessments. However, the overall landscape value remains on the lower side of Low to Moderate, meaning that the overall Landscape Capacity remains at Medium to High.

Table 3.5 North East Chelmsford - Landscape Value for Parcel GLP7 (extracted from Table 10.13 of the Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Report)

Landscape Value	
1 Distinctiveness of character	Moderate – presents some landscape elements/ features that are typical of character but are not particularly valued or supported through designation.
2 Quality and condition of elements and features	Low - landscape features that are in poor condition with fragmented/ weakening landscape character; declining state and limited time-depth.
3 Scenic value and aesthetic appeal	Low - limited or no aesthetic appeal with detracting features including road noise, flood lighting and residential development on western edge of settlement.
4 Presence of cultural, historic or nature conservation associations	Low – few cultural or nature conservation features and interests (hedgerows, woodland/ roadside planting and ponds).
5 Recreational opportunities	Moderate to High - moderate recreational value, as indicated by the presence of a number of PRoWs. This includes a PRoW that forms a part of a promoted circular walk around the settlement promoted by 'Country Walking in Essex'.
6 Levels of tranquillity	Low – low levels of tranquillity; disturbed and impinged by constant and elevated levels of noise intrusion associated with the A131 and visual intrusion of the settlement edge.

Existing and Amended Landscape Assessment Summaries

Table 3.6 Existing Summary Table for Parcel GLP7

Land Parcel	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
GLP7	L - M	M	M	L	M - H

Table 3.6 Amended Summary Table for Parcel GLP7

Land Parcel	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
GLP7	L - M	M	M	L - M	M - H

3.3 South Woodham Ferrers

Table 3.7 South Woodham Ferrers - suggested errors and responses

Parcel	Suggested Error by TOR	Response
SWFLP2	The visual sensitivity has been underestimated. The table suggests two scores of high and one of moderate to high yet the overall score for visual sensitivity is moderate. It should be moderate to high at the very least. This would then give a moderate to high overall landscape sensitivity and low to medium capacity.	It is conceded that the visual sensitivity rating should be adjusted to: Moderate to High, reflecting the rising land towards Edwins Hall Road. However, the potential for mitigation on the lower slopes is also noted, meaning that the Potential for Mitigation rating should be Moderate rather than High. The Overall Landscape Sensitivity therefore becomes Moderate to High, but the overall Landscape Capacity remains as Medium.

Existing and Amended Landscape Assessment Summary

Table 3.8 Existing Summary Table for Parcel SWFLP2

Land Parcel	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
SWFLP2	M	M	M	M	M

Table 3.9 Amended Summary Table for Parcel SWFLP2

Land Parcel	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
SWFLP2	M	M - H	M - H	M	M

Note: a separate Technical Note appraising additional land at South Woodham Ferrers has been produced.

4. Conclusion

The analysis of the suggested translation errors has revealed that modest adjustments to the ratings applied to some of the land parcels can be made to better reflect the individual judgements

made. For the majority of the land parcels highlighted in the Representations made by Terence O'Rourke, the overall assessments of landscape capacity should remain as they have been reported.

In the following two instances, relating to parcels at North East Chelmsford, a revision to the overall landscape capacity assessment is reasonable to reflect the adjustment of individual ratings.

Table 3.10 Amended Summary Table for Parcels NECLP1 and NECLP4 (see also Figures 3.1 and 3.2 above)

Land Parcel	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
NECLP1	M	M	M	M	M
NECLP4	M	M - H	M - H	M	L - M

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