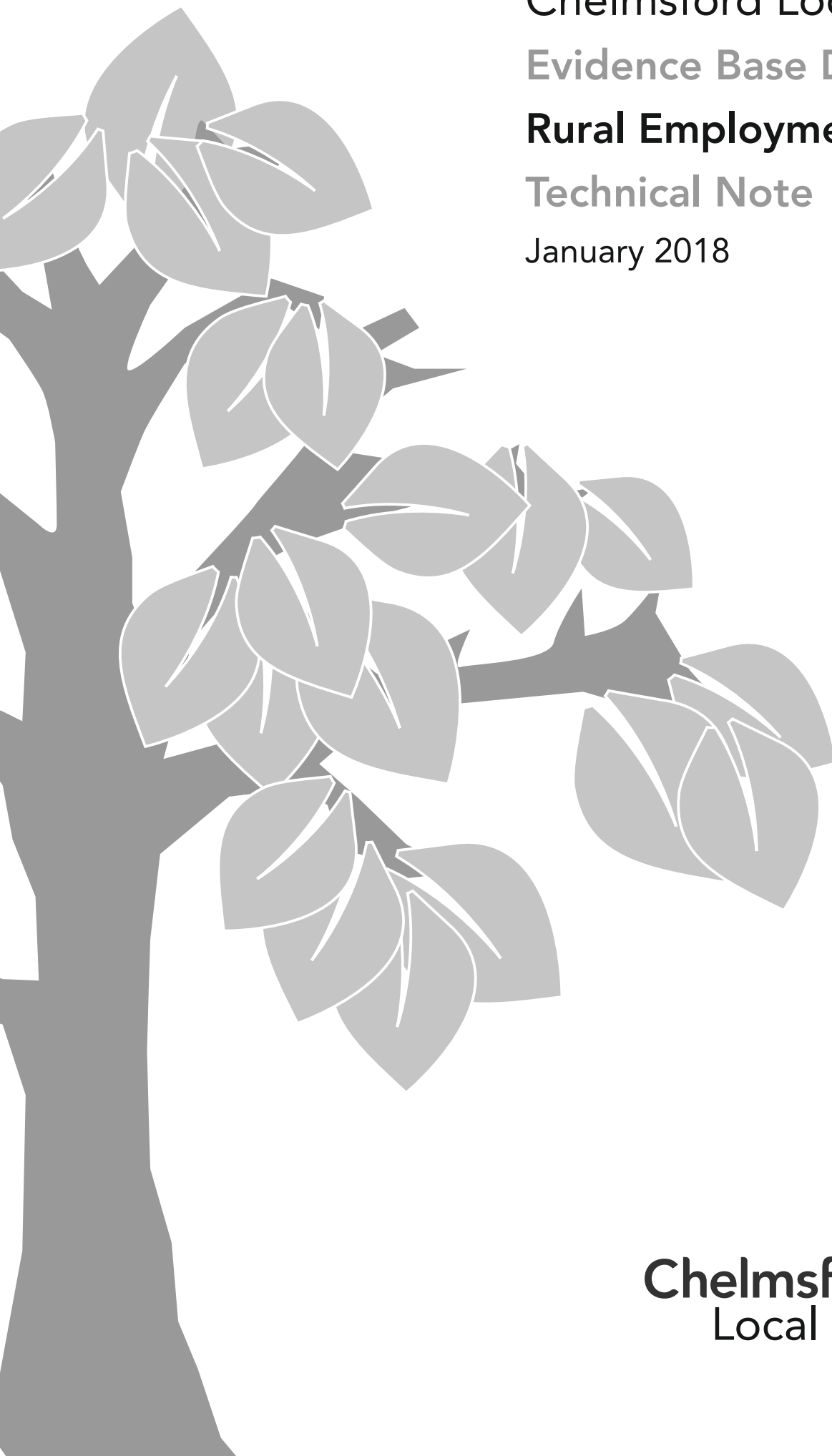


Chelmsford Local Plan  
Evidence Base Document  
**Rural Employment Areas**  
Technical Note  
January 2018





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# **1. Introduction**

1.1 This document informs and supports the allocation of 16 existing Rural Employment Areas within the new Chelmsford City Council Local Plan.

1.2 Chelmsford's rural area contains a number of existing employment areas of differing types and sizes. In line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (para 28) the Local Plan seeks to support the sustainable growth of business and enterprise in rural areas.

1.3 This document complements the Employment Land Review (ELR) published in January 2015. The ELR lists 29 Employment Areas (mainly in urban areas) which are allocated within the existing Local Plan (or Local Development Framework). These employment areas have been rolled forward from the LDF into the new Local Plan.

1.4 In Section 7 and Appendix 7 of the ELR, 14 further non-allocated rural business sites are listed and described. The sites selected generally comprise converted rural buildings mainly in Class B Uses and provide rural employment opportunities.

1.5 A survey has been carried out on the 14 Rural Employment Sites identified in the ELR as well as 16 other sites identified by Council Officers during the Autumn of 2017. The purpose of the study was to identify sites that meet the Council's criteria for allocation as Rural Employment Areas and accompanying designation on the Local Plan Policies Map

1.6 The methodology used for the survey and the criteria for the selection of Rural Employment Areas is set out in Sections 2 and 4 respectively. Section 3 lists the type of Use Classes and businesses most likely to be found in the Rural Employment Areas.

1.7 The sites proposed to be allocated as Rural Employment Areas are listed in Section 4 and shown geographically on Figure 1.

# **2. Methodology**

2.1 Current national policy does not provide any detailed guidance on defining employment areas. However, it does support the setting of clear boundary lines on a Local Plan Policies Map. The NPPF states in paragraph 21 that in drawing Local Plans, local planning authorities should set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated need over the plan period. As such, it is considered important to use a robust and pragmatic criteria and methodology to define the City's Rural Employment Areas (Rural EAs).

2.2 The methodology used for undertaking the review is set out below:

- The criteria used to determine which sites to include or reject as Rural EAs was based on the guidance set out within paragraphs 7.30 and 7.31 of the ELR, internal Officer discussions and the existing range and mix of uses found on the sites surveyed. The ELR is available on-line via <https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-new-local-plan/new-local-plan/evidence-base/>

- Relevant sections of the ELR were reviewed as a starting point to identify potential new Rural EAs
- Internal discussions took place with the Council's planning and enforcement officers as well as the Economic Development Team to identify potential rural EAs for assessment and then to discuss the site boundaries for those proposed for allocation
- Desktop studies of all potential Rural EAs were carried out between October – November 2017 using Ordnance Survey data, planning history searches, aerial photos and on-line mapping
- Site visits were undertaken by planning policy officers to all sites subsequently allocated as Rural EAs and some rejected sites during November 2017.

2.3 Any relevant future planning permissions on the proposed and rejected Rural EAs will be considered as part of any future reviews of this technical note.

### 3. The Use Classes Order

3.1 The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories known as 'Use Classes'. This study was primarily concerned with Class B uses although some other uses and types of businesses are listed below which can sometimes be found on employment sites:

- **A1 Shops** - Shops
- **B1 Business** - Offices (other than those that fall within A2 i.e. financial and professional services), research and development of products and processes, light industry such as bedroom and kitchen manufacture
- **B2 General industrial** - Use for industrial process other than those falling within class B1 including car repair and window manufacturers
- **B8 Storage or distribution** – Enclosed or open air storage
- **D1 Non-residential institutions** – Medical and health services, non-residential education and training centres
- **D2 Assembly and leisure** - Area for indoor sports and recreation such as yoga, pilates and dance studios
- **Sui Generis** - Certain uses do not fall within any use class and are considered 'sui generis'. Such uses are very varied. Some uses relevant to this study are vehicle scrap yards and beauty salons.

## 4. Rural Employment Areas Selection Criteria

4.1 Table 1 below sets out the criteria used to determine whether a site should be included or excluded as a Rural Employment Area in the new Local Plan.

**Table 1 – Rural Employment Areas Selection Criteria**

	Criteria
<b>Include</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Established, consolidated and authorised rural employment areas, which generally consist of more than one building and several individual businesses/tenants with B1, B2 and B8 uses dominating. Other non-employment uses on the site such as D1, D2 and A1 may be acceptable but must be in the minority. In exceptional cases sites immune to enforcement action have been included providing they meet all the requirements above.</li></ul>
<b>Exclude</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Existing Rural Employment Areas predominantly containing a mix of non-employment uses including agricultural/equestrian uses, residential uses, and/or commercial uses where it is not possible to define a consolidated or easily recognisable area of employment uses.</li><li>Sites with a small number of employment uses (typically 3 or less) and/or where the uses are spread out and mixed with non-employment uses such as agriculture and retail.</li><li>Sites comprising a single tenant/business in a single building.</li><li>Sites with no reasonable prospect of it being used for employment purposes for the long-term (in accordance with paragraph of the NPPF).</li></ul>

4.2 Note that boundaries of proposed Rural EAs should normally follow clearly defined physical features such as walls, fences, tree lines, mature hedgerows and field boundaries. Car parking areas and smaller areas of landscaping integral to the site are generally included whereas any uses not forming part of the employment offer such as residential and agricultural/equestrian uses are excluded.

## 5. Proposed Rural Employment Areas

5.1 Out of the 30 potential sites reviewed, 16 sites were found to meet the criterion for inclusion above. These are listed in Table 2 below and are allocated within the Pre-Submission Local Plan. The majority of these sites are in the west and south of Chelmsford and 7 are located within the Green Belt as shown in Figure 1. Please note that Rural EAs in the Green Belt allocated within the new Local Plan are 'washed over' by the Green Belt. As such, no changes are proposed to the Green Belt boundary as a consequence of this study.

5.2 For information, any relevant and recent planning permissions related to the sites surveyed have been referenced. However, this list is not intended to be exhaustive. Similarly, the uses listed for each site may not be exhaustive. Please refer to section 3 for more details.

**Table 2 – Rural Employment Areas allocated in the Pre-Submission Local Plan**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Ash Tree Farm, Bishop Stortford Road	Boyton Cross, north of Roxwell	This site contains a wide mix of uses in B1, B2 and B8 use including a large ground workers yard, a window manufacturer installer and a plastic warehouse. Relevant planning history include 95/06174/FUL, 12/00302/FUL, 14/01351/FUL, 14/01584/FUL, 16/01935/FUL, 17/00106/FUL.
2	Bolding Hatch Farm Business Centre, Bishop Stortford Road	West of Roxwell	This is a relatively small, well contained site surrounded by a moat and trees. It contains a small number of converted farm buildings in B1 and B8 use (00/00401/FUL). Planning permission has recently been granted for two new buildings in the north and south western part of the site to be used for B1 office use (17/00560/FUL).
3	Boyton Hall Farm, Boyton Hall Lane	North of Roxwell	This farm is partly in agricultural use with a number of very large storage buildings and partly in commercial use. The commercial part is well defined consisting of a mix of B1, B2 and B8 uses and broadly follows an application for change of use of agricultural buildings to commercial use (14/00940/FUL) and another for storage of equipment (08/00146/CLEUD).
4	Land adjacent Bumpstead's Cottage, Margaretting Road	South of Writtle (near junction with Nathan's Lane)	This is a small site formerly in equestrian use containing 15 small units in a variety of uses but dominated by B1 and B8 uses (15/01124/FUL).
5	Little Boyton Hall Farm, Boyton Hall Lane	North of Roxwell	This farm is partly in agricultural, partly in commercial use but the commercial part is well defined containing a number of business, ranging from offices (B1 use) to light manufacturing (B1c use). Relevant planning history include (14/01711/FUL, 14/02064/FUL, 15/01165/FUL and 16/02223/FUL).
6	Oaklands Farm Estate, Goatsmoor Lane	North east of Billericay	This is a consolidated, well contained low key site with single storey buildings along the edges and in the centre. There are a variety of uses on site including B1, B2 and B8. Relevant planning history include 85/0239, 86/0127.
7	Old Park Farm Business Centre, Main Road (also referred to as Whitbreads Business Centres)	West of Ford End	This is a large site containing former farm and agricultural buildings converted to a high quality business centre for mainly B1 office use (12/01791/FUL) and 15/00225/FUL). The site includes a recently converted Dutch Barn with a Café (A3). Permission was also given for the barn to contain up to two units for supporting D2 leisure uses.

	Name	Location	Description
			There is also a freestanding former agricultural building in the southern part of the site in use for storage and distribution (B8), (13/01791).
8	Phillows Farm, Hammonds Road	West of Little Baddow, south of Boreham	This is a medium sized site containing former barns and cartlodes converted into high quality offices (B1 use), with one training centre (D1 use) as well as a unit for beauty and spa treatments (sui generis) to the north east, and a building used for storage (B8 use) in the western part of the site. Relevant planning history include 10/01899/FUL, 13/00057/FUL, 15/00823/FUL and 13/01504/FUL.
9	Reeds Farm, Cow Watering Lane	North of Writtle	This is a large site comprising of nurseries to the west and a well-established consolidated employment area to the east in former agricultural buildings. There is also a couple of shared parking areas and an estates office in the centre. The boundary has been drawn around the employment area to the east which is accessed from Roxwell Road to the north. The site contains a large number of units in mixed use including B1, B2, B8, D1, D2 and sui generis uses (including a chiropractor, a dance school and a yoga and pilates studio). Relevant planning history include 94/06651/FUL, 9405705/FUL, 92/CHL/1049 as well as appeals allowed in the 1980s.
10	Runwell Hall Farm, Hoe Lane	South east of South Hanningfield	This site contains recently converted agricultural buildings in use as offices (B1) and storage/storage and distribution (B8), 14/00294/FUL). There is also a barn used as a grain store to the east which has been excluded from the employment area.
11	Warner's Farm, Main Road	North of Howe Street, west of the Main Road	The western and north-eastern part of the farm consists of a mixture of agricultural and business uses. The south-eastern part can however be defined as solely in employment use, centred around a main courtyard and in a wide range of uses within the A1, B1, B2, B8 and sui generis use classes. A joinery manufacturer (B1) occupies a large part of a building in the northern part of the site (B1). Relevant planning history include 90/01416/FUL and 96/05867/FUL.
12	The Warren Estate, Lordship Road	North of Writtle	This site contains a wide mix of businesses in B1, B2 and B8 use including an accountancy (B1) and a large barn storing audio, lighting, staging and video equipment for events (B8). A barn in the north western corner of the site is in agricultural use and has been excluded.



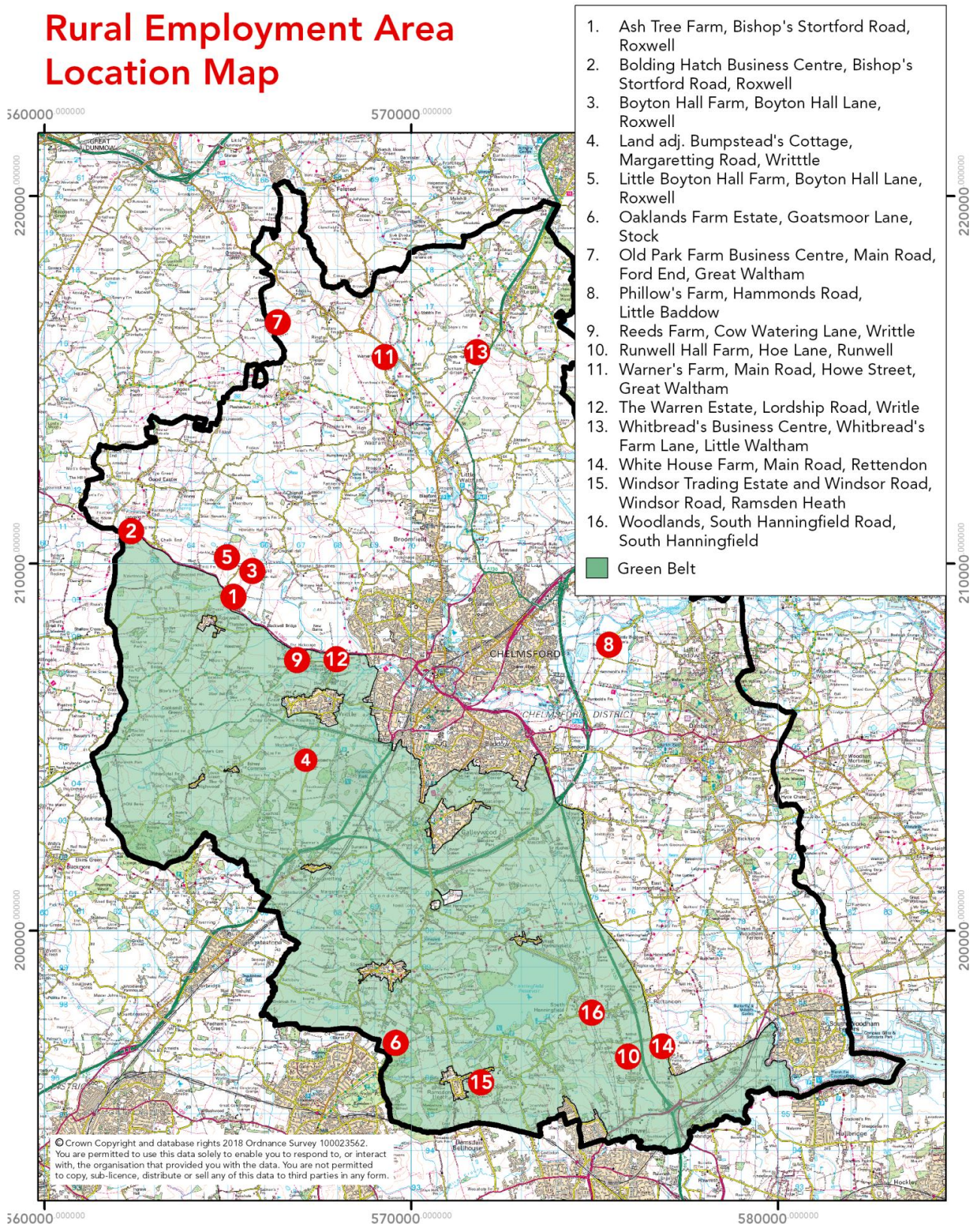
	Name	Location	Description
			Relevant planning history include 02/02305/FUL, 12/00559/FUL, 10/00339/FUL, 12/00734/FUL, 11/00607/FUL, 10/01025/FUL and 09/00934/FUL.
13	Whitbreads Business Centre, Whitbreads Farm Lane	North East of Chatham Green	This site contains a number of farm buildings converted into high quality B1 office use and is a centre for the Essex Young Farmers (EYF), (06/00456/FUL). To the rear but separated from these other buildings on the site by approximately 15 m, is a newly built cartlodge used for storage by EYF and an education visitors centre (D1). These two units have been excluded from the site boundary due to the separation and use class.
14	White House Farm, Main Road	North of Rettendon Place	The site contains four parallel barns converted to business use (07/00145/FUL). A wide mix of businesses operate from the site including B1, B2 and B8 uses as well as a golf shop (A1). Containers are currently stored on part of the site.
15	Windsor Trading Estate and Windsor Road	Ramsden Heath	A very well established employment site in two parts. Windsor Trading Estate occupies the southern part of the site and is in use as a car salvage yard and used car dealer (sui generis). A number of car dismantling/car spares/tyre dealers line Windsor Road to the north (sui generis/B2) of the Trading Estate and there is a scaffolding business in the northern part of the site (B8). Relevant planning history include 93/06179/CLEUD, 94/05804/CLEUD, CHL/1925/90, 95/05735/FUL and 14/02076/FUL.
16	Woodlands, South Hanningfield Road	East of South Hanningfield	This is a relatively small and well established site. The southern part is occupied by a civic engineering and construction company that also has a large yard to the south west for materials storage (B1, B2 and B8). The north eastern part of the site contains several small units occupied by a wide variety of businesses mainly in the same use classes as above. Relevant planning history includes CHR/0237/61, 80/0891, 09/00945 and 15/01463/FUL.

5.3 Rural EAs allocated in the Pre-Submission Local Plan are designated on the following Policies Maps:

- Map 1 Chelmsford Urban Area
- Map 9 Chatham Green
- Map 24 Ramsden Heath
- Map 31 St Lukes Park
- Map 35 Writtle
- Map 36 Bolding Hatch
- Map 37 Old Park Farm
- Map 38 Warner's Farm
- Map 39 Woodlands
- Map 40 Oaklands

5.4 Figure 1 below shows the location of all 16 Rural EAs allocated in the Pre-Submission Local Plan.

Figure 1 Location of Rural EAs allocated in the Pre-Submission Local Plan





## 6. Discounted Sites

6.1 Table 3 below contains a list of sites which have been reviewed and discounted as they fail to satisfy the criterion for designation as Rural EAs in the Pre-Submission Local Plan. Note that this list is not exhaustive since it would be too resource intensive to review all sites that may contain just a few commercial uses or a mix of agricultural and commercial uses.

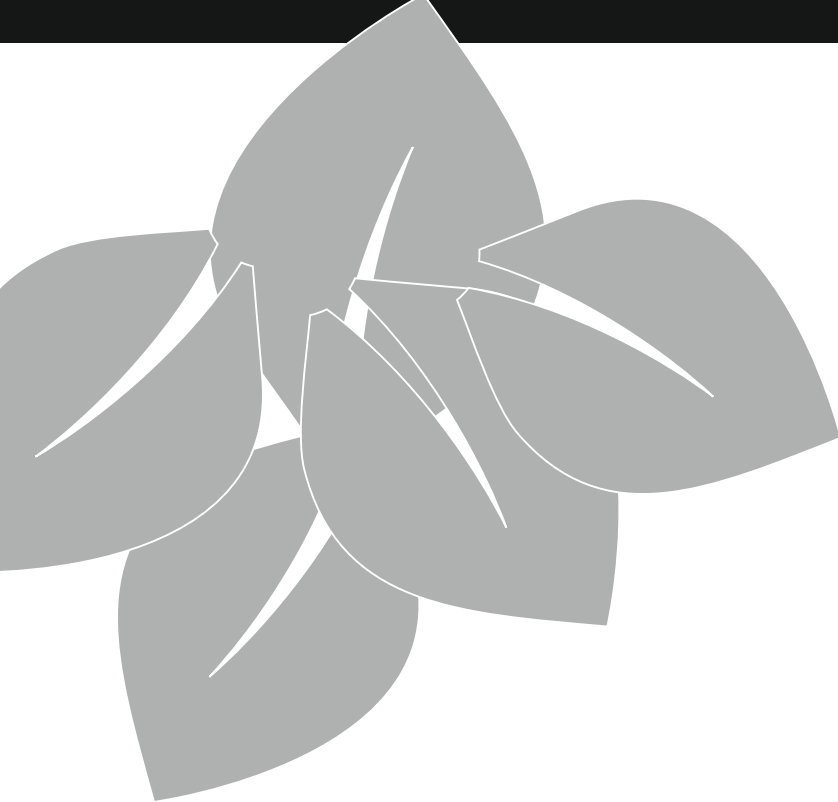
**Table 3 - Discounted Sites**

Name of site and road name	Location	Comment
Birkett Hall, Main Road	Woodham Ferrers	The site is mainly in livery/agriculture use with only one commercial use (17/01459/FUL).
Brock Farm, Ingatestone Road	South west of Stock	The front of the site contains commercial buildings (09/01492/FUL and 07/00974/FUL) with a couple of stand-alone buildings to the rear (10/01289/FUL and 10/01290/FUL) as well as one building which is in agricultural use. The planning permissions for the buildings to the rear do not include the surrounding land. The site therefore is not consolidated and has no obvious boundary, hence does not meet the criterion for inclusion. A recent planning application to convert the site to residential use has been dismissed at appeal, but it does indicate the landowner's future aspirations for the site (16/02115/FUL, 17/00034/REFUSE).
Chantry Farm, Chantry Lane	North of Boreham	Planning permission was obtained in 1999 (99/00878/FUL) to convert a number of former farm buildings to warehouse/storage (B8), industry (B2) and office use (B1). However the site has been promoted for redevelopment for specialist housing through the Call for Sites process. A Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared for Boreham and any further site allocations outside of the Local Plan process will be considered through this Neighbourhood Plan.
Croxton's Mill, Blasford Hill	South of Little Waltham	This is a converted Grade II listed mill with several offices split over three floors (89/2136 and 90/0526). All office suites are in this single building, therefore the site does not meet the criterion for a Rural EA, i.e. it has to be more than one building.

Name of site and road name	Location	Comment
Lamar Engineer Ltd, Main Road	North of Margaretting	This site contains only one building (allowed on appeal 90/0422/FUL) and therefore does not meet the criterion for a Rural EA, i.e. it has to be more than one building.
Mashbury Hall, Chignal Road	Mashbury	This site contains a mixture of agricultural, equestrian and commercial uses (15/02023/FUL) and does therefore not meet the criterion for inclusion since it is not possible to define a consolidated or easily recognisable area of employment uses.
Muggeridge Farm	Battlesbridge	This farm is part of the Battlesbridge Antique Centre with units for small businesses and land for camping and caravans. It comprises repair and sale only, no B class uses (94/05007/FUL), which is within the criterion for inclusion.
The Old Coal Yard, Little Waltham Road	North of Chelmsford, off Essex Regiment Way	This site contains five businesses including one relatively large office (B1). The remaining uses are medical and health services (D1) and indoor sports uses (D2) (98/01471/FUL, 15/02030/FUL, 17/00259/FUL). The site is not considered an employment site since it is not dominated by B uses.
Parklands Farm	Lower Green, Galleywood	There are only three businesses operating from this farm, in B1 and B8 use mixed with grain storage buildings and livery use. There is no obvious boundary to separate the commercial uses from the agricultural and livery use (00/00561/CLEUD), hence it cannot be classed as a Rural EA.
Pools Lane	South west of Highwood	Desktop searches indicate that at least four businesses currently operate from this site. There is however no permitted commercial use on this site.
Rawlings Farm and Rettendon Antiques Centre	South of Rettendon Common	This is a large site split into two. The antique centre forms the eastern part and is accessed from the old A130. It is dominated by retail uses but also contains a large recording studio (B1) and a furniture upholsterer (B1). Rawlings Farm is accessed from South Hanningfield Road and is very spread out with mainly car/lorry repair (B2), a plaster moulder (B1), tyre repair (B2), piling storage and distribution over a large area (B8) and go cart repair. The site is excluded due to it being sprawling, containing unauthorised uses as well as a number of retail units (91/0233 – refusal).

Name of site and road name	Location	Comment
Rough Hill Complex, The Tye	East Hanningfield	This site is excluded because the uses are not consolidated but rather dispersed with one large use dominating the site, a company that processes, stores and distributes timber products (B2 and B8), 05/01741/FUL).
Rochester Farm, Main Road, Great Leighs	South of Great Leighs	Recent planning permissions obtained for three former agricultural buildings to be used for B8 storage (15/00593, 15/00011/COUIPA, 16/01083/FUL and 17/01317). No information on the building to the east, the site is presumably mixed commercial and agriculture. The site has only three units in B use and there is no obvious boundary between employment and agricultural use, hence the site does not meet the criterion for inclusion.
Unit 1 Warners Farm, Main Road	North of Howe Street, east of the Main Road	This site consists of three parallel barns converted to business use. The site is occupied by a company which is a specialist manufacturer and supplier of windows, doors etc falling within use class B1 (97/05868/FUL). Given that the buildings are occupied by only one company, it does not meet the criterion for inclusion.





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Planning and Housing Policy  
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