

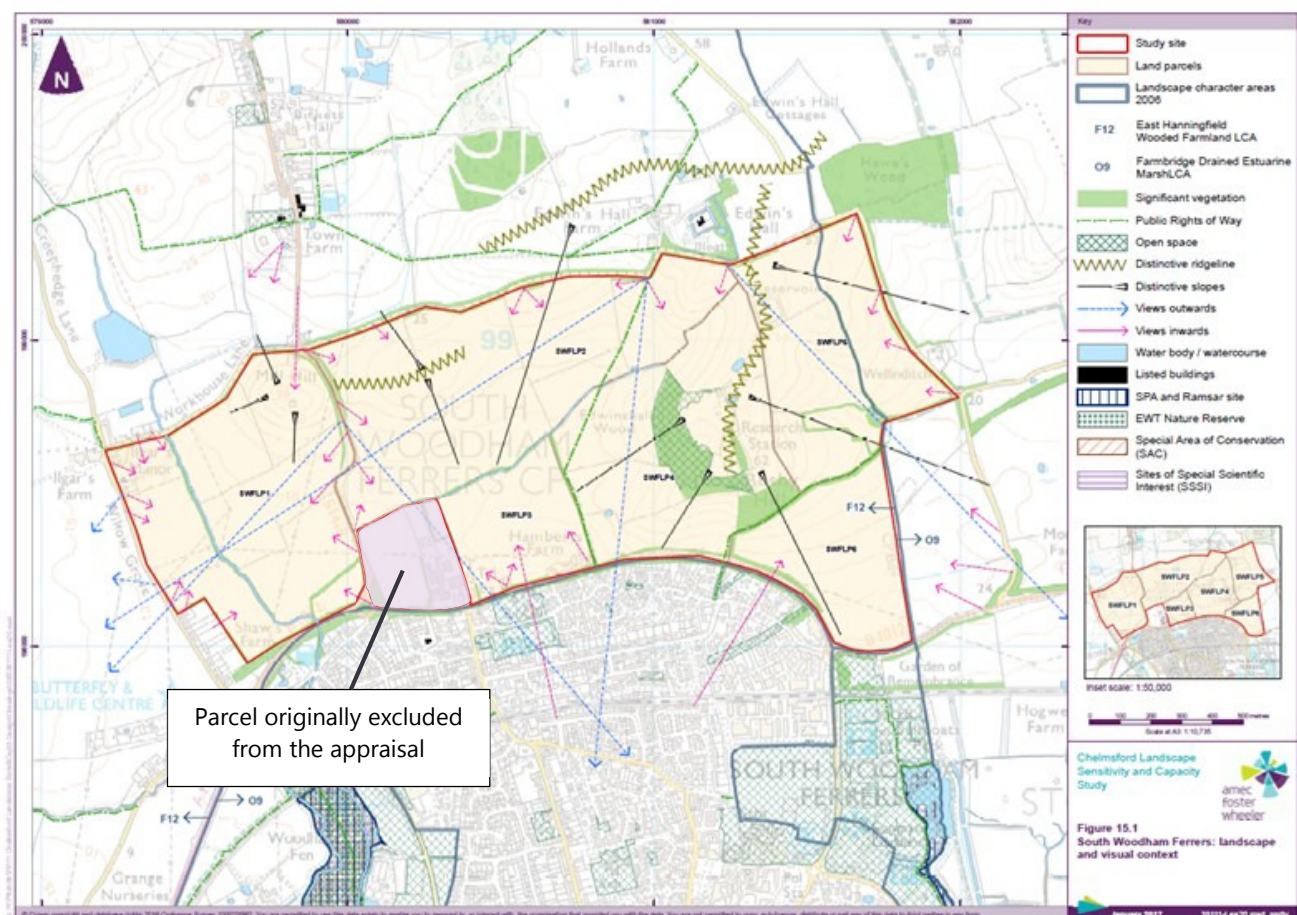
Technical note:

Chelmsford Local Plan Pre-Submission Document – Annex to the Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Evidence Base Report on Land at South Woodham Ferrers

1. Purpose of the Technical Note

This Technical Note sets out the appraisal of the landscape sensitivity and capacity of land to the north of Burnham Road (opposite Hullbridge Road), South Woodham Ferrers. The land parcel was originally excluded from the appraisal of land in the wider vicinity (see Figure 1.1) because permission for development had been granted on the eastern part of the land.

Figure 1.1 Extent of the existing survey of land at South Woodham Ferrers (parcels SWFLP1 – SWFLP6) and location of the parcel to be appraised



2. Background

2.1 Local landscape character context

This land parcel is located to the north of the town of South Woodham Ferrers. The Study Site lies within the southern edge of the East Hanningfield Wooded Farmland Landscape Character Area (F12) as described by the Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessments prepared by Chris Blandford Associates in September 2006 (Chelmsford LCA). Figure 2.1 illustrates the landscape and visual context of the Study Site.

East Hanningfield Wooded Farmland Landscape Character Area (F12)

Key characteristics of relevance to this Study Site and the Land Parcels described below, are:

- Gently rolling/ undulating wooded farmland overlooking the Crouch River channel to the south.
- Predominantly large arable fields, delineated with very mature treed field boundaries and ditches.
- Evidence of field boundary loss.
- Pockets of pasture and pony paddocks.
- Network of quiet narrow lanes.
- Generally dispersed settlement pattern.
- Sense of tranquillity away from major road corridors.
- Fords where streams and narrow lanes meet.
- Views to wooded horizons and across the Crouch River channel.

The Chelmsford LCA describes a gently rolling/ undulating wooded farmland. Field boundaries are noted to be predominantly well stocked with mature trees, although it cites a presence of simple wooden post fences and evidence of boundary loss and hedgerow gapping. Whilst it describes a sense of enclosure associated with the network of tree-lined lanes and patches of mature deciduous/ mixed woodland, it does also note the presence of open views across the Crouch River valley (and drained estuarine marsh) that provide a sense of place, open and framed views to wooded horizons (including those within adjoining LCAs) and open views to the urban edges of South Woodham Ferrers. It further describes the sense of tranquillity as being disturbed to the south of the area by activity associated with South Woodham Ferrers and A130/A132 road corridors.

The Chelmsford LCA describes the following planning and land management issues of relevance to the Study Site:

- Pressure of increased traffic on rural, minor lanes.
- Potential for visually intrusive development at the fringes of small villages and also South Woodham Ferrers.
- Noise and visual intrusion associated with the A132 and A130 road corridors.
- Potential for major road improvements to the A132 and A130.
- Potential visually intrusive development of new farm buildings.

- Deterioration and eventual loss of mature woodland, single trees and hedgerows.

The Chelmsford LCA sets out the following sensitivities to change of relevance to the Study Site:

- Very mature treed field boundaries, ditches and patches of mature deciduous and mixed woodland which are sensitive to changes in land management.
- Overall sense of tranquillity within parts of the landscape character area (away from main road corridors) and network of narrow lanes that are sensitive to change, new development and increased traffic flows.
- Open views to wooded horizons and panoramic views across the drained estuarine marsh to the south are sensitive to potential new development interrupting or blocking views.
- A sense of historic integrity resulting from a dispersed historic settlement pattern and presence of several areas of co-axial fields (of ancient origin).

The Chelmsford LCA Landscape Strategy Guidelines set out to conserve and enhance the landscape through seeking 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
- Improve the integrity of the landscape and reinforce its character by introducing new/and or enhanced elements where distinctive features or characteristics are absent.

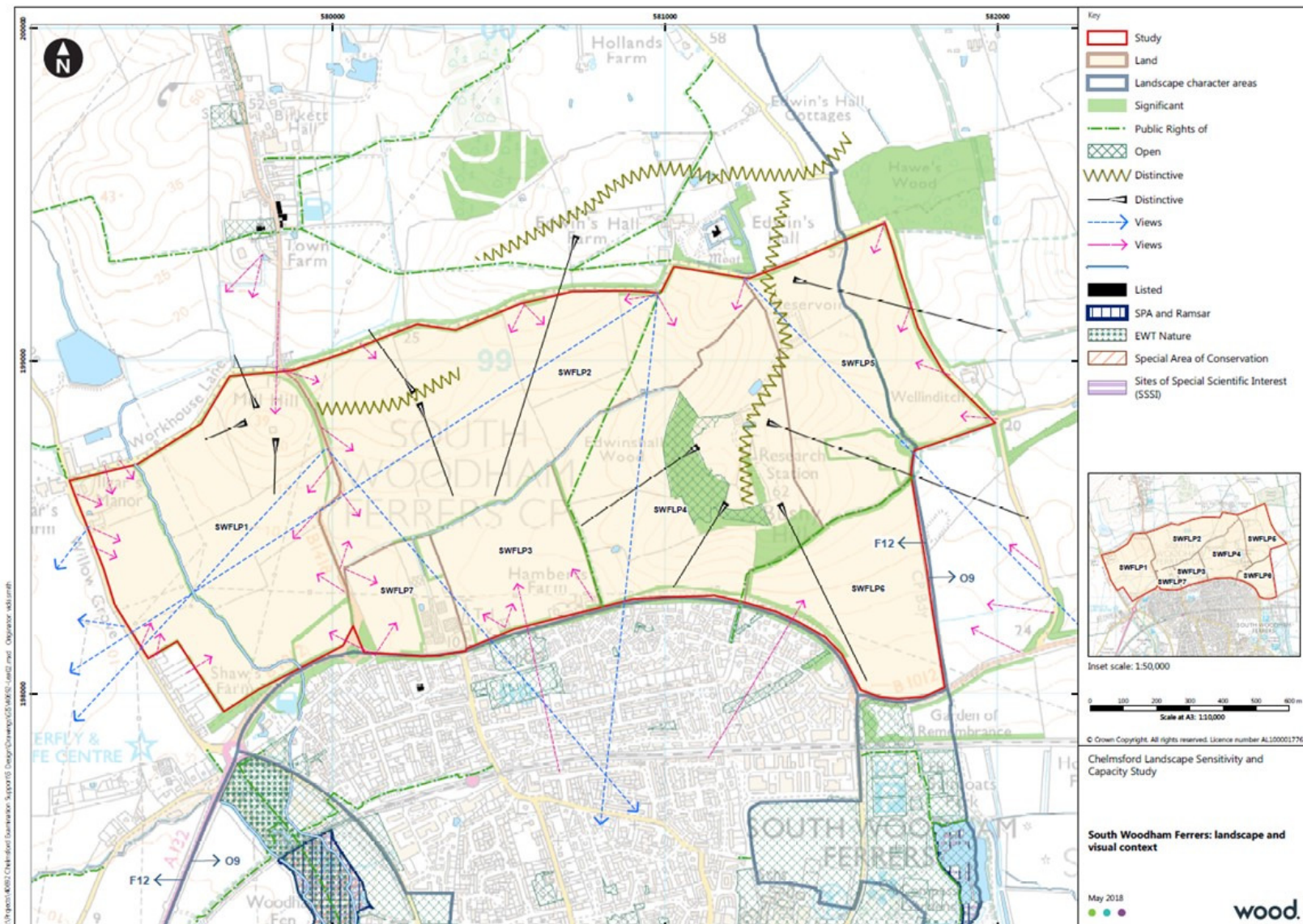
Suggested Planning Guidelines of the Chelmsford LCA of relevance to the Study Site include:

- Conserve and enhance the landscape settings of small settlements and South Woodham Ferrers.
- Ensure any appropriate new development responds to the historic settlement pattern and uses materials that are appropriate to local landscape character. Such development should be well integrated with the surrounding landscape.
- Conserve the mostly rural character of the area.
- Conserve open views across the areas and to adjacent LCAs and open views across the Crouch River channel.
- Seek to screen visual detractors (such as the A130 and A132 road corridors with shelterbelts).
- Seek to minimise the impact of visually intrusive new development on the wooded slopes.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines of relevance include:

- Conserve and manage the existing mature hedgerow network.
- Conserve, manage and enhance woodland (semi-natural and ancient) and patches of woodland (consider use of traditional methods i.e. coppicing and pollarding).
- Conserve historic lanes.
- Plant half-standard trees within field boundaries to succeed over mature trees.

Figure 2.1 South Woodham Ferrers Landscape and Visual Context (existing parcels SWFLP1 – SWFLP6 and the newly appraised parcel SWFLP7)



Looking northwards across SWFLP7 from the B1012 Burnham Road



Looking south eastwards across SWFLP7 from the B1418



Looking south eastwards across SWFLP7 from the B1418



Looking north west across SWFLP7 from the B1012 Burnham Road



Frontage of SWFLP7 at the junction between the B1012 Burnham Road and Hullbridge Road



2.2 Land Parcel SWFLP7

Land Parcel Location

Land Parcel SWLP7 is located to the north of the B1012 Burnham Road, east of the B1418, opposite the junction of the Burnham Road with Hullbridge Road.

Local Landscape Character Description

The land parcel forms a part of the East Hanningfield Wooded Farmland Landscape Character Area (F12), as defined by the Chelmsford LCA. The land parcel consists of a single medium to large scale field and a former plant nursery. The land parcel contains a limited number of landscape elements/ features that are representative of the host LCA such as gently rolling landform and large arable fields.

Visual Context and Characteristics

This land parcel is partially open with hedgerows/trees providing a degree of enclosure/containment to the south; and rising landform providing containment to the north. Some glimpsed medium-distance views to the north are available off the Burnham Road. However, views are predominantly confined to the immediate surroundings. Public views are limited to those northwards from the B1012 Burnham Road and eastwards from the B1418. Private views are limited to a small number of isolated residential properties to the north of the B1012 and glimpsed from some properties to the south of the B1012. Pylons and overhead lines dominate the land parcel, whilst existing built development and fencing associated with the former plant nursery are prominent.

Landscape Sensitivity to Development

As noted above, the land parcel contains a limited number of landscape elements/features that are representative of landscape character. Character is recognisable, although it is fragmented, indistinct and weakened. Semi-natural habitats are limited to a small number of hedgerows/hedgerow trees and two small streams/ditches, one of which forms the northern boundary of the land parcel. There is limited sense of time-depth and hedgerows are in decline (fragmented, unmanaged and partly removed). The land parcel is separated from the settlement of South Woodham Ferrers by a clearly defined boundary (B1012 and roadside vegetation). Overall the land parcel is judged to be of low to moderate landscape character sensitivity.

Visual Sensitivity to Development

The land parcel is partially open with moderate levels of inter-visibility. Moderate numbers of public and private views are available although these are typically confined to locations within the immediate vicinity. Development would be conspicuous, particularly if viewed from the B1418 as it descends south to meet the B1012. However, these views could be successfully mitigated through careful siting/design of development and the implementation/enhancement of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and woodland on the western side of the land parcel in keeping with character of the landscape and the landscape management guidelines. The land parcel is judged to be of moderate visual sensitivity. Planting at the junction of the B1012 and B1418 is maturing and forms a reasonably dense screen preventing views directly into the land parcel from Burnham Road from along the road section that approaches the roundabout from the west.

Landscape Value

The land parcel is judged to be of low value. This is a non-designated 'ordinary' landscape whose character and scenic value has become undermined by pylons and overhead wires and landscape elements/features that are in poor and declining condition (hedgerows, fields and farm/nursery buildings). Landscape character is becoming fragmented, indistinct and weakened. SWFLP7 possesses limited aesthetic appeal due to the dominance of the pylons and overhead lines, indistinct character and noise from the adjoining roads. Although views north towards the rising landform are reasonably attractive, there is no recreational value (no public access).

Table 2.1 Overall Sensitivity and Value Summary Table for Land Parcel SWFLP7

Landscape Character Sensitivity	
1 Representativeness of character	Moderate – contains some landscape elements/ features that are representative of typical character.
2 Condition of elements and features	Low – elements/features (hedgerows) are in declining/ degraded condition.
3 Nature and complexity of landform	Moderate – gently undulating and simple natural landform.
4 Scale and pattern of landscape	Moderate – medium scale landscape with simple patterns.
5 Historic features and sense of time-depth	Low – no historic landscape elements/ features and limited sense of time-depth (undermined by fragmentation/ removal of hedgerows, and presence of pylons and overhead wires).
6 Presence of natural elements	Low - natural habitats associated with hedgerows/ hedgerow trees and two small streams/ ditches.
7 Type of existing development	Low – isolated properties/ farmsteads typical of character. However existing built development and fencing associated with the former plant nursery, pylons and overhead lines have a strong detractive influence.
8 Relationship to settlement edge	High – separated from the settlement edge via strong clearly defined boundary (B1012 roadside corridor and vegetation).
Visual Sensitivity	
1 Openness and inter-visibility	Moderate – the area is partially open with moderate levels of inter-visibility.
2 Views available	Moderate – moderate numbers of public and private views are available within the immediate vicinity (Bushy Hill open space, Edwin's Hall Lane, B1012, B1418 and a small number of isolated residential properties within the area (associated with the B1012).
3 Potential for mitigation	Moderate – development would be reasonably conspicuous although could be successfully mitigated (through careful siting/ design of development and the implementation/ enhancement of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and woodland in keeping with character of the landscape), extending existing planting.
Landscape Value	
1 Distinctiveness of character	Low to Moderate – contains landscape/ features that are typical of character but not particularly valued or supported through designation.
2 Quality and condition of elements and features	Low – whilst its character is recognisable, it is becoming fragmented, indistinct and weakened; hedgerows are in decline (fragmented, unmanaged and removed). The Chelmsford LCA aims for conservation and enhancement.

3 Scenic value and aesthetic appeal	Low – whilst there is moderate or ‘ordinary’ aesthetic appeal associated with attractive views to the north of rising landform and open countryside; aesthetic appeal and scenic qualities are eroded by the strong detractive influence of pylons and overhead lines and the declined condition of the landscape.
4 Presence of cultural, historic or nature conservation associations	Low - few nature conservation features (hedgerows/ hedgerow trees and two small streams/ ditches)
5 Recreational opportunities	Low – no recreational value as no public access.
6 Levels of tranquillity	Low to Moderate – low levels of tranquillity; impinged upon by elevated noise levels associated with the busy B1012 and visual intrusion of pylons and overhead lines within the land parcel and the adjoining plant nursery.

Conclusions on Overall Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity

SWFLP7 is judged to be of moderate overall landscape sensitivity and low value with a medium to high landscape capacity to accommodate low rise residential and employment development. The assessment upon landscape capacity is subject to careful siting/ design of development and the retention, enhancement and implementation of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and wooded copses in keeping with the character of the landscape. Key characteristics / qualities to be safeguarded, recommendations for mitigation and guidelines are:

- Retain and strengthen existing boundary hedgerow network with new hedgerows and tree planting (hedgerow trees / copses).
- Retain the streams and ditches.
- Residential properties – implement physical and green buffers to minimise impact on views.
- Provide a positive northern settlement edge (softened and well-integrated into the countryside).

Table 2.2 Summary table for Land Parcel SWFLP7

Land Parcel	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
SWLP7	L - M	M	M	L	M - H

Figure 2.1 South Woodham Ferrers Landscape Sensitivity

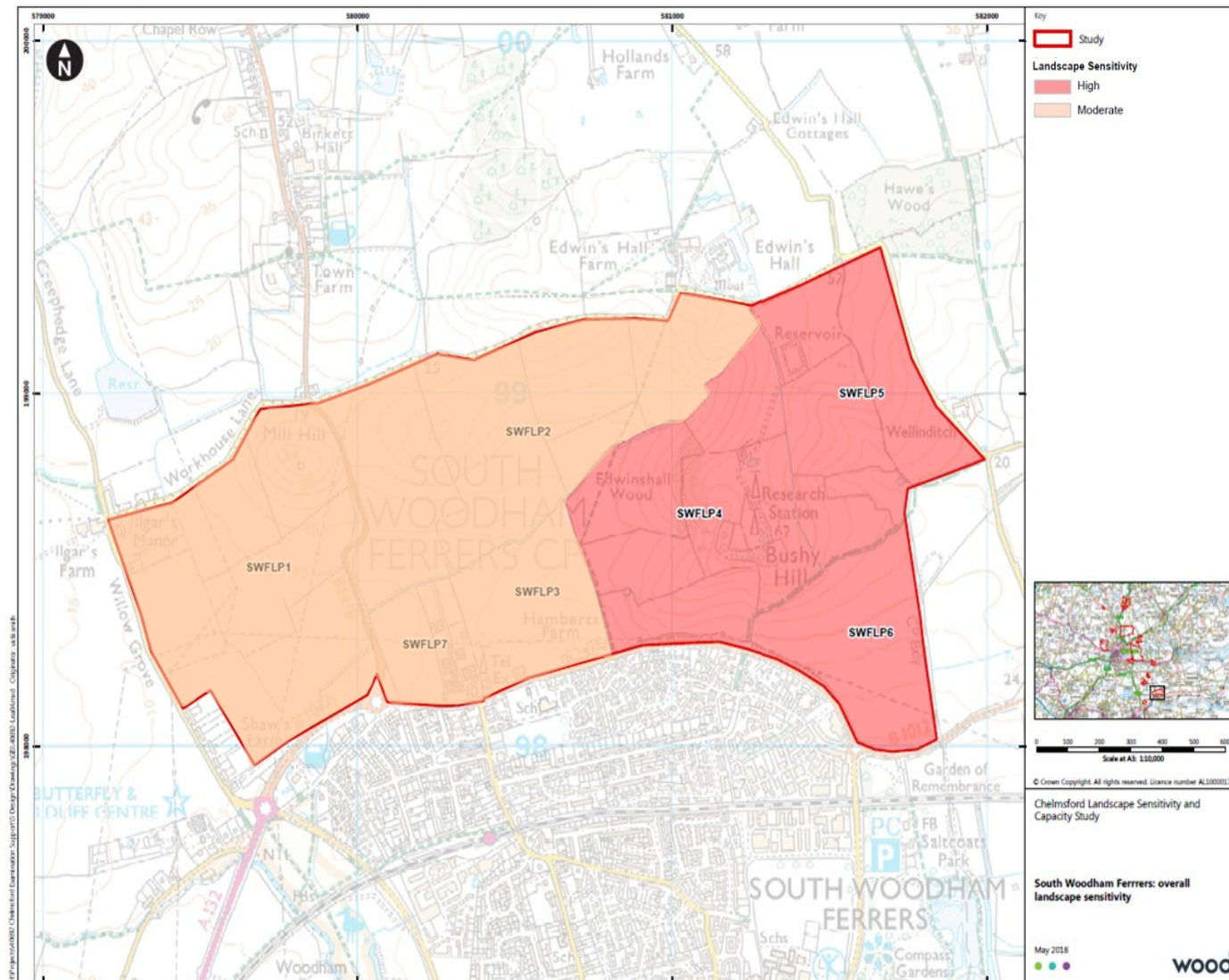
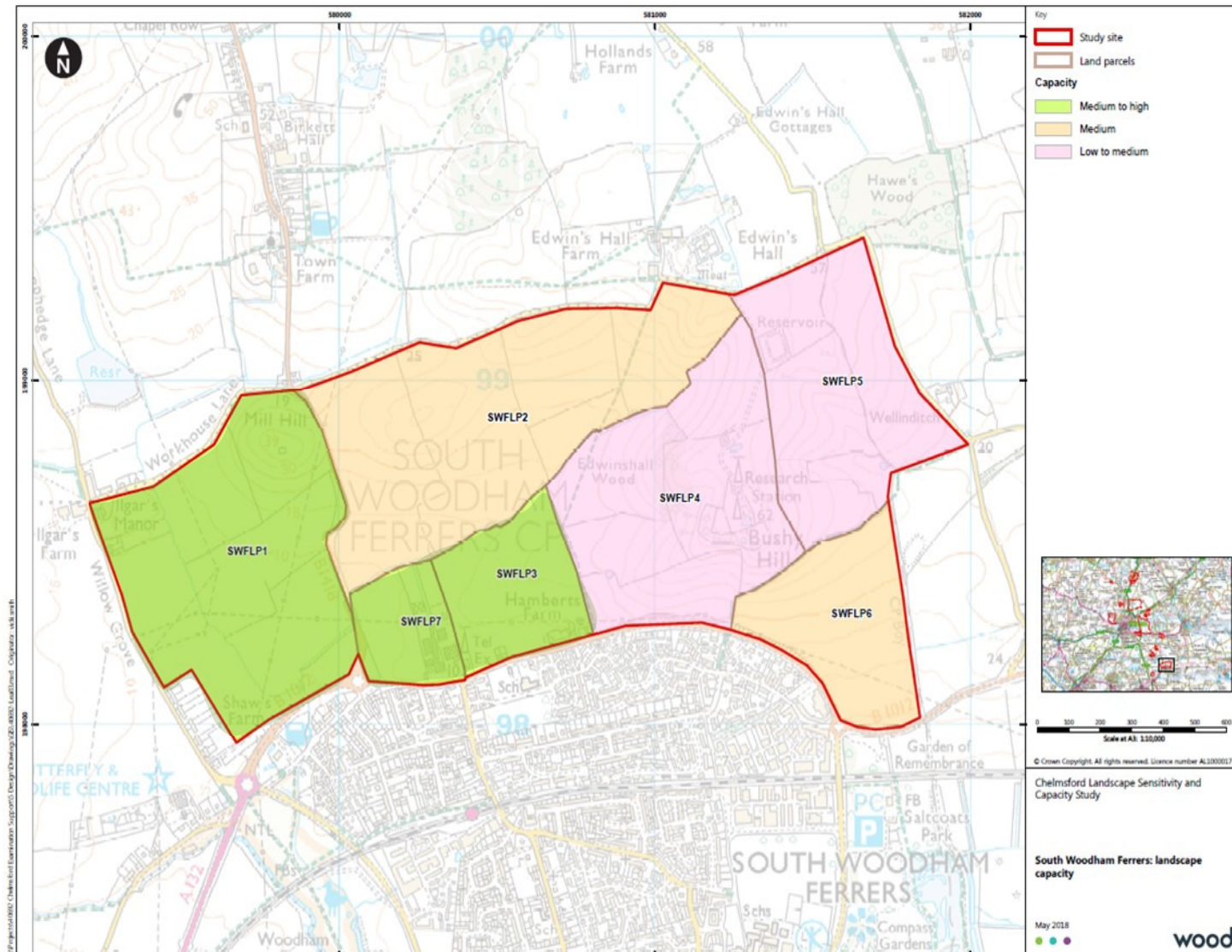


Figure 2.2 South Woodham Ferrers Overall Landscape Capacity



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