



**BRENTWOOD  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **Brentwood Borough Council**

### **Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity Study: Potential and Strategic Allocation Options**

#### **Reg 19 Pre-Submission**

**Report Reference: CE-BW-0585-RP02 - FINAL**

**29 October 2018**



**Produced by Crestwood Environmental Ltd.**

**Crestwood Report Reference: CE-BW-0585-RP02 - FINAL**

<b>Version &amp; Status</b>	<b>Date Produced</b>	<b>Written / Updated by:</b>	<b>Checked &amp; Authorised by:</b>
Draft v1	28-06-13	Karl Jones (Principal Landscape Architect), Adam Collinge (Landscape Architect)	Karl Jones (Principal Landscape Architect)
Draft v2	22-11-13	Karl Jones (Principal Landscape Architect), Adam Collinge (Landscape Architect)	Karl Jones (Principal Landscape Architect)
Draft v3	30-06-16	Adam Collinge (Senior Landscape Architect)	Neil Furber (Principal Landscape Architect)
Draft v4	24-10-18	Adam Collinge (Principal Landscape Architect)	Karl Jones (Principal Landscape Architect)
Draft v5	25-10-18	Adam Collinge (Principal Landscape Architect)	Karl Jones (Principal Landscape Architect)
Draft v6	25-10-18	Adam Collinge (Principal Landscape Architect)	Karl Jones (Principal Landscape Architect)
FINAL	29-10-18	Adam Collinge (Principal Landscape Architect)	Karl Jones (Principal Landscape Architect)

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 Brentwood Borough Council (the Council) is in the process of preparing a new Local Development Plan (LDP) for the Borough which, once adopted, will supersede saved policies in the current Replacement Local Plan (Brentwood Borough Council, June 2005). The Brentwood LDP will set out strategic priorities for the Borough, including policies to deliver housing.
- 1.1.2 In 2012 the Coalition Government introduced a new planning system. Under the new system, instead of producing separate development plan documents, such as a Core Strategy, planning authorities can now produce a single local plan if they wish to. Brentwood Borough Council has chosen to do this. The Council published its preferred options document for consultation in 2013, the 'Local Plan 2015-2030: Preferred Options' set out the long term vision for how the Council proposed the Borough should develop by 2030 and the draft strategy and policies for achieving that vision.
- 1.1.3 Following the conclusion of the consultation in 2013 it became apparent to the Council that several issues needed to be reconsidered, specifically regarding meeting full objectively assessed development needs. Consequently the Council published its 'Strategic Growth Options' document for consultation in January 2015, which set out all sites suggested to the Council to meet development needs and information on some key issues to consider as part of assessing sites, such as transport infrastructure, local services, and the environment.
- 1.1.4 To inform the preparation of the new Brentwood Local Plan, an evidence base is required. In 2014 the Council published a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (David Couttie Associates, December 2013), to form part of the evidence base, to assess future housing need and demand and inform housing targets. An update to the 2014 SHMA is currently being undertaken by the Council in light of subsequent amendments in national policy guidance.
- 1.1.5 In 2011 the Council published a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (Atkins, October 2011), as part of the evidence base, to provide a preliminary assessment of sites with the potential to accommodate the housing targets. The SHLAA provided the starting point for considering sites as part of the plan making process. It aimed to identify, in a systematic manner, land likely to be suitable, available and achievable for housing development in the Borough to meet housing targets during the period 2010 to 2031.
- 1.1.6 A total of 297 areas of land were assessed in the SHLAA. These were identified from a variety of sources, including Brentwood Urban Capacity Study (Brentwood Borough Council, June 2005); records of sites with existing or previous planning consents; and land put forward through an open 'Call for Sites' exercise (November-December 2009) or other discussions with the Council.
- 1.1.7 The SHLAA indicated that there was an adequate amount of available land to meet the then proposed housing requirements on brownfield sites for the first 9.9 years (2010 – 2019/2020) and that the Council may need to release a minimal amount of Greenfield land during this period to provide 0.1 years supply. *"During the second 10 years (2020 - 2030), other than a reliance on Windfall sites, the SHLAA indicated that there would be a minimal amount of Brownfield land (89 dwellings) to deliver the required housing supply"* and that Greenfield sites would be required to

meet the remaining requirement (of which there were sufficient sites available).

1.1.8 The SHLAA recommended that the potential Greenfield release which may be required during the assessment period should be done through a detailed assessment of potential housing sites through the Council's Site Allocations and should build upon the work done to date in the SHLAA. Subsequent to the SHLAA, a number of other Sites have been brought to the attention of Brentwood Borough Council as having potential for housing. This has resulted in the SHLAA being supplemented by other sources and more up to date information where possible, such as:

- sites submitted by landowners and developers;
- sites proposed by parish councils and members of the public; and
- other sites known or owned by the Council.

1.1.9 As part of the evidence base, the Council identified that a strategic level assessment of the potential effects on Brentwood Borough's landscape was required. Effects of landscape character are entirely related to the details of an individual proposal or development. In order to account for potential landscape effects as part of the evidence base at a strategic level, this study assesses the Landscape Sensitivity and the Landscape Capacity of each Site to accommodate potential change in relation to allocation, and potential future development, of new residential areas (housing) at each Site. Landscape Capacity is defined as *"the degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate a specific type of change without significant effects on its character"*.

1.1.10 Additionally, in 2014, the assessment was broadened out to consider whether any of the sites under consideration would be assessed differently (in terms of each site's Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity) should an allocation, or subsequent development, be made for employment or mixed-use purposes.

1.1.11 Whilst work on the draft Local Plan progressed, in 2017 Brentwood commissioned an updated and Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) to review the previous SHLAA baseline and in accordance with requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). As part of this review a number of additional sites were put forward for consideration as housing and employment land.

1.1.12 Through review of the HELAA and wider evidence base, the Council has been able to identify a number of potential strategic sites which can deliver the Housing, Mixed use or Employment development to meet Brentwood's strategically assessed needs, whilst discounting a number of other proposals.

1.1.13 This document will be published in support of the new Brentwood Local Plan Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Consultation. Should this process highlight any further considerations or comments requiring clarification, this document may be subsequently amended to account for the consultation period prior to submission of the Brentwood Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate.

## **1.2 THE BRIEF**

1.2.1 In 2006 a landscape character assessment was produced for Mid Essex, which included Brentwood Borough (Chris Blandford Associates, September 2006). This identified a number of Landscape

Character Types (LCT's) and Landscape Character Areas (LCA's) within Brentwood Borough. This forms part of the local plan evidence base. The character assessment identified that the lowest sensitivity to change (or development) related to the Horndon Fenland LCA (Moderate Sensitivity), which occupies land within Brentwood borough south of the A127 road corridor. All other LCAs in Brentwood north of the A127, have a sensitivity to change of Relatively High or Moderate to High.

- 1.2.2 This indicates that at a broad landscape scale, the least sensitive landscape area to change within Brentwood was the landscape south of the A127, indicating this area may be more acceptable for strategic development compared to LCAs north of the A127 corridor and the wider Brentwood area.
- 1.2.3 In order to gain greater understanding of the potential variation across the LCAs at a Site specific level, Brentwood Borough Council commissioned Crestwood Environmental Ltd. in March 2013 to undertake an independent, professional Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study of 30 individual sites ('Housing Sites') considered by the Council, at that stage, to be worthy of further consideration in order to meet the strategic housing objectives of the Borough.
- 1.2.4 In late 2014, following consultation on the 'Local Plan 2015-2030: Preferred Options', the Council commissioned an additional 27 sites for assessment in 2015, 12 of which were to be further considered for employment use and 1 for mixed use development.
- 1.2.5 In January 2015, Brentwood Borough Council commenced a consultation period on potential 'Strategic Growth Options'. As part of the consultation, two questions were compiled to obtain public opinion as to the 'value' the public places on the landscape. These were designed to incorporate in to the assessment of Landscape Capacity.
- 1.2.6 In late 2015, following consultation on the 'Strategic Growth Options' document, the Council commissioned a further 6 sites for assessment for housing purposes, with assessment to be undertaken in early 2016.
- 1.2.7 As the local plan and wider evidence base has progressed, it has become clear that a number of Sites are either undeliverable, would not contribute sufficiently to strategically assessed need, would not comply with the promoted spatial strategy in the draft local plan or can be discounted due to other constraints not related to landscape.
- 1.2.8 Based on this process, Brentwood Borough Council has identified three Strategic Options that may deliver its assessed need in relation to Housing/Mixed-Use and Employment development. In 2018, Brentwood Borough Council requested that the Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study focus on the assessment of Sites which comprise the Strategic Options, where the Sites are located within the Green Belt and outside of the existing urban or settled areas. These options comprise Sites that are considered to meet the boroughs strategically assessed need, broadly comply with the preferred spatial strategy and are potential deliverable and where no overriding sustainability or environmental concerns which would lead to the Site being discounted.
- 1.2.9 The following tables outline the Sites considered as part of this study which form part of the Strategic Options, as well as the type of development the Site has been promoted for.

**Table 1 Preferred Allocations – Sites Common to All Options**

Site No.	Site Location	Proposed Development Type
010	Sow & Grow Nursery, Ongar Road, Pilgrims Hatch	Housing Development
022	Land at Honey Pot Lane, Brentwood	Housing Development
023A&B	Doddinghurst Road (North & South of A12)	Housing Development
027	Land adjacent to Carmel, Mascalls Lane, Warley	Housing Development
032	Land East of Nags Head Lane, Brentwood	Housing Development
034	Officers Meadow, Land off Alexander Lane, Shenfield	Housing Development
075B	Land off Stocks Lane, Kelvedon Hatch	Housing Development
076	Land south of Redrose Lane, north of Orchard Piece, Blackmore	Housing Development
077	Land south of Redrose Lane, north of Woollard Way, Blackmore	Housing Development
079C	Land adjacent to Ingatestone by-pass	Employment Development
079A	Land adjacent to Ingatestone by-pass	Housing Development
083	Land west of Warley Hill, Pastoral Way, Warley	Housing Development
085B	Land adjacent to Tipps Cross Community Hall, Blackmore Road, Tipps Cross	Housing Development
087	Land at Alexander Lane, Shenfield	Housing Development
101A	M25 work site	Employment Development
101C	Land at Codham Hall	Employment Development
106	Site adjacent to Ingatestone Garden Centre (former A12 works site)	Housing Development
112D	Childerditch Industrial Estate	Employment Development
112E	Childerditch Industrial Estate	Employment Development
128	Ingatestone Garden Centre, Roman Road, Ingatestone	Housing Development
158	Land north of A1023 Chelmsford Road, Shenfield	Mixed-Use Development
187	Land south of East Horndon Hall	Employment Development
194	Brizes Corner Field, Blackmore Road, Kelvedon Hatch	Housing Development
235	Land to the north of Alexander Lane, Shenfield	Housing Development
263	Land east of Chelmsford Road, Shenfield	Housing Development
276	Oak Hurst, Chelmsford Road, Shenfield	Housing Development
294	Chestnut Field, Blackmore Road, Hook End	Housing Development

**Table 2 Strategic Option 1: Dunton Hills Garden Village**

Site No.	Site Location	Proposed Development Type
200	Entire Land East of A128, south of A127	Mixed-Use Development



**Table 3 Strategic Option 2: West Horndon**

Site No.	Site Location	Proposed Development Type
037D	Land West of Thorndon Avenue, West Horndon	Mixed-Use Development
038B	Land East of Thorndon Avenue, West Horndon	Housing Development
038A	Land East of Thorndon Avenue, West Horndon	Housing Development
126	Land East of West Horndon, South of Station Road	Housing Development

**Table 4 Strategic Option 3: North Brentwood**

Site No.	Site Location	Proposed Development Type
024A	Sawyers Hall Farm	Housing Development
024B	Sawyers Hall Farm	Housing Development
299	Land off Weald Road & Honeypot Lane	Housing Development
302C	Land off Ongar Road	Housing Development

1.2.10 In total, 36 individual Site assessments have been undertaken. Occasionally, sites have been assessed as, or sub-divided in to, separate land parcels where deemed appropriate. These are explained below.

1.2.11 Subsequent to further site investigations, Site 200 comprised a large site on the southeastern boundary of Brentwood borough (south of A127), comprising range of open agricultural land, some liner woodland features and a gold course in the southern half of the site. There is a clear ridgeline that runs roughly north to south through the site, such that eastern parts of the site are around 20m higher than western parts of the site. As such, the Site has been split and assessed as 200(East) and 200(West) for the purposes of this study.

1.2.12 Overall, the Council has commissioned the study in order to:

- Help determine the most appropriate directions for future development in the Borough;
- Support an evidence base to inform the (draft) new Brentwood Local Plan, 2015-2030; and
- Help to determine appropriate planning policy which would relate to the acceptability of Proposed Allocation from a landscape perspective.

### 1.3 CRESTWOOD ENVIRONMENTAL

1.3.1 Crestwood Environmental Ltd. is an independent environmental consultancy and a Registered Practice of the Landscape Institute, employing landscape architects, planners and environmental consultants with extensive experience in land use planning and impact assessments.

1.3.2 This study has been led by Karl Jones BSc (Dual Hons.) CMLI CEnv MIAgrM AIEMA, Managing Director and Principal Landscape Architect and Adam Collinge BSc (Hons) PGDipLA MA CMLI AMIEnvSci, Associate Director and Principal Landscape Architect. Karl has over 18 years' experience in landscape design, assessment and management, has acted as an Expert Witness on landscape and visual matters at Public Inquiry and has been a member of the Technical Committee of the Landscape Institute since 2011. Adam has over 10 years' experience in landscape architecture and

planning in both public and private sector and has also provided evidence and acted as an Expert Witness at Public Inquiry in relation to Development Plans and planning appeals.

## **1.4 DOCUMENT STRUCTURE**

1.4.1 This report is divided into further sections as described below.

1.4.2 Section 2 (Methodology and Approach) describes the basis for the methods used to undertake the assessment and describes the terminology, criteria and process/method used to determine and describe the Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity of the Housing Sites.

1.4.3 Section 3 (Landscape Context) describes some of the results of the desk study relating to the landscape context, e.g. landscape character assessments, landscape designations. This section also considers the results of the public consultation exercise.

1.4.4 Section 4 (Summary of Assessment Results and Recommendations) summarises the results of the assessment of Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity. The detail of the assessment is provided in Appendix L3 on a site-by-site basis, using Site Assessment Sheets. Recommendations are given to prioritise sites and to guide the direction of the future growth in housing of Brentwood Borough, in terms of Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity.

1.4.5 At the end of the Report a Glossary (providing a description of the intended use/meaning of the terms used in this assessment), References and Acknowledgements are provided. Drawings and other documents that are referred to are located in the Appendices.

## **1.5 SCOPE**

1.5.1 This study assesses landscape and visual considerations only in relation to the identified 36 Sites in relation to potential development. A range of other environmental considerations may need to be taken into account, such as ecology / nature conservation, heritage and archaeology, water quality and flooding potential etc., by others, to determine the potential wider environmental and cumulative impacts of development at potential site allocations.

1.5.2 Landscape character, landscape sensitivity and landscape capacity form only a small number of many areas to be considered in preparation of the Council's LDP. The Council is under no obligation to follow this Report's findings and recommendations in preference to other planning considerations, where on balance other planning considerations outweigh landscape aspects. On its own, this report cannot be used to justify the granting or refusing of planning permission or allocating, or not allocating, a housing, employment and/or mixed use site.

## **1.6 ASSUMPTIONS**

1.6.1 The following assumptions have been made in order to provide a baseline from which professional judgement and consideration can be applied to the potential or perceived effects from housing, employment and/or mixed use development, in respect of Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity.

1.6.2 The main built development forms are assumed to be:

- **For Housing**, predominantly 2 storey, circa 6-7m maximum height, residential buildings. This does not mean that higher buildings would be inappropriate at the Sites, only that

the study for this type of development has not considered buildings of predominantly larger height than these.

- **For Employment and Mixed Use/Leisure**, predominantly 3 storey buildings, potentially comprising warehouse, industrial and/or commercial (including office, leisure, retail. etc.) style buildings, average height c. 10m-15m. This does not mean that higher buildings would be inappropriate at the Sites, only that the study for this type of development has not considered buildings of predominantly larger height than these.

- 1.6.3 It is recognised that Employment and/or Mixed Use allocations are likely to lead to different land-uses, however, for the purposes of this study, it is assumed that the relative heights, scale, footprint, density, etc. would be similar to one another. Whilst Mixed Use developments generally comprise areas of housing, relatively more appreciable effects on the landscape are likely to relate to surrounding larger commercial, industrial or warehouse buildings as with any Employment based development.
- 1.6.4 These assumptions are important in order to consider whether potentially larger scale buildings would have a more appreciable effect in relation to Landscape Capacity with regards to Employment/Mixed Use allocations compared to the Housing assessments.
- 1.6.5 It is assumed that any buildings would be well-designed and would use traditional or other appropriate building techniques, styles and materials appropriate to the buildings use and surroundings. It is also assumed that the development would include a strong framework of structural landscaping including ground modelling, where appropriate, and tree planting of appropriate scale, area, design and species composition to ensure that the development achieves a good fit in the landscape.
- 1.6.6 It is not within the scope of this study to consider various and differing development scenarios on a site by site basis. Each site is considered according to the same assumptions to inform the relative Landscape Capacity of each Site to one another.

## 2 METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

### 2.1 GUIDANCE

2.1.1 There is no definitive method for carrying out Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity studies. This study follows guidance given on current best practice methodology for judging Landscape Sensitivity and capacity informed by:

- **The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment** (third edition), published April 2013 by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; and
- **Landscape Character Assessment, Guidance for England and Scotland**, published April 2002 by the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (superseded during the course of this study by the following document)
- **An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment** published October 2014 by Natural England; and
- **Topic Paper 6: Techniques for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity** (Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, January 2004).

2.1.2 It is noted that, during the course of this study, Natural England has begun work and consultations to develop and bring forward a replacement to Topic Paper 6. It is therefore anticipated that Topic Paper 6 will be superseded and this study should be reviewed in light of any new guidance at an appropriate stage, where required.

### 2.2 PROCESS OVERVIEW

2.2.1 Essentially, Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity evaluation is a systematic process undertaken using the stages shown below:

1. Define the Brief and Scope of the Assessment;
2. Determine the Assessment Methods and Criteria;
3. Desk Study;
4. Fieldwork;
5. Undertake Assessment;
6. Produce recommendations; and
7. Presentation of Assessment.

#### **Define the Brief and Scope of the Assessment**

2.2.2 A request from the Council for an initial scope of works was requested and provided in January 2013.

2.2.3 An Inception Meeting was held on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2013 at Crestwood Environmental Ltd.'s offices, attended by Bill Newman (Interim Planning Policy Manager for Brentwood Borough Council), Philip

Drane (Planning Officer for Brentwood Borough Council), Karl Jones (Direct and Principal Landscape Architect for Crestwood Environmental Ltd.) and Adam Collinge (Senior Landscape Architect for Crestwood Environmental Ltd.).

- 2.2.4 At the Inception Meeting the requirements of the work was discussed in more detail and the scope of works refined and agreed. Various documents were passed to Crestwood Environmental Ltd. providing further information about the Housing Sites. Further meetings and conference calls have been held at regular intervals in the subsequent years, particularly where the number of Sites or scope of the assessments has changed.
- 2.2.5 The Brief and Scope of the assessment are clearly set out in the project brief as described in Sections 1.2 and 1.5 above.

### **Determine the Assessment Methods and Criteria**

- 2.2.6 The guidance documents listed in para 2.1 form the basis of the methodology.
- 2.2.7 The most important stage in the study is defining appropriate criteria for relevant assessment so that these may be applied in a systematic, impartial and transparent judgement and the conclusions of the assessment summarised into meaningful recommendations. The technique adopted follows the methodology in Topic Paper 6 (Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, January 2004) for assessing the 'overall sensitivity of the landscape' to a particular type of change or development<sup>1</sup>, defined in terms of the interactions between the landscape itself, the way it is viewed and the particular nature of the type of change or development in question, summarised as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} &\textbf{Overall Landscape Sensitivity (to a specific type of change)} \\ &= \\ &\textbf{Landscape Character Sensitivity + Visual Sensitivity} \end{aligned}$$

- 2.2.8 For judging the ability or capacity of the landscape to accommodate change or development, the technique adopted follows the methodology in Topic Paper 6 for judging the overall Landscape Sensitivity, as above, and the value attached to the landscape or to specific elements in it, summarised as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} &\textbf{Landscape Capacity (to accommodate specific type of change)} \\ &= \\ &\textbf{Overall Landscape Sensitivity + Landscape Value} \end{aligned}$$

- 2.2.9 The criteria are based around four key aspects:
1. Landscape and settlement character sensitivity;
  2. Settlement form and pattern;
  3. Visual considerations; and
  4. Landscape Value.

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<sup>1</sup> Topic Paper 6 refers to Overall Landscape Sensitivity in relation to non-specific development; in this report the term is used specifically in relation to assessment of Landscape Sensitivity in relation to housing development.

### Landscape and settlement character sensitivity

- 2.2.10 This considers impacts upon particular aspects of landscape character including landform, land cover, land use, scale, pattern, enclosure, quality and condition.
- 2.2.11 An assessment is made on the presence or absence of distinctive landscape elements or features, whether they could be readily replaced and whether they make a positive contribution to character and sense of place.
- 2.2.12 Criteria have been developed to assess the function of each Site in the wider setting of each settlement. It is considered that the most important considerations in this respect are the function of the site as actual or perceived intervening land between settlements; and as an important break between town and countryside.
- 2.2.13 Where the character of a Site is defined by surrounding built development rather than the setting of the Site on the edge of the town and countryside, determination of its apparent function as open space affecting the setting, appearance, form and/or character of the built environment is made, and commented on further as appropriate.

### Settlement form and pattern

- 2.2.14 A consideration in relation to the assessment of built development is the relationship with historic settlement pattern and the extent to which this has been sustained or modified. Growth will have occurred which has obviously altered settlement shape and, to a varying extent, the pattern of each town, i.e. the direction of growth which often reflects natural influences or other considerations. In some areas there is a good landscape fit where the built up area on the edge of town relates well to its landscape setting, for example a strong linear form or other shape related to topography or hydrology or historical land use or patterns of buildings or activities. In other areas the fit is not so good resulting in a harsh edge to the town which does not blend so well into the surrounding landscape.
- 2.2.15 Compatibility of changes to the overall shape of a settlement and their fit in the wider settlement pattern of the landscape is essential if new development is to sustain the appreciation of distinctive settlement patterns and characteristics. An assessment is made on the relationship of the Sites with existing settlements and conclusions are made on whether development would overall have a negative effect, neutral or positive effect on settlement form and pattern.

### Visual considerations

- 2.2.16 The assessment considers the potential visual effects of development at the Sites, such as the obstruction of views (for example by new buildings) or intrusion into views; how conspicuous the development may be or whether it would affect important skylines or views, for example those seen from dwellings, roads, paths and viewpoints, and to what extent this might affect the setting of adjacent settlements. Some visual effects may be reduced by mitigation measures; these may themselves have adverse effects on the landscape or may obstruct important views in the attempt to prevent views of the new development.
- 2.2.17 The landscape elements considered to be important in the assessment of visual considerations are:
- Views in to the site and approaches;

- Outward views;
- Ridges and other areas of high ground; and
- Conspicuousness.

2.2.18 Visibility of development is not necessarily an adverse effect, even where it would be conspicuous. Thus the assessment takes in to account whether development is likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view, or where development could enhance views or existing visual amenity.

### Landscape Value

2.2.19 The first three key aspects considered above, namely landscape and settlement character sensitivity, settlement form and pattern; and visual considerations, were assessed to reach conclusions on the overall Landscape Sensitivity of each Site. This process inevitably involved both objective assessment, such as the presence or absence of landscape features, and relative and comparative judgements, such as changes to patterns, diversity and openness.

2.2.20 Turning the sensitivity study into an assessment of capacity to accommodate a particular type of change requires consideration of more subjective, experiential or perceptual aspects of the landscape and of the value attached to it. Certain landscapes are valued by society for a variety of reasons and these need to be reflected in judgements made about capacity to accept change. Thus the capacity assessment considers the interaction between the sensitivity of the landscape, the type and amount of change, and the way that the landscape is valued.

2.2.21 Criteria have been adopted which consider landscape protection by designation or other protective policy, and other aspects of value, such as scenic value interest, and public amenity value by way of views, access and opportunity for quiet enjoyment (tranquillity).

2.2.22 Additionally, and as recognised in Topic Paper 6, Landscape Value may also be influenced by 'Consensus on Value'. Whilst overall Landscape Value can be determined by consideration of the presence of designations (or other protective policy) and other criteria (such as tranquillity, scenic beauty or remoteness), public opinion/perception and consensus on value can potentially also contribute to judgements on Landscape Value and are duly recognised in the study.

### Desk Study

2.2.23 Requested background information and other documents required to assist in the carrying out of the study was provided by the Council; other material was obtained from the Council's website. This enabled a desk study of published and unpublished material to begin immediately.

2.2.24 Other data was provided, including information held on the Council's GIS system, such as OS base tiles, to enable study mapping to be provided in compatible electronic format. Satellite mapping from Google (including Street View) and Bing Maps (Birds Eye View) was used to gain an appreciation of landscape and settlement character prior to the fieldwork and where access to the Housing Sites was restricted.

2.2.25 Access within and adjacent to the Sites was determined through checking of 1:25,000 OS Explorer mapping (showing public rights of way and access land), on websites such as MAGIC (Natural England, n.d.) and the Essex County Council Interactive PRoW Map (Essex County Council, n.d.) and

checked in the field.

## Fieldwork

- 2.2.26 Surveys of the Sites and their immediate surroundings were undertaken between the dates of 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> April 2013, 21<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan 2015, 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> March 2015 and 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> January 2016 by an experienced Landscape Architect. Field notes were made and digital photographs were taken to record features and elements of relevance to the criteria adopted to assess landscape and settlement character sensitivity, settlement form and pattern, visual sensitivity and Landscape Value. Footpaths across the sites were walked; otherwise the assessment was carried out from surrounding paths or other routes.

## Public Consultation Exercise

- 2.2.27 In January 2015, Brentwood Council undertook further public consultation on the developing Local Plan, through a Strategic Growth Options consultation. To further inform this study, two questions were composed as part of the consultation with regards to the public's relative perception of their surrounding landscape and what features people most associate with their surrounding landscape. The questions were presented as follows.

**?** **Q10: Please rate the level to which you value the landscape near where you live (on a scale of 1 to 5), as compared to other areas within Brentwood Borough, for the following aspects:**

Aspect:	Very Low	Low	Average	High	Very High
Scenic Beauty / Attractiveness	1	2	3	4	5
Outdoor Recreation / Leisure Use	1	2	3	4	5
Wildlife Interest	1	2	3	4	5
Historical Interest	1	2	3	4	5
Tranquillity	1	2	3	4	5
Other – please specify: .....	1	2	3	4	5



**? Q11: To what extent do you think the following are present in the landscape near where you live (on a scale of 1 to 4):**

Aspect:	Absent	Occasional	Frequent	Predominant
Houses	1	2	3	4
Commercial / Industrial buildings	1	2	3	4
Nature Reserves / Wildlife	1	2	3	4
Farmland	1	2	3	4
Woodland	1	2	3	4
Degraded / Derelict / Waste land	1	2	3	4
Infrastructure (Road / Rail / Pylons etc.)	1	2	3	4
Leisure / Recreational Facilities	1	2	3	4
Other – please specify: .....	1	2	3	4

2.2.28 The results of the public consultation are compiled to form part of the evidence base to inform professional judgements on Landscape Value.

### Undertake the Assessment

2.2.29 Appropriate criteria were defined and then applied in a systematic and impartial judgement of the sensitivity and capacity of each Site for Housing, Employment and Mixed Use/Leisure as appropriate. Criteria for all the four key aspects explained in 2.2.9 were devised as being most appropriate to consider the potential site allocation types, i.e. either housing, employment and/or mixed-use allocations.

2.2.30 To assess landscape character sensitivity the following criteria in Table 5 were used:

**Table 5 Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity Criteria**

<b>High Sensitivity</b>	<p>Distinctive elements and combination of features present that could not be replaced readily and which make a positive contribution to character and sense of place.</p> <p>Important intervening open land between settlements, or perceived as such.</p> <p>Important to the setting of the settlement by providing a desirable and distinctive transition between built environment and countryside.</p> <p>Open space important to the appearance, form and character of the built environment.</p> <p>Development would be isolated from settlement/built environment or would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern.</p> <p>Site lies outside clear and important boundary features defining settlement extent.</p>
<b>Medium Sensitivity</b>	<p>Commonplace elements and combination of features present, some of which could not be readily replaced and which create generally unremarkable character but some sense of place.</p> <p>Part of a larger area of intervening open land between settlements, or perceived as such.</p> <p>Of some importance to the settlement setting; Transition between built environment and countryside is less distinctive.</p> <p>Open space of some importance to the setting, appearance, form and character of the built environment.</p> <p>Development would have some association with settlement/built environment and may have some effect on settlement form and pattern.</p>
<b>Low Sensitivity</b>	<p>Some elements / features are discordant, derelict or in decline, resulting in indistinct or undesirable character with little or no sense of place. Few, if any, features / elements that could not be replaced or worthy of retention.</p> <p>Is not important intervening open land between settlements.</p> <p>Of little importance to settlement setting; Non-distinctive transition from built environment to countryside.</p> <p>Open space of little or no importance to the appearance, form and character of the built environment.</p> <p>Development would be an appropriate extension of the town with no or very little adverse impact on important aspects of settlement form and pattern.</p>

2.2.31 To assess visual sensitivity the following criteria in Table 6 were used:

**Table 6 Visual Sensitivity Assessment Criteria**

<b>High Sensitivity</b>	<p>Promotes important views into/out from important built features of a settlement - mitigation unlikely.</p> <p>Important to the setting of the settlement where development would create unacceptable visual effects on the countryside: mitigation unlikely.</p> <p>Site largely open to public/private views where views of the countryside or open space are very important.</p> <p>Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous: Successful mitigation unlikely.</p>
<b>Medium Sensitivity</b>	<p>Views into and/or out of settlement of some importance: scope to mitigate potential visual effects.</p> <p>Of some importance to settlement setting: Some scope to mitigate visual effects on the countryside.</p> <p>Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are important, or is more open to views in which the countryside or open space is of less importance.</p> <p>Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.</p>
<b>Low Sensitivity</b>	<p>Of little or no importance to the setting of the town such that development would not lead to unacceptable visual effects on the countryside, with or without mitigation.</p> <p>Site is well screened from public or private views.</p> <p>Development would not be discernible or would enhance views or existing visual amenity.</p>

2.2.32 To make a judgement on overall Landscape Sensitivity by considering the interactions between landscape character sensitivity and visual sensitivity, the following categories given in the matrix in Table 7 were used.

**Table 7 Overall Landscape Sensitivity Categories**

<b>Landscape &amp; Settlement Character Sensitivity</b>	High	High	High	High
	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
	Low	Low	Medium	High
		Low	Medium	High
		<b>Visual Sensitivity</b>		

### Applying the Criteria in Landscape Capacity Assessment

- 2.2.33 Converting a sensitivity study into an assessment of capacity to accommodate a particular type of change requires consideration of the way that the landscape is valued.
- 2.2.34 In the absence of any specific landscape designations, the Landscape Value of the Sites and immediate area was assessed by assessing and making judgment on the degree of tranquillity, remoteness, wildness and scenic beauty with reference to both desk top and fieldwork study.
- 2.2.35 Further to this, each professional judgement on Landscape Value was subsequently reviewed in respect of the public consultation exercise (stakeholder engagement). The purpose of this part of the review was to consider if the public perception or value stakeholders attributed to the landscape would reinforce the professional judgements made in respect of Landscape Value or otherwise.
- 2.2.36 It is noted that public opinion or perception *contributes* to judgements of Landscape Value, in conjunction with all other considerations or criteria.
- 2.2.37 It is further noted that determination of Landscape Value must be professionally considered on a relative scale, accounting for the generally subjective nature of the responses that would be received. For example, a very positive public response in relation to Landscape Value should not be viewed in isolation where clearly the landscape is not designated or there is evidence of landscape degradation. Equally, a more negative public response should not necessarily drive a reassessment of designated landscapes to lower levels, particularly where landscape elements are assessed as being in good condition.
- 2.2.38 It is noted that where public consultation responses were not available on earlier assessments (i.e. those completed prior to the consultation), each previous assessment was reconsidered in light of the subsequent public consultation exercise to review the assessment results.
- 2.2.39 To assess the Landscape Value afforded at each site, the criteria in Table 8 were used.

**Table 8 Landscape Value Assessment Criteria**

<b>High Landscape Value</b>	Lies wholly within a designated landscape. Localised character and scenic value is distinctive. Important to the setting of a registered historic park and garden. Presents locally important landscape characteristics or scenic value; or Presents important public amenity value by way of views, access, sporting facilities or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).
<b>Medium Landscape Value</b>	Lies wholly or partially within a designated landscape but where localised character and scenic value is less distinctive or has become degraded. Lies adjacent to a designated landscape. Presents locally distinctive landscape characteristics with some scenic interest; or Presents some public amenity value by way of views, access, sporting facilities or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).
<b>Low Landscape Value</b>	Does not lie within or adjacent to a designated landscape. Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value / interest; or Does not present important public amenity value by way of views, access, sporting facilities or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

2.2.40 To make judgements on Landscape Capacity by considering the interactions between overall Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Value, the categories given in the matrix in Table 9 were used.

**Table 9 Landscape Capacity Categories**

<b>Overall Landscape Sensitivity</b>	High	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low - Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>
	Medium	<b>Medium - High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low - Medium</b>
	Low	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium - High</b>	<b>Medium</b>
	Low	Medium	High	
	<b>Landscape Value</b>			

2.2.41 For the purposes of this report, Landscape Capacity refers to the degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate a specific type of change without significant effects on its character, i.e. the Landscape Capacity of a Site reflects its ability to accommodate change in terms of new potential housing development but does not convey any assessment in terms of the amount of housing that a site can accommodate, beyond the assumptions as stated in Section 1.6 above.

### Produce Recommendations

2.2.42 Recommendations are given in Section 4.3 to prioritise Sites and to guide the direction of the future housing growth in Brentwood Borough. Where Sites have been assessed as having the same overall capacity to accommodate development, a judgement is made and recommendations given on the order that these Sites could be brought forward for development, in landscape and visual terms. Sites considered as having Low capacity should not be prioritised for development from a landscape perspective i.e. strong likelihood of significant or potentially unacceptable landscape effects.

- 2.2.43 This being said, the recommendations are also formed and should also be used to inform policy requirements in relation to the potential allocation of Sites for development. For example, where a Site has a Medium capacity Landscape Capacity, this indicates development would have the potential for some detrimental impacts on landscape character, yet these would not necessarily be unacceptable or significant. Effects could be potentially reduced through good design, landscaping and detailed assessment to promote an acceptable development strategy in landscape terms.
- 2.2.44 The assessment results of Landscape Capacity are one contributing element towards the decision-making process on appropriate site allocation. The results of this study should be read in terms of effect on *the landscape* only.

### **Presentation of Assessment**

- 2.2.45 The detailed record of the landscape and visual aspects and contributors towards Landscape Value are recorded on a Site Assessment Sheet pro forma (see Appendix L1) for each site according to the assessment basis (housing, employment and/or mixed use). This illustrates the findings of the fieldwork and desk study and shows the resultant assessment on a site-by-site basis in detail, following the approach described in Section 2.
- 2.2.46 Colour-coded tables are presented as part of the Site assessments. The assessment results for each Site have then been combined into an overall summary table to allow easy comparison between sites and for cross-reference to the coloured maps at Appendix L5. Summary commentary and recommendations have been included with this in Section 4.

## 3 LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

### 3.1 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

3.1.1 In 2006 a landscape character assessment was produced for Mid Essex, which included Brentwood Borough (Chris Blandford Associates, September 2006). This identified a number of Landscape Character Types (LCT's) and Landscape Character Areas (LCA's) within Brentwood Borough. Those that contained the Sites were:

*F - Wooded Farmland LCT:*

- F7 - Blackmore Wooded Farmland (Site no.'s 076, 077, 079a, 79c)
- F8 - Doddinghurst Wooded Farmland (Site no.'s 023, 024A, 024B, 075B, 058B, 158, 194, 294)
- F9 - Little Warley Wooded Farmland (Site no. 25, 37c (North))
- F10 - Heybridge Wooded Farmland (Site no.'s 034, 087, 106, 128, 235, 263, 276))
- F13 - Great Warley Wooded Farmland (Site no.'s 027, 032, 112D, 112E)
- F15 - Weald Wooded Farmland (Site no.'s 022, 299, 302C)

*G – Fenland LCT:*

- G1 - Horndon Fenland (Site no.'s 037D, 038A, 038B, 101A, 101C, 126, 187, 200 (East & West))

3.1.2 It is noted that two Sites, 010 and 083, fall outside of any defined Landscape Character Area reflecting their existing developed status or relative proximity to the urban or settled areas.

#### **Wooded Farmland LCT**

3.1.3 The key characteristics of Wooded Farmland Landscape Character Type are listed as:

- Elevated undulating hills or ridges and slopes;
- Mixture of arable and pasture farmland;
- Pockets of common and pasture;
- Views to wooded horizons;
- Well wooded with blocks of mature mixed and deciduous woodland (including areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland);
- Copses, hedges and mature single trees;
- Mature field boundaries;
- Framed views to adjacent character areas;
- Enclosed character in places; and
- Network of quiet, often tree-lined narrow lanes.

## Fenland LCT

3.1.4 The key characteristics of the Fenland Landscape Character Type are listed as:

- Level relief;
- Open, exposed landscape;
- Large-scale arable and pasture farmland;
- Gappy hedges; and
- Linear roads on causeways.

## Landscape Characteristics

3.1.5 The published landscape character assessment (Chris Blandford Associates, September 2006) provides a useful reference to understand the landscape context of the Housing Sites on a larger scale (generally) than the Housing Sites. The document suggests landscape planning guidelines, which relate to the landscape at this scale and describes sensitivities to change. The general sensitivity to change for each Landscape Character Area given in the landscape character assessment (Chris Blandford Associates, September 2006) is provided in Table 10. This forms part of the context to the specific assessment undertaken at each Housing Sites.

**Table 10**      **General Sensitivity of LCAs to Change**

Landscape Character Area	Sensitivity to Change
Blackmore wooded farmland	Relatively High
Doddinghurst wooded farmland	Relatively High
Little Warley wooded farmland	Relatively High
Heybridge wooded farmland	Relatively High
Great Warley wooded farmland	Relatively High
Ingrave & Herongate wooded farmland	Moderate to High
Weald wooded Farmland	Relatively High
Horndon Fenland	Moderate

3.1.6 The Sensitivity to Change as highlighted in the landscape character assessment (Chris Blandford Associates, September 2006), is related to a number of factors such as intrinsic landscape qualities, biodiversity value, visual characteristics, historic integrity and re-creatability (i.e. *“the degree to which the intrinsic landscape qualities, biodiversity value, visual characteristics, historic integrity of an area can be re-created if eroded or lost”*).

3.1.7 The landscape character assessment also notes that *“the evaluation is based on the relatively broad-brush analysis undertaken at 1:25,000 scale for this Study. The degree of sensitivity is not absolute. It is likely to vary according to the nature of change under consideration, and is therefore only indicative”*.

3.1.8 Due to the scale of the assessment, each landscape area will have varying sensitivity to change between different localities. The assessment was not intended to be site-specific and does not

relate to a specific type of development.

- 3.1.9 In this study (the Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study), the prevalent landscape characteristics at each specific Site have been recorded, presented and used in the assessment of their Overall Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity in relation to this specific type of development at the appropriate scale, i.e. it is a study targeted more to the specific effects of development on prevalent characteristics and character at those locations and the affected locality.
- 3.1.10 It is therefore likely that the Overall Landscape Sensitivity (a function of both landscape and visual sensitivity – refer to Table 7) as assessed for individual Housing Sites as part of this report will vary from the broader sensitivity to change, as defined in the published landscape character assessment (Chris Blandford Associates, September 2006), with implications for the Landscape Capacity assessed for each Housing Site. The assessment of Overall Landscape Sensitivity in this report is likely to be based on differing criteria (refer to Table 5 and Table 6) from the assessment criteria in the published landscape character assessment.
- 3.1.11 At a broad landscape scale, it is noted that based on the published landscape character assessment (Chris Blandford Associates, September 2006), the lowest recorded Landscape Sensitivity in Brentwood relates to the Horndon Fenland LCA (Moderate sensitivity). This LCA is located entirely south of the A127, to the east and west of West Horndon. All other areas of Brentwood have a Moderate to High of Relatively High Sensitivity to Change, thus at a broad landscape scale, development in these other LCA areas is likely to be more sensitive.
- 3.1.12 A comparison check has been undertaken between the published landscape character assessment (Chris Blandford Associates, September 2006) ‘Sensitivity to Change’ rating for the individual Landscape Character Areas and the site-specific Overall Landscape Sensitivity as assessed in this study. The summary of this comparison can be found in Appendix L4.

## 3.2 LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

- 3.2.1 With regard to protected landscapes, there are no statutory landscape designations such as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty within Brentwood Borough.
- 3.2.2 The current policy framework for local planning control in Brentwood Borough is provided by the statutory ‘Development Plan’ consisting of the **Brentwood Replacement Local Plan** (Brentwood Borough Council, 25 August 2005 (Adopted)) which supersedes the first Adopted Brentwood Local Plan (adopted March 1995, with a First Alteration adopted in July 1997). This development plan provides a comprehensive statement of land use policies and proposals for the Borough and sits within the context of the NPPF (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012).<sup>2</sup>
- 3.2.3 The Brentwood Replacement Local Plan showed a number of non-statutory designations across the Borough; the two main landscape-specific designations being:
- Special Landscape Areas (SLA’s); and
  - Landscape Improvement Areas.
- 3.2.4 **SLA’s** were described as “...valuable high quality landscapes which are the result of a combination of natural features such as vegetation cover, relief and presence of water... The conservation and/or

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<sup>2</sup> The East of England Plan which was revoked 3 January 2013 along with saved structure plan policies



*restoration of these areas is important both to the particular locality and to the County's natural heritage in terms of their special character and visual quality". This gives an indicator as to one aspect of Landscape Value. It is noted that no SLA was present in the Horndon Fenland and were all located north of the A127, reflecting the broad landscape sensitivity across Brentwood borough.*

- 3.2.5 **Landscape Improvement Areas** have been identified *"primarily because of the impact of urban intrusion into the countryside, coupled with the considerable loss of trees as a result of Dutch Elm disease"*. Effectively this is indicative of areas noted as having a degraded landscape character. It is noted that much the Horndon Fenland LCA comprises a Landscape Improvement Area, indicating some degradation to the landscape.
- 3.2.6 A significant part of the Borough overlaps with the **Thames Chase Community Forest** area. This is not a landscape-specific designation but indicates a positive requirement at policy level to provide landscape and conservation improvements along with improved recreation and access over the area.
- 3.2.7 **Historic Parks and Gardens** and the **Writtle Ancient Landscape** areas are shown in the Replacement Local Plan. This states *"Any ancient landscapes that are designated in the Brentwood Borough will need to be protected from development that would adversely affect the nature or physical appearance of the landscape feature.... Brentwood Borough has three registered parks and gardens, Warley Place and Weald Park (both Grade II) and Thorndon Park which is Grade II\*. In order to reflect their importance and to conserve their character and appearance these sites have been designated as Conservation Areas."* This reflects other valued landscape features in Brentwood.
- 3.2.8 Green Belt designation has not been treated as a landscape-specific designation in this assessment, as Green Belt is a planning designation primarily designed to prevent urban sprawl and settlement coalescence. The presence of each Site within the Green Belt and the results of a separate study undertaken on these (and other) potential sites in relation to contribution towards the purposes of the Green Belt and potential effects from housing development are noted alongside the assessment.

### **3.3 PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

- 3.3.1 Further to the baseline landscape context, public opinion has also been considered in relation to judgements on Landscape Value.
- 3.3.2 During the public consultation exercise on Strategic Growth Option in January 2015, around 500 responses were received in relation to Questions 10 and 476 in relation to Question 11 in the consultation. The vast majority of consultation responses were from residents within Brentwood Borough.
- 3.3.3 The responses to the two questions have been collated, analysed and reviewed in light of this Landscape Capacity Study. The responses have been reviewed to establish trends, which would help inform any professional judgements and determination on Landscape Value. A summary of key findings and tables are shown below.

#### **Question 10 - Summary of Findings in relation to Public Consultation**

- 3.3.4 In respect of Question 10, the public consultation exercise broadly asked respondents to rank key

aspects of Landscape Value on a scale of 1-5 (i.e. Very Low to Very Highly valued), in relation to the landscape of the area in which they live. The five categories were Scenic Beauty/Attractiveness, Outdoor Recreation/Leisure Use, Wildlife Interest, Historical Interest and Tranquillity.

- 3.3.5 The overall responses to Question 10 are shown at Appendix L6. The overall responses show that across Brentwood, there is a generally positive opinion of landscape value in relation to the criteria. In relation to Scenic Beauty, Wildlife Interest and Tranquillity, over 65% of all respondents considered these aspects to be of a 'Very High' score in terms of value. Whilst a majority of respondents also scored Outdoor Recreation and Historical Interest 'Very High', there was greater variation in response to these aspects with over 45% of respondents scoring these aspects as 'Average' or 'High' (scores of 3 and 4 out of 5).
- 3.3.6 Only a small minority of respondents ranked each aspect as 'Low' or 'Very Low', comprising less than 7% of respondents in each case.
- 3.3.7 Appendix L6 also outlines the public consultation responses by area of Brentwood. The results show response by key areas including Brentwood, Shenfield, Hutton, West Horndon, Blackmore, Doddinghurst, Ingrave, Herongate, Ingatestone and other villages and areas.
- 3.3.8 Over 22% of the responses were from residents in Blackmore. The vast majority of responses ranked each aspect 'Very High'. This is similar for nearby Doddinghurst, albeit there is more diversity in opinion in relation to Outdoor Recreation and Historic Interest. It is noted that this study has not considered any sites near or around Blackmore, Doddinghurst, or nearby areas at the northern fringes of Brentwood Borough.
- 3.3.9 The second largest numbers of respondents were from West Horndon (88 respondents). Whilst responses were generally positive there are some key discrepancies in opinion, between differing aspects. For Scenic Beauty, 59% considered the value to be High and 31% Very High. For Outdoor Recreation, around 64% of respondents considered the aspect to be Average value. Around 80% or more, of respondents considered Wildlife Interest and Tranquillity as Very High value. For Historic Interest, around 61% considered the aspect to be High Value and 24% Average. Overall, the majority of respondents considered Scenic Beauty, Outdoor Recreation and Historic Interest to be Average or High value. Wildlife Interest and Tranquillity were generally considered Very High value.
- 3.3.10 For Ingrave and Herongate (total 80 respondents), responses were generally positive, with over 75% of respondents scoring each aspect as High to Very High value. No respondents in Ingrave viewed any aspect as Low or Very Low. In Herongate, no aspect was ranked Low or Very Low, except for 3 respondents in relation to Historic Interest.
- 3.3.11 Respondents from the main towns in Brentwood Borough, namely Brentwood and Shenfield, comprised only 6% of the total responses. Whilst the number of responses was low in number, there was a generally positive opinion of landscape value. There also appears to be more divergence in opinion on the value related to the various aspects. For example, for all aspects except tranquillity, over 50% of respondents in Brentwood and Shenfield scored the aspects Very Low to High, potentially showing a divergence in opinion and perhaps reflecting the diversity of localities within and on the edge of the main towns. In Brentwood, over 80% of respondents rated the aspects Average to Very High. This increased to around 95% in Shenfield, albeit the sample size was very small (9 respondents).
- 3.3.12 Pilgrims Hatch (18 respondents) also shows a similar pattern, where there is some diversity in

opinion, however, the majority of respondents rated the various aspects as Average to Very High and in the case of Scenic Beauty, Outdoor Recreation, Wildlife Interest and Tranquillity, 50% or more of respondents scored these aspects Very High in terms of value. No aspects were scored Very Low.

- 3.3.13 Conversely, in Hutton (a suburb of Shenfield) and Hutton Village, there were 47 respondents. There was a greater consensus that the majority of respondents considered the aspects to be of a Very High value. Around 60% of respondents considered the aspects to be Very High Value, except for Historic Interest, where this proportion fell to around 43%. For Scenic Beauty, Wildlife Interest and Tranquillity, all respondents rated the value at Average or above. Very few respondents regarded the landscape value as Low or Very Low in respect of Outdoor Recreation and Historic Interest. The responses from Hutton, may suggest a marginally higher opinion in relation to the landscape aspects compared to nearby Shenfield and Brentwood, taken as a whole.
- 3.3.14 Ingatestone (19 respondents) was rated High or Very High by over 80% of respondents in relation to each aspect. No Low or Very Low scores were received except for a single respondent in relation to Tranquillity.
- 3.3.15 A small number of written comments were also supplied. These all generally supported the approach of incorporating public opinion in the assessment of Landscape Value. However, some other comments also expressed the following:
- *“Whilst we have no objection to the Council seeking to gain an understanding of local resident's perceptions of landscape "value", the outcomes of the survey should not be used to inform the landscape evidence currently being produced. This should be an Objective assessment undertaken by a qualified professional”*
  - *“Aim should be to discover what impacts release of any greenfield land would have. Intrinsic value of the landscape being considered for development is one of these, but the impacts would be a combination of both the nature of the proposed developments (including indirect effects) and aspects related to wider values relating to those areas impacted”.*
  - *“Important to be able to see the countryside and not feel like living in a town, to see wildlife, the need for woods and trees to provide oxygen, counteract pollution and reduce noise pollution from the road and railway”.*
  - *“The consultation document refers to fenland landscapes and also implies that the A127 has greater development potential due to it having a "different landscape character". The inference seems to be that the landscape is less attractive than elsewhere in the Borough. Whilst it does indeed have a different landscape character to the North of the Borough, the local residents' value of the open space and farmland should not be considered any lower than residents of the North of the Borough”.*
- 3.3.16 There will be fewer responses in areas with smaller populations. Those areas scoring relatively lowly may be in greater need of improvement which is not necessarily the same as development.”
- 3.3.17 There were also at least 3 responses where greater emphasis is recommended in relation to Historic character, particularly around Hutton. There were also concerns that visibility of proposals have not been accounted for in the public consultation.

## Question 11 - Summary of Findings in relation to Public Consultation

- 3.3.18 In respect of Question 11, the public consultation exercise broadly asked respondents the level to which they considered a number of aspects or elements were present within the landscape. These aspects included built elements such as housing and industry, as well as more natural elements/managed landscapes, such as woodland, wildlife and farmland. Respondents were asked to rate the elements as Absent, Occasional, Frequent or Predominant (i.e. a score of 1-4).
- 3.3.19 The overall summary of responses to Question 11 are shown at Appendix L7. The overall responses show that across Brentwood, Housing is considered to be Frequent by a majority of respondents (63%). Industrial, Infrastructure and Leisure land uses are generally considered to be Occasional, with smaller number of respondent's recording these aspects as Absent or Frequent. 73% of respondents consider Waste or Derelict Land to be Absent with 23% considering it to be Occasional.
- 3.3.20 Farmland is considered to be the most prominent land use in the borough with 69% recording Farmland as Predominant and 25% Frequent. 47% believe Wildlife / Nature Reserves are Frequent with 36% believing them to be Predominant. Woodland is fairly evenly split in term of opinion as to whether it is Occasional, Frequent or Predominant across the borough.
- 3.3.21 Respondents also noted other features including some historic buildings, as well as schools and village halls. Country Parks and Ponds are also mentioned by several respondents.
- 3.3.22 Appendix L7 also outlines the public consultation responses by area of Brentwood. A number of key trends are noted from the results:
- As with Question 10, Blackmore and Doddinghurst had higher proportions of respondents. Farmland was considered to be Predominant by the majority with Wildlife and Woodland also considered to be Frequent or Predominant. Housing was considered to be Frequent. Infrastructure and Industry as generally considered to be Occasional or Absent. A majority of respondents consider Derelict Land to be Absent. Recreation is generally evenly split between being considered Occasional or Frequent. Similar trends are also recorded for Ingrave, Herongate and Ingatestone.
  - Brentwood, Shenfield and Pilgrims Hatch again only received 36 combined responses. Generally, these areas have a greater diversity in terms of the scoring ranges per aspect, although the sample size is relatively small. The majority of respondent consider Housing to be Frequent or Predominant, Industry and Infrastructure is considered to be Occasional or Frequent. There is a fairly even split between respondents considering Wasteland to be Absent or Occasional. There is a fairly even split as to the relative association of Wildlife, Farmland and Woodland, such that these aspects are generally recorded as Occasional, Frequent and Predominant; likely to be considered Frequent on average. Leisure is fairly evenly split between Occasional and Frequent.
  - Hutton (a suburb of Shenfield), generally shows Housing recorded as Frequent, Industry evenly split between Occasional and Absent and Infrastructure and Leisure/Recreation split between Occasional and Frequent. A majority of respondents believe Derelict Land to be Absent. The majority of respondents consider Wildlife, Farmland and Woodland to be Frequent or Predominant.
  - West Horndon (85 respondents) is generally shows consensus of opinion across all aspects. Housing, Industry and Infrastructure are considered Frequent. Farmland is considered

Predominant, with Wildlife considered Frequent. Leisure / Recreation and Woodland are considered Occasional. Derelict Land is considered Absent.

- 3.3.23 Other more general comments received, reiterated the overall presence of aspects in the surrounding landscape. Two respondents considered that greater account of the Historic Environment should have formed part of the landscape consultation questions.

### **Summary**

- 3.3.24 Overall, respondents do confirm that they consider various aspects of Landscape Value to be highly valued across the borough and Farmland is generally considered to be a Predominant land use, although Housing is also considered Frequent. The borough is less associated with Commercial and Industrial developments.
- 3.3.25 Villages and lower populous areas, including Blackmore, Doddinghurst, Ingrave, Herongate and Ingatestone, are generally more associated with Farmland, Woodland and Wildlife, with Housing being Frequent, compared to Industry and Infrastructure Land Uses. This correlates with relatively higher landscape value scores for aspects such as Scenic Beauty, Outdoor Recreation, Wildlife Interest, Historic Interest and Tranquillity.
- 3.3.26 The responses from Brentwood, Shenfield, Pilgrims Hatch and West Horndon show that the relatively landscape value scores are on the whole slightly lower compared to other areas in the borough and this corresponds with greater recognition as to the presence of human development including Frequent Housing and Occasional/Frequent Industry and Infrastructure. However, the areas are still recognised generally as being considered of a High landscape value and Farmland is often considered the Predominant or Frequent land use. It is noted that West Horndon is a significantly smaller settlement compared to Brentwood and Shenfield, but is associated with and located immediately adjacent to Infrastructure such as the A127 and rail line.
- 3.3.27 The responses for Hutton (a suburb of Shenfield) indicate that the area is frequently associated with Housing, but is not typically well associated with Industry/Infrastructure. Landscape aspects are slightly more highly valued compared to other more built up areas, such as Brentwood and Shenfield.
- 3.3.28 The numbers of respondents disproportionately represent the villages and areas of Blackmore, West Horndon and Doddinghurst, compared to higher populous areas of Brentwood and Shenfield, where responses were low (aside from Hutton where there was a relatively higher response rate). As such, any tentative conclusions on how the public value landscape should be treated with caution.
- 3.3.29 Overall, the public consultation responses are considered to broadly compare well with the desk study and fieldwork exercise undertaken by Crestwood, including the Landscape Value Assessments.

## 4 SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1 ASSESSMENT RESULTS

4.1.1 Using the methods described in Section 2, and the colour-coded tables within, for ease of reference, the results for the 31 sites are given:

- In detail in **Appendix L3**; and
- Summarised in **Appendix L2**.

4.1.2 The results are further summarised below.

4.1.3 Further to this, a comparison check has been undertaken between the published landscape character assessment (Chris Blandford Associates, September 2006) 'Sensitivity to Change' rating for the individual Landscape Character Areas and the site-specific Overall Landscape Sensitivity as assessed in this study. The summary of this comparison can be found in Appendix L4.

4.1.4 Overall, it is considered that there are no significant differences in the sensitivity ratings of the published landscape character assessment and this study. Where some differences are evident, this is due to the site-specific situation and prevalent characteristics of the Site in comparison to the wider Landscape Character Area – for example, at Sites 079A, 085B, 106, 112D, 112E and 128.

### 4.2 ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE CAPACITY

4.2.1 Landscape Capacity refers to the degree to which a particular landscape area is able to accommodate specific types of change (in this case housing, employment or mixed-use development) without significant effects on its character, taking into account Landscape Value (non-monetary value). It is reiterated here that Landscape Capacity is not an indication of the density or amount of development that could be accommodated within each Site.

4.2.2 Table 11 summarises the Landscape Capacity of each Site based on the proposed development type (i.e. Housing, Employment Mixed Use or Leisure as relevant), taking into account landscape and settlement character, visual sensitivity and Landscape Value.

4.2.3 An assessment rating of Low or Low-Medium indicates a Site which would be relatively unsuitable for development in landscape terms. Sites considered as having **Low or Low-Medium Landscape Capacity** should not be preferentially prioritised for development when considering effects on the landscape.

4.2.4 Sites having **High or Medium-High Landscape Capacity** should be preferentially prioritised for development when considering effects on the landscape.

4.2.5 Sites that have a **Medium Landscape Capacity** (inclusive of split **Low-Medium/Medium** and **Medium/Medium-High** Landscape Capacity) are more likely to require additional work in relation to development design and assessment, on a more detailed level, to enable successful integration into the landscape (e.g. refining of the boundary of the Site to retain certain landscape elements or restrict visibility, or mitigation design to achieve the same).

**Table 11 Summary of Assessment Results for Landscape Capacity: Housing Sites**

Landscape Capacity		Number of Site Areas*	Site Reference No's
High		4	010, 085B, 101A, 294
High	Medium - High	0	
Medium - High		15	023, 024A & B, 037D, 038A, 079A, 087, 101C, 106, 112D, 112E, 126, 128, 187, 276
Medium - High	Medium	3*	158, 235, 263
Medium		11	022, 027, 032, 034, 075B, 076, 077, 076C, 083, 194, 299
Medium	Low - Medium	3*	038B, 200 (East), 200 (West)
Low - Medium		0	
Low - Medium	Low	1*	302C
Low		0	

\*Note: A small number of Sites were assessed to have 'split' criteria's, whereby the site could be considered to fall under multiple criteria for either Landscape and Visual Sensitivity and Landscape Value. Therefore, this is reflected in a 'split' assessment of Landscape Capacity. Equally, a small number of sites, by virtue of their scale and a range of characteristics, may contain smaller areas that are of a differing Landscape Capacity. These considerations are reflected in the assessment results. Refer to the individual assessment sheets in Appendix L3 for further details.

4.2.6 These results are shown spatially on Figure 1 in Appendix L5.

## 4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

### Overall

- 4.3.1 The recommendations, in terms of where allocations may be preferentially prioritised, are presented based solely on the assessment of Landscape Capacity i.e. *"the degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate a specific type of change without significant effects on its character"*. No other sustainability, environmental or planning considerations have been applied.
- 4.3.2 Where Sites are located predominantly within or adjacent to established industrial/commercial land uses, housing may not be appropriate in these locations for other environmental reasons. However, such sites are generally assessed for Employment or Mixed-Use Development.
- 4.3.3 Overall, no Site received a **Low Landscape Capacity** rating, indicating that all the assessed Sites may have some development potential, subject to detailed assessment and appropriate design. Site 302C received the lowest Landscape Capacity rating of **Low/Low-Medium**, indicating the Site should not be preferentially prioritised for development when considering effects on the landscape.
- 4.3.4 The below recommendations for prioritising development is based only on landscape capacity. A lower priority Site does not necessarily mean that a Site is undeliverable for development, however lower priority Sites are likely to require more detailed assessment, design and appropriate landscape mitigation in order to successfully integrate a development without or limiting

unacceptable landscape effects. As such, this may also impact on delivery timescales of a Site over the Local Plan period, especially where structural landscaping should be required at an early stage.

#### Highest Priority Sites For Development

4.3.5 The following sites are recommended to be preferentially prioritised for development due to their **High Landscape Capacity** for this type of development:

- **010** Sow & Grow Nursery, Ongar Road, Pilgrims Hatch
- **085B** Land adjacent to Tipps Cross Community Hall, Blackmore Road, Tipps Cross
- **101A** M25 works site, A127/M25 J29 (Land at Codham Hall Farm)
- **294** Chestnut Field, Blackmore Road, Hook End

4.3.6 The following sites, following on from those listed above, are also recommended to be preferentially prioritised for Housing Development due to their **Medium-High Landscape Capacity** for this type of development:

- **023** Doddinghurst Road (North & South of A12)
- **024A** Sawyers Hall Farm, Sawyers Hall Lane, Brentwood
- **024B** Sawyers Hall Farm, Sawyers Hall Lane, Brentwood
- **037D** Land west of Thorndon Avenue, West Horndon
- **038A** Land east of Thorndon Avenue, West Horndon
- **079A** Land adjacent to Ingatestone by-pass
- **087** Land at Alexander Lane, Shenfield
- **101C** Land at Codham Hall
- **106** Former A12 works site, Mountnessing
- **112D** Childerditch Industrial Estate
- **112E** Childerditch Industrial Estate
- **126** Land east of West Horndon, south of Station Road
- **128** Ingatestone Garden Centre, Roman Road, Ingatestone
- **187** Land south of East Horndon Hall
- **276** Oak Hurst, Chelmsford Road, Shenfield

#### Lowest Priority Sites for Housing Development

4.3.7 The following Sites are recommended to be considered as the lowest priority sites for development due to their **Low or Low-Medium Landscape Capacity** for this type of development:

- **302C** Land off Ongar Road



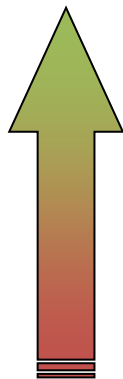
4.3.8 Site 302C is a relatively large Site considered to be of High Landscape Sensitivity and a Medium - High Landscape Value. The Site is located west of the Ongar Road and beyond the existing settlement extents of Pilgrim's Hatch. The Site is adjacent to and partially overlaps an existing SLA and the western extents of the Site are in fairly close proximity to the Weald Park Registered Park and Garden, with the potential to influence setting. Whilst, overall, the Site has a Low or Low-Medium Landscape Capacity to be entirely developed, some smaller areas may have a slightly higher capacity where landscape value and sensitivity are potentially lower and/or where development is in closer to proximity to nearby urban areas (i.e. areas around and adjacent to existing ribbon development along the Ongar Road, at the eastern extents of the Site).

4.3.9 This being said, where the western extents of the Site overlap the SLA and are in closest proximity to the Registered Park and Garden, the land may be considered important to the assets setting. As such, the western extents of the Site have a higher Landscape Value resulting in a further reduced Landscape Capacity (i.e. **Low** Landscape Capacity at western extents of Site). Revisions to the boundary of 302C may result in a higher overall Landscape Capacity.

#### Intermediate Priority Sites for Housing Development

4.3.10 All other Sites were assessed (at least partially) to have **Medium Landscape Capacity** for this type of development (also accounting for Medium-High/Medium split assessments and Medium/Low-Medium split assessments). Of these assessed Medium Landscape Capacity Sites, an illustrative relative 'priority' for development would be as follows:

Higher Priority



- 158, 235 & 263

- 022, 027, 032, 034, 075B, 076, 077, 076C, 083, 194, 299

- 038B, 200 (East), 200 (West)

Lower Priority

4.3.11 Sites 158, 235 and 263 are assessed as having a Medium or Medium-High Landscape Capacity in relation to development. The Sites were assessed as being Medium Landscape Sensitivity but due to the nature of the sites and their characteristics, it is highlighted that the sites could be considered Low or Medium Landscape Value. Whilst other Medium Landscape Capacity sites also have this same assessment rating, by further considering aspects of Landscape Sensitivity in relation to the site's relationship to existing development (in particular housing development), professional judgement has been used to highlight these sites of being of a potentially higher priority for allocation compared to other similarly assessed sites where Landscape Capacity is assessed as Medium.

4.3.12 Of the four sites assessed as being Medium/Low-Medium Landscape Capacity it is noted that Site 38B is a fairly large Site that has a variety of overlapping land-uses, designations and access

arrangements such that different parts of the Site have the potential to have different levels of Landscape Capacity. Parts of this site will have Low-Medium Landscape Capacity, notably where there is promoted recreational general access, mature characteristic landscape elements (woodland) and where development coincides with the Historic Park and Garden. This Site would benefit from further investigation, particularly as it lies within the Landscape Improvement Area designation and would provide areas of at least a Medium Landscape Capacity; particularly where the site is well related to West Horndon.

- 4.3.13 A similar evaluation can be applied to Sites 200 East and West. Whilst both Sites have the same overall assessment rating, Site 200 was split to recognise the topography level difference between eastern and western areas of the Site, that could have potentially lead to differing assessment ratings and wider considerations in terms of the relationship of the site to West Horndon and/or Basildon. There are also a range of land uses and landscape elements, of various conditions, across the sites. Unlike Site 038B, none of Sites 200 East and West is covered by a landscape designation (such as SLA or Registered Park and Garden) and entirely falls in the Landscape Improvement Area, whereby in terms of designations the landscape would not be considered highly valued. It is noted that 200 East and 200 West have some public access opportunities (in the form of limited numbers of PRow, relative to the scale of the site) as well as differing recreational opportunities (in the form of a golf course), compared to Site 038B.
- 4.3.14 The main difference between Site 38B and 200 East/West is that, (notwithstanding the adjacent presence of the A127 to the north and the rail line to the south, in relation to Sites 200 East and West), Site 38B has a better physical relationship to West Horndon, albeit the development of Site 038B would constitute a very large change to the existing settlement character and extent of West Horndon. Sites 200 East and West would benefit from further investigation at a more detailed level, particularly as the sites fall within a Landscape Improvement Area designation.
- 4.3.15 Other sites placed within the Medium Landscape Capacity criteria comprise differing characteristics. Other important site considerations, in respect of Medium Landscape Capacity sites, are further noted below:
- Site 27 lies within the Special Landscape Area (SLA) designation and within the Thames Chase Community Forest but provides no public access. Given the small size of this Site, and relative contribution to the SLA and the close proximity to other housing, this Housing Sites could be considered to have relatively high Landscape Capacity for this type of Development relative to others with the 'Medium' rating, with appropriate design.
  - Sites 79A and 79C also lie within the SLA but provide little contribution towards the character in this locality being areas heavily altered by the modern road junction (Ingatestone Bypass A12) that forms them. These Housing Sites do not have public access and do not provide high visual amenity. For these reasons, these Housing Sites could be considered to have relatively high Landscape Capacity for this type of Development relative to others with the 'Medium' rating, with appropriate design.
  - Site 034 is not within or adjacent to a landscape designation but provides good public access opportunities. The landscape condition and character is variable, with some brownfield and some greenfield elements. With more detailed consideration of development of less sensitive parts of the Sites rather than the whole site, and appropriate layout and detailed design, retaining more valued landscape elements, certain parts of the Housing Sites could be developed to focus on parts that would have a higher Landscape Capacity than the Site as a

whole.

- Development of Site 032 has the potential to fundamentally change the western-most boundary of Brentwood, requiring good mitigation and sensitive design, to limit perceptual encroachment from viewpoints further to the west.
- Development proposals across Site parcels north of Shenfield (i.e. 087, 235, 034, 276 and 263) have varying sensitivity and landscape value. Some parcels or Sites afford greater public access or recreational enjoyment, whilst others have a number of more valued characteristics such as mature woodland cover. These aspects would have to be accounted for and integrated in to any design proposals, both on an individual and cumulative basis.

### Strategic Options and Cumulative Considerations

- 4.3.16 The Landscape Capacity study is a good indicator of the relative acceptability of landscape impacts from development at an individual Site level. However, a number of Sites will have to be allocated to deliver the housing and development requirements of Brentwood. Therefore, there is potential for cumulative adverse landscape effects. These effects will generally relate to the Strategic Options, where Sites are adjacent to each other, would form a single development area or would substantially alter to the existing settled extents of ‘urban’ or village areas.
- 4.3.17 Whilst it is accepted that there would be varying Landscape Capacity over a Site and group of Sites, where the Site comprising the Strategic Options are considered together, that the Landscape Capacity of the Option should be based on the worst-case or lowest Landscape Capacity score of the individual composite Sites to indicate a cumulative Landscape Capacity.
- 4.3.18 It is noted that the majority of Sites common to all Options are generally separated from each other or are located where they would not combine to form material changes to the individual landscape capacity assessments. As such the potential Strategic Site Options are focused on. Where these potentially combine with other individual Sites, relevant notes are provided below and there is a further note on the combination of proposed Sites allocations north of Shenfield.

**Table 12 Strategic Option 1: Dunton Hills Garden Village**

Site No.	Site Location	Proposed Development Type	Cumulative Landscape Capacity	
200	Entire Land East of A128, south of A127	Mixed-Use Development	Medium	Low-Medium

**Table 13 Strategic Option 2: West Horndon**

Site No.	Site Location	Proposed Development Type	Cumulative Landscape Capacity	
037D	Land West of Thorndon Avenue, West Horndon	Mixed-Use Development	Medium	Low-Medium
038B	Land East of Thorndon Avenue, West Horndon	Housing Development		
038A	Land East of Thorndon Avenue, West Horndon	Housing Development		
126	Land East of West Horndon, South of Station Road	Housing Development		

**Table 14 Strategic Option 3: North Brentwood**

Site No.	Site Location	Proposed Development Type	Cumulative Landscape Capacity	
024A	Sawyers Hall Farm	Housing Development	Low-Medium	Low
024B	Sawyers Hall Farm	Housing Development		
299	Land off Weald Road & Honeypot Lane	Housing Development		
302C	Land off Ongar Road	Housing Development		

- 4.3.19 Strategic Option 3 receives an overall Low/Low-Medium Landscape Capacity based on Site 302C being assessed to that capacity and being the overall lowest priority Site identified within this study. The western extents of 302C will be of the lowest Landscape Capacity in close proximity to the Registered Park and Garden and overlapping the existing SLA. Revisions to the boundary of 302C may result in a higher overall Landscape Capacity.
- 4.3.20 It is noted that Sites 024A&B and 299 have a higher individual Landscape Capacity and could be considered on their own merits.
- 4.3.21 The Strategic Option 3 Sites do not generally combine to result in ‘cumulative effects’ owing to their relative proximity to each other, yet it is noted that to deliver Option 3, 302C would form the largest strategic Site allocation and development area of the Sites considered under the Option.
- 4.3.22 It is also an important consideration that the strategic Sites under Strategic Option 3 all fall within Landscape Character Areas (Chris Blandford Associates, September 2006) with a Relatively High Sensitivity to Change.
- 4.3.23 As stated previously Landscape Capacity refers to the degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate a specific type of change without significant effects on its character. As such, the context of the Landscape Capacity assessment from 302C in the context of the wider Landscape Character Area sensitivity is an important consideration.
- 4.3.24 It is noted that Strategic Option 3, would also combine Site 302C with Site 010; this is not considered to lead to any cumulative landscape capacity effects over and above the individual Site assessment for 302C. Further to this, Site 299 is adjacent to Site 022, both south of the A12 adjacent to the Brentwood urban area. In Landscape Capacity terms, both these Sites individually received a Medium Landscape Capacity Assessment; this is considered an appropriate assessment level when considering both Sites together, noting the presence of some landscape features (e.g. mature tree cover) potentially worthy of retention.
- 4.3.25 Strategic Option 1 (Dunton Hills Garden Village) receives an overall Medium/Low-Medium Landscape Capacity rating accounting for the eastern and western parts of the Site. This does not change the individual Landscape Capacity Assessments which apply an individual assessment level.
- 4.3.26 Strategic Option 2 (West Horndon) receives an overall Medium/Low-Medium Landscape Capacity rating, primarily accounting for Site 038B, which forms the largest Site within the Option. It is noted that the other individual composite Sites received higher landscape capacity ratings on an individual basis and some areas within Site 038B would also be of a higher landscape capacity. These areas could be considered on their own merits. However, as a combined Strategic allocation, the combination of Sites under Option 2, primarily accounting for Site 038B, would also lead to a considerable enlargement of West Horndon (more than doubling the existing developed area) and

there would be associated landscape and settlement character effects.

- 4.3.27 Comparatively, Strategic Option 1 received a higher Landscape Sensitivity compared to those Sites comprising Strategic Option 2, primarily owing to being a large Site in the open countryside, away from an existing settled area, notwithstanding that strategic development around West Horndon would considerably change the existing settlement character in terms of scale and extent. However, the Dunton Hills Option is also considered to have an overall lower Landscape Value compared to Site 038B at West Horndon, where there are designations over parts of the Site (e.g. Registered/Historic Park and Garden) and there are also some areas of formal recreation relating to the existing settled area.
- 4.3.28 In relation to both Strategic Options 1 and 2, Site 187 would in effect be adjacent to either strategic allocation. Overall, this is not considered to materially alter the above comments or assessment of Landscape Capacity.
- 4.3.29 Comparatively, Strategic Option 1 covers the largest land area, with Strategic Option 3 covering the smallest.
- 4.3.30 It is also an important consideration that the strategic Sites under both Strategic Options 1 and 2 all fall within Landscape Character Areas (Chris Blandford Associates, September 2006) with a Moderate Sensitivity to Change and within a current Landscape Improvement Area, potentially indicating greater development potential compared to higher sensitivity Landscape Character Areas in Brentwood. This should also be considered in the context of the scale of the strategic development sites required.
- 4.3.31 Overall, all the Strategic Options will have the potential for adverse or detrimental effects on landscape character and this is a relative judgement between the Landscape Sensitivity and Value and the scale of development required. All of the Options are also considered to offer some development potential in landscape terms where unacceptable effects on landscape character could be avoided through good design or refinement of Site selections depending on meeting strategic development needs.
- 4.3.32 Overall, accounting for these factors, both Strategic Option 1 and Option 2 are considered a higher priority for development compared to Option 3, where Site 302C was considered to have the lowest Landscape Capacity of all Sites considered and all strategic Sites under Option 3 are located in a Landscape Character Area with a Relatively High Sensitivity to Change.
- 4.3.33 Whilst there are areas or Sites as part of Strategic Option 2 which are considered of a higher Landscape Capacity, the scale of the strategic development required around West Horndon is such that in comparison to Strategic Option 1, both Options have the potential to have some material adverse effect of landscape character, the acceptability of which would require detailed assessment, design and landscape mitigation (both structural landscaping and Green Infrastructure) to establish an acceptable scheme in landscape terms.

#### Sites North Of Shenfield

- 4.3.34 As part of the assessed Sites, those common to all Strategic Options (or forming their own potential Site allocation), there is a cluster of Sites north of Brentwood contained between the A12 and local rail line. These Sites comprise Sites 087, 235, 034, 276 and 263.

- 4.3.35 The Landscape Capacity ranges from Medium to Medium-High. The lowest Landscape Capacity related to the largest Site 034 (Medium Landscape Capacity), with all other Sites assessed to a higher landscape capacity.
- 4.3.36 Overall, the combination of these Sites is considered as a whole to be of a Medium Landscape Capacity. Careful consideration would be required in relation to how the Sites relate to each other, the existing settled area and the retention of important or valued landscape features such as the woodland blocks.
- 4.3.37 Careful consideration would also be required in relation to the A12, such that boundary landscaping was retained and improved to visually contain the Sites and prevent encroachment and cumulative effects with areas north of the A12 towards Mountnessing. This will be a key landscape and visual consideration.
- 4.3.38 Ideally, the Sites should be assessed and promoted on a Masterplan basis, to develop an appropriate development strategy in relation to landscape and visual acceptability.

### **General Recommendations**

- 4.3.39 Where the boundaries of certain Sites or Strategic Options, the results of the Landscape Capacity Assessment may be different. This is particularly where boundaries were changed to omit or avoid more sensitive landscape areas of a Site. However, changes to the boundaries would need to be assessed against the strategic development needs of Brentwood and wider land availability.
- 4.3.40 Consideration of development of any of the Sites should be informed in the first instance at the master planning stage with reference to the published landscape character assessment (Chris Blandford Associates, September 2006). A site-specific assessment on landscape and visual effects should inform an iterative design process and a landscape and visual impact assessment is likely to be required to accompany any planning applications for individual Sites and in particular the Strategic Site Options. Consideration of landscape aspects should be integrated with consideration of good design, open space strategies, green infrastructure plans, biodiversity targets etc. to provide sustainable development at any site. Any development should also reflect and seek to improve retained or important landscape characteristics, with reference to the design guidance contained in any Local Character Assessments of the time.
- 4.3.41 In relation to the Strategic Options, whilst unacceptable landscape effects can likely be avoided through good design and effective mitigation, it is recommended that for the chosen Strategic Option, this is developed based on a detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and iterative design process to develop an overarching Masterplan as relevant to the Option under consideration.
- 4.3.42 A strong landscape and Green Infrastructure led design ethos, reflecting valued characteristics and potential for improvements within the local Landscape Character Area, would help in developing an acceptable scheme in landscape terms. The Council may also wish to allocate or promote areas of landscape enhancement and/or structural landscaping within the Local Plan, to account for preferred Site allocation options. Early planting and structural landscaping can help to integrate any future development potential at an earlier stage and help limit the potential for effects in advance of detailed proposals coming forward.
- 4.3.43 Where an overarching Masterplan process may not be achievable, Sites or areas of Sites that may

come forward separately should be assessed where practical on a cumulative basis with other proposed allocations to ensure no significant adverse cumulative landscape or visual effects are likely to arise which would prejudice any other proposed allocation.

- 4.3.44 Brentwood Borough Council may wish to consider these points as part of wider planning policy in the Local Plan.

## GLOSSARY

*For the avoidance of confusion, the terms used in this report follow the definitions given below:*

<b>Landscape</b>	An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors
<b>Landscape Element</b>	A component part of the landscape (e.g. landform, roads, hedges, woods).
<b>Landscape Feature</b>	A prominent eye-catching element (e.g. wooded hilltop or church spire).
<b>Landscape Characteristics</b>	Combinations of elements and experiential characteristics (e.g. noise, smell) that make a particular contribution to a Landscape Character Type.
<b>Landscape Character</b>	The distinct recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular landscape and how people perceive this, creating a particular sense of place.
<b>Landscape Character Types</b>	<b>LCTs</b> are non-locationally-specific areas of the same landscape character.
<b>Landscape Character Areas</b>	<b>LCA</b> s refer to specific geographical locations of a particular character type.
<b>Landscape Value</b>	The relative (non-monetary) value that is attached to different landscapes. In a policy context the usual basis for recognising certain highly valued landscapes is through the application of a local or national landscape designation. A landscape may also be valued by different communities of interest for many different reasons without any formal designation, recognising, for example, perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness; special cultural associations; or the existence of a consensus about importance, either nationally or locally.
<b>Landscape Capacity</b>	The degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate a specific type of change without significant effects on its character.
<b>Overall Landscape Sensitivity</b>	<i>In this report:</i> This term refers to the combined sensitivity of Landscape Receptors and Visual Receptors to a specific type of change.
<b>Landscape Character Sensitivity</b>	The level of stability, robustness and resilience of the landscape elements and characteristics present and their ability to be replicated based on their quality, condition and value.
<b>Landscape Receptor</b>	Landscape element, characteristic or character that would potentially experience an impact or effect.
<b>Visual Receptor</b>	Individuals, special interest groups, a community or population that would potentially experience an impact or effect on their view.
<b>Scenic Beauty</b>	Subjective value attributed to the emotional response of an individual to a landscape scene, which, although heavily influenced by intrinsic quality, is conditioned by an individual's perception (memories, associations, cultural influences and preference).
<b>Visual Amenity</b>	The subjective value attributed to the degree of pleasure gained from what is seen in a given view (quality of view).
<b>Tranquillity</b>	Subjective experience from being at a location that provides individuals with the space and conditions to relax, achieve mental balance and a sense of distance from stress. <b>Tranquil areas</b> are often associated with quiet, remote (or appearing remote), natural, non-developed (non-built) and non-busy areas.
<b>Site visibility</b>	The areas within which the subject site can be seen, the amount of site visible and the numbers able to see the subject site.



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## **APPENDICES:**

Appendix L1	Site Assessment Sheet Pro forma
Appendix L2	Summary of Assessment Results
Appendix L3	Detailed Site Assessment Sheets
Appendix L4	Summary Comparison Check between the Assessed Overall Landscape Sensitivity and the published Landscape Character Assessment
Appendix L5	Figure 1 – Landscape Capacity of Sites
Appendix L6	Summary Analysis of Public Consultation Responses – Question 10
Appendix L7	Summary Analysis of Public Consultation Responses – Question 11

**APPENDIX L1:**

Site Assessment Sheet Pro forma

## **APPENDIX L2:**

Summary of Assessment Results

**APPENDIX L3:**

Detailed Site Assessment Sheets

**APPENDIX L4:**

Summary Comparison Check between the Assessed Overall Landscape Sensitivity and the published Landscape Character Assessment

**APPENDIX L5:**

Figure 1 – Landscape Capacity of Sites

**APPENDIX L6:**

Summary Analysis of Public Consultation Responses – Question 10



**APPENDIX L7:**

Summary Analysis of Public Consultation Responses – Question 11