

5.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF CHELMSFORD BOROUGH

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5.1 General

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

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

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

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

A - River Valley

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

B - Farmland Plateau

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

D - Drained Estuarine Marsh

D9 - Fambridge Drained Estuarine Marsh

F - Wooded Farmland

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

5.2 River Valley Landscapes

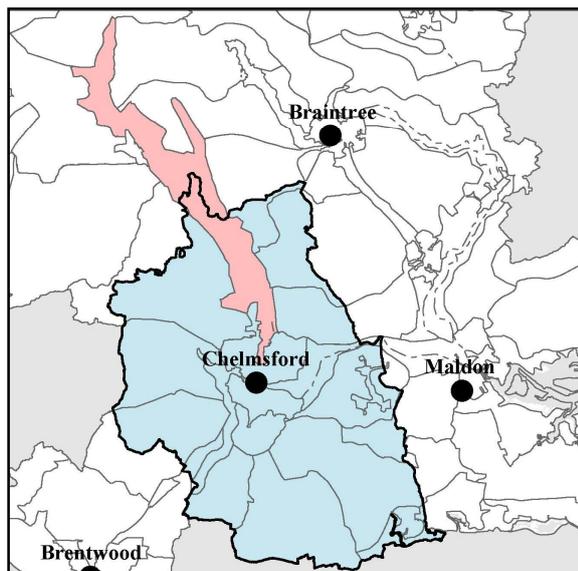
5.2.1 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

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

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

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

A6 UPPER CHELMER RIVER VALLEY (shared with Uttlesford District)

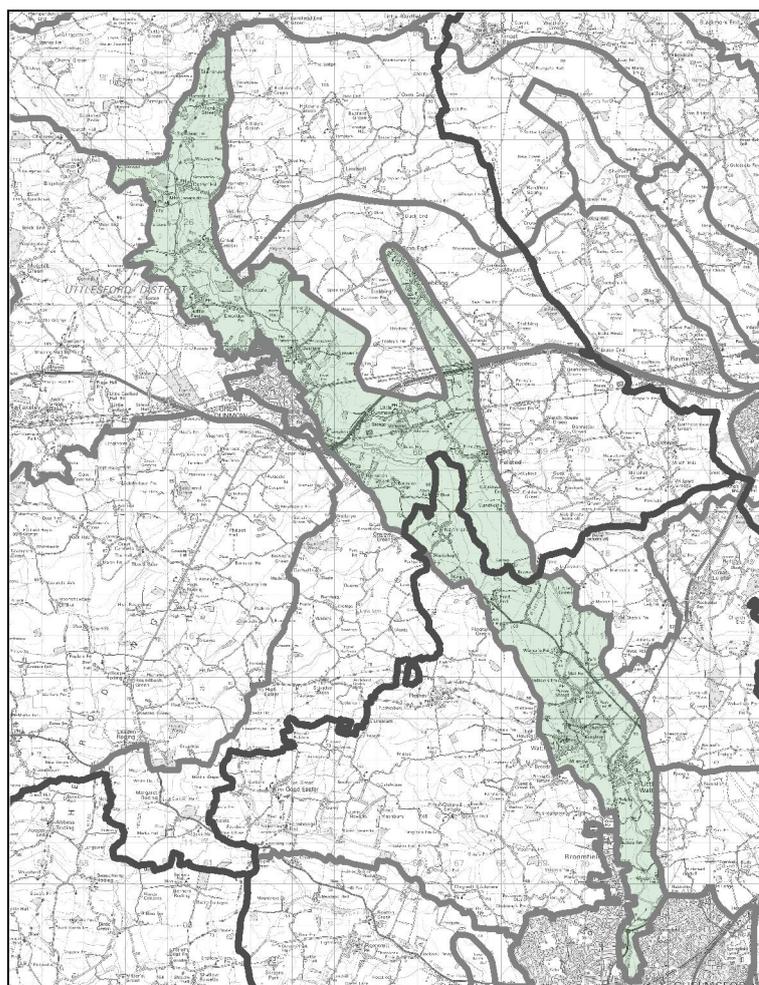


Key Characteristics

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

Overall Character

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



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

Visual Characteristics

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

Historic Land Use

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

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

Ecological Features

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

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

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

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

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

Sensitivities to Change

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

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

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

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

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

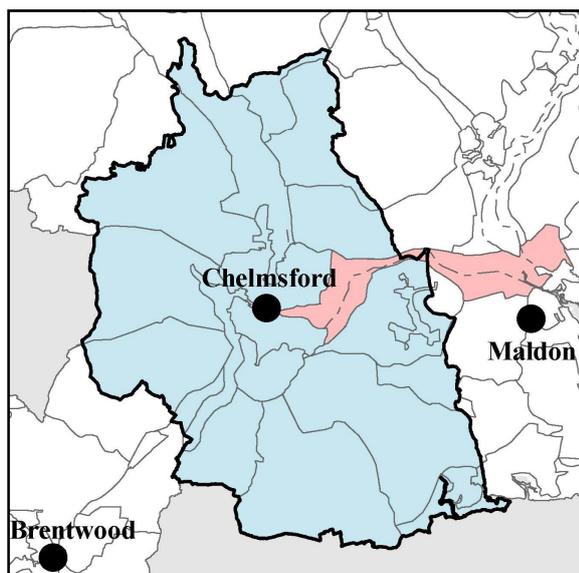
- Consider the visual impact of new residential development and farm buildings upon valley sides.
- Conserve and enhance cross-valley views and characteristic views across and along the valley.
- Ensure any new development on valley sides is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape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

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

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

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

A7 LOWER CHELMER RIVER VALLEY (shared with Maldon District)

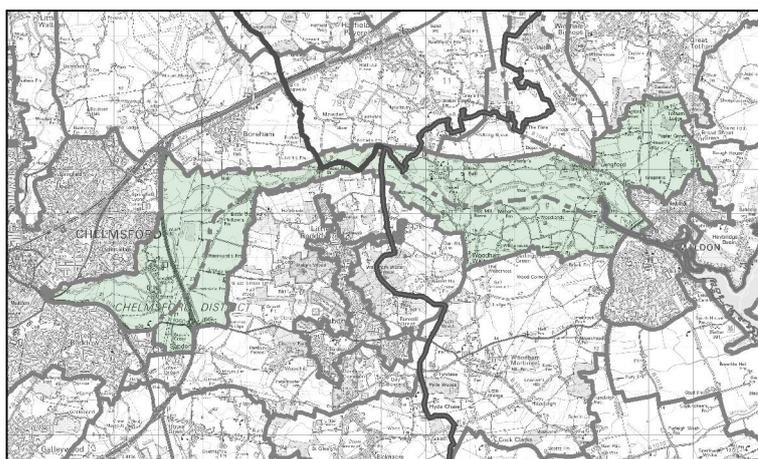


Key Characteristics

- Shallow valley.
- Predominantly arable farmland on the valley slopes.
- The Lower Chelmer where it meets the River Blackwater has gentle valley sides.
- Overall strong sense of place and tranquillity away from Maldon and the A12 and the railway line.

(Sub-Unit A7a)

- Mixture of arable and pastoral fields on the valley floor.
- The Lower Chelmer where it meets the River Blackwater has a wide flat valley floor
- Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive feature in close proximity to the river.



Overall Character

The lower reaches of the River Chelmer between Chelmsford and Maldon are open in character, with a wide floodplain and gently sloping valley sides. South of Langford the narrower meandering River Blackwater joins the wider more mature River Chelmer to flow towards Maldon. Medium to large scale arable and pastoral fields with a regular pattern dominate its length. Hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees delineate their boundaries. In places the hedgerows are thick but fragmented. Where roads cross the river valley ditches with banks that are often vegetated with hedgerows bound them. Tree cover is high along the banks of the river with willow and poplar plantations common as well as pockets of wet alder/willow woodland. The majority of the river valley floor is sparsely populated adding to its open character. Small settlements are dispersed along valleysides or clustered around the few bridging points. Maldon occupies a valley-side location at the mouth of the river, but along with major roads that cross the area there is a limited impact on character. Within the valley floor are a

series of reservoirs in proximity to the river. There is an overall sense of tranquillity throughout the character area, with several quiet rural lanes winding through the landscape.

Visual Characteristics

- The views are open and occasionally panoramic in the lower reaches of the river valley where they are unconstrained by hedgerow trees.
- Views along the valley corridor are framed.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by a predominance of medium to large pre-18th century fields with straight boundaries, including 18th to 19th-century enclosure in the south of the area, and with a pocket of small irregular fields to the northeast. On a micro-scale there is a considerable degree of co-axiality in their layout, usually relating directly to the immediate topography. The river valleys are marked by enclosed water meadows. Historic dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, isolated manors with some nucleated hamlets.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by intensive and widespread arable agriculture. The area contains 10 sites of nature conservation value, including:

- Ten CWS along and including the River Chelmer of running water, wetland, grassland and semi-natural woodland habitats.
- Four areas of ancient woodland.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential for pollution of the ditches and the River Chelmer from fertiliser and pesticide run-off from the surrounding agricultural fields.
- Potential for erection of new farm buildings and houses within the open landscape, which would be conspicuous on the skyline.
- Increasing traffic on minor roads including large lorries and HGVs.
- Potential further decline in condition of field boundaries through further agricultural intensification.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include linear poplar and willow plantations and pockets of wet alder/willow woodland, which are sensitive to changes in land management. The overall sense of tranquillity throughout the character area would potentially be affected by new development. The skyline of the slopes of the lower valley are moderately visually sensitive, with open (and occasionally panoramic views) gained to and from the river corridor, which could be affected by new development. There is a sense of historic continuity resulting from water meadows along the river valley and a historic dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and isolated manors with some isolated hamlets. Wildlife habitats are scattered throughout the area (including 10 sites of importance for nature conservation, comprising ancient woodland, running water, wetland and grassland). Overall, this area has relatively high sensitivity to change.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

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

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

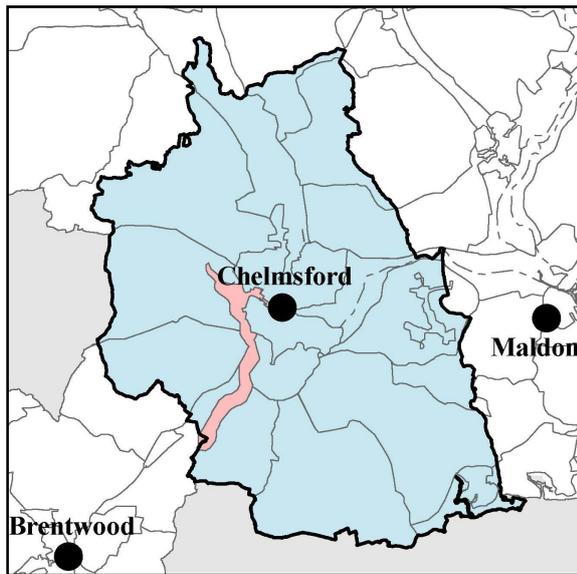
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Manage the traffic flows along the minor roads especially those not suitable for HGVs and lorries due to narrow bridges.
- Ensure that new built development is in keeping landscape character.
- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of settlements.
- Enhance the screening of the A12 and the railway line.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

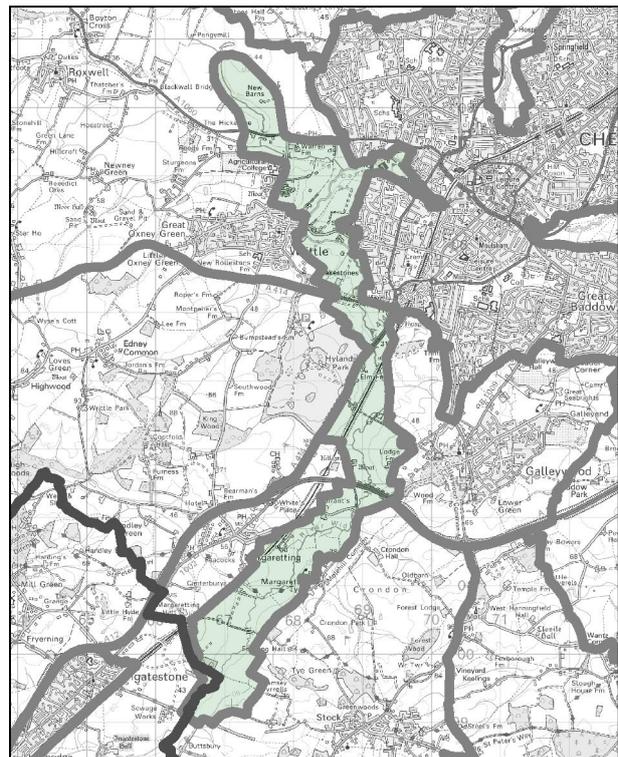
- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern, and strengthen through planting where appropriate to local landscape character.
- Conserve and manage the ecological structure of hedges and ditches within the character area.
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials, which area in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character.

A8 CAN AND WID RIVER VALLEY



Key Characteristics

- Confluence of the relatively shallow U-shaped valleys of the Can and Wid rivers.
- Human-influenced/course of River Can as it flows into Chelmsford's urban area.
- Can river channel surrounded by designed parkland/amenity landscape (Admiral's Park).
- Sense of enclosure provided by diverse mature vegetation lining the Can (within the built area).
- Relatively open nature of the floodplain and slopes of the River Wid.
- Patchwork of riverside habitats, including pasture and arable fields, interspersed with riverside poplars and other patches of vegetation lining the Wid.
- River valleys overlooked by Chelmsford Urban Edge.
- Dispersed settlement pattern, with occasional single farmsteads within the floodplain and on the slopes.



Overall Character

This character area is situated adjacent to the western edge of Chelmsford and encompasses the confluence of the relatively shallow U-shaped valleys of the Can and Wid. The Can valley flows into the area through farmland plateau to the northwest, where the course of the river does not dominate the character of the landscape. As the river valley gently meanders into the fabric of Chelmsford urban area to the east, the character of the valley is more greatly influenced by human interaction as it flows through Admiral's Park, (than in its upper reaches). At this point, diverse riverside vegetation and mature trees line the river (which is straightened in places). Immediately adjacent to the river, areas of open amenity grassland, dotted with single mature (predominantly deciduous) parkland trees contribute

to designed character and sense of place. Although the river is crossed by several bridges and surrounded by an inter-connecting network of public footpaths and several public sports facilities within the park, there is a sense of tranquillity within pockets of Admiral's Park. Views are generally restricted and channelled (by vegetation) along the river corridor, leading to a sense of enclosure. In contrast the Wid valley has a more open character, with views across and along the course and also to adjacent areas of farmland plateau and wooded farmland. The Wid valley flows into the area through wooded farmland to the south and converges within the Can to the northeast of Writtle and west of Chelmsford. The eastern and western slopes of the valley are relatively steep, rising towards Hylands Park in the west and wooded farmland to the east. There are a few patches of woodland on the slopes of the valley, with character determined by a patchwork of riverside habitats, including pasture and arable fields, interspersed with riverside poplars and other patches of vegetation. As the Wid valley curls around the western edge of Chelmsford, commercial and industrial units at the urban edge overlook the open floodplain.

Visual Characteristics

- Open views to Hylands Park and house from the eastern slopes of the Wid valley and also from within the floodplain.
- Open views to the wooded horizons of farmland to the west of the area.
- Open views to the urban edges of Chelmsford.
- Open views of farmland plateau to the north of the River Can.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by a rather mixed field pattern consisting of many small fields of ancient origin, both grid-like co-axial and irregular in shape. The historic settlement was very dispersed with scattered farmsteads in an irregular field and woodland pattern, some of the settlement being focussed on greens and commons, which lies along the highest ground. The main historic landscape features include:

- Some patches of enclosed meadow along the valley floors.
- A few small areas of parkland attached to mansion houses.
- Many small patches of ancient woodland through the area.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by intensive and widespread arable agriculture. The area contains 3 sites of nature conservation value including:

- A CWS near the River Car of wetland and grassland habitat.
- Two CWSs comprised of ancient and semi-natural habitats.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential expansion of the Chelmsford urban edge (to the east) and Writtle urban edge (to the west).
- Noise and visual intrusion associated with the A414 and A12 road corridors and also the railway corridor.
- Visual intrusion of large-scale industrial and commercial warehouse units within Chelmsford urban area (to the east of the character area).
- Re-use of past mill sites.
- Management and maintenance of the Can river corridor as a recreational and leisure resource (particularly along stretches within the urban area).

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include mature vegetation lining the River Can, and a patchwork of riverside habitats, including pasture and arable fields, interspersed with riverside poplars, which are sensitive to changes in land management. Single

(predominantly deciduous) parkland trees within Admiral's Park are also sensitive landscape features. The skyline of the slopes of the Wid valley is visually sensitive, with potential new development being visible within several views to and from adjacent Landscape Character Areas. There is also a sense of historic integrity, resulting from a dispersed and scattered settlement pattern, patches of enclosed meadows along the valley floor and a few small areas of parkland. This landscape is moderately to highly sensitive to change or new development.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

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

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

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve the relatively tranquil and undeveloped character of the floodplain of the River Wid.
- Consider the visual impact of new farm buildings or extensions to existing settlements upon valleys slopes.
- Conserve the western landscape setting of Chelmsford and the eastern landscape setting of Writtle.
- Maintain cross-valley views and conserve characteristic views along the valleys.
- Ensure any new development on valley sides is small-scale and responds to historic settlement pattern, form and building materials.
- Maintain views to Hylands Park and House to the west.
- Screen visually intrusive urban-edge development within Chelmsford (especially large warehouse buildings within the industrial estate at the eastern edge of the town) with selective tree planting which is appropriate to local landscape character.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and manage existing hedgerows.
- Seek to manage and control potential fertiliser run-off from nearby farmland.
- Seek to enhance existing floodplain habitats.
- Encourage the planting of native alder, willow, ash and oak in groups along the riverside where appropriate.

5.3 Farmland Plateau Landscapes

5.3.1 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

- Elevated gently rolling Boulder Clay/Chalky Till plateau landscape which is incised by river valleys
- Network of winding lanes and minor roads
- Medium to large-scale enclosed predominantly arable fields
- Long distance views across valleys from certain locations
- Well wooded in places (with several areas of semi-natural and ancient woodland)

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

B15 - Pleshey Farmland Plateau

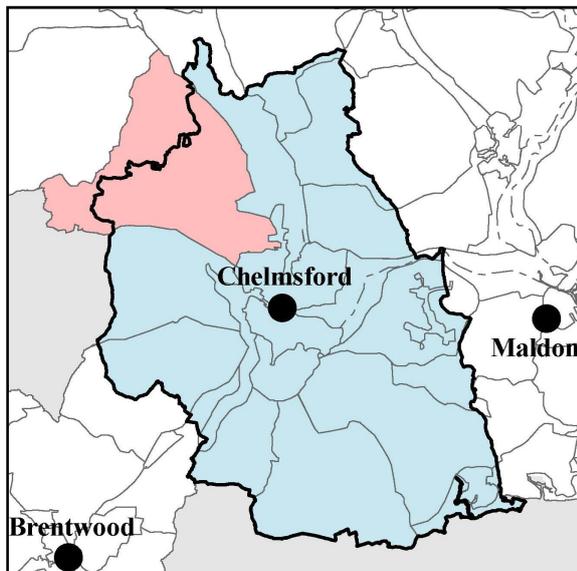
B16 - Felsted Farmland Plateau

B17 - Terling Farmland Plateau

B20 - Writtle Farmland Plateau

B21 - Boreham Farmland Plateau

B15 PLESHEY FARMLAND PLATEAU (shared with Uttlesford District)



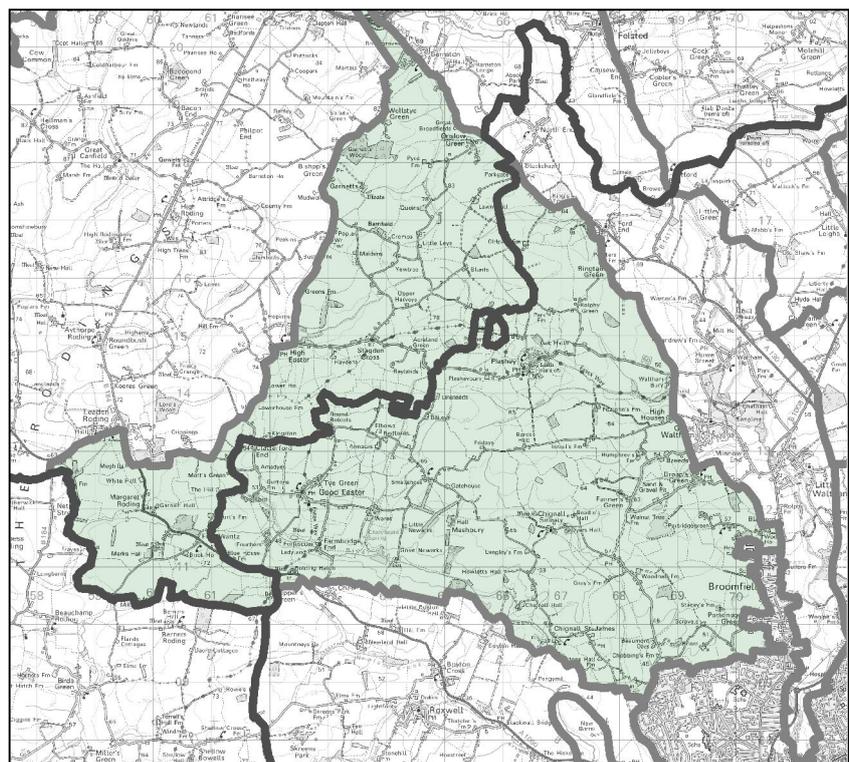
Key Characteristics

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

Overall Character

Pleshey Farmland Plateau is located south of Barnston near Great Dunmow where it stretches to the edge of Chelmsford.

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



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

Visual Characteristics.

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

Historic Land Use

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

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

Ecological Features

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

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

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

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

Sensitivities to Change

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

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

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

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

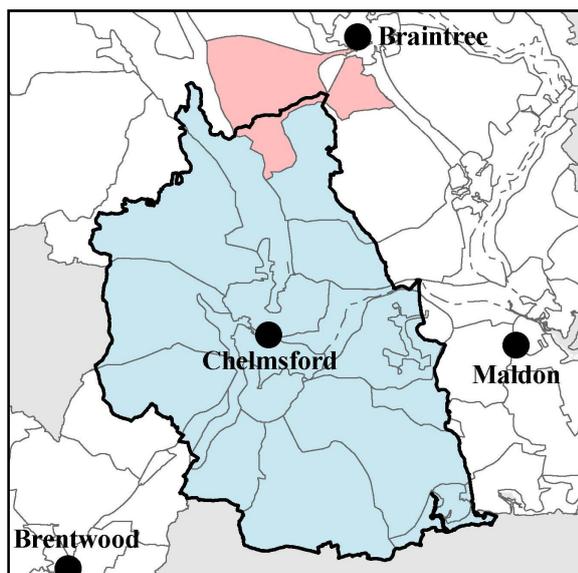
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

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

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

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

B16 FELSTED FARMLAND PLATEAU (shared with Braintree District and Uttlesford District)

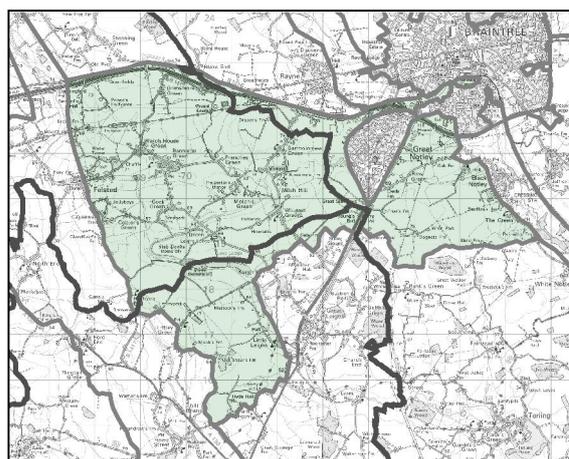


Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating farmland.
- Network of narrow, winding lanes.
- Many small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape.
- The farmland is predominantly arable with field boundaries delineated by fragmented hedgerows.

Overall Character

The Felsted Farmland Plateau extends from the A120 in the north to Black Notley in the east, Chatham Green in the south and Felsted in the west. The farmland is gently undulating with a patchwork of irregular medium to large fields. Their boundaries are enclosed by either thick but intermittent hedgerows, or just marked by grassy banks and ditches. In long views scattered small woods and copses and hedgerow trees coalesce to sometimes create the illusion of a wooded horizon. The farmland surrounding the villages of Mole Hill Green, Bannister Green and Watch House Green is composed of smaller irregular predominantly pastoral grass fields. The area is fairly densely populated with villages straggling along the roads to coalesce with each other. The farmsteads also form clusters of buildings. There is a comprehensive network of narrow winding rural lanes around which the settlement pattern is based. Many of the roads surrounded by fields tend to be surrounded by raised banks or hedges. Interest and variety is added to the area through the presence of local vernacular buildings with colour washed walls and red tiled or thatched roofs. The area has a strong sense of place and away from the key settlements and the A120 and A131 is tranquil.



Visual Characteristics

- The views are open to panoramic across the farmland. The variation in the nature of the view is dictated by the trees.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by pre-18th century irregular fields, probably of medieval origin and some maybe even older, relatively small in size in the southern half of the area and getting larger to the north. Historically the settlement comprised dispersed or polyfocal settlement strung out along an extensive network of linear and triangular greens, the latter located at road junctions. In addition there were isolated farms set within their own lands.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by intensive and widespread arable agriculture. The area contains one site of nature conservation value - Flich Way CWS comprising unimproved grassland and hedgerow habitats. Other ecological features include:

- Patches of ancient woodland at Margaret Roding Wood, Nightingale Wood, Garnetts Wood and Barnston Lays.
- Species rich hedgerows and ditches bounding the arable and pastoral fields.
- Small deciduous woodlands and copses scattered across the area.
- Tree/scrub-lined stream corridors.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential for pollution of the streams and ditches from fertiliser and pesticide run-off from agricultural fields.
- Potential for erection of new farm buildings and residential dwellings on the edge of the settlements, which would be conspicuous on the skyline.
- Potential further decline in condition of field boundaries through further agricultural intensification.
- Increased traffic on the minor roads when the Essex Showground is open.

Landscape Strategy Option

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

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

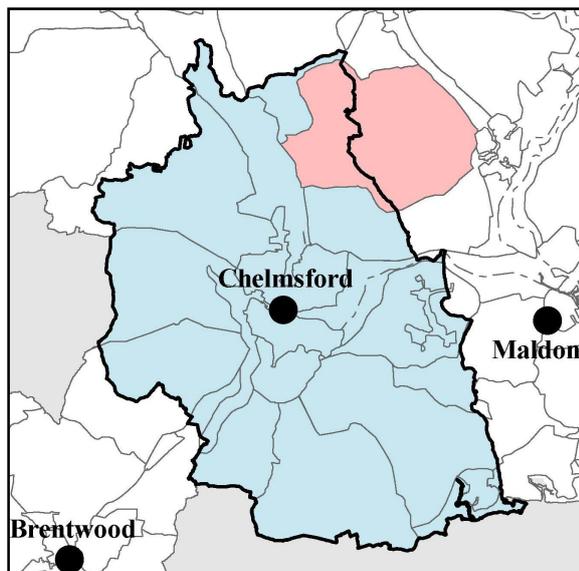
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Ensure that new build is in keeping with landscape character.
- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of settlements.
- Maintain cross-valley views and characteristic views across and along the valley.
- Ensure any new development on valley sides is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

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

B17 TERLING FARMLAND PLATEAU (shared with Braintree District)

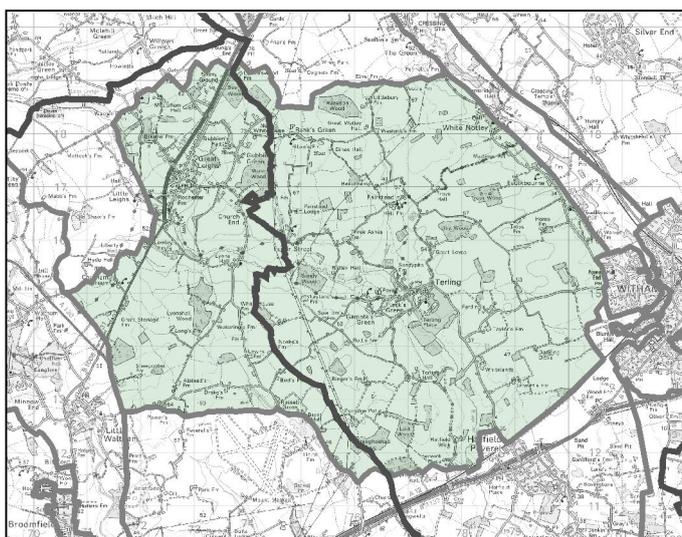


Key Characteristics

- Rolling arable farmland.
- Irregular pattern of medium to large scale fields.
- Scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small hamlets, typically with greens and ponds.
- Network of narrow winding lanes.
- Mostly tranquil away from the A12 and A131.

Overall Character

The farmland plateau surrounding Terling between the A12 and A131 is on rolling hills and valleys especially in the west. North east of Terling the farmland becomes flat and very open overlying deep well drained fine loams. The land is mainly arable with an irregular pattern of medium to large scale fields. Thick but intermittent hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees often delineate the field boundaries. In the north east of the area the grassy banks and ditches often mark field boundaries. There are many pockets of predominantly deciduous woodland with occasional mixed woodland. Some of these pockets form the remnants of ancient woodland. In addition there are several ponds or depressions in the middle of the larger fields that tend to be surrounded in trees. In long views these scattered small woods and copses, and hedgerow trees coalesce to create the illusion of a wooded horizon. The farmland is crossed by a comprehensive network of winding narrow lanes that are often bound by tall hedgerows and trees or where they are sunk below the surrounding fields by ditches and banks. In addition the Essex Way and the East Anglian Farm Rides Horse Riding Trail along with a network of footpaths cross the fields. Pylons cross the farmland creating a strong linear feature within the skyline. The dispersed settlement pattern is characterised by small isolated hamlets and farmsteads that are occasionally moated, often dispersed along lanes, with the larger village of Terling in the centre of the area. Away from the A12 and A131 there are areas with a tranquil character.



Visual Characteristics

- Key Focal features are the Terling Church Spire which towers over the surrounding countryside and Terling Place.
- Views in the area vary between open and panoramic depending on the locality and density of trees within the view.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by a historic pattern of irregular fields of various sizes. The historic pattern of dispersed settlements and scattered farmsteads survive. Some settlements would have been focussed on greens. The main historic landscape features include:

- Despite moderate to significant boundary loss, the field boundary pattern survives.
- Several areas of ancient woodland.
- The line of the Roman road from Chelmsford to Braintree, which bisects the Character Area.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by intensive and widespread arable agriculture. The area contains 35 sites of nature conservation value:

- The River Ter SSSI and associated wetland habitats.
- 34 CWSs, including 25 with ancient and semi-natural woodland habitat.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential for pollution of the streams and ditches from fertiliser and pesticide run-off from agricultural fields.
- Potential for erection of new farm buildings and residential dwellings on the edge of the settlements, which would be conspicuous on the skyline.
- Potential further decline in condition of field boundaries through further agricultural intensification.

Landscape Strategy Option

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

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

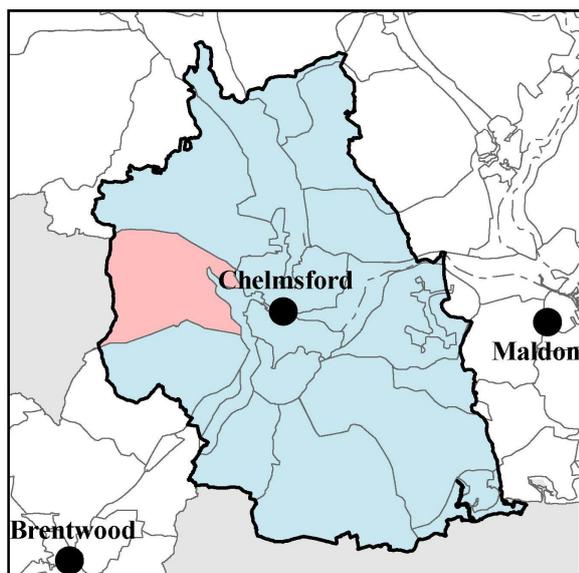
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Ensure that new build is in keeping with landscape character.
- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of settlements.
- Ensure any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

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

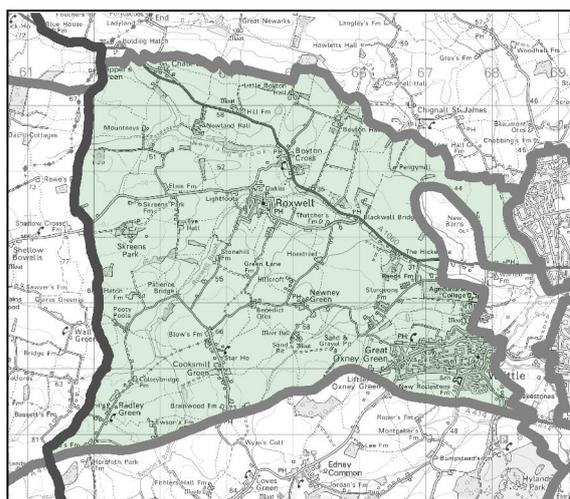
B20 WRITTLE FARMLAND PLATEAU



Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating glacial till farmland plateau landscape.
- Predominantly arable farmland, with patches of pasture in close proximity to settlements.
- Predominantly irregular field pattern.
- Fields generally delineated by gappy hedges, often containing single mature deciduous trees.
- Scattered settlement pattern, dominated by Writtle in the east.
- Several halls and associated designed/parkland landscapes.
- Network of narrow, winding lanes.

Overall Character



Situated to the west of Chelmsford, this gently undulating area of glacial till plateau is dissected by a number of small brooks (including Newlands and Roxwell Brook) and overlooks the confluence of the Rivers Can and Wid to the east. Character is dominated by an irregular arrangement of predominantly arable fields, with smaller pasture fields and paddocks in close proximity to settlements. Medium-sized arable fields are generally delineated by gappy hedges, which contain several single mature deciduous trees and also ditches. Other than Writtle (a large village in the east of the area, and Roxwell (a smaller hamlet to the north), settlement pattern consists of scattered farmsteads and hamlets, which are sprinkled across the landscape. Writtle¹ is separated from Chelmsford further to the east by the floodplains of the Rivers Can and Wid (LCA A8). A number of halls (including Newney Hall, Moor Hall and Newland Hall), often areas of designed parkland landscape, are peppered across the landscape. The character of the heart of Writtle is influenced by several historic buildings which are clustered around a village green, delineated by mature deciduous trees and was described by Pevsner as ‘one of the most attractive village greens of Essex’². Although the main road corridors of the A414 and A1060 road run through the area, there is a sense of tranquillity away from these routes.

¹ Writtle Village Design Statement (Writtle Parish Council, 2004).

² The Buildings of England: Essex (Pevsner, N. 2003).

A network of narrow winding lanes also cross the plateau, providing differing views across the undulating landscape. Open views across the Wid valley to wooded horizons in the east and south from the southeastern half of the area; give a sense of the raised nature of this area of farmland plateau.

Visual Characteristics

- Open views across the Wid valley to wooded horizons in the east and south from the southeastern half of the area.
- Open views into the floodplain of the Rivers Can and Wid from eastern edge of the area.
- Open views to the western urban edge of Chelmsford from the eastern edge of the area.
- Landmark church spires of Writtle and Roxwell churches visible across the farmland plateau.

Historic Land Use

- Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by any small irregular fields of ancient origin, with pockets of sinuous co-axial fields. This area was part of Writtle Forest, a medieval hunting forest. Substantial pockets of ancient woodland survive, as does the historic settlement pattern of dispersed villages focussed on greens and commons, and scattered farmsteads in an irregular field and woodland pattern. Only within Writtle itself has development gradually spread to encompass two greens and take on the characteristics of a nucleated settlement in relatively modern times.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable agriculture and pasture. The area contains 10 sites of nature conservation value. These include:

- Three CWSs with ancient woodland habitat.
- Seven CWSs comprised of grassland, semi-natural woodland habitats.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Visually intrusive signage associated with garden centres and nurseries.
- Highway improvements or potential widening of the A414 and A1060.
- Disturbance of sense of tranquillity as a result of noise and traffic associated with the A414 and A1060.
- Potential pressure for expansion of Writtle settlement.
- Potential future decline and loss of field boundaries through lack of management and further introduction of intensive agricultural practices.
- Increased pressure on minor roads and rural lanes.
- Potential for the introduction of new visually intrusive farm buildings.
- Ensure any extensions to existing housing developments avoid visual intrusion.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include single mature deciduous trees within hedgerows and ditches at field boundaries, (which are sensitive to changes in land management). The open nature of the skyline of several areas of the plateau is visually sensitive, with new development potentially visible within expansive views across the plateau and also within views to and from the Wid Valley. There is a strong sense of historic integrity, resulting from a dispersed historic settlement pattern of small hamlets and villages and several visible historic features (including Newney Hall, Moor Hall and Newland Hall). The comprehensive network of quiet rural lanes, which cross the landscape are sensitive to potential increased traffic flow, associated with new development. There are also several important wildlife habitats within the area (including 10 sites of importance for nature conservation, comprising ancient woodland and grassland habitats) which are sensitive to changes in land management. Overall, this character area has moderate sensitivity to change.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

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

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

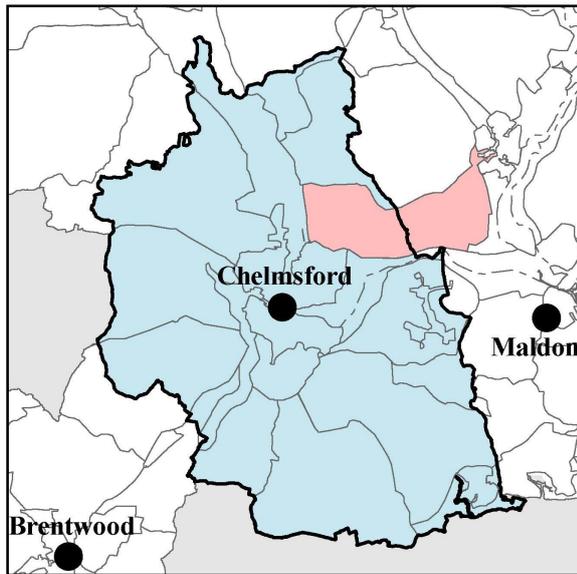
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Protect the setting of Writtle (including the floodplains of the Can and Wid to the east), which separates the settlement from Chelmsford.
- Ensure that any appropriate new development responds to the historic settlement pattern and uses materials which are appropriate to local landscape character.
- Conserve views into the Can and Wid valleys from the eastern edge of the area.
- Conserve the mostly rural character of the area.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance existing hedgerow network by planting hawthorn and strengthening elm.
- Establish arable field margins as an important nature conservation habitat.
- Seek ways to reduce the visual impact of the main road corridors (A414 & A1060), through introducing new and strengthening existing parallel shelterbelts where appropriate.
- Conserve historic lanes and unimproved roadside verges.

B21 BOREHAM FARMLAND PLATEAU (shared with Braintree District and Maldon District)

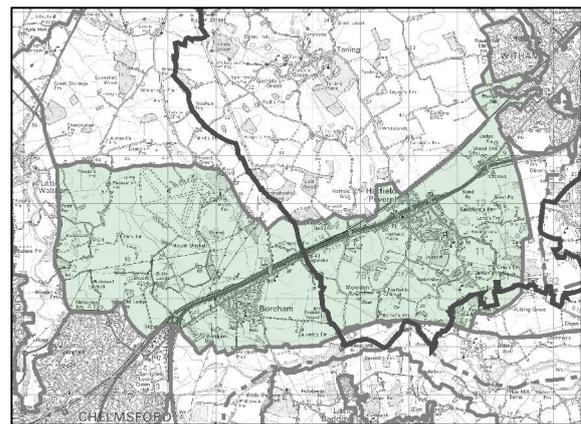


Key Characteristics

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

Overall Character

Boreham Farmland Plateau is centred on Boreham and the A12 dual carriageway. The gently undulating landscape is fairly densely populated with the large settlements of Hatfield Peveral and Boreham and the scattered smaller villages and hamlets such as Nounsley. Farmsteads line the roads outside of the main settlements. To the east and north of Boreham there are several disused sand and gravel pits. The pits have predominantly been filled in with water, the surrounding areas landscaped and trees have been planted. Some of these new lakes are used as fisheries and are surrounded by rough grassland and wire fences. Surrounding the settlements pastoral fields tend to be small to medium with their boundaries delineated by gappy and fragmented hedgerows with hedgerow trees. In the south west of the area are large open arable fields separated by banks and ditches providing extensive long distance views across the River Chelmer Valley. In these areas there are a few isolated dwellings and farmsteads and trees scattered across the landscape. Throughout the area outside the built up areas the roads tend to be sunk below the surrounding fields and lined with banks topped with tall hedges and hedgerow trees. The A12 dual carriageway splits the area visually into two with only a few crossing points to join the areas. The road is a very dominant feature as the traffic noise carries across large swathes of the area reducing the sense of tranquillity.



Visual Characteristics.

- The A12 forms the key landmark in the area as it is raised above the surrounding landscape and is visible over a long distance.
- The views in the area are generally short distance and constrained by the tall hedges and small woodlands, however in the south and west of the area, the large arable fields provide very open panoramic views.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by a predominance of medium to large fields with straight boundaries, including 18th to 19th-century enclosure, with a pocket of small irregular fields to the northeast. Historically there is a dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, with nucleated settlement at Boreham. The main historic landscape features include:

- The Roman roads of Stane Street and the former A12 which have left their imprint on the modern landscape, influencing field alignment and settlement distribution.
- Modern development that is focussed around Boreham, but also within the Character Area there is also an airfield, the modern arterial route of the A12, and areas of gravel extraction.
- Water meadows along the river valleys.
- Historic park and gardens surrounding Boreham House.

Ecological Feature

This Character Area is dominated by intensive and widespread arable agriculture with small pockets of woodland and narrow lanes. The area contains 9 sites of nature conservation value including two with ancient and semi-natural woodland habitat. Ecological features also include ditches, reservoirs, streams and rivers and gravel and sand Pits.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential for pollution of the streams, rivers and ditches from fertiliser and pesticide run-off from agricultural fields.
- Potential for erection of new farm buildings in the open agricultural land, which would be conspicuous on the sky line.
- Potential residential expansion of villages and towns, which would be conspicuous on the surrounding rural landscape.
- Increasing traffic on minor roads, especially during rush hour.
- Potential further decline in condition of field boundaries through further agricultural intensification.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include hedgerows, banks and ditches at field boundaries (which are sensitive to changes in land management). There is a sense of historic integrity, with a dispersed historic settlement pattern visible in places and occasional historic features such as New Hall and/or Boreham House and historic park/gardens visible within the landscape. Overall, this character area has low to- moderate sensitivity to change.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

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

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

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Consider the visual impact of new residential development and farm buildings in the surrounding agricultural fields.
- Ensure any new development is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

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

5.4 Drained Estuarine Marsh Landscapes

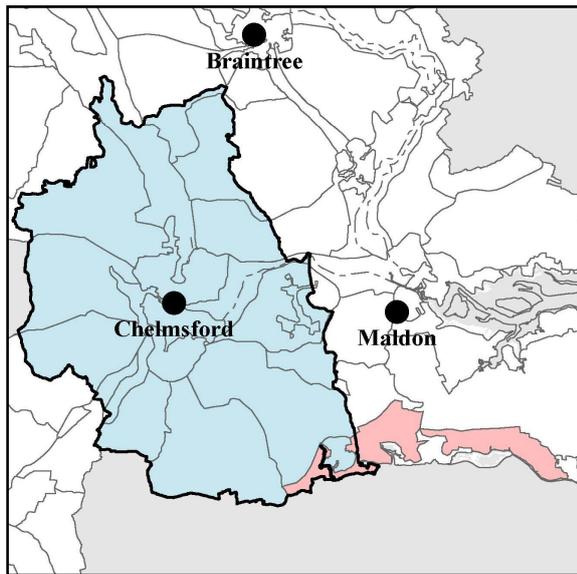
5.4.1 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

- Areas of flat, artificially drained former saltmarsh currently grassland and cultivated fields
- Visible sea walls separate drained former marshland and current saltmarsh/mudflats
- Lack of large areas of trees or woodland
- Network of visible drainage ditches

5.4.2 This Landscape Character Type contains the following Landscape Character Area:

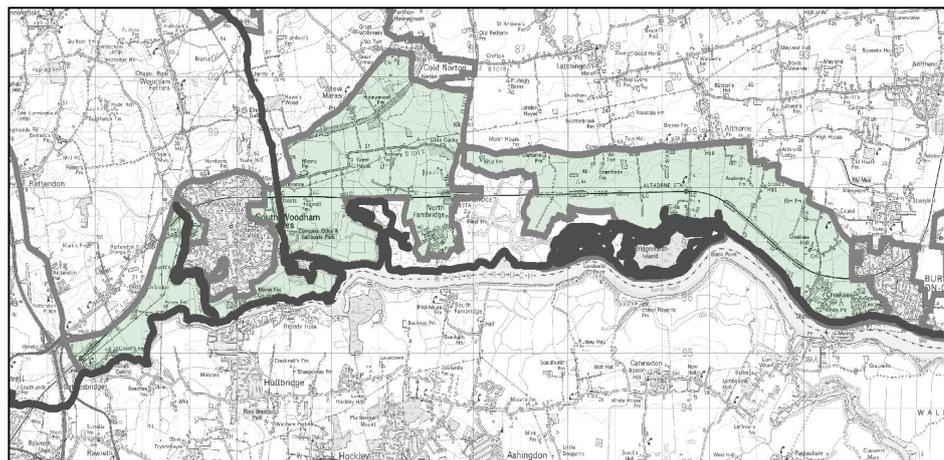
D9 - Fambridge

D9 FAMBRIDGE DRAINED ESTUARINE MARSH (shared with Maldon District)



Key Characteristics

- Low-lying flat drained marsh hinterland north of River Crouch that become gently rolling further inland.
- Predominantly open, arable fields with a regular, rectilinear field pattern.
- Steeply rising land above Creeksea and North Fambridge
- Extensive grazing marsh.
- Sense of isolation and openness near the sea wall.



Overall Character

This character area is the hinterland of the marshes on the north shore of the narrow River Crouch. This drained marshland is now primarily arable, although extensive grazing is apparent near the sea wall. Gently rising from the marsh levels, the landform is gently rolling country indented by many creeks, with scattered blocks of trees, linear tree belts, scrub and formerly elm-dominated hedgerows around pastures. The narrow estuary penetrates far inland at Bridgemarsh Creek, Althorne Creek, Fenn Creek and Clementsgreen Creek. Drainage ditches and relic dykes accentuate the medium to large-scale field pattern, and sinuous ditches are visible near Bridgemarsh Creek. Small blocks of woodland are visible west and north of North Fambridge and west of Burnham-on-Crouch, but most other tree cover is usually near farmsteads. The land rises dramatically at Creeksea in a broad ridge that stretches northwest. Pylons dominate the horizon to the north, and the only road through the area, the B1012/1010, follows the right-angled pattern found elsewhere on the Dengie Peninsula which suggests ancient planned landscape here also. The railroad between South Woodham Ferrers and Burnham is

well screened in the landscape. Pedestrian access to the sea wall and marsh landscape is limited, with only a few tracks and lanes leading to the river from North Fambridge, Althorne and Creeksea. There is a public footpath along the sea wall between Burnham and North Fambridge, Little Hayes. The Marsh Farm Country Park also provides public access to the river. Settlement pattern is linear along the main road, with scattered farms on the slopes. Woodham Ferrers is a large new town with a well-screened wooded perimeter, but it appears out of character with such dense planting in an open marshland landscape. Historic buildings are less visible here than elsewhere on the Dengie Peninsula but some examples are seen at North Fambridge and occasionally elsewhere, including Creeksea Place. Local vernacular is primarily weatherboarding, painted white with black trim. The Ferryman Pub at North Fambridge highlights the former importance of the area for the ferry landing across the river here. Overall, this landscape character appears sandwiched between two urban centres, historic but expanding Burnham and modern South Woodham Ferrers, and yet due to its lack of access across the farmland, it retains a strong sense of place and offers many opportunities, especially along the sea wall, to find places with a great sense of isolation and tranquillity.

Visual Characteristics

- Historic pub at North Fambridge where ferry used to cross the river.
- Panoramic views across adjacent saltmarsh and mudflats down the river and across large farmland fields to the south shore of the river at North Fambridge.
- Short-distance views across Althorne Creek to Bridgemarsh Island.
- Long views down Clementsgreen Creek to Brandyhole Reach.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by a distinctive co-axial rectilinear field pattern (known as Dengie-form after this area). Historically settlement is scattered along the roads along the top of the ridge and on smaller peninsulas protruding out to the coast. The main historic landscape features include:

- Areas of salt marsh and grazing marsh adjacent to the River Crouch within Marsh Farm Country Park.
- Field systems of considerable antiquity, that may have their origins in the middle Saxon period, if not before.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by arable farmland and extensive grazing marsh. The area contains numerous sites of nature conservation value and other ecological features. These include:

- Crouch & Roach Estuaries Ramsar and SPA - supports internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl.
- Essex Estuaries cSAC - supports variety of internationally important habitats including estuarine, mudflats, sandflats, *Salicornia* colonising mud, *Spartina* swards and Atlantic salt meadows.
- Crouch and Roach Estuaries SSSI – tidal mud, saltmarsh and grazing marsh which support internationally important numbers of dark-bellied Brent geese, and nationally important numbers of black-tailed godwit, shelduck and shoveler plus other wildfowl and uncommon flora.
- Ancient woodland at North Fambridge Hall Wood.
- Fen, saltmarsh and mudflats.
- Riverside creek margins and banks of the River Crouch.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Encroaching urban edge at South Woodham Ferrers very abrupt.
- Potential growth in water sports, especially sailing and pleasure craft, with inherent demand for more marinas and river moorings.
- Sea-level rise and erosion could lead to the loss of existing saltmarsh within the Crouch Estuary channel.

- Risk of erosion due to wash from motorised craft.
- Potential for damage to diverse, important saltmarsh and bird habitats with a potential increase in tourism and accessibility to visitors.
- Further development, including caravan parks as at Creeksea could erode the generally undisturbed character of the area and adversely affect saltmarsh.
- Pressure for change of use from arable for development, which may have a visually intrusive impact on landscape character.
- Pressure from development within this, and adjacent character areas.
- Continuing loss of hedges and field boundary vegetation with subsequent loss of historic pattern, sense of enclosure and ecological habitat.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include areas of drained grazing marsh close to the sea wall, ditches, dykes and sea walls, scattered blocks of trees and linear tree belts (which are sensitive to changes in land management). The open nature of the area is visually sensitive to new development (especially in close proximity to the sea wall), which would be visible within views from adjacent character areas. There is a sense of historic integrity, resulting from a distinctive co-axial rectilinear field pattern and a dispersed historic settlement pattern. Potential new development either within the area, or within adjacent character areas, may also disturb the strong sense of tranquillity. The area also contains several internationally and nationally important sites for wildlife (in particular, wildfowl). Overall, this character area has high sensitivity to change.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

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

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

Restore - seek to reinforce and/or reinstate historic landscape patterns and features that contribute to sense of place and time depth, by repairing distinctive elements that have been lost or degraded.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Loss of hedgerows due to agricultural intensification.
- Ensure that any new development is well integrated into the surrounding landscape, responds to historic settlement pattern and scale, and uses materials which are appropriate to the local landscape character.
- Conserve the rural character of the area.
- Ensure that new farm buildings are sensitively designed and located within the landscape to accord with existing character.
- Conserve panoramic long distance views to adjacent character areas of drained and open estuarine marsh to the south.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and restore the existing hedgerow network with particular emphasis placed on the planting and management of elm.
- Conserve historic lanes and unimproved roadside verges.
- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of North Fambridge, Creeksea and other villages.

5.5 Wooded Farmland Landscapes

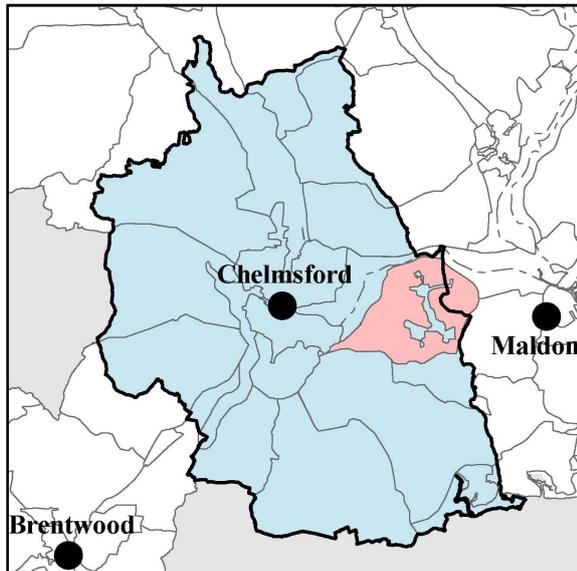
5.5.1 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

- 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
- Network of quiet, often tree-lined narrow lanes

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

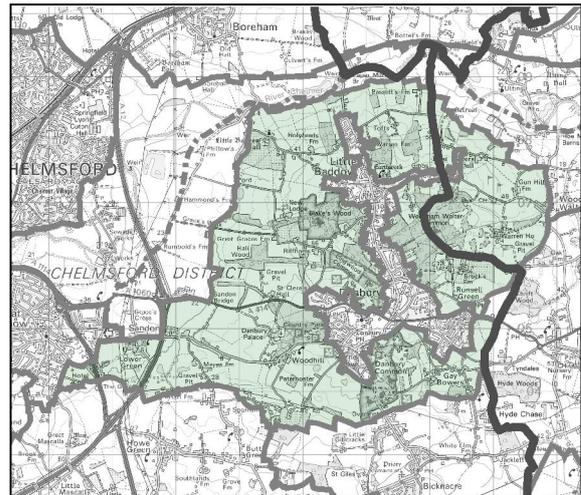
F5 - Little Baddow and Danbury Wooded Farmland
F6 - Woodham Wooded Farmland
F7 - Blackmore Wooded Farmland
F10 - Heybridge Wooded Farmland
F12 - East Hanningfield Wooded Farmland
F16 - Galleywood Wooded Farmland

F5 LITTLE BADDOW AND DANBURY WOODED FARMLAND (shared with Maldon District)



Key Characteristics

- Wooded hill and ridge housing the linear settlements of Little Baddow and Danbury.
- Sense of enclosure provided by large areas of dense deciduous and mixed woodland.
- Intricate landscape pattern consisting of commons, pasture, heathland and woodland habitats.
- Arable farmland fringing the outer edges of patches of woodland.
- Series of narrow lanes winding down the hillsides and facilitation views into and across the Chelmer/Blackwater valley to the north and east.
- Views to wooded horizons within adjacent wooded farmland to the south.
- Predominantly linear settlement pattern.



Overall Character

This character area encompasses a distinctive area of wooded hills to the east of Chelmsford. The relatively large linear villages of Little Baddow form a crossroads upon a very large, gently domed hill and connecting ridge. Within the settlements, a strong sense of enclosure is provided by extensive dense patches of deciduous and mixed woodland (e.g. Birch Wood, Pheasant House Wood, Spring Wood, Blake's Wood, Belhill Wood) within the surrounding landscape setting. These woodland patches are interspersed with an intricate, diverse and interesting mosaic of commons (e.g. Danbury, Woodham Walter and Lingwood) heathland (Little Baddow – containing several mature oak pollards) and pasture. Relatively open arable farmland, which is punctuated by single mature deciduous trees and has mature field boundaries, provides the setting for this patchwork of habitats. Narrow lanes (several of which are tree-lined) wind down the hillsides, facilitating panoramic views across and into the Chelmer/Blackwater valley to the north and east. Character is also influenced by views to wooded horizons within adjacent wooded farmland Landscape Character Areas to the south. There is a sense of

enclosure and tranquillity and an intimate character within pockets of the area (away from the main A414 corridor). The area also has a strong sense of place and historic continuity. Settlement pattern is predominantly linear, with a cluster of attractive vernacular buildings at Horne Row and housing arranged around a triangular village green within Danbury.

Visual Characteristics

- Open and framed panoramic views into and across the Chelmer/Blackwater valley and floodplain to the north and east.
- Framed views to adjacent arable farmland.
- Open and framed views to wooded horizons of adjacent wooded farmland to the south.
- Patches of woodland create a sense of enclosure and restrict views out from Little Baddow and Danbury.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by small and irregular fields of ancient origin. Historically settlement was dispersed around several commons and greens, with a small nucleation around the church in Danbury. This original settlement pattern has been extended, mostly along the roads, with the commons preserved as nature reserves. The main historic landscape features include:

- The prominent Iron Age hill fort, covering an area of 25 hectares.
- Areas of ancient woodland, surrounding Danbury.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable agriculture with woodland areas surrounding the urban area of Danbury. The area contains 23 sites of nature conservation value. These include:

- Blake's Wood & Lingwood Common SSSI (90 hectares) comprising woodland and grassland habitats.
- Danbury Common SSSI (70- hectares) of woodland and grassland habitats.
- Woodham Walter Common SSSI (80 hectares) comprising woodland and grassland habitats.
- Twenty CWS sites comprising ancient and semi-natural woodland, wetland and grassland habitats.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Pressure of increasing traffic on minor rural roads.
- Management of common land and heathland for nature conservation and recreational purposes.
- Noise and visual intrusion associated with the A414 road corridor.
- Potential loss of mature field boundaries as a result of lack of management or further intensification of agricultural practices.
- Management and maintenance of patches of mature deciduous and mixed woodland.
- Potential new development at the fringes of Little Baddow or Danbury, or on the slopes of the hill, which may be highly visible from surrounding character areas, including the Chelmer/Blackwater valley to the north.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include large areas of dense deciduous and mixed woodland, an intricate mosaic of commons, pasture and heathland spread throughout the area and several mature field boundaries (containing several mature trees), all of which are sensitive to changes in land management. The network of quiet rural lanes is also sensitive to change or increased traffic associated with new development. There is a strong sense of historic integrity, resulting from patches of ancient woodland and a prominent Iron Age hill fort (which is a visible historic feature). There are also several important wildlife habitats within the area (including 20 sites of importance for nature conservation, comprising ancient woodland, grassland and commons),

which are sensitive to changes in land management. Overall, this character area has relatively high sensitivity to change.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

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

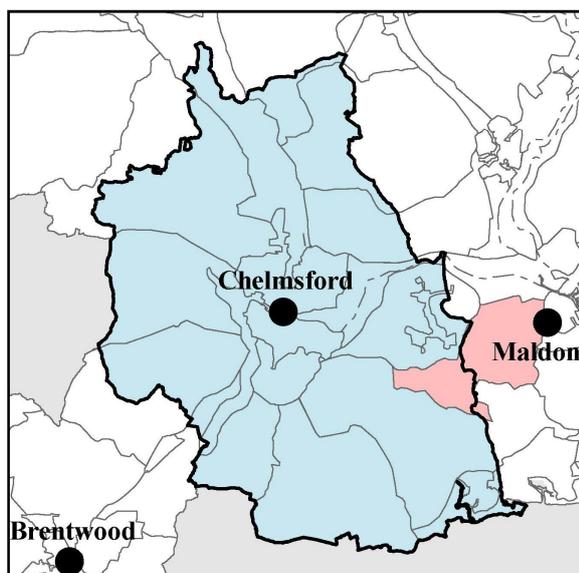
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of Little Baddow and Danbury settlements.
- Ensure that any appropriate new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses materials which are appropriate to local landscape character. Such development should be well integrated within the surrounding landscape.
- Potential new development should be carefully sited in relation to the ridge and hillsides (taking into account possible visual intrusion when viewed from adjacent character areas).
- Conserve the open and framed nature of views into and across the Chelmer/Blackwater valley to the north and also to wooded horizons to the south.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and manage areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland within the area as important historical, landscape and nature conservation features.
- Conserve and restore pastures.
- Conserve and manage the existing hedgerow pattern, and strengthen where appropriate through planting.
- Conserve the predominantly rural character of the area.
- Conserve, enhance and manage areas of common land through appropriate management/nature conservation strategies.
- Conserve and manage areas of heathland as important historic, landscape and nature conservation features.
- Conserve historic tree-lined lanes and unimproved roadside verges.

F6 WOODHAM WOODED FARMLAND (shared with Maldon District)

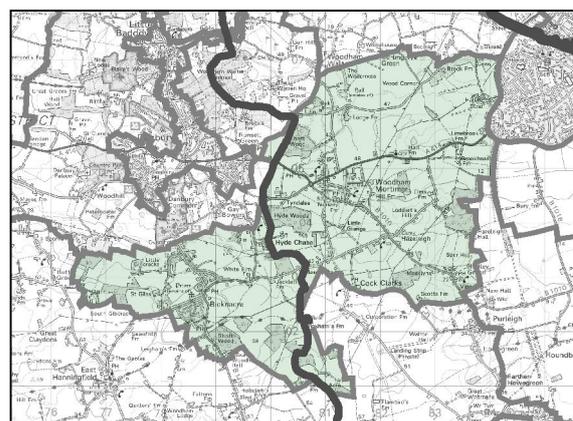


Key Characteristics

- Sands and gravels over London Clay.
- Broad wooded east-west ridge descending from Danbury.
- Distinctive small rounded hills visible where ridge has eroded in southeast.
- Open landscape of arable farmland framed by woodland and hedgerows on the lower ground.
- Enclosed to semi-enclosed commons, small irregular fields and pasture on the wooded ridge.

Overall Character

This character area encompasses the gently undulating wooded hill and ridge landscape southwest of Maldon and south of Danbury. Part of the Danbury Hills, this ridge landscape runs above the Chelmer Valley and stretches south from Curling Tye Green to Cock Clark's. The southwestern portion of the area centres on Bicknacre (outside the district boundary), and extends across Hyde Chase to Rudley Street in the east. The distinctive landform of nearby Danbury, with its very large gently domed hill, is often visible on the horizon. A connecting ridge runs southwest from Danbury across this character area, and erosion has created some visually dramatic small rounded hills in the southeast, at Hazeleigh. This heavily wooded landscape is characterised by trees: tree-lined roads, lanes, and tracks, tree-enclosed fields and many dispersed fragments of ancient oak-hornbeam woodland that merge with newer plantings. Hedgerows and hedgebanks are often lined with oaks along the lanes, and in some field boundaries. Small to medium-scale irregular arable fields, some pasture and wooded commons on the slopes are interspersed among the woodland south of Danbury. More open medium- to-large scale arable farmland is visible to the south in adjacent area F12, around Bicknacre, and in the northern parts of this area. Here the hedgerows are more gappy. The busy A414 winds through this countryside, as well as many lanes and secondary roads including the B1010. Pylons march across the landscape from Cock Clark's in a northeast direction towards Maldon. Settlement pattern consists of small villages, hamlets and dispersed farmsteads, with larger settlements in adjacent areas. Traditional colour-washed plaster or half-timbered buildings are noticeable in the old villages, but most settlements have predominantly 20th century buildings. Historic churches are visible on higher ground, as at Woodham Walter. Many



footpaths crisscross the area, including St Peter's Way. Other land use is visible that extends from the proximity to Danbury and Maldon: sand and gravel pits, nurseries, agricultural storage and other commercial activity. This is a varied and interesting landscape, where the enclosed, intimate character in the wooded hills contrasts with the semi-enclosed, more open views surrounding it on the lower ground. Heavy traffic detracts from the overall tranquillity of the area, but in the wooded hills and in the lanes south of Danbury there are still areas with a strong sense of tranquillity and a strong sense of place.

Visual Characteristics

- Long views of the Chelmer Valley framed by woodland open up on the edges of the ridge in the north, whereas more open views across arable fields are possible on the lower ground around Bicknacre and Cock Clarke's.
- Intimate character in the wooded areas.
- Occasional views to churches that sit on higher ground.
- Dramatic small rounded hills at Hazeleigh.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by pre-18th century fields, probably of medieval origin and some maybe even older, mostly regular in plan. Historically, the settlement pattern was dispersed, some of it being focussed on commons. This pattern has survived with a more recent nucleation at Bicknacre. The main historic landscape features include:

- Co-axial field layouts, usually relating directly to the immediate topography.
- River valleys marked by enclosed meadow.
- Areas of ancient woodland, primarily along the eastern side of the area.
- A number of parks of medieval origin.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable agriculture with large blocks of woodland. The area contains 9 sites of nature conservation and a further four areas of ancient woodland areas, including:

- Thrift Wood, Woodham Ferrers SSSI, comprised of ancient and semi-natural woodland.
- Eight CWSs comprised of ancient and semi-natural woodland and grassland habitats, including Hyde Wood, Thrift Wood, Folks Wood, Parsonage Wood, Hazeleigh High Wood, Slough House Wood, Jackletts Wood, New England Wood, Round Wood, Squeaking-Gate Wood, Cank Wood, and Great Wood.
- Other ecological features, including small streams, ditches, irrigation reservoirs, Hedgerows and a few unimproved meadows.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Pressure of increased traffic on rural and minor lanes.
- Potential visually intrusive development along A414.
- Potential for visually intrusive expansion to the settlement edges of Maldon.
- Potential for visually intrusive development of new farm buildings.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include the wooded, east-west ridge, tree-lined road, lanes and tracks, tree-enclosed fields and many dispersed fragments of ancient oak-hornbeam woodland, all of which are sensitive to changes in land management. The network of quiet rural lanes (including lining hedgebanks and hedgerows) is also sensitive to change or increased traffic associated with new development. There is a relatively strong sense of historic integrity, resulting from a dispersed settlement pattern (with more recent nucleation at Bicknacre),

enclosed meadows within river valleys and a considerable degree of co-axiality within fields (on a local-scale, usually relating directly to the immediate topography). Overall, this character area has relatively high sensitivity to change.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

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

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

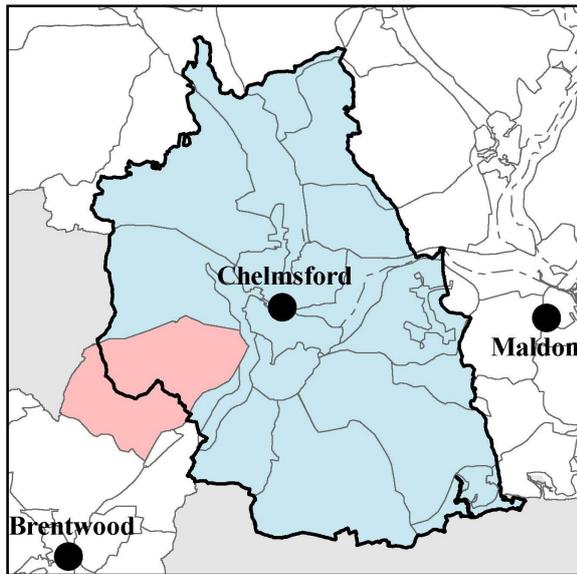
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve the mostly rural character of the area.
- Ensure that any new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses materials which are appropriate to the local landscape character; such development should be well integrated into the surrounding landscape.
- Ensure that new farm buildings are sensitively designed and located within the landscape to accord with existing character

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

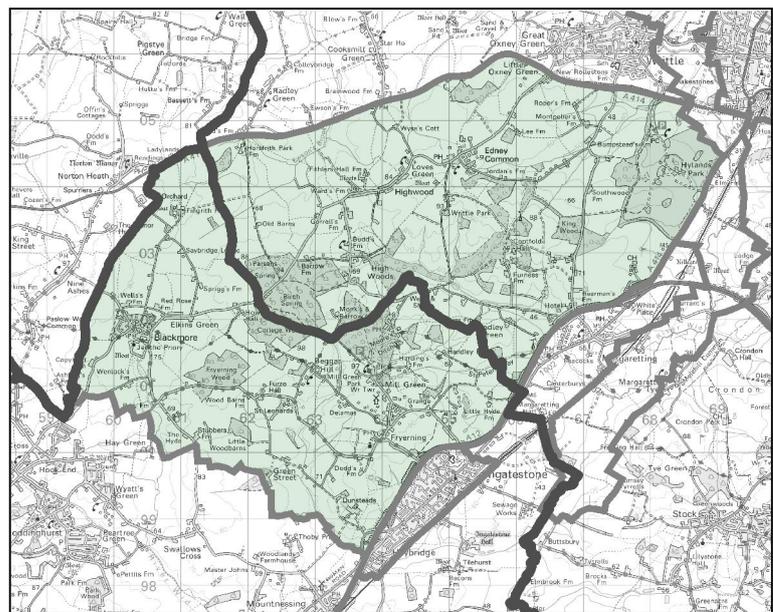
- Conserve and restore existing hedgerow network where gappy and depleted especially on property boundaries or on field margins.
- Conserve, manage and enhance areas of semi natural and ancient woodland as important heritage, nature conservation and landscape features.
- Conserve historic lanes and unimproved roadside verges.
- Introduce arable field margins as a means to ensure that mature trees within hedgerows are not disturbed by ploughing.
- Introduce a planting management programme to ensure future trees within field hedgerow boundaries will succeed mature trees.
- Safeguard Woodham Walter Common SSSI.

F7 BLACKMORE WOODED FARMLAND (shared with Brentwood Borough)



Key Characteristics

- Undulating wooded farmland.
- Medium to large-scale patches of woodland interspersed with irregular arable fields.
- Mature hedgerows and deciduous treed field boundaries.
- Patches of smaller-scale pasture fields and pony paddocks.
- Views to wooded horizons.
- Several small hamlets and farmsteads lining routes through the area.
- Sense of tranquillity away from major roads.
- Network of narrow lanes.



Overall Character

The character of this area of undulating farmland is dominated by a wide belt of medium to large-scale woodlands stretching from Fryerning Wood in the southwest to South Wood (on the fringes of Hylands Park) in the northeast. Patches of predominantly deciduous woodland are interspersed with an irregular arrangement of medium to large-scale fields. Smaller-scale pasture fields and pony paddocks are also dotted within the landscape, particularly within woodland clearings to the north of Fryerning. Fields are generally delineated by mature hedges and deciduous treed field boundaries, which are usually in good condition but occasionally gappy in places. Within fields surrounding the patches of woodland, a recognisable sense of place and character is provided by views to wooded horizons, both within the character area and also within adjacent character areas. Settlement pattern is scattered and consists of two main nucleated villages (Blackmore to the west and Fryerning to the east) and several small hamlets and farmsteads, which generally line routes through the area. St. Mary the Virgin church, Fryerning post mill and the tower of St. Lawrence church, Blackmore (which Pevsner describe as 'one of the most, if not the most impressive of all timber towers in England) are visible landmarks within the landscape. The main A414, A12 and A1016 road corridors line this character area to the

north, south and east. Therefore, although within patches of landscape enclosed by woodland there is an intimate character with a relatively strong sense of tranquillity; in proximity to road corridors this character is disturbed by constant background traffic noise. Views across the landscape generally unfold, enclosed by the rolling topography and patches of woodland. A network of narrow lanes, often covered by canopies of mature trees traverse the area, providing a sense of seclusion. The mature, designed parkland landscape of Hylands Park, containing several mature trees, and associated with Hylands House (a neo-classical mansion, built around 1730) dominates the character of the eastern part of this character area.

Visual Characteristics

- Open views to wooded horizons, both within the character area and also within adjacent LCA.
- Long-distance views across farmland enclosed by patches of woodland.
- Unfolding views, moving through the undulating landscape and patches of woodland.
- Open views to the Chelmsford's south-western urban edge from Hylands Park.
- St. Mary's Church (Widford) is landmark within views north-eastwards from Hylands Park.
- St. Mary the Virgin church, Fryerning post mill and the tower of St. Lawrence church, Blackmore are landmarks within views across the character area.

Historic Land Use

Anciently, parts of this Character Area were within Writtle Forest, a medieval hunting forest. Substantial pockets of woodland survive, as does the historic settlement pattern of dispersed villages focussed on greens and commons, and scattered farmsteads in an irregular field and woodland pattern. The field pattern is rather mixed: to the east and south is an extensive area of pre-18th century co-axial enclosure; to the north and north-east is an area of pre-18th century irregular fields, probably of medieval origin and some maybe even older, some of which may be the result of intermittent woodland clearance along the edges of Writtle Forest. Historically the settlement pattern has been very dispersed. The main historic landscape features include:

- Areas of large, irregular fields.
- Hylands Park, a medieval parkland.
- A single Saxon estate, the place-name evidence suggests that the area encompassed Ingatestone and the adjoining parishes of Mountnessing (F8), Margaretting, Fryerning and Buttsbury in the upper Wid valley.
- A number of areas of ancient woodland.
- A few small areas of parkland attached to mansion houses.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable and pastoral agriculture interspersed with deciduous woodland. The area contains 18 sites of nature conservation value including:

- Hylands Park SINC with unimproved grassland and woodland habitats and a further 17 sites with ancient and semi-natural woodland.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Pressure of increased traffic on major roads, rural and minor lanes.
- Potential for visually intrusive development around the edges of Chelmsford (for example within the floodplain of the River Wid to the west of Chelmsford).
- Noise and visual intrusion associated with A414, A12 and A1016 road corridors,
- Potential major road improvements (A414, A12 and A1016).
- Potential visually intrusive development of new farm buildings.
- Deterioration and eventual loss of mature treed hedgerows and single mature trees through lack of appropriate management.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include medium to large-scale patches of woodland, mature hedgerows and deciduous treed field boundaries, and patches of small-scale pasture fields and paddocks, which are sensitive to changes in land management. The overall sense of tranquillity within parts of the character area (away from main road corridors) is also sensitive to change and potential new development, or increases in traffic flow associated with such development. Open views to wooded horizons (where gained) are sensitive to potential new development, which may interrupt or block such views. There is a sense of historic integrity, resulting from a historic settlement pattern of dispersed villages, focussed on greens and commons and scattered farmsteads in an irregular field and woodland pattern. This pattern is particularly sensitive to large-scale new development. Sensitive visible historic features also include Hylands Park (a medieval parkland) and a few smaller areas of parkland attached to mansion houses. The network of quiet rural lanes is also sensitive to change or increased traffic associated with new development along with the sense of tranquillity away from major road corridors. There are several important wildlife habitats within the area (including 18 sites of importance for nature conservation, comprising unimproved grassland woodland habitats and ancient woodland). Overall, this character area has relatively high sensitivity to change.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

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

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

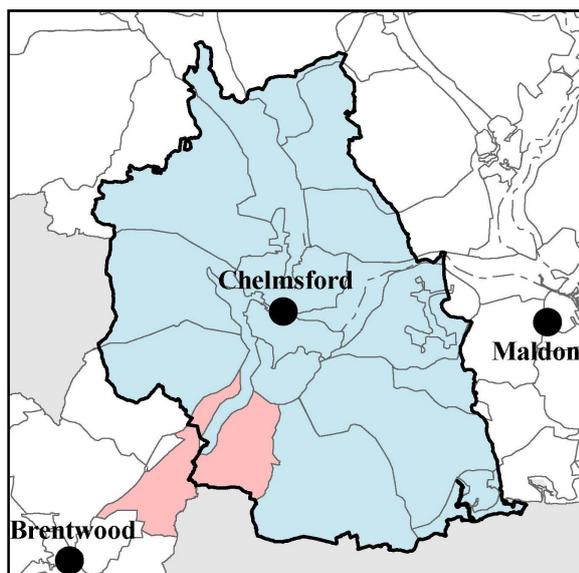
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of Chelmsford town and Ingatestone Village.
- Ensure that any appropriate new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses materials, which are appropriate to local landscape character. Such development should be well integrated with the surrounding landscape.
- Conserve the mostly rural character of the area.
- Conserve views into the Wid valley from the eastern edge of the area.
- Conserve the setting of Hylands House and Park.
- Seek to screen visual detractors (such as major road corridors, for example with planted shelter belts).

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and manage the existing mature hedgerow network.
- Conserve, manage and enhance patches of woodland (consider the use of traditional methods, such as coppicing and pollarding where appropriate to locality and local landscape character).
- Conserve historic lanes and unimproved roadside verges.
- Plant half-standard trees within field hedgerow boundaries to succeed over mature trees.
- Introduce arable field margins as a means of ensuring that mature trees within hedgerows are not disturbed by ploughing.
- Conserve and enhance areas of semi-natural and ancient woodland as important heritage, nature conservation and landscape features.

F10 HEYBRIDGE WOODED FARMLAND (shared with Brentwood Borough)

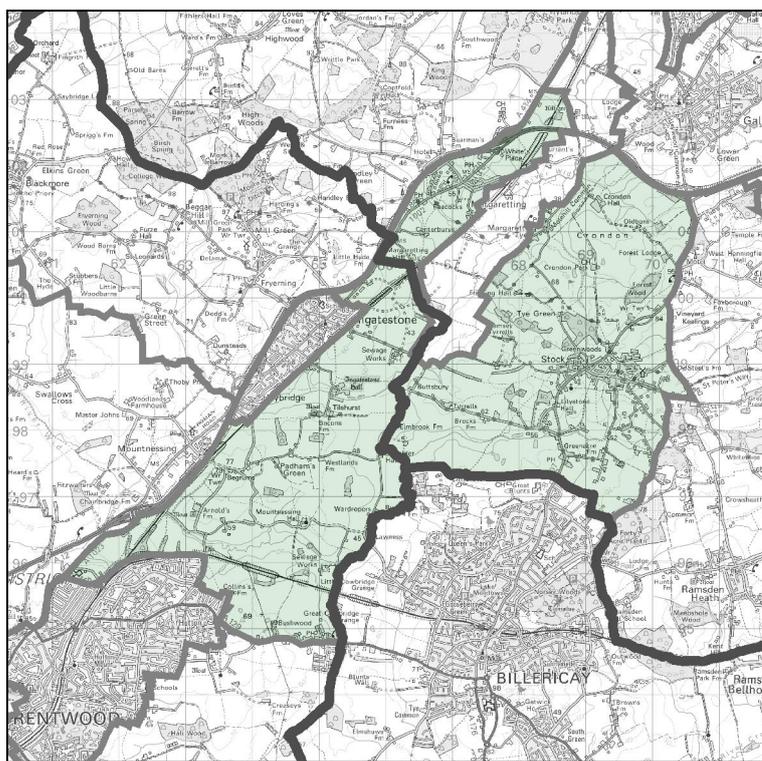


Key Characteristics

- Mature, undulating wooded farmland lining the B1002 road and railway corridor.
- Mixture of medium to large-scale predominantly arable fields with mature treed field boundaries.
- Single mature trees and vegetation-lined ditches.
- Strong linear settlement pattern though the centre of the area, becoming more scattered at distance from the road/railway corridor.
- Landmark halls and churches.
- Narrow, often tree-lined rural lanes.

Overall Character

Situated to the northeast of Brentwood urban area, this character area encompasses wooded farmland to the south of the B1002 road and railway corridor. The northern half of the character area surrounds the southern half of the valley of the River Wid. A mixture of medium to large-scale, predominantly arable fields, delineated with mature trees, rather than lower hedges, dominates the character of the area. Several single mature trees and species-rich ditches also provide recognisable landscape features. The strong linear settlement pattern of Ingatestone and Margaretting settlements (lining the straight B1002 road and railway corridor) and Brentwood urban edge to the southwest, introduce a suburbanised character to the northern part of the character area. Away from this main settlement corridor, however, settlement pattern is smaller scale, consisting of small hamlets and scattered farmsteads which are accessible via a network of quiet, often tree-lined rural lanes - for example Old Church Lane. Church towers and small



halls within Ingatestone and Margaretting for example, and Mountnessing windmill, are landmarks within views across the area and from surrounding character areas.

Visual Characteristics

- Open views to urban edges of Brentwood, Mountnessing and Ingatestone.
- Open views into the valley of the River Wid from fields within the northern half of the area.
- Views to wooded horizons both within the area and within adjacent Landscape Character Areas.
- Framed views to landmark church towers and halls (such as Ingatestone Hall) and also to Mountnessing windmill.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by irregular fields mixed in with the predominant co-axial field system of ancient origin. The co-axial fields are mostly aligned east to west. The commons were mostly enclosed by the 19th century, but part of their extent can be seen in the surviving field boundary pattern. Historically, the settlement pattern was dispersed, some of it being focussed on commons. There were also scattered farmsteads, and parkland associated with Ingatestone Hall.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable agriculture with scattered woodland. The area contains 13 SINC's comprised of unimproved grassland, scrub and ancient and semi-natural woodland habitats, plus 9 ancient woodlands south of Ingatestone.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Noise and visual intrusion associated with the B1002 road and main railway corridor.
- Potential visually intrusive expansion of the urban edges of Brentwood, Mountnessing and Ingatestone.
- Pressure of increased traffic on rural and minor lanes.
- Potential visually intrusive farm buildings.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include mature treed field boundaries, single mature trees and vegetation-lined ditches, which are sensitive to changes in land management. The overall sense of tranquillity within parts of the character area (away from main road corridors) and the network of narrow tree-lined lanes is also sensitive to change and potential new development, or increases in traffic flow associated with such development. Open views to wooded horizons are sensitive to potential new development, which may interrupt or block such views. There is a sense of historic integrity, resulting from linear historic settlement pattern and the presence of several areas of co-axial fields (of ancient origin). There are also several important wildlife habitats within the area (including 13 sites of importance for nature conservation, predominantly comprising ancient woodland). Overall, this character area has relatively high sensitivity to change.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

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

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

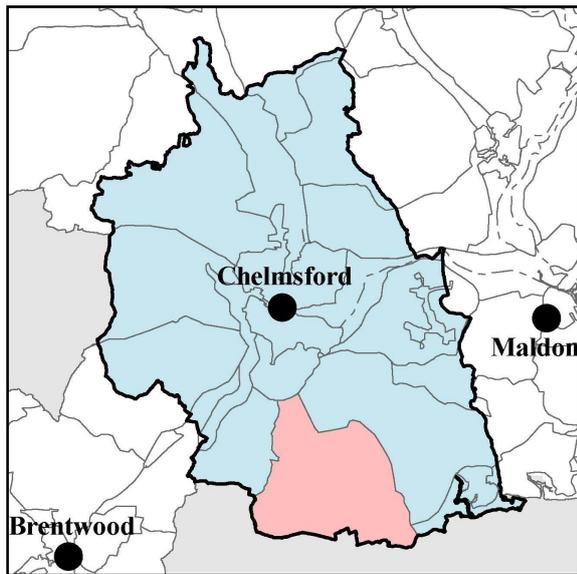
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve the mostly rural character of the area.
- Ensure that any appropriate new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses materials, which are appropriate to local landscape character. Such development should be well integrated with the surrounding landscape.
- Maintain views to landmark churches and halls and also to wooded horizons.
- Maintain open views into the Wid valley from the northern part of the character area.
- Ensure that new farm buildings are sensitively designed and located within the landscape in accordance with existing landscape character.
- Seek measures to screen visually intrusive urban edges around Brentwood, Mountnessing and Ingatestone.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

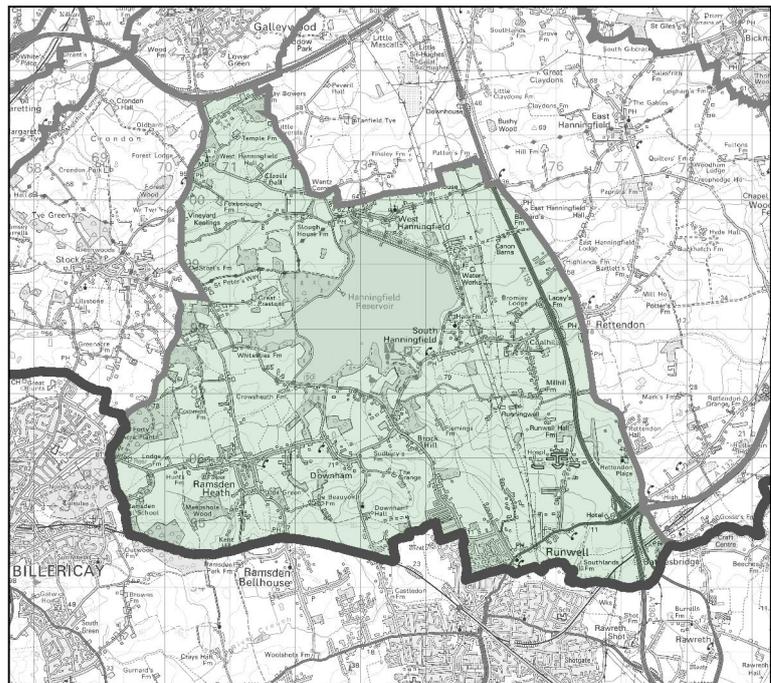
- Conserve and enhance mature hedgerow trees.
- Conserve and manage areas of woodland (consider the use of traditional methods, such as coppicing and pollarding, in keeping with local landscape character).
- Conserve and enhance areas of semi-natural and ancient woodland as important heritage, nature conservation and landscape features.
- Conserve historic lanes and unimproved roadside verges.
- Introduce arable field margins as a means of ensuring that mature trees within hedgerows are not disturbed by ploughing.

F11 SOUTH HANNINGFIELD WOODED FARMLAND



Key Characteristics

- Undulating mature wooded farmland.
- Vast expanse of Hanningfield reservoir.
- Mixed woodland and a patchwork of diverse habitats surrounding the reservoir.
- Small-scale linear settlement pattern.
- Medium to large-scale arable fields with hedged and treed field boundaries.
- Views to wooded horizons both within the character area and within adjacent character areas.
- Network of quiet, narrow rural lanes traverse the area.



Overall Character

This character area is situated to the south of Chelmsford and north of Billericay and Wickford (to the south of the Study Area). Undulating arable wooded farmland (delineated by mature hedgerows with several hedgerow trees) covers the area. The area slopes (relatively steeply in places) downwards from north to south, affording spectacular views across the Thames valley in places. At the centre of the area, character is dominated by the vast expanse of Hanningfield reservoir. The large body of water is surrounded by a mixed woodland reserve (including Peninsula Wood, Well Wood, Chestnut Wood and Hawks Wood, a visitors centre and nature reserve) and contains diverse habitats for wildlife (especially wildfowl). Flocks of swifts, swallows and martins swooping onto the reservoir during the summer, provide a visually interesting and dynamic character. The uniform and engineered concrete edges of the reservoir exert a strong human influence upon the surrounding landscape, whilst certain stretches of the reservoir exhibit more natural shorelines and have well-developed marginal vegetation. Settlement pattern consists of several small linear hamlets and villages (including South and West Hanningfield

and Ramsden Heath). Church towers within these villages are visible landmarks from the surrounding landscape. There is some sense of enclosure and tranquillity within woodland clearings and away from settlements. A network of quiet, rural and often tree-lined lanes also crosses the character area.

Visual Characteristics

- Open and framed views to wooded horizons, both within the character area and also within adjacent LCA.
- Spectacular panoramic views into the Thames valley from certain locations.
- Open, panoramic views across Hanningfield reservoir dramatically influenced by changing weather and colours of the sky.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by irregular fields mixed, with the predominant co-axial fields of ancient origin. The commons were mostly enclosed by the 19th century, but part of their extent can be seen in the surviving field boundary pattern. Historically, the settlement pattern was dispersed, some of it being focussed on commons. There were also scattered farmsteads. This pattern has survived with more recent nucleations of settlement at East Hanningfield and Rettendon.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable agriculture and pasture with frequent woodland. The area contains Hanningfield Reservoir SSSI (c. 400 ha) and 32 CWSs, comprising ancient and semi-natural woodland, unimproved grassland and wetland habitats.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Pressure of increased traffic on rural, minor lanes.
- Potential future expansion of Hanningfield reservoir.
- Potential for fertiliser and pesticide run-off from adjacent agricultural farmland to pollute Hanningfield reservoir and affect water quality and habitats.
- Potential for visually intrusive development at the fringes of small villages and also Wickford and Billericay.
- Noise and visual intrusion associated with A127 road corridor.
- Potential major road improvements to the A127.
- Potential visually intrusive development of new farm buildings.
- Deterioration and eventual loss of mature woodland, single trees and hedgerows.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include mature hedged and treed field boundaries and a patchwork of diverse woodland and other habitats surrounding Hanningfield reservoir (which are sensitive to changes in land management). The overall sense of tranquillity within parts of the character area (away from main road corridors) and the network of narrow tree-lined lanes is also sensitive to change and potential new development, or increases in traffic flow associated with such development. Open views to wooded horizons are sensitive to potential new development, which may interrupt or block such views. There is a sense of historic integrity, resulting from a dispersed historic settlement pattern and the presence of several areas of co-axial fields (of ancient origin). There are also several important wildlife habitats consisting of 22 areas of ancient woodland. Overall, this character area has relatively high sensitivity to change.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

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

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

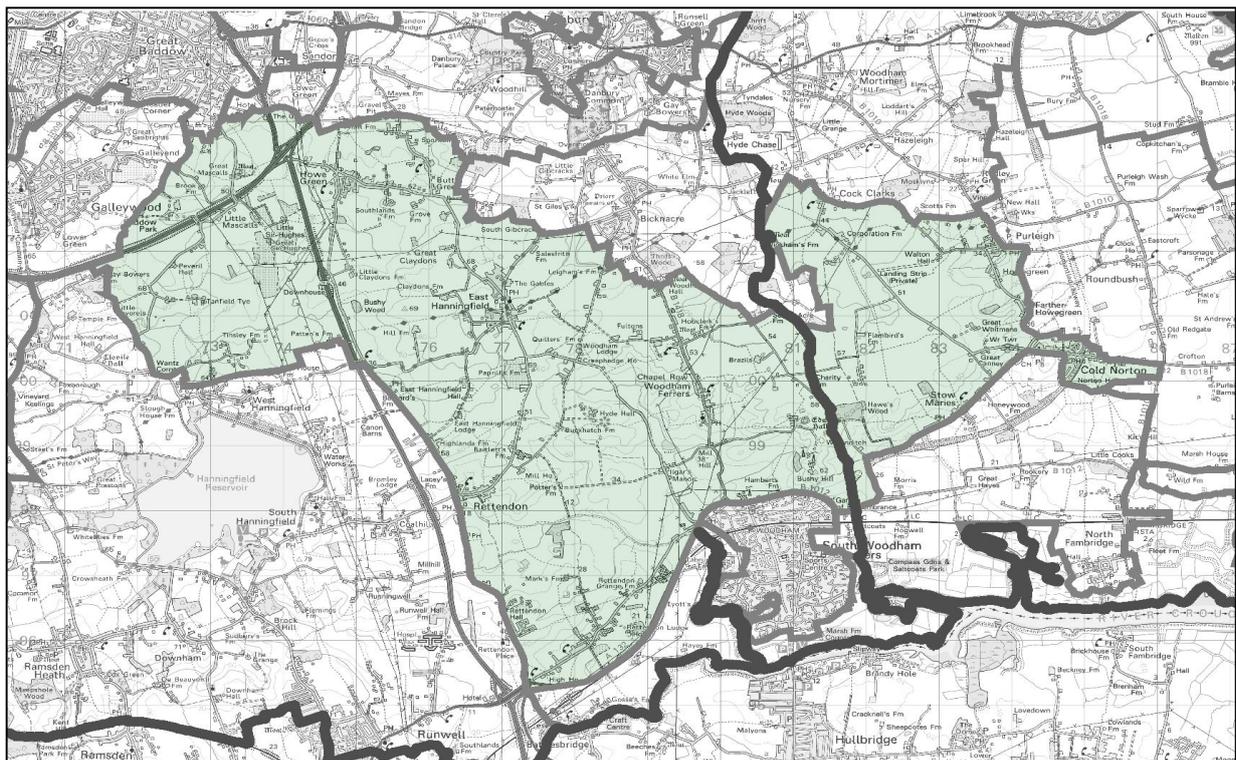
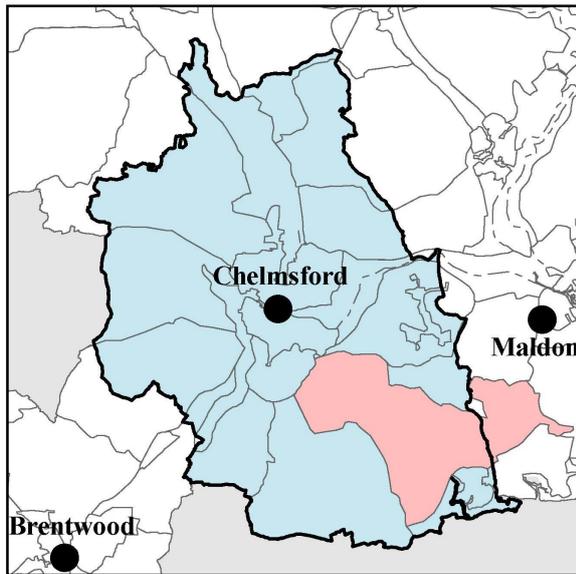
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the landscape settings of small settlements within the character area and also Wickford and Billericay.
- Ensure that any appropriate new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses materials, which are appropriate to local landscape character. Such development should be well integrated with the surrounding landscape.
- Conserve the mostly rural character of the area.
- Conserve existing views across the area and to adjacent Landscape Character Areas.
- Seek to screen visual detractors (such as A127 road corridor, for example with planted shelter belts).
- Conserve the open, undeveloped character and valuable wetland habitats associated with Hanningfield Reservoir.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and manage the existing mature hedgerow network.
- Conserve, manage and enhance patches of woodland (consider the use of traditional methods, such as coppicing and pollarding where appropriate to locality and local landscape character).
- Conserve historic lanes and unimproved roadside verges.
- Plant half-standard trees within field hedgerow boundaries to succeed over mature trees.
- Introduce arable field margins as a means of ensuring that mature trees within hedgerows are not disturbed by ploughing.
- Conserve and enhance areas of semi-natural and ancient woodland as important heritage, nature conservation and landscape features.
- Seek to minimise potential impacts from agricultural practices (such as run off) on valuable habitats within and fringing Hanningfield Reservoir.

F12 EAST HANNINGFIELD WOODED FARMLAND (shared with Maldon District)



Key Characteristics

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

- Fords where streams and narrow lanes meet.
- Views to wooded horizons and across the Crouch River channel.

Overall Character

This character area encompasses gently rolling/undulating wooded farmland to the north of South Woodham Ferrers and south of Chelmsford. Overall, the area slopes gradually downwards from north to south, towards the floor of the Crouch River valley. Predominantly large arable fields are delineated by very mature deciduous treed field boundaries, ditches and simple wooden post fences. In places, however, field boundaries are gappy with evidence of boundary loss. Pockets of pasture and pony paddocks are also dotted throughout the character area (for example surrounding Howe Green). A network of quiet, narrow tree-lined lanes cross the area, upon which there is a sense of enclosure. Patches of mature deciduous and mixed woodland provide further enclosure. Other than the large, nucleated settlement of South Woodham Ferrers (overlooking the Crouch River channel), settlement pattern consists of several small hamlets and scattered farmsteads. There is a sense of tranquillity within more intimate, northern parts of the character area, which becomes more disturbed to the south by activity associated with South Woodham Ferrers, the A132 and A130 road corridors. Open views across drained estuarine marsh to the Crouch channel help to create a recognisable sense of place. Pylons are also dominant within views southwards from the area. Several small stream corridors and narrow lanes permeate the area, and where these meet, fords are a key characteristic. Churches within small settlements (for example All Saints Church, East Hanningfield) are landmarks within views across and to the area.

Visual Characteristics

- Open and framed views to wooded horizons, both within the character area and also within adjacent LCA.
- Panoramic views across drained estuarine marsh to the south, along the Crouch River channel.
- Open views to urban edges of South Woodham Ferrers.
- Pylons dominant within views southwards from the area.
- Church towers are landmarks within views across the area.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by irregular fields mixed in with the predominant co-axial fields of ancient origin. Historically, the settlement pattern was dispersed, some of it being focussed on commons. This pattern has survived with more recent nucleations of settlement at East Hanningfield and Rettendon. The main historic landscape features include:

- Co-axial fields mostly aligned east to west
- Commons, which were mostly enclosed by the 19th century, although part of their former extent can be seen in the surviving field boundary pattern.
- A few ancient woodlands on the north of the area.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable agriculture and pasture. The area contains 4 CWSs, comprising grassland habitats.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Pressure of increased traffic on rural, minor lanes.
- Potential for fertiliser and pesticide run-off from adjacent agricultural farmland to pollute stream corridors/River Crouch and affect water quality and habitats.
- Potential for visually intrusive development at the fringes of small villages and also South Woodham Ferrers.
- Noise and visual intrusion associated with A132 and A130 road corridors.

- Potential major road improvements to the A132 and A130.
- Visual prominence of new road bridges.
- Potential visually intrusive development of new farm buildings.
- Deterioration and eventual loss of mature woodland, single trees and hedgerows.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include very mature treed field boundaries, ditches and patches of mature deciduous and mixed woodland, which are sensitive to changes in land management. The overall sense of tranquillity within parts of the character area (away from main road corridors) and the network of narrow (often tree-lined lanes, with fords at the meeting point with streams) is also sensitive to change and potential new development, or increases in traffic flow associated with such development. Open views to wooded horizons and also panoramic views across drained estuarine marsh to the south are sensitive to potential new development, which may interrupt or block such views. There is a sense of historic integrity, resulting from a dispersed historic settlement pattern and presence of several areas of co-axial fields (of ancient origin). Overall, this character area has relatively high sensitivity to change.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

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

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

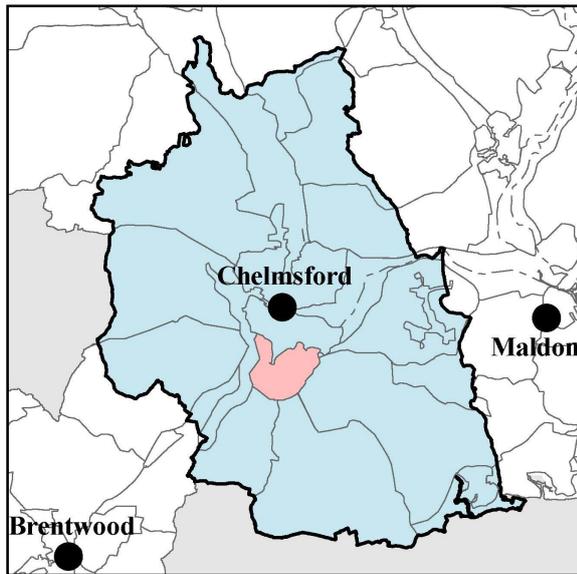
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the landscape settings of small settlements within the character area and also South Woodham Ferrers.
- Ensure that any appropriate new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses materials, which are appropriate to local landscape character. Such development should be well integrated with the surrounding landscape.
- Conserve the mostly rural character of the area.
- Conserve existing views across the area and to adjacent Landscape Character Areas.
- Conserve open views across and along the Crouch River channel.
- Seek to screen visual detractors (such as A130 and A132 road corridors, for example with planted shelter belts).
- Seek to minimise the impact of visually intrusive new development on the wooded slopes.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and manage the existing mature hedgerow network.
- Conserve, manage and enhance patches of woodland (consider the use of traditional methods, such as coppicing and pollarding where appropriate to locality and local landscape character).
- Conserve historic lanes and unimproved roadside verges.
- Plant half-standard trees within field hedgerow boundaries to succeed over mature trees.
- Introduce arable field margins as a means of ensuring that mature trees within hedgerows are not disturbed by ploughing.
- Conserve and enhance areas of semi-natural and ancient woodland as important heritage, nature conservation and landscape features.
- Seek to minimise potential impacts from agricultural practices (such as run off) on valuable habitats within streams and the Crouch River channel.

F16 GALLEYWOOD WOODED FARMLAND



Key Characteristics

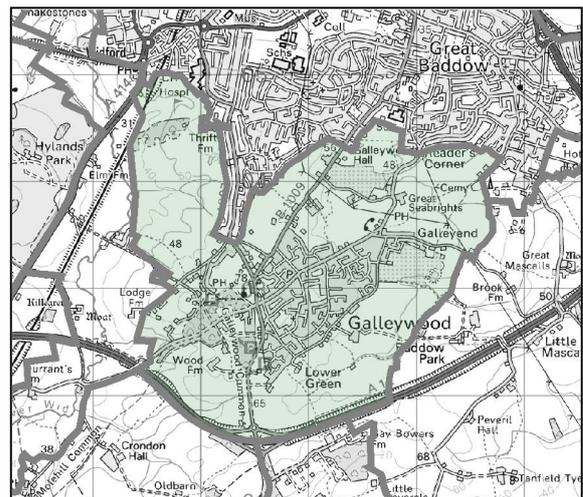
- Gently undulating topography with views to higher land to the south and east.
- Settlement pattern dominated by Galleywood nucleated settlement.
- Occasional scattered farmsteads.
- Wide strip of small arable fields to the south of Chelmsford urban area.
- Intricate arrangement of habitats surrounding Galleywood common.
- Sense of tranquillity despite proximity to major A12 road corridor.

Overall Character

Situated directly to the south of Chelmsford, the western slopes of this area encompass the eastern valley sides of the River Wid. Topography gently undulates throughout the area, with views to higher land to the south (of the A12) and east (Danbury wooded hills). Settlement pattern is dominated by the large nucleated settlement – Galleywood, which is separated from the main built fabric within Chelmsford by a wide strip of small-scale fields, often with mature field boundaries. Occasional single farmsteads are also sprinkled within the area. An intricate and diverse arrangement of habitats (including woodland, lowland heath, open grassland, ponds, bog and common) surrounds Galleywood common, to the west of Galleywood. Open, panoramic views to surrounding wooded hill horizons can be gained looking southwards and eastwards from the common area. Despite proximity to the A12 corridor, there is a sense of tranquillity within (and in areas surrounding) Galleywood common and woodland.

Visual Characteristics

- Open, panoramic views to surrounding wooded hill horizons to the south and east.
- Open views into and along the Wid valley to the west.
- Views to Chelmsford urban edge from the northern part of the character area.



Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by irregular fields mixed in with the predominant co-axial fields of ancient origin. The commons were mostly enclosed by the 19th century, but part of their extent can be seen in the surviving field boundary pattern. Historically, the settlement pattern was dispersed, some of it being focussed on commons. There were also scattered farmsteads. The main historic landscape features include:

- Co-axial fields that are mostly aligned east to west.
- A few ancient woodlands.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable agriculture and pasture. The area contains the following sites of nature conservation value and one area of ancient woodland, including:

- A CWS comprising ancient and semi-natural habitat.
- Numerous CWSs at Galleywood, comprising woodland habitats and unimproved grassland.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Loss of mature field boundaries.
- Noise and visual intrusion associated with the main A12 road corridor.
- Increased pressure on historic lanes and minor roads.
- Potential visually intrusive expansion of Chelmsford and Galleywood.
- Potential loss of small-scale intricate field pattern to the north of Galleywood and south of Chelmsford through potential coalescence of both settlements.
- Management of Galleywood common for recreation and nature conservation purposes.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include the intricate arrangement of habitats (including woodland, lowland heath, open grassland, ponds bog and common) surrounding Galleywood common, which are sensitive to changes in land management. Open views to wooded horizons to the south and east and also open views into and along the Wid valley to the west, are sensitive to potential new development, which may interrupt or block such views. There is a sense of historic integrity, resulting from east-west aligned co-axial fields, a few ancient woodlands, a dispersed settlement pattern and a visible surviving field boundary pattern, denoting the extent of former commons. Overall, this character area has relatively- high sensitivity to change.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

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

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Ensure that the design of new agricultural buildings reflects the local vernacular style and uses materials which are appropriate to local landscape character.
- Conserve the mostly rural character of the area.
- Ensure that any new development responds to the historic settlement pattern and uses materials which are appropriate to local landscape character.
- Seek ways to ensure that potential new development at the fringes of Chelmsford and Galleywood not visually intrusive within the surrounding landscape setting.
- Conserve the landscape setting of Chelmsford and Galleywood within the character area.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and manage areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland within the area as important historical, landscape and nature conservation features.
- Conserve and manage the existing hedgerow pattern, and strengthen where appropriate through planting.
- Seek ways to mitigate the visual impact of the A12 road corridor through introducing new and strengthening existing parallel shelter belts.
- Conserve historic, tree lined and covered lanes and unimproved roadside verges.
- Establish arable field margins as important nature conservation habitats.