

6.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF MALDON DISTRICT

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6.1 General

6.1.1 This section of the report provides the detailed ‘profiles’ of Landscape Character Areas within Maldon District, 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). Reference should also be made to other studies for neighbouring authority areas including:

- Colchester Borough Landscape Character Assessment

6.1.2 The following Landscape Character Types and Areas have been identified within Maldon District (see Figure 6.1), and are described in the following sections:

A - River Valley Landscapes

A7 - Lower Chelmer River Valley
A9 - Blackwater River Valley

B - Farmland Plateau Landscapes

B21 - Boreham Farmland Plateau

C - Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats Landscapes

C1 - Tollesbury Fleet Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats
C2 - Blackwater Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats
C3 - Dengie Flats Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats
C4 - Fleet Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats
C5 - Bridgemarsh Island Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats

D - Drained Estuarine Marsh Landscapes

- D1 - Old Hall Marshes and Tollesbury Wick Drained Estuarine Marsh
- D2 - Maldon Drained Estuarine Marsh
- D3 - Northey Island Drained Estuarine Marsh
- D4 - Osea Island Drained Estuarine Marsh
- D5 - Mundon Drained Estuarine Marsh
- D6 - Ramsay Drained Estuarine Marsh
- D7 - Bradwell Drained Estuarine Marsh
- D8 - Dengie Drained Estuarine Marsh
- D9 - Fambridge Drained Estuarine Marsh

E - Coastal Farmland Landscapes

- E1 - Tolleshunt Coastal Farmland
- E2 - Tillingham and Latchingdon Coastal Farmland

F - Wooded Farmland Landscapes

- F3 - Totham Wooded Farmland
- F4 - Tolleshunt Knights Wooded Farmland
- F5 - Little Baddow and Danbury Wooded Farmland
- F6 - Woodham Wooded Farmland
- F12 - East Hanningfield Wooded Farmland

6.2 River Valley Landscapes

6.2.1 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

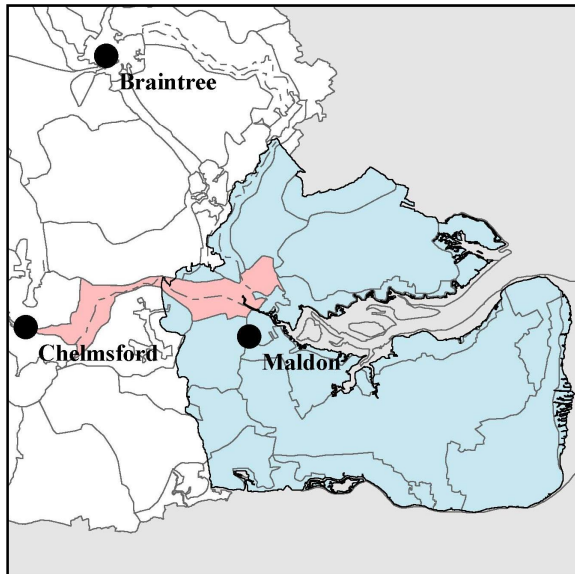
- V-shaped or u-shaped landform which dissects Boulder Clay/Chalky Till plateau
- Main river valley served by several tributaries
- Flat or gently undulating valley floor
- Intimate character in places
- Wooded character in places

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

A7 - Lower Chelmer River Valley

A9 - Blackwater River Valley

A7 LOWER CHELMER RIVER VALLEY (shared with Chelmsford District)

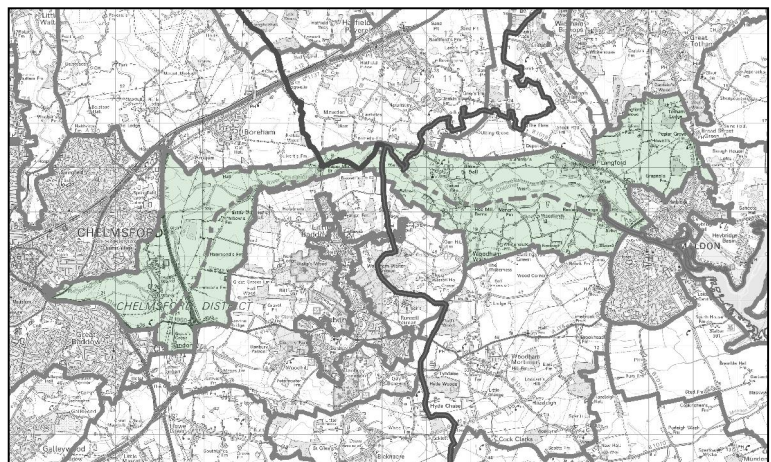


Key Characteristics

- 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 with 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 areas.

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.

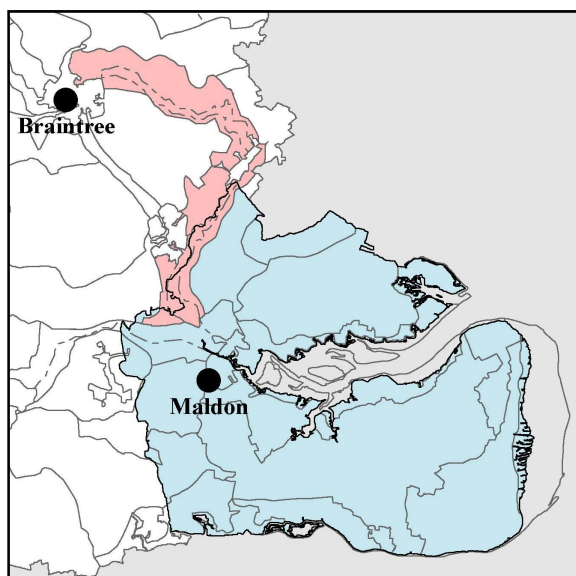
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- 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.

A9 BLACKWATER RIVER VALLEY (shared with Braintree District)

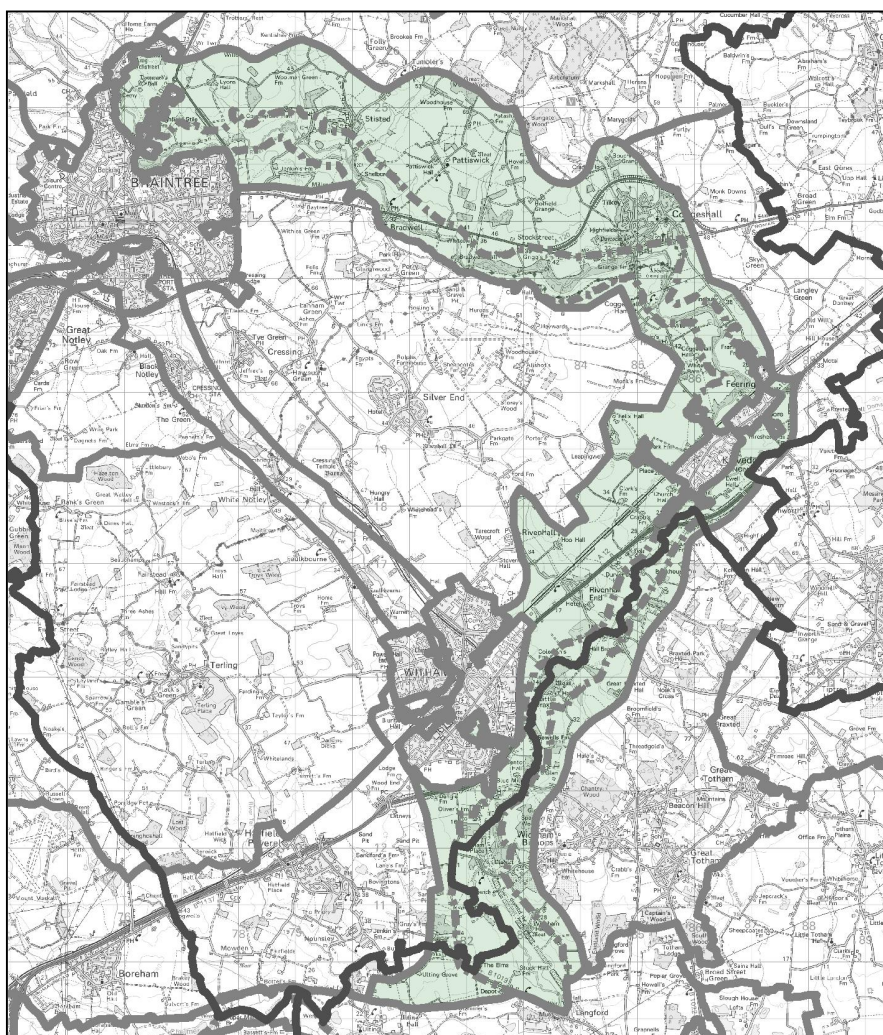


Key Characteristics

- Shallow valley.
- The valley sides slope gently up from the valley floor.
- Predominantly arable farmland on the valley slopes.
- The Lower Blackwater near the confluence with the River Chelmer has gently valley slopes.
- Overall strong sense of place and tranquillity away from the towns of Braintree, Witham and Maldon and the A120, A12 and the railway line.

(Sub-Unit A9a)

- Mixture of arable and pastoral on the valley floor.
- The River Blackwater Valley floor north of the A120 is narrow.
- The River Blackwater near the confluence with the River Chelmer has a wide flat valley floor.



- Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive features especially along the river banks.

Overall Character

The Upper Blackwater near Braintree is located in a relatively narrow valley with slopes that start gently at the top and get steeper the further into the valley to form a typical v-shape river valley centred on the river. There are areas of woodland located on valley slopes of the upper valley. As the river meanders down the valley, the valley floor becomes more wooded especially south of Coggeshall. Around Bradwell Village, the former sand and gravel pits are well vegetated with areas of poplar and willow plantations associated with the Blackwater River and its small tributary streams adding to the good tree cover and enclosure in the area. However in the lower reaches of the river until it joins the River Chelmer near Maldon the valley becomes wider with a flat valley floor with gently sloping valley sides. In this area there are few plantations and areas of woodland. The landscape becomes more open dominated by large open arable fields which benefit from the well drained fine loamy and sandy soils overlying chalk. Throughout the valley the hedgerows delineating field boundaries are in mixed condition with some well trimmed hedges and others that are more scrubby and fragmented with scattered hedgerow trees. The valley floor has large settlements such as Braintree and Witham along industries centred on the river such as watermills. Many of these mills have been converted to tourist attractions but maintain original features. On the valley slopes surrounding the river there are isolated farmsteads that are occasionally moated and small villages. The villages tend to be linear centred on the roads. All the settlements are well screened by deciduous trees. Interest is added to the landscape through the presence of a number of halls and large dwellings made from brick with a timber frame. The river valley has a strong sense of character and place with tranquil areas located along the narrow rural lanes away from the key settlements and busy roads.

Visual Characteristics

- Holfield Grange and the churches at Langford and Ulting form key landmarks along and across the river valley.
- 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.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by a mix of pre-18th century irregular fields probably of medieval origin and some maybe even older and pre-18th century co-axial fields, also of probable medieval origin. The valley bottom contains present and former enclosed meadow. The historic settlement pattern is largely dispersed, comprising isolated manors, church/hall complexes, farms, moated sites and hamlets. The main historic landscape features include:

- The valley to the south of Coggeshall which now contains extensive willow plantations.
- The historic towns of Kelvedon and Coggeshall.
- 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.
- Moderate post-1950s boundary loss.

Ecological Features

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

- Ten CWSs with ancient and semi-natural woodland habitats including part of Barrowfield Wood, Blackwater Plantation, Tilkey Road, Coggeshall, Blackwater Plantation West, part of Bungate Wood, part of Great Monk Wood, Coven Plantation, Lyonshall Wood and Bramble Wood.

- Six CWSs with unimproved grassland, hedgerow and wetland habitats including Moor Gardens, Riverview Meadows, Disused Railway - Witham, Hoo Hall Meadow, Feering Marsh and Whet Mead, also a Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential for pollution of the ditches and the River Blackwater from fertiliser and pesticide run-off from the surrounding agricultural fields.
- Potential for rubbish being thrown from car windows along the busy roads especially the A12.
- 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 distinctive linear poplar and willow plantations along the river banks, which are sensitive to changes in land management. The skyline of the valley slopes is visually sensitive, with potential new development being visible within several views to and from adjacent Landscape Character Areas and also within views across and along the valley. There is also a sense of historic integrity, resulting from enclosed meadows within the valley bottom, historic settlements (including Kelvedon and Coggeshall) and a dispersed settlement pattern, comprising isolated manors, church/hall complexes, farms and moated sites. There area also several important wildlife habitats within the area (including sixteen County Wildlife Sites, comprising a mixture of semi-natural woodland, unimproved grassland, hedgerows and wetland habitats) which are sensitive to changes in land management.

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.
- Manage the roadside flytipping and rubbish thrown from cars that lands in the road verges.

6.3 Farmland Plateau Landscapes

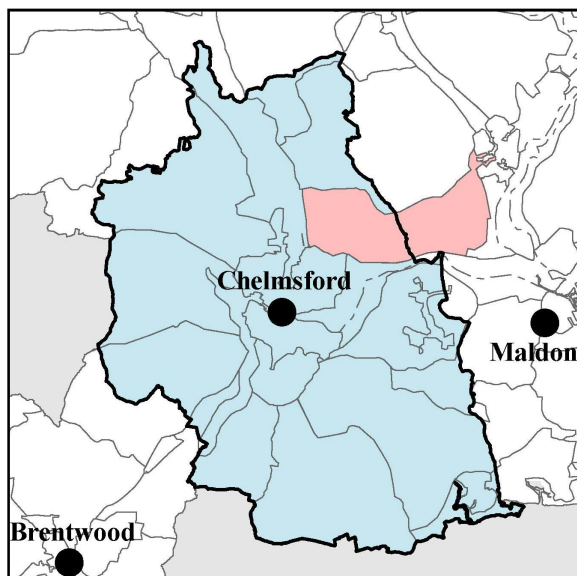
6.3.1 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

- 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)

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

B21 - Boreham Farmland Plateau

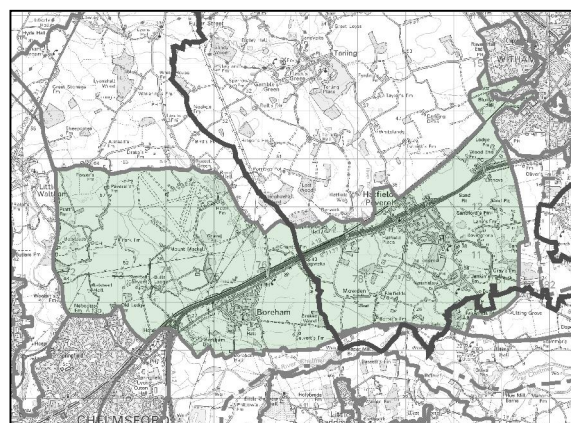
B21 BOREHAM FARMLAND PLATEAU (shared with Braintree District and Chelmsford Borough)



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.

6.4 Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats Landscapes

6.4.1 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

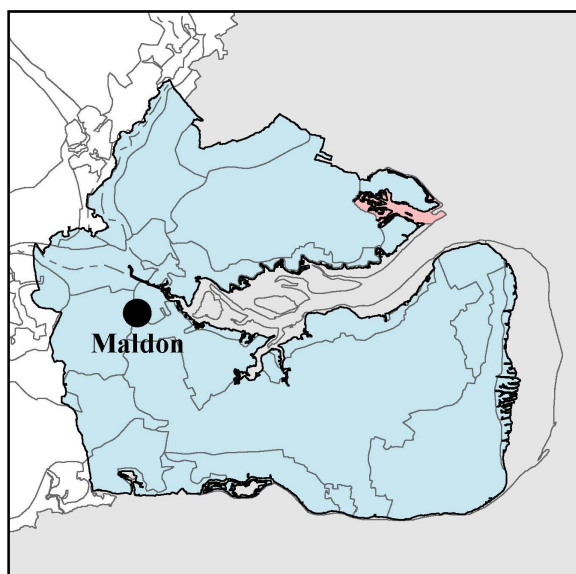
- Flat, low-lying and open landscape
- Areas of saltmarsh, mudflats, shingle spits and tidal creeks adjacent to the coast
- Generally tranquil and undisturbed character
- Sense of remoteness and tranquillity
- Visible sea walls separate drained former marshland and current saltmarsh/mudflats
- Lack of trees or hedgerows

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

- C1 - Tollesbury Fleet Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats
- C2 - Blackwater Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats
- C3 - Dengie Flats Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats
- C4 - Fleet Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats
- C5 - Bridgemarsh Island Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats

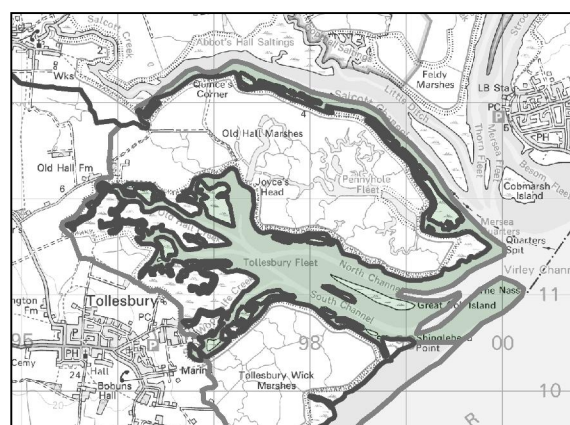
6.4.3 The Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats landscape type is particularly affected by ongoing change due to dynamic coastal processes, and this is a key influence on the future management of these landscapes.

C1 TOLLESBURY FLEET ESTUARINE MARSH/MUDFLATS



Key Characteristics

- Intricate patchwork of tidal mudflats, sands and fringing saltmarshes.
- Inter-tidal landscape which is periodically covered by the constant washing of sea water.
- Sense of remoteness and tranquillity.
- Character greatly influenced by the changing colours of the sea and sky.
- Dendritic pattern of creeks and channels flowing out into Tollesbury Fleet.
- Important habitats for wildlife and biodiversity.



Overall Character

This character area encompasses an open area of channels and creeks within Tollesbury Fleet, which are fringed by sweeping tidal mudflats and sands. The sea constantly washes the landscape (which is situated beyond the sea wall) and is overlooked by drained estuarine marsh to the north and south (behind the sea wall). The atmospheric changing colours of sea and sky dominate character within the area. There is also a sense of remoteness and tranquillity within this flat, open and exposed landscape. At times, however, character is much wilder and more windswept. There is no settlement and very little hedgerow or tree cover within the area. Shortly after the water has receded at low tide, the mudflats glisten with moisture before darkening in colour and drying in the sun.

Visual Characteristics

- Wide, open panoramic views across the Blackwater Estuary, with sea and sky dominant on the horizon.
- Open views across Tillingham and Latchingdon Coastal Farmland to the west.
- Open, panoramic views across Old Hall Marshes and Tollesbury Wick Drained Estuarine Marshes.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by present and former marshland. The main historic landscape features include the sea defence wall, which marks the inland boundary.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by mudflats, coastal marsh and creeks. The area contains the following sites of nature conservation value:

- Dengie Ramsar Site - supports internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl.
- Blackwater Estuary 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.
- Blackwater Estuary SSSI - mudflats and saltmarsh that support internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl including Brent geese.

Other ecological features include:

- An area of ancient and semi-natural woodland on the eastern inland edge.
- Remnant hedgerows.
- Unimproved grassland habitats on narrow verge sides.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Sea-level rise and erosion could lead to the loss of existing saltmarsh and mudflats.
- Risk of erosion due to wash from motorised craft.
- Potential for damage to diverse, important bird habitats and archaeological remains with a potential increase in tourism and accessibility to visitors.
- New development could erode the generally undisturbed character of the area and adversely affect mudflats.
- Loss of saltmarsh through coastal squeeze.

Sensitivities to Change

The intricate pattern of tidal mudflats, sands and fringing saltmarshes, linked by a series of winding channels and creeks, is sensitive to changes in land management or new development. The open and exposed nature of the area (with no visible vertical skyline elements present) is highly visually sensitive to new development, both within the area and within adjacent character areas (including areas of seascape). It is highly likely that potential new development would be visible within views from the Blackwater Estuary, Tillingham and Latchingdon Coastal Farmland and also from Old Hall and Tollesbury Wick Drained Estuarine Marshes. 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.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

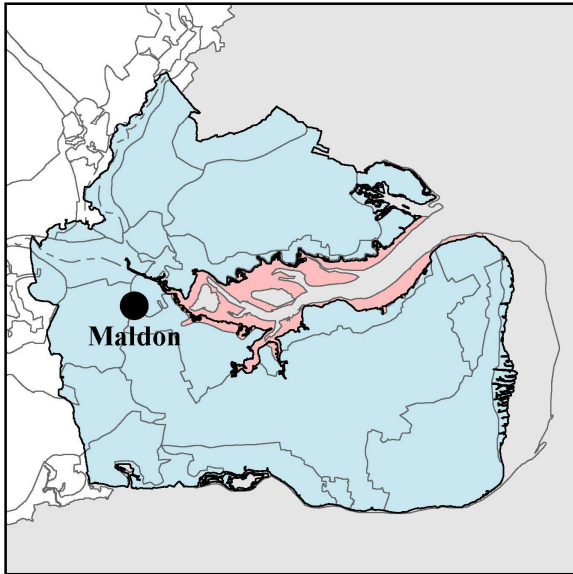
- Conserve the open nature of the mosaic of mudflats.
- Conserve the mostly undisturbed, undeveloped character.
- Consider the impact on views from the area to potential areas of new development within adjacent Tillingham and Latchingdon Coastal Farmland.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Manage recreational use of the Tollesbury Fleet and the Blackwater channels by motorised craft to prevent erosion of mudflats.
- Conserve and protect the natural habitats that support important wildfowl, including Brent geese.
- Conserve and manage saltmarsh habitats.

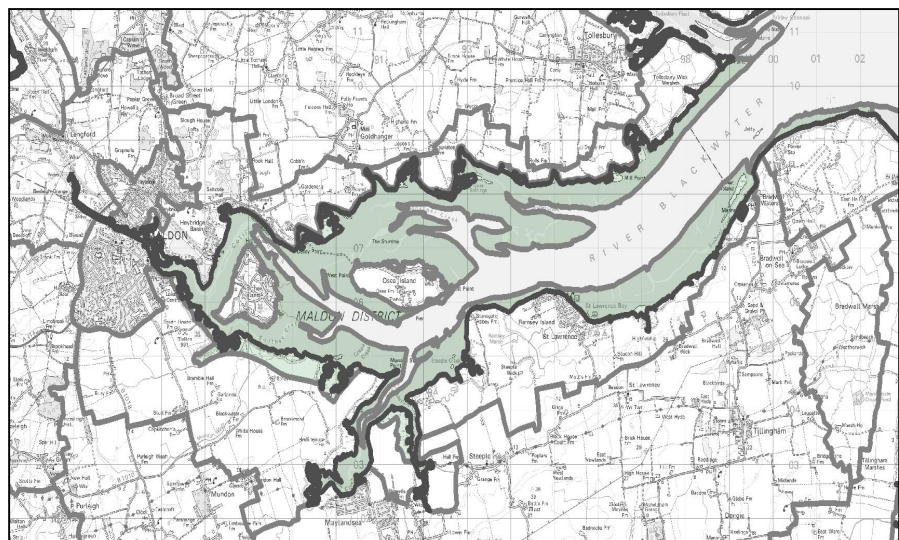
- Manage and control possible levels of sewage and pollution released from development within adjacent coastal farmland.

C2 BLACKWATER ESTUARINE MARSH/MUDFLATS



Key Characteristics

- Intricate patchwork of predominantly tidal mudflats and sands lining the northern and southern slopes of the Blackwater channel/estuary.
- Inter-tidal landscape which is periodically covered by the constant washing of sea water.
- Sense of remoteness and tranquillity.
- Character greatly influenced by the changing colours of the sea and sky.
- Important habitats for wildlife (including Brent Geese) and biodiversity.
- Open landscape with extensive views of estuary and coast.
- Limited public access.



Overall Character

This extensive area of open, inter-tidal mudflats fringes the northern and southern edges of the Blackwater channel. At high tide, the mudflats within this Landscape Character Area are submerged. Shortly after the water has receded at low tide, the mudflats glisten with moisture before darkening in colour and drying in the sun. Several distinct creeks (including Goldhanger, Southey, Upper Collins and Thirslet) traverse the mud and provide variety within the landscape pattern. The movement of boats within the channel occasionally disturbs remoteness and tranquillity, which is stronger towards the eastern end of the channel, than in proximity to Maldon in the west. Weather conditions and the changing colour of sea and sky have a dramatic affect upon landscape character within the area.

Visual Characteristics

- Open, panoramic views of water within the channel, dominated by sky with flurries of movement from estuarine waders and sea birds.
- Long-distance panoramic views across drained estuarine marsh and coastal farmland to the north and south.
- Open views to and across Northey and Osea Islands.
- Changing skies and weather conditions strongly influence the character of views to and from the area.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by present and former marshland. The main historic landscape features include the sea defence wall, which marks the inland boundary.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by estuarine habitats, mudflats and creeks. The area contains the following sites of nature conservation value:

- Dengie Ramsar Site - supports internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl.
- Blackwater Estuary 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.
- SSSI Blackwater Estuary – mudflats and saltmarsh that support internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl including Brent geese.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Sea-level rise and erosion could lead to the loss of existing mudflats.
- Risk of erosion due to wash from motorised craft.
- Potential for damage to diverse, important bird habitats and archaeological remains with a potential increase in tourism and accessibility to visitors.
- New development could erode the generally undisturbed character of the area and adversely affect mudflats.
- Restricted public access.
- Disturbance of habitats through inappropriate recreation.
- Risk of pollution of inter-tidal habitat (particularly in close proximity to Maldon in the west).

Sensitivities to Change

The intricate pattern of tidal mudflats and sands lining the Blackwater channel, interspersed with several distinct creeks (including Goldhanger, Southey, Upper Collins and Thirslet) is sensitive to changes in land management or new development. The open and exposed nature of the area (with no visible vertical skyline elements present) is highly visually sensitive to new development, both within the area and within adjacent character areas (including the Blackwater channel and areas of seascape). It is highly likely that potential new development would be visible within long-distance views from drained coastal estuarine marsh and coastal farmland to the north and south and also within open views from Northey and Osea Islands. 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.

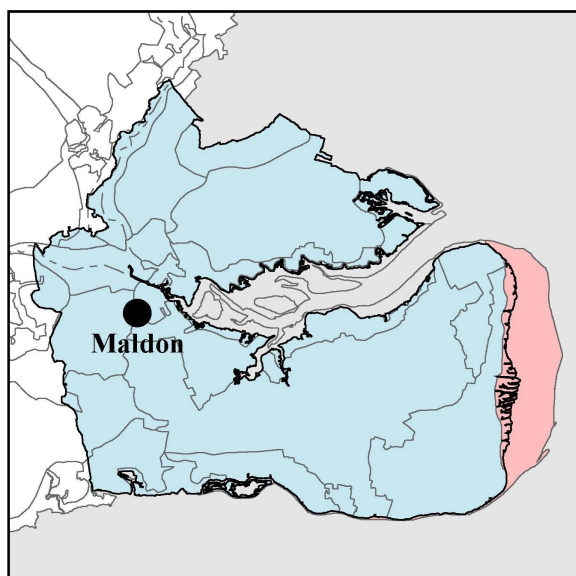
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve the open nature of the mosaic of mudflats.
- Conserve the mostly undisturbed, undeveloped character.
- Consider the impact on views from the area to potential areas of new development within adjacent areas of drained estuarine marsh and coastal farmland.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Manage recreational use of the Blackwater channel by motorised craft to prevent erosion of mudflats.
- Conserve and protect the natural habitats that support important wildfowl, including Brent geese.
- Conserve and manage mudflat habitats.
- Manage and control possible levels of sewage and pollution released from development within adjacent coastal farmland.

C3 DENGIE FLATS ESTUARINE MARSH/MUDFLATS

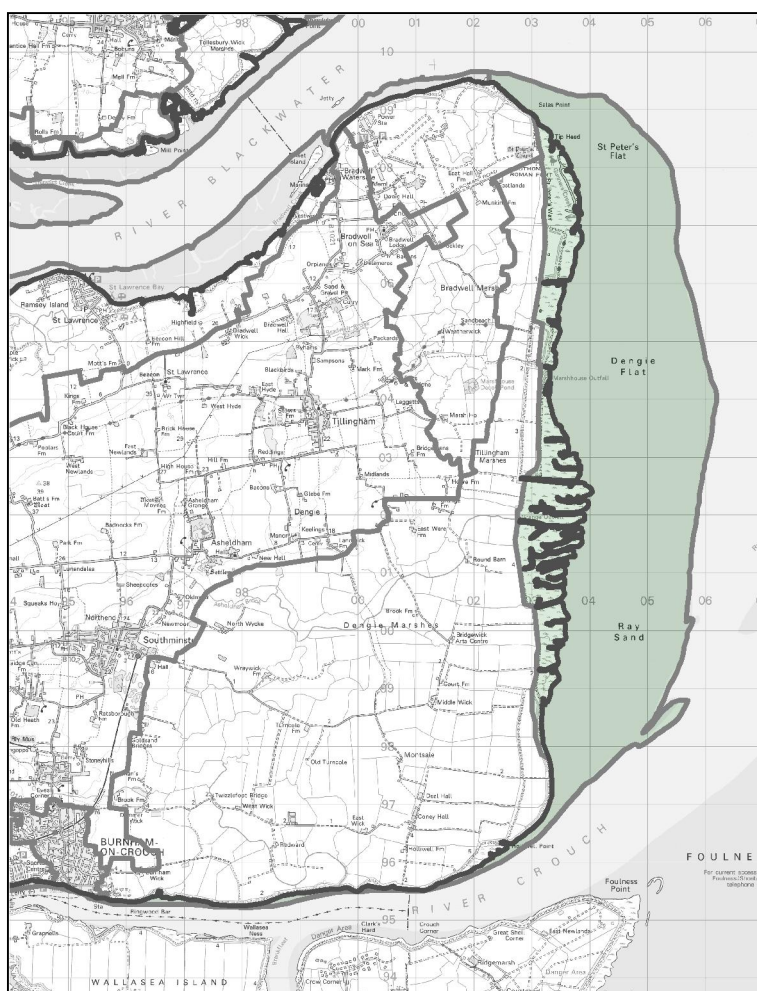


Key Characteristics

- Expansive area of saltmarsh, fringed by open mudflats (Dengie Flat and Ray Sand).
- Inter-tidal landscape which lines the eastern coastal edge.
- Panoramic, open views eastwards across the sea, towards a seemingly endless horizon.
- Sense of remoteness and tranquillity.
- Character greatly influenced by the changing colours of the sea and sky.
- Important habitats for wildlife and rare coastal flora.

Overall Character

This character area lines the eastern edge of the Maldon coastline and encompasses expansive areas of open saltmarsh. This diverse habitat is contained to the west by the sea wall (behind which, drained estuarine marsh dominates the character of the landscape). To the east, the saltmarshes are lined with large areas of diverse inter-tidal mudflats (including St. Peter's Flat, Dengie Flat and Ray Sand), which provide important habitats for birds. Character within the area is greatly influenced by the changing colours of the sea and sky. Panoramic, open views eastwards across the sea, towards a seemingly endless horizon add to creating a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.



within the area. The relative absence of tree cover and settlement creates an expansive landscape that is wild in places.

Visual Characteristics

- Open views across drained estuarine marsh to the west.
- Panoramic, open views eastwards across the sea, towards a seemingly endless horizon.
- Short-distance views to the landmark Bradwell power station within coastal farmland to the west.
- Dramatic views across ever-changing mudflats, influenced by the colour of the sea and sky.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by present and former marshland. The main historic landscape features include the sea defence wall, which marks the inland boundary.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by coastal habitats, mudflats and seashore. The area contains the following sites of nature conservation value:

- Dengie Ramsar Site- supports internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl.
- Dengie 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.
- Dengie SSSI – tidal mudflats and saltmarsh with rare coastal flora and internationally and nationally important wintering populations of wildfowl and waders.
- Holliwell Point NNR – foreshore habitats.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Sea-level rise and erosion could lead to the loss of existing mudflats.
- Risk of erosion due to wash from motorised craft.
- Loss of saltmarsh through coastal squeeze.
- Potential for damage to diverse, important bird habitats and archaeological remains with a potential increase in tourism and accessibility to visitors.
- New development within adjacent coastal farmland to the west could erode the generally undisturbed character of the area and adversely affect mudflats.
- Restricted public access.
- Disturbance of habitats through inappropriate recreation.
- Risk of pollution of inter-tidal habitat.

Sensitivities to Change

The expansive area of saltmarsh, fringed by open mudflats, is sensitive to changes in land management or new development. The open and exposed nature of the area (with no visible vertical skyline elements present) is highly visually sensitive to new development, both within the area and within adjacent character areas (including areas of seascape). It is highly likely that potential new development would be visible within long-distance views from adjacent drained coastal estuarine marsh and from areas of seascape to the east. 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.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve the open nature of the mosaic of mudflats.
- Conserve the mostly undisturbed, undeveloped character.
- Consider the impact on views from the area to potential areas of new development within adjacent areas of drained estuarine marsh and coastal farmland.
- Conserve open views across seascape to the east.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

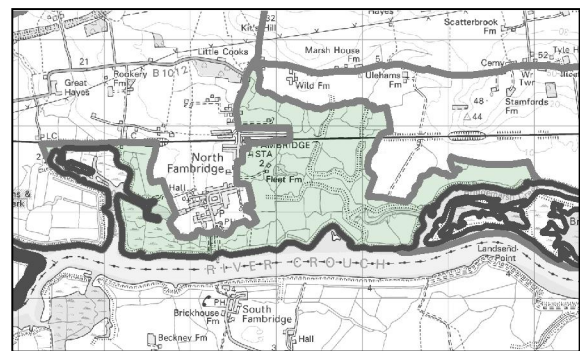
- Conserve and protect the natural habitats that support important wildfowl, including Brent geese.
- Conserve and manage mudflat habitats.
- Manage and control possible levels of sewage and pollution released from development within adjacent coastal farmland.

C4 FLEET ESTUARINE MARSH/MUDFLATS



Key Characteristics

- Intricate network of tidal mudflats, sands and fringing saltmarshes lining the northern bank of the River Crouch channel.
- Sense of remoteness and tranquillity.
- Character greatly influenced by the changing colours of the sea and sky.
- Landscape pattern of small channels and creeks.
- Diverse and important habitats for wildlife (particularly Brent Geese and other wildfowl) and uncommon flora.



Overall Character

This character area encompasses an expansive linear area of mudflats, sand and saltmarshes lining the northern shore of the River Crouch. Character within the area is dominated by Stow creek, which contains the colourful West Wick marina (situated to the west of North Fambridge) and feeds the main river channel. Character is also influenced by the constantly changing nature of water within the channel and the effect that this has on the appearance of inter-tidal mudflats. Open panoramic, long-distance views across drained estuarine marsh and coastal farmland can be gained to the north, creating a sense of space within the Landscape Character Area. Shorter views to the opposite bank of the River Crouch and also eastwards along the river corridor also create a localised sense of place. Although there is no settlement within the character area, the small-nucleated settlement of North Fambridge overlooks the area to the north. There is a general sense of tranquillity within the area, despite proximity to the railway corridor directly to the north.

Visual Characteristics

- Open panoramic long-distance views across drained estuarine marsh and coastal farmland (adjacent Landscape Character Areas) to the north.
- Shot-distance views to the opposite river bank.
- Open long distance views eastwards along the Crouch river channel.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by the 18th century reclaimed marshes. The main historic landscape features include:

- Large drainage ditch field boundaries, mainly without banks or hedges, some following the sinuous course of the former creeks.
- The sea wall, which is now breached and most of the land either eroded away or reverted to marsh.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by coastal farmland and mudflats. The area contains the following sites of nature conservation value:

- Croach and Roach Estuaries 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.
- Croach and Roach Estuaries SSSI – tidal mud, saltmarsh and grazing marsh supports 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.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Coastal squeeze which may lead to a loss of saltmarsh habitats.
- Sea-level rise and erosion which could lead to the loss of existing mudflats.
- Noise and movement associated with the railway corridor to the north.
- Risk of erosion from motorised craft within the Crouch channel.
- Potential new development around the fringes of North Fambridge which may impact upon divers and important habitats and may also be highly visible from the character area.
- Loss of the rural and generally undeveloped character of the area.

Sensitivities to Change

The intricate pattern of tidal mudflats, sands and fringing saltmarshes lining the Crouch channel, interspersed by Stow Creek and several other smaller creeks is sensitive to changes in land management or new development. The open and exposed nature of the area (with no visible vertical skyline elements present) is highly visually sensitive to new development, both within the area and within adjacent character areas (including the Crouch channel and areas of seascape). It is highly likely that potential new development would be visible within long-distance views from drained coastal estuarine marsh and coastal farmland to the north and also within short-distance views from the opposite riverbank. 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.

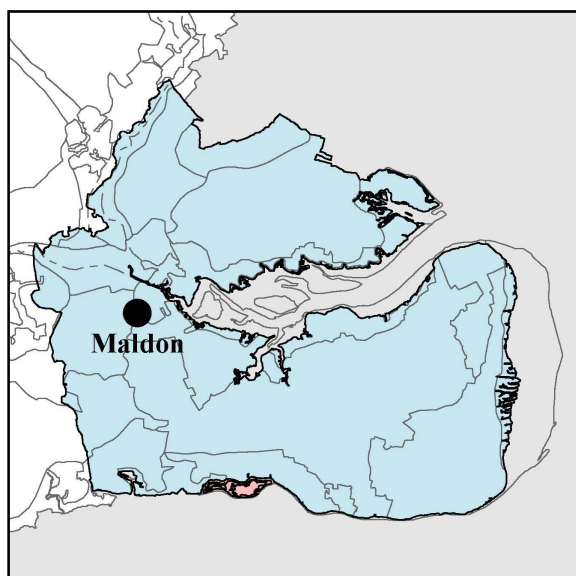
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve the open nature of the mosaic of mudflats and salt marshes.
- Conserve the mostly undisturbed, undeveloped character of the area.
- Consider the impact on views from the area to potential new development around the fringes of North Fambridge.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

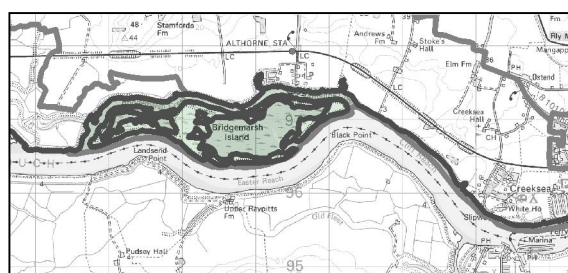
- Manage recreational use of the Crouch channel by motorised craft to prevent erosion of mudflats and saltmarsh.
- Conserve and protect the natural habitats that support important wildfowl and vegetation habitats.
- Conserve and manage mudflat and saltmarsh habitats.
- Manage and control possible levels of sewage and pollution released from development within adjacent coastal farmland and from North Fambridge.

C5 BRIDGEMARSH ISLAND ESTUARINE MARSH/MUDFLATS



Key Characteristics

- Bridgemarksh Island – containing several large areas of saltmarsh and mudflats within the Crouch channel and separated from the mainland by the adjoining Bridgemarksh and Althorne Creeks.
- Sense of remoteness and tranquillity.
- Character greatly influenced by the changing colours of the sea and sky.
- Partly dendritic landscape pattern, consisting of several small channels and creeks.
- Diverse and important habitats for wildlife (particularly Brent Geese and other wildfowl).
- Intricate and relatively inaccessible/isolated landscape.



Overall Character

This character area encompasses an island mosaic of saltmarsh and mudflats which is separated from the northern bank of the River Crouch by the adjoining Bridgemarksh and Althorne creeks. An intricate network of drainage channels traverses these habitats. Character within the area is influenced by the ever-changing colours of the sea and sky and also by tidal water movement within the Crouch channel (affecting the appearance, colour and texture of mudflats and hummocky saltmarsh). Despite proximity to areas of drained marshland and coastal farmland to the north and also on the opposite side of the river channel, there is sense of remoteness and tranquillity within the area. As a result of its physical separation from the main riverbank and its position within the Crouch channel, there is also a sense of isolation and inaccessibility within the area.

Visual Characteristics

- Open panoramic long-distance views across drained estuarine marsh and coastal farmland (adjacent Landscape Character Areas) to the north.
- Shot-distance views to the opposite river bank.
- Open long distance views eastwards along the Crouch river channel.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area includes the reclamation of Bridgemarsh Island in the 18th century and its subsequent sub-division into fields. The main historic landscape features include:

- Large drainage ditch field boundaries, mainly without banks or hedges, some following the sinuous course of the former creeks.
- The sea wall, which is now breached and most of the land either eroded away or reverted to marsh.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by coastal farmland and mudflats. The area contains the following sites of nature conservation value:

- Croach and Roach Estuaries 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.
- Croach and Roach Estuaries SSSI – tidal mud, saltmarsh and grazing marsh which supports 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.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Coastal squeeze which may lead to a loss of saltmarsh habitats.
- Sea-level rise and erosion which could lead to the loss of existing mudflats.
- Noise and movement associated with the railway corridor to the north.
- Risk of erosion from motorised craft within the Crouch channel.
- Loss of the rural and generally undeveloped character of the area.

Sensitivities to Change

The large-scale pattern of tidal mudflats and saltmarsh within the Crouch channel (separated from the northern riverbank by adjoining Bridgemarsh and Althorne Creeks) is sensitive to changes in land management or new development. The open and exposed nature of the area (with no visible vertical skyline elements present) is highly visually sensitive to new development, both within the area and within adjacent character areas (including Crouch channel). It is highly likely that potential new development would be visible within long-distance views from drained coastal estuarine marsh and coastal farmland to the north and also within views from the east along the Crouch river channel. 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.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve the open nature of the mosaic of mudflats and salt marshes.
- Conserve the mostly undisturbed, undeveloped character of the area.
- Consider the impact on views from the area to potential new development within coastal farmland to the north and also on the opposite bank of the river channel.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Manage recreational use of the Crouch channel by motorised craft to prevent erosion of mudflats and saltmarsh.
- Conserve and protect the natural habitats that support important wildfowl and vegetation habitats.
- Conserve and manage mudflat and saltmarsh habitats.
- Manage and control possible levels of sewage and pollution released from development within adjacent coastal farmland.

6.5 Drained Estuarine Marsh Landscapes

6.5.1 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

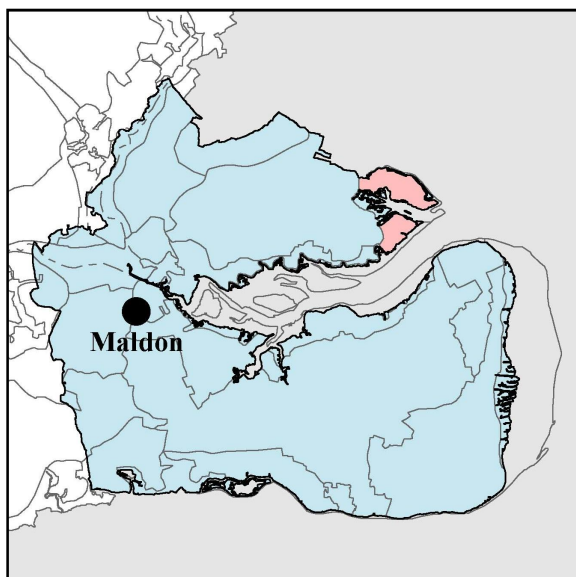
- Areas of flat, artificially drained former saltmarsh currently grassland and cultivated fields
- Visible sea walls separate drained former marshland and current saltmarsh/mudflats
- Lack of large areas of trees or woodland
- Network of visible drainage ditches

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

D1 - Old Hall Marshes and Tollesbury Wick Drained Estuarine Marsh
 D2 - Maldon Drained Estuarine Marsh
 D3 - Northey Island Drained Estuarine Marsh
 D4 - Osea Island Drained Estuarine Marsh
 D5 – Mundon Drained Estuarine Marsh
 D6 - Ramsay Drained Estuarine Marsh
 D7 - Bradwell Drained Estuarine Marsh
 D8 - Dengie Drained Estuarine Marsh
 D9 - Fambridge Drained Estuarine Marsh

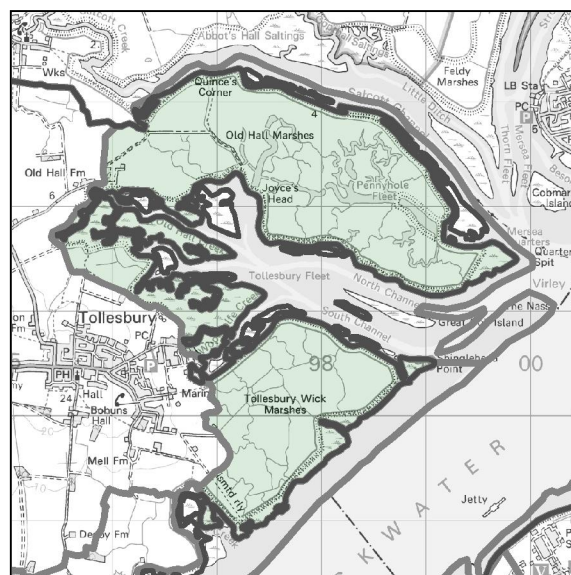
6.5.3 The Drained Estuarine Marsh landscape type is particularly affected by ongoing change due to dynamic coastal processes, and this is a key influence on future management of these landscapes.

D1 OLD HALL MARSHES AND TOLLESBURY WICK DRAINED ESTUARINE MARSH



Key Characteristics

- Old Hall Marshes has traditional drained grazing marsh.
- Tollesbury Wick is rare example of freshwater grazing marsh.
- Absence of woodland.
- Flat low-lying alluvial fields criss-crossed with drainage ditches and dykes.
- Borrow dykes visible behind the sea wall which retain the sinuous natural pattern of the tidal creeks.
- Rough pasture, borrow dykes, sea walls, salt marsh.
- Wide views over the Blackwater Estuary from the sea wall.
- Strong sense of tranquillity.



Overall Character

This character area is comprised of the two peninsulas either side of Tollesbury Fleet, on the Blackwater Estuary. Old Hall Marshes, on the north side of the channel, is a large area of drained marshland protected by sea wall. Run as a working farm and a nature reserve, it contains grazing marsh for cattle and sheep, as well as many ponds. It attracts wildfowl and wading birds to breed and overwinter. Within the wall are large areas of unimproved grassland, reedbeds and open water. Broad borrow dykes at the back of the sea wall retain the natural winding pattern of natural creeks and fleets. Vehicular access is restricted to permit holders, but a public footpath along the sea wall is most easily reached from Tollesbury. Tollesbury Wick, on the south side of the Fleet is also a drained estuarine marsh behind sea walls, with rare freshwater grazing marsh. Owned by the Essex Wildlife Trust, it is also managed using traditional methods sympathetic to wildlife. Large areas of rough pasture, pools and reedbeds can be seen. On the other side of the sea wall, at both sites, salt marsh and exposed mudflats are visible. Landscape character is heavily influenced by the changing colour and pattern of sea and sky. These are large-scale landscapes due to the panoramic quality of the views, with a strong sense of isolation and tranquillity.

Visual Characteristics

- Dramatic panoramic views to the Blackwater Estuary influenced by sea and sky.
- Views to local landmark Bradwell Power Station from sea wall.
- Open landscape of flat low-lying drained marshland crisscrossed by drainage ditches, ponds, reedbeds and intermittent scrub.
- Views to the salt marsh and mudflats beyond at low tide from the sea wall.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by a narrow fringe of present and former marshland, largely reclaimed in the 18th century. The main historic landscape features include:

- Field boundaries, which are large drainage ditches, mainly without banks or hedges, some following the sinuous course of the former creeks.
- Enclosure by the sea defence wall.
- A lack of settlement.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by unimproved pasture farmland and drained estuarine marsh. The area contains the following sites of nature conservation value:

- Blackwater Estuary Ramsar Site - supports internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl.
- Blackwater Estuary SPA - supports internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl.
- Blackwater Estuary SSSI & NNR - intertidal mudflats and saltmarsh that support internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl including Brent geese.
- Tollesbury Wick EWT Reserve – uncommon habitat of freshwater grazing marsh and sea wall grasslands.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Destabilisation of sea walls.
- Lighting and future use of Bradwell Power Station.
- Expansion of marina at Tollesbury and effect on wildlife disturbance.
- Potential for more visually intrusive expansion to the settlement edges at Tollesbury.
- Flood protection and managed retreat issues.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include areas of freshwater grazing marsh, flat, low-lying fields criss-crossed with drainage ditches and dykes, borrow dykes, sea walls and a natural sinuous pattern of natural creeks and fleets (which are sensitive to changes in land management). The open nature of the area, with few vertical elements visible on the skyline, is visually sensitive to new development, which would be visible within views from the Blackwater Estuary and also from saltmarsh and mudflats beyond the sea wall. 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.

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.

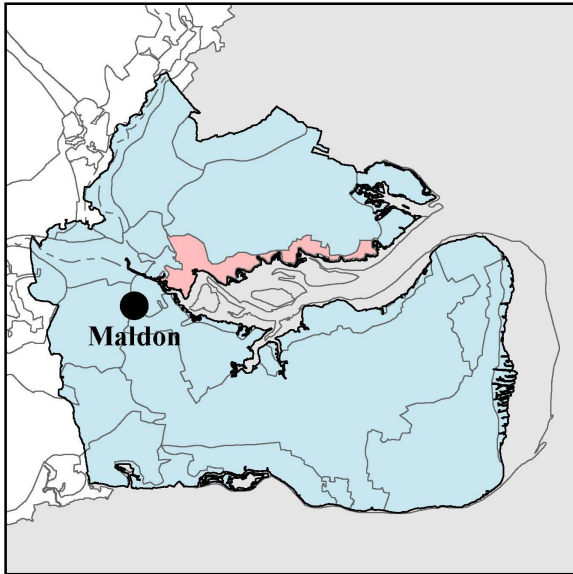
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Continue to conserve the open undeveloped character of the area.
- Consider the impacts of development in adjacent character areas avoiding visual intrusion.
- Conserve the largely undisturbed and tranquil nature of the area.
- Conserve long-distance panoramic views.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

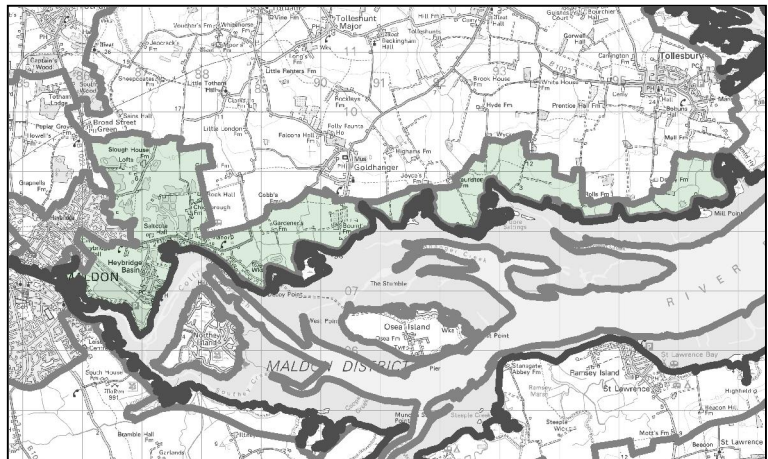
- Continue to conserve grazing marsh, as is presently being done under the management of the RSPB at Old Hall Marshes and Essex Wildlife Trust at Tollesbury Wick.
- Consider the potential for creation of new inter-tidal habitats (such as saltmarsh) through Managed Realignment (without regard to information set out within the Blackwater Estuary Flood Management Strategy : Essex Estuarine Strategy).

D2 MALDON DRAINED ESTUARINE MARSH



Key Characteristics

- Drained coastal marsh landscape, now isolated from tidal influences.
- Scrubby, often gappy hedgerows or random copses, mainly near farmsteads.
- Absence of woodland.
- Flat arable farmland behind the coastal marshland.
- Dispersed isolated farmsteads.
- Urban/suburban influence of Maldon on eastern edges of the character area.



Overall Character

This character area is the flat drained coastal marshland east of Maldon that lies behind the sea walls of the upper Blackwater Estuary, below the Tolleshunt Coastal Farmland (E1) to the north. This is land that has been drained artificially for centuries. The landscape is characteristic of the Essex coast; large-scale, flat, and generally low-lying, with distinctive drainage ditches and dykes, as well as remnant borrow dykes at the back of the enclosing sea wall. Field boundaries are usually made up of scattered trees or tall thorn hedges and clumps of scrub along drainage ditches. The field pattern is semi-regular. Some pasture is evident, and is often surrounded by denser vegetation. Settlement pattern is dispersed over the area in a small number of large farmsteads and scattered agricultural buildings - there are no villages in this character area. Vehicular access to the estuary is difficult in the farmlands as the only road to cross the area is the B1026. Tracks and lanes through private land remain the only way to the estuary, although there is a network of footpaths that permit access in a few places, and a footpath along the length of the sea wall. At the sea wall the views across the estuary are wide and open, including vies of Bradwell Power Station. The urban fringe of Maldon extends eastwards to approximately the Wash Bridge on the B1026: where it becomes a mosaic of semi-industrial and suburban areas, with caravan parks and the tourist attraction of Heybridge Basin, a former locks. Small farmland fields are interspersed between these uses. Sand and gravel pits, both used and disused can

be seen northeast and southeast of Maldon, which is testimony to its economic importance in this part of the countryside. Evidence of the industrial-maritime past is also visible in old warehouses, and former worker's cottages on the east side of the town. Overall, this character area has a strong sense of tranquillity, particularly in areas away from Maldon and the main road.

Visual Characteristics

- Long open views to the wooded farmland in the north.
- Limited views to the Blackwater Estuary except from the sea wall, from where they are panoramic in all directions.
- Views to local landmark Bradwell Power Station from sea wall.
- Open landscape of flat low-lying drained marshland crisscrossed by drainage ditches and intermittent scrub.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by a very long, but narrow fringe of present and former marshland. The field boundaries are large drainage ditches, mainly without banks or hedges, some following the sinuous course of the former creeks. The marshes were largely reclaimed in the 18th century. The settlement is largely highly dispersed, comprising isolated farms, the older of these are located on the boundary between the former dryland and the marsh, whilst those of 18th and 19th century origin are sited on the reclaimed land. To the west the field pattern has been characterised by a mixture of pre-18th century irregular fields and later piecemeal enclosure by agreement. The fields in the southern portion of the area were laid out on a roughly ladder-like system running down from the crest of the ridge down to the marsh edge. In the post-medieval period, this area was sub-divided into long narrow farms, enabling access to the high ground, the south-facing slopes and the marsh, and hence the widest range of landscape resources. The area has also seen extensive quarrying of sands and gravels.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by arable agriculture and grazing marsh. The area contains the following sites of nature conservation value:

- Blackwater Estuary SPA - supports internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl.
- Lofts Farm Pit SSSI - comprising features of geodiversity interest.
- Blackwater Estuary SSSI – mudflats and saltmarsh that support internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl including Brent geese.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential further loss and decline in hedgerows due to intensive agricultural practice and lack of management.
- Pressure of increased traffic on B1026 and minor lanes especially during peak tourist seasons.
- Potential for more visually intrusive expansion to the settlement edges at Maldon and Goldhanger.
- Potential for visually intrusive development of new farm buildings.
- Flood protection and managed retreat issues.
- Pressure on the landscape from urban-fringe related activities, such as sand and gravel extraction, horse paddocks, caravan sites, and increased amenity uses such as recreational boating and water-related leisure activities.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include drained coastal marsh, drainage ditches, dykes and the sea wall, (which are sensitive to changes in land management). The open nature of views from the sea wall are visually sensitive, however, several vertical elements (including Bradwell power station) are also visible within views. There is a sense of historic integrity,

resulting from visible historic sea walls and a dispersed historic settlement pattern. The area also contains several internationally and nationally important sites for wildlife (in particular, wildfowl). Overall, this character area has moderate - to 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.

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

- Ensure that any new development responds to historic settlement pattern and scale, and uses materials that are appropriate to the local landscape character. Such development should be well integrated into the surrounding landscape.
- Ensure that sites no longer used for gravel extraction are sensitively restored to reflect the local landscape character and are well integrated into the surrounding landscape.
- Conserve the mostly 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.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Consider the potential for creation of new inter-tidal habitats (such as saltmarsh) through Managed Realignment (with regard to information set out within the Blackwater Estuary Flood Management Strategy : Essex Estuarine Strategy).
- Ensure that caravan sites are well integrated into the surrounding landscape and that their scale is in keeping with local landscape character.

Visual Characteristics

- Presence of large numbers of birds.
- Panoramic views to the Blackwater Estuary.
- Views to local landmark Bradwell Power Station from sea wall.
- Open landscape of flat low-lying drained marshland crisscrossed by drainage ditches.
- Views to the salt marsh and mudflats beyond at low tide from the sea wall.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by the reclamation of the marshlands. Northey Island is known to have existed in the 10th century when it played a pivotal role in the Battle of Maldon. There has been subsequently modified by further reclamation and sub-division into rectangular fields. This process is now being reversed with the breaching, both accidentally and also deliberate, of sea walls to allow tidal egress. The main historic landscape features include the causeway of Saxon origin, which links Northey to the mainland.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated drained by estuarine marsh. These are managed in places as grazing marsh on Northey Island. Extensive areas of inter-tidal salt marsh surrounding the island are sites of nature conservation value. These include:

- Essex Estuaries cSAC - supports variety of internationally important habitats including estuarine, mudflats, sandflats, *Salicornia* colonising mud, *Spartina* swards and Atlantic salt meadows.
- Blackwater Estuary SSSI - mudflats and saltmarsh that support internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl including Brent geese.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Destabilisation of sea walls.
- Access to the sea wall from a public highway.
- Expansion of boating activities on the estuary and the effect of wildlife disturbance and salt marsh erosion.
- Potential for more visually intrusive expansion to the settlement edges at Maldon.
- Flood protection and managed retreat issues.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include areas of traditional drained grazing marsh, sea walls and small areas of saltmarsh and a network of drainage ditches, (which are sensitive to changes in land management). The open nature of the area, with few vertical elements visible on the skyline, is visually sensitive to new development, which would be visible within views to and from the Blackwater Estuary and also from surrounding seascape areas. There is a sense of historic integrity, resulting from the presence of a causeway (of Saxon origin) which links Northey to the mainland. 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 important sites for wildlife. Overall, this character area has high sensitivity to change.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

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.

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 the open undeveloped character of the area.
- Consider the impacts of development in adjacent character areas to avoid visual intrusion.
- Conserve the largely undisturbed and tranquil nature of the area.
- Conserve long-distance panoramic view across the river and ensure that new development does not detract from these views.
- Ensure any new development, particularly on the south shore of the Blackwater Estuary, is of an appropriate scale, form, design and materials and uses colours that respond to landscape setting and landscape character.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Continue the creation and management of new inter-tidal habitats through Managed Realignment, as is being currently carried out by the National Trust.

D4 OSEA ISLAND DRAINED ESTUARINE MARSH



Key Characteristics

- Distinctive, flat salt marsh island.
- Traditional drained grazing marsh.
- Mudflats, water and sky dominate views from the sea wall.
- Regular field pattern with hedgerows and copses on field boundaries; absence of woodland.
- Flat low-lying alluvial fields with drainage ditches and dykes.
- Wide views over the Blackwater Estuary from the sea wall.
- Strong sense of tranquillity.



Overall Character

This character area is an island in the saltwater flood plain of the Blackwater Estuary. It lies east of Northey Island. This is drained estuarine marsh of primarily arable fields on well-drained soils. The farmland has a rectilinear field pattern separated by ditches and broken hedgerows - few trees are in evidence. Elms that once were characteristic of the area are only visible now as dead stumps in the hedges. The hedge network creates a visually linked sense of enclosure in an otherwise intensively open, managed, and large-scale landscape. There is visual evidence of the ancient right-angled lanes that go around the field boundaries that suggest ancient planned farmland historic to this area. This land is in private ownership, and access is limited to a causeway across the estuarine marsh only usable for four hours each tide. This is a landscape dominated by views of sea and sky and the salt marsh and estuary give this a maritime character. It has a strong sense of isolation and tranquillity

Visual Characteristics

- Panoramic views to the Blackwater Estuary.
- Views to local landmark Bradwell Power Station from sea wall.
- Open arable landscape of flat low-lying drained marshland dissected by drainage ditches.
- Views to the salt marsh and mudflats beyond at low tide from the sea wall.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by the reclamation of the marshlands, a process that probably commenced in the early medieval period. There has been subsequently modified by further reclamation and sub-division into rectangular fields.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by drained estuarine marsh and grazing marsh. The area contains the following sites of nature conservation value:

- Blackwater Estuary 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.
- Other ecological features include species-rich hedgerows and grassland on sea walls.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential for the introduction of visually intrusive agricultural buildings within the character area, which would be visible from surrounding character areas.
- Expansion of boating activities on the estuary and the effect on salt marsh erosion and destabilisation of sea walls.
- Potential for more visually intrusive expansion to the settlement edges on the south shore of the estuary.
- Vulnerable to sea-level rise and potential effects of global warming.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include areas of traditional drained grazing marsh, sea walls and small areas of saltmarsh, hedgerows at field boundaries and a network of drainage ditches and dykes, (which are sensitive to changes in land management). The open nature of the area, is visually sensitive to new development, which would be visible within views to and from the Blackwater Estuary and also from surrounding seascape areas. 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 important sites for wildlife. Overall, this character area has moderate to- 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.

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.

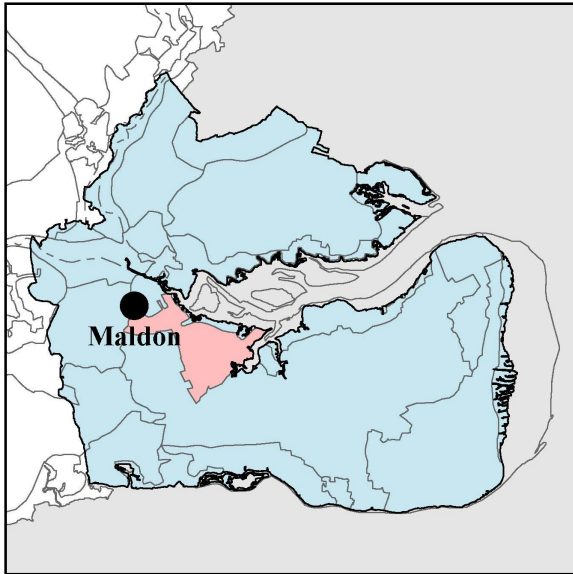
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Consider the impacts of development in adjacent character areas avoiding visual intrusion.
- Conserve the largely undisturbed and tranquil nature of the area.
- Conserve long-distance panoramic view across the river and ensure that new development does not detract from these views.
- Ensure any new development, on the south shore of the Blackwater Estuary, avoids the introduction of suburban styles and materials and responds to landscape setting, taking into account views to and from adjacent areas of open and drained estuarine marsh.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

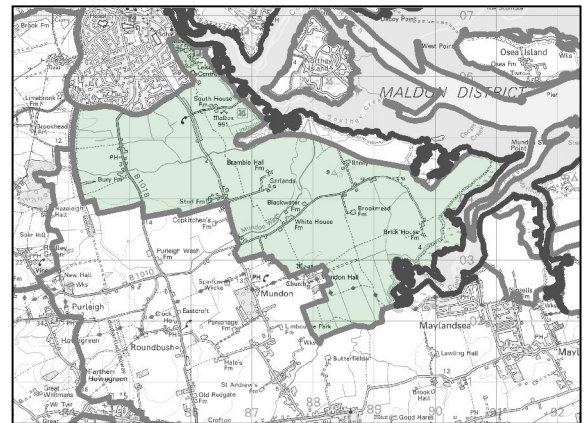
- Where suitable, encourage use of ESA management options to maintain grazing marsh habitats.
- Consider the potential for creation of new inter-tidal habitats (such as saltmarsh) through Managed Realignment (with regard to information set out within the Blackwater Estuary Flood Management Strategy : Essex Estuarine Strategy).

D5 MUNDON DRAINED ESTUARINE MARSH



Key Characteristics

- Gently rolling marsh hinterland crossed by intricate creeks merges with the flat marshland on the southern shore of the Blackwater Estuary.
- Predominantly open, arable fields with a regular, rectilinear field pattern.
- Lack of tree cover and settlement pattern, with scattered large farms.
- Scrubby, often gappy hedgerows or random copses, mainly near farmsteads.
- Sense of emptiness and openness mitigated by views to higher ground at Maldon, to the steep slopes to the south east, and from views out over the estuary to the wooded ridges in the north east.



Overall Character

This character area is the hinterland of the southwest corner of the Blackwater Estuary below Maldon where the flat marshland meets the ancient sloping clay farmlands. Crossed by many creeks and a disused canal, with scattered scrub and wide views, this gently rolling country flattens as it approaches the marshes. Remnant dead elms are reminders of former tall elm-dominated hedgerows that were characteristic of this landscape and the only other trees that are noticeable now are the occasional copses and small woodland patches that are seen mainly near farmsteads. Telegraph poles distinguish the skyline along the roads, and the characteristic right-angled bends in the lanes mark the shapes of the rectilinear field pattern, which is small to medium scale. Condition of farm buildings is quite variable, with some in quite poor condition. The sense of the history in the area is visible in the occasional vernacular weatherboarded houses in the villages, and some scattered moated houses, such as Mundon Hall. The adjacent church of St Mary, with 14th century origins, is an important historic landmark, as is the ancient block of woodland of Mundon Furze nearby. Farmland stretches right up to the urban edge of Maldon with no transition. Similar residential encroachment into the farmlands has occurred at Mundon, and is not integrated into the landscape. This area is generally quite open with trees or hedgerows occasionally framing views. The landscape is textured by views to woodland on the higher

ground to the north, across the marshes and the estuary, and on the rising ground to the southeast. The lack of enclosure and the feeling of being in a somewhat isolated place is strongest near the marshlands and the lanes that lead to it, but is lessened nearer to the few busy B roads that provide access across the area.

Visual Characteristics

- Expansive views across large farmland fields onto the Blackwater Estuary.
- Panoramic views across adjacent saltmarsh and mudflats.
- Short-distance views across Southey Creek to Northey Island.
- Long views locally across flatlands to Maldon.

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:

- Field systems which are of considerable antiquity, and may have their origins in the middle Saxon period, if not before.
- Field which were historically bordered by elm hedgerows, but most of these were lost in the 1970s as a consequence of Dutch Elm Disease.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by open arable fields and pasture farmland. The area contains one area of ancient and semi-natural woodland near Mundon, and boundary ditches, scrub and species-rich hedgerows on field margins.

Key Planning and land Management Issues

- Potential for more visually intrusive expansion to the settlement edges at Maldon.
- Potential further loss and decline in hedgerows due to intensive agricultural practice and lack of management.
- Pressure of increased traffic on B1018/1010 and minor lanes especially during peak tourist seasons.
- Potential for visually intrusive development of new farm buildings.
- Flood protection and managed retreat issues.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include several creeks, occasional copses and patches of small woodland (often associated with farmsteads), which are sensitive to changes in land management. The generally open skyline of the area is visually sensitive to new development, which would be visible within views to and from the Blackwater Estuary, from surrounding farmland areas and also within short-distance views across Southey Creek to Northey Island. There is a strong sense of historic integrity, resulting from historic settlements and field systems (which may have their origins in the middle Saxon period). Potential new development either within the area, or within adjacent character areas, may also disturb the strong sense of tranquillity. 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.

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.

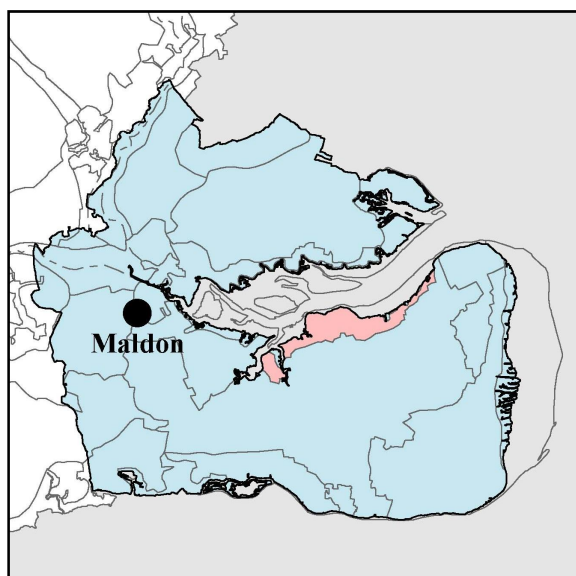
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Ensure that any new development responds to historic settlement pattern and scale, and uses materials that are appropriate to the local landscape character. Such development should be well integrated into the surrounding landscape.
- Conserve and enhance the mostly 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.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

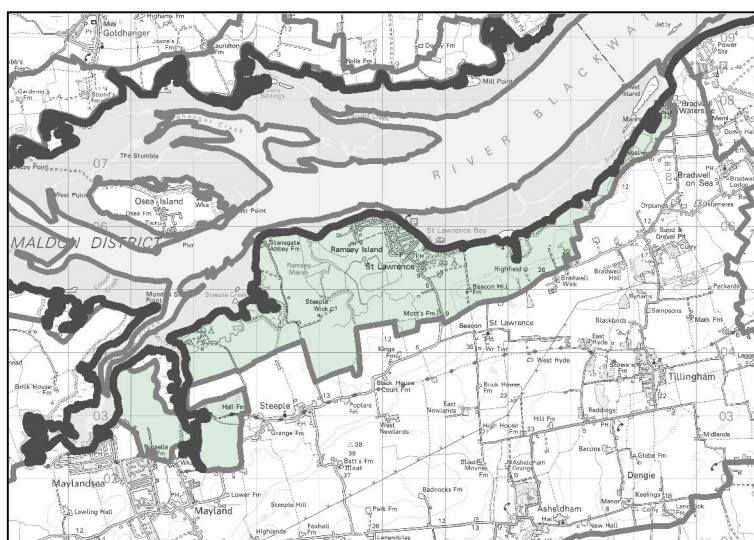
- Conserve and manage areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland as important landscape, historical and nature conservation sites.
- Consider the potential for creation of new inter-tidal habitats (such as saltmarsh) through Managed Realignment (with regard to information set out within the Blackwater Estuary Flood Management Strategy : Essex Estuarine Strategy).

D6 RAMSAY DRAINED ESTUARINE MARSH



Key Characteristics

- Generally flat landform of drained saltmarsh between the sea walls and the sloping Tillingham Coastal Farmlands (E2) at its southern boundary.
- Mainly arable fields with some grazing marsh that merges with the sea walls and saltings on the southern shore of the Blackwater Estuary.
- Residual ditches and dykes.
- Regular, rectilinear field pattern and large farms.
- Scrubby, often gappy hedgerows or scattered tree groups, mainly near farmsteads.
- Sense of openness with panoramic views of sea and sky.



Overall Character

This area of low-lying drained former marshland stretches from behind the sea walls of the lower Blackwater Estuary between Pewitt Island to the east and Lawling Creek to the west. Primarily arable farmland, there is also some grazing marsh. There are some sinuous ditches still visible. Nearer to the estuary the field pattern is somewhat irregular, but becomes quite linear and larger scale overall. The estuary shoreline is indented with small pockets of undrained salt marsh and a sandy beach at Ramsay Island, where there is also a marina. Historically this was sparsely settled grazing marsh, but now there is visible evidence of intense development at Ramsay Island for housing and tourist use. A marina, leisure park and caravan site indicate its popularity for holidaymakers, and this former plotland of small bungalows and weatherboarded houses is fast becoming suburban, with dense new housing that has no visual link to the local vernacular architecture. Ornamental planting also has no natural association with indigenous vegetation. Pedestrian access to the sea wall is possible along much of the shore, but vehicular access is limited to lanes that intersect the Bradwell Road the south. Going west

towards Lawling Creek the field pattern is still large-scale, with few farmsteads and limited access. There is another caravan park at Canney House on the creek. Development pressures all along the Bradwell road to the east of Ramsay Island have affected the character of this area; the Bradwell Road is busy, with relatively heavy traffic and its associated noise. The traces of a once-isolated area are visible but the tranquillity of the area has been lost.

Visual Characteristics

- Dramatic, steeply rising slopes in E2 are visible from this Landscape Character Area.
- Expansive, panoramic views along estuary from the sea walls, as well as views to the higher wooded farmlands to the north.
- Views of suburban development at Maylandsea and St Lawrence Island from higher ground in E2.
- One very modern house at Ramsay Island integrates well with existing cottages facing the estuary.
- Bradwell Power Station and pylons that march south from it dominate views to the east and are local landmarks.
- Large fields textured by contrast between rough grassland and cereal crops.
- New housing development along Bradwell road has no relationship in terms of style, materials or colour with the surrounding character of the area.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by a very long, but narrow fringe of present and former marshland along the southern edge of the Blackwater estuary. The marshes were largely reclaimed in the 18th century. The settlement is largely highly dispersed, comprising isolated farms, the older of these are located on the boundary between the former dryland and the marsh, whilst those of 18th and 19th century origin are sited on the reclaimed land. The only sizable settlement is the largely modern village of St Lawrence, sited on the former Ramsey Island. Other historic landscape features include the field boundaries comprising large drainage ditches, mainly without banks or hedges, some following the sinuous course of the former creeks.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by open arable fields and pasture with some grazing marsh and draining marsh between the sea walls and saltings on the southern shore of the Blackwater Estuary. The area contains the following sites of nature conservation value:

- Blackwater Estuary SPA - supports internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl.
- Blackwater Estuary SSSI - mudflats and saltmarsh that support internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl including Brent geese.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential further loss and decline in hedgerows due to intensive agricultural practice and lack of management.
- Vulnerable to sea-level rise and potential effects of global warming.
- Flood protection and managed retreat issues.
- Pressure of increased traffic on Bradwell road and minor lanes especially during peak tourist seasons.
- Expansion of boating activities on the estuary and the effect on salt marsh erosion and destabilisation of sea walls.
- Potential for more visually intrusive expansion to the settlement edges.
- Suburbanisation of plotland villages.
- Potential for visually intrusive development of new farm buildings.
- Lighting and future use of Bradwell Power Station.

- Pressure on the landscape from increased amenity uses, such as caravan sites, yacht clubs and pleasure-boat marinas.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include areas of grazing marsh, sinuous ditches, small pockets of undrained saltmarsh and sea walls, which are sensitive to changes in land management. The generally open skyline of the area is visually sensitive to new development, which would be visible within views to and from adjacent coastal farmland, along the estuary, and also from higher wooded farmlands to the north. There is a sense of historic integrity, which is visible within field boundaries (comprising large drainage ditches, mainly without banks or hedges, some following the sinuous course of former creeks). Overall, this character area has high sensitivity to change. 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.

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

- Ensure that any new development responds to historic settlement pattern and scale, and uses materials that are appropriate to the local landscape character. Such development should be well integrated into the surrounding landscape.
- Conserve and enhance the mostly 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.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Ensure that caravan sites are well integrated into the surrounding landscape and that their scale is in keeping with local landscape character.
- Consider the potential for creation of new inter-tidal habitats (such as saltmarsh) through Managed Realignment (with regard to information set out within the Blackwater Estuary Flood Management Strategy : Essex Estuarine Strategy).

D7 BRADWELL DRAINED ESTUARINE MARSH

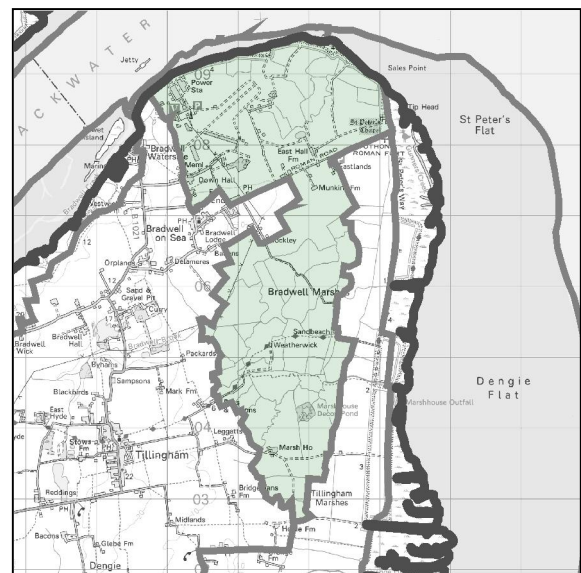


Key Characteristics

- Flat, low-lying land immediately behind sea wall defences.
- Mostly arable farmland on former reclaimed marsh intersected by linear ditches and dykes.
- Absence of trees except around farmsteads.
- Sense of huge sky, sound of birds, tranquillity, and panoramic views across the marshland and out to sea.
- Isolated farms; restricted access provided by a very few lanes; absence of settlements.

Overall Character

This area of flat, low-lying drained marshland behind the sea wall is at the tip of the Dengie Peninsula, where it juts out into the Blackwater Estuary. It stretches between Sales Point and Bradwell Power Station then extends down into the Bradwell Marshes. This character area includes the ancient St Peter-on-the-Wall Saxon church and a disused military airfield from World War II. It is a remote landscape, with access for vehicles limited to one B road; and access to the sea wall is only on foot via either the old Roman Road to St Peter's, or various footpaths such as St Peter's Way. The Bradwell Marshes have a long history and here the sinuous ditches reflect the older natural drainage patterns and fleets that were originally used to enclose the marshland. Near Marsh House, an old decoy pond remains, and in places old counter walls can be seen. Remnant elm hedgerows are visible in places. This is in stark contrast to the mostly rectilinear open field pattern of the more recently drained marshland to the east (D6). This windswept landscape of big sky and shifting colours displays varying textures - from the rough textured salt marsh at low tide through to the smoother grazing marsh/grassland and the extensive expanses of arable fields. Disused or derelict buildings mixed with small isolated settlements amid large-scale open arable farmland give this remote promontory of big sky and sea and shifting colours an atmosphere and a character that seems forgotten and lost in time. The sense of tranquillity is very strong.



Visual Characteristics

- Bradwell Nuclear Power Station and its pylons dominate the skyline as a visual landmark in the northern reaches of the area, visible from great distances over the surrounding flatlands, especially when lit at night.
- St Peter-on-the-Wall church is visible from the surrounding flatlands.
- Strong sense of being windswept and desolate.
- Visual relief is offered by views on a clear day looking inland to the wooded slopes on the north shore of the Blackwater Estuary as well as northwards to Mersea Island and the open sea to the north and east.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by drained curvilinear reclaimed land, which tends to be 18th century or earlier in origin. The main historic landscape features include:

- Field boundaries comprising water-filled ditches.
- Remnants of the original seawalls, which are still visible as relict landscape features.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by arable farmland on former reclaimed marsh intersected by linear ditches and dykes. The area contains Sandbeach Meadows SSSI - unimproved grassland supports dark-bellied Brent geese, plus other ecological features such as reed beds in ditches, and unimproved grasslands.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Lighting and future use for Bradwell Power Station.
- Proposed wind farm on Bradwell Marshes and ancillary telecommunications.
- Issues of potential for pollution of water table due to large-scale intensive agriculture and use of fertilizer.
- Potential for more visually intrusive expansion to the settlement edges.
- Increase of tourist traffic during peak tourist periods.
- Potential further loss and decline in hedgerows due to intensive agricultural practice and lack of management.
- Potential further decline in condition of field boundaries through further agricultural intensification.
- Utilities development i.e. Masts, pylons.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include areas of drained marsh, sinuous ditches and remnant elm hedgerows (which are sensitive to changes in land management). The open nature of the area is visually sensitive to new development, which would be visible within views from adjacent character areas. There is a sense of historic integrity, resulting from historic field boundaries, comprising water-filled ditches and remnants of old sea walls. 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.

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.

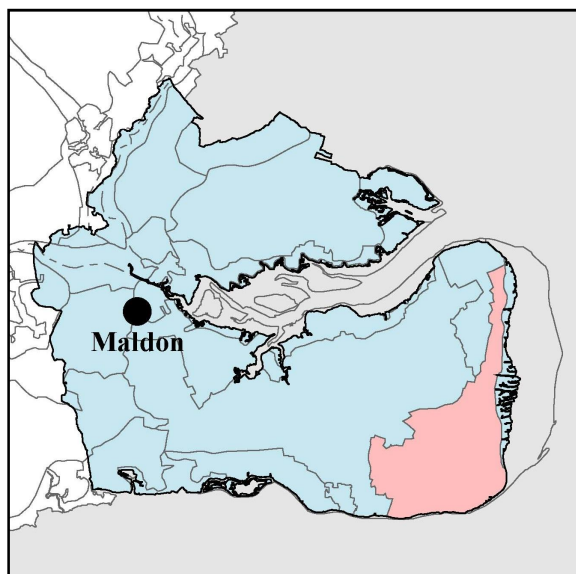
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve the open, undeveloped character of the area.
- Conserve the largely undisturbed and tranquil nature of the area.
- Consider the impacts of any development in adjacent character areas avoiding visual intrusion.
- Ensure that any new development is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles.
- Conserve and enhance the landscape of ditches, dykes, etc.
- 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.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Where appropriate, create opportunities for unimproved grassland.
- Conserve and enhance the ecological structure of ditches, drains within the character area.
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials in keeping with local vernacular landscape character.
- Encourage further partnerships such as the Environmental Stewardship Scheme with East Hall Farm to promote sustainable agricultural practices.
- Consider the potential for creation of new inter-tidal habitats (such as saltmarsh) through Managed Realignment (with regard to information set out within the Crouch and Blackwater Estuary Flood Management Strategy : Essex Estuarine Strategy).

D8 DENGIE DRAINED ESTUARINE MARSH

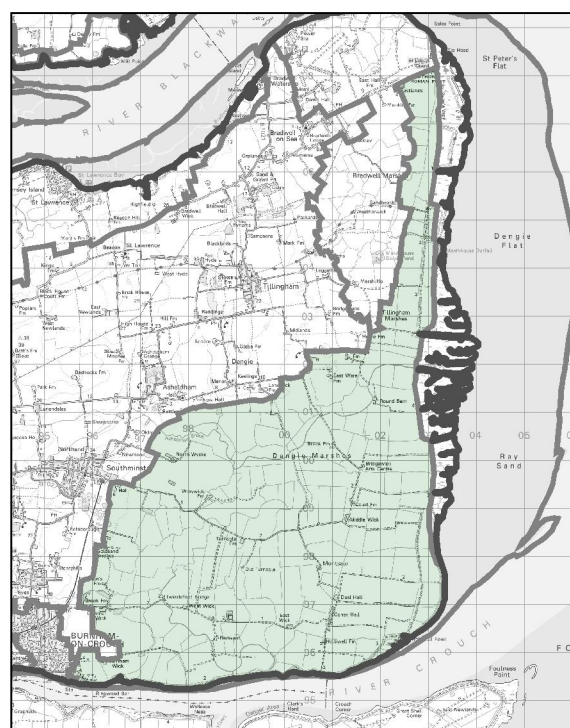


Key Characteristics

- Low drained land immediately behind sea wall defences.
- Mostly arable farmland on former reclaimed marsh intersected by linear ditches and dykes.
- Absence of trees except around farmsteads.
- Sense of huge sky, sound of birds, tranquillity, and panoramic views across the marshland and out to sea.
- Isolated farms; restricted access provided by a very few lanes; absence of settlements.

Overall Character

This character area encompasses the low-lying drained farmland immediately behind the sea wall defences from Sale Point in the northeast tip of the Dengie Peninsula and parallel to the fringing saltmarsh southwards round Holliwell Point to the broad tracts of polder lying between Burnham-on-Crouch and the sea. The boundary between these drained coastal marshlands and the adjacent coastal farmlands of Tillingham and Latchingdon (E2) is generally along the change in soil type from good quality silts of the coastal farmlands to the harder to work clays of the older diverse marshland. It is a vast, expansive area of huge skies and ditches, dykes and open arable farmland, mainly cereals, with little traditional grazing marsh seen today. Telegraph poles mark tracks and farmsteads across the view in places, with access for vehicles very limited. Narrow lanes, often private, lead to farmsteads or connect them, and public footpaths are often the only way to reach the coast. St Peter's Way is one of the very few footpaths giving public access to the sea wall. The marshland furthest inland is the oldest, and this is where settlements, ancient sinuous drainage patterns and evidence of more woody vegetation are evident. The more recent innings of land near the sea wall have no settlements, very large barns and a regular field pattern of rectilinear fields, drains and ditches. Woody vegetation is absent except along remaining old, neglected counter wall sea



defences that remain from an earlier time. This landscape is extremely remote, with only the sound of the wind, birds and the occasional farm vehicle, it has a very tranquil character.

Visual Characteristics

- Bradwell Nuclear Power Station and its pylons dominate the skyline as a visual landmark to the north, visible from great distances over the surrounding flatlands.
- St Peter-on-the-Wall church is visible from the surrounding flatlands.
- Occasional tall Lombardy poplar windbreaks loom over fields but do not jar visually; sporadic use of coniferous windbreaks looks out of character with marshland.
- Strong sense of being windswept, desolate and difficult to move about in other than on foot.
- The sense of space and sky is intense and often overwhelming.
- Tall reeds dominate the ditches, especially in the southern part of the area outside Burnham, and occasional mounded irrigation reservoirs break the line of the horizon.
- Some visual relief is offered by views on a clear day looking inland to the wooded slopes of Tillingham and Latchingdon and Fambridge Coastal Farmlands. Looking out over the seawall, there are long views to the North Kent coast, the Dengie Flats and Foulness.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by drained reclaimed land, which are either curvilinear and 18th century or earlier in origin, or rectilinear (to the east) and largely of 19th or early 20th century date, with some former curvilinear reclamation that was subsequently straightened, of 18th century or early 19th century origin. Other historic features include the water-filled ditch field boundaries, and the remnants of the original seawalls that are still visible as relict landscape features.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by arable farmland on former reclaimed marsh intersected by linear ditches and dykes. The area contains the following main ecological features:

- Reed-filled ditches.
- Arable fields that provide feeding grounds for Brent geese.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Issues of potential for pollution of water table due to large-scale intensive agriculture and use of fertilizer.
- Potential high density residential expansion of towns directly onto the marshland, as at Burnham, with no transition zone or vernacular architecture.
- Increase of tourist traffic during peak tourist periods e.g.: Burnham.
- Potential further decline in condition of field boundaries through further agricultural intensification.
- Potential for further utilities development i.e. Masts, pylons, wind farms.
- Developments with individual large/bulky buildings.
- Infrastructure implications, especially for roads, as expansion of industrial scale farming continues.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include areas of drained marsh, ditches, dykes and sea walls (which are sensitive to changes in land management). The open nature of the area is visually sensitive to new development, which would be visible within views from adjacent character areas. There is a sense of historic integrity, resulting from historic field boundaries, comprising water-filled ditches and remnants of old sea walls. Potential new development either within the area, or within adjacent character areas, may also disturb the strong sense of tranquillity. Overall, this character area has high sensitivity to change.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

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.

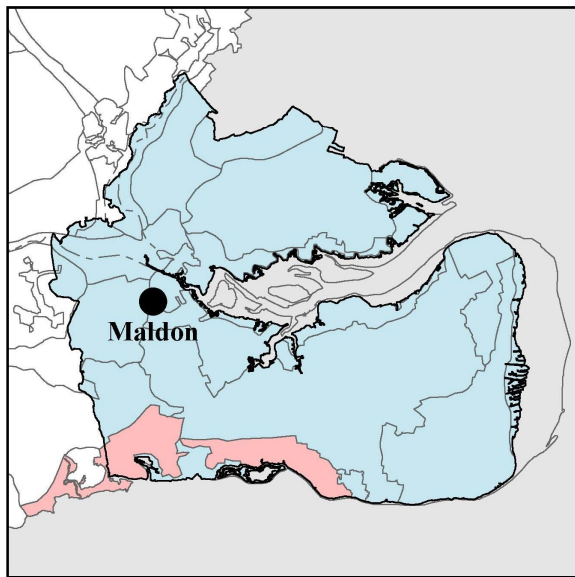
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Consider the visual impact of new residential development and farm buildings on the open arable landscape.
- Ensure that any new development is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles.
- Where appropriate, conserve and enhance the landscape of ditches, dykes, etc.
- Develop strategies to reduce the impact of tourist traffic and localized industrial agricultural expansion.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

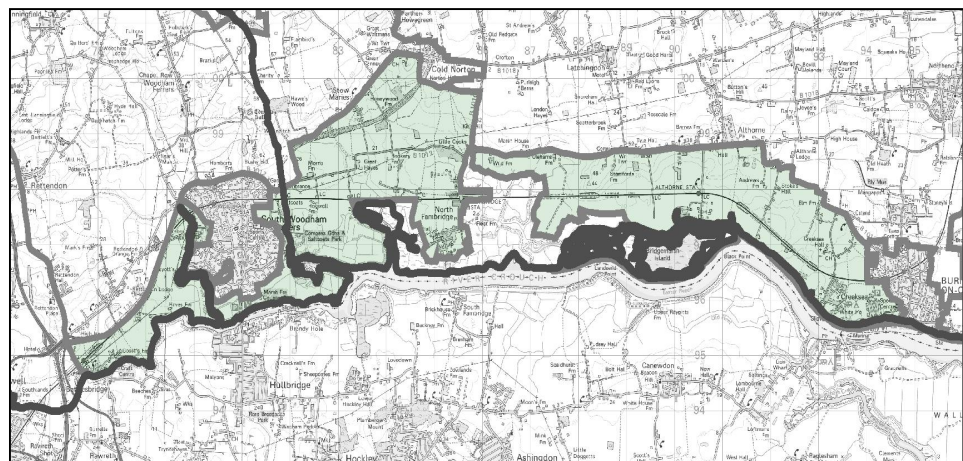
- Develop strategies to reduce potential for pollution in ditches and streams bounding the fields.
- Conserve the existing field boundary pattern, and restore where necessary through planting native species appropriate to local landscape character.
- Create opportunities for unimproved grassland.
- Conserve and enhance the ecological structure of ditches, drains within the character area.
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials in keeping with local vernacular landscape character.
- Consider the potential for creation of new inter-tidal habitats (such as saltmarsh) through Managed Realignment (with regard to information set out within the Crouch and Blackwater Estuary Flood Management Strategy : Essex Estuarine Strategy).

D9 FAMBRIDGE DRAINED ESTUARINE MARSH (shared with Chelmsford Borough)



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 Bridgemark 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.
- Croach 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

- 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 historic lanes and unimproved roadside verges.
- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of North Fambridge, Creeksea and other villages.
- Consider the potential for creation of new inter-tidal habitats (such as saltmarsh) through Managed Realignment (with regard to information set out within the Crouch Estuary Flood Management Strategy : Essex Estuarine Strategy).

6.6 Coastal Farmland Landscapes

6.6.1 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

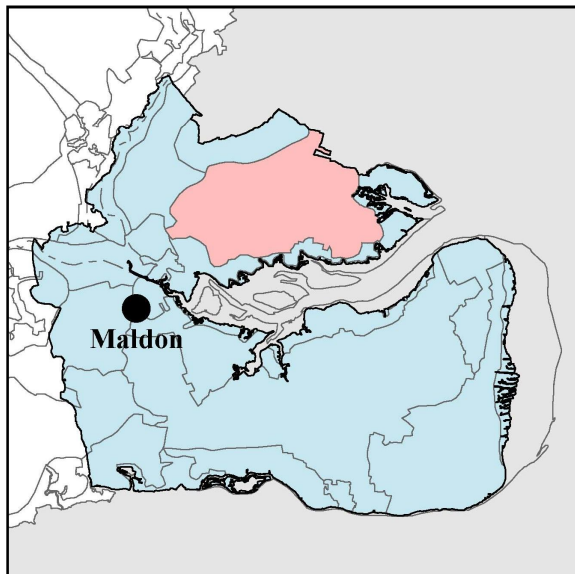
- Predominantly flat, low-lying landscape, sloping gradually upwards to the north
- Views of river estuaries and coastline from several locations
- Arable farmland on underlying heavy clay soils
- Lack of large patches/areas of woodland
- Relatively sparse settlement pattern

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

E1 - Tolleshunt Coastal Farmland

E2 - Tillingham and Latchingdon Coastal Farmland

E1 TOLLESHUNT COASTAL FARMLAND

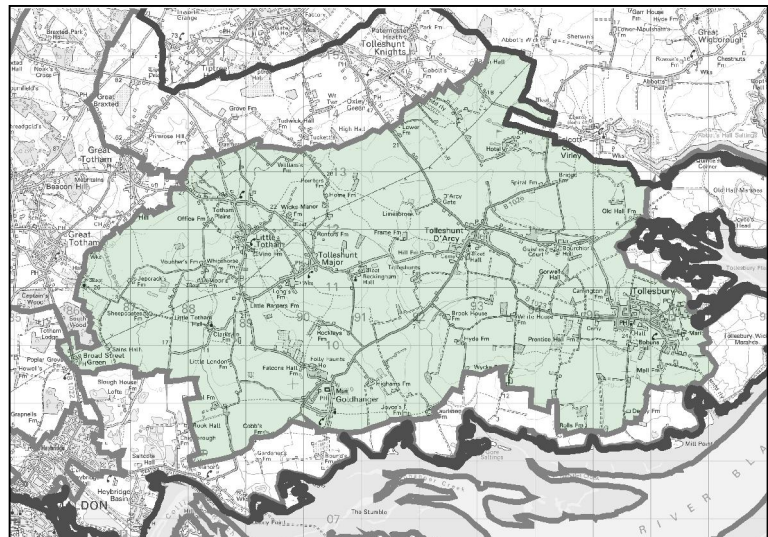


Key Characteristics

- Absence of woodland.
- Semi regular pattern of tall hedgerows, small copses and shelterbelts, although many hedgerows removed.
- Gently undulating arable farmland behind the coastal marshland.
- Small-scale settlements situated in close proximity.

Overall Character

This coastal farmland is the hinterland to the North Blackwater Estuary. Lying on well-drained loamy soils it extends from Tollesbury in the east to the wooded ridge farmlands in the north and west, with the low-lying Maldon Drained Estuarine Farmland (See D2) to the south, which also separates it from the estuary. It is a gently sloping landscape of mainly arable crops, with some horse pasture near settlements. Fields are semi regular and large. Tall remnant elm hedgerows bound the fields, and coniferous windbreaks can be seen in some places. Extensive hedgerow loss in many places gives the appearance of a large-scale field pattern. Pylons march across the fields in a line moving southwest to northeast between Little Totham and Tolleshunt Major. Vehicular access around the area is via many small winding lanes and minor roads, and there is also a complex network of footpaths. Attractive historic villages, often surrounded by trees, are scattered in linear settlements along roads and most farmsteads are dispersed in sometimes quite isolated locations across the area. Access to the estuary is difficult, but possible at Tollesbury. This village has a maritime in character due to its position on the edge of the marshland behind the old sea walls. Distinctive vertical nineteenth century sail loft buildings, the light ship and many sailing boats on the Woodrolfe Creek are visible from a distance across the marshes, and the church spire in the village can be seen across the fields to the south. Overall this is a landscape varied in texture and colour. The sky and horizon meet frequently here, in contrast to the more enclosed intimate feel in the villages across the centre of the area. This is an area



characterised by its quiet lanes and isolated farmsteads with a strong sense of place and a strong sense of tranquillity

Visual Characteristics

- Panoramic views across coastal farmland to the Blackwater Estuary and the Tollesbury Wick marshes as well as to the wooded farmland to the north and west.
- Views to Bradwell Power Station.
- Open landscape of flat to slightly undulating arable fields.
- Sail lofts local landmarks at marina outside Tollesbury.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by a mixture of pre-18th century irregular fields and later piecemeal enclosure by agreement. Historically the settlement is dispersed, comprising isolated manors, farms, moated sites and hamlets bordering small greens. The only nucleated settlement of any size is Tollesbury. The main historic landscape features include:

- A single large estate from the Saxon period, the Tolls which is reflected in the current place-names of Tolleshunt and Tollesbury.
- The fields in the southern portion of the area which were laid out on a roughly ladder-like system running down from the crest of the ridge down to the marsh edge.
- Rectilinear field in the northern half of the areas, which are still are grouped into distinct blocks, possibly representing individual farm extents. These fields are definitely medieval in origin and given the known history of the area it is possible that the basic framework was laid out in the Saxon period.
- Sub-divided into long narrow farms during the post-medieval period, enabling access to the high ground, the south-facing slopes and the marsh, and hence the widest range of landscape resources.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable agriculture. The main ecological features include:

- Two areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland on the northern edges.
- Tall hedgerows, small copses and shelterbelts, although many hedgerows removed.
- Unimproved grassland habitats on narrow verge sides.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential further loss and decline in hedgerows due to intensive agricultural practice and lack of management.
- Pressure of increased traffic on rural and minor lanes especially during peak tourist seasons.
- Pressure from increased amenity uses such as recreational boating, and water-related leisure activities and effects on tranquil areas.
- Potential visual intrusion of telephone masts.
- Effects of new uses such as golf courses at Tolleshunt Knights and expansion of marina at Tollesbury.
- Potential for more visually intrusive expansion to the settlement edges at Tollesbury, particularly on the creekside marina.
- Potential for visually intrusive development of new farm buildings.
- Eastern part of the area vulnerable to loss of coastal/estuarine landscape features due to sea level rise and effects of global warming.
- Flood protection and managed retreat issues.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include tall, remnant elm hedgerows, small copses and shelterbelts (which are sensitive to changes in land management). The open nature of the skyline of several areas of the coastal farmland is visually sensitive, with new development potentially visible within expansive views across the area and also within views to and from adjacent drained estuarine marsh. There is a strong sense of historic integrity, resulting from a dispersed historic settlement pattern of small hamlets and villages, distinctive historic co-axial field pattern in a southern portion of the area and several visible historic features (including Tollesbury 19th century sail loft). The comprehensive network of quiet rural lanes, which cross the landscape are sensitive to potential increased traffic flow, associated with new development. Overall, this character area has moderate to – 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.

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.

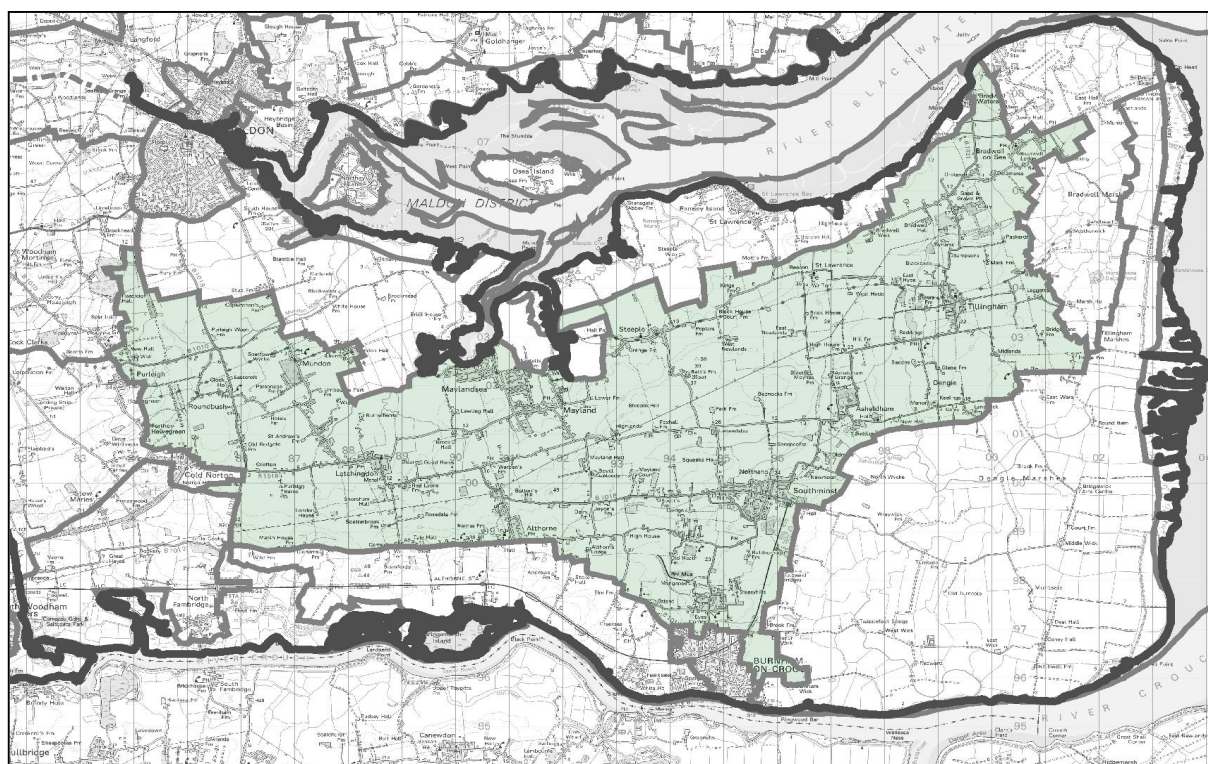
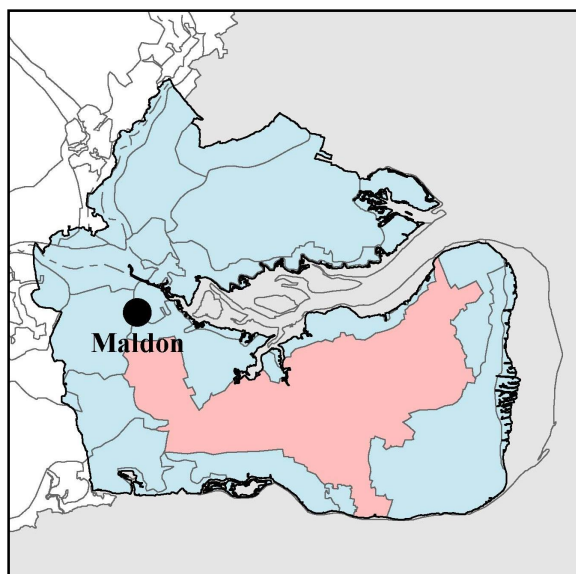
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Ensure that any new development responds to historic settlement pattern and scale, and uses materials that are appropriate to the local landscape character. Such development should be well integrated into the surrounding landscape.
- Conserve the mostly 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 and enhance historic lanes and unimproved roadside verges.
- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of Tollesbury and other villages.

E2 TILLINGHAM AND LATCHINGDON COASTAL FARMLAND



Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating arable farmland behind the coastal marshland, locally quite steep.
- Heavy clay soils and lighter sandy loamy soils where sand and gravel deposits overlie clay.
- Distinctive long hedgerow boundaries running on parallel axes are a common feature, thought to be the result of ancient planned enclosure.
- Dutch elm disease has made elm loss noticeable in hedgerows.
- Right-angled bends in lanes reflect ancient field pattern.
- Settlement pattern follows underlying soils - sand and gravel formations on a ridge between Bradwell and Burnham - elsewhere settlement on slopes in clay areas.

Overall Character

This character area lies on the broadly rolling higher ground forming the hinterlands behind both the Dengie drained marshland (D7/D8), the lower Blackwater estuary drained marshland (D5/D6), and the river Crouch drained farmland (D9). This land is steeply sloping in places, as above Steeple, Mayland, and St Lawrence, and south of Cold Norton. Criss-crossed by drains and ditches, many of the field patterns have noticeable right-angled bends that the adjacent lanes follow, which is thought to demonstrate evidence of ancient planned landscape. The mainly rectilinear field pattern is medium to large scale. Extensive hedgerow loss in many places gives the appearance of a large-scale field pattern. Farming is a mix of arable and some pasture enclosed by elm-dominated hedgerows and copses, many of them containing a large proportion of dead elms, victims of Dutch elm disease. Trees and shelterbelts are usually located near farmsteads. Scattered hedgerow oak trees are visible in some places along fields and lanes. Around Latchingdon many conifer windbreaks can also be seen. Visually intrusive pylons march across the fields through the centre of the area. The telegraph poles are less visually intrusive. Occasionally a water tower dominates the horizon locally. The B1010 is the main access road between Maldon and Burnham, but the B1018 and B1021 also service the area. Road traffic is omnipresent. The railway between Burnham and Southminster is well hidden in the landscape. Historic settlement patterns are visible in the line of villages along the top of the low north-south ridge between Bradwell and Burnham, due to underlying sands and gravels, whereas other villages are more dispersed in a linear pattern along roads across the underlying clay slopes. Farmsteads are scattered across the area. The vernacular architecture is weatherboard painted white with black trim. Red brick is also widely found as a local material. The fringes of most of the older villages have been suburbanised in an unsympathetic way that visually intrudes into the local landscape. Views of the church at Tillingham are completely obscured by modern housing in yellow brick. Current, as well as late 20th century development at Mayland and Maylandsea is particularly noticeable, due to its density and suburban style, and does not blend well into the open landscape character. Disused sand and gravel pits have also often been insensitively or inappropriately restored causing loss of hedgerow pattern and uncharacteristic landform. This is a landscape characterised by its rolling topography, by its visual links to the drained marshland and by its texture of its deciduous tree and shrubs in field boundaries. Urban expansion is happening fast here, and as a consequence only certain pockets, well away from the B road network, have a moderate sense of tranquillity now.

Visual Characteristics

- Steeple church visible from higher ground to the south.
- Panoramic views from Althorne to both Blackwater and Crouch estuaries.
- Steep slopes descending to Steeple, Mayland and St Lawrence visible from across the Blackwater Estuary.
- Some ancient manors and moats visible.
- Urban fringes visually intrusive in terms of density and architectural style.

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). These are of considerable antiquity, and may have their origins in the middle Saxon period, if not before. These were historically bordered by elm hedgerows, but most of these were lost in the 1970s as a consequence of Dutch Elm Disease. The original medieval pattern of settlements scattered along the roads along the top of the ridge and on smaller peninsulas protruding out to the coast is still evident, as at Burnham-on-Sea. Other historic landscape features include the former Bradwell-on-Sea airfield, which is now the site of the Bradwell Nuclear Power-station.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by a mix of arable and pastoral agriculture behind the coastal marshland. Ecological features include:

- Remnants of historic hedgerows.
- Unimproved grassland on narrow roadside verges.
- Irrigation reservoirs.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential further loss and decline in hedgerows due to intensive agricultural practice and lack of management.
- Pressure of increased traffic on rural and minor lanes especially during peak tourist seasons.
- Pressure from increased water-related leisure activities and effects on tranquil areas.
- Potential visual intrusion of telephone masts.
- Effects of new uses on tranquillity such as firing ranges.
- Potential for more visually intrusive expansion to the settlement edges Potential for visually intrusive development of new farm buildings.
- Flood protection and managed retreat issues.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include distinctive long hedgerow boundaries (often containing deciduous trees and shrubs) running on parallel axes (which are sensitive to changes in land management). The open nature of the skyline of several areas of the coastal farmland is visually sensitive, with new development potentially visible within expansive views across the area and also within views to and from adjacent drained estuarine marsh and coastal farmland. There is a strong sense of historic integrity, resulting from a historic settlement pattern of villages lining the top of the low north-south ridge between Bradwell and Burnham and a distinctive historic co-axial field pattern. 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.

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

- Ensure that any new development responds to historic settlement pattern and scale, and uses materials that are appropriate to the local landscape character Such development should be well integrated into the surrounding landscape.
- Conserve the mostly 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.

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 Tollesbury and other villages.

6.7 Wooded Farmland Landscapes

6.7.1 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

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

F3 - Totham Wooded Farmland
F4 - Tolleshunt Knights Wooded Farmland
F5 - Little Baddow and Danbury Wooded Farmland
F6 - Woodham Wooded Farmland
F12 - East Hanningfield Wooded Farmland

F3 TOTHAM WOODED FARMLAND (shared with Braintree District)

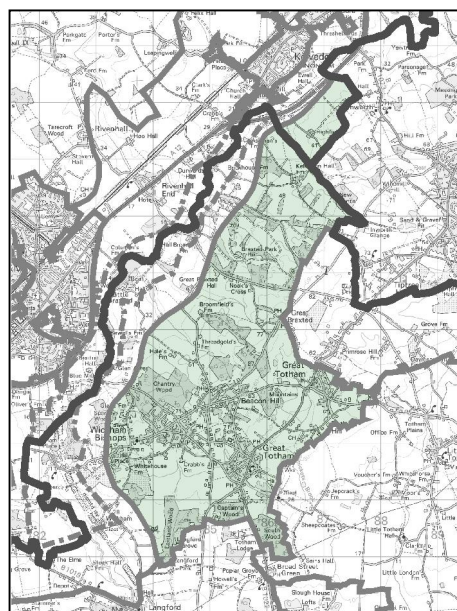


Key Characteristics

- Wooded ridges and hillsides to the east of the River Blackwater.
- Predominantly agricultural fields enclosed by woodland patches or hedgerows with mature trees.
- Field boundaries vary; some thickly enclosed, as at Beacon Hill; some more open with gappy hedges.
- Interest created by colour-washed buildings both in villages and scattered in the landscape.

Overall Character

Totham Wooded Landscape Character Area covers the wooded eastern hills and slopes above the River Blackwater, which stretches from the sparsely settled Kelvedon Hall Farm area in the north, through Great Braxted and to the Eastern Wood and Captain's Wood in the south. Chantry Wood lies on the western edge of the area, the wooded slopes south of Great Totham and Totham Hill making the eastern boundary of the area. The landform is rolling hills with some steep ridges, particularly along Beacon Hill Ridge, with small to medium-size agricultural fields enclosed by woods and copses. These are quite dense at Great Braxted, and become more open as they descend southwards towards the villages of Great Totham and the fringes of Wickham Bishops. Some of these woods are remnants of ancient woodland. The field pattern is irregular, usually following the topography of the land. There are occasional ditches, streams, and small farmstead reservoirs. A network of many footpaths and tracks cover the area, some of which have become vehicular roads. Vehicular access is good, with several B roads that cross the area. The scale varies from intimate and enclosed on the higher thickly wooded slopes and ridges, to medium scale on the lower southern slopes where hedges and hedgerow trees predominate as field boundaries. The landscape is textured with contrasts of deciduous woods and hedges, undulating fields that are a mixture of arable and grazing, and occasional coniferous tree belts. This is an enclosed landscape, with periodic views through gaps in the trees on the higher ground to the valley below. It is a gentle, subtly varied landscape that has a strong sense of place as it apparent it has long been domesticated by farming and human settlement. Braxted Park and scattered



pre-1800 granges and farmhouses add to this sense of history. The slight sense of isolation on the higher ground comes from these inward-looking views framed by dense woods. The hilltops and lanes are relatively tranquil, with settlement edges and areas near the A12 more disturbed by vehicular noise. The sense of tranquillity thus varies from strong to moderate.

Visual Characteristics

- Long distance views to drained estuarine marshes from Mountain Road leading into Great Braxted
- Timber church steeples are a feature within the landscape, but few churches are on high ground and are often tucked into the wooded landscape.
- Some open views to the valley below, but more often the views are short distances, over fields and buildings framed by the wooded ridges.
- New residential development on Hall Road, Great Totham is visually out of character with surrounding landscape in terms of colour, style and density of the settlement.

Historic Land Use

Historically this Character Area comprised Tiptree Heath, a huge area of common rough pasture and wood-pasture shared between the neighbouring parishes. Encroachment on this area began in a piecemeal fashion in the medieval period, but extensive open tracts still remained until the early 19th century when it was finally enclosed by Enclosure Act. This piecemeal history of enclosure is evident. Some areas of the original heath and wood-pasture survive, these appear as ancient woodland and are largely located on the top of the ridge, the Wickham Bishops area is particularly well-wooded. Historically settlement was very dispersed and sparse, comprising isolated church/hall complexes, manors, farms, cottages and small hamlets. The main historic landscape features include:

- Enclosed meadow pasture along the Domsey Brook valley floor.
- Braxted Park and a smaller park at Hill House.
- The modern settlement of Wickham Bishops, which largely date to the 20th century.
- Moderate to high post-1950s boundary loss, in many cases involving the removal of boundaries introduced in the early 19th century.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable agriculture with large blocks of woodland. The area contains no designated sites of nature conservation. Ecological features include:

- Boundaries of ditches and species-rich hedgerows.
- Approximately 21 areas of Ancient Woodland including: Kelvedon Hall Wood/Tiptree Wood/Westhall Wood/Rond Wood/Criers Wood/Stowling Wood/Chantry Wood/Eastland, and Captain's Wood.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Pressure of increased traffic on rural and minor lanes.
- Potential for more visually intrusive development on the fringes of Witham.
- Potential for visually intrusive development of new farm buildings.
- Potential for visually intrusive development within adjacent character area (around Witham).

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include several woodland patches and copses, mature trees within hedgerows and occasional ditches, which are sensitive to changes in land management. The overall sense of tranquillity within parts of the character area is also sensitive to change and potential new development, or increases in traffic flow associated with such development. There is a strong sense of historic integrity, resulting from a series of ancient woodlands situated on the top of the ridge (comprising areas of original heath and wood pasture), Braxted Park and Hill House and patches of enclosed meadow within the valley floors, which are also

sensitive to changes in land management. The 21 blocks of ancient woodland within the character area provide important habitats for wildlife. 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.

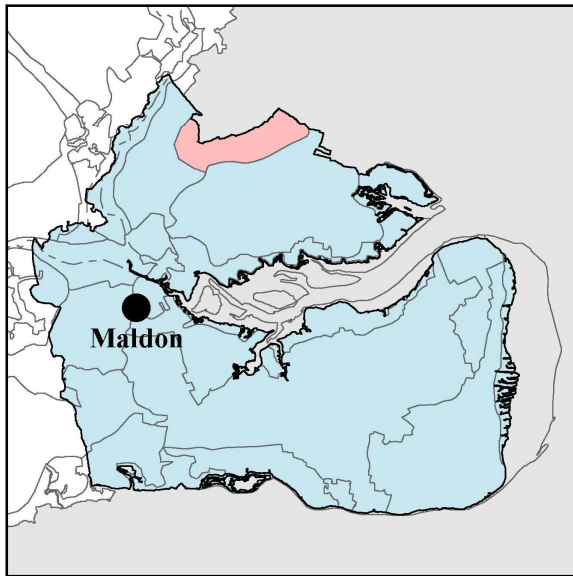
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve and protect open views from Mountain Road, Braxted Lane and other rural lanes.
- Ensure that any new development responds to historic settlement pattern and scale, and uses materials and colours that are appropriate to the local landscape character; such development should be well integrated into the surrounding landscape.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and restore existing hedgerow network where gappy and depleted especially on property boundaries or on field margins.
- Conserve and enhance the ecological structure of woodland, copses and hedges within the character area.
- 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 ploughing does not disturb mature trees within hedgerows.
- Conserve and promote the use of local building materials which are in keeping with the local vernacular and landscape character.

F4 TOLLESHUNT KNIGHTS WOODED FARMLAND

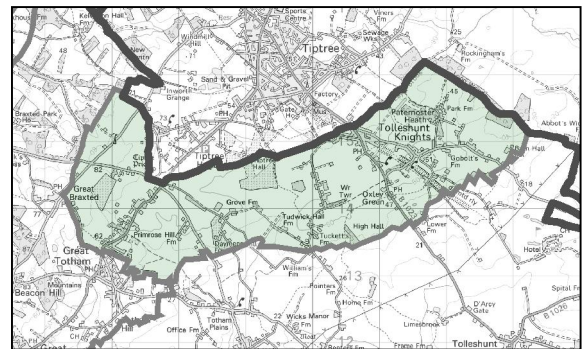


Key Characteristics

- Enclosed landscape of wooded farmland, in the southern part of the Tiptree Ridge.
- Remnant heathland to the north of the area.
- Intimate and semi-enclosed character created by density of woodland on the ridge.
- Mosaic of small to medium sized arable fields.

Overall Character

This character area is located on the Tiptree Ridge, taking in Tolleshunt Knights in the northwest and extending to Great Braxted in the west. The northern boundary takes in a portion of the remnant Tiptree heath, and the southern edge of the area is aligned with the edge of the wooded ridge. This is rolling wooded farmland made up of a mosaic of small to medium-sized arable fields interspersed with many patches of mixed woodland which are sometimes interlocking. This includes fragments of ancient woodland. Occasionally coniferous windbreaks are visually dominant. Fields are defined by intermittent oaks, scrub and tall gappy hedgerows along the irrigation ditches. Shapes vary from irregular to regular. Farming is mainly arable, though there is some pasture. The condition of the landscape varies from very well maintained to poor near some parts north of Great Totham. Settlement pattern is dispersed, made up of scattered farmsteads and the linear settlement of Tolleshunt Knights and the northern edges of Great Totham, (which lies in adjacent character area F3). This is a quiet, gently undulating semi-enclosed landscape where rough grassland and heathland in the north merge with the wooded field boundaries from Tiptree Priory to Ingworth. Long views are possible from the ridge top across the rolling coastal farmland to the south (see E1). Local vernacular architecture includes colour-washed plaster, weatherboarding and thatched and pantile roofs, although 20th century buildings predominate. Vehicular access is mostly via winding lanes, often with thick hedgerow boundaries, though the B1023 cuts across the area. With its low density of settlement and the high proportion of tree cover, this character area has a strong sense of tranquillity.



Visual Characteristics

- Long views on a clear day across coastal farmland to Blackwater Estuary in the south or to Blackwater Valley to the west.
- Disused railway line visible in the landscape.
- Dark woodland blocks form backdrop to most views across fields on upper ridge, which is almost flat.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is very varied, ranging from predominately pre-18th century irregular fields, probably medieval or earlier in origin, in the north-west of the area, to a more co-axial rectilinear system, also medieval in origin, in the remainder of the area, with dispersed areas of later piecemeal enclosure. Some of this later enclosure dates to the later medieval or post-medieval period, whilst the remainder, particularly on the former Layer Heath dates to the early 19th century. To the west, historically this area comprised Tiptree Heath, a huge area of common rough pasture and wood-pasture shared between the neighbouring parishes. Encroachment on this area began in a piecemeal fashion in the medieval period, but extensive open tracts still remained until the early 19th century when it was finally enclosed by Enclosure Act. Historically the settlement is dispersed, comprising isolated church/hall complexes, manors, farms, cottages and hamlets bordering small greens.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable agriculture with of woodland. Main ecological features include:

- Ancient woodlands including fragments of Long Wood, Wigborough Springs and High Hall Wood comprising oak and hornbeam.
- Streams and irrigation reservoirs.
- Boundaries of ditches and species-rich hedgerows.
- Some remnant heathland.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential for visually intrusive development within adjacent character area (around Tiptree).
- Potential for expansion of visually intrusive development on edges of Tolleshunt Knights.
- Pressure of increased traffic on rural and minor lanes.
- Potential for visually intrusive development of new farm buildings.
- Large scale leisure development uses that are potentially visually intrusive (such as golf courses).

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include many patches of mixed woodland and remnant heathland to the north of the area, which are sensitive to changes in land management. The overall sense of tranquillity within parts of the character area is also sensitive to change and potential new development, or increases in traffic flow associated with such development. There is a sense of historic integrity, resulting from a dispersed historic settlement pattern and patches of surviving original heath and wood pasture, appearing as ancient woodlands, which are also sensitive to changes in land management. The skyline of adjacent coastal farmland character areas is visually sensitive to change or new development, with long views southwards, as far as the Blackwater Estuary possible. 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.

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.

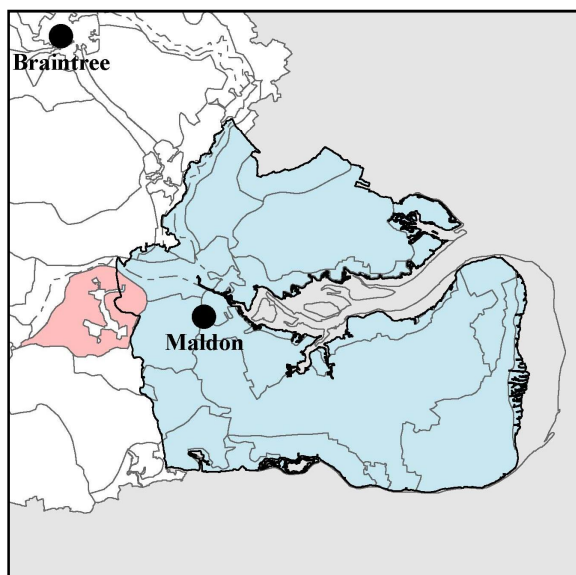
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the wooded landscape character.
- Ensure that any new development responds to historic settlement pattern and scale, and uses materials and colours that 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.
- Conserve the mostly rural character of the area.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

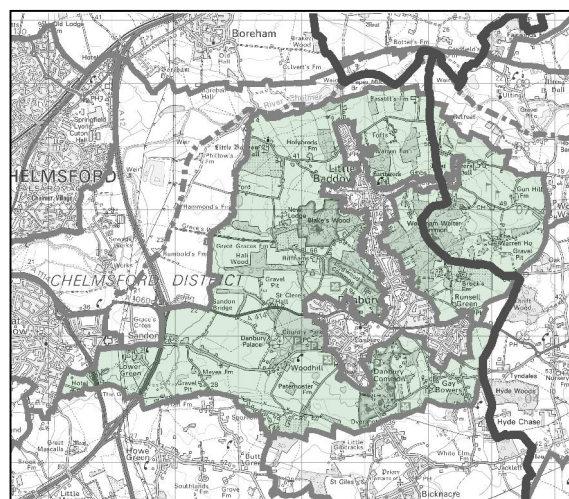
- Conserve and restore existing hedgerow network where gappy and depleted especially on property boundaries or on field margins.
- Conserve, manage and enhance areas of semi natural and ancient woodland as important heritage, nature conservation and landscape features.
- Conserve historic lanes and unimproved roadside verges.
- Introduce arable field margins as a means to ensure that mature trees within hedgerows are not disturbed by ploughing.
- Introduce a planting and management programme to ensure future trees within field hedgerow boundaries will succeed mature trees.
- Conserve and promote the use of local building materials which are in keeping with the local vernacular and landscape character.

F5 LITTLE BADDOW AND DANBURY WOODED FARMLAND (shared with Chelmsford Borough)



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, Pheasanthouse 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.

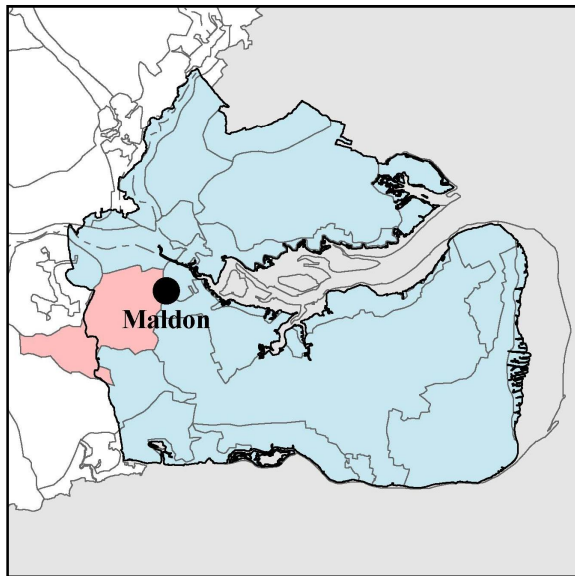
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- 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

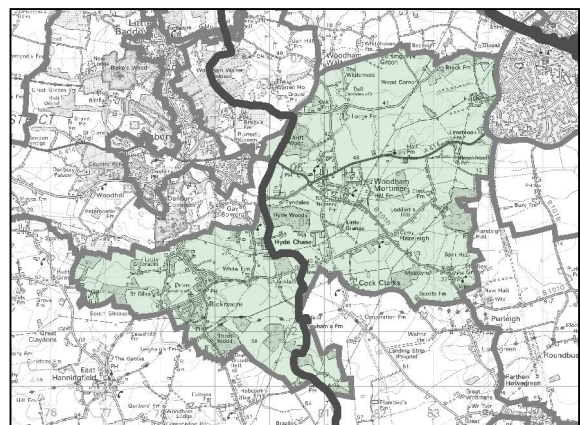
- Conserve and manage areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland within the area as important historical, landscape and nature conservation features.
- Conserve and restore pastures.
- Conserve and manage the existing hedgerow pattern, and strengthen where appropriate through planting.
- Conserve the 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 Chelmsford Borough)



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 hedgerows 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.

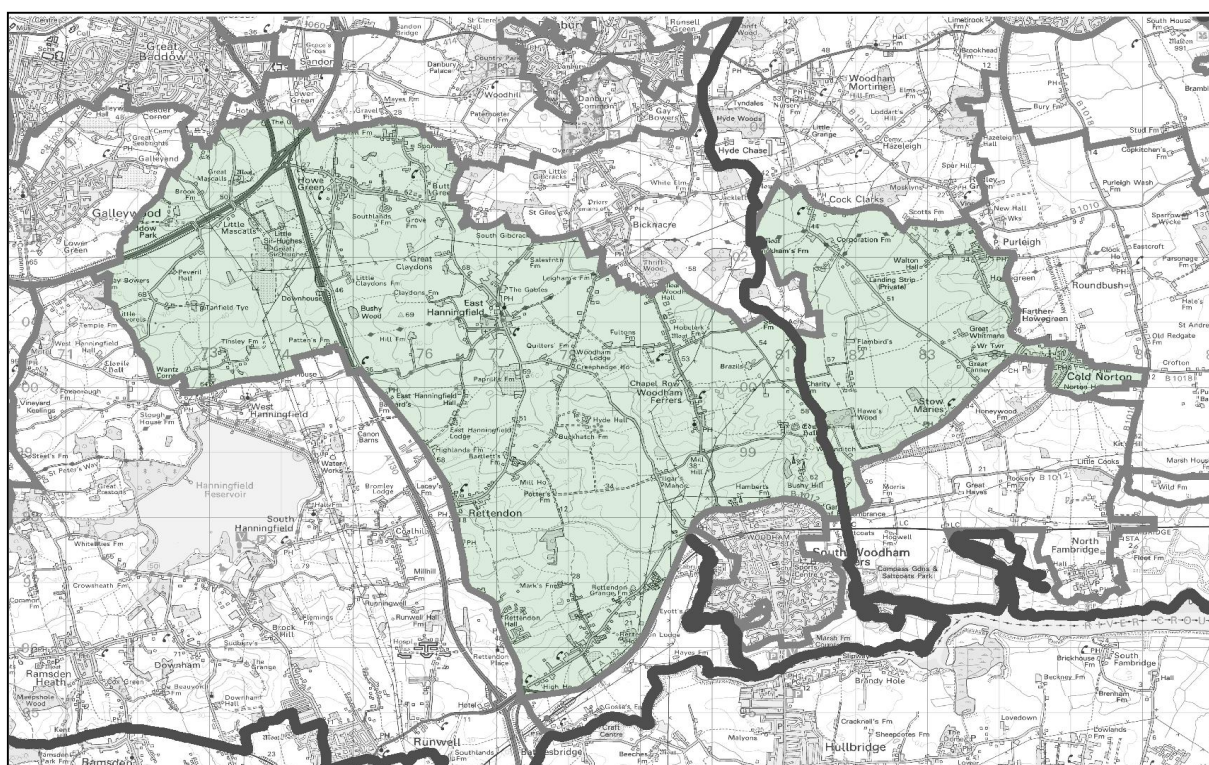
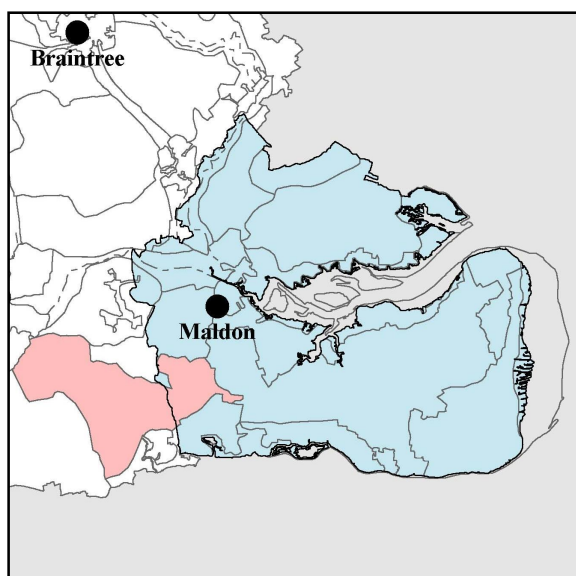
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- 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.

F12 EAST HANNINGFIELD WOODED FARMLAND (shared with Chelmsford Borough)



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.

6.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF MALDON DISTRICT

6.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF MALDON DISTRICT

6.1 General

6.1.1 This section of the report provides the detailed ‘profiles’ of Landscape Character Areas within Maldon District, 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). Reference should also be made to other studies for neighbouring authority areas including:

- Colchester Borough Landscape Character Assessment

6.1.2 The following Landscape Character Types and Areas have been identified within Maldon District (see Figure 6.1), and are described in the following sections:

A - River Valley Landscapes

A7 - Lower Chelmer River Valley
A9 - Blackwater River Valley

B - Farmland Plateau Landscapes

B21 - Boreham Farmland Plateau

C - Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats Landscapes

C1 - Tollesbury Fleet Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats
C2 - Blackwater Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats
C3 - Dengie Flats Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats
C4 - Fleet Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats
C5 - Bridgemarsh Island Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats

D - Drained Estuarine Marsh Landscapes

- D1 - Old Hall Marshes and Tollesbury Wick Drained Estuarine Marsh
- D2 - Maldon Drained Estuarine Marsh
- D3 - Northey Island Drained Estuarine Marsh
- D4 - Osea Island Drained Estuarine Marsh
- D5 - Mundon Drained Estuarine Marsh
- D6 - Ramsay Drained Estuarine Marsh
- D7 - Bradwell Drained Estuarine Marsh
- D8 - Dengie Drained Estuarine Marsh
- D9 - Fambridge Drained Estuarine Marsh

E - Coastal Farmland Landscapes

- E1 - Tolleshunt Coastal Farmland
- E2 - Tillingham and Latchingdon Coastal Farmland

F - Wooded Farmland Landscapes

- F3 - Totham Wooded Farmland
- F4 - Tolleshunt Knights Wooded Farmland
- F5 - Little Baddow and Danbury Wooded Farmland
- F6 - Woodham Wooded Farmland
- F12 - East Hanningfield Wooded Farmland

6.2 River Valley Landscapes

6.2.1 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

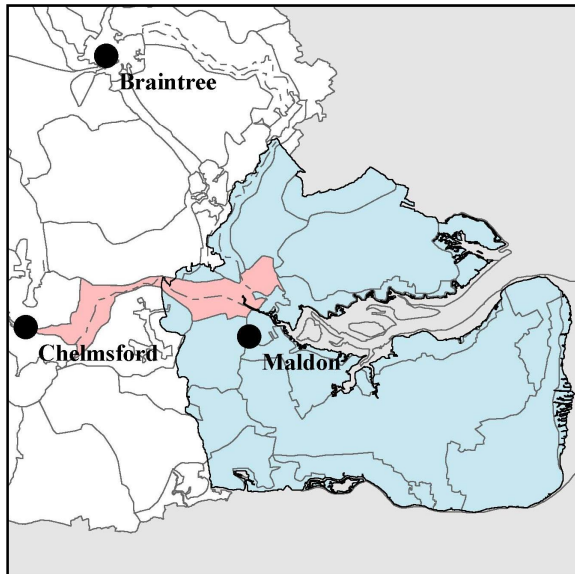
- V-shaped or u-shaped landform which dissects Boulder Clay/Chalky Till plateau
- Main river valley served by several tributaries
- Flat or gently undulating valley floor
- Intimate character in places
- Wooded character in places

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

A7 - Lower Chelmer River Valley

A9 - Blackwater River Valley

A7 LOWER CHELMER RIVER VALLEY (shared with Chelmsford District)

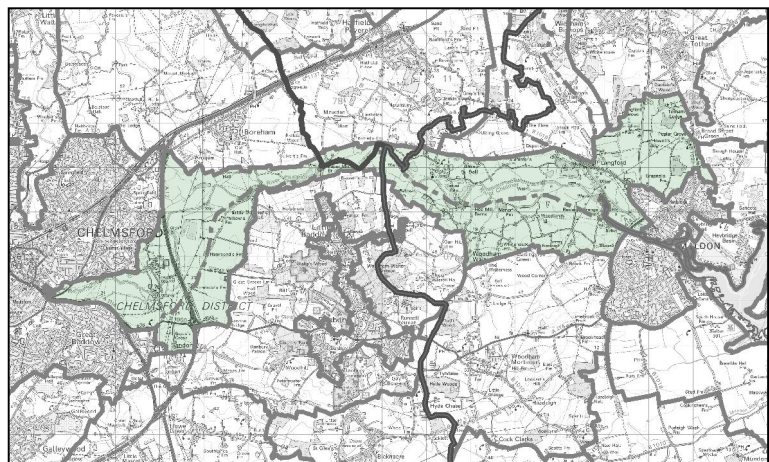


Key Characteristics

- 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 with 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 areas.

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.

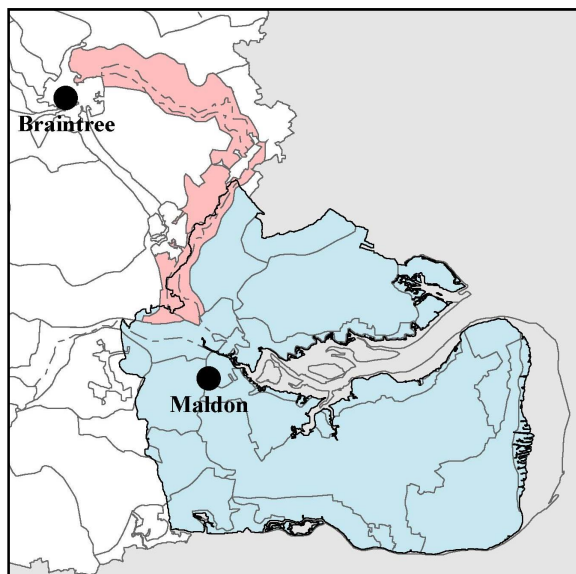
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- 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.

A9 BLACKWATER RIVER VALLEY (shared with Braintree District)

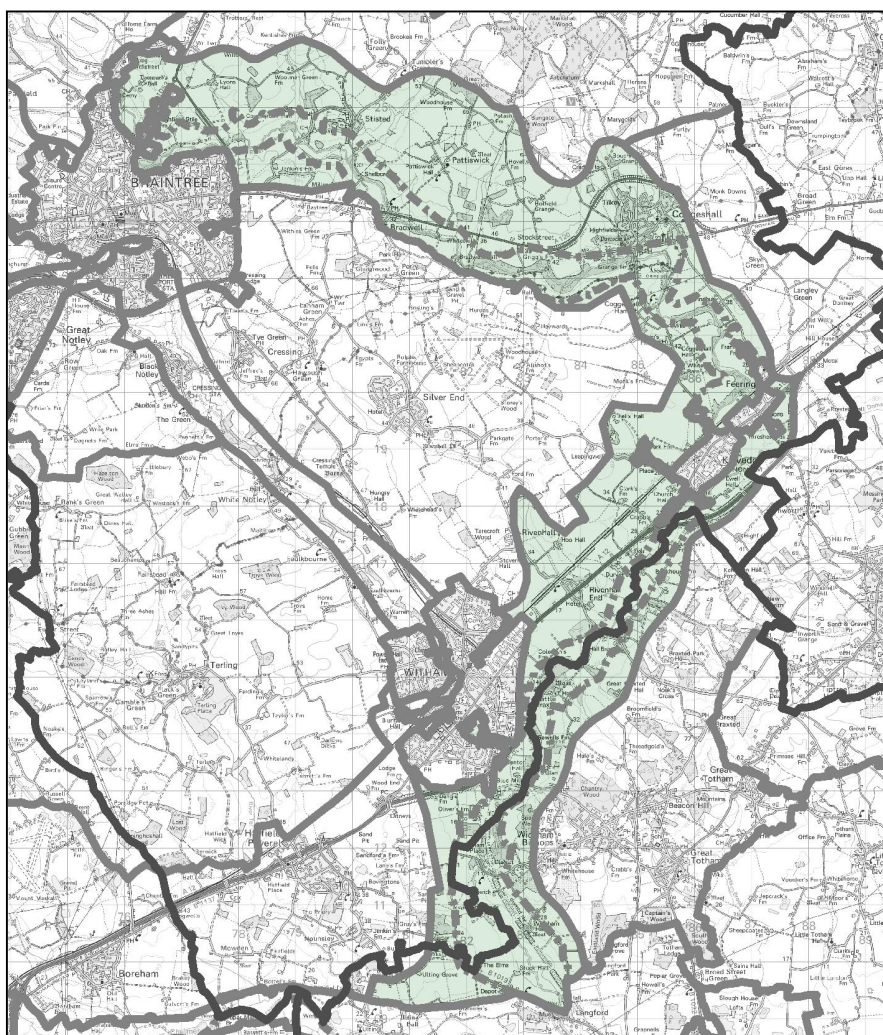


Key Characteristics

- Shallow valley.
- The valley sides slope gently up from the valley floor.
- Predominantly arable farmland on the valley slopes.
- The Lower Blackwater near the confluence with the River Chelmer has gently valley slopes.
- Overall strong sense of place and tranquillity away from the towns of Braintree, Witham and Maldon and the A120, A12 and the railway line.

(Sub-Unit A9a)

- Mixture of arable and pastoral on the valley floor.
- The River Blackwater Valley floor north of the A120 is narrow.
- The River Blackwater near the confluence with the River Chelmer has a wide flat valley floor.



- Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive features especially along the river banks.

Overall Character

The Upper Blackwater near Braintree is located in a relatively narrow valley with slopes that start gently at the top and get steeper the further into the valley to form a typical v-shape river valley centred on the river. There are areas of woodland located on valley slopes of the upper valley. As the river meanders down the valley, the valley floor becomes more wooded especially south of Coggeshall. Around Bradwell Village, the former sand and gravel pits are well vegetated with areas of poplar and willow plantations associated with the Blackwater River and its small tributary streams adding to the good tree cover and enclosure in the area. However in the lower reaches of the river until it joins the River Chelmer near Maldon the valley becomes wider with a flat valley floor with gently sloping valley sides. In this area there are few plantations and areas of woodland. The landscape becomes more open dominated by large open arable fields which benefit from the well drained fine loamy and sandy soils overlying chalk. Throughout the valley the hedgerows delineating field boundaries are in mixed condition with some well trimmed hedges and others that are more scrubby and fragmented with scattered hedgerow trees. The valley floor has large settlements such as Braintree and Witham along industries centred on the river such as watermills. Many of these mills have been converted to tourist attractions but maintain original features. On the valley slopes surrounding the river there are isolated farmsteads that are occasionally moated and small villages. The villages tend to be linear centred on the roads. All the settlements are well screened by deciduous trees. Interest is added to the landscape through the presence of a number of halls and large dwellings made from brick with a timber frame. The river valley has a strong sense of character and place with tranquil areas located along the narrow rural lanes away from the key settlements and busy roads.

Visual Characteristics

- Holfield Grange and the churches at Langford and Ulting form key landmarks along and across the river valley.
- 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.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by a mix of pre-18th century irregular fields probably of medieval origin and some maybe even older and pre-18th century co-axial fields, also of probable medieval origin. The valley bottom contains present and former enclosed meadow. The historic settlement pattern is largely dispersed, comprising isolated manors, church/hall complexes, farms, moated sites and hamlets. The main historic landscape features include:

- The valley to the south of Coggeshall which now contains extensive willow plantations.
- The historic towns of Kelvedon and Coggeshall.
- 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.
- Moderate post-1950s boundary loss.

Ecological Features

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

- Ten CWSs with ancient and semi-natural woodland habitats including part of Barrowfield Wood, Blackwater Plantation, Tilkey Road, Coggeshall, Blackwater Plantation West, part of Bungate Wood, part of Great Monk Wood, Coven Plantation, Lyonshall Wood and Bramble Wood.

- Six CWSs with unimproved grassland, hedgerow and wetland habitats including Moor Gardens, Riverview Meadows, Disused Railway - Witham, Hoo Hall Meadow, Feering Marsh and Whet Mead, also a Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential for pollution of the ditches and the River Blackwater from fertiliser and pesticide run-off from the surrounding agricultural fields.
- Potential for rubbish being thrown from car windows along the busy roads especially the A12.
- 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 distinctive linear poplar and willow plantations along the river banks, which are sensitive to changes in land management. The skyline of the valley slopes is visually sensitive, with potential new development being visible within several views to and from adjacent Landscape Character Areas and also within views across and along the valley. There is also a sense of historic integrity, resulting from enclosed meadows within the valley bottom, historic settlements (including Kelvedon and Coggeshall) and a dispersed settlement pattern, comprising isolated manors, church/hall complexes, farms and moated sites. There area also several important wildlife habitats within the area (including sixteen County Wildlife Sites, comprising a mixture of semi-natural woodland, unimproved grassland, hedgerows and wetland habitats) which are sensitive to changes in land management.

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.
- Manage the roadside flytipping and rubbish thrown from cars that lands in the road verges.

6.3 Farmland Plateau Landscapes

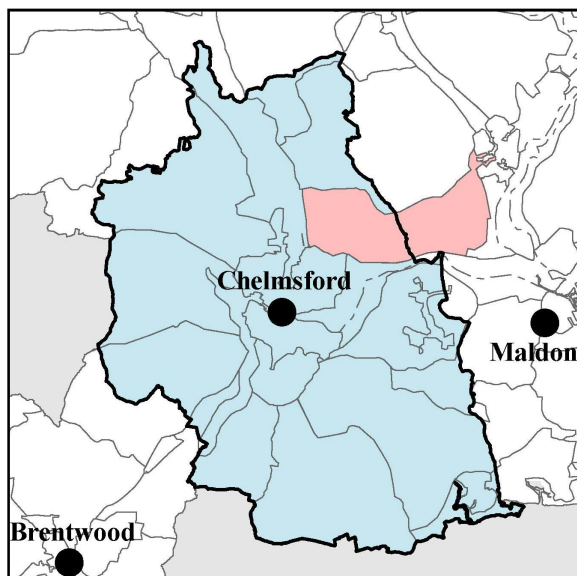
6.3.1 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

- 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)

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

B21 - Boreham Farmland Plateau

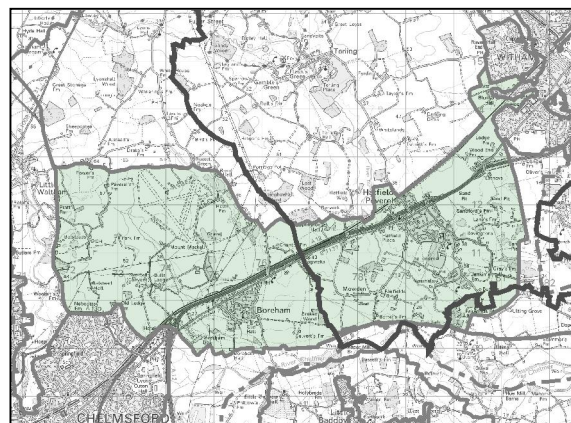
B21 BOREHAM FARMLAND PLATEAU (shared with Braintree District and Chelmsford Borough)



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.

6.4 Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats Landscapes

6.4.1 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

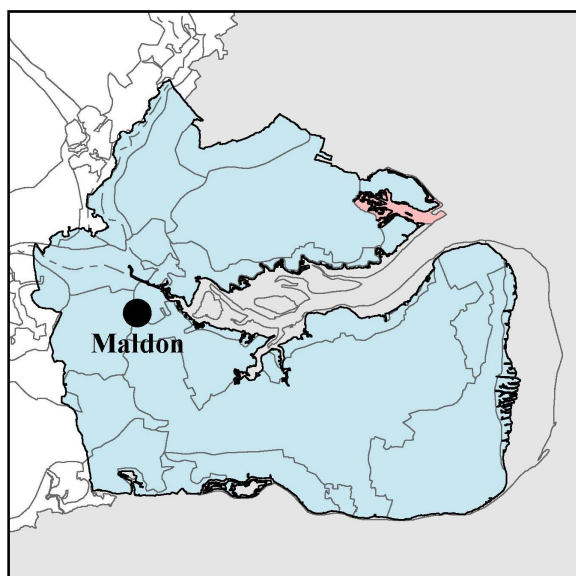
- Flat, low-lying and open landscape
- Areas of saltmarsh, mudflats, shingle spits and tidal creeks adjacent to the coast
- Generally tranquil and undisturbed character
- Sense of remoteness and tranquillity
- Visible sea walls separate drained former marshland and current saltmarsh/mudflats
- Lack of trees or hedgerows

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

- C1 - Tollesbury Fleet Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats
- C2 - Blackwater Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats
- C3 - Dengie Flats Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats
- C4 - Fleet Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats
- C5 - Bridgemarsh Island Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats

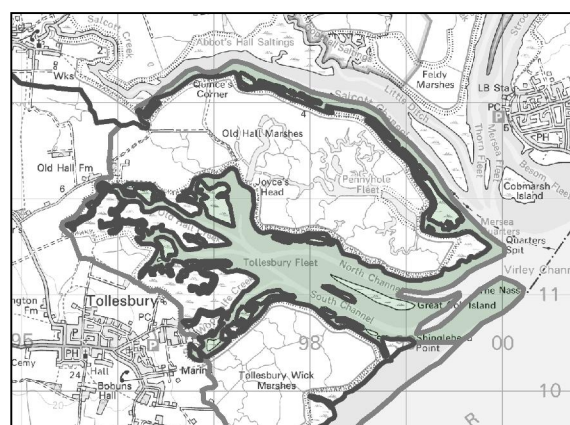
6.4.3 The Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats landscape type is particularly affected by ongoing change due to dynamic coastal processes, and this is a key influence on the future management of these landscapes.

C1 TOLLESBURY FLEET ESTUARINE MARSH/MUDFLATS



Key Characteristics

- Intricate patchwork of tidal mudflats, sands and fringing saltmarshes.
- Inter-tidal landscape which is periodically covered by the constant washing of sea water.
- Sense of remoteness and tranquillity.
- Character greatly influenced by the changing colours of the sea and sky.
- Dendritic pattern of creeks and channels flowing out into Tollesbury Fleet.
- Important habitats for wildlife and biodiversity.



Overall Character

This character area encompasses an open area of channels and creeks within Tollesbury Fleet, which are fringed by sweeping tidal mudflats and sands. The sea constantly washes the landscape (which is situated beyond the sea wall) and is overlooked by drained estuarine marsh to the north and south (behind the sea wall). The atmospheric changing colours of sea and sky dominate character within the area. There is also a sense of remoteness and tranquillity within this flat, open and exposed landscape. At times, however, character is much wilder and more windswept. There is no settlement and very little hedgerow or tree cover within the area. Shortly after the water has receded at low tide, the mudflats glisten with moisture before darkening in colour and drying in the sun.

Visual Characteristics

- Wide, open panoramic views across the Blackwater Estuary, with sea and sky dominant on the horizon.
- Open views across Tillingham and Latchingdon Coastal Farmland to the west.
- Open, panoramic views across Old Hall Marshes and Tollesbury Wick Drained Estuarine Marshes.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by present and former marshland. The main historic landscape features include the sea defence wall, which marks the inland boundary.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by mudflats, coastal marsh and creeks. The area contains the following sites of nature conservation value:

- Dengie Ramsar Site - supports internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl.
- Blackwater Estuary 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.
- Blackwater Estuary SSSI - mudflats and saltmarsh that support internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl including Brent geese.

Other ecological features include:

- An area of ancient and semi-natural woodland on the eastern inland edge.
- Remnant hedgerows.
- Unimproved grassland habitats on narrow verge sides.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Sea-level rise and erosion could lead to the loss of existing saltmarsh and mudflats.
- Risk of erosion due to wash from motorised craft.
- Potential for damage to diverse, important bird habitats and archaeological remains with a potential increase in tourism and accessibility to visitors.
- New development could erode the generally undisturbed character of the area and adversely affect mudflats.
- Loss of saltmarsh through coastal squeeze.

Sensitivities to Change

The intricate pattern of tidal mudflats, sands and fringing saltmarshes, linked by a series of winding channels and creeks, is sensitive to changes in land management or new development. The open and exposed nature of the area (with no visible vertical skyline elements present) is highly visually sensitive to new development, both within the area and within adjacent character areas (including areas of seascape). It is highly likely that potential new development would be visible within views from the Blackwater Estuary, Tillingham and Latchingdon Coastal Farmland and also from Old Hall and Tollesbury Wick Drained Estuarine Marshes. 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.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

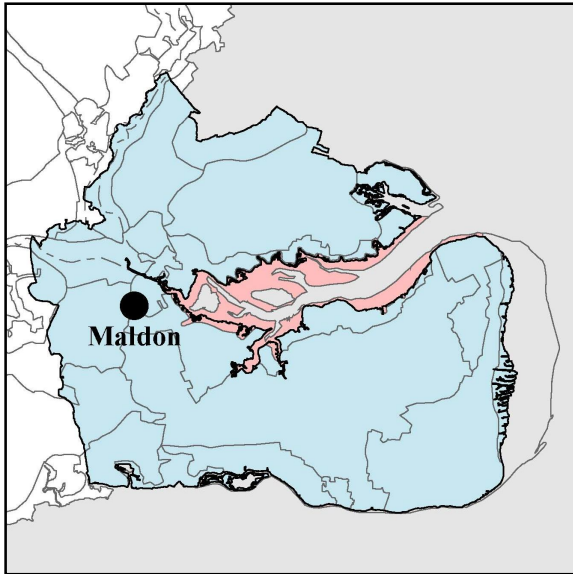
- Conserve the open nature of the mosaic of mudflats.
- Conserve the mostly undisturbed, undeveloped character.
- Consider the impact on views from the area to potential areas of new development within adjacent Tillingham and Latchingdon Coastal Farmland.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Manage recreational use of the Tollesbury Fleet and the Blackwater channels by motorised craft to prevent erosion of mudflats.
- Conserve and protect the natural habitats that support important wildfowl, including Brent geese.
- Conserve and manage saltmarsh habitats.

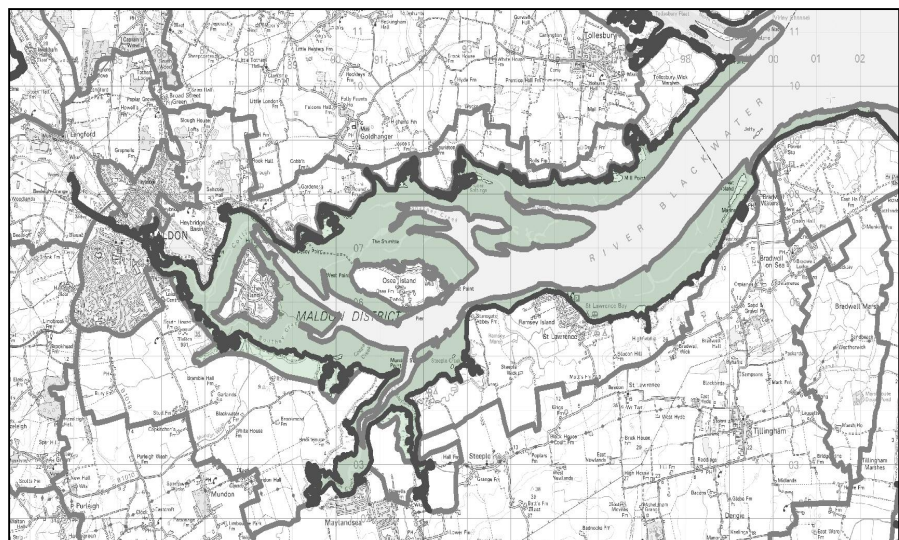
- Manage and control possible levels of sewage and pollution released from development within adjacent coastal farmland.

C2 BLACKWATER ESTUARINE MARSH/MUDFLATS



Key Characteristics

- Intricate patchwork of predominantly tidal mudflats and sands lining the northern and southern slopes of the Blackwater channel/estuary.
- Inter-tidal landscape which is periodically covered by the constant washing of sea water.
- Sense of remoteness and tranquillity.
- Character greatly influenced by the changing colours of the sea and sky.
- Important habitats for wildlife (including Brent Geese) and biodiversity.
- Open landscape with extensive views of estuary and coast.
- Limited public access.



Overall Character

This extensive area of open, inter-tidal mudflats fringes the northern and southern edges of the Blackwater channel. At high tide, the mudflats within this Landscape Character Area are submerged. Shortly after the water has receded at low tide, the mudflats glisten with moisture before darkening in colour and drying in the sun. Several distinct creeks (including Goldhanger, Southey, Upper Collins and Thirslet) traverse the mud and provide variety within the landscape pattern. The movement of boats within the channel occasionally disturbs remoteness and tranquillity, which is stronger towards the eastern end of the channel, than in proximity to Maldon in the west. Weather conditions and the changing colour of sea and sky have a dramatic affect upon landscape character within the area.

Visual Characteristics

- Open, panoramic views of water within the channel, dominated by sky with flurries of movement from estuarine waders and sea birds.
- Long-distance panoramic views across drained estuarine marsh and coastal farmland to the north and south.
- Open views to and across Northey and Osea Islands.
- Changing skies and weather conditions strongly influence the character of views to and from the area.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by present and former marshland. The main historic landscape features include the sea defence wall, which marks the inland boundary.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by estuarine habitats, mudflats and creeks. The area contains the following sites of nature conservation value:

- Dengie Ramsar Site - supports internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl.
- Blackwater Estuary 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.
- SSSI Blackwater Estuary – mudflats and saltmarsh that support internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl including Brent geese.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Sea-level rise and erosion could lead to the loss of existing mudflats.
- Risk of erosion due to wash from motorised craft.
- Potential for damage to diverse, important bird habitats and archaeological remains with a potential increase in tourism and accessibility to visitors.
- New development could erode the generally undisturbed character of the area and adversely affect mudflats.
- Restricted public access.
- Disturbance of habitats through inappropriate recreation.
- Risk of pollution of inter-tidal habitat (particularly in close proximity to Maldon in the west).

Sensitivities to Change

The intricate pattern of tidal mudflats and sands lining the Blackwater channel, interspersed with several distinct creeks (including Goldhanger, Southey, Upper Collins and Thirslet) is sensitive to changes in land management or new development. The open and exposed nature of the area (with no visible vertical skyline elements present) is highly visually sensitive to new development, both within the area and within adjacent character areas (including the Blackwater channel and areas of seascape). It is highly likely that potential new development would be visible within long-distance views from drained coastal estuarine marsh and coastal farmland to the north and south and also within open views from Northey and Osea Islands. 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.

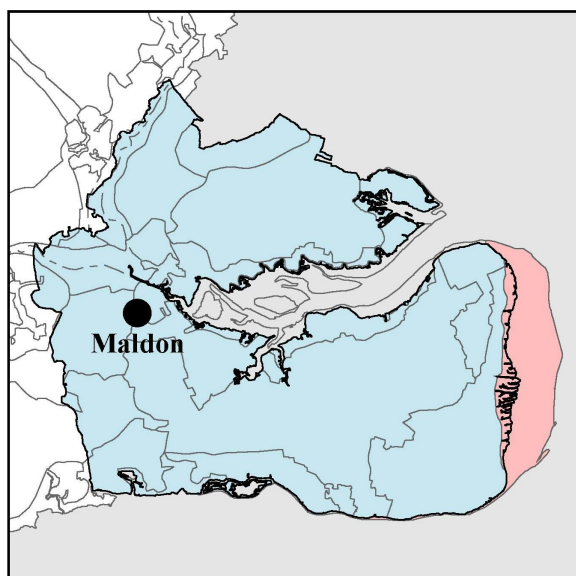
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve the open nature of the mosaic of mudflats.
- Conserve the mostly undisturbed, undeveloped character.
- Consider the impact on views from the area to potential areas of new development within adjacent areas of drained estuarine marsh and coastal farmland.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Manage recreational use of the Blackwater channel by motorised craft to prevent erosion of mudflats.
- Conserve and protect the natural habitats that support important wildfowl, including Brent geese.
- Conserve and manage mudflat habitats.
- Manage and control possible levels of sewage and pollution released from development within adjacent coastal farmland.

C3 DENGIE FLATS ESTUARINE MARSH/MUDFLATS

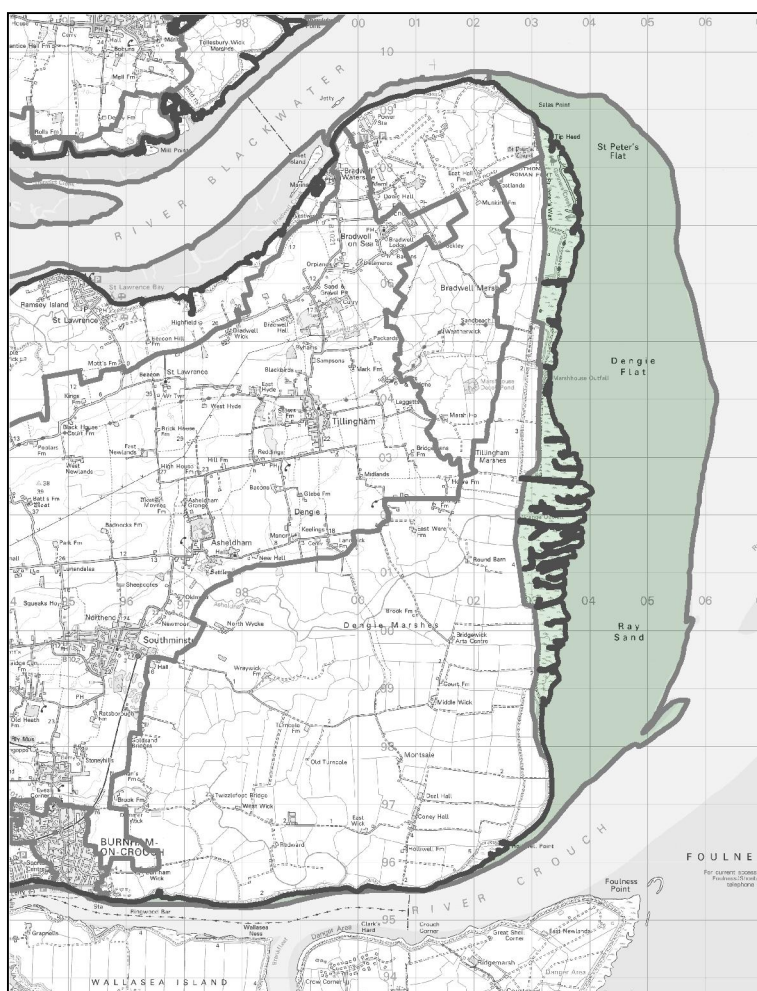


Key Characteristics

- Expansive area of saltmarsh, fringed by open mudflats (Dengie Flat and Ray Sand).
- Inter-tidal landscape which lines the eastern coastal edge.
- Panoramic, open views eastwards across the sea, towards a seemingly endless horizon.
- Sense of remoteness and tranquillity.
- Character greatly influenced by the changing colours of the sea and sky.
- Important habitats for wildlife and rare coastal flora.

Overall Character

This character area lines the eastern edge of the Maldon coastline and encompasses expansive areas of open saltmarsh. This diverse habitat is contained to the west by the sea wall (behind which, drained estuarine marsh dominates the character of the landscape). To the east, the saltmarshes are lined with large areas of diverse inter-tidal mudflats (including St. Peter's Flat, Dengie Flat and Ray Sand), which provide important habitats for birds. Character within the area is greatly influenced by the changing colours of the sea and sky. Panoramic, open views eastwards across the sea, towards a seemingly endless horizon add to creating a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.



within the area. The relative absence of tree cover and settlement creates an expansive landscape that is wild in places.

Visual Characteristics

- Open views across drained estuarine marsh to the west.
- Panoramic, open views eastwards across the sea, towards a seemingly endless horizon.
- Short-distance views to the landmark Bradwell power station within coastal farmland to the west.
- Dramatic views across ever-changing mudflats, influenced by the colour of the sea and sky.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by present and former marshland. The main historic landscape features include the sea defence wall, which marks the inland boundary.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by coastal habitats, mudflats and seashore. The area contains the following sites of nature conservation value:

- Dengie Ramsar Site- supports internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl.
- Dengie 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.
- Dengie SSSI – tidal mudflats and saltmarsh with rare coastal flora and internationally and nationally important wintering populations of wildfowl and waders.
- Holliwell Point NNR – foreshore habitats.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Sea-level rise and erosion could lead to the loss of existing mudflats.
- Risk of erosion due to wash from motorised craft.
- Loss of saltmarsh through coastal squeeze.
- Potential for damage to diverse, important bird habitats and archaeological remains with a potential increase in tourism and accessibility to visitors.
- New development within adjacent coastal farmland to the west could erode the generally undisturbed character of the area and adversely affect mudflats.
- Restricted public access.
- Disturbance of habitats through inappropriate recreation.
- Risk of pollution of inter-tidal habitat.

Sensitivities to Change

The expansive area of saltmarsh, fringed by open mudflats, is sensitive to changes in land management or new development. The open and exposed nature of the area (with no visible vertical skyline elements present) is highly visually sensitive to new development, both within the area and within adjacent character areas (including areas of seascape). It is highly likely that potential new development would be visible within long-distance views from adjacent drained coastal estuarine marsh and from areas of seascape to the east. 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.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve the open nature of the mosaic of mudflats.
- Conserve the mostly undisturbed, undeveloped character.
- Consider the impact on views from the area to potential areas of new development within adjacent areas of drained estuarine marsh and coastal farmland.
- Conserve open views across seascape to the east.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

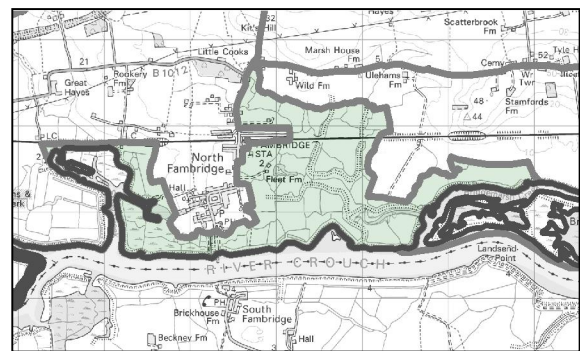
- Conserve and protect the natural habitats that support important wildfowl, including Brent geese.
- Conserve and manage mudflat habitats.
- Manage and control possible levels of sewage and pollution released from development within adjacent coastal farmland.

C4 FLEET ESTUARINE MARSH/MUDFLATS



Key Characteristics

- Intricate network of tidal mudflats, sands and fringing saltmarshes lining the northern bank of the River Crouch channel.
- Sense of remoteness and tranquillity.
- Character greatly influenced by the changing colours of the sea and sky.
- Landscape pattern of small channels and creeks.
- Diverse and important habitats for wildlife (particularly Brent Geese and other wildfowl) and uncommon flora.



Overall Character

This character area encompasses an expansive linear area of mudflats, sand and saltmarshes lining the northern shore of the River Crouch. Character within the area is dominated by Stow creek, which contains the colourful West Wick marina (situated to the west of North Fambridge) and feeds the main river channel. Character is also influenced by the constantly changing nature of water within the channel and the effect that this has on the appearance of inter-tidal mudflats. Open panoramic, long-distance views across drained estuarine marsh and coastal farmland can be gained to the north, creating a sense of space within the Landscape Character Area. Shorter views to the opposite bank of the River Crouch and also eastwards along the river corridor also create a localised sense of place. Although there is no settlement within the character area, the small-nucleated settlement of North Fambridge overlooks the area to the north. There is a general sense of tranquillity within the area, despite proximity to the railway corridor directly to the north.

Visual Characteristics

- Open panoramic long-distance views across drained estuarine marsh and coastal farmland (adjacent Landscape Character Areas) to the north.
- Shot-distance views to the opposite river bank.
- Open long distance views eastwards along the Crouch river channel.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by the 18th century reclaimed marshes. The main historic landscape features include:

- Large drainage ditch field boundaries, mainly without banks or hedges, some following the sinuous course of the former creeks.
- The sea wall, which is now breached and most of the land either eroded away or reverted to marsh.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by coastal farmland and mudflats. The area contains the following sites of nature conservation value:

- Croach and Roach Estuaries 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.
- Croach and Roach Estuaries SSSI – tidal mud, saltmarsh and grazing marsh supports 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.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Coastal squeeze which may lead to a loss of saltmarsh habitats.
- Sea-level rise and erosion which could lead to the loss of existing mudflats.
- Noise and movement associated with the railway corridor to the north.
- Risk of erosion from motorised craft within the Crouch channel.
- Potential new development around the fringes of North Fambridge which may impact upon divers and important habitats and may also be highly visible from the character area.
- Loss of the rural and generally undeveloped character of the area.

Sensitivities to Change

The intricate pattern of tidal mudflats, sands and fringing saltmarshes lining the Crouch channel, interspersed by Stow Creek and several other smaller creeks is sensitive to changes in land management or new development. The open and exposed nature of the area (with no visible vertical skyline elements present) is highly visually sensitive to new development, both within the area and within adjacent character areas (including the Crouch channel and areas of seascape). It is highly likely that potential new development would be visible within long-distance views from drained coastal estuarine marsh and coastal farmland to the north and also within short-distance views from the opposite riverbank. 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.

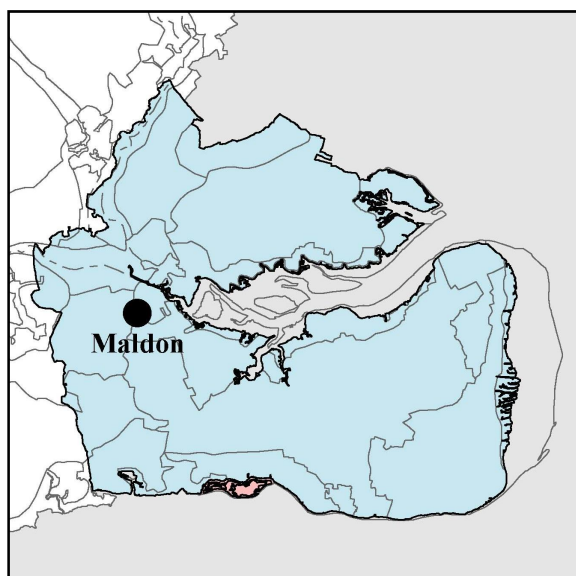
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve the open nature of the mosaic of mudflats and salt marshes.
- Conserve the mostly undisturbed, undeveloped character of the area.
- Consider the impact on views from the area to potential new development around the fringes of North Fambridge.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

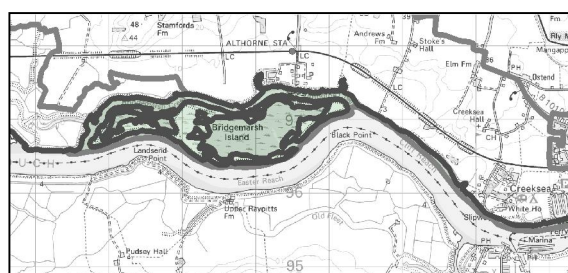
- Manage recreational use of the Crouch channel by motorised craft to prevent erosion of mudflats and saltmarsh.
- Conserve and protect the natural habitats that support important wildfowl and vegetation habitats.
- Conserve and manage mudflat and saltmarsh habitats.
- Manage and control possible levels of sewage and pollution released from development within adjacent coastal farmland and from North Fambridge.

C5 BRIDGEMARSH ISLAND ESTUARINE MARSH/MUDFLATS



Key Characteristics

- Bridgemarksh Island – containing several large areas of saltmarsh and mudflats within the Crouch channel and separated from the mainland by the adjoining Bridgemarksh and Althorne Creeks.
- Sense of remoteness and tranquillity.
- Character greatly influenced by the changing colours of the sea and sky.
- Partly dendritic landscape pattern, consisting of several small channels and creeks.
- Diverse and important habitats for wildlife (particularly Brent Geese and other wildfowl).
- Intricate and relatively inaccessible/isolated landscape.



Overall Character

This character area encompasses an island mosaic of saltmarsh and mudflats which is separated from the northern bank of the River Crouch by the adjoining Bridgemarksh and Althorne creeks. An intricate network of drainage channels traverses these habitats. Character within the area is influenced by the ever-changing colours of the sea and sky and also by tidal water movement within the Crouch channel (affecting the appearance, colour and texture of mudflats and hummocky saltmarsh). Despite proximity to areas of drained marshland and coastal farmland to the north and also on the opposite side of the river channel, there is sense of remoteness and tranquillity within the area. As a result of its physical separation from the main riverbank and its position within the Crouch channel, there is also a sense of isolation and inaccessibility within the area.

Visual Characteristics

- Open panoramic long-distance views across drained estuarine marsh and coastal farmland (adjacent Landscape Character Areas) to the north.
- Shot-distance views to the opposite river bank.
- Open long distance views eastwards along the Crouch river channel.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area includes the reclamation of Bridgemarsh Island in the 18th century and its subsequent sub-division into fields. The main historic landscape features include:

- Large drainage ditch field boundaries, mainly without banks or hedges, some following the sinuous course of the former creeks.
- The sea wall, which is now breached and most of the land either eroded away or reverted to marsh.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by coastal farmland and mudflats. The area contains the following sites of nature conservation value:

- Croach and Roach Estuaries 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.
- Croach and Roach Estuaries SSSI – tidal mud, saltmarsh and grazing marsh which supports 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.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Coastal squeeze which may lead to a loss of saltmarsh habitats.
- Sea-level rise and erosion which could lead to the loss of existing mudflats.
- Noise and movement associated with the railway corridor to the north.
- Risk of erosion from motorised craft within the Crouch channel.
- Loss of the rural and generally undeveloped character of the area.

Sensitivities to Change

The large-scale pattern of tidal mudflats and saltmarsh within the Crouch channel (separated from the northern riverbank by adjoining Bridgemarsh and Althorne Creeks) is sensitive to changes in land management or new development. The open and exposed nature of the area (with no visible vertical skyline elements present) is highly visually sensitive to new development, both within the area and within adjacent character areas (including Crouch channel). It is highly likely that potential new development would be visible within long-distance views from drained coastal estuarine marsh and coastal farmland to the north and also within views from the east along the Crouch river channel. 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.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve the open nature of the mosaic of mudflats and salt marshes.
- Conserve the mostly undisturbed, undeveloped character of the area.
- Consider the impact on views from the area to potential new development within coastal farmland to the north and also on the opposite bank of the river channel.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Manage recreational use of the Crouch channel by motorised craft to prevent erosion of mudflats and saltmarsh.
- Conserve and protect the natural habitats that support important wildfowl and vegetation habitats.
- Conserve and manage mudflat and saltmarsh habitats.
- Manage and control possible levels of sewage and pollution released from development within adjacent coastal farmland.

6.5 Drained Estuarine Marsh Landscapes

6.5.1 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

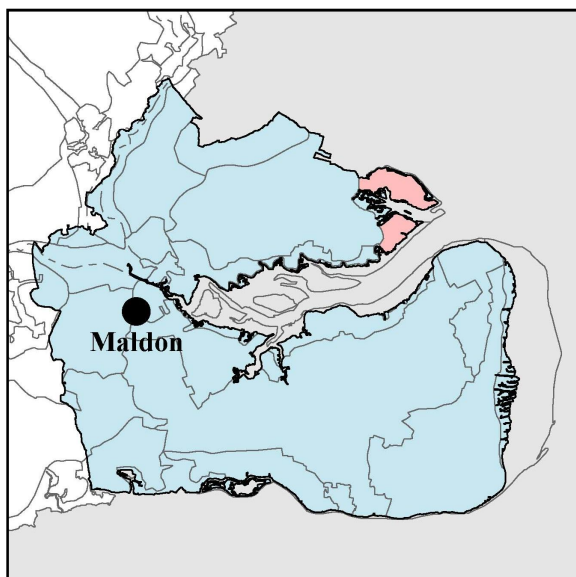
- Areas of flat, artificially drained former saltmarsh currently grassland and cultivated fields
- Visible sea walls separate drained former marshland and current saltmarsh/mudflats
- Lack of large areas of trees or woodland
- Network of visible drainage ditches

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

D1 - Old Hall Marshes and Tollesbury Wick Drained Estuarine Marsh
 D2 - Maldon Drained Estuarine Marsh
 D3 - Northey Island Drained Estuarine Marsh
 D4 - Osea Island Drained Estuarine Marsh
 D5 – Mundon Drained Estuarine Marsh
 D6 - Ramsay Drained Estuarine Marsh
 D7 - Bradwell Drained Estuarine Marsh
 D8 - Dengie Drained Estuarine Marsh
 D9 - Fambridge Drained Estuarine Marsh

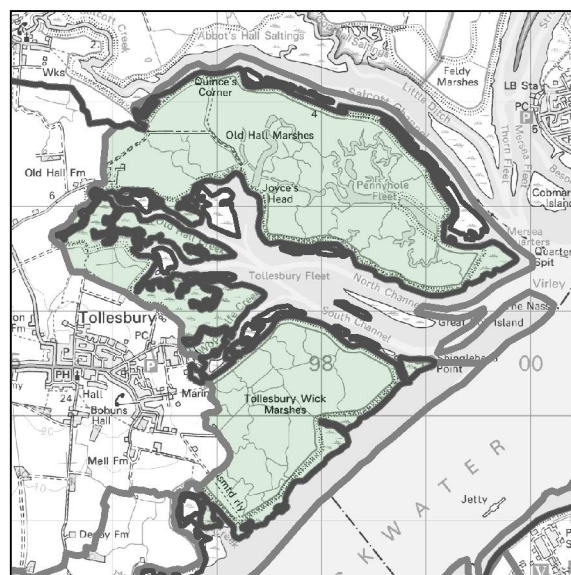
6.5.3 The Drained Estuarine Marsh landscape type is particularly affected by ongoing change due to dynamic coastal processes, and this is a key influence on future management of these landscapes.

D1 OLD HALL MARSHES AND TOLLESBURY WICK DRAINED ESTUARINE MARSH



Key Characteristics

- Old Hall Marshes has traditional drained grazing marsh.
- Tollesbury Wick is rare example of freshwater grazing marsh.
- Absence of woodland.
- Flat low-lying alluvial fields criss-crossed with drainage ditches and dykes.
- Borrow dykes visible behind the sea wall which retain the sinuous natural pattern of the tidal creeks.
- Rough pasture, borrow dykes, sea walls, salt marsh.
- Wide views over the Blackwater Estuary from the sea wall.
- Strong sense of tranquillity.



Overall Character

This character area is comprised of the two peninsulas either side of Tollesbury Fleet, on the Blackwater Estuary. Old Hall Marshes, on the north side of the channel, is a large area of drained marshland protected by sea wall. Run as a working farm and a nature reserve, it contains grazing marsh for cattle and sheep, as well as many ponds. It attracts wildfowl and wading birds to breed and overwinter. Within the wall are large areas of unimproved grassland, reedbeds and open water. Broad borrow dykes at the back of the sea wall retain the natural winding pattern of natural creeks and fleets. Vehicular access is restricted to permit holders, but a public footpath along the sea wall is most easily reached from Tollesbury. Tollesbury Wick, on the south side of the Fleet is also a drained estuarine marsh behind sea walls, with rare freshwater grazing marsh. Owned by the Essex Wildlife Trust, it is also managed using traditional methods sympathetic to wildlife. Large areas of rough pasture, pools and reedbeds can be seen. On the other side of the sea wall, at both sites, salt marsh and exposed mudflats are visible. Landscape character is heavily influenced by the changing colour and pattern of sea and sky. These are large-scale landscapes due to the panoramic quality of the views, with a strong sense of isolation and tranquillity.

Visual Characteristics

- Dramatic panoramic views to the Blackwater Estuary influenced by sea and sky.
- Views to local landmark Bradwell Power Station from sea wall.
- Open landscape of flat low-lying drained marshland crisscrossed by drainage ditches, ponds, reedbeds and intermittent scrub.
- Views to the salt marsh and mudflats beyond at low tide from the sea wall.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by a narrow fringe of present and former marshland, largely reclaimed in the 18th century. The main historic landscape features include:

- Field boundaries, which are large drainage ditches, mainly without banks or hedges, some following the sinuous course of the former creeks.
- Enclosure by the sea defence wall.
- A lack of settlement.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by unimproved pasture farmland and drained estuarine marsh. The area contains the following sites of nature conservation value:

- Blackwater Estuary Ramsar Site - supports internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl.
- Blackwater Estuary SPA - supports internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl.
- Blackwater Estuary SSSI & NNR - intertidal mudflats and saltmarsh that support internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl including Brent geese.
- Tollesbury Wick EWT Reserve – uncommon habitat of freshwater grazing marsh and sea wall grasslands.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Destabilisation of sea walls.
- Lighting and future use of Bradwell Power Station.
- Expansion of marina at Tollesbury and effect on wildlife disturbance.
- Potential for more visually intrusive expansion to the settlement edges at Tollesbury.
- Flood protection and managed retreat issues.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include areas of freshwater grazing marsh, flat, low-lying fields criss-crossed with drainage ditches and dykes, borrow dykes, sea walls and a natural sinuous pattern of natural creeks and fleets (which are sensitive to changes in land management). The open nature of the area, with few vertical elements visible on the skyline, is visually sensitive to new development, which would be visible within views from the Blackwater Estuary and also from saltmarsh and mudflats beyond the sea wall. 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.

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.

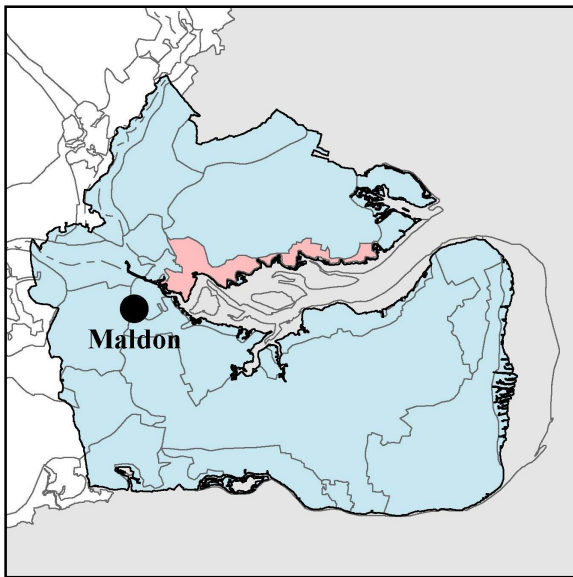
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Continue to conserve the open undeveloped character of the area.
- Consider the impacts of development in adjacent character areas avoiding visual intrusion.
- Conserve the largely undisturbed and tranquil nature of the area.
- Conserve long-distance panoramic views.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

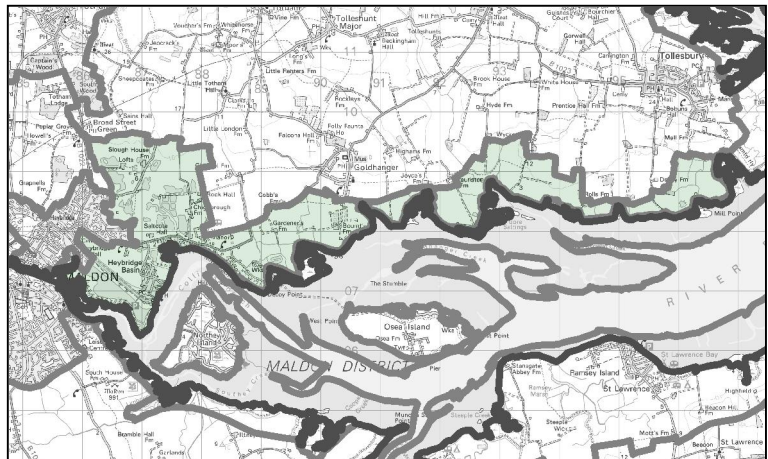
- Continue to conserve grazing marsh, as is presently being done under the management of the RSPB at Old Hall Marshes and Essex Wildlife Trust at Tollesbury Wick.
- Consider the potential for creation of new inter-tidal habitats (such as saltmarsh) through Managed Realignment (without regard to information set out within the Blackwater Estuary Flood Management Strategy : Essex Estuarine Strategy).

D2 MALDON DRAINED ESTUARINE MARSH



Key Characteristics

- Drained coastal marsh landscape, now isolated from tidal influences.
- Scrubby, often gappy hedgerows or random copses, mainly near farmsteads.
- Absence of woodland.
- Flat arable farmland behind the coastal marshland.
- Dispersed isolated farmsteads.
- Urban/suburban influence of Maldon on eastern edges of the character area.



Overall Character

This character area is the flat drained coastal marshland east of Maldon that lies behind the sea walls of the upper Blackwater Estuary, below the Tolleshunt Coastal Farmland (E1) to the north. This is land that has been drained artificially for centuries. The landscape is characteristic of the Essex coast; large-scale, flat, and generally low-lying, with distinctive drainage ditches and dykes, as well as remnant borrow dykes at the back of the enclosing sea wall. Field boundaries are usually made up of scattered trees or tall thorn hedges and clumps of scrub along drainage ditches. The field pattern is semi-regular. Some pasture is evident, and is often surrounded by denser vegetation. Settlement pattern is dispersed over the area in a small number of large farmsteads and scattered agricultural buildings - there are no villages in this character area. Vehicular access to the estuary is difficult in the farmlands as the only road to cross the area is the B1026. Tracks and lanes through private land remain the only way to the estuary, although there is a network of footpaths that permit access in a few places, and a footpath along the length of the sea wall. At the sea wall the views across the estuary are wide and open, including vies of Bradwell Power Station. The urban fringe of Maldon extends eastwards to approximately the Wash Bridge on the B1026: where it becomes a mosaic of semi-industrial and suburban areas, with caravan parks and the tourist attraction of Heybridge Basin, a former locks. Small farmland fields are interspersed between these uses. Sand and gravel pits, both used and disused can

be seen northeast and southeast of Maldon, which is testimony to its economic importance in this part of the countryside. Evidence of the industrial-maritime past is also visible in old warehouses, and former worker's cottages on the east side of the town. Overall, this character area has a strong sense of tranquillity, particularly in areas away from Maldon and the main road.

Visual Characteristics

- Long open views to the wooded farmland in the north.
- Limited views to the Blackwater Estuary except from the sea wall, from where they are panoramic in all directions.
- Views to local landmark Bradwell Power Station from sea wall.
- Open landscape of flat low-lying drained marshland crisscrossed by drainage ditches and intermittent scrub.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by a very long, but narrow fringe of present and former marshland. The field boundaries are large drainage ditches, mainly without banks or hedges, some following the sinuous course of the former creeks. The marshes were largely reclaimed in the 18th century. The settlement is largely highly dispersed, comprising isolated farms, the older of these are located on the boundary between the former dryland and the marsh, whilst those of 18th and 19th century origin are sited on the reclaimed land. To the west the field pattern has been characterised by a mixture of pre-18th century irregular fields and later piecemeal enclosure by agreement. The fields in the southern portion of the area were laid out on a roughly ladder-like system running down from the crest of the ridge down to the marsh edge. In the post-medieval period, this area was sub-divided into long narrow farms, enabling access to the high ground, the south-facing slopes and the marsh, and hence the widest range of landscape resources. The area has also seen extensive quarrying of sands and gravels.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by arable agriculture and grazing marsh. The area contains the following sites of nature conservation value:

- Blackwater Estuary SPA - supports internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl.
- Lofts Farm Pit SSSI - comprising features of geodiversity interest.
- Blackwater Estuary SSSI – mudflats and saltmarsh that support internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl including Brent geese.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential further loss and decline in hedgerows due to intensive agricultural practice and lack of management.
- Pressure of increased traffic on B1026 and minor lanes especially during peak tourist seasons.
- Potential for more visually intrusive expansion to the settlement edges at Maldon and Goldhanger.
- Potential for visually intrusive development of new farm buildings.
- Flood protection and managed retreat issues.
- Pressure on the landscape from urban-fringe related activities, such as sand and gravel extraction, horse paddocks, caravan sites, and increased amenity uses such as recreational boating and water-related leisure activities.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include drained coastal marsh, drainage ditches, dykes and the sea wall, (which are sensitive to changes in land management). The open nature of views from the sea wall are visually sensitive, however, several vertical elements (including Bradwell power station) are also visible within views. There is a sense of historic integrity,

resulting from visible historic sea walls and a dispersed historic settlement pattern. The area also contains several internationally and nationally important sites for wildlife (in particular, wildfowl). Overall, this character area has moderate - to 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.

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.

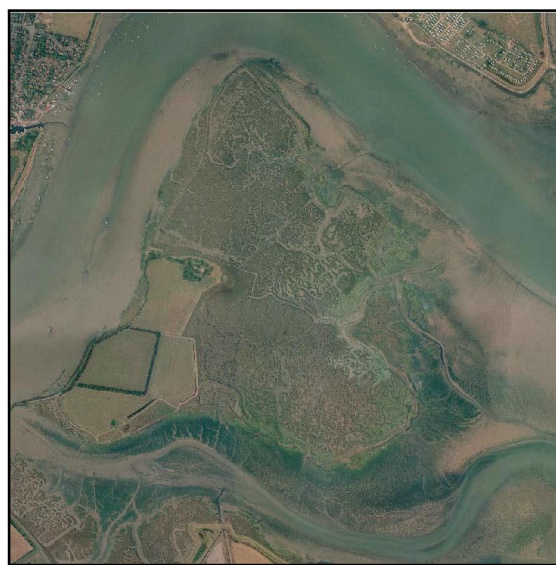
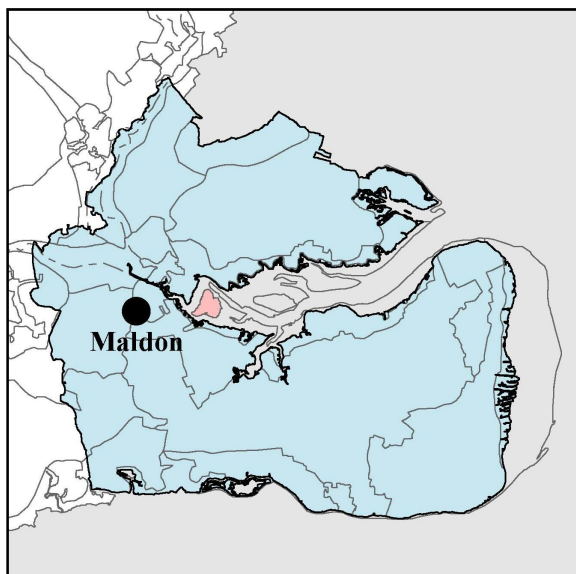
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Ensure that any new development responds to historic settlement pattern and scale, and uses materials that are appropriate to the local landscape character. Such development should be well integrated into the surrounding landscape.
- Ensure that sites no longer used for gravel extraction are sensitively restored to reflect the local landscape character and are well integrated into the surrounding landscape.
- Conserve the mostly 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.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Consider the potential for creation of new inter-tidal habitats (such as saltmarsh) through Managed Realignment (with regard to information set out within the Blackwater Estuary Flood Management Strategy : Essex Estuarine Strategy).
- Ensure that caravan sites are well integrated into the surrounding landscape and that their scale is in keeping with local landscape character.

D3 NORTHEY ISLAND DRAINED ESTUARINE MARSH

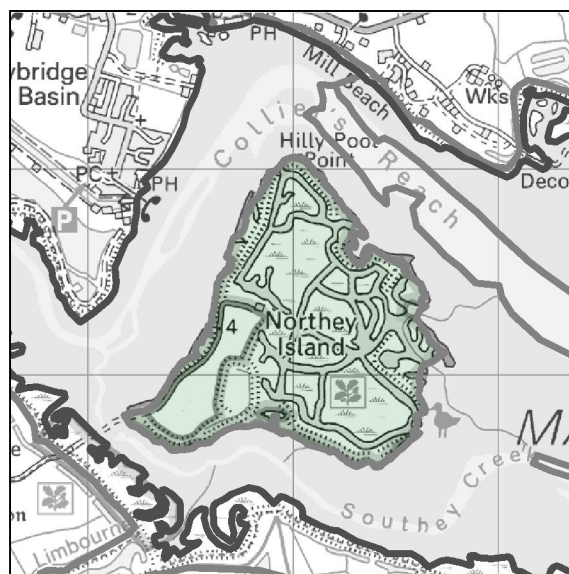


Key Characteristics

- Distinctive, flat salt marsh island.
- Traditional drained grazing marsh.
- Experiments ongoing with managed retreat.
- Absence of woodland.
- Flat low-lying alluvial fields with drainage ditches and dykes.
- Rough pasture, sea walls, salt marsh.
- Wide views over the Blackwater Estuary from the sea wall.
- Strong sense of tranquillity.

Overall Character

This character area lies at the head of the Blackwater Estuary east of Maldon and is managed as a nature reserve. Access is possible only at low tide via a causeway, and is limited to those who apply for a permit. It is open to the public once a year. Pedestrian access is available along most of the sea wall, although access to the sea wall from a public highway is limited. Located in the salt-water flood plain and with extensive areas of inter-tidal salt marsh surrounding the island, part of it is managed for grazing marsh. It is also a location where experiments with managed retreat are taking place. This is when the outer sea wall is breached in several places allowing salt marsh to be recreated. The grazing marsh is inside an inner sea wall. This is an important nature conservation area, especially for overwintering wildfowl. The landscape character is flat, low-lying and offers long views from the sea wall, over the salt marsh to the Blackwater Estuary and beyond. There is no tree cover, but hedgerows enclose the pasture. At low tide the vast areas of mudflats are exposed. This character area has a long history and was farmed until the end of the 19th century, although this is not apparent today. This is a large-scale landscape of sea and sky in all directions. It has a strong sense of isolation and tranquillity.



Visual Characteristics

- Presence of large numbers of birds.
- Panoramic views to the Blackwater Estuary.
- Views to local landmark Bradwell Power Station from sea wall.
- Open landscape of flat low-lying drained marshland crisscrossed by drainage ditches.
- Views to the salt marsh and mudflats beyond at low tide from the sea wall.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by the reclamation of the marshlands. Northey Island is known to have existed in the 10th century when it played a pivotal role in the Battle of Maldon. There has been subsequently modified by further reclamation and sub-division into rectangular fields. This process is now being reversed with the breaching, both accidentally and also deliberate, of sea walls to allow tidal egress. The main historic landscape features include the causeway of Saxon origin, which links Northey to the mainland.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated drained by estuarine marsh. These are managed in places as grazing marsh on Northey Island. Extensive areas of inter-tidal salt marsh surrounding the island are sites of nature conservation value. These include:

- Essex Estuaries cSAC - supports variety of internationally important habitats including estuarine, mudflats, sandflats, *Salicornia* colonising mud, *Spartina* swards and Atlantic salt meadows.
- Blackwater Estuary SSSI - mudflats and saltmarsh that support internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl including Brent geese.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Destabilisation of sea walls.
- Access to the sea wall from a public highway.
- Expansion of boating activities on the estuary and the effect of wildlife disturbance and salt marsh erosion.
- Potential for more visually intrusive expansion to the settlement edges at Maldon.
- Flood protection and managed retreat issues.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include areas of traditional drained grazing marsh, sea walls and small areas of saltmarsh and a network of drainage ditches, (which are sensitive to changes in land management). The open nature of the area, with few vertical elements visible on the skyline, is visually sensitive to new development, which would be visible within views to and from the Blackwater Estuary and also from surrounding seascape areas. There is a sense of historic integrity, resulting from the presence of a causeway (of Saxon origin) which links Northey to the mainland. 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 important sites for wildlife. Overall, this character area has high sensitivity to change.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

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.

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.

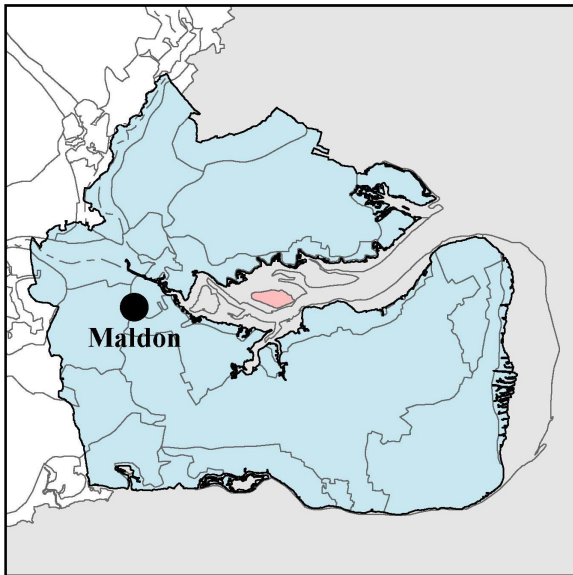
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve the open undeveloped character of the area.
- Consider the impacts of development in adjacent character areas to avoid visual intrusion.
- Conserve the largely undisturbed and tranquil nature of the area.
- Conserve long-distance panoramic view across the river and ensure that new development does not detract from these views.
- Ensure any new development, particularly on the south shore of the Blackwater Estuary, is of an appropriate scale, form, design and materials and uses colours that respond to landscape setting and landscape character.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Continue the creation and management of new inter-tidal habitats through Managed Realignment, as is being currently carried out by the National Trust.

D4 OSEA ISLAND DRAINED ESTUARINE MARSH



Key Characteristics

- Distinctive, flat salt marsh island.
- Traditional drained grazing marsh.
- Mudflats, water and sky dominate views from the sea wall.
- Regular field pattern with hedgerows and copses on field boundaries; absence of woodland.
- Flat low-lying alluvial fields with drainage ditches and dykes.
- Wide views over the Blackwater Estuary from the sea wall.
- Strong sense of tranquillity.



Overall Character

This character area is an island in the saltwater flood plain of the Blackwater Estuary. It lies east of Northey Island. This is drained estuarine marsh of primarily arable fields on well-drained soils. The farmland has a rectilinear field pattern separated by ditches and broken hedgerows - few trees are in evidence. Elms that once were characteristic of the area are only visible now as dead stumps in the hedges. The hedge network creates a visually linked sense of enclosure in an otherwise intensively open, managed, and large-scale landscape. There is visual evidence of the ancient right-angled lanes that go around the field boundaries that suggest ancient planned farmland historic to this area. This land is in private ownership, and access is limited to a causeway across the estuarine marsh only usable for four hours each tide. This is a landscape dominated by views of sea and sky and the salt marsh and estuary give this a maritime character. It has a strong sense of isolation and tranquillity

Visual Characteristics

- Panoramic views to the Blackwater Estuary.
- Views to local landmark Bradwell Power Station from sea wall.
- Open arable landscape of flat low-lying drained marshland dissected by drainage ditches.
- Views to the salt marsh and mudflats beyond at low tide from the sea wall.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by the reclamation of the marshlands, a process that probably commenced in the early medieval period. There has been subsequently modified by further reclamation and sub-division into rectangular fields.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by drained estuarine marsh and grazing marsh. The area contains the following sites of nature conservation value:

- Blackwater Estuary 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.
- Other ecological features include species-rich hedgerows and grassland on sea walls.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential for the introduction of visually intrusive agricultural buildings within the character area, which would be visible from surrounding character areas.
- Expansion of boating activities on the estuary and the effect on salt marsh erosion and destabilisation of sea walls.
- Potential for more visually intrusive expansion to the settlement edges on the south shore of the estuary.
- Vulnerable to sea-level rise and potential effects of global warming.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include areas of traditional drained grazing marsh, sea walls and small areas of saltmarsh, hedgerows at field boundaries and a network of drainage ditches and dykes, (which are sensitive to changes in land management). The open nature of the area, is visually sensitive to new development, which would be visible within views to and from the Blackwater Estuary and also from surrounding seascape areas. 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 important sites for wildlife. Overall, this character area has moderate to- 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.

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.

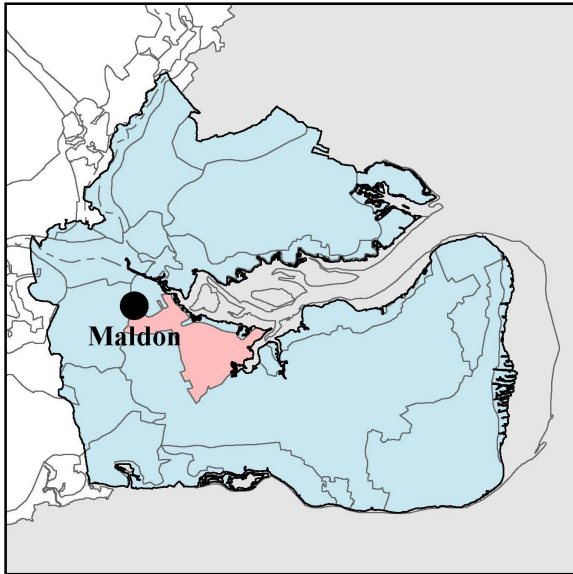
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Consider the impacts of development in adjacent character areas avoiding visual intrusion.
- Conserve the largely undisturbed and tranquil nature of the area.
- Conserve long-distance panoramic view across the river and ensure that new development does not detract from these views.
- Ensure any new development, on the south shore of the Blackwater Estuary, avoids the introduction of suburban styles and materials and responds to landscape setting, taking into account views to and from adjacent areas of open and drained estuarine marsh.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

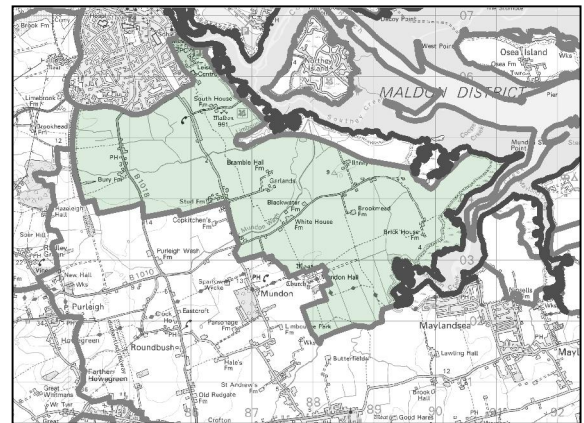
- Where suitable, encourage use of ESA management options to maintain grazing marsh habitats.
- Consider the potential for creation of new inter-tidal habitats (such as saltmarsh) through Managed Realignment (with regard to information set out within the Blackwater Estuary Flood Management Strategy : Essex Estuarine Strategy).

D5 MUNDON DRAINED ESTUARINE MARSH



Key Characteristics

- Gently rolling marsh hinterland crossed by intricate creeks merges with the flat marshland on the southern shore of the Blackwater Estuary.
- Predominantly open, arable fields with a regular, rectilinear field pattern.
- Lack of tree cover and settlement pattern, with scattered large farms.
- Scrubby, often gappy hedgerows or random copses, mainly near farmsteads.
- Sense of emptiness and openness mitigated by views to higher ground at Maldon, to the steep slopes to the south east, and from views out over the estuary to the wooded ridges in the north east.



Overall Character

This character area is the hinterland of the southwest corner of the Blackwater Estuary below Maldon where the flat marshland meets the ancient sloping clay farmlands. Crossed by many creeks and a disused canal, with scattered scrub and wide views, this gently rolling country flattens as it approaches the marshes. Remnant dead elms are reminders of former tall elm-dominated hedgerows that were characteristic of this landscape and the only other trees that are noticeable now are the occasional copses and small woodland patches that are seen mainly near farmsteads. Telegraph poles distinguish the skyline along the roads, and the characteristic right-angled bends in the lanes mark the shapes of the rectilinear field pattern, which is small to medium scale. Condition of farm buildings is quite variable, with some in quite poor condition. The sense of the history in the area is visible in the occasional vernacular weatherboarded houses in the villages, and some scattered moated houses, such as Mundon Hall. The adjacent church of St Mary, with 14th century origins, is an important historic landmark, as is the ancient block of woodland of Mundon Furze nearby. Farmland stretches right up to the urban edge of Maldon with no transition. Similar residential encroachment into the farmlands has occurred at Mundon, and is not integrated into the landscape. This area is generally quite open with trees or hedgerows occasionally framing views. The landscape is textured by views to woodland on the higher

ground to the north, across the marshes and the estuary, and on the rising ground to the southeast. The lack of enclosure and the feeling of being in a somewhat isolated place is strongest near the marshlands and the lanes that lead to it, but is lessened nearer to the few busy B roads that provide access across the area.

Visual Characteristics

- Expansive views across large farmland fields onto the Blackwater Estuary.
- Panoramic views across adjacent saltmarsh and mudflats.
- Short-distance views across Southey Creek to Northey Island.
- Long views locally across flatlands to Maldon.

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:

- Field systems which are of considerable antiquity, and may have their origins in the middle Saxon period, if not before.
- Field which were historically bordered by elm hedgerows, but most of these were lost in the 1970s as a consequence of Dutch Elm Disease.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by open arable fields and pasture farmland. The area contains one area of ancient and semi-natural woodland near Mundon, and boundary ditches, scrub and species-rich hedgerows on field margins.

Key Planning and land Management Issues

- Potential for more visually intrusive expansion to the settlement edges at Maldon.
- Potential further loss and decline in hedgerows due to intensive agricultural practice and lack of management.
- Pressure of increased traffic on B1018/1010 and minor lanes especially during peak tourist seasons.
- Potential for visually intrusive development of new farm buildings.
- Flood protection and managed retreat issues.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include several creeks, occasional copses and patches of small woodland (often associated with farmsteads), which are sensitive to changes in land management. The generally open skyline of the area is visually sensitive to new development, which would be visible within views to and from the Blackwater Estuary, from surrounding farmland areas and also within short-distance views across Southey Creek to Northey Island. There is a strong sense of historic integrity, resulting from historic settlements and field systems (which may have their origins in the middle Saxon period). Potential new development either within the area, or within adjacent character areas, may also disturb the strong sense of tranquillity. 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.

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.

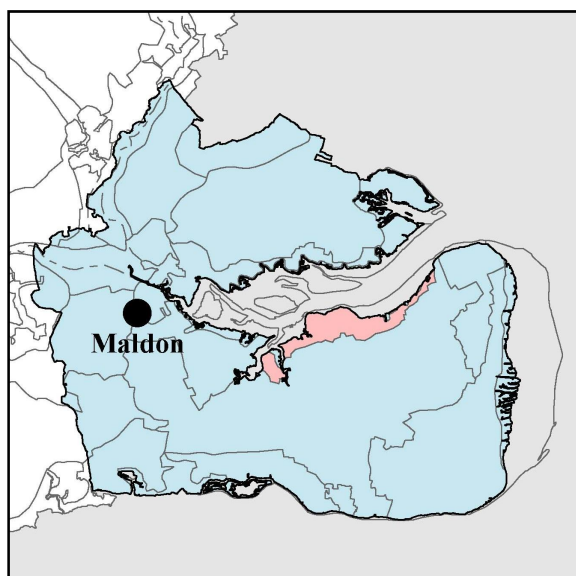
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Ensure that any new development responds to historic settlement pattern and scale, and uses materials that are appropriate to the local landscape character. Such development should be well integrated into the surrounding landscape.
- Conserve and enhance the mostly 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.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

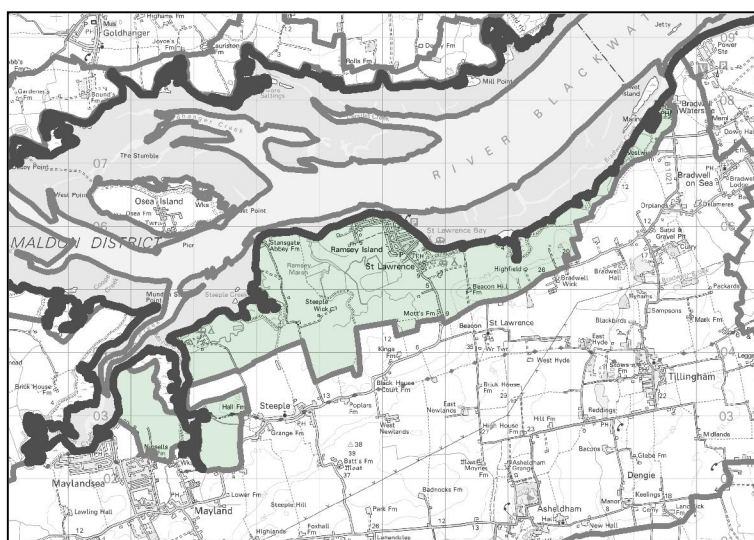
- Conserve and manage areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland as important landscape, historical and nature conservation sites.
- Consider the potential for creation of new inter-tidal habitats (such as saltmarsh) through Managed Realignment (with regard to information set out within the Blackwater Estuary Flood Management Strategy : Essex Estuarine Strategy).

D6 RAMSAY DRAINED ESTUARINE MARSH



Key Characteristics

- Generally flat landform of drained saltmarsh between the sea walls and the sloping Tillingham Coastal Farmlands (E2) at its southern boundary.
- Mainly arable fields with some grazing marsh that merges with the sea walls and saltings on the southern shore of the Blackwater Estuary.
- Residual ditches and dykes.
- Regular, rectilinear field pattern and large farms.
- Scrubby, often gappy hedgerows or scattered tree groups, mainly near farmsteads.
- Sense of openness with panoramic views of sea and sky.



Overall Character

This area of low-lying drained former marshland stretches from behind the sea walls of the lower Blackwater Estuary between Pewitt Island to the east and Lawling Creek to the west. Primarily arable farmland, there is also some grazing marsh. There are some sinuous ditches still visible. Nearer to the estuary the field pattern is somewhat irregular, but becomes quite linear and larger scale overall. The estuary shoreline is indented with small pockets of undrained salt marsh and a sandy beach at Ramsay Island, where there is also a marina. Historically this was sparsely settled grazing marsh, but now there is visible evidence of intense development at Ramsay Island for housing and tourist use. A marina, leisure park and caravan site indicate its popularity for holidaymakers, and this former plotland of small bungalows and weatherboarded houses is fast becoming suburban, with dense new housing that has no visual link to the local vernacular architecture. Ornamental planting also has no natural association with indigenous vegetation. Pedestrian access to the sea wall is possible along much of the shore, but vehicular access is limited to lanes that intersect the Bradwell Road the south. Going west

towards Lawling Creek the field pattern is still large-scale, with few farmsteads and limited access. There is another caravan park at Canney House on the creek. Development pressures all along the Bradwell road to the east of Ramsay Island have affected the character of this area; the Bradwell Road is busy, with relatively heavy traffic and its associated noise. The traces of a once-isolated area are visible but the tranquillity of the area has been lost.

Visual Characteristics

- Dramatic, steeply rising slopes in E2 are visible from this Landscape Character Area.
- Expansive, panoramic views along estuary from the sea walls, as well as views to the higher wooded farmlands to the north.
- Views of suburban development at Maylandsea and St Lawrence Island from higher ground in E2.
- One very modern house at Ramsay Island integrates well with existing cottages facing the estuary.
- Bradwell Power Station and pylons that march south from it dominate views to the east and are local landmarks.
- Large fields textured by contrast between rough grassland and cereal crops.
- New housing development along Bradwell road has no relationship in terms of style, materials or colour with the surrounding character of the area.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by a very long, but narrow fringe of present and former marshland along the southern edge of the Blackwater estuary. The marshes were largely reclaimed in the 18th century. The settlement is largely highly dispersed, comprising isolated farms, the older of these are located on the boundary between the former dryland and the marsh, whilst those of 18th and 19th century origin are sited on the reclaimed land. The only sizable settlement is the largely modern village of St Lawrence, sited on the former Ramsey Island. Other historic landscape features include the field boundaries comprising large drainage ditches, mainly without banks or hedges, some following the sinuous course of the former creeks.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by open arable fields and pasture with some grazing marsh and draining marsh between the sea walls and saltings on the southern shore of the Blackwater Estuary. The area contains the following sites of nature conservation value:

- Blackwater Estuary SPA - supports internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl.
- Blackwater Estuary SSSI - mudflats and saltmarsh that support internationally and nationally important numbers of wildfowl including Brent geese.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential further loss and decline in hedgerows due to intensive agricultural practice and lack of management.
- Vulnerable to sea-level rise and potential effects of global warming.
- Flood protection and managed retreat issues.
- Pressure of increased traffic on Bradwell road and minor lanes especially during peak tourist seasons.
- Expansion of boating activities on the estuary and the effect on salt marsh erosion and destabilisation of sea walls.
- Potential for more visually intrusive expansion to the settlement edges.
- Suburbanisation of plotland villages.
- Potential for visually intrusive development of new farm buildings.
- Lighting and future use of Bradwell Poser Station.

- Pressure on the landscape from increased amenity uses, such as caravan sites, yacht clubs and pleasure-boat marinas.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include areas of grazing marsh, sinuous ditches, small pockets of undrained saltmarsh and sea walls, which are sensitive to changes in land management. The generally open skyline of the area is visually sensitive to new development, which would be visible within views to and from adjacent coastal farmland, along the estuary, and also from higher wooded farmlands to the north. There is a sense of historic integrity, which is visible within field boundaries (comprising large drainage ditches, mainly without banks or hedges, some following the sinuous course of former creeks). Overall, this character area has high sensitivity to change. 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.

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.

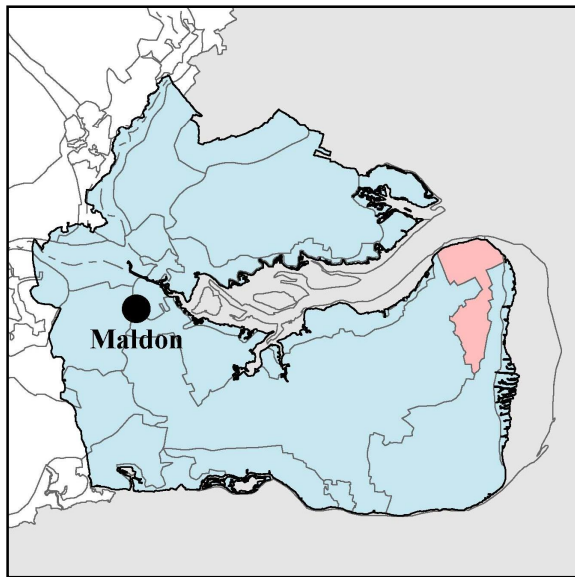
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Ensure that any new development responds to historic settlement pattern and scale, and uses materials that are appropriate to the local landscape character. Such development should be well integrated into the surrounding landscape.
- Conserve and enhance the mostly 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.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Ensure that caravan sites are well integrated into the surrounding landscape and that their scale is in keeping with local landscape character.
- Consider the potential for creation of new inter-tidal habitats (such as saltmarsh) through Managed Realignment (with regard to information set out within the Blackwater Estuary Flood Management Strategy : Essex Estuarine Strategy).

D7 BRADWELL DRAINED ESTUARINE MARSH

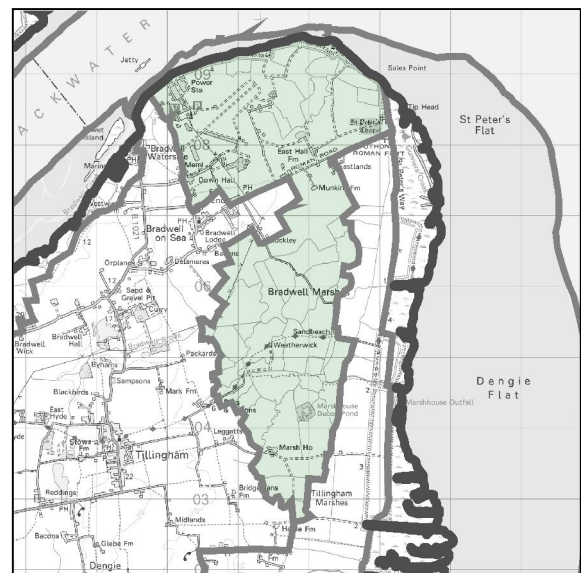


Key Characteristics

- Flat, low-lying land immediately behind sea wall defences.
- Mostly arable farmland on former reclaimed marsh intersected by linear ditches and dykes.
- Absence of trees except around farmsteads.
- Sense of huge sky, sound of birds, tranquillity, and panoramic views across the marshland and out to sea.
- Isolated farms; restricted access provided by a very few lanes; absence of settlements.

Overall Character

This area of flat, low-lying drained marshland behind the sea wall is at the tip of the Dengie Peninsula, where it juts out into the Blackwater Estuary. It stretches between Sales Point and Bradwell Power Station then extends down into the Bradwell Marshes. This character area includes the ancient St Peter-on-the-Wall Saxon church and a disused military airfield from World War II. It is a remote landscape, with access for vehicles limited to one B road; and access to the sea wall is only on foot via either the old Roman Road to St Peter's, or various footpaths such as St Peter's Way. The Bradwell Marshes have a long history and here the sinuous ditches reflect the older natural drainage patterns and fleets that were originally used to enclose the marshland. Near Marsh House, an old decoy pond remains, and in places old counter walls can be seen. Remnant elm hedgerows are visible in places. This is in stark contrast to the mostly rectilinear open field pattern of the more recently drained marshland to the east (D6). This windswept landscape of big sky and shifting colours displays varying textures - from the rough textured salt marsh at low tide through to the smoother grazing marsh/grassland and the extensive expanses of arable fields. Disused or derelict buildings mixed with small isolated settlements amid large-scale open arable farmland give this remote promontory of big sky and sea and shifting colours an atmosphere and a character that seems forgotten and lost in time. The sense of tranquillity is very strong.



Visual Characteristics

- Bradwell Nuclear Power Station and its pylons dominate the skyline as a visual landmark in the northern reaches of the area, visible from great distances over the surrounding flatlands, especially when lit at night.
- St Peter-on-the-Wall church is visible from the surrounding flatlands.
- Strong sense of being windswept and desolate.
- Visual relief is offered by views on a clear day looking inland to the wooded slopes on the north shore of the Blackwater Estuary as well as northwards to Mersea Island and the open sea to the north and east.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by drained curvilinear reclaimed land, which tends to be 18th century or earlier in origin. The main historic landscape features include:

- Field boundaries comprising water-filled ditches.
- Remnants of the original seawalls, which are still visible as relict landscape features.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by arable farmland on former reclaimed marsh intersected by linear ditches and dykes. The area contains Sandbeach Meadows SSSI - unimproved grassland supports dark-bellied Brent geese, plus other ecological features such as reed beds in ditches, and unimproved grasslands.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Lighting and future use for Bradwell Power Station.
- Proposed wind farm on Bradwell Marshes and ancillary telecommunications.
- Issues of potential for pollution of water table due to large-scale intensive agriculture and use of fertilizer.
- Potential for more visually intrusive expansion to the settlement edges.
- Increase of tourist traffic during peak tourist periods.
- Potential further loss and decline in hedgerows due to intensive agricultural practice and lack of management.
- Potential further decline in condition of field boundaries through further agricultural intensification.
- Utilities development i.e. Masts, pylons.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include areas of drained marsh, sinuous ditches and remnant elm hedgerows (which are sensitive to changes in land management). The open nature of the area is visually sensitive to new development, which would be visible within views from adjacent character areas. There is a sense of historic integrity, resulting from historic field boundaries, comprising water-filled ditches and remnants of old sea walls. 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.

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.

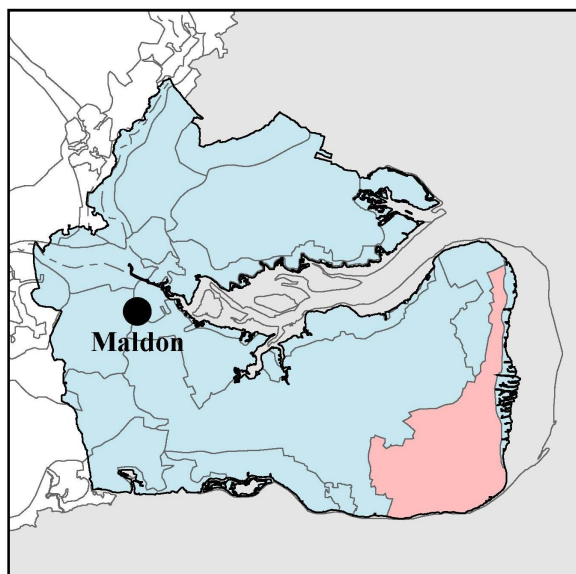
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve the open, undeveloped character of the area.
- Conserve the largely undisturbed and tranquil nature of the area.
- Consider the impacts of any development in adjacent character areas avoiding visual intrusion.
- Ensure that any new development is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles.
- Conserve and enhance the landscape of ditches, dykes, etc.
- 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.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Where appropriate, create opportunities for unimproved grassland.
- Conserve and enhance the ecological structure of ditches, drains within the character area.
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials in keeping with local vernacular landscape character.
- Encourage further partnerships such as the Environmental Stewardship Scheme with East Hall Farm to promote sustainable agricultural practices.
- Consider the potential for creation of new inter-tidal habitats (such as saltmarsh) through Managed Realignment (with regard to information set out within the Crouch and Blackwater Estuary Flood Management Strategy : Essex Estuarine Strategy).

D8 DENGIE DRAINED ESTUARINE MARSH

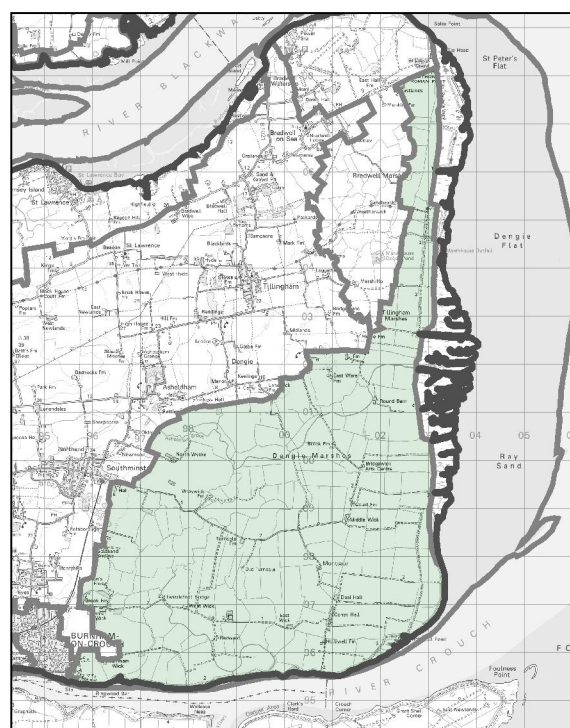


Key Characteristics

- Low drained land immediately behind sea wall defences.
- Mostly arable farmland on former reclaimed marsh intersected by linear ditches and dykes.
- Absence of trees except around farmsteads.
- Sense of huge sky, sound of birds, tranquillity, and panoramic views across the marshland and out to sea.
- Isolated farms; restricted access provided by a very few lanes; absence of settlements.

Overall Character

This character area encompasses the low-lying drained farmland immediately behind the sea wall defences from Sale Point in the northeast tip of the Dengie Peninsula and parallel to the fringing saltmarsh southwards round Holliwell Point to the broad tracts of polder lying between Burnham-on-Crouch and the sea. The boundary between these drained coastal marshlands and the adjacent coastal farmlands of Tillingham and Latchingdon (E2) is generally along the change in soil type from good quality silts of the coastal farmlands to the harder to work clays of the older diverse marshland. It is a vast, expansive area of huge skies and ditches, dykes and open arable farmland, mainly cereals, with little traditional grazing marsh seen today. Telegraph poles mark tracks and farmsteads across the view in places, with access for vehicles very limited. Narrow lanes, often private, lead to farmsteads or connect them, and public footpaths are often the only way to reach the coast. St Peter's Way is one of the very few footpaths giving public access to the sea wall. The marshland furthest inland is the oldest, and this is where settlements, ancient sinuous drainage patterns and evidence of more woody vegetation are evident. The more recent innings of land near the sea wall have no settlements, very large barns and a regular field pattern of rectilinear fields, drains and ditches. Woody vegetation is absent except along remaining old, neglected counter wall sea



defences that remain from an earlier time. This landscape is extremely remote, with only the sound of the wind, birds and the occasional farm vehicle, it has a very tranquil character.

Visual Characteristics

- Bradwell Nuclear Power Station and its pylons dominate the skyline as a visual landmark to the north, visible from great distances over the surrounding flatlands.
- St Peter-on-the-Wall church is visible from the surrounding flatlands.
- Occasional tall Lombardy poplar windbreaks loom over fields but do not jar visually; sporadic use of coniferous windbreaks looks out of character with marshland.
- Strong sense of being windswept, desolate and difficult to move about in other than on foot.
- The sense of space and sky is intense and often overwhelming.
- Tall reeds dominate the ditches, especially in the southern part of the area outside Burnham, and occasional mounded irrigation reservoirs break the line of the horizon.
- Some visual relief is offered by views on a clear day looking inland to the wooded slopes of Tillingham and Latchingdon and Fambridge Coastal Farmlands. Looking out over the seawall, there are long views to the North Kent coast, the Dengie Flats and Foulness.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by drained reclaimed land, which are either curvilinear and 18th century or earlier in origin, or rectilinear (to the east) and largely of 19th or early 20th century date, with some former curvilinear reclamation that was subsequently straightened, of 18th century or early 19th century origin. Other historic features include the water-filled ditch field boundaries, and the remnants of the original seawalls that are still visible as relict landscape features.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by arable farmland on former reclaimed marsh intersected by linear ditches and dykes. The area contains the following main ecological features:

- Reed-filled ditches.
- Arable fields that provide feeding grounds for Brent geese.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Issues of potential for pollution of water table due to large-scale intensive agriculture and use of fertilizer.
- Potential high density residential expansion of towns directly onto the marshland, as at Burnham, with no transition zone or vernacular architecture.
- Increase of tourist traffic during peak tourist periods e.g.: Burnham.
- Potential further decline in condition of field boundaries through further agricultural intensification.
- Potential for further utilities development i.e. Masts, pylons, wind farms.
- Developments with individual large/bulky buildings.
- Infrastructure implications, especially for roads, as expansion of industrial scale farming continues.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include areas of drained marsh, ditches, dykes and sea walls (which are sensitive to changes in land management). The open nature of the area is visually sensitive to new development, which would be visible within views from adjacent character areas. There is a sense of historic integrity, resulting from historic field boundaries, comprising water-filled ditches and remnants of old sea walls. Potential new development either within the area, or within adjacent character areas, may also disturb the strong sense of tranquillity. Overall, this character area has high sensitivity to change.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

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.

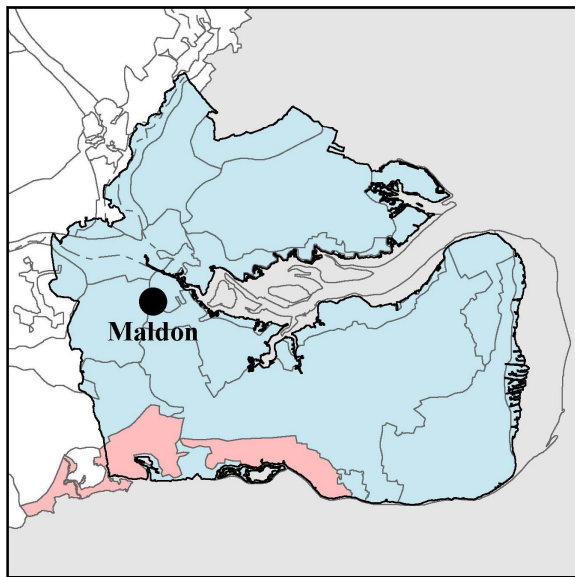
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Consider the visual impact of new residential development and farm buildings on the open arable landscape.
- Ensure that any new development is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles.
- Where appropriate, conserve and enhance the landscape of ditches, dykes, etc.
- Develop strategies to reduce the impact of tourist traffic and localized industrial agricultural expansion.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

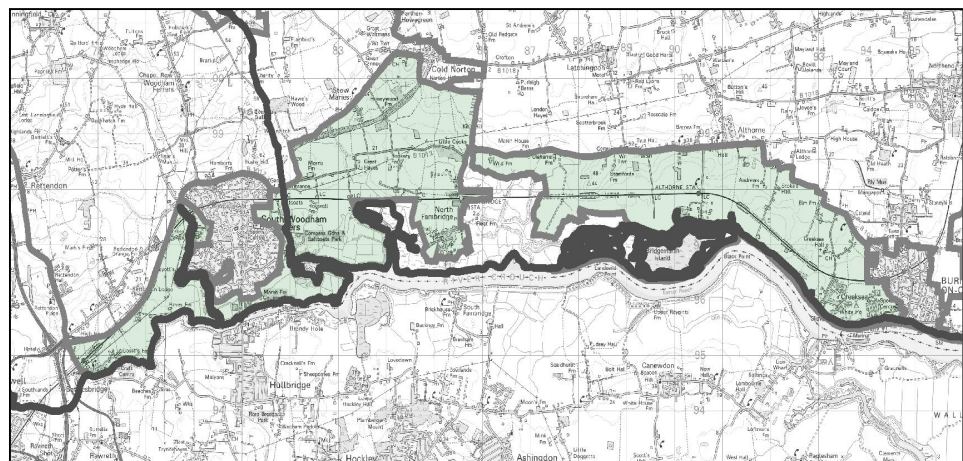
- Develop strategies to reduce potential for pollution in ditches and streams bounding the fields.
- Conserve the existing field boundary pattern, and restore where necessary through planting native species appropriate to local landscape character.
- Create opportunities for unimproved grassland.
- Conserve and enhance the ecological structure of ditches, drains within the character area.
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials in keeping with local vernacular landscape character.
- Consider the potential for creation of new inter-tidal habitats (such as saltmarsh) through Managed Realignment (with regard to information set out within the Crouch and Blackwater Estuary Flood Management Strategy : Essex Estuarine Strategy).

D9 FAMBRIDGE DRAINED ESTUARINE MARSH (shared with Chelmsford Borough)



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 Bridgemark 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.
- Croach 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

- 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 historic lanes and unimproved roadside verges.
- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of North Fambridge, Creeksea and other villages.
- Consider the potential for creation of new inter-tidal habitats (such as saltmarsh) through Managed Realignment (with regard to information set out within the Crouch Estuary Flood Management Strategy : Essex Estuarine Strategy).

6.6 Coastal Farmland Landscapes

6.6.1 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

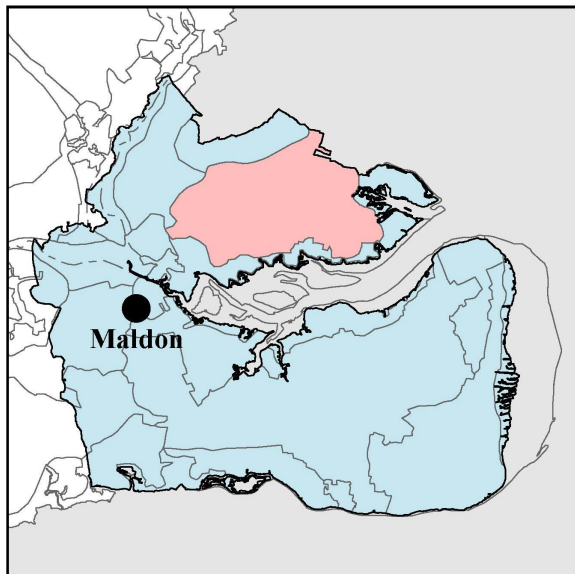
- Predominantly flat, low-lying landscape, sloping gradually upwards to the north
- Views of river estuaries and coastline from several locations
- Arable farmland on underlying heavy clay soils
- Lack of large patches/areas of woodland
- Relatively sparse settlement pattern

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

E1 - Tolleshunt Coastal Farmland

E2 - Tillingham and Latchingdon Coastal Farmland

E1 TOLLESHUNT COASTAL FARMLAND

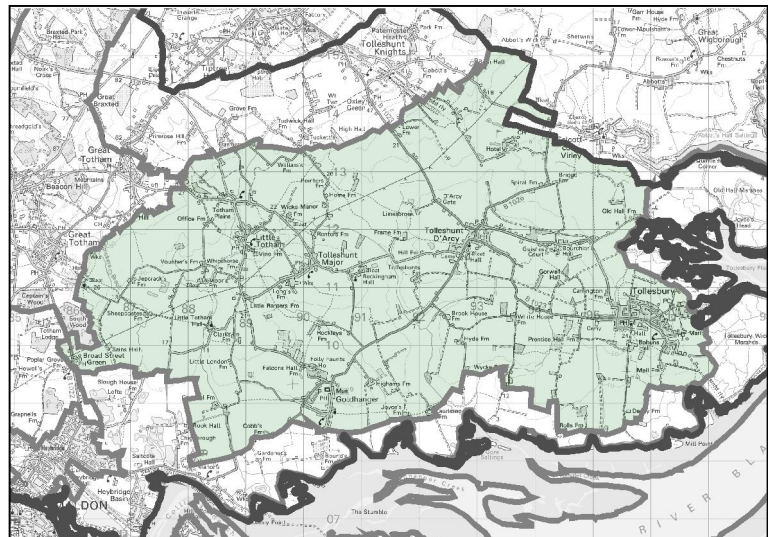


Key Characteristics

- Absence of woodland.
- Semi regular pattern of tall hedgerows, small copses and shelterbelts, although many hedgerows removed.
- Gently undulating arable farmland behind the coastal marshland.
- Small-scale settlements situated in close proximity.

Overall Character

This coastal farmland is the hinterland to the North Blackwater Estuary. Lying on well-drained loamy soils it extends from Tollesbury in the east to the wooded ridge farmlands in the north and west, with the low-lying Maldon Drained Estuarine Farmland (See D2) to the south, which also separates it from the estuary. It is a gently sloping landscape of mainly arable crops, with some horse pasture near settlements. Fields are semi regular and large. Tall remnant elm hedgerows bound the fields, and coniferous windbreaks can be seen in some places. Extensive hedgerow loss in many places gives the appearance of a large-scale field pattern. Pylons march across the fields in a line moving southwest to northeast between Little Totham and Tolleshunt Major. Vehicular access around the area is via many small winding lanes and minor roads, and there is also a complex network of footpaths. Attractive historic villages, often surrounded by trees, are scattered in linear settlements along roads and most farmsteads are dispersed in sometimes quite isolated locations across the area. Access to the estuary is difficult, but possible at Tollesbury. This village has a maritime in character due to its position on the edge of the marshland behind the old sea walls. Distinctive vertical nineteenth century sail loft buildings, the light ship and many sailing boats on the Woodrolfe Creek are visible from a distance across the marshes, and the church spire in the village can be seen across the fields to the south. Overall this is a landscape varied in texture and colour. The sky and horizon meet frequently here, in contrast to the more enclosed intimate feel in the villages across the centre of the area. This is an area



characterised by its quiet lanes and isolated farmsteads with a strong sense of place and a strong sense of tranquillity

Visual Characteristics

- Panoramic views across coastal farmland to the Blackwater Estuary and the Tollesbury Wick marshes as well as to the wooded farmland to the north and west.
- Views to Bradwell Power Station.
- Open landscape of flat to slightly undulating arable fields.
- Sail lofts local landmarks at marina outside Tollesbury.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by a mixture of pre-18th century irregular fields and later piecemeal enclosure by agreement. Historically the settlement is dispersed, comprising isolated manors, farms, moated sites and hamlets bordering small greens. The only nucleated settlement of any size is Tollesbury. The main historic landscape features include:

- A single large estate from the Saxon period, the Tolls which is reflected in the current place-names of Tolleshunt and Tollesbury.
- The fields in the southern portion of the area which were laid out on a roughly ladder-like system running down from the crest of the ridge down to the marsh edge.
- Rectilinear field in the northern half of the areas, which are still are grouped into distinct blocks, possibly representing individual farm extents. These fields are definitely medieval in origin and given the known history of the area it is possible that the basic framework was laid out in the Saxon period.
- Sub-divided into long narrow farms during the post-medieval period, enabling access to the high ground, the south-facing slopes and the marsh, and hence the widest range of landscape resources.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable agriculture. The main ecological features include:

- Two areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland on the northern edges.
- Tall hedgerows, small copses and shelterbelts, although many hedgerows removed.
- Unimproved grassland habitats on narrow verge sides.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential further loss and decline in hedgerows due to intensive agricultural practice and lack of management.
- Pressure of increased traffic on rural and minor lanes especially during peak tourist seasons.
- Pressure from increased amenity uses such as recreational boating, and water-related leisure activities and effects on tranquil areas.
- Potential visual intrusion of telephone masts.
- Effects of new uses such as golf courses at Tolleshunt Knights and expansion of marina at Tollesbury.
- Potential for more visually intrusive expansion to the settlement edges at Tollesbury, particularly on the creekside marina.
- Potential for visually intrusive development of new farm buildings.
- Eastern part of the area vulnerable to loss of coastal/estuarine landscape features due to sea level rise and effects of global warming.
- Flood protection and managed retreat issues.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include tall, remnant elm hedgerows, small copses and shelterbelts (which are sensitive to changes in land management). The open nature of the skyline of several areas of the coastal farmland is visually sensitive, with new development potentially visible within expansive views across the area and also within views to and from adjacent drained estuarine marsh. There is a strong sense of historic integrity, resulting from a dispersed historic settlement pattern of small hamlets and villages, distinctive historic co-axial field pattern in a southern portion of the area and several visible historic features (including Tollesbury 19th century sail loft). The comprehensive network of quiet rural lanes, which cross the landscape are sensitive to potential increased traffic flow, associated with new development. Overall, this character area has moderate to – 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.

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.

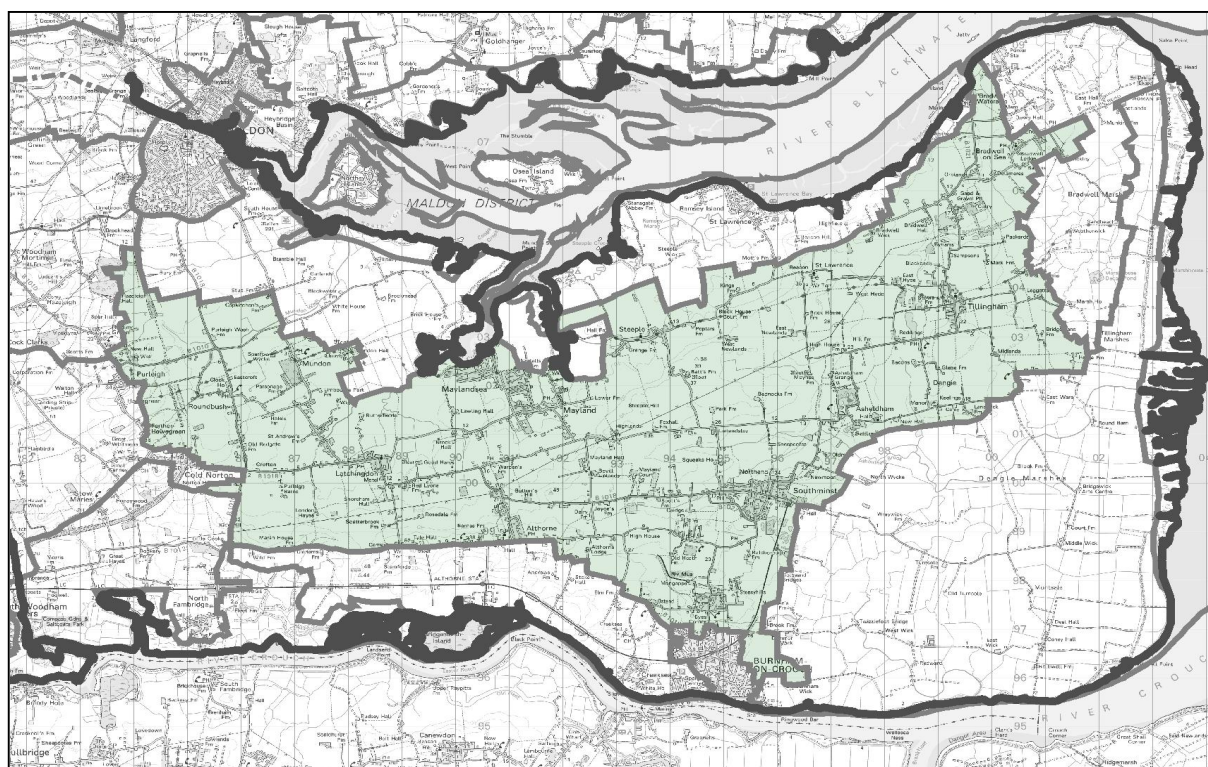
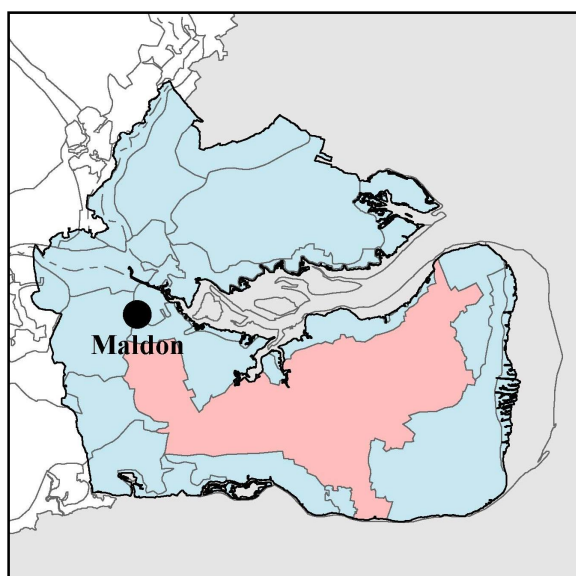
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Ensure that any new development responds to historic settlement pattern and scale, and uses materials that are appropriate to the local landscape character. Such development should be well integrated into the surrounding landscape.
- Conserve the mostly 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 and enhance historic lanes and unimproved roadside verges.
- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of Tollesbury and other villages.

E2 TILLINGHAM AND LATCHINGDON COASTAL FARMLAND



Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating arable farmland behind the coastal marshland, locally quite steep.
- Heavy clay soils and lighter sandy loamy soils where sand and gravel deposits overlie clay.
- Distinctive long hedgerow boundaries running on parallel axes are a common feature, thought to be the result of ancient planned enclosure.
- Dutch elm disease has made elm loss noticeable in hedgerows.
- Right-angled bends in lanes reflect ancient field pattern.
- Settlement pattern follows underlying soils - sand and gravel formations on a ridge between Bradwell and Burnham - elsewhere settlement on slopes in clay areas.

Overall Character

This character area lies on the broadly rolling higher ground forming the hinterlands behind both the Dengie drained marshland (D7/D8), the lower Blackwater estuary drained marshland (D5/D6), and the river Crouch drained farmland (D9). This land is steeply sloping in places, as above Steeple, Mayland, and St Lawrence, and south of Cold Norton. Criss-crossed by drains and ditches, many of the field patterns have noticeable right-angled bends that the adjacent lanes follow, which is thought to demonstrate evidence of ancient planned landscape. The mainly rectilinear field pattern is medium to large scale. Extensive hedgerow loss in many places gives the appearance of a large-scale field pattern. Farming is a mix of arable and some pasture enclosed by elm-dominated hedgerows and copses, many of them containing a large proportion of dead elms, victims of Dutch elm disease. Trees and shelterbelts are usually located near farmsteads. Scattered hedgerow oak trees are visible in some places along fields and lanes. Around Latchingdon many conifer windbreaks can also be seen. Visually intrusive pylons march across the fields through the centre of the area. The telegraph poles are less visually intrusive. Occasionally a water tower dominates the horizon locally. The B1010 is the main access road between Maldon and Burnham, but the B1018 and B1021 also service the area. Road traffic is omnipresent. The railway between Burnham and Southminster is well hidden in the landscape. Historic settlement patterns are visible in the line of villages along the top of the low north-south ridge between Bradwell and Burnham, due to underlying sands and gravels, whereas other villages are more dispersed in a linear pattern along roads across the underlying clay slopes. Farmsteads are scattered across the area. The vernacular architecture is weatherboard painted white with black trim. Red brick is also widely found as a local material. The fringes of most of the older villages have been suburbanised in an unsympathetic way that visually intrudes into the local landscape. Views of the church at Tillingham are completely obscured by modern housing in yellow brick. Current, as well as late 20th century development at Mayland and Maylandsea is particularly noticeable, due to its density and suburban style, and does not blend well into the open landscape character. Disused sand and gravel pits have also often been insensitively or inappropriately restored causing loss of hedgerow pattern and uncharacteristic landform. This is a landscape characterised by its rolling topography, by its visual links to the drained marshland and by its texture of its deciduous tree and shrubs in field boundaries. Urban expansion is happening fast here, and as a consequence only certain pockets, well away from the B road network, have a moderate sense of tranquillity now.

Visual Characteristics

- Steeple church visible from higher ground to the south.
- Panoramic views from Althorne to both Blackwater and Crouch estuaries.
- Steep slopes descending to Steeple, Mayland and St Lawrence visible from across the Blackwater Estuary.
- Some ancient manors and moats visible.
- Urban fringes visually intrusive in terms of density and architectural style.

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). These are of considerable antiquity, and may have their origins in the middle Saxon period, if not before. These were historically bordered by elm hedgerows, but most of these were lost in the 1970s as a consequence of Dutch Elm Disease. The original medieval pattern of settlements scattered along the roads along the top of the ridge and on smaller peninsulas protruding out to the coast is still evident, as at Burnham-on-Sea. Other historic landscape features include the former Bradwell-on-Sea airfield, which is now the site of the Bradwell Nuclear Power-station.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by a mix of arable and pastoral agriculture behind the coastal marshland. Ecological features include:

- Remnants of historic hedgerows.
- Unimproved grassland on narrow roadside verges.
- Irrigation reservoirs.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential further loss and decline in hedgerows due to intensive agricultural practice and lack of management.
- Pressure of increased traffic on rural and minor lanes especially during peak tourist seasons.
- Pressure from increased water-related leisure activities and effects on tranquil areas.
- Potential visual intrusion of telephone masts.
- Effects of new uses on tranquillity such as firing ranges.
- Potential for more visually intrusive expansion to the settlement edges Potential for visually intrusive development of new farm buildings.
- Flood protection and managed retreat issues.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include distinctive long hedgerow boundaries (often containing deciduous trees and shrubs) running on parallel axes (which are sensitive to changes in land management). The open nature of the skyline of several areas of the coastal farmland is visually sensitive, with new development potentially visible within expansive views across the area and also within views to and from adjacent drained estuarine marsh and coastal farmland. There is a strong sense of historic integrity, resulting from a historic settlement pattern of villages lining the top of the low north-south ridge between Bradwell and Burnham and a distinctive historic co-axial field pattern. 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.

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

- Ensure that any new development responds to historic settlement pattern and scale, and uses materials that are appropriate to the local landscape character Such development should be well integrated into the surrounding landscape.
- Conserve the mostly 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.

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 Tollesbury and other villages.

6.7 Wooded Farmland Landscapes

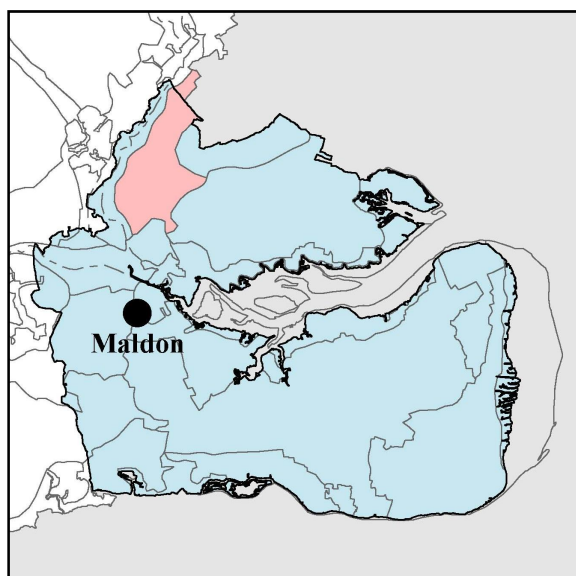
6.7.1 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

- 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

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

F3 - Totham Wooded Farmland
F4 - Tolleshunt Knights Wooded Farmland
F5 - Little Baddow and Danbury Wooded Farmland
F6 - Woodham Wooded Farmland
F12 - East Hanningfield Wooded Farmland

F3 TOTHAM WOODED FARMLAND (shared with Braintree District)

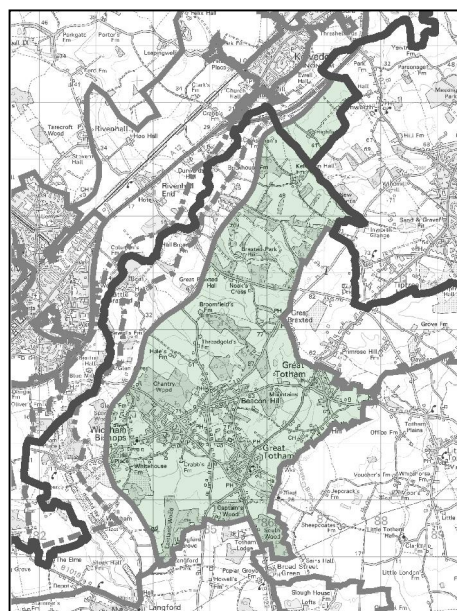


Key Characteristics

- Wooded ridges and hillsides to the east of the River Blackwater.
- Predominantly agricultural fields enclosed by woodland patches or hedgerows with mature trees.
- Field boundaries vary; some thickly enclosed, as at Beacon Hill; some more open with gappy hedges.
- Interest created by colour-washed buildings both in villages and scattered in the landscape.

Overall Character

Tottham Wooded Landscape Character Area covers the wooded eastern hills and slopes above the River Blackwater, which stretches from the sparsely settled Kelvedon Hall Farm area in the north, through Great Braxted and to the Eastern Wood and Captain's Wood in the south. Chantry Wood lies on the western edge of the area, the wooded slopes south of Great Tottham and Tottham Hill making the eastern boundary of the area. The landform is rolling hills with some steep ridges, particularly along Beacon Hill Ridge, with small to medium-size agricultural fields enclosed by woods and copses. These are quite dense at Great Braxted, and become more open as they descend southwards towards the villages of Great Tottham and the fringes of Wickham Bishops. Some of these woods are remnants of ancient woodland. The field pattern is irregular, usually following the topography of the land. There are occasional ditches, streams, and small farmstead reservoirs. A network of many footpaths and tracks cover the area, some of which have become vehicular roads. Vehicular access is good, with several B roads that cross the area. The scale varies from intimate and enclosed on the higher thickly wooded slopes and ridges, to medium scale on the lower southern slopes where hedges and hedgerow trees predominate as field boundaries. The landscape is textured with contrasts of deciduous woods and hedges, undulating fields that are a mixture of arable and grazing, and occasional coniferous tree belts. This is an enclosed landscape, with periodic views through gaps in the trees on the higher ground to the valley below. It is a gentle, subtly varied landscape that has a strong sense of place as it apparent it has long been domesticated by farming and human settlement. Braxted Park and scattered



pre-1800 granges and farmhouses add to this sense of history. The slight sense of isolation on the higher ground comes from these inward-looking views framed by dense woods. The hilltops and lanes are relatively tranquil, with settlement edges and areas near the A12 more disturbed by vehicular noise. The sense of tranquillity thus varies from strong to moderate.

Visual Characteristics

- Long distance views to drained estuarine marshes from Mountain Road leading into Great Braxted
- Timber church steeples are a feature within the landscape, but few churches are on high ground and are often tucked into the wooded landscape.
- Some open views to the valley below, but more often the views are short distances, over fields and buildings framed by the wooded ridges.
- New residential development on Hall Road, Great Totham is visually out of character with surrounding landscape in terms of colour, style and density of the settlement.

Historic Land Use

Historically this Character Area comprised Tiptree Heath, a huge area of common rough pasture and wood-pasture shared between the neighbouring parishes. Encroachment on this area began in a piecemeal fashion in the medieval period, but extensive open tracts still remained until the early 19th century when it was finally enclosed by Enclosure Act. This piecemeal history of enclosure is evident. Some areas of the original heath and wood-pasture survive, these appear as ancient woodland and are largely located on the top of the ridge, the Wickham Bishops area is particularly well-wooded. Historically settlement was very dispersed and sparse, comprising isolated church/hall complexes, manors, farms, cottages and small hamlets. The main historic landscape features include:

- Enclosed meadow pasture along the Domsey Brook valley floor.
- Braxted Park and a smaller park at Hill House.
- The modern settlement of Wickham Bishops, which largely date to the 20th century.
- Moderate to high post-1950s boundary loss, in many cases involving the removal of boundaries introduced in the early 19th century.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable agriculture with large blocks of woodland. The area contains no designated sites of nature conservation. Ecological features include:

- Boundaries of ditches and species-rich hedgerows.
- Approximately 21 areas of Ancient Woodland including: Kelvedon Hall Wood/Tiptree Wood/Westhall Wood/Rond Wood/Criers Wood/Stowling Wood/Chantry Wood/Eastland, and Captain's Wood.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Pressure of increased traffic on rural and minor lanes.
- Potential for more visually intrusive development on the fringes of Witham.
- Potential for visually intrusive development of new farm buildings.
- Potential for visually intrusive development within adjacent character area (around Witham).

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include several woodland patches and copses, mature trees within hedgerows and occasional ditches, which are sensitive to changes in land management. The overall sense of tranquillity within parts of the character area is also sensitive to change and potential new development, or increases in traffic flow associated with such development. There is a strong sense of historic integrity, resulting from a series of ancient woodlands situated on the top of the ridge (comprising areas of original heath and wood pasture), Braxted Park and Hill House and patches of enclosed meadow within the valley floors, which are also

sensitive to changes in land management. The 21 blocks of ancient woodland within the character area provide important habitats for wildlife. 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.

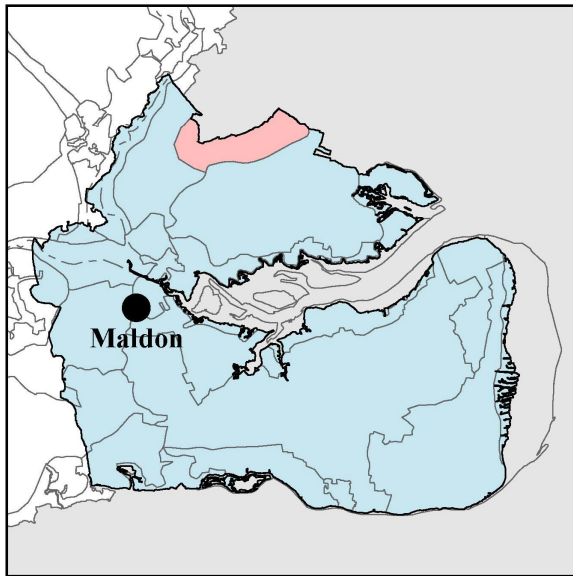
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve and protect open views from Mountain Road, Braxted Lane and other rural lanes.
- Ensure that any new development responds to historic settlement pattern and scale, and uses materials and colours that are appropriate to the local landscape character; such development should be well integrated into the surrounding landscape.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and restore existing hedgerow network where gappy and depleted especially on property boundaries or on field margins.
- Conserve and enhance the ecological structure of woodland, copses and hedges within the character area.
- 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 ploughing does not disturb mature trees within hedgerows.
- Conserve and promote the use of local building materials which are in keeping with the local vernacular and landscape character.

F4 TOLLESHUNT KNIGHTS WOODED FARMLAND

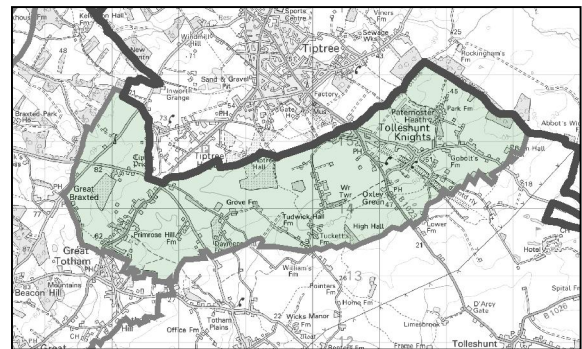


Key Characteristics

- Enclosed landscape of wooded farmland, in the southern part of the Tiptree Ridge.
- Remnant heathland to the north of the area.
- Intimate and semi-enclosed character created by density of woodland on the ridge.
- Mosaic of small to medium sized arable fields.

Overall Character

This character area is located on the Tiptree Ridge, taking in Tolleshunt Knights in the northwest and extending to Great Braxted in the west. The northern boundary takes in a portion of the remnant Tiptree heath, and the southern edge of the area is aligned with the edge of the wooded ridge. This is rolling wooded farmland made up of a mosaic of small to medium-sized arable fields interspersed with many patches of mixed woodland which are sometimes interlocking. This includes fragments of ancient woodland. Occasionally coniferous windbreaks are visually dominant. Fields are defined by intermittent oaks, scrub and tall gappy hedgerows along the irrigation ditches. Shapes vary from irregular to regular. Farming is mainly arable, though there is some pasture. The condition of the landscape varies from very well maintained to poor near some parts north of Great Totham. Settlement pattern is dispersed, made up of scattered farmsteads and the linear settlement of Tolleshunt Knights and the northern edges of Great Totham, (which lies in adjacent character area F3). This is a quiet, gently undulating semi-enclosed landscape where rough grassland and heathland in the north merge with the wooded field boundaries from Tiptree Priory to Ingworth. Long views are possible from the ridge top across the rolling coastal farmland to the south (see E1). Local vernacular architecture includes colour-washed plaster, weatherboarding and thatched and pantile roofs, although 20th century buildings predominate. Vehicular access is mostly via winding lanes, often with thick hedgerow boundaries, though the B1023 cuts across the area. With its low density of settlement and the high proportion of tree cover, this character area has a strong sense of tranquillity.



Visual Characteristics

- Long views on a clear day across coastal farmland to Blackwater Estuary in the south or to Blackwater Valley to the west.
- Disused railway line visible in the landscape.
- Dark woodland blocks form backdrop to most views across fields on upper ridge, which is almost flat.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is very varied, ranging from predominately pre-18th century irregular fields, probably medieval or earlier in origin, in the north-west of the area, to a more co-axial rectilinear system, also medieval in origin, in the remainder of the area, with dispersed areas of later piecemeal enclosure. Some of this later enclosure dates to the later medieval or post-medieval period, whilst the remainder, particularly on the former Layer Heath dates to the early 19th century. To the west, historically this area comprised Tiptree Heath, a huge area of common rough pasture and wood-pasture shared between the neighbouring parishes. Encroachment on this area began in a piecemeal fashion in the medieval period, but extensive open tracts still remained until the early 19th century when it was finally enclosed by Enclosure Act. Historically the settlement is dispersed, comprising isolated church/hall complexes, manors, farms, cottages and hamlets bordering small greens.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable agriculture with of woodland. Main ecological features include:

- Ancient woodlands including fragments of Long Wood, Wigborough Springs and High Hall Wood comprising oak and hornbeam.
- Streams and irrigation reservoirs.
- Boundaries of ditches and species-rich hedgerows.
- Some remnant heathland.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential for visually intrusive development within adjacent character area (around Tiptree).
- Potential for expansion of visually intrusive development on edges of Tolleshunt Knights.
- Pressure of increased traffic on rural and minor lanes.
- Potential for visually intrusive development of new farm buildings.
- Large scale leisure development uses that are potentially visually intrusive (such as golf courses).

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include many patches of mixed woodland and remnant heathland to the north of the area, which are sensitive to changes in land management. The overall sense of tranquillity within parts of the character area is also sensitive to change and potential new development, or increases in traffic flow associated with such development. There is a sense of historic integrity, resulting from a dispersed historic settlement pattern and patches of surviving original heath and wood pasture, appearing as ancient woodlands, which are also sensitive to changes in land management. The skyline of adjacent coastal farmland character areas is visually sensitive to change or new development, with long views southwards, as far as the Blackwater Estuary possible. 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.

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.

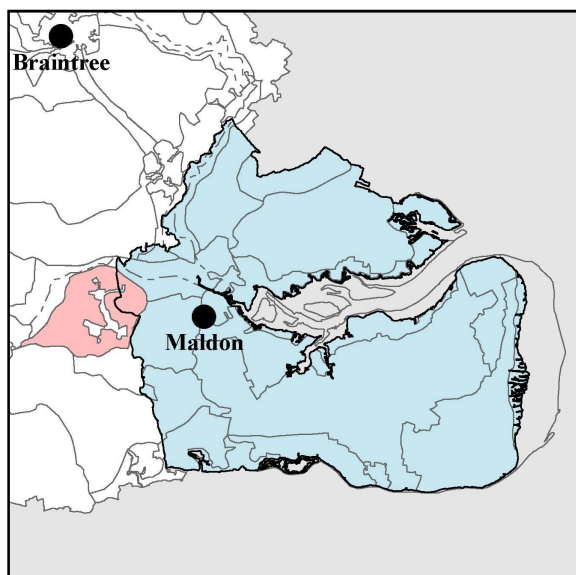
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the wooded landscape character.
- Ensure that any new development responds to historic settlement pattern and scale, and uses materials and colours that 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.
- Conserve the mostly rural character of the area.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

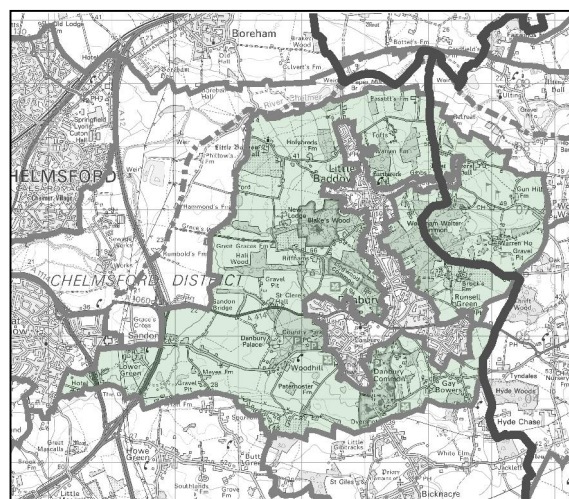
- Conserve and restore existing hedgerow network where gappy and depleted especially on property boundaries or on field margins.
- Conserve, manage and enhance areas of semi natural and ancient woodland as important heritage, nature conservation and landscape features.
- Conserve historic lanes and unimproved roadside verges.
- Introduce arable field margins as a means to ensure that mature trees within hedgerows are not disturbed by ploughing.
- Introduce a planting and management programme to ensure future trees within field hedgerow boundaries will succeed mature trees.
- Conserve and promote the use of local building materials which are in keeping with the local vernacular and landscape character.

F5 LITTLE BADDOW AND DANBURY WOODED FARMLAND (shared with Chelmsford Borough)



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, Pheasanthouse 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.

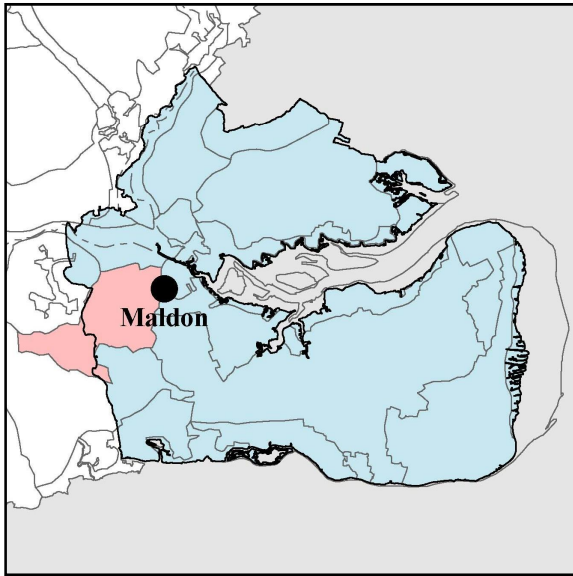
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- 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

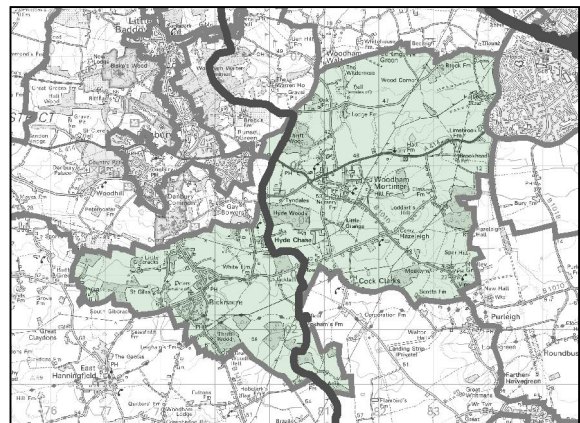
- Conserve and manage areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland within the area as important historical, landscape and nature conservation features.
- Conserve and restore pastures.
- Conserve and manage the existing hedgerow pattern, and strengthen where appropriate through planting.
- Conserve the 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 Chelmsford Borough)



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.

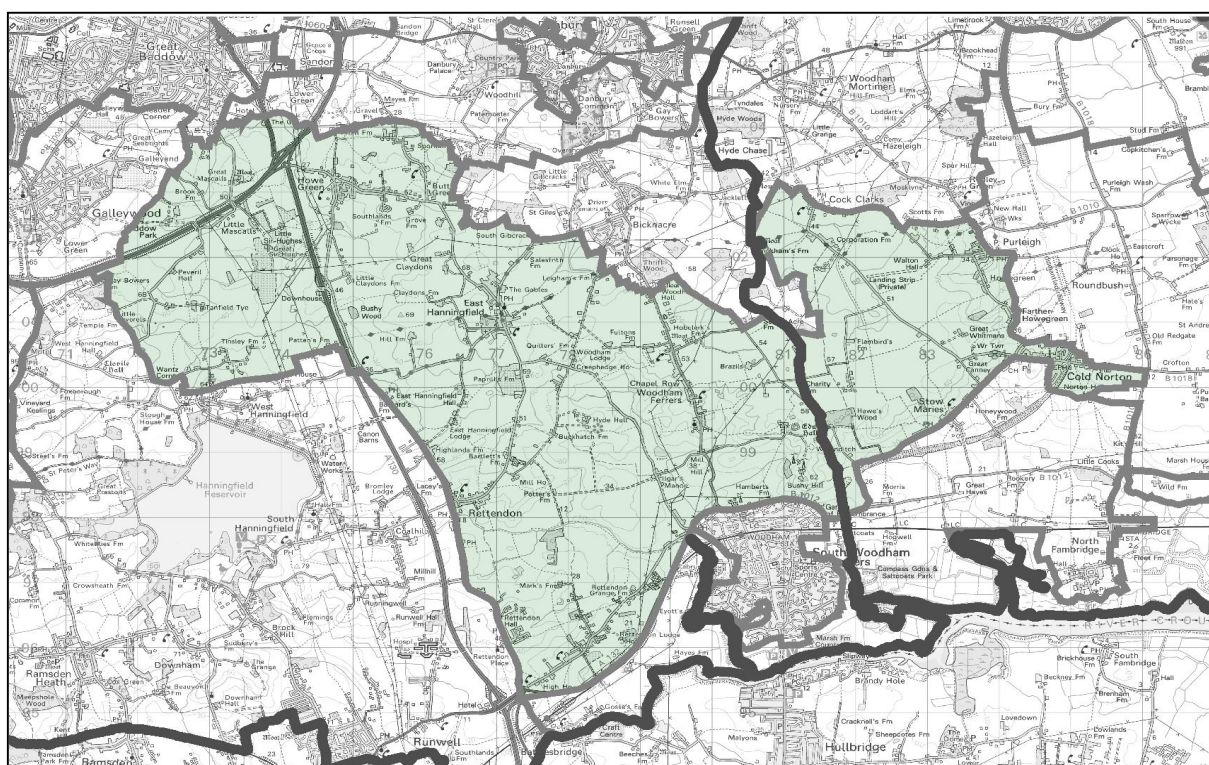
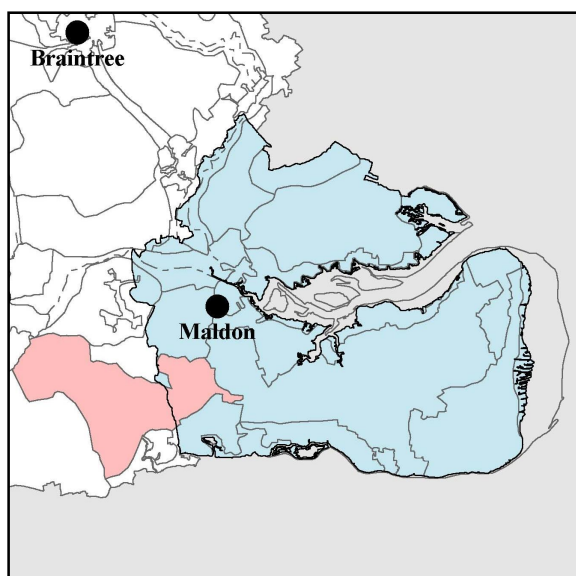
Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- 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.

F12 EAST HANNINGFIELD WOODED FARMLAND (shared with Chelmsford Borough)



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.

