



**Colchester City Council**

**Colchester Local Wildlife  
Sites Network: Partial  
Review**

**Findings and  
Recommendations  
Addendum**

**Final report**

Prepared by LUC

February 2026

**Colchester City Council**

**Colchester Local Wildlife Sites Network: Partial Review**  
**Findings and Recommendations Addendum**

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

**1.1** In October 2024, LUC was appointed by Colchester City Council (hereafter referred to as the ‘Council’) to undertake a Partial Review of Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) in the district, plus a single LoWS in Tendring, located in close proximity to one proposed site allocation that adjoins the district boundary. The Review was completed in September 2025 and forms part of the robust evidence base that informs the Council’s emerging new Local Plan to 2041 preferred options of growth. The Colchester Local Wildlife Sites Network: Partial Review - Findings and Recommendations Report was produced by LUC in September 2025, which put forward recommendations for eight LoWS to be considered for extension.

**1.2** This addendum has been produced in response to targeted consultation led by the Council with Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT) and Colchester Natural History Society (CNHS) on the draft version of the 2025 Findings and Recommendations Report, as a result of which, a further five potential LoWS were identified by CNHS for inclusion as part of this assessment. In addition, further to discussion at the Council’s Local Plan Committee, it was agreed that 11 preferred site allocations where the Biodiversity Assessment evidence indicated development would harm biodiversity (and not due to harm to an adjacent LoWS) would also form part of this assessment.

**1.3** The aim of this addendum is to provide the following elements:

- Desk-based assessment of the 11 preferred site allocations identified as likely to harm biodiversity to inform requirements for site survey and assessment in spring 2026. These sites are hereafter referred to as Tranche 4.
- Collated baseline for eight LoWS proposed for extension as per the Findings and Recommendations Report in accordance with the published Essex LoWS Selection Criteria<sup>1</sup>. This will inform recommendations for designation of the proposed extensions for each of the LoWS subject to site survey. These sites are hereafter referred to as Tranche 2.
- Collated baseline for five potential LoWS identified through consultation with CNHS in accordance with the published Essex LoWS Selection Criteria<sup>2</sup>. This will

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<sup>1</sup> Essex Wildlife Trust (2016) Local Wildlife Site Selection Criteria

<sup>2</sup> Essex Wildlife Trust (2016) Local Wildlife Site Selection Criteria

inform recommendations for designation of these potential LoWS subject to site survey. These sites are hereafter referred to as Tranche 3.

- Identify, at high level, the impacts that will likely arise from proposed development coming forwards as part of the preferred options for growth in the Local Plan, and consider opportunities, including through management, to create resilience and enhance each site and the wider network.

**1.4** This report should be read in conjunction with the Colchester Local Wildlife Sites Network: Partial Review - Findings and Recommendations Report produced by LUC in September 2025.

### Structure

**1.5** The structure of the remainder of the report is as follows:

- **Chapter 2** outlines the method used for the desk study and site surveys of the LoWS review of Tranches 2-4 sites.
- **Chapter 3** summarises the outcomes of the LoWS desk-based assessment and survey and provides recommendations regarding existing LoWS and pre-designated sites.
- **Chapter 4** outlines the findings of the desk-based assessment of the Tranche 4 sites and outlines next steps for survey and assessment.

## Chapter 2

### Approach

**2.1** Reference should be made to Chapter 3 of the Colchester Local Wildlife Sites Network: Partial Review - Findings and Recommendations Report produced by LUC in September 2025, which outlines the approach to consultation, identification of additional sites and site survey and assessment. A summary of this is provided below.

#### Consultation

**2.2** The approach to this Review has been informed by consultation with the EWT and CNHS in July 2025. As part of an iterative process, a draft version of Colchester Local Wildlife Sites Network: Partial Review - Findings and Recommendations Report was circulated for consultation with local wildlife experts. The process was led by the Council, who have moderated the comments provided for LUC to review.

**2.3** Additionally, discussion took place with the Council's Local Plan Committee in July 2025, which was led by the Council.

**2.4** This addendum report has been prepared in response to comments provided as part of this consultation process to include consideration of additional sites for inclusion as part of the LoWS network, for clarity, termed Tranches 2 to 4.

#### Site Selection

**2.5** Reference should be made to **Figure 1, Appendix A**, which presents the location of Tranche 1-4 sites assessed for survey as part of this Review.

#### Identification of LoWS and potential LoWS for Assessment

##### Tranche 1

**2.6** As part of the original assessment, an assessment was undertaken to identify LoWS located within, adjacent to or within 50m of an emerging site allocation being considered for inclusion within the new Local Plan.

**2.7** To rationalise the spatial scope, GIS was used to identify all overlapping, adjacent to or within 50m of the identified emerging site allocations. The 50m buffer was used to account for possible mapping discrepancies and to capture any LoWS in immediate proximity. It is recognised that this focuses the assessment, principally to reflect potential habitat loss and fragmentation. This approach was agreed with the

Council and considered appropriate to inform this stage of the plan-making process. Further consideration of impacts for assessment may be required in later stages of the planning process, if/as new allocation sites come forward. It should be noted that very small areas of overlapping site allocations may be a result of mapping not having exactly matching boundaries.

**2.8** A total of 29 LoWS, including 3 potential LoWS (PCLoWS) were taken forward for survey and review and formed the Tranche 1 sites. It should be noted that the spatial scope of this review was to focus on the existing LoWS network in relation to allocation sites, and as such was a targeted review as part of the wider Local Plan evidence base. However, it is recognised that it is also important to identify opportunities to expand, connect and buffer the network.

**2.9** Full detail on the approach that was applied for this assessment is provided within the Colchester Local Wildlife Sites Network: Partial Review - Findings and Recommendations Report.

### Identification of Additional Sites

#### Tranche 2

**2.10** In response to the findings and recommendations that arose as part of the original assessment of Tranche 1 sites as detailed in the Findings and Recommendations Report, the Council commissioned eight additional LoWS identified with potential for extension to be included within this Review. These sites were included as part of this review in line with the methods specified below under **Site Survey and Assessment**.

Table 2.1 Tranche 2 - Sites

Tranche 2 - Sites
Potential extension of an existing LoWS – Gosbecks Archaeological Park
Potential extension of an existing LoWS – Hythe Lagoons
Potential extension of an existing LoWS – Seven Star Green
Potential extension of an existing LoWS – Birch Brook Wood
Potential extension of an existing LoWS – Middlewick Ranges
Potential extension of an existing LoWS – Pits Wood
Potential extension of an existing LoWS – Cymbeline Meadows

#### Tranche 2 - Sites

Potential extension of an existing LoWS – Wivenhoe Park

#### Tranche 3

**2.11** As a result of consultation with EWT and CNHS, a total of five additional potential LoWS were identified for inclusion in this Review in addition to the original 29 (now referred to as Tranche 1 sites). These sites were included as part of this review in line with the methods specified below under **Site Survey and Assessment**.

**2.12** Two of the potential LoWS put forward by CNHS had overlapping boundaries with Tranche 2 sites. The potential extension area of Middlewick Ranges LoWS (Tranche 2) was entirely overlapped by the northernmost section of CNHS\_2: Weir Lane Grassland (Tranche 3), and, as such, this section is considered as part of the Tranche 2 site, with the main grassland to the south, beyond Birch Brook Wood LoWS, considered as the Tranche 3 site, CNHS 2: Weir Lane Grassland. The potential extension area of Cymbeline Meadows LoWS (Tranche 2) was entirely overlapped by CNHS\_3: Land North and CNHS\_11: Moat Field, which were combined to form Cymbeline Meadows Extension (Tranche 3). As these areas adjoin Cymbeline Meadows LoWS, the boundaries were merged to create a single potential extension area for Cymbeline Meadows LoWS.

Table 2.2 Tranche 3 - Sites

CNHS ID	Tranche 3 - Sites
CNHS_13	Greenstead Slopes
CNHS_23	City Centre Green Spaces, including Land Lane and Riverside Grasslands
CNHS_2	Weir Lane Grassland
CNHS_3 and CNHS_11	Land North of Cymbeline Meadows and Moat Field combined to form Cymbeline Meadows Extension
CNHS_24	Harwich Road Recreation Ground

#### Tranche 4

**2.13** Following discussion with the Council's Local Plan Committee, led by the Council, 11 preferred site allocations were identified for further consideration as part of this Review as detailed below under **Refinement of Site Selection for Additional Sites for Assessment – Tranche 4**.

Table 2.3 Tranche 4 - Sites

Tranche 4 - Sites
Site allocation – 10165 PP18 Land North of Woolmer Green
Site allocation – 10256 PP9 North East Colchester, including Land off St John’s Road including willow plantation on St John’s playing field and land adjacent
Site allocation – 10262 PP21 Highlands, Tiptree
Site allocation – 10621 PP49 Land at St Ives Road, Peldon
Site allocation – 10656 PP31 Land north of Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green
Site allocation – 10657 PP19 Land North Oak Road, Tiptree
Site allocation – 10758 PP40 Land west of The Folley, Layer de la Haye
Site allocation – 10759 PP39 The Furze, Layer de La Haye
Site allocation – 10761 PP7 Land off Bakers Lane, Braiswick
Site allocation – 10952 PP4 Braiswick, Colchester Road
Site allocation – 10956 PP41 Rowhedge Business Park, Rectory Road, Rowhedge

#### Refinement of Site Selection for Additional Sites for Assessment – Tranche 4

**2.14** A desk-based assessment was undertaken to inform recommendations to include these sites as listed in Table 2.3 above for site survey and assessment against the Essex Local Wildlife Sites Selection Criteria.

**2.15** This assessment comprised a GIS-based assessment to identify which sites should be prioritised for site survey and assessment given their potential suitability to meet the LoWS criteria. This methodology combined a broad evidence base informed by range of spatial datasets with professional judgement to ensure that recommendations were consistent and transparent in manner.

**2.16** The following datasets were used as part of this desk-based assessment:

■ **Habitat value:**

- **Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) - Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs)** – this dataset was used to identify national designation sites, local nature reserves, local wildlife

sites and areas of irreplaceable habitat in Essex and thus understand the existing habitat value of each site.

■ **Essex LoWS Selection Criteria – Habitat Selection:**

- **Ancient Woodland Inventory** – to assess the presence of irreplaceable woodland habitat features. This was applied to criteria HC1.
- **Priority Habitat Inventory** – to assess the presence, extent and proportion of priority habitats. This was applied to criteria HC2-3, 7, 9-17 and 21-27.
- **Wood Pasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat** – to assess the presence, extent and proportion of wood pasture and parkland habitat. This was applied to criteria HC4.
- **England’s Historic Parklands** – Undesignated – to assess the presence, extent and proportion of historic parkland habitat. This was applied to criteria HC4. This dataset was used to supplement the Wood Pasture and Parkland Bap Priority Habitat dataset,
- **UKCEH Land Cover Map** – to assess the presence, extent and proportion of relevant habitat. This was applied to criteria HC2-3, 11-14, 16-17 and 22-23. This dataset was used in conjunction with the Living England Habitat Dataset.
- **Living England Habitat Data** – to assess the presence, extent and proportion of relevant habitat. This was applied to criteria HC2-3, 5, 9, 11-14, 16-20 and 25.
- **Floodmap for Planning – Flood Risk Zones** – to assess the potential flood risk of each site. This was applied to criteria HC10.
- **OS Open Rivers** – to assess the presence, extent and proportion of river habitat. This was applied to criteria HC18-20.
- **Colchester City Council** – Open Space Data – to assess the potential for each site to offer accessible natural greenspace. This was applied to criteria HC31.

■ **Essex LoWS Selection Criteria – Species Selection:**

- **Important Plant Areas** – to assess the presence, extent and proportion of each site to be within an area of importance for plants and as such support notable vascular plant species in relation to SC1.
- **Important Bird Areas** – to assess the presence, extent and proportion of each site to be within an

area if importance for birds and as such support globally threatened or near-threatened bird species, significant populations of migratory bird species and/or endemic species in relation to SC5-6.

- **Important Invertebrate Areas** – to assess the presence, extent and proportion of each site to be within an area of importance for invertebrates and as such support protected and notable invertebrate species in relation to SC18-20.
- **Essex LNRS – Priority Species Data** – this data was not available at the time of this assessment. However, should this become available, it is recommended that this should be included to further support the consideration of species as part of this review.

#### ■ Opportunity:

- **Essex LNRS – Strategic Creation Opportunities** – this dataset was used to identify sites, which present the greatest potential to deliver benefits for nature and the broader environment.

**2.17** It should be noted that this desk-based assessment has taken a designated sites and habitat-led approach. Species considerations – to inform the LoWS species selection criteria – have been brought through using the publicly available datasets where available as detailed above under **Essex LoWS Selection Criteria – Species Selection**.

**2.18** In some instances, it was not feasible to assess a particular Habitat or Species Selection Criteria as outlined in the Essex LoWS Selection Criteria as a suitable dataset was not available to inform the relevant criteria. This was relevant to HC8, SC2-5, SC7-17. It is recognised that this is a limitation of this assessment.

**2.19** All sites recommended for further survey and assessment were listed as high, moderate or low priority for survey. This was based on the following assumptions:

- High – all sites located with an APIB, overlapped irreplaceable habitat, including ancient woodland or lowland fen vegetation, or were identified within the Important Invertebrate Area dataset were identified as high priority for survey.
- Moderate – those sites, which were identified to overlap priority habitats, such as deciduous woodland, were located with an area of accessible greenspace and/or had potential to support habitats, which were eligible to meet a habitat criteria, which were over >1ha, were identified as moderate priority for survey.
- Low – those sites, which did not support any irreplaceable or priority habitats and which had potential

to support habitats, which were eligible to meet a habitat criteria, which were <1ha, were identified as low priority.

**2.20** Any overlaps <0.5% were excluded from the assessment. This accounts for discrepancies in the digitisation of boundaries between different datasets.

**2.21** Following the desk-based assessment, this was subject to a collaborative review with the Council to confirm the list of sites to be recommended for further site survey and assessment in spring 2026. This has been reviewed and agreed with surveys of 10 out of the 11 sites to be taken forward for survey and assessment next year.

## Site Survey and Assessment

**2.22** This section refers to the method that has been applied in relation to Tranche 2-3 sites. At this stage, no site survey and assessment have been conducted for those sites identified under Tranche 4 – Sites. Those sites identified for survey as part of the Tranche 4 – Sites following a desk-based assessment will be undertaken from March 2026. This addendum will be updated to reflect the findings and recommendations on completion of the surveys.

### Review of Baseline Information for Each Site

**2.23** A systematic review of the baseline information for Tranche 2 and 3 sites selected for site survey was conducted. This made use of the 2015 LoWS review to ensure familiarity with each LoWS and to understand the reasons for designation (where applicable). Additional information where available, such as survey data and site management plans, was reviewed to supplement baseline information for each site.

### Survey Preparation and Access

**2.24** To optimise survey efficiencies and minimise repeat data handling, hand-held survey tablets were equipped to include the site boundary maps, the GIS database and bespoke proforma based on the Essex LoWS Selection Criteria. The fields of the database correspond to the data requirements of the Criteria.

**2.25** To minimise logistical complications during the site surveys and to increase safety for surveyors, access was agreed before the commencement of the surveys.

### Site Survey

**2.26** A site survey was undertaken for the Tranche 2-3 sites as identified and agreed in consultation with the Council. These site surveys were carried out in September 2025, which falls within the optimal survey window for floral identification. It is recognised that these surveys are undertaken late in the optimal survey window and as such summer flowering may be

less readily identifiable during the survey and as such the survey focuses on the assessment against the criteria rather than full data lists and as such is not considered a constraint to the outputs of this Review.

**2.27** A proposed extension area to Cymbeline Meadows LoWS was identified in both Tranche 2 and Tranche 3. These areas to the north and north west of the LoWS boundary, incorporating CNHS\_3: Land North (overlapping LUC's potential extension area of Charter Woods) and CNHS\_11: Moat Field, were merged to create a single potential extension survey area for Cymbeline Meadows LoWS.

**2.28** Tranche 2 includes the extension area of Middlewick Ranges LoWS, located southeast of its boundary. This area was also put forward by CNHS during the consultation and was referred to as the northern section of Weir Lane Grassland. In this assessment, the Tranche 2 site is assessed as an extension to Middlewick Ranges LoWS, and the Tranche 3 site is assessed as a potential new LoWS due to the separation of the largest section of Weir Lane Grassland to the south by Birch Brook Wood LoWS.

**2.29** This survey was undertaken in accordance with the LoWS Selection Criteria<sup>3</sup>, which has been specifically developed to enable the identification of LoWS in Essex. A detailed habitat survey does not form part of this project scope.

### Site Evaluation

**2.30** The Tranche 2 and 3 sites subject to survey were assessed against the LoWS Selection Criteria, which is set out in **Table 2.4** below. The sites were considered against each point to provide clarity as to how the various criteria have been considered. This is presented in a user-friendly format intended to inform decision-making for emerging site allocations and support future site planning and management by Colchester City Council. This is linked to a GIS database containing information gathered during both the desk-study and site survey.

Table 2.4 LoWS Selection Criteria

Criteria	
Habitat Selection Criteria	
Woodland, Scrub and Related Habitats	Habitat Criterion 1 (HC1) – Ancient Woodland Sites HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites HC3 – Other Priority Habitat Woodland Types on Non-ancient Sites HC4 – Wood-pasture and Parkland HC5 – Woody Scrub HC6 – Veteran Trees HC7 – Old Orchards HC8 – Hedgerows and Green Lanes
Grassland	HC9 – Lowland Meadows HC10 – River Floodplain HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands HC12 – Lowland Calcareous Grassland
Heathland	HC13 – Heathland and Acid Grassland
Wetland Habitats	HC14 – Lowland Fen Vegetation HC15 – Reedbeds
Open Water Habitats	HC16 – Lakes and Reservoirs

<sup>3</sup> Local Wildlife Site Selection Criteria, 2016. Essex Local Wildlife Sites Partnership.

Criteria	
	HC17 – Ponds HC18 – Rivers HC19 – Extended Riverine Habitat HC20 – Complex Riverine Habitats
Coastal Habitats	HC21 – Coastal Grazing Marsh HC22 – Tidal Transition Zones HC23 – Saltmarsh and Mudflats HC24 – Saline Lagoons and Borrow Dyke Habitats HC25 - Sand Dune and Shingle Beach Vegetation HC26 – Maritime Cliffs and Slopes
Other Habitats	HC27 – Post-industrial Sites HC28 – Small-component Mosaics HC29 – Habitat Extension Mosaics HC30 – Wildlife Corridors HC31 – Accessible Natural Greenspace
Species Selection Criteria <sup>4</sup>	
Plants	Species Criterion 1 (SC1) – Vascular Plants SC2 – Bryophytes SC3 – Lichens SC4 – Fungi
Birds	SC5 – Notable Bird Species SC6 – Exceptional Populations of Common Bird Species
Mammals	SC7 – Dormouse SC8 – Barbastelle (and other Annex II) bats SC9 – Other Bat Breeding Colonies SC10 – Bat Hibernation Sites SC11 – Protection of Otter Holts SC12 – Breeding Water Vole Colonies
Amphibians	SC13 – Hotspot for Amphibian Diversity SC14 – Palmate Newts SC15 – Great Crested Newts
Reptiles	SC16 – Hotspots for Reptile Diversity
Invertebrates	SC17 – White-clawed Crayfish

<sup>4</sup> These criteria have been developed to ensure that sites with specific interest, which do not qualify under the habitat selection criteria are considered on their species interest alone.

Criteria	
	SC19 – Invertebrates listed as Species of Principal Importance in England SC19 – Important Invertebrate Assemblages SC20 – Notable 'flagship' macro-invertebrates

**2.31** This addendum of the LoWS Review will also include a set of recommendations using the categories described below in **Table 2.5**.

*Table 2.5 Assessment Categories*

Category	Description
<b>Designated LoWS</b>	
Retain – No change	The LoWS has maintained its value and at which no significant intervention for restoration, enhancement or creation are identified.
Proposed for extension to the LoWS boundary	The assessment confirms that the LoWS boundary should be proposed for extension, based on the nature and connectivity of adjoining habitats that contribute to the value of the LoWS.
Potential for extension to the LoWS boundary	Potential to extend the LoWS boundary was identified during the assessment, based on the nature and connectivity of adjoining habitats that contribute to the value of the LoWS. Additional land was not subject to detailed survey or full assessment against the LoWS criteria as part of this review and would be required to determine any proposed boundary change.
Opportunity	Existing LoWS with potential through habitat management and/or creation to significantly increase the ecological value of the site and to provide resilience to the network. This will be informed by Strategic Creation Opportunities identified in the LNRS as well as opportunities recorded on site.
At Risk	Existing LoWS at risk of de-designation due to a decline in ecological value. These LoWS should retain their existing designation, however, action is required by the landowner and/or manager to ensure that these sites are retained, and where appropriate additionally enhance, their value. Action here is considered a priority.
De-designation	The LoWS, or portion thereof, that has been subject to significant and irreversible change i.e. no longer supports habitats of LoWS value and not considered viable for restoration or recreation. De-designation may be partial – i.e. a boundary change referring to a specific area – or full.
<b>Pre-designated Sites</b>	
New LoWS	New sites meeting the LoWS criteria and recommended to be progressed through the designation process. The LoWS-level status of these sites should be centrally recognised during the interim period until designation through the Local Plan is complete.
Potential LoWS	Sites identified for consideration under the LoWS criteria but which are not yet designated as LoWS. In relation to this assessment, these sites may not be recommended for designation in current condition. However, recommendations for restoration, creation and/or enhancement are made to enable these sites to meet the LoWS in the future.  This also includes additional areas adjoining existing LoWS, which may present opportunities to extend the existing LoWS in the future, once target criteria are met.
Not recommended for designation	Sites, which, following survey, do not currently meet the LoWS criteria nor present significant opportunities for delivering sufficient habitats / other features of LoWS value (i.e. retained as potential LoWS). Nevertheless, these sites may offer opportunity for delivering some value to

Category	Description
	biodiversity as part of wider nature recovery. This may specifically complement, connect or buffer the LoWS network and/or contribute to the delivery of off-site biodiversity net gain as part of future land use.

## Limitations and Constraints

### Desk-based study

**2.32** GIS was used to map irreplaceable and priority habitats within potential extension areas and potential LoWS. Some of these sites feature irreplaceable and priority habitats due to very small areas of overlap as a result of mapping not having exactly matching boundaries. This is marked as a 'boundary discrepancy' within the proformas in **Appendix C**, and a note is provided to explain where the overlap occurs. This is not considered a significant limitation of the report and is, in fact, useful information given the value of boundary areas in supporting species found within irreplaceable and priority habitats.

### Site surveys

**2.33** For transparency, the extent of survey access for each site was recorded within the site proforma and shown on the site maps within **Appendix C**.

**2.34** For sites which could not be accessed for survey, the survey proforma and assessment were completed, as far as possible, using desk-based information.

**2.35** A site survey was not carried out at the potential extension area of Hythe Lagoons LoWS, situated to the west and the south of the LoWS. This is because the desk study revealed that the potential extension area falls within the Upper Colne Marshes SSSI, meaning it should be excluded from the LoWS system. As such, the recommendation for Hythe Lagoons LoWS is to retain the current boundary.

- Restricted access applies to the sites listed below.  
Partial access:
  - Cymbeline Meadows (only relevant to Tranche 1)
- No access but viewed from public footpaths:
  - Weir Lane Grassland

**2.36** All surveys were carried out in September 2025. Although this is considered to be towards the later stages of the optimal botanical survey period, and as such is not considered to be a constraint to the survey findings of this report. This is because the majority of the sites had been left undisturbed and so retained their summer vegetation cover. In addition, the weather throughout September was relatively mild, allowing plants to continue their growth into this period.

**2.37** The majority of Weir Lane Grassland had been recently cut, making plant identification more difficult. Some fields had, however, been left uncut, and so species identification within these fields was used to gain an overall understanding of the site.

**2.38** Some forms of agricultural activity, such as mowing and clearing, had also taken place within CNHS\_11: Moat Fields surrounding Moat Farm, in the potential extension area of Cymbeline Meadows LoWS. This made species identification more difficult but did not prevent an overall conclusion of the site from being established.

# Chapter 3

## Local Wildlife Site Review – Results and Recommendations of Tranche 2 and 3 Sites

**3.1** This Chapter presents the recommendations of the LoWS Survey, including recommendations for extension of existing LoWS designations and inclusion of new LoWS as part of the network. Overarching habitat recommendations are also provided.

### LoWS Recommendations

#### Tranche 2

**3.2** Of the eight sites with potential extension areas taken forward for further survey in September 2025, six of the LoWS are recommended to have their boundaries redrawn to include adjacent land, which is eligible for selection as a LoWS, thus strengthening the LoWS network. This included:

- Gosbecks Archaeological Park
- Birch Brook Wood
- Middlewick Ranges
- Pits Wood
- Cymbeline Meadows
- Wivenhoe Park

**3.3** The other two LoWS with potential extension areas are not recommended to have their boundaries redrawn. The potential extension area of Hythe Lagoons LoWS sits within the Upper Colne Marshes SSSI and as such is not eligible for inclusion within the LoWS network. In terms of Seven Star Green LoWS, the potential extension area, linking it to Daisy Green in the south west, is not currently eligible under any habitat or species criteria.

#### Tranche 3

**3.4** Of the five sites identified as potential LoWS following consultation with CNHS, four new LoWS are recommended to be progressed through the designation process based on their eligibility under certain LoWS criteria.

**3.5** The Moat Field area within the Cymbeline Meadow Extension, put forward by CNHS, did not satisfy a habitat or species criterion. Land North of Cymbeline Meadows, which covers the potential extension area proposed by LUC, did

satisfy habitat and species criteria and is considered a proposed extension of the Tranche 2 site.

**3.6** The LoWS status recommendations are presented in **Table 3.1** below. **Figure 8** in **Appendix A** presents a plan of the surveyed sites and their recommendations. **Table B.3,**

**Appendix B** presents each sites' current designation status and the recommendations of this review. More detailed information against the LoWS criteria and other contextual ecological information is provided in the site proformas in **Appendix C** and site photographs are provided in **Appendix D**.

Table 3.1 LoWS Status Recommendation - Tranche 2 and 3 Sites

LoWS Status	Recommendation of the 2025 Review	Site Name
Existing LoWS	Proposed extension to the LoWS boundary	Gosbecks Archaeological Park Birch Brook Wood Middlewick Ranges Pits Wood Cymbeline Meadows, including Land North of Cymbeline Meadows and excluding Moat Field Wivenhoe Park
	Retain – No change	Seven Star Green Hythe Lagoons
Pre-designated Sites	New LoWS	Greenstead Slopes City Centre Green Spaces, including Land Lane and Riverside Grasslands Weir Lane Grassland Harwich Road Recreation Ground
	Potential LoWS	N/A
	Not Recommended for Designation	N/A

### Retain – No Change

**3.7 Seven Star Green LoWS'** potential extension area did not contain lowland meadow or grassland habitat of sufficient condition or extent to allow its inclusion under LoWS criteria. Therefore, it is recommended that Seven Star Green LoWS' designation remains the same.

**3.8** The desk study of **Hythe Lagoons LoWS'** potential extension area to the west and south of the site revealed that it sits within the Upper Colne Marshes SSSI, recognised for its grazing marsh, ditch and open water habitats supporting an outstanding assemblage of nationally scarce plants and wintering birds. As SSSIs are deemed to be outside the LoWS system, it is recommended that the boundary of Hythe Lagoons LoWS' designation remains the same.

### Proposed extension to the LoWS boundary

**3.9** Six of the eight sites with potential extension areas are recommended to have their boundaries updated to include the areas that are eligible under certain LoWS criteria. These proposed extension areas contribute to the value of their respective LoWS, strengthening the LoWS network.

- The eastern fields of **Gosbecks Archaeological Park LoWS** extension area offer extensive grassland and small sections of plantation woodland, which are accessible to local residents. It is therefore eligible for inclusion as a LoWS under HC31 – Accessible Natural Greenspace and should be incorporated into the LoWS boundary. Alongside this, the eastern fields are of importance to invertebrates and ground-nesting birds

such as skylark, given the management regime which leaves long strips of uncut grassland. It is therefore recommended that this extension area is proposed for inclusion as part of Gosbecks Archaeological Park LoWS.

- The extension area located on the southeast boundary of **Birch Brook Wood LoWS**, just north of Rowhedge allotments, offers sparse dry acid grassland and scrub habitats, ideal for invertebrates, birds and reptiles. It is therefore eligible for inclusion as a LoWS under HC13 – Heathland and Acid Grassland given that the vegetation and ground flora of the area are characteristic of acidic conditions. Therefore, it is recommended that this extension area be included within the boundary of Birch Brook Wood LoWS.
- **Middlewick Ranges LoWS** proposed extension area includes grasslands to the southeast, which sit between Middlewick Ranges LoWS in the west, Donyland Wetlands LoWS in the east and Birchbrook Wood LoWS in the south. It is recommended for inclusion into the Middlewick LoWS boundary under HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands and HC13 – Heathland and Acid Grassland, given the extensive neutral grassland with patches of acidic grassland. In addition, the interim invertebrate survey suggests that the extension area supports numerous notable and scarce invertebrates, likely satisfying SC18 – Invertebrates listed as Species of Principal Importance in England and SC19 – Important Invertebrate Assemblages. Therefore, it is recommended that the boundary of Middlewick Ranges LoWS be redrawn to include this extension area.
- The proposed extension area to the east of **Pits Wood LoWS** features a characteristic woodland ground flora, a scrub understorey and a high canopy. It also features an area of tall forbs and sedges under the cricket-bat willow plantation, where conditions are damp in proximity to the Roman River. It also connects four LoWS, which are classified for their deciduous or ancient woodland habitats. Therefore, as the woodland extension area satisfies HC2 - Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient sites, HC14 – Lowland Fen Vegetation and HC30 – Wildlife Corridors, it should be included within the Pits Wood LoWS.
- The proposed extension area of **Cymbeline Meadows LoWS** includes Charter Woods and the scrub/woodland mosaic next to Alderwood Care Home, which are eligible under HC2 - Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient sites and sit within the Essex Coast IIA and as such likely satisfy SC18 – Invertebrates listed as Species of Principal Importance in England and SC19 – Important Invertebrate Assemblages. This area, situated

along the northern boundary of the LoWS, is therefore recommended to be taken forward for inclusion as part of the extension to Cymbeline Meadows LoWS. The Moat Field area, adjacent to the north west boundary of the current LoWS, is not included within the proposed extension area as this comprised of arable fields and hedgerows, which do not at the time of survey satisfy the requirements for any habitat or species criteria.

- The proposed extension area to the west of **Wivenhoe Park LoWS** supports a mosaic of neutral grassland, scrub, deciduous woodland and several oak trees with veteran features, making it eligible under HC4 – Wood-pasture and Parkland. These habitats are ecologically valuable for a range of invertebrates, birds, reptiles and small mammals. Therefore, the boundary of Wivenhoe Park LoWS is recommended to be redrawn to include this extension area.

### New LoWS

**3.10** The four potential LoWS sites identified by CNHS are recommended to be progressed through the designation process based on their eligibility under certain LoWS criteria and the contribution that they could make to the current LoWS network.

- **Greenstead Slopes** features neutral grasslands and deciduous woodland, meeting HC11 - Other Neutral Grasslands and HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites. Its location within Greenstead also means that there are opportunities for nearby residents to access a green space, enhancing the site's value and strengthening the recommendation to include this site within Colchester's LoWS network. Greenstead Slopes is therefore recommended for designation as a new LoWS.
- **City Centre Green Spaces, including Land Lane and Riverside Grasslands** support grassland, woodland and scrub habitats which provide ecological value within the urban context of Colchester City. At present, these habitats are not considered eligible as a LoWS under individual habitat criteria. However, the habitats combine to form a site of significant conservation value, particularly with the consideration that the northern side connects Bull Meadows LoWS and Cowdray Marsh LoWS, meeting HC30– Wildlife Corridors. In addition, the site provides nature-related recreational and amenity value to the large, nearby residential population of Colchester, making it eligible under HC31 – Accessible Natural Greenspace. This excludes the area owned by the Colchester & East Essex Cricket Club, where public access is not available and management is not conducive to enhancing biodiversity. City Centre Green

Spaces, including Land Lane and Riverside Grasslands, is therefore recommended for designation as a new LoWS.

for each of site assessed in the respective survey proformas **(Appendix C)**.

- **Weir Lane Grassland** is comprised of extensive neutral grasslands demarcated by scrubby field margins and native hedgerows. It therefore meets HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands for its habitat composition and ability to support numerous notable and scarce invertebrates, likely satisfying SC18 – Invertebrates listed as Species of Principal Importance in England and SC19 - Important Invertebrate Assemblages. This is in conjunction with its location between two existing LoWS: Birch Brook Wood and Donyland Woods West, making it eligible under HC30 – Wildlife Corridors. Weir Lane Grassland is therefore recommended for designation as a new LoWS.
- **Harwich Road Recreation Ground** features neutral grassland with a relatively high diversity of grass and forb species, supporting a high frequency of invertebrates, making it eligible for classification as a LoWS under HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands. The continued management of this grassland with techniques aimed at maximising biodiversity will improve species diversity over time and could also be used to extend the ecologically valuable habitats towards the west of the site where amenity grassland remains. Harwich Road Recreation Ground is therefore recommended for designation as a new LoWS.

### Potential LoWS

**3.11** No sites were identified under this assessment category as part of this Review.

### Not Recommended for Designation

**3.12** No sites were identified under this assessment category as part of this Review.

## Recommendations to Strengthen the LoWS Network

**3.13** The LoWS network is a vital component to ensuring biodiversity can thrive across Colchester. As such it is important that the LoWS network, and supporting habitat in the wider network are protected, maximise opportunities for biodiversity. This is particularly important given the future challenges arising from climate change and the biodiversity crisis.

**3.14** Reference should be made to **Chapter 5** of the Findings and Recommendations report, which outlines a series of overarching management recommendations for the LoWS network. More specific recommendations have been provided

## Chapter 4

# Site Selection – Findings and Recommendations of Tranche 4 Sites

**4.1** This Chapter presents the findings of the desk-based assessment and outlines recommendations for further survey and assessment for the 11 site allocations identified as part of the Tranche 4 sites for further consideration as part of this Review.

### Summary of the Desk-based Assessment – Findings

#### Designated Sites and Irreplaceable Habitat Network

**4.2** Of the 11 site allocations identified, three were located within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) – Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIB). This included:

- **10256 North East Colchester**<sup>5</sup> – lies adjacent to Bullock Wood SSSI and ancient woodland.
- **10657 Land North Oak Road, Tiptree** - overlaps the southern parcel of Eden Wood LoWS and partially overlaps Inworth Wood LoWS in the north-west.
- **10761 Land off Bakers Lane, Braiswick** – overlaps the northern parcel of Lexden Dyke LoWS in the south-west. This same area is also identified as ancient woodland habitat.

**4.3** Eden Wood LoWS, Inworth Wood LoWS and Lexden Dyke LoWS were subject to survey as part of the original assessment (Tranche 1) as detailed in the Colchester Local Wildlife Sites Network: Partial Review - Findings and Recommendations Report.

**4.4** Although not within an APIB, **10656 Land north of Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green, 10952 Braiswick, Colchester Road** and **10956 Rowhedge Business Park, Rectory Road, Rowhedge**, were located <35m from an APIB identified for supporting a LoWS designation.

#### Habitats

##### Woodland, Scrub and Related Habitats

**4.5** All site allocations with the exception of **10262 Highlands, Tiptree** have potential to support habitats, which

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<sup>5</sup> This includes Land off St John's Road including willow plantation on St John's playing field and land adjacent, which is not identified for

allocation within the forthcoming Local Plan. For the purposes of this assessment, this site is referred to as "10256 North East Colchester".

would be eligible to meet the habitat selection criteria for woodland, scrub and related habitats (HC1-8). This included:

- One site allocation, **10761 Land off Bakers Lane, Braiswick** was located adjacent to an area identified for supporting ancient woodland habitat as per the Ancient Woodland Inventory dataset. However, as this is not within the boundary of the site, it is therefore not considered to have potential to meet habitat criteria – HC1 Ancient Woodland.
- 10 site allocations (excluding **10262 Highlands, Tiptree**) were identified to overlap spatial datasets, which indicate the presence of woodland that may be eligible to meet the criteria of either HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites or HC3 – Other Priority Habitat Woodland Types on Non-ancient Sites. Of these sites, six were identified through the priority habitat inventory for deciduous woodland and nine were identified by the CEH landcover map under broadleaved woodland and coniferous woodland and Natural England's Living England dataset broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland and coniferous woodland.
- Four site allocations, **10256 North East Colchester, 10657 Land North Oak Road, Tiptree, 10758 Land west of The Folley, Layer de la Haye** and **10759 The Furze, Layer de La Haye**, overlap the Natural England Living England dataset under the habitat code scrub. Therefore, these site allocations have potential to be eligible to meet the criteria of HC5 – Woody Scrub.

**4.6** No site allocations were found to overlap any spatial datasets, which may indicate that these site allocations have potential to be eligible to meet criteria relating to HC4 – Wood-pasture and Parkland, HC6 – Veteran Trees and HC7 – Old Orchards.

**4.7** No spatial datasets were available at the time of the desk-based assessment to assess the potential for site allocations to be eligible to meet any criteria relating to HC8 – Hedgerows and Green Lanes.

### Grassland

**4.8** Of the 11 site allocations, eight were identified to overlap spatial datasets, which may indicate the presence of either neutral or calcareous grassland habitat and as such have potential to be eligible to meet the criteria relating to HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands and HC12 – Lowland Calcareous Grassland. This included:

- **10165 Land North of Woolmer Green**
- **10256 North East Colchester**
- **10262 Highlands, Tiptree**

- **10621 Land at St Ives Road, Peldon**
- **10656 Land north of Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green**
- **10657 Land North Oak Road, Tiptree**
- **10758 Land west of The Folley, Layer de la Haye**
- **10952 Braiswick, Colchester Road**

**4.9** All eight sites were identified through the Natural England Living England dataset only under the habitat code improved and semi-improved grassland.

**4.10** No site allocations were found to overlap any spatial datasets, which may indicate that these site allocations have potential to be eligible to meet criteria relating to HC9 – Lowland Meadows and HC10 – River Floodplain.

### Heathland

**4.11** Of the 11 site allocations identified for further assessment, a total of nine site allocations overlapped spatial datasets, which indicate the presence of heathland and acid grassland habitat and therefore have potential to be eligible for selection under the habitat criteria - HC13 – Heathland and Acid Grassland. This included:

- **10165 Land North of Woolmer Green**
- **10256 North East Colchester**
- **10262 Highlands, Tiptree**
- **10621 Land at St Ives Road, Peldon**
- **10656 Land north of Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green**
- **10657 Land North Oak Road, Tiptree**
- **10758 Land west of The Folley, Layer de la Haye**
- **10761 Land off Bakers Lane, Braiswick**
- **10965 Rowhedge Business Park, Rectory Road, Rowhedge**

**4.12** All sites were identified through the Natural England Living England dataset under the habitat code dwarf shrub heath. **10761 Land off Bakers Lane, Braiswick** was also identified under the CEH Landcover map under habitat code, acid grassland, heather, heather grassland.

### Wetland habitats

**4.13** Three site allocations were identified to overlap spatial datasets, which indicate that these sites have potential to be eligible to meet habitat selection criteria – HC14 – Lowland Fen Vegetation. This included:

- **10256 North East Colchester**
- **10621 Land at St Ives Road, Peldon**

■ **10656 Land north of Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green**

**4.14** All sites were identified through the Natural England Living England dataset under the habitat code fen, marsh and swamp.

**4.15** No site allocations were found to overlap any spatial datasets, which may indicate that these site allocations have potential to be eligible to meet criteria relating to HC15 – Reedbeds.

#### Open Water Habitats

**4.16** No site allocations were found to overlap any spatial datasets, which may indicate that these site allocations have potential to be eligible to meet criteria relating to open water habitats (HC16-20).

#### Coastal Habitats

**4.17** No site allocations were found to overlap any spatial datasets, which may indicate that these site allocations have potential to be eligible to meet criteria relating to coastal habitats (HC21-26).

#### Other Habitats

**4.18** One site allocation, **10657 Land North Oak Road, Tiptree**, adjoins two LoWS, including Inworth Wood and Eden Wood. Should this site allocation support suitable habitat, which would allow the dispersal and interchange of species, there is potential for this site allocation to be eligible to meet habitat criteria - HC30 – Wildlife Corridors.

**4.19** Two site allocations, **10256 North East Colchester** and **10657 Land North Oak Road, Tiptree**, were identified to overlap with Colchester City Council's open space data and as such has potential to be eligible for meeting habitat criteria - HC31 – Accessible Natural Greenspace.

### Species

#### Plants

**4.20** No site allocations were found to overlap any Important Plant Areas, which may indicate that these site allocations have potential to be eligible to meet criteria relating to plants (SC1-4).

#### Birds

**4.21** No site allocations were found to overlap any Important Bird Areas, which may indicate that these site allocations have potential to be eligible to meet criteria relating to birds (SC5-6).

#### Mammals

**4.22** No spatial datasets were available at the time of the desk-based assessment to assess the potential for site allocations to be eligible to meet any criteria relating to mammals (SC7-12).

#### Amphibians

**4.23** No spatial datasets were available at the time of the desk-based assessment to assess the potential for site allocations to be eligible to meet any criteria relating to amphibians (SC13-15).

#### Reptiles

**4.24** No spatial datasets were available at the time of the desk-based assessment to assess the potential for site allocations to be eligible to meet any criteria relating to reptiles (SC16).

#### Invertebrates

**4.25** Two site allocations, **10758 Land west of The Folley, Layer de la Haye** and **10759 The Furze, Layer de La Haye**, overlapped the Important Invertebrate Areas dataset, which are areas identified for supporting nationally or internationally significant invertebrate populations and their habitats. Therefore, these site allocations have potential to be eligible for meeting species criteria relating to invertebrates (SC18-20).

**4.26** No spatial datasets were available at the time of the desk-based assessment to assess the potential for site allocations to be eligible to meet any criteria relating to white-clawed crayfish (SC17).

### Opportunities to Contribute to the Local Nature Recovery Network

**4.27** As part of the desk-based assessment consideration was also given to the potential for each site to present strategic opportunities for habitat creation and enhancement, which would contribute to the local nature recovery network. The LNRS – Strategic Creation Opportunity dataset presents the greatest potential to deliver benefits for nature and the broader environment. The desk-based assessment identified all eleven sites to overlap this dataset.

**4.28** This included:

- **10165 Land North of Woolmer Green** – in relation to woodland and scrub.
- **10256 North East Colchester** – in relation to woodland, scrub, grassland and freshwater standing water.

- **10262 Highlands, Tiptree** – in relation to woodland and scrub.
- **10621 Land at St Ives Road, Peldon** – in relation to woodland and freshwater standing water.
- **10656 Land north of Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green** – in relation to woodland and grassland.
- **10657 Land North Oak Road, Tiptree** – in relation to woodland, scrub, grassland and freshwater standing water.
- **10758 Land west of The Folley, Layer de la Haye** – in relation to woodland, grassland and freshwater standing water.
- **10759 The Furze, Layer de La Haye** – in relation to woodland and grassland.
- **10761 Land off Bakers Lane, Braiswick** – woodland, grassland and freshwater standing water.
- **10952 Braiswick, Colchester Road** – in relation to woodland, scrub, grassland and freshwater river buffer.
- **10956 Rowhedge Business Park, Rectory Road, Rowhedge** – in relation to woodland, grassland and freshwater standing water.

**4.29** Therefore, all site allocations have the potential to contribute to the LNRS through strategic creation opportunities.

## Recommendations

**4.30** In light of the desk-based assessment findings, it is recommended that further survey and assessment is undertaken in accordance with Essex LoWS Selection Criteria for all sites identified with potential to support habitats and/or species, which may be eligible to meet the criteria. This is with exception to 10761 Land off Bakers Lane, Braiswick, which supported Lexden LoWS, which was subject to survey as part of the Tranche 1 surveys as part of the original assessment. Given the habitats of value located within the site allocation have been subject to assessment and that no recommendations were identified to extend this site to include additional areas of habitat value, no further survey is recommended.

**4.31** Those site allocations identified for further survey have been listed as high, moderate or low priority for survey. This has been informed by the findings of the desk-based assessment. Detail of this approach is outlined in **Chapter 2**.

**4.32** A summary of recommendations is provided in **Table 4.1** below.

Table 4.1 Recommendations for further survey and assessment

Site Allocation	Eligible Criteria	Further Survey Recommended	Priority for Survey
10165 Land North of Woolmer Green	HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites HC3 – Other Priority Habitat Woodland Types on Non-ancient Sites HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands HC12 – Lowland Calcareous Grassland HC13 – Heathland and Acid Grassland	Yes	Low
10256 North East Colchester	HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites HC3 – Other Priority Habitat Woodland Types on Non-ancient Sites HC5 – Woody Scrub	Yes	High

Site Allocation	Eligible Criteria	Further Survey Recommended	Priority for Survey
	HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands HC12 – Lowland Calcareous Grassland HC13 – Heathland and Acid Grassland HC14 – Lowland Fen Vegetation HC31 – Accessible Natural Greenspace		
10262 Highlands, Tiptree	HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands HC12 – Lowland Calcareous Grassland HC13 – Heathland and Acid Grassland	Yes	Low
10621 Land at St Ives Road, Peldon	HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites HC3 – Other Priority Habitat Woodland Types on Non-ancient Sites HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands HC12 – Lowland Calcareous Grassland HC13 – Heathland and Acid Grassland HC14 – Lowland Fen Vegetation	Yes	High
10656 Land north of Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green	HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites HC3 – Other Priority Habitat Woodland Types on Non-ancient Sites HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands HC12 – Lowland Calcareous Grassland HC13 – Heathland and Acid Grassland HC14 – Lowland Fen Vegetation	Yes	High

Site Allocation	Eligible Criteria	Further Survey Recommended	Priority for Survey
10657 Land North Oak Road, Tiptree	HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites HC3 – Other Priority Habitat Woodland Types on Non-ancient Sites HC5 – Woody Scrub HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands HC12 – Lowland Calcareous Grassland HC13 – Heathland and Acid Grassland HC30 – Wildlife Corridors HC31 – Accessible Natural Greenspace	Yes	High
10758 Land west of The Folley, Layer de la Haye	HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites HC3 – Other Priority Habitat Woodland Types on Non-ancient Sites HC5 – Woody Scrub HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands HC12 – Lowland Calcareous Grassland HC13 – Heathland and Acid Grassland SC19 – Invertebrates listed as Species of Principal Importance in England SC19 – Important Invertebrate Assemblages SC20 – Notable 'flagship' macro-invertebrates	Yes	High
10759 The Furze, Layer de La Haye	HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites HC3 – Other Priority Habitat Woodland Types on Non-ancient Sites HC5 – Woody Scrub	Yes	High

Site Allocation	Eligible Criteria	Further Survey Recommended	Priority for Survey
	<p>SC19 – Invertebrates listed as Species of Principal Importance in England</p> <p>SC19 – Important Invertebrate Assemblages</p> <p>SC20 – Notable ‘flagship’ macro-invertebrates</p>		
<p>10761 Land off Bakers Lane, Braiswick</p>	<p>HC1 – Ancient Woodland Sites</p> <p>HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites</p> <p>HC3 – Other Priority Habitat Woodland Types on Non-ancient Sites</p> <p>HC13 – Heathland and Acid Grassland</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>10952 Braiswick, Colchester Road</p>	<p>HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites</p> <p>HC3 – Other Priority Habitat Woodland Types on Non-ancient Sites</p> <p>HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands</p> <p>HC12 – Lowland Calcareous Grassland</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Moderate</p>
<p>10956 Rowhedge Business Park, Rectory Road, Rowhedge</p>	<p>HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites</p> <p>HC3 – Other Priority Habitat Woodland Types on Non-ancient Sites</p> <p>HC13 – Heathland and Acid Grassland</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Moderate</p>

# Appendix A

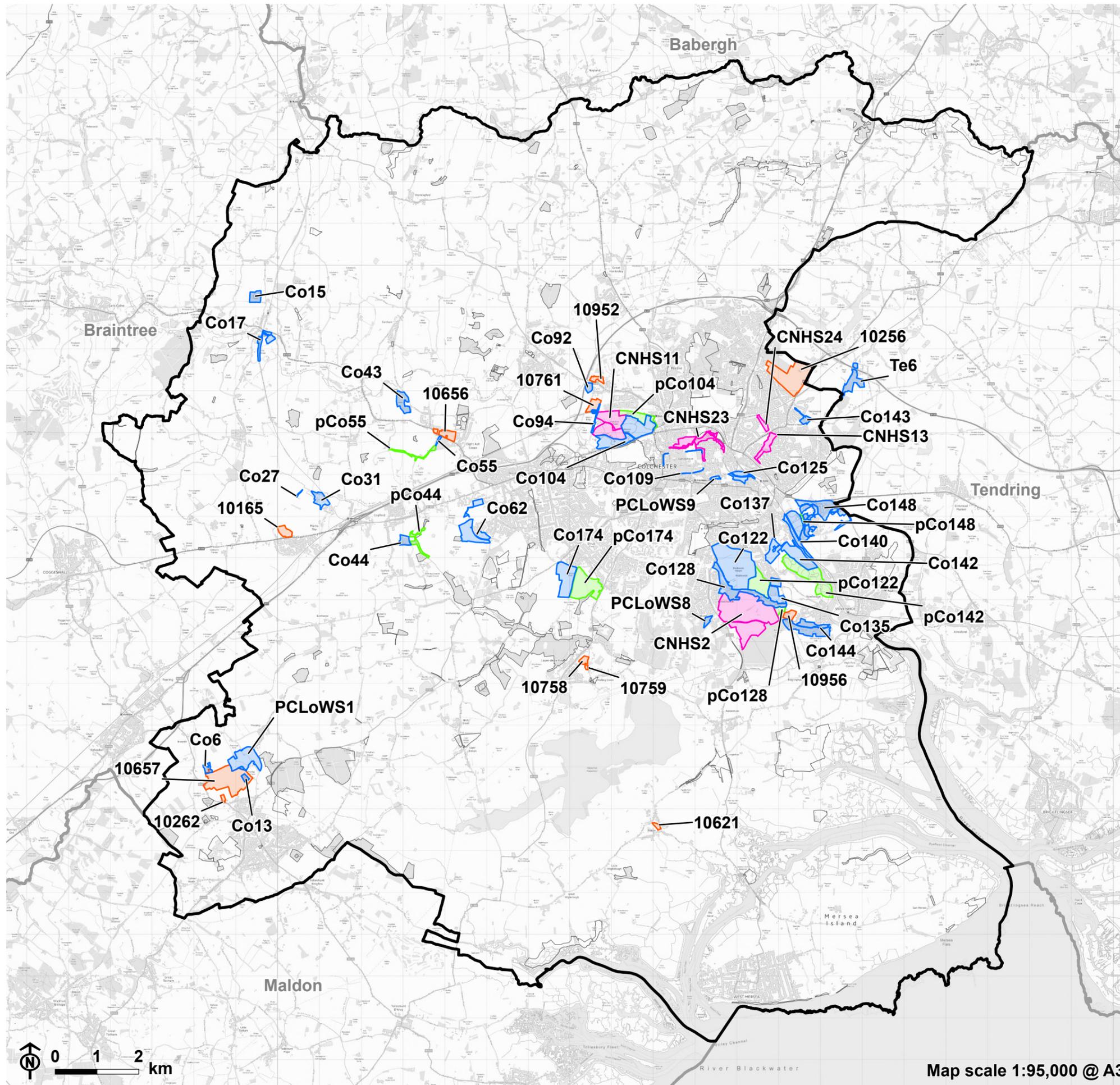
## Figures

**Figure 1:** LoWS in Colchester Assessed by Tranche

**Figure 2:** LoWS Survey Recommendations for Tranche 2 and 3

**Figure 3:** LoWS Survey Recommendations for Tranche 4

**Figure 1: LoWS in Colchester Assessed by Tranche**

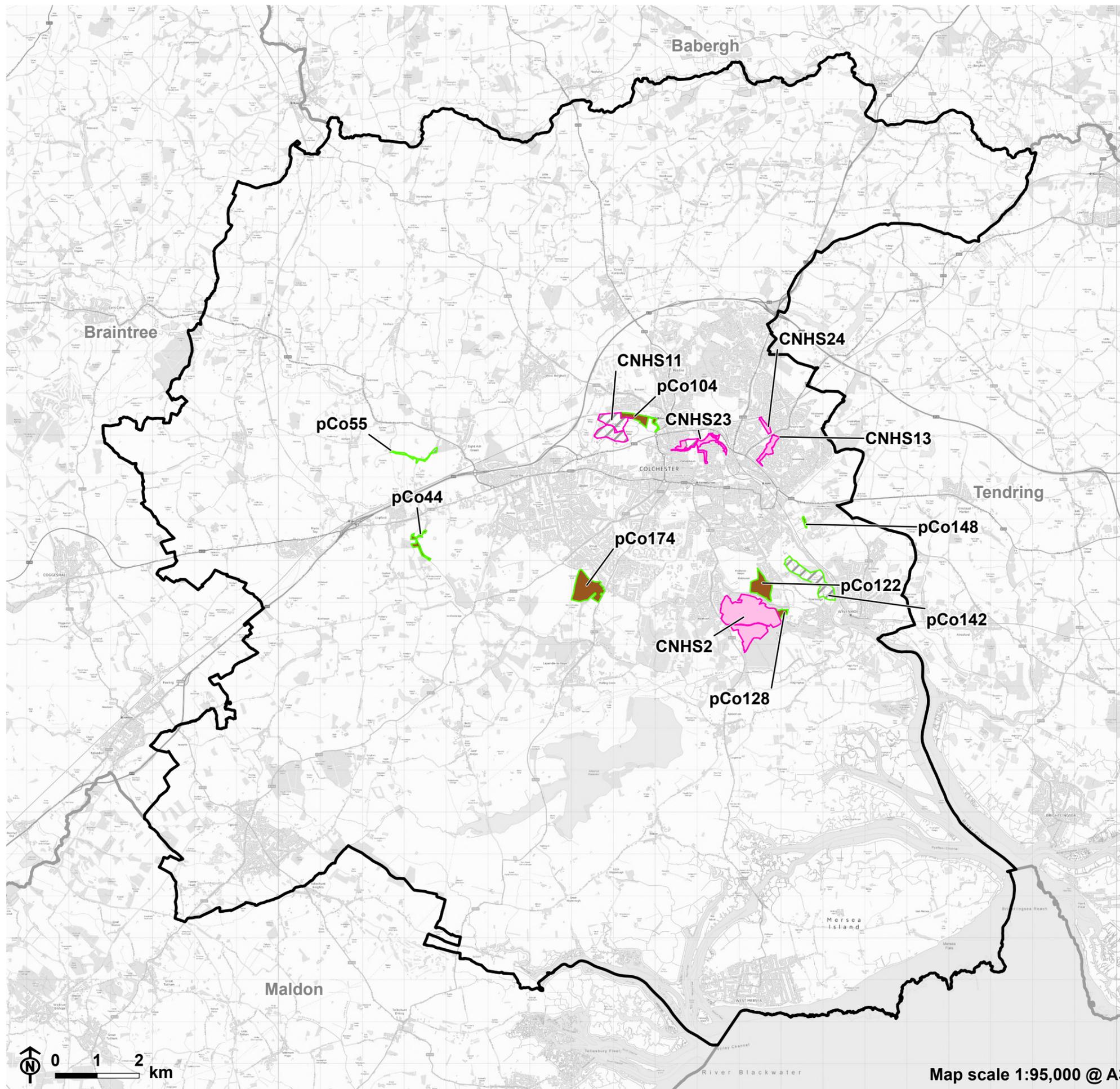


- Colchester District boundary
- Neighbouring district
- Tranche 1 – Sites taken forward for survey and assessment between April-June 2025
- Tranche 2 – Sites taken forward following recommendation of the Colchester LoWS Review Report (September 2025) as detailed in Chapter 5
- Tranche 3 – Sites identified following consultation with CNHS
- Tranche 4 – Sites identified as part of discussions with the Local Plan Committee
- Not scheduled for survey

0 1 2 km

Map scale 1:95,000 @ A3

**Figure 2: LoWS Survey Recommendations for Tranche 2 and 3**

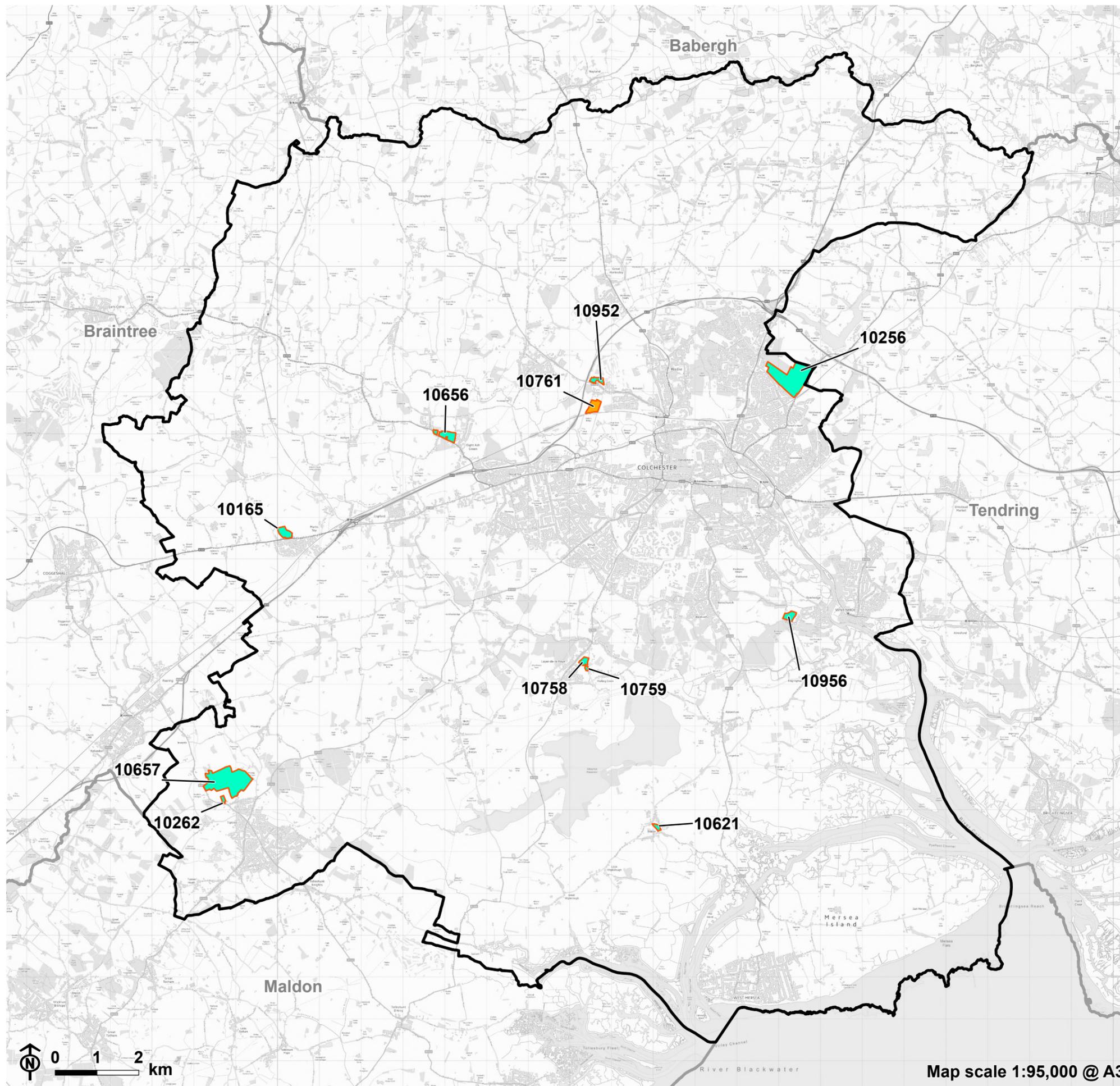


- Colchester District boundary
- Neighbouring district
- Tranche 2
- Tranche 3
- Recommendation**
- New LoWS
- Proposed extension
- Not recommended for designation

0 1 2 km

Map scale 1:95,000 @ A3

Figure 3: LoWS Survey Recommendations for Tranche 4



- Colchester District boundary
- Neighbouring district
- Tranche 4
- Recommendation**
- Recommended for further survey and assessment
- Not recommended for further survey and assessment



Map scale 1:95,000 @ A3

## **Appendix B**

### **Local Wildlife Site Assessment – Tranche 2-3**

**Table B.1 Tranche 2 sites subject to survey and their associated areas**

LoWS ID	LoWS Name	LoWS Area (ha)	Extension Area (ha)
Co174	Gosbecks Archaeological Park	27	35.31
Co142	Hythe Lagoons	21.7	38.71
Co55	Seven Star Green	0.8	4.30
Co128	Birch Brook Wood	30.5	3.24
Co122	Middlewick Ranges	75.4	20.61
Co44	Pits Wood	5	6.51
Co104	Cymbeline Meadows	46.5	11.64
Co148	Wivenhoe Park	40.6	1.21

**Table B.2 Tranche 3 sites subject to survey and their associated areas**

CNHS ID	Site Name	Area (ha)
CNHS_13	Greenstead Slopes	9.54
CNHS_23	City Centre Green Spaces, including Land Lane and Riverside Grasslands	14.50
CNHS_2	Weir Lane Grassland	104.26
CNHS_3 and CNHS_11	Cymbeline Meadow Extension made up of Land North and Moat Field - refer to Tranche 2 sites above.	49.28 (11.64 included as part of the Cymbeline Meadow LoWS extension in Table B.1.)
CNHS_24	Harwich Road Recreation Ground	3.43

**Table B.3 LoWS Recommendations**

Site Name	2025 Survey	
	LoWS Status	Recommendation
Gosbecks Archaeological Park	Existing	Proposed extension to the LoWS boundary
Hythe Lagoons	Existing	Retain – No Change
Seven Star Green	Existing	Retain – No Change
Birch Brook Wood	Existing	Proposed extension to the LoWS boundary
Middlewick Ranges	Existing	Proposed extension to the LoWS boundary
Pits Wood	Existing	Proposed extension to the LoWS boundary

Site Name	2025 Survey	
Cymbeline Meadows	Existing	Proposed extension to the LoWS boundary
Wivenhoe Park	Existing	Proposed extension to the LoWS boundary
Greenstead Slopes	Pre-designated site	New LoWS
City Centre Green Spaces, including Land Lane and Riverside Grasslands	Pre-designated site	New LoWS
Weir Lane Grassland	Pre-designated site	New LoWS
Harwich Road Recreation Ground	Pre-designated site	New LoWS

# Appendix C

## Proformas

## Birch Brook Wood Proposed Extension

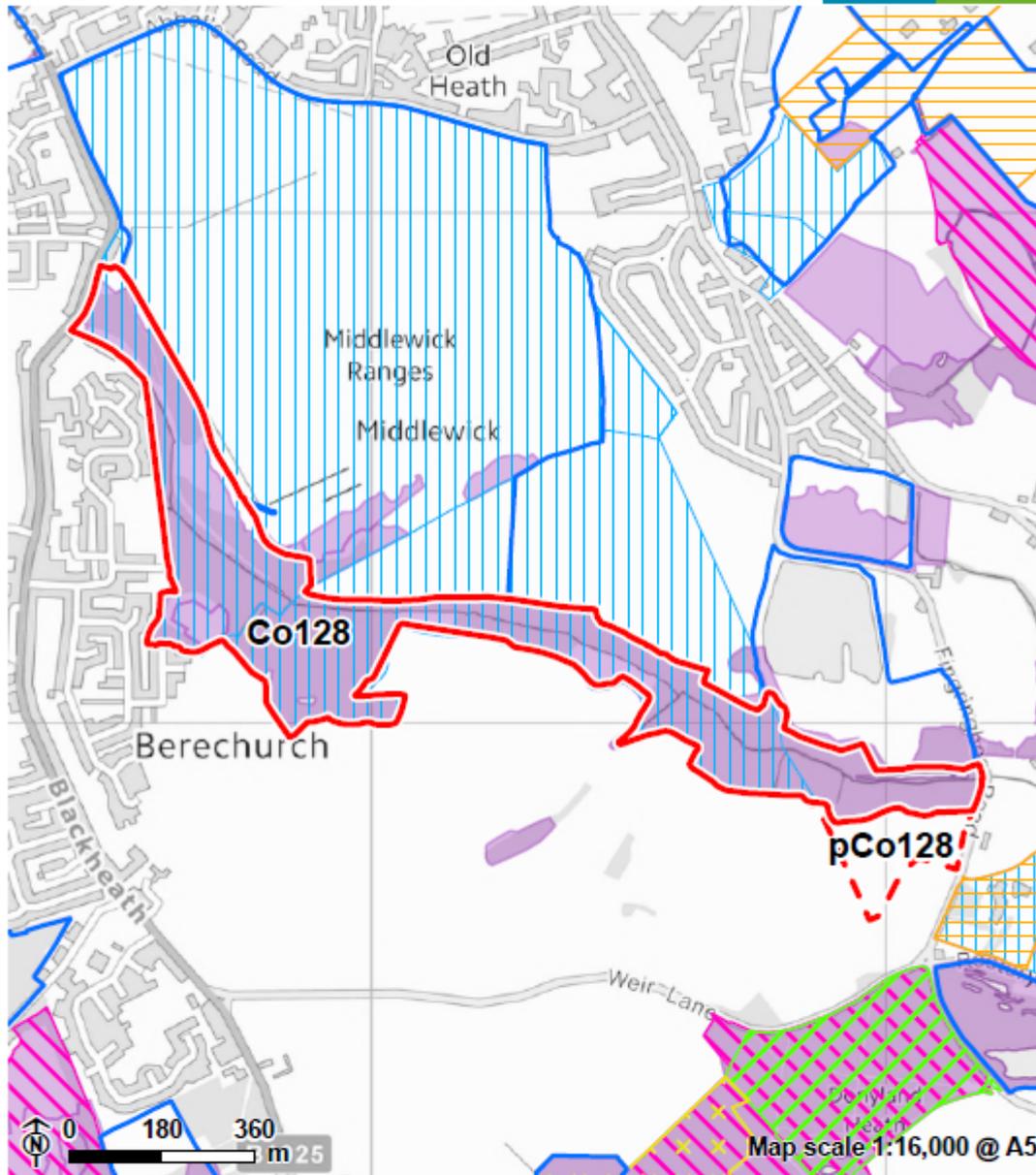
Birch Brook Wood Proposed Extension		
Site Information	Original LoWS	Extension Area
LoWS ID:	Co128	pCo128
LoWS Name:	Birch Brook Wood	Birch Brook Wood Proposed Extension
Grid Reference:	TM0112822198	TM0201521754
Area (ha):	30.69	3.24
Ownership:	Private	East Donyland Parish Council
Management Provider:	Military of Defence	East Donyland Parish Council
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: N/A Emerging: Middlewick <sup>6</sup>	Preferred: Rowhedge Business Park Emerging: Middlewick and Rowhedge Business Park
Total Area of Site Allocation Overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0.00 Emerging: 26.58	Preferred: 0 Emerging: 0.01 (Middlewick)
LoWS Citation:	<p>Although now predominantly a woodland site, Birch Grove, towards the eastern end, is the only section of any age, with a flora that suggests it may be ancient in origin. The remainder of the site supports secondary woodland, spreading from old field boundaries, wet woodland along the brook and in lower lying areas and localised areas of acid grassland.</p> <p>On the higher, dry ground the woodland consists of Pedunculate Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>), Elm (<i>Ulmus</i> sp.) and Birch (<i>Betula</i> spp.) with Holly (<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>) and Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) in the understorey and a ground flora that includes Bracken (<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>) and Wood Sage (<i>Teucrium scorodonia</i>). Scrubbier margins include Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>) and, in places, Gorse (<i>Ulex europaeus</i>) while larger Pedunculate Oaks mark old hedge lines.</p> <p>The wet woodland is largely made up of Crack Willow (<i>Salix fragilis</i>) and Grey Willow (<i>S. cinerea</i>), with some Silver Birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>). In more open areas there are localised sedge (<i>Carex</i> sp.) beds with Marsh Thistle (<i>Cirsium palustre</i>) and Skullcap (<i>Scutellaria galericulata</i>). Birch Grove consists of Pedunculate Oak and Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>) with Alder (<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>) along the streamside. The ground flora is rich in ferns, with the Essex Red Data List (ERDL) species Narrow</p>	N/A – area not previously classified as a LoWS.

<sup>6</sup> This site has been included within the emerging site allocation dataset as this in an existing allocation within the adopted local plan.

Birch Brook Wood Proposed Extension			
	<p>Buckler fern (<i>Dryopteris carthusiana</i>), Lady Fern (<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>), Hard Fern (<i>Blechnum spicant</i>) and Scaly Male Fern (<i>Dryopteris affinis</i>) of particular note. Other noteworthy plant species include Hart's-tongue Fern (<i>Asplenium scolopendrium</i>), Wood Anemone (<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>), Pignut (<i>Conopodium majus</i>), Dog's Mercury (<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>), Enchanter's Nightshade (<i>Circaea lutetiana</i>), Bluebell (<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>), Creeping Jenny (<i>Lysimachia nemorum</i>), Wood Sorrel (<i>Oxalis acetosella</i>), Remote Sedge (<i>Carex remota</i>) and the ERDL Wood Horsetail (<i>Equisetum sylvaticum</i>) at one of its few Essex locations.</p> <p>The area around the Redoubt comprises dry acid grassland and scrub, providing additional habitat diversity. The ground flora includes Red Fescue (<i>Festuca rubra</i>), Common Bent (<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>), Sheep's Sorrel (<i>Rumex acetosella</i>), Hieracium sabaudum (a hawkweed) and Bracken, with Pedunculate Oak, Gorse, Bramble (<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>) and Broom (<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>) scrub. A further area of sparse acid grassland is found on the southern edge of the site near its eastern end. Plant species here include Common Bent, Sheep's Sorrel, Hieracium sabaudum, Common Centaury (<i>Centaureum erythraea</i>), Blue Fleabane (<i>Erigeron acris</i>), Heath Speedwell (<i>Veronica officinalis</i>), Cladonia lichens and Hoary Cinquefoil (<i>Potentilla argentea</i>).</p>		
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes	Yes	
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	Grassland Only	No	
Irreplaceable Habitat on Site:	Ancient tree	No	
Priority Habitat on Site:	Deciduous woodland, No main habitat but additional habitats present	Deciduous woodland	
Known Projects/Initiatives:	Unknown. Private woodland.	Unknown	
Survey Data			
Surveyor: EB	Date: 25.04.2025	Surveyor: EB	Date: 10.09.2025
Weather: Grey	Access: Survey was limited to footpaths as access was not granted by Military of Defence.	Weather: Sunny	Access: Private but fully accessible for survey.

Birch Brook Wood Proposed Extension	
Summary of Site:	
<p>Located south of Colchester City and directly south of Middlewick Ranges LoWS and Donyland Wetlands LoWS, Birch Brook Wood is an extensive and unmanaged deciduous woodland which surrounds Birch Brook watercourse.</p>	<p>This is a small area of sparse acid grassland and scrub which shares its northern boundary with Birch Brook Wood LoWS. To the west, it is bordered by Weir Lane Grassland, whilst Fingringhoe Road and Rowhedge allotments make up the eastern and southern boundaries. The northern section of the site, which abuts Birch Brook Wood LoWS lies within the Essex Coast IIA, highlighting its importance for invertebrates. The site is owned by East Donyland Parish Council and does not appear to be publicly accessible.</p>
Habitat Survey Description:	
<p>Birch Brook Wood is made up of several different types of woodland allowing it to be selected as a LoWS under HC1, HC2 and HC3. Some areas of Birch Brook Wood, particularly towards the east, supported significant ancient woodland indicator species such as bluebell, red currant, lords and ladies, wood sorrel, common figwort and wood spurge. Damper areas adjacent to the brook supported further notable ground flora species such as pendulous sedge, remote sedge, scaly male-fern, broad buckler fern, narrow buckler fern and harts- tongue fern some of which are Essex Red Data List (ERDL) species. The sub-canopy was diverse including holly, wild cherry, wych elm, hazel and silver birch. The canopy was dominated by pedunculate oak and ash with damper patches around the brook dominated by willows, green alder and birch constituting wet woodland. Drier and higher aspects of the woodland were more dominated by bracken, bramble and nettle than adjacent to the brook.</p> <p>A significant amount of standing and lying dead wood was recorded during the survey offering bat roost suitability and opportunities for invertebrates. Natural regeneration within the woodland was evident by the presence of saplings of a variety of sizes. The structure of the woodland also varied across the site, with open glade areas resulting from recent tree fall being quickly colonised by new growth.</p> <p>The northern boundary adjacent to Middlewick LoWS and Donyland Wetland LoWS featured an important successional scrub habitat where Nightingale were recorded during the survey.</p>	<p>The sparse acid grassland features grasses such as false oat-grass and sweet vernal grass and is abundant with forbs such as wild parsnip, agrimony, ribwort plantain, perforate st John's wort, and blue fleabane, occasional grey sedge, fat hen, soft rush, self-heal, and common toadflax. Bare ground resulting from yellow meadow ant hills and rabbit burrowing is prevalent throughout the site and allows a forb assemblage, characteristic of acid grassland, including mouse-ear hawkweed, lesser hawkbit, sheep's sorrel and lesser centaury, to establish. This diverse range of flora and bare ground attracts a large number of invertebrates.</p> <p>The scrub layer within this grassland is extensive and makes access to the central part of the site difficult, limiting disturbance from humans. Species within the scrub include bramble, blackthorn, hawthorn, dog rose, broom and individual oak, ash and apple tree saplings. The structure of the scrub is varied which offers good foraging and nesting habitats for birds and open glades offer ideal basking opportunities for reptiles.</p>

### C.1: Desk Study - Birch Brook Wood Potential Extension

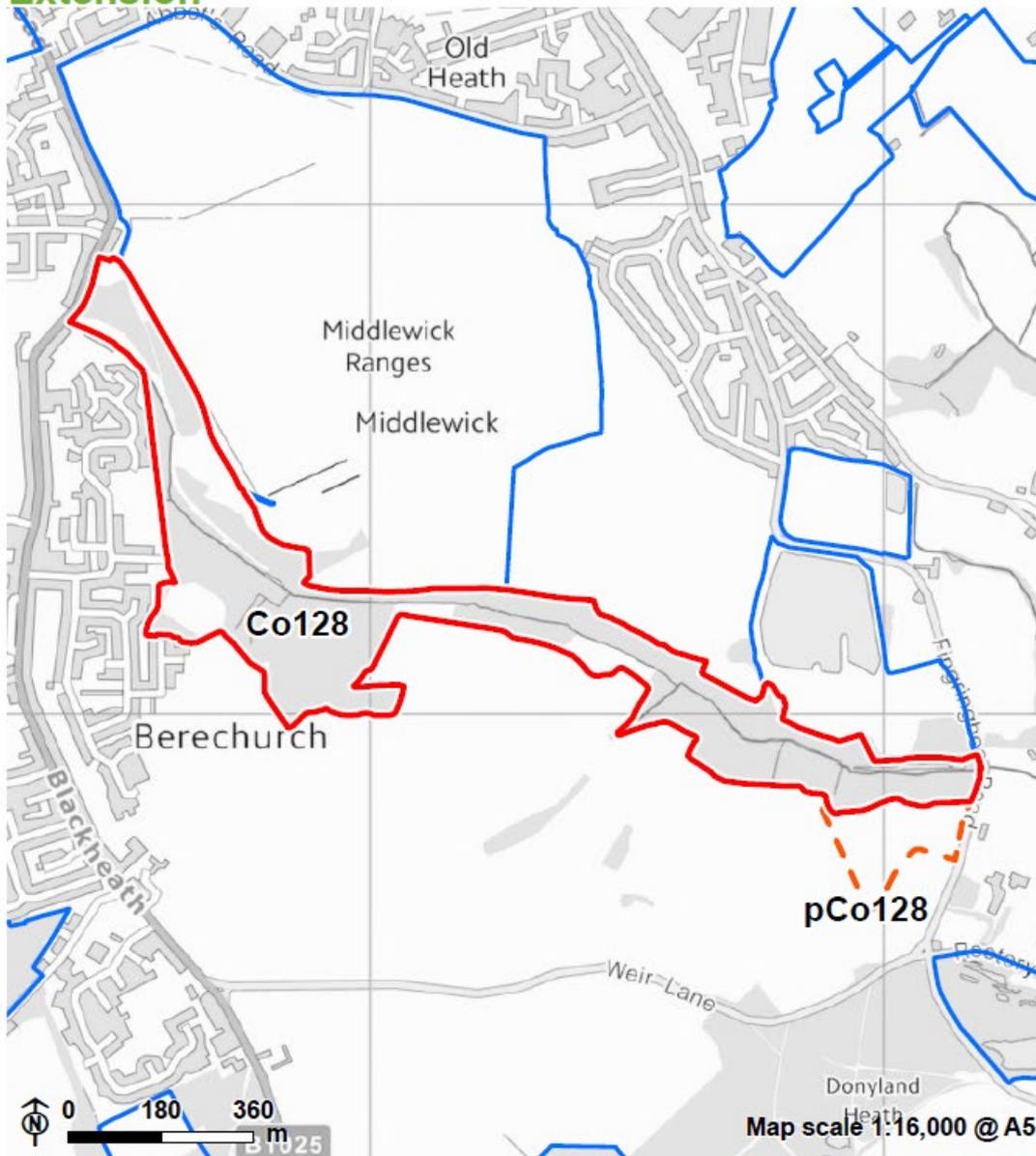


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- Potential for extension
- Survey site boundary
- Other LoWS boundary
- Preferred site allocation
- Emerging site allocation
- Ancient Woodland Inventory
- Wood Pasture and Parkland
- Priority Habitat Inventory

Birch Brook Wood Proposed Extension

### C.2: Access Constraints and Boundary Changes - Birch Brook Wood Proposed Extension



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 Survey site boundary       Proposed extension

Changes to Habitats Since the Previous 2015 Surveys:

Birch Brook Wood Proposed Extension	
No significant changes in woodland species since the 2015 report were noted during the survey. It should be noted that Birch Brook was also selected as a LoWS for its Heathland and Acid Grassland habitat (HC13), but the survey did not record any evidence of this habitat within the site boundary. It was however recorded adjacent to the south east boundary, hence the recommendation for a boundary extension.	N/A – area not previously surveyed.
Condition Statement:	
<b>Favourable, declining</b> Woodland was assessed as Favourable, declining as woodland is currently good quality with high number of species and good structural diversity. However, absence of management does put this habitat at risk to some extent from threats such as bracken dominance, invasive non-native species and boundary treatment.	<b>Favourable, declining</b> The scrub layer within the site is rapidly expanding upwards and outwards, decreasing light levels and threatening the distinctive acidic plant communities found there.
Management:	
<b>Satisfactory</b> It appears that no active management takes place within Birch Brook Wood to protect and enhance the woodland. Essex Highways has constructed and maintain several boardwalks over Birch Brook which incidentally protect damp areas and associated vegetation such as ferns.	<b>Satisfactory</b> The site is not actively managed, which is beneficial in some respects as it reduces disturbance of the sensitive acid grassland but does pose a threat in terms of succession of scrub, which could lead to the loss of acid grassland.
Known/Relevant Existing Site Management Plan:	
Unknown	Unknown
Opportunities on Site:	
N/A N/A	N/A N/A
Threats and Disturbances:	
<b>Invasive non-native species, Boundary treatment</b> Within Birch Brook Wood there were a few sections where invasive non-native Portuguese laurel was present, particularly to the west. Along the southern boundary of Birch Brook Wood there had been recent clearance of scrub margins and the installation of a large fence. Scrub margins hold high ecological value and so this action threatens birds, mammals and reptiles which use this habitat for commuting and foraging.	<b>Scrub dominance</b> Due to the dense nature of the scrub, common threats to ecology, such as litter and vandalism, were not recorded. However, scrub dominance does threaten the acidic grassland if not managed accordingly.
Level of Use:	
<b>Low</b> Birch Brook wood is intersected by footpaths which lends itself to use by walkers and dog walkers. The site is however quite extensive and the terrain uneven or wet in places which	<b>None</b> Due to the dense nature of the scrub, it was very difficult to enter the area from the side nearest to Rowhedge allotments. Within the scrub, there were no visible signs of recreational usage.

Birch Brook Wood Proposed Extension		
means the majority of the woodland outside of footpaths is left undisturbed.		
Management Recommendations:		
<p>Firstly, the sections of invasive non-native Portuguese laurel within the woodland should be removed to prevent further spread. Secondly, management should reinstate the successional habitat of scrub on the southern boundary, like that found on the northern boundary, as it holds high ecological value.</p>	<p>Management should focus on maintaining the current diverse range of habitats found within the site, that is, bare ground, acid grassland, mixed scrub and individual trees. Scrub and individual trees should be selectively thinned to ensure that the acid grassland is not lost to succession, which is a very real threat if management is not started promptly.</p>	
LoWS Criteria		
Habitat Selection Criteria		
Woodland, Scrub and Related Habitats:	<p>HC1 – Ancient Woodland sites</p> <p>HC2 - Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient sites</p> <p>HC3 - Other Priority Habitat Woodland Types on Non-ancient sites</p>	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Grassland:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Heathland:	HC13 - Heathland and Acid Grassland	HC13 – Heathland and Acid Grassland
Additional Comments:	N/A	<p>Birch Brook Wood is classified as a LoWS under HC13, as well as HC1, HC2, HC3, and SC1. As this site sits along the southeast boundary of Birch Brook Wood LoWS and supports characteristic acid grassland vegetation, thus meeting the HC13 Criterion, the site should be included within the current LoWS.</p>
Wetland Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Open Water Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Coastal Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Other Habitats:	N/A	N/A

Birch Brook Wood Proposed Extension		
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Species Selection Criteria		
Plants:	SC1 – Vascular Plants	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Birds:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Mammals:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Amphibians:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Reptiles:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Invertebrates:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	All of Birchbrook Wood sits within the Essex Coast IIA denoting that it contains nationally rare and scarce invertebrate populations and their habitats. The survey also revealed interesting invertebrate populations such as several bee nests in mature oak trees. Specialist invertebrate surveys should be carried out at this LoWS to understand the invertebrate species and whether the site can be classified under SC18 and SC19 similar to the adjacent Middlewick Ranges LoWS.	The northern section of this site sits within the Essex Coast IIA, denoting that it contains nationally rare and scarce invertebrate populations and their habitats. The survey also revealed interesting invertebrate populations such as ivy mining bees gathering in big numbers and numerous yellow meadow ant hills. Similar to Birch Brook Wood LoWS, specialist invertebrate surveys should be carried out here to understand the invertebrate species and whether the site can be classified under SC18 and SC19.
LoWS Survey Recommendations		
Designated LoWS		
LoWS Survey Recommendation:	Proposed extension to LoWS boundary	
Rationale:	It is recommended that the current boundary of Birch Brook Wood LoWS is updated to include the proposed extension area, which includes sparse acid grassland, scrub and bare ground habitats. This area is eligible for selection as a LoWS under HC13 – Heathland and Acid Grassland and contains a mosaic of other habitats which are ideal for invertebrates, birds and reptiles. This not only extends the value of Birch Brook Wood LoWS but also due to its proximity to Donyland Wetlands LoWS and Middlewick Ranges LoWS, this has the potential to create an even larger network of highly valuable habitats within Colchester.	

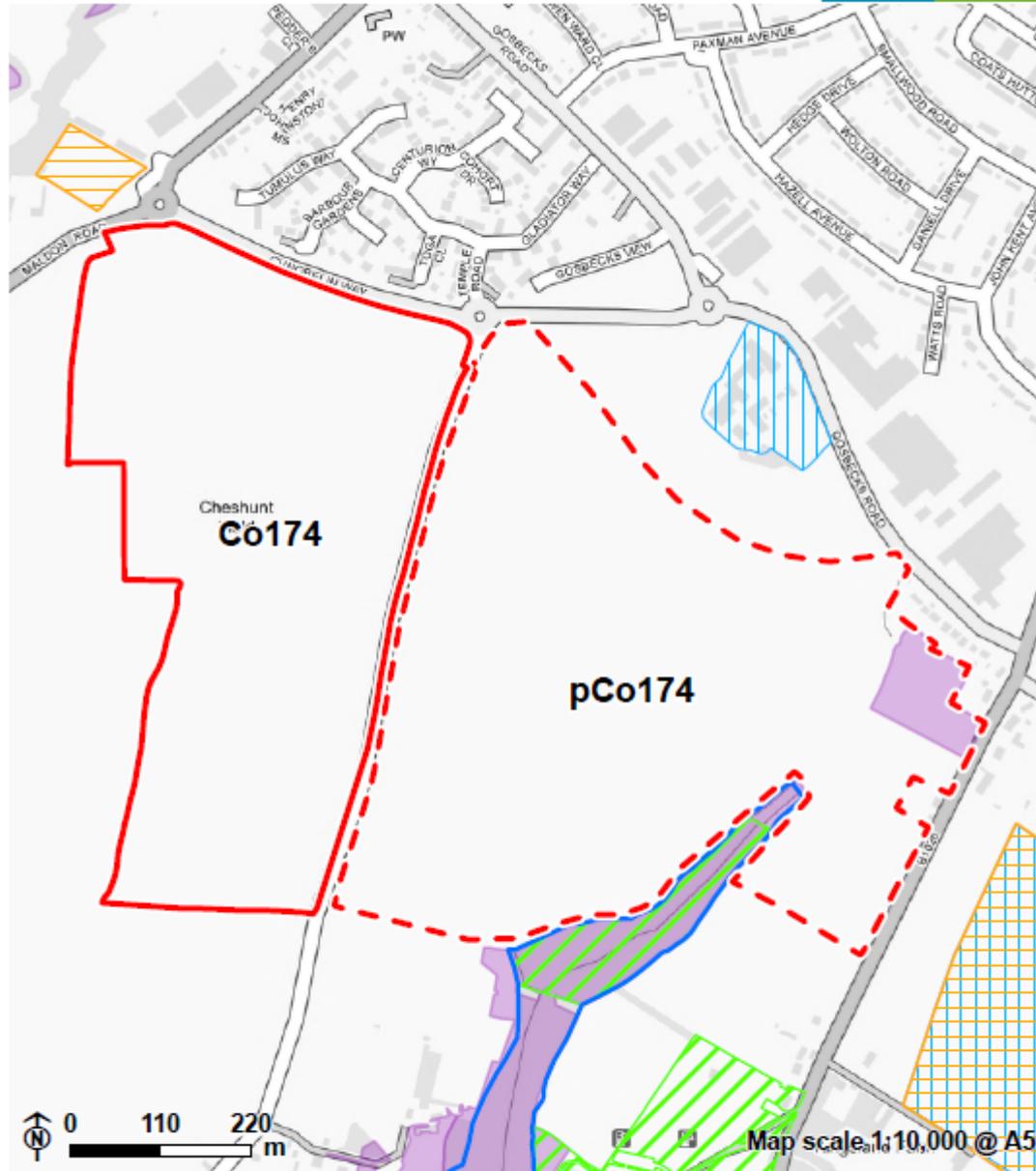
## Gosbecks Archaeological Park Proposed Extension

Gosbecks Archaeological Park Proposed Extension		
Site Information	Original LoWS	Extension area
LoWS ID:	Co174	pCo174
LoWS Name:	Gosbecks Archaeological Park	Gosbecks Archaeological Park Proposed Extension
Grid Reference:	TL9689922504	TL9735722327
Area (ha):	27.12	35.31
Ownership:	Colchester City Council (CCC)	Colchester City Council (CCC)
Management Provider:	CCC	CCC
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: Land North of Maldon Road, Colchester Emerging: Tey Green	Preferred: N/A Emerging: N/A
Total Area of Site Allocation Overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0.00 Emerging: 0.00	Preferred: 0 Emerging: 0
LoWS Citation:	Gosbeck's Park comprises a large area of species-rich seeded grassland that represents an extensive resource for invertebrates as well as providing an open green space that is easily accessible to Colchester residents. The grass component comprises mainly tall, coarse grasses such as Cock's-foot ( <i>Dactylis glomerata</i> ) and False Oat-grass ( <i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i> ) with areas of meadow grasses ( <i>Poa</i> sp.). In contrast, the herb layer retains a great abundance of flowering plants resulting from the original seed mix, which have become well established and continue to flourish. Lady's Bedstraw ( <i>Galium verum</i> ) occurs in locally dominant patches and Yarrow ( <i>Achillea millefolium</i> ) and Common Knapweed ( <i>Centaurea nigra</i> ) are abundant throughout. In addition, other characteristic herbs include Wild Carrot ( <i>Daucus carota</i> ), Yellow-rattle ( <i>Rhinanthus minor</i> ), Oxeye Daisy ( <i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i> ), Field Scabious ( <i>Knautia arvensis</i> ), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil ( <i>Lotus corniculatus</i> ) and Dwarf Mallow ( <i>Malva neglecta</i> ). The area around the Roman Temple is more intensively managed than the adjacent tall grassland, but the short turf here supports locally abundant Common Bird's-foot-trefoil.	N/A – area not previously classified as a LoWS
Located within an Area of Particular	Yes	No

Gosbecks Archaeological Park Proposed Extension			
Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):			
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	Grassland Only	Freshwater Standing Water Only	
Irreplaceable Habitat on Site:	No	No	
Priority Habitat on Site:	No	Deciduous woodland	
Known Projects/Initiatives:	Unknown	Unknown	
Survey Data			
Surveyor: KR	Date: 01.04.2025	Surveyor: EB	Date: 09.09.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: Publicly accessible	Weather: Sunny	Access: Publicly accessible
Summary of Site:			
<p>Gosbeck's Park is an Iron Age and Roman site consisting predominantly of flat grassland and farmland. The LoWS designation covers the western half of the archaeological park only, which includes predominately flat grassland, with hedgerows along the edges of the site. The site is fully accessible to the public, and is located centrally within Colchester between Stanway and Layer-de-la-Haye. The site is in close proximity to a number of LoWS, the closest being Sodoms Wood c. 240m east. The site falls within the Essex Coast Important Invertebrate Area (IIA) and is therefore of importance for invertebrates.</p>		<p>This is the eastern side of Gosbecks Archaeological Park situated between Olivers Lane in the west and Layer Road in the east. Much of the site is grassland, which is grazed by cattle between spring and autumn. Two small sections of plantation deciduous woodland exist towards the northeast boundary, and the site is bordered by native hedgerows. The site is fully accessible to the public and adjoins Gosbecks Archaeological Park LoWS in the east and Sodoms Wood LoWS in the south. A housing development has recently been constructed along the northern boundary. The site falls within the Essex Coast Important Invertebrate Area (IIA) and is therefore of importance for invertebrates.</p>	
Habitat Survey Description:			
<p>Neutral grassland is the primary habitat on site, which is managed sensitively for wildlife. Approximately 50% of the grass is cut each year, late in summer to allow flowers to seed, and to provide habitat for overwintering invertebrates. The site falls within the Essex Coast Important Invertebrate Area and therefore there is potential for the site to be classified under invertebrate criteria, however this would need to be confirmed by specialist surveys. In addition, skylark is known to nest on site, which was confirmed during the visit, with multiple skylarks heard and seen during the survey. Hedgerows and scrub with log piles are present around the boundaries of the site providing habitat for lizards which were relocated to the site in 2002. The hedgerows additionally provide nesting habitat for a range of birds species and commuting and foraging habitat for small mammals such as bats.</p>		<p>Similar to Gosbecks Archaeological Park LoWS in the east, neutral grassland is the primary habitat on site. The grazed fields with a short sward height are dominated by grasses such as perennial rye, Yorkshire fog, cocksfoot and forbs such as white clover, yarrow and ribwort plantain. Strips of grassland with a longer sward height are present, particularly towards Layer Road in the east and this includes species such as false oat-grass, sweet vernal grass, meadow grasses (<i>Poa sp.</i>) and bent grasses (<i>Agrostis sp.</i>). The herb layer is more diverse within the longer sward grassland with species such as dominant yarrow and autumn hawkbit, frequent ribwort plantain, occasional knapweed, musk mallow, red clover, oxeye daisy and rare lady's bedstraw, sheep's sorrel and slender tare. Where cattle grazing is lighter, small patches of bramble, hawthorn and oak scrub have established. The field margins feature tall forbs, such as frequent tansy, hogweed, hedge mustard and bracken,</p>	

Gosbecks Archaeological Park Proposed Extension	
	<p>providing good overwintering habitat for invertebrates. They also create a good boundary habitat next to the native hedgerows, predominantly comprised of hawthorn, blackthorn, oak and field maple, providing foraging and nesting opportunities for birds. The hedgerow banks also feature bare ground patches resulting from footfall and rabbits which offer opportunities for ground-nesting bees and wasps.</p> <p>The two sections of plantation deciduous woodland (planted in the early 1990s) contain a canopy layer of oak, ash, wild cherry and field maple with an understory of hawthorn, hornbeam, dogwood, apple and silver birch. The ground layer is dominated by bramble and some grasses such as false oat-grass and cocksfoot. The structural diversity of the woodlands is low based on their age but species diversity is high and offers numerous habitats such as deadwood piles for invertebrates and reptiles.</p> <p>Within the grassland, there are several potential veteran oak trees, one of which features a barn owl box.</p>

## C.1: Desk Study - Gosbecks Archeological Park Potential Extension

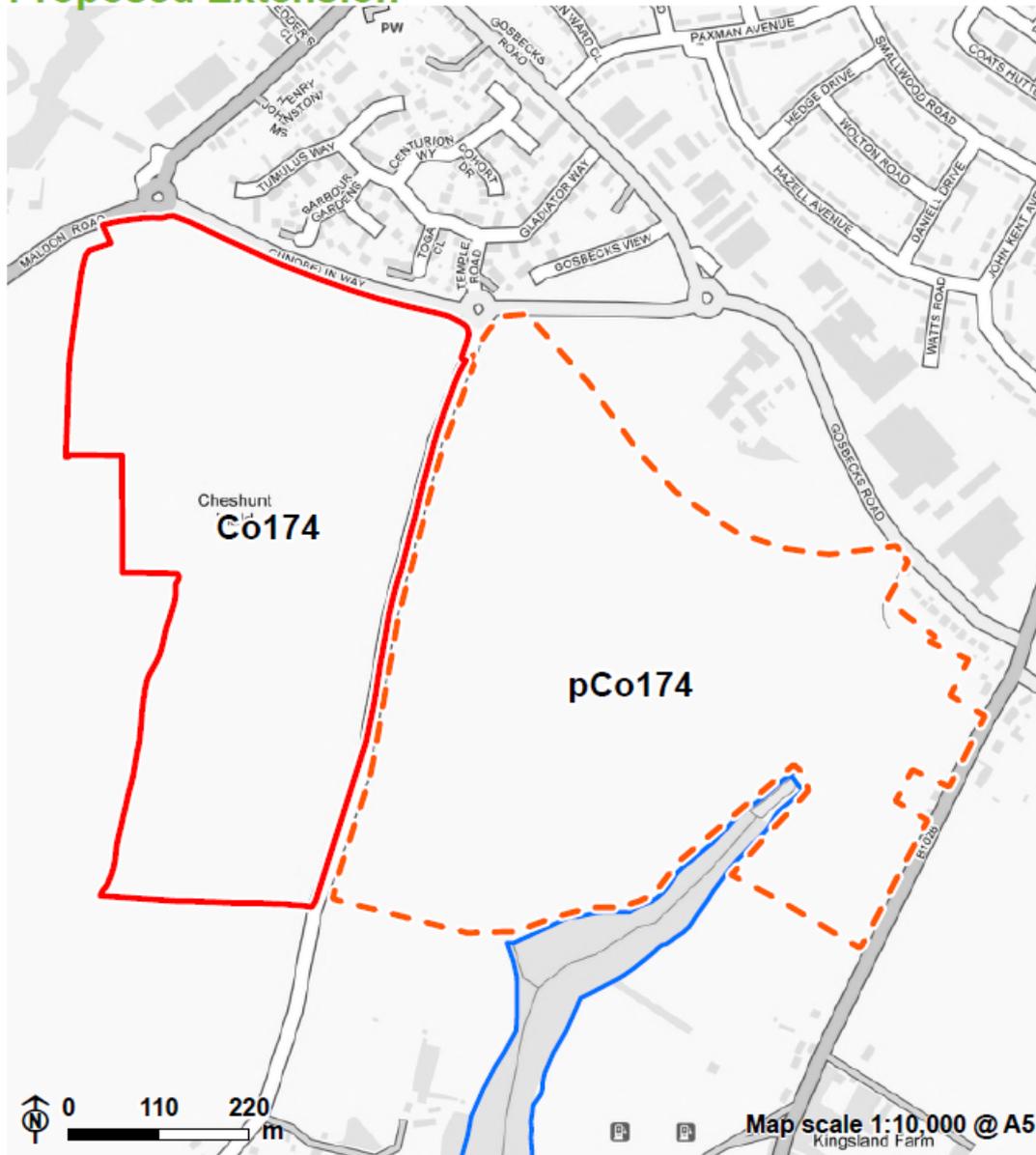


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- Potential for extension
- Survey site boundary
- Other LoWS boundary
- Preferred site allocation
- Emerging site allocation
- Wood Pasture and Parkland
- Priority Habitat Inventory

Gosbecks Archaeological Park Proposed Extension

## C.2: Access Constraints and Boundary Changes - Gosbecks Archeological Park Proposed Extension



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Survey site boundary      Proposed extension

Changes to Habitats Since the Previous 2015 Surveys:

Gosbecks Archaeological Park Proposed Extension	
The habitat description appears unchanged from 2015. It was recommended within the previous survey that the grassland is mowed in rotation so that areas of grass are left for overwintering species, and it was clear while on site that this has been implemented.	N/A – area not previously surveyed
Condition Statement:	
<b>Favourable</b> The site is managed sensitively for wildlife, with grass at varying heights providing ground nesting habitat for skylark and overwintering habitat for invertebrates. Scrub, hedgerows and log piles are present along the site boundaries providing habitat for reptiles and paths are regularly mown, encouraging walkers to keep to the paths.	<b>Favourable</b> Similar to the eastern side, the site is managed sensitively for wildlife, with grass at varying heights providing ground nesting habitat for skylark and overwintering habitat for invertebrates. Scrub, hedgerows and log piles are present along the site boundaries providing habitat for reptiles.
Management:	
<b>Good</b> The site is clearly managed well and managed for the benefit of biodiversity. Regularly mown paths are present throughout the site to keep walkers to the paths, minimising disturbance to ground nesting skylark. There are multiple signs within the site notifying walkers of the presence of ground nesting skylarks and the importance of sticking to the paths and to keep dogs on leads to minimise any disturbance. It was evident that mowing is carried out in rotation as strips of more tussocky grassland were present, providing overwintering habitat for invertebrates and cover for ground nesting birds and small mammals. Log piles had been purposefully provided for reptiles and each year ragwort is controlled via pulling and spraying.	<b>Good</b> The grassland is clearly managed well by the countryside ranger team at CCC. The paths throughout the site, which connect it to the eastern side, are regularly mown, encouraging walkers to keep to the paths and minimising disturbance to ground nesting skylark within the longer sward grassland. There were also signs throughout the site encouraging people to pick up dog faeces and not to litter. The presence of invasive non-native plants such as ragwort was low, suggesting the pulling and spraying management technique is effective. Management also takes place within the woodland to provide additional habitats and to promote regeneration, evidenced by the deadwood piles.
Known/Relevant Existing Site Management Plan:	
An Action Plan for 2021 - 2022 <sup>7</sup> was found online on the Colchester City Council website, however a more recent management plan may exist not online.	This website <sup>8</sup> highlights some of the key management practices that take place over the whole of Gosbecks Archaeological Park.
Opportunities on Site:	
<b>Hedgerow creation, invertebrate survey</b> Arable land is present immediately to the west of the site, and it was noted that there was no hedgerow between the two along the northern quarter of the site. It is recommended that a hedgerow is planted here to maintain connectivity between the site and surrounding habitats. Given the size of the site, this is not expected to impact upon skylark nesting habitat, but will provide greater connectivity around the site for small mammals and reptiles. In addition, given the sites location within an IIA, and the habitats on site, the site is considered to be of importance for rare and threatened	<b>Hedgerow creation</b> Some of the hedgerows along the boundary of the site feature large gaps, particularly along Olivers Lane and some of them have grown upwards which reduces their suitability for nesting birds. More native hedgerow planting would strengthen this important habitat and improve connectivity for birds, reptiles and invertebrates between the rest of Gosbecks Archaeological Park in the east and Sodoms Wood LoWS in the south.

<sup>7</sup> Gosbeck's Archaeological Park: Action Plan for 2021 – 2022. Accessed in May 2025 at: [CBC-Parks-Gosbeck's-Archeological-Park-2021-2022-action-plan-Action Plan Gosbeck's 2021-2022 PUBLIC.pdf](#)

<sup>8</sup> Colchester City Council. Our country parks and nature reserves. Accessed online in October 2025: [Our country parks and nature reserves – Colchester City Council](#)

Gosbecks Archaeological Park Proposed Extension		
species of invertebrates. An invertebrate survey would be beneficial to understand the invertebrates present on site and how to enhance the site for invertebrates further.		
Threats and Disturbances:		
<b>Dogs</b> Despite there being numerous signs to keep dogs on the lead during the skylark nesting season, multiple dogs were noted to be off the leads.	<b>Dog fouling and Litter</b> Despite there being numerous signs to pick up dog faeces, it was recorded on site as well as low levels of litter.	
Level of Use:		
<b>Moderate</b> A popular dog waking spot	<b>Moderate</b> A popular dog walking spot but appeared to be less used than the eastern field due to parking restrictions on Olivers Lane.	
Management Recommendations:		
While there has been a significant effort to educate walkers about the presence of skylarks, many dogs were noted to be off the lead running through the grassland. It would be beneficial to monitor the skylark population, and if the presence of dogs is deemed to be causing a significant risk, consideration could be given to preventing public access to some areas, or to the creation of dead hedges along paths to limit access.		The proposed extension area did not appear to have signs that highlighted the importance of keeping dogs on leads to prevent disturbance to nesting skylarks. As skylarks were recorded to be using this eastern side of Gosbecks Archaeological Park it would be beneficial to place the same signs on this side of the site to educate the local residents.
LoWS Criteria		
Habitat Selection Criteria		
Woodland, Scrub and Related Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Grassland:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	At present, the grassland isn't considered to meet the criteria of HC11, however there is potential for it to, so it is recommended grassland surveys are undertaken during the optimal survey window to assess for inclusion under this criteria in future.	At present, the grassland isn't considered to meet the criteria of HC11, however there is potential for it to, so it is recommended grassland surveys are undertaken during the optimal survey window to assess for inclusion under this criteria in future.
Heathland:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Wetland Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A

Gosbecks Archaeological Park Proposed Extension		
Open Water Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Coastal Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Other Habitats:	HC31 - Accessible Natural Greenspace	HC31 – Accessible Natural Greenspace
Additional Comments:	The site clearly holds significant ecological value, evidenced alone by the habitat it provides for ground nesting birds. However, given the data was not available at the time of the survey to include the site under any species criteria, the site has been designated under HC31. This accounts for the sites value to local residents as well as local wildlife.	Similar to the rest of Gosbecks Archaeological Park to the west, the site is a large grassland with small sections of plantation woodland, which holds considerable recreational and amenity value for local residents. At the same time, the site holds significant ecological value for wildlife including open space for skylark, long sward grassland, hedgerows for nesting birds, scrub and deadwood for invertebrates and reptiles.
Species Selection Criteria		
Plants:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Birds:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	To qualify under SC5 - Notable Bird Species, 5-year average data is required, which was not available at the time of assessment. Given the known population of nesting skylark present on site, there is potential for the site to qualify under SC5. It is recommended that bird surveys are undertaken to both monitor the population on site, and to assess for inclusion under SC5.	Skylark were recorded within the proposed extension area. To qualify under SC5 - Notable Bird Species, 5-year average data is required, which was not available at the time of assessment. However, given their presence on site, there is potential for the site to qualify under SC5. It is recommended that bird surveys are undertaken to both monitor the population on site, and to assess for inclusion under SC5.
Mammals:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Amphibians:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Reptiles:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A

Gosbecks Archaeological Park Proposed Extension		
Invertebrates:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	This site is located within the Essex IIA and is therefore considered to be of importance for rare and threatened species of invertebrates. For detail on the exact assemblage of species present, it is recommended that detailed surveys are undertaken, to assess for inclusion under the invertebrate criteria.	This site is located within the Essex IIA and is therefore considered to be of importance for rare and threatened species of invertebrates. For detail on the exact assemblage of species present, it is recommended that detailed surveys are undertaken, to assess for inclusion under the invertebrate criteria.
LoWS Survey Recommendations		
Designated LoWS		
LoWS Survey Recommendation:	Proposed extension to the LoWS boundary	
Rationale:	It is recommended that the entire Gosbecks Archaeological Park, including the proposed extension area, is classified as a LoWS under HC31 – Accessible Natural Greenspace. The grassland and small sections of plantation woodland within the proposed extension area to the east of the current LoWS offer extensive recreational opportunities for local residents and those from further afield who drive to the site. Simultaneously, the site is managed beneficially by CCC to support numerous important habitats for birds, specifically skylark, reptiles and invertebrates which also connect to other habitats such as Sodoms Wood LoWS in the south.	

## Greenstead Slopes

Greenstead Slopes	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	CNHS_13
LoWS Name:	Greenstead Slopes
Grid Reference:	TM0171125684
Area (ha):	9.54
Ownership:	Colchester City Council (CCC)
Management Provider:	CCC rangers
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: N/A Emerging: N/A
Total Area of Site Allocation Overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0 Emerging: 0
LoWS Citation:	N/A – area not previously classified as a LoWS
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	No
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	No
Irreplaceable Habitat on Site:	No
Priority Habitat on Site:	Deciduous woodland
Known Projects/Initiatives:	Unknown
Survey Data	
Surveyor: EB	Date: 16.09.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: Publicly accessible
Summary of Site:	
<p>This is a large recreational area comprised of grassland and ash plantation woodland located to the west of Colchester city in the residential area of Greenstead. A stream called Porter's Brook creates the western boundary of the site and the ash plantation woodland is known locally as Ghost Woods. The site is intersected by numerous paths and is used frequently by children and dog walkers.</p>	

## Greenstead Slopes

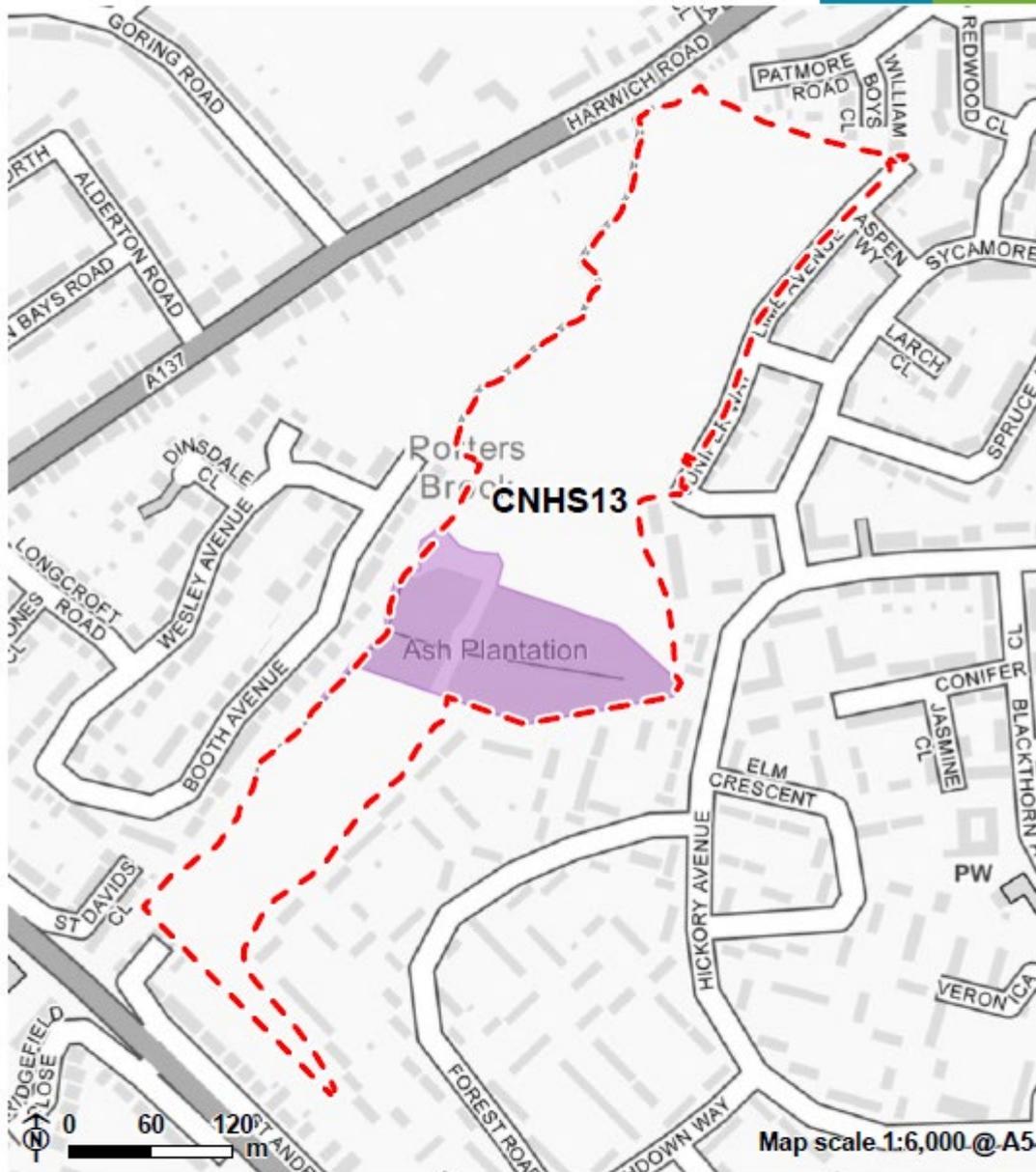
### Habitat Survey Description:

A long sward grassland covers most of the site. This is dominated by false oat grass, timothy, cocksfoot, with abundant knapweed and yarrow, occasional red clover, meadow buttercup, lesser bird's foot trefoil, ribwort plantain, festuca grasses, field bindweed, common and creeping bent, couch grass and rare red bartsia, yellow meadow vetchling, common fleabane, grey sedge, and field scabious. Sections of the grassland that are less disturbed feature yellow meadow ant hills and have scattered mixed scrub and individual oak saplings, offering a diverse habitat for invertebrates and birds. Some sections are also dominated by one or two floral species, such as willowherbs within the centre of the site, hairy tare close to Porter's Brook and an area of horsetail at the top of the slope. Of lesser ecological importance, but still recreationally important, are the areas of short mown amenity grassland comprised of species such as perennial rye grass, yarrow, common cat's ear, cocksfoot with occasional sheep's sorrel, mouse ear chickweed and buckthorn plantain, which are situated at the top of the slopes, closer to Greenstead.

Ghost Wood, located centrally within the site, is the largest section of deciduous woodland on the site and features a canopy of mature ash and oak trees. Holly, yew, hazel, hawthorn, elder, field maple and bramble make up the understorey and there is a recognisable and diverse woodland ground flora, including herb robert, ground ivy, wood avens, foxglove, red campion with yellow pimpernel, remote sedge, wood melick, broad buckler fern and pendulous sedge where the ground is damper near Porter's Brook. No veteran trees are apparent but standing dead wood does offer bat roosting features and opportunities for saprophytic invertebrates. The deciduous woodland does extend to follow the length of Porter's Brook but the understorey more frequently includes the invasive non-native cherry laurel here.

There is a good boundary habitat between areas of woodland and grassland where tall forbs such as willowherb, teasels and knapweed dominate. Towards the south of the site, there appears to have been recent planting of cherry, oak, dogwood, rowan, hawthorn and dog rose saplings on the lower grassland slopes. Nearby, an area of aspen trees is naturally expanding into the grassland.

### C.1: Desk Study - Greenstead Slopes

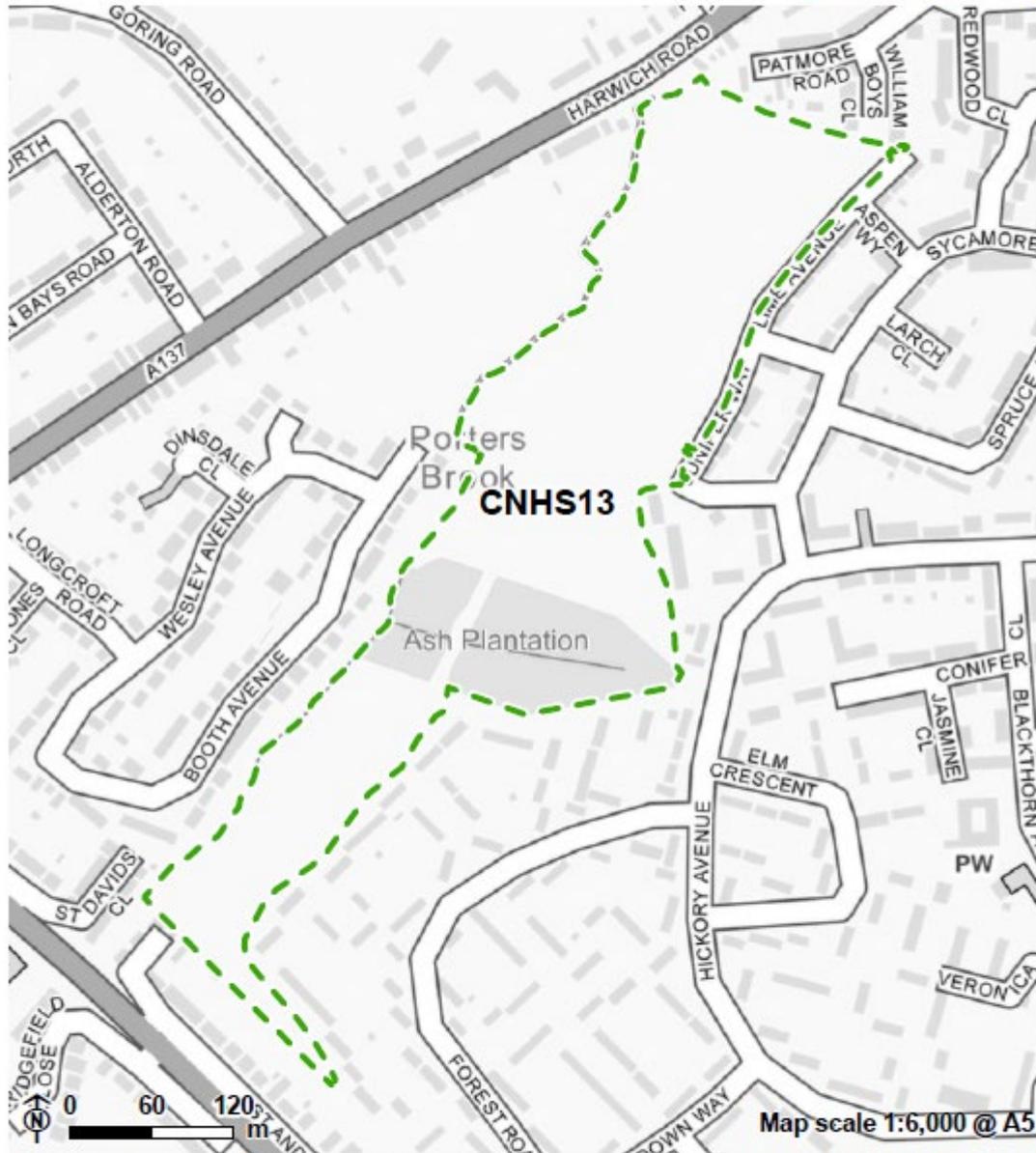


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Potential for extension      Priority Habitat Inventory

Greenstead Slopes

## C.2: Access Constraints and Boundary Changes - Greenstead Slopes



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 New LoWS

<b>Greenstead Slopes</b>
Changes to Habitats Since the Previous 2015 Surveys:
N/A – area not previously surveyed.
Condition Statement:
<p><b>Favourable</b></p> <p>Although Ghost Wood is a plantation ash woodland, it now features a recognisable layered structure and a woodland ground flora including species such as pendulous sedge and yellow pimpernel. The grassland is also of good quality, evidenced by the presence of plants characteristic of unimproved neutral grassland such as knapweed and yellow meadow vetchling, which supports a diverse range of invertebrates and birds.</p>
Management:
<p><b>Satisfactory</b></p> <p>The level of management is unknown, however, there was evidence of coppicing and path clearance within the woodland which creates glades and improves the structural diversity of the habitat. Longer sward grassland also suggests that management is prioritising biodiversity.</p>
Known/Relevant Existing Site Management Plan:
It is unknown whether there is a council-led management plan, but volunteers have set up a project called 'Keep The Green Clean' <sup>9</sup> , which aims to reduce the amount of litter on site.
Opportunities on Site:
<p><b>N/A</b></p> <p>There is an opportunity to enhance the ecological value of the site through management changes. See Management Recommendations below.</p>
Threats and Disturbances:
<p><b>Fly tipping, Vandalism, Litter, Dog Fouling and Invasive non-native species</b></p> <p>Fly tipping and litter were noted in some parts of the site, in particular next to Porter's Brook, which is a direct threat to water quality and wildlife. The dumping of organic waste from residential properties and the allotments on the western boundary was also noted. This can lead to the spread of invasive non-native plant species and threaten native grassland and woodland species present on site. Cherry laurel, which is an invasive non-native plant species, was already relatively abundant within Ghost Wood near Porter's Brook. Evidence of campfires and informal encampments was also prevalent within Ghost Wood which can have negative impacts on sensitive woodland ground flora. Dog fouling was also present in the grassland which can cause localised nutrient enrichment.</p>
Level of Use:
<p><b>High</b></p> <p>This site is located within a residential area which means that usage is high for a range of different activities, including dog walking, using the playground and commuting. Paths that appeared to have been recently upgraded intersected the grassland and woodland habitats.</p>
Management Recommendations:
It is unclear whether there is a cohesive management plan in place for this site but one should be developed which applies specific techniques to the grassland, scrub and woodland habitats to enhance the ecological value. For the grassland, management should continue to leave long swards undisturbed to allow the yellow meadow ants to create conditions which will increase species diversity. At the same time, some scrub control should be implemented to ensure that the grassland is

<sup>9</sup> Keep the Green Clean. Accessed online in October 2025: [About KTGC | Keep The Green Clean](#)

Greenstead Slopes	
not lost over time to succession. The woodland is of relatively good quality, but the cherry laurel should be removed under the guidance of an invasive species specialist and monitored to manage its spread. To prevent further spread of invasive non-native species from the nearby allotments and residential properties, it is recommended that education is used to inform locals of the importance of the site. This could also be one way in which to reduce litter near Porter's Brook and prevent vandalism which would enhance the overall ecological value of Greenstead Slopes.	
LoWS Criteria	
Habitat Selection Criteria	
Woodland, Scrub and Related Habitats:	HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites
Additional Comments:	Ghost Wood features a recognisable and diverse canopy and understorey dominated by native deciduous tree species. There is also a diverse woodland ground flora, including herb robert, wood avens, yellow pimpernel, remote sedge, wood melick, broad buckler fern and pendulous sedge, owing in part to the damp conditions provided by Porters Brook.
Grassland:	HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands
Additional Comments:	The grasslands, particularly areas which have been left unmown, contain numerous grass and forb species characteristic of unimproved neutral grasslands, such as false oat grass, timothy, cocksfoot, knapweed, yarrow, red clover, meadow buttercup, lesser bird's foot trefoil and ribwort plantain.
Heathland:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Wetland Habitats:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Open Water Habitats:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Coastal Habitats:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Other Habitats:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Species Selection Criteria	
Plants:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Birds:	N/A

Greenstead Slopes	
Additional Comments:	N/A
Mammals:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Amphibians:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Reptiles:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Invertebrates:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
LoWS Survey Recommendations	
Designated LoWS	
LoWS Survey Recommendation:	New LoWS
Rationale:	<p>This site is comprised of two habitats which make it eligible for selection as a new LoWS, that is HC11 - Other Neutral Grassland and HC2 - Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites. The grassland contains numerous species characteristic of unimproved neutral grasslands supporting rare and threatened species of invertebrates, including Essex Red Data List species such as Red Bartsia Bee as documented by Colchester Natural History Society during their surveys in 2023. The woodland is eligible thanks to its recognizable layered structure and diverse ground flora. In addition, the site is in proximity to a residential area and provides opportunities for nature exploration. Overall, there is a strong reason to include Greenstead Slopes within Colchester's LoWS network and it should be taken forward as a new LoWS.</p>

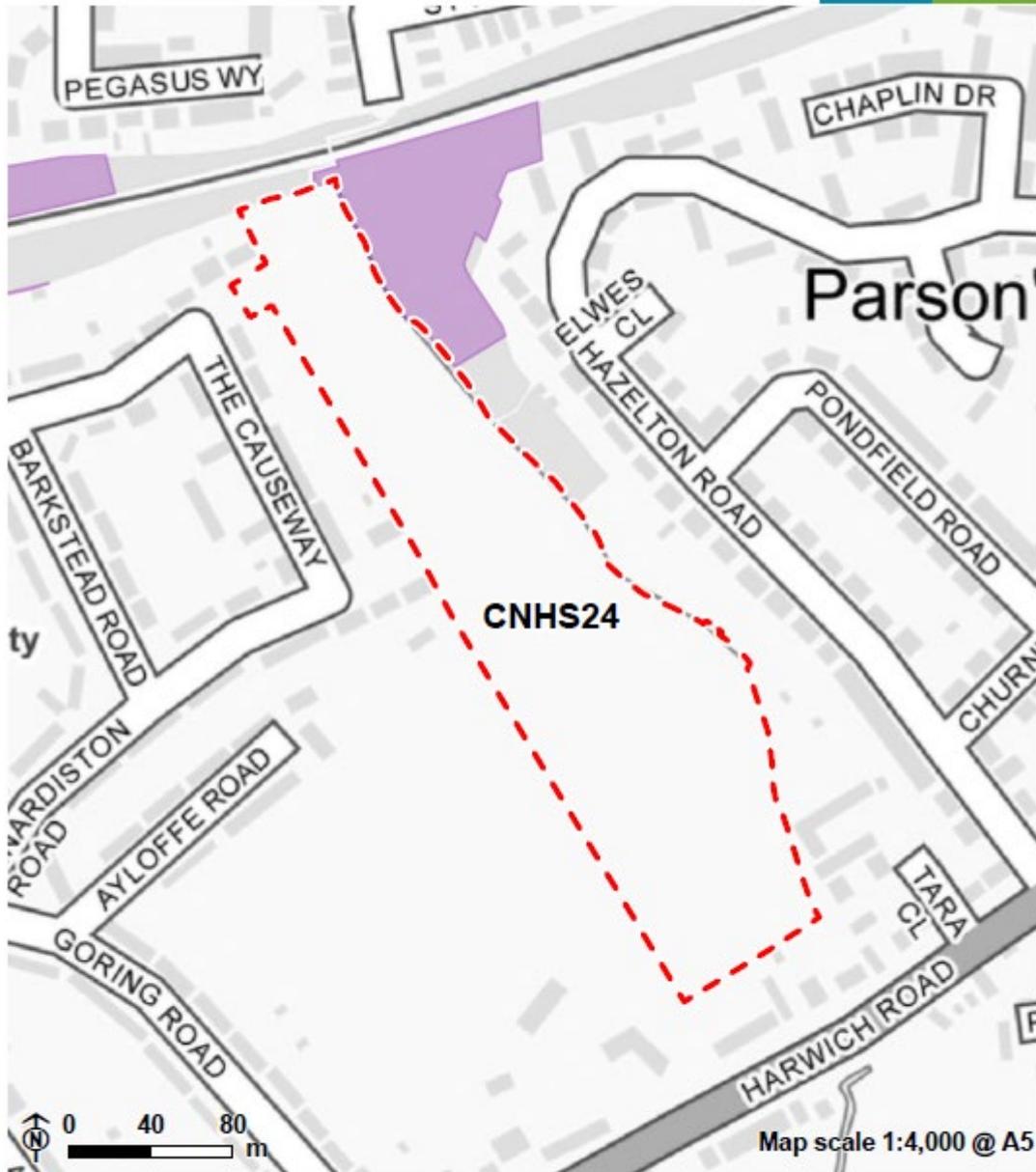
## Harwich Road Recreation Ground

Harwich Road Recreation Ground	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	CNHS_24
LoWS Name:	Harwich Road Recreation Ground
Grid Reference:	TM0163426206
Area (ha):	3.43
Ownership:	Colchester City Council (CCC)
Management Provider:	CCC Rangers
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: N/A Emerging: N/A
Total Area of Site Allocation Overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0 Emerging: 0
LoWS Citation:	N/A – area not previously classified as a LoWS
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	No
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	No
Irreplaceable Habitat on Site:	No
Priority Habitat on Site:	Deciduous woodland (boundary discrepancy – habitat to the north east corner)
Known Projects/Initiatives:	This is a nature recovery site which is part of the Colchester Woodland and Biodiversity project, launched in 2019. Management has been relaxed here to allow wildflowers to flourish and to attract more invertebrates.
Survey Data	
Surveyor: EB	Date: 16.09.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: Publicly accessible
Summary of Site:	
<p>Located to the west of Colchester City, between a railway line in the north and Harwich Road in the south, this site is a large playing field in a densely residential area. The west side of the recreation ground comprises short mown amenity grassland (not included but relevant for context), whereas the east side has a less intensive management regime, favouring a longer</p>	

Harwich Road Recreation Ground
sward grassland with scattered scrub and trees. Porter's Brook runs along the eastern boundary of the Site and is flanked by deciduous woodland in the north.
Habitat Survey Description:
<p>The majority of the site is comprised of tussocky grassland, dominated by species such as Yorkshire fog, cocksfoot, false oat-grass with frequent yarrow, common cat's ear, field bindweed, cow parsley, oxeye daisy and knapweed. Yellow meadow ants have established anthills within the centre of the grassland, a species known to promote species richness and diversity within grasslands. Plant species recorded in proximity to these anthills include common bent, Timothy, sweet vernal grass, lesser bird's foot trefoil, red clover, yellow meadow vetchling, festuca grasses, lesser stitchwort, lesser hawkbit and hairy sedge. Numerous grasshoppers, crickets, small copper butterflies and bumblebees were recorded foraging within this area.</p> <p>The grassland also features scattered scrub and individual saplings, some of which have been planted and others which have naturally regenerated. Tree species are native, including hawthorn, dogwood, field maple, silver birch and oak which diversify the habitats and present good foraging opportunities for birds. Native hedgerows also border the northern and eastern side with species such as bramble, dog rose, elder and blackthorn, extending the foraging opportunities of the site.</p> <p>Porter's Brook is a small stream that runs along the eastern boundary. The sides of the stream are vegetated by pendulous sedge but some sections of it are heavily disturbed by footfall and litter.</p> <p>Patches of creeping thistle and nettles are present within the site, particularly towards the north and east, which suggests localised nutrient enrichment, likely from previous usage of the site.</p>

Harwich Road Recreation Ground

### C.1: Desk Study - Harwich Road Recreation Ground

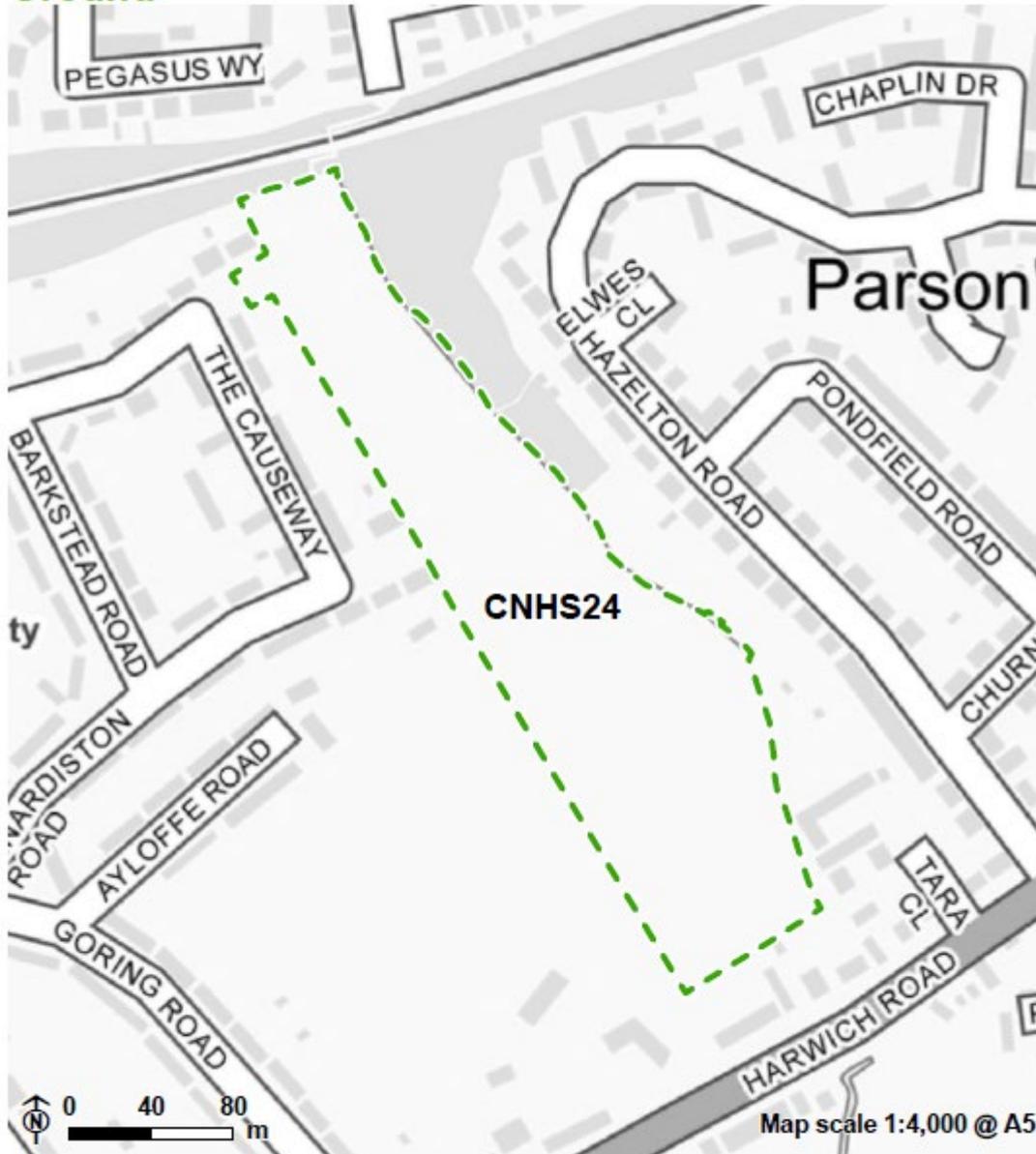


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 Potential for extension       Priority Habitat Inventory

Harwich Road Recreation Ground

### C.2: Access Constraints and Boundary Changes - Harwich Road Recreation Ground



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New LoWS

Changes to Habitats Since the Previous 2015 Surveys:

N/A – area not previously surveyed

Harwich Road Recreation Ground	
Condition Statement:	
<p><b>Favourable</b></p> <p>The site is dominated by tall sward neutral grassland with patches of abundant common knapweed, oxeye daisy, yellow meadow vetchling, common cat's ear, sweet vernal grass, and common bent, which are characteristic of unimproved neutral grassland (NVC: MG5 grassland). This suggests that the relaxed management regime has been successful in establishing an important habitat for nature within Colchester.</p>	
Management:	
<p><b>Satisfactory</b></p> <p>Management has been relaxed on the eastern section of Harwich Road recreation ground, leading to the successful establishment of a long sward grassland with a diverse forb assemblage, ideal for invertebrates and birds.</p>	
Known/Relevant Existing Site Management Plan:	
Unknown	
Opportunities on Site:	
<p><b>Education</b></p> <p>The site features a single sign outlining the Woodland and Biodiversity project which has led to the successful establishment of this long sward grassland. This sign is hidden within the grassland itself, so it is recommended that it be moved and further signage be provided to highlight the importance of this habitat and ways in which residents can support its establishment by not entering the grassland and refraining from littering within the vicinity.</p>	
Threats and Disturbances:	
<p><b>Litter and Dog Fouling</b></p> <p>Linked to the proximity of the site to residential areas, litter and dog faeces were recorded throughout the site. Litter is a particular issue within Porter's Brook which poses a threat to sensitive riverine habitats. Dog faeces can also lead to localised nutrient enrichment which can threaten the sensitive grassland plant communities.</p>	
Level of Use:	
<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <p>The site is in proximity to a large residential area, so usage of the recreation ground is relatively high. However, paths have been cut around the longer sward grassland, which prevents disturbance to the more ecologically valuable grassland habitat.</p>	
Management Recommendations:	
<p>The current management regime, whereby mowing has been relaxed on the eastern side, should be commended and continued to allow the grassland species to flourish and diversify. Management should focus on expanding this grassland in the north where creeping thistle and nettles currently dominate, by a sympathetic management regime of cutting back these species and removing the arisings. The western side of the sward, which is shorter and dominated by perennial rye grass, could also be managed similarly to the eastern side to extend the ecologically valuable grassland habitat. It should also be noted that the saplings within the longer sward grassland will need to be selectively managed in the future to prevent succession and maintain the existing grassland.</p>	
LoWS Criteria	
Habitat Selection Criteria	
Woodland, Scrub and Related Habitats:	N/A

Harwich Road Recreation Ground	
Additional Comments:	N/A
Grassland:	HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands
Additional Comments:	Although the site features some species such as knapweed, meadow vetchling and oxeye daisy, which are characteristic of NVC MG5 type, making it eligible under HC9 - Lowland Meadows, the site is largely semi-improved, which means it is more suitable for inclusion as a LoWS under HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands.
Heathland:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Wetland Habitats:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Open Water Habitats:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Coastal Habitats:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Other Habitats:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Species Selection Criteria	
Plants:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Birds:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Mammals:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Amphibians:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Reptiles:	N/A

Harwich Road Recreation Ground	
Additional Comments:	N/A
Invertebrates:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
LoWS Survey Recommendations	
Designated LoWS	
LoWS Survey Recommendation:	New LoWS
Rationale:	<p>Since 2019, this site has been managed sympathetically to improve the grassland structure and plant diversity. The survey confirmed that this has been successful, evidenced by a high diversity of grass and forb species. The grassland features several species of HC9 – Lowland meadows such as yellow meadow vetchling and sweet vernal grass but the field as a whole was not species-rich enough to satisfy HC9. Subsequently, this site is eligible for classification under HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands, given the grassland habitat present and its ability to support notable populations of invertebrates, recorded during the survey and those carried out by Colchester Natural History Society in 2023.</p>

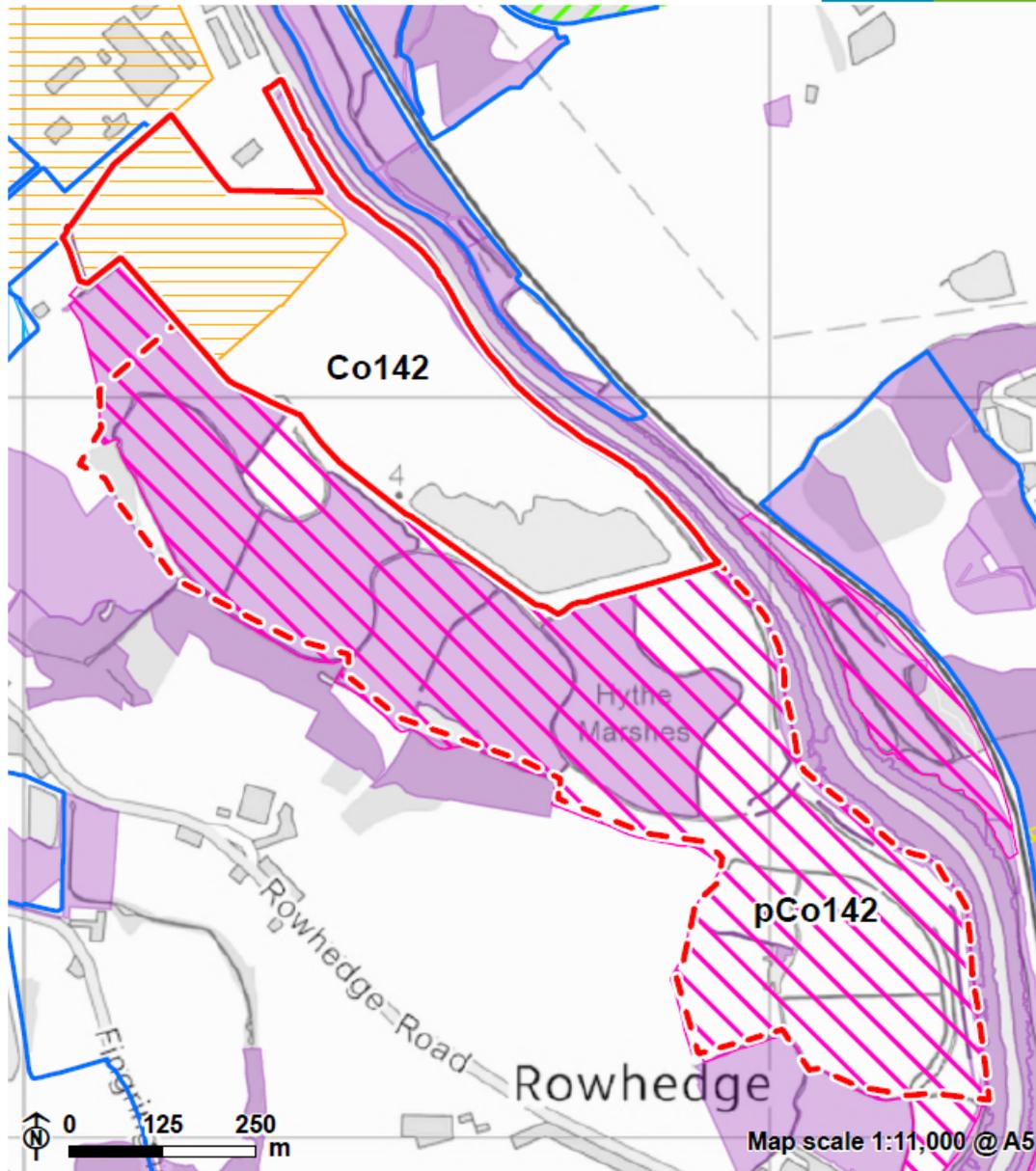
## Hythe Lagoons Potential Extension

Hythe Lagoons Potential Extension		
Site Information	Original LoWS	Extension Area
LoWS ID:	Co142	pCo142
LoWS Name:	Hythe Lagoons	Hythe Lagoons Potential Extension
Grid Reference:	TM0247323041	TM0273622566
Area (ha):	21.80	38.71
Ownership:	Colchester City Council	Private
Management Provider:	Colchester City Council	Private Landowner
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: Anglian Water Recycling Centre Emerging: N/A	Preferred: Anglian Water Recycling Centre Emerging: N/A
Total Area of Site Allocation Overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 6.11 Emerging: 0	Preferred: 0 Emerging: 0
LoWS Citation:	<p>These lagoons are of importance as a breeding ground for Little Ringed Plover and, in some years, Avocet (both listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended)), as well as Lapwing, Shelduck and Linnet. It also provides a high tide roost and feeding habitat for a variety of coastal birds,</p> <p>including a significant proportion of the estuary's population of Black-tailed Godwits through autumn and winter. Although artificially created by the construction of embanked lagoons to take dredging material from the adjacent river Colne, the ecology of this site is very much one of coastal grazing marsh, which was the habitat present before the lagoons were created. It contains habitats that augment the adjacent Upper Colne Marshes SSSI and is now managed by Colchester Borough Council as a Local Nature Reserve.</p> <p>The northernmost lagoon supports dense stands of Common Nettle (<i>Urtica dioica</i>) with scattered scrub, particularly around its margins.</p> <p>To the south, the next lagoon is dry for much of the year, but supports stands of Sea Club-rush (<i>Bolboschoenus maritima</i>), Annual Sea-blite (<i>Suaeda maritima</i>), glassworts (<i>Salicornia</i> spp.) and the Nationally Scarce Sea Barley (<i>Hordeum marinum</i>). The habitat of the central lagoon is dry coastal grassland that is equivalent to upper saltmarsh communities, dominated by Sea Couch (<i>Elytrigia atherica</i>). The southern lagoon holds a large area of permanent water that</p>	N/A – area not previously classified as a LoWS

Hythe Lagoons Potential Extension			
	<p>draws down to leave broad, muddy margins with fringing stands of Common Reed (<i>Phragmites australis</i>) and Sea Club-rush. On the eastern edge of the site there is open mosaic habitat that reveals the previous industrial use of the area.</p> <p>Throughout the site there is an exceptional population of the Nationally Scarce Dittander (<i>Lepidium latifolium</i>) and significant quantities of another now scarce Essex plant, Wormwood (<i>Artemisia absinthum</i>). A large population of Great Green Bush Crickets is also present.</p>		
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes	Yes	
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	No	No	
Irreplaceable Habitat on Site:	Coastal saltmarsh	Coastal saltmarsh	
Priority Habitat on Site:	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, Coastal saltmarsh, Mudflats, No main habitat but additional habitats present.	Deciduous woodland, Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, Good quality semi improved grassland, Mudflats, Coastal saltmarsh	
Known Projects/Initiatives:	Most recent Site action plan (2023 - 2024) which includes activities such as the management of scrub in the north of the Site, selectively removing trees from lagoon banks and litter picking throughout the whole of the Site.	Unknown	
Survey Data			
Surveyor: EB	Date: 03.04.2025	Surveyor: N/A	Date: N/A
Weather: Sunny	Access: Footpaths. Survey of Northern section restricted due to dense scrub.	Weather: N/A	Access: N/A
Summary of Site:			
Former dredging lagoons located next to the River Colne towards the south east of Colchester district. Dredging ceased in the 1970s and the site is now a popular location for dog walkers and birdwatchers thanks to its footpaths and bird hide.		Located south of Hythe Lagoon LoWS and north of Rowhedge residential area, this site features a large expanse of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh adjacent to the River Colne. This potential extension area sits within the Upper Colne Marshes SSSI, recognised for its outstanding assemblage of nationally scarce plants and an unusual diversity of brackish ditches which provide habitat for terrestrial and aquatic invertebrates and wintering birds. The whole site sits within the Essex Coast IIA, denoting that it is of importance for rare and threatened species of invertebrates.	

Hythe Lagoons Potential Extension	
Habitat Survey Description:	
<p>The site is comprised of a mosaic of different habitats which attracts a wide variety of notable bird and invertebrate species. In the north there is an area of dense mixed scrub composed predominantly of bramble, hawthorn and blackthorn. Where mixed scrub has been managed by Colchester Council other plant species, such as teasle and burdock, have established offering important feeding opportunities for birds. Towards the middle of the site there is an area of grassland dominated by sea couch and also the location of the nationally scarce dittander.</p> <p>Further south there is a shallow lagoon filled with water at the time of the survey and surrounded by common reed and sea club-rush. Shallow ditches demarcate the whole site to the west from the surrounding coastal grazing marshes.</p>	<p>N/A – survey not carried out due to location within a SSSI.</p>

## C.1: Desk Study - Hythe Lagoons Potential Extension

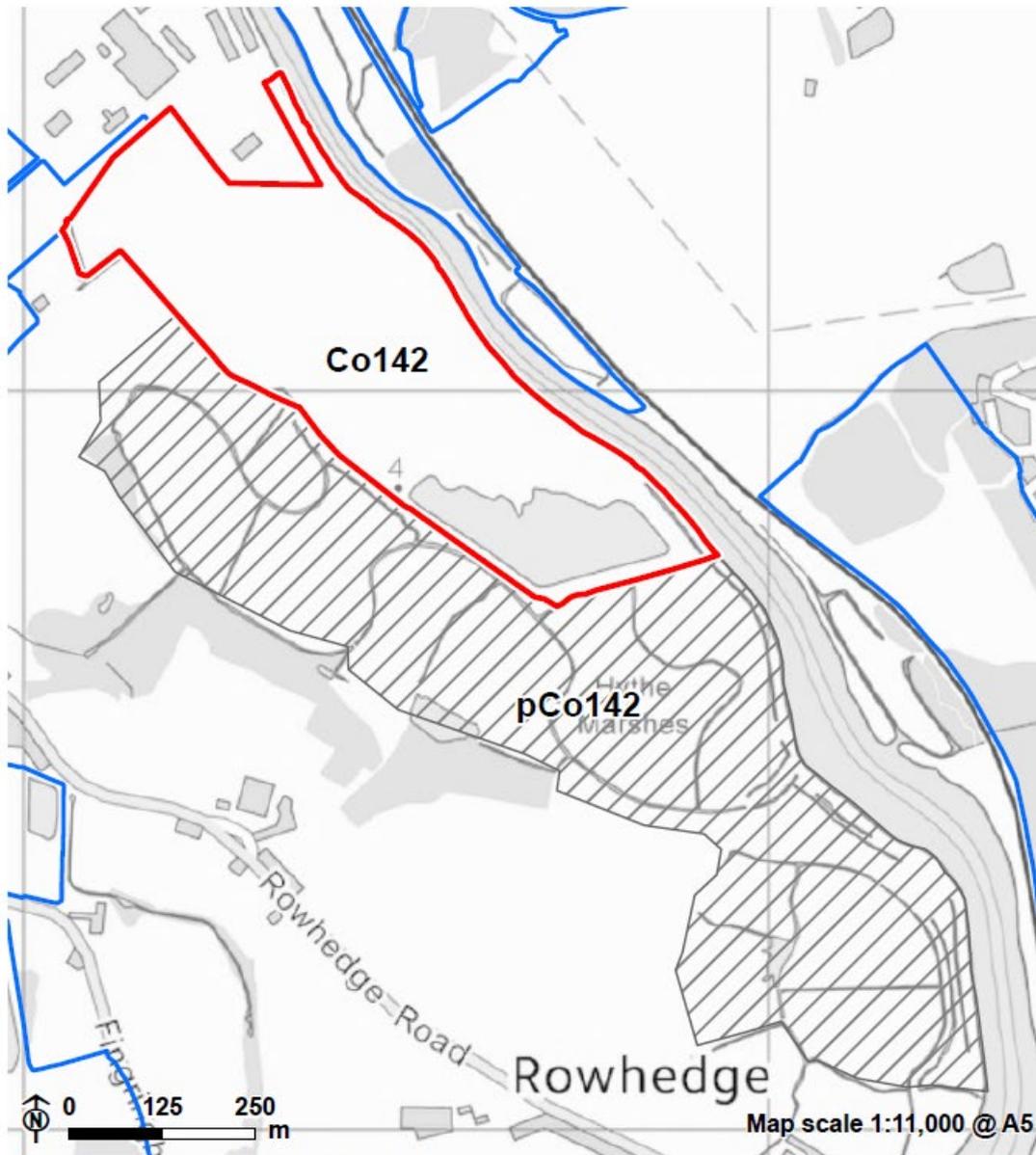


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- |                           |                                      |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Potential for extension   | Ancient Woodland Inventory           |
| Survey site boundary      | Wood Pasture and Parkland            |
| Other LoWS boundary       | Sites of Special Scientific Interest |
| Preferred site allocation | Priority Habitat Inventory           |
| Emerging site allocation  |                                      |

Hythe Lagoons Potential Extension

## C.2: Access Constraints and Boundary Changes - Hythe Lagoons



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- Survey site boundary
- Not recommended for designation

Changes to Habitats Since the Previous 2015 Surveys:

Hythe Lagoons Potential Extension	
No significant changes in habitats since 2015 were observed during the survey. However, anecdotal evidence and research revealed that the southern lagoon now dries up during summer or periods of dry weather such as in 2022.	N/A – area not previously surveyed.
Condition Statement:	
<b>Favourable</b> Previous report highlighted the potential for succession to scrub habitats to have a negative impact on the site, but this has been avoided as a result of active management. Overall, this LoWS offers a range of diverse habitats for notable and scarce plant, invertebrate and bird species.	N/A – survey not carried out due to location within a SSSI.
Management:	
<b>Good</b> The site appears to be well managed by CCC rangers and volunteers who follow the site Action Plan.	N/A – survey not carried out due to location within a SSSI.
Known/Relevant Existing Site Management Plan:	
Site Action Plan can be found here: <a href="#">Hythe Lagoons Action Plan June 2023 – May 24</a>	Unknown
Opportunities on Site:	
<b>N/A</b> The site is being well managed and no specific additional opportunities were identified as part of the survey.	N/A - survey not carried out due to location within a SSSI.
Threats and Disturbances:	
<b>Development, Pollution, Climate change</b> The main threat to Hythe Lagoons and its important plant, invertebrate and bird species relates to development as a large section of the site sits within a preferred site allocation. The site is currently disturbed by the nearby water treatment plant and industrial units as they produce large quantities of dust which were being blown into the site during the survey and could be smothering habitats and causing nutrient enrichment. This could be negatively impacting the important plant and invertebrate communities which the site is designated for. There is also a threat from future climate change increasing the likelihood of the southern lagoon to dry up during periods of hot weather. This would reduce the sites importance as a coastal breeding ground for notable bird species.	N/A - survey not carried out due to location within a SSSI.
Level of Use:	
<b>Moderate</b> Fencing and signage is used around the site to prevent access to damp grassland sections and thus protect the nationally scarce plant species. The site is also located quite far from main urban centres meaning that public usage is	N/A - survey not carried out due to location within a SSSI.

Hythe Lagoons Potential Extension		
moderate and does not appear to be a threat to its selection as a LoWS.		
Management Recommendations:		
Management should focus on protecting the important coastal grassland habitat at Hythe Lagoons as it offers excellent foraging and breeding opportunities for birds and invertebrates. Further to this, management should consider ways to maintain water levels in the southern lagoon even during dry periods to improve its resilience to climate change. Research needs to be undertaken on the best approach, but options include dredging or a pump from the nearby River Colne. Encroachment of grassland by scrub is currently well managed by rangers and should continue to be an action point moving forward so that an open habitat for coastal bird species is maintained.		N/A – survey not carried out due to location within a SSSI.
LoWS Criteria		
Habitat Selection Criteria		
Woodland, Scrub and Related Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Grassland:	HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Heathland:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Wetland Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Open Water Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Coastal Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Other Habitats:	HC27 – Post-industrial sites	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Species Selection Criteria		

Hythe Lagoons Potential Extension		
Plants:	SC1	N/A
Additional Comments:	The survey confirmed the presence of the nationally scarce dittander located in the central grassland section of the site.	N/A
Birds:	SC5 – Notable Birds Species	N/A
Additional Comments:	During the survey the lagoon which the majority of the coastal birds depend upon was filled with water and as such a number of notable bird species were recorded.	N/A
Mammals:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Amphibians:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Reptiles:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Invertebrates:	SC20 - Notable 'Flagship' Macro-invertebrates	N/A
Additional Comments:	Hythe Lagoons LoWS is located within the Essex Coast IIA and the previous report stated that the site held a significant population of Great Green Bush Cricket which is a notable flagship macro-invertebrate. It is advised that invertebrate surveys are updated to ensure that current management is working to maintain the habitat which this species depends upon.	N/A
LoWS Survey Recommendations		
Designated LoWS		
LoWS Survey Recommendation:	Retain – No Change	
Rationale:	As the potential extension area of Hythe Lagoons LoWS sits within the Upper Colne Marshes SSSI, it should not have its boundary redrawn to include this area. This is because SSSIs are deemed to be outside of the LoWS system as they offer greater levels of protection than LoWS. Therefore, it is recommended that Hythe Lagoons LoWS retains its current boundary as it offers a unique mosaic of grassland, scrub and open water habitats supporting nationally scarce plants, invertebrates and wintering birds. The northern part of the LoWS sits within a preferred site allocation, threatening the future extent and viability of the LoWS and the boundary habitats of the Upper Colne Marshes SSSI.	

## Cymbeline Meadows Proposed Extension

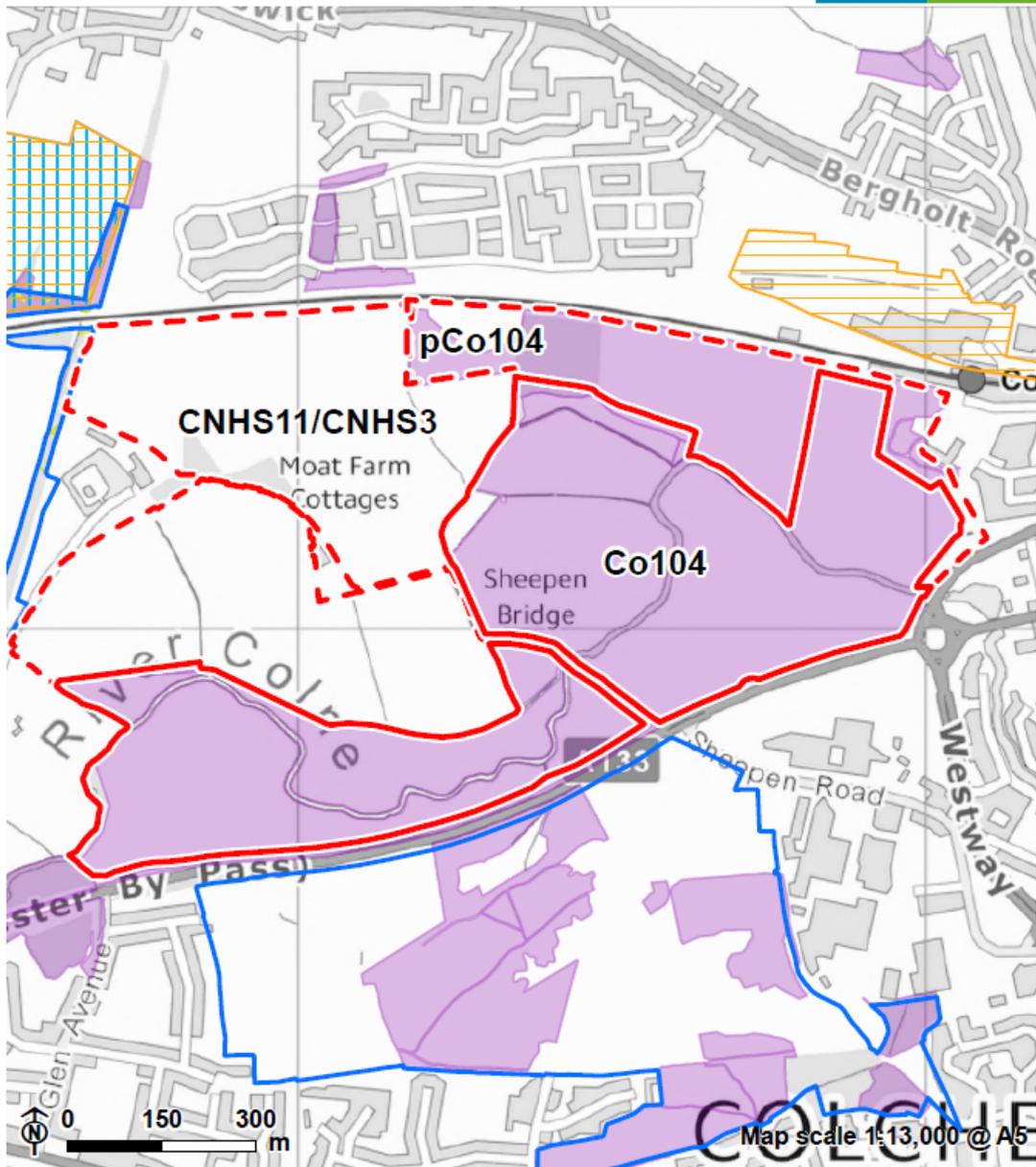
Cymbeline Meadows Proposed Extension		
Site Information	Original LoWS	Extension Area
LoWS ID:	Co104	pCo104
LoWS Name:	Cymbeline Meadows	Cymbeline Meadows Proposed Extension
Grid Reference:	TL9838925998	TL9857726373
Area (ha):	46.70	49.28 surveyed in total but 11.64 is the final Cymbeline Meadow LoWS proposed extension
Ownership:	Colchester City Council (CCC)	Colchester City Council (CCC)
Management Provider:	CCC Rangers	CCC Rangers
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: N/A Emerging: N/A	Preferred: North Station and Land off Bakers Lane Emerging: N/A
Total Area of Site Allocation Overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0 Emerging: 0	Preferred: 0 Emerging: 0
LoWS Citation:	<p>This site comprises a series of pastures within the floodplain of the meandering River Colne, also including areas of marshland, numerous hedgerows and aquatic vegetation within the river channel itself. A wide range of grass species occur including Reed Canary-grass (<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>), Meadow Foxtail (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>), Red Fescue (<i>Festuca rubra</i>), Common Bent (<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>), Sweet Vernal-grass (<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>), Yorkshire-fog (<i>Holcus lanatus</i>), Soft- brome (<i>Bromus hordeaceus</i>) and Smooth Meadow-grass (<i>Poa pratensis</i>). Wetter areas support Cuckooflower (<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>), Tufted Hair-grass (<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>), Common Marsh-bedstraw (<i>Galium palustre</i>), Reed Sweet-grass (<i>Glyceria maxima</i>), Sharp-flowered Rush (<i>Juncus acutiflorus</i>), Marsh Thistle (<i>Cirsium palustre</i>) and Lesser Pond-sedge (<i>Carex acutiformis</i>). Essex Red Data List species Brown Sedge (<i>Carex disticha</i>) also occurs locally in dense stands.</p> <p>The western meadows were previously cultivated with cereal crops until 1990 when they were seeded with species of grass and wildflower as cattle pasture. They have largely retained a species-rich sward with herbs including Agrimony (<i>Agrimonia eupatoria</i>), Oxeye Daisy (<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>), Meadow Buttercup (<i>Ranunculus acris</i>), Common Knapweed (<i>Centaurea nigra</i>), Lady's Bedstraw</p>	N/A - area not previously classified as a LoWS

Cymbeline Meadows Proposed Extension			
	<p>(<i>Galium verum</i>), Field Scabious (<i>Knautia arvensis</i>), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>) and Wild Carrot (<i>Daucus carota</i>).</p> <p>The banks of the River Colne have a diverse riverside flora, which includes stands of Reed Sweet-grass (<i>Glyceria maxima</i>), Branched Bur-reed (<i>Sparganium erectum</i>) and Water-cress (<i>Rorippa nasturtium aquaticum</i>), alongside the marginal and aquatic species Marsh Woundwort (<i>Stachys palustris</i>), Common Water-plantain (<i>Alisma plantago-aquatica</i>), Flowering-rush (<i>Butomus umbellatus</i>), Water Figwort (<i>Scrophularia auriculata</i>), Water Mint (<i>Mentha aquatica</i>), Arrowhead (<i>Sagittaria sagittifolia</i>), Purple loosestrife (<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>), Gipsywort (<i>Lycopus europaeus</i>) and Brooklime (<i>Veronica beccabunga</i>).</p> <p>The river corridor supports a range of riparian species including invertebrates such as Banded Demoiselle along with other hunting dragonflies and damselflies, Kingfisher, Otter and a newly established population of Water Voles. Noctule bat is regularly recorded feeding over this grassland site.</p>		
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes		Yes
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	Grassland Only		Grassland Only, Grassland and Freshwater Standing Water
Irreplaceable Habitat on Site:	Ancient tree		Ancient tree
Priority Habitat on Site:	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, Deciduous woodland, No main habitat but additional habitats present		Deciduous woodland, Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, No main habitat but additional habitats present
Known Projects/Initiatives:	Numerous projects are carried out by CCC Rangers. Examples included coppicing of hedgerows, fencing off areas of the river to prevent erosion from cattle, scrub management and tree planting (specifically Black Poplar as they are the most endangered native timber tree in Britain).		Projects also appear to occur within the northern section of the extension (Charter Woods) see below in the Management section.  It is unknown whether projects occur within the north west section of the extension area (Moat Fields).
Survey Data			
Surveyor: EB	Date: 01.04.2025	Surveyor: EB	Date: 11.09.2025 (Charter Woods) and 30.09.2025 (Moat Fields)

Cymbeline Meadows Proposed Extension			
Weather: Sunny	Access: Footpath through western side. Eastern side not accessible.	Weather: Sunny	Access: Open access
Summary of Site:			
<p>Until 1988 Cymbeline Meadows was a commercial arable farm but now constitutes an extensive river floodplain running alongside the River Colne. To the south it is bordered by native hedgerows and a main road and to the north there is an area of deciduous woodland called Charter Wood. It is located immediately north west of Colchester City and has numerous public rights of way intersecting it.</p>		<p>Located north of Cymbeline Meadows LoWS and south of the main railway line into Colchester, this site comprises Charter Woods, 10 ha of plantation woodland planted in 1990 and 1995, and a scrub/woodland mosaic towards the east near Alderwood Care Home.</p> <p>Located north west of Cymbeline Meadows LoWS are several large arable fields surrounding Moat Farm. These are intersected by native hedgerows and also dotted with a few patches of young plantation woodland. At the time of the survey, these fields were not intensively farmed or managed.</p>	
Habitat Survey Description:			
<p>The survey was confined to the area of Cymbeline Meadows owned by Colchester City Council. This is primarily composed of a river floodplain with smaller areas of other neutral grassland, marsh and scrub intersected with species-rich native hedgerows (most commonly a mixture of hawthorn, blackthorn, ash, dog rose, willow, silver birch). Several skylarks were observed over the areas of tussocky grass within the floodplain during the survey and numerous other birds were observed foraging within the hedgerows. Several large veteran oak trees are located within Cymbeline Meadows providing habitat for nesting birds and offering bat roost suitability. The water in the river Colne appeared to be of good quality and fish were observed within it. The river and its margins also exhibited a good diversity of habitats such as cliffs, graded edges, shallow pools and areas of vegetation making it an ideal site for water voles and otters.</p>		<p>Charter Woods has a diverse shrub and canopy layer in terms of species, including numerous natives, such as hornbeam, oak, ash, field maple, dog rose, lime, birch and sallow. For the most part, the ground flora is relatively sparse and dominated by leaf litter with frequent bramble, cocksfoot, false oat grass, curled dock, and occasional hairy brome, false brome, agrimony, greater stitchwort and selfheal. Towards the east of Charter Woods, in proximity to a small stream, wood avens, male fern, pendulous sedge and hart's tongue fern are present which are characteristic of damp woodlands. Common frog is also seen near here, highlighting the importance of the site for a range of species. Several glades have been created within Charter Woods, which contain a grassland ground flora comprised of Cock's foot, knapweed, yarrow, ribwort plantain, creeping buttercup and red clover with occasional teasel and burdock, which offer good foraging habitat for invertebrates and birds. Fallen deadwood is abundant and offers good habitat for small mammals and insects.</p> <p>A scrub/woodland mosaic exists next to Alderwood Care Home and is different in terms of species and structure, likely due to damper conditions. The canopy is dominated by pussy and crack willow with horse chestnut located near the wet ditch. The ground flora is dominated by pendulous sedge, goat's rue, jointed rush with abundant red campion, greater willowherb, wild angelica, nettle and occasional thistle and mugwort. Given the low usage of this area by people, birds such as long-tailed tits appear to forage extensively here.</p> <p>The fields surrounding Moat Farm, to the north west of Cymbeline Meadows LoWS, did not contain intensive arable crops but instead were left fallow or planted with favourable wild bird seed mixes. Species within these arable fields included dominant perennial rye grass, fescues, cocksfoot, false oat grass and abundant red clover, yarrow, ribwort plantain and musk mallow. Arable weeds such as scarlet pimpernel, cornfield knotgrass and fat hen were frequent, reflecting a relaxed agricultural regime. Some fields also appeared to be planted with nitrogen-fixing plants such as</p>	

Cymbeline Meadows Proposed Extension	
	<p>sainfoin and lucerne, or left fallow, favouring tall forbs such as wild carrot, curled dock, spear thistle, bristly oxtongue, hoary ragwort, providing foraging opportunities for several skylark seen during the survey. The field margins also had tussocky grasses and forbs with additional species such as hedge mustard, tansy and bracken, which are ideal overwintering habitat for insects.</p> <p>Small patches of young plantation woodland exist within the Moat Field area. They lack structural diversity due to their age but have a variety of species, including field maple, cherry, oak, beech, sweet chestnut, hawthorn and hazel. Holm oak which is an invasive non-native species was also noted.</p> <p>Hedgerows are an important linear feature within this area as they connect the patches of woodland and provide commuting routes for bats, birds, and invertebrates from Charter Woods to surrounding habitats. Some even contained water, suggesting they could be routes for amphibians as well. Hedgerow species are varied and predominantly native, including blackthorn, hawthorn, dog rose, dogwood, oak, crab apple, cherry, willow, Plymouth pear, and aspen. Some of the hedgerows include standing deadwood, and there is a veteran willow tree with large amounts of fungus (chicken of the wood) located near the boundary with Cymbeline Meadows LoWS, providing opportunities for invertebrates.</p>

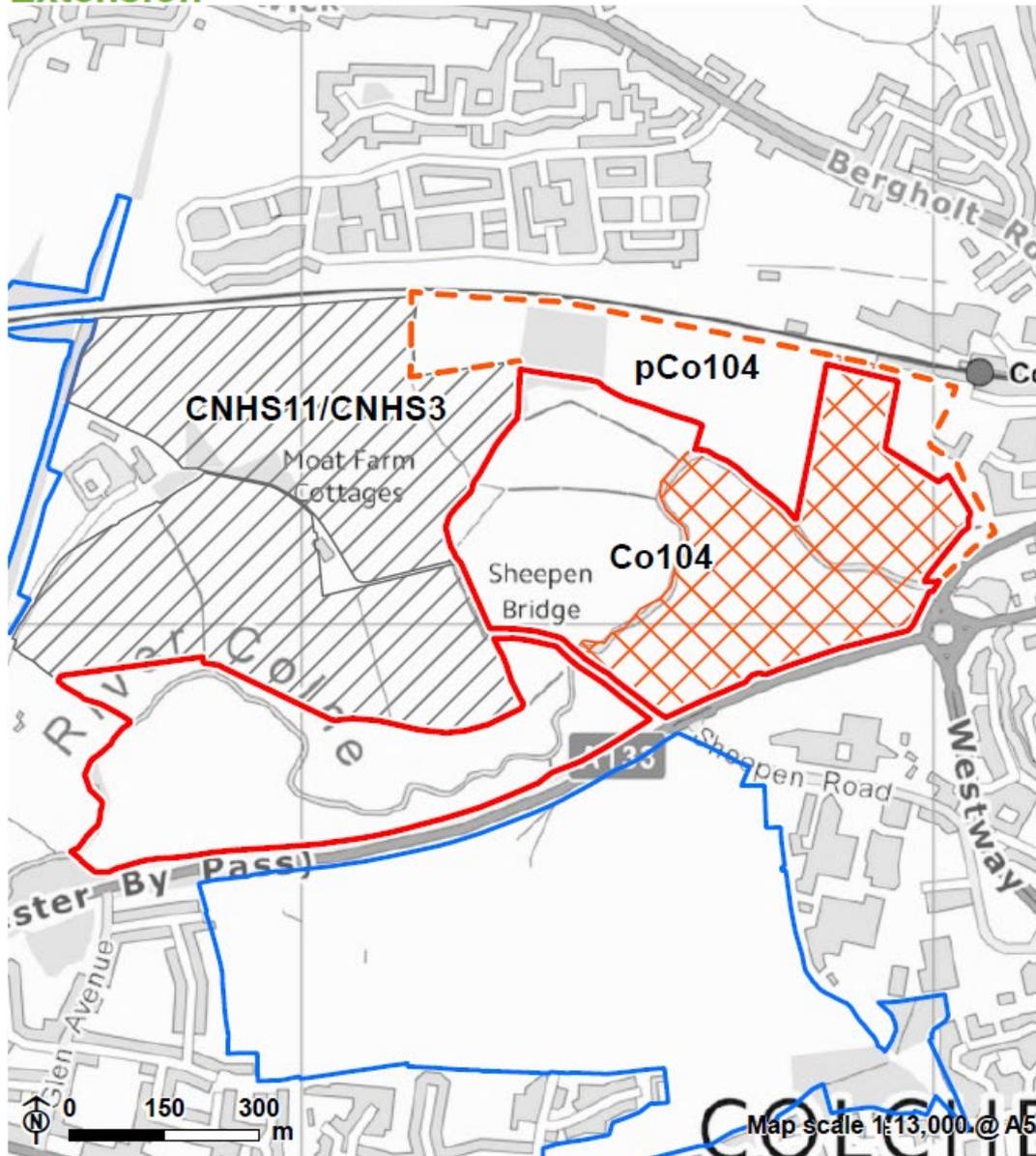
## C.1: Desk Study - Cymbeline Meadows Potential Extension



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- Potential for extension
  - Survey site boundary
  - Other LoWS boundary
  - Preferred site allocation
  - Emerging site allocation
  - Ancient Woodland Inventory
  - Priority Habitat Inventory

Cymbeline Meadows Proposed Extension

## C.2: Access Constraints and Boundary Changes - Cymbeline Meadows Proposed Extension



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- Survey site boundary
- Proposed extension
- Not recommended for designation
- Access constrained

Cymbeline Meadows Proposed Extension	
Changes to Habitats Since the Previous 2015 Surveys:	
No significant changes in habitats since 2015 were observed during the survey. The council owned side of Cymbeline Meadows remains a good example of a river floodplain (HC10) with other neutral grasslands (HC11) and offers opportunities for breeding water vole colonies (SC12). It was not possible to fully evaluate the eastern side but viewed from the edges it was apparent that the area contains similar habitats such as grassland, marsh, scrub and hedgerows all of which are of high ecological value, particularly for bats, birds and invertebrates.	N/A – land not previously surveyed
Condition Statement:	
<b>Favourable</b> It was evident during the survey that the majority of the site was being well managed by rangers at Colchester City Council to conserve and enhance the value of the habitats and thus maximise its potential for biodiversity. This was all being achieved whilst dealing with the issues associated with moderate recreational use.	<b>Favourable</b> Charter Woods supports a range of native tree and shrub species, and abundance of dead wood and glades which offer good floral diversity.  The arable fields surrounding Moat Farm are not currently intensively managed, meaning some foraging opportunities for birds and invertebrates are provided by tall grasses and forbs. Hedgerows are also an important commuting feature for bats, birds, amphibians and invertebrates.
Management:	
<b>Good</b> The council owned side of Cymbeline Meadows appears to be well managed by CCC rangers as it exhibits a wide range of ecological valuable habitats as well as providing high amenity value to Colchester residents.	<b>Satisfactory</b> Management within Charter Woods by CCC Rangers has created a site which is both recreationally and ecologically valuable. For example, boardwalks have been constructed in the damper areas which prevent compaction, protect the woodland ground flora and allow walkers to enjoy the site. Management, such as glade creation and leaving deadwood in situ, is also undertaken, which specifically enhances biodiversity.  Although the Moat Field area appears to still be under agricultural management, the land does not contain intensive arable crops and, as such, is relatively sympathetic to biodiversity. To improve this, management recommendations are provided below.
Known/Relevant Existing Site Management Plan:	
More detail on the management plan of the council owned side of Cymbeline Meadows can be found here: <a href="#">Cymbeline Meadows</a>	Charter Wood Management Plan 2013 – 2016 <sup>10</sup> was found online. A more recent management plan may be in place but is not readily available online.
Opportunities on Site:	
N/A	N/A N/A

<sup>10</sup> Charter Wood Management Plan 2013 – 2016. Accessed in October 2025 at: [Microsoft Word - Charter Wood Management Plan Final 2012.doc](#)

Cymbeline Meadows Proposed Extension	
The council owned side of Cymbeline Meadows (west and central section) is being well managed and no specific additional opportunities were identified as part of the survey.	
Threats and Disturbances:	
<p><b>Dog fouling, Litter, Fly tipping, Noise</b></p> <p>Due to the proximity of Cymbeline Meadows to Colchester City and the public rights of way which intersect the site, recreational use is high particularly within the western section. This generates issues such as litter, dog fouling and fly tipping, all of which were observed in small quantities during the survey but seem to be well managed by the rangers. The site is also adjacent to a main road which creates noise pollution. Erosion of the riverbanks from cattle is well managed by fences but still created by dogs and pedestrians. It was also noted that the east side of the Cymbeline Meadows (not owned by the council) was up for sale which could be a threat to the current expansive grassland habitats and associated wildlife dependent on the future management and use of the site.</p>	<p><b>Litter, Fly Tipping, and Invasive non-native species</b></p> <p>Along the railway line, litter and fly tipping are relatively high, which is harmful to the sensitive woodland ground flora, and due to the proximity to the small ditch, could be affecting water quality. Goat's rue, which is an invasive and non-native species, is found in the small area of scrub/woodland next to Alderwood Care Home. This threatens to outcompete the native ground flora found within this area. Holm oak, another invasive non-native species, was also recorded within the small patches of woodland near Moat Farm. Muntjac deer are also noted within Charter Woods to be eating saplings, which could prevent natural regeneration of the woodland in the future.</p>
Level of Use:	
<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <p>In the western section of the site where there are public rights of way the LoWS is used extensively for recreation. The ownership of the eastern fields is unknown but seem to be private. During the survey these fields were locked and use of them appeared very low but it is understood that events such as an annual circus take place here and so use of the site and associated threats fluctuate temporally.</p>	<p><b>Low to Moderate</b></p> <p>There are public rights of way that intersect the whole of the extension area and allow the site to be used recreationally and by dog walkers. Use of Charter Woods appears to be low as it is relatively difficult to access (either through a railway pass or from Cymbeline Meadows car park).</p>
Management Recommendations:	
<p>Action has already been taken to reduce riverbank erosion from cattle by installing fences. Some erosion does remain though particularly from dogs and walkers. This could threaten water vole habitat and so could be better managed by introducing signage explaining the importance of leaving the river margins undisturbed.</p>	<p>Charter Woods is already well managed by CCC Rangers, but it is recommended that management should focus on protecting the eastern section near the stream, where a diverse woodland ground flora with ferns has established. Techniques such as fencing off areas or putting up signs outlining the importance of these habitats could be utilised. Secondly, management should selectively thin some of the trees to let in light, which would not only increase the ground flora of the woodland but also improve the structural diversity over time.</p> <p>The main focus for the CCC Rangers should, however, be within the Moat Field area, as arable land does not currently satisfy any habitat or species criteria as outlined in the Essex LoWS Selection Criteria, but is a key area for biodiversity enhancement due to its existing habitats and location. Similar to the approach taken with Cymbeline Meadows LoWS, it is recommended that this agricultural land be transitioned to grassland using an appropriate meadow/wildflower seed mix to extend the ecologically valuable habitats already provided within the LoWS. In addition, the hedgerows which are currently grown out could be coppiced to diversify habitats, and the small patches of woodland could be expanded.</p>

Cymbeline Meadows Proposed Extension		
LoWS Criteria		
Habitat Selection Criteria		
Woodland, Scrub and Related Habitats:	N/A	HC2 - Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites
Additional Comments:	N/A	The area to the north of Cymbeline Meadows LoWS, including Charter Woods and near Alderwood Care Home, qualifies under HC2 due to the presence of a recognisable layered structure, the presence of a canopy dominated by native species and areas featuring typical woodland flora. Even though it is predominantly of plantation origin, the survey confirmed that it is of a substantive nature conservation interest for plants, invertebrates, birds, amphibians and mammals.
Grassland:	HC10 - River Floodplain HC11 - Other Neutral Grasslands	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	Currently, the Moat Field area does not satisfy any grassland habitat criteria. If the management recommendations outlined above, similar to those used at Cymbeline Meadows LoWS and High Wood LoWS, it is likely that these fields could satisfy HC11 – Other Neutral Grassland in the near future.
Heathland:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Wetland Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Open Water Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Coastal Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Other Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Species Selection Criteria		
Plants:	N/A	N/A

Cymbeline Meadows Proposed Extension		
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Birds:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Mammals:	SC12 – Breeding Water Vole Colonies	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Amphibians:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Reptiles:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Invertebrates:	N/A	SC19 – Important Invertebrate Assemblages
Additional Comments:	To the north of Cymbeline Meadows is Charter Woods which sits within the Essex Coast IIA. It is likely that the grassland, hedgerow, scrub and river habitats in Cymbeline Meadows offer additional areas for invertebrates and thus contribute to the IIA.	Charter Woods to the north of Cymbeline Meadows LoWS sits within the Essex Coast IIA, denoting that it contains nationally rare and scarce invertebrate populations and their habitats. For details on the exact assemblage of species present, it is recommended that detailed surveys be undertaken to assess for the inclusion under the invertebrate criteria.
LoWS Survey Recommendations		
Designated LoWS		
LoWS Survey Recommendation:	Proposed extension to the LoWS boundary	
Rationale:	<p>The proposed extension area to Cymbeline Meadows LoWS differs from the potential area put forward by CNHS (Tranche 3). Firstly, Moat Fields does not currently qualify as a LoWS, because although they feature tussocky grasses, forbs and hedgerows, which are ecologically valuable, they do not satisfy any habitat or species criteria. This, however, could change if the management recommendations above are implemented.</p> <p>On the other hand, the extension area to the north of Cymbeline Meadows LoWS, including Charter Woods and the scrub/woodland mosaic near Alderwood Care Home, does currently qualify as a LoWS. This is because it contains a varied canopy of native species, features typical woodland ground flora and is managed to improve biodiversity through the creation of glades and deadwood piles, satisfying HC2 - Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites. In addition, it sits within the Essex Coast IIA, likely satisfying SC19 - Important Invertebrate Assemblages, subject to more detailed invertebrate surveys. Therefore, the extension area to the north of Cymbeline Meadows LoWS, should be included within the existing LoWS boundary.</p>	

## Middlewick Ranges Proposed Extension

Middlewick Ranges Proposed Extension		
Site Information	Original LoWS	Extension Area
LoWS ID:	Co122	pCo122
LoWS Name:	Middlewick Ranges	Middlewick Ranges Proposed Extension
Grid Reference:	TM0095522813	TM0153822370
Area (ha):	75.40	20.61
Ownership:	Military of Defence	Private
Management Provider:	Military of Defence	Private
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: N/A Emerging: Middlewick <sup>11</sup>	Preferred: N/A Emerging: Middlewick
Total Area of Site Allocation Overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0.00 Emerging: 75.40	Preferred: 0 Emerging: 18.71
LoWS Citation:	<p>The vegetation here comprises tall sward grassland and scrub to the north and south, short-mown acidic turf over the rifle ranges and scrubby acidic grassland behind the main butts.</p> <p>The northern-most field is hay-cut and species-poor, but retains an acidic character with Red Fescue (<i>Festuca rubra</i>) and Common Bent (<i>Agrostis tenuis</i>), along with Common Sorrel (<i>Rumex acetosa</i>), Sheep's Sorrel (<i>Rumex acetosella</i>), Autumn Hawkbit (<i>Scorzoneroides autumnalis</i>).</p> <p>To the south of this the grassland has been invaded by scrub, which now includes Pedunculate Oaks (<i>Quercus robur</i>) of considerable size, with elm (<i>Ulmus</i> sp.), Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>) and Blackthorn (<i>Prunus spinosa</i>). The open grassland is marginally more diverse here, with Sweet Vernal Grass (<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>), Field Wood-rush (<i>Luzula campestris</i>), meadow-grass (<i>Poa</i> sp.), Yarrow (<i>Achillea millefolium</i>) and Bird's-foot-trefoil (<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>). However, False Oat-grass (<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>) and Cock's-foot Grass (<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>) are frequent and there is abundant Gorse (<i>Ulex europaeus</i>) and Broom (<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>) scrub. A population of the Nationally Scarce Lesser Calamint (<i>Clinopodium</i></p>	N/A – area not previously classified as a LoWS

<sup>11</sup> This site has been included within the emerging site allocation dataset as this in an existing allocation within the adopted local plan.

Middlewick Ranges Proposed Extension		
	<p>calaminta) can be found on the western edge of the site here.</p> <p>To the south of the butts there is a combination of Gorse scrub, bare ground and sparse sward acidic grassland over uneven ground. Although not floristically diverse on the whole, there are patches of lichen heath, dominated by <i>Cladonia</i> lichens. The meadow to the south of this area, beyond some more scrubby Pedunculate Oak woodland, is more diverse, in part, with Common Bent, Red Fescue, timothy (<i>Phleum</i> sp.), Wild Carrot (<i>Daucus carota</i>), Lesser Stitchwort (<i>Stellaria graminea</i>), Common Knapweed (<i>Centaurea nigra</i>) and Hare's foot Clover (<i>Trifolium arvense</i>).</p> <p>The principal value of this site, however, is its invertebrate populations. The main rifle butts at the south end of the site, along with smaller sandy banks to the north, provide significant nesting habitat for a range of insects, whilst the extensive grasslands surrounding them, including those areas kept closely mown over the active parts of the rifle range, provide the necessary additional foraging grounds. The best-studied group of insects here is the hymenoptera (bees, wasps and ants), within which seven nationally threatened (Red Data Book) and eight Nationally Scarce species have been recorded. The most significant species are the SPIE digger wasps <i>Cerceris quadricincta</i> (RDB1) and <i>Cerceris quinquefasciata</i> (RDB3), the latter's brood-parasite cuckoo-wasp <i>Hedychrum niemelai</i> (RDB3) and the Small Blue Carpenter-bee <i>Ceratina cyanea</i> (RDB3). Some of the short-mown sandy banks bordering the range roads support a large population of the RDB2 Bee-wolf (<i>Philanthus triangulum</i>).</p>	
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes	Yes
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	No	No
Irreplaceable Habitat on Site:	Ancient tree	Ancient tree
Priority Habitat on Site:	Deciduous woodland, No main habitat but additional habitats present	Deciduous woodland
Known Projects/Initiatives:	Unknown.	Landowner confirmed no projects.
Survey Data		

Middlewick Ranges Proposed Extension			
Surveyor: EB and KR	Date: 24.04.2025	Surveyor: EB	Date: 10.09.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: The central area of the site was fenced off from public access, and access was not granted for this area from the Military of Defence, therefore could not be surveyed. All remaining areas were surveyed.	Weather: Damp	Access: Open access
Summary of Site:			
<p>Middlewick Ranges is a former firing range located south of Colchester City and represents one of the City's largest LoWS. Military activity ceased in 2021 but some areas are fenced off to the public due to health and safety concerns. Other areas of grassland, scrub and deciduous woodland within Middlewick Ranges are publicly accessible and commonly used for recreation. Middlewick Ranges is located in close proximity to multiple LoWS, the closest being Birch Brook Wood LoWS which borders the southern and western boundary of the site. Colchester Cemetery LoWS is approximately 45m north west of the site and Donyland Wetlands is c 375m east of the site. The site is located within the Essex Coast Important Invertebrate Area (IIA), meaning the site has been recognised for its importance for invertebrates.</p>		<p>The proposed extension area sits to the southeast of Middlewick Ranges LoWS, close to Fingringhoe Road. It is made up of several grassland fields bordered by scrubby patches and native hedgerows. To the south, it is bordered by Birch Brook Wood LoWS and to the east it is bordered by Donyland Wetlands LoWS.</p>	
Habitat Survey Description:			
<p>Middlewick Ranges is comprised of a mosaic of habitats including predominantly acid grassland, including lowland dry acid grassland in addition to neutral grasslands, scrub, bare ground sandy cliffs, hedgerows and lowland mixed deciduous woodland.</p> <p>NVC surveys of the site has been undertaken in 2024 and reported on<sup>12</sup>, and therefore a full in-depth species list of all habitats within Middlewick Ranges is available separately.</p> <p>Areas of grassland were extensive and species varied based on location. Grassland towards the north, east and south of the site were of an acidic character with species including common bent, sweet vernal grass, red fescue, field wood-rush, yarrow and occasional meadow buttercup, bulbous buttercup, sheep's sorrel, autumn hawkbit and mouse ear chickweed. Neutral grassland areas included species such as Yorkshire fog, cocksfoot, cuckoo flower, meadow foxtail, false oat grass, hairy tare, common knapweed, ribwort plantain and red clover.</p> <p>Scrub was located primarily to the south of the main rifle butts and was comprised predominantly of gorse and broom of a variety of ages. Patches of bare ground, lichen heath and individual oak, hawthorn and silver birch trees were integrated into the scrub creating a patchwork of valuable foraging habitats for birds, reptiles and invertebrates.</p>		<p>The majority of the site is comprised of semi-unimproved neutral grassland with patches of acidic grassland, demarcated by native hedgerows with trees. Plant species recorded within the grassland vary depending on location and management technique. Within the northernmost field, towards Speedwell Road, the grassland is uncut and characteristically acidic, dominated by grasses such as common bent, sweet vernal grass and Yorkshire fog. Presence of forbs is relatively high here and includes abundant yarrow and ribwort plantain, frequent common cat's ear and common sorrel, with occasional field scabious, field bindweed, fescue grasses, yellow toadflax, lesser stitchwort, sheep's sorrel, lesser hawkbit, and perforate st John's wort.</p> <p>The grassland field margins feature more tussocky grasses such as cocksfoot, false oat-grass and transition into scrubby, grown-out hedgerows including species such as bramble, holly, blackthorn, elm and oak. Standing and fallen dead wood is present which offers ideal habitat to invertebrates.</p> <p>Within the three southern fields, which sit between Middlewick Ranges LoWS in the north, Birch Brook Wood LoWS in the south and Donyland Wetlands LoWS in the east, the grass is cut, making species identification more difficult. Nevertheless, similar species to above are recorded</p>	

<sup>12</sup> G, Groome (2024) Botanical Surveys of Middlewick Ranges

Middlewick Ranges Proposed Extension	
<p>Woodland areas towards the north and the south were dominated by pedunculate oaks as well as hawthorn, elm and blackthorn with occasional holm oak. Several individual trees were dotted around the site and had considerable veteran features such as holes and cracks suitable for bat roosts.</p> <p>Areas which are publicly inaccessible were not subject to survey but appeared to contain grassland with a longer sward height due to absence of management. Skylarks were recorded to be actively using this grassland during the survey and mammal tracks were observed to be entering the area.</p> <p>NVC surveys and invertebrate surveys have been undertaken within Middlewick Ranges, and the reports were available at the time of survey. In summary, 354 species of vascular plant were recorded within Middlewick Ranges, of which 26 are, or have been regarded as nationally and/or county rare, scarce and/or threatened. As detailed within the report however, it's important to note that records relating to the status of species in Essex are long out of date and a number of taxa reported to be Essex Rare are almost certainly neither Rare nor Scarce in the county. The NVC survey additionally found that 32.4ha falls within the priority habitat lowland dry acid grassland, which is of 'high botanical nature conservation value' and noted by Dr Groome to be of eligible for selection as a site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)<sup>12</sup>. The invertebrate surveys are currently ongoing, however an interim report<sup>13</sup> was available at the time of survey, and it is noted within the interim report that while the completion of the surveys will increase the overall numbers and may change some of the relative scoring in close outcomes, the extremes are unlikely to change. In summary, the interim report states that the number of taxa recorded for the invertebrates strongly supports the entire area as being of conservation significance for invertebrates, with one sample type being of irreplaceable significance. 634 invertebrate species had been recorded to inform the interim assessment, with the final expected to be between 800 and 900 species.</p> <p>Further to this and as outlined through consultation with the Essex Wildlife Trust and Colchester Natural History Society, a fungi survey was undertaken in 2024, which identified the site to support at least 43 grassland fungi species and as such making it an exceptional site in terms of diversity for this assemblage<sup>14</sup>.</p> <p>In addition to the sites importance for invertebrates and plant diversity, the site is reported to be of importance for Nightingales, and Nightingales were heard during the survey in particular within the scrub at the south of the site. Trees were additionally noted within the site which have bat roost suitability and the importance of the site for invertebrates, in turn provides a valuable foraging resource for bats. Habitats</p>	<p>but the grassland is more characteristically neutral. Towards the field margins, which contain broom and gorse scrub, grassland species are more acidic and further acidic indicators such as mouse ear hawkweed are recorded. Several fungal fruiting bodies are recorded within these fields too.</p> <p>Towards the eastern boundary of the site located near Fingringhoe Road there is an area of grassland fenced off into a large triangle. This has a noticeably longer sward length and is dominated by tussocky grasses such as false oat-grass, cocksfoot, meadow foxtail, and rough meadow grass. Forbs include frequent yarrow, ribwort plantain and knapweed with occasional ragwort, lady's bedstraw, teasel, cow parsley, field bindweed and rare spear thistle, nettles and prickly sow thistle. Yellow meadow ant hills, which make important contributions to structural and species diversity within grasslands, are also present here.</p> <p>Throughout the survey, numerous invertebrate species were recorded including caterpillars, snails, spiders, bees, grasshoppers and butterflies, in line with the interim invertebrate report<sup>13</sup> that this is an area of conservation significance for invertebrates.</p>

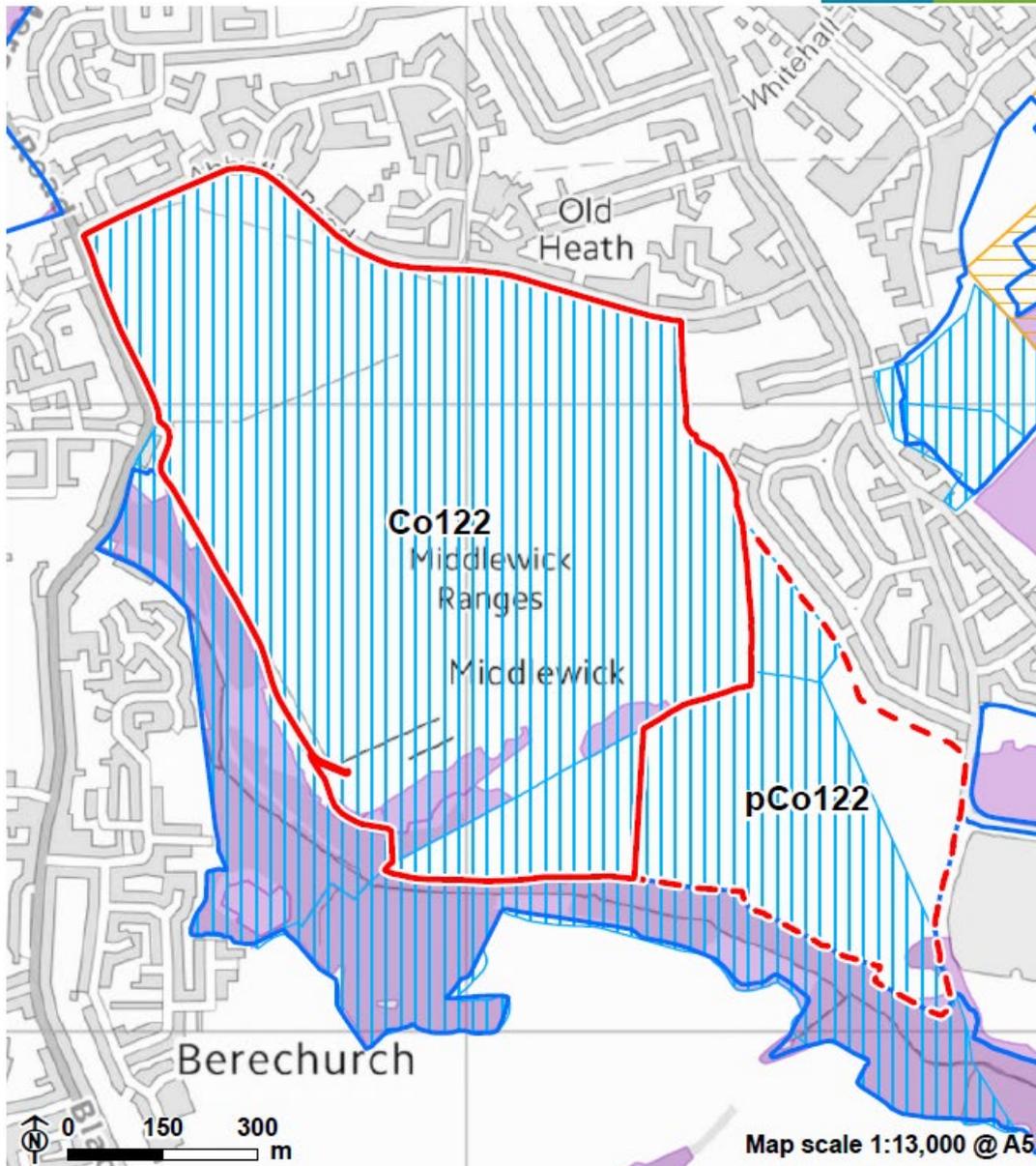
<sup>13</sup> M. Edwards (2024) Interim Report of Entomological Survey and Assessment for Middlewick Ranges.

<sup>14</sup> Buglife, Butterfly Conservation, Colchester Natural History Society, Essex Field Club, Essex Wildlife Trust, Friends of Middlewick and RSPB (2025), Middlewick Ranges: the case for Site of Special Scientific Interest designation.

Middlewick Ranges Proposed Extension	
on site also provide opportunities for reptiles, amphibians and small mammals.	

Middlewick Ranges Proposed Extension

### C.1: Desk Study - Middlewick Ranges Potential Extension

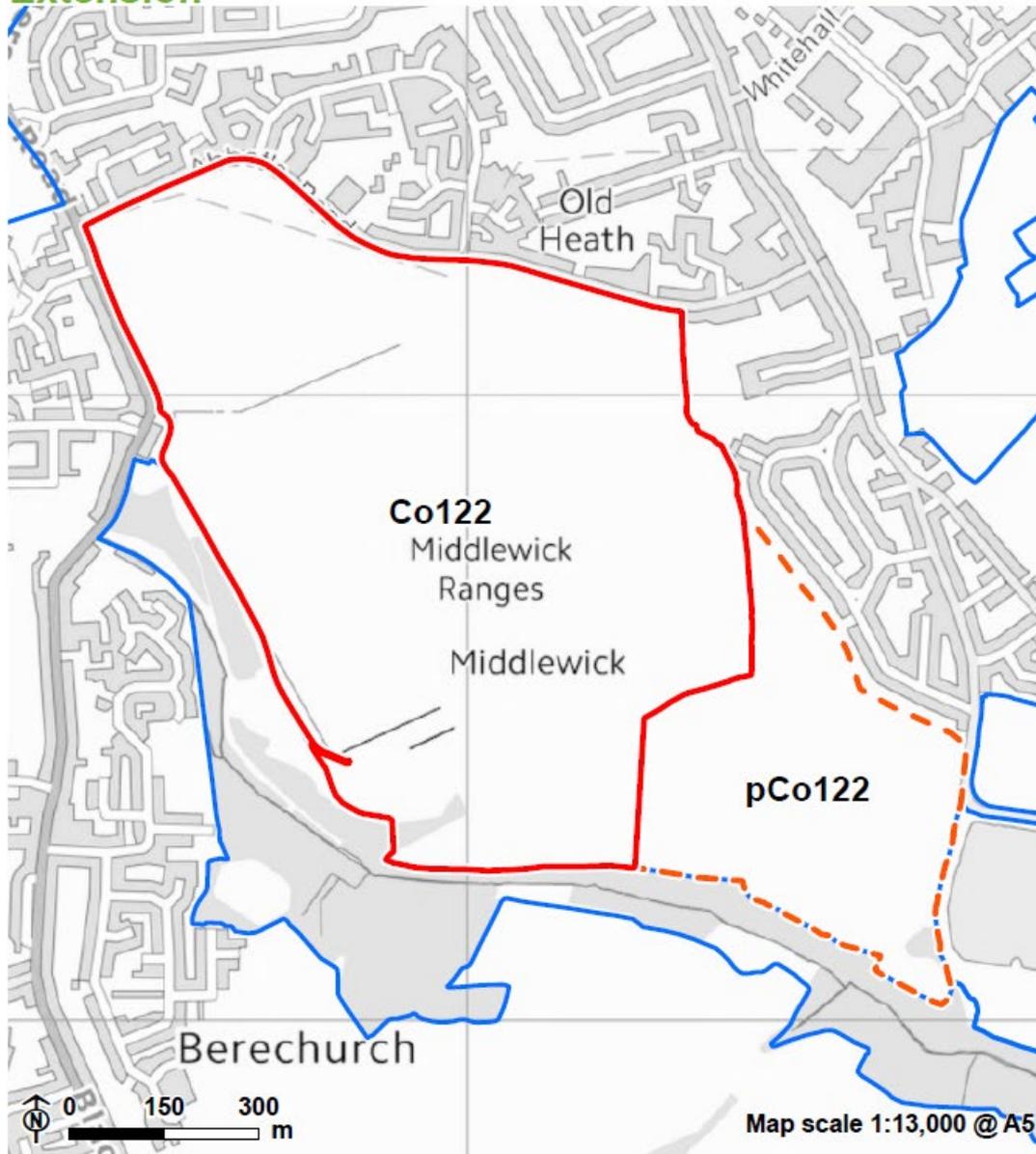


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- Potential for extension
- Survey site boundary
- Other LoWS boundary
- Preferred site allocation
- Emerging site allocation
- Priority Habitat Inventory

Middlewick Ranges Proposed Extension

### C.2: Access Constraints and Boundary Changes - Middlewick Ranges Proposed Extension



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Survey site boundary      Proposed extension

Changes to Habitats Since the Previous 2015 Surveys:

Middlewick Ranges Proposed Extension	
No significant changes in habitats since 2015 were observed during the survey, however some areas of woody scrub have progressed into woodland such as in the north and south of the site. In addition, during the time of the last survey, the site was still in use by the MoD, and the grass was noted to be short-mown. The grassland within the surveyed areas were short-mown, however the grassland within the fenced area was noted to be left long, given it is no longer being used for military activities.	N/A – area not previously surveyed.
Condition Statement:	
<b>Favourable, declining</b> Middlewick Ranges is assessed as favourable condition as it contains a mosaic of extensive areas of acidic grassland, including lowland dry acid grassland with a high species diversity interspersed with scrub, bare ground and woodland habitats which is extremely valuable in particular for invertebrates and bird species, as well providing habitats for bats, reptile and amphibians. Despite this, the site is no longer in use by the MoD, and therefore management will have changed. While the majority of the grassland on site was mown, the grass within the fenced area was left long. The current level of management is unknown, and without ongoing management, the condition of the habitats will decline and their value for the wildlife they currently support will decline.	<b>Favourable, declining</b> This site is assessed as favourable as it contains extensive areas of semi-unimproved acidic and neutral grassland with scrubby margins and native hedgerows. These habitats are of particular importance for invertebrates and bird species. However, the grassland habitats are now declining due to recent management changes, similar to the rest of Middlewick Ranges LoWS.
Management:	
<b>Poor</b> During the survey some evidence of active management was observed. This included grass cutting and scrub control in the northern fields and clearly marked paths around the whole site. The fenced off area did not appear to be actively managed due to the longer sward height. The habitats on site require on going management to ensure their ecological value is maintained. E.g. nightingales require structurally diverse areas with patches of scrub at different stages of growth, as opposed to large areas of uniform scrub, and the grassland areas will be lost to scrub succession in the absence of management. Therefore, without management of the key habitats on site, the ecological value will deteriorate.	<b>Satisfactory</b> Grass cutting in some of the fields indicates that some management does take place. This currently maintains a variety of grassland, scrub and hedgerow habitats which are of high ecological value, but continued management is required to protect these from sensitive habitats from succession, fire and littering.
Known/Relevant Existing Site Management Plan:	
Unknown	Discussion with the landowner revealed that they were not aware of any management taking place. The site survey did, however, reveal that some grassland fields had been recently mown.
Opportunities on Site:	
<b>Hedgerow planting</b> Middlewick Ranges lacks a hedgerow around its boundary, particularly in the north. There is an opportunity to plant a native hedgerow here which would create nesting and	<b>N/A</b>  N/A

Middlewick Ranges Proposed Extension	
foraging habitats and also create a natural barrier between the main road and the acidic grassland.	
Threats and Disturbances:	
<p><b>Dog fouling, Litter, Vandalism</b></p> <p>Litter, dog fouling and vandalism associated with recreational use of Middlewick Ranges was recorded during the survey. This is relatively spread out over the site due to the size of Middlewick Ranges but particular examples include a small firepit located in the north west of the site near to Abbot's Road. In general, this was minimal in extent and not significant impacting upon the value of the site. Middlewick has not been brought forward as a preferred allocation.</p>	<p><b>Litter, Dog Fouling, Fly Tipping</b></p> <p>The majority of the litter and fly tipping was recorded within the grassland and hedgerows along Fingringhoe Road. This threatens the sensitive habitats there and the species that utilise them for foraging and commuting. A patch of burnt grassland was also recorded near the southern end of Speedwell Road, likely linked to the residential properties. This is a serious threat, particularly concerning the area's dry weather conditions which means fire can spread quickly and damage the whole grassland.</p>
Level of Use:	
<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <p>Middlewick Ranges is surrounded along its northern, eastern and western boundary by residential development which means that it is used relatively frequently for recreation. Certain areas of Middlewick Ranges such as the central ranges are however fenced off meaning recreational use here is low.</p>	<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <p>Multiple informal paths intersect the site, meaning it is used recreationally by dog walkers and other users.</p>
Management Recommendations:	
<p>In order to maintain the current extent of acid and neutral grassland at Middlewick Ranges and thus ensure the selection of this site under HC11 and HC13, scrub management will be required. Scrub should be retained as it is a key habitat on site, providing an important habitat for birds and invertebrates but succession within the grasslands should be avoided. The scrub should be managed by cyclical cutting, to ensure the scrub continues to provide suitable habitat for nightingales, which prefer structurally diverse areas with patches of scrub at different stages of growth, as opposed to large areas of uniform scrub. The grassland areas which were accessed during the survey were noted to be uniform in height. Grassland on site should be managed following traditional hay meadow techniques, to allow the species to flower, increasing species and structural diversity. It is key however that the site continues to provide suitable habitat for invertebrates, and therefore once the invertebrate survey is complete, a management plan should be created, guided by the invertebrates of note on site, and their habitat requirements. Although not contributing to one of Middlewick Ranges selection criteria, the select felling of oak woodland in the south of the site would let light in and allow natural regeneration of a woodland which is currently quite homogenous in terms of tree age.</p>	<p>See management recommendations on the left under Middlewick Ranges LoWS.</p>
LoWS Criteria	
Habitat Selection Criteria	

Middlewick Ranges Proposed Extension		
Woodland, Scrub and Related Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Grassland:	HC11 - Other Neutral Grasslands	HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands
Additional Comments:	N/A	The majority of the extension area is characterised by semi-unimproved neutral grassland.
Heathland:	HC13 - Heathland and Acid Grassland	HC13 – Heathland and Acid Grassland
Additional Comments:	N/A	The NVC <sup>12</sup> and LUC survey confirmed the presence of acid grassland vegetation in small patches within the extension area.
Wetland Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Open Water Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Coastal Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Other Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Species Selection Criteria		
Plants:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Birds:	SC5 – Notable Bird Species.	N/A
Additional Comments:	Several nightingales were heard and seen during the survey at Middlewick Ranges and recent surveys of nightingales within Middlewick Ranges and surrounding habitats found that the area surveyed supports 1% of the total UK population of the species. While 5-year average data is not available at the time of assessment, it is arguable that this an exceptional circumstance and therefore should be included within this criteria.	N/A
Mammals:	N/A	N/A

Middlewick Ranges Proposed Extension		
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Amphibians:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Reptiles:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Invertebrates:	SC18 - Invertebrates listed as Species of Principal Importance in England SC19 - Important Invertebrate Assemblages	SC18 - Invertebrates listed as Species of Principal Importance in England SC19 - Important Invertebrate Assemblages
Additional Comments:	All of Middlewick Ranges LoWS sits within Essex Coast IIA denoting that it contains nationally rare and scarce invertebrate populations. The interim invertebrate report states that the number of taxa recorded for the invertebrates strongly supports the entire area as being of conservation significance for invertebrates, with one sample type being of irreplaceable significance.	Although this area does not sit within the Essex Coast IIA, the interim invertebrate report undertaken in 2024 by Mike Edwards <sup>13</sup> and the survey carried out by LUC indicate that this area contains important populations of invertebrates.
LoWS Survey Recommendations		
Designated LoWS		
LoWS Survey Recommendation:	Proposed extension to LoWS boundary	
Rationale:	Surveys have confirmed that the proposed extension area contains largely unimproved neutral grassland with patches of lowland dry acid grassland. This means that the proposed extension area is eligible for selection as a LoWS under HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands and HC13 – Heathland and Acid Grassland and should therefore be included within the Middlewick Ranges LoWS boundary. In addition, the interim invertebrate report <sup>13</sup> suggests that these grasslands, bordered by scrubby hedgerows support numerous notable and scarce invertebrates, likely satisfying SC18 – Invertebrates listed as Species of Principal Importance in England and SC19 - Important Invertebrate Assemblages. It is therefore recommended that Middlewick Ranges LoWS boundary is extended to include the additional area to the east. This will not only expand the size of the existing LoWS but will connect Middlewick Ranges LoWS with Donyland Wetlands LoWS.	

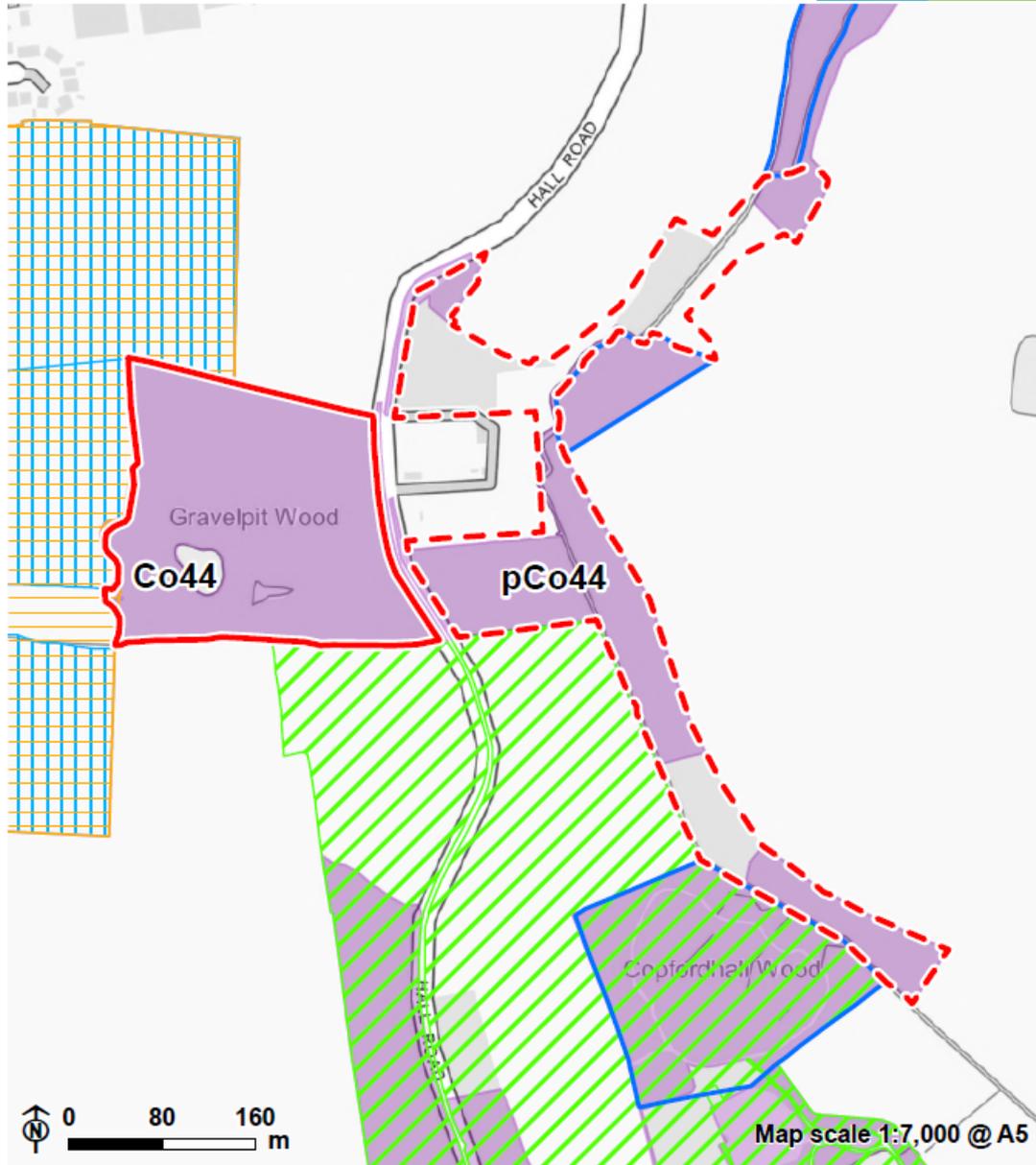
## Pits Wood Proposed Extension

Pits Wood Proposed Extension		
Site Information	Original LoWS	Extension Area
LoWS ID:	Co44	pCo44
LoWS Name:	Pits Wood	Pits Wood Proposed Extension
Grid Reference:	TL9303923413	TL9335523393
Area (ha):	5.04	6.51
Ownership:	Private	Private
Management Provider:	It was previously understood that the site was managed by the Forestry Commission, however, it has been confirmed that the site is managed by Copford Pits Wood Trust.	Private landowner
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: Land East of School Road Emerging: Land East of School Road	Preferred: N/A Emerging: N/A
Total Area of Site Allocation Overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0.07 Emerging: 0.07	Preferred: 0 Emerging: 0
LoWS Citation:	<p>Situated in old gravel pit workings, this wood has an undulating topography and sandy underlying substrate.</p> <p>It supports a diverse canopy and scrub composition with Pedunculate Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>), including some large standards, alongside Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>), Hornbeam (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>) and Field Maple (<i>Acer campestre</i>) standing over Spindle (<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>), Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>), Blackthorn (<i>Prunus spinosa</i>), Elder (<i>Sambucus nigra</i>), elm (<i>Ulmus</i> sp.) and Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) coppice within the understorey.</p> <p>The developing woodland flora is dominated by Dog's Mercury (<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>) and Bramble (<i>Rubus ruticosus</i> agg), with Bracken (<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>) dominant on the higher banks to the woodland margins. Primrose (<i>Primula vulgaris</i>), Wood Sedge (<i>Carex sylvatica</i>) and Three-nerved Sandwort (<i>Moehringia trinervia</i>) are found mostly near the woodland paths. Ponds forming in the hollows have a variety of marginal species including Marsh Marigold (<i>Caltha palustris</i>), Common Marsh- bedstraw (<i>Galium palustre</i>) and Cyperus Sedge (<i>Carex pseudocyperus</i>).</p>	N/A – area not previously classified
Located within an Area of Particular	Yes	Yes

Pits Wood Proposed Extension			
Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):			
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	Woodland and Freshwater Standing Water	Woodland, Grassland and Freshwater Standing Water	
Irreplaceable Habitat on Site:	No	No	
Priority Habitat on Site:	Deciduous woodland	Deciduous woodland	
Known Projects/Initiatives:	The Copford Pits Wood Trust has a large team of volunteers who manage the site all year round. Projects across the site are varied but the overall aim is to ensure that the local community has access to a thriving woodland and for the woodland to offer as TBC		Unknown
Survey Data			
Surveyor: EB	Date: 02.04.2025	Surveyor: EB	Date: 25.09.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: Open	Weather: Sunny	Access: Private woodland but fully accessible for survey
Summary of Site:			
Pits Wood, located central west within Colchester district, is a great example of a well-managed deciduous woodland offering excellent ecological (trees, scrub, ponds, deadwood habitats) and amenity value (paths, forest school, benches).		Located south of Copford village, to the east of Pits Wood LoWS, this site is a strip of deciduous woodland which runs along the length of a small stream called the Roman River. It connects several other LoWS selected for ancient or deciduous woodland including Keeper's Cottage Wood LoWS in the north, Copford Hall Wood North LoWS in the centre and Copford Hall Wood LoWS in the south.	
Habitat Survey Description:			
<p>The majority of the site is made up of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland with a good diversity in terms of species present, age and structure linked to the presence of rides and glades. The canopy is primarily comprised of mature ash and oak trees, with a lot of them offering bat roosting suitability in their crevices and ivy-covered trunks. The understorey is comprised of hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, silver birch, beech, elm and willow. Numerous saplings were present too, indicating that natural regeneration of the woodland is occurring. Off the main paths, there is an extensive ground flora and numerous ancient woodland indicator species such as primrose, dog's mercury and redcurrant. Two ponds with diverse marginal vegetation including marsh marigold and creeping jenny are also present towards the south west of the site. There are also areas of mixed scrub (bramble, blackthorn, willow) offering suitable habitat for birds such as nightingale. The undulating topography of the woodland is also good for badgers.</p>		<p>The woodland on site is dominated by a canopy of ash, oak, and alder, particularly where conditions are damp next to the Roman River. The understorey is varied, containing species such as hazel, hawthorn, holly, crab apple, elder and sycamore. Towards the south, there appears to be old hazel coppice and natural alder saplings are abundant here. Although this wood is not listed as ancient, the ground flora has abundant bluebells (anecdotal) and extensive patches of dog's mercury, wood avens, pendulous sedge, hairy brome and wood melick which are all ancient woodland indicators. This is alongside other plant species such as ground ivy, bracken, bramble and nettles.</p> <p>Dotted around the woodland, where conditions are dampest, such as south of the sewage works, cricket bat willow trees have been planted by the landowner. The ground flora here is also different, with tall herbs such as great willowherb, meadowsweet and wild angelica, and species more adapted to aquatic environments such as reed sweet-grass, pond</p>	

Pits Wood Proposed Extension	
	<p>sedge, fool's watercress and water mint, characteristic of lowland fenlands.</p> <p>The woodland offers good opportunities for bats, given the presence of standing deadwood with features such as holes and crevices, as well as opportunities for saproxylic invertebrates in the deadwood piles left in situ. Evidence of badgers was also recorded on site.</p>

## C.1: Desk Study - Pits Wood Potential Extension

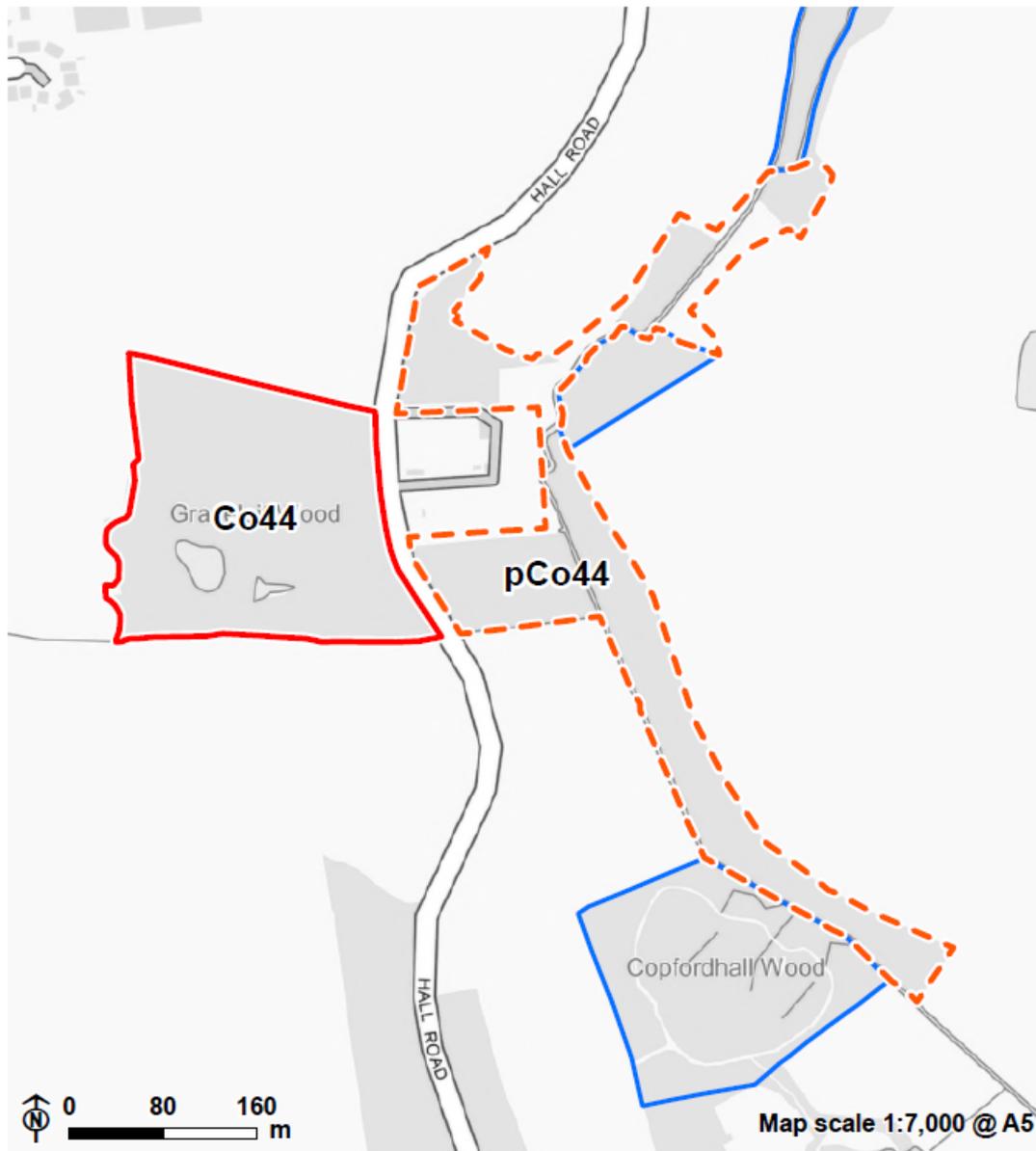


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- |                           |                            |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Potential for extension   | Emerging site allocation   |
| Survey site boundary      | Wood Pasture and Parkland  |
| Other LoWS boundary       | Priority Habitat Inventory |
| Preferred site allocation |                            |

Pits Wood Proposed Extension

## C.2: Access Constraints and Boundary Changes - Pits Wood Proposed Extension



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Survey site boundary       Proposed extension

Changes to Habitats Since the Previous 2015 Surveys:

In the 2015 review, selective coppicing was recommended. Since then, coppicing of hazel has occurred and has been

N/A – area not previously surveyed

Pits Wood Proposed Extension	
beneficial in terms of diversifying the woodland structure. Bramble and bracken clearance has also taken place which has allowed a more diverse ground flora to establish. It should also be noted that one of the ponds has recently dried up due to the presence of willow trees.	
Condition Statement:	
<p><b>Favourable</b></p> <p>The Lowland Mixed Deciduous woodland is being actively conserved and enhanced. Other habitats such as ponds and scrub, which don't contribute to this site's selection as a LoWS, are also being actively managed which further extends the importance of this site for a wide variety of flora and fauna species.</p>	<p><b>Favourable</b></p> <p>This site is comprised of lowland mixed deciduous woodland and wet woodland (cricket-bat willow planted in low frequency) and pockets of fenland vegetation, supporting diverse plant communities which offer considerable habitats for invertebrates, birds, amphibians and bats.</p>
Management:	
<p><b>Good</b></p> <p>Management achieves a good balance between offering a space for the local community where they can relax and learn about nature e.g., Forest Schools and conserving a good quality woodland which is beneficial to a wide range of species.</p>	<p><b>Satisfactory</b></p> <p>Discussion with the landowner revealed that the woodland is primarily unmanaged to minimise disturbance and to enhance the value to wildlife. Some selective coppicing and felling take place sporadically to allow light into the woodland and to encourage natural regeneration. Management in the past has focused on restoring the Roman River to its natural state by using logs to create shallow pools and rapids.</p>
Known/Relevant Existing Site Management Plan:	
<p>The Pits Wood Trust has an extensive management plan in which areas of the woodland are mapped out and then prescribed different management techniques in order to maintain and enhance that area to reach a desired outcome. For example, elder once dominated the woodland but this has been cut back to allow other species to establish. Coppicing of hazel has also taken place to let light reach the ground floor. The hazel branches, as well as other naturally fallen wood, has been left in situ to create other habitats and to discourage public access away from the main footpaths. The ponds are managed by removing duckweed and excess reeds to ensure open water. Additional management includes the creation of 25 bird and bat boxes positioned around the woodland.</p>	<p>Management does not follow a plan.</p>
Opportunities on Site:	
<p><b>N/A</b></p> <p>The site is being well managed, and no specific additional opportunities were identified as part of the survey.</p>	<p><b>N/A</b></p>
Threats and Disturbances:	
<p><b>Development, Litter, Dog fouling, Vandalism</b></p> <p>Development is the main threat to the woodland habitat and species found at Pits Wood as a preferred site allocation sits within the west of the site. Currently, the site is moderately disturbed by litter and dog fouling, but this is confined to the</p>	<p><b>Ash dieback</b></p> <p>Given the abundance of ash trees within the canopy, some of the woodland is at risk from future ash dieback.</p>

Pits Wood Proposed Extension		
<p>areas adjacent to footpaths. Ground excavation to create biking jumps has occurred in the past but this is discouraged and managed well by the working group of Pits Wood Trust. As development increases around Pits Wood it is likely that footfall will increase and so these threats will likely expand.</p>		
Level of Use:		
<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <p>Most footfall is contained within the paths which dissect the woodland. A recent planning condition for a local development has meant that these paths have been gravelled to encourage walking to school. Litter and dog fouling bins are located near the perimeter of the site but may need to be increased if footfall increases associated with local development.</p>	<p><b>Low</b></p> <p>Given that this site is privately owned, footfall within the woodland is very low which minimises disturbance and allows a recognisable woodland flora to establish.</p>	
Management Recommendations:		
<p>The management plan for Pits Wood is extensive and delivering a wide range of benefits for wildlife. The biggest threat to this LoWS is from a rise in local development leading to damage and vandalism of the site which will need to be managed accordingly.</p>		<p>The current non-intervention management appears to be maintaining the sensitive habitat types present and allowing a recognisable woodland ground flora to establish. In the long term though, it is recommended that some selective coppicing, particularly of the hazel within the south, is carried out to maintain the viability of the woodland.</p>
LoWS Criteria		
Habitat Selection Criteria		
Woodland, Scrub and Related Habitats:	HC2 - Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient sites	HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient sites
Additional Comments:	When Pits Wood was taken over by the current landowner, it was a very shaded woodland with an oak/ash climax. The site now features very good structural diversity offering a range of habitats.	The dominant habitat on site is woodland with a recognisable layered structure and a diverse woodland ground flora, including certain ancient woodland indicator species such as dog's mercury.
Grassland:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Heathland:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Wetland Habitats:	N/A	HC14 – Lowland Fen Vegetation
Additional Comments:	N/A	This site features a tall-herb fen and sedge bed under the riverside cricket-bat willow plantation, which makes it eligible under this criterion.
Open Water Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A

Pits Wood Proposed Extension		
Coastal Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Other Habitats:	N/A	HC30 – Wildlife Corridors
Additional Comments:	N/A	This site sits within the Roman River Valley Living Landscape <sup>15</sup> , which is an area of high biodiversity due to the connectivity of habitats on either side of the river valley, supporting the inclusion of this site under this criterion.
Species Selection Criteria		
Plants:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	Although the site does not qualify as an ancient woodland (HC1), ancient woodland indicator species were recorded during the survey including lords and ladies, dog's mercury, bluebells and redcurrant.	N/A
Birds:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	During the survey there was a high frequency and diversity of birds: nuthatch, blackcap, blue tit, great tit, wren, dunnock and chiffchaff. There is also anecdotal evidence that nightingales are a frequent visitor each year. Further surveys should be carried out to determine whether the site can qualify as a LoWS under SC5 or SC6.	N/A
Mammals:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Amphibians:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Reptiles:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Invertebrates:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	High number of butterflies seen whilst surveying in the woodland. Further surveys would be required to confirm if the site could be classified under SC20.	N/A

<sup>15</sup> Tansley, D. (ed) (2019) Roman River Valley Living Landscape, Essex Wildlife Trust, Great Wigborough. Accessed in October 2025 online at: [https://www.cnhhs.uk/\\_files/ugd/309bf8\\_c1147ba3c90b4bc9be0b6e6d28ada1b7.pdf](https://www.cnhhs.uk/_files/ugd/309bf8_c1147ba3c90b4bc9be0b6e6d28ada1b7.pdf)

Pits Wood Proposed Extension	
LoWS Survey Recommendations	
Designated LoWS	
LoWS Survey Recommendation:	Proposed extension to LoWS boundary
Rationale:	<p>The proposed extension area is eligible for selection as a LoWS under three criteria and contributes to the value of Pits Wood LoWS by connecting valuable habitats for invertebrates, amphibians, birds and mammals. Firstly, the site satisfies the HC2 - Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient sites criterion given the presence of a recognisable layered structure and a diverse woodland ground flora, including certain ancient woodland indicator species such as dog's mercury. Secondly, it satisfies the HC14 – Lowland Fen Vegetation criterion, where conditions are damp along the Roman River and the canopy is dominated by alder and willow (cricket-bat plantation), and a ground flora including reed sweet-grass and meadow sweet. Finally, as the site connects four other LoWS classified for their ancient or deciduous woodland habitats and sits within the Roman River Valley Living Landscape, allowing the dispersal and interchange of species within each site, this site can be further classified under HC30– Wildlife Corridors.</p>

## City Centre Green Spaces, including Land Lane and Riverside Grasslands

City Centre Green Spaces, including Land Lane and Riverside Grasslands	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	CNHS_23
LoWS Name:	City Centre Green Spaces, including Land Lane and Riverside Grasslands
Grid Reference:	TM0004125771
Area (ha):	14.50
Ownership:	Colchester City Council (CCC)
Management Provider:	CCC Rangers
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: N/A Emerging: N/A
Total Area of Site Allocation Overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0 Emerging: 0
LoWS Citation:	N/A – area not previously classified as a LoWS
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	No
Irreplaceable Habitat on Site:	No
Priority Habitat on Site:	Deciduous woodland, Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, No main habitat but additional habitats present
Known Projects/Initiatives:	Unknown
Survey Data	
Surveyor: EB	Date: 16.09.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: Open access
Summary of Site:	
<p>This site is situated just north of Colchester city and features amenity grassland, community orchards, long sward grassland, a lake and pockets of deciduous woodland and areas of the River Colne bank. The majority of the site is open access and used frequently due to its proximity to the city. Some of the site is privately owned by Colchester &amp; East Essex Cricket Club.</p>	

### City Centre Green Spaces, including Land Lane and Riverside Grasslands

The site provides a linkage between Bull Meadow LoWS and Cowdray Marsh LoWS on the northern side of the River Colne. Colchester Roman Wall LoWS also forms the southern boundary of the proposed new LoWS near Land Lane.

#### Habitat Survey Description:

Starting from the east side, the site comprises a mosaic of grassland with individual trees and mixed scrub. Sections of the grassland are left uncut which allows tussocky grasses such as false oat-grass, cocksfoot, wall barley and timothy to establish, ideal overwintering habitat for invertebrates. Forbs such as common comfrey, hedge mustard, cow parsley, cleavers, yarrow, lesser hawkbit, and occasional horehound and fat hen also grow within the grassland and scrubby areas adjacent to the path. These offer good foraging habitat for butterflies and bumblebees recorded during the survey and surveys carried out by Colchester Natural History Society in 2023. The scrub also has ecological value, given the high presence of flowering shrubs such as elder, hawthorn and bramble and piles of oak and willow deadwood which appear to have been purposefully left to benefit wildlife. Some species such as nettle, wall barley and curled dock are indicators of nutrient enrichment, but this is only localised, and the majority of the long sward grassland is varied in terms of species.

Moving along the River Colne towards Colchester Castle Park, habitats include short sward amenity grassland with low ecological value alongside longer sward grassland with species similar to those mentioned above. Individual mature and recently planted trees of a variety of species are scattered throughout the grassland, offering nesting habitat to birds. The riverbanks are vegetated and feature bullrushes and tall forbs such as greater willowherb, creeping thistle, gypsywort, nettle and musk mallow as well as young saplings of alder and willow, offering further nesting habitat to aquatic birds such as swans and ducks.

A large pond is located within the centre of the site which offers further refuge and foraging habitat for aquatic birds. A deciduous wet woodland is located to the east of the pond and features an alder and willow canopy, with reed sweet grass and fool's watercress within the permanently inundated areas. Large amounts of deadwood are also located here, ideal for saprophytic invertebrates.

Other small patches of deciduous woodland are present too within the site, including Tommies' Wood planted in 2018 with 200 birch, hazel and alder saplings.

On the northern side of the River Colne, between Bull Meadows LoWS and Cowdray Marsh LoWS, there is an area of young wet woodland dominated by a canopy of alder, grey alder, goat willow, grey willow and a ground flora of redcurrant and pendulous sedge. Native hedgerows with dog rose, hawthorn, blackthorn, field maple and silver birch line the River Colne on this northern side and improve foraging habitat for invertebrates and birds.

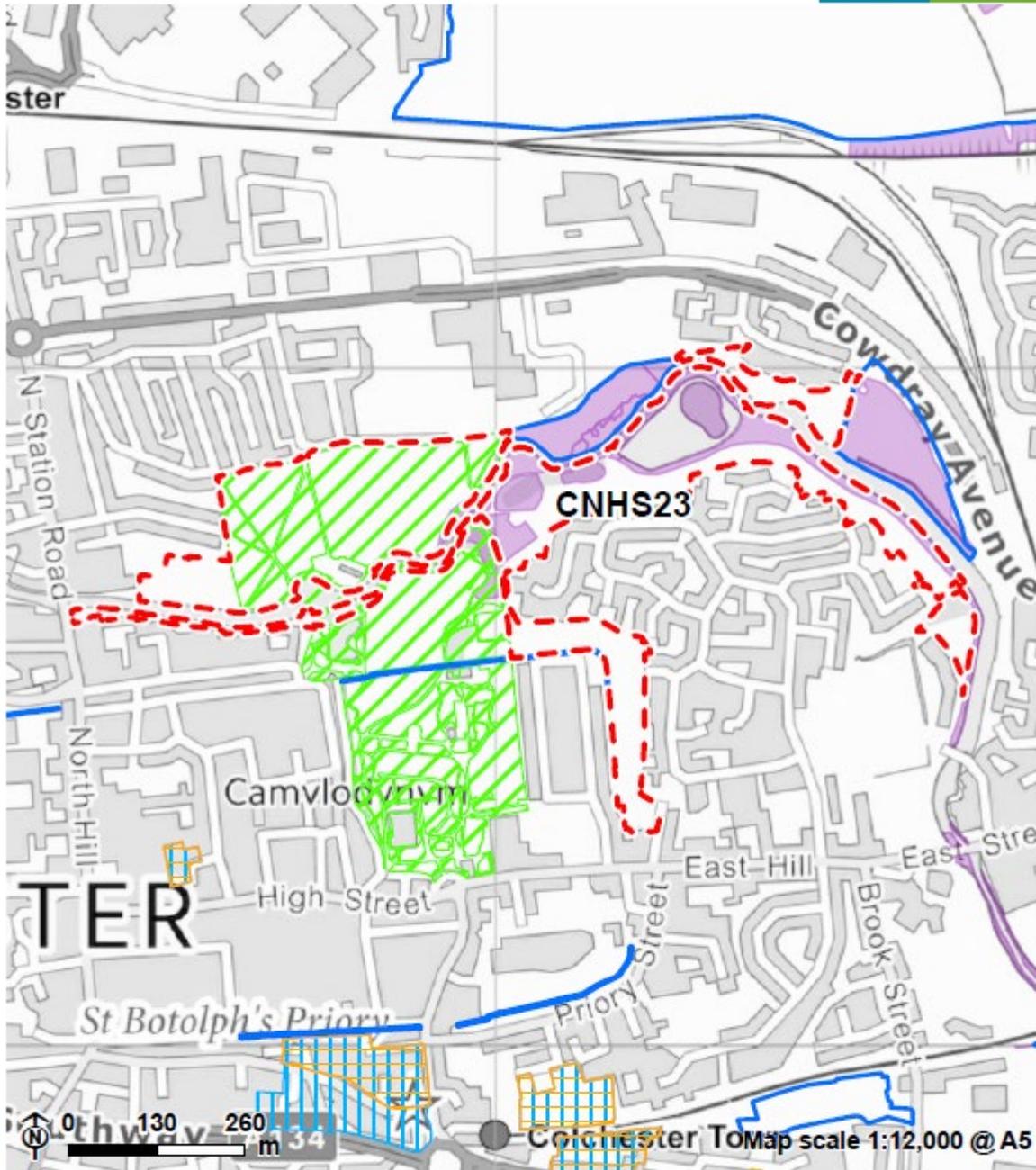
The Colchester & East Essex Cricket Club does not provide significant ecological value due to the main habitat comprising of amenity grassland dominated by perennial rye grass. This area also features invasive and non-native species such as cherry laurel and cotoneaster, behind the clubhouse.

Kings Meadow also features short mown amenity grassland which holds little ecological value. However, strips of longer sward grassland on recently landscaped banks feature additional forbs such as creeping cinquefoil, creeping bittercress and ribwort plantain. There are also glades of orchard and willow tree planting here which increase the biodiversity of the area. A patch of perennial sedge called sweet galingale is also found within Kings Meadow highlighting the damp conditions of the area.

Back along the southern side of the River Colne, near Castle Park, mature trees such as horse chestnut, weeping willow, oak, and hornbeam are present. Some of these mature trees are covered in Virginia creeper which is an invasive and non-native species and others appear to have root protection zones which are impacted by the high footfall within the park.

Towards Land Lane in the south of the site, habitats include long sward grassland with similar species as above, mixed scrub and individual trees. This area appears to be less visited, which attracts a greater area of nesting bird species, particularly within the scrub composed of bramble, hops and ivy adjacent to the Colchester Roman Wall LoWS. The invasive and non-native tree of heaven is rapidly spreading in the section closest to Land Lane.

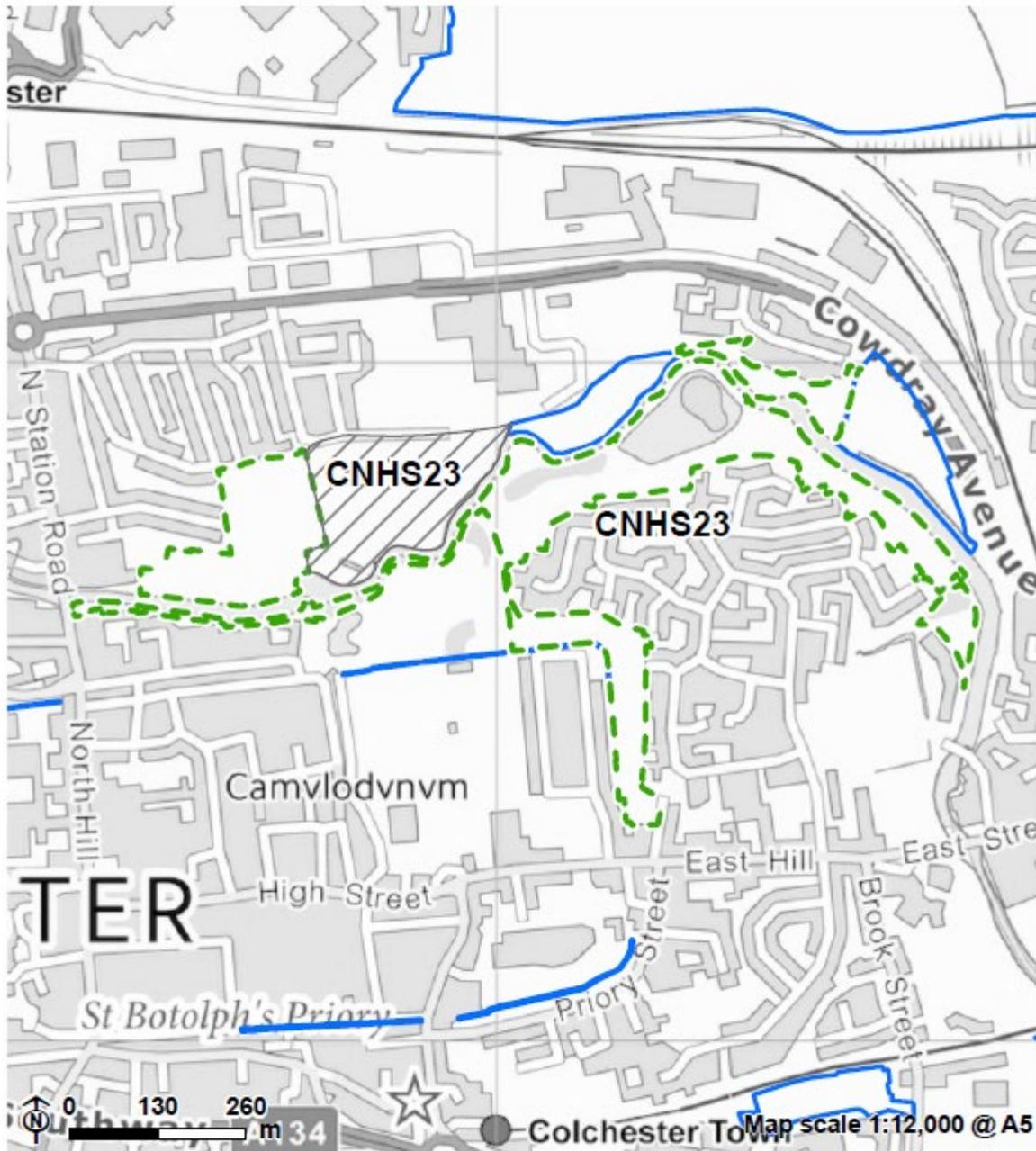
## C.1: Desk Study - City Centre Greenspaces



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- |                           |                            |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Potential for extension   | Emerging site allocation   |
| Other LoWS boundary       | Wood Pasture and Parkland  |
| Preferred site allocation | Priority Habitat Inventory |

## C.2: Access Constraints and Boundary Changes - City Centre Greenspaces



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 New LoWS

 Not recommended for designation

City Centre Green Spaces, including Land Lane and Riverside Grasslands
Changes to Habitats Since the Previous 2015 Surveys:
N/A – area not previously surveyed
Condition Statement:
<p><b>Favourable</b></p> <p>Overall, the site featured grassland, woodland and scrub habitats of good ecological value, particularly within the urban context of the site. As the site straddles the River Colne, it provides a key green/blue corridor within Colchester, which helps to support populations of amphibians, invertebrates, small mammals and birds within the area, as well as providing recreational value to residents.</p>
Management:
<p><b>Good</b></p> <p>It was clear during the survey that management of the site has recently been relaxed, which has enhanced the ecological value of the site whilst still providing an accessible and clean natural green space to Colchester residents. Positive management techniques included leaving large sections of the grassland uncut, providing forbs and overwintering sites for invertebrates, recent native tree planting along the River Colne, the creation of new orchards within Kings Meadow to diversify habitats and signage throughout the site to prevent dumping of litter and organic matter which can spread invasive and non-native species.</p>
Known/Relevant Existing Site Management Plan:
It is unknown if CCC has a formal management plan for these areas.
Opportunities on Site:
<b>N/A</b>
Threats and Disturbances:
<p><b>Invasive non-native species, Litter, Fly-tipping and Vandalism</b></p> <p>As this site contains parkland close to residential properties, several invasive non-native plant species were recorded such as cotoneaster and cherry laurel which pose a threat to native plant species. Evidence of litter, fly-tipping and vandalism were recorded on site but given the high usage of the site, this was comparatively low to other sites visited in Colchester, likely due to the active management by CCC Rangers.</p>
Level of Use:
<p><b>High</b></p> <p>Due to its proximity to Colchester city centre, the site is used frequently for recreation. Certain areas, particularly in between Bull Meadow LoWS and Cowdray Marsh LoWS, are less frequented and, as such, have a more diverse ground flora. Management also maintains paths around the site and fences off more ecologically sensitive habitats which works well to encourage users to stick to the path, thus limiting disturbance.</p>
Management Recommendations:
<p>It is recommended that invasive non-native species such as the tree of heaven, cherry laurel, cotoneaster and Virginia creeper are removed under the supervision of an invasive species specialist to prevent further spread, particularly given the site's proximity to the River Colne which could spread these species even further.</p> <p>Management should also incorporate fencing or signs around the mature trees along the River Colne so that their root protection zones are less subject to the high footfall within this area of Colchester Castle Park.</p>
LoWS Criteria

City Centre Green Spaces, including Land Lane and Riverside Grasslands	
Habitat Selection Criteria	
Woodland, Scrub and Related Habitats:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Grassland:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Heathland:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Wetland Habitats:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Open Water Habitats:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Coastal Habitats:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Other Habitats:	HC30 – Wildlife Corridors HC31 – Accessible Natural Greenspace
Additional Comments:	<p>The site is eligible under HC30 because, although the habitats present are not eligible to meet other habitat criteria, the site connects Bull Meadows LoWS and Cowdray Marsh LoWS through an area of young wet woodland, allowing the dispersal and interchange of species within each site. This habitat connectivity offers significant ecological value, particularly in the urban context of Colchester.</p> <p>The site is also eligible under HC31 as it contains substantial nature conservation interest through its grassland, scrub and woodland habitats, and given its proximity to Colchester city, it provides significant nature-related recreational opportunities for the urban population.</p>
Species Selection Criteria	
Plants:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Birds:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Mammals:	N/A

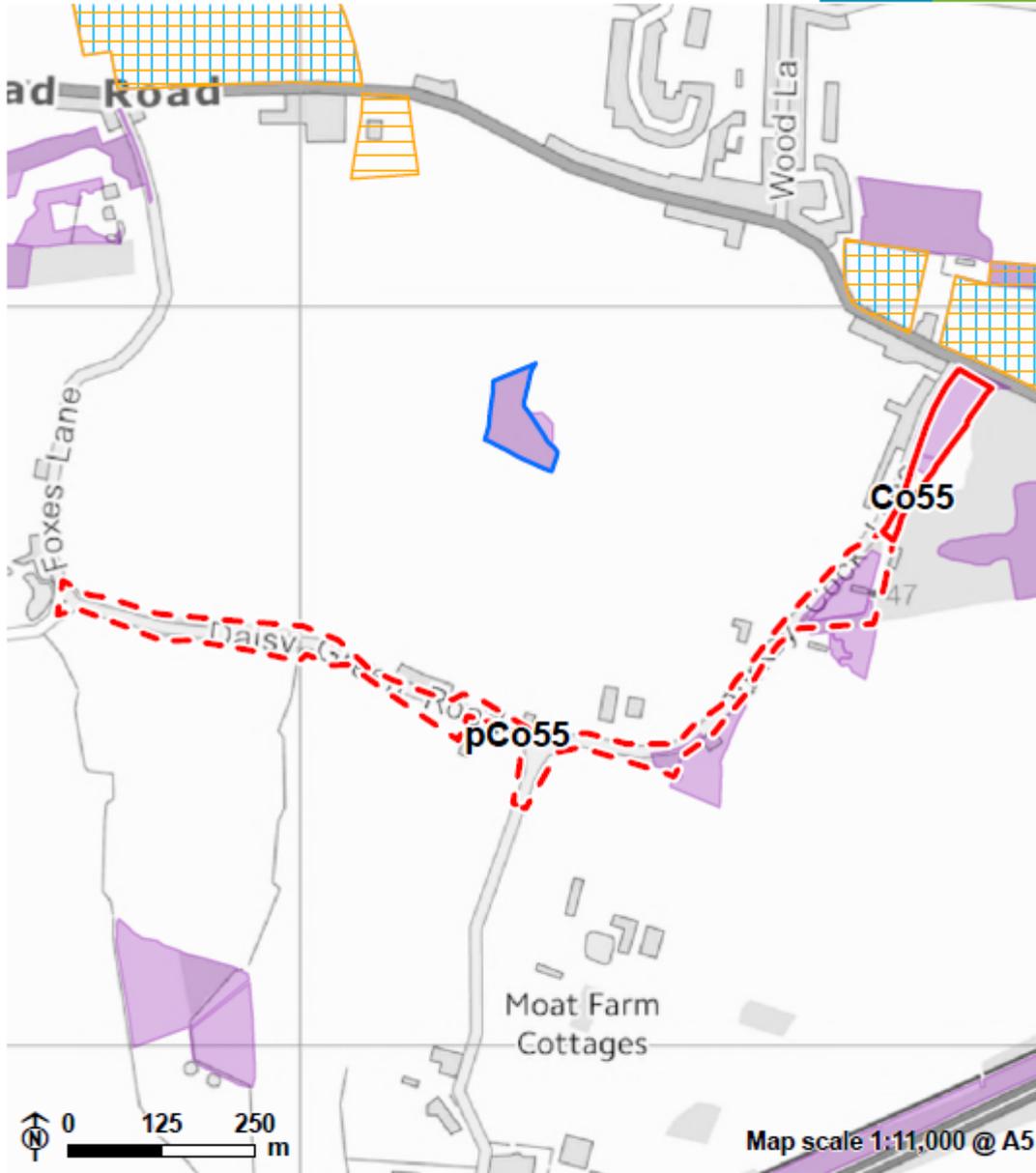
City Centre Green Spaces, including Land Lane and Riverside Grasslands	
Additional Comments:	N/A
Amphibians:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Reptiles:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Invertebrates:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
LoWS Survey Recommendations	
Designated LoWS	
LoWS Survey Recommendation:	New LoWS
Rationale:	<p>The grassland, woodland and scrub habitats on site provide ecological value within the urban context of Colchester City but are of insufficient quality to make the site eligible as a LoWS under individual habitat criteria. However, the habitats combine to form a site of significant conservation value, particularly with the consideration that the northern side connects Bull Meadows LoWS and Cowdray Marsh LoWS making it eligible under HC30– Wildlife Corridors. In addition, the site provides nature-related recreational and amenity value to the large, nearby residential population of Colchester, satisfying HC31 – Accessible Natural Greenspace. This excludes the area owned by the Colchester &amp; East Essex Cricket Club, where public access is not available and management is not conducive to enhancing biodiversity. Therefore, City Centre Green Spaces, including Land Lane and Riverside Grasslands is therefore recommended to be taken forward as a new LoWS.</p>

## Seven Star Green Potential Extension

Seven Star Green Potential Extension		
Site Information	Original LoWS	Extension Area
LoWS ID:	Co55	pCo55
LoWS Name:	Seven Star Green	Seven Star Green Potential Extension
Grid Reference:	TL9385725825	TL9329525457
Area (ha):	0.78	4.30
Ownership:	Eight Ash Green Parish Council	Eight Ash Green Parish Council
Management Provider:	Eight Ash Green Parish Council	Eight Ash Green Parish Council and private landowners
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: Land north of Halstead Road east of Wood Lane Emerging: Land north of Halstead Road	Preferred: N/A Emerging: N/A
Total Area of Site Allocation Overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0.00 Emerging: 0.00	Preferred: 0 Emerging: 0
LoWS Citation:	<p>This green comprises species-rich grassland with acidic influences and a small pond with surrounding scrub.</p> <p>Cuckooflower (<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>) flourishes in the damp areas near the pond, which itself supports Lesser Spearwort (<i>Ranunculus flammula</i>) and Lesser Bulrush (<i>Typha angustifolia</i>).</p> <p>The grassland varies in character with areas of freer-draining soils supporting species such as Red Fescue (<i>Festuca rubra</i>), Field Wood-rush (<i>Luzula campestris</i>), Tormentil (<i>Potentilla erecta</i>), Heath-grass (<i>Danthonia decumbens</i>) and Zigzag Clover (<i>Trifolium medium</i>). The Essex Red Data List species Sneezewort (<i>Achillea ptarmica</i>) and Velvet Bent (<i>Agrostis canina</i>) have also been recorded.</p> <p>Other areas including the upper slopes support taller, coarser grasses such as Yorkshire-fog (<i>Holcus lanatus</i>) alongside Sweet Vernal-grass (<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>), meadow- grasses (<i>Poa</i> spp.), Common Knapweed (<i>Centaurea nigra</i>), Grass Vetchling (<i>Lathyrus nissolia</i>) and Yellow- rattle (<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>).</p>	N/A – area not previously classified as a LoWS
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes	Yes

Seven Star Green Potential Extension			
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	Grassland Only	Grassland Only, Woodland, Grassland and Freshwater Standing Water	
Irreplaceable Habitat on Site:	No	No	
Priority Habitat on Site:	Good quality semi improved grassland	Deciduous woodland, No main habitat but additional habitats present	
Known Projects/Initiatives:	Unknown.	Unknown.	
Survey Data			
Surveyor: EB	Date: 02.04.2025	Surveyor: EB	Date: 10.09.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: Open	Weather: Damp	Access: Open
Summary of Site:			
<p>Seven Star Green LoWS is a small area of species-rich grassland located central west within Colchester district and bordered by wet ditches, native hedgerows, roads and residential buildings. Lightly used paths intersect the site and there is a small pond towards the north. It is connected to other similar grassland patches such as Daisy Green in the south east by large grass verges and hedgerows.</p>		<p>This site is located on the southern edge of Eight Ash Green village in a predominantly arable landscape. It is comprised of numerous grassland verges which extend south west from Seven Star Green LoWS along Turkey Cock Lane and Daisy Green Road. There are several small ponds and drainage ditches located along Daisy Green Road.</p>	
Habitat Survey Description:			
<p>Species rich-grassland with numerous vascular plants such as knapweed, meadow vetchling and greater stitchwort beneficial for invertebrates. Certain sections of the site had acidic indicators such as field wood-rush, heath bedstraw and tormentil. Some shaded areas adjacent to the hedgerows had ancient woodland indicators such as dog violet, bluebells and lords and ladies. The pond present was in good quality due to recent clearance of rushes and bramble scrub and was surrounded by vegetation with a preference for damper conditions such as soft rush and cuckooflower.</p>		<p>The mown grassland verges are dominated by grasses such as perennial rye grass, creeping bent, and Yorkshire fog, with occasional forbs such as creeping buttercup, yarrow and dandelion. Where the mowing regime is more relaxed, for example, under the canopies of oak, Scots pine and weeping willow trees, floral diversity is slightly higher with species such as knapweed, hairy sedge, lesser bird's foot trefoil and herb Robert.</p> <p>Two small ponds are located within the site, offering important habitat to amphibians, invertebrates and reptiles within a landscape dominated by arable fields. The pond located at the crossroads of Turkey Cock Lane and Daisy Green Road appears stagnant and is bordered by species such as bulrush, great willowherb, wild horse radish, as well as those suggesting nutrient enrichment such as nettle, broad leaf dock and creeping thistle. The other pond, further west along Daisy Green Road, is dry but is surrounded by a long sward grassland, dominated by Yorkshire fog, hogweed, yarrow, nettle, knapweed and rare yellow meadow vetchling and smooth tare.</p>	

### C.1: Desk Study - Seven Star Green Potential Extension



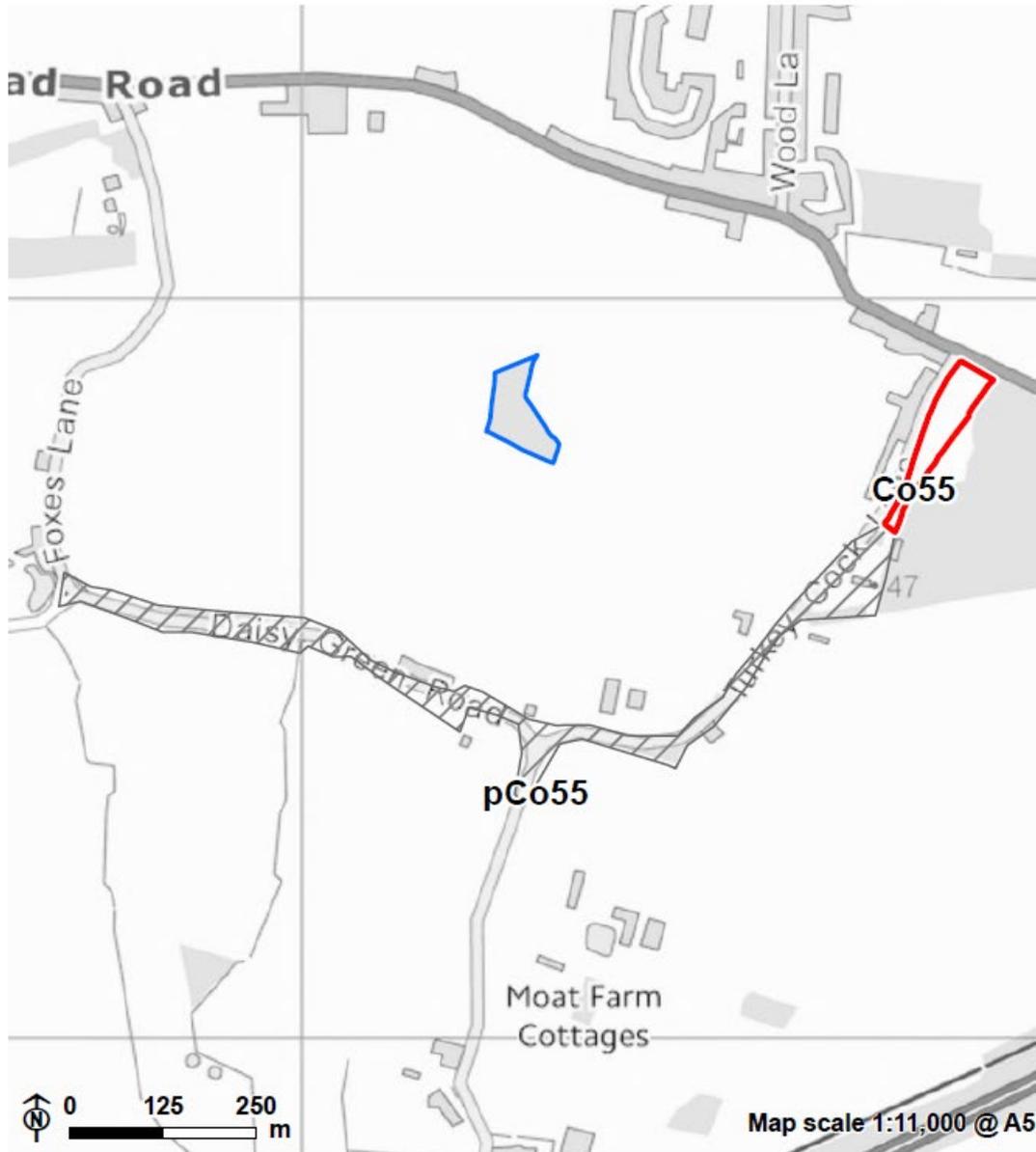
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- |                         |                            |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Potential for extension | Preferred site allocation  |
| Survey site boundary    | Emerging site allocation   |
| Other LoWS boundary     | Priority Habitat Inventory |

Seven Star Green Potential Extension

## C.2: Access Constraints and Boundary Changes - Seven Star Green



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- Survey site boundary
- Not recommended for designation

Changes to Habitats Since the Previous 2015 Surveys:

Seven Star Green Potential Extension	
In the previous report Seven Star Green was assessed as 'Unfavourable, declining' due to the grassland vegetation being negatively impacted by shading from ash trees and nutrient enrichment from a fire. The ash trees are still present in the north but signs of nutrient enrichment within the central portion of the site were not apparent.	N/A – area not previously surveyed
Condition Statement:	
<p><b>Favourable, declining</b></p> <p>Assessed as favourable due to it being an area of unimproved grassland with a wide variety of flora and several acid grassland indicator species such as field wood-rush, heath bedstraw and tormentil. However, this condition is declining in areas due to shading from mature trees and encroachment of vehicles and pedestrians onto the verges which could threaten its classification under HC9 and HC13.</p>	<p><b>Unfavourable</b></p> <p>This site has been assessed as unfavourable due to the stagnant conditions within the two ponds and the patches of vegetation which indicate nutrient enrichment.</p>
Management:	
<p><b>Satisfactory</b></p> <p>There was some evidence of management being carried out by Eight Ash Green Parish Council to conserve and enhance Seven Star Green. This included a stump indicating tree removal and clearance of rushes and scrub around the pond. Some activities such as the recent planting of a pin oak tree and katsura tree will create shade and thus works against management trying to preserve the acid grassland vegetation.</p>	<p><b>Poor</b></p> <p>Management of the grassland verges varies a lot depending on whether it is privately owned or council-owned. Where management has been relaxed, longer sward grasslands which provide good ecological connectivity have established. However, numerous sections have been intensively mown which makes it unable to be classified under a grassland criterion.</p>
Known/Relevant Existing Site Management Plan:	
Eight Ash Green Parish Council actively manages the green and connected Daisy Green. The exact management plan is unknown but the area is uncultivated and ungrazed.	Unknown
Opportunities on Site:	
<p><b>N/A</b></p> <p>N/A</p>	<p><b>Education and Mowing regime</b></p> <p>As some of the grassland verges are managed privately by residents, education on the benefits of reducing mowing would be one way to allow a longer sward grassland to establish throughout the entire site which would improve connectivity through the arable landscape.</p>
Threats and Disturbances:	
<p><b>Encroachment (incl. Informal parking) and Litter</b></p> <p>During the survey several cars were parked on Seven Star Green just off Turkey Cock Lane. Erosion of the grass verges here indicates that this is a frequent occurrence. Litter was also present on Seven Star Green as it had been blown from nearby residential properties.</p>	<p><b>Pollution</b></p> <p>Plant species such as nettles, curled dock and creeping thistle, indicative of nutrient enrichment, likely resulting from the roads or surrounding arable fields have outcompeted more sensitive plant communities within the grassland verges.</p>
Level of Use:	

Seven Star Green Potential Extension		
<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <p>Due to the proximity of the Seven Star Green to residential buildings (driveways even intersect it) there seems to be moderate use of the site by dog walkers and families who visit the duck pond.</p>	<p><b>Low</b></p> <p>The grassland verges are large but used infrequently by walkers due to their proximity to the road.</p>	
Management Recommendations:		
<p>As recommended previously, trees on Seven Star Green should not be planted and the existing mature ash trees should potentially be removed to allow the rare acid grassland flora to thrive. It is also recommended that parking on Turkey Cock Lane is discouraged as the grassland here is being considerably eroded by vehicles. Furthermore, current paths which intersect the site at numerous places could be focused into a single path which would reduce the pressure from footfall on grassland vegetation.</p>	<p>Management should focus on improving the water depth and water quality within the two ponds, as they have the potential to offer high ecological value within the arable landscape, especially if they remain viable the whole year round. Ponds that are open and a little shaded are the most ecologically valuable, so management should focus on cutting back some of the trees which currently create shade, whilst retaining some scrub / tall grassland around the pond, which makes good nesting habitat for birds.</p> <p>Management of the grassland verges should focus on letting a longer sward grassland establish, which in turn would promote higher floral diversity and create an important network for invertebrates.</p>	
LoWS Criteria		
Habitat Selection Criteria		
Woodland, Scrub and Related Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Grassland:	HC9 – Lowland Meadows	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Heathland:	HC13 – Heathland and Acid Grassland	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Wetland Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Open Water Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Coastal Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Other Habitats:	N/A	N/A

Seven Star Green Potential Extension		
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Species Selection Criteria		
Plants:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Birds:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Mammals:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Amphibians:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Reptiles:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Invertebrates:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
LoWS Survey Recommendations		
Designated LoWS		
LoWS Survey Recommendation:	Retain – No Change	
Rationale:	<p>Seven Star Green LoWS should retain its designation as a LoWS, given the presence of a species-rich grassland with patches of acidic grassland, allowing it to be classified under HC9 – Lowland Meadows and HC13 – Heathland and Acid Grassland. However, the potential extension area, made up of the roadside verges of Turkey Cock Lane and Daisy Green Road, does not meet the criteria for LoWS designation. The potential extension area does feature long sward grassland with characteristic species such as meadow vetchling and knapweed, but the species density or diversity is not high enough to make it eligible under HC9 or HC13. Alongside this, nutrient enrichment from surrounding arable fields and pollution from cars is favouring species such as nettles and curled dock. Therefore, the potential extension area should not be taken forward for designation as part of Seven Star Green LoWS.</p>	

## Weir Lane Grassland

Weir Lane Grassland	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	CNHS_2
LoWS Name:	Weir Lane Grassland
Grid Reference:	TM0128421755
Area (ha):	104.26
Ownership:	Military of Defence
Management Provider:	Military of Defence
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: N/A Emerging: Middlewick <sup>16</sup>
Total Area of Site Allocation Overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: N/A Emerging: 19.47
LoWS Citation:	N/A – area not previously classified as a LoWS
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	Grassland Only
Irreplaceable Habitat on Site:	Ancient tree Ancient woodland (boundary discrepancy - overlap with boundary of Donyland Woods West LoWS to the south)
Priority Habitat on Site:	Deciduous woodland
Known Projects/Initiatives:	Unknown
Survey Data	
Surveyor: EB	Date: 18.09.2025
Weather: Grey	Access: Survey was limited to footpaths as access was not granted by Military of Defence
Summary of Site:	

<sup>16</sup> This site has been included within the emerging site allocation dataset as this is an existing allocation within the adopted local plan.

### Weir Lane Grassland

This site is an extensive area of grassland located on either side of Weir Lane, south east of Colchester City, towards Rowhedge. Birch Brook Wood LoWS makes up its northern boundary, whilst Donyland Woods West LoWS forms its southern boundary. Other LoWS, such as Middlewick Ranges LoWS, Donyland Wetlands LoWS and Rowhedge Pits LoWS also sit in close proximity to the site. Footpaths intersect the northern side of the site and are used frequently by dog walkers. The southern part of Weir Lane Grassland sits within the Essex Coast IIA and is therefore of importance for invertebrates.

#### Habitat Survey Description:

The survey was restricted to the northern side of Weir Lane, where public rights of way intersect the site.

The dominant habitat type within this area is neutral grassland with a long sward height intersected by native hedgerows and pockets of deciduous woodland. Grassland species include dominant Yorkshire fog, cocksfoot, abundant yarrow and ribwort plantain, with frequent common cat's ear and occasional hoary willowherb, hogweed and mugwort.

More diverse patches of grassland are present, particularly towards Birch Brook Wood LoWS, with frequent sweet vernal grass, oxeye daisy, perforate st John's wort, occasional sheep's sorrel, lesser birdsfoot trefoil, common knapweed, lesser hawkbit, field bindweed. Rare plants include white campion, shepherd's purse and sand spurrey. Young patches of scrub comprised of bramble, oak and hawthorn saplings.

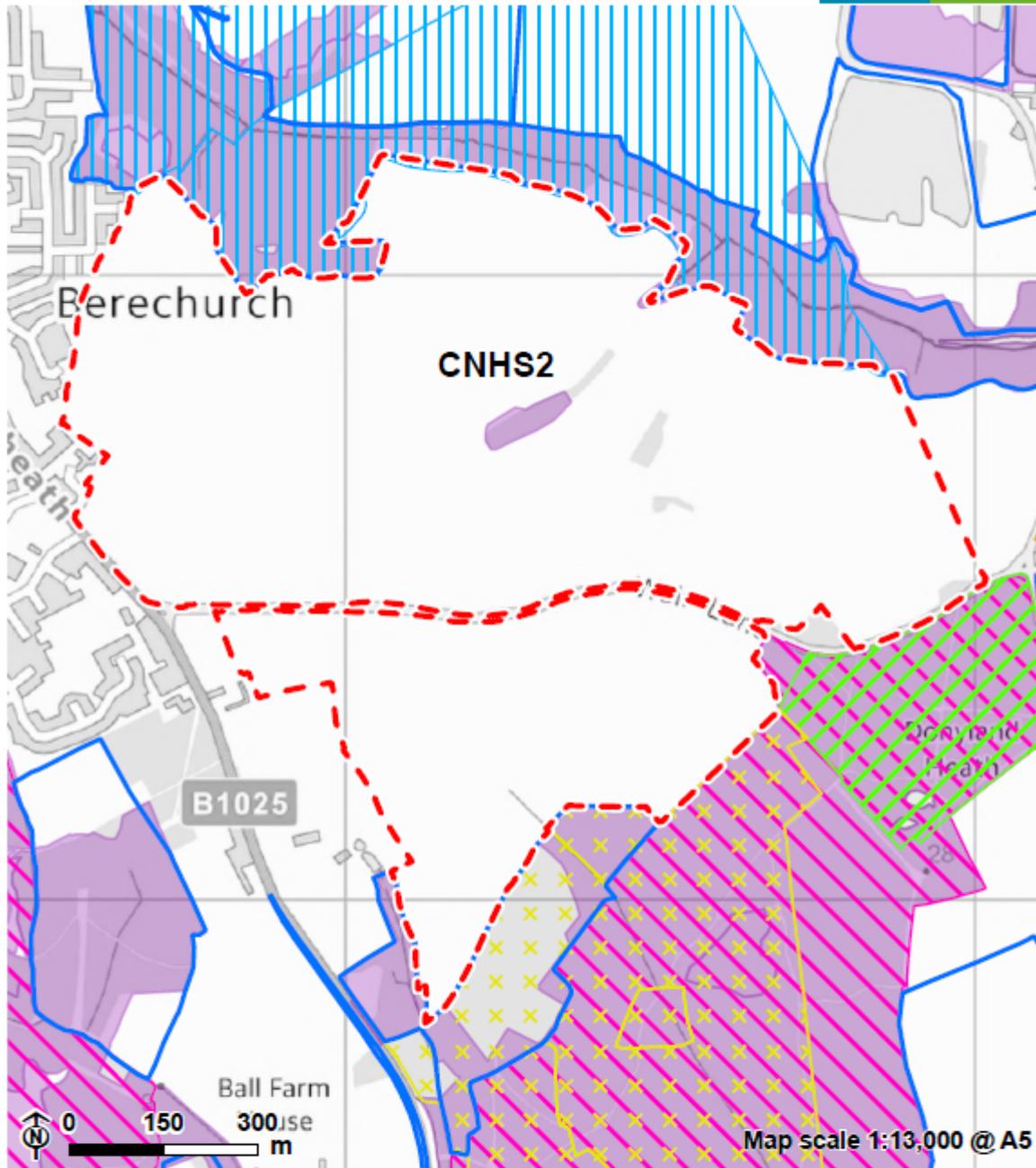
There are also small patches of creeping thistle and nettles reflecting previous arable farming on the site, albeit not that intensive.

The small pockets of deciduous woodland were not surveyed as they were not intersected by footpaths but appeared to comprise an oak and ash canopy with an elder, rowan, broom, aspen and sweet chestnut understorey, which is a diverse mix of native species. Naturally regenerated aspen, which is considered a keystone species for certain invertebrates, appears to be expanding rapidly within the site.

The native hedgerows which border the site and demarcate some of the grassland fields are dominated by blackthorn and hawthorn with abundant oak, field maple and ash and occasional holly, cherry, rowan, hazel and crab apple. Mature oak and ash trees, often covered in ivy or honeysuckle and with deadwood and bat roosting features, are present within these hedgerows.

Observed from Weir Lane, the southern side of the site appeared to have similar grassland and hedgerow habitats as detailed above but the current mowing regime seemed to be more intense, indicated by a shorter sward length.

### C.1: Desk Study - Weir Lane Grassland

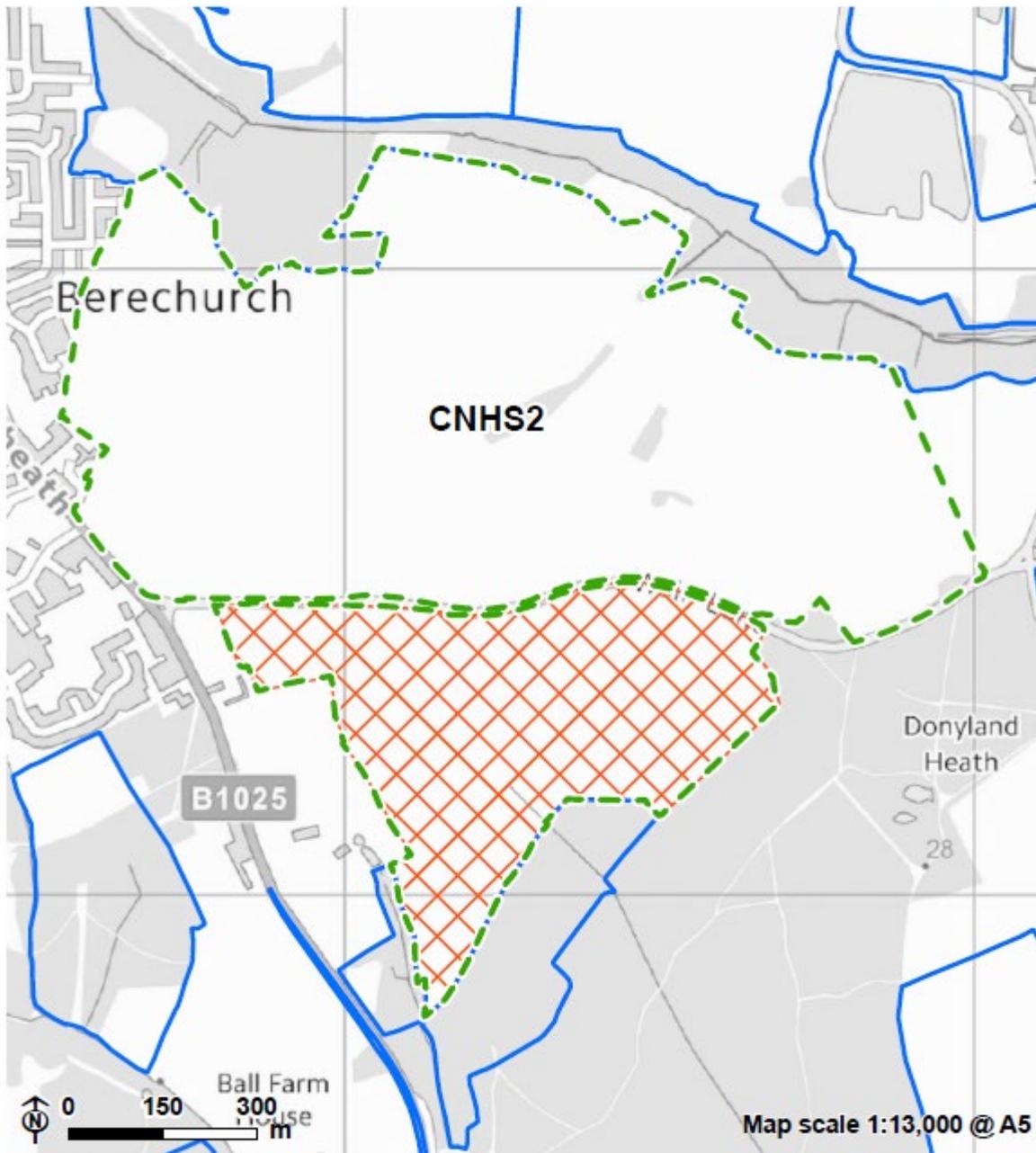


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- Potential for extension
- Other LoWS boundary
- Preferred site allocation
- Emerging site allocation
- Ancient Woodland Inventory
- Wood Pasture and Parkland
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Priority Habitat Inventory

Weir Lane Grassland

## C.2: Access Constraints and Boundary Changes - Weir Lane Grassland



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 New LoWS

 Access constrained

<b>Weir Lane Grassland</b>
Changes to Habitats Since the Previous 2015 Surveys:
N/A – area not previously surveyed.
Condition Statement:
<b>Favourable, declining</b> Weir Lane grassland is currently assessed as favourable, as it contains an extensive area of neutral grassland, as well as patches of deciduous woodland which are connected via native hedgerows and areas of scrub. These habitats are highly valuable to invertebrates, birds and small mammals. Nevertheless, it is also assessed as declining, as recent changes in MOD usage of the site mean that it is not actively being managed and habitats could deteriorate quickly.
Management:
<b>Poor</b> During the survey, some active management was observed, including grass cutting in several of the fields, particularly in the south. Scrub did not appear to be actively managed and, as such, is expanding into the grassland in the form of bramble patches and oak saplings, which could threaten the long sward grassland, which is an important habitat for small mammals and birds.
Known/Relevant Existing Site Management Plan:
Unknown.
Opportunities on Site:
<b>N/A</b> N/A
Threats and Disturbances:
<b>Litter, Dog Fouling and Succession due to lack of management</b> Both litter and dog faeces were recorded on site in low quantities during the survey, which can have negative implications on sensitive plant species and wildlife. Lack of management is, however, the biggest threat to the overall biodiversity of the site. See Management Recommendations below.
Level of Use:
<b>Moderate</b> As the site is in proximity to the residential areas of Rowhedge, Berechurch and Old Heath, it is frequently used for recreation and by dog walkers.
Management Recommendations:
As outlined in the botanical survey in 2024 <sup>12</sup> , management is required to maintain the nature conservation interest of the grasslands; otherwise, the quality of habitats will deteriorate quickly due to succession. The southwest section of Weir Lane Grassland was classified as <i>NVC MG6b - Lolium perenne-Cynosurus cristatus grassland, Anthoxanthum odoratum sub-community</i> , but could revert to <i>NVC U1d</i> , a locally rare dry acid grassland, under an appropriate grazing management plan. In addition, management should aim to be temporally and geographically varied to maximise the diversity of habitats and thus species, particularly invertebrates, within the site.
LoWS Criteria
Habitat Selection Criteria

Weir Lane Grassland	
Woodland, Scrub and Related Habitats:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Grassland:	HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands
Additional Comments:	Although several plants characteristic of HC9 – Lowland Meadows such as sweet vernal grass and ribwort plantain were recorded during the LUC survey, the site does not match the Lowland Meadows HPIE description and instead is eligible as a LoWS under HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands, given the large expanse of semi-unimproved neutral grassland with demonstrable nature conservation value.
Heathland:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Wetland Habitats:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Open Water Habitats:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Coastal Habitats:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Other Habitats:	HC30 – Wildlife Corridors
Additional Comments:	The site connects Birch Brook Wood LoWS in the north with Donyland Woods West LoWS in the south. The native hedgerows and the large expanse of grassland are important commuting habitats for bats, small mammals, invertebrates and birds and facilitate the dispersal and interchange of species between these two woodland LoWS.
Species Selection Criteria	
Plants:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Birds:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Mammals:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Amphibians:	N/A

Weir Lane Grassland	
Additional Comments:	N/A
Reptiles:	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A
Invertebrates:	SC18 – Invertebrates listed as Species of Principal Importance in England SC19 – Important Invertebrate Assemblages
Additional Comments:	Some of the southern section of Weir Lane Grassland (not surveyed due to access constraints) sits within the Essex Coast IIA, denoting that it contains nationally rare and scarce invertebrate populations and their habitats. The interim invertebrate report <sup>13</sup> also demonstrates that Weir Lane Grassland, particularly the woodland edges and grown-out hedgerows, are species-rich in terms of invertebrates meaning that the site is eligible under SC18 and SC19, depending on the results of the final report.
LoWS Survey Recommendations	
Designated LoWS	
LoWS Survey Recommendation:	New LoWS
Rationale:	The botanical survey undertaken in 2024 <sup>12</sup> and the recent LUC survey confirm that Weir Lane Grassland is a large area of neutral grassland, some of which has been left relatively unimproved and uncut which supports tussocky grasses and forbs, which are an important habitat for invertebrates and small mammals. It is therefore eligible for selection under HC11 - Other Neutral Grasslands. The small pockets of deciduous woodland and native hedgerows also have high ecological value, particularly for invertebrates, and the interim invertebrate report <sup>13</sup> suggests that Weir Lane Grassland is also eligible as a LoWS under SC18 - Invertebrates listed as Species of Principal Importance in England and SC19 – Important Invertebrate Assemblages, subject to the final report. This is further supported by the site being located within the Essex Coast IIA. Finally, the site also provides important commuting habitat between Birch Brook Wood LoWS in the north and Donyland Woods West LoWS in the south, satisfying HC30 – Wildlife Corridors. Due to the eligibility of this site under these criteria, Weir Lane Grassland is therefore recommended to be taken forward as a new LoWS.

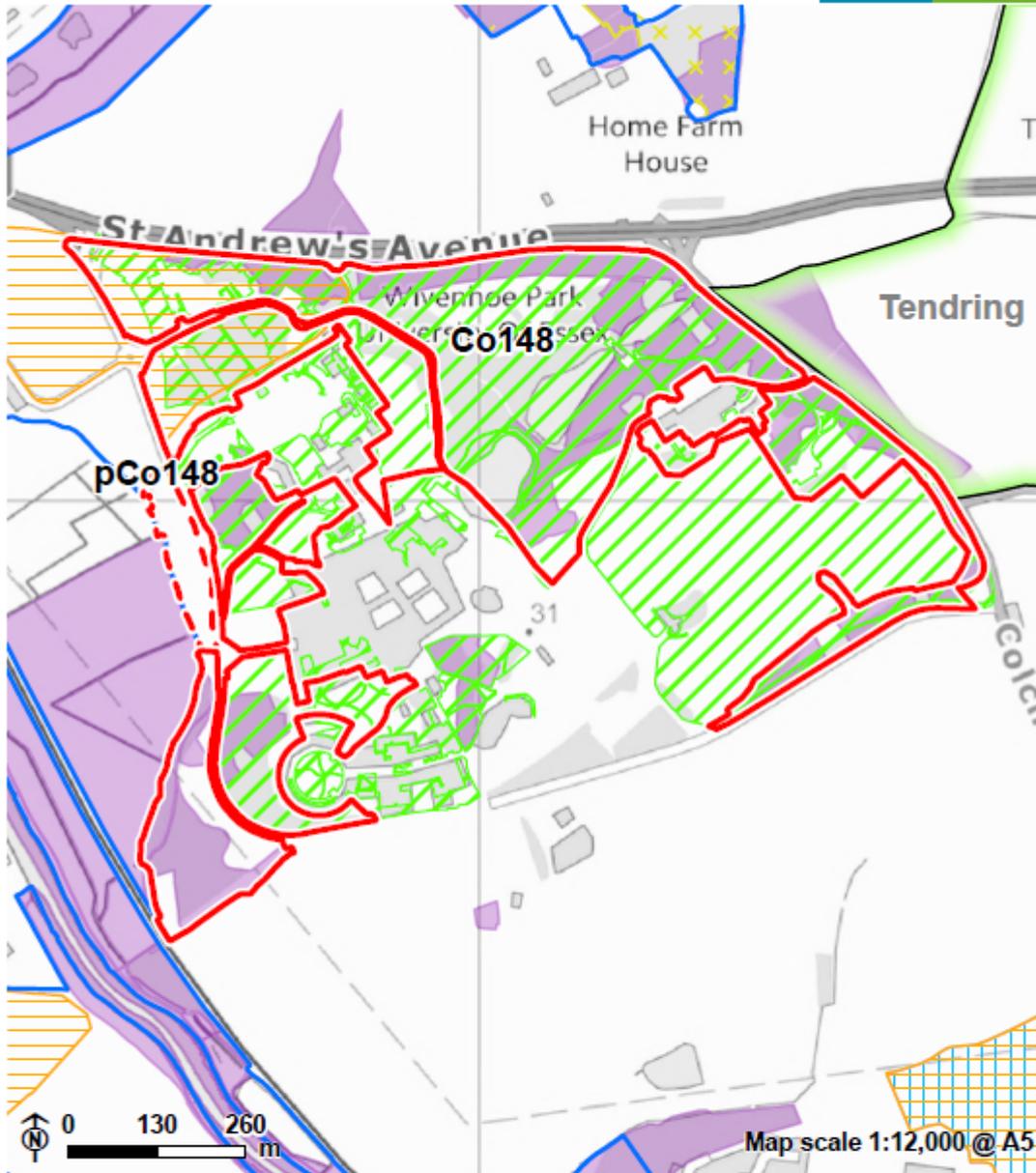
## Wivenhoe Park Proposed Extension

Wivenhoe Park Proposed Extension		
Site Information	Original LoWS	Extension Area
LoWS ID:	Co148	pCo148
LoWS Name:	Wivenhoe Park	Wivenhoe Park Proposed Extension
Grid Reference:	TM0294624036	TM0256523920
Area (ha):	40.64	1.21
Ownership:	Private	Private – University of Essex
Management Provider:	University of Essex Estates Team	University of Essex Estates Team
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: Knowledge Gateway Emerging: Knowledge Gateway	Preferred: Knowledge Gateway Emerging: Knowledge Gateway
Total Area of Site Allocation Overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 5.85 Emerging: 5.85	Preferred: 0 Emerging: 0
LoWS Citation:	<p>This site comprises the modified parkland associated with Wivenhoe House, now dominated by the University of Essex. The parkland includes some oak (<i>Quercus</i> spp.) trees in excess of 400 years old, with large specimens of Cork Oak (<i>Q. suber</i>), redwoods, pines and cedars. Some areas of woodland appear to be very old, with locally plentiful Bluebell (<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>). The intimate association that can develop between wildlife and the built environment of old parkland is demonstrated by the interesting fern fauna that has developed on the ha-ha (sunken wall) of Wivenhoe House, with a significant population of Hart's-tongue Fern (<i>Asplenium scolopendrium</i>).</p> <p>Areas of short acidic grassland are dominated by Red Fescue (<i>Festuca rubra</i>), Common Bent-grass (<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>), and Sheep's Sorrel (<i>Rumex acetosella</i>) with Field Wood-rush (<i>Luzula campestris</i>), Creeping Soft grass (<i>Holcus mollis</i>), Heath Bedstraw (<i>Galium saxatile</i>), Creeping Cinquefoil (<i>Potentilla reptans</i>), Hairy Sedge (<i>Carex hirta</i>) and timothy (<i>Phleum</i> sp.). More noteworthy species include Blinks (<i>Montia fontana</i>), Slender Parsley-piert (<i>Aphanes microcarpa</i>) and the ERDL species Early forget-me-not (<i>Myosotis ramossissima</i>) and Subterranean Clover (<i>Trifolium subterraneum</i>).</p> <p>In less free-draining areas, the grassland is lush and here there are additional species such as Sweet Vernal Grass (<i>Anthoxanthum</i></p>	N/A – area not previously classified as a LoWS

Wivenhoe Park Proposed Extension			
	<p>odoratum), Yorkshire-fog (<i>Holcus lanatus</i>), Common Knapweed (<i>Centaurea nigra</i>), Wild Carrot (<i>Daucus carota</i>), Hare's-foot Clover (<i>Trifolium arvense</i>), Prickly Sedge (<i>Carex muricata</i>), Bird's foot Clover (<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>), Lesser Stitchwort (<i>Stellaria graminea</i>) and Cuckooflower (<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>).</p> <p>The invertebrate fauna includes a good range of butterflies, including White-letter and Purple Hairstreaks, Ringlet, Speckled Wood and skippers. Nightingales regularly occur in an area of scrubby woodland close to the railway line. The park also supports a rookery, good breeding numbers of Jackdaws and significant numbers of over-wintering Goosander on the lakes.</p>		
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes	Yes	
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	Freshwater Standing Water Only	No	
Irreplaceable Habitat on Site:	Ancient tree	Ancient tree	
Priority Habitat on Site:	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, Deciduous woodland, Wood pasture and parkland	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh (boundary discrepancy – habitat to the west)	
Known Projects/Initiatives:	Extensive management undertaken by the University of Essex Estates team. Project undertaken with The Landscape Partnership to create a masterplan for the site so that each habitat is managed and enhanced according to a desired outcome.	Sits under the same management plan of the University of Essex Estates team.	
Survey Data			
Surveyor: EB	Date: 03.04.2025	Surveyor: EB	Date: 09.09.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: Open	Weather: Sunny	Access: Private but fully accessible for survey
Summary of Site:			
<p>Wivenhoe Park is located on the eastern boundary of Colchester district and is composed of a large wood pasture and parkland with pockets of deciduous woodland and acid grassland which surrounds the University of Essex campus. Footfall is relatively high due to presence of students, but site retains habitats of high ecological value, enhanced by projects undertaken by the Estates team.</p>		<p>This is a small parcel of land situated between Boundary Road to the east and University Marshes LoWS to the west. It is comprised of tall neutral grassland, scrub and a small section of deciduous woodland which features several oak trees with veteran features.</p>	
Habitat Survey Description:			

Wivenhoe Park Proposed Extension	
<p>Extensive Wood-pasture and Parkland habitat with over 100 veteran trees and 3 ancient trees which offer significant bat roosting and bird nesting opportunities. The areas of Deciduous Woodland such as Nightingale Wood in the southwest have a dominant oak canopy with an understorey of elder and gorse. Woodland ground flora contains some ancient woodland indicator species such as bluebell, lords and ladies, wood avens, scented dog violet but also abundant bramble and nettle. Browsing by muntjac was evident which was preventing natural regeneration of trees. Well managed hedgerows connected woodland parcels. Grassland managed either as amenity grassland so frequently mowed for students (species included perennial rye grass, daisy and dandelion) or as acid grassland so only mowed annually and has higher ecological value (species included red fescue, field wood-rush, yorkshire-fog, hogweed, common yarrow, sheep's sorrel, jointed rush and common dog-violet). The large ornamental pond located in the centre of the site and building adjacent supports a known Noctule maternity roost.</p>	<p>The majority of the site is comprised of neutral grassland and is dominated by false oat grass, meadow foxtail, Yorkshire fog, cocksfoot with abundant hoary ragwort, frequent field speedwell, creeping cinquefoil and common sorrel, occasional grey sedge, tufted hair grass, sweet vernal grass, timothy, lesser bird's foot trefoil, ribwort plantain and rare spiked sedge. Species indicative of nutrient enrichment such as creeping thistle, nettle and curled dock are also present within the grassland. Patches of bare ground, exposed by burrowing rabbits, provide opportunities for invertebrates such as mining bees.</p> <p>The grassland transitions into woody scrub featuring species such as bramble, hawthorn, dog rose and oak and then into a small patch of deciduous woodland with a canopy comprised of oak, ash and small-leaved lime trees. Elder, blackthorn, and hawthorn make up the shrub layer of the woodland.</p> <p>Most notably, the site contains several oak trees which have veteran features such as deadwood, large cavities and holes. These present opportunities for a range of wildlife, including roosting bats, saproxylic invertebrates and nesting birds.</p>

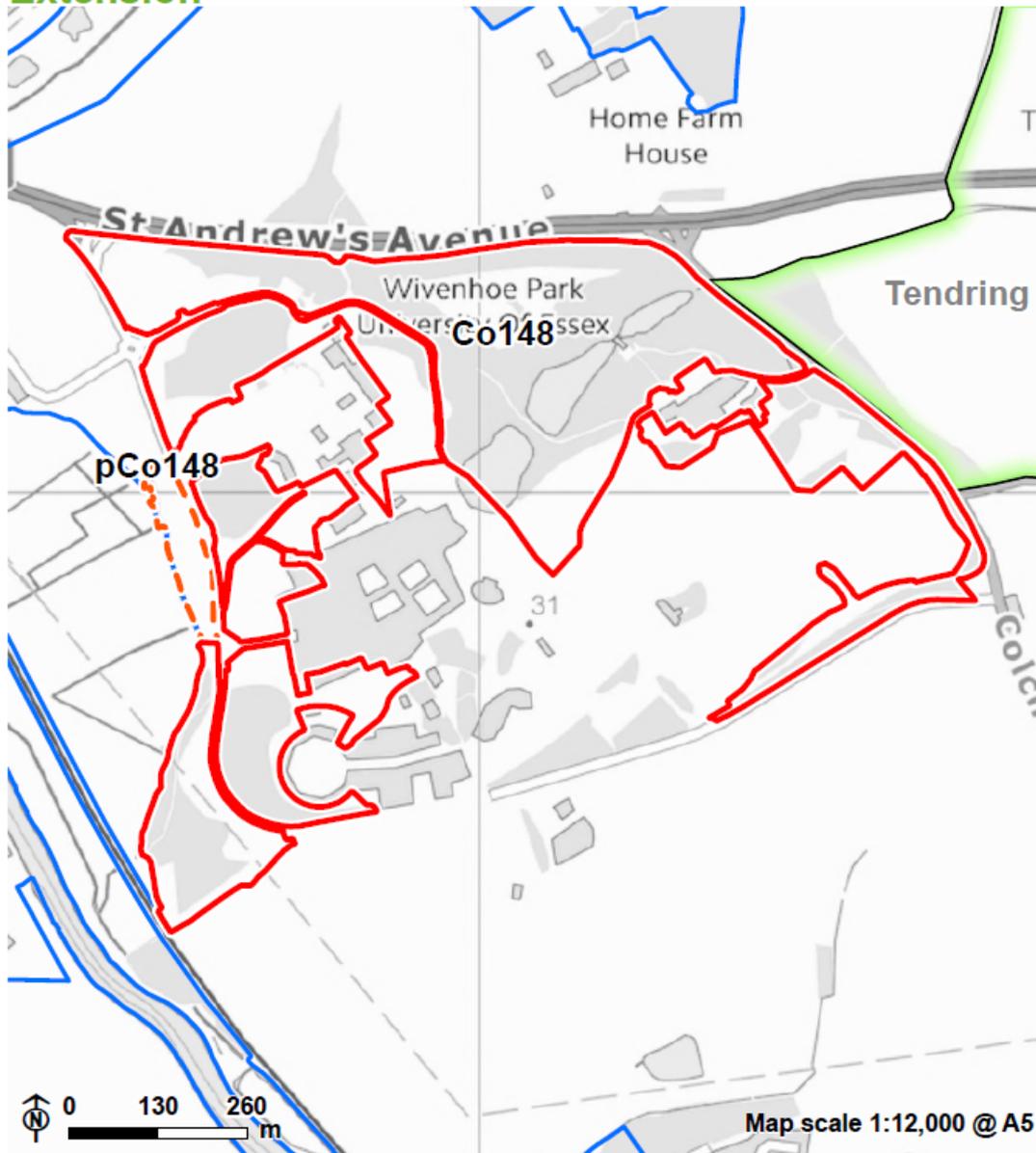
### C.1: Desk Study - Wivenhoe Park Potential Extension



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- |                              |                            |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Potential for extension      | Preferred site allocation  |
| Survey site boundary         | Emerging site allocation   |
| Other LoWS boundary          | Ancient Woodland Inventory |
| Colchester District boundary | Wood Pasture and Parkland  |
| Neighbouring district        | Priority Habitat Inventory |

Wivenhoe Park Proposed Extension

## C.2: Access Constraints and Boundary Changes - Wivenhoe Park Proposed Extension



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- Survey site boundary
- Proposed extension
- Colchester District boundary
- Neighbouring district

Changes to Habitats Since the Previous 2015 Surveys:

Wivenhoe Park Proposed Extension	
Continued development of university buildings in the northwest of the site has reduced the extent of semi-natural habitats.	N/A – area not previously surveyed
Condition Statement:	
<b>Favourable</b> Habitats of mixed deciduous woodland, wood-pasture and parkland and acid grassland are well managed to support a diverse range of important species such as bats, badgers, invertebrates and reptiles.	<b>Favourable</b> There is a mosaic of habitats here, including tall grassland, scrub, deciduous woodland and veteran trees, presenting opportunities for a wide range of wildlife.
Management:	
<b>Good</b> N/A	<b>Satisfactory</b> It appears that this area of Wivenhoe Park is uncut and left largely undisturbed, allowing tussocky grasses and forbs to establish which are beneficial to invertebrates and birds.
Known/Relevant Existing Site Management Plan:	
Extensive management guided by masterplan and focused on improving biodiversity and increasing foraging and sheltering opportunities for protected species such as bats, hedgehogs (reintroduction), birds, reptiles and invertebrates. For example, Nightingale Wood is being specifically managed to offer suitable habitat for nightingales.	The Estates team at the University of Essex has a masterplan which guides management of the whole site. It is unknown what management is undertaken within this area.
Opportunities on Site:	
<b>N/A</b> The site is being well managed and no specific additional opportunities were identified as part of the survey.	<b>N/A</b> N/A
Threats and Disturbances:	
<b>Development, Litter, Invasive non-native species,</b> Development is the main threat to the important habitats and species found at Wivenhoe Park as a large preferred site allocation sits within the site. Invasive non-native species present such as cherry laurel to the west and Spanish bluebell, Buddleia and Rhododendron near the lake and small strands of Buddleia in Nightingale Wood near railway line. Litter, dog fouling and vandalism does occur but this is not a significant issue as it is tackled by the Estates team on a regular basis.	<b>Development</b> Wivenhoe Park LoWS and the proposed extension area are threatened by the future development of the University of Essex. This proposed extension area sits between Wivenhoe Park LoWS and University Marshes LoWS, providing a good buffer habitat between the university development and sensitive marsh habitat, and as such should be kept undeveloped.
Level of Use:	
<b>Moderate</b> Much of the site is freely accessible and used by dog walkers and students.	<b>Low</b> The site is next to Boundary Road, within the university campus, but usage is low due to the presence of other open green spaces which offer more recreational value.
Management Recommendations:	

Wivenhoe Park Proposed Extension		
<p>Management should prioritise protecting the site from further development. Beyond this, it is recommended that invasive non-native plant species around the site are removed. Also, physical barriers in the form of dead hedges or fences could be installed around veteran trees to prevent compaction within the root protection zones.</p>	<p>Firstly, the localised nutrient enrichment evidenced by the presence of creeping thistle, nettle and curled dock within the grassland should be investigated and controlled to allow the grassland to increase in species diversity.</p> <p>Secondly, to ensure the grassland habitat is maintained, the woody scrub should be controlled to prevent further encroachment. The scrub is an equally important habitat, but managing its extent will ensure a high diversity of habitats on site, which benefits a wider range of wildlife.</p>	
LoWS Criteria		
Habitat Selection Criteria		
Woodland, Scrub and Related Habitats:	HC2 - Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient sites HC4 - Wood-pasture and Parkland	HC4 – Wood-pasture and parkland
Additional Comments:	N/A	Survey confirmed the presence of a grassland habitat with veteran oak trees, which means it is eligible under this criterion and can be incorporated into the existing Wivenhoe Park LoWS boundary.
Grassland:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Heathland:	HC13 – Heathland and Acid Grassland	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Wetland Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Open Water Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Coastal Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Other Habitats:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Species Selection Criteria		
Plants:	N/A	N/A

Wivenhoe Park Proposed Extension		
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Birds:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	N/A	N/A
Mammals:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	According to the landowner, surveys carried out by students at the University of Essex have revealed four bat species roosting and seven species foraging on site. Species include noctule, soprano, common and Myotis sp. Involvement with the Essex Bat Group could be sought to confirm whether this site qualifies under SC8, SC9 or SC10 in relation to bats. Badger sets have also been recorded by students between the University Marshes and Wivenhoe Park.	N/A
Amphibians:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	Although several waterbodies are present on site, confirmation was received from the landowner that these are stocked with carp and that there are no known records of GCN. As such, Wivenhoe Park does not meet the criteria for SC13, SC14 or SC15.	N/A
Reptiles:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	The landowner highlighted that there are regular sightings of adder and common lizard on site. A single common lizard was sighted during the survey. However, as the site does not support significant populations of three or more reptile species is not eligible for SC16.	N/A
Invertebrates:	N/A	N/A
Additional Comments:	Beehives have been introduced around the site. Butterflies and moths present in abundance whilst surveying. However, more detailed invertebrate surveys would be required to conclude if it could be classified under a Species Criterion for Invertebrates (SC18, SC19, SC20).	N/A
LoWS Survey Recommendations		
Designated LoWS		
LoWS Survey Recommendation:	De-designation (partial) and proposed extension to the LoWS boundary	
Rationale:	It is recommended that the existing LoWS boundary be updated to remove an area of the developed footprint in the north west of the site. This area has been subject to recent development, and	

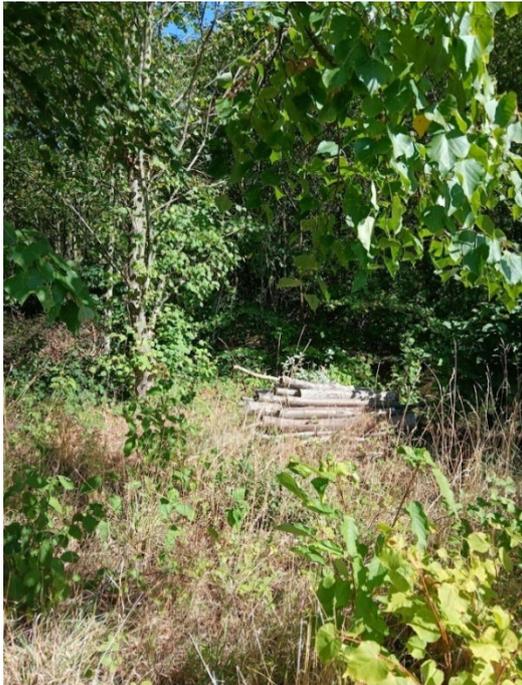
Wivenhoe Park Proposed Extension	
	<p>therefore is recommended for partial de-designation, as this area of the site no longer contributes to the value of the LoWS.</p> <p>At the same time, it is recommended that the proposed extension area to the west of the Wivenhoe Park LoWS, which supports a mosaic of grassland, scrub and deciduous woodland habitats with several veteran oak trees, is included within the boundary since it is eligible under HC4 – Wood-pasture and Parkland and contributes to the value of the LoWS by providing more ecologically valuable habitats.</p>

**Appendix D**  
**Proforma – Site Photos**

### Co128: Birch Brook Wood - Proposed extension area

<p>Mosaic habitat featuring bare ground, grassland, mixed scrub and individual trees.</p>	<p>View of the north section of Rowhedge allotments with scrub habitat and Birch Brook Wood in the background.</p>
	
<p>Widespread patches of bare ground, likely caused by burrowing rabbits, featuring numerous holes created by Hymenoptera.</p>	<p>Dense patches of mixed scrub, including bramble, hawthorn and blackthorn.</p>
	

### Co174: Gosbecks Archaeological Park – Proposed extension area

<p><b>View of the main grassland adjacent to Olivers Lane. Signage to discourage littering and dog fouling.</b></p>	<p><b>Area of grassland left long to provide structural diversity within the Site, increasing its ecological value.</b></p>
	
<p><b>Log pile located in longer sward grassland margin adjacent to Olivers Lane.</b></p>	<p><b>Young woodland area west of Layer Road featuring log piles suitable for insects, amphibians and small mammals.</b></p>
	

<p><b>Recent development along the northern boundary of the Site.</b></p>	<p><b>Barn owl box installed by Essex Wildlife Trust on an individual oak tree with veteran features.</b></p>
	

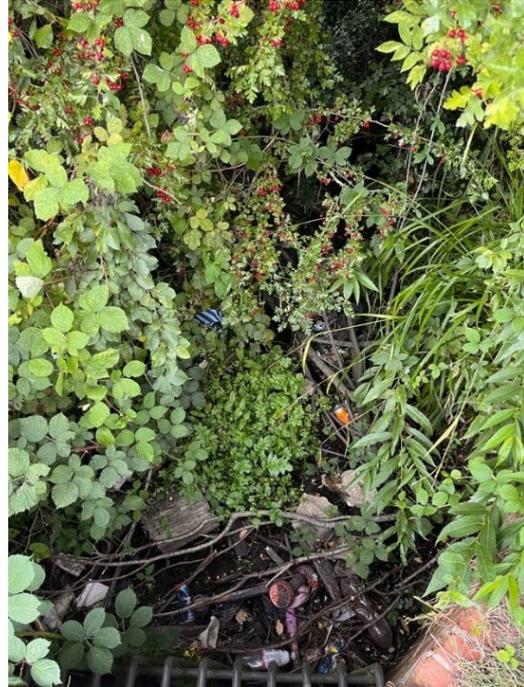
### CNHS\_13: Greenstead Slopes – New LoWS

<p>View of main grassland area from Lime Avenue.</p>	<p>Long sward grassland with pockets of mixed scrub and individual tree saplings.</p>
	
<p>A glade within the mixed deciduous woodland featuring standing deadwood and field maple saplings.</p>	<p>Presence of invasive non-native cherry laurel within woodland adjacent to Porters Brook, likely originating from residential properties behind.</p>
	

**Evidence of fires and vandalism within the mixed deciduous woodland.**



**Evidence of littering and fly tipping within Porters Brook running along the western boundary.**



### CNHS\_24: Harwich Road Recreation Ground – New LoWS

<p>Longer sward grassland with scattered scrub and individual trees.</p>	<p>Signage indicating that the longer sward grassland is not mown between March and September to help improve biodiversity.</p>
	
<p>Anthills created by yellow meadow ants within the longer sward grassland.</p>	<p>Porters Brook running along the eastern boundary of the Site.</p>
	

<p><b>Area of amenity grassland on the western side of Harwich Road Recreation Ground.</b></p>	<p><b>Small copper butterfly recorded in the scrubby woodland margins.</b></p>
	

**Co142: Hythe Lagoons – Potential extension area**

N/A – Survey not carried out as extension area lies within Upper Colne Marshes SSSI.

### Co104: Cymbeline Meadows - Proposed extension area

<p>A small stream leading to the River Colne creates damp conditions within Charter Wood and allows Hart's-tongue fern and Common Male-fern to grow.</p>	<p>Rows of trees within Charter Woods, which is a 10ha mixed broadleaved plantation woodland planted between 1990 and 1995.</p>
	
<p>Boardwalk on the eastern side of Charter Woods, where conditions are damper.</p>	<p>Damp scrub/woodland mosaic near Alderwood Care Home dominated by tall forbs and willow trees.</p>
	

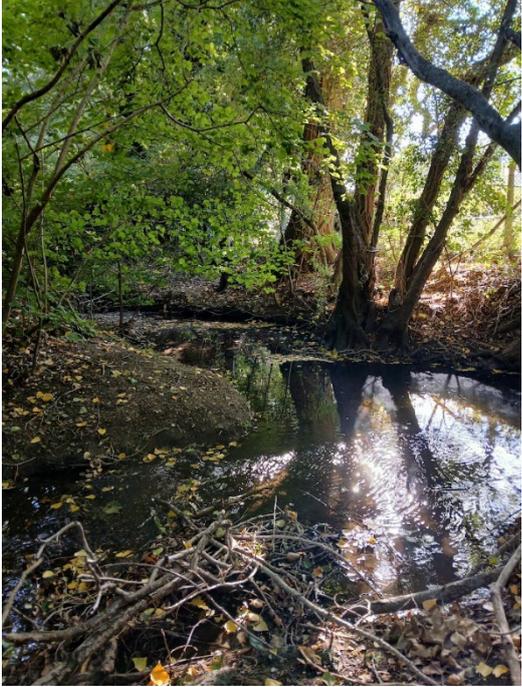
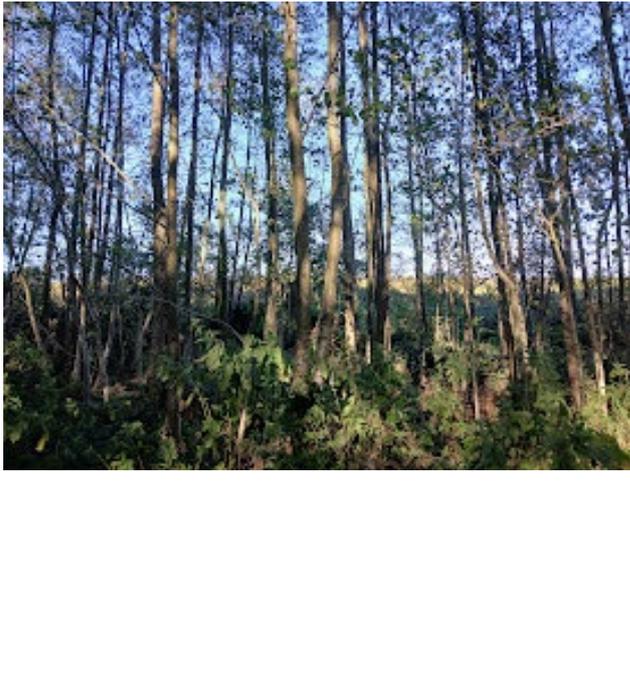
<p><b>Ex-arable fields surrounding Moat Farm (area not to be included within LoWS boundary).</b></p>	<p><b>Grown out, native hedgerows demarcating the ex-arable fields (area not to be included within LoWS boundary).</b></p>
	

**Co122: Middlewick Ranges - Proposed extension area**

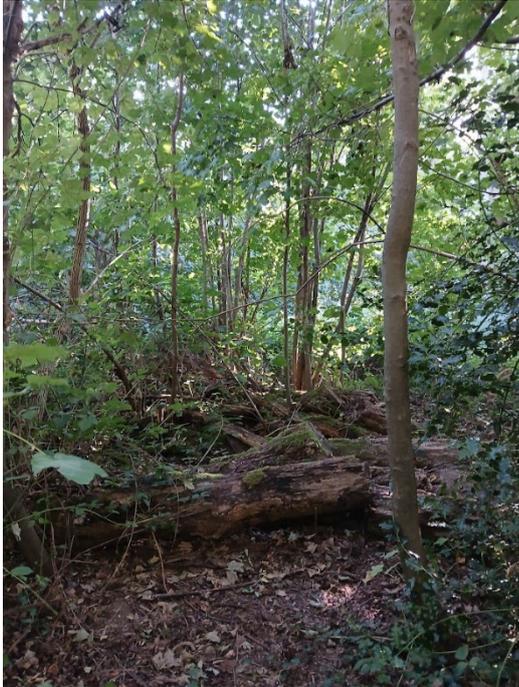
<p>Footpaths through grassland with longer sward length. Oak saplings provide structural diversity.</p>	<p>Footpath through dense blackthorn scrub.</p>
	
<p>Recently mown grassland with patches of bramble scrub left.</p>	<p>Longer sward grassland in the north featuring a higher cover of forbs such as Field Scabious.</p>
	

<p><b>Anthills created by the yellow meadow ant located in the longer sward length grassland.</b></p>	<p><b>Evidence of recent grassland fire in the foreground. Standing deadwood in the background provides an ideal habitat for invertebrates.</b></p>
	

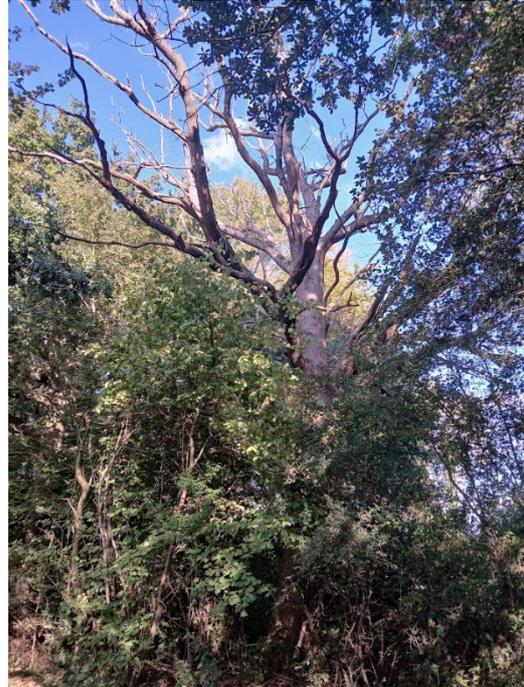
### Co44: Pits Wood - Proposed extension area

<p>The Roman River that meanders through the woodland creating damp conditions.</p>	<p>Hazel trees which appeared to have been coppiced in the past but not recently.</p>
	
<p>English Cricket Bat Willow plantation adjacent to the Roman River.</p>	<p>Naturally regenerated alder woodland towards Copford Hall Wood LoWS.</p>
	

**Deadwood left in situ offers habitat for saproxylic invertebrates.**



**Standing dead wood offers roosting potential for bats.**



### CNHS\_23: City Centre Green Spaces, including Land Lane and Riverside Grasslands – New LoWS

<p>Riverside walk footpath with longer sward grassland to the left and River Colne to the right.</p>	<p>Area of amenity grassland and longer sward grassland with scrub located north of Colchester Roman Wall LoWS.</p>
	
<p>Signage to discourage the dumping of green waste to prevent the spread of invasive non-native species.</p>	<p>Area of stagnant water adjacent to mixed deciduous woodland.</p>
	

**A recently planted community orchard located at Kings Meadow in Castle Park.**

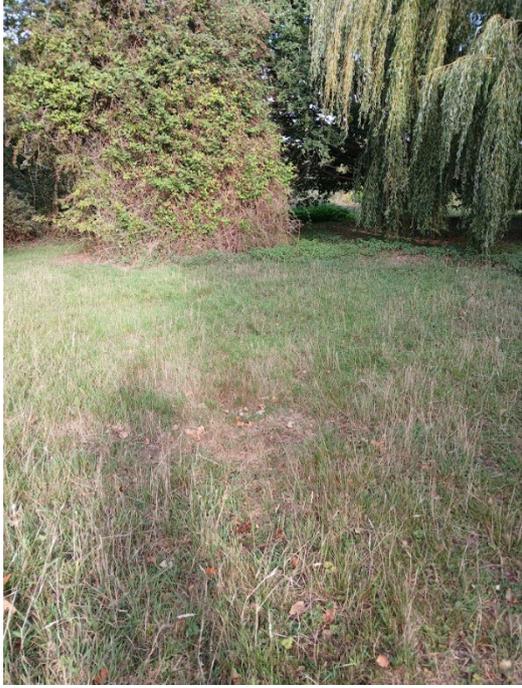


**Shortly mown amenity grassland at Colchester & East Essex Cricket Club. Area not to be included with LoWS boundary.**



**Co55: Seven Star Green – Potential extension area**

<p><b>Mown grassland area with mature oak trees in the background.</b></p>	<p><b>Small pond located adjacent to the crossroads of Daisy Green Road and Turkey Cock Lane.</b></p>
	
<p><b>Recently mown grassland area adjacent to Daisy Green Road.</b></p>	<p><b>Private grassland verge adjacent to Daisy Green Road.</b></p>
	

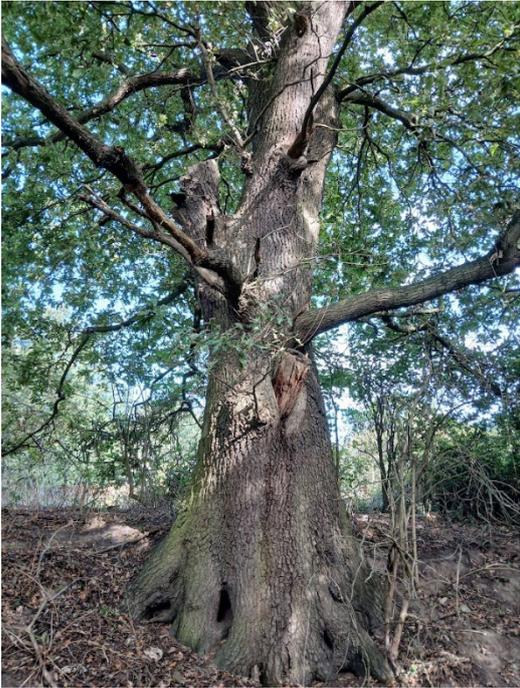
<p><b>Stagnant pond water adjacent to Daisy Green Road.</b></p>	<p><b>Longer sward grassland with a patch of bramble and hawthorn scrub.</b></p>
	

### CHNS\_2: Weir Lane Grassland – New LoWS

<p>Site is dominated by longer sward grassland with patches of scrub and small tree saplings.</p>	<p>View of Birch Brook Wood LoWS on the left and Weir Lane Grassland to the right. Note the recent clearance of scrub and the introduction of a fence.</p>
	

<p>View of southern section of Weir Lane Grassland from Weir Lane Road. This section was completely inaccessible as no PRow intersected it.</p>	<p>Numerous dead and veteran oak trees are within the hedgerows that demarcate the grassland fields.</p>
	
<p>Patch of blackthorn and broom scrub located along the margins of the grassland.</p>	<p>Longer sward grassland featuring numerous forbs such as common toadflax that offer foraging habitat for invertebrates.</p>
	

**Co148: Wivenhoe Park - Proposed extension area**

<p><b>Mosaic of habitat featuring bramble scrub, mature oak trees, and regeneration of ash trees.</b></p>	<p><b>Oak tree with veteran features such as hollowing and deadwood.</b></p>
	
<p><b>Area of longer sward length neutral grassland.</b></p>	<p><b>Oak tree with veteran features such as deadwood.</b></p>
	

Patches of bare ground within longer sward length grassland offer opportunities for burrowing invertebrates.



Mature oak tree with veteran features adjacent to Boundary Road.

