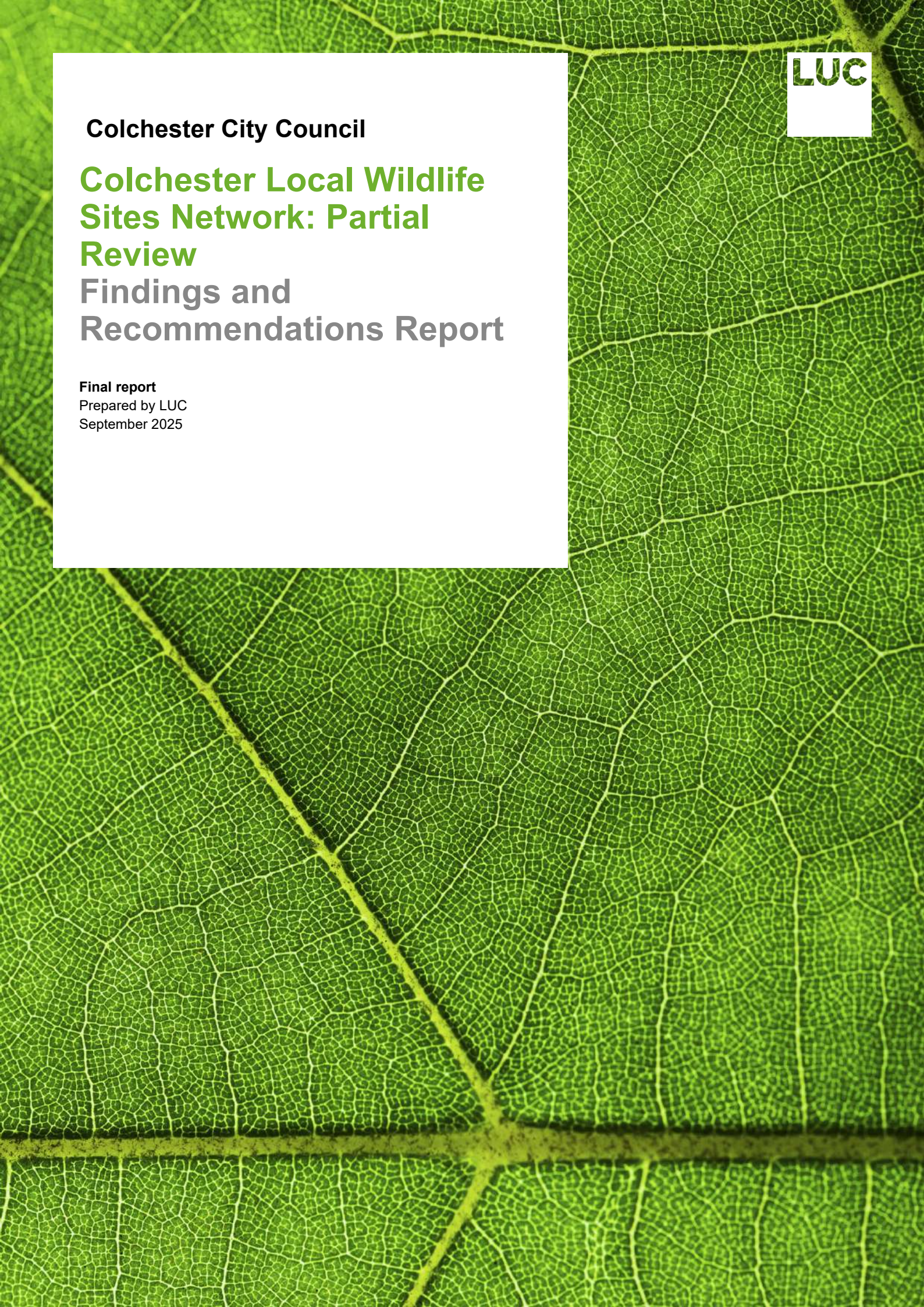

Colchester City Council

Colchester Local Wildlife Sites Network: Partial Review

Findings and Recommendations Report

Final report
Prepared by LUC
September 2025

Colchester City Council

Colchester Local Wildlife Sites Network: Partial Review

Findings and Recommendations Report

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Contents

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 is to be completed in June 2025 to form part of the robust evidence base that informs the Council's emerging new Local Plan to 2041 preferred options of growth.

1.2 This Partial LoWS Review includes the assessment of 26 existing LoWS located within 50m of emerging and/or preferred site allocations coming forwards as part of the new Local Plan. In addition, three potential LoWS will also be included as part of this review, which were previously identified as part of the previous LoWS Review[1]. It is recognised that this is not a full review of the entire LoWS network but rather a targeted, partial review as part of the wider Local Plan evidence base.

1.3 In draft form, this report has been issued to the Essex Wildlife Trust and Colchester Natural History Society for consultation led by the Council. This final issue captures all relevant feedback arising from consultation and responds accordingly.

Project Aims

1.4 The aims of the LoWS Review are to:

- Provide a desk-based review of ecological assets in the district to determine the existing baseline, including statutory and non-statutory designated sites, ancient woodland and priority habitats.
- This review will also consider alignment with the emerging Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)[2], where there may be opportunities to expand the existing LoWS network, and its role in relation to the climate emergency declared by the Council in 2019.
- Collate a baseline for 29 sites within the LoWS network in accordance with the published Essex LoWS Selection Criteria[3]. This will inform recommendations for designation of each of the LoWS subject to site survey.

[1] Essex Ecology Services Limited (2025), Colchester Borough Local Wildlife Site Review.

[2] Essex County Council (2024), Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy

[3] Essex Wildlife Trust (2016) Local Wildlife Site Selection Criteria

- 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.

Context

The Local Plan to 2041

1.5 The Council are in the process of preparing a new Local Plan to 2041, which will consider new national policy and ensure that current and future development needs are met. The Council have carried out early engagement of the Local Plan (Issues and Options) and have drafted a Preferred Options Draft Plan (Regulation 18), which is expected to be published for consultation in late 2025.

1.6 This Partial LoWS Review has considered the list of emerging site allocations, which have then been refined to the preferred list of site allocations that will be taken forward as part of the Regulation 18 Local Plan.

Geographic Context

1.7 The district of Colchester is located in north-east Essex, bordered by Suffolk in the north and by three Essex authorities, including Tendring, Maldon and Braintree to the east, south and west. The city of Colchester lies in the centre east of the district and is surrounded by numerous other smaller towns and villages which are home to 13% of Essex's population making it the most populous district in Essex[4]. Alongside these urban areas, the district is also comprised of agricultural land, woodlands, grasslands, rivers and a large estuarine and coastal area to the southeast, providing a wide variety of important terrestrial and marine habitats.

1.8 The district supports a diverse range of biodiversity assets, including:

- One Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Four Special Protection Areas (SPA)
- Four Ramsar sites
- 10 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- 8 Local Nature Reserves (LNR)
- 175 Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS)
- Irreplaceable habitats including ancient woodland and veteran trees
- Priority habitat including coastal saltmarsh, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, mudflats, reedbeds, maritime cliff and slope, deciduous woodland, lowland meadows, lowland heathland, traditional orchards, lowland fens and good quality semi-improved grassland.

Nature Recovery and Climate Change Resilience: commitments and actions

1.9 Nature recovery and climate change resilience are inextricably linked. The LoWS network is integral to the delivery of nature recovery across the district, and indeed more widely across the county. This section sets out the key policy and strategic commitments to delivering nature recovery, either directly or as part of wider action to address climate change.

1.10 In July 2019, the Council declared a climate emergency and, in response, released the 2023 Climate Action Plan[5], which coordinates and reports on key projects and actions that will reduce emissions and produce positive environmental impacts for the city. Themes and actions of the Plan, include "*Enhance biodiversity and protect our natural environment*", which includes measures designed to protect and enhance biodiversity in the district whilst also recognising the importance and value of biodiversity for people's health and wellbeing.

1.11 In 2021 the Council reaffirmed its commitment to a greener, more thriving future for the district, by supporting the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill, now referred to as the Climate and Nature Bill[6]. The Bill calls for:

> *"A Bill to require the United Kingdom to achieve climate and nature targets; to give the Secretary of State a duty to implement a strategy to achieve those targets; to establish a Climate and Nature Assembly to advise the Secretary of State in creating that strategy; to give duties to the Committee on Climate Change and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee regarding the strategy and targets; and for connected purposes."*
>
> UK Parliament Website, January 2025.

1.12 In recognition of the biodiversity emergency, the 2021 Environment Act requires a national nature network delivered through a series of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS). Colchester is located within the Essex LNRS, which is led by

[4] Office for National Statistics (2022). Population and household estimates, England and Wales: Census 2021.
[5] Colchester City Council (2023), Colchester City Council Climate Emergency Action Plan 2024-2027
[6] Available here: Climate and Nature Bill - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament

Essex County Council. The LoWS network, along with the national and international designated site network, form the core of the nature network which aims to ensure nature is 'bigger, better and more connected'[7] for nature to recover and thrive. Thriving ecosystems optimise resilience to climate change whilst delivering ecosystem services such as air and water regulation, and to support people's health and wellbeing.

1.13 The draft Essex LNRS[8] was subject to public consultation between 30 August 2024 to 25 October 2024. Publication is anticipated in July 2025 and will be supported by a launch event. Once published, it will act as a tool to drive action for nature recovery and bring about benefits for nature and the wider environment.

Existing Ecological Evidence

1.14 The Council has collated a range of ecological evidence relating to the LoWS network, to biodiversity and to various allocation sites. The most relevant of these were provided to LUC for consideration as part of the desk-based based study. This includes the 2015 Colchester LoWS Review[1] and the Emerging Allocations Biodiversity Assessment[9] and Strategic Biodiversity Assessment[10]. The full list is provided in **Chapter 3**: **Approach**.

Structure

1.15 This Chapter presented the purpose and aims of this report and provided context on the natural environment in Colchester and how this relates to key changes in planning policy and legislation relating to the climate and biodiversity emergency and nature recovery.

1.16 The structure of the remainder of the report is as follows:

- **Chapter 2** summarises the legal and policy context influencing the designation and protection of LoWS in the district of Colchester.
- **Chapter 3** outlines the method used for the desk study and site surveys of the LoWS review.
- **Chapter 4** presents the results of the desk study, offering a network-focused approach to the LoWS review.
- **Chapter 5** summarises the outcomes of the LoWS surveys and provides recommendations regarding LoWS and key considerations in relation to preferred options of growth coming forward as part of the new Local Plan .

[7] The concepts of bigger, better and more joined up" was envisaged in the Government White Paper: Lawton, J. (2010). Making Space for Nature: A review of England's wildlife sites and ecological network
[8] Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (draft), 2024. Essex County Council. Available here: https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/c-e/lnrs-public-consultation
[9] Place Services (2024), Emerging Allocations Biodiversity Assessment.
[10] Place Services (2024). Strategic Biodiversity Assessment.

Chapter 2
Legal and Policy Context

2.1 This Chapter provides an overview of how legislation and policy at the national, regional and district levels relate to the designation, safeguarding and management of the LoWS network. Relevant targets are highlighted as well as published actions and projects identified to achieve these, that are relevant to the LoWS network.

National Policy

2021 Environment Act

Nature Recovery Targets

2.2 The Environment Act is UK's framework for environmental protection. It binds the ambition of Defra's 25-Year Environment Plan (25YEP)[11] – to protect and enhance England's environment for future generations – into law. This sets long-term goals and ambitions for environmental improvements, including what we now term nature recovery. The legally binding targets that relate to biodiversity in the Act, and the subsequent Environment Improvement Plan (EIP) 2023, are summarised as:

- Restore or create in excess of 500,000ha of a range of wildlife-rich habitat outside protected sites by 2042, compared to 2022 levels, with interim targets set in the EIP for 140,000ha by 2028.
- Increase total tree and woodland cover from 14.5% of land area now to 16.5% by 2050, with interim targets set in the 2023 EIP to increase this by 0.26% by 31 January 2028.
- Halt the decline in species populations by 2030, and then increase populations by at least 10% to exceed current levels by 2042.
- Improve the Red List Index for species extinction risk by 2042, compared to 2022 levels.
- Reduce nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and sediment pollution from agriculture into the water environment by at least 40% by 2038, compared to a 2018 baseline.

2.3 The LoWS network is core to the nature recovery network, along with nationally and international designated

[11] 2018 DEFRA 25 Year Environment Plan (25YEP) 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment'

sites, hence; has a role in delivering these overarching targets.

The Biodiversity Duty

2.4 The 2021 Act also imposes an enhanced biodiversity duty[12], [13] on local authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England through the process of exercising of their functions. This requires local authorities to determine policies and specific objectives and take action to further the general biodiversity objective. This mandates the requirement to review all policies related to nature conservation every five years in support of these targets. It also requires local authorities to report on their actions, achievements and targets ahead, similarly in five year cycles.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS)

2.5 To achieve the aforementioned targets, the Act advocates for the establishment of LNRS. Colchester forms part of the Essex LNRS, for which the responsible authority is Essex County Council. The LNRS are spatial planning frameworks developed at the sub-regional level to enhance nature, guided by national priorities. Collectively, LNRS establish a nationwide nature recovery network of wildlife-rich locations that expands, enhances, and connects across the country.

2.6 LNRS play a pivotal role in determining the priorities for nature's recovery, mapping the most valuable existing areas for nature conservation, and outlining specific proposals for creating or improving habitats.

2.7 To meet the overarching aim of the national LNRS to create “networks of bigger, better and more connected habitats”, the Essex LNRS draft report prioritise the creation of 18,000 hectares of new woodland, 22,000 hectares of new grassland and 3,100 hectares of new habitats in urban areas, alongside the expansion of existing habitats.

2.8 The Council has a statutory requirement to “align their objectives and policies in the Local Plan with the goals and priorities outlined in the LNRS”. This will mean ensuring that land use allocations in the Local Plan work in combination with the LNRS to achieve the national aim of nature recovery and biodiversity conservation.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

2.9 Mandatory BNG was established under the 2021 Act, becoming mandatory in early 2024, requiring development to achieve a minimum of 10% BNG and must be delivered over a legacy period of at least 30 years. This pushes towards greater integration between planning and environmental protection.

2.10 BNG is a tool to help ensure the delivery of enhancement as part of development planning applications, beyond ‘no net loss’ nature recovery. BNG applies where unavoidable detrimental impacts on habitat are predicted. Essentially a system to quantify mitigation and compensation, it is not applicable to irreplaceable habitats and on protected sites, only in very select circumstances.

2.11 A spatial hierarchy applies to BNG delivery; delivery should be prioritised on site (maintain the permeability of newly built development. Where this is unavoidable, off-site delivery may be considered. BNG cannot be delivered within statutory designated sites to maintain or reinstate favourable conservation status. However, there is potential to deliver BNG within LoWS and its supporting network, which buffer, and connect these designated sites. Where LoWS are already of high-quality, BNG may be more effectively used to deliver nature-rich habitats in the supporting network through habitat creation and enhancement. This may also allow for the expansion of the network by bringing undesignated sites up to LoWS quality and therefore suitable for designation.

2.12 The Council has recommended developers to prioritise on-site BNG, in recognition that this is a key tool in restoring and enhancing biodiversity within the district. However, the Council has recognised that there will be a need for off-site BNG delivery and between 14 June 2024 and 26 July 2026, carried out a ‘BNG call for sites’ consultation to help consider land within the district which could be used for instances where on-site delivery of BNG was not possible. This followed and supplemented an earlier call for sites (winter 2024/25) in which no BNG sites had been submitted. Nine sites were submitted to the BNG call for sites. These sites were analysed by Place Services and four sites were considered to have high significance. In principle, where BNG is successfully delivered sufficient to meet the Essex criteria, these sites may in the future contribute to the LoWS network.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

2.13 The latest publication of the NPPF (December 2024) sets out the approach that Local Plans should take in relation to biodiversity. Paragraph 179 states that Plans should “identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and

[12] Complying with the biodiversity duty - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

[13] Reporting your biodiversity duty actions: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/reporting-your-biodiversity-duty-actions

local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation".

2.14 Further to this:

> "Plans should also promote conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats and species, ecological networks and support measurable targets for multi-functional areas and net gains for biodiversity".

2.15 A strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure is to be supported through planning policies. This identifying and mapping includes those LoWS as sites locally important for nature and protected within the planning system.

2.16 When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles (Paragraph 180): *"if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigation or, as a last resort, compensated for, them planning permission should be refused"*.

Other Imperatives and Duties in the Conservation of Habitats and Species

2.17 Forming the bedrock for nature conservation efforts, the following legislation establishes the imperative and duties that both the Government and supporting local authorities must adhere to. The LoWS criteria reflect these conservation priorities, hence; the network supports a substantial proportion of these habitats and species, where they occur within Colchester:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (Annexes I and II) include the habitats and species of importance at the European level that are legally protected within the UK.
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) forms the principal legislation which transposes the EU Regulations into UK law.
- Additionally, the 2006 Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act (as amended) mandates:
  - Public and local authorities bear a duty to consider *"the conservation of biodiversity in exercising their functions."* This encompasses the development of local policies and strategies, involvement in planning and development control, and the management of their estates (see earlier subheading of 2021 Environment Act: the Biodiversity Duty).
  - The list of habitats and species of primary importance is enshrined within Section 41 of the NERC Act. These lists are incorporated into the Priority Habitat Inventory map (PHI), maintained at the national level by Natural England.

Local Policy

Colchester City Council Statutory Development Plan

2.18 Colchester City Local Plan 2013-2033: North Essex Authorities' Shared Strategic Section 1 provides a shared strategic policy context and deals with cross boundary matters for North Essex together with Braintree and Tendring Councils. This plan was adopted by Colchester City Council on 2 February 2021.

2.19 Colchester City Council Local Plan 2017-33, Section 2 provides the policy framework, site allocations and development management policies for the district up to 2033. This plan was adopted on 4 July 2022.

2.20 The Council are now preparing a new Local Plan, which ensures that the plan aligns with any new national policy and that current and future development needs are able to be met.

2.21 The following policies have been extracted from the Regulation 18 Local Plan Review (February 2025), and which are relevant to the assessment:

- Policy EN1: Nature Conservation Designated Sites – this policy outlines the protection afforded to nature conservation designated sites, including local designations.
- Policy EN2: Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Environmental Net Gain – this policy outlines the requirement for the delivery of 10% BNG and refers to the LNRS strategic opportunity mapping. This includes detail on specific strategic offsite BNG sites, including those at Chipping Farm, which lies adjacent to a LoWS and Brook Meadows, which is designated as LoWS.

2.22 In addition, there are protection and safeguarding measures, including the requirement for buffers and expansion of LoWS, provided under specific development management policies.

Colchester City Council Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

2.23 In response to its declaration of the climate emergency, the Council drafted three SPDs to communicate the ambitions in relation to the climate emergency for development in the district. These include the Biodiversity SPD, which sets out principles that the council expects development to achieve to ensure that proposals create space for nature. This document identifies the importance of LoWS as part of the nature recovery network and the need to consult with the Essex

Wildlife Trust should any development come forward affecting these non-statutory designated sites.

Colchester Climate Emergency Action Plan 2024-2027

2.24 The Action to 'Enhance biodiversity and protect our natural environment' identifies the following key projects that relate to the LoWS network:

- Create new habitats at the Cymbeline Meadows LoWS. Converting farmland through the provision of tree planting and the creation of wildflower meadows to create habitats for wildlife.
- Deliver a river restoration project at Cymbeline Meadows to reduce riverbank erosion and improve water quality. Offering free trees and shrubs to residents, community groups and schools as part of the "Trees for Years" campaign.
- Reducing the mowing of green spaces, to help rewild areas and encourage growth of grasses and wildflowers which support insects and pollinators.
- Deliver improvements at the Ferry Marsh SSSI that benefit local wildlife as well as manage access for the public.
- Managing Colchester's green spaces for the benefit of biodiversity, including using only peat free compost on our green spaces and not using glyphosate herbicides. We have also started producing wood chippings from our green waste to use as mulch in the parks.

Essex Climate Action Commission (ECAC) Report 2021

2.25 An independent body called the Essex Climate Action Commission (ECAC) has been set up by Essex County Council in recognition of the role of planning in mitigating the climate and biodiversity crises. The 2021 report recommends that at least 30% of land in Essex to be managed as Natural Green Infrastructure such as woodlands, meadows and wetlands by 2040[14].

2.26 The Blackwater and Colne River catchment areas, both of which are partially located within the Colchester district, have been selected as Climate Focus Areas (CFA) under the ECAC's recommendations. Work is therefore underway in these locations to accelerate climate action and reverse biodiversity decline and to act as an example for other locations within Colchester and Essex.

[14] Essex Climate action Plan (2021-2025), 2021. Essex County Council. Available here: https://www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-12/Climate%20Action%20Plan%20-%2008.12.23.pdf

Chapter 3
Approach

Consultation

3.1 The approach to this Review has been informed by consultation with the Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT) and Colchester Natural History Society (CNHS). As part of an iterative process, a draft version of this report was circulated for consultation. The process was led by the Council, who have moderated the comments provided for LUC to review.

3.2 The majority of the comments provided were in agreement with the findings and recommendations of the report; a reflection of historic work by the Council to refine the list of sites under consideration for development allocation in the forthcoming Local Plan, as well as the adherence of LUC to the established process for assessing LoWS in Essex.

3.3 All relevant comments requiring action have been addressed in this report or, where these relate to considerations for the wider Local Plan process and policy development, are being taken forwards for consideration by the Council.

Identification of Additional Sites

3.4 Sites originally identified for inclusion in the Review through discussion with the Council (see subheading 'Site Selection' below are referred to as Tranche 1 (29 sites). Based on the results and recommendations arising from the Tranche 1 surveys, a selection of additional sites for extension were identified; these are referred to as Tranche 2 (eight sites).

3.5 As a result of consultation with EWT and CNHS, a total of five additional potential LoWS sites as outlined in **Appendix C** were identified for inclusion in this review in addition to the original 29 (now referred to as Tranche 1 sites). These are referred to as Tranche 3 and will be reported in addendum once survey and assessment is fully complete.

Table 3.1 Tranche 3 - Sites

Tranche 3 - Sites
Greenstead Slopes
City Centre Green Spaces, including Land Lane and Riverside Grasslands
Weir Lane Grasslands

Tranche 3 - Sites
Cymbeline Meadow Extension
Harwich Road Recreation Ground

3.6 Additional consultation with the Council's Local Plan Committee, led by the client team, 11 site allocations were identified for inclusion in this assessment. These are referred to as Tranche 4 and will be reported in addendum.

Table 3.2 Tranche 4 - Sites

Tranche 4 - Sites
Site allocation – 10165 Land North of Woolmer Green
Site allocation – 10256 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 Highlands, Tiptree
Site allocation – 10621 Land at St Ives Road, Peldon
Site allocation – 10656 Land north of Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green
Site allocation – 10657 Land North Oak Road, Tiptree
Site allocation – 10758 Land west of The Folley, Layer de la Haye
Site allocation – 10759 The Furze, Layer de La Haye
Site allocation – 10761 Land off Bakers Lane, Braiswick
Site allocation – 10952 Braiswick, Colchester Road
Site allocation – 10956 Rowhedge Business Park, Rectory Road, Rowhedge

Site Selection

Identification of Emerging Site Allocations

3.7 A final list of 73 proposed allocations was provided by the Council for inclusion in this review. This comprised a total area of 224ha across the district with four emerging site allocations located abutting the adjacent districts. This included Land South of Marks Tey, Land North of Bromley Road, Buildings Farm and Welshwood Park (the latter three form part of the same proposed allocation – North East Colchester).

Identification of LoWS and potential LoWS for Assessment

Tranche 1 Sites

3.8 To identify sites for survey, 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. This list of sites allocations known as 'emerging site allocations' have been identified prior to the Regulation 18 stage of the plan and have been included in this review to inform decision-making and process. It should be noted that these sites have and will be refined further as part of the plan-making process.

3.9 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, potentially on LoWS at greater distance, may be required in later stages of the planning process, if/as 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.

3.10 Following consultation with the Council, it was agreed that the following sites would be taken forward for survey as part of this review:

- Of the 175 LoWS in the district, a total of 25 LoWS will be taken forward for review.
- An additional LoWS (TE6 Wall's Wood) located in Tendring District will be included for assessment, which lies adjacent to one of the emerging site allocation,10616a: North East Colchester.
- In addition to this, a further three sites identified as potential LoWS (PCLoWS) in the 2015 LoWS review[15] will be taken forward assessment as part of this review. Potential LoWS are those sites identified for consideration under the LoWS criteria but which are not yet designated as such. See **Table 3.5** below for detail on the definition of a PCLoWS. This included:

[15] Essex Ecology Services Limited (2015) Colchester Borough Local Wildlife Site Review 2015. Available here: https://cbccrmdata.blob.core.windows.net/noteattachment/CBC00033%20Colchester%20Borough%20LoWS%20Review%202015%20Final%20Version%20November%202017.pdf

- PCLoWS9: St Botolph's Sidings, Colchester
- PCLows8: Black Heath, Colchester
- PCLoWS1: Messing Park

3.11 The total 29 LoWS sites was agreed with Colchester City Council.

3.12 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 is 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. This report, therefore, provides consideration of the wider network as part of the desk-study, as detailed under the relevant later subheading.

Tranche 2 Sites

3.13 In response to the findings and recommendations that arose, 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**. The results and recommendations and will be reported in addendum.

Tranche 3 Sites

3.14 As noted earlier, five additional potential LoWS were identified by CNHS for inclusion in this review and will be reported in addendum.

Tranche 4 Sites

3.15 As noted earlier 11 site allocations were identified following Consultation with the Local Plan Committee and will be reported in addendum.

Summary

3.16 Reference should be made to **Appendix C**, which provides a summary list of all sites subject to assessment as part of this review process, including the additional sites identified following consultation. A summary is provided in **Table 3.3**.

Table 3.3 Summary of sites subject to assessment in this review

Tranche Number	Number of Sites	Type of site
1	29	LoWS (26) Potential LoWS (3)
2	8	LoWS - extensions
3	5	Potential LoWS sites
4	11	Site allocations

3.17 Reference should be made to **Figure 1, Appendix A**, which maps the LoWS and previously identified potential LoWS of Tranches 1 for which assessment is complete.

Desk Study

Local Nature Recovery in Essex

3.18 The first step of this assessment involved the review of the draft Essex LNRS as part of this desk study and identified key aspects in relation to Colchester, including:

- Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs) – as defined in the draft LNRS
- Priority Species – as defined in the draft LNRS. This included consideration of Important Plant Areas (IPAs) and Important Invertebrate Areas (IIAs).

3.19 Recognising the need to accommodate the Council's commitments to future nature recovery, particularly in relation to the changing climate, consideration was given to strategic creation opportunities within Colchester. The following spatial dataset was used:

- Strategic Creation Opportunities – as defined in the draft LNRS.

Review of Biodiversity Assets across the District

3.20 The next step (Step 2) of assessment identified the existing biodiversity assets across the district as a whole, and to provide strategic context for evaluating LoWS in Colchester.

3.21 The spatial datasets listed below were mapped to inform this assessment. Ancient and veteran tree data was not available at the time of assessment.

- Statutory and non-statutory designated nature conservation sites (SAC, SPA, SSSI, Ramsar, Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and LoWS) within 5km. It should be noted that LoWS were identified within district only.
- Ancient woodland inventory
- Ancient tree inventory
- Priority habitat inventory

- Rivers, streams canals, lakes, ponds and other waterbodies – Ordnance Survey mapping
- Important Invertebrate Areas (IIA)
- Important Plant Areas (IPA)

3.22 Following this, an overview was provided on the representation of these biodiversity assets in relation to the LoWS network.

3.23 It should be noted that this review has taken a designated sites and habitat-led approach. Species considerations – to inform the LoWS species selection criteria – have been brought through based on priority species drawn from the LNRS and using the publicly available datasets as follows:

- Important Invertebrate Areas (IIA)
- Important Plant Areas (IPA)

3.24 Review of the baseline data for each site selected for survey is described under the later subheading of 'Site Survey and Assessment'.

Proposed Allocations: An overview

3.25 To generate an overview of emerging site allocations identified for inclusion within the Local Plan in relation to the biodiversity assets across the district as a whole, the site boundaries were overlaid on the district wide habitat biodiversity baseline from step 2.

3.26 Headline information drawn from this included:

- Overlap with international and national designated sites
- Overlap with LNR
- Overlap with to LoWS
- Overlap with ancient woodland
- Overlap with mapped priority habitats
- Overlap with Strategic Creation Opportunities.

3.27 It is recognised that not all allocation sites to be assessed will be adopted. Accordingly, cumulative considerations are not in depth.

Site Survey and Assessment

Review of Baseline Information for Each Site

3.28 A systematic review of the baseline information for each LoWS 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. 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

3.29 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.

3.30 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

3.31 A site survey was undertaken for the Tranche 1 sites (26 LoWS and three potential LoWS) identified and agreed in consultation with the Council at the project outset. These site surveys were carried out between April 2025 and May 2025. This timeframe is, in part driven by the Local Plan programme but is during the early flowering season to allow for optimal opportunities for floral identification, particularly for rare and notable woodland species. It is recognised that late 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.

3.32 Tranche 2 and 3 sites are scheduled for survey in September 2025 and will be reported in addendum.

3.33 Tranche 4 sites identified for survey following a desk-based assessment will be undertaken from March 2026 and will be reported in addendum.

3.34 This survey was undertaken in accordance with the LoWS Selection Criteria[16], which has been specifically developed to enable the identification of LoWS in Essex. Detailed habitat survey does not form part of this project scope.

Site Evaluation

3.35 The LoWS and potential LoWS subject to survey was be assessed against the LoWS Selection Criteria, which is set out in **Table 3.4** 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

[16] Local Wildlife Site Selection Criteria, 2016. Essex Local Wildlife Sites Partnership.

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 3.4 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 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

Criteria	
	HC31 – Accessible Natural Greenspace
Species Selection Criteria[17]	
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 SC19 – Invertebrates listed as Species of Principal Importance in England SC19 – Important Invertebrate Assemblages SC20 – Notable 'flagship' macro-invertebrates

3.36 The LoWS Review will also include a set of recommendations using the categories described below in **Table 3.5**.

Table 3.5 Assessment Categories

Category	Description
Designated LoWS	
Retain – No change	The LoWS has maintained its value and at which no significant intervention for restoration, enhancement or creation are identified.
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.

[17] These criteria have been developed to ensure tat sites with specific interest, which do not qualify under the habitat selection criteria are considered on their species interest alone.

Category	Description
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.
Pre-designated Sites	
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 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

3.37 For transparency, the extent of survey access for each site was recorded within the site proforma and shown with the Site maps within **Appendix A**.

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

3.39 Two sites were entirely inaccessible – St Botolphs Sidings and Hythe Brownfield. As both of these were not accessible for survey, no recommendation could be concluded; hence, these are distinctly listed in the recommendations table (Chapter 5, Table 5.1).

3.40 Restricted access applied to the sites listed below.

- Partial Access:
  - Lexden Dyke
  - Wall's Wood
  - The Moors
  - Chappel Ponds and Millenium Green
  - Rowhedge Pits
  - Donyland Wetlands
  - University Marshes
  - Hythe Lagoons
  - Cymbeline Meadows
  - Middlewick Ranges
  - Stanway Pit
- No access but viewed from public footpaths:
  - Fiddler's Wood
  - Birch Brook Wood
  - Black Heath

Chapter 4
Desk Study

4.1 This Chapter sets out the results of the desk study and offers an overview of the biodiversity assets, including designated sites, irreplaceable habitat, priority habitats and species within Colchester.

Local Nature Recovery in Essex

Areas of Particular Importance

4.2 The LNRS contains maps of the APIB within Essex. These APIB include national conservation sites, local nature reserves and other areas such as LoWS and irreplaceable habitat. As of February 2024, 14.22% of Essex was covered by APIB. Further detail on these biodiversity assets is presented from para 4.5 below.

Priority Species

4.3 The Essex LNRS has produced a priority species shortlist which identifies 28 species considered to be a priority in terms of recovery and has identified where these species have been recorded in the highest numbers since 1990. The district of Colchester has recorded high levels of some of these species in comparison to neighbouring districts in Essex. This is the case for bird species such as lapwing, nightingale, ringed plover, swift, turtle dove, flora species such as green winged orchid and lesser calamint, invertebrate species such as digger wasp, native oyster and stag beetle and mammal species such as water vole and western hedgehog. These species rely on a range of habitat types, including but not limited to arable farmland, woodland and river corridors, for which Essex, including Colchester, provide an importance resource and has significant potential through nature recover to support these priority and endangered species.

Strategic Creation Opportunities

4.4 The LNRS draft report also identified locations within Essex that could become APIB. These strategic creation opportunities were selected following a multi-criteria evaluation analysis which considered local priorities, the type of habitat to be created, whether it would significantly improve biodiversity and the extent to which it would connect isolated habitats and extend current nature corridors. According to the report, 30.18% of Essex is covered by strategic creation opportunity areas. These have the potential to deliver the most benefits for nature and the wider environment.

Review of Biodiversity Assets across the District

Designated Site Network

4.5 Designated sites form the core of the nature network. These are organised hierarchically, from international, national to locally important. The LoWS network provides support to the upper hierarchy by providing ecological connectivity between sites, in the form of corridors and stepping stones between sites, by buffering and diluting pressures such as recreational activity (where accessible), pollution and climate change. It should be recognised that this assessment focused on biodiversity assets within the district only.

4.6 Reference should be made to **Figure 2**, **Appendix A**, which illustrates the LoWS network within the district and the designated site network within 5km of the district of Colchester.

International and European Designations

4.7 **Essex Estuaries SAC** is the only SAC within the district. This SAC is located in the southeast, along the estuarine and coastal boundary of the district and covers 5.6% of the total area of the district. It is characterised by the estuary, open coast mudflats, saltmarshes, salt meadows and sandbanks, all of which the SAC is designated for.

4.8 **Blackwater Estuary (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 4) SPA and Ramsar site, Colne Estuary (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 2) SPA and Ramsar Site, Stour and Orwell Estuaries SPA and Ramsar** are the six SPA and Ramsar sites located within the district of Colchester, covering 8.2% of the total district area. Abberton Reservoir SPA and Ramsar lies wholly within the district located towards the south. The SPA and Ramsar site is one of the most important reservoirs in the country for overwintering waterfowl, as well as for supporting significant numbers of moulting birds in autumn and a large colony of breeding cormorants in the summer months. The Blackwater Estuary and Colne Estuary SPAs and Ramsar sites are partially located in the southeast of the district and overlap the Essex Estuaries SAC. Near the northeast boundary of Colchester's district, a small area of Stour and Orwell Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site can be found. These sites are designated for supporting coastal habitats, invertebrate species, and breeding and overwintering waterfowl.

4.9 A review of LoWS in relation to the international and European designated site network found that nine LoWS abut Essex Estuaries SAC, Blackwater Estuary SPA and Ramsar site and Colne Estuary SPA and Ramsar site. None were found to directly overlap the SAC, SPAs and Ramsar sites itself.

National Designations

4.10 Both the **Blackwater Estuary (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 4)** and the **Colne Estuary (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 2)** are designated as National Nature Reserves (NNR).

4.11 Abberton Reservoir, Colne Estuary, Blackwater Estuary and Stour and Orwell Estuaries, which have been identified above as SPA and Ramsar sites, all have Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) status. It should be noted that in relation to the Stour and Orwell Estuaries, the SSSI is referred to as the Cattawade Marshes. In addition to these sites, there are six further sites with SSSI status within the district. These are as follows: **Bullock Wood, Marks Tey Brickpit, Roman River, Tiptree Heath, Upper Colne Marshes and Wivenhoe Gravel Pit.** These are scattered around the district but most of them are located towards the southeast.

4.12 A review of LoWS in the district identified one LoWS to overlap with the SSSI network:

- Marks Tey Brick Pit LoWS overlaps Mark Teys Brick Pit SSSI.

4.13 A further 21 LoWS were identified to abut Blackwater Estuary, Roman River, Upper Colne Marshes and Colne Estuary SSSI. In two instances, the LoWS provided connection between two SSSIs, including between Roman River and Upper Colne Marshes SSSI, and Blackwater Estuary and Colne Estuary SSSI.

Local Designations

4.14 **Bull Meadows, Colne, Hilly Fields, Lexden Park, Salary Brook, Spring Lane Meadows, Tiptree Parish Field and Welsh Wood** are the eight Local Nature Reserves (LNR) located within the district. These cover 0.3% of the district, with most of them located close to the city or towards the east. Whilst relatively small in area, these contribute to permeability through landscapes of intensive urban and agricultural land use. Habitats found within these LNRs consist primarily of grassland, marshland and woodland. A review of LoWS in relation to the LNR network identified all LNR to overlap a LoWS in the district.

4.15 The entire LoWS network across Colchester includes **175 LoWS**, which covers 5.96% of the district. These sites are located across the district with increased concentration through the centre around Colchester City, Wivenhoe and Tiptree.

Irreplaceable Habitat

4.16 Reference should be made to **Figure 3**, **Appendix A**, which illustrates the ancient woodland inventory within 1km of the district of Colchester and how this relates to the LoWS network.

4.17 The ancient woodland inventory covers an area of 552.2 hectares, scattered over the district, with 86.3% of it located within the LoWS network. The total cover of ancient woodland across the network is amounts to 23.1%.

4.18 The priority habitat inventory supports the following irreplaceable habitat, which is present within the district:

- Coastal saltmarsh – this comprises an area of 654.9ha of which 0.8% is located within the LoWS.
- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, coastal saltmarsh – this comprises a total area of 0.8ha of which 0.003% is located within the LoWS network.
- Lowland fen – this comprises a total area of 3ha of which 0.1% is located within the LoWS network.

Priority and Notable Habitats

4.19 Reference should be made to **Figure 4**, **Appendix A,** which illustrates the priority habitat inventory (PHI) within 1km of the district of Colchester and how this relates to the LoWS network.

4.20 Colchester supports 14 different priority habitats, which extend across 5380.1 hectares of the district, in scattered distribution. 23% of these priority habitats are located within the LoWS network. More detail is provided below for each priority habitat.

4.21 **Deciduous woodland** is the most extensive priority habitat within the district of Colchester, extending over an area of 1917.7 hectares. This is scattered within the district and plays an important role in habitat connectivity in landscape which is dominated by arable fields. Nearly half of the area covered by deciduous woodland is located within the LoWS network.

4.22 The next three most extensive priority habitats are **Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh** covering an area of 1062.3 hectares, **Mudflats** covering an area of 1004.1 hectares and **Coastal saltmarsh** covering an area of 654.9 hectares. These three priority habitats are primarily located towards the southeast coastal boundary where the estuary mouths join the North Sea but the floodplain grazing marshes are also inland, situated along the river Colne and Stour.

4.23 The PHI category of **No main habitat but additional habitats present** encompasses areas "where candidate habitats exist but no main habitat can be identified"[18]. This covers an area of 519.2 hectares and includes unidentified grassland types, woodland edge habitats, and modified habitats such as pastures, golf courses and military land which contribute to the diversity of habitats within the district of Colchester.

4.24 Smaller areas of other priority habitats are also found within the district of Colchester. This includes **traditional orchards, semi-improved grassland, lowland heathland, reedbeds, lowlands meadows, maritime cliffs and slopes, lowland fens and ponds.**

4.25 The LNRS also highlights the importance of other habitats within the Colchester district not classified above. **Agricultural land** covers a large part of the district and, depending on the intensity of management, can offer a mosaic of important habitats such as hedgerows, grassland and scrub. **Urban areas** such as the City of Colchester and the smaller surrounding towns and villages also offer additional important habitats. These habitat types offer permeability through the landscape.

4.26 Other notable habitats, include river and standing water, which offer important habitat for fauna and flora, and which provides permeability through the landscape, particularly in areas more developed, such as Colchester City. A key river corridor in the district is the River Colne. This was recorded in the south along the easter boundary of the district running through Colchester City and then running westwards across the district. In addition to this, a notable standing waterbody in the district is Abberton Reservoir located in the south. Ardleigh Reservoir is recorded to the north of Colchester City, outside of the district.

Priority and Notable Species Areas

4.27 Reference should be made to **Figure 5, Appendix A** which illustrates the LoWS network within the district in relation to the IPA and IIA.

Important Plant Areas (IPAs)

4.28 Colchester district supports the **Thames Estuary, Essex & Suffolk Coast IPA** along the coastline in the south of the district. This comprises a total area of 2272.97ha of which 0.02% is located within the LoWS network.

Important Invertebrate Areas (IIAs)

4.29 Colchester district supports three distinct IIAs, which are located in the north to the east of the River Stour, in the south associated with the Colne and Blackwater Estuary and in the centre of the district between Abberton Reservoir and Colchester City. These are known as the **Essex Coast IIA**. This comprises a total area of 22,799.66ha of which 15.4% of the IIA is located within the LoWS network.

[18] MAGIC Map (2015). Available: https://magic.defra.gov.uk/Metadata_for_MAGIC/Metadata%20for%20Priority%20Habitats%20%20Inventory%20verison%202.1%20%20Deciduous%20Woodland.pdf

Proposed Allocations: An overview

4.30 A total of 73 emerging site allocations have been identified as part of the Local Plan Review process. Following this, a preferred options site allocations list has been developed for the Regulation 18 Local Plan, which has refined the emerging site allocations list. Reference should be made to **Figure 6, Appendix A**, which shows the location of the emerging site allocations in relation to the LoWS network and **Figure 7, Appendix A**, which shows the location of the preferred options site allocations.

4.31 An overview is provided in **Table 4.1** below, which outlines how emerging and preferred options site allocations proposed relates to the biodiversity assets in the district.

Table 4.1 Overview of emerging and preferred site allocations in relation to biodiversity assets in the district

Biodiversity Asset	Emerging Site Allocations		Preferred Options Site Allocations	
	Overlapping Biodiversity Asset (ha)	Overlapping Biodiversity Asset (%)	Overlapping Biodiversity Asset (ha)	Overlapping Biodiversity Asset (%)
Statutory Designated Sites				
SAC	0	0	0	0
SPA	0	0	0	0
Ramsar Sites	0	0	0	0
NNR	0	0	0	0
SSSI	1.5	0.17	0	0
Non-Statutory Designated Sites				
LNR	0	0	0	0
LoWS	194.16	22.45	22.13	3.82
Habitat Data				
Irreplaceable Habitat – Ancient Woodland, Coastal Saltmarsh and Fenland (PHI)	0.57	0.07	0.63	0.11
Priority and Notable Habitats	49.50	5.72	8.48	1.46
Habitat Creation Opportunities				
Strategic Creation Opportunities	308.82	35.71	227.06	39.20

Chapter 5
Local Wildlife Site Review – Results and Recommendations

5.1 This Chapter presents the recommendations of the LoWS Survey, including recommendations for existing LoWS designations to reflect their current state. Overarching habitat recommendations are also provided.

5.2 This report has been subject to consultation with the Essex Wildlife Trust and Colchester Natural History Society. Overall, the comments provided by both organisations, were in agreement with the findings and recommendations as detailed below. This final issue captures all relevant feedback arising from consultation and responds accordingly.

Emerging Local Plan Considerations

5.3 As set out under the subheading below, the LoWS network across Colchester was found to be in overall good status. With the exception of a boundary change at two site's to reflect partial de-designation of areas irreversibly given to past development, all LoWS subject to assessment should be given high priority for retention and conservation.

5.4 It is recognised that any proposed development site coming forward will in due course, as part of the planning process, be required to complete an assessment of potential ecological impacts. This will include consideration of indirect and/or at-distance impacts on LoWS within the locality, hence; is anticipated to include LoWS outside the scope of this partial review.

5.5 Early engagement with ecology during the masterplanning stage of a proposed development increases the opportunity to maximise benefits to the development design and future residents or site users. Early understanding of potential adverse impacts to avoid, or where this is not possible, minimise and fully mitigate also then benefits cost planning and programme management.

LoWS Recommendations

Tranche 1

5.6 The review of the existing LoWS network identified that it was, overall in good status. A single site - Rowhedge Pits - was identified to be At Risk due to the presence of a significant amount of human disturbance within the Site including litter, fly tipping, fires and biking. Prompt positive remedial action could return this site to a favourable condition and secure its ecological value in the long term. Two further

sites – Wivenhoe Park and Stanway Pit – have been recommended for partial de-designation (i.e. boundary change) due to recent development within those respective parts of each site.

5.7 The LoWS status recommendations are presented in **Table 5.1** below. **Table B.2**, **Appendix B** presents each sites' current designation status and the recommendations of this review. **Figure 8** presents a plan of the surveyed sites and their recommendations. More detailed information against the LoWS criteria and other contextual ecological information is provided in the site proformas in **Appendix D** and Site photographs are provided in **Appendix E.**

Table 5.1 LoWS Status Recommendation – Tranche 1 - Sites

LoWS Status	Recommendation of the 2025 Review	Site Name
Existing LoWS	Retain – No change (14 Sites)	Colchester Roman Wall Eden Wood Wall's Wood West House Wood Acorn Wood Chappel Ponds and Millennium Green Fiddler's Wood The Moors University Marshes Welsh Wood Inworth Wood Marks Tey Brick Pit Stonefield Strip Lexden Dyke
	Proposed extension to the LoWS boundary (Eight sites)	Gosbecks's Park Hythe Lagoons Seven Star Green Birch Brook Wood Middlewick Ranges Pits Wood Cymbeline Meadows Wivenhoe Park
	Opportunity (One Site)	Donyland Wetlands
	At Risk (One Site)	Rowhedge Pits
	De-designation (partial) (Two Sites)	Stanway Pit Wivenhoe Park

LoWS Status	Recommendation of the 2025 Review	Site Name
Potential LoWS	New LoWS (One Site)	Messing Park
	Potential LoWS (One Site)	Black Heath, Colchester
Sites not surveyed (desk-based assessment only)	N/A	PLoWS St Botolphs Sidings Co137 - Hythe Brownfield

Retain – No Change

5.8 A total of 14 sites were considered to continue to offer habitats of appropriate condition, extent, quality and diversity to retain their existing LoWS designation. Therefore, it is recommended that these designations remain the same. Additional information supporting the continued designation of these sites is provided within **Appendix D**.

Potential Extension to the LoWS Boundary

5.9 A total of eight sites were identified which have potential to be extended. However, it is important to note that access to areas outside of the LoWS boundaries was typically limited, and the recommendation to extend the boundary is supported by desk study information alone and would need to be supported by site survey and full assessment against the Criteria.

These sites are referred to as Tranche 2 sites and will be taken forward for further survey and assessment in September 2025 and will be reported on in addendum.

- It is recommended that the entire **Gosbeck's Archaeological Park** is considered for inclusion as a LoWS. The east of the Site (outside the LoWS boundary) was not subject to survey and therefore it is recommended that this part of the Site is surveyed to fully assess its potential to be included, however there is evidence to suggest that it additionally holds importance for nature. The eastern side is additionally a grass field, grazed by cattle, it is accessible to the public, and skylarks are known to nest on all parts of the site. The eastern side is additionally within the important invertebrate area. Therefore there is potential that this side is additionally of importance for skylarks, invertebrates and provides accessible natural greenspace, which matches the reasons for designation for the western side. Specialist survey work across the whole of the Site would be of benefit to fully assess the Site's value and to inform a management plan.
- The grazing fields that surround **Hythe Lagoons** to the west and south are located within the Essex IIA. These areas were not subject to survey as part of the survey of Hythe Lagoons but they have the potential to offer grassland habitat suitable for vascular plants (SC1), notable bird species (SC5) and notable flagship macro-invertebrates (SC20). Further surveys would be required to confirm the habitats in these areas but there could be potential to extend the LoWS and thus strengthen the network's value for birds and invertebrates.
- Located south of **Seven Star Green** are further grassland verges and hedgerows which connect to Daisy Green and ponds in the south west. These additional verges and Daisy Green were not subject to a detailed survey but they were very similar in composition to Seven Star Green. More detailed botanical surveys of these additional grassland areas should be undertaken to understand if they can be selected as a LoWS under the Lowland Meadows (HC9) and Heathland and Acid Grassland (HC13) and thus strengthen the network of LoWS in Colchester.
- **Birch Brook Wood** contains extensive woodland habitats of high ecological value for birds, mammals and invertebrates. It also contains notable vascular plant species indicative of ancient woodland. The current boundary of the LoWS needs to be reconsidered to include the dry acid grassland and scrub located to the south east. This would not only increase the value of this LoWS through inclusion of additional valuable habitats, but due to the location of Birch Brook Wood adjacent to Middlewick Ranges LoWS and Donyland Wetlands LoWS, this has the potential to create an even larger network of highly valuable habitats.
- During the survey of **Middlewick Ranges**, the species composition within the fields to the south east of the Site (outside of the LoWS boundary), close to Fingringhoe Road were noted to be of a similar composition to the

fields included within the LoWS. As detailed in the LoWS criteria document, any site supporting characteristic acid vegetation shall be eligible for selection and as such an extension to the LoWS is recommended. Increasing the size of Middlewick Ranges would provide greater resilience within the LoWS network as neighbouring Sites (i.e. Donyland Wetlands and Birch Brook Wood) would be connected under the same designation status.

- **Pits Wood** is connected to three other woodland LoWS via deciduous woodland, hedgerows and the Roman River. It was not possible to survey these LoWS but there were clear mammal footpaths between these sites, highlighting their connectivity. Enhancements of the woodland habitats which connect these LoWS would provide an opportunity to extend the LoWS boundary and thus strengthen the resilience of the LoWS network.
- It is recommended that Charter Wood, to the north of **Cymbeline meadows** should be included within the Cymbeline meadows LoWS boundary. This is subject to further detailed survey carried out in Charter Wood, but it is likely to fall under HC2 as it is an extensive 10 hectares of deciduous woodland. Furthermore, it sits under the Essex Coast IIA highlighting its importance for invertebrates. This will increase the diversity of habitats within the Cymbeline Meadows LoWS, thus strengthening its resilience.
- On the western boundary of **Wivenhoe Park** between Boundary Road and the University Marshes LoWS is an area of mixed scrub, grassland and woodland habitats similar to that found within Wivenhoe Park. These habitats fall under the same selection criteria (HC2, HC4 HC13) and so should be included within the site boundary in order to strengthen the selection of Wivenhoe Park as a LoWS. This is of particular importance since Wivenhoe Park has lost area and thus important habitats in recent years due to university development.

Opportunity

5.10 An opportunity at **Donyland Wetlands** has been identified, with potential through habitat management and creation to significantly increase the ecological value of the Site and to provide resilience to the network.

5.11 Opportunities were identified primarily within the southern area of the Site, south of the fishing lake, which consists of a scrub and grassland mosaic, which provides valuable bird nesting habitat, including for nightingales. This area of the Site borders Birch Brook Wood, and is c. 490m east of Middlewick Ranges (although after the proposed extension of Middlewick, the boundaries would be adjacent), both of which are Important Invertebrate Areas. While Donyland Wetlands is not within an IIA, enhancing the grassland through implementation of a mowing regime to promote species and height diversity, would increase the value of the Site for invertebrates. Reinstating the sandy banks and damp hollows which were present during the 2015 review, would additionally provide habitat for invertebrates, and increase the potential for Donyland Wetland itself to be included within the IIA. Implementation of a grassland mowing regime, would ensure the mosaic of grassland and scrub is retained, and not lost completely to scrub, or trees, which is slowly happening with self-set trees noted within the grassland areas. Retaining this mosaic also provides valuable habitat for reptiles, which could be enhanced by the placement of log piles throughout this area to provide shelter. The scrub should be managed to ensure the site 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 area of Japanese Knotweed within the east of the site should be removed and controlled, to prevent its spread to the rest of the site. Lastly, one of the criteria which Donyland Wetlands was designated for was Hotspots for amphibian diversity (SC13). Creation of a wildlife pond within this southern grassland area therefore has high potential to be occupied quickly, and provide additional breeding habitat for amphibians and invertebrates.

At Risk

5.12 One Site – **Rowhedge Pits** – was identified to be At Risk, due to a significant amount of human disturbance within the woodland. Litter and fly tipping were noted in particular within ponds within the north of the site, which have potential to harm wildlife that may be present within the ponds, including Great Crested Newts which were noted to be present within the site during the 2015 review. While litter was the most concentrated within this northern area, lower levels of litter was seen throughout the rest of the site. In addition to litter, the southern side of the site was used for biking, with various ramps and paths through the woodland, as well as remnants of small fire pit areas. In addition to the human disturbance, the site is threatened by succession which will reduce the diversity of habitats on site, in particular the features of the site's post-industrial nature, including the cliff and banks of exposed substrates and wet depressions which provide habitats for invertebrates. Little of these exposed sandy banks were present, outside of the compressed bare ground resulting from the biking.

5.13 Despite the disturbance within the site, the wood is large and provides a valuable habitat for an abundance of species within the area, which should be protected and enhanced. It is recommended that a site-wide 'clean up' should be undertaken to remove litter from the site. Placing additional

signs around the edges of the site to educate local residents on the importance of the site, and its designation as a LoWS would help to discourage visitors littering within it. The management suggested in 2015 still applies here given the dominance of secondary woodland across the site, including the introduction of a programme of cyclical clearance to create open habitat within the site together with specific maintenance of habitat features of importance to invertebrates such as cliffs and banks of exposed substrate, wet depressions and pond maintenance. Cyclical clearance should occur in some parts, creating a mosaic of habitats, with management and enhancement of retained woodland to maximise its biodiversity. Clearance of vegetation from wet depressions may additionally be required, to ensure the retention of the standing water features, which provide valuable habitat for invertebrates. The Site is located within an IIA, meaning it is of value to invertebrates, and therefore it is recommended that an invertebrate survey is carried out, and a habitat management plan is produced following this to ensure continued management of the site for important invertebrate species. In addition, the presence of invasive species within the woodland also should be managed, including cherry laurel, holm oak and variegated yellow archangel which were identified within the site.

De-designation (Partial; boundary change)

5.14 Two sites, **Wivenhoe Park** and **Stanway Pit** were noted to both have had development within the boundary of the LoWS. The developed areas, specifically, do not satisfy the criteria for a LoWS and are not suitable for restoration so are therefore recommended to be excluded from the LoWS boundary. A map showing the amended boundary is shown in **Appendix A.** These developed areas comprise only small areas of the sites, and the remainder of the sites continue to provide ecological value and be of importance to the local wildlife site network.

New LoWS

5.15 One Potential LoWS, **Messing Park**, was recommended to be designated as a New LoWS, due to the presence of Wood Pasture and Parkland Habitat on site. This site is listed within the Wood Pasture and Parkland Habitat Inventory and there was evidence on site to support this as part of the survey for the LoWS Review. The site included sheep grazed fields, with open grown mature trees displaying veteran features, dead wood features throughout the grass and scrub and hedgerows along the edges of the site. While the site displayed many features of Wood Pasture and Parkland, management changes are recommended to increase the ecological value of the site. The grassland on site was noted be closely grazed and would benefit from implementation of a conservation grazing regime, to promote species and height diversity within the grassland. Occasional clumps of scrub could be established within the grassland to provide further nectar sources for invertebrates, and its extent managed by grazing. The hedgerows around the edges of the site were overgrown and gappy. Planting the gaps and managing as a hedgerow would improve connectivity and create a valuable corridor along the edges of the site. The pond was observed to be lacking aquatic marginal vegetation and the surface was dominated by algae, indicating high nutrient levels. Restoration of the pond would provide a valuable habitat for amphibians and invertebrates.

5.16 The site would additionally benefit from further specialist surveys including an arboriculture survey to identify the presence of ancient and veteran trees, and an invertebrate survey to inform a management plan to manage and enhance the habitat.

Potential LoWS

5.17 **Black Heath** was previously identified as a Potential LoWS as old maps show the site to be the last surviving remnant of Black Heath, a large heathland waste that gave its name to this area of urban Colchester. The survey identified that the site was dominated by mixed broadleaf and coniferous woodland, including predominantly Scots pine, oak and beech. The 2015 review recommended that this site would need to be restored to heathland through the removal of conifers to be designated as a LoWS. The established woodland however does provide considerable benefit to wildlife as several nightingales were heard within the woodland, bat roost suitability was present within the trees and the site falls within an IIA, therefore it holds value for invertebrates. Restoring areas of heathland would be beneficial but should be done sensitively to ensure the existing ecological value is retained. For example, selective felling of trees to create glades within the woodland. It is recommended that this site is retained as a potential LoWS to be considered for inclusion within the network in the future.

Recommendations to Strengthen the LoWS Network

5.18 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.

5.19 This report outlines a series of overarching management recommendations for the LoWS network. More specific recommendations have been provided for each of site assessed in the respective survey proformas (**Appendix D)**.

Habitat Management

5.20 Habitat management should be conducted in accordance with best practice guidance by appropriately qualified and licenced contractors, and in consultation with an experienced ecologist. It should be recognised that in some instances, sites will require flexible and adaptive management strategies in place to respond to specific sites conditions and species present.

5.21 Vegetation clearance such as scrub and hedgerow management should be conducted at appropriate times using appropriate methods outside of the bird nesting season from March to September inclusive. Management should encourage habitat structural complexity, where space allows, through rotational management of grasslands, scrub and hedgerows for the benefit of insects, birds and mammals. Incorporating native species and traditional techniques such as hedge laying will further enhance existing habitats for wildlife.

Scrub Management

5.22 Scrub is a valuable habitat that provides opportunities for an abundance of species, and in particular for nesting and foraging birds. If unmanaged however, scrub has the potential to spread, resulting in the loss of valuable habitats such as species rich grassland, or for the scrub itself to naturally succeed to woodland.

5.23 Scrub habitat was present on multiple LoWS surveyed, and was noted to provide valuable bird nesting habitat; in particular for nightingales which was heard at several sites. As shown within the species maps within the draft LNRS[2], Colchester is a particular stronghold for nightingale within Essex. Managing scrub for nightingales is key to ensuring that the scrub remains suitable, as nightingales are particularly sensitive to habitat change. A cutting regime should be implemented to ensure structurally diverse areas with patches of scrub at different stages of growth, rather than larger areas of uniform scrub. This in combination with additional management techniques such as the development of scrub with well-developed edges, including forbs and grassland will increase the quality of the habitat for additional species, such as reptiles and invertebrates.

5.24 While scrub in itself is a valuable habitat, management to prevent its spread is also important, to ensure that habitats such as species rich grassland is not lost to succession to scrub. Habitats within the LoWS network are sensitive to succession, and without active management to control scrub, would be quickly lost, such as sandy bare substrates within post-industrial sites, grassland areas and wetland areas.

Grassland Management

5.25 Grasslands are a key habitat component of the local wildlife network, which are susceptible to loss or degradation if not managed appropriately. While it is recognised that ecological sensitive management techniques are occurring within the LoWS network (e.g. 50% of the grassland is cut each year at Gosbeck's to provide overwintering habitat for invertebrates), there is space for management improvements across the network.

5.26 If possible, implementation of a conservation grazing regime is recommended, with stocking rates and rotation schedules that prevents overgrazing and promotes species diversity. It is recognised that the presence of livestock on certain sites would not be appropriate, and therefore in these locations, a sensitive mowing regime that allow species to flower in summer, and the removal of cuttings following mowing, will increase the biodiversity with the grassland. Regular management such as this not only promotes species diversity but also helps to retain grassland habitats, preventing them from being lost to scrub succession as detailed above.

5.27 Where the grassland seedbank has been completely lost or degraded, appropriate grassland and wildflower seeds can be introduced to the site, of local provenance, to restore species diversity within the grassland.

Woodland management

5.28 Multiple of the LoWS surveyed were dominated by woodland, including irreplaceable ancient woodland. While each woodland site is specific, and should be managed by a site-specific woodland management plan, some common themes were noted across the network. Pheasant pens were present within three of the woodland sites, which were noted to be having a significant impact on the ground flora in these locations, resulting in bare ground, with few nutrient loving species such as nettles. The presence of pheasant pens also meant there was vehicle presence within the woodland, resulting in further bare ground. Where sites are, or can be, under positive management in collaboration with the land manager or tenant, the removal of pheasant pens would offer significant benefit to species and structural diversity of ground flora.

5.29 The impacts of deer grazing was also noted within some woodland sites, resulting in poor ground flora and little regeneration. The impacts of deer on certain sites should be monitored and centrally collated (e.g. through the Essex Field Club). If significant, solutions to deer management would need to consider larger, more landscape scale solutions. Fencing may be considered in select cases to promote regeneration, where the habitat disturbance of installation would not be excessively adverse to the value of the LoWS .

5.30 There was evidence of coppicing within multiple woodlands surveyed. This could be augmented, for example, by the creation of glades and rides to promote structural diversity and biodiversity within the woodland. Ash was also noted as an abundant species within some woodland sites. The presence of ash dieback should be monitored (again, the results would most usefully be centrally collated for future research), and replacement native tree planting undertaken if necessary. Standing and fallen dead wood habitat should safely remain in situ, to create further habitat niches within the woodland.

Invasive Species

5.31 Invasive species are a major driver of biodiversity decline and species noted during the surveys included Japanese Knotweed, variegated yellow archangel, cherry laurel, muntjac, Russian vine, holm oak, New Zealand pigmyweed, duckweed, Spanish bluebell, *Rhododendron* sp, *Buddleia* sp and *Cotoneaster* sp. Invasive species were noted to be at least present within the majority of the sites surveyed. Continuous management and control is required to ensure they do not have a significant impact on the condition of the LoWS network.

Human Disturbance

5.32 While in general across the network, human disturbance was not deemed a significant issue, in some sites it was noted to be having an impact upon the quality of the habitats, via the presence of litter and fly tipping, biking, fires and dog fouling. Increasing public awareness and educating the local residents about the importance of the habitats on site, and their designation as a LoWS, may help to discourage human disturbance within these sites. Increased presence of habitat management activities taking place within such sites may also help indicate that these habitats are not in fact neglected or forgotten about.

Habitat Enhancement / Creation

Pond Restoration / Creation

5.33 Ponds provide important breeding habitats for amphibians and invertebrates and their management is crucial to maximise their value for biodiversity. Ponds were present within various of the LoWS surveyed, and while some were noted to be in good condition (e.g. Pits Wood), others were noted to be either shaded, dense with emergent vegetation so there was no open water, lacking in any aquatic vegetation, dominated by algae or duckweed or had litter within. Ponds in poor condition should be restored as appropriate to each site, for example, via removal of adjacent trees to reduce shade, control of aquatic vegetation, control of algae and duckweed and pond dredging. Enhancement of existing ponds will increase suitable breeding habitat for a range of amphibians and invertebrates, increasing biodiversity within the network. In addition, pond creation should be undertaken where feasible, and in locations surrounded by good quality terrestrial habitat to supplement the existing pond network.

Woodland Creation

5.34 As identified within the LNRS, a habitat priority within Essex is to create 18,000 hectares of new woodland across Essex. Efforts should continue to be made to identify opportunities to create new woodland in strategic locations that improve habitat complexity and connectivity within and between LoWS, guided by the LNRS strategic habitat creation opportunity maps. Woodland creation would be beneficial in locations such as Eden wood, which consists of two distinct areas separated by farmland. Creation of woodland to connect up separate small areas of woodland, would increase the value of the small woodland sites and increase resilience of the LoWS network.

Plant Species Selection and Management

5.35 Key considerations when determining appropriate species for planting as part of wildflower meadows or woodland creation are outlined below. Listed guidance may be supplemented by new publications available at the time of future works coming forward.

- Selection of species suitable for the substrate type and ground conditions. Appropriate preparation of the ground prior to planting or sowing will be required to ensure successful establishment and longevity of sown / planted vegetation.
- Selection of species suitable for the future land use, taking into account application of grit salt to roads or recreational access areas / points to other greenspaces.
- Selection of a diverse mix of species to create structural diversity within the habitat mosaic and to provide some cover throughout the year, whilst recognising seasonal change.
- Selection of species tolerant of conditions associated with the predicted effects of climate change, i.e. the increased likelihood of warmer drier summers and wetter

winters. Published guidance includes that of TDAG[19], the RHS[20],[21], Forest Research[22],[23] and RSPB[24].

- Selection for local or native provenance where possible.
- Selection of berry-bearing, nectar-rich, and seed-rich species to support foraging beyond the spring / summer peak. Example lists are published by the British Trust for Ornithology[25] and Royal Horticultural Society (RHS)[26].

[19] TDAG (2018) Tree Species Selection for Green Infrastructure - A Guide for Specifiers
[20] RHS (2017) Gardening in a changing climate. Available at: RHS Gardening in a Changing Climate report / RHS and Trees for climate change / RHS Gardening
[21] Available here: Drought-resistant plants / RHS Gardening
[22] Forest Research. Species and provenance choice for adapting England's woodlands. Species and provenance choice for adapting England's woodlands - Forest Research
[23] Available here: https://forestresearch.gov.uk/research/climatechange-adaptation/adapting-forest-and-woodland-management-tothe-changing-climate/
[24] Available here: https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-andwildlife/advice/gardening-for-wildlife/plants-for-wildlife/droughtresist
[25] BTO (2023) Plants for fruits and seeds. Available at: https://www.bto.org/how-you-can-help/providing-birds/wildlifegardening/plants-fruits-and-seed
[26] Available at: RHS Plants for Pollinators / RHS

Appendix A
Figures

Local Wildlife Sites Review
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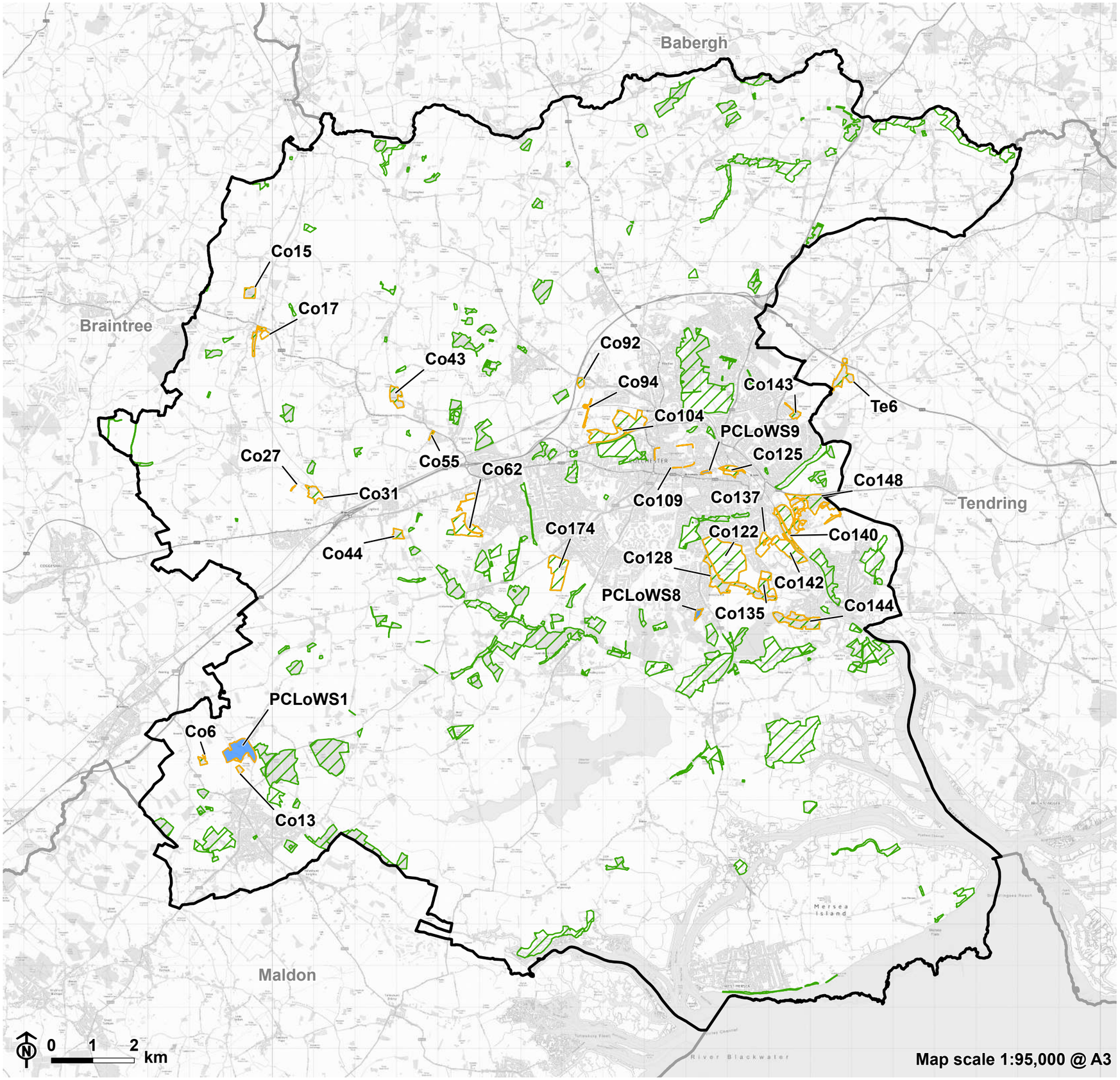
Figure 1: Local Wildlife Site Network



Colchester District boundary
Neighbouring district
Site for survey
Local Wildlife Site (LoWS)*
Potential Local Wildlife Site (PCLoWS)*

*Note that the LoWS network within Colchester is inclusionary of potential Local Wildlife Sites and site Te6, which are reflected in the below calculations.

Number of LoWS/PCLoWS in Colchester	Number of LoWS/PCLoWS surveyed	% of LoWS network surveyed
177	29	16.4

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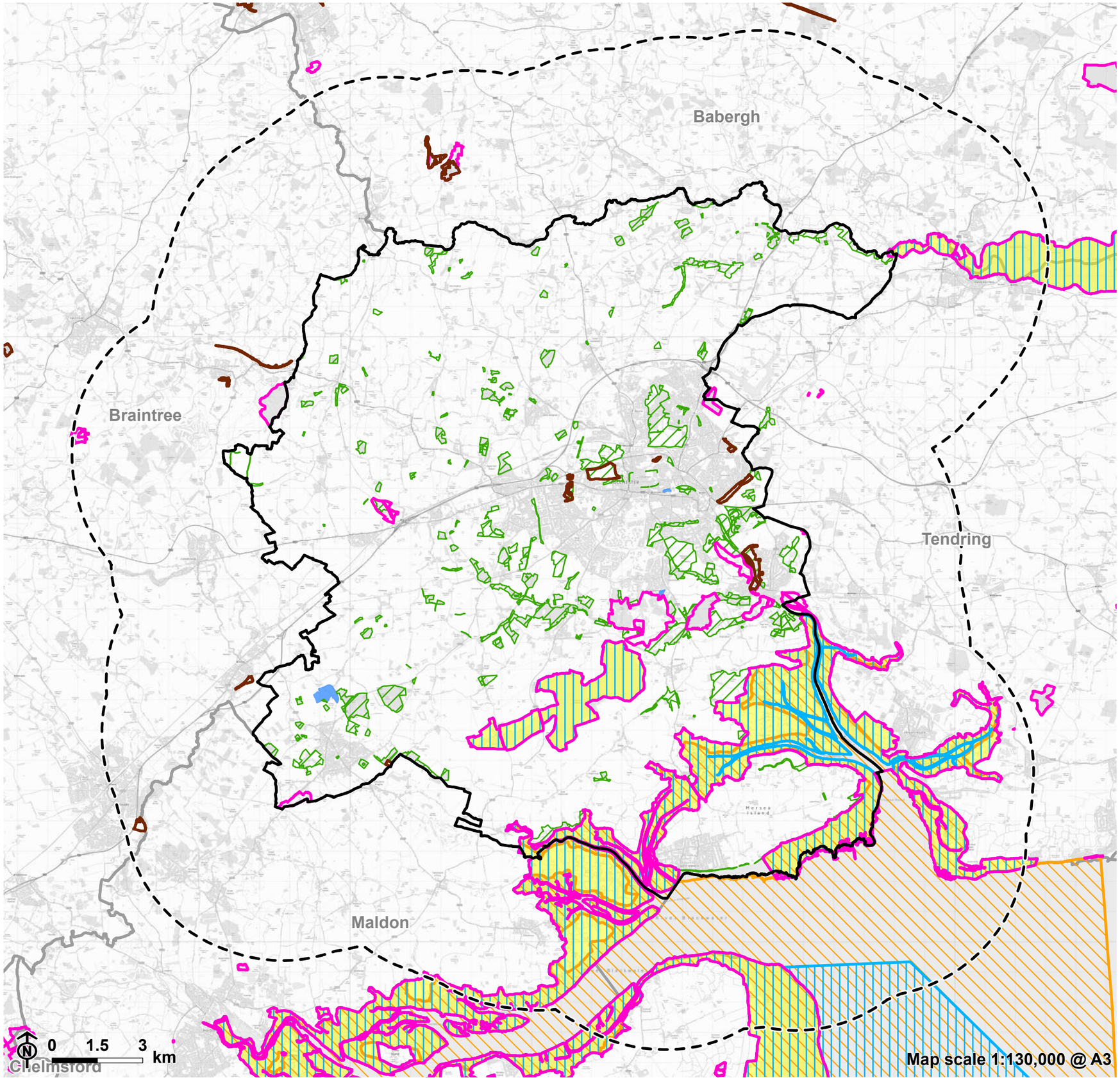
Figure 2: Designated Site Network within Colchester



- Colchester District boundary
- Neighbouring district
- Colchester District 5km buffer
- Local Wildlife Site (LoWS)*
- Potential Local Wildlife Site (PCLoWS)
- Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Ramsar

*Note that Local Wildlife Site data is not available beyond the boundary of Colchester, with exception to Te6 which was included for survey but not included in the calculations in this table.

Designation	Number of sites within Colchester	Area within Colchester (Ha)	% coverage of Colchester
SAC	1	1943.12	5.6
SPA	4	2840.76	8.2
SSSI	10	3443.63	9.9
LNR	8	106.1	0.3
LoWS	173	2059.08	5.9
Ramsar	4	2834.82	8.2

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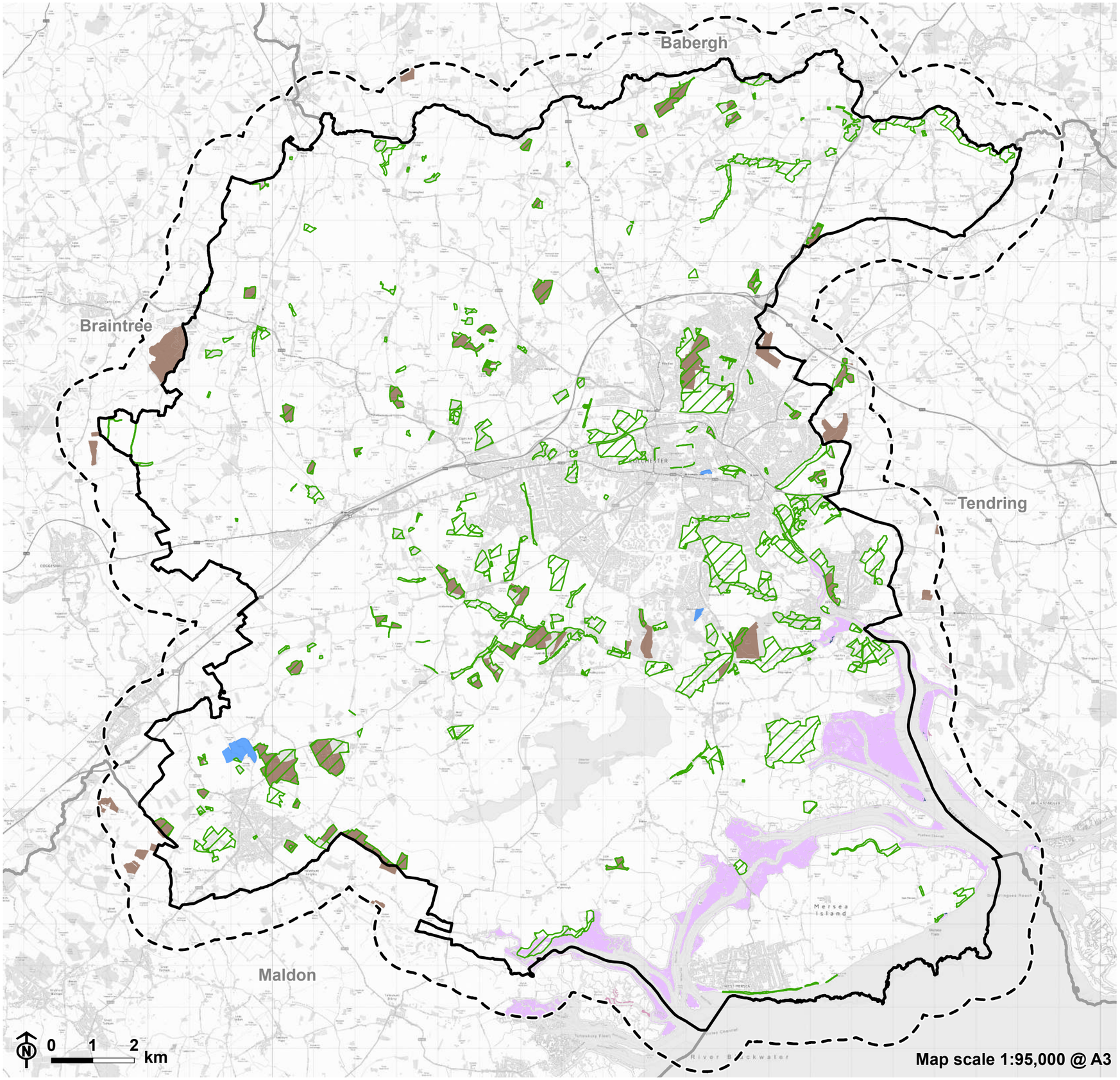
Figure 3: Irreplaceable Habitat within Colchester



- Colchester District boundary
- Neighbouring district
- Colchester District 1km buffer
- Local Wildlife Site (LoWS)*
- Potential Local Wildlife Site (PCLoWS)
- Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI)

Priority Habitat Inventory (PHI)**

- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh,Coastal saltmarsh
- Coastal saltmarsh
- Lowland fens
- Reedbeds,Coastal saltmarsh

*Note that Local Wildlife Site data is not available beyond the boundary of Colchester, with exception to Te6 which was included for survey but not included in the calculations in this table.

**Irreplaceable habitat uses blanket bog, limestone pavements, coastal sand dunes, coastal saltmarsh and lowland fens from the PHI, where present.

Designation	Area within Colchester (Ha)	Area within LoWS (Ha)	% within the LoWS network
AWI	552.2	476.4	23.1
PHI			
Coastal saltmarsh	647.8	17.5	0.8
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, Coastal saltmarsh	0.8	0.1	0.0
Lowland fens	3.0	3.0	0.1
Reedbeds, Coastal saltmarsh	1.93	0.0	0.0

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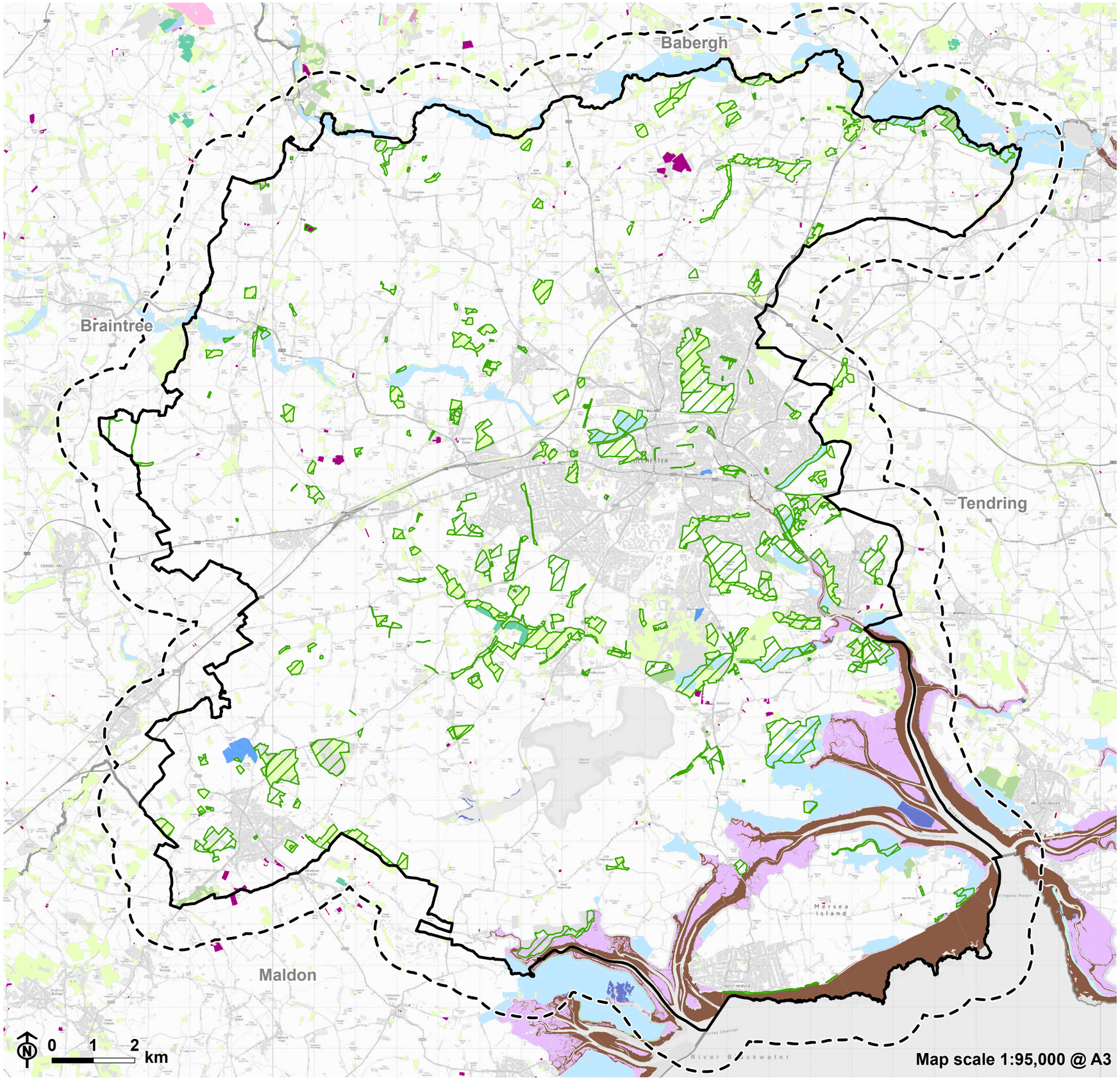
Figure 4: Priority Habitats within Colchester



- Colchester District boundary
- Neighbouring district
- Colchester District 1km buffer
- Local Wildlife Site (LoWS)*
- Potential Local Wildlife Site (PCLoWS)

Priority Habitat Inventory (PHI)

- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh
- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh,Coastal saltmarsh
- Coastal saltmarsh
- Coastal vegetated shingle
- Deciduous woodland
- Good quality semi improved grassland
- Lowland calcareous grassland
- Lowland dry acid grassland
- Lowland fens
- Lowland heathland
- Lowland meadows
- Maritime cliff and slope
- Mudflats
- No main habitat but additional habitats present
- Purple moor grass and rush pastures
- Reedbeds
- Reedbeds,Coastal saltmarsh
- Traditional orchard

*Note that Local Wildlife Site data is not available beyond the boundary of Colchester, with exception to Te6 which was included for survey.

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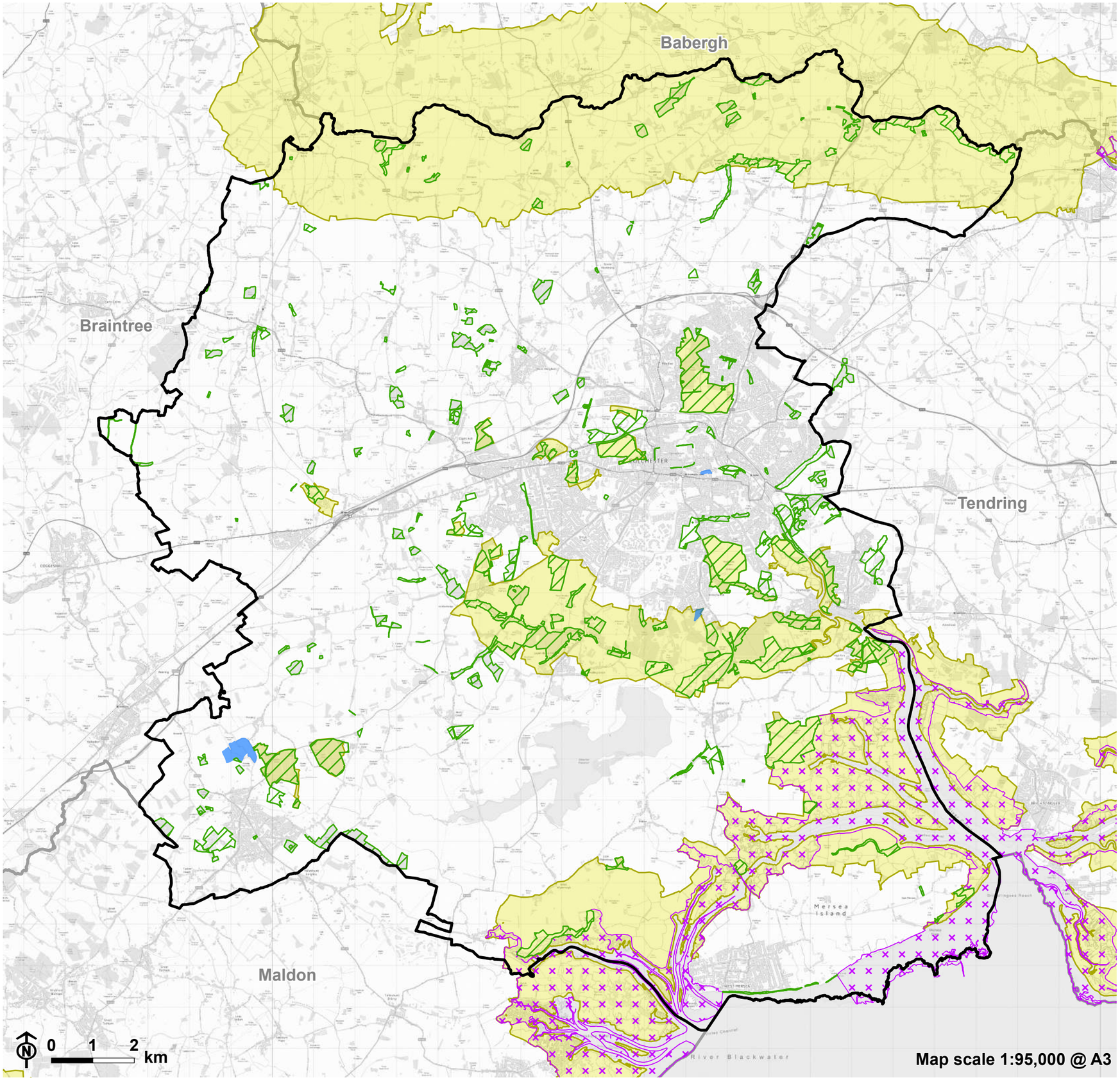
Figure 5: Essex Coast Important Invertebrate Area and Important Plant Area



- Colchester District boundary
- Neighbouring district
- Local Wildlife Site (LoWS)*
- Potential Local Wildlife Site (PCLoWS)
- Important Plant Area
- Important Invertebrate Area**

*Note that Local Wildlife Site data is not available beyond the boundary of Colchester, with exception to Te6 which was included for survey but not included in the calculations in this table.

**Important Invertebrate Areas (IIAs) are places that are home to nationally or internationally significant invertebrate populations and their habitats. Buglife has created this network of over 100 IIAs in England, Scotland and Wales to promote the management for conservation of these land areas, ranging from small sites for a single significant species, through to expansive landscapes scale habitat complexes.

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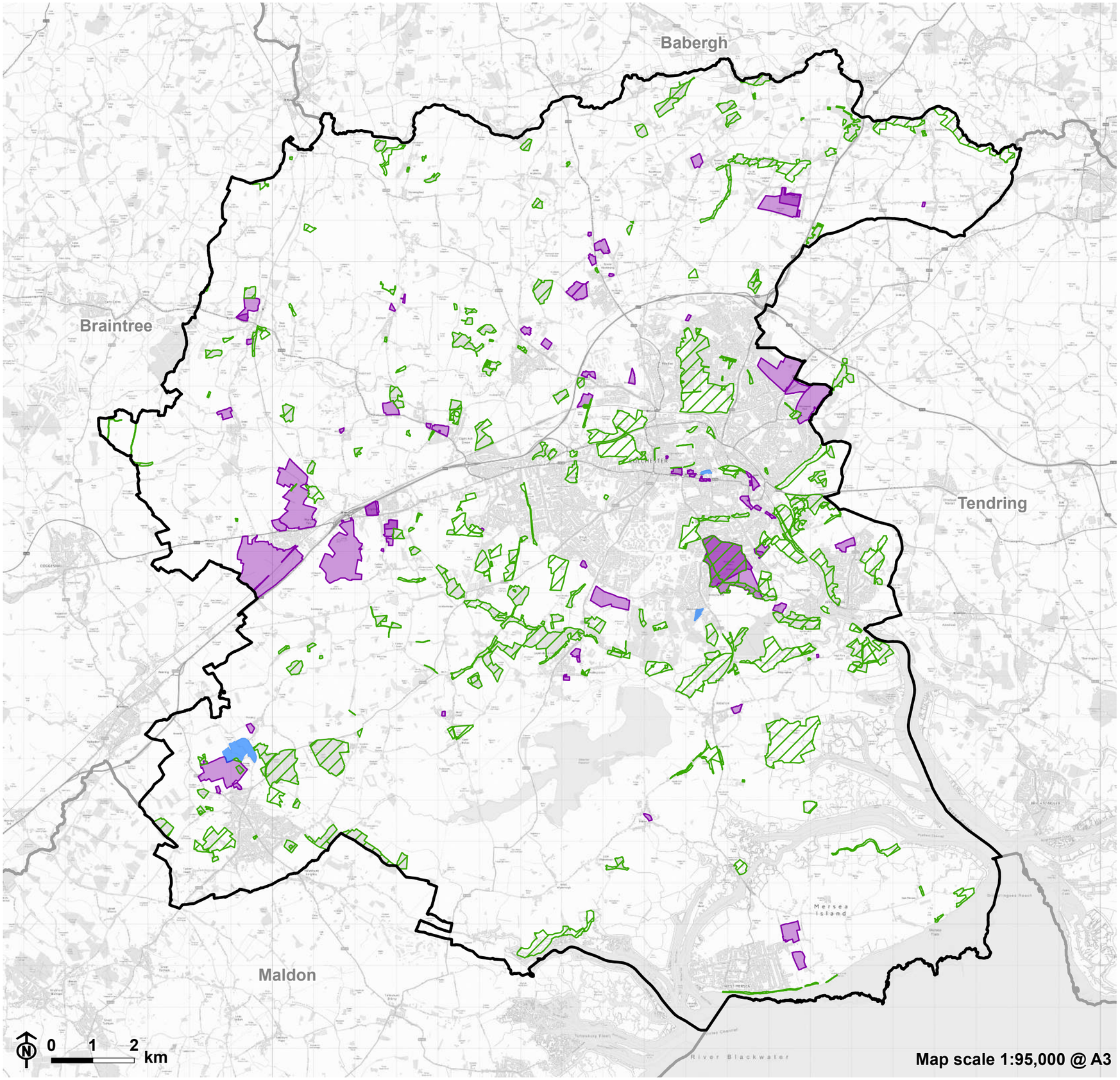
Figure 6: Local Plan Emerging Site Allocations and its Overlap with the Local Wildlife Site Network



- Colchester District boundary
- Neighbouring district
- Emerging site allocation
- Local Wildlife Site (LoWS)*
- Potential Local Wildlife Site (PCLoWS)

*Note that Local Wildlife Site data is not available beyond the boundary of Colchester, with exception to Te6 which was included for survey but not included in the calculations in this table.

LoWS name	Total area (ha) within site allocation	% of LoWS within Site Allocation
Acorn Wood	0.01	0.00
Birch Brook Wood	37.75	4.37
Donyland Wetlands	0.01	0.00
Eden Wood	2.04	0.24
Fiddler's Wood	0.00	0.00
Hythe Brownfield	6.98	0.81
Inworth Wood	0.75	0.09
Lexden Dyke	0.53	0.06
Middlewick Ranges	145.71	16.85
Pits Wood	0.03	0.00
Stonefield Strip	0.34	0.04

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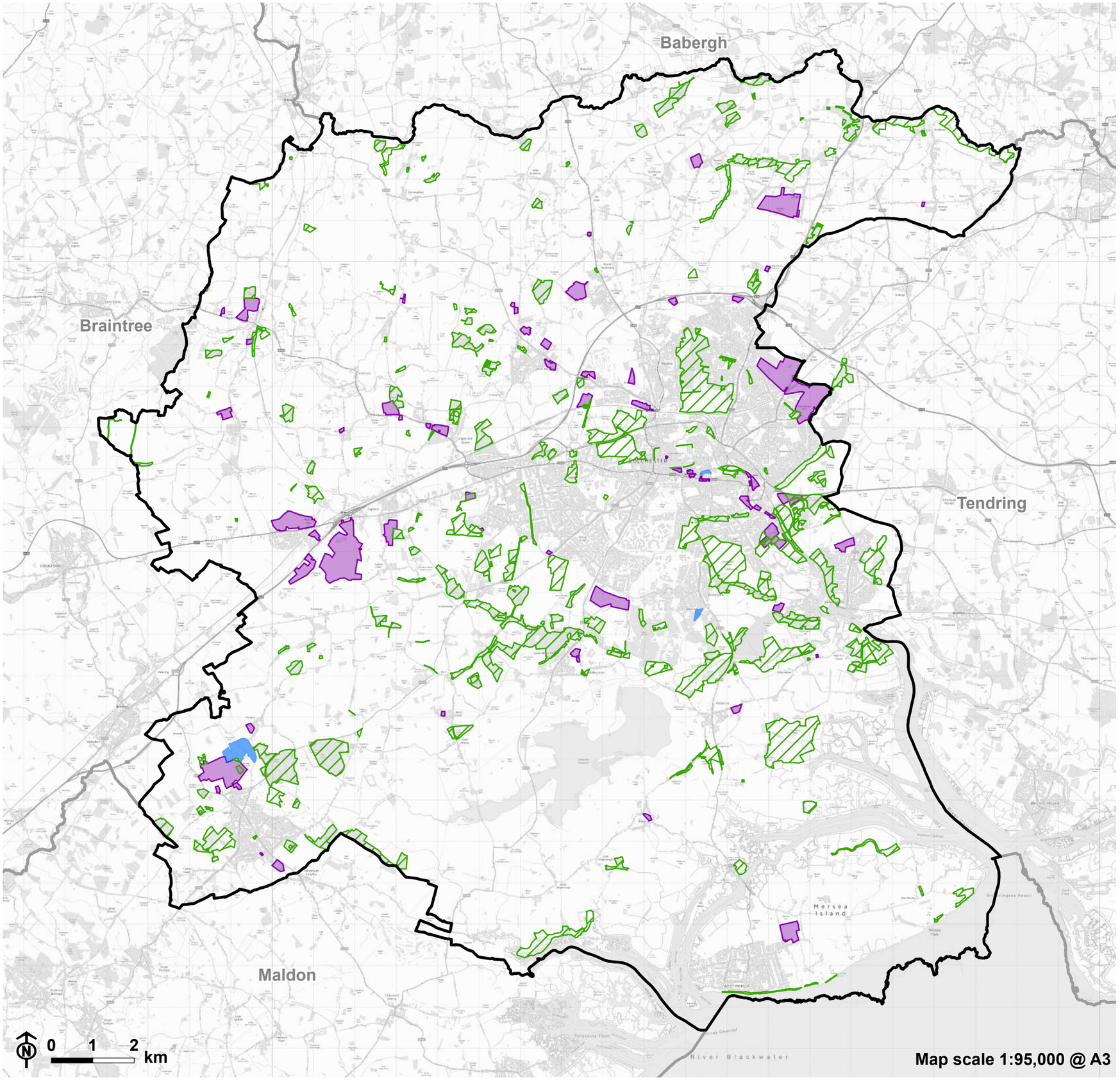
Figure 7: Local Plan Preferred Site Allocations and its Overlap with the Local Wildlife Site Network



- Colchester District boundary
- Neighbouring district
- Preferred site allocation
- Local Wildlife Site (LoWS)*
- Potential Local Wildlife Site (PCLoWS)

*Note that Local Wildlife Site data is not available beyond the boundary of Colchester, with exception to Te6 which was included for survey but not included in the calculations in this table.

LoWS name	Total area (ha) within site allocation	% of LoWS within Site Allocation
Acorn Wood	0.01	0.00
Eden Wood	2.04	0.35
Hythe Brownfield	3.75	0.65
Hythe Lagoons	6.11	1.05
Inworth Wood	0.75	0.13
Lexden Dyke	0.53	0.09
Pits Wood	0.04	0.01
Wivenhoe Park	5.85	1.01

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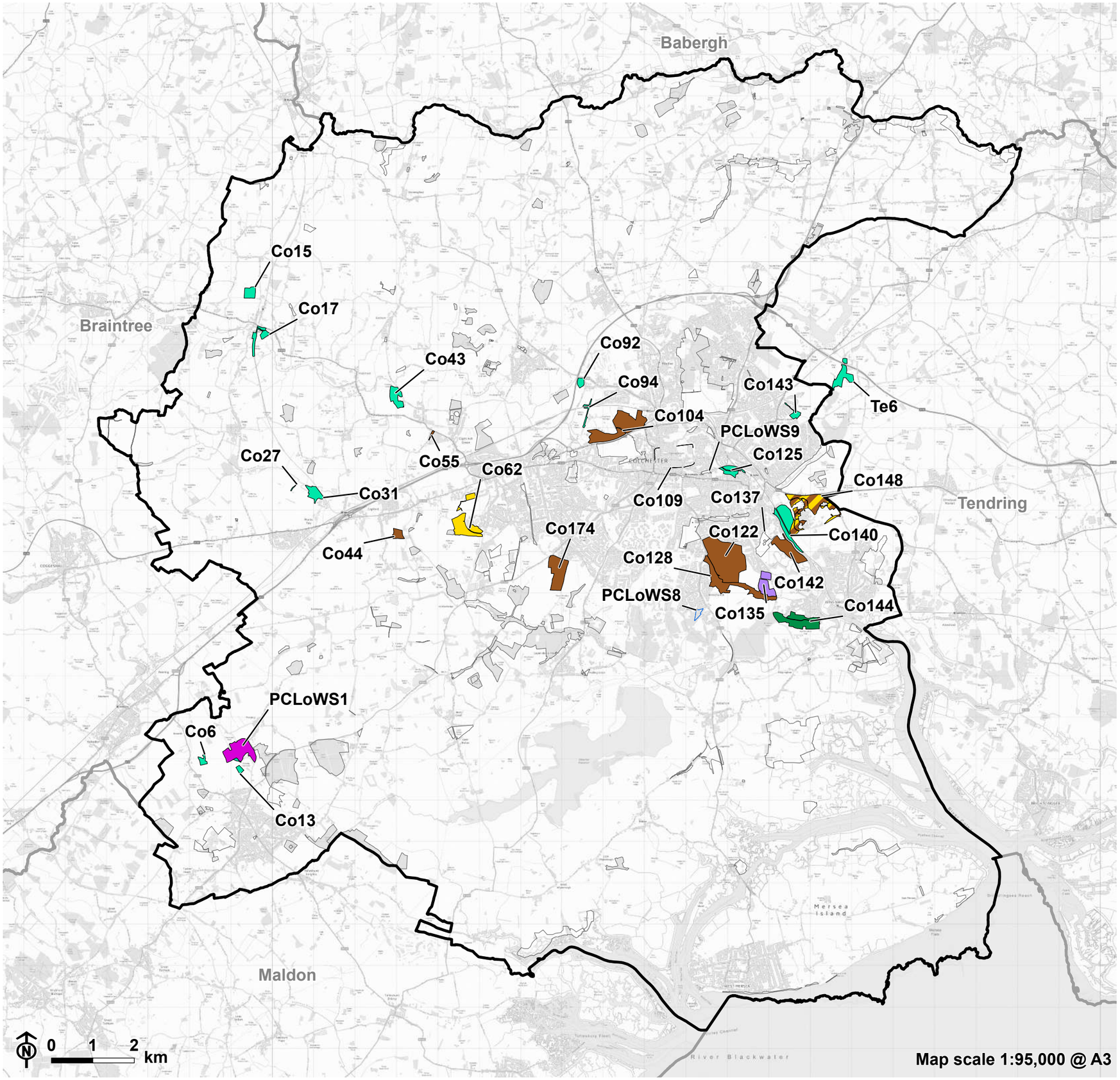
Figure 8: Local Wildlife Site (LoWS) Survey Recommendations



- Colchester District boundary
- Neighbouring district

Recommendation

- At risk
- New LoWS
- Opportunity
- De-designation (partial)
- De-designation (partial) / proposed extension to LoWS boundary
- Proposed extension to LoWS boundary
- Retain - no change
- Potential LoWS
- Not surveyed

Appendix B

Local Wildlife Site Assessment

Table B.1: LoWS subject to survey and their associated areas

LoWS ID	LoWS Name	Area (ha)
Existing LoWS		
Co6	Inworth Wood	3.04
Co15	Acorn Wood	6.73
Co17	Chappel Ponds and Millennium Green	8.09
Co27	Stonefield Strip	0.34
Co43	Fiddler's Wood	11.01
Co44	Pits Wood	5.04
Co55	Seven Star Green	0.78
Co92	West House Wood	3.21
Co94	Lexden Dyke	2.46
Co104	Cymbeline Meadows	46.70
Co109	Colchester Roman Wall	0.53
Co125	The Moors	8.05
Co143	Welsh Wood	3.71
Co13	Eden Wood	2.69
Co31	Marks Tey Brick Pit	9.02
Co62	Stanway Pit	25.32
Co122	Middlewick Ranges	75.40
Co128	Birch Brook Wood	30.69
Co135	Donyland Wetlands	15.26
Co137	Hythe Brownfield	11.74
Co140	University Marshes	22.17
Co142	Hythe Lagoons	21.80
Co144	Rowhedge Pits	27.56

LoWS ID	LoWS Name	Area (ha)
Co148	Wivenhoe Park	40.64
Co174	Gosbecks's Park	27.12
Te6	Wall's Wood	14.26
Potential LoWS		
PCLoWS9	St Botolph's Sidings	1.29
PCLoWS8	Black Heath	2.57
PCLoWS1	Messing Park	27.39

Table B.2: LoWS Recommendations

LoWS Name	2025 Survey	
	LoWS Status	Recommendation
Inworth Wood	Existing	Retain – No change
Acorn Wood	Existing	Retain – No change
Chappel Ponds and Millennium Green	Existing	Retain – No change
Stonefield Strip	Existing	Retain – No change
Fiddler's Wood	Existing	Retain – No change
Pits Wood	Existing	Proposed extension to the LoWS boundary
Seven Star Green	Existing	Proposed extension to the LoWS boundary
West House Wood	Existing	Retain – No change
Lexden Dyke	Existing	Retain – No change
Cymbeline Meadows	Existing	Proposed extension to the LoWS boundary
Colchester Roman Wall	Existing	Retain – No change
The Moors	Existing	Retain – No change
Welsh Wood	Existing	Retain – No change
Eden Wood	Existing	Retain – No change
Marks Tey Brick Pit	Existing	Retain – No change
Stanway Pit	Existing	De-designation (partial)

LoWS Name	2025 Survey	
	LoWS Status	Recommendation
Middlewick Ranges	Existing	Proposed extension to the LoWS boundary
Birch Brook Wood	Existing	Proposed extension to the LoWS boundary
Donyland Wetlands	Existing	Opportunity
Hythe Brownfield	Existing	-
University Marshes	Existing	Retain – No change
Hythe Lagoons	Existing	Proposed extension to the LoWS boundary
Rowhedge Pits	Existing	At Risk
Wivenhoe Park	Existing	De-designation (partial) and extension
Gosbecks's Park	Existing	Proposed extension to the LoWS boundary
Wall's Wood	Existing	Retain – No change
St Botolph's Sidings	Proposed	-
Black Heath	Proposed	Potential LoWS
Messing Park	Proposed	New LoWS

Appendix C

Local Wildlife Site Assessment – Summary of Sites

C.1 Following consultation led by the Council with the EWT and CNHS, and in response to comments provided as part of the Local Plan Committee, additional sites were identified for assessment as part of this review. A summary of the sites identified for assessment are detailed below in **Table C1**.

Table C.1 Summary of sites subject to survey and assessment

Tranche 1 – Sites taken forward for survey and assessment in April-June 2025	Tranche 2 – Sites taken forward following recommendation of the draft LoWS SINC Report as detailed in Chapter 5.	Tranche 3 – Sites identified following consultation with EWT and CNHS	Tranche 4 – Sites identified as part of the Local Plan Committee
Existing LoWS – Inworth Wood	Potential extension of an existing LoWS – Gosbeck's Archaeological Park	Greenstead Slopes	Site allocation – 10165 Land North of Woolmer Green
Existing LoWS – Acorn Wood	Potential extension of an existing LoWS – Hythe Lagoons	City Centre Green Spaces, including Land Lane and Riverside Grasslands	Site allocation – 10256 North East Colchester, including Land off St John's Road including willow plantation on St John's playing field and land adjacent
Existing LoWS – Chappel Ponds and Millennium Green	Potential extension of an existing LoWS – Seven Star Green	Weir Lane Grasslands	Site allocation – 10262 Highlands, Tiptree
Existing LoWS – Stonefield Strip	Potential extension of an existing LoWS – Birch Brook Wood	Cymbeline Meadow Extension	Site allocation – 10621 Land at St Ives Road, Peldon
Existing LoWS – Fiddler's Wood	Potential extension of an existing LoWS – Middlewick Ranges	Harwich Road Recreation Ground	Site allocation – 10656 Land north of Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green
Existing LoWS – Pits Wood	Potential extension of an existing LoWS – Pits Wood	-	Site allocation – 10657 Land North Oak Road, Tiptree
Existing LoWS – Seven Star Green	Potential extension of an existing LoWS – Cymbeline Meadows	-	Site allocation – 10758 Land west of The Folley, Layer de la Haye
Existing LoWS – West House Wood	Potential extension of an existing LoWS – Wivenhoe Park	-	Site allocation – 10759 The Furze, Layer de La Haye
Existing LoWS – Lexden Dyke	-	-	Site allocation – 10761 Land off Bakers Lane, Braiswick
Existing LoWS – Cymbeline Meadows	-	-	Site allocation – 10952 Braiswick, Colchester Road
Existing LoWS – Colchester Roman Wall	-	-	Site allocation – 10956 Rowhedge Business Park, Rectory Road, Rowhedge
Existing LoWS – Existing LoWS – The Moors	-	-	-
Existing LoWS – Welsh Wood	-	-	-

Tranche 1 – Sites taken forward for survey and assessment in April-June 2025	Tranche 2 – Sites taken forward following recommendation of the draft LoWS SINC Report as detailed in Chapter 5.	Tranche 3 – Sites identified following consultation with EWT and CNHS	Tranche 4 – Sites identified as part of the Local Plan Committee
Existing LoWS – Eden Wood	-	-	-
Existing LoWS – Marks Tey Brick Pit	-	-	-
Existing LoWS – Stanway Pit	-	-	-
Existing LoWS – Middlewick Ranges	-	-	-
Existing LoWS – Birch Brook Wood	-	-	-
Existing LoWS – Donyland Wetlands	-	-	-
Existing LoWS – Hythe Brownfield	-	-	-
Existing LoWS – University Marshes	-	-	-
Existing LoWS –Hythe Lagoons	-	-	-
Existing LoWS – Rowhedge Pits	-	-	-
Existing LoWS – Existing LoWS – Wivenhoe Park	-	-	-
Existing LoWS – Existing LoWS – Gosbecks's Park	-	-	-
Existing LoWS – Wall's Wood	-	-	-
Proposed LoWS – St Botolph's Sidings	-	-	-
Proposed LoWS –Black Heath	-	-	-
Proposed LoWS –Messing Park	-	-	-

Appendix D

Proformas

Messing Park	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	PCLoWS1
LoWS Name:	Messing Park
Grid Reference:	TL8921718179
Area (ha):	27.39
Ownership:	Private
Management provider:	Managed as a farm, grazed by sheep.
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: Land North Oak Road Emerging: Land North Oak Road
Total area of site Allocation overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0.01 Emerging: 0.01
LoWS Citation:	No citation available.
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	Freshwater Standing Water Only, Woodland and Freshwater Standing Water, Woodland, Grassland and Freshwater Standing Water.
Irreplaceable habitat on site:	Mature open grown trees on site with veteran features were present. A specialist arboriculture survey should be carried out to confirm.
Priority habitat on site:	Deciduous woodland, Wood Pasture & Parkland
Known projects/initiatives:	Unknown
Survey Data	
Surveyor: KR	Date: 31.03.2025

Messing Park	
Weather: Sunny	Access: Private but fully accessible at the time of survey

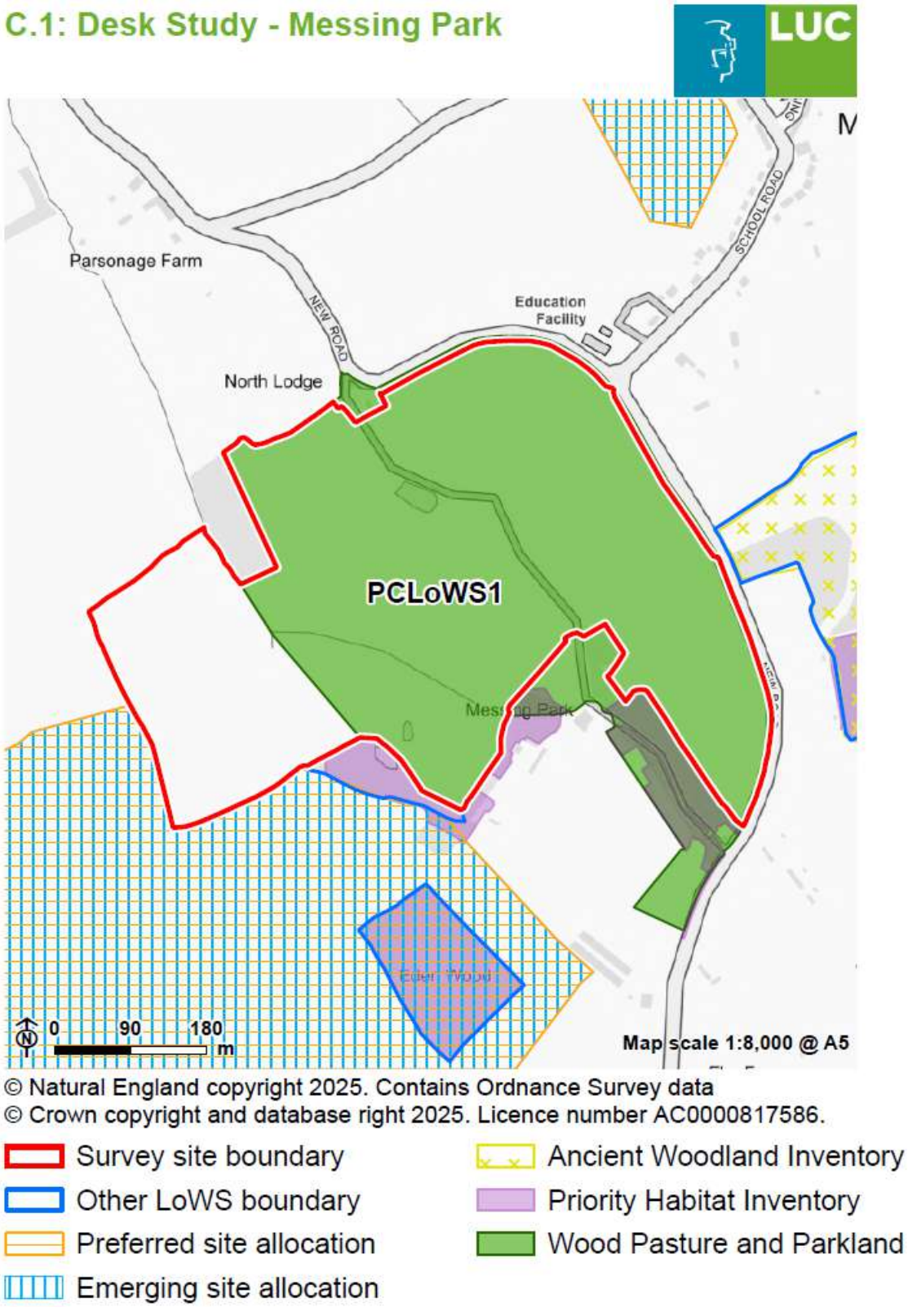
Summary of site:

Messing Park is a private farm located in the west of Colchester between Tiptree and Messing, consisting of sheep grazed grassland, with open grown mature trees and dead wood interspersed throughout. The site is bordered by Eden Wood LoWS to the south and Pods and Conyfield Woods LoWS to the east. Inworth Wood LoWS is additionally close, c 470m west.

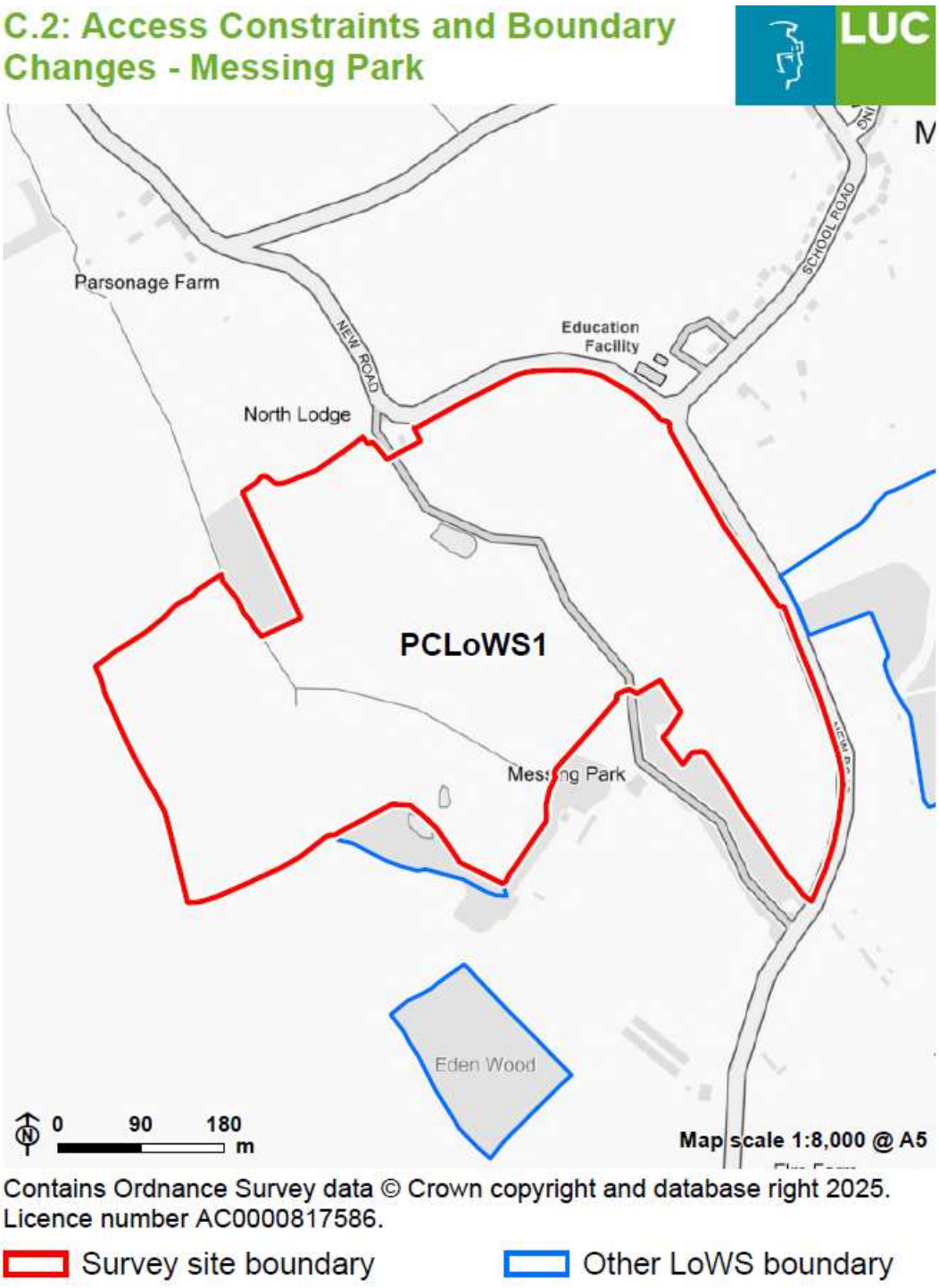
Habitat survey description:

The site predominantly includes sheep grazed fields with mature open grown trees scattered throughout. The grass was closely grazed and species noted included *Agrostis* sp, crested dogstail, small cats tail, Yorkshire fog, creeping buttercup, yarrow and field wood rush with occasional stands of tufted hair grass. Large open grown mature trees such as oak and horse chestnut were present throughout the grassland and some included veteran features such as deadwood and cavities. It is likely that veteran and / or ancient trees are present. Multiple trees had features highly suitable for roosting bats and nesting birds such as owls which are known to be on site (anecdotal evidence). Dead trees and dead wood had been left in situ throughout the site and scrub was present along the edges of the site, providing opportunities for invertebrates. The site is listed under the Wood Pasture and Parkland Habitat Inventory, and there was evidence on site to support this as detailed above. Wood Pasture and Parkland is a rare and valuable habitat in the UK. A pond was present however it lacked aquatic marginal vegetation and a large amount of algae was present, indicating high nutrient levels within the pond. Mature overgrown hedges were present along the edges of the site, and ditches were additionally present. The site is well connected to the surrounding landscape which includes predominantly farmland in addition to Pods and Conyfield Wood LoWS which borders the east of the site and Eden Woods LoWS which bordered the south of the site. Pods and Conyfield Wood LoWS is listed as an Important Invertebrate Area (IIA) however Messing Park itself does not fall within an IIA. Deciduous woodland is listed as present within the site above, however no woodland was identified on site, and it has likely been listed due to the presence of woodland neighbouring the site.

Messing Park



Messing Park



Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys:

The previous survey did not provide detailed habitat survey information. Instead a recommendation for further specialist survey work was made.

Messing Park

Condition Statement:

Unfavourable

Additional comments:

The site displayed elements of good condition, such as the presence of open grown mature trees with veteran features, presence of decaying wood providing ecological niches, and an absence of invasive non-native plant species. However, the grassland was heavily grazed, lacking in species and structural diversity, and while there was some scrub along the edges of the site, this was limited in extent, and the site was lacking stands of individual plants of clumps of scrub.

Management:

Satisfactory

Additional comments:

The site is use as a farm, and sheep graze the grassland on site, which is a preferable management technique for Wood Pasture and Parkland habitat, however the biodiversity on site could be improved via changes in management, as recommended below.

Known/relevant existing site management plan:

Unknown

Opportunities on site:

Scrub establishment / management, conservation grazing, hedgerow management, pond enhancements

Additional comments:

There is an opportunity to enhance the ecological value of the site through management changes, and through enhancement of habitats on site including the grassland and pond. See recommendations below.

Threats and Disturbances:

Overgrazing, neighbouring development

Additional comments:

The grass was noted to be closely grazed, with sheep grazing all year round, which limits the ecological value of the grassland. A preferred allocation borders the site, which while will not result in direct loss of habitat, there could be indirect impacts such as shading from neighbouring development.

Level of use:

None

Additional comments:

Not publicly accessible - Private farm

Management Recommendations:

This site would benefit from a management plan which protects and enhances the Wood Pasture and Parkland habitat, such as through establishing a conservation grazing regime. This would promote species and height diversity in the grassland, benefitting invertebrates. Occasional clumps of scrub could be established within the grassland to provide further nectar sources for invertebrates, and its extent managed by grazing. The hedgerows around the edges of the site were overgrown and gappy. Planting the gaps and managing as a hedgerow would improve connectivity and create a valuable corridor along the edges of the site. The pond was observed to be lacking aquatic marginal vegetation and had algae within indicating high nutrient levels. Restoration of the pond would provide a valuable habitat for amphibians and invertebrates.

Messing Park	
LoWS Criteria	
Habitat Selection Criteria	
Woodland, scrub and related habitats:	HC4 - Wood-pasture and Parkland
Additional comments:	It is recommended that an arboriculture survey is carried out to accurately assess for the presence of veteran trees.
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:	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

Messing Park	
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:	This site is listed within the Wood Pasture and Parkland Habitat Inventory and there was evidence on site to support this as part of the survey for the LoWS Review. Therefore, it is recommended that the site is designated as a LoWS under criteria HC4, however the site would benefit from further specialist surveys including an arboriculture survey and invertebrate survey to inform a management plan to manage and enhance the habitat.

West House Wood	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	Co92
LoWS Name:	West House Wood
Grid Reference:	TL9745527078
Area (ha):	3.21
Ownership:	Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT)
Management provider:	Essex Wildlife Trust
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: Braiswick Emerging: Braiswick
Total area of site Allocation overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0.00 Emerging: 0.00
LoWS Citation:	This site is an Essex Wildlife Trust nature reserve and comprises mainly ancient wood, with a strip of more recent wood along the northern edge. It has a canopy of mainly Pedunculate Oak (Quercus robur) and Ash (Fraxinus excelsior) with localised Small-leaved Lime (Tilia cordata) over an understorey of old Hazel (Corylus avellana) coppice with Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna), Blackthorn (Prunus spinosa) and locally dominant Holly (Ilex aquifolium). The ground flora is characterised by large quantities of Bluebell (Hyacinthoides non- scripta), Wood Anemone (Anemone nemorosa), Moschatel (Adoxa moschatellina), Wood-sedge (Carex sylvatica) and Red Campion (Silene dioica), as well as more local Pignut (Conopodium majus), Gooseberry (Ribes uva-crispa) and Barren Strawberry (Potentilla sterilis). Two central ponds support Marsh-bedstraw (Galium palustre), Soft-rush (Juncus effusus), Bittersweet (Solanum dulcamara), Water-plantain (Alisma plantago-aquatica) and Yellow Iris (Iris pseudacorus).
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	Freshwater River Buffer Only
Irreplaceable habitat on site:	Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland
Priority habitat on site:	Deciduous woodland
Known projects/initiatives:	The wood is occasionally used by girl guides and for corporate events
Survey Data	
Surveyor: KR	Date: 01.04.2025

West House Wood	
Weather: Sunny	Access: Publicly accessible

Summary of site:

West House Wood is a small ancient woodland located centrally within Colchester, immediately east of the A12, managed by the Essex Wildlife Trust. The closest LoWS to the wood includes Spring Grove LoWS c 300m south west and Lexden Dyke c. 370m south east.

Habitat survey description:

During the time of the survey, the woodland floor was carpeted with bluebells with wood anemone, dogs violet, lesser celandine and lords and ladies also present. Understorey species included holly, hazel, honeysuckle, rowan and hawthorn. Oak, ash, sweet chestnut and small leaved lime are present within the canopy. As noted within 2015, the woodland is not listed in the Ancient Woodland Inventory, however the ground flora and presence of old small-leaved lime coppice suggest ancient status. Three ponds supporting smooth newts and frogs and wood piles were additionally present within the wood. Ancient woodland is an irreplaceable habitat and the site provides valuable nesting, foraging and commuting opportunities for bats, birds, invertebrates, amphibians and small mammals in the area. Trees were noted to have multiple features for roosting bats. To the north of the wood, outside of the LoWS boundary, waste was dumped approximately 15 years ago and has since become established by a rich plant diversity (as informed by the site manager) and provides basking habitat for reptiles. This area consisted of a mixture of bare ground, scrub, grass and tall ruderal. The area to the south of the site (outside of the boundary), could not be surveyed however appears to be a mixture of dense scrub and grassland from aerial. This area likely provides a valuable buffer to the site given its small size, and supplements the woodland, providing additional habitat, in particular for the bird species and amphibians known to be using the site. A species list for birds noted within the woodland was provided by the site manager, and these included pheasant, woodpigeon, green woodpecker, great spotted woodpecker, wren, robin, blackbird, song thrush, blackcap, lesser whitethroat, chiffchaff, blue tit, great tit, carrion crow and nightingale. A botanical species list was additionally provided by the site manager, and included: field maple, sycamore, yarrow, moschatel, horse chestnut, bugle, garlic mustard, wood anemone, cow parsley, cuckoo pint, water fern, daisy, common birch, large bindweed, wavy bittercress, remote sedge, wood sedge, sweet chestnut, enchanter's nightshade, spear thistle, creeping thistle, hemlock, hazel, common hawthorn, foxglove, wild teasel, broad buckler fern, great willowherb, wood spurge, lesser celandine, ash, cleavers, cut-leaved cranesbill, shining cranesbill, dovesfoot cranesbill, herb robert, wood avens, ground ivy, ivy, bluebell, tutsan, perforate st john's wort, stinking iris, yellow iris, holly, soft rush, white dead-nettle, least duckweed, oxeye daisy, common honeysuckle, yellow pimpernel, cultivated apple, spotted medick, balm, wood millet, wood forget-me-not, wild parsnip, green alkanet, ribwort plantain, annual meadow grass, aspen, creeping cinquefoil, cowslip, primrose, wild cherry, blackthorn, bracken, common oak, creeping buttercup, red currant, bramble, broad-leaved dock, goat willow, elder, common figwort, common ragwort, red campion, rowan, greater stitchwort, chickweed, dandelion, wood sage, small-leaved lime, stinging nettle, ivy-leaved speedwell, wood speedwell, thyme-leaved speedwell and common dog violet.

West House Wood

Survey site boundary
Emerging site allocation
Preferred site allocation
Priority Habitat Inventory

West House Wood

Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys:

The site appears to match the previous site citation from 2015. In 2015 'neglected coppice' was noted as a management issue, however hazel coppicing does occur at the site and the wood as a whole is managed very well.

West House Wood
Condition Statement: Favourable **Additional comments:** A very well managed site providing a species rich, diverse woodland offering valuable opportunities to an abundance of wildlife in the local area, including birds, amphibians, invertebrates and small mammals including bats. The woodland supports a variety of native tree and shrub species, with a diverse ground flora, good vertical structure and an abundance of deadwood features.
Management: Good **Additional comments:** The site is managed very well by the EWT, with many management activities taking place including path maintenance, dead hedge laying, holly management, cyclical coppicing, brash stools to protect against grazing, shade management around the ponds and dead wood pile creation.
Known/relevant existing site management plan: Unknown
Opportunities on site: Education, woodland creation **Additional comments:** The site is already well managed, however could be used for educational purposes for local schools to teach about habitat management, pond dipping etc. The site is relatively small and therefore woodland creation should be undertaken where possible adjacent to the site to increase its size, enhancing its value and habitat resilience.
Threats and Disturbances: Pollution, Neighbouring development **Additional comments:** The wood is immediately adjacent to the A12 so there is occasionally litter from the road and likely high pollution levels given its proximity. A preferred allocation is in close proximity to the site, which while will not result in a direct loss of habitat, there could be indirect impacts such as an increase in visitors to the site.
Level of use: Low **Additional comments:** The wood is small so not used by large numbers of walkers / dog walkers.
Management Recommendations: N/A – The site is already well managed by EWT
LoWS Criteria
Habitat Selection Criteria

West House Wood	
Woodland, scrub and related habitats:	HC1 - Ancient Woodland sites, HC2 - Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient sites
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:	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

West House Wood	
Additional comments:	N/A
Invertebrates:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
LoWS Survey Recommendations	
Designated LoWS	
LoWS Survey Recommendation:	Retain - No change
Rationale:	An irreplaceable, well managed woodland that provides opportunities for an abundance of species. The site should retain its local wildlife site status and should continue to be protected. In addition, the area of dense scrub/grassland mosaic to the south of the site, outside of the LoWS boundary, provides valuable bird nesting opportunities and buffers the site given the small size of the wood.

Lexden Dyke	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	Co94
LoWS Name:	Lexden Dyke
Grid Reference:	TL9759926352
Area (ha):	2.46
Ownership:	Colchester City Council (CCC) own the middle section immediately south of the railway and the ownership for remainder of the site is unknown.
Management provider:	Colchester City Council are responsible for management of the section that is owned by them, however management for the rest of the site is unknown
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: Land off Bakers Lane Emerging: Land off Bakers Lane
Total area of site Allocation overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0.53 Emerging: 0.53
LoWS Citation:	This site comprises as small block of clearly ancient Small-leaved Lime (Tilia cordata) woodland, strips of possibly ancient woodland along the Lexden Dyke earthwork and a small extent of relic acidic grassland with scattered tree and scrub cover. The southern portion of the dyke contains some small areas of acid grassland, with encroaching Gorse (Ulex europaeus), Broom (Cytisus scoparius) and Brambles (Rubus fruticosus agg.). A small sloping unimproved meadow to the east of the dyke, periodically horse-grazed, is included in the site, as it is continuous with the dyke habitat and shares some of the herbs, notably Harebell (Campanula rotundifolia), an Essex Red Data List plant, and Sheep's Sorrel (Rumex acetosella).The northern broadleaved wood, bisected by the railway line, comprises standards of Pedunculate Oak (Quercus robur), Ash (Fraxinus excelsior) and overgrown Small-leaved Lime coppice, along with stands of Aspen (Populus tremula), Wild Cherry (Prunus avium), elm (Ulmus sp.) and Holly (Ilex aquifolium). The ground flora here includes Moschatel (Adoxa moschatellina), Creeping Soft-grass (Holcus mollis), abundant Bluebell (Hyacinthoides non-scripta), Dog's Mercury (Mercurialis perennis), Red Campion (Silene dioica) and Lesser Celandine (Ficaria verna).
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	Grassland and Freshwater Standing Water
Irreplaceable habitat on site:	Ancient woodland
Priority habitat on site:	Deciduous woodland

Lexden Dyke	
Known projects/initiatives:	Unknown
Survey Data	
Surveyor: KR	Date: 01.04.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: Publicly accessible

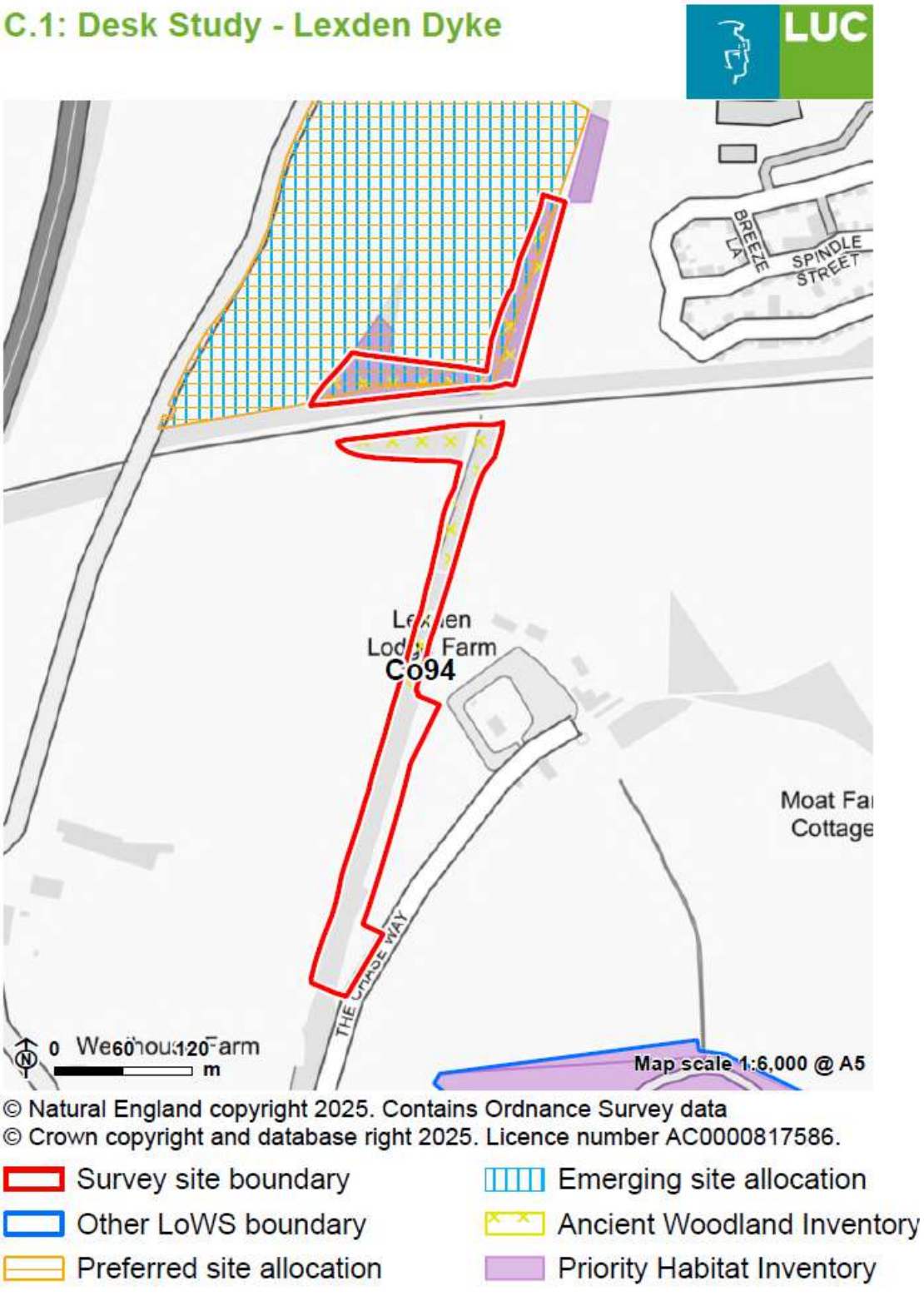
Summary of site:

A narrow site comprising a dyke lined with woodland and scrub, bisected by a railway line. A small area of grassland is included within the boundary at the southern end of the site. The site is located centrally within Colchester, in between Braiswick and Lexden. The site is in close proximity to a number of Local Wildlife sites, including Cymbeline Meadows, Lexden Springs LNR, Cooks Lane, West House Wood and Spring Grove.

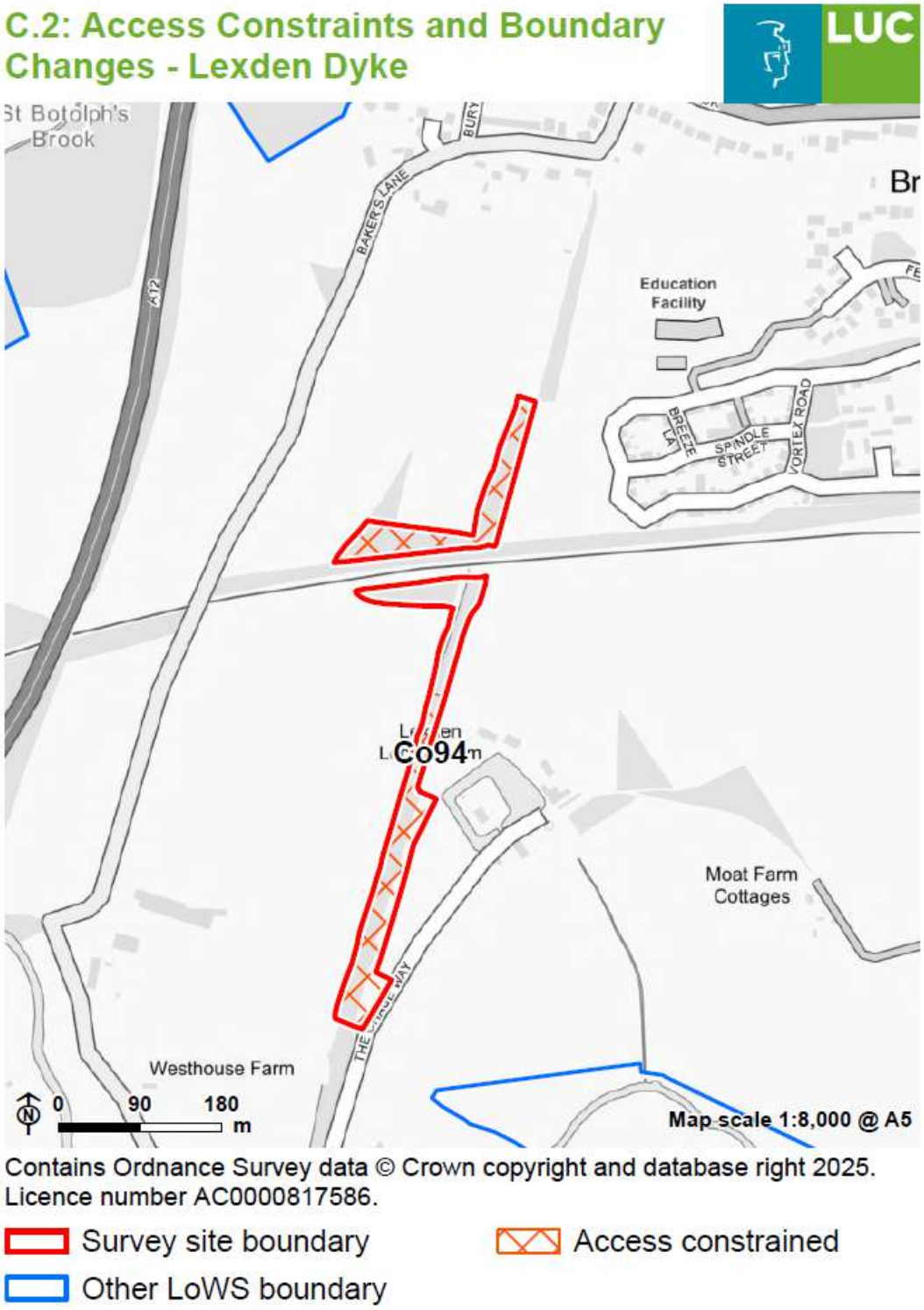
Habitat survey description:

The site is partially owned by CCC, however the ownership of the rest of the site is unknown and was not granted, therefore the majority of site was surveyed from footpaths adjacent to the site. Visible from a footpath east of the southern half was mature scrub including broom, elder and bramble along the dyke, however the dyke itself was not directly visible in this southern half. Scattered trees were present and bluebells were visible in places along the southern half. The grassland area included a field, which was not within the councils ownership and so not directly surveyed. The area of woodland just south of the railway line fell within the councils ownership and was accessible via a footpath. The woodland floor was carpeted in bluebells, as well as abundant lesser celandine, dogs mercury, lords and ladies, red campion and dogs violet. The understory also included coppice and elder, however in general the understorey was sparse in this area of woodland. The northern part of the site, north of railway could only be accessed at one point due to the density of scrub along the edge. The woodland was carpeted with bluebells and displayed good structural and species diversity. The density of scrub along the edge is beneficial to prevent residents from accessing the woodland and the scrub includes a good mix of species, however the woodland edge could be enhanced, as currently the grass is mown right up to the scrub along woodland edge. Dead wood was noted on both sides, in addition to a small amount of litter, including an old tent and a shopping trolley. The site was bordered predominantly by farmland and a golf course.

Lexden Dyke


C.1: Desk Study - Lexden Dyke
LUC
BREEZE LA
SPINDLE STREET
Co94
THE CHASE WAY
0 60 120 m
Map scale 1:6,000 @ A5
© Natural England copyright 2025. Contains Ordnance Survey data
© Crown copyright and database right 2025. Licence number AC0000817586.
Survey site boundary
Other LoWS boundary
Preferred site allocation
Emerging site allocation
Ancient Woodland Inventory
Priority Habitat Inventory

Lexden Dyke



Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys:

Lexden Dyke
The habitat description appears unchanged, however access was limited during the 2025 survey.
Condition Statement: Favourable however access was limited, in particular towards the south of the site. **Additional comments:** The woodland areas which could be accessed displayed a good mix of species including good ground flora, and good structural diversity in places, however there is opportunity to enhance the site further as suggested within the management recommendations.
Management: Satisfactory **Additional comments:** The level of management within the site is unknown, however there was evidence of tree planting along the western edge of the site.
Known/relevant existing site management plan: Unknown
Opportunities on site: Woodland edge enhancement, coppice management, conservation grazing **Additional comments:** There is an opportunity to enhance the ecological value of the site through management changes. See Recommendations below.
Threats and Disturbances: Pollution, Development **Additional comments:** The site is particularly narrow, and is surrounded by farmland and a golf course, making it susceptible to the effects of run off, especially given the lack of woodland edge. The site is in direct threat of development, as the northern half of the site falls within a preferred site allocation, including ancient woodland.
Level of use: None/low **Additional comments:** The majority of the site is not publicly accessible, and the part which does sit beside a footpath is very small and therefore is unlikely to be a destination for local residents.
Management Recommendations: A high density of nettles was noted within the dyke, potentially indicating high nutrient levels as a result of the neighbouring land uses. A golf course and farmland border the site. It is recommended that the woodland edges of the site are enhanced, via creation of a buffer with a scalloped edge, to create a gradient from woodland to scrub edge to long grassland. This will help to increase the resilience of the woodland and increase the diversity of the woodland. The woodland south of the railway would benefit from some understorey planting, given this was noted to be lacking in this area of woodland. Increasing the size of the woodland on site, through woodland creation is additionally recommend to enhance and increase the resilience of the woodland, given the small size of the site. Coppicing should continue to be practiced within the woodland areas, to

Lexden Dyke	
increase the species diversity within the woodland. The grassland could not be directly surveyed, however it is recommended that it is managed by a conservation grazing regime to preserve and enhance its value. The northern half of the site, including the ancient woodland which falls within the site allocation should be retained and protected as a LoWS.	
LoWS Criteria	
Habitat Selection Criteria	
Woodland, scrub and related habitats:	HC1 - Ancient Woodland sites, HC2 - Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient sites
Additional comments:	N/A
Grassland:	HC13 - Heathland and Acid Grassland
Additional comments:	The grassland area could not be directly accessed for survey due to access restrictions, however it could be seen from the footpath that the grassland area was still present within the site.
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

Lexden Dyke	
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:	Retain - No change
Rationale:	The site continues to be a valuable local wildlife site, including irreplaceable ancient woodland which provides opportunities in particular for birds, bats, badger and invertebrates. The site should therefore retain its local wildlife site status, and should continue to be protected and enhanced.

Gosbecks Archaeological Park	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	Co174
LoWS Name:	Gosbecks Archaeological Park
Grid Reference:	TL9689922504
Area (ha):	27.12
Ownership:	Colchester City Council (CCC)
Management provider:	Colchester City Council
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: Land North of Maldon Road, Colchester Emerging: Tey Green
Total area of site Allocation overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0.00 Emerging: 0.00
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 (Dactylis glomerata) and False Oat-grass (Arrhenatherum elatius) with areas of meadow grasses (Poa 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 (Galium verum) occurs in locally dominant patches and Yarrow (Achillea millefolium) and Common Knapweed (Centaurea nigra) are abundant throughout. In addition, other characteristic herbs include Wild Carrot (Daucus carota), Yellow-rattle (Rhinanthus minor), Oxeye Daisy (Leucanthemum vulgare), Field Scabious (Knautia arvensis), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (Lotus corniculatus) and Dwarf Mallow (Malva neglecta). 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.
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:	N/A
Priority habitat on site:	N/A
Known projects/initiatives:	Unknown
Survey Data	

Gosbecks Archaeological Park	
Surveyor: KR	Date: 01.04.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: Publicly accessible

Summary of site:

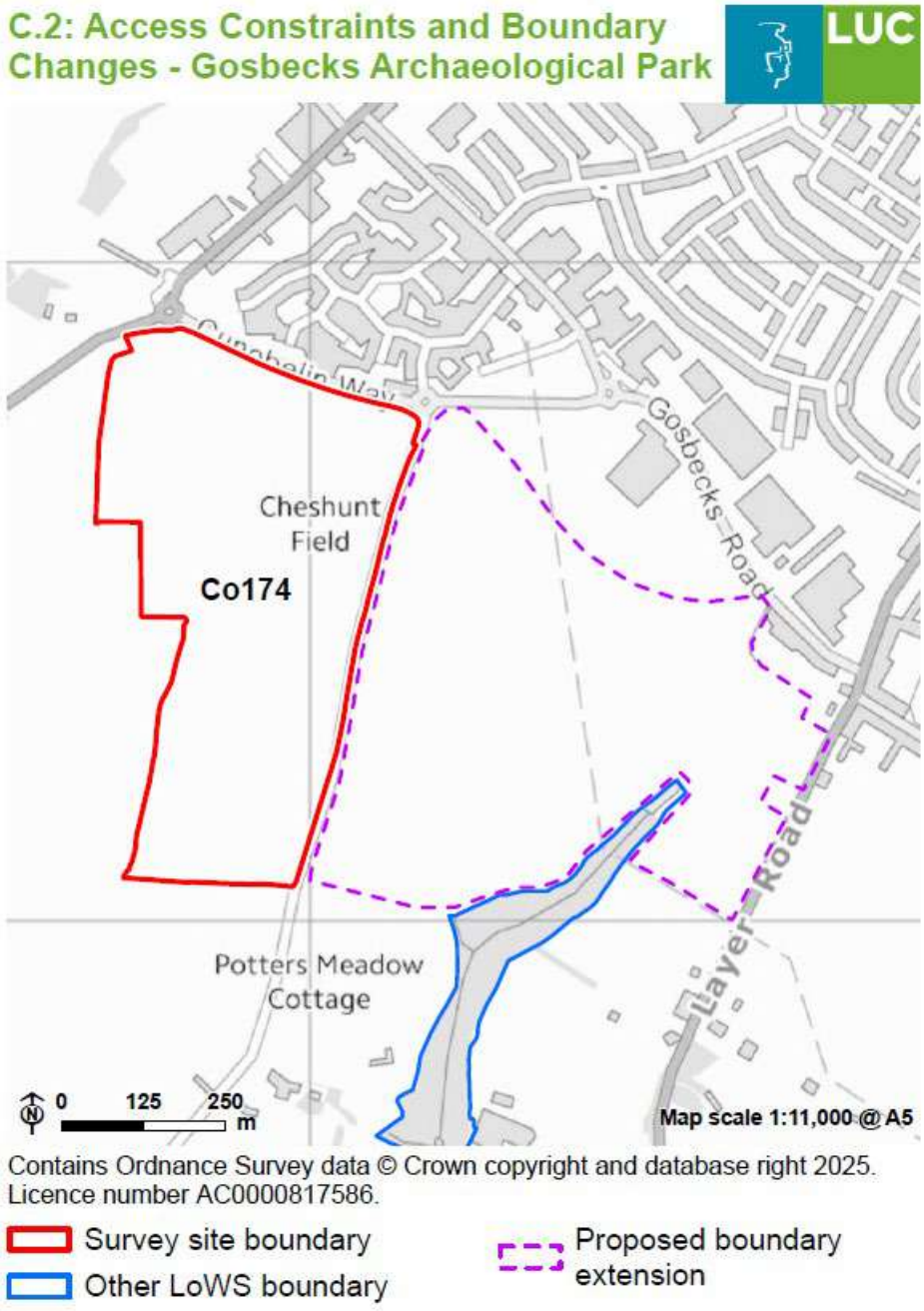
Gosbeck's Park is an Iron Age and Roman site consisting predominantly of flat grassland and farmland. The LoWS designation covers the western half of the archaeological park only, which includes predominately flat grassland, with hedgerows along the edges of the site. The site is fully accessible to 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 Local Wildlife sites, 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.

Habitat survey description:

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.

Gosbecks Archaeological Park

Gosbecks Archaeological Park



Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys:

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.

Condition Statement:

Favourable

Gosbecks Archaeological Park
Additional comments: 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.
Management: Good **Additional comments:** 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.
Known/relevant existing site management plan: An Action Plan for 2021 - 2022[27] was found online on the Colchester City Council website, however a more recent management plan may exist not online.
Opportunities on site: Hedgerow creation, invertebrate survey **Additional comments:** 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 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: Dogs **Additional comments:** 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.
Level of use: Moderate **Additional comments:** A popular dog waking spot
Management Recommendations:

[27] 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

Gosbecks Archaeological Park	
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.	
LoWS Criteria	
Habitat Selection Criteria	
Woodland, scrub and related habitats:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Grassland:	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.
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:	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.
Species Selection Criteria	
Plants:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A

Gosbecks Archaeological Park	
Birds:	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.
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:	This site is located within an 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 Gosbeck's Archaeological Park is considered for inclusion as a LoWS. The east of the site (outside the LoWS boundary), was not subject to survey and therefore it is recommended that this part of the site is surveyed to fully assess its potential to be included, however there is evidence to suggest that it additionally holds importance for nature. The eastern side is a grass field, grazed by cattle. It is additionally accessible to the public, and skylarks are known to nest on all parts of the site. The eastern side is additionally within the important invertebrate area. Therefore there is potential that this side is additionally of importance for skylarks, invertebrates and provides accessible natural greenspace, which matches the reasons for designation for the western side. Specialist survey work across the whole of the site would be of benefit to fully assess the site's value and to inform a management plan.

Wall's Wood	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	Te6
LoWS Name:	Wall's Wood
Grid Reference:	TM0377527214
Area (ha):	14.26
Ownership:	Private
Management provider:	Privately managed
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: North East Colchester Emerging: Land north of Bromley Road
Total area of site Allocation overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0.00 Emerging: 0.00
LoWS Citation:	This site consists of probably ancient streamside woodland with younger woodland blocks of varying ages on the valley sides. In the central part of the stream valley, where there was once a mill, is a complex of marsh and wet woodland habitats. The stream banks and adjoining woodlands are dominated by Pedunculate Oak (Quercus robur) standards with Wild Cherry (Prunus avium), Field Maple (Acer campestre), Holly (Ilex aquifolium) and occasional Hornbeam (Carpinus betula). The ground flora is very rich, including: Bluebell (Hyacinthoides non-scripta), Yellow Archangel(Lamiastrum galeobdolon), Dog's Mercury (Mercurialis perennis), Wood Sorrel (Oxalis acetosella), Moschatel (Adoxa moschatellina), Creeping-jenny (Lysimachia nummularia), Enchanter's-nightshade (Circaea lutetiana), Wavy Hair-grass (Deschampsia flexuosa), Primrose (Primula vulgaris), Tutsan (Hypericum androsaemum), Wood Sedge (Carex sylvatica), Remote Sedge (Carex remota) and Wood Anemone (Anemone nemorosa). A diverse range of ferns is also present including Hart's-tongue (Asplenium scolopendrium) and the Essex Red Data List species Scaly Male Fern (Dryopteris affinis) and Lady Fern (Athyrium filix-femina). The upper slopes mainly hold coppiced Sweet Chestnut (Castanea sativa) with occasional Ash (Fraxinus excelsior) and Pedunculate Oak standards and an understorey of Hazel (Corylus avellana), Field Maple, Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna). The ground flora includes Bluebell, but is not as diverse as the stream sides. Some spring lines, dropping down to the stream, are marked by Alder (Alnus glutinosa). The more recent woodland blocks to the east and south – including The Broomhangings – consist of Pedunculate Oak, Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and Hawthorn with Bramble. The eastern block includes some small scale gravel workings and the ground flora includes Wood Sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*) and Heath Speedwell (*Veronica officinalis*). In the central part of the stream valley, Alder and Willow (*Salix spp.*) woodland dominates in parts with more open areas of Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*) Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*), Common Hemp-nettle (*Galeopsis tetrahit*), Water Chickweed (*Myosoton aquaticum*) and Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*).
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes

Wall's Wood	
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	Woodland and Freshwater Standing Water
Irreplaceable habitat on site:	Ancient tree, Ancient woodland
Priority habitat on site:	Deciduous woodland
Known projects/initiatives:	Unknown
Survey Data	
Surveyor: KR	Date: 02.04.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: The site is privately owned, however public footpaths run through the wood. The site is owned by three separate landowners, and access permission was granted by two. Therefore some parts of the site were not walked through, however footpaths ran though the majority of the site, therefore the survey was not constrained by access.

Summary of site:

A large deciduous woodland, including ancient woodland, lowland mixed deciduous woodland and wet woodland. Owing to its ancient nature, the site includes a rich plant diversity including multiple ancient woodland indicators. Salary brook runs through the wood, increasing the habitat diversity on site. The site is located just outside, however immediately adjacent to Colchester, within Tendring. This sizeable wood is surrounded by arable fields, and therefore is an important wildlife site in this area of Tendring.

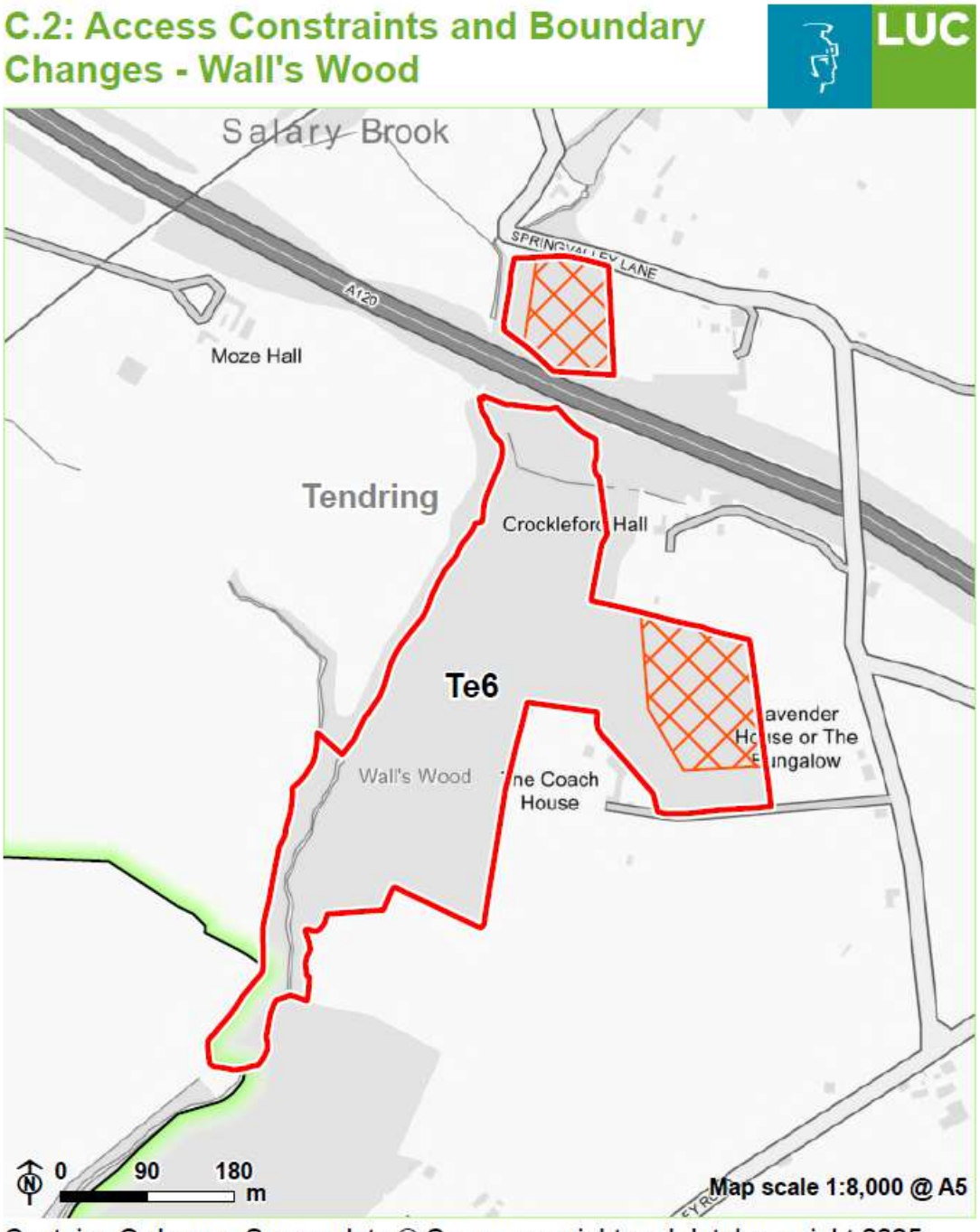
Habitat survey description:

A rich ground flora was noted within the woodland, including an abundance of bluebells, in addition to lesser celandine, wood anemone, dogs mercury, ground ivy, foxglove, red campion, greater stitchwort, marsh marigold, pendulous sedge, soft rush and water mint within the wetter areas. Blackthorn, hawthorn, holly, honeysuckle, hazel and elder were noted within the understorey. Tree species noted included pedunculate oak, sweet chestnut, field maple, silver birch and hornbeam. Mosses were present, and many of the trees displayed features suitable for roosting bats. Two veteran trees are mapped on site within the ancient tree inventory. Dead wood and multiple wood piles were present within the wood.

C.1: Desk Study - Wall's Wood

- Survey site boundary
- Colchester District boundary
- Neighbouring district
- Preferred site allocation
- Emerging site allocation
- Ancient Woodland Inventory
- Priority Habitat Inventory

Wall's Wood



Survey site boundary
Colchester District boundary
Neighbouring district
Access constrained

Wall's Wood
Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys: No notable changes observed.
Condition Statement: Favourable **Additional comments:** The woodland was noted to include a rich ground flora and good mix of native tree and shrub species as well as a good age range, including veteran trees. An abundance of dead wood was additionally present within the woodland and coppicing within the woodland helps bolster the biodiversity within the woodland.
Management: Satisfactory **Additional comments:** The level of management is unknown, however there was evidence of coppicing within the woodland, and occasional tree management for health and safety reasons is carried out, with the wood retained on site and placed in log piles.
Known/relevant existing site management plan: Unknown
Opportunities on site: N/A **Additional comments:** There is an opportunity to enhance the ecological value of the site through management changes. See Management Recommendations below.
Threats and Disturbances: Invasive non-native species, biking, neighbouring development **Additional comments:** Cherry laurel was noted predominantly towards the north of the site. Variegated yellow archangel, and muntjac was also seen on site. There was additionally evidence of ramp building for biking within the woodland, however this was limited in extent and not significantly impacting upon the woodland. A preferred allocation borders the southern end of the site, which while will not result in direct loss of habitat, there could be indirect impacts such as shading from neighbouring development and increased visitors.
Level of use: Moderate **Additional comments:** Dog walkers, walkers, cyclists
Management Recommendations: There was evidence of coppicing within the woodland which should continue to be practiced. The site is owned by multiple owners, and therefore levels of management within the wood likely vary. It would be beneficial to have a management plan that covers the wood as a whole. Invasive non-native species including cherry laurel, variegated yellow archangel and muntjac were noted within the woodland. The cherry laurel and variegated yellow archangel should be removed under the guidance of an invasive species specialist and monitored to manage their spread. The impact of muntjac should be monitored, and if significant, management controls should be put in place such as deer fencing, brash piles, to allow regeneration within the woodland. The previous survey noted sycamore within the northern woodland block. This area of woodland was only surveyed from the footpath, as access permission was not granted for this area, however it is likely that

Wall's Wood	
sycamore is still prevalent here and so removal and replacement with native species may be beneficial. It is likely that with increased development in the vicinity of the site, there will be additional visitors to the site. Maintaining paths, and signs to educate visitors about the importance of the site will help to ensure visitors stick to the paths, and limit any impacts on the woodland as much as possible.	
LoWS Criteria	
Habitat Selection Criteria	
Woodland, scrub and related habitats:	HC1 - Ancient Woodland sites, HC2 - Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient sites, HC3 - Wet Woodland
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
Additional comments:	N/A
Species Selection Criteria	
Plants:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Birds:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Mammals:	N/A

Wall's Wood	
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:	Retain - No change
Rationale:	A sizeable woodland that includes a variety of woodland types including irreplaceable ancient woodland and wet habitats such as wet woodland and salary brook. The woodland includes a rich flora including Essex red data list ferns and provides an abundance of opportunities for wildlife in the local area and connects to multiple hedgerows within the surrounding arable fields, given its size and linear shape. It is therefore an important component of the local wildlife site network, and its status should be retained and protected.

Welsh Wood	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	Co143
LoWS Name:	Welsh Wood
Grid Reference:	TM0262126318
Area (ha):	3.71
Ownership:	Colchester City Council
Management provider:	Colchester City Council
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: North East Colchester Emerging: Land north of Bromley Road
Total area of site Allocation overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0.00 Emerging: 0.00
LoWS Citation:	This largely ancient wood, a fragment of a more extensive area lost to housing, consists of standards of Pedunculate Oak (Quercus robur) with Small-leaved Lime (Tilia cordata), Ash (Fraxinus excelsior) and Hazel (Corylus avellana) coppice. Along the south western edge and along the stream to the northwest, Sweet Chestnut (Castanea sativa) coppice replaces the lime. The canopy also includes Field Maple (Acer campestre), Wild Cherry (Prunus avium), streamside Alder (Alnus glutinosa) and clones of Aspen (Populus tremula) with Holly (Ilex aquifolium) in the understorey. The ground flora is surprisingly rich in ancient woodland plants, including Moschatel (Adoxa moschatellina), Pendulous Sedge (Carex pendula), Remote Sedge (C. remota), Wood Sedge (C. sylvatica), abundant Bluebell (Hyacinthoides non-scripta), Wood Anemone (Anemone nemorosa), Wood Melick (Melica uniflora), Hart's-tongue Fern (Asplenium scolopendrium), Soft Shield-fern (Polystichum setiferum), Early Dog- violet (Viola reichenbachiana) and Primrose (Primula vulgaris), along with Lesser Celandine (Ranunculus ficaria) and Goldilocks Buttercup (Ranunculus auricomus).
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	Freshwater River Buffer Only
Irreplaceable habitat on site:	Ancient woodland
Priority habitat on site:	Deciduous woodland
Known projects/initiatives:	A forest school takes place within the woodland
Survey Data	

Welsh Wood	
Surveyor: KR	Date: 02.04.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: Publicly accessible

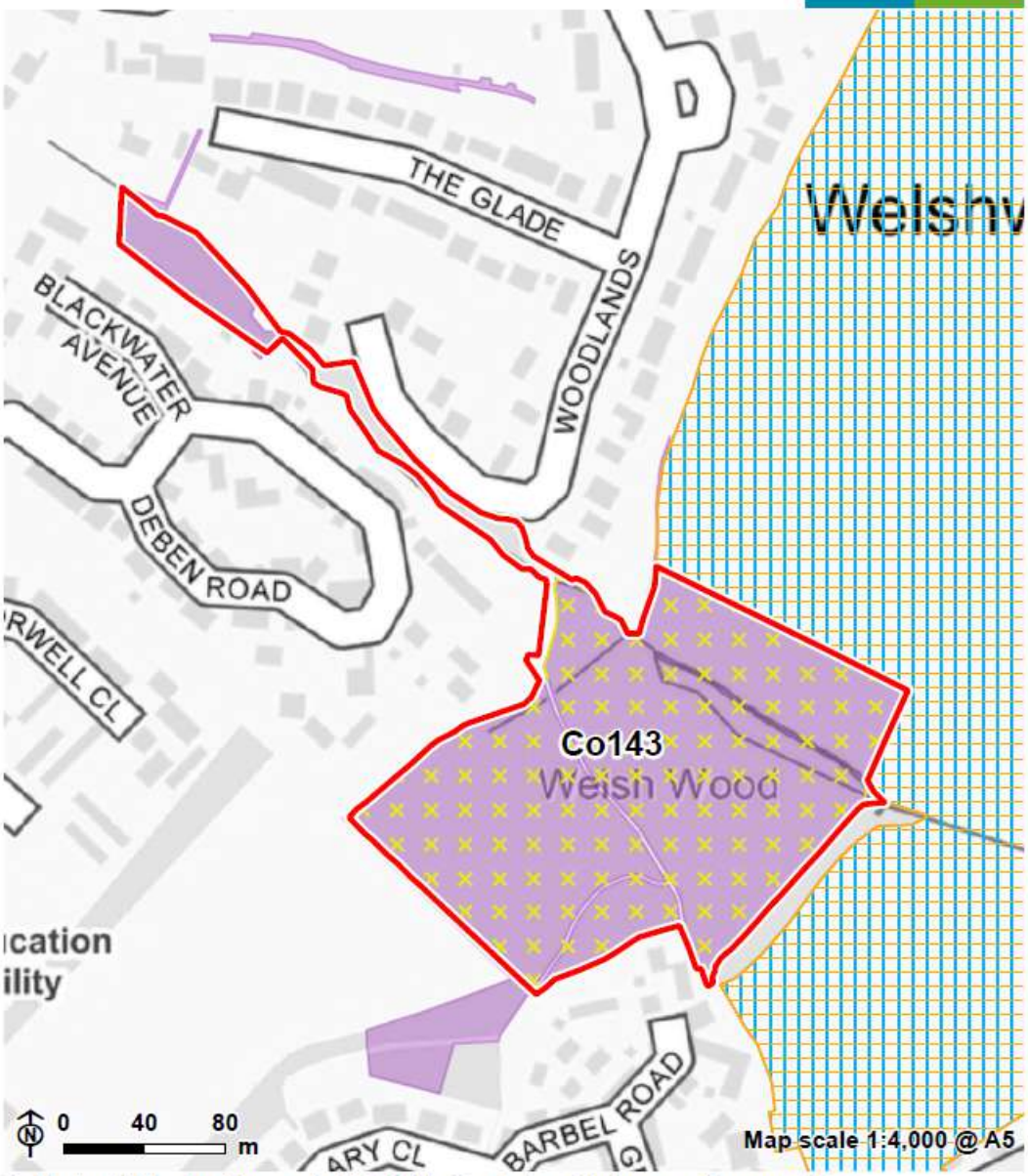
Summary of site:

A small local ancient woodland with a rich ground flora including ancient woodland indicators. The site is located within the east of Colchester and is surrounded by residential development and farmland.

Habitat survey description:

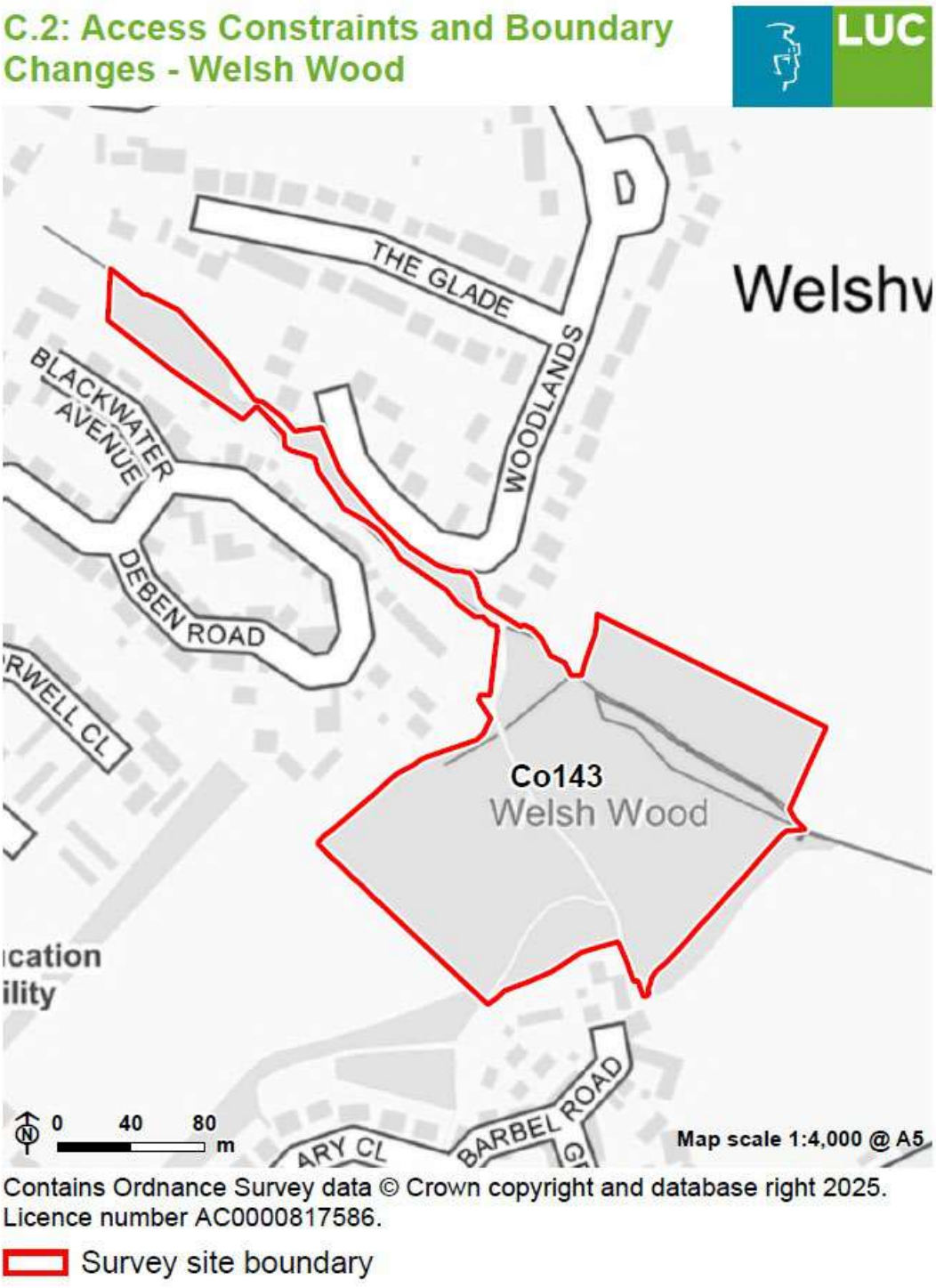
This site is predominantly ancient woodland, with a small section of secondary woodland in the north, and a stream which joins Salary Brook Local Nature Reserve further south. The woodland is known to support a rich diversity of flora which was evidenced while on site. The ground was carpeted with bluebells with additional ground species including wood anemone, pendulous sedge, early dogs violet, wild garlic, lesser celandine, greater stitchwort, pignut, wood melick, dogs mercury and speedwell sp. Holly, bramble, hazel and elder was noted within the understorey, as well as small leaved lime, oak, ash, field maple and sweet chestnut within the canopy. Harts tongue fern and *Carex* sp was noted growing along the stream. An abundance of dead wood and log piles were present throughout the wood, as well as standing dead wood, providing valuable habitat for invertebrates. The site provides foraging habitat for bats and has potential to support bat roosts, given trees were noted to have bat roost suitability.

C.1: Desk Study - Welsh Wood



Survey site boundary
Preferred site allocation
Emerging site allocation
Ancient Woodland Inventory
Priority Habitat Inventory

Welsh Wood



Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys:

The habitat description appears unchanged from 2015, however in 2015 it was noted that a small amount of cherry laurel was noted within the wood. In 2025, additional invasive non-native species were present in addition to cherry laurel including

Welsh Wood
variegated yellow archangel and Russian vine. This would suggest that the number of invasive non-native species has increased since the last survey
Condition Statement: Favourable **Additional comments:** The woodland supports a rich ground flora, a range of native tree and shrub species, an abundance of dead wood and good vertical structure. The presence of invasive non-native species should continue to be controlled to ensure its condition does not decline.
Management: Good **Additional comments:** The site appears to be well managed with activities taking place such as path maintenance, litter picking, occasional invasive control, coppicing and ditch maintenance.
Known/relevant existing site management plan: Site Action Plan June 2023 - May 2024[28] is available online on the Colchester City Council website
Opportunities on site: Woodland creation **Additional comments:** The site is relatively small and therefore woodland creation should be undertaken where possible adjacent to the site to increase its size, enhancing its value and habitat resilience. Additional management recommendations are provided below.
Threats and Disturbances: Invasive non-native species, neighbouring development **Additional comments:** Cherry laurel, variegated yellow archangel and Russian vine are present within the woodland. A preferred allocation borders the site, which while will not result in direct loss of habitat, there could be indirect impacts such as shading from neighbouring development and an increased number of visitors.
Level of use: Moderate **Additional comments:** Dog walkers, walkers, forest school
Management Recommendations: Cherry laurel, variegated yellow archangel and Russian vine are known to be on site. Only cherry laurel was noted within the previous survey, indicating the presence of invasive non-native species has potentially increased since the previous survey. Their presence is known to the rangers and their control is included within the latest management plan. It is important this continues to be a priority, as a small site such as this is more susceptible to the spread of invasive non-native species. The site should continue to be managed by coppicing, which can be unsightly to visitors if they are unaware of the practice.

[28] Welsh Wood Site Action Plan June 2023 – May 24. Accessed in May 2025 at: Country parks and local nature reserves · Colchester City Council

Welsh Wood	
Putting up additional signs to educate visitors about the practice would help to bring visitors 'on side'. This would additionally help to manage an increased number of visitors, which may result from increased development within the local area. Woodland creation to expand the LoWS and maintenance of footpaths would also help to minimise impacts on the site from visitors.	
LoWS Criteria	
Habitat Selection Criteria	
Woodland, scrub and related habitats:	HC1 - Ancient Woodland sites, HC2 - Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient sites
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:	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

Welsh Wood	
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:	Retain - No change
Rationale:	This site is an irreplaceable habitat supporting a rich plant diversity, providing opportunities for an abundance of species within the local area, in particular birds, invertebrates, small mammals including bats and amphibians. This type of habitat is rare and valuable. The site is also connected to Salary Brook LNR in the south, and therefore forms an important part of the LoWS network and its status should be retained and protected.

The Moors	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	Co125
LoWS Name:	The Moors
Grid Reference:	TM0109124953
Area (ha):	8.05
Ownership:	Crown Commissioners
Management provider:	Unknown however there is a 'Friends of the Moors movement' who have undertaken litter picking and path maintenance works in the past. Their level of management currently is unknown.
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: Derelict Coal Yard site Emerging: Derelict Coal Yard site
Total area of site Allocation overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0.00 Emerging: 0.00
LoWS Citation:	This unusual site comprises beds of Common Reed (Phragmites australis), woodland, rough grassland and ruderal communities that have developed an unusual flora and fauna. In the mid-19th Century this area supported a series of riverside meadows either side of a meander in the River Colne, but by the turn of the 20th Century the river had been straightened, presumably to allow bigger boats to reach the East Mills upstream. Common Reed forms dense fringes along the river's banks and a large stand is found on low lying ground between the river and the railway line. More interesting plant species include Hemlock Water-dropwort (Oenanthe crocata), Wormwood (Artemisia absinthum), the Essex Red Data List species Small Teasel (Dipsacus pilosus) and the Nationally Scarce Dittander (Lepidium latifolium), with Wild Celery (Apium graveolens) and Marsh Woundwort (Stachys palustris) on the banks of the tidal River Colne also being of note. In general, away from the river, the site supports rough grassland with scattered bushes and patches of dense scrub. Along the southern edge there is an old boundary hedge and a band of Sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus) and willow (Salix sp.) woodland on damp land fed by springs.The invertebrate populations are of note, with Wormwood Shark moth (Cucullia absinthii), several interesting hoverflies and, unusually for Colchester, a good mollusc fauna. Also present are a good range of bumblebees and butterflies, and populations of Slow Worm and Common Lizard.
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	N/A
Irreplaceable habitat on site:	N/A

The Moors	
Priority habitat on site:	Deciduous woodland, Mudflats, No main habitat but additional habitats present
Known projects/initiatives:	Unknown
Survey Data	
Surveyor: KR	Date: 02.04.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: Publicly accessible to the south of the river. Not accessible on the northern side.

Summary of site:

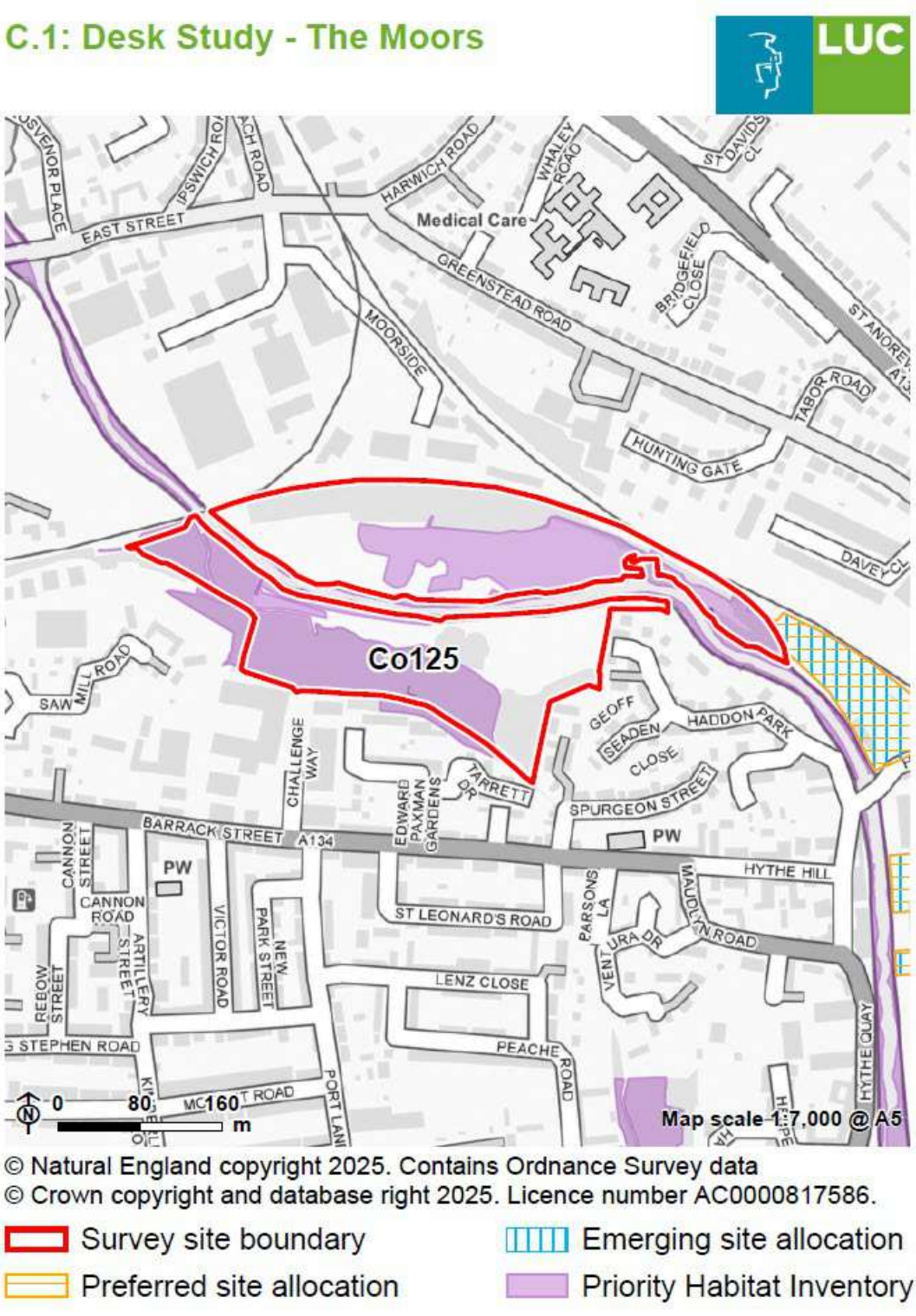
The site consists of a mosaic of habitats including reedbeds, scrub, willow, deciduous woodland, rough grassland and the River Colne. The river splits the site into two sections. The southern half is publicly accessible, and a paved path runs through it, providing access to nature. The northern half is not accessible and was not surveyed. The site is located centrally within Colchester, in an area of dense urban development. A PLoWS, St Botolphs Sidings is c. 200m west of the site.

Habitat survey description:

The survey was confined to the southern half of the site only, as the northern half was not accessible. This part of the site consisted of a mosaic of scrub, tall ruderal vegetation and grassland, with secondary broadleaved woodland along the southern edge of the site.

Species noted within the scrub included bramble, blackthorn and hawthorn, with sycamore trees and willow trees additionally present. The woodland was predominantly sycamore within the canopy, including mature trees with bat roost suitability and dead wood was present. Holly and elder was present within the understorey. The woodland generally lacked a ground flora, which was predominantly bare ground with the occasional nettles and lords and ladies. There was evidence of human disturbance within the wooded part of the site, as there was a significant amount of litter present, and a dominance of bare ground, likely due to a combination of the woodland conditions and people present within the wood. Wet areas with pools were additionally present with willow trees growing within, providing opportunities for invertebrates. The reedbed provides valuable habitat for a range of birds, as well as mammals such as otter and water vole. The mosaic of habitats on site provide a valuable wildlife habitat for a range of species, as well as providing access to nature for local residents

The Moors


C.1: Desk Study - The Moors
LUC
Medical Care
EAST STREET
HARWICH ROAD
WHALEY ROAD
GREENSTEAD ROAD
MOORSIDE
BRIDGEFIELD CLOSE
TABOR ROAD
HUNTING GATE
Co125
SAW MILL ROAD
CHALLENGE WAY
TARRETT DR
EDWARD PAXMAN GARDENS
GEOFF SEADEN CLOSE
HADDON PARK
SPURGEON STREET
BARROCK STREET
A134
PW
HYTHE HILL
CANNON STREET
CANNON ROAD
ARTILLERY STREET
VICTOR ROAD
NEW PARK STREET
ST LEONARD'S ROAD
PARSONS LA
MAGDALEN ROAD
LENZ CLOSE
PEACHE ROAD
HYTHE QUAY
0
80
160
m
Map scale 1:7,000 @ A5
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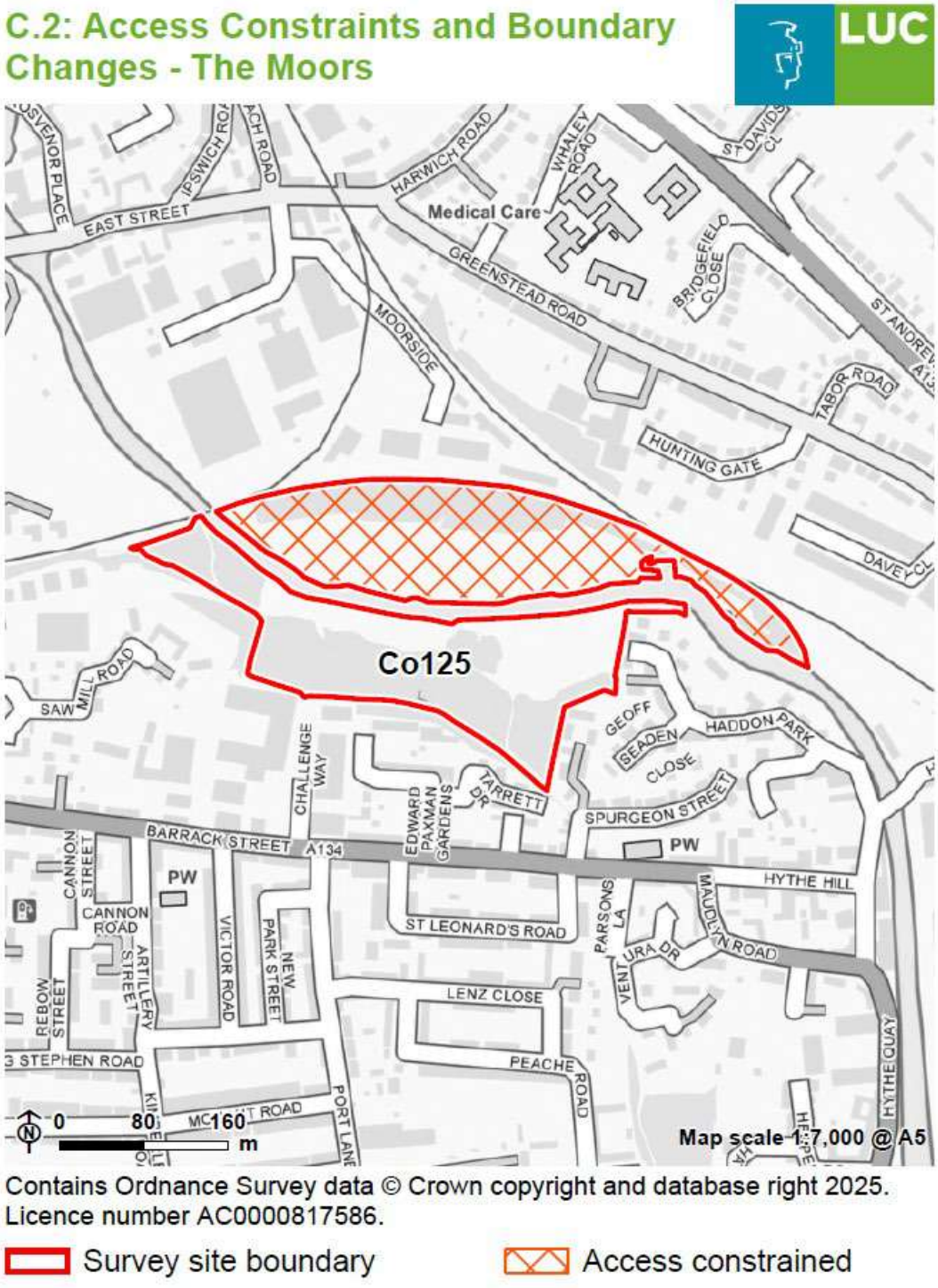
Survey site boundary
Emerging site allocation
Preferred site allocation
Priority Habitat Inventory

The Moors



Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys:

The Moors
Overall the habitat appears unchanged from 2015, however in 2015 the spread of scrub south of the river was raised as a management issue. Historical google imagery indicates that the scrub has spread slightly, although the mosaic of habitats still remain.
Condition Statement: Declining **Additional comments:** If uncontrolled, the scrub will dominate the site and reduce the diversity of habitats present. This in combination with the presence of litter/human disturbance on site means the site condition is declining.
Management: Poor **Additional comments:** The litter within the woodland and the increase in scrub since the previous survey indicates a lack of management on site.
Known/relevant existing site management plan: Unknown
Opportunities on site: Education, deadwood **Additional comments:** Deadwood piles would provide habitat for reptiles which are known to be on site. Additional informative signage would be beneficial to educate local residents on the value of the site and the species which are known to be present. Management recommendations provided below will additionally ensure the sites value is protected.
Threats and Disturbances: Litter, scrub dominance **Additional comments:** A significant amount of litter was present within the woodland on site and aerial imagery indicates that the presence of scrub has spread since the previous survey, which will reduce the diversity of habitats present if not controlled.
Level of use: High **Additional comments:** A popular walking and cycling route, and the amount of litter indicates its level of use.
Management Recommendations: As identified in 2015, a threat to the site is the spread of scrub which will reduce the diversity of habitats present. Historic google imagery indicates that the presence of scrub has spread over the years, as expected, however the site still retains its mosaic character, with open areas of grassland interspersed throughout the scrub. It is important to retain these open grass areas, by managing further scrub and tall ruderal spread, to ensure the scrub has a well developed edge with clearings that provide sheltered edges. This creates ecological niches, maximising the value of these habitats, in particular for reptiles which are known to be on site. Log piles could additionally be placed throughout the site, providing habitat for reptiles and amphibians. The woodland along the southern edge of the site would benefit from enhancement to increase the diversity of the ground flora and control litter. A significant amount of disturbance was noted here, primarily from litter however there were additionally signs of burning. It is recommended that additional signs are put up to discourage and educate residents about the value of the habitats on site. More regular litter picking may also be required. The wormwood shark moth has also

The Moors	
been recorded on site, therefore management should ensure habitat is suitable for this species, such as the presence of wormwood or mugwort which is the foodplant.	
LoWS Criteria	
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:	HC15 - Reedbeds
Additional comments:	N/A
Open water habitats:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Coastal habitats:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Other habitats:	HC28 - Small Component Mosaics, HC31 - Accessible Natural Greenspace
Additional comments:	N/A
Species Selection Criteria	
Plants:	SC1 - Vascular Plants
Additional comments:	While the plants previously identified to qualify the site under SC1 were not identified on site, it is recognised that access was limited during the survey to the southern half only, and the survey was only a snapshot in time, and therefore this criteria has been continued from the previous assessment.
Birds:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A

The Moors	
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:	Retain - No change
Rationale:	This site supports a mosaic of a variety of habitats, that in combination provide valuable opportunities for an abundance of species, including species of note such as small teasel, dittander, wormwood shark moth and populations of slow worm and common lizard. The site should retain its LoWS status, however would benefit from intervention to control litter within the site, and implementation of a woodland management plan to enhance the woodland, in addition to a scrub management plan, to retain the diversity of habitats on site.

Marks Tey Brick Pit	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	Co31
LoWS Name:	Marks Tey Brick Pit
Grid Reference:	TL9102524398
Area (ha):	9.02
Ownership:	Private
Management provider:	The site is an active Brick Pit run by W H Collier Ltd
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: N/A Emerging: Tey Green
Total area of site Allocation overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0.00 Emerging: 0.00
LoWS Citation:	This site has developed from low-intensity clay extraction over a period in excess of 100 years. This has resulted in a rich mosaic of brownfield wildlife habitats, including wet willow (Salix spp.) scrub woodland, marsh, open water habitats and flower-rich, sparsely vegetated ground. Areas of open ground support a range of short perennials and other herbs such as Common Centaury (Centaurium erythraea), Wild Teasel (Dipsacus fullonum), Bristly Oxtongue (Helminthotheca echioides) and Common Ragwort (Senecio jacobaea). The low-lying centre of the quarry supports locally dominant willows (Salix spp.) alongside lush open areas of willowherbs (Epilobium spp.), horsetails (Equisetum sp.), Hard Rush (Juncus inflexus), Common Fleabane (Pulicaria dysenterica) and Lesser Bulrush (Typha angustifolia). There are patches of locally dominant Common Reed (Phragmites australis) alongside Tufted Hair-grass (Deschampsia cespitosa) and Water Mint (Mentha aquatica).Adjacent higher banks support dense areas of Brambles (Rubus fruticosus agg.) with birch (Betula sp.) interspersed with Traveller's-joy (Clematis vitalba). Semi-mature woodland lies on the raised western ridge at the original ground level, with some large Pedunculate Oak (Quercus robur) standards with underlying Bluebell (Hyacinthoides non-scripta) and Dog's Mercury (Mercurialis perennis). The brownfield invertebrate fauna includes the Nationally Rare (RDB3) Small Blue Carpenter-bee (Ceratina cyanea), which utilises old Bramble scrub and the flowers of ragwort whilst the numerous other banks of sand and clay across the upper parts of the Site provide habitat for many other invertebrate groups. This Local Wildlife site lies within a larger Geological site of Special Scientific Interest.
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	Freshwater River Buffer Only, Freshwater Standing Water and Freshwater River Buffer
Irreplaceable habitat on site:	N/A

Marks Tey Brick Pit	
Priority habitat on site:	Deciduous woodland
Known projects/initiatives:	N/A
Survey Data	
Surveyor: KR	Date: 03.04.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: No private access, however fully accessible at the time of the survey

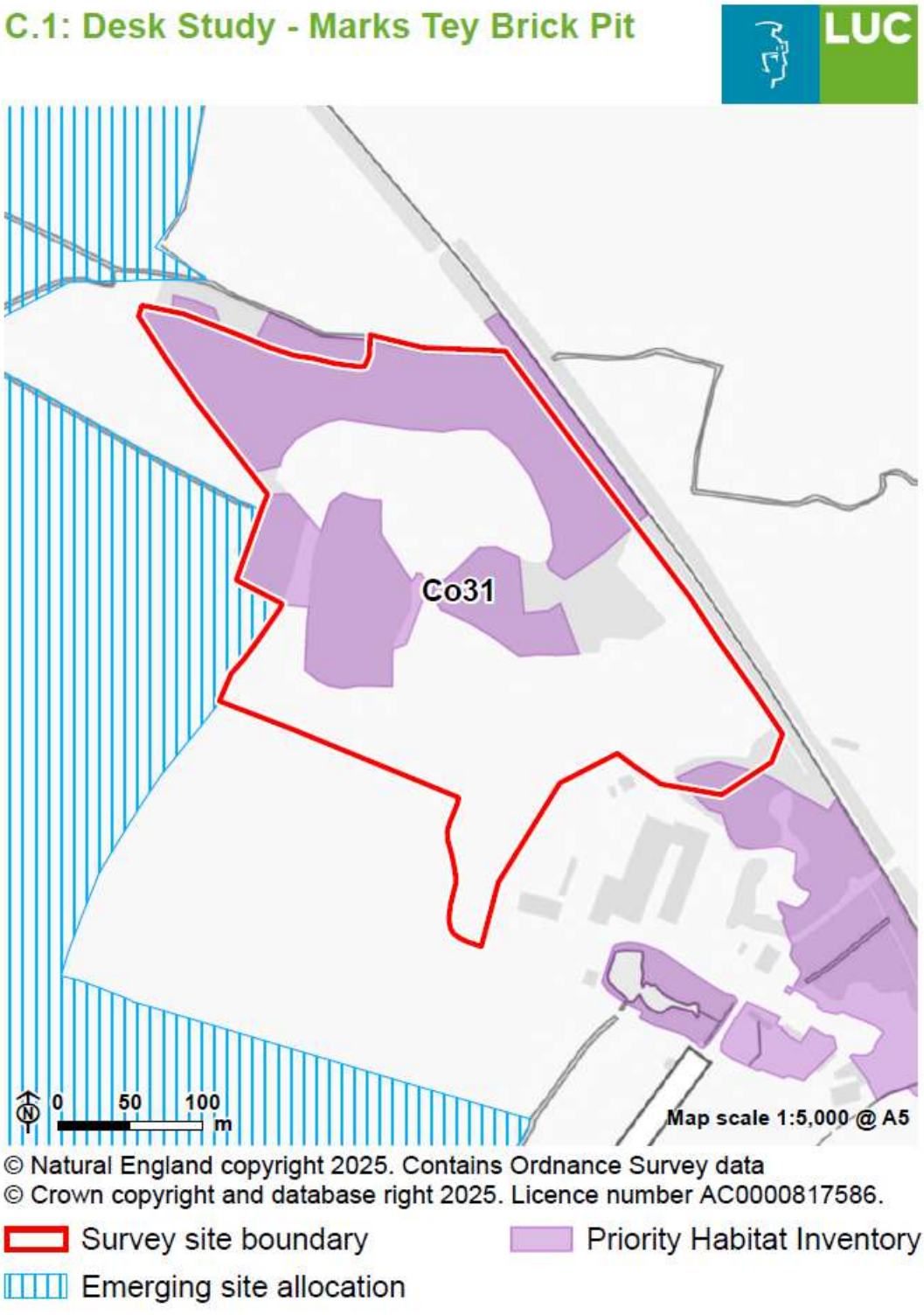
Summary of site:

An active although low intensity clay extraction site whereby small digs happen approximately every two years. This has meant the site has developed into a rich habitat mosaic including wet woodland, broadleaved woodland, dense scrub, wet depressions, bare ground with ephemeral vegetation, reedbed and grassland. The site is located within the west of Colchester in an area dominated by farmland. The site lies within the Essex Coast Important Invertebrate Area (IIA). The closest Local Wildlife sites include Stonefield Strip c. 200m west and Church House Wood c. 300m North. The site is also designated as a geological SSSI.

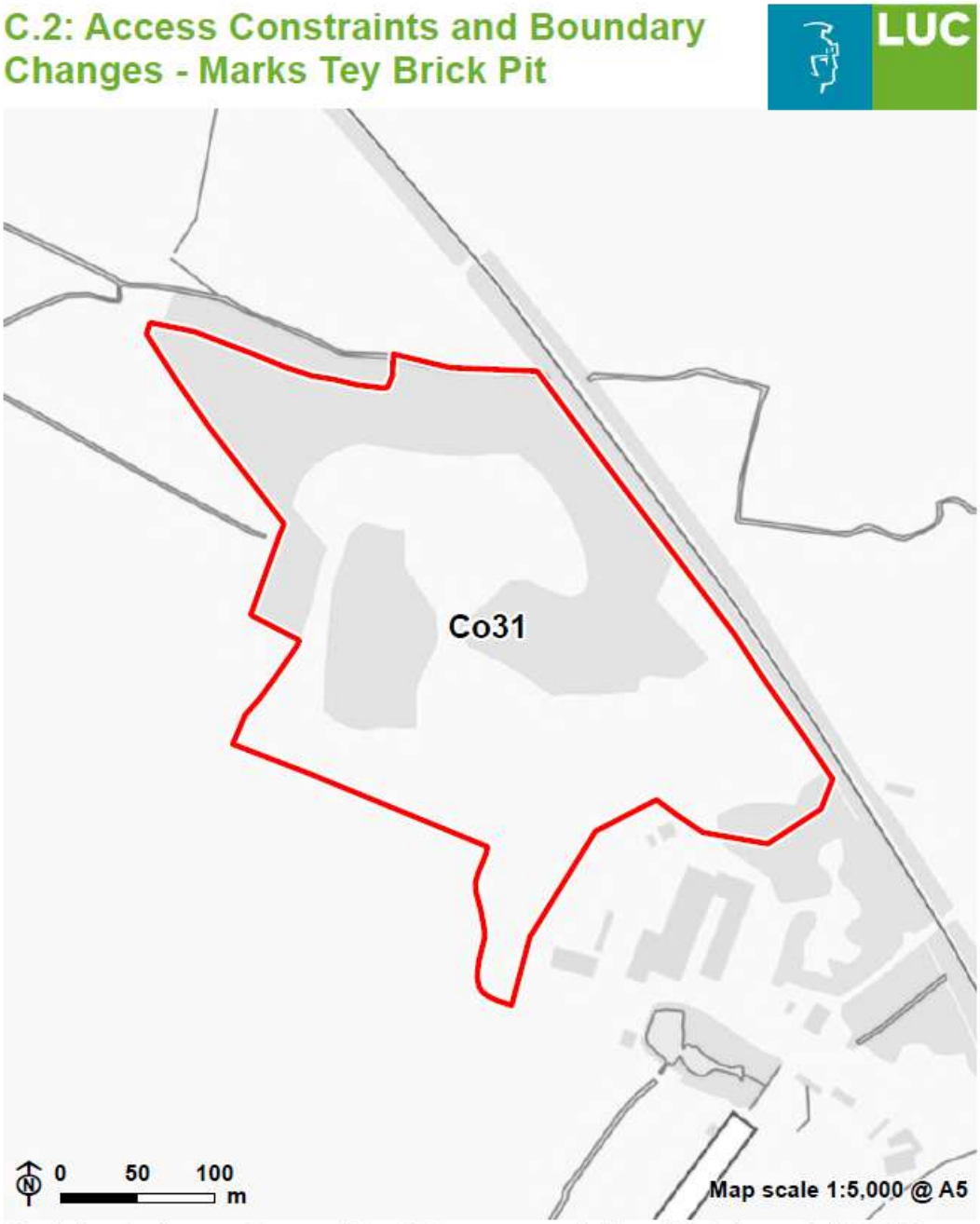
Habitat survey description:

The central part of the site was the location of the previous dig, with areas of bare ground scattered with flowering coltsfoot. Vertical bare ground faces were present, providing nesting habitat for invertebrates. An area of this dig had filled with water and was vegetated with hard and soft rush and willow scrub. Outside of this, areas of dense bramble scrub with goat willow, elder and dogwood had developed, with tall ruderal species such as teasel and nettles. Wet depressions were occasionally present with small patches of reeds. Regularly mown paths were present throughout the site, providing a well-developed and sheltered edge to the scrub, which was lined with long grasses, transitioning to the regularly mown grass paths. This progressed into woodland along the higher edges of the site. The woodland transitioned between drier broadleaved woodland and wetter willow woodland areas. The broadleaved areas included oak, field maple and willow within the canopy with hazel and hawthorn with the understorey. Primrose, false brome, nettles, lords and ladies, early dogs violet and dogs mercury were present within the ground layer. An area of broadleaved woodland in the west at ground level included a hazel and oak woodland with bluebells , dogs mercury and ground ivy present. As the woodland progressed into the wetter areas, in particular in the north west corner and the low lying areas with wet depressions, willow became the dominant species. Hard and soft rush was present in the ground layer, with floating sweet grass on wet depressions. False brome was additionally present, as well as hawthorn and bramble. An abundance of deadwood was noted throughout the wooded area. Broadleaved woodland was additionally present on the higher ground in the east of the site, including a mix of willow, oak, silver birch and field maple with a hazel, elder and hawthorn understorey. The ground layer in this woodland area was almost absent apart from scattered nettle and occasional wild garlic and dogs mercury. Browsing pressure was noted within this part of the woodland in particular, and muntjac and deer are known to be on site. The Roman River forms the northern boundary of the site, which was lined with dense wild garlic along its banks. An Essex Wildlife Trust footprint tunnel was located within the river, to monitor the presence of mink. The Roman River is known to support water vole and otter. A dead badger was present on the bank of the roman river, indicating that they use the site at least for commuting and foraging, and potentially for sett building. The south of the site consisted of a mosaic of grassland and mature bramble, blackthorn and hawthorn scrub. The grassland was dominated by false brome with mossy patches with a higher abundance of forbs including ground ivy, creeping cinquefoil, self-heal and stinking hellebore. As identified in the previous assessment, the site supports the Nationally Rare (RDB3) Small Blue Carpenter-bee. The site is additionally mapped within the Essex Coast Important Invertebrate Area. This in combination with the abundance of habitat types on site would warrant the need for an invertebrate survey.

Marks Tey Brick Pit



Marks Tey Brick Pit



Survey site boundary

Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys:

N/A

Marks Tey Brick Pit

Condition Statement:

Favourable, but declining

Additional comments:

This site is a low intensity active brick pit, and during the survey a variety of habitats were present on site, including bare substrate from the most recent dig. Without continued management to retain the diversity of habitats, there is potential for them to be lost to succession, resulting in a decline in condition.

Management:

Satisfactory

Additional comments:

No active habitat management in place other than mowing of the paths, however the low intensity ,active nature of the site, maintains the presence of bare ground on site.

Known/relevant existing site management plan:

Unknown

Opportunities on site:

Specialist invertebrate survey work to determine species assemblage.

Additional comments:

Given the sites location within an IIA, and the habitats on site, the site is considered to be of importance for rare and threatened species of invertebrates. An invertebrate survey would be beneficial to understand the invertebrates present on site and how to manage and enhance the site for these invertebrates.

Threats and Disturbances:

Succession resulting in loss of bare substrates

Additional comments:

Without continued management, the diversity of habitats on site will be lost to succession by scrub and woodland.

Level of use:

None

Additional comments:

The site is not open to the public.

Management Recommendations:

As identified in 2015, the largest threat to the site is succession, resulting in the loss of the complex mosaic of habitats, specifically bare substrates, wet depressions and wet woodland. The site is still in use as a brick pit, and digs happen approximately every two years, therefore areas of bare ground are being maintained on site. However, the site cannot function as a brick pit forever and therefore when the site closes, there is a risk the complex habitat mosaic will be lost to succession. As previously mentioned, the site falls within an IIIA and supports a nationally rare species, therefore there is evidence to suggest this site supports important populations of invertebrates or additional rare species. It is advised that specialist survey is carried out and a management plan is put in place which ensures the protection of these habitats and the species they support, into the future. It is advised that the scrub within the scrub grassland mosaic in the south of the site is managed, to

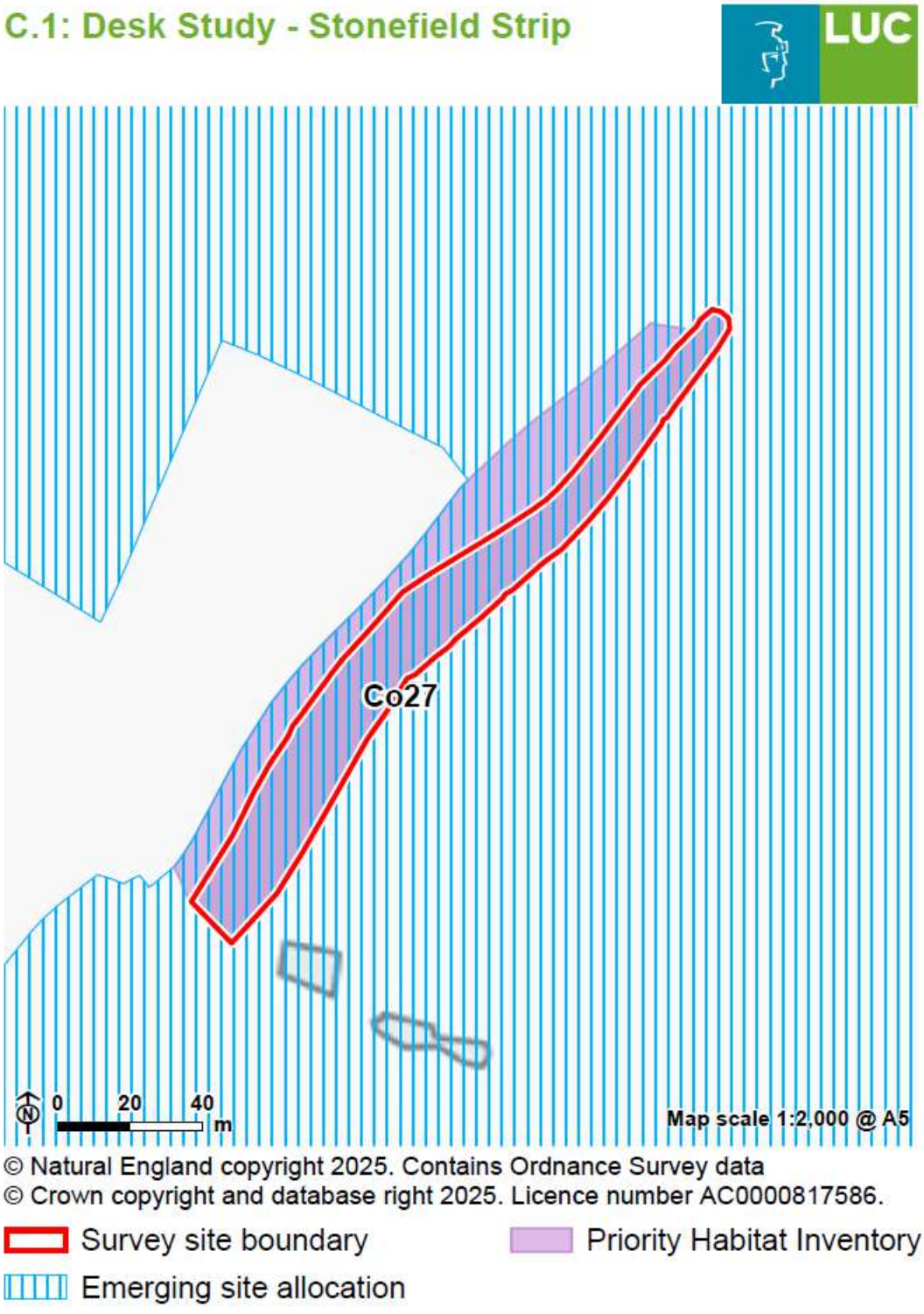
Marks Tey Brick Pit	
retain the open nature, and prevent scrub from dominating this area fully. This will help to maintain the habitat diversity on site, and provides basking habitat for reptiles.	
LoWS Criteria	
Habitat Selection Criteria	
Woodland, scrub and related habitats:	HC2 - Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient sites, HC3 - Other Priority Habitat Woodland Types on Non-ancient sites
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:	HC27 - Post Industrial sites
Additional comments:	N/A
Species Selection Criteria	
Plants:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Birds:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Mammals:	N/A

Marks Tey Brick Pit	
Additional comments:	N/A
Amphibians:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Reptiles:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Invertebrates:	N/A
Additional comments:	This site is located within an 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:	Retain - No change
Rationale:	This site includes a rich mosaic of habitats, which form in unique situations such as this and provides habitat for nesting birds, foraging, commuting and roosting bats, badger, water vole and otter along the Roman River, amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates. This site should retain its LoWS status, however would greatly benefit from a management plan to secure its status in future, and ensure its benefit for wildlife, in particular invertebrates, is maximised.

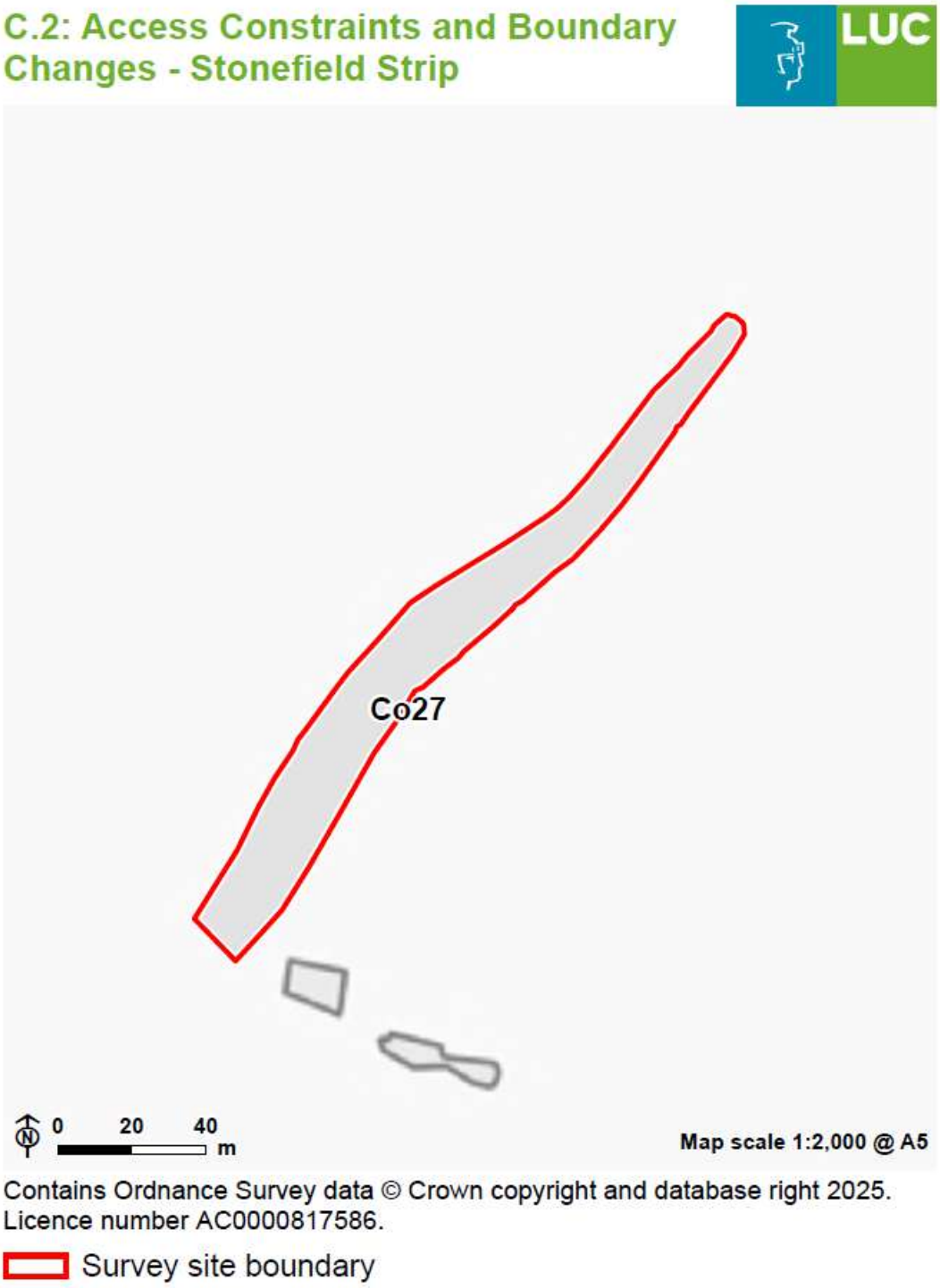
Stonefield Strip	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	Co27
LoWS Name:	Stonefield Strip
Grid Reference:	TL9051224536
Area (ha):	0.34
Ownership:	Private
Management provider:	Unknown
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: N/A Emerging: Tey Green
Total area of site Allocation overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred:0.00 Emerging: 0.34
LoWS Citation:	This narrow strip of woodland is dominated by tall Ash (Fraxinus excelsior) and Field Maple (Acer campestre) coppice in the canopy with Hazel (Corylus avellana), Elder (Sambucus nigra), Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna) and Blackthorn (Prunus spinosa) forming a scattered shrub layer. Bluebell (Hyacinthoides non-scripta) is abundant throughout the ground flora, interspersed with patches of Dog's Mercury (Mercurialis perennis). Goldilocks Buttercup (Ranunculus auricomus), an indicator of ancient woodland, is also present.
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	Woodland and Freshwater Standing Water
Irreplaceable habitat on site:	The site is too small to be listed on the Ancient Woodland Inventory, however there is evidence to suggest it is an ancient woodland fragment.
Priority habitat on site:	Deciduous woodland
Known projects/initiatives:	Unknown
Survey Data	
Surveyor: KR	Date: 03.04.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: The site is private, however there is a footpath along the western boundary and the woodland is very narrow, so the survey was not limited.
Summary of site:	

Stonefield Strip
A narrow strip of broadleaved ancient woodland located between farmland within the west of Colchester. The closest Local Wildlife site includes Marks Tey Brick Pit c. 200m east.
Habitat survey description: The woodland has a rich ground flora including ancient woodland indicators. The ground was dominated by bluebells and dogs mercury. Additional species noted included goldilocks buttercup, red campion, speedwell sp., cleavers, greater stitchwort, lesser celandine, garlic mustard, primrose and lords and ladies. The canopy was predominantly ash, with an understorey of field maple, hawthorn, blackthorn, holly and honeysuckle. Woodpecker holes were noted within some of the trees and a badger latrine was present on the edge of wood. A ditch ran along the western edge of the site.

Stonefield Strip



Stonefield Strip



Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys:

Description appears unchanged from 2015.

Stonefield Strip
Condition Statement: Favourable **Additional comments:** This woodland supports a rich ground flora, a range of native tree and shrub species, presence of deadwood, good vertical structure and an absence of invasive non-native species.
Management: Good **Additional comments:** The level of management within the wood is unknown, however the woodland was noted to be in favourable condition.
Known/relevant existing site management plan: Unknown
Opportunities on site: Woodland creation **Additional comments:** The site is relatively small and therefore woodland creation should be undertaken where possible adjacent to the site to increase its size, enhancing its value and habitat resilience.
Threats and Disturbances: Ash dieback **Additional comments:** The canopy is dominated by ash therefore at risk of dieback in future.
Level of use: None **Additional comments:** The site is not open to the public.
Management Recommendations: The woodland is particularly small, at only 0.34ha. The canopy of the wood was predominantly ash, which has potential to be impacted by ash dieback in future. This should be monitored and the loss of trees should be replaced with native species such as oak. Deadwood should be retained within the woodland and standing deadwood retained if safe. In addition, given the small size of the site, it is recommended that the connecting hedgerows and tree lines, which provide connectivity between the wood and habitat in the surrounding area (e.g. Marks Tey Brick Pit) is protected and enhanced, to help build resilience in the wood. Woodland creation where possible adjacent to the Site would additionally be beneficial to increase the size of the site, enhancing its value and resilience.
LoWS Criteria
Habitat Selection Criteria

Stonefield Strip	
Woodland, scrub and related habitats:	HC1 - Ancient Woodland sites
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:	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

Stonefield Strip	
Additional comments:	N/A
Invertebrates:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
LoWS Survey Recommendations	
Designated LoWS	
LoWS Survey Recommendation:	Retain - No change
Rationale:	This small ancient woodland remnant support a diverse mix of flora, including ancient woodland indicators. The site provides commuting and foraging habitat for badgers, roosting opportunities for bats, bird nesting habitat and opportunities for invertebrates, dormouse, amphibians and reptiles. The site should retain its LoWS status.

Chappel Ponds and Millennium Green	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	Co17
LoWS Name:	Chappel Ponds and Millennium Green
Grid Reference:	TL8968728169
Area (ha):	8.09
Ownership:	The Chappel Millenium Green Trust
Management provider:	The Chappel Millenium Green Trust
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: Swan Grove Emerging: Swan Grove
Total area of site Allocation overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0.00 Emerging: 0.00
LoWS Citation:	The ponds to the west side of the viaduct are of particular note for the presence of a large Great-crested Newt population. The plantation and ruderal habitat by the River Colne is also valuable terrestrial habitat for the newts. In addition, Chappel Millennium Green was created in 2000, with part of the area south of the river being managed for wildlife. The wet, rough grassland extends the habitat suitable for Great Crested Newts, and benefits many other species including reptiles, invertebrates, small mammals and birds. The habitat in this area comprises tall sward grassland with a marshy area to the south, and a pond in the east corner. The wet area supports stands of Floating Sweet-grass (Glyceria fluitans), Great Willowherb (Epilobium hirsutum), Rushes (Juncus spp.) and a large stand of Water Horsetail (Equisetum fluviatile), an Essex Red Data List species. Cuckooflower (Cardamine pratensis) is also found scattered throughout the grassland in damp habitat.
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	Grassland and Freshwater Standing Water
Irreplaceable habitat on site:	N/A
Priority habitat on site:	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, Deciduous woodland, Ponds
Known projects/initiatives:	A '200 club' scheme exists, where members donate £24 a year to be entered into a prize draw, and the money is used to manage the site
Survey Data	

Chappel Ponds and Millennium Green	
Surveyor: KR	Date: 03.04.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: The majority of the site was accessible for survey, however the small parcel north of the river was not accessed and the woodland along the railway was surveyed from the footpath running along its edge.

Summary of site:

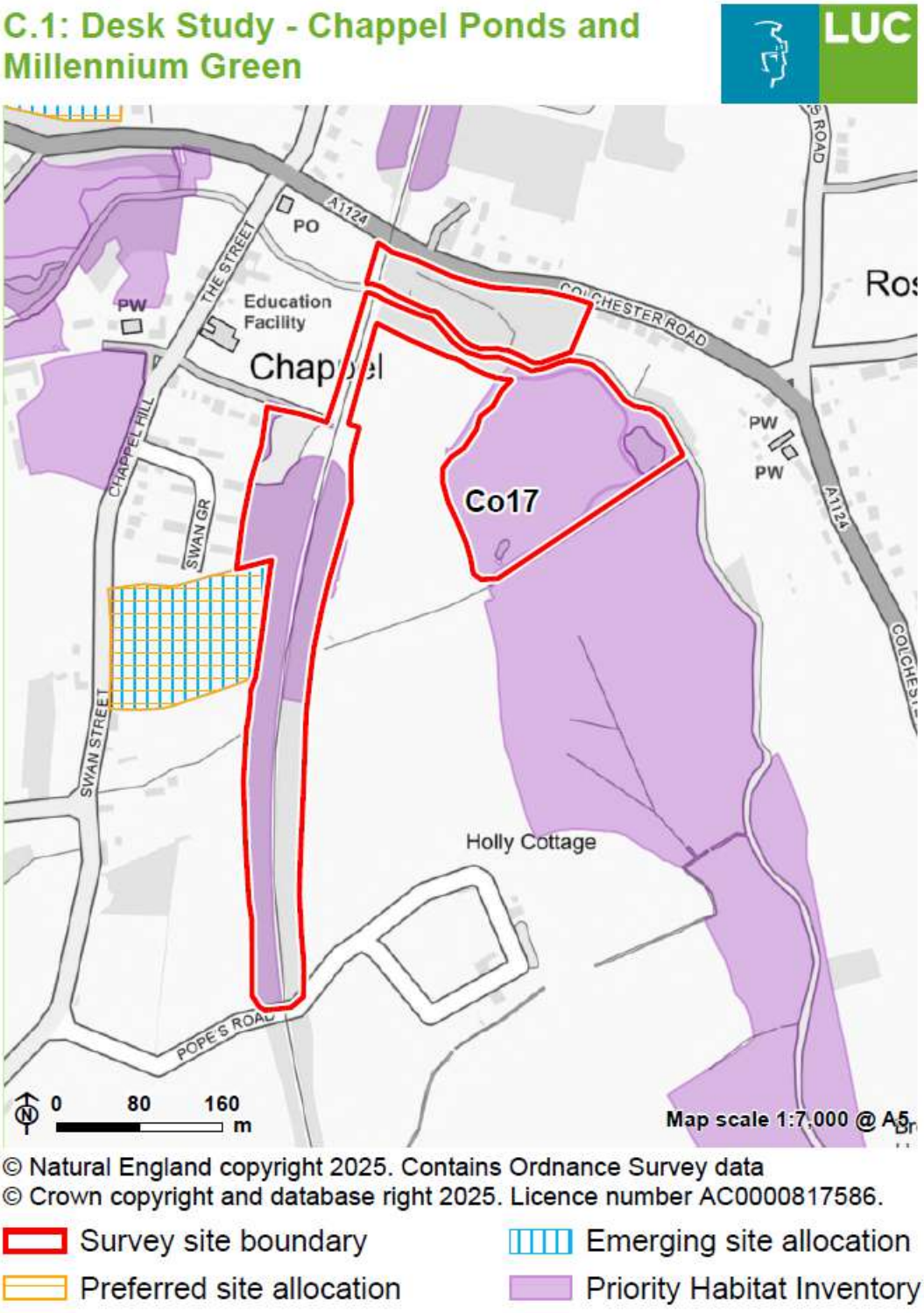
This LoWS includes a variety of habitats including a wet meadow, ponds, scattered trees and woodland. The site is located within the north west of the borough and is surrounded by farmland, residential development and coastal and floodplain grazing marsh. The closest LoWS includes Acorn Wood c. 675m North.

Habitat survey description:

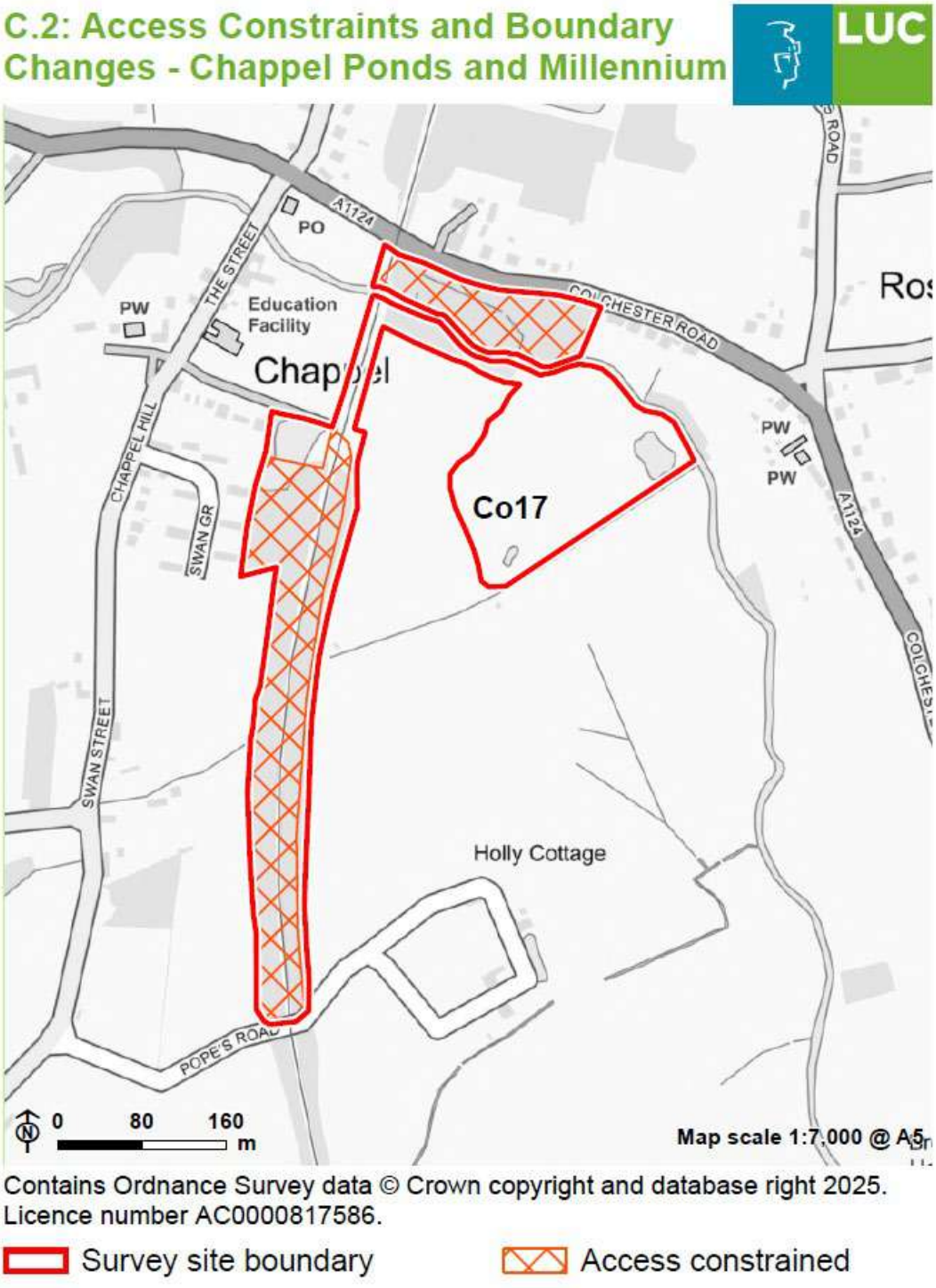
A wooden raised walkway ran along the edge of the wet meadow, allowing visitors to access the area safely and without disturbing the habitat. The edges of the water meadow, along the walkway were wooded, including alder and willow trees, with scrub species including hawthorn, blackthorn and bramble. The ground layer included nettles, harts tongue fern, dogs mercury and lords and ladies. Species identifiable within the water meadow was limited given the time of year, however water mint, willowherb, creeping buttercup, foxtail, cuckoo flower and wild angelica were noted to be present. Two ponds were present on the edges of the water meadow and a larger pond was present in the west of the viaduct, with willow and sedges growing within. GCN is known to be present within the pond to the west of the viaduct. The river Colne flows through the site, and splits it into two sections. The small area north of the river was not accessed however it could be seen from the south of the river that dense bramble scrub, scattered trees, tall ruderal and grassland mosaic was present.

The woodland along the viaduct was surveyed via the footpath along the edge. Species noted were field maple, hazel, hawthorn, silver birch, and elder. Abundant dogs mercury was present within the woodland. Bird boxes had been put on trees and an orchard had been planted, however this fell outside of the LoWS boundary.

Chappel Ponds and Millennium Green



Chappel Ponds and Millennium Green



Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys:

Chappel Ponds and Millennium Green

The site was not surveyed in 2015, however it was surveyed in 2008. The previous 2008 description appears to match what was seen on site in 2025, however a search on historic google imagery does show the density of the vegetation around the ponds has increased significantly and they have become less open

Condition Statement:

Favourable

Additional comments:

The site is managed well and wildlife sensitive management practices have been implemented to enhance the value of the site for wildlife. A variety of habitats are maintained on site, which in combination increase the sites ecological value. Scrub is controlled to retain the open nature of habitats and bird boxes were noted on trees. The ponds however are at risk of declining in condition, in the absence of active management.

Management:

Good

Additional comments:

The site is actively managed by the trust and includes activities such as mowing of the water meadow once a year, active tree management with wood left on site and litter picking. Scrub clearance has occurred on the water meadow edge to prevent scrub encroachment, and the wooden walkway allows access without damaging the habitat. A '200 club' scheme exists, where members donate £24 a year to be entered into a prize draw, and the money is used to manage the site.

Known/relevant existing site management plan:

Unknown, however a tree assessment was undertaken in 2024.

Opportunities on site:

Pond enhancements

Additional comments:

See management recommendations below

Threats and Disturbances:

N/A

Additional comments:

N/A

Level of use:

Moderate / High

Additional comments:

The site is adjacent to playing fields and therefore the area as a whole is a valuable natural green space for the local community. The number of visitors on site during the survey was low, however it is believed to be a popular greenspace for local residents.

Management Recommendations:

The ponds were noted to be dense with aquatic vegetation and heavily shaded in parts. Management will be required in future to prevent drying up of the ponds and ensure they are suitable for breeding GCN as well as common amphibians. In general the site is managed well.

Chappel Ponds and Millennium Green	
LoWS Criteria	
Habitat Selection Criteria	
Woodland, scrub and related habitats:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Grassland:	N/A
Additional comments:	At present, the grassland isn't considered to meet the grassland criteria, 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
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:	HC31 - Accessible Natural Greenspace
Additional comments:	N/A
Species Selection Criteria	
Plants:	SC1 - Vascular Plants
Additional comments:	N/A
Birds:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Mammals:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A

Chappel Ponds and Millennium Green	
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:	Retain - No change
Rationale:	This LoWS includes a variety of habitats which in combination provide a valuable wildlife site known to support species such as great crested newts and water horsetail the Essex Red Data List species. The site continues to meet the Essex LoWS criteria and therefore its status should be retained and protected.

Rowhedge Pits	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	Co144
LoWS Name:	Rowhedge Pits
Grid Reference:	TM0270821316
Area (ha):	27.56
Ownership:	Cadman
Management provider:	Owned by Cadman 2003 Limited, however it is unknown who is responsible for managing the site
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: Rowhedge Business Park Emerging: Rowhedge Business Park
Total area of site Allocation overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0.00 Emerging: 0.00
LoWS Citation:	These former gravel pits now predominantly support woodland, with a distinction between lower, seasonally wet land and land closer to the original ground level. Within this are seasonal and permanent ponds, exposed sandy banks and more open grass and scrub mosaics. It is bisected by the former wharf access road. On the higher ground, the woodland canopy is made up of Pedunculate Oak (Quercus robur), Ash (Fraxinus excelsior), Silver Birch (Betula pendula) and Sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus) with some Wild Cherry (Prunus avium). The understorey includes willow (Salix spp.), Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna), Elder (Sambucus nigra), and Holly (Ilex aquifolium). The ground flora is generally low in diversity with Male Fern (Dryopteris filix-mas), Broad Buckler Fern (Dryopteris dilatata), Wood Avens (Geum urbanum), False-brome (Brachypodium sylvaticum), Herb- Robert (Geranium robertianum), Honeysuckle (Lonicera periclymenum), Common Ivy (Hedera helix), Bracken (Pteridium aquilinum) and Bramble (Rubus fruticosus agg.). Small quantities of Hieracium sabaudum, a grassland and heath species, remain in more open areas. The lower areas, largely with exposed mineral soils, are damp with extensive standing water over the winter months. Silver Birch, Sallow (Salix cinerea), and Aspen (Populus tremula) have colonised to form a canopy, but there is little understorey or ground layer. Mosses, including Polytrichum species, are widespread alongside Peltigera lichens with Soft-rush (Juncus effusus) and Bramble also present. The bog-moss Sphagnum squarrosum, which is scarce in Essex and especially in the northeast, occupies several damp hollows in a restricted area of the site. The water bodies are varied in size and nature, with fringes of Common Reed (Phragmites australis), Lesser Bulrush (Typha angustifolia) and Sea Club-rush (Bolboschoenus maritimus) being typical species. The few steep, sandy faces that are still exposed provide nesting habitat for solitary bees and wasps, including the Nationally Rare (RDB3) Nomada fulvicornis. Great Crested Newts are known to be present.
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	N/A

Rowhedge Pits	
Irreplaceable habitat on site:	N/A
Priority habitat on site:	Deciduous woodland, No main habitat but additional habitats present
Known projects/initiatives:	Unknown
Survey Data	
Surveyor: KR	Date: 04.04.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: Partially accessible - some areas particularly in the north were inaccessible due to steep banks and sides, however this was generally limited in extent and did not limit the survey.

Summary of site:

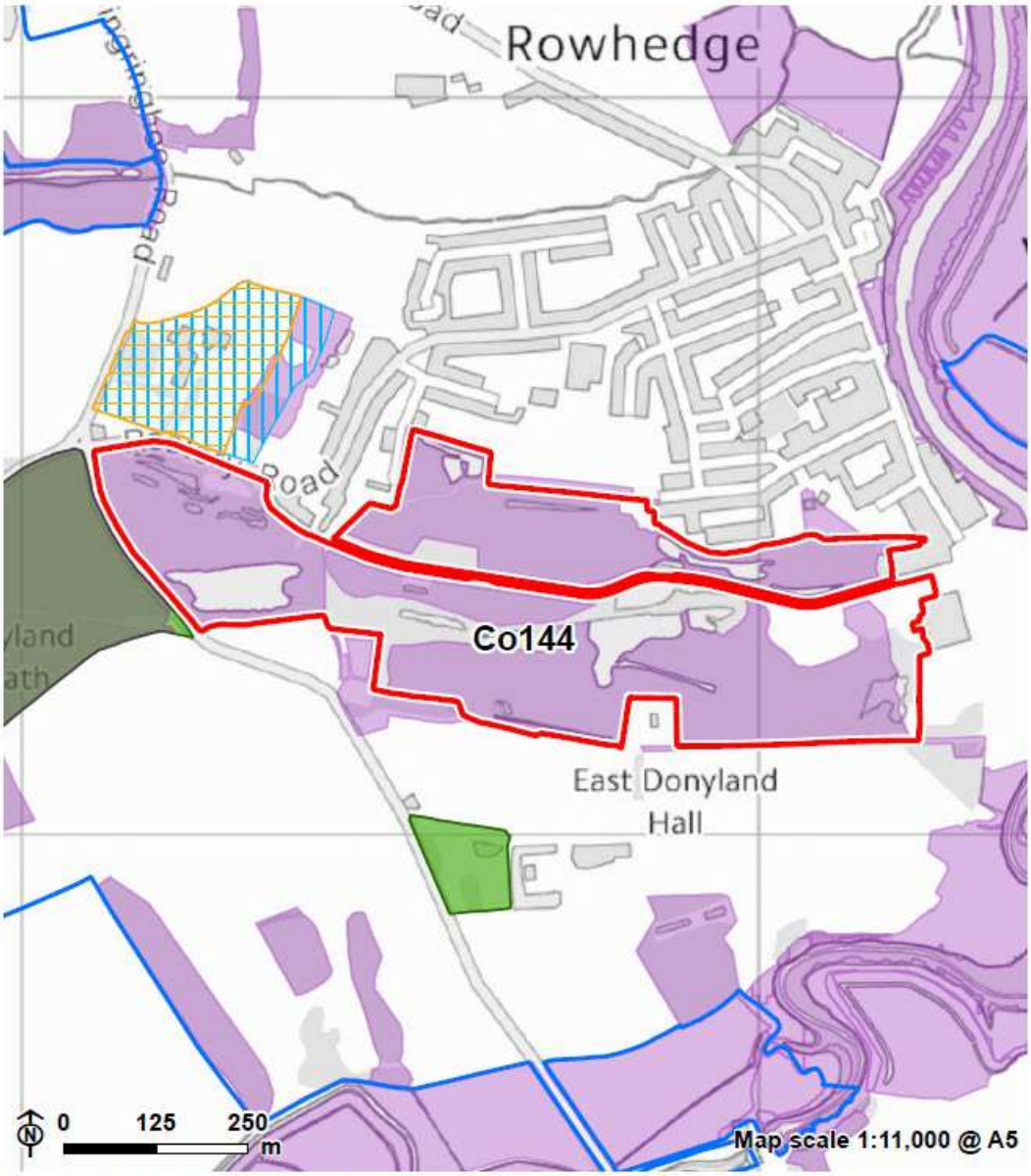
A former gravel pits which has now become predominantly colonised by woodland, however still retains many of its post-industrial features including wet depressions, varied topography, bare ground faces and mosses. The site is located in the east of Colchester and is bordered by the Roman River SSSI to the west and Upper Colne Marshes to the east. The site has been mapped within the Essex Coast Important Invertebrate Area (IIA).

Habitat survey description:

These former gravel pits were dominated largely by woodland, with varied topography resulting in ponds and pools within the wetter lower ground parts. The site was split in half by Rowhedge Wharf Road. The northern half had a canopy including oak and ash with an understorey of holly, cherry laurel, hazel, silver birch, hawthorn, beech, blackthorn and willow within the wet depressions. Cherry laurel was particularly dominant in the northern part of the woodland. Bramble, false brome, broad buckler fern, and lords and ladies were present within the ground flora. The southern side displayed a similar species composition, with a dominance of silver birch in the east and a fishing lake in the west. Some sandy bank faces were present, however not in significant amounts. The woodland edge along the central road, in places, had a good woodland edge transitioning from woodland to scrub to rough grassland. Despite the site being private, and with many signs to show this, it is evident that the site is used regularly as litter and fly tipping was present in particular in the north where the site bordered residential gardens, where rubbish had been thrown directly into waterbodies. Additionally there were multiple fire pit remnants throughout the site and various biking tracks and ramps within the southern side of the site in particular. In addition, given the site is now predominantly woodland, this would suggest there has been a lack of active management to protect and enhance its post-industrial nature. Despite this, the site still retains many of these post-industrial features, and provides valuable habitat for species such as birds, bats, badgers (a sett was present on site), amphibians, including great crested newt, and reptiles. The site sits within the Essex Coast IIA, and therefore it is additionally an important habitat for invertebrates.

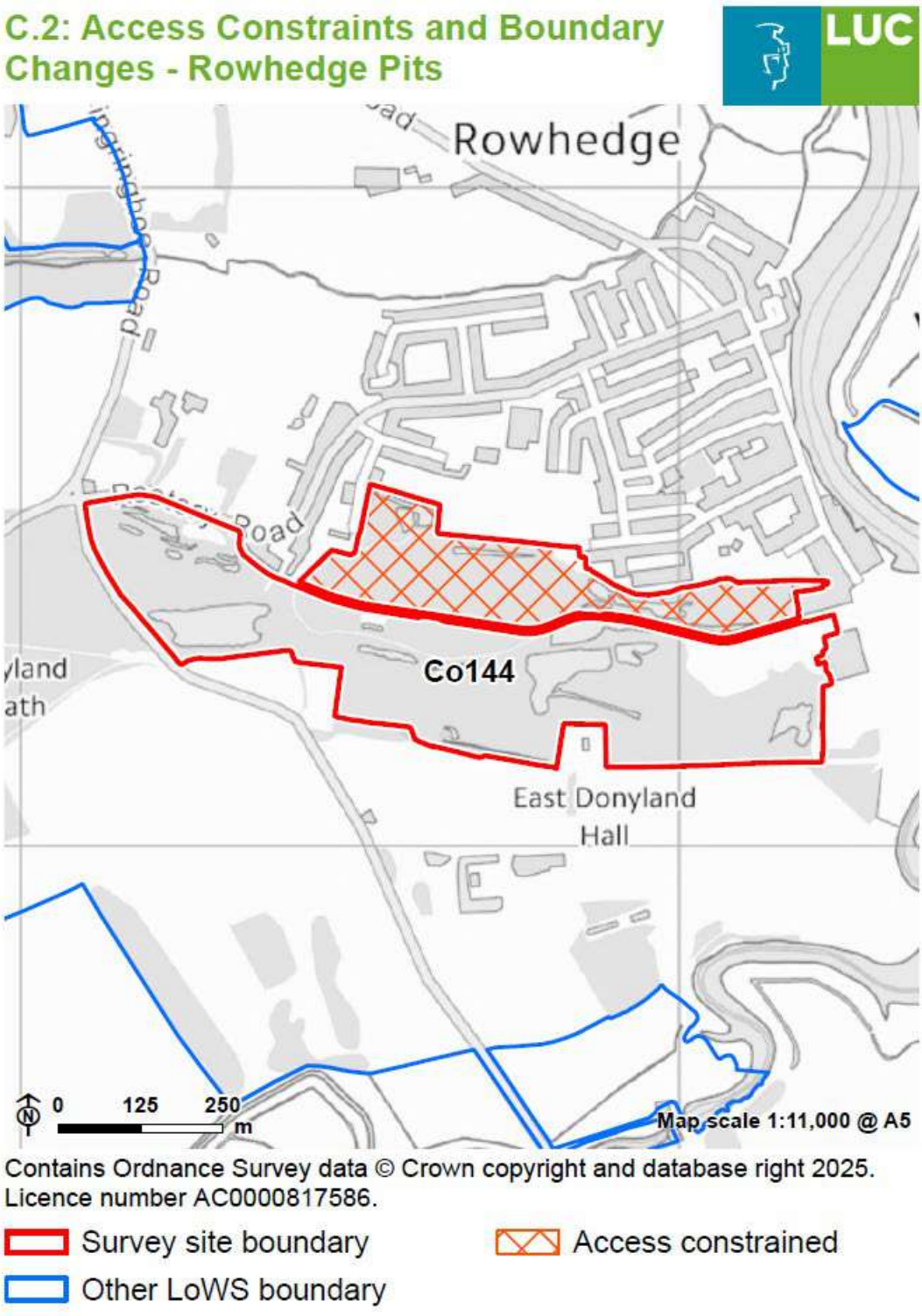
Rowhedge Pits

C.1: Desk Study - Rowhedge Pits



Survey site boundary
Other LoWS boundary
Preferred site allocation
Emerging site allocation
Priority Habitat Inventory
Wood Pasture and Parkland

Rowhedge Pits



Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys:

Rowhedge Pits
The habitat description appears unchanged from 2015, however there is no reference to litter / fly tipping or biking within the previous assessment, suggesting this has become an issue since then.
Condition Statement: Declining **Additional comments:** The presence of litter, fly tipping and biking is impacting upon the condition of the habitats on site and their ecological value. The dominance of woodland also threatens the diversity of habitats on site, and the post-industrial nature of the site, which provides valuable habitat for invertebrates.
Management: Poor **Additional comments:** The litter and biking use throughout the site, as well as the dominance of woodland with little open areas retained and few sunny sandy bank faces suggest there has been a lack of active management, or that it has not been managed guided by the sites post- industrial nature.
Known/relevant existing site management plan: Unknown
Opportunities on site: Specialist invertebrate survey work to determine species assemblage. **Additional comments:** Given the sites location within an IIA, and the habitats on site, the site is considered to be of importance for rare and threatened species of invertebrates. An invertebrate survey would be beneficial to understand the invertebrates present on site and how to manage and enhance the site for these invertebrates.
Threats and Disturbances: Fly tipping, litter, invasive non-native species, biking, succession to woodland **Additional comments:** As detailed above, litter and fly tipping was noted in some parts of the site, in particular within the waterbodies within the northern part of the site, which create a direct threat to wildlife within the waterbodies. Evidence of biking was also prevalent within the site, including trails and ramps, which can have impacts on the ecology of habitats including related to soil erosion, ground flora and fauna using the site. Invasive non-native species were also present within the site, including cherry laurel which was noted to be most abundant within the northern section, as well as variegated yellow archangel, and holm oak. Invasive non-native species can spread rapidly and threaten the diversity of plant species within woodland areas. Lastly, dominance of woodland threatens to decrease the diversity of habitats on site if active habitat management is not undertaken.
Level of use: Moderate / high **Additional comments:** It is likely that the number of people using the site is fairly low given that most people will respect the signs, however the presence of human disturbance in the woodland is high (litter, fly tipping, biking tracks and ramps, fire pits)
Management Recommendations:

Rowhedge Pits	
The management suggested in 2015 still applies here given the dominance of secondary woodland across the site, including the introduction of a programme of cyclical clearance to create open habitat within the site together with specific maintenance of habitat features of importance to invertebrates such as cliffs and banks of exposed substrate. Cyclical clearance should occur in some parts, creating a mosaic of habitats, with management and enhancement of retained woodland to maximise its biodiversity, such as through coppicing, creation of log piles and invasive non-native species control. Clearance of willow from wet depressions may additionally be required, to ensure the retention of the standing water features, which provide valuable habitat for invertebrates and amphibians. Given the complexity of the site and the mix of habitats present, as well as the site's location within an IIA, it is recommended that an invertebrate survey is carried out, and a habitat management plan is produced following this, to ensure management of the site for invertebrates known to be on site. In addition, a site wide 'clean up' should be undertaken to remove litter from the site. Placing additional signs around the edges of the site to educate local residents on the importance of the site, and its designation as a LoWS would additionally help to discourage visitors from using littering.	
LoWS Criteria	
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:	HC27 - Post-Industrial sites
Additional comments:	N/A
Species Selection Criteria	
Plants:	N/A

Rowhedge Pits	
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
Additional comments:	N/A
Invertebrates:	N/A
Additional comments:	This site is located within an 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:	At risk
Rationale:	The site is a valuable wildlife site within Colchester, that includes a mix of habitats, which arise from unique circumstances such as on post-industrial sites. These habitats provide an abundance of opportunities for wildlife in the local area, in particular to invertebrates, given the nature of habitats present and its location within an important invertebrate area. In addition, given the site's large size, and connectivity to surround SSSI's, the site is a key component of the LoWS network which should be protected and enhanced. However, a significant amount of human disturbance was noted within the site, including fly tipping, litter, biking and fire pits as well as invasive non-native species, which threatens the condition of the site. Therefore, the site has been identified to be At risk from human interference and woodland dominance which threatens the site's designation criteria. The site would really benefit from a habitat management plan, to ensure its value as a post-industrial LoWS is protected and maximised.

Donyland Wetlands	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	Co135
LoWS Name:	Donyland Wetlands
Grid Reference:	TM0192922187
Area (ha):	15.26
Ownership:	Cadman
Management provider:	Owned by Cadman 2003 Limited, however it is unknown who is responsible for managing the site
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: N/A Emerging: Middlewick
Total area of site Allocation overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0.00 Emerging: 0.01
LoWS Citation:	This is the area of a former mineral extraction site and supports significant populations of breeding amphibians, most notably a large colony of Common Toad, a SPIE, with Common Frog and Smooth Newt. The northern section comprises a broad, shallow lake that draws down in the summer. The shallow margins support dense willow (Salix spp.) woodland with swamp vegetation and some rough grassland. The lake supports a dense population of pondweed (Potamogeton sp.) and breeding Little Grebe and Tufted Duck. Great Green Bush-cricket (Tettigonia viridissima) (an Essex Red Data List species) has been recorded here. The southern section comprises a deep flooded pit, which is now a fishing lake, and sloping rough grassland dropping down to the adjacent Birch Brook LoWS. The fishing lake is fringed with scrub and Reedmace (Typha latifolia) and is well used by waterfowl in the winter. Along its western edge is an old lane with large Pedunculate Oaks (Quercus robur).The grassland is recent in origin, following the disturbance of quarrying operations, including the main processing area at its eastern end. It includes exposed sandy banks and damp hollows, with significant patches of Bramble scrub becoming established. Plant species include Common Knapweed (Centaurea nigra), Agrimony (Agrimonia eupatoria), Red Bartsia (Odontites vernus), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (Lotus corniculatus), Creeping Cinquefoil (Potentilla reptans) and Perforate St John's-wort (Hypericum perforatum). In some more open areas, including where rabbits have grazed, the mineral origin of the soils is revealed by the presence of Red Fescue (Festuca rubra), Common Stork's-bill (Erodium cicutarium) and Common Centaury (Centaurium erythraea).
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	N/A

Donyland Wetlands	
Irreplaceable habitat on site:	N/A
Priority habitat on site:	Deciduous woodland
Known projects/initiatives:	Fishing occurs on the southern lake
Survey Data	
Surveyor: KR	Date: 25.04.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: Partially accessible. The southern half of the site could be accessed along the western side (the eastern side of the lake was fenced and locked). The grassland to the south was accessed, although the very eastern end was very dense vegetation and so full access to this corner of the site was not possible. The northern half of the site could not be accessed however could be viewed from a footpath along the eastern edge.

Summary of site:

The site consisted of a large fishing lake, with an old lane with mature oaks along the western edge and neutral grassland with scattered scrub to the south of the lake. The northern part of the site could not be accessed for survey, however is known to be a shallow lake with willow woodland along its edge.

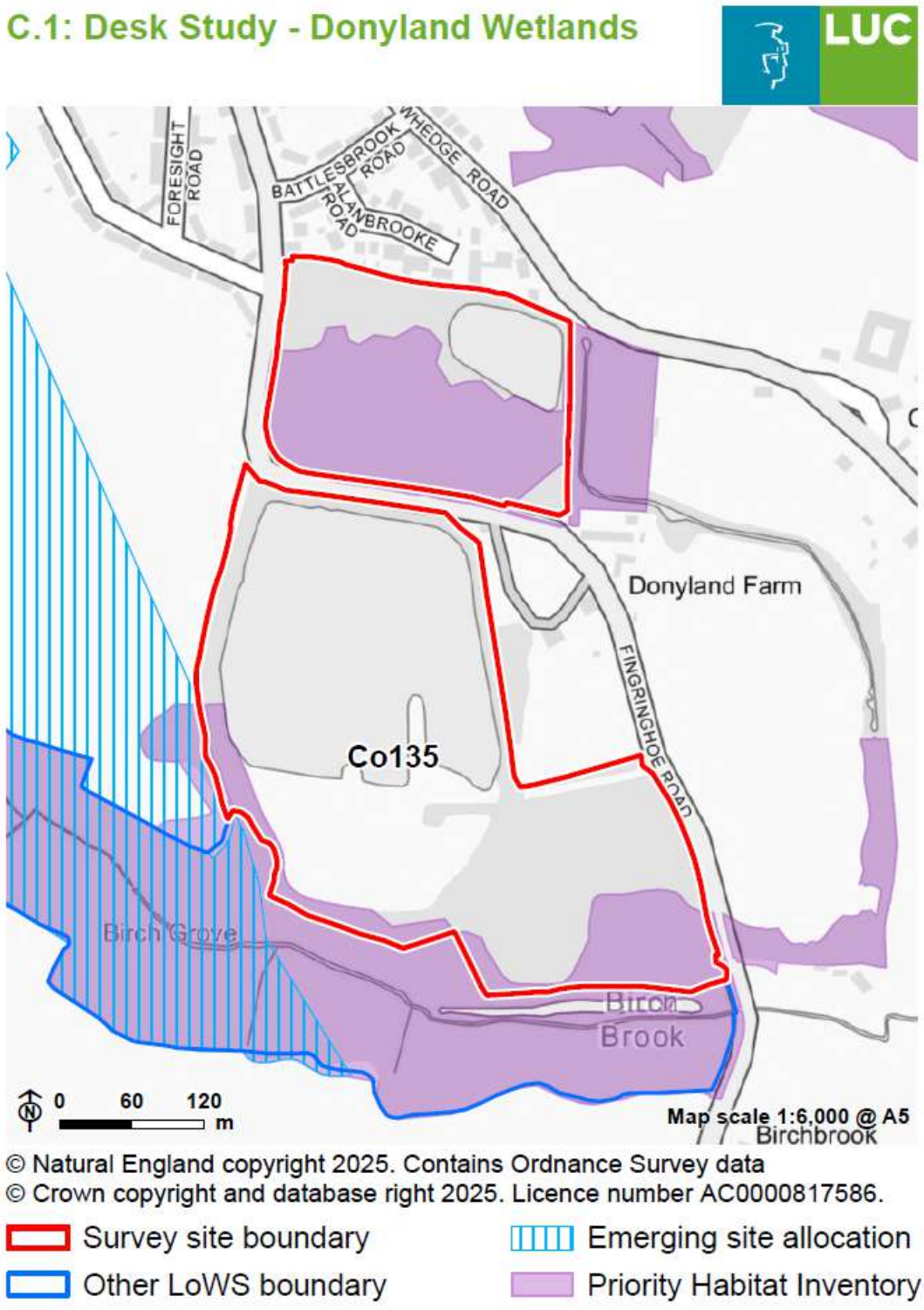
Habitat survey description:

The green lane along the western side of the lake was noted to include a diverse mix of flora including mature oaks, holly, blackthorn, dog rose, lesser celandine, bluebell, wood crocus, lords and ladies, pink sorrel, bluebells, greater stitchwort, speedwell sp., winters purslane and foxglove. Litter was present in some locations along the lane. The large fishing lake was only visible from the western and southern edge, however willow could be seen growing around the edge, in addition to bullrush and marsh buttercup. The neutral grassland to the south of the site was noted to include a diverse mix of species including cocksfoot, yorkshire fog, ribwort plantain, creeping cinquefoil, oxeye daisy, common daisy, bristly oxtongue, common knapweed, common vetch, ragwort, spotted medick, ground ivy, comfrey, cowslip, bittercress, teasel, smooth meadow grass and hoary cress. Scattered scrub was interspersed throughout the grass area, and included bramble predominantly with blackthorn, dog rose, hawthorn and a small amount of gorse and broom. Self-seeded young trees were additionally scattered throughout the grassland area. Patches of nettles and anthills were present. Occasional wet patches dominated by Norfolk reed and bullrush were present, however no water was present at the time of the survey. Damp areas of grass were present close to the lake, including jointed / sharp flowered rush, hard rush and meadow buttercup. A dense area of Japanese knotweed was present in the east of the site. The grassland includes a rich mix of species, which in combination with the scattered scrub, provide valuable bird nesting opportunities (Nightingales were heard during the survey) and habitat for invertebrates, reptiles, small mammals including bats and amphibians. The southern boundary of the grassland / scrub mosaic was continuous with the neighbouring Birch Brook Wood. This area of the site was therefore in the transitional stage from grassland and scrub, with self-seeded young trees establishing, to established woodland within Birch Brook Wood. The northern half of the site, north of Fingringhoe road could only be seen from the footpath along the eastern boundary, however due to the density of the vegetation along this edge, this part of the site could not be sufficiently surveyed.

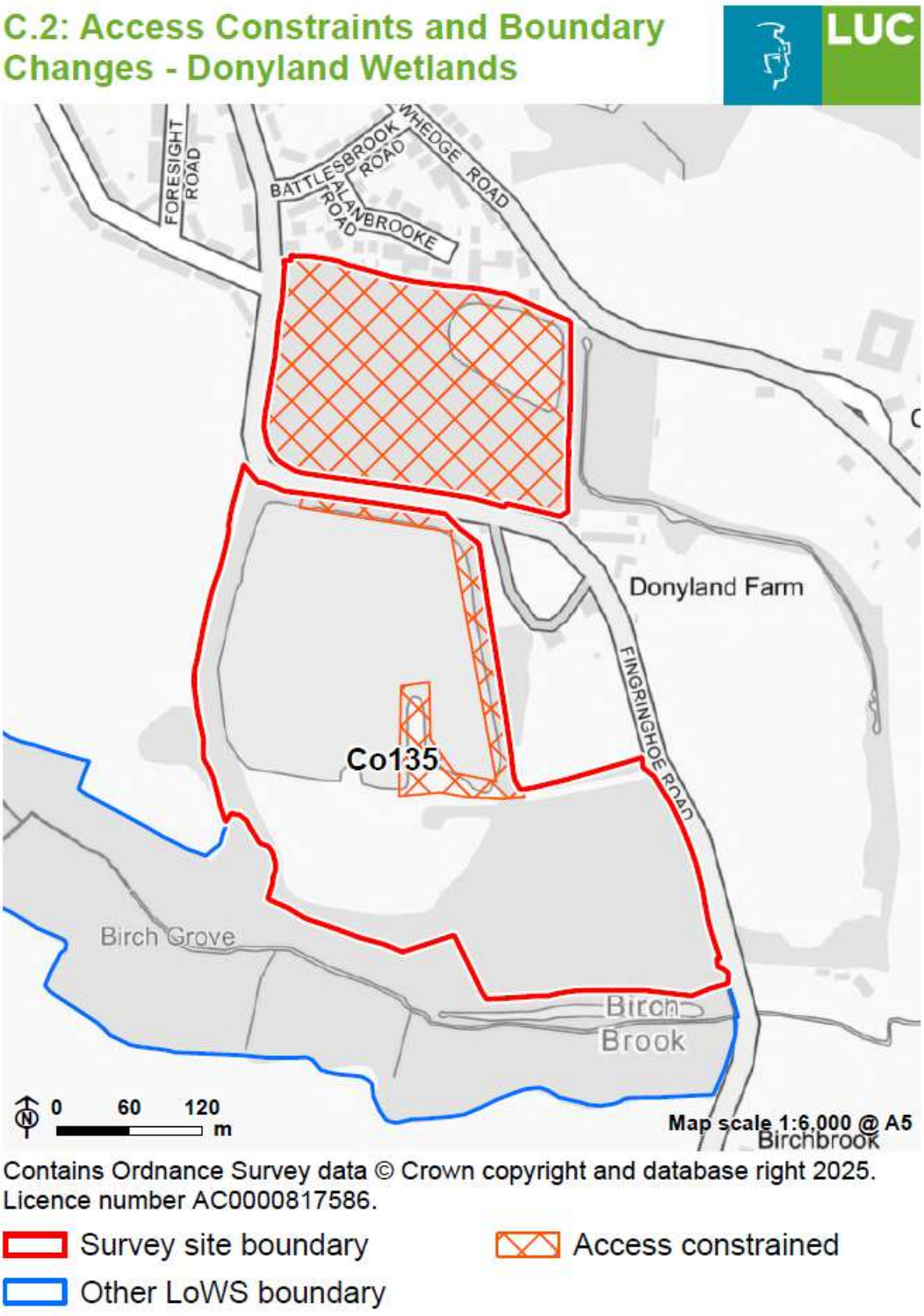
The grassland / scrub mosaic area was included within a botanical and interim invertebrate survey[29],[30] which was undertaken primarily within Middlewick Ranges, and the surrounding land. These surveys found this area to be structurally and botanically diverse, with an accompanying invertebrate diversity. The botanical surveys found this area to support 132 plant species, of which 8 are or have been recorded as nationally and/ or country rare, scarce and / or threatened according to published sources. 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.

[29] G, Groome (2024) Botanical Surveys of Middlewick Ranges
[30] M. Edwards (2024) Interim Report of Entomological Survey and Assessment for Middlewick Ranges.

Donyland Wetlands



Donyland Wetlands



Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys:

Donyland Wetlands
No sandy banks were visible, as was noted to be present during the 2015 survey. In addition, a search on historic google images does show that the spread of scrub has increased since 2014.
Condition Statement: Favourable, Declining in parts **Additional comments:** While the grassland and scrub mosaic currently provides valuable bird nesting habitat, in particular for nightingales which were heard during the survey, in the absence of active ongoing management, the scrub will dominate and the grassland areas will be lost to succession. The green lane was noted to be in good condition with a rich ground flora, scrub layer and mature trees, however litter was present in parts along here.
Management: Poor **Additional comments:** There are no signs of active management to protect the grassland scrub mosaic area, given that the presence of scrub has increased significantly since 2014, trees are starting to set seed and the areas of bare ground which provide habitats for invertebrates have been lost. A large stand of Japanese knotweed was additionally still present in the east of the site, which was noted in 2015. The lake is managed as a fishing lake, and the northern water body was not accessed for survey.
Known/relevant existing site management plan: Unknown
Opportunities on site: Scrub management, tree management, bare ground creation, deadwood habitat creation, grassland mowing regime, pond creation **Additional comments:** See management recommendations below
Threats and Disturbances: Scrub / tree encroachment, invasive non-native species, litter Additional comments: Japanese knotweed was present in the east of the grassland scrub mosaic area and scrub succession threatens the ecological value of this southern area. Litter was present along the green lane.
Level of use: Low / moderate **Additional comments:** The lake and green lane are used by anglers/walkers, however the rest of the site appears not to be used.
Management Recommendations: The southern grassland and scrub area is at risk of being lost to succession, given the spread of scrub and tree saplings now established within the grassland. It is advised that the scrub is managed to retain the mosaic of grassland and scrub currently on site, and to prevent the grassland being lost completely. The scrub should be managed to ensure this site 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 area should be managed following hay meadow techniques, to further enhance the species diversity within the grassland. The area of Japanese Knotweed within the east of the site should be removed and controlled, to prevent its spread to the rest of the site. In addition, it would be beneficial to reinstate the bare ground features which were present during the time of the 2015 survey. Birch Brook wood which is immediately adjacent to the site, is mapped within the Essex Coast Important Invertebrate area. Therefore, the presence of

Donyland Wetlands	
the grassland / scrub mosaic, in addition to bare ground would provide additional valuable habitat for invertebrates and supplement the birch brook wood adjacent. Some deadwood features were seen on site, however additional log piles could be placed within the southern grassland area to provide further habitat for reptiles. Lastly consideration could be given to the creation of a wildlife pond in the southern grassland area of the site. This would supplement the toad, frog and newt population already known to be present on site. Litter picking should occur along green lane. The northern section could not be accessed for survey, however the management recommendation from 2015 would likely still apply here 'In the northern section, the willow scrub is becoming very dense and would benefit from clearance and ongoing management. The remaining open water area has been colonised by the invasive, non-native New Zealand Pigmyweed (Crassula helmsii), which could take over the entire water column'	
LoWS Criteria	
Habitat Selection Criteria	
Woodland, scrub and related habitats:	HC3 – Other Priority Habitat Woodland Type on Non-ancient sites, HC8 – Hedgerows and Green Lanes
Additional comments:	The woodland area in the north could not be directly surveyed, however it could be seen from the footpath and from aerial that this habitat was still present on site.
Grassland:	HC11 – Other Neutral Grassland
Additional comments:	N/A
Heathland:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Wetland habitats:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Open water habitats:	HC16 – Lakes and Reservoirs
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

Donyland Wetlands	
Birds:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Mammals:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Amphibians:	SC13 – Hotspots for Amphibian Diversity
Additional comments:	While species data was not available at the time of assessment, the survey confirmed that the site still supports habitat for breeding amphibians, and therefore this criteria has continued to be assigned.
Reptiles:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Invertebrates:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
LoWS Survey Recommendations	
Designated LoWS	
LOWS Survey Recommendation:	Opportunity
Rationale:	There is opportunity to enhance the southern grassland area through meadow management techniques, scrub control to maintain the mosaic, pond creation and log pile creation. Its location adjacent to Birch Brook IIA and Middlewick give the site potential to support a wide range of species, in particular birds, reptiles, invertebrates and amphibians

Eden Wood	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	Co13
LoWS Name:	Eden Wood
Grid Reference:	TL8920517789
Area (ha):	2.69
Ownership:	Private
Management provider:	Private landowner
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: Land North Oak Road Emerging: Land North Oak Road
Total area of site Allocation overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 2.04 Emerging: 2.04
LoWS Citation:	Eden Wood is old woodland made up of old Hornbeam (Carpinus betulus) and Hazel (Corylus avellana) coppice amongst large oak (Quercus robur) standards. Other canopy species include Sweet Chestnut (Castanea sativa), Aspen (Populus tremula), Crab Apple (Malus sylvestris), Sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus) and Ash (Fraxinus excelsior). The understorey is scattered and open with occasional Elder (Sambucus nigra), Holly (Ilex aquifolium), Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna) and Midland Hawthorn (Crataegus laevigata). The ground layer is very sparse, consisting mainly of leaf litter and bare ground, but there are some patches of Bluebell (Hyacinthoides non-scripta) and Nettle (Urtica dioica). A small area of woodland along the southern margins of Messing Park, part of a larger Eden Wood that existed before clearance at the end of the 19th Century, is included in this Local Wildlife site for its varied canopy and ground flora. Trees include Horse-chestnut (Aesculus hippocastanum), Pedunculate Oak, Hornbeam and Wild Cherry (Prunus avium) along with Hazel, Ash and Field Maple coppice. Willows (Salix spp.) grow at the bottom of the slope where a damp swampy area forms. The ground flora is rich supporting dominant stands of Dog's Mercury (Mercurialis perennis) alongside Bluebell, Red Campion (Silene dioica) and Moschatel (Adoxa moschatellina). Butchers Broom (Ruscus aculeatus) is also present on the upper slopes
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	Woodland and Freshwater Standing Water, Woodland, Grassland and Freshwater Standing Water
Irreplaceable habitat on site:	N/A
Priority habitat on site:	Deciduous woodland
Known projects/initiatives:	It is understood that the wood is not actively managed.

Eden Wood	
Survey Data	
Surveyor: EB	Date: 31.03.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: Private woodland but fully accessible for survey.

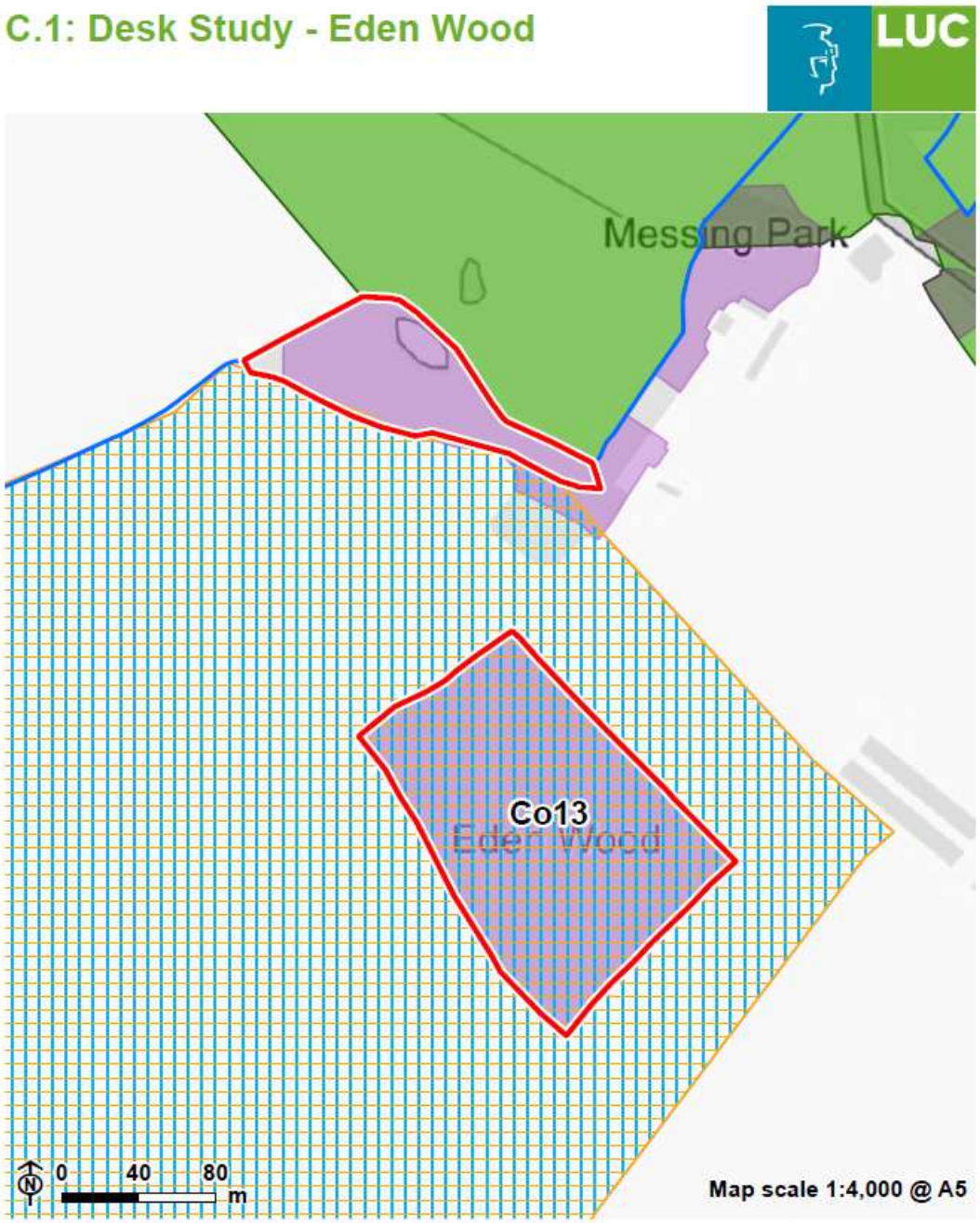
Summary of site:

Located towards the south west boundary of Colchester district, Eden Wood is a deciduous woodland split into two parcels, each varying in quality. The main woodland located in the south was of poor quality due to a sparse ground flora likely induced by the presence of a large pheasant pen, erosion by game manager vehicles and presence of cherry laurel stands. The northern parcel located along the margins of Messing Park LoWS was of better quality and featured ancient woodland indicator species. A small swampy pond was also present in the northern woodland parcel.

Habitat survey description:

Both parcels featured a varied canopy and understorey with species such as oak, hazel, hornbeam, ash, horse chestnut, sweet chestnut, sycamore, holly and elder. Both parcels also featured considerable standing deadwood with bat roosting features. Ground flora in the main woodland parcel was very sparse with only nettle and bramble whereas the northern parcel had a diverse ground flora including ancient woodland indicator species such as dog's mercury, snowdrop, bluebell, butcher's broom, ivy leaved speedwell, honey suckle and ground ivy. Also in the northern woodland parcel was a swampy pond surrounded by willows and connected to a damp ditch running near the margin of Messing Park LoWS. Both woodland parcels are connected by a native hedgerow but are relatively isolated from other semi-natural habitats due to their position in landscape dominated by arable fields.

Eden Wood


C.1: Desk Study - Eden Wood
LUC
Messing Park
Co13
Eden Wood
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80
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Map scale 1:4,000 @ A5
© Natural England copyright 2025. Contains Ordnance Survey data
© Crown copyright and database right 2025. Licence number AC0000817586.
Survey site boundary
Other LoWS boundary
Preferred site allocation
Emerging site allocation
Priority Habitat Inventory
Wood Pasture and Parkland

Eden Wood

Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys:

Previous surveys did not report the presence of cherry laurel. This is now present in the main woodland located in the south.

Eden Wood

Condition Statement:

Favourable

Additional comments:

Woodland of varying quality but offers considerable habitat to mammals, birds and invertebrate species in a primarily arable landscape.

Management:

Poor

Additional comments:

No management to improve site as confirmed by the landowner.

Known/relevant existing site management plan:

Unknown

Opportunities on site:

Tree planting

Additional comments:

As the two woodland parcels at Eden Wood are separated but in very close proximity, tree planting could take place between them to create a larger, more valuable woodland habitat.

Threats and Disturbances:

Development, Vehicular erosion, Invasive non-native species

Additional comments:

As the main woodland parcel sits wholly within a preferred site allocation, the main threat to the woodland and the associated species comes from development. Other current disturbances come from vehicular erosion from gamekeeper vehicle in main woodland parcel to the south, likely due to wet ground in winter and there are also five laurel stands present in main woodland parcel.

Level of use:

Moderate

Additional comments:

No public access but used by game keeper vehicles.

Management Recommendations:

The previous report recommended management to focus on the spread of sycamore. The recent survey confirmed that management has been successful in reducing the extent of sycamore in the woodland. Management should now focus on main woodland parcel to the south where pressure from pheasant pen should be alleviated and vehicular access should be restricted to allow woodland ground flora to establish. It is understood from the landowner that the current use of the land for pheasant keeping will soon be halted and therefore impacts from pheasant browsing and vehicle erosion are expected to reduce as a result.

In addition, the cherry laurel located in the main woodland parcel should be removed to prevent further spread.

LoWS Criteria

Habitat Selection Criteria

Eden Wood	
Woodland, scrub and related habitats:	HC2 - Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient sites
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:	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

Eden Wood	
Additional comments:	N/A
Invertebrates:	N/A
Additional comments:	Eden Wood is located in close proximity to the Essex Coast IIA (less than 500m). Although not directly within the IIA, this woodland habitat is likely to contribute to the network by providing suitable habitat for invertebrate species.
LoWS Survey Recommendations	
Designated LoWS	
LoWS Survey Recommendation:	Retain - No Change.
Rationale:	Eden Wood is a good quality deciduous woodland and should be retained and protected from proposed development. This is particularly the case in the woodland parcel to the north which has good species diversity, age diversity [saplings, mature and veteran trees with good ecological niches] and ancient woodland indicator species. Management should focus on the main woodland parcel in the south by restricting vehicular access, reducing pheasant usage and removing cherry laurel. These actions will maintain and enhance the woodland and allow a ground flora and saplings to establish to naturally regenerate the woodland.

Inworth Wood	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	Co6
LoWS Name:	Inworth Wood
Grid Reference:	TL8832817948
Area (ha):	3.04
Ownership:	Private
Management provider:	Private landowner
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: Land North Oak Road Emerging: Land North Oak Road
Total area of site Allocation overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0.75 Emerging: 0.75
LoWS Citation:	This site consists of a block of ancient woodland with 20th Century additions to the northeast, southeast and along the southern edge. The older woodland consists of Hornbeam (Carpinus betulus) and Ash (Fraxinus excelsior) coppice with Pedunculate Oak (Quercus robur) standards, primarily around its edges, and occasional Wild Cherry (Prunus avium). The understorey includes Field Maple (Acer campestre), Crab Apple (Malus sylvestris) and Midland Hawthorn (Crataegus laevigata) with elm invading along the southern edge. Bramble (Rubus fruticosus agg.) is dominant in places, where there has been recent coppicing. The ground flora includes frequent Bluebell (Hyacinthoides non- scripta) and Dog's Mercury (Mercurialis perennis) as well as Primrose (Primula vulgaris), Red Currant (Ribes rubra), Three-nerved Sandwort (Moehringia trinervia), Wood Speedwell (Veronica montana), Wood Sedge (Carex sylvatica) and Goldilocks Buttercup (Ranunculus auricomus). The more recent blocks of woodland are made up of Pedunculate Oak and Ash, with occasional Hornbeam in the southeast.
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	Woodland Only, Woodland, Grassland and Freshwater Standing Water
Irreplaceable habitat on site:	Ancient woodland
Priority habitat on site:	Deciduous woodland
Known projects/initiatives:	It is understood that the wood is not actively managed.
Survey Data	

Inworth Wood	
Surveyor: EB	Date: 31.03.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: Private woodland but fully accessible for survey.

Summary of site:

Located towards the south west boundary of Colchester district, Inworth wood is an ancient and deciduous woodland surrounded primarily by arable fields. It had a varied species composition and good structural diversity with areas of relatively recent hornbeam and ash coppicing, which was planted 20 years ago by the Forestry Commission, mixed with mature oak and wild cherry. A large pheasant pen was located towards the south east of the woodland.

Habitat survey description:

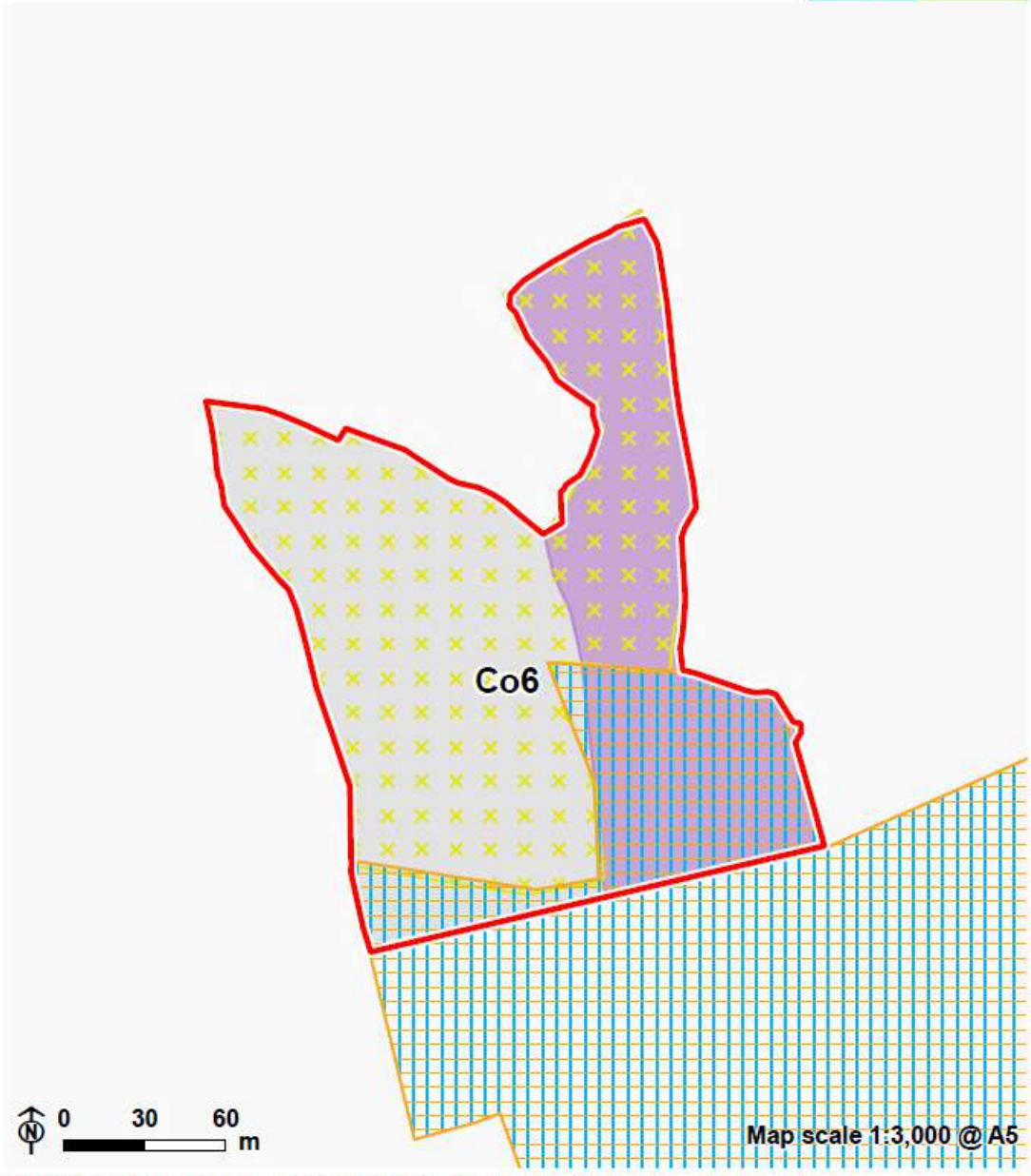
Ground flora of the woodland was diverse and featured numerous ancient woodland indicator species such as dominant primrose, bluebell, red campion and frequent lords and ladies.

Other frequent species included lesser celandine, greater stitchwort, ground ivy and common dog violet.

Ground flora was less diverse near pheasant pen in south and towards the north east where bramble and nettle was dominant. A ride, which is an important habitat within woodlands, had been created by a vehicular access point towards the west of the woodland. There was also a drainage ditch on eastern side associated with species tolerating wetter conditions such as pendulous sedge.

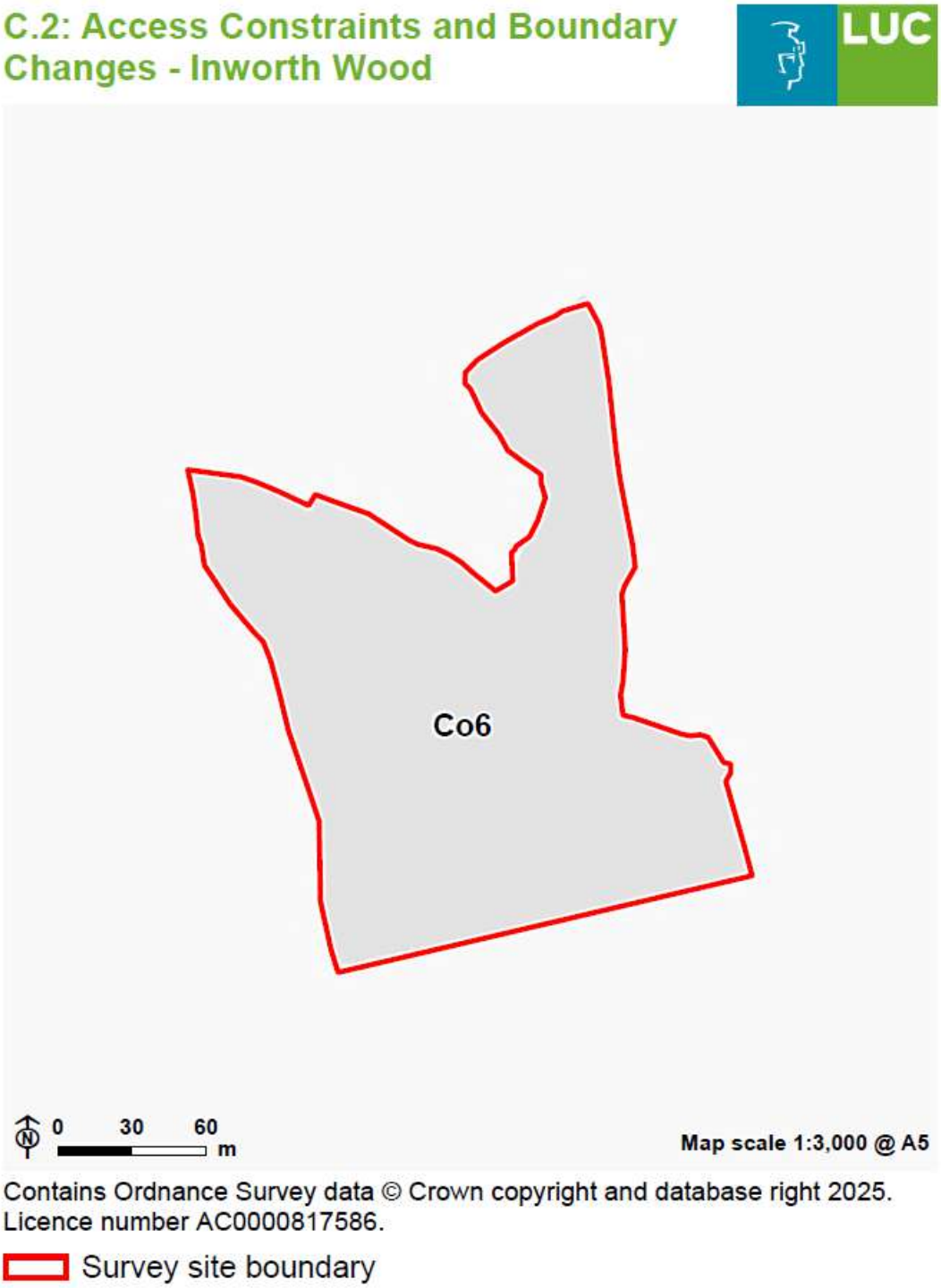
Standing dead wood was abundant in the woodland and offered considerable habitats for bat roosts. Furthermore, log and brash piles dotted around the site offered suitable refugia for reptiles.

C.1: Desk Study - Inworth Wood



Survey site boundary
Preferred site allocation
Emerging site allocation
Ancient Woodland Inventory
Priority Habitat Inventory

Inworth Wood



Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys:

No considerable changes in habitats since 2015.

Inworth Wood
Condition Statement: Favourable **Additional comments:** Good quality ancient and lowland mixed deciduous woodland containing numerous important floral and faunal species.
Management: Satisfactory Additional comments: No management to improve site as confirmed by the landowner.
Known/relevant existing site management plan: Unknown
Opportunities on site: N/A **Additional comments:** N/A
Threats and Disturbances: Development **Additional comments:** The main threat to Inworth wood is related to development as the site falls within a preferred site allocation. The wood is currently disturbed by deer browsing and pheasant keeping as evidenced by the lack of ground flora and natural regeneration of trees in the south. The extent of ash dieback was not assessed during the survey but due to the abundance of this species within the woodland it is likely that this could threaten the status of the woodland in the future if active management is not taken to diversify the species present.
Level of use: Low **Additional comments:** Private woodland so no public access. Only used by pheasant gamekeeper.
Management Recommendations: Management should look to protect this important woodland habitat from development. To further enhance the ecological value of the site, cyclical coppicing of hornbeam and ash could be reintroduced. Also, tree species present in woodland could be diversified so that woodland is maintained even if ash dieback contributes to ash mortality in the future. Finally, management could look at reducing pheasant pressure in south east and fence off areas from deer to encourage natural regeneration of trees and the establishment of a more diverse ground flora.
LoWS Criteria
Habitat Selection Criteria

Inworth Wood	
Woodland, scrub and related habitats:	HC1 - Ancient Woodland sites, HC2 - Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient sites
Additional comments:	Ancient woodland indicators mainly present under the hornbeam and ash coppice within the centre of the parcel and towards the north west.
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:	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

Inworth Wood	
Reptiles:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Invertebrates:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
LoWS Survey Recommendations	
Designated LoWS	
LoWS Survey Recommendation:	Retain – No Change
Rationale:	An irreplaceable ancient and lowland mixed deciduous woodland in good condition that provides opportunities for an abundance of species. The site should retain its LoWS status and should continue to be protected.

Wivenhoe Park	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	Co148
LoWS Name:	Wivenhoe Park
Grid Reference:	TM0294624036
Area (ha):	40.64
Ownership:	Private
Management provider:	University of Essex Estates Team
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: Knowledge Gateway Emerging: Knowledge Gateway
Total area of site Allocation overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 5.85 Emerging: 5.85
LoWS Citation:	This site comprises the modified parkland associated with Wivenhoe House, now dominated by the University of Essex. The parkland includes some oak (Quercus spp.) trees in excess of 400 years old, with large specimens of Cork Oak (Q. suber), redwoods, pines and cedars. Some areas of woodland appear to be very old, with locally plentiful Bluebell (Hyacinthoides non-scripta). 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 (Asplenium scolopendrium). Areas of short acidic grassland are dominated by Red Fescue (Festuca rubra), Common Bent-grass (Agrostis capillaris), and Sheep's Sorrel (Rumex acetosella) with Field Wood- rush (Luzula campestris), Creeping Soft grass (Holcus mollis), Heath Bedstraw (Galium saxatile), Creeping Cinquefoil (Potentilla reptans), Hairy Sedge (Carex hirta) and timothy (Phleum sp.). More noteworthy species include Blinks (Montia fontana), Slender Parsley-piert (Aphanes microcarpa) and the ERDL species Early forget-me-not (Myosotis ramossissima) and Subterranean Clover (Trifolium subterraneum). In less free-draining areas, the grassland is lusher and here there are additional species such as Sweet Vernal Grass (Anthoxanthum odoratum), Yorkshire-fog (Holcus lanatus), Common Knapweed (Centaurea nigra), Wild Carrot (Daucus carota), Hare's-foot Clover (Trifolium arvense), Prickly Sedge (Carex muricata), Bird's foot Clover (Lotus corniculatus), Lesser Stitchwort (Stellaria graminea) and Cuckooflower (Cardamine pratensis). 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.
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes

Wivenhoe Park	
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	Freshwater Standing Water Only
Irreplaceable habitat on site:	Ancient tree
Priority habitat on site:	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, Deciduous woodland, Wood pasture and parkland
Known projects/initiatives:	Extensive management undertaken by 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. Examples include mowing
Survey Data	
Surveyor: EB	Date: 03.04.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: Open

Summary of site:

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.

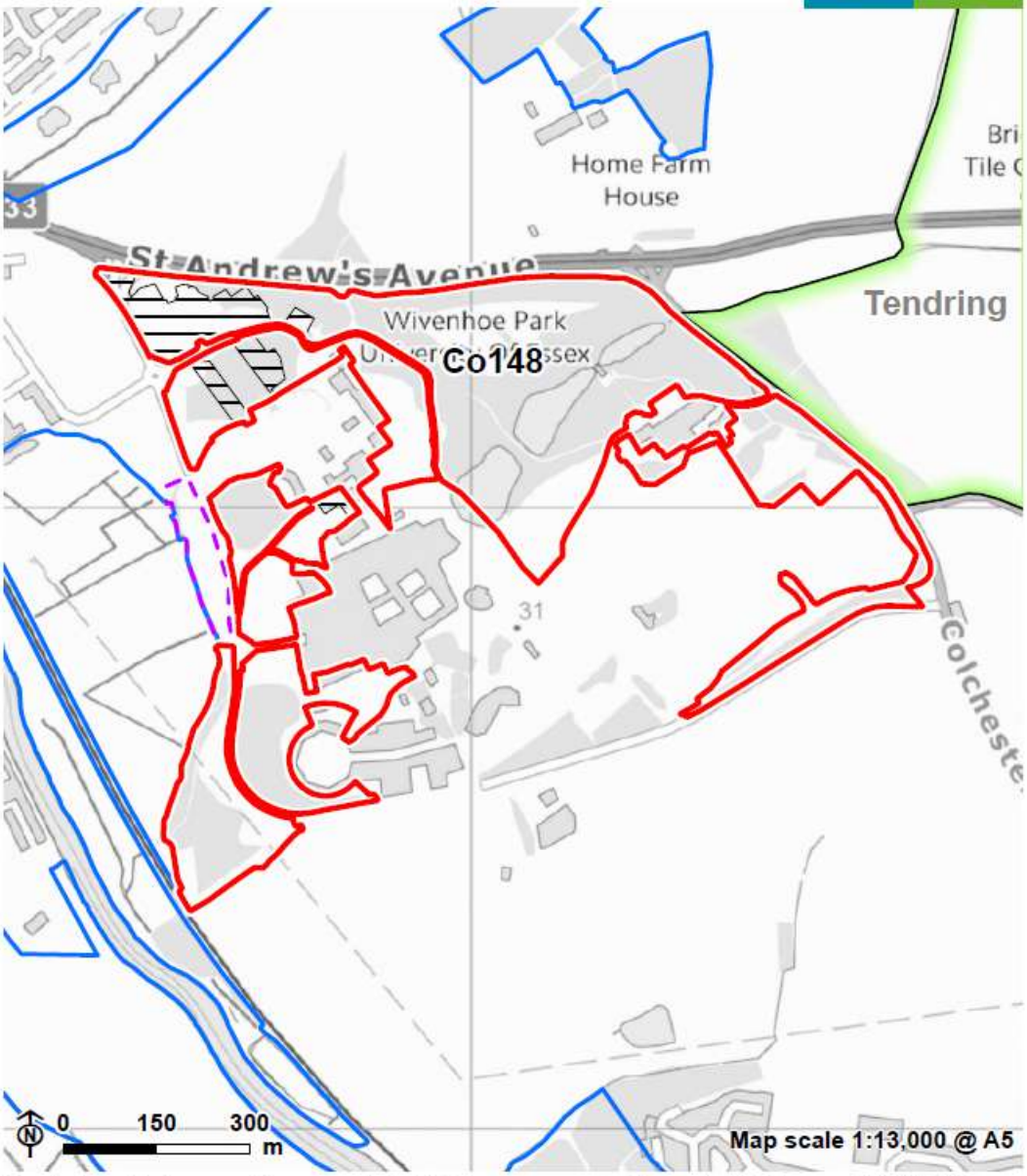
Habitat survey description:

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 Decidious Woodland such as Nightingale Wood in the south west 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.

C.1: Desk Study - Wivenhoe Park

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

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



- Survey site boundary
- Other LoWS boundary
- Colchester District boundary
- Neighbouring district
- Proposed boundary exclusion
- Proposed boundary extension

Wivenhoe Park

Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys:

Continued development of university buildings in the north west of the site has reduced the extent of semi-natural habitats.

Condition Statement:

Favourable

Additional comments:

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.

Management:

Good

Additional comments:

N/A

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.

Opportunities on site:

N/A

Additional comments:

The site is being well managed and no specific additional opportunities were identified as part of the survey.

Threats and Disturbances:

Development, Litter, Invasive non-native species,

Additional comments:

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.

Level of use:

Moderate

Additional comments:

Much of the site is freely accessible and used by dog walkers and students.

Management Recommendations:

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.

LoWS Criteria

Wivenhoe Park	
Habitat Selection Criteria	
Woodland, scrub and related habitats:	HC2 - Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient sites, HC4 - Wood-pasture and Parkland
Additional comments:	N/A
Grassland:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Heathland:	HC13 – Heathland and Acid Grassland
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:	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.

Wivenhoe Park	
Amphibians:	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.
Reptiles:	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.
Invertebrates:	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).
LoWS Survey Recommendations	
Designated LoWS	
LoWS Survey Recommendation:	De-designation (partial) and extension
Rationale:	It is recommended that the site boundary is 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 therefore is recommended for partial de-designation, as this area of the site no longer contributes to the value of the LoWS. The area between Boundary road and University Marshes LoWS could be included within the boundary as it contains a mixture of mixed scrub, grassland and woodland habitats which contributes to the value of Wivenhoe Park LoWS. Management in the rest of Wivenhoe Park is of excellent quality and is maintaining the important Mixed Deciduous Woodland, Wood-pasture and Parkland and Acid Grassland habitats found there.

University Marshes	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	Co140
LoWS Name:	University Marshes
Grid Reference:	TM0241323722
Area (ha):	22.17
Ownership:	Private
Management provider:	Land north of the railway is owned by The University of Essex. Some of the land south of the railway and adjacent to the river is owned by Colchester City Council but management here is unknown.
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: Knowledge Gateway, King Edward Quay Emerging: King Edward Quay Industrial Park
Total area of site Allocation overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0.00 Emerging: 0.00
LoWS Citation:	This relict grazing-marsh retains many typical species, such as Grass Vetchling (Lathyrus nissolia), Dittander (Lepidium latifolium), Hairy Buttercup (Ranunculus sardous) and Divided Sedge (Carex divisa), whilst the larger drains support broad bands of Common Reed (Phragmites australis), with Brackish Water-crowfoot (Ranunculus baudotii) in areas of more open water. The section between the River Colne and the railway line is currently unmanaged and is being invaded by False Oat-grass (Arrhenatherum elatius) and scrub.
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	N/A
Irreplaceable habitat on site:	Ancient tree, Coastal saltmarsh
Priority habitat on site:	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, Coastal saltmarsh, Deciduous woodland, Mudflats, No main habitat but additional habitats present
Known projects/initiatives:	The University Marshes on the north side of the railway are unmanaged. The University of Essex has plans to reintroduce grazing cattle within this area in 2025 for conservation purposes. Management of the south side of the railway is unknown.
Survey Data	

University Marshes	
Surveyor: EB	Date: 03.04.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: Open but surveyor did not enter reedbeds due to health & safety concerns.

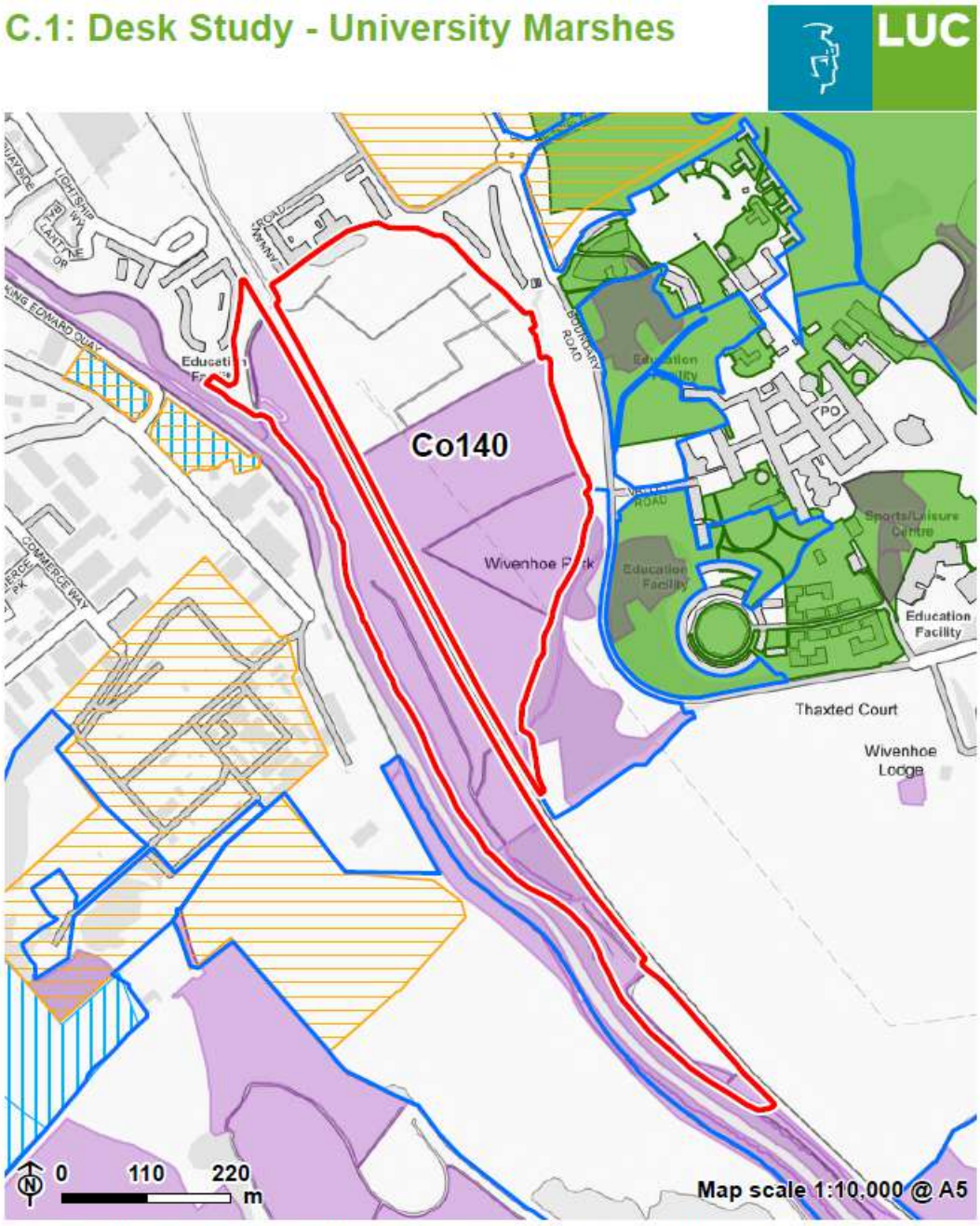
Summary of site:

University Marshes are located south east of Colchester City, either side of a railway track. On the north side of the railway there are extensive and undisturbed reedbeds (inaccessible due to water). On the south side of the railway, the habitats are more varied and feature reedbeds, grazing marshes and scrub. The Wivenhoe Trail runs along this section.

Habitat survey description:

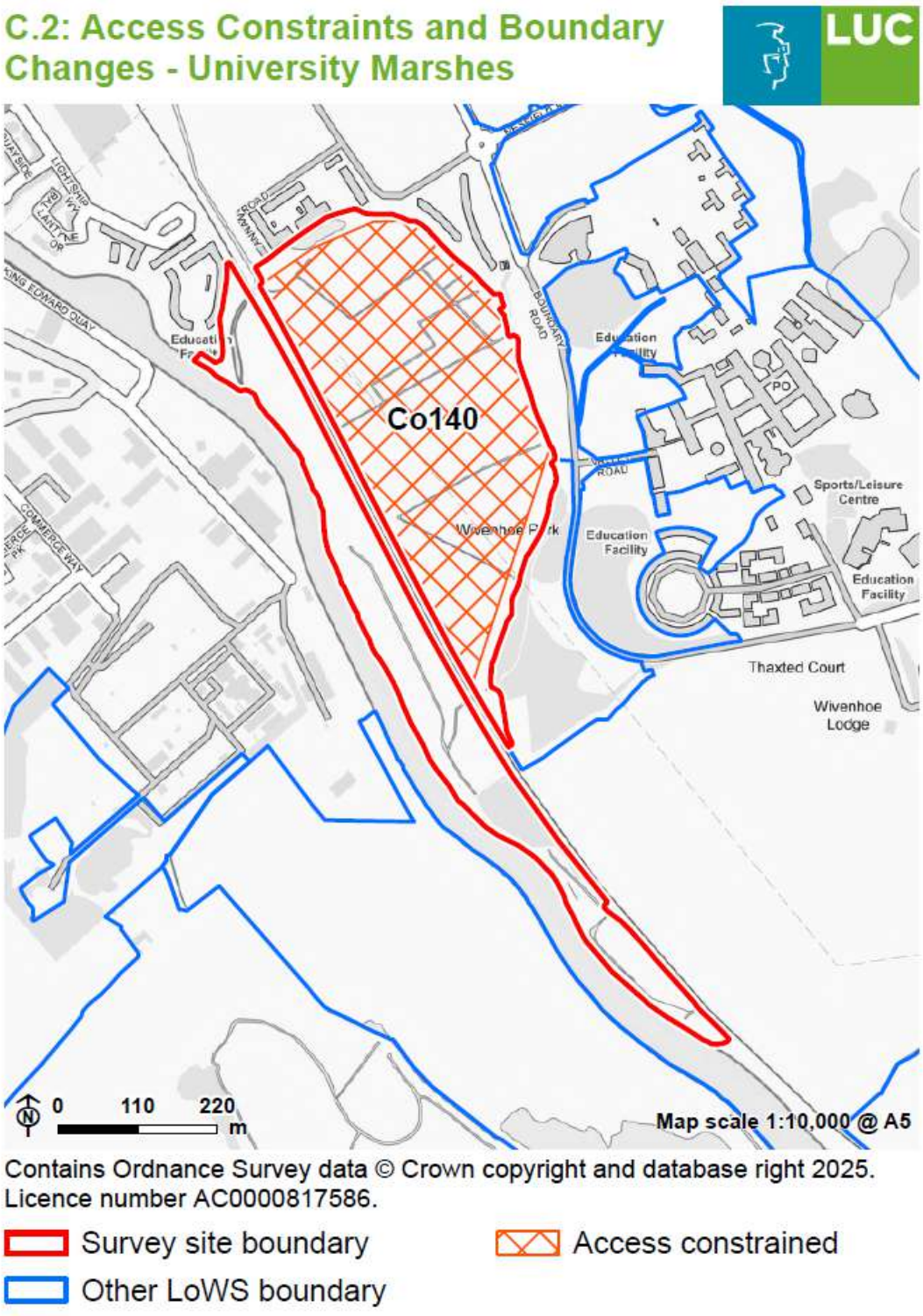
Reedbeds were comprised of dominant common reed and were of good quality due to their size, shape and lack of disturbance from humans. Grazing marshes between river and railway feature periodically inundated creeks with vegetation such as common reed, sea club rush and common couch. Hedgerows along Wivenhoe Trail comprised of blackthorn, dog rose and hawthorn prevent access and disturbance of reedbeds and grazing marshes and offer nesting opportunities for birds. A pond on the northern side owned by the University of Essex was of good quality with marginal vegetation such as marsh marigold and used by nesting mallard. Areas of scrub are also abundant and are comprised of dominant bramble with quaking oat grass, soft rush and teasel. Succession of scrub habitats is considerable leading to several areas of young oak woodland establishing.

University Marshes



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

University Marshes



Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys:

University Marshes
Continuation of succession noted in 2015 review meaning that scrub habitat in between river and railway was extensive and progressing towards woodland in some parts.
Condition Statement: Favourable, declining **Additional comments:** An extensive area of common reed and as such passes the selection criterion HC15.
Management: Satisfactory **Additional comments:** The landowner confirmed that the north side of railway has not been actively managed in 10 years but the reedbed habitat was of good quality here. Management of south side of railway is not apparent and means succession of habitats from grazing marsh to scrub to woodland is occurring.
Known/relevant existing site management plan: Current management plan by University of Essex is to leave reedbeds undisturbed by humans but to reintroduce cattle to improve the quality of the grassland and to manage scrub encroachment.
Opportunities on site: N/A **Additional comments:** N/A
Threats and Disturbances: Litter, Fouling, Invasive non-native species **Additional comments:** Some Buddleia present on the northern side of the railway near the pond. Anecdotal evidence of mink in area which is an invasive non-native species and could threaten water vole and otter population.
Level of use: Moderate **Additional comments:** North side of the railway is inaccessible which prevents damage. The south side of the railway is intersected by the Wivenhoe trail which is a well-used route and generates some litter within the grazing marsh, scrub and woodland habitats.
Management Recommendations: It is recommended that the Buddleia by the pond on the University campus side is removed to prevent further spread. It is also recommended that the hedgerows along the Wivenhoe Trail are maintained and infilled to prevent disturbance of the reedbed and grazing marsh habitats and their associated species. Management should also look to remove the litter associated with the frequent usage of Wivenhoe Trail.
LoWS Criteria
Habitat Selection Criteria

University Marshes	
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:	HC15 - Reedbeds
Additional comments:	N/A
Open water habitats:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Coastal habitats:	HC21 – Coastal Grazing Marsh
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:	Anecdotal evidence of water vole and otters within the site. Further surveys would be required to establish whether the site can be classified as a LoWS under SC11 and SC12.
Amphibians:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A

University Marshes	
Reptiles:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Invertebrates:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
LoWS Survey Recommendations	
Designated LoWS	
LoWS Survey Recommendation:	Retain
Rationale:	Extensive area of undisturbed reedbed in good quality located north of the railway which is bordered by coastal grazing marsh and scattered scrub bushes to the south. Although the encroachment of scrub has the potential to degrade the condition of the reedbed and coastal grazing marsh in the area between the railway and the river, the importance of the scrub habitat should not be overlooked and should be managed accordingly.

Pits Wood	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	Co44
LoWS Name:	Pits Wood
Grid Reference:	TL9303923413
Area (ha):	5.04
Ownership:	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.
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: Land East of School Road Emerging: Land East of School Road
Total area of site Allocation overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0.07 Emerging: 0.07
LoWS Citation:	Situated in old gravel pit workings, this wood has an undulating topography and sandy underlying substrate. It supports a diverse canopy and scrub composition with Pedunculate Oak (Quercus robur), including some large standards, alongside Ash (Fraxinus excelsior), Hornbeam (Carpinus betulus) and Field Maple (Acer campestre) standing over Spindle (Euonymus europaeus), Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna), Blackthorn (Prunus spinosa), Elder (Sambucus nigra), elm (Ulmus sp.) and Hazel (Corylus avellana) coppice within the understorey. The developing woodland flora is dominated by Dog's Mercury (Mercurialis perennis) and Bramble (Rubus ruticosus agg), with Bracken (Pteridium aquilinum) dominant on the higher banks to the woodland margins. Primrose (Primula vulgaris), Wood Sedge (Carex sylvatica) and Three-nerved Sandwort (Moehringia trinervia) are found mostly near the woodland paths. Ponds forming in the hollows have a variety of marginal species including Marsh Marigold (Caltha palustris), Common Marsh- bedstraw (Galium palustre) and Cyperus Sedge (Carex pseudocyperus).
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	Woodland and Freshwater Standing Water
Irreplaceable habitat on site:	N/A
Priority habitat on site:	Deciduous woodland

Pits Wood	
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
Survey Data	
Surveyor: EB	Date: 02.04.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: Open

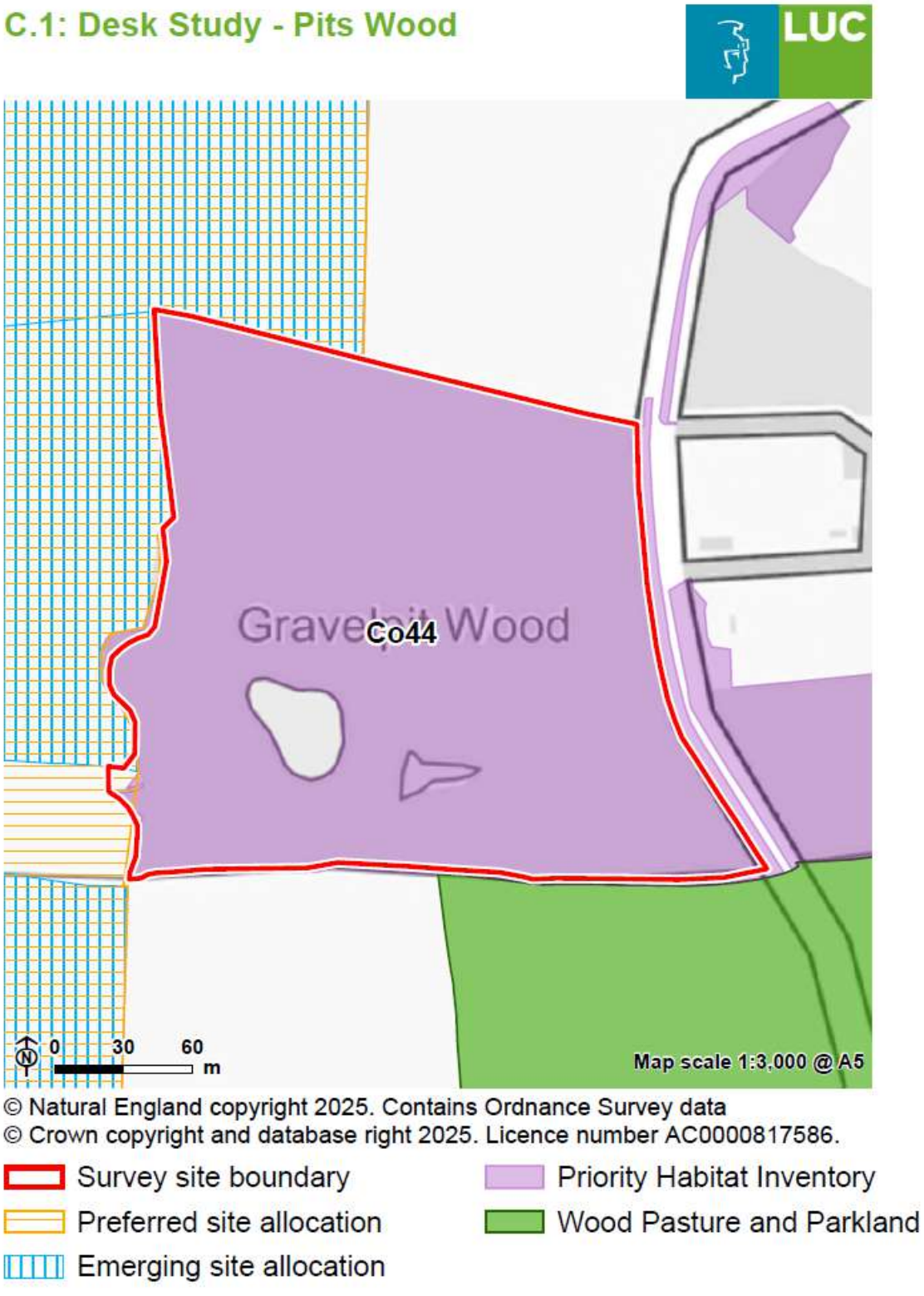
Summary of site:

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).

Habitat survey description:

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.

Pits Wood


C.1: Desk Study - Pits Wood
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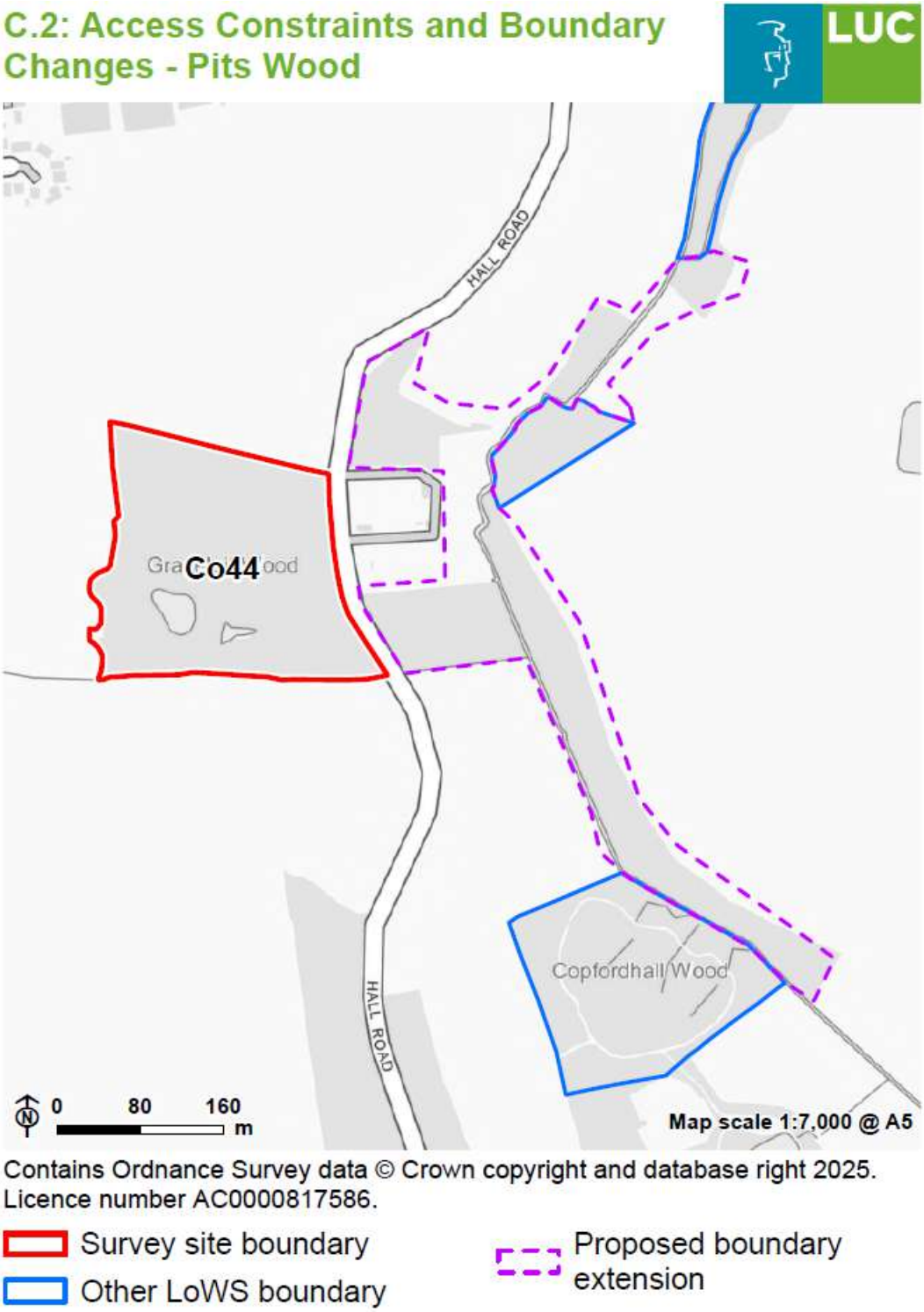
Survey site boundary
Preferred site allocation
Emerging site allocation
Priority Habitat Inventory
Wood Pasture and Parkland

Pits Wood



Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys:

Pits Wood
In the 2015 review, selective coppicing was recommended. Since then, coppicing of hazel has occurred and has been 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: Favourable **Additional comments:** 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.
Management: Good **Additional comments:** 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.
Known/relevant existing site management plan: 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.
Opportunities on site: N/A **Additional comments:** The site is being well managed, and no specific additional opportunities were identified as part of the survey.
Threats and Disturbances: Development, Litter, Dog fouling, Vandalism **Additional comments:** 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 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.
Level of use: Moderate **Additional comments**: 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.

Pits Wood	
Management Recommendations: 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.	
LoWS Criteria	
Habitat Selection Criteria	
Woodland, scrub and related habitats:	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.
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:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Species Selection Criteria	
Plants:	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.
Birds:	N/A

Pits Wood	
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.
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:	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.
LoWS Survey Recommendations	
Designated LoWS	
LoWS Survey Recommendation:	Proposed extension to the LoWS boundary
Rationale:	Pits Wood is an excellent quality woodland with numerous ancient woodland indicators and should be retained as a LoWS and protected from proposed development. Consideration should be made to extend the boundary to three other woodland LoWS via deciduous woodland, hedgerows and the Roman River. These sites were not subject to survey as part of the survey of Pits Wood but there were clear mammal footpaths between these sites, highlighting their connectivity. Enhancements of the woodland habitats which connect these LoWS would provide an opportunity to extend the LoWS boundary and thus strengthen the resilience of the LoWS network. Any extension to Pits Wood boundary to connect it to the three nearby LoWS would need to be informed by surveys of these additional areas located to the east.

Seven Star Green	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	Co55
LoWS Name:	Seven Star Green
Grid Reference:	TL9385725825
Area (ha):	0.78
Ownership:	Eight Ash Green Parish Council
Management provider:	Eight Ash Green Parish Council
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: Land north of Halstead Road east of Wood Lane Emerging: Land north of Halstead Road
Total area of site Allocation overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0.00 Emerging: 0.00
LoWS Citation:	This green comprises species-rich grassland with acidic influences and a small pond with surrounding scrub. Cuckooflower (Cardamine pratensis) flourishes in the damp areas near the pond, which itself supports Lesser Spearwort (Ranunculus flammula) and Lesser Bulrush (Typha angustifolia). The grassland varies in character with areas of freer-draining soils supporting species such as Red Fescue (Festuca rubra), Field Wood-rush (Luzula campestris), Tormentil (Potentilla erecta), Heath-grass (Danthonia decumbens) and Zigzag Clover (Trifolium medium). The Essex Red Data List species Sneezewort (Achillea ptarmica) and Velvet Bent (Agrostis canina) have also been recorded. Other areas including the upper slopes support taller, coarser grasses such as Yorkshire-fog (Holcus lanatus) alongside Sweet Vernal-grass (Anthoxanthum odoratum), meadow- grasses (Poa spp.), Common Knapweed (Centaurea nigra), Grass Vetchling (Lathyrus nissolia) and Yellow- rattle (Rhinanthus minor).
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:	N/A
Priority habitat on site:	Good quality semi improved grassland
Known projects/initiatives:	Unknown.

Seven Star Green	
Survey Data	
Surveyor: EB	Date: 02.04.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: Open

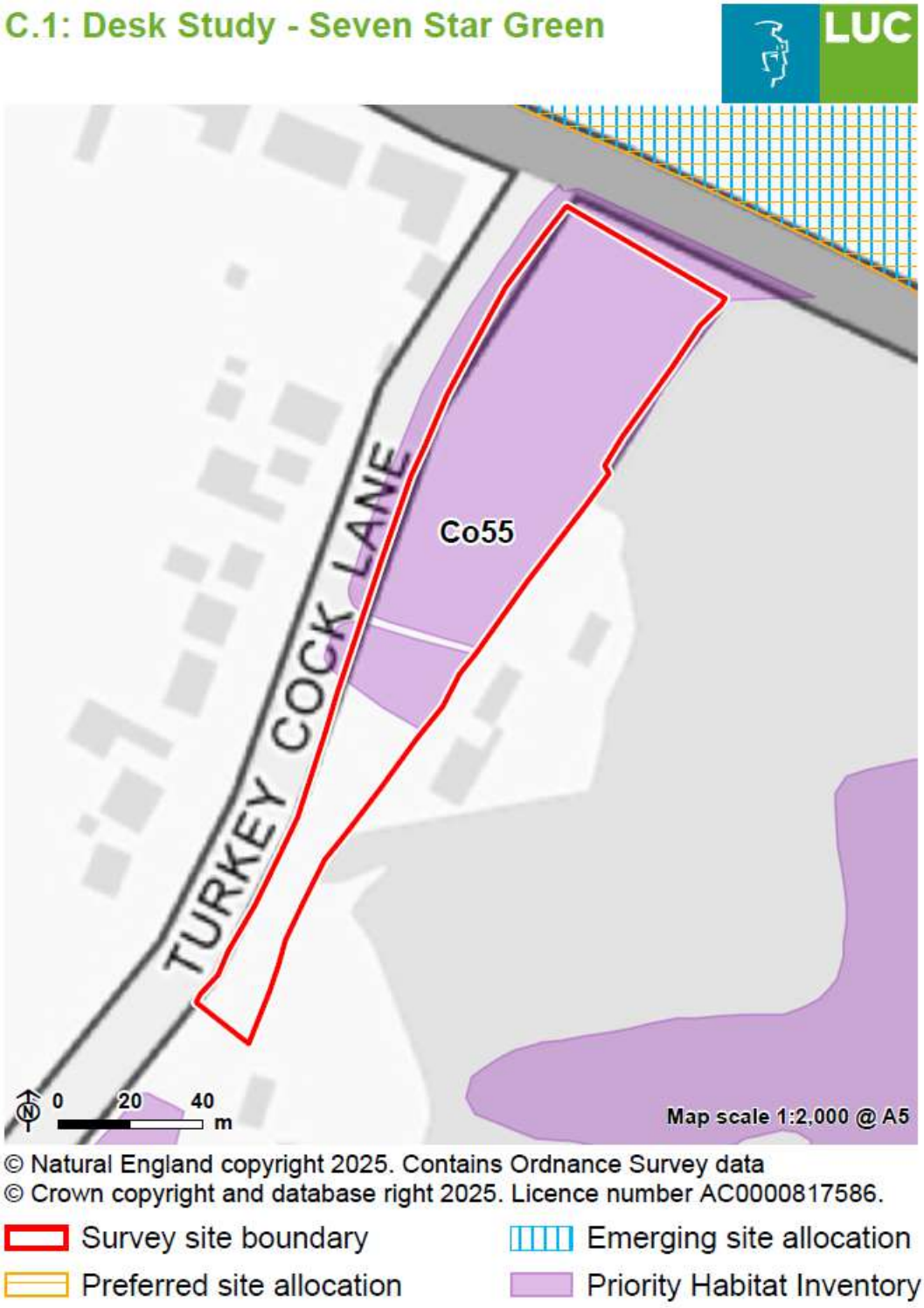
Summary of site:

Seven Star Green 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.

Habitat survey description:

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.

Seven Star Green



Seven Star Green

Seven Star Green

Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys:

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.

Condition Statement:

Favourable, declining

Additional comments:

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.

Management:

Satisfactory

Additional comments:

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.

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.

Opportunities on site:

N/A

Additional comments:

N/A

Threats and Disturbances:

Encroachment (incl. Informal parking), Litter

Additional comments:

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.

Level of use:

Moderate

Additional comments:

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.

Management Recommendations:

Seven Star Green	
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.	
LoWS Criteria	
Habitat Selection Criteria	
Woodland, scrub and related habitats:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Grassland:	HC9 – Lowland Meadows
Additional comments:	N/A
Heathland:	HC13 – Heathland and Acid Grassland
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

Seven Star Green	
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:	Proposed extension to the LoWS boundary
Rationale:	Located south of Seven Star Green are further grassland verges and hedgerows which connect to Daisy Green and ponds in the south west. These additional verges and Daisy Green were not subject to a detailed survey but they were very similar in composition to Seven Star Green. More detailed surveys of these additional areas should be undertaken to understand if they can be selected as LoWS under the HC9 and HC13 and thus strengthen the network of LoWS in Colchester.

Colchester Roman Wall	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	Co109
LoWS Name:	Colchester Roman Wall
Grid Reference:	TL9969525269
Area (ha):	0.53
Ownership:	Unknown
Management provider:	Unknown
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: Vineyard Street Development Emerging: Vineyard Street Development
Total area of site Allocation overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0.00 Emerging: 0.00
LoWS Citation:	The Roman town walls around Colchester are unique in the county and have developed a specialised flora, which includes several scarce species. Only the main remaining sections of the wall are indicated on the map, but the LoWS designation extends to any extant surfaces. The section between the upper and lower Castle Park is of particular significance. Rue-leaved Saxifrage (Saxifraga tridactylites), Black Spleenwort (Asplenium adiantum-nigrum), Wall Rue (Asplenium ruta-muraria), Maidenhair Spleenwort (Asplenium trichomanes), Lesser Calamint (Clinopodium calamintha), Flattened Meadow-grass (Poa compressa) and Subterranean Clover (Trifolium subterraneum) are of particular note, all featuring on the ERDL. Other characteristic species include Hart's-tongue Fern (Asplenium scolopendrium), Thyme-leaved Sandwort (Arenaria serpyllifolia), Common Whitlowgrass (Erophila verna), Thale Cress (Arabidopsis thaliana), Fern-grass (Catapodium rigidum), Red Fescue (Festuca rubra) and Pellitory-of-the-wall (Parietaria diffusa). Non-native species such as Wallflower (Erysimum cheiri), Red Valerian (Centranthus ruber) and Ivy-leaved Toadflax (Cymbalaria muralis) also contribute to the distinctiveness of the community. The lichen flora is exceptional and, amongst a taxonomically difficult group, may contain an as yet undescribed new species, discovered during earlier survey work. Where south- facing, areas of soft mortar support populations of solitary bees and wasps.
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	N/A
Irreplaceable habitat on site:	N/A
Priority habitat on site:	Wood Pasture and Parkland (northern section)

Colchester Roman Wall	
Known projects/initiatives:	The latest management plan which could be found for this LoWS spanned 2019-2024 (titled Colchester Town Wall: Management Plan 2019-2024). The main objective of this management plan was to maintain and repair the Town Wall so that it continued to be a nationally important heritage asset. Other objectives were also included such as the protection of important floral and faunal species which may be located on the wall or use it. Special measures have been undertaken to ensure the Roman Wall maintains its population of important plant species such as the successful relocation of lesser calamint in 2017 in advance of repairs.
Survey Data	
Surveyor: EB	Date: 01.04.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: Open but difficult to survey higher aspects of the wall.

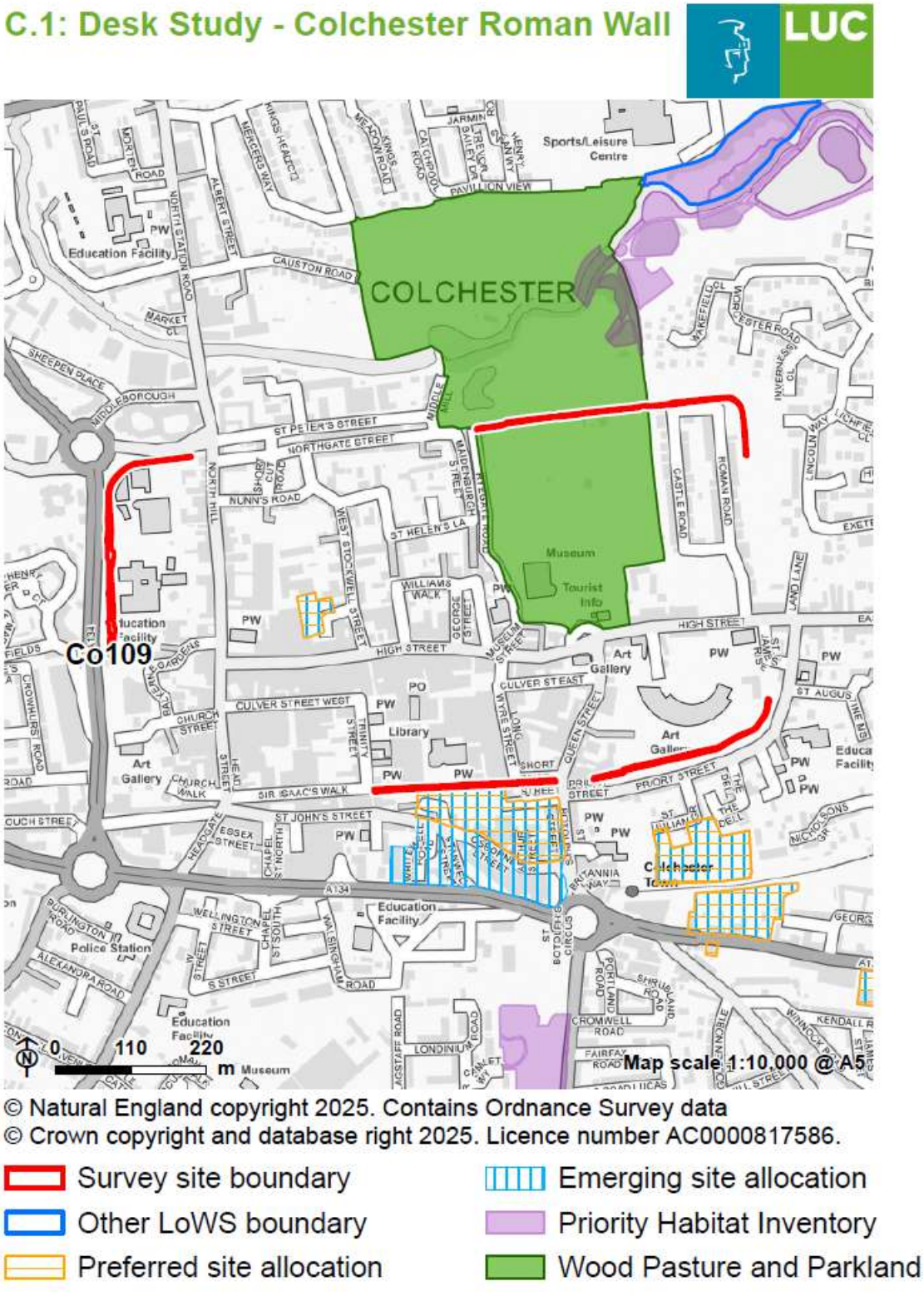
Summary of site:

Surrounding Colchester City is a Roman Wall colonised by numerous vascular plants, some of which are included under the Essex Red Data List (ERDL) signifying that they are only present in a handful of sites in Essex or declining rapidly.

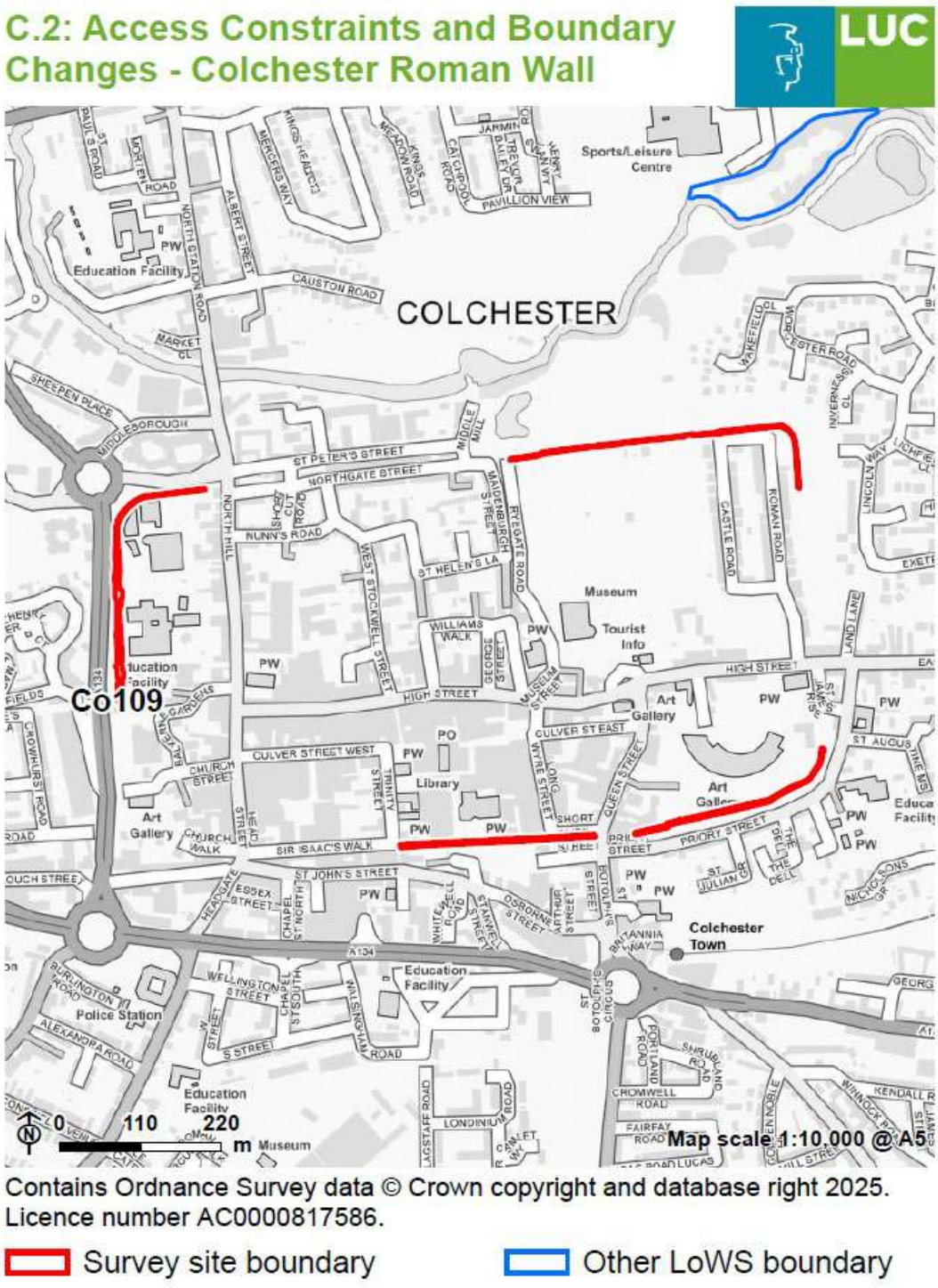
Habitat survey description:

The extent of vegetation cover varies quite considerably on the Roman Walls. Balkerne Hill had a high coverage of wallflowers and the section between the upper and lower Castle Park was dominated by bryophytes. In contrast, sections near Vineyard Street and Priory Street car park were less vegetated. Overhanging trees and scrub composed of bramble, Buddleia and ivy were present, particularly near the Middleborough roundabout offering nesting opportunities for birds. It was apparent during the survey that south-facing sections of the wall were attracting invertebrate species such as wasps and bees.

Colchester Roman Wall



Colchester Roman Wall



Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys:

It was noted during the survey that some sections of the Roman Wall were devoid of vegetation. In some parts, this can be attributed to repair works which were carried out between 2013-2018 as stated within the Colchester Town Wall:

Colchester Roman Wall
Management Plan 2019-2024 document. Some of the recently repaired sections, however, were surveyed to have an important vegetative cover such as at Balkerne Hill where wallflowers were dominant. This reflects that plant species have been able to recolonise the Roman Wall since repair works
Condition Statement: Declining **Additional comments:** Assessed as declining condition as it appears that restoration and maintenance work undertaken since 2015 has reduced the amount of vascular plant species for which the site has been designated at some sections of the Roman Wall.
Management: Satisfactory **Additional comments:** The management plan outlines measures to protect the important vascular plant communities on the Roman Wall such as avoidance and relocation. Important plant communities were present during the survey but it was not possible to assess whether management had successfully maintained the presence of ERDL species due to inaccessibility and the fact that it was early in the flowering season. Further detailed botanical surveys would be required to confirm this.
Known/relevant existing site management plan: Colchester Town Wall: Management Plan 2019-2024
Opportunities on site: N/A **Additional comments:** N/A
Threats and Disturbances: Invasive non-native species **Additional comments:** Damaging plants and trees such as Buddleia, bramble, ivy, cotoneaster and sycamore are present along some sections of the Roman Wall particularly in the south. Some of these are non-native and invasive species and in combination they not only damage the wall but block out light to vascular plants below thus threatening the species for which the site has been designated.
Level of use: Moderate **Additional comments:** Most sections of the Roman Wall are in proximity to public areas such as car parks, recreational parks and footpaths. Some sections are fenced off and due to its height the majority of the Roman Wall is inaccessible. No litter or vandalism was recorded on the Roman Walls during the survey.
Management Recommendations: Currently, the cover of Buddleia, bramble, ivy, sycamore and cotoneaster is relatively high in relation to other vascular plants and bryophytes. Although stated in the management plan as an objective, it is recommended that these damaging species, some of which are invasive and non-native are removed to ensure the survival of the vascular plants for which the Roman

Colchester Roman Wall	
Walls are designated for. The survey revealed evidence of herbicide usage on some sections of the Roman Wall and this is discouraged to maintain the correct conditions for important vascular plant species.	
LoWS Criteria	
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:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Species Selection Criteria	
Plants:	SC1 – Vascular Plants
Additional comments:	The survey took place early within the flowering season meaning it was not possible to assess the full extent of vascular plants on the Roman Wall. Access was also limited due to the height of the Roman Wall. No ERDL species were recorded but other important plant species included ivy leaved toadflax, wallflowers, purple deadnettle and white comfrey as well as a range of bryophytes.
Birds:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A

Colchester Roman Wall	
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:	Retain - No Change
Rationale:	Vegetation surveys during the optimal flowering season with specialist equipment to reach greater heights would be required to ensure that the recent repair works have not been detrimental to the vascular plants for which this site is designated for. This information could also be used to inform the future management plan to protect this unique and important site for ERDL species which then further supports invertebrates and nesting birds.

Hythe Lagoons	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	Co142
LoWS Name:	Hythe Lagoons
Grid Reference:	TM0247323041
Area (ha):	21.80
Ownership:	Colchester City Council
Management provider:	Colchester City Council
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: Anglian Water Recycling Centre Emerging: Anglian Water Recycling Centre
Total area of site Allocation overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 6.11 Emerging: 6.11
LoWS Citation:	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, 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. The northernmost lagoon supports dense stands of Common Nettle (Urtica dioica) with scattered scrub, particularly around its margins. To the south, the next lagoon is dry for much of the year, but supports stands of Sea Club-rush (Bolboschoenus maritima), Annual Sea-blite (Suaeda maritima), glassworts (Salicornia spp.) and the Nationally Scarce Sea Barley (Hordeum marinum). The habitat of the central lagoon is dry coastal grassland that is equivalent to upper saltmarsh communities, dominated by Sea Couch (Elytrigia atherica). The southern lagoon holds a large area of permanent water that draws down to leave broad, muddy margins with fringing stands of Common Reed (Phragmites australis) 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. Throughout the site there is an exceptional population of the Nationally Scarce Dittander (Lepidium latifolium) and significant quantities of another now scarce Essex plant, Wormwood (Artemisia absinthum). A large population of Great Green Bush Crickets is also present.
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes

Hythe Lagoons	
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	N/A
Irreplaceable habitat on site:	Coastal saltmarsh
Priority habitat on Site:	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, Coastal saltmarsh, Mudflats, No main habitat but additional habitats present.
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.
Survey Data	
Surveyor: EB	Date: 03.04.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: Footpaths. Survey of Northern section restricted due to dense scrub.

Summary of site:

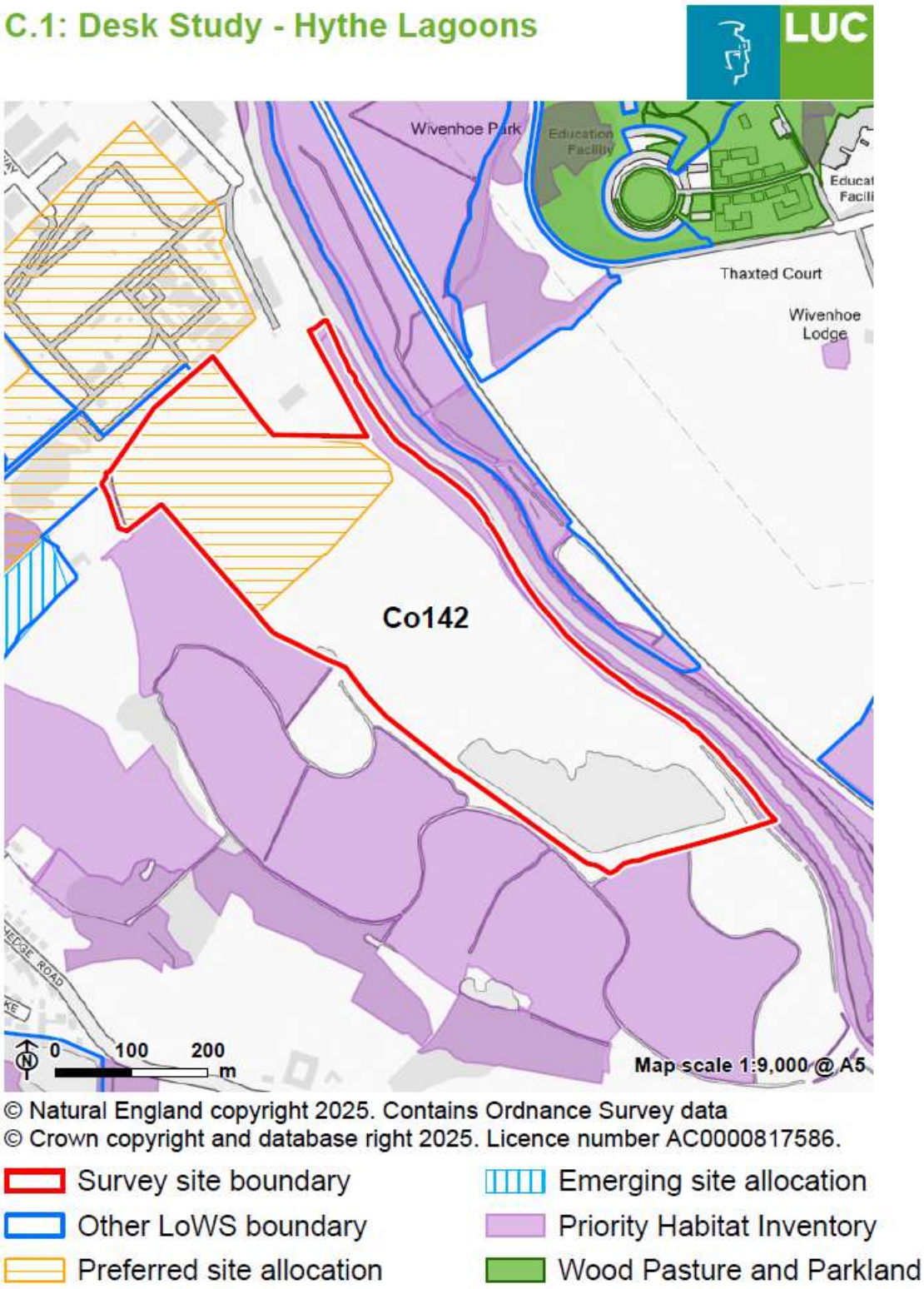
Former dredging lagoons located next to the River Colne towards the south east of Colchester district. Dredging ceased in the 1970s and the site is now a popular location for dog walkers and birdwatchers thanks to its footpaths and bird hide.

Habitat survey description:

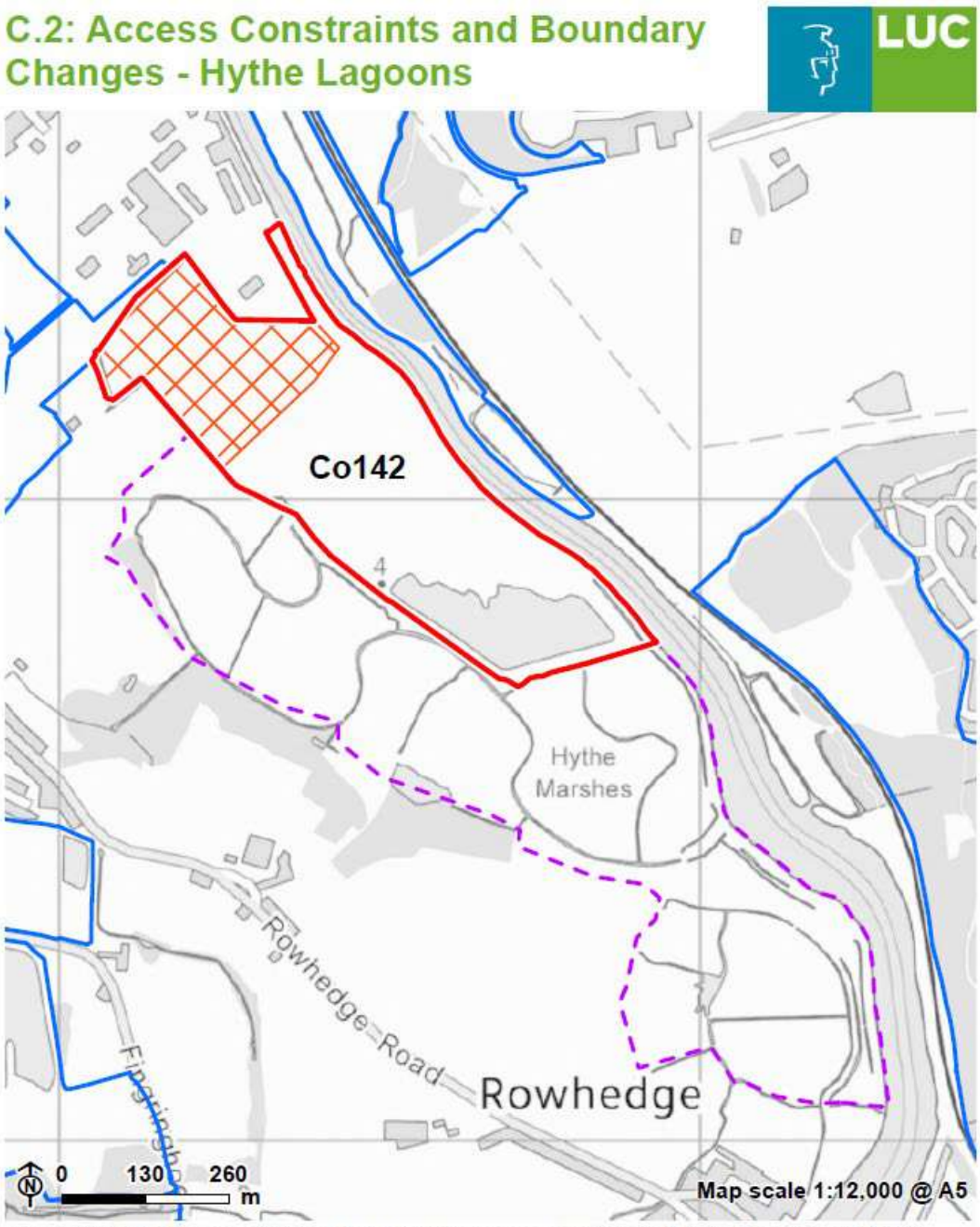
The site is comprised of a mosaic of different habitats which attracts a wide variety of notable bird and invertebrate species. In the north there is an area of dense mixed scrub composed predominantly of bramble, hawthorn and blackthorn. Where mixed scrub has been managed by Colchester Council other 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.

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.

Hythe Lagoons



Hythe Lagoons



Survey site boundary
Other LoWS boundary
Proposed boundary extension
Access constrained

Hythe Lagoons

Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys:

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.

Condition Statement:

Favourable

Additional comments:

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.

Management:

Good

Additional comments:

The site appears to be well managed by Colchester Council ranger and volunteers who follow the site Action Plan.

Known/relevant existing site management plan:

Site Action Plan can be found here:Hythe Lagoons Action Plan June 2023 – May 24

Opportunities on site:

N/A

Additional comments:

The site is being well managed and no specific additional opportunities were identified as part of the survey.

Threats and Disturbances:

Development, Pollution, Climate change

Additional comments:

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.

Level of use:

Moderate

Additional comments:

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 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

Hythe Lagoons	
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.	
LoWS Criteria	
Habitat Selection Criteria	
Woodland, scrub and related habitats:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Grassland:	HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands
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:	HC27 – Post-industrial sites
Additional comments:	N/A
Species Selection Criteria	
Plants:	SC1
Additional comments:	The survey confirmed the presence of the nationally scarce dittander located in the central grassland section of the site.
Birds:	SC5 – Notable Birds Species
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.

Hythe Lagoons	
Mammals:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Amphibians:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Reptiles:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Invertebrates:	SC20 - Notable 'Flagship' Macro-invertebrates N/A
Additional comments:	Hythe Lagoons 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.
LoWS Survey Recommendations	
Designated LoWS	
LoWS Survey Recommendation:	Proposed extension to the LoWS boundary
Rationale:	Similar to Hythe Lagoons, the surrounding grazing fields to the west and south identified for inclusion as part of an extension to the site are located within the Essex IIA. They were not subject to survey as part of the survey of Hythe Lagoons but have the potential to offer grassland habitat suitable for notable bird species (SC5) and notable flagship macro-invertebrates (SC20). Further surveys would be required to confirm the habitats in these areas but there could be the potential to extend the extent of the LoWS and thus strengthen the network's value for birds and invertebrates.

Cymbeline Meadows	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	Co104
LoWS Name:	Cymbeline Meadows
Grid Reference:	TL9838925998
Area (ha):	46.70
Ownership:	Colchester City Council
Management provider:	Colchester City Council
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:	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 (Phalaris arundinacea), Meadow Foxtail (Alopecurus pratensis), Red Fescue (Festuca rubra), Common Bent (Agrostis capillaris), Sweet Vernal-grass (Anthoxanthum odoratum), Yorkshire-fog (Holcus lanatus), Soft- brome (Bromus hordeaceus) and Smooth Meadow-grass (Poa pratensis). Wetter areas support Cuckooflower (Cardamine pratensis), Tufted Hair-grass (Deschampsia cespitosa), Common Marsh-bedstraw (Galium palustre), Reed Sweet-grass (Glyceria maxima), Sharp-flowered Rush (Juncus acutiflorus), Marsh Thistle (Cirsium palustre) and Lesser Pond-sedge (Carex acutiformis). Essex Red Data List species Brown Sedge (Carex disticha) also occurs locally in dense stands. 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 (Agrimonia eupatoria), Oxeye Daisy (Leucanthemum vulgare), Meadow Buttercup (Ranunculus acris), Common Knapweed (Centaurea nigra), Lady's Bedstraw (Galium verum), Field Scabious (Knautia arvensis), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (Lotus corniculatus) and Wild Carrot (Daucus carota). The banks of the River Colne have a diverse riverside flora, which includes stands of Reed Sweet-grass (Glyceria maxima), Branched Bur-reed (Sparganium erectum) and Water-cress (Rorippa nasturtium aquaticum), alongside the marginal and aquatic species Marsh Woundwort (Stachys palustris), Common Water-plantain (Alisma plantago-aquatica), Flowering-rush (Butomus umbellatus), Water Figwort (Scrophularia auriculata), Water Mint (Mentha aquatica), Arrowhead (Sagittaria sagittifolia), Purple loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria), Gipsywort (Lycopus europaeus) and Brooklime (Veronica beccabunga). 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.

Cymbeline Meadows	
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
Priority habitat on site:	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, Deciduous woodland, No main habitat but additional habitats present
Known projects/initiatives:	Numerous projects are carried out by Rangers from Colchester City Council. 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).
Survey Data	
Surveyor: EB	Date: 01.04.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: Footpath through western side. Eastern side not accessible.

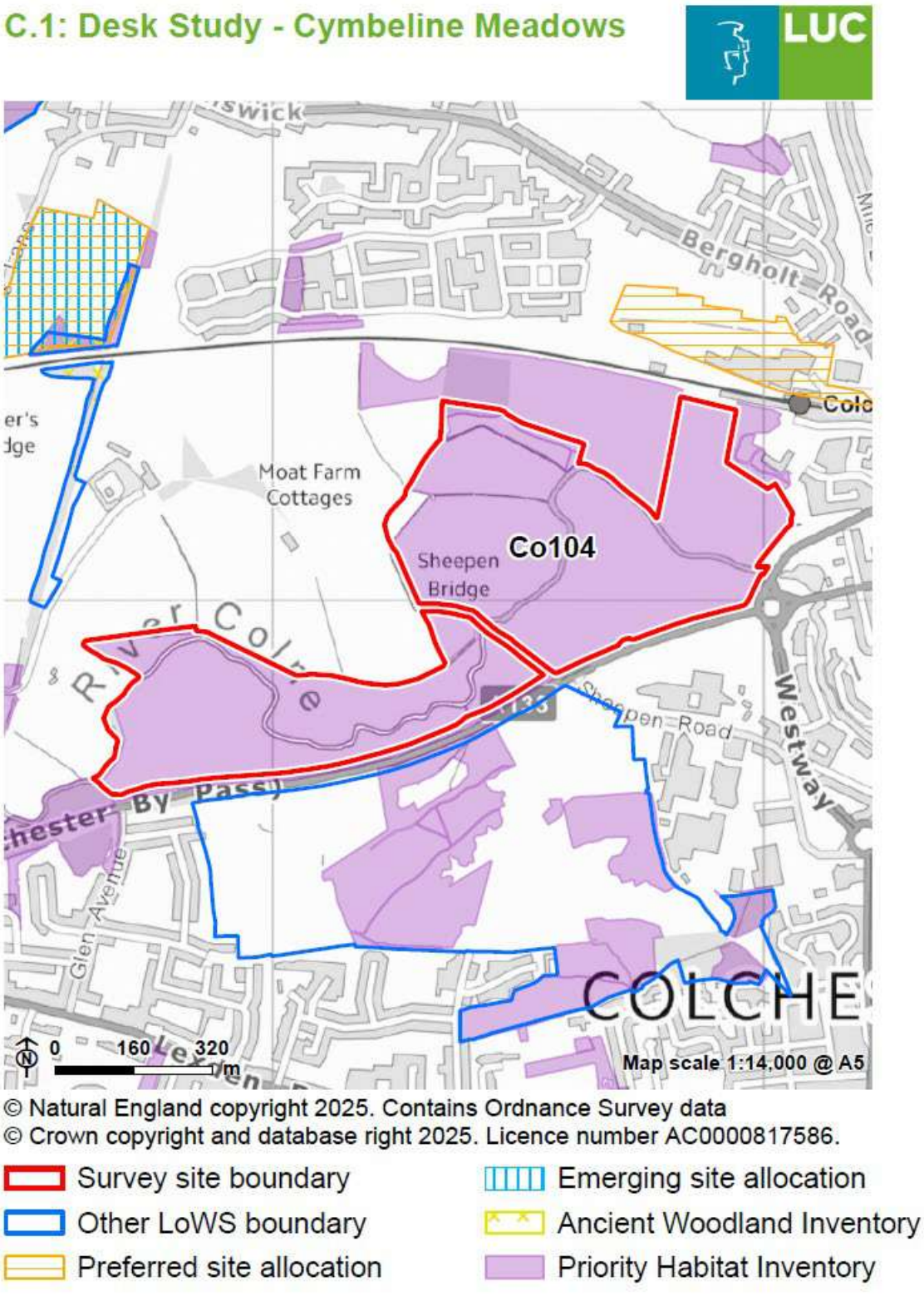
Summary of site:

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.

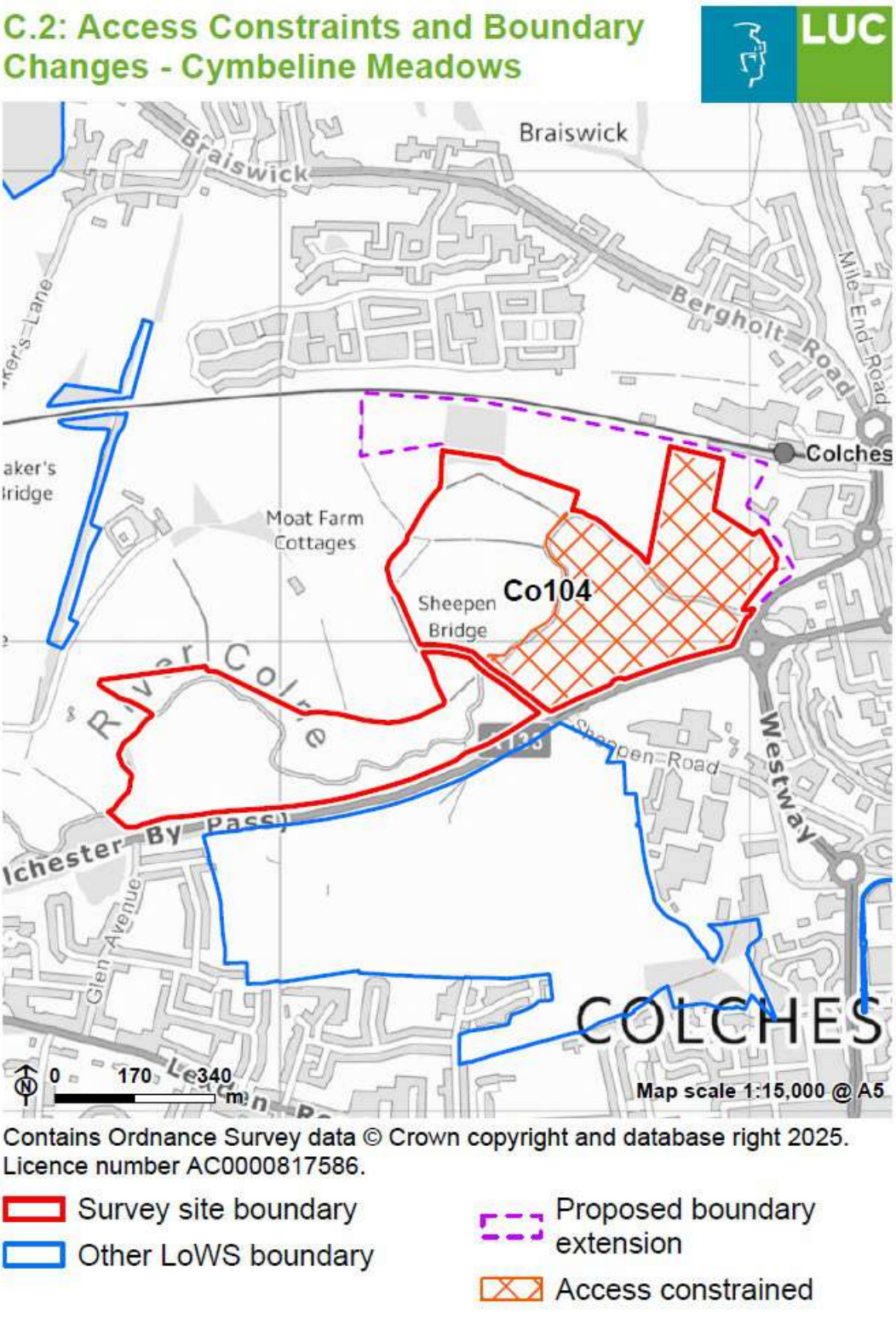
Habitat survey description:

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.

Cymbeline Meadows



Cymbeline Meadows



Cymbeline Meadows

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.

Condition Statement:

Favourable

Additional comments:

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.

Management:

Good

Additional comments:

The council owned side of Cymbeline Meadows appears to be well managed by Colchester Council rangers as it exhibits a wide range of ecological valuable habitats as well as providing high amenity value to Colchester residents.

Known/relevant existing site management plan:

More detail on the management plan of the council owned side of Cymbeline Meadows can be found here: Cymbeline Meadows

Opportunities on site:

N/A

Additional comments:

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:

Dog fouling, Litter, Fly tipping, Noise

Additional comments:

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.

Level of use:

Moderate

Additional comments:

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

Cymbeline Meadows	
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.	
Management Recommendations: 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.	
LoWS Criteria	
Habitat Selection Criteria	
Woodland, scrub and related habitats:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Grassland:	HC10 River Floodplain, HC11 - Other Neutral Grasslands
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:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Species Selection Criteria	
Plants:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Birds:	N/A

Cymbeline Meadows	
Additional comments:	N/A
Mammals:	SC12 – Breeding Water Vole Colonies
Additional comments:	N/A
Amphibians:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Reptiles:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Invertebrates:	N/A
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.
LoWS Survey Recommendations	
Designated LoWS	
LoWS Survey Recommendation:	Proposed extension to the LoWS boundary
Rationale:	Cymbeline Meadows exhibits an extensive river floodplain and other neutral grasslands with good diversity in terms of species and sward height. The River Colne also exhibits a range of different habitats which are suitable for water vole foraging, nesting and commuting. Thus, the site should retain its LoWS status and pressure to develop the eastern section of the site should be discouraged to ensure that these habitats of high ecological value are preserved. Charter Wood to the north of the site should also be included within the LoWS under HC2 as it is an extensive 10 hectares of deciduous woodland and sits under the Essex Coast IIA. This will increase the diversity of habitats within the Cymbeline Meadows LoWS, thus strengthening its resilience.

Acorn Wood	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	Co15
LoWS Name:	Acorn Wood
Grid Reference:	TL8946829242
Area (ha):	6.73
Ownership:	Private
Management provider:	Private landowner
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: Land west of Station Road Emerging: Land west of Station Road
Total area of site Allocation overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0.01 Emerging: 0.01
LoWS Citation:	Sourced from 2008 review - This ancient wood has a mixed canopy of Pedunculate Oak (Quercus robur) and Ash (Fraxinus excelsior) with some Sweet Chestnut (Castanea sativa), which is generally confined to the north east corner. Hazel (Corylus avellana) coppice forms the main shrub canopy along with Elder (Sambucus nigra). Bramble (Rubus fruticosus agg) scrub is frequent throughout the wood whilst Dog's Mercury (Mercurialis perennis) and Common Nettle (Urtica dioica) are the most common ground flora species. Species of interest in this include Wood Anemone (Anemone nemorosa), Bluebell (Hyacinthoides non-scripta), Primrose (Primula vulgaris) and Wood Sedge (Carex Sylvatica).
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	N/A
Irreplaceable habitat on site:	Ancient woodland
Priority habitat on site:	Deciduous woodland
Known projects/initiatives:	It is understood that the wood is not actively managed.
Survey Data	
Surveyor: EB	Date: 04.04.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: Private woodland but fully accessible for survey.

Acorn Wood

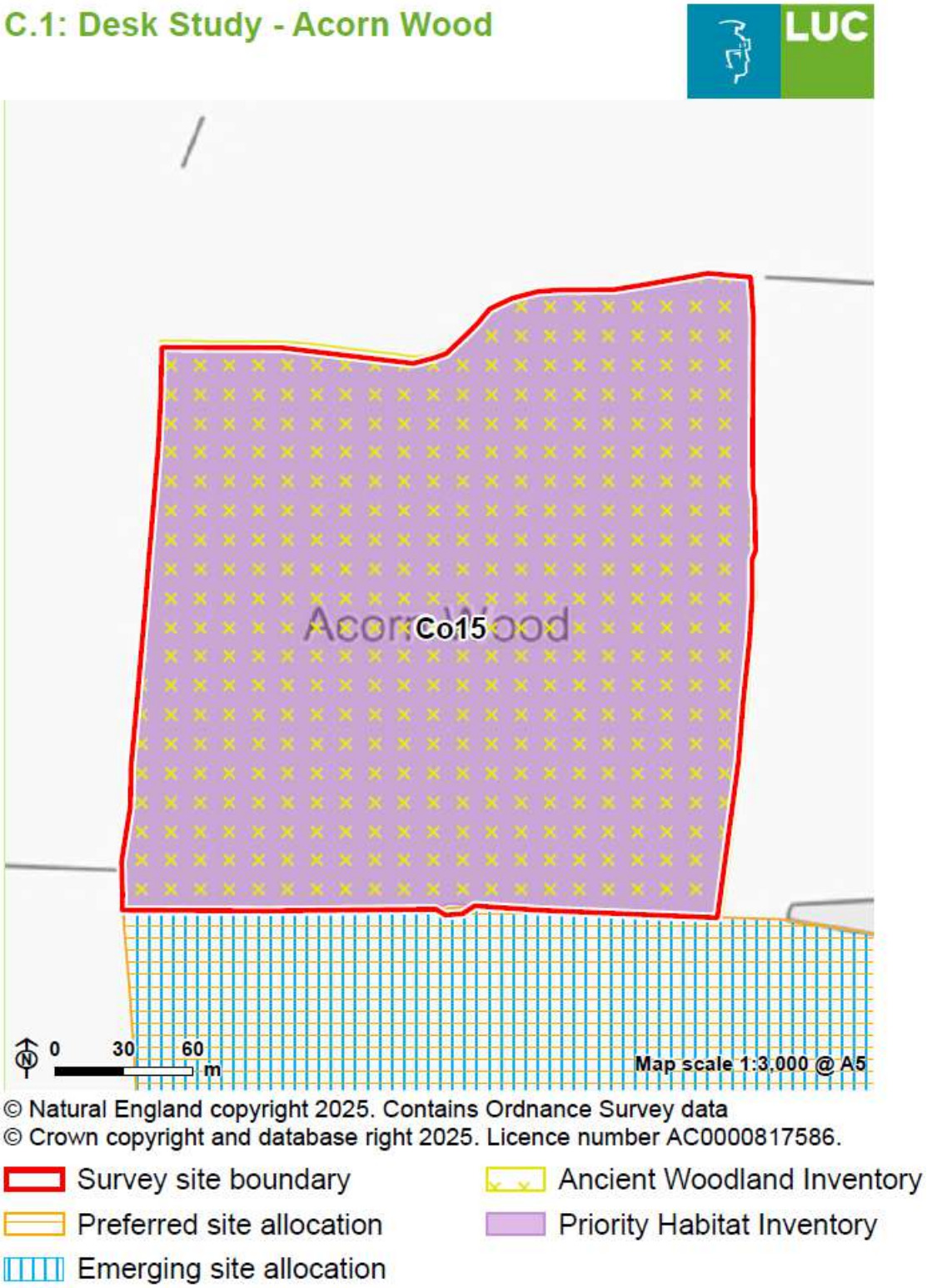
Summary of site:

Acorn Wood is located towards the north west boundary of Colchester district and is an area of Ancient Woodland (source: MagicMaps) with numerous ancient woodland indicator species. Woodland is used for pheasant keeping and is surrounded by arable fields demarcated by native hedgerows.

Habitat survey description:

Acorn Wood has a rich ground flora dominated by bluebell and dog's mercury. Additional ancient woodland indicator species noted include wood avens, moschatel, lords and ladies and wild primrose. Some patches of bramble and nettles were present but to a small extent. Some areas of the woodland were damper and exhibited different species such as cocks foot, common bent, wood sedge and soft rush. Where the ground was damp, vehicular access to pheasant pens is leading to some considerable erosion. In other sections, vehicular access contributed to diversifying the structure of the woodland by creating rides. The understorey was varied in species composition including hawthorn, hazel, holly, elder, field maple and hornbeam (potentially old coppice). The canopy was composed of mature oak, ash and sweet chestnut. Several large trees were dead but left standing offering significant bat roost suitability. A large and undisturbed badger sett was located within the woodland.

Acorn Wood


C.1: Desk Study - Acorn Wood
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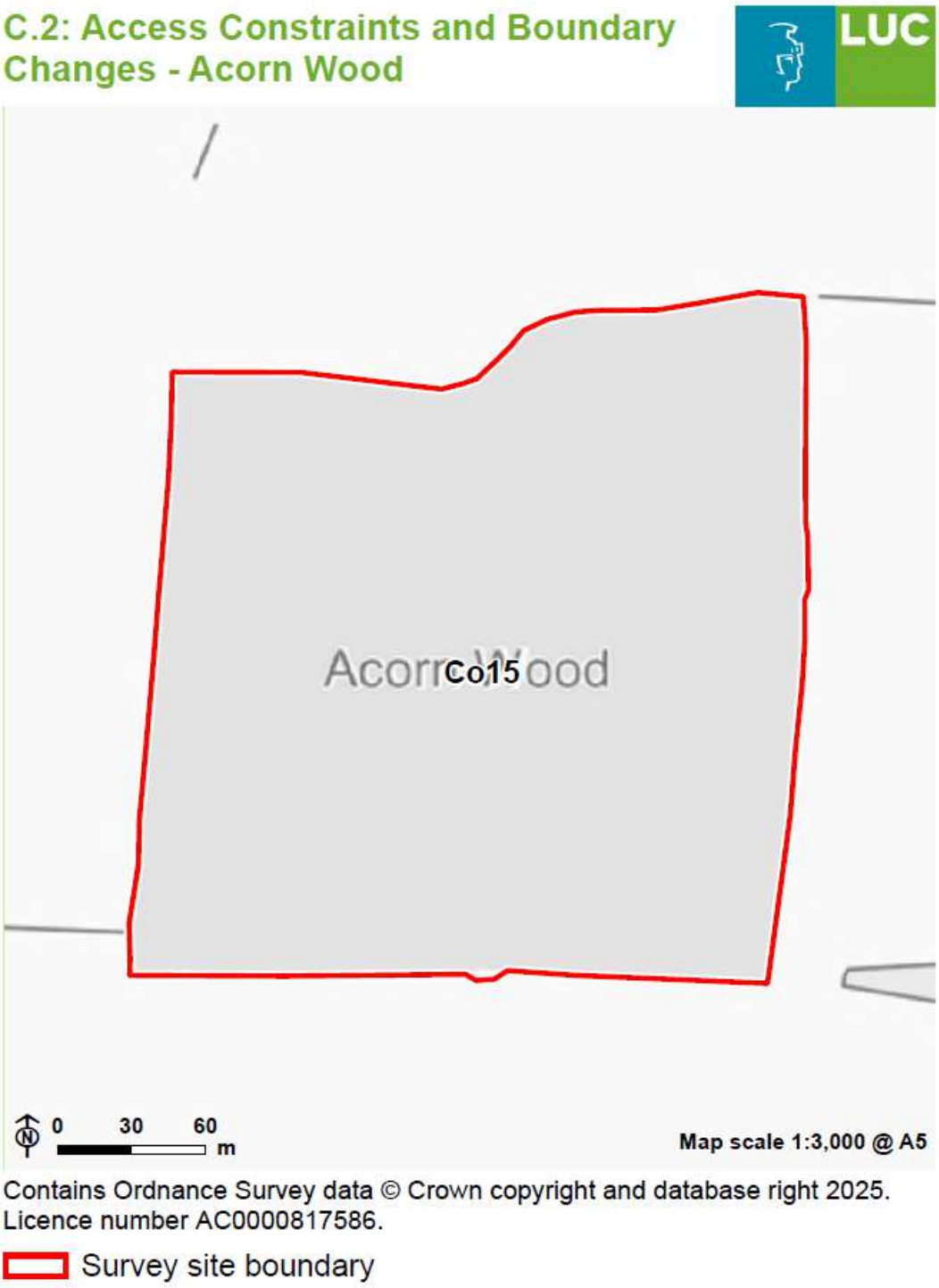
Survey site boundary
Preferred site allocation
Emerging site allocation
Ancient Woodland Inventory
Priority Habitat Inventory

Acorn Wood



Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys:

Acorn Wood was included in the 2008 review but not the 2015 review. No significant changes in habitats since 2008 were observed during the survey.

Acorn Wood

Condition Statement:

Favourable

Additional comments:

Good quality ancient woodland with a varied species composition and canopy structure with signs of natural regeneration evidenced by the presence of small ash and oak saplings.

Management:

Satisfactory

Additional comments:

No active management takes place within Acorn Wood to enhance the woodland for biodiversity. It is understood that coppicing was last undertaken 20 years ago. At the time of survey, bramble and nettles had been recently cleared to gain access to pheasant pens.

Known/relevant existing site management plan:

Unknown

Opportunities on site:

N/A

Additional comments:

N/A

Threats and Disturbances:

Development in adjacent field, Vehicular erosion, Invasive non-native species, Boundary treatment

Additional comments:

The main threat to Acorn wood and the species it supports comes from development in the adjacent field linked to a preferred site allocation. Within the woodland there is also disturbance from pheasant management and vehicular erosion, particularly in the west. Another threat comes from the fact that the buffer between the arable fields and Acorn Wood is very small, potentially damaging root protection zones of large trees. A small patch of Rhododendron which is an invasive non-native species was also recorded during the survey near the access point on the west side.

Level of use:

Moderate

Additional comments:

Acorn Wood is private and there are numerous signs around the site alerting people to this fact to discourage entry. For this reason, public usage is low. The presence of pheasant pens does mean certain sections of the wood are however used for vehicular and pedestrian access.

Management Recommendations:

As vehicular access was creating quite large ruts in the ground due to damp conditions, it is recommended that materials are used on the access tracks to prevent compaction and damage to root protection zones. In addition, the buffer strip between the adjacent fields should be widened and a scrub transition layer should be encouraged to establish as this will increase the ecological value of the woodland. The patch of Rhododendron should be removed to prevent further spread within the woodland. Finally, due to the presence of ash trees within Acorn wood, ash dieback will need to be monitored to ensure long-term resilience of the woodland.

Acorn Wood	
LoWS Criteria	
Habitat Selection Criteria	
Woodland, scrub and related habitats:	HC1 – Ancient Woodland sites (HCr1(a) in 2008 review)
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:	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

Acorn Wood	
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:	Retain - No Change
Rationale:	The site should retain its LoWS status as it is a good example of an ancient woodland due to the density and variety of ancient woodland indicator species. Furthermore, the site holds an established badger sett and presents numerous bat roosting and bird nesting opportunities in the mature and dead trees. Development along the southern boundary is the main threat to this site.

Stanway Pit	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	Co62
LoWS Name:	Stanway Pit
Grid Reference:	TL9467423679
Area (ha):	25.32
Ownership:	Private
Management provider:	Private landowner
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: Land South of Tollgate West, Stanway, Lakelands Crescent Emerging: Lakelands Crescent
Total area of site Allocation overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 3.04 Emerging: 0.00
LoWS Citation:	This site comprises what remains of two disused sand pits following recent development within this area. Recent disturbance and landscaping work means that the vegetation and topography is much changed within the remaining areas of the former “Stanway Pit” to the south and “Oldhouse Farm Pit” to the north. An extensive area of brownfield invertebrate habitat still remains comprising bare ground of nutrient poor sand and gravels alongside two notable sections of sparsely vegetated cliffs to the west, as well as an area of birch (Betula sp.) and willow (Salix sp.) scrub to the south-west. The disturbed ground has been colonised by short perennial and tall ruderal vegetation such as Blue Fleabane (Erigeron acris), Common Centaury (Centaurium erythraea), Wild Teasel (Dipsacus fullonum) and willowherbs (Epilobium sp.), providing nectar sources for a range of invertebrates. Previous records for the site include the Red Data Book and UK SPIE digger wasp Cerceris quinquefasciata RDB3), its brood parasite cuckoo-bee Hedychrum niemelai (RDB3) and the Small Blue Carpenter-bee Ceratina cyanea (RDB3), with other notable records including the Small Woodlouse Armadillidium nasatum, the Nationally Scarce (Nb) Adonis’ Ladybird and the Golden-rod Nomad Bee Nomada rufipes, although it is not known how many of these species persist.
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	N/A
Irreplaceable habitat on site:	N/A
Priority habitat on site:	Deciduous woodland (small overlap with Tye Grove in south west)

Stanway Pit	
Known projects/initiatives:	Unknown.
Survey Data	
Surveyor: EB	Date: 02.04.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: Open

Summary of site:

Two disused sand pits featuring extensive open mosaic habitats located in Stanway, just west of Colchester City. Development pressure is high here and buildings have been constructed within the LoWS and on its boundary in recent years. Footpaths intersect the site, particularly in the south.

Habitat survey description:

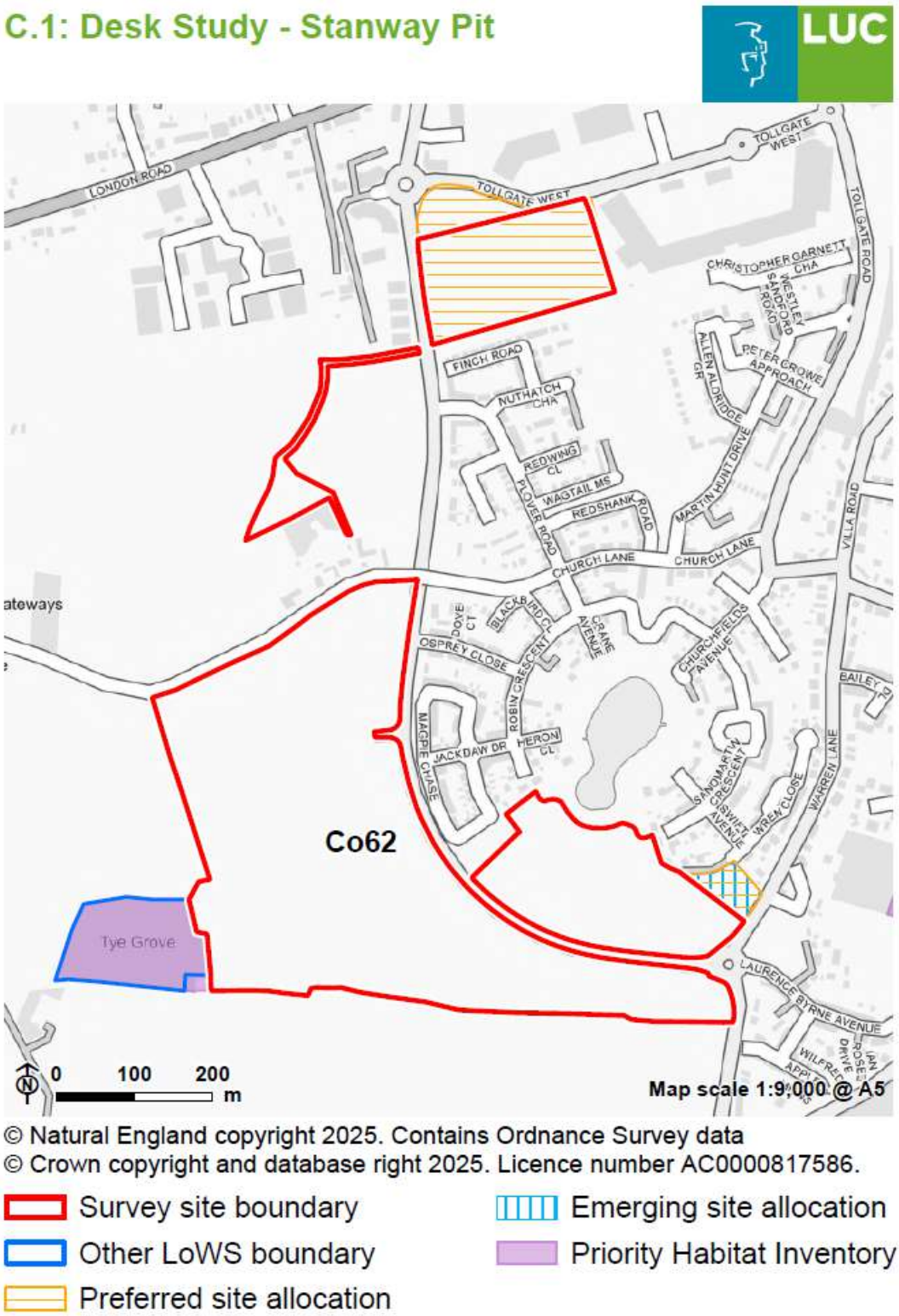
These former sand pits were not dominated by a single habitat but composed of a mosaic of grassland, woodland, mixed scrub (bramble, willow or gorse), native hedgerows, sparsely vegetated cliffs and areas of tall ruderal vegetation.

Vascular plants varied considerably around the site and depended greatly on conditions. Damper areas were colonised by rushes, sedges and willowherbs whilst drier areas were colonised by wild teasel, ground ivy and wild carrot with lots of bare and disturbed ground. These plants offer important foraging opportunities for a variety of wildlife species, including nectar for pollinating insects and seeds for birds and small mammals.

The perimeter of the site was dotted with several large oak trees offering considerable bat roosting potential, particularly along the south west perimeter of the site. There was also evidence of badger within the site and suitable habitat for them to forage and commute.

Some of the site was inaccessible for survey, for example the central section due to steep cliffs.

Stanway Pit


C.1: Desk Study - Stanway Pit
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FINCH ROAD
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MAGPIE CHASE
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WREN CLOSE
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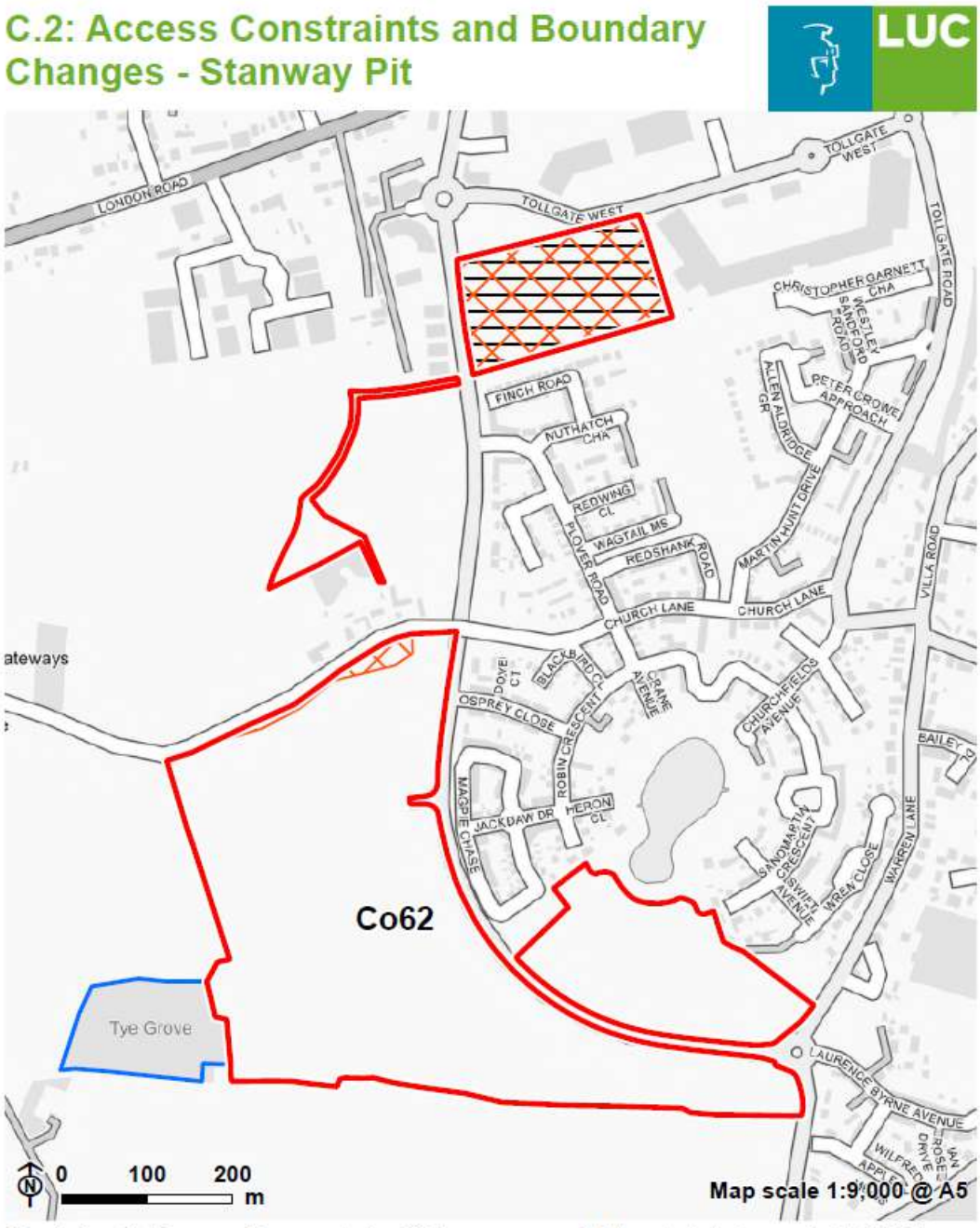
Survey site boundary
Other LoWS boundary
Preferred site allocation
Emerging site allocation
Priority Habitat Inventory

Stanway Pit


C.2: Access Constraints and Boundary Changes - Stanway Pit
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PETER CROWE APPROACH
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MARTIN HUNT DRIVE
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WREN CLOSE
WARREN LANE
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Survey site boundary
Other LoWS boundary
Proposed boundary exclusion
Access constrained

Stanway Pit

Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys:

An area in the south west previously described as birch and willow scrub would now be better classified as a dense deciduous woodland. Sparsely vegetated cliffs and disturbed ground colonised by tall ruderal vegetation both of which are characteristic of post-industrial sites (HC27) still remain within Stanway Pits.

Condition Statement:

Unfavourable - declining

Additional comments:

Assessed as Unfavourable - Declining due to development having taken place in the centre of the site (Lakeland Centre) and currently taking place in the north east parcel to the East of the Stanway Western Bypass. Extensive open mosaic habitats do still exist and are offering numerous benefits to a wide range of wildlife.

Management:

Poor

Additional comments:

It appears that there is no active management to protect and preserve the habitats within Stanway Pits. This is demonstrated by the fact that some of the site has been developed upon and continues to be developed upon currently. Some management appeared to be taking place within the south east section of the site such as tree planting (silver birch, oak, hazel), grass cutting, hedgerow planting along road and maintenance of paths to allow recreational use.

Known/relevant existing site management plan:

Unknown

Opportunities on site:

N/A

Additional comments:

N/A

Threats and Disturbances:

Development, Litter, Dog fouling, Fly tipping, Invasive non-native species

Additional comments:

Development is the main threat to the important habitats and species found at Stanway Pits as part of the site falls within a preferred site allocation. To a lesser extent, Stanway Pits is threatened by litter and vandalism linked to the moderate recreational use. Most notably there was a fire pit and temporary camp shelter located in the birch and willow woodland close to the café. Small patches of invasive non-native Buddleia were present towards the south west of the site.

Level of use:

Moderate

Additional comments:

In 2023 a community centre and café was built within the central portion of Stanway Pits. The site is also located near residential properties. These two factors mean the site is used frequently for dog walking and recreation. Some sections of the site are however inaccessible due to dense scrub growth, steep inclines and uneven terrain.

Management Recommendations:

Stanway Pit	
As identified in 2015, the largest threat to the site is development which has subsequently taken place within the site and adjacent to the boundary. As Stanway Pits sits within the Essex Coast IIA and has records of supporting nationally rare invertebrate species it is advised that a specialist survey is carried out and a management plan is put in place which ensures an open mosaic of habitats is maintained into the future. It is recommended that management also focuses on alleviating the impacts of recreational use as this is already moderately impacting the site and will continue to do so in the future with the planned development of adjacent areas. The extent of invasive non-native Buddleia should be managed so that it does not become dominant in the site.	
LoWS Criteria	
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:	HC27 - Post-industrial sites
Additional comments:	N/A
Species Selection Criteria	
Plants:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Birds:	N/A

Stanway Pit	
Additional comments:	Linnet, blue tit, great tit, buzzard, chiff chaff, greenfinch, long tailed tit, kestrel, skylark, jay, wren.
Mammals:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Amphibians:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Reptiles:	N/A
Additional comments:	Survey revealed suitable basking and foraging opportunities adjacent to scrub. Further surveys should be carried out to confirm the suitability of Stanway Pits for reptiles.
Invertebrates:	SC19 - Important Invertebrate Assemblages
Additional comments:	Survey revealed diverse and abundant invertebrate populations including butterflies, spiders, bees, wasps, snails and ants. Activity was particularly high at areas of bare ground with holes and soil heaps associated with Hymenoptera nest building found in the sandy cliffs. The south western section of the site is also within the Essex Coast IIA which highlights the importance of the site for invertebrates.
LoWS Survey Recommendations	
Designated LoWS	
LoWS Survey Recommendation:	De-designation (partial)
Rationale:	The majority of the site still retains open mosaic habitats on previously developed land which are of high ecological value particularly for invertebrates and birds. Despite this, the boundary of Stanway Pits will need to be updated again to reflect the development which has recently taken place within the centre and north east of the site. Management should focus on protecting the rest of the site from further development as the open mosaic habitats offer numerous habitats to a wide range of wildlife.

Black Heath	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	PCLoWS8
LoWS Name:	Black Heath
Grid Reference:	TM0028921492
Area (ha):	2.57
Ownership:	Private
Management provider:	Military of Defence
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:	Old maps show this area to be the last surviving remnant of Black Heath, a large heathland waste that gave its name to this area of urban Colchester. Despite having been planted with conifers and with plentiful Bramble (Rubus fruticosus agg.) and Bracken (Pteridium aquilinum), the site still supports a few plants of Purple Moor grass (Molinea caerulea), which is a rare species in northeast Essex, as well as the hawkweed Hieracium sabaudum. Common Calamint (Clinopodium ascendens) is also present, but may have been introduced with garden rubbish, as the habitat is not what would be expected.
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	No
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	N/A
Irreplaceable habitat on site:	N/A
Priority habitat on site:	N/A
Known projects/initiatives:	No known projects but recently felled and marked trees were present during the survey which suggests active management is taking place within the site.
Survey Data	
Surveyor: EB:	Date: 24.04.2025
Weather: Sunny	Access: Survey limited to footpaths as no access granted by Military of Defence.

Black Heath

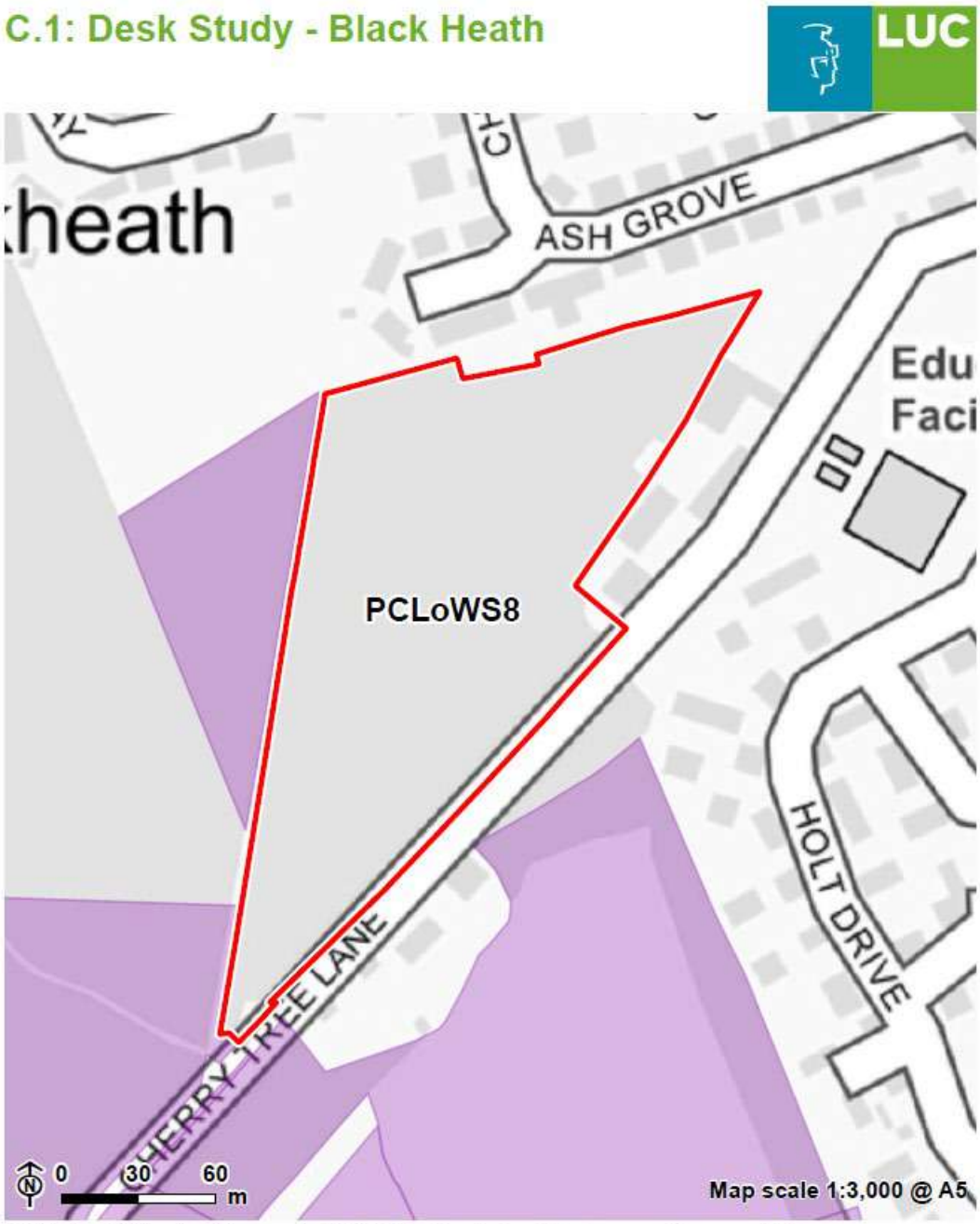
Summary of site:

Small area of mixed broadleaf and coniferous woodland intersected by footpaths and located on the edge of a residential area south of Colchester City. Potential LoWS linked to it being the last surviving remnant of Black Heath (a large heathland in the past).

Habitat survey description:

Mixed broadleaf and coniferous woodland was the single habitat present within the survey area. The canopy layer was dominated by mature Scots pine, oak and beech. Most of the Scots pine was covered in ivy which offered bat roost suitability. The understorey was diverse in terms of species and was comprised of abundant holly, silver birch, field maple and hawthorn and occasional cherry and rowan. The ground flora was less diverse and was dominated by bramble and bracken with patches of bluebell and greater stitchwort. Standing deadwood was present and piles of deadwood had been left which offered opportunities for invertebrates. It was also clear that Scots pine and beech trees had been recently felled and were left on site at the time of survey.

Black Heath


C.1: Desk Study - Black Heath
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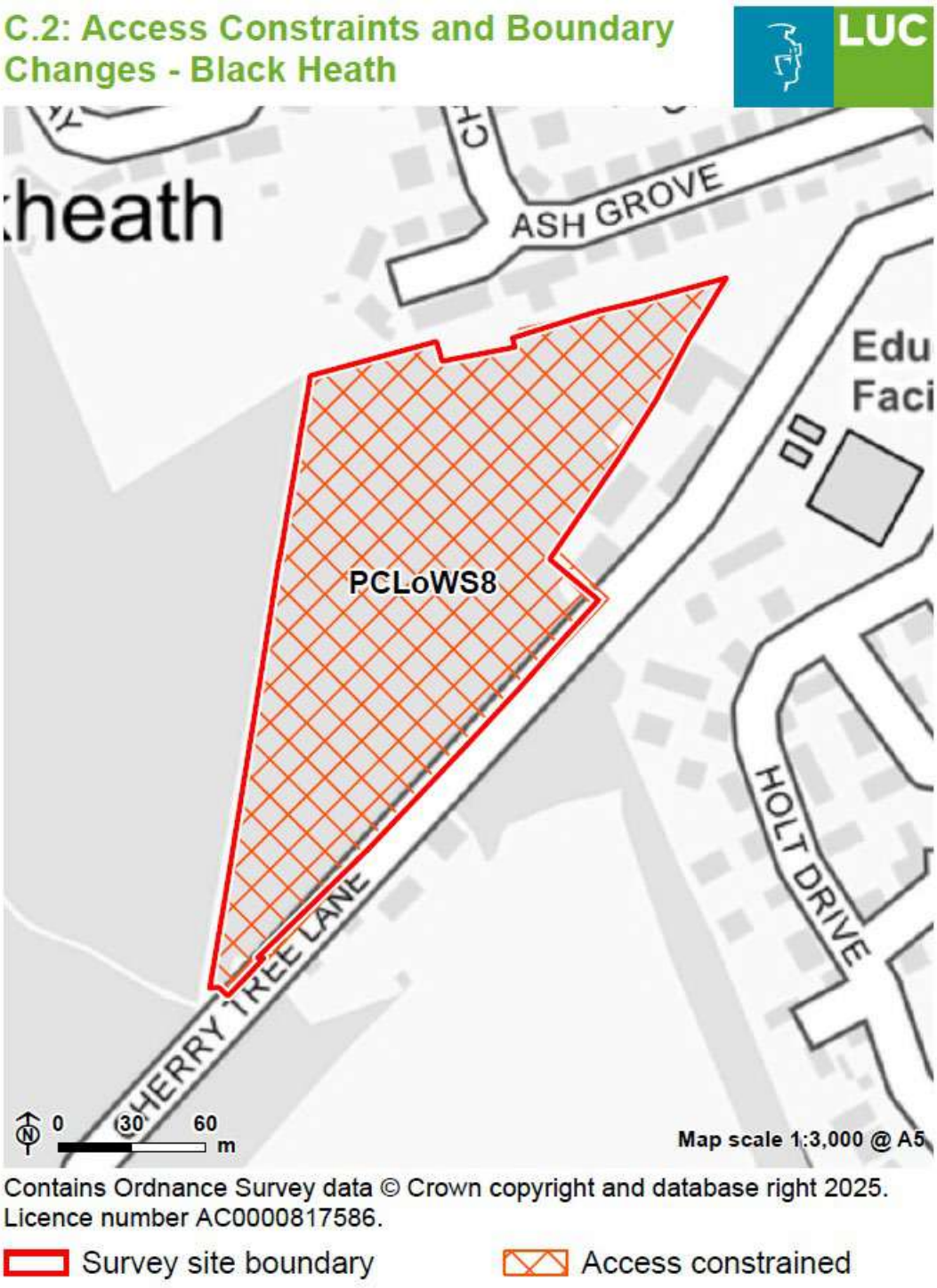
© Natural England copyright 2025. Contains Ordnance Survey data
© Crown copyright and database right 2025. Licence number AC0000817586.
Survey site boundary
Priority Habitat Inventory

Black Heath



Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys:

Black Heath
The previous report listed Black Heath as a potential LoWS and that the removal of planted conifers would be required for this to be achieved. The survey revealed some clearing of coniferous trees, potentially with the aim of restoring heathland, but the main habitat remained as mixed broadleaved and coniferous woodland.
Condition Statement: Unfavourable - no change **Additional comments:** Assessed as Unfavourable - No Change as the site remains an area of mixed broadleaved and coniferous woodland rather than a heathland for which it is assigned as a potential LoWS. It should be noted that the site still offers numerable benefits associated with the woodland habitat type but could be managed to improve this e.g., selective felling of Scots pine, removal of cherry laurel and education to help reduce litter and dog fouling.
Management: Poor **Additional comments:** This is a potential LoWS for heathland habitat. Management has not been undertaken to completely restore this as the site is predominantly a mixed coniferous and broadleaved woodland. It should also be noted that there were high levels of litter and fly tipping, further suggesting an absence of management.
Known/relevant existing site management plan: Unknown
Opportunities on site: Active tree management **Additional comments:** In order to return this site to heathland, substantial clearance of trees would have to take place. It should be noted that the existing woodland area does, however, offer considerable benefits e.g., bramble scrub used by nightingales, bat roost suitability, opportunities for invertebrates.
Threats and Disturbances: Dog fouling, Fly tipping, Litter, Invasive non-native species **Additional comments:** Paths through woodland are used frequently and this has led to considerable amounts of dog fouling, fly tipping and litter next to the paths. The survey also noted several stands of cherry laurel towards the south and adjacent to the paths.
Level of use: Moderate **Additional comments:** Due to the proximity of Black Heath to residential properties the site was observed to be used moderately by dog walkers.
Management Recommendations: Management should continue to selective fell trees to create glades and small patches of heathland. It is also recommended that cherry laurel is removed to prevent further spread. Lastly, signage outlining the importance of the site for wildlife could be installed to discourage dog fouling, fly tipping and litter.

Black Heath	
LoWS Criteria	
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:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Species Selection Criteria	
Plants:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Birds:	N/A
Additional comments:	Several nightingales were heard on site during the survey and were likely using the bramble scrub. Further surveys would be required to establish whether this site qualifies as a LoWS under SC5 or SC6.
Mammals:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A

Black Heath	
Amphibians:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Reptiles:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Invertebrates:	N/A
Additional comments:	The site falls within the Essex Coast IIA and therefore contains valuable habitats 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:	Potential LoWS
Rationale:	Retain as potential LoWS. As an area of mixed deciduous and coniferous woodland this site offers considerable benefits for wildlife, particularly roosting bats, nesting birds and invertebrates. Restoring the heathland habitat would be of benefit but should be done sensitively to ensure existing ecological value is retained. For example, selective felling of trees to create glades and small patches of heathland in amongst the woodland.

Middlewick Ranges	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	Co122
LoWS Name:	Middlewick Ranges
Grid Reference:	TM0095522813
Area (ha):	75.40
Ownership:	Military of Defence
Management provider:	Military of Defence
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: N/A Emerging: Middlewick
Total area of site Allocation overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0.00 Emerging: 75.40
LoWS Citation:	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. The northern-most field is hay-cut and species-poor, but retains an acidic character with Red Fescue (Festuca rubra) and Common Bent (Agrostis tenuis), along with Common Sorrel (Rumex acetosa), Sheep's Sorrel (Rumex acetosella), Autumn Hawkbit (Scorzoneroides autumnalis). To the south of this the grassland has been invaded by scrub, which now includes Pedunculate Oaks (Quercus robur) of considerable size, with elm (Ulmus sp.), Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna) and Blackthorn (Prunus spinosa). The open grassland is marginally more diverse here, with Sweet Vernal Grass (Anthoxanthum odoratum), Field Wood-rush (Luzula campestris), meadow-grass (Poa sp.), Yarrow (Achillea millefolium) and Bird's-foot-trefoil (Lotus corniculatus). However, False Oat-grass (Arrhenatherum elatius) and Cock's-foot Grass (Dactylis glomerata) are frequent and there is abundant Gorse (Ulex europaeus) and Broom (Cytisus scoparius) scrub. A population of the Nationally Scarce Lesser Calamint (Clinopodium calaminta) can be found on the western edge of the site here. 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 Cladonia 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 (Phleum sp.), Wild Carrot (Daucus carota), Lesser Stitchwort (Stellaria graminea), Common Knapweed (Centaurea nigra) and Hare's foot Clover (Trifolium arvense). The principal value of this site, however, is it 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

Middlewick Ranges	
	Book) and eight Nationally Scarce species have been recorded. The most significant species are the SPIE digger wasps Cerceris quadricincta (RDB1) and Cerceris quinquefasciata (RDB3), the latter's brood-parasite cuckoo-wasp Hedychrum niemelai (RDB3) and the Small Blue Carpenter-bee Ceratina cyanea (RDB3). Some of the short-mown sandy banks bordering the range roads support a large population of the RDB2 Bee-wolf (Philanthus triangulum).
Located within an Area of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIBs):	Yes
Located within a Strategic Habitat Creation Opportunity Area:	N/A
Irreplaceable habitat on site:	Ancient tree
Priority habitat on site:	Deciduous woodland, No main habitat but additional habitats present
Known projects/initiatives:	Unknown.
Survey Data	
Surveyor: EB and KR	Date: 24.04.2025
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.

Summary of site:

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 local wildlife site's, 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.

Habitat survey description:

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.

NVC surveys of the site has been undertaken in 2024 and reported on[31], and therefore a full in-depth species list of all habitats within Middlewick Ranges is available separately.

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.

[31] G, Groome (2024) Botanical Surveys of Middlewick Ranges

Middlewick Ranges

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.

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.

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.

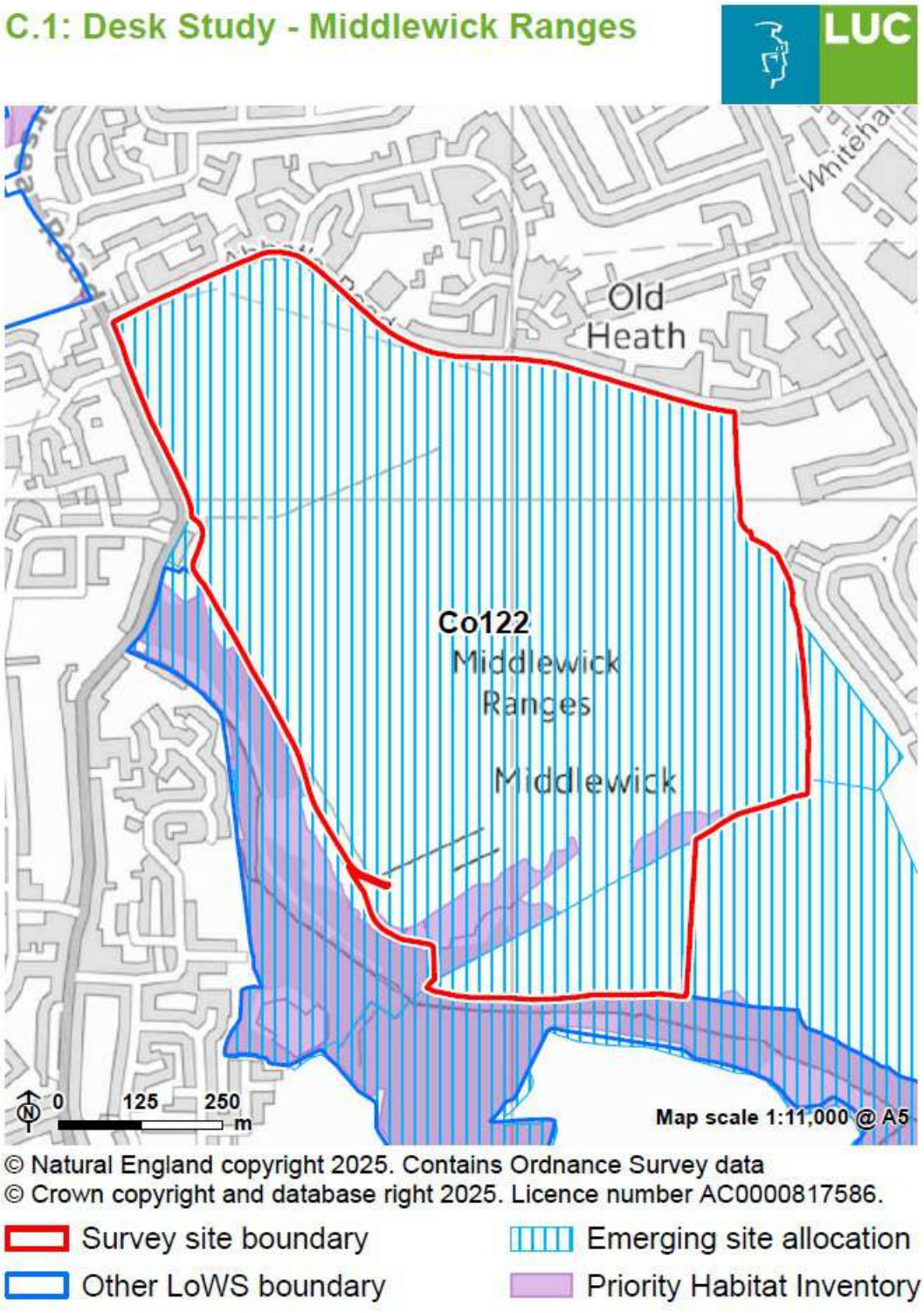
NVC surveys and invertebrate surveys have been undertaken within Middlewick Ranges and the reports were available at the time of survey. In summary, 354 species of vascular plant were recorded within Middlewick Ranges, of which 26 are, or have been regarded as nationally and/or county rare, scarce and/or 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). The invertebrate surveys are currently ongoing, however an interim report[32] 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.

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[33].

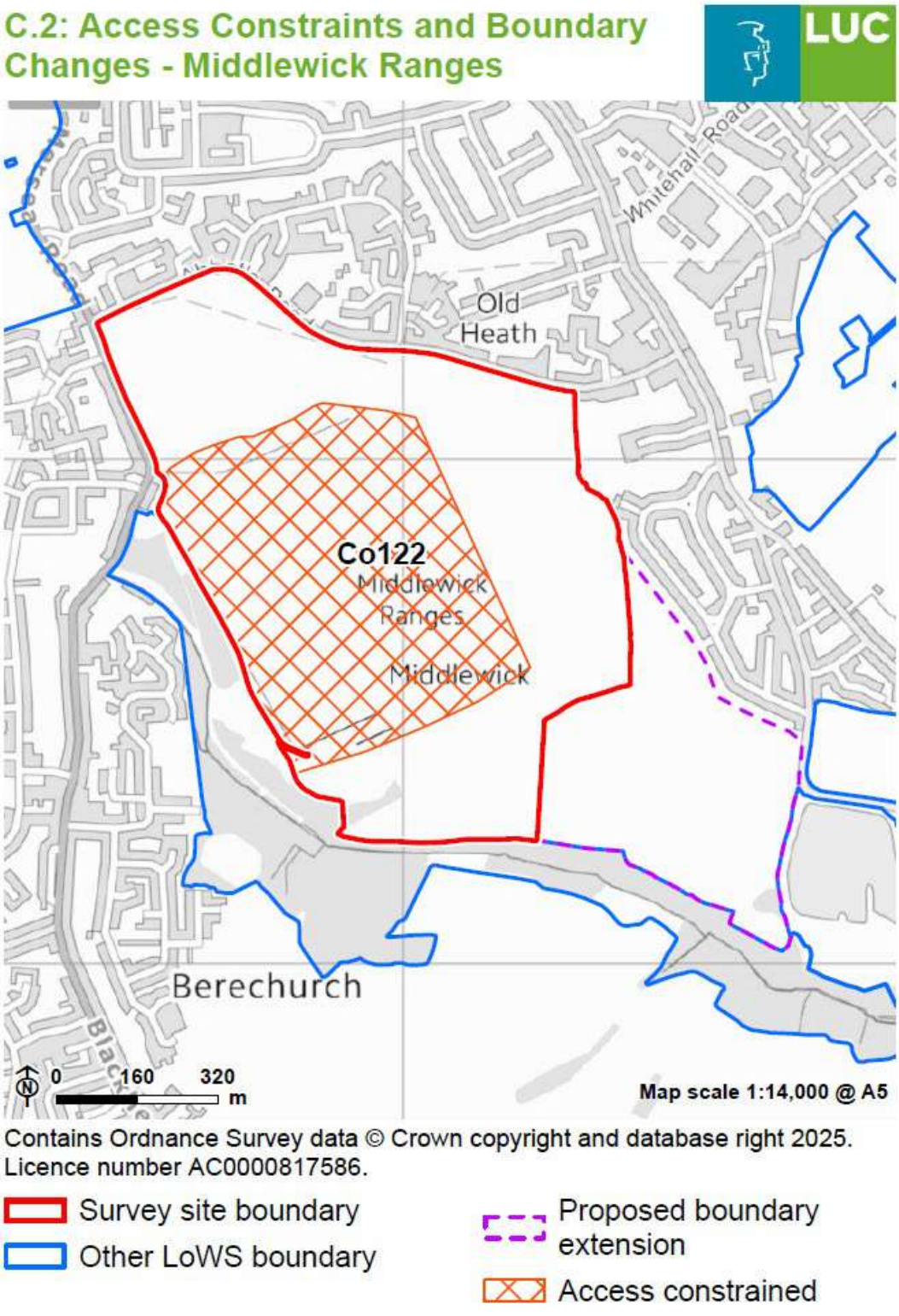
In addition to the sites importance for invertebrates and plant diversity, the site is reported to be of importance for Nightingales, and Nightingales were heard during the survey in particular within the scrub at the south of the site. Trees were additionally noted within the site which have bat roost suitability and the importance of the site for invertebrates, in turn provides a valuable foraging resource for bats. Habitats on site also provide opportunities for reptiles, amphibians and small mammals.

[32] M. Edwards (2024) Interim Report of Entomological Survey and Assessment for Middlewick Ranges.
[33] 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



Middlewick Ranges



Middlewick Ranges

Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys:

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.

Condition Statement:

Favourable, declining

Additional comments:

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.

Management:

Poor

Additional comments:

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.

Known/relevant existing site management plan:

Unknown

Opportunities on site:

Hedgerow planting

Additional comments:

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 foraging habitats and also create a natural barrier between the main road and the acidic grassland.

Threats and Disturbances:

Dog fouling, Litter, Vandalism

Additional comments:

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.

Level of use:

Middlewick Ranges	
Moderate **Additional comments:** 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.	
Management Recommendations: 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.	
LoWS Criteria	
Habitat Selection Criteria	
Woodland, scrub and related habitats:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Grassland:	HC11 - Other Neutral Grasslands
Additional comments:	N/A
Heathland:	HC13 - Heathland and Acid Grassland
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

Middlewick Ranges	
Additional comments:	N/A
Species Selection Criteria	
Plants:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Birds:	SC5 – Notable Bird Species.
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.
Mammals:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Amphibians:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Reptiles:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Invertebrates:	SC19 - Important Invertebrate Assemblages, SC18 - SPIE Invertebrates
Additional comments:	All of Middlewick Ranges 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.
LoWS Survey Recommendations	
Designated LoWS	
LoWS Survey Recommendation:	Proposed extension to the LoWS boundary
Rationale:	Middlewick Ranges is an extremely valuable Local Wildlife site, that includes rare lowland dry acid grassland, is of particular importance to invertebrates and birds and was noted by Dr Groome to be of eligible for selection as a site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The site should therefore be retained and protected. In the 2015 Review, Middlewick Ranges was selected in part as a LoWS for its 'HC11 - Other Neutral Grasslands' and 'HC13 – Heathland and Acid Grassland'. Vegetation within the fields to the south east of the site, close to Fingringhoe Road were noted to be of a similar composition to the grassland already included in the LoWS. Species were acidic in character such as sheep's sorrel, field wood-rush, red fescue, yarrow and sweet vernal grass. This is supported by the botanical survey report, which

Middlewick Ranges	
	notes this area to be mostly MG6b with small patches of U1d (lowland dry acid grassland) in the three southernmost fields. As detailed in the LoWS criteria document, any site supporting characteristic acid vegetation shall be eligible for selection and as such an extension to the LoWS is recommended. This would additionally connect up the designation with the nearby Donyland wetlands, strengthening the LoWS network.

Fiddler's Wood	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	Co43
LoWS Name:	Fiddler's wood
Grid Reference:	TL9299526732
Area (ha):	11.01
Ownership:	Private
Management provider:	Private landowner
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: Land West of Brood Chase Emerging: Land North Halstead Road
Total area of site Allocation overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0.00 Emerging: 0.00
LoWS Citation:	This ancient wood comprises Pedunculate Oak (Quercus robur), Ash (Fraxinus excelsior), Silver Birch (Betula pendula) and coppiced Hazel (Corylus avellana) with some planted Beech (Fagus sylvatica) and a scrub layer of Blackthorn (Prunus spinosa) and Elder (Sambucus nigra). Sweet Chestnut (Castanea sativa) dominates the central compartment. The ground flora, though largely dominated by Bramble (Rubus fruticosus agg), includes areas where Bluebell (Hyacinthoides non-scripta) and Wood Anemone (Anemone nemorosa) are abundant. Also present are Remote Sedge (Carex remota), Broad Buckler-fern (Dryopteris dilatata), Male-fern (Dryopteris filix-mas) and locally abundant Bracken (Pteridium aquilinum).
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 woodland
Priority habitat on site:	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh (small overlap with River Colne floodplain), Deciduous woodland
Known projects/initiatives:	Unknown. Private woodland.
Survey Data	
Surveyor: EB	Date: 24.04.2025

Fiddler's Wood	
Weather: Sunny	Access: The survey was restricted to an assessment of species located next to the footpaths (Eight Ash Green 10, Aldham 3 and Aldham 4).

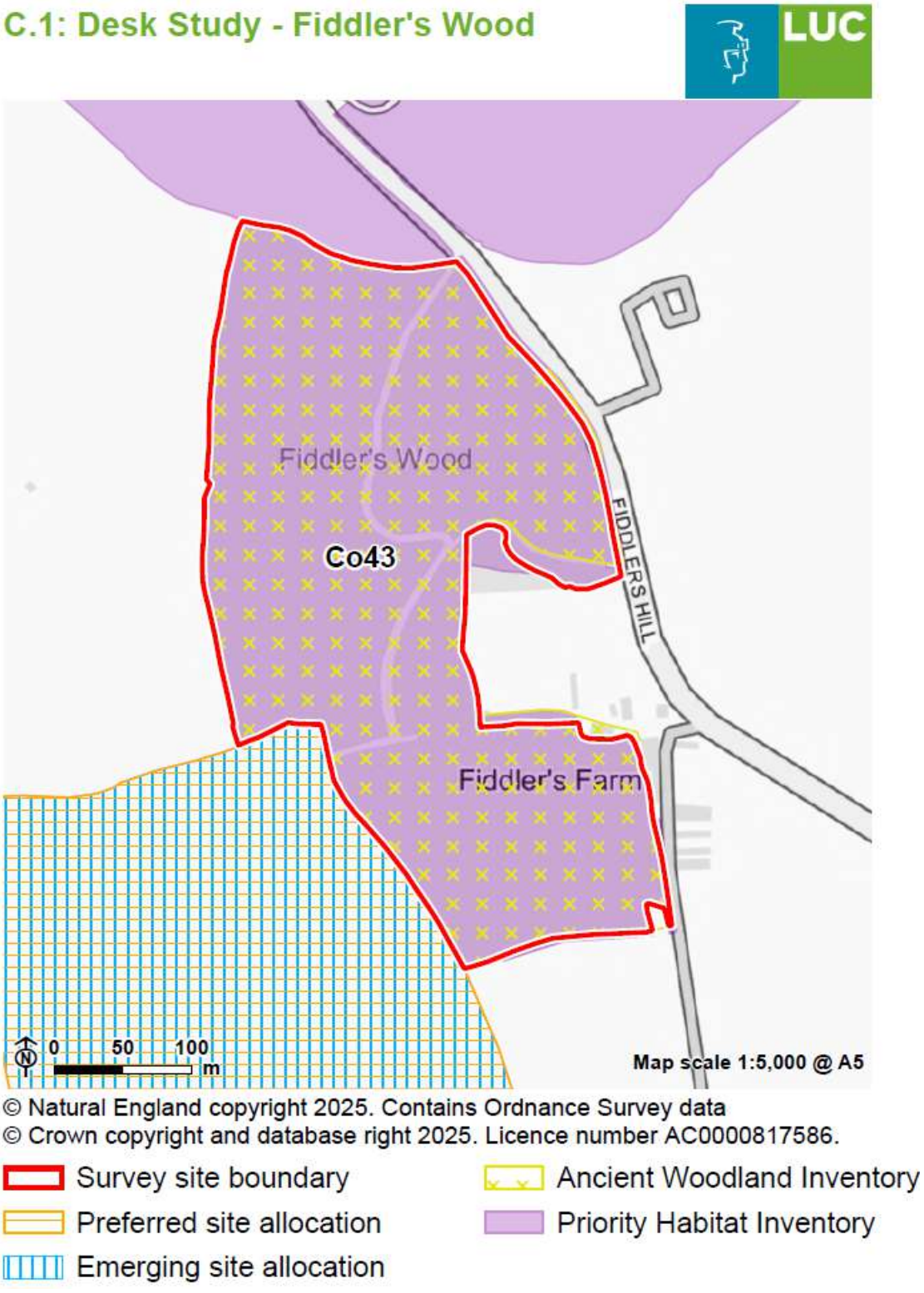
Summary of site:

An ancient woodland with a few ancient woodland indicator species located north of new residential development and south of a floodplain grazing marsh.

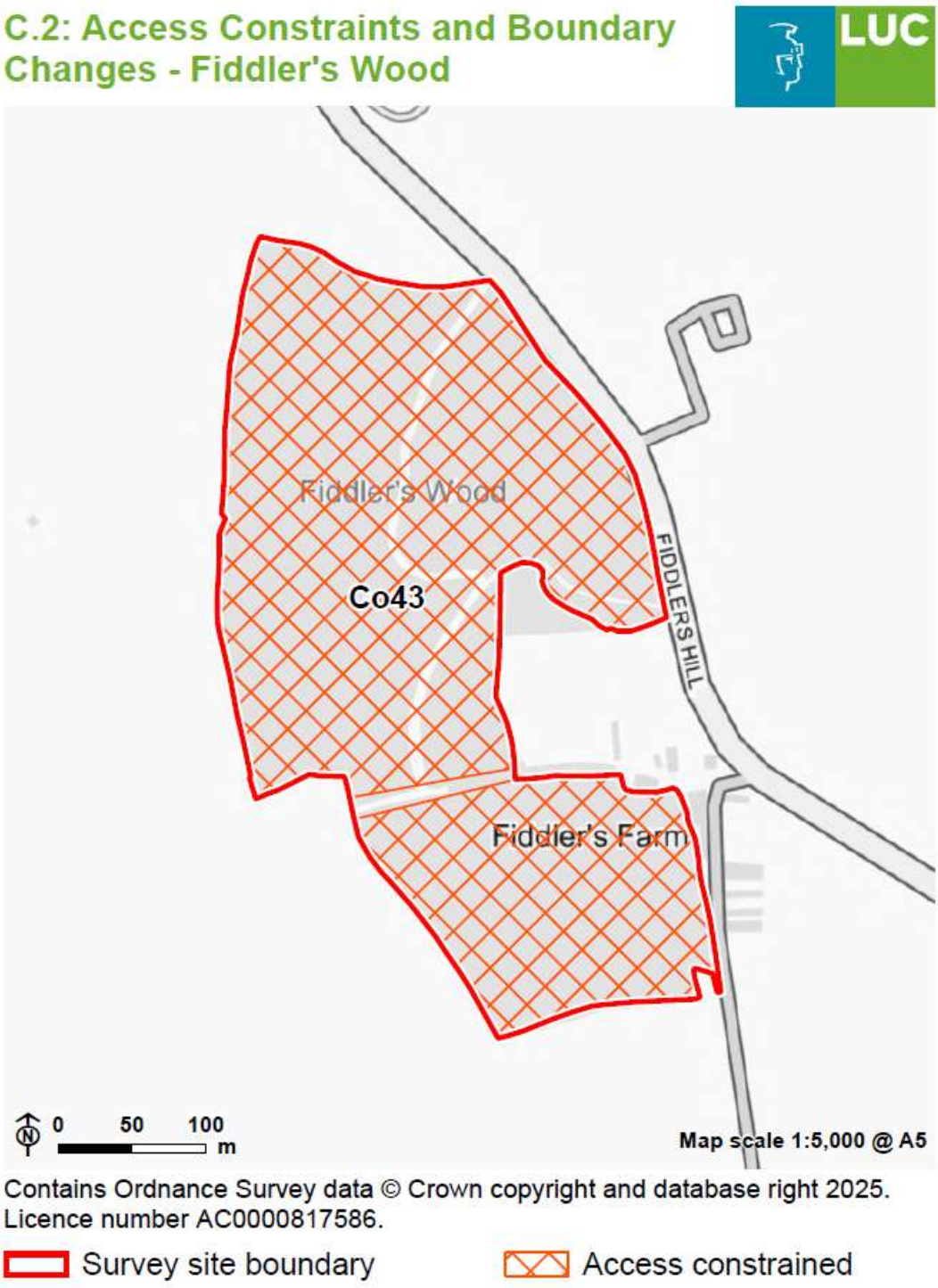
Habitat survey description:

Along the path which intersected the woodland (Eight Ash Green 10) the canopy was dominated by mature oak, ash, beech and cherry trees and the understorey was comprised of silver birch, hazel, holly and ash trees. The ground flora was densely covered in bluebells with frequent patches of bramble. Natural regeneration of trees was evident as there abundant holly, hazel and ash saplings. There was also evidence of tree planting within this central section on non-native trees such as sycamore maple and eucalyptus. Along the western periphery path (Aldham 3 and Aldham 4), more species were noted such as blackthorn, crab apple, hawthorn and hazel creating a dense hedgerow between the woodland and arable fields with no arable margin buffer. A pond within the woodland was also noted from the western periphery. Standing deadwood was recorded within the woodland with bat roost suitability linked to woodpecker holes and lifted bark. A bees nest was also noted in an ash tree along the western boundary during the survey. Furthermore, piles of deadwood had been purposely left within the woodland creating opportunities for reptiles and invertebrates. Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh was noted to be present on site within the desk study, however during the site survey it was not noted to be present on site.

Fiddler's Wood



Fiddler's Wood



Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys:

No significant changes in woodland species since the 2015 report. It was however not possible to survey the north-west section where management was recommended to control the non-native sycamore. It was also not possible to assess

Fiddler's Wood
whether the recommended coppicing had been reintroduced as survey was limited to along the central and western footpath. Some recent tree planting has taken place but this is at a small scale in comparison to the size of the woodland
Condition Statement: Unfavourable - no change **Additional comments:** Woodland was assessed as Unmanaged, declining in the past report and it was not possible to assess whether the sycamore in the north-west, for which this assessment was given, had been controlled since then. Recent planting of other non-native trees e.g., eucalyptus means that this recommendation to remove non-native species to improve the condition of the ancient woodland remains.
Management: Satisfactory **Additional comments:** Not possible to assess management of whole site but ancient woodland indicators were recorded adjacent to the path indicating that management is preserving this important habitat to some extent. On the other hand, some of the management within the LoWS does not seem to align to the preservation of an ancient woodland. For example, planting non-native species such as sycamore maple and eucalyptus which could threaten its status under HC1 - Ancient Woodland sites.
Known/relevant existing site management plan: Unknown
Opportunities on site: N/A **Additional comments:** N/A
Threats and Disturbances: Neighbouring development, Vehicular erosion **Additional comments:** The main threat to Fiddler's Wood comes from the preferred site allocation located to the south west of the site. This may negatively impact the habitats and species located within the woodland if recreational use is not managed appropriately.
Level of use: Low **Additional comments:** Use of Fiddlers Wood by the public is minimal as footpath only runs through middle and around western boundary. There is some vehicular erosion but this is minimal.
Management Recommendations: As the main threat to Fiddler's Wood is related to neighbouring development, management should focus on mitigating negative impacts associated with recreational use e.g., littering and ground flora trampling. In addition, to maintain Fiddler's Wood as a good quality ancient woodland site into the future, it is recommended that the recently planted non-native trees e.g., eucalyptus and sycamore are removed. Bramble could also be selectively cleared to allow a more diverse ground flora to establish.

Fiddler's Wood	
LoWS Criteria	
Habitat Selection Criteria	
Woodland, scrub and related habitats:	HC1 - Ancient Woodland sites
Additional comments:	The woodland contained wild cherry trees and crab apple trees and supported a ground flora dominated by bluebell. These are all species indicative of ancient woodland in Essex and thus confirms that Fiddler's Wood is eligible under HC1.
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:	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

Fiddler's Wood	
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:	Retain - No Change
Rationale:	This area of ancient woodland has good structural diversity (presence of rides and glades was apparent from the footpath) and a good ground flora coverage of bluebells enabling it to retain its LoWS status as an ancient woodland site. This is an important site within Colchester's LoWS network and should be protected from negative impacts associated with neighbouring development and managed to remove the invasive non-native tree species.

Birch Brook	
Site Information	
LoWS ID:	Co128
LoWS Name:	Birch Brook
Grid Reference:	TM0112822198
Area (ha):	30.69
Ownership:	Private
Management provider:	Military of Defence
Site Allocation/s within 50m of the LoWS:	Preferred: N/A Emerging: Middlewick
Total area of site Allocation overlapping LoWS (ha):	Preferred: 0.00 Emerging: 26.58
LoWS Citation:	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. On the higher, dry ground the woodland consists of Pedunculate Oak (Quercus robur), Elm (Ulmus sp.) and Birch (Betula spp.) with Holly (Ilex aquifolium) and Hazel (Corylus avellana) in the understorey and a ground flora that includes Bracken (Pteridium aquilinum) and Wood Sage (Teucrium scorodonia). Scrubbier margins include Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna) and, in places, Gorse (Ulex europaeus) while larger Pedunculate Oaks mark old hedge lines. The wet woodland is largely made up of Crack Willow (Salix fragilis) and Grey Willow (S. cinerea), with some Silver Birch (Betula pendula). In more open areas there are localised sedge (Carex sp.) beds with Marsh Thistle (Cirsium palustre) and Skullcap (Scutellaria galericulata). Birch Grove consists of Pedunculate Oak and Ash (Fraxinus excelsior) with Alder (Alnus glutinosa) along the streamside. The ground flora is rich in ferns, with the Essex Red Data List (ERDL) species Narrow Buckler fern (Dryopteris carthusiana), Lady Fern (Athyrium filix-femina), Hard Fern (Blechnum spicant) and Scaly Male Fern (Dryopteris affinis) of particular note. Other noteworthy plant species include Hart's-tongue Fern (Asplenium scolopendrium), Wood Anemone (Anemone nemorosa), Pignut (Conopodium majus), Dog's Mercury (Mercurialis perennis), Enchanter's Nightshade (Circaea lutetiana), Bluebell (Hyacinthoides non- scripta), Creeping Jenny (Lysimachia nemorum), Wood Sorrel (Oxalis acetosella), Remote Sedge (Carex remota) and the ERDL Wood Horsetail (Equisetum sylvaticum) at one of its few Essex locations. The area around the Redoubt comprises dry acid grassland and scrub, providing additional habitat diversity. The ground flora includes Red Fescue (Festuca rubra), Common Bent (Agrostis capillaris), Sheep's Sorrel (Rumex acetosella), Hieracium sabaudum (a hawkweed) and Bracken, with Pedunculate Oak, Gorse, Bramble (Rubus fruticosus) and Broom (Cytisus scoparius) 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 (Centaurium erythraea), Blue Fleabane (Erigeron acris), Heath Speedwell (Veronica officinalis), Cladonia lichens and Hoary Cinquefoil (Potentilla argentea).

Birch Brook	
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
Priority habitat on site:	Deciduous woodland, No main habitat but additional habitats present
Known projects/initiatives:	Unknown. Private woodland.
Survey Data	
Surveyor: EB	Date: 25.04.2025
Weather: Grey	Access: Survey was limited to footpaths as access was not granted by Military of Defence.

Summary of site:

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.

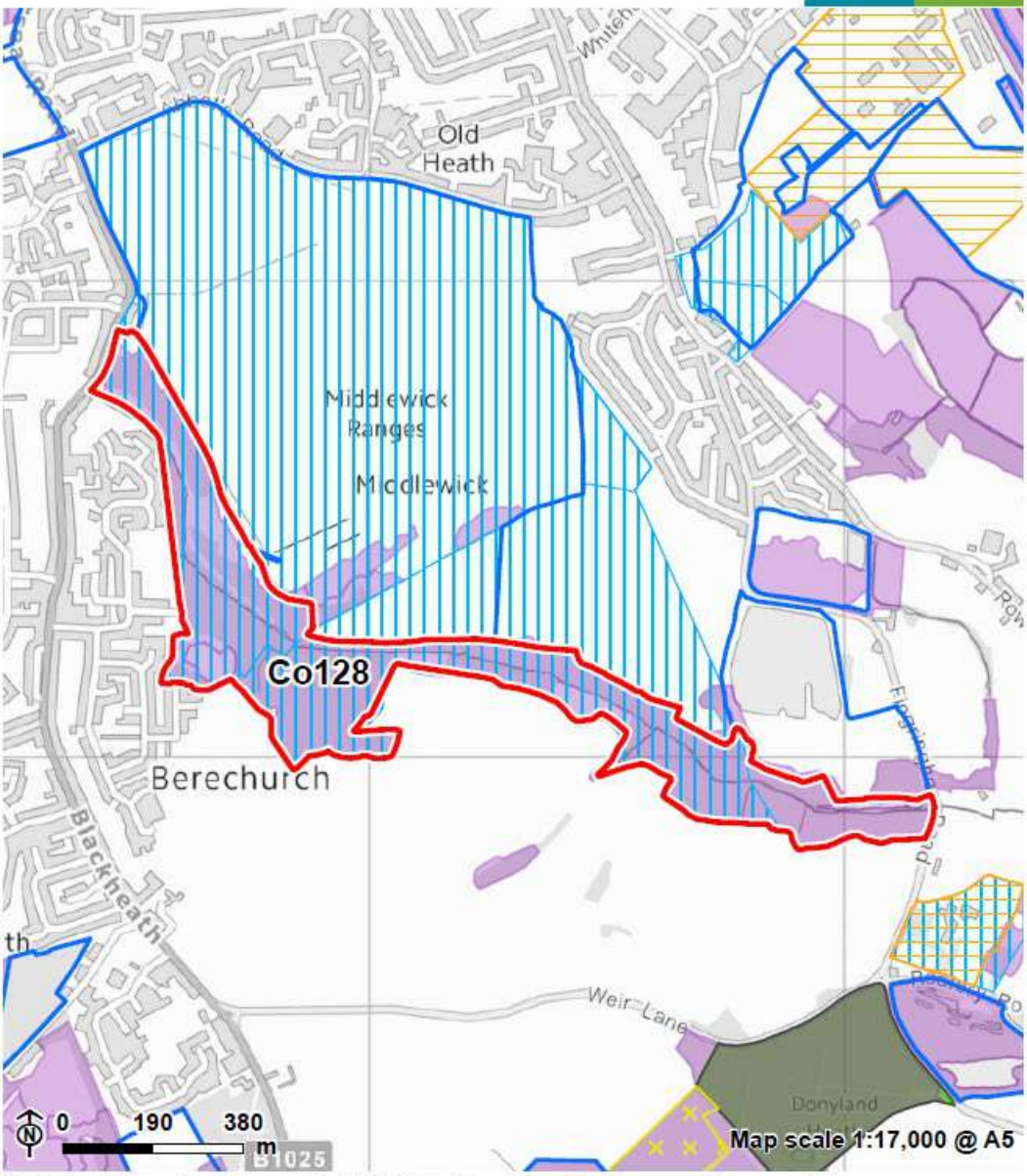
Habitat survey description:

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.

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.

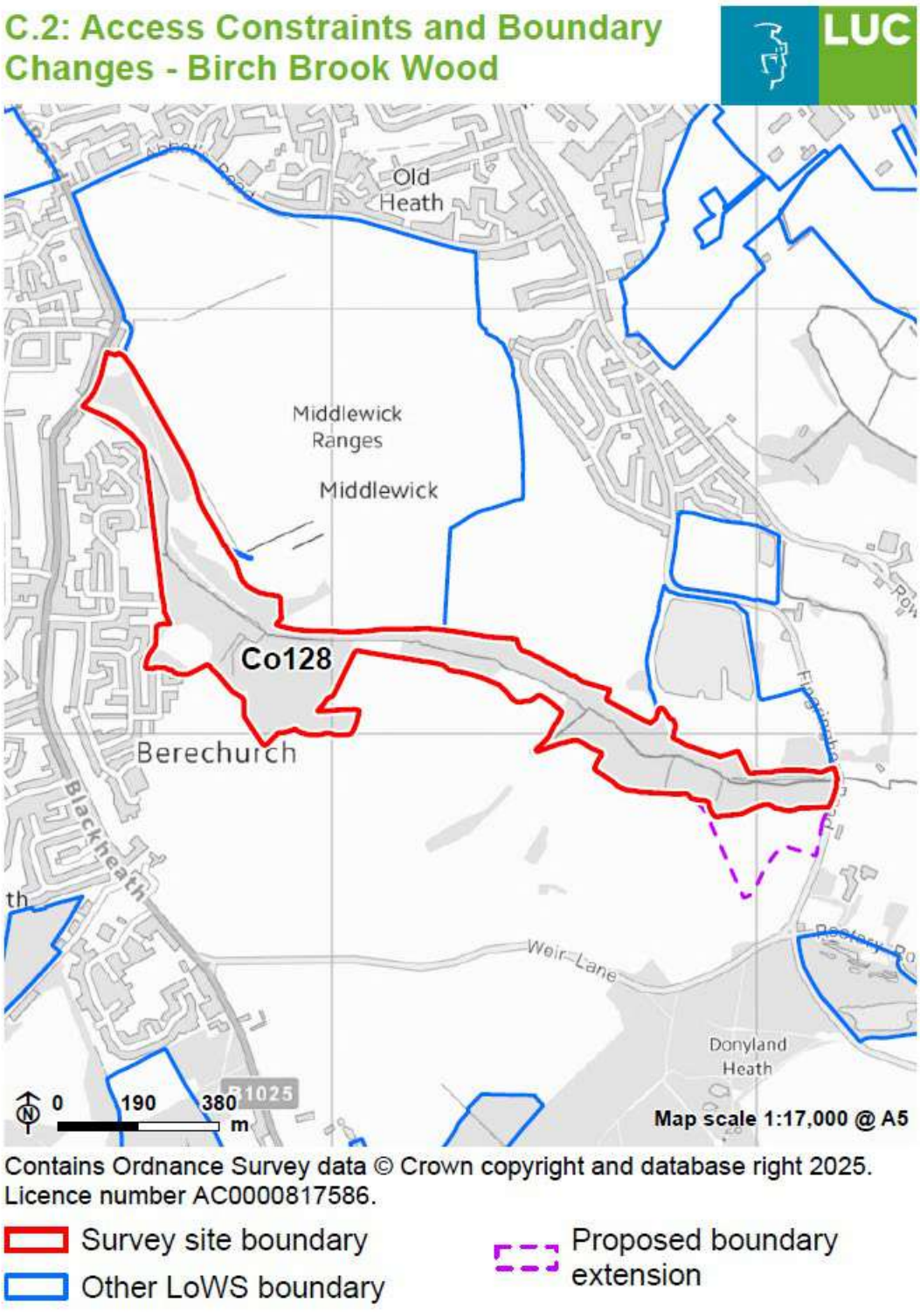
The northern boundary adjacent to Middlewick LoWS and Donyland Wetland LoWS featured an important successional scrub habitat where Nightingale were recorded during the survey.

C.1: Desk Study - Birch Brook Wood



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

Birch Brook



Changes to habitats since the previous 2015 surveys:

Birch Brook
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.
Condition Statement: Favourable, declining **Additional comments:** 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.
Management: Satisfactory **Additional comments:** 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.
Known/relevant existing site management plan: Unknown
Opportunities on site: N/A **Additional comments:** N/A
Threats and Disturbances: Invasive non-native species, Boundary treatment **Additional comments:** 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.
Level of use: Low **Additional comments:** 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 means the majority of the woodland outside of footpaths is left undisturbed.
Management Recommendations:

Birch Brook	
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.	
LoWS Criteria	
Habitat Selection Criteria	
Woodland, scrub and related habitats:	HC1 – Ancient Woodland sites, HC2 - Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient sites, HC3 - Other Priority Habitat Woodland Types on Non-ancient sites
Additional comments:	N/A
Grassland:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Heathland:	HC13 - Heathland and Acid Grassland
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:	SC1 – Vascular Plants
Additional comments:	N/A
Birds:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Mammals:	N/A

Birch Brook	
Additional comments:	N/A
Amphibians:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Reptiles:	N/A
Additional comments:	N/A
Invertebrates:	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.
LoWS Survey Recommendations	
Designated LoWS	
LoWS Survey Recommendation:	Proposed extension to the LoWS boundary
Rationale:	Birch Brook Wood contains extensive woodland habitats of high ecological value for birds, mammals and invertebrates. It also contains notable vascular plant species indicative of ancient woodland. The current boundary of the LoWS needs to be reconsidered to include the dry acid grassland and scrub located to the south east. This would not only extend the value of this LoWS but due to the location of Birch Brook Wood adjacent to Middlewick Ranges LoWS and Donyland Wetlands LoWS this has the potential to create an even larger network of highly valuable habitats.

Appendix E

Proforma – Site Photos

Local Wildlife Site Photos

Co6: Inworth Wood

Pheasant pen located in the south of the Site.	Small stream running close to the eastern boundary of the Site.
	
Example of good management - deadwood left in situ.	Erosion from vehicles present towards the west of the Site.
	
Ground flora of wild primrose under hazel and hornbeam coppice.	

Co13: Eden Wood

Pheasant pen and sparse ground flora situated in main woodland parcel.	Standing dead tree with numerous woodpecker holes and cracks offering bat roosting potential.
	
Bare ground caused by vehicle erosion in the main woodland parcel.	Laurel stand located in the main woodland parcel.

	
Woodland parcel located adjacent to Messing Park LoWs featuring a damp depression dominated by willow trees.	Woodland parcel located adjacent to Messing Park LoWS with a ground flora dominated by dog's mercury.
	

Co15: Acorn Wood

View of northeastern side of Site surrounded by arable fields.	Hornbeam and hazel coppice with ground flora dominated by dog's mercury and moschatel.
	

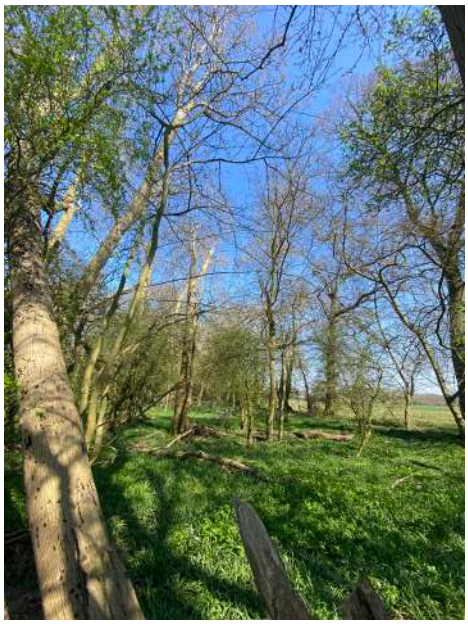
Standing dead wood offering considerable bat roosting potential.	Vehicle erosion through the central section of the woodland.
	
Dead wood and new coppice regrowth.	
	

Co17: Chappel Ponds and Millennium Green

Pond located in the south of the Site, with dense aquatic vegetation present.	Wooden boardwalk around the perimeter of the Site.

	
Pond in the east of the Site.	Meadow within the east of the Site.
	
Broadleaved woodland area along the edge of the railway.	Pond to the west the Site, previously known to support GCN.
	

Co27: Stonefield Strip

Woodland with the ground carpeted in bluebells, deadwood and good structural diversity.	Woodland with the ground carpeted in bluebells, deadwood and good structural diversity.
	

Co31: Marks Tey Brick Pit

Area of the previous dig, within the centre of the Site.	Woodland areas on the higher ground edge of the Site.
	
Dense scrub with mown pathways throughout.	Roman River along the edge of the Site.

	
Grassland / scrub mosaic area in the south east of the Site.	Bare ground banks providing habitat for invertebrates.
	

Co43: Fiddler's Wood

View of central section from public footpath.	View of western boundary from public footpath.

	
Recent tree planting of non-native eucalyptus tree along central footpath.	Example of dead hedging which is a good management technique to prevent access into woodland.
	
View from western boundary of a small pond within woodland and ground flora dominated by bluebells.	View of northern boundary adjacent to the Colne floodplain grazing marsh.
	

Co44: Pits Wood

Main footpath through woodland parcel.	Mammal paths intersecting the ground flora dominated by dog's mercury.
	
Pond located towards the south west which had been recently cleared of woody vegetation.	Example of dead hedging using offcuts from hazel coppicing which is a good management technique to prevent access into woodland.
	
Ground disturbance from recreational bicycle access near the western boundary.	Southeastern section of the woodland showing scrub and canopy layer.

Co55: Seven Star Green

View of northern grassland section featuring ash trees, new saplings and gorse scrub.	View of central grassland section intersected by a footpath and driveways of residential properties.
	
Small pond located next to Turkey Cock Lane.	View of informal parking located adjacent to Turkey Cock Lane.
	
Evidence of tree management within the grassland.	Recent planting of several trees within the grassland.

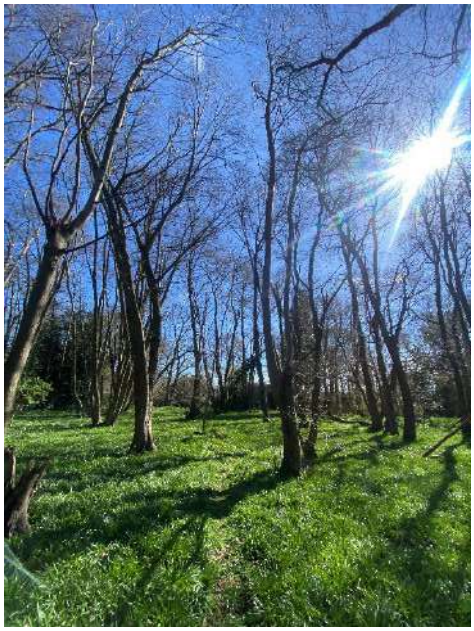
Co62: Stanway Pit

View from western boundary featuring willow, bramble and gorse scrub and sandy cliffs on the left.	View from southern boundary showing recent development of Lakeland Centre and tree planting within grassland.
	
Informal encampment with firepit located in the centre of the site.	Bare sandy soils featuring holes created by Hymenoptera.
	
View of north western section featuring bare sandy soils and gorse scrub.	View of north eastern section currently under development.
	

Co92: West House Wood

View of the woodland showing the ground carpeted with bluebells, coppicing and deadwood.	Image showing a clearly marked out path for visitors.
	
Log piles and holly management within the woodland.	View of the scrubby area to the south of the Site, outside the LoWS boundary.
	

Co94: Lexden Dyke

View of the Dyke and grassland area from the footpath to the east of the southern side of the Site.	View along the public footpath that ran along the southern side of the Site, between the golf course and the Site.
	
View of the woodland just south of the railway, showing a ground carpeted in bluebells, however a lack of understorey.	The dense scrubby edge along the eastern side of the north half of the Site.
	
The woodland the northern half of the Site with a ground carpeted with bluebells.	

Co104: Cymbeline Meadows

View of extensive floodplain grazing marsh from southern boundary.	View of river Colne and fencing to prevent erosion of river bank.
	
View of northern section marsh habitat with Charter Wood in the background.	View of private and inaccessible eastern section with evidence of informal camping and fly tipping.
	
Evidence of dog fouling adjacent to footpaths in the council owned and publicly accessible western section.	Numerous veteran trees and standing dead wood offering considerable bat roosting opportunities.
	

Co109: Colchester Roman Wall

View of southern section adjacent to Priory Street car park where fencing reduces access to wall.	View of southern section adjacent to Vineyard Street car park where cars can park directly adjacent to wall.
	
Northern section near Duncan's Gate where there is a high cover of bryophytes.	Western section on Balkerne Hill where there is a high cover of wall flowers.
	
North western section near Middleborough Roundabout where there is a high cover of ivy, Buddleia and bramble.	Eastern section in Castle Park where there is a high cover of brambles.

Co122: Middlewick Ranges

View of northern grassland which contained acidic indicator species.	View of gorse and broom scrub located in front of the butts in the south eastern section.
	
Young oak woodland located near the southern boundary.	Fencing of main rifle range with entry points for mammals.
	

Bare sandy soils with holes from Hymenoptera.	Evidence of littering and fire in the north eastern section near Abbot's Road.
	

Co125: The Moors

Litter present within the woodland along the south of the Site.	Public footpath through the south side of the Site, with the scrub / grassland mosaic on either side.
	
Broadleaved woodland in the south east of the Site.	View of the reedbeds along the River Colne.
	

Co128: Birch Brook Wood

Wet woodland comprised of willow, green alder and birch located towards the east.	Boardwalks over Birch Brook.
	
Recent scrub clearance and installation of a fence on the southern boundary.	Scrubby habitat on the northern boundary between Birch Brook wood and Donyland Wetlands LoWS.
	
Numerous veteran trees and standing dead wood offering considerable bat roosting opportunities.	Section of woodland where ground flora is dominated by red currant.

Co135: Donyland Wetlands

Green lane with mature oak trees along the west of the Site.	Large fishing lake within the southern half of the Site.
	
Grassland / scrub mosaic within the southern side of the Site, south of the fishing lake.	The northern half of the Site, visible only from a public footpath along the eastern side of the Site.

Co140: University Marshes

View from northern boundary of extensive reedbeds on both sides of the railway track.	Balancing pond located towards the northern boundary. Note the presence of buddleia next to the fence.
	
Reedbed area south of the railway with successional scrub habitat.	Wivenhoe Trail which runs along the southwestern boundary.
	
Stagnant water in close proximity to the Wivenhoe Trail.	Scrubby habitat progressed into oak woodland over Wivenhoe Trail.

Co142: Hythe Lagoons

View of southern lagoon and bird hide behind scrub habitat.	View of river Colne and footpath which creates eastern boundary.
	
View of drainage ditches and floodplain grazing marsh which surrounds the site to the south and east.	View of dense scrubby habitat located towards the northern boundary.
	
Fenced off inundated sections containing notable plant species such as dittander.	Entrance to the site from Haven Road in the north where scrub management is being undertaken.


Hythe Lagoons
Local Wildlife Site

Co143: Welsh Wood

Coppicing and a rich ground flora present within the woodland.	Good structural diversity within the woodland, and clear paths for visitors.
	
View of the northern part of the woodland.	Variegated yellow archangel within the woodland.
	

Co144: Rowhedge Pits

Litter present within the north of the Site in particular.	Good woodland edge along the road within the centre of the Site.
	
Ponds and wet depressions throughout the Site.	Evidence of fires within the Site.
	
Mountain biking trails and ramps within the Site.	

Co148: Wivenhoe Park

View of northern parkland with mature oak trees. Grass is cut annually here to allow more diverse flora to establish.	View of large lake within the Site.
	
Recent tree clearance and planting.	Soil erosion and compaction adjacent to footpaths and within root protection zones of mature trees.
	
Bramble and gorse scrub located to the west of Boundary road.	Presence of non-native and invasive cherry laurel along eastern boundary.

Co174: Gosbecks's Archeaological Park

Areas of grassland left long to provide structural diversity within the Site, increasing its ecological value.	Areas of grassland on Site recently cut.
	
Scrubby edges of the Site providing bird nesting habitat.	Signs had been placed throughout the Site to encourage walkers to keep dogs on leads to protect skylark.
	

Edge of the Site adjacent to farmland with no hedgerow present.	
	

PCLoWS1: Messing Park

Deadwood piles were present throughout the Site.	Large mature open grown trees scattered within the grassland.
	
Standing deadwood on Site.	Scrubby edges on Site.
	
Short, sheep grazed grassland with little structural diversity.	

PCLows8: Black Heath, Colchester

Woodland with a canopy dominated by Scots pine and a bramble understorey.	Section of the woodland with a ground flora dominated by bluebells.
	
Evidence of recent felling of Scots pine.	Evidence of fly tipping adjacent to footpaths.
	
Evidence of dog fouling and littering adjacent to footpaths.	
	

TE6: Wall's Wood

Salary Brook ran along the western edge of the Site.	Evidence of woodland coppice management.
	
A small amount of biking evidence was present within the woodland.