



Colchester Borough Council

**LANDSCAPE CAPACITY OF SETTLEMENT
FRINGES IN COLCHESTER BOROUGH**



Draft Final Report

August 2005

CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES


Environment Landscape Planning

Colchester Borough Council

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Signed: 
Position: Associate Technical Director
Date: 24 August 2005

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PREFACE

This Landscape Capacity of Settlement Fringes is one of a series of technical studies commissioned by Colchester Borough Council to provide the evidence base for the preparation of the new Local Development Framework.

The report assesses the potential capacity of the landscapes around the main settlements (Colchester, Marks Tey, Tiptree and Wivenhoe) to accommodate future strategic development needs in the Borough, taking into account the value of these landscapes and their sensitivity to change. The capacity assessment is not absolute, but provides an indication of the issues associated with development in any given location.

In addition to this report, the following separate technical reports have also been prepared by CBA:

- Colchester Borough Landscape Character Assessment
- Review of Countryside Conservation Areas in Colchester Borough

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful for the advice and guidance provided by the Client Project Group who steered the study. The Project Group comprised:

- Dave Cookson, Planning Policy Manager
- Emma Quantrill, Principal Planning Officer
- Adam John, Principal Landscape Architect
- Ruth Noble, Planning Officer

The CBA project team comprised:

- Dominic Watkins
- Emma Clarke
- Ross Allan
- Katy Stronach
- Jonathan Webb
- Marian Cameron

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 In September 2004, Colchester Borough Council commissioned Chris Blandford Associates (CBA) to prepare a borough-wide assessment of landscape character to inform the review of landscape policies as part of the new Local Development Framework (LDF) preparation process. As a discrete part of this work, CBA prepared this assessment of the landscape capacity of settlement fringes in Colchester Borough. This report should be read in conjunction with the Landscape Character Assessment.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

1.2.1 The key purpose of the study is to inform decisions about the potential scale and location of potential urban expansion around the fringes of the main settlements, should this be required to meet future strategic development needs in the Borough.

1.2.2 The key objective of the study is to:

- evaluate the potential capacity of the landscapes around the main settlements to accommodate new development, taking into account the value of these landscapes and their sensitivity to change.

1.3 Approach and Methodology

Scope

1.3.1 The evaluation considers the capacity of all undeveloped settlement edge landscapes to accommodate urban development. Land allocated for proposed housing development and land safeguarded for transport infrastructure is considered to be undeveloped land for the purposes of the capacity assessment.

1.3.2 The selection of settlements was undertaken by the Client Project Team. The selected areas reflected the principal settlements in the Borough and the principles of sustainable development, including the sequential approach to the location of development and access to key transport centres and other services.

1.3.3 The following Settlement Fringes were selected for assessment (see Figure 1):

- Colchester Fringes (divided into six assessment study areas);
- Marks Tey Fringes;
- Tiptree Fringes;
- West Mersea Fringes.

Approach

1.3.4 The general approach is in line with the guidance published by the Countryside Agency in conjunction with Scottish Natural Heritage - *Landscape Character Assessment - Guidance for England and Scotland* (2002), in particular the supplementary advice set out in the accompanying 'Topic Paper' entitled *Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity* (Swanwick, 2004).

1.3.5 The evaluation of the potential capacity of settlement fringes to accommodate development reflects (i) the inherent sensitivity of the landscape resource itself and (ii) the value attached to the landscape or to specific elements in it.

Evaluating Landscape Sensitivity

1.3.6 The sensitivity of each defined 'Landscape Setting Area' around the settlements was assessed in the field taking into account the following three key features:

- Intrinsic Landscape Qualities – the number of positive visual, ecological and historic qualities/features;
- Contribution to Distinctive Settlement Setting - the extent to which an area has distinctive backdrops, distinctive approaches, green corridor linkages, allows critical outward and inward views;
- Visual Characteristics (Visual Prominence and Intervisibility) – the extent to which an area has prominent topography and/or is widely visible from surrounding areas.

1.3.7 The degree of sensitivity is evaluated using the following three-point scale:

- **High Sensitivity** – Area unlikely to be able to accommodate the particular type of change without extensive degradation of character and value. Mitigation measures are unlikely to be able to address potential landscape/environmental issues.
- **Moderate Sensitivity** – Area may be able to accommodate the particular type of change with some degradation of character and value, but mitigation measures would be required to address potential landscape/environmental issues.
- **Low Sensitivity** – Area should be able to accommodate the particular type of change with only very limited, if any, degradation of character and value. Mitigation measures should be able to address all potential landscape/environmental issues.

Evaluating Landscape Value

1.3.8 The evaluation of landscape value is set out in the Review of Countryside Conservation Areas report, which was used to inform this capacity study.

Defining Landscape Capacity

1.3.9 ‘Landscape Setting Areas’ with the greatest potential capacity to accommodate development without significant degradation of character and value include those areas assessed as being of low sensitivity and low landscape value.

1.3.10 Other areas of higher landscape sensitivity and value where offer greater constraints to development: however, these areas may offer opportunities for new/extended ‘green infrastructure’ provision and environmental enhancement that can help mitigate the effects of development. The capacity assessment is therefore not absolute, but provides an indication of the issues associated with development in any given location.

2.0 COLCHESTER FRINGES

Colchester Southern Fringes

Character Area Profiles

A4, A5, A6, and B2a, B3, B6, B7

Fringe 1 - Eight Ash Green to Gosbecks (see Figure 2)

Sensitivity and Value

Landscape Setting Areas	Intrinsic Landscape Qualities			Contribution to Distinctive Settlement Setting			Visual Characteristics						Landscape Sensitivity			Landscape Value		
	Many	Some	Few	Very Important	Partial	Very Limited	Visual Prominence			Intervisibility			High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low
							High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low						
1		•			•			•				•				•	•	
2			•			•		•			•			•				•
3			•		•			•			•			•				•
4	•				•		•				•		•					•

Landscape Setting Area 1

Analysis

- Flat to gently sloping landscape with a tributary valley of the River Colne running through the northern part of Eight Ash Green;
- Main railway line crosses the area (lined on both sides with vegetation) forming a green corridor;
- Medium to large arable fields with gappy field boundaries;
- Setting area is divided into two parts by a large triangular patch of woodland;
- Setting area provides visual and physical separation between Colchester settlement fringe and Eight Ash Green.

Capacity

- Limited

Landscape Setting Area 2

Analysis

- Generally flat topography, sloping down gradually in the north-eastern corner of the area;
- Large industrial Business Park (Tollgate) to the west of Tollgate Road containing a mixture of large shops (for example, Sainsbury's and Comet) which is surrounded to the south by a former sand and gravel pit (within a slight depression) now covered by rough grassland;
- Views to the harsh urban edge of Tollgate Business Park from Church Lane;
- Straight (Roman) road connects the settlement fringe of Colchester with Stanway, ribbon-like settlement that is surrounded by small arable fields with intact field boundaries.

Capacity

- Potential

Landscape Setting Area 3

Analysis

- Generally flat topography, sloping down towards the start of the Roman River Valley to the southwest of the area;
- Large areas of sand and gravel pits (some active and some disused) which contribute to a partly degraded character;
- Sand and gravel extraction areas are immediately surrounded by large areas of degraded rough grassland and large arable fields with intact field boundaries;
- Modern housing development within former gravel working area at Stanway pit, where houses are laid out in close proximity to a lake;
- Open views across sand and gravel pits to Colchester settlement fringe, which has a harsh urban edge around the new development at Stanway Pit;
- Open views out from new development to surrounding areas of arable farmland and rough grassland;
- Smaller-scale landscape pattern immediately adjacent to the urban edge between Heath Road and Warren Lane, where a mixture of small to medium-sized regular arable fields with intact field boundaries and orchards provide a green setting whilst limiting views from and into the settlement edge from sand and gravel pits to the south.

Capacity

- Potential

Landscape Setting Area 4

Analysis

- Topography slopes generally upwards to the south, providing views over the northern slopes of the Wooded Roman River Valley;
- Gosbecks archaeological park contains earthwork remains of a Roman temple, theatre, a stretch of a Roman road and substantial evidence of fields and trackways of Iron Age and Roman date, which are positive historic features;
- The harsh urban edge new development at Cunobelin Way and Gosbecks View is highly visible from Gosbecks archaeological park and other areas within the landscape setting area;
- Visibility of the setting are from areas of landscape further to the south is blocked by several medium and large patches of woodland within the Roman river valley to the south (for example Butcher's Wood/Oliver's Thicks – situated upon a small tributary valley of the Roman River);
- Parts of Butcher's Wood/Oliver's Thicks are also designated as a SINC, providing a positive ecological feature within the landscape setting area.

Capacity

- Potential

Fringe 2 - Gosbecks to Berechurch (see Figure 3)

Sensitivity and Value

Landscape Setting Areas	Intrinsic Landscape Qualities			Contribution to Distinctive Settlement Setting			Visual Characteristics						Landscape Sensitivity			Landscape Value		
	Many	Some	Few	Very Important	Partial	Very Limited	Visual Prominence			Intervisibility			High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low
							High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low						
5		•		•				•			•			•			•	•
6		•				•		•			•			•				

Landscape Setting Area 5

Analysis

- Topography slopes gently downwards from the settlement edge towards the Roman River valley in the south;

- Harsh urban edges are visible around Gosbecks Farm and along parts of Maypole Green Road;
- A linear green corridor of small woodland patches/groves (some of which are designated as SINCS) align the northern slopes of the Roman River valley, providing a distinctive southern backdrop to the landscape setting area;
- Clear views can be obtained of Gosbecks archaeological park (within the adjacent landscape setting area) fields to the south of Gosbecks Road. The area is intervisible with other (horizontally adjacent) setting areas; however, visibility into the area from the south/southeast is limited by patches/groves of woodland on the northern slopes of the Roman River valley.

Capacity

- Limited

Landscape Setting Area 6

Analysis

- Topography is gently sloping towards the south, with a higher ridge at Roman Way Camp;
- The landscape setting area currently forms a green wedge, which runs southwards out of the city and separates settlement areas to the east and west, punctuated with military buildings/barrack, allotment gardens and cemeteries. At present, much of the area comprises construction sites for the new garrison, which will occupy the green wedge and is set to provide new military villages with areas of open space and green links (<http://www.colchester-regen.co.uk/garrison.asp>);
- The area is highly visible from adjacent settlement areas, however a number of existing green lines of vegetation (in tact field boundaries) break up the space and limit views across the area from east to west;
- Visible remains of several positive historic features are found within the settlement area, consisting of the WWII pillboxes, spigot mortar emplacements and a military air raid shelter.

Capacity

- Potential

Fringe 3 - Middlewick, the Hythe and Rowhedge (see Figure 4)

Sensitivity and Value

Landscape Setting Areas	Intrinsic Landscape Qualities			Contribution to Distinctive Settlement Setting			Visual Characteristics						Landscape Sensitivity			Landscape Value		
							Visual Prominence			Intervisibility								
	Many	Some	Few	Very Important	Partial	Very Limited	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low
7	•			•			•			•			•			•		
8	•				•			•			•			•			•	
9	•			•				•			•		•			•		
10		•			•			•			•			•		•		
11	•			•			•			•			•			•		
12		•		•			•			•			•				•	

Landscape Setting Area 7

Analysis

- The western half of this character area is covered by a large area of woodland (Friday Wood), which provides a distinctive wooded backdrop to the settlement edge at Blackheath and encompassing Berechurch Hall Camp;
- The eastern half of the area is covered by a large number of smaller patches and groves of woodland, which extend from Friday Wood in the west;
- These woodland areas are situated at the top on the northern slopes of the Roman River valley. They shield views into and out of the settlement and provide a green setting for Colchester settlement edge;
- The woodland areas are visible from several surrounding landscape setting areas as landscape features on the horizon.

Capacity

- Limited

Landscape Setting Area 8

Analysis

- Topography slopes gently downwards in the east towards the slopes of the Colne River Valley;
- Middlewick ranges (predominantly comprising tall sward and scrubby acidic grassland - designated as a SINC) are situated directly adjacent to the urban edge along Abbot's Road;
- Views across the ranges can be gained from the north and east settlement edges, towards streamside vegetation, woodland and scrub which aligns Birch Brook (a tributary of the River Colne);
- This vegetation limits views to and from adjacent landscape setting areas to the south (area 9) and provides a distinctive southern backdrop to the landscape setting area;
- Positive visible historic features comprise a pillbox and spigot mortar emplacement at the western periphery of Middlewick ranges (junction of Mersea Road and Queen Elizabeth Way).

Capacity

- Limited

Landscape Setting Area 9

Analysis

- Topography slopes downwards from a high point, to the south towards the Roman River valley and to the north-east to Birch Brook stream corridor;
- The area comprises a mix of large, medium and small fields, with relatively intact field boundaries;
- The landscape setting area has a wooded backdrop to the south-east (comprising Donyland large woodland area, parts of which are designated SSSI and SINC). This vegetation limits views into the setting area from the south-east, however, open views of the area can be gained from the settlement edge along Blackheath Road/Roman Hill;
- Streamside vegetation aligning the Black Brook to the north, limits intervisibility with Middlewick ranges (setting area 8).

Capacity

- Limited

Landscape Setting Area 10

Analysis

- This landscape setting area aligns both sides of Rowhedge Road and provides physical and visual separation between Colchester settlement edge in the north and Rowhedge settlement edge to the south;
- Topography falls away to the east, sloping gradually downwards towards the western slopes of the Colne valley;
- Landscape setting area is predominantly comprised of medium to large arable fields with gappy field boundaries;
- To the east of Rowhedge Road, small patches of woodland (one of which is a designated SINC) frame views across Hythe Marshes (setting area 11) towards the Colne Valley floor and the eastern valley sides of the Colne;
- The landscape setting area is visible from Hythe Marshes and the eastern Colne valley sides (to the south-west of Wivenhoe);
- Views into the area from the southern edges of Colchester and the northern edge of Wivenhoe are limited by patches of vegetation and hedged field boundaries.

Capacity

- Limited

Landscape Setting Area 11

Analysis

- This landscape setting area encompasses western slopes of the Colne valley, which gradually falls towards the river and valley bottom;
- Habitats within the area comprise small patches of woodland, ponds and grasslands (Hythe marshes) which are designated as a SINC;
- Sewage works within the industrial estate at the south-eastern settlement edge of Colchester (west of the river) are shielded from the setting area by a linear strip of vegetation, which limits views southwards into the area;
- The area is highly visible from the University of Essex (on the eastern side of the River) and also from certain locations along Rowhedge road and also from the new harsh urban settlement edge to the north of Marsh crescent (Wivenhoe);
- Clear views of the eastern valley sides (setting area 12) can be gained from Hythe marshes, which are generally open in character.

Capacity

- Limited

Landscape Setting Area 12

Analysis

- This area comprises patches of drained rough grassland adjacent to the River Colne. A railway line and electricity pylons area visible detractors within the landscape corridor;
- The area provides visual and physical separation between the University of Essex campus and the River Colne;
- Occasional lines of deciduous trees provide some division within an otherwise open landscape;
- Open views of the setting area can be gained from the University campus buildings and access road (within setting area 14);
- The area is also highly visible from landscape setting area 11 (on the western side of the river);
- Views to tall buildings/harsh urban edge within the University of Essex campus;
- Topography slopes gradually upwards (eastern valley side of the River Colne) with the University buildings overlooking the setting area.

Capacity

- Limited

Fringe 4 - Greenstead, the University of Essex and Wivenhoe (see Figure 5)

Sensitivity and Value

Landscape Setting Areas	Intrinsic Landscape Qualities			Contribution to Distinctive Settlement Setting			Visual Characteristics						Landscape Sensitivity			Landscape Value			
							Visual Prominence			Intervisibility									
	Many	Some	Few	Very Important	Partial	Very Limited	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	
13		•		•				•						•			•		
14		•			•			•			•			•			•		
15	•				•		•				•			•			•		

Landscape Setting Areas	Intrinsic Landscape Qualities			Contribution to Distinctive Settlement Setting			Visual Characteristics						Landscape Sensitivity			Landscape Value		
							Visual Prominence			Intervisibility								
	Many	Some	Few	Very Important	Partial	Very Limited	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low
16	•			•				•			•		•				•	
17		•				•			•			•			•			•
18		•			•			•			•			•				•

Landscape Setting Area 13

Analysis

- This area provides a setting for the southern edge of Rowhedge;
- The topography is predominantly flat in close proximity to the settlement edge and slopes down to the Roman river valley in the south (which is a designated SSSI);
- The area includes the eastern half of Donyland woods (SINC) and medium to large arable fields, divided in places by thick strips of deciduous trees;
- There is a harsh urban edges around the warehouses to the south east of Rowhedge, which is visible from the Roman River valley corridor;
- Views from other setting areas to the northwest and Rowhedge settlement edge are limited by Donyland Woods;
- Long views within the setting area are limited by thick strips of woodland at field boundaries;
- Donyland woods provide a distinctive backdrop to the setting of Rowhedge.

Capacity

- Limited

Landscape Setting Area 14

Analysis

- Topography encompasses the fairly steeply sloping southern valley sides of the Salary Brook (a tributary of the River Colne) valley (parts of which are designated as SINC);

- The area comprises medium and large regular arable fields with intact hedged field boundaries, interspersed with patches of mixed woodland (for example Holme wood, Clinghoe hill wood and Thousand acres wood);
- Vegetation bordering the A133 (Clacton Road) limits view between this setting area and the grounds of the University of Essex to the south (setting area 15).

Capacity

- Limited

Landscape Setting Area 15

Analysis

- This area encompasses the campus of the University of Essex, which is separated from both Wivenhoe and southern Colchester;
- The campus area includes university buildings, parking, large areas of grassland and the landmark house and parkland (Post-Medieval Deer Park) of Wivenhoe lodge, parts of which are listed. Wivenhoe Park is also the site of a registered park and garden;
- Several groups of single mature deciduous trees are situated around the periphery of the parkland and parts of the area are also designated as a SINC;
- 19th century gate lodge (listed building) is situated to the east of Wivenhoe House;
- Topography is generally flat in the west and slopes gradually downwards towards the Colne valley to the east;
- Several of the tall buildings within the University campus have a harsh urban edge;
- Open views can be obtained across adjacent setting area (16) and over setting area 12 (the eastern slopes of the River Colne valley) towards the western valley slopes (setting area 11);
- The area is also highly visible from the Colne river valley corridor to the west.

Capacity

- Limited

Landscape Setting Area 16

Analysis

- This is the northern landscape setting area for Wivenhoe which provides a visual and physical gap between Wivenhoe and the University of Essex;

- The area consists of a mixture of medium and large arable fields with generally intact field boundaries;
- Patches of harsh urban edge are situated along the northeastern edge of Wivenhoe, however an area of woodland enfolds the northwestern settlement edge, providing a green edge and limiting views into and out of the settlement from the northwestern and western edges;
- Views of the river and along the Colne valley corridor can be gained from the western edges of the setting area;
- The topography is flat to the west and slopes downwards to the east towards the Colne valley.

Capacity

- Limited

Landscape Setting Area 17

Analysis

- This setting area comprises gravel extraction areas, with several flooded gravel pits alongside large arable fields with generally intact field boundaries;
- Patches of woodland surrounding the gravel pits (for example Gravel Pit Grove);
- Topography is generally flat and plateau-form, sloping down gradually to towards Wivenhoe in the west;
- Wivenhoe settlement edge is generally green, with a few patches of harsh urban edge when vegetation does not border housing;
- Several sports grounds within the area, (including the cricket ground which is alongside allotments and Wivenhoe Football Club Grounds);
- A small waterbody to the south of Broad Lanes is designated as a SSSI.

Capacity

- Potential

Landscape Setting Area 18

Analysis

- This setting area comprises large arable fields with low, gappy field boundaries;
- A railway line crosses the area, but is shielded in places by lines of deciduous vegetation;

- Part of the river Colne corridor and belts of woodland within the area are designated as SSSI;
- Open views across the River Colne towards the estuary can be gained from the southern half of the area;
- Topography slopes gently downwards towards the river in the southwest;
- Wivenhoe settlement edges are generally green within this setting area;
- There is little intervisibility with the sand and gravel extraction areas to the north (area 17), however glimpse views both areas are obtainable from Alresford Road.

Capacity

- Potential

Colchester Northern Fringes

Fringe 5-8 - Welshwood Park (see Figures 6-8)

Sensitivity and Value

Landscape Setting Areas	Intrinsic Landscape Qualities			Contribution to Distinctive Settlement Setting			Visual Characteristics						Landscape Sensitivity			Landscape Value		
							Visual Prominence			Intervisibility								
	Many	Some	Few	Very Important	Partial	Very Limited	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low
1	•			•			•			•			•			•	•	
2	•			•				•			•		•				•	
3		•			•		•				•			•			•	
4	•			•			•			•			•			•	•	
5		•			•			•			•			•			•	
6			•		•					•		•		•			•	•
7		•			•					•		•		•			•	•
8	•				•					•		•		•			•	
9	•			•			•			•			•			•		

Landscape Setting Area 1 (Figure 6)

Analysis

- The topography of this landscape setting area slopes quite steeply downwards in a south-westerly direction towards the valley of the River Colne;
- There are two main large blocks of woodland within the setting area: Hillhouse Wood and Stitching Wood, which are also designated SINCs;
- The area consists predominantly of arable fields with intact field boundaries, several of which are mature;
- Views south down the Colne river valley slopes to the floor of the river valley can be gained in places from the landscape setting area;
- The boundary between settlement edge and open countryside is quite marked within this landscape setting area, especially when moving westwards along Cook's Hall Road.

Capacity

- Limited

Landscape Setting Area 2 (Figure 6)

Analysis

- The topography within this area is much flatter than within a adjacent landscape setting areas;
- There are several medium-sized patches of woodland. A large area of woodland (Pitchbury Wood) is situated to the north east of the setting area and blocks views into the setting area from countryside further to the northeast;
- Pitchbury Woods are a designated SINC;
- Arable fields align both sides of Nayland Road;
- Views east across the landscape setting area towards Pitchbury Woods can be gained from Nayland Road;
- Pitchbury Ramparts although at distance from the settlement edge (situated to the south of Pitchbury Woods) are a Scheduled Monument and provide a positive archaeological and historical feature within the landscape setting area.

Capacity

- Limited

Landscape Setting Area 3 (Figure 7)

Analysis

- Topography within this landscape setting area is distinctive in that it slopes relatively steeply downwards towards the Colne River Valley, which sweeps along the southern boundary of the setting area and the smaller tributary valley of St. Botolph's Brook. Although West Bergholt is connected to Braiswick and the rest of Colchester by a road bridge which crosses the A12, the topography of the area separates the landscape setting areas of West Bergholt from areas of landscape to the east of the A12, providing a distinct setting to West Bergholt;
- The setting area consists predominantly of arable fields and areas of rough grassland with several mature field boundaries;
- Harsh urban edges along the eastern edges of West Bergholt can be viewed when travelling north westwards along Braiswick Road after crossing the road bridge;
- This approach along Braiswick Road is distinctive, with views along the road corridor and into the Colne Valley;
- Views down into the Colne Valley can also be obtained from locations along the southern settlement edge and from the Southern End of Bourne Road. Views are, however, restricted in places by mature vegetation at field boundaries.

Capacity

- Limited

Landscape Setting Area 4 (Figure 7)

Analysis

- This landscape setting area is covered by part of the slopes and valley floor of the River Colne. Topography slopes downwards in a southerly direction from the southern settlement edge of Braiswick and downwards in a northerly direction from the northern settlement edge of Colchester, towards the flat floor of the Colne River valley;
- The area contains part of the distinctive corridor of the River Colne, lined with vegetation in places, and meandering through its floodplain;
- The area provides the southern landscape setting to Braiswick and a northern landscape setting to Colchester;

- There is a distinctive gateway at the eastern end of the Avenue of Remembrance as views of the river corridor to the north end and the western extents of Colchester settlement begin;
- The area comprises a predominantly a mixture of grassland and riverside habitats, with arable fields and some mature field boundaries on the northern valley slopes;
- A belt of mature vegetation runs north-south along the route of Lexden Dyke, and also aligns the railway corridor;
- The golf course to the East of Baker's Lane, close to Braiswick exerts a more suburban influence over the landscape setting area;
- The area of playing fields to the west of Colchester Institute also have a suburban feel and a line of harsh urban edge to the east of Fitzwilliam road can be viewed from the western extent of these playing fields;
- Views northwards of the flat River Colne corridor can be gained from the Avenue of Remembrance;
- The southern half of the river corridor within this setting area is a designated SINC, along with West House wood, to the west of Braiswick and Spring Grove to the west of the A12 corridor;
- Scheduled Monument designation covers a relatively large area within the playing fields of and surrounding Colchester Institute, which was once the site of Romano-British temples, Roman Kilns, a Roman Armoury and other Roman Buildings.

Capacity

- Limited

Landscape Setting Area 5 (Figure 7)

Analysis

- There is a flat area of plateau, containing the golf course to the north of Braiswick and east of A12. Generally, topography slopes downwards to the west of the golf course into the valley of St. Botolphs Brook and also gradually downwards towards the Colne River Valley within and towards the Mile End residential area;
- The tributary of St. Botolphs Brook, which runs through the setting area, provides physical and visual separation between West Bergholt and Horkesley Heath to the north of the valley and Colchester to the South;
- This setting area forms the northern landscape setting for Braiswick and the western edge of Colchester at Mile End;

- The area comprises relatively large arable fields with several intact, mature field boundaries to the north of Braiswick;
- The large golf course to the north of Braiswick exerts a suburban influence over the western half of the landscape setting area, which also feels partly contained to the east by the corridor of the A12;
- There is a harsh urban edge aligning new development along Howards Croft Road (within Mile End residential area), which overlooks a large area of mown amenity grassland playing fields;
- Views of arable fields to the north can be gained from Fords Lane, views back to Colchester from West Bergholt and Horkesley Heath, however, are generally restricted by topography and mature vegetation.

Capacity

- Limited

Landscape Setting Area 6 (Figure 7)

Analysis

- Topography slopes very gradually upwards to the north across the setting area;
- The area consists of relatively flat, large arable fields with some intact field boundaries;
- Two large areas of playing and sports fields (key open spaces) to the north of Mile End Road extend a suburban influence northwards from the settlement edge;
- There are several areas of new development at the settlement edge within this landscape setting area e.g. to the east of Brinkley Grove road - Brinkley Chase, at the crossroads of Severalls Lane and the eastern end of Mile End road;
- There is also a large warehouse (at time of survey – under construction) with a harsh urban edge, which can be viewed looking south from Severalls Lane (at the junction with the lane leading to Whitehouse Farm);
- The A12 corridor crosses the landscape setting area, providing physical and visual (with belts of mature vegetation aligning the road) separation between Colchester and landscape/villages to the north;
- The grounds of Severalls Hospital are designated as a Grade II registered Park and Garden (English Heritage) and provide a positive historic contribution to the landscape setting area;

- To the south of Mill road within the urban area, woodland within High Woods Country Park is designated ancient and semi-natural woodland and a large proportion of the Country Park is a designated SINC;
- There is also a Special Protection Area aligning Straight Road, leading to Boxted.

Capacity

- Potential

Landscape Setting Area 7 (Figure 8)

Analysis

- Topography rises northwards across the landscape setting area, moving away from the settlement edge;
- The setting area is split in half to the north and south by the A12 corridor and Colchester settlement is contained to the south of the dual carriageway;
- The infrastructure of the A12 corridor has a dominant influence on the character of the setting area, disturbing tranquillity;
- The settlement edge within this landscape setting area is predominantly made up of large commercial buildings within Colchester Business Park;
- Kiln Wood area of ancient replanted woodland to the south of Langham Lodge is designated as a SINC;
- To the north of the A12 corridor, land use consists of predominantly arable fields.

Capacity

- Limited

Landscape Setting Area 8 (Figure 8)

Analysis

- Overall the topography within this landscape setting area is flat and slopes very gradually downwards in a south-easterly direction;
- Bullock Wood, a large geometric area of woodland is situated adjacent to the east of the settlement edge and is, surrounded by small, geometric areas of orchards nestled to the north of the woodland;
- Bullock Wood is also a designated SSSI and an area of semi-natural ancient woodland;
- Infrequent belts of vegetation align the A120 corridor;

- Land use predominantly comprises arable fields with several intact, mature field boundaries;
- Views of harsh sections of urban edge can be gained when looking northwestwards along Colchester Road, however, much of the urban edge is screened by vegetation;
- Fox Street, small linear hamlet is distinctly separated from Colchester by arable fields, which align both sides of Colchester Road;
- The western half of Ardleigh reservoir follows the alignment of the A120 to the north of the road.

Capacity

- Limited

Landscape Setting Area 9 (Figure 8)

Analysis

- This landscape setting area contain valley slopes floor of the relatively narrow corridor of the Salary Brook, a tributary of the River Colne. The valley sides, are therefore relatively steep to the east of Welsh Wood to the northwest and on the opposite side of the valley;
- Colchester's southern urban edge (Greenstead) occupies higher land and the upper slopes of the river valley to north;
- Two areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland are situated within the landscape setting area to the east of the settlement edge: Welshwood, the Broomhangings and Churn Wood;
- The attractive valley sides are highly visible looking south along Bromley Road;
- At the settlement edge along Welshwood park road, large, detached unusual houses area situated amongst mature trees within a glade;
- There is strong landscape structure within the fields aligning Crockleford/Bromley Road with several distinctive landscape features;
- Paddocks with wooden post and rail fencing are also situated along the northern side of Crockleford/Bromley Road;
- There is a tranquil and peaceful character, with several views to a wooded skyline and green settlement edges.

Capacity

- Limited

3.0 MARKS TEY FRINGES

See Figure 9

Character Area Profiles

B4, B2a, B2, A2

Sensitivity and Value

Landscape Setting Areas	Intrinsic Landscape Qualities			Contribution to Distinctive Settlement Setting			Visual Characteristics						Landscape Sensitivity			Landscape Value		
							Visual Prominence			Intervisibility								
	Many	Some	Few	Very Important	Partial	Very Limited	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low
1		•		•				•					•				•	
2		•			•			•					•				•	
3	•				•			•						•			•	
4	•			•				•				•			•		•	
5		•			•			•					•				•	
6		•			•			•					•				•	•

Landscape Setting Area 1

Analysis

- Topography is very gently rolling and sloping gradually upwards to the north;
- Great Tey Road, which is relatively narrow and lined along one side, runs northwards through the setting area leading to Great Tey;
- The narrow Church Lane, aligned with bungalows at the settlement edge, leads to an attractive vernacular church (a positive historic feature within the setting area);
- Moving northwards away from the settlement edge towards Great Tey, land use comprises predominantly arable fields with mature hedge field boundaries in places;
- Mature field boundaries and small blocks of woodland generally restrict views southwards to the settlement edge from Great Tey Road;
- Views can be obtained of the attractive wooden tower and tiled spire of St. Andrews church to the east.

Capacity

- Limited

Landscape Setting Area 2

Analysis

- Topography slopes gradually upwards to the northeast and west;
- This area comprises predominantly arable fields, some of which have mature hedge field boundaries. Field boundaries immediately to the north of the settlement have more a suburban influence with the presence of some post and rail fencing;
- There are several dominant human infrastructure elements within the setting area. The A12 railway line with electrified lines and the A12 road corridor cross the landscape setting area;
- Visually intrusive nurseries along the settlement corridor (with many sheds on display), a mobile phone mast and associated conifer plantation and several car parks associated with Marks Tey station all assert further suburban influence over the southern edge of the setting area;
- A strip of harsh urban edge along Coggeshall road is dominant in views south from Church lane;
- The distinctive vernacular St. Andrews church is a positive historic feature within the setting area, with an unusual wooded tower and tiled spire;
- Two small areas of SINC woodland and a SSSI are situated within the setting area;
- Views north from the settlement edge comprise open countryside and views south of the settlement edge from the bend in Brook Road are generally screened by vegetation at field boundaries. From certain viewpoints, however, moving traffic on the main road and A12 corridor is perceptible within the view;
- Views of Marks Tey junction and across to modern northern residential edges of Copford can be gained from the southern edge of the landscape setting area.

Capacity

- Limited

Landscape Setting Area 3

Analysis

- The topography of the area slopes gradually upwards to the northeast across the landscape setting area;
- The area comprises predominantly arable fields, which are more open in places than within adjacent landscape setting areas. Mature hedge field boundaries are still present, but gappy in some places;
- There are few views back to the settlement edge from Daisy Green Road and Chippetts lane, most of which are shielded by vegetation at field boundaries;
- Mature vegetation aligns the railway and A12 road corridor which form the southern boundary of the setting area;
- There is a small, designated SINC to the northwest of Chippetts Farm.

Capacity

- Limited

Landscape Setting Area 4

Analysis

- Topography is most elevated in close proximity to the southern edge of Copford and slopes very gradually downwards towards the eastern extents of the wooded Roman River valley;
- There are two large areas of woodland within the landscape setting area - Gravelpit wood and Copfordhall woods, which screen the sewage works in views from the surrounding setting area;
- Patches of harsh urban edge along the southeastern settlement edge of Copford, can be viewed from School Road when looking northwards;
- The setting area comprises predominantly arable fields;
- Three adjacent patches of SINC woodland are located to the south of Copford and Copfordhall woods are also a designated SINC;
- At some distance from the southern settlement edge of Copford, an attractive black wooden vernacular structure marks the approach to the crossroads at Copford Green.

Capacity

- Limited

Landscape Setting Area 5

Analysis

- Topography slopes gradually upwards in a southwesterly direction across the landscape setting area;
- The area consists of predominantly arable fields with intact field boundaries, some of which are mature. There is also a patch of woodland to the east of Mill Road nurseries;
- Mill Road nursery and another nursery further to the west along London Road exert a Suburban influence within views north from within the setting area towards the settlement edge.

Capacity

- Limited

Landscape Setting Area 6

Analysis

- Overall topography is flat and slopes very gradually upwards in a south-westerly direction;
- The settlement edge is surrounded to the east by predominantly arable fields with mature field boundaries;
- The dominant A12 road and railway corridor cause visual intrusion into the setting area and disturb the tranquillity of the setting area;
- Views south into the landscape setting area can be gained from Coggeshall Road to the east of Honeylands Farm.

Capacity

- Limited

4.0 TIPTREE FRINGES

See Figure 10

Character Area Profiles

F1 and F2.

Sensitivity and Value

Landscape Setting Areas	Intrinsic Landscape Qualities			Contribution to Distinctive Settlement Setting			Visual Characteristics						Landscape Sensitivity			Landscape Value		
							Visual Prominence			Intervisibility								
	Many	Some	Few	Very Important	Partial	Very Limited	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low
1	•			•				•				•				•		
2		•			•			•				•			•			•
3	•			•				•				•				•		
4		•				•		•				•			•		•	•
5		•			•			•				•			•		•	

Landscape Setting Area 1

Analysis

- Topography sloping relatively steeply upwards in a north-westerly direction towards a broad ridge running to the northwest of Tiptree;
- The area comprises a mixture of small medium and large arable fields, mostly with intact field boundaries;
- Large woodland area (Pods Wood – designated SINC) and smaller patches of woodland such as Ransom’s Grove, limit views into and out of the area from the north and north-east;
- Pods wood provides a distinctive wooded skyline backdrop to the setting area in the north;
- Several key open spaces comprising playing fields and sports grounds associated with the school on Maypole Road;
- Settlement edges are generally green.

Capacity

- Limited

*Landscape Setting Area 2*Analysis

- Topography relatively steeply sloping upwards to the north-west (towards broad ridge) which limits views of Tiptree when moving northwards along Factory Road until in close proximity to the settlement edge;
- Distinctive approach to the area along Factory Road, with orchards on either side of the road, associated within Tiptree (preserves) factory;
- The setting area comprises medium and large arable fields with intact field boundaries and a medium-sized square patch of woodland (Birch Wood) which is designated as a SINC;
- Generally green urban settlement edge with harsher edges around the factory and buildings at the end of Cherry Chase.

Capacity

- Limited

*Landscape Setting Area 3*Analysis

- Tiptree Heath (a designated SSSI) consisting of remnant heathland, acidic grassland and dwarf shrubs cover, provides a distinctive landscape backdrop and dominant landscape feature to the south of the setting area;
- The area consists of a mixture of medium and large regular fields with some intact field boundaries and is situated on the higher slopes leading up to a broad ridge to the northwest;
- Settlement edges are generally green surrounding Tiptree Heath;
- Views of the edges of Tiptree Heath can be gained from the B1022; however, long distance views are generally shielded by vegetation on the heathland.

Capacity

- Limited

Landscape Setting Area 4

Analysis

- This landscape setting area is situated on top of a broad south-west running ridge;
- An area of sand and gravel pits and associated small ponds (designated as a SINC) form a distinctive feature in the centre of the setting area;
- A strip of thin, very regular linear fields expand from the north of Tiptree Heath appear to be associated with settlement pattern. These are surrounded to the north by large regular arable fields, with deciduous trees in generally intact hedgerows;
- Views can be gained from Windmill Hill southwards towards Tiptree and the harsh settlement edge of the new development west of Vine Road;
- There are several patches of harsh urban settlement edge along the western edge of Maldon Road.

Capacity

- Limited

Landscape Setting Area 5

Analysis

- The area is situated on top of a broad ridge;
- A very large irregular arable field (with Eden square woodland block at the centre) is situated adjacent to Messing Park with single mature deciduous trees around the periphery and within. This vegetation screens some views of the settlement edge from the north;
- The remainder of the area comprises a mixture of medium and large regular and irregular fields with intact field boundaries;
- The water tower within Tiptree is a prominent landmark in views towards the settlement;
- Perry's Wood and Hill Wood are designated SINC.

Capacity

- Limited

5.0 WEST MERSEA FRINGES

See Figure 11

Character Area Profiles

E1, C2 and C3

Sensitivity and Value

Landscape Setting Areas	Intrinsic Landscape Qualities			Contribution to Distinctive Settlement Setting			Visual Characteristics						Landscape Sensitivity			Landscape Value			
							Visual Prominence			Intervisibility									
	Many	Some	Few	Very Important	Partial	Very Limited	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	
1		•		•			•			•			•				•		
2			•		•			•			•			•				•	
3			•			•		•			•				•			•	

Landscape Setting Area 1

Analysis

- Topography slopes downwards from a high point/ridge just to the north of the settlement, towards the coastline (which is a designated SSSI);
- When approaching from the north across the Strood causeway, Colchester Road provides a distinctive approach to the setting area, with open views to the west across arable fields to the coastal channels and mainland coastal farmland;
- The landscape setting area comprises large open arable fields, across which, panoramic views of the Strood channel and coastal farmland to the north can be gained;
- The settlement edge is green in places to the north of Colchester Road, where vegetation frames views across the channel and coast;
- There are patches of harsh urban settlement edge to the north of Brickhouse Close and Whittaker Way;
- The open seascape (including saltmarshes and mudflats) provides a distinctive southern backdrop the area.

Capacity

- Limited

*Landscape Setting Area 2*Analysis

- Large arable fields with generally intact field boundaries,
- This area is situated on a relatively broad ridge which forms one of the highest points on the island;
- Short-distance views to the settlement edge (which is generally green in this location) can be gained from Dawes Lane in a southwesterly direction;
- There is some intervisibility with adjacent landscape setting area (1) however, topography and vegetation limit long distance views towards the coast from this area.

Capacity

- Limited

*Landscape Setting Area 3*Analysis

- This area comprises a mixture of medium and large arable fields with gappy field boundaries in places;
- Seaview Caravan park and the sewage works in close proximity to the urban edge (to the east of Seaview Avenue);
- Seaview Caravan park and sewage works;
- Harsh urban edge around Seaview Caravan park;
- Long distance views area generally blocked by vegetation at field boundaries and surrounding parts of the urban edge;
- Waldegraves Farm caravan site further to the east dominant landscape features;
- Views across the Blackwater estuary southwards towards the sea; (SSSI coastline);
- Topography slopes very gently downwards towards the coast in a south-easterly direction.

Capacity

- Potential