

Colchester City Council Settlement Evidence: Stage 2 October 2025



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Introduction

Colchester City Council has commenced work on reviewing the Local Plan. The Local Development Scheme indicates that member approval and public consultation will take place on the Preferred Options plan / November / December 2025 - January 2026. The plan will be revised and considered by Local Plan Committee for further consultation and agreement to Submit August/ September 2026. Submission for Independent Examination is anticipated by October 2026.

Local Plans provide the strategy and policies for shaping an area over the next 15 years. Plans must be consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Sustainable development is at the heart of the Local Plan.

The Settlement Evidence Stage 1 Report (November 2024) sets out the current profile for each settlement in Colchester and identified high level opportunities and constraints for each location. This Settlement Evidence Stage 2 Report is part of the Local Plan evidence base and sets out the background to the designation of Settlement Boundaries. It sets out the methodology the Council has considered, includes the assessments for each settlement, other background information that has informed the assessments and details of any proposed alterations to the Settlement Boundary.

Role of Settlement Boundaries

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Settlement boundaries are an essential tool for the management of development and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development by preventing the encroachment of development into the countryside, protecting the rural character of the area.

Areas outside of settlement boundaries are defined as 'Countryside'. Within the countryside there are a number of very small villages and hamlets and isolated clusters of dwellings which lack any community facilities or access to services and rely on nearby larger settlements to meet their daily needs.

Settlement Boundaries are currently defined in the Adopted Colchester Local Plan. As part of the Local Plan Review process, a review of the Settlement Boundaries is necessary to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and where appropriate, reflect proposals for new allocations for development.

The Preferred Options Local Plan Spatial Strategy

The Preferred Options Local Plan makes provision for growth and supporting infrastructure across the Colchester area to 2041. A sufficient number of homes have been provided in the plan to meet the overall housing requirement to 2041 as set out in The Local Plan Policy ST5: Colchester's Housing Needs.

Growth is directed across Colchester starting with the most sustainable and accessible locations in the urban area or close to, transport corridors and existing centres, where there tends to be a range of employment opportunities, facilities, services and travel choices for future communities.

Additionally, an appropriate level of growth is allocated within the large, medium and some small settlements, based on the opportunities and constraints of each settlement and informed by the wider evidence base. This can help support the long-term viability of services and facilities, which may otherwise be lost.

The growth needs of Colchester are balanced against the need to protect and enhance biodiversity, landscape and heritage. The highest areas of sensitivity are receiving the lowest levels of growth in this Local Plan. This approach also ensures that existing settlements maintain their distinctive character and role by avoiding harmful coalescence between them and through conserving their setting. New development will be required to respect the character and appearance of landscapes and the built environment and preserve or enhance the historic environment and biodiversity to safeguard the character of the City.

The Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community (TCBGC) and other large-scale developments will deliver substantial growth, enabling significant community benefits to be realised. Opportunities for growth along key transport corridors, particularly with access to the rail network are favoured subject to sufficient capacity on the network and/or appropriate mitigation to support any enhancement required.

The primary focus for growth is made through the allocations identified in the Local Plan, together with the existing commitments and TCBGC as set out in Policy ST5. Allocations are made in accordance with the settlement hierarchy set out below. The settlement hierarchy groups areas across Colchester based on their sustainability merits, size, function, opportunities and the services provided in each locality.

The Local Plan Settlement Hierarchy

Colchester Urban Area including City Centre
Growth and Opportunity Areas Hythe Opportunity Areas Magdalen Street Opportunity Area Marks Tey Growth Area Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community Growth Area
Large Settlements Tiptree West Mersea Wivenhoe
Medium Settlements Abberton and Langenhoe Boxted Chappel and Wakes Colne Copford Dedham and Dedham Heath Eight Ash Green Fordham Great Horkesley Great Tey Langham Layer de la Haye Rowhedge West Bergholt
Small Settlements Aldham Birch and Layer Breton

Copford Green Easthorpe East Mersea Fingringhoe Great Wigborough Little Horkesley Messing Mount Bures Peldon Salcott Wormingford
Countryside

Methodology

Settlement Boundary Review Principles

The principles from the Settlement Boundary Review undertaken for the adopted Local Plan are still relevant and have been used in this review. These principles are set out below.

1. Playing fields, open spaces and allotments should generally not be within the settlement boundary. However, if effectively enclosed by built-up development, they should be included but specifically protected from development.
2. Development which is of a dispersed built form and more loosely knit development should not be included in the settlement boundary or have a settlement boundary of its own.
3. Where a village hall or sports pavilion is effectively enclosed by the built form of the village, then it should be included in the settlement boundary. Any associated playing fields/open space should be specifically protected.
4. Where a village hall or sports pavilion is located on the edge of the settlement, adjoining the existing main built-up part of the village, then these buildings should be included in the settlement boundary. Associated playing fields/open space that lies beyond the hall or pavilion should be excluded.
5. Where a village hall or sports pavilion lies beyond the main built-up part of a settlement, it should not be included in the settlement boundary. Any associated playing fields/open space should also be excluded.
6. School buildings and associated playgrounds/playing fields that are effectively enclosed by built-up development should be included in the settlement boundary and the playgrounds/ playing fields specifically protected.
7. Where schools are located on the edge of the settlement and the buildings adjoin the main built-up part of the village then those buildings should be included in the settlement boundary. Associated playgrounds/playing fields that lie beyond the school buildings should be excluded.
8. Where schools are located on the edge of the settlement and the associated playgrounds/playing fields separate the school's buildings from the main built-up part of the settlement then both the buildings and the grounds should be excluded from the settlement boundary.

9. Churches and places of worship that are effectively enclosed by the built-up development of the settlement should be located within the settlement boundary. Where these buildings are on the edge or are detached from the main built-up part of the settlement, they should be excluded from the settlement boundary.
10. Farms should generally be excluded from the settlement boundary except where effectively enclosed by the built-up development of the settlement.
11. Gardens on the edge of the main built-up part of the settlement should generally be included in the settlement boundary following recognisable physical features where possible. Exceptions will be made in instances where:
 - a. The character of the area is considered to have more similarity to open countryside than the built-up area; or
 - b. The area provides an irregularity to the size and shape of the settlement boundary. An example would be where one garden in a row extends into the open countryside. The extended area may be excluded from the settlement boundary; or
 - c. Where the garden/grounds of a house/building on the edge of a settlement, extends considerably beyond the main built-up part of this settlement. In such cases this area may be partially or completely excluded from the settlement boundary, having regard to 1) and 2).
12. Rural Exception Sites should be excluded.
13. Allocations for market housing, employment development, community use and Gypsy & Traveller sites (and sites with planning permission for these uses) that are on the edge of the main built-up part of the settlement should be included in the settlement boundary.

Assessment Methodology

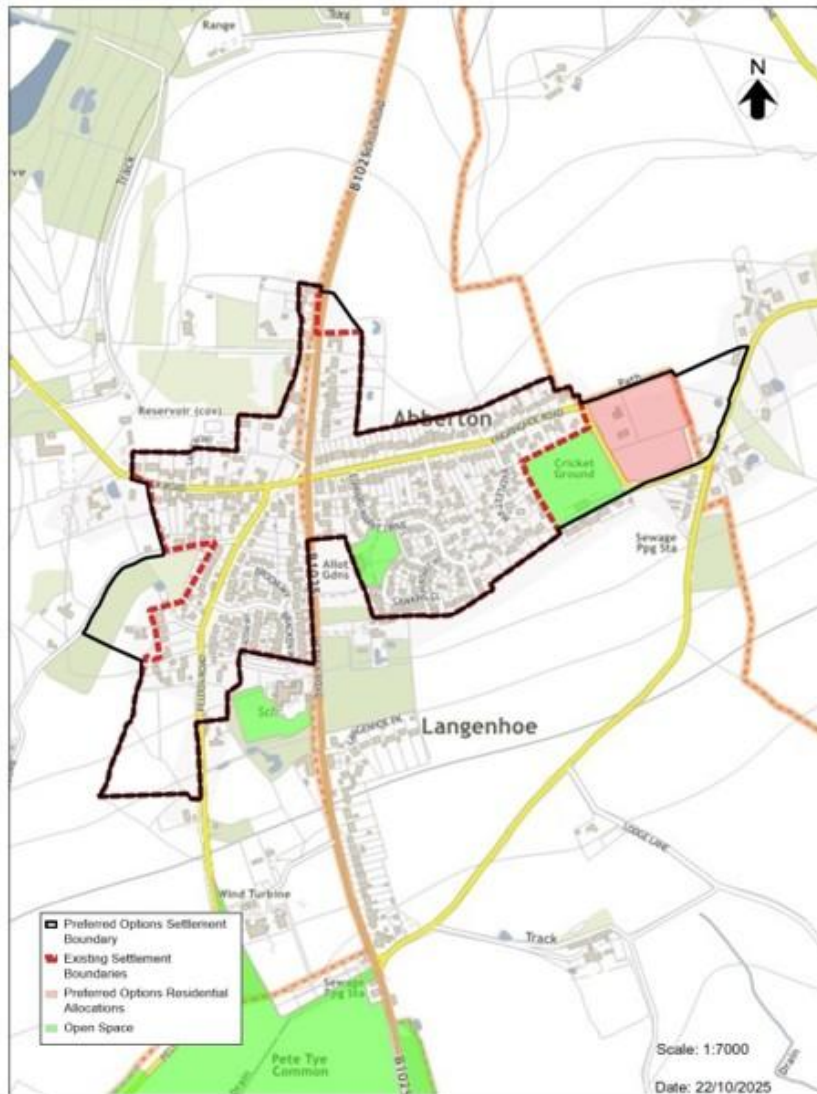
The existing Settlement Boundaries in the adopted Local Plan have been used as the starting point for this review. Based on the principles outlined above, a desktop review of the Settlement Boundaries has been undertaken which considers:

1. Planning permissions granted outside of existing boundary
2. Preferred Options Allocations
3. General amendments and corrections

A number of recommended amendments to the Settlement Boundaries have been defined and these are set out below.

Abberton and Langenhoe

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundaries



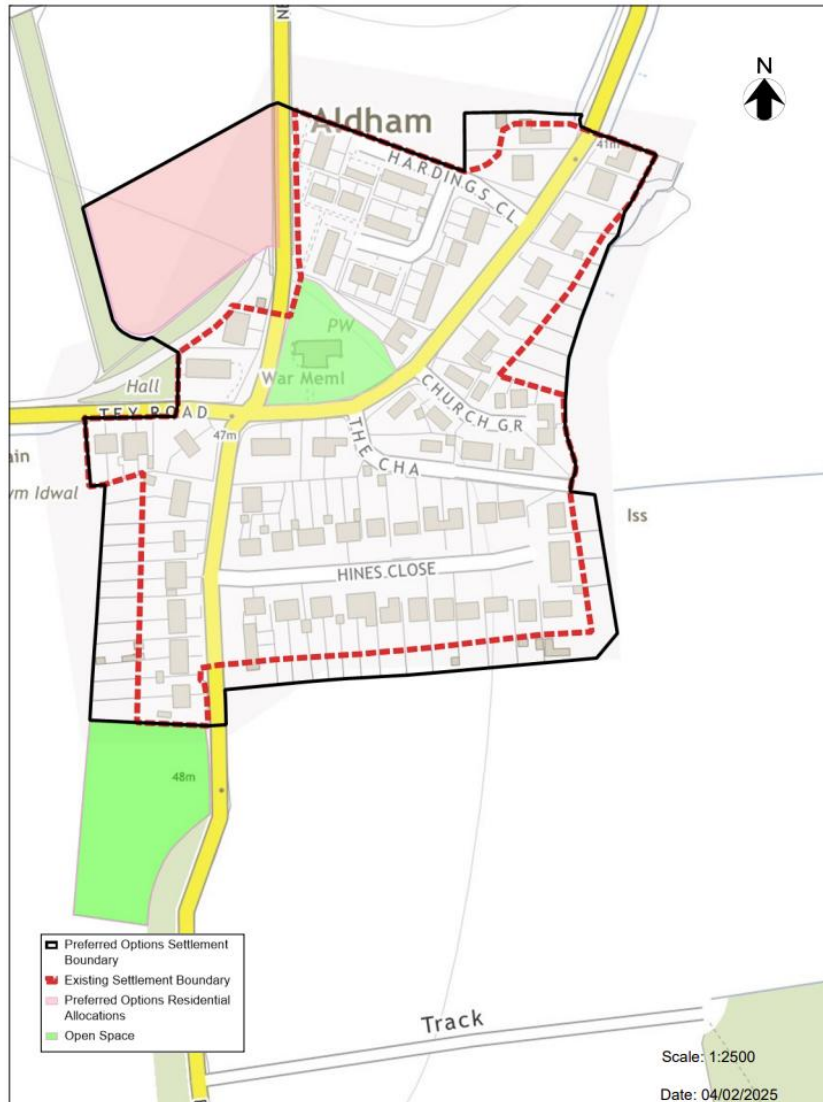
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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Reason
Extend to include Land at View Park and adjoining open space	To include proposed residential allocation
Extend to include planning application 213530 Land west of Peldon Road	Planning permissions granted outside of existing boundary
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

Aldham

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundaries



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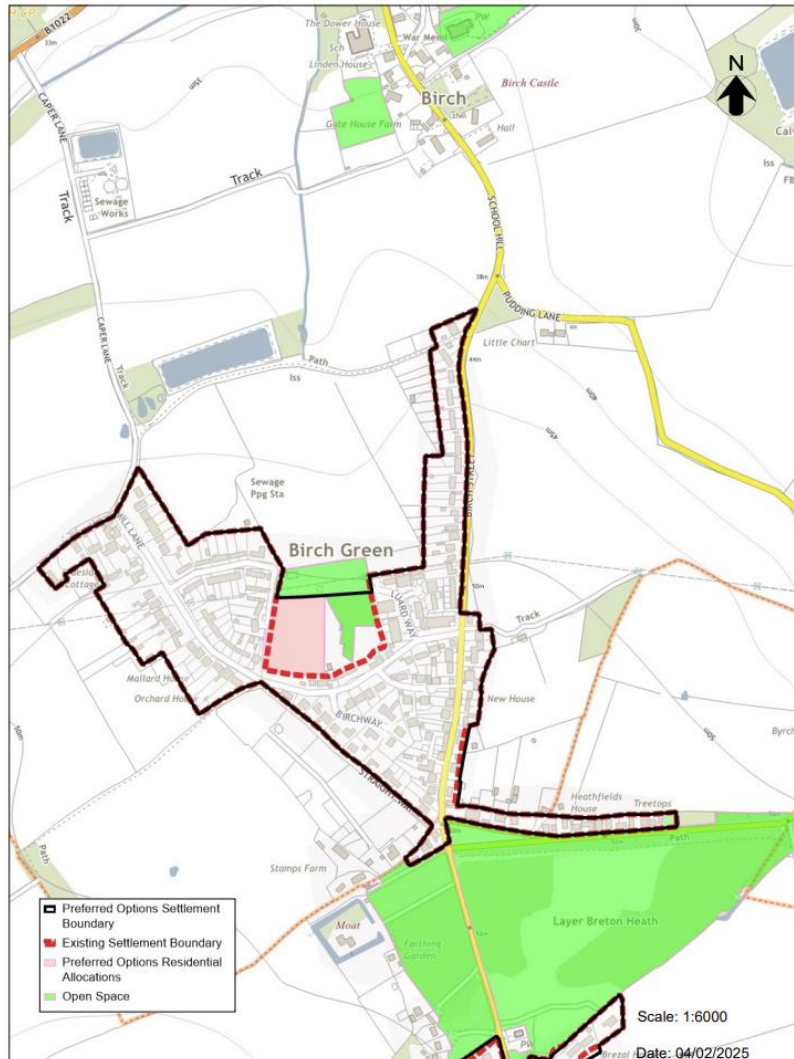
Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Extend to include Land off New Road	To include proposed residential allocation
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

Birch

Note Birch and Layer Breton grouped in the hierarchy - Settlement Boundary for Layer Breton illustrated on separate map.

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



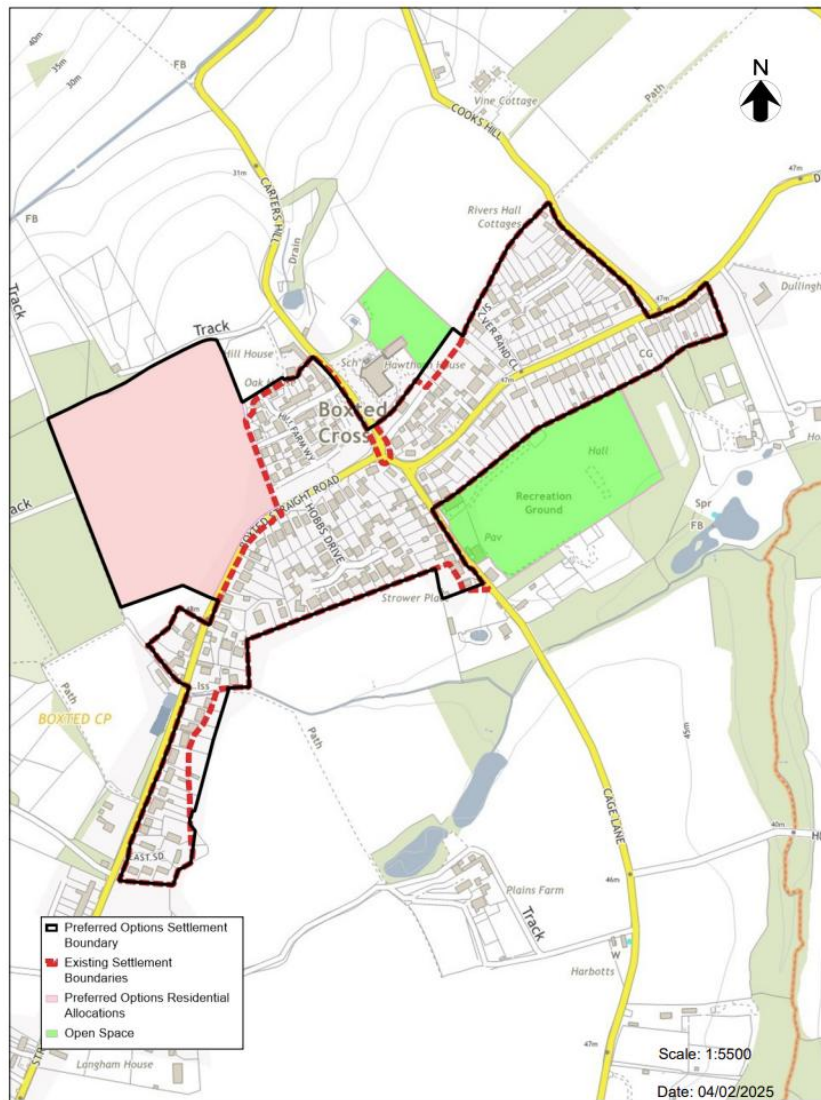
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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Extend to include Land at Birch Green and adjacent open space	To include proposed residential allocation

Boxted

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



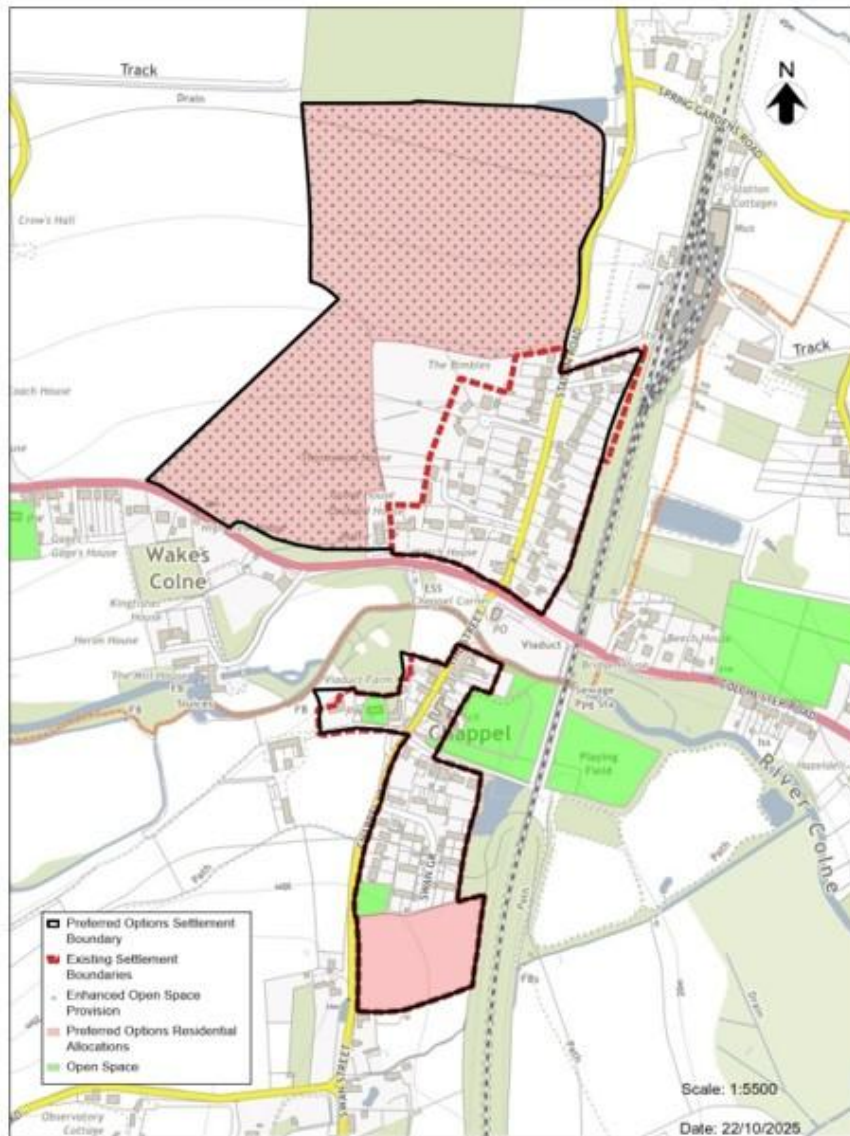
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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Extend to include Land North of Botted Straight Road	To include proposed residential allocation
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

Chappel and Wakes Colne

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



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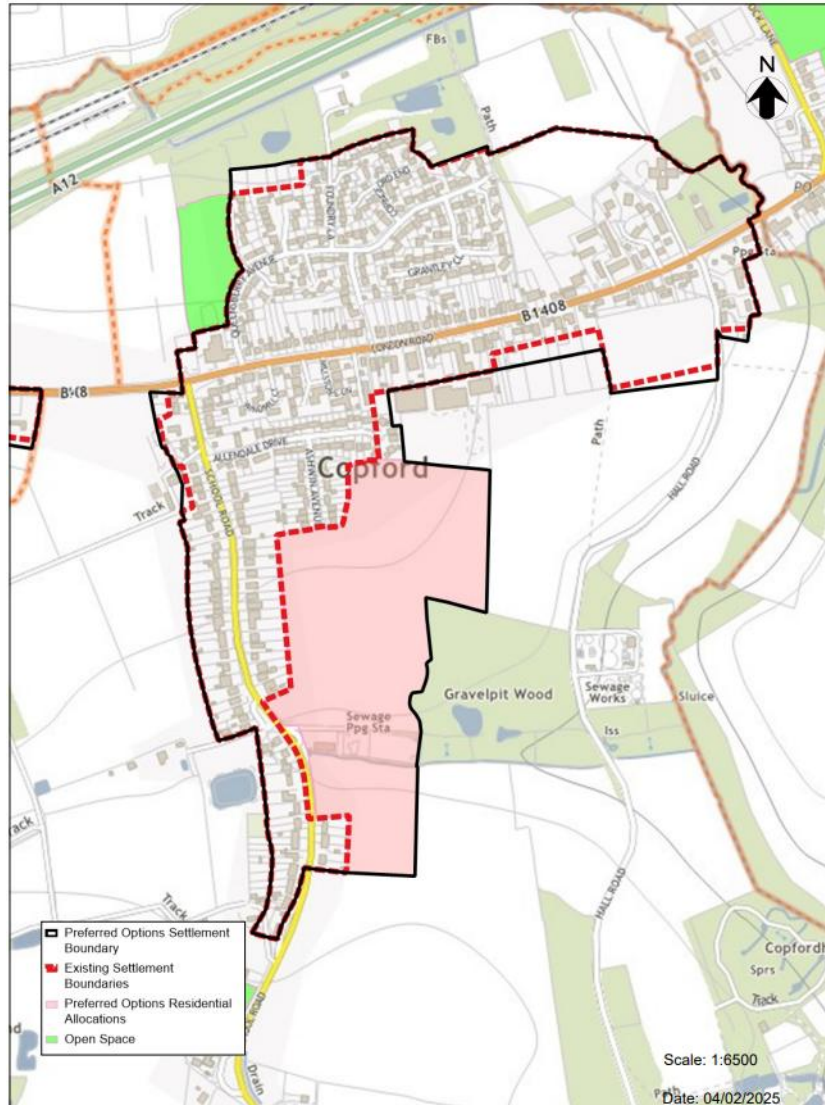
Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Extend to include land west of Station Road	To include proposed residential allocations
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

Copford, Copford Green and Easthorpe

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary

Copford



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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Extend to include land east of School Road	To include proposed residential allocation
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

Copford Green

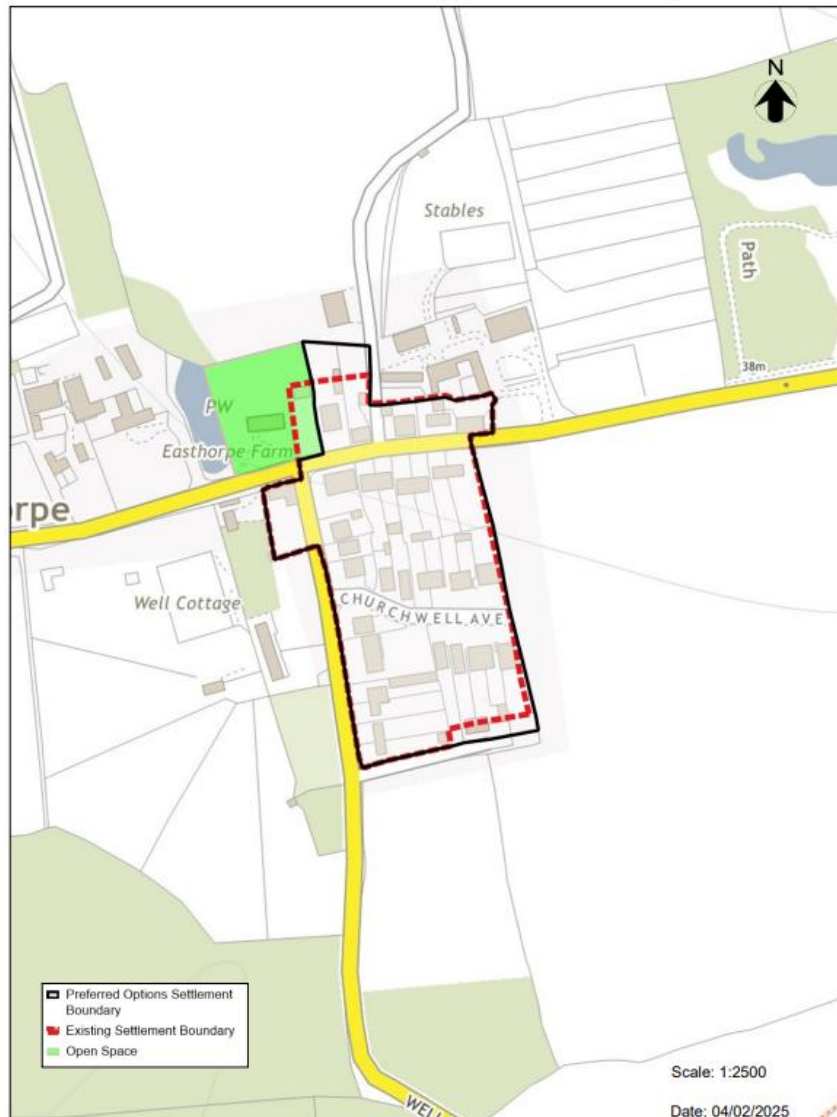


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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

Easthorpe



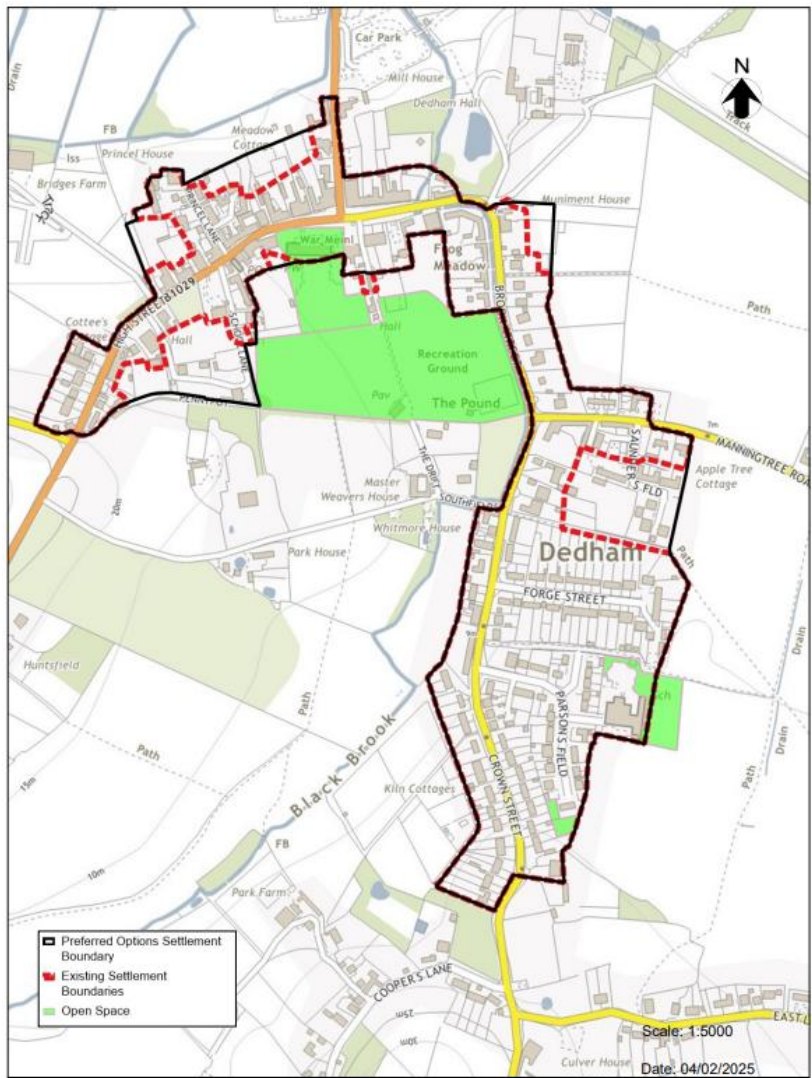
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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

Dedham

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



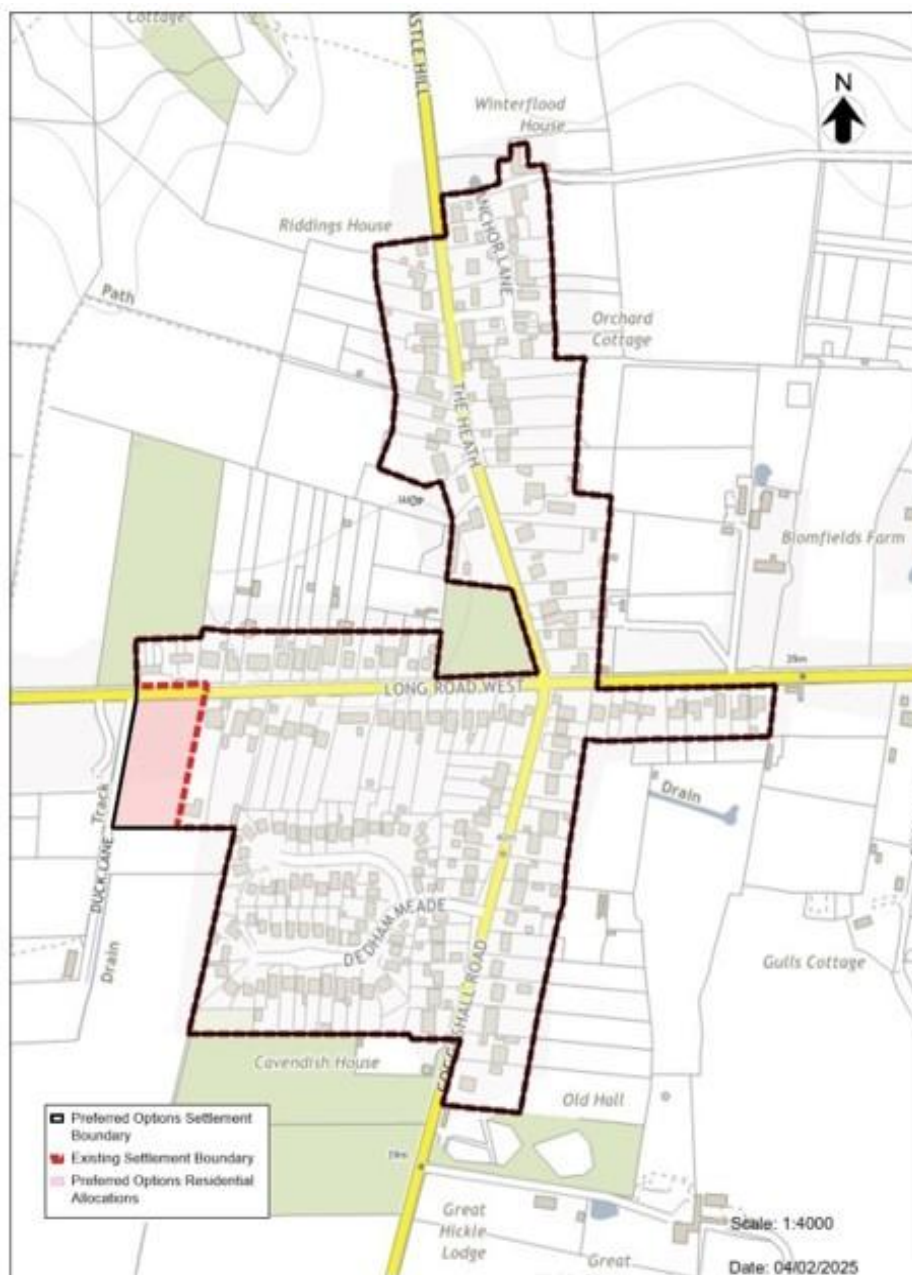
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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

Dedham Heath

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary

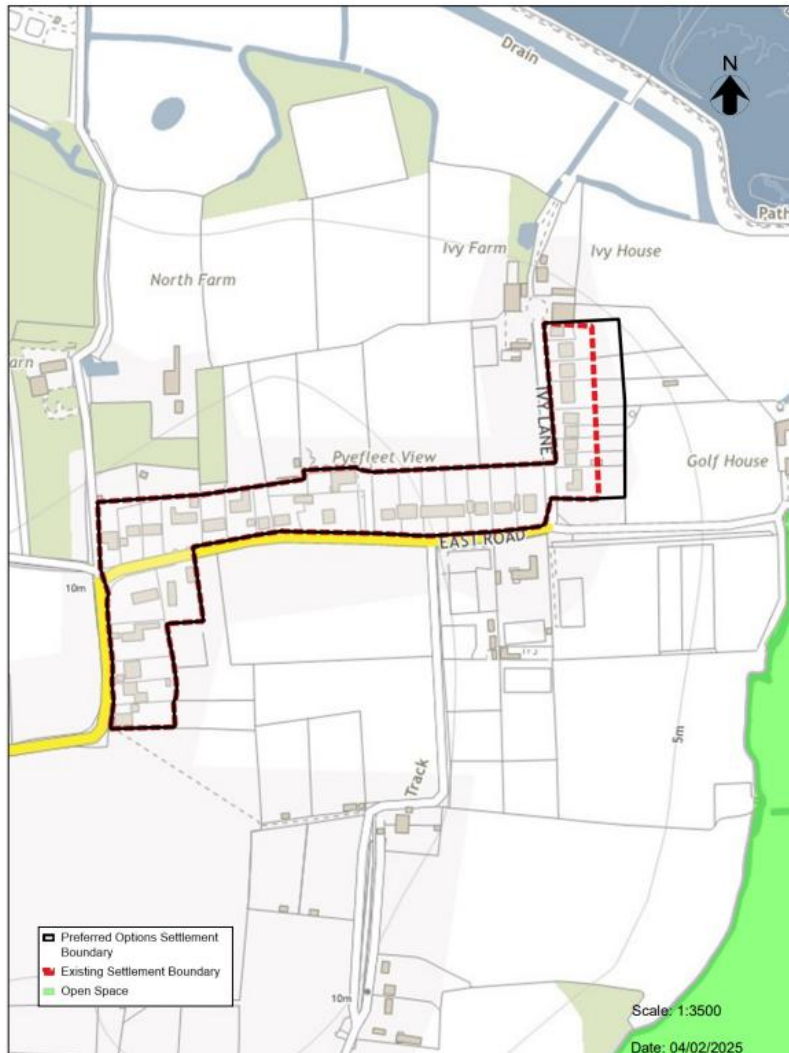


Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Extend to include land South of Long Road	To include proposed residential allocation

East Mersea

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



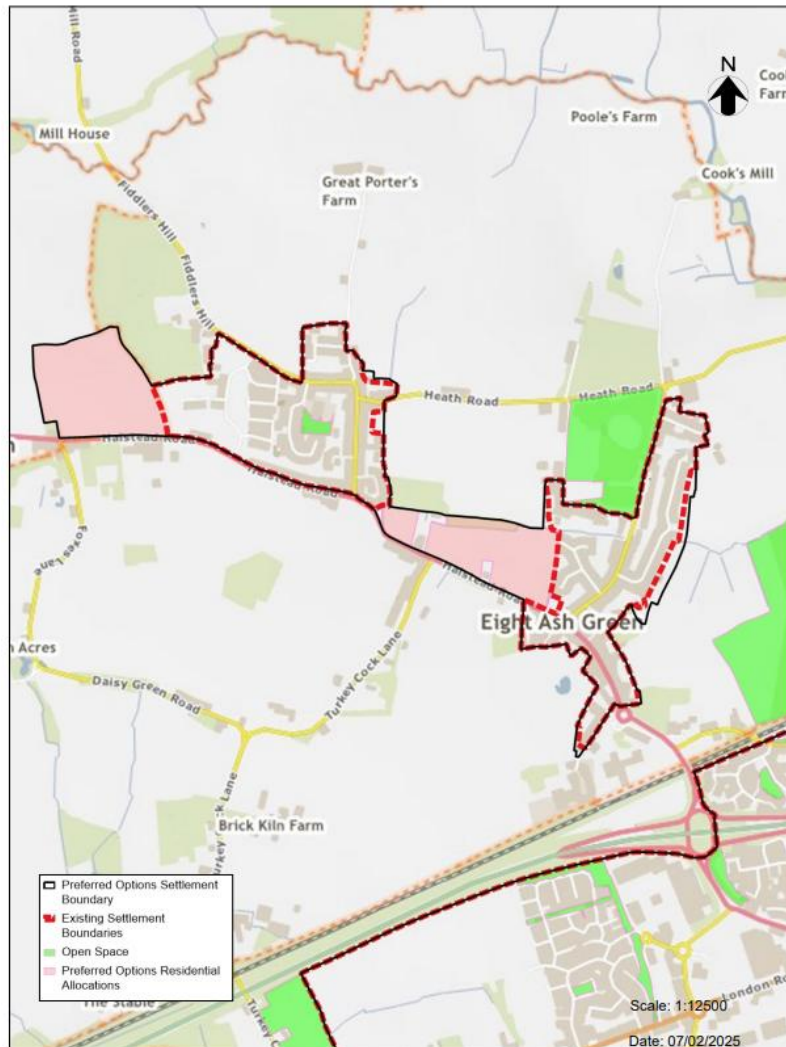
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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

Eight Ash Green

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



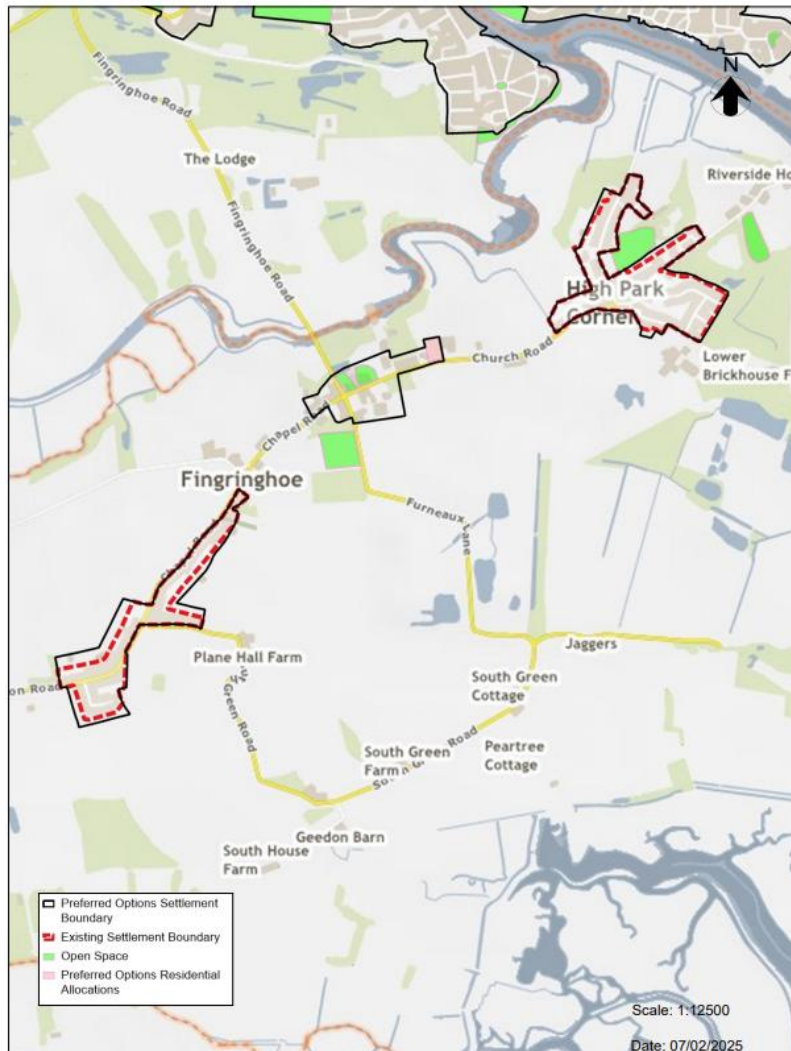
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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Extend settlement boundary to include Land north of Halstead Road, West of Fiddlers Wood	To include proposed residential allocation
New settlement boundary in centre of village to include Land North of Halstead Road East of Wood Lane	To include proposed residential allocation
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

Fingringhoe

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary

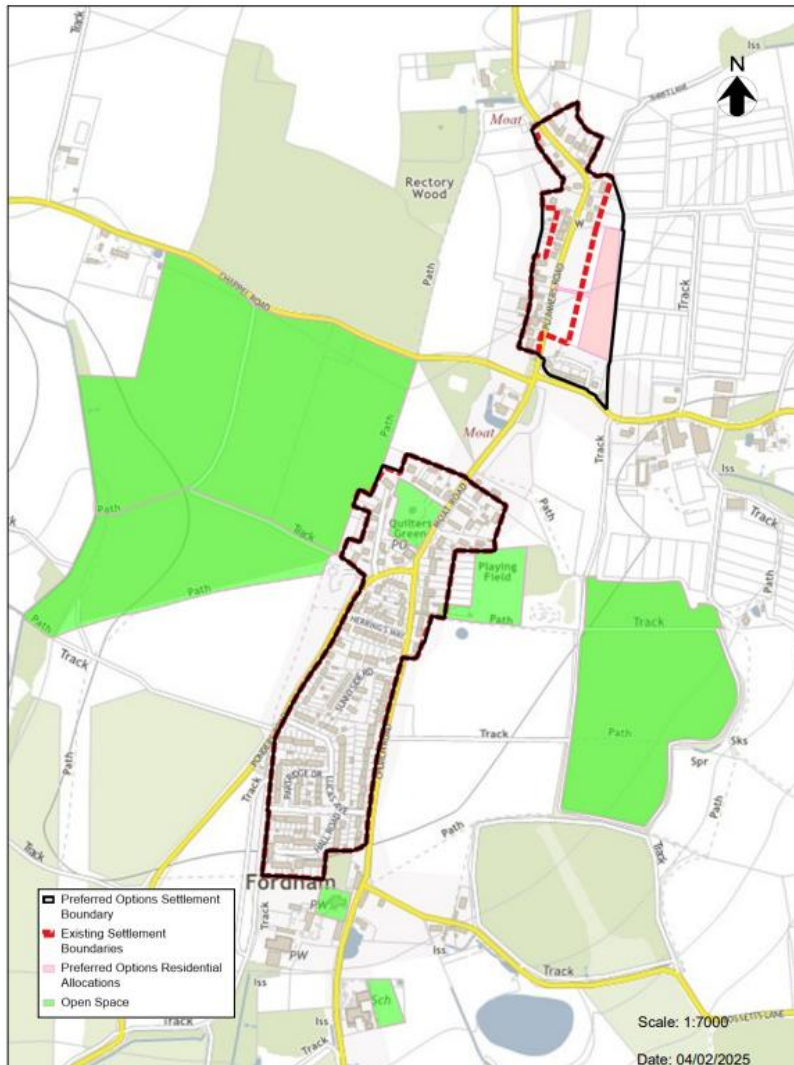


Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
New settlement boundary in centre of village to include Picketts Farm	To include proposed residential allocation
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

Fordham

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary

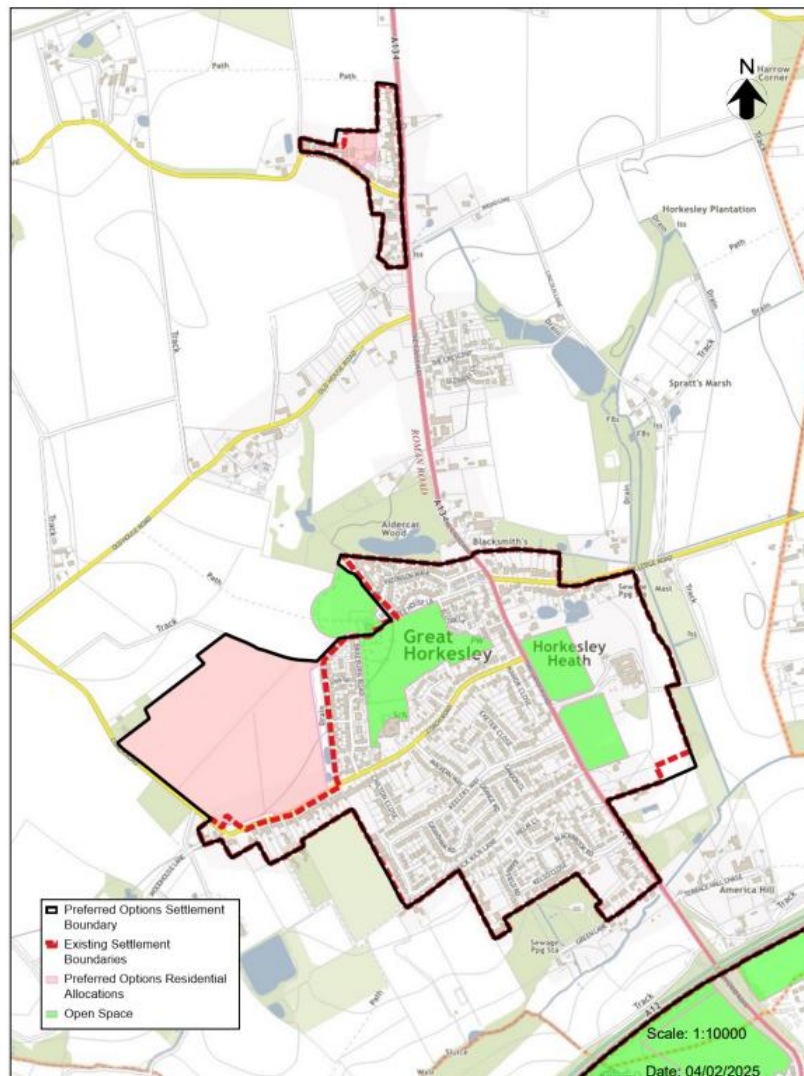


Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Extend to include land east of Plummers Road	To include proposed residential allocation
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

Great Horkesley

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



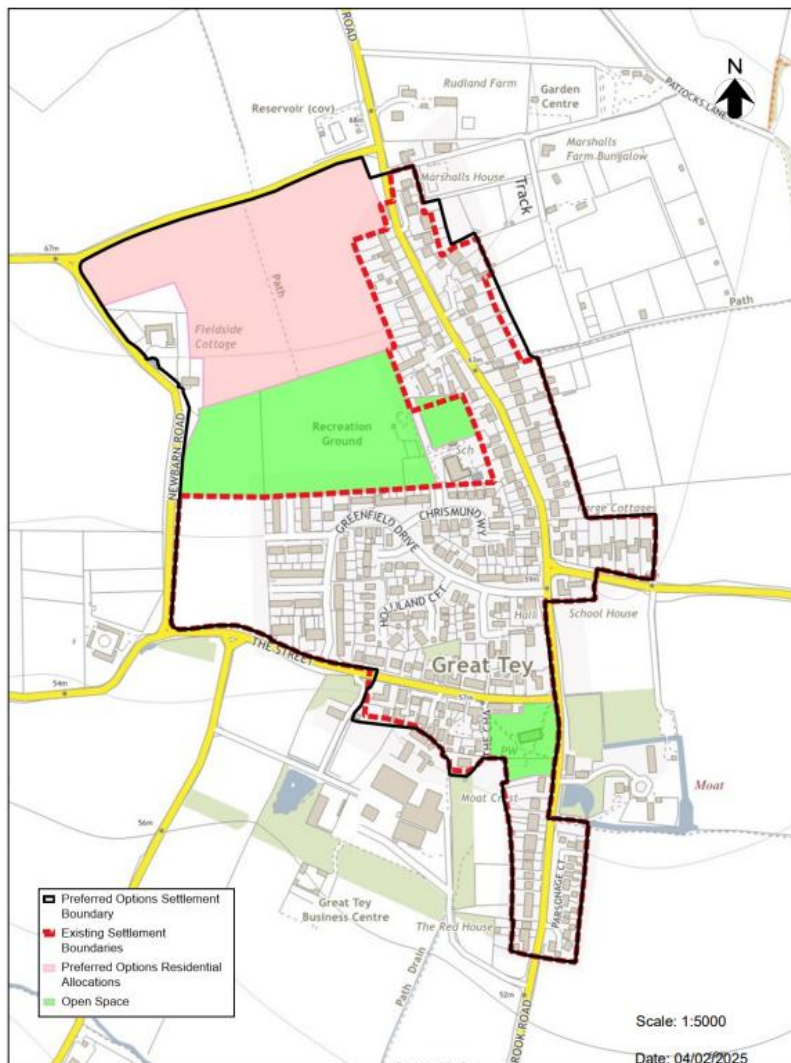
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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Extend to include Land North of Coach Road	To include proposed residential allocation
Extend to include planning application 230625 Land to the east of Nayland Road	Planning permissions granted outside of existing boundary
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

Great Tey

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Extend to include land at Earls Colne Road and adjoining open space	To include proposed residential allocation
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

Great and Little Wigborough

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



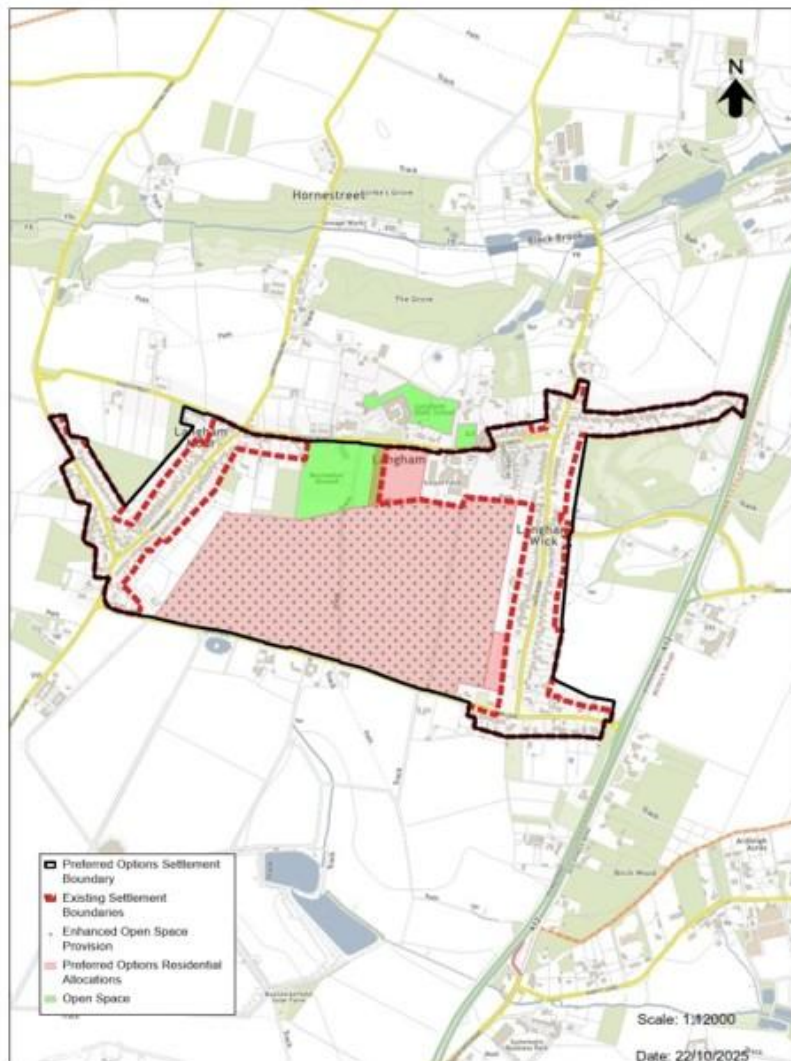
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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

Langham

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



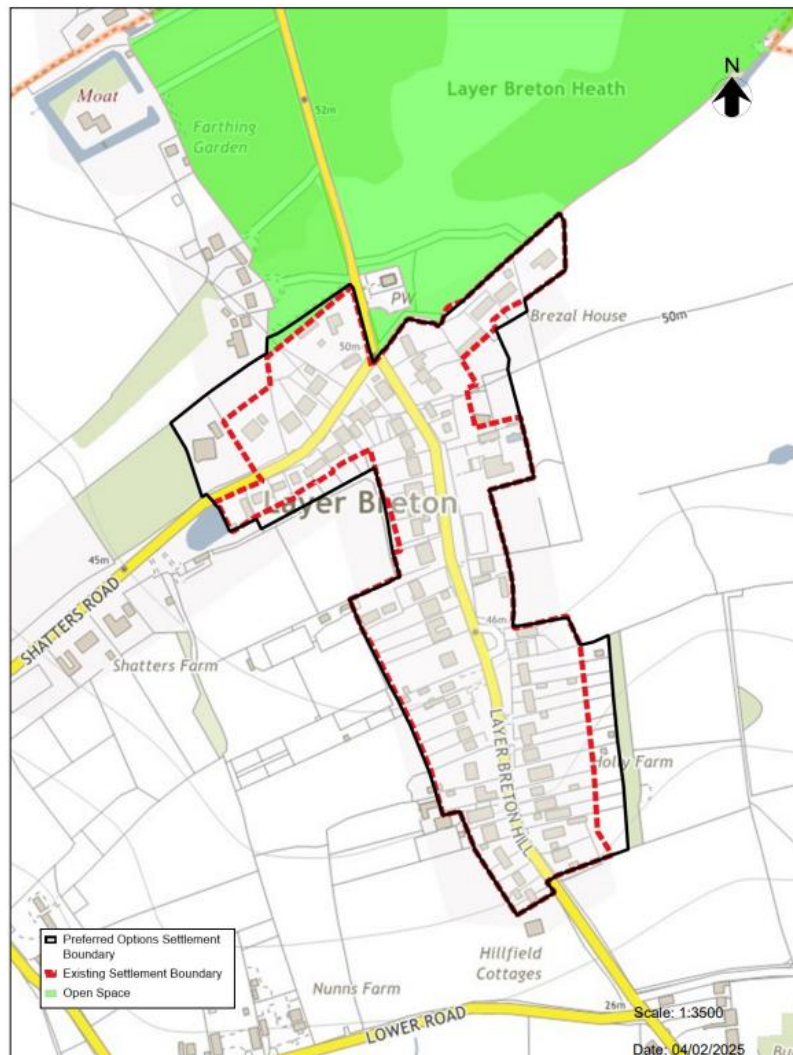
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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Extend to include Land north of Park Lane joining the two settlements	To include proposed residential allocation
Extend to include Land opposite Wick Road	To include proposed residential allocation
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

Layer Breton

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

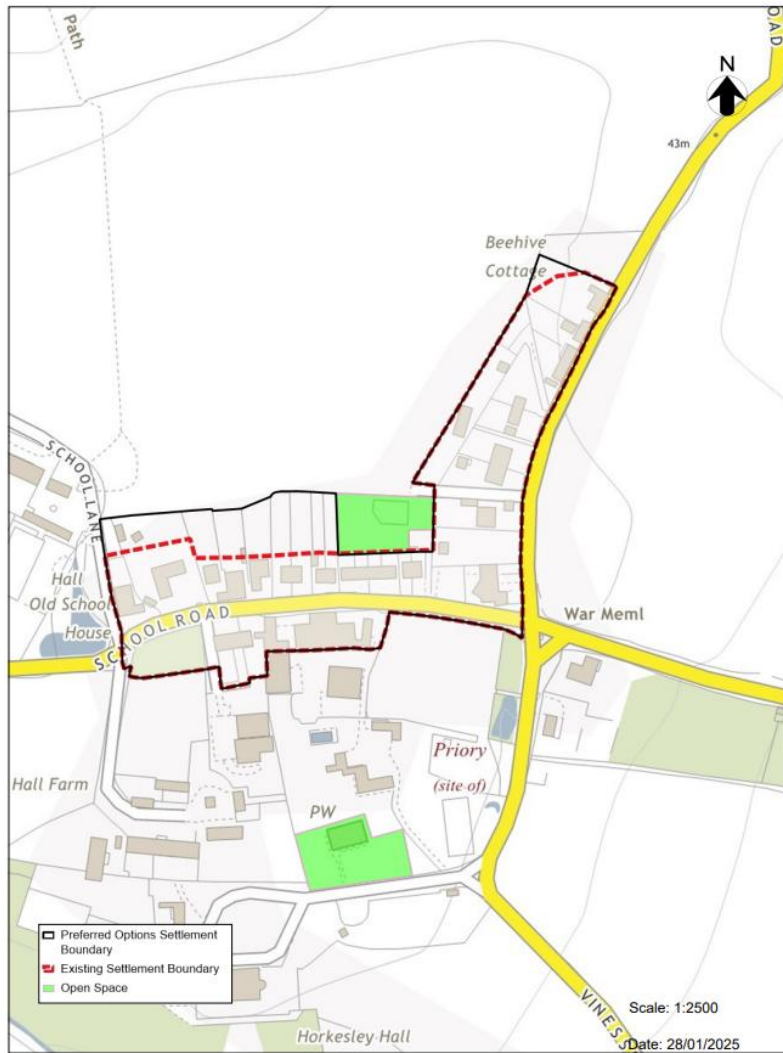
Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



Description	Criteria
Extend to include land west of The Folley	To include proposed residential allocation
Extend to include land at the Furze	To include proposed residential allocation
Extend to include part of planning application 231600 Land west of the Folley	Planning permissions granted outside of existing boundary
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

Little Horkesley

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



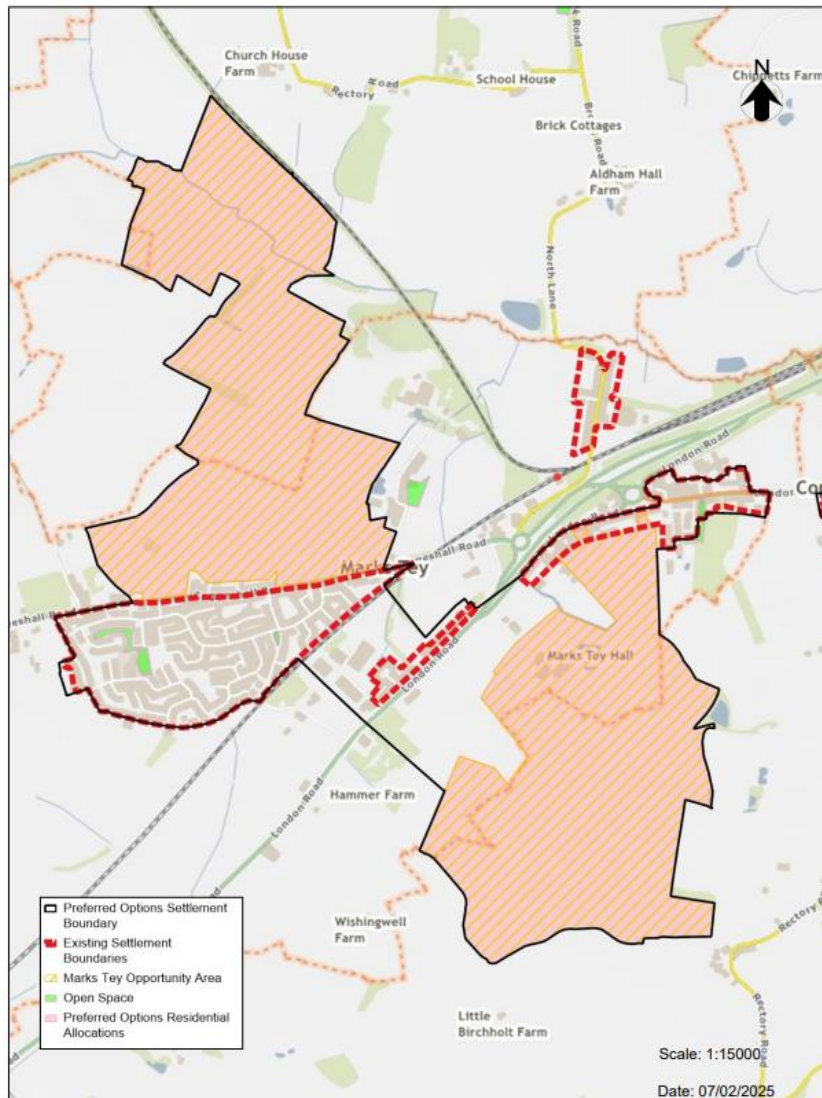
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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

Marks Tey

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



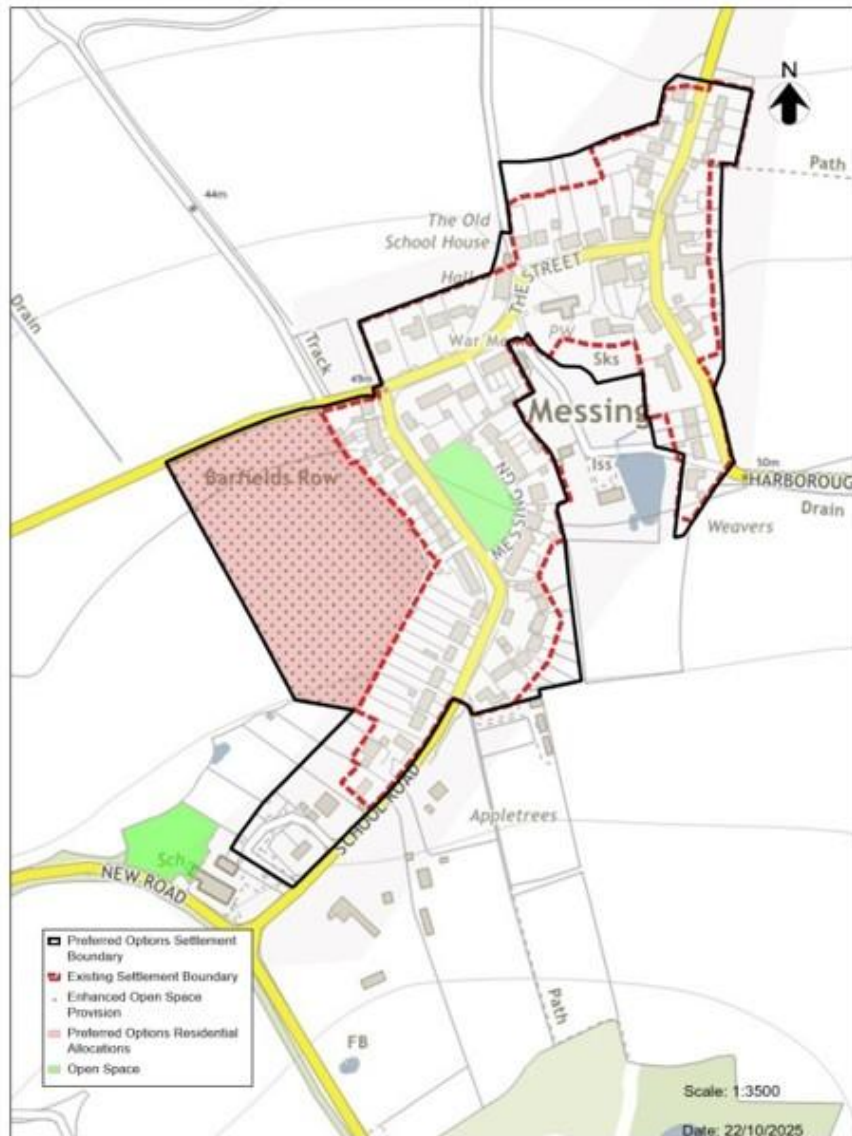
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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Extend to include land south of Marks Tey and join settlements	To include proposed residential allocation
Extend to include land north of A120 and join settlements	To include proposed residential allocation
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

Messing

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



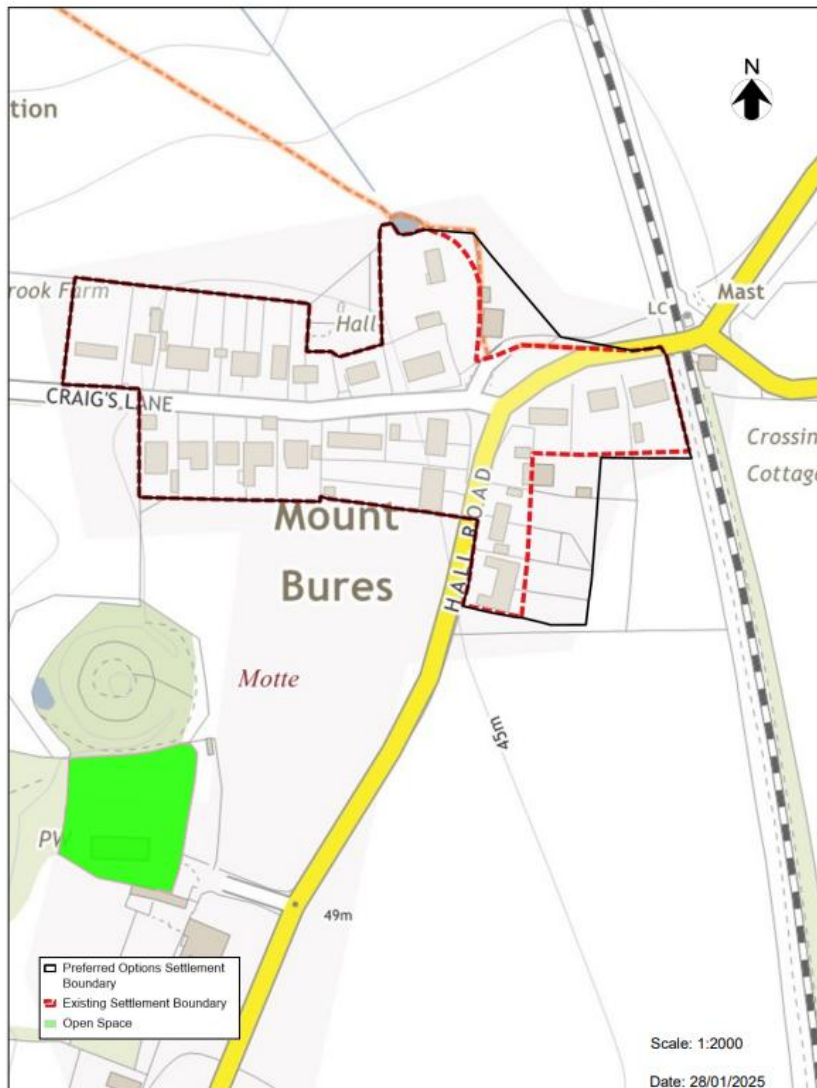
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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Extend to include land at Kelvedon Road	To include proposed residential allocation
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

Mount Bures

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

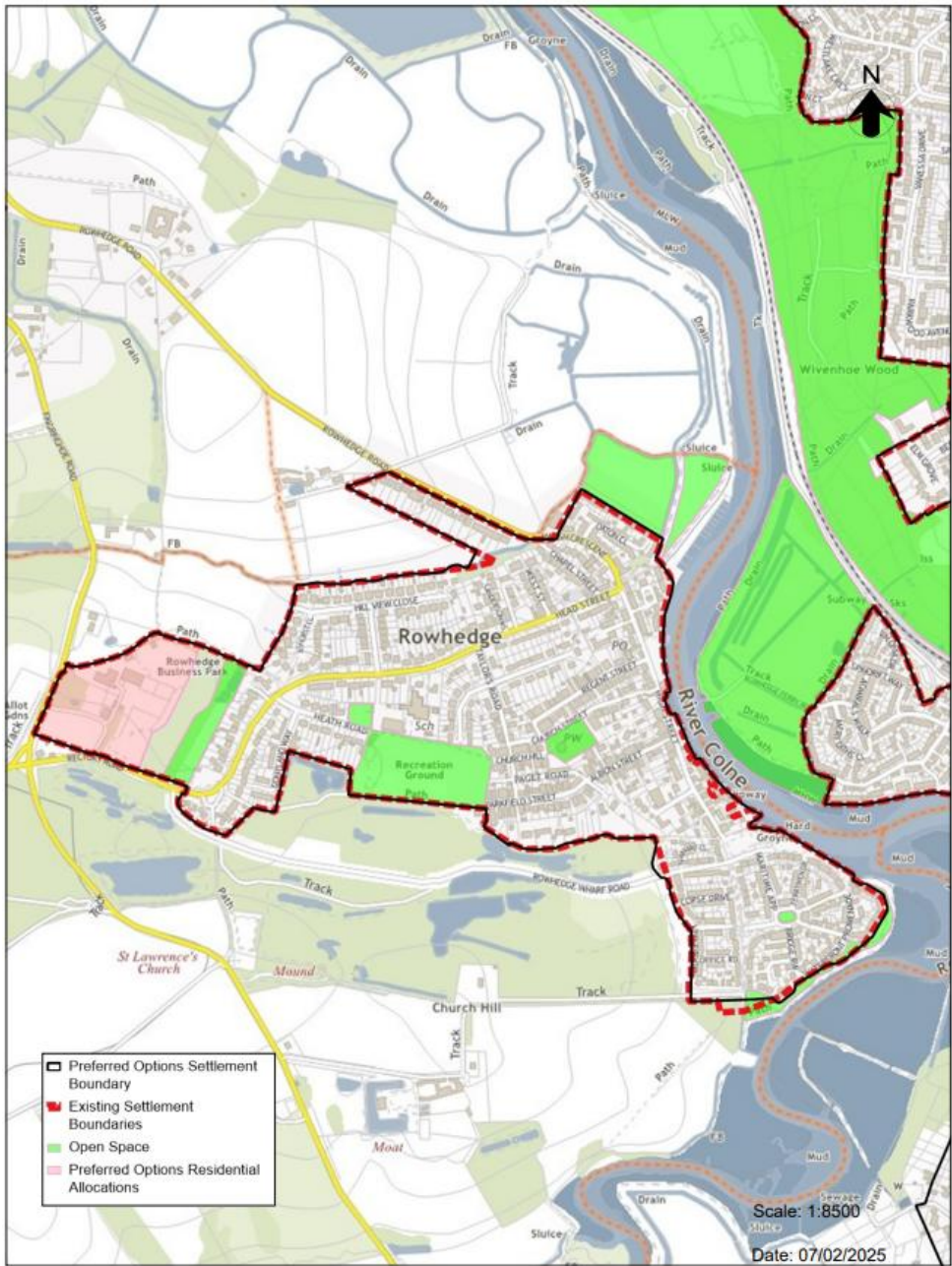
Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



Description	Criteria
Extend to include land at St Ives Road to join the two boundaries	To include proposed residential allocation
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

Rowhedge

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



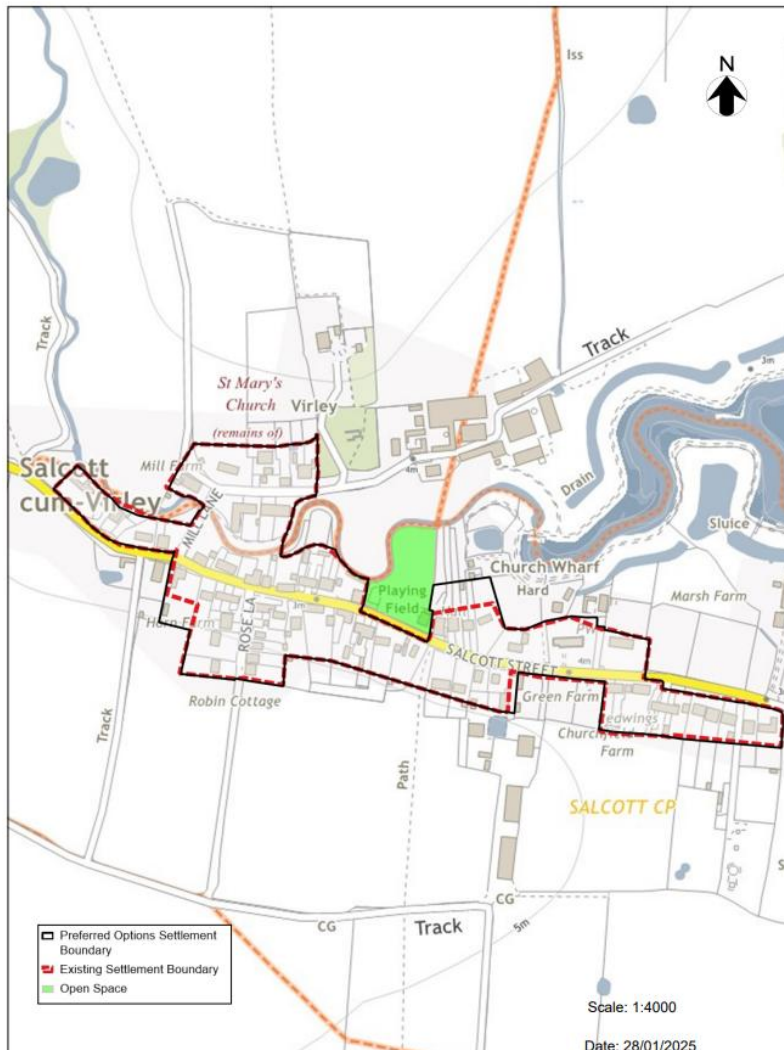
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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

Salcott cum Virley

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



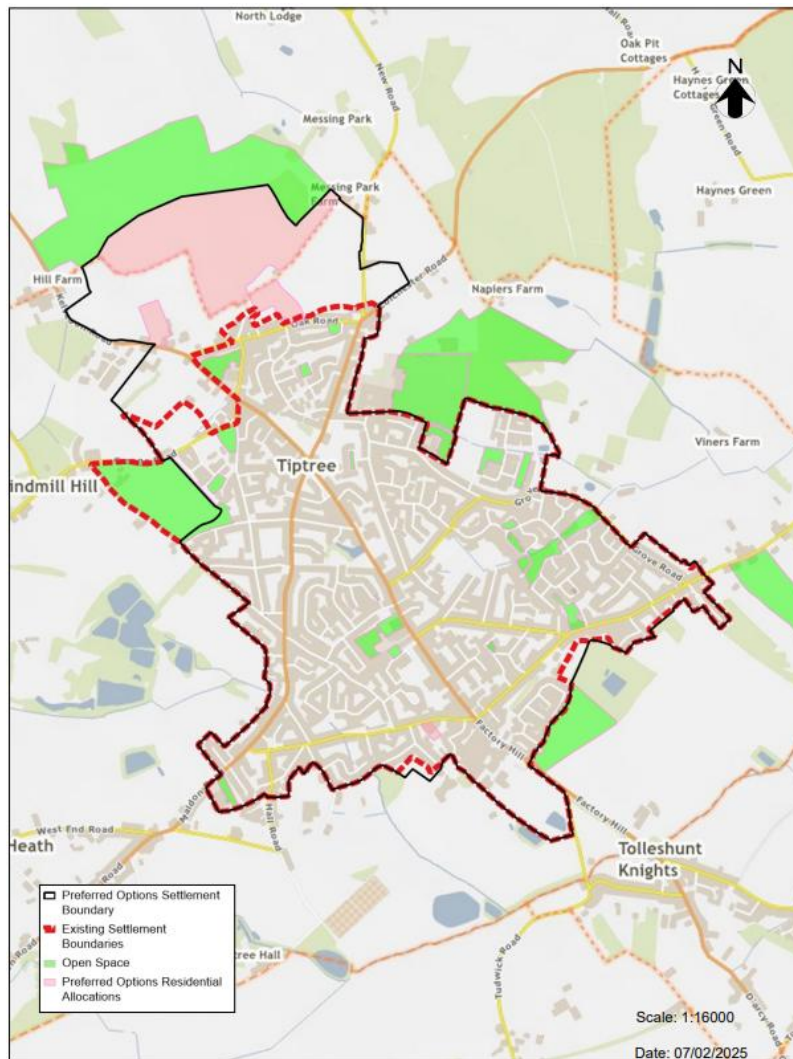
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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

Tiptree

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



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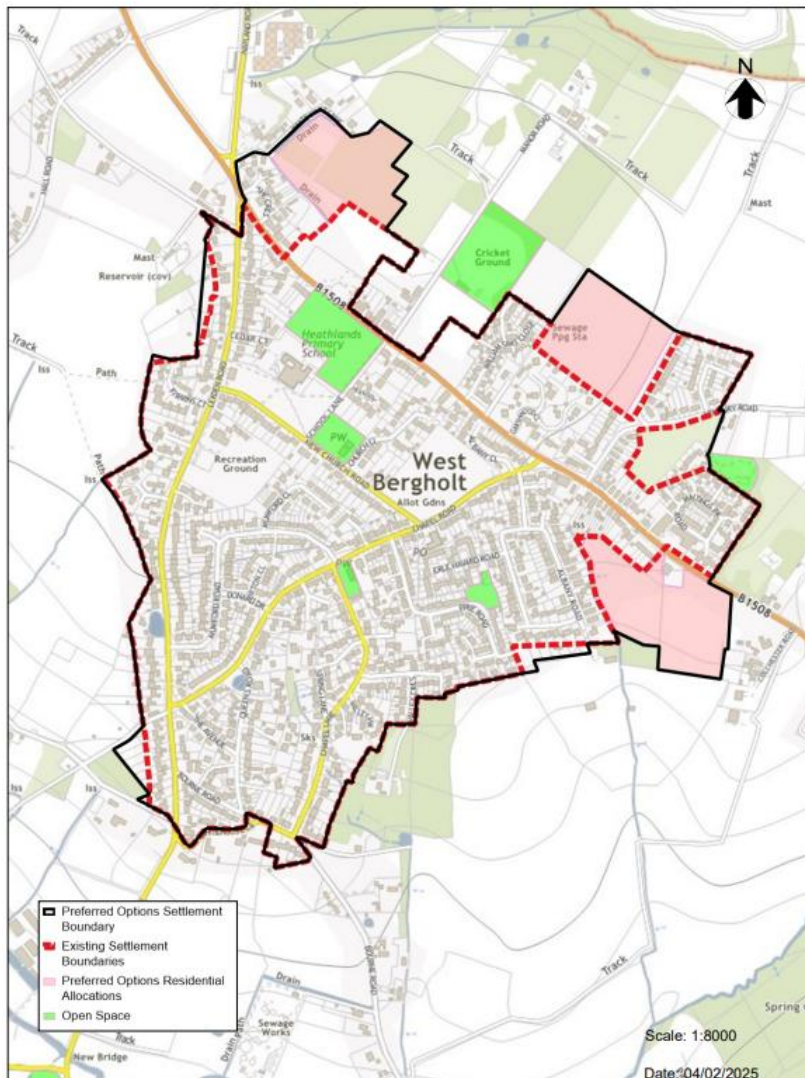
Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Extend to the north to include land north of Oak Road	To include proposed residential allocation
Extend to the north to include land at Bonnie Blue Oak	To include proposed residential allocation
Extend to include land at Highlands, Kelvedon Road	To include proposed residential allocation
Extend to include planning application 231368 land at Elms Farm	Planning permissions granted outside of existing boundary

Extend to include planning application 190647 Land adjoining The Gables	Planning permissions granted outside of existing boundary
Remove open space to west	General amendment

West Bergholt

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Extend to include land at the White Hart Lane	To include proposed residential allocation
Extend to include land North of Colchester Road	To include proposed residential allocation
Extend to include land off Colchester Road	To include proposed residential allocation
Extend to include planning application 180733 Land Adjacent Armoury Road	Planning permissions granted outside of existing boundary
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

West Mersea

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



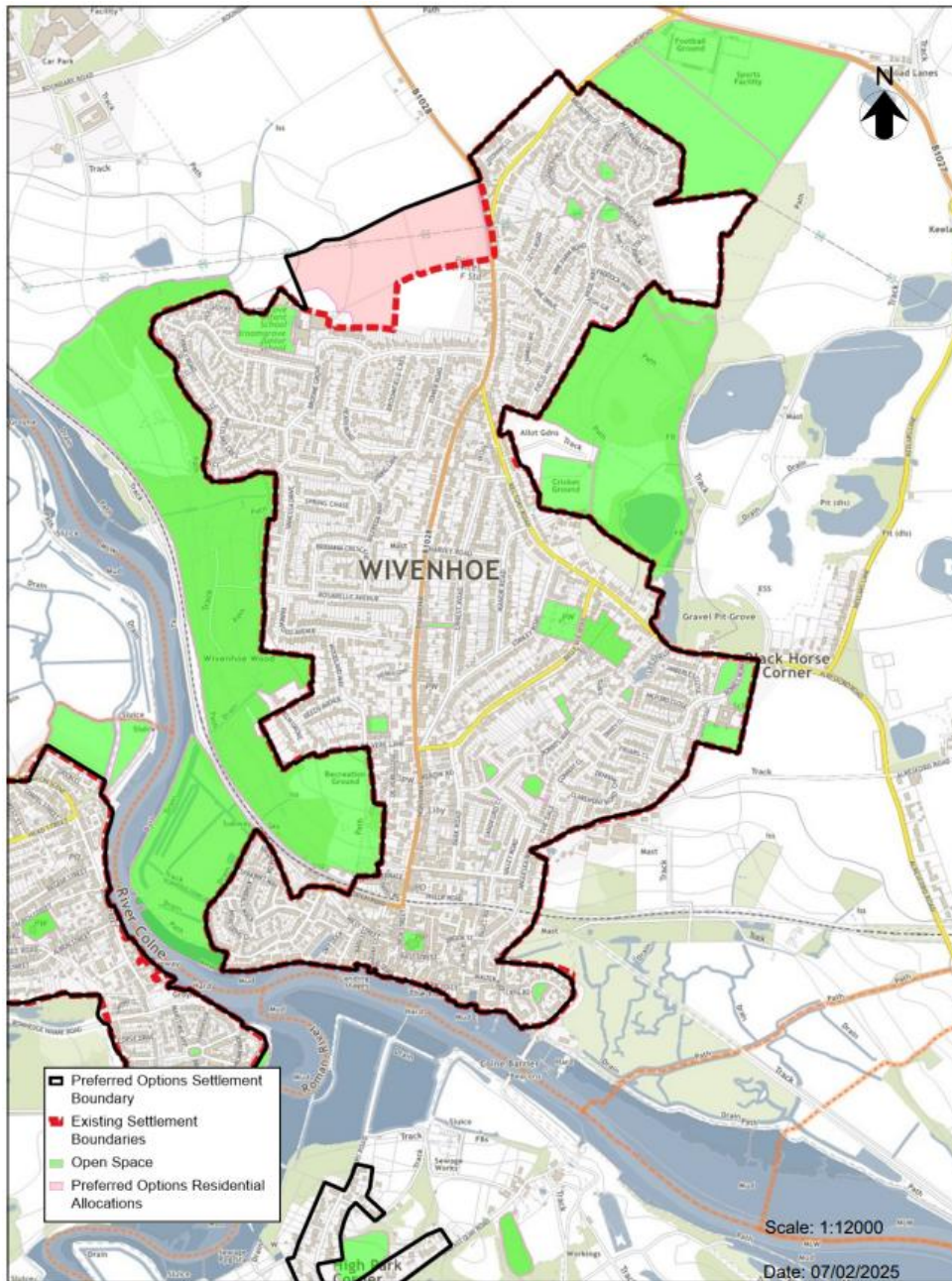
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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Extend to include land east of Dawes Lane	To include proposed residential allocation
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

Wivenhoe

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



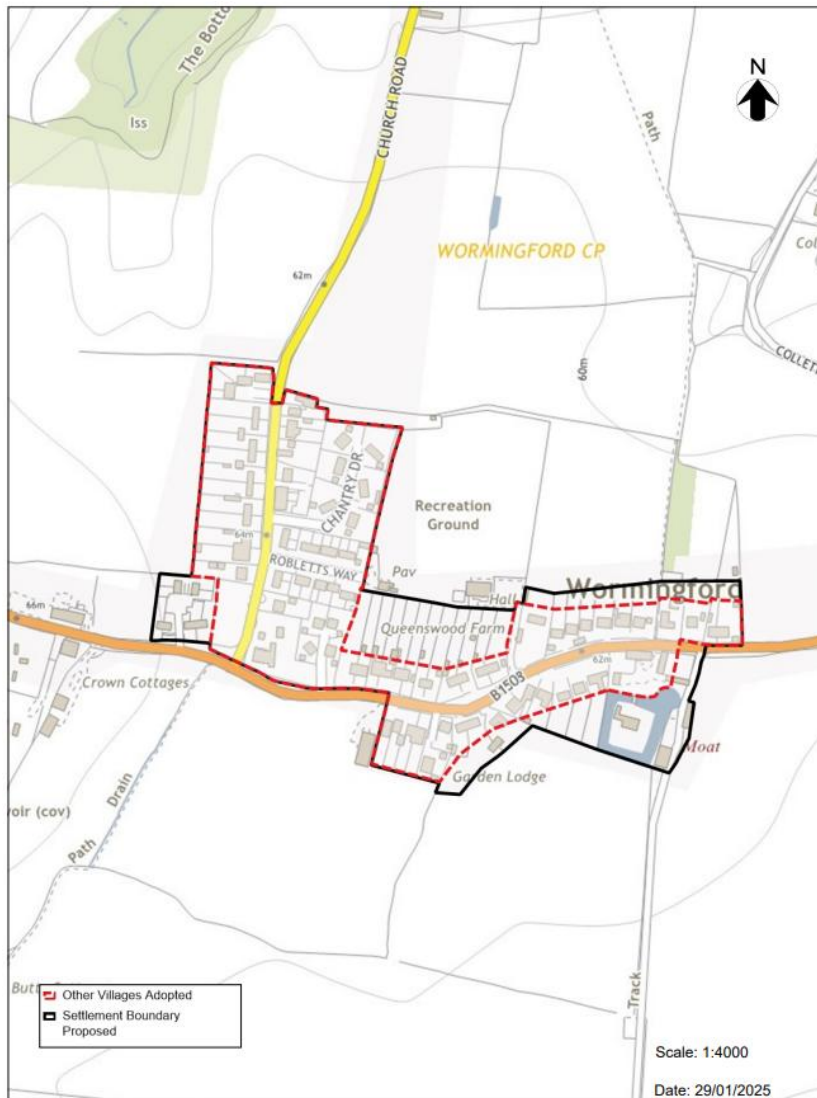
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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Extend to include land north west of Fire Station	To include proposed residential allocation
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

Wormingford

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



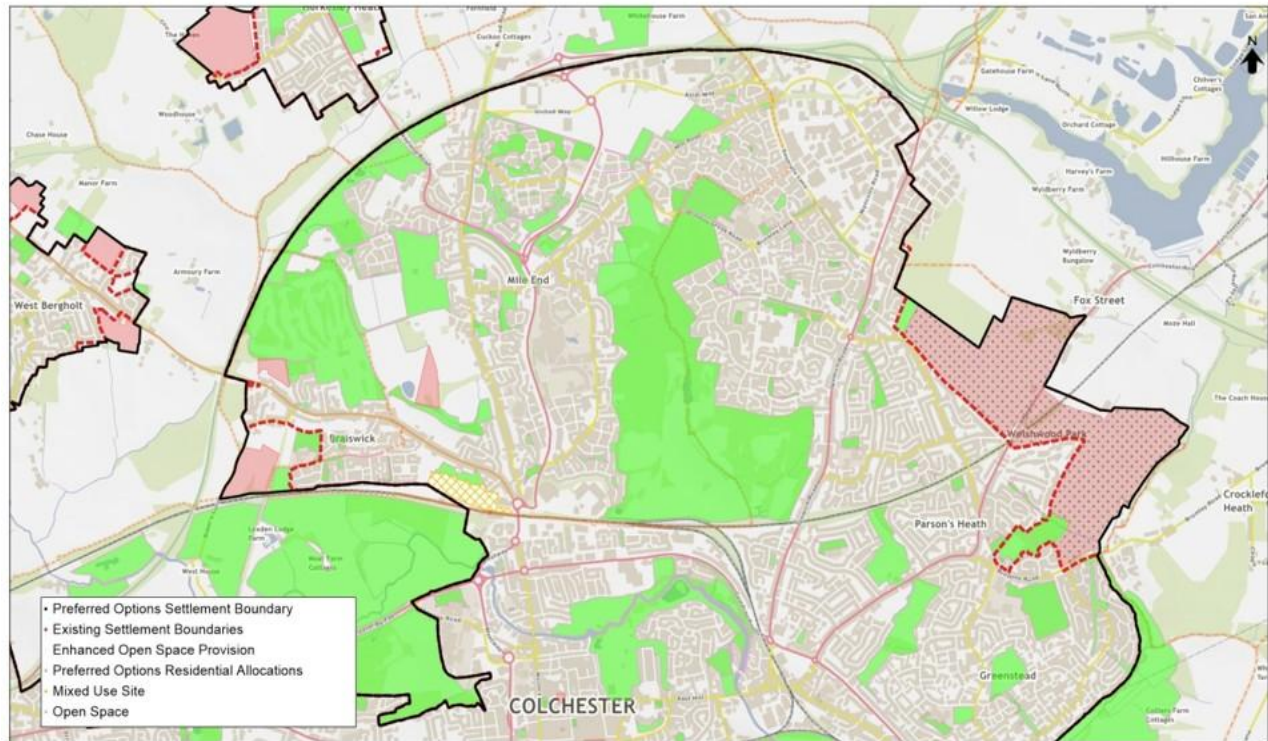
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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

North Colchester

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



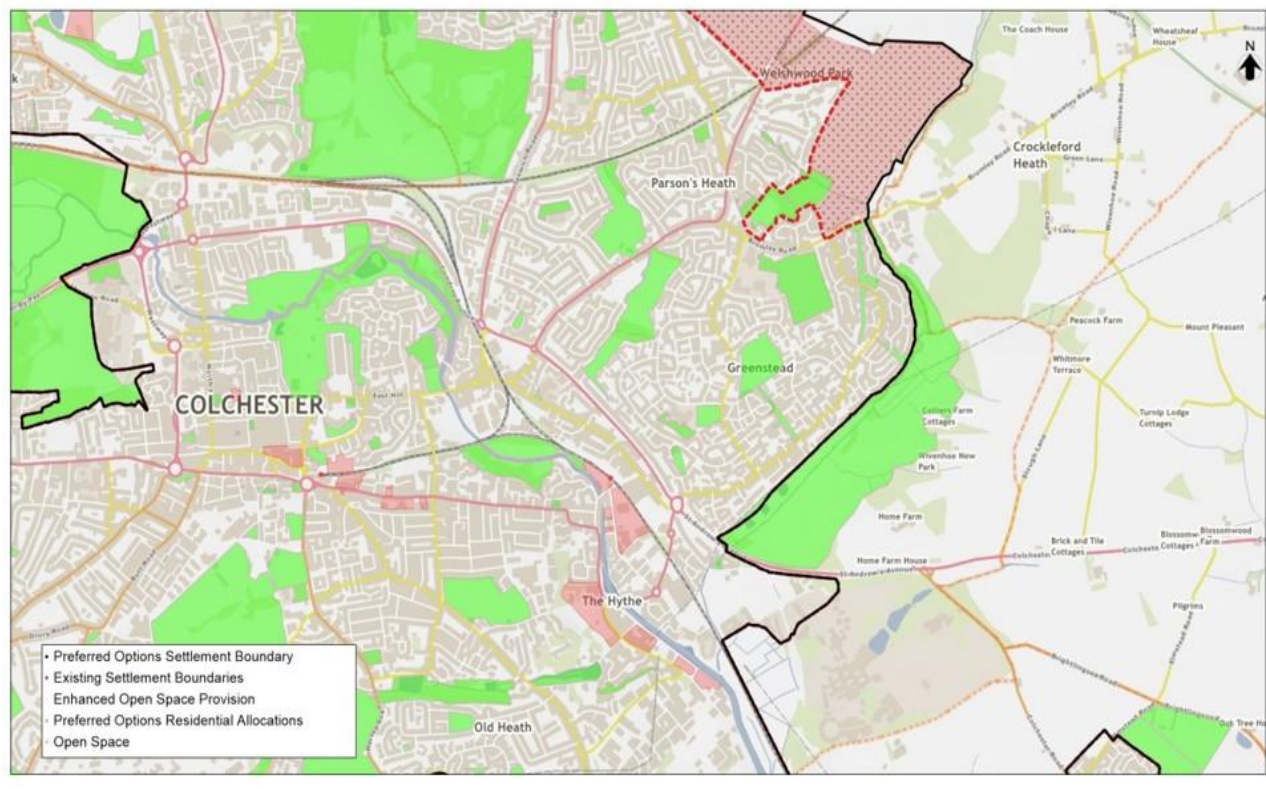
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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Extend to include land off Bakers Lane	To include proposed residential allocation
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

East Colchester

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



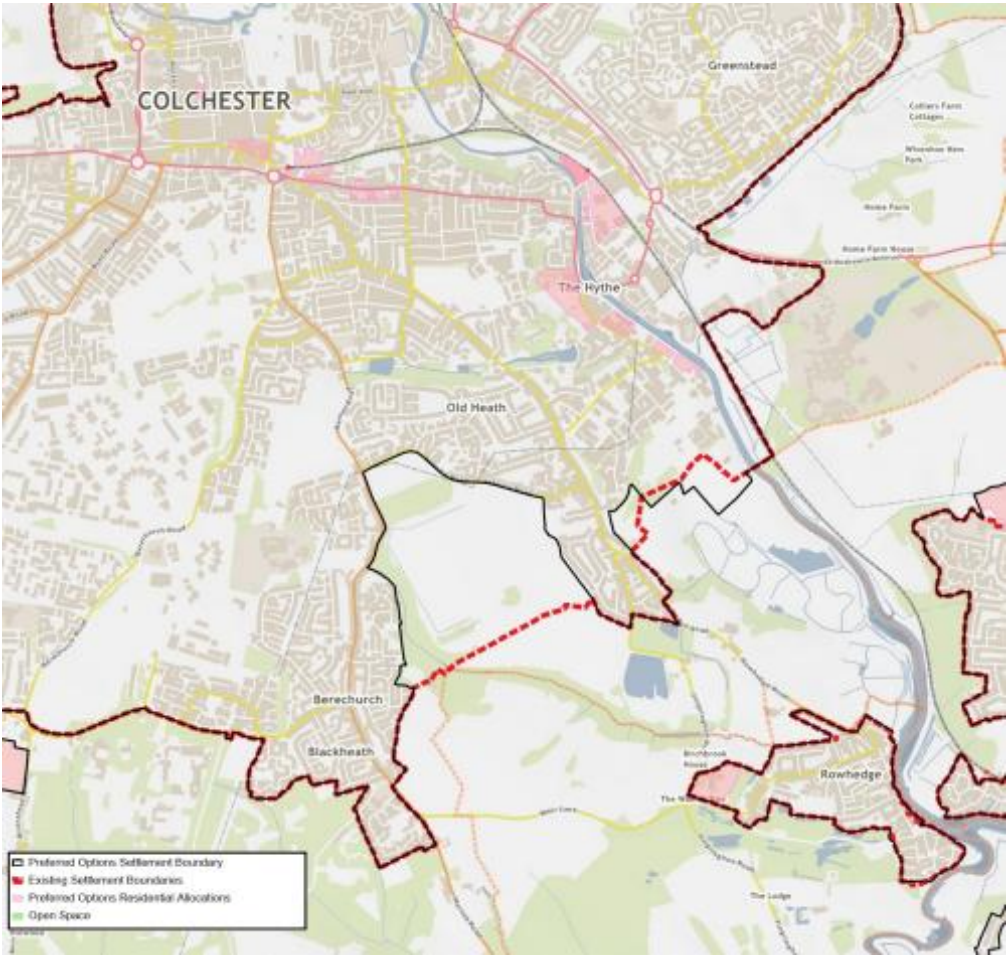
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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Extend to include North East Colchester	To include proposed residential allocation
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

South Colchester

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



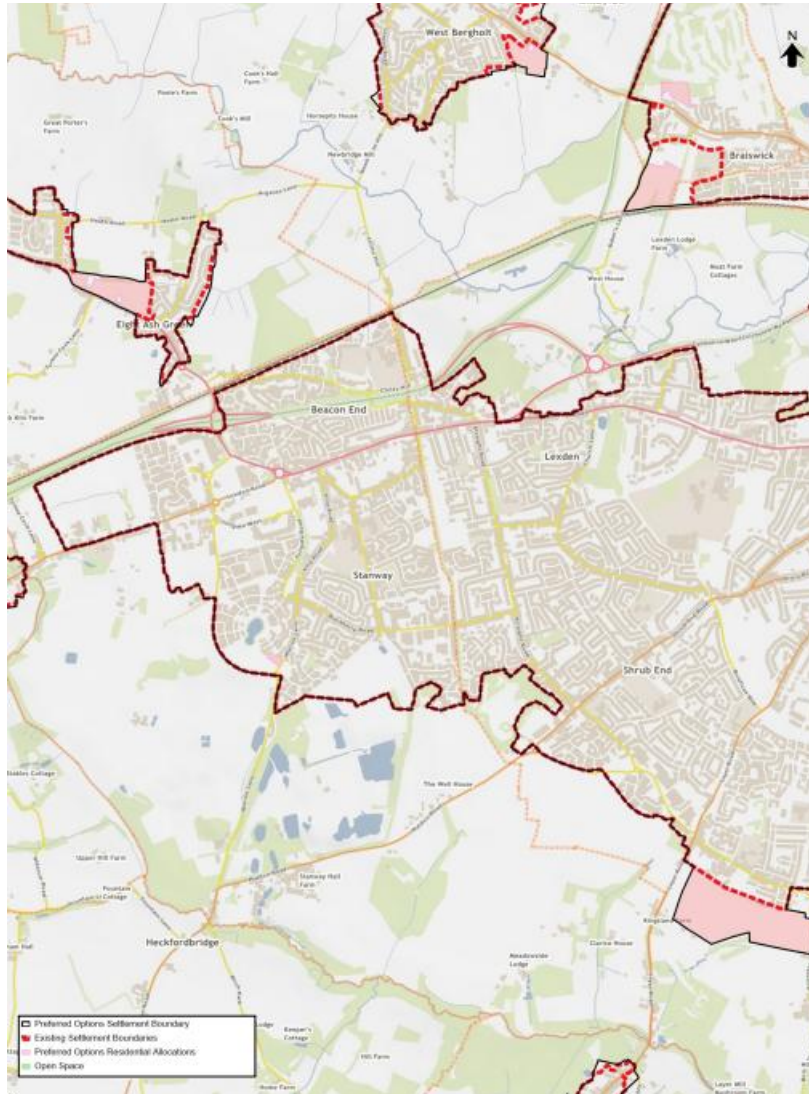
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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Moved boundary in to remove Middlewick allocation	General amendment
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment

West Colchester

Existing and Preferred Options Settlement Boundary



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Settlement boundary amendments

Description	Criteria
Extend to include Land south of Berechurch Hall Road	To include proposed residential allocation
Adjust boundary to built form fence line	General amendment