

Great crested newts

- 2.3.47 Great crested newts, and their breeding sites are protected under the Habitats Regulations and the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) 1981. There are a number of large and small ponds in the Site offering potentially suitable breeding habitat. Many of the larger ponds appear to be of recent origin, formed from ex-sand and gravel workings. However, some of these appear to be stocked with fish, making them less suitable for great crested newts. There are also a number of smaller ponds associated with gardens. In many cases the ponds are adjoined by terrestrial habitat suitable for great crested newts.
- 2.3.48 However, there are no records of great crested newts from within the Site, although there are a small number of records from within the 2km Study Area. Many of the ponds and terrestrial habitat are set within a landscape of intensive arable agriculture, although the hedgerow network and other semi-natural habitat do provide some level of habitat connectivity.

Reptiles

- 2.3.49 All British reptiles are protected from deliberate killing and injuring under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) 1981. Suitable habitat for reptiles, comprising tall, tussocky grassland or grassland of varied structure and tall ruderal accompanied by scrub (including bramble) or hedges and features such as spoil, rubble or wood piles, streams and ponds, is widespread throughout the Site. A number of locations with such habitats and features are identified in the Target Notes (Table 2.1), but this is not exhaustive and further areas of suitable habitat are present elsewhere. Some areas of habitat are relatively small and/or isolated (e.g. TN29) in otherwise unsuitable habitat and this will make them less likely to support reptiles. Although there are only very scarce records of reptiles within the Site this may reflect survey effort rather than presence or absence.

Birds

- 2.3.50 Bird species, their nests and eggs are protected from killing and injuring under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) 1981. In addition, some species, listed in Schedule 1 are protected from deliberate disturbance at all times. Arable, fallow and grassland may support ground nesting birds such as skylark and may to be used for foraging by a wide range of species. Hedgerows, scrub, trees and woodland are likely to comprise important breeding and foraging habitat for farmland and woodland species and the waterbodies and swamp habitat may support wetland species such as waterfowl.

Dormice

- 2.3.51 Dormice and their breeding and resting places are protected under the Habitats Regulations and the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) 1981. Suitable habitat for dormice, for example woodland and especially Ancient Woodland, scrub and hedgerows, particularly where these adjoin or have connectivity to woodland, is present within the Site, particularly in and around Bullock Wood and along the Salary and Sixpenny Brook corridors.
- 2.3.52 There are no records of dormice from within the Site but this may reflect survey effort rather than the absence of the species.

Water voles

- 2.3.53 Water voles are protected from deliberate killing and injuring under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) 1981. The Salary and Sixpenny Brooks offer suitable habitat for water voles and there are records of the species along both watercourses. In addition, some of the waterbodies may also offer suitable habitat, though some are relatively isolated.

Bats

- 2.3.54 Bats and their breeding and resting places are protected under the Habitats Regulations and the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) 1981. Trees with features such as cracks and cavities and heavy growths of ivy, of which there are many within the Site, as well as buildings with features such as tiled roofs, and internal cavities such as roof spaces, may be used as roosts by bats. In addition, habitats and features such as woodland, hedgerows, grassland, watercourses, waterbodies and other wetland areas are likely to be important for foraging and commuting.

Otters

- 2.3.55 Otters and their breeding and resting places are protected under the Habitats Regulations and the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) 1981. Otters have been recorded from the Salary Brook, and from locations immediately north and south of the Site at either end of the Salary Brook valley. In addition to the Salary Brook valley, the Sixpenny Brook corridor and some nearby waterbodies may also be used by otters.

Badgers

- 2.3.56 Badgers and their setts are protected from interference under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Badger setts tend to be found in woodlands, amongst scrub, on banks and in hedgerows.

Activity can take place in a wide range of habitats, including woodland, scrub, along hedgerows, grassland, arable and gardens. Suitable habitat for badgers is widespread throughout the Site, as are records of them.

Other Notable Species

Essex BAP Species

2.3.57 The following Essex BAP species have the potential to occur within the Site.

- Bat spp.;
- Pipistrelle bat;
- Dormouse;
- Brown hare;
- Grey partridge;
- Skylark;
- Song thrush;
- Great crested newt;
- Stag beetle; and
- Bees.

2.4 Constraints and Opportunities

2.4.1 The habitats of greatest nature conservation importance within the Site are the:

- woodlands, especially Ancient Woodland;
- hedgerow network, especially where this is in relatively good condition, well connected and where it includes mature trees;
- more species-rich grassland, such as that in the Salary Brook Valley (e.g. TN21 and 22); and
- wetland habitats, including the Salary and Sixpenny Brooks and associated swamp habitat and waterbodies.

2.4.2 Other habitats, such as the species-poor grassland, ruderal and arable are of less importance, although locally they may have significance for some species, such reptiles and skylark.

2.4.3 Based on the distribution of habitats within the Site the most important areas are considered to be:

- Bullock Wood;
- The Salary Brook Valley and immediately adjoining areas, including woodland, hedges, grassland and wetland; and
- The Sixpenny Brook corridor, including adjoining waterbodies.

2.4.4 Also of importance is the mosaic of habitats, including woodland, scrub, grassland, ruderal and ponds to the east of Wivenhoe, and including Wivenhoe Cross Pit LWS and Wivenhoe Gravel Pit SSSI.

2.4.5 Recommendations regarding the consideration of ecological aspects of potential development, including opportunities for ecological enhancements, within the Site are set out below:

- Retain and safeguard important habitats and areas, including those identified in Section 2.3 above.
- Buffer sensitive habitats, such as Ancient Woodland and wetland, from any proposed development using strips of undeveloped land between the relevant habitats and proposed development sites or areas.
- Retain wide green corridors, for example building upon the existing hedgerow network, especially where this includes mature trees, within and through developed areas, and linking other retained (and created) areas of habitat, both within and outside any development.
- Retain mature trees within any proposed development, preferably within wider areas of semi-natural habitat or green corridors.
- Enhance retained habitats by appropriate positive management, such as coppicing, grazing etc..
- Create new areas of habitat, such as woodland, scrub, grassland and wetland, including ponds, targeted especially adjacent to or between retained existing areas of habitat in order to expand and link them, thus making them more resilient.
- Retain and enhance (through habitat creation and management) habitat links to the wider landscape, for example to the Colne Valley.

2.4.6 The above principles are consistent with, and would help in the delivery of, the recommendations for creation of ecological networks and links identified in the Colchester Borough Green Infrastructure Strategy⁶.

Further Work Recommendations

2.4.7 On the basis of the scoping survey work undertaken as part of this Environmental Audit, the following more detailed ecological surveys are recommended for specific species and/or species groups to inform the masterplanning, environmental assessment and mitigation for development on the Site:

⁶ Colchester Borough Green Infrastructure Strategy, Land Use Consultants (2011)

- Botanical;
- Terrestrial and freshwater invertebrates;
- Amphibians, including great crested newts;
- Reptiles;
- Breeding birds;
- Dormice;
- Water voles;
- Bats, including roosts and activity; and
- Badgers.

2.5 Summary

- 2.5.1 Much of the Site consists of arable fields set within a more or less intact hedgerow network, which includes mature and veteran trees. There are also significant areas of woodland, including Ancient Woodland, some relatively species-rich grassland and wetland habitats, including streams, ponds and swamp. Apart from the Nationally Important Bullock Wood in the north west of the Site these habitats are concentrated along the valleys or corridors of the Salary Brook and Sixpenny Brook, and it is recommended that habitats in these areas in particular are retained and enhanced in relation to any potential or proposed development within the Site. The Site also has the potential to support a number of protected species and other species of conservation importance and more detailed surveys will be required for these, as appropriate, in relation to any proposed development.

3.0 LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AND VISUAL AMENITY

3.1 General

3.1.1 The purpose of this section is to identify potential constraints and opportunities for development of the Site in landscape and visual terms.

3.1.2 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) aims to promote co-operation on improving approaches to the planning, management and protection of landscapes throughout Europe. The ELC states that '*landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors*'. This appraisal adopts the broad and inclusive ELC definition of landscape embracing townscapes and riverscapes, as well as all forms of rural landscape.

3.2 Audit Methodology

3.2.1 Potential landscape/townscape character and visual amenity effects that could result from development of the Site have been determined by assessing the degree of change to the existing landscape character and amenity of sensitive visual receptors within the Study Area. The methodology used for the appraisal is based on the guidance set out in adapted as appropriate for the purposes of this Environmental Audit:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (The Landscape Institute and the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013).
- Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002)

3.2.2 In line with the above guidance, the appraisal includes a desk-based review of currently available landscape character studies and other relevant information, supplemented by targeted field survey work.

3.2.3 The desk-based review included consideration of the following information:

- National Character Area Profiles (Natural England, 2013/2014);
- Essex Landscape Character Assessment (Chris Blandford Associates, 2003);
- Colchester Borough Landscape Character Assessment (Chris Blandford Associates, 2005);
- Tendring District Landscape Character Assessment (Land Use Consultants, 2001);

- Townscape Character Assessments for Colchester, Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe (Chris Blandford Associates, 2006);
- Landscape Capacity of Settlement Fringes in Colchester Borough (Chris Blandford Associates, 2005);
- Landscape Capacity of Settlement Fringes in Colchester Borough (Chris Blandford Associates, 2005);
- Assessment of Open Countryside between Settlements in the Borough of Colchester (Chris Blandford Associates, 2009);
- 1:25,000 & 1:10,000 scale OS mapping; and
- Aerial photography (Google Maps/Bing Maps).

3.2.4 A field survey of the Study Area was undertaken in August 2015 from the extensive network of public rights of way through the Site. This included taking photographs from representative views within the Site.

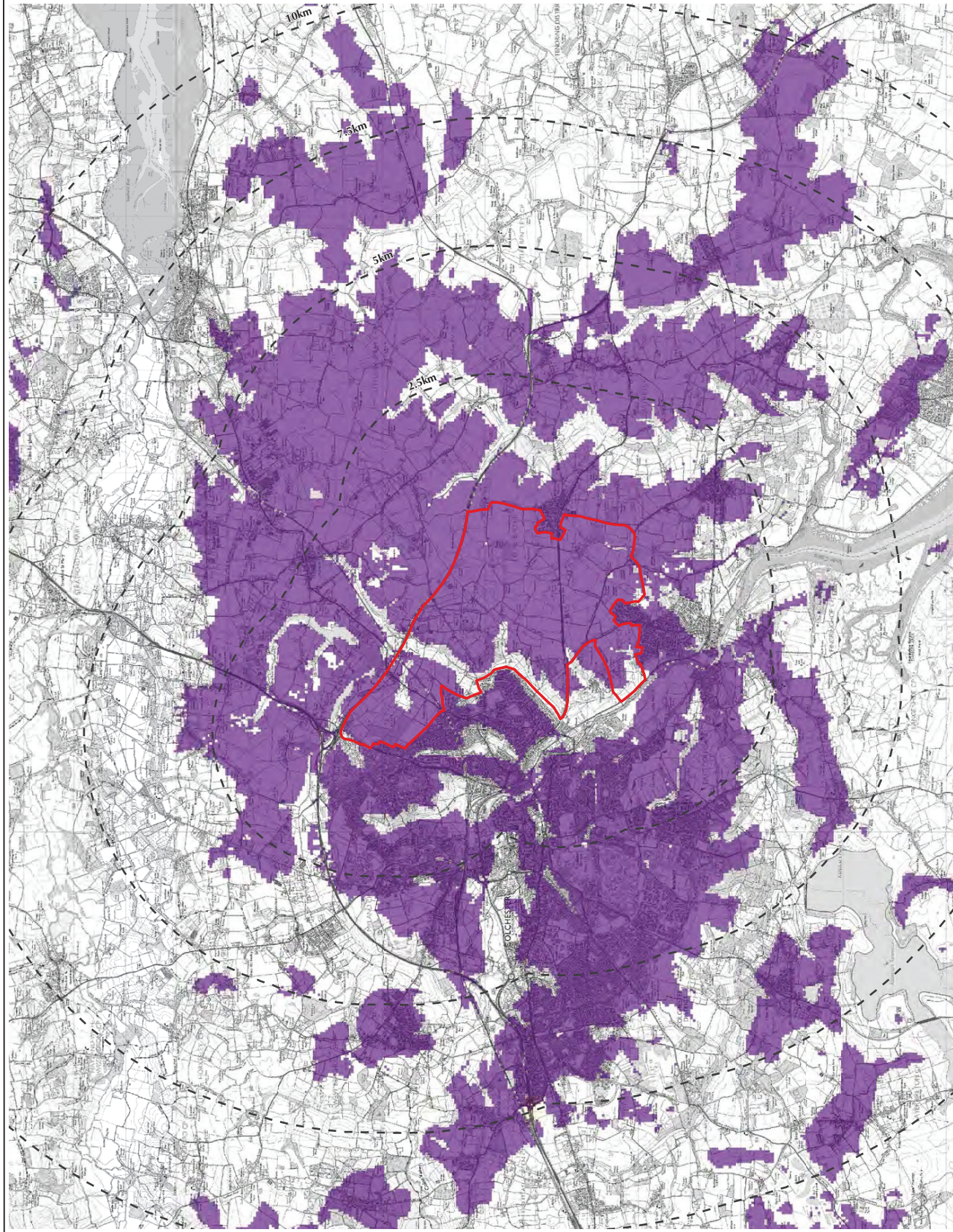
Study Area

3.2.5 The Study Area was defined by modelling the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) of the Site using GIS software as shown on **Figure 3.1**. The field survey work established that the actual Zone of Visual Influence (or visual envelope) of the Site is far more limited than the ZTV suggests due to the screening effects of intervening buildings and vegetation. On this basis, a Study Area extending 2.5 km from the Site was chosen to allow an appraisal of the potential significant landscape and visual effects of development on the Site.

3.3 Existing Conditions

Topography and Watercourses

3.3.1 The majority of the Site lies between 45m AOD in the far north, and 30m AOD towards the south. See **Figure 3.2** for details. The majority of the site topography is gently undulating, whilst the narrow and steep-sided river valley of Salary Brook crosses the site in the north and follows its western edge, falling to 2m AOD. In the south eastern corner of the site there is a change in topography associated with Sixpenny Brook, where the land forms a shallow sided valley, falling to around 25m AOD.



KEY

Site Boundary

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) has been digitally mapped using a computer model to show areas from which the Site may be theoretically visible. The ZTV mapping uses elevation data to create a digital terrain model and calculate intervisibility between points. The ZTV does not take account of screening by buildings, structures and vegetation that will influence potential visibility.

Notes:

The point locations and heights used within the model are for indicative purposes only. The ZTV is calculated for 7 points, each 1m above the ground, spaced evenly across the highest ground within the site boundary.

Viewer height is 2m above ground level.

The terrain model is bare ground and uses OS Terrain 50 height data. Earth curvature and atmospheric refraction have been taken into account.

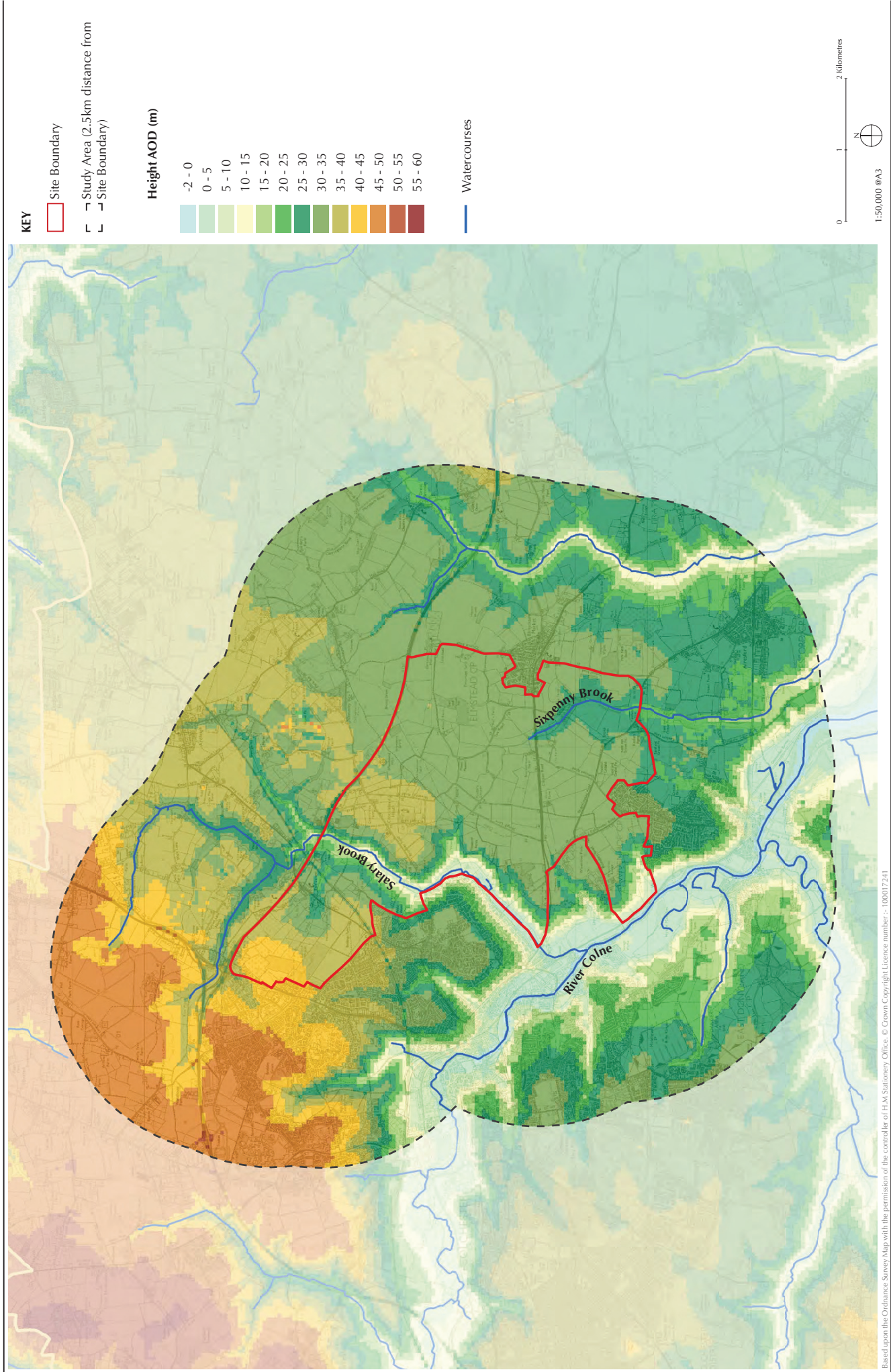
The software used is ESRI Arc GIS 10

0 1 2 kilometres

1:75,000 @A3

FIGURE 3.1

ZONE OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY



CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES
 landscape | environment | heritage

November 2015
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EAST COLCHESTER GROWTH AREA OPTION
ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT
 COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL

FIGURE 3.2
 TOPOGRAPHY & WATERCOURSES

Vegetation

- 3.3.2 The vegetation within the Site is varied (see **Figure 1.1**). On the eastern edge of Colchester it is composed of intensive arable farmland. Blocks of ancient woodland including Wallis Wood and Churn Wood are found on the southern side of the Salary Brook river valley, along with another area of ancient woodland in the far north of the Site. Wooded areas are also associated with Sixpenny Brook in the south-east of the Site. The majority of the field boundaries are formed by mature hedges and shaws, particularly in the north and around fields close to settlement. Along the majority of the road corridors, dense and high hedges and trees restrict visibility.

Land Use

- 3.3.3 Land use within the Site is dominated by arable farming, with blocks of ancient woodland along the valley edge towards the north. The A133 bisects the Site, from the eastern edge of Colchester to Elmstead Market. The northern edge is defined by the major transport corridor of the A120, and the A137 also crosses the Site in the north. The urban edge of Colchester is located to the west; to the south is the town of Wivenhoe, and to the east is the village of Elmstead Market. Salary Brook runs from Ardleigh reservoir to the north of the A120, to the eastern edge of Colchester, where it follows the valley along the edge of Colchester/Site boundary until it joins the River Colne beyond the south-western edge of the Site. Other water features include Sixpenny Brook, in the south-eastern quarter of the site, and restored sand and gravel pits. Features of interest include extensive sand and gravel workings to the east of Wivenhoe, and the University of Essex site at Wivenhoe Park (outside the site boundary).

National Character Areas

- 3.3.4 The Assessment Area is covered by National Character Area 111⁷, see **Figure 3.3**, the Northern Thames Basin. The following key characteristics are relevant to the Study Area:
- *The landform is varied with a wide plateau divided by river valleys.*
 - *Characteristic of the area is a layer of thick clay producing heavy, acidic soils, resulting in retention of considerable areas of ancient woodland.*
 - *Areas capped by glacial sands and gravels have resulted in nutrient-poor, free-draining soils which support remnant lowland heathlands, although these are now small. Areas that have alluvial deposits present are well drained and fertile.*

⁷ NCA Profile: 111 Northern Thames Basin (Natural England, 2013) www.naturalengland.org.uk

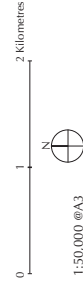


KEY

- Site Boundary
- Study Area (2.5km distance from Site Boundary)

National Character Areas:

- 111: Northern Thames Basin
- 81: Greater Thames Estuary



EAST COLCHESTER GROWTH AREA OPTION
ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT
 COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL

FIGURE 3.3
 NATIONAL CHARACTER AREAS

- *The water bearing underlying Chalk beds are a main source of recharge for the principal London Basin Chalk aquifer.*
- *A diverse landscape with a series of broad valleys containing the major rivers Ver, Colne and Lea, and slightly steeper valleys of the rivers Stour, Colne and Roman. Numerous springs rise at the base of the Bagshot Beds and several reservoirs are dotted throughout the area*
- *The pattern of woodlands is varied across the area and includes considerable ancient semi-natural woodland. Hertfordshire is heavily wooded in some areas as are parts of Essex, while other areas within Essex are more open in character. Significant areas of wood pasture and pollarded veteran trees are also present.*
- *The field pattern is very varied across the basin reflecting historical activity. Informal patterns of 18th-century or earlier enclosure reflect medieval colonisation of the heaths. Regular planned enclosures dating from the Romano-British period are a subtle but nationally important feature on the flat land to the south-east of the area. In the Essex heathlands 18th- and 19th-century enclosure of heathlands and commons followed by extensive 20th-century field enlargement is dominant.*
- *Grasslands are characteristic of the river valleys throughout. Horticulture and market gardening are found on the light, sandy soils of former heaths in Essex, particularly around Colchester, along with orchards, meadow pasture and leys following numerous narrow rivers and streams.*
- *The diverse range of semi-natural habitats include ancient woodland, lowland heath and floodplain grazing marsh and provide important habitats for a wide range of species including great crested newt, water vole, dormouse and otter.*
- *Rich archaeology including sites related to Roman occupation, with the Roman capital at Colchester and City of St Albans (Verulamium) and links to London.*

3.3.5 To the south of the Assessment Area, National Character Area 81⁸, see **Figure 3.3**, the Greater Thames Estuary. The following key characteristics are relevant to the Study Area:

- *Predominantly flat, low-lying coastal landscape where extensive open spaces are dominated by the sky, and the pervasive presence of water and numerous coastal estuaries extend the maritime influence far inland.*
- *Eastern edge of the London Basin with its underlying geology of the extensive London Clay, containing important sites for geodiversity including fossiliferous deposits, and overlain by productive loamy soils derived from intertidal alluvial muds.*
- *Geological contrast and variety along the coastline provided by Sheppey, a long, low island rising from a stretch of very flat marsh along the Swale Estuary in Kent with low, steep clay cliffs facing towards Essex, and Mersea Island in the Blackwater Estuary in Essex.*

⁸ NCA Profile: 81 Greater Thames Estuary (Natural England, 2013) www.naturalengland.org.uk

- *Coastline of major geomorphological interest for its coastal processes. Accretion of material carried by the sea from the north recharges intertidal coastal habitats, which are subject to coastal squeeze from rising sea levels.*
- *Open grazing pastures patterned by a network of ancient and modern reed-fringed drainage ditches and dykes, numerous creeks and few hedges or fences, with tree cover a rarity.*
- *Traditional unimproved wet pasture grazed with sheep and cattle combined with extensive drained and ploughed arable land protected from floods by sea walls, with some areas of more mixed agriculture on higher ground.*
- *Strong feelings of remoteness and wilderness persist on extensive salt marshes, mudflats and reclaimed farmed marshland, which support internationally important plants, invertebrates and populations of breeding and overwintering birds, notably overwintering Brent geese.*
- *Open mosaic habitats on brownfield sites support nationally important invertebrate assemblages and key populations of rare invertebrate species.*
- *Distinctive landmarks of coastal military heritage including Napoleonic military defences, forts and 20th-century pillboxes.*
- *Some of the least settled parts of the English coast with numerous small villages and hamlets on higher ground and marsh edges reflecting medieval patterns and the coastal economy.*

Essex Landscape Character Assessment

3.3.6 The Essex Landscape Character Assessment⁹ has identified the following landscape character areas within the Study Area. These are shown on **Figure 3.4**:

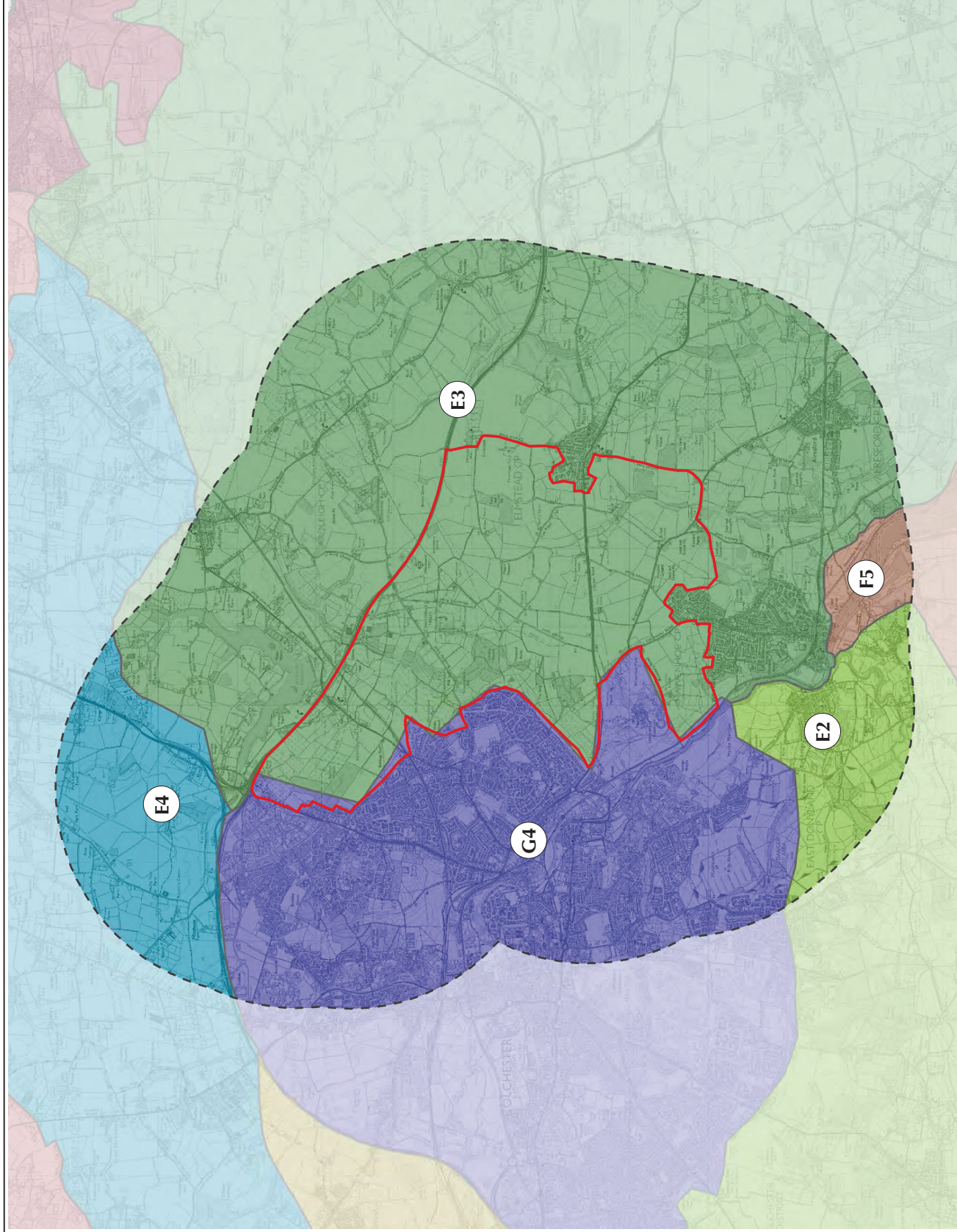
- Tendring Plain (E3)
- Colchester and Environs (G4)
- North Colchester Farmlands (E4)
- South Colchester Farmlands (E2)
- North Blackwater and Colne Coastal Farmlands (F5)

3.3.7 The following key characteristics for each character area are relevant to the Study Area:

Tendring Plain (E3)

- *Large flat farmland plateau, dissected by occasional small narrow valleys.*
- *Arable land use dominates, but with some pasture and orchards.*
- *Straight and regular field patterns with mainly low trimmed hedgerows.*
- *Widely dispersed blocks of woodland/small copses, sparse tree cover in the north.*
- *Former heathland character near Colchester*

⁹ Essex Landscape Character Assessment, Chris Blandford Associates (2003)

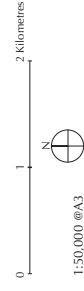


KEY

- Site Boundary
- Study Area (2.5km distance from Site Boundary)

Essex Landscape Character Areas:

- E3: Tending Plain
- G4: Colchester & Environs
- E4: North Colchester Farmlands
- E2: South Colchester Farmlands
- F5: North Blackwater & Colne Coastal Farmlands



Based upon the Ordnance Survey Map with the permission of the controller of H.M. Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright Licence number - 100017241

Colchester and Environs (G4)

- *Historic town core with a strong grid pattern on a low hill above the River Colne.*
- *Residential and commercial development wraps over valleysides or slightly elevated flatter land.*
- *Uninterrupted valley floor of the Colne forms a ribbon of green space running through the centre of the urban area.*
- *Large blocks of woodlands and open spaces on some valleysides.*
- *Variable size regular hedgerowed fields in the fringing farmland.*

North Colchester Farmlands (E4)

- *Flat arable farmland, with regular fields and low trimmed hedgerows.*
- *Isolated linear woods.*
- *Generally wide views.*
- *Large apple orchards introduce interest and variety.*
- *Many smallholdings and glasshouses.*

South Colchester Farmlands (E2)

- *Mix of small regular pasture and large arable fields.*
- *Dense woodland in the Roman River valley.*
- *Enclosed, intimate character in the north, more open in the south.*
- *Complex settlement pattern of nucleated and linear villages/hamlets, and farmsteads along dispersed lanes.*
- *Distinctive elongated large waterbody of Abberton Reservoir within a shallow valley.*

North Blackwater and Colne Coastal Farmlands (F5)

- *Gently sloping arable farmland with intermittent tall elm hedgerows.*
- *Significant areas of grazing marsh and saltmarsh associated with narrow estuarine inlets and outlets, channels and creeks.*
- *Small villages/hamlets and isolated farmsteads mainly on higher land, with a few creekside villages.*
- *Tranquil character.*
- *Mostly tranquil, secluded character.*

Colchester Borough and Tendring District Level Landscape Character Areas

3.3.8 The Colchester Borough Landscape Character Assessment¹⁰ has identified the following landscape character areas within the Study Area. These are shown on **Figure 3.5**:

Wooded Roman River Valley (A2)

- *Relatively steep and wooded slopes of narrow v-shaped Roman River valley (tributary of the Colne River);*
- *Large areas of deciduous and coniferous (mixed) woodland on the valley slopes (e.g. Donyland Wood, Friday Wood and Chest Wood);*
- *Small patches of ancient woodland on the valley sides;*
- *Large regular fields on northern valley slopes with a concentration of smaller irregular fields at High Park Corner;*
- *Several areas of historic parkland, often associated with halls, overlooking the valley floor;*
- *Views across and within the valley restricted by large woodland areas.*

Roman River Valley Floor (A3)

- *Narrow, meandering floodplain of the Roman River, becoming slightly broader at its confluence with the River Colne;*
- *Several marshy areas adjacent to the river, supporting riparian/ wetland vegetation within the enclaves created by meanders;*
- *Single mature deciduous trees adjacent to and as landscape features on the edge of marshy areas adjacent to Ferry Road at the confluence of the Roman and Colne Rivers;*
- *Views across the open river mouth to High Park corner in the south and Wivenhoe in the north;*
- *Rowhedge Warehouses as a dominant landmark on the edge of the floodplain to the south of Wivenhoe.*

Colne River Valley Slopes (A5)

- *Relatively steep v-shaped valley slopes facilitate attractive and open views across and along the River corridor;*
- *Principal road network consisting of narrow tree-lined (sometimes sunken) lanes traversing the valley sides to the north and south;*
- *A mosaic of medium to large-sized irregular and regular, predominantly arable fields with medium hedgerows containing semi-mature/ mature hedgerow trees;*

¹⁰ Colchester Borough Landscape Assessment, Chris Blandford Associates (2005)

- *Some larger semi-enclosed arable fields to the west of Wakes Colne; and concentrations of smaller fields with intact hedge boundaries adjacent to settlements;*
- *Settlement pattern consists of small linear village settlements such as Wakes Colne and Eight Ash Green, adjacent to the north-south roads, which cross the River Valley; small hamlets and farmsteads.*

Ardleigh River Valley (A6)

- *Lower reaches of a small narrow river valley encompassing the Salary Brook and steep valley sides;*
- *Wooded western valley slopes (patches of ancient deciduous woodland);*
- *Small regular fields on the valley sides in proximity to Salary Brook, becoming larger adjacent to the south;*
- *Connects to the large Ardleigh reservoir and remainder of the character area outside the borough boundary to the north.*

Southern Colchester Farmland Plateau (B3)

- *An area of sloping farmland plateau (with a mixture of small, medium and large predominantly arable fields) bordered by Colchester settlement fringes to the north and the wooded Roman River Valley to the south;*
- *Influence of the military (East Donyland military training area & Middlewick Rifle Ranges) – disturbs tranquillity whilst firing practice is taking place;*
- *Several large patches of woodland extend from the northern slopes of the Roman River valley, onto the plateau;*
- *Several small lakes and ponds, within disused sand and gravel works;*
- *Character area provides physical and visual separation between Colchester urban area and the Roman River Valley;*
- *Fragmented and sometimes chaotic landscape structure with numerous unrelated land uses.*

Great Horkesley Farmland Plateau (B6)

- *Small to medium scale arable fields with concentrations of mature trees at field boundaries;*
- *Interesting field pattern consisting of small, regular fields to the south of Boxted and also to the east of Great Horkesley;*
- *Orchards in close proximity to Great Horkesley;*
- *Farmland plateau crossed in a north-south direction by two straight roads, which connect with Colchester's northern settlement fringe. Linear settlement pattern extends from the layout of these roads;*

- *A network of narrow lanes (sometimes sunken), which are lined by trees and hedges connect the remainder of the character area with the two main north south roads;*
- *Hedgerows are diverse and well managed/ clipped in most places.*

Langham Farmland Plateau (B7)

- *Langham airfield – clipped straight hedges adjacent to Park Lane;*
- *Silver birches within field boundaries to the east of disused Langham airfield;*
- *Large-scale arable fields with some remnant orchards now cover the large expanse of airfield;*
- *Paddocks, surrounded by wooden post and rail fences;*
- *Airfield dominates field pattern.*

Wivenhoe Farmland Plateau (B8)

- *Small, irregular patches of woodland;*
- *Plateau, predominantly arable farmland consisting of medium to large arable irregular fields with gappy field boundaries;*
- *Well-connected network of lanes and footpaths traversing the area;*
- *Distinctive Wivenhoe Park and Lodge adjacent to the University of Essex site.*

Fingringhoe Open Coastal Estuarine Marsh (C1)

- *Mosaic of open saltmarshes, mudflats, narrow winding creeks and channels, adjacent to the River Colne;*
- *Inter-tidal landscape, constantly washed by the sea which provides movement;*
- *Separated from a backdrop of drained coastal marshes and open coastal farmland by prominent sea walls;*
- *Remote, inaccessible character accentuated by the sounds of gulls and other birds.*

Colne Drained Coastal Estuarine Marsh (D3)

- *Corridor of rough grassland and grazing marsh lines the River Colne;*
- *Scattered patches of low-lying scrub;*
- *Network of drainage ditches in places;*
- *Visual influence of main railway line which runs through parts of the area.*

Langenhoe Coastal Farmland (E3)

- *Area of gently sloping open coastal farmland with distinctive topographical knolls housing Peldon and Abberton/Langenhoe settlements;*
- *Predominantly arable farmland with patches of rough grassland and small patches of woodland;*
- *Generally undeveloped character and large-scale field pattern;*
- *Isolated farmsteads situated along narrow lanes;*
- *Rifle ranges to the east of Langenhoe.*

3.3.9 The Tendring District Landscape Character Assessment¹¹ has identified the following landscape character areas within the Study Area (see **Figure 3.5**):

Ardleigh Valley System (6B)

- *Steep sided wooded valley hidden from the surrounding farmed plateau.*
- *Ancient deciduous woodland clings to valley sides and alder and willow dominate stramlines.*
- *Leafy lanes drop steeply down the valley side and cross the streams on stone bridges e.g. Springvalley Lane.*
- *The A120 and railway line, in contrast, cut across the valley on embankments, fragment the valley both visually and physically.*
- *Spring Valley Mill is the only remaining example of a water mill in Tendring.*
- *Ardleigh Reservoir floods the two northernmost arms of the valley system.*

Alresford Valley System (6C)

- *A series of distinct river valleys, steep sided in places, containing Sixpenny, Tenpenny and Bentley Brooks and including the slopes descending to the Colne Estuary.*
- *The intimate, leafy character contrasts with the adjacent expansive open arable landscapes of the heathland plateau.*
- *Large areas of deciduous woodland including Thorringtonhall Wood, one of the largest ancient woodlands in the district.*
- *Old coppice stools are visible in many of the woodlands.*
- *Historic lanes drop steeply down the valley side and cross the brooks at ancient crossing points.*
- *Sparse settlement consisting of scattered cottages and isolated farms.*
- *Recent infill has resulted in ribbon development on the edge of Thorrington Cross.*
- *Gravel pits and sewage works are present.*

¹¹ Tendring District Landscape Character Assessment (2001) Land Use Consultants

Bromley Heaths (7A)

- *Exposed and windswept plateau corresponding to the highest part of the district.*
- *Deep, coarse, loamy and often stoneless brown soils which support a high grade agricultural land.*
- *Large scale productive arable fields divided by low, gappy hedgerows where hedgerow oaks stand out as silhouettes against the skyline.*
- *Apple orchards around Ardleigh, Elmstead and Frating are sheltered by belts of poplar or fast growing Leylandii.*
- *Former heaths largely converted to smallholdings or regenerating as woodland. Small areas of remnant heath survive.*
- *Neglected oak/sweet chestnut coppice with ground flora typical of acidic woodland soils.*
- *Low density, rural settlement pattern of scattered farms and halls, hamlets, villages and small market towns.*
- *Network of narrow lanes connects the scattered farms and villages and roadside verges often containing gorse and bracken.*
- *Dramatic, dominating skyline.*

Townscape Character Areas

3.3.10 The following Townscape Character Areas¹² in Colchester are inter-visible with, or are immediately adjacent to, the Site (see **Figure 3.6**):

E2 – Elmstead Road (Edwardian Suburbs)

3.3.11 *This Character Area encompasses a short row of housing, which lines Elmstead Road (a main pedestrian and bus link from the University of Essex to the town centre). The area is close proximity to the River Colne, the Hythe and the University of Essex. Housing within the area is generally isolated from other nearby residential areas within the Hythe by roundabouts and the large Tesco supermarket, which is opposite. Houses are generally raised from street level (with steep steps leading up to front doors and raised front gardens) and are predominantly brick, with consistency in architectural details. The area has a busy character on account of its proximity to several main roads and junctions.*

F11 – Hawthorn Avenue (Inter-War/Post-War Suburbs)

3.3.12 *This relatively high-density area of inter-war housing consists of a combination of two-storey semi-detached and terraced houses with two and three-storey flats set out in a courtyard*

¹² Townscape Character Assessments of Colchester, Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe , Chris Blandford Associates (2006)

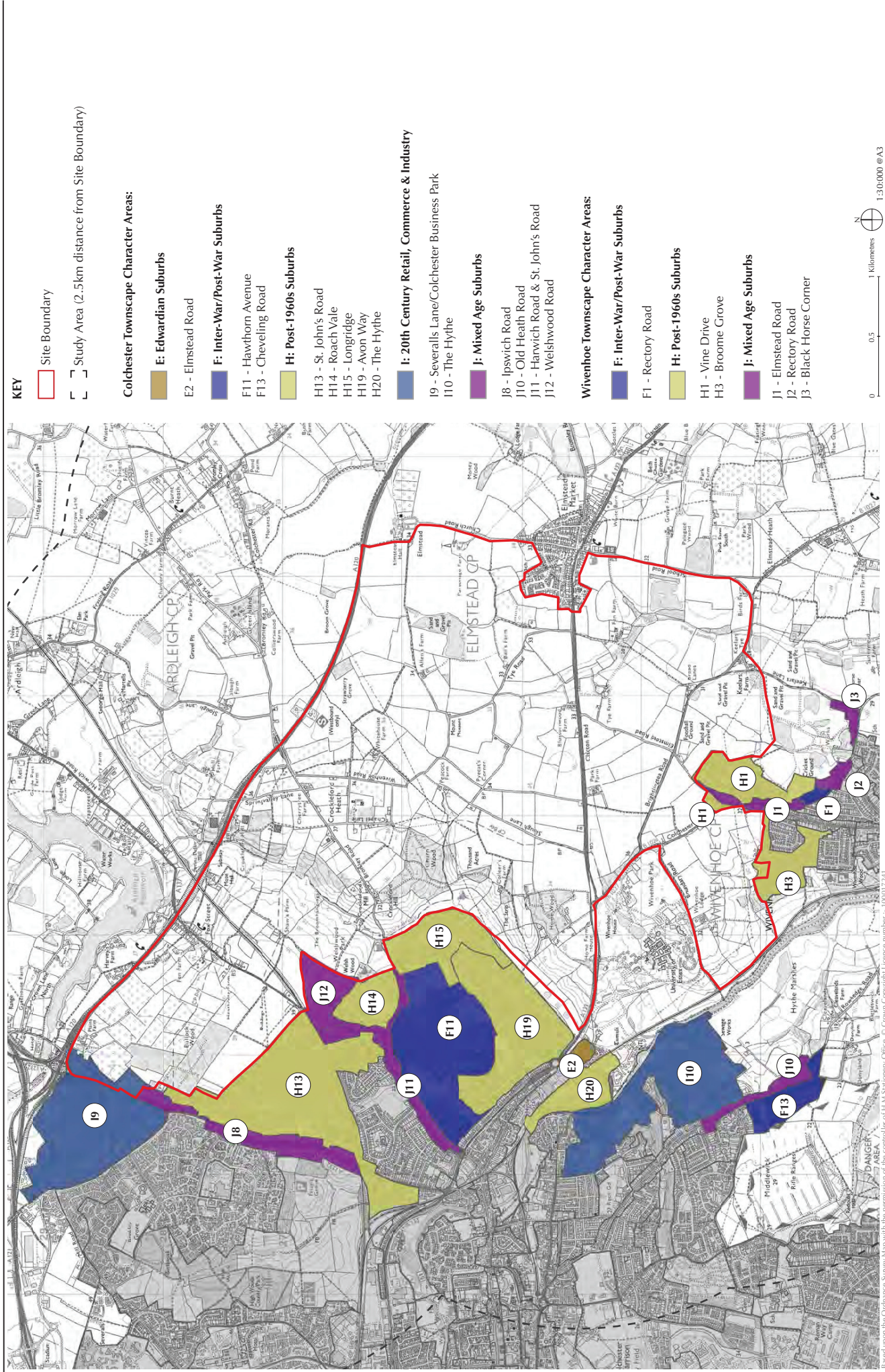


FIGURE 3.6
COLCHESTER & WIVENHOE
TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

EAST COLCHESTER GROWTH AREA OPTION
ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT
COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL

layout. Hazelmere Infant and Nursery School and Sir Charles Lucas Arts College are located within the residential area. There is overall uniformity in architectural style, which leads to a recognisable localised sense of place. Overall, however, the streetscape is bland and utilitarian with a limited number of public open spaces punctuating built-form.

F13 – Cheveling Road (Inter-War/Post-War Suburbs)

- 3.3.13 *This suburb of inter-war housing is situated close to the southern edge of Colchester's urban area and is set back from Old Heath Road, which runs to the east of the area. Housing is set out in a slightly curvilinear pattern following Cheveling Road. There is consistency in architectural style, form and materials, which are typical of this period. Sense of place is recognised by views to the large industrial/commercial development on the opposite side of Old Heath Road and views to Middlewick Firing Ranges to the west.*

H13 – St. John's Road (Post-1960s Suburbs)

- 3.3.14 *An area of post-1960s detached and semi-detached housing which is based around two main roads and a number of closes and cul-de-sacs. Housing along Templewood and Churnwood Roads (to the south of the railway line) has a very similar character and is therefore included within this area, even though the railway line physically separates the two residential blocks. Housing is relatively low density, and most houses have private gardens and drives. Overall, this area lacks sense of place, but is quiet and feels safe.*

H14 – Roach Vale (Post-1960s Suburbs)

- 3.3.15 *This residential suburb is located at the north eastern edge of the urban area and is separated into two halves by a large swathe of greenspace (comprising school playing fields, sports ground and Welsh Wood). The curvilinear street pattern and architectural style is typical of other such modern (c.1980s/1990s) housing developments both within the Borough and throughout the United Kingdom. At the eastern edge, housing overlooks Welsh Wood and the valley of Salary Brook.*

H15 – Longridge (Post-1960s Suburbs)

- 3.3.16 *This residential suburb is situated at the eastern edge of the urban area and overlooks Salary Brook Valley to the east. Housing ranges from large, predominantly detached, red brick houses with large gardens and clear definition between public and private space in the northern part of the area, to bungalows and terraces within the southern part. All properties characteristically obtain views across the valley, providing distinctive setting and sense of place. Street pattern is*

curvilinear, with several avenues and closes leading off Longridge Road (the main vehicular access road).

H19 – Avon Way (Post-1960s Suburbs)

- 3.3.17 *This large residential suburb occupies the northern slope of Salary Brook Valley and lines the south eastern urban edge of Colchester. Housing comprises a combination of semi-detached houses, terraces and low-rise blocks of flats with varying architectural styles and details, ranging from c.late 1970s to c.1990s. Occasional street trees are visible within the combined curvilinear and grid street pattern. However, overall streetscape character is bland and stark. Open views across the Colne Valley and Salary Brook Valley can be gained from within the Character Area, contributing to a recognisable sense of place. Avon Way, a busy traffic route, disturbs overall sense of tranquillity within the area.*

H20 – The Hythe (Post-1960s Suburbs)

This recently redeveloped mixed use area contains private and University accommodation alongside a large commercial superstore (B&Q). Housing is arranged as large blocks of accommodation (between three and six storeys) which overlook the river corridor and are situated on the eastern bank of the River Colne. Large areas of car parking associated with residential development and the superstore are a dominant character of this area. This area is within the Hythe and character is sometimes disturbed with noise from the adjacent railway corridor, Hythe industrial/commercial area and river. Traffic congestion also detracts from an otherwise coherent character. Open views along the river and to other areas of the Hythe add identity to the character of this area and help to determine an overall distinct sense of place.

I9 – Severalls Lane/Colchester Business Park (20th Century Retail, Commerce & Industry)

- 3.3.18 *This area of light industrial units and warehouses is located at the northern extent of Colchester urban area, bounded to the north by the A12. A number of car showrooms located along the northern end of Ipswich Road are also within this Character Area. A combination of large buildings constructed from varying materials, with large colourful signs, creates a somewhat chaotic character.*

I10 – The Hythe (20th Century Retail, Commerce & Industry)

- 3.3.19 *This area lines the western banks of the River Colne and contains a large number of industrial and commercial buildings, some of which are associated with the current and former use of the River Corridor. The character of the area is dominated by the riverscape and associated*

industrial land use. The area generally has a mixed character with a mixture of 'fringe-type' elements such as caravans, lorries and industrial material associated with fishing boats on the river. On-street parking is also a feature of this area. Views along the river corridor and to other taller industrial buildings evoke a sense of place within the area. Character is dominated by a mixture of 'hard' elements, such as tall metal fencing lining industrial areas to the east and tarmac road surfacing. Pylons, which cross the river and also the Character Area are dominant landmarks within views from surrounding Character Areas. Corrugated metal grain silos overlooking the river are also landmark features contributing to the character of the area. Views to new four-, five- and six-storey buildings on the opposite side of the river and also views to tower blocks on the campus of the University of Essex can be gained from the area. The Character Area is situated within The Hythe East Colchester Regeneration Area 30 and overall townscape is therefore in a state of flux.

J8 – Ipswich Road (Mixed Age Suburbs)

- 3.3.20 *This Character Area includes housing, which has developed along the line of Ipswich Road, and is located within the northwestern part of Colchester's urban area. Houses have various architectural styles and cover several periods from medieval to post-1960s (modern) infill. Characteristically houses are set back from the road by front gardens, with all houses facing the road. A mixture of semi-detached and detached houses with bungalows also being typical of the area. Views into the Colne Valley from the southern end of Ipswich Road contribute to providing a recognisable sense of place.*

J10 – Old Heath Road (Mixed Age Suburbs)

- 3.3.21 *This Character Area encompasses housing (and occasional shops) along both sides of Old Heath Road, which is situated to the east of Middlewick ranges and west of the Hythe, at the western edge of the urban area. Views across open farmland, Hythe Marshes and the floodplain of the River Colne can be gained from the backs of houses along the eastern side of Old Heath Road. Views to the tower blocks of the University of Essex campus can also be gained from this Character Area, contributing to a recognisable sense of place. Housing facades are more or less continuous along Old Heath Road, with mixed architectural styles, dating from Victorian to post-war, with occasional post-1960s infill.*

J11 – Harwich Road & St. John's Road (Mixed Age Suburbs)

- 3.3.22 *This relatively small Character Area encompasses housing which lines the main Harwich Road and southern end of St John's Road. Houses within the area range from Victorian to post-1960s period, with a predominance of postwar housing and modern development towards the*

northern end. A mixture of terraced, semi-detached and detached houses are typical of this area. Occasional small shops also line Harwich Road. The southern end of St John's Road comprises semi-detached and detached houses and bungalows.

J12 – Welshwood Road (Mixed Age Suburbs)

- 3.3.23 *This relatively small and compact Character Area is located adjacent to Welshwood Park. It contains a unique and diverse mixture of detached houses, which are set back from the wide Welshwood Road and have large front and back gardens. Houses are set within a woodland glade, which creates a diverse and tranquil character. Architectural age and style varies on a plot-by-plot basis (some with thatched roofs, others with timber-facing). Harmony is brought to the area by the presence of mature woodland trees, which create enclosure, and strong localised sense of place.*
- 3.3.24 The following Townscape Character Areas in Wivenhoe are inter-visible with, or are immediately adjacent to, the Site (**Figure 3.6**):

F1 - Rectory Road (Inter-War/Post-War Suburbs)

- 3.3.25 *This Character Area contains a small linear belt of predominantly post-war houses that line the northern and southern sides of a short section of Rectory Road, which connects with Colchester Road and the Avenue in the west, and then runs along the northwestern edge of Wivenhoe. There is consistency in architectural style and detail, generally red brick houses, of which several have bay windows. Houses generally have small front gardens, which provide separation along the road corridor and contribute visual interest to the character of the area. Adjacent residential areas to the north, south and west provide a sense of enclosure, with open views across allotments and Wivenhoe Cricket Ground from the back of properties along the northern edge of Rectory Road. There are generally few views into or out of the area, other than to directly adjacent residential areas.*

H1 - Vine Drive (Post-1960s Suburbs)

- 3.3.26 *This suburb of post-1960s housing is situated at the northeastern edge of Wivenhoe's urban area, overlooking open countryside to the north and east. Street pattern is predominantly curvilinear, with two-storey, semi-detached and detached properties arranged around a series of closes and avenues leading from Broadfields, Vine Drive, Richard Avenue and Field Way. Bungalows are also present within the Character Area (Llamas Drive) and a row of shops along Broadfields creates a lively and bustling entrance to the northern end of this otherwise secluded suburb. The area is set back from the main road (Avenue Road, which later becomes the High*

Street to the south). Several areas of publicly accessible grassland/open space are dotted amongst the urban structure, with one patch to the south of Richard Avenue and a large area of allotments and a cricket ground at the southern edge of the area.

H3 - Broome Grove (Post-1960s Suburbs)

- 3.3.27 *This predominantly 1980s/1990s residential area is situated at the northwestern edge of Wivenhoe and overlooks the Colne Valley and open fields on the valley side to the north and west. Views across the valley are however limited by small patches of woodland at the western settlement edge. Street pattern is predominantly curvilinear, with housing set out along a number of drives and crescents, which lead off Broome Grove Road. Housing is predominantly semi-detached and two-storeys in height. Although relatively homogenous in terms of architectural style, red and buff brick predominates, streetscape is generally bland, particularly with few street trees to enhance the character of the area.*

J1 - Elmstead Road (Mixed Age Suburbs)

- 3.3.28 *This relatively long area of mixed age suburbs lines Elmstead/Colchester Roads with Colchester and the University of Essex to the north, and Wivenhoe retail and historic core to the south. Properties within this area have developed along the line of the road corridor and generally face the main road. The streetscape is quite wide and varied, with visual interest provided by vegetation within small front gardens. The area has a bustling and busy character on account of noise and movement associated with Elmstead/Colchester Roads and contains a mixture of different architectural styles and details.*

J2 - Rectory Road (Mixed Age Suburbs)

- 3.3.29 *This Character Area contains a mixture of different architectural styles dating from different periods of urban development. The area is situated at the northeastern edge of Wivenhoe's urban area and contains a combination of Victorian, post-war and modern (post-1960s) housing, which line the main road corridor. Streetscape is generally distinctive, with several street trees and patches of mature vegetation within front gardens along the road corridor. The area is enclosed to the south by adjacent residential areas and is more open to the north, overlooking open fields.*

J3 - Black Horse Corner (Mixed Age Suburbs)

- 3.3.30 *This Character Area contains a mixture of buildings from differing architectural periods: post-war to post-1960s. Overall street pattern is linear, with houses facing the road corridors.*

Properties are detached, often exhibiting distinctive and interesting architecture and set within large plots along Alresford Road. Properties are also detached and set within slightly smaller plots along Keelars Lane to the north. The area has a relatively secluded and tranquil character, despite proximity to the working sand and gravel pits along the northern edge of the area. Open views across adjacent fields can be gained to the south and east.

Landscape Designations

- 3.3.31 Landscape designations within the Study Area are shown on **Figure 3.7** and described below:

Wivenhoe Park Grade II Registered Historic Park and Garden

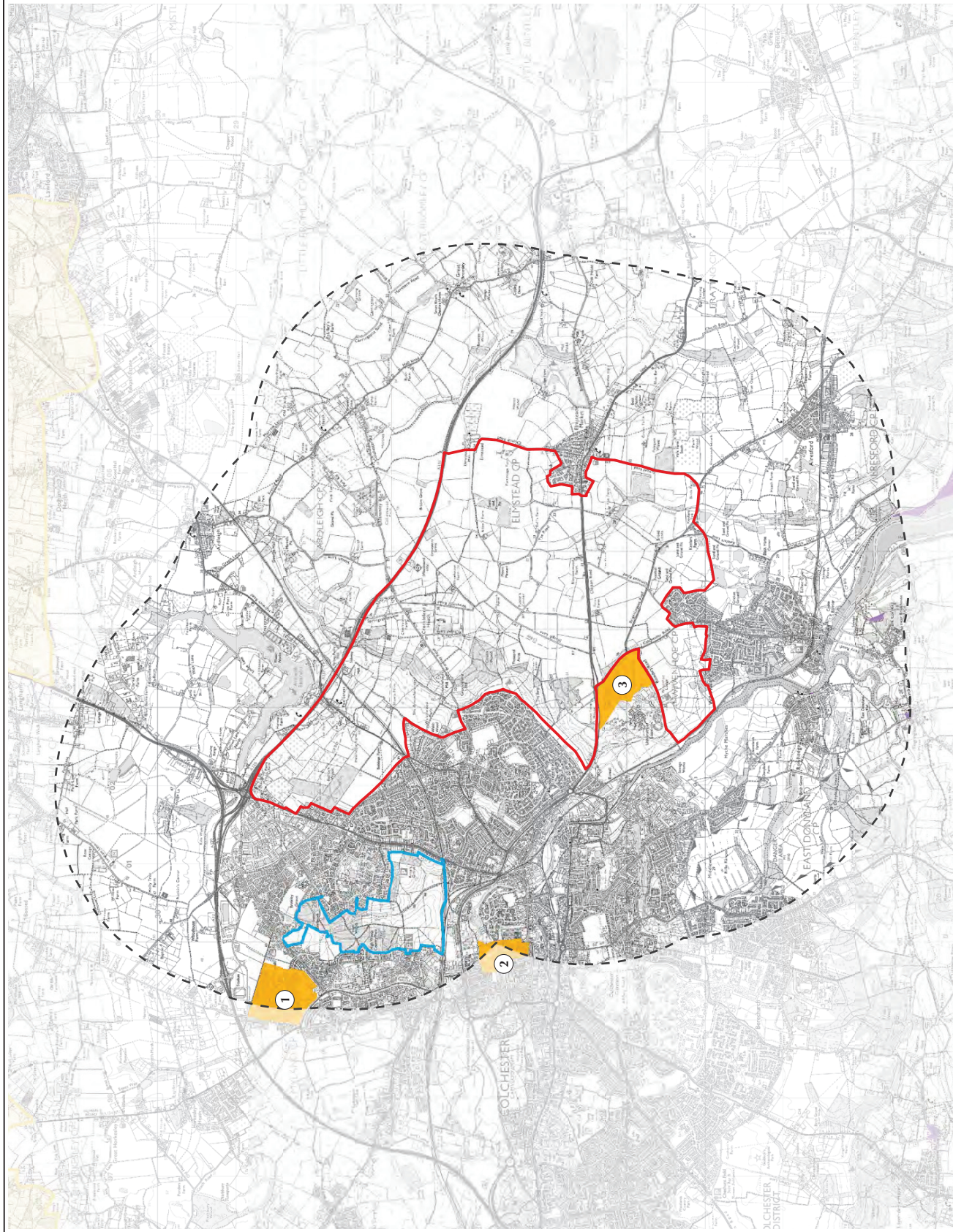
- 3.3.32 Wivenhoe Park Grade II Registered Historic Park and Garden is located immediately to the west of the site, north of Wivenhoe. The Park is associated with the Grade II* Listed Wivenhoe House, and includes a designed garden area, originally laid out in 1847-48 by WA Nesfield, and parkland beyond, laid out by Richard Woods in 1777. The Park is scattered with mature oaks, sweet chestnut, lime, and beech, predominantly dating from the mid C19, with a series of three lakes running through the valley. The land is now managed for a variety of purposes by the University.

Colchester Castle Park Grade II Registered Historic Park and Garden

- 3.3.33 Colchester Castle Park Grade II Registered Historic Park and Garden is located 2.5km to the west of the site, in the centre of Colchester. The Park is 9ha of late 19th century public park set around the remains of Colchester Castle and an 18th century house (now a museum).

Severalls Hospital Grade II Registered Historic Park and Garden

- 3.3.34 Severalls Hospital Grade II Registered Historic Park and Garden is located 2.5km to the north west of the site, on the northern edge of Colchester. Severalls Hospital was a psychiatric facility that opened in 1913 and closed in 1997. It was located within 15 acres of mature parkland; which is now designated as a Grade II Registered Historic Park and Garden. The area has been subsequently identified within the Adopted Review Colchester Borough Local Plan March 2004 for residential development.



KEY

Site Boundary

Study Area (2.5km distance from Site Boundary)

Registered Historic Parks & Gardens

- 1) Severalls Hospital
- 2) Colchester Castle
- 3) Wivenhoe Park

High Woods Country Park

Access Land

0 1 2 Kilometres



1:50,000 @A3

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High Woods Country Park

- 3.3.35 High Woods Country Park is located approximately 1km to the west of the site, within the northern area of Colchester. The Country Park has a range of facilities including a network of paths for walking and cycling, play areas, fishing, and a visitor centre.

Visual Amenity

- 3.3.36 Field work was undertaken to validate the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping (see **Figure 3.1**). This has established that the actual Zone of Visual Influence (or visual envelope) of the Site is considerably more limited than the ZTV suggests.
- 3.3.37 An appraisal of the Study Area's visual amenity has been made following fieldwork and reference to 1:10,000 and 1:25,000 scale Ordnance Survey maps of the area. In addition, a series of colour photographs have been taken from viewpoints within the Site that are representative of views accessible to the public (see **Figure 3.8**).
- 3.3.38 All photographs were taken in August 2015 and their locations are indicated on **Figure 3.8**. It should be noted that the screening effect of vegetation will be diminished during winter when deciduous vegetation is not in leaf. The photographs are presented on **Figure 3.9** and described below:

Viewpoint 1a

- 3.3.39 Viewpoint 1a shows a view north from the access point across an area of grassed open space at the corner of St. John's Close, looking towards houses in Woodview Close. The view shows the typically partial screening of views towards the houses to the north by the trees, hedgerows and woodland (Bullock Wood) along the field boundary at the edge of the Site and within the existing housing.

Viewpoint 3

- 3.3.40 Viewpoint 3 shows a view north from the car park of The Beehive pub on Bromley Road. The view across the pub garden to the arable fields beyond is obscured by trees and hedges, giving only glimpsed views.