

Soils

- Seasonally wet alluvial clay soils on valley floor. Well drained coarse or fine loamy soils and calcareous clay soils on the valleysides.

Landform

- Shallow valley with predominantly moderately sloped valleysides, some gentle. Very narrow valley floor from near source to Bishop Stortford. Average 300 - 400 m width south of here.
- A few small tributary valleys.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Calcareous fen/marsh.
- Unimproved hay meadows.
- Wet alder/carr woodland.
- Some ancient mixed deciduous woods on valleysides.

Pattern of field enclosure

- Unenclosed meadows, or small linear fields divided by drainage ditches and hedges on valley floor.
- Medium to large sized hedged fields on valleysides.

Farming pattern

- Pasture on valley floor, arable on valleysides.

Woodland/tree cover

- Linear wet woodlands, poplar/willow plantations and riverside trees on the valley floor.
- Many small valley-side woods and copses.
- Very dense tree cover in some tributary valleys.

Settlement pattern and built form

- Urban edge of Harlow influences the character of the centre of the valley.
- Small villages and dispersed hamlets on valleysides.
- A few large villages much expanded by modern development, e.g. Stansted Mountfitchet, Lower Sheering.
- Historic vernacular of colour washed plaster and pegtile roofs. Some half timber and brick.

Communications

- Winding lanes run along the upper valleysides, and only cross the valley at a few bridging points.

- The railway to Cambridge runs within some sections of the valley but is generally hidden by vegetation.
- M11 crosses a few of the smaller tributary valleys and the Stansted junction is on the fringe of the area.
- The A414 and the A120 also cross the valley.

Other landscape features

- Strongly meandering River Stort course.
- Church spires are distinctive landmarks.
- Windmill/castle at Stansted Mountfitchet.
- A few sand and gravel pits.
- Numerous small estates and parklands, e.g. Stansted Hall, Maunden House, Sheering Hall, Hallingbury Park.
- Iron age hillfort at Wallbury.
- Mills and Brewery Malthouses.

Landscape Condition

- There are localised areas of abandoned, or overgrazed pastures.
- Overall the condition of hedgerows and woodlands in the farmland is moderate to good.
- The condition of the settlements is moderate to good. A few villages show signs of poor quality modern development.
- Light industrial sheds on the valley floor at the northern edge of Harlow are visually intrusive.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- Traditional use of the valley floor for grazing meadows and the valleysides for arable farming by the farms and small estates had a strong influence in the development of present day character.
- Given the proximity of major road and rail routes, there may be further pressure for major urban development. Due to the small scale enclosed character of the valley, with its strong tree cover, any such development would be very difficult to absorb.

**STORT VALLEY (C2)
SENSITIVITY EVALUATION**

TYPE/SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT/CHANGE	KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND ACCOMMODATION OF CHANGE ISSUES	LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY LEVEL
1. Major urban extensions (>5 ha) and new settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of valley floor/small parklands. • Intrinsic small scale character of most of the valley. • Tranquil in character in the north. • Strong strength of character/good condition of much of the landscape. 	H
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape settings. • Low to moderate intervisibility. 	M
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of valley floor/small parklands. • Low capacity for additional routes. • Tranquil character in the north. • Strong strength of character/good condition of much of the landscape. 	H
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of valley floor/small parklands. • Intrinsic small scale character of most of the valley. • Strong strength of character/good condition of the landscape. • Tranquil character in the north. 	H
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrinsic small scale character of the valley. • Uncommon intrusive influences. • Low to moderate intervisibility. 	H
6. Large scale 'open uses'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of valley floor/small parklands. • Intrinsic small scale character of most of the valley. 	H
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of valley floor/small parklands. • Tranquil character in the north. • Uncommon intrusive influences. • Strong strength of character/good condition of much of the landscape. 	H
8. Incremental small scale developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncommon intrusive influences. • Character of the lanes/settlements. • Low to moderate intervisibility. 	M
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncommon intrusive influences. • Tranquil character in the north of the area. • Low to moderate intervisibility. 	H
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition of floodplain meadows and small pastures. 	M

Note:

(a) *The landscape would have a high sensitivity level to any large scale mineral extraction.*

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

4.4.7 *Lee Valley (C3)*



Key Characteristics

- Very broad, flood plain occupied by wet gravel pits, woodland and a variety of fragmented agricultural, recreational and small scale industrial land uses.
- Rolling farmland to the east, typically with bold blocks of woodland and linear tree belts on valleysides and ridges.
- Significant clusters of active and derelict glasshouse land use.
- Extensive views from higher ground within the area.

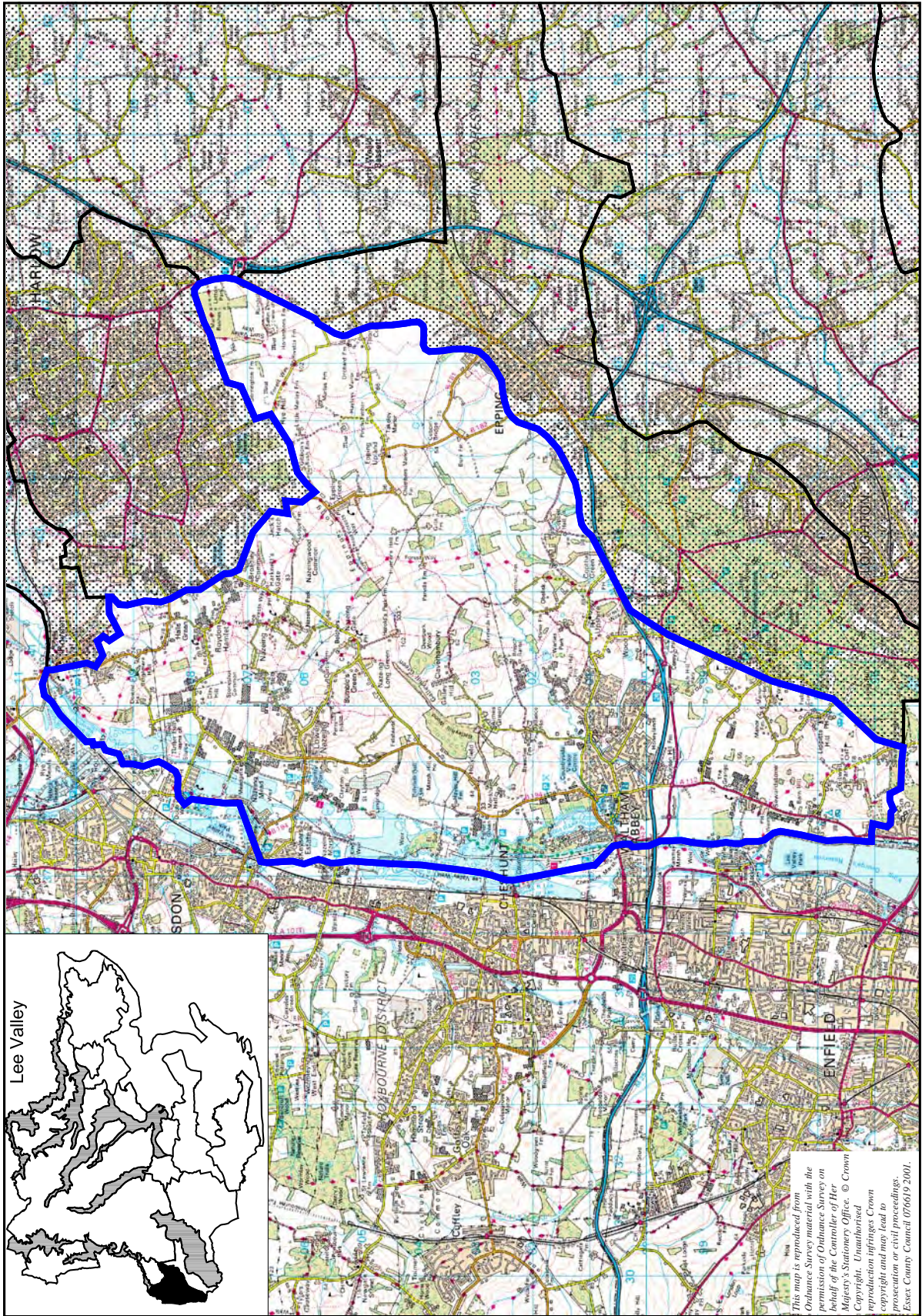
Overall Character

The Lee Valley Character Area includes a wide flat valley floor, adjacent moderately sloping eastern valleysides, and a series of connected smaller tributary valleys and broad ridges, aligned approximately north east to south west. Large wet gravel pits on the valley floor are dotted with islands and promontories. These are enclosed by regenerating woodland in the south, creating a secluded character, but are associated with a complex disjointed pattern of land use in the north of the area. Open, rolling farmland to the east on the London clay soils of the ridges and valleys, has a strong pattern of hedgerowed fields, blocks of woodland and linear tree belts. Wide views across the area are obtained from high ground, and pylons and glasshouses interrupt these in parts.

Character Profile

Geology

- Sands and Gravels and Alluvium on main valley floor. London Clay on the valleysides.



Soils

- Seasonally wet alluvial clay soils, fine loamy/silty soils, slowly permeable calcareous soils.

Landform

- The River Lee Valley is very broad with a wide flat valley floor, and undulating eastern valleysides made up of distinctive rounded low hills/small ridges.
- To the east of the main valley a number of small tributaries of the Lee such as Cobbins Brook and Nazeing Brook are located in narrower north east to south west aligned valleys with broad ridges between them.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Alder/willow woodland, marsh and a few unimproved wet meadows on the valley floor.
- Mixed ancient woodland on the valleysides.

Pattern of field enclosure

- Field pattern absent from much of the valley floor. Some unenclosed meadows divided by drainage ditches near Waltham Abbey.
- Regular, hedgerowed, field pattern of small to medium size fields on the valleysides/ridges. Some large fields with more fragmented hedgerow boundaries around Epping Upland.

Farming pattern

- Mainly arable farmland.
- Some pasture on valleysides in the west of the area.
- Small holdings, horticultural use in parts.

Woodland/tree cover

- Dense woodland scrub cover on main valley floor, including natural regeneration of willow, alder, and planted areas.
- Strong pattern of valleyside/ridgetop woodlands and copses, but around Epping Upland only a few isolated tree belts.
- Hedgerow oak trees.
- Willow and poplars along stream courses in the farmland.

Settlement pattern and built form

- Mixed pattern of large and small villages, hamlets, farmsteads and modern houses strung out along lanes. More sparse settlement pattern further east.
- Historic vernacular of colour washed plaster, weatherboarding and brick.

- A number of the villages have much development of a suburban character, e.g. Nazeing.
- Main town of Waltham Abbey has a strong historic core but also large modern estates.

Communications

- Network of small winding lanes.
- Main valley has a north-south route on the valleysides with only a few east-west crossing points.
- M25 crosses the southern fringe of the area.

Other landscape features

- Large wet gravel pits dominate the valley floor. In the south these tend to be surrounded by woodland. In the north they occur with active gravel workings, caravan parks and small industrial works.
- Active and derelict glasshouses are a feature around Nazeing, Roydon Hamlet and near Waltham Abbey.
- Lee navigation is a raised canal with locks. Variety of other natural and man made watercourses.
- Significant area of historic parkland at Copped Hall. A number of smaller estates such as Nazeing Park and Monkams Hall.
- Waltham Abbey Church is an important local landmark.
- Historic gun powder works at Waltham Abbey.
- Pylon routes run north to south in the main valley and cross the area west to east.

Landscape Condition

- The condition of the valley floor landscape is mixed. It is good where woodland has developed around the wet gravel pits, but poor in the north of the area.
- The condition of the farmland hedgerows and woodlands is moderate to good, but a significant area with a fragmented hedgerow pattern in poor condition occurs around Epping Upland.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- Sand and gravel extraction, commencing in the early 1900s, has been a major influence on the development of the main valley floor landscape. Earlier less efficient extraction methods allowed the development of reedbeds and extensive alder, willow, birch scrub/woodland, suggestive of the early valley landscape prior to clearance for pasture.

- Residential expansion, the development of glass house industry and the use of valley floor landscape for a variety of other industrial and recreational uses have created a disturbed character to parts of the valley floor.
- Future pressures for change may include further development of recreational land uses, urban expansion of Waltham Abbey, and of Harlow which is adjacent to this character area, as well as small scale infill expansion of villages. These require sensitive siting and design if they are to be successfully accommodated in the landscape but could in some cases present opportunities for landscape enhancement and restoration where landscape condition is poor.

**LEE VALLEY (C3)
SENSITIVITY EVALUATION**

TYPE/SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT/CHANGE	KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND ACCOMMODATION OF CHANGE ISSUES	LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY LEVEL
1. Major urban extensions (>5 ha) and new settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual exposure of ridgetops, valleysides. • Integrity of valley floor/valleyside hedgerows/woodlands. • Coalescence. 	H
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual exposure of ridgetops/valleysides. <p><i>Some opportunities to improve some existing poor urban edges around Waltham Abbey and Harlow.</i></p>	L
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual exposure of ridgetops/valleysides. • Integrity of valley floor. • Landform character. • Low capacity for further change. 	M
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual exposure of ridgetops/valleysides. • Integrity of valley floor. <p><i>Siting, massing, form and colour and strong landscape frameworks are critical.</i></p>	M
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual exposure of ridgetops/valleysides. <p><i>Siting, massing, form and colour are critical.</i></p>	M
6. Large scale 'open uses'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual exposure of ridgetops/valleysides. • Integrity of valley floor/valleyside hedgerows/woodlands. <p><i>Possible opportunities to enhance areas in poor condition, e.g. in the north of the main valley, around Epping Upland with new landscape frameworks.</i></p>	L
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual exposure of ridgetops/valleysides. 	M
8. Incremental small scale developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low capacity for further change. 	M
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual exposure of ridgetops/valleysides. • Low capacity for further change. 	M
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition of hedgerows and small woodlands on valleysides. 	M

Note:

- (a) *Both visually exposed ridgetops/valleysides and large parts of the main valley floor are highly sensitive to most forms of large scale built development.*

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

4.4.8 *Roding Valley (C4)*

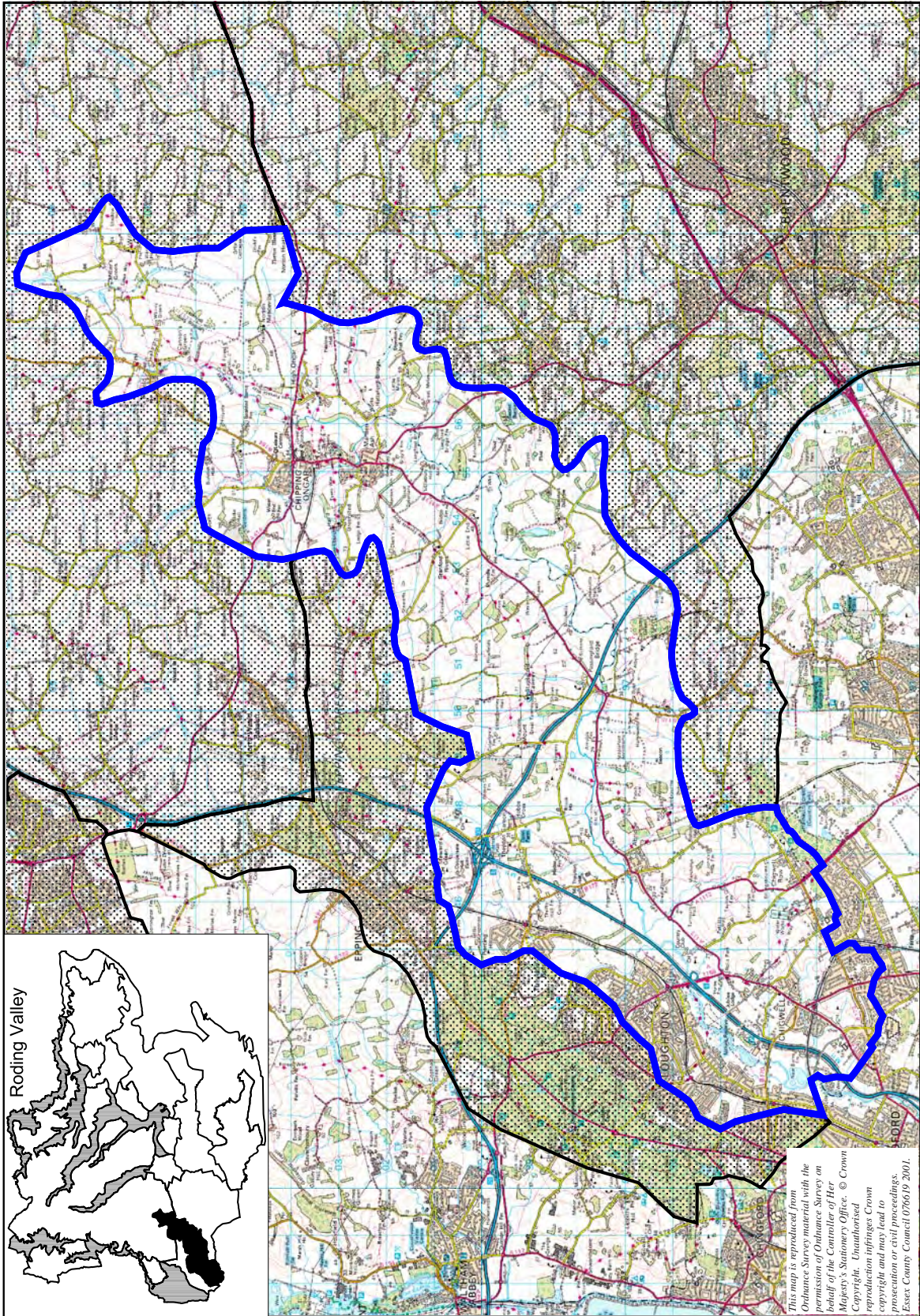


Key Characteristics

- Wide valley, deepening to the south.
- Gently to moderately undulating valleysides, occasionally intersected by small tributary valleys.
- Strong pattern of valleyside vegetation with thick hedgerow field boundaries, many hedgerow trees and scattered small woodlands.
- Meadows on flat valley floor, with occasional riverside trees.
- Tranquil character except in the south.

Overall Character

The Roding Valley is a broad and gentle valley. Where the valley deepens in the south and there are a number of tributary valleys joining, the landform becomes quite complex with rounded low hills aligned at right angles to the main valley. Arable fields of contrasting scale on the valleysides are typically enclosed by wide hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees, and sometimes by woodland. The river meanders through small meadows on the valley floor with only a few riverside trees. The valley is quite sparsely settled for much of its length, but dense urban settlement occurs at Loughton. The M11, M25/railway corridors within the valley bottom or traversing the valley are visually prominent in the south.



Character Profile

Geology

- Glacial Till (Chalky Boulder Clay), London Clay, Alluvium

Soils

- Deep well drained and slowly permeable calcareous clays, seasonally waterlogged clayey soils, deep stoneless alluvial soils.

Landform

- Broad valley, shallow in the north, becoming fairly deep south west of Abridge.
- Very narrow valley floor north of Langford Bridge, wider southwards.
- Gently to moderately undulating valleysides.
- Connecting smaller tributary valleys dissect the valleysides.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Hay meadows, flood meadows, marsh, unimproved grassland.

Pattern of field enclosure

- Small fields bounded by hedges or ditches on the valley floor.
- Varied field pattern of irregular and regular small, medium and large hedged fields on the valleysides.

Farming pattern

- Mainly arable, some pasture on the valley floor.

Woodland/tree cover

- Scattered small woods, copses and tree belts on the valleysides.
- A few linear woods on valley floor north of Chipping Ongar, including a few poplar plantations.
- Hedgerow oak/ash.

Settlement pattern and built form

- Sparse settlement pattern of small villages/hamlets on the valleysides and occasional isolated farmsteads.
- Typical local historic vernacular of colourwash plaster in the north, weatherboarding and brick in the south.
- Absence of settlement on valley floor.
- In far south of valley urban settlements of Loughton and Chigwell have a suburban character.

Communications

- Long sections of the valley are not crossed by any roads except at a few bridging points and lanes are often situated towards the top of the valleysides.
- M11 and M25 cross the valley in the south, and A414 in the centre.

Other landscape features

- Wet gravel pits near Loughton.
- Pylon route is locally visually prominent crossing the valley near Howletts Hall.

Landscape Condition

- Hedgerows are in moderate to good condition but with localised areas of fragmented hedgerows on valleysides.
- Many pastures in the south of the valley are in poor condition due to overgrazing associated with horsiculture.
- The condition of the small settlements is good.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- It would appear since the Second World War there has been conversion of some valleyside pasture to arable, and rationalisation of field patterns associated with agricultural intensification.
- Future trends for change may include major transportation improvements and both urban development and recreational pressures on urban fringe or/less viable agricultural land in the south.

**RODING VALLEY (C4)
SENSITIVITY EVALUATION**

TYPE/SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT/CHANGE	KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND ACCOMMODATION OF CHANGE ISSUES	LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY LEVEL
1. Major urban extensions (>5 ha) and new settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some visually exposed valleysides. • Integrity of hedgerow pattern/small woodlands. • Integrity of valley bottom. • Strong strength of character, good condition of much of the valley. • Mostly tranquil character. 	H
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some visually exposed valleysides. 	M
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some visually exposed valleysides. • Landform character. • Integrity of hedgerows pattern/small woodlands. • Mostly tranquil character. 	M
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some visually exposed valleysides. • Integrity of pattern of hedgerows and woodlands. • Integrity of the valley bottom. • Mostly tranquil character. 	H
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some visually exposed valleysides. • Intrinsic character of the valley bottom. 	H
6. Large scale 'open uses'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some visually exposed valleysides. • Integrity of hedgerow pattern/small woodlands. • Intrinsic character of valley bottom. 	M
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some visually exposed valleysides. • Intrinsic character of the valley bottom. • Integrity of hedgerow pattern/small woodlands. • Mostly tranquil character. 	M
8. Incremental small scale developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrinsic character of small settlements/lanes. 	M
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some visually exposed valleysides. • Integrity of the valley bottom. • Mostly tranquil character. 	M
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition of hedges and small woodlands. 	M

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

4.4.9 *Chelmer Valley (C5)*

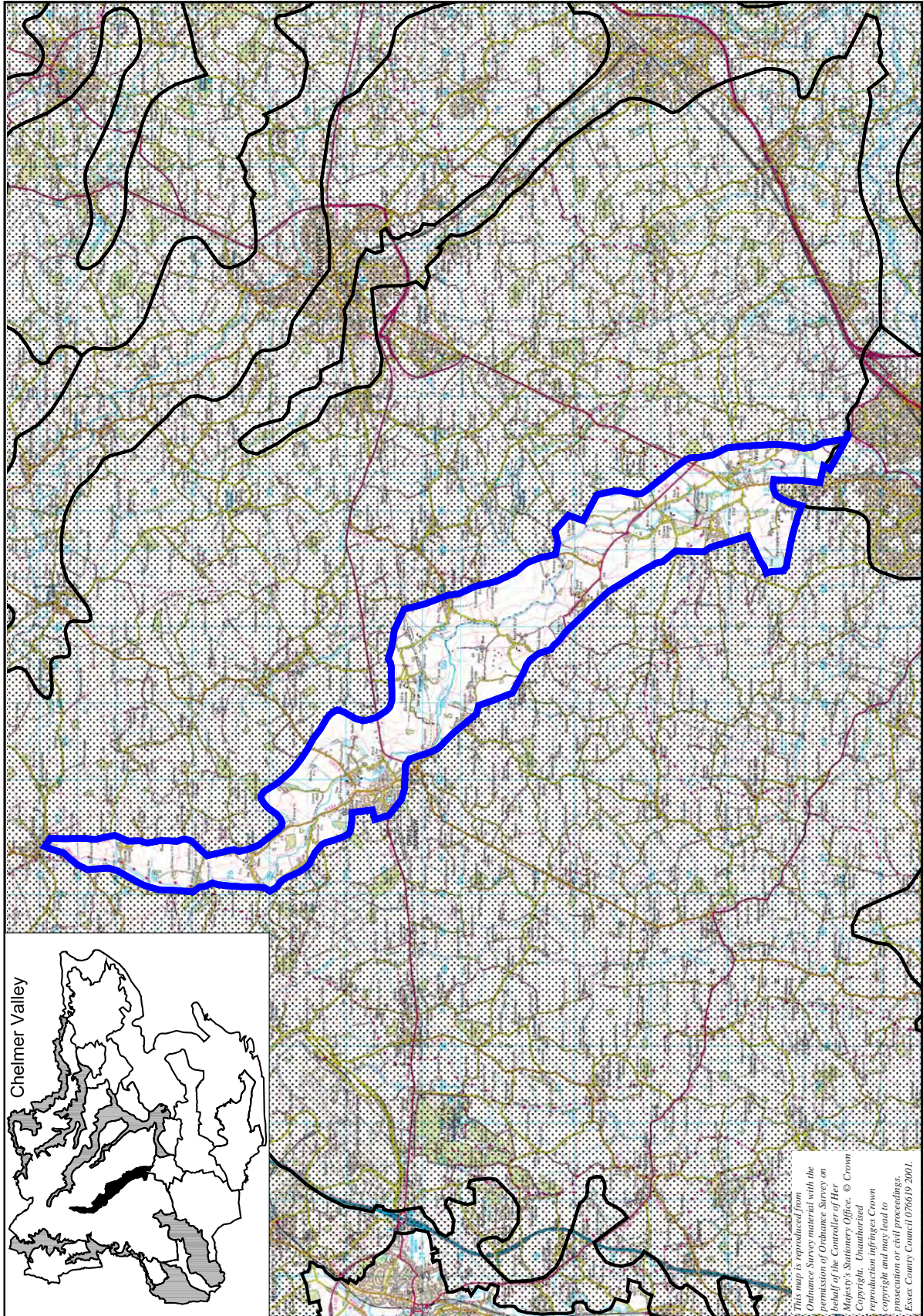


Key Characteristics

- Narrow valley, with a restricted valley bottom.
- Dense riverside trees.
- Arable valleysides with a fairly open character.
- Small linear settlements occupy the upper valleysides or straggle down to a few bridging points.
- Historic watermills and Second World War pillboxes are distinctive features.
- Mostly tranquil character.

Overall Character

The Chelmer Valley character area extends from the north west of Essex to the edge of Chelmsford. It is a narrow valley within the surrounding very gently undulating glacial clay plateau. The valley bottom has an enclosed character with many riverside and hedgerow trees and a string of small wet woodlands. As a result available views are quite confined and often framed. The valleysides have a more open character with low gappy hedgerows, scattered hedgerow trees and only occasional woods. The majority of the settlements are small with very limited modern development. Only a few major roads cross the valley so this contributes to its substantially tranquil character.



Character Profile

Geology

- Glacial Till (Chalky Boulder Clay), London Clay, Sands and Gravels

Soils

- Deep well drained fine loamy, coarse loamy and sandy soils, slowly permeable calcareous clay soils.

Landform

- Narrow and shallow valley.
- Moderately sloped valleysides in the north, becoming more gentle south of Great Dunmow.
- Narrow valley floor.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Flood meadows, valley fen.
- A few ancient woodlands.

Pattern of field enclosure

- Small to medium size irregular often gappy hedged fields on valleysides.
- Linear fields divided by drainage ditches and hedges on valley floor.

Farming pattern

- Mainly arable, some pasture on valley floor.

Woodland/tree cover

- Occasional small woods/copses on valleysides.
- Localised concentrations of wet woodland with poplar plantations on the valley floor, e.g. near Little Waltham.
- Dense riverside trees.

Settlement pattern and built form

- Dispersed small villages and hamlets on valleysides often associated with bridging points, e.g. Duton Hill.
- A small number of isolated farmsteads on the valleysides.
- Market town of Gt Dunmow.
- Local vernacular of half timber, colour wash plaster with some decorative pargetting, thatch and pantile roofs.

Communications

- A130 skirts the edge of the valley and crosses it in a few places.
- A120 traverses the valley at Great Dunmow.

Other landscape features

- Langleys Historic Park.
- Historic watermills.
- Small humpbacked bridges.
- Brewery at Hartford End.
- Second World War pillboxes.
- Sand and Gravel Pits near Belstead.

Landscape Condition

- The condition of valleyside vegetation is mixed with many fragmented hedgerows.
- On the valley floor there is some evidence of abandonment of grazing of valley floor meadows.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- The landscape has remained relatively stable over long periods of time. Agricultural intensification since the Second World War has resulted in the loss of some valleyside hedgerows.
- Future trends for change may include urban development pressures near Great Dunmow and Chelmsford, and transportation improvements. Agricultural change may lead to alternative uses being sought for less viable agricultural land in valley bottom, although there may also be opportunities for landscape enhancement as a result of alterations to subsidy regimes.

**CHELMER VALLEY (C5)
SENSITIVITY EVALUATION**

TYPE/SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT/CHANGE	KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND ACCOMMODATION OF CHANGE ISSUES	LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY LEVEL
1. Major urban extensions (>5 ha) and new settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrinsic small scale character of the valley. • Integrity of valley bottom. • Mostly tranquil character. 	H
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual exposure of some valleysides. 	M
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrinsic small scale character of valley. • Integrity of valley bottom. • Mostly tranquil character. 	H
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrinsic small scale character of valley. • Integrity of valley bottom. 	H
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrinsic small scale character of valley. 	H
6. Large scale 'open uses'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of valley bottom. • Small scale character. 	M
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrinsic small scale character of the valley. • Integrity of valley bottom. • Mostly tranquil character. 	H
8. Incremental small scale developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrinsic character of settlement and narrow lanes. 	H
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrinsic small scale character of the valley. • Mostly tranquil character. 	H
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition of valley bottom meadows/vegetation and valley side hedgerows, woodlands. 	M

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

4.4.10 *Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys (C6)*

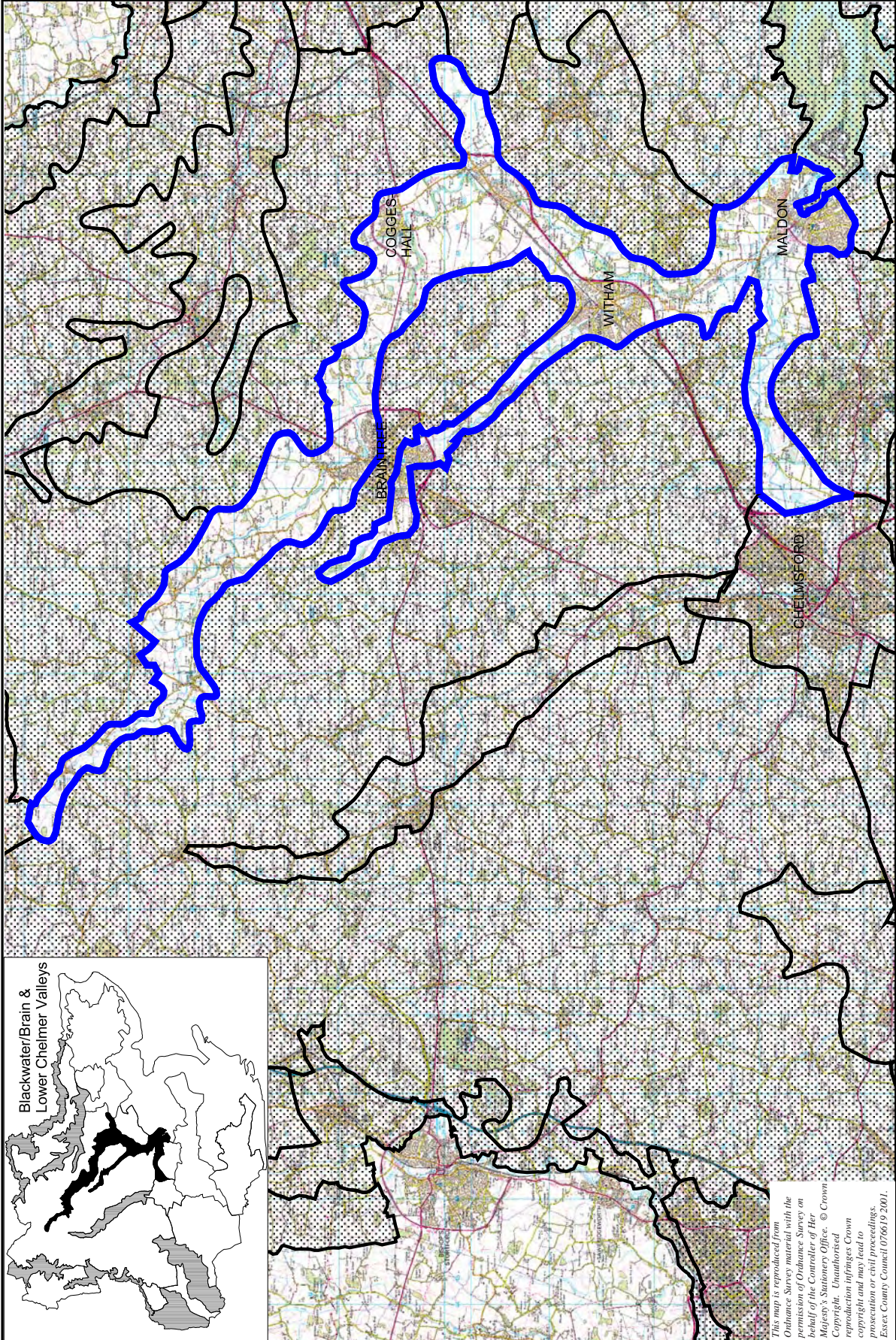


Key Characteristics

- Shallow valleys.
- Predominantly arable farmland with well hedged medium to large fields.
- The Brain and the Upper Blackwater Valleys are narrow with undulating valleysides.
- The Lower Chelmer, and the Blackwater near Maldon, have wide flat valley floors, and gentle valleysides.
- Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive feature.

Overall Character

The Brain and the Upper Blackwater valleys are relatively narrow with moderate slopes. By contrast, the Lower Chelmer and the Blackwater, south of Langford, have wide floodplains with gentle valleysides and are more open in character. Medium scale, arable farmland dominates throughout their length, with a predominantly strong pattern of hedgerow boundaries with frequent hedgerow trees. Tree cover is high along the banks of the rivers with willow and poplar plantations common as well as pockets of wet alder/willow woodland. Small settlements are dispersed along valleysides or cluster around a few key bridging points. The towns of Braintree, Witham and Maldon occupy valleyside locations, but along with the major roads that cross the area have a limited impact on character.



Character Profile

Geology

- Mainly Sands and Gravels, some Alluvial Deposits, Glacial Till (Chalky Boulder Clay)

Soils

- Deep well drained fine loamy, coarse loamy and sandy soils, slowly permeable calcareous clay soils, deep stoneless alluvial soils.

Landform

- Shallow valleys.
- The upper Blackwater (also known as the River Pant above Braintree) and the Brain Valleys are relatively narrow, with moderately sloped valley sides.
- The Lower Chelmer and Lower Blackwater (below Braintree) have gentle valley sides.
- The Lower Chelmer, and the Blackwater south of Langford Bridge have wide flat valley floors/floodplains.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Some ancient mixed woodland on valley sides.
- Alder carr.
- Unimproved grazing meadows.

Pattern of field enclosure

- Generally medium size irregular hedged fields on valley sides and valley floor.
- Some large fields in the Lower Chelmer Valley.

Farming pattern

- Arable farmland is dominant.
- Some pockets of pasture on the valley floor.

Woodland/tree cover

- A few widely dispersed small woods and copses on the valley sides.
- Extensive poplar/willow plantations on Blackwater valley floor from Braintree to Witham.
- Dense riverside trees along the Brain and the middle part of the Blackwater Valley.

Settlement pattern and built form

- Sparse settlement pattern in the upper valleys above Braintree.
- Scattered farmsteads, hamlets and small villages on the valley sides.
- Medium size towns of Braintree, Witham and Maldon occupy valley side/valley floor locations.

- Local vernacular of colour wash plaster and half timber in the north, more weatherboarding and brick in the south.

Communications

- Roads and lanes run along the top of the valleys or occasionally cross at right angles.
- Main A120 crosses the Blackwater and Brain valleys near Braintree.
- Major A12(T) crosses the Lower Chelmer Valley near Chelmsford, and runs within the Blackwater Valley floor near Witham.

Other landscape features

- Pylon routes cross the Lower Chelmer/Blackwater Valleys.
- Braxted, Sisted Hall, Faulkbourne Hall historic parks.
- Golf courses at Black Notly and Sisted.

Landscape Condition

- Farmland hedgerows are generally in good condition, although there are localised areas of fragmentation.
- The condition of the settlements is mixed. Some of the towns such as Braintree and Witham have intrusive industrial and housing development and some modern out of character infill tends to occur in the villages close to them.
- Gravel workings are locally visually prominent.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- Past influences on change were mainly agricultural, but the expansion of the towns of Braintree, Coggeshall, Witham and Maldon, together with the development of sand and gravel workings in the 20th Century had localised impacts.
- There are likely to be continued urban development, and associated transportation and recreational development pressures in the A12 corridor and near Braintree.

**BLACKWATER/BRAIN/LOWER CHELMER VALLEYS (C6)
SENSITIVITY EVALUATION**

TYPE/SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT/CHANGE	KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND ACCOMMODATION OF CHANGE ISSUES	LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY LEVEL
1. Major urban extensions (>5 ha) and new settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of valley floors. • Some visually exposed valleysides/open valley floors. • Intrinsic small scale character of most of the valleys. • Tranquil character in parts. 	H
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of the valley floor. • Some visually exposed valleysides/open valley floors. 	L
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of valley floors. • Some visually exposed valleysides/open valley floors. • Landform character. 	M
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrinsic small scale character of most of the valleys. • Integrity of valley floor. • Some visually exposed valleysides/open valley floors. • Landform character. • Tranquil character in parts. 	H
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landform character. • Some visually exposed valleysides/open valley floors. • Integrity of the valley floor. 	M
6. Large scale 'open uses'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some visually exposed valleysides/open valley floors. • Integrity of valley floor. 	M
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of the valley floor. • Some visually exposed valleysides/open valley floors. • Tranquil character in parts. 	M
8. Incremental small scale developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of the valley floor. 	M
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some visually exposed valleysides/open valley floors. • Intrinsic small scale character of most of the valleys. 	M
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition of woodlands and hedgerows. 	M

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

4.4.11 *Colne Valley (C7)*

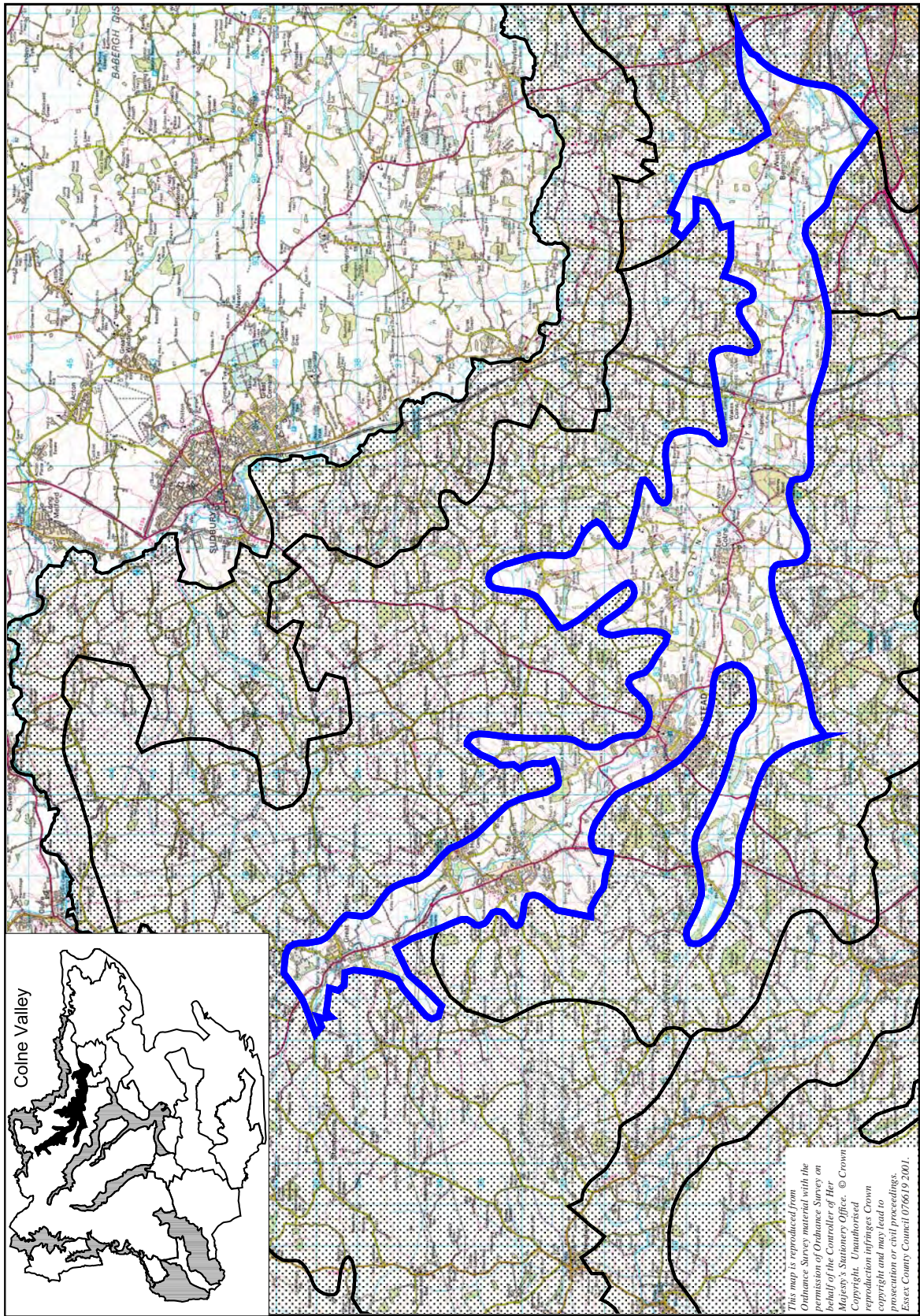


Key Characteristics

- Shallow valley of variable width with numerous small tributary valleys.
- Gently to moderately undulating valleysides.
- Narrow valley bottom, mainly pasture.
- Arable valleyside farmland with frequent small woodlands.
- A series of small towns and villages at bridging points.
- Historic mill buildings are distinctive features.

Overall Character

The Colne Valley is a narrow valley with strongly rolling valleysides in the north, tending to widen out and become somewhat more gentle south of Halstead. The valley bottom is narrow comprising small linear meadows/pastures and wet woodlands. On the valleysides medium scale arable farmland dominates, but enclosure is provided by a strong pattern of hedgerows, mature hedgerow trees and small woods. Typically small settlements occupy the lower valleysides located at bridging points, with few major roads crossing the area.



Character Profile

Geology

- Sands and Gravels, London Clay, Alluvial Deposits, Glacial Till (Chalky Boulder Clay)

Soils

- Deep well drained fine loamy and coarse loamy soils, slowly permeable fine loamy and calcareous clay soils.

Landform

- Shallow valley, gentle to moderate sloped gently undulating valleysides. Locally more strongly undulating between Sible Hedingham and Halstead.
- Narrow valley floor.
- A few narrow tributary valleys with moderate slopes.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Mixed ancient woodland including lime woodland, e.g. Chalkney Wood.
- Unimproved meadows.

Pattern of field enclosure

- Medium size regular and irregular hedged fields on the valleysides.
- Small linear hedged fields on valley floor.

Farming pattern

- Arable farmland dominates on valleysides.
- Pasture along the valley bottom.

Woodland/tree cover

- Both small and large woodlands on valleysides, less frequent west of Wakes-Colne.
- Hedgerow trees on valleysides.
- Small linear woods on valley floor and dense riverside trees.

Settlement pattern and built form

- Settlement mainly absent from the valley floor.
- Some small towns, nucleated large villages and small hamlets at key bridging points along the river.
- Occasional isolated farmsteads along lanes on the valleysides.
- Traditional vernacular half timber, plaster, pantile and thatch.

Communications

- Network of sinuous and straight lanes.
- The A1124 runs through the valley.
- Disused railway line. Short section used as the Colne Valley steam railway.

Other landscape features

- Watermills.
- Wet gravel pits near White Colne.
- Colne Valley Steam Railway.
- Castle at Headingham.
- Chappel viaduct.

Landscape Condition

- The condition of the farmland hedgerows and of the small woodlands is moderate to good. Occasionally there are fragmented hedgerows.
- Localised intrusion of poor quality housing and industrial development occurs around some of the larger settlements.
- Some parts of the valley floor have extensive horsiculture with associated overgrazing and replacement of hedgerow boundaries with paddock fencing.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- Past influences on change were mainly agricultural, but the railway led to expansion of some of the towns.
- Urban development pressures within the relatively narrow valley corridor are likely to remain high. Given the small scale character of the valley these are difficult to integrate. Ongoing pressure for associated recreational development can also be expected.

**COLNE VALLEY (C7)
SENSITIVITY EVALUATION**

TYPE/SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT/CHANGE	KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND ACCOMMODATION OF CHANGE ISSUES	LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY LEVEL
1. Major urban extensions (>5 ha) and new settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of the valley bottom. • Intrinsic small scale character of the valley. • Visual exposure of some valleysides. 	H
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate intervisibility. • Visual exposure of some valleysides. 	M
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of the valley bottom. • Intrinsic small scale character of the valley. • Landform character. • Visual experience of some valleysides. 	H
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of the valley bottom. • Intrinsic small scale character of the valley. • Visual exposure of the valleysides. 	H
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrinsic small scale character of the valley. • Landform character. • Moderate intervisibility. 	H
6. Large scale 'open uses'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedgerow field/woodland pattern. 	M
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of the valley bottom. • Visual exposure of some valleysides. • Landform character. 	H
8. Incremental small scale developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of the valley floor. 	M
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual exposure of some valleysides. • Integrity of the valley/intrinsic small scale character. 	M
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedgerow and woodland condition. 	M

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

4.4.12 *Stour Valley (C8)*

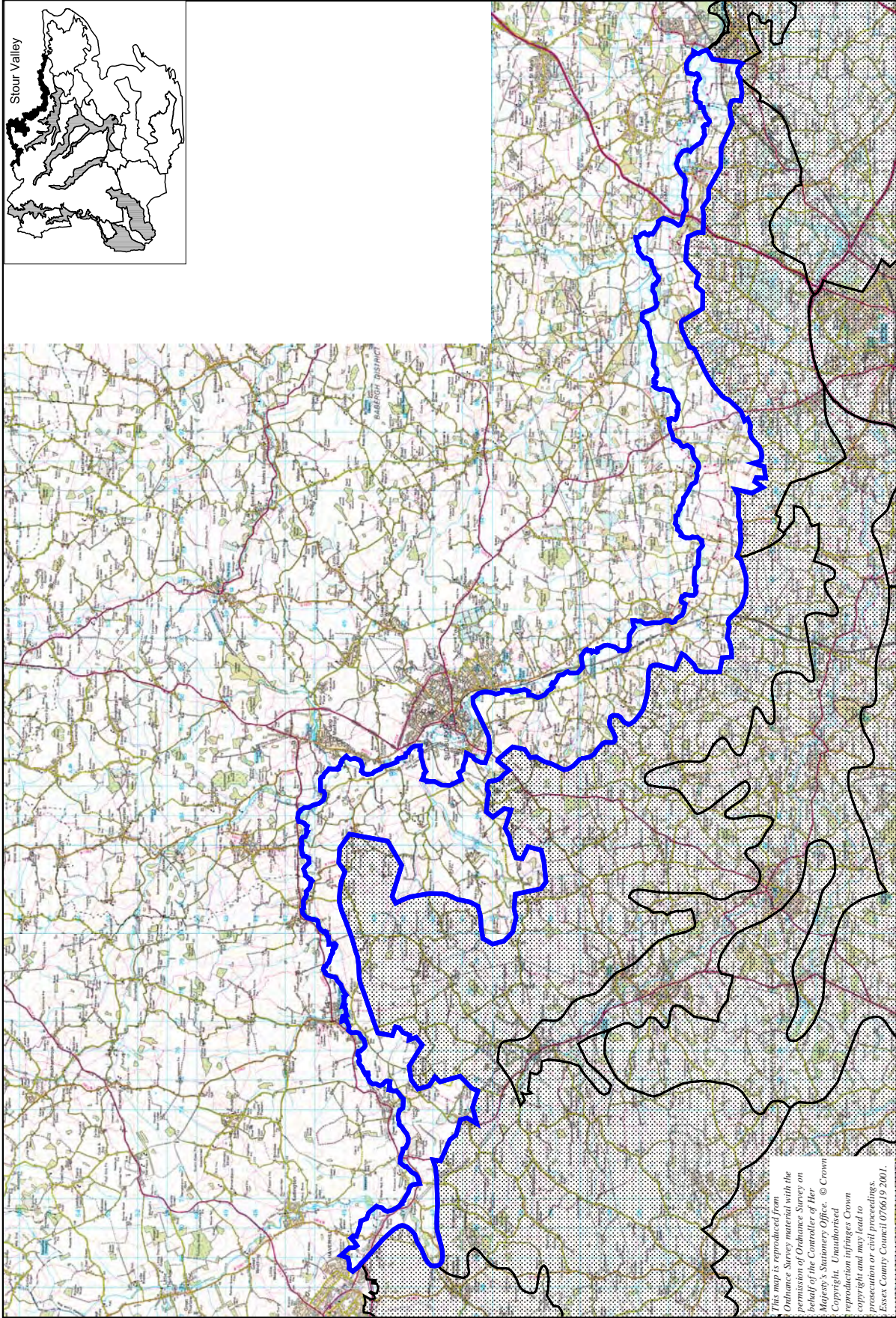


Key Characteristics

- Typically wide flat valley floor with floodplain meadows, riverbank willow trees and small wet woodlands.
- Rolling rounded valleysides with a complex mosaic of small woods, pasture and arable fields in the east, gentler arable valleysides in the north and west.
- Church towers, traditional villages, farmsteads, barns and mills are distinctive features.
- Sinuous pattern of lanes and roads.
- Mostly tranquil, secluded character.

Overall Character

The Stour Valley is a wide valley with a broad flat valley floor for much of its length. In the north and west arable farmland tends to dominate the valley, but it becomes much more pastoral in character further east. Here there is a patchwork of pasture and arable farmland and woodland on the valleysides and mainly meadows divided by hedgerows and/or wet ditches on the valley floor. Plantations of cricket bat willows and hybrid poplars are also common on the floodplain. Traditional small settlements and isolated farmsteads with limited modern development occur throughout the area, linked by narrow, sometimes sunken, valleyside lanes. Where the landscape is more open, there are panoramic views of the valley. In more enclosed parts, views are framed and focused. With the exception of the main A12(T) crossing the valley near Dedham, the area has an undeveloped character.



Character Profile

Geology

- Glacial Till (Chalky Boulder Clay), Sands and Gravels, London Clay, Alluvial Deposits

Soils

- Slowly permeable clay soils. Deep permeable fine and coarse loamy soils. Deep stoneless seasonally waterlogged alluvial soils.

Landform

- Shallow valley, with undulating rounded valleysides, some more gentle slopes in the upper parts of the valley.
- Flat valley floor along the entire length of the river, but generally wider east of Bures.
- Numerous narrow moderate to steep sided tributary valleys.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Estuarine grazing marsh.
- Ancient oak-ash-hazel woodland.
- Alder carr woodland.

Pattern of field enclosure

- Variable field pattern.
- Medium-large size irregular hedged fields on valleysides to the north/northwest of Carnash.
- Small regular hedged fields on valleysides south/south east of Carnash.
- Small to medium size irregular fields divided by both hedges and ditches on valley floor west of Nayland.
- Small to medium size semi-regular fields divided mainly by ditches on valley floor east of Nayland.

Farming pattern

- Mix of pasture and arable farmland on valleysides.
- Mainly pasture, meadows on the valley floor, but with localised areas of arable.

Woodland/tree cover

- Many small deciduous and mixed woodlands and hedgerowed trees on valleysides, becoming less frequent in north west. However, there has been loss of characteristic elms from the valley.
- Occasional linear woods on valley floor including poplar/willow plantations.

Settlement pattern and built form

- Widely separated small villages and hamlets on higher valleysides, a few on lower valleysides associated with bridging points.
- Scattered farmsteads and cottages on upper parts of the valleysides, becoming less frequent in the north west.
- General absence of settlement on the valley floor.
- Traditional local vernacular of colour wash plaster, half timber.

Communications

- Network of valleyside lanes and roads running approximately at right angles to the contours or parallel with them on lower valleysides.
- Few roads on the valley floor.
- A12(T) is the only major road crossing the area.

Other landscape features

- Church towers are important landmarks.
- Small historic parklands, e.g. Langham, Lawford.
- Wet sand and gravel pits in the north west.

Landscape Condition

- The condition of the valleyside hedgerows is mixed, mostly good in the east, somewhat fragmented in the north west.
- The condition of the small settlements is mostly good, despite some insensitive 1970's infill.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- Past influences on the landscape have been mainly agricultural, with fluctuations in arable and pasture land on the valley floor.
- A current and likely increasing trends are the spread of horsiculture on some valley floor meadows with the introduction of pony paddocks. Many of the development pressures are small scale and incremental, such as conversion of farm buildings into residential use, gradual increase in 'suburbanisation' of rural properties, and concrete curbing to rural lanes which undermine rural character. There are also likely to be ongoing pressures from recreation and tourism.

**STOUR VALLEY (C8)
SENSITIVITY EVALUATION**

TYPE/SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT/CHANGE	KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND ACCOMMODATION OF CHANGE ISSUES	LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY LEVEL
1. Major urban extensions (>5 ha) and new settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intimate scale of the landscape. • Integrity of valley floor. • Parts of the valley have an AONB designation. • Visual exposure of some valleysides. 	H
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intimate scale of the landscape. • Integrity of valley floor. • Parts of the valley have an AONB designation. • Visual exposure of some valleysides. 	H
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intimate scale of the landscape. • Landform character. • Uncommon intrusive influences. • Parts of the valley have an AONB designation. 	H
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intimate scale of the landscape. • Visual exposure of some valleysides. • Parts of the valley have an AONB designation. 	H
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intimate scale of the landscape. • Visual exposure of some valleysides. • Parts of the valley have an AONB designation. 	H
6. Large scale 'open uses'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodland/hedgerow pattern. • Integrity of valley floor. • Visual exposure of some valleysides. • Parts of the valley have an AONB designation. 	M
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of valley floor. • Visual exposure of some valleysides. • Woodland/hedgerow pattern. 	H
8. Incremental small scale developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parts of the valley have an AONB designation. 	H
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intimate scale of the landscape. • Integrity of the valley bottom. 	H
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedgerow/woodland pattern. 	H

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

4.5 Wooded Hill and Ridge Landscapes (D)

4.5.1 The Wooded Hills and Ridges are a distinctive landscape type within the south and west of the study area. Their relief and strongly wooded character are a marked contrast to surrounding areas of more open arable farmland and river valleys.



4.5.2 The key characteristics of this division can be summarised as:

- Woodland dominated hills and ridges on a belt of Bagshot/Claygate Beds and other sand and gravel formations, stretching through Essex from Epping Forest to Tiptree.
- Wooded commons with ancient and secondary woodland defined by peripheral medieval wood banks.
- A concentration of small estates/areas of historic parkland.
- Well hedged landscape, with large areas of ancient, semi-natural woodland.
- Historically scattered and fairly sparse settlement pattern, overlain in parts by expanding modern suburban development of historic market towns.

4.5.3 Typical hedgerow species are Hawthorn and Oak with occasional Gorse, Holly, Blackthorn, Dog rose, Hazel, Elm, Ash, Birch, Beech, Sweet Chestnut, Elderberry.



4.5.4 The Wooded Hills and Ridges comprises four Landscape Character Areas within the study area:

- Epping Forest & Ridges (D1)
- Brentwood Hills (D2)
- Danbury Hills (D3)
- Tiptree Ridge (D4)

4.5.5 *Epping Forest and Ridges (D1)*

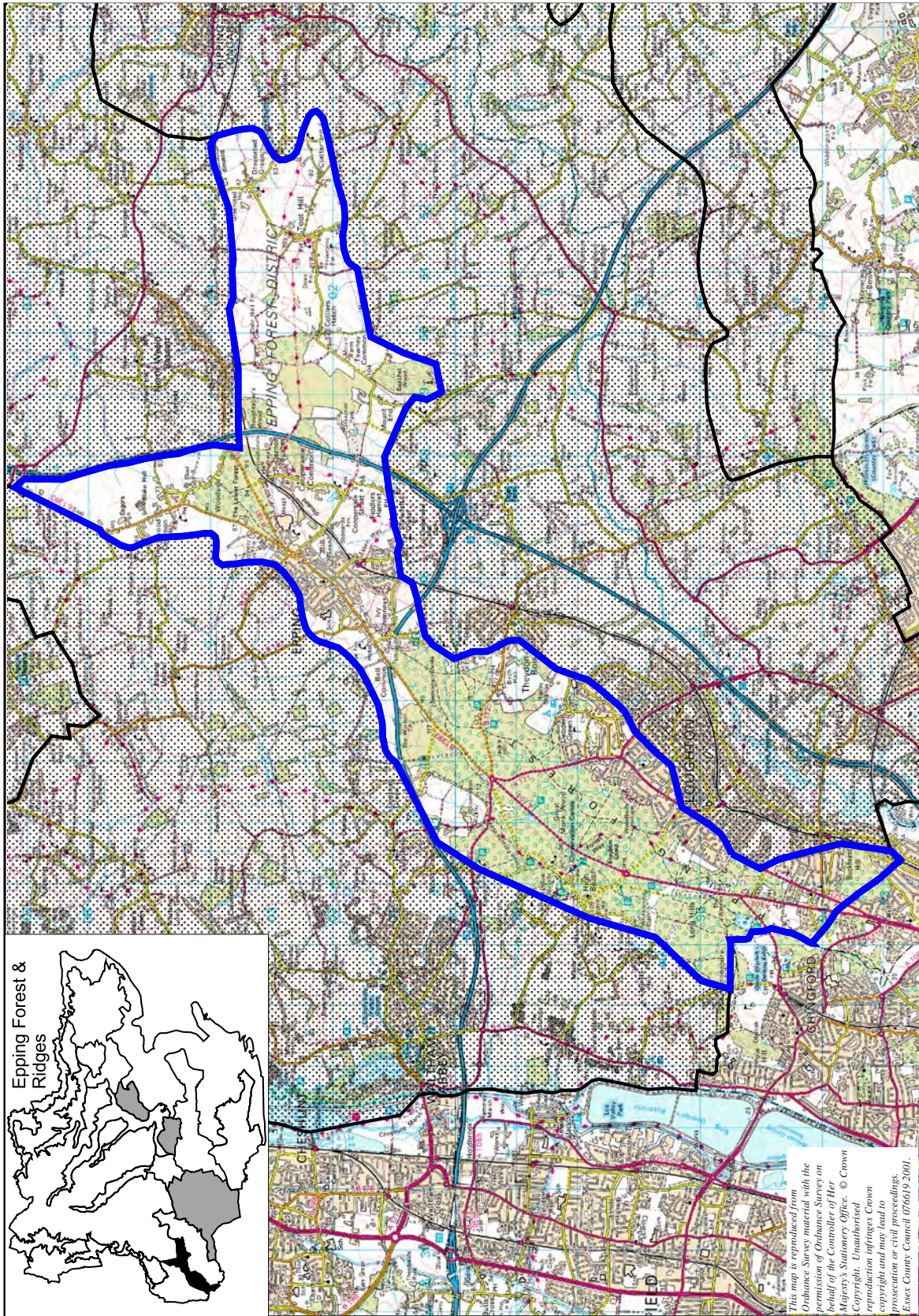


Key Characteristics

- Elevated moderate to steep sided ridges, crowned by woodland.
- Very large crescent shaped block of ancient deciduous woodland to the west.
- Wooded skylines.
- Distinctive grassy plains and large ponds within Epping Forest, greens and commons associated with settlements.
- Small to medium scale pattern of hedged pasture and arable fields with frequent hedgerow trees.

Overall Character

Epping Forest and Ridges is a landscape of heavily wooded ridgelines, fringed by predominantly small and medium size thick hedgerow fields which are often indented into the woodland edges. Within extensive areas of beech and oak-hornbeam woodland scattered small grassy plains and large ponds as well as many ancient formerly pollarded trees are a feature. The main settlements of Epping, Loughton and Theydon Bois have a historically linear form of development, including associated large commons. Although they have been much expanded by modern suburban development this is not widely apparent in the surrounding landscape due to enclosing woodland and/or their own high tree cover. The western and southern parts of the area are partly visually interrupted by a complex network of major transportation routes, including the M11 and M25. However, to the north east urban influences on character are uncommon with a network of narrow lanes, small villages, hamlets and farmsteads.



Character Profile

Geology

- Claygate and Bagshot sand and gravel/pebble beds and London Clay.

Soils

- Coarse/fine loamy, silty and sandy soils on ridgetops. Some slowly permeable clayey soils on ridgetops.

Landform

- Major SW-NE aligned broad ridge with a gently undulating ridgetop and moderate to steep sides. Smaller connected N-S aligned ridge.
- Small narrow steep stream valleys in the ridgetops.
- Undulating landform in the north east of the area.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Epping Forest has large areas of ancient beech and oak-hornbeam woodland (traditional wood-pasture and pollards now mostly unmanaged), together with pockets of acid grassland/heath and bog/marsh adjoining ponds.

Pattern of field enclosure

- Mix of small and medium size hedged fields with both curved and straight boundaries.

Farming pattern

- Limited extent of farmland in comparison to wooded area, characterised by both pasture and arable fields.

Woodland/tree cover

- Extensive coherent blocks of woodland that have a major influence on character. Epping Forest is predominantly deciduous. Woodlands in the east of the area, e.g. Mount Wood include conifer plantations.
- High tree cover in Epping and Loughton.

Settlement pattern and built form

- The town of Epping and the large village of Theydon Bois retain strong historic cores with large commons. Epping and Loughton have much suburban development.
- Small hamlets and farmsteads are dispersed around the fringes of the area.
- Local vernacular of brick, weatherboarding and coloured washed plaster.

Communications

- Winding lanes.
- M25 and M11 cross the area in cutting and tunnel.
- The main A104, A121, B1393 form very straight roads through the centre of Epping Forest.

Other landscape features

- Large ponds/commons and greens.
- Iron age hillforts of Amesbury Banks and Loughton Camp within Epping Forest.
- Historic parklands, e.g. Hill Hall, Gaynes Park.
- Radio mast at Beacher Wood.
- A number of golf courses within area.

Landscape Condition

- The landscape condition of the major woodlands is moderate to good. The decline of traditional pollard management and invasion of grass plains by birch and scrub species slightly erode character.
- The condition of hedgerows/hedgerow trees is mostly good.
- A radio mast and a number of mobile phone masts on high ground and golf courses out of keeping with character have introduced some incongruous features into the area.
- The condition of the farmland is moderate. There is some evidence of overgrazing from horses near the main settlements.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- In the last century the principal trend for change was the suburban expansion of Epping and Loughton.
- Current trends include some decline in traditional woodland management, increasing traffic and visitor numbers associated with recreational use of Epping Forest, and siting of mobile phone masts close to the M11/M25.
- There is likely to be continuing pressure for urban development especially housing development given the proximity of London, and recreational pressure both from visitors to Epping Forest, and use of urban fringe farmland for golf courses and horsiculture.

**EPPING FOREST AND RIDGES (D1)
SENSITIVITY EVALUATION**

TYPE/SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT/CHANGE	KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND ACCOMMODATION OF CHANGE ISSUES	LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY LEVEL
1. Major urban extensions (>5 ha) and new settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of woodlands, hedgerow field pattern. • Strong character of landscape, mostly in good condition. 	H
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of woodlands, hedgerow field pattern. • Landscape setting of settlements. 	M
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of woodlands, hedgerow field pattern. • Low capacity for further change. • Some visually exposed ridgesides. 	H
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of woodlands, hedgerow field pattern. • Landform character. • Some visually exposed ridgesides. 	H
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of woodlands, hedgerow field pattern. <p><i>Siting, massing, form and colour are critical.</i></p>	M
6. Large scale 'open uses'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of woodlands, hedgerow field pattern. • Low capacity for further change. 	H
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of woodlands, hedgerowed field pattern. • Some visually exposed ridgesides. 	H
8. Incremental small scale developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character of the lanes. • Settlement form and character. 	M
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual exposure of some ridgesides. • Low capacity for further change. 	M
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodland/hedgerow condition are essential to character. 	H

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

4.5.6 *Brentwood Hills (D2)*

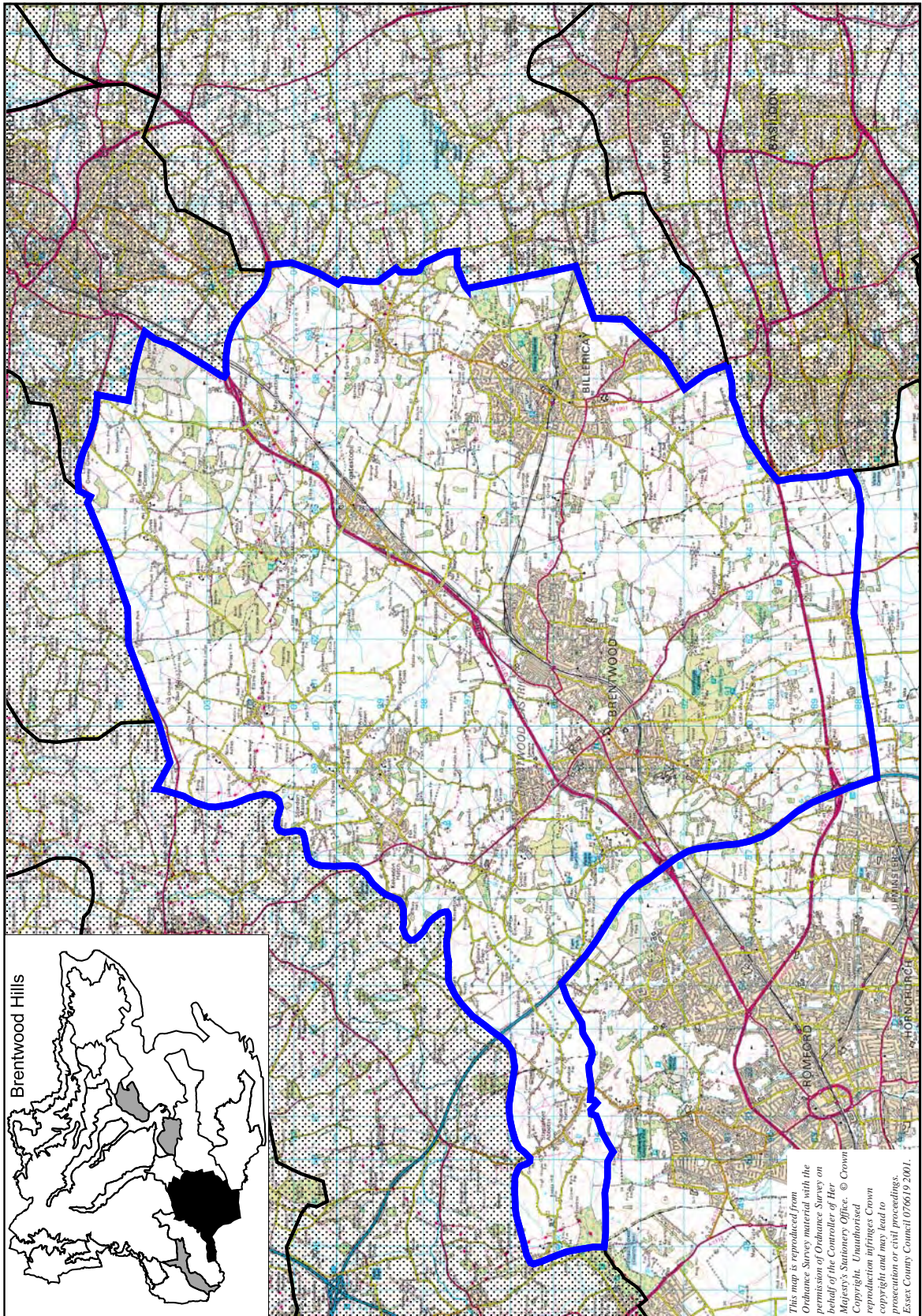


Key Characteristics

- Gently to strongly undulating hills/ridges.
- Semi enclosed character due to presence of numerous small woods, large interlocking blocks of woodland and frequent hedgerow trees.
- Patchwork of small irregular pasture and arable fields, opening out to medium to large regular arable fields in the centre of the area.
- Dense linear settlement pattern along major south west to north east road/rail routes.

Overall Character

The Brentwood Hills have a varied topography comprising a series of ridges and rounded hills. The landform is strongly rolling towards the edges of the character area, flattening out towards the centre on high ground. To the south a slight escarpment occurs between Childerditch and Little Burstead. It is a wooded landscape with many small scattered woods, some large blocks of woodland, tree belts of historic parkland and hedgerow trees. As a result, views are often quite confined, but in parts long views are possible over more open farmland and from high ground. Small unenclosed greens, commons and scattered ponds add interest and variety of the area. A number of isolated churches on hilltops are also a distinctive feature. Villages, hamlets, cottages and farmsteads are typically strung out along the narrow lanes, with a dense urban settlement concentrated along the main road and rail routes running through the centre of the area.



Character Profile

Geology

- Claygate and Bagshot Beds, London Clay, and a small area of Glacial Till.

Soils

- Complex mosaic of soils including well drained fine loamy soils, seasonally waterlogged slowly permeable clayey, fine and coarse loamy soils.

Landform

- Gently to strongly undulating low hills/ridges.
- South facing escarpment between Gt Warley and Gt Burshead incised by small narrow valleys.
- Gentle, very shallow valley of the River Wid.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Ancient oak-hornbeam and mixed deciduous woodland, e.g. Hordon, Norsey, Thorndon Woods. Sweet chestnut coppice. Springline alder woodland.
- Unimproved neutral/acid grassland and relict pockets of heathland.

Pattern of field enclosure

- Predominantly small scale irregular hedged field pattern.
- Some parts in the centre of the area have medium to large scale field pattern with straight boundaries, defined by tree belts or fragmented hedgelines.

Farming pattern

- Mix of arable and pasture farmland.

Woodland/tree cover

- Relatively high tree/woodland cover.
- Very large blocks of woodland south of Brentwood, east of Billericay and north of Ingatestone.
- Many small woodlands and copses scattered throughout the area.
- Frequent hedgerow trees, shaws.
- Mixed or conifer shelterbelts around some farms, fields.

Settlement pattern and built form

- Many small linear hamlets along lanes interspersed with farmsteads and cottages.
- Some medium-large villages along major road routes.
- Brentwood and Billericay are historic market towns, much expanded by modern commuter development.
- Mixed vernacular including red brick, colour washed plaster and weatherboarding.

Communications

- Complex pattern of narrow sinuous lanes.
- M25 forms the eastern boundary of the character area.
- A12(T) cuts through the centre.
- A pylon route runs close to the M25, and another cuts across farmland between Brentwood and Billericay.

Other landscape features

- Some greens associated with settlement, and a few surviving commons, e.g. Galleywood Common.
- High frequency of ponds.
- Large historic park at Hylands and a number of small estates.
- Country Parks of Weald/Thorndon include remnant wood pasture and historic parkland.
- Local landmarks include isolated churches, e.g. Little Burstead, and windmills at Mountnessing and Stock.
- Golf courses are a fairly common feature.

Landscape Condition

- The condition of woodlands and hedgerows is moderate to good. However, parts of the arable farmland have a fragmented hedgerow pattern in poor condition.
- Major roads, some industrial development and large farm buildings are visually intrusive/detract from character in localised areas.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- The character of much of the landscape has not changed significantly for long periods of time apart from enclosure of large commons in the 19th Century, and erosion of typical small irregular field patterns due to expansion of arable farming since the Second World War.

- The development of major road/rail routes through the area and pressure from the expansion of London has led to considerable expansion of the market towns of Brentwood and Billericay, and partial urbanisation of some of the larger villages.
- As well as urban development pressure, there are likely to be continuing pressures for major road improvements which, if not sensitively aligned and designed, could be damaging to character. Also, the character of narrow hedged/banked lanes are vulnerable both to erosion and to minor highway improvements to accommodate increasing levels of commuter traffic.

**BRENTWOOD HILLS (D2)
SENSITIVITY EVALUATION**

TYPE/SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT/CHANGE	KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND ACCOMMODATION OF CHANGE ISSUES	LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY LEVEL
1. Major urban extensions (>5 ha) and new settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low to moderate intervisibility. • Some ridges, hillsides are more visually exposed. • Integrity of woodland, hedgerow field pattern. • Coalescence. • Islands of tranquillity in the north. <p><i>Any new development should include strong new woodland/hedgerow framework planting particularly where arable farmland is in poor condition.</i></p>	M
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low to moderate intervisibility. • Some ridges, hillsides are visually exposed. 	M
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low to moderate intervisibility. • Irregular grain of the landscape. • Landform character. • Islands of tranquillity. <p><i>Route alignment and appropriate mitigation is critical.</i></p>	M
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low to moderate intervisibility. • Some ridges, hillsides are visually exposed. • Landform character. • Islands of tranquillity. <p><i>Siting, massing, form and colour and landscape framework that respond to character are critical.</i></p>	M
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low to moderate intervisibility but some ridges, hilltops are visually exposed. • Landform character. <p><i>Siting, massing, form and colour are critical.</i></p>	M
6. Large scale 'open uses'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low to moderate intervisibility. • Integrity of woodland, hedgerow field pattern. 	M
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low to moderate intervisibility. • Some ridges, hillsides are visually exposed. • Integrity of woodland, hedgerow field pattern. • Islands of tranquillity. 	M
8. Incremental small scale developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character of the narrow lanes. • Distinctive character/form of some settlements. • Integrity of hedgerow field pattern. 	H
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low to moderate intervisibility. • Some ridges, hillsides are visually exposed. • Islands of tranquillity. 	M
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodland condition. • Integrity of small scale hedgerowed field pattern. 	H

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

4.5.7 *Danbury Hills (D3)*

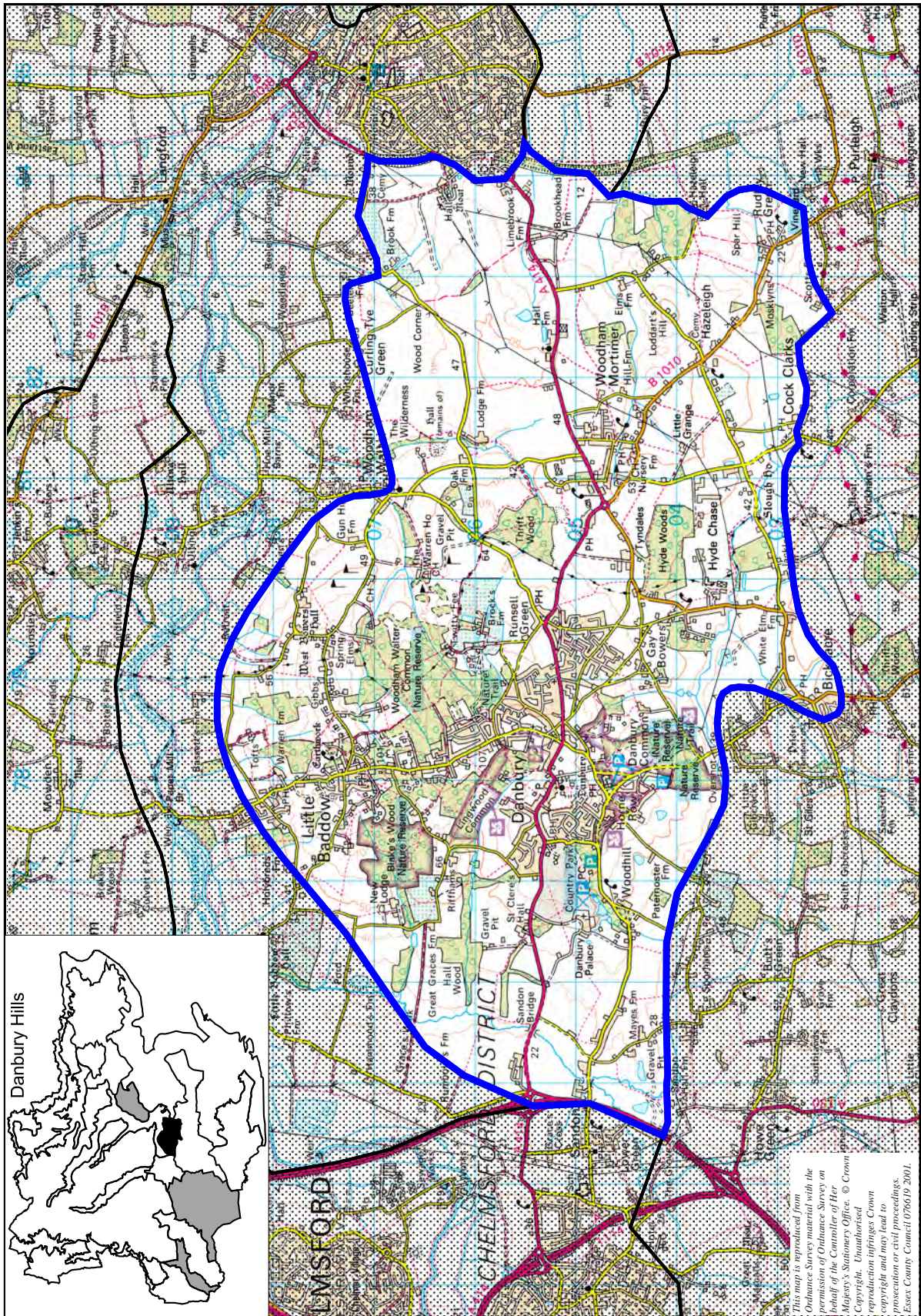


Key Characteristics

- Distinctive landform of a very large gently domed hill, and a broad connecting ridge eroded into small rounded hills in the south east.
- Dense woodland on Danbury Hill, fairly open arable farmland to the east.
- Historic parklands, grassy commons, pockets of heathland and orchards diversify character.
- Long views across the Chelmer Valley from high ground.

Overall Character

The Danbury Hills are a small area of moderate to steep sided hills markedly elevated above the Chelmer/Blackwater valley to the north and the South Essex farmlands to the east. Extensive deciduous and mixed woodland clothes Danbury Hill and largely surrounds the hilltop settlements of Little Baddow and Danbury. The church spire of Danbury is a distinctive feature rising above the wooded skyline. Small fields of pasture and commons are interspersed amongst the woodland in the west, giving way to more open arable farmland in the east with a medium to large scale field pattern. The main A414, as well as the narrow lanes, follow winding routes through the area. In the east some visual interruption is caused by overhead lines.



Character Profile

Geology

- Sands and Gravels and London Clay

Soils

- Well drained fine loamy soils, often over gravel.

Landform

- Visually prominent dome shaped hill, elevated approximately 90 m above the Chelmer Valley. Moderate to steep western and northern hillsides.
- Broader, connected approximately east-west aligned ridge of lower elevation. Around Hazeleigh the ridge has been eroded into some distinctive rounded small hills.
- Small narrow, steep sided valleys are a feature around Danbury and Little Baddow.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Ancient sessile oak-hornbeam woodland.
- Heathland, valley bogs and unimproved meadows.

Pattern of field enclosure

- Small-medium scale irregular hedged field pattern in the west and south east of the area. Medium to large scale field pattern in the north east.

Farming pattern

- Pasture interspersed between the woodland in the west and south east of the area. Arable farmland in the north east.
- Strong concentration of orchards in the area.

Woodland/tree cover

- Large complex of deciduous and mixed woodland around Danbury and Little Baddow with indented boundaries to surrounding farmland.
- Isolated woodland blocks, small copses and some tree belts in the east of the area.
- Many hedgerow oak trees.

Settlement pattern and built form

- Historically linear villages of Danbury and Little Baddow, much expanded by modern housing development, but surrounded by woodland.
- Small hamlets and individual farmsteads along lanes.

Communications

- The main A414 follows a sinuous route over Danbury Hill and across the farmland in the east to Maldon.
- Small winding lanes.

Other landscape features

- Historic parklands of Danbury Park and Riffhams.
- A number of small disused and active sand and gravel pits, enclosed by woodland.
- Scattered small reservoirs.

Landscape Condition

- The condition of the woodlands is good with many actively managed.
- Some hedgerows are broken within the arable farmland.
- Danbury and Little Baddow retain strong historic cores, but extensive modern development is out of keeping with their character.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- A strongly wooded character remains in the west of the area, but there has been loss of woodland, erosion of hedgerows associated with intensive arable farmland in the east. This trend may have reached its peak and there may be opportunities for restoration of woodlands, hedgerows and grasslands in the future.
- Small sand and gravel pits in the area have so far had only very localised impacts and not significantly eroded character.
- Pressure for additional small scale housing development around Danbury and Little Baddow is possible.

**DANBURY HILLS (D3)
SENSITIVITY EVALUATION**

TYPE/SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT/CHANGE	KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND ACCOMMODATION OF CHANGE ISSUES	LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY LEVEL
1. Major urban extensions (>5 ha) and new settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of woodlands, commons and small scale hedgerowed field pattern. • Visual exposure of some ridgesides/hillsides. 	H
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low intervisibility of some existing urban edges. 	L
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of woodlands, commons, small scale hedgerowed field pattern. • Landform character. • Character of roads and lanes. 	H
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of woodlands, commons, small scale hedgerowed field pattern. • Visual exposure of some ridgesides/hillsides. • Landform character. 	H
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual exposure of some ridgesides/hillsides. • Landform character. 	H
6. Large scale 'open uses'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of woodlands, commons, small scale hedgerowed field pattern. <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Opportunities for landscape enhancement/restoration in the north east of the area.</i></p>	M
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of woodlands, commons, small scale hedgerowed field pattern. • Low to moderate intervisibility. 	M
8. Incremental small scale developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character of the small settlements. 	M
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual exposure of some ridges/hillsides. 	M
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition of woodlands and hedgerows that are an essential part of character. 	H

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

4.5.8 *Tiptree Ridge (D4)*

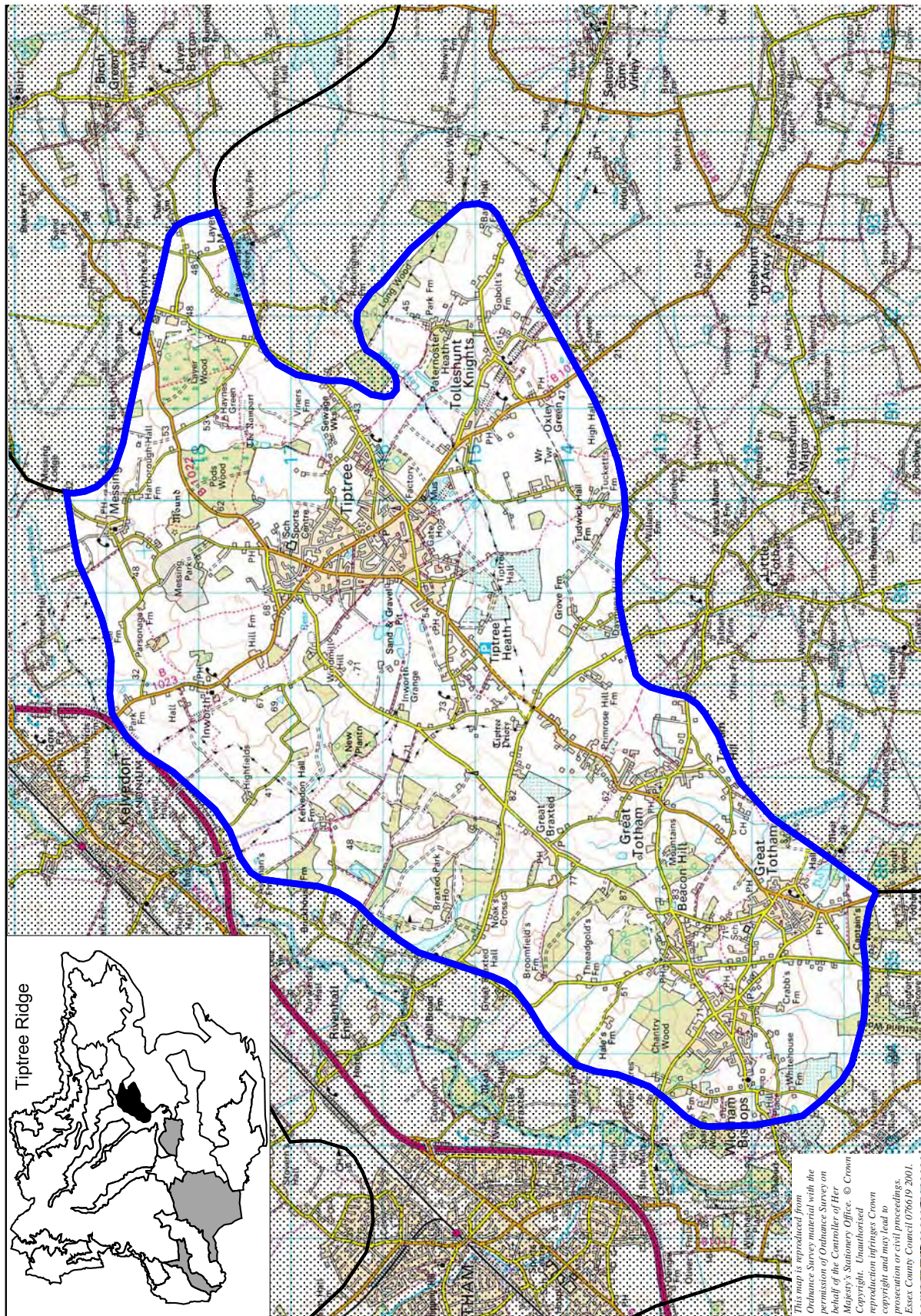


Key Characteristics

- Elevated, broad ridge.
- Strongly wooded western ridgetside.
- Small - medium scale field pattern.
- Enclosed character provided by many tall, thick hedgerows and woodland.
- Framed views over the Blackwater Valley and the Blackwater coastal farmlands.

Overall Character

The Tiptree Ridge landscape is formed by a broad and relatively high ridge, which is clothed by large areas of woodland on its western side. Small to medium size fields are set within a strong structure of numerous woodland blocks, copses and tall thick hedgerows, but much of the area's former heathland and wood pasture character has been lost. Where gaps in hedgerows permit, framed views over the Blackwater Valley to the west and the coastal farmlands to the south east are possible. The settlement pattern is dispersed, principally isolated farmsteads in the west, and a mix of small/large villages, hamlets, small farmsteads, cottages and modern houses along lanes in the east of the area.



Character Profile

Geology

- Glacio-Fluvial Sands and Gravels, London Clay

Soils

- Well drained fine loamy over clayey soils, slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged soils.

Landform

- Broad and relatively high SW-NE aligned ridge, elevated approx. 55 m above the surrounding countryside. Mainly moderate slopes, some more gentle slopes on the north west side. The ridge is slightly indented by small valleys, and the ridgetop gently undulates.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Heathland (Tiptree heath is the largest remaining fragment in Essex, historically part of a much more extensive area extending the length of the ridge).
- Oak woodland, sweet chestnut coppice, holly and birch scrub.

Pattern of field enclosure

- Small and medium size fields of both regular and irregular shape bounded typically by tall wooded hedgerows with large number of hedgerow trees. Many very small paddocks around settlements.

Farming pattern

- A mix of pasture and arable farmland.

Woodland/tree cover

- Extensive deciduous woodland cover of large and small woods/copses, some interlocking.
- A few straight bounded conifer plantations, and treebelts.
- Many hedgerow trees including oak, sweet chestnut, holly, field maple.

Settlement pattern and built form

- The western side of the area has a relatively sparse settlement pattern of isolated farmsteads and cottages along lanes or houses of large estates.
- The eastern side of the area from Gt Totham to Tiptree has a higher density of settlement including small and large villages, hamlets and many farmsteads, houses along lanes. Tiptree has extensive modern estates.
- Local vernacular of the area includes weatherboarding, plaster and pantile.

Communications

- Small narrow winding and straight lanes, often with thick hedgerow boundaries.
- No major roads cross the area.

Other landscape features

- Historic parks at Braxted and Messing.
- Small sand and gravel pit at Tiptree.
- Tiptree Jam Factory with a number of orchards in surrounding area.
- Tiptree windmill.
- Radio mast on high ground above Braxted Park.
- Scattered small reservoirs.

Landscape Condition

- The condition of the hedgerows is moderate to good, in localised areas they are fragmented.
- Some poor quality development out of character is found around Tiptree and in the small settlements to the south west.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- Much of the area's former heathland was lost during the course of late enclosure.
- Many settlements have been subject to modern infill and expansion.
- Future possible trends for change may include pressure for further housing development around Tiptree, use of high ground for masts, alternative recreational uses of less viable agricultural land.

**TIPTREE RIDGE (D4)
SENSITIVITY EVALUATION**

TYPE/SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT/CHANGE	KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND ACCOMMODATION OF CHANGE ISSUES	LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY LEVEL
1. Major urban extensions (>5 ha) and new settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of woodlands, hedgerow field pattern. • Visual exposure of some ridgesides. • Small areas of tranquillity in the west. 	H
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low to moderate intervisibility. <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Opportunities to improve some existing urban edges.</i></p>	L
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of woodland, hedgerowed field pattern. • Landform character. • Character of the lanes. 	H
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of woodland, hedgerow field pattern. • Small areas of tranquillity in the west. 	M
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual exposure of some ridgesides. <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Siting, massing, form and colour are critical.</i></p>	M
6. Large scale 'open uses'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of woodland, hedgerow field pattern. <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Possible opportunities for restoration of heathland character.</i></p>	M
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of woodland hedgerow field pattern. • Small areas of tranquillity in the west. 	M
8. Incremental small scale developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character of settlements and lanes. 	M
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual exposure of ridgetops/ridgesides. 	M
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition of woodlands, hedgerows that are an essential part of character. 	M

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

4.6 London Clay Landscapes (E)

4.6.1 The London Clay landscapes are found in south Essex and around Colchester and the Tendring Plain.



4.6.2 The key characteristics of this division can be summarised as:

- Mainly gently undulating or flat landform.
- Heavy clay soils and lighter sandy/loamy soils where sand and gravel deposits overly clay.
- Regular and straight hedged field boundaries the result of both ancient planned landscapes, and late enclosure of former heathlands.
- Pasture and arable farmland.
- Mostly enclosed nature of the landscape.

4.6.3 The main hedgerow species are Hawthorn, Oak, Elm with occasional Ash, Blackthorn, Field Maple.

4.6.4 The London Clay Plateau landscapes comprise four Landscape Character Areas within the study area:

- South Essex Farmlands (E1)
- South Colchester Farmlands (E2)
- Tendring Plain (E3)
- North Colchester Farmlands (E4)

4.6.5 *South Essex Farmlands (E1)*

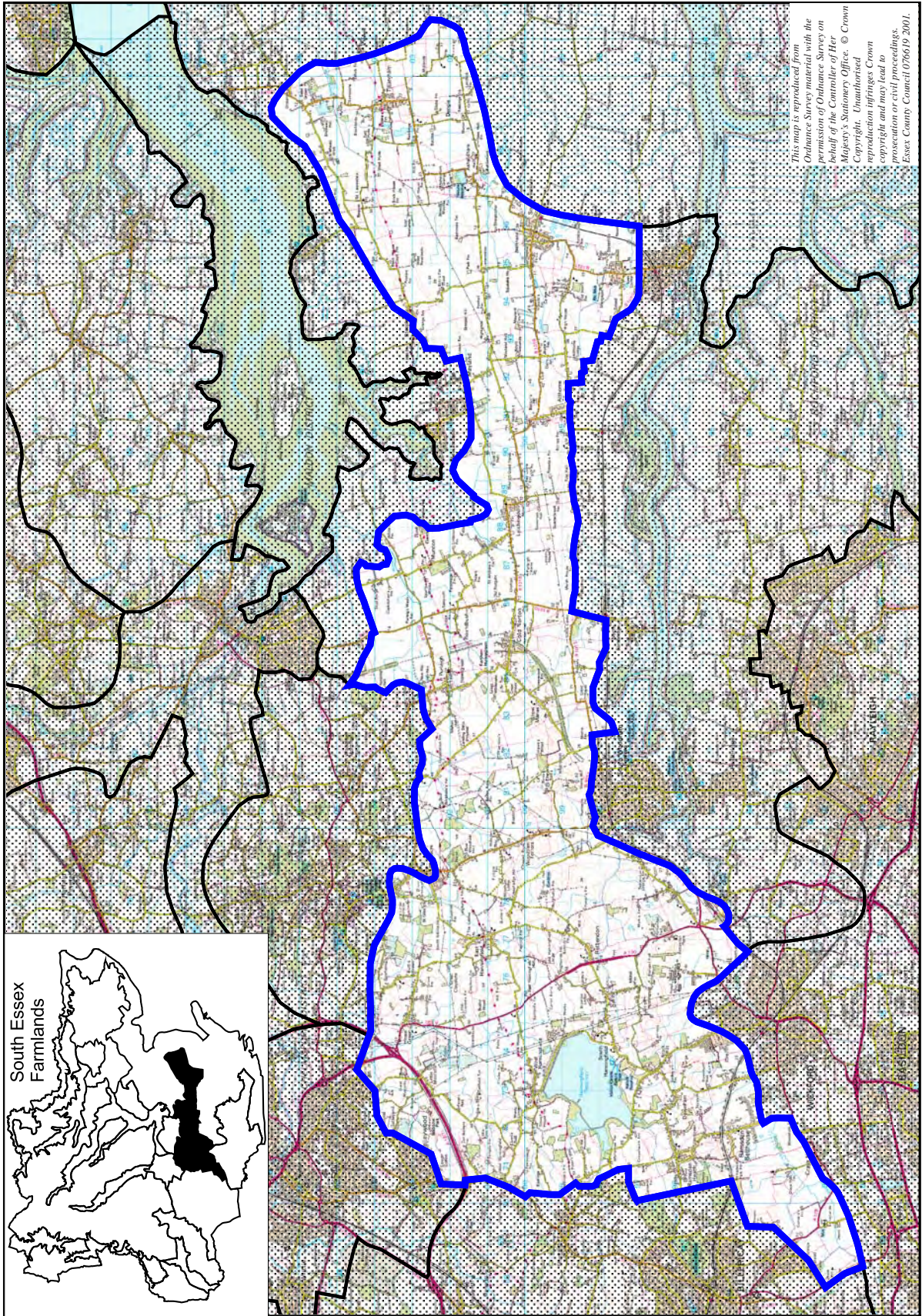


Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating landform, locally strongly rolling.
- Rectilinear field pattern with tall thick hedgerow boundaries.
- Occasional small woods and copses.
- Sense of enclosure
- Striking large open water expanse of Hanningfield Reservoir surrounded by dense tree belts is a distinctive feature in the west.
- Pylons are a frequent presence.

Overall Character

The South Essex Farmlands have a simple pattern of small to medium size rectangular arable and pasture fields. Distinctive long hedgerow boundaries running on parallel axes are a common feature, thought to be the result of ancient planned enclosure and extend over gently to strongly undulating landform. Despite the large scale loss of elm in the area, the tall thick hedges contribute an enclosed character to the landscape. In the west the large Hanningfield Reservoir and its surrounding mixed treebelts are a dramatic contrast to the surrounding farmland. Overhead pylons and some major roads visually interrupt the landscape.



Character Profile

Geology

- Mainly London Clay, some Claygate and Bagshot Beds and Sands and Gravels

Soils

- Slowly permeable clayey soils, small areas of fine or coarse loamy and silty soils.

Landform

- Varied landform.
- Large parts are gently undulating.
- More strongly rolling topography associated with rounded, moderate to steep sided hills/small escarpments between Ramsheath and Woodham Ferrers, extending north to Cold Norton and Purleigh.
- Low broad ridge extends on the Dengie Peninsula.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Oak-hornbeam woodland.
- Neutral meadows.

Pattern of field enclosure

- Predominantly small and medium rectilinear fields, often with long co-axial field boundaries (ancient planned field system).
- A few areas with large fields where field pattern has been lost, e.g. east of Rettendon.
- Predominantly thick hedgerow boundaries.

Farming pattern

- Mix of arable and pasture farmland, arable more dominant in the east.
- Occasional orchards, e.g. near Chelmsford.

Woodland/tree cover

- Scattered small woods and copses in the west, more widely dispersed in the east towards the Dengie Peninsula.
- Mixed tree belts around Hanningfield Reservoir.
- Scattered hedgerow oak trees. Elm was previously the dominant hedgerow tree.

Settlement pattern and built form

- Dispersed settlement pattern.
- Small villages and hamlets generally of strong linear form.
- Farmsteads, cottages and more recent suburban houses along lanes.
- Isolated farmsteads and barns within the farmland.
- Local vernacular of weatherboarding (painted black or white) and brick.

Communications

- Minor roads are quite straight and follow strong north to south, east to west patterns, sometimes with distinctive right angled bends. Narrow grass verges.
- Main A130 runs through the centre of the area and the A12(T) bisects the north west corner.

Other landscape features

- Hanningfield Reservoir - very large expanse of open water.
- Pylon routes running north to south and east to west, interrupt the landscape.
- Masts at Bushy Hill.
- A few sand and gravel pits on the Dengie Peninsula.

Landscape Condition

- In parts, especially in the east of the area, there has been loss of hedgerows due to field rationalisation, or fragmentation due to lack of management.
- The condition of some settlements is poor due to out of character 1960's and 1970's development.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- Traditionally the landscape was dominated by pasture but extensive areas have been converted to arable.
- Future trends for change may include pressure for urban development, masts on high ground and recreational uses given the proximity to urban areas in the east.

**SOUTH ESSEX FARMLAND (E1)
SENSITIVITY EVALUATION**

TYPE/SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT/CHANGE	KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND ACCOMMODATION OF CHANGE ISSUES	LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY LEVEL
1. Major urban extensions (>5 ha) and new settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of hedgerow field pattern • Low to moderate intervisibility. • Visual exposure of some ridge/hillsides. 	M
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low to moderate intervisibility. <p><i>Possible opportunities to improve existing urban edges.</i></p>	L
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of hedgerow field pattern. • Low to moderate intervisibility. 	M
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low to moderate intervisibility. • Visual exposure of some ridge/hillsides. • Landform character. <p><i>Siting, massing, form and colour are critical.</i></p>	M
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low to moderate intervisibility. • Visual exposure of some ridge/hillsides. • Landform character. <p><i>Siting, massing, form and colour are critical.</i></p>	M
6. Large scale 'open uses'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of hedgerow field pattern. • Visual exposure of some ridge/hillsides. <p><i>Possible opportunities for landscape enhancement in some parts.</i></p>	M
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of hedgerow field pattern. 	M
8. Incremental small scale developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition of hedgerows. • Character of settlements. 	M
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low to moderate intervisibility. • Limited capacity for further change. 	M
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition of hedgerow field pattern. 	M

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

4.6.6 *South Colchester Farmlands (E2)*

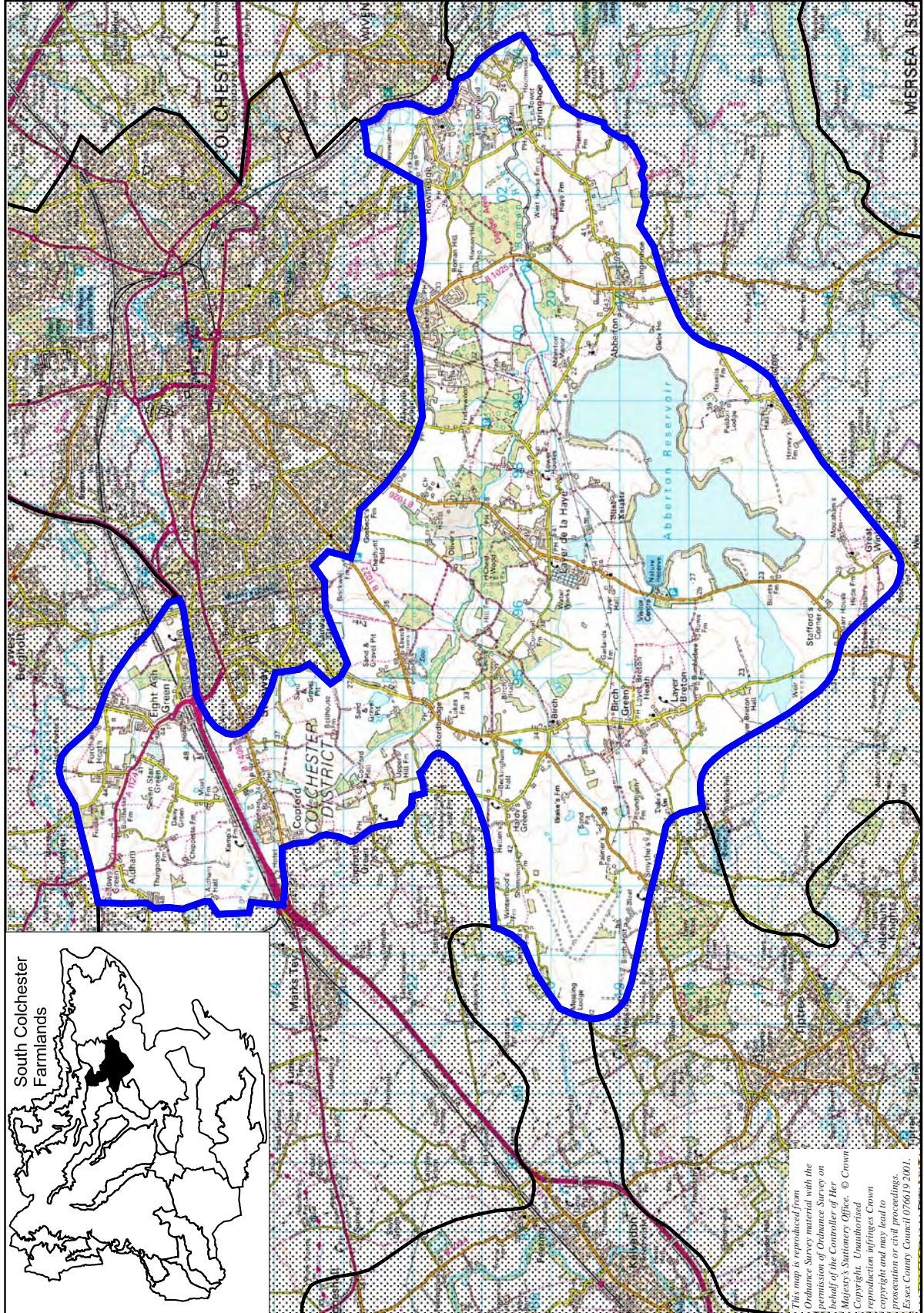


Key Characteristics

- 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.

Overall Character

The South Colchester Farmlands is a gently undulating landscape of hedgerowed pasture and arable fields, bisected to the north by the narrow valley of the River Roman which has strongly wooded valleysides and small meadows and marshes in the valley bottom. In the south the large open waterbody of Abberton Reservoir is a surprising contrast to the surrounding farmland landscape. Heathlands were formerly extensive in the area, but now much of this character has been lost. Away from the edge of Colchester the area has a tranquil character.



Character Profile

Geology

- Sands and Gravels and London Clay

Soils

- Deep permeable coarse loamy soils and slowly permeable clayey soils.

Landform

- Predominantly gently undulating.
- Narrow valley of the River Roman cuts across the area with moderate to steep valleysides.
- Valleyside slopes of the River Colne on the eastern boundary.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Unimproved acid grasslands, heath, fen, mixed ancient woodland, mainly concentrated now in Roman river valley. Heath at Layer Breton.

Pattern of field enclosure

- Regular or semi regular fields small, medium and large hedgerow fields.

Farming pattern

- Mainly pasture.
- More arable south of Abberton Reservoir and around edge Colchester.
- Occasional orchards.

Woodland/tree cover

- Interlocking large blocks of woodland and linear woods concentrated in and around the Roman river valley.
- A few isolated small woods and copses elsewhere.
- Mixed tree belts adjacent to Abberton Reservoir.
- Hedgerow oaks.

Settlement pattern and built form

- Complex settlement pattern.
- Medium size villages such as Rowhedge and Layer de la Haye which have been much expanded by modern development.
- Both small nucleated and linear hamlets.
- Farms mainly along the lanes.
- Typical historic local vernacular of weatherboarding and brick.

Communications

- Straight or slightly winding narrow lanes.
- A12(T) bisects a small section of the area in the north.

Other landscape features

- Large open water expanse of Abberton Reservoir, which has distinctive rounded small peninsulas, and is partly surrounded by tree belts.
- Layer Marney Towers is a local landmark.
- Active and disused sand and gravel pits near Rowhedge, Stanway and Birch.
- Two overhead line routes locally visually interrupt the landscape south of Layer de la Haye.

Landscape Condition

- The condition of the woodlands is moderate to good.
- Some hedgerows in the south of the area are very degraded.
- The condition of the settlements is moderate. Some show signs of out of character modern development.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- Around Colchester, Stanway and Eight Ash Green there was formerly extensive heathland which has now mostly been enclosed.
- In the south of the area there has been loss of hedgerows associated with field rationalisation.

**SOUTH COLCHESTER FARMLANDS (E2)
SENSITIVITY EVALUATION**

TYPE/SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT/CHANGE	KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND ACCOMMODATION OF CHANGE ISSUES	LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY LEVEL
1. Major urban extensions (>5 ha) and new settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of woodlands, hedgerow field pattern. • Moderate intervisibility. • Tranquil character away from edge of Colchester. • Strength of character of the Roman river valley. <p><i>Possible opportunities for new landscape frameworks based upon woodland and former heathland character.</i></p>	M
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate intervisibility. <p><i>Possible opportunities to improve some existing urban edges.</i></p>	L
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of woodlands, hedgerow field pattern. • Moderate intervisibility. • Tranquil character away from edge of Colchester. • Strength of character of the Roman river valley. 	M
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate intervisibility. • Integrity of woodland, hedgerow field pattern. • Tranquil character away from edge of Colchester. • Strength of character of the Roman river valley. 	M
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate intervisibility. <p><i>Siting, massing, form and colour are critical.</i></p>	M
6. Large scale 'open uses'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate intervisibility. • Woodland, hedgerow field pattern. • Strength of character of Roman river valley. 	M
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate intervisibility. • Tranquil character away from edge of Colchester. • Integrity of woodlands, hedgerow field pattern. • Strength of character of the Roman river valley. 	M
8. Incremental small scale developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character of settlements and lanes. 	M
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate intervisibility. • Limited capacity for further change. • Tranquil character away from edge of Colchester. 	M
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition of farmland hedgerows. 	M

Note:

- (a) *The Roman River Valley/Colne Valleysides are highly sensitive to most forms of large scale development due to its intrinsic strength of character and good condition.*

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

4.6.7 *Tendring Plain (E3)*

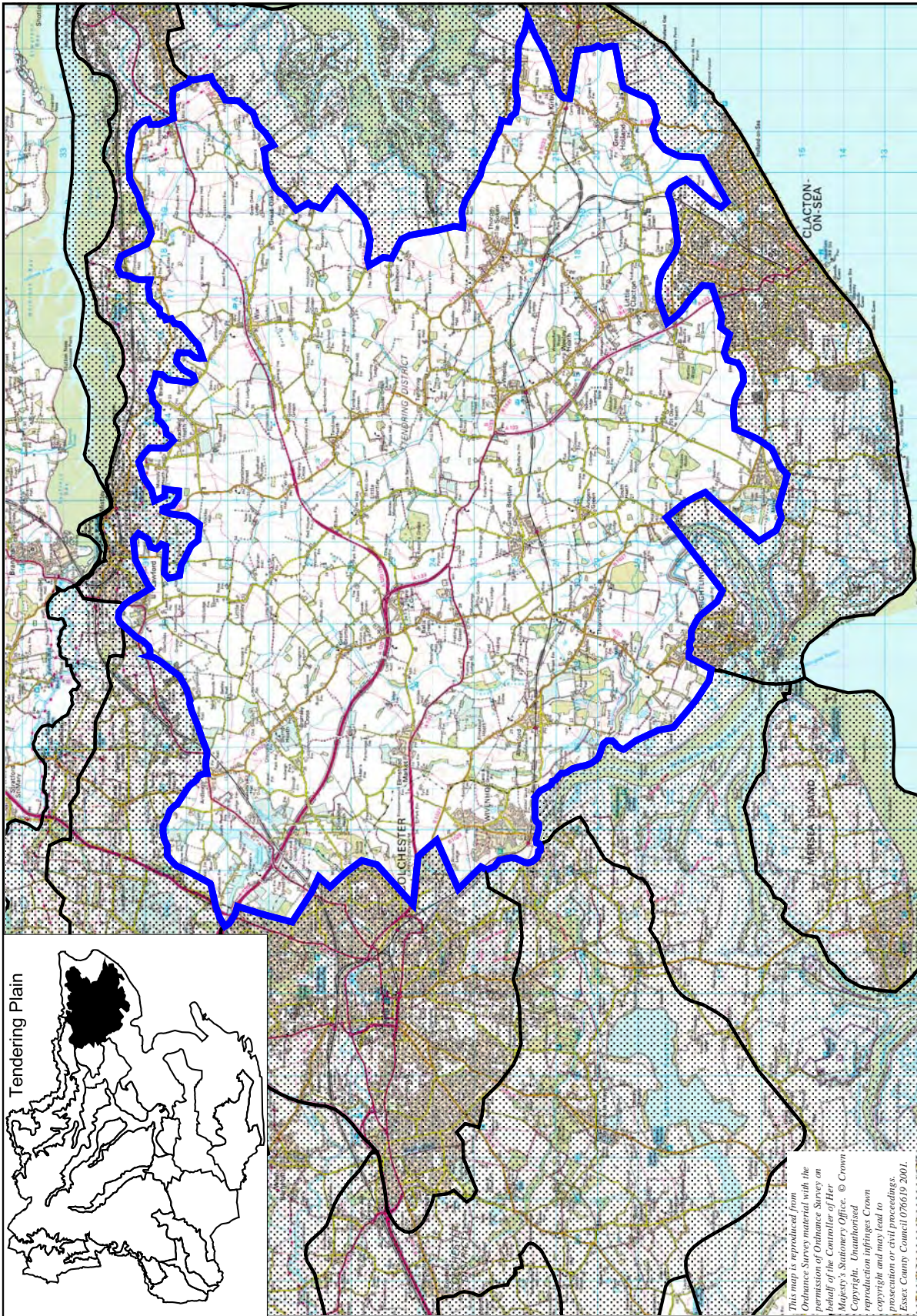


Key Characteristics

- 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.

Overall Character

The Tendring Plain is a low, relatively flat plateau with extensive arable land use on loamy, sandy and clay soils. Typically the fields are large and regular. Apart from a few localised clusters of woodlands/copses they are very widely dispersed. As a result the area has a generally open character and there are frequent wide views in which the small settlements, scattered hedgerow trees, occasional lines of poplars punctuate the low horizons. Small river/stream valleys cutting through the broad plateau have a contrasting enclosed character and more intimate scale. Pylons, high masts and major roads visually interrupt the landscape in parts.



Character Profile

Geology

- Brickearths and Loams, Sands and Gravels and London Clay.

Soils

- Deep stoneless coarse loamy soils and slowly permeable clayey soils.

Landform

- Extensive flat to slightly undulating plateau.
- This is dissected by a number of narrow valleys with moderate sloping valley sides.
- Valley sides of the Colne on the western boundary.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Ancient mixed coppice woods, spring line alder woodland.
- Relief areas of heath in road verges. (Former extensive presence of heathland indicated by settlement names such as St Osyth and Weeley Heaths).

Pattern of field enclosure

- Medium to large regular and semi-regular fields with low trimmed and tall hedgerow boundaries, some fragmented.

Farming pattern

- Predominantly arable.
- Improved pasture occurs within the valleys.
- Large orchards around Alresford, Elmstead Market and Ardleigh.

Woodland/tree cover

- Widely dispersed small woods/copses on the plateau.
- Some larger blocks of deciduous woodland in the west around Colchester, near Alresford, and north of St Osyth.
- Small valleys tend to have linear woods along streams.
- Scattered hedgerow oak trees.
- Occasional poplar tree belts.

Settlement pattern and built form

- Relatively sparse settlement pattern of small villages and hamlets with a mainly linear form. Farmsteads and cottages tend to occur along lanes.
- Small town of Wivenhoe in the south west of the area.
- Typical historic local vernacular includes colour wash plaster, weatherboarding and brick.

Communications

- Simple network of narrow, straight and some slightly more sinuous lanes.
- Major A120, A133 cross the area with sweeping alignments.

Other landscape features

- St Osyth Priory/park.
- Some widely visible high masts in the north of the area.
- Northwest to southeast aligned pylon route.
- Sand and gravel pits including areas of open water south of Alresford and near Brightlingsea.

Landscape Condition

- Hedgerows are in moderate condition. Some are very fragmented.
- Settlements are in moderate condition. Out of character suburban infill particularly from the 1960's and 1970's occurs in some.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- Former heathland on sandy soils around Colchester were lost as a result of late enclosure.
- Significant loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees has occurred in parts associated with arable intensification since the Second World War.
- Current and likely ongoing trends for change include pressures for major transportation developments, urban development pressure on the edge of Colchester, and use of the area for large telecommunication masts. Changes in agricultural subsidy regimes may bring possible opportunities for restoration of hedgerows, small woodlands and heathland.

**TENDRING PLAIN (E3)
SENSITIVITY EVALUATION**

TYPE/SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT/CHANGE	KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND ACCOMMODATION OF CHANGE ISSUES	LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY LEVEL
1. Major urban extensions (>5 ha) and new settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate to high intervisibility. • Tranquil areas in the north east and south of the area. <p><i>Possible opportunities to absorb change with new landscape frameworks of woodland, hedgerows appropriate to character and restoration of heathland.</i></p>	M
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate to high intervisibility. 	L
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate to high intervisibility. • Tranquil areas in the north east and south of the area. 	M
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate to high intervisibility. • Tranquil areas in the north east and south of the area. 	H
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate to high intervisibility. 	H
6. Large scale 'open uses'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate to high intervisibility. • Simple large scale field pattern. <p><i>Possible opportunities to absorb change with restoration of woodland, hedgerows, heathland.</i></p>	L
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate to high intervisibility. • Tranquil areas in the north east and south of the area. 	M
8. Incremental small scale developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate to high intervisibility. 	H
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate to high intervisibility. • Tranquil areas in the north east and south of the area. 	H
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition of hedgerows and woodlands. 	M

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

4.6.8 *North Colchester Farmlands (E4)*

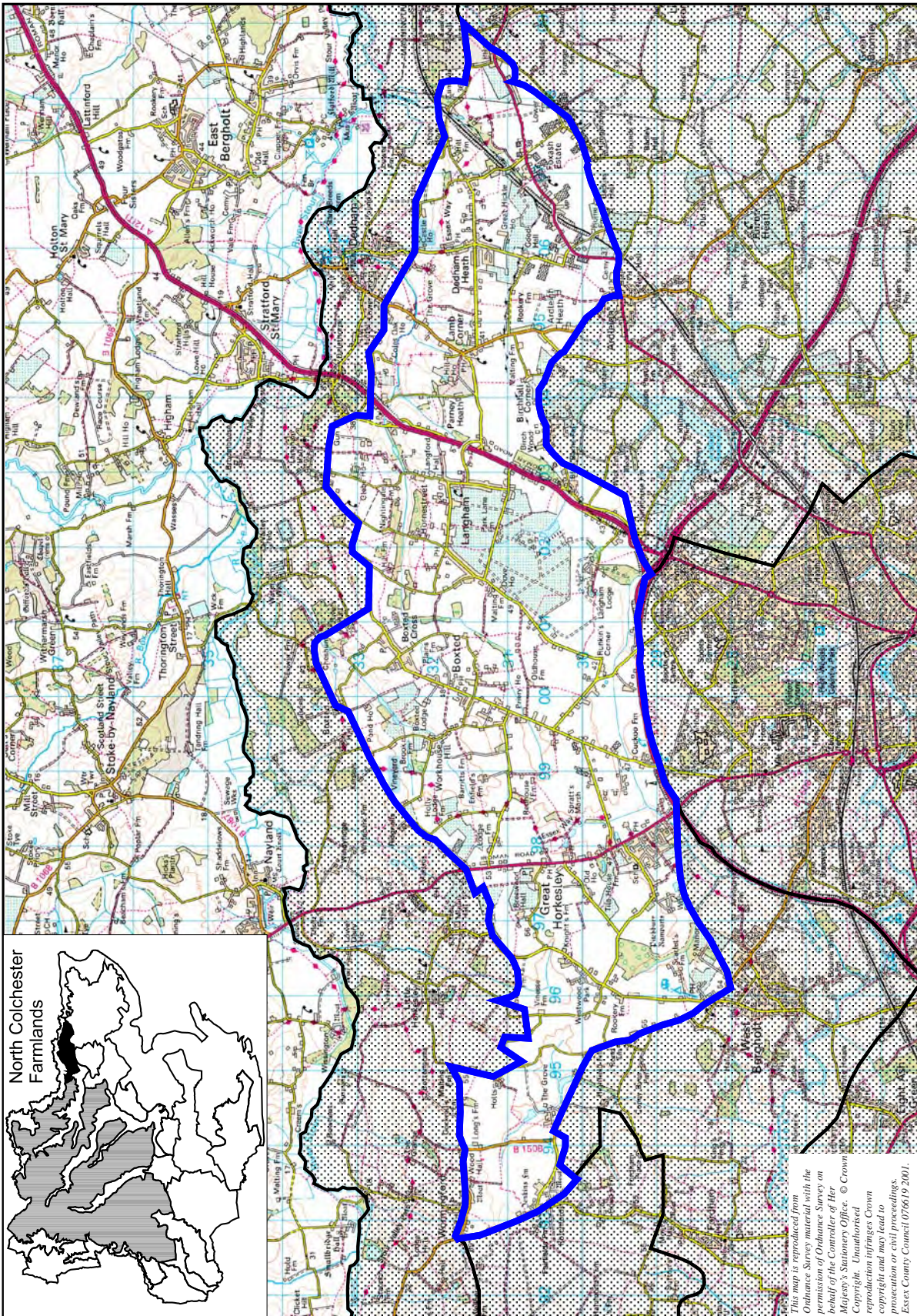


Key Characteristics

- 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.

Overall Character

The North Colchester Farmlands have a strong pattern of regular arable fields and straight lanes, occasionally reinforced by lines of poplar trees. Wide views are often possible across the farmland due to the general lack of substantial hedgerows/hedgerow trees. However, localised enclosure is created by extensive orchards such as those near Langham and Gt Horkesley. The area's dispersed settlement is characterised by small villages, hamlets and farmsteads along lanes, and in places by more recent 20th century ribbon development.



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Character Profile

Geology

- Brickearths and Loams, Sands and Gravels, London Clay

Soils

- Deep fine and coarse loamy soils.

Landform

- Flat or very gently undulating.
- Locally more rolling associated with small stream valleys.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Relict heath in a few road verges. (Place names also indicate former presence).

Pattern of field enclosure

- Mainly small regular fields, a few medium and large size. Low trimmed hedgerow or grass bank boundaries.

Farming pattern

- Mostly arable farmland.
- Large orchards at Laugham and Great Horkesley.
- Glasshouse horticulture, e.g. at Foxash Estate.
- Smallholdings.

Woodland/tree cover

- A few isolated linear woods and copses.
- Local concentration of wood in stream valleys.
- In places lines of poplar trees along roads.
- Scattered hedgerow trees.

Settlement pattern and built form

- Largely dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets and farmsteads along lanes.
- A few nucleated villages.
- Modern ribbon development along lanes is common.
- Local vernacular of weatherboarding and brick.

Communications

- Straight lanes.
- Main A12(T) crosses through the centre of the area.

Other landscape features

- Ardleigh Reservoir.
- Pitchbury ramparts Iron Age hillfort.
- Small parkland estate of Hillhouse.

Landscape Condition

- Abandoned smallholdings, derelict glasshouses are in poor condition.
- The condition of the hedgerows is mixed, some are poorly managed.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- Significant change took place in the landscape with the late enclosure of former heathlands in the area. Establishment of smallholdings in the 1920's/30's also strongly influenced character.
- Recent trends for change include the decline of smallholdings, often no longer farmed, and expansion of vegetable crops under plastic.
- Principal possible future trends for change include pressure for urban development, and a variety of alternative uses being sought for smallholdings and glasshouse land.

**NORTH COLCHESTER FARMLANDS (E4)
SENSITIVITY EVALUATION**

TYPE/SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT/CHANGE	KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND ACCOMMODATION OF CHANGE ISSUES	LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY LEVEL
1. Major urban extensions (>5 ha) and new settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate to high intervisibility. • Hedgerow field pattern. • Islands of tranquillity. • Northern part of the area is within the AONB. 	M
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate to high intervisibility. • Hedgerow field pattern. • Islands of tranquillity. • Northern part of the area is within the AONB. 	M
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate to high intervisibility. • Islands of tranquillity. • Northern part of the area is within the AONB. 	M
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate to high intervisibility. • Islands of tranquillity. • Northern part of the area is within AONB. 	H
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate to high intervisibility. <p><i>Siting, massing, form and colour are critical.</i></p>	M
6. Large scale 'open uses'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity of hedgerowed field pattern. • Moderate to high intervisibility. • Northern part of the area is within the AONB. 	M
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate to high intervisibility. • Integrity of hedgerow field pattern. • Islands of tranquillity. • Northern part of the area is within the AONB. 	M
8. Incremental small scale developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate to high intervisibility. • Character of settlements and lanes. • Northern part of the area is within the AONB. 	M
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate to high intervisibility. 	H
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition of hedgerow field pattern. 	M

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

4.7 Coastal Landscapes (F)

4.7.1 The Coastal landscapes in Essex are extensive areas of open, and largely undeveloped low-lying land adjacent to the coast, much of which is of significant nature conservation value. The very long coastline is deeply indented by major river estuaries including the Stour, Colne, Blackwater, Crouch, and the Thames, and includes distinctive island and peninsula features. Much of the coastal land behind the sea wall has been reclaimed to form wet grazing marshes and, where drained and improved, arable fields. Inland, the land rises and is dominated by arable farmland.



4.7.2 The key characteristics of this division can be summarised as:

- Expansive, sky-dominated, flat, low lying landscapes with water often a feature in views. The estuaries bring the maritime character inland.
- Deeply indent coastline.
- Traditional grazing marshes and drained arable land protected from flooding by sea walls.
- Few hedgerows or fences; numerous creeks, drainage ditches and dykes.
- Tree cover limited to farmsteads and villages on higher ground.
- Extensive evidence of 20th century military activity.
- Many settlements related to fishing or boating industry.

4.7.3 Typical hedgerow species are Hawthorn, Oak, Elm, with occasional Elderberry, Blackthorn, Dog rose.

4.7.4 The Coastal landscapes comprise ten Landscape Character Areas within the study area:

- Thames Estuary (F1)
- Crouch & Roach Farmland (F2)
- Dengie & Foulness Coast (F3)
- Blackwater Estuary (F4)
- North Blackwater Coastal Farmlands (F5)
- Mersea Island (F6)
- Brightlingsea-Clacton-Frinton Coast (F7)
- Hamford Water (F8)
- Stour Estuary Slopes (F9)
- Stour Estuary (F10)

4.7.5 *Thames Estuary (F1)*



Key Characteristics

- Very wide estuary mouth, extending out to open sea.
- Extensive tidal mudflats/sands, together with some fringing saltmarsh.
- Large scale landscape with a strong sense of exposure.
- Expansive views in which water and sky dominate, with the outline of the Kent coast sometimes visible in the distance.
- Man-made development restricted to the northern boundary, except for the distinctive landmark of the exceptionally long Southend Pier.

Overall Character

The Thames Estuary is primarily a seascape. Large expanses of open water, and broad tidal mudflats and sands are the main influence on character. The daily rhythms of tide and changes in weather and lighting conditions mean this is also a constantly changing dynamic landscape. In the east a broad band of rough low grazing saltmarsh with an intricate pattern of narrow creeks and runnels, extends around the Hadleigh/Ray Channels, adding variety and seasonal colour to the area. The area's rich wildlife, with thousands of wading birds overwintering on the saltmarshes and mudflats, also provides interest. The towns of Southend on Sea and Canvey Island lie on the northern boundary and are prominent in views northwards from the foreshore. Despite this, overall character is undeveloped, with no buildings and very few man-made structures within the area.

Character Profile

Geology

- London Clay, Alluvium

Soils

- Deep stoneless alluvial soils.

Landform/coastal form

- Very wide mouth of the Thames Estuary/open sea.
- Extensive tidal mudflats, sands dissected by a simple pattern of large and small channels narrowing in front of Canvey Island.
- Indented saltmarsh edge adjacent to Two Tree Island and Canvey Island with an intricate pattern of tiny channels/runnels.
- Low cliffs on the boundary of the character area at Southend/Leigh on Sea.
- Shingle bank promontory at Shoeburyness.

Semi natural vegetation

- Saltmarsh.

Other landscape features

- Southend Pier 2 km length is a major landmark.
- River traffic of oil tankers and large container ships, as well as small fishing boats and sailing boats using the estuary.
- Concrete seawalls/promenades and grassed seawalls on the boundary.
- Jetties and groynes.

Landscape Condition

- Some erosion of saltmarsh is occurring.
- Some poor quality urban development just outside the character area is visually intrusive, e.g. tower blocks in Southend.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- The main past influences on the landscape have been natural coastal processes. Coastal squeeze is a current trend which is a threat to the important remaining saltmarshes in the area. There are limited opportunities for coastal retreat due to extensive urban areas adjoining which require flood protection.
- Demand for marinas, port development are possible pressures in the future which would be very difficult to absorb.