THAMES ESTUARY (F1)
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	• High intervisibility. • Inappropriate.	H
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	• High intervisibility. • Inappropriate.	H
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	• High intervisibility. • Distinctive character and integrity of the saltmarsh/mudflats.	H
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	• High intervisibility. • Distinctive character and integrity of the saltmarsh/mudflats. • Undeveloped character.	H
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	• High intervisibility. • Inappropriate.	H
6. Large scale 'open uses'	• High intervisibility. • Inappropriate.	H
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	• High intervisibility. • Distinctive character and integrity of the saltmarsh/mudflats. • Flat character.	H
8. Incremental small scale developments	• High intervisibility.	H
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	• High intervisibility.	H
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	• Saltmarsh grazing/water level management.	H

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

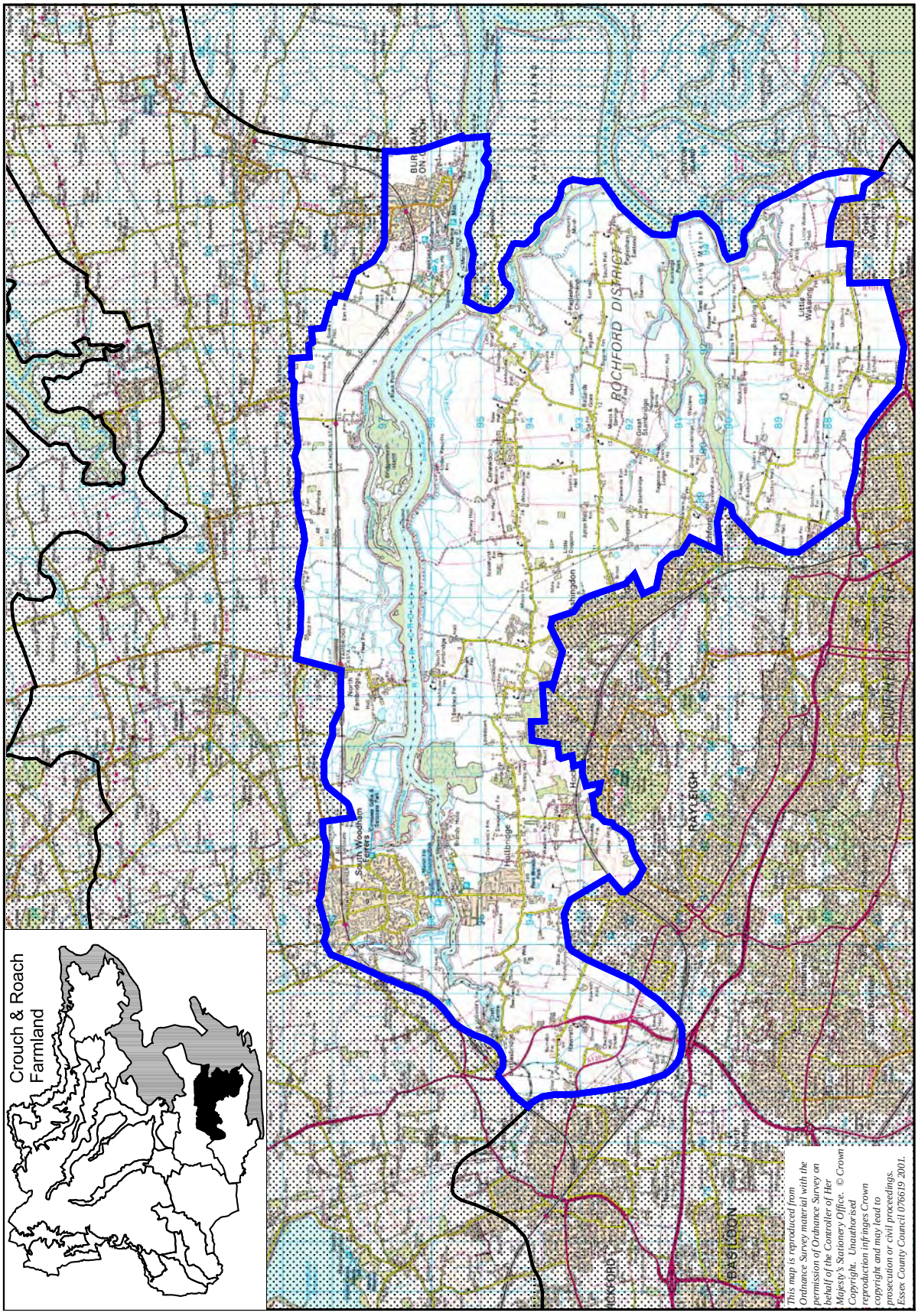
4.7.6 *Crouch & Roach Farmland (F2)*

Key Characteristics

- Long narrow Crouch and Roach river estuaries with bands of flat low lying marshlands.
- Rolling or gently undulating arable farmland between the estuaries. Regular fields of variable size and thick or intermittent hedgerow boundaries.
- Frequent long views across the farmland to the estuaries from higher ground.
- Strongly right angled pattern of lanes.
- Small villages, a scattering of hamlets, farmsteads, and newer suburban properties are concentrated along the lanes on higher ground.

Overall Character

The coastal character of the area is defined by the narrow estuaries which penetrate far inland, with associated mudflats, saltmarsh and reclaimed marshlands, sometimes including grazing marsh. The land between the estuaries and their immediate margins is gently or strongly undulating arable farmland. Moderate to steep sided estuary valleysides are a distinctive backdrop either side of the Crouch. Typically, thick hedgerows dominated by scrub elm follow the rectilinear field boundaries. However, there has been significant loss of hedgerows especially in the south of the area, as well as the general loss of elm the formerly characteristic hedgerow tree, resulting in a fairly open character. The settlement pattern is sparse along the edge of the estuaries, and mostly small settlement tend to hug the slightly higher drier land. Large parts of the area have a tranquil character.


Crouch & Roach Farmland
ROCHFORD DISTRICT
RAYLEIGH
BASILDON
SOUTHEND-ON-SEA
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Character Profile

Geology

- London Clay, Sands and Gravels, Brickearths and Loams, Claygate and Bagshot Beds, Sands and Gravels

Soils

- Slowly permeable clayey soils, deep stoneless alluvial and well drained silty/loamy soils.

Landform/coastal form

- Mostly very gently undulating landform.
- Low moderate to steep to estuary/valleysides around Canewdon/near Hockley and to the north of the Crouch estuary between South Woodham Ferrers and Burnham on Crouch.
- Incised narrow estuaries of the Rivers Crouch and Roach.
- Narrow margins of flat low lying marshland and saltmarshes next to the Roach, broader areas adjacent to the Crouch.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Saltmarsh, grazing marsh, ancient woodland.

Pattern of field enclosure

- Regular, mainly small to medium size fields, some large. Distinctive ancient planned coaxial hedgerow boundaries in many parts.
- Regular and irregular fields on the marshlands with straight and sinuous ditch boundaries.

Farming pattern

- Largely arable, but with some significant areas of coastal grazing marsh, e.g. around North Fambridge.

Woodland/tree cover

- Very widely dispersed small copses. Some small woodlands on the ridge near Hockley.
- Scattered hedgerow oak and ash trees. Occasional elms, but these have largely been lost.

Settlement pattern and built form

- Absence of settlement within the marshlands apart from a very small number of isolated farmsteads.
- Small hamlets, farmsteads and early 20th century houses along roads on the higher ground.
- A few small villages, some with a suburban character at the edges.

- Local vernacular of black and white weatherboarding, colour washing and red brick. Occasional examples of dutch gables as an architectural detail on brick houses
- Small town of Burnham on Crouch, historically a fishing settlement now an important yachting centre.
- Larger town of Woodham Ferrers with extensive modern estates.

Communications

- Narrow lanes with right angled bands following the field boundaries.
- Lack of roads within the marshlands other than farm tracks.
- Main A130 crosses the landscape in the west. Otherwise few major roads cross the area.

Other landscape features

- Church towers and spires are often visually prominent in the landscape.
- Some wet gravel pits.
- Scattered ponds and small reservoirs.
- Small caravan/mobile home parks.
- Quays and a marina at Burnham on Crouch.
- Occasional marinas, pontoons and river moorings elsewhere.

Landscape Condition

- Many hedgerows are fragmented.

- The condition of the small settlements is very mixed, often including out of character modern infill.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- There has been significant loss of grazing marsh as a result of agricultural intensification since the Second World War.

- Loss of elm trees from the farmland in the 1960's and 1970's made the character of the area more open.

- Present and likely ongoing trends for change include pressure for urban development around South Woodham Ferrers, transportation developments near Southend, and demand for additional boat moorings, marina facilities along the estuaries. Flood protection measures may also be a likely future issues. There may be some opportunities for managed realignment together with restoration of saltmarshes and grazing marshes, rather than use of visually intrusive higher hard sea walls.

CROUCH AND ROACH FARMLAND (F2)
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	• Moderate to high intervisibility. • Visual exposure of some estuary valleysides. • Tranquil character.	H
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	• Moderate to high intervisibility.	M
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	• Moderate to high intervisibility. • Tranquil character.	M
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	• Moderate to high intervisibility. • Integrity of hedgerow pattern.	H
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	• Moderate to high intervisibility.	H
6. Large scale 'open uses'	• Integrity of hedgerow pattern. • Moderate to high intervisibility.	M
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	• Integrity of hedgerow pattern. • Moderate to high intervisibility.	M
8. Incremental small scale developments	• Moderate to high intervisibility. • Mixed existing character of settlements.	M
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	• Moderate to high intervisibility. • Tranquil character.	H
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	• Condition of hedgerows. • Condition of saltmarshes.	M

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

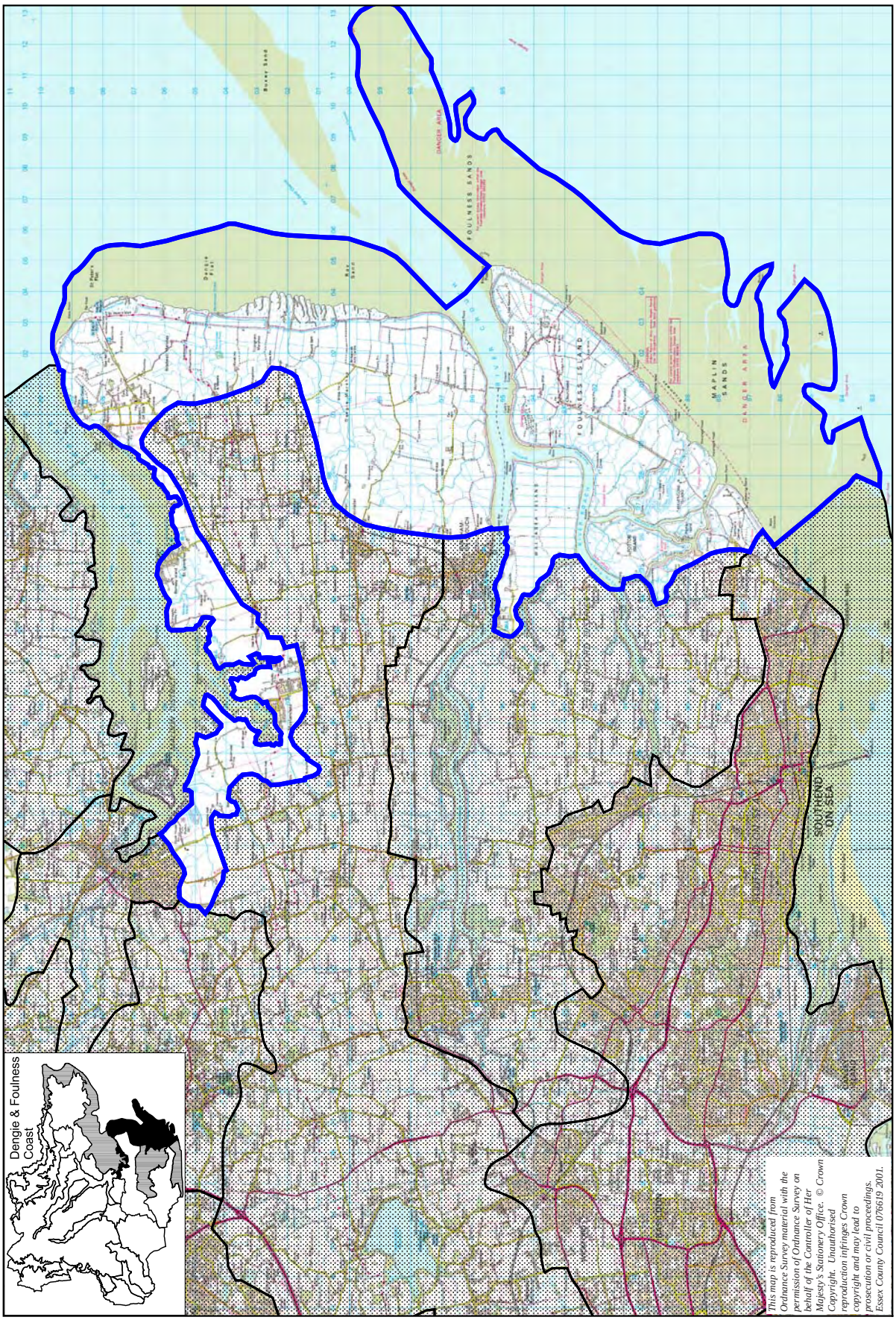
4.7.7 *Dengie and Foulness Coast (F3)*

Key Characteristics

- Large scale, flat landscape.
- Sense of openness/space. Wide views.
- Vast tidal mudflats and sands, and extensive fringing saltmarshes, rich in wildlife.
- Mainly arable farmland of the reclaimed marshlands, intersected by ditches and dykes.
- Absence of woodland, only a few hedgerows.
- Isolated farms and barns, with small villages restricted to the fringes.
- Bradwell Nuclear Power Station is a significant landmark.
- Remote tranquil character.

Overall Character

Dengie and Foulness coast is a distinctive extensive area of reclaimed marshlands, and of sweeping tidal mudflats and sands beyond the sea wall. It is a flat open and exposed landscape, dominated by the sky and/or the sea. A large scale pattern of arable fields on the marshlands is defined by straight or sinuous ditches, with very few trees. Settlement is very sparse. The older marshlands have occasional farmsteads and lanes, but on the more recent reclaimed areas, there are just a few isolated barns and farmsteads. No major roads cross the area so this increases its remote tranquil character.


Dengie & Foulness Coast
SOUTHEND ON-SEA
FOULNESS SANDS
FOULNESS ISLAND
MAPLIN SANDS
DANGER AREA
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Character Profile

Geology

- Mainly alluvium, some London Clay and Sands & Gravels

Soils

- Deep stoneless fine/coarse silty and clayey soils.

Landform/coastal form

- Large areas of flat low lying land below 5 m elevation. To the south this is broken into a series of small and large islands by the lower Crouch and Roach estuaries and connecting creeks, e.g. Foulness, Wallasea, Potton Islands.
- Beyond the sea wall in the east both narrow fringes and large pockets of flat saltmarsh and vast tidal sand/mudflats such as Maplin sands.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Saltmarsh, pockets of coastal grazing marsh, sea wall grassland, shoreline vegetation.

Pattern of field enclosure

- Predominantly regular, medium to large size fields bounded by straight ditches and dykes.
- Some significant pockets further inland of older, irregular shaped small and medium size fields bounded by sinuous ditches, including remnant fleets in the south.
- Wallasea Island has a geometric field pattern. Overall appearance of a large scale field pattern due to only a few hedgerows.

Farming pattern

- Intensive arable farmland, small areas of grazing marsh.

Woodland/tree cover

- Generally very sparse tree cover.
- A few isolated copses, and trees around farmsteads.
- Some isolated trees/scrub on the older reclaimed marshes.

Settlement pattern and built form

- Isolated farmsteads on the older reclaimed marshes, only occasional barns on the more recently reclaimed land from sea.
- Churchend on Foulness is the only traditional hamlet in the area.
- 1930s plotland developments at Maylandsea and St Lawrence Bay.

Communications

- Sparse road network of narrow straight or dog-legging lanes. Mainly farm tracks.

Other landscape features

- Bradwell Nuclear Power Station is an important landmark with an imposing presence.
- Isolated church at Bradwell on Sea.
- Military ranges, e.g. at Foulness with trackways and unfarmed strips and scattered buildings/debris.
- Traces of redhills.
- Decoy ponds.
- Shingle spit at Foulness Point.
- Caravan sites/leisure parks at St Lawrence Bay.

Landscape Condition

- Some intrusive farm buildings occur around historic farmsteads.

- Locally intrusive industrial/warehouse buildings occur at Creeksea.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- Since the Second World War there has been significant loss of coastal grazing marsh and of features such as decoy ponds and old sea wall, as a result of agricultural intensification.

- The main future influences on changes are likely to be agricultural and flood protection. Changes in arable subsidy regimes may present opportunities for large scale managed realignment with creation of saltmarsh and restoration of coastal grazing marsh.

DENGIE & FOULNESS COAST (F3)
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	• High intervisibility. • Tranquil character. • Sparse settlement pattern.	H
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	• High intervisibility. • Tranquil character. • Sparse settlement pattern.	H
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	• High intervisibility. • Tranquil character.	H
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	• High intervisibility. • Sparse settlement pattern. • Tranquil character.	H
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	• High intervisibility. *Siting, massing, form and colour are critical.*	H
6. Large scale 'open uses'	• High intervisibility. • Absence of woodland/tree cover.	M
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	• High intervisibility. • Landform character.	H
8. Incremental small scale developments	• High intervisibility. • Character of historic farmsteads.	M
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	• High intervisibility.	H
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	• Condition of saltmarsh.	H

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

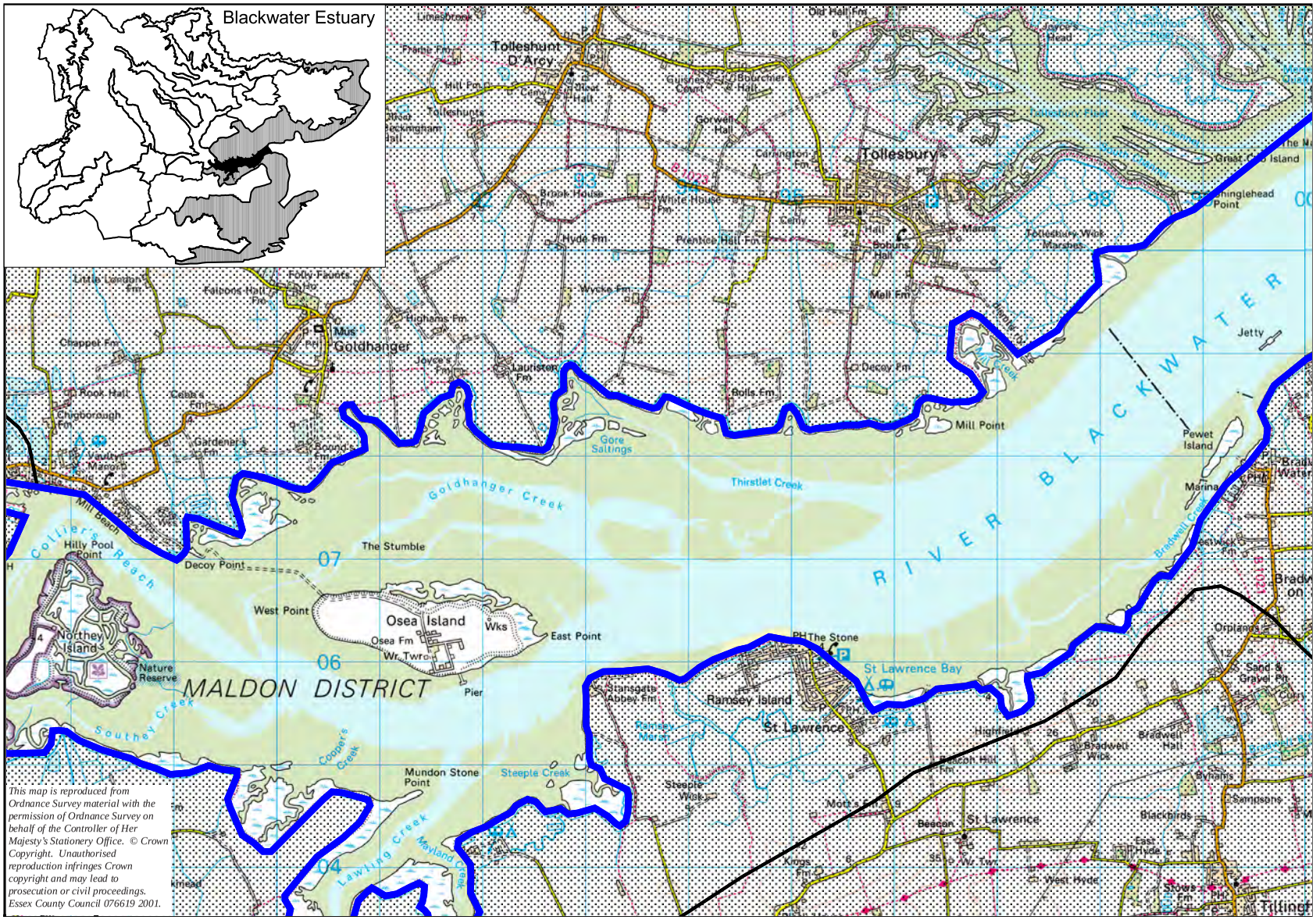
4.7.8 *Blackwater Estuary (F4)*

Key Characteristics

- Very broad estuary.
- Strongly indented shoreline and very extensive tidal mudflats in the west, wide low water channel in the east.
- Distinctive, gently sloped low alluvial and flat saltmarsh islands.
- Sense of openness and space, with wide views.
- Mostly undeveloped coastline.

Overall Character

The Blackwater Estuary is the largest in Essex and only narrows markedly in its upper reaches near to Maldon. It has a large scale character which is enhanced along much of its length by the adjacent flat marshlands. Mudflats, water and sky dominate in views from the edge, broken only by the occasional vertical elements of yacht masts. The estuary widens out to the open sea with sweeping curves. Narrow creeks with pockets of saltmarsh occur more frequently in the west, with a simpler pattern of mudflats and open water in the east.



Character Profile

Geology

- Alluvium

Soils

- Deep stoneless alluvial soils.

Coastal landform

- Very wide estuarine outlet up to 2.5 km width.
- West of Osea Island the estuary has a simple pattern of bands of intertidal mud and small pockets of saltmarsh.
- From Osea Island to Maldon the mudflats are much more extensive and the edge of the estuary more indented by creeks with larger pockets of saltmarsh.
- Northey Island is mostly saltmarsh and Osea Island is a low alluvial island, a maximum of 5 m elevation.

Pattern of field enclosure

- Regular small to medium size low trimmed hedged fields on Osea Island.

Farming pattern

- Farmland on Osea with a mix of arable and pasture fields.

Woodland/tree cover

- General absence of trees. Small copse on Osea Island.

Settlement pattern and built form

- Hythe Quay at Maldon lies on the boundary of the character area.
- Osea and Northey Islands have small farmsteads.

Other landscape features

- 19th Century barges at Maldon and hulks in mudflats/saltmarshes.
- Marinas at Maylandsea and Bradwell Creek.
- Yacht moorings of the Hythe, Colliers Reach, Mill Beach and Mayland Creek.
- Low causeway to Osea Island.

Landscape Condition

- The estuary has an undisturbed character and as such it is in good condition.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- The estuary is mainly subject to natural processes.

- Saltmarsh erosion and wildlife disturbance, however, are current trends which are being exacerbated by inappropriate boating activity.

- Pressure for additional areas for noisy watersports and marinas are possible which will be very difficult to absorb into this landscape.

BLACKWATER ESTUARY (F4)
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	• High intervisibility. • Tranquil character. • Inappropriate.	H
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	• High intervisibility. • Tranquil character. • Inappropriate.	H
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	• High intervisibility. • Tranquil character. • Inappropriate.	H
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	• High intervisibility. • Tranquil character. • Integrity of saltmarshes and mudflats.	H
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	• High intervisibility. • Tranquil character. • Inappropriate.	H
6. Large scale 'open uses'	• Tranquil character. • Integrity of saltmarshes and mudflats. • High intervisibility.	H
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	• High intervisibility. • Tranquil character. • Landform/coastal farm.	H
8. Incremental small scale developments	• High intervisibility. • Integrity of saltmarshes and mudflats.	H
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	• High intervisibility. • Tranquil character.	H
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	• Condition of saltmarsh.	H

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

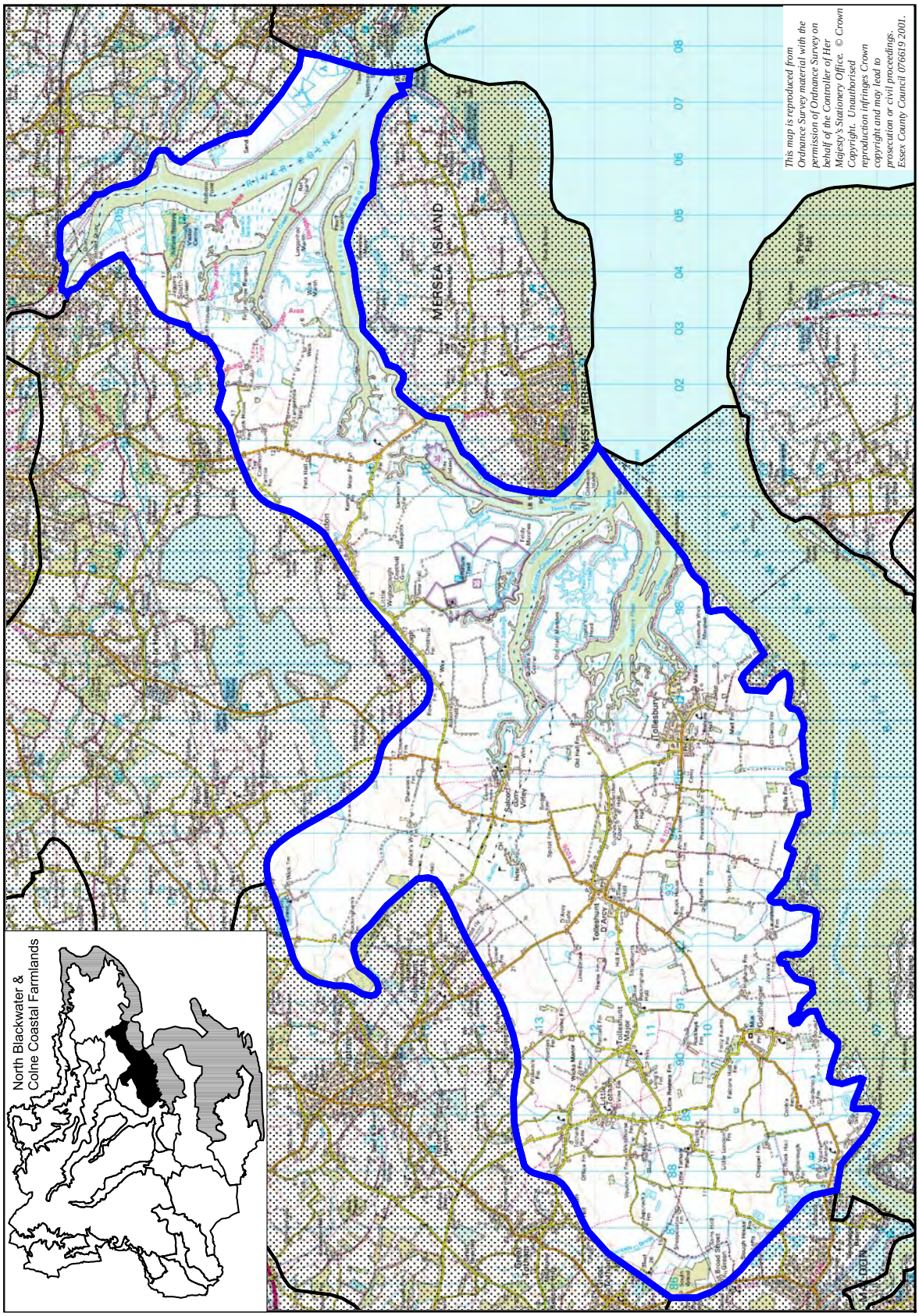
4.7.9 *North Blackwater/Colne Coastal Farmlands (F5)*

Key Characteristics

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

Overall Character

The North Blackwater coastal farmlands is a gently undulating arable landscape with an extensive fringe of coastal grazing marsh and saltmarsh associated with both small sheltered creeks and channels which indent the coastline, and the relatively narrow estuary of the Colne. The farmland has variable enclosure. Sometimes the tall hedgerows restrict views, in other parts where there has been large scale loss of hedgerows, long views to the estuaries and the sea are possible. On the marshlands and saltmarsh edges, there are open views across the estuaries and out to sea or inland to small settlements on high ground, in which churches can form distinctive landmarks.


North Blackwater &
Colne Coastal Farmlands
MERSEA ISLAND
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Character Profile

Geology

- Mainly London Clay, some areas of alluvium and sands and gravels

Soils

- Slowly permeable clayey soils, well drained fine loamy soils. Deep stoneless alluvial soils.

Landform

- Gently undulating landform.
- Some areas of flat marshes/saltmarsh adjacent to Tollesbury, Salcott fleets, Byfleet and Strood channels and the Colne estuary with a complex pattern of creeks and small saltmarsh islands.
- Narrow estuary of the River Colne.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Saltmarsh, coastal grazing marsh.

Pattern of field enclosure

- Semi regular field pattern of small to medium size fields, but with some areas of larger fields, e.g. north east of Maldon.
- Tall elm hedgerows bounding the fields, but extensive loss in some areas gives the appearance of a large scale field pattern.

Farming pattern

- Mostly arable fields. Some significant areas of grazing marsh, e.g. Old Hall/Tollesbury Wick marshes.

Woodland/tree cover

- Widely dispersed small copses and shelterbelts.
- Absence of woodlands.
- Elm dominated hedgerows.

Settlement pattern and built form

- Overall sparse settlement pattern.
- A few isolated farmsteads.
- In the north east small villages and hamlets are located along lanes.
- Creekside villages of Tollesbury and Salcott.
- Local vernacular of weatherboarding, red brick.

Communications

- Sparse road network, mainly narrow lanes.
- Absence of major roads.

Other landscape features

- Large golf course at Tolleshunt Knights.
- Recreational boating in Lower Colne and sail lofts, lightships, sailing boats at Tollesbury.
- Decoy ponds, red hills and oyster pits on the saltmarshes.
- Pylon route cuts across the landscape in the north west.

Landscape Condition

- Hedgerow pattern has been significantly eroded in parts.

- Some saltmarsh is subject to erosion.

- The condition of small settlements is mostly good. Although some out of character development has occurred, this is visually contained by tree'd settings.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- Loss of many hedgerows from farmland has occurred due to agricultural intensification since the Second World War. Orchards were also previously a feature in the area that have been lost.

- There are likely to be continuing recreational pressures including for noisy watersports, marina development and recreational boat moorings.

NORTH BLACKWATER/COLNE COASTAL FARMLANDS (F5)
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	• Moderate to high intervisibility. • Tranquil character. • Integrity of estuarine saltmarsh and grazing marsh.	H
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	• Moderate to high intervisibility. • Character of small settlements.	M
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	• Moderate to high intervisibility. • Tranquil character. • Integrity of estuarine saltmarsh and grazing marsh.	H
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	• Moderate to high intervisibility. • Tranquil character. • Integrity of estuarine saltmarsh and grazing marsh.	H
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	• Moderate to high intervisibility. *Siting, massing, form and colour are critical.*	M
6. Large scale 'open uses'	• Hedgerow pattern. • Absence of woodlands. *May be opportunities for hedgerow restoration.*	M
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	• Moderate to high intervisibility. • Landform character. • Integrity of coastal grazing marsh/saltmarsh.	H
8. Incremental small scale developments	• Character of small settlements.	M
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	• Moderate to high intervisibility. • Tranquil character.	H
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	• Hedgerow condition.	M

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

4.7.10 *Mersea Island (F6)*

Key Characteristics

- Oval shaped island with a broad low central clay ridge.
- Fringing low lying grazing marshes, pockets of saltmarsh and broad mud/sandflats.
- Mainly agricultural landscape with a few large farmsteads and a scattering of suburban houses along lanes.
- Predominantly open character with frequent views of sea and the estuary.
- Narrow zig-zagging and sinuous hedgerowed lanes.
- Most of the area is tranquil.

Overall Character

Mersea Island is distinguished by its hump backed ridge of London Clay which forms the bulk of the island. This is slightly elevated above adjacent low lying coastal grazing marshes and saltmarsh. Despite only being separated from the mainland to the north by narrow tidal channels, there is a stronger sense of being on an island than the other large physical islands on the Essex Coast. Much of it is agricultural, sparsely settled, and tranquil. The large seaside village/yachting centre of West Mersea, with its surrounding caravan/mobile home parks is a distinct contrast to the rest of the island.


MERSEA ISLAND
WEST MERSEA
East Mersea
Mersea Flats
Mud & Sand
Mud & Sand
Brightlingsea Reach
Cudmore Grove Country Park
Visitor Centre
Nature Reserve
Reeveshall Marsh
Maydays Marsh
Broad Fleet
Reeves Hall
Bocking Hall
Maydays Fm
Bower Hall
Haycocks
Blue Row
Weathercock
The Cross
Barrow Hill
Wellhouse Fm
Rewsalls Fm
Waldegraves Fm
North Barn
Ivy Ho
Broman's Fm
Fen Fm
Moat
B 1025
The Strood
Ray Island
Cobmarsh Island
Mersea Fleet
Thorn Fleet
Pewit Island
Langenhoe Marsh
Wick Marsh
Danger Area
Mersea Island
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Character Profile

Geology

- London Clay, Sands and Gravels, Alluvium

Soils

- Fine silty/loamy soils, slowly permeable clayey soils, deep stoneless alluvial clay soils.

Landform

- Gently sloping broad ridge max. 20 m elevation.
- Wide band of very flat low lying land in the north of the island.
- Extensive tidal sands and mudflats to the south.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Saltmarsh, grazing marsh, sea wall grassland.

Pattern of field enclosure

- *Small-medium size regular fields* bounded by intermittent tall hedges on the ridge and marked by drainage ditches on the flat marshes.

Farming pattern

- Mix of pasture and arable farmland.

Settlement pattern and built form

- Lack of settlement on the grazing marshes.
- A few large isolated farmsteads and small groups of cottages and houses on the ridge. Hamlet of East Mersea.
- Large seaside village of West Mersea at the south west end of the island, traditionally associated with boat building, oyster fishing and now a yachting port.
- Local vernacular of weatherboard, thatch and tile and brick.

Communications

- Causeway bridge is the only road access to the island.
- A few narrow sinuous and zig-zagging lanes on the central island ridge.
- Single larger B road from the bridge to West Mersea. Small lanes in the historic core of West Mersea.

Other landscape features

- Low sandy cliffs at Cudmore Grove Country Park.
- Old Oyster Pits on the saltmarshes.
- Caravan Parks at West and East Mersea.
- Brightly coloured beach hunts at West Mersea.
- Scattered Second World War pillboxes.
- Old barges and yachts in the muddy creeks south east of the causeway, smacks and lighters at West Mersea.

Landscape Condition

- The condition of the farmland hedgerows is moderate.

- The condition of the small settlements is mixed with some out of character modern houses.

- There is evidence of expanding pony paddocks and overgrazed pasture around the edge of West Mersea.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- The character of much of the agricultural landscape has remained relatively stable.

- The expansion of West Mersea from a small fishing village into a seaside town has been a significant change this century.

- Current and likely ongoing trends for change are the expansion of horsiculture and demands for development of additional marinas and boat moorings.

MERSEA ISLAND (F6)
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	• Moderate to high intervisibility. • Visual exposure of ridgetops/ridgesides. • Tranquil character.	H
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	• Moderate to high intervisibility. *Possible opportunity to improve existing poor urban edge.*	M
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	• Moderate to high intervisibility. • Tranquil character.	H
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	• Moderate to high intervisibility. • Tranquil character.	H
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	• High intervisibility. • Visual exposure of ridgetop/ridgesides. • Landform character.	H
6. Large scale 'open uses'	• Moderate to high intervisibility. • Absence of woodland. • Landform character. • Integrity of saltmarshes, mudflats.	M
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	• Moderate to high intervisibility. • Tranquil character. • Integrity of saltmarshes, coastal.	H
8. Incremental small scale developments	• Character of small settlements and lanes. • Integrity of hedgerow field pattern.	M
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	• High intervisibility.	H
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	• Hedgerow condition.	M

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

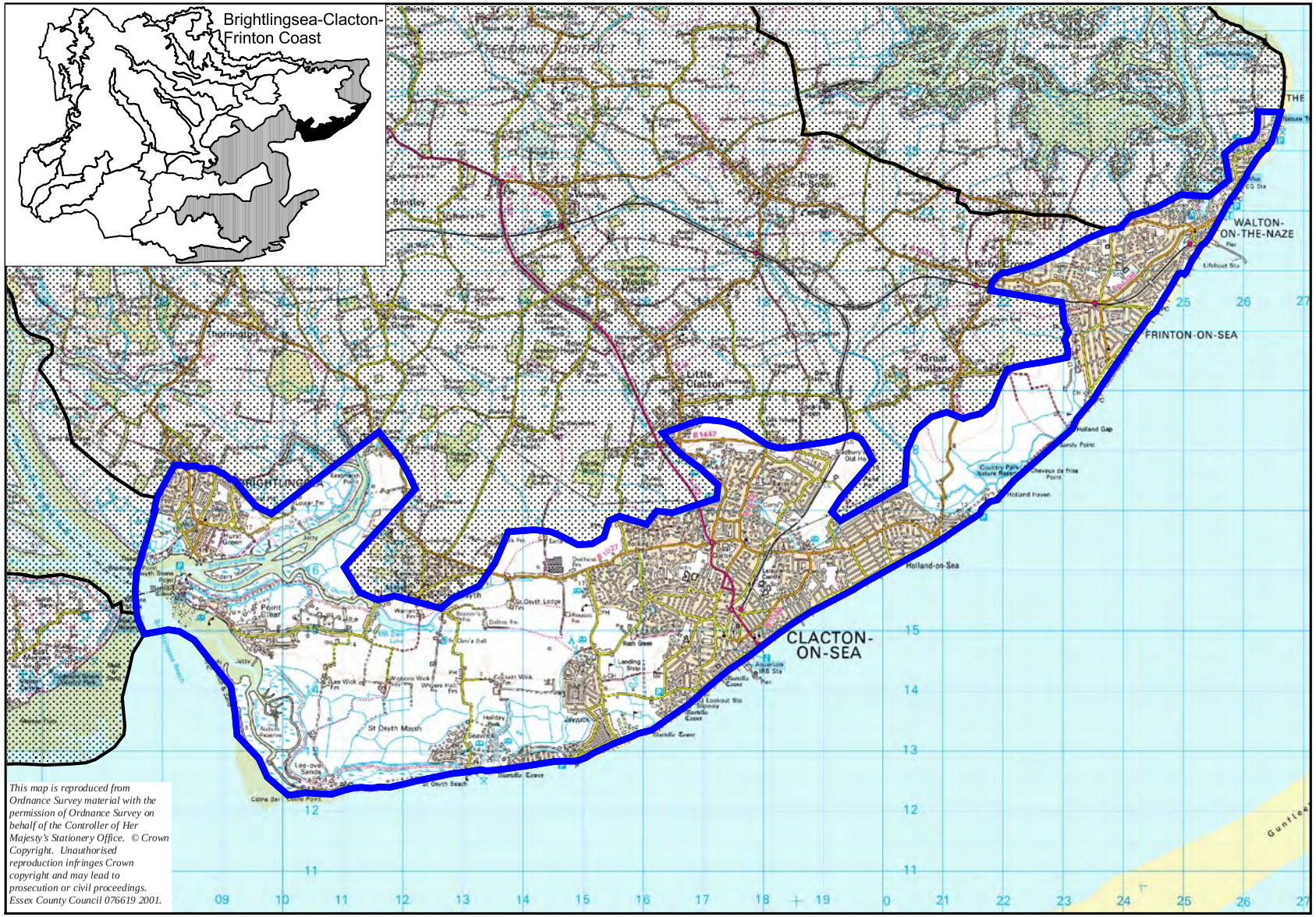
4.7.11 *Brightlingsea-Clacton-Frinton Coast (F7)*

Key Characteristics

- Medium to large coastal towns interspersed by open farmland and other land in mixed recreational use.
- Gently sloping or flat arable fields, with very few hedgerows and an absence of trees.
- Sand and shingle beaches along the southern and eastern coast, significant areas of saltmarsh and mudflats along the estuary and its connecting creeks in the west.
- Distinctive plotlands developments.
- Napoleonic Martello towers are distinctive landmarks on the coast.

Overall Character

The Brightinlingsea-Frinton-Coast has a varied character. The seaside towns dominated by suburban development cover a significant length of the coast, occupying slightly elevated land, but also spreading onto the flat marshlands. To the west and north east of Clacton there are broad bands of open arable farmland with only a few isolated large farmsteads. Along the coastal edge the plotland developments of Jaywick and Point Clear, various caravan/mobile home parks, golf courses and a country park create a disjointed character. By way of contrast, in the south west there are extensive areas of saltmarsh, mudflats at the mouth of the Colne which are tranquil with a strong sense of isolation.



Character Profile

Geology

- London Clay, Sands and Gravels, Brickearths and Alluvium

Soils

- Deep permeable coarse loamy soils, deep stoneless alluvial soils.

Landform/coastal form

- Gently undulating south and south west facing slopes, 5 - 25 m elevation enclosing a narrow band of low lying flat marshlands.
- At Frinton and Walton the low lying land peters out and steep sand and gravel cliffs occur.
- Pebble and sandy beaches along the coast.
- Wide estuary mouth of the Colne (Brightlingsea Reach) with adjacent saltmarsh, and inter tidal muds. Connected creeks loop around to the south and east of Brightlingsea with saltmarsh fringes and islands.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Saltmarsh, seawall grassland.

Pattern of field enclosure

- Regular and irregular fields of the coastal marshes bounded by curving ditches and straight dykes.
- Wide borrow dykes next to the sea wall.
- Mainly medium size semi-regular fields on the coastal slopes with a very fragmented hedgerow pattern.

Farming pattern

- Predominantly arable. Most of the former coastal grazing marsh has been lost.

Woodland/tree cover

- Absence of woodlands.
- Remnant scrubby elm hedgerows in the farmland.

Settlement pattern and built form

- A few scattered farmsteads on the coastal slopes or at the break of slope with the marshes.
- Large seaside resorts of Clacton, Frinton, Walton upon the Naze, mid Victorian in origin, but each with their own individual identity.
- Brightlingsea, historic boat building centre but now principally a centre for yachting and other watersports.

- All these towns have been much expanded by suburban development.
- Plotland developments of Jaywick and Point Clear and holiday village of Seawick west of Clacton.
- Local vernacular of weatherboarding, brick.

Communications

- Small lanes with distinctive right angled bends following the field pattern.

Other landscape features

- Colne Point sandbars/shingle spit.
- Napoleonic Martello Towers.
- Old Oyster pits on some of the saltmarshes.
- Old counter walls on the marshlands.
- A number of large caravan parks.
- Golf courses.

Landscape Condition

- Hedgerows are in poor condition.

- The condition of the settlements is mixed.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- Past significant change took place with the major expansion of the seaside towns this century.

- Post the Second World War there has been loss of grazing marsh to arable farmland.

- Current trends include pressure for further urban development, and intensification within the plotland settlements of Jaywick and Point Clear.

- Flood defence is likely to be a future issue. Given the length of developed coastline opportunities for managed realignment, are likely to be limited in this area.

BRIGHTLINGSEA - CLACTON - FRINTON COAST (F7)
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	• High intervisibility. • Some visually exposed hillslopes. • Coalescence. • Tranquil character in the south west.	H
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	• High intervisibility. • Some visually exposed hillslopes. *Opportunity to improve existing urban edges.*	M
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	• High intervisibility. • Tranquil character in the south west.	M
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	• High intervisibility. • Integrity of estuarine mudflats/saltmarsh. • Tranquil character in the south west. *Silty, massing, form and colour are critical.*	M
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	• Moderate to high intervisibility. • Some visually exposed hillslopes. *Siting, massing, form and colour are critical.*	M
6. Large scale 'open uses'	• Moderate to high intervisibility. • Absence of trees on the coastal marshlands. • Tranquil character in south west. *Some uses might offer opportunities for restoration of hedgerows, coastal grazing marsh.*	M
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	• High intervisibility. • Some visually exposed hillslopes. • Land form character. • Integrity of saltmarshes.	M
8. Incremental small scale developments	• High intervisibility. • Intrinsic character of farmsteads, small settlements.	M
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	• High intervisibility. • Visually exposed slopes/ridgeline.	H
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	• Hedgerow condition.	L

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

4.7.12 *Hamford Water (F8)*

Key Characteristics

- Large rounded and indented estuarine inlet with many scattered islands.
- Generally undeveloped shoreline.
- Fringing arable farmland with a very sparse tree cover.
- Settlement is restricted to a few isolated farmsteads.
- Wide views across the inlet and out to sea.

Overall Character

Hamford Water is a small distinctive character area with a strong sense of place which derives from the unusual rounded shape of its large estuarine inlet, and its complex pattern of saltmarsh, creeks, mud and scattered reed fringed islands. It is enclosed to the east by the low sand and gravel peninsula of the Naze. The surrounding arable farmland to the north, west and south slopes very gently to the inlet, and has fragmented low hedgerows with trees largely absent. Occasional small quays/boatyards are dotted around the inlet, but the only settlements are isolated farmsteads on slightly higher ground.


Hamford Water
VEHICLE FERRY FROM HARWICH TO
Cuxhaven (Germany) 1 day
Turku (Finland) 2 days
both Fridays only
VEHICLE FERRY FROM HARWICH INTERNATIONAL PORT TO
Esbjerg 15 - 20 hours
Hamburg 18 - 21 hours
Gothenberg 24 hours
Hook of Holland (High Speed Superferry) 3 hours 40 mins
Little Oakley
Great Oakley
Crabknowe Spit
Pye Sand
Pennyhole Bay
Pewit Island
Horsey Island
Hamford Water
Walton Channel
Nature Reserve
THE NAZE
Nature Trail
Kirby-le-Soken
Thorpe-le-Soken
WALTON-ON-THE-NAZE
Beaumont
Dovercourt
Harwich
Landguard Point
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Character Profile

Geology

- London Clay, Sands and Gravels, Alluvium

Soils

- Slowly permeable clayey soils, deep stoneless alluvial soils, coarse loamy soils.

Landform

- Large, approx rounded, but very indented estuarine inlet.
- Complex pattern of mudflats, narrow channels/creeks and small islands.
- The low ridge of the Naze Peninsula of sands and gravels max. 20 m elevation, partly encloses the eastern side of the inlet.
- Fringe of flat low lying land around the inlet below 5 m elevation and this is itself surrounded by a gentle moderately sloped low ridge up to 20 m elevation.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Saltmarsh, sea wall grassland, intertidal/littoral vegetation.

Pattern of field enclosure

- Medium size semi regular fields. Some small fields. Bounded by low fragmented hedges or occasional pockets of scrub on the higher ground, and by straight drainage ditches on the low lying land.

Farming pattern

- Predominantly arable. Some small areas of coastal grazing marsh.
- Small orchards on the edge of Little Oakley.

Woodland/tree cover

- Sparse tree cover.
- A few isolated tree belts and a small copse on Skippers Island.

Settlement pattern and built form

- General lack of settlement apart from a few isolated farmsteads.
- Three small villages lie on the north west and southern boundaries of the area.
- Harwich and Walton upon the Naze in adjacent character areas abut the northern and south eastern edges respectively.

Communications

- Winding lane follows the top of the ridge at the boundary of the character area. Otherwise only farm tracks access the area.

Other landscape features

- The Naze Tower - a tall brick polygonal tower is an important landmark.
- Small marina north of Walton upon Naze.
- Kirby and Beaumont Quays, Boatyards.
- Scattered small irrigation reservoirs.
- Caravan Park on the edge of Harwich.
- Small refuse tip at Kirby.

Landscape Condition

- Hedgerows are in poor or moderate condition.

- The condition of the small settlements is good.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- Past significant change includes the loss of coastal grazing marsh associated with agricultural intensification since the Second World War.

- Current and likely ongoing trends include pressure for additional boat mooring/marina facilities and water sports.

- Erosion of saltmarsh may also be an issue due to coastal squeeze.

HAMFORD WATER (F8)
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	• High intervisibility. • Strength of character. • Integrity of the inlet • Parts of the area are tranquil.	H
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	• High intervisibility.	M
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	• High intervisibility. • Strength of character. • Integrity of the inlet. • Parts of the area are tranquil.	H
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	• High intervisibility. • Strength of character. • Integrity of the inlet.	H
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	• High intervisibility. • Strength of character.	H
6. Large scale 'open uses'	• High intervisibility. • Sparse tree cover. • Strength of character.	H
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	• High intervisibility. • Sparse tree cover. • Strength of character. • Integrity of the inlet. • Landform character.	H
8. Incremental small scale developments	• High intervisibility. • Character of farmsteads. • Landform character.	H
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	• High intervisibility. • Strength of character.	H
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	• Hedgerow condition.	M

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

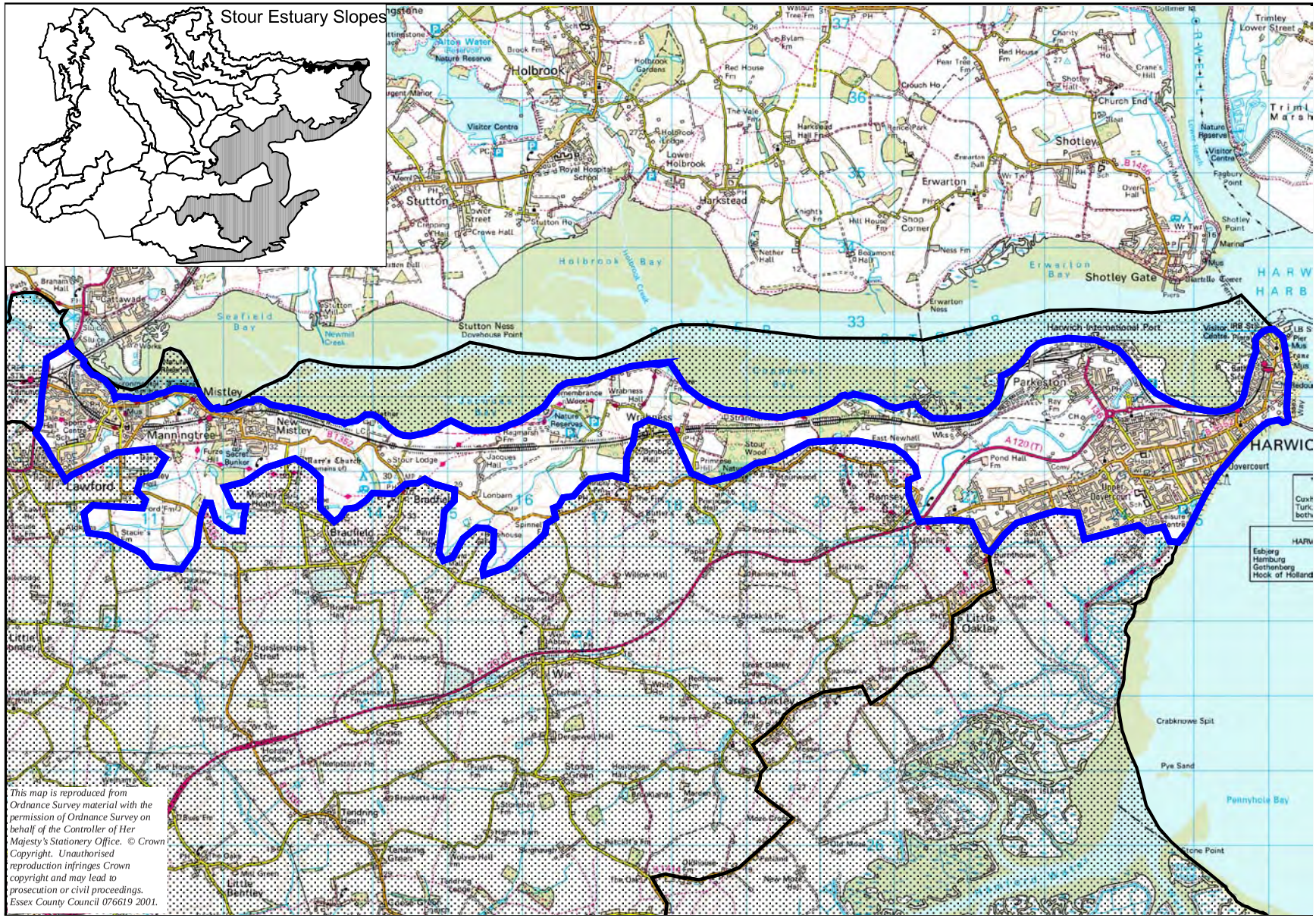
4.7.13 *Stour Estuary Slopes (F9)*

Key Characteristics

- Well hedged mixed farmland on undulating slopes.
- Small steep sided rounded peninsulas adjacent to the estuaries, sometimes wooded.
- Both open and framed views of the Stour estuary.
- Historic small and large ports occupy rising ground in the east and west, with a few small scattered settlements interspersed between them.

Overall Character

The Stour Estuary slopes are a relatively small area of undulating arable and pasture farmland adjacent to the Stour estuary. Blocks of woodland and thick hedgerows provide a semi-enclosed character and an intimate scale, but some parts are more open allowing sweeping views down to the estuary. Steep wooded slopes, associated with small peninsulas which project into the estuary, are a distinctive feature. The large port/industrial town of Harwich lies in the east, but has a limited impact on overall character which is mostly tranquil.


Stour Estuary Slopes
Holbrook
Stutton
Harkstead
Erwarton
Shotley
Shotley Gate
Church End
Holbrook Bay
Erwarton Bay
Stutton Ness
Harwich International Port
Parkeston
Mistley
Manningtree
New Mistley
Lawford
Bradfield
Bradfield Heath
Wrabness
Little Oakley
Great Oakley
Crabknowe Spit
Pye Sand
Pennyhole Bay
Stone Point
Esbjerg
Hamburg
Gothenburg
Hook of Holland
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Character Profile

Geology

- London Clay, Sands and Gravels, Alluvium

Soils

- Deep permeable coarse loamy soils, slowly permeable clayey soils, deep stoneless alluvial soils.

Landform

- Gently to moderately undulating slopes.
- Occasional steep slopes where rounded small peninsulas project into the estuary, e.g. at Copperas Wood and New Mistley.
- Narrow steep sided valleys of small streams flowing into estuary.
- Small areas of flat low lying land around Ramsay Creek and Parkeston Quay and Bathside.
- Relatively steep sided but low ridge/promontory, max of 20 m elevation at Harwich.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Ancient coppice with standards woodlands. Lime and sweet chestnut coppice.

Pattern of field enclosure

- Regular small to medium size fields bounded by hedgerows and woodlands.

Farming pattern

- Mix of pasture and arable fields.

Woodland/tree cover

- A few medium to large blocks of woodland.
- Some dispersed copses and woodland belts.
- Woodlands on peninsulas, steep slopes adjacent to the estuary.
- Occasional hedgerow trees.

Settlement pattern and built form

- In the majority of the area there are just a few isolated farmsteads and hamlets scattered along the lanes.
- At the head of the estuary, Manningtree and Mistley are old ports with quays, malting warehouses and maltings fringing the river. Mistley was at one time developed as a port.

- The port of Harwich is a large town at the mouth of the estuary. It has narrow medieval streets with old wharves and quays. The adjacent seaside suburb of Dovercourt was mainly developed in the fifties.
- Local vernacular red brick, pantiles and colour washed plaster.
- Dutch gables are a local architectural detail.

Communications

- Railway in cutting and on embankment runs close to the estuary edge.
- Generally few roads. Very winding east-west B1352 on higher land, and a few approx. north-south running lanes.

Other landscape features

- St Nicholas Church tower and spire at Harwich, the cranes at Parkeston Quay and Mistley Towers are local landmarks.
- Small estates of Mistley Place, Wrabness and Jacques Hall.

Landscape Condition

- Hedgerows and woodlands are in moderate to good condition.
- Intrusive industrial warehouse development occurs at Parkeston.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- Agricultural change post war has resulted in some field rationalisation and loss of hedgerows.

- Urban and industrial development is a current pressure at the edges of the area around Harwich and together with pressure for transportation developments, could be an ongoing issue.

STOUR ESTUARY SLOPES (F9)
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	• Integrity of hedgerow/woodland pattern. • Strength of character of the area. • Visual exposure of some estuary/valleyside slopes.	H
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	• Moderate intervisibility. • Visual exposure of some estuary/valleyside slopes. *There may be an opportunity to improve some existing urban edges.*	M
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	• Moderate intervisibility. • Visual exposure of some estuary/valleyside slopes. • Strength of character of the area. • Landform character.	H
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	• Integrity of hedgerows/woodland pattern. • Strength of character of the area. • Visual exposure of some estuary/valleyside slopes.	H
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	• Visual exposure of some estuary/valleyside slopes. • Moderate intervisibility. • Landform character. *Siting, massing, form and colour are critical.*	M
6. Large scale 'open uses'	• Integrity of hedgerow/woodland pattern. • Strength of character of the area. • Visual exposure of some estuary/valleyside slopes.	M
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	• Integrity of hedgerow/woodland pattern. • Strength of character of the area. • Visual exposure of some estuary/valleyside slopes. • Landform character.	H
8. Incremental small scale developments	• Moderate intervisibility. • Intrinsic character of small settlements.	M
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	• Moderate intervisibility. • Strength of character of the area.	M
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	• Condition of hedgerows/woodlands.	M

Note:

(a) *The area around Parkeston is of moderate sensitivity to category 4.*

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

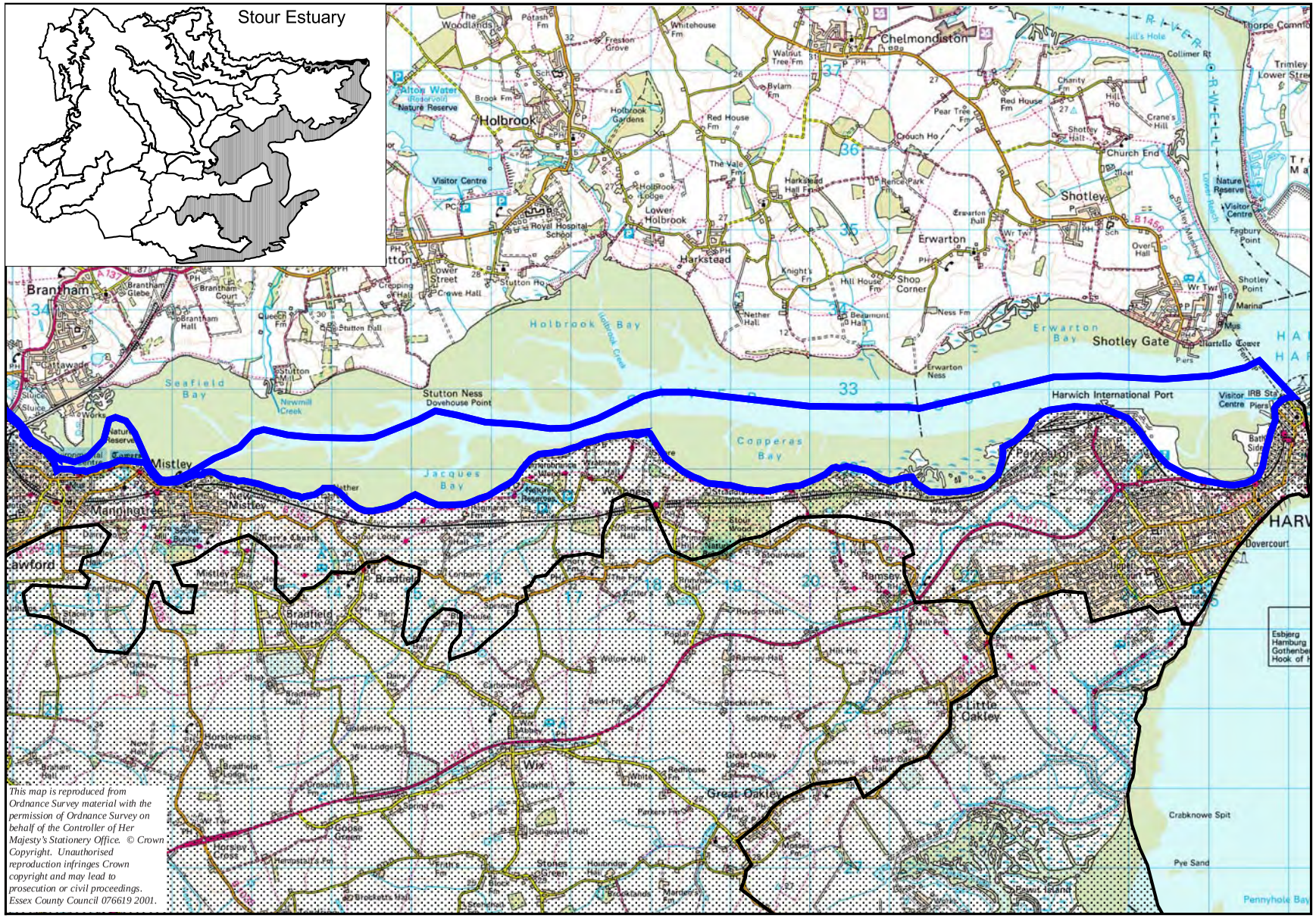
4.7.14 *Stour Estuary (F10)*

Key Characteristics

- Broad sheltered estuary.
- Straight low water channel, with large tidal mudflats and narrow fringes/pockets of saltmarsh.
- Gently curved estuary shoreline, with adjacent landform creating a series of bays.
- Open views across the estuary to Suffolk farmlands, or along the estuary in which steep wooded slopes are a feature.

Overall Character

The Stour estuary is a broad and compared with other estuaries in Essex, a relatively straight estuary. It is contained by the moderate to steep slopes of the adjacent Stour Estuary Slopes character area which provide a backdrop to it. It has a simple pattern of mudflats and channels, and pockets of saltmarsh without a complex pattern of indented creeks. The undeveloped character of the shoreline along most of its length is a distinct contrast to the busy shipping quays of Harwich, Parkeston in the east and Manningtree and Mistley in the west.



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Character Profile

Geology

- Alluvium/London Clay

Soils

- Deep stoneless alluvial soils.

Coastal form

- Broad estuary approx. 1.5-2 km wide, but smaller than the Blackwater.
- Relatively straight channel. However, the adjacent landform of the Stour estuary slopes create a series of gently curved bays exposed as mudflats at low tide.
- Simple pattern of channels and creeks.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Narrow fringe or small pockets of saltmarsh along much of the length of the estuary from Copperas Bay to Mistley. Larger area associated with Bramble Creek in the east.

Settlement pattern and built form Manningtree

- Harwich, Parkeston Mistley and Manningtree Quays on the boundary.

Communications

- Estuary is used for yachting and other recreational boating, and container ships dock at the eastern end.

Other landscape features

- Cranes at Harwich.

Landscape Condition

- Some erosion of saltmarsh is occurring.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- Dredging and over deepening of channels for container ships at the eastern end of the estuary threatens the stability of the mudflats.

- Coastal squeeze as a result of rising sea levels could erode mudflats and saltmarsh further in future.

- Recreational trends with developments of watersports and marina development are ongoing pressures.

- Also possible pressures for new flood defences with little opportunity for managed retreat.

STOUR ESTUARY (F10)
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	• Inappropriate. • Undeveloped character of the shoreline.	H
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	• Inappropriate. • Undeveloped character of the shoreline.	H
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	• Inappropriate. • Undeveloped character of the shoreline.	H
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	• Moderate to high intervisibility. • Undeveloped character of the shoreline. • Integrity of mudflats and saltmarsh.	H
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	• Inappropriate. • Undeveloped character of the shoreline.	H
6. Large scale 'open uses'	• Moderate to high intervisibility. • Integrity of mudflats, saltmarsh.	H
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	• Moderately high intervisibility. • Landform character. • Undeveloped character of this shoreline.	H
8. Incremental small scale developments	• High intervisibility. • Undeveloped character of the shoreline.	H
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	• High intervisibility. • Undeveloped character of the shoreline.	H
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	• Condition of saltmarsh.	H

Note:

(a) *The area around Parkeston is of moderate sensitivity to development type 4.*

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

4.8 Urban Landscapes (G)

4.8.1 These are extensive areas that are dominated by urban land uses so that they can be recognised as a distinct landscape division. They are not completely built-up, and include distinctive, but fragmented, areas of open space that help break up and give character and structure to the surrounding built form, such as formal parks and gardens, allotments, playing fields and, areas of 'encapsulated countryside'. Urban fringe countryside of mixed land use around the settlements is also included.

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

- Very large areas of 20th century residential and commercial developments, usually surrounding a historic core, and/or enveloping former villages.
- Visual dominance of an urban skyline.
- Integral open spaces important for informal/formal recreation and/or wildlife, and which act as green lungs.
- Influence of water, with river valley or large coastal estuary locations, often with an associated gently undulating landform.

4.8.3 The Urban Landscapes comprise four Landscape Character Areas within the study area:

- Harlow & Environs (G1)
- Chelmsford & Environs (G2)
- South Essex Coastal Towns (G3)
- Colchester & Environs (G4)

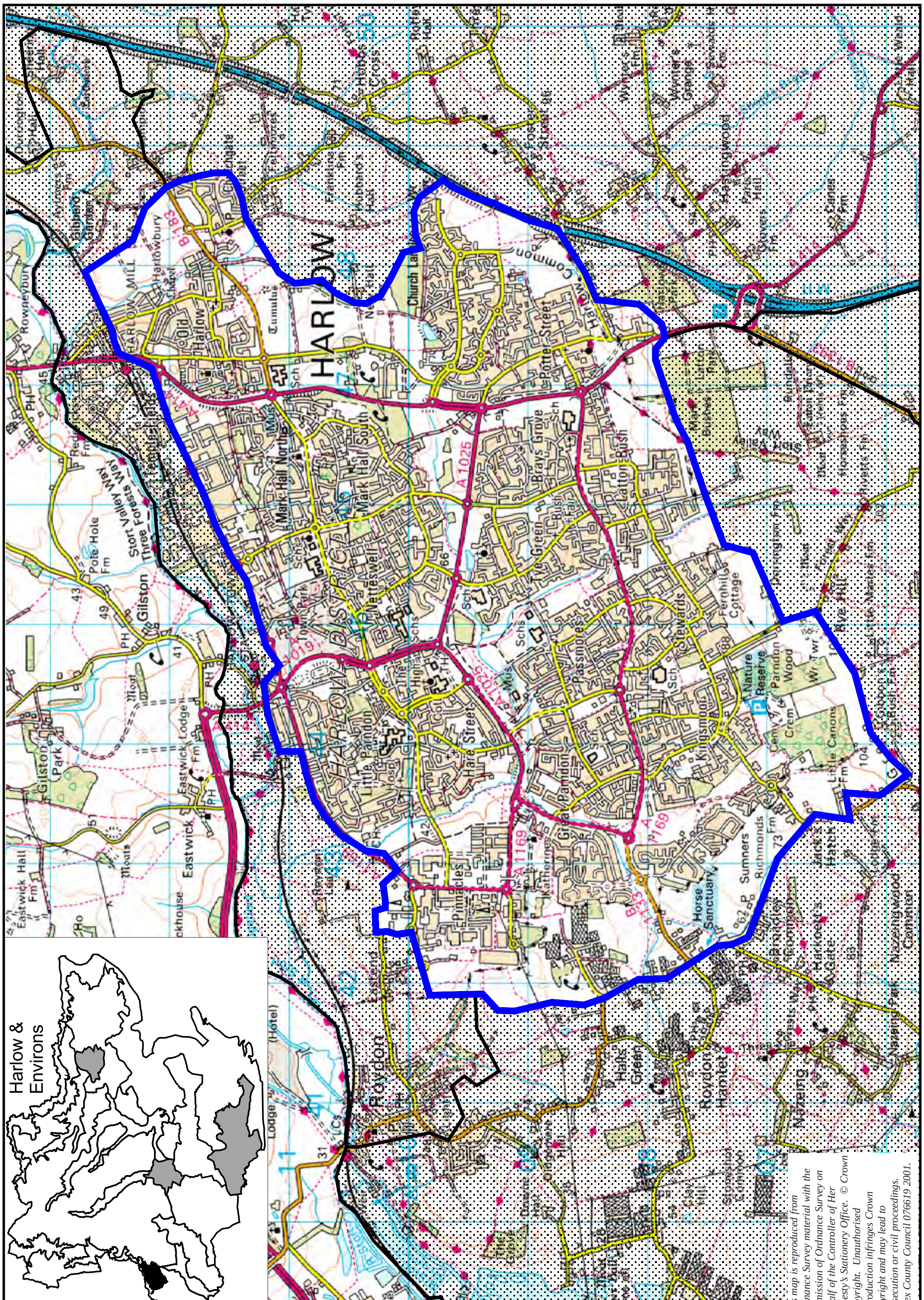
4.8.4 *Harlow and Environs (G1)*

Key Characteristics

- A new town with compact residential neighbourhoods, and distinct zones of commercial development.
- Prominent tower blocks in the centre.
- Extensive linear network of open spaces in valley bottoms and on lower valleysides.
- Mixed arable and pasture farmland on rising ground to the south, west and south east of the town.
- Medium size hedgerowed arable fields on gently undulating/flat land to the east.
- Floodplain edge of the River Stort forms the northern boundary.

Overall Character

This character area comprises the planned new town of Harlow and a surrounding fringe of farmland. The town wraps over valleysides/low hills with higher land and/or tree belts/woodland visually containing it on the southern, western and eastern boundaries. It has a distinctive network of open space corridors following the valleys which, together with the woodlands retained in the development, provide a setting for and soften the urban form. Commercial development tends to be located on the lower valleysides, sometimes screened by thick belts of trees avoiding more visually prominent slopes.


Harlow & Environs
HARLOW
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Character Profile

Geology

- Sands and Gravels, Glacial Till and London Clay

Soils

- Slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils, and well drained fine silty soils.

Landform

- Gentle to moderately undulating valleysides of the Stort, and various tributaries.
- Relatively small low hills/ridges dividing them.
- Higher ridgeline to the south up to 105 m elevation.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Ancient woodlands, marsh, alder carr, reedswamp.

Pattern of field enclosure

- Small to medium size regular and irregular fields. Some large. Bounded by hedgerows.

Farming pattern

- Arable farmland in the south and east. Mix of arable, pasture, and glasshouse use in the west.

Woodland/tree cover

- Small and medium size deciduous woods dispersed through the area.
- Some large blocks of woodland to the south including mixed conifer/deciduous woodland.
- Generally high tree cover associated with extensive landscaping of the new town.

Settlement pattern and built form

- Old village of Harlow in the northeast.
- Town Centre on high land.
- Residential areas of the new town form compact neighbourhoods on higher ground with the valleys largely retained as open spaces, which together with the woodlands form strong green networks.
- Industrial areas of Pinnacles and Temple Fields are on slightly lower ground and are partly concealed by woodland and/or new planting.

Communications

- Major roads generally have extensive open space, planting associated with them.

Other landscape features

- Prominent dry ski slope in the north (now redundant and subject to outline permission for residential development).

Landscape Condition

- The condition of the open spaces within the town is good.

- 'Urban fringe' farmland is generally in moderate condition with few significant urban fringe problems evident.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- The major change in the landscape has been the development of the new town.

- Current and likely ongoing pressure for urban development existing within the narrow fringe of surrounding farmland. It will be essential in accommodating any further development to conserve the landscape setting of the town, and the green wedge network within the town.

HARLOW AND ENVIRONS (G1)
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	• Some visually exposed high ground/skylines on south and west boundaries of the area. • Integrity of linear open space system in valleys. • Woodland setting.	M
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	• Integrity of linear open space system in valleys. • Woodland setting.	L
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	• Integrity of linear open space system in the valleys.	M
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	• Integrity of linear open space system in the valleys. • Landform character. • Woodland setting.	M
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	• Landform character. • Urban character.	L
6. Large scale 'open uses'	• Integrity of linear open space system in the valleys and of woodlands. • Woodland setting.	L
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	• Integrity of linear open space system in the valleys.	H
8. Incremental small scale developments	• Urban character.	L
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	• Urban character.	L
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	• Hedgerow condition.	L

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

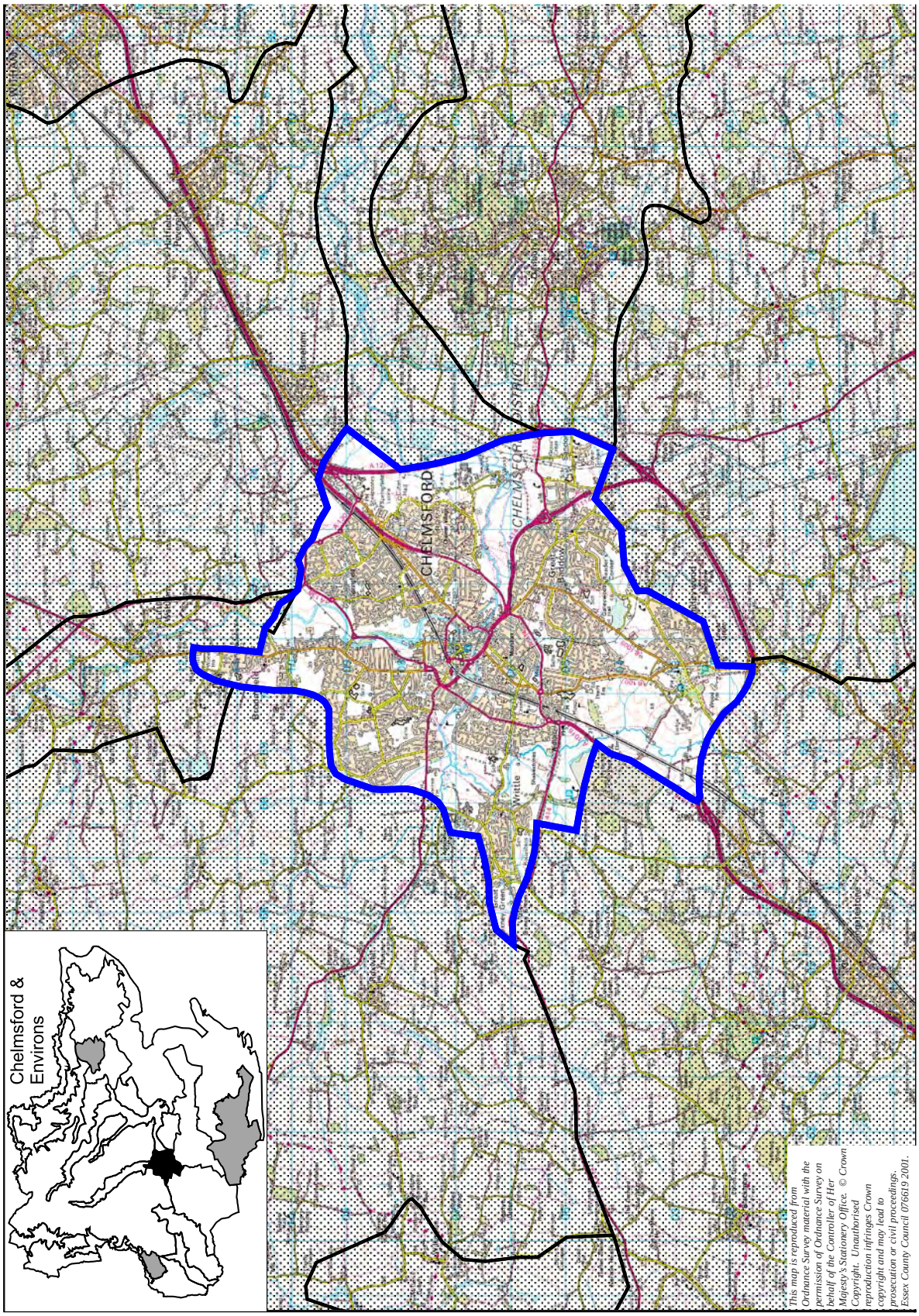
4.8.5 *Chelmsford and Environs (G2)*

Key Characteristics

- Historic town with extensive residential estate development spreading over a gently sloping valleyside landform.
- Wide riverside corridors of green space except in the town centre.
- Fringe of mixed farmland with variable size hedgerowed fields, with few woods or copses.
- Large villages of Writtle and Galleywood physically separated from the town, but with much development of an urban character.

Overall Character

Chelmsford lies at the confluence of the Chelmer and Can Rivers with the River Wid on its western boundary. In the town centre dense urban development directly adjoins the rivers, but to the north, west and east, there are wide riverside corridors of green space comprised of a patchwork of small to medium size damp meadows, and land in a variety of other recreational uses. Their character varies from very open to fairly enclosed with dense riverside trees. Between the rivers large areas of 20th century residential development on gentle slopes extend to a narrow farmland fringe. The farmland has a varied character with both large arable fields with few hedgerows, and contrasting areas with a smaller scale pattern


CHELMSFORD
Chelmsford &
Environs
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of pasture and arable fields. The character area is crossed by many major roads with the A12 visually prominent on embankment to the north east. Overhead lines and a tall mast also visually interrupt the landscape in the south.

Character Profile

Geology

- London Clay, Glacial Tills, Sand and Gravels, Alluvium

Soils

- Wide range of soil types. Deep well drained and slowly permeable calcareous clay soils, well drained fine, coarse loamy and sandy soils and deep stoneless alluvial soils.

Landform

- Mostly gently undulating.
- Gentle shallow valleys of the Rivers Chelmer, Can and Wid cut through/bound the area. Chelmer and the Can, have narrow flat valley floors to the north and west, widening out to the east.
- Relatively higher ground around Galleywood up to 70 m elevation.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Pockets of alder carr, ancient woodland of mixed species.

Pattern of field enclosure

- Irregular field pattern of small, medium and large hedged fields, some on the valley floor bounded by ditches.

Farming pattern

- Both arable and pasture farmland.
- Valley floors have extensive horse grazing.
- Orchards around Galleywood.

Woodland/tree cover

- A few scattered copses/tree belts/plantations within the urban area, in the valleys or at the edges of the area.
- Variable ornamental tree cover. Some of the main approaches to the town/associated older residential neighbourhoods have a higher tree cover compared with more recent development.

S*ettlement pattern and built form*

- Dense historic town centre of Chelmsford occupies a slightly elevated position above the Can and Chelmer. Mixed skyline including some larger tower blocks.
- Variable width of undeveloped open spaces and fields adjacent to the rivers create green corridors dividing and softening the urban form. Only within the town core are the valley floors fully developed.
- Modern residential development has spread absorbing some former villages.
- The large villages of Galleywood and Writtle retain strong historic cores but have much modern development.

Communications

- The main A12(T) forms part of the eastern boundary to the area.
- Major ring road around the town centre.
- Railway principally on embankment acts through the area southwest-northeast.

Other landscape features

- Pylon routes in the north east and south of the area.
- High mast at Great Baddow.
- Golf courses near Widford and the Can Valley.
- Partly canalised course of the River Chelmer with locks.

Landscape Condition

- Hedgerows in the farmland are in mixed condition, some fragmented.

- The public open spaces within the valleys are in good condition. However, the condition of the meadows/pasture is very mixed. Along the Chelmer Valley some are overgrazed by horses.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- The town of Chelmsford has grown very significantly in the 20th Century.

- Riverside open spaces have been retained but are under pressure from a variety of urban fringe activities including the expansion of horse grazing.

- Additional urban development on the urban fringe is likely to be an ongoing trend, as well as transportation improvements.

CHELMSFORD & ENVIRONS (G2)
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	• Integrity of river valley corridors. • Moderate to high intervisibility. • Some visually exposed valleysides. • Coalescence. *Any new development should include strong new woodland/hedgerow framework planting particularly where arable farmland is in poor condition.*	M
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	• Moderate to high intervisibility. • Integrity of river valley corridors. *Possible opportunities to improve some existing urban edges.*	L
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	• Integrity of river valley corridors. • Moderate to high intervisibility.	M
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	• Integrity of river valley corridors. • Moderate to high intervisibility. *Siting, massing, form and colour and appropriate woodland, hedgerowed framework are critical.*	M
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	• Some visually exposed valleysides. • Moderate to high intervisibility. *Siting, massing, form and colour are critical.*	M
6. Large scale 'open uses'	• Integrity of river valley corridors. • Integrity of hedgerow field pattern. *Possible opportunities to create new woodlands within surrounding farmland.*	M
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	• Moderate to high intervisibility. • Integrity of river valley corridors.	H
8. Incremental small scale developments	• Urban character.	L
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	• Moderate to high intervisibility. • Urban character.	M
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	• Urban character.	L

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

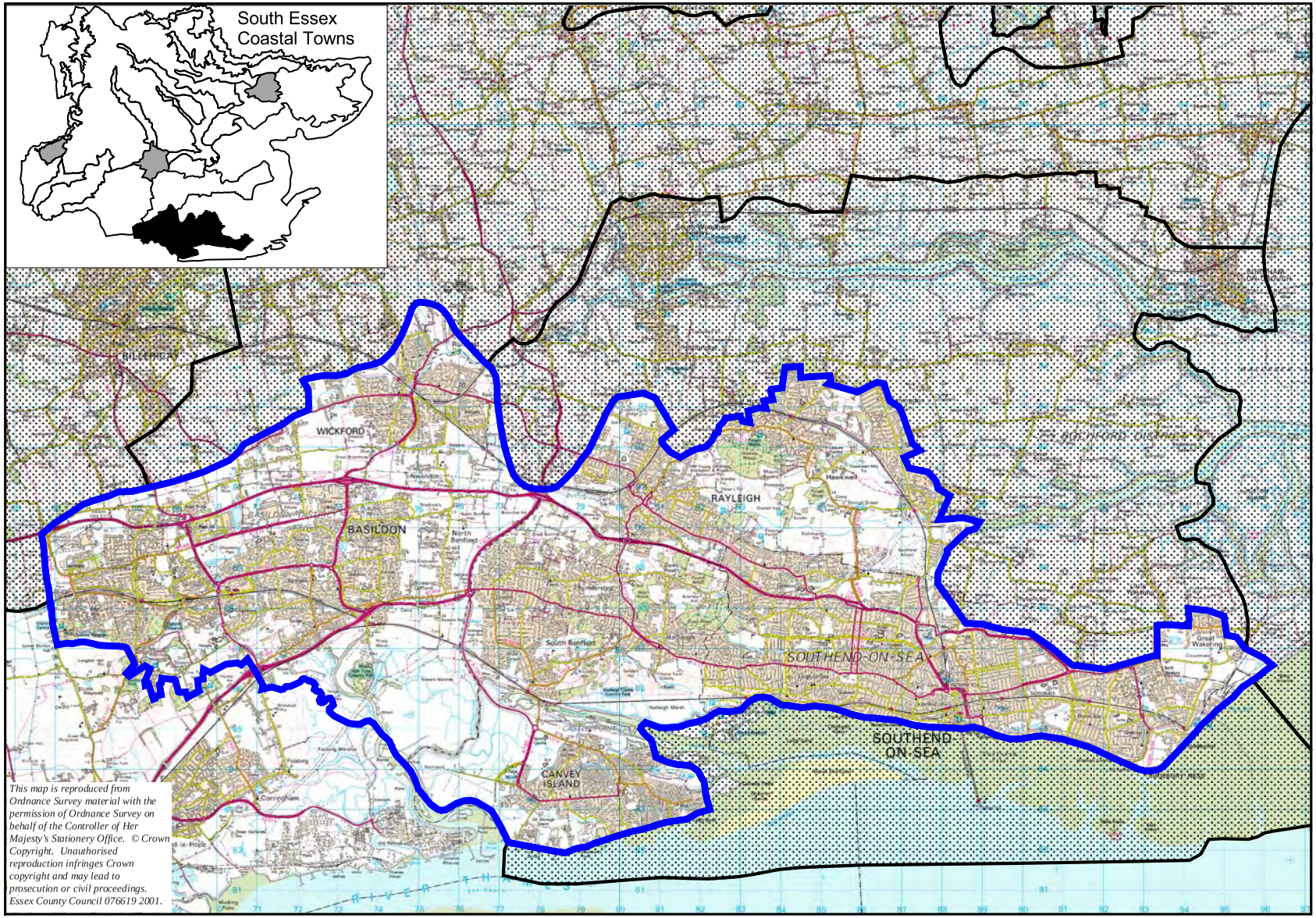
4.8.6 *South Essex Coastal Towns (G3)*

Key Characteristics

- Large areas of dense urban development.
- Strongly rolling hills with steep south and west facing escarpments covered by open grassland or a mix of small woods, pastures and commons.
- Extensive flat coastal grazing marshes in the south adjacent to the Thames Estuary.
- Large blocks of woodland in the centre of the area.
- Narrow bands and broader areas of gently undulating arable farmland, with a remnant hedgerow pattern, separating some of the towns.
- Particularly complex network of major transportation routes.
- Pylon routes visually dominate farmland in the A130 corridor.

Overall Character

The South Essex Coastal Towns is an area of very mixed character, but unified by the overall dominance of urban development, with frequent views of an urban skyline. The major towns spread over gently undulating or flat land, but locally extend over prominent ridgelines and hillsides as well. A distinctive steep sided south facing escarpment between Hadleigh and Basildon retains significant areas of open grassland, as well as a patchwork of small woods, including woods on former plotlands and small pastures. Contrasting flat coastal grazing marsh lies to the south. In some parts such as south of Hadleigh, and around Hockley, the urban form is softened by very large woodlands and the Roach Valley is largely undeveloped.



However, many residential and industrial edges with areas of adjacent open arable farmland are hard and abrupt with few hedgerows and woodlands remaining.

Character Profile

Geology

- Claygate and Bagshot Beds, Sands and Gravels, Brickearths and Loams, Alluvium

Soils

- Slowly permeable clayey soils. Fine silty and fine loamy soils. Deep stoneless alluvial soils.

Landform

- Very varied topography.
- Flat low lying land south east of Basildon, around Canvey Island and Rochford, and east of Southchurch.
- Steep south and west facing ridges/escarpments from Leigh on Sea to Benfleet extending around to Rayleigh/Hockley, tailing out towards Southminster. Moderate to steep escarpment south and south east of Basildon.
- Gentle-moderately undulating land in the remainder of the area.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Coastal grazing marshes, reedbeds marsh, extensive areas of ancient woodland including sessile oak woods, some unimproved meadows.

Pattern of field enclosure

- Varied field pattern.
- Small irregular fields bounded by straight and winding ditches on the marshlands.
- Small to medium size semi-regular hedged fields, sometimes bounded by woodland, in South Benfleet, Hadleigh, Daws Heath, Hockley areas. Some parts with larger fields where hedgerow pattern has been lost.
- Regular large size fields with fragmented hedgerow pattern north of Basildon and in the Wickford and Rochford areas.

Farming pattern

- Arable farmland associated with flat to gently undulating land, pasture more common on steeper slopes.
- Extensive coastal grazing marsh between Canvey and Basildon.

Woodland/tree cover

- High concentration of woodland in the Thundersley/South Benfleet, Daws Heath and Hockley areas and around the Langdon Hills, including small and large blocks of interlocking deciduous woodland. Some secondary woodland associated with previous plotland asreas.
- Absence of woodland/trees on the flat low lying marshes.
- Small, very dispersed woods and copses in the west of the area.
- Southend has many avenue trees. Basildon New Town has extensive landscaping.

Settlement pattern and built form

- Urban settlements cover a very large area.
- Basildon New Town occupies gently undulating land to the south and east of the steeper Langdon Hills. Distinct pattern of compact residential neighbourhoods, industrial areas, town centre interspersed with broad corridors of green space along the roads, and a number of large parks and playing fields.
- Southend on Sea, and its associated neighbourhoods is the largest urban area with a dominant grid pattern of streets running parallel and at right angles to the contours. Dense urban form, but with some large parks and open spaces.
- Rayleigh, Hockley and Wickford are principally dormitory towns with a more varied urban form, and street pattern. Housing areas sometimes are visually prominent wrapping over hillsides and valleysides.
- Canvey Island is on flat low lying land and has a grid street pattern, with a network of draining dykes within the built form.

Other landscape features

-- Rayleigh and Hadleigh Castles.
- Pylons and overhead lines are visually prominent between Basildon and Benfleet, Wickford and Rayleigh, and Rayleigh and Rochford.
- Oil storage depots, landfill sites near Canvey Island.
- Southend Airport.
- A number of golf courses.

Landscape Condition

- The condition of the settlement is very mixed. Poor quality intrusive commercial 'shed' development is common within the area.

- The condition of the woodlands and hedgerows is moderate.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- The area has been subject to very significant change in the 20th Century, with massive expansion of urban areas, and urban development pressure is likely to be a significant ongoing trend.

- Areas where traditional landscape character survives well, such as the Upper Roach Valley, the Crouch Valley, the Thames Marshes, Langdon Hills and Dunton Ridges need particular protection from landscape or development change.

- Recreational pressures are also likely to be considerable.

SOUTH ESSEX COASTAL TOWNS (G3)
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	• Visually exposed steep escarpments. • Integrity of woodlands and hedgerow pasture fields. • High intervisibility on marshlands. • Coalescence. • Major green spaces/integrity of major green corridors. • Poor condition of some arable farmland with intrusive pylons, transportation routes. *Any new development should include strong new woodland/hedgerow framework particularly where arable farmland is in poor condition.*	M
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	• Visually exposed steep escarpments. • Integrity of woodlands, hedgerow field pattern. • High intervisibility on marshlands. *Opportunities to improve some existing harsh urban edges.*	L
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	• High intervisibility of marshlands. • Landform character.	M
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	• Visually exposed steep escarpments. • Integrity of woodlands and hedgerow field pattern. • High intervisibility on marshlands. • Poor condition of some arable farmland at the edges.	M
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	• Visually exposed steep escarpments. • High intervisibility on marshlands.	L
6. Large scale 'open uses'	• Visually exposed steep escarpments. • Integrity of coastal grazing marsh. *Opportunities to improve areas in poor condition.*	M
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	• High intervisibility on marshlands. • Landform character.	M
8. Incremental small scale developments	• Strong urban character.	L
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	• Visually exposed steep escarpments. • High intervisibility on marshlands. • Low capacity for further change.	H
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	• Woodland and hedgerow and unimproved grassland condition.	H

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

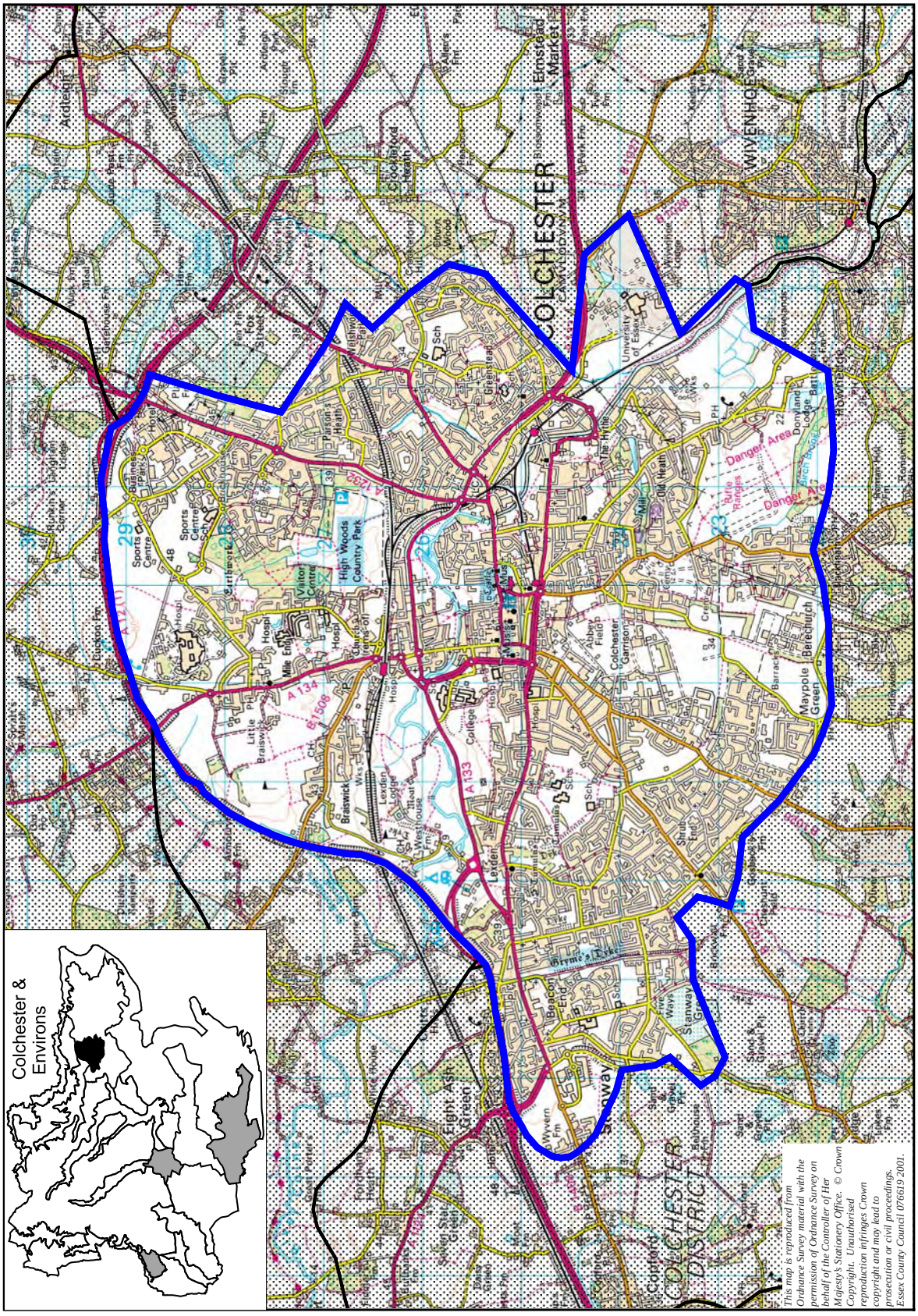
4.8.7 *Colchester and Environs (G4)*

Key Characteristics

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

Overall Character

The centre of the town with its distinctive roman/medieval street pattern, occupies a low rise above the River Colne. Dense residential and commercial development has spread along main routes into the town, and extended over valleysides and elevated flatter land absorbing former villages such as Lexden. The urban form, however, is broken by the valley floor of the meandering River Colne which has a mostly broad band of green space, and small linear woodlands alongside it. A network of large open spaces/woodlands and smaller tree belts, also connect the town to the surrounding countryside in the north and south, providing a setting and softening the urban development. Mixed farmland occurs on the northern and southern fringes. This is fragmented by a variety of other land uses.


COLCHESTER
WIVENHOE
Ardleigh
Elmstead Market
Eight Ash Green
Stanway
COLCHESTER DISTRICT
Colchester & Environs
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Character Profile

Geology

- Sands and Gravels, London Clay, Alluvium

Soils

- Deep permeable coarse loamy soils, deep stoneless alluvial soils.

Landform

- Gentle to moderate undulating valleysides and flat valley floor of the River Colne, which is tidal south of Hythe.
- Connecting moderate to steep sided tributary valleys with small streams.
- Flat to gently undulating higher ground, max of 35 m elevation, above valleysides.
- Small area of very flat low lying marshes in the south east.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Coastal grazing marsh, some ancient woodland of mixed species.

Pattern of field enclosure

- Small and medium size semi regular fields with straight hedged or sinuous and straight ditch boundaries.

Farming pattern

- Mix of pasture and arable fields. Orchards near Stanway Green and Bullock Wood.

Woodland/tree cover

- Linear copse/woods on the valleysides of the Colne and its tributaries.
- Medium-large blocks of woodlands in the north.
- Tree belts, plantations south of Colchester Garrison
- Distinctive avenue of birch trees on A133 approach to Colchester.

Settlement pattern and built form

- Historic core of Colchester with a strong grid street pattern.
- Modern town with extensive residential ribbon and cul de sac development, and a number of dispersed industrial estates extends over valleysides, low hills, absorbing villages such as Lexden.
- Largely undeveloped valley floor of the Colne forms a green space corridor.
- A network of open space/pockets of farmland and woodlands also connect the town to the surrounding countryside generally north to south.

Communications

- A12(T) forms the outer boundary to the area to the north with a number of major A roads connecting to the town centre. South of the town centre and Lexden, there are no major roads.

Other landscape features

- A massive water tower, the town hall, church spires and a number of tower blocks create a mixed skyline in the centre.
- Colchester Castle - Norman Keep.
- Extensive parks and open spaces notably Castle Park.
- Essex University tower blocks.
- Colchester Garrison/Middlewich Rifle ranges.

Landscape Condition

- The condition of the open spaces and woodlands is mostly good.

- Pasture/grazing marsh on the Colne Valley floor is overgrazed in parts due to horsiculture.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- Significant expansion of the town took place in the 19th and 20th Centuries.

- There are current and likely ongoing considerable urban development pressures within the relatively narrow fringe of surrounding farmland.

COLCHESTER AND ENVIRONS (G4)
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	• Moderate intervisibility. • Integrity of the Colne Valley floor. • Landscape setting of large open spaces and woodlands.	M
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	• Moderate intervisibility. • Integrity of the Colne Valley floor. • Landscape setting of large open spaces and woodlands.	L
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	• Moderate intervisibility. • Integrity of the Colne Valley floor. • Landscape setting of large open spaces and woodlands.	M
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	• Moderate intervisibility. • Integrity of the Colne Valley floor. • Landscape setting of large open spaces and woodlands.	M
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	• Moderate intervisibility. • Some visually exposed valleysides.	M
6. Large scale 'open uses'	• Landform character. • Integrity of the Colne Valley floor.	M
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	• Moderate intervisibility. • Integrity of the Colne Valley floor. • Some visually exposed valleysides.	H
8. Incremental small scale developments	• Largely urban character.	L
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	• Moderate intervisibility. • Some visually exposed valleysides.	M
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	• Woodland and hedgerow condition.	M

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

5.0 LANDSCAPE ISSUES IN ESSEX

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 As a result of increased pressures for housing, minerals, transport, recreation, energy generation and other major land uses, there has been a general erosion of the character, quality and diversity of the Essex landscape since the mid-twentieth century. The cumulative effects of small-scale changes have also had a significant impact.

5.1.2 This section identifies and summarises the key issues for the planning and management of the landscape in the plan area, both generic or countywide issues and landscape type/character area specific issues. It is expected that, where appropriate, these issues would be addressed by a future Landscape Strategy for Essex and Southend on Sea. The Strategy would provide land management and planning guidelines, and identify priorities for action in relation to opportunities for the conservation and enhancement of the landscape.

5.2 Countywide Landscape Issues

Climate Change

5.2.1 It is widely acknowledged that global climate change is inevitable, and that it is likely to have significant physical impacts on the landscape. The South East region including Essex is particularly sensitive to the effects of climate change. The principal implications of global warming are likely to be:

- Sea level rises, threatening important coastal habitats, and increasing the risk of flooding in low-lying areas.
- Warmer year round temperatures, wetter winters and drier summers, which may cause habitat and species displacement, and changes in cropping patterns.
- Increased frequency of extreme weather events – drought conditions, storms and flooding.

5.2.2 The exact climatic changes and their effects on character and condition of the landscape are difficult to predict, so environmental monitoring is essential to inform future planning and land management decisions.

5.2.3 However, key issues may include:

- Replacement of traditional crops with new crops such as sunflowers, maize, soya, as well as renewable energy crops such as willow coppice, with associated changes in agricultural practices.
- Irrigation for summer droughts which may increase the need for farm reservoirs .
- Greater soil erosion, and reduction in productivity of the soils through droughts, high winds, storm runoff, which may affect farm viability and create additional pressure for new uses in the countryside.
- Changing livestock practices and housing, which may affect grazing patterns and require new types of farm building.
- New pests and diseases and/or more stress from drought which may lead to the loss of particular species and species groups that contribute to the individuality of different landscapes.
- Potential greater storm damage to woodlands.
- Erosion of intertidal mudflats and saltmarsh.
- Construction of new larger types of sea defences.
- New renewable energy generation developments, such as wind farms and tidal barrages.

Urban Development and Urban Fringe

5.2.4 Urban development has placed an increasing pressure on all aspects of the landscape over the last fifty years in particular. This is resulting in urban expansion into undeveloped rural areas, redevelopment and intensification of urban areas, increasing urbanisation and development of rural villages and hamlets. Closely associated with urban areas, the urban fringe is often used to locate access roads, sewage works, waste disposal facilities and intensive recreation uses. However, the urban fringe also provides a setting for urban areas, and often contains important landscape features/habitats.

5.2.5 The key issues include:

- Settlement-edge housing and commercial/retail estate development impacts on landscape character and wider visual impacts on the countryside.
- Unsympathetic infill of historic settlement cores.
- Quality of built environment.
- Loss/erosion of urban open spaces and of tree cover.
- Decline in the condition of landscapes in the urban fringe, with problems such as lack of management of hedgerows/trees, poorly managed horse paddocks and flytipping.

Transport

5.2.6 Reflecting the national trend, the county has seen increasing levels of car usage. This is leading to major congestion, pollution problems, and pressures for new road schemes in the countryside between major urban areas, and roads improvements that significantly affect landscape character. New types of pressure may be created by upgrading of the rail network and the building of new multi-modal transport interchanges.

5.2.7 The key issues include:

- The effects of new roads and bypasses and service stations, including the introduction of new structures, lighting, and earthworks into the landscape.
- Road improvements that can have an urbanising effect, especially on rural lanes, by road widening, straightening and introduction of features such as kerbs, lighting and signage.

Tranquil Areas

5.2.8 Nationally, extensive tracts of tranquil and undeveloped countryside are becoming an increasingly limited resource: maintaining extensive areas of tranquil countryside largely free from the influence of urban intrusion and major transport corridors is of critical concern to the protection of the essential character of the county. Figure 9 shows how the pattern of tranquil areas in the county has changed dramatically between the 1960s and 1990s. Only the most remote northwest and eastern parts of the county now contain extensive tranquil areas. The lack of tranquillity associated with the urban landscapes of South Essex has been exacerbated by the effects of traffic along the M25/M11/A12/A13 road corridors.

5.2.9 The key issues include:

- Fragmentation of tranquil areas by major road transport corridors.
- Threats from various developments to existing extensive tranquil areas and remaining ‘islands’ of tranquillity.

Mineral Extraction & Waste

5.2.10 Mineral extraction occurs in many parts of Essex. The county is the largest producer of sand and gravel in the Southeast Region, regularly producing over 20% of the Regions output. Clay, brickearth and small quantities of silica sand are also extracted. The extent to which

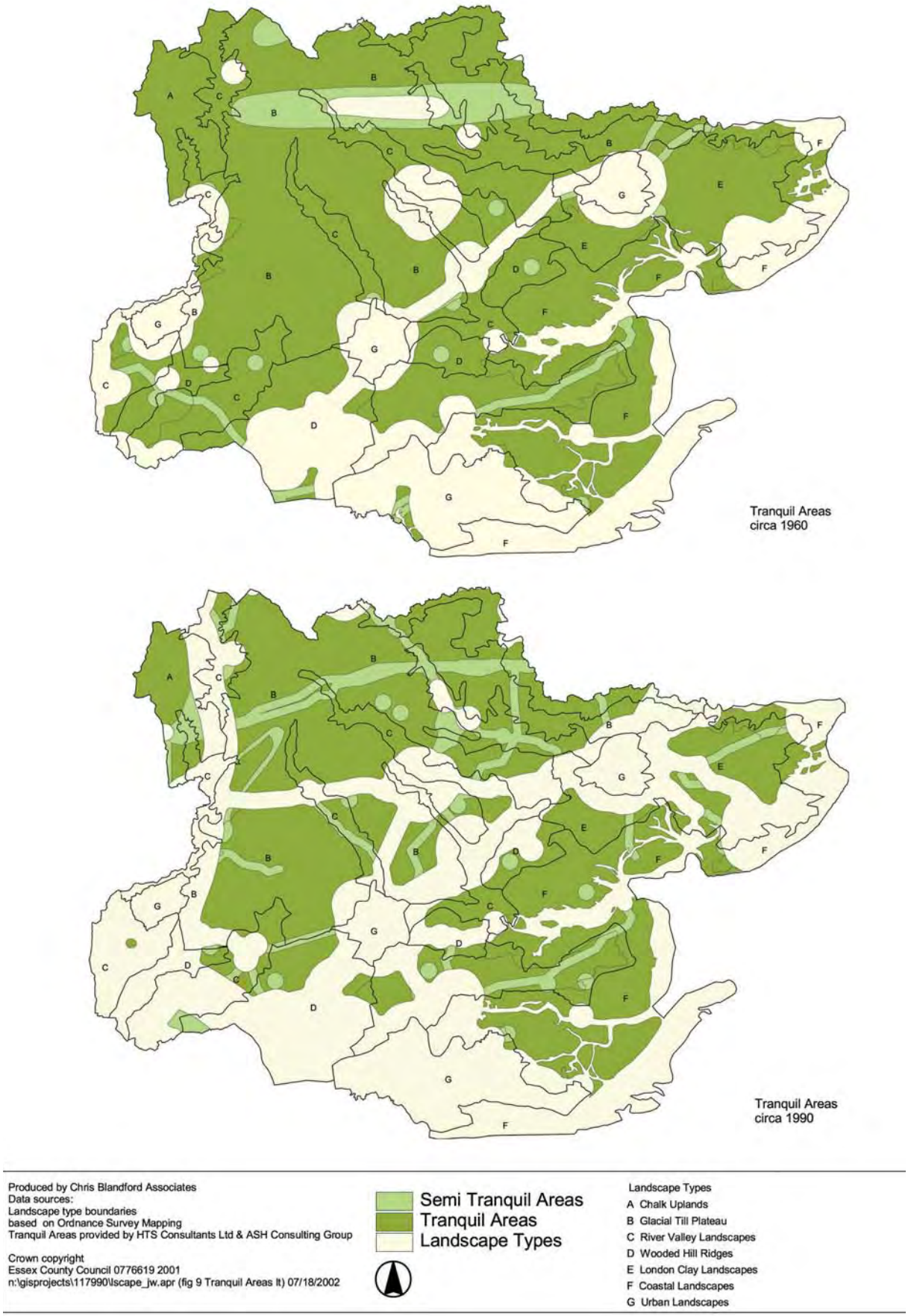

Figure 9 Tranquil Areas

mineral extraction continues to impact on the landscape may depend upon whether more recycled aggregates or alternative sources from outside the area are used. With regard to waste, despite moves away from landfill as the primary means of waste disposal, this is likely to continue for some time and other methods of waste management may create new pressures on the landscape.

5.2.11 The key issues include:

- The effects of minerals/landfill operations including changes to field pattern, loss of landscape features, introduction of alien landforms, landraising, haulage routes, lighting.
- The effects of restoration schemes depending on restoration to agriculture, woodland or other uses, and whether these are sympathetic to landscape character.

Agriculture and Agricultural Diversification

5.2.12 Agricultural activity is a vital aspect of the rural environment and can be considered as the primary factor in shaping the character of the landscape. Agriculture has the ability to substantially enhance and detract from the character of the landscape in a relatively short period of time, primarily due to mechanisation and intensive practices. These have, over the last fifty years, contributed to the changes in the rural environment through intensive cropping, loss of field boundaries, drainage of marshes/wetlands, and the introduction of new farm buildings. Pastures and coastal grazing marshes are dependent on appropriate livestock grazing practices. On some coastal grazing marshes scrub encroachment is becoming a problem due to lack of grazing/management. Changes in farming practice and fluctuations in the agricultural economy have an important impact and this will only increase, as global markets become a major influencing factor.

5.2.13 Farm diversification is also causing changes in the farmland landscape as the pressures to help maintain farm viability culminate in new enterprises and adaption of buildings.

5.2.14 The key issues include:

- Continuing decline/loss of landscape features such as hedgerows, field margins and farm ponds as a result of maximising field size, lack of appropriate management, and spray drift.
- Soil erosion as a result of autumn cultivation of arable crops.
- Introduction of large, new farm buildings in the landscape as a result of new EU standards.

- Farm diversification such as the adoption or reuse of farm buildings for commercial, industrial and storage uses which may conflict with historical/architectural character and the introduction of new industrial crops.
- The effects of agri-environmental schemes such as countryside stewardship.
- Impact of events such as foot and mouth disease on livestock grazing practices.

Woodland, Trees and Hedgerows

5.2.15 The varying patterns of the trees, woodlands and hedgerows within Essex are very important elements of its landscape character. They are also significant in historic and wildlife terms.

5.2.16 The key issues include:

- Decline of traditional woodland management practices such as coppicing, pollarding.
- Decline of grazing in wood pasture woods.
- Continuing loss of hedgerows/lack of management of hedgerows.
- Lack of management of shelterbelts.

Nature Conservation and Biodiversity

5.2.17 There is a strong relationship between landscape character and nature conservation/ biodiversity. Particular habitats and groups of species are an essential part of the character of the Essex landscape. Essex remains rich and diverse in wildlife despite significant losses of landscape features and habitats, but continuing threats from changing land management practices and from development remain.

5.2.18 The key issues include:

- Agricultural intensification, urban development, mineral extraction, waste disposal resulting in direct loss of habitats and species, or indirect losses due to associated pollution, changes to the water table.
- Introduction of genetically modified crops and possible effects on native fauna and flora.
- Introduction of non-native species, or native species not of local provenance.

Historic Landscapes

5.2.19 Essex was enclosed early. The tapestry of ancient woodland, hedgerows and trackways is a major part of the historic landscape, which is therefore very sensitive to the loss of these features, or to changes to them. There has been loss of/a decline in the structure and condition of surviving historic landscape features.

5.2.20 The key issues include:

- Vulnerability to neglect of features such as historic buildings and structures, earthworks, hedgerows, areas of ancient woodland and historic parks and gardens.
- Erosion of historic lanes and tracks by traffic/road improvements.
- Introduction of new uses such as golf courses into historic parks and gardens.
- Vulnerability of historic coastal landscape features to sea level rise and development.

Recreation and Tourism

5.2.21 The Essex landscape is important as an attraction for recreation and tourism. 'Honeypot' areas include Dedham Vale, parts of the coast, some historic parklands, and major wooded areas such as Epping Forest. In the largely arable county of Essex footpaths and bridleways are very important for countryside access. Informal recreation is the most popular, and usually least intrusive form of recreation. Problems arise when overuse and overcrowding damage/disturb the landscape and the quality of the experience. New formal recreational activities can introduce urbanising effects.

5.2.22 The key issues include:

- Effects of formal recreational activities such as golf courses, including possible loss of landscape features, new buildings, car parks, modifications to landform, lighting.
- Effects of noisy water and motor sports on tranquil areas.
- Effects of horseculture including sub division of fields, new stables, overgrazing and construction of menages/jumps.
- Effects of tourism related developments, e.g. caravan parks and management of visitors in 'honeypot' areas.

5.3 Landscape Character Type Issues

Coastal Landscapes

5.3.1 The key issues for the coastal landscapes include:

- Development issues (ports, dredging, energy related developments, marinas and other tourism related developments).
- Flood protection and managed retreat issues.
- Access and recreation (management of visitors).
- Land management/biological diversity issues (changes in the traditional management of grazing marsh).

Glacial Till and London Clay Plateau Landscapes

5.3.2 The key issues for the clay plateau landscapes include:

- Development issues (road developments, historic village infill, telecommunication masts, proliferation of small agricultural reservoirs).
- Land management/biological diversity issues (changing grazing regimes of pastures, increase in farm size/subdivision of farmland for non-farm uses, lack of appropriate woodland management, decline in hedgerow management).

River Valley Landscapes

5.3.3 The key issues for the river valley landscapes include:

- Development issues (sand and gravel extraction).
- Land management/biological diversity issues (changing grazing regimes).

Urban Landscapes

5.3.4 The key issues for the urban dominated landscapes include:

- Development issues (settlement extensions, urban infill, commercial warehousing, landfill, waste incinerators, green open space networks, tree cover).
- Land management/biological diversity issues (encapsulated countryside, ecologically sensitive previously used urban land).

Wooded Hill and Ridge Landscapes

5.3.5 The key issues for the wooded hill and ridge landscapes include:

- Development issues (settlement extensions, historic village infill).
- Land management/biological diversity issues (common land management; management of mature trees and pollards; lack of continuity of management).

Chalk Upland Landscapes

5.3.6 The key issues for the chalk upland landscapes include:

- Development issues (telecommunication masts, new agricultural buildings).
- Land management/biological diversity issues (management of woodlands and of remnant chalk grassland).

5.4 Landscape Character Area Issues

5.4.1 Specific issues relating to individual character areas are highlighted under past, present and future trends for change.

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APPENDIX A - RECORD OF STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Initial Stakeholder Workshop (15th June 2001)

Attendees

Melvyn Crow	Braintree District Council
David Churchill	Brentwood District Council
Derek Stebbing	Chelmsford Borough Council
Terry Bailey	Chelmsford Borough Council
Adam John	Colchester Borough Council
Tim DeKeyzer	Countryside Agency
Peter Ennis	Dedham Vale Project
Kim Pearce	DEFRA
Martin Barrell	Environment Agency
Chris Neilan	Epping Forest District Council
Roy Lewis	Essex County Council
Martin Wakelin	Essex County Council
Crispin Downs	Essex County Council
Wendy Frost	Harlow District Council
Simon Odell	Hertfordshire County Council
Peter Holborn	Suffolk County Council
Phil Green	Tendring District Council
Sarah Nicolas	Uttlesford District Council
Jamie Cole	Rochford District Council

Facilitators

Dominic Watkins	Chris Blandford Associates
Justine Dowsing	Chris Blandford Associates

Second Stakeholder Workshop (20 March 2002)

Attendees

Melvyn Crow	-	Braintree District council
Paul Munson	-	Braintree District Council
David Churchill	-	Brentwood District Council
Paul MacBride	-	Chelmsford Borough Council
Katherine Blake	-	Dedham Vale & Stour Valley Project
Martin Barrell	-	Environment Agency
Chris Neilan	-	Epping Forest District Council
Martin Wakelin	-	Essex County Council
Crispin Downs	-	Essex County Council
Peter Holborn	-	Suffolk County Council
David Pugh	-	Tendring District Council
Jamie Cole	-	Rochford District Council
Andy Day	-	Castle Point Borough Council
Mike Stranks	-	Castle Point Borough Council
Nigel Cowlin	-	Maldon District Council

Facilitators

Dominic Watkins	-	Chris Blandford Associates
Matthew Bright	-	Chris Blandford Associates

APPENDIX B - SUMMARY MATRIX OF CHARACTER AREA SENSITIVITY EVALUATIONS

To be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 - 1.4.17

CHARACTER AREAS		1 Major urban extensions (>5 ha) and new settlements	2 Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	3 Major transportation developments/ improvements	4 Commercial/ warehouse estate/port development	5 Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	6 Large scale 'open uses'	7 Mineral extraction/ waste disposal	8 Incremental small scale developments	9 Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	10 Decline in traditional countryside management
A1	North West Essex Chalk Farmlands	H	H	H	H	M	M	H	H	M	M
B1	Central Essex Farmlands	M	L	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
B2	North Essex Farmlands	H	H	H	H	M	M	H	H	H	M
B3	Blackwater/Stour Farmlands	M	M	M	H	M	M	M	M	M	L
B4	Gosfield Wooded Farmlands	H	L	M	H	M	M	M	M	M	M
C1	Cam Valley	H	M	M	H	M	M	M	M	M	M
C2	Stort Valley	H	M	H	H	H	H	M	M	H	M
C3	Lee Valley	H	L	M	M	M	L	M	M	M	M
C4	Roding Valley	H	M	M	H	H	M	M	M	M	M
C5	Chelmer Valley	H	M	H	H	H	M	M	H	H	M
C6	Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys	H	L	M	H	M	M	M	M	M	M
C7	Colne Valley	H	M	H	H	H	M	H	M	M	M
C8	Stour Valley	H	H	H	H	H	M	H	H	H	H
D1	Epping Forest & Ridges	H	M	H	H	M	H	H	M	M	H
D2	Brentwood Hills	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	H	M	H
D3	Danbury Hills	H	L	H	H	H	M	M	M	M	H
D4	Tiptree Ridge	H	L	H	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
E1	South Essex Farmlands	M	L	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
E2	South Colchester Farmlands	M	L	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
E3	Tendring Plain	M	L	M	H	H	L	M	H	H	M
E4	North Colchester Farmlands	M	M	M	H	M	M	M	M	H	M
F1	Thames Estuary	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H
F2	Crouch & Roach Farmland	H	M	M	H	H	M	M	M	H	M
F3	Dengie & Foulness Coast	H	H	H	H	H	M	H	M	H	H
F4	Blackwater Estuary	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H
F5	North Blackwater/Colne Coastal Farmlands	H	M	H	H	M	M	H	M	H	M
F6	Mersea Island	H	M	H	H	H	M	H	M	H	M
F7	Brightlingsea-Clacton-Frinton Coast	H	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	H	L
F8	Hamford Water	H	M	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	M
F9	Stour Estuary Slopes	H	M	H	H	M	M	H	M	M	M
F10	Stour Estuary	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H
G1	Harlow & Environs	M	L	M	M	L	L	H	L	L	L
G2	Chelmsford & Environs	M	L	M	M	M	M	H	L	M	L
G3	South Essex Coastal Towns	M	L	M	M	L	M	M	L	H	H
G4	Colchester & Environs	M	L	M	M	M	M	H	L	M	M