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## **NEW LOCAL PLAN EVIDENCE BASE: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, SENSITIVITY & CAPACITY STUDY**

### **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 As part of the new Local Plan evidence base, A Landscape Character, Sensitivity & Capacity Study (LCSCS) has been commissioned and completed to provide a source of up-to-date and robust information on landscape character and sensitivity in the District.
- 1.2 This report explains the evidence and key findings of the study as well as the implications for Rochford District's plan-making.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The Council has jointly with Southend-on-Sea Borough Council commissioned Chris Blandford Associates, a landscape design and environmental planning consultancy, to prepare the LCSCS to inform both Councils' emerging development plans.
- 2.2 Landscape character occurs where the same combinations of physical (e.g. land cover/flora and fauna) and cultural (e.g. land use) landscape attributes are found. Landscape character can incorporate both good quality and poor quality landscapes across urban and rural areas, and seas and rivers.
- 2.3 The LCSCS is a tool that allows landscape character to be understood, explained and described in a transparent and objective way by identifying variations in the patterns of physical and cultural attributes. They also recognise how landscapes have changed over time and acknowledge the influence of human activities on landscapes.
- 2.4 The study will assist decision-making with respect to any future planned changes that may affect the character of the landscapes within and around the study area, including in Rochford District.
- 2.5 The Council's existing Core Strategy 2011 identifies that the District is predominantly rural with 12,763 hectares designated as Metropolitan Green Belt. It also identifies the broad landscape of the character of the District as being made up of three types: Crouch and Roach Farmland; Dengie and Foulness Coastal; and South Essex Coastal Towns, with the latter of these three as least sensitive to development. The locations of these character areas are identified within the Strategic Environmental Assessment Baseline Information Profile.
- 2.6 The NPPF requires planning policies to protect and enhance valued landscapes, and where consistent with other NPPF policies, take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure. Furthermore, the NPPF requires Plans to promote the

enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.

- 2.7 The Council's existing planning policies, including Policy ENV1 of the Core Strategy, require the Council to maintain and enhance the environmental quality in the District to protect its distinctive character.
- 2.8 The Study draws on and, where appropriate, updates existing landscape evidence to develop a more detailed LCSCS of the landscape, townscape and seascape within Rochford District and neighbouring Southend-on-Sea Borough.

### **3 SALIENT INFORMATION**

#### **Aims and Methodology**

- 3.1 The Landscape Character Study has been informed by the assessment of landscape sensitivity in accordance with the principles of Natural England guidance.
- 3.2 Preparatory desk-based studies and reviews of existing available information about the landscape within the study area and neighbouring areas as well as field survey work were undertaken. Key stakeholders from neighbouring authorities and relevant statutory and non-statutory bodies were also consulted.

#### **Main Findings**

- 3.3 The LCSCS identified a number of distinct landscape character areas across the study area, including a total of 29 character areas within Rochford District across various typologies including
- Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats
  - Drained Estuarine Marsh
  - Coastal Farmland
  - Wooded Farmland and Hills
  - River Valley Floor
  - Coastal Mosaic
  - Urban
- 3.4 The study has analysed the condition and quality of each character area, and made recommendations for the future enhancement and preservation of landscape character in each area.

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- 3.5 The study also assessed both the individual sensitivity of each area to development and the capacity of the area to accommodate development (roughly the inverse of the sensitivity), as can be seen in Figures 3.1 and 3.2.
- 3.6 In summary, the study identified the most sensitive landscapes along the District's coast and riversides, with other sensitive landscapes to the north and south of Hockley, and around Canewdon and Paglesham.
- 3.7 The LCSCS has also assessed and provided recommendations on existing areas of landscape policy, noting the following:

#### **Upper Roach Valley Special Landscape area**

- A highly valued landscape, in good condition with medium to high sensitivity and limited opportunity to mitigate development. Worthy of protection.
- The current boundary is appropriate in protecting the special qualities.
- The consultant recommends a minor amendment to the wording of Policy URV1, or,
- To establish separate policies in relation to the purposes of the area, i.e. informal recreation, conservation and a green lung.

#### **Coastal Protection Belt (CPB)**

- Current boundary is largely appropriate albeit there are small parcels of land that do not meet the criteria which could be removed from the CPB as part of the emerging development plan.
- 3.8 The recommendations form part of the technical evidence base but they do not in themselves form policy or change existing policies. It will be for the Council to decide whether to take up these recommendations in the formulation of new policies through the emerging development plan process.

## **4 RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 One of the key tests of soundness for a Local Plan is the justification of its strategy and policies based on a robust technical evidence base. The last Landscape Character Study undertaken for the District was published in 2003. There is therefore a need to update the evidence base to ensure the Council's policies that are based on protecting the environment remain up to date and effective.
- 4.2 If the Council fails to update its evidence, its emerging plan would not be informed by the most up-to-date nor robust evidence on the condition and value of landscape character areas. It may therefore weaken the Council's ability to protect landscape character areas value through the planning

process or could result in the Council's emerging plan being found unsound at the examination stage.

## **5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Study would provide a source of up-to-date and robust evidence to inform the Council's emerging Plans. In doing so, it will allow the Council to adequately conserve, restore and enhance landscape character areas value through the planning process. Without this Study, the Council's ability to protect areas with landscape character value and importance through the planning process may be weakened.
- 5.2 However, the publication of this Study is not considered to have any direct environmental implications.

## **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The preparation of this Study was achieved within agreed budgets.

## **7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The Study is an evidence document that holds no status as part of the development plan. There are therefore not considered to be any legal implications relating to its publication.

## **8 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed as no decision is being made.

## **9 RECOMMENDATION**

- 9.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That the Landscape Character, Sensitivity & Capacity Study, attached at Appendix A, be noted as evidence and published on the Council's website.



Marcus Hotten

Assistant Director, Place and Environment

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**Background Papers: -**

None.

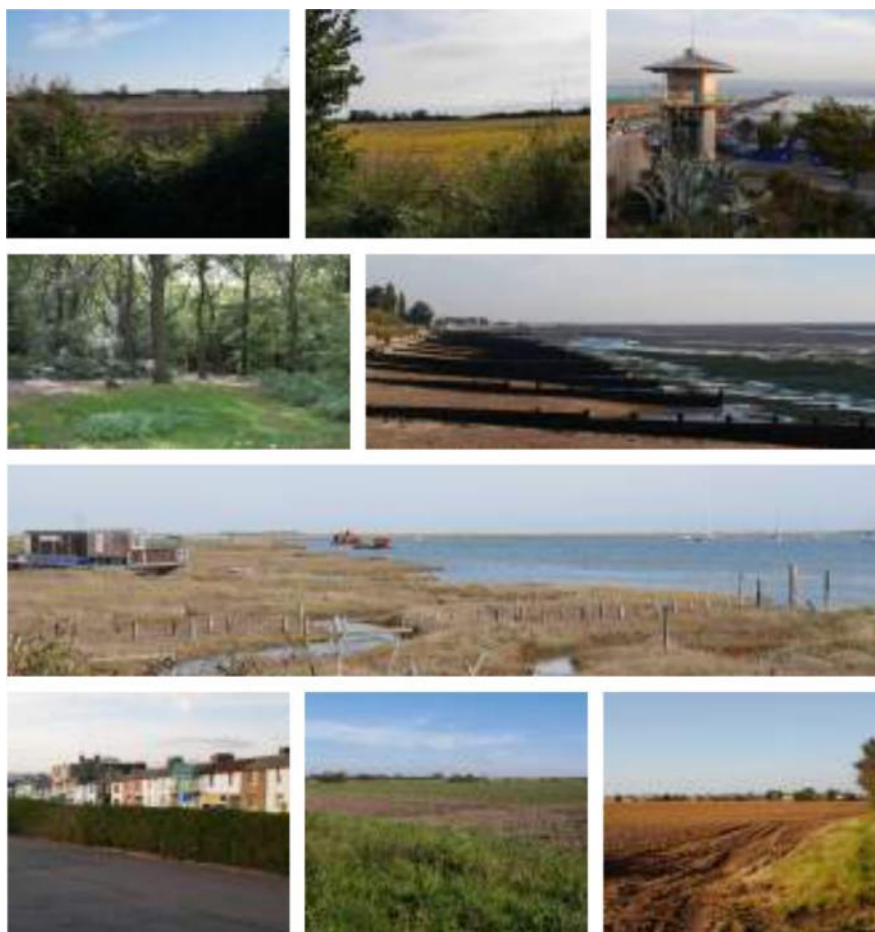
For further information please contact Daniel Goodman (Senior Strategic Planner, Strategic Planning and Economic Regeneration) on: -

Phone: 01702 318043

Email: [Daniel.goodman2@rochford.gov.uk](mailto:Daniel.goodman2@rochford.gov.uk)

If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.

# Rochford District Council & Southend Borough Council Landscape Character, Sensitivity & Capacity Study



July 2019

Rochford District Council  
& Southend Borough Council  
Landscape Character, Sensitivity  
& Capacity Study

Approved

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Watkins', enclosed within a faint, light-colored circular stamp.

Dominic Watkins

Position

Director

Date

1st July 2019

Revision

Final

## ADVISORY NOTE

This document is an evidence report that has been prepared for the Council's new Local Plan. It is not a statement of Council policy and is intended to inform future decisions but does not bind the Council to any particular decision.

Where the document contains findings, it is important that these are understood in context provided in the document. Publication of this document should not be interpreted as endorsement of these findings.



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

1.1.1 In July 2018, Rochford District Council and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council commissioned Chris Blandford Associates (CBA) to prepare the Rochford and Southend Landscape Character Assessment and Sensitivity and Capacity Study (the Study), to inform both Councils' emerging planning policy and Local Plans.

#### Context

##### National Planning

1.1.2 Chapter 15 of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 sets out the Government's current policies on conserving and enhancing the natural environment in England. With regards to landscape conditions, the NPPF states:

- *“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: (a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes... (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); (b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services...”<sup>1</sup>;*
- *“Plans should: ...allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.”<sup>2</sup>*

##### Local Planning

1.1.3 Rochford District Council and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council are currently preparing new Local Plans to guide future development to 2038.

1.1.4 As part of their duty to co-operate, Rochford and Southend Councils are working collaboratively with their four neighbouring South Essex authorities, and Essex County Council, to prepare a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) for South Essex. The JSP is expected to provide a strategic framework for the future growth and vitality of the sub-region, including by guiding the spatial distribution

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 170, NPPF 2019

<sup>2</sup> Paragraph 171, NPPF 2019

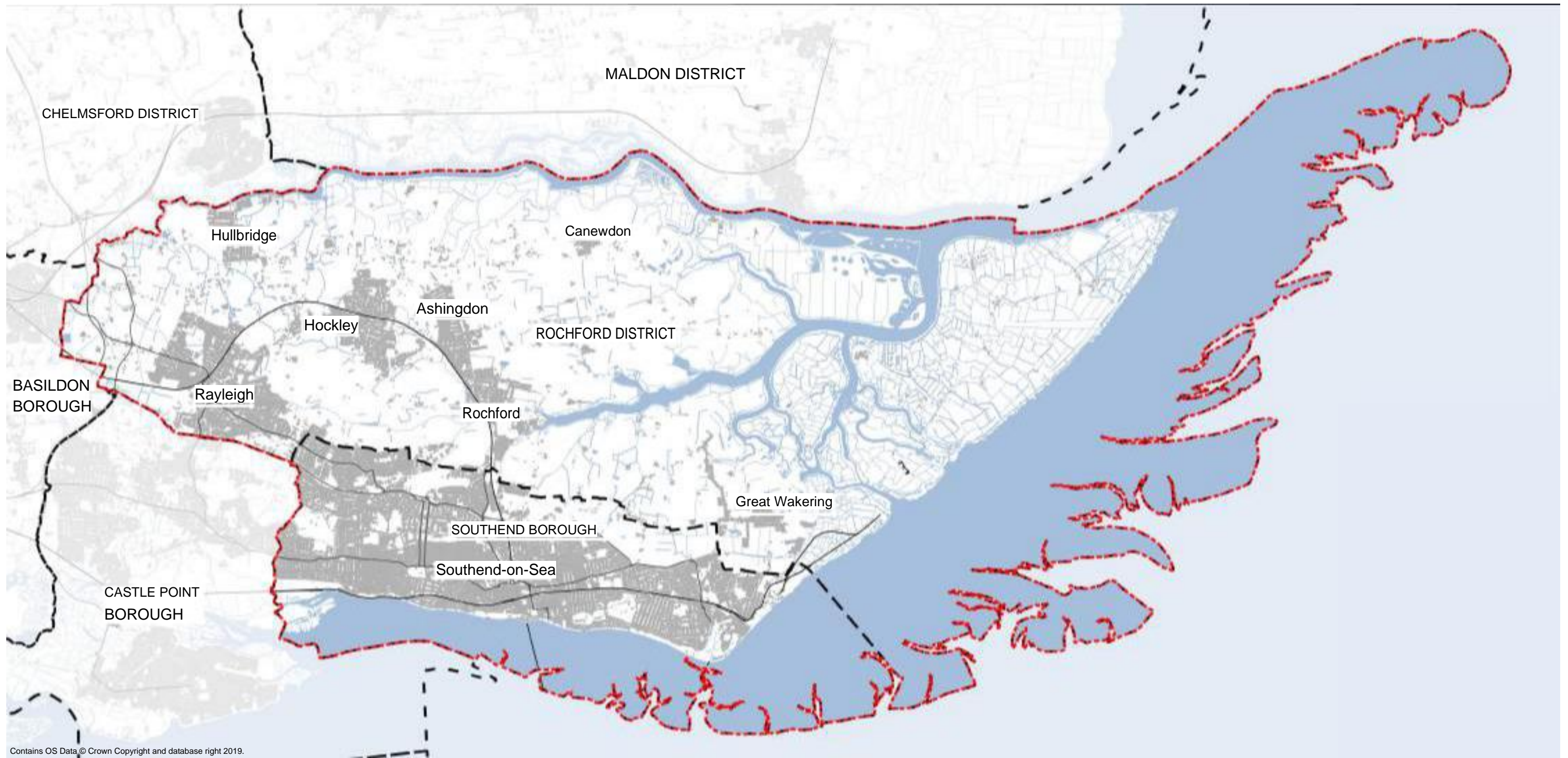
of growth and identifying areas of strategic opportunity. The JSP will form part of each authority's local development plan and will inform the preparation of other development plan documents, including local plans and site allocation plans as appropriate.

## **Landscape Context**

- 1.1.5 The two authority areas have different and distinctive landscape features and character. It is important to understand the processes and influences that have led to the present situation (detailed in **Section 2.0**).
- 1.1.6 Rochford District sits within a peninsula between the River Thames and River Crouch in South Essex. Its eastern boundary is with the North Sea. Rochford has land boundaries with Basildon, Castle Point and Southend to the south and west, and marine boundaries with Maldon and Chelmsford to the north. The area contains several towns and villages with interconnecting infrastructure. The District has a significant land area outside the existing residential areas, much of which falls within the Metropolitan Green Belt and includes areas that are susceptible to flooding and/or have international and national environmental significance. In particular, the District's river channels and coastline are protected under a range of environmental designations, including the Foulness Ramsar Site, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Protection Areas (SPA), and form part of the Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- 1.1.7 Southend is a linear, predominantly urban area along the northern side of the Thames Estuary. It has land boundaries with Rochford and Castle Point to the north and west respectively. It is a densely populated urban area comprising a variety of housing types. Southend has developed as a tourist resort, with 7 miles of foreshore along the Thames Estuary. Outside of the urban area are four areas of the Metropolitan Green Belt, part of which contains areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland. The foreshore and mudflats form the Benfleet and Southend Marshes Ramsar Site, SSSI and SPA, and the eastern coastline is part of the Essex Estuaries SAC.

## **1.2 Objectives**

- 1.2.1 The key purpose of the Study is to provide a detailed understanding of the character of the landscape across the study area (**Figure 1.1**), including settlement areas and coastal mudflats. The Study aims to assist in managing change, particularly to the settlement fringe and Green Belt landscapes, by providing advice on sensitivities of the landscape to accommodate development and offering guidance on opportunities to help protect and enhance landscape character.
- 1.2.2 The Study aims to strengthen and reinforce the sense of place for Rochford and Southend-on-Sea by considering how the landscape is perceived, experienced and valued by people. It provides



**KEY**

- Study Area
- Planning Authority Boundary

a high-level spatial planning, siting and design guidance framework in relation to future development, to inform the emerging spatial strategies, as well as aid future site briefs and development management in strategic terms.

- 1.2.3 The Study will assist decision-making with respect to planned changes that may affect the character of the landscapes, townscapes and seascapes within and around the study area. It is intended to provide a valuable tool for the Councils and other users including neighbouring authorities, developers and a range of local stakeholders. It also provides baseline information for monitoring landscape change.

## 1.3 Methodology

### Scope of Study

- 1.3.1 The study draws on and, where appropriate, updates existing landscape evidence to develop a more detailed Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment of the landscape, townscape and seascape within Rochford and Southend-on-Sea.
- 1.3.2 The study area for the Landscape Character Assessment (**Section 3.0**) spans Rochford District including the River Crouch and River Roach and mudflats to the east of the Foulness coastline, and Southend Borough including the mudflats to the south and east.
- 1.3.3 The study area for the Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Assessment (**Section 4.0**) is refined. It includes the landscape character areas that are outside of settlement boundaries and within the Green Belt as defined within the current Local Plans and including Foulness Island.
- 1.3.4 Informed by the assessment of landscape sensitivity, the Study includes recommendations on the potential capacity of the landscapes within the Green Belt and Foulness Island to accommodate development.
- 1.3.5 This evidence was commissioned by Rochford District Council in collaboration with Southend-on-Sea Borough Council. It should not be considered to be a material consideration for planning applications relating to land outside of the study area.

## Landscape Character Assessment

- 1.3.6 The Landscape Character Assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the principles of Natural England's guidance *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*<sup>3</sup> and *An Approach to Seascape Character Assessment*<sup>4</sup>.
- 1.3.7 Landscape Character Assessment is a tool that allows landscape character to be understood, explained and described in a transparent and objective way. It does this by identifying the variations in the patterns of physical, natural and cultural attributes, and experiential characteristics, that makes one area of landscape distinctive from another at a range of spatial scales. Landscape Character Assessment also recognises how landscapes have changed over time and acknowledges the influence of human activities on landscapes.
- 1.3.8 The term 'landscape' relates to natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas and includes land, inland water and marine areas. Increasingly, the landscape character assessment process is used to inform urban/townscape assessments and seascape character assessments.
- 1.3.9 In line with the Councils' specification and clarifications, the study area covers the whole of Rochford District and Southend Borough including all urban, rural and coastal areas.

## Desk Studies

- 1.3.10 Before embarking on field survey work, preparatory desk-based studies were undertaken to collate and analyse available information about the landscape within the study area. An initial review of the following existing character studies was carried out:
- Rochford District Environmental Capacity Study 2015;
  - Rochford District Open Space Study 2009;
  - Rochford District Historic Environment Characterisation Project 2006;
  - Rochford District Conservation Area Character Appraisals;
  - Southend Borough Character Study 2011;
  - Southend Borough Conservation Area Character Appraisals;
  - Essex Coast Landscape Character Assessment 2005;
  - Essex Landscape Character Assessment 2002;
  - Thames Gateway Historic Environment Characterisation Project 2005.

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<sup>3</sup>Natural England, 2014

<sup>4</sup>Natural England, 2012

1.3.11 Existing character studies for neighbouring areas were also reviewed as part of the process:

- Maldon District Landscape Character Assessment 2006;
- Chelmsford Borough Landscape Character Assessment 2006;
- Basildon Borough Landscape Character Assessment 2013;
- Castle Point Borough Landscape Character Assessment 2010.

1.3.12 In order to provide an appropriate scale for assessing the landscape sensitivity of the study area to development (and being suitable as a baseline for monitoring landscape change), district/local level landscape character areas have been defined. These character areas broadly provide sub-division of the existing county-scale character areas defined by the Essex Landscape Character Assessment<sup>5</sup>.

1.3.13 In accordance with Natural England's guidance, the definition of the Character Area boundaries would take into account the nature, extents and patterns created by the interplay of the following key "landscape attributes":

- Topography and Landform
- Geology and soils
- Water bodies and hydrology
- Field shapes and sizes
- Land uses
- Land cover and vegetation
- Historic landscape character
- Settlement patterns

1.3.14 These landscape attributes have been identified through the collation and review of relevant GIS datasets, Google/Bing aerial images and OS mapping.

1.3.15 The preliminary boundaries of the character areas defined by the desk studies were mapped in GIS. Where appropriate, the boundaries follow distinct features on the ground.

### **Field Surveys**

1.3.16 The desk studies were supplemented by field survey work to verify/refine the boundaries of the preliminary character areas and inform the character descriptions by identifying landscape changes on the ground (e.g. new development, significant loss of landscape features etc).

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<sup>5</sup> Chris Blandford Associates, 2003



- 1.3.17 The field surveys identified the visual and sensory (aesthetic, perceptual and experiential) qualities of the landscape for each character area and identify the current condition/quality of key landscape features to inform the sensitivity assessment. Critically, the field surveys explored the visual relationship between the urban areas and the surrounding rural areas that provide the landscape/seascape setting and context in which the urban townscapes are experienced.

### **Stakeholder Consultation**

- 1.3.18 Key stakeholders from neighbouring authorities and relevant statutory and non-statutory bodies were consulted following the first stage of the assessment process, to gather opinions and comments on the proposed names and boundaries for the character types and character areas, plus general commentary regarding the preliminary classification.

### **Character Descriptions**

- 1.3.19 The study area was initially divided into character types. These are distinct types of landscape that are generally homogeneous in character and occur in different parts of the study area that share common characteristics. The character type descriptions comprise the key characteristics associated with the area.
- 1.3.20 Character areas are unique, individual areas that share generic characteristics with other areas within the character type they identified as being within. The character and condition of the constituent character areas within each character type are described, supported by landscape strategy recommendations for conserving, enhancing, protecting or restoring the character area features where applicable.
- 1.3.21 Historic landscape character information has been provided for areas included within The Historic Landscape Characterisation Report for Essex<sup>6</sup> and does not include those character areas below the high water line.

### **Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Assessment**

- 1.3.22 The aim of the Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment is to provide a key tool for informing the allocation of development sites outside of settlement boundaries in the Councils' new Local Plans.

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<sup>6</sup> Essex County Council in partnership with English Heritage, 2011

- 1.3.23 The assessment was undertaken in accordance with the principles of Topic Paper 6 on Techniques and Criteria for Judging Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity<sup>7</sup>.
- 1.3.24 The study area for the assessment includes the character areas (or parts thereof) identified in the Landscape Character Assessment, that are outside of settlement boundaries within the Green Belt including Foulness Island.
- 1.3.25 As part of the emerging Local Plans the Councils are looking at areas to locate future development. In reference to the South East Essex Strategic Growth Assessment (2019) they have requested that the landscape sensitivity and capacity assessment (Section 3) considers an area of search for strategic scale development. Where necessary the character areas within this area of search have been subdivided into land parcels to provide more detailed understanding of the landscape value, sensitivity and capacity of the area. The land parcels enable understanding of local variation within the broad brush character area, using the value, sensitivity and capacity scales set out below.

#### Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

- 1.3.26 The approach to the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment was based on the following definitions and concepts:
- **Landscape condition** is based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape, considering intactness and state of elements and features that make up the character area;
  - **Landscape sensitivity** is based on judgements about the relative value and the susceptibility of the landscape to the development scenario(s) being considered;
  - **Landscape value** is based on judgements about the relative value or importance attached to a landscape;
  - **Landscape susceptibility** is based on judgements about the ability of the landscape to accommodate change without undue negative consequences, having consideration of overall character and condition.

#### Assessing Landscape Value

- 1.3.27 In line with the revised National Planning Policy Framework<sup>8</sup> (NPPF), the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment considers the relative landscape value of the study area.

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<sup>7</sup> Countryside Agency, 2002

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019

1.3.28 For the purposes of the study, landscape value would be assessed on the basis of the following criteria recommended by best practice guidance:

- Landscape quality: the physical state of the landscape, and its intactness, from visual, functional, and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements which make up the character in any one place;
- Scenic quality: the way in which landscapes appeal primarily to the visual and perceptual senses;
- Rarity: the presence or absence of unique/rare features and elements in the landscape;
- Representativeness: whether the landscape contains a particular character, and/or features and elements, which are judged to be worthy of representing (such as pockets of ancient remnant woodland or an intricate network of hedgerows for example);
- Conservation values: the presence of features of particular wildlife, geological, archaeological, historic/cultural conservation interest and value (as recognised by established designation systems) that add to the value of the landscape as well as having value in their own right;
- Sense of wildness/tranquillity: the existence of relatively remote areas in the landscape which provide a sense of wildness or tranquillity. Such areas are typically characterised by low levels of disturbance, an absence of detracting elements (such as built development, industry, traffic, noise, movement, the presence of people and artificial lighting) and the presence of positive landscape qualities (such as the naturalness of the landscape, presence and visibility of rivers and the visibility of woodland);
- Cultural associations: the cultural associations of the landscape with particular people, artists, writers or other media, or events in history.

1.3.29 The relative landscape value of the character areas within the context of the study area was assessed using the following five-point scale, which reflects the principles for assessing landscape value provided by current Landscape Institute guidance<sup>9</sup>:

- **Low Landscape Value** – generally undesignated landscape/features of lower value in a local context; in poorer condition; with limited sense of place due to lack of distinctive scenic and perceptual qualities and cultural associations; limited presence of cultural and natural heritage assets of local significance; and limited value for recreation.
- **Low to Medium Landscape Value** – generally non-statutory designated landscape/features of moderate value in a regional and local context; in moderate to poorer condition; some locally distinctive sense of place due to limited scenic and perceptual qualities and cultural associations; some presence of cultural and natural heritage assets of local significance; some

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<sup>9</sup> Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition, 2013 (LI and IEMA)

presence of particular characteristics/features which are considered important examples; and local value for recreation.

- **Medium Landscape Value** – generally non-statutory designated landscape/features of moderate value in a regional and local context; in moderate condition; with a locally distinctive sense of place due to scenic and perceptual qualities and cultural associations; presence of cultural and natural heritage assets of local significance; and locally valued for recreation.
- **Medium to High Landscape Value** – generally statutory or non-statutory designated landscape/features of moderate to higher value in a regional and local context; in moderate to good condition; with a locally distinctive sense of place due to scenic and perceptual qualities and cultural associations; presence of cultural and natural heritage assets of significance; presence of particular characteristics/features which are considered important examples; and local value for recreation.
- **High Landscape Value** – generally statutory designated landscape/features of higher value in a national and regional context; in good condition; with a stronger sense of place due to distinctive scenic and perceptual qualities (wildness/tranquility) and cultural associations; presence of cultural and natural heritage assets of highest significance; and highly valued for recreation.

### Assessing Landscape Sensitivity

1.3.30 This step considers the inherent sensitivity of the landscape, which includes an understanding of landscape character and its visual characteristics. The assessment of landscape sensitivity has taken into account the following criteria:

- Natural factors – the nature, extent and pattern of vegetation, semi-natural habitats and landform/drainage;
- Cultural factors – the nature, extent and pattern of land uses, settlements and historical features;
- Perceptual/aesthetic factors – sense of scale, enclosure, diversity, texture, form, pattern, prominence of skyline, tranquillity/remoteness, scenic qualities;
- Landscape quality/condition – representativeness, intactness and state of repair;
- General visibility – the level of visibility/inter-visibility and nature of views (taking into account seasonal variations);
- Visual receptors – the type and nature of visual receptors, levels of activity and perceptions;
- Mitigation potential – opportunities for mitigating landscape and visual effects of development and compatibility of mitigation measures with local character.

1.3.31 The overall landscape sensitivity of each character area within the study area has been assessed using the following five-point scale:

- **Low Landscape Sensitivity** – typically a landscape that has relatively unimportant components or is an area of low quality and is potentially tolerant of substantial changes without undue negative consequences. For example, this category would apply where the landscape is assessed as having a lack of distinctiveness and continuity/time depth (i.e. the landscape is of recent origin with few features of historic interest), and it may also have very limited visibility due to dominant landforms and a high level of tree cover.
- **Low to Medium Landscape Sensitivity** – typically a landscape that has relatively unimportant components or is an area that is in low to moderate condition and is potentially tolerant of changes with undue negative consequences. For example, this category would apply where the landscape is assessed as having a lack of distinctiveness and continuity/time depth (i.e. the landscape is largely of recent origin with few features of historic interest), and it may also have limited to moderate intervisibility due to dominant/apparent landforms and intermittent tree cover.
- **Medium Landscape Sensitivity** – typically a landscape that has relatively ordinary components or is an area that is in moderate condition and is reasonably tolerant of changes without undue negative consequences. For example, this category would apply where the landscape is assessed as having some distinctive features and characteristics that provide continuity/time depth, and typically has moderate visibility due to apparent/insignificant landforms and intermittent/open tree cover.
- **Medium to High Landscape Sensitivity** – typically a landscape that has some important components or is an area that is in moderate to good condition, and has some limited tolerance to changes, without undue negative consequences. For example, this category would apply where the landscape is assessed as having distinctive features and characteristics, some of which may be unique/rare, that provide continuity/time depth, and typically has moderate to higher intervisibility due to apparent/insignificant landforms and intermittent/open tree cover.
- **High Landscape Sensitivity** – typically a landscape that has important components or is an area of particularly distinctive character that is good quality and is susceptible to relatively small changes which would result in undue negative consequences. For example, this category would apply where the landscape is assessed as having many unique/rare characteristics that are very distinctive and provide considerable continuity/time depth (i.e. the landscape is of ancient origin with many features of historic interest), and it may also have very high visibility due to very limited topographical variation and tree cover.

1.3.32 As with all criteria-based assessments based upon data and information which is to a greater or lesser extent subjective, some caution is required in its interpretation in order to avoid the

suggestion that certain landscape features or qualities can be absolutely associated with certain sensitivities. In reality, landscape sensitivity is the result of a complex interplay of often unequally weighted variables.

1.3.33 The assessments are based on professional judgement, taking account of the interplay between the criteria, as well as those which might be more important to landscape character in a particular character area.

1.3.34 In addition, it should be noted that within the overall landscape sensitivity assessment there may be variations in relation to individual landscape elements and land parcels. These are picked up in the reporting where appropriate.

### Landscape Capacity Assessment

1.3.35 The study area for the assessment includes the character areas (or parts thereof) identified in the Landscape Character Assessment, that are outside of settlement boundaries within the Green Belt including Foulness Island.

1.3.36 For the purposes of this assessment the development scenarios outlined in **Table 1** were agreed with the Councils as being indicative of the nature of development likely to come forward in the next Local Plan period:

**Table 1 Outline Development Scenarios**

Scenario	Density Range	Indicative Heights	Mix of Uses
Small-scale	30 dwellings per hectare (dph)	Up to three storeys in height	55% residential; 33% open space; 12% community uses
Medium-scale	40 dwellings per hectare (dph)	Up to three storeys in height	55% residential; 33% open space; 12% community uses
Large-scale	50+ dwellings per hectare (dph)	Up to three storeys in height	55% residential; 33% open space; 12% community uses

1.3.37 In order to establish the potential landscape capacity of each character area/land parcel, the overall landscape sensitivity and landscape value have been combined using the matrix in **Table 2** below.

**Table 2 Indicative Landscape Capacity Assessment Matrix**

Overall Landscape Character Sensitivity	LOW	Low to Medium	Medium	Medium to High	Medium to High	High
	High Medium Low	Low to Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium to High	Medium to High
		Low to Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
		Low to Medium	Low to Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
		Low	Low to Medium	Low to Medium	Low to Medium	Low to Medium
		High	Medium to High	Medium	Low to Medium	Low
		<b>Landscape Value</b>				

1.3.38 The indicative landscape capacity of each land parcel/character area within the study area has been assessed using the following five-point scale.

**Landscape Capacity Scale**

- **Low Landscape Capacity** – typically a landscape with very limited potential capacity to accommodate the development scenarios due to generally high landscape value and high landscape sensitivity of the character area. New development has a high potential of having a negative impact upon key features and characteristics of the landscape, which are desirable to safeguard in line with relevant national/local planning policy objectives.
- **Low to Medium Landscape Capacity** – typically a landscape assessed as having medium to high landscape sensitivity and medium to high landscape value. New development has potential to erode the positive key features and characteristics of the landscape, which are desirable to safeguard in line with relevant national/local planning policy objectives. Taking into account site-specific constraints, there may be potential to accommodate small-scale development in specific locations within parts of the landscape with lower sensitivity, subject to appropriate siting, design and landscape mitigation.

- **Medium Landscape Capacity** – typically a landscape assessed as having medium landscape value and medium landscape sensitivity (or other such similar combination). Subject to appropriate siting, design and landscaping mitigation, small and/or medium-scale new development could potentially be accommodated without negatively impacting upon key features and characteristics of the landscape, which are desirable to safeguard.
- **Medium to High Landscape Capacity** – typically a landscape assessed as having low to medium landscape value and low to medium landscape sensitivity (or other such similar combination). Subject to appropriate siting, design and landscape mitigation small to medium-scale new development could potentially be accommodated without negatively impacting upon key features and characteristics of the landscape, which are desirable to safeguard. Higher density development could potentially be accommodated, with careful consideration of design and context.
- **High Landscape Capacity** – typically a landscape with greater potential capacity to accommodate the development scenarios due to the generally low landscape value and low landscape sensitivity of the character area. Subject to appropriate siting, design and landscape mitigation, small to large-scale new development could potentially be accommodated without negatively impacting upon key features and characteristics of the landscape, which are desirable to safeguard.

1.3.39 It should be noted that evaluating a landscape’s capacity for development is a complex issue requiring professional judgement about the susceptibility/vulnerability of the landscape resource and its visual sensitivity to the type of change being considered, and the value attached to the landscape or to specific features.

1.3.40 In addition, it should not necessarily be assumed that the assessment score applies consistently across the entire character area. For example, it could be possible for a certain scale/type of development, where carefully sited, well-designed and with suitable mitigation, to be accommodated in a character area assessed as having an overall high or moderate sensitivity to the development scenario. Conversely, in a character area assessed as having an overall low sensitivity to the development scenario, it could be possible that the sensitivity is higher in parts of the character area due to locally specific constraints.

1.3.41 While the study provides an indication of the overall landscape sensitivity of the character areas within the study area, and their relative capacity to accommodate development, care should be taken not to interpret the results as a definitive statement on the suitability of a specific site/location to accommodate a particular type or scale of development. The findings of the Study would need to be supplemented by detailed studies at a site-specific level.



### **Recommended Development Scale**

- 1.3.42 This is based upon professional judgement, with consideration of the assessed landscape value, landscape sensitivity and indicative landscape capacity. Having identified the potential capacity for development, the outline development scenarios are considered alongside the key characteristics and particular sensitivities of the character area in order to identify the most appropriate scale of development.

### **Landscape Planning Policy Review & Recommendations**

- 1.3.43 A review of relevant existing landscape planning policies has been undertaken, giving consideration to the findings of the study. Where appropriate, recommendations for policy wording and changes to designation boundaries have been included as a guide for the emerging Local Plans.

## 2.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

### 2.1 Evolution of the Landscape & Townscapes

#### Physical Influences

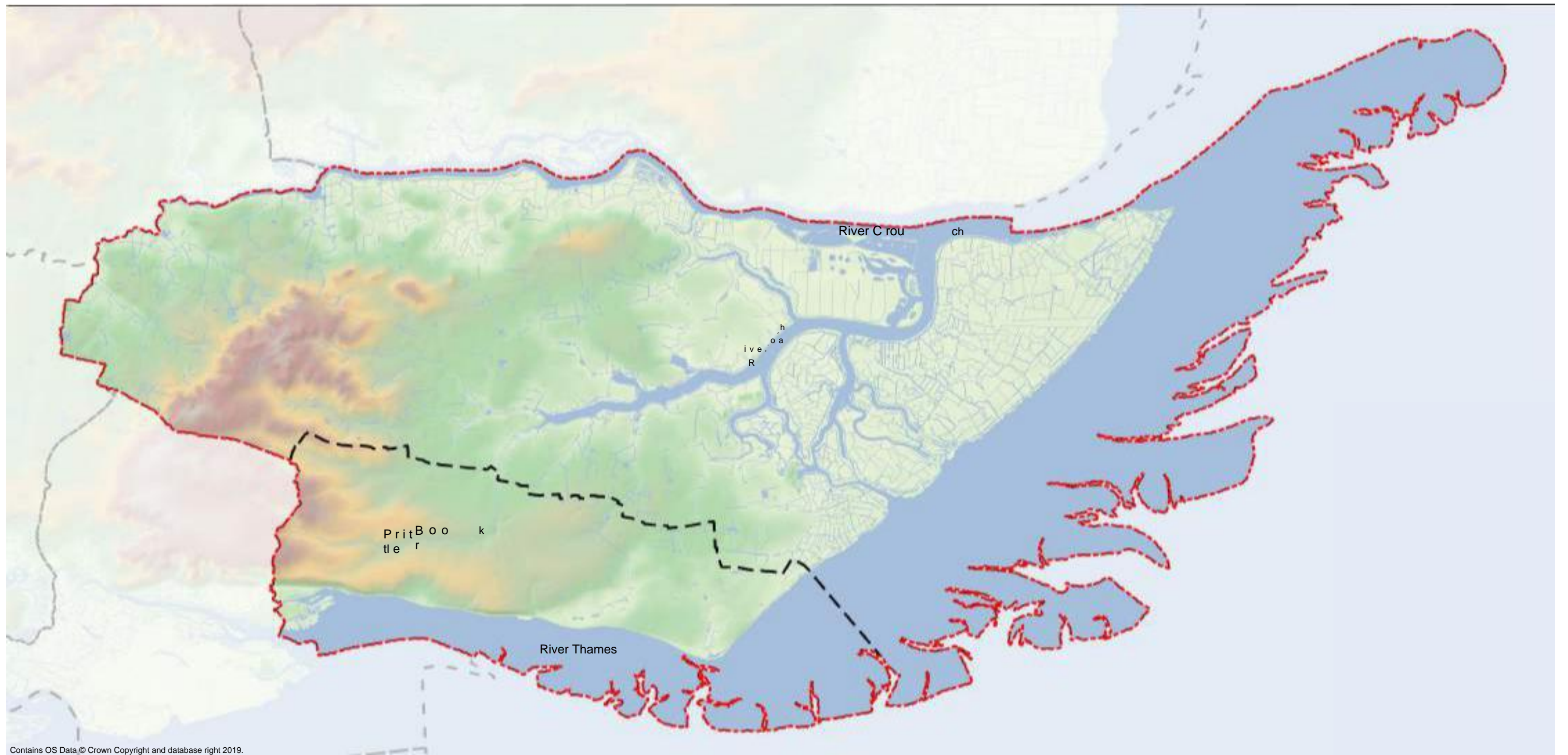
##### Topography

##### *Study Area Overview*



- 2.1.1 As illustrated on **Figure 2.1** the study area is generally formed by low-lying landform associated with the Thames Estuary and coastal location. Much of the area comprises extensive, flat, open land that has been historically reclaimed to form marshes. The landform rises gradually to the west from sea level on the east coast, through Southend-on-Sea to approximately 35m AOD at Westcliff-on-Sea. The highest topography within the study area is between Rayleigh and Hockley at approximately 70m AOD.
- 2.1.2 Inland the topography dips and rises again across ridges defined by small watercourses. These ridges have an east-west orientation following the shape of the coastline and sloping down to the mudflats and marshes to the east. They extend east from the hills that span north-south through Rochford and Castle Point.

##### *Rochford District*

- 2.1.3 Rochford District is predominantly low-lying and flat, particularly in the east associated with the reclaimed land of the islands. Landform begins to gently rise west of the River Roach and Potton Creek through Paglesham and towards Stonebridge. On the northeast edge of the District, Canewdon is located on one of the highest hills of the Essex coastline. The land rises from the River Crouch to approximately 35m AOD within the village centre. This landform stands out from the surrounding topography in the east of the District, which ranges between 0-15m AOD.
- 2.1.4 Further inland, landform dips and rises to localised ridges. Contours rise from approximately 10m AOD on the eastern edge of Rochford to 70m AOD on the northern edge of Rayleigh. Beyond this, to the west the topography slopes down again through Rayleigh to the western edge of the District.




**KEY**

-  Study Area
-  Planning Authority Boundary

Height AOD (m)



-  Watercourses/  
Waterbodies

### *Southend Borough*

- 2.1.5 The eastern seafront of Southend-on-Sea is low-lying, whilst an escarpment forms the western seafront providing clear views across the estuary. Inland the topography gently rises and dips around small watercourses. Overall, landform rises from sea level in the east of the Borough to approximately 50m AOD on the west Borough boundary. Landform gently dips north from the coastal escarpment towards Eastwood and into Rochford District.

### **Hydrology**

#### *Study Area Overview*

- 2.1.6 As illustrated in **Figure 2.1** water is the defining feature of the study area. The landscape has been shaped by hydrology in a variety of ways. The study area forms part of the Thames Estuary, which is primarily defined by the River Thames which enters the North Sea to the south of Southend-on-Sea. The study area is defined by the River Crouch to the north and a number of tributaries flowing into the River Thames to the south.

#### *Rochford District*

- 2.1.7 The River Roach rises in the Rayleigh Hills and flows east, dissecting Rochford District in a west-east direction and joining the River Crouch between Wallasea and Foulness Islands.
- 2.1.8 Much of the coastal land has been historically reclaimed to form a variety of pastoral and arable farmland. A large number of watercourses cross the coastal landscape. These watercourses form an irregular pattern across Foulness Island, with more structured drainage pattern characterising Wallasea Island. Further inland the number of drains reduces, particularly as the topography begins to rise.
- 2.1.9 Small lakes and reservoirs have been formed in the west of Rochford District, associated with recreational and nursery farming land uses.

### *Southend Borough*

- 2.1.10 There are fewer watercourses and features associated with Southend Borough. The coastal setting is the defining characteristic of the town. The Prittle Brook flows west-east following the direction of the ridges and coastline, through the west of the Borough before bending north into Rochford and becoming the River Roach. There are small ponds and watercourses associated

with recreational land use at Southchurch Park and Thorpe Hall Golf Club along the eastern edge of Southend, and also within Gunners Park at the southern point of the Borough.

## **Geology**

### ***Study Area Overview***

2.1.11 As illustrated on **Figure 2.2** the bedrock geology across the majority of Rochford and Southend forms part of the Thames Group. Thames Group comprises clay, silt, sand and gravel.

2.1.12 Historic sea level fluctuations and diversions of the rivers have resulted in extensive deposits of sand and gravel across the study area and wider county of Essex. The low-level East Essex Gravels contribute to the geology of the study area.

2.1.13 The intertidal alluvial muds have established drained loamy soils across the area, which provide fertile and productive land. Soils across the river terraces form some of the best agricultural land in the district. These are naturally free draining, particularly where brickearth is present, and easy to work.

2.1.14 Much of the east of the study area is reclaimed coastal marshes. The soils are heavy gleys that undergo periodic waterlogging from fluctuations in the water table.

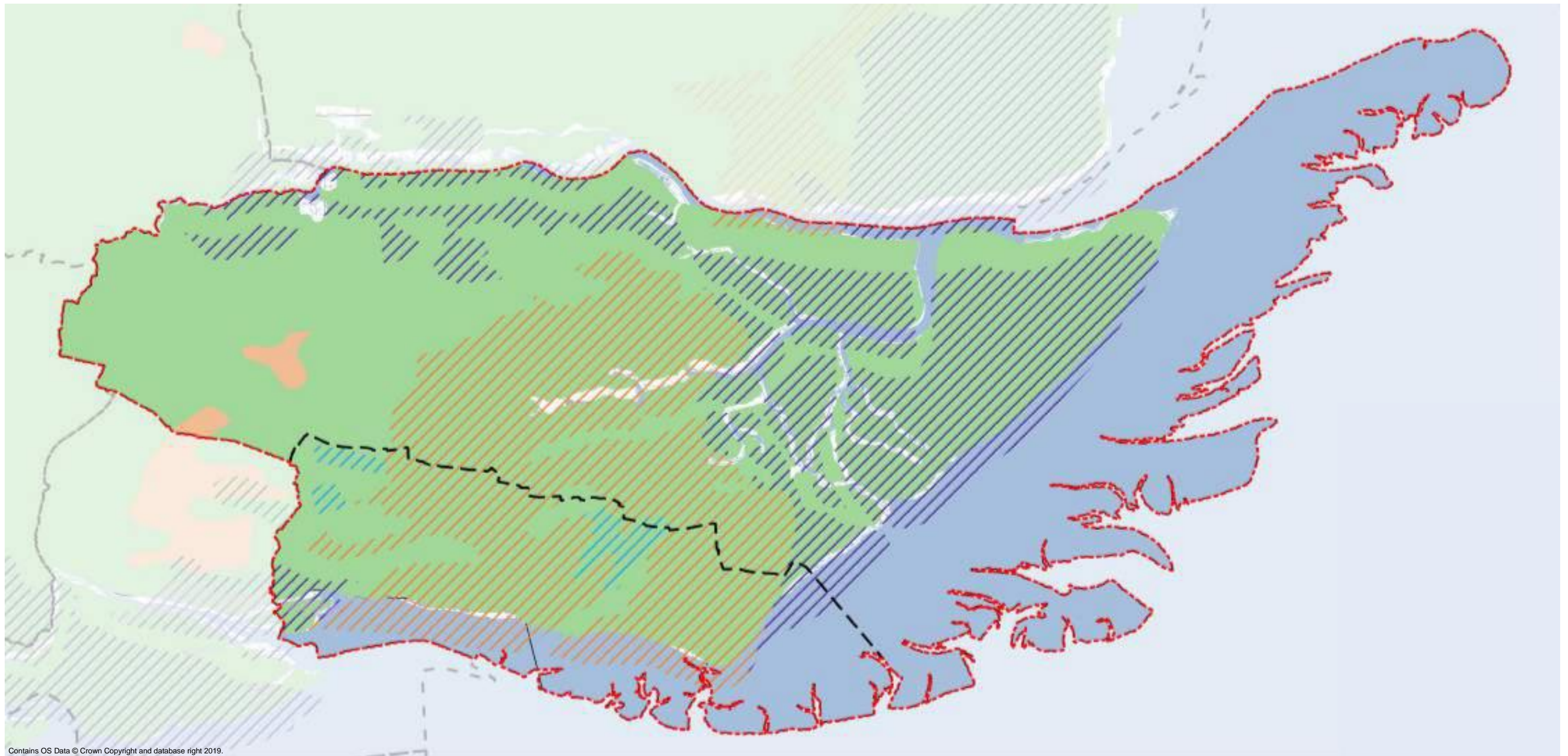
### ***Rochford District***

2.1.15 The eastern part of the District comprises Thames Group bedrock overlain with alluvial deposits. These deposits stretch along the northern part of the district, parallel to the River Crouch. There are areas of Brecklesham Group and Barton Group bedrock in the west of the District, which correspond with the ridged landform.

2.1.16 The central part of the district is formed of river terrace deposits, which are extensive within the Thames Basin. These are largely formed of sand and gravel.

### ***Southend Borough***

2.1.17 The Thames Group bedrock extends across Southend Borough. Superficial geology is largely river terrace deposits, across much of the east and central part of the Borough. There are small areas of brickearth to the north and northwest.



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**KEY**

- Study Area
- Planning Authority Boundary

**Bedrock Geology:**

- Thames Group - Clay, Silt, Sand & Gravel
- Bracklesham Group & Barton Group (Undifferentiated) - Sand, Silt & Clay

**Superficial Geology:**

- Alluvium
- Brickearth
- Landslip
- River Terrace Deposits (Undifferentiated)
- Sand & Gravel of Uncertain Age & Origin

## Biodiversity

### *Study Area Overview*

2.1.18 As illustrated in **Figure 2.3** there are several statutory and non-statutory biodiversity designations<sup>10</sup> associated with this coastal area including Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar Sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Local Nature Reserves (LNR).

### *Rochford District*

2.1.19 The Essex Estuaries SAC extends north from Shoeburyness, along the river channels of the Roach and Crouch and continues north along the Essex Coast.

2.1.20 The Crouch and Roach Estuaries and Foulness Ramsar Sites and Special Protection Areas (SPA) also extend along the coastline of Rochford District and along the mudflats of the river channels including the southern drained area of Foulness Island.

2.1.21 There are four Local Nature Reserves (LNR) in Rochford District. Hockley Woods is the largest, forming an area of Ancient Woodland to the south of Hockley. Marylands on the north side of Hockley is also a small area of Ancient Woodland. Magnolia Fields on the west of Ashingdon is a former brickworks site and Kendall Park is natural woodland on the shore of the River Crouch at Hullbridge.

2.1.22 As shown in **Figure 2.4** the majority of the rural area falls within the Metropolitan Green Belt. Foulness Island is outside of the Green Belt.

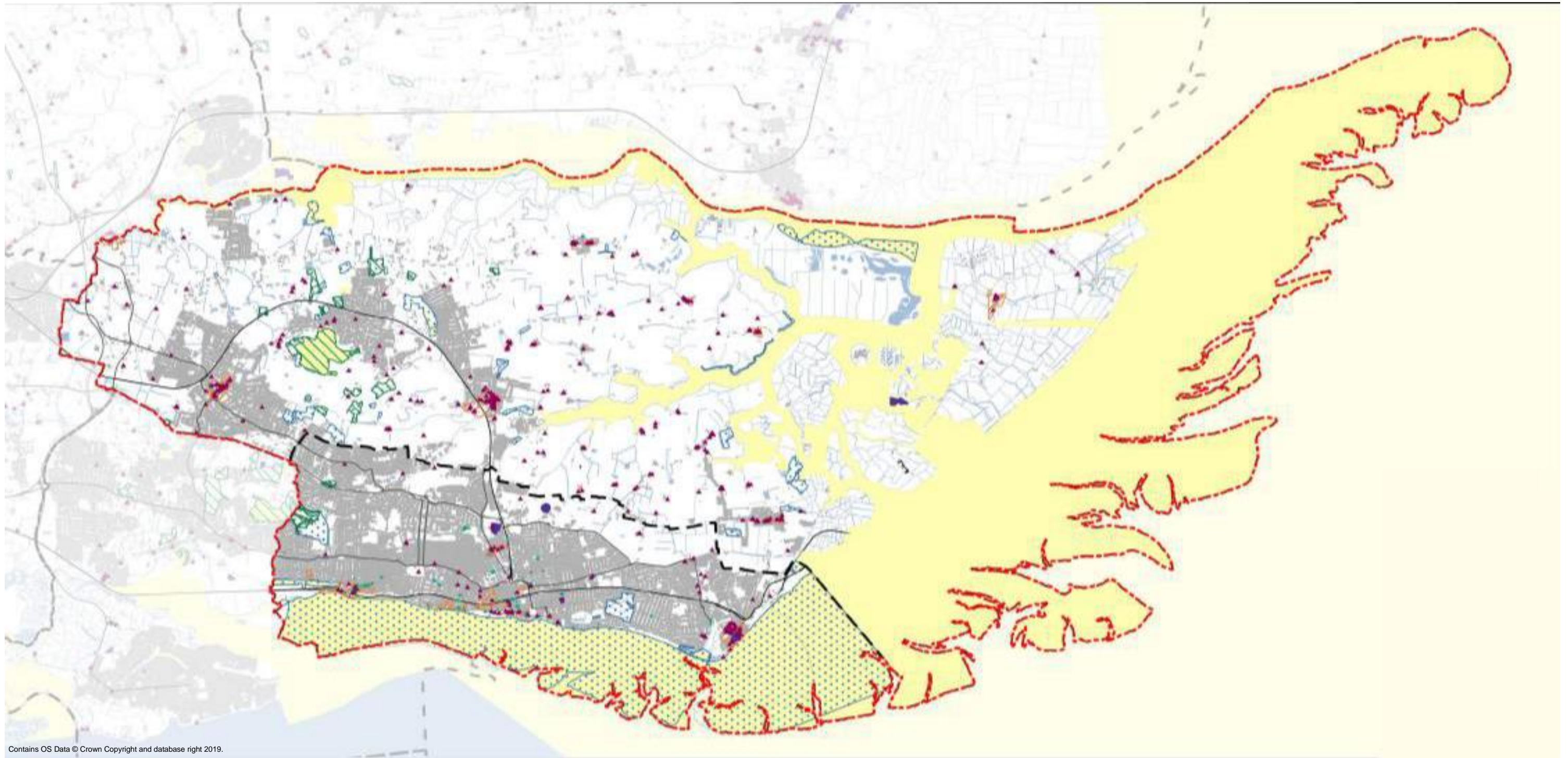
2.1.23 There are a number of non-statutory biodiversity designations scattered across the District including Local Wildlife Sites such as Wallasea Managed Retreat and Brandyhole Marsh Extension.

### *Southend Borough*

2.1.24 The Benfleet and Southend Marshes SPA extends along the coastline from Canvey Island (west of the Borough boundary) to Shoeburyness, where it borders the Foulness SPA. The Benfleet and Southend Marshes Ramsar Site covers the same area. This is also designated a SSSI.

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<sup>10</sup>These include local wildlife sites and nature reserves in Rochford District and Southend-on-Sea Borough



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**KEY**

- Study Area
- Planning Authority Boundary
- ▲ Listed Buildings
- Locally Listed Buildings
- Scheduled Monuments
- Conservation Areas
- Statutory Biodiversity Designations
- Non-Statutory Biodiversity Designations
- Ancient Woodland





**KEY**

- Study Area
- Planning Authority Boundary
- Green Belt
- Coastal Protection Belt
- Upper Roach Valley

- 2.1.25 The Southend on Sea Foreshore LNR spans the coastline from Leigh Cliffs to Shoeburyness. Shoeburyness Old Ranges LNR is located at the southern point of the coastline at Shoeburyness. Belton Hills LNR is on the southwest edge of the Borough.
- 2.1.26 The Metropolitan Green Belt extends into the western edge of the Borough, within Belfairs Park and across Hadleigh Marsh and Two Trees Island on the southwest coastline. There is also an area of Green Belt on the northeast edge of the Borough, north of the A1159 and A13.
- 2.1.27 There are a number of non-statutory biodiversity designations scattered across the Borough including Local Wildlife Sites at Belfairs Park and Belton Hills.

## **Human Influences**

### **Archaeology**

#### ***Study Area Overview***

- 2.1.28 There is archaeological evidence of human activity dating from the Mesolithic period including axes that may relate to clearance of former woodland.
- 2.1.29 The existing settlement pattern across Essex can be attributed to Roman settlement, with towns developed at communication nodal points. Numerous Roman finds have been recorded across southeast Essex. This was a densely occupied and productive agricultural zone but with dispersed settlement pattern.
- 2.1.30 There is strong evidence of Saxon settlement throughout southeast Essex, with many of the place names appearing to refer to early settlements.
- 2.1.31 There is clear evidence of an historic landscape created through a variety of human interactions. These have been further developed through further intensification of human activity particularly exploiting the grazing land of the marshes, and the fish and shellfish resources of the estuary.
- 2.1.32 The medieval settlement pattern of southeast Essex was generally dispersed, with church/hall complexes being the focal point. In the coastal settlements, the church is often on higher ground and the hall nearer to the sea. Much of present field system originates in 12th century, if not before and is characterised by small irregular fields. Extensive marshes along the northern border

of the District and across the islands form a flat, open landscape of medieval and post-medieval grazing marsh.

### *Rochford District*

- 2.1.33 Geological deposits in Rochford contain evidence of Palaeolithic occupation, including an important site at Barling where various artefacts have been discovered.
- 2.1.34 Mesolithic sites have been documented along the Crouch Estuary at Rawreth, Hullbridge, South Fambridge and Canewdon. Neolithic activity is also documented along the river terraces, including flint artefacts at Canewdon. Further Neolithic sites are on the Barling Terrace between Great Wakering and Shoeburyness, and also at Hambro Hill, Rayleigh.
- 2.1.35 Various Bronze Age sites including Early Bronze Age burials and evidence of settlement through to Late Bronze Age and Iron Age have been excavated across Rochford, including settlement around North Shoebury and Great Wakering.
- 2.1.36 Documented Roman finds are concentrated to the area south of Rochford, associated with brickearth/gravel extraction sites. Plumberow Mount near Hockley is thought to represent the remains of a Roman burial mound. There is evidence of land use for cereal production and grazing of sheep in the coastal marshes, as well as exploitation of the coast for oysters and whelks.
- 2.1.37 Early Saxon artefacts have been documented from the brickfields at Great Wakering and excavations at Barling and Paglesham. A Saxon cemetery has also been excavated at Rayleigh. Some of the best evidence is from the banks of the Prittle Brook between Southend and Rochford District.
- 2.1.38 Rayleigh was the principal town in the Medieval period. Rayleigh Castle was built by Swein of Essex between 1066 and 1086 on a spur from the Rayleigh Hills. The castle was taken into royal ownership in 1163. The town established within the outer bailey of the castle and as ribbon development along the main road. Rochford was a market town some distance to the east of Rochford Hall (church and hall complex), formed around the Market Square and as ribbon development along South Street to the bridge over the River Roach. Medieval settlements were nucleated settlements including Great Wakering and Canewdon and dispersed settlements that comprised of a church/hall complex, moated sites, few cottages and scattered farms. Many of the existing farm sites can be traced back to the 13th and 14th centuries. Marsh pasture was particularly important for sheep farming. Manors within southeast Essex had grazing rights across

the Foulness Island archipelago and the pattern of enclaves continued into the post-medieval period. The present day settlement pattern across the marshes originates in the medieval period.

2.1.39 Southeast Essex remained essentially rural through the post-medieval period and sheep pasture on the marshes remained important. The exploitation of fish and shellfish continued to expand and contribute to the local economy.

2.1.40 Military activity around Foulness and at Shoebury dates from 1855 when the experimental range for artillery was established here. The military occupation of this coastline has resulted in much of the historic features and wildlife interest being preserved across the marshlands.

### *Southend Borough*

2.1.41 Similarly to Rochford District, there is evidence of human activity across Southend Borough dating to the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods. The present day coastline was largely formed following these periods, as sea levels rose.

2.1.42 There is evidence of people first settling around Prittle Brook during the Mesolithic period and that the population gradually evolved from hunter-gatherer to more settled agricultural practices. Systems of ditched rectangular fields associated with the Bronze Age have been identified at North Shoebury. There is also evidence of prehistoric activity around the settlement of Shoebury and suggesting ramparts in the present Garrison protected an Iron Age settlement.

2.1.43 Roman occupation influenced the Borough and there have been various discoveries of Roman artefacts during road and rail construction in the early 20th century, which suggest that the settlement was of some significance. The Romans built a fortified settlement at the Ness, within the location of the current Garrison development.

2.1.44 It is thought that the first settlement at Prittlewell was a Saxon village close to the church that still contains part of a 7th century arch. A Saxon burial ground is also documented to the east of Priory Park. Human settlement at Leigh is also thought to date to this period. Saxon invaders re-established a settlement at Shoebury, which later became a base for the Danes.

2.1.45 Leigh, Prittlewell and Shoebury remained isolated settlements through the medieval and post-medieval periods with marsh fringing the coast around Leigh and Shoebury. Scattered farmhouses and labourer/fisherman cottages would have been scattered across the Borough, particularly relating to the coastline. Domesday records from 1086 document two manors near Prittlewell, one of which became Prittlewell Priory the lands of which extended south to the seafront. Leigh developed as a fishing hamlet, which increased trade through the Middle Ages

and had a parish church by the 13th century. Shoebury remained isolated, with the 12th century parish church and hall on slightly higher ground, inland to the west. The wider Borough comprised scattered farmhouses and halls with clusters of cottages. What is now Southend-on-Sea was a cluster of fisherman's cottages to the south of Prittlewell.

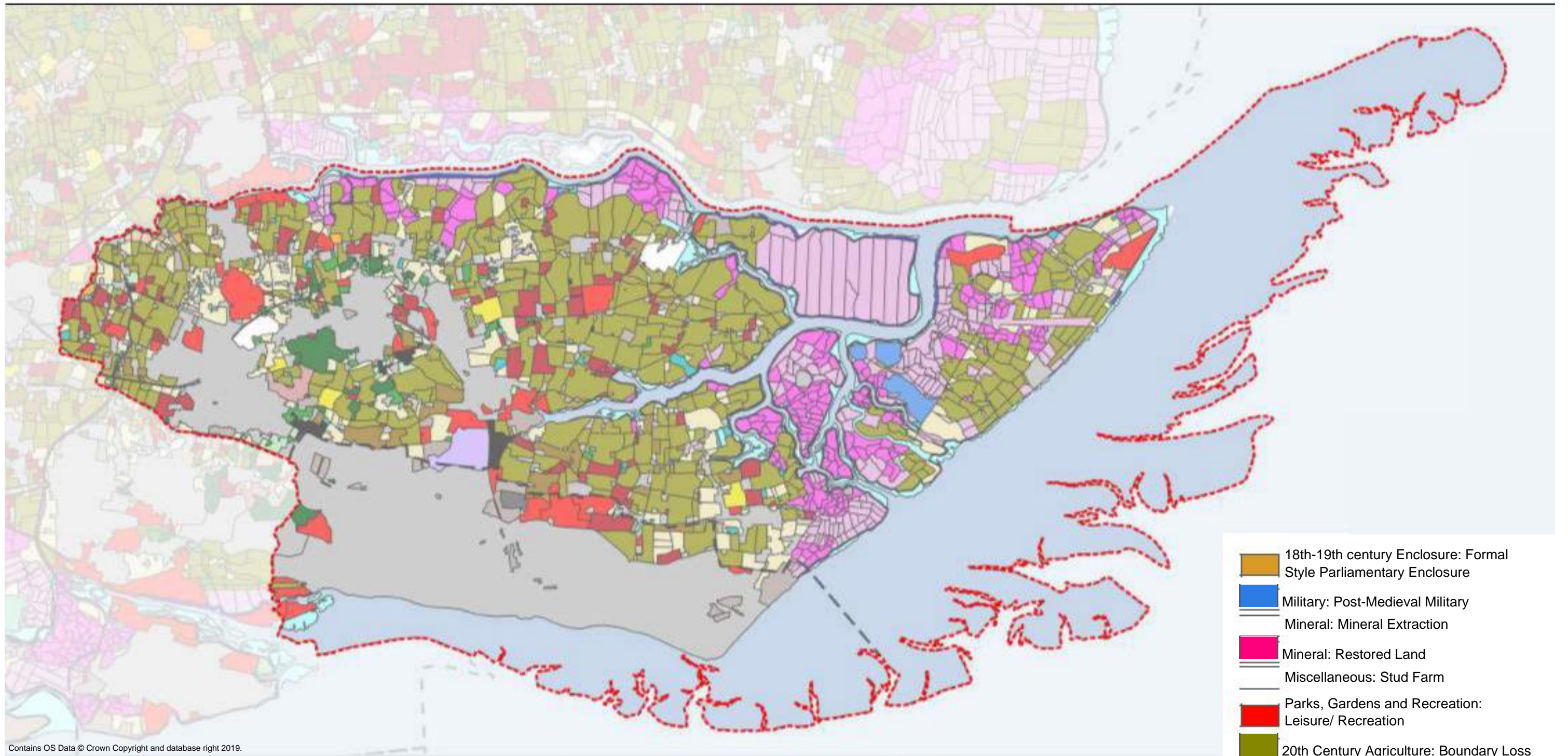
## Historic Landscape

### *Study Area Overview*

- 2.1.46 Historic Landscape Character Types (HLCT) identified within the study area by the Essex Historic Landscape Characterisation Project are shown in **Figure 2.5**. This demonstrates how the landscape has changed through the variety of land uses, resulting in 20th century agriculture appearing to dominate particularly inland within Rochford District. Southend Borough is largely a modern built-up area comprising urban development.
- 2.1.47 There are small areas of 18th-19th century enclosure scattered across the study area. More complex areas of coastal - drained enclosure are evident around the River Roach estuary. The western part of the study area is more densely settled, with modern built up areas forming northern extension to Southend. Areas of ancient woodland are remnant of what was historically a wooded landscape.

### *Rochford District*

- 2.1.48 Rochford District HLCT vary with topography and proximity to watercourses. Agricultural land uses of varying enclosure patterns span the majority of the District. 20th century agriculture has resulted in enclosure boundary loss particularly through the central area of the District, with smaller areas of change on Foulness Island. Coaxial enclosure remains evident across the District, most often adjacent to settlement areas.
- 2.1.49 Along the River Crouch and across much of the Foulness Island archipelago coastal drained enclosure associated with the reclaimed marshland remains. Areas of this have been altered through the 19th to 20th century and a more rectilinear enclosure pattern introduced, particularly evident on Wallasea Island.
- 2.1.50 Urban settlement areas are grouped in the west of the District, with good communication links with Southend to the south and west of the District to Basildon and into London. Small settlements and clusters of cottages are scattered through the central and eastern parts. Plotland type settlement is still evident particularly at Ashingdon and north of Rayleigh.



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**KEY**

- Study Area
- Planning Authority Boundary

**Essex County Historic Landscape Character Types:**

- Pre-18th Century Enclosure: Coaxial Enclosure
- Pre-18th Century Enclosure: Dual-axis - Rectilinear 'co-axial' fields
- Pre-18th Century Enclosure: Irregular Enclosure
- Built-up areas - Historic: Religious Institutions
- Built-up areas - Modern: Built-up areas - urban development

- Built-up areas - Modern: Plotlands
- Coastal - drained enclosure: Drained reclamation - curvilinear - pre-18th C
- Coastal - drained enclosure: Drained reclamation - rectilinear - 19th/20th C
- Coastal - managed wetland: Oyster beds
- Coastal - managed wetland: Unimproved Intertidal
- Communications: Airfield - civilian

- Communications: Motorway, railway
- Horticulture: Allotments
- Horticulture: Orchard
- Horticulture: Nursery with Glasshouse
- Inland - Managed Wetland: Enclosed Meadow
- Industry: Industrial
- 18th-19th century Enclosure: Piecemeal Enclosure by Agreement

- 18th-19th century Enclosure: Formal Style Parliamentary Enclosure
- Military: Post-Medieval Military
- Mineral: Mineral Extraction
- Mineral: Restored Land
- Miscellaneous: Stud Farm
- Parks, Gardens and Recreation: Leisure/ Recreation
- 20th Century Agriculture: Boundary Loss
- 20th Century Agriculture: Boundary Loss - with Relict Elements
- 20th Century Agriculture: 20th Century Enclosure
- Water Features: Sea Defences
- Water Features: Water Reservoir
- Woodland: Ancient Woodland
- Woodland: 19th-20th Century Woodland Plantation

- 2.1.51 Woodland areas are concentrated on the slopes of the Rayleigh Hills with scattered, small woodlands to the north of Hockley and larger area defining the southern extent of Hockley. Small woodlands are also dispersed across the agricultural landscape between the settlement areas at the head of the River Roach.
- 2.1.52 The coastal part of the District is managed wetland that continues along the river channels and corresponds with the various biodiversity designations Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Foulness Ramsar Site, Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Protection Area (SPA).

### ***Southend Borough***

- 2.1.53 The majority of Southend comprises modern built up area with scattered pockets of industry to the east, northwest and central area.
- 2.1.54 An area of ancient woodland extends from Castle Point across the western Borough boundary at Belfairs Park with a small pocket bounding the A127 north of this.
- 2.1.55 The northeast edge of the Borough, outside of the urban area, is primarily rural comprising of 20th century agriculture. The western part of this strip is recreational land including a golf course and park that adjoin a crematorium and cemetery on the north edge of the urban area, encompassed by an industrial estate.
- 2.1.56 The coastal part of the Borough is managed wetland that continues along the river channels and corresponds with the various biodiversity designations across the estuary including Benfleet and Southend Marshes Ramsar Site and SSSI.

### **Settlement Development**

#### ***Study Area Overview***

- 2.1.57 The World Wars altered the Essex landscape, introducing features such as airfields and landing strips as well as pillboxes and the radar station at Canewdon.
- 2.1.58 The post-War re-building programme resulted in mineral extraction and the creation of broad, shallow brickearth quarries north and east of Southend. The material is evident in housing across the region.

- 2.1.59 There was massive expansion of the urban areas as a result of agricultural land being sold off as housing parcels in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. There are surviving plotland areas, although much have been regularised. Following this, the 1960s saw further expansion of rural areas as London overspill.
- 2.1.60 Expansion of industrialisation has also led to expansion of towns, with estates added to the settlement fringes. Latterly, recreational land uses including golf courses are located within the settlement edge landscapes.

### ***Rochford District***

- 2.1.61 Settlement patterns began to change with the introduction of the railways in the 19th century. The expansion of Southend as a seaside resort also impacted on settlement through Rochford District. The introduction of the Great Eastern Railway led to the expansion of the quiet village of Hockley as landowners sold their farmland for development.
- 2.1.62 Rochford was heavily defended during the World Wars, with pillboxes evident across the landscape today. Southend airport was a former fighter base and there is the former Radar station at Canewdon.
- 2.1.63 Agricultural depression in the 19th-20th century resulted in many farms being sold to entrepreneurs who divided the land and sold separate plots to people wanting to leave the crowded city of London. Informal 'plotland' development is evident in Ashingdon and Rochford, some of which has since been regularised.
- 2.1.64 Agriculture experienced changes in the mid to late 20th century, altering parts of the southeast Essex landscape. Levelling works and straightening of drainage channels on Wallasea Island has completely altered the historic landscape.
- 2.1.65 There are expanses of post-World War II housing within the main settlement areas of Rochford, Rayleigh and Hockley. This is interspersed with more recent suburbs. Prior to this the character was much less densely settled, with piecemeal plotland style development.

### ***Southend Borough***

- 2.1.66 Southend began to be developed in the late 18th century. Building of railways in the mid-19th century saw an increase in tourism at Southend, resulting in an expansion of the urban landscape.



- 2.1.67 Prior to the introduction of the railway growth was gradual. The historic cores of Leigh, Shoebury and Prittlewell were dispersed along the coast and Regency and early to mid-Victorian growth began to extend along the seafront at Southend. As the railway was extended east to Shoeburyness and the Liverpool Street line introduced to the north, Southend became popular as a seaside resort and the urban area began to grow. There was also expansion of Leigh-on-Sea and the Garrison was established at Shoeburyness.
- 2.1.68 Much of the early to mid-Victorian development in the central part of Southend was focussed around the first railway station and consisted of terraced streets ascending in size with the larger, grander properties on the seafront. Late Victorian development saw the introduction of larger villas in addition to more terraced housing following the regular street grid pattern extending out of the central area.
- 2.1.69 Rapid expansion of Southend took place in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods, much of which was built around a planned street network with grid pattern. A more piecemeal pattern of development followed during and after the First World War, which was more focussed around the north of Leigh-on-Sea, Westcliff and southern part of Prittlewell. Southchurch also began to develop north of the railway and along the seafront.
- 2.1.70 The majority of development continued to be focussed along the seafront and London Road through the inter-war period. Expansion also began to take place, pushing north and extending west at Leigh-on-Sea. Following World War II rapid expansion took place, with pre-fabricated systems introduced for speed. However, brick built houses soon took over once more.
- 2.1.71 Much of the existing settlement pattern was formed prior to the 1960s. Shoeburyness in particular, expanded post-war due to the development of the A127 along the northern edge of the main urban area. This also resulted in a focus for development including industrial and business in the northern part of the Borough.

## Heritage Assets

### *Study Area Overview*

- 2.1.72 As illustrated on **Figure 2.3**, nationally designated sites with statutory protection within the study area include 12 Scheduled Monuments (SMs) such as Rayleigh Castle, and the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment, Foulness.
- 2.1.73 There are 24 Conservation Areas within the study area, predominantly focussed within the historic centres of settlements.

- 2.1.74 Listed Buildings are primarily focussed around the Conservation Areas. They are examples of historic building types dating from the medieval period and include churches, halls, cottages, timber framed and weather-boarded properties, Victorian and Edwardian houses.
- 2.1.75 There are a number of Listed Buildings scattered across the rural area. These are largely churches, halls and farmhouses.

### *Rochford District*

- 2.1.76 There are six SMs in Rochford District including a Romano-British burial site on Foulness Island, Rayleigh Castle, Rochford Hall, Plumberow Mount, Heavy anti-aircraft gunsite and atomic weapons research establishment at Foulness Island.
- 2.1.77 A large number of Listed Buildings are scattered across the District, with clusters in the historic town centres of Rochford and Rayleigh, within villages including Great Wakering and Canewdon, and in smaller settlements such as Paglesham and associated with church/hall complexes across the rural area.
- 2.1.78 Listed Buildings in Rochford town centre are focussed along North, South, East and West Streets within the historic core. They include period houses along South Street, cottages along West Street, 18th/19th century weatherboard cottages, timber framed halls such as the Grade II\* 14th century hall on South Street and 19th century red-brick carriage buildings. Further out from the town centre is Grade I listed Rochford Hall, which retains the agricultural setting in part. Grade II\* listed Church of St Andrew is nearby.
- 2.1.79 Within Rayleigh the Listed Buildings are scattered along High Street onto Hockley Road and Church Street. Much of the historic core has been redeveloped through the 20th century. Listed Buildings include 17th and 19th century cottages, some of which are timber framed, Dutch Cottage, Rayleigh Windmill and Holy Trinity church that is thought to date back to the 12th century.
- 2.1.80 Conservation Areas are located in Rochford, Rayleigh, Battlesbridge on the northwest District boundary, Canewdon, Paglesham, Paglesham Eastend, Great Wakering, Foulness and Churchend.

### *Southend Borough*

- 2.1.81 There are six SMs in Southend Borough including Prittlewell Camp hillfort, Southchurch Hall moated site, Danish Camp at Shoeburyness, Prittlewell Priory, World War II caisson and Cold War defence boom at Shoeburyness.
- 2.1.82 Listed Buildings are clustered in Shoeburyness, Leigh and central Southend. Those in Shoeburyness include a variety of Grade II structures and buildings associated with the Garrison including Commandant's House and Officer's Mess at Horseshoe Barracks. West of the Garrison is Grade II\* Church of St Andrew and Grade II South Shoebury Hall Farmhouse.
- 2.1.83 Listed Buildings in Leigh include the Grade II Crooked Billet pub, white-washed cottages and Leigh Library and Grade II\* Church of St Clement. These are located in Leigh Old Town Conservation Area, which is formed almost exclusively along one street lined with buildings that back onto the sea and the cliffs.
- 2.1.84 Listed Buildings in Southend include structures such as the Southend-on-Sea War Memorial and a telephone kiosk as well as the Pleasure Pier, Georgian terraces on the clifftop and Victorian hotels. There are several Conservation Areas along the frontage of Southend, that highlight the variety of development typologies associated with the expansion of the seaside destination.
- 2.1.85 Other Listed Buildings are within Prittlewell Conservation Area, along London Road, a small number in Eastwood and in the rural area in the northeast.



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**KEY**

- Study Area
- Planning Authority
- Boundary

**Character Types/ Areas:**

- A: Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats**
- A1 - Leigh Sand
- A2 - Southend Flat
- A3 - Shoebury Ness
- A4 - Maplin Sands & Foulness Sands
- A5 - Foulness Sands & Crouch Estuary

- B: Drained Estuarine Marsh**
- B1 - Foulness Island
- B2 - Potton, Havengore, Rushley & New England Islands
- B3 - Shoeburyness North

- C: Coastal Farmland**
- C1 - West of Hullbridge
- C2 - East of Hullbridge
- C3 - Canewdon
- C4 - Paglesham
- C5 - Stonebridge
- C6 - Little Wakering
- C7 - Great Wakering

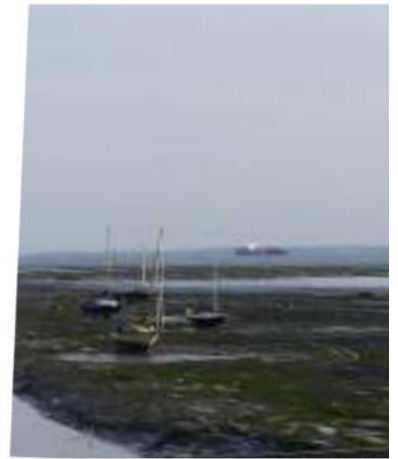
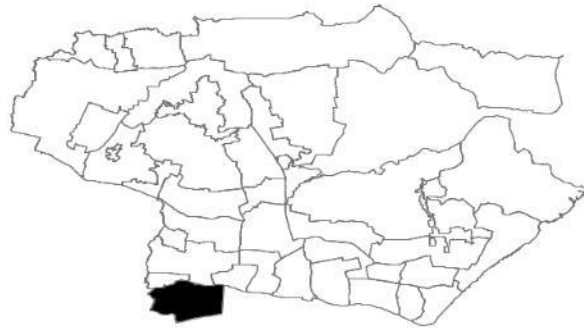
- D: Wooded Farmland and Hills**
- D1 - Rawreth
- D2 - North of Hockley and Hawkwell
- D3 - East of Rochford
- D4 - Southeast of Rayleigh
- D5 - Hockley Woods
- D6 - Stroud Green

- E: River Valley**
- E1 - River Crouch
- E2 - River Roach

- F: Coastal Mosaic**
- F1 - Wallasea Island

- D7 - Belfairs Park
- D8 - Belton
- D9 - Garon Park
- G: Urban**
- G1 - Hullbridge
- G2 - Rayleigh (West)
- G3 - Rayleigh (East)
- G4 - Rayleigh (Core)
- G5 - Hockley & Hawkwell
- G6 - Rochford & Ashingdon
- G7 - Rochford (Core)
- G8 - Eastwood
- G9 - Southend Airport
- G10 - Leigh-on-Sea (North)
- G11 - Prittlewell
- G12 - Leigh-on-Sea (South)
- G13 - Chalkwell
- G14 - Westcliff-on-Sea
- G15 - Central Southend
- G16 - Southchurch (North)
- G17 - Bournes Green
- G18 - North Shoebury
- G19 - Southchurch (South)
- G20 - Thorpe Hall
- G21 - Thorpe Bay
- G22 - Shoeburyness
- G23 - Great Wakering & Little Wakering

A: Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats



## **2.2 Landscape Character Type A: Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats**

### **Key Characteristics**

- Flat, low-lying and open landscape below the high water mark;
- Areas of mudflats and tidal creeks adjacent to the coast;
- Distinctive, linear boom and pier structures extend from the coastline, across the sand and are particularly visible at low-tide;
- Wooden groynes extend from the sea wall into the mudflats, which has resulted in areas of recreational, sandy beach, particularly along the southern coastline;
- The eastern mudflats form part of the MOD land that extends several kilometres east of the coastline;
- A large landscape, that is exposed during low tide;
- Expansive views; south towards an industrial horizon and east to the open, sea views.

### **Landscape Character Areas**

2.2.1 There are five character areas of the Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats Type within the study area:

- A1 - Leigh Sand
- A2 - Southend Flat
- A3 - Shoebury Ness
- A4 - Maplin Sands & Foulness Sands
- A5 - Foulness Sands & Crouch Estuary

A: Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats  
A1: Leigh Sand



## **A1 - Leigh Sand**

### **Character description**

- 2.2.2 The Leigh Sand character area is an expanse of tidal mudflats, marshes and part of an island on the northern side of the Thames Estuary, off the coast of Leigh-on-Sea, and is the southwestern-most corner of the study area. It is bounded to the north by Belton Wooded Farmland and Hills (D8), the urban areas of Leigh-on-Sea (South) and Chalkwell (G10 and G11); and to the east by Southend Flat Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats (A2). The character area lies within the borough of Southend.
- 2.2.3 Much of the character area is designated as the Benfleet and Southend Marshes SPA, Ramsar and SSSI, Leigh National Nature Reserve, and also as a local Site of Interest for Nature Conservation. The eastern part of Two Tree Island also falls within this character area and is an Essex Wildlife Trust Reserve. This consists of grassland, scrub, reedbeds and lagoons and supports a wide variety of birds, particularly migrants. The reserve contains a number of permissive footpaths. The edge of the Leigh Old Town Conservation Area extends into the north of this character area.
- 2.2.4 There are views to and from this area to the wider landscape, including to Hadleigh Castle and Country Park in Castle Point District to the west, as well as long views across the Thames Estuary from much of the character area. This is a predominantly very exposed landscape with big skies, though there are parts of Two Tree Island that feel slightly more sheltered and enclosed where trees and scrub have grown up, restricting views. Variety within the character area includes the perspective of views along the channel between Two Tree Island and the mainland, where views are restricted to along the coast, rather than out across the wider estuary.

### ***Historic Character***

- 2.2.5 The parts of this character area that are above the mean high water line include areas of Coastal Managed Wetland – Unimproved Intertidal, which includes intertidal mudflats. Two Tree Island is predominantly identified as Parks, Gardens and Recreation: Leisure/Recreation, due to its current use as a Nature Reserve, but is also predominantly 19th - 20th century rectilinear drained enclosure.

### ***Quality/condition***

- 2.2.6 The roadways and hardstanding on Two Tree Island are in poor condition in places, and litter and dog waste are a problem in some areas. Some poor quality urban development just outside



the character area is visually intrusive, such as high rise buildings in Southend. The condition of this area overall is considered to be moderate to poor.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Public footpaths should be promoted and recreational access within this area enhanced as part of an important landscape adjacent to the urban area of Southend-on-Sea;
- Conserve and enhance the nature reserve, including maintenance of access;
- In line with the TE2100 Plan<sup>11</sup>, ensure that any new or adapted sea defences do not encroach into the Estuary;
- Conserve the open nature of the mudflats;
- Conserve the mostly undisturbed, undeveloped character;
- Consider the impact on views from the area to potential areas of new development within adjacent townscape.

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<sup>11</sup> TE2100 Plan November 2012.

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A: Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats  
A2: Southend Flat



## **A2 - Southend Flat**

### **Character description**

- 2.2.7 The Southend Flat character area is an expanse of tidal mudflats on the northern side of the Thames Estuary, with the town of Southend on the land to the north. It forms much of the southern part of the study area. It is bounded to the west by Leigh Sand Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats (A1), to the east by Shoebury Ness Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats (A3). To its north are the urban areas of Chalkwell (G11), Westcliff-on-Sea (G12), Central Southend (G13), Southchurch (South) (G17), Thorpe Hall (G18) and Thorpe Bay (G19).
- 2.2.8 The character area is designated as the Benfleet and Southend Marshes SPA, Ramsar and SSSI, and also as a local Site of Interest for Nature Conservation. Most of the character area, with the exception of its westernmost extents, is designated as the Outer Thames Estuary SPA. The Southend-on-Sea foreshore Local Nature Reserve also covers much of the area.
- 2.2.9 This character area offers panoramic views across the Thames Estuary, and back to Southend sea front, as well as views along the seafront from the publicly accessible beaches which form the northern edge of the character area, nearest to Southend-on-Sea. This is a very exposed landscape with big skies, and a sense of tranquillity when further from the shore. East-west views are broken by Southend pier, which, extending more than 2km out into the estuary is one of the longest pleasure piers in the world. The pier also offers wider views back to Southend sea front.

### **Quality/condition**

- 2.2.10 Some poor quality urban development on the seafront, adjacent to the character area is visually intrusive, such as high rise buildings in Southend. The pier is a key feature of this character area and is a well-used and valued asset. Groynes and smaller piers along the seafront vary in condition. The beach along this seafront is well valued and maintained. The condition of this area is considered to be moderate.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- In line with the TE2100 Plan<sup>12</sup>, ensure that any new or adapted sea defences do not encroach into the Estuary.
- Conserve the open nature of the mudflats

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<sup>12</sup>TE2100 Plan November 2012.

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- Conserve the mostly undisturbed, undeveloped character
- Consider the impact on views from the area to potential areas of new development within adjacent townscape, including views to and from the pier

A: Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats  
A3: Shoebury Ness



### **A3 - Shoebury Ness**

#### **Character description**

- 2.2.11 The Shoebury Ness character area is an expanse of tidal mudflats on the northern side of the Thames estuary. It is bounded to the west by Southend Flat Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats (A2), to the east by Maplin Sands and Foulness Sands Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats (A4), and to the north by the predominantly urban area of Shoeburyness (G20). The character area forms part of the southern and eastern edge of the study area.
- 2.2.12 The western part of the character area is designated as the Benfleet and Southend Marshes SPA, Ramsar and SSSI. The eastern part is Foulness SPA, Ramsar and SSSI, and the Essex Estuaries SAC. The character area is also designated as the Outer Thames Estuary SPA. The Southend-on-Sea foreshore Local Nature Reserve also covers part of the west of the area, and most of the area is a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation.
- 2.2.13 The character area forms the western extent of the MOD Shoeburyness danger area, and as such is subject to a range of byelaws, parts of which remove public access across most of the area. The Shoebury East beach, which extends approx. 600m on the southern side of the Shoeburyness Boom is usually open to the public.
- 2.2.14 This character area offers panoramic views across the Thames Estuary, and back to the coast at Shoeburyness, as well as views west towards Southend seafront. This is a very exposed landscape with big skies and a sense of tranquillity when noisy MOD exercises are not being undertaken. Views to the north are broken by the Shoeburyness Boom, a cold war submarine barrier which extends out into the estuary, and which forms the northern boundary to this character area.

#### ***Quality/condition***

- 2.2.15 The coastal edge is formed of a narrow beach at the base of the wide, concrete sea wall. The sea wall and other concrete structures stand out in front of the green area of Gunners Park. Graffiti is an issue along the coastal edge. Several groynes, in varying condition divide the narrow beach. The beach is not well used or maintained. The condition of this area, associated with the coastline is considered to be aesthetically poor.

## Landscape strategy recommendations

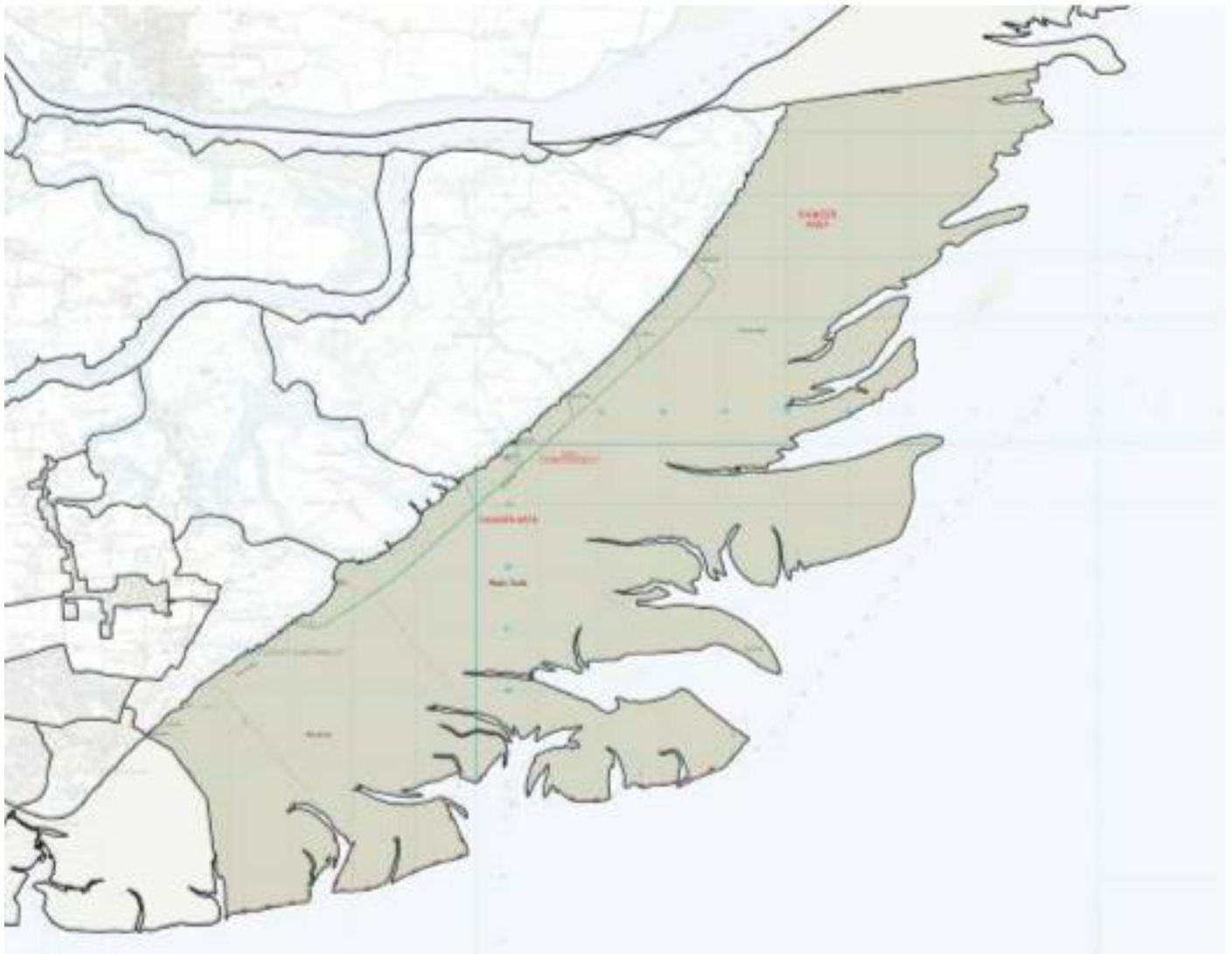
- In line with the TE2100 Plan<sup>13</sup>, ensure that any new or adapted sea defences do not encroach into the Estuary.
- Conserve the open nature of the mudflats
- Conserve the mostly undisturbed, undeveloped character
- Consider the impact on views from the area to potential areas of new development within adjacent landscape and townscape

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<sup>13</sup>TE2100 Plan November 2012.

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A: Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats  
A4: Maplin Sands &  
Foulness Sands





## **A4 - Maplin Sands & Foulness Sands**

### **Character description**

- 2.2.16 The Maplin Sands and Foulness Sands character area is an expanse of tidal mudflats on the northern side of the Thames estuary. It is bounded to the southwest by Shoebury Ness Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats (A3), to the north by Foulness Sands and Crouch Estuary Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats (A5), and to the east by the drained estuarine marsh areas of Foulness Island (B1); Potton, Havengore, Rushley & New England Islands (B2); and Shoeburyness North (B3).
- 2.2.17 The character area is designated as the Foulness SPA, Ramsar and SSSI. The character area is also designated as the Outer Thames Estuary SPA and the Essex Estuaries SAC. The westernmost part of the character area is a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation.
- 2.2.18 The character area forms part of the MOD Shoeburyness danger area, and as such is subject to a range of byelaws, parts of which remove public access across most of the area. The Broomway (part byway open to all traffic, part bridleway) runs parallel to the coast across the sand and mudflats, but is considered dangerous to access given the risk of being trapped by the incoming tide, or straying from the path.
- 2.2.19 This character area offers panoramic views south across the Thames Estuary, east out into the North Sea, and back to the coast. This is a very exposed landscape with big skies and a sense of tranquillity when noisy MOD exercises are not being undertaken. Views to the south are broken by the Shoeburyness Boom, a cold war submarine barrier which extends out into the estuary, and which forms the southern boundary to this character area.

### **Quality/condition**

- 2.2.20 This is a remote, large-scale landscape with occasional intrusive elements. There are scattered concrete elements, blocks, slipways and the Broomway coastal road and military 'junk' such as army shells is washed up on the shore. There are some areas of poor quality associated with limited management of structures. It forms part of the SPA, SAC and Ramsar designation along the coastline. Overall the condition of this area is considered to be moderate.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Conserve the open nature of the mudflats
- Conserve the mostly undisturbed, undeveloped character

- Consider the impact on views from the area to potential areas of new development within adjacent landscape.

A: Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats  
A5: Foulness Sands &  
Crouch Estuary



## **A5 - Foulness Sands & Crouch Estuary**

### **Character description**

- 2.2.21 The Foulness Sands and Crouch Estuary character area is an expanse of tidal mudflats on the southern side of the River Crouch estuary. It is bounded to the south by Maplin Sands and Foulness Sands Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats (A4) and the drained estuarine marsh areas of Foulness Island (B1). It forms the far northeast corner of the study area.
- 2.2.22 The character area is designated as the Foulness SPA, Ramsar and SSSI. The character area is also designated as the Outer Thames Estuary SPA and the Essex Estuaries SAC.
- 2.2.23 The character area forms part of the MOD Shoeburyness danger area, and as such is subject to a range of byelaws, parts of which remove public access across the area.
- 2.2.24 This character area offers panoramic views south across the Thames Estuary, east out into the North Sea, northwards across the Crouch Estuary, and back to the coast. This is a very exposed landscape with big skies and a sense of tranquillity when noisy MOD exercises are not being undertaken.

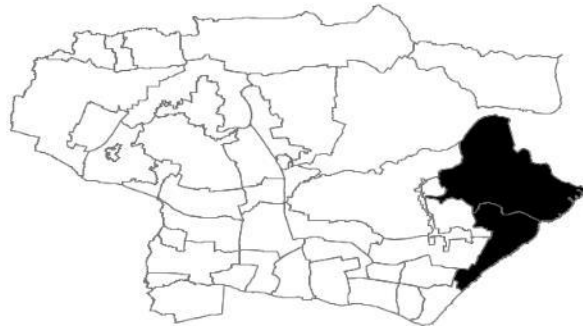
### ***Quality/condition***

- 2.2.25 This character forms part of the remote, large-scale landscape that forms the eastern extents of the study area and is generally considered to be tranquil. It forms part of the SPA, SAC and Ramsar designation along the coastline. Overall the condition of this area is considered to be good.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Conserve the open nature of the mudflats
- Conserve the mostly undisturbed, undeveloped character
- Consider the impact on views from the area to potential areas of new development within adjacent landscape

B: Drained Estuarine Marsh



## **2.3 Landscape Character Type B: Drained Estuarine Marsh**

### **Key Characteristics**

- Areas of flat, artificially drained former saltmarsh, which is predominantly arable farmland with grassland areas;
- Lack of vegetation, consisting of occasional hedgerow remnants and small areas of shrubland;
- Settlement is associated with the MOD land use, with various structures scattered across the area;
- There is a focus of activity in the southern part of the character type associated with MOD logistics;
- Isolated, often barren and remote character;
- Expansive views with large skies;
- Embankments along drainage channels occasionally foreshorten views.

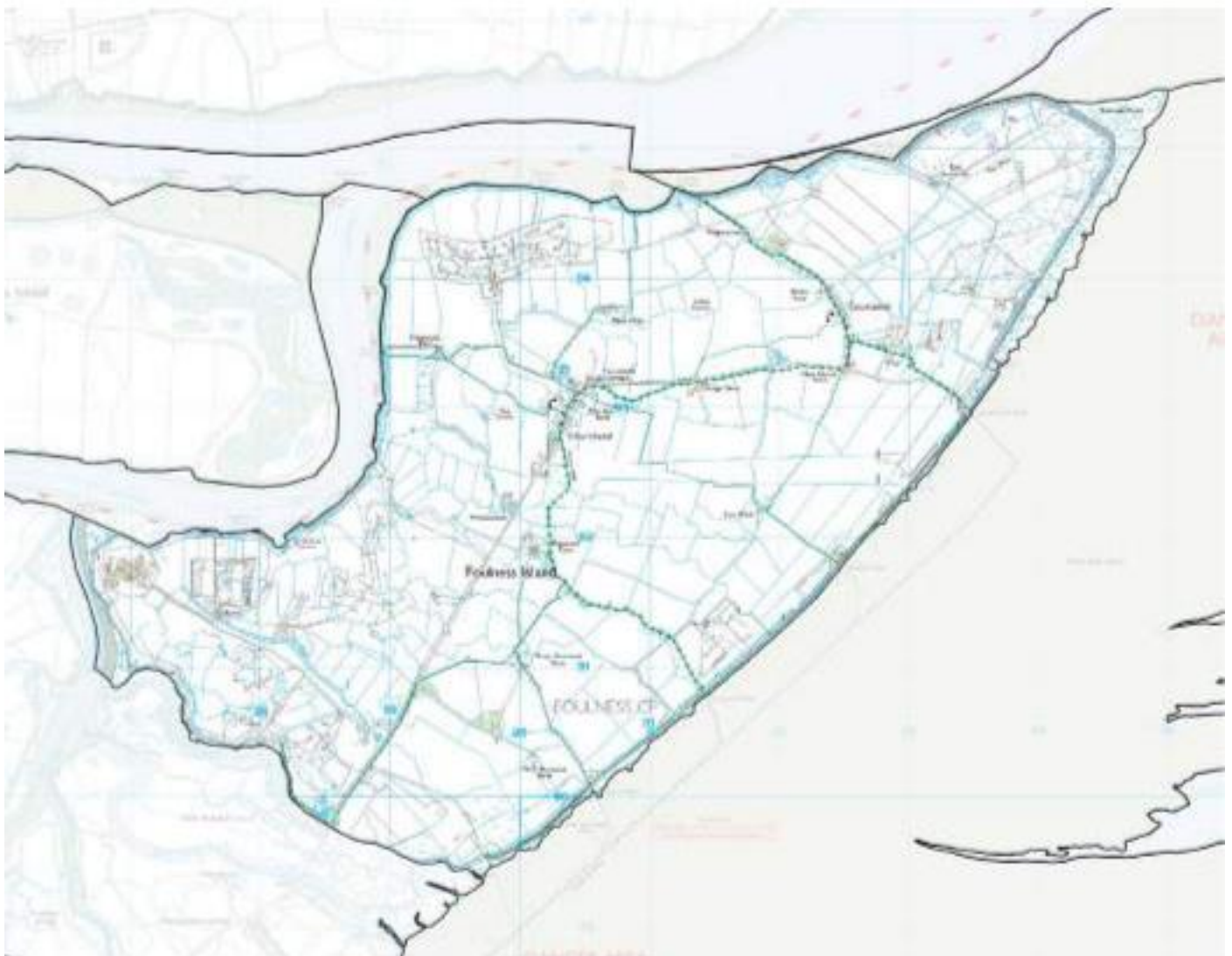
### **Landscape Character Areas**

2.3.1 There are three character areas of the Drained Estuarine Marsh Type within the study area:

- B1 - Foulness Island
- B2 - Potton, Havengore, Rushley & New England Islands
- B3 - Shoeburyness North

B: Drained Estuarine Marsh

B1: Foulness Island



## **B1 - Foulness Island**

### **Character description**

- 2.3.2 The Foulness Island character area comprises drained estuarine marshland an island in the far east of Rochford District. The island is divided from the rest of Rochford district by a series of watercourses, including the River Roach, and Shelford Creek, although it is connected to the adjacent New England and Havengore Islands by an area of marshy land in the south. The character area lies in the east of the study area, and is bounded to the west by Wallasea Island coastal mosaic (F1) and Potton, Havengore, Rushley & New England Islands (B2) drained estuarine marsh; to the east and south by Foulness Sands & Crouch Estuary (A5) and Maplin Sands & Foulness Sands (A4) estuarine marsh/mudflats
- 2.3.3 The water courses and some parts of the drained estuarine marsh around the island are designated as the Foulness SPA, Ramsar and SSSI, and the main waterways are part of the Essex Estuaries SAC. The character area forms part of the MOD Shoeburyness danger area, and as such is subject to a range of byelaws, parts of which remove public access across much of the area, allowing the MOD to close the limited number of public rights of way when dangerous activities are undertaken.
- 2.3.4 The land within this area other than areas used directly by the MOD is predominantly comprised of arable farmland, protected from the sea by a tidal defence bund which encircles the island. Field boundaries are mostly ditches with limited presence of hedgerows, though there are trees and scrub in places, particularly around the small areas of settlement. There is a small village at Churchend, including a grade II listed church which is used as a heritage centre. There are also a number of scattered farmsteads and buildings or structures associated with the MOD activity.
- 2.3.5 There are a few scattered public rights of way on the island, but access to these is limited other than by the small local population, as the only public right of way accessing the island is the dangerous Broomway, which crosses the mudflats to the south.
- 2.3.6 This landscape is exposed and flat, offering opportunities for long views; though the sea defence bunds limit the extent of some views. This is a predominantly exposed landscape with big skies and a sense of tranquillity when MOD exercises are not being undertaken.

### ***Historic Character***

- 2.3.7 The eastern side of Foulness Island is predominantly formed of 20th century fields with boundary loss, interspersed with areas of drained reclaimed curvilinear pre-18th century and rectilinear



19th/20th century fields. The western side of the island is predominantly drained reclaimed rectilinear 19th/20th century fields with some large areas of post-medieval military land in the south-west. Some small areas of leisure/recreation land exist in the north-west and north east of the island.

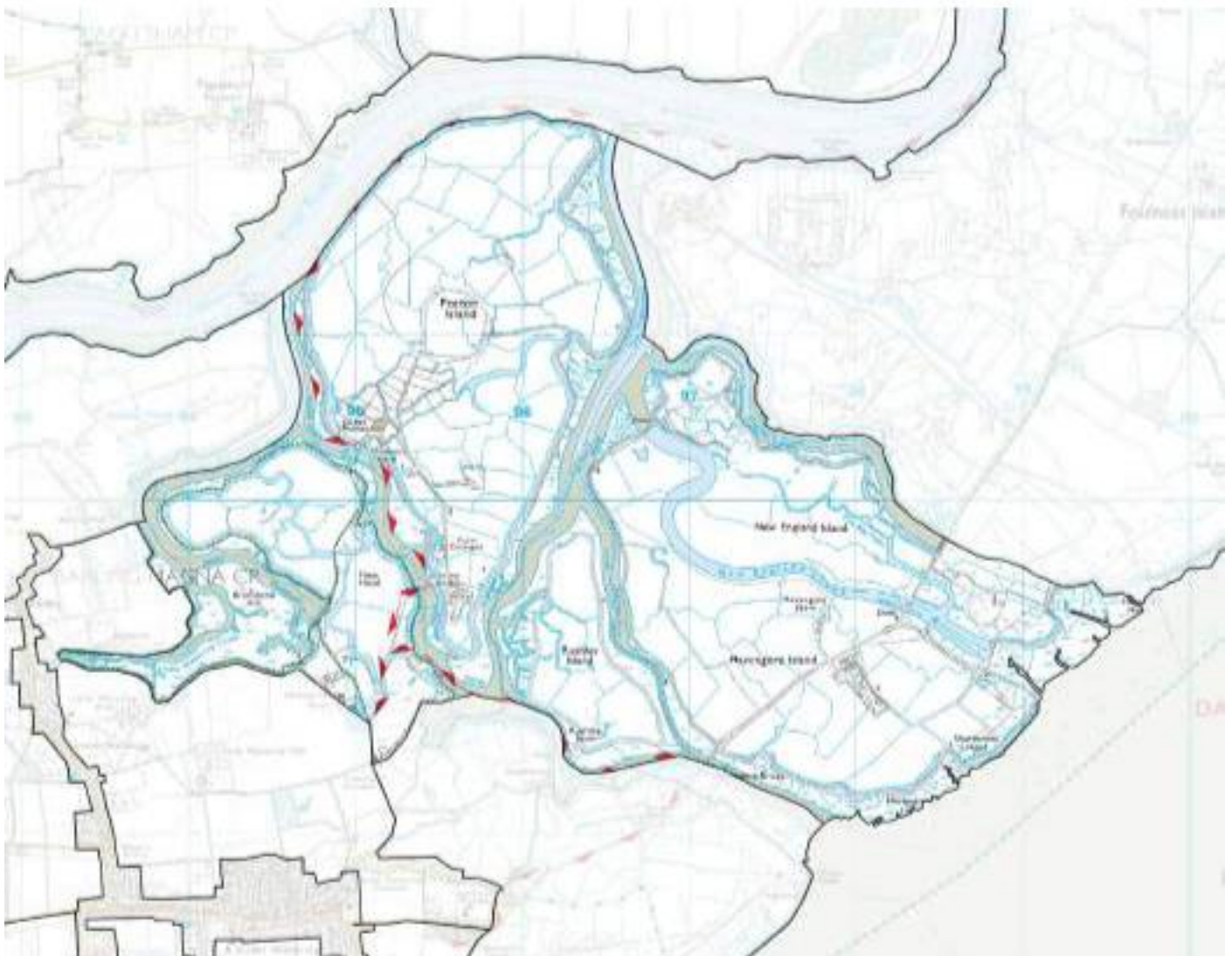
### ***Quality/condition***

- 2.3.8 The military land use in this character area has in places resulted in degradation of some landscape features and grazing marsh has been converted to arable land. There is a moderate level of tranquillity across the area, associated with the remote character and MOD land use. A number of historic features and wildlife interest has been preserved in this area. Overall, landscape condition is considered to be moderate.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Discourage the use of non-native and conifer hedgerow/boundary planting, which is not in keeping with the existing wider landscape character;
- Where possible, encourage the return of historic grazing marsh as a land use, instead of arable conversion;
- Conserve and enhance the open character of the coastal edge landscapes where possible.

B: Drained Estuarine Marsh B2:  
Potton, Havengore, Rushley &  
New England Islands



## **B2 - Potton, Havengore, Rushley & New England Islands**

### **Character description**

- 2.3.9 The Potton, Havengore, Rushley & New England Islands character area comprises a series of drained estuarine marshland islands between the River Roach in the north and the Thames Estuary in the south. The islands are separated by a series of smaller watercourses, such as New England Creek, Fleethead Creek and Potton Creek, as well as areas of marshy land and mudflats. The character area lies in the southeast of the study area and is bounded to the east by Foulness Island drained estuarine marsh (B1), the north by Wallasea Island coastal mosaic (F1), the west by the coastal farmland at Paglesham (C4), Stonebridge (C5) and East of Little Wakering (C6), and the southeast by Maplin Sands and Foulness Sands Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats (A4). The character area lies within Rochford District.
- 2.3.10 The water courses and some parts of the drained estuarine marsh around the islands are designated as the Foulness SPA, Ramsar and SSSI, and the Essex Estuaries SAC. Most of the character area is part of the MOD Shoeburyness danger area, and as such is subject to a range of byelaws, parts of which remove public access across much of the area.
- 2.3.11 The land within this area is predominantly comprised of pasture in the north, and arable farmland further south, protected from the sea by a tidal defence bund which encircles the island. Field boundaries are mostly ditches with very limited presence of hedgerows, trees and scrub. There is a very little settlement, with a farmstead at Great Potton, a couple of cottages, and some other scattered buildings that may be of either agricultural or military use.
- 2.3.12 There are very few public rights of way in this character area, with all those that do occur lying to the west of Potton Creek, predominantly outside the MOD danger area.
- 2.3.13 This landscape is exposed and flat, offering opportunities for long views; though the sea defence bunds limit the extent of some views. This is a predominantly fairly exposed landscape with big skies and a sense of tranquillity when MOD exercises are not being undertaken.

### ***Historic Character***

- 2.3.14 Potton Island is a mosaic of drained reclaimed land, including curvilinear pre-18<sup>th</sup> century fields and rectilinear 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century fields, with the latter more dominant in the north. Havengore Island is also a mosaic of drained reclaimed curvilinear pre-18<sup>th</sup> century and rectilinear 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century fields, with a small amount of 20<sup>th</sup> century agriculture with boundary loss and 20<sup>th</sup> century enclosure in the east. New England Island is a mix of small areas of 20<sup>th</sup> century

agriculture with boundary loss and 20th century enclosure, together with small areas of drained reclaimed curvilinear pre-18th century and rectilinear 19th/20th century fields. Rushley Island consists entirely of drained reclaimed curvilinear pre-18th century fields. All of the islands are typically surrounded by unimproved intertidal land.

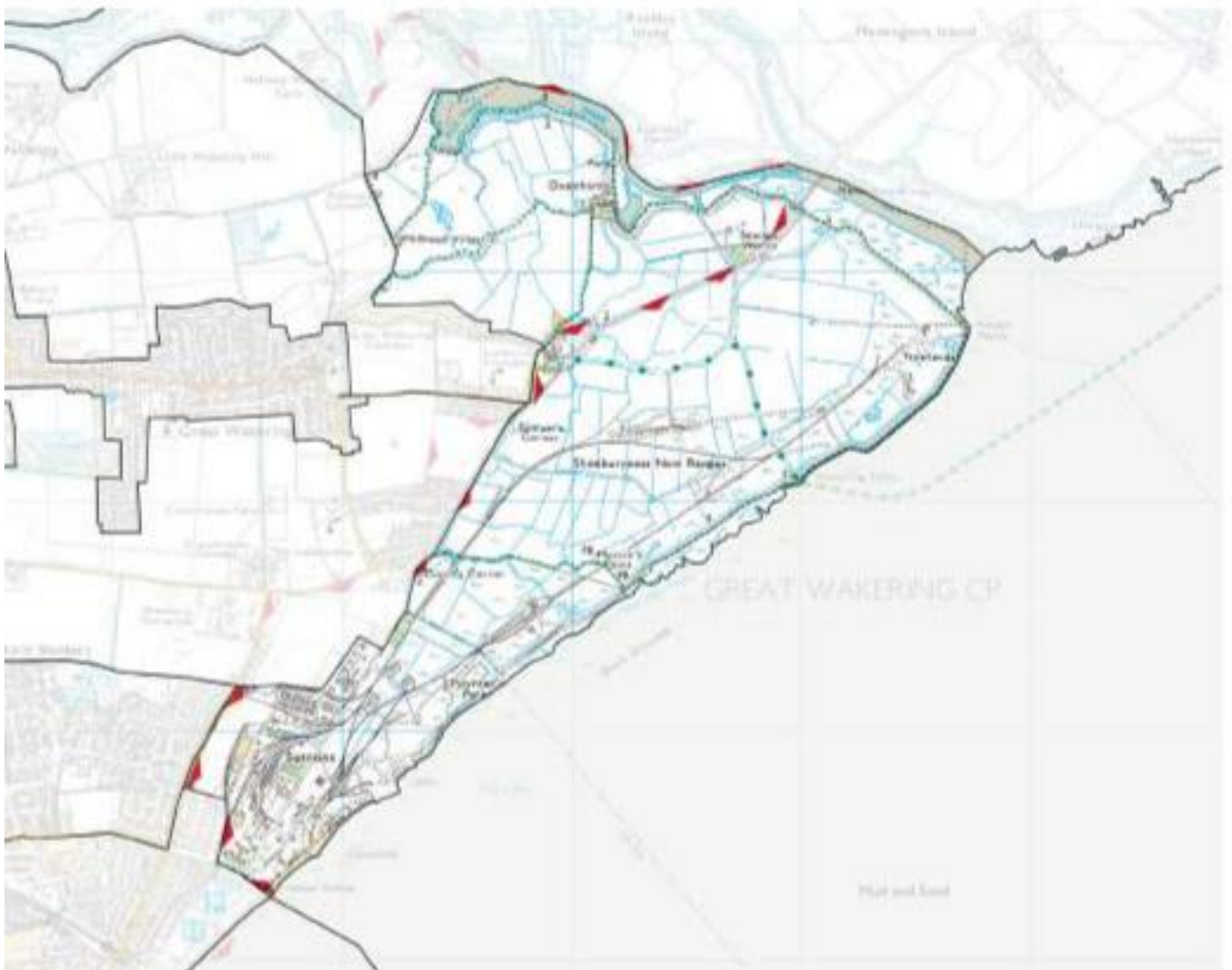
### ***Quality/condition***

2.3.15 The military land use in this character area has in places resulted in degradation of some landscape features and grazing marsh has been converted to arable land. There is a moderate level of tranquillity across the area, associated with the remote character and MOD land use. A number of historic features and wildlife interest has been preserved in this area. Overall, landscape condition is considered to be moderate.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Discourage the use of non-native and conifer hedgerow/boundary planting, which is not in keeping with the existing wider landscape character;
- Maintain the open character of this coastal landscape;
- Where possible given the MOD access restrictions, maintain and encourage recreational footpaths through the rural area to provide connectivity with the adjacent settlements.

B: Drained Estuarine Marsh  
B3 - Shoeburyness North



## **B3 - Shoeburyness North**

### **Character description**

- 2.3.16 The Shoeburyness North character area comprises an area of drained estuarine marshland on the northern side of the Thames Estuary. The character area lies in the south of the study area, and is bounded to the north by the Havengore Creek, which separates the area from the Potton, Havengore, Rushley & New England Islands drained estuarine marsh (B2), to the southeast by Maplin Sands and Foulness Sands Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats (A4), and to the west by the coastal farmland at East of Little Wakering (C6) and South of Great Wakering (C7). On its southwestern edge are the eastern extents of Southend-on-Sea, including the predominantly urban area at Shoeburyness (G20). The character area lies within Rochford District.
- 2.3.17 The water courses and some parts of the drained estuarine marsh around the islands are designated as the Foulness SPA, Ramsar and SSSI, and the Essex Estuaries SAC. Most of the character area, with the exception of the northern area around Oxenham, is part of the MOD Shoeburyness danger area, and as such is subject to a range of byelaws, parts of which remove public access across much of the area.
- 2.3.18 The land within this area is predominantly comprised of arable farmland, protected from the sea by a tidal defence bund which runs along the coastal edge of the character area. Field boundaries are mostly ditches with some presence of hedgerows. Along the coastal edge, are large areas of rough grassland and scrub.
- 2.3.19 There are public rights of way in this character area (mostly footpaths), including a route that runs most of the way along the coastal edge of the area on the sea defence bund, though access to those routes that lie within the MOD danger area can be removed by the MOD for safety purposes.
- 2.3.20 This landscape is quite varied, enclosed in some places due to the presence of dense scrub, which, along with the sea defence bunds can limit the extent of views. Elsewhere, where there is less vegetation, longer views are possible across the flat farmland. Views are possible to the Thames Estuary from the edge of the character area.

### ***Historic Character***

- 2.3.21 The central and eastern part of this character area mainly consists of drained reclaimed rectilinear 19th/20th century fields, with the south-west and northern part mainly drained reclaimed

curvilinear pre-18th century fields. There are small parcels of industrial land around the sewage works in the north-east and at Suttons in the south-west.

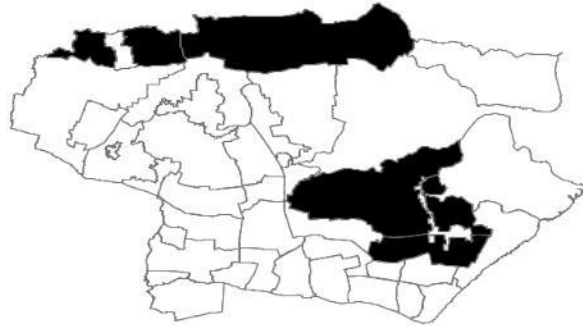
### ***Quality/condition***

2.3.22 The condition of the landscape structure in this area is predominantly good; with the distinctive pattern of ditches that forms the field structure predominantly intact. The areas identified as of particular biodiversity value, including the tussocky grassland, short turf, bare ground, scattered/dense scrub and ditches are in favourable condition, although the scrub may need some management to maintain at appropriate levels. Some localised areas are degraded though heavy military uses. The landscape condition overall is considered to be moderate.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Maintain the distinctive pattern of ditches that form many of the field boundaries;
- Maintain opportunities for wide views of the estuary from the edge of this character area;
- Where possible given the MOD access restrictions, maintain and encourage recreational footpaths through the rural area to provide connectivity with adjacent settlements;
- Maintain and enhance as appropriate the pattern of tussocky grassland, short turf, bare ground, scattered/dense scrub and ditches that cover the land closest to the estuary.

C: Coastal Farmland





## 2.4 Landscape Character Type C: Coastal Farmland

### Key Characteristics

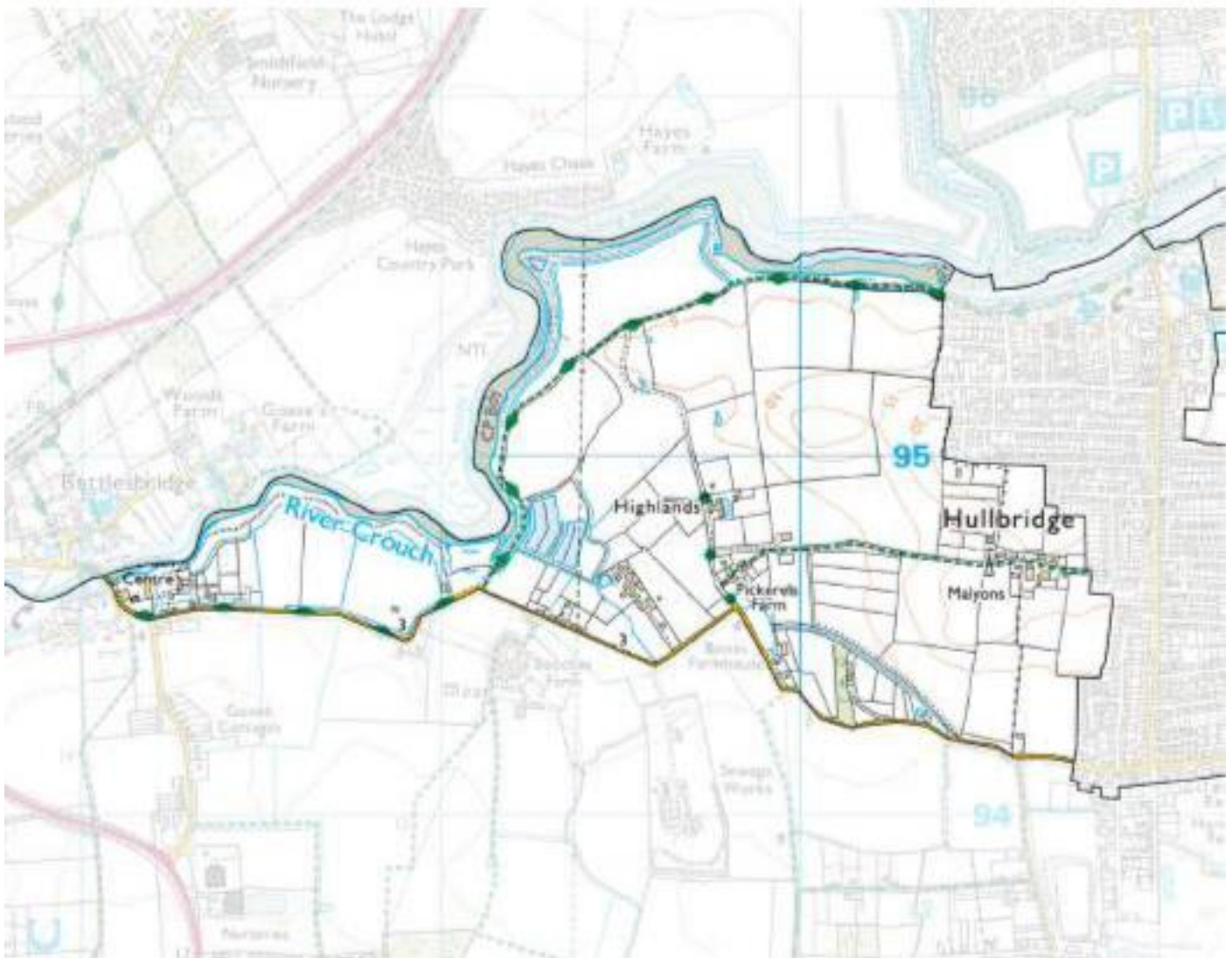
- Gently undulating, low-lying topography, sloping gradually upwards to the west;
- Medium to large-scale, open field network of predominantly arable farmland with varied type and quality of hedgerows;
- Some ancient hedgerow boundaries remain in places;
- Pastoral farmland and horse paddocks common in places, often associated with properties and close to farms;
- Little woodland cover, with tree vegetation focussed around villages;
- Dispersed copses combine with hedgerows and woodland cover in the backdrop of views to give the impression of a well treed landscape, particularly in transitional areas of landscape;
- Generally scattered settlement pattern comprising small villages, hamlets, farmsteads and individual properties along roads on higher ground;
- Built form is often visible in views across the landscape although many of the villages have an enclosed, inward looking character due to layout and surrounding vegetation;
- Long views across the estuaries from higher ground;
- Rivers are not immediately apparent in views although land uses associated with adjacent estuaries often stand out.

### Landscape Character Areas

2.4.1 There are seven character areas of the Coastal Farmland Type within the study area:

- C1 - West of Hullbridge
- C2 - East of Hullbridge
- C3 - Canewdon
- C4 - Paglesham
- C5 - Stonebridge
- C6 – East of Little Wakering
- C7 - South of Great Wakering

C: Coastal Farmland  
C1: West of Hullbridge



## **C1 - West of Hullbridge**

### **Character description**

- 2.4.2 The West of Hullbridge character area comprises coastal farmland adjacent to the River Crouch in the north west of the study area. The character area is bounded to the north and west by the River Crouch (E1), which is also the district boundary in this location. On its eastern edge is the urban character area of Hullbridge (G1) and to the south is Rawreth Wooded Farmland and Hills (D1). The character area lies within Rochford District.
- 2.4.3 The land within this area is predominantly comprised of farmland, both arable and pastoral. Field boundaries are mostly hedgerows, some of which have scattered hedgerow trees.
- 2.4.4 There are a number of farmsteads and individual or small groups of properties, and in the west, part of the small settlement of Battlesbridge, including some residential properties, an area of light industrial buildings and a plant nursery with polytunnels.
- 2.4.5 This landscape is gently rolling and fairly open offering opportunities for views, both across the river towards South Woodham Ferrers and the Hayes Leisure Park; and westwards past Hullbridge along the River Crouch. Some longer views are also possible from the higher ground to the west of Hullbridge. In other places views are more limited due to the undulating topography, and though the character area is not particularly wooded, there are some small blocks of trees and scrub that provide a limited sense of enclosure. There is some sense of tranquillity in this area, particularly when away from settlement and alongside the river. The Saffron Trail promoted route runs through this area, predominantly alongside the river.

### ***Historic Character***

- 2.4.6 This character area is predominantly comprised of 20th century agriculture with boundary loss. There is a small area of enclosed meadow in the west, alongside the River Crouch. There are pockets of 18th – 19th century formal style parliamentary enclosure in the centre, together with some built-up areas. Small fields of 20th century enclosure exist in the east of the character area.

### ***Quality/condition***

- 2.4.7 The hedgerows are gappy and lacking in management in some locations, and the publicly accessible locations, such as the footpath along the river are degraded/worn in places. The vegetation that lines the edge of the settlement to the east is in a variable condition, making the

hard edge of the settlement visible from some locations. The condition of this area overall is considered to be moderate.

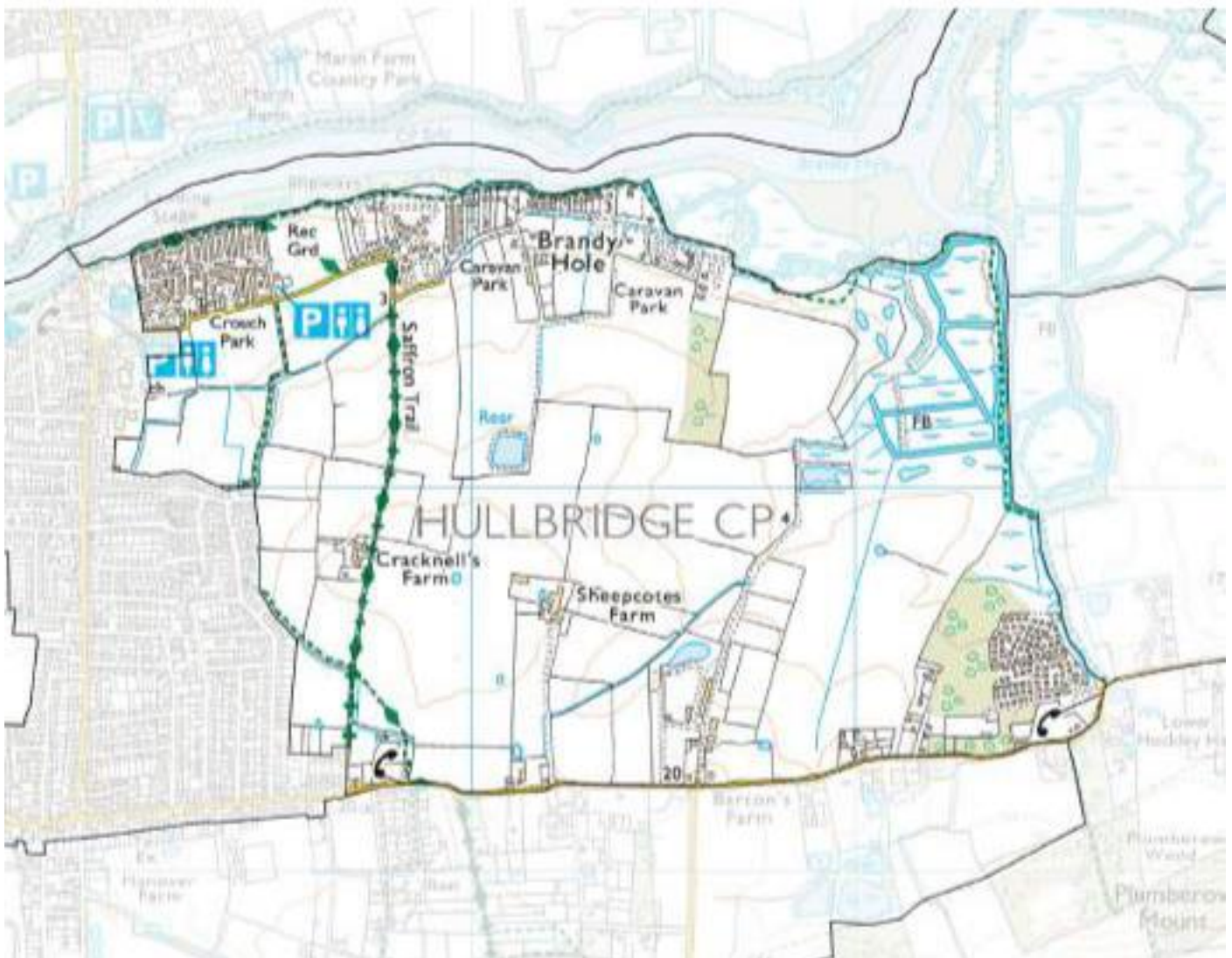
### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Considering in particular the land allocation<sup>14</sup> to the east of the character area, any future development should be of an appropriate layout, type and scale, located in proximity to existing infrastructure and appropriately screened by landscape mitigation proposals;
- Conserve and enhance existing hedgerows and boundary tree vegetation;
- Maintain and promote PRow through this character area, particularly the connection along the river.

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<sup>14</sup>Reference SER6 LDF Allocations Document, 2014

C: Coastal Farmland  
C2: East of Hullbridge



## **C2 - East of Hullbridge**

### **Character description**

- 2.4.8 The East of Hullbridge character area comprises an area of coastal farmland on the southern side of the River Crouch. The character area lies in the north of the study area and is bounded to the west by the settlement of Hullbridge (G1), to the south by the wooded farmland and hills at Rawreth (D1) and the east by a continuation of the coastal farmland type Canewdon (C3). The character area lies within Rochford District.
- 2.4.9 The banks/mudflats of the River Crouch to the north of the area are designated as the Crouch and Roach Estuaries SPA, Ramsar and SSSI. The land within this area is predominantly comprised of farmland, both arable and pastoral, with the smaller pastoral fields predominantly found adjacent to farmsteads or other settlement. Field boundaries are mostly hedgerows, many of which have hedgerow trees.
- 2.4.10 In the north of the character area, adjacent to the river, are a number of properties, including extensive areas of both residential and holiday parks. There are a number of farmsteads and individual or small groups of properties in the middle and south of the character area.
- 2.4.11 This undulating landscape offers opportunities for views, both outwards across the river towards South Woodham Ferrers and along the River Crouch; and within the character area to the rolling farmland it comprises. Though the character area is not particularly wooded, there are some blocks of trees and scrub that can provide a sense of enclosure. There is some limited sense of tranquillity in this area, particularly when away from settlement or alongside the river. The Saffron Trail promoted route runs south-north through this area, joining Lower Road to the footpaths along the river.

### ***Historic Character***

- 2.4.12 This character area mostly consists of 20th century agriculture with boundary loss, although the section along the River Crouch is predominantly leisure/recreation land and unimproved inter-tidal. There is also a small parcel of leisure/recreation land in the south-east at Hockley Park. Several areas of pre-18<sup>th</sup> century rectilinear 'co-axial' fields exist, mainly in the south of the character area. The north-east of the character area consists of a mosaic of drained reclaimed curvilinear pre-18th century and rectilinear 19th/20th century fields.

### ***Quality/condition***

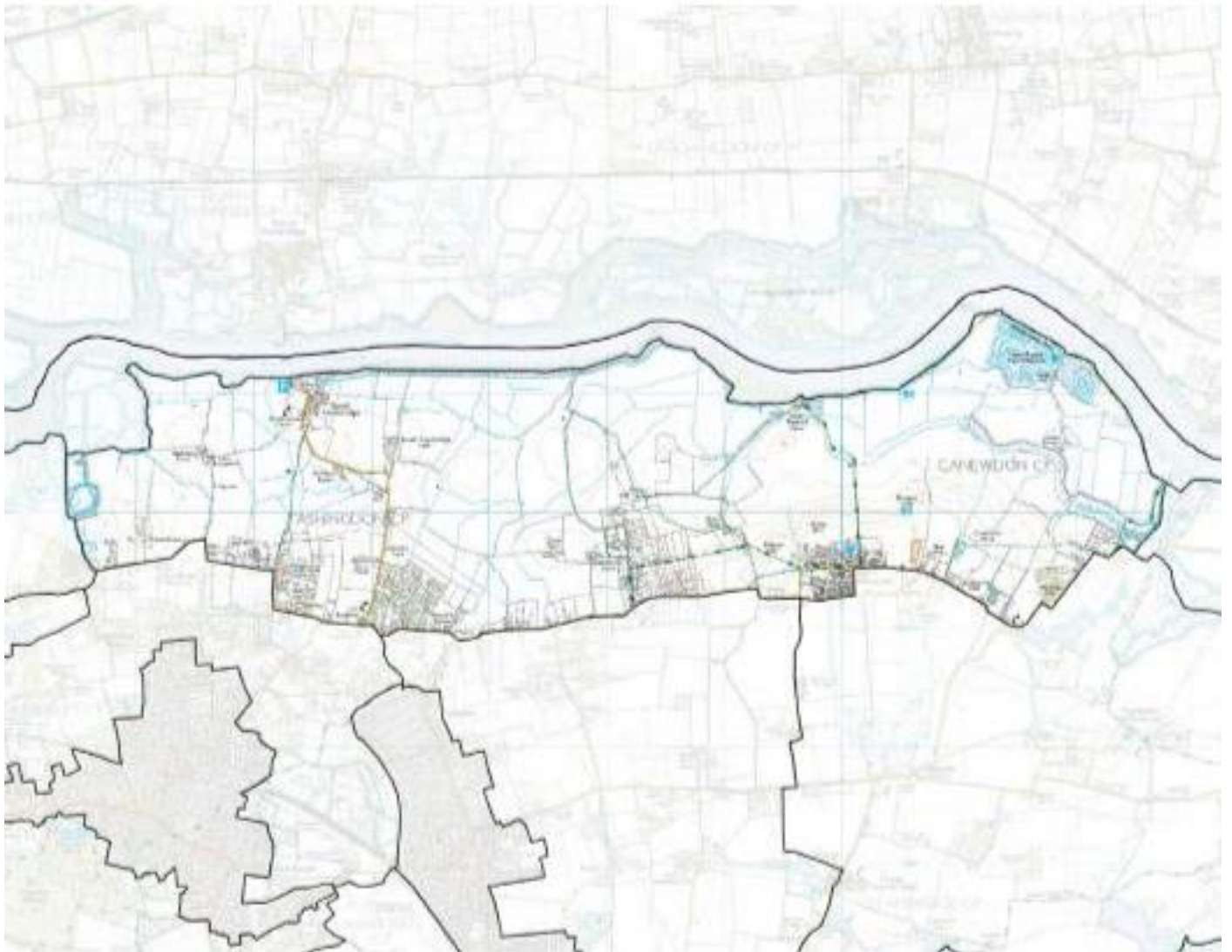
2.4.13 The character area is predominantly well maintained, with a strong landscape structure and hedgerows predominantly in good condition. In some places, the holiday park style of accommodation is not in keeping with the surrounding landscape, but these are predominantly fairly well-screened. The condition of this area overall is considered to be moderate to good.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- New development or changes in land management should conserve and enhance the balance of urban and rural elements within this character area, with particular regard to the importance of screening vegetation;
- Conserve and enhance existing hedgerows and boundary tree vegetation;
- Public footpaths should be promoted and recreational access through this area, particularly maintaining and enhancing links to the connection along the river.

C: Coastal Farmland

C3: Canewdon





### **C3 – Canewdon**

#### **Character description**

- 2.4.14 The Canewdon character area comprises an area of coastal farmland on the southern side of the River Crouch. The character area lies in the north of the study area, and is bounded to the west by the coastal farmland East of Hullbridge (C2), to the east by Wallasea Island coastal mosaic (F1), and to the south, areas of wooded farmland and hills North of Hockley and Hawkwell (D2) and East of Rochford (D3), and a continuation of the coastal farmland type at Paglesham (C4). The character area lies within Rochford District.
- 2.4.15 The banks/mudflats of the River Crouch to the north of the area are designated as the Crouch and Roach Estuaries SPA, Ramsar and SSSI, and along with the waterway is designated as the Essex Estuaries SAC. The land within this area is predominantly comprised of large-scale arable farmland, with some smaller pastoral fields predominantly found adjacent to farmsteads or other settlements. Field boundaries vary and include ditches on the lower lying ground and close to the river, and hedgerows, many of which have hedgerow trees further to the south on the higher land. Woodland cover is limited but does include some small blocks of woodland near to settlements and in the centre and south of the character area.
- 2.4.16 There are a number of settlements, or parts of settlements within this character area, all adjacent to the road that forms the southern boundary of the area. In the east, Canewdon is a small village with a conservation area around the historic core along the High Street, which follows a medieval or earlier linear settlement pattern. The 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> century church of St. Nicholas is grade II listed and also has an associated conservation area. In addition to groups of properties associated with Ashingdon and to the north of Hockley, there are a number of farmsteads and individual or small groups of properties in the north of the character area close to the river, such as at South Fambridge.
- 2.4.17 This landscape offers opportunities for views, both outwards across the river; and southwards towards the wooded farmland and hills and coastal farmland. There are panoramic views from Canewdon near to the church. Though the character area is not particularly wooded, the trees and scrub near to settlements can provide a very localised sense of enclosure. There is frequently a sense of tranquillity in this area, particularly when away from settlements or alongside the river, though roads are audible in some locations. The Roach Valley Way promoted route runs through this area, from the river, through Canewdon to Lark Hill Road.

### *Historic Character*

2.4.18 This character area mostly comprises fields of 20th century agriculture with boundary loss, although the section along the River Crouch is predominantly sea defences and unimproved intertidal land. Small pockets of pre-18th century rectilinear 'co-axial' fields exist throughout the character area. There are significant areas of drained reclaimed curvilinear pre-18th century and rectilinear 19th/20th century fields in both the north-west (to the east of South Fambridge adjacent to the River Crouch and to the west of South Fambridge) and in the north-east (around Lower Raypitts Nature Reserve) of the character area.

### *Quality/condition*

2.4.19 Some field boundaries in this character area have been recently lost, with the hedgerows (where they occur on higher ground) in varying condition. Settlement is predominantly well integrated into the landscape with soft green edges, although there is new development on the southwest side of Canewdon that is currently prominent. Overall, this character area is generally in moderate to good condition.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Conserve and enhance existing hedgerow boundaries including hedgerow trees, particularly on the higher ground;
- Any future development should be low-level and contained by existing and new planting to assimilate it within the existing settlement edges and current landscape character;
- Settlement edge vegetation should be conserved and enhanced;
- Footpath links should be provided and maintained in order to improve access to rural areas;
- Valued historic landscape features such as churches and churchyards should be conserved and enhanced.

C: Coastal Farmland

C4: Paglesham



## **C4 - Paglesham**

### **Character description**

- 2.4.20 The Paglesham character area comprises an area of coastal farmland in the centre of Rochford District. The character area lies in the centre of the study area. It is bounded to the west by an area of wooded farmland and hills East of Rochford (D3), and to the east by Wallasea Island coastal mosaic (F1) and Potton, Havengore, Rushley & New England Islands drained estuarine marsh (B2). To the north and south of the character area there is a continuation of the coastal farmland type, with Canewdon (C3) to the north and Stonebridge (C5) beyond the River Roach to the south. The character area lies within Rochford District.
- 2.4.21 The banks/mudflats of the River Roach to the south of the area are designated as the Crouch and Roach Estuaries SPA, Ramsar and SSSI, and along with the waterway is designated as the Essex Estuaries SAC. The land within this area is predominantly comprised of arable farmland, with some smaller pastoral fields predominantly found adjacent to farmsteads or other settlement. Field boundaries vary and include ditches on the lower lying ground and close to the river, and hedgerows on higher ground, some of which have hedgerow trees. Woodland cover is limited to occasional small blocks.
- 2.4.22 There are a number of small settlements, or parts of settlements within this character area, including Paglesham Churchend, Paglesham Eastend and Ballards Gore. Part of Great Stambridge also lies on the eastern edge of the area. The predominantly 16<sup>th</sup> century Church of St. Peter in Paglesham Churchend is grade II\* listed, there are a number of farmsteads and individual or small groups of properties in the north of the character area close to the river, such as at South Fambridge.
- 2.4.23 This landscape offers opportunities for views from its edges to adjacent character areas across the waterways, including across the River Roach to Potton Island and across Paglesham Creek to Wallasea Island. Within the area there is a localised sense of enclosure, particularly close to settlements where there tends to be more vegetation, though from settlement edges looking out, and between settlements, longer views are possible. There is frequently a sense of tranquillity in this area, particularly when away from settlement or alongside the river. There are a number of public rights of way running through this area, including the Roach Valley Way promoted route.

### ***Historic Character***

- 2.4.24 This character area mostly comprises fields of 20th century agriculture with boundary loss, although the section along the River Roach is mainly unimproved intertidal land, as is Paglesham

Creek and Paglesham Pool. There is a section of leisure/recreational land at Ballards Gore Golf Club. Small pockets of pre-18th century rectilinear 'co-axial' fields exist throughout the character area. An area of disused mineral extraction is found to the north-east of Loftmans Farm. Several reservoirs are present, including a large one in the south of the character area.

### ***Quality/condition***

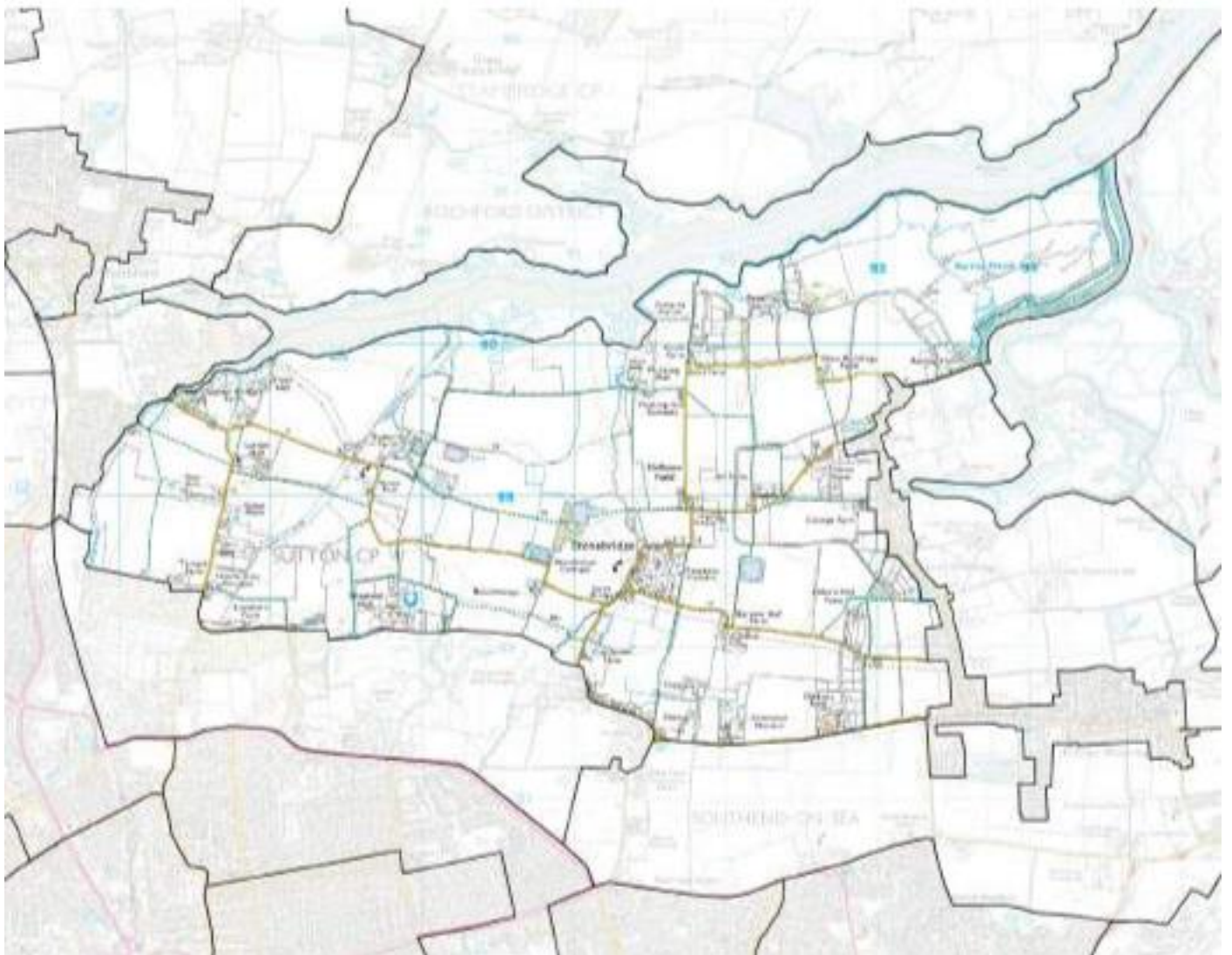
2.4.25 Hedgerows where they occur in this character area, are in varying condition with some intact and some gappy or poorly managed, though in places, particularly on lower lying land close to the river, this contributes to a more open character. Settlement is predominantly well integrated into the landscape, although some boundary treatments are not in keeping with local landscape character, such as high conifer boundaries. Overall, this character area is in moderate condition.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Conserve and enhance existing hedgerow boundaries including hedgerow trees, particularly where these provide important screening features close to settlements;
- Any future development should be low-level and contained by existing and new planting to assimilate it within the urban edges and current landscape character;
- Settlement edge vegetation should be conserved and enhanced where appropriate, discourage use of harsh vegetated edges such as leylandii, which are not in keeping with existing landscape character;
- Footpath links should be provided and maintained in order to improve access to rural areas;
- Valued historic landscape features such as churches and historic halls should be conserved and enhanced.

C: Coastal Farmland

C5: Stonebridge



## **C5 – Stonebridge**

### **Character description**

- 2.4.26 The Stonebridge character area comprises an area of coastal farmland in the centre of Rochford District. The character area lies in the centre of the study area. It is bounded to the west by the southern part of Rochford (G6), to the southwest by an area of wooded farmland and hills at Garon Park (D9) and to the east by an area of drained estuarine marsh on the Potton, Havengore, Rushley & New England Islands (B2). To the north and southeast of the character area there is a continuation of the coastal farmland type, with Paglesham (C4) beyond the River Roach to the north, East of Little Wakering (C6) to the southeast and South of Great Wakering (C7) to the south. The character area is within Rochford District.
- 2.4.27 The banks/mudflats of the River Roach to the north of the area are designated as the Crouch and Roach Estuaries SPA, Ramsar and SSSI, and along with the waterway is designated as the Essex Estuaries SAC. The land within this area is predominantly comprised of arable farmland, with some smaller pastoral fields predominantly found adjacent to farmsteads or other settlement. Field boundaries vary, including hedgerows, some of which have hedgerow trees, and others which have large gaps or sections missing. Woodland cover is limited to occasional small blocks, and in places there are narrow belts of woodland and scrub that act as field boundaries.
- 2.4.28 The small settlement of Stonebridge lies in the centre of the character area. On the periphery of the settlement are a number of listed cottages and a farmhouse. Elsewhere in the character area are a number of scattered farmsteads, individual or small groups of properties, and a large plant nursery in the south on Southend Road. There is a scheduled monument south of Butler's Farm, a 20th century heavy anti-aircraft gunsite.
- 2.4.29 This landscape offers some opportunities for views across fields, many of which are to treed horizons, and views from its edges to adjacent character areas across the waterways. Within the area there is some localised sense of enclosure, particularly close to settlement where there tends to be more vegetation. There is frequently a sense of tranquillity in this area. There are a number of public rights of way running through this area, connecting farmsteads, settlements and the wider countryside.

### ***Historic Character***

- 2.4.30 This character area mostly comprises fields of 20th century agriculture with boundary loss, although small pockets of pre-18th century rectilinear 'co-axial' fields and 18<sup>th</sup>-19th century

piecemeal enclosure by agreement exist throughout the character area. Some small built-up areas are also present.

### ***Quality/condition***

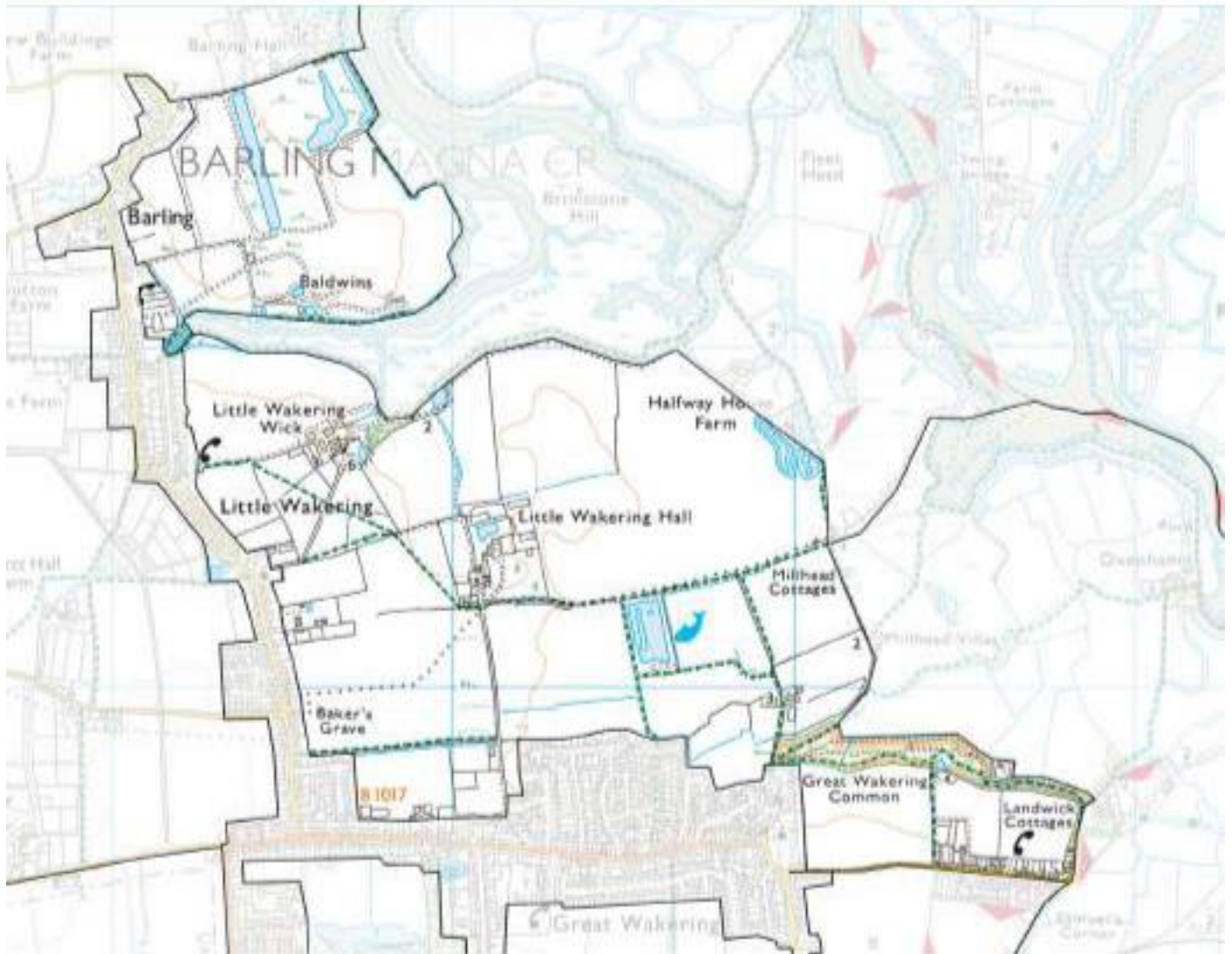
2.4.31 Hedgerows and lines of hedgerow trees, where they occur in this character area are in varying condition, with some intact and some gappy or poorly managed, though in places this contributes to a more open character. Settlement is in some cases well integrated into the landscape, although there are instances where a lack of screening to larger properties or screening vegetation in degraded condition provides a harsher property or settlement edge. Overall, this character area is in moderate condition.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Conserve and enhance existing hedgerow boundaries including hedgerow trees, particularly where these provide edges to or enclosure near settlement;
- Any future development should be of an appropriate scale and an appropriate landscape strategy should form part of any proposals, to assimilate built form within the existing landscape context;
- Footpath links should be provided and maintained in order to improve access to rural areas;
- Valued historic landscape features such as historic halls should be conserved and enhanced.



C: Coastal Farmland  
C6: Little Waking



## **C6 – East of Little Wakering**

### **Character description**

- 2.4.32 The East of Little Wakering character area comprises an area of coastal farmland in the east of Rochford District. The character area lies to the east of the centre of the study area and is bounded to the west and south by the settlements of Little and Great Wakering (G23) and a continuation of the coastal farmland landscape type, including Stonebridge (C5) and South of Great Wakering (C7). To the east and northeast are areas of drained estuarine marsh, with the Potton, Havengore, Rushley & New England Islands (B2) in the northeast, and Shoeburyness North (B3) to the east. The character area lies within Rochford District.
- 2.4.33 The land within this area is predominantly comprised of a mosaic of arable and pastoral farmland, with some smaller pastoral fields predominantly found adjacent to farmsteads or on the edge of settlement. Field boundaries are predominantly hedgerows, some of which have large gaps or sections missing. Hedgerow trees are a common feature, and in places there are narrow belts of woodland and scrub that act as field boundaries. Woodland is very limited, with only occasional small groups of trees.
- 2.4.34 Settlement in this character area is limited to the occasional scattered farmstead, and the grade II\* listed Little Wakering Hall, which is 15<sup>th</sup> century or earlier origin, with alterations and additions dating to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. To the east of Great Wakering is Great Wakering Common, an area of common land with a number of footpaths and a small community woodland.
- 2.4.35 This landscape offers some opportunities for views across fields, often limited by hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The settlement edges of Little and Great Wakering are visible in many locations within the character area, though the edges are predominantly softened by vegetation. Within the area there is some localised sense of enclosure, particularly close to settlement where there tends to be more vegetation, and from some locations on Great Wakering Common. Elsewhere on the common views are possible to the adjacent areas of drained estuarine marsh. There is frequently a sense of tranquillity in this area. There are a number of public rights of way running through this character area, connecting farmsteads, the adjacent settlement and the wider countryside.

### ***Historic Character***

- 2.4.36 This character area is a mosaic of 20th century agriculture with boundary loss, 20th century agriculture with boundary loss and relict elements, and pre-18th century rectilinear ‘co-axial’

fields. There are also some small built-up areas. There are a few reservoirs, and an area of unimproved intertidal land to the south of Barling Hall.

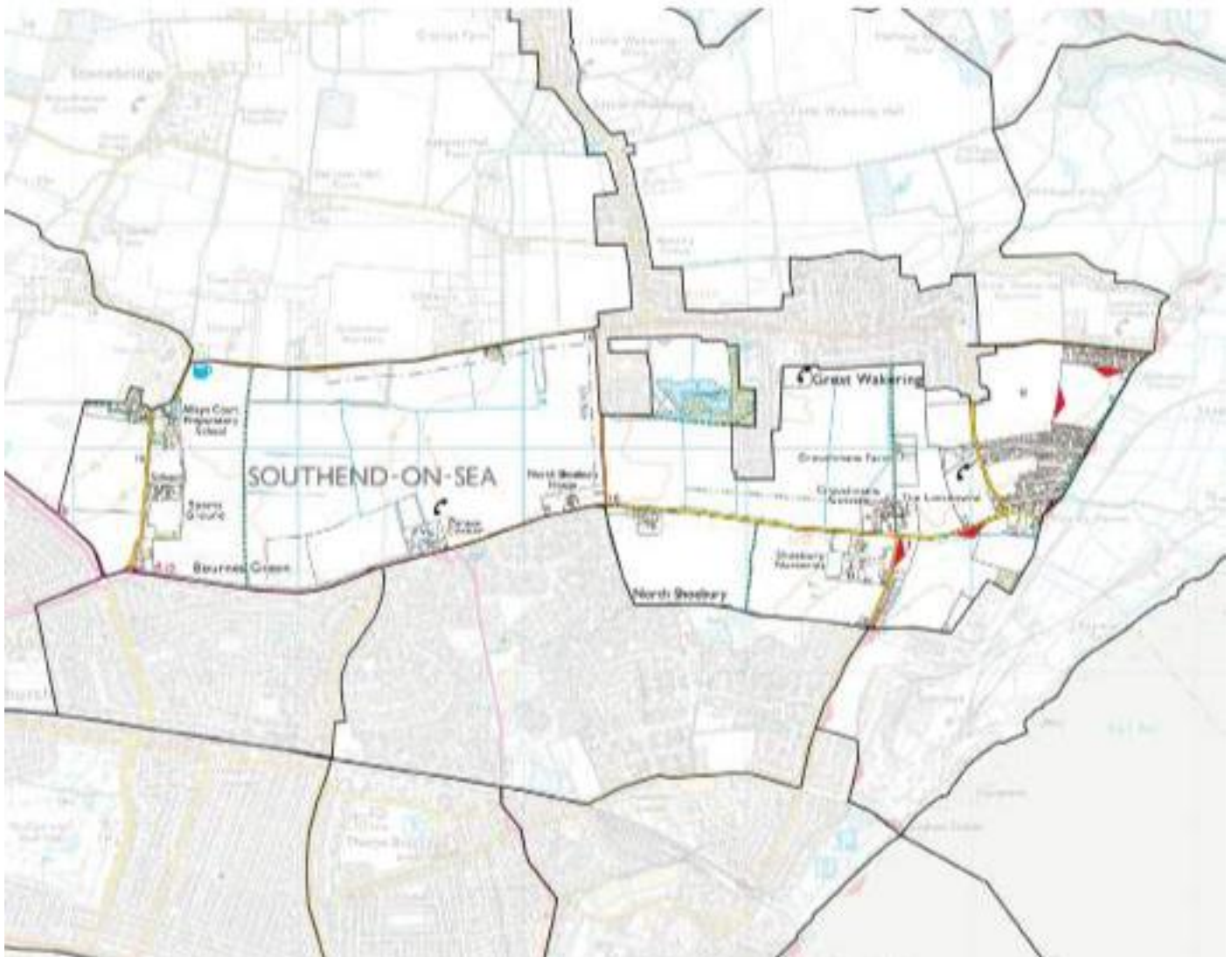
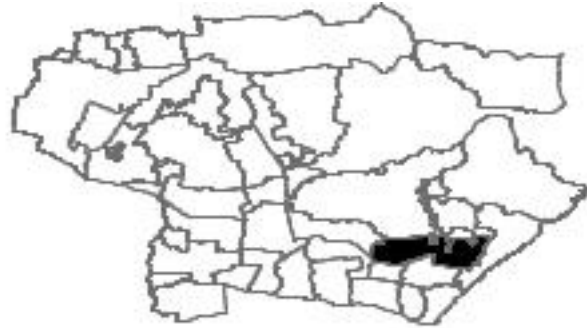
### ***Quality/condition***

2.4.37 The condition of this character area is better in the south, where field boundaries are predominantly well maintained, contributing to landscape connectivity. In the north, the character is less consistent, with scrub and pockets of neglected land around the air field. In some places, vegetation provides a buffer to the adjacent residential edge, although the landscape around the river edge closest to the settlement at Barling Sluice is in a fairly degraded condition. Overall the landscape condition is moderate.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Conserve and enhance existing hedgerow boundaries including hedgerow trees, particularly where these provide edges to or enclosure near settlement;
- Conserve views to the adjacent river and mudflats;
- Any future development should be low-level and contained by existing and new planting to assimilate it within the existing settlement edges and current landscape character;
- Valued historic landscape features such as historic halls and their associated landscape features should be conserved and enhanced.

C: Coastal Farmland  
C7: Great Woking



## **C7 – South of Great Waking**

### **Character description**

- 2.4.38 The South of Great Waking character area comprises an area of coastal farmland in the south of Rochford District. The character area lies to the south of the centre of the study area and is bounded to the south by part of the urban area of Southend-on-Sea, including Southchurch (North) (G14), Bournes Green (G15) and North Shoebury (G16). To the west is an area of wooded farmland and hills at Garon Park (D9), to the north is a continuation of the coastal farmland landscape type, including Stonebridge (C5) and East of Little Waking (C6), and to the east is an area of drained estuarine marsh, Shoeburyness North (B3). The character area lies across both Rochford District and Southend Borough.
- 2.4.39 The land within this area is predominantly comprised of low-lying, arable farmland, with occasional smaller pastoral fields predominantly found adjacent to farmsteads or on the edge of settlement. Field boundaries are a mix of ditches and hedgerows, some of which have large gaps or sections missing, with occasional hedgerow trees. There are occasional small blocks and belts of woodland.
- 2.4.40 There are two small areas of settlement in the east of the character area off Shoebury Road and New Road, which form part of Great Waking, but are separate from the main extent of the village. Elsewhere, settlement in this character area is limited to the occasional farmsteads, small group of residential properties, and two schools in the west of the area. In the southeast of the area, close to North Shoebury, is a large parcel of land with a number of light industrial buildings and uses.
- 2.4.41 The relatively flat, low-lying landscape and limited number of hedgerows give this character area some opportunities for longer views across fields, particularly in the north of the character area. Views to settlement edges are also possible from a number of locations within this character area, as much of its southern edge is bounded by Southend, and its north eastern edges by Great Waking. Some of these edges are softened by vegetation. There is some limited sense of tranquillity in this character area when away from roads and settlement. There are few public rights of way running through this character area, and these are predominantly north-south orientated, connecting Southend to the wider countryside.

### ***Historic Character***

- 2.4.42 This character area is predominantly comprised from fields of 20th century enclosure and 20th century agriculture with boundary loss. There is a small area of pre-18th century rectilinear 'co-

axial' fields in the south-west and an area of 18<sup>th</sup>-19th century piecemeal enclosure by agreement in the north-west. There are built-up areas at Great Wakering, Cupids Corner, Crouchman's Cottage and Shoebury Nurseries.

### ***Quality/condition***

2.4.43 The condition of this character area is variable, with pockets, particularly in backland plots close to industrial uses or some farms in a neglected condition. Elsewhere, the landscape is in better condition, though there are newer developments, such as that on the B1017 that will take time to mature and soften in the landscape. The condition of field boundaries is mixed, with some in good condition, but elsewhere very gappy or poorly managed. Overall the landscape condition is moderate to poor.

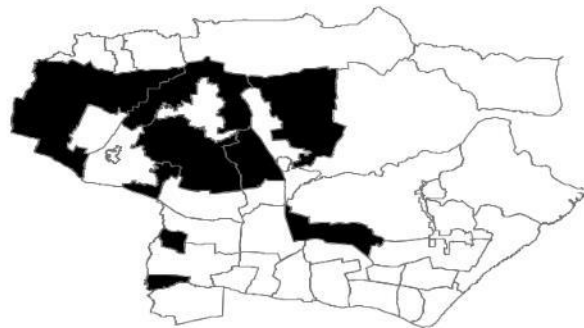
### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Conserve and enhance settlement edge vegetation;
- Considering in particular the land allocation site<sup>15</sup> on agricultural land to the north of the character area, any future development should be of an appropriate layout, type and scale, located in proximity to existing infrastructure and appropriately screened by landscape mitigation proposals;
- Maintain, and where appropriate enhance recreational footpaths through the rural area to provide connectivity between the urban area, adjacent settlements, and the surrounding countryside.

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<sup>15</sup>Reference SER9 LDF Allocations Document, 2014

D: Wooded Farmland and Hills



## 2.5 Landscape Character Type D: Wooded Farmland and Hills

### Key Characteristics

- Elevated, undulating hills and slopes forming the central and western part of the District;
- Blocks of mature mixed and deciduous woodland) including areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland, combine with copses, treed hedgerows, tree-lined roads and individual trees to create a wooded landscape;
- Hedgerows are well maintained and often form robust, roadside boundaries that create an enclosed, sunken character when travelling the more minor routes;
- Tree-lined roads are common, through lower density settled areas to the edge of the towns;
- A variety of property types are associated with this landscape type, with historic halls and farmsteads scattered through the rural area and 20th century properties often lining the roads;
- Small to medium scale field network, comprising both arable and pasture;
- Strong presence of horse grazing and livery land uses, particularly associated with the edges of settlement and clusters of properties along roads;
- Views are of wooded horizons that obscure views of built form associated with the adjacent settlement edges;
- Numerous public routes particularly across the central, wooded area and linking between Hockley Woods and Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park.

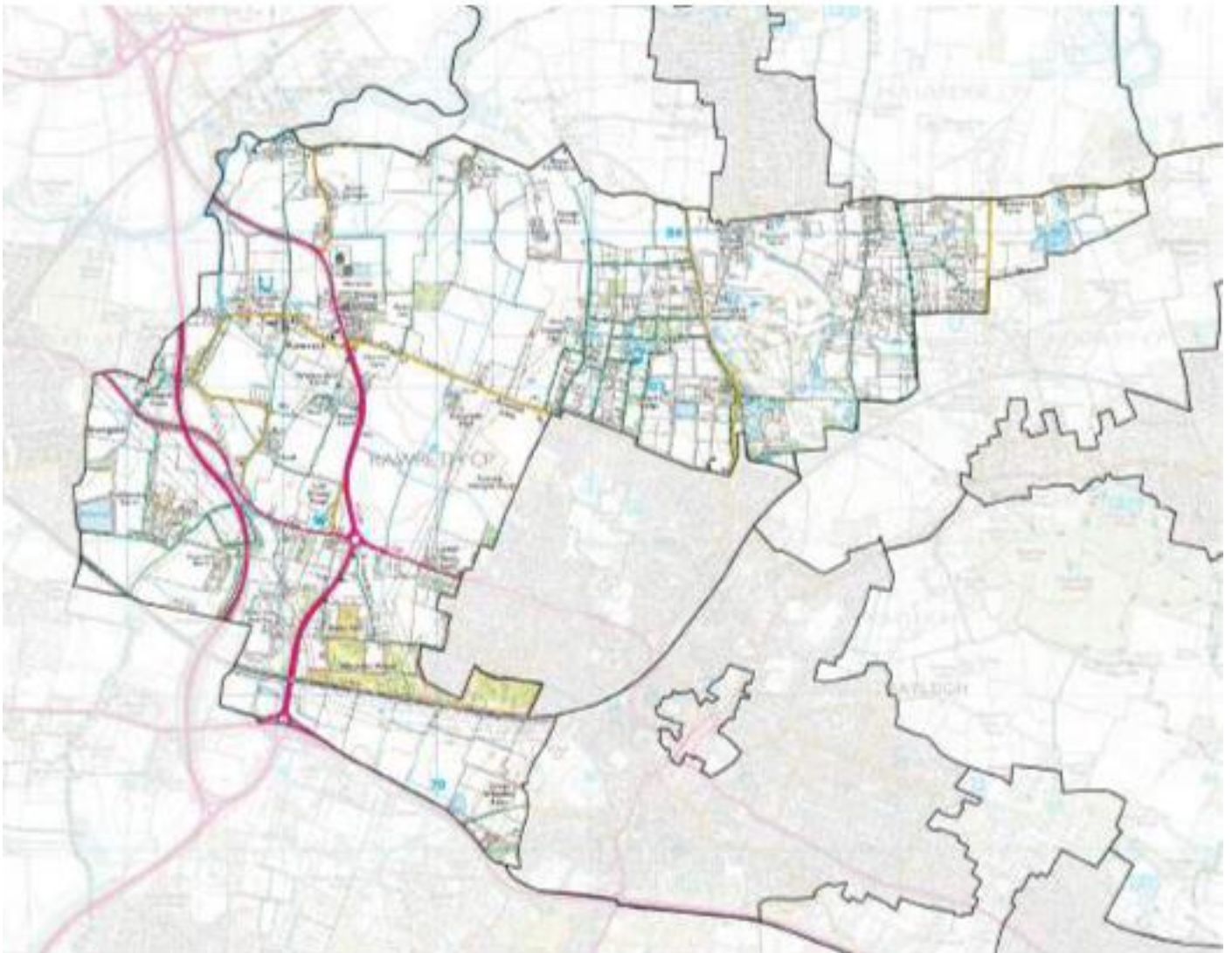
### Landscape Character Areas

2.5.1 There are nine character areas of the Wooded Farmland and Hills Type within the study area:

- D1 - Rawreth
- D2 - North of Hockley and Hawkwell
- D3 - East of Rochford
- D4 - Southeast of Rayleigh
- D5 - Hockley Woods
- D6 - Stroud Green
- D7 - Belfairs Park
- D8 - Belton
- D9 - Garon Park



D: Wooded Farmland and Hills D1: Rawreth



## D1 – Rawreth

### Character description

- 2.5.2 The Rawreth character area comprises wooded farmland and hills in the far west of the study area. The character area is bounded to the north by Hullbridge (G1) and the coastal farmland on its west and east (C1 and C2). On its eastern edge is the area of wooded farmland and hills north of Hockley and Hawkwell, and the urban area of Rayleigh (G2 and G3). The character area lies within Rochford District.
- 2.5.3 The land within this area is predominantly comprised of arable farmland, particularly in the west, with smaller pastoral fields close to settlement, and with a higher concentration in the east. Field boundaries, where they are apparent are mostly hedgerows, some of which have scattered hedgerow trees. This is quite a complex landscape, with a number of key transport routes dividing the area, including the A130 and A1245 which run north-south, the broadly east-west oriented A129, and the Shenfield-Southend Victoria Railway line; as well as a number of smaller roads.
- 2.5.4 This character area has a number of small blocks and belts of woodland, which in combination with the predominantly vegetated field boundaries give tree lined horizons and a sense of enclosure in places. Much of the settlement is also well screened by vegetation. To the north and northeast of Rayleigh the landscape is particularly enclosed, with small-scale, plotlands-type development. The golf course in this locality is also fairly well-treed.
- 2.5.5 The small village of Rawreth lies in the west of the area, and includes the grade II listed parish church of St Nicolas, some residential properties, industrial uses and plant nurseries. There are a number of large farmsteads and individual or small groups of properties scattered across the area. There is an electricity substation in the south, and the pylons that connect to it are a notable vertical feature in the landscape across this character area.
- 2.5.6 This landscape is gently undulating and locally fairly enclosed, offering some opportunities for long views, such as northwards from Rawreth Lane to the west of Rayleigh, looking towards the River Crouch and the landscapes beyond. Elsewhere, views are often shortened due to a combination of topography and vegetation, with tree lines horizons. There is some sense of tranquillity in this area, particularly when away from the main transport routes. There are a number of public rights of way scattered across this character area, including a short stretch of the Saffron Trail in the east.

### *Historic Character*

- 2.5.7 While largely made up of 20<sup>th</sup> century agriculture with boundary loss and 20<sup>th</sup> century enclosure, it does contain some fields with relict elements, and this area is a mosaic of many different HLC types. These include pre-18<sup>th</sup> century enclosure – dual-axis, rectilinear ‘co-axial’ fields, 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century formal style parliamentary enclosure. There are several areas of leisure/recreational land including around The Rayleigh Club golf course.

### *Quality/condition*

- 2.5.8 Hedgerows are regularly fragmented or missing and lacking in management. The scattered small-scale industrial premises and associated back land plots are in a neglected condition in some cases, which in combination with the fragmented nature of the landscape due to the number of significant transport corridors generally undermines landscape condition. The condition of this area is considered to be moderate to poor.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

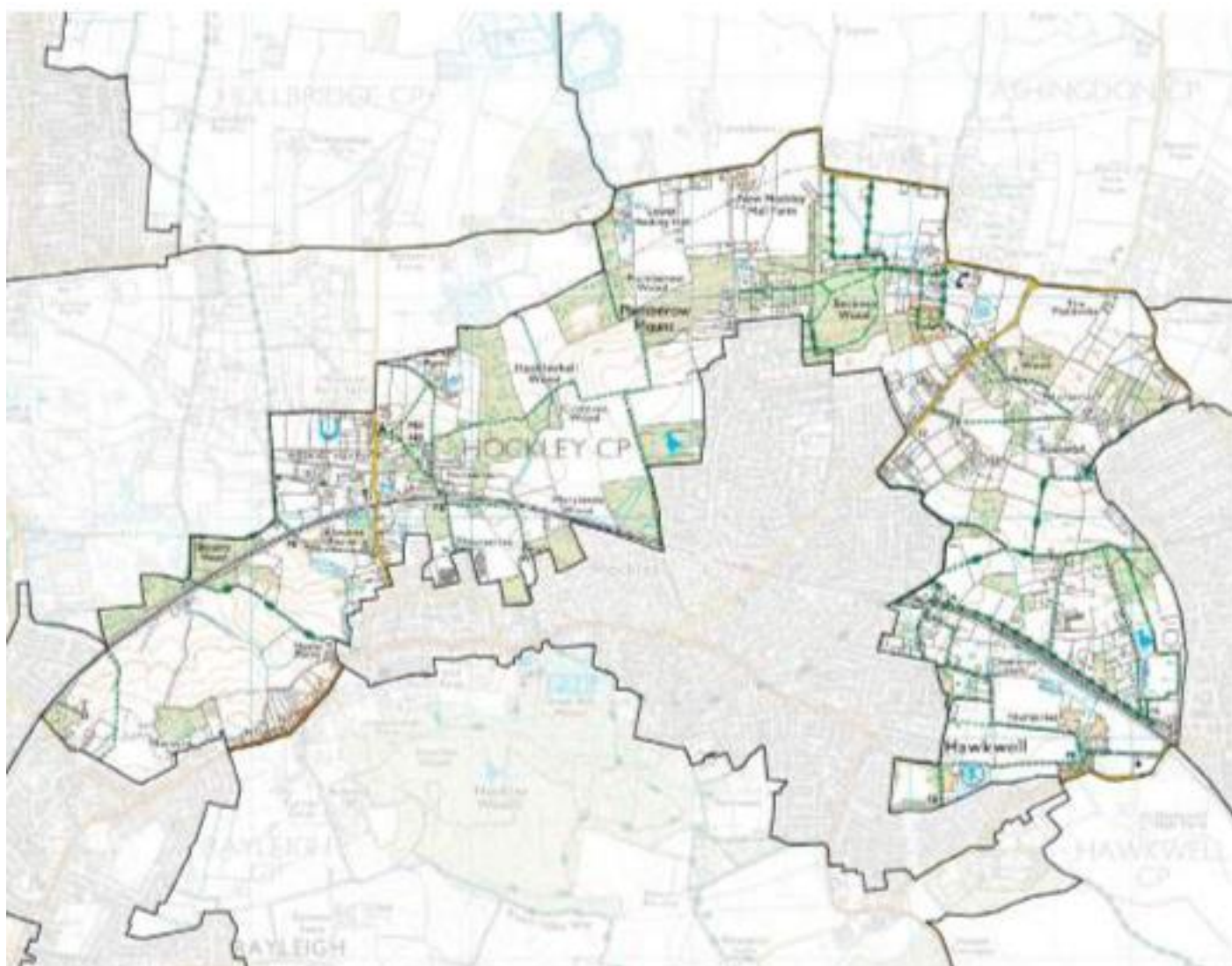
- Woodland blocks should be retained and managed, particularly where they contribute local screening of settlement edges, main roads and other potentially intrusive elements;
- Variety of field pattern should be retained and hedgerow maintenance and planting encouraged;
- Considering in particular the land allocation site<sup>16</sup> on agricultural land to the east of the character area (and adjacent to allocated brownfield site<sup>17</sup>), any future development should be of an appropriate layout, type and scale, located in proximity to existing infrastructure and appropriately screened by landscape mitigation proposals;
- New planting should provide physical and visual links between existing woodland and hedgerows, contributing to the green infrastructure and connectivity between adjacent character area.

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<sup>16</sup>Reference SER1 LDF Allocations Document, 2014

<sup>17</sup>Reference BFR4 LDF Allocations Document, 2014

D: Wooded Farmland and Hills  
D2: North of Hockley and Hawkwell



## D2 - North of Hockley and Hawkwell

### Character description

- 2.5.9 This character area comprises wooded farmland hills in the northwest of the study area and encompasses the northern edge of Hockley and Hawkwell. It is bound by a number of different character types including areas of wooded farmland and hills (D1, D5 and D6) to the south and west. Areas of coastal farmland (C2 and C3) are to the north and urban areas (G2, G3, G5 and G6) form parts of the southern boundary.
- 2.5.10 The landscape is a patchwork of small fields and woodland blocks. A small-scale, irregular field pattern is present across the area. The farmland is predominantly arable fields that are defined by hedgerows often formed of trees. In proximity to properties, such as around Church Road, Magnolia Road and in the north of the area fields have been subdivided and horse grazing is common.
- 2.5.11 Woodland blocks are scattered across this area and linked by robust hedgerow field boundaries. The greatest concentration of woodland is in the north of the character area at Beckney Wood and Plumberow Mount. This forms the northern edge of Hockley and large properties have been built in plots that have been established within the woods. Tree cover reduces in the southwest of the area, in the gap between Rayleigh and Hockley. Here, woodland lines the railway line but there are limited hedgerow field boundaries and larger fields that create a locally more open character than the wider character area.
- 2.5.12 Settlement within the character area comprises scattered clusters of detached properties often along unmaintained roads and properties along the main link roads including High Road and Greensward Lane that form an extension to the main settlement areas. Much of the built form has a secluded setting due to the surrounding woodland combined with the undulating topography across the area, particularly in the north and east.
- 2.5.13 There are limited transport routes within this area. The railway cuts through the southern part of the character area, between Rayleigh and Hockley in the southwest and Hawkwell and Rochford to the southeast. The southern edges of the character area are formed by link roads between the adjacent settlement areas. Two roads link north, between Hockley and Lower Road on the northern character area boundary. Between these routes are minor and often unmaintained roads for access to clusters of properties. A number of PRoW cross this area, through the woodland and linking between roads and settlement areas.

2.5.14 The landscape within this character area has an overall tranquil and enclosed character. There are few intrusive elements in this character area. Larger buildings associated with commercial/business land uses such as in the south on Sweyne Avenue and north on Lower Road are occasionally more conspicuous, although vegetation provides partial screening. Woodland and hedgerows contain views across the character area. Longer views occasionally open up from footpaths on higher ground and where larger fields exist between vegetation, but an overall secluded character persists.

#### *Historic Character*

2.5.15 This character area is a mosaic of 20<sup>th</sup> century enclosure, pre-18<sup>th</sup> century enclosure rectilinear 'co-axial' fields, and 20<sup>th</sup> century agriculture with boundary loss. There are also significant pockets of ancient woodland and 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century woodland plantation in the area.

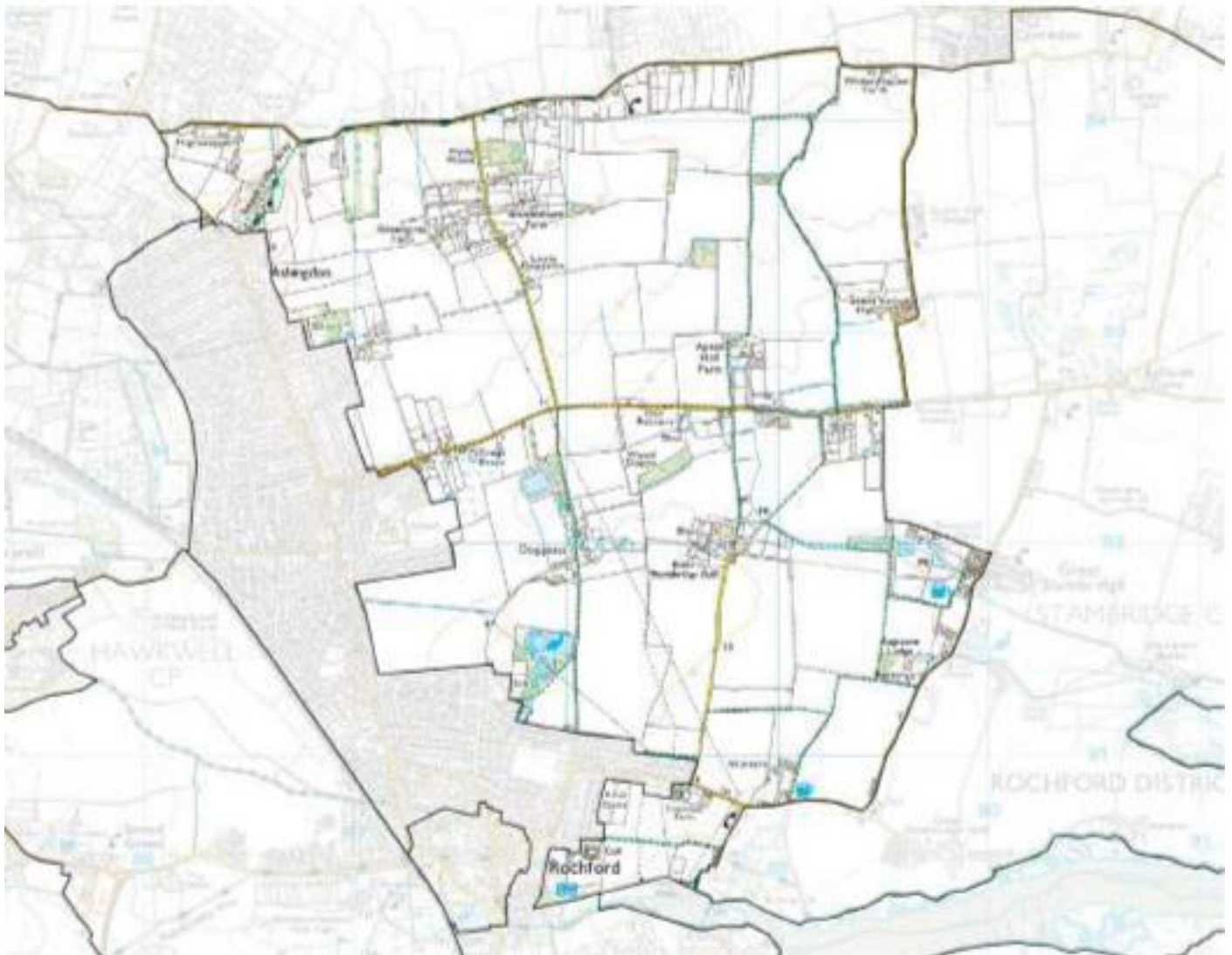
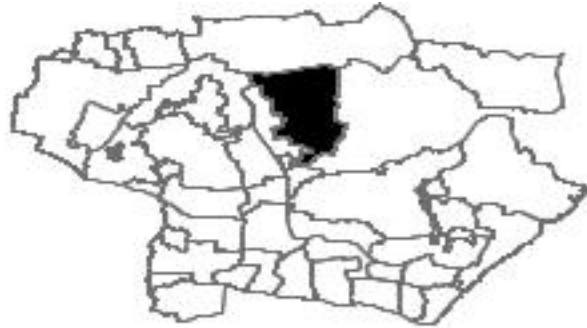
#### *Quality/condition*

2.5.16 The character area contains a number of areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland. These are generally linked by intact hedgerows containing trees. Development of scattered residential plots has generally taken place within the small-scale field structure although has resulted in alteration to the woodland in part. The condition of this area is considered to be good.

#### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Valued historic landscape features including areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland and Plumberow Mount should be conserved and enhanced;
- Conserve and enhance hedgerow, tree and woodland vegetation across the area in order to retain the enclosed and tranquil character;
- Any new development should be incorporated within the vegetation structure and well screened;
- Maintain and encourage recreational footpaths through the rural area to provide connectivity with the adjacent urban areas.

D: Wooded Farmland and Hills D3: East of Rochford



### **D3 - East of Rochford**

#### **Character description**

- 2.5.17 The character area forms part of the central, rural landscape of the study area. It forms the transitional landscape between Rochford and Ashingdon urban area (G6) and surrounding coastal farmland (C3, C4 and C5) to the north, east and south.
- 2.5.18 This is a predominantly arable landscape comprising a range of field sizes, from small fields along the northern edge to large fields in the southeast of the area. An irregular field pattern is present across the area and there is evidence of historic hedgerow removal in places. Smaller fields in the north of the character area and near to clustered properties are often pastoral. The larger fields that cover the majority of the character area are arable.
- 2.5.19 Small woodland blocks are scattered across the area and linked in part by hedgerows with scattered trees. Hedgerows have become fragmented in places and often only form part of a field boundary or have become gappy. Tree groups and woodland planting is generally located in proximity to properties including farmsteads and clusters of residential units. Roadside hedgerows are common, particularly in proximity to properties. They are generally tall although often broken along boundaries with larger arable fields.
- 2.5.20 A tributary stream flows south through the east of the character area, into the adjoining coastal farmland to join the river estuary. It is defined by riparian planting and forms more sinuous field boundaries than in the wider character area.
- 2.5.21 Clusters of settlement characterise this area. Farmsteads are located at the end of narrow, private lanes and comprise of a number of clustered units including farmhouse, barns and sheds. Low density groups of residential properties are located on the main routes. They are often set in large plots of land and behind a hedge and/or tree roadside boundary. These property frontage boundaries are more manicured than the field boundaries and are often non-native species such as laurel and leylandii. Properties are of varying typology and form, with clusters having developed in a piecemeal way. Much of the development has taken place within existing field boundaries and is generally contained by hedgerows and tree planting.
- 2.5.22 There are limited vehicular routes in this character area. Three roads pass through the area in an east-west direction, on the north boundary, through the centre and within the south of the character area. Narrow lanes and farm tracks run perpendicular to these routes, forming part of the field pattern. Stambridge Road and Scotts Hall Road form the east boundary of the character area and link the east-west routes.



2.5.23 Due to the flat topography, scattered woodland and hedgerow field and roadside boundaries there is limited visibility across the character area. Views are often contained by surrounding vegetation. Where there are gaps in hedgerows, longer views are available across the large fields. Due to the limited transport routes and rural land uses there are few intrusions within this character area and it has a remote, occasionally tranquil character. Housing on the eastern edge of Rochford is occasionally conspicuous, in particular on Nelson Road and Victory Lane.

#### ***Historic Character***

2.5.24 This character area mostly comprises 20<sup>th</sup> century agriculture with boundary loss and 20<sup>th</sup> century enclosure, although there are small pockets of pre-18<sup>th</sup> century rectilinear 'co-axial' fields throughout the character area. A small area of 20<sup>th</sup> century agriculture with boundary loss and relict elements exists in the west. Several small blocks of ancient woodland and 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century woodland plantation also exist.

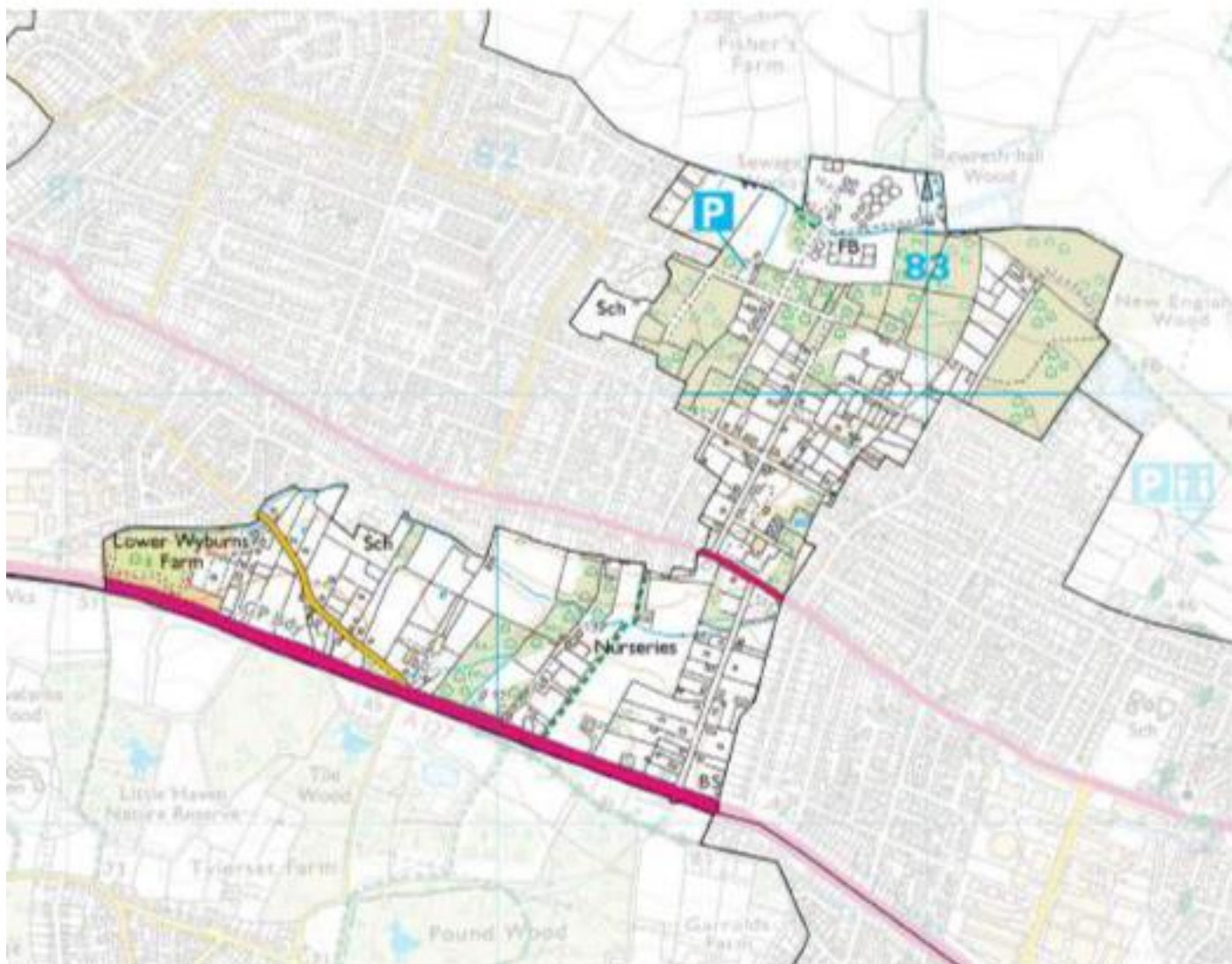
#### ***Quality/condition***

2.5.25 The character area contains small, scattered woodland areas, which occasionally link to hedgerows and vegetation within and around private properties. Hedgerows are gappy and poorly managed in places, although the overall character is of a wooded farmland landscape. Key characteristics associated with the character type are less apparent than in the other wooded farmland and hills areas, which is consistent with this area forming the transition into coastal farmland. The condition of this area is considered to be moderate.

#### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Woodland blocks should be retained and managed, with new planting encouraged where appropriate and in keeping with the overall landscape character;
- The existing hedgerow network should remain intact and enhanced where appropriate, to maintain the wooded character;
- Any new development should be assimilated and screened by new and /or existing vegetation in order to limit visibility of built form in this character area.

D: Wooded Farmland and Hills  
D4: Southeast of Raleigh



## D4 - Southeast of Rayleigh

### Character description

- 2.5.26 The character area forms the landscape between the two urban areas of Rayleigh (G3) and Eastwood (G6). Hockley Woods (D5) wooded farmland and hills is to the north of this character area, and the wooded landscape continues south outside of the study area.
- 2.5.27 Woodland planting in this character area is relatively recent and has been introduced as residential development of area took place. Woodland is the predominant land cover within the character area, with small fields between blocks.
- 2.5.28 The woodland and field structure has a grid pattern, similar to that of the adjacent housing areas. Woodland blocks are linked by treed hedgerows and small groups of field trees. This creates a small-scale and enclosed landscape character.
- 2.5.29 This character area contains a variety of land uses including plant nurseries in the south and on the A1015, former and existing farms, sewage works in the north, schools and residential. This is a complex and small-scale landscape. The woodland assimilates much of the built elements and gives the impression of a wooded landscape. However, many of the land uses have a more urban character and erode the rural character of the landscape between the urban areas.
- 2.5.30 Roads within this character area follow the grid pattern that is common to the local area. These are minor and often unmaintained roads that provide access to the properties only. They are generally enclosed by roadside hedgerows and trees. In the northern part of the character area there are some links through to adjacent housing areas such as at Rayleigh Avenue. The A127 dual-carriageway forms the southern boundary to the character area and is locally intrusive due to the volume of traffic, signage and land uses that have developed off it including storage yards. The A1015 bisects the character area, linking between the two urban areas.
- 2.5.31 The area provides a level of separation between the adjacent urban areas. However, commercial land use on the A1015 and dispersed built form through the area means that this is not always apparent. The woodland planting helps to emphasise the separation and absorbs much of the development. Visual character is enclosed and views are contained by woodland around the small fields.

### *Historic Character*

2.5.32 This character area is dominated by horticulture, with a large area of nursery (with glasshouse) in the south and another horticultural area in the centre. There is a fairly large area of 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century woodland plantation in the north-west. A number of areas are built-up.

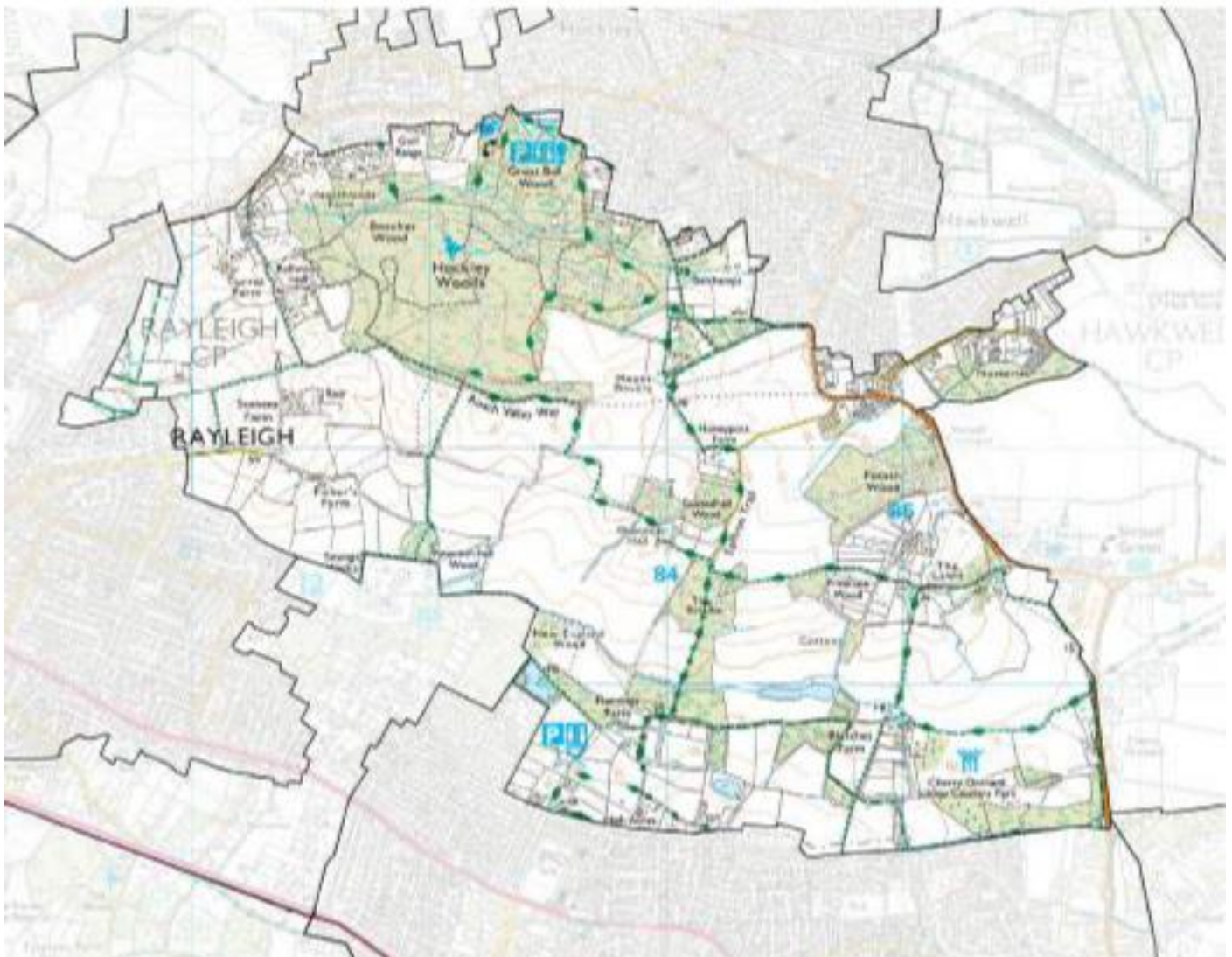
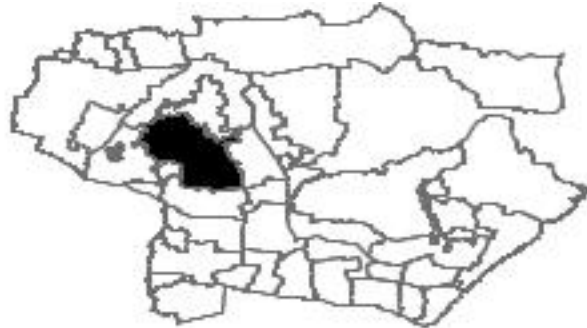
### *Quality/condition*

2.5.33 Development in the area has been haphazard and resulted in chaotic character. Some land uses have resulted in degradation of local landscape elements in places. The woodland contributes to a level of separation between the denser urban areas of Rayleigh and Eastwood. However, travelling along Rayleigh Road, the change in landscape between the urban areas and this character area is not apparent. The condition of this area is considered to be poor to moderate.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Retain the enclosed, wooded character through management of existing woodland and hedgerow vegetation;
- Enhance and conserve woodland planting to maintain the separation of the two adjacent urban areas;
- New development should be limited and contained within the existing field and vegetation structure in order to retain woodland connectivity with adjacent areas.

D: Wooded Farmland and Hills  
D5: Hockley Woods



## D5 - Hockley Woods

### Character description

- 2.5.34 The character area is at the centre of the Rochford District urban areas (G3, G5 and G6). Adjacent areas of wooded farmland and hills (D2, D4 and D6) extend northwest, east and southwest from this area. Eastwood urban area (G8) in Southend Borough is to the south.
- 2.5.35 Much of this character area is designated as forming the Upper Roach Valley, which is historically designated as a Special Landscape Area and Area of Ancient Landscape. Hockley Wood is a large area of predominantly ancient and semi-natural woodland in the north of the Upper Roach Valley. It is located on slopes of the ridge landform in the west of the study area, formed around a tributary stream of the River Roach that flows to the south of Hockley. The woods are an important recreational resource, providing a number of footpath routes, a public car park and equipped play.
- 2.5.36 There are a number of smaller areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland to the south and southeast of Hockley Woods. Newer woodland planting has been introduced in the south of the character area within Cherry Orchard Country Park. Between the woodland blocks the land is predominantly large, arable field. The southern part of the character area comprises small-scale fields, divided by dense hedgerows and woodland blocks. These fields form part of the Country Park and are primarily open areas of grass and wild flowers. There are also areas of horse grazing and pastoral land in the southern part of the character area.
- 2.5.37 The field pattern within the southern part of the area is largely representative of the historic landscape and intact hedgerows define the small-scale, intimate landscape that forms the fringe to the urban area to the south. Hedgerows through the northern part of the character area are more fragmented and there is evidence of removal as field size has been increased, particularly in the central part of the area. Trees within hedgerows provide visual and physical links between the woodland blocks and contribute to wooded horizons experienced through this area.
- 2.5.38 The undulating, sloping landform results in a variety of visual experiences within this character area. There are a large number of PRoW that these views are experienced from, including the Roach Valley Way and Saffron Trail walking routes. Views from the rising slopes in the west provide long-distance views towards surrounding character area and the urban areas are conspicuous in the foreground. Views in the east of the character area are more enclosed due to the low-lying, flatter topography and pattern of woodland and hedgerows.

2.5.39 Overall this is a tranquil landscape with few intrusions. Transport routes are limited to the northwest and east character area boundaries. Internal routes are farm tracks and local roads that provide access to farms and residences. Development in this character area is scattered and comprises farmsteads, individual and small groups of properties, small-scale business/commercial and the HM Young Offenders Institution in the north of the area. Built form is largely located towards the edges of the character area, in proximity to adjacent urban areas.

#### *Historic Character*

2.5.40 Significant areas of ancient woodland are present in this character area, including Hockley Woods, Great Bull Wood, The Scrubs, Potash Wood and Gustedhall Wood. There are also pockets of 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century woodland plantation present. The rest of the area is mainly 20<sup>th</sup> century agriculture with boundary loss, although a significant area of pre-18<sup>th</sup> century irregular enclosure exists around Fisher's Farm in the west. There are also two areas of 20<sup>th</sup> century agriculture with boundary loss and relict elements in the west and in the centre.

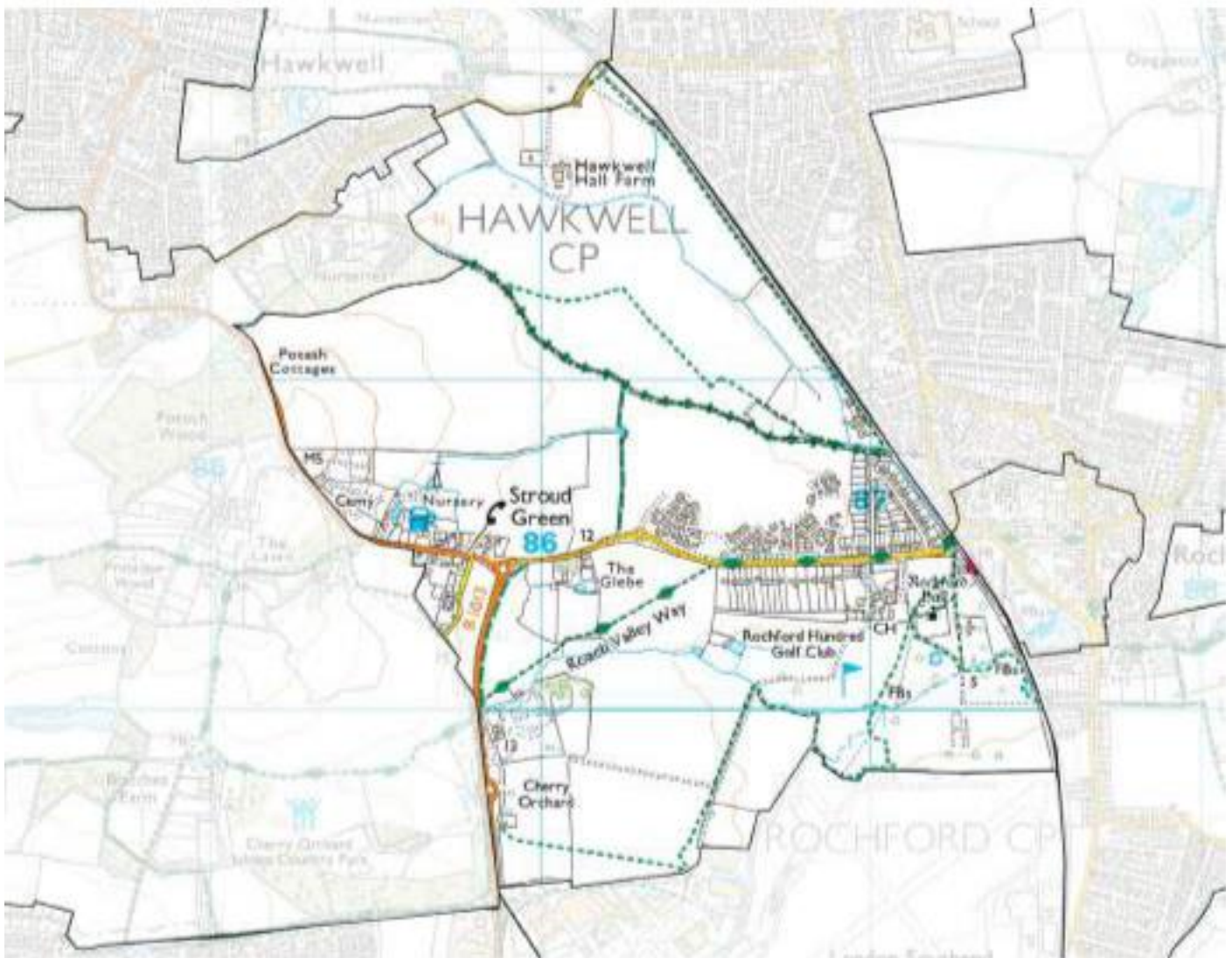
#### *Quality/condition*

2.5.41 There is significant woodland cover, including blocks of ancient and semi-natural woodland that is well-managed. A network of public rights of way covers the character area and provides access to the woodlands and links particularly through the Country Park. Hedgerows have become fragmented in places but the overall woodland character is maintained. The condition of this area is considered to be good.

#### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Conserve and enhance existing hedgerow boundaries including hedgerow trees, which provide visual and physical links between woodland blocks and contribute to the wooded character of the character area;
- Valued areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland should be conserved and enhanced;
- New woodland planting should be encouraged as part of the Upper Roach Valley landscape;
- Public footpaths should be promoted and recreational access through this area enhanced as part of an important rural landscape between surrounding urban areas;

D: Wooded Farmland and Hills D6: Stroud Green





## D6 - Stroud Green

### Character description

- 2.5.42 This character area is to the west of Rochford and Ashingdon (G6), south of Hockley and Hawkwell (G5) and north of Southend Airport (G9) urban areas. Hockley Woods (D5) area of wooded farmland and hills extends west beyond Cherry Orchard Lane and Hall Road that form the boundary between these character area. An area of wooded farmland and hills (G2) also continues north of this character area, around the north of Hockley and Hawkwell.
- 2.5.43 The landscape within this character area is less wooded than the adjacent areas of wooded farmland and hills. Dense hedgerows and small tree blocks are present within this area, particularly in the south and including trees within Rochford Hundred Golf Course. The north of this character area is more sparsely vegetated due to larger field sizes and fewer hedgerow boundaries. Wooded horizons are a feature in views across this landscape.
- 2.5.44 There are a variety of land uses within this character area, which is akin to the transitional nature of the landscape between urban areas. Land uses include the golf course on the southwest edge of Rochford, residential areas along Hall Road including a new housing development that extends the edge of Rochford west into this character area, plant nurseries on Hall Road, The Lawn Cemetery on Hall Road, large arable fields, playing fields and clusters of built form including farmsteads, small businesses and residential properties. The southern part of the character area (south of Hall Road is allocated ref. NEL3<sup>18</sup> as 'new employment land' as an extension to Southend Airport.
- 2.5.45 Two tributary watercourses flow through this area towards the River Roach. The watercourse through the southern part of the character area is well vegetated and forms the boundary between fields before flowing through the centre of the golf course. The northern watercourse is less vegetated and forms a ditch boundary between fields and flows alongside a farm access track into the adjacent urban area.
- 2.5.46 Rochford Hall is a Scheduled Monument forming part of the golf course complex, with part of it also Grade I listed. The Grade II\* listed Church of St Andrew is to the east of the Hall and also set within the grounds of the golf course. These features are enclosed by trees planted around their periphery and groups of trees scattered across the golf course. Low density, post-war residential development continues west along Hall Road forming the northern edge of the golf course. Post-war development also extends north of the Hall along the railway line. Residential

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<sup>18</sup>Rochford Allocations Plan, 2014

development is taking place to the west of this, to the north of Hall Road and within the existing field structure.

2.5.47 Built form is generally inconspicuous in views across the character area by virtue of the vegetation structure. Settlement edges are defined by dense, often treed hedgerows that define the irregular field pattern and often line the roads and tracks within the character area. Where there are breaks in vegetation, longer views are available particularly across the more open field structure in the north of the area. Although the vegetation creates a level of screening across the character area, partially constructed development on Cherry Orchard Way and Hall Road is visually intrusive within the rural landscape. Cherry Orchard Way is a busy transport route that is locally intrusive, although relatively well contained by roadside vegetation.

### *Historic Character*

2.5.48 This character area is mostly comprised of 20th century agriculture with boundary loss and 20<sup>th</sup> century enclosure, with a band of 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century piecemeal enclosure by agreement running through the centre. There is an area of leisure/recreational land around Rochford Hundred Golf Club in the south-west.

### *Quality/condition*

2.5.49 Due to the variety of land uses the condition of the landscape and contributing features varies across the area. The modern land uses have introduced urban elements to the rural landscape that have resulted in alteration to field and vegetation structure. Remaining hedgerows are generally well-maintained and wooded horizons are characteristic of the character area. The condition of this area is considered to be moderate.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Conserve and enhance existing hedgerows and boundary tree vegetation as contributing to wooded horizons;
- Retain areas of separation between the urban areas through considered location of future development;
- Maintain public footpath links through this character area, between the urban areas and connecting to features in the wider area including the River Roach to the east and Hockley Wood to the west;
- Any new development should be established within the existing landscape pattern through consideration of location and layout, and retention and provision of appropriate vegetation.

D: Wooded Farmland and Hills D7: Belfairs Park



## **D7 - Belfairs Park**

### **Character description**

- 2.5.50 This is one of the smallest character area within the study area. It is located on the western edge of Southend Borough, between the urban areas (G8 and G10). The character area forms an extension of the wooded landscape in Castle Point Borough to the west of the study area.
- 2.5.51 The character area predominantly comprises of Belfairs Golf Club, which continues across the Borough boundary to the west. The golf greens have been formed within the woodland area and the course has an enclosed, secluded character. The north, east and south boundaries of the golf course are well treed and form the rear gardens of adjacent residential properties within the urban areas. The northeast corner of the character area is formed by a local cricket pitch, which is enclosed by well-maintained, beech hedge with trees.
- 2.5.52 There is limited built form within this character area as it largely comprises the wooded golf course. A small number of large, residential properties are located on Eastwood Road North, set back beyond a wide grass verge and front gardens with low walls. Other properties in this character area include the cricket and golf clubhouses and other community buildings within the parkland setting.
- 2.5.53 The woodland character creates an enclosed, secluded and often tranquil landscape setting. The character area is predominantly a community, parkland facility set between the urban areas.

### ***Historic Character***

- 2.5.54 The west of the area is dominated by the ancient woodland of Great Wood (Belfairs Nature Reserve), whilst the east of the area is now under leisure/recreational use as a golf course.

### ***Quality/condition***

- 2.5.55 The area is a well-maintained community space, providing a variety of facilities. The woodland structure has been historically altered to create the golf course, including some clearance and some planting of tree groups to create the greens. The vegetation structure within the character area links to the wider woodland area in the west. The condition of this area is considered to be good.

## Landscape strategy recommendations

- Maintain and enhance woodland planting as part of the recreational facilities;
- Conserve the green space and promote links to nearby public spaces as part of the local green infrastructure.

D: Wooded Farmland and Hills D8: Belton



## **D8 – Belton**

### **Character description**

- 2.5.56 The character area forms a small area of wooded farmland and hills on the southwest edge of the study area and Southend-on-Sea. The urban area (G10) extends north and east along the seafront from here. The character area is an extension of the rural landscape within Castle Point Borough to the west, across the Borough boundary and forming the transition from the urban edge of Leigh-on-Sea.
- 2.5.57 The character area is a strip of land, comprising partially wooded slopes from the residential edge down to the mudflats at Leigh-on-Sea, and rough grassland and pasture at the foot of the slopes transitioning into the mudflats. The slopes are designated as a Local Nature Reserve and managed for the grassland habitats. These slopes are divided by Belton Way link road, which connects between the adjacent housing areas and Leigh-on-Sea railway station. There is ongoing work to improve pedestrian connectivity via steps, from the residential area to the station.
- 2.5.58 There are a number of different land uses on the low-lying land to the south of the area including a driving range, boat club, small pasture and arable fields, and railway station car park. Access tracks pass through this area, to car parks in the adjacent mudflats to the south and farms to the west.
- 2.5.59 The character area creates a transitional zone, comprising the partially wooded, sloping cliffs that link across the lower-lying fields with fragmented hedgerow boundaries to the rough grassland and marsh across Two Tree Island to the south, which forms the edge of the estuary. The landscape opens up in a southerly direction, from the wooded slopes to the edge of the marsh.
- 2.5.60 The character area is characterised in part by the transport hub that has established around Leigh-on-Sea railway station and also associated with the link roads that pass through the area. The railway station forms the gateway to the wider urban area of Southend-on-Sea. The area is busy with vehicles passing through and accessing the station.

### ***Historic Character***

- 2.5.61 The area is dominated by the built-up urban land on the edge of Leigh-On-Sea, known as Belton Gardens and the leisure/recreational land of Belton Hills, Leigh Golf Driving Range and a large playing field to the south-west of Leigh-On-Sea station. There is a small area of unimproved intertidal land alongside Leigh Creek to the south of Leigh Golf Driving Range.

### ***Quality/condition***

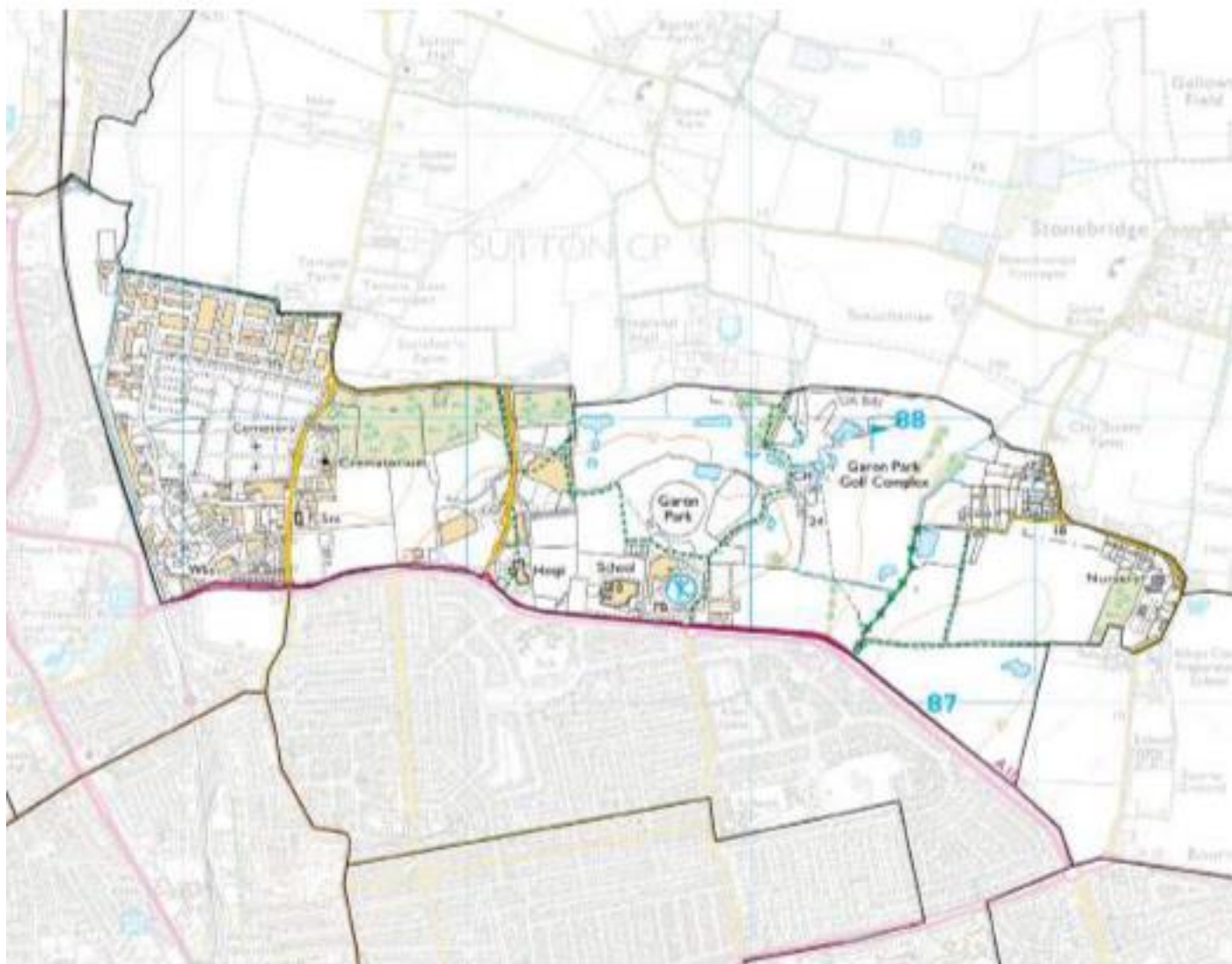
2.5.62 The LNR is well maintained and the woodland vegetation provides a buffer to the residential edge and transition to the estuarine landscape at the foot of the cliffs. The lower-lying land comprises a variety of land uses that have created a fragmented landscape on the edge of the estuary. Scattered tree and hedgerow vegetation helps to absorb this in part. Built elements associated with the railway station and road structure, and the boatyards are conspicuous on the edge of the character area. The condition of this area is generally moderate, with some areas of higher and some of poorer quality associated with the different land uses and maintenance.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Conserve and maintain the LNR in line with maintenance schedules;
- Maintain and promote PRoW through this character area to adjacent historic and environmental sites such as Hadleigh Castle to the west and Leigh NNR to the south;
- Maintain and enhance existing field and roadside boundary vegetation to help assimilate existing land uses in the exposed coastal landscape;
- Any future development should be limited to small-scale, in proximity to existing infrastructure and well screened by appropriate vegetation.



D: Wooded Farmland and Hills D9: Garon Park



## D9 - Garon Park

### Character description

- 2.5.63 This character area is on rising, undulating slopes that form the northern edge of Southend. It is a linear character area across the north of the urban area (G14) of Southend-on-Sea, between Prittlewell (G9) in the west and areas of coastal farmland (C5 and C7) that extend north and east.
- 2.5.64 The character area incorporates a number of community/recreational facilities including The Essex Golf Complex, Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre, allotments, cemetery, hospital and recreation grounds. The western part of the character area is formed of a large industrial estate that encompasses the cemetery to the north, south and west. Large retail units are at the centre of the character area, including garden centre and supermarket.
- 2.5.65 There is a linear settlement along Wakering Road and Rebels Lane in the east and northeast of the character area, comprising low density housing set back from the road beyond small front gardens, schools, recreational space and some business development including plant nursery and livery yards. There is a small area of residential development on the roundabout junction of Eastern Avenue and Sutton Road. This is largely inter-war development around a cul-de-sac layout and set back from the main roads beyond a wide pavement.
- 2.5.66 Much of the development in this character area has taken place post-1980s and has resulted in a transitional, urban fringe landscape between dense urban development to the south and coastal farmland to the north. The development has resulted in change of land use from agricultural across much of the character area. Development of this area has a piecemeal character, with blocks of development types and open space between. The open space generally comprises a number of recreational parks and sports facilities. A number of fields and areas of rough grassland remain in the central part of the character area between the developed areas, and adjacent to the settlement in the northeast of the character area. These areas have become overgrown in part, contributing to the treed character of the area.
- 2.5.67 Tree and hedgerow vegetation is scattered across this area. It takes different forms such as scrubland areas, formal planting creating avenues within the cemetery, blocks of trees around the greens of the golf course, hedgerow boundaries to the allotments, remaining fields and roads, and buffer planting around development areas.

### *Historic Character*

2.5.68 This area is predominantly comprised of leisure/recreational land, including at Garon Park Cricket Ground, Garon Park Golf Complex, Cecil Jones College, Wellesley Hospital, The Jones Memorial Recreation Ground and nearby sports ground and land surrounding Fossett's Farm. Additionally there is some religious institution land at Sutton Road Cemetery and surrounding industrial land, a small section of Pre-18<sup>th</sup> century rectilinear 'co-axial' fields in the south-east of the character area, several small areas of 20<sup>th</sup> century agriculture with boundary loss, together with a nursery with glass house and small orchard in the very east of the character area, to the north of Alleyn Court Preparatory School and New Wick Farm Cottages.

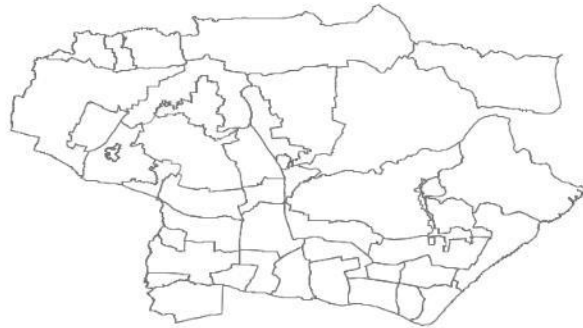
### *Quality/condition*

2.5.69 The character area is well maintained in part, particularly through the golf course and cemetery areas. Development has largely taken place within the historic field structure and retains hedgerow and tree boundaries in places. Remnant fields have been neglected between development areas and trees have begun to establish. Combined with retained and new boundary planting this gives the impression of a wooded landscape. The condition of this area is generally moderate, because of the pressures that the different land uses place on the landscape in this area. Due to the piecemeal development, physical and visual connectivity is limited in this character area.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- New development or changes in land management should conserve and enhance the balance of urban and rural elements within this character area;
- Encourage maintenance of existing tree, hedgerow and boundary vegetation to retain the wooded character of the urban edge, transitional landscape;
- Improve existing and provide public footpath links between the public green spaces to improve connectivity through the area.

E: River Valley



## **2.6 Landscape Character Type E: River Valley Floor**

### **Key Characteristics**

- Watercourses and their immediate banks/intertidal mudflats;
- Relatively slow flowing in a predominantly flat landscape;
- In places, sea defence bunds extend along the river edges;
- Landscapes designated for nature conservation value;
- Sailing clubs, marinas, pontoons and river moorings provide a facility for numerous sailing boats and leisure craft;
- The views are open and occasionally panoramic in where they are unconstrained by hedgerow trees;
- Views along the river corridor are framed.

### **Landscape Character Areas**

2.6.1 There are two character areas of the River Valley Floor Type within the study area:

- E1 – River Crouch
- E2 – River Roach

E: River Valley  
E1: River Crouch



## **E1 – River Crouch**

### **Character description**

- 2.6.2 The River Crouch character area comprises the channel, immediate banks and areas of intertidal mudflat of the River Crouch from Hullbridge to the estuary. The character area lies in the far north of the study area and is bounded to the south by East of Hullbridge (C2) and Canewdon (C3) Coastal Farmland, Hullbridge (G1), Wallasea Island Coastal Mosaic (F1) and Foulness Island Drained Estuarine Marsh (B1). The character area lies within Rochford District, and the river is the boundary between Rochford and Maldon District which lies to the north.
- 2.6.3 The banks/mudflats of the River Crouch to the north of the area are designated as the Crouch and Roach Estuaries SPA, Ramsar and SSSI, and along with the waterway is designated as the Essex Estuaries SAC.
- 2.6.4 This landscape is exposed and flat, offering opportunities for long views along the river both from the water and from paths along the river bank. There are a number of marinas and mooring points along the river, which increases recreational use of the watercourse. This is a relatively tranquil landscape, particularly away from settlement, but can also be exposed and windy in poor weather conditions.

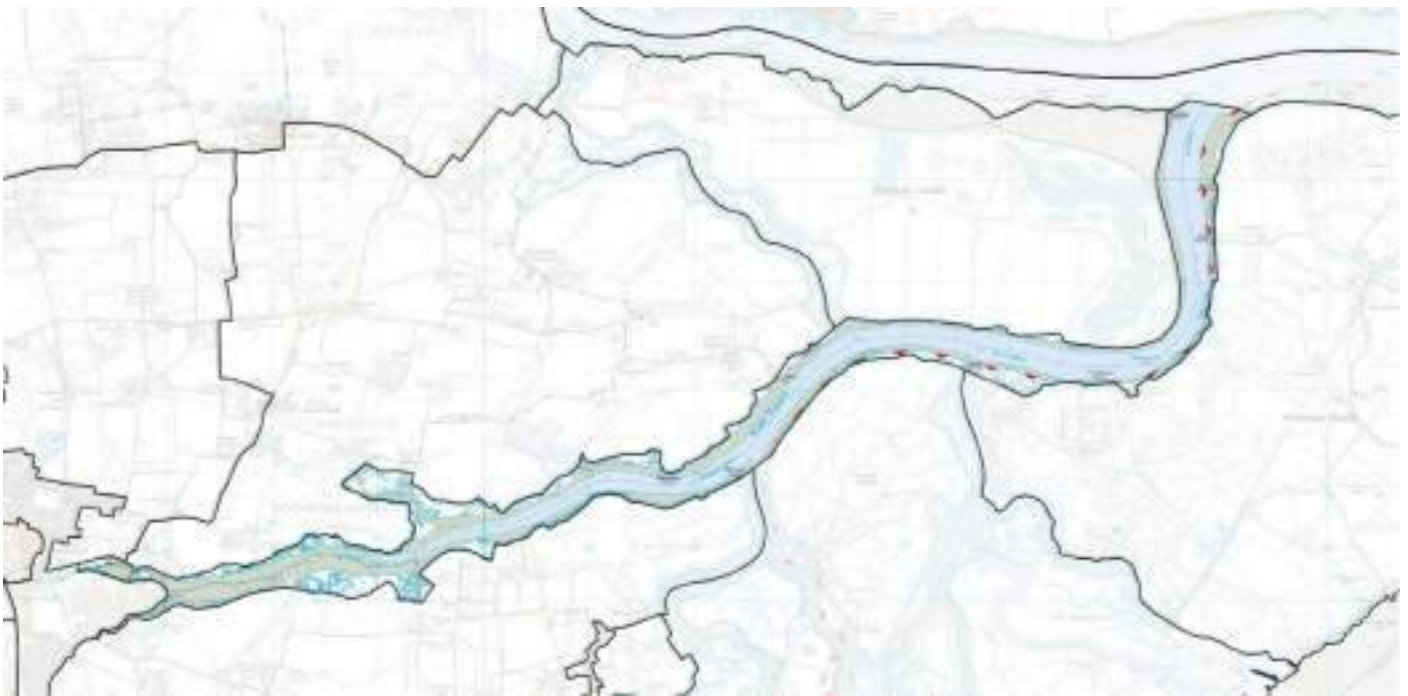
### ***Quality/condition***

- 2.6.5 This is generally a tranquil landscape with long views along the river corridor. In places marina development can be intrusive, especially when large in scale. This character area is considered to be in moderate condition.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Conserve the sense of tranquillity throughout the character area, which would potentially be affected by new development.

E: River Valley  
E2: River Roach





## **E2 – River Roach**

### **Character description**

- 2.6.6 The River Roach character area comprises the channel, immediate banks and areas of intertidal mudflat of the main channel of the River Roach from Rochford to the confluence with the River Crouch at the eastern side of Wallasea Island. The character area lies in the centre of the study area and is bounded to the north by Paglesham coastal farmland (C4) and Wallasea Island Coastal Mosaic (F1) and to the south by Stonebridge coastal farmland (C5) and Potton, Havengore, Rushley & New England Islands (B2) and Foulness Island Drained Estuarine Marsh (B1). The character area lies within Rochford District.
- 2.6.7 The banks/mudflats of the River Roach are designated as the Crouch and Roach Estuaries SPA, Ramsar and SSSI, and along with the waterway is designated as the Essex Estuaries SAC.
- 2.6.8 This landscape is exposed and flat, offering opportunities for long views along the river both from the water and from paths along the river bank and along the sea defence bunds that run along much of the river edge. This is a relatively tranquil landscape, particularly away from settlement, but can also be exposed and windy in poor weather conditions.

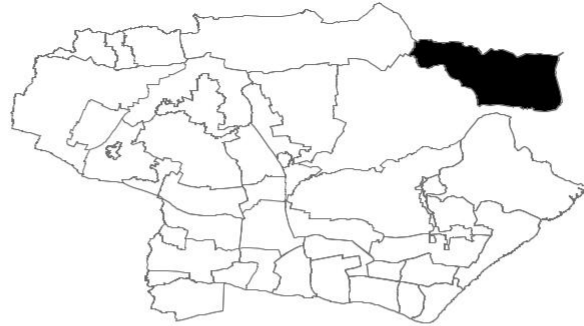
### ***Quality/condition***

- 2.6.9 This is generally a tranquil landscape, once away from the western end of the character area and the industrial estate, with long views along the river corridor. There are some derelict features such as old boats on the fringes of the character area which detract from landscape condition. Overall this character area is considered to be in moderate condition.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Conserve or enhance as appropriate, the sense of tranquillity throughout the character area, which would potentially be affected by new development.
- Enhance the condition of the riverside, particularly adjacent to boatyards or industrial development to remove landscape detractors.

F: Coastal Mosaic



## **2.7 Landscape Character Type F: Coastal Mosaic**

### **Key Characteristics**

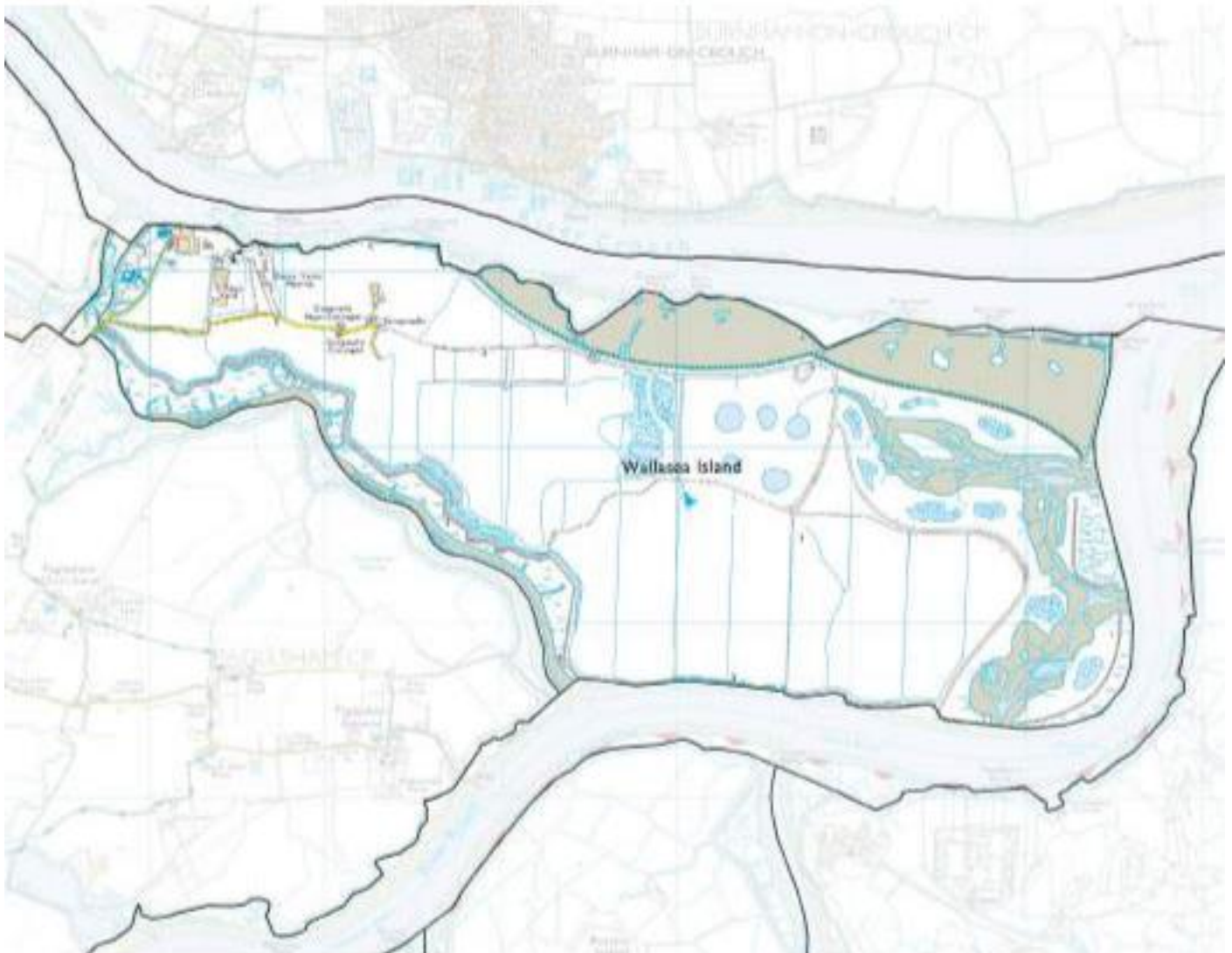
- A varied coastal and riverine landscape, comprised of a mosaic of habitats, including mudflats, salt marshes and tidal lagoons;
- Large areas of the landscape lie below the high water mark;
- Landscapes frequently of high biodiversity and nature conservation value;
- Landscape features include sea defences, which may or may not be in use – in places these have been breached to allow saltwater incursion;
- Sparse settlement and infrastructure.

### **Landscape Character Areas**

2.7.1 There is one character area of the Coastal Mosaic type within the study area:

- F1 – Wallasea Island

F: Coastal Mosaic  
F1: Wallasea Island



## **F1 - Wallasea Island**

### **Character description**

- 2.7.2 The Wallasea Island character area comprises an extensive area of coastal mosaic on and around the island on the south side of the River Crouch. The island is divided from the rest of Rochford District by Lion and Paglesham Creeks in the west and southwest, and the larger River Roach in the south and east. The character area lies in the north of the study area and is bounded to the west by Canewdon Coastal Farmland (C3), the southwest by Paglesham Coastal Farmland, the southeast by Potton, Havengore, Rushley & New England Islands Drained Estuarine Marsh, and the east by Foulness Island Drained Estuarine Marsh. The character area lies within Rochford District.
- 2.7.3 The water courses and parts of the drained estuarine marsh around the island are designated as the Foulness SPA, Ramsar and SSSI and the major watercourses are part of the Essex Estuaries SAC. The island has undergone significant change in the past 5 years, with the creation of a new RSPB reserve – the Wallasea Island Wild Coast Project. The area has been used to dispose of spoil created by the Crossrail scheme in London, which has enabled the raising of the land above sea level and the creation of new intertidal areas of saltmarsh, islands and mudflats (Jubilee Marsh). Saline lagoons, a creek network and grazing marsh have also been created<sup>19</sup>. The project, the largest coastal habitat restoration ever undertaken in the UK, was substantially completed in 2018.
- 2.7.4 This landscape is exposed and flat, offering opportunities for long views; though the sea defence bunds, originally around the arable land, but now removed or moved in some places, limit the extent of some views, and there are views of tree lined horizons when looking southwest. Views are also possible across the River Crouch to Burnham-on-Crouch. This is a predominantly very exposed landscape with big skies and a strong sense of tranquillity.

### ***Historic Character***

- 2.7.5 The remaining parts of Wallasea Island outside the Wild Coast Project Area consist mainly of rectilinear 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century drained reclamation land, with a small section of 20<sup>th</sup> century agriculture with boundary loss and industrial land on the west of the island. A very small section of leisure/recreation land, a riverside holiday park, exists on the western boundary alongside Lion Creek. The Wild Coast Project is in the process of restoring a large swath of coastal habitats which have historically been lost from the Essex and UK coastlines.

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<sup>19</sup><https://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves-and-events/reserves-a-z/wallasea-island-wild-coast-project/#ZwoJqPIU5buXTQUb.99>

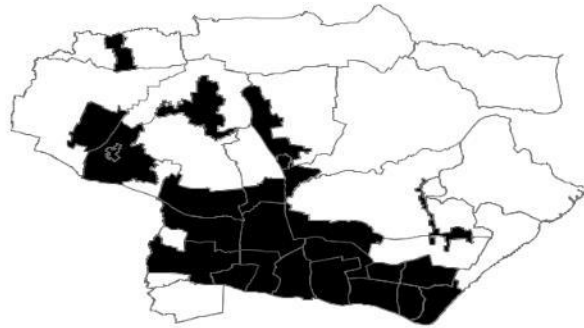
### ***Quality/condition***

- 2.7.6 The roadways and hardstanding are in poor condition in places, and the western part of the island, away from the habitat creation project has some evidence of neglect. The habitat creation project, and associated access facilities including hides and paths are under development and parts of the landscape will need time to mature. The overall condition of this area is considered to be moderate.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- 2.7.7 The major force for change in this character area is the Wallasea Island Wild Coast Project. This aims to, and is in the process of, restoring a large swathe of coastal habitats which have historically been lost from the Essex and UK coastlines. Any landscape strategy for this area should align with the aims of the project.

G: Urban



## 2.8 Landscape Character Type G: Urban

### Key Characteristics

- A well-populated landscape with evidence of ancient settlement across the whole study area;
- The form of the historic cores of the towns are generally intact although modern development has replaced or dominates historic buildings in large part;
- Overall, a high density of development is associated with the towns and suburbs;
- Pockets of lower density housing, where properties have larger plots, are generally associated with outer edges of the settlements and more modern development;
- The towns have a sprawling character, whereby development has gradually expanded from the historic cores out along the main routes and spaces between have been infilled;
- The urban areas are predominantly enclosed and inward looking, although occasional modern settlement edges are conspicuous in long views from adjacent character types;
- Some uniformity of building type through planned development within Southend;
- Overall, little conformity through the urban areas resulting in a variety of building typologies mixed together particularly evident in the secondary centres.

### Townscape Character Areas

2.8.1 There are 23 character areas of the Urban type within the study area:

- G1 - Hullbridge
- G2 - Rayleigh (West)
- G3 - Rayleigh (East)
- G4 – Rayleigh (Core)
- G5 - Hockley & Hawkwell
- G6 - Rochford & Ashingdon
- G7 – Rochford (Core)
- G8 - Eastwood
- G9 - Southend Airport
- G10 - Leigh-on-Sea (North)
- G11 - Prittlewell
- G12 - Leigh-on-Sea (South)
- G13 - Chalkwell
- G14 - Westcliff-on-Sea
- G15 - Central Southend
- G16 - Southchurch (North)
- G17 - Bournes Green



- G18 - North Shoebury
- G19 - Southchurch (South)
- G20 - Thorpe Hall
- G21 - Thorpe Bay
- G22 – Shoeburyness
- G23 – Great Wakering & Little Wakering

G: Urban  
G1: Hullbridge



## **G1 – Hullbridge**

### **Character description**

- 2.8.2 The Hullbridge character area is an urban area in the northwest of the study area. To its west and east are areas of coastal farmland (character areas C1 and C2), and to its south is Rawreth wooded farmland and hills (D1). It is bounded to the north by the River Crouch. Hullbridge is in Rochford District.
- 2.8.3 The character area comprises the settlement of Hullbridge, the majority of which is formed from 20th century housing, which has been developed along a number of regularly arranged residential roads. In the north of the settlement, the roads predominantly run parallel to the river, branching away from the central Ferry Road. Further south, the roads lie perpendicular to the river, branching off Lower Road. Near to the waterfront on Ferry Road are a small number of listed 18th century cottages, the remaining historic core of the settlement.
- 2.8.4 Adjacent to the river, and surrounded by the settlement, is a local nature reserve, Kendall Park, which is predominantly comprised of woodland. The River Crouch where it runs adjacent to the settlement is part of the Crouch and Roach Estuaries Ramsar, SPA and SSSI. It is also part of the Essex Estuaries SAC.

### ***Settlement Fringe***

- 2.8.5 Built form is located right up to the edge of the river, to the north of the character area. Properties on The Esplanade experience open views of the river and surrounding drained landscape.
- 2.8.6 The eastern and western settlement fringe is defined by hedgerow field boundaries of varying height and density. Properties largely back onto the settlement boundary, with gable ends occasionally forming the edge. Built edges are exposed in part and often stand out against the open character of the surrounding fields. Hedgerows across the landscape help to conceal the settlement in wider views.
- 2.8.7 The southern fringe is formed of residential properties either side of Lower Road. Lower density development and golf course form the transitional landscape between character areas to the south.

### **Quality/condition**

2.8.8 Housing type and settlement layout is generally consistent throughout the character area. The settlement is well-contained and does not sprawl into adjacent character areas. Rear gardens of properties predominantly form the settlement edge, backing onto fields of the adjacent character areas. Hedgerow planting often defines the settlement boundary although a variety of fence types are conspicuous on some edges. Ferry Road is the well-maintained, main route through the settlement, with retail/business units at the centre and provides a direct link to the waterfront. The settlement area is in generally good condition although some boundary treatments are of lower quality and conspicuous in the adjacent character area.

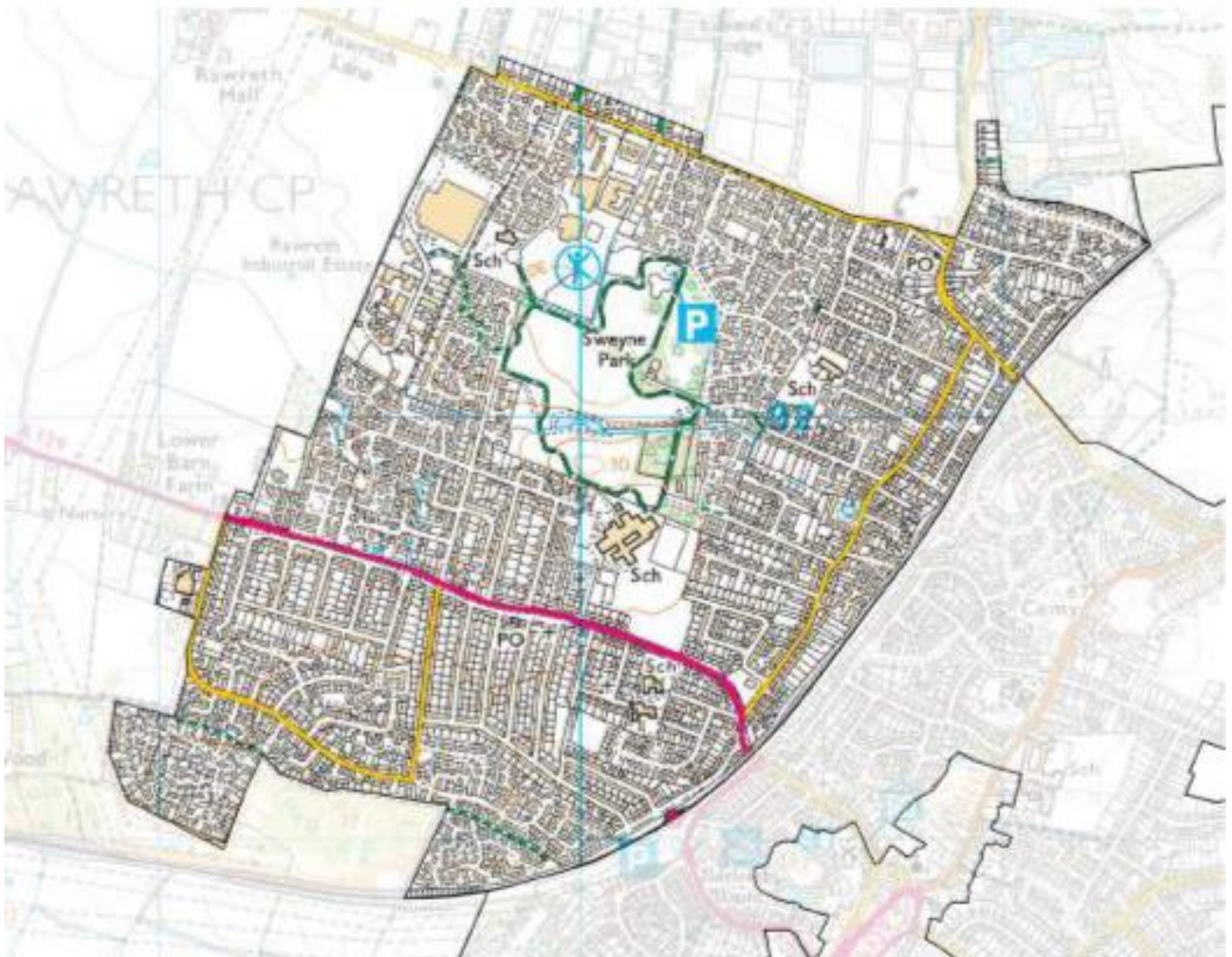
### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Hedgerow boundaries should be retained and enhanced to help assimilate the settlement edges within the surrounding coastal farmland character type;
- Considering in particular the land allocation sites<sup>20</sup> on agricultural land to the west of the settlement, any future development should be of an appropriate layout, type and scale, located in proximity to existing infrastructure and appropriately screened by landscape mitigation proposals to establish a well-contained settlement edge;
- Tree and hedgerow planting should be conserved and promoted as part of any future development proposals to maintain the enclosure and focussed character of the existing settlement.

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<sup>20</sup>Reference SER6a and SER6b LDF Allocations Document, 2014

G: Urban  
G2: Raleigh (West)



## **G2 - Rayleigh (West)**

### **Character description**

- 2.8.9 Rayleigh (west) character area contains the westernmost settlement area within Rochford District, bound to the north, south and west by Rawreth wooded farmland and hills (D1) and to the east by Rayleigh (east) (G3). The Shenfield to Southend Victoria railway line forms the boundary between Rayleigh (west) and Rayleigh (east).
- 2.8.10 The character area comprises predominantly 20<sup>th</sup> century residential development that forms the northwest extension of Rayleigh, to the west of the railway line. Early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century housing generally has grid-like form, with streets at right angles to the main transportation routes including London Road and Down Hall Road, which is parallel to the railway. Later 20<sup>th</sup> century development towards the outer edges of this character area follows a more sinuous form, with cul-de-sacs off a spine road for example Bardfield Way in the south of the character area.
- 2.8.11 The northern edge of the character area is defined by Rawreth Lane that is primarily characterised by 1960-1990s housing that fronts onto the road, set back behind short driveways and front gardens. A small area of commercial and light-industrial units, and a school and recreational facilities can be identified forming the western edge of this character area as part of the transitional land between G2 and G1.
- 2.8.12 Key transport corridors through the area are London Road, which connects in an east-west direction between the A1245 link road to the A127 and the centre of Rayleigh. Rawreth Lane runs parallel to this in the north of the character area, into the northern part of Rayleigh and linking further east to Hockley. The railway separates this newer settlement area of Rayleigh from the historic core.
- 2.8.13 Sweyne Park is a 23ha open space in the north of this character area, which comprises groups of trees and shrubs around meadow areas, with a variety of paths crossing the area. Other pockets of greenspace within this character area are limited to recreational playing fields often association with education facilities, green space within housing developments and a small area of allotments on Station Avenue.
- 2.8.14 Inward views are associated with this character area, created by the proximity of built form and limited open space. Views are dominated by housing of varying typology and by vehicles on the main thoroughfares. Vegetation along field and roadside boundaries limits views between this and adjacent character area.

### *Settlement Fringe*

- 2.8.15 The settlement is surrounded by agricultural fields to the north, west and partially along the southern boundary. The railway shapes the southern and eastern extents.
- 2.8.16 To the north, Rawreth Lane defines the current settlement boundary in part, although residential development does extend north of this. A hedgerow field boundary physically divides the residential development from the small-scale fields beyond. Visual links between the character areas are limited.
- 2.8.17 Larger scale fields characterise the western fringe and urban elements on this settlement edge often stand out in views across them from the adjacent character area. Hedgerows and woodland blocks screen the built form along much of this settlement edge.
- 2.8.18 The southern settlement edge is more enclosed and less conspicuous by virtue of surrounding woodland areas and the railway cutting to the south.

### *Quality/condition*

- 2.8.19 This settlement forms an extension to Rayleigh (East) and has been established through piecemeal development. It comprises a variety of building type and form, established around varying street patterns. Swayne Park provides a central area of public green space that is easily accessed from the surrounding housing areas. Footpath links through the wider settlement area and between other green spaces are more limited. Where expansion has taken place, edge of settlement land uses and development is conspicuous in part. Hedgerow and woodland planting helps to assimilate some of the edge development and provide the boundary between the urban and rural character areas. The condition of this area is considered to be moderate.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Hedgerow boundaries should be retained and enhanced to help assimilate the settlement edges within the surrounding wooded farmland and hills character type;
- Links between existing and future green spaces should be enhanced and provided as part of local green infrastructure provision;
- Considering in particular the land allocation site<sup>21</sup> on agricultural land to the west of the settlement and on brownfield land at the western edge of the character area, any future development should be of an appropriate layout, type and scale, located in proximity to

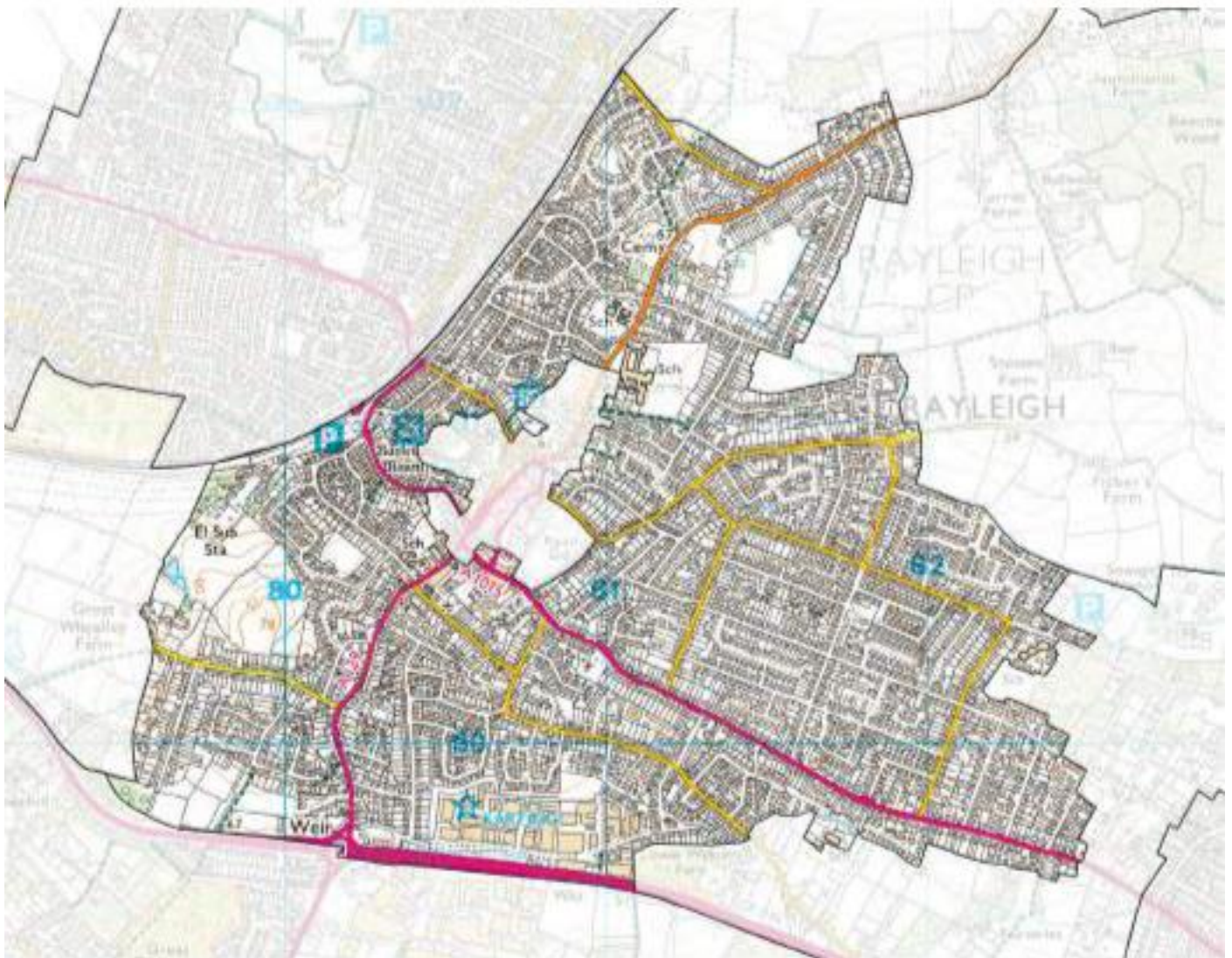
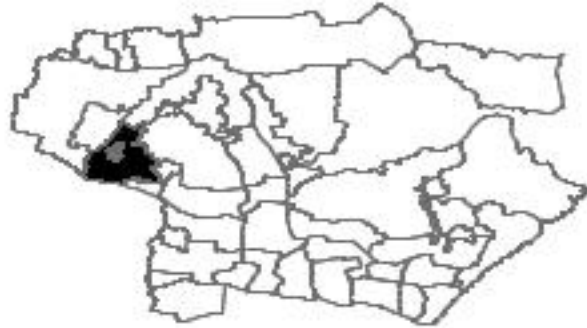
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<sup>21</sup> Reference SER1 and BFR4 LDF Allocations Document, 2014

existing infrastructure and appropriately screened by and incorporating landscape mitigation proposals. It should consider the key characteristics of the adjacent character area and woodland and hedgerow planting should be incorporated.



G: Urban  
G3: Rayleigh (East)



### **G3 - Rayleigh (East)**

#### **Character description**

- 2.8.20 Rayleigh (east) character area is formed of the historic core of the market town of Rayleigh and 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century settlement extensions to the north, south and east formed along Hockley Road, High Road and Eastwood Road respectively. The character area adjoins areas of wooded farmland hills (D1, D4 and D5) to the north, east and southwest, with the railway line boundary with Rayleigh (west) to the northwest.
- 2.8.21 The area comprises a variety of street types and form. London Hill and Station Road curve around the base of Rayleigh Mount; the main link roads pass through the town centre (G4) and wind through the suburbs. The eastern part of the character area is formed around a planned grid pattern that has expanded over time from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century plotlands, which have since been replaced by post-war development. Outer edges of the urban area have established around a more sinuous street pattern with cul-de-sac development and pockets of green space.
- 2.8.22 The historic core comprises high density development, with modern commercial units set between the remaining historic buildings and business frontages line the High Street with numerous car parking areas behind. The suburbs comprise less dense development where properties are predominantly set back from the road behind small front gardens and/or driveways. Many of the roads are tree lined and have green street corners.
- 2.8.23 Most of the listed buildings within Rayleigh are focussed in the historic core (G4), with a small number in the wider character area including farmhouses on the south and west edges.
- 2.8.24 Pockets of green space are scattered through the settlement and include recreational and school playing fields, equipped play areas, cemetery, treed footpaths links between streets and green spaces and small fields on the southern edge of the character area adjacent to the A127. Large private gardens and roadside trees also contribute to the character of the leafy suburbs, particularly towards the outer edges of the character area.
- 2.8.25 The form and layout of the urban area combined with tree vegetation mean that views tend to be fairly short and limited to the settlement area. There are occasional longer views from within green spaces and higher topography, in which the wooded landscape of adjacent character area can be experienced.

### *Settlement Fringe*

- 2.8.26 Hedgerow field boundaries form much of the perimeter of this character area, identifying the boundary between the adjacent areas. Residential properties back onto the majority of the settlement edge, with a variety of rear boundary treatments and vegetation cover associated with this.
- 2.8.27 The north and southeast settlement fringes are largely enclosed by surrounding vegetation including small woodland blocks and mature hedgerows that define a small-scale field structure. The northeast fringe is occasionally more conspicuous due to rising contours and more limited tree cover associated with this settlement edge. Hedgerow boundaries provide a buffer to the built edge.
- 2.8.28 The A127 defines the southern boundary of the character area and Rochford District, with residential and commercial development continuing south of this on the edge of Hadleigh.
- 2.8.29 The southwest settlement fringe is softer and characterised by green spaces between housing areas. Small fields break up zones of housing and tree planting provides a soft buffer to this settlement edge, where it transitions into the adjacent wooded farmland and hills.

### *Quality/condition*

- 2.8.30 This settlement has a sprawling character, where development has gradually expanded out from the town centre and major routes, into the surrounding small-scale field pattern. The settlement edge is generally well integrated by mature hedgerow and woodland vegetation associated with the adjacent field pattern. Some hedgerow removal/replacement has taken place along parts of the northern boundary and due to proximity of built form to the rural edge and the settlement is conspicuous from the adjacent character area. There is limited green space within the character area and few footpath links to the surrounding rural areas. The condition of this area is considered to be moderate.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Existing woodland planting within this and adjacent character area should contribute to the limits to growth and maintaining separation between nearby urban areas;
- Hedgerow boundaries should be retained and enhanced to help assimilate the settlement edges within the adjacent wooded farmland and hills character type;
- Provide and improve links between existing green space and with surrounding rural character area.

G: Urban  
G4: Raleigh (Core)



## **G4 - Rayleigh (Core)**

### **Character description**

- 2.8.31 Rayleigh (Core) character area is formed of the historic core of the settlement of Rayleigh and is surrounded by the Rayleigh – East Urban character area (G3).
- 2.8.32 The historic core of Rayleigh comprises the remnants of the traditional market town, established at the gates of a Norman castle (today only the earthworks remain) on a wide High Street, with a church at one end. There are few traditional buildings remaining on the High Street due to redevelopment, though the town's original framework and structure remain legible.
- 2.8.33 The only significant public open space in the historic core is the Mount, a small, wooded green space. Rayleigh Mount is the site of a medieval castle and is a Scheduled Monument. The churchyard is crossed by footpaths and is an important green area at the north end of the town.<sup>22</sup>
- 2.8.34 Service areas to the rear of the High Street and Bellingham Lane, and hard standings used for car parking, form unattractive townscape which would benefit from improvement.

### **Quality/condition**

- 2.8.35 Rayleigh (Core) is designated as a conservation area, which contains a number of important historical settlement features. The original framework and structure of the historic town are apparent, although modern development has altered the built structure of the town. Rayleigh Mount has become disconnected from the town centre due to the surrounding development that has resulted in concealed access to the green space. The condition of this area is considered to be moderate.

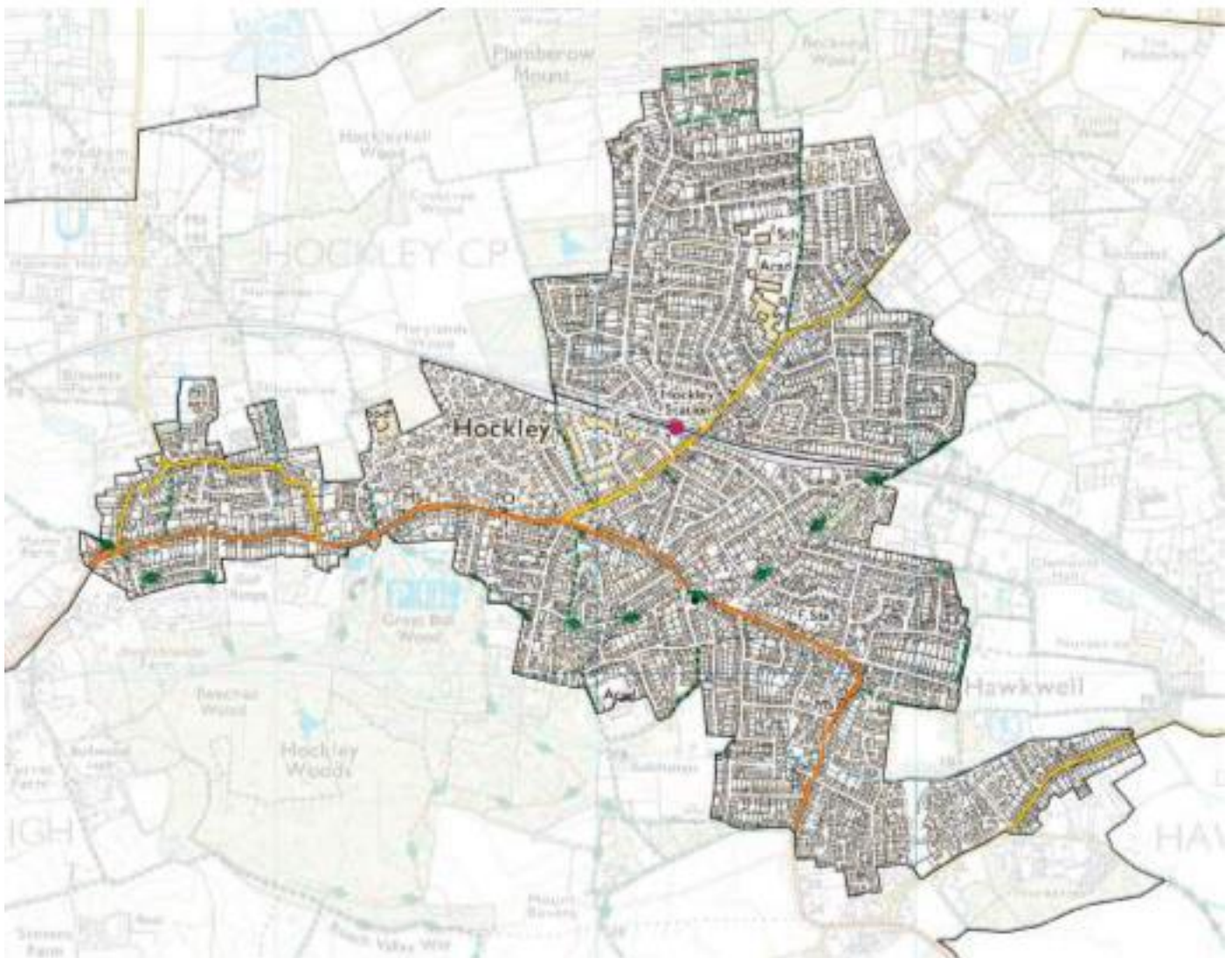
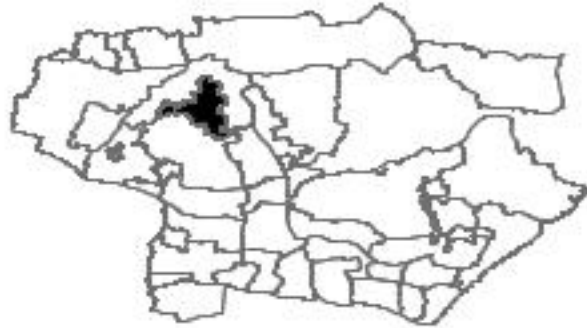
### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- The wooded character of Rayleigh Mount should be maintained;
- Connectivity between the town centre, Rayleigh Mount and other green spaces should be improved;
- Use of locally appropriate building materials and styles in any new development;
- Management and enhancement of tree planting within the town core.

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<sup>22</sup>Rayleigh Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2007) Rochford District Council

G: Urban  
G5: Hockley & Hawkwell



## **G5 - Hockley & Hawkwell**

### **Character description**

- 2.8.36 This is a sprawling character area, formed along the main link routes through the north of Rochford District. The historic settlements of Hockley and Hawkwell were linear, established along High Road, Main Road, Spa Road and Rectory Road. These have been absorbed into the current settlement form and the former villages are not identifiable. The Shenfield to Southend railway line dissects the settlement into two. The southern area is sprawling, having formed along the B1013 between Rayleigh and Rochford. The northern area is more compact and generally higher density.
- 2.8.37 Wooded Farmland and Hills character type borders this character area. Hockley Woods forms the southern edge and smaller woodland blocks surround the northern extent of the character area. A combination of small woodlands and treed hedgerows encompass the remainder of the character area. Settlement has established between the woodland areas and often within the form of the historic field pattern.
- 2.8.38 The character area is made up by a number of residential development areas that have taken place between 1920s and present day. An area of commercial development is central to this character area, to the south of the Hockley train station. Within the wider character area, small commercial units are limited to local precincts. The gradual development of this character area has resulted in large areas of a similar housing type infilled with smaller, more modern developments of different housing type and character.
- 2.8.39 Settlement expansion has largely taken place along roads perpendicular to the main routes, enabling development to take place behind and parallel to the main road frontage. Green frontages often characterise the main roads, with properties set back behind small front gardens. Secondary road frontages are characterised by more open, small front gardens, with remnant trees of previous woodland areas and field boundaries often delineating back gardens.
- 2.8.40 There is limited green space within this character area, although it does benefit from a number a footpath links into the adjacent character area to the north, south and east. Fields of varying sizes, woodland blocks and recreational green spaces are located around the boundary of this character area. Internal green space comprises sports fields and local areas of play.
- 2.8.41 The form and layout of the urban area combined with wooded character of the local and surrounding landscape mean that views are predominantly limited to the settlement area. The

wooded character of the adjacent character areas is apparent from within G5, with street and garden tree planting providing links through the urban area.

### ***Settlement Fringe***

- 2.8.42 Much of the settlement fringe is characterised by woodland edges and hedgerow field boundaries within the adjacent character areas. A small-scale field pattern encompasses the northern edges of the character area. Built form has expanded up to these wooded edges and the settlement fringe has a generally enclosed character. The built edge has a staggered character, where small developments have pushed out from the main settlement, between areas of woodland.
- 2.8.43 The southern edges are largely characterised by Hockley Woods. Development has taken place right up to the edge of the woodland, with recreational land uses common along this fringe. The southeast edge has a more sprawling character, where development has pushed east and south into the small-scale network of fields. Hedgerows and woodland contribute to assimilating development within the wooded landscape.

### ***Quality/condition***

- 2.8.44 This settlement has a sprawling character, where medium density development has gradually expanded along major routes, into the surrounding small-scale field pattern. The settlement edge is well integrated and development is confined by woodland blocks and mature hedgerow vegetation associated with the adjacent small-scale field pattern. There is limited green space within the settlement, with recreational facilities are often located towards the edge of the character area or in the adjacent character area. There are a number of footpath links from the edges of the settlement into to the adjacent character area. The condition of this area is considered to be good.

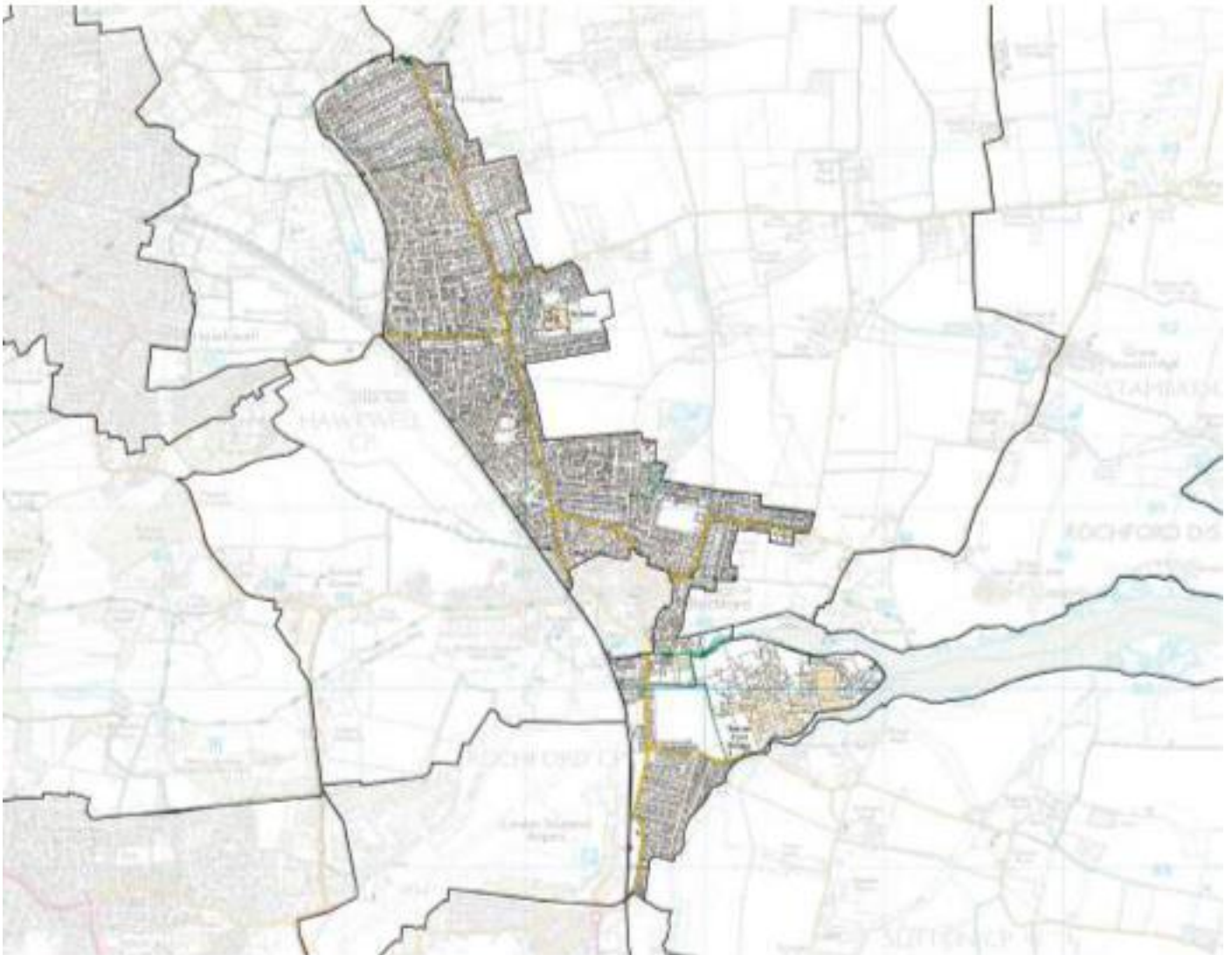
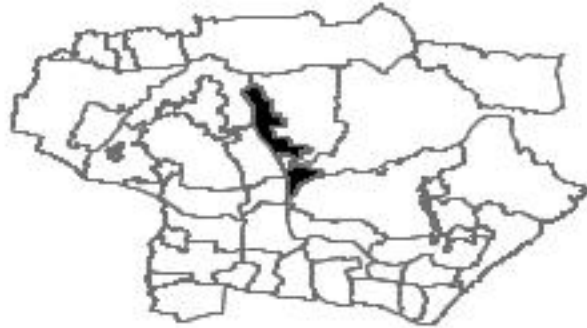
### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Existing woodland planting within this and adjacent character areas should contribute to the limits to growth and maintaining separation between nearby urban areas;
- Hedgerow boundaries to development should be retained and enhanced to help assimilate the settlement edges within the surrounding wooded farmland and hills character type;
- Conserve and enhance footpath links between existing green space and with surrounding rural character area.



G: Urban

G6: Rochford & Ashington



## **G6 - Rochford & Ashingdon**

### **Character description**

- 2.8.45 This linear character area is formed of several settlement areas that have amalgamated over time. It extends north-south between Ashingdon and the southern District boundary with urban areas in Southend (G9) and adjacent Wooded Farmland and Hills – Garon Park (D9). Coastal Farmland character area (C4 and C5) extend east from the southern part of the character area, and Woodland Farmland and Hills (D2, D3 and D6) encompass the northern extent.
- 2.8.46 Much of the commercial and business development is clustered around the historic centre (G7) and contained by the railway line to the west. A large industrial area is located between two river tributaries to the southeast of the town centre.
- 2.8.47 Housing areas primarily extend north from the historic core. The parallel streets of the southern extent of the character area originate from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century terraces have gradually been encompassed by a variety of development types established along the planned street pattern. Settlement to the north and east of the town centre dates from the inter-war period. The street pattern is established perpendicular to the Ashingdon Road, an arterial road linking to the centre of Southend. The settlement is contained in part by the railway line to the west and woodland that extends north of this. Much of the development has taken place within the historic field pattern and has grown up between historic farmhouse and church/hall complexes, linking dispersed settlement together.
- 2.8.48 The historic core consists of relatively dense, predominantly commercial development with a large number of historical, often listed, buildings. There are small pockets of green space between and forming the curtilage to buildings. The spaces within the settlement are well treed and the treed character extends through the character area, linking with the surrounding Wooded Farmland and Hills character type. There is no dominant housing type or character across the character area due to the piecemeal way that the settlement has developed. The western edge of the settlement is well contained due to orientation of housing with back gardens onto small-scale fields and woodland. The eastern side of the settlement is more open and built edges are occasionally conspicuous from the adjacent character area. Woodland blocks and linking hedgerows provide screening in part.
- 2.8.49 There are a number of green and public spaces associated with the transitional landscape between this and adjacent character areas, including allotments to the east, public parks on Millview Meadows and Bradley Way, Rochford Hundred Golf Club to the west and recreational

fields to the northeast. Various public footpaths connect between the settlement edge and the adjacent character area, particularly to the west.

### *Settlement Fringe*

- 2.8.50 This area has a varied settlement fringe character and forms part of the transition of the wider landscape between wooded farmland and hills and coastal farmland character types.
- 2.8.51 To the west, the airport, railway and woodland blocks have generally established the limits to settlement expansion in this direction. However, there has been recent expansion to the west of the historic core. A small-scale field structure with treed hedgerows and woodland blocks characterises the norther settlement edge. To the east, woodland and hedgerow cover reduces and the settlement edge is more exposed than the west. Settlement to the east has a more piecemeal character, that has led to a more fractured settlement edge where development has taken place within the field structure and linking as infill between older housing areas.
- 2.8.52 Properties predominantly back onto the surrounding rural areas, resulting in a variety of boundary edge types. Recreational and small business land uses are often located within the fringe landscape, providing the transition between the urban area and adjacent character areas.
- 2.8.53 The Roach Valley Way runs through the conservation area from its south-east corner, following the roads to the north and west before linking up with Ironwell Lane. At the eastern edge of the golf course, a north-south public right of way follows an old field boundary. Other footpaths link across the golf course, one going through the churchyard. <sup>23</sup>

### *Quality/condition*

- 2.8.54 This settlement has a sprawling, linear character, due to amalgamation of several settlement areas and piecemeal expansion over time. The settlement edge is generally well integrated by surrounding vegetation, although this is more variable along the eastern edge of the character area. There is limited green space within the settlement, with recreational facilities are often located towards the edge of the character area or in the adjacent character area. There are limited footpath links through the settlement or linking with the adjacent character areas. The condition of this area is considered to be moderate.

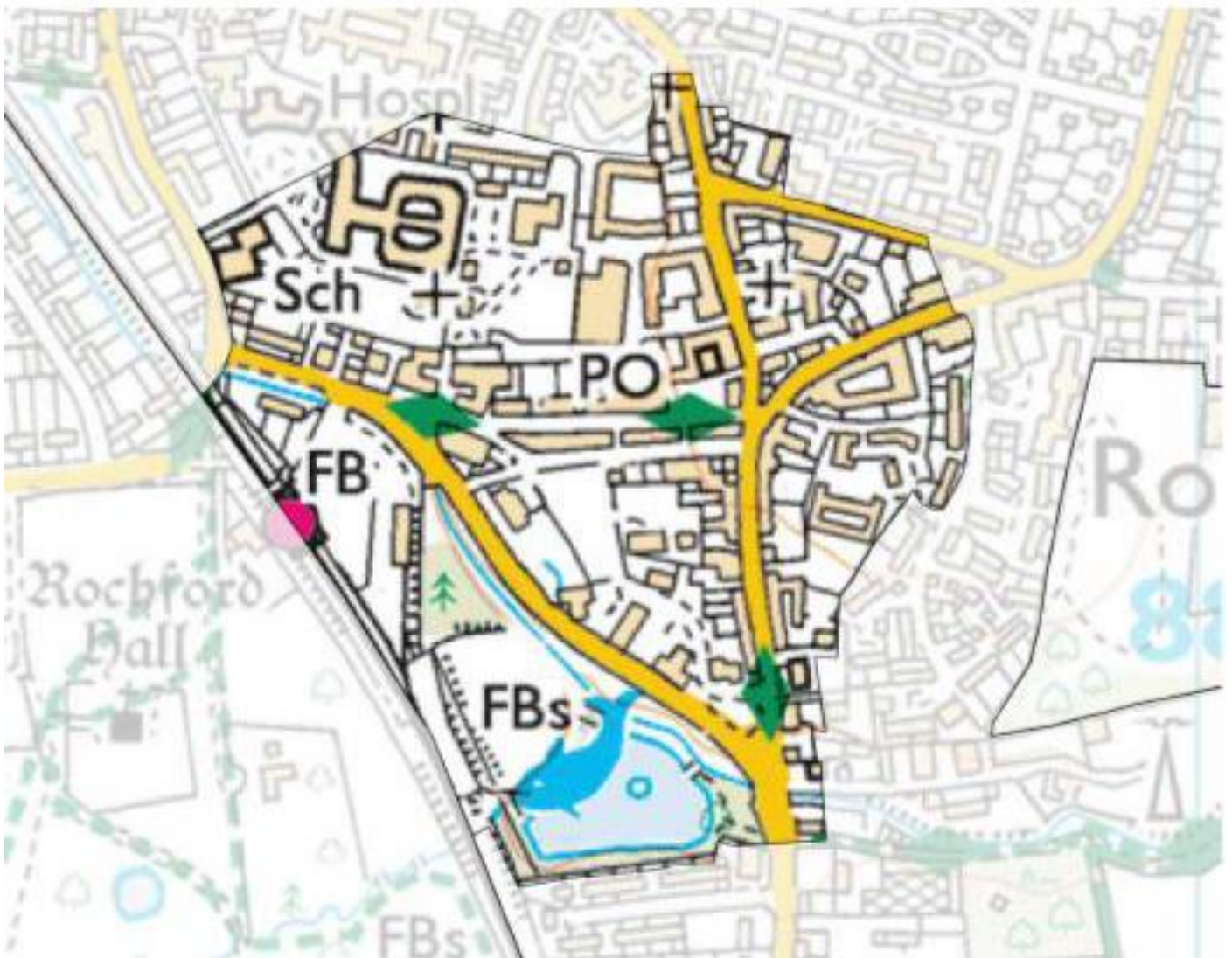
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<sup>23</sup>Rochford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2007) Rochford District Council

## Landscape strategy recommendations

- Hedgerow boundaries to development should be retained and enhanced to help assimilate the settlement edges within the surrounding wooded farmland and hills character type;
- Any future development should retain the integrated edge character and be contained by vegetation and field pattern within the adjacent character area;
- Appropriate hedgerow and tree planting should be introduced as part of any development proposals, in keeping with adjacent character area characteristics;
- Footpath links should be provided and maintained in order to improve access to public green space and adjacent rural areas.

G: Urban  
G7: Rochford (Core)



## **G7 - Rochford (Core)**

### **Character description**

- 2.8.55 Rochford (Core) character area is formed of the historic core of the settlement of Rochford and is surrounded by the Rochford and Ashingdon Urban character area (G6).
- 2.8.56 The historic core of Rochford is at the head of the River Roach and takes the form of a cross along North Street, South Street, East Street and West Street. This is where the majority of listed buildings within the character area are clustered, within the Conservation Area. The conservation area includes the historic town centre and the backlands east of South Street and north of West Street. It also extends west of the core, covering the station, the parish church, and Rochford Hall, a Tudor mansion now partially demolished.

### **Quality/condition**

- 2.8.57 The original character of the old market town is largely preserved, centred on the cross-roads. A number of 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings form the picturesque core, with brick townhouses and cottages elsewhere. The condition of the buildings in the Conservation Area is mostly good.<sup>24</sup> More modern development has been integrated within the historic core.

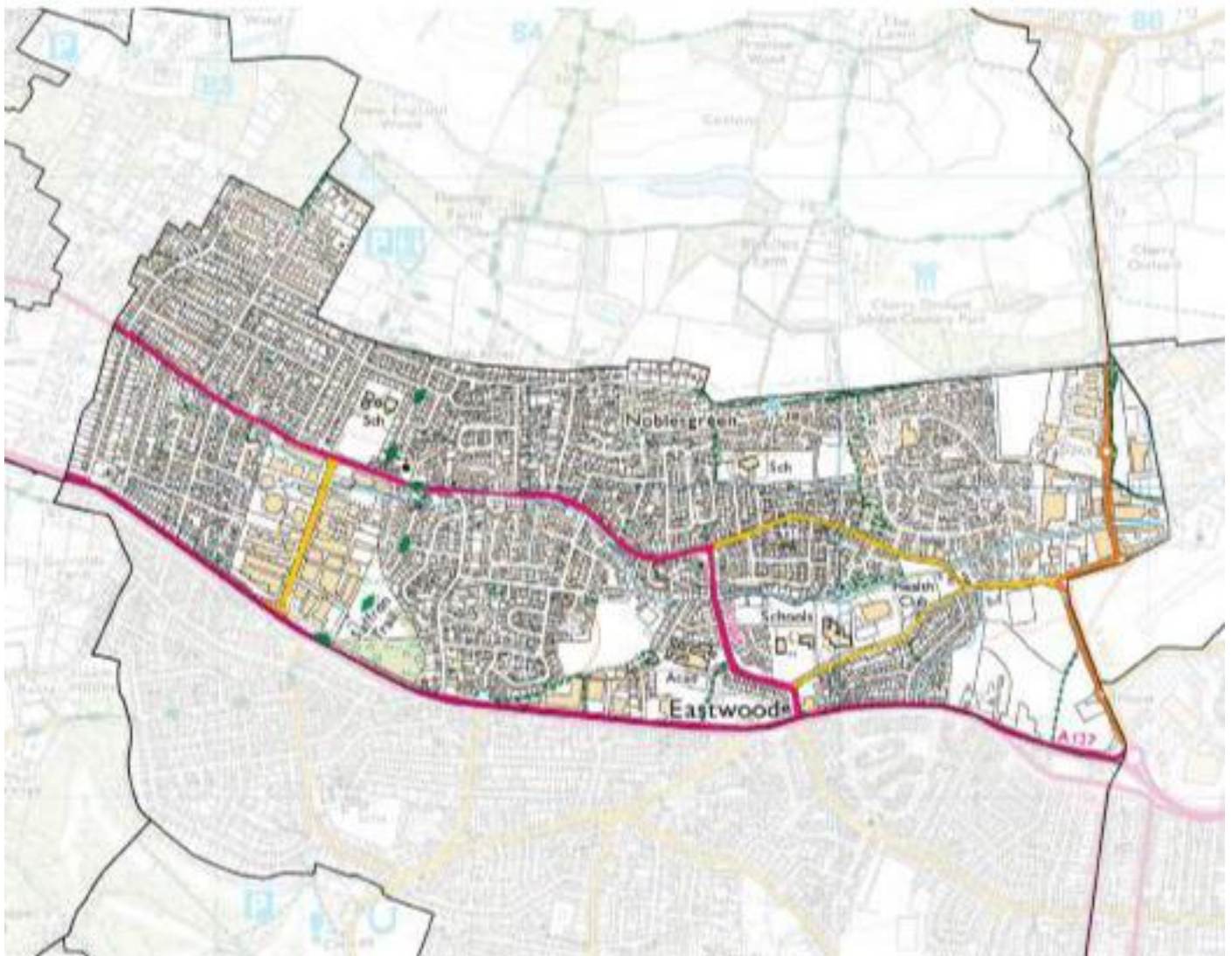
### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Any future development should contribute to the market town character of the historic core;
- Links between the historic core, wider conservation area and adjacent rural areas and open space should be conserved and enhanced.

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<sup>24</sup>Rochford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2007) Rochford District Council

G: Urban  
G8: Eastwood



## **G8 - Eastwood**

### **Character description**

- 2.8.58 This character area forms the north western urban extent of Southend. It is encompassed by areas of wooded farmland and hills (D4, D5 and D6) to the north and west, and urban areas (G9, G10 and G11) extend south and east. The Borough boundary forms the majority of the northern edge of this urban area. The southern edge is defined by the A127 dual carriageway.
- 2.8.59 The area comprises predominantly post-war housing and has been developed in a largely piecemeal way, resulting in a variety of housing types and settlement form. The western part of the character area has a grid-like settlement layout, with roads perpendicular to the A127 and further north become parallel to the A1015. Housing types vary from small, semi-detached bungalows and dormer / chalet bungalows to larger detached properties towards the northern boundary. Housing layout within the central and eastern parts of the character area has a more sinuous form and is set out as cul-de-sac development.
- 2.8.60 The Progress Road industrial estate is located between two housing areas. It is a busy trade area between the arterial roads through this character area. Additional commercial areas are located further east along the A127 and on the eastern edge of the character area, adjacent to Southend Airport.
- 2.8.61 There are three public parks within the character area; Oak Wood Park is a secluded space adjacent to Progress Road industrial estate and housing on Leslie Drive, Eastwood Park is a larger, more open space in the central part of the character area, and Scotts Park and a smaller, wooded space to the north of the character area. Other green spaces include sports fields and athletics track, and local areas of play and small green pockets set within housing estates.
- 2.8.62 There are two listed buildings within the character area namely Grade II listed Bell House Public House on Rayleigh Road, and Grade II listed Cockethurst Farmhouse on White House Road.

### ***Settlement Fringe***

- 2.8.63 The southern edge of the character area is defined by the A127 dual carriageway. Existing housing and commercial development is slightly set back from this route and the development edge is often tree lined, with some exposed rear garden boundaries in places. Green spaces including Oak Wood Park and Eastwood Academy sports fields break up the line of development on this edge. The road forms the boundary between this and the urban area to the south. The



southeast edge comprises irregular arable fields that have a partially neglected appearance and have been altered by community facilities and commercial development on Nestuda Way.

2.8.64 The northern fringe is characterised by treed hedgerows and small woodland blocks associated with the adjacent character area. Housing along Rayleigh Avenue and Eastwood Rise is enclosed by surrounding trees that form a soft edge between the urban and wooded areas. Larger properties along Green Lane are less well screened along their rear boundaries, where they have been constructed within part of a larger field pattern and are conspicuous in part from the adjacent character area. Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park forms the northeast fringe to this character area and contributes to a soft development edge.

2.8.65 The eastern fringe is characterised by car sales rooms and the busy link road adjacent to Southend Airport. The western fringe is secluded and characterised by the adjacent wooded character area (D4).

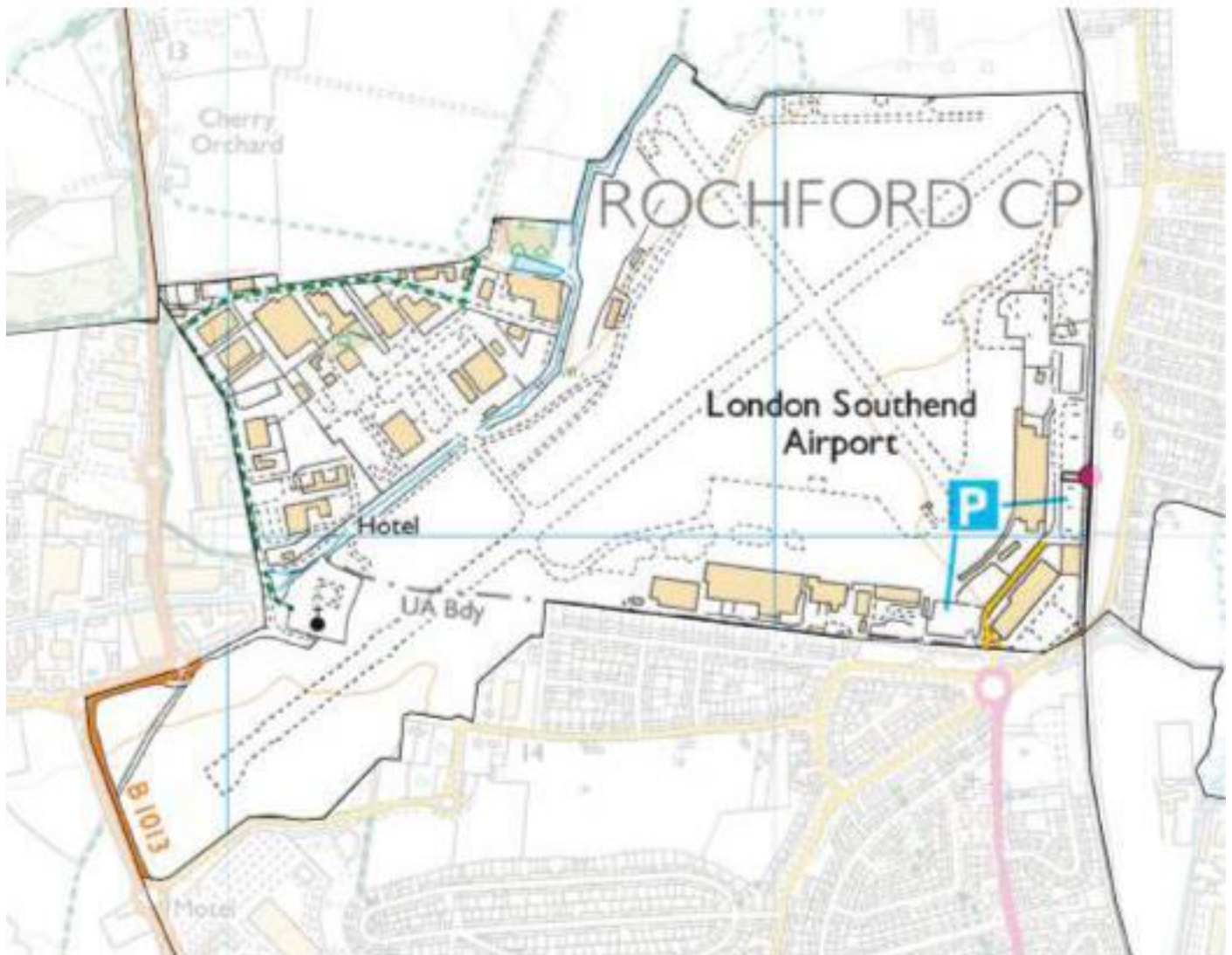
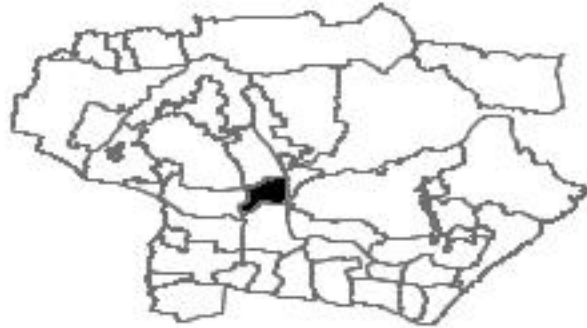
#### *Quality/condition*

2.8.66 This urban area comprises a variety of land uses. Type and layout of built form also varies across the area. There are various green spaces throughout the settlement, often forming the break between housing/development areas and not always easily accessible. The area is generally well integrated as part of the wider urban area. Parts of the northern boundary are more conspicuous where development has pushed across former field boundaries. New woodland planting as part of the country park helps to alleviate this. The condition of this area is considered to be moderate.

#### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Green spaces and associated tree vegetation within the settlement should be conserved and enhanced;
- Links between green spaces should be improved and maintained;
- Woodland and hedgerow planting on the settlement edges and within the adjacent character area should be conserved and enhanced in order to provide a well-integrated settlement edge, and maintain separation from the Upper Roach Valley;
- Roadside vegetation and street trees should be maintained where appropriate.

G: Urban  
G9: Southend Airport



## **G9 - Southend Airport**

### **Character description**

- 2.8.67 This is a small urban character area on the northern edge of Southend-on-Sea and southern edge of Rochford. Areas of wooded farmland and hills (D5 and D6) extend north and west from this character area.
- 2.8.68 The character area comprises the operational area of London Southend Airport including terminal buildings, hangars and runway, low-level commercial/industrial units and large areas of hardstanding. Due to the nature of the land uses there is an open character to the character area, although surrounding residential development contributes to it being absorbed into the wider urban area.
- 2.8.69 St Laurence Church is a grade I listed building set within a brick walled and well treed, secluded churchyard towards the southwest of this character area. It is adjacent to the runway and surrounded by modern development associated with the airport and commercial land uses.

### ***Settlement Fringe***

- 2.8.70 The northern edge of this character area is formed by treed hedgerow boundaries and the edge of a large golf course, which contribute to local screening at ground level.
- 2.8.71 To the south, east and west are edges of adjacent urban areas that include housing to the east and south, and commercial units and enclosed fields to the west. The edges of the airfield and runway are defined by hedgerow planting to screen ground level views.

### ***Quality/condition***

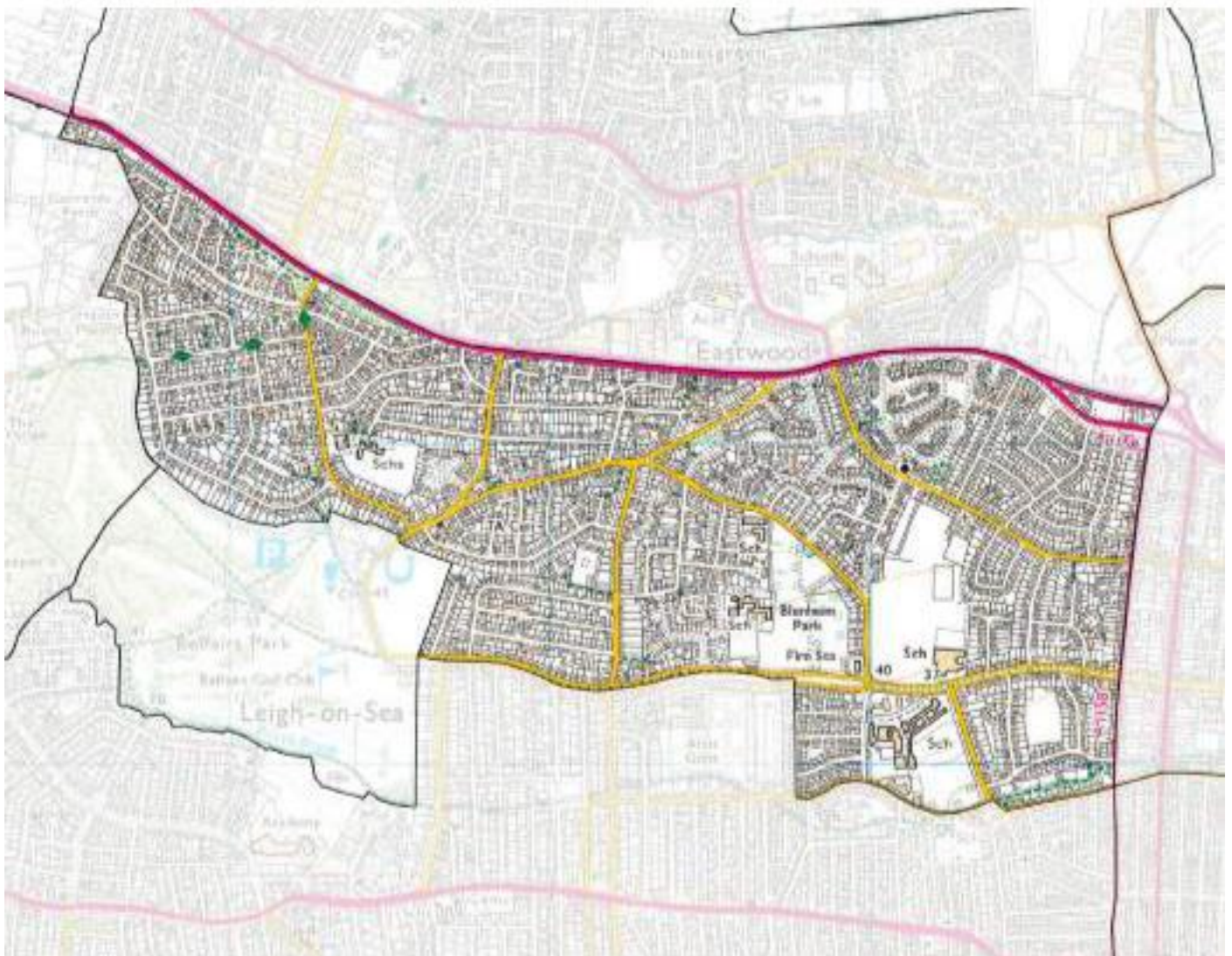
- 2.8.72 The runway forms the main part of this character area, with commercial land use to the north and south. The area is relatively well integrated by surrounding vegetation that screens views into the character area. The northern edge is more exposed due fragmentation of vegetation in the adjacent character area. Commercial development spans across the north of this character area into the adjacent area to the west. The historic church is contained within its enclosed churchyard setting, but has been encompassed by the more dominating, modern, urban structures. The condition of this area is considered to be moderate to poor.

## Landscape strategy recommendations

- Tree and hedgerow planting around the edges of this character area should be conserved and enhanced in order to reduce intrusion associated with aeroplane movement and the large, urban structures on adjacent character area;
- Any future development should be of an appropriate scale and contained by existing and new planting to assimilate it within the urban edge zone;
- Roadside vegetation and street trees should be maintained where appropriate;
- Valued historic landscape features including the church and churchyard should be conserved and enhanced.

G: Urban

G10: Leigh-on-Sea (North)



## **G10 - Leigh-on-Sea (North)**

### **Character description**

- 2.8.73 This character area forms part of the west suburbs of Southend on Sea. It is surrounded by urban areas (G8, G11 and G12) to the north, south and east. A small area of wooded farmland and hills (D7 – Belfairs Park) forms the southwest fringe of the character area.
- 2.8.74 This character area is medium density residential area that has been established around a loose grid street pattern. Housing in the central and eastern parts of this area dates from the inter-war period. This was infilled and expanded west post World War II.
- 2.8.75 There is no common housing type to this character area. It varies from early 20<sup>th</sup> century, large, semi-detached properties in the east to detached bungalows in the west. Tree-lined, residential streets are a feature of this area. Properties are generally set back from the road beyond wide pavements with grass verges, and small front gardens and/or driveways.
- 2.8.76 There is no central, community area or shopping centre. Small runs of local shops and businesses form local centres within the different housing areas including along Eastwood road North, Bridgwater Drive and Elmsleigh Drive.
- 2.8.77 There are a small number of green or public spaces within this urban area. Blenheim Park and the adjacent grounds of St Thomas More High School form a large, central green space to the character area. There are occasional, small green spaces within housing estates and school grounds contribute to open space between the housing areas. As a consequence of the housing density and form of this area and tree lined streets, views are inward looking and there is no visual relationship with adjacent or wider character area.

### ***Settlement Fringe***

- 2.8.78 Arterial roads form the north, south and east boundaries of this character area. Housing type, form and layout transitions across these boundaries.
- 2.8.79 Belfairs Sports Ground and Golf Club forms the western edge of the character area, as an extension of the wooded farmland and hills character type that forms the west of the study area and spans the District and Borough boundaries.

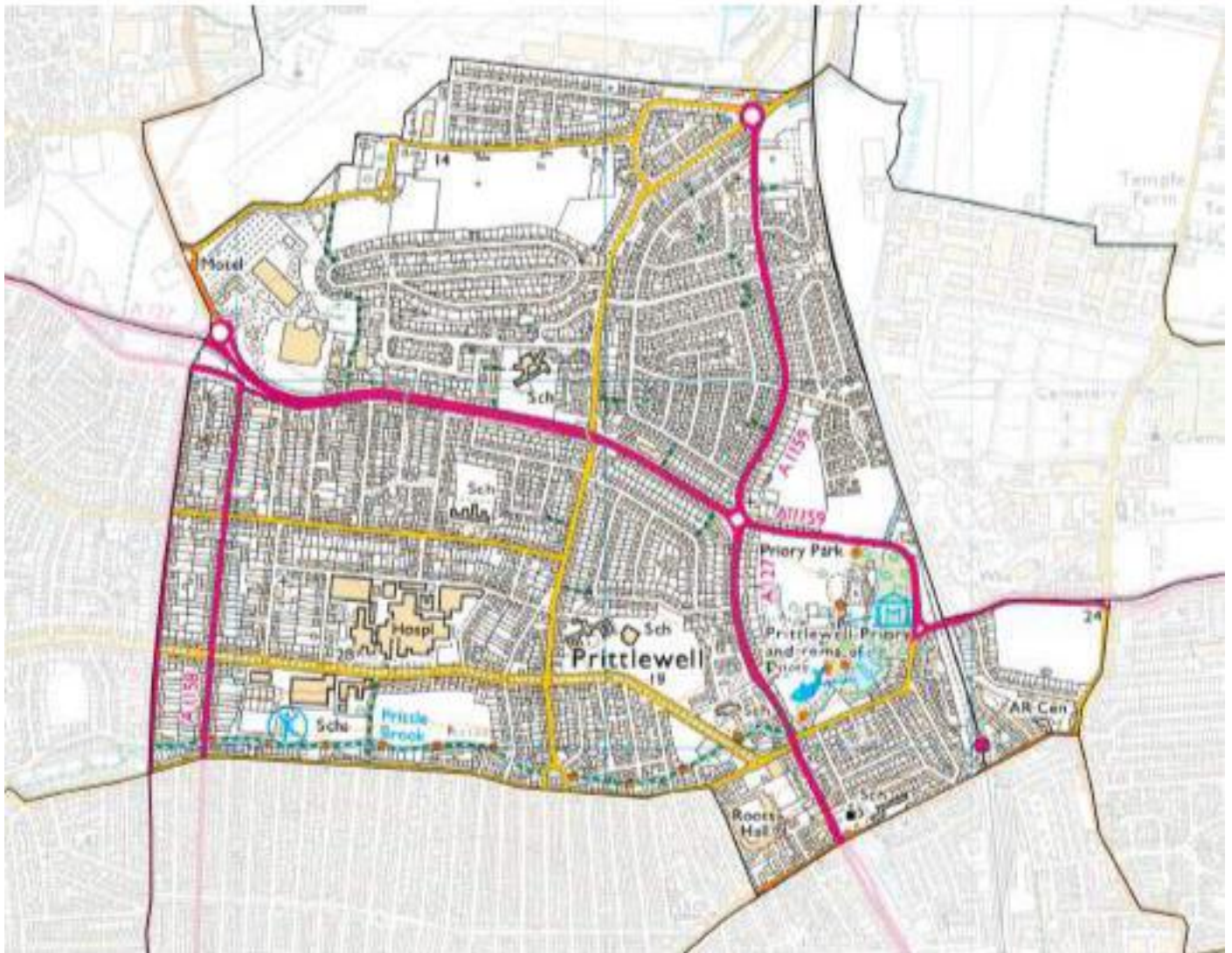
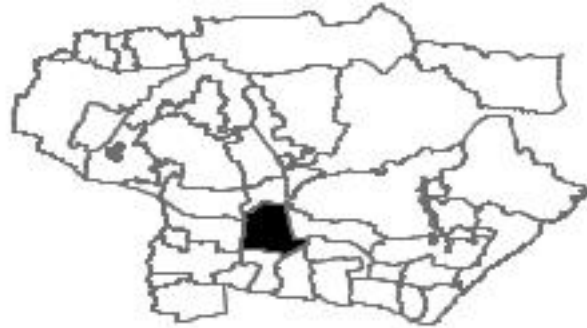
### ***Quality/condition***

2.8.80 This urban area forms part of the wider settlement of Southend-on-Sea. Housing type and form is similar across the area. The western edge is well integrated by woodland within Castle Point Borough and forming Belfairs Wood. Public green space is limited within this area. Street trees and trees forming garden boundaries contribute to this being a leafy suburb. The condition of the area is considered to be moderate to good.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Green spaces throughout this area should be conserved and enhanced;
- Links between green spaces in this and adjacent character area should be improved and maintained;
- Woodland planting on the western settlement edge and within the adjacent character area should be conserved and enhanced in order to maintain a well-integrated settlement edge, and maintain separation between urban areas;
- Roadside vegetation and street trees should be maintained where appropriate.

G: Urban  
G11: Prittlewell





## **G11 – Prittlewell**

### **Character description**

- 2.8.81 Prittlewell character area is on the northern edge of the Borough and forms the gateway to Southend from the north. The character area is adjacent to other urban areas (G8, G9, G10, G12, G14, G15 and G16) to the north, south and west. An area of wooded farmland and hills (D9) extends east with coastal farmland (C5) beyond to the northeast.
- 2.8.82 The A127 is a dominant feature due to the volume of traffic and width of the dual carriageway through the housing areas that extend to the north and south. Prittlewell Chase is another dominant route through this character area that provides access to Southend University Hospital. These roads divide Prittlewell into three areas, although housing type, form and layout merges across these internal boundaries.
- 2.8.83 The historic settlement of Prittlewell was towards the southern boundary of the character area around East Street and West Street and including Prittlewell Priory to the north. A handful of historic properties remain and there is a local centre of shops and businesses at this road junction. Grade I listed Prittlewell Priory is a museum set within Priory Park, which is a large, treed, green space to the southeast of this character area.
- 2.8.84 Housing within this character area is low to medium density. Housing areas are frequently broken up by green and public space including allotments, school grounds, recreational fields and small arable fields to the north of the area. A public footpath and cycleway follow the route of the Prittle Brook, parallel to Fairfax Drive through the southern part of the character area, linking between Leigh and Prittlewell Priory Park.
- 2.8.85 Housing in this area began to develop during the inter-war period, particularly in the central part of the character area and including the hospital. It has formed around a loose grid, established around the two main routes east-west between outer and central Southend. Post-war housing is found towards the edges of the character area including semi-detached and bungalow properties around Eastbury Lane and Wells Avenue in the north. More recent housing development has taken place on the western edge adjacent to the railway line.

### ***Settlement Fringe***

- 2.8.86 The Shenfield to Southend railway line forms the eastern edge of this character area. The railway runs along a well-treed cutting that separates it from the adjacent woodland farmland and hills area (D9).

2.8.87 Properties on the northern edge abut Southend Airport and recent commercial development has taken place at the junction of the A127 and Nestuda Way. Small fields provide a green finger between housing areas and include equipped and informal areas of play.

2.8.88 The southern and western character area boundaries are defined by main routeways, where housing type and form transitions across the boundary with an adjacent area. Prittlewell properties front onto these roads and are often of similar character to those opposite.

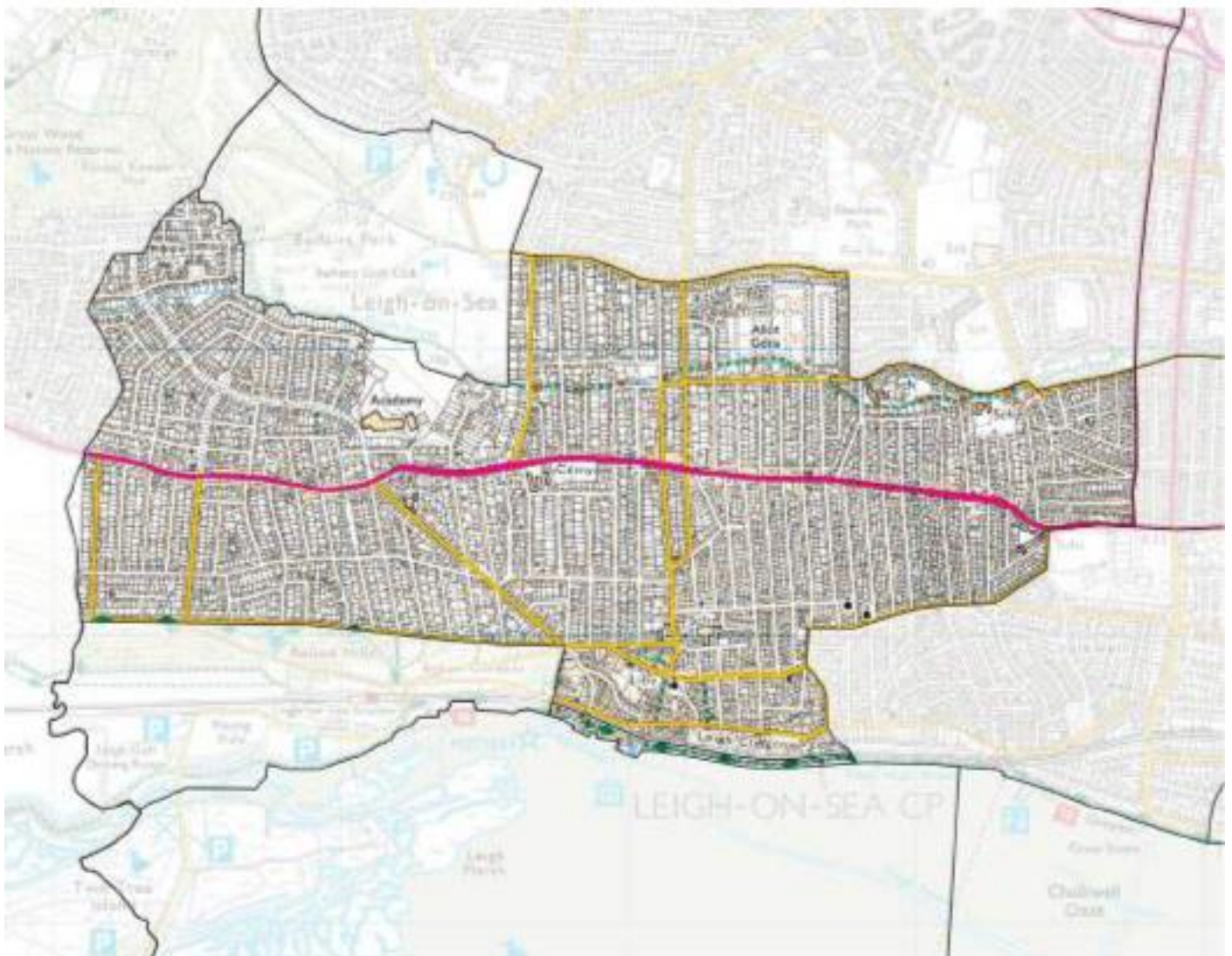
#### *Quality/condition*

2.8.89 This urban area forms the part of northern Southend-on-Sea, which has pushed north up to the airport boundary. The area is primarily residential, built up around the hospital and with more recent commercial development in the northwest. Housing type and settlement form varies across the area and has no overriding character. The settlement is divided by several main roads that segregate housing areas and limit connectivity within this character area and into adjacent areas. Prittlewell Priory and surrounding park is an important historic feature and public green space to the southeast of area. A variety of other green spaces provide local green space within different housing areas, but there is limited connectivity between them. The condition of the area is considered to be moderate to poor.

#### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Green spaces throughout this area should be conserved and enhanced;
- Links between green spaces in this and adjacent character areas should be provided or improved;
- Settlement edge vegetation should be conserved and enhanced particularly along the railway and airport boundaries;
- Roadside vegetation and street trees should be maintained where appropriate to limit intrusion from main roads on the housing areas;
- Valued historic landscape features including Prittlewell Priory should be conserved and enhanced.

G: Urban  
G12: Leigh-on-Sea (South)



## **G12 - Leigh-on-Sea (South)**

### **Character description**

- 2.8.90 Leigh-on-Sea (South) is a large residential area forming the eastern extent of Southend-on-Sea, formed around the A13 arterial road from central Southend through Hadleigh and beyond to Basildon. The character area is to the south of G10 urban area and west of G13 and G14. The southern edge of the character area bounds a small area of wooded farmland and hills (D8) and estuarine marsh and mudflats A1) extends east along the sea front of Southend-on-Sea.
- 2.8.91 The historic part of the area is focussed around Church Hill, along Leigh Hill and onto part of Broadway. Development of the strong grid street pattern, north of the historic centre began towards the end of the Victorian period. Moderate size detached and semi-detached properties were built out in this area during the Edwardian period. The grid pattern was continued east and west through the inter-war period. To the east of Station Road, the density of housing increases slightly and there is greater variety in house type and style including terraces and bungalows. To the west of Hadleigh Road development becomes less dense, streets widen and are often tree lined with narrow grass verges.
- 2.8.92 London Road is the spine road to the character area and provides a linear centre of local shops and services that extends the whole length east-west through the centre of the character area. Shops and services on Broadway offer a secondary centre in the southern part of the character area.
- 2.8.93 Old Leigh is the original coastal settlement, on the estuary and is separated from the main settlement area by the railway. It is characterised by narrow streets, cottages and boatyards, including timber clad and white-washed brick properties.
- 2.8.94 Development within the southern part of the character area is less dense and roads are more sinuous, working with the contours of the hillside. Areas of treed, green space exist between groups of properties on the slopes. Residents of large properties on Cliff parade experience long distance views looking out over the sloping cliff gardens and across the estuary. Away from the cliffs there is limited green space within the character area and it is characterised by the grid street pattern, which is often tree-lined. School playing fields, a cemetery, small park and allotments contribute pockets of green space in this urban area.
- 2.8.95 Views through the area are limited and focussed along the linear streets. There are long distance views to the south from the cliffs, across the estuary towards Canvey Island. These views are of a busy shipping route and industry is clearly visible on the horizon.

### *Settlement Fringe*

- 2.8.96 The character area is a dense urban area that extends from central Southend-on-Sea and continues in part, west to merge with Hadleigh and suburbs beyond this. Belfairs Park to the north and Belton Hills Nature Reserve to the south are part of the wooded farmland and hills character type that forms the western part of the study area. They are fingers of green space that break up the edge of the dense urban form and link into the rural landscape outside of the Borough.
- 2.8.97 Part of the southern edge of the character area is formed by the cliff gardens and the railway runs along the coastline at the foot of the slopes. The mudflats of the estuary extend south from here, the character of which alters with the tide.
- 2.8.98 The north and east boundaries of the character area are delineated by main roads that mark the transition in housing type, form and layout associated with the development of the suburbs of Southend-on-Sea. Often there are busy road junctions associated with these transitional areas.

### *Quality/condition*

- 2.8.99 This is a large suburb of western Southend-on-Sea. There is a general sense of uniformity through the area in relation to housing age, type, form and style. Whilst there is some variation, the Victorian/Edwardian, parallel streets are the overriding characteristic associated with this area. There is limited green space within this area and few links to spaces in adjacent character area. Old Leigh and the cliff gardens provide variation in the area and are noted areas of interest. The western edge of the settlement is exposed, due to limited vegetation cover in the adjacent character area. The condition of the area is considered to be moderate.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Links to nearby green spaces and rural areas should be promoted and improved;
- Improve vegetation along character area edges in order to better integrate the settlement in relation to adjacent areas;
- Maintain green sea frontage.

G: Urban  
G13: Chalkwell



## **G13 – Chalkwell**

### **Character description**

- 2.8.100 Chalkwell is a small, comparatively low-density, urban character area between two urban areas (G12 and G13) and with its southern boundary to the estuarine mudflats (A1 and A2).
- 2.8.101 Chalkwell is a leafy suburb, primarily characterised by moderate, detached inter-war properties established around a more sinuous grid pattern than adjacent suburbs. These form the central part of the character area. To the west of Cliff Road housing density increases slightly and this is more in common with the adjacent character area (G12) and inter-war development. A wider grid pattern is noticeable in the east of the area, with large properties of varied design are set back along wide, tree-lined streets.
- 2.8.102 The wider streets, tree-lined character and lower density development creates a more peaceful, suburban character than that of adjacent character area. The Ridgeway provides the main route through the area, which links between Chalkwell Avenue and the A13. There is no direct link between central areas such as Southend-on-Sea and Leigh-on-Sea so traffic volume is relatively low.
- 2.8.103 Green and public spaces are scattered through the area, with a number of sports courts along the railway behind houses towards the south of the area and Chalkwell Park, sports grounds and schools forming the northern edge along the A13.

### ***Settlement Fringe***

- 2.8.104 The sea front is characterised by large, low-rise residential properties including flats, semi-detached and detached houses. These are set back from the sea wall behind large front gardens on Grand Parade and beyond bowling greens on Chalkwell Esplanade. Residents experience long-distance views across the estuary from these properties.
- 2.8.105 The east, west and north (in part) edges of the character area are delineated by main routes, although housing type begins to transition a few streets either side of this, particularly in the west of the area. The northern edge with London Road where Chalkwell Park forms a green break in the urban grain associated with the commercial centre along this routeway. It separates the lower density housing in Chalkwell from that to the north in Leigh-on-Sea and Westcliff-on-Sea.

### ***Quality/condition***

2.8.106 There is a general sense of uniformity through the area in relation to housing age and type, with some variation in form and style. There has been greater alteration to properties along the sea frontage, introducing modern structures and varying vernacular. Tree-lined streets are characteristic of this area. These link between the scattered green spaces, particularly through the central and eastern part. The condition of the area is generally considered to be good.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Tree-lined streets should be conserved and enhanced;
- Open sea frontage should be maintained, providing public green space and separation of residential properties and beach;
- Well-defined links between green spaces within and outside the area, including the sea front should be maintained and improved.



G: Urban  
G14: Westcliff-on-Sea



## **G14 - Westcliff-on-Sea**

### **Character description**

- 2.8.107 This urban area is encompassed by adjacent urban areas (G10, G11, G12, G13 and G15) to the north, east and west. The estuarine marsh/mudflats (A2) extend along the coast to the south of this character area.
- 2.8.108 The housing typology within this character area can be attributed to the late Victorian and Edwardian era. The character area is divided into two distinct areas by London Road that creates a northern and southern part to the area. The housing is set out along a grid pattern with a strong north-south axis particularly in the north. The southern area is formed around Hamlet Court Road, which has become the main commercial street for the area, and established between the coastline, railway and London Road.
- 2.8.109 The southern area is characterised by Edwardian architecture including external timberwork, bays, gables and balconies. The most elaborate properties are located towards the seafront. Modern development has taken place along the seafront, introducing apartments and blocks of flats between the more traditional properties. The northern part of the character area is more modest, with smaller and more repetitive housing typology along parallel and narrow streets.
- 2.8.110 This is a dense, residential suburb with very little green or public space. Vegetation along the railway line, trees within rear gardens and occasional street trees break up the urban grain in part. There is a linear green space on the seafront, on the slopes between Western Esplanade and Clifton Drive. It is divided up by flights of steps and footpaths.
- 2.8.111 Due to the tight grid pattern and density of built form, views between this and adjacent character area are limited. Views are focussed along the linear streets and look towards the perpendicular routes. There are long distance views available from the south of the character area, across the estuary.

### ***Settlement Fringe***

- 2.8.112 The character area is surrounded by the residential edges of adjacent urban areas (G8, G9, G10, G11 and G13). These are separated by residential streets, where the building typology and/or settlement form begins to change and key characteristics alter.
- 2.8.113 The sea front is characterised by the wide road with wide pavements that run parallel to the beach and water's edge below the concrete sea wall. Large, low-rise residential properties

including flats, semi-detached and detached houses. These are set back from the sea wall behind large front gardens on Grand Parade and beyond bowling greens on Chalkwell Esplanade. Residents experience long-distance views across the estuary from these properties. Edwardian properties with decorative balconies are interspersed with modern, low- and high-rise blocks of flats, and properties that have been extended upwards. The central part of the frontage is a narrow area of grass slopes between Western Esplanade and the residential streets on the upper level including The Leas and Clifton Drive. Expansive mudflats extend south across the estuary from this frontage.

### ***Quality/condition***

2.8.114 A generally uniform grid-layout, particularly to the north of the area. Housing typology is largely repetitive through the area, with variation in design attributed to different house builders. There is greater variety in properties along the seafront, where more recent alterations and development has taken place. The area contains a high density of residential properties of uniform typology. Similar to Leigh-on-Sea, parallel streets are the overriding characteristic associated with this area.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Introduce/improve connectivity to the sea front;
- Ensure that new development is in-keeping with existing street vernacular.

G: Urban  
G15: Central Southend



## **G15 - Central Southend**

### **Character description**

- 2.8.115 This character area is at the centre of Southend Borough, with residential areas extending east and west from here along the coast. Urban areas (G11, G14, G16 and G19) encompass the north, east and west of this character area. Estuarine marsh and mudflats (A2) extends south, east and west from the southern edge of the character area.
- 2.8.116 The character area is the commercial hub of the Borough. It has fragmented character and is formed of areas of different building typology, divided by Queensway bypass and the railway line. It is focussed around the central seafront and pier, with retail units focussed around the commercial centre extending north along High Street, between Royal Terrace and Queensway.
- 2.8.117 There are a number of conservation areas within this character area, focussed along the sea front including Royal Terrace, Clifftown Parade and Westcliff Parade. These are the early residential areas of Southend. They contain properties relating to different periods and styles of development, associated with the growth of the seaside resort. Several of the buildings within these conservation areas are listed, including The Royal Hotel, properties on Clifftown Parade as part of the planned estate, and 18th century properties on Royal Terrace.
- 2.8.118 Beyond the commercial centre and seafront are a variety of residential areas. Parallel streets of terraces exist towards the north of the area, although the layout is less structured than adjoining character area. Residential areas are separated roads and railways, as well as civic buildings such as along London Road and Victoria Avenue.
- 2.8.119 Southend Cliff Gardens are a wide public green space on the cliff slopes that extend west from Adventure Island along the seafront of this character area. It contains a number of designed spaces and footpaths that link between the seafront (Western Esplanade) and properties on higher land along Westcliff Parade and Clifftown Parade. Within the wider character area are small green spaces including a cemetery, school grounds, sports facilities and Prittlewell Gardens on Clifftown Parade.

### ***Settlement Fringe***

- 2.8.120 The character area forms part of the urban area that covers much of the Borough. The residential streets merge across the character area boundaries and are delineated by streets where the change in character begins. To the north, East Street and West Street form the boundary with the historic settlement of Prittlewell, and a decrease in density and height of built form. To the B1015

and A1160 mark the transition from the commercial centre to the surrounding residential areas. The western transition is across Milton Road, which is lined by a variety of building types.

2.8.121 The central part of the sea front is characterised by the amusement arcades and rides, from which the pier extends. It is a busy, cluttered section of the sea front of Southend-on-Sea. The cliff gardens form the majority of the sea front of this character area. They provide a set back from the sea wall for properties up on the cliffs and create a more open character to the sea front than through the rest of the Borough. Long distance, open views are available along this stretch, looking out across the estuary.

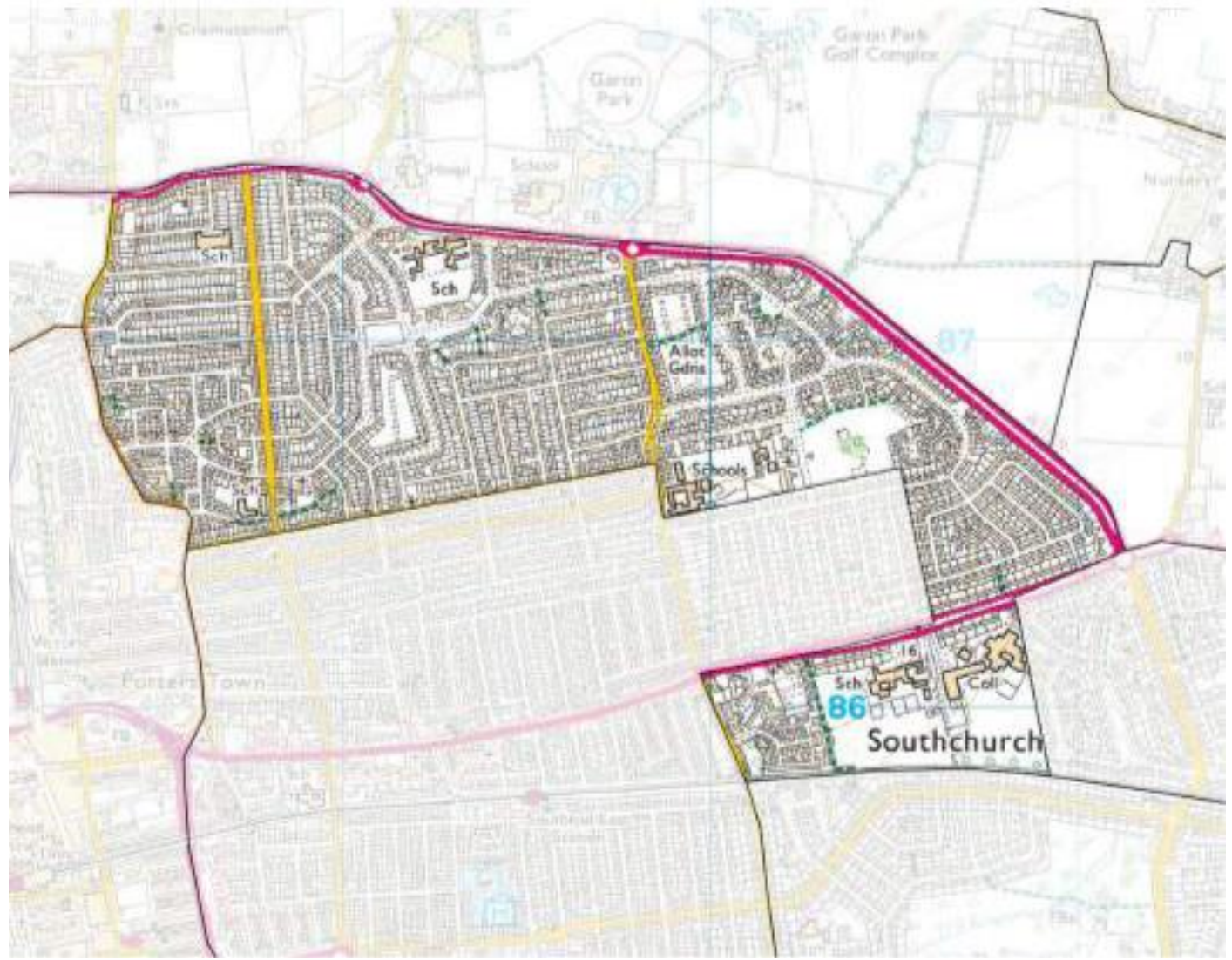
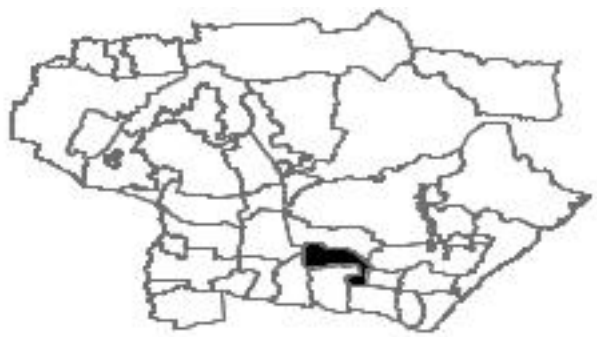
#### ***Quality/condition***

2.8.122 The character area contains a variety of land uses which create a number of sub-areas, relating to residential, commercial and sea frontage green space. There are pockets that are of poor condition due to derelict/unused buildings and incongruous vernacular and signage. Overall the area is considered to be of moderate condition.

#### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Introduce/improve connectivity to the sea front;
- Conserve and enhance the cliff gardens as part of the wider, connected sea frontage;
- Consider key views and building typology as part of any new development.

G: Urban  
G16: Southchurch (North)



## **G16 - Southchurch (North)**

### **Character description**

- 2.8.123 This character area forms the northern extent of Southchurch (South) (G19) and northern edge of Southend-on-Sea urban area. It wraps around the eastern extent of Southchurch (South) and has boundaries with several other urban areas (G11, G15, G17 and G20) to the south, east and west. An area of wooded farmland hills (D9) forms much of the northern edge and coastal farmland (C7) extends to the east.
- 2.8.124 Housing layout is less dense than that which forms Southchurch (South) and the grid pattern is less evident. The western part of this character area is established around Bournemouth Park Road, which continues south into area G17. Bungalows dominate this part of the character area, formed around a partial concentric grid and cul-de-sac layout.
- 2.8.125 Development in the eastern part of this character area is largely post-war housing, comprising semi-detached bungalows and two-storey properties around a cul-de-sac street layout formed around Bournes Green Park.
- 2.8.126 There are a number of green spaces within this character area. Bournes Green Park is a focal space in the east, with properties both facing and backing onto it. There are two large areas of allotments accessed from Norwich Avenue and Rylands Road. These are backed onto by largely post-war semi-detached properties. School grounds to the north and south of the area also contribute to green space amongst the housing layout.

### ***Settlement Fringe***

- 2.8.127 The A1159 forms a clear barrier between this urban character area and the adjacent wooded farmland and hills (D9) area. It contains the residential parts of the Borough to the south, although commercial and leisure development continues to the north of the road. Houses predominantly front onto the A159, set back behind short front gardens/driveways. A tree lined, central reservation divides the dual carriageway between Sutton Road and Rylands Road junctions. This becomes a much narrower central reservation defined by a grass verge and street lighting as the road continues around the eastern part of the character area. Trees and shrubs line the northern edge of the road and form a visual and physical barrier between this and the adjacent character area.
- 2.8.128 The western edge of the character area is defined by the B1015 that links between the A1159 bypass and the sea front, and marks where the commercial area transitions to residential. The



southern and eastern edges are less distinct, where residential streets mark the transition between housing areas.

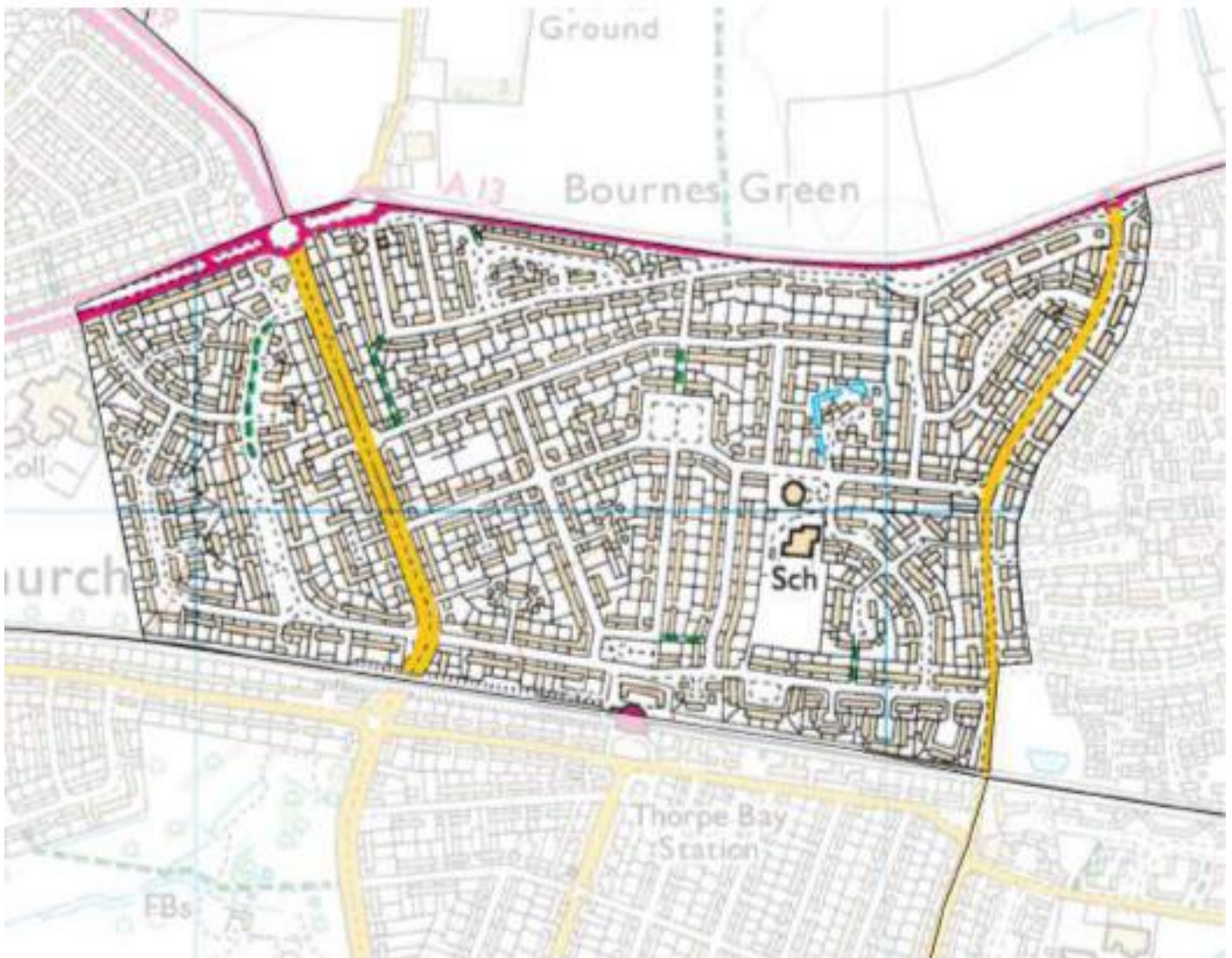
### ***Quality/condition***

2.8.129 The character area is made up of several different housing areas, evident by variation in street pattern and housing typology. Allotments provide large areas of green space within the built form. Street trees and wide streets soften the built character and contribute to an area of moderate density as a transition to the more rural landscape to the north. Overall this area is considered to be of moderate condition, with variation across the character area.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Maintain and enhance street tree planting through the area;
- Improve connectivity between green space within the character area and adjacent areas;
- Maintain existing green spaces as important public assets.

G: Urban  
G17: Bournes Green



## **G17 - Bournes Green**

### **Character description**

- 2.8.130 This character area forms the northern extent of Thorpe Bay (G21), along the northern part of the urban area of Southend-on Sea. The urban areas (G16, G18, G19, G20 and G21) extend south, east and west of this character area. Coastal farmland (C7) extends to the north and east of the character area.
- 2.8.131 This is one of the smaller, defined urban areas. It is a residential area that was built out in the post-war period. It is influenced by the garden city movement, evidenced by the loose grid layout with proportional blocks and cul-de-sacs, small areas of green space and tree-lined routes. This is a comparatively low-density residential area that comprises predominantly detached properties of varying style.
- 2.8.132 Green space within this area includes tennis courts, sports grounds, linked linear spaces along Willingale Way (incorporating a small watercourse) and public park on Branscombe Square. Thorpe Hall Avenue is a dual carriageway through the western part of this character area, with a tree-lined central reservation. The streets have an overall green character, established by street trees and/or trees and shrubs in front garden plots that provide set back of properties from the roads.

### **Settlement Fringe**

- 2.8.133 The A13 forms the northern boundary to this character area and defines the change from urban to coastal farmland. There is a mature hedgerow boundary along the northern side of the A13, which provides a visual and physical barrier between residential properties on the south side of the road and the agricultural fields to the north. It establishes the current settlement limits. Trees and green spaces along the residential frontages contribute to the feeling of the urban-rural edge.
- 2.8.134 The southern edge is defined by the railway line. Properties along Barnstaple Road and cul-de-sacs off it back onto the railway line. A similar residential layout is continued as part of the transition of the residential area into Thorpe Bay (G21) to the south.
- 2.8.135 The east and west edges of the character area are less distinct, where housing areas meet. Back gardens of properties on Maplin Way North mark the change in housing type and layout between this character area and North Shoebury. The western edge is defined by back gardens of properties on Wansfell Gardens, where they back onto a school and its associated outdoor space.

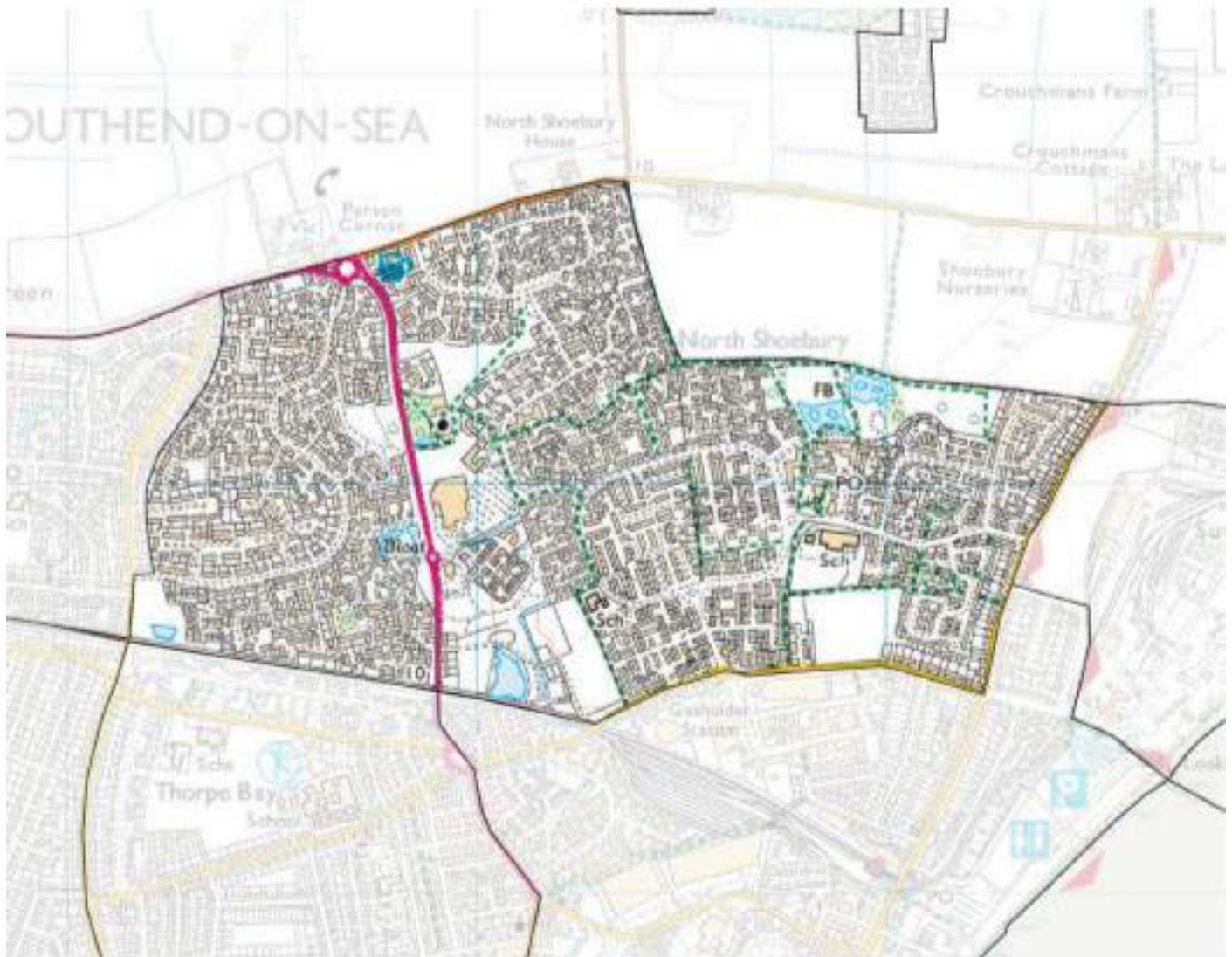
### ***Quality/condition***

2.8.136 A medium density suburb set out around a number of green spaces. Street trees and linear green spaces contribute to a leafy suburb. A variety of housing types, largely set out along wide streets and set back from the road by front gardens and wide pavements often with grass verges. It is considered that this area is of good quality that should be maintained.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Maintain and enhance street tree planting through the area;
- Conserve and enhance public green spaces as part of the wider network.

G: Urban  
G18: North Shoebury



## **G18 - North Shoebury**

### **Character description**

- 2.8.137 This character area spans the northeast edge of the urban areas, with urban areas (G21 and G22) continuing south around the coast. It is a more recent extension to the urban area (G17) to the west. Coastal farmland (C7) forms the northern edge of this area.
- 2.8.138 Development of this area largely took place from the mid-1970s through the 1990s. It is more piecemeal than older parts of the urban area and a more modern street layout is apparent; comprising sinuous spine roads and cul-de-sacs. There is no clear centre to this character area. A large supermarket is at the physical centre, located close to the location of the former settlement of North Shoebury. St Mary's Church is set within a treed churchyard setting to the north of this. Green space extends from this churchyard, between residential areas to the north, south into Shoebury Park and west across the A13.
- 2.8.139 Shoebury Park comprises ornamental gardens with a lake, equipped play area, sports field and courts, skate park and bike trails. It appears well maintained with good links with adjacent green space and housing areas.
- 2.8.140 Development in the east of the area comprises open plan, low-rise development. It has been established around small, local green and public spaces that link between blocks of built form. Larger green spaces including recreational fields and school grounds, separate the different housing areas. Friars Park is a wooded green space forming the northern edge of this area. There is less green space in the western part of this character area, limited to pockets set within the surrounding housing.

### ***Settlement Fringe***

- 2.8.141 The northern edge of this character area is defined in part by the A13 and Poynters Lane. Properties along here form a conspicuous edge between the urban and rural character area, due to the open field boundary character of adjacent fields. Scattered tree planting along property frontages help to soften this in part. Hedgerow field boundaries define the urban-rural edge of the eastern part of the character area. Residential properties back right up to these boundaries in places. The hedgerow boundaries help to conceal the built form. Friars Park also provides a setback to housing on this built edge.
- 2.8.142 The southern character area boundary is defined by the railway and by the change in land use between residential and industrial along Elm Road. The railway defines a change in housing

typology and form. To the west of the A13, residential properties are located right up to the railway edge on either side. The railway forms the southern edge of Shoebury Park, physically separating it from the adjacent character area (G20). The industrial area is very much related to the railway, and Elm Road marks this transition between character areas.

2.8.143 The east and west boundaries are generally less distinct. Linking roads define the change between housing types and form, although in some places this transitions less abruptly. An agricultural field forms part of the eastern boundary transition, on the edge of the adjacent MOD land.

#### *Quality/condition*

2.8.144 A variety of housing types and residential areas make up this character area. Well-maintained green spaces form the central part of the character area with good links into adjacent housing areas. Housing is generally established along sinuous, wide streets, often with street trees. A medium density residential area, in generally good condition.

#### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Maintain and enhance street tree planting through the area;
- Conserve and enhance public green spaces and links as part of the wider network;
- Maintain transitional edges with adjacent character area, between suburban and rural areas.

G: Urban  
G19: Southchurch (South)





## **G19 - Southchurch (South)**

### **Character description**

- 2.8.145 The character area is a residential area of Southend-on-Sea that extends east from the central Southend urban area (G15) and encompassed by further urban areas (G16 and G20) to the north and east. Estuarine marsh and mudflats (A2) form the southern boundary of the character area.
- 2.8.146 The character area is focussed around Southchurch Road, which provides the local retail/commercial centre to this suburb. There is a mix of building typologies along this route, including modern blocks of retail units, post-war low-rise flats and converted Victorian terraces.
- 2.8.147 Housing in this character area dates from the late Victorian and early Edwardian periods, with much of the properties established along a grid pattern. An area to the southwest of this character area forms an extension to the adjacent character area (G15), which contains a number of commercial units along the sea front and some more modern infill development set within the terraced streets. A number of transport routes pass through the area in an east-west direction parallel to the sea front, including London Road and the railway, which divide the housing areas.
- 2.8.148 Southchurch Hall is at the centre of this character area set within a small, treed park that is surrounded by residential properties. Southchurch Park is a large recreational park to the southeast of the character area. There are smaller areas of green space set amongst the housing areas in the north of the area, but overall this is a dense residential district. Due to orientation and layout of built form views are largely contained to the local street scene. As with the wider sea front, there are long distance views south across the estuary.

### ***Settlement Fringe***

- 2.8.149 The character area forms part of the seafront, within the wider urban area. The town centre (G13) forms the western edge. The north and east edges of this area are defined by roads, where housing type or form begins to change.
- 2.8.150 The southern fringe is along the seafront. Part of it is defined by the extension of the commercial area along Marine Parade, including some leisure facilities. This transitions into the residential area, with blocks of terraced properties of different types and character as the distance from the town centre increases, from Victorian to present day development.

### ***Quality/condition***

2.8.151 Housing type is relatively uniform across the character area. There is some variety in the southwest, where the commercial centre has expanded into the residential area and change of land use has occurred. Pockets of green space are in good condition but are not well connected. The street scene is relatively well maintained and often with street trees set within narrow pavements. The area is considered to be of generally moderate condition but lacking connectivity between the different housing areas, particularly across the railway and down to the seafront.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Maintain and enhance street tree planting through the area;
- Conserve and enhance public green spaces and improve links with residential areas and other green space;
- Improve sea frontage as part of the wider public realm and potential green space strategy.

G: Urban  
G20: Thorpe Hall



## **G20 - Thorpe Hall**

### **Character description**

- 2.8.152 This character area forms part of the eastern seafront of Southend-on-Sea. It is adjacent to a variety of urban area character areas (G16, G17, G18, G19 and G21). Estuarine marsh and mudflats extend south and along the seafront of this area.
- 2.8.153 This area has one of the lowest housing densities within Southend-on-Sea. The southern part of the area dates from the Edwardian period. However, the majority of the area was established in the interwar and post-war periods.
- 2.8.154 The southern and eastern part of the area has a very strong grid character, with properties largely established perpendicular to the seafront. This has been established around St Augustine's Church, which forms an attractive focal point at the centre of the housing area. The age of the properties generally reduces further from the seafront, with post-war houses and bungalows forming much of the development, particularly beyond Burges Road. Residential development in the northwest of the area is slightly denser; established in smaller plots and around a tighter street layout.
- 2.8.155 There is a large golf course, forming much of the western part of the character area, between Thorpe Hall Avenue and Colbert Avenue. There is a public green space located in the southwest of the area, accessed from Greenways and Lifstan Way. It appears as an extension of the more formal recreation grounds to the west of Lifstan Way (in area G19). Properties back onto it along three sides. Tennis courts and semi-formal gardens provide public green space along the seafront of this character area, set back behind the sea wall and B1016. Streets are predominantly tree-lined and the area has a more leafy character than other adjacent areas.

### ***Settlement Fringe***

- 2.8.156 The northern edge is formed by the railway line, which divides the character area from Southchurch (North) and Bournes Green. Residential properties back onto the railway, along this northern edge.
- 2.8.157 The eastern boundary is formed by Maplin Road, which links north-south between the seafront and A13 along the northern edge of the Borough. This route is lined with residential properties and marks the transition between the adjoining character area.

2.8.158 The southern contains a variety of building types and land uses associated with the seaside destination. Properties vary from Edwardian to modern flats and hotels. The eastern frontage of this character area is more open, with public green space gently sloping up to the large, semi-detached, seaward facing properties of Thorpe Bay Gardens.

2.8.159 Green space partly links across the western edge of the character area from the adjoining area. Lifstan Way defines where the change in housing type and layout begins to change along the southern part of the Borough.

#### *Quality/condition*

2.8.160 A mixture of housing types across the area, which can be sub-divided into development areas of similar typology. There is greater variety along the sea front where more recent development/alterations have taken place. This is a medium density residential area, with areas of public green space in moderate condition. Overall, the housing areas are in good condition.

#### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Maintain and enhance the public green space along the sea frontage and on Lifstan Way;
- Improve connectivity with the sea front and green space;
- Maintain and enhance street trees as part of the green infrastructure.

G: Urban  
G21: Thorpe Bay



## **G21 - Thorpe Bay**

### **Character description**

- 2.8.161 The character area forms part of eastern Southend-on-Sea, surrounded by urban areas (G17, G18, G20 and G22) to the north, east and west. The southern boundary is with estuarine marsh/mudflats (A2) that extends west along the seafront of the town.
- 2.8.162 The character area has predominantly residential land use. Housing has been established within a loose grid layout. West Road provides the local shops and services for this character area, in an area known as Cambridge Town. Development in this location dates back to late 19th century, although more modern development has taken place particularly along West Road associated with the retail units and frontages.
- 2.8.163 Development on the northern edge of the character area is characterised by late 1960s, low-rise blocks of flats established with gable ends to the railway line and around pockets of green space including equipped areas of play. Terraced and semi-detached properties of similar style and age extend south along Blyth Avenue, Bunters Avenue and Maplin Way, marking the transition between this area and the adjacent character area (G20). South of Caulfield Road and east of Pentland Avenue, post-war, detached and semi-detached properties are established in larger plots and along tree-lined streets within the grid pattern. More recent development, of larger properties has taken place along the south of the character area, backing onto Shoebury Common Road.
- 2.8.164 There are a variety of green and public spaces through this character area, including sloping commons on the southern edge and expansive grass areas behind the beach and sea wall along Shoebury Common Road. There is a large churchyard on Church Road and allotments behind properties on St Andrews Road and Herbert Road in the centre of the character area. In the north there are large, open school playing fields and pockets of green space between blocks of flats.

### ***Settlement Fringe***

- 2.8.165 The northern edge is defined by the railway line between this and the adjacent character area (G18), with residential properties in close proximity to the railway cutting.
- 2.8.166 The eastern edge is defined by Ness Road, with a change in residential typology along the northeast edge and open green space including Gunners Park along the east and southeast edge. Properties along this residential edge back onto the road and a variety of boundary treatments are experienced along this edge.

2.8.167 The southern edge of this area is formed by open green space onto the beach front that is lined with colourful beach huts. Residential properties back onto the road and green space, and a variety of fence and wall boundaries are conspicuous along the residential edge.

2.8.168 Maplin Road defines the transition of housing typology and styles between this and the adjacent character area.

#### *Quality/condition*

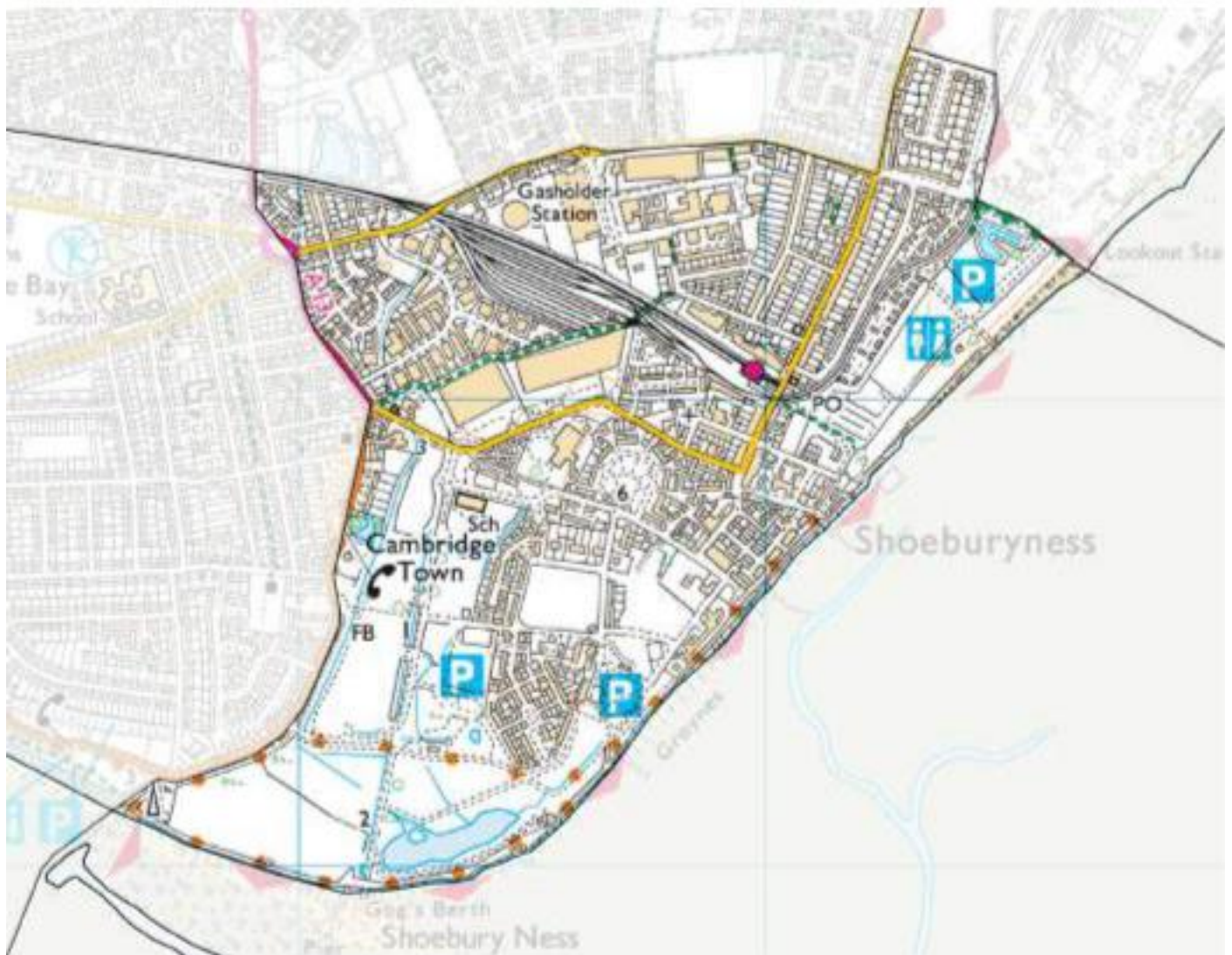
2.8.169 Rear boundaries of development on the south and southeast edge of the area create a poor quality edge to the residential area on the seafront. The green space on the seafront is functional but uninspiring and lacking connectivity/purpose. The residential areas are of generally good condition. The area on the seafront is disjointed and in poor condition.

#### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Improve the seafront green space in terms of appearance and usability;
- Improve connectivity of green spaces through the adjacent character area;
- Improve the settlement edge to Shoebury Common and Gunners Park.



G: Urban  
G22: Shoeburyness



## **G22 – Shoeburyness**

### **Character description**

- 2.8.170 This character area forms the southeast coastal edge of the Borough. Urban areas (G18 and G21) extend west and north of here. Drained estuarine marsh (B3) extends north along the coastline and the surrounding area to the south and east is estuarine marsh/mudflats (A3).
- 2.8.171 This is a fragmented area, containing a variety of land uses in relation to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) land and railway terminus. Business/industrial land uses are focussed around the railway sidings, comprising large distribution units on Campfield Road, single storey business units Towerfield Road and smaller industrial sheds on Vanguard Way.
- 2.8.172 Residential areas of varying age and style abut the business area to the north (character area G18), south, east and west. The Garrison is the most significant feature of this character area and contains a number of listed buildings. The Victorian military establishment forms the central area. It comprises a variety of Victorian terraced, semi-detached and detached properties established around focal green spaces. The area has undergone recent development and modern properties have been developed to correspond with the Victorian architecture. The new development extends south of the historic Garrison and forms a conspicuous edge in views across the coastal parkland.
- 2.8.173 The residential area to the west of the character area is an area of modern, infill, cul-de-sac development between the railway, business area and post-war housing on the A13. It comprises predominantly red-brick, semi-detached and terraced properties in small plots of land. Development in the northeast of the character area dates from the 1920s. It has a loose grid layout and comprises predominantly terraced and semi-detached properties with long, narrow rear gardens. More recent residential development has taken place either side of the military railway line.
- 2.8.174 Much of the green space within this character area forms Gunners Park around the southern and eastern coastline, and to the east of Ness Road. Areas adjacent to Ness Road are proposed for future development. Gunners Park provides an informal open, park space with various footpaths across it and links into the Garrison housing areas. The concrete sea wall provides a footpath around the coastline, along which various war defences/structures stand out. More formal 'greens' provide focal spaces within the Victorian Garrison. Properties are set within treed parkland setting. East Beach Park is an informal green space in the northeast of the character area.

### ***Settlement Fringe***

- 2.8.175 The northern edge of this character area is formed by the railway siding and associated industrial/business land uses and an area of medium density housing. Lower density residential areas extend north from here.
- 2.8.176 The sea wall is the limit to development on the eastern edge of this area. Green spaces and footpaths are characteristic of this edge, with much of the residential development set back, inland. The green space, parkland extends around the southern part of the character area and modern development has taken place inland, as an extension of the Garrison. The built edge is conspicuous in places, particularly around Gunners Rise where it is on higher landform and fronts onto the green space. Small areas of tree planting buffer the edge in places.
- 2.8.177 Properties on the edge of the adjacent character area (G21) also, often stand out in views across Gunners Park due to the open character of the green space and proximity of properties to the park. The park provides separation between the different development areas and a transition from the dense urban area of Southend-on-Sea, to the exposed coastline and mudflats to the south and east.

### ***Quality/condition***

- 2.8.178 This area is largely green space, which is an important recreational and wildlife space. There are a number of routes through the park that link around the coast, into the garrison housing area and has good parking provision. Some of the green space is less well maintained and is earmarked for further development. Development has been well designed as medium density with an open edge to the green space. Overall the area is of good condition.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Maintain soft, landscape edges to development, with open boundaries and few intrusive elements;
- Conserve and enhance the green space as a wildlife and recreational space;
- Maintain and improve footpaths and links with nearby green space and residential areas.

G: Urban  
G23: Great Waking & Little Waking



## **G23 - Great Wakering & Little Wakering**

### **Character description**

- 2.8.179 This character area is comprised of the settlements of Barling, Little Wakering and Great Wakering, which extend along High Street (B1017). It is surrounded by coastal farmland, with Stonebridge (C5) to the west, Little Wakering (C6) to the east and Great Wakering (C7) to the south.
- 2.8.180 Great Wakering was formerly a linear settlement, extending west from the church along High Street. Little Wakering was a cluster of properties around the church and south to a farmhouse. This largely forms the current conservation area, which comprises a mix of predominantly 18th-20th century buildings with a few 17th century properties remaining and the 12th century church. The church towers and spires stand out in views across the surrounding, large-scale arable landscape.
- 2.8.181 The settlement began to expand beyond the linear form during the inter-war period but it was not until post-war that the two began to combine along Little Wakering Road. The settlement has a piecemeal character, through small developments having taken place, gradually, over time. There is a variety of housing through the village from terraced cottages on High Street to large detached properties around cul-de-sac development on the southern and northeast edges of Great Wakering.
- 2.8.182 An area to the southwest was a former quarry and brickworks, which has had recent commercial and residential development. A number of lakes with footpaths have been formed and provide local green space. Wakering Common is to the northeast of the village, comprising grassland and wetland with a number of public routes and a small area of community forest.

### ***Settlement Fringe***

- 2.8.183 Development generally follows the line of the main spine roads through the villages. It has pushed out into the adjacent fields in places. Historic field boundary lines generally limit the current settlement extents. Development has pushed further south, forming part of a larger field. Properties in the southern extent stand out in the open views across the fields south of Great Wakering. Properties within the main village are less visible due to a combination of topography and hedgerow boundaries.
- 2.8.184 Settlement fringes vary along the north of Great Wakering and extending north through Little Wakering. In places, properties form a hard, conspicuous edge to the village as viewed along

approach roads. Hedgerows along property boundaries and around the smaller fields adjacent to the settlement provide some screening of built form and help to assimilate fringes in the landscape.

### ***Quality/condition***

2.8.185 Settlement form is relatively tight, following the historic linear pattern along High Street and Little Wakering Road. It has begun to sprawl south, where it becomes more visible and out of character with the main settlement. There is a variety of building type and form through the settlement, which is of generally good condition. Historic buildings including the churches are well maintained. The settlement has a slightly sprawling character due to piecemeal development. There is limited green space, although a number of footpath links provide good access to the surrounding rural landscape. Overall the area is of good condition.

### **Landscape strategy recommendations**

- Maintain soft, landscape edges to development, including hedgerows and trees;
- Conserve and enhance the green spaces for both wildlife and recreation;
- Maintain and improve footpaths and links with the surrounding countryside, green spaces and residential areas.

## **3.0 LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY & CAPACITY ASSESSMENT**

### **3.1 General**

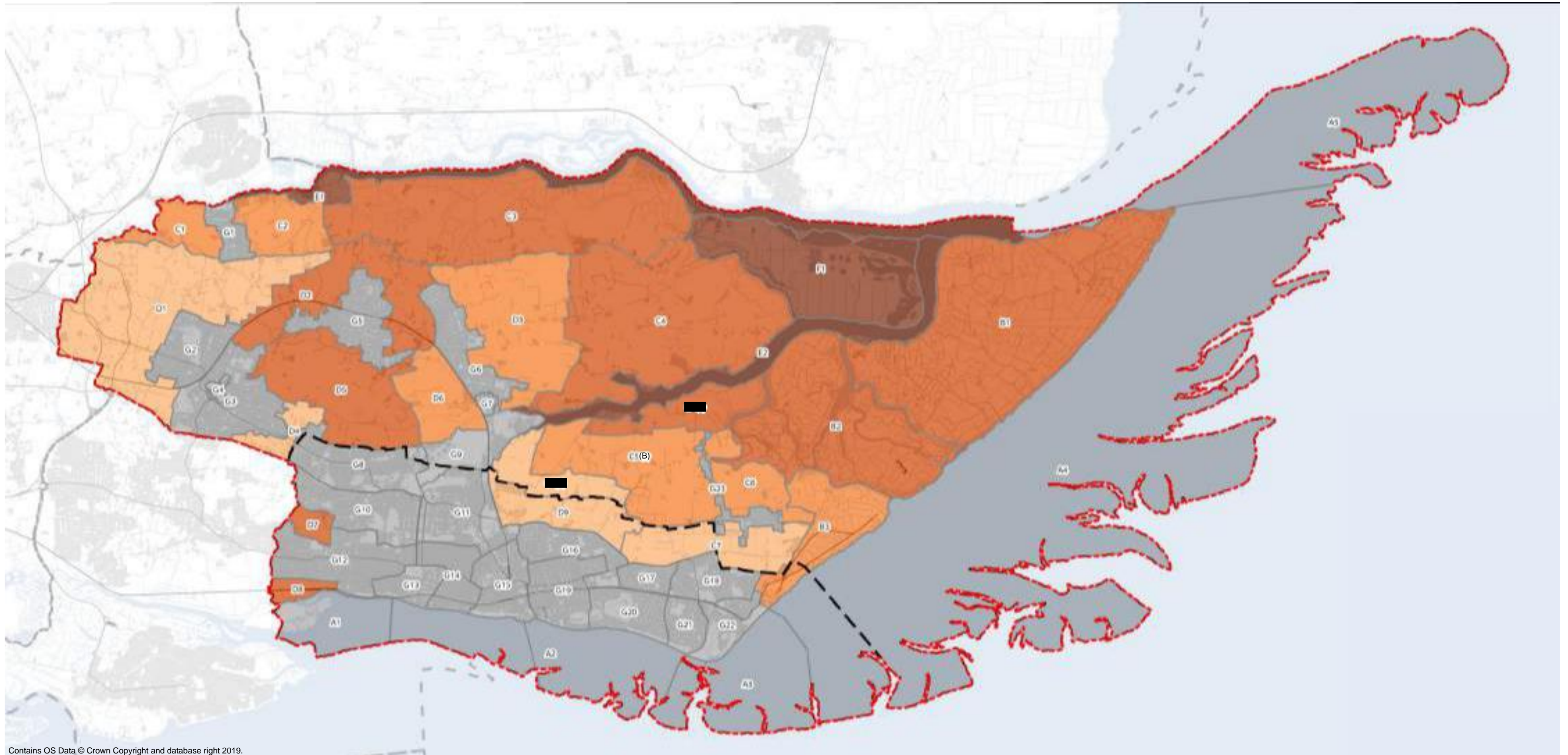
3.1.1 Informed by the findings of the Landscape Character Assessment in **Section 2.0**, this section sets out advice on the sensitivity of the character areas within the study area, that fall within the Green Belt and including Foulness Island. The landscape sensitivity assessment also includes recommendations on the potential capacity of the landscapes within Rochford District and Southend Borough to accommodate development, which can be used to inform the allocation of sites within the emerging Local Plans.

### **3.2 Sensitivity of Character Areas**

3.2.1 The assessment of sensitivity of character areas within the study area to development-led change is set out in **Table 3** and illustrated spatially on **Figure 3.1**. This should be read in conjunction with the methodology and assessment criteria set out in **Section 1.0**.



### **3.3 Capacity of Character Areas**

3.3.1 The assessment of the potential capacity of landscapes within Rochford District and Southend Borough to accommodate development is set out in **Table 3** and illustrated spatially on **Figure 3.2**. This should be read in conjunction with the methodology and assessment criteria set out in **Section 1.0**.








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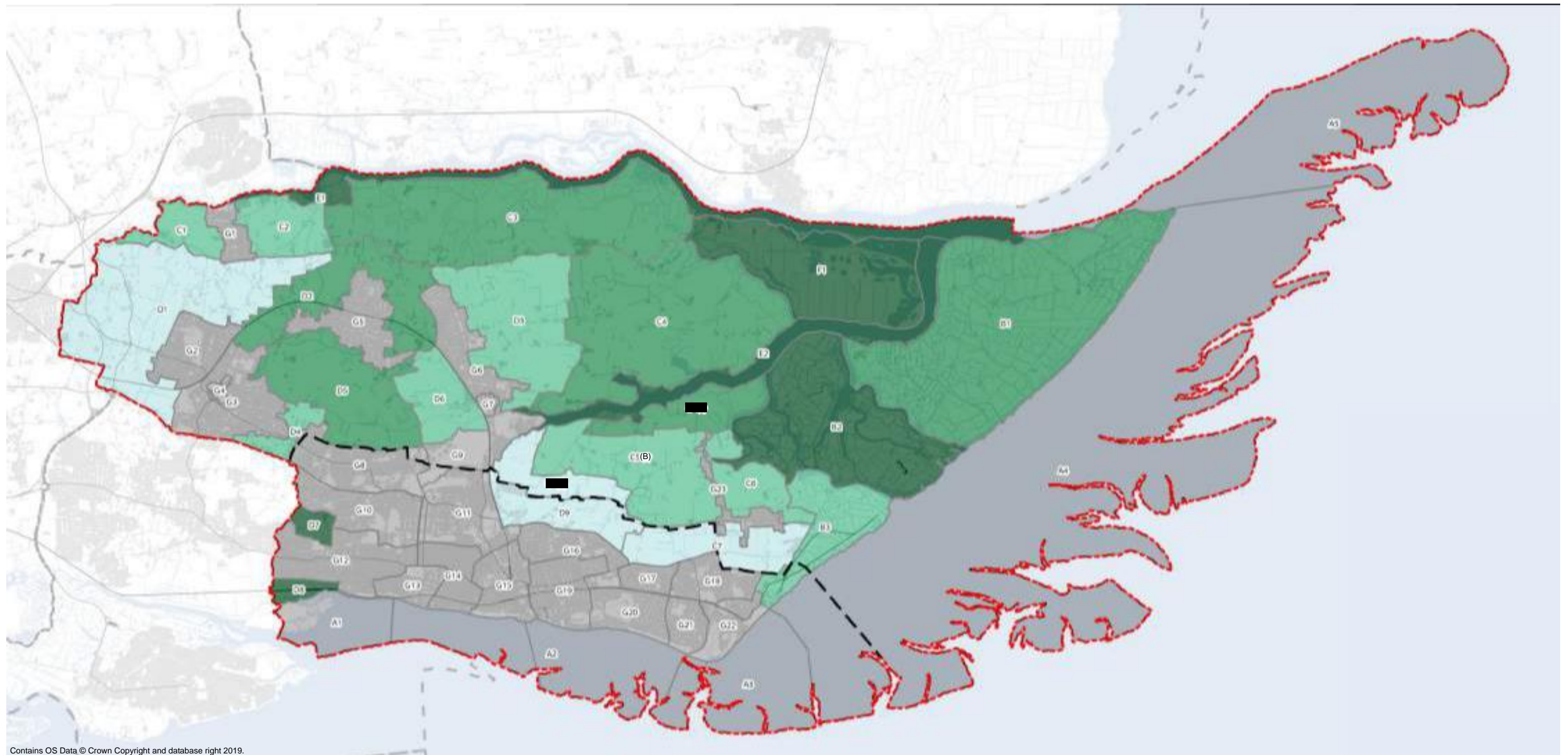
**KEY**

-  Study Area
-  Planning Authority Boundary

**Landscape Sensitivity**

-  High
-  Medium-High
-  Medium
-  Low-Medium
-  N/A





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**KEY**

- Study Area
- Planning Authority Boundary

**Landscape Capacity**

- Low
- Low-Medium
- Medium
- Medium-High
- N/A

**Table 3 - Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment**

Landscape Sensitivity within the study area				Landscape Capacity within the study area	
Character Area	Character Type	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Indicative Landscape Capacity	Recommended Development Scale <sup>25</sup>
B1 – Foulness Island	Drained Estuarine Marsh	This is a remote area that contains a number of natural areas. Historic and current military land use has resulted in scattered structures and military settlement across the large-scale landscape. There are long views across the open, often tranquil landscape, towards and across the North Sea. Tranquillity is reduced at times by military activity. It is a landscape of variable condition due to historic land use changes. This is a unique landscape within the study area, where historic and wildlife features are preserved as part of the military land. The Island forms part of the Foulness SPA, Ramsar and SSSI, Essex Estuaries SAC and the coastal protection belt. <b>Medium to High Landscape Value</b>	A historically drained land area with various historical features. Scattered settlement including military buildings and linear village of Churchend. It is a large-scale, remote landscape of arable fields and little tree and shrub cover. This enables wide views across the character area and across to adjacent character areas. Considering the land use it is in moderate condition, with some areas of value in relation to habitats. There is restricted public access to the island, therefore limited numbers of visual receptors. However, those who do visit have particular interest in the cultural and visual character of the island. Localised opportunities for mitigation of development. <b>Medium to High Sensitivity</b>	There are a variety of important landscape and historic features within this character area that are identified as having medium to high sensitivity. Wide, often uninterrupted views contribute to the remote qualities and limit the ability for this area to accommodate new development. The area contains a variety of built form including more dominant military structures, which lower the scenic quality in places. Local variation within the land parcel results in localised areas of lower sensitivity. However, the overall landscape qualities of this area result in limited capacity to accommodate the proposed development scenarios. Careful consideration of location and appropriate type, layout and scale is required. <b>Low to Medium Capacity</b>	Limited small-scale
B2 – Potton, Hevengore, Rushley & New England Islands	Drained Estuarine Marsh	This is a remote area that contains a number of natural areas. Historic and current military land use has resulted in scattered structures within the large-scale landscape. There are long views across the open, often tranquil landscape, towards and along water channels and across open fields, particularly from drainage bunds. Tranquillity is reduced at times by military activity. It is a landscape of variable condition due to historic and current land uses. This is a unique landscape within the study area, where water channels with high sides separate the drained marshlands. The Islands form part of the Foulness SPA, Ramsar and SSSI, Essex Estuaries SAC and the coastal protection belt. <b>Medium to High Landscape Value</b>	A historically drained land area with occasional historical features. Very limited settlement comprising scattered military and farm buildings. It is a large-scale, remote landscape of irregular, arable fields and little tree and shrub cover. This enables wide views across the character area and across to adjacent character areas. Considering the land use it is in moderate condition, with some areas of value in relation to habitats. There is restricted public access to the islands and no public footpaths, therefore limited numbers of visual receptors. Views of the edge of the area are available from the Broomway when access is permitted. Limited opportunity for mitigation of development. <b>Medium to High Sensitivity</b>	There are a variety of important landscape and historic features within this character area that are identified as having medium to high sensitivity. Wide, predominantly uninterrupted views and division of the land by channels and creeks contribute to the remote qualities that limit the ability for this area to accommodate new development. Combined with the very limited existing built form within this area, the remote character of this area restricts the capacity to accommodate the proposed development scenarios. <b>Low Capacity</b>	No scenario is appropriate
B3 – Shoeburyness North	Drained Estuarine Marsh	This area forms the southern part of the military land and is less remote than areas B1 and B2. There military structures and buildings scattered across the area, often obscured by surrounding shrubs and scrub. The southern part of the area is more developed around the railway head and on the edge of Shoeburyness. Landscape condition varies across the area. Field structure and boundaries are generally good. Military development has eroded this in part and reduces the levels of tranquillity that are associated with the wider estuarine marsh area. Parts of this area are within the SPA, Ramsar, SSSI, SAC and the coastal protection belt designations and there are some public footpaths in the north of the area. <b>Medium Landscape Value</b>	A historically drained land area with more recent military development in the southern part. A predominantly large-scale landscape associated with the drained land, with greater levels of enclosure in the south due to development and vegetation. Moderate levels of tranquillity are associated with this area, particularly north towards Foulness. It is an area of varying landscape quality due to the land uses and valuable habitat areas. Wide, open views are available across the drained landscape. Vegetation and built form restrict views in the south. There are a limited number of receptors within this area due to restricted access to public footpaths. Limited opportunity for mitigation of development. <b>Medium Sensitivity</b>	This area lacks the distinctive features found in the wider character type (such as in B1 and B2), has more recent time depth and moderate landscape condition. There is also a significant quantity of military development already present. However, there are areas of local tranquillity and a number of key designations. The area contains local variation in landscape value and sensitivity. Overall it is assessed as having medium capacity to accommodate small-scale development. <b>Medium Capacity</b>	Small-scale

<sup>25</sup>**Small-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 30dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Medium-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 40 dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Large-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 50+ dph and up to five storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses.

Landscape Sensitivity within the study area				Landscape Capacity within the study area	
Character Area	Character Type	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Indicative Landscape Capacity	Recommended Development Scale <sup>25</sup>
C1 – West of Hullbridge	Coastal Farmland	This is a partly enclosed agricultural landscape. Farms and dwellings are scattered along the southern edge, and Hullbridge forms the eastern edge. The River Crouch along the north of the character area is moderately tranquil, with some active waterfronts. Landscape condition varies with land use and ownership, particularly considering hedgerow structure which is gappy in places. The river channel forms part of the Crouch and Roach Estuaries Ramsar, SSSI, SPA and Essex Estuaries SAC, and the area is within the coastal protection belt. The Saffron Trail long distance path links through this area, along the River Crouch. There are open, often long-distance views available along the river, and of the more active waterfront further east. <b>Medium Landscape Value</b>	Vegetation structure comprises hedgerows in generally good condition, with some gapping. There are occasional tree groups around properties and along the main road. This is a medium-scale landscape established by the field pattern and character area edge features including the river, road and Hullbridge settlement edge. This results in generally contained visual character, with some longer views to the north from the Saffron Trail and higher topography at the west of Hullbridge. Users of the two public footpath routes and residents on the eastern edge of Battlesbridge and west of Hullbridge are the key receptors in this area. Some opportunity for mitigation of development. <b>Medium Sensitivity</b>	The area has variable landscape condition and sensitivity associated with key features and relationship to the existing settlement edge. The western part of the area has a higher sensitivity to development due to the relationship with the water's edge and presence of key features. The eastern part of the area has reduced sensitivity. The more modern field structure, proximity to existing settlement and relatively enclosed character contribute to a greater capacity to accommodate new development in the eastern part of the character area. <b>Medium Capacity</b>	Small to medium-scale
C2 – East of Hullbridge	Coastal Farmland	The sense of enclosure varies across this area, with more enclosed and smaller fields adjacent to Hullbridge and larger fields with gappy / partial hedgerows further west. This is an area of generally moderate landscape and scenic quality, associated with vegetation cover and views of the river to the north. Different land uses including farms, livery and boatyards, and proximity to settlement areas establishes a moderate level of activity experienced within the area. Typical of the coastal farmland character type, containing a number of key characteristic features. The river channel along the north edge of the area forms part of the Crouch and Roach Estuaries Ramsar, SSSI, SPA and Essex Estuaries SAC, and the area is within the coastal protection belt. <b>Low to Medium Landscape Value</b>	Vegetation structure comprises hedgerows in generally good condition, with some gapping and removal in places to create larger fields. The relationship of the farmland to the river has been altered by residential development along the water's edge. There are occasional tree groups including along settlement edges and woodland in the southeast. This is a medium-scale landscape established by the field and settlement pattern. This results in varied visual character, with some longer views across the fields and across the river. Users of the Saffron Trail and connecting paths, and residents of the scattered settlement areas are the key receptors in this area. Some opportunity for mitigation of development. <b>Medium Sensitivity</b>	The area has variable landscape condition and sensitivity associated with key features and relationship to the existing settlement edge. The existing settlement edge is relatively well-contained by field structure and boundaries. The area is of moderate condition considering landscape features and views. It has an overall medium sensitivity, with localised variation. Overall the area is evaluated as having medium capacity, associated with land adjacent to existing development. There is local variation considering long views, open character to the east and visibility of existing development. <b>Medium Capacity</b>	Small-scale
C3 – Canewdon	Coastal Farmland	The area comprises generally large-scale fields with hedgerow and ditch boundaries in varying condition. A more enclosed pattern persists in relation to settlement areas, with hedgerow field boundaries and small woodland blocks creating a rectilinear field pattern. Settlement along the southern edge of the area is generally well integrated by topography and vegetation. The church at Canewdon is a local landmark. Away from the settlement areas the open landscape often has a remote character, with wide views across the river channel to the expansive landscape to the north. The river channel forms part of the Crouch and Roach Estuaries Ramsar, SSSI, SPA and Essex Estuaries SAC, and the area is within the coastal protection belt. <b>Medium Landscape Value</b>	This is a large-scale, arable landscape with ditch and hedgerow field boundaries. There is scattered tree vegetation including occasional woodland blocks near to settlement. It is a generally open landscape, with more enclosed areas associated with areas of settlement such as Ashingdon and Canewdon. A number of footpaths link through the area, providing good connectivity with the river, the church at Canewdon and linking with the Roach Valley Way. Key visual receptors are users of these routes and residents particularly on the edges of settlement areas. Views are often expansive across the large fields, particularly from the higher topography at Canewdon. Limited opportunity for mitigation of development. <b>Medium to High Sensitivity</b>	The area has generally good overall landscape condition. Existing development is often well-contained and does not stand out despite the openness of this landscape. Due to the medium landscape value and medium to high overall sensitivity there is limited capacity to accommodate the proposed development scenarios. Where there is local variation, often considering the appearance of and relationship to existing settlement edges there is some capacity to accommodate small-scale development. <b>Low to Medium Capacity</b>	Small-scale

<sup>25</sup>**Small-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 30dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Medium-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 40 dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Large-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 50+ dph and up to five storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses.

Landscape Sensitivity within the study area				Landscape Capacity within the study area	
Character Area	Character Type	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Indicative Landscape Capacity	Recommended Development Scale <sup>25</sup>
C4 – Paglesham	Coastal Farmland	<p>The area is predominantly a large-scale arable landscape, with localised enclosed character associated with settlement areas, where a tighter field pattern exists with strong hedgerow boundaries and small tree groups. It is a generally intact landscape with good scenic quality. Often long, wide views are available across the open field network and towards the estuary, particularly from drainage banks along water channels and the river banks. An often exposed and remote landscape with very little intrusion from development. The Roach Valley Way long distance path and riverside footpaths are well linked with the scattered settlements and to the adjacent character areas. The River Roach forms part of the SPA, Ramsar, SSSI and SAC designations, and the area is partially within the coastal protection belt.</p> <p><b>Medium to High Landscape Value</b></p>	<p>Irregular fields with hedge and ditch boundaries result in varied enclosure patterns. It has a partly open character with areas of tighter enclosure around rural settlements including Paglesham Churchend and Paglesham, and where small woodland blocks and hedgerows group together. The area has a remote and often tranquil character. Landscape features are in varied condition, with some poorly managed hedgerows and settlement boundaries. Key visual receptors are users of the Roach Valley Way and linking paths between settlements, and residents of the scattered settlements. Views are occasionally expansive, particularly across the adjacent water channels, across the estuarine landscape. Limited opportunity for mitigation of development.</p> <p><b>Medium to High Sensitivity</b></p>	<p>This is an often exposed and remote landscape in moderate condition. It is an area containing limited existing development that is occasionally visible in longer views across the exposed landscape. The area has a strong relationship with the river channels that encompass the east. The overall landscape qualities of this area result in limited capacity to accommodate the proposed development scenarios. Careful consideration of location and appropriate type, layout and scale is required.</p> <p><b>Low to Medium Capacity</b></p>	Limited small-scale
C5 – Stonebridge	Coastal Farmland	<p><u>Land Parcel A:</u> The land parcel contains some characteristics of the adjacent drained estuarine marsh landscape type and forms the edge of the various biodiversity designations along the River Roach. It has remote characteristics, with areas of high tranquillity and containing scattered often listed buildings.</p> <p><b>Medium to High Landscape Value</b></p> <p><u>Land Parcel B:</u> This is an agricultural landscape containing scattered settlement within a tight field pattern and often encompassed by tree or hedgerow vegetation. Moderate levels of tranquillity and in generally moderate landscape condition.</p> <p><b>Medium Landscape Value</b></p> <p><u>Land Parcel C:</u> This parcel contains a greater variety of land uses, related to the proximity to the more urban settlement edges of Rochford and Southend. Views are more enclosed and contain urban built form. This results in lower levels of tranquillity and remoteness.</p> <p><b>Low to Medium Landscape Value</b></p>	<p><u>Land Parcel A:</u> This is a relatively flat landscape that has common characteristics with adjacent character areas to the north and east. Expansive views, particularly to the north across the estuarine landscape are associated with this land parcel. Skylines are undeveloped and there is an overall sense of tranquillity.</p> <p><b>Medium to High Sensitivity</b></p> <p><u>Land Parcel B:</u> This parcel contains scattered vegetation often around settlement areas, which offers a moderate sense of enclosure and reduced sense of scale compared to parcel A. Vegetation is in varying condition.</p> <p><b>Medium Sensitivity</b></p> <p><u>Land Parcel C:</u> The area contains clusters of development including equestrian and market gardening. The edge of the industrial estate is conspicuous in local views and reduces local levels of tranquillity within this area. Vegetation is in varying condition with often gappy hedgerow field boundaries.</p> <p><b>Low to Medium Sensitivity</b></p>	<p><u>Land Parcel A:</u> This is a partly exposed landscape that forms part of wide, open views from and to adjacent character areas. There are areas of tranquillity associated with this parcel, particularly to the east where there is a relationship with the adjacent estuarine landscape. There is limited opportunity to mitigate development in this parcel.</p> <p><b>Low to Medium Capacity</b></p> <p><u>Land Parcel B:</u> The scattered settlement and vegetation combined with variety of land uses has resulted in a landscape of moderate condition and varying levels of tranquillity. There is opportunity for this area to accommodate some development, of appropriate type, scale and form, that incorporates appropriate landscape mitigation and is considerate of the key characteristics of the landscape type and character.</p> <p><b>Medium Capacity</b></p> <p><u>Land Parcel C:</u> The area contains few distinctive features and has lower scenic value than the wider character area. The less sensitive and lower valued landscape of this parcel provides opportunity for development of appropriate type, scale and form that incorporates landscape mitigation that would contribute to and enhance the key landscape characteristics.</p> <p><b>Medium to High Capacity</b></p>	<p><u>Land Parcel A:</u> Limited small-scale</p> <p><u>Land Parcel B:</u> Small to medium-scale</p> <p><u>Land Parcel C:</u> Small to medium-scale</p>

<sup>25</sup>**Small-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 30dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Medium-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 40 dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Large-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 50+ dph and up to five storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses.

Landscape Sensitivity within the study area				Landscape Capacity within the study area	
Character Area	Character Type	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Indicative Landscape Capacity	Recommended Development Scale <sup>25</sup>
C6 – Little Wakering	Coastal Farmland	A medium scale, often enclosed landscape due to intact hedgerow pattern and vegetated settlement edges. More exposed, remote character is associated with the edges of the character area transitioning to the adjacent estuarine landscape type to the east. A large number of public footpaths pass through this area, linking between settlement areas and the watercourses that divide the estuarine landscape. Wide views of the estuarine landscape are often available, particularly from footpaths on the banks of the watercourses. The River Roach forms part of the SPA, Ramsar, SSSI and SAC designations, and the area is partially within the coastal protection belt. <b>Medium Landscape Value</b>	Hedgerows, tree belts including avenues, and small woodland areas are in generally good condition. They contribute to an enclosed character, particularly in proximity to the settlement edge and around Little Wakering Hall. There are a scattered remnant historic/cultural features and buildings, including Little Wakering Hall and Great Wakering Common. Various public footpaths pass through the area and link with the river and estuarine landscape to the north and east. Key visual receptors are users of the footpaths, experiencing views of varying enclosure as they move through the landscape. More open views are available along the river, across the more open character areas to the north and east. Limited opportunity for mitigation of development. <b>Medium Sensitivity</b>	This area is a more enclosed coastal landscape with some valuable landscape and historic features. There is existing settlement on two sides of the parcel, with drained estuarine marsh landscape extending to the north and east. Local variation within the land parcel results in localised areas of higher and lower sensitivity. There is some capacity to accommodate small-scale development in proximity to existing settlement edges. <b>Medium Capacity</b>	Small-scale
C7 – Great Wakering	Coastal Farmland	This is a medium scale, arable landscape on the edge of the urban area. It forms a transitional landscape between the urban landscape type to the south and estuarine landscape to the north. It contributes to the rural character of Great Wakering, acting as a separating landscape between the suburbs of Southend-on-Sea and Great Wakering. It has low levels of tranquillity with frequent views of settlement edges and localised intrusion from traffic on the A13. Occasional open, longer views are available across larger fields with more limited hedgerow boundaries, towards the adjacent coastal farmland areas. There is limited public footpath access or cultural associations with this landscape. <b>Low to Medium Landscape Value</b>	Hedgerows are fragmented within this area. There are scattered, small woodland blocks and tree groups in the south, and around small lakes in the northwest that are in generally good condition. In the east of the area, the combination of vegetation and settlement edges to the north and south, contribute to a contained landscape that is influenced by surrounding land uses. The west of the area has a more exposed character, with often open views across the flat landscape. The northern settlement edge of Southend is often identifiable in views by presence of tall hedgerows and trees that line the B1017 that forms the character area boundary. There is some tranquillity associated with this area. Key visual receptors are users of the linking footpaths across the area, between settlement edges, and local residents. There is opportunity for mitigation of development in this area. <b>Low to Medium Sensitivity</b>	This area has the character of a transitional landscape, between the urban edge of Shoebury and south of Great Wakering, including military land use influences in the eastern part. The western part of the area contains less development, is more open and views are available across the fields to the coastal farmland further north. The area provides separation between the two settlement areas, that should be retained in order to conserve the identifiable village characteristics of Great Wakering. This, therefore, limits the capacity to accommodate the development scenarios particularly within Southend Borough boundary due to potential visibility in views from more sensitive character areas. Where there is local variation in landscape value and sensitivity there is capacity for development of appropriate type and scale. <b>Medium to High Capacity</b>	Small to medium-scale
D1 – Rawreth	Wooded Farmland and Hills	This is a large character area containing a variety of land uses, which result in a variation in landscape and scenic quality across the area. It is predominantly an arable landscape with medium to large-scale fields that enable occasional long views. A number of detracting features are experienced within views and settlement edges are occasionally conspicuous. Vegetation structure is fragmented. Land uses such as industry and transport corridors reduce the overall quality and result in low tranquillity value. <b>Low Landscape Value</b>	The overall wooded character is intact although hedgerows vary in condition and woodland blocks are scattered, with greater concentration in the south. Scattered settlement and plotlands are evident. A variety of commercial development has more recently taken place in this area, in proximity to major roads. Vegetation contributes to screening this in part. Roads and associated lighting, signage etc. is locally detracting in part and tranquillity in this area is limited. Visibility across the area is varied. Views are generally enclosed by vegetation and built form, with occasional longer views north towards the flatter character areas associated with the river. There are limited public footpaths across the area and some open access land in the south. Key visual	The landscape of this area is evaluated as being in moderate to poor condition, with limited important landscape features. There is limited historic time depth and urban influences are conspicuous. There is variation in condition, value and sensitivity across the area, which influence the capacity to accommodate new development. However, there is capacity to accommodate small to medium-scale development in this area, through careful consideration of location and appropriate mitigation in order to maintain locally sensitive land parcels. <b>Medium to High Capacity</b>	Small to medium-scale

<sup>25</sup> **Small-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 30dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Medium-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 40 dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Large-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 50+ dph and up to five storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses.

Landscape Sensitivity within the study area				Landscape Capacity within the study area	
Character Area	Character Type	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Indicative Landscape Capacity	Recommended Development Scale <sup>25</sup>
			receptors are users of the footpaths and local residents. There is some opportunity for mitigation of development in this area. <b>Low to Medium Sensitivity</b>		
D2 – North of Hockley and Hawkwell	Wooded Farmland and Hills	This is a well-wooded character area, with a generally tight landscape pattern established by vegetation structure. There is an overall enclosed character with secluded and tranquil places away from settlement edges and scattered development. A number of public routes cross through the area, providing views of the arable landscape with wooded horizons and few detracting features. There area has good scenic and landscape quality. Woodland includes areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland, linked by robust hedgerows and other woodland planting. <b>Medium Landscape Value</b>	Several areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland are well linked by intact hedgerows and woodland blocks that often form the settlement edges. An enclosed, tight character persists, with scattered settlement away from the settlement edge of Hockley and Hawkwell. The level of vegetation and scattered development results in a moderately tranquil character, with few intrusions. Views are predominantly of a wooded landscape and are enclosed by vegetation and topography. A number of footpaths cross the area, including the Saffron Trail. Key visual receptors are users of these routes, as well as local residents, including those on the edges of adjacent urban areas. There is some opportunity for mitigation of development in this area. <b>Medium to High Sensitivity</b>	The area has a tight landscape structure established by the historic field pattern and woodland blocks. There are high levels of visual enclosure. It is a valued landscape containing a number of important features and patterns. It is a unique landscape within the study area and, therefore has limited capacity to accommodate development. There is some capacity for limited small-scale development to be accommodated adjacent to the existing settlement edge within the historic field structure. Careful consideration of location and appropriate type, layout and scale is required. <b>Low to Medium Capacity</b>	Limited small-scale
D3 – East of Rochford	Wooded Farmland and Hills	This is a generally medium scale, arable landscape with scattered woodland blocks and hedgerows of varying condition. There is limited scenic value associated with the character area and limited intervisibility with adjacent character areas. The character area displays key characteristics of the landscape type, although these have been eroded in part and the area provides a transition into the adjacent coastal farmland type. This is not a remote landscape and it is influenced by adjacent settlement, although vegetation limits this in part. <b>Medium Landscape Value</b>	Vegetation cover is in varying condition, comprising scattered woodland and linking hedgerows around an irregular field pattern. Settlement is clustered in tighter field networks, set within the large-scale arable landscape. It is a varied landscape with some areas of localised tranquillity. Parts of the landscape are more exposed where hedgerows are gappy. There are some longer views available, associated with broken hedgerows. Views are generally contained within the character area and characterised by wooded horizons. There are few footpaths in this area, and key visual receptors are primarily residents of the scattered properties and edge of Rochford. There is some opportunity for mitigation of development in this area. <b>Medium Sensitivity</b>	The area has varying landscape condition related to a variety land uses and scattered development. Existing development is often well-contained and does not stand out despite the openness of this landscape. Due to the medium landscape value and medium to high overall sensitivity there is limited capacity to accommodate the proposed development scenarios. Where there is local variation, often considering the appearance of and relationship to existing settlement edges there is some capacity to accommodate small-scale development. Careful consideration of location and appropriate type, layout and scale is required. <b>Medium Capacity</b>	Small-scale
D4 – Southeast of Rayleigh	Wooded Farmland and Hills	The variety and type of urban edge land uses within this area has resulted in varying landscape condition. Landscape features have been impacted upon by adjacent land uses. Hedgerows and woodland have been retained in part and create an enclosed, occasionally secluded character. Views into and out of the area are limited, and the area is not perceptible from adjacent character areas. Whilst it is a unique landscape within the study area, it has been absorbed into the surrounding urban areas and the key wooded farmland and hills characteristics have been eroded. <b>Low Landscape Value</b>	The area has a high proportion of woodland cover, which is linked by hedgerows around small fields and groups of development. The vegetation provides a screen for development within the area and adjacent settlement edges. Development has been established between the vegetation cover and there is limited tranquillity associated with the area. There are areas of poor quality landscape associated with the variety of land uses. Views are enclosed and there is limited perception of adjacent areas. Two footpaths provide links into adjacent areas to the north and south, with limited public access within the area itself. Key receptors are residents within the area and on adjacent	The area has varying landscape condition related to the number of land uses and influence of adjacent settlement edges. It is an enclosed, wooded landscape that provides separation of Rayleigh and Eastwood. Whilst the landscape is evaluated as being in poor to moderate condition, with limited value and low sensitivity, it is important to maintain the sense of separation between the settlement areas which reduces the capacity to accommodate development. Some small-scale development could be appropriate within the area. Careful consideration of location and appropriate type, layout and scale is required. <b>Medium Capacity</b>	Limited small-scale

<sup>25</sup> **Small-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 30dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Medium-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 40 dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Large-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 50+ dph and up to five storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses.

Landscape Sensitivity within the study area				Landscape Capacity within the study area	
Character Area	Character Type	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Indicative Landscape Capacity	Recommended Development Scale <sup>25</sup>
			settlement edges. There is some opportunity for mitigation of development in this area. <b>Low to Medium Sensitivity</b>		
D5 – Hockley Woods	Wooded Farmland and Hills	This area contains the majority of the woodland within the study area, including areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland, which link with woodland to the south in adjacent character areas and outside of the study area. Part of the area forms a country park and there are a number of recreational routes that link with this. Whilst there are areas of varying condition, the overall landscape and scenic condition is considered to be good due to well-managed woodland features and linking hedgerows across the area. The sense of enclosure in places creates pockets of tranquillity away from the surrounding urban areas. Development detracts from the rural character at the edges of the area, but the overall wooded character is prevailing. <b>High Landscape Value</b>	A well wooded area with intact ancient and semi-natural woodland linked by predominantly robust hedgerows with some gapping. A varied field pattern and size results in different levels of enclosure. Vegetation screens scattered built form and generally buffers the adjacent settlement edges, resulting in areas of tranquillity within the area. The area is in good condition and has unique landscape qualities within the study area. Views are often enclosed by vegetation, although rising topography enables some longer views of surrounding settlement and landscape. Key visual receptors are users of the network of footpaths and visitors to the country park and woods. There is limited opportunity for mitigation of development in this area. <b>Medium to High Sensitivity</b>	This area has good landscape condition and is valued for landscape features and recreational purposes. The woodland features and pockets of tranquillity are positive contributors to the landscape character of this area, which provides a green lung between the surrounding settlements. The combination of high value and medium to high sensitivity gives this area a low to medium capacity to accommodate development. There is limited variation across the area. Limited small-scale development of appropriate location, scale and design could be accommodated adjacent to existing development. <b>Low to Medium Capacity</b>	Limited small-scale
D6 – Stroud Green	Wooded Farmland and Hills	A variety of land uses persist across this area, which results in varying landscape and scenic quality. The area contributes to the green space between two settlement areas, although has been altered by recent development. There are long views south from the edge of Hawkwell, across large-scale fields. The wider area is more enclosed by vegetation and settlement, particularly in the south. There are low levels of tranquillity within this area due to variety of land uses and features. Rochford conservation area extends into this character area and contains a number of important features. Several public footpaths including the Roach Valley Way link through this area. <b>Low to Medium Landscape Value</b>	Hedgerows with hedgerow trees provide the vegetation structure of this area, with wooded horizons associated with the adjacent Hockley Woods area and golf course to the south. The extended development edge is locally conspicuous and there is some intrusion from traffic on main routes through this area. Levels of enclosure vary, from more exposed in the north to enclosed due to smaller fields and more intact hedgerows with trees in the south of the area. Users of the footpaths experience a variety of views due to levels of enclosure, from more open views looking south from Hawkwell to more contained in the south. There is some opportunity for mitigation of development in this area. <b>Medium Sensitivity</b>	The landscape condition and value of this area is varied, in relation to land uses and existing types of development. It contributes a transitional landscape between Southend Airport, Rochford and Hawkwell. The area has experienced changing of land uses, although retains some historic features and patterns. There is capacity to accommodate small-scale development. This should be appropriately located, having consideration of potential visibility and incorporating landscape mitigation proposals. <b>Medium Capacity</b>	Small-scale
D7 – Belfairs Park	Wooded Farmland and Hills	The area is predominantly Belfairs golf course, comprising woodland blocks around greens. It is well managed and has predominantly good landscape quality. There is some scenic quality associated with green space within the wider urban area. There is recreational value and some conservation value within this area, considering the woodland connectivity with Hadleigh Great Woods and extending north. This is an active character area and influenced by adjacent urban areas. <b>Medium Landscape Value</b>	The area comprises a well-managed, wooded golf course and edge of urban area cricket ground. Woodland blocks link with more extensive woodland to the west outside of the study area. There is good connectivity of footpaths through this area, including along the Prittle Brook to the south. Views are contained by woodland blocks and there is limited intervisibility with adjacent areas. There is limited opportunity for mitigation of development in this area. <b>Medium to High Sensitivity</b>	The area comprises of an enclosed, wooded golf course. It is an important recreational resource at the edge of the built-up area. It contains areas of woodland that link to the wider, wooded landscape to the west. Due to the current land use there is limited capacity to accommodate development. <b>Low Capacity</b>	No scenario is appropriate

<sup>25</sup>**Small-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 30dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Medium-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 40 dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Large-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 50+ dph and up to five storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses.

Landscape Sensitivity within the study area				Landscape Capacity within the study area	
Character Area	Character Type	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Indicative Landscape Capacity	Recommended Development Scale <sup>25</sup>
D8 – Belton	Wooded Farmland and Hills	The variety of land uses results in varying landscape and scenic quality across the area. There are wide views from within this area, across the estuarine landscape and including the nature reserve to the south. There are detracting features within this area including the railway station, metal boundary fences and boatyard paraphernalia. Wooded slopes separate this area from the adjacent urban form and it has a secluded character in part with some tranquillity associated with the adjacent mudflats landscape and nature reserve. The area is adjacent to the Benfleet and Southend Marshes SPA, Ramsar, SSSI and contains the Belton Hills LNR. <b>Medium Landscape Value</b>	A variety of vegetation cover, with wooded slopes on the urban edge and fields with hedgerow boundaries on lower lying land adjacent to the marsh. It is a small-scale landscape that provides the transition from urban edge to more exposed, large-scale fields to the west. It is a diverse and moderately active landscape with some intrusive elements. There is a level of remoteness associated with the edge of the marshland and extensive views south from this area. There are several footpaths through the area. Users of the paths and visitors to the nature reserves are key receptors, as well as railway visitors to Southend-on-Sea. There is limited opportunity for mitigation of development in this area. <b>Medium to High Sensitivity</b>	This area forms the edge of the urban area and provides a transitional landscape on the edge of the Borough, with mudflats extending south and exposed, arable landscape to the west. It is a landscape of varying condition and value, that contains important features and areas of relative tranquillity. The visual and physical relationship with the mudflats and estuary is important and as such reduces the capacity to accommodate development. <b>Low Capacity</b>	No scenario is appropriate
D9 – Garon park (Land within the Green Belt)	Wooded Farmland and Hills	A large part of this area is formed of the Essex golf complex and is managed landscape with designed woodland blocks and tree lines around greens in good condition. The wider area is of varying condition, associated with current land uses. It is a generally enclosed landscape with enclosed views and limited scenic quality. It is a transitional, urban edge landscape. The vegetation provides some screening of built form and contains the urban sprawl. It is a valued recreational landscape but there is little conservation or cultural value. <b>Low to Medium Landscape Value</b>	Vegetation in this area largely comprises designed tree planting through the golf course and avenues along roads and through the cemeteries. There are pockets of remnant hedgerows and field structure that contribute to the wooded character. It is an active and diverse landscape that forms the fringe to the main urban area to the south. There is limited tranquillity associated with this area, and commercial land uses often intrude on the areas of open green space including parks. The character area is on slightly elevated land, with lower landform to the north, east and south. There are wide-ranging, open views available from more sensitive character areas to the north, looking south towards this area and characterised by an undeveloped skyline with occasional tower blocks visible to the west. Views within the area are largely contained by development and associated vegetation. Key receptors are users of the footpaths in the east of the area and visitors using the recreational facilities. There are some more sensitive parts of this area including the cemeteries and woodland blocks. There is some opportunity for mitigation of development in this area. <b>Low to Medium Sensitivity</b>	The area forms the edge of the urban area. As a transitional landscape on the urban fringe, it contains a variety of land uses. Existing development has a piecemeal character and is occasionally conspicuous. There is some local variation in the overall moderate condition, low to medium landscape value and low to medium landscape sensitivity associated with potential visibility and the more exposed landscape at the northern periphery of the area. There is capacity for this area to accommodate future development of appropriate type and scale and through careful consideration of location and appropriate mitigation in line with key landscape characteristics of the area. <b>Medium to High Capacity</b>	Small to medium-scale with limited opportunity for large-scale

<sup>25</sup>**Small-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 30dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Medium-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 40 dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Large-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 50+ dph and up to five storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses.



Landscape Sensitivity within the study area				Landscape Capacity within the study area	
Character Area	Character Type	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Indicative Landscape Capacity	Recommended Development Scale <sup>25</sup>
E1 – River Crouch	River Valley	The majority of this area comprises the water channel itself, the edges of which form the transition into the adjacent urban, coastal farmland and drained estuarine marsh areas. The area has an overall tranquil character, with some riverside activity in proximity to settlement areas to the north and south. Generally high scenic quality is associated with the character area and moderate landscape condition. The area is designated as part of the Crouch and Roach Estuaries SPA, Ramsar and SSSI, Essex Estuaries SAC and coastal protection belt. The river has historic significance as a commercial, trading and fishing route. <b>Medium to High Landscape Value</b>	This area forms part of the important, wider estuary habitat area. It is an exposed area, with limited vegetation cover, particularly the exposed mudflats and water channel at low water. There is very little settlement along the edge of this area, generally limited to moorings and small-scale development, except at Burnham-on-Crouch, which has an active waterfront. It is a predominantly tranquil character area, with a sense of remoteness particularly to the east. There are often wide, open views available from footpaths on the river's edge, along the river and across the adjacent character areas to the north, south and east. Key receptors are users of the footpaths, as well as occasional residents in proximity to this area, due to the open character of their views. Very limited opportunity for mitigation of development. <b>High Sensitivity</b>	The physical area of this character area that could potentially accommodate development is limited. The landscape in this area is in moderate condition, is well valued and has high sensitivity. Overall there is limited capacity to accommodate development. <b>Low Capacity</b>	No scenario is appropriate
E2 – River Roach	River Valley	This area comprises the water channel itself with some wide banks in places. The edges of the area form the transition into the adjacent coastal farmland and drained estuarine marsh areas. The area has an overall tranquil character, with some industrial activity at the river head in Rochford. Generally high scenic quality is associated with the character area do to undeveloped river edges and often wide views across adjacent open landscapes. The area is designated as part of the Crouch and Roach Estuaries SPA, Ramsar and SSSI, Essex Estuaries SAC and coastal protection belt. The river has historic significance as a commercial, trading and fishing route. <b>Medium to High Landscape Value</b>	This area forms part of the important, wider estuary habitat area. It is an exposed area, with limited vegetation cover, particularly the exposed mudflats and water channel at low water. There is very little settlement along the edge of this area, limited to moorings at the village edge at Paglesham Eastend and industrial/boatyard development at the river head at Rochford. It is a predominantly tranquil character area, with a sense of remoteness particularly to the east. There are wide, open views available from footpaths on the river's edge, along the river and across the adjacent character areas. Key receptors are users of the footpaths, as well as occasional residents in proximity to this area, due to the open character of their views. Very limited opportunity for mitigation of development. <b>High Sensitivity</b>	The physical area of this character area that could potentially accommodate development is limited. The landscape in this area is in moderate condition, is well valued and has high sensitivity. Overall there is limited capacity to accommodate development. <b>Low Capacity</b>	No scenario is appropriate
F1 – Wallasea Island	Coastal Mosaic	This is a remote landscape in the north of the study area. Industry is a localised intrusion on the tranquillity in the west of the island. The majority of the area is tranquil and often wild. Habitat restoration work is improving both the landscape and scenic condition of the area. Wallasea Island forms part of the Foulness SPA, Ramsar and SSSI, Essex Estuaries SAC and coastal protection belt. There are wide views available across the River Crouch and surrounding marshes. This area has unique characteristics and some cultural significance. <b>High Landscape Value</b>	This is an important habitat area, that is undergoing various restoration works to the saltmarsh, mudflat and lagoon habitats. As such it contains a variety of landscape patterns and features. Vegetation is generally low level scrub, grassland and marsh species. As such, this is a remote, exposed landscape with high levels of tranquillity. There are wide, open, long-distance views across this area and into adjacent character areas and beyond. Key receptors are visitors to the nature reserve and users of the footpath network who are visiting to experience the unique habitat. Very limited opportunity for mitigation of development. <b>High Sensitivity</b>	This is an area of high landscape value and sensitivity. It is a remote and tranquil landscape with some local intrusion in the west. The restored wetland landscape is creating a unique landscape in the study area. There is very limited capacity to accommodate development in this area. <b>Low Capacity</b>	No scenario is appropriate

<sup>25</sup>**Small-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 30dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Medium-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 40 dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Large-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 50+ dph and up to five storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses.

## 3.4 Summary

### Landscape Sensitivity

- 3.4.1 The key findings of the assessment of the sensitivity of character areas within the study area to development-led change are summarised in **Table 4**.

**Table 4 – Summary of Landscape Sensitivity within the Study Area**

Landscape Character Area (see Figure 2.6)	Overall Landscape Sensitivity (see Figure 3.1)
B1 Foulness Island	Medium to High
B2 Potton, Havengore, Rushley & New England Islands	Medium to High
B3 Shoeburyness North	Medium
C1 West of Hullbridge	Medium
C2 East of Hullbridge	Medium
C3 Canewdon	Medium to High
C4 Paglesham	Medium to High
C5 Stonebridge	Medium
C5A	Medium to High
C5B	Medium
C5C	Low to Medium
C6 Little Wakering	Medium
C7 Great Wakering	Low to Medium
D1 Rawreth	Low to Medium
D2 North of Hockley and Hawkwell	Medium to High
D3 East of Rochford	Medium
D4 Southeast of Rayleigh	Low to Medium
D5 Hockley Woods	Medium to High
D6 Stroud Green	Medium
D7 Belfairs Park	Medium to High
D8 Belton	Medium to High
D9 Garron Park	Low to Medium
E1 River Crouch	High
E2 River Roach	High
F1 Coastal Mosaic	High

- 3.4.2 The most sensitive character areas are assessed as being within the river valley and coastal mosaic landscape types within Rochford District. A number of character areas have been assessed as medium to high sensitivity landscapes, across the drained estuarine march, coastal farmland and wooded farmland and hills landscape types. These areas are predominantly across the north of Rochford District, extending south across Foulness Island archipelago and the localised ridge east of Rayleigh.
- 3.4.3 Lower sensitivity character areas are associated with landscapes that contain a greater diversity of features and including more urban elements, generally associated with the urban edges of Southend and Rayleigh.

## Landscape Capacity

3.4.4 The key findings of the assessment of the capacity of character areas within the study area to development-led change are summarised in **Table 5**.

**Table 5 – Summary of Landscape Capacity within the Study Area**

Landscape Character Area (see Figure 2.6)	Indicative Landscape Capacity (see Figure 3.2)	Recommended Development Scale <sup>26</sup>
B1 Foulness Island	Low to Medium	Limited small-scale
B2 Potton, Havengore, Rushley & New England Islands	Low	No scenario
B3 Shoeburyness North	Medium	Small-scale
C1 West of Hullbridge	Medium	Small to medium-scale
C2 East of Hullbridge	Medium	Small-scale
C3 Canewdon	Low to Medium	Small-scale
C4 Paglesham	Low to Medium	Limited small-scale
C5 Stonebridge	Medium	Small to medium-scale
C5 A	Low to Medium	Limited small-scale
C5 B	Medium	Small to medium-scale
C5 C	Medium to High	Small to medium-scale
C6 Little Wakering	Medium	Small-scale
C7 Great Wakering	Medium to High	Small to medium-scale
D1 Rawreth	Medium to High	Small to medium-scale
D2 North of Hockley and Hawkwell	Low to Medium	Limited small-scale
D3 East of Rochford	Medium	Small-scale
D4 Southeast of Rayleigh	Medium	Limited small-scale
D5 Hockley Woods	Low to Medium	Limited small-scale
D6 Stroud Green	Medium	Small-scale
D7 Belfairs Park	Low	No scenario

<sup>26</sup> **Small-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 30dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses;  
**Medium-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 40 dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses;  
**Large-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 50+ dph and up to five storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses.

<b>Landscape Character Area</b> (see Figure 2.6)	<b>Indicative Landscape Capacity</b> (see Figure 3.2)	<b>Recommended Development Scale<sup>26</sup></b>
D8 Belton	Low	No scenario
D9 Garron Park	Medium to High	Small to medium-scale with limited opportunity for large-scale
E1 River Crouch	Low	No scenario
E2 River Roach	Low	No scenario
F1 Coastal Mosaic	Low	No scenario

3.4.5 Areas of least capacity to accommodate development are generally the areas assessed as having high sensitivity, due to the vulnerability of the key landscape characteristics associated with them. These areas include the river valley, coastal mosaic and much of the coastal farmland landscapes.

3.4.6 Areas of greater capacity to accommodate a level of development are predominantly associated with urban fringe or as part of a transitional landscape where a diversity of urban and rural features are experienced and fewer unique characteristics are apparent. These areas include C7, D9 and parts of C5, C6 and B3 to the north and northeast of Southend, and D1 to the west of Rayleigh at the western edge of Rochford District.

## 4.0 LANDSCAPE POLICY OPTIONS

### 4.1 General

4.1.1 A review of the following existing landscape designations and relevant policies within Rochford District and Southend-on-Sea Borough has been undertaken informed by the Study's findings:

- Upper Roach Valley Special Landscape Area (Rochford District);
- Coastal Protection Belt;
- Ancient Woodland.

4.1.2 Options and recommendations for policy development are also provided where appropriate.

### 4.2 Upper Roach Valley Special Landscape Area

4.2.1 The Upper Roach Valley Special Landscape Area (SLA) boundary considered by this review is shown on **Figure 2.4**. This is the boundary referred to within Policy URV1 (Upper Roach Valley) of the adopted Core Strategy<sup>27</sup>.

#### Planning Background

4.2.2 Section 15 of the revised NPPF sets out the Government's policy on conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraph 170 states that "*Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes... (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)... b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside...*".

4.2.3 The supporting Planning Practice Guidance notes that landscape character assessments should be prepared where appropriate, to provide understanding of the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape as evidence in developing strategic policies for the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including landscape<sup>28</sup>.

4.2.4 The Upper Roach Valley was formally identified as an SLA through work carried out by Essex County Council. The Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan notes that SLA "identify areas where conservation or restoration of existing landscape character should be given

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<sup>27</sup> Rochford District Council, LDF Core Strategy, December 2011

<sup>28</sup> Planning Practice Guidance, 2018 – Natural Environment chapter, Landscape section

high priority”. SLA were originally “*identified in the Countryside Conservation Plan on the basis of studies of morphology, vegetation cover and presence of water*” and are “*important...for the quality of their landscapes*”<sup>29</sup>.

- 4.2.5 The Upper Roach Valley was designated as an SLA and Area of Ancient Landscape in the Rochford Replacement Local Plan<sup>30</sup>. It is noted in the Core Strategy as being an “*an area with special landscape characteristics*”. It is described as “*a green lung*” between the four settlement areas and provides an “*informal area of recreation with green links criss-crossing the valley and connecting Rochford with Rayleigh and linking the Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park with Hockley Woods*”<sup>31</sup>.
- 4.2.6 The objective of the Upper Roach Valley is “*to create additional, high quality recreational spaces...which is accessible to local residents, whilst ensuring the protection and enhancement of biodiversity*”.

#### **Landscape Character Evidence Base**

- 4.2.7 The landscape character assessment<sup>32</sup> was prepared in accordance with the 2014 Approach to Landscape Character Assessment<sup>33</sup> and reflects the principles of the European Landscape Convention. The assessment has identified a variety of landscape types and character areas across the study area. **Section 3.0** of this study assesses the landscape value, sensitivity and capacity of the study area, in line with the latest guidance in Topic Paper 6<sup>34</sup>.
- 4.2.8 The Upper Roach Valley forms part of the Hockley Woods (D5) character area. This is assessed as being a highly valued landscape with medium to high sensitivity and limited opportunity to mitigate development. This corresponds with the Council’s desire to protect this part of the District.
- 4.2.9 The Upper Roach Valley is a well-wooded landscape, containing areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland, that is valued for informal recreation and tranquillity. The landscape is in generally good condition and moderate levels of time depth.
- 4.2.10 Evidenced by the landscape character assessment, the landscape of the Upper Roach Valley is unique to Rochford District with a number of important characteristics. It is an area of medium to high sensitivity outside of the coastal protection zone. It is an area worthy of protection.

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<sup>29</sup> Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan adopted April 2001 (since revoked)

<sup>30</sup> Rochford District, 2006

<sup>31</sup> Rochford Core Strategy, 2011

<sup>32</sup> Section 2.0 of this Study

<sup>33</sup> Natural England, 2014

<sup>34</sup> Techniques and Criteria for Judging Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity, Countryside Agency 2002

## Recommendation

- 4.2.11 Within the context of Rochford, it has been concluded that the landscape of the Upper Roach Valley has special qualities and it is considered that the current boundary is appropriate in protecting these special qualities.
- 4.2.12 Assuming the Council wishes to continue with its current approach to the Upper Roach Valley SLA, the following minor amendments (as underlined) to Policy URV1 and the supporting text are recommended, from a landscape perspective:
- 4.2.13 Policy URV1 – Upper Roach Valley:

*“THE COUNCIL WILL STRIVE TO SEE THE UPPER ROACH VALLEY BECOME A VAST ‘GREEN LUNG’ PROVIDING INFORMAL RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS, WITHIN THE LOCALLY VALUED LANDSCAPE. THE COUNCIL WILL PROTECT THE AREA FROM DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD UNDERMINE THIS AIM AND WILL CONTINUE THE APPROACH OF MAINTAINING IMPORTANT LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND CREATING THE RIGHT CONDITIONS FOR FLORA AND FAUNA TO FLOURISH, WITH THE MINIMUM INTERFERENCE. ACCESS THROUGH THE UPPER ROACH VALLEY AND ANY ESSENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WILL BE DESIGNED SO AS TO HAVE THE MINIMUM IMPACT ON THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND WILDLIFE. THE COUNCIL WILL EXPAND CHERRY ORCHARD JUBILEE COUNTRY PARK, THROUGH COMPULSORY PURCHASE WHERE NECESSARY, AND WILL CREATE LINKS WITH OTHER PARTS OF THE UPPER ROACH VALLEY, EFFECTIVELY CREATING A SINGLE, VAST INFORMAL RECREATIONAL AREA. LINKS WILL INCLUDE A NETWORK OF FOOTPATHS, CYCLEPATHS AND BRIDLEWAYS THAT CONNECT AREAS WITHIN THE UPPER ROACH VALLEY AND RESIDENTIAL AREAS, WHILST BEING LOCATED AND DESIGNED SO AS TO NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND WILDLIFE”.*

*“The Upper Roach Valley, including the area around Hockley Woods, is an area with special landscape characteristics. In the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan (2006) the area is designated as a Special Landscape Area and as an Area of Ancient Landscape. These designations arose from survey work carried out by Essex County Council. The 2019 Landscape Character Assessment identifies the unique characteristics of his landscape in the context of Rochford District. It is identified as a well-wooded landscape that provides areas of tranquillity between the urban settlements. The Upper Roach Valley is a large ‘green lung’ bounded by Rayleigh, Hockley, Rochford and Southend. As such, it represents an opportunity to provide informal recreational space accessible to local residents. Parts of the Upper Roach Valley are already well utilised, such as Hockley Woods and the recently established Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park.*

*There are fourteen ancient woodlands in the District and seven of them lie within the Upper Roach Valley, south of the head of the valley formed by the railway line. The area’s importance to biodiversity is reflected in the designation of a number of wildlife sites within the Upper Roach Valley.*

*The need for more informal recreational space in South East Essex has been identified on numerous occasions over a number of years, including in the 1982 and 2001 Structure Plans and the 2005 Thames Gateway South Essex Greengrid Strategy.*

*The Council has sought to help address this need through the establishment of Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park. Work began on the Country Park in 2002 and the park has been gradually*

expanded. The approach to the development of the Country Park is centred on ensuring the right conditions are in place in order for fauna and flora to flourish, and utilising the existing features of the landscape, all with the minimum of human interference.

The Upper Roach Valley represents an opportunity to provide recreational activities in close proximity to the main residential settlements of the District, as well as Southend. The Council is carrying out works to improve access to the Country Park and will implement improved access and car-parking facilities in a manner that minimises the impact on the landscape. This provides an opportunity to link this area with the wider green infrastructure network and improve to the countryside from surrounding areas.

To the north-west of the Country Park lies Hockley Woods – and to the south-west of Hockley Woods is an area designated as a special and historic landscape area. Currently these areas are not connected, but there is potential to do so to enhance informal recreational opportunities. Sustainable access to these areas (for example linked cycling networks) will be encouraged. These will also be used to provide wildlife networks, thus avoiding fragmentation of habitats<sup>35</sup>.

- 4.2.14 An alternative approach would be to establish separate policies in relation to the purposes of the Upper Roach Valley SLA to provide informal recreation, conserve the special qualities of the landscape and provide a green lung between the urban areas.

### 4.3 Coastal Protection Belt

- 4.3.1 The Coastal Protection Belt (CPB) boundary considered by this review is shown on **Figure 2.4**. This is the boundary referred to within Policy ENV2 (Coastal Protection Belt) of Rochford's adopted Core Strategy<sup>36</sup>.
- 4.3.2 CBA has previously carried out a similar review of the Colchester Coastal Protection Belt<sup>37</sup> in Essex as part of the evidence base for the emerging local plan 2017-2033. A review of the Rochford CPB has been undertaken following the same approach as used for the Colchester review. The full review is included in **Appendix A**.
- 4.3.3 The CPB boundary review concludes that the current boundary is largely appropriate. There are small parcels of land identified that do not meet the criterion and could be removed from the CPB as part of the emerging Local Plan. The proposed changes to the existing CPB are shown on **Figure A1** in **Appendix A**.
- 4.3.4 In light of the review and from a landscape perspective, it is recommended that consideration is given to the proposed minor revisions to the current adopted Policy ENV2 set out as amendments underlined below, in order to align it with national planning policy and guidance for the protection and management of coastal areas in England.

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<sup>35</sup> Rochford District Council, LDF Core Strategy – justification text for Policy URv1 paras 7.1-7.7

<sup>36</sup> Rochford District Council, LDF Core Strategy, December 2011

<sup>37</sup> Colchester Protection Belt Review, June 2016



#### 4.3.5 Policy ENV2 of the Rochford LDF Core Strategy:

“THE COUNCIL WILL:

- PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE LANDSCAPE, WILDLIFE AND HERITAGE QUALITIES OF THE COASTLINE, RECOGNISING THE IMPLICATIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND SEA LEVEL RISE, AND THE NEED FOR NECESSARY ADAPTATION;
- PREVENT THE POTENTIAL FOR COASTAL FLOODING; EROSION BY THE SEA; AND UNSTABLE LAND (E.G. LAND SLIPS);
- ~~NOT PERMIT~~ RESTRICT DEVELOPMENT IN COASTAL AREAS WHICH ARE AT RISK FROM FLOODING, EROSION AND LAND INSTABILITY;
- ENSURE THAT DEVELOPMENT WHICH IS EXCEPTIONALLY PERMITTED DOES NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE OPEN AND RURAL CHARACTER, OR HISTORIC FEATURES OR WILDLIFE SITES;
- ENSURE THAT DEVELOPMENT WHICH MUST BE LOCATED IN A COASTAL LOCATION WILL BE WITHIN THE ALREADY DEVELOPED AREAS OF THE COAST.”

“The undeveloped coast is one of the most important landscape assets of the District, ~~matching the Special Landscape Areas~~. The District's coast and estuaries are of great importance recognised through national and international designations for their wildlife and natural habitats. *At the national level, the revised NPPF (2019) sets out the Government's requirements for protecting the coast from inappropriate development and coastal change. Planning Policy Guidance 20 (PPG20 – Coastal Planning) has largely been replaced by the Planning Policy Statement 25 Supplement: Development and Coastal Change. This document The NPPF and its companion planning practice guidance provides guidance to Local Planning Authorities on planning for development and protecting the coastal environment. These documents are clear on the need to direct development away from areas vulnerable to coastal change and this is especially true for the Rochford District, where much of the coast is covered by national and international nature conservation designations.*

At regional level, the Coastal Protection Subject Plan, a statutory plan adopted in 1984, defined the extent of the coastal areas within Essex where there would be the most stringent restriction on development, due to the special character of the open and undeveloped coast. *In line with the recommendations of the 2019 Rochford and Southend-on-Sea Landscape Character Assessment, Sensitivity & Capacity Assessment, the Coastal Protection Belt remains an important landscape designation in the Borough in order to protect the valued coastal areas from inappropriate development. Policy CC1 of the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan (2001) embodies the commitment to the Coastal Protection Belt. This will be replaced by our own policies once the Development Plan Documents are adopted*<sup>38</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> Rochford District Council, LDF Core Strategy – justification text for Policy ENV2 paras 8.17-8.19

## 4.4 Ancient Woodland

4.4.1 Areas of Ancient Woodland considered by this review are shown on **Figure 2.3**.

### Planning Background

4.4.2 Ancient Woodland in England is “*an area that’s been wooded continuously since at least 1600AD*”<sup>39</sup>. It is defined as “*an irreplaceable habitat*” and is important for wildlife, soils, recreational value, and cultural, historical and landscape value<sup>40</sup>.

4.4.3 Section 15 of the revised NPPF sets out the Government’s policy on conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Under ‘habitats and biodiversity’ paragraph 175 states “...c) *development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists*”<sup>41</sup>.

4.4.4 The Ancient Woodland Standing Advice states that ancient woodland is *important* for its:

- *“Wildlife (which include rare and threatened species);*
- *Soils;*
- *Recreational value;*
- *Cultural, historical and landscape value*”<sup>42</sup>.

4.4.5 Natural England has created a digitised Ancient Woodland Inventory, which identifies 52000 ancient woodland sites in England. They have also produced ‘A handbook for updated the Ancient Woodland Inventory for England’, which establishes a clear and consistent methodology for updates so that it can be systematically updated by Natural England and Partners.

4.4.6 Within Rochford District LDF Core Strategy, reference is made to fourteen ancient woodlands within the District. They are not specifically identified but are protected under Policy ENV1 – Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Landscape and Habitats and the Protection of Historical and Archaeological Sites, which identifies ancient woodlands as being of nature conservation importance. The Rochford District LDF Development Management Plan<sup>43</sup> expands on the Council’s commitment to protecting the areas of ancient woodland. The majority of the areas of ancient woodland within Rochford Borough are designated as Local Wildlife Sites,

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<sup>39</sup> Ancient Woodland Standing Advice, Forestry Commission and Natural England 2018

<sup>40</sup> Ancient Woodland Standing Advice, Forestry Commission and Natural England 2018

<sup>41</sup> NPPF 2019, paragraph 175

<sup>42</sup> Ancient Woodland Standing Advice, Forestry Commission and Natural England 2018

<sup>43</sup> Rochford District Council, 2014

which are protected by Policy ENV1. Hockley Woods is a Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI), also protected by Policy ENV1.

- 4.4.7 A small area of ancient woodland is identified on the Southend-on-Sea Proposals Map, forming part of Belfairs Park. Ancient woodland is not specifically referenced within the Core Strategy nor the Development Management Document. Policies KP2 – Development Principles and CP4 – The Environment and Urban Renaissance provide general policies that achieve sustainable development and high quality design including conserving the natural and historic environment of the Borough, of which ancient woodland forms part of. The area of ancient woodland is also designated as a Local Wildlife Site on the Proposals Map, which is also protected by policies KP2 and CP4.

### **Landscape Character Evidence Base**

- 4.4.8 The landscape character assessment<sup>44</sup> was prepared in accordance with the 2014 Approach to Landscape Character Assessment<sup>45</sup> and reflects the principles of the European Landscape Convention. The assessment has identified a variety of landscape types and character areas across the study area. **Section 3.0** of this study assesses the landscape value, sensitivity and capacity of the study area, in line with the latest guidance in Topic Paper 6<sup>46</sup>.
- 4.4.9 The areas of ancient woodland within the study area fall within character areas that form the wooded farmland and hills character type, namely character areas D2 North of Hockley and Hawkwell, D5 Hockley Woods and D7 Belfairs Park. These are the most wooded character areas associated with the wooded farmland and hills character type. They are all assessed as being of medium to high landscape sensitivity due to the overall landscape condition and quality of features within them.
- 4.4.10 The areas of designated ancient woodland within the study area correspond with the location of ancient woodland historic landscape character type, as shown in **Figure 2.5**. There are additional areas of ancient woodland within the historic landscape character type mapping, which also fall within the character areas D2, D5 and D7.

### **Recommendation**

- 4.4.11 The ancient woodland areas are noted features within the landscape and are identified as such in the character assessment. However, they are not a landscape designation in their own right.

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<sup>44</sup>Section 2.0 of this Study

<sup>45</sup>Natural England, 2014

<sup>46</sup>Techniques and Criteria for Judging Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity, Countryside Agency 2002

The existing policies/guidance on ancient woodland within the Rochford and Southend-on-Sea local plans is considered appropriate to the purpose of the designations.

- 4.4.12 The landscape character assessment will form part of the evidence base, informing future policies. Key landscape characteristics and features should be conserved through emerging strategic policies where appropriate.

## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 General

5.1.1 In line with paragraphs 170 and 171 of the NPPF 2019, and consistent with best practice advocated by the Government's national Planning Practice Guidance, it is recommended that Rochford District and Southend Borough Councils use the findings of this study as set out below.

### 5.2 Local Plan Allocations

5.2.1 The findings of the Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment in **Section 3.0** should be used to inform the assessment of potential site allocations for the new Local Plans alongside other relevant evidence.

5.2.2 The findings should also be used to inform planning applications coming forward on existing allocated sites, with regard to consideration of key landscape characteristics and appropriateness of development scale.

### 5.3 Local Plan Policy Development

5.3.1 The findings of the Study should also be used to support Local Plan policy formulation with regard to the role that the rural, urban fringe and urban landscapes within the study area play in terms of:

- Avoiding coalescence between Rayleigh, Rochford, Hockley and Hawkwell, Southend and settlements in the neighbouring authorities;
- Provision of accessible and biodiverse green infrastructure assets;
- Recognising the intrinsic value of landscape in its own right and also landscapes that make a strong contribution to the historic significance and setting of heritage assets, and biodiversity designations associated with the coast;
- Opportunities for helping to protect and enhance local landscape distinctiveness through mitigation of development-led change and appropriate land management practices;
- Opportunities for restoring areas where the landscape character has been eroded or compromised by inappropriate or insensitive past development.

5.3.2 It is also recommended that the findings of the Landscape Policy Options presented in **Section 4.0** should be used to inform policy development for the new Local Plans.

## **5.4 Landscape Assessment Toolkit**

- 5.4.1 It is also recommended that Rochford District and Southend Borough Councils give consideration to preparing a 'Landscape Assessment Toolkit' to provide a user guide to help planning officers, developers and other stakeholders effectively apply the findings of the Study in assessing and shaping development proposals.
- 5.4.2 The Toolkit could take the form of a step-by-step guide, illustrated by case studies, for assessing landscape sensitivity to development proposals, developing appropriate landscape mitigation measures and identifying landscape enhancement opportunities, potentially using a set of landscape and visual sensitivity criteria in the form of a simple checklist to signpost users to relevant information in the Study.

**APPENDIX A**  
**Coastal Protection Belt Review**

## Coastal Protection Belt Review

### General

The review of the existing Coastal Protection Belt (CPB) boundary and policy to inform the emerging Rochford and Southend-on-Sea Local Plans involved the following tasks:

- Review of existing CPB boundary.
- Identify CPB mapping criteria.
- Map proposed updated CPB boundary.
- Recommend a revised coastal areas policy.

The existing CPB boundary considered by this review is shown on **Figure 2.4**. This is the CPB boundary referred to within Policy ENV2 (Coastal Protection Belt) of the adopted Rochford District Core Strategy<sup>47</sup>. NB. There is no CPB policy within the Southend-on-Sea Core Strategy.

The current CPB boundary used in Rochford Borough is based on the CPB defined in 1984 by Essex County Council in the Essex Coast Protection Subject Plan<sup>48</sup>. The Subject Plan recognised the rural and undeveloped character of the Essex coastline as a unique, finite and irreplaceable resource in its own right. The Subject Plan set out a coastal protection policy, the main objective of which was to protect the coastline outside built-up areas from development that would adversely affect the open and rural character or wildlife within an area known as 'The Coastal Protection Belt'.

A broad study area was selected as a starting point for defining the CPB area from first principles in the 1984 Subject Plan. The study area used the tidal influence of river estuaries as the inland cut-off point. The criteria used to determine whether land within the study area should be included or not within the CPB boundary is documented in detail within the Subject Plan.

The proposed approach to reviewing the CPB in the study area is based on the principles and criteria established by the Essex Coast Protection Subject Plan and adapted in the Colchester Review. This has also been informed by a brief review of the current legislative and policy framework for the protection and management of coastal areas in England. The approach also draws on the evidence of the landscape character assessment above.

### National Policy

Section 14 of the revised 2019 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>49</sup> sets out the Government's policy on meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change. The accompanying online planning practice guidance on flood risk and coastal change provides guidance to Local Planning Authorities (LPA).

The aim of the policy on coastal change, as set out in paragraphs 166-169 of the NPPF, is to reduce risk from coastal change by avoiding inappropriate development in vulnerable areas or contributing to impacts of physical change to the coast. LPAs should apply Integrated Coastal Zone Management, a joined-up, participative approach towards the planning and management of land and marine elements in coastal areas.

LPAs should identify Coastal Change Management Areas in their Local Plans, where rates of physical changes to the shoreline through erosion, coastal landslip, permanent inundation or coastal accretion are likely to be significant over the next 100 years, taking into consideration shoreline management plans. The current Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan identifies policies for managing the flood and coastal erosion risks to the coastline within Rochford and Southend. The policies for the Crouch and Roach Estuary (Unit H), Foulness, Potten and Rushley (Unit I) and Southend frontage (Unit J) include holding the line through much of the area, with the standard of protection maintained between now and 2055.

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<sup>47</sup> Rochford District Council, LDF Core Strategy, December 2011

<sup>48</sup> Essex Coast Protection Subject Plan, Written Statement and Proposals Map, Essex County Council, December 1984

<sup>49</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government



Localised managed realignment through breach of the existing defence is proposed between 2025 to 2055. This would result in localised physical changes to the shoreline.

LPAs are expected to be clear what development would be appropriate in Coastal Change Management Areas and make provision for development and infrastructure that needs to be relocated away from Coastal Change Management Areas. When assessing applications in such areas, LPAs should consider the degree to which the character of the coast, including its environmental designations (natural and heritage) may be compromised, and also the implications for provision of a continuous recreational route along the coast.

### Landscape Character Evidence Base

The landscape character assessment<sup>50</sup> was prepared in accordance with the 2014 Approach to Landscape Character Assessment<sup>51</sup> and reflects the principles of the European Landscape Convention. The assessment has identified a variety of landscape types and character areas across the study area. **Section 3.0** of the Study assesses the landscape value, sensitivity and capacity of the study area, in line with the latest guidance in Topic Paper 6<sup>52</sup>.

It identifies generic character types throughout the Borough and more specific character areas. In relation to the CPB, the following character types represent areas of coastal/estuarine landscape character within the study area:

- Drained Estuarine Marsh (LCT B)
- Coastal Farmland (LCT C)
- River Valley (LCT E)
- Coastal Mosaic (LCT F)

### Criteria

The following criteria have been used to validate the existing CPB boundary as shown on **Figure 2.4**:

- **A Coastal Character** – inclusion of open, undeveloped and rural areas (terrestrial and inter-tidal) that have a distinctive coastal/estuarine character and sense of place as defined by the landscape character assessment. This criterion is in line with NPPF objectives to protect the open, undeveloped and rural character of the coast.
- **B Coastal Designations** – inclusion of designated sites of nature conservation value associated with coastal habitats such as saltings, marshes and mudflats; and designated sites of cultural heritage value associated with the Borough's coastal history. This criterion is in line with NPPF objectives to protect natural and historic environment designated assets in coastal areas.
- **C Coastal Change Areas** – inclusion of coastal areas that are likely to experience significant physical changes as a result of permanent/temporary inundation. This criterion is in line with NPPF objectives for management of coastal change.

In determining whether to include areas in the CPB or not, the area should wholly or predominantly meet criterion A; or meet criteria B and/or C. In this way, greatest weight is given to criterion A in line with the main objective to protect the open, undeveloped and rural character of the coast.

**Table A** provides the details of the evidence used to inform the CPB boundary review process.

The following factors were used in considering the delineation of the CPB boundaries:

- Exclude built-up urban areas that are not predominantly rural, undeveloped or open – as determined by reference to the latest available Ordnance Survey data and settlement boundaries from the Rochford and Southend Local Plans;

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<sup>50</sup> Section 2.0 of this Study

<sup>51</sup> Natural England, 2014

<sup>52</sup> Techniques and Criteria for Judging Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity, Countryside Agency 2002

- Follow the administrative boundaries of Rochford and Southend where appropriate – as determined by reference to the latest available Ordnance Survey data and settlement boundaries from the Rochford and Southend Local Plans;
- Wherever possible, follow permanent physical features that are readily identifiable and defensible on the ground (such as roads, field boundaries and the low-water mark in inter-tidal areas) – as determined by reference to the latest available Ordnance Survey data and aerial photographs<sup>53</sup>.

**Table A - CPB Boundary Definition Criteria Evidence**

Criteria	Evidence
Coastal Character	Open, undeveloped and rural areas (terrestrial and inter-tidal) that have a distinctive coastal/estuarine character and sense of place defined by the landscape character assessment as represented by the following character types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drained Estuarine Marsh (LCT B)</li> <li>• Coastal Farmland (LCT C)</li> <li>• River Valley (LCT E)</li> <li>• Coastal Mosaic (LCT F)</li> </ul>
Coastal Designations <sup>54</sup>	Designated sites of nature conservation value associated with coastal habitats such as saltings, marshes and mudflats as represented by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ramsar Sites</li> <li>• Special Protection Areas (SPA)</li> <li>• Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)</li> <li>• Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)</li> <li>• National Nature Reserves</li> <li>• Local Nature Reserves</li> </ul> Designated sites of cultural heritage value associated with the Borough's coastal history as represented by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scheduled Monuments</li> <li>• Conservation Areas</li> </ul>
Coastal Change Areas	Areas that are likely to experience significant physical changes as a result of permanent and/or temporary inundation as represented by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal areas within the study area identified for managed realignment of existing defences between 2025-2055<sup>55</sup></li> <li>• Coastal areas within Flood Zone 3<sup>56</sup></li> </ul>

### Proposed Updates to CPB Boundary

The proposed changes to the existing CPB are shown on **Figure A1** and detailed in **Table B** below.

**Table B - Schedule of Proposed Changes to the CPB Boundary**

Appraisal Section	Proposed Additions	Proposed Deletions	Comments
1 (Battlesbridge to South Fambridge)	None	Deletion of two areas of land that do not meet criterion A; or B and/or C.	
2 (South Fambridge to Paglesham Creek)	None	Deletion of one parcel of land that does not meet criterion A; or B and/or C.	The land parcel is partly developed and does not demonstrate the key coastal characteristics associated with the wider character area.

<sup>53</sup> Source Google Earth and Bing maps website accessed December 2018

<sup>54</sup> Refer to Figure 2.3

<sup>55</sup> Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan, 2010





<sup>56</sup> Flood Map for Planning website accessed December 2018

Appraisal Section	Proposed Additions	Proposed Deletions	Comments
3 (North River Roach to Wallasea)	None	Deletion of one parcel of land that does not meet criterion A; or B and/or C.	
4 (South River Roach to Barlinghall Creek)	None	Deletion of small parcel of land north of Sutton Road/Shopland Road and larger land area north of Shopland Road/Barling Road that do not meet criterion A; or B and/or C.	
5 (Little Wakering to Shoeburyness)	None	None	This area contains several coastal characteristics and includes open, undeveloped land. It is also an area largely within Flood Zone 3.
6 (Rushley, Potton, Havengore and Foulness Islands)	None	None	This is an open, largely undeveloped and rural area. It is partly covered by several nature designations including SAC, SPA, Ramsar and SSSI. It is also within Flood Zone 3.
7 (Belton Hills to Two Tree Island)	None	Deletion of narrow parcel of land that does not meet criterion A; or B and/or C.	

The proposed CPB boundary shown on **Figure A1** has been digitised using an Ordnance Survey base map and provided as a GIS shapefile.



**KEY**

-  Study Area
-  Planning Authority Boundary
-  Coastal Protection Belt (CPB)
-  Areas currently within CPB, proposed for removal

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## **APPENDIX B**

### **Glossary**

## **Glossary**

### **Characterisation**

The process of identifying areas of similar character, classifying and mapping them and describing their character.

### **Characteristics**

Elements, or combinations of elements, which make a particular contribution to distinctive character.

### **Classification**

Is concerned with dividing the landscape into areas of distinct, recognisable and consistent common character and grouping areas of similar character together.

### **Ecosystem Services**

These are services provided by the natural environment that benefit people; including food, fibre and fuel provision and the cultural services that provide benefits to people through recreation and cultural appreciation of nature. Other services provided by ecosystems include the regulation of the climate, purification of the air and water, flood protection, soil formation and nutrient recycling.

### **Elements**

Individual components that make up the landscape, such as trees and hedges.

### **Features**

Particularly prominent or eye-catching elements in the landscape, such as tree clumps, church spires or wooded horizons.

### **Key Characteristics**

Those combinations of elements and features that are particularly important to the current character of the landscape and help to give an area its particularly distinctive sense of place.

### **Landscape**

An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.

### **Landscape Capacity**

The degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate change without unacceptable adverse effects on its character. Capacity is likely to vary according to the type and nature of the change being proposed.

### **Landscape Character**

A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements and features in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.

### **Landscape Character Areas**

These are single, unique areas that are the discrete geographical areas within a particular landscape type. Each has its own individual character and identity, even though it shares the same generic characteristics with other areas of the same type.

### **Landscape Character Assessment**

This is the process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features (characteristics) that make landscapes distinctive. The process results in the production of a Landscape Character Assessment.

**Landscape Character Types**

These are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the country, but wherever they occur they share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation, historical land use and settlement pattern.

**Landscape Management**

Action, from a perspective of sustainable development, to ensure the regular upkeep of a landscape, so as to guide and harmonise changes that are brought about by social, economic and environmental processes.

**Landscape Planning**

Strong forward-looking action to enhance, restore or create landscapes.

**Landscape Policy**

An expression by the competent public authorities, of general principles, strategies and guidelines that permit the taking of specific measures aimed at the protection, management and planning of landscapes.

**Landscape Protection**

Actions to conserve and maintain the significant or characteristic features of a landscape justified by its value derived from its natural configuration and/or from human activity.

**Landscape Condition**

This is based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape; about its intactness, from visual, functional and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements that make up the character in any one place.

**Landscape Sensitivity**

A term applied to specific receptors, considering judgements of the susceptibility of the receptor to the type of change proposed and the value related to that receptor.

**Landscape Susceptibility**

The ability of a defined landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed type of change without undue negative consequences.

**Landscape Value**

The relative importance attached to a landscape (often as a basis for designation or recognition), which expresses national or local consensus because of its quality, special qualities including perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness, cultural associations or other conservation issues.

**APPENDIX C**  
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Midlands Office Third Floor The Birkin Building 2 Broadway Nottingham NG1 1PS T +44 (0)115 8386737 E mail@cbastudios.com W  
www.cbastudios.com South East Office The Print Rooms Studio 511 164/180 Union St Waterloo London SE1 0LH  
Directors D Watkins BSc MSc MRTPI FRGS • A Croft BA MA MCifA  
Senior Consultant C J Blandford BA DipLD MLA FLI

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