



Basildon Borough

Plotland Growth Potential Study

Basildon Borough Council

Final report

Prepared by LUC

October 2024

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Basildon Borough

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Purpose and scope

1.1 LUC was commissioned by Basildon Borough Council (BBC) in April 2024 to provide an update to the 2017 Plotland Study [See reference 1]. The aim of the study is to ascertain if and how sustainable development, consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) [See reference 2], can be delivered in plotland areas. This will help inform the preparation of the spatial strategy and planning policies for a New Local Plan for Basildon Borough.

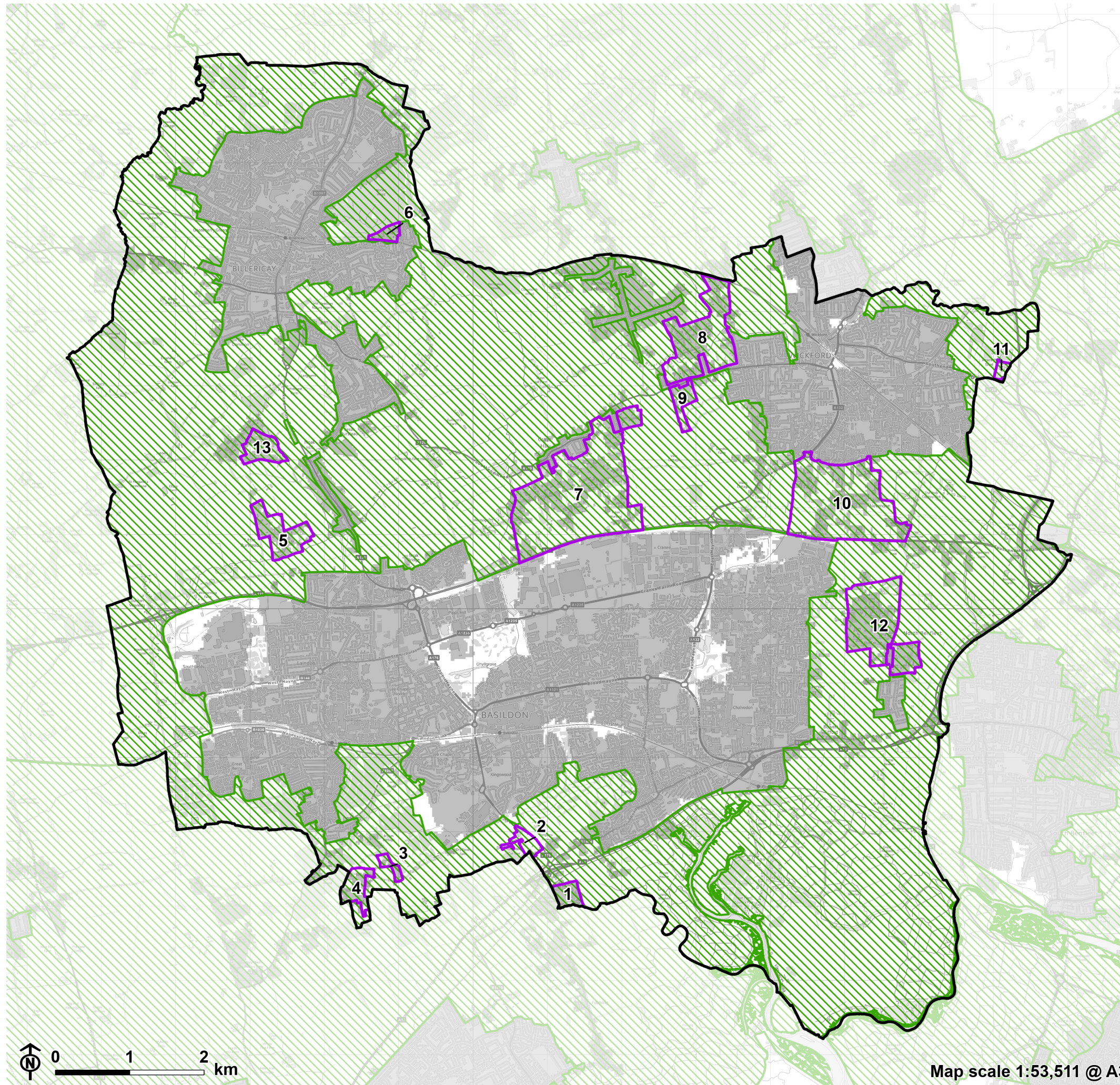
1.2 The study has considered 13 plotland areas, which are all located within the current extent of the Metropolitan Green Belt. The plotland areas are shown on **Figure 1.1** and listed below:

- Bells Hill Road/Hawkesbury Bush Lane;
- Break Egg Hill, Billericay;
- Broomhills Chase, Little Burstead;
- Crays Hill;
- Fairmead, Wickford;
- Fobbing (also referred locally as Crooked Brook);
- Green Lane, Little Burstead;
- Newhouse Farm and Castledon Road, Wickford;
- North Benfleet.
- Northlands, Langdon Hills;
- Ramsden View Road, Wickford;

Chapter 1 Introduction

- Stormonts Way, Langdon Hills; and
- Wickford Lawns, Shotgate.

Figure 1.1: Plotland Areas



- Basildon Borough boundary
- Settlement
- Green belt
- Plotland area
- 1: Fobbing Plotland
- 2: Bells Hill Road Plotland
- 3: Stormonts Way Plotland
- 4: Northlands Plotland
- 5: Green Lane Plotland
- 6: Break Egg Hill Plotland
- 7: Crays Hill Plotland
- 8: Newhouse Farm and Castledon Road Plotland
- 9: Ramsden View Road Plotland
- 10: Fairmead Plotland
- 11: Wickford Lawns Plotland
- 12: North Benfleet Plotland
- 13: Broomhills Chase Plotland

1.3 The study appraises how each plotland area can accommodate development in landscape and Green Belt terms. This is followed by high-level design guidance, including suggestions on:

- appropriate height, form and density of built development;
- mitigation measures to help avoid or reduce any likely landscape and visual and/or Green Belt harm;
- potential compensatory improvements to the Green Belt and its green and blue infrastructure; and
- infrastructure requirements and delivery recommendations for the opportunity areas in each plotland.

1.4 For plotland areas where more substantial infill development is considered appropriate, or where areas could be released from the Green Belt (in the context of NPPF paragraphs 144-148), an estimate of total capacity to accommodate growth is provided. These capacities will subsequently be used to calculate the likely costs associated with delivery of necessary infrastructure improvements to facilitate their sustainable development.

1.5 This is not a detailed landscape and visual assessment (LVIA) or Green Belt harm assessment of specific development proposals but a refined analysis of characteristics, value and harm to Green Belt purposes to assist with understanding how each plotland could be developed in line with landscape and Green Belt sensitivities.

Background

Basildon Borough

1.6 Basildon Borough is in South Essex, 30 miles east of the City of London. It covers an area of 87km² and has a population of approximately 187,600 [See reference 3]. The largest settlement is Basildon, located in the south of the

borough. This is a Mark 1 New Town designated in 1948 and built in several phases over 50 years. It includes the neighbourhoods of Basildon, Laindon, Vange, Pitsea, Steeple View and Noak Bridge. Two smaller independent towns are situated in the north of the Borough: Billericay (including Great Burstead and South Green and Break Egg Hill) is the second largest settlement followed closely by Wickford (incorporating Shotgate). The urban areas are surrounded by rural countryside containing two serviced villages, as well as the 13 plotland areas set within the Green Belt.

Plotlands

1.7 The term 'plotland' refers to areas of land laid out in regular plots on which a number of self-built settlements were established in the south-east of England from the late 1800s and up to the Second World War. Plotland creation began as a result of the late 19th and early 20th century agricultural depression and involved farmland being sub-divided and sold-off as housing parcels. It reached its peak in the 1920's to 1930's, but with the introduction of greater planning regulations after the Second World War, the creation of new plotland areas was generally brought to an end.

1.8 Plotlands have a distinctive settlement pattern, with dwellings set out within an allotment of land in regular rectilinear patterns. Often the dwellings are arranged along a road with long land strips forming the allotment. Due to the pre-war relaxed planning regulations, plotlands also tended to have a character of their own, with a variety of buildings and structures constructed using an assortment of materials. Over time most of plotland areas have gradually been upgraded, with many buildings having been replaced with a more modern and commonplace suburban types of development such as bungalows and chalets.

1.9 Some of the original plotlands were set out but not taken up and so they have remained undeveloped. Others have been absorbed into new development or were regularised as part of new town building such as Basildon. Basildon was constructed in the 1950s and 60s, replacing one of the largest concentrations of plotlands in Essex.

1.10 Areas of plotland that were not intensely developed were often included within the extent of the Green Belt designation when it was introduced in 1947. This had the effect of freezing the extent of development within these areas at a point in time. Therefore, developed plots are interspersed with undeveloped plots where new development is generally considered to be inappropriate.

1.11 The term plotland is now more widely associated with land used by gypsies and travellers for the provision of pitches and the construction of temporary dwellings. Within Basildon Borough, some plotland areas provide sites which are lawful, whilst others are unauthorised and have attracted enforcement action from the local planning authority. Where greenfield land has been cleared to make way for such provision, these pitches have impacted landscape character and have eroded the openness of the Green Belt.

Chapter 2

Context

2.1 This chapter sets out the study context, including a summary of relevant national and local policy and previous local studies. A description of the Borough's Green Belt and the wider Metropolitan Green Belt can be found in the Basildon Green Belt Study (LUC, 2023).

Policy context

National

Landscape policy and guidance

2.2 Paragraph 20 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for England states that local planning authority development plans should include strategic policies for the “conservation and enhancement of...landscapes...”.

2.3 Paragraph 180 of the NPPF states that “planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by...protecting and enhancing valued landscapes...(in a manner commensurate with their...identified quality in the development plan [and] recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside”. Paragraph 181 of the NPPF requires local plans to “distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites”.

2.4 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF states “planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments...are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not

preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)”.

2.5 National Planning Practice Guidance builds on the NPPF’s requirements by stating that local plan strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes and that this can include ‘nationally and locally-designated landscapes but also the wider countryside. Where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify their special characteristics and be supported by proportionate evidence. Policies may set out criteria against which proposals for development affecting these areas will be assessed. Plans can also include policies to avoid adverse impacts on landscapes and to set out necessary mitigation measures, such as appropriate design principles and visual screening, where necessary. The cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully.’

[See reference 4].

Green Belt policy and guidance

2.6 Government policy on the Green Belt is set out in Chapter 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) [See reference 5] “Protecting Green Belt Land”.

2.7 Paragraph 142 of the NPPF states that ‘the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence’.

2.8 This is elaborated in NPPF paragraph 143, which states that Green Belts serve five purposes, as set out below:

1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.
2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.

3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.
5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

2.9 The NPPF emphasises in paragraphs 144 and 145 that local planning authorities should establish and, if justified, only alter Green Belt boundaries through the preparation of their Local Plans. Paragraph 145 goes on to say that “once established, there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed or changed when plans are being prepared or updated. Authorities may choose to review and alter Green Belt boundaries where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, in which case proposals for changes should be made only through the plan-making process. Strategic policies should establish the need for any changes to Green Belt boundaries having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so they can endure beyond the plan period” **[See reference 6]**.

2.10 When defining Green Belt boundaries NPPF paragraph 148 states local planning authorities should:

- Demonstrate consistency with Local Plan strategy, most notably achieving sustainable development;
- Not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;
- Safeguard enough non-Green Belt land to meet development needs beyond the plan period; and
- Define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.

2.11 Current planning guidance makes it clear that the Green Belt is a strategic planning policy constraint designed primarily to prevent the spread of built

development and the coalescence of urban areas. The NPPF goes on to state “local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land” (paragraph 150).

2.12 It is important to note, however, that these positive roles should be sought for the Green Belt once designated. The lack of a positive role, or the poor condition of Green Belt land, does not necessarily undermine its fundamental role to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Openness is not synonymous with landscape character or quality.

2.13 Paragraphs 152 and 153 state that “inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances... ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations”.

2.14 New buildings are inappropriate in the Green Belt. There are exceptions to this which are set out in two closed lists. The first is in paragraph 154 which sets out the following exceptions:

- “buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;

- limited infilling in villages;
- limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan; and
- limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
 - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development, or
 - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.”

2.15 Paragraph 155 sets out other forms of development that are not inappropriate provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. These are:

- “mineral extraction;
- engineering operations;
- local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;
- the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;
- material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation or for cemeteries or burial grounds); and
- development, including buildings brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.”

2.16 The NPPF’s Green Belt policies are supplemented by Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The guidance sets out some of the factors that should be

taken into account when considering the potential impact of development on the openness of Green Belt land. The factors referenced are not presented as an exhaustive list, but rather a summary of some common considerations borne out by specific case law judgements. The guidance states openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects [See reference 7]. Other circumstances which have the potential to affect judgements on the impact of development on openness include:

- The duration of development and its remediability to the original or to an equivalent (or improved) state of, openness; and
- The degree of activity likely to be generated by development, such as traffic generation.

2.17 The guidance also elaborates on paragraph 150 of the NPPF which requires local planning authorities to set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the remaining Green Belt land. The guidance endorses the preparation of supporting landscape, biodiversity, or recreational need evidence to identify appropriate compensatory improvements, including:

- “new or enhanced green infrastructure;
- woodland planting;
- landscape and visual enhancements (beyond those needed to mitigate the immediate impacts of the proposal);
- improvements to biodiversity, habitat connectivity and natural capital;
- new or enhanced walking and cycle routes; and
- improved access to new, enhanced, or existing recreational and playing field provision.”

2.18 Finally, the guidance offers some suggested considerations for securing the delivery of identified compensatory improvements – the need for early engagement with landowners and other interested parties to obtain the

necessary local consents, establishing a detailed scope of works and identifying a means of funding their design, construction and maintenance through planning conditions, section 106 obligations and/or the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Emerging Green Belt planning reform

2.19 The Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) recently consulted on proposed changes to national Green Belt planning policy in the NPPF. Notable proposed changes include a potential expansion of the definition of previously developed land and the definition of a new category of Green Belt land called 'grey belt'.

2.20 Paragraph 142 (as amended) requires proposed alterations to Green Belt boundaries to not 'fundamentally undermine the function of the Green Belt across the area of the Plan as a whole'. Paragraph 144 (as amended) includes references to consider the allocation and development of 'grey belt' land in sustainable locations prior to other sustainable Green Belt locations. 'Grey belt' is defined in Annex 2 of the revised NPPF as 'land in the green belt comprising Previously Developed Land and any other parcels and/or areas of Green Belt land that make a limited contribution to the five Green Belt purposes (as defined in para 140 of this Framework), but excluding those areas or assets of particular importance listed in footnote 7 of this Framework (other than land designated as Green Belt).' The wider consultation expands on this definition suggesting that land that makes a limited contribution to the Green Belt purposes will:

- Not strongly perform against any Green Belt purpose; and
- Have at least one of the following features:
 - Land containing substantial built development or which is fully enclosed by built form.
 - Land which makes no or very little contribution to preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another.

- Land which is dominated by urban land uses, including physical developments.
- Land which contributes little to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns.

2.21 There has been a general call for more detailed guidance to ensure the consistent and transparent definition of grey belt land. The implications for Green Belt planning in Basildon and the Plotlands cannot be determined until the NPPF has been finalised and further detail planning practice guidance is published.

Infrastructure policy and guidance

2.22 The NPPF sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It goes on to describe what this means in terms of plan making:

“all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;”

2.23 Further to this, NPPF paragraph 20 sets out that local plans should include strategic policies which make sufficient provision for (amongst other things):

“b) infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);

c) community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure).

d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.”

2.24 Further advice is contained in the government’s Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), which sets out that:

“At an early stage in the plan-making process strategic policy-making authorities will need to work alongside infrastructure providers, service delivery organisations, other strategic bodies such as Local Enterprise Partnerships, developers, landowners and site promoters. A collaborative approach is expected to be taken to identifying infrastructure deficits and requirements, and opportunities for addressing them. In doing so they will need to:

- assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure, and its ability to meet forecast demands. Where deficiencies are identified, policies should set out how those deficiencies will be addressed; and
- take account of the need for strategic infrastructure, including nationally significant infrastructure, within their areas”.

2.25 In accordance with the above, the identification of infrastructure requirements related to the plotlands should be sufficiently detailed to inform a site allocation policy within the local plan. It is recommended this is undertaken in collaboration with infrastructure stakeholders. The infrastructure requirements appraisal undertaken as part of this project identifies high level infrastructure planning matters which would helpfully inform these discussions with infrastructure stakeholders.

Local

Adopted Local Plan

2.26 In December 2023, BBC reviewed a series of ‘saved policies’ against the most recent NPPF (December 2023) to assess the level of compliance of each policy. Saved policies represent the local planning policies currently applied by the Council to inform the determination of planning applications in the Borough and enforce planning control, in the absence of an up to date Local Plan. The findings of the review are set out within the February 2024 Compliance Review of the Saved Policies with the National Planning Policy Framework report, which should be taken into consideration when determining planning applications.

2.27 The report concludes that some local policies no longer align with current national planning policy due to numerous changes since the original NPPF in 2012. Specifically, changes in retail policies (introducing Class E in 2020) and housing policies (affected by changes since 2018) are noted. The review highlights pressures to convert employment land to residential use, especially where vacancies occur and to develop in the Green Belt. Overall, while the Saved Policies partially comply with current national policy, there are gaps and inconsistencies compared to the 2023 NPPF, necessitating a reliance on national guidelines. A future update after the Government’s release of the National Development Management Policies in 2024 is anticipated to further inform this compliance assessment.

Green Belt policies

2.28 Relevant saved Green Belt and landscape policies include:

- BAS GB1: The Definition of the Green Belt - The supporting text to BAS GB1 establishes the reasoning behind the green belt designation in the plan which takes into consideration the purposes that Green Belt serves.

The policy refers to the Proposals Map for the exact boundaries defined through the adoption of the Basildon District Local Plan (1998).

- **BAS GB3: Replacement dwellings in the Green Belt** – This policy aims to regulate the enlargement and replacement of dwellings to maintain consistency with the local character and planning standards. It further provides locally relevant criteria associated with exceptions to the policy.
- **BAS GB4: Extension to dwellings in the Green Belt** – This policy outlines the requirements for extensions to any dwelling located in the Green Belt. It further provides locally relevant criteria associated with exceptions to the policy.
- **BAS GB5: Definition of a Dwelling** – This policy outlines specific criteria that dwellings must meet to qualify under Policies BAS GB3 and BAS GB4, ensuring that only legitimate and habitable structures are eligible. The aim is to ensure that extensions and replacements are applied to genuinely habitable and structurally sound dwellings.
- **BAS GB6: Agricultural Workers Dwellings** – This policy restricts new dwellings in the Green Belt but allows exceptions for agricultural workers if essential for the enterprise's functioning, assessed through a financial viability test. The policy aims to preserve the Green Belt while accommodating necessary agricultural housing needs.
- **BAS GB7: Re-use of Buildings in the Green Belt** – This policy allows the re-use or adaptation of suitable buildings in the Green Belt. Policy BAS GB7's aim is to balance development needs with the preservation of the Green Belt's character and openness.
- **BAS S3: Areas of Special Reserve** – This policy designates specific land between the urban area and the Green Belt for potential future housing development needs to be utilised beyond the current Local Plan period. Planning permission for permanent development on this land will not be granted until the Local Plan is reviewed to propose the development of one or both sites. Until then, development will be restricted to what is normally allowed in the Green Belt. The aim of the policy is to plan for future housing needs while ensuring adequate community and recreational infrastructure.

- **BAS C1: Protected Areas – SSSI's, SNIC's & important wildlife habitats –**
This policy ensures the protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and other important wildlife habitats by prohibiting developments that could have a materially adverse effect on these areas. The aim is to safeguard valuable natural and scientific sites while carefully weighing the benefits of development.
- **BAS C2: Country Parks –** protects Country Parks from adverse development – This policy prevents development which may negatively impact the conservation or landscape value of a Country Park.
- **BAS C7: The Marshes Area –** protection from damaging development – This policy prohibits any development, including recreational proposals, that would harm the landscape, open and rural character, or wildlife of the marshes in the Coastal Protection Area. The aim is to preserve the natural environment and maintain the ecological and aesthetic integrity of the coastal marshes.
- **BAS R1: Open Space –** protection – This policy specifies that planning permission will not be granted for developments in urban open spaces if they would significantly harm the recreational or amenity value of the space or detract from the contribution the open space makes to the character of the surrounding area. The aim is to protect the benefits that open spaces provide to urban communities and maintain the overall character of urban areas.

Infrastructure policies and guidance

2.29 Local plan policy BAS BE12 (Development Control) sets out that residential developments will be refused if they cause material harm to traffic danger, or congestion (amongst other non-infrastructure related matters).

2.30 Local plan policy BAS BE21 (healthcare developments – new primary and community facilities) and Policy BAS BE22 (healthcare developments – extensions to hospitals) set out requirements for the extension of such facilities.

2.31 Some site specific local plan policies also make reference to infrastructure provision, however this is limited to those specific sites.

2.32 Locally adopted guidance sets out the expectations in relation to developer contributions which are expected from developments coming forward in Basildon, including infrastructure planning matters. The key guidance documents in relation to this are:

- Essex County Council Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions [See reference 8]; and
- Basildon Borough Planning Obligations Strategy supplementary planning document [See reference 9].

Emerging Local Plan

2.33 The Borough's new Local Plan will replace the existing Basildon District Local Plan Saved Policies 2007. Future plan-making would need to take full account of any non-statutory, strategic framework prepared jointly by the South Essex Councils. In addition, there are five neighbourhood areas, but only one neighbourhood plan currently under preparation, Noak Bridge, as well as a Neighbourhood Development Order for Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet. A neighbourhood plan for Wickford may also come forward soon. These will be part of the statutory development plan once they are made.

2.34 The first stage of preparation of the new Local Plan was a Regulation 18 consultation on Issues and Options in the summer of 2023. A second Regulation 18 consultation of a Draft Plan is planned for the end of 2024. Further consultation will then follow in 2025 prior to the submission of the Plan to begin Examination in Public.

2.35 This Plotlands study will help the Council to build an exceptional circumstances case for making alterations to Green Belt boundaries (if required) and plan for the allocation of specific site options and their infrastructure needs.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Approach

3.1 The aim of the study is to ascertain if and how sustainable development, consistent with the NPPF (2023), can be accommodated in plotland areas. As all 13 plotland areas are located in the Green Belt, the main routes to deliver and encourage plotland development are limited to:

1. Releasing areas of plotland from the Green Belt through the definition of 'exceptional circumstances' (NPPF paragraphs 144-148); or
2. Signposting developers to areas where plotland development in the Green Belt is more likely to be appropriate in line with NPPF paragraph 154.

3.2 The approach for the landscape and Green Belt appraisal is designed with these routes in mind and therefore identifies the following:

- Sensitive areas where development could not be delivered in landscape and visual and/or likely Green Belt terms (that is to say, higher sensitivity areas);
- Areas where limited infill in plotlands defined as villages might be appropriate in the context of NPPF paragraph 154e; and
- Areas where more substantial infill development might be accommodated without significant landscape and Green Belt impacts through the demonstration of the necessary exceptional circumstances from making alterations to Green Belt boundaries (see NPPF paragraphs 144-148).

3.3 Although NPPF paragraphs 154 and 155 outline other opportunities for appropriate housing growth in Green Belt plotland locations (in addition to 154e), the other exceptions and not inappropriate land uses either do not relate to housing or are highly likely to only apply to areas that are too small in extent and therefore housing capacity for the purposes of this strategic study, for example:

- The extension or alteration of a building that does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building (NPPF paragraph 154c), the replacement of a building with one of the same use and size (NPPF paragraph 154c) and the re-use of permanent and substantial buildings provided they preserve openness and do not conflict with the Green Belt purposes (NPPF paragraph 155d) will not materially increase the number of homes delivered in the plotlands.
- Infill and previously developed locations where development would not have a greater impact on openness (regardless of villages status) would likely be too small to deliver notable increases in homes given that any new built development would result in a loss of spatial openness (NPPF paragraph 153g).
- Development for identified affordable housing need when located on previously developed land and would not cause substantial harm to openness (NPPF paragraph 154g). The Council has yet to determine how it will meet its affordable housing needs through Local Plan site allocations. Until this is established, it is not known whether this exception is applicable to development management decisions in the forthcoming plan period. Until the details of the Borough's affordable housing needs and plans are known, all existing built development within the plotlands can be seen as opportunity areas for affordable housing, subject to its scale and design not causing substantial harm to openness.
- Buildings brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order (NPPF paragraph 155f) fall outside of the scope of the Local Plan.

3.4 Higher sensitivity areas will include areas of absolute constraints and other sensitive landscape areas/features. It will also include any open/undeveloped

agricultural land not strongly related to existing development, such as those on the periphery of a plotland area.

3.5 In areas where limited infill development would be appropriate, individual potential development parcels are not identified. This scenario assumes limited infilling and as such any parcels are invariably small, that is to say below 1 hectare (see below).

3.6 In areas where more substantial infill development might be accommodated, parcels of land at a minimum of 1 hectare (ha) are identified, which are used to inform conclusions on approximate capacity to accommodate growth. Where a parcel lies adjacent to the edge of a settlement inset from the Green Belt, or relates to substantial areas of existing washed-over development, there is likely to be potential for release from the Green Belt. In such cases it is assumed that any parcels would be released along with any adjacent areas of development washed-over by the Green Belt. In identifying parcels, the assessment is blind to any ownership constraints or the legal status of existing development.

Process

3.7 The process for undertaking the study involved the following main stages:

1. Mapping constraints and permissions
2. Landscape and Green Belt appraisal
3. Opportunity for development
4. Design guidance
5. Capacity to accommodate growth

6. Infrastructure requirements and delivery
7. Transport and movement
8. Green and blue infrastructure

3.8 The approach to each of these stages of the study is described below.

Stage 1. Mapping constraints and permissions

3.9 The first stage of the study was to map any designations which would be likely to represent an ‘absolute’ constraint to development within parts of a site – that is, where built development would be unlikely to be permitted, regardless of landscape and visual character. Absolute constraints to development are:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC);
- Special Protection Areas (SPA);
- RAMSAR sites;
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- National Nature Reserves (NNR);
- Local Nature Reserves (LNR);
- Ancient Woodland;
- Flood Zone 3b (the functional floodplain);
- Scheduled Monuments;
- Registered Parks and Gardens;
- Open access land (CROW Act);
- Cemeteries; and
- Reservoirs.

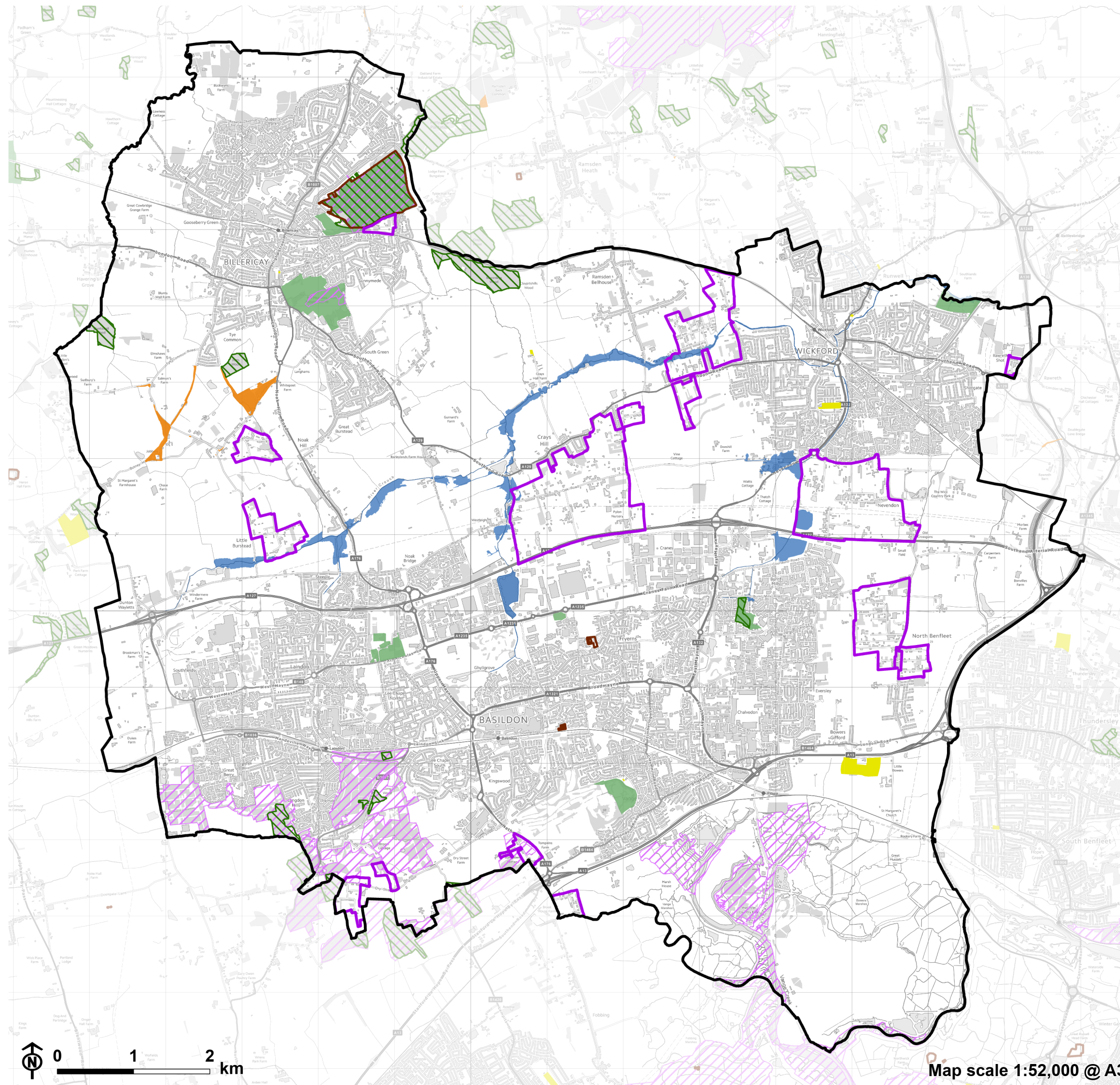
3.10 There are other designations which, whilst not considered ‘absolute’ at a strategic scale, are still likely to have a bearing on landscape sensitivity. These include:

- National Landscapes (AONBs);
- Listed Buildings;
- Conservation Areas;
- Biological Heritage Sites, such as Local Wildlife Sites (SINC);
- Priority Habitats;
- Tree Preservation Orders (TPO);
- Flood zones 2 and 3a;
- Country Parks and other Green Space; and
- Local landscape-related designations, such as the Marshes Area designated under Policy C7 and C8 of the Basildon Local Plan.

3.11 Absolute constraints are shown on Figure 3.1 and other constraints are shown on **Figure 3.2** (cultural heritage, landscape and open space) and **Figure 3.3** (natural heritage and flood risk).

3.12 Existing consented development was also mapped. The appraisal assumes that all consented planning applications will be developed. A plotland’s relationship with consented schemes is set out in the site description.

Figure 3.1: Absolute Constraints

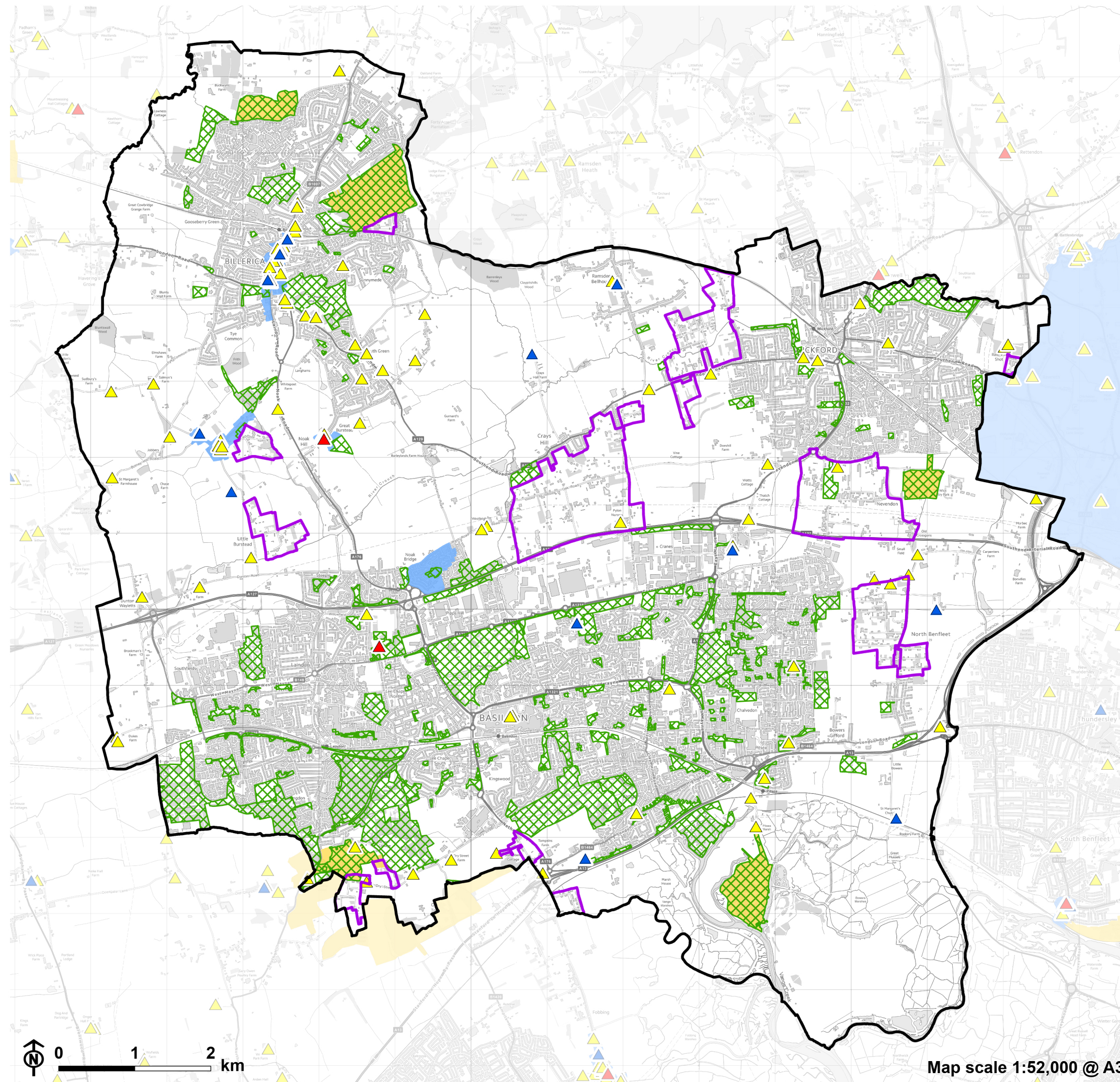


- Basildon Borough boundary
- Plotland area
- Ancient Woodland
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Scheduled Monument
- Local Nature Reserve
- CRoW access land
- Flood zone 3b
- Cemetery



Map scale 1:52,000 @ A3

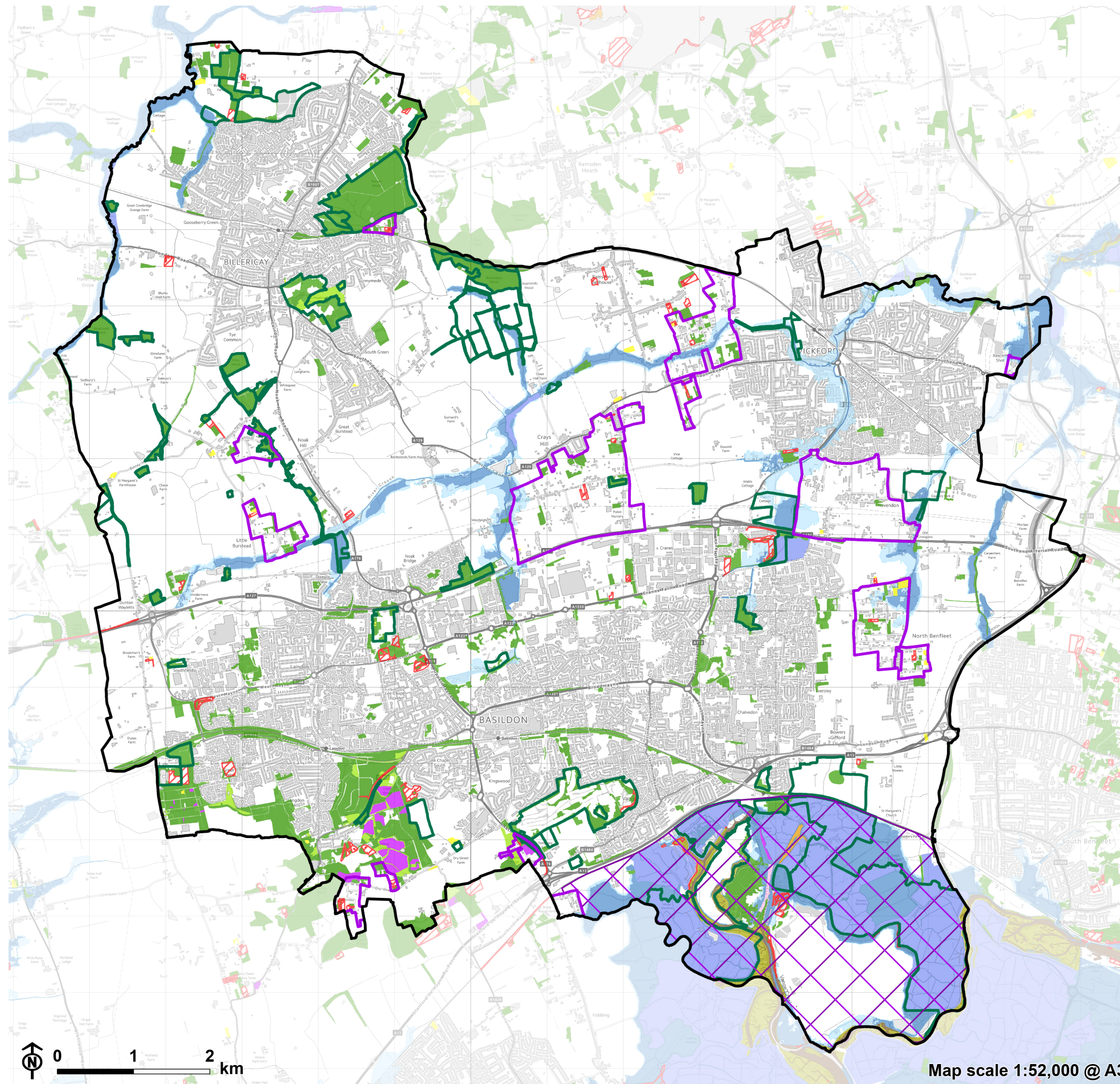
Figure 3.2: Other Constraints - Cultural Heritage, Landscape and Open Space



- Basildon Borough boundary
- Plotland area
- Public open space
- Country Park
- Conservation Area
- Listed building**
 - Grade I
 - Grade II*
 - Grade II

Map scale 1:52,000 @ A3

Figure 3.3: Other Constraints - Natural Heritage and Flood Risk



- Basildon Borough boundary
- Plotland area
- Flood zone 2
- Flood zone 3
- Local Wildlife Site
- Marsh Area
- Priority Habitat Inventory**
- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh
- Coastal saltmarsh
- Deciduous woodland
- Good quality semi-improved grassland
- Lowland fens
- Lowland meadows
- Mudflats
- Reedbeds
- Traditional orchard
- No main habitat but additional habitats present

Map scale 1:52,000 @ A3

Data sources

3.13 Key sources of information used to inform the assessment include:

- Ordnance Survey base maps (1:50K and 1:25K);
- Aerial photography (Google Earth);
- The Basildon Landscape Character and Green Belt Landscape Capacity Study (2014) [See reference 10];
- Essex Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) [See reference 11];
- Biodiversity designations (local and national);
- Historic England designations;
- Relevant Local Authority data, including for Conservation Areas; and
- CPRE tranquillity mapping.

Stage 2. Landscape and Green Belt appraisal

Landscape sensitivity

3.14 In order to identify landscape and visual constraints to development it is necessary to consider the sensitivity of a site's landscape and visual characteristics to the type of development in question. This assessment draws on Natural England guidance on Landscape Sensitivity Assessment [See reference 12]. The guidance describes landscape sensitivity, within the context of spatial planning and land management, as:

“a measure of the resilience, or robustness, of a landscape to withstand specified change... without undue negative effects on the landscape and visual baseline and their value”.

Assessment criteria

3.15 The sensitivity criteria set out below have been used as a basis for a qualitative assessment of landscape sensitivity in each plotland area. The selection of criteria has been informed by attributes of landscape that could be affected by built development (residential development). This includes both 'landscape' and 'visual' aspects of sensitivity, combining judgements on susceptibility to the specific development type being considered together with the value(s) related to that landscape and visual resource.

3.16 For each plotland, the study presents analysis against each of the sensitivity criteria. This identifies landscape elements or characteristics which are associated with higher, moderate or lower levels of sensitivity and suggests where development within the plotland area is likely to be more or less harmful in landscape terms.

Physical and natural character

This considers the distinctiveness of the landform and the presence of and extent of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features (for example trees, hedgerows or grassland habitats) which contribute to landscape character and could be vulnerable to loss from development. Smooth or gently undulating indistinctive landforms are likely to be less sensitive to development, while distinctive landforms/landform features or dramatic landform changes are likely to increase sensitivity. Areas with valued natural features (including designated habitats) result in increased sensitivity to development, while landscapes with limited natural features (for example intensively farmed or areas with high levels of existing development or brownfield sites) will be less sensitive.

It also considers any particular functional value associated with the natural landscape, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape, such as

natural hydrological systems/ floodplains; areas of undisturbed and healthy soils; areas that form carbon sinks, such as woodlands; areas of diverse landcover (benefits pest regulation); or areas that form an important part of a multifunctional Green Infrastructure network.

Higher sensitivity:

- Presence of strong topographical variety and/or distinctive landform/landform features like incised valleys with prominent slopes.
- Frequent occurrence of valued natural features and presence of larger areas of semi-natural habitats.
- Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function.

Moderate sensitivity:

- Undulating landform or some distinct landform features.
- Some occurrence of valued semi-natural habitats and features.
- The landscape has some functional value, although the degree and/or physical extent of this is limited.

Lower sensitivity:

- Absence of strong topographical variety and/or distinctive landform/landform features.
- Lack of semi-natural habitat coverage or valued natural features.
- Landscapes/ areas that do not perform a clearly identifiable and valuable function.

**Historic character, pattern and time depth,
and historical or cultural associations**

This considers pattern and historic ‘time depth’ [See reference 13] that contribute to landscape character: in terms of a distinctive plotland settlement character, or the presence of historic field patterns (recorded in the Essex HLC [See reference 14]), or the presence of historic features. Landscapes/townscapes with a distinctive settlement form and pattern (such as plotlands with surviving early buildings and/or allotment layout and access road arrangement) and landscapes with more irregular field patterns (particularly those of historic origin) are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of modern development; whilst landscapes with existing modern development and form/pattern or a landscape with regular and more modern field patterns are likely to be less sensitive. Landscapes with a high density of historic features important to the character of the area (such as Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Registered Parks and Gardens) are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than areas where such development already exists.

It also considers historical or cultural associations, such as featuring in art or literature, or associations with important historical figures or events which contribute to positive perceptions of the landscape.

Higher sensitivity:

- Retains a strong early plotland character with original buildings/structures and development plots retained.
- Complex, irregular and varied landscape patterns (including historic field patterns with irregular boundaries).
- Presence of many historic features that contribute to landscape character.
- Has national or regionally important historical or cultural associations.

Moderate sensitivity:

- Some retention of early plotland character, but with some more modern and/or intrusive development types eroding that character.
- Mixture of simple and complex landscape patterns.
- Presence of some historic features that contribute to landscape character, or adjacent to historic features.
- Has some locally important historical or cultural associations.

Lower sensitivity:

- Very little retention of original plotland character, with development type and patterns being almost wholly replaced with modern or intrusive development.
- Simple, regular or uniform landscape patterns (mainly of modern origin).
- Absence of historic features in or adjacent to the area.
- A landscape with no cultural or historic associations.

Settlement form and edge character

This considers the extent to which the area relates to the form and pattern of existing adjacent settlement(s), with reference to the nature of existing development within the area and character of the settlement edge and presence and role of boundary features. This includes the extent to which physical or cultural heritage features may have influenced settlement form or constrained settlement growth. A well-integrated settlement edge, by virtue of landscape structure or landform variation, will be more sensitive. An exposed settlement edge with no landscape features to integrate the settlement/rural fringe will be less sensitive and may offer opportunities for development to enhance the settlement edge and integration.

Higher sensitivity:

- Development would have a poor relationship with existing settlement form, crossing a boundary feature and/or extending into an area with a distinctly different landscape – for example, the extension of settlement beyond a ridge crest or into a valley.
- Area contains natural/cultural features that strongly influence settlement form.

Moderate sensitivity:

- Development would be perceived as settlement advancement into the countryside but would not represent a step-change in settlement form. It would not cross a distinctive boundary feature.
- Area may contain natural/cultural features that influence settlement form to some extent.

Lower sensitivity:

- The landscape has not influenced the form of the settlement. The area is strongly associated with an existing settlement and would not, if developed, be perceived as an extension of the settlement into the countryside.
- Area does not contain natural/cultural features that influence settlement form.

Settlement setting

This considers the role that the landscape plays in providing a setting to an adjacent settlement. This includes its visual relationship with the settlement (for example it may provide a backdrop or open views to or from the settlement), any particular distinctiveness which enhances settlement character (such as a strong sense of historic character or the experience of arrival/departure), or whether it preserves a clear separation between distinct settlements (an area's role in providing a settlement setting will be

enhanced if it is maintaining a fragile rural separation between urban areas). Reference will be made to the Basildon Green Belt Study (LUC, 2023) when considering the latter, specifically in relation to Green Belt Purpose 2 (where relevant).

Higher sensitivity:

- The area contributes positively to the character of the settlement, by providing a scenic backdrop or contributing strongly to views to or from the settlement (this may include an area that forms an important part of a view highlighted in a Conservation Area appraisal).
- The area has particular distinctiveness which enhances settlement character (such as a strong sense of historic character or the experience of arrival).
- The area preserves a clear separation between distinct settlements.

Moderate sensitivity:

- The area provides some contribution to the character of the settlement, by providing a backdrop or playing some part in views to or from it.
- The area may have some distinctiveness linked to the settlement character.
- The area may play a part in preserve separation between distinct settlements.

Lower sensitivity:

- The area provides a limited contribution to the character of the settlement, it does not play an important part in views to or from it.
- The area does not have particular distinctiveness which enhances settlement character.
- The area does not preserve a clear separation between distinct settlements.

Visual prominence, skyline and views

This considers the visual character of the landscape area, including the sense of openness or enclosure (due to landform and land cover), and extent to which potential development would be visible. It also considers the skyline character of the area including whether it forms a visually distinctive skyline or an important undeveloped skyline. It also considers the visual receptors to which the landscape area is likely to be visible, including sensitive receptors (such as tourist attractions, promoted viewpoints, national trails, country parks or local public rights of way or green space) where the undeveloped character of the landscape contributes to the quality of the view.

Higher sensitivity:

- Open character with little screening land cover.
- Area is visually prominent or contains distinctive skylines.
- Clear visibility from sensitive receptor locations where the undeveloped character of the landscape contributes to the quality of the view.

Moderate sensitivity:

- Semi-enclosed or has some enclosed and some open areas.
- The area may have some visually prominent skylines, but these could be avoided if developing.
- Views from sensitive receptor locations are screened or heavily filtered but site may be visible from local public rights of way or residential properties in the immediate vicinity, making some positive contribution to their visual setting.

Lower sensitivity:

- Visually enclosed landscape screened by landform or land cover.

- Does not form a visually distinctive or prominent skyline.
- Well screened from sensitive receptors and local public rights of way and residential properties, but may be visible from lower sensitivity receptors such as users of the local road network and railways

Perceptual character

This criterion considers qualities such as rurality (traditional land uses with little influence from modern, human influences), sense of remoteness or tranquillity. High scenic value (for example strong aesthetic qualities resulting from scale, form, colour and texture) and freedom from human activity/disturbance and 'dark skies' would add to sensitivity in this criterion. This is because development will introduce new features which may detract from a sense of tranquillity and or remoteness. This refers to the CPRE's tranquillity mapping.

Higher sensitivity:

- A highly rural and/ or tranquil landscape, remote from visible or audible signs of human activity and modern development.
- Higher scenic value, and may also have relatively darker skies compared to other surrounding areas.

Moderate sensitivity:

- Some sense of rural character and/or tranquillity and scenic value but with some signs of human activity and modern development.
- Some sense of scenic value, and may also have moderately dark skies compared to other surrounding areas

Lower sensitivity:

- Close to visible or audible signs of human activity and modern development.
- Lower scenic value and relatively lighter night skies.

Green Belt appraisal

3.17 This builds on the Basildon Green Belt Study (2023) and uses the same approach, including consideration of openness and harm to the Green Belt Purposes.

3.18 A summary of the findings of the 2023 study is provided. However, where opportunities for more substantial infill development are identified, a qualitative analysis is provided, considering scenarios for reduced harm at a more granular scale (in comparison to the assessment findings for larger Green Belt Study parcel within which it is located).

Stage 3. Opportunity for development

3.19 Based on the findings of the landscape and Green Belt appraisal, the following areas are identified:

- Sensitive areas where development could not be delivered in landscape and visual and/or likely Green Belt terms (that is to say, higher sensitivity areas);
- Areas where limited infill development in plotlands defined as villages might be appropriate in the context of NPPF paragraph 154e; and
- Areas where more substantial infill development might be accommodated without significant landscape and Green Belt impacts through the demonstration of the necessary exceptional circumstances from making alterations to Green Belt boundaries (see NPPF paragraphs 144-148).

3.20 These areas are indicated on the key constraints and opportunities map at the end of the analysis.

Stage 4. Design guidance

3.21 Each opportunity area is assigned a density guideline to inform how any additional development might be accommodated across each plotland. This includes guidance on appropriate height, form and density of built development. The scale of development should reflect the character of the local environment, and where appropriate the need to maintain the openness, and the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Reference to existing densities and the suggested density of future development is based on the following assumed average approximate number of dwellings per hectare (dph):

- High density – 75 dph (high density areas are normally found within Town centres, or near Town centres, and so not likely to be relevant to any plotland areas).
- Medium density – 50 dph
- Low density – 25 dph.

3.22 Design guidance also includes potential mitigation measures to avoid or reduce any likely landscape and visual or Green Belt harm within each plotland area, with recommendations for enhancements to the landscape and GBI also provided within **Appendix A**. Paragraph 150 of the NPPF requires local planning authorities to set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land. Planning Practice Guidance elaborates on this by endorsing the preparation of supporting landscape, biodiversity, or recreational need evidence to identify appropriate compensatory improvements.

Stage 5. Capacity to accommodate growth

3.23 For plotland areas where more substantial infill development might be accommodated without significant landscape and Green Belt impacts through the demonstration of the necessary exceptional circumstances from making alterations to Green Belt boundaries, parcels of land at a minimum of 1 ha are identified. From this, an approximate total capacity to accommodate growth is provided by multiplying the total area of the parcels within a given plotland area by the suggested density of development (that is to say, high, medium or low).

3.24 In areas where limited infill in plotlands defined as villages might be appropriate in the context of NPPF paragraph 154e, assigning an accurate development capacity is very difficult, given the sporadic and small-scale nature of these infill locations. However, for these areas an indicative range of total capacity is provided based on high-level review of vacant plots not considered sensitive in landscape and Green Belt terms. In identifying parcels, the assessment is blind to any ownership constraints or the legal status of existing development.

Stage 6. Infrastructure requirements and delivery

3.25 Following the identification of opportunity areas within the plotlands and the calculation of their potential capacity to accommodate homes, a high-level appraisal of infrastructure requirements was undertaken. This relates only to the plotlands where development opportunity has been identified. These appraisals set out the infrastructure needs likely to arise, based on the scale of development opportunity identified within each plotland. This section has drawn on the guidance set out in the Essex County Council Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions [See reference 15] and Basildon Borough Planning Obligations Strategy supplementary planning document [See reference 16] and other relevant evidence to produce a bespoke 'Basildon Plotland Infrastructure

Calculator'. The calculator has converted the identified constraints-led capacity of each plotland into a series of key infrastructure requirements, covering:

- Education
- Travel plan monitoring
- GP capacity
- Open space and sports facilities
- Utilities
- Community
- Emergency services
- Libraries
- Waste planning

3.26 The full scope and assumptions used is set out in Appendix C.

Stage 7. Transport and movement

3.27 Desk-based and high-level transport and movement analysis has also been undertaken. It focused on the practicalities of access for cycling, walking, public transport and private vehicles, as well as constraints for municipal and emergency vehicles. The ECC Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions sets out ECC's expectations in terms of highways and transportation. In its capacity as the Highway Authority, ECC may request mitigation in its response to consultation on any planning applications that may have an impact on the highway. Mitigation measures may include works to the highway, provision of active travel planning measures, and financial contributions towards strategic transportation projects.

3.28 The analysis has taken note of national and local amenities. It has only been undertaken for plotlands that have potential capacity of greater than 20 dwellings.

Stage 8. Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI)

3.29 Planning Practice Guidance endorses the preparation of supporting landscape, biodiversity, or recreational need evidence to identify appropriate compensatory improvements (to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land) to offset the impact of removing land from the Green Belt, including:

- “new or enhanced green infrastructure;
- woodland planting;
- landscape and visual enhancements (beyond those needed to mitigate the immediate impacts of the proposal);
- improvements to biodiversity, habitat connectivity and natural capital;
- new or enhanced walking and cycle routes; and
- improved access to new, enhanced, or existing recreational and playing field provision.”

3.30 The opportunity areas identified through the landscape and Green Belt analysis have been combined with data on:

- existing biodiversity value (e.g. designated sites) and habitat network enhancement opportunities (Natural England Habitat Networks data);
- recreational access gaps (e.g. PROW network data and Natural England’s access to greenspace mapping) combined with key socio-economic data (e.g. IMD);
- natural flood risk management opportunities (e.g. Working with Natural Processes data); and
- key constraints e.g. designated nature and heritage sites, best and most versatile (BMV) Grade 1 and 2 land and built up urban land.

3.31 This has enabled the high level identification of spatially specific opportunities for compensatory GBI improvements to land within the plotlands

and surrounding Green Belt. It should be noted that these opportunities are high level and site specific studies/surveys will be needed as opportunities will need to be tested once preferred allocations have been identified. Engaging with relevant landowners and experts (e.g. ecologists, landscape management experts) will also be critical to understanding project feasibility and deliverability.

Outputs

3.32 Detailed analysis for each plotland area is presented in **Appendix A**.

Analysis includes the following:

- A **map** showing the plotland boundary, nearby settlements, and any absolute and other constraints in and around the plotland area.
- A **description** of the plotland, including its location within the borough; its **landscape context** (with reference to the Basildon Landscape Character Assessment, 2013); and a description of any existing development consents/permissions within the area.
- **Landscape analysis**, including a summary of key landscape and visual sensitivities.
- **Green Belt** context (with reference to the Basildon Green Belt Study, 2023) and analysis, including reference to impact of releasing and developing GB land.
- A summary of the **opportunities for development** within the plotland area and where these exist, the following additional information.
- **Design guidance** for opportunity areas within the plotland area, taking account of key constraints and potential to mitigate impacts, including through potential landscape and GBI enhancement.
- An estimate of total **capacity to accommodate growth** (for those plotland area where more substantial infill development is considered appropriate).
- A summary of high level **infrastructure requirements** for the opportunity areas. **Appendix C** sets out the assumptions used to calculate the infrastructure requirements for each opportunity area.

- Opportunities for compensatory **Green and Blue Infrastructure** improvements to land within the plotlands and surrounding Green Belt.
- A key **constraints and opportunities map**, including any identified higher landscape sensitivity areas, areas for potential limited infill development or areas for more substantial infill/ Green Belt infilling.

Chapter 4

Study findings

4.1 This chapter summarises the findings of the Plotlands Potential Growth Study. Detailed plotland area assessments are included at **Appendix A**.

4.2 The assessment has found that most of the plotland areas have little to no potential to accommodate development at a notable scale in landscape and Green Belt terms. This is primarily due to their isolated location in the open countryside, located at distance from the nearest settlement edge inset from the Green Belt, and are invariably separated from it by intervening open farmland and woodland and/or strong separating features such as major road corridors. In addition, the majority of the plotlands are not defined as ‘villages’ in the Borough’s settlement hierarchy (see **Appendix B**) which means there is no potential for limited infill village development (appropriate in Green Belt terms) amongst existing areas of plotland development.

4.3 There is potential for some development in landscape and Green Belt terms, consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), in the following plotland areas:

- Break Egg Hill, Billericay:
 - Limited infill village development amongst existing areas of plotland development deemed appropriate in Green Belt terms, roughly between 4 and 5 dwellings could be accommodated without affecting the character of the plotland.
- Broomhills Chase, Little Burstead:
 - Limited infill village development amongst existing areas of plotland development deemed appropriate in Green Belt terms, roughly between 5 and 8 dwellings could be accommodated without affecting the character of the plotland.
- Crays Hill:

- Release of some of the northern parts of the plotland area that are partially contained by existing development inset from the Green Belt in Crays Hill village. These areas have an estimated total capacity of 219 dwellings.
- Newhouse Farm and Castledon Road, Wickford:
 - Release of the southern parts of the plotland area contained by existing development inset from the Green Belt in Wickford. These areas have an estimated total capacity of 350 dwellings in this location.
 - Limited infill village development amongst existing areas of plotland development deemed appropriate in Green Belt terms, roughly between 15 and 25 dwellings could be accommodated without affecting the character of the plotland.
- North Benfleet:
 - Limited infill village development amongst existing areas of plotland development deemed appropriate in Green Belt terms, roughly between 35 and 50 dwellings could be accommodated without affecting the character of the plotland.
- Ramsden View Road, Wickford:
 - Release of a portion of the northern end of the plotland area that is partially contained by existing development inset from the Green Belt in Wickford. These areas have an estimated total capacity of 25 dwellings in this location.

4.4 Further details and figures showing the location and extent of each area can be found in **Appendix A**.

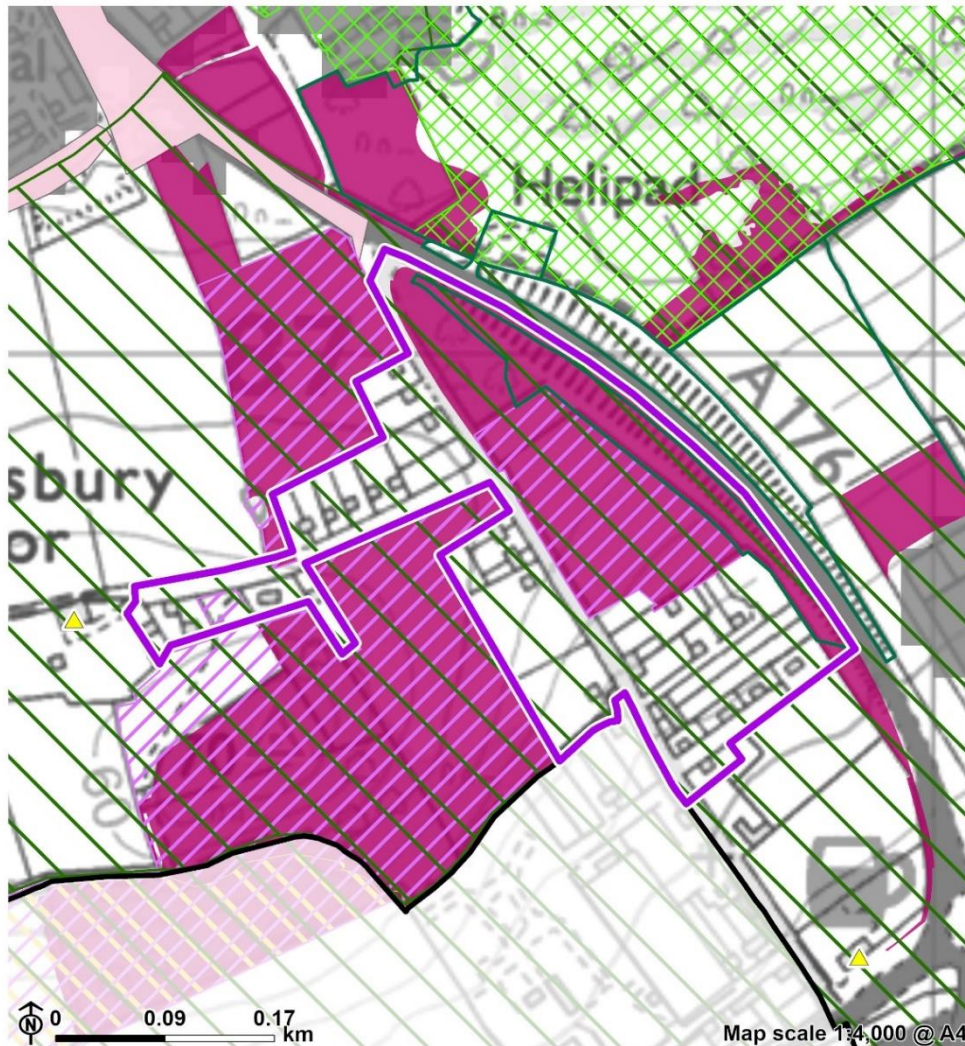
Appendix A

Plotland area assessments

Bells Hill Road/Hawkesbury Bush Lane

Bells Hill Road Plotland

Basildon Borough Plotlands Growth
Potential Study
Basildon Borough Council



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- | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Basildon Borough boundary | Absolute constraint | Local Wildlife Site |
| Bells Hill Road Plotland | Site of Special Scientific Interest | Other constraint |
| Settlement | | Priority Habitat |
| Consented development (RLA 2023) | | Country Park |
| Green belt | | Public open space |
| | | Grade II |

Plotland_MapSeries_OS/Bells Hill Road Plotland

Landscape context

A.1 The plotland area is located in the south-west of the Borough and measures approximately 9ha. It lies south of Basildon (Lee Chapel South/Kingswood), immediately west of the A176 and north of the A13/1176 junction.

A.2 Development is organised along Bells Hill Road and Leonard Road to the south-east and along Hawkesbury Bush Lane to the north-west. That to the south-east is contiguous with development along Bells Hill Road (located outside the plotland area) within the administrative area of Thurrock. Development within the plotland predominantly comprises low-density modern bungalows and chalets and associated outbuildings (garages and sheds). There are no consented developments within the plotland area.

A.3 Existing built development is interspersed with several medium sized arable and pasture fields, and features small areas of woodland and tree belts, some of which is identified as Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland'. Part of the plotland is also designated as part of the Langdon Ridge SSSI and as part of the Nether Mayne Verges Local Wildlife Site (SINC).

A.4 The plotland area lies entirely within LCA 14 – Langdon Hills, as defined within the Basildon Landscape Character Assessment (2014). Relevant key characteristics of the LCA include:

- “The landform is strongly undulating encompassing the elevated Langdon Hills with sloping sides and secondary valleys
- Grid-like former plotland sites to the north west of the area at Langdon Hills Nature Reserve
- Medium sized rectilinear arable fields and small scattered pastures with mixed tall and clipped hedgerows to the south east
- Extensive woodland cover, predominantly Oak with a mix of Sycamore, Ash, Field Maple, Hawthorn and Elm

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

- Some secondary woodland on former plotlands and mature Oaks and Poplars throughout golf course.
- Higher ground allows some extensive views overlooking the Thames Estuary
- Isolated farmhouses, dispersed roadside ribbon settlement of 20th century origin and some Plotland retaining a grid-like structure
- Ecological designations cover large parts of the character area and also comprising an extensive country park and nature reserve
- Small number of intrusive commercial development in open locations and some major roads dissecting the landscape
- Extensive network of Public Rights of Way run through and connect areas of informal recreation within the parcels of the Country Park and nature reserve”

Landscape analysis

Physical and natural character

A.5 The following considers the distinctiveness of the landform and the presence of and extent of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features, as well as any particular functional value associated with the natural landscape:

- The area occupies a sloping landform, falling from a ridge of higher ground in the north-west at approximately 60m AOD down to approximately 25m in the south-east. This reflects its location on the edge of the Langdon Hills (moderate sensitivity).
- Part of Langdon Ridge SSSI falls within the north-east of the plotland, encompassing a large area of Priority Habitat ‘good quality semi improved gassland’ and ‘deciduous woodland to the east of Bells Hill Road. The SSSI also covers two areas of ‘lowland meadows’ just beyond the plotland’s northern and southern boundaries. The ‘Nether Mayne Verges’

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

Local Wildlife Site (SINC) covers the majority of the eastern boundary - the verges are managed to provide links between larger areas of habitat (Vange Hill and Golf Course Local Wildlife Sites to the north-east of the plotland). There are also frequent mature trees around existing development (higher sensitivity).

- Elsewhere, the plotland comprises domestic gardens or pasture fields with limited semi-natural habitats or valued natural features (lower sensitivity).

Historic character, pattern and time depth, and historical or cultural associations

A.6 The following considers pattern and historic ‘time depth’: in terms of a distinctive plotland settlement form and pattern, or the presence of historic field patterns or historic features that contribute to landscape character. It also considers historical or cultural associations which contribute to positive perceptions of the landscape:

- The landscape is identified within the Essex HLC (2013) as being predominantly comprised of ‘built-up areas’, with the eastern strip being ‘motorways’ (lower sensitivity).
- Historic mapping (OS Six Inch, 1840s – 1880s) shows that the medium size field rectilinear pattern, likely to be of Saxon origin, remains evident in the wider landscape albeit with some disturbance due to the introduction of the A176 (moderate sensitivity). The early 20th century plotland was imposed upon this earlier landscape structure. Whilst the original plotland allotment arrangement is preserved, which helps retain some plotland character, much of the built development has been replaced with more modern development (moderate sensitivity).
- The site contains no historic designations; the closest designated asset is the Grade II listed Hawksbury Manor which lies approximately 50m away along Hawkesbury Bush Lane to the west (moderate sensitivity).

Settlement form and edge character

A.7 The following considers the extent to which the landscape relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement(s):

- The plotland lies approximately 250m south of Basildon (Lee Chapel South/Kingswood) from which it is separated by Basildon Golf Course and open arable farmland. Development would therefore have a poor relationship with existing settlement form (higher sensitivity).

Settlement setting

A.8 The following considers the role that the landscape plays in providing a setting to an adjacent settlement(s), including visual relationship, any distinctiveness it provides, or whether it preserves separation between distinct settlements:

- Woodland cover and open agricultural fields within the plotland form part of an open rural wooded setting between the south of Basildon. Woodland cover and rising topography form part of a wooded backdrop in views south from the settlement edge, including from Dry Street (higher sensitivity)
- The woodland within the east of the plotland makes some contribution to a sense of separation between Basildon and Fobbing when travelling between the two along the A176. The 2023 Green Belt Study also identified this area as contributing towards a wide gap between Basildon and Stanford-le-Hope merged with Corringham (moderate sensitivity).

Visual prominence, skyline and views

A.9 The following considers the visual character of the landscape, including the sense of openness or enclosure, and extent to which potential development would be visible to surrounding visual receptors:

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

- Woodland and tree cover within and around the plotland generally screens views into the plotland and results in a sense of visual enclosure. This, along with the predominance of single-storey structures, means that the existing development within the plotland is not visually prominent (lower sensitivity). However, development along Hawkesbury Bush Lane to the west is less well-enclosed owing to its location on the ridge of higher ground and the relatively open boundary along the western part of the road (higher sensitivity). Woodland cover within the plotland also contributes to a sense of an undeveloped skyline in views from the south, as noted within the Landscape Character and Green Belt Landscape Capacity Study (2014) (moderate sensitivity).
- Views out of the plotland are generally screened by mature woodland cover (lower sensitivity), however there are some long views south from higher ground (particular eastern parts of Hawkesbury Bush Lane and along Bells Hill Road) towards Fobbing Marshes and the Thames Estuary beyond (higher sensitivity).
- Views towards the northern edge of the plotland are available from parts of Dry Street and in the vicinity of Basildon Hospital to the north (lower sensitivity).
- Views into western parts of the plotland are likely to be available from the Footpath 177 as it meets Hawkesbury Bush Lane. There are also a number of residential properties along the southern section of Bells Hills Road and Vange Park Road which would experience views towards the southern parts of the plotland (moderate sensitivity).

Perceptual character

A.10 The following considers the qualities of the landscape, including sense of rurality, remoteness or tranquillity:

- A largely developed landscape lying near to the southern edge of Basildon with limited sense of tranquillity and experience of dark skies. The area is identified as being of relatively low tranquillity in CPRE tranquillity mapping

and as having moderately dark skies in the CPRE night blight Dark mapping (lower sensitivity).

- Areas of remnant farmland and woodland within Hawkesbury Bush provides some sense of rural character and scenic value (moderate sensitivity).

Key landscape sensitivities

The following features/characteristics are identified as the principal constraints to development within the plotland area:

- Sloping topography which forms part of the Langdon Hills, a distinctive landscape feature within views from the wider landscape.
- Long views south to Fobbing Marshes and the Thames Estuary.
- Value of Langdon Ridge SSSI and 'Nether Mayne Verges' Local Nature Reserve, as well as areas of Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland' and 'good quality semi improved grassland' in providing localised areas of semi-natural habitat as well as links to larger areas of habitat beyond the plotland boundaries.
- Dense tree cover, particularly to the east and north-east, provides a strong sense of visual enclosure and form distinctive landscape features.
- The role the plotland area in preserving clear separation between the southern edge of Basildon and Fobbing.
- Intervening farmland and woodland cover mean the plotland has a poor relationship with the existing settlement form of Basildon.
- Remnant farmland and woodland contributing to a rural setting to the south of Basildon; Woodland cover and rising topography within the plotland form part of a wooded backdrop in views south from the settlement edge.

Green Belt impacts across the plotland

A.11 The plotland area lies across two parcels identified and assessed within the Basildon Green Belt Study (2023): BA SW1 and BA SW2. Release and inappropriate development north of Hawkesbury Bush Lane and west of Bells Hill Road is considered likely to generate moderate harm to the Green Belt purposes, specifically to Green Belt purposes 1 (checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas) and 3 (assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment). This can be attributed to the proximity and existing urbanising influence of the large built-up area of Basildon north of Dry Street and the fact that land to the south lies higher and so is already partially influenced by the large built-up area, and also has more resilience due to its stronger relationship with the wider countryside.

A.12 The rest and vast majority of the plotland has greater distinction from the large built-up area as a result of a combination of intervening boundaries, the screening influence of mature woodland and topography. Release and development in this location would further weaken the Green Belt land south west of Basildon on elevated higher ground where sprawl and encroachment will have greater impact, particularly to the south, resulting in high harm to Green Belt purposes 1 (checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas) and 3 (assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment), and moderate harm to Green Belt purpose 2 (preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another).

Opportunity areas for development

A.13 Based on the analysis above, there is little potential to accommodate substantial infill development, owing to the plotlands small size and landscape and Green Belt sensitivities. The plotland is located approximately 250m from the nearest settlement edge inset from the Green Belt at Basildon ((Lee Chapel South/Kingswood) to the north, and is separated from it by open farmland and woodland cover.

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

A.14 In addition, given that the plotland is not defined as a village in the Borough's settlement hierarchy (see **Appendix B**), there is no potential for limited infill village development (appropriate in Green Belt terms) amongst existing areas of plotland development.

Break Egg Hill, Billericay

Break Egg Hill Plotland

Basildon Borough Plotlands Growth
Potential Study
Basildon Borough Council



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- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Basildon Borough boundary | Absolute constraint | Local Wildlife Site |
| Break Egg Hill Plotland | Scheduled Monument | Other constraint |
| Settlement | Ancient Woodland | Priority Habitat |
| Green belt | Site of Special Scientific Interest | Country Park |
| | Local Nature Reserve | Public open space |

Plotland_MapSeries_OS/Break Egg Hill Plotland

Landscape context

A.15 The plotland area is located on the eastern edge of Billericay and measures just over 6ha. It is a roughly triangular shaped parcel of land situated between Great Fox Hill and Norsey Wood to the north, the Great Eastern Railway to the south (beyond which lies the suburb of Sunnymede) and development along Outwood Common Road to the east. Norsey Wood to the north carries several landscape-related designations including SSSI, Ancient Woodland, a Local Nature Reserve, a Scheduled Monument and a Country Park.

A.16 Development is organised along Break Egg Hill, The Crossway and Brackendale and predominantly comprises low-density modern bungalows and chalets and associated outbuildings (garages and sheds). There are no consented developments within the plotland area.

A.17 Existing built development is interspersed with gardens, undeveloped allotments and substantial mature tree cover, much of which is identified as Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland', including the woodland which runs along the railway line to the south.

A.18 The plotland area lies entirely within LCA10 – East Billericay Wooded Hills and Ridges, as defined within the Basildon Landscape Character Assessment (2014). Relevant key characteristics of the LCA include:

- “Gently undulating topography falling towards the River Crouch.
- Undulating and sloping landform to edge of plateau
- Small-medium sized fields separated by network of mature hedges with numerous hedgerow trees
- Marked rural character within area
- Number of large to medium ancient woods
- Norsey Wood – LNR, SSSI and SM with notable earthworks

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

- Mill Meadows – LNR & SSSI important ancient grazing meadows and for fungi
- Few isolated properties and farm buildings
- Break Egg Hill Plotland
- Minor roads and some rights of way.”

Landscape analysis

Physical and natural character

A.19 The following considers the distinctiveness of the landform and the presence of and extent of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features, as well as any particular functional value associated with the natural landscape:

- The landform within the plotland slopes gently from approximately 85m (AOD height) in the north to 70m in the south; this reflects the landform of the wider area which slopes down towards the upper River Crouch valley (moderate sensitivity).
- The plotland lies immediately to the south of Norsey Wood which is designated as a SSSI, Local Nature Reserve and Local Wildlife Site (SINC) and features large areas of Ancient Woodland. Mature tree cover, including Priority Habitat ‘deciduous woodland’, within the plotland is part of a wider wooded landscape and forms distinctive landscape features (higher sensitivity).
- Elsewhere, plotland comprises small domestic gardens with limited semi-natural habitats or valued natural features (lower sensitivity).

Historic character, pattern and time depth, and historical or cultural associations

A.20 The following considers pattern and historic 'time depth': in terms of a distinctive plotland settlement form and pattern, or the presence of historic field patterns or historic features that contribute to landscape character. It also considers historical or cultural associations which contribute to positive perceptions of the landscape:

- The landscape is identified within the Essex HLC (2013) as being predominantly comprised of 'built-up areas'. A strip of land to the south of the plotland – that along the railway line - is identified as 'motorways' (lower sensitivity).
- The wider area of mature ancient woodland was formerly a medieval deer park dating back to at least 1250 AD, with associated earthworks ('The Deerbank') running along the northern boundary of the plotland (higher sensitivity). However, the irregular field pattern of medieval or earlier origin has been overlain by the plotland and adjacent areas of settlement, and the introduction of the Great Eastern Railway along the plotland's southern boundary has also modified the historic landscape pattern (lower sensitivity).
- Whilst the original plotland allotment arrangement along Break Egg Hill, The Crossway and Brackendale is preserved, which helps retain some plotland character, much of the built development has been replaced with more modern development (moderate sensitivity).
- The plotland contains no historic designations, although it lies immediately south of Norsey Wood which is designated as a Scheduled Monument (moderate sensitivity).

Settlement form and edge character

A.21 The following considers the extent to which the landscape relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement(s):

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

- Whilst the plotland lies along the western edge of Billericay, it is for the most part strongly separated from it by mature woodland cover at Norsey Wood to the north and the wooded railway line to the south (higher sensitivity). However, the eastern edge of the plotland is partially contained by the settlement edge along Outwood Common Road from which it is less strongly separated by a combination of small woodland blocks and domestic garden boundaries (moderate sensitivity).

Settlement setting

A.22 The following considers the role that the landscape plays in providing a setting to an adjacent settlement(s), including visual relationship, any distinctiveness it provides, or whether it preserves separation between distinct settlements:

- Woodland cover and dispersed mature trees within the plotland form part of the highly wooded rural setting to the east of Billericay. The mature tree cover within the plotland contribute to a wooded backdrop experienced from properties in Sunnymede and along Outwood Common Road (higher sensitivity).

Visual prominence, skyline and views

A.23 The following considers the visual character of the landscape, including the sense of openness or enclosure, and extent to which potential development would be visible to surrounding visual receptors:

- The widespread tree cover, results in a strong sense of visual enclosure. Views across the plotland have an enclosed character, with localised views terminating on the surrounding woodland and small groups of trees. This, along with the predominance of single-storey structures, means that the existing development within the plotland is not visually prominent (lower sensitivity).

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

- Footpath 26 passes along Break Egg Hill within the north of the plotland, with filtered views of adjacent properties on the plotland's northern side reducing the rural character of the view. There are also a number of residential properties along Outwood Common Road which would experience filtered views towards the eastern parts of the plotland (moderate sensitivity).
- Despite the proximity of Norsey Wood Country Park and Local Nature Reserve to the north, there is a limited visual relationship with the plotland owing to the presence of substantial intervening tree cover (lower sensitivity).

Perceptual character

A.24 The following considers the qualities of the landscape, including sense of rurality, remoteness or tranquillity:

- A highly wooded area which, despite its proximity to the urban edge of Billericay, provides scenic value and a relative sense of rurality and tranquillity. CPRE tranquillity mapping indicates low tranquillity although CPRE night blight mapping indicates an area with moderately dark skies (moderate sensitivity).

Key landscape sensitivities

The following features/characteristics are identified as the principal constraints to development within the plotland area:

- Landscape and natural heritage value associated with areas of Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland' within the plotland and its relationship with the adjacent Norsey Wood SSSI, Local Nature Reserve, Local Wildlife Site and large areas of Ancient Woodland.

- Mature tree cover around existing development contributes to the wooded character of the surrounding landscape and the rural, wooded setting to the east of Billericay.
- Intervening extensive woodland cover and presence of the railway line mean that the plotland for the most part has a poor relationship with the existing settlement form of Billericay.
- Surviving original plotland layout and rural plotland character.

Green Belt impacts across the plotland

A.25 The plotland area lies in parcel BI6 identified and assessed within the Basildon Green Belt Study (2023). Release and inappropriate development in the plotland area is judged to only cause moderate harm to Green Belt purpose 3 (assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment). This is by virtue of the existing urbanising influences in the plotland and limited impact on adjacent Green Belt land due to the density of the woodland and its designation as a SSSI, prohibiting further weakening and development to the north. Mature woodland in the plotland maintains openness.

A.26 More generally, the Break Egg Hill Plotland has been judged through the Borough's settlement hierarchy to be suitable for definition as a village, by virtue of its proximity and connection to Billericay. Consequently, there are likely to be isolated and small-scale opportunities for limited infill village development across the plotland in line with paragraph 154e of the NPPF.

Opportunity areas for development

A.27 Based on the analysis above, there is little potential to accommodate substantial infill development, owing to the plotland's small size and landscape and Green Belt sensitivities. However, given the plotland is defined as a village in the Borough's settlement hierarchy (see **Appendix B**), there is some

potential for limited infill village development (appropriate in Green Belt terms) amongst existing areas of plotland development in the Green Belt.

Design guidance

A.28 The following high-level design guidance has been identified for opportunity areas identified within the plotland area. This has considered the key constraints and potential to mitigate impacts, with potential landscape and GBI enhancement measures set out below. They are also indicated on the figure below.

Design guidance and recommendations for mitigation

- Any limited infill development within the plotland should be of a similar height and density as the existing development (i.e. low density bungalows and chalets at a low density) and should seek to maintain the rural plotland character.
- Retain existing mature tree cover within areas of plotland development, particularly Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland', to help reduce the visual presence of existing and any future development.
- Consider the visual impact of any new development, including on views from Footpath 26 as it passes along Break Egg Hill.
- Development should avoid and be set back from existing Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland', with an appropriate buffer zone to avoid root damage.
- Avoid suburbanising boundary treatments such as gates and fences, to help maintain perceived rural character within the plotland.

Capacity to accommodate growth

A.29 Assigning an accurate development capacity to the wider potential of the plotland to accommodate limited infill village development (appropriate in Green Belt terms) is very difficult given the sporadic and small-scale nature of these infill locations. However, it is estimated that the plotland could accommodate somewhere between 4 and 5 dwellings without affecting the character of the plotland. The appropriateness of such development in Green Belt terms will need to be determined on a site by site basis as planning applications come forward through the development management process. Consequently, the capacity range identified in this paragraph cannot be allocated in the Local Plan but may provide an indication as to the scale of potential Green Belt-appropriate windfall development in the Green Belt over the plan period.

Infrastructure Requirements and Delivery Recommendations

A.30 Each plotland site deemed viable for development has had its infrastructure requirements assessed using assumptions detailed in **Appendix C**. These assumptions are based on the prevailing policy requirements set out as applicable, whether those of Essex County Council, Basildon Borough Council or central government authorities.

Table A.1: Infrastructure requirements for Break Egg Hill, Billericay

Infrastructure category	Infrastructure sub-category / Item	New build or extension?	Requirement	Unit (area/ppl)	Requirement (£)
Education	Early Years	School extension	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Primary	School extension	n/a	n/a	n/a

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

Infrastructure category	Infrastructure sub-category / Item	New build or extension?	Requirement	Unit (area/ppl)	Requirement (£)
	Secondary	School extension	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Post 16	School extension	n/a	n/a	n/a
School Transport	Primary Transport		n/a	n/a	n/a
	Secondary Transport		n/a	n/a	n/a
Travel planning	Travel plan monitoring		n/a	n/a	n/a
Healthcare	GP Surgery	GP surgery extension	0.86	sqm	£2,584
Open Space	Allotments		0.001	ha	
	Amenity Green spaces		0.017	ha	
	Park and recreation grounds		0.021	ha	
	Play space (children)		0.031	ha	
	Play space (Youth)		0.031	ha	
	Natural Green space		0.013	ha	
	RAMS Mitigation				£819
Sports Facilities	Pools Cost				£2,984
	Halls Cost				£2,718
	Indoor Bowls Cost				£83
	Artificial Grass Pitch cost (3G)				£447
	Artificial Grass Pitch cost (sand)				£404

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

Infrastructure category	Infrastructure sub-category / Item	New build or extension?	Requirement	Unit (area/ppl)	Requirement (£)
Community	Community Building	Community facility extension	3	sqm	£6,990
Emergency Services	Ambulance capacity				£1,700
Libraries	Library	Library extension	n/a	n/a	n/a
Waste	Waste management				n/a

A.31 Review of electricity network usage information from UK Power Networks (UKPN) (the local electricity distribution company) in this area does not raise significant concerns about the potential for this site to connect to the electricity grid. However, UKPN should be contacted to confirm this position.

Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI)

A.32 The Break Egg Hill Plotland lies adjacent to Norsey Wood SSSI, Local Nature Reserve, Country Park and Local Wildlife Site and large areas of Ancient Woodland. Norsey Wood is also designated as a Scheduled Monument. There are footpaths extending into the country park from the north edge of the plotland, indicating good access to nature. The plotland contains large areas of Priority Habitat ‘deciduous woodland’ and the entirety of the plotland falls within a network enhancement zone designated for Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland. A Public Right of Way (PRoW) runs along the northern boundary of the plotland, adjacent to two of the three opportunity areas, providing access to the neighbouring countryside. Based on Natural England’s access to natural greenspace data which sets out four standards, the majority of the plotland falls within the doorstep standard which means that a greenspace of at least 0.5ha is within 200m.

A.33 While the plotland falls within an area designated as unsuitable for woodland creation, the undeveloped sections of the plotland are covered by

broadleaved woodland. A railway line runs along the southern boundary of the plotland.

Opportunities for compensatory improvements

A.34 Planning obligations can be included as part of planning approval to secure funding for green and blue infrastructure, including monitoring and maintenance, and ensure its success and longevity. Any development projects in this plotland would need to provide better ecological connectivity through S106 obligations and/or CIL.

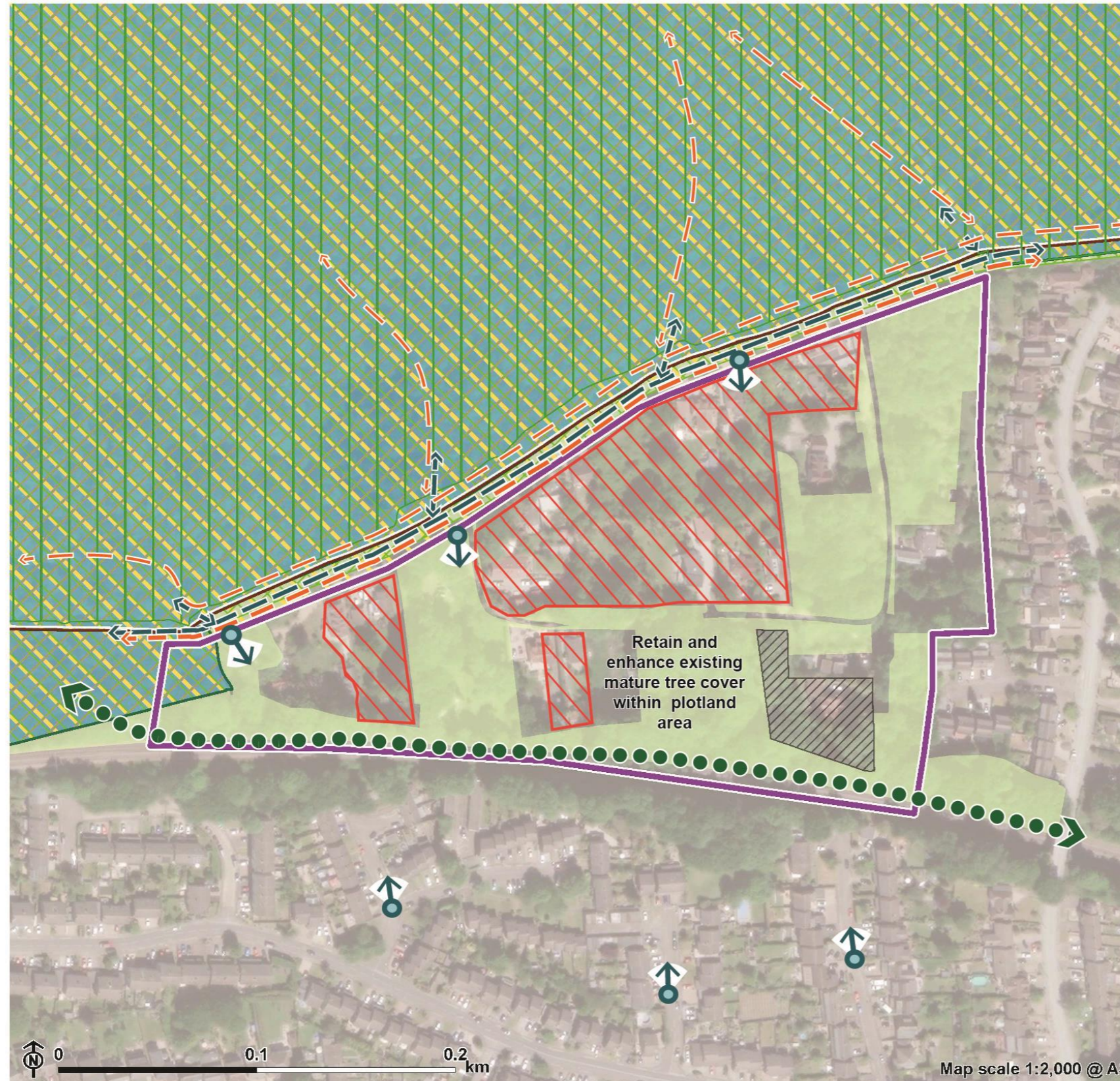
A.35 After reviewing the information above, the most relevant GBI opportunity for this plotland is:

- Planning obligations could be used to secure funding to support enhancements to manage and improve Norsey Wood in line with the Norsey Wood Nature Reserve Management Plan 2020 – 2025 [See reference 17]. For example, the Management Plan sets out that habitat diversity aims to be increased through a system of wide rides to be developed. Additionally, accessible entrances aim to be created and maintained.
- There is an existing Public Right of Way (PRoW) along the boundary between the plotland and Norsey Wood. To align with the Norsey Wood Nature Reserve Management Plan, this access can be maintained and enhanced by providing accessible entrances. The figure below shows the potential opportunity area in the location of this existing PRoW.
- If a buffer zone is created around the Priority Habitat, this could provide a valuable habitat for woodland wildlife and should consist of semi-natural habitat (e.g. a mix of woodland edge and semi-improved grassland to provide structural complexity and species diversity). Habitat connectivity could also be enhanced along the existing railway line, providing links to the country park to the north.

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

A.36 In addition, since 2 April 2024, all new planning applications in England must deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG). As such, new development within this plotland will have to increase biodiversity compared to what was previously on site which should lead to GBI enhancements on site. However, these enhancements are to meet a separate policy requirement and should not be considered as compensatory improvements to offset the impact of removing land from the Green Belt.

A.37 To note, this is a high-level study therefore once preferred site allocations have been identified, site specific studies would need to be completed to inform more detailed project planning and viability. Engaging with relevant landowners and experts (e.g. ecologists, landscape management experts) will be critical to understanding project feasibility and deliverability.



Basildon Borough Plotlands Growth Potential Study
Basildon Borough Council



Break Egg Hill Plotland
Key constraints and opportunities

- Break Egg Hill Plotland
- Basildon Borough boundary
- Constraints**
- Public open space
- Scheduled Monument
- Ancient Woodland
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Wildlife Site
- Country Park
- Priority Habitats Inventory**
- Deciduous woodland
- No main habitat but additional habitats present
- Existing access connectivity
- ↗ Views
- Opportunities**
- ↔ Potential enhanced habitat connectivity
- ↔ Potential enhanced access connectivity
- Potential limited infill development

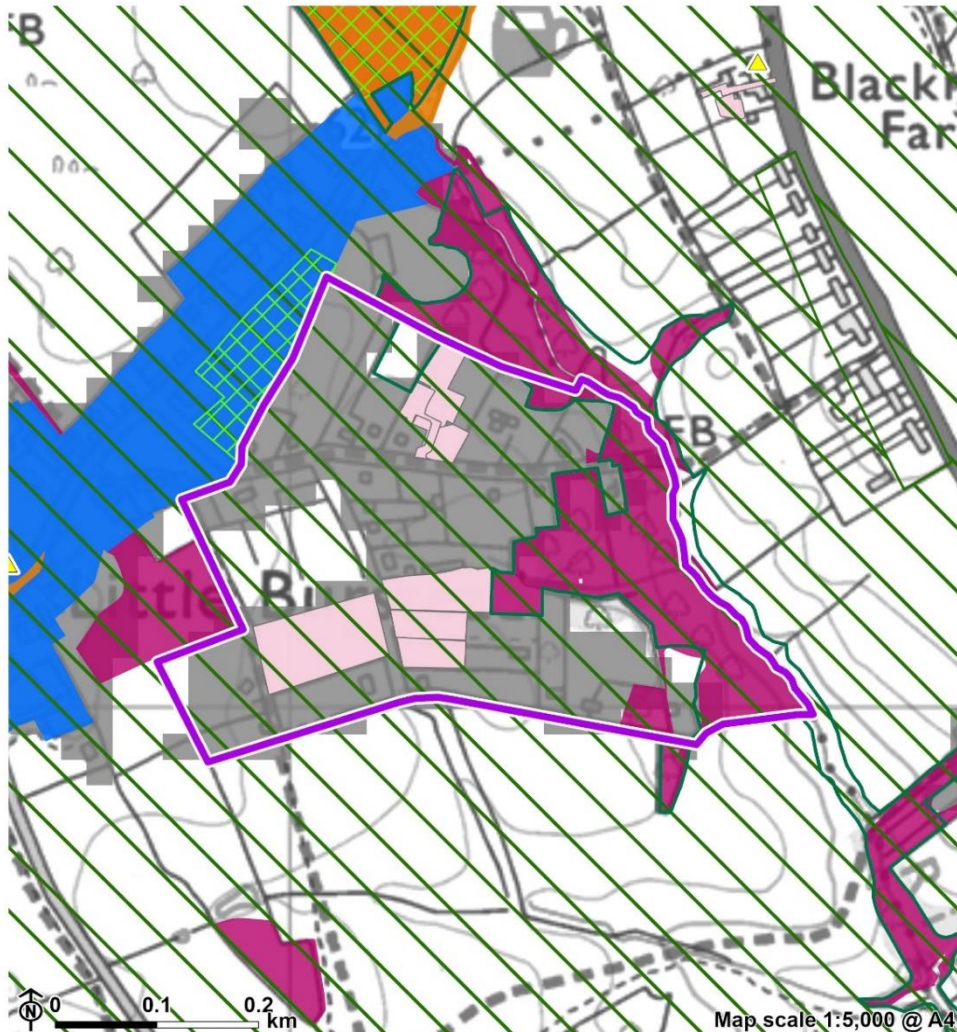
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Illustrated by: Thompson_A

Broomhills Chase, Little Burstead

Broomhills Chase Plotland

Basildon Borough Plotlands Growth Potential Study
Basildon Borough Council



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- | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Basildon Borough boundary | Absolute constraint | Local Wildlife Site |
| Broomhills Chase Plotland | CRoW access land | Other constraint |
| Settlement | | Conservation Area |
| Consented development (RLA 2023) | | Priority Habitat |
| | | Public open space |
| | | Grade II |

Plotland_MapSeries_OS/Broomhills Chase Plotland

Landscape context

A.38 The plotland area is located in the west of the borough and measures approximately 17ha. It lies immediately east of Little Burstead, a linear village which extends along Laindon Common Road, and immediately west of the River Crouch.

A.39 Development is organised on a broad grid along Broomhill Chase and comprises low-density modern bungalows and chalets and associated outbuildings (garages and sheds). There are several consented developments within the plotland area, for development which is relatively small in scale, all of which are for the demolition of existing buildings and construction of replacement bungalows (19/01044/FULL, 19/00239/FULL, 21/00747/FULL, 23/00072/FULL, 21/00756/FULL, 22/00582/REM)

A.40 Existing built development is interspersed with open fields and paddocks and undeveloped plots. The plotland also features substantial mature tree cover to the east of the plotland, most of which is identified as Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland' and forms part of Little Burstead Wood Local Wildlife Site (SINC).

A.41 The plotland area lies entirely within LCA12 – Burstead Sloping Farmland, as defined within the Basildon Landscape Character Assessment (2014).

Relevant key characteristics of the LCA include:

- “Sloping landform with marked secondary undulations to edge of plateau
- Large fields with remnant hedges and hedgerow trees apart from at settlement boundaries
- Marked rural and arable character to most of area
- Noak Hill and associated ribbon development along A176
- Two Plotlands areas at Broomhills Chase and Green Lanes/The Chase
- Discrete woodlands and linear green lane

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

- Few isolated farms and farm buildings
- Minor roads and networks of local rights of way
- St Mary's Little Burstead and St XX [sic] Great Burstead churches are notable landmark buildings"

Landscape analysis

Physical and natural character

A.42 The following considers the distinctiveness of the landform and the presence of and extent of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features, as well as any particular functional value associated with the natural landscape:

- The landform within the plotland is gently sloping, reflecting that of the wider surrounding area; AOD heights range from between approximately 70m in the west to 55m in the east along the River Crouch. The River Crouch forms a distinctive topographical feature within the wider area (moderate sensitivity).
- Little Burstead Wood is a Local Wildlife Site (SINC) and is identified as Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland' and forms part of a riparian corridor of the River Crouch in the east and immediately to the north-east of the plotland (higher sensitivity). Dense tree cover around existing development (within gardens) also forms distinctive landscape features (moderate sensitivity).
- Elsewhere, the plotland comprises domestic gardens or fields/paddocks with limited semi-natural habitats or valued natural features (lower sensitivity).

Historic character, pattern and time depth, and historical or cultural associations

A.43 The following considers pattern and historic 'time depth': in terms of a distinctive plotland settlement form and pattern, or the presence of historic field patterns or historic features that contribute to landscape character. It also considers historical or cultural associations which contribute to positive perceptions of the landscape:

- The landscape is identified within the Essex HLC (2013) as being predominantly comprised of 'built-up areas', small areas of '19th-20th century plantaion' adjacent to the River Crouch in the east and north-east (lower sensitivity).
- Historic mapping (OS Six Inch, 1840s – 1880s) shows that the original rectilinear field pattern, likely originating from Saxon times, is preserved to the south-west of the plotland (higher sensitivity). Elsewhere, the original pattern of larger fields along the River Crouch is evident although overlain by plotland development and later woodland plantations (moderate sensitivity).
- The early 20th century plotland allotment arrangement, which generally fits with the pre-existing landscape structure, is preserved which helps retain some plotland character. However, much of the built development has been replaced with more modern development (moderate sensitivity)
- The site contains no historic designations although it is immediately adjacent to the historic settlement of Little Burstead which is covered by a Conservation Area designation and contains a number of listed buildings including the Grade II listed Hope House and Coopers Cottage, all of which have limited physical or visual relationship with the plotland (lower sensitivity).

Settlement form and edge character

A.44 The following considers the extent to which the landscape relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement(s):

- The plotland's western boundary is shared with Little Burstead's Conservation Area, albeit with the plotland development set back from Laindon Common Road. The boundary to the north-west of the plotland is defined by intermittent tree cover along Laindon Common Road and a hedgerow (moderate sensitivity) whilst that to the south-west is defined more strongly by woodland cover (higher sensitivity).
- The plotland is strongly separated from ribbon development along Noak Hill Road (A176) by the Rive Crouch and associated woodland cover (higher sensitivity).

Settlement setting

A.45 The following considers the role that the landscape plays in providing a setting to an adjacent settlement(s), including visual relationship, any distinctiveness it provides, or whether it preserves separation between distinct settlements:

- Woodland cover and open fields/paddocks within the plotland form part of a wider rural setting to the east of Little Burstead. The Little Burstead sits on the edge of a slight escarpment with mature woodland, including that along the River Crouch, which provides a wooded backdrop in views from parts of the settlement edge, as well as from Great Burstead along Noak Hill Road in the east (moderate sensitivity).
- The plotland, and particularly its vegetation along the River Crouch, forms part of the rural area between Little Burstead and ribbon development along Noak Hill Road (A176), preserving clear separation between these distinct areas of settlement (higher sensitivity).

Visual prominence, skyline and views

A.46 The following considers the visual character of the landscape, including the sense of openness or enclosure, and the extent to which potential development would be visible to surrounding visual receptors:

- The small to medium sized allotments and dense tree cover around existing development result in a sense of visual enclosure across much of the plotland. This along with the predominance of single-storey structures, means that the existing development within the plotland is not visually prominent – the Basildon Borough Landscape Character Assessment and Green Belt Landscape Capacity Study notes that the plotland “includes substantive areas of vegetation which conceals its presence in the wider landscape even in the winter months” (lower sensitivity). However, the north-western boundary of the plotland is less vegetated meaning that development, including some two-story properties, are visible from Laindon Common Road and adjacent greenspace/common land (moderate sensitivity).
- The southern edge of the plotland is less enclosed and views are available south across the open arable farmland which slopes gently to the south and east towards the River Crouch (higher sensitivity).
- Views into the plotland are available from Footpath 47 and 49 where they pass through the northern and western parts of the plotland respectively – open fields/paddocks to the west of the plotland in particular make some positive contribution to the quality of the view (moderate sensitivity).
- Views into the north-western parts of the plotland are also available from parts of Laindon Common Road (lower sensitivity).

Perceptual character

A.47 The following considers the qualities of the landscape, including sense of rurality, remoteness or tranquillity:

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

- A rural, open landscape of sloping farmland with scattered woodlands lying adjacent to the historic settlement on Little Burstead. The plotland is relatively well protected from intrusion by development along Great Burstead in the east, and well buffered from more widespread development at Billericay in the north and Basildon in the south. The surrounding areas of farmland and woodland through the river valley of the River Crouch provide some sense of rural character and scenic value (moderate sensitivity).
- Whilst CPRE night blight mapping indicates the area experiences relatively dark skies, CPRE tranquillity mapping indicates relatively low overall tranquillity (lower sensitivity).

Key landscape sensitivities

The following features/characteristics are identified as the principal constraints to development within the plotland area:

- Topographical variety provided by the gently sloping landform and the shallow valley of the River Crouch to the east.
- Areas of Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland' and Burstead Wood Local Wildlife Site along the River Crouch to the east.
- Dense tree cover around existing development and woodland along much of the River Crouch form distinctive landscape features.
- Remnant historic field pattern in the south-west of the plotland.
- Woodland cover to the south-west of the plotland strongly defines the settlement edge of Little Burstead.
- Role of open fields/paddocks and woodland cover in providing a rural setting to the east of Little Burstead and in preserving clear separation between Little Burstead and development along Great Burstead to the east.

- Higher levels of openness to the south where the plotland's boundary vegetation is less dense, as well as where the plotland flanks Laidon Common Road; views south across sloping arable farmland.
- Visible from public footpaths which pass through the plotland to the north and west.
- Surviving original plotland layout and resulting plotland character.

Green Belt impacts across the plotland

A.48 The plotland lies within the open countryside within outer areas OA3 and OA4. The area has very strong distinction from Billericay to the north east, Great Burstead to the south east and Basildon to the south. Release and inappropriate development within the plotland has the potential to significantly weaken the distinction of adjacent Green Belt land to the west and south, resulting in at least very high harm to Green Belt Purpose 3 (assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment).

A.49 More generally, the Broomhills Chase Plotland has been judged by inspectors through appeals and the Borough's settlement hierarchy to be suitable for definition as a village, by virtue of its association and merging with Little Burstead Village. Consequently, there are likely to be isolated and small-scale opportunities for limited infill village development across the plotland in line with paragraph 154e of the NPPF.

Opportunity areas for development

A.50 Based on the analysis above, there is little potential to accommodate substantial infill development, owing to the plotland's small size and landscape and Green Belt sensitivities. The plotland is located approximately 190m from the nearest settlement edge inset from the Green Belt at Great Burstead to the east, and separated from it by the River Crouch and woodland.

A.51 However, given the plotland is defined as a village in the Borough's settlement hierarchy (see **Appendix B**), there is some potential for limited infill village development (appropriate in Green Belt terms) amongst existing areas of plotland development in the Green Belt.

Design guidance

A.52 The following high-level design guidance has been identified for opportunity areas identified within the plotland area. This has considered the key constraints and potential to mitigate impacts, with potential landscape and GBI enhancement measures set out below. They are also indicated on the figure below.

Design guidance and recommendations for mitigation

- Limited infill development within the plotland area should be of a similar height and density as the existing development (i.e. predominantly bungalows and chalets at a low density) and should seek to maintain the plotland character.
- Retain existing mature tree cover within areas of plotland development, including Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland' to the east and hedgerows, to help reduce the visual presence of existing and any future development.
- Consider the visual impact of any new development, including on views from Laindon Common Road to the north-west and from Footpath 49 to the south; potential for the strengthening of boundary vegetation to the north-west and south of the plotland area.
- Avoid suburbanising boundary treatments such as gates and fences, to help maintain perceived rural character within the plotland.

- Development should avoid and be set back from existing Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland', with an appropriate buffer zone to avoid root damage.

Capacity to accommodate growth

A.53 Assigning an accurate development capacity to the wider potential of the plotland to accommodate limited infill village development (appropriate in Green Belt terms) is very difficult given the sporadic and small-scale nature of these infill locations. However, it is estimated that the plotland could accommodate somewhere between 5 and 8 dwellings without affecting the character of the plotland. The appropriateness of such development in Green Belt terms will need to be determined on a site by site bases as planning applications come forward through the development management process. Consequently, the capacity range identified in this paragraph cannot be allocated in the Local Plan but may provide an indication as to the scale of potential Green Belt-appropriate windfall development in the Green Belt over the plan period.

Infrastructure Requirements and Delivery Recommendations

A.54 Each plotland site deemed viable for development has had its infrastructure requirements assessed using assumptions detailed in **Appendix C**. These assumptions are based on the prevailing policy requirements set out as applicable, whether those of Essex County Council, Basildon Borough Council or central government authorities.

Table A.2: Infrastructure requirements for Broomhills Chase, Little Burstead

Infrastructure category	Infrastructure sub-category / Item	New build or extension?	Requirement	Unit (area/ppl)	Requirement (£)
Education	Early Years	School extension	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Primary	School extension	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Secondary	School extension	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Post 16	School extension	n/a	n/a	n/a
School Transport	Primary Transport		n/a	n/a	n/a
	Secondary Transport		n/a	n/a	n/a
Travel planning	Travel plan monitoring		n/a	n/a	n/a
Healthcare	GP Surgery	GP surgery extension	1.37	sqm	£4,135
Open Space	Allotments		0.001	ha	
	Amenity Green spaces		0.027	ha	
	Park and recreation grounds		0.034	ha	
	Play space (children)		0.050	ha	
	Play space (Youth)		1.369	ha	
	Natural Green space		0.020	ha	
	RAMS Mitigation				£0
Sports Facilities	Pools Cost				£4,591

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

Infrastructure category	Infrastructure sub-category / Item	New build or extension?	Requirement	Unit (area/ppl)	Requirement (£)
	Halls Cost				£4,181
	Indoor Bowls Cost				£127
	Artificial Grass Pitch cost (3G)				£688
	Artificial Grass Pitch cost (sand)				£622
Community	Community Building	Community facility extension	5	sqm	£11,184
Emergency Services	Ambulance capacity				£2,720
Libraries	Library	Library extension	n/a	n/a	n/a
Waste	Waste management				n/a

A.55 Review of electricity network usage information from UK Power Networks (UKPN) (the local electricity distribution company) indicates there may be concerns about the potential for this site to connect to the electricity grid. This is the because the West Horndon Primary 11kV substation is considered to be more than 5% undercapacity. However, UKPN should be contacted to confirm this position.

Green and Blue Infrastructure

A.56 The Broomhills Chase Plotland includes land designated as Little Burstead Wood LWS and SINC, which runs along the eastern boundary of the plotland; this land is also designated as a priority habitat 'deciduous woodland' and falls within the Ancient Semi Natural Woodland habitat network. The eastern section of the plotland is also adjacent to a riparian corridor of the River Crouch and immediately to the northeast of the plotland. There are areas of Broadleaved woodland located to the east and to the south of the plotland. The majority of

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

the plotland is covered by built up area with areas of residential gardens. Most of the plotland is designated as unsuitable for woodland creation, however the western section of the plotland has low woodland creation suitability.

A.57 The Working with Natural Processes (WWNP) aims to reduce flood and coastal erosion risk through implementing measures that help to protect, restore and emulate the natural functions of catchments, floodplains, rivers and the coast. WWNP takes many different forms and can be applied in urban and rural areas and on rivers, estuaries and coasts. The WWNP Riparian Woodland Potential Map illustrates an area along the east boundary of the plotland, adjacent to Noak Hill Road, and an area to the south of the plotland, where there is potential for woodland management and tree planting to offer natural flood risk management. The natural flood risk management figure below illustrates the location of the Riparian Woodland Potential.

A.58 Great Burstead Common and Laindon Common, public open spaces, and The Burstead Gold Club, an outdoor sports facility, are located just to the north of the plotland. A Public Right of Way (PRoW) runs from north to south through the western section of the plotland and from east to west between two of the opportunity areas into Little Burstead Wood. Based on Natural England's access to natural greenspace data, which sets out four standards, a portion of the opportunity areas fall within the doorstep standard which means that a greenspace of at least 0.5ha is within 200m, but the entirety of the plotland falls within the neighbourhood standard which means that a natural greenspace of at least 10 ha is within 1 km. The majority of the plotland falls within an area of 25% susceptibility to Ground Water Flooding.

Opportunities for compensatory improvements

A.59 After reviewing the information above, the most relevant GBI opportunities for this plotland are:

- Enhance hedgerows throughout the area, including the introduction of hedgerow trees to provide visual screening and enhance connectivity of the local habitat network and historic field boundaries.

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

- Planning obligations could be used to manage and improve the ecological connectivity between Little Burstead Wood LWS and the woodland within the plotland, especially within the western section, and within Laindon Common to the north.
- Obligations could also be used to manage the ecological links between Little Burstead Wood and the riparian corridor as well as implement natural flood risk management measures. The natural flood risk management figure below illustrates the Riparian Woodland Potential areas in and around the plotland. Areas within the plotland could be enhanced to provide opportunity for natural flood risk management. If woodland enhancement is undertaken in an area of ecological sensitivity, ecological surveys would be required.
- A buffer zone around Priority Habitat could provide a valuable habitat for woodland wildlife and should consist of semi-natural habitat (e.g. a mix of woodland edge and semi-improved grassland to provide structural complexity and species diversity).
- Enhance the connectivity along the river corridor within the plotland, including possible connections with the existing PRoWs, including the east-west connection. This could provide green infrastructure connections between Laindon Common and Noak Hill and the wider surrounding countryside. This opportunities for enhanced access along the river corridor are shown in the key constraints and opportunities figure below.

A.60 Planning obligations can be included as part of planning approval in order to secure funding for green and blue infrastructure, including monitoring and maintenance, and ensure its success and longevity. Any development projects in this plotland would need to provide better ecological connectivity and improve access to greenspace through S106 obligations and/or CIL. In addition, since 2 April 2024, all new planning applications in England must deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG). As such, new development within this plotland will have to increase biodiversity compared to what was previously on site which could lead to GBI enhancements on site.

A.61 To note, this is a high-level study therefore once preferred site allocations have been identified, site specific studies would need to be completed to inform

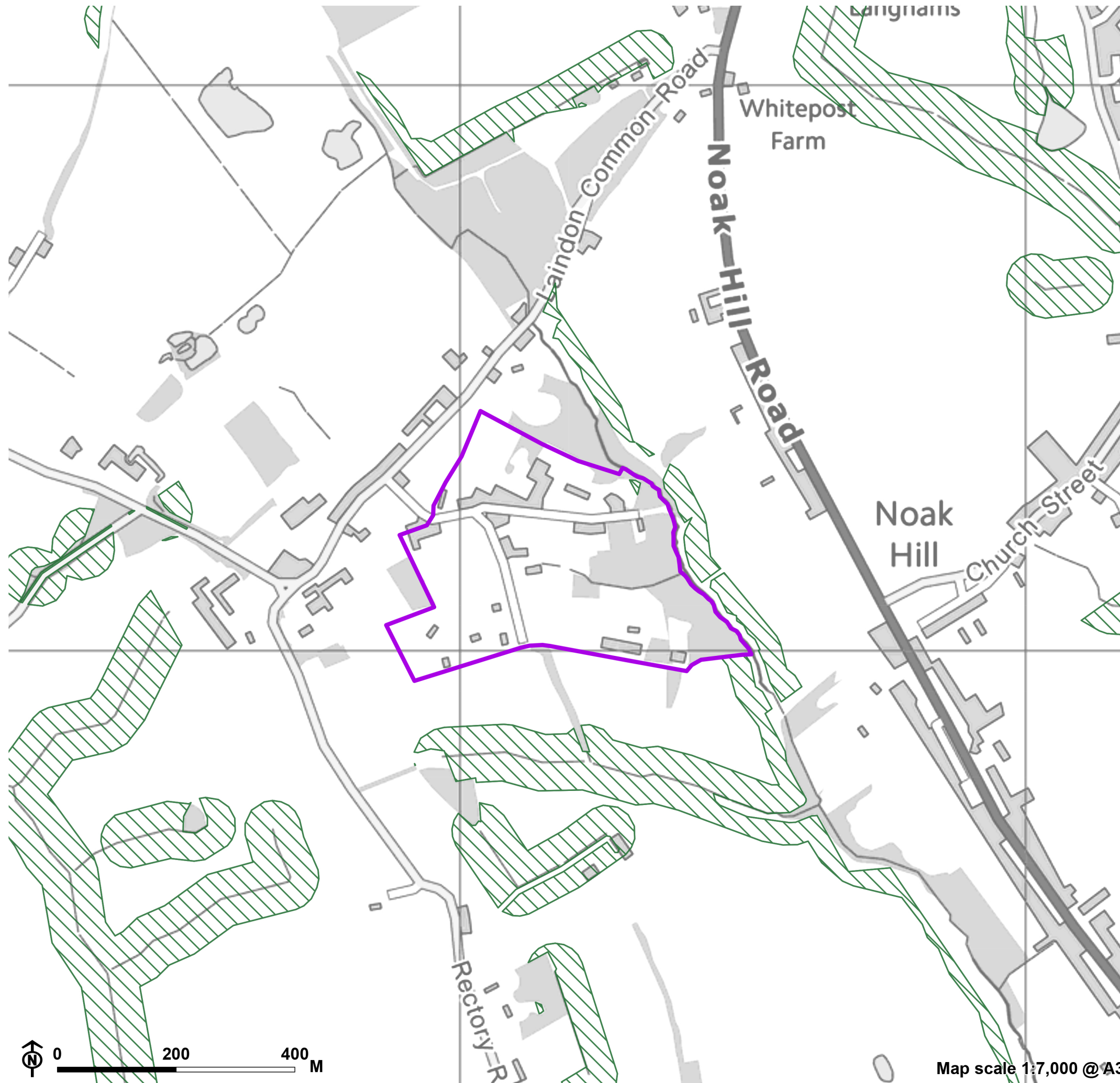
Appendix A Plotland area assessments

more detailed project planning and viability. Engaging with relevant landowners and experts (e.g. ecologists, landscape management experts) will be critical to understanding project feasibility and deliverability.



**Natural Flood Risk Management -
Broomhills Chase Plotland**

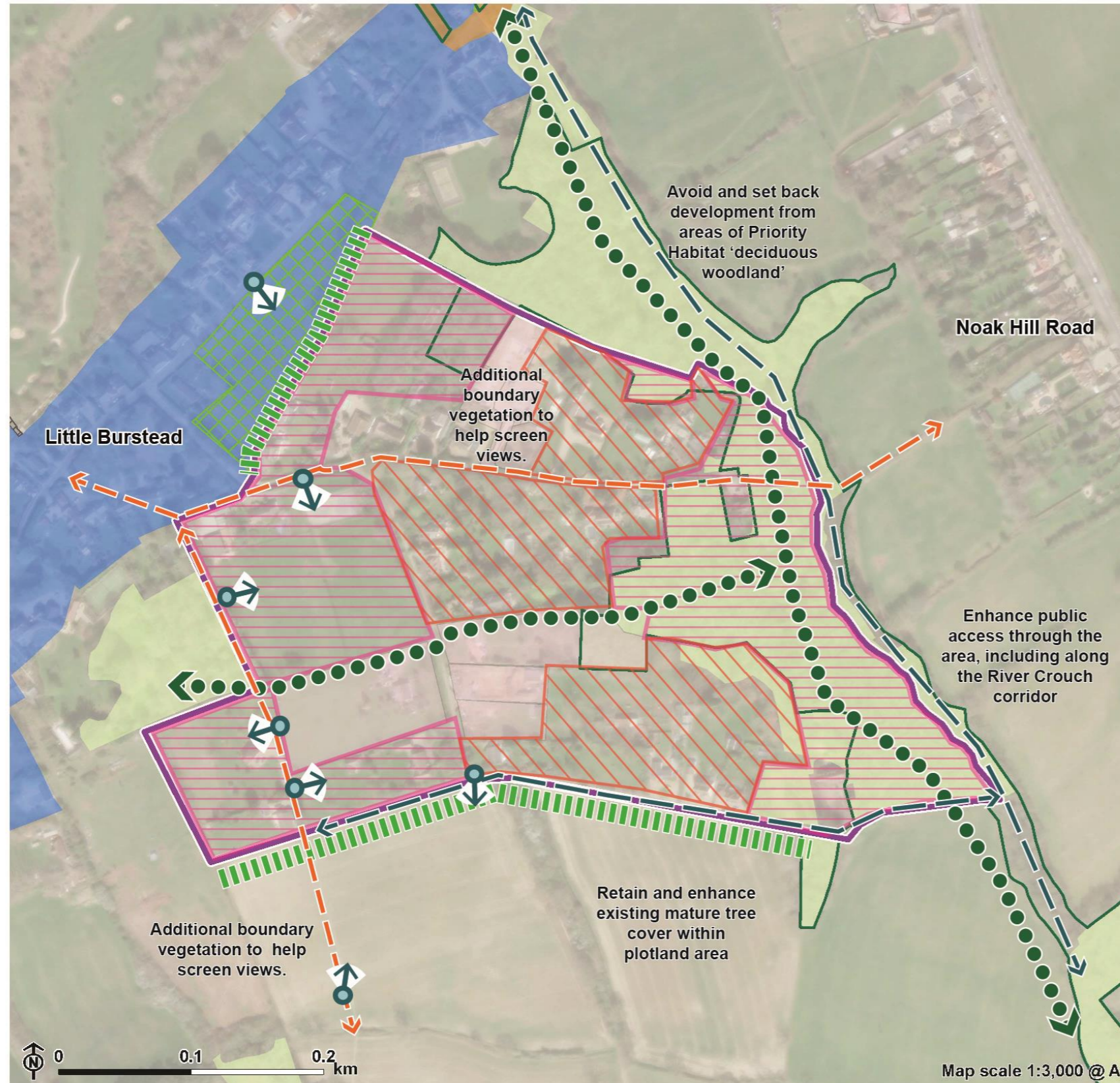
- Basildon Borough boundary
- Plotland area
- WWNP Riparian Woodland Potential



Note:

Areas of Riparian Woodland Potential have been masked by constraint layers.

Map scale 1:7,000 @ A3



Basildon Borough Plotlands Growth Potential Study
 Basildon Borough Council



Broomhills Chase Plotland
Key constraints and opportunities

- Broomhills Chase Plotland
- Basildon Borough boundary
- Constraints**
- Public open space
- CRoW access land
- Local Wildlife Site
- Conservation Area
- Consented development (RLA 2023)
- Priority Habitats Inventory**
- Deciduous woodland
- No main habitat but additional habitats present
- Higher sensitivity area
- Existing access connectivity
- Views
- Opportunities**
- Potential enhanced habitat connectivity
- Potential enhanced access connectivity
- Potential limited infill development
- Strengthen boundary vegetation

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12879_001_Figures/Plotland_MapSeries_Aerial 11/09/2024 EB:Collins_N
 Illustrated by: Thompson_A

Landscape context

A.62 This is a large plotland area measuring approximately 200ha. It is located centrally within the borough, situated between the A127 and northern edge of Basildon to the south and the village of Crays Hill and the A129 to the north. It lies almost equidistant from Billericay to the north-west and Wickford to the north-east.

A.63 There are several scattered areas of development across the plotland, including residential properties, gypsy and traveller sites, and outbuildings used by a range of industrial and commercial businesses. The densest area of development lies in the south-western corner off the A127 and comprises a large garden centre with associated retail and parking. Residential dwellings within the plotland comprise relatively modern detached bungalows or bungalow chalets and are set out mainly along Crays Hill Road and Oak Road which are at crossroads through the centre of the site.

A.64 There are several consented developments within the plotland area, for development which is relatively small in scale, including the construction of several residential dwellings to the north-east (21/00919/FULL, 22/00699/FULL, 21/00129/OUT, 20/00789/FULL, 21/00211/FULL and 19/01388/FULL) and a dementia and nursing care home to the south-west (21/00485/OUT).

A.65 Existing built development is interspersed with several open agricultural fields and smaller paddocks and undeveloped (often overgrown) plots. The plotland also features several small woodland blocks and tree belts, some of which is identified as Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland'. The River Crouch runs close to the western boundary of the plotland with the associated Flood Zone 3b covering parts of the plotland area.

A.66 The plotland area lies almost entirely within LCA 08 – Crays Hill Settled Claylands, as defined within the Basildon Landscape Character Assessment (2014). Relevant key characteristics of the LCA include:

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- “Straight narrow lanes enclosed with high hedgerows
- Dispersed development in long narrow plotlands
- Linear village development of Crays Hill (mainly second half of twentieth century) along A129
- Scattered small fields of grazing land
- Area visually contained by hedgerows and trees cover
- Long distance views to the north across the Crouch valley from the A129 highly valued by local community
- Gypsy and Travellers site
- Raised landform of Crays Hill”.

Landscape analysis

Physical and natural character

A.67 The following considers the distinctiveness of the landform and the presence of and extent of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features, as well as any particular functional value associated with the natural landscape:

- The landform within the plotland gently slopes from 20m AOD towards the localised high point of Crays Hill at around 45m AOD to the north (moderate sensitivity). The River Crouch on the western boundary and scattered ponds south of Oak Road form distinctive topographical features (moderate sensitivity).
- Nutton’s Wood Local Wildlife Site (SINC) lies within the east of the plotland area. This is designated to protect an assemblage of tree species, including some indicative of it being ancient woodland (higher sensitivity).
- There are several areas of Priority Habitat ‘deciduous woodland’ scattered across the poltland, with a notable concentration in northern parts of the plotland around the edge of Crays Hill village, and a small area of Priority

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

Habitat 'traditional orchard' to the south-west. Dense tree cover, including frequent mature oaks, around existing development and riparian woodland along much of the River Crouch form distinctive landscape features (moderate sensitivity).

- Elsewhere, the plotland comprises a mix of arable and pasture farmland and domestic gardens with limited semi-natural habitats or valued natural features (lower sensitivity).
- The valley of the River Crouch forms part of Flood Zone 3b, performing a valuable part of the floodplain (higher sensitivity).

Historic character, pattern and time depth, and historical or cultural associations

A.68 The following considers pattern and historic 'time depth': in terms of a distinctive plotland settlement form and pattern, or the presence of historic field patterns or historic features that contribute to landscape character. It also considers historical or cultural associations which contribute to positive perceptions of the landscape:

- The majority of the landscape is identified within the Essex HLC (2013) as comprising modern 'built-up areas' or 'post 1950's enclosure' (lower sensitivity). However, there are two areas of 'pre 18th century irregular enclosure' to the south-east and some scattered historic farmsteads which provide some sense of time-depth (moderate sensitivity).
- Historic mapping (OS Six Inch, 1840s – 1880s) shows that the grid-like medium size field pattern originating from Saxon times are preserved, with some open fields retained across the plotland (higher sensitivity).
- Elsewhere, the original field pattern is evident but is overlain by development and with some hedgerow loss in places (moderate sensitivity).
- The early 20th century plotland allotment arrangement, which generally fits with the pre-existing landscape structure, is particularly evident in the north of the area and along Oak Road, Crays Hill Road and Southlands Road,

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

which helps retain some plotland character. However, much of the built development has been replaced with more modern development (moderate sensitivity)

- The site contains only one historic designation – the Grade II listed Great Wasketh Farmhouse to the south-east (moderate sensitivity); elsewhere in the plotland area there are no designated heritage assets (lower sensitivity).

Settlement form and edge character

A.69 The following considers the extent to which the landscape relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement(s):

- The plotland lies along the northern edge of Basildon, separated from it by the A127 which forms a strong boundary feature. Development would have a poor relationship with the existing settlement form of Basildon (higher sensitivity).
- The southern edge of Crays Hill is intermittently defined by woodland blocks, which help intergrate the settlement edge and form distinctive boundary features (moderate sensitivity). Elsewhere the settlement edge is not strongly defined and open areas of landscape are partially enclosed by the settlement edge, meaning that development would not generally be perceived as an extension of the settlement into the countryside (lower sensitivity).

Settlement setting

A.70 The following considers the role that the landscape plays in providing a setting to an adjacent settlement(s), including visual relationship, any distinctiveness it provides, or whether it preserves separation between distinct settlements:

- Woodland cover and open agricultural fields within the northern parts of the plotland form an open rural setting to the south of Crays Hill, which

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

provides some contribution to the character of the settlement (moderate sensitivity).

- The open character of much of the plotland area plays a part in preserving a sense of separation between Basildon and the village of Crays Hill. In particular this is experienced when travelling between the two settlements along Gardiners Lane North. The 2023 Green Belt Study also identified this area as contributing towards gap between Wickford and Basildon (higher sensitivity).

Visual prominence, skyline and views

A.71 The following considers the visual character of the landscape, including the sense of openness or enclosure, and extent to which potential development would be visible to surrounding visual receptors:

- Presence of frequent tall hedgerows, woodland areas and frequent scattered mature trees (mainly oak) within private plots and along narrow lanes gives much of the area a wooded feel and a sense of enclosure. Views across much of the plotland have an enclosed character, with localised views terminating on several small woodlands and tree belts. This, along with the predominance of single-storey structures, means that the existing development within the plotland is not visually prominent (moderate sensitivity). Less woodland cover and relatively larger fields result in a greater sense of openness in the south-east (higher sensitivity).
- The landform is gently sloping and does not form a visually distinctive or prominent skyline (lower sensitivity). However, as noted within the Landscape Character and Green Belt Landscape Capacity Study (2014), there are important views north across the Crouch Valley from areas to the north-east of the plotland (higher sensitivity).
- Views into the more open south-eastern parts of the plotland are likely to be available from Footpath 68 and 78, where the largely undeveloped character of the landscape makes some positive contribution to the quality of the view (higher sensitivity). Elsewhere, views from public footpaths

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

(including Footpath 40, 69 and 70) and residential properties are generally filtered through woodland and other vegetation (moderate sensitivity).

- Views are also available from the surrounding road network (including Oak Road, Crays Hill Road, Oak Lane, Pipp's Hill Road North, Gardiners Lane North, the A127 and the A129), albeit views tend to be screened or filtered by vegetation (lower sensitivity).

Perceptual character

A.72 The following considers the qualities of the landscape, including sense of rurality, remoteness or tranquillity:

- A partially developed landscape lying adjacent to the urban area of Basildon with limited sense of tranquillity and experience of dark skies. The area is identified as being of relatively low tranquillity in CPRE tranquillity mapping and as having moderately dark skies in the CPRE night blight Dark mapping (lower sensitivity).
- Areas of remnant farmland and woodland and the river valley of the River Crouch provides some sense of rural character and scenic value (moderate sensitivity).

Key landscape sensitivities

The following features/characteristics are identified as the principal constraints to development within the plotland area. They are also indicated on the aerial view below.

- Topographical variety provided by the gently sloping landform of Crays Hill and the shallow valley of the River Crouch. Functional value of Flood Zone 3b along the valley of the River Crouch.
- Ecological value of the Nutton's Wood Local Wildlife Site (SINC) and several scattered areas of Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland'.

- Dense tree cover, including frequent mature oaks, around existing development and riparian woodland along the River Crouch forms distinctive landscape features.
- Remnant historic field pattern and Grade II listed farmhouse to the south-east.
- The role of the plotland area, particularly southern parts, in preserving clear separation between Basildon and the village of Crays Hill.
- Surviving original plotland layout and resulting plotland character in the north of the area and along Oak Road, Crays Hill Road and Southlands Road.

Green Belt impacts across the plotland

A.73 The plotland area lies across two parcels identified and assessed within the Basildon Green Belt Study (2023): CH4 and CH6. Release and inappropriate development in these locations generally has the potential to generate high harm to Green Belt purposes 1 (checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas), 2 (preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another) and 3 (assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment). This can be attributed to the plotlands location in between the large built-up area of Basildon and the neighbouring towns of Billericay and Wickford, although the partially developed nature of the plotland prevents the potential for very high harm to these purposes.

A.74 The landscape analysis has identified smaller areas of low landscape sensitivity in the northern parts of the plotland area that were too small for definition in the Borough-wide Green Belt study (2023). The isolated release and development of these smaller areas would have lower than high harm to the Green Belt purposes. Although largely open, they are partially contained by the inset village of Crays Hill and several small woodland blocks, resulting in less distinction from the village and a more limited relationship with the wider open countryside. Consequently, their isolated release and development would have a lower impact on the wider Green Belt and more moderate harm on the

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

Green Belt purposes 2 (Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another) and 3 (Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment) overall. Given Crays Hill is not defined as a large built-up area and this limited release at the southern edge of the village would have not association or relationship with the large built-up area of Basildon to the south, harm to Green Belt Purpose 1 (Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas) would be low.

Opportunity areas for development

A.75 Based on the analysis above, there is potential to release some of the northern parts of the plotland area that are partially contained by existing development in Crays Hill village (that on Oak Avenue, Crays Hill Road, the A129 and Gardiners Lane North) and several small woodland blocks. This existing development is inset from the Green Belt and so there may be an opportunity to rationalise the Green Belt boundary as part of a release, potentially using existing (and future) woodland blocks as a robust and recognisable boundary feature.

A.76 Given that the plotland is not defined as a village in the Borough's settlement hierarchy (see **Appendix B**), there is no potential for limited infill village development (appropriate in Green Belt terms) amongst existing areas of plotland development.

Design guidance

A.77 The following high-level design guidance has been identified for opportunity areas identified within the plotland area. This has considered the key constraints and potential to mitigate impacts, with potential landscape and GBI enhancement measures set out below. They are also indicated on the figure below.

Design guidance and recommendations for mitigation

- Locate built development in the north of the plotland in areas partially contained by existing inset development in Crays Hill village, so as to relate better to the existing settlement pattern; and avoid any impact on the sense of separation between the village and Basildon (and in turn between Wickford and Basildon).
- Built development to the north should be of a similar height and density as the adjacent inset settlement edge (i.e. one to two storey detached and semi-detached housing at a low density).
- Retain existing mature tree cover within the plotland area, including Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland', hedgerows and mature trees (including oaks) interspersed within existing plotland development, to help reduce the visual presence of existing and nay future development.
- Retain and existing woodland and introduce new woodland and tree planting to the south of Crays Hill village, to help screen the visual influence of existing and future built development and to form a robust and defensible Green Belt boundary (for the proposed Green Belt release).
- Development should avoid and be set back from existing Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland', with an appropriate buffer zone to avoid root damage.

Capacity to accommodate growth

A.78 The total area of the area identified for potential release from the Green Belt in the north of the plotland is c. 8.75 ha. Low density development (c. 25dph) consistent with the density of the development in the adjacent inset settlement edge, would provide an estimated total capacity of 219 dwellings in this location. The Council must demonstrate the necessary 'exceptional

circumstances' set out in paragraphs 144-148 of the NPPF before allocating this area for development in the Local Plan.

Infrastructure Requirements and Delivery Recommendations

A.79 Each plotland site deemed viable for development has had its infrastructure requirements assessed using assumptions detailed in **Appendix C**. These assumptions are based on the prevailing policy requirements set out as applicable, whether those of Essex County Council, Basildon Borough Council or central government authorities.

Table A.3: Infrastructure requirements for Crays Hill

Infrastructure category	Infrastructure sub-category / Item	New build or extension?	Requirement	Unit (area / pupils)	Requirement (£)
Education	Early Years	School extension	19	pupils	£384,134
	Primary	School extension	64	pupils	£1,280,445
	Secondary	School extension	43	pupils	£1,174,046
	Post 16	School extension	7	pupils	£189,654
School Transport	Primary Transport		64	pupils	£1,702,226
	Secondary Transport		43	pupils	£253,967
Travel planning	Travel plan monitoring				£370,110
Healthcare	GP Surgery	GP surgery extension	n/a (spare capacity exists)	sqm	n/a (spare capacity exists)

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Infrastructure category	Infrastructure sub-category / Item	New build or extension?	Requirement	Unit (area / pupils)	Requirement (£)
Open Space	Allotments		0.030	ha	
	Amenity Green spaces		0.728	ha	
	Park and recreation grounds		0.931	ha	
	Play space (children)		1.369	ha	
	Play space (Youth)		0.000	ha	
	Natural Green space		0.548	ha	
	RAMS Mitigation				£35,885
Sports Facilities	Pools Cost				£125,807
	Halls Cost				£114,572
	Indoor Bowls Cost				£3,481
	Artificial Grass Pitch cost (3G)				£18,854
	Artificial Grass Pitch cost (sand)				£17,035
Community	Community Building	Community facility extension	131	sqm	£306,162
Emergency Services	Ambulance capacity				£74,460
Libraries	Library	Library extension	16.425	m2	£53,436
Waste	Waste Management				£25,950

A.80 Review of electricity network usage information from UK Power Networks (UKPN) (the local electricity distribution company) in this area does not raise significant concerns about the potential for this site to connect to the electricity grid. However, UKPN should be contacted to confirm this position.

Transport Infrastructure

Vehicle Transport

A.81 This plotland is bordered to the south by the A127. This is a dual carriageway routing east-west providing wider connections into Basildon town centre to the south, the M25 to the west, and the A130 to the east with connections to Chelmsford and Southend-on-Sea. The A127 speed limit along the southern boundary of the plotland is 50mph.

A.82 The plotland has three vehicle access points onto the A127;

- Pipp's Hill Road North: Located on the western boundary. This junction provides access to/from the eastbound A127 carriageway only. Access is facilitated by on and off-slip lanes, however the on-slip also serves as a vehicle entrance to a garden centre.
- Oak Lane: Located centrally within the plotland. This is a sub-standard private lane connecting to the A127 via a dropped kerb with poor surfacing treatment. The lane has a barrier to restrict vehicle access.
- Gardeners Lane North: Located on the eastern boundary. This junction provides access to/from the eastbound A127 carriageway only. Access is facilitated by on and off-slip lanes.

A.83 Roads within the plotland are a mixture of rural and residential A-road (A129), and rural single track country lanes.

A127 Pedestrian Safety Issues

A.84 All three of the junctions described above are the sites of pedestrian fatalities, with five fatalities in total since 1999 (source: Crashmap.co.uk). There are pedestrian desire lines at these junctions linking Crays Hill to the retail and leisure parks located south of the A127. This has resulted in a reduced speed limit to 50mph (previously 70mph), and signage warning pedestrians not to cross. After a fatality in 2016 at the Oak Lane junction, there have been local calls for a pedestrian footbridge at the location.

Pedestrian Infrastructure

A.85 Within the plotland, pedestrian infrastructure is concentrated along the A129 residential frontage in Crays Hill village. Elsewhere, the rural nature of the plotland results in limited pedestrian infrastructure.

A.86 As noted above, there are known road safety issues on the A127 caused by a lack of pedestrian crossing points on key desire lines. For example, pedestrians travelling from Crank Hill to the Festival Leisure Park would be required to travel c.5km (c. 1-hour walk) if utilising the nearest formal crossing point (pedestrian footbridge to Miles Gray Road). By comparison, the direct pedestrian desire line from Pipp's Hill Road North to Waterfront Walk would be c.1.8km (c. 25-minute walk).

Cycle Infrastructure

A.87 There is limited cycle infrastructure within the plotland due to the area's rural character. National Cycle Network 13 (NCN 13) routes approximately 1km west of the area's western boundary, providing a predominantly off-road link into Basildon Town Centre. The town centre is accessible within a c. 20-25minute cycle from the centre of the plotland.

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A.88 There is an off-road cycle path on each side of the A127, however as discussed above there is no method of crossing within the vicinity of the plotland. The paths are shared with pedestrians and some localised sections are narrow, poorly surfaced and restricted by bollards.

Public Transport

A.89 Crays Hill is served by local bus routes stopping along the A129. These are generally low frequency, operating every 1 to 2 hours. They serve a variety of local destinations including Basildon, Billericay and Wickford. Bus stops within Crays Hill are equipped with timetable information, seating and shelters.

A.90 The closest rail stations are:

- Billericay (c. 6.5km north-west; a 25-minute cycle or 15-minute drive)
- Wickford (c. 5km east; a 15-minute cycle or 10-minute drive)
- Basildon (c. 5.5km south; a 20-minute cycle or 10-minute drive)

A.91 They provide regular services to Southend, Southminster and Central London.

Opportunities for Improvement

A.92 Based on the above there are several opportunities for improvements to transport infrastructure:

- Developer contributions towards pedestrian safety improvements on the A127, including lighting, reduced speed limit, warning signage for drivers.
- Developer contributions towards provision of new pedestrian crossings on the A127 linking to the major trip attractors (retail, leisure and employment) south of the A127. These must be located at convenient locations meeting desire lines, e.g. Oak Lane.

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

- Improved signage and cycle links to the existing off-road network (NCN 13).
- Contributions towards increased bus frequencies and real time information displays at stops.

Green and Blue Infrastructure

A.93 This large plotland mostly comprises existing development, including residential properties. There are small areas of Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland', tree belts and woodland blocks which are scattered throughout the plotland. However, there are pockets of deciduous woodland located adjacent to two opportunity areas. A portion of the northern most opportunity area also falls within the network enhancement zone for Priority Habitat 'traditional orchards'. Immediately to the north, east and west of the plotland are large areas of land which have been identified as having potential for wider catchment woodland potential. There is also a smaller area of land to the south with the same designation. Nutton's Wood lies within the plotland boundary to the east and is designated as a LWS and SINC as well as a Priority Habitat. Much of the central and northern area of the plotland is designated as unsuitable for woodland creation. However, pockets and a portion of the southern section of the plotland is designated as having low suitability for woodland creation.

A.94 The River Crouch and its valley is located to the north and west of the plotland. A small area of the plotland to the northwest is located within flood zone 2 with a medium risk of flooding. A smaller area in the same location is located within flood zone 3 (high risk) and 3b (functional flood plain). There are Public Rights of Way (PRoW) that run through the plotland, including north to south from Oak Road toward Gardiners Close. There is limited connectivity via PRoW to the west of the plotland area. However, none of the opportunity areas fall within an area identified by Natural England as having local access to greenspace.

Opportunities for Compensatory Improvement

A.95 After reviewing the information above, the most relevant GBI opportunity for this plotland:

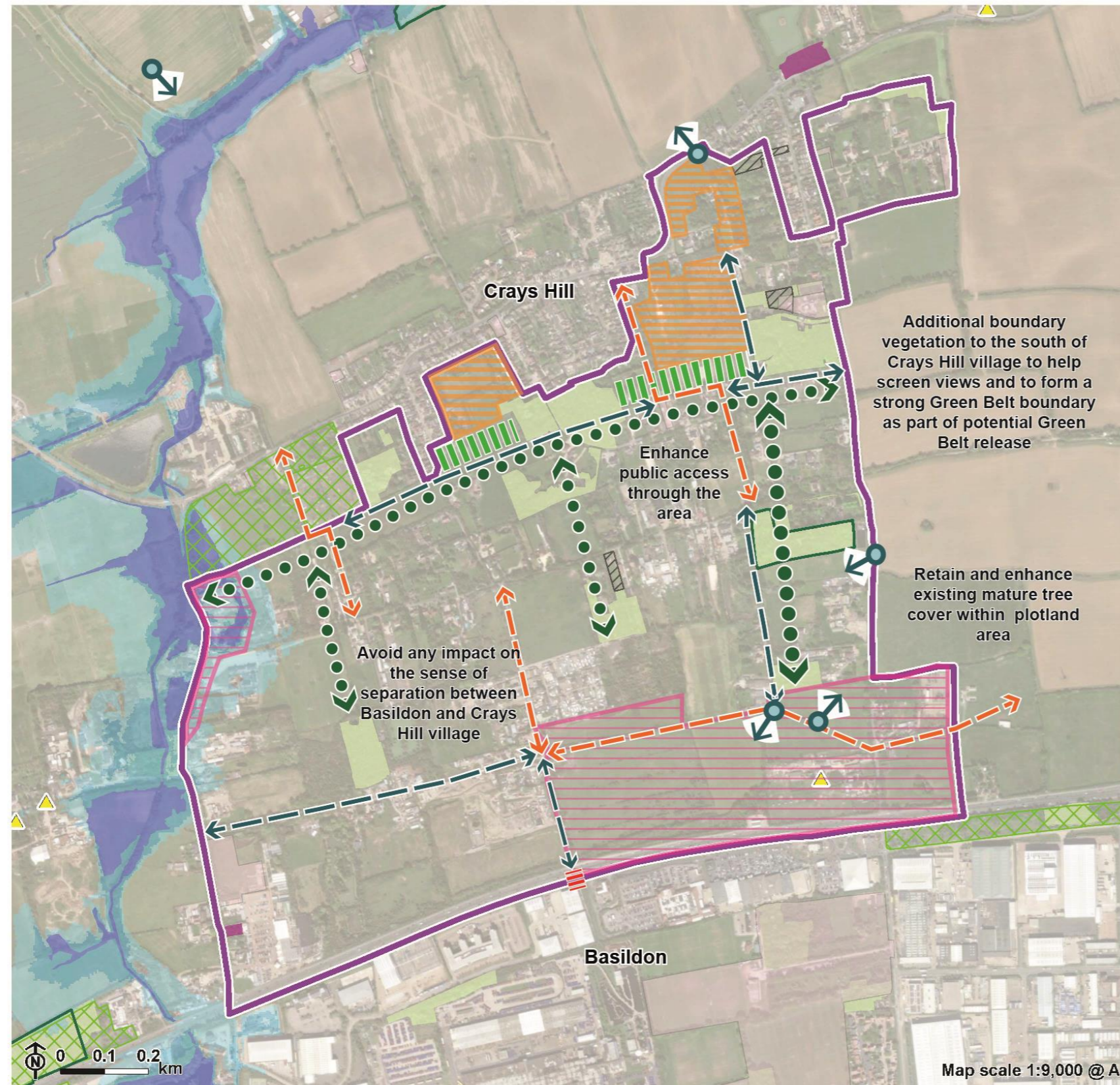
- Enhance ecological connectivity between areas of woodland within the plotland, including Nutton's Wood and the areas around the plotland that have been identified as having potential for wider woodland catchment. In addition, a buffer zone around Priority Habitat could provide a valuable habitat for woodland wildlife and should consist of semi-natural habitat (e.g. a mix of woodland edge and semi-improved grassland to provide structural complexity and species diversity). There may also be potential to plant woodland within the southern section of the plotland.
- Manage the existing PRoW access from the north of the plotland to Nutton's Wood SINC, as shown on the figure below. Any access needs to consider the ecological sensitivity of the SINC. To ensure management or improvement to this access is ecologically sensitive, the advice of an ecologist should be sought.
- Create wildlife corridors throughout the plotland through hedgerows along residential gardens to provide habitat connectivity as a large amount of the plotland has residential development. Enhancing hedgerows throughout the area, and introducing hedgerow trees, could also provide visual screening, and enhance historic field boundary. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible.

A.96 Planning obligations can be included as part of planning approval to secure funding for green and blue infrastructure, including monitoring and maintenance, and ensure its success and longevity. As the development at Crays Hill would be more substantial than other plotlands, there is potential for larger, more strategic GBI projects to come forward on site or throughout the plotland. These projects could be supported via s106 developer contributions (where supported by GBI policy), or by Community Infrastructure Levy funding (or the proposed new Infrastructure Levy system) where projects are providing strategic (green) infrastructure to support development. Such projects should be identified in relevant Infrastructure Funding Statements. In addition, since 2

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

April 2024, all new planning applications in England must deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG). As such, new development within this plotland will have to increase biodiversity compared to what was previously on site which could lead to GBI enhancements on site.

A.97 To note, this is a high-level study therefore once preferred site allocations have been identified, site specific studies would need to be completed to inform more detailed project planning and viability. Engaging with relevant landowners and experts (e.g. ecologists, landscape management experts) will also be critical to understanding project feasibility and deliverability.



Basildon Borough Plotlands Growth Potential Study
Basildon Borough Council



Crays Hill Plotland
Key constraints and opportunities

- Crays Hill Plotland
- Basildon Borough boundary
- Constraints**
- ▲ Grade II listed building
- Public open space
- Local Wildlife Site
- Flood zone 2
- Flood zone 3
- Flood zone 3b
- Consented development (RLA 2023)
- Priority Habitats Inventory**
- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh
- Deciduous woodland
- No main habitat but additional habitats present
- Traditional orchard
- Higher sensitivity area
- Existing access connectivity
- ↔ Views
- Opportunities**
- Potential enhanced habitat connectivity
- Strengthen boundary vegetation
- Potential enhanced access connectivity
- Potential substantial infill / inseting
- Potential pedestrian crossing

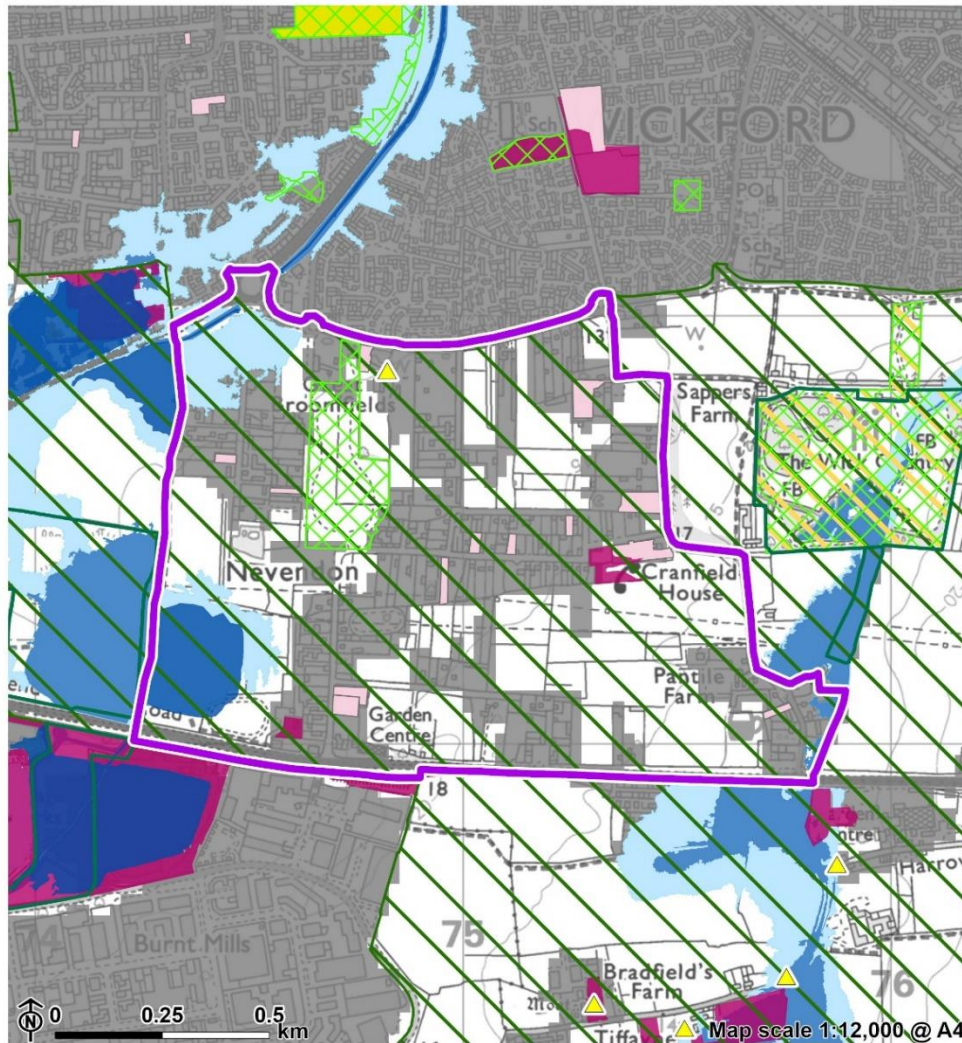
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Illustrated by: Thompson_A

Fairmead, Wickford

Fairmead Plotland

Basildon Borough Plotlands Growth Potential Study
Basildon Borough Council



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- | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Basildon Borough boundary | Absolute constraint | Local Wildlife Site |
| Fairmead Plotland | Cemetery | Other constraint |
| Settlement | Flood zone 3b | Priority Habitat |
| Consented development (RLA 2023) | | Country Park |
| Green belt | | Flood zone 3 |
| | | Flood zone 2 |
| | | Public open space |
- Plotland_MapSeries_OS/Fairmead Plotland

Landscape context

A.98 This is a large plotland area measuring approximately 137ha. It is located to the east of the borough, situated between the A127 and north-eastern edge of Basildon to the south and Cranfield Park Road and the southern edge of Wickford to the north.

A.99 There are several scattered areas of development across the plotland, including residential properties, gypsy and traveller sites, and outbuildings used by a range of industrial and commercial businesses. The densest area of development lies in the centre of the plotland along Meadow Way and The Chase. Residential dwellings within the plotland comprise relatively modern detached bungalows or bungalow chalets and are set out on a grid of roads.

A.100 There are several consented developments across the plotland area, for development which is relatively small in scale, including the construction of residential dwellings to the south-west (20/00387/FULL and 20/00510/FULL), centrally along Meadow Way and The Chase (21/00739/FULL, 20/01147/FULL, 21/01269/FULL and 22/00250/FULL), to the east on Fairway and Cranfield Park Road (21/00016/FULL, 20/01162/FULL and 15/00554/FULL), to the north off Cranfield Park Road (19/00973/FULL), and to the north-west off Lower Park Road and Upper Park Road (22/01613/LDCE and 21/00983/FULL).

A.101 Existing built development is interspersed with several open agricultural fields and smaller paddocks and undeveloped (often overgrown) plots. The plotland also features several small woodland blocks and tree belts. A small unnamed stream along the western boundary and land to the south-west of the plotland fall within Flood Zone 3b and land to the north-west and south-east also lies partly within Flood Zone 2.

A.102 The plotland area lies almost entirely within LCA 04 – North Benfleet and Nevendon Settled Claylands, as defined within the Basildon Landscape Character Assessment (2014). Relevant key characteristics of the LCA include:

- “Flat landform

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

- Plotland settlements comprising grid of narrow linear plots located off main through roads
- Plotland roads mainly unadopted and unsurfaced
- Horse and pony paddocks, medium-sized and subdivided by post and wire fences or gappy hawthorn hedgerows
- A127 and A13 pass through/adjacent to the area
- Recreational grounds including Rushley Park, woods, open green space and educational grounds form a north-south linear feature located at eastern boundary with Pitsea
- Medium to small arable fields at Bradfield's Farm and between recreational and plotlands areas, separated by rectilinear hedgerow boundaries
- Fragmented woodland cover".

Landscape analysis

Physical and natural character

A.103 The following considers the distinctiveness of the landform and the presence of and extent of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features, as well as any particular functional value associated with the natural landscape:

- The landform within the plotland is relatively flat to gently undulating at around 15m AOD, but rises gently in the south-east to up to around 20m AOD and falls to around 10m AOD in the west (moderate sensitivity).
- Land to the south-west of the plotland lies immediately adjacent to Nevendon Washland Nature Reserve (moderate sensitivity).
- There are several scattered woodland blocks and tree belts throughout the plotland including one area of Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland' to the

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

east. There is also a small area of Priority Habitat 'traditional orchard' to the south-west (moderate sensitivity).

- Elsewhere, the plotland comprises a mix of arable and pasture farmland and domestic gardens with limited semi-natural habitats or valued natural features (lower sensitivity).
- The unnamed stream along the western boundary and land within the south-west forms part of Flood Zone 3b and land within the north-east and south-east lies within Flood Zone 2. It therefore performs a valuable function as part of the floodplain (higher sensitivity).

Historic character, pattern and time depth, and historical or cultural associations

A.104 The following considers pattern and historic 'time depth': in terms of a distinctive plotland settlement form and pattern, or the presence of historic field patterns or historic features that contribute to landscape character. It also considers historical or cultural associations which contribute to positive perceptions of the landscape:

- The majority of the landscape is identified within the Essex HLC (2013) as comprising modern 'built-up areas' or 'post 1950's enclosure' (lower sensitivity). However, there are areas of 'pre 18th century irregular enclosure' to the south-east and south-west and remnant historic farmsteads to the north at Great Broomfields and Cranfields of early post-medieval or medieval origin, which provide some sense of time-depth (moderate sensitivity).
- Historic mapping (OS Six Inch, 1840s – 1880s) shows that the Medieval grid-like medium size field pattern remains evident within the plotland, with open fields retained across the plotland particularly to the south-west and south-east (higher sensitivity).
- Elsewhere, the original field pattern is evident but is overlain by development and with some hedgerow loss in places (moderate sensitivity).

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

- The early 20th century plotland allotment arrangement, which generally fit with the pre-existing landscape structure, is evident in the north-west (along Lower Park Road and Upper Park Road), in central areas (along Meadow Way and The Chase) and to the south (along Hoverfields Drive). This helps retain some plotland character, although much of the built development has been replaced with more modern development (moderate sensitivity)
- The site contains only one historic designation – the Grade II listed Great Broomfields to the north (moderate sensitivity); elsewhere in the plotland area there are no designated heritage assets (lower sensitivity).

Settlement form and edge character

A.105 The following considers the extent to which the landscape relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement(s):

- The plotland lies along the north-eastern edge of Basildon, separated from it by the A127 which forms a strong boundary feature. The southern edge of Wickford is also defined strongly by Cranfield Park Road albeit with some development along the southern edge of the road. Development would have a poor relationship with the existing settlement form of Basildon and Wickford (higher sensitivity).

Settlement setting

A.106 The following considers the role that the landscape plays in providing a setting to an adjacent settlement(s), including visual relationship, any distinctiveness it provides, or whether it preserves separation between distinct settlements:

- Woodland cover and open agricultural fields within the plotland form an open rural setting to the south of Wickford, with some views available from the settlement edge (moderate sensitivity). There is limited visual

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

relationship with the north-eastern edge of Basildon owing to the presence of the A127 and associated tree cover (lower sensitivity).

- The open character of much of the plotland area plays a part in preserving a sense of separation between Basildon and Wickford. In particular, this is experienced when travelling between the two settlements along Nevendon Road (north-west of the plotland) and Cranfield Park Road (east of the plotland). The 2023 Green Belt Study also identified this area as contributing towards gap between Basildon and Wickford (higher sensitivity).

Visual prominence, skyline and views

A.107 The following considers the visual character of the landscape, including the sense of openness or enclosure, and extent to which potential development would be visible to surrounding visual receptors:

- Presence of hedgerows, woodland areas and frequent scattered mature trees within private plots and along roads gives much of the area a wooded feel and a sense of enclosure. Views across much of the plotland have an enclosed character, with localised views terminating on several small woodlands and tree belts. This, along with the predominance of single-storey structures, means that the existing development within the plotland is not visually prominent (moderate sensitivity). Less woodland cover and relatively larger fields result in a greater sense of openness in the south-east and south-west (higher sensitivity).
- The landform is relatively flat and does not form a visually distinctive or prominent skyline (lower sensitivity). However, as noted within the Landscape Character and Green Belt Landscape Capacity Study (2014), there are important views from bend of Cranfield Park Road near Cranfield House with long distance view south towards North Benfleet (higher sensitivity).
- Views into the more open south-western parts of the plotland are likely to be available from Footpath 89, where the largely undeveloped character of the landscape makes some positive contribution to the quality of the view.

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

Some views out are also available to visitors to Cranfield Park (higher sensitivity). Elsewhere, views from public footpaths (including Footpath 88 running along the western boundary) and residential properties are generally filtered through woodland and other vegetation (moderate sensitivity).

- Views are also available from the surrounding road network (including Cranfield Park Road, Vevendon Road, the A127), as well as the roads and lanes within the plotland, albeit views tend to be screened or filtered by vegetation (lower sensitivity). There are often views important local views from the end of residential roads looking across fields (moderate sensitivity).

Perceptual character

A.108 The following considers the qualities of the landscape, including sense of rurality, remoteness or tranquillity:

- A partially developed landscape lying adjacent to the urban areas of Basildon and Wickford with limited sense of tranquillity and experience of dark skies. Traffic noise from A13 and A127 also impact perceptual qualities. The area is identified as being of relatively low tranquillity in CPRE tranquillity mapping and as having moderately dark skies in the CPRE night blight Dark mapping (lower sensitivity).
- Areas of open farmland and woodland provide some sense of rural character and scenic value (moderate sensitivity).

Key landscape sensitivities

The following features/characteristics are identified as the principal constraints to development within the plotland area.

- Functional value of Flood Zone 3b along the unnamed stream along the western boundary and within the south-west of the plotland, and Flood Zoen 2 within the north-east and south-east.
- Ecological and landscape value of the woodland cover, in particular the area of Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland' and 'traditional orchard'.
- Sense of time-depth provided by remnant historic field pattern historic farmsteads at Great Broomfields and Cranfields to the north; the former is a Grade II listed building.
- Greater sense of visual openness land to the south-east and south-west; views available from Footpath 89 to the south-west and from Cranfield Park Road to the south-east.
- The role of the plotland area in preserving clear separation between Basildon and Wickford.

Green Belt impacts across the plotland

A.109 The plotland area lies within parcel WI9 identified and assessed within the Basildon Green Belt Study (2023). Release and inappropriate development in this area is generally considered likely to generate very high harm to Green belt purposes 1 (checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas) and 2 (preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another) but more moderate harm to Green Belt Purpose 3 (assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment). This can be attributed to the fact that although the plotland is already partly developed and has weaker distinction overall, further inappropriate development could significantly compromise the gap between Basildon and Wickford, increasing their association. The merging of the large built-up area of Basildon with Wickford would make Wickford part of Basildon, representing a significant northward sprawl of the large built-up area.

Opportunity areas for development

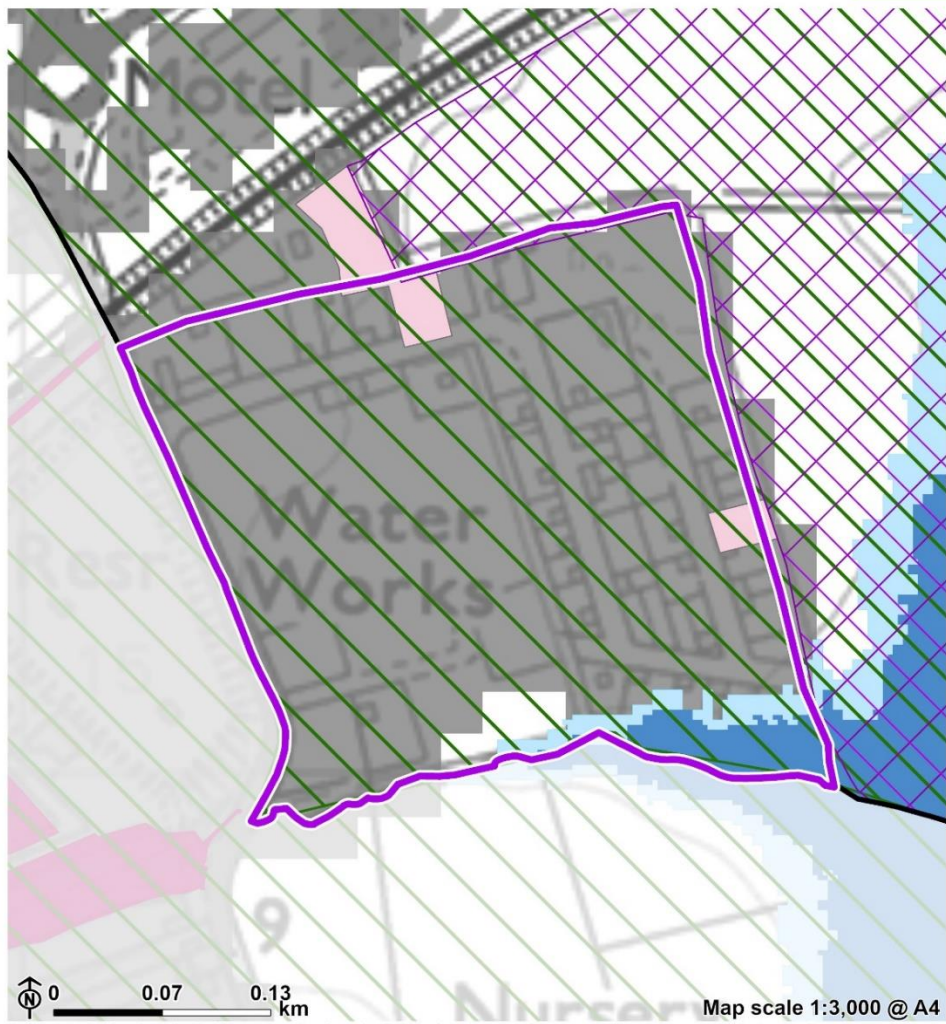
A.110 Based on the analysis above, there is little potential to accommodate substantial infill development, owing to landscape and Green Belt sensitivities. Whilst the plotland is located immediately adjacent to the urban edges of Wickford and Basildon, the settlement boundaries (inset from the Green Belt) are strongly defined by Cranfield Park Road and the A127 respectively. Therefore, development would have a poor relationship with the existing settlement form. The open character of much of the plotland area also plays a part in preserving a sense of separation between Basildon and Wickford.

A.111 Given that the plotland is not defined as a village in the Borough's settlement hierarchy (see **Appendix B**), there is no potential for limited infill village development (appropriate in Green Belt terms) amongst existing areas of plotland development.

Fobbing (Crooked Brook)

Fobbing Plotland

Basildon Borough Plotlands Growth
Potential Study
Basildon Borough Council



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- Basildon Borough boundary
- Fobbing Plotland
- Settlement
- Consented development (RLA 2023)
- Green belt
- Marsh Area
- Other constraint**
- Priority Habitat
- Flood zone 3
- Flood zone 2

Plotland_MapSeries_OS/Fobbing Plotland

Landscape context

A.112 The plotland area is located to the south of Basildon and measures approximately 10ha. It lies on the southern side of both the A13 and the Tilbury to Southend railway line, west of Vange Marshes. High Road lies along the western boundary and access to the plotland is via Moores Avenue and South Road to the north and south respectively.

A.113 Development is organised along Moores Avenue to the north; Brook Drive, Woodlands Drive and Hertford Drive to the east; and South Road to the south. Central western areas of the plotland comprises an open pasture fields. The majority of the properties within the plotland are single storey, bungalows or bungalow chalets with a normal assemblage of outbuildings (garages and sheds).

A.114 There are two consented developments within the plotland area, for development which is relatively small in scale. This includes demolition and construction of replacement dwellings (22/00836/FULL) and the construction of 3 bungalows with associated access from Moores Avenue in lieu of existing buildings (18/01657/FULL).

A.115 There are no landscape-related designations within the plotland itself, but it lies immediately west of the Marshes Area (Policy C7 and C8).

A.116 The plotland area lies entirely within LCA 01 – Bowers and Vange Estuary Marshlands, as defined within the Basildon Landscape Character Assessment (2014). Relevant key characteristics of the LCA include:

- “Flat, low-lying drained marshlands
- Pylon lines are dominant features
- Open, exposed landscape
- Few isolated farm buildings and no public roads

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

- Main land-uses: grazing and nature reserve with some arable farmland on east side
- Small-medium sized fields separated by network of reed-fringed drainage ditches
- Panoramic views across the marshlands towards Basildon and South Benfleet in the north and the London Gateway Port at Shellhaven in the south
- Tidal creeks with extensive mudbanks exposed at low tide ... “

Landscape analysis

Physical and natural character

A.117 The following considers the distinctiveness of the landform and the presence of and extent of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features, as well as any particular functional value associated with the natural landscape:

- The landform within the plotland is gently sloping from between 15m and 10m in the west to approximately 5m AOD in the east, reflecting its position on the western side of the Vange Creek valley (moderate sensitivity).
- Land along a stream/ditch which forms the southern boundary of the plotland area falls within Flood Zone 2 and 3, and therefore performs a valuable part of the functional floodplain. This also has a functional relationship with Vange and Fobbing Marshes SSSI and Wickford Meadows Local Wildlife Site (SINC) which lie to the east (higher sensitivity).
- The plotland largely comprises domestic gardens or grazed farmland with limited semi-natural habitats or valued natural features. There is some semi-mature woodland cover and scrub vegetation to the south-west of the plotland (lower sensitivity).

Historic character, pattern and time depth, and historical or cultural associations

A.118 The following considers pattern and historic 'time depth': in terms of a distinctive plotland settlement form and pattern, or the presence of historic field patterns or historic features that contribute to landscape character. It also considers historical or cultural associations which contribute to positive perceptions of the landscape:

- The landscape is identified within the Essex HLC (2013) as being comprised of 'built-up areas - modern'. The early 20th century allotment arrangement is preserved which helps retain some plotland character. However, much of the built development has been replaced with more modern development (moderate sensitivity).
- The site contains no historic designations; the closest designated assets are the Grade II listed Church of All Saints and Five Bell Inn which both lie north of the A13, as well as Fobbing Conservation Area approximately 1.6km south of the plotland, all of which have no visual or physical connection to the plotland (lower sensitivity).

Settlement form and edge character

A.119 The following considers the extent to which the landscape relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement(s):

- The plotland lies immediately south of the A13 which, along with the associated vegetation which lines it, form a strong boundary feature which clearly separates the plotland from Basildon (higher sensitivity).
- The small settlement at Fobbing lies about 1.6km south of the plotland, although ribbon development extends north from the settlement core along High Road including recent development immediately west of the plotland (Maple Creek). Development would be perceived as settlement advancement into the countryside but would not represent a step-change in settlement form (moderate sensitivity).

Settlement setting

A.120 The following considers the role that the landscape plays in providing a setting to an adjacent settlement(s), including visual relationship, any distinctiveness it provides, or whether it preserves separation between distinct settlements:

- The open pasture farmland within central western areas of the plotland forms part of a wider rural landscape to the south of Basildon and north of Fobbing, although has a limited physical or visual relationship with either settlement (lower sensitivity). However, the plotland does have a visual relationship with the new area of residential development on the opposite side of High Road (Maple Creek) (moderate sensitivity).
- The open character of the pasture farmland makes some contribution to a sense of separation between Basildon and Fobbing when travelling between the two along High Road (moderate sensitivity).

Visual prominence, skyline and views

A.121 The following considers the visual character of the landscape, including the sense of openness or enclosure, and extent to which potential development would be visible to surrounding visual receptors:

- The Basildon Borough Landscape Character Assessment and Green Belt Landscape Capacity Study describes the wider landscape as being open to public view with “an absence of vegetation in the landscape that could screen development”, there are some elevated views available from the A176 to the north (higher sensitivity).
- The presence of low hedegrows and only occasional mature trees results in semi-enclosed character across much of the plotland. This, along with the predominance of single-storey structures, means that the existing development within the plotland is not visually prominent (moderate sensitivity). Mature tree within the south of the plotland and along the

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

stream/ditch along the southern boundary results in a greater sense of visual enclosure (lower sensitivity).

Perceptual character

A.122 The following considers the qualities of the landscape, including sense of rurality, remoteness or tranquillity:

- A largely developed landscape lying adjacent to the urban area of Basildon and busy A13 with resulting limited sense of tranquillity and experience of dark skies. The area is identified as being of relatively low tranquillity in CPRE tranquillity mapping and as having moderately dark skies in the CPRE night blight Dark mapping (lower sensitivity).
- Areas of remnant farmland, hedgerows and the wider marshland/riparian character of Vange Creek floodplain to the east provides some sense of rural character and scenic value (moderate sensitivity).

Key landscape sensitivities

The following features/characteristics are identified as the principal constraints to development within the plotland area. They are also indicated on the aerial view below.

- Functional value of land within the south of the plotland as part of the floodplain, as well as its relationship with Vange and Fobbing Marshes SSSI and Wickford Meadows Local Wildlife Site (SINC) to the east.
- Rural character of undeveloped pasture farmland in central western parts of the plotland which have a visual relationship with recent development along Fobbing High Road and make some contribution to a sense of separation between Basildon and Fobbing.
- Whilst hedgerows and tree cover (particularly within the south of the plotland) provides some sense of visual containment, the wider

landscape context is relatively open with views available from elevated positions to the north (A176) and east.

Green Belt impacts across the plotland

A.123 The plotland area lies within parcel BA SE4 identified and assessed within the Basildon Green Belt Study (2023). Release and inappropriate development in this area is generally considered likely to generate very high harm to Green Belt purposes 1 (checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas) and 3 (assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment) and high harm Green Belt Purpose 2 (preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another). This can be attributed to the area's general openness and very strong distinction from Basildon to the north east. Further inappropriate development in this location would weaken the strength of the A13 and railway line as strong retaining features, preventing the southward sprawl of the large built up area of Basildon into the open countryside and narrowing the undeveloped gap with neighbouring Corringham to the south.

Opportunity areas for development

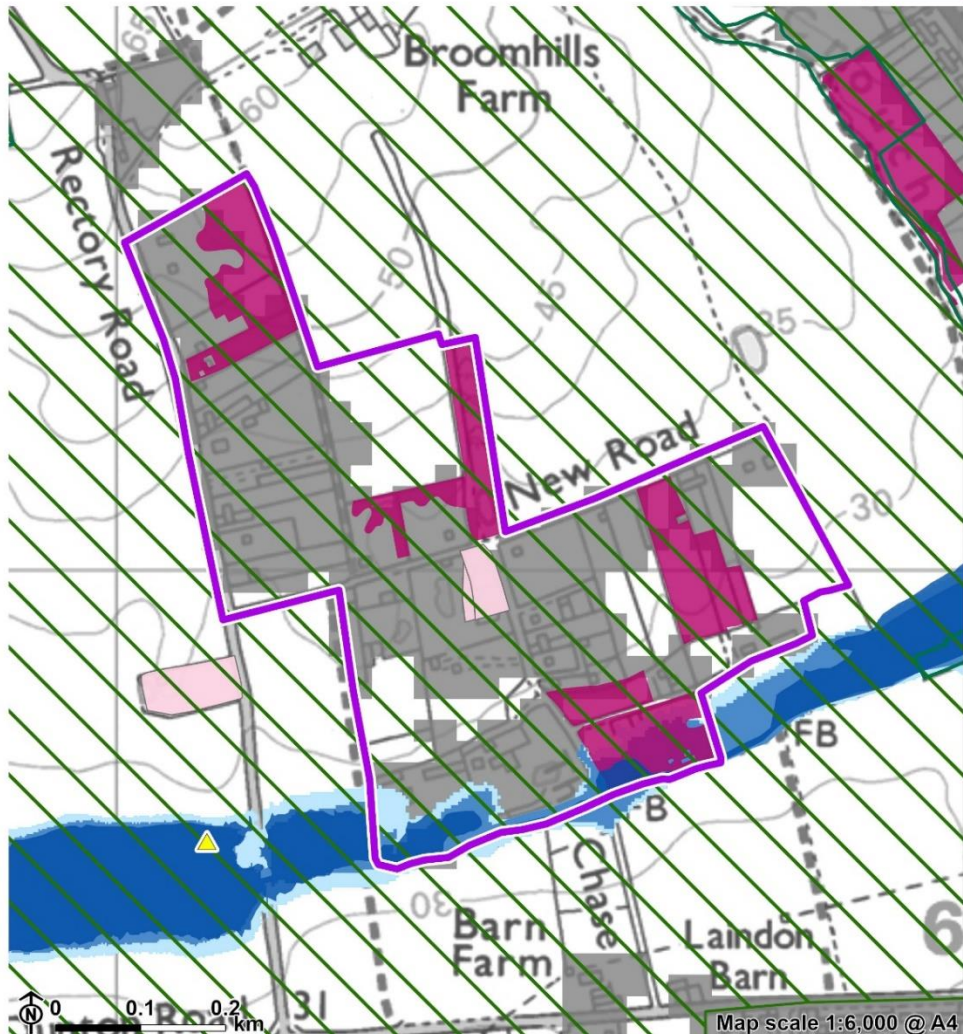
A.124 Based on the analysis above, there is little potential to accommodate substantial infill development, owing to the plotlands small size and landscape and Green Belt sensitivities. The plotland is located over 500m from the nearest settlement edge inset from the Green Belt at Basildon (Vange) to the north-east, and is separated from it by open farmland and the A13.

A.125 In addition, given that the plotland is not defined as a village in the Borough's settlement hierarchy (see **Appendix B**), there is no potential for limited infill village development (appropriate in Green Belt terms) amongst existing areas of plotland development.

Green Lane, Little Burstead

Green Lane Plotland

Basildon Borough Plotlands Growth Potential Study
Basildon Borough Council



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- | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Basildon Borough boundary | Absolute constraint | Local Wildlife Site |
| Green Lane Plotland | Flood zone 3b | Other constraint |
| Settlement | | Priority Habitat |
| Consented development (RLA 2023) | | Flood zone 3 |
| Green belt | | Flood zone 2 |
| | | Grade II |

Plotland_MapSeries_OS/Green Lane Plotland

Landscape context

A.126 The plotland area is located in the west of the borough and measures approximately 30ha. It lies between the north-western edge of Basildon (Steeple View) to the south and the village of Little Burstead to the north. The River Crouch runs along the southern boundary.

A.127 Development is organised along Rectory Road, New Road, Green Lane and The Chase, and predominantly comprises low-density modern bungalows and chalets and associated outbuildings (garages and sheds) with some two-storey development in places. There are two consented developments within the plotland area, for development which is relatively small in scale. This includes demolition of existing buildings and construction of replacement bungalows, amenity space and landscaping (21/01162/FULL and 20/01313/FULL).

A.128 Existing built development is interspersed with several small open paddocks and undeveloped (often overgrown) plots. The plotland also features a number of small woodland blocks and tree belts, some of which is identified as Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland'.

A.129 The plotland area lies entirely within LCA12 – Burstead Sloping Farmland, as defined within the Basildon Landscape Character Assessment (2014). Relevant key characteristics of the LCA include:

- “Sloping landform with marked secondary undulations to edge of plateau
- Large fields with remnant hedges and hedgerow trees apart from at settlement boundaries
- Marked rural and arable character to most of area
- Noak Hill and associated ribbon development along A176
- Two Plotlands areas at Broomhills Chase and Green Lanes/The Chase
- Discrete woodlands and linear green lane

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

- Few isolated farms and farm buildings
- Minor roads and networks of local rights of way
- St Mary's Little Burstead and St XX [sic] Great Burstead churches are notable landmark buildings"

Landscape analysis

Physical and natural character

A.130 The following considers the distinctiveness of the landform and the presence of and extent of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features, as well as any particular functional value associated with the natural landscape:

- The landform within the plotland is gently sloping, reflecting that of the wider surrounding area; AOD heights range from between approximately 65m in the north to 30m in the south where the River Crouch and its Flood Zone 3b lies along the southern boundary. The River Crouch and associated tributary streams and scattered ponds form distinctive topographical features within the wider area (moderate sensitivity).
- There are several areas of Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland' throughout the plotland, and an area Priority Habitat 'traditional orchard' in the north. Dense tree cover around existing development and riparian woodland along much of the River Crouch also form distinctive landscape features (moderate sensitivity).
- Elsewhere, the plotland comprises domestic gardens and small paddocks with limited semi-natural habitats or valued natural features (lower sensitivity).
- The River Crouch at Noak Bridge Local Wildlife Site (SINC) lies in proximity to the south-east. Whilst not extending into the plotland area, the corridor of the River Crouch to the south of the plotland shares some of its characteristics including the river and its banks (moderate sensitivity).

Historic character, pattern and time depth, and historical or cultural associations

A.131 The following considers pattern and historic 'time depth': in terms of a distinctive plotland settlement form and pattern, or the presence of historic field patterns or historic features that contribute to landscape character. It also considers historical or cultural associations which contribute to positive perceptions of the landscape:

- The landscape is identified within the Essex HLC (2013) as being predominantly comprised of 'built-up areas', with a small area in the east being 'post 1950s enclosure' adjacent to a narrow strip of 'ancient woodland' (lower sensitivity).
- Historic mapping (OS Six Inch, 1840s – 1880s) shows that the original rectilinear field pattern, likely originating from Saxon times, is preserved in the wider area (higher sensitivity). Within the plotland itself the original pattern is evident although overlain by plotland development and later woodland plantations (moderate sensitivity).
- The site contains no historic designations; the closest designated assets are the Grade II* Church of Saint Mary, which is located in proximity to the north-west of the plotland along Rectory Road. Little Burstead (covered by a Conservation Area designation) also lies further to the north although has limited physical or visual relationship with the plotland (lower sensitivity).

Settlement form and edge character

A.132 The following considers the extent to which the landscape relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement(s):

- The plotland is located about 270m north of Basildon (Steeple View) and 270m west of Noak Hill. However, the plotland is separated from both settlements by the River Crouch and intervening open arable fields. The historic settlement at Little Burstead lies just over 650m north of the

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

plotland, separated from it by several agricultural fields and hedgerows. Development would therefore have a poor relationship with the existing nearby settlements (higher sensitivity).

Settlement setting

A.133 The following considers the role that the landscape plays in providing a setting to an adjacent settlement(s), including visual relationship, any distinctiveness it provides, or whether it preserves separation between distinct settlements:

- Woodland cover and small paddocks within the plotland form part of a rural setting to the north of Basildon. This, along with woodland cover along the River Crouch, provides a wooded middle ground with higher ground visible in the distance (moderate sensitivity). Woodland cover along the River Crouch means that the plotland has a limited visual relationship with Noak Hill and several intervening hedgerows mean the plotland has a limited visual relationship with Little Burstead (lower sensitivity).
- The plotland forms part of the rural area between the south of Little Burstead, north of Basildon and west of Noak Hill. It therefore plays a part in preserving clear separation between these areas of settlement. The 2023 Green Belt Study also identified this area as contributing towards a wide gap between Basildon and Billericay (higher sensitivity).

Visual prominence, skyline and views

A.134 The following considers the visual character of the landscape, including the sense of openness or enclosure, and extent to which potential development would be visible to surrounding visual receptors:

- The small to medium sized allotments and dense tree cover around existing development, results in a sense of visual enclosure across much of the plotland. This means that the existing development within the plotland

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

is not visually prominent – the Basildon Borough Landscape Character Assessment and Green Belt Landscape Capacity Study notes that the plotland “includes substantive areas of vegetation which conceals its presence in the wider landscape even in the winter months”. Woodland cover along the River Crouch also provides some visual containment to the south (lower sensitivity).

- However some parts of the plotland are less enclosed and there are some open views out into the wider countryside, these are available particularly in the east and north-west where boundary vegetation is less dense and the plotland interfaces with the larger-scale arable land which slopes gently southward towards Dunton Road (moderate sensitivity).
- Views into the plotland are available from Footpath 49 where it passes through the western side of the plotland (as well as where it approaches the plotland from the north and south). There are also views towards the plotland from where Footpath 58 to the south and east (although views will intermittently be enclosed by the vegetation along the River Crouch) and from Footpath 57 to the west. The rural, undeveloped character of the landscape makes some positive contribution to the quality of the view (moderate sensitivity).
- Elsewhere views into the western parts of the plotland are available from Rectory Road (lower sensitivity).

Perceptual character

A.135 The following considers the qualities of the landscape, including sense of rurality, remoteness or tranquillity:

- A largely undeveloped landscape lying north to the urban area of Basildon with limited sense of tranquillity and experience of dark skies. The area is identified as being of relatively low tranquillity in CPRE tranquillity mapping and as having moderately dark skies in the north of the plotland in the CPRE night blight Dark mapping (lower sensitivity).

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

- Areas of remant farmland and woodland and the river valley of the River Crouch provides some sense of rural character and scenic value (moderate sensitivity).

Key landscape sensitivities

The following features/characteristics are identified as the principal constraints to development within the plotland area. They are also indicated on the aerial view below.

- Topographical variety provided by the gently sloping landform and the shallow valley of the River Crouch. Functional value of Flood Zone 3b along the valley of the River Crouch.
- Areas of Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland' throughout the plotland, and an area of 'traditional orchard' to the north.
- Dense tree cover, including that around existing development, as well as within riparian woodland along much of the River Crouch, which form distinctive landscape features.
- Higher levels of visual openness to the east and north-west where the plotland's boundary vegetation is less dense.
- The role of the plotland area in preserving a clear separation between Basildon, Little Burstead and Noak Hill.
- Visible from public footpaths which pass though and close to the plotland area.

Green Belt impacts across the plotland

A.136 The plotland lies within the open countryside within outer area OA4. The area has very strong distinction from Great Burstead to the east and Basildon to the south. Release and inappropriate development within the plotland has the

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

potential to significantly weaken the distinction of adjacent Green Belt land, resulting in at least very high harm to Green Belt Purpose 3 (assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment). It would also weaken the clearly defined boundary of the River Crouch to the south and further weaken the already fragile gap between Basildon and Billericay to the east around Great Burstead offering potential for very high harm to Green Belt purposes 1 (checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas) and 2 (preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another).

Opportunity areas for development

A.137 Based on the analysis above, there is little potential to accommodate substantial infill development, owing to the plotlands small size and landscape and Green Belt sensitivities. The plotland is located approximately 270m from the nearest settlement edges inset from the Green Belt at Basildon to the south and Great Burstead to the east, and separated from them by the River Crouch and open farmland.

A.138 In addition, given that the plotland is not defined as a village in the Borough's settlement hierarchy (see **Appendix B**), there is no potential for limited infill village development (appropriate in Green Belt terms) amongst existing areas of plotland development.

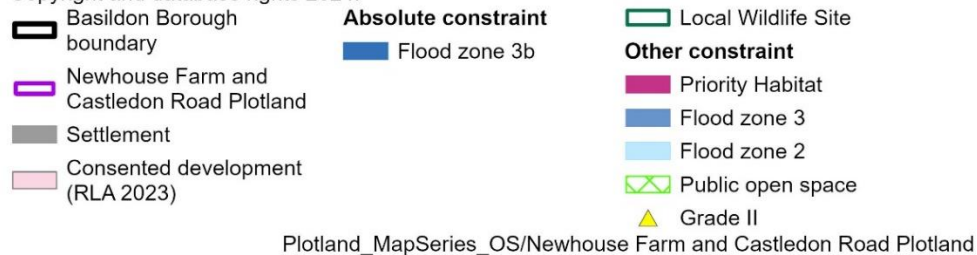
Newhouse Farm and Castledon Road

Newhouse Farm and Castledon Road Plotland

Basildon Borough Plotlands Growth Potential Study
Basildon Borough Council



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Plotland_MapSeries_OS/Newhouse Farm and Castledon Road Plotland

Landscape context

A.139 The plotland area is located to the north-east of the borough and measures approximately 77ha. It lies on the western edge of the town of Wickford and close to the south-east of the village of Ramsden Bellhouse and is situated between London Road (A129) to the south and the Wickford to Shenfield railway line to the north.

A.140 Development is organised along a grid of roads with three distinct areas – one to the south contained development (inset from the Green Belt) on London Road, Woolshots Road and Sugden Avenue; one located centrally accessed via Sugden Avenue; and one to the north-east along Castledon Road. Development within the plotland predominantly comprises low-density modern bungalows and chalets and associated outbuildings (garages and sheds), with some larger two-storey detached properties to the north-east along Castledon Road. There are five consented developments within the plotland area, for development which is relatively small in scale. This includes demolition and construction of a replacement dwellings (21/00799/FULL and 17/00540/FULL), the re-use and conversion of an existing building (21/01598/FULL) or the construction of 3 or 4 new dwellings (21/00375/FULL and 21/00762/FULL).

A.141 Existing built development is interspersed with several open agricultural fields and smaller paddocks and undeveloped (often overgrown) plots. The plotland also features several small woodland blocks and tree belts, some of which is identified as Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland'. The River Crouch runs through the southern part of the plotland.

A.142 The plotland area lies entirely within LCA 06 – Ramsden-Bellhouse and Wickford Settled Claylands, as defined within the Basildon Landscape Character Assessment (2014). Relevant key characteristics of the LCA include:

- “Gently undulating topography falling towards the River Crouch.
- Vegetation along the River Crouch and railway line form prominent features.

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

- Ramsden Bellhouse is a linear settlement built along existing Church Lane.
- 20th Century plotland development with mature vegetation (particularly oaks) and mix of individual detached houses/chalet bungalows, paddocks and overgrown / undeveloped plots.
- 20th Century linear development along A129 is a mix of houses and small industrial enterprise, i.e. Garden Centre.
- Medium scale arable fields with mixed hedgerow boundaries with occasional mature oak trees, located west of Wickford.
- Medium size paddocks separated by post and wire fencing are located within the Castledon settlement.
- Fragmented woodland form discrete features of the landscape.
- Plotlands connected by narrow, quiet private roads (often unsurfaced and with no drainage).
- Important views into the area from high land to the north around Brock Hill and from Downham Church on Castledon Road.”

Landscape analysis

Physical and natural character

A.143 The following considers the distinctiveness of the landform and the presence of and extent of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features, as well as any particular functional value associated with the natural landscape:

- The landform within the plotland is undulating, reflecting that of the wider surrounding area; AOD heights range from between approximately 25m in the south-east and north-east and 11-13m along the River Crouch. The Upper River Crouch and associated tributary streams and scattered ponds form distinctive topographical features within the area (moderate sensitivity).

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

- The Wickford Meadows Local Wildlife Site (SINC) lies in proximity to the east. Whilst not extending into the plotland area, the corridor of the River Crouch share some of its characteristics including bank side vegetation, adjacent pastures (moderate sensitivity).
- There are several areas of Priority Habitat ‘deciduous woodland’, concentrated mainly to the south-east and central parts of the plotland, and Priority Habitat ‘traditional orchard’ to the north-west. Dense tree cover, including frequent mature oaks, around existing development and riparian woodland along much of the River Crouch and its tributary streams also form distinctive landscape features. The The corridor of the River Crouch (moderate sensitivity).
- Elsewhere, the plotland comprises domestic gardens or arable farmland with limited semi-natural habitats or valued natural features (lower sensitivity).
- The valley of the River Crouch forms part of Flood Zone 3b, performing a valuable part of the floodplain (higher sensitivity).

Historic character, pattern and time depth, and historical or cultural associations

A.144 The following considers pattern and historic ‘time depth’: in terms of a distinctive plotland settlement form and pattern, or the presence of historic field patterns or historic features that contribute to landscape character. It also considers historical or cultural associations which contribute to positive perceptions of the landscape:

- The landscape is identified within the Essex HLC (2013) as being predominantly comprised of ‘built-up areas’ (lower sensitivity).
- Historic mapping (OS Six Inch, 1840s – 1880s) shows that the grid-like medium size field pattern originating from Saxon times are preserved, with some open fields along the River Crouch are retained in central eastern areas (higher sensitivity).

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

- Elsewhere, the original field pattern is evident it is overlain by plotland development and with some hedgerow loss in places. (moderate sensitivity).
- The early 20th century plotland allotment arrangement, which generally fit with the pre-existing landscape structure, is preserved which helps retain some plotland character. However, much of the built development has been replaced with more modern development (moderate sensitivity).
- The site contains no historic designations; the closest designated asset is the Grade II listed Bell Farmhouse which lies along London Road to the south which has limited physical or visual relationship with the plotland (lower sensitivity).

Settlement form and edge character

A.145 The following considers the extent to which the landscape relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement(s):

- The plotland lies along the western edge of Wickford and close to the south-east of the village of Ramsden Bellhouse. Existing development along London Road is contiguous with the edge of Wickford and is perceived as being part of the settlement. Development to the south of the plotland along London Road (between the edge of Wickford and existing development on Woolshots Road), would therefore not generally be perceived as an extension of the settlement into the countryside (lower sensitivity).
- Other parts of the plotland are less strongly associated with Wickford, being separated from it by the River Crouch and woodland cover to the south-east of the plotland; or Ramsden Bellhouse, being separated from it by woodland cover to the north of the plotland. Woodland cover creates well-integrated settlement edges and forms distinctive boundary features (moderate sensitivity).

Settlement setting

A.146 The following considers the role that the landscape plays in providing a setting to an adjacent settlement(s), including visual relationship, any distinctiveness it provides, or whether it preserves separation between distinct settlements:

- Woodland cover and open agricultural fields within the south-east and eastern central parts of the plotland form part of an open rural setting to the west of Wickford. Mature woodland cover provides a wooded backdrop in views and the wooded shallow valley of the River Crouch provides some sense of arrival/departure when travelling along Castledon Road (moderate sensitivity).
- Eastern and north-eastern parts of the plotland form an open area between north-west Wickford and Ramsden Bellhouse. It therefore plays a part in preserving clear separation between these two distinct settlements. The 2023 Green Belt Study also identified this area, including the woodland blocks, as contributing towards gap between Wickford and Billericay (higher sensitivity).

Visual prominence, skyline and views

A.147 The following considers the visual character of the landscape, including the sense of openness or enclosure, and extent to which potential development would be visible to surrounding visual receptors:

- The small to medium sized allotments and presence of intermittent tree cover, including dense tree cover around existing development, results in a sense of visual enclosure across much of the plotland. Views across the plotland have an enclosed character, with localised views terminating on several small woodlands and tree belts. This, along with the predominance of single-storey structures, means that the existing development within the plotland is not visually prominent (moderate sensitivity).

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

- The landform is gently undulating and does not form a visually distinctive or prominent skyline. However, as noted within the Landscape Character and Green Belt Landscape Capacity Study (2014), there are important views south from high land to the north around Brock Hill and from Downham Church on Castledon Road within which the plotland area is visible; and towards western parts of the area from Doeshill to the south (higher sensitivity).
- Views into eastern parts of the plotland are likely to be available from Footpath 91 as it meets Castledon Road, where the undeveloped character of the landscape makes some positive contribution to the quality of the view. There are also a number of residential properties along Castledon Road which would experience views across the eastern parts of the plotland (moderate sensitivity).
- Elsewhere views into the western parts of the plotland are available from Church Road and views into the north-eastern parts from Castledon Road (lower sensitivity).

Perceptual character

A.148 The following considers the qualities of the landscape, including sense of rurality, remoteness or tranquillity:

- A largely developed landscape lying adjacent to the urban area of Wickford with limited sense of tranquillity and experience of dark skies. The area is identified as being of relatively low tranquillity in CPRE tranquillity mapping and as having moderately dark skies in the CPRE night blight Dark mapping (lower sensitivity).
- Areas of remnant farmland and woodland and the river valley of the River Crouch provides some sense of rural character and scenic value (moderate sensitivity).

Key landscape sensitivities

The following features/characteristics are identified as the principal constraints to development within the plotland area. They are also indicated on the aerial view below.

- Topographical variety provided by the gently undulating landform and the shallow valley of the River Crouch and unnamed tributary streams. Functional value of Flood Zone 3b along the valley of the River Crouch.
- Value of the Upper River Crouch valley as part of the functional floodplain and through its relationship with Wickford Meadows Local Wildlife Site (SINC) to the east.
- Several areas of Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland', concentrated mainly to the south-east and central parts of the plotland, and Priority Habitat 'traditional orchard' to the north-west.
- Dense tree cover, including frequent mature oaks, around existing development and riparian woodland along much of the River Crouch and its tributary streams also form distinctive landscape features.
- Remnant historic field pattern along the River Crouch in central eastern areas.
- Surviving original plotland layout and resulting plotland character.
- The role of eastern parts of the plotland area in preserving clear separation between Wickford and Ramsden Bellhouse.
- Visible in elevated views from Brock Hill and from Downham Church to the north.

Green Belt impacts across the plotland

A.149 The plotland area lies across five parcels identified and assessed within the Basildon Green Belt Study (2023): WI2, WI13, WI14, WI15 and RB2.

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

Release and inappropriate development in these locations is not considered likely to generate any more than moderate harm to any single Green Belt purpose, specifically to Green Belt purposes 2 (preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another) and 3 (assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment). This can be attributed to the partially developed nature of the plotland, combined with its containment by the adjacent inset urban areas of Ramsden Bellhouse and Wickford.

A.150 The most harmful areas of the plotland in Green Belt terms are located in the north eastern corner of the plotland either side of the Casltedon Road, where the plotland development is less dense and less contained, resulting in more distinction from the inset urban edges of Ramsden Bellhouse to the west and Wickford to the south.

A.151 The release and development of the majority of the plotland area would further breach the River Crouch to the south further weakening the Green Belt boundary between the northwest of Wickford and the surrounding Green Belt.

A.152 The notable exceptions to this are the southern portions of the plotland contained by London Road and Sugden Avenue and Woolshots Road (parcel WI13) and Castledon Road (parcel WI14) and south of the River Crouch. Only the former (WI13), bound by London Road and Sugden Avenue and Woolshots Road is considered to result in low/no Green Belt harm to the Green Belt due to this area already being mostly developed by inappropriate land uses and having weak distinction from the urban edge of Wickford. Furthermore, its release and development would not weaken adjacent Green Belt land due to the area's existing containment by the inset urban area of Wickford, and the treelined River Crouch represents a stronger alternative Green Belt boundary to the north.

A.153 The landscape analysis has not identified any areas of opportunity that were not already identified as being low/no harm in Green Belt terms in the Basildon Green Belt Study (2023).

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

A.154 More generally, the Newhouse Farm and Castledon Road Plotland has been judged by inspectors through various appeals and the Borough's settlement hierarchy to be suitable for definition as a village, by virtue of its proximity and connection to Wickford and Ramsden Bellhouse. Consequently, there are likely to be isolated and small-scale opportunities for limited infill village development across the plotland in line with paragraph 154e of the NPPF.

Opportunity areas for development

A.155 Based on the analysis above, there is potential to release the southern parts of the plotland area that is contained by existing development on London Road, Woolshots Road and Sugden Avenue from the Green Belt designation for development. The existing development on London Road, Woolshots Road and Sugden Avenue is inset from the Green Belt and so there may be an opportunity to rationalise the Green Belt boundary as part of a release, potentially using the River Crouch and associated Flood Zone 3b as a robust and recognisable boundary feature.

A.156 In addition, given the plotland is defined as a village in the Borough's settlement hierarchy (see **Appendix B**), there is some potential for limited infill village development (appropriate in Green Belt terms) amongst existing areas of plotland development to the north-west and north-east in the Green Belt.

Design guidance

A.157 The following high-level design guidance has been identified for opportunity areas identified within the plotland area. This has considered the key constraints and potential to mitigate impacts, with potential landscape and GBI enhancement measures set out below. They are also indicated on the figure below.

Design guidance and recommendations for mitigation

- Locate built development in the south of the plotland in areas partially contained by existing inset development on London Road, Woolshots Road and Sugden Avenue, so as to relate better to the existing settlement pattern; and avoid any impact on the sense of separation between Wickford and Ramsden Bellhouse (and in turn between Wickford and Billericay).
- Built development within the south of the area should be of a similar height and density as the adjacent inset settlement edge (i.e. one to two storey detached and semi-detached housing at a low density), whilst any limited infill development within the area should be of a similar height and density as the existing development (i.e. bungalows and chalets at a low density) and should seek to maintain the plotland character.
- Retain existing mature tree cover within areas of plotland development, including mature oaks, hedgerows and Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland', to help reduce the visual presence of existing and nay future development.
- Consider the visual impact of any new development, including on important views from Brock Hill and from Downham Church to the north; potential for the strengthening of boundary vegetation to the north of the plotland area.
- Development should avoid and be set back from the shallow valley of the River Crouch and its tributary streams; these features should form the basis of a GBI network.
- Retain and enhance existing tree belts and introduce new woodland and tree planting to the south of the River Crouch, to help screen the visual influence of existing and future built development and to form a robust and defensible Green Belt boundary (for the proposed Green Belt release).

- Development should avoid and be set back from existing Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland', with an appropriate buffer zone to avoid root damage.
- Limit visibility of urban elements, such as new access roads, along Castledon Road, to help maintain perceived rural character to the north-west of Wickford.

Capacity to accommodate growth

A.158 The total area of the area identified for potential release from the Green Belt in the south west of the plotland is approximately 14 ha. Low density development (c. 25dph) consistent with the density of the development in the adjacent inset settlement edge, would provide an estimated total capacity of 350 dwellings in this location. The Council must demonstrate the necessary 'exceptional circumstances' set out in paragraphs 144-148 of the NPPF before allocating this area for development in the Local Plan.

A.159 Assigning an accurate development capacity to the wider potential of the plotland to accommodate limited infill village development (appropriate in Green Belt terms) is very difficult given the sporadic and small-scale nature of these infill locations. However, it is estimated that the central and north-eastern parts of the plotland could accommodate somewhere between 15 and 25 dwellings without affecting the character of the plotland. The appropriateness of such development in Green Belt terms will need to be determined on a site by site bases as planning applications come forward through the development management process. Consequently, the capacity range identified in this paragraph cannot be allocated in the Local Plan but may provide an indication as to the scale of potential Green Belt-appropriate windfall development in the Green Belt over the plan period.

Infrastructure Requirements and Delivery Recommendations

A.160 Each plotland site deemed viable for development has had its infrastructure requirements assessed using assumptions detailed in **Appendix C**. These assumptions are based on the prevailing policy requirements set out as applicable, whether those of Essex County Council, Basildon Borough Council or central government authorities.

Table A.4: Infrastructure requirements for Newhouse Farm and Castledon Road, Wickford

Infrastructure category	Infrastructure sub-category / Item	New build or extension?	Requirement	Unit (area / pupils)	Requirement (£)
Education	Early Years	School extension	33	pupils	£657,763
	Primary	School extension	110	pupils	£2,192,543
	Secondary	School extension	73	pupils	£2,010,353
	Post 16	School extension	12	pupils	£324,749
School Transport	Primary Transport		110	pupils	£2,914,770
	Secondary Transport		73	pupils	£434,874
Travel planning	Travel plan monitoring				£633,750
Healthcare	GP Surgery	GP surgery extension	64.29	sqm	£193,821
Open Space	Allotments		0.051	ha	
	Amenity Green spaces		1.247	ha	

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

Infrastructure category	Infrastructure sub-category / Item	New build or extension?	Requirement	Unit (area / pupils)	Requirement (£)
	Park and recreation grounds		1.594	ha	
	Play space (children)		2.344	ha	
	Play space (Youth)		0.000	ha	
	Natural Green space		0.938	ha	
	RAMS Mitigation				£61,448
Sports Facilities	Pools Cost				£215,226
	Halls Cost				£196,006
	Indoor Bowls Cost				£5,995
	Artificial Grass Pitch cost (3G)				£32,254
	Artificial Grass Pitch cost (sand)				£29,142
Community	Community Building	Community facility extension	225	sqm	£524,250
Emergency Services	Ambulance capacity				£127,500
Libraries	Library	Library extension	28.125	m2	£91,500
Waste	Waste management				£44,430

A.161 Review of electricity network usage information from UK Power Networks (UKPN) (the local electricity distribution company) in this area does not raise significant concerns about the potential for this site to connect to the electricity grid. However, UKPN should be contacted to confirm this position.

Transport Infrastructure

Vehicle Transport

A.162 This plotland area is bordered to the south by the A129 London Road. This is characterised by extensive residential frontage and direct property access via vehicle crossovers along the northern edge of the road.

A.163 There are north – south aligned roads that provide access within the plotland area and link to London Road at the south. These are more rural in character, comprising single track country lanes with no footways. The River Crouch divides the area and there is only one crossing point within the plotland, via Sugden Avenue which leads to a network of smaller residential streets. Sugden Road and all offshoots are private roads and do not provide any through-routing.

A.164 Along the Plotland's eastern boundary, Castledon Road provides another river crossing. This route follows the eastern boundary and routes through the north-eastern area of the plotland. It is heavily residential in character to the south, with frequent vehicle crossovers providing direct property access. The road becomes more rural in character to the north, with properties set back and screened from view, but direct driveway accesses remain a frequent occurrence.

A.165 There are no significant accident clusters on the area's road network within the latest 5 years of data (source: Crashmap.co.uk).

A.166 With the exception of the greenfields directly fronting Castledon Road, other vacant plots are set back behind existing residential development and therefore access opportunities are limited by this extensive frontage. There are some small-scale private lanes and cut-throughs that provide access to the rear of the residential properties, however this would need to be considered in more detail on a case-by-case basis, and in consultation with landowners.

Pedestrian Infrastructure

4.5 London Road has comprehensive footways along its northern boundary however, there are localised instances of poor surfacing. The frequency of vehicle crossovers creates an uneven surface which is not amenable for wheelchair and buggy users. Dropped kerbs and tactile paving at side road crossings are not consistently provided or are in disrepair.

4.6 The internal roads accessed from Sugden Avenue do not have footway provision. Within the northern roads accessed from Sugden Avenue, this is considered in-keeping with the rural character of the area and suitable for the low vehicle numbers and speeds accommodation. The straight and wider alignment of Sugden Avenue may encourage higher vehicle speeds, and traffic calming and pedestrian footways would be beneficial, however it is noted this is a privately-owned road.

4.7 On Casteldon Road, pedestrian footways become more intermittent and narrow further north. There are locations where surfacing is in disrepair, dropped kerbs exist and tactile paving is not provided at side road crossings, and footways are extremely narrow (<1m wide). Telegraph poles are noted to be located centrally within narrow footways, particularly north of Elizabeth Drive, causing obstruction especially for wheelchair and buggy users. Any development in the north-eastern plotland area would need to ensure cohesive pedestrian footways are provided linking to the south.

Cycle Infrastructure

A.167 There is no dedicated cycle infrastructure within the plotland area or its vicinity.

Public Transport

A.168 Wickford Rail Station is located c. 2km east of the plotland (a c.5-minute cycle or 25-minute walk away). The station provides regular services to Southend and London Liverpool Street.

A.169 Bus services operate along London Road bordering the south of the plotland. They operate on an approximately 45-to-60-minute frequency and serve local destinations including Wickford Town Centre and Billericay. The eastbound bus stop is marked with a bus flag but does not have seating or shelter. The westbound stop is equipped with seating and a shelter, however the pedestrian crossing and footway linking to the stop is overgrown with vegetation and in poor condition. Tactile paving is present adjacent to the bus layby but is misaligned and does not connect to designated crossing. Improvements to bus stop connections would be necessary to improve bus access from the plotland area.

Opportunities for Improvement

A.170 Based on the above, there are several opportunities for improvements to transport infrastructure:

- Extend footways on Castledon Road as required, to provide a complete footway network within and around the plotland.
- Developer contributions towards footway widening, decluttering, and resurfacing on Castledon Road.
- Developer contributions towards a review and improvements to tactile paving and dropped kerbs at side road crossings.
- Developer contributions towards cycle infrastructure within and around the plotland.
- Contributions towards increased bus frequencies, real time information displays at stops, provision of seating and shelters, and improved

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

pedestrian access to stops including pedestrian crossings of London Road.

Green and Blue Infrastructure

A.171 The Newhouse Farm and Castledon Road Plotland is characterised by larger areas of settlement with some pockets of Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland' located within the south east corner and in the north. Wickford Riverside LWS and SINC is located immediately to the east of the plotland boundary. Much of the site to the north and north west is unsuitable for woodland creation. However, small areas to the south east have high suitability for woodland creation and areas to the north east and to the south west have medium suitability.

A.172 The River Crouch runs from east-west across the plotland. The central section of the plotland from east to west is designated as flood zone 2 (medium risk) and flood zone 3 (high risk) and 3b (functional floodplain). Immediately to the north, south and west of the plotland large areas of land have wider woodland catchment potential which could provide natural flood risk management. There are no PRowS within the plotland. A PRow runs immediately south of the plotland from London Road. A PRow also runs from the east of the plotland from Castledon Road along Riverside Walk. Based on Natural England's access to natural greenspace data which sets out four standards, only a portion of the eastern opportunity areas fall within the wider neighbourhood standard which means that a greenspace of at least 20ha is within 2km.

Opportunities for compensatory improvement

A.173 After reviewing the information above, the most relevant GBI opportunities for this plotland are:

- Enhance ecological links between the various pockets of woodland within the plotland and surrounding the plotland, including Wickford Riverside

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

LWS and SINC and the River Crouch corridor. This is shown in the figure below via enhanced habitat connectivity. In addition, a buffer zone around Priority Habitat could provide a valuable habitat for woodland wildlife and should consist of semi-natural habitat (e.g. a mix of woodland edge and semi-improved grassland to provide structural complexity and species diversity).

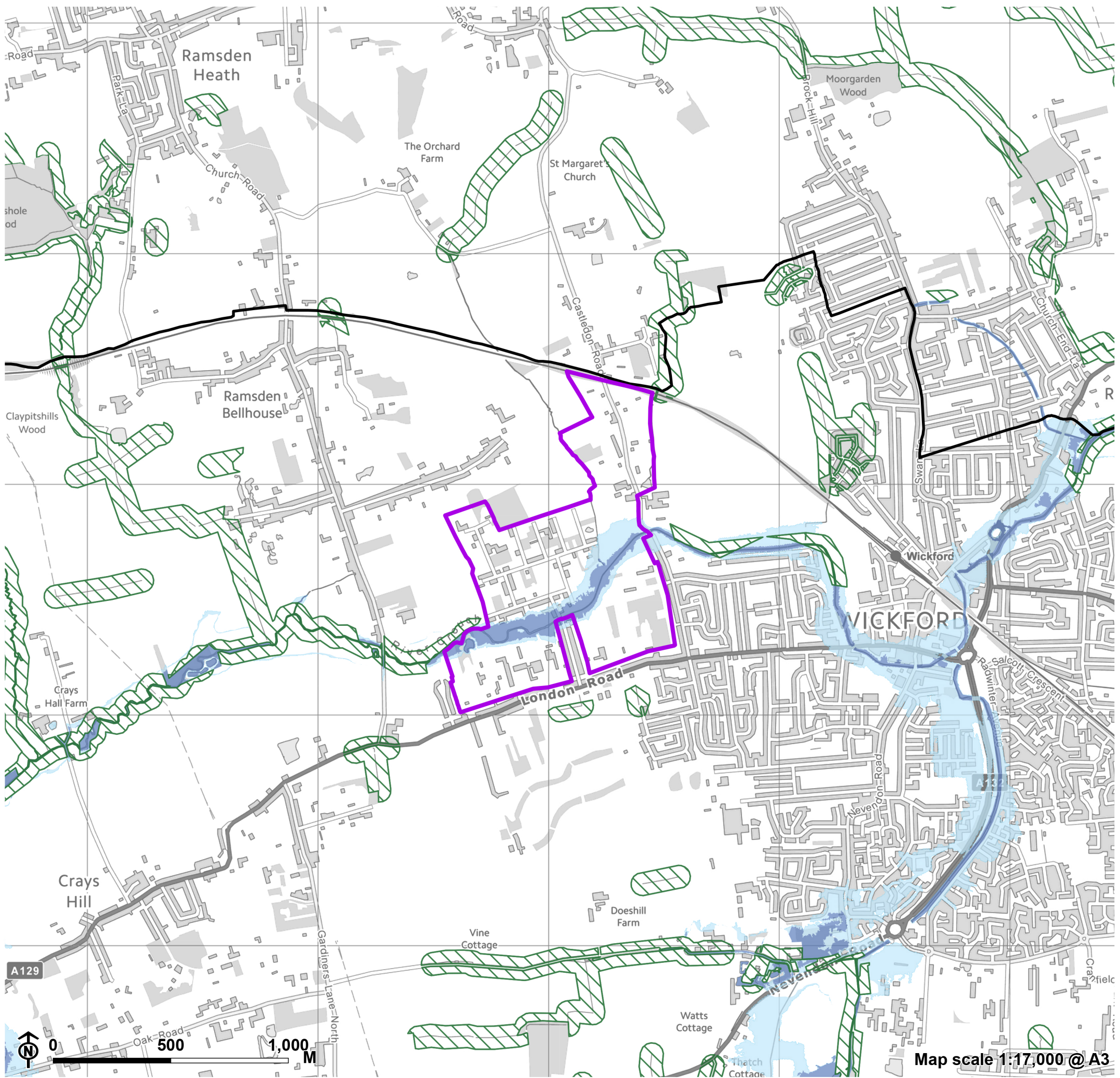
- Improve the PRow connectivity across the plotland which could be done by extending the PRow that runs along Riverside Walk. The figure below shows this opportunity area along the river corridor.
- Enhance connections with Wickford Meadows Riverside SINC to the east and wider opportunities identified by the Environmental Agency further west along the River Crouch for Riparian Woodland Potential and Floodplain Woodland Potential. The natural flood risk management map below shows the opportunity areas for natural flood risk management within and around the plotland.
- Enhance hedgerows throughout the area, including the introduction of hedgerow trees, to provide visual screening, strengthen the connectivity of the local habitat network and enhance historic field boundary. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible.

A.174 Planning obligations can be included as part of planning approval in order to secure funding for green and blue infrastructure, including monitoring and maintenance, and ensure its success and longevity. Any development projects in this plotland would need to provide better ecological connectivity and public access through S106 obligations and/or CIL. In addition, since 2 April 2024, all new planning applications in England must deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG). As such, new development within this plotland will have to increase biodiversity compared to what was previously on site which could lead to GBI enhancements on site.

A.175 To note, this is a high-level study therefore once preferred site allocations have been identified, site specific studies would need to be completed to inform more detailed project planning and viability. Engaging with relevant landowners

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

and experts (e.g. ecologists, landscape management experts) will also be critical to understanding project feasibility and deliverability.



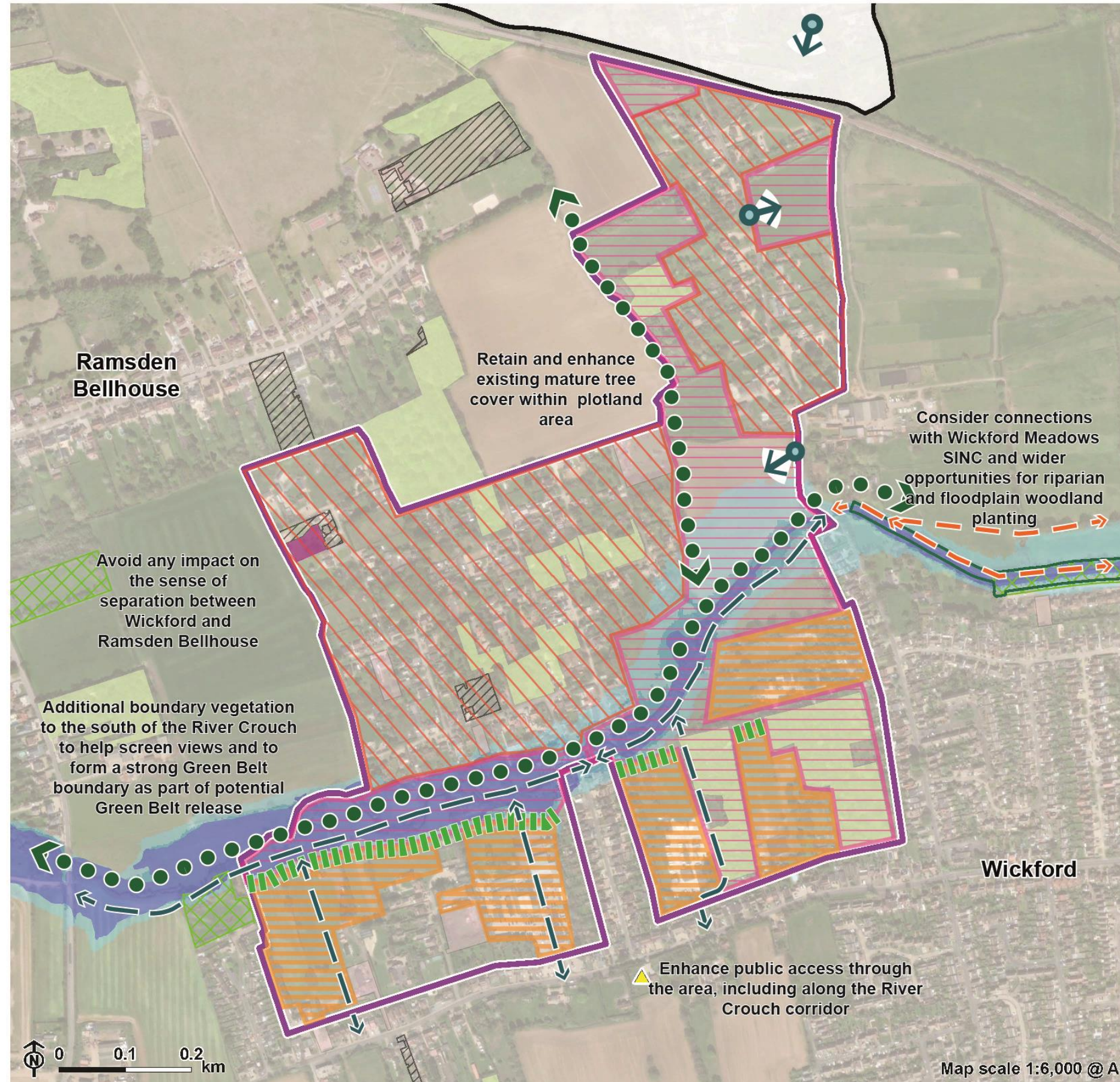
**Natural Flood Risk Management -
Newhouse Farm and Castledon Road Plotland**

- Basildon Borough boundary
- Plotland area
- WWNP Riparian Woodland Potential
- Flood zone 3
- Flood zone 2

Note:
Areas of Riparian Woodland Potential have been masked by constraint layers.



Map scale 1:17,000 @ A3



Basildon Borough Plotlands Growth Potential Study
Basildon Borough Council



Newhouse Farm and Castledon Road Plotland
Key constraints and opportunities

- Newhouse Farm and Castledon Road Plotland
- Basildon Borough boundary

Constraints

- Grade II listed building
- Public open space
- Local Wildlife Site
- Flood zone 2
- Flood zone 3
- Flood zone 3b
- Consented development (RLA 2023)

Priority Habitats Inventory

- Deciduous woodland
- No main habitat but additional habitats present
- Traditional orchard
- Higher sensitivity area
- Existing access connectivity
- Views

Opportunities

- Strengthen boundary vegetation
- Potential enhanced habitat connectivity
- Potential enhanced access connectivity
- Potential limited infill development
- Potential substantial infill / inseting

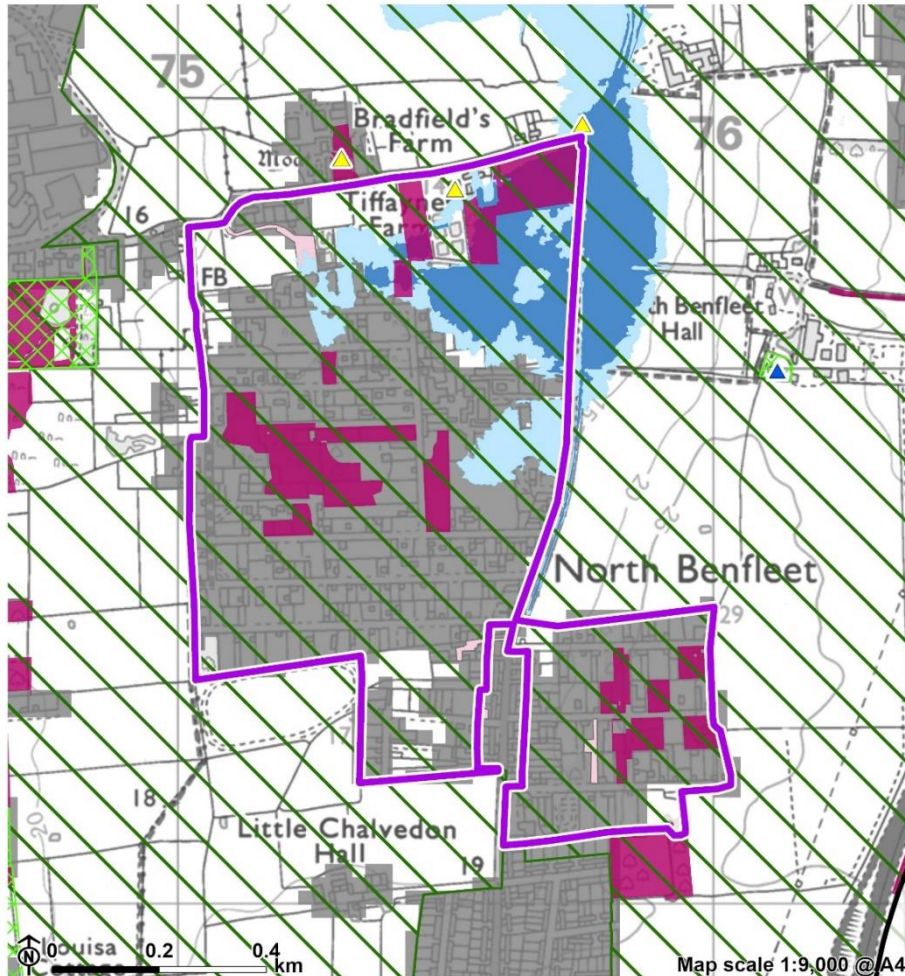


Map scale 1:6,000 @ A3

North Benfleet

North Benfleet Plotland

Basildon Borough Plotlands Growth
Potential Study
Basildon Borough Council



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- Basildon Borough boundary
- North Benfleet Plotland
- Settlement
- Consented development (RLA 2023)
- Green belt

- Other constraint**
- Priority Habitat
- Flood zone 3
- Flood zone 2
- Public open space
- Grade II*
- Grade II

Plotland_MapSeries_OS/North Benfleet Plotland

Landscape context

A.176 This is a large plotland area measuring approximately 81ha. It is located to the east of the borough, situated between Basildon to the west, Bowers Gifford to the south and South Benfleet to the east.

A.177 Development is organised on a grid of streets and covers the majority of the plotland, albeit with the north being slightly less developed. The majority of the buildings are single and two storey detached dwellings surrounded by modest gardens and areas of hardstanding. These residential areas are punctuated with mobile homes and outbuildings used by a range of industrial and commercial businesses.

A.178 There are several consented developments across the plotland area, for development which is relatively small in scale, including the construction of residential dwellings to the north (20/00093/FULL) and to the south-east (22/01337/LDCE and 22/01706/LDCE).

A.179 Existing built development is interspersed with open agricultural fields and smaller paddocks and undeveloped (often overgrown) plots. The plotland also features several small woodland blocks and tree belts. Land to the north-east of the plotland is lower-lying and lies within Flood Zone 2.

A.180 The plotland area lies within LCA 04 – North Benfleet and Nevendon Settled Claylands, as defined within the Basildon Landscape Character Assessment (2014). Relevant key characteristics of the LCA include:

- “Flat landform
- Plotland settlements comprising grid of narrow linear plots located off main through roads
- Plotland roads mainly unadopted and unsurfaced
- Horse and pony paddocks, medium-sized and subdivided by post and wire fences or gappy hawthorn hedgerows

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

- A127 and A13 pass through/adjacent to the area
- Recreational grounds including Rushley Park, woods, open green space and educational grounds form a north-south linear feature located at eastern boundary with Pitsea
- Medium to small arable fields at Bradfield's Farm and between recreational and plotlands areas, separated by rectilinear hedgerow boundaries
- Fragmented woodland cover".

Landscape analysis

Physical and natural character

A.181 The following considers the distinctiveness of the landform and the presence of and extent of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features, as well as any particular functional value associated with the natural landscape:

- The landform within the plotland is relatively flat at between 15m and 17m AOD (lower sensitivity), but begins to rise gently in the south-east up to around 30m AOD (moderate sensitivity).
- There are several scattered woodland blocks and tree belts throughout the plotland including areas of Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland' to the west and south-east. There are also areas of Priority Habitat 'traditional orchard' to the north-east and south-east (moderate sensitivity).
- Elsewhere, the plotland comprises a mix of paddocks and domestic gardens with limited semi-natural habitats or valued natural features (lower sensitivity).
- Lower-lying land within the north-east of the plotland lies within Flood Zone 2 and therefore performs a valuable natural function as part of the floodplain (higher sensitivity).

Historic character, pattern and time depth, and historical or cultural associations

A.182 The following considers pattern and historic ‘time depth’: in terms of a distinctive plotland settlement form and pattern, or the presence of historic field patterns or historic features that contribute to landscape character. It also considers historical or cultural associations which contribute to positive perceptions of the landscape:

- The majority of the landscape is identified within the Essex HLC (2013) as comprising modern ‘built-up areas’. The more open parts to the north are identified as comprising a mix of ‘post 1950’s enclosure’ (lower sensitivity).
- In the north of the plotland there is a remnant medieval moated site at Tiffayne’s Farmhouse (Grade II listed building) which, along with Bradfield Farmhouse (Grade II listed building) in proximity to the north of the plotland provides some sense of time-depth (moderate sensitivity).
- Historic mapping (OS Six Inch, 1840s – 1880s) shows that the medieval grid-like medium size field pattern remains evident within the plotland, with open fields retained across the plotland particularly in the north-east (higher sensitivity).
- Elsewhere, the original field pattern is evident but is overlain by development and with some hedgerow loss in places (moderate sensitivity).
- The early 20th century geomteric plotland allotment arrangement, which generally fit with the pre-existing landscape structure, is evident in northern areas (Elm Road, Barclay Road, Upper Avenue, Carlton Road and Lower Avenue), central areas (Hamilton Road, Windsor Road, and Osbourne Road) and to the south (Katherine Road, Clifton Road and Clarence Road). This helps retain some plotland character, although much of the built development has been replaced with more modern development (moderate sensitivity).

Settlement form and edge character

A.183 The following considers the extent to which the landscape relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement(s):

- The plotland lies immediately north of Bowers Gifford, with existing development within the south of the plotland east of Pound Lane contiguous with the settlement edge (lower sensitivity). However, the relatively large open field to the west of Pound Lane in this location provides some sense of separation between the main part of Bowers Gifford to the south and plotland development to the north (moderate sensitivity).
- The north-western part of the plotland lies close to the eastern edge of Basildon (Burnt Mills), with only small amounts of open land between the two (moderate sensitivity). Elsewhere the plotland is less strongly related to the eastern edge of Basildon, being separated from it by open farmland and woodland blocks (higher sensitivity).

Settlement setting

A.184 The following considers the role that the landscape plays in providing a setting to an adjacent settlement(s), including visual relationship, any distinctiveness it provides, or whether it preserves separation between distinct settlements:

- Woodland cover and open agricultural fields within the north-east of the plotland form part of an open rural setting to the east of Basildon. However, there is limited visual relationship between the two owing to intervening development within the north-west of the plotland (moderate sensitivity).
- The open character of northern parts of the plotland area plays a part in preserving a sense of separation between Basildon/Pitsea and South Benfleet/Thundersley especially when travelling along Burnt Mills Road. The 2023 Green Belt Study also identified this area as contributing

towards the gap between Basildon and South Benfleet, albeit noted that the urbanising influence of the existing washed-over plotland development (moderate sensitivity).

Visual prominence, skyline and views

A.185 The following considers the visual character of the landscape, including the sense of openness or enclosure, and extent to which potential development would be visible to surrounding visual receptors:

- Presence of hedgerows, woodland areas and frequent scattered mature trees within private plots and along roads gives much of the area a wooded feel and a sense of enclosure. Views across much of the plotland have an enclosed character, with localised views terminating on several small woodlands and tree belts. This, along with the predominance of single-storey structures, means that the existing development within the plotland is not visually prominent (moderate sensitivity).
- The landform is relatively flat to gently sloping and does not form a visually distinctive or prominent skyline (lower sensitivity).
- Views into the more open north-western parts of the plotland are likely to be available from Footpath 143, where the largely undeveloped character of the landscape makes some positive contribution to the quality of the view. Some views out are also available to visitors to All Saints Church and users of Footpath 317 to the west (higher sensitivity). Elsewhere, views from public footpaths (including Footpath 143 to the south-west) are generally filtered through woodland and other vegetation (moderate sensitivity).
- Views are also available from the surrounding road network (including Burnt Mills Road, Pound Lane and North Benfleet Hall Road), as well as the roads and lanes within the plotland, albeit views tend to be screened or filtered by vegetation (lower sensitivity).

Perceptual character

A.186 The following considers the qualities of the landscape, including sense of rurality, remoteness or tranquillity:

- A partially developed landscape lying adjacent to the urban areas of Basildon and Bowers Gifford with limited sense of tranquillity and experience of dark skies. Traffic noise from A13 and A127 to the south, east and north also impact perceptual qualities. The area is identified as being of relatively low tranquillity in CPRE tranquillity mapping and as having moderately dark skies in the CPRE night blight Dark mapping (lower sensitivity).
- Areas of open farmland and woodland, particularly to the north, provide some sense of rural character and scenic value (moderate sensitivity).

Key landscape sensitivities

The following features/characteristics are identified as the principal constraints to development within the plotland area.

- Functional value of Flood Zone 2 within the north-east of the plotland.
- Ecological and landscape value of the woodland cover, in particular the area of Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland' and 'traditional orchard'.
- Sense of time-depth provided by remnant historic field pattern and historic moated site at Tiffayne's Farmhouse (Grade II listed) to the north.
- Surviving original plotland layout and resulting plotland character in northern, central areas and southern parts of the area.
- The role of open land to the north of the plotland area in contributing to a sense of separation between Basildon/Pitsea and South Benfleet/Thundersley when travelling along Burnt Mills Road.

Green Belt impacts across the plotland

A.187 The plotland area lies within parcel NB1 identified and assessed within the Basildon Green Belt Study (2023). Release and inappropriate development in the plotland is considered to generate no more than moderate harm to Green Belt purposes 1 (checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas), 2 (preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another) and 3 (assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment). Further release and development would generally strengthen the association between Basildon and North Benfleet, increasing the latter's association with the large built-up area and in so doing narrowing the relatively narrow gap between Basildon and South Benfleet; however, the significance of this is somewhat reduced by the existing washed over development, which limits the impact that further development would cause in the immediate vicinity.

Opportunity areas for development

A.188 Based on the analysis above, there is no potential to accommodate substantial infill development. Whilst the south of the plotland is located immediately adjacent to the urban edge of Bowers Gifford, there are no vacant plots of land of sufficient size to accommodate substantial infill development.

A.189 However, given the plotland is defined as a village in the Borough's settlement hierarchy (see **Appendix B**), there is some potential for limited infill village development (appropriate in Green Belt terms) amongst existing areas of plotland development in the Green Belt.

Design guidance

A.190 The following high-level design guidance has been identified for opportunity areas identified within the plotland area. This has considered the key constraints and potential to mitigate impacts, with potential landscape and

GBI enhancement measures set out below. They are also indicated on the figure below.

Design guidance and recommendations for mitigation

- Any limited infill development within the plotland should be of a similar height and density as the existing development (i.e. single and two storey detached dwellings at a low density) and should seek to maintain the plotland character.
- Retain existing mature tree cover within the plotland area, including Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland' and 'traditional orchard', hedgerows and mature vegetation interspersed within existing plotland development, to help reduce the visual presence of existing and nay future development.
- Development should avoid and be set back from existing Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland' and 'traditional orchard', with an appropriate buffer zone to avoid root damage.
- Consider the visual impact of any new development, including from public rights of way; potential for increasing and strengthening boundary vegetation along the south-western and western edge of the plotland. This will help screen the visual influence of existing and future built development and will form a robust and defensible Green Belt boundary (for the proposed Green Belt release).
- Maintain open farmland to the north and north-west of the plotland so as to limit potential impact on the sense of separation between Basildon/Pitsea and South Benfleet/Thundersley when travelling along Burnt Mills Road.

Capacity to accommodate growth

A.191 Assigning an accurate development capacity to the wider potential of the plotland to accommodate limited infill village development (appropriate in Green Belt terms) is very difficult given the sporadic and small-scale nature of these infill locations. However, it is estimated that the plotland could accommodate somewhere between 35 and 50 dwellings without affecting the character of the plotland. The appropriateness of such development in Green Belt terms will need to be determined on a site by site bases as planning applications come forward through the development management process. Consequently, the capacity range identified in this paragraph cannot be allocated in the Local Plan but may provide an indication as to the scale of potential Green Belt-appropriate windfall development in the Green Belt over the plan period.

Infrastructure Requirements and Delivery Recommendations

A.192 Each plotland site deemed viable for development has had its infrastructure requirements assessed using assumptions detailed in **Appendix C**. These assumptions are based on the prevailing policy requirements set out as applicable, whether those of Essex County Council, Basildon Borough Council or central government authorities.

Infrastructure requirements for North Benfleet

Infrastructure category	Infrastructure sub-category / Item	New build or extension?	Requirement	Unit (area / pupils)	Requirement (£)
Education	Early Years	School extension	4	pupils	£2,249
	Primary	School extension	15	pupils	£7,496

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

	Secondary	School extension	10	pupils	£6,873
	Post 16	School extension	2	pupils	£43,300
School Transport	Primary Transport		15	pupils	£9,965
	Secondary Transport		10	pupils	£1,487
Travel planning	Travel plan monitoring				£0
Healthcare	GP Surgery	GP surgery extension	8.57	sqm	£25,843
Open Space	Allotments		0.007	ha	
	Amenity Green spaces		0.166	ha	
	Park and recreation grounds		0.213	ha	
	Play space (children)		0.313	ha	
	Play space (Youth)		0.000	ha	
	Natural Green space		0.125	ha	
	RAMS Mitigation				£8,193
Sports Facilities	Pools Cost				£28,697
	Halls Cost				£26,134
	Indoor Bowls Cost				£794
	Artificial Grass Pitch cost (3G)				£4,301
	Artificial Grass Pitch cost (sand)				£3,886

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

Community	Community Building	Community facility extension	30	sqm	£69,900
Emergency Services	Ambulance capacity				£17,000
Libraries	Library	Library extension	3.750	m2	£12,200
Waste	Waste management				n/a

A.193 Review of electricity network usage information from UK Power Networks (UKPN) (the local electricity distribution company) in this area does not raise significant concerns about the potential for this site to connect to the electricity grid. However, UKPN should be contacted to confirm this position.

Transport Infrastructure

Vehicle Transport

A.194 This plotland area is bordered to the north by Burn Mills Road, and the east by Pound Lane. Burn Mills Road is rural in nature with residential properties set back from the carriageway, and several direct driveway accesses. The road is subject to a 30mph speed limit and routes east-west, connecting into Basildon to the west.

A.195 Pound Lane is subject to a 40mph limit. Towards the north of the plotland area, it is similarly rural in nature serving a mix of residential driveways and small-scale industrial uses. It connects to the A127 westbound carriageway with short on- and off-slip roads. Towards the south (from Cat Tree Lane southwards), the road becomes more residential in nature with direct property frontage, footways and vehicle crossovers.

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

A.196 All internal roads within the plotland area are unadopted private routes. They are generally characterised as single-track, or narrow two-lane roads with no footway and varying surface quality.

A127 Pedestrian Safety Issues

A.197 The Pound Lane / A127 junction has experienced four road traffic accidents in the latest five years of available data (2018-2022) (source: Crashmap.co.uk). One of these resulted in a serious motorcycle casualty, and one involved a pedestrian fatality.

A.198 Although the nature of the dispersed small-scale development opportunities in this plotland would not lead to a significant increase in pedestrian movements at this junction, any intensification of use would need to be considered within the context of these known safety issues.

Pedestrian Infrastructure

A.199 Pound Lane has comprehensive footways along both sides of the carriageway from Cat Tree Lane southwards, however these are varying in quality and there are several localised areas of poor, loose surfacing particularly at side road crossings. Pavement parking appears to be an issue which obstructs pedestrian movement, and the frequency of vehicle crossovers creates an uneven surface which is not amenable for wheelchair and buggy users. Dropped kerbs and tactile paving at side road crossings are not consistently provided.

A.200 The internal private roads within the plotland area are generally single track or narrow rural lanes. Footways are not provided, however this is in-keeping with the character of these plotland areas and suitable for the low vehicle numbers and speeds accommodation.

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

A.201 Surrounding facilities and amenities are dispersed, however there is a concentration of employment uses within Burn Mill Industrial Estate for which there is no pedestrian connection on Burn Mills Road. A potential improvement would be to upgrade the existing Public Right of Way that borders the west of the plotland and facilitate a footway connection to this on Burnt Mills Road.

Cycle Infrastructure

A.202 There is no dedicated cycle infrastructure within the Plotland area or its vicinity.

Public Transport

A.203 A local bus service (route 21) operates north-south along Pound Lane. They operate on an approximate hourly frequency between Bowers Gifford and Basildon.

A.204 There are several stops along the corridor with varying facilities ranging from a simple bus flag to seating and shelters. There are limited formal pedestrian crossings on Pound Lane in the vicinity of these stops.

A.205 The closest rail station is Pitsea, located approximately 5km south-west of the area (a 15-minute cycle or 10-minute drive). The station provides regular services to Shoeburyness and London Fenchurch Street.

Opportunities for Improvement

A.206 The opportunities for development within this plotland are likely to be small-scale, sporadic and therefore seeking large-scale new infrastructure contributions may not be feasible. However, there are considered to be several opportunities for improvements in the area:

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

- Extend footways on Burnt Mills Road, linking the Burnt Mills Road / Courtauld Road junction to the Public Right of Way (PROW) bordering the plotland's western boundary. This should be delivered alongside resurfacing and lighting improvements on the PROW.
- Developer contributions towards footway widening, decluttering, and resurfacing on Pound Lane.
- Developer contributions towards a review and improvements to tactile paving and dropped kerbs at side road crossings.
- Review of formal pedestrian crossing locations on Pound Lane, and provision of improved crossing facilities at key desire lines.
- Contributions towards increased bus frequencies, real time information displays at stops, provision of seating and shelters, and improved pedestrian access to stops including pedestrian crossings on Pound Lane.

Green and Blue Infrastructure

A.207 The North Benfleet plotland is mostly comprised of settlement area with small pockets of Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland' located within both of the opportunity areas. The Priority Habitat 'traditional orchard' is located in the north east corner of the plotland, outside of the opportunity areas. The southern opportunity area falls completely within a Network Enhancement Zone for traditional orchards. The majority of the plotland is designated as unsuitable for woodland creation however there are small areas of medium and high suitability to the north and east.

A.208 The north eastern corner of the site is located in flood zone 2 (medium risk) and a smaller section of this area is located in flood zone 3 (high risk). There are large areas of land designated as wider catchment woodland potential surrounding the plotland which could provide natural flood risk management. There is a PROW that runs along the western boundary of the site from Bowers Gifford. There is another PROW outside the plotland boundary that runs east-west from Pound Land to Knightlands Lodge. Based on Natural England's access to natural greenspace data which sets out four standards,

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

only about half of the northern opportunity area fall within the wider neighbourhood standard which means that a greenspace of at least 20ha is within 2km.

Opportunities for compensatory improvement

A.209 After reviewing the information above, the most relevant GBI opportunities for this plotland are:

- Enhance the areas of priority habitats deciduous woodland and traditional orchard throughout the plotland, the location of which is shown on the figure below. As some of the areas are located within the opportunity areas identified for development there is a clear opportunity for development proposals to enhance them. In addition, a buffer zone around Priority Habitat could provide a valuable habitat for woodland wildlife and should consist of semi-natural habitat (e.g. a mix of woodland edge and semi-improved grassland to provide structural complexity and species diversity).
- Enhance the PRoW network to run through the plotland to provide access to Basildon. The figure below illustrates the potential for enhanced access toward Basildon.
- Greenspace can be enhanced by incorporating additional greenspace elements into the developments. However, to qualify as an improvement, these contributions must exceed the minimum standards outlined in current policy requirements. Additionally, hedgerows could be enhanced throughout the area, including the introduction of hedgerow trees, to provide visual screening, strengthen the connectivity of the local habitat network and enhance historic field boundary. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible.

A.210 Planning obligations can be included as part of planning approval in order to secure funding for green and blue infrastructure, including monitoring and maintenance, and ensure its success and longevity. Any development projects in this plotland would need to provide better ecological connectivity and access to greenspace through S106 obligations and/or CIL. In addition, since 2

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

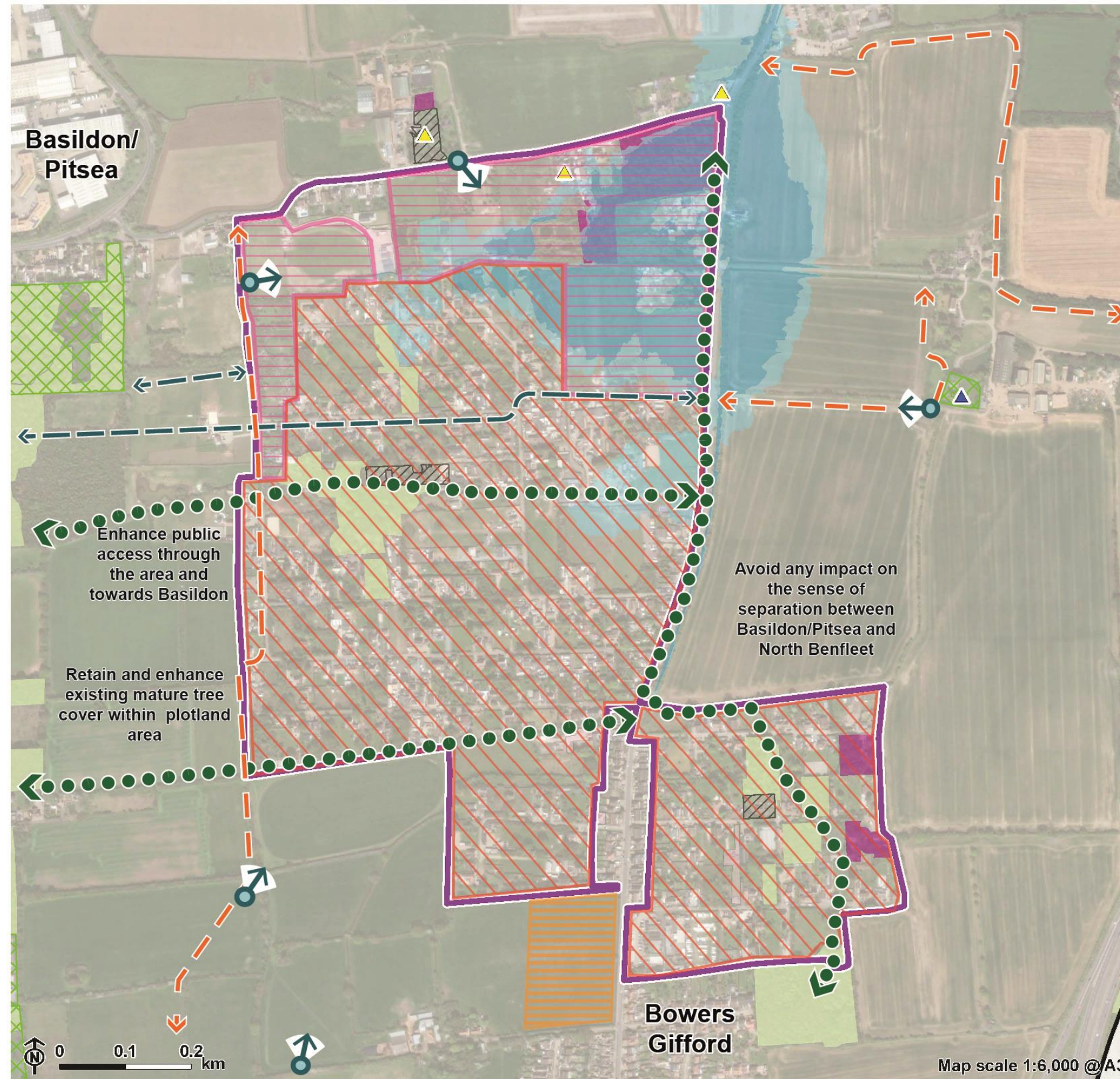
April 2024, all new planning applications in England must deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG). As such, new development within this plotland will have to increase biodiversity compared to what was previously on site which could lead to GBI enhancements on site. There is a clear need for more greenspace in the area which could be provided through development.

A.211 To note, this is a high-level study therefore once preferred site allocations have been identified, site specific studies would need to be completed to inform more detailed project planning and viability. Engaging with relevant landowners and experts (e.g. ecologists, landscape management experts) will also be critical to understanding project feasibility and deliverability.



North Benfleet Plotland
Key constraints and opportunities

- North Benfleet Plotland
- Basildon Borough boundary
- Constraints**
- ▲ Grade II* listed building
- ▲ Grade II listed building
- Public open space
- Flood zone 2
- Flood zone 3
- Consented development (RLA 2023)
- Priority Habitats Inventory**
- Deciduous woodland
- No main habitat but additional habitats present
- Traditional orchard
- Higher sensitivity area
- Existing access connectivity
- ↗ Views
- Opportunities**
- Potential enhanced habitat connectivity
- Potential enhanced access connectivity
- Potential limited infill development
- Potential substantial infill / inseting



Northlands, Langdon Hills

Northlands Plotland

Basildon Borough Plotlands Growth Potential Study
Basildon Borough Council



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- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basildon Borough boundary Northlands Plotland Settlement Consented development (RLA 2023) Green belt | <p>Absolute constraint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ancient Woodland Site of Special Scientific Interest | <p>Other constraint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priority Habitat Country Park Public open space Grade II |
|---|---|--|

Plotland_MapSeries_OS/Northlands Plotland

Landscape context

A.212 The plotland area is located along the southwestern edge of the borough and measures approximately 16ha. It lies predominantly south of Dry Street, with a smaller section to the north of the road. It is surrounded by a number of landscape-related designations, including Langdon Ridge SSSI, Langdon Hills Local Wildlife Site (SINC), Coombe Wood Ancient Woodland and Westley Heights Country Park and Langdon Hills Country Park (within neighbouring Thurrock).

A.213 Development allotments are organised in a regular pattern along Dray Street, Northlands Approach, Coombe Drive, Thames View, Grays Avenue and Blackheath Chase. Built development predominantly comprises low-density modern bungalows and chalets and associated outbuildings (garages and sheds). There are four consented developments within the plotland area, for development which is relatively small in scale. This includes the construction of a bungalow with therapy pool annexe (19/01405/FULL), and the demolition of existing dwellings and outbuildings and the construction of replacement chalets/dwellings (21/00166/FULL, 21/00090/FULL and 22/00728/FULL).

A.214 Existing built development is interspersed with open paddocks and undeveloped (often overgrown) plots. The plotland also features several small woodland blocks and tree belts, some of which is identified as Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland'. Land to the north of Dry Street forms part of the Langdon Hills SSSI and Local Wildlife Site and Westley Heights Country park.

A.215 The plotland area lies entirely within LCA14 – Langdon Hills, as defined within the Basildon Landscape Character Assessment (2014). Relevant key characteristics of the LCA include:

- “The landform is strongly undulating encompassing the elevated Langdon Hills with sloping sides and secondary valleys
- Grid-like former plotland sites to the north west of the area at Langdon Hills Nature Reserve

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

- Irregular, curvilinear field patterns and former plotlands in the centre wrapping round the hillside at Westley Heights
- Medium sized rectilinear arable fields and small scattered pastures with mixed tall and clipped hedgerows to the south east
- Extensive woodland cover, predominantly Oak with a mix of Sycamore, Ash, Field Maple, Hawthorn and Elm
- Some secondary woodland on former plotlands and mature Oaks and Poplars throughout golf course.
- Higher ground allows some extensive views overlooking the Thames Estuary
- Isolated farmhouses, dispersed roadside ribbon settlement of 20th century origin and some Plotland retaining a grid-like structure
- Ecological designations cover large parts of the character area and also comprising an extensive country park and nature reserve
- Small number of intrusive commercial development in open locations and some major roads dissecting the landscape
- Extensive network of Public Rights of Way run through and connect areas of informal recreation within the parcels of the Country Park and nature reserve”

Landscape analysis

Physical and natural character

A.216 The following considers the distinctiveness of the landform and the presence of and extent of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features, as well as any particular functional value associated with the natural landscape:

- The plotland slopes down from approximately 100m AOD in the north to 55m AOD in the south, reflecting its location within the Langdon Hills. 'Dry

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

Street' which runs through the north of the plotland is a reference to the sandy ground of the area (higher sensitivity).

- There are frequent mature trees around existing development, including Oak, Sycamore and Ash, and the small and medium scale arable and grazed fields/paddocks are enclosed by mature tree belts and hedgerows (moderate sensitivity).
- The plotland is surrounded by extensive woodland, including Ancient Woodland at Coombe Wood to the immediate west. Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland' within the north and south of the plotland area is part of a wider network which covers large sections of the Langdon Hills. Land to the north forms part of Langdon Ridge SSSI and Westley Heights Country Park. The wider SSSI and Country park support a diverse mosaic of semi-natural habitats, including grasslands, fen meadows, woodlands, scrub, species-rich hedgerows and ponds (higher sensitivity).
- Within the plotland the domestic gardens and pasture have limited semi-natural habitats or valued natural features (lower sensitivity).

Historic character, pattern and time depth, and historical or cultural associations

A.217 The following considers pattern and historic 'time depth': in terms of a distinctive plotland settlement form and pattern, or the presence of historic field patterns or historic features that contribute to landscape character. It also considers historical or cultural associations which contribute to positive perceptions of the landscape:

- The landscape is identified within the Essex HLC (2013) as being predominantly comprised of 'built-up areas' (lower sensitivity), with small areas of 'pre 18th century enclosure to the north of Dry Street (moderate sensitivity).
- The plotland area is set within a wider landscape characterised by curvilinear, medium-size field pattern produced through medieval piecemeal assarting of woodland (higher sensitivity). The early 20th

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

century plotland was imposed upon this earlier landscape structure. Whilst the original plotland allotment arrangement is preserved, which helps retain some plotland character, much of the built development has been replaced with more modern development (moderate sensitivity).

- The plotland contains the Grade II listed Rose Cottage to the north-east on Dry Street, which provides some sense of time-depth (moderate sensitivity). Other nearby heritage assets include Westley Hall which lies to the north within Westley Heights Country Park, although this feature has limited physical or visual relationship with the plotland (lower sensitivity).

Settlement form and edge character

A.218 The following considers the extent to which the landscape relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement(s):

- The plotland lies south of Langdon Hill/Great Berry and south-west of Lee Chapel, both suburbs of Basildon. The plotland is separated from these settlements by extensive woodland cover, including that within Westley Heights Country Park and Willow Park Nature Reserve. Development would therefore have a poor relationship with existing settlement form (higher sensitivity).

Settlement setting

A.219 The following considers the role that the landscape plays in providing a setting to an adjacent settlement(s), including visual relationship, any distinctiveness it provides, or whether it preserves separation between distinct settlements:

- Woodland cover and dispersed mature trees within the plotland form part of the highly wooded rural setting to the south and west of Basildon. Mature woodland cover encloses the southern edge of Basildon and provides a wooded backdrop in views from the settlement edge, although

the distance from the settlement edge and fall of the landform to the south limits the contribution of the plotland in this regard (moderate sensitivity).

Visual prominence, skyline and views

A.220 The following considers the visual character of the landscape, including the sense of openness or enclosure, and extent to which potential development would be visible to surrounding visual receptors:

- The visually prominent Langdon Hills/ridge forms a distinctive landscape feature within views from the wider landscape; in distant views the area forms a wooded ridge wrapping around and enclosing the urban edge of Basildon (higher sensitivity). However, mature tree cover and woodland within and around the plotland result in a strong sense of visual enclosure with views in and out of the plotland generally well screened. This, and the predominance of single-storey structures, mean that the existing development within the plotland is not generally visible within the surrounding landscape (lower sensitivity).
- Some views out of the plotland area available through gaps in vegetation. The elevated position of the plotland allows extensive views south and south-east across the lower-lying ground associated with the River Thames and Pitsea Creek towards Kent. Notable views are available from Thames View on the eastern side of the plotland (higher sensitivity)
- Views into eastern parts of the plotland are likely to be available from Footpath 186 where it flanks the eastern boundary of the plotland and where the wooded character of the landscape makes some positive contribution to the quality of the view. Residential properties along Dry Street may experience views across the north-eastern parts of the plotland through gaps in vegetation (moderate sensitivity).
- Filtered views into the northern parts of the plotland may be available from the more open parts of Westley Heights Country Park which is elevated above the plotland to the north (moderate sensitivity).

Perceptual character

A.221 The following considers the qualities of the landscape, including sense of rurality, remoteness or tranquillity:

- A largely undeveloped, highly wooded landscape enclosing the southern edge of Basildon with some sense of tranquillity and experience of dark skies. The northern half of the plotland has higher levels of tranquillity owing to greater woodland cover (providing some sense of rural character and scenic value) but the area is overall identified as being of relatively low tranquillity in CPRE tranquillity mapping and as having moderately dark skies in the CPRE night blight Dark mapping (lower sensitivity).

Key landscape sensitivities

The following features/characteristics are identified as the principal constraints to development within the plotland area. They are also indicated on the aerial view below.

- Forms part of the Langdon Hills which are distinctive landscape feature within views from the wider landscape.
- The sloping landform creating with some long views available across the Thames Valley and Pitsea Creek.
- Landscape and natural heritage value associated with Langdon Ridge SSSI, areas of Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland' and Westley Heights Country Park.
- Dense tree cover, including frequent mature Oak, Sycamore and Ash, around existing development form distinctive landscape features, screen views of existing built development and contribute to the wooded character of the surrounding landscape.
- The role of the plotland area forming part of the rural, highly wooded southern setting to Basildon (particularly Langdon Hills and Lee Chapel South).

- Intervening extensive woodland cover mean the plotland has a poor relationship with the existing settlement form of Basildon.
- Visible from Footpath 186 and parts of Westley Heights Country Park.

Green Belt impacts across the plotland

A.222 The plotland area lies within outer area OA5 identified and assessed within the Basildon Green Belt Study (2023). Release and inappropriate development in this area is generally considered likely to generate very high harm to Green Belt purposes 1 (checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas) and 3 (assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment) and high harm Green Belt Purpose 2 (preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another). This can be attributed to the area's general openness and very strong distinction from Basildon to the north and east. Further inappropriate development in this location would further encroach onto the wooded slopes that mark strong distinction between the wider countryside and the large built-up area of Basildon to the north and east, weakening the distinction of Green Belt that lies at lower elevations and narrowing the gap between Basildon and Stanford-le-Hope.

Opportunity areas for development

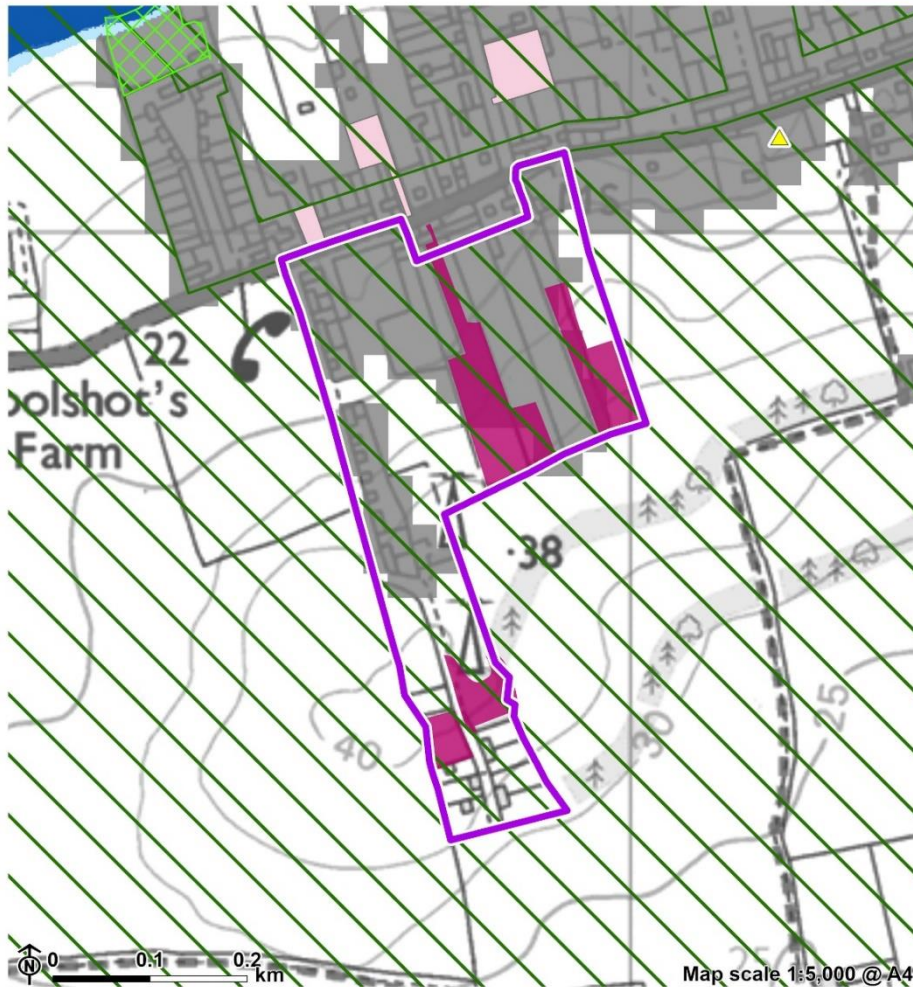
A.223 Based on the analysis above, there is little potential to accommodate substantial infill development, owing to the plotlands small size and landscape and Green Belt sensitivities. The plotland is located approximately 400m from the nearest settlement edge inset from the Green Belt at Langdon Hills to the north, and separated from it by substantial intervening mature woodland cover.

A.224 In addition, given that the plotland is not defined as a village in the Borough's settlement hierarchy (see **Appendix B**), there is no potential for limited infill village development (appropriate in Green Belt terms) amongst existing areas of plotland development.

Ramsden View, Wickford

Ramsden View Road Plotland

Basildon Borough Plotlands Growth
Potential Study
Basildon Borough Council



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- | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Basildon Borough boundary | Absolute constraint | Other constraint |
| Ramsden View Road Plotland | Flood zone 3b | Priority Habitat |
| Settlement | | Flood zone 3 |
| Consented development (RLA 2023) | | Flood zone 2 |
| | | Public open space |
| | | Grade II |

Plotland_MapSeries_OS/Ramsden View Road Plotland

Landscape context

A.225 The plotland area is located to the north-east of the borough and measures approximately 12ha. It is situated to the south of London Road (A129) on the western edge of the town of Wickford and close to the eastern edge of Crays Hill village to the west.

A.226 Development is organised along London Road to the north and Ramsden View Road, which runs perpendicular to London Road, to the west. Development to the north of Ramsden View Road is slightly denser, mirroring the small tightly packed plots on London Road which forms part of the inset urban area of Wickford. Development within the plotland predominantly comprises low-density modern bungalows and chalets, whilst that on London Road adjacent to the plotland comprises one and two storey properties.

A.227 Existing built development is interspersed with several open agricultural fields and smaller paddocks and undeveloped (often overgrown) plots. The north-eastern parts of the plotland comprises long linear strips of land associated with properties on London Road. The plotland also features several small woodland blocks and tree belts, some of which is identified as Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland'.

A.228 The plotland area lies entirely within LCA 06 – Ramsden-Bellhouse and Wickford Settled Claylands, as defined within the Basildon Landscape Character Assessment (2014). Relevant key characteristics of the LCA include:

- “Gently undulating topography falling towards the River Crouch.
- Vegetation along the River Crouch and railway line form prominent features.
- Ramsden Bellhouse is a linear settlement built along existing Church Lane.
- 20th Century plotland development with mature vegetation (particularly oaks) and mix of individual detached houses/chalet bungalows, paddocks and overgrown / undeveloped plots.

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

- 20th Century linear development along A129 is a mix of houses and small industrial enterprise, i.e. Garden Centre.
- Medium scale arable fields with mixed hedgerow boundaries with occasional mature oak trees, located west of Wickford.
- Medium size paddocks separated by post and wire fencing are located within the Castledon settlement.
- Fragmented woodland form discrete features of the landscape.
- Plotlands connected by narrow, quiet private roads (often unsurfaced and with no drainage).
- Important views into the area from high land to the north around Brock Hill and from Downham Church on Castledon Road.”

Landscape analysis

Physical and natural character

A.229 The following considers the distinctiveness of the landform and the presence of and extent of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features, as well as any particular functional value associated with the natural landscape:

- The landform within the plotland slopes gently down from around 40m AOD in the south to around 20m AOD in the north. This forms part of a wider surrounding undulating landform sloping towards the River Crouch in the north (moderate sensitivity).
- There are areas of Priority Habitat ‘deciduous woodland’ within the south-west of the plotland and to the north-east within the linear strips behind properties on London Road. There are also frequent mature trees, including Oaks, around existing development (moderate sensitivity).
- Elsewhere, the plotland comprises domestic gardens or arable farmland with limited semi-natural habitats or valued natural features (lower sensitivity).

Historic character, pattern and time depth, and historical or cultural associations

A.230 The following considers pattern and historic 'time depth': in terms of a distinctive plotland settlement form and pattern, or the presence of historic field patterns or historic features that contribute to landscape character. It also considers historical or cultural associations which contribute to positive perceptions of the landscape:

- The landscape is identified within the Essex HLC (2013) as being predominantly comprised of 'built-up areas' with a small area of 'post 1950's enclosure' to the west (lower sensitivity).
- Historic mapping (OS Six Inch, 1840s – 1880s) shows that the grid-like medium size field pattern originating from Saxon times are preserved, with some open fields retained (higher sensitivity).
- Elsewhere, the original field pattern is still evident but is overlain by plotland development (moderate sensitivity).
- The early 20th century plotland allotment arrangement along Ramsden View Road, which generally fit with the pre-existing landscape structure, is preserved which helps retain some plotland character. However, much of the built development has been replaced with more modern development (moderate sensitivity).
- The site contains no historic designations; the closest designated asset is the Grade II listed Bell Farmhouse which lies along London Road to the east which has limited physical or visual relationship with the plotland (lower sensitivity).

Settlement form and edge character

A.231 The following considers the extent to which the landscape relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement(s):

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

- The plotland lies along the western edge of Wickford and close to the eastern edge of Crays Hill village. Existing development along London Road is contiguous with the edge of Wickford and is perceived as being part of the settlement. Development to the north of the plotland along London Road (between the edge of Wickford and existing development on Woolshots Road), would therefore not generally be perceived as an extension of the settlement into the countryside (lower sensitivity).
- Other parts of the plotland are less strongly associated with Wickford, being separated from it by open fields and woodland within the north-eastern parts of the plotland (moderate sensitivity). The plotland has a limited relationship with the eastern edge of Crays Hill owing to the presence of intervening open farmland and hedgerows (higher sensitivity).

Settlement setting

A.232 The following considers the role that the landscape plays in providing a setting to an adjacent settlement(s), including visual relationship, any distinctiveness it provides, or whether it preserves separation between distinct settlements:

- Woodland cover and open agricultural fields within the plotland form part of an open rural setting to the west of Wickford. Mature woodland cover provides a wooded backdrop in views (moderate sensitivity).
- Open land within the plotland makes some contribution to a sense of separation between Wickford and Crays Hill village to the west and between Wickford and Basildon to the south-west. The 2023 Green Belt Study also identified this area as contributing towards gap between Wickford and Basildon (higher sensitivity).

Visual prominence, skyline and views

A.233 The following considers the visual character of the landscape, including the sense of openness or enclosure, and extent to which potential development would be visible to surrounding visual receptors:

- The small to medium sized allotments and presence of intermittent tree cover, including dense tree cover around existing development, results in a sense of visual enclosure across much of the plotland. Views across the plotland have an enclosed character, with localised views terminating on several small woodlands and tree belts. This, along with the predominance of single-storey structures, means that the existing development within the plotland is not visually prominent (moderate sensitivity).
- The landform is undulating and the gently rising topography of the plotland forms a low wooded horizon in views south from London Road and west from the edge of Wickford (moderate sensitivity). In addition, as noted within the Landscape Character and Green Belt Landscape Capacity Study (2014), there are long-distance views towards the area from Kent Hill (north of Ramsden Bellhouse) in Chelmsford Borough. In addition, there are important views south from high land to the north around Brock Hill and from Downham Church on Castledon Road within which the plotland area is partially visible; and from Doeshill to the south (higher sensitivity).

A.234 Views towards the plotland are likely to be available from Footpath 82 to the south and south-west and from Footpath 84 to the east. There are also some residential properties along London Road to the north which would experience views towards northern parts of the plotland (moderate sensitivity).

Perceptual character

A.235 The following considers the qualities of the landscape, including sense of rurality, remoteness or tranquillity:

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

- A largely developed landscape lying adjacent to the urban area of Wickford with limited sense of tranquillity and experience of dark skies. The area is identified as being of relatively low tranquillity in CPRE tranquillity mapping and as having moderately dark skies in the CPRE night blight Dark mapping (lower sensitivity).
- Areas of remnant farmland and woodland provide some sense of rural character and scenic value (moderate sensitivity).

Key landscape sensitivities

The following features/characteristics are identified as the principal constraints to development within the plotland area.

- Topographical variety provided by the undulating landform which also provided a low wooded horizon in views from London Road and the edge of Wickford.
- Areas of Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland', to the south-west and north-east.
- Dense tree cover, including frequent mature oaks, around existing development.
- Remnant historic field pattern including some open fields retained.
- Surviving original plotland layout and resulting plotland character.
- The role of open land within the plotland area in contributing to a sense of separation between Wickford and Crays Hill and between Wickford and Basildon.
- Visible in elevated views from the north (Kent Hill, Brock Hill and from Downham Church) to the north, and from Doe Hill to the south.

Green Belt impacts across the plotland

A.236 The plotland area lies across two parcels identified and assessed within the Basildon Green Belt Study (2023): WI12 and CH4. Release and inappropriate development directly south of the A129 is not considered likely to generate any more than moderate harm to Green Belt purposes 1 (checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas), 2 (preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another) and 3 (assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment). This can be attributed to this land having more association with the urban area along London Road and less of an impact on the wider Green Belt than the open countryside to the south, including the southern end of the plotland, which has more distinction than the northern two thirds as a result of its distance from London Road and the screening influence of trees between them. The harm of release and development in the southern third of the plotland would therefore result in higher harm to the same Green Belt purposes.

A.237 The landscape analysis has not identified any areas of opportunity that were not already identified as being moderate harm in Green Belt terms in the Basildon Green Belt Study (2023).

Opportunity areas for development

A.238 Based on the analysis above, there is potential to release some northern parts of the plotland area that is partially contained by existing development on London Road and Ramsden View Road. The existing development on London Road is inset from the Green Belt and so there may be an opportunity to rationalise the Green Belt boundary as part of a release, potentially using existing and future woodland as a robust and recognisable boundary feature.

A.239 Given that the plotland is not defined as a village in the Borough's settlement hierarchy (see **Appendix B**), there is no potential for limited infill

village development (appropriate in Green Belt terms) amongst existing areas of plotland development.

Design guidance

A.240 The following high-level design guidance has been identified for opportunity areas identified within the plotland area. This has considered the key constraints and potential to mitigate impacts, with potential landscape and GBI enhancement measures set out below. They are also indicated on the figure below.

Design guidance and recommendations for mitigation

- Locate built development in the north of the plotland in areas partially contained by existing inset development on London Road and existing plotland development on Ramsden View Road, so as to relate better to the existing settlement pattern; and avoid any impact on the sense of separation between Wickford and Crays Hill and Wickford and Basildon.
- Built development should be of a similar height and density as the adjacent inset settlement edge (i.e. one to two storey housing at a low density).
- Retain existing mature tree cover within areas of plotland development, including mature oaks, hedgerows and Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland', to help reduce the visual presence of existing and nay future development.
- Consider the visual impact of any new development, including on important views from Kent Hill and from Doe Hill; potential for the strengthening of boundary vegetation to the north of the plotland area.
- Retain existing tree belts and introduce new woodland and tree planting to the south of new development. This will help screen the visual influence of existing and future built development and will form a robust

and defensible Green Belt boundary (for the proposed Green Belt release).

- Development should avoid and be set back from existing Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland', with an appropriate buffer zone to avoid root damage.

Capacity to accommodate growth

A.241 The total area of the area identified for potential release from the Green Belt in the south west of the plotland is approximately 1ha. Low density development (c. 25dph) consistent with the density of the development in the adjacent inset settlement edge, would provide an estimated total capacity of 25 dwellings in this location. The Council must demonstrate the necessary 'exceptional circumstances' set out in paragraphs 144-148 of the NPPF before allocating this area for development in the Local Plan.

Infrastructure Requirements and Delivery Recommendations

A.242 Each plotland site deemed viable for development has had its infrastructure requirements assessed using assumptions detailed in **Appendix C**. These assumptions are based on the prevailing policy requirements set out as applicable, whether those of Essex County Council, Basildon Borough Council or central government authorities.

Table A.5: Infrastructure requirements for Ramsden View Road, Wickford

Infrastructure category	Infrastructure sub-category / Item	New build or extension?	Requirement	Unit (area / pupils)	Requirement (£)
Education	Early Years	School extension	2	pupils	£1,124
	Primary	School extension	7	pupils	£3,748
	Secondary	School extension	5	pupils	£3,437
	Post 16	School extension	1	pupils	£21,650
School Transport	Primary Transport		7	pupils	£4,983
	Secondary Transport		5	pupils	£743
Travel planning	Travel plan monitoring				£0
Healthcare	GP Surgery	GP surgery extension	4.29	sqm	£12,921
Open Space	Allotments		0.003	ha	
	Amenity Green spaces		0.083	ha	
	Park and recreation grounds		0.106	ha	
	Play space (children)		0.156	ha	
	Play space (Youth)		0.000	ha	
	Natural Green space		0.063	ha	
	RAMS Mitigation				£4,097

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

Infrastructure category	Infrastructure sub-category / Item	New build or extension?	Requirement	Unit (area / pupils)	Requirement (£)
Sports Facilities	Pools Cost				£14,463
	Halls Cost				£13,172
	Indoor Bowls Cost				£400
	Artificial Grass Pitch cost (3G)				£2,167
	Artificial Grass Pitch cost (sand)				£1,958
Community	Community Building	Community facility extension	15	sqm	£34,950
Emergency Services	Ambulance capacity				£8,500
Libraries	Library	Library extension	1.875	m2	£6,100
Waste	Waste management				n/a

A.243 Review of electricity network usage information from UK Power Networks (UKPN) (the local electricity distribution company) in this area does not raise significant concerns about the potential for this site to connect to the electricity grid. However, UKPN should be contacted to confirm this position.

Transport Infrastructure

Vehicle Transport

A.244 This plotland area is bordered to the north by the A129 London Road. This is characterised by extensive residential frontage and direct property access via vehicle crossovers along the northern edge of the road. Along the

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

south, properties are set back from the carriageway with direct driveway access, and no footway is present.

A.245 Ramsden View Road routes along the western boundary of the plotland area. This is a privately owned road connecting to London Road to the north. It has sections of footway along the residential frontage to the north of the road, however this stops approximately 30m south of its junction with London Road so does not provide a complete link. Approximately 100m south of London Road, Ramsden View Road becomes an unsurfaced gravel single-track lane, connecting to several further properties.

A.246 There are no significant accident clusters on the area's road network within the latest 5 years of data (source: Crashmap.co.uk).

Pedestrian Infrastructure

A.247 London Road has comprehensive footways along its northern boundary however, there are localised instances of poor surfacing. The frequency of vehicle crossovers creates an uneven surface which is not amenable for wheelchair and buggy users. Dropped kerbs and tactile paving at side road crossings are not consistently provided or are in disrepair.

A.248 The internal Ramsden View Road has a short section of footway; however, it does not provide a complete link to London Road. The unsurfaced nature of Ramsden View Road may present challenges for pedestrians with mobility impairments.

A.249 The pedestrian experience at the Ramsden View Road / London Road junction is poor, with several locations with potential for vehicle and pedestrian conflict due to the vehicle forecourts present on both sides of London Road. There is no clear formal facility or crossing for pedestrians to reach the northern footway on London Road. A section of buff coloured paving adjacent to the bus stop could cause a safety hazard for visually impaired users who may mistake this as tactile paving indicating a crossing point.

Cycle Infrastructure

A.250 There is no dedicated cycle infrastructure within the plotland area or its vicinity.

Public Transport

A.251 Wickford Rail Station is located c. 2.5km east of the Plotland (a c.7-minute cycle or 30-minute walk). The station provides regular services to Southend and London Liverpool Street.

A.252 Bus services operate along London Road bordering the north of the Plotland. They operate on an approximately 45 to 60 minute frequency and serve local destinations including Wickford Town Centre and Billericay.

A.253 The nearest westbound bus stop is marked with a bus flag but does not have seating or shelter. As noted above, there are issues with pedestrian connectivity, lack of formal crossing points, and misleading surfacing treatment. The bus stop is surrounded on all sides by carriageways and vehicle movements making the waiting experience unpleasant for passengers.

A.254 The closest eastbound bus stop is located c. 65m east of Ramsden View Road. This is marked by a bus flag and does not have a shelter or seating. The location of the bus stop is between two vehicle access points and requires pedestrians to wait in a vulnerable position. As noted previously, there are no formal crossing facilities to enable pedestrian movement to the north of London Road.

A.255 Improvements to bus stop connections would be necessary to improve bus access from the plotland area.

Opportunities for Improvement

A.256 Based on the above, there are several opportunities for improvements to transport infrastructure:

- Surfacing improvements on Ramsden View Road.
- Improve surfacing of the existing footway on Ramsden View Road and extend to connect to London Road.
- Provide clear pedestrian routing and formalised crossing facilities from Ramsden View Road to the northern footway on London Road.
- There is opportunity to re-design the vehicle forecourt by Ramsden View Road and the westbound bus stop to provide significant improvements.
- Contributions towards increased bus frequencies, real time information displays at stops, provision of seating and shelters.
- Relocation of the eastbound bus stop to a more appropriate location to enable passengers to wait in a protected location away from vehicle turning movements.

Green and Blue Infrastructure

A.257 The Ramsden View, Wickford plotland is characterised by areas of settlement, agricultural fields and areas of Priority Habitat 'Deciduous Woodland' to the north-east and south which fall outside of the opportunity area identified. The majority of the plotland area is designated as unsuitable for woodland creation. However, there are some small areas in the south, north east and within the opportunity area which are designated as having low suitability for woodland creation. A small area just to the east of the opportunity area is designated as high suitability for woodland creation. The plotland is not located within flood zone 2, 3 or 3b. A large portion of the plotland has been identified as having wider woodland catchment potential which could provide natural flood risk management. There are no PRoWs within the plotland. The nearest PRoW is located to the south from Gardiners Lane North to Borwick Lane and to the east from London Road to the A132. Also, none of the

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

opportunity areas fall within an area identified by Natural England as having local access to greenspace.

Opportunities for compensatory improvements

A.258 After reviewing the information above, the most relevant GBI opportunities are:

- Enhance ecological connectivity between the priority habitats onsite this could be done through tree coverage. In addition, a buffer zone around Priority Habitat could provide a valuable habitat for woodland wildlife and should consist of semi-natural habitat (e.g. a mix of woodland edge and semi-improved grassland to provide structural complexity and species diversity).
- Improve public access through and around the plotland by creating new PRoWs and connecting with the existing PRoW network. This is illustrated on the figure below.
- Enhance habitat connectivity throughout the plotland which could provide opportunities for Riparian Woodland to act as a natural flood risk barrier.
- Enhance hedgerows throughout the area, including the introduction of hedgerow trees, to provide visual screening, strengthen the connectivity of the local habitat network and enhance historic field boundary. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible.

A.259 Planning obligations can be included as part of planning approval in order to secure funding for green and blue infrastructure, including monitoring and maintenance, and ensure its success and longevity. Any development projects in this plotland would need to provide better ecological connectivity, access to greenspace and natural flood risk management through S106 obligations and/or CIL. In addition, since 2 April 2024, all new planning applications in England must deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG). As such, new development within this plotland will have to increase biodiversity

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

compared to what was previously on site which could lead to GBI enhancements on site.

A.260 To note, this is a high-level study therefore once preferred site allocations have been identified, site specific studies would need to be completed to inform more detailed project planning and viability. Engaging with relevant landowners and experts (e.g. ecologists, landscape management experts) will also be critical to understanding project feasibility and deliverability.



Ramsden View Road Plotland
Key constraints and opportunities

- Ramsden View Road Plotland
- Basildon Borough boundary
- Constraints**
- Grade II listed building
- Consented development (RLA 2023)
- Priority Habitats Inventory**
- Deciduous woodland
- No main habitat but additional habitats present
- Existing access connectivity
- Views
- Opportunities**
- Strengthen boundary vegetation
- Potential enhanced habitat connectivity
- Potential enhanced access connectivity
- Potential substantial infill / insetting



Stormonts Way, Langdon Hills

Stormonts Way Plotland

Basildon Borough Plotlands Growth Potential Study
Basildon Borough Council



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Map scale 1:3,000 @ A4

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Basildon Borough boundary | Absolute constraint | Other constraint |
| Stormonts Way Plotland | Site of Special Scientific Interest | Priority Habitat |
| Settlement | | Country Park |
| Green belt | | Public open space |
| | | Grade II |

Plotland_MapSeries_OS/Stormonts Way Plotland

Landscape context

A.261 This is a small plotland area, measuring 5ha, located near the south-western edge of the borough. It is situated between Dry Street to the south and Willow Park Nature Reserve to the north-east and lies in relative proximity to Northlands Plotland to the south-west. It is surrounded by a number of landscape-related designations, including Langdon Ridge SSSI, Langdon Hills Local Wildlife Site (SINC), Westley Heights Country Park and Langdon Hills Country Park (within neighbouring Thurrock).

A.262 Development within the plotland is organised in allotments to the west of Southway and predominantly comprises low-density modern bungalows and chalets and associated outbuildings (garages and sheds). There are no consented developments within the plotland area. Existing built development is interspersed with small paddocks and undeveloped (often overgrown) plots. The plotland also features several small woodland blocks and tree belts, some of which is identified as Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland'. The north of the plotland comprises woodland cover which forms part of Langdon Ridge SSSI and Westley Heights Country park.

A.263 The plotland area lies entirely within LCA14 – Langdon Hills, as defined within the Basildon Landscape Character Assessment (2014). Relevant key characteristics of the LCA include:

- “The landform is strongly undulating encompassing the elevated Langdon Hills with sloping sides and secondary valleys
- Grid-like former plotland sites to the north west of the area at Langdon Hills Nature Reserve
- Medium sized rectilinear arable fields and small scattered pastures with mixed tall and clipped hedgerows to the south east
- Extensive woodland cover, predominantly Oak with a mix of Sycamore, Ash, Field Maple, Hawthorn and Elm
- Some secondary woodland on former plotlands and mature Oaks and Poplars throughout golf course.

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- Higher ground allows some extensive views overlooking the Thames Estuary
- Isolated farmhouses, dispersed roadside ribbon settlement of 20th century origin and some Plotland retaining a grid-like structure
- Ecological designations cover large parts of the character area and also comprising an extensive country park and nature reserve
- Small number of intrusive commercial development in open locations and some major roads dissecting the landscape
- Extensive network of Public Rights of Way run through and connect areas of informal recreation within the parcels of the Country Park and nature reserve”

Landscape analysis

Physical and natural character

A.264 The following considers the distinctiveness of the landform and the presence of and extent of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features, as well as any particular functional value associated with the natural landscape:

- The landform within the plotland gently slopes from approximately 85m AOD in the north-west to 75mAOD in the south-east reflecting its location within the Langdon Hills (moderate sensitivity).
- There are frequent mature trees around existing development (moderate sensitivity). Development is also set within domestic gardens and interspersed with open pasture fields and paddocks which have limited semi-natural habitats or valued natural features (lower sensitivity).
- Woodland within in the plotland is part of a wider network which covers large sections of the Langdon Hills. Areas of Priority Habitat ‘deciduous woodland’ are located in the north and south of the plotland. That to the north forms part of Langdon Ridge SSSI and Westley Heights Country

Park. The wider SSSI and Country park support a diverse mosaic of semi-natural habitats, including grasslands, fen meadows, woodlands, scrub, species-rich hedgerows and ponds (higher sensitivity).

Historic character, pattern and time depth, and historical or cultural associations

A.265 The following considers pattern and historic 'time depth': in terms of a distinctive plotland settlement form and pattern, or the presence of historic field patterns or historic features that contribute to landscape character. It also considers historical or cultural associations which contribute to positive perceptions of the landscape:

- The landscape is identified within the Essex HLC (2013) as being predominantly comprised of 'built-up areas' (lower sensitivity), with one small area of 'pre 18th century enclosure to the north (moderate sensitivity).
- The plotland area is set within a wider landscape characterised by curverlinear, medium-size field pattern produced through medieval piecemeal assarting of woodland (higher sensitivity). The early 20th century plotland was imposed upon this earlier landscape structure. Whilst the original plotland allotment arrangement along Southway is preserved, which helps retain some plotland character, much of the built development has been replaced with more modern development (moderate sensitivity).
- The site contains no historic designations; the closest designated assets are the Grade II listed Thatched Cottage which lies east along Dry Street, as well as Grade II listed Westley Hall which lies to the north within Westley Heights Country Park, both of which have a limited physical or visual relationship with the plotland (lower sensitivity).

Settlement form and edge character

A.266 The following considers the extent to which the landscape relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement(s):

- The plotland lies south-east of Langdon Hills/Great Berry and south-west of Lee Chapel South, both suburbs of Basildon. The plotland is separated from these settlements by extensive woodland cover, including that within Westly Heights Country Park and Willow Park Nature Reserve. Development would therefore have a poor relationship with existing settlement form (higher sensitivity).

Settlement setting

A.267 The following considers the role that the landscape plays in providing a setting to an adjacent settlement(s), including visual relationship, any distinctiveness it provides, or whether it preserves separation between distinct settlements:

- Woodland cover and dispersed mature trees within the plotland form part of the highly wooded rural setting to the south and west of Basildon. Mature woodland cover encloses the southern edge of Basildon and provides a wooded backdrop in views from the settlement edge, although the plotland's distance from the settlement edge limits its contribution in this regard (moderate sensitivity).

Visual prominence, skyline and views

A.268 The following considers the visual character of the landscape, including the sense of openness or enclosure, and extent to which potential development would be visible to surrounding visual receptors:

- The visually prominent Langdon Hills/ridge forms a distinctive landscape feature within views from the wider landscape; in distant views the area

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forms a wooded ridge wrapping around and enclosing the urban edge of Basildon (higher sensitivity). However, mature tree cover and woodland within and around the plotland result in a strong sense of visual enclosure with views in and out of the plotland generally well screened. This, and the predominance of single-storey structures, mean that the existing development within the plotland is not generally visible within the surrounding landscape (lower sensitivity).

- Filtered views into the western parts of the plotland are available from the more open parts of Westley Heights Country Park, which is elevated above the plotland to the east (moderate sensitivity).
- Views into eastern parts of the plotland are likely to be available from Footpath 253 where it flanks the eastern boundary and where the wooded character of the landscape makes some positive contribution to the quality of the view (moderate sensitivity).

Perceptual character

A.269 The following considers the qualities of the landscape, including sense of rurality, remoteness or tranquillity:

- A largely undeveloped, highly wooded landscape enclosing the southern edge of Basildon with some sense of tranquillity and experience of dark skies. The northern half of the plotland has higher levels of tranquillity owing to greater woodland cover, contributing to the sense of rural character and scenic value (moderate sensitivity), but the area is overall identified as being of relatively low tranquillity in CPRE tranquillity mapping and as having moderately dark skies in the CPRE night blight Dark mapping (lower sensitivity).

Key landscape sensitivities

The following features/characteristics are identified as the principal constraints to development within the plotland area.

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- Forms part of the Langdon Hills which are distinctive landscape feature within views from the wider landscape.
- Landscape and natural heritage value associated with Langdon Ridge SSSI, areas of Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland' and Westley Heights Country Park.
- Dense tree cover, including frequent mature oaks, around existing development form distinctive landscape features and contribute to the wooded character of the surrounding landscape.
- The role of the plotland area forming part of the rural, highly wooded southern setting to Basildon (particularly Langdon Hills and Lee Chapel South).
- Intervening extensive woodland cover mean the plotland has a poor relationship with the existing settlement form of Basildon.
- Visible from Public Footpath 253 and parts of Westley Heights Country Park.

Green Belt impacts across the plotland

A.270 The plotland area lies within outer area OA5 identified and assessed within the Basildon Green Belt Study (2023). Release and inappropriate development in this area is generally considered likely to generate very high harm to Green Belt purposes 1 (checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas) and 3 (assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment) and high harm Green Belt Purpose 2 (preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another). This can be attributed to the area's general openness and very strong distinction from Basildon to the north and east. Further inappropriate development in this location would further encroach onto the wooded slopes that mark strong distinction between the wider countryside and the large built-up area of Basildon to the north and east, weakening the distinction of Green Belt that lies at lower elevations and narrowing the gap between Basildon and Stanford-le-Hope.

Opportunity areas for development

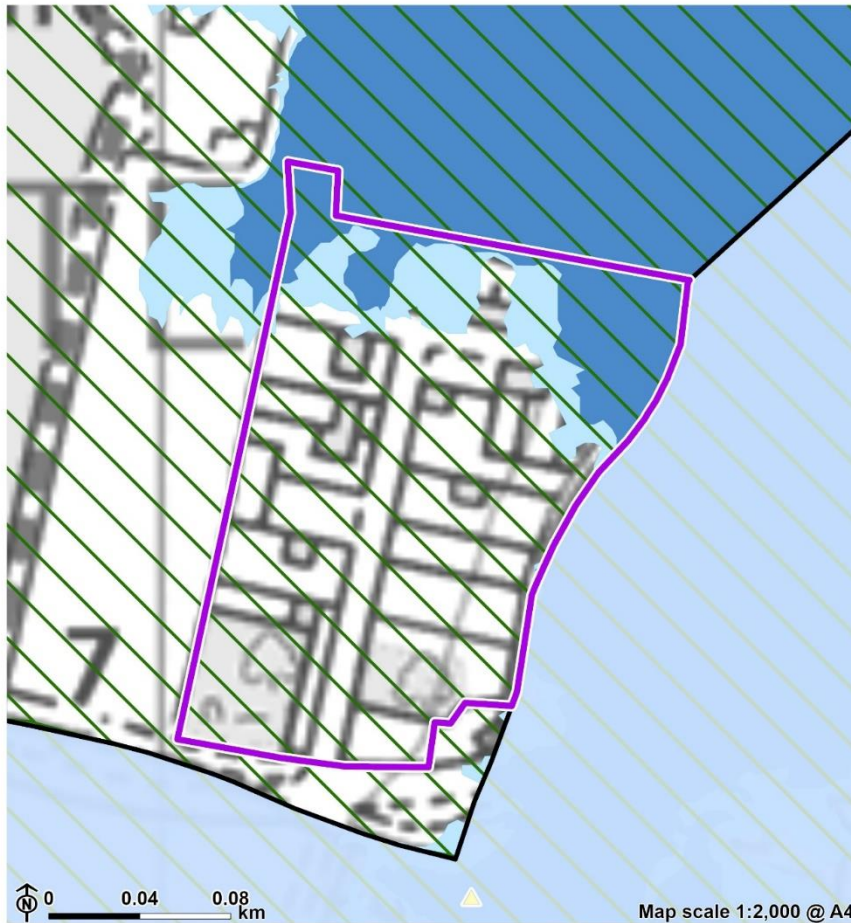
A.271 Based on the analysis above, there is little potential to accommodate substantial infill development, owing to the plotlands small size and landscape and Green Belt sensitivities. The plotland is located approximately 450m from the nearest settlement edge inset from the Green Belt at Langdon Hills to the north-west, and separated from it by substantial mature woodland cover.

A.272 In addition, given that the plotland is not defined as a village in the Borough's settlement hierarchy (see **Appendix B**), there is no potential for limited infill village development (appropriate in Green Belt terms) amongst existing areas of plotland development.

Wickford Lawns, Shotgate

Wickford Lawns Plotland

Basildon Borough Plotlands Growth
Potential Study
Basildon Borough Council



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- Basildon Borough boundary
- Wickford Lawns Plotland
- Green belt

- Other constraint**
- Conservation Area
 - Flood zone 3
 - Flood zone 2
 - Grade II

Plotland_MapSeries_OS/Wickford Lawns Plotland

Landscape context

A.273 This is a small plotland area, measuring 4ha, lying on the borough's north-eastern boundary with the neighbouring Rochford District. It is located near to the eastern edge of Wickford (Shotgate), off Southend Road, north of the A129 and to the west of the A130.

A.274 Development within the plotland is organised in allotments along Oak Avenue and Enfield Road and predominantly comprises low-density modern bungalows and chalets and associated outbuildings (garages and sheds). There are no consented developments within the plotland area. Existing built development is interspersed with small paddocks and undeveloped (often overgrown) plots. The plotland's northern and north-eastern edges are within Flood Zones 2 and 3, corresponding with areas of lower lying ground.

A.275 The plotland area lies entirely within LCA5 – Shotgate and North Wickford Urban Fringe, as defined within the Basildon Landscape Character Assessment (2014). Relevant key characteristics of the LCA include:

- “Gently sloping landform dropping towards the River Crouch at the north boundary
- Mixture of urban fringe land-uses including: recreational land, arable farmland, plotlands and sewage treatment works
- Pylon lines and A130 are dominant features
- Vegetation along the River Crouch forms prominent feature
- Well connected by public right of ways
- Historic field pattern well preserved
- Views east towards open farmland of the Crouch valley
- Views west towards urban edge of Shotgate and Wickford
- Small- medium size fields separated by network of mature hedges with numerous hedgerow trees...”.

Landscape analysis

Physical and natural character

A.276 The following considers the distinctiveness of the landform and the presence of and extent of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features, as well as any particular functional value associated with the natural landscape:

- The landform within the plotland is relatively flat and low-lying at between approximately 5m and 9m AOD, forming part of the floodplain of the River Crouch which lies to the north. The northern and eastern boundaries of the plotland are covered by Flood Zones 2 and 3 (moderate sensitivity).
- There are no semi-natural habitats within the plotland however there are frequent mature trees around existing development which form part of a wider network of woodland and scrub including that at Rawreth Shot to the north and to the west of Shot Farm (moderate sensitivity).
- Development is also set within domestic gardens and interspersed with small paddocks which have limited semi-natural habitats or valued natural features (lower sensitivity).

Historic character, pattern and time depth, and historical or cultural associations

A.277 The following considers pattern and historic 'time depth': in terms of a distinctive plotland settlement form and pattern, or the presence of historic field patterns or historic features that contribute to landscape character. It also considers historical or cultural associations which contribute to positive perceptions of the landscape:

- The landscape is identified within the Essex HLC (2013) as being comprised of 'built-up areas' (lower sensitivity).

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

- The plotland area is set within a wider landscape characterised by a rectilinear field pattern of Mid Saxon origin (higher sensitivity). The original field pattern is evident within the plotland but is overlain by plotland development (moderate sensitivity).
- The early 20th century geomteric plotland allotment arrangement, which generally fits with the pre-existing landscape structure, remains evident. This helps retain some plotland character, although much of the built development has been replaced with more modern development (moderate sensitivity).
- The site contains no historic designations; the closest designated assets are the Grade II listed buildings at Shotgate Farm to the south and Shot Farm to the north-west. Shot Farm dates back to the 16th century but has a limited physical or visual relationship with the plotland (lower sensitivity).

Settlement form and edge character

A.278 The following considers the extent to which the landscape relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement(s):

- The plotland lies east of Wickford and is separated from it by open fields, scrub and woodland cover west of Shot Fram and the A129. Development would therefore have a poor relationship with existing settlement form (higher sensitivity).

Settlement setting

A.279 The following considers the role that the landscape plays in providing a setting to an adjacent settlement(s), including visual relationship, any distinctiveness it provides, or whether it preserves separation between distinct settlements:

- The dispersed mature trees and small paddocks within the plotland form part of a wooded, rural setting to the east of Wickford. Scrub and woodland cover, including that within and around the plotland, provides a

Appendix A Plotland area assessments

semi-wooded backdrop in views from the settlement edge (moderate sensitivity).

- Woodland and open paddocks/fields within the plotland make some contribution to a sense of separation between Wickford and the small settlement of Rawreth to the east, particularly when travelling along Southend Road between the two. The 2023 Green Belt Study also identified this area as contributing towards the relatively wide gap between Wickford and Rayleigh (moderate sensitivity).

Visual prominence, skyline and views

A.280 The following considers the visual character of the landscape, including the sense of openness or enclosure, and extent to which potential development would be visible to surrounding visual receptors:

- Views in and out of the plotland are mostly screened by boundary vegetation. This, and the predominance of single-storey structures, mean that the existing development within the plotland is not highly visible within the surrounding landscape (lower sensitivity).
- Views towards the plotland are available from Footpath 104 between Shot Farm and Southend Road. The wooded character of the landscape makes some positive contribution to the quality of the view, although pylons and containers/storage units at Shot Farm are visually detracting. Residential properties along Southend Road/London Road to the south-east may also experience filtered views towards southern and eastern parts of the plotland (moderate sensitivity).

Perceptual character

A.281 The following considers the qualities of the landscape, including sense of rurality, remoteness or tranquillity:

- A wooded, predominantly agricultural landscape to the east of Wickford which makes some contribution to rural character and scenic value

(moderate sensitivity). However, noise from the A129 and A130 and containers/storage units at Shot Farm are detracting influences, resulting in a limited sense of tranquillity. Tranquillity and experience of dark skies are assessed as being low in CPRE tranquillity and night blight mapping (lower sensitivity).

Key landscape sensitivities

The following features/characteristics are identified as the principal constraints to development within the plotland area.

- Flat low-lying topography forming part of the River Crouch floodplain.
- Dispersed tree cover around existing development form distinctive landscape features and contribute to the wooded character of the surrounding landscape.
- The role of the plotland area as part of a rural setting to the east of Wickford.
- Intervening farmland, woodland and A129 mean the plotland has a poor relationship with the existing settlement form of Wickford.
- The role of woodland and open paddocks within the plotland area in contributing to a sense of separation between Wickford and Rawreth when travelling along Southend Road.
- Visible from Public Footpath 104.
- Surviving original plotland layout and resulting plotland character.

Green Belt impacts across the plotland

A.282 The plotland area lies within outer area OA8 identified and assessed within the Basildon Green Belt Study (2023). Release and inappropriate development in this area is generally considered likely to generate very high

harm to Green Belt purpose 3 (assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment) and high harm Green Belt Purpose 2 (preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another). This can be attributed to the area's general openness and very strong distinction from Wickford to the west. Further inappropriate development in this location further breach the woodland block to the west, which forms a clear boundary at the urban edge of Wickford and acts as an important separating feature between Wickford and Rayleigh to the east.

Opportunity areas for development

A.283 Based on the analysis above, there is little potential to accommodate substantial infill development, owing to the plotlands small size and landscape and Green Belt sensitivities. The plotland is located approximately 350m from the nearest settlement edge inset from the Green Belt – Shotgate to the west - west - and separated from it by the A129. Elsewhere intervening farmland, scrub and woodland lie between the plotland and the urban area of Wickford.

A.284 In addition, given that the plotland is not defined as a village in the Borough's settlement hierarchy (see **Appendix B**), there is no potential for limited infill village development (appropriate in Green Belt terms) amongst existing areas of plotland development.

Appendix B

Review of plotlands as villages

B.1 A review of the Borough's settlement hierarchy review (2024) and appeal decisions relating to the determination of developments in the Green Belt as appropriate 'limited infilling within villages' has been undertaken. The purpose of this review has been to establish which of the Borough's 13 plotlands should be considered as 'villages' and therefore suitable for limited infilling under paragraph 154e of the NPPF.

Inspector Judgement Review

B.2 Through the appeal decisions, inspectors have classified the following plotland areas as 'villages' by virtue of their proximity to 'focal points' or 'discernible centres' characterised by local services and facilities such as churches and primary schools. Consequently, the following plotlands are judged to be villages in this study:

- Newhouse Farm and Castledon Road Plotland, by virtue of its location in close proximity to both the large town of Wickford and the serviced village of Ramsden Bellhouse. This has resulted in two appeal decisions being granted as appropriate infilling within villages under paragraph 154e of the NPPF [See reference 18]. The Inspector noted that, in the main core of the area, undeveloped plots were few, "and the predominant character is that of a well-ordered residential suburb". The Inspector noted the Council's view that the former plotland settlement area should not be considered a village, that the Council's reasoning was unclear, and that "The plotland area was not identified as a village in the 1998 District Local Plan, but there is nothing in the NPPF that restricts the policy in question only to settlements that have been formally recognised in that way. The relatively recent origins of the plotland settlement, and its planned nature, may distinguish it to some degree, but these differences do not seem to me to be fundamental. None of these matters seems to me to form a

Appendix B Review of plotlands as villages

convincing reason as to why the appeal site should not be treated as (lying) within a village.”

- Broomhills Chase Plotland, by virtue of its association and merging with Little Burstead Village. This has resulted in two appeal decisions being granted as appropriate infilling within villages under paragraph 154e of the NPPF [See reference 19]. The Inspectors noted that “Burstead, with reference to the Oxford dictionary definition, comprised a group of houses and associated buildings, which is larger than a hamlet and smaller than a town, and should therefore be considered as a village for the purposes of the Framework”, and that “Little Burstead also includes a pub and church which are features of a traditional village settlement”.
- Southern portion of the North Benfleet Plotland (south of Osbourne Road) in close proximity to the focal point and serviced section of Pound Lane. Although the relevant appeal was dismissed, the inspector acknowledged Clifton Road and its neighbouring offshoots off Pound Lane as within the village. [See reference 20].

B.3 Conversely, similar appeals have been dismissed associated with the following more isolated and dispersed plotlands:

- Fobbing Plotland;
- Northlands Plotland and Stormonts Way Plotland along Dry Street, Langdon Hills; and,
- Wickford Lawns Plotland.

Settlement Hierarchy Review

B.4 In light of the above, the Council’s review of the Borough Settlement Hierarchy has resulted in the following plotland areas being defined as villages by virtue of their close proximity and therefore association with neighbouring established centres:

- Break Egg Hill Plotland, which sits on the eastern edge of Billericay, adjacent to the urban area. As such, it is difficult to distinguish this as a

Appendix B Review of plotlands as villages

separate settlement. Consequently, this plotland also forms part of the settlement of Billericay, and is treated as part of Billericay.

- Broomhills Chase Plotland by virtue of its proximity and connection to Little Burstead Village.
- Newhouse Road and Castledon Farm Plotland by virtue of its proximity and connection to Wickford and Ramsden Bellhouse.
- North Benfleet Plotland by virtue of its proximity and connection to the serviced village of Bowers Gifford via Pound Lane to the south. The Settlement Hierarchy Review notes the Parish Council is preparing a Neighbourhood Development Order which provides a case for treating the village and plotlands as one settlement for the purpose of this exercise.

B.5 The remaining plotland areas are therefore, considered to represent unserviced settlements and are therefore not defined as villages. Consequently, appropriate and not inappropriate development in the Green Belt in these plotlands does not extend to include 'limited infilling in villages' outlined in paragraph 154e of the NPPF:

- Bells Hill Road Plotland.
- Crays Hill Plotland.
- Fairmead Plotland.
- Fobbing Plotland.
- Green Lane Plotland.
- Northlands Plotland.
- Ramdens View Road Plotland.
- Stormont Way Plotland.
- Wickford Lawn Plotland.

Implications for this Plotlands Study

B.6 The definition of certain plotlands as villages and their spatial extent directly inform this plotland study as follows:

- Opportunity areas for limited infill development may extend to previously undeveloped locations where openness could be lost in the following plotland areas defined as ‘villages’ (but only where these undeveloped locations are found to have limited landscape sensitivity and are not covered by an absolute constraints):
 - Break Egg Hill Plotland.
 - Broomhills Chase Plotland.
 - Newhouse Road and Castledon Farm Plotland.
 - North Benfleet Plotland.

Appendix C

Assumptions used for infrastructure requirements

Introduction

C.1 This infrastructure note sets out the broad assumptions and approach for calculating the infrastructure requirements of the plotlands growth opportunity areas.

Education

C.2 Essex County Council (ECC) has a statutory responsibility to ensure sufficient school and childcare places are available for local children and younger people. Specifically, under Section 14 of the 1996 Education Act, local authorities must secure sufficient school places to serve their area. The available schools must be sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide all pupils with the opportunity of an appropriate education. Section 2 of the 2006 Education and Inspections Act further places ECC, as the appropriate local authority, under a duty to secure diversity in the provision of schools and increase opportunities for parental choice. Subsequent legislation (2011 Education Act part 5.37) encourages the development of a more diverse range of education providers, particularly academy trusts and free schools, a number of which now operate within Essex. Section 2 of the 2008 Education and Skills Act requires that all persons under the age of eighteen yet to obtain a 'level three' qualification (for example two 'A' levels), must participate in education or training. Participation does not require all young people to stay on at school, as employment-based training can fulfil this requirement. The National Planning Policy Framework [\[See reference 21\]](#) (NPPF) (paragraph 95) also sets out that sufficient choice for school places should be available to meet the needs of

Appendix C Assumptions used for infrastructure requirements

existing and new communities, and that a proactive, positive, and collaborative approach should be taken by planning authorities to meet this requirement. It is generally accepted that education provision in an area should not operate at 100% of its capacity, as it is important to retain some level of surplus places. The National Audit Office report 'Capital Funding for New School Places' (2013) refers to a minimum 5% surplus that the Department for Education assumes in its planning as necessary to support operational flexibility (mid-year admissions) and facilitate parental choice. A deficiency may thus be deemed to exist without the certainty of every local place being filled.

C.3 Where a need for additional school places as a direct result of housing development is identified, the expectation is that the cost of providing additional places (and land requirement if needed) is met by developers. In accordance with the requirements set out in ECC's Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions [See reference 22], the trigger for collecting contributions towards early years and childcare, primary, secondary, post-16 and school transport is developments of 20 dwellings and above. The trigger for collecting contributions towards special educational needs places is 1000+ dwellings.

C.4 Financial contributions sought from development are used to extend existing facilities wherever possible, however there may be some instances where extension of a local school is not possible due to site or design constraints, or where the number of pupils generated is so large that provision within a new facility is a more suitable solution. The minimum size for a new-build primary school preferred by ECC is 420 pupils. The minimum size for a new-build secondary school preferred by ECC is 660 pupils.

C.5 In order to calculate the appropriate contribution from new development, the approach used by ECC is to utilise a pupil yield to determine the number of school pupils likely to be living in the new dwellings (these are different for early years, primary phase, secondary, post-16 and special educational needs). The number of pupils generated by a development is then multiplied by a standardised 'expected contribution per pupil' for either extending an existing school or building a new one (whichever solution is the most appropriate to the circumstances of the development). The expected contributions are different for each phase of education. It may be the case that land or land costs are also

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sought in addition to the contribution to build the new / extended school facilities.

C.6 The pupil yield per dwelling and cost multipliers for early years and childcare, primary and secondary education stages are set out in **Table C.1** below. Please note that maisonettes, single storey bungalows and trailers/caravans are treated as flats whilst one-bedroom units and dwellings such as student and elderly accommodation are excluded from the calculation.

Table C.1: Essex County Council pupil yield per dwelling and expected contribution per pupil for new builds and extensions across early years and childcare, primary, secondary, post-16 and special educational needs (SEN) provision

Education stage	Pupil yield per dwelling	Expected contribution per pupil - extensions	Expected contribution per pupil – new build
Early years and childcare	0.09 (0.045 for 2+ bedroom flats)	£19,989	£23,865
Primary	0.3 (0.15 for 2+bedroom flats)	£19,989	£23,865
Secondary	0.2 (0.1 for 2+ bedroom flats)	£27,492	£28,912
Post-16	0.04 (0.01 per one bed flat / house, 0.02 per 2+ bed flat)	£27,492	£28,865
Special educational needs (SEN) provision	0.007	As SEN provision is required during all phases of education, the cost is calculated by using the appropriate phase cost above	As SEN provision is required during all phases of education, the cost is calculated by using the appropriate phase cost above

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Education stage	Pupil yield per dwelling	Expected contribution per pupil - extensions	Expected contribution per pupil – new build
		and multiplying this by four.	and multiplying this by four.

C.7 On average, the cost of transporting a primary school child to school is £19.98 per day (return) (April 2023). The corresponding cost for secondary school transport is £6.26 (April 2023). This is due to economies of scale – secondary school children are transported to a fewer number of school sites. The calculation of school transport contributions is based on 190 days per year over 7 years for primary school children, and 190 days per year over 5 years for secondary school children. New development is expected to fund school transport if it is located beyond defined walking distance thresholds from the where pupils living in the development will attend school. Walking distance is defined by S 444(5) of the Education Act 2006 at two miles for those aged under eight and three miles for those who are eight years and above. These distances are measured by the shortest available walking route.

Travel plan monitoring

C.8 Residential developments consisting of more than 80 dwellings will be required to provide a Travel Plan to encourage sustainable travel and provide contributions to ECC for the ongoing monitoring of the Travel Plan. A Section 106 agreement will be used to set out developers’ travel plan contributions, with annual monitoring fees as set out in **Table C.2** below.

Table C.2: ECC expectations for developers’ travel plan contributions and annual monitoring fees

Dwellings	Fee
Up to 79 dwellings	No fee

Appendix C Assumptions used for infrastructure requirements

Dwellings	Fee
80-449 dwellings	£1,690 per annum
450-749 dwellings	£2,817 per annum
750-1000 dwellings	£3,994 per annum
More than 1000 dwellings	Fees will be negotiated case by case

C.9 Commercial developments that will result in 50 or more employees will also require a Travel Plan. In the case of workplace travel plans, EEC will require a one-off monitoring fee of £6,760.

GP capacity

C.10 NHS Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB) assesses planning applications for the effect they have on primary healthcare provision within the healthcare catchment of the proposed development. The capacity of a general practice (whether there is a surplus or a deficit) is a factor of the net internal area in square metres (m²) occupied by the practice and the size of the practice list.

C.11 Where existing GP practices do not have capacity to accommodate the additional growth resulting from the proposed development, it is necessary to consider the number of new residents generated and the subsequent increase in demand upon existing constrained services. The list below provides an example of the evidence the ICB uses when reviewing planning applications to make the case for developer contributions towards extensions or new facilities.

- GP surgeries within 2km – extensions to GP surgeries within this distance of a new development will be sought as a preference however if the nearest surgery is further away then contributions are still expected, and may be used to secure new provision in the locality if the development is large enough to support a new surgery;

Appendix C Assumptions used for infrastructure requirements

- Weighted list size - the weighted list size of the GP practice based on the Carr-Hill formula; this figure more accurately reflects the need of a practice in terms of resource and space and may be slightly lower or higher than the actual patient list;
- Net Internal Area (NIA) (m²) - Current Net Internal Area occupied by the nearby practice(s);
- Capacity needed for current weighted list size - based on 120m² per 1,750 patients (this space requirement is aligned to Department of Health guidance within “Health Building Note 11-01: facilities for Primary and Community Care Services”);
- Spare capacity (NIA m²) - based on existing weighted list size of nearby practice(s).

C.12 Without mitigation, additional population growth in the area resulting from new development may result in a capacity deficit, or would add to an existing deficit, and both of these scenarios are considered unsustainable. As such, the potential cost of extensions or new facilities where there is insufficient capacity at present has been calculated. This was based on the following assumptions, which are derived following liaison with Mid and South Essex ICB:

- Additional population growth is calculated on the basis of 2.5 people per dwelling;
- Additional floorspace required to meet growth is calculated based on 120m² per 1,750 patients;
- Capital funding required to create additional floor space is calculated based on Building Cost Information Services (BCIS) cost multiplier of £3,015 per m² for new build and extensions to health centres and hospitals.
- Ideally a new GP surgery would have an NIA of 1,000m² (providing for around 14,500 patients) to be of a sustainable size. However, in remote locations, a smaller surgery of around 750m² (providing for around 11,000 patients) with additional room to expand on site may also be acceptable to ensure that provision is local to development.

C.13 The other elements of primary care include pharmacy, dentist, optician services. These services are typically funded through business plans of providers and do not usually result in a call on developer contributions. As such these services were not considered in the infrastructure planning work for this commission.

Open space and sports facilities

C.14 Accessibility standards set out in the Basildon District Open Space Assessment (2010) [See reference 23] were used as part of the assessment of potential new development’s need for open space. These open space standards per 1,000 population are set out in **Table C.3**.

Table C.3: Open space standards per 1,000 population for different types of open space, GI and sports facilities

Typology	Recommended Standard (per 1,000 population)
Urban parks and gardens	1.82ha
Natural and semi-natural open space	2.62ha
Amenity green space	1.33ha
Provision for children and young people	2.5 defined play spaces per 1,000 children
Allotments and community gardens	0.054ha
Education fields	No minimum standard
Civic space	No minimum standard

C.15 The open space standards above have been calculated relevant to each plotland’s development capacity. It is assumed that open space provision

Appendix C Assumptions used for infrastructure requirements

required will be provided for within the sites as part of their design and landscaping. As such separate costs have not been calculated for open space.

C.16 The Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) tariff [See reference 24] has also been appraised to identify whether any of the plotland areas would be required to contribute towards this. For 2024/25 it is set to £163.86 per dwelling and applies to developments within the identified 'zone of influence'.

C.17 In relation to sports provision, the Sports England Playing Pitch Calculator and Indoor Sports Facilities calculator has been used to assess the demand for grass sports pitches/artificial pitches and indoor sports facilities arising from any proposed development.

Utilities

Water supply and waste water treatment

C.18 Water supply and waste water treatment are statutory responsibilities of the water companies and were not further investigated within the scope of this project.

Digital infrastructure

C.19 Internet providers typically connect to all new developments in accordance with their business plans and the UK Government's ambitions for increasing connectivity. As such this infrastructure area was not reviewed within the scope of this assessment.

Power

C.20 Information on electricity network infrastructure and usage [See reference 25] supplied by UK Power Networks (the local distribution systems operator) were used to identify if there are any significant constraints on local capacity to absorb development within the plotlands.

Community

C.21 The Basildon Borough Council Planning Obligations Strategy [See reference 26] sets out the expectations in relation to community buildings. It includes the following provisions:

“For large scale development of 500+ new units it will be a requirement to include the provision of indoor space which provides flexible use for the community.

Such facilities that should be considered are:

(i) The inclusion of a multi-use space for community groups and clubs to use e.g. village halls.

(ii) The ability, or otherwise, of nearby existing facilities to serve the community.

(iii) The individual needs and requirements of the locality.

It may also be the case that where a number of development sites come forward within a settlement or town within the Borough there will be a requirement for them each to contribute towards one larger indoor facility”.

C.22 Guidance from Sport England in relation to Community / Village hall design sets out the minimum size of a facility is approximately 15x20m (300 square metres) (interpreted from the drawings on page 5). This can be used to calculate a provision requirement of at least 0.6 square metres per dwelling (300 divided by 500). Information from cost modelling sets out an approximate construction cost of £2,270-£2,390 per square metre – thus, using the middle of this range (£2,330 per square metre) a contribution per dwelling of £1,398 can be derived. Assuming an occupancy rate of 2.4 persons per dwelling, this equates to £582.50 per person.

C.23 A contribution in line with the above has been assumed according to the scale of the development potential at each plotland area. New-build community facilities are recommended and given an approximate cost if the capacity is greater than 500 homes. Where the capacity is below this threshold, a contribution has been calculated which would be expected to be taken for extending existing community facilities.

Emergency services

C.24 The East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST) has a set standard charge per dwelling of £340 to fund increased operation capacity.

C.25 Discussions with Essex Police have identified the following expectations of the Police in relation to new development:

- Electric Charging points for emergency services vehicles / reducing carbon cost;
- 20mph and self-enforcement – key to ensure road design in new developments self-enforces speed, police enforcement will not be

Appendix C Assumptions used for infrastructure requirements

available unless intelligence suggests vulnerable road user groups are in the geographic or accident data supports;

- Average speed systems - where appropriate, to encourage in pre-planning the designing in of speed cameras, as well as the funding for installation;
- Consideration of automatic number plate recognition cameras (ANPR) (dependent on magnitude of development) - for utilising and adoption across strategic sites across the road infrastructure;

C.26 Discussions with Essex County Fire and Rescue have identified their key requirement relates to the design of the highway to allow fire tender access and to provide hydrants in appropriate locations.

C.27 The above considerations should be taken into account in any development proposals for the plotland areas.

Libraries

C.28 The Library Service is statutory (1964 Public Libraries & Museums Act) and is required to provide a comprehensive and efficient service for all persons living, working and studying in Essex. Library services in Basildon are provided by ECC and there are currently five public libraries in the Borough: Basildon, Freyerns, Laindon, Pitsea and Vange. Mobile library services are delivered on a three-week rota at Park Lodge, Billericay, Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford and Noak Bridge Primary School, Noak Bridge.

C.29 Funding for youth facilities and libraries comes from ECC budgets and where there is likely to be an increase in demand arising from development, contributions are expected. In accordance with the ECC developers' guide to infrastructure contributions, new library facilities are expected to come forward in developments of 7,000 or more dwellings. However none of the plotlands offer this scale of capacity and it is considered that development would contribute towards the extension / improvement of existing facilities. It should be noted that only developments of 20 or more dwellings are considered for library

Appendix C Assumptions used for infrastructure requirements

contributions. The calculation methodology used for such developments is as follows:

C.30 A service requirement of 30m² net of public library space per 1000 population, based upon the current model of delivery and found in the Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) advice. The average cost per sq.m. for library provision is £2,020 (RICS East of England Library tender value first quarter 2013). Based on an average household size of 2.4 occupants (ONS figure) this gives a figure of £144 per dwelling. In addition, there would be a requirement for the extension to be fitted out at £100 per dwelling. This brings the total requirement to £244 per dwelling.

Waste planning

C.31 ECC is both the Waste Planning Authority (WPA) for Essex and the Waste Disposal Authority (WDA). As WDA, ECC is responsible for ensuring that Local Authority-collected waste from homes is disposed of. ECC also has a duty to provide accessible facilities to the public for the disposal of their waste; this is currently fulfilled through the provision of a network of Recycling Centres for Household Waste. The ECC Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions document sets out that for development of 100 or more homes, a contribution of £120 per house and £90 per flat will be expected.

References

- 1 Basildon Borough Council (June 2017) Basildon Borough Plotland Study 2017
- 2 Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (December 2023) National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF_December_2023.pdf
- 3 Office for National Statistics (2023). How life has changed in Basildon: Census 2021. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/E07000066/>
- 4 Paragraph: 036 Reference ID: 8-036-20190721
- 5 [Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government \(2021\) National Planning Policy Framework \[pdf\]](#)
- 6 Indicative changes to the NPPF were published for consultation on December 22nd, 2022. This includes clarification that ‘Green Belt boundaries are not required to be reviewed and altered if this would be the only means of meeting the objectively assessed need for housing over the plan period’. This change clarifies that authorities are not expected to review the Green Belt, but authorities still can review and alter Green Belt boundaries if they wish, if they can demonstrate that exceptional circumstances exist.
- 7 Two important Planning Appeal judgements (Heath & Hampstead Society v Camden LBC & Vlachos (2008) and Turner v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & East Dorset District Council (2016)) define openness as having both a spatial aspect and a visual aspect. However, in February 2020 the Supreme Court overturned the Court of Appeal Ruling on the case of Sam Smith v North Yorkshire County Council and Darrington Quarries Ltd (2018), and in doing so asserted that openness does not imply freedom from all forms of potential development and that visual impact is not an obligatory consideration when assessing Green Belt openness.

References

- 8 Essex County Council (2024) The Essex County Council Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions. Available at: www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-07/Developers%20Guide%202024.pdf
- 9 [Basildon Borough \(2015\) Planning Obligations Strategy SPD](https://www.basildon.gov.uk/planningobligations). Available at: <https://www.basildon.gov.uk/planningobligations>
- 10 The Landscape Partnership (2014) Landscape Character and Green Belt Landscape Capacity Study for Basildon Borough Council. Available at: <https://www.basildon.gov.uk/article/4948/Landscape-and-Green-Belt>
- 11 Lynn Dyson-Bruce, Alison Bennett (2013) Essex Historic Landscape Characterisation Project (HLC) [data-set]. York: Archaeology Data Service [distributor]. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.5284/1022584>
- 12 'Approach to landscape sensitivity assessment' (Natural England, 2019)
- 13 The time period expressed in the landscape, or the extent to which the landscape reflects a certain time period (a landscape with greater time depth will comprise older elements than a landscape with lesser time depth).
- 14 Whilst once extensive throughout Essex, plotlands do not feature particularly highly on the HLC, partly because they post-date the 1st edition OS map (used as a basis for analysis) and partly because the majority have been subsumed into modern urban areas.
- 15 Essex County Council (2024) The Essex County Council Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions. Available at: www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-07/Developers%20Guide%202024.pdf
- 16 [Basildon Borough \(2015\) Planning Obligations Strategy SPD](https://www.basildon.gov.uk/planningobligations). Available at: <https://www.basildon.gov.uk/planningobligations>
- 17 Basildon Council (2020) Norsey Wood Nature Reserve Management Plan 2020 – 2025 (Updated January 2020)
- 18 1 – APP/V1505/W/21/3283720 (21/00762/FULL) - Land on the east side Of Newhouse Avenue, Wickford, SS12 0JZ; 2 –

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- APP/V1505/W/21/3278853 (21/00375/FULL) - Land between 'Green Oak' and 'Woodlands', Branksome Avenue, Wickford, Essex.
- 19** 1 – APP/V1505/W/3249059 (19/01373/OUT) - Land between The Willows (aka Crystal Cottage) and Cranbourne, Broomhills Chase, Billericay, CM12 9TH; 2 – APP/V1505/W/21/3281323 (21/01027/PIP) - Lyndhurst, Broomhills Chase, Billericay CM12 9TG
- 20** APP/V1505/W/22/3302322 (22/00318/FULL) - The Orchard, 8 Clifton Road, Bowers Gifford, Basildon, Essex SS13 2LE
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- 25** UK Power Networks (2010) Welcome to UK Power Networks Open Data Portal [online]. Available At: <https://ukpowernetworks.opendatasoft.com/pages/network-infrastructure-usage-map/>
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