

**Landscape Character and
Green Belt
Landscape Capacity Study**

for

Basildon Borough Council

**Volume One
Landscape Character Assessment of
Basildon Borough**

December 2014

The Landscape Partnership Ltd is a practice of Chartered Landscape Architects, Chartered Town Planners and Chartered Environmentalists, registered with the Landscape Institute and a member of the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment & the Arboricultural Association.

The Landscape Partnership Limited
Registered Office:
Greenwood House
15a St Cuthberts Street
Bedford
MK40 3JG

Registered in England No 2709001

Volume 1: Landscape Character Assessment of Basildon Borough

Volume 2: Green Belt Landscape Capacity Study of Basildon Borough (separate document)

Volume 1: contents

1	Introduction	5
1.1	Introduction	5
1.2	Purpose and scope	5
1.3	Structure of the report	6
2	Landscape Character context	07
2.1	National/regional character context	7
2.2	Essex County Landscape Character context	9
2.3	Landscape Character of adjoining local authorities	12
3	Shaping of the Basildon Landscape	14
3.1	General	14
3.2	Human influences on the landscape	14
4	Character of Basildon’s landscapes overview	16
4.1	Characterisation methodology	16
4.2	Character of the Basildon landscape – an overview	19
4.3	Landscape Character Types	20
4.4	Landscape Character Areas	21
4.5	Key views	21
4.6	Key landmarks	26
4.7	Gateways to Basildon Borough	28
5	Basildon’s Landscape Character areas	30
5.1	LCA1 - Bowers and Vange Estuary Marshlands	31
5.2	LCA2 - Pitseahall Island Restored Landforms	34
5.3	LCA3 - Bowers Gifford and North Benfleet Farmlands	37
5.4	LCA4 - North Benfleet and Nevendon Settled Claylands	40
5.5	LCA5 - Shotgate and North Wickford Urban Fringe	44
5.6	LCA6 - Ramsden-Bellhouse and Wickford Settled Claylands	46
5.7	LCA7 - Doeshill Farmlands	49
5.8	LCA8 - Crays Hill Settled Claylands	52
5.9	LCA9 - Upper Crouch Valley Farmlands	55
5.10	LCA10 - East Billericay Wooded Hills and Ridges	58
5.11	LCA11 - West Billericay Wooded Farmlands	61
5.12	LCA12 - Burstead Sloping Farmland	64
5.13	LCA13 - Dunton Settled Clayland	67
5.14	LCA14 - Langdon Hills	70

Glossary

Figures

Figure 01	Countryside Character Areas – National Picture
Figure 02	National Character Areas in Essex (© Chris Blandford Associates, 2003)
Figure 03	Essex County Landscape Character Assessment (© Chris Blandford Associates, 2003)
Figure 04	Essex Coast Landscape Character Assessment (SAIL and Essex County Council 2005)
Figure 05	Sub-Regional Landscape Character Areas (Thames Gateway South Essex Greengrid Strategy, Greengrid Partnership)
Figure 06	Landscape Management Strategy Matrix
Figure 07	Landscape Regions
Figure 08	Basildon Borough Landscape Character Types
Figure 09	Basildon Borough Landscape Character Areas
Figure 10	Landmarks and Views
Figure 11	Gateways

Appendices

Appendix 01	Basildon Landscape Character Area Field Survey Form
Appendix 02	Basildon Landscape Character Assessment Stakeholder Consultation Form
Appendix 03	Summary of outcomes from Basildon Landscape Study stakeholder workshop

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 In December 2012 The Landscape Partnership was commissioned by Basildon Borough Council (BBC) to undertake a landscape study of the Green Belt within the Borough. Part one of the commission comprised a Landscape Character Assessment of the Borough which included the identification and description of Landscape Character areas, gateways and key views within the Borough. This report, Volume 1 presents the results of part one of the assessment. Part two of the commission comprised a landscape sensitivity and capacity assessment of the whole of the Borough's Green Belt; the results of which are published in a separate volume – Volume 2.

1.1.2 The reports were taken to public consultation during January to April 2014 as part of the Council's consultation on the Local Plan Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options. A number of comments were made in relation to the Landscape Character Assessment and the Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment. These comments were reviewed and a few of the areas re-visited. Following this, in December 2014 the studies were updated to reflect, where appropriate, comments made during the consultation period.

1.2 Purpose and scope

1.2.1 In February 2012, the Council carried out a consultation on their Core Strategy Preferred Options Report. In response to this consultation, the Council received some criticisms on the preliminary Green Belt methodology which was prepared as part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy. The criticisms described the Green Belt methodology as broad brush and simplistic, and some consultees felt that limited consideration had been given to the Borough's landscape.

1.2.2 The Council decided to revise their Green Belt methodology and carry out a comprehensive Green Belt study. This landscape study was commissioned in order to inform and support the Green Belt study in addressing the landscape concerns raised through the Core Strategy consultation. The Landscape Character Assessment section of the study (Volume 1) would inform the Green Belt capacity study (Volume 2) by providing a detailed knowledge base of the Landscape Character of Basildon.

1.2.3 The brief for the project required the following main outputs;

- Identification of the main landscape tracts and key landscape features to inform the development of Local Character Areas. The process was to include the assessment of topographical, ecological and historical features
- Identification of the visual context of the Borough's landscape and strategic views to and from natural and man-made landmarks including those beyond the Borough.
- Identification of important gateways into and within the Borough and the interface between townscape and landscape.

1.3 Structure of the report

1.3.1

This report documents the processes involved in the character assessment beginning in Section 2 with an overview of the existing Landscape Character Assessments that were used to inform the study. The study then provides a brief description of how the landscape of Basildon has been formed, the changes it has undergone and the pressures it may face in the future. The report then sets out the methodology used in the character assessment process and an overview of the character of Basildon, its Landscape Types, views and gateways. Full landscape profiles of each Landscape Character Area then follow in section 5 of the report.

2 Landscape Character Context

2.1 National/regional character context

- 2.1.1** The process of landscape characterisation and assessment has been promoted at a national scale in England by the work of Natural England (formerly the Countryside Agency). Between 1998 and 1999 the Countryside Agency published the Joint Character Areas (JCAs) and Countryside Character Area descriptions, splitting England into 159 character areas based on the characteristics of their natural and man-made landscape (see Figure 1).



Figure 1 – Countryside Character Areas – National Picture

- 2.1.2** The National Character Map defines Basildon Borough as lying within National Character Areas 111 - Northern Thames Basin and Area 81 - Greater Thames Estuary. The detailed descriptions for these areas are found in the Countryside Character, Volume 6 East of England and 7: South East & London. Figure 02 below shows the location of these two areas.

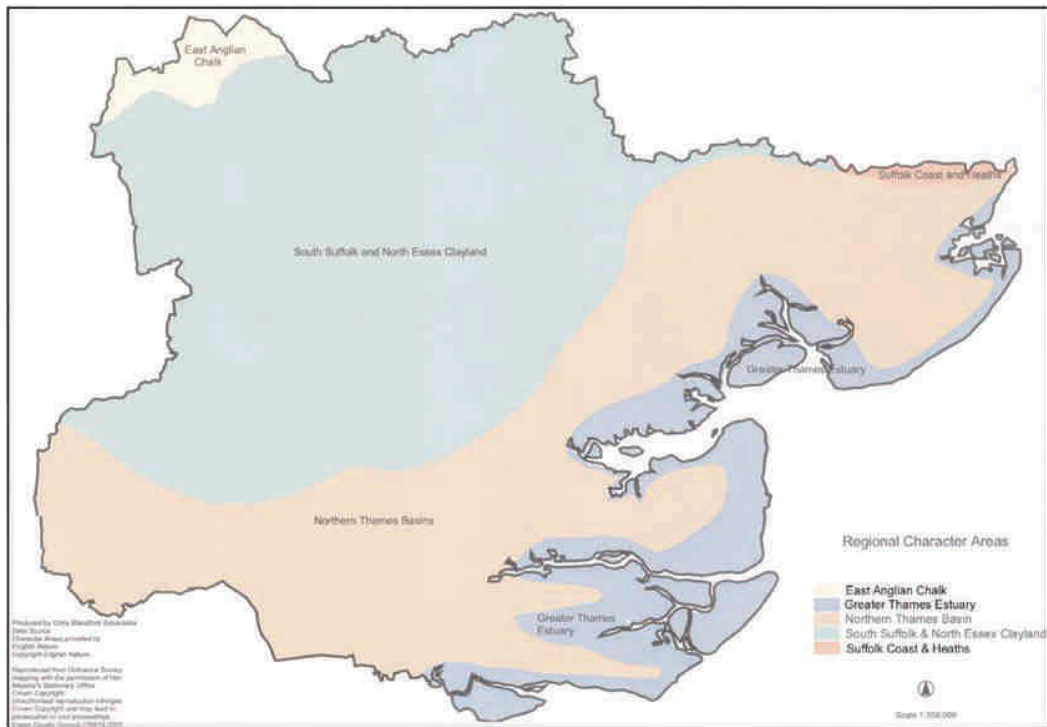


Figure 2 – National Character Areas in Essex (© Chris Blandford Associates, 2003)

- 2.1.3** The value of understanding the Landscape Character of all landscapes in England is recognised in one of the Core Planning Principles within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF para 17) which states that planning should *"take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it"*. Landscape Character Assessment is the process which can identify these intrinsic values and unique characteristics of the diverse landscapes in the UK.
- 2.1.4** Current guidance for carrying out character assessments is provided in 'Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland' (Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage - 2002).

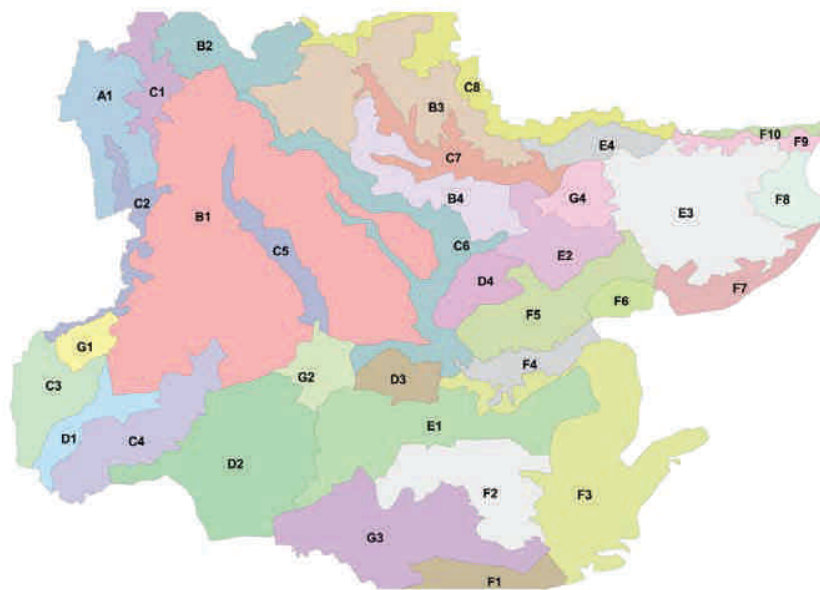
2.2 Essex County Landscape Character context

Essex Landscape Character Assessment (2003)

2.2.1

A number of character assessments have been carried out at the county and district scale within Essex. The Essex Landscape Character Assessment was carried out in 2003 by Chris Blandford Associates for Essex County Council and Southend on Sea Borough Council. The study identified 35 Landscape Character areas, four of which occur within or immediately adjacent to Basildon Borough. These are as follows:

- D2: Brentwood Hills
- E1: South Essex Farmlands
- F2: Crouch & Roach Farmland
- G3: South Essex Coastal Towns



*Figure 3 – Essex County Landscape Character Assessment
(© Chris Blandford Associates, 2003)*

Essex Coast Landscape Character Assessment (2005)

2.2.2

The Essex Coast Landscape Character Assessment study area follows the Essex coastline from Thurrock in the Thames estuary to the Stour Valley and Harwich, in the north east.

2.2.3

The following Landscape Character Types fall within parts of these character areas and in the Basildon Borough or directly adjacent to it:

- River Terrace Farmlands
- Diverse Coastal Marshland
- Urban Fringe Estuary Marshland
- Intertidal Salt Marsh

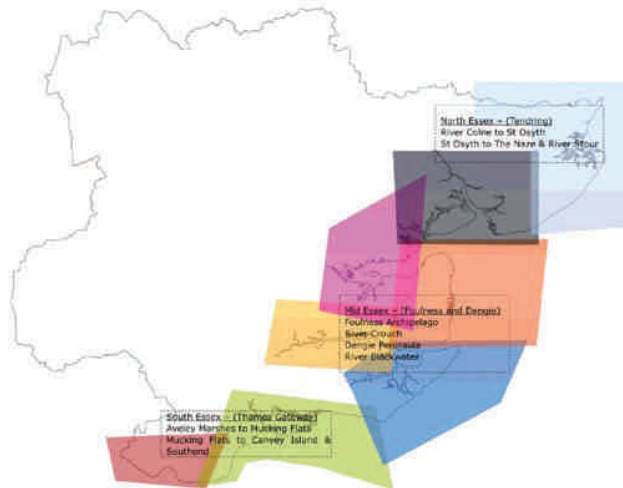


Figure 4 - Essex Coast Landscape Character Assessment (SAIL and Essex County Council 2005)

2.2.4 The character study identified 30 distinct Landscape Character areas along the Essex Coast. The south east corner of the Basildon Borough falls within this study area. The following Character Areas lie within or immediately adjacent to Basildon Borough:

- West Canvey/ Shellhaven
- Canvey Benfleet
- Tilbury, Mucking and Fobbing Marshes

Thames Gateway South Essex Greengrid Strategy 2008

2.2.5 The Thames Gateway South Essex area incorporates Basildon, Thurrock, Castle Point and Southend on Sea and has been identified as a priority area for regeneration and growth. The Greengrid Strategy provides guidance for development in this area. As part of the analysis work within the study a Landscape Character Assessment was carried out. The study identified 14 Landscape Character Areas, 5 of which lie within the Basildon Borough as illustrated below in Figure 5. These are as follows;

- 5. Corringham Thames Terraces
- 6. Langdon Hills
- 7. Fobbing and Bowers Marshes
- 8. Basildon Town
- 9. North Benfleet Farmland

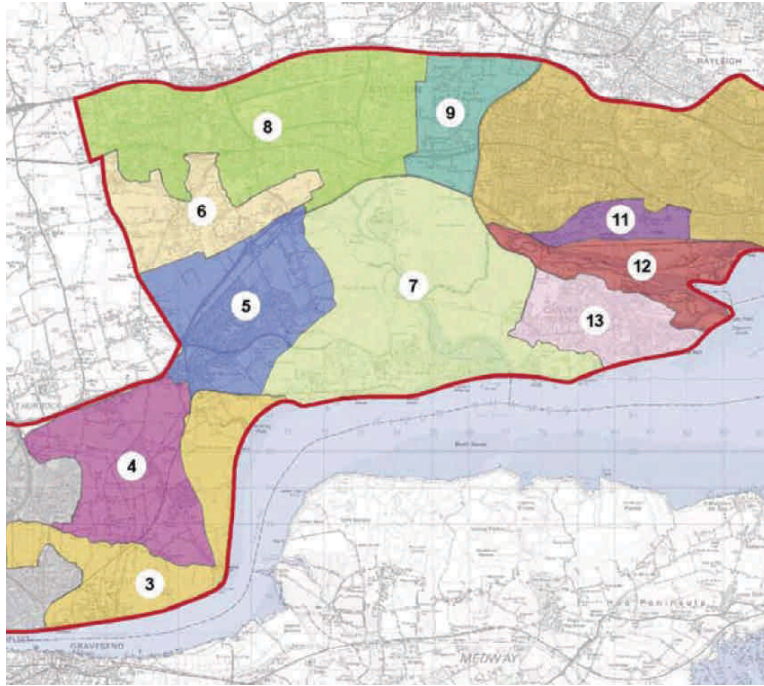


Figure 5 - Sub-Regional Landscape Character Areas (Thames Gateway South Essex Greengrid Strategy, Greengrid Partnership, 2008)

2.3 Landscape Character of adjoining local authorities

2.3.1 A number of the Local Authorities adjacent to Basildon have previously undertaken district scale Landscape Character Assessments. The character areas/types identified in these studies and the position of their boundaries with Basildon Borough have been considered as part of this Volume 1 study in order to provide cross authority consistency where possible. The location of the adjacent Character Areas to Basildon Borough are shown on Figure 06. The following Landscape Character Assessments are illustrated:

- Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Malden and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessments, 2006
- Thurrock Local Landscape Character Assessment, 2004
- Green Belt Landscape Assessment for Castle Point Borough Council, 2010

2.3.2 To the west of the Basildon Borough lies Brentwood Borough. The Landscape Character Assessment identifies three character areas adjacent or very close to Basildon Borough as follows:

- F10: Heybridge Wooded Farmland (shared with Chelmsford City)
- F14: Ingrave and Herongate Wooded Farmland
- G1: Horndon Fenland

2.3.3 The northern edge of Basildon Borough abuts the boundary of Chelmsford City. The Landscape Character Assessment identifies four character areas adjacent or very close to Basildon Borough, which are:

- D9 Farmbridge Drained and Estuarine Marsh
- F10: Heybridge Wooded Farmland (shared with Brentwood Borough)
- F11: South Hanningfield Wooded Farmland
- F12: East Hanningfield Wooded Farmland (shared with Maldon District)

2.3.4 The eastern edge of Basildon Borough abuts the boundary of Rochford District. This local authority does not currently have a detailed Landscape Character Assessment and utilises the Essex County Landscape Character Areas, two of which lie adjacent or cross over into Basildon, which are:

- F2: Crouch & Roach Farmland
- G3: South Essex Coastal Towns

2.3.5 The Borough of Thurrock is situated to the south west of Basildon. It's Local Landscape Character Assessment identifies four character areas adjacent or very close to Basildon Borough, which are:

- LLCA5: Fobbing Marshes/Holehaven
- LLCA11: Fobbing and Corringham Scarp
- LLCA12: Horndon

- LLCA14: Langdon Hills

2.3.6

The Borough of Castle Point is situated to the south east corner of the Basildon Borough. Castle Point does not have a detailed character assessment, but information is available in a Green Belt Landscape Assessment for Castle Point Borough Council (September 2010). The study indicates 7 Green Belt areas closely associated with the boundary to Basildon, these do not have descriptive names. The document also cites the Landscape Character Types from the Landscape Character Assessment of the Essex Coast (2005).

3 Shaping of the Basildon Landscape

3.1 General

3.1.1 Basildon is located to the south of Essex and close to the Thames Estuary. It has a varied topography ranging from elevated plateaux and local hills to the marshlands and creeks associated with the Thames Estuary. The underlying geology is largely formed of London Clay with Claygate clays and Bagshot Formation sands and gravels forming areas of higher ground at the Langdon Hills to the south west and also to the north east around Billericay. The Vange and Bowers marshes are comprised of tidal flat deposits while the valley-floor and tributaries associated with the river Crouch are alluvial. Early records of vegetation in the area suggest that from 7,500 BC the Borough was covered by mixed deciduous forest, largely of Oak, Lime and Elm.

3.1.2 There is an existing detailed historic study of Basildon Borough produced by Essex County Council (2010-2011) that provides a thorough report of the development of the Basildon landscape. The 'Basildon Borough Historic Environment Characterisation Assessment' can be found on the Council's website: <http://www.basildon.gov.uk>. Some of the findings from this report are now included below in section 3.2.

3.2 Human influences on the landscape

3.2.1 Significant human influences on the landscape appeared in the Neolithic period (4,000 - 2,200BC) as woodland began to be cleared for fields and meadows through the introduction of farming. This continued on a large scale with the re-organisation of the landscape during the Bronze Age (2,200 - 700BC). Evidence for changes within Basildon Borough became most apparent during the Iron Age (700BC - 43AD) in the form of settlement sites, burials and field systems. A large and wealthy settlement was apparent close to Norsey Wood, in Billericay.

3.2.2 Evidence of settlement from the Roman period (43 - 410AD) suggests that the main settlement was centered around the present Billericay school and playing fields. It is also during this time that the rectilinear field pattern that is still evident today became apparent around Wickford.

3.2.3 The large number of medieval churches in Basildon are thought to have come out of the organisation of the Saxon church in the 7th century. The minster churches served large areas of land that were later split up into smaller parishes. Further distribution of land was evident in the late Saxon period where land was subdivided into numerous small manors. The manors were dispersed allowing the main centre to be located on the low lying London Clay, but giving access to woodland and marsh pasture through having separate areas on the coastal marshes and Langdon Hills. Much of the rectilinear field patterns also had their origin within this period which have come to characterise much of the South and East Essex landscape.

- 3.2.4** The Domesday Book (1086) described the Basildon landscape as sparsely populated with scattered farms and church and hall complexes. There are 42 Listed Buildings in the Borough that have their origin from the medieval period (1066-1537). Land was used for a mix of arable and pastoral agriculture and patches of small woodland were spread across the whole area, with more concentrated areas on the Langdon Hills and around Norsey Wood.
- 3.2.5** The 1777 Chapman and Andre map of Essex provides a reasonably accurate picture of the landscape as it was in the late medieval period. Characteristics that still have influence on the current landscape include the grid-like formation of small roads crossing the landscape, the favoured position of churches on higher ground with examples of Pitsea and Vange and a number of areas of heathland particularly around Little Burstead.
- 3.2.6** A major influence on the landscape followed the arrival of the railway in 1889 to Laindon and Pitsea and later a second London to Southend line passing through Billericay and Wickford. Changes in society continued to influence the Borough at the beginning of the 20th century with the agricultural depression leaving large numbers of Essex farms semi-derelict, derelict and abandoned. These farms were bought for low prices by entrepreneurs who split them into individual plots, or what has now become known as Plotlands. There were limited regulations applied to these developments resulting in access via unmade roads, limited access to sanitation, water or lighting and properties that were typically little more than timber shacks. The small scale pattern of Plotlands has been retained in some areas to the present time often with more modern houses replacing the original dwellings. Other plots have been abandoned and colonised by secondary woodland, resulting in grid-like areas of woodland with paths running along former roads.
- 3.2.7** The next major change occurred with the post WWII establishment of Basildon New Town in 1949. The New Town was largely welcomed as it provided an opportunity to clear a number of the Plotlands and provide a modern standard of accommodation and employment opportunities. The urban area of Basildon has expanded since the original New Town status together with further growth in the towns of Billericay and Wickford. Despite the expanding urban character in the 20th century there are still extensive areas of rural and peri-urban landscape. The ancient rectilinear field patterns can still be recognised although the development of Plotlands and post-1950s boundary loss have reduced this pattern. A well-wooded landscape is still present to the south west of Basildon and around Billericay with a mix of ancient and secondary woodlands. To the south-east the landscape is still characterised by grazing marsh and former grazing marsh on the Thames flood-plain.
- 3.2.8** The end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st has seen a significant amount of change in the Borough with large scale expansion of urban areas and intensification of arable farming practices. This is likely to be an ongoing trend as pressure for further urban development continues. Pressures for major improvements to roads could also be damaging to Landscape Character with narrow hedged/banked lanes vulnerable to development change. Rural landscapes face pressures not only of potential development but also from visual intrusion and noise especially from roads. The impact of light pollution has also become more apparent in recent times resulting from settlement growth and road infrastructure improvements.

4 Character of Basildon's landscapes – overview

4.1 Characterisation methodology

- 4.1.1** The methodology used in this study is based on the national guidance found in 'Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland' (2002) and the associated Topic Papers. The precise approach was also chosen to meet the requirements of BBC.

Desk Based Stage

- 4.1.2** The initial stage of the Landscape Character Assessment involved the assessment of the study area using the existing Landscape Character Assessments (see Section 2 above), desk-based information gathered from BBC and neighbouring authorities and research into landscape and environmental designations. This data was reviewed to begin to identify the pattern of features that would help define Borough scale Landscape Character areas from the larger scale National and County Character Areas.

Field Survey

- 4.1.3** A pro forma field survey form was developed to capture survey information in a structured and consistent manner (see Appendix 1). This includes information about areas through a mixture of guided responses and sections of free text to provide greater opportunity for description. The character section of the survey form covered landform, landcover, historical pattern and visual and sensory perception. The condition section of the survey form covered historical integrity, ecological integrity and visual impact. Additional notes and photographic records supplemented the use of forms. Both notes and photographs informed the process of drafting a description of and illustrating each character area in the final report. The study area was systematically appraised from roads and public rights of way by two survey teams. The lead members of each team carried out an initial survey day together to ensure a Borough wide consistency of approach.

- 4.1.4** Urban areas, defined for this study as those outside Green Belt, were not surveyed. However, the interface of urban areas with rural areas has been considered. The field survey was carried out between January and March 2013 (although consideration was given to the landscape in different seasons), viewing from publically accessible locations throughout the Borough. The survey teams consisted of two Landscape Architects, who were then responsible for drafting the text and defining the boundaries of each Landscape Character Area surveyed.

The Characterisation Process

- 4.1.5** Following on from the desk study and fieldwork coherent Landscape Character Areas were identified in draft form alongside diagrams of key viewpoints and local landmarks.

Boundaries

- 4.1.6** It should be recognised that although the drawing of boundary lines on a plan is an inevitable part of the process, this does not always mean that landscape character is dramatically different to either side of each and every line. Landscape character can suddenly change e.g. at the interface of an historic parkland, at the foot of a steep scarp slope or at a settlement edge, but often there is a more gradual transition. In such cases

the boundary line marks more a watershed of character, where the balance of the defining elements has shifted from one Landscape Type to another.

- 4.1.7** It should also be appreciated when viewing the GIS version of the Landscape Character Areas, that the lines are digitised against a 1:25,000 base and at a scale of accuracy of c.1:2,500. This level of detail can infer that a decision has been made about which side of a road a change in landscape character occurs or whether one particular house is included in an area or not. In practice a reasonable decision has been made on the basis of the available OS data, existing boundary information and the fieldwork data and survey sheets, but will be subject to change over time and cannot in every instance be regarded as definitive, but rather as indicative of where a transition occurs.

Stakeholder Meeting

- 4.1.8** An important part of the process of Landscape Character Assessment is the involvement of local stakeholders. This was carried out through a Stakeholder Event, which was held on 6th February 2013. A wide range of consultees were invited including: those with a professional interest, environmental organisations, landowners, developers, parish councils and local amenity groups. The workshop was attended by 20 people. At the meeting attendees received a presentation on the background to the principles of Landscape Character Assessment and details of the process underway within Basildon Borough. Attendees were then given the opportunity to discuss their views and to make suggestions on the draft character areas, key characteristics, viewpoints and landmarks within smaller groups. Questionnaires were also provided both in electronic and hard copy form (see Appendix 2) to enable fuller more detailed contributions from the stakeholders. Those who were unable to attend were given further opportunity to contribute to the character statements using the electronic questionnaire available through the Council's website. All the returns and comments (for summary see Appendix 3) were carefully considered and included as appropriate into the Character Area Statements.

Landscape Character Areas

- 4.1.9** Landscape Character Areas were then defined using the survey data from the fieldwork and following consideration of comments from stakeholders. This included some minor adjustments to names, and boundary lines and a reduction of the total number of Landscape Character Areas from 15 to 14. The Landscape Character Areas were identified on a series of maps both as hard copy plans and digitally using GIS (ArcView 10.1).

- 4.1.10** For each of the identified Landscape Character Areas, a description has been prepared and the key characteristics and features identified, (see Section 5).

- 4.1.11** As part of the assessment of each Character Areas, a 'Condition and Strength of Character Matrix' has been included. In order to assess any landscape's potential ability to adapt to change without losing its intrinsic character, it is necessary to analyse the functional integrity or condition of the landscape together with the strength of character as demonstrated by the more permanent or robust elements of the landscape. Landscape condition is determined from an evaluation of the relative state (poor/moderate/good) of elements within the landscape that are subject to change, such as survival of hedgerows, extent and impact of built development. Strength of character is determined from an evaluation of the impact of relatively stable factors, such as landform, pattern of land cover, the continuity of a historic pattern, the degree of visibility and its rarity.

4.1.12 Six factors were considered for both condition and strength of character in relation to each character area. These factors are as follows;

Condition

- Landcover Change
- Age Structure of Tree Cover*
- Extent of semi-natural habitat survival*
- Management of semi-natural habitats
- Survival of cultural pattern (fields and hedges)
- Impact of built development*

Strength of Character

- Impact of landform*
- Impact of landcover*
- Historic pattern*
- Tranquillity
- Distinctiveness/rarity
- Visual unity

** Prime condition categories if tie*

4.1.13 Each factor was evaluated in the field, with a record made on the survey sheet against a three-point scale and entered in the matrix table. Values for the factors on each axis were then aggregated and a majority total applied. Where totals of equal value were identified, 'prime' categories have been identified that are considered to be of relatively greater importance when considering landscape character and these are given priority weighting. The field survey form (see Appendix 1) identifies the elements that are considered when assessing each of the factors.

4.1.14 The resulting intersection on the matrix derived the general long term landscape management strategy for each Landscape Character Area. For example where a landscape area is assessed overall as in good 'condition' but only moderate 'strength of character' the strategy will be to 'conserve and strengthen', see Figure 7 below.

Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Strength of character		

Figure 6 – Landscape Management Strategy Matrix

4.1.15 Each of the strategies identified above reflects the strength of character and the condition of the landscape as recorded in the field. The strategy suggests the way in which each Landscape Character Area should be managed in order to maximise the character and condition of the landscape.

4.1.16 Guidelines for future countryside management within each Landscape Character Area were then provided. Factors that have been considered within the guidelines include agricultural practices, development pressures, landscape detractors, recreation, cultural heritage and biodiversity. The Landscape Character Area statements and strategies also provide the context for Volume 2 of the study relating to Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity. The management guidelines provide a framework for protection and enhancement of each LCA in the future. These guidelines should inform management activities in the future and should be taken into consideration when developing proposals for any new development. In particular they identify opportunities for protecting and strengthening the local landscape character that could be undertaken as part of the development process.

Key Views, Landmarks and Gateways

4.1.17 Important views, landmarks and gateways have been defined using the survey data from the fieldwork and following consideration of comments from stakeholders. These are identified on a diagrammatic map together with descriptions and details of each view, landmark and gateway in sections 4.5 to 4.7 below.

4.2 Character of the Basildon landscape – an overview

4.2.1 Basildon Borough can be broadly categorized into 4 landscape regions (see Figure 7 below).

4.2.2 Firstly on the higher ground to the north west, formed by underlying patches of Claygate clays and Bagshot Formation sands, wooded hills and arable plateaux surround Billericay.

4.2.3 Secondly the central part of the Borough lies on the lower lying London Clays. Here the land is dissected by the valleys of the River Crouch and associated tributaries. Basildon urban core and Wickford comprise much of this zone along with the less developed River Crouch valley which mainly comprises farmland.

4.2.4 Thirdly to the south east the landscape character changes to the low lying drained marshlands of the Thames estuary. The Pitsea landfill site forms a prominent raised landform within this zone. The Wat Tyler Country Park occupies a restored landscape of grassland and scrub.

4.2.5 Fourthly the land rises to the south west of where the Langdon Hills are formed on Bagshot sands and Claygate Clays. Large parts of this area are densely wooded and part of the Langdon Hills Nature Reserve. Steep ridges provide long distant views out of the Borough.

4.3 Landscape Character Types

4.3.1 The landscape character in the Borough can be characterized in terms of both character types and character areas. Character Types are generic in their attributes and can appear in more than one location, including locations within Basildon and outside. In contrast character areas are a specific local expression of a Character Type occurring only in one unique location. The identified areas of Landscape Types and Landscape Character are both the result of a strategic assessment at Borough level. They reflect the general pattern and characteristics of the landscape rather than small scale variations. However, in many areas there are also small pockets of land where the landscape characteristics differ from those of the overarching character type and character area.

4.3.2 The following Landscape Character Types have been identified from a combination of desk and site study work within Basildon Borough and by reviewing the adjacent character assessments and national and county level studies in order to gauge the overarching characteristics of the landscape and enable consistency across Borough boundaries. Character Type names have considered those already used outside the Borough for cross border consistency. The Borough has been divided into eight Landscape Character Types as follows (see also Figure 8);

- **Estuary Marshlands** - Flat, coastal landscape of relatively undisturbed marshland. Extensive natural habitats of saltmarsh and intertidal mudflats. Remote, open character that has avoided extensive human influence.
- **Lowland Settled Claylands** - Relatively flat, settled agricultural landscape often associated with coastal fringe areas. Small fields and plots create a relatively enclosed landscape with limited long distance views. Dispersed settlements are scattered throughout the zone.
- **Lowland Farmlands** - Low lying landscape crossed in parts by major river corridors. Intensely farmed agricultural land that is in close proximity to well developed, densely populated settlements. Intrusive modern buildings may be a feature and the open character of the land allows views to settlements on higher ground.
- **Restored Landforms** - Area of raised landform, previously used for landfill that has been restored. Current land uses include country parks, waste disposal and restored grassland and scrub. Isolated location with a remote character.
- **Urban Fringelands** - Gently sloping, open landscape adjacent to a dense urban edge. Typical land-uses include public open space, scrub land, transport corridors and agricultural land.
- **Wooded Hills and Ridges** – Sloping and undulating landscape providing enclosure and variation in texture and scale. Prominent hills and ridges. Large parts of the land are covered in woodland with more open clearings of pasture and arable farmland.
- **Wooded Farmland** - A gently undulating, elevated arable landscape with scattered blocks of woodland. Small ribbon developments or isolated farmhouses. The elevated land allows some open long distance views, where not contained by woodland.
- **Sloping Farmland** – A sloping and undulating arable landscape, very open in character allowing long distant views over farmland. Some localised ribbon development and scattered farm buildings.

4.4 Landscape Character Areas

The Landscape Character Areas are derived from the Landscape Character Types. Fourteen Areas have been identified, following stakeholder comments. These are detailed in Section 5 below and their extent is shown on key diagrams and on Figure 9. The extent of the areas have been mapped digitally using GIS (ArcView 10.1). The Landscape Character Areas are as follows:

- 1: Bowers and Vange Estuary Marshlands
- 2: Pitseahall Island Restored Landforms
- 3: Bowers Gifford and North Benfleet Farmlands
- 4: North Benfleet and Nevendon Settled Claylands
- 5: Shotgate and North Wickford Urban Fringe
- 6: Ramsden-Bellhouse and Wickford Settled Claylands
- 7: Doeshill Farmlands
- 8: Crays Hill Settled Claylands
- 9: Upper Crouch Valley Farmlands
- 10: East Billericay Wooded Hills and Ridges
- 11: West Billericay Wooded Farmlands
- 12: Burstead Sloping Farmlands
- 13: Dunton Settled Claylands
- 14: Langdon Hills

4.5 Key views

- 4.5.1** Through a combination of field work and stakeholder involvement, key views have been identified, the locations of which are shown on Figure 10. These include viewpoints within the Borough, with views across the Borough's landscape and out towards the landscape of the adjacent authorities, and viewpoints outside the Borough with views of the Borough's landscape. The views can be appreciated from public locations including, roads, rights of way and areas of public open space. These views should ideally be retained and enhanced as they provide an important way of appreciating the landscape character of the Borough. They include wide panoramas, or extended framed views of rural landscapes from elevated positions and can typically extend over much of the Borough. Other local identified views are typically either shorter or extend up towards local landmarks e.g. ridgelines or listed buildings. A description of the view from each viewpoint is listed below;

VIEWPOINTS OUTSIDE THE BOROUGH (With views towards Basildon)

Viewpoint A; Fobbing High Road Wide long distance views towards Basildon Borough from Fobbing High Road. Views extend to the east over the Fobbing, Vange and Bowers Marshes towards the built edge of Pitsea. The urban development of Basildon can be glimpsed in the distance.

Viewpoint B; South Benfleet (Boyce Hill Golf course/Essex Way)

Significant, long distance views to the west towards Basildon Borough. The urban edge of Castle Point is visible in the foreground with distant views towards the Vange and Bowers Marshes with the Langdon Hills glimpsed in the background beyond. The elevated A130 and the surrounding arable land are also visible.

Viewpoint C; Kiln Road, Thundersley from Coombe Woods Glimpsed narrow long distance view west down Kiln Road towards Basildon Borough. In the background of the view, arable fields around North Benfleet are visible in the distance.

Viewpoint D; Church Lane, Thundersley

Glimpsed long distance view along road towards eastern edge of Basildon Borough. Urban fringe of Castle Point is visible in the foreground with the A130 and the edge of Basildon viewed beyond. The strategic green corridor of undeveloped land between Castle Point and Basildon Junction is clearly visible with the roofs of the large industrial buildings on Burnt Mills Industrial Estate prominent in the background.

Viewpoint E; All Saints Church, Rettendon

View south towards Basildon Borough from the churchyard of All Saints Church, Rettendon. View extends over agricultural landscape across the A130 towards the edge of Wickford. Trees along the River Crouch and field hedgerow vegetation screen much of the urban edge of Wickford. High voltage power lines extend across the centre of the view.

Viewpoint F; Castledon Road/ Church of St Margaret's

Wide views south from churchyard of St Margaret's church across Basildon Borough towards the northern edge of Wickford in the south east and Crays Hill in the south-west. The foreground is formed of sloping arable land with mature hedges and trees. In clear conditions, the edge of Basildon is visible including the distinctive watertower on the Burnt Mill Industrial Estate (known locally as 'The Onion').

Viewpoint G; Ramsden Heath - Church Road, Park Lane & Kent Hill

Views south across the Borough from high ground on edge of village edge. Views extend across the Crouch Valley towards Basildon. Park Lane has glimpsed views through the houses and vegetation of Claypits Wood, Barrenleys Wood and Upper Crouch Valley Farmlands.

Viewpoint H; A13 towards Langdon Hills

View of the Langdon Hills looking north from the A13. The view has open farmland in the foreground and the strong wooded ridge of the Langdon Hills on the skyline, only interrupted by the communications tower on top of the Westley Heights.

Viewpoint J; One Tree Hill Panorama

Wide stretching panoramic views from field within Langdon Hills Country Park, looking south east across open farmland towards Wat Tyler Country Park and Bowers and Vange Marshes. Part of the Langdon Hills where Basildon Golf course is situated can be seen to the left of the view. On a clear day the view extends over to Canvey Island.

Viewpoint K; High Road

View north east from High Road, south of the Basildon Borough. The built edge of Basildon town centre is prominent in the view with the wooded ridge occupied by Basildon golf course to the left and the marshes surrounding Wat Tyler Country Park to the right.

Viewpoint L; Lower Dunton Road

Roadside panoramic view taking in the distinctive form of the Langdon Hills, with the EWT Langdon Nature Reserve to the left and Langdon Hills Country Park to the right. The vegetated skyline is only broken by the communications tower on the top of Westley Heights.

Viewpoint M - Brentwood Road A128

View from road looking north east across grass fields towards the Basildon Borough. The elevated Langdon Hills are visible on the horizon

Viewpoint N; Old Church Lane

View east towards Basildon Borough from Old Church Lane. View extends over agricultural landscape to wooded high ground around Billericay.

Viewpoint P; Padham's Green Road

View south east towards Basildon Borough from Padham's Green Road. The view looks across open farmland either side of the narrow lane towards the wooded hills around Billericay.

VIEWPOINTS WITHIN THE BOROUGH (With views across the Borough and out towards surrounding areas)**Viewpoint 1; Bridleway leading from Coxes Farm Road**

Panoramic views from bridleway on elevated land close to Brier Mount. The view encompasses the open sloping farmland of the Crouch Valley in the foreground and extends south east with distant views to Crays Hill and Basildon.

Viewpoint 2; Outwood Common Road

Framed long distant view looking south along Outwood Common Road between houses on either side. The view looks out across Basildon town centre with the Langdon Hills forming the skyline above.

Viewpoint 3; Laindon Road (A176)

Near the public right of way there are attractive views to wider countryside to the south west framed by boundary trees on either side. The view is currently unaffected by modern development.

Viewpoint 4; Botney Hill

View from the elevated landform of Botney Hill allows wide sweeping views south east towards Basildon. The Ford research centre is a prominent feature within the view and a wooded skyline formed by the Langdon Hills to the distance.

Viewpoint 5; Noak Hill Road

A break in the roadside ribbon development of Noak Hill presents a long distant view looking south west from the road. The view encompasses Burstead sloping farmland with the Ford Research centre visible on the horizon.

Viewpoint 6; Footpath Noak Hill

A footpath to the east of the roadside residential development of Noak Hill allows panoramic views over open arable to the south east. In the foreground a tree belt frames the steeple of St Mary Madeline Church in Great Burstead. Hills beyond Basildon form the

far skyline with the urban edge visible below. The recognisable landmark of 'The Onion' in Basildon is visible to the right of the view on the edge of Great Burstead.

Viewpoint 7; Dunton Plotlands Nature Reserve

Attractive long distant view from Public Right of Way within the Dunton Plotlands Nature Reserve, looking west into the Brentwood Borough. Looking down slope towards a lake in the foreground, with rolling arable farmland beyond. The built form of buildings in Upminster can be seen in the distance.

Viewpoint 8; Lincewood

Important panoramic view from Public Right of Way near the Lincewood Nature Reserve offering extensive views south, across arable farmland towards the Thames Estuary.

Viewpoint 9; Westley Heights

The B1007 cuts through Westley Heights allowing extensive framed views from the high ground with woodland on either side. The majority of Basildon town centre is hidden by vegetation in the foreground and the view extends to the sloping farmland surrounding Little Burstead and Noak Hill.

Viewpoint 10; Westley Heights across reservoir

View from an elevated dome of land within Westley Heights. The extensive view overlooks a covered reservoir in the foreground and extends over Basildon where the spire of St Nicholas Church is a landmark. More distant views extend towards Crays Hill and the wooded hills east of Billericay on the skyline.

Viewpoint 11; Basildon Golf Course

The public footpath crossing Basildon Golf Course provides wide panoramic views to the south. The view encompasses many features including All Saints Church in Vange, open arable farmland and Fobbing marshes, Pitsea, the oil refinery complex at Corytown and the London Gateway port at Shell Haven.

Viewpoint 12; A176 framed view

Framed view between vegetation either side of the A176. The view extends right across Fobbing Marshes and Holyhaven to the London Gateway port at Shell Haven which forms a recognisable built landmark on the far skyline.

Viewpoint 13; Pitsea marina

Panoramic view south across Vange Creek and Fobbing Marshes. Tidal creek with moored boats form the foreground of the view with the marshes seen behind. Double line of high voltage power lines form prominent features extending into the distance.

Viewpoint 14; Bowers Marshes

Panoramic long distance views from paths through RSPB reserve. Views south across the grazing marshes towards the raised landform of Pitsea landfill.

Viewpoint 15; Pitsea Cemetery and Crematorium

Long distance views south from edge of cemetery. Elevated position at top of slope allows wide views across Bowers Marshes towards raised landform of Pitsea landfill in the distance. Viewpoint is one of few public points with elevated views over the marshes.

Viewpoint 16; Church Lane, Bowers Gifford

Narrow long distance view south towards Bowers Marshes from elevated position on Church Lane. View is enclosed on both sides by field hedgerows.

Viewpoint 17; A13, Pitsea

Glimpsed long distance views from A13 across Vange Marshes towards raised landform of Wat Tyler Country Park and Pitsea landfill site in the distance. Marshes and tidal creeks flood at high tide to create substantial areas of open water which form prominent feature in the view. Elsewhere along the A13 views across the marshes are generally screened by roadside vegetation. Opportunities exist for roadside vegetation to be thinned to allow greater visibility over the marshes and improve visual connectivity with the marshes.

Viewpoint 18; A130

Views from A130 on embankment across agricultural landscape. Important views of the strategic green corridor between Basildon and Castle Point. High voltage powerlines form prominent feature extending across the view.

Viewpoint 19; A129, London Road

Views north across Upper Crouch Valley farmlands from the London Road between Wickford and Crays Hill. Views across undulating agricultural landscape with the wooded ridge of Kent Hill and Ramsden Heath visible in the distance.

Viewpoint 20; A130

Open views west from A130 across agricultural landscape towards the edge of Wickford.

Viewpoint 21; North-western edge of Wickford

View south across sloping agricultural fields from public footpath on edge of Wickford.

Viewpoint 22; Church Lane, Crays Hill

Panoramic views to both sides of Church Lane where the public footpath crosses the road. The views face north east and north west from Crays Hill taking in the Upper Crouch Valley Farmlands with Ramsden Bellhouse and Billericay and the wooded ridge in the distance.

Viewpoint 23; Outwood Common Road

View from Outwood Common Road at the entrance to Norsey Wood, looking east across arable farmland. Meepshole Wood forms a wooded skyline in part of the view, with more extensive rural views between trees into the Chelmsford District.

Viewpoint 24; Queens Park Avenue

View from road looking across grass field towards the Stock Brook Golf Club. To the right of the view are tall poplars along the golf course boundary, more extensive framed views are glimpsed through the trees across farmland in the Chelmsford City to the north west.

Viewpoint 25; Queens Park Country Park

Panoramic views from the higher ground within Country Park towards Brentwood Borough to the west and Chelmsford City to the north, with attractive views across Stock Brook

Viewpoint 26; Mountnessing Road

Framed view from Mountnessing Road looking west between residential properties to Grange Farm. The view extends across farmland into the Brentwood Borough. The railway embankment forms a linear feature to the right of the view.

Viewpoint 27; Tye Common Road

Open view across arable farmland looking west from Tye Common Road. The tops of high rise buildings in Brentwood can be seen in the distance to the right of the view and Bluntswall and James's Woods form a wooded skyline to the left.

Viewpoint 28; Dunton Road

Panoramic views from along Dunton Road, looking north east and north west over open arable fields towards the vegetated corridor of the River Crouch. Mary the Virgin Church in Little Burstead and the surrounding elevated sloping farmlands are features within the view. Electricity pylons are more prominent to the east of the view.

Viewpoint 29; Wash Road

View from roadside looking north west across arable fields towards Great Burstead. The steeple of St Mary Magdalene Church in Great Burstead can be seen above vegetation on the skyline. The recycling depot and Barleylands are features in the Upper Crouch Valley

Viewpoint 30; Church Lane

Attractive view looking south east towards the Essex Wildlife Trust's Langdon Nature Reserve from a gap in the hedgerow along Church Lane, Dunton. The tree lined railway embankment runs across the view and the wooded Langdon Hills can be seen beyond.

Viewpoint 31; All Saints Church, Vange

View from All Saints church graveyard looking north to the wooded ridge occupied by Basildon golf course. The residential built edge of Vange can be seen to the north east.

4.6 Key landmarks

- 4.6.1** Local Landmarks were selected for their presence in important views or importance as an iconic symbol of Basildon's industry, architecture or history. They were tested at the Stakeholder meeting. Locations of these landmarks are shown on Figure 10 a brief descriptions of each landmark is provided below;

LOCAL LANDMARK

Landmark A; Church of St Mary Magdalene, Great Burstead (Grade I), Random stone rubble Church of Norman origin. A shingled spire and castellated parapet to the west tower is noticeable in views.

Landmark B; The Church of Saint Mary the Virgin, Little Burstead (Grade II*) Small evolved medieval church preserving medieval nave, chancel and porch roofs and a 15th Century timber framed tower. The church has a shingled broach spire.

Landmark C; The Dunton Technical Centre

The Ford Motor Company British research and development Headquarters. The large modern buildings are recognisable throughout the Borough and known as a successful commercial endeavour.

Landmark D; Dunton Hall Church

Part of a hall and church complex, medieval in origin. Rebuilt in the 19th century with red brick and a timber bell tower. The church is now a private residence.

Landmark E; Church of St Nicholas, Laindon, Basildon (Grade I)

14th Century structure of ragstone rubble and pudding stone with some tile and old brick incorporated. A weatherboarded tower with shingle spire showing a traditional Essex timber framed style.

Landmark F; Brooke House, Basildon (Grade II)

Listed tower block of 14 storey flats built between 1960 and 1962 of concrete with dark brown handmade brick cladding and aluminium glazed screens and windows; the architectural advisor for which was Sir Basil Spence. Built to provide the first high density residential accommodation in Basildon town centre and to form a vertical landmark amongst the surrounding horizontal features of the town.

Landmark G; The Onion Water Tower, Basildon

White painted, distinctive Basildon landmark at 157 feet tall. Part of the Case New Holland Tractor Plant.

Landmark H; All Saints Church, Vange (Grade II*)

Prominently situated church on the escarpment above the river. The church is Norman in origin and made of ragstone and flint with a small timber, weatherboarded bell turret and pyramid shingled roof.

Landmark J; St Michael's Church, Pitsea (Grade II)

Standing at the summit of Pitsea Mount. The church was rebuilt in 1870 but only the tower remains.

Landmark K; St Margaret's Church, Bowers Gifford and North Benfleet (Grade II*)

Church with square timber framed and shingle bell tower with octagonal timber spire with shingle cladding.

Landmark L; Church of All Saints, North Benfleet

A small random stone church of 13th century origin. The majority was rebuilt in the 17th century and restored in the 19th. The west tower, built in 1903 retains some features of the earlier belfry.

Landmark M; St Mary's Church, Runwell (Grade I)

13th century origin church with extensive medieval fabric. Built of stone rubble and flint with red tiled roofs and timber framed porches. It has a shingle recessed spire with a lead finial with a weathervane.

Landmark N; Church of St Mary the Virgin, Ramsden Bellhouse (Grade II*) Early 15th Century church with timber framed and weatherboarded tower with a broach spire.

Landmark P; Telecoms mast in Westley Heights Country Park

Located on the high ground within Westley Heights. Prominent feature protruding from the wooded ridge of the Langdon Hills.

Landmark Q; Basildon & Thurrock University Hospital buildings

Large intrusive modern buildings, of a brutalist style, with two large tower blocks, one of which is taller than the other. Noticeable in otherwise unspoilt views of the Langdon Hills.

Landmark R: Basildon Hollywood sign;

Large Hollywood-style letters spelling out 'Basildon' on the A127 set in front of a line of mature Lombardy Poplars. A prominent feature when viewed from the road, marking a gateway to Basildon town.

4.7 Gateways to Basildon Borough

4.7.1 Gateways form the transition from rural to urban landscapes and provide a sense of arrival/departure to and from Basildon Borough. The gateways identified are located at the main access routes into the Basildon Borough or between the main settlements within it. In general, the Borough has few notable gateways and the entrance and exit points are not clearly defined. They are however important entry/departure points which should be retained and where possible enhanced. Locations of the identified Gateways can be found on Figure 11. They have been divided into Main Gateways (main trunk Roads) and Secondary Gateways (other primary and secondary roads) and are briefly described below.

MAIN GATEWAYS

Gateway 1; Approach into Basildon centre from the A127. Busy road junction, semi-enclosed by vegetation with limited views into the Borough. The Ford Research Centre provides a recognisable feature associated with Basildon but there is a limited sense of arrival into a destination space, rather a thoroughfare.

Gateway 2; Junction with A127 and A176 providing access to residential areas and town centre of Basildon from the main roads. Views out to developed areas are well contained by vegetation. The junction has a series of grass mounded roundabouts that provide some interest on approach. Gravel planting features and specimen Poplar trees along with 'Hollywood style' Basildon letters add character to the approach although again there is a limited sense of arrival into the town itself.

Gateway 3; Southern approach into Basildon from the A13 onto the A176. This entrance and exit point allows glimpses of iconic parts of the Borough, with framed views of the Langdon Hills on the approach and extended views out to the London Gateway port at Shell haven seen when exiting south. The gateway also includes some wide, naturally managed roadside verges on the road cutting with established trees and wildflower meadows.

Gateway 4; Access to residential areas of Pitsea, Chelvedon and Vange from the A13. The A13 flyover offers limited visual connection to Basildon centre and has a strong urban feel in areas looking across supermarkets and office blocks, but the elevated position does allow attractive views across the Estuary marshes and the tower of St Michael's Church in Pitsea offers an historic landmark on approach.

Gateway 5; Arrival to Wickford from Basildon centre on the A132. Well contained route from rural to urban with strong hedgerows, but the junction to the town itself lacks entrance features and the A132 dominates rather than shows characteristics of the town.

Gateway 6; Eastern approach to the Borough from Rochford and Southend. Gateway is poor quality, formed by the junction of the A127 and the A130. There are no significant landscape features marking the gateway other than the slipways, signage and embankments of the road junction itself.

SECONDARY GATEWAYS

Gateway A; Entrance into the Borough at the southern tip via the B1007 into Billericay. The residential edge is open to views from the road, there is no entrance feature on arrival and the transition to residential town is quite immediate.

Gateway B; Approach to Billericay on the A129 Havering's Grove to the north west of the Borough. The A129 offers attractive views across wooded farmland but this changes quite quickly into residential edge without a recognised transition into the town of Billericay.

Gateway C; Approach from the south to Billericay via the A176. From leaving an area of rural character between Noak Hill and Billericay the A176 follows a well vegetated route before arriving at the urban edge where there is a more gradual transition to the historic edge of the town and where the semi-natural Mill Meadows also extend into the town.

Gateway D; Arrival to Great Burstead and South Green via the A129. The approach takes you from open views of farmland to an exposed residential edge with limited transition period or sense of arrival into a settlement.

Gateway E; Approach to Wickford through ribbon development on the A129. The gateway is enclosed by residential development with limited vegetation and offers a crowded and overlooked entrance to the town.

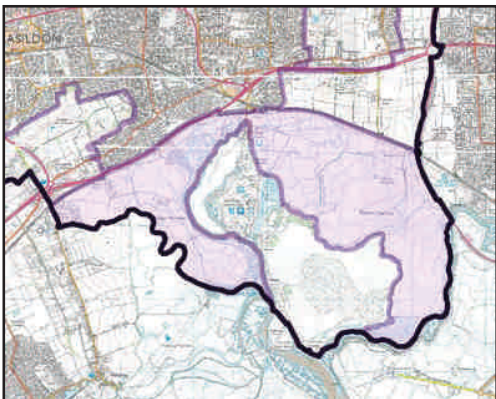
Gateway F; Access to Basildon from Noak Hill and Billericay on the A176. The access route gives a limited indication of an entrance into the town.

Gateway G; Arrival into the Basildon Borough on the A13 and A130 from South Benfleet. The transition takes you from a densely populated residential area of Benfleet onto a busy road junction.

5 Basildon's Landscape Character Areas

5.1 LCA1 – Bowers and Vange Estuary Marshlands

Location and extent of character area



Bowers Marshes RSPB reserve



Vange Creek and Vange Marshes

5.1.1 Summary description and location

Coastal and estuary marshlands to the south of Pitsea and Vange. Area is bounded by railway line to the north and Fobbing Marshes to the south. It is a relatively undisturbed marshland landscape that was enclosed as grazing marsh in the medieval/post-medieval period. The area forms the least developed part of the Borough and has a remote and open character. It forms part of the Greater Thames Marshes Nature Improvement Area (NIA).

5.1.2 Key characteristics

- Flat, low-lying drained marshlands
- Pylon lines are dominant features
- Open, exposed landscape
- Few isolated farm buildings and no public roads
- 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
- Flocks of birds feeding or gathering

5.1.3 Physical influences

- Tidal Flat deposits over London Clay
- Flat topography with incised tidal creeks
- Scattered areas of open water including scrapes and fresh and saltwater lagoons
- Mosaic of wetland habitats including newly created inter-tidal, reed bed and coastal wet grasslands
- Scarcity of tree and shrub vegetation but some scrubby hawthorn hedgerow along field boundaries

5.1.4 Historical and cultural features

- Regular and irregular field boundaries mainly of medieval/post medieval origin
- Evidence of Roman salt-working
- Remains of World War II landscape features including anti-glider trenches and bomb craters
- Range of archaeological features including earthwork sea walls and flood defences
- Very little twentieth century development or settlement
- New RSPB reserve currently being developed as part of the Thames Gateway Parklands initiative

5.1.5 Visual and sensory characteristics

- Remote and wild with little human activity
- Tranquil
- Panoramic views across the marshlands
- Long distance views towards developed areas on raised land to the north and west (Basildon, South Benfleet and Fobbing) and the London Gateway port at Shell Haven to the south
- Raised landform of Pitsea waste disposal site forms prominent feature
- Background noise from vehicles on A13 and railway

5.1.6 Condition

- Condition of marshlands generally good with ongoing management of nature reserve by RSPB.
- Condition of farmed land and privately owned grazing land moderate with some hedgerows and field boundaries in need of improvement

5.1.7 Long term management strategy

Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
Strength of character				

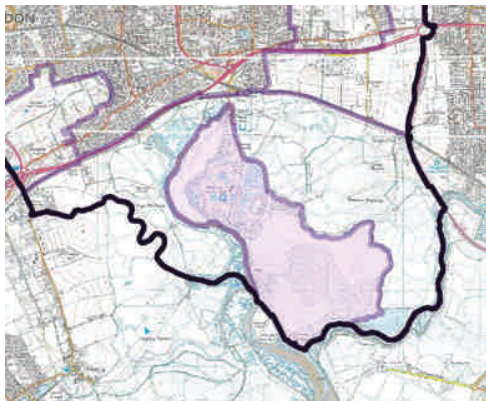
5.1.8 Management guidelines

- Support the range of countryside projects within the LCA promoted through the Essex Wildlife Trust - Living Landscape Area 31 (Wat Tyler Complex)
- Improve public access arrangements to marshlands with upgraded public rights of way network (including signage and interpretation)
- Encourage the dissemination of information about the historic and ecological importance and appropriate management of the marshes

- Encourage reversion from arable uses to pasture and grassland
- Promote improvements to field hedgerows where present
- New planting to use native stock of local provenance wherever possible
- Resist any development, reclamation or further drainage of the marshlands
- Promote the use of low-density stock grazing as a management technique
- Protect landscape from development that would alter its character visually or environmentally
- Preserve and enhance existing network of ditches and water channels as characteristic field boundaries, including retention and management of marginal vegetation
- Resist the introduction of lighting
- Enhancement and creation of wetland landscape features such as reedbeds, ponds, scrapes and occasional pollarded willows
- Conserve unimproved and semi-improved grassland wherever possible, avoiding agricultural improvements to reduce their acid or calcareous nature, in order to maintain their nature conservation value
- Restoration and enhancement of wet grassland to provide a habitat for wading birds

5.2 LCA2 - Pitseahall Island Restored Landforms

Location and extent of character area



Restored area of Pitsea Waste disposal Site



Wat Tyler Country Park

5.2.1 Summary description and location

Area of raised land (partly restored landfill and partly a natural area of raised land) set within the Bowers and Vange marshlands to the south of Pitsea. Holehaven Creek/Vange Creek forms the western boundary to the area. Most of the landscape was formed in the twentieth century and principal land uses comprise the Wat Tyler Country Park, an operational waste landfill site, civic amenity site and a large area of former landfill, now restored to grassland and scrub. The area is of mixed character with many land-uses typically associated with urban fringe areas.

5.2.2 Key characteristics

- Raised landforms
- Pylon lines are dominant features
- Few buildings or public roads
- Main land-uses: Country park, waste landfill site, civic amenity site, Pitsea Hall marina and sewage works
- Historic field patterns obscured by landraising activities
- Views towards Basildon and South Benfleet in the north (including the Langdon Hills) and the London Gateway Port at Shellhaven in the south plus long distance views towards Kent
- Timbermans Creek and Pitseahall Fleet
- Remains of nineteenth century cordite and explosives factory
- Isolated location with limited public access other than country park

5.2.3 Physical influences

- London Clay partly overlain by Holocene beach and tidal flat deposits forming small natural 'island' of raised land
- Major artificial landform created during twentieth century by land-raising from waste-disposal activities (Pitsea Landfill)
- Substantial areas of mature hawthorn scrub in country park and scattered areas of scrub and birch around base of restored landfill
- Extensive areas of restored grasslands in former landfill areas
- Timbermans Creek - creek with tidal mudflats
- Pitseahall Fleet – dammed creek now a freshwater lagoon with extensive reedbeds (SSSI and SINC)
- Wat Tyler Country Park SSSI and SINC – registered due to important populations of invertebrates and herpetofauna

5.2.4 Historical and cultural features

- Formerly part of the Pitsea Hall Estate farmed until the late 1800s but few historic features remaining from this period other than some field boundaries on the high ground and oyster pits within the creeks
- Northern area used for manufacture and storage of explosives during twentieth century (Owned by British Explosives Syndicate and then Nobel Explosives Company). Several industrial features remaining including concrete washing bowl (used to wash or drain guncotton) and substantial earth structures such as blast mounds
- Land purchased by the War Department in 1928 and used as sea Transport Depot
- Range of World War II features and defences remain including pill-boxes forming southern end of the General Headquarter anti-invasion line
- Pitsea Waste Landfill Site opened post World War II to accept domestic and trade refuse from Essex and London. Site due to close c. 2020 and will be recontoured and incorporated into the complex of nature reserves already in this area.

5.2.5 Visual and sensory characteristics

- Isolated location with remote character
- Background noise from traffic and plant associated with waste landfill site
- Panoramic views across the marshlands (particularly to the south over Fobbing marshes)
- Double line of electricity pylons forms dominant feature in the landscape
- Views along Holehaven Creek/Vange Creek of Pitsea Marina towards Fobbing Marshes
- Long distance views towards developed areas on raised land to the north and west (Basildon, South Benfleet and Fobbing), the London Gateway Port at Shell Haven to the south and on clear days, views towards Kent
- Views towards St Michael's Church Tower, Pitsea and Langdon Hills

5.2.6 Condition

- Condition of country park generally good with ongoing programme of regular management and new visitors centres to offer cultural interpretation and visitor facilities
- Condition of Pitsea Hall Lane and adjacent land generally poor. Diverse urban fringe activities including sewage treatment works, civic amenity site, pony sanctuary and light industrial uses mainly with poor quality boundary treatments

5.2.7 Long term management strategy

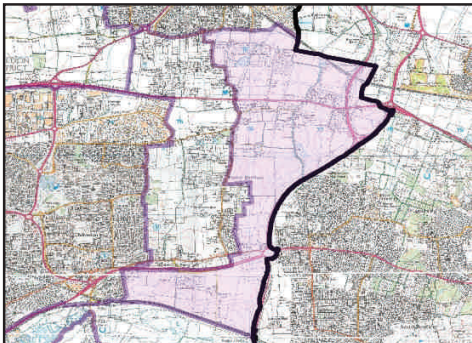
Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
Strength of character				

5.2.8 Management guidelines

- Support the range of countryside projects within the LCA promoted through the Essex Wildlife Trust - Living Landscape Area 31 – Wat Tyler Complex
- Maintain and improve public access arrangements with upgraded public rights of way network (including signage and interpretation)
- Encourage the dissemination of information about the historic and ecological importance and appropriate management of the area
- Promote restoration of landfill to species rich grassland with scattered areas of native scrub
- Promote improvements to Pitsea Hall Lane to upgrade approach to Wat Tyler Country Park particularly for visitors on foot or cycle
- Retain and develop Country Park functions and promote the area as a major area for recreation
- Resist the introduction of lighting
- Ensure all existing and proposed recreational land uses include appropriate measures to manage and enhance the existing landscape setting and historical and ecological value. Particular attention should be given to ensure earth work proposals complement the natural landform patterns.
- Protect and enhance existing wetland features
- Conserve and enhance pedestrian access along Vange Creek
- New planting to use native stock of local provenance wherever possible
- Monitor area for invasion by alien species such as Japanese knotweed and treat and remove as necessary to eradicate

5.3 LCA3 – Bowers Gifford and North Benfleet Farmlands

Location and extent of character area



View East from Church Road



View south towards North Benfleet Church

5.3.1 Summary description and location

Area of gently undulating farmed claylands extending between Wickford in the north to the Bowers Marshes in the south. The area is bounded to the east by the A129 and A130 and dissected by the A127 and A13. Area includes scattered farmhouses and manors set within a rectilinear field system with prominent field hedgerows and frequent mature oak trees. Within the character area, two sub-areas exist divided by the A127. To the north of the A127 land is higher and with more extensive dispersed settlement pattern, whilst to the south land falls towards the Bowers Marshes and contains some large areas of open agricultural fields.

5.3.2 Key characteristics

- Pylon lines are dominant features
- Few buildings or local roads, but crossed and bounded by several busy A roads (A13, A129, A130 and A127), which include wide dual carriageways, many of which feature as embankments, flyovers or cuttings for part of their route
- Main land-uses: arable farmland
- Rectilinear field system
- Dispersed settlement pattern
- Panoramic views south over Bowers Marshes (e.g. from Bowers Gifford Crematorium)
- Open landscape with little built development
- Rushbottom Lane Green Lane with its connection under the A130 to Thundersely to the east
- All Saints Church, North Benfleet and St Margarets Church, Bowers Gifford

5.3.3 Physical influences

- London Clay overlain in places by head deposits, alluvium and river terrace gravels
- Undulating landform (typically between 15 and 30m AOD) sloping more steeply south of Bowers Gifford towards edge of Bowers Marshes at 5m AOD
- Small ponds associated with farmsteads eg Sadlers Hall Farm and Bowers Hall Farm and site of former North Benfleet Hall
- Occasional larger man-made water-bodies including North Benfleet Hall fisheries, agricultural reservoir and lakes in Wick Country Park
- Mature hedgerows (mainly hawthorn with some elm) with frequent mature oak trees
- Mainly arable fields with occasional fields of pasture
- Rushbottom Lane Green Lane forms valuable green corridor

5.3.4 Historical and cultural features

- Several moated sites of medieval origin including, North Benfleet Hall, Bowers Hall and Bowers Vicarage
- World War II GHQ defense-line runs through the area. Extant remains include a number of pill-boxes and a filled-in anti-tank ditch
- Rectilinear field pattern of ancient origin. Limited loss of hedgerow boundaries eg. east of Bowers Hall
- St Margarets, Bowers Gifford parish church of fourteenth century origin (on site of earlier church)
- All Saints, North Benfleet parish church (grade II* Listed) thirteenth century origin (or earlier) and adjacent hall complex with ponds and open green forms focal point
- Country park recently created close to southern edge of the settlement of Wickford - Wick Country Park

5.3.5 Visual and sensory characteristics

- Remote character and inaccessible in places
- Roads A130, A13, A127 and A129 (including major interchanges at Sadlers Farm and at junction of A127, A129 and A130 east of Morbec Farm) form significant barriers to pedestrian and cycle movements
- Constant background noise from road traffic
- Long distance views from the Bowers Gifford area across the Bowers Marshes towards Pitseahall Island and raised landform. The Coryton Oil Refinery complex is visible on the horizon.
- Narrow long distance view south along Church Road towards Bowers Marshes
- Views east towards wooded ridges of Thundersley and South Benfleet e.g. from North Benfleet Hall
- Double line of electricity pylons forms dominant feature in the landscape
- Towers of North Benfleet and Bowers Gifford churches form local landmarks

5.3.6 Condition

- Substantial areas of farmland in good condition with well-maintained hedgerows
- Pockets of land currently unfarmed and unmanaged eg. south of Pitsea Crematorium and Cemetery
- Several rights of way in poor condition with few signs
- Rushbottom Lane Green Lane route towards Wickford obstructed by A127

5.3.7 Long term management strategy

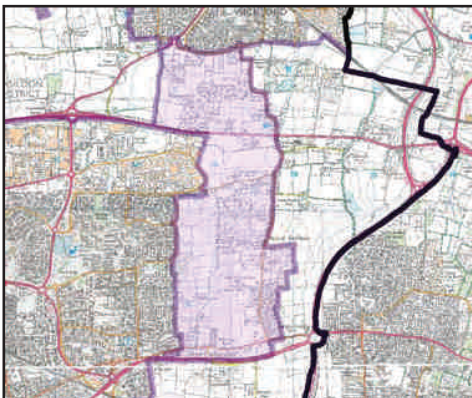
Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
Strength of character				

5.3.8 Management guidelines

- Promote improvements to field hedgerows where present including regular management and planting of new oak trees to provide long term replacements for existing mature oak hedgerow trees
- New planting to use native stock of local provenance wherever possible
- Maintain and improve existing rights of way network including improved signage
- Seek a safe solution to re-connect Rushbottom Lane as a right of way across the A127
- Support the range of countryside projects within the LCA promoted through the Essex Wildlife Trust - Living Landscape Area 32 (Nevendon Mosaic)
- Protect landscape from development that would alter its character visually or environmentally
- Consider creation of a landscape feature at junction of A127 and A130 to enhance this key Borough and sub-regional gateway.
- Promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and important semi-natural habitats and the creation of links between semi-natural habitats
- Promote restoration of ditches and discouragement of enclosing existing open drainage systems
- Planting on boundaries between new development and adjacent agricultural landscape to be native tree species only
- Encourage planting around perimeter of existing and proposed developed areas (e.g. A127 Corridor) to screen views of development from the wider area

5.4 LCA 04 – North Benfleet and Nevendon Settled Claylands

Location and extent of character area



View west from Windsor Road, North Benfleet



View of paddock, Nevendon

5.4.1 Summary description and location

Flat area of dispersed settlement, (mainly 20th Century plotlands) and small grazing fields separating the north-east of Pitsea, from the south-west of Wickford and incorporating the settlements around Nevendon, North Benfleet and Bowers Gifford. Both the eastern and southern boundaries are demarcated by roads; Pound Lane and the A13 respectively. Small fields and narrow plots create a dense pattern and enclosed landscape with few long distance views. The area includes various land uses typical of urban fringe areas including playing fields, a garden centre and grazing lands for ponies. The Nevendon Plotlands settlement forms a separate sub-area within the character area with a distinct geometric road pattern, individual dwellings on large plots and a strong cover of mature vegetation.

5.4.2 Key characteristics

- 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
- 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

5.4.3 Physical influences

- Geology is London clay overlaid in places with head deposits
- Mainly flat topography (c. 15m AOD) rising gently in the south to 35m AOD
- Mature hawthorn hedgerows (some gappy) form boundaries to plotland plots recreational areas and grazing fields
- Tree cover dispersed with denser cover in plotlands areas. Mature vegetation with mix of native and ornamental species
- Several small woodlands e.g. adjacent to eastern edge of Pitsea
- Variety of field types including large-medium arable fields north of Bradfields Farm, smaller grazing paddocks in central area and larger fields of pasture in south
- Occasional small ponds

5.4.4 Historical and cultural features

- Remains of moated site and historic settlement at Bradfield's Farm
- Medieval grid-like field boundaries survive within the plotland, paddocks and recreational field's layout
- Cranfields Farm (medieval origin) and Great Broomfields (post-medieval origin) are remains of the dispersed medieval settlement pattern
- Plotlands have a grid-like layout (characteristic of pre- World War II) of non-vernacular detached houses, chalet bungalows and Gypsy and Traveller sites

5.4.5 Visual and sensory characteristics

- Enclosed area due to roadside and boundary vegetation
- Local short distance views within the area eg. from Eversley Road towards Little Chalvedon Hall
- Traffic noise from A13 and A127
- Viewpoint on bend of Cranfield Road near Cranfield House with long distance view south towards North Benfleet
- Important local views from the end of residential roads looking across fields

5.4.6 Condition

- The historic field patterns are fragmented with many boundaries being poorly managed
- Condition of farmland and paddocks is mixed. Several horse paddocks overgrazed and in poor condition
- Some unadopted private roads with poorly maintained surface and a lack of/ filled-in drainage ditches
- Condition of plotlands is mixed
- The area is poor ecologically with no designations or evidence of ecological management
- Condition of recreational areas and new woodlands is generally good

5.4.7 Long term management strategy

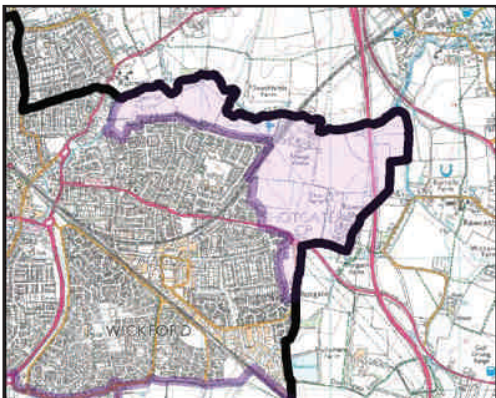
Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
Strength of character				

5.4.8 Management guidelines

- Promote hedgerow restoration and creation with native species throughout the area to provide visual and ecological links and replace post and wire fencing. Pattern to follow historic field boundaries and rights of way where possible and include additional hedgerow trees.
- Support the range of countryside projects within the LCA promoted through the Essex Wildlife Trust - Living Landscape Area 32 (Nevendon Mosaic)
- Promote the creation of buffer zones along arable field margins/hedgerows and near semi-natural habitats to improve biodiversity and connectivity
- Promote crop diversification and mixed livestock/ arable farming where possible
- Promote the management of existing woodland in order to establish a diverse profile of native species including high forest, coppice with standards and woodland edge
- Manage existing ponds and create new ponds where possible
- Promote use of traditional materials, built form and native planting in association with existing buildings and new agricultural structures
- Maintain and enhance existing rights of way and support new rights of way running east to west to form connections between footpath and edge of Pitsea and North Benfleet
- Develop strategy for mitigating landscape and visual effects of any new development
- Promote public footpath between London Road and Burnt Mills Road (including new signage) and encourage development of east-west footpaths to connect with this
- Encourage retention and management of existing mature vegetation within plotlands areas to ensure existing level of tree cover is retained

5.5 LCA5 – Shotgate and North Wickford Urban Fringe

Location and extent of character area



View across Wickford Memorial Park towards St Mary's Church, Runwell



Open land north of Shotgate

5.5.1 Summary description and location

A small area situated in the north-east corner of the Borough adjacent to the urban edge of Shotgate and North-East Wickford. Area is bounded by the River Crouch to the north and the borough boundary to the east.

The area contains a variety of land-uses typical of urban fringe areas including public open space, playing fields, scrub land, agricultural land, plotlands, pylons and transport corridors including a railway line, the A130 and the A129.

5.5.2 Key characteristics

- 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
- Distant views towards All Saints Church, Rettendon

5.5.3 Physical influences

- Heavy London clay through most of the area overlain with alluvial deposits next to the River Crouch and head deposits elsewhere
- River Crouch (partly flowing within concrete channel) enclosed by mature vegetation creates a strong ecological link
- Good hedgerow structure including remains of field hedgerow and hedgerow trees within Wickford Memorial Park
- Fragmented new woodland cover has been developed west of Shot Farm
- Railway corridor lined by mature vegetation forms ecological corridor
- Dominant tree species – Oak with some areas of hawthorn and birch in scrub areas
- Giddings Copse/Shotgate Thickets former SINC (by railway line to east of Wickford Memorial Park)

5.5.4 Historical and cultural features

- Predominantly rectilinear field pattern still evident (possibly of Mid Saxon origin) although there has been some boundary / hedgerow loss
- Archaeologically rich area dating from the prehistoric to the post-medieval period.
- Includes small area of plotlands in Rawreth Shot (south-east from Shot Farm)
- Wickford Memorial Park – formerly riverside meadows now well-used public open space highly valued by local community
- Areas of modern development including sewage works, Wickford Lawns Plotlands and container storage area adjacent to Shot Farm
- Shot Farm - Historic farmstead
- Designated Open Spaces: Wickford Memorial Park and Shotgate Recreation Ground

5.5.5 Visual and sensory characteristics

- Views to tower of St Mary's Church Runwell from Memorial Park and Rettendon Church from Shotgate
- Long distance views east towards open farmland of the Crouch valley
- Constant, low level noise from A130 and views of fast-moving traffic
- Shotgate roundabout (junction A129, London Road and Hodgson Way) forms a key gateway to Wickford
- Pylon lines form prominent features

5.5.6 Condition

- Areas of remaining farmland around Shot Farm generally in good condition although the yard area around Shot Farm itself is of poor visual quality comprising containers and farm outbuildings in poor condition
- Shotgate Recreational Ground and Wickford Memorial Park are well managed and well used
- Area of unmanaged land north of new Shotgate sports complex

5.5.7 Long term management strategy

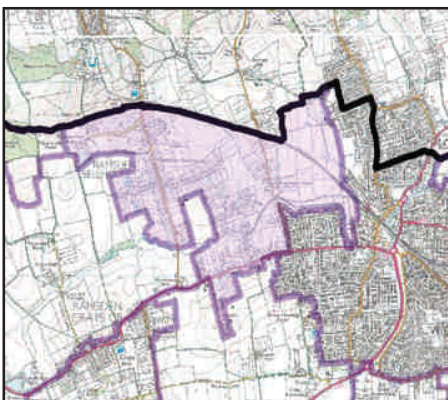
Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
Strength of character				

5.5.8 Management guidelines

- Support the range of countryside projects within the LCA promoted through the Essex Wildlife Trust - Living Landscape Area 34 (Upper Crouch)
- Promote hedgerow restoration and creation with native species to provide visual and ecological links. Pattern to follow historic field boundaries and rights of way where possible and include additional hedgerow trees.
- Existing pattern of field boundaries to be preserved
- Promote the creation of buffer zones along arable field margins/hedgerows and near semi-natural habitats to improve biodiversity and connectivity
- Promote crop diversification and mixed livestock/ arable farming where possible
- Maintain and enhance existing rights of way and support new rights of way running east to west to form circular routes
- Develop strategy for mitigating landscape and visual effect of any new development particularly in views from A130 and A127
- Encourage the establishment of riverine tree species along River Crouch, including black poplar and pollarded willow to provide definition of river in the landscape
- Retain key viewpoints and vistas to All Saints Church Rettendon and tower of St Mary’s Church, Runwell
- Retain, reinforce and manage woodland belt adjacent to railway line in order to strengthen age and species diversity

5.6 LCA 06 – Ramsden-Bellhouse and Wickford Settled Claylands

Location and extent of character area



Farmland north-west of Wickford



View east along Glebe Way

5.6.1 Summary description and location

A settled farmland landscape on the northern slopes of the upper Crouch Valley. Area of plotlands and long stretches of linear development on long plots in Ramsden Bellhouse and along Castledon Road (both mainly twentieth century). Settlement is interspersed with areas of farmland (manly pastoral) particularly in the north-west. The undulating ground slopes to the River Crouch, which flows from west to east through the centre of the character area. The area is bounded to the north by the railway line and Borough boundary and to the south by the line of settlement along the A129/ London Road.

5.6.2 Key characteristics

- 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
- 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)
- New residential developments around fringes of north Wickford
- Important views into the area from high land to the north around Brock Hill and from Downham Church on Castledon Road

5.6.3 Physical influences

- Geology is London clay which outcrops in much of the area and overlain in places on the lower slopes by colluvial head deposits
- Upper River Crouch and associated tributary streams flow through the area
- Undulating topography sloping from c. 30m AOD (at high point by Kent Hill) towards the River Crouch and its tributaries (c. 10-15m AOD)
- Few ditches bordering arable fields
- Scattered small ponds, particularly in Ramsden Bellhouse
- Dense tree cover within settled areas particularly New House Farm Plotlands (accessed via Sugden Avenue) with frequent mature oaks
- Wickford Meadows Local Wildlife Site (SINC) – River Crouch and its bank side vegetation

5.6.4 Historical and cultural features

- Grid-like medium size field patterns originating from Saxon times, are largely intact although there has been some hedge loss especially around the plotlands
- Remains of buildings from scattered medieval settlements, including; St Mary's Church and Hall complex (Ramsden Bellhouse), and the moated site of Berne Hall
- Nineteenth century railway line
- 1920s plotland development in the south of the area (accessed from Sugden Avenue) with very regular linear pattern
- Plotlands settlements comprise non-vernacular detached houses, chalet bungalows, scattered commercial areas eg Alpha Garden Centre, paddocks and overgrown / undeveloped plots

5.6.5 Visual and sensory characteristics

- Views from through roads (Church Lane and Castledon Road) generally restricted by roadside development and vegetation
- Long distance views across the Crouch Valley from public rights of way west of Berne Hall
- Open views across undulating farmland from west side of Ramsden Bellhouse eg Ramsden Park Farm
- Important views into the area from high land to the north around Brock Hill and from Downham Church on Castledon Road
- Views in Plotlands and settlements are contained due to houses and gardens and boundary vegetation

5.6.6 Condition

- The historic field patterns are moderately intact, with the only interruption being around settlements
- Condition of farmland and paddocks is moderate with some hedgerows and field boundaries in need of improvement or restoration

5.6.7 Long term management strategy

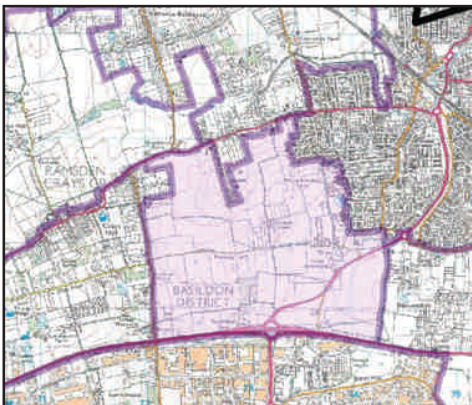
Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Strength of character		

5.6.8 Management guidelines

- Promote hedgerow restoration and creation with native species throughout the area to provide visual and ecological links. Pattern to follow historic field boundaries and rights of way where possible and include additional hedgerow trees.
- Existing pattern of field boundaries to be preserved
- Promote the creation of buffer zones along arable field margins/hedgerows and near semi-natural habitats to improve biodiversity and connectivity
- Promote crop diversification and mixed livestock/ arable farming where possible
- Promote the management of existing woodland in order to establish a diverse profile of age and native species
- Manage existing ponds and create new ponds where potential
- Promote use of traditional materials, built form and native planting in association with existing buildings and new agricultural structures
- Maintain and enhance existing rights of way including improved signage
- Promote crop diversification and mixed livestock/ arable farming where possible
- Develop strategy for mitigating landscape and visual effect of any new development
- Encourage retention and management of existing mature vegetation within plotlands areas (particularly mature oaks) to ensure existing level of tree cover is retained
- Retain key viewpoints and vistas to surrounding landscape including views towards St Mary’s Church, (Ramsden Bellhouse) from public roads and rights of way

5.7 LCA 07 – Doeshill Farmlands

Location and extent of character area



View north-east from Borwick Lane towards Doeshill



View south from Borwick Lane towards Noke Wood

5.7.1 Summary description and location

An area of sloping open farmland located north of Basildon and crossed by the historic Borwick Lane. The area extends from the A129 in the north to the A127 in the south. The western boundary is marked by the developed edge of Crays Hill, whilst Wickford and Nevendon urban fringes create the eastern boundary.

The area includes some very large arable fields and is crossed by several rights of way. It contains little settlement other than scattered farmsteads. The raised landform of Doeshill and Noke Wood both form prominent natural landmarks which can be seen through most of the area.

5.7.2 Key characteristics

- Sloping landform with the highest point and natural landmark being Doeshill
- Marked rural character (despite proximity to Basildon and Wickford)
- Predominantly arable landscape with large open fields
- Regular rectilinear field patterns separated with a network of mature hedges with large oak trees
- Isolated woodland and Noke Wood Local Wildlife Site (SINC) located north of Stevenson’s Farm

- Scattered isolated farmsteads and houses accessed by quiet rectilinear tracks
- Quiet minor roads with grass verges
- Good rights of way network

5.7.3 Physical influences

- London clay with sandy Claygate deposits capping isolated hills
- Landform slopes from high point of Doeshill (40m AOD) to 10m AOD west of Nevendon
- Narrow grass verges and some ditches align tracks and lanes
- Strong pattern of mature hedgerows with frequent mature oak trees
- Noke Wood Local Wildlife Site– mature woodland mainly Ash coppice and standards and also including stand of Wild Service Tree. Rich groundflora including range of orchids

5.7.4 Historical and cultural features

- Medieval rectilinear field system (largely intact) with a scattered farmsteads
- Moated site and a sixteenth century manorial hall survive at Little Bromfords (formerly known as Nevendon Manor)
- Early 20th century Plotlands development on edge of Crays Hill at Southlands Road and Ramsden View Road
- Archaeological evidence of early prehistoric occupation in the area
- Areas of public open space and school playing fields on east side adjacent to urban edge of Wickford

5.7.5 Visual and sensory characteristics

- Long-distance views north across the Crouch Valley
- Urban edges of Wickford and Basildon well screened by local landform
- Panoramic and distant views towards Doeshill Farm (especially from the north and west)
- Predominantly open views across arable fields with hedgerows and trees framing skyline
- Views from Borwick lane to Doeshill to the north and Noke Wood to the south
- Noke Wood and Doeshill form local landmarks

5.7.6 Condition

- Condition of farmland generally good
- Condition of woodland and hedges good, (although some are fragmented)
- Area of unfarmed land south of Nevendon Road in poor and unmanaged condition

5.7.7 Long term management strategy

Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong

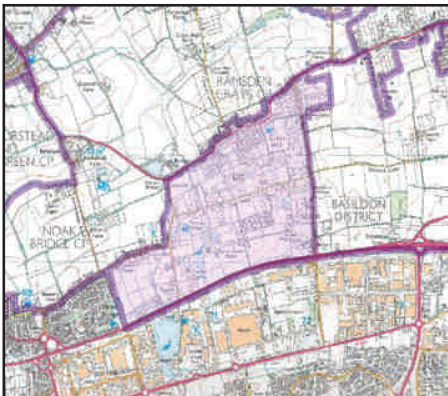
5.7.8 Management guidelines

- Promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and semi-natural habitats and the creation of links between semi-natural habitats

- Promote hedgerow restoration and creation with native species throughout the area to provide visual and ecological links including planting of new oak trees to provide long term replacements for existing mature oak hedgerow trees. Pattern to follow historic field boundaries and rights of way wherever possible
- Support the range of countryside projects within the LCA promoted through the Essex Wildlife Trust - Living Landscape Area 32 (Nevendon Mosaic)
- Maintain and strengthen planting along northern boundary of A127 to ensure traffic corridor is screened in views from undeveloped areas to the north
- Promote crop diversification and mixed livestock/ arable farming where possible
- Protect landscape from development that would alter its character visually or environmentally
- Promote use of traditional materials, built form and native planting in association with new agricultural structures
- Promote restoration of ditches and discouragement of enclosing existing open drainage systems
- Promote the management of woodland in order to establish a diverse profile of native species including high forest, coppice with standards and woodland edge
- Create new ponds where suitable scope
- Maintain and enhance existing rights of way (including improved signage)
- Retain key viewpoints and vistas to landscape from public roads and rights of way
- Retain hedges, trees and woodlands in settlements and plotland areas to maintain screening cover

5.8 LCA8 – Crays Hill Settled Claylands

Location and extent of character area



Oak Lane



Crays Hill (A129)

5.8.1 Summary description and location

Substantial area of surviving plotland development and village of Crays Hill on the southern slopes of the raised landform known as Crays Hill. Area incorporates scattered historic farmsteads, mixed twentieth century residential development and a Gypsy and Travelers site. Area is bounded to the south by the A127, to the east by Gardiners Lane North, to the west by the village of Noak Bridge and by the built edge of Crays Hill (A129) along the northern edge. Area comprises narrow lanes enclosed by hedgerows with a dense pattern of small fields, plotlands and small woodland blocks. Presence of frequent tall hedgerows, woodland areas and frequent scattered mature trees (mainly oak) within private plots and long lanes gives much of the area a wooded feel.

5.8.2 Key characteristics

- 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

5.8.3 Physical influences

- London Clay overlain in places by colluvial head deposits. Crays Hill capped by sandy Claygate Beds
- Land gently sloping from 20m AOD towards high point of Crays Hill c. 45m AOD
- Scattered small ponds eg associated with Great Wasketts Farm and larger waterbodies adjacent to Summerhill Farm
- Tall, overgrown hedgerows mainly hawthorn and elm. Frequent stretches of tall coniferous hedging
- Frequent clumps of mature trees in private plots and small woodland blocks (mainly oak)
- Nuttons Wood LoWS (privately owned) – Oak woodland including some Wild Service Tree.

5.8.4 Historical and cultural features

- Grid-like field pattern of middle Saxon origin still evident
- Scattered farmsteads including 15th/16th century building and ponds at Great Wasketts Farm, Great Barns and Summerhill Farm
- Fields were sub-divided into plotlands in the 1920s with further plots added in 1938
- Evidence of prehistoric settlement in the area including two Bronze Age hoards discovered in the Great Wasketts area

5.8.5 Visual and sensory characteristics

- Area mainly contained by mature vegetation with few views in or out of the area
- Viewpoints along the A129 eg. at bend of London Road with long distance views north across the upper Crouch Valley
- Traffic movement focused along northern and southern edges with little traffic through the centre of the area
- Area perceived by some local residents as unsafe

5.8.6 Condition

- Overgrown roadside hedgerows
- Some unadopted private roads with poorly maintained surface
- Varying condition of plotlands

5.8.7 Long term management strategy

Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Strength of character		

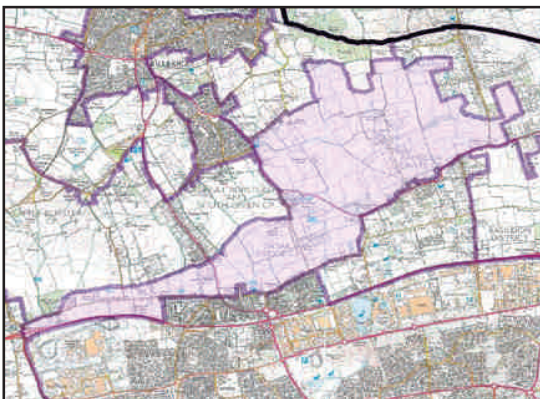
5.8.8 Management guidelines

- Promote hedgerow restoration and creation with native species throughout the area to provide visual and ecological links. Pattern to follow historic field boundaries and rights of way where possible and include additional hedgerow trees.
- Promote management of roadside hedgerows
- Existing pattern of field boundaries to be preserved

- Promote the management of existing woodland in order to establish a diverse profile of age and species (native)
- Manage existing ponds and create new ponds where potential
- Promote landscape buffers to provide screening of Gypsy and Travellers site
- Maintain and enhance existing rights of way including improved signage
- Develop strategy for mitigating landscape and visual effect of any new development
- Encourage retention and management of existing mature vegetation within plotland areas and large private gardens (particularly mature oaks) to ensure existing level of tree cover is retained
- Retain key viewpoints and vistas to surrounding landscape particularly views north from A129/Crays Hill Road across upper Crouch valley

5.9 LCA 9– Upper Crouch Valley Farmlands

Location and extent of character area



Crouch Valley from Crays Hill



Intersports Playing Fields

5.9.1 Summary description and location

A low lying area of predominantly agricultural farmland centered on the upper reaches of the River Crouch. The area extends to the south-eastern edge of South Green and the lower slopes of the East Billericay wooded sloping farmland to the north, to the settlement of Ramsden Bellhouse to the east and Crays Hill to the south. A narrow finger of land extends along the majority of the course of the River Crouch to the south west, as well as continuing along along Dunton Road to the north west of Basildon. The area is principally agricultural with a mix of large open arable fields to west and east and more intact areas of medium sized well hedged fields to the centre. There are also a number of urban fringe land uses including sports pitches and some intrusive modern structures.

5.9.2 Key characteristics

- Gently sloping landform throughout most of area
- Local higher ground at Crays Hill to south east
- Large scale arable fields to east and west of area with limited hedges and trees particularly along the A129
- Intact historic pattern of medium scale fields with good hedges and mixed arable and pasture to centre of area running north south between Crays Hill and Barrenleys Wood
- Absence of woodland

- Urban fringe uses including playing fields, recycling centre and Barleylands Farm/Craft Centre with seasonal exhibitions and markets
- Scattered intrusive commercial development in open locations
- Settlement limited to isolated properties and farm buildings
- Panoramic views to north towards Wooded Hills and ridge
- Sense of separation created between Billericay (including Great Burstead/South Green), Wickford and Basildon
- A129 runs through part of area, elsewhere minor roads and a number of rights of way running north south

5.9.3 Physical influences

- Heavy London clay to most of area with alluvial sediments along River Crouch and some head deposits north of the River Crouch
- Meandering River Crouch flowing from west to east fed by a number of minor brooks, streams and drainage ditches. Vegetation following line of river
- Five LoWS in area: Little Burstead Woods,, Crays Hill Meadow, Laindon Barns Washland, Poles Wood, and Parsonage Farm Green Lane and Hedges
- Ponds local features e.g. at farmsteads and some modern artificial reservoirs and small lakes
- Good hedgerow structure with hedgerow oaks
- Few discrete linear woods along River Crouch

5.9.4 Historical and cultural features

- Predominantly rectilinear field fields of medieval or Saxon origin on north-south east-west grid – the structure survives well to the centre of area but interrupted and in part relic to the more open areas
- Dispersed moated church and hall sites including St Mary's, Crays Hill

5.9.5 Visual and sensory characteristics

- Panoramic and distant views to the north west towards the Wooded Hills at Billericay and north towards Ramsden Heath.
- Some wide panoramic views over area from edges including Crays Hill village and from Brier Mount
- Views from Dunton Road and Wash Road to the north across the vegetated River Crouch valley and towards Little Burstead and Great Burstead
- Abrupt unsympathetic urban edge to south at developments of Noak Bridge, Steeple View and Crays Hill
- Area around Barleylands has strong urban fringe character with Council recycling depot, car boot sale site, playing fields etc all prominent features
- Isolated industrial units some on former farmstead sites present functional structures in open landscape e.g. Gurnards Farm
- Traffic noise from A129 and intermittent noise from trains on the Brentwood to Wickford railway line
- Isolated and remote feel to centre of area around St Mary's Crays Hill where there are a number of public footpaths with links to wooded hills

5.9.6 Condition

- Condition of farmed land variable. Well managed to central areas. Poor condition and more functional to open arable areas with minimal tree and hedge planting

5.9.7 Long term management strategy

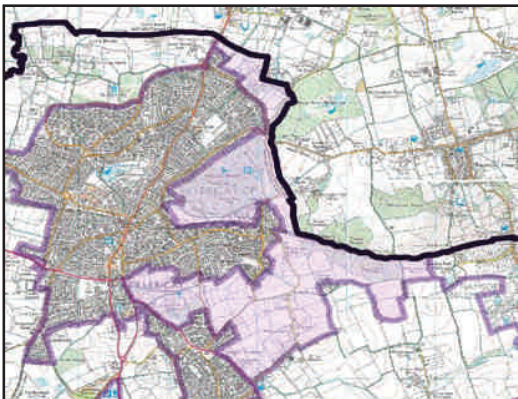
Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Strength of character		

5.9.8 Management guidelines

- Support the range of countryside projects within the LCA promoted through the Essex Wildlife Trust - Living Landscape Area 34 (Ramsden Heath and Woods)
- Protect remaining grassland habitats along river valley and improve the management of old meadows and pastures by ceasing fertiliser and herbicide application and introducing sensitive grassland management such as late hay cutting or low density livestock grazing
- Promote the creation of buffer strips along watercourses to prevent pesticide, herbicide and fertilizer run-off and provide habitat for wildlife; encourage their linkage to eco-corridors within the wider landscape
- Enhancement and creation of wetland landscape features such as ponds, scrapes and pollarded willows
- Promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and important semi-natural habitats and the creation of links between semi-natural habitats
- Promote hedgerow restoration and creation throughout the area to provide visual and ecological links. Pattern to follow historic field boundaries wherever possible
- Encourage new native hedgerow planting to historic field boundaries including roads and rights of way
- Promote crop diversification and mixed livestock/ arable farming where possible.
- Promote both the creation of new ponds and the retention / enhancement for wildlife of existing ponds
- Promote the use of reservoirs for water storage and nature conservation interest, rather than groundwater abstraction. Ensure that reservoirs are designed to reduce impact on the character of the local landscape
- Promote the use of traditional field enclosure where land is converted to equestrian pasture
- Ensure existing and proposed recreational land uses include appropriate measures to manage and enhance the existing historical and ecological value. Particular attention should be given to improve the landscape structure around sports facilities and other recreational land uses e.g. Barleylands that introduce a sub-urban influence in the countryside
- Promote improved rights of way including routes running east-west e.g. along course of the River Crouch
- Retain key viewpoints and vistas to landscape from public roads and rights of way
- Promote a clear strategy for the visual and noise mitigation of main roads including A127 and A129 to positively integrate these corridors into the local landscape character

5.10 LCA10 – East Billericay Wooded Hills and Ridges

Location and extent of character area



Norsey Wood Local Nature Reserve & SSSI



Towards Outwood Farm

5.10.1 Summary description and location

An area of wooded farmland on hills and ridges located to the east of Billericay. The area is bounded by the combined urban edge of Billericay, Sunnymede and South Green neighbourhoods to the west. The northern boundary extends to the Basildon Borough boundary which in part follows the railway. The southern boundary marks the interface with the more open upper Crouch valley farmlands. Despite the proximity to the urban area of Billericay this is a relatively intact landscape of small to medium fields with good enclosure and set on undulating landform to the edge of the wooded plateau to the north. The area includes fingers of landscape that extend west between the built up areas. It also includes the small wooded Plotland of Break Egg Hill, south of Norsey Wood.

5.10.2 Key characteristics

- 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
- 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

5.10.3 Physical influences

- Clay and drift deposits including sandy Claygate Beds form a complex series of undulating hill slopes and local ridges
- Small incised streams with alluvial deposits rise from springs on the higher ground and flow to the River Crouch
- Ponds locally important
- Substantial areas of ecological importance including Norsey Wood, Barrenleys Wood and Mill Meadows with ancient grazing.
- Native broadleaved woodland. Species predominantly oak with birch, sweet chestnut, sycamore, ash, hazel and hawthorn etc

5.10.4 Historical and cultural features

- Predominantly irregular fields of medieval or earlier origin- much surviving
- Woodlands used for hunting and supply of timber with rides and coppice with standards present
- Former medieval deer park at Norsey Wood dating back to at least 1250 AD
- Bronze Age burial mounds and Roman and Iron Age settlement in Norsey Wood
- Woodbank and ditch earthworks to perimeter of Norsey Wood – local damage to north west boundary with housing
- Former gravel extraction, pottery kilns and post mills at Mill Hill
- Some 16th-18th century farmhouses
- Pressure from development to fringes e.g. to Potash Road and Norsey Road

5.10.5 Visual and sensory characteristics

- Limited panoramic and distant views to the south including to Basildon and Langdon Hills – limited by landform and vegetation
- Important panoramic view from elevated land at Brier mount on the character area boundary across the River Crouch Valley towards the Langdon Hills
- Open views from south to the extensive wooded ridge that extends from Brentwood in the west to South Hanningfield Wooded Farmland in Chelmsford City in the east
- Extensive framed rural views from Outwood Common Road looking east into the Chelmsford City
- Number of more local and enclosed/semi-enclosed views
- Marked contrast of area to sub-urban Billericay with 20th century housing which is locally intrusive e.g. Balmoral Close South Green where landform provides views
- Intermittent noise from vehicles, including A129 to west of area and Brentwood to Wickford railway line

5.10.6 Condition

- Condition of woodland, hedges and meadows generally good with ongoing management of LNR's local conservation societies
- Condition of farmed land and privately owned grazing land moderate to good

5.10.7 Long term management strategy

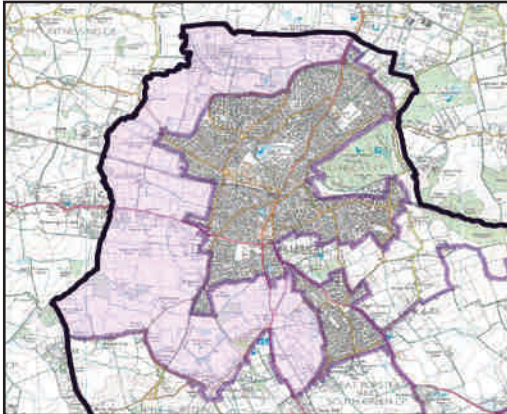
Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Strength of character		

5.10.8 Management guidelines

- Support the range of countryside protects within the LCA promoted through the Essex Wildlife Trust - Living Landscape Area 34 (Ramsden Heath and Woods)
- Support the management of designated wildlife sites and habitats including Mill Meadows and Norsey Wood. To include the mosaic of woodland, scrub and meadows and the wider connections through the network of hedgerows and woodland within the arable landscape
- Promote the appropriate management of woodland in order to establish a rich ground flora with diverse management systems, such as high forest, coppice and coppice with standards
- Protect remaining grassland habitats and improve the management of old meadows and pastures
- Promote the creation of buffer strips along arable field margins and to watercourses to prevent pesticide, herbicide and fertilizer run-off and provide habitat for wildlife; encourage their linkage to eco-corridors within the wider landscape
- Support retention, restoration and management of hedges and hedgerow trees.
- Promote both the creation of new ponds and the retention / enhancement for wildlife of existing ponds
- Promote the use of traditional field enclosure methods where land is converted to equestrian pasture
- Manage active recreational activities e.g. paintballing Barrenleys Wood to safeguard habitats and conserve Ancient Woodland
- Promote and manage recreational access within area including sites with public access, circular walks and along existing and new rights of way
- Promote continued education and public participation in countryside management including friends groups
- Retain key viewpoints and vistas to landscape from public roads and rights of way
- Ensure fingers of open space and agricultural land are maintained into the built up areas
- Manage woodland and tree cover to reduce visual impacts of existing built development from within rural areas

5.11 LCA11 - West Billericay Wooded Farmland

Location and extent of character area



View from Tye Common Road looking west



House in Little Burstead village

5.11.1 Summary description and location

An area of wooded farmland to the north and west of Billericay. The southern boundary follows Sudburys Farm Road and Tye Common Road. It encompasses Little Burstead and Laindon Common. The eastern boundary follows the built extent of Billericay which is set on higher ground. The east boundary follows the B1007 running north to Chelmsford City while the northern and western boundary extends to the limits of the Borough. The character area is relatively tranquil, comprising a typically well preserved historic agricultural landscape but with some visual impact from the adjacent settlement.

5.11.2 Key characteristics

- Gently undulating plateau topography
- Predominantly medium to large scale arable fields with mix of hedgerow field boundaries and occasional mature tree rows
- Open fields largely used for arable farming, with smaller grazed paddocks closer to the residential urban edge
- A number of formal recreational land uses that are well valued by local communities including Queens Park Country Park, Little Burstead Golf Club, Cricket, Tennis and Football clubs adjacent to Billericay, Hannakins Farm Recreation Ground and Stock Brook Golf and Country Club
- Scattered mature woodlands form strong features within the landscape, gaining in size and connectivity to the north and south of the Billericay urban area
- Mixture of irregular field patterns with some areas of coaxial fields
- Scattered, isolated farms and houses connected with quiet, rural tracks and lanes
- Laindon Common secondary woodland being managed to revert back to heath

5.11.3 Physical influences

- Geology a mix of boulder clay, claygate beds and London Clay
- River Wid and associated tributary streams also leading to Stock Brook dissect the character area with gently sloping valleys. Some alluvium and head deposits along and near watercourses
- Source of the River Crouch within The Wilderness Local Wildlife Site at The Burstead Golf Course
- Areas of predominantly mature Oak woodland with occasional Birch and Ash trees. A number of which are LoWS
- Isolated meadows and verges designated as LoWS including Hannakins Meadow
- Young tree planting within Queens Park Country Park
- Mix of clipped and tall hedgerows

5.11.4 Historical and cultural features

- Irregular field patterns with coaxial zones of medieval or earlier origin remain largely intact although there has been considerable field boundary loss throughout the zone
- Dispersed medieval settlement pattern remains with isolated farms and houses some now converted for recreation uses. Mix of vernacular and non-vernacular in styles scattered across the landscape
- Laindon Common survives as ancient common land containing mature Oak and Birch woodland and which is being managed to revert back to heath
- Archaeological finds of Iron Age and Roman artefacts have provided evidence of earlier occupation
- Bluntswall and Frith Wood are ancient woodlands in the south of the character area
- Little Burstead village is designated as a Conservation Area

5.11.5 Visual and sensory characteristics

- Predominantly open views across gently undulating farmland with woodland forming skyline e.g. from Tye Common Road and Mountnessing Road
- Some contained views within smaller scale fields and in the higher proportion of woodland to the north
- Many views from within and on the edge of Billericay urban area over the character area and towards Brentwood Borough to the west, Chelmsford City to the north and Little Burstead and the Crouch valley to the south.
- Wooded hills surrounding Billericay area visible on the horizon in views looking into the Basildon Borough from the west
- Tranquil countryside once away from the urban edge, railway line and A129 connection to Brentwood
- Railway line is a prominent feature on embankment within a number of views
- Quiet, narrow lanes with wide grassed verges to the south
- Sudbury Farm Lane lies on a gentle plateau allowing some open views across the wooded farmland landscape to the borough boundary
- Urban edge to Billericay is exposed and prominent in places

5.11.6 Condition

- Condition of farmed land and paddocks is moderate with some hedgerows and field boundaries in need of improvement or restoration
- Condition of recreation facilities (Queens Park Country Park, sports pitches and The Burstead Golf Course) is generally good and well used
- Raw urban edges are exposed to the open countryside and the entrance to Billericay from the A129 is lacking a strong visual gateway

5.11.7 Long term management strategy

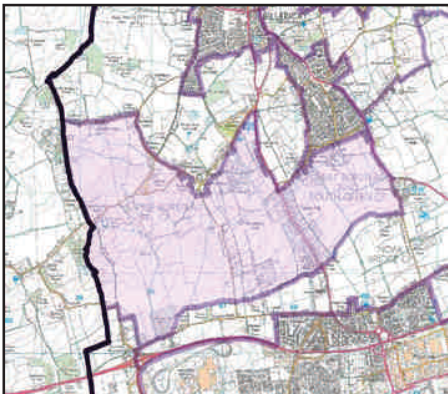
Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
Strength of character				

5.11.8 Management guidelines

- Support the management of the mosaic of woodland, scrub and meadows and the wider connections through the wider network of hedgerows and woodland within the arable landscape
- Promote the appropriate management of woodland in order to establish a rich ground flora with different management systems, such as high forest, coppice and coppice with standards
- Protect remaining grassland habitats and improve the management of old meadows and pastures
- Promote the creation of buffer strips along arable field margins and to watercourses to prevent pesticide, herbicide and fertilizer run-off and provide habitat for wildlife; encourage their linkage to eco-corridors within the wider landscape
- Promote the retention, management and restoration of hedgerows following historic field boundaries
- Support retention, restoration and management of hedges and hedgerow trees
- Promote both the creation of new ponds and the retention / enhancement for wildlife of existing ponds
- Promote the use of traditional field enclosure methods where land is converted to equestrian pasture
- Promote and manage pattern or traditional existing meadows, hedges and woodland with areas used for active recreational activities including golf and playing fields to protect
- Enhance and extend network of existing rights of way and public access
- Promote continued education and public participation in countryside management e.g. friends group at Queens Country Park and Laindon Common conservators
- Retain key viewpoints and vistas to landscape from public roads and rights of way
- Manage woodland and tree cover to reduce visual impacts of existing built development from within rural areas

5.12 LCA12 – Burstead Sloping Farmland

Location and extent of character area



Little Burstead Church



View north-west towards Chase Farm

5.12.1 Summary description and location

An area of open sloping farmland located to south of Little Burstead and Great Burstead. The area extends from an area of undulating plateau to the north of Little and Great Burstead to the River Crouch in the south. The western boundary is marked by the Borough boundary although the same character extends further into Brentwood Borough. The eastern boundary runs into the upper slopes of the Crouch Valley. The area includes some very large arable fields on sloping ground. As a result there are a number of panoramic views towards and over the area from the south, to the south towards Basildon and the Langdon Hills and to the south-east towards Crays Hill and South Benfleet.

5.12.2 Key characteristics

- 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
- Few isolated farms and farm buildings
- Minor roads and networks of local rights of way

- St Mary's Little Burstead and St XX Great Burstead churches are notable landmark buildings

5.12.3 Physical influences

- Head deposits overlying Claygate Beds and London Clay. Slowly permeable with seasonal water logging
- Small incised by streams with alluvial deposits rise from springs on the higher ground including the headwaters of the River Crouch
- Roads aside hedges variable – some taller, others moderate and a number absent
- Few ponds
- Discrete ecological features and LoWS designations within area including Little Burstead Common, Botney Hill Wood, Gravel Pit Wood and Green Lane. Better connectivity of habitats to centre around The Dell at Noak Hill and Plotlands
- Isolated woodlands including Lady Spring and Gravelpit Wood
- Hedgerow trees predominantly oak

5.12.4 Historical and cultural features

- Predominantly rectilinear fields of medieval ancient possibly Saxon origin – much 20th century boundary loss
- Prominent and isolated landmark of St Mary's The Virgin Little Burstead on upper ridge once linked to hall complex (now absent)
- St Mary Magdalene, Great Burstead churches and The Grange are historic features to north east
- Early 20th century Plotlands development at Green Lanes/ The Chase and Broomhills Chase sporadic redevelopment
- A small group of buildings clustered about St Mary Magdalene, Great Burstead churches are designated a Conservation Area

5.12.5 Visual and sensory characteristics

- Panoramic and distant views over very open sloping farmland e.g. from Dunton Road
- Extensive panoramic views to south from the Noak Hill area over Basildon and landmarks e.g. Ford's Dunton Technical Centre, 'Onion' water tower and the more distant Langdon Hills. Views to traffic on A127
- Views to west to Brentwood Borough where woodland marks the skyline
- Botney Hill allows wide sweeping views south east towards Basildon and is a marked landform in views towards the character area
- Attractive undulating and folded landforms on steeper slopes east of Botney Hall Farm
- Empty remote character west of Rectory Road
- Some modern farm buildings and conifers prominent and visually intrusive
- Noak Hill ribbon development bisects area and precludes awareness of arable landscape to east and west and erodes separation between Billericay and Basildon
- Built development in two areas of Plotlands is more visually contained by vegetation
- Distant intrusive noise from A127 and Dunton Road
- Historic landscape and archaeology moderately sensitive to change

5.12.6 Condition

- Arable farmland largely very open and intensively farmed and poor ecologically with no replanting evident
- Condition of woodland, hedges and green lanes moderate

5.12.7 Long term management strategy

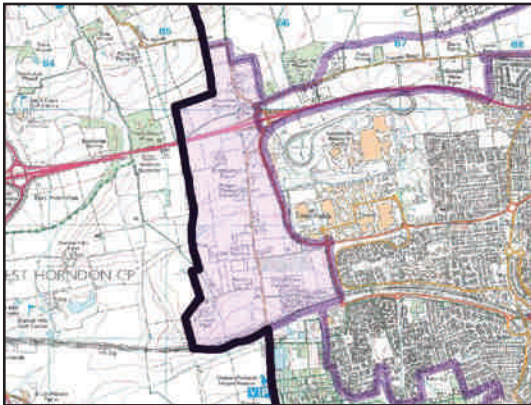
Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Strength of character		

5.12.8 Management guidelines

- Promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and semi-natural habitats and the creation of links between semi-natural habitats
- Promote hedgerow restoration and creation with native species throughout the area to provide visual and ecological links. Pattern to follow historic field boundaries and rights of way wherever possible
- Promote crop diversification and mixed livestock/ arable farming where possible
- Promote use of traditional materials, built form and native planting in association with new agricultural structures
- Promote the management of woodland in order to establish a diverse profile of native species including high forest, coppice with standards and woodland edge
- Create new ponds where suitable scope
- Maintain and enhance existing rights of way
- Retain key viewpoints and vistas to landscape from public roads and rights of way
- Ensure existing and proposed recreational land uses include appropriate measures to manage and enhance the existing landscape setting and historical and ecological value
- Retain hedges, trees and woodlands in settlements and Plotlands areas to maintain screening cover

5.13 LCA13 - Dunton Settled Claylands

Location and extent of character area



Open grass paddocks



Fields near Friern Manor

5.13.1 Summary description and location

An area of predominantly flat, open farmland located to the west of Laindon. The area gently rises in the south culminating with a low hillock south west of Dunton Hall. The western boundary is marked by the Borough boundary although the same character extends further into Brentwood Borough. The southern boundary follows the railway. The northern part of the character area encompasses grazed pastures and the small settlement of Dunton Wayletts north of the A127. The urban edge of Laindon is largely well enclosed from view by dense vegetation to the east of the B148, but the tranquillity of the area is heavily affected by the A127, B148 and railway line. The area retains a distinctive grid-like grain to its layout, derived from its medieval or earlier rectilinear field system. Built development is sporadic with dispersed lines of residential properties.

5.13.2 Key characteristics

- Predominantly flat landform with gentle slopes in the south towards the railway
- Typically medium to large sized arable fields. Medium sized paddocks are subdivided with post and barbed wire fencing
- Predominantly open farmland with occasional tall hedgerows forming fragmented enclosure
- Field boundaries delineated with some tall hedgerows, post and wire fencing and mature tree rows without hedgerows
- Narrow rural lanes connect dispersed roadside settlement and agricultural barns
- Dunton Park static caravan park occupies the south east corner of the character area
- Small area of mature Oak and Birch woodland north of the caravan park
- Church and hall complex at Dunton Hall are local landmarks

- Houses are predominantly 20th century with some Victorian gault brick buildings including the Old Rectory and Friern Manor

5.13.3 Physical influences

- Geology is a mix of head deposits and London Clay
- Hedgerows predominantly Hawthorn and Elm with scattered single Oak trees
- Isolated mature woodland north of the caravan park
- Strong linear tree belts to the edge of Southfields Industrial Estate to edge of Laindon
- No ecological designations within the character area
- Small ponds

5.13.4 Historical and cultural features

- Grid-like, rectilinear field patterns, possibly Middle Saxon in origin
- Site of medieval church and hall complex at Dunton Hall
- The Old Rectory occupies a former medieval moated site
- Little archaeological work has been undertaken in the zone, reflective of the limited amount of development

5.13.5 Visual and sensory characteristics

- Predominantly open and locally visible from the railway line, B148 and A127
- The busy transport links to 3 sides of the character area are influential with noise from traffic and trains evident throughout
- The static homes of the Dunton Caravan Park are shielded from view by a stretch of woodland, reducing its impact on the farmland to the north but open aspects to the west
- The church spire at Dunton is a local focal point on the skyline
- The Ford Technical Centre, Dunton is prominent landmark in Laindon/Basildon
- The residential edge of Laindon and Southfields Industrial estate are generally visually well contained by mature vegetation
- Views to the higher ground south to the Langdon Hills and north towards the Brentwood Hills and across farmland in Thurrock to the south west
- Attractive view from Church Lane, framed through vegetation looking south east towards the Essex Wildlife Trust's Langdon Nature Reserve
- The wooded Langdon Hills are a prominent feature on the skyline

5.13.6 Condition

- Condition of farmed land and paddocks is moderate to poor with some hedgerows and field boundaries in need of improvement or restoration
- The historic field pattern is intact but many boundaries are poorly managed with post and barbed wire fencing
- The area is poor ecologically with no designations or evidence of habitat management

5.13.7 Long term management strategy

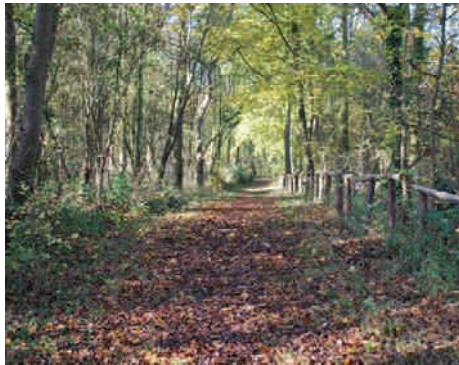
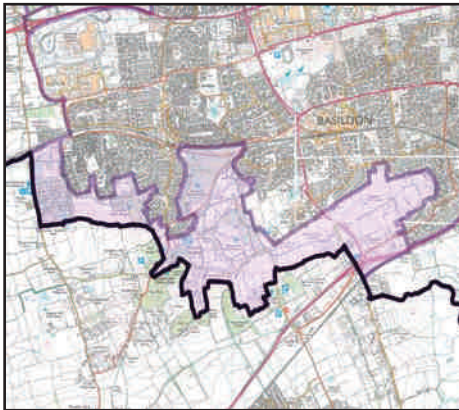
Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
Strength of character				

5.13.8 Management guidelines

- Support the range of countryside projects within the LCA promoted through the Essex Wildlife Trust - Living Landscape Area 30 (Langdon Hills)
- Promote hedgerow restoration and creation with native species throughout the area to provide visual and ecological links and replace post and wire fencing. Pattern to follow historic field boundaries and rights of way where possible and include additional hedgerow trees.
- Promote the creation of buffer zones along arable field margins/hedgerows and near semi-natural habitats to improve biodiversity and connectivity
- Promote crop diversification and mixed livestock/ arable farming where possible
- Promote the management of existing woodland in order to establish a diverse profile of native species including high forest, coppice with standards and woodland edge
- Manage existing ponds and create new ponds where potential
- Promote use of traditional materials, built form and native planting in association with existing buildings and new agricultural structures
- Maintain and enhance existing rights of way and support new rights of way running east to west to form circular routes
- Retain key viewpoints and vistas to Langdon Hills and Burstead Sloping Farmland from public roads and rights of way
- Develop strategy for mitigating visual effect of A127 and B148 and built edge of Laindon
- Support visual mitigation of existing Dunton Park Caravan Park

5.14 LCA14 - Langdon Hills

Location and extent of character area



View into Marks Hill Nature Reserve (R.Cole)



Arable fields near Hawkesbury Manor

5.14.1 Summary description and location

An area of strongly undulating hills, and elevated land clothed with woodlands and wooded farmland to the south west of Basildon. The character area follows the indented urban edge of Laindon/Basildon to the north and the Borough Boundary to the south where the character extends further south into Thurrock. Stretches of the railway line follow the boundary north of the Langdon Hills Nature Reserve and Marks Hill Nature Reserves and to the south east adjacent to north of Vange and Bowers Marshes. The area is highly wooded to the north west with both ancient and secondary woodland which has developed on a number of former plotland sites. South of Dry Street there is a narrow plateau including arable fields before the landform falls steeply to the south at the escarpment which largely lies beyond the Borough boundary. In distant views the character area forms a wooded ridge wrapping around and enclosing the urban edge of Basildon. Much of the land is part of the Langdon Hills Country Park and the Essex Wildlife Trust's Langdon Nature Reserve, which provide accessible areas for informal recreation. Basildon Golf Club occupies the ridge to the north east and is enclosed by residential development in Vange. The character area has small scale and largely rural feel. However, built development has begun to encroach to the south east where the A176, B1464 and A13 dissect the landscape and a series of intrusive modern structures are visible in key viewpoints.

5.14.2 Key characteristics

- 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

- 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
- All Saints Church in Vange is an important viewpoint and landmark
- 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

5.14.3 Physical influences

- The geology is largely formed by sandy Claygate Beds overlain by a lens of Stanmore Gravel. These rounded sand and gravel hills and ridges create a strongly undulating topography that rises steeply to Westley Heights
- 'Dry Street' refers to the sandy ground of the area
- Langdon Hills Nature Reserve, Lincewood, Marks Hill and Willow Park Nature Reserves are all designated LoWS as is Langdon Hills Country Park. Species rich parts of Basildon Meadows are designated as SSSI
- Settled Plotlands both sides of Dry Street and west of A176 at Bells Hill Road
- Curved former drainage system present in the Vange Hill nature reserve to the east of the Golf course forming a stagnant stream following the residential edge
- Number of ponds associated with nature reserves and recreation areas
- Covered reservoir on hillside west of Lee Chapel South
- Field boundaries marked by tall mature hedgerows and Oak rows and regenerating Elm

5.14.4 Historical and cultural features

- Strong surviving rectilinear patchwork of pasture and arable field bounded by thick hedgerows
- Plotlands grid-like formation is evident in the Langdon Nature Reserve
- Irregular curvilinear field pattern is thought to be a result of piecemeal assarting of woodland in the medieval period
- Much of this area was set out in the early 20th century for Plotlands but retained the irregular formation
- Majority of Plotlands development is now abandoned with natural regeneration resulting in secondary woodland and incorporated into the wider Langdon Nature Reserve. A Plotlands Museum "The Haven" provides a valuable record of previous history
- Ancient woodland within the Lincewood Nature Reserve
- Few Listed buildings including Rose Cottage(Grade II) on Dry Street as a remaining thatched cottage and Hawkesbury Manor
- All Saints Church was recorded to have a deserted medieval village around it, giving reason for its prominent location on the escarpment above the river and marshes

5.14.5 Visual and sensory characteristics

- Arable fields on the ridge south west of Lincewood Nature Reserve allows extensive views east to Thurrock and south west towards London
- Wide verges on A176 frame views south to the marshes and distant industrial views to Coryton Oil Refinery and London Gateway Port
- Domed open space east of Long Wood provides views north across Basildon and Cray's Hill to wooded Hills near Billericay on the skyline
- Elevated land at Basildon Golf Course, Dunton Plotlands Nature Reserve and Westley Heights allow extensive views to Pitsea and the London Gateway Port to the south, rolling farmland within the Brentwood Borough to the west and across Basildon to wooded hills and sloping farmland surrounding Billericay and Crays Hill to the north
- The Langdon Hills are prominent in views from outside the character area including from north, west and south, in particular from Canvey Island and Cranham
- Dense woodland, tree belts and valley slopes enclose much of the character area internally leaving little exposed built urban edge
- The B1007 and B1036 is enclosed on both sides by dense woodland including Marks Hill nature reserve
- The radio mast on Westley Heights and Basildon Hospital's administration tower are prominent structures in views and intrusive on the surrounding area
- All Saints Church, Vange and St Marys Church, Laindon are local landmarks
- Commercial structures west of Tompkins Farm and around the Five Bells interchange, together with the the busy and noisy transport links fragment the character of the area to the south east

5.14.6 Condition

- Large areas of woodland and former Plotlands are managed for nature conservation and are in good condition. Field boundaries are typically intact with strong hedgerows
- Ecological designations indicate good management of habitats
- The leisure facilities are well used with good public rights of way and access via car parks
- Wide verges with meadows and tree planting to main roads provide additional nature conservation value
- Historic field patterns have survived well and boundaries remain intact but historic features are sensitive to change and the area has been adversely affected by built development to the south east

5.14.7 Long term management strategy

Condition	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
Strength of character				

5.14.8 Management guidelines

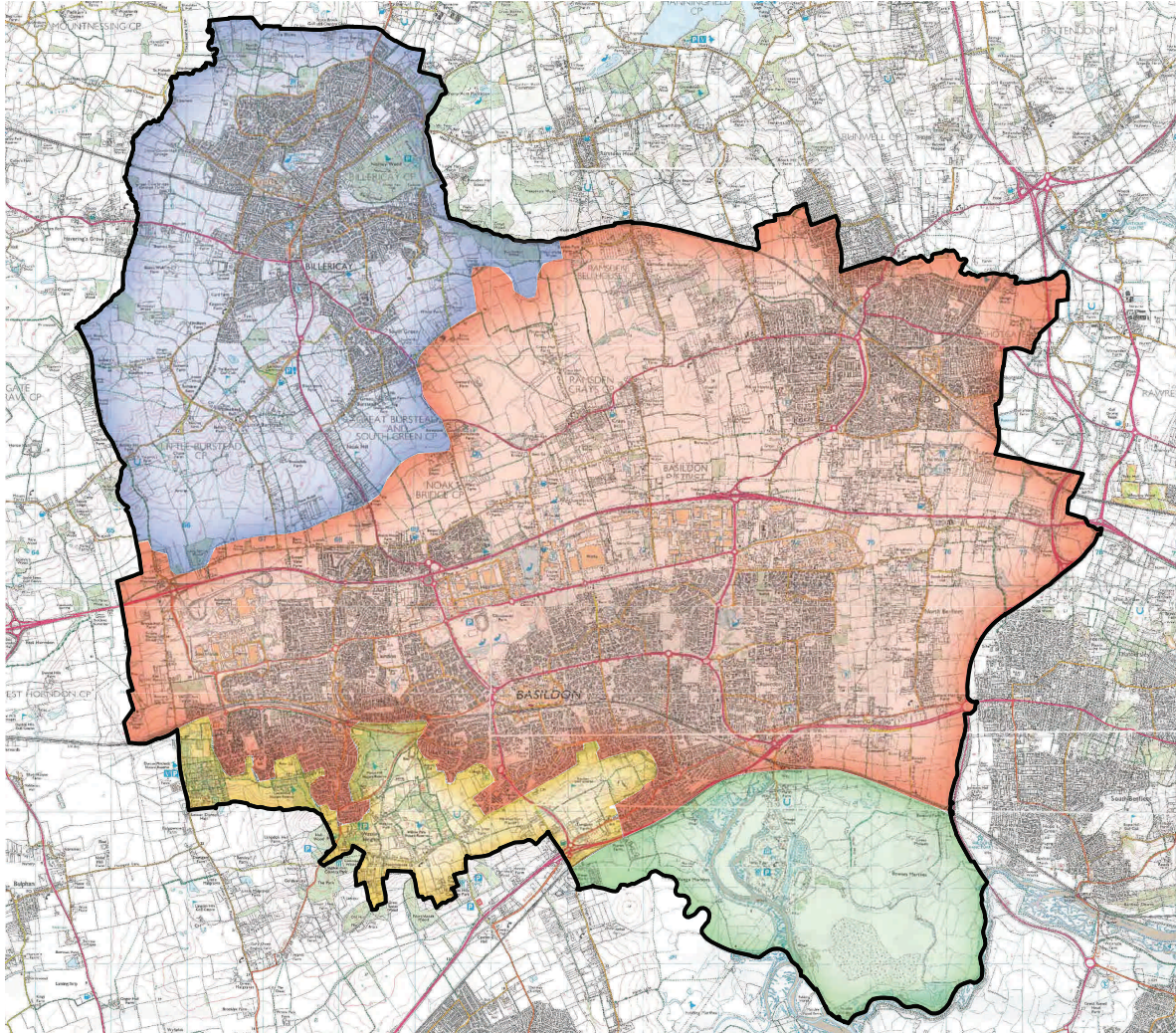
- Support the range of countryside projects within the LCA promoted through the Essex Wildlife Trust - Living Landscape Area 30 (Langdon Hills)
- Promote the retention and management of the diversity and scale of the character area
- Support the management of designated wildlife sites and nature reserves including Marks Hill Reserve, Westley Heights, Dunton Plotlands, Lincewood.
- Promote the retention and management of the connecting network of woodland, scrub and meadows
- Support the range of countryside projects within the LCA promoted through the Essex Wildlife Trust - Living Landscape Area 30 (Langdon Hills)






- Promote the appropriate management of woodland in order to establish a rich ground flora with diverse management systems, including high forest, coppice, coppice with standards and scrub/understorey
- Protect remaining grassland habitats and improve the management of old meadows and pastures
- Promote the creation of buffer strips along arable field margins and to watercourses to prevent pesticide, herbicide and fertilizer run-off and provide habitat for wildlife; encourage their linkage to eco-corridors within the wider landscape
- Support retention, restoration and management of hedges and hedgerow trees particularly those of historic value
- Promote both the creation of new ponds and the retention/enhancement for wildlife of existing ponds
- Resolve stagnant water at Vange Hill nature reserve
- Promote the use of traditional field enclosure methods where land is converted to equestrian pasture
- Promote and manage continued public recreational access throughout area and balance use and access with biodiversity objectives
- Promote continued education and public participation in countryside management including establishment of local 'friends groups' (community support groups for open spaces)
- Retain and manage key viewpoints and vistas to and from the landscape from public roads, rights of way and public open spaces
- Protect area from inappropriate development and ensure that the local character, scale and pattern of development are respected
- Promote a strategy to visually mitigate intrusive features e.g. hospital tower
- Manage woodland and tree cover to reduce visual impacts of existing built development from within rural areas

Glossary

BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BBC	Basildon Borough Council
EWT	Essex Wildlife Trust
GIS	Geographic Information System
LoWS	Local Wildlife Site
LCA	Landscape Character Area
POS	Public Open Space
PROW	Public Right of Way
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest


Figures and Appendices



- Key**
-  Basildon Borough Boundary
 -  Billericay Bagshot Sands and Claygate Clays
 -  Low lying London Clays
 -  Drained marshlands
 -  Langdon Hills Bagshot Sands and Claygate Clays

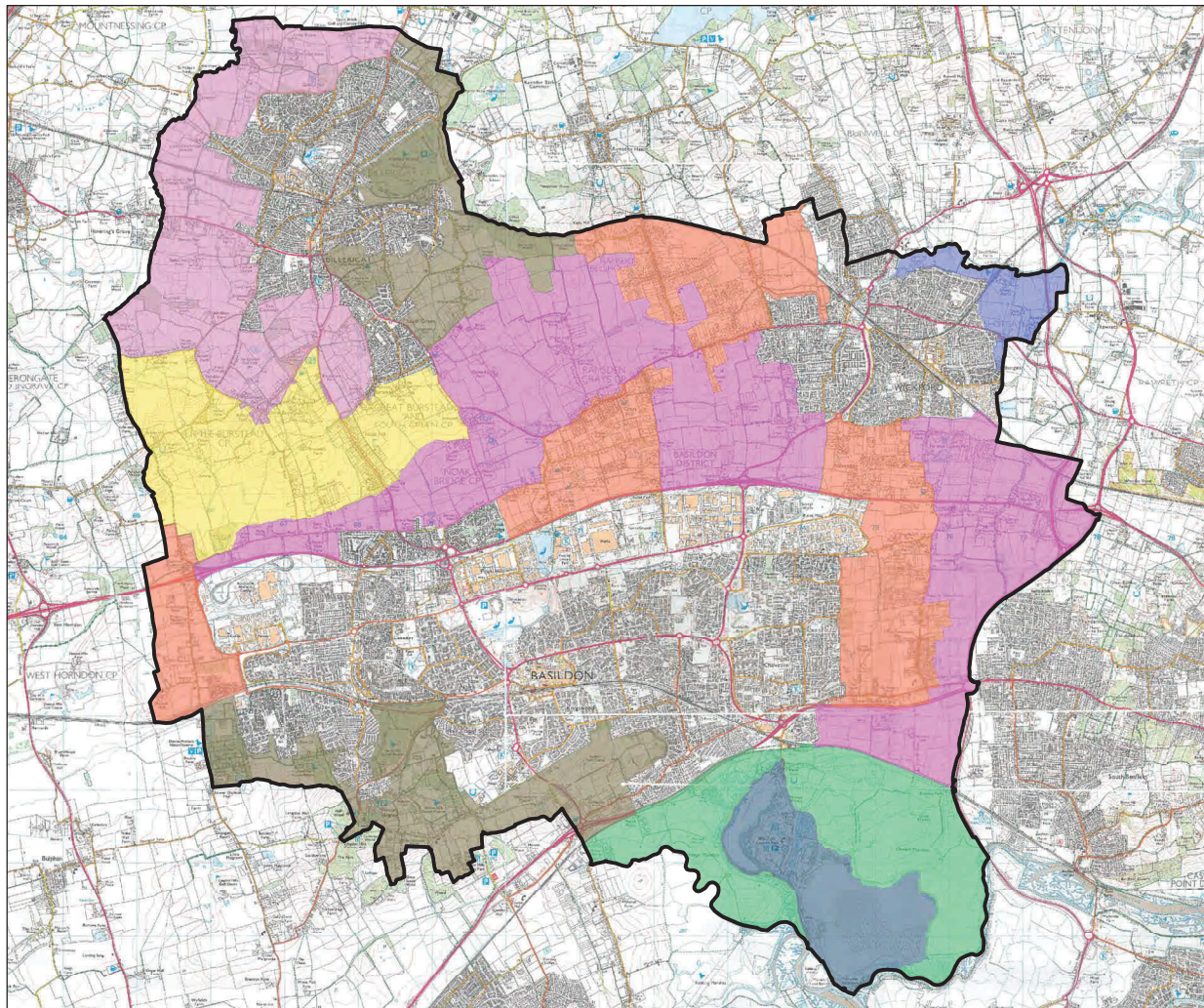


Project	Basildon Landscape Study		
Drawing	Landscape Regions		

Dwg No.	Figure 7	 North	
Scale	1:50,000 @ A3		
Date	September 2013		
Drawn	IJ		Checked

Bedford	01234 261315	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Woodbridge	01394 380509	<input type="checkbox"/>
London	0207 252 0002	<input type="checkbox"/>
Norwich	01603 230777	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do not scale off drawing. All dimensions & levels are to be checked on site. Any discrepancies must be reported to the landscape architect immediately.
 © The Landscape Partnership Ltd
 *Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Licence number: AL 100002205. © CROWN



Key

Basildon Borough Boundary

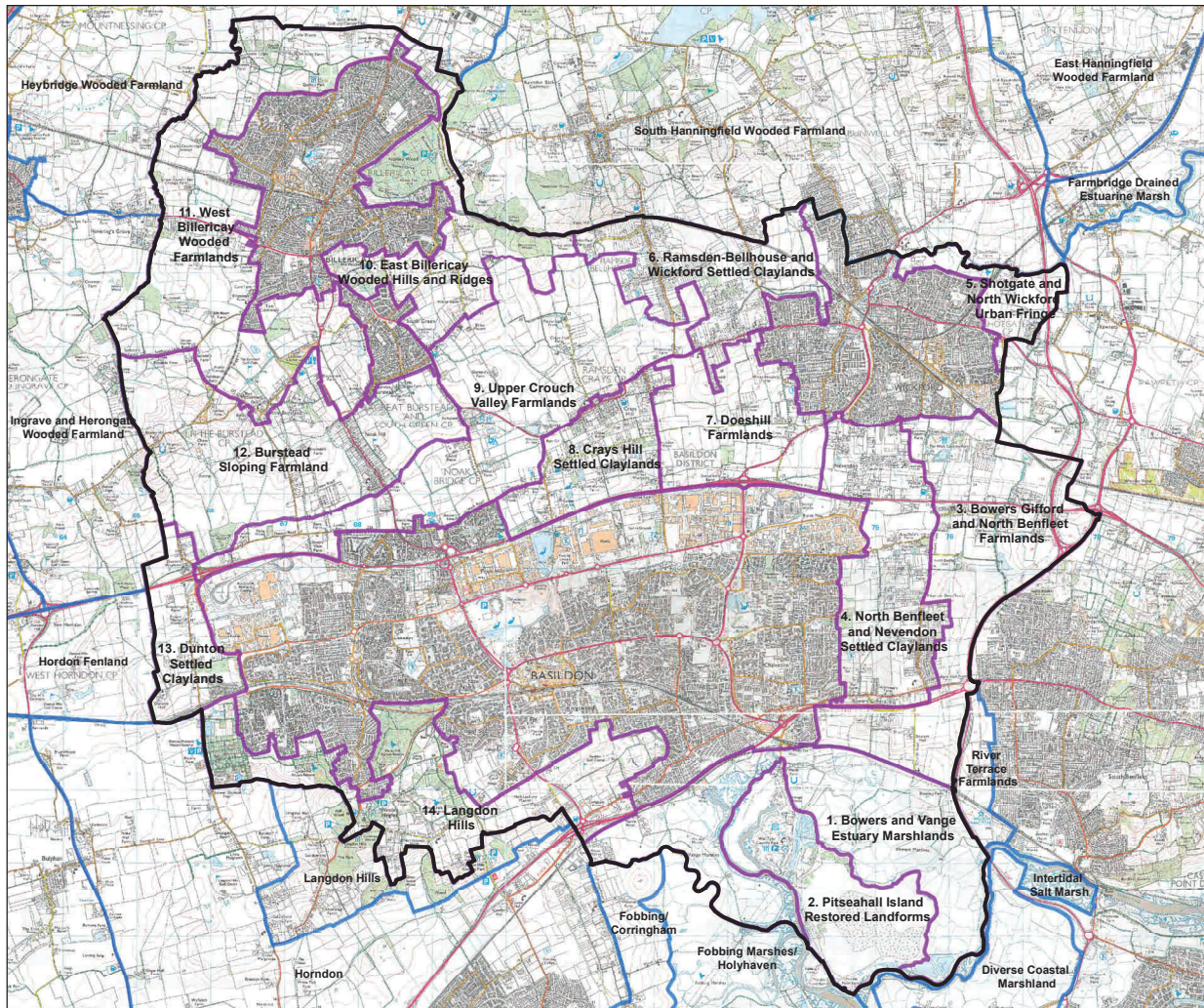
Landscape Character Types

- Estuary Marshlands
- Lowland Farmlands
- Lowland Settled Claylands
- Restored Landforms
- Sloping Farmland
- Urban Fringelands
- Wooded Farmlands
- Wooded Hills and Ridges




Project	Basildon Landscape Study
Drawing Title	Landscape Character Types
Drawing Number	Figure 8
Scale	1:50,000 @ A3
Date	July 2013
Drawn	IJ
Checked	JB



© The Landscape Partnership Ltd
 Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Licence number: AL 100002205 © CROWN



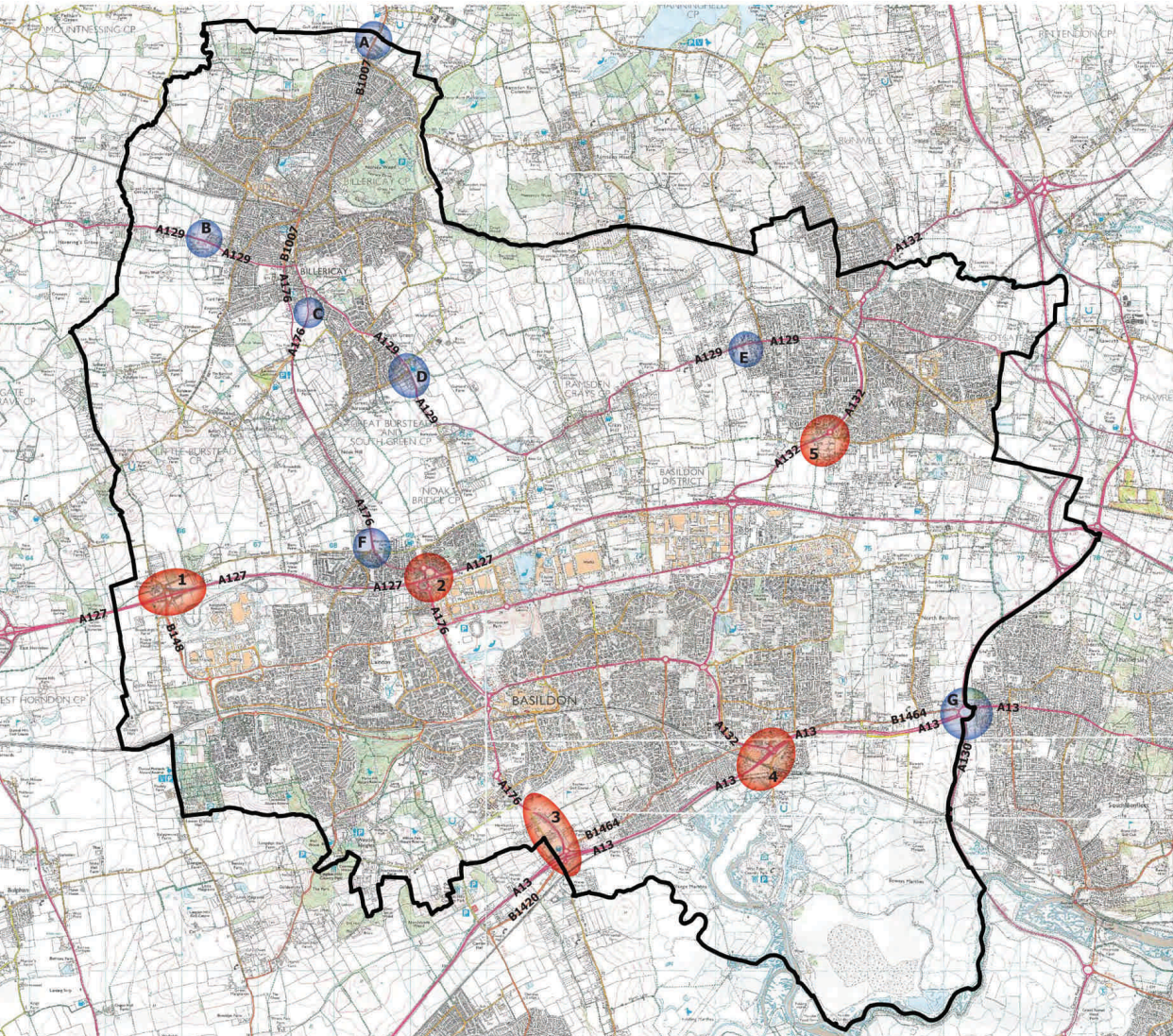
Key

-  Basildon Borough Boundary
-  Landscape Character Areas within Basildon Borough
-  Landscape Character Areas in adjacent authorities




Project	Basildon Landscape Study
Drawing Title	Landscape Character Areas
Drawing Number	Figure 09
Scale	1:50,000 @ A3
Date	April 2013
Drawn	IJ
Checked	JB



© The Landscape Partnership Ltd
 Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office, Licence number: AL 100002205 © CROWN



Key

-  Basildon Borough Boundary
-  Main Gateway
-  Secondary Gateway

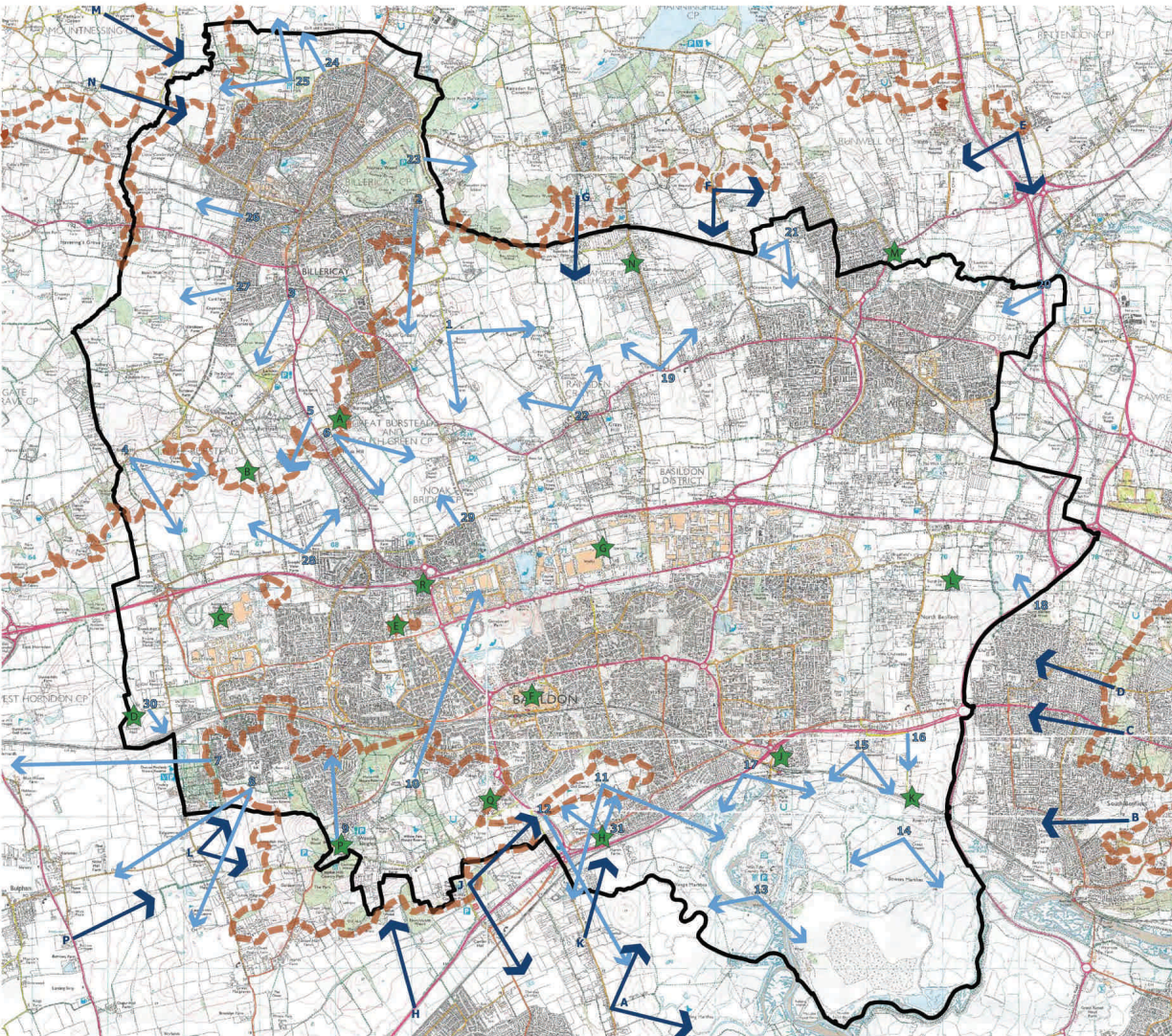


Project	Basildon Landscape Study
Drawing	Gateways

Dwg No.	Figure 10		
Scale	1:50,000 @ A3		
Date	April 2012		
Drawn	IJ		Checked

Bedford	01234 261315	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Woodbridge	01394 380509	<input type="checkbox"/>
London	0207 252 0002	<input type="checkbox"/>
Norwich	01603 230777	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do not scale off drawing. All dimensions & levels are to be checked on site. Any discrepancies must be reported to the landscape architect immediately. © The Landscape Partnership Ltd. *Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. Licence number: AL 100002295. © CROWN



Key

- Basildon Borough Boundary
- Landmark
- See text for Landmark descriptions A-Q
- Viewpoints outside the Borough (with views towards Basildon)
- See text for viewpoint descriptions A-P
- Viewpoints within the Borough (with views across the Borough and out towards surrounding areas)
- See text for viewpoint descriptions 1-31
- 50m Contour line



Project	Basildon Landscape Study
Drawing	Landmarks and Views

Dwg No.	Figure 11		
Scale	1:35,000 @ A2		
Date	February 2012		
Drawn	IJ		Checked

Bedford	01234 261315	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Woodbridge	01394 380509	<input type="checkbox"/>
London	0207 252 0002	<input type="checkbox"/>
Norwich	01603 230777	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do not scale off drawing. All dimensions & levels are to be checked on site. Any discrepancies must be reported to the landscape architect immediately.
© The Landscape Partnership Ltd
*Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Licence number: AL 100002205, 01/05/08

Basildon Borough LCA		FIELD SURVEY RECORD		SHEET No.	Page 1 of 2
Date :		Surveyors' Name/s :		Higher level LCA:	
Location : Landscape Character Area : Conditions :				Regional: County: Coastal:	
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER					
LANDFORM (S1)		dominant prominent apparent (widespread/localised) insignificant			
Description: flat gently undulating strongly undulating steep broad valley narrow valley plain plateau upland sloping			Hydrology: river stream ponds lakes reservoir wetlands other		
			Degree of slope:		Altitude :
LANDCOVER (S2)		dominant prominent apparent (widespread/localised) insignificant			
Description: open farmland treed farmland wooded farmland parkland woodland grassland / common open water or wetlands			Primary land use: ommercial / industrial farmland:arable/pastoral/mixed forestry:broadleaf/conifer/mixed common or green: grassed/treed nursery / allotments / orchard recreation or amenity:type reservoir disturbed : type		
Associated features: e.g. glasshouses/ marina.			Secondary land use (select from above)		
Woodland cover: extensive interlocking linear discrete fragmented		Species:		Field boundaries (in order of prominence): hedgerow (with/without trees) tree rows hedgebank fence wall/wet ditch other (high/medium/low)	
				Species:	
HISTORICAL PATTERN (S3) dominant prominent apparent (widespread/localised) insignificant					
Description: organic planned unenclosed					
Field pattern: geometric (ordered) regular (rectilinear) subregular (interlocking – curved boundaries) irregular (organic, winding lanes) discontinuous (no discernable pattern)			Transport pattern: motorway A road B road track / lane canal railway		
Field size: 1- small < 2ha 2- small/medium 3- medium/large 4- large > 8ha			Settlement: Form: village / hamlet / isolated house or farm/ other Building style: vernacular / non-vernacular Age: Tudor/Stuart/Georgian/ Victorian/Edwardian/20thC Materials: walls and roof		
Verges: absent variable uniform wide / medium / narrow ditched			Country houses: Age: Tudor/Stuart/Georgian/Victorian/Edwardian 20thC Materials:		
Other built features (function, age and materials):					
Other comments e.g. cultural features					
VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION					
Views of area from outside: widely visible locally visible concealed			Sense of enclosure: confined contained open exposed		
Tranquility (S4): tranquil/distant/discordant Source: Level and constancy::			Rarity (S5): unique rare unusual Frequent		
Strategic views out		Local landmarks within		Gateways	

CONDITION

HISTORICAL INTEGRITY

Extent and type of landcover change (C1): pasture to arable change in extent of woodland/tree cover on farmland loss of field boundaries parkland to farmland minerals other	widespread localised insignificant	Age structure of tree cover (C2): over mature mature/young mixed	Survival of cultural pattern (C5): intact and well managed intact but poorly managed interrupted (gen. intact but locally interrupted) declining (boundaries poorly managed) relic
---	--	--	---

Notes:

ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY

Extent of habitat/corridor survival (C3): Widespread Linked Scattered relic	Management of habitats (C4): Good Not obvious Poor
--	--

Notes:

VISUAL IMPACT

Impact of built development (C6): Urban/Transport corridor/rural housing/ utilities/structures/other	high moderate low	Visual Unity (S6): Unified Coherent Incoherent	high moderate low
---	-------------------------	--	-------------------------

Notes:

Boundary notes:

CHARACTER SUMMARY

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER	WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
S1 Impact of landform* S2 Impact of landcover* S3 Historic pattern* S4 Tranquillity S5 Distinctiveness/rarity S6 Visual unity	Insignificant Insignificant Insignificant Discordant Frequent Incoherent	Apparent Apparent Apparent Moderate Unusual Coherent	Dominant/Prominent Dominant/Prominent Dominant/Prominent Tranquil Unique/rare Unified

Totals * Prime character categories if tie

CONDITION	POOR	MODERATE	GOOD
C1 Landcover Change C2 Age Structure of Tree Cover* C3 Extent of semi-natural habitat survival* C4 Management of semi-natural habitats C5 Survival of cultural pattern (fields and hedges) C6 Impact of built development*	Widespread Overmature Relic Poor Declining/Relic High	Localised Mature or young Scattered Not obvious Interrupted Moderate	Insignificant Mixed Widespread/Linked Good Intact Low

Totals * Prime condition categories if tie

MATRIX		Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
		Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
		Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character

Weak
Moderate
Strong
Strength of Character

General notes, observations and recommendations

Basildon Landscape Character Assessment – Stakeholder Consultation Form

Name.....Date

Organisation.....

Tel.....Email.....

You can also contact us via the website.

Please complete the sections in the questionnaire that are of interest to you and return by Monday 18 February 2013 to: **The Landscape Partnership, Tunnel Wharf, 121 Rotherhithe St, London, SE16 4NF** Tel: **020 7252 0002**, email: joanna.ede@tlp.uk.com

Introduction

Each part of England is different; it has a particular sense of place. Landscape Character Assessment is an established and systematic method of identifying the local characteristics of an area and proposing ways that local distinctiveness can be reinforced and managed to maintain or improve diversity and quality within the landscape. Over recent years the Landscape Character Assessment approach has been used throughout much of England to provide planning guidance through a consistent framework. A study has been commissioned by Basildon Borough Council to provide a Landscape Character Assessment of the rural part of the authority as part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan.

The initial aim of the study is to build up a picture of the local landscape within a geographical framework of landscape character areas. Following initial work by the Council's consultants (The Landscape Partnership) Draft landscape character areas have been proposed for the rural areas of the authority. Defining these areas has involved a combination of desk study (covering aspects such as geology, soils, land use, ecology and historic environment) and field work (to test the desk study and also to identify other important visual, perceptual and aesthetic characteristics).

The attached sheets and plan have been produced at this interim stage in the development of the Landscape Character Assessment for Basildon Borough Council, when the views of a wide range of Stakeholders are sought. We would value any comments or information that you have to guide the development of the Landscape Character Assessment descriptions and to thereby enrich the study. We appreciate that there is a wealth of information available through local stakeholders. Please feel free to add comments to reflect your local and detailed knowledge of the areas.

The value of the landscape to the local population is an important aspect of the study. We would therefore like to know what you value about the rural landscape near to you, why you value it and which parts of it you value most. The findings will provide direct input to the study, which should be completed by the end of March 2013. The general questions on the following pages give you the opportunity to contribute to protecting and enhancing the authority's landscape. The assessment covers the following types of features and aspects.

WOODLAND
PARKS AND GARDENS
RECREATION
RIVERS AND STREAMS
WETLAND AREAS

PEACE AND TRANQUILLITY
FIELDS AND HEDGEROWS
HISTORIC FEATURES
BIODIVERSITY
ECOLOGICAL CORRIDOR

VIEWS
LOCAL LANDMARKS
HISTORIC ASSOCIATIONS
SPACE AND SKY
FOOTPATHS & RIGHTS OF WAY

Where there is insufficient space on the sheets please provide comments on additional paper.

General Questions

Draft Landscape Character Areas

G1. With reference to the attached Landscape Character Area map do you think that the main landscape areas have been correctly identified within the study area? (NB It should be noted that the boundaries between character areas may sometimes be reasonably clear whereas in other locations they may be a zone of more gradual transition).

Yes

No

If 'No' please mark on the attached plan suggested changes or describe in words below

Favourite Landscape Areas in Basildon Borough

G2. Now thinking about Basildon Borough as a whole, (excluding the urban areas) can you identify the areas of landscape that are particularly important to you and that you particularly value (MAXIMUM 4 AREAS)?
What is the name of each area or location and where is it?

PLEASE WRITE IN THE NAME THAT YOU USE FOR EACH AREA AND DESCRIBE ITS LOCATION

Area 1.

Area 2.

Area 3.

Area 4.

- G3. What, if anything, do you particularly like about these valued areas or locations?
PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY FOR EACH AREA

	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4
The views in/from the area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The area is picturesque	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The area is peaceful/tranquil	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The area is easy to get to	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The wildlife of the area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The history/heritage of the area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The facilities/amenities in the area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (PLEASE TICK BOX AND WRITE IN DETAILS BELOW)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- G4. Again looking at the map, what, if any, local customs, historic events or cultural/arts associations are you aware of within the borough?
- G5. Can you think of any ways that the rural landscape within the Borough could be managed to protect or enhance its local character?

Character Area 1 – Pitsea Hall Island

Key characteristics

- Raised landforms
- Pylon lines are dominant features
- Few buildings or public roads
- Main land-uses: Country park, waste disposal site, Pitsea Hall marina and sewage works
- Historic field patterns obscured by landraising activities
- Views towards Basildon and South Benfleet in the north and Shellhaven refinery in the south
- Timbermans Creek and Peasenhall Fleet
- Remains of nineteenth century cordite and explosives factory
- Isolated location with limited public access other than country park

1. Do you have any comments on the suggested boundaries or name of the area?
2. Do you have any comments on the key characteristics identified for the area? (mark list above or add below)
3. Do you consider that there are any important distinctive features in the area? (eg key buildings, landmarks etc)
4. What are the important natural features of the area? (including, hydrology, geology & wildlife)
5. What are the important cultural/historic features of the area? (including, field patterns, people & places)
6. What are the main recreational and accessibility features of the area? Are there any local areas where recreation facilities and/or access to the countryside is particularly poor?
7. What are the important perceptual or aesthetic factors of the area (e.g. visual impact of development, tranquillity, noise)
8. What do you think have been the main changes in the landscape character area in recent years and what forces for change do you anticipate in the future?
9. Do you think new development could be accommodated in this area and what specific guidelines would you suggest to guide the management/enhancement and or development of the area?

Character Area 2 –Bowers and Vange Estuary Marshlands

Key characteristics

- Flat, low-lying drained marshlands
- Pylon lines are dominant features
- Open, exposed landscape
- Few isolated farm buildings and no public roads
- 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
- Views towards Basildon and South Benfleet in the north and Shellhaven refinery in the south
- Tidal creeks with extensive mudbanks exposed at low tide
- Flocks of birds feeding or gathering

1. Do you have any comments on the suggested boundaries or name of the area?
2. Do you have any comments on the key characteristics identified for the area? (mark list above or add below)
3. Do you consider that there are any important distinctive features in the area? (eg key buildings, landmarks etc)
4. What are the important natural features of the area? (including, hydrology, geology & wildlife)
5. What are the important cultural/historic features of the area? (including, field patterns, people & places)
6. What are the main recreational and accessibility features of the area? Are there any local areas where recreation facilities and/or access to the countryside is particularly poor?
7. What are the important perceptual or aesthetic factors of the area (e.g. visual impact of development, tranquillity, noise)
8. What do you think have been the main changes in the landscape character area in recent years and what forces for change do you anticipate in the future?
8. Do you think new development could be accommodated in this area and what specific guidelines would you suggest to guide the management/enhancement and or development of the area?

Character Area 3 – Rushbottom Lane Farmlands

Key characteristics

- Pylon lines are dominant features
- Few buildings or local roads but crossed and bounded by several busy A roads (A13, A 129, A130 and A127)
- Main land-uses: arable farmland
- Rectilinear field system
- Dispersed settlement pattern
- Panoramic views south over Bowers Marshes
- Open landscape with little built development
- Rushbottom Lane green lane

1. Do you have any comments on the suggested boundaries or name of the area?
2. Do you have any comments on the key characteristics identified for the area? (mark list above or add below)
3. Do you consider that there are any important distinctive features in the area? (eg key buildings, landmarks etc)
4. What are the important natural features of the area? (including, hydrology, geology & wildlife)
5. What are the important cultural/historic features of the area? (including, field patterns, people & places)
6. What are the main recreational and accessibility features of the area? Are there any local areas where recreation facilities and/or access to the countryside is particularly poor?
7. What are the important perceptual or aesthetic factors of the area (e.g. visual impact of development, tranquillity, noise)
8. What do you think have been the main changes in the landscape character area in recent years and what forces for change do you anticipate in the future?
8. Do you think new development could be accommodated in this area and what specific guidelines would you suggest to guide the management/enhancement and or development of the area?

Character Area 4 – North Benfleet and Nevendon Settled Claylands

Key characteristics

- 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
- A127 and A13 pass through/adjacent to the area
- Recreational grounds including Rushley Park, woods, open green space/grounds from school located at boundary with Basildon
- Medium to small arable fields at Bradfield's farm and between recreational and Plotlands are separated by rectilinear hedgerow boundaries
- Fragmented woodland cover

1. Do you have any comments on the suggested boundaries or name of the area?
2. Do you have any comments on the key characteristics identified for the area? (mark list above or add below)
3. Do you consider that there are any important distinctive features in the area? (eg key buildings, landmarks etc)
4. What are the important natural features of the area? (including, hydrology, geology & wildlife)
5. What are the important cultural/historic features of the area? (including, field patterns, people & places)
6. What are the main recreational and accessibility features of the area? Are there any local areas where recreation facilities and/or access to the countryside is particularly poor?
7. What are the important perceptual or aesthetic factors of the area (e.g. visual impact of development, tranquillity, noise)
8. What do you think have been the main changes in the landscape character area in recent years and what forces for change do you anticipate in the future?
9. Do you think new development could be accommodated in this area and what specific guidelines would you suggest to guide the management/enhancement and or development of the area?

Character Area 5 – Shotgate and North Wickford Urban Fringe

Key characteristics

- 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
- Distant views towards All Saints Church, Rettendon

1. Do you have any comments on the suggested boundaries or name of the area?
2. Do you have any comments on the key characteristics identified for the area? (mark list above or add below)
3. Do you consider that there are any important distinctive features in the area? (eg key buildings, landmarks etc)
4. What are the important natural features of the area? (including, hydrology, geology & wildlife)
5. What are the important cultural/historic features of the area? (including, field patterns, people & places)
6. What are the main recreational and accessibility features of the area? Are there any local areas where recreation facilities and/or access to the countryside is particularly poor?
7. What are the important perceptual or aesthetic factors of the area (e.g. visual impact of development, tranquillity, noise)
8. What do you think have been the main changes in the landscape character area in recent years and what forces for change do you anticipate in the future?
9. Do you think new development could be accommodated in this area and what specific guidelines would you suggest to guide the management/enhancement and or development of the area?

Character Area 6 – Ramsden-Bellhouse and Wickford Settled Claylands

Key characteristics

- 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 Road
- 20th Century plotland development with mature vegetation (particularly oaks) and mix of individual detached homes, paddocks and overgrown / undeveloped plots
- 20th Century linear development along A129 is a mix of houses and small commercial 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 Road settlement
- Fragmented woodland form discrete features of the landscape
- Plotlands connected by narrow, quiet private roads (often unsurfaced)
- New residential developments around fringes of north Wickford

1. Do you have any comments on the suggested boundaries or name of the area?
2. Do you have any comments on the key characteristics identified for the area? (mark list above or add below)
3. Do you consider that there are any important distinctive features in the area? (eg key buildings, landmarks etc)
4. What are the important natural features of the area? (including, hydrology, geology & wildlife)
5. What are the important cultural/historic features of the area? (including, field patterns, people & places)
6. What are the main recreational and accessibility features of the area? Are there any local areas where recreation facilities and/or access to the countryside is particularly poor?
7. What are the important perceptual or aesthetic factors of the area (e.g. visual impact of development, tranquillity, noise)
8. What do you think have been the main changes in the landscape character area in recent years and what forces for change do you anticipate in the future?
9. Do you think new development could be accommodated in this area and what specific guidelines would you suggest to guide the management/enhancement and or development of the area?

Character Area 7 – Doeshill Farmlands

Key characteristics

- Sloping landform with the highest point and natural landmark being Doeshill
- Marked rural character (despite proximity to Basildon and Wickford)
- Predominantly arable landscape with large open fields
- Regular rectilinear field patterns separated with a network of mature hedges with large oak trees
- Isolated woodland and SINC–Noke Wood located north of Stevenson Farm
- Scattered isolated farmsteads and houses accessed by quiet rectilinear tracks
- Quiet minor roads with grass verges
- Good rights of way network

1. Do you have any comments on the suggested boundaries or name of the area?
2. Do you have any comments on the key characteristics identified for the area? (mark list above or add below)
3. Do you consider that there are any important distinctive features in the area? (eg key buildings, landmarks etc)
4. What are the important natural features of the area? (including, hydrology, geology & wildlife)
5. What are the important cultural/historic features of the area? (including, field patterns, people & places)
6. What are the main recreational and accessibility features of the area? Are there any local areas where recreation facilities and/or access to the countryside is particularly poor?
7. What are the important perceptual or aesthetic factors of the area (e.g. visual impact of development, tranquillity, noise)
8. What do you think have been the main changes in the landscape character area in recent years and what forces for change do you anticipate in the future?
9. Do you think new development could be accommodated in this area and what specific guidelines would you suggest to guide the management/enhancement and or development of the area?

Character Area 8 – Crays Hill Settled Claylands

Key characteristics

- 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
- Dale Farm and Oak Lane travellers site
- Raised landform of Crays Hill

1. Do you have any comments on the suggested boundaries or name of the area?
2. Do you have any comments on the key characteristics identified for the area? (mark list above or add below)
3. Do you consider that there are any important distinctive features in the area? (eg key buildings, landmarks etc)
4. What are the important natural features of the area? (including, hydrology, geology & wildlife)
5. What are the important cultural/historic features of the area? (including, field patterns, people & places)
6. What are the main recreational and accessibility features of the area? Are there any local areas where recreation facilities and/or access to the countryside is particularly poor?
7. What are the important perceptual or aesthetic factors of the area (e.g. visual impact of development, tranquillity, noise)
8. What do you think have been the main changes in the landscape character area in recent years and what forces for change do you anticipate in the future?
9. Do you think new development could be accommodated in this area and what specific guidelines would you suggest to guide the management/enhancement and or development of the area?

Character Area 9 – Upper Crouch Valley Farmlands

Key characteristics

- Gently sloping landform throughout most of area
- Local higher ground at Crays Hill to south east
- Large scale arable fields to east and west of area with limited hedges and trees.
- Intact historic pattern of medium scale fields with good hedges and mixed arable and pasture to centre of area running north south between Crays Hill and Barrensleys Wood.
- Absence of woodland
- Urban fringe uses including playing fields, recycling centre and Barleylands Farm/Craft Centre
- Scattered intrusive commercial development in open locations
- Settlement limited to isolated properties and farm buildings
- Panoramic views to north towards Wooded Hills and ridge
- A129 runs through part of area, elsewhere minor roads and a number of rights of way running north south

1. Do you have any comments on the suggested boundaries or name of the area?
2. Do you have any comments on the key characteristics identified for the area? (mark list above or add below)
3. Do you consider that there are any important distinctive features in the area? (eg key buildings, landmarks etc)
4. What are the important natural features of the area? (including, hydrology, geology & wildlife)
5. What are the important cultural/historic features of the area? (including, field patterns, people & places)
6. What are the main recreational and accessibility features of the area? Are there any local areas where recreation facilities and/or access to the countryside is particularly poor?
7. What are the important perceptual or aesthetic factors of the area (e.g. visual impact of development, tranquillity, noise)
8. What do you think have been the main changes in the landscape character area in recent years and what forces for change do you anticipate in the future?
9. Do you think new development could be accommodated in this area and what specific guidelines would you suggest to guide the management/enhancement and or development of the area?

Character Area 10 – East Billericay Wooded Sloping Farmland

Key characteristics

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

1. Do you have any comments on the suggested boundaries or name of the area?
2. Do you have any comments on the key characteristics identified for the area? (mark list above or add below)
3. Do you consider that there are any important distinctive features in the area? (eg key buildings, landmarks etc)
4. What are the important natural features of the area? (including, hydrology, geology & wildlife)
5. What are the important cultural/historic features of the area? (including, field patterns, people & places)
6. What are the main recreational and accessibility features of the area? Are there any local areas where recreation facilities and/or access to the countryside is particularly poor?
7. What are the important perceptual or aesthetic factors of the area (e.g. visual impact of development, tranquillity, noise)
8. What do you think have been the main changes in the landscape character area in recent years and what forces for change do you anticipate in the future?
9. Do you think new development could be accommodated in this area and what specific guidelines would you suggest to guide the management/enhancement and or development of the area?

Character Area 11 – West Billericay Wooded Farmland

Key characteristics

- Gently undulating plateau topography
- Predominantly medium to large scale arable fields with mix of hedgerow field boundaries and occasional mature tree rows.
- Open fields largely used for arable farming, with smaller grazed paddocks closer to the residential urban edge.
- Recreational land uses including Queens Park Country Park, 2 Golf Clubs , Cricket and Football Clubs adjacent to Billericay
- Scattered mature woodlands form discrete but consistent features of the landscape, gaining in size and connectivity to the north and south of the Billericay urban area.
- Irregular field patterns with areas of coaxial field pattern.
- Scattered, isolated farms and houses connected with quiet, rural tracks and lanes.
- Buckwyns Plotland Area

1. Do you have any comments on the suggested boundaries or name of the area?
2. Do you have any comments on the key characteristics identified for the area? (mark list above or add below)
3. Do you consider that there are any important distinctive features in the area? (eg key buildings, landmarks etc)
4. What are the important natural features of the area? (including, hydrology, geology & wildlife)
5. What are the important cultural/historic features of the area? (including, field patterns, people & places)
6. What are the main recreational and accessibility features of the area? Are there any local areas where recreation facilities and/or access to the countryside is particularly poor?
7. What are the important perceptual or aesthetic factors of the area (e.g. visual impact of development, tranquillity, noise)
8. What do you think have been the main changes in the landscape character area in recent years and what forces for change do you anticipate in the future?
9. Do you think new development could be accommodated in this area and what specific guidelines would you suggest to guide the management/enhancement and or development of the area?

Character Area 12 – Burstead Sloping Farmland

Key characteristics

- 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
- Number of large to medium ancient woods
- Noak Hill and associated ribbon development along A176
- Two areas of Plotlands development
- Discrete woodlands and linear green lane
- Few isolated farms and farm buildings
- Minor roads and some rights of way
- Little Burstead and Great Burstead landmark buildings (churches – St Mary the Virgin, Little Burstead and St Mary Magdelene, Great Burstead) and Conservation Areas

1. Do you have any comments on the suggested boundaries or name of the area?
2. Do you have any comments on the key characteristics identified for the area? (mark list above or add below)
3. Do you consider that there are any important distinctive features in the area? (eg key buildings, landmarks etc)
4. What are the important natural features of the area? (including, hydrology, geology & wildlife)
5. What are the important cultural/historic features of the area? (including, field patterns, people & places)
6. What are the main recreational and accessibility features of the area? Are there any local areas where recreation facilities and/or access to the countryside is particularly poor?
7. What are the important perceptual or aesthetic factors of the area (e.g. visual impact of development, tranquillity, noise)
8. What do you think have been the main changes in the landscape character area in recent years and what forces for change do you anticipate in the future?
9. Do you think new development could be accommodated in this area and what specific guidelines would you suggest to guide the management/enhancement and or development of the area?

Character Area 13– Dunton Settled Claylands

Key characteristics

- Predominantly flat landform with gentle slopes in the south towards the railway
- Typically medium to large sized arable fields. Medium sized paddocks are subdivided with post and barbed wire fencing
- Predominantly open farmland with occasional tall hedgerows forming fragmented enclosure
- Field boundaries delineated with some tall hedgerows, post and wire fencing and mature tree rows without hedgerows
- Narrow rural lanes connect dispersed roadside settlement and agricultural barns
- Dunton Park static caravan park occupies the south east corner of the character area
- Small area of mature Oak and Birch woodland north of the caravan park
- Church and hall complex at Dunton Hall are local landmarks
- Houses are predominantly 20th century with some Victorian gault brick buildings including the Old Rectory and Friern Manor

1. Do you have any comments on the suggested boundaries or name of the area?
2. Do you have any comments on the key characteristics identified for the area? (mark list above or add below)
3. Do you consider that there are any important distinctive features in the area? (eg key buildings, landmarks etc)
4. What are the important natural features of the area? (including, hydrology, geology & wildlife)
5. What are the important cultural/historic features of the area? (including, field patterns, people & places)
6. What are the main recreational and accessibility features of the area? Are there any local areas where recreation facilities and/or access to the countryside is particularly poor?
7. What are the important perceptual or aesthetic factors of the area (e.g. visual impact of development, tranquillity, noise)
8. What do you think have been the main changes in the landscape character area in recent years and what forces for change do you anticipate in the future?
9. Do you think new development could be accommodated in this area and what specific guidelines would you suggest to guide the management/enhancement and or development of the area?

Character Area 14 – Langdon Hills - Westley Heights

Key characteristics

- 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 Dunton Nature Reserve
- Irregular, curvilinear field patterns and former plotlands to the south east wrapping round the hillside at Westley Heights
- Extensive woodland cover, predominantly Oak with a mix of Sycamore, Ash, Field Maple, Hawthorn and Elm
- Higher ground allows some extensive views overlooking the Thames Estuary
- Isolated farmhouses and small groups of redeveloped housing on plotland sites
- Ecological designations cover the majority of the character area comprising large country parks and nature reserves
- Scattered small paddocks throughout the character area and medium sized arable fields to the south west on slopes
- B1007 runs through part of the area, elsewhere are a number of small winding tracks and lanes.
- Public rights of way run through and connect the country parks and nature reserves

1. Do you have any comments on the suggested boundaries or name of the area?
2. Do you have any comments on the key characteristics identified for the area? (mark list above or add below)
3. Do you consider that there are any important distinctive features in the area? (eg key buildings, landmarks etc)
4. What are the important natural features of the area? (including, hydrology, geology & wildlife)
5. What are the important cultural/historic features of the area? (including, field patterns, people & places)
6. What are the main recreational and accessibility features of the area? Are there any local areas where recreation facilities and/or access to the countryside is particularly poor?
7. What are the important perceptual or aesthetic factors of the area (e.g. visual impact of development, tranquillity, noise)
8. What do you think have been the main changes in the landscape character area in recent years and what forces for change do you anticipate in the future?
9. Do you think new development could be accommodated in this area and what specific guidelines would you suggest to guide the management/enhancement and or development of the area?

Character Area 15 – Langdon Hills - One Tree Hill

Key characteristics

- Plateau edge landform to the west with some steep slopes and wooded ridges to the east
- Medium sized rectilinear arable fields and pastures with mixed tall and clipped hedgerows
- Higher ground provides wide views over Thames estuary
- Dispersed roadside ribbon settlement of 20th century origin and some redeveloped plotland houses retaining grid-like structure
- A series of enclosed rectilinear meadows south of Lee Chapel South are proposed for development
- Some secondary woodland on former plotlands and mature Oaks and Poplars throughout golf course.
- Scattered intrusive commercial development in open locations
- All Saints Church in Vange is an important viewpoint and landmark from west

1. Do you have any comments on the suggested boundaries or name of the area?
2. Do you have any comments on the key characteristics identified for the area? (mark list above or add below)
3. Do you consider that there are any important distinctive features in the area? (eg key buildings, landmarks etc)
4. What are the important natural features of the area? (including, hydrology, geology & wildlife)
5. What are the important cultural/historic features of the area? (including, field patterns, people & places)
6. What are the main recreational and accessibility features of the area? Are there any local areas where recreation facilities and/or access to the countryside is particularly poor?
7. What are the important perceptual or aesthetic factors of the area (e.g. visual impact of development, tranquillity, noise)
8. What do you think have been the main changes in the landscape character area in recent years and what forces for change do you anticipate in the future?
9. Do you think new development could be accommodated in this area and what specific guidelines would you suggest to guide the management/enhancement and or development of the area?

**Appendix 3 - Summary of outcomes from Basildon Landscape Study
stakeholder workshop
6th February 2013**

North-east Focus Group

Facilitator(s): Joanna Ede (The Landscape Partnership)
Matthew Winslow (Basildon Borough Council)

Number of stakeholders: 5 (three from Noak Bridge Parish Council and two Councillors)

Main areas of discussion

LCA 05 Shotgate and North Wickford Urban Fringe

- Draft name, boundary and key characteristics description all agreed
- Wickford Memorial Park is highly valued and considered a very important public open space. It is well-used by a wide range of people for many different activities
- River Crouch Conservation Group plays an important role
- Connections between Shotgate and Wickford are poor (railway line forms a barrier)
- Straightening of River Crouch was carried out to stop flooding of Wickford town centre
- Website of the Wickford North Green Action Group may have photographs that can be used for the study.

Key actions: Note Wickford Memorial Park as being highly valued by local communities

LCA06 Ramsden Bellhouse and Wickford Settled Claylands

- Draft name, boundary and key characteristics description all agreed. (Agreement that it was right to include the plotland area on the south of the A129 and Ramsden Park Farm in the north, within the area)
- Additional important views identified into the area from high land to the north around Brock Hill and from Downham Church on Castledon Road
- Name for the plotlands area off Sugden Avenue not known

Key actions: Include additional views.

LCA07 Doeshill Farmlands

- Name of character area discussed. Doeshill not well-known locally as a name. Borwick Lane considered as an alternative but also not well known. Most well-known feature/name in the area was Great Bromfords but agreed that this related to only a small part of the area. Group agreed that Doeshill Farmlands was an appropriate name as the landform of Doeshill covered the whole area.
- Proposed amendment to the boundary to exclude Crays Hill school and Southlands avenue. The group felt that this area was part of Crays Hill and should therefore be within area 8.
- Discussion about the area of land south of the A132. It was agreed that it was right to include this within LCA07 (rather than as part of Nevendon).
- Draft description of key characteristics was agreed

Key actions: Amend boundary as proposed

LCA08 Crays Hill Settled Claylands

- Draft boundary line was discussed. Potential to include Noak Bridge nature reserve within the area but eventually agreed that this was part of the Noak Bridge urban area rather than LCA08.
- Proposed extension to the area to include school and Southlands Avenue as noted above. Agreed
- Important and highly valued views from A129 across the Crouch Valley particularly at the bend in the road north of the Shepherd and Dog pub. " Views across the Crouch Valley are fabulous"

- Crays Hill known locally by some as 'heart attack hill' due to its steepness. The bench is a much valued resting point.
- Area is not used much by walkers or residents from Noak Bridge. It is considered to be unsafe due to the large numbers of travellers from the Dale Farm site. Oak Lane is not considered as an important or valued through route. Potential to promote recreation
- Draft description of key characteristics was agreed

Key actions: Amend boundary as proposed. Note that area is perceived as being unsafe.

Comments on other areas

- Name of LCA13 considered inappropriate. The place name Dunton is considered locally to refer to the plotlands nature reserve area which is outside the area
- Upper Crouch Valley (area 09) is a highly valued local landscape. It is well used for recreation (PROW are very well used) and the views across the area from Noak Bridge and Crays Hill are highly valued
- Hollywood style 'Basildon' sign (and the adjacent clump of trees) is an important local landmark
- General concern about the prospect of any new development within the green belt in the borough

North-west Focus Group

Facilitator(s): Jonathan Billingsley (The Landscape Partnership)

Number of stakeholders: 4 (Two/Three Councillors and representatives from Billericay Society and Norsey Wood Society?)

Main areas of discussion

LCA 09 Upper Crouch Valley Farmlands

- Draft name, boundary and key characteristics description all agreed (Barleylands is another accepted term but only covers the central part of the area)
- Recreational uses are a key feature in central area at Barleylands including football, fishing, archery, children's farm and train. Also seasonal Countryside shows and Steam Rallies. Well-used by a wide range of people for many different activities including school parties. Craft village and large car parks
- River Crouch corridor a valued linear location and feature
- Views to elevated wooded ridge valued
- Open space/agriculture between Noak Hill and Noak Bridge/Basildon valued gap. Some low lying land near River Crouch seasonally floods.
- Isolated eyesores in prominent industrial units
- Landmark church at Crays Hill (*The church is well hidden by surrounding trees and not particularly visible in views so we felt shouldn't be highlighted as a landmark*)
- Some recent loss of hedges at Crays Hill Farm. Need to protect remaining hedges
- Promote new hedge planting in valley particularly where the character has been eroded to west and east. Some recent hedge planting has taken place last year

Key actions: Note that River Crouch is valued as a local feature. Add need for new hedge planting.

LCA10 East Billericay Wooded Sloping Farmland

- Draft name, boundary and key characteristics description all agreed.
- Fingers of woodland, nature reserves and agricultural land very valued as they reach into urban areas of Billericay and Great Burstead.
- Norsey Wood highly valued, including fine bluebell display, coppicing, archaeology and now with additional managed meadow to perimeter. BBC countryside manager and Friends group of volunteers. Site also used for community service activities for offenders- see as a positive thing
- Mill Meadow also highly valued with rare species, informal access, grazing and post mill stump, BBC countryside manager and Friends group of volunteers. Popular informal recreation area very close to town
- Elsewhere the network of tree lined tall hedges provide valuable wildlife corridors
- Should focus on continued management and protection of landscape and habitats.
- Some important views from high ground across Crouch valley to Langdon Hills

Key actions: Identify areas highly valued by local community. Identify view towards Langdon Hills.

LCA11 West Billericay Wooded Farmlands

- Draft name, boundary and key characteristics description all agreed.
- The relationship of countryside including where it comes close into the town is seen as particularly important to the setting

- Many views from within and on edge of Billericay urban area out to plateau and across the Crouch valley and to Langdon Hills. Noted as important visual links e.g. Festival Gardens , across school site near (A176/A129 junction) to west . Role of town on highest ground a key feature
- Presence of small scale paddocks and wildlife corridors an important feature
- Area to north includes a number of recreation facilities including Stock Brook Country Club (27 hole GC), Queens Park Country Park, Buckwyns Farm Stables
- Valued areas to south include Laindon Common Conservators, Golf Course (9 hole). Kennel Lane stables and Frith Wood
- Management should continue with more hedges to open areas

Key actions: Identify additional views. Identify areas particularly valued by local communities

LCA12 Burstead Sloping Farmland

- Draft name, boundary and key characteristics description all agreed.
- Little Burstead and Great Burstead Church and Botney Hill noted landmarks (*Botney Hill noted as marked landscape feature but not landmark*)
- Open dramatic sloping landscape valued with views from south up slope and towards Basildon and Ford Dunton to south – a lack of any detracting features important
- Woodland and landform to west of Basildon mark visual boundary to west
- Some Plotlands generally well hidden in vegetation
- The Grange Great Burstead – important historic landmark (*noted in descriptions as historic feature but not landmark due to it being well concealed by vegetation*)

Key actions: Include landmarks and views

South-east Focus Group

Facilitator(s): Nicole Gonzalez-Tarrio (The Landscape Partnership)

Number of stakeholders: 5 (three from Bowers Gifford Parish Council, one councillor officer and one policy planner from Castle Point)

Main areas of discussion

LCA 01- Bowers and Vange estuary marshlands

- Discussion about whether LCA01 and LCA02 should be combined as one landscape character area, both are managed by the RSPB and Essex County Council and have similar key characteristics
- Northern boundary of the LCA was agreed as it marks the higher land which was created by the glacial moraine
- Key characters were generally agreed. A key feature was the coastal grazing ground
- There are public rights of way which make the area accessible. In the future a new public footpath and cycle road will connect the area to the SSSI in Castle Point
- Other sensory characteristics: wilderness, flat, tranquil
- The area is managed by RSPB and Essex County Council and is part of one of the biggest nature reserves in England
- The RSPB recently discovered a Roman road on the east access to the site
- Dormouse has been seen at PROW by St Michaels Church

Key actions: identify additional sensory characteristics. Retain LCA01 and LCA02 as separate due to strong differences in landform and significance of landfilling activities

LCA 02- Pitsea Hall Island restored landforms

- Landscape character area 1 & 2 could be considered as one Landscape Character area (as mentioned above)
- Proposed name for combined LCA: North Thames Marshland
- Wat Tyler is not part of Landfill area but individual clay island that was initially higher than surrounding area
- Draft description of key characteristics agreed
- Key views were agreed and there are additional views to Kent and Langdon Ridge
- Area is of particular importance due to its protected species, will read as one large nature reserve once the RSPB obtains and restores the Veolia site
- Other sensory characteristics: wilderness, flat, tranquil

Key actions: include additional views to Kent and Langdon Ridge

LCA 03- Rushbottom Lane farmlands

- Bowers Gifford residents refer to this area as North Benfleet. Alternative name of North Benfleet Farmlands therefore suggested. Rushbottom Lane is not well known locally and refers to the area east of A130
- Proposed amendment to boundary; the group felt that the area north of the A127 was different in character as it is at a higher level. They also feel the A127 is a clear boundary between the North and South of the area. There are plans to increase The Wick Country Park south

- Area between Wickford and Basildon around Nevendon and Wick Country Park is an important area of green belt which maintains the separation between the two settlements. Key species in this area have been identified.
- Overall the area was considered of very high importance and a strategic part of greenbelt as it separates Castle Point from Basildon. The area is under pressure especially as Castle Point would like to expand their housing west of the A129
- Underpass wildlife
- Draft description of key characteristics were agreed
- Draft key views of the area were agreed. Additional important view from North Benfleet hall facing east
- Areas considered of particular importance; Harrow road, School lane and North Benfleet Hall and Methodist church
- Terminal moraine in south boundary causes end of this area and start of marshes

Key actions: Rename as Bowers Gifford and North Benfleet farmlands. Identify sub-area in description. Include additional views.

LCA 04- North Benfleet and Nevendon settled claylands

- Name of character area to include Bowers Gifford
- The group felt that the Nevendon area, locally referred to as Nevendon, was a separate character area. The A127 feels like a northern boundary due to poor connections between north and south. Locally, Nevendon is referred to as the area comprising Nevendon Road- and it would read better as a separate character area or part of Doeshill LCA.
- There are important local views from the end of the residential roads facing east onto the fields
- Generally agreed with the key descriptions. They felt the field boundaries were predominantly hedgerow and not rail and post
- Importance of this area to separate Basildon from Castle Point
- There are protected species in the area; great crested newts, bats, adders and Muntjac deer have been spotted near Rushley park. Rushley park has protected trees with TPO
- Description; quiet countryside between two main roads in plotland, relatively few houses, widely spread
- Discussion about the area of land south of the A132. It was agreed that it was right to include this within LCA07 (rather than as part of Nevendon)
- North Benfleet and Bradfield Farm are referred to in the Doomsday book
- Old lake has been infilled, water is now redirected and flooding the south area of Pond Lane. General concern about the water table and the new run-off created from new development
- Previous attempt to develop the area 50yrs ago; drains were installed but nothing else
- Development of 130houses has been proposed by Nottingham Council. There is currently a petitions to stop this and residents are trying to buy neighbouring fields to stop development
- No doctors, dentist and infrastructure in the area
- Informal footpath near Jackmans farm
- There is a possibility for controlled development to infill abandoned plots and houses and London Road, to be small scale, low density

Key actions: Describe Nevendon as a sub-area. Include additional views.

Comments on other areas

- Travellers using Nevendon area are illegal and have constructed large houses

- LCA07- Doeshill, contains an ancient woodland with 5no types of orchids including the butterfly orchid. The woodland is protected. There are lakes forming west of Old Nevendon Road.

South-west Focus Group

Facilitator(s): Isabel Jones (The Landscape Partnership)
Sarah Neill (Basildon Borough Council)

Number of stakeholders: 4 (Living landscapes, Basildon Council?)

Main areas of discussion

LCA14/15 Langdon Hills - Westley Heights/ One Tree Hill

- The group agreed with the key characteristics and understood reasons why we had split the two in terms of landform and land use and historical field patterns. But felt it is such a highly valued area it should be treated as a whole entity.
- As part of the 'Living Landscapes' there is continuity in flora/fauna, important views and recreation. Strong sense of place and tranquillity throughout both areas
- Dry Street (an old Drove) is an important feature to both sides of the Langdon hills and not a divider.
- Large networks of bridleways and public footpaths run throughout both and it is valued as a recreation facility by people on all sides (including beyond the district boundary).
- The names especially 'One Tree Hill' do not encompass the whole area - One Tree Hill is located in small area to the south and out of the district boundary
- The name 'Langdon Ridge' should be applied to areas 14 and 15 as a whole
- The group agreed with the negative landmarks identified
- They identified various important viewpoints including long distance views from the Dunton Plotlands nature reserve, Hall Wood and Westley heights and views from Watt Tyler looking towards the hills. Views extend out as far as the Olympic Park and Southend Pier
- Provided a photo looking across the meadows from fields behind the college at Lee Chapel South, also are to send us leaflets with information on Langdon Hills Living Landscapes
- They felt views from beyond the district boundary looking towards the character area were important and should be highlighted including views from Downham Church, Canvey Island, and Cranham looking east to Langdon Ridge
- Wanted to see the Langdon Reserve maintained as one living landscape regardless of district boundaries as the landscape character extends beyond. Importance to people of both Basildon, Thurrock and beyond. Wanted authorities to unite to provide management schemes.
- Traffic calming on Dry Street - important leisure route.
- More investment needed in the country parks - woodlands have been neglected, limited woodland management schemes in place
- Public access to the Langdon meadows - patients from hospital, growing schemes, use from community centre/college
- Infilling with houses on unused plotland sites

Key actions: Combine areas 14 and 15 into one LCA. Add views.

LCA13 Dunton Settled Claylands

- Agreed with key characteristics - Relatively flat, open farmlands with limited views out. Old Rectory and Dunton church historic features
- The railway line makes a logical boundary between the area and the Langdon Hills
- They felt the area was of less importance to other surrounding areas of Basildon

- Could potentially be a site for development (the groups interests lay heavily with the Langdon hills, limited associations with this area)