

CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES
environment landscape planning



Epping Forest District Council
Epping Forest Landscape Studies
Landscape Character Assessment



January 2010

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Approved

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Watkins', enclosed within a large, circular scribble.

Dominic Watkins

Position

Director

Date

21st January 2010

Revision

Final Report

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Preface

In April 2009, Epping Forest District Council commissioned Chris Blandford Associates (CBA) to undertake a Landscape Character Assessment of the District.

The Study provides a baseline inventory of the landscape character of the District. It also sets out recommendations for the application of the Study for consideration and action as appropriate by the Council. The need to protect and enhance landscape character is recognised by Government planning policy on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. To ensure that full account is given to landscape character in planning decisions, this report is recommended to the Council for use as an evidence base for informing the preparation of the Local Development Framework.

We are grateful for the advice and guidance provided by the Steering Group, namely:

- Chris Neilan – Landscape Officer and Arboriculturist, Epping Forest District Council,
- Ian White – Forward Planning Manager
- Paul Hewitt - Countryside Manager

The Consultant team comprised:

- Dominic Watkins
- Emma Clarke
- Sarah De Vos

Chris Blandford Associates
January 2010

Executive Summary

Background

In April 2009, Epping Forest District Council commissioned Chris Blandford Associates (CBA) to undertake a Landscape Character Assessment of the District at a scale of 1:25,000.

The aim of the study is to provide a comprehensive District-wide assessment of landscape character within the study area to inform land use planning and land management decisions. The Landscape Character Assessment will be specifically used as a technical evidence base to inform the Local Development Framework currently in preparation.

The overall aim of landscape planning, design and management should be to achieve 'sustainable landscapes' that are visually, ecologically and culturally as rich as possible to meet all of society's social, economic and environmental needs. A better understanding of landscapes provided by Landscape Character Assessment – their diversity, character and distinctiveness, evolution, sensitivity to change and their management needs – is essential to help to work towards this goal.

Methodology

The overall approach to the study is based on *Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland* (Countryside Agency/Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002), the latest published guidance, and takes into account current best practice. Landscape Character Assessment addresses both the relatively objective process of landscape characterisation, which involves identifying, mapping, classifying and describing 'landscape character', and the more subjective process of evaluating landscape character to inform planning and land management decisions. In summary, the main stages involved in the process were:

- Desk Study Research
- Field Survey
- Characterisation
- Evaluation
- Preparation of the Study Report.

Content of the Report

Section 1.0 sets out the context for the Study. It explains the background to the Study, its aims and objectives and highlights the importance of landscape character. It also describes the planning policy framework for the Study, and outlines the approach and process behind the assessment methodology.

Section 2.0 provides an overview of the Study Area. It describes the physical and historical influences on the landscape, and identifies the key forces for change affecting landscape character today. This section also provides an overview of Landscape Character Areas across the study area as a whole in their national and county context.

Section 3.0 of the report provides an overview of the Landscape Character of the study area and contains the detailed 'profiles' of Landscape Character Areas within Epping District.

Section 4.0 sets out the consultants' recommendations to Epping Forest District Council for its consideration and action as appropriate. Recommendations are provided for the application of the Landscape Character Assessment including its use in relation to informing Local Development Framework policies for protecting and enhancing landscape character, and in providing a baseline and framework for monitoring landscape change. Recommendations for further work required to enhance the evidence base on the landscape and settlement character of the study area are also included.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and study area

1.1.1 In April 2009, Epping Forest District Council commissioned Chris Blandford Associates (CBA) to undertake two Landscape Studies of the District to enable a better understanding of its landscapes and provide an evidence base for informing policies within the forthcoming Local Development Framework (LDF). The studies comprise two inputs:

- A district-wide Landscape Character Assessment (this report); and
- A Settlement-edge Landscape Sensitivity Assessment.

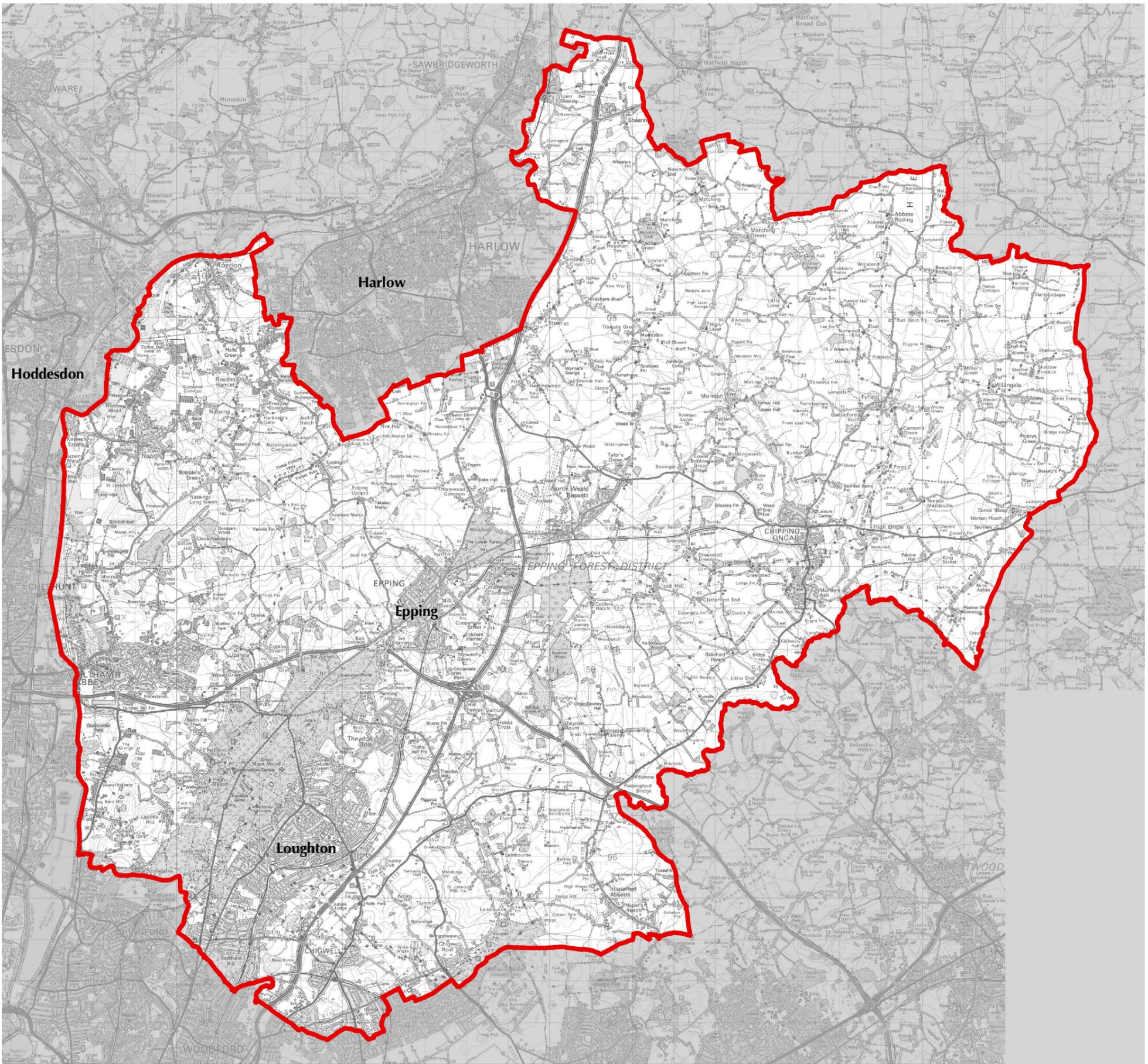
1.1.2 The District of Epping Forest abuts the north-eastern edge of London and is located in the south-west corner of the County of Essex (see **Figure 1.1**). It contains the towns of Loughton/Buckhurst Hill, Waltham Abbey, Chigwell, Epping and Chipping Ongar, together with several villages, the largest of which are Theydon Bois, North Weald Bassett, Roydon and Nazeing. Many of the towns and villages are historic, but those close to London have grown rapidly as commuter towns. This was particularly in connection with the coming of what is now the Central Line of the London Underground.

1.1.3 The District is also situated in close proximity to the national motorway network. The M11 runs north-south almost through the centre of the District with local road connections at Hastingwood (just south of Harlow) and Loughton (exit only north-bound, enter only south-bound). The M25 crosses the District east-west with a local road junction at Waltham Abbey and an interchange with the M11. The Central Line of the London Underground has stations at Buckhurst Hill, Loughton, Debden, Chigwell, Grange Hill, Theydon Bois and Epping. Roydon is the only national rail station in the District - on the line between London Liverpool Street and Cambridge/Stansted.

1.1.4 This district-wide Landscape Character Assessment characterises all the rural area up to and including the urban edge. The study area borders Uttlesford District to the north, Chelmsford Borough to the east, Brentwood Borough to the south-east and Harlow to the north-west (all within Essex County). To the north and west, the study area abuts East Hertfordshire District and Broxbourne Borough (both within Hertfordshire) and to the south, Waltham Forest, Havering, Enfield and Redbridge (within Greater London).

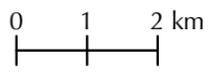
1.2 Study Aims and Objectives

1.2.1 The aim of the Study is to provide a comprehensive District-wide assessment of landscape character within the study area to inform land use planning and land management decisions.



KEY

 Study Area



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The Landscape Character Assessment will be specifically used to inform policy within the Epping Forest District Local Development Framework, which is currently being prepared by the Council.

1.2.2 The key objectives of the Study are to:

- Provide a baseline inventory and description of landscape character by Type and Area at a scale of 1:25,000.
- Identify key issues, sensitivities to change and management strategy, objectives/guidelines for each Character Area.
- Ensure that Landscape Character Types and Areas join up seamlessly across administrative boundaries, including those of existing character assessment studies carried out by neighbouring authorities.

1.3 The Importance of Landscape Character

1.3.1 The UK Government is a signatory to the European Landscape Convention. The Convention aims to encourage public authorities within member states to adopt policies and measures for the protection, management and planning of all landscapes, whether outstanding or ordinary, that determine the quality of people's living environment. It specifically encourages local authorities to introduce exemplary and long lasting policies or measures to protect, manage and plan landscapes.

1.3.2 The European Landscape Convention defines landscape as:

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

1.3.3 The term landscape is typically synonymous with the countryside; however, landscape is everywhere and includes rural landscapes, urban landscapes/townscapes, urban fringe landscapes, and coastal landscapes/seascapes.

1.3.4 The European Landscape Convention defines 'landscape character' as:

'A distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular type of landscape.'

1.3.5 In England and Scotland, Landscape Character Assessment is a tool that allows landscape character to be understood, explained and described in a transparent and robust way. It does this by mapping and describing the variations in physical, natural and cultural attributes and

experiential characteristics that make one area distinctive from another at a range of spatial scales. Landscape Character Assessment also considers how landscapes have changed over time, and acknowledges the influences that human activities and the impacts of economic development have in shaping and changing landscapes.

- 1.3.6 The overall aim of landscape planning, design and management should be to achieve sustainable landscapes that are visually, ecologically and culturally as rich as possible to meet all of society's social, economic and environmental needs. A better understanding of landscapes provided by Landscape Character Assessments – their diversity, character and distinctiveness, evolution, sensitivity to change and their management needs – is essential to help to work towards this goal, and essential to effective spatial planning.

1.4 Planning Policy Framework

Planning Policy Guidance

- 1.4.1 National Planning Policy relating to landscape character in rural areas is primarily addressed in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7, but also referred to in other contexts in PPS1, PPS12 and PPS15.

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development

- 1.4.2 PPS1 sets out the Government's overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. It states that one of the Government's objectives for planning is that it should facilitate and promote sustainable urban and rural development by protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment and the quality and character of the countryside (paragraph 5). In its key principles, PPS1 states that 'a spatial planning approach should be at the heart of planning for sustainable development' (paragraph 13.iii) and 'design which fails to take the opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area should not be accepted' (paragraph 13.iv). It goes on to say that, when preparing development plans, 'planning authorities should seek to enhance as well as protect biodiversity, natural habitats, the historic environment and landscape and townscape character' (paragraph 27). PPS1 also requires new design to be integrated into the existing urban form and natural and built environments (paragraph 35).

Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

- 1.4.3 Landscape Character Assessment, along with Village or Town Design Statements and Village or Parish Plans, are recommended by PPS7 as tools to assist local authorities in the preparation of

policies and guidance that encourage good quality design throughout rural areas (paragraph 13). Landscape Character Assessment is also recommended in PPS7 as a tool for creating carefully drafted criteria-based policies in Local Development Documents to protect valued landscapes outside nationally designated areas without the need for rigid local designations, which may restrict sustainable development and the economic vitality of rural areas. PPS7 advises that local landscape designations should only be maintained or, exceptionally, extended, where it can be clearly shown that criteria-based policies cannot provide the necessary protection (paragraphs 24 and 25).

Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning

- 1.4.4 PPS 12 provides guidance on the structure and delivery of the new Spatial Planning system and explains the importance of Spatial Planning in creating strong, safe and prosperous communities. It describes Spatial Planning as a process of place shaping and delivery. It emphasises the need for evidence based policies and plans that have regard to the sense of local distinctiveness and community derived objectives, set within the framework of national policy and regional strategies. Spatial planning provides a means of safeguarding an area's environmental assets, both for their intrinsic value and for the contribution they make to social and economic well being. The PPS makes specific mention of the roles that Spatial Planning has to play in the proper provision of green infrastructure and in the conservation and enhancement of the landscape.
- 1.4.5 PPS12 advises that Local Development Frameworks must be based on sound evidence. The vision expressed in Core Strategies should be in conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and informed by an analysis of the characteristics of the area and its constituent parts, and the key issues and challenges facing them. The Core Strategy should be supported by evidence of what physical, social and green infrastructure is needed to enable development in the area. It is evident in this PPS that a thorough understanding of local landscape and local green infrastructure requirements is key to the process of effective Spatial Planning.

Draft Planning Policy Statement 15: Planning for the Historic Environment

- 1.4.6 The Draft version of PPS 15 notes that planning can identify and define the interest and character that the historic environment brings to an area and conserve that value. It also recognises that an area's heritage can also provide a reference point for the design of new development in sensitive locations. It also highlights the importance of integrating conservation of heritage assets into the wider planning context and notes that it is particularly important to appreciate and capitalise on the potential that such assets have to contribute to

place-shaping, through their distinctive character and inspiration for the design of further development.

- 1.4.7 The historic dimension of the District’s landscape has been assessed by Essex Country Council in its Historic Landscape Classification (HLC), as part of the East of England Regional Project. The HLC records different forms of field patterns, their historic origin and change within the landscape over time. The report (which is currently in preparation) and its associated data have been used to aid understanding and assessment of the present day landscape within the District.

Regional Planning Policy

The Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England – The East of England Plan

- 1.4.8 The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the East of England, the East of England Plan, was published in May 2008 and sets out planning policy and guidance specific to the East of England region, which includes Epping Forest District, until 2021. The RSS is based on the principles of sustainable development, and specifically identifies the need to protect and enhance the distinctiveness of the Region’s natural environment (including landscape) as a key consideration in managing the spatial development of the East of England. RSS Policy ENV2 – Landscape Conservation, states:

‘Planning authorities and other agencies should recognise and aim to protect and enhance the diversity and local distinctiveness of the National Character Areas identified by:

- *Developing area-wide strategies, based on Landscape Character Assessments, setting long-term goals for landscape change, and giving priority to those areas subject to most growth and change;*
- *Developing criteria-based policies, informed by the area-wide strategies and Landscape Character Assessments, to ensure all development respects and enhances local landscape character; and*
- *Securing mitigation measures where, in exceptional circumstances, damage to local landscape character is unavoidable’.*

- 1.4.9 The RSS recognises that the landscapes, townscapes and seascapes of the East of England are defining features of the region and provide an important setting for settlements and contribute to local distinctiveness and sense of place. The Landscape Character Assessment approach is supported by the RSS as a basis for assessing and managing the impacts of development on the landscape and as a tool for promoting high quality development which enhances local landscape character and distinctiveness.

Local Planning Policy

- 1.4.10 The Epping Forest Local Plan (1998) and subsequent adopted alterations (2006)¹ provide the framework for guiding, controlling and bringing forward development in the District. Under the new system set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, this Local Plan will eventually be replaced by a series of Local Development Documents which will collectively comprise the Local Development Framework (LDF). When the process of change is complete, the full LDF and its Development Plan Documents (DPDs) for the District will conform to the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England (RSS). LDF policies should not repeat National or Regional policies.
- 1.4.11 The Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS), which sets a 3 year timetable for the preparation of DPDs, is currently out of date, and it is hoped that a new LDS will be adopted early in 2010.
- 1.4.12 The adopted Local Plan contains a number of policies concerned with the protection, conservation and enhancement of aspects of the landscape. The Plan expresses a strong commitment to the conservation of the District's countryside. The conservation and enhancement of landscape character is specifically addressed in Policy LL1 – Rural Landscape, which states:

Policy LL1 – Rural Landscape

- 1.4.13 The Council will continue to act to:
- (i) Conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the countryside; and
 - (ii) Encourage the considerate use and enjoyment of the countryside by the public.
- Subject to specific circumstances, particular attention will be paid to:
- (a) the needs of agriculture, woodland planting and management, and other habitat and wildlife conservation;
 - (b) the provision of facilities for public access and informal recreation and to enable quiet enjoyment;
 - (c) the protection of historic features and their settings; and
 - (d) the achievement and conservation of visually attractive landscapes'.
- 1.4.14 The following subject or place specific Local Plan policies are also relevant to the protection, conservation, restoration and/or enhancement of aspects of landscape character, quality and distinctiveness.

¹ Combined policies of Epping Forest District Local Plan (1998) and alterations (2006) Published 2008

‘Policy CP2 – Protecting the quality of the Rural and Built Environment:

The quality of the rural and built environment will be maintained, conserved and improved by:

- (i) Sustaining and enhancing the rural environment, including conserving countryside character, in particular its landscape, wildlife and heritage qualities, and protecting countryside for its own sake.*
- (v) Preserving and enhancing the biodiversity and networks of natural habitats for the area, including river and wildlife corridors and other green chains.*

Policy HC2 – Ancient Landscapes:

The Council will not grant planning permission for development which could adversely affect the nature and physical appearance of ancient landscapes (identified as such on the Proposals Map).

Policy HC4 – Protected Lanes, Commons and Village Greens:

The Council will not grant planning permission for any development which would damage or be detrimental to the historic or landscape character of protected lanes (identified as such on the Proposals Map), commons or village greens.

Policy HC5 – Epping Forest:

The Council will not grant planning permission for any development or use which could prejudice the historic nature and wildlife value of Epping Forest (identified as such on the Proposals Map) or its function as open space for the purposes of public enjoyment.

Policy LL2 – Inappropriate Rural Development:

The Council will not grant planning permission for development in the countryside unless it is satisfied that the proposal will:

- (i) Respect the character of the landscape; and/or*
- (ii) Enhance the appearance of the landscape; and;*
- (iii) Where appropriate, involve the management of part or all of the remainder of the site to enhance its contribution to the landscape.*

Policy LL10 – Adequacy of provision for landscape retention:

The Council will refuse to grant planning permission for provision of any development which it considers makes inadequate provision for the retention of:

- (i) Trees; or*
- (ii) Natural features, particularly wildlife habitats such as woodlands, hedgerows, ponds and watercourses, or;*
- (iii) Man-made features of historical, archaeological or landscape significance’.*

1.5 Approach and Methodology

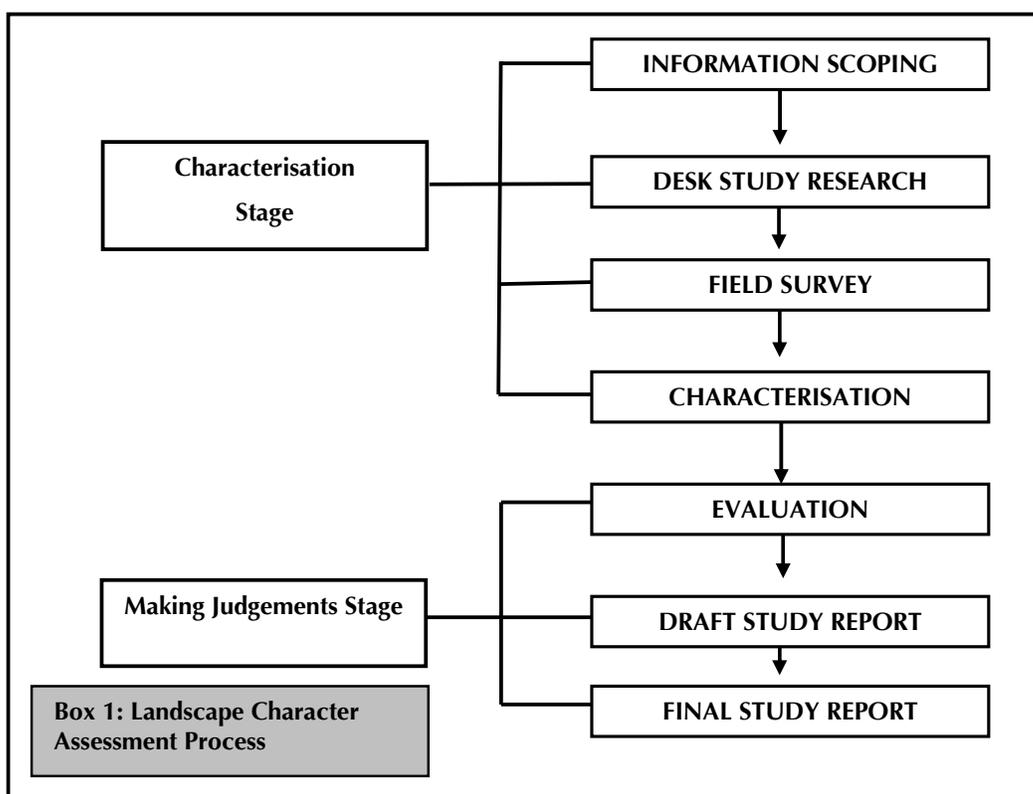
- 1.5.1 The overall approach of undertaking the Landscape Character Assessment is based on the latest published guidance by the Countryside Agency², taking into account current best practice. Landscape Character Assessment addresses both the relatively objective process of landscape

² Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland (Countryside Agency/Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002).

characterisation, which involves identifying, mapping, classifying and describing 'landscape character', and the more subjective process of evaluating landscape character to inform planning and land management decisions.

1.5.2 In 2006, Chris Blandford Associates carried out a series of Landscape Character Assessments within Essex for Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Local Authority Areas. In liaison with the Steering Group, it was agreed to carry forward a similar approach for the Epping Forest District Landscape Character Assessment in order to ensure consistency of landscape classifications, descriptions and guidance between the District-level assessments within Essex.

1.5.3 The study process is illustrated in **Box 1**, and described below.



Information Scoping

1.5.4 This preliminary stage involved the following main tasks:

- Identification and review of existing Landscape Character Assessments covering Epping District and adjoining areas;

- Collection and collation of landscape character information for incorporation into the Epping District Landscape Character Assessment.

Desk Study Research

- 1.5.5 This stage involved desk-based research to identify physical and historical factors that have influenced the shape and use of the landscape. This work drew on a variety of documents and maps that describe the physical geography and cultural history of the study area (see **Appendix B** for details). The desk research also identified forces for change affecting the character of the landscape within the Study Area.
- 1.5.6 In summary, the desk work involved:
- A review of existing national, county and local Landscape Character Assessments relating to the Study Area, including the National Character Areas (Natural England); Essex Landscape Character Assessment and existing 'district-level' assessments for neighbouring areas in Essex and Hertfordshire;
 - Production and analysis of map overlays of landform, drainage, vegetation, historic landscape character data and nature conservation designations;
 - Analysis of aerial photographs;
 - Identification of draft Landscape Character Types and Areas.
- 1.5.7 In recognition of the important contribution that historic patterns and features make to the character of the current landscape in this part of Essex, information from the Essex Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) Study dataset was incorporated into the Landscape Character Assessment (see **Appendix C** for details of the methodology used).

Field Survey

- 1.5.8 Field surveys were undertaken between April and June 2009. The aim of the surveys was to undertake a visual analysis of how different features and elements combined to create distinctive patterns in the landscape. The surveys were undertaken from key viewpoints within each draft Landscape Character Area by a team of field survey assessors. The checklist included:
- Landform;
 - Rivers/drainage;
 - Land cover;
 - Field pattern and field boundaries;
 - Communication routes;
 - Settlement form/pattern;

- Building styles;
- Scale;
- Texture;
- Enclosure;
- Stimuli;
- Sense of tranquillity;
- Movement;
- View types and composition;
- Landmarks.

1.5.9 The survey information (including photographs) was used to (i) inform the descriptions of landscape character and (ii) to test and refine the draft Landscape Character Area boundaries.

Characterisation

1.5.10 The characterisation stage involved a combination of the desk study research and field survey analysis in order to identify and map generic Landscape Character Types and geographically unique Landscape Character Areas at 1:25,000 scale (see **Section 3.0** for details).

1.5.11 For each generic Landscape Character Type, its boundaries were mapped and its key characteristics described. For each unique Landscape Character Area, its boundaries were mapped and the following characterisation information was recorded:

- Key Characteristics
- Overall Character Description
- Visual Characteristics
- Historic Land Use
- Ecological Features

Evaluation

1.5.12 At this stage, Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives were defined for each Landscape Character Type and the following judgements were made about each Landscape Character Area:

- Key Planning and Land Management Issues;
- Sensitivities to Change;
- Suggested Land Management Guidelines.

Evaluation of Landscape Sensitivity

- 1.5.13 The methodology for evaluating the intrinsic sensitivities of each Landscape Character Area to change is based on the criteria for judging sensitivity set out within an accompanying paper to the 'Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland³', taking into account current best practice.
- 1.5.14 It should be noted that the evaluation is based on the relatively broad-brush analysis undertaken at 1:25,000 scale for this Study. The degree of sensitivity is not absolute. It is likely to vary according to the nature of change under consideration, and is therefore only indicative. This evaluation should be read in conjunction with the more strategic evaluation of landscape sensitivity set out in the Essex Landscape Character Assessment⁴.
- 1.5.15 The criteria used to evaluate the relative sensitivities of each Landscape Character Area are defined in Box 2.

Intrinsic Landscape Qualities

The number and contribution of positive visual qualities/characteristics to landscape value/sense of place.

Biodiversity Value

The contribution of positive ecological elements or features to landscape value/sense of place.

Visual Characteristics (Intervisibility and Visual Prominence)

The degree to which an area is widely visible from, and positively influences the character of, surrounding areas.

Historic Integrity

The contribution of positive visible historic elements within the area, taking into account the intactness and integrity of historic landscape patterns and the presence of valued historic features within the area.

Re-creatability

The degree to which the intrinsic landscape qualities, biodiversity value and historic integrity of an area can be re-created if eroded or lost.

Box 2: Landscape Sensitivity Evaluation Criteria

³ Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland: Topic Paper 6 (Countryside Agency/Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002).

⁴ Essex County Council and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, July 2002.

Landscape Strategy Objectives and Guidelines

- 1.5.16 This stage also involved identifying proposed broad strategy objectives and suggested guidelines for each Landscape Character Type. Taking into account the condition and sensitivities of the constituent Landscape Character Area, one or more of the following strategy objectives was identified:
- **Conserve** – seek to protect and enhance positive features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.
 - **Enhance** – seek to improve the integrity of the landscape and reinforce its character, by introducing new elements where distinctive features or characteristics are absent.
 - **Restore** – seek to reinforce and/or reinstate historic landscape patterns and features that contribute to sense of place and time depth, by repairing distinctive elements that have been lost or degraded.
- 1.5.17 The sensitivity analysis, together with the proposed strategy objectives and suggested guidelines for each Landscape Character Area can be used to inform:
- The identification of spatial development options within the District’s Local Development Framework.
 - Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment of Local Development Framework site allocations.
 - The emphasis of landscape issues that may need to be considered in greater detail in relation to development control decisions for major schemes.
 - The need to consider landscape issues in greater detail in relation to criteria-based landscape protection and enhancement policies within Local Development Frameworks.

1.6 Structure of the Report

- 1.6.1 The study report is structured as follows:
- 1.6.2 **Section 1.0** sets out the context for the Study. It explains the background to the Study, its aims and objectives, and highlights the importance of landscape character. It also describes the planning policy framework for the Study, and outlines the approach and process behind the assessment methodology.
- 1.6.3 **Section 2.0** provides an overview of the Study Area. It describes the physical and historical influences on the landscape, and identifies the key forces for changes affecting landscape character today. This section also provides an overview of landscape character across the study area as a whole in its national and county context. The descriptions of individual

Landscape Character Areas in Section 3.0 should be read in conjunction with this information to ensure that the contextual relationship within the wider landscape is understood.

- 1.6.4 **Section 3.0** of the report provides the detailed ‘profiles’ of Landscape Character Types and Areas within Epping Forest District. The profiles are structured as follows:

Landscape Character Types

- Location and boundaries
- Key Characteristics
- Landscape Character Areas
- Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

Landscape Character Areas

- Location and boundaries of character area
- Photograph
- Key Characteristics
- Overall Character Description
- Visual Characteristics
- Historic Land Use
- Ecological Features
- Key planning and land management issues
- Sensitivities to change
- Suggested landscape planning guidelines
- Suggested landscape management guidelines

- 1.6.5 **Section 4.0** sets out the consultants’ recommendations to Epping Forest District Council for their consideration and action as appropriate. Recommendations are provided for the application of the Landscape Character Assessment including its use in relation to informing Local Development Framework policies for protecting and enhancing landscape character, and in providing a baseline and framework for monitoring landscape change. Recommendations for further work required to enhance the evidence base on the landscape and settlement character of the study area are also included.

2.0 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY AREA

2.1 General

2.1.1 This section provides an overview of the Study Area. It describes the physical and historical influences on the landscape, and identifies key forces for change affecting landscape character today. This section also provides an overview of landscape character across the study area as a whole in its national and county context.

2.2 Physical Influences on the Shaping of the Landscape

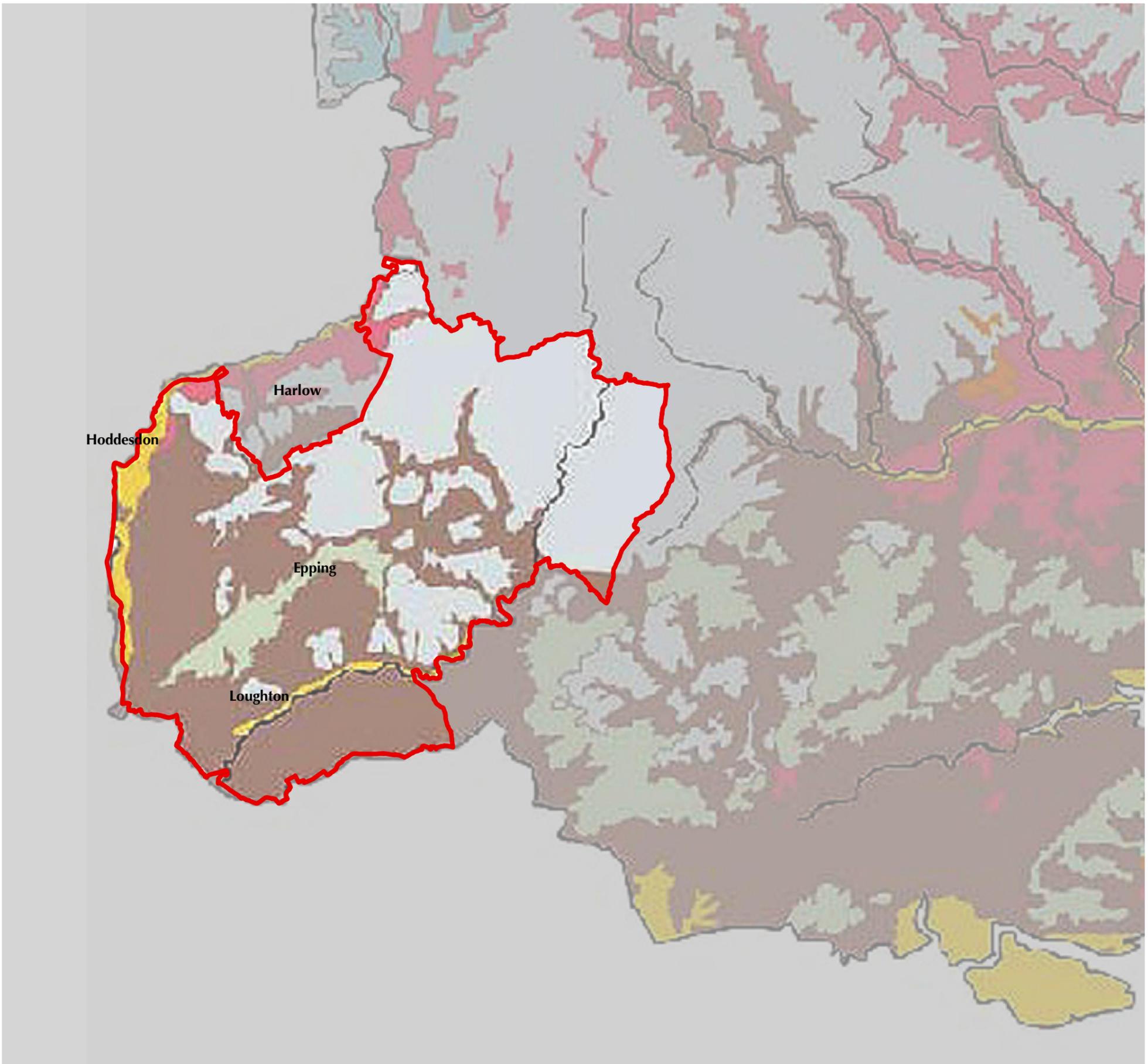
2.2.1 The landscape within the study area has evolved as a result of an interaction of the physical structure of the landscape and the vegetation and land uses that cover it. To understand what makes a place distinctive, it is useful to identify the key physical influences that have shaped the landscape over time.

Geology, Landform and Drainage

2.2.2 The oldest rocks within the study area were laid down between 440-360 million years ago. These mainly consist of hard, slaty shales, mudstones and sandstones. Overlying this base is a number of different geological layers, formed between 135 million years ago and the present, which lead up to and include the present surface geology. The basic stratigraphy of this geology is as follows:

- Brick Earth Quaternary Period (1.8 million years ago to present day)
- Lowestoft Till Tertiary Period (66-1.8 million years ago)
- Thanet Sand Formation Tertiary Period (66-1.8 million years ago)
- Bullhead Bed Cretaceous Period (135-65 million years ago)
- Bagshot Sand Cretaceous Period (135-65 million years ago)
- Claygate Beds Cretaceous Period (135-65 million years ago)
- London Clay Cretaceous Period (135-65 million years ago)
- Reading Beds Cretaceous Period (135-65 million years ago)
- Upper Chalk Cretaceous Period (135-65 million years ago)
- Upper Greensand Cretaceous Period (135-65 million years ago)
- Gault Clay Cretaceous Period (135-65 million years ago)

2.2.3 The surface geology of the study area (shown on **Figure 2.1**) overlies an exposed layer of **London Clay** interspersed with **Claygate Beds**. The Surface geology is composed of **clays, silts** and **sands** with scattered boulders (erratics) known collectively as boulder clay. This originally formed a plateau that has been slowly dissected by the formation of rivers, which is particularly



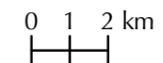
KEY



Surface Geology

- Alluvial Deposits
- Sands and Gravels
- Brickearths and Loams
- Glacial Till
- Claygate and Bagshot Beds
- London Clay
- Lambeth Group
- Chalk

Study Area



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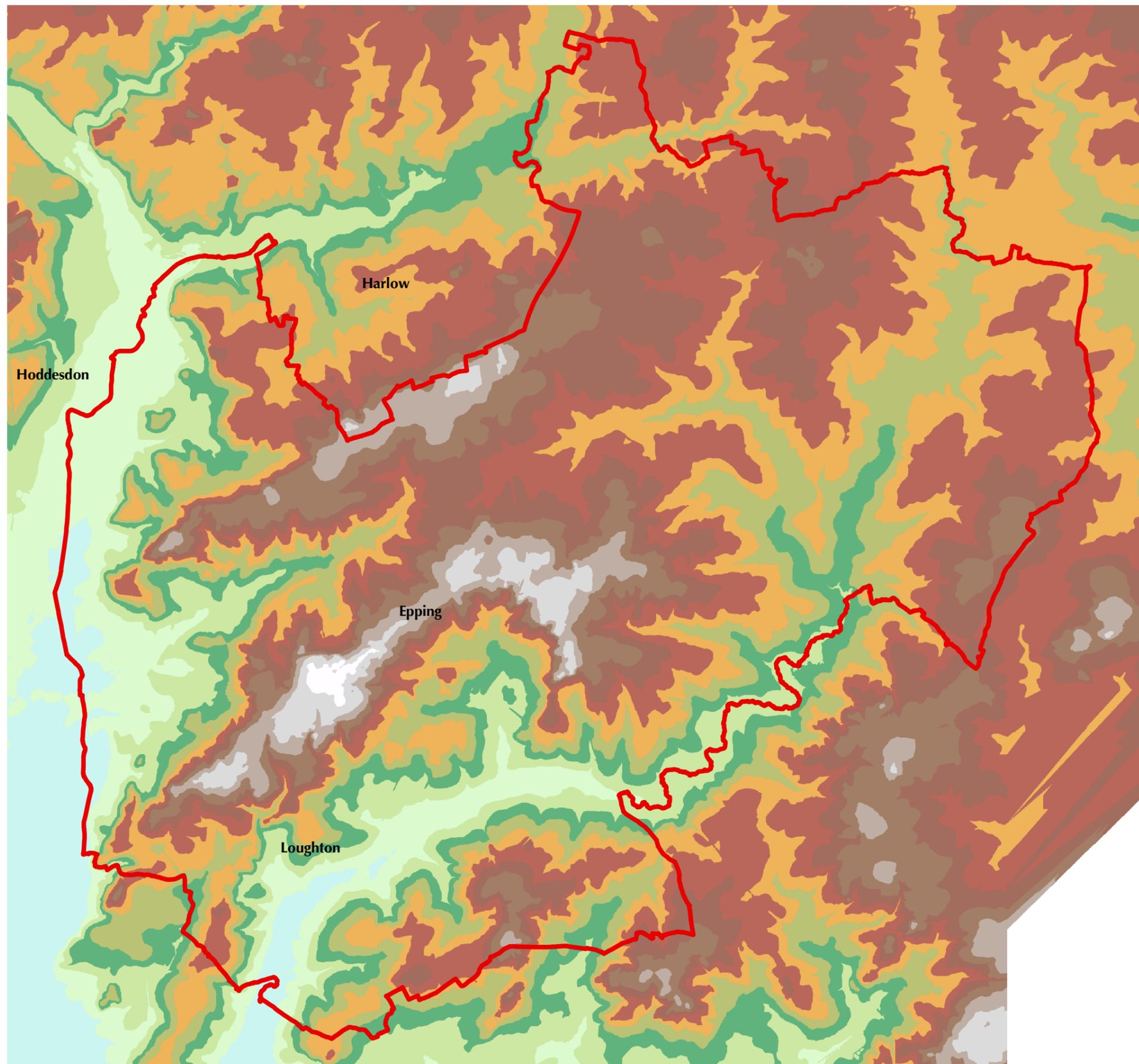
visible within the north-east of the Study Area. The thick, chalky boulder clays were deposited by the Anglian ice sheet over the series of terraces (Kesgrave sands and gravels) left by earlier courses of the River Thames. On the steeper valley sides, especially to the east of the River Lea, the drift geology has been entirely eroded away to expose London Clay. The rivers and their valleys lie on **alluvium** composed of **clay, silt, sand and gravel**; products of fluvial erosion of the Kesgrave formation and Lowestoft Till deposited along the river floor and its surrounding floodplain. Sand and gravel are found adjacent to the alluvium along the outer extents of the valley floor. However the higher, smaller tributaries have exposed head and glaciofluvial deposits.

2.2.4 The London Clay is a dark, bluish-grey clay which is generally brown on exposure and cracks in dry weather. It can be baked to form red bricks and tiles and has been extensively dug for this purpose, particularly at Loughton and south of Epping. The layers of sand and clay from the Claygate Beds have also been used for brick-making within the Study Area.

2.2.5 The highest land within the study area lies to the south of Harlow (see **Figure 2.2**), along a ridge which rises to 110 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) and to the northwest of Loughton (where land rises to 100 metres and encompasses the Epping Forest Ridge). The study area comprises a low, gently undulating landscape which is dissected by two major river valleys; the Lea, running north-across the western edge of the area, and the Roding, running northeast to southwest across the eastern edge of the area. The floodplains of both rivers are generally flat and wide, encompassing the floors of the two river valleys. In addition to this, the corridor of the River Stort meanders to the north of the Study Area, and feeds into the River Lea to the west of Harlow. A number of smaller tributary valleys radiate out from the two main valleys, dividing the surrounding hills and ridges. The River Lea originally defined the western edge of the Study Area, however, the engineered Lea navigation and the extensive post-mineral extraction water bodies and wetlands now dominate the character of these areas. The Old River Lea diverges from the uniform and engineered Lea Navigation canal at King's Weir. As the River Lea flows south-westwards, it becomes a broad, artificial, navigable channel.

Landcover and Ecological Character

2.2.6 The rural landscape of the study area is predominantly used for arable or improved pasture, particularly on the flat or gently undulating land. The rich soils are intensively cultivated and large cereal fields are a feature of much of the Study Area. There are significant areas of remaining semi-natural habitat that make an important contribution to the area's distinctive character. The presence and distribution of these habitats is strongly influenced by geology and landform, and include woodland, lowland heathland and freshwater and open water habitats. Parts of the Lea Valley are designated as a Ramsar site and Special Protection Area



KEY

Study Area

Elevation (mAOD)

High: 130

Low: 10

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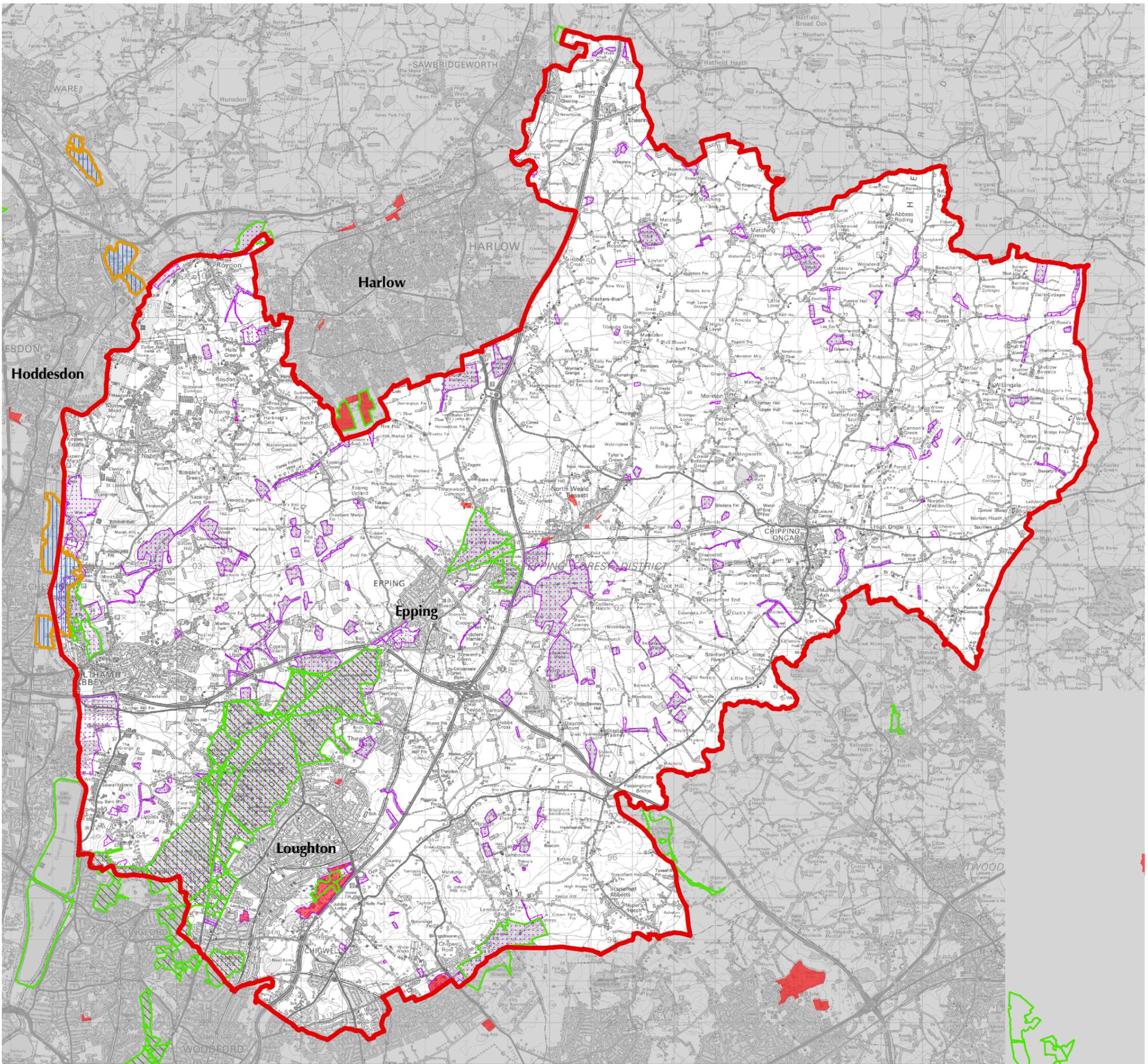
(SPA), whilst Epping Forest is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). There are nine Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) either wholly or partly within the District and nine Local Nature Reserves (LNR). The distribution of these areas, which are designated for their nature conservation value, are shown on **Figure 2.3** and described below in relation to key habitat types.

Woodland

- 2.2.7 The Study Area encompasses several large areas of woodland with a pollarded character (including Epping Forest and the remnants of Hainault Forest). Woodland pollards and hedgerow pollards are key landscape features. The hedgerow pollards and woodland edge pollards also provide key indicators of the age of field systems. Many areas of the District have significant collections of veteran pollards in the hedgerows, indicating the presence of ancient field systems. The most frequently pollarded trees are hornbeam, beech, sessile oak and pedunculate oak. Historically, many of these trees were pollarded in association with wood pasture, as boundary markers in fields and for cane production for withy beds. The habitat matrix of dead and decaying wood associated with this process provides damp conditions for lichens, mosses and fungi.
- 2.2.8 Patches of ancient woodland (much of which has been coppiced since medieval times or earlier) are scattered throughout the study area and are often dominated by sessile and pedunculate oak and hornbeam, with secondary colonisation by birch. An example of ancient coppiced bluebell woods is located to the south of Abridge. Ash, field maple and yew are also frequent, where more base-rich conditions occur. Larger areas of ancient woodland are situated at Galleyhill and Deepark Woods (to the south of Lower Nazeing), Wintry Wood (to the northeast of Epping) and within Epping Forest (to the southwest of Epping). In addition to ancient woodland, ancient hedgerows and field boundaries are a dominant feature within much of the Study Area. Veteran trees (often within ancient woodland) are also a key feature of the landscape of the Study Area. In addition, there is a nationally important collection of Black Poplars in the Roydon area.
- 2.2.9 Areas of other woodland (predominantly mixed, deciduous) are located to the immediate north-west of Loughton, along the Epping Forest ridge (which forms one of the most dominant woodlands within the District) and within Hainault Forest to the east of Chigwell Row.

Lowland Heathland

- 2.2.10 The only substantial area of remaining lowland heath within the study area is located to the northwest of Theydon Bois, within Epping Forest (between Epping Thicks and Jack's Hill). This



KEY

-  Special Areas of Conservation
-  Special Protection Areas
-  Ramsar Sites
-  Sites of Special Scientific Interest
-  Local Nature Reserves
-  County Wildlife Sites

 Study Area

0 1 2 km

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habitat encompasses a patchwork of dwarf shrubs, including ling heather; bell heather, cross-leaved heath, bilberry and gorse. Other remnant patches are located at Norton Heath (close to the A414), east of High Ongar and at Chigwell Row. These areas would once have formed part of a wider expanse of linked heathland, extending across to the east of Essex at Danbury and Tiptree. After the Bronze Age, large expanses of heathland were subjected to agricultural reclamation and abandonment, particularly at the margins of larger sites.

Freshwater and Open Water habitats

2.2.11 A complex of rivers and streams flow across the Study Area, several of which have been modified for flood alleviation or drainage. The rivers support a varied aquatic and emergent flora and several scarce species. Within river valleys, neutral grasslands, running water, wet grassland, valley floodplains, floodplain woodlands, grazing marsh, fens, rush pasture, swamp and valley mires provide key habitats for plants and animals.

2.2.12 In addition, the networks of flooded gravel pits along the Lea Valley are significant landscape features, which provide key habitats for bird and waterfowl population. The corridors of the Lea, Stort and Roding rivers are also key features within the landscape. Most natural bodies of open water in the study area are eutrophic (rich in nutrients) or mesotrophic/eutrophic (medium-rich in nutrients). Small ponds and lakes are also abundant.

2.3 Historical Influences on the Landscape

2.3.1 This section provides a brief overview of the historical influences on landscape character within the study area and identifies key factors that have moulded the development of the landscape through time:

Settlement of the Landscape

2.3.2 The present day landscape within the study area is a result of episodes of settlement, abandonment and re-use throughout history. The settlement pattern of the study area has its earliest origins in the **prehistoric period**. The valleys of the Lea and Stort contain a wide range of evidence for **Mesolithic** (c. 10,000 to c. 4,500BC) occupation. During the **Neolithic** (4500-2300 BC), the period when farming was first introduced, numerous artefact scatters represent widespread settlement, whilst a Causewayed Enclosure - a major monument of earth and timber, was built at Matching Green. Many finds of metalwork along the Lea and Stort Valleys (dating from the **Bronze Age** (2300-700BC)) provide indications of the dense settlement focused on these valleys and perhaps the first tangible evidence of early transport corridors across the District. In the **Iron Age** (700BC-AD43), the strategic significance of this corridor is

marked by Ambresbury Banks and Loughton Camp hillforts – a most unusual occurrence in the East of England. By this time, a landscape of great antiquity and complexity had been created, which influenced the way in which successive generations understood and used their surroundings.

- 2.3.3 Many of the present villages have their origin in the **Saxon** (AD 410-1066) period. In the **medieval** (1154-1485) period, the settlement pattern consisted of a mixture of small market towns at Waltham Abbey and Epping; small, nucleated villages and hamlets as at Roydon and Epping Upland and widespread dispersed settlement in the form of farms and cottages. The alternating expansion and rapid contraction of the population (the latter through plague) caused new towns to be established and others to be abandoned. Modern Epping was founded in the 12th century by Waltham Abbey to extract income from those travelling along the alternative route from London to Cambridge.
- 2.3.4 In the **post-medieval** period, the growth of the London market and the development of the transport network led to an increase in settlement in the study area and the further development of Country Estates. Epping, in its position approximately half a day's ride from London, became a major coaching town in the 17th and 18th centuries (having 26 coaching inns). With the development of the railway, the coaching trade dramatically declined, however, this new transport system enabled the construction of large housing developments aimed at London's first commuters.

The Church

- 2.3.5 During the Saxon period (AD 410-1066), the Christian church became a major driver in the formation of the modern landscape, through becoming an administrator and adjudicator for the local community in a new national parish system that formed the basis for our modern parishes. A number of historic medieval churches survive within the study area as key visible landmarks, reminding us of the power of the church in the medieval and later development of the landscape.
- 2.3.6 As the church system developed through the medieval period, so did its land and powers. A number of religious communities were located within the Study Area, with the most powerful being the 11th century Saxon foundation of Waltham Abbey. Waltham Abbey owned much of the land and estates in the study area and was a major influence in the medieval development of the landscape, including small-scale clearance of heath and woodland for agricultural land and the creation of the new settlement of modern Epping. With the dissolution of the Abbey in 1540, the estates and lands were divided up and sold, and the landscapes of the Abbey's landholdings changed.

Agriculture

- 2.3.7 The agricultural landscape has been a feature of the study area since the adoption and gradual development of agriculture in the Neolithic period (c. 4500 to 2,300 BC). The development of the agricultural landscape can be described through four key phases:

Prehistoric

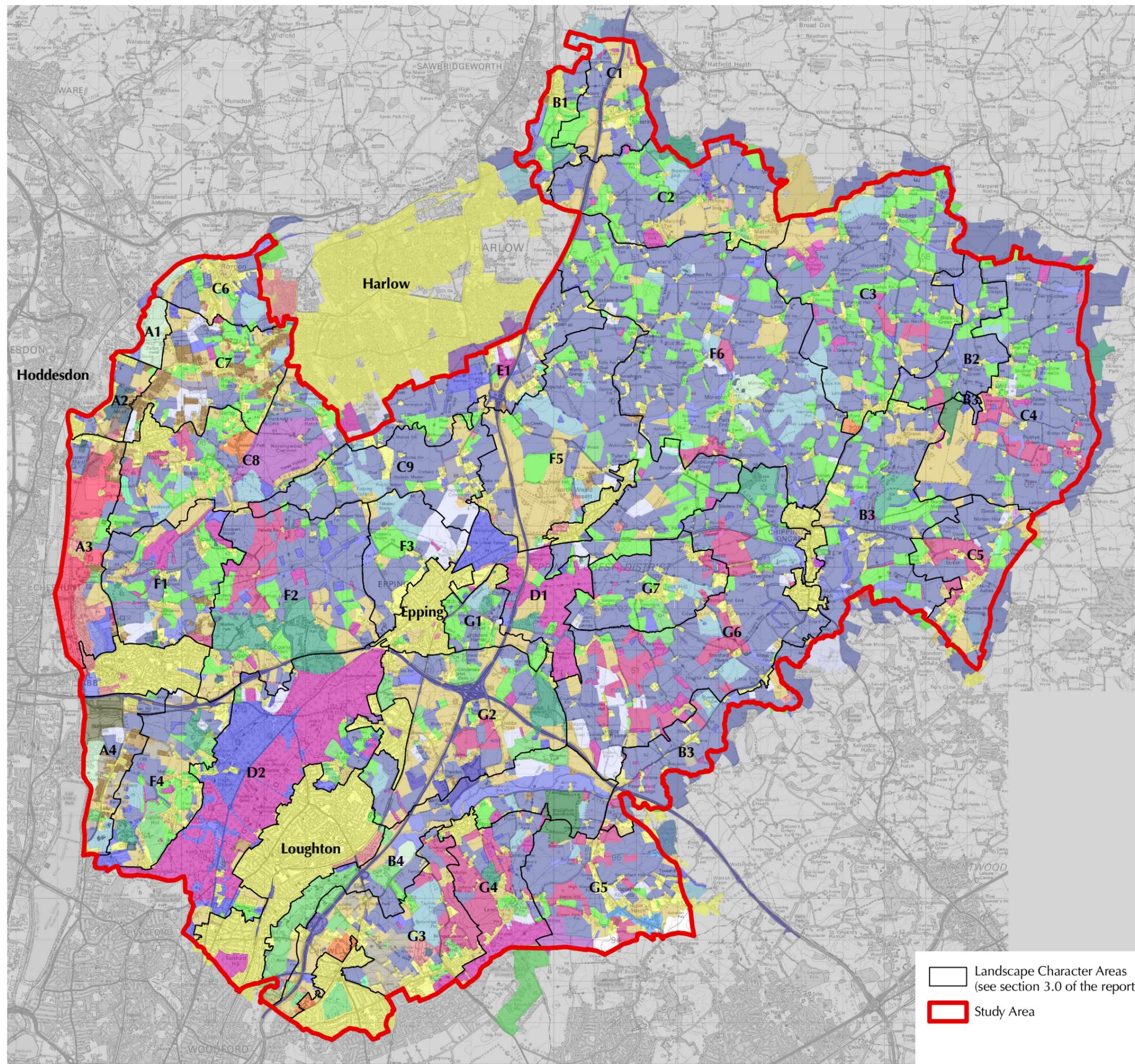
- 2.3.8 During this period, agricultural activity took place within a variety of field systems and open landscapes, used, abandoned and re-used across the generations. It is known that in many locations across Britain, the Romans and later the Saxons re-used earlier field systems, and there is thus the potential that some of the field boundaries within the study area may be of Late Iron Age/Roman origin.

Medieval

- 2.3.9 During the Medieval period, the landscape was divided into estates and subdivided into manors owned by lords and farmed by tenants in networks of fields. This feudal form of landscape management would have been prevalent across the Study Area, and significant remains of the intricate field systems survive in the Nazeing and South Roydon Conservation Area and elsewhere at Upshire and Copped Hall.
- 2.3.10 Medieval woodland practice has a major impact on shaping the current distribution of coppice woodland within the District. Hainault Forest and Epping Forest were both industrially managed to supply wood fuel for the ovens, furnaces and bake houses of London. This is commemorated in local place names such as Colliers Row ('colliers' being the charcoal burners).

Medieval/Post-Medieval

- 2.3.11 Both during and after the medieval period, with the exception of Nazeing and South Roydon, much of the landscape has since undergone piecemeal enclosure, whereby the land has been rationalised into consolidated private ownership through a series of private land exchanges and through gradual enclosure of woodland, forest, heath and common. The Historic Landscape Character analysis (see **Figure 2.4**) indicates that significant areas of these pre-18th century enclosed fields survive around the Study Area. In addition, the horticultural industry has a long history within the western half of the Study Area, with its roots in the medieval market gardens in the fertile river valleys. The industry blossomed after the removal of tax on glass in 1845, after which, the landscapes from Roydon to Waltham Abbey were dominated by a 'sea of



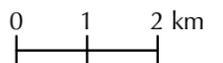
KEY



Historic Landscape Character

- Pre 18th century coaxial enclosure
- Pre 18th century enclosure
- Pre 18th century irregular enclosure
- Pre 18th century irregular sinuous enclosure
- Urban development
- Hospital, school, university
- Built-up areas - modern
- Communications - airfield/civilian
- Communications - motorway/railway
- Commons, wastes and heaths with a built margin
- Common, wastes and heaths with an open margin
- Commons, wastes and heaths
- Historic earthwork
- Horticulture - allotments
- Horticulture - orchards
- Horticulture - nursery with glasshouse
- Inland managed wetland - enclosed meadow
- Inland managed wetland - water meadow
- Disused industrial
- Industrial
- 18th-19th century piecemeal enclosure by agreement
- 18th-19th century formal style parliamentary enclosure
- 18th-19th century enclosure
- Military - post-medieval
- Mineral (disused extraction)
- Mineral extraction
- Mineral - restored land
- Miscellaneous: stud farm
- Parks, gardens, recreation - informal parkland
- Parks, gardens, recreation - leisure/recreation
- 20th century agriculture - boundary loss
- 20th century agriculture - boundary loss with relict elements
- 20th century enclosure
- Water reservoir
- Ancient woodland
- 19th - 20th century woodland plantation

- Landscape Character Areas (see section 3.0 of the report)
- Study Area



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glass'. The industry continues today in a reduced form in Roydon and Nazeing parishes, and historic elements of older greenhouses and water towers can still be identified within the landscape.

Twentieth Century

- 2.3.12 In the 20th century, changes in agricultural practice brought about by the Common Agricultural Policy led to the further rationalisation of fields within the landscape, with the stripping out of field boundaries to create large 'prairie fields'. This process first became intensive in the 1950s and continued throughout much of the twentieth century. The pattern of 'prairie fields' is particularly apparent in the northeast of the District around Matching and Matching Green; and to the east of Fyfield.

Parks and Forest

- 2.3.13 Parks, and the large residences often associated with parks, are a distinctive feature of the landscape of the Study Area. From the medieval period onwards, parks were developed by the nobility as a means of enjoying outdoor pursuits and supplying their table, largely through hunting. The study area was particularly popular for this type of landscape use and contains a significant concentration of parks and large houses. Notable clusters occur near Waltham Abbey (Warlies and Copped Hall) and around Epping (Gaynes Park, Coopersale Hall and Ongar Great Park).
- 2.3.14 There are four key phases of park development in the Study Area:
- Deer parks first appear in the early medieval period. These were established by the nobility with the permission of the King. Medieval parks were not usually laid out to be ornamental, in the way that parks were designed from the 17th century onwards. The medieval parks may, however have evoked an aesthetic response and been manipulated to increase this response. Some early parks no longer survive as visible features within the landscape but several notable examples have survived e.g. Ongar Great Park near Coopersale, which is reputedly the earliest recorded deer park in Britain, dating from 1045. Here, the earthwork boundary that once surrounded the park survives as a visible feature within the landscape. Deer parks are also commemorated in the survival of Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge at Chingford (dating from 1543). This was essentially (at first floor) an open hunting stand, past which deer were driven for the pleasure of the monarch herself and gentry.
 - During the Tudor period the use of parks for hunting gained even more popularity, largely through the passion of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I for this activity. The old Royal Forest was used for hunting and parks also began to be developed as aesthetic settings for mansions and manors. Copped Hall was used in this way.

- During the 18th century the aesthetic value of landscape moved to the fore, with the development of the English Landscape Movement, and other later landscape design fashions. Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown was one of the fathers of the English landscape park. He redesigned Copped Hall’s parkland in the mid 18th century. The owners of Coopersale House also consulted Brown about their park.
- The 19th century was particularly notable for the introduction of exotic plants. Hunting continued to be a feature of these landscapes, with copses provided specifically to enable the newly fashionable fox hunting. Several parks were redesigned in the 19th century, including Copped Hall.

2.3.15 The residences associated with the parks also went through several historic phases of development. This type of residence had its origin in the early medieval manorial halls, which were later supplanted by impressive halls with moats; many of these fell out of use during and after the 16th century and survive as moated mounds, for example, at Epping Green. The 15th to 17th centuries are generally seen as a transition period in the architectural form of large private houses, with a number of new courtyard mansions created for the elite: one classic example is the unusual 15th century Nether Hall.

2.3.16 A Forest was a particular form of medieval deer park, within which royalty, and certain privileged lords, could hunt deer, though the land itself may not have been owned by the Crown. The term Forest therefore denotes the presence of deer reserved for the royalty and not necessarily the presence of woodland, though woodland may have been part of a Forest. Waltham Forest, the larger precursor of Epping Forest, has its origins as a royal hunting area. The land was owned by Waltham Abbey, and both the Abbey and the Forest were favourite places of Henry VIII before the Dissolution. In the early 19th century, it is possible that Epping Forest might have been enclosed and lost, if not for the efforts of Willingale’s (a commoner who executed his lopping rights). Willingale resisted the plans of the Reverend John Whitaker Maitland, Lord of the Manor or Loughton, who, in 1865 had enclosed some 1,300 acres of Epping Forest within his manor to be used for building. Thomas’ case delayed the felling of trees and allowed public sentiment to change in favour of keeping them as recreational areas. This paved the way for the Corporation of London to agree to buy out landowners in the 1870s. The Epping Forest Act, which still protects the Forest, was passed in 1878.

Communications

2.3.17 People have always moved within the landscape for activities such as hunting, trading and social meetings. Trackways and rivers formed the earliest forms of communication networks from prehistory onwards. Historic routeways are important as the precursors of the modern communication system, but also as a significant influence on the siting of later settlement and

other features within the landscape. The River Lea is a key historical communication route within the Study Area. It has been an important routeway since early prehistory, as well as being an important environment for food, plant materials and other resources. During the medieval period, the use of the River Lea became formalised as new cuts were made to improve navigation of the river.

Historic Landscape Character

- 2.3.18 The historic land use features in the present day landscape within the study area are mapped on **Figure 2.4**, taken from the Essex Historic Landscape Characterisation Study⁵. This shows the extent and distribution of historic field systems, settlements and other features that create the cultural dimension of the existing landscape character of the Study Area. Essex County Council is also in the process of using the Historic Landscape Character Data to prepare mapping and descriptions of Historic Landscape Character Zones for Essex as part of the Historic Landscape Character Report for the County (in preparation). These draft Historic Landscape Character Zones are shown on **Figure 2.5**. The accompanying draft text descriptions to accompany each zone have been used to inform the Key Characteristics of each Landscape Character Type within Epping Forest District (as set out within Section 3.0).

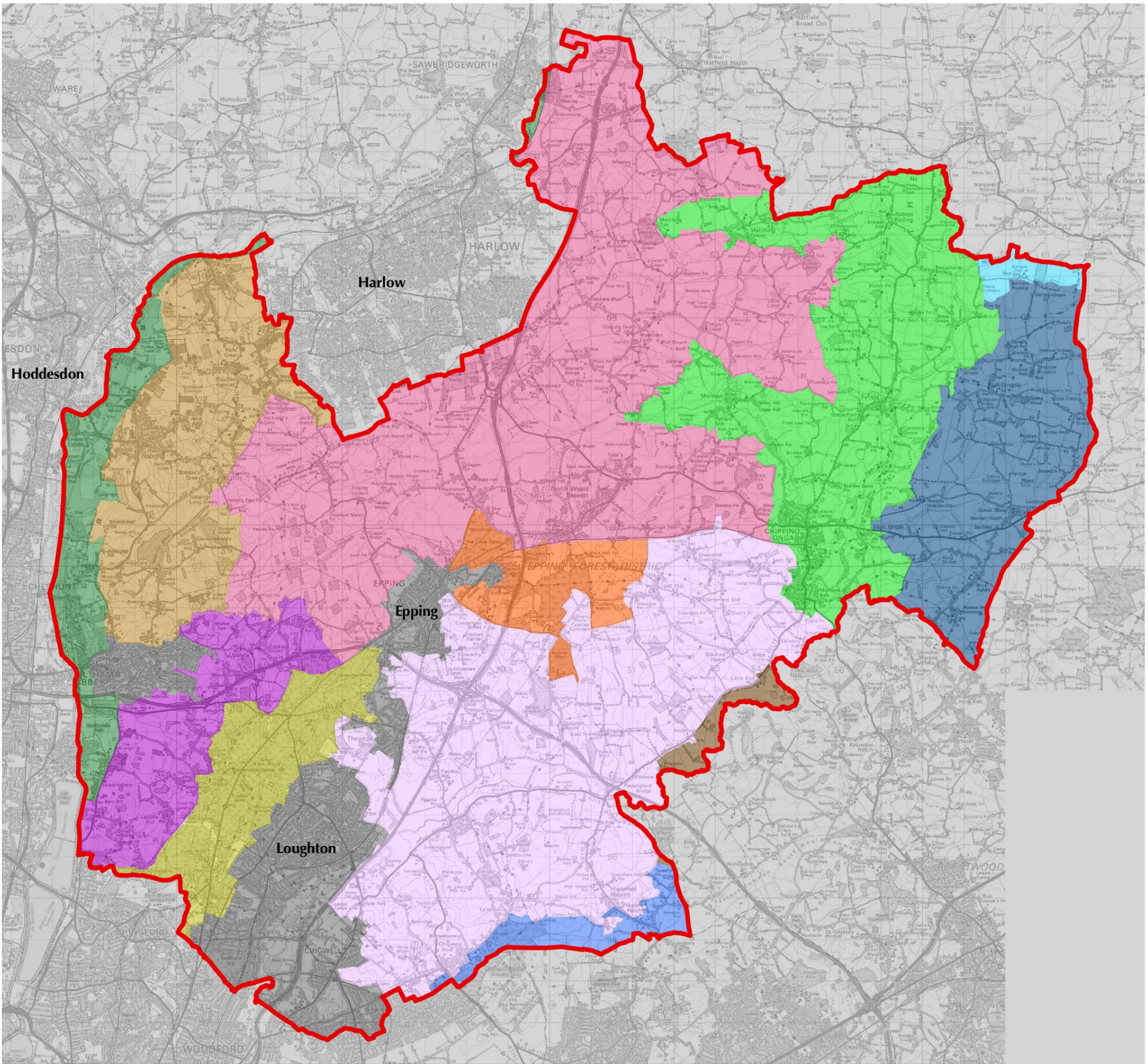
Historic Environment Designations

- 2.3.19 A variety of historic environment sites and features within the study area are protected in recognition of their historical, archaeological and/or architectural value. These are described below:

Scheduled Monuments

- 2.3.20 There are 33 nationally important archaeological sites within the Study Area, which are protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979). These include:
- Waltham Abbey Royal Gunpowder Factory;
 - Waltham Abbey, including Gatehouse and Stoney Bridge;
 - Latton Priory (to the south of Harlow);
 - Moated site (to the south of Dorrington Farm);
 - Rookwood Hall moated site (to the east of Matching Green);
 - Two moated sites (to the north of Willingale);
 - Moat House moated site, Stapleford Tawney;
 - Wynters Armourie moated site;
 - Four moated sites, Willingale;

⁵ Essex Historic Landscape Characterisation Report, In Preparation, Essex County Council



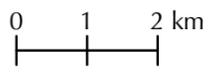
KEY



Historic Landscape Character Zones

- Copped Hall Ridge
- Epping Forest
- Hainault Forest
- Lea Valley
- Lower Roding valley
- Navestock Heaths
- Roydon and Nazeing
- The Lavers
- The Rodings
- West of Chelmsford and the Cam valley
- Willingale area
- Wintry Forest
- Urban Areas

Study Area



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- Spriggs moated site;
- Cold War Heavy Anti-aircraft gun site, (northeast of Halls Green Farm, Roydon);
- Nether Hall, Roydon;
- The Temple, Temple Hill, Warlies Park;
- Obelisk (northwest of Cobbins Pond, Waltham Abbey);
- Bundish Hall moated site (to the north of Chipping Ongar);
- Marshalls moated site (south of Weald Place; North Weald Bassett);
- Moated site south of Dorrington Farm, North Weald Bassett;
- Three mounds on Shelley Common, Ongar;
- Ongar Castle;
- Ongar Park Pale (west of Colliers Hatch, Stanford Rivers);
- North Weald Redoubt;
- World War II bombing decoy, Nazeing;
- World War II Bofors Anti-aircraft gun platform 340m (southeast of Cheshunt railway station);
- Heavy Anti-aircraft gunsite on Lippitts Hill, Waltham Abbey;
- Hill Hall brick kiln and deserted manorial settlement (south of Beachet Wood);
- Roman villa (south of Hill Farm, Roding valley);
- Roman building (southwest of Long Shaw);
- Roman site, Hill's Farm, Theydon Garnon;
- Ambresbury Banks hillfort, Epping Forest;
- Loughton Camp, hillfort, Epping Forest.

Conservation Areas

2.3.21 There are 25 Conservation Areas of special architectural or historical interest within the Study Area, protected under the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990. These include historic centres of towns, village centres, small hamlets, historic landscapes and historic parks and gardens⁶. They are located at:

- Abbess Roding;
- Abridge;
- Baldwins Hill – Loughton;
- Bell Common – Epping;
- Blake Hall – Bobbingworth;
- Chigwell Village;
- Chipping Ongar;
- Coopersale Street;
- Copped Hall;

⁶ http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council_services/planning/conservation/conservation_area_information.asp

- Epping;
- Great Stony School, Chipping Ongar;
- High Ongar;
- Hill Hall, Theydon Mount;
- Lower Sheering;
- Matching;
- Matching Green;
- Matching Tye;
- Moreton;
- Nazeing and South Roydon;
- Royal Gunpowder Factory, Waltham Abbey;
- Roydon Village;
- Staples Road, Loughton;
- Upshire;
- Waltham Abbey;
- York Hill, Loughton.

Registered Historic Parks and Gardens

2.3.22 There are 5 designed landscapes within the Study Area, which are included on the English Heritage non-statutory national register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. These include:

- Down Hall (to the southeast of Sheering);
- Blake Hall (to the north-west of Chipping Ongar);
- Copped Hall (to the south-west of Epping);
- Coopersale House (to the north Fiddler's Hamlet);
- Hill Hall (to the south of Mount End).

2.4 Key Forces for Change in the Landscape

2.4.1 Use of the land for housing, recreation, transport, energy generation and other activities has resulted in some places in erosion of the character, quality and diversity of the landscapes within the study area since the mid-twentieth century. The cumulative effects of small-scale and incremental changes have had a particularly marked effect on the character of the landscape.

2.4.2 The pace, mixture and scale of landscape changes will continue in the future, which may impact, positively or negatively, upon those qualities that make the landscape special. A key challenge is to understand, manage and direct future positive change in the landscape in ways

that conserve and enhance its essential characteristics and valued attributes, whilst enabling sensitively designed development to be accommodated and to meet social and economic needs.

2.4.3 The key global, national and local forces for change that affect the character of the Study Area's landscapes are considered under the following main headings:

- Agriculture, Land Management and Diversification
- Socio-economic Characteristics
- Infrastructure, Transport and Traffic
- Built Development
- Recreation and Tourism
- Climate Change

Agriculture, Land Management and Diversification

2.4.4 Agricultural activity is a vital aspect of the rural environment within the study area and is a primary factor in shaping the character of the landscape. Epping Forest District is a highly productive arable farming area. The best arable land is in the north of the District. The heavier clays to the south were traditionally more difficult to work and therefore were managed as pasture. There was also a ready market for animals and milk products in London to the south. Cattle were driven on foot to market, first thing in the morning, from Stapleford Abbots (a practice which lasted at least until the beginning of World War II). Historically, pasture fields were also much more common, particularly around Epping Upland and Lambourne than within the current landscape of the Study Area. The conversion of pasture fields to arable in the south of the District is largely a 20th century phenomenon as a result of the loss of markets for animal produce in London and the effects of the railways being used for transport. Epping and Hainault Forest also owe their existence to the infertile ridge soils, from which it was not worth clearing the trees.

2.4.5 Agriculture has the ability to substantially enhance and detract from the character of the landscape in a relatively short period of time, primarily due to an increase in mechanisation and intensive practices. These have, over the last fifty years, contributed to the changes in the rural environment through intensive cropping, loss of field boundaries, introduction of a larger-scale field pattern, drainage of marshes/wetlands, and the introduction of new farm buildings. Pastures are dependent on appropriate livestock grazing practices. Loss of field boundaries was particularly apparent in the 1950s and 1960s in the northeast of the District (to the east of the M11). During the decade there has also been a change in the types of arable crops being grown, including the extensive recent use of oilseed rape and linseed.

- 2.4.6 Changes in farming practice and fluctuations in the agricultural economy have an important impact and the number of changes will only increase, as global markets become a major influencing factor. Whilst the effects of post-1945 agricultural change on landscape character are well understood, it is yet to become clear what future changes may result from increasing competition in the global market place, ongoing from the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy or the effects of the Government Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food, including proposed Entry-Level Agri-Environment Scheme (ELS) and Higher Tier Schemes. There may be ongoing adverse effect on character, as well as important opportunities to enhance and restore character as a result of changes in policy. Epping Forest Countrycare, working with landowners, has promoted hedgerow and woodland management to a significant extent across the District over the last twenty years. This process is likely to be continued in the future.
- 2.4.7 The area was affected by Dutch Elm disease and there has been a gradual decline in traditional hedge-laying and coppicing creating more fragmented and gappy hedgerows. There is potential through agri-environmental schemes such as Environmental Stewardship to encourage farmers to make changes to their farming practices that would help restore the loss of important habitats and features within the landscape. Within the Study Area, several hedgerows have already been replaced and hedgerow trees introduced as a result of Environmental Stewardship Schemes.
- 2.4.8 The key issues affecting landscape character include:
- Decrease in woodland and tree cover and loss of small woodlands (several of which are ancient);
 - Loss of veteran trees;
 - Continuing decline/loss of landscape features such as hedgerows, hedgerow and field trees, field margins and farm ponds as a result of maximising field size, lack of appropriate management and spray drift;
 - Loss of elms in the past reducing sense of intimacy and enclosure;
 - Soil erosion as a result of autumn cultivation of arable crops;
 - Increased pressure for new uses of 'marginal' land, including smallholdings, leisure uses and pony paddocks;
 - Increase in pony paddocks giving rise to poor hedgerow and grassland management and intrusive post and wire fencing/ranch fencing, stable facilities and ménages;
 - Increase in large arable farm units which may lead to further homogenisation of the landscape, reduction in biodiversity and potential demand for more centralised and large-scale buildings such as grain storage facilities;
 - Farm diversification such as (i) the adoption or reuse of farm buildings for commercial, industrial and storage uses which may conflict with historical/architectural character and (ii) the introduction of new industrial crops.

Socio-economic characteristics

- 2.4.9 The social and economic characteristics of the towns in the Study Area, including Epping, Loughton, Waltham Abbey, Buckhurst Hill, North Weald and Chipping Ongar play an important role in the process of future change and regeneration within the region. In recent years there has been a change in the structure and type of employment away from traditional manufacturing and agriculture to the service industries including retail, office employment and the high tech sector. Tourism is also a source of rural employment within some of the villages and also associated with Epping Forest and the Lea Valley Regional Park. Commuting out of the Study Area, to Harlow, London and to Stansted Airport for employment, is also significant.
- 2.4.10 The town centres, local centres within urban neighbourhoods and village shops provide the social and economic focus of their communities. The last ten to fifteen years have seen many changes in retailing, including the growth of regional shopping centres, the growth of out-of-town retail parks, extended opening hours and Sunday trading, and more recently internet shopping. All of these changes have had an effect on existing town and local centres.

Infrastructure, Transport and Traffic

- 2.4.11 Reflecting the national trend, the study area has seen increasing levels of car usage. This is leading to major congestion, pollution problems, and pressures for new road schemes in the countryside between the towns and road improvements that significantly affect landscape character.
- 2.4.12 Throughout the study area there is a comprehensive network of major roads, which provide connections between the towns in the area and also outside the area including London, Harlow and Cambridge. The M25 crosses the southern half of the Study Area, whilst the M11 runs north-south through centre of the District. In addition to this, the A414 connects Harlow in the west to the rest of Essex (to the east of the study area boundary) and the A113 connects Chigwell in the southwest with Chipping Ongar to the northeast. There is also a network of B and minor roads within the Study Area. The motorways and A-roads can become congested during peak periods. There is also a network of cycle trails and public footpaths within the Study Area.
- 2.4.13 The Central Line of the London Underground has stations at Buckhurst Hill, Chigwell Hill, Grange Hill, Loughton, Debden, Theydon Bois and Epping. The Central Line extension from Epping to Ongar closed in the early 1990s. This section of the line is currently in the hands of a private company, including land assets. It is not clear what will happen to the physical structures of the railway, including a raised track which is a significant visual feature of the

landscape in some sections, where it runs on embankments. Roydon is the only national rail station in the District - on the line between London Liverpool Street and Cambridge.

2.4.14 The key issues affecting landscape character include:

- Construction of new roads, bypasses and service stations, including the introduction of new structures, lighting, and earthworks into the landscape.
- Road improvements that can have an urbanising effect, especially on rural lanes, by road widening, straightening and introduction of features such as kerbs, paving, highway lighting, visibility splays and signage. Pressure on rural lanes is particularly strong around Waltham Abbey and Nazeing as a result of large delivery vans and lorries associated with the nurseries.
- Increased requirement for parking provision in villages and towns which are popular with tourists;
- The Metropolitan Green Belt has had a radical effect on retention of open countryside.

Built Development

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

2.4.16 Housing and other development has been absorbed into several of the towns in the study area and within parts of the surrounding rural landscape over the last thirty years because there is a constant need for the provision of new houses and services. However, Green Belt policy has helped to constrain development and control the expansion of settlements.

2.4.17 The key issues affecting landscape character include:

- Quality of built environment;
- Loss/erosion of urban open spaces and of tree cover;
- Inappropriate choice of building materials;
- Visual impacts associated with floodlighting;
- Night-time remoteness damaged by lighting at urban fringes;
- Decline in the condition of landscapes in the urban fringe, with problems such as lack of management of hedgerows/trees, poorly managed horse paddocks and fly-tipping;

- Housing growth at the periphery of towns can extend the urban character of these areas into the landscape, as increased noise and light pollution and development lead to an urbanising effect on the rural landscape and loss of tranquillity;
- New strategic initiatives to maintain and enhance existing green spaces and corridors and to create new provision of green infrastructure, as an integral part of new development.

Recreation and Tourism

2.4.24 In recent years there has been a substantial increase in the number and proportion of people playing sport and taking part in recreational activities. Tourism and leisure make a contribution to the local economy. In addition the many 'traditional' villages and the countryside in the study area are an attraction in their own right. Key facilities for informal recreation within the study area include Epping Forest and the Lee Valley Regional Park.

2.4.18 The key issues affecting landscape character include:

- Disturbance of habitat by inappropriate recreation.
- Pressure from tourism to increase the capacity and size of caravan and camping areas and their associated facilities.
- Continued demand for golf courses, driving ranges and associated facilities.
- Increased desire for public access to river valleys and 'traditional' valleys potentially leading to creation of footpaths and cycleways that cause scarring and erosion to the landscape.
- Localised fence clutter through management for recreation.

Climate Change

2.4.19 It is widely acknowledged that global climate change is inevitable, and that it is likely to have significant physical impacts on the landscape⁷. The South East region including Essex is particularly sensitive to the effects of climate change as a result of its low-lying position. Changes in the form of increased temperatures, wetter winters, and more extreme weather events have been identified in the last 10 years. The scenarios produced by the UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP02) suggest by 2080 the UK is likely to experience:

- Annual temperature rises by between 2 and 3.5°C.
- More frequent high summer temperatures and very cold winters becoming increasingly rare.
- Winters becoming wetter and summers becoming drier.
- More frequent summer droughts, winter flooding and storms.
- Sea-levels rising between 26 and 86 cm above the current level in South East England.

⁷ Epping Forest District Council has prepared a Climate Change Strategy (2009).

- 2.4.20 Whilst there are still uncertainties regarding exact changes at regional and local levels, it is clear there could be both direct and indirect impacts on landscape character. The potential implications for landscape character include changes in habitats and species composition, and habitat fragmentation. Climate change could also result in changes in water resources, soils, agricultural land, recreation, tourism and cultural heritage.

2.5 Landscape Character in the study area – An Overview

- 2.5.1 This section of the report describes the context for the District Landscape Character Assessment provided by the hierarchical classification of Landscape Character Types and Areas defined at the national, regional and county levels.

National Level

- 2.5.2 The national context for defining the boundaries of different Landscape Character Units within the study area is provided by the National Character Areas from the Character of England Map⁸ and the National Landscape Typology⁹ - as illustrated on **Figures 2.6** and **2.7** respectively.

National Character Areas

- 2.5.3 The study area contains part of the following two National Character Areas, defined at 1:250,000 scale (see **Figure 2.6**):
- South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland (86)
 - Northern Thames Basin (111).

- 2.5.4 The character of these National Character Areas is described within Countryside Character Volume 6, published by the Countryside Agency¹⁰.

National Landscape Typology

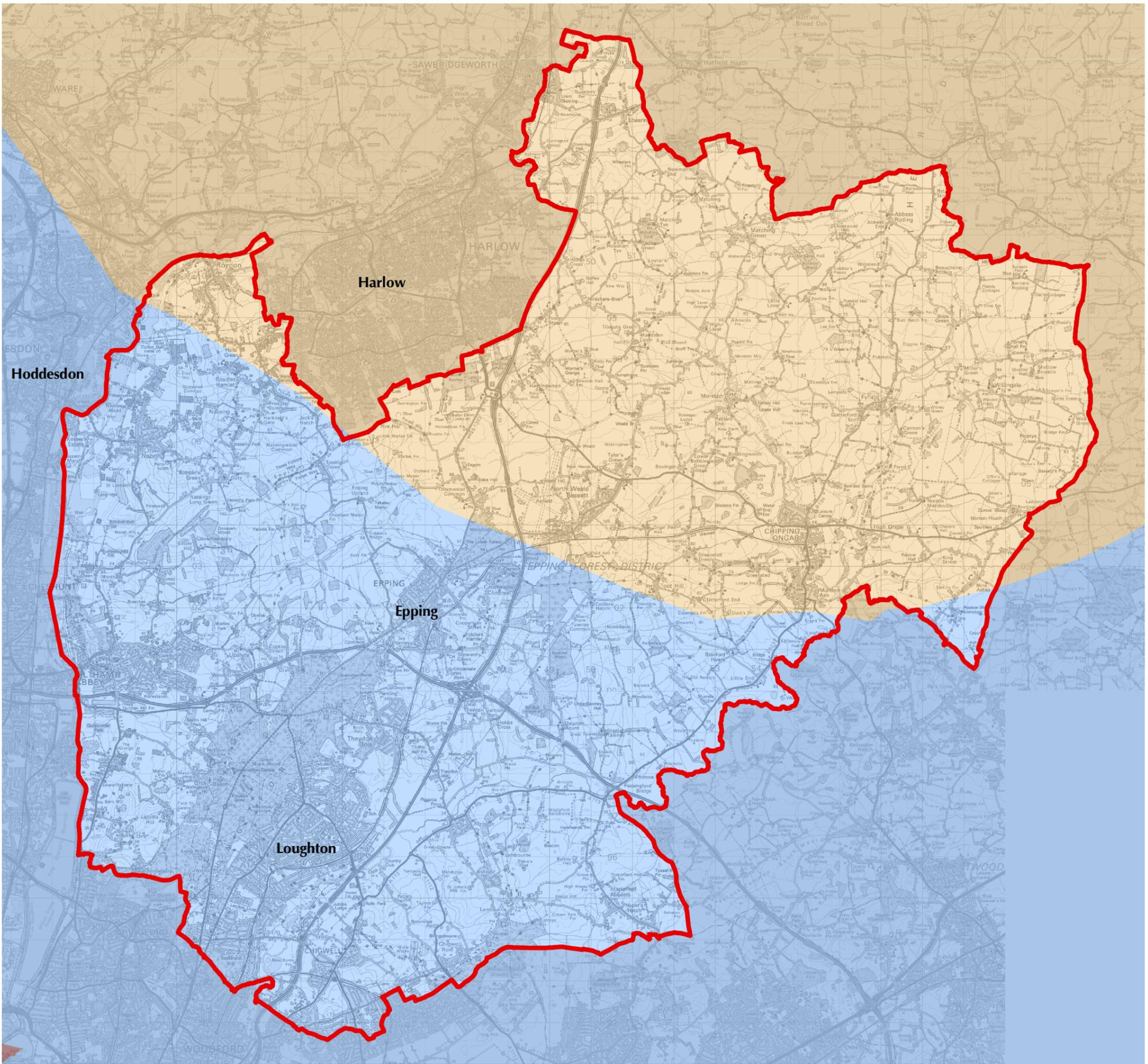
- 2.5.5 The National Landscape Typology is a hierarchical classification of Landscape Character Types being developed by Natural England. The Typology has produced a national classification of 'Level 1' Landscape Character Types¹¹ defined at a 1:250,000 scale. These are homogenous units of land with a uniform character that are distinct from each other on the basis of definitive natural and cultural attributes.

⁸ Character of England Map, Natural England, Updated 2006).

⁹ National Landscape Typology (Living Landscapes Project for the Countryside Agency and Partners, 2002).

¹⁰ Countryside Character Volume 6 – East of England (Countryside Agency, 1999).

¹¹ Level 1 Landscape Character Types – 1:250,000 Scale (Developed for the Countryside Agency/English Nature by Steven Warnock/ the Living Landscapes Project/Entec Ltd. 2002).



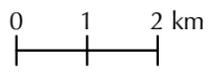
KEY



Joint Character Areas

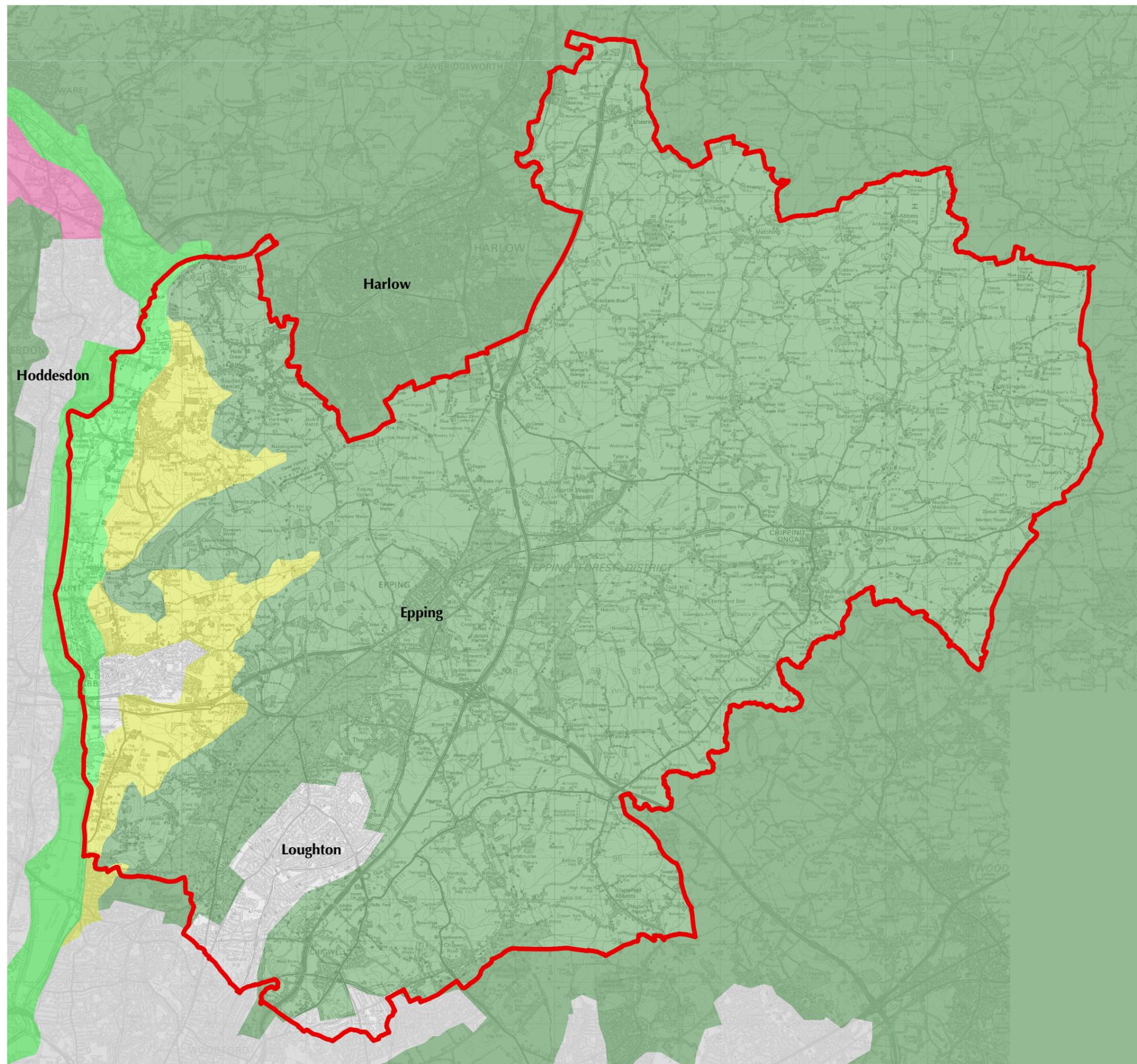
- 86 South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland
- 111 Northern Thames Basin

Study Area



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Figure 2.6
Character of England Map -
National Joint Character Areas



KEY



National Landscape Typology

Physiography (1st letter)

- L - Lowlands
- R - Intermediate

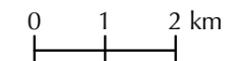
Landcover (2nd letter)

- B - Other light land
- C - Clayland
- W - Wetland

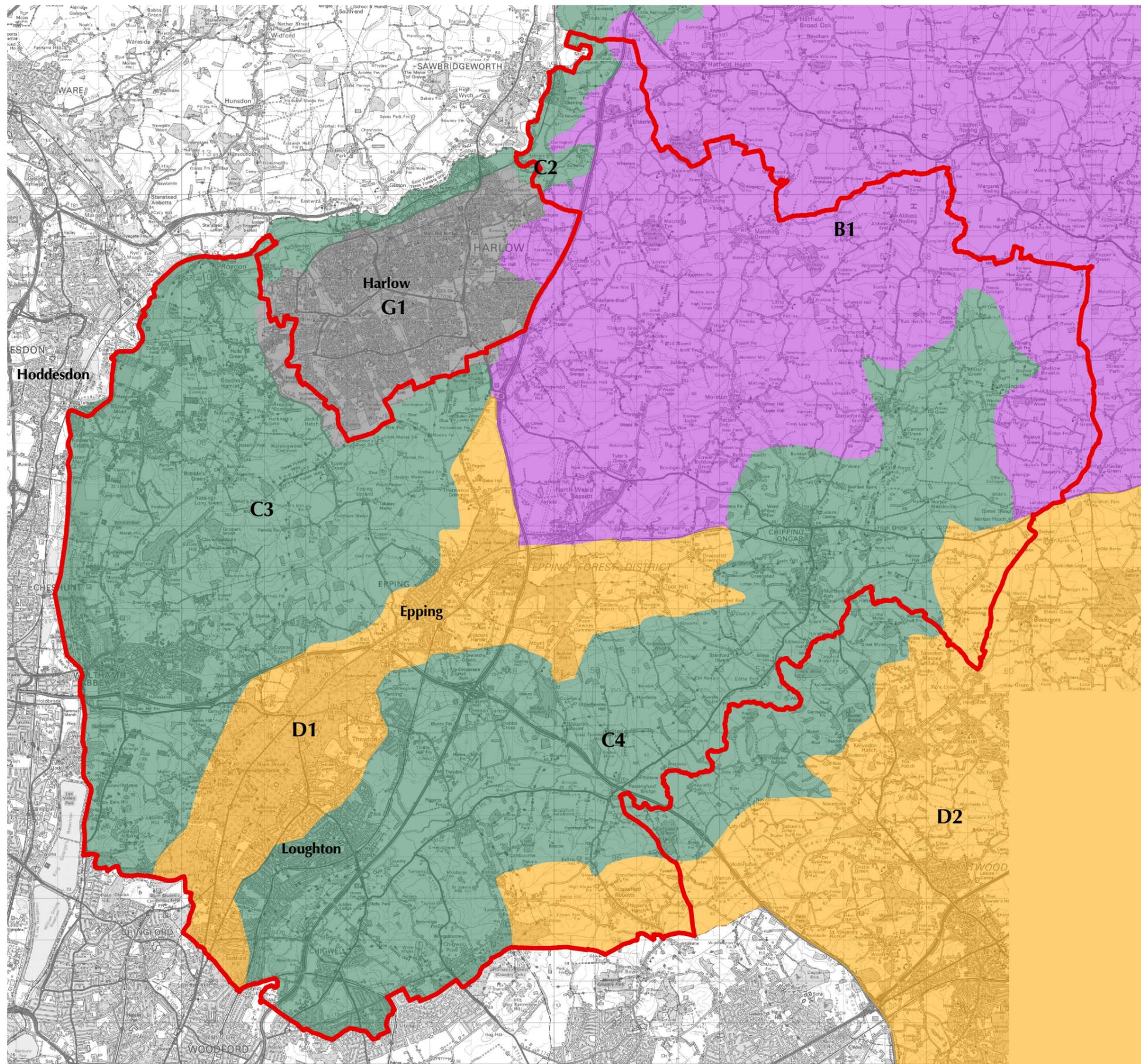
Cultural Pattern (3rd letter)

- A - Wooded - Ancient woods
- D - Dispersed unwooded
- E - Wooded Estateland
- W - Wetland/waste unwooded

- LBE
- LCD
- LWW
- RCA
- Urban
- Study Area



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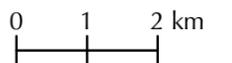
KEY



Mid-Essex County Landscape Character Types and Areas

- B Glacial Till Plateau
- B1 Central Essex Farmland
- C River Valley Landscapes
- C2 Stort Valley
- C3 Lee Valley
- C4 Roding Valley
- D Wooded Hills/Ridges
- D1 Epping Forest and Ridges
- D2 Brentwood Hills
- G Urban Landscapes
- G1 Harlow & Environs

Study Area



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Figure 2.8
 County Landscape Character Types and Areas

3.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF EPPING FOREST DISTRICT

3.1 General

3.1.1 This section of the report provides the detailed ‘profiles’ of Landscape Character Types and Areas within Epping Forest District, structured as follows:

Landscape Character Types

- Location and boundaries
- Key Characteristics
- Landscape Character Areas
- Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

Landscape Character Areas

- Location and boundaries of character area
- Photograph
- Key Characteristics
- Overall Character Description
- Visual Characteristics
- Historic Land Use
- Ecological Features
- Key planning and land management issues
- Sensitivities to change
- Suggested landscape planning guidelines
- Suggested landscape management guidelines

3.1.2 The profiles should be read as a whole to inform decision making. As acknowledged by the latest guidance,¹⁵ landscape is a continuum and character does not in general change abruptly on the ground. More commonly, the character of the landscape will change gradually rather than suddenly, and therefore the boundaries between landscape character units should be considered to reflect zones of transition in many cases. In addition, the boundaries have been defined and mapped at a scale of 1:25,000, and the assessment is therefore only suitable for use at this scale. This should be taken into consideration when the assessment is being used to inform decision-making in relation to development and land management proposals at the local level.

¹⁵ Countryside Agency/Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland

3.1.3 Where boundaries of Landscape Character Types and Areas extend outside the District boundary, these have been mapped on **Figure 3.1**. Reference should also be made to other studies for neighbouring authority areas including:

- Harlow Area Landscape and Environment Study, Volumes 1-3, Chris Blandford Associates, September 2004;
- Brentwood Landscape Character Assessment, Chris Blandford Associates, September 2006;
- Chelmsford Landscape Character Assessment, Chris Blandford Associates, September 2006;
- Broxbourne Landscape Character Assessment, Chris Blandford Associates, October 2008.

3.1.4 The following Landscape Character Types and Areas have been identified within the District:

A: RIVER VALLEY FLOODPLAIN: FLOODED GRAVEL PITS AND MARSHES

- A1 Rye Meads
- A2 Nazeing Mead
- A3 Lea Valley Marshes
- A4 Rammey Marsh

B: RIVER VALLEY

- B1 River Stort
- B2 Upper Roding
- B3 Middle Roding
- B4 Lower Roding

C: FARMLAND PLATEAU

- C1: Sheering
- C2: Matching
- C3: Abbess
- C4: Willingale
- C5: Nine Ashes
- C6: Roydon
- C7: Roydon Hamlet
- C8: Bumble's Green
- C9: Epping Green

D: WOODED RIDGES

- D1: Lower Forest to Beachet Wood Ridge
- D2: Epping Forest Ridge

E: FARMED RIDGES

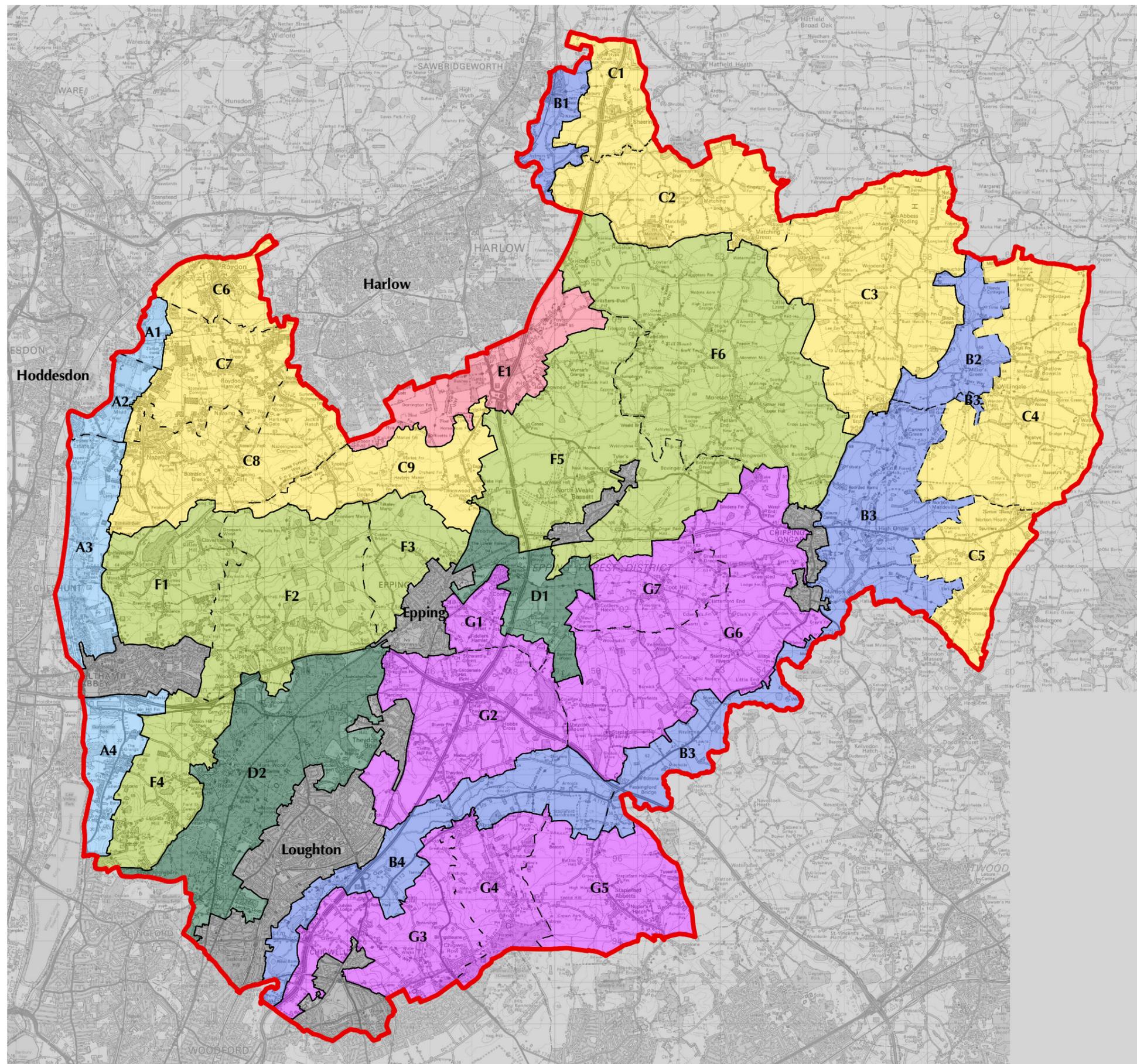
- E1: Jack's Hatch to Church Langley

F: RIDGES AND VALLEYS

- F1: Holyfield
- F2: Upshire
- F3: Cobbin's Bridge
- F4: Lippitts and Daws Hill
- F5: North Weald
- F6: Magdalen Laver and Moreton

G: WOODED RIDGES AND VALLEYS

- G1: Coopersale
- G2: Theydon Garnon
- G3: Chigwell

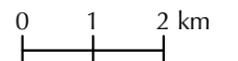


KEY



Epping Forest Landscape Character Types and Areas

- A River Valley Floodplain:
Flooded Gravel Pits and Marshes
A1 Rye Meads
A2 Nazeing Mead
A3 Lea Valley Marshes
A4 Rammey Marsh
- B River Valley
B1 River Stort
B2 Upper Roding
B3 Middle Roding
B4 Lower Roding
- C Farmland Plateau
C1 Sheering
C2 Matching
C3 Abbess
C4 Willingale
C5 Nine Ashes
C6 Roydon
C7 Roydon Hamlet
C8 Bumble's Green
C9 Epping Green
- D Wooded Ridges
D1 Lower Forest to Beachet Wood Ridge
D2 Epping Forest Ridge
- E Farmland Ridges
E1 Jack's Hatch to Church Langley
- F Ridges and Valleys
F1 Holyfield
F2 Uphire
F3 Cobbin's Bridge
F4 Lippitts and Daws Hills
F5 North Weald
F6 Magdalen Laver and Moreton
- G Wooded Ridges and Valleys
G1 Coopersale
G2 Theydon Garnon
G3 Chigwell
G4 Lambourne
G5 Stapleford Abbots
G6 Stapleford Tawney and Stanford Rivers
G7 Toot Hill
- Urban
- Study Area



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Figure 3.1
Epping Forest Landscape
Character Types and Areas

- G4: Lambourne
- G5: Stapleford Abbots
- G6: Stapleford Tawney and Stanford Rivers
- G7: Toot Hill

3.2 River Valley Floodplain: Flooded Gravel Pits and Marshes: Landscape Character Type A

Location and Boundaries

3.2.1 This Landscape Character Type is situated at the western edge of the District and continues outside the District boundary into Broxbourne Borough, broadly following the course of the River Lea. To the northeast, this Landscape Character Type is overlooked by Farmland Plateau (Landscape Character Type C), whilst the adjacent Ridges and Valleys (Landscape Character Type F) meets the southeastern edge.

Key Characteristics

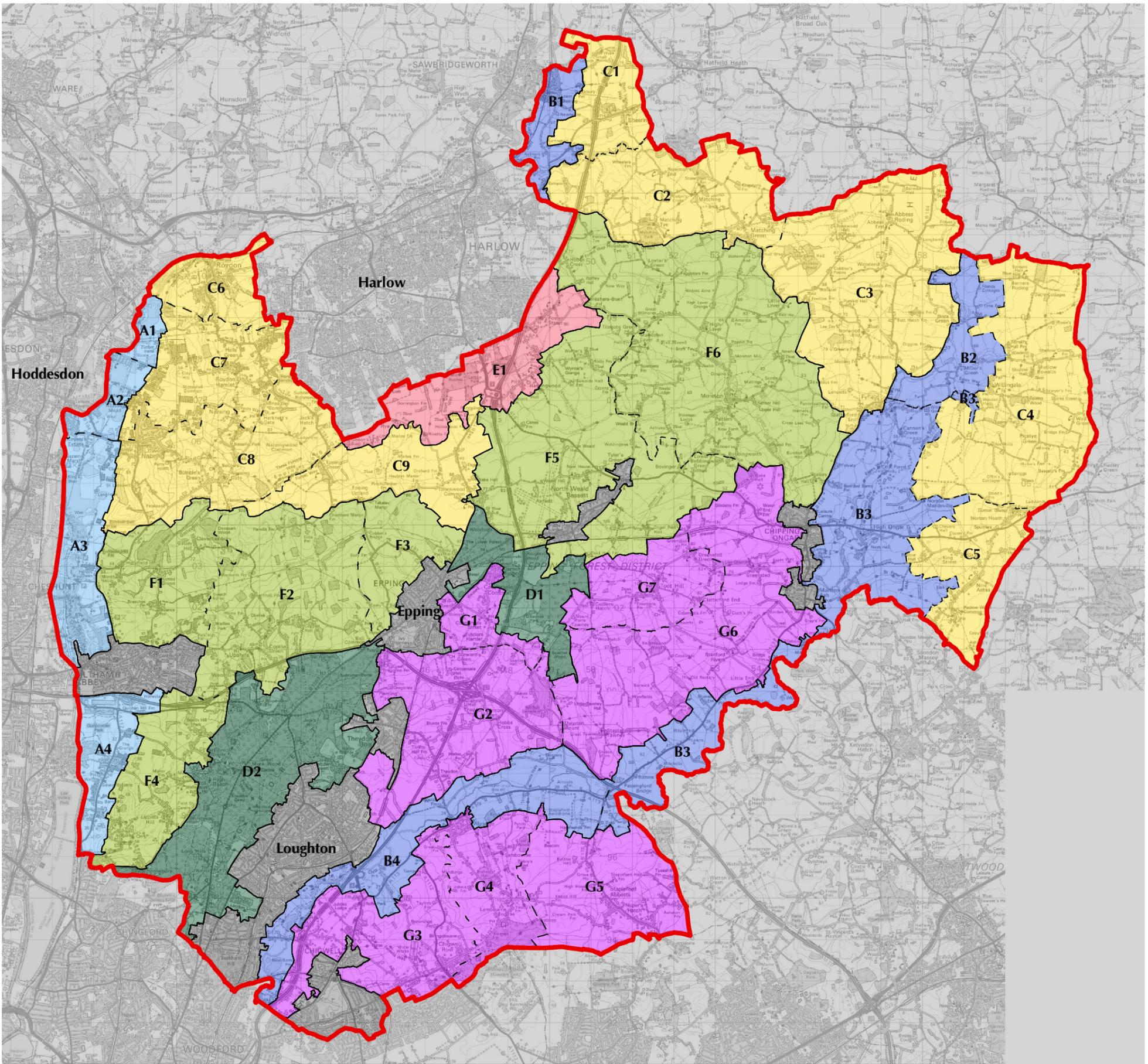
3.2.2 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

- Flat, low-lying landscape, which is predominantly underlain by alluvial deposits;
- Landscape encompasses the floodplain of the river and extensive water bodies, which are the result of former mineral extraction;
- A mosaic of managed wetland vegetation including scrub, marshes and woodland, which create visual boundaries and contribute texture to the landscape;
- Patches of meadow pasture within the valley bottom (often of medieval origin or earlier).
- Associated with this is a wide variety of fauna, including swans, geese and ducks, contributing to the value of this landscape for nature conservation;
- A relatively strong sense of tranquillity throughout, despite proximity to several urban edges and large industrial developments;
- Rows of pylons and large industrial warehouses are also dominant features in places.

Landscape Character Areas

3.2.3 This Landscape Character Type contains the following Character Areas (as shown on **Figure 3.1**):

- A1 Rye Meads
- A2 Nazeing Mead
- A3 Lea Valley Marshes
- A4 Rammey Marsh

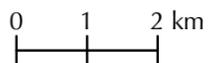


KEY



Epping Forest Landscape Character Types and Areas

- A River Valley Floodplain:
Flooded Gravel Pits and Marshes
A1 Rye Meads
A2 Nazeing Mead
A3 Lea Valley Marshes
A4 Rammey Marsh
- B River Valley
B1 River Stort
B2 Upper Roding
B3 Middle Roding
B4 Lower Roding
- C Farmland Plateau
C1 Sheering
C2 Matching
C3 Abbess
C4 Willingale
C5 Nine Ashes
C6 Roydon
C7 Roydon Hamlet
C8 Bumble's Green
C9 Epping Green
- D Wooded Ridges
D1 Lower Forest to Beachet Wood Ridge
D2 Epping Forest Ridge
- E Farmland Ridges
E1 Jack's Hatch to Church Langley
- F Ridges and Valleys
F1 Holyfield
F2 Uphire
F3 Cobbin's Bridge
F4 Lippitts and Daws Hills
F5 North Weald
F6 Magdalen Laver and Moreton
- G Wooded Ridges and Valleys
G1 Coopersale
G2 Theydon Garnon
G3 Chigwell
G4 Lambourne
G5 Stapleford Abbots
G6 Stapleford Tawney and Stanford Rivers
G7 Toot Hill
- Urban
- Study Area



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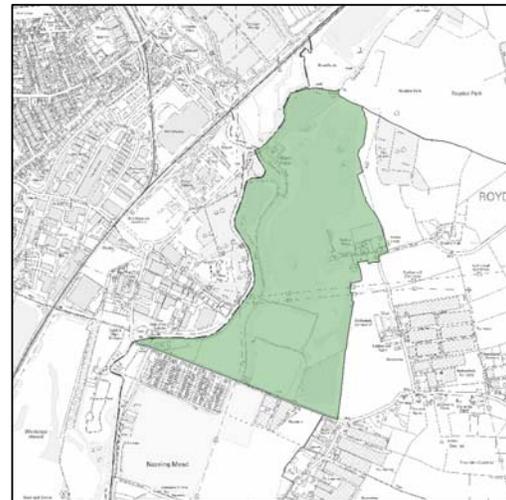
Figure 3.1
 Epping Forest Landscape Character Types and Areas

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

- 3.2.4 The proposed strategy objectives for this Landscape Character Type and its constituent Landscape Character Areas are:
- 3.2.5 **Conserve** - seek to protect and enhance positive features (as set out within the 'sensitivities to change' sections for each Landscape Character Area below) that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.
- 3.2.6 **Enhance** – seek to improve the integrity of the landscape, and reinforce its character, by introducing new and/or enhanced elements where distinctive features or characteristics are absent.
- 3.2.7 **Restore** – seek to reinforce and/or reinstate historic landscape patterns and features that contribute to sense of place and time depth, by repairing distinctive elements that have been lost or degraded.
- 3.2.8 Suggested landscape guidelines for planning and management of each Landscape Character Area, within the context of the above strategy objectives, are set out in the following section.

A1: RYE MEADS

Location and Boundaries



3.2.9 Rye Meads Landscape Character Area is situated in the northeast of the District, within the corridor of the River Lea. To the east, it is overlooked by Roydon and Roydon Hamlet Landscape Character Areas (C6 and C7) within the Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Type.

Key Characteristics

- Flat floodplain of the River Lea encompassing a series of extensive flooded gravel pits (the result of former mineral extraction);
- Lines of electricity pylons march across the landscape and are dominant vertical elements;
- A general absence of settlement within the floodplain, other than occasional farmsteads at the edge of the area;
- Pockets of wetland vegetation and mature deciduous trees adjacent to the waterbodies, including wetland species such as willow, poplar and alder, create texture within the landscape and contribute to a varied sense of enclosure within views;
- Views to glasshouses on the eastern bank of the valley and the power station (within Broxbourne Borough to the west) contribute to recognisable sense of place.

Overall Character

3.2.10 Rye Meads Landscape Character Area is dominated by the vast expanses of open water (flooded gravel pits) that lie within the flat floodplain of the Lea Valley. Interspersed with the open water are pockets of wetland vegetation and rough grassland, which contribute texture to the landscape and provide key ecological habitats. There is a strong sense of openness within views across the waterbodies, with mature deciduous trees at the edges of the water providing one of the only forms of enclosure. Lines of electricity pylons introduce vertical elements and are dominant man-made elements within this landscape. Despite proximity to a large industrial estate on the western side of the valley (within Broxbourne), there is a relatively strong sense of tranquillity within much of this area, at distance from the B1133 road corridor along its southern edge.

Visual Character

- Lines of pylons crossing the landscape are dominant vertical elements within views across, and to, this Landscape Character Area;
- Within views westwards, the power stations and large industrial warehouse buildings on the western valley side (within Broxbourne) are dominant features, which contribute to recognisable sense of place;
- Panoramic views across open water bodies are a key feature of this landscape, with mature deciduous trees framing views at the edges of the water.

Historic Land Use

- 3.2.11 This landscape has been transformed more than once during its history. The river was initially used on a large-scale to transport produce from the Hertfordshire area to London and began to be canalised in Elizabethan times. The original grazing meadows within the river valley have been largely destroyed, giving way to sand and gravel extraction in the early 20th century. Following mineral extraction, the gravel pits were infilled and restored to form the current landscape of managed wetlands.

Ecological Features

- 3.2.12 The key ecological features within this area are the flooded former gravel pits and an associated patchwork of rich and complex wetland habitats, which support breeding and wintering wildfowl. There are no designated international or national sites of nature conservation value; however the area contains one County Wildlife Site.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential pollution of the waterbodies from fertiliser and pesticide run-off associated with adjacent agricultural fields;
- Management of mature deciduous trees and the patchwork of wetland habitats;
- Introduction of new tall vertical elements or large industrial buildings within, or at the edges of the area;
- Parallel management of the area for its nature conservation value and recreational use.

Sensitivities to Change

- 3.2.13 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include the patchwork of wetland habitats, mature deciduous trees and remnant pockets of meadow pasture within the valley floor. Several important habitats for wildlife and biodiversity are scattered throughout the area. The relatively strong sense of tranquillity at distance from main roads and industrial edges is also sensitive to change. The strong sense of openness within views across open water bodies, contributes to visual sensitivity, which is vulnerable to the introduction of further tall vertical elements or large industrial buildings/structures. As a result, this landscape is considered to have **moderate** sensitivity to change overall.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Consider the visual impact of new industrial development or tall vertical elements on the sense of openness within views across this area;

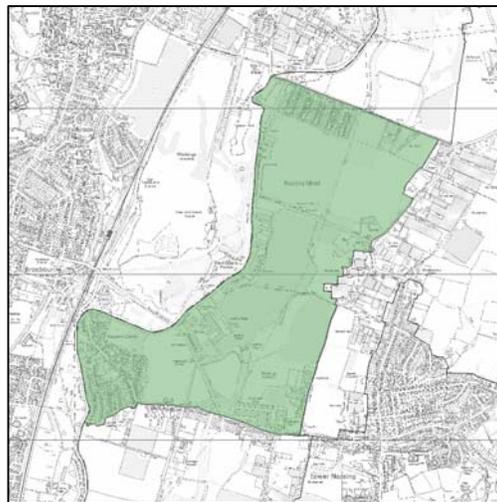
- Maintain cross-valley views and characteristic views along the valley corridor and into adjacent Landscape Character Areas, such as Roydon Farmland Plateau (C6) and Roydon Hamlet Farmland Plateau (C7) to the east;
- Conserve the relatively strong sense of tranquillity within the eastern half of the area, at distance from the Power station and works (within Broxbourne Borough to the west) and Rye Meads industrial estate to the north.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and manage mature deciduous trees and enhance where in decline, using locally native species;
- Conserve and manage the ecological structure of wetland habitats;
- Develop strategies to reduce the potential for pollution from adjacent agricultural fields.

A2: NAZEING MEAD

Location and Boundaries



3.2.14 Nazeing Mead Landscape Character Area is situated at the western edge of the District, within the corridor of the Lea Valley. To the north and south it abuts Rye Meads (A1) and Lea Valley Marshes (A3) Landscape Character Areas (both within the River Valley Floodplain: Flooded Gravel Pits and Marshes Landscape Character Type). To the east, it is overlooked by Roydon Hamlet Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Area (C7).

Key Characteristics

- A series of large, open waterbodies (former mineral workings) within the flat valley floodplain of the River Lea corridor dominate landscape pattern;
- Relatively strong sense of tranquillity, despite proximity of the railway;
- General absence of settlement within the area;
- Electricity pylons cross this landscape, introducing dominant vertical elements and contributing to recognisable sense of place;
- Contrast between the ordered form of the River Lea navigation (canal) and the semi-natural character of the flooded mineral workings.

Overall Character

- 3.2.15 This Landscape Character Area encompasses a patchwork of large, open waterbodies, associated wetland vegetation and occasional, small pockets of mature deciduous trees, all of which contribute texture to the landscape. There is contrast between the more engineered elements (for example, electricity pylons) and the softer, more natural elements. Despite proximity to the mainline railway corridor which runs to the west of the area and the B194 road corridor, which runs along the eastern edge, there is a relatively strong sense of tranquillity throughout much of this area. Open views across the waterbodies and to adjacent Landscape Character Areas (both within and adjacent to the corridor of the River Lea) contribute to recognisable sense of place.

Visual Character

- Panoramic open views across the vast areas of open water;
- Views to glasshouses on the eastern valley side contribute to recognisable sense of place;
- Open views across and along the corridor of the River Lea.

Historic Land Use

- 3.2.16 Similarly to all of the Landscape Character Areas within the corridor of the River Lea, this area has been greatly modified throughout history, with the current landscape of managed wetlands resulting from the infilling of sand and gravel extraction pits (which were first active in the early 20th century). There are few historic landscape elements remaining within this area.

Ecological Features

- 3.2.17 The key ecological features within this area are the flooded former gravel pits and an associated patchwork of wetland habitats for breeding and wintering wildfowl. In addition to this, mature trees also contribute to the ecological network of habitats. There are no designated sites of international, national or local nature conservation value within this area.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential pollution of the waterbodies from fertiliser and pesticide run-off associated with adjacent agricultural fields;
- Management of wetland habitats;
- Introduction of new tall vertical elements or large industrial buildings within, or at the edges of the area;
- Parallel management of the area for its nature conservation value and recreational/industrial use.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this area include the patchwork of mature deciduous trees and the network of wetland habitats (including reedbeds and wet grasslands). The relatively strong sense of tranquillity within much of the area is sensitive to change. Open views across the area and also across and along the valley are sensitive to any potential new development, particularly tall vertical elements or large industrial buildings. Overall, this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **moderate** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Maintain cross-valley views and characteristic views along the valley corridor and into adjacent Landscape Character Areas, including Rye Meads River Valley Floodplain (A1), Lea Valley Marshes River Valley Floodplain (A3), Roydon Hamlet Farmland Plateau (C7) and Bumble's Green Farmland Plateau (C8);
- Conserve the relatively strong sense of tranquillity within most of the area;
- Consider the visual impact of new industrial development or tall vertical elements on the sense of openness within views across this area, particularly north and south along the River Lea corridor.

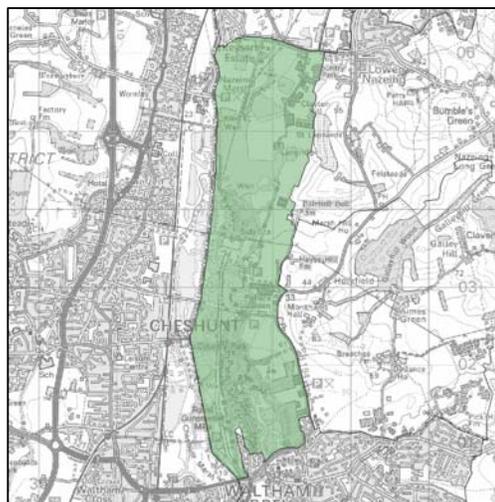
Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the ecological structure of wetland habitats;

- Develop strategies to reduce the potential for pollution from adjacent land uses;
- Seek opportunities to restore former mineral workings and enhance their landscape and potential nature conservation value through establishment of key habitats.

A3: LEA VALLEY MARSHES

Location and Boundaries



3.2.18 The Lea Valley Marshes Landscape Character Area is situated at the western edge of the District, within the floodplain of River Lea. To the north, this area abuts Nazeing Mead River Valley Floodplain (A2) Landscape Character Area, whilst the southern edge meets the northern settlement edge of Waltham Abbey.

Key Characteristics

- Linear area of wetland which encompasses extensive waterbodies (flooded former gravel pits) and associated wetland vegetation;
- Predominantly flat, low lying area within the valley floor or the River Lea;
- Patchwork of wetland habitats which support a range of fauna, including swans, geese and ducks;
- The narrow corridor of the River Lea is not a dominant feature within the wider wetland landscape;
- Relatively strong sense of tranquillity throughout, despite proximity to settlement and the railway corridor along the western edge (within Broxbourne Borough);
- Pockets of trees and woodland provide a varied sense of enclosure, with the woodland to the south of Hook Marsh (within the River Lea Country Park) providing a key landscape feature;
- A general absence of settlement, other than the nursery glasshouses to the west of Holyfield and utility buildings associated with the sewage works in the north of the area.

Overall Character

3.2.19 Situated within the broad, flat valley bottom on the River Lea, this Landscape Character Area encompasses a patchwork of open waterbodies, associated wetland vegetation and trees. Despite the predominantly semi-natural landscape (resulting from the flooding and restoration of former gravel pits), human influence is apparent in the form of dominant electricity pylons within views to the settlement edges of Cheshunt in the western part of the area (within Broxbourne Borough¹⁶). Despite proximity to urban areas and the railway line along the western edge, there is a relatively strong sense of tranquillity throughout much of the area. The area is served by a network of public footpaths which run across and along the valley, facilitating access to this area as a recreational resource (forming part of the Lee Valley Regional Park). Within the southeastern corner of the area, to the west of the B194 road, extensive, predominantly deciduous woodland is a dominant landscape feature within views and provides a sense of enclosure to this part of the valley side.

Visual Character

- Views across the landscape are dominated by the vast expanses of open water, with associated vegetation and trees creating visual boundaries and an intermittent sense of enclosure;

¹⁶ See Broxbourne Landscape Character Assessment, Broxbourne Borough Council, Chris Blandford Associates, October 2008.

- Views along (north-south) and across (east-west) the river corridor are generally limited by intervening vegetation;
- Within certain views, lines of electricity pylons are dominant vertical elements within the landscape;
- Within views eastwards from this area, the ridges and valleys at Holyfield provide a backdrop of rising land.

Historic Land Use

3.2.20 Similarly to all of the Landscape Character Areas within the corridor of the River Lea, this area has been greatly modified throughout history, with the current landscape of managed wetlands reflecting the infilling of sand and gravel extraction pits (which were first active in the early 20th century). There are few historic landscape elements remaining within this area, other than Waltham Abbey fishponds within the southeastern corner of the area. The four rectangular fishponds, now dry, date from the medieval period and were once connected by a sluice system from Cornmill Stream into the Lower Mill Stream.

Ecological Features

- 3.2.21 The key ecological features within this area are the flooded former gravel pits and an associated patchwork of rich and complex wetland habitats. The area falls within or encompasses several sites of nature conservation value, which include:
- Turnford and Cheshunt Pits Ramsar Site – designated as an internationally important wetland site; and Special Protection Area (SPA);
 - Turnford and Cheshunt Pits Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) - designated as nationally important for its wintering birds (including gadwall and shoveler) and locally important for its breeding birds (including great crested grebe, tufted duck, little ringed plover, sedge warbler and reed warbler); and its rich and varied flora and fauna;
 - Waltham Abbey SSSI – designated as nationally important for its alder woodland, which supports the largest heronry in Essex;
 - Six County Wildlife Sites (which include woods and marshes).

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential pollution of the waterbodies from fertiliser and pesticide run-off associated with adjacent agricultural fields;
- Management of wetland habitats for ecological diversity;
- Introduction of new tall vertical elements or large industrial buildings within, or at the edges of the area;
- Parallel management of the area for its nature conservation value and recreational use.

- Loss of mature woodland due to lack of, or inappropriate management.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this area include a diverse and rich network of ecological habitats (including patches of mature deciduous trees and woodland, wet woodland and grassland). The relatively strong sense of tranquillity within much of the area is sensitive to change or loss. Open views across the vast expanses of open water are sensitive to any potential new development, particularly tall vertical elements or large industrial buildings. Overall, this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **moderate to high** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

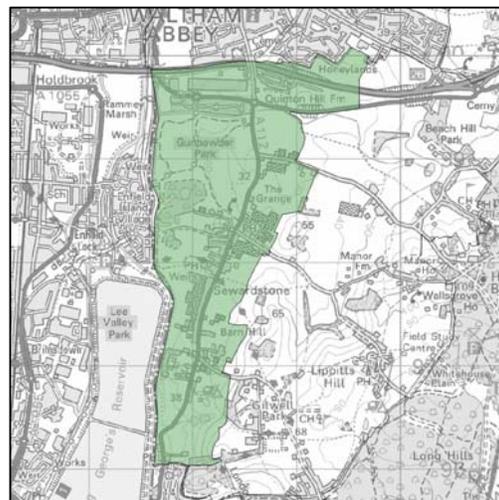
- Maintain characteristic views across open water bodies and towards the rising ridge and valley landscapes on the eastern side of the valley;
- Maintain and enhance waterside trees, which frame views across and along the valley;
- Consider the visual impact of new industrial development or tall vertical elements on the sense of openness within views across this area;
- Maintain and enhance public access to the area via the network of public footpaths;
- Conserve the relatively strong sense of tranquillity within most of the area.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the ecological structure of wetland, particularly wet wood and other woodland habitats;
- Ensure continued positive management of woodland;
- Develop strategies to reduce the potential for pollution from adjacent land uses.

A4: RAMMEY MARSH

Location and Boundaries



3.2.22 Ramme Marsh Landscape Character Area is situated at the southwestern corner of the District, within the corridor of the Lea Valley. The northern edge of the area abuts the southern settlement edge of Waltham Abbey. To the east, Lippitts and Daws Hills Ridges and Valleys (F4) Landscape Character Area overlooks this Landscape Character Area.

Key Characteristics

- A patchwork of water bodies (infilled former gravel pits) with associated marshland vegetation and grassland which is crossed by the canalised corridor of the River Lea Navigation;
- Mature trees line the River Lea Navigation, providing recognisable landscape features and a sense of enclosure;
- Lines of electricity pylons within the wider, flat floodplain of the River Lea are dominant vertical elements, visible within most views across the area;
- Sense of tranquillity within this landscape is disturbed by noise and movement associated with the M25 road corridor which crosses the area;
- A general absence of settlement within the area.

Overall Character

3.2.23 This Landscape Character Area encompasses the most southerly section of the Lea Valley within the District. The valley corridor continues to the south of the Study Area, where the landscape is dominated by King George's Reservoir (within the Lee Valley Regional Park). Situated within the flat river valley bottom, the landscape pattern within this area encompasses several small water bodies and a patchwork of grassland and marshland vegetation. At the southern edge of Waltham Abbey, the designed landscape of Gunpowder Park, encompassing a series of sculpted landform spaces and associated vegetation is a key landscape feature. Lines of electricity pylons are dominant vertical elements within views across the area. The overall sense of tranquillity is greatly disturbed by noise and movement of traffic on the M25 road corridor which crosses the area. The canalised corridor of the River Lea Navigation (often with colourful boats) and associated mature trees along its length is a key feature which runs north-south across the area. The Lea Valley Walk National Trail follows the line of the River Lea Navigation and provides access to the area.

Visual Character

- Views north and south along the corridor of the River Lea Navigation are contained by mature vegetation along the canal sides;
- Vegetation also generally limits views east-west across the valley corridor and views to adjacent Landscape Character Areas;
- Within certain views, lines of electricity pylons are dominant vertical elements within the landscape.

Historic Land Use

- 3.2.24 Similarly to all of the Landscape Character Areas within the corridor of the River Lea, this area has been greatly modified throughout history, with the current landscape of managed wetlands resulting from the infilling of sand and gravel extraction pits (which were first active in the early 20th century). There are few historic landscape elements remaining within this area.

Ecological Features

- 3.2.25 The key ecological features within this area are the flooded former gravel pits and an associated patchwork of wetlands and grassland which provide key habitats for birds. In addition to this, mature trees also contribute to the ecological network of habitats. There are no designated sites of international or national nature conservation value; however there is one County Wildlife Site.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential pollution of the waterbodies from fertiliser and pesticide run-off associated with adjacent agricultural fields;
- Management of wetland habitats for ecological diversity;
- Introduction of new tall vertical elements or large industrial buildings within, or at the edges of the area;
- Parallel management of the area for its nature conservation value and recreational use.
- Loss of mature woodland due to lack of, or inappropriate management;
- Further loss of sense of tranquillity as a result any potential future widening of the M25 or other main A-road corridors.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this area include the network of ecological habitats (including patches of mature deciduous trees and wetlands). Views north and south along the corridor of the River Lea Navigation are sensitive to any potential new development, particularly tall vertical elements or large industrial buildings. Overall, this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **moderate** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Maintain characteristic views north and south along the corridor of the River Lea Navigation;

- Conserve and enhance waterside trees, which provide a sense of enclosure within views across and along the valley;
- Consider the visual impact of new industrial development or tall vertical elements on the sense of openness within views across this area;
- Maintain and enhance public access to the area via the network of public footpaths, such as the Lea Valley Walk.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the ecological structure of wetland and woodland habitats within Gunpowder Park ;
- Develop strategies to reduce the potential for pollution from adjacent land uses.

3.3 River Valley: Landscape Character Type B

Location and Boundaries

3.3.1 The River Valley Landscape Character Type occurs in four locations within the District, following the courses of the River Stort and River Roding Valleys. At the northern edge of study area, this Landscape Character Type continues outside the District boundary (within Harlow District) following the Stort Valley. To the southwest, this Landscape Character Type continues within Brentwood Borough following the course of the River Roding.

Key Characteristics

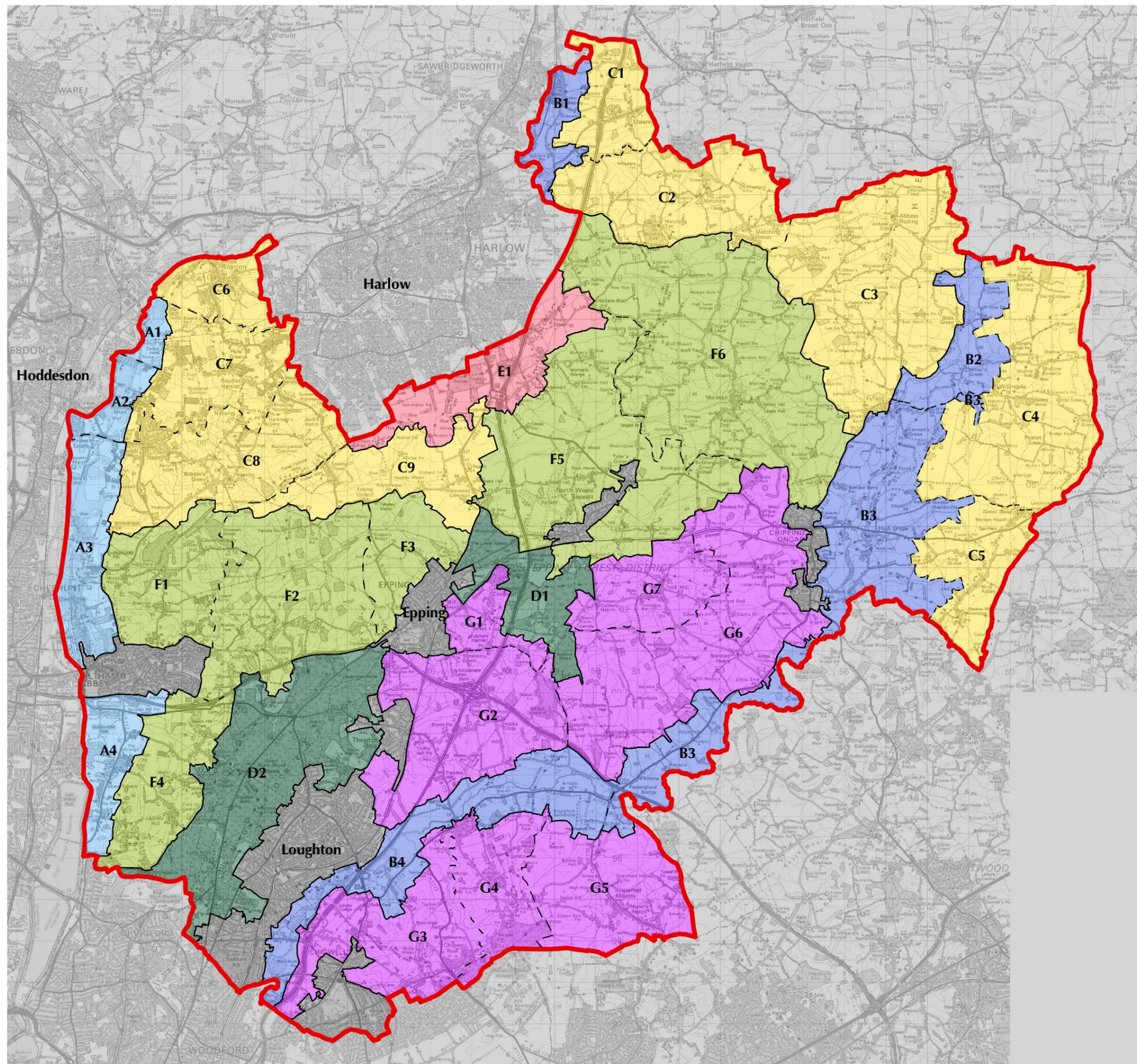
3.3.2 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

- V-shaped or u-shaped landform which dissects surrounding farmland landscape;
- Main river valley is often served by several smaller tributaries;
- Predominantly underlain by a geology of alluvium;
- Extensive tracts of pre-18th century sinuous fields interspersed by patches of pre-18th century irregular fields (probably of medieval origin and some perhaps earlier);
- Tracts of enclosed meadow pasture and small areas of ancient woodland;
- Flat or gently undulating valley floor;
- Gently or steeply sloping valley sides which often facilitate views across and along the valley;
- Intimate, wooded character in places.

Landscape Character Areas

3.3.3 This Landscape Character Type contains the following Character Areas (as shown on **Figure 3.1**):

- B1 River Stort
- B2 Upper Roding
- B3 Middle Roding
- B4 Lower Roding

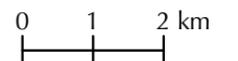


KEY



Epping Forest Landscape Character Types and Areas

- A River Valley Floodplain:
Flooded Gravel Pits and Marshes
A1 Rye Meads
A2 Nazeing Mead
A3 Lea Valley Marshes
A4 Rammey Marsh
- B River Valley
B1 River Stort
B2 Upper Roding
B3 Middle Roding
B4 Lower Roding
- C Farmland Plateau
C1 Sheering
C2 Matching
C3 Abbess
C4 Willingale
C5 Nine Ashes
C6 Roydon
C7 Roydon Hamlet
C8 Bumble's Green
C9 Epping Green
- D Wooded Ridges
D1 Lower Forest to Beachet Wood Ridge
D2 Epping Forest Ridge
- E Farmland Ridges
E1 Jack's Hatch to Church Langley
- F Ridges and Valleys
F1 Holyfield
F2 Uphire
F3 Cobbin's Bridge
F4 Lippitts and Daws Hills
F5 North Weald
F6 Magdalen Laver and Moreton
- G Wooded Ridges and Valleys
G1 Coopersale
G2 Theydon Garnon
G3 Chigwell
G4 Lambourne
G5 Stapleford Abbots
G6 Stapleford Tawney and Stanford Rivers
G7 Toot Hill
- Urban
- Study Area



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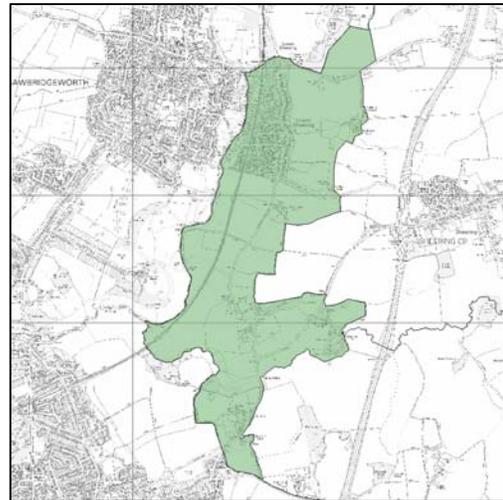
Figure 3.1
Epping Forest Landscape
Character Types and Areas

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

- 3.3.4 The proposed strategy objectives for this Landscape Character Type and its constituent Landscape Character Areas are:
- 3.3.5 **Conserve** - seek to protect and enhance positive features (as set out within the 'sensitivities to change' sections for each Landscape Character Area below) that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.
- 3.3.6 **Enhance** – seek to improve the integrity of the landscape, and reinforce its character, by introducing new and/or enhanced elements where distinctive features or characteristics are absent.
- 3.3.7 Suggested landscape guidelines for planning and management of each Landscape Character Area, within the context of the above strategy objectives, are set out in the following section.

B1: RIVER STORT

Location and Boundaries



3.3.8 The River Stort Landscape Character Area is situated at the northern edge of the District and abuts the eastern settlement edge of Sawbridgeworth to the west. To the east, this Landscape Character Area is adjacent to Sheering (C1) and Matching (C2) Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Areas.

Key Characteristics

- Gently meandering corridor of the River Stort which has a relatively strong sense of enclosure as a result of vegetation lining the river corridor;
- Relatively strong sense of tranquillity, which is disturbed at times by the noise and movement of trains on the main London-Cambridge railway line;
- Views are generally focused along the river corridor, rather than into and out of the valley;
- Patchworks of pasture and wetland vegetation along the river corridor, including pockets of arable farmland along the valley sides;
- The small, linear village of Lower Sheering, with its combination of historic buildings and church contributes to settlement pattern within the area;
- A network of rural road corridors crosses the landscape

Overall Character

3.3.9 This Landscape Character Area encompasses part of the gently meandering corridor of the River Stort. There is a relatively strong sense of enclosure within the valley as a result of vegetation and mature trees lining the river corridor. Overall sense of tranquillity is relatively strong, but is disturbed at times, by noise and movement associated with the mainline railway. Towards the centre of the area, the small, linear village of Lower Sheering, which encompasses several historic buildings, maltings and a church, contributes to settlement pattern. Along the valley sides, pockets of arable fields are located on the valley sides, often lined with mature hedgerows.

Visual Character

- Views are generally contained along the valley corridor as a result of mature trees lining much of the river corridor and providing a sense of enclosure;
- Views into and out of the valley are also limited by this vegetation.

Historic Land Use

3.3.10 The historic landscape pattern within this Landscape Character Area is generally less disturbed than others within the Study Area. To the south of Lower Sheering, fields which were enclosed pre-18th century are visible, whilst pockets of fields along the valley sides display post-1950s boundary loss as a result of 20th century agricultural practices. To the south of Durrington Hall, informal medieval parkland is a visible historic feature, whilst pockets of historic enclosed meadow pasture are dotted alongside the river corridor. Part of the village of Lower Sheering is designated as a Conservation Area for its extensive group of mid-late 19th century maltings

which were constructed for local malting company H.A and D. Taylor limited from about 1860 onwards.

Ecological Features

- 3.3.11 Key ecological features within this Landscape Character Area include riverside grasslands and meadows, with associated mature trees such as alder and willow. The River Stort supports a wide range of invertebrates, birds and mammals, including water vole. There are no international or national designations within the area, however there are two County Wildlife Sites along the valley corridor.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Pressure of increasing traffic on minor rural roads;
- Noise and visual intrusion associated with the mainline railway corridor;
- Potential loss of hedgerows at field boundaries as a result of lack of management or further intensification of agricultural practices;
- Pollution of the river corridor as a result of run-off associated with adjacent agricultural fields;
- Loss of meadows, grasslands or mature trees along the valley corridor as a result of agricultural intensification.

Sensitivities to Change

- 3.3.12 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include the strong linear pattern of trees lining the valley sides and mature field boundaries, which are sensitive to changes in land management. The sense of remoteness and tranquillity away from the mainline railway corridor is sensitive to potential new development and the skyline of the valley sides is visually sensitive. There is relatively strong historic integrity as a result of the historic field pattern and medieval parkland. This predominantly historic field pattern is sensitive to changes in land management. As a result of the above factors, this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **high** overall sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Ensure that any new development on the valley sides or within adjacent agricultural fields is small-scale, responds to historic settlement pattern and form and utilises local vernacular materials;
- Maintain open views along the valley corridor;
- Conserve the largely undeveloped character of the area and small-scale settlement pattern;

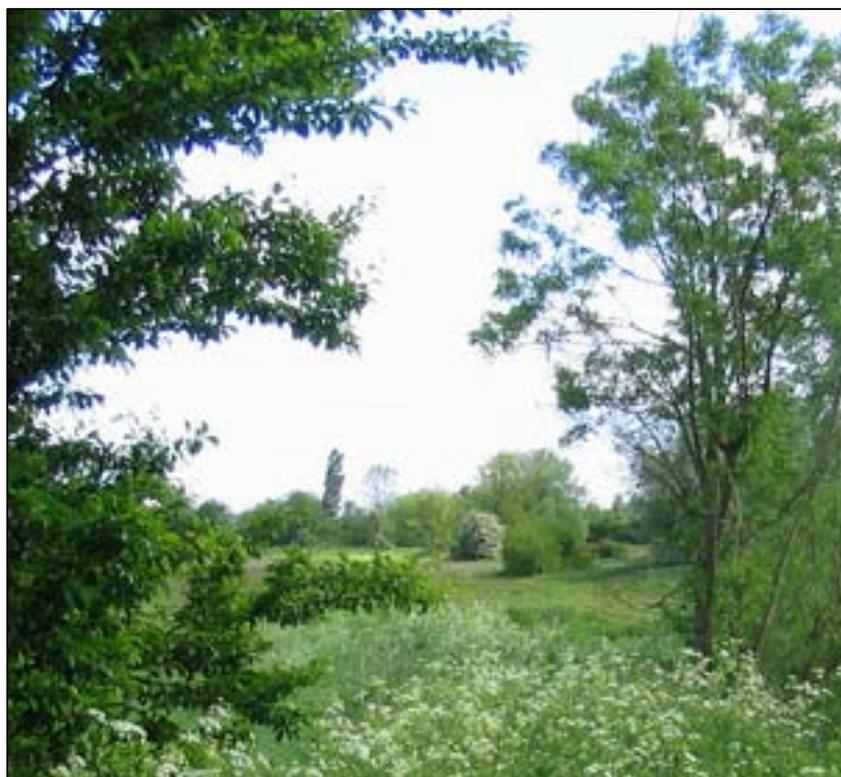
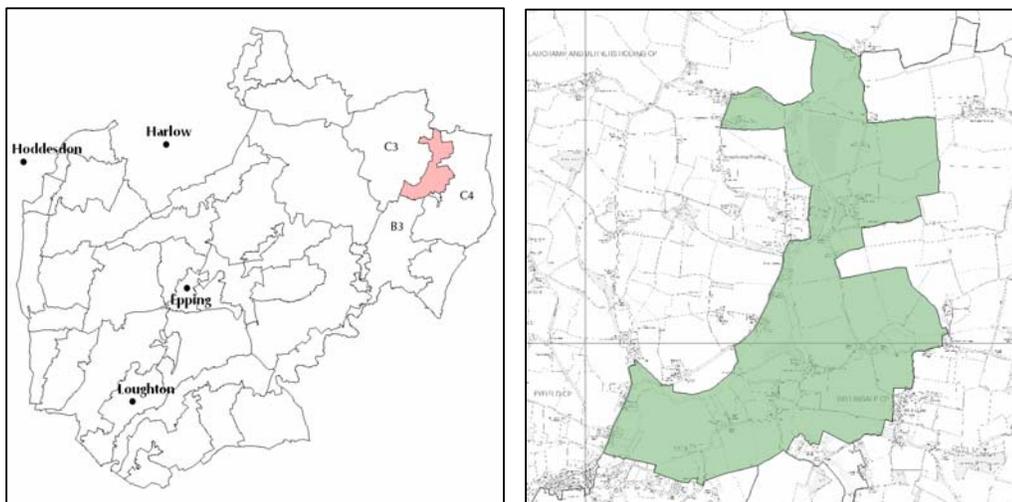
- Conserve the predominantly undisturbed, rural character and relatively strong sense of tranquillity.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and manage the existing hedgerow pattern (and associated headlands) and strengthen where appropriate through planting;
- Encourage conservation of existing key habitats and landscape features along the river corridor and expand the resource through habitat restoration and re-creation guided by ecological networks;
- Ensure that UK Biodiversity Action Plan habitats are appropriately managed;
- Restore and enhance wetland habitats.

B2: UPPER RODING

Location and Boundaries



3.3.13 The Upper Roding Valley Landscape Character Area is situated in the northeast of the District. To the south, it meets the middle section of the Roding Valley (Landscape Character Area B3), whilst to the east and west, it abuts Willingale Farmland Plateau (C4) and Abbess Farmland Plateau (C3) Landscape Character Areas.

Key Characteristics

- This area encompasses the gently undulating course of the River Roding, including the relatively narrow, flat valley bottom and gently sloping valley sides;
- Sinuous belts of woodland contribute to landscape pattern, interspersed with a patchwork of predominantly arable fields;
- Field pattern is delineated by a network of mature hedgerows, often containing hedgerow trees;
- There is a relatively strong sense of tranquillity throughout the area;
- A network of rural lanes cross the landscape, connecting scattered farmsteads with small villages such as Fyfield to the west;
- The historic ponds to the west of Flands cottages are also landscape features.

Overall Character

3.3.14 This Landscape Character Area encompasses the northerly most occurrence of the valley of the River Roding within the Study Area. Landscape pattern comprises a patchwork of predominantly arable fields, which are generally lined with a network of mature hedgerows, some of which contain hedgerow trees. In addition to this, patches of sinuous, predominantly deciduous woodland provide enclosure within some views. The narrow course of the River Roding runs through these fields and is lined in places with mature trees, providing an intermittent sense of enclosure along the valley corridor. Occasional small farmsteads are scattered throughout the area, contributing to settlement pattern. A network of narrow rural lanes provides access to this area and the overall sense of tranquillity is strong throughout much of the area.

Visual Character

- In places, views along the valley corridor are contained by woodland, but in others, views across and along the valley contribute to recognisable sense of place;
- Long-distance views across farmland are often enclosed by patches of woodland.

Historic Land Use

3.3.15 Many of the historic landscape features within this area have been lost to 20th century agriculture (in particular boundary loss since the 1950s). However, historic landscape features include linear belts of enclosed meadow pasture along the river valley and small pockets of pre-18th century enclosure within the current day field pattern.

Ecological Features

- 3.3.16 There are no national or international sites of nature conservation value within this Landscape Character Area; however, there is one County Wildlife Site to the south-east of Beauchamp Roding. Other key ecological features include belts of mature deciduous woodland, mature hedgerows at field boundaries and pockets of meadow and grassland along the river corridor.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Pressure of increasing traffic on minor rural roads;
- Management of areas of woodland for nature conservation and landscape value;
- Potential loss of hedgerows at field boundaries as a result of lack of management or further intensification of agricultural practices;
- Pollution of the river corridor as a result of run-off associated with adjacent agricultural fields;
- Loss of meadows, grasslands or mature trees along the valley corridor as a result of agricultural intensification.

Sensitivities to Change

- 3.3.17 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include patches of deciduous woodland, the network of mature hedgerows and the overall sense of remoteness and tranquillity. Long distance views across the landscape are characteristic of this area and are vulnerable to interruption by large-scale or tall vertical developments. This Landscape Character Area is considered to have **moderate** sensitivity to change overall.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Ensure that any new development on the valley sides or within adjacent agricultural fields is small-scale, responds to historic settlement pattern and form and utilises local vernacular materials;
- Maintain open views across and along the valley corridor;
- Conserve the largely undeveloped character of the area and small-scale settlement pattern;
- Conserve the predominantly undisturbed, rural character and relatively strong sense of tranquillity.

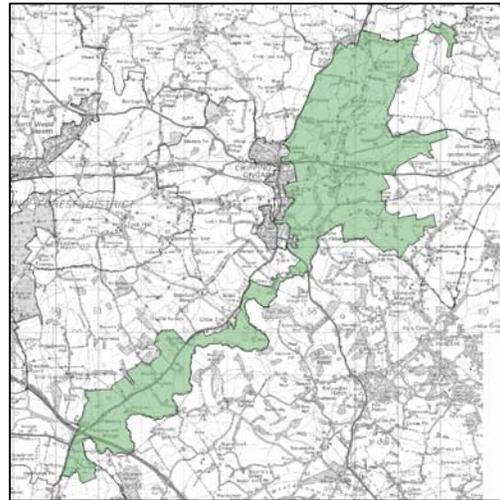
Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and manage the existing hedgerow pattern (and associated headlands) and strengthen where appropriate through planting;

- Conserve and manage areas of woodland, meadow pastures and grasslands along the valley as important landscape and nature conservation features;
- Conserve historic lanes and unimproved roadside verges;
- Restore and enhance wetland habitats.

B3: MIDDLE RODING

Location and Boundaries



3.3.18 The Middle Roding Valley Landscape Character Area is situated in the east of the study area and extends outside the eastern boundary of the District, into Brentwood Borough. Along its northern section, the area abuts Willingale Farmland Plateau (C4), Nine Ashes Farmland Plateau (C5) and Magdalen Laver and Moreton Ridges and Valleys (F6) Landscape Character

Areas. Further south, this area abuts Stapleford Abbots Wooded Ridges and Valleys (G6) Landscape Character Area.

Key Characteristics

- A patchwork of large, predominantly arable fields is situated within the wide valley floor of the middle section of the Roding Valley;
- Long belts of sinuous deciduous woodland provide a sense of enclosure on river banks;
- The noise and movement associated with the road corridor disturbs overall sense of tranquillity;
- Field pattern is delineated by a network of mature hedgerows, which contain deciduous trees in places and are gappy in others;
- Narrow road corridors which are lined with trees and mature hedgerows;
- Woodland patches contribute to the sense of that this a 'wooded' landscape as you move through it;
- Settlement pattern comprises a series of scattered farmsteads and the small, nucleated village of High Ongar in the south of the area.

Overall Character

3.3.19 This Landscape Character Area encompasses the middle section of the River Roding, the southern bank of which is situated within Brentwood Borough to the southeast of the Study Area. A patchwork of grassland along the river corridor and arable fields adjacent to the river corridor are lined with mature hedgerows, often containing hedgerow trees. There is an intermittent sense of enclosure within the landscape as a result of the long belts of sinuous woodland and other smaller pockets of deciduous woodland which contribute to landscape pattern. Overall sense of tranquillity is strong throughout much of the area, but is disturbed in proximity to the A414 road corridor which crosses the southern half of the area. Other than the main A414 road, the landscape is crossed by a network of minor, predominantly rural roads, which are often lined with mature trees, resulting in a strong sense of enclosure. A series of interconnected public footpaths provide access to the landscape, including the St. Peter's Way and the Essex Way National Trails.

Visual Character

- Views to moving traffic on the M25 road corridor from the south-western edge of the area;
- In the south-western corner of the area, views to the settlement edges of Chipping Ongar are a feature;

- Views across farmland are often limited by patches and belts of mature deciduous woodland that create a sense of enclosure;
- Views to electricity pylons which cross the river valley and are dominant vertical elements within certain views across this area.

Historic Land Use

3.3.20 Remnant historic landscape features within this Landscape Character Area include pockets of enclosed meadow pasture along the river corridor, patches of ancient woodland and an area of informal medieval parkland to the south of Little Forest Hall. Many of the fields within this Landscape Character Area have encountered post 1950s boundary loss as a result of agricultural intensification. Part of the village of High Ongar is designated as a Conservation Area for its arrangement of historic buildings. This historic village includes several cottages dating from the late 16th or early 17th century and the parish church of St. Mary the Virgin (dating from the mid 12th century).

Ecological Features

3.3.21 This Landscape Character Area is dominated by arable fields with pockets of deciduous woodland. This woodland, much of which is ancient (including Westlands and Thistlelands Springs and Whitney Wood) is a key ecological feature alongside the river corridor; and together with hedgerows, contributes to a network of ecological habitats. No internationally or nationally designated sites occur in the area, but there are 7 County Wildlife Sites, which comprise a mixture of grassland, woodland and mosaic sites.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential encroachment of urban development into the valley corridor at the eastern edges of Chipping Ongar urban area;
- Pressure of increasing traffic on minor rural roads;
- Noise and visual intrusion associated with the M25 road corridor;
- Potential loss of hedgerows at field boundaries as a result of lack of management or further intensification of agricultural practices;
- Pollution of the river corridor as a result of run-off associated with adjacent agricultural fields;
- Loss of grasslands or mature trees along the valley corridor as a result of agricultural intensification.

Sensitivities to Change

3.3.22 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include the belts of sinuous woodland along the river corridor, mature field boundaries and pockets of ancient woodland which are sensitive to changes in land management. The sense of remoteness and tranquillity away from the M25 road corridor is also sensitive to the introduction of potential new development. There is moderate historic integrity as a result of the patches of historic field boundaries and the area of medieval parkland, which are sensitive to changes in land management. As a result of the above factors, this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **moderate to high** overall sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Ensure that any new development on the valley sides or within adjacent agricultural fields is small-scale, responds to historic settlement pattern and form and utilises local vernacular materials;
- Conserve the largely undeveloped character of the area and small-scale settlement pattern;
- Conserve the predominantly undisturbed, rural character and relatively strong sense of tranquillity.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and manage the existing hedgerow pattern (and associated headlands) and strengthen where appropriate through planting;
- Conserve areas of historic parkland and historic field boundary features;
- Conserve and manage areas of ancient woodland as important historical, landscape and nature conservation features;
- Conserve historic lanes and unimproved roadside verges;
- Encourage conservation of existing habitats and landscape features and expand the resource through habitat restoration and re-creation guided by ecological networks;
- Restore and enhance wetland habitats.

B4: LOWER RODING

Location and Boundaries



3.3.23 The Lower Roding Valley Landscape Character Area is situated within the south of the District and abuts the southern settlement edge of Loughton along the southeast of the river corridor. To the north and south, the river corridor is overlooked by several Landscape Character Areas within the Wooded Ridges and Valleys Landscape Character Type (including Theydon Garnon (G2), Chigwell (G3), Lambourne (G4) and Stapleford Abbots (G5).

Key Characteristics

- Gently meandering course of the lower section of the River Roding, which is lined in places by small ponds and a patchwork of small-scale arable and pastoral fields;
- In places, fields are lined with mature hedgerows which define field pattern and provide an intermittent sense of enclosure;
- Belts of linear woodland are also features of the landscape;
- Overall sense of tranquillity is disturbed throughout much of the area by noise and movement of traffic on the M25 road corridor which crosses the area and runs along its eastern side;
- Several major road corridors cross the area, including the M11, A1168 and A113;
- There is an absence of public footpaths along the river corridor, other than at the edges of settlements, where access connects some urban areas (for example Loughton and Chigwell) to the river valley.

Overall Character

3.3.24 This Landscape Character Area encompasses the lower section of the Roding River Valley before it flows southwards outside the boundaries of the Study Area, towards Central London. The river corridor is narrower here than within the upper and middle sections of the valley to the north. A patchwork of relatively small arable and pastoral fields lines the river corridor. These fields are delineated by a network of hedgerows, occasionally containing hedgerow trees. Several main road corridors and a London Underground line cross the area, introducing a source of noise and movement and disturbing the overall sense of tranquillity. At the edge of the urban areas of Loughton and Chigwell, playing fields and other urban fringe land uses such as sports and recreation grounds are key landscape features which impart a human influence over the river corridor.

Visual Character

- Views to the urban edges of Loughton, Buckhurst Hill, Woodford and Chigwell are characteristic of the southern half of the area;
- Generally open views along the river corridor and a strong sense of intervisibility between the valley corridor and adjacent arable and pastoral fields;
- Views of this area from the northbound carriageway of the M11.

Historic Land Use

3.3.25 Along the river corridor, substantial areas of meadow pasture are visible historic landscape features. Adjacent to the river corridor, there has been some post 1950s boundary loss as a

result of agricultural intensification and the development of the M11 road corridor, however there is still evidence of a sinuous historic field pattern.

Ecological Features

- 3.3.26 Key ecological features within this Landscape Character Area include pockets of flower-rich, unimproved hay meadows within Roding Valley Meadows Local Nature Reserve, nestled beside the river corridor. These meadows are bounded by thick hedgerows, scrub and secondary woodland and display colourful wildflowers in May. Four of these meadows are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for their nature conservation value. In addition to the meadows, hedgerows and mature trees are key ecological features. Several County Wildlife Sites, both woodland and grasslands are also scattered throughout the area.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential encroachment of urban development into the valley corridor at the urban edges of Loughton, Buckhurst Hill, Woodford and Chigwell;
- Noise, movement and visual intrusion associated with the M11 road corridor;
- Pressure of increasing traffic on minor rural roads;
- Potential loss of hedgerows at field boundaries as a result of lack of management or further intensification of agricultural practices;
- Pollution of the river corridor as a result of run-off associated with adjacent agricultural fields;
- Loss of grasslands, species-rich meadows or mature trees along the valley corridor as a result of agricultural intensification.

Sensitivities to Change

- 3.3.27 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include the substantial areas of species-rich meadows, hedgerows and pockets of woodland which are sensitive to changes in land management. There is relatively strong historic integrity as a result of the enclosed meadow pastures and remnant historic field boundaries. The meadows are also key ecological features which are sensitive to changes in land management or encroachment by development. As a result of the above factors, this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **moderate to high** overall sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Ensure that any development at the edges of urban areas in close proximity to the valley sides is small-scale and responds to historic settlement pattern and local vernacular;

- Maintain cross-valley views;
- Ensure that new woodland planting enhances existing landscape character and that species composition reflects local provenance.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and manage the existing hedgerow pattern (and associated headlands) and strengthen where appropriate through planting;
- Conserve historic field boundary features;
- Conserve species-rich meadows as features of historic and ecological value;
- Encourage conservation of existing key habitats and landscape features and expand the resource through habitat restoration and re-creation guided by ecological networks;
- Conserve historic lanes and unimproved roadside verges.

3.4 Farmland Plateau: Landscape Character Type C

Location and Boundaries

3.4.1 This Landscape Character Type occurs in two broad locations within the District, with one group of Landscape Character Areas in the northeast (stretching from Sheering to Nine Ashes) and another in the northwest (running from Roydon to Thornwood Common). In the northeast, the Farmland Plateau is dissected by the valley of the River Roding and abuts the Ridges and Valleys Landscape Character Type (F) to the south. In the northwest, this Landscape Character Type overlooks the River Valley Floodplain: Flooded Gravel Pits and Marshes Landscape Character Type (A) to the east and abuts the Ridges and Valleys Landscape Character Type (F) to the south.

Key Characteristics

3.4.2 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

- Elevated, gently rolling Boulder Clay/Chalky Till plateau landscape, which is incised by several relatively small river valleys;
- Network of winding lanes and minor roads;
- Medium to large-scale, predominantly arable fields, which are often enclosed by a network of hedgerows;
- Dispersed settlement pattern of scattered manors, farms, cottages and small villages;
- In places, historic field pattern comprises a mixture of pre 18th century irregular fields (which are probably of medieval origin and some maybe even older) belonging to the manorial demesnes and larger farms and commons, which were subsequently enclosed;
- In other places, post 1950s boundary loss is apparent, particularly where this Landscape Character Type occurs to the north of the settlements of Matching Tye and Matching Green;
- Long distance views across valleys from several locations;
- Well wooded in places, with several areas of semi-natural and ancient woodland.

Landscape Character Areas

3.4.3 This Landscape Character Type contains the following Character Areas (as shown on **Figure 3.1**):

- C1: Sheering
- C2: Matching
- C3: Abbess

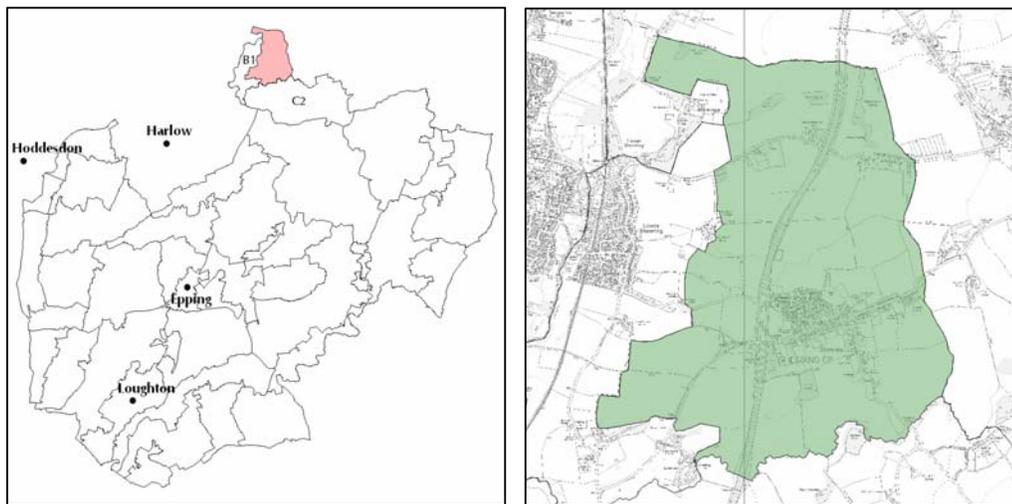
- C4: Willingale
- C5: Nine Ashes
- C6: Roydon
- C7: Roydon Hamlet
- C8: Bumble's Green
- C9: Epping Green

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

- 3.4.4 The proposed strategy objectives for this Landscape Character Type and its constituent Landscape Character Areas are:
- 3.4.5 **Conserve** - seek to protect and enhance positive features (as set out within the 'sensitivities to change' sections for each Landscape Character Area below) that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.
- Enhance** – seek to improve the integrity of the landscape, and reinforce its character, by introducing new and/or enhanced elements where distinctive features or characteristics are absent.
- 3.4.6 Suggested landscape guidelines for planning and management of each Landscape Character Area, within the context of the above strategy objectives, are set out in the following section.

C1: SHEERING

Location and Boundaries



- 3.4.7 Sheering Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Area is situated at the northern edge of the District and overlooks the River Stort (B1) Landscape Character Area to the west. To the south, this area abuts Matching Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Area (C2).

Key Characteristics

- Gently rolling plateau landscape with medium to large-scale arable fields, lined in places with a network of hedgerows;
- A network of narrow, winding lanes connect the small, nucleated village of Sheering with occasional scattered farmsteads;
- Small, isolated pockets of deciduous woodland;
- Occasional veteran trees are landscape features within views across fields;
- Corridor of the M11 motorway crosses the area north-south and introduces a source of noise and movement;
- Sense of tranquillity is relatively strong at distance from the M11 corridor.

Overall Character

3.4.8 This relatively small area of Farmland Plateau forms the southern extent of a wider expanse of plateau which extends to the north of the Study Area, within Uttlesford District¹⁷. Landscape is dominated by a series of large prairie fields, which are lined with gappy hedgerows and interspersed with small pockets of deciduous woodland. The corridor of the M11 which crosses the area north-south has a dominant influence on the character of the landscape, introducing a source of noise and movement and disturbing the overall sense of tranquillity. Long distance, open views across large, undulating arable fields are characteristic of this area, with occasional views into the Stort Valley from the western edge of the area contributing to recognisable sense of place. Towards the centre of the area, the small, nucleated village of Sheering, with its landmark church, contributes to the settlement pattern, which otherwise comprises occasional scattered farmsteads.

Visual Character

- Views across and along the M11 corridor are a key feature from several locations within this area;
- Small patches of woodland and gappy hedgerows provide an intermittent sense of enclosure within open views across arable fields;
- From the western edge of the area glimpsed views into the Stort Valley contribute to recognisable sense of place.

¹⁷ See Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessments, September 2006, Chris Blandford Associates.

Historic Land Use

3.4.9 The fields within this area have a generally modern character, with some isolated areas of historic landscape interspersed with large areas of modern 20th century prairie fields, where post-1950s boundary loss is apparent. There is some post 1950s enclosure of fields adjacent to the M11 corridor and several smaller extents of pre-18th century field systems are isolated within this broad swathe of prairie fields. The area also contains the visible and non-visible archaeological remains of a large number of moated sites, which cluster around Sheering in particular. Sheering is a long-established settlement as evidenced by its mention in the 1086 Domesday Book. Agricultural ridge and furrow, thought to date to the medieval period is visible to the south of Sheering.

Ecological Features

3.4.10 This Landscape Character Area is dominated by intensive and widespread arable agriculture. The area contains no designated sites of international, national or local value for nature conservation; however, three areas of woodland have been designated as County Wildlife Sites and other ecological features include species-rich hedgerows.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential for the erection of new farm buildings; or residential dwellings at the edges of Sheering, which could be conspicuous on the skyline if not designed sensitively;
- Potential further decline in the condition of field boundaries through further agricultural intensification;
- Potential increases in volume of traffic on narrow rural lanes and road corridors;
- Potential for widening of the M11 corridor which would introduce a further source of noise and movement and further disturb sense of tranquillity;
- Potential for loss of small pockets of woodland or veteran trees due to inappropriate management.

Sensitivities to Change

3.4.11 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include hedgerows, occasional veteran trees, small extents of pre-18th century field systems and moated sites, which are sensitive to changes in land management. The comprehensive network of rural lanes which cross the landscape are sensitive to potential increased traffic flow, associated with new development. The open skyline of higher areas of the farmland plateau is visually sensitive to new development that may be visible within views across, to and

from the area. As a result of the above factors, overall this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **low to moderate** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

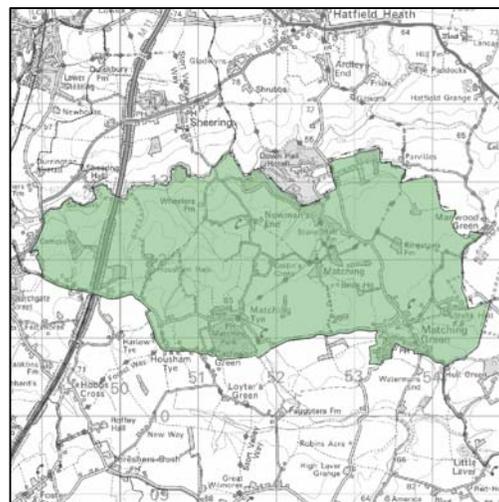
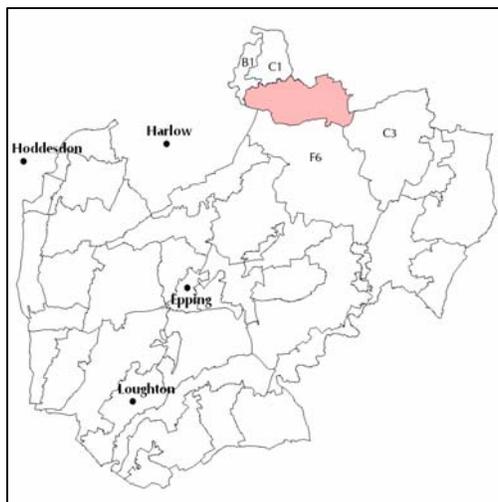
- Ensure that any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern (of small-scale villages, hamlets and scattered farmsteads), landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles;
- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of Sheering;
- Maintain characteristic open views across the farmland and into the valley of the River Stort from the western edge of the area.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern (and associated headlands), and strengthen through planting using local provenance species;
- Conserve and manage areas of woodland as important landscape and nature conservation features;
- Ensure that highway improvement schemes respect and reflect local character;
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character.

C2: MATCHING

Location and Boundaries



3.4.12 Matching Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Area is situated in the north of the District, adjacent to Sheering Farmland Plateau (C1) and Abbess Farmland Plateau (C3) Landscape Character Areas. To the south, this area abuts Magdalen Laver and Moreton Ridges and Valleys Landscape Character Area (F6).

Key Characteristics

- Landscape pattern is dominated by arable farmland, comprising a network of medium to large-scale arable fields, permeated by patches of woodland;
- Network of narrow lanes connect isolated farmsteads and small hamlets and villages;
- M11 corridor crosses the area, running north-south and introduces a source of noise and movement;
- Gently rolling landform;
- Numerous veteran trees, including hornbeam, pedunculate oak, ash and willow within fields and hedgerows;
- Halls and associated formally designed landscapes are also key features;
- Sense of tranquillity is relatively strong throughout most of the area, but is disturbed in the west as a result of the M11 corridor.

Overall Character

- 3.4.13 Dominated by arable farmland, encompassing a patchwork of medium to large arable fields, the landscape pattern of this area is permeated by patches of woodland (much of which is semi-natural and ancient). Several small, narrow stream corridors dissect the plateau (including the corridor of Pincey Brook) creating intimate landscape features and contributing to the gently undulating landform. Small, nucleated historic hamlets and villages, such as Matching Green, Matching and Matching Tye punctuate the surrounding fields and contribute to a dispersed and isolated settlement pattern. Halls (such as Matching Hall) with associated designed, formal landscapes are also key landscape features. In addition to this, occasional, isolated farmsteads are scattered throughout much of the area. Sense of tranquillity is strong throughout most of the area, at distance from the M11 corridor and the landscape is crossed by a network of minor rural road corridors which are often lined with trees and hedgerows.

Visual Character

- Open views across a patchwork of rolling arable fields are punctuated by patches of deciduous woodland which frame certain views;
- Views across and along the M11 corridor from the west of the area;
- In several locations, views are channelled along minor road corridors as a result of mature trees and hedgerows lining the road corridors.

Historic Land Use

- 3.4.14 The field pattern is dominated by post-1950s prairie fields, which are large in scale and sub-regular in shape. These modern fields are the result of boundary removal, as a well as post-

1950s enclosure, with a concentration of the latter near to the M11 motorway corridor. Interspersed between these prairie fields are areas of surviving irregularly shaped pre-18th century field systems. The parkland associated with halls and ancient woodland break up the dominance of the prairie fields. A number of small historic settlements are situated within the area, several of which are nucleated around a green or common, whilst others are located along roadsides and at road junctions. Several of these historic settlements are Conservation Areas, including Matching, Matching Tye and Matching Green. The Landscape Character Area also contains a number of historic halls and manor houses.

Ecological Features

- 3.4.15 Key ecological features within this Landscape Character Area include hedgerows, small stream corridors, veteran trees and patches of ancient woodland. The Landscape Character Area is dominated by intensive and widespread arable agriculture and no sites of international or national value for nature conservation can be found within the area. There are, however, 9 County Wildlife Sites comprising a combination of woodland, grassland and mosaic sites.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential for the erection of new farm buildings or residential dwellings at the edges of Matching, Matching Tye or Matching Green, which could be conspicuous on the skyline if not designed sensitively;
- Potential further decline in the condition of field boundaries through further agricultural intensification;
- Potential increases in volume of traffic on narrow rural lanes and road corridors;
- Potential for widening of the M11 corridor which would introduce a further source of noise and movement and further disturb sense of tranquillity;
- Potential for loss of small pockets of woodland or veteran trees due to inappropriate management;
- Potential for loss of parkland to agriculture due to changes in land management.

Sensitivities to Change

- 3.4.16 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include hedgerows, veteran trees, and small extents of pre-18th century field systems and parkland which are sensitive to changes in land management. The comprehensive network of rural lanes which cross the landscape are sensitive to potential increased traffic flow, associated with new development. The open skyline of higher areas of the farmland plateau is visually sensitive to new development that may be located within views across, to and from the area. The relatively strong sense of tranquillity at distance from the M11 corridor is also

sensitive to potential new development. As a result of the above factors, overall this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **moderate** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

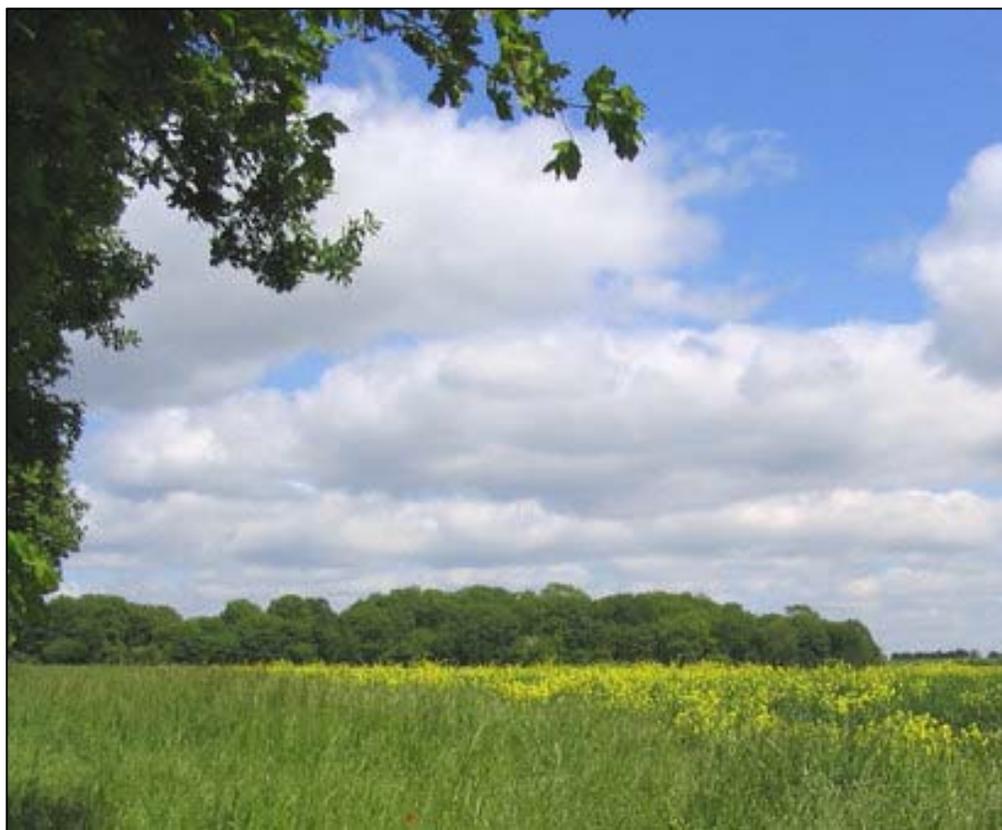
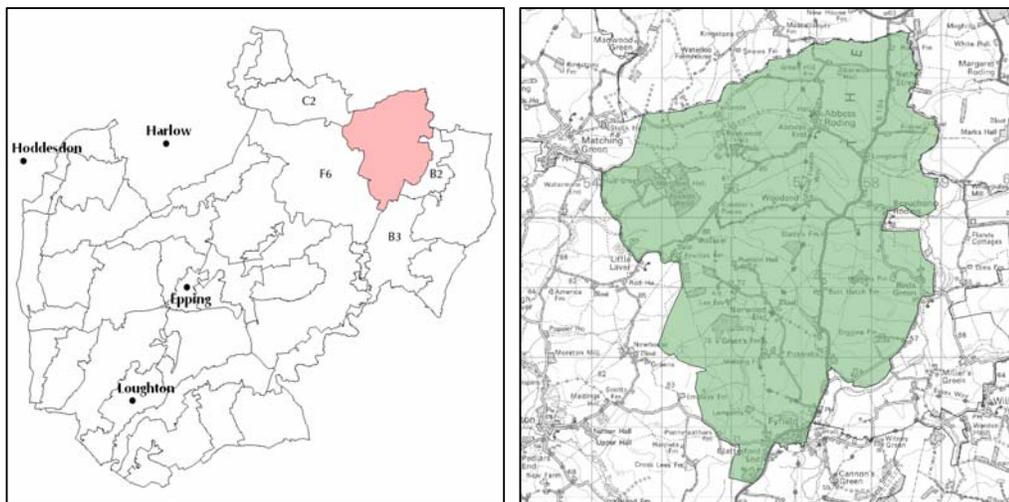
- Ensure that any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles;
- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of Matching, Matching Tye and Matching Green;
- Conserve areas of parkland as historic landscape features;
- Maintain characteristic panoramic, open views across farmland.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern (and adjacent headlands), and strengthen through planting using local provenance species;
- Establish species-rich field margins within arable fields as an important nature conservation habitat;
- Conserve and manage areas of ancient woodland as important landscape and nature conservation features;
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character;
- Seek ways to reduce the visual impact of the main road corridors through introducing new and strengthening existing parallel shelterbelts where appropriate;
- Conserve and manage veteran trees as key landscape and ecological features;
- Conserve and protect small stream corridors from pollution associated with adjacent agricultural fields.

C3: ABBESS

Location and Boundaries



3.4.17 Abbess Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Area is situated in the northwest of the District. To the west, it abuts Matching Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Area (C2), whilst to the east, it overlooks the Upper and Middle sections of Roding River Valley (Landscape Character Areas B2 and B3).

Key Characteristics

- A patchwork of large arable fields which are delineated by low to medium hedgerows, in places containing hedgerow trees (some of which are veteran trees);
- A scattered and small-scale settlement pattern of small hamlets and villages (such as Abbess Roding and Beachamp Roding) in addition to isolated farmsteads;
- A network of narrow, predominantly rural lanes which are lined with hedgerows, often containing hedgerow trees connect the villages and farmsteads;
- Several narrow stream corridors cross the landscape and contribute to the gently rolling topography;
- There is often a strong sense of enclosure along narrow lanes;
- Small, medium and large patches of deciduous woodland are dotted within the landscape (several of which are ancient), contributing to recognisable sense of place;
- A comprehensive network of footpaths and bridleways provide access to this landscape, including the Three Forests Way National Trail;
- Sense of tranquillity is strong throughout most of the area, but is slightly disturbed in proximity to the B184 road corridor which runs north-south across the eastern half of the area.

Overall Character

3.4.18 This Landscape Character Area forms the southern edge of a larger area of Farmland Plateau which extends to the north of the study area (within Uttlesford District¹⁸). It encompasses a mosaic of large, gently undulating arable fields which are interspersed with small stream corridors and dotted with patches of deciduous woodland. These fields are often lined with hedgerows, some of which contain hedgerow trees. A small-scale settlement pattern of small villages and hamlets alongside scattered, isolated farmsteads is apparent. These are served by a network of narrow, rural lanes, which often exhibit a strong sense of enclosure as a result of trees and hedgerows lining the road corridors. Overall sense of tranquillity is strong throughout most of the area. Within the eastern half of the area, views into the corridor of the Roding River Valley contribute to recognisable sense of place, whilst panoramic, often open views across arable farmland are characteristic of most of the area. In places, church spires or towers are landmark elements within views.

Visual Character

- Church towers and spires form landmark elements within views across parts of the area;

¹⁸ See Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessments, September 2006, Chris Blandford Associates.

- From the eastern half of the area, views into the Roding River Valley contribute to a recognisable sense of place;
- Patches of deciduous woodland contribute to an intermittent sense of enclosure within views across the landscape.

Historic Land Use

3.4.19 Several of the fields within this area have suffered post 1950s boundary loss as a result of agricultural intensification. Pockets of pre 18th century enclosure do however remain, forming a key feature of the remnant historic landscape pattern. Small areas of ancient woodland are also a feature of this Landscape Character Area. The village of Abbess Roding is one of eight hamlets and villages between Great Dunmow (to the north of the Study area) and Chipping Ongar, collectively known as 'The Rodings' which lie either side of the River Roding. Its name derives from the Abbess of Barking who was a patron of the Parish Church of St. Edmund and a local landowner in the Middle Ages. The church provides the focal point of the settlement and dates largely from the 14th century, although it has even earlier origins. The hamlet has evolved linearly in a north/south direction along the main road. All the buildings are set well back from the road within large plots. Wide verges lined by mature trees and hedges create an arcadian character and buildings are contained within a landscape-dominated setting.

Ecological Features

3.4.20 There are no international or national designated areas of nature conservation value within this Landscape Character Area; however key ecological features include mature hedgerows, stream corridors, veteran trees and pockets of woodland. There are eleven locally designated County Wildlife Sites within the area.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential for the erection of new farm buildings within agricultural fields, or residential dwellings at the edges of Abbess Roding, which could be conspicuous on the skyline if not designed sensitively;
- Potential further decline in the condition of field boundaries through further agricultural intensification;
- Potential increases in volume of traffic on narrow rural lanes and road corridors;
- Potential for loss of small pockets of woodland or veteran trees due to inappropriate management;

Sensitivities to Change

3.4.21 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include hedgerows, veteran trees, small extents of pre-18th century field systems; small areas of ancient woodland and larger areas of deciduous woodland. The comprehensive network of rural lanes which cross the landscape are sensitive to potential increases in traffic flow, associated with new development. The open skyline of higher areas of the farmland plateau is visually sensitive to new development that may be visible within views across, to and from the area. The relatively strong sense of tranquillity throughout most of the area is also sensitive to potential new development. As a result of the above factors, overall this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **moderate to high** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

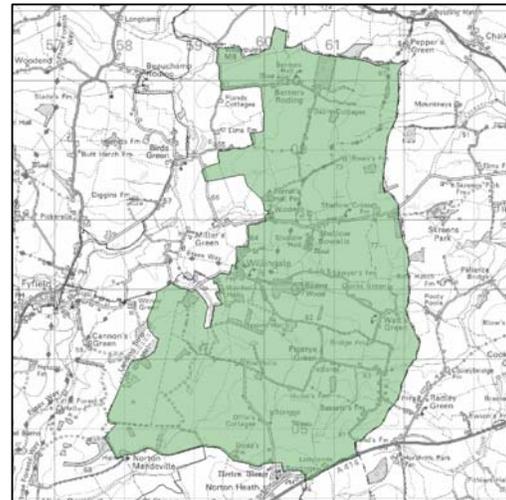
- Ensure that any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive buildings styles;
- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of Abbess Roding and Beauchamp Roding;
- Maintain characteristic panoramic, open views across farmland.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and manage areas of ancient and other woodland as important landscape, historic and nature conservation features;
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials which are in keeping with local vernacular;
- Conserve and manage veteran trees as key landscape and ecological features;
- Conserve and protect small stream corridors from pollution associated with adjacent agricultural fields;
- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern (and associated headlands), and strengthen through planting using local provenance species;
- Establish species-rich field margins within arable fields as an important nature conservation habitat.

C4: WILLINGALE

Location and Boundaries



3.4.22 Willingale Farmland Plateau is situated at the eastern edge of the District. To the south, this area abuts Nine Ashes Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Area (C5), whilst to the east it overlooks the Upper Roding River Valley Landscape Character Area (B2).

Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating, predominantly arable farmland which encompasses a series of large arable fields and smaller field systems in close proximity to small hamlets, such as Willingale;
- Several narrow stream corridors dissect the plateau and contribute a gently rolling topography;
- A series of narrow road corridors, often lined with mature hedgerows are a key feature;
- A series of moated sites are scattered within the area and provide historic landscape features;
- There is a strong sense of tranquillity throughout most of this area, which has a predominantly rural character;
- The landscape is crossed by an interconnected network of public footpaths and National Trail routes;
- Settlement pattern is small-scale and dispersed, encompassing small hamlets such as Willingale and a series of scattered, isolated farmsteads;
- Small patches of predominantly deciduous woodland are scattered within several of the fields, contributing to an intermittent sense of enclosure.

Overall Character

3.4.23 This Landscape Character Area encompasses a patchwork of predominantly arable fields, lined with a network of hedgerows (gappy in places). Several of the hedgerows contain mature hedgerow trees. Around the periphery of the area, fields tend to be large-scale, whilst in close proximity to small hamlets, such as Willingale, a smaller-scale and more intimate field pattern is apparent. There is a strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity throughout most of this area, which has a predominantly rural character. A network of narrow, minor rural roads connects isolated farmsteads and small hamlets. These are often lined with mature hedgerows and trees which create a sense of enclosure and limit views to adjacent fields. Several historic moated sites and small patches of deciduous woodland are key landscape features. Panoramic, open views across farmland are characteristic of this landscape.

Visual Character

- The towers of the churches in Willingale are key features within views across this landscape from several fields surrounding the village;
- Small patches of woodland frame certain views across farmland; otherwise panoramic, open views are a key characteristic;

- Channelled views can often be gained along minor road corridors as a result of the high hedgerows lining them.

Historic Land Use

- 3.4.24 The historic field pattern within this area is dominated, in the most part, by large arable fields (the result of 20th century agricultural intensification). The smaller-scale fields around Willingale, however, display a pattern of pre-18th century enclosure. Pockets of ancient woodland, moated sites and small, historic hamlets are also historic landscape features.

Ecological Features

- 3.4.25 There are no international or nationally designated areas of nature conservation value within this Landscape Character Area; however key ecological features include small patches of ancient woodland to the south of Willingale, mature hedgerows, stream corridors and veteran trees. Eleven pockets of woodland within the area have been designated as County Wildlife Sites.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential for the erection of new farm buildings within agricultural fields, or residential dwellings at the edges of Willingale, which could be conspicuous on the skyline if not designed sensitively;
- Potential further decline in the condition of field boundaries through further agricultural intensification;
- Potential increases in volume of traffic on narrow rural lanes and road corridors;
- Potential for loss of small pockets of woodland or veteran trees due to inappropriate management.

Sensitivities to Change

- 3.4.26 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include hedgerows, small stream corridors, veteran trees, small extents of pre-18th century field systems (around Willingale); historic moated sites and small areas of ancient woodland. The comprehensive network of rural lanes which cross the landscape are sensitive to potential increased traffic flow, associated with new development. The open skyline of higher areas of the farmland plateau is visually sensitive to new development that may be visible within views across, to and from the area. The relatively strong sense of tranquillity throughout most of the area is also sensitive to potential new development. As a result of the above factors, overall this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **moderate to high** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

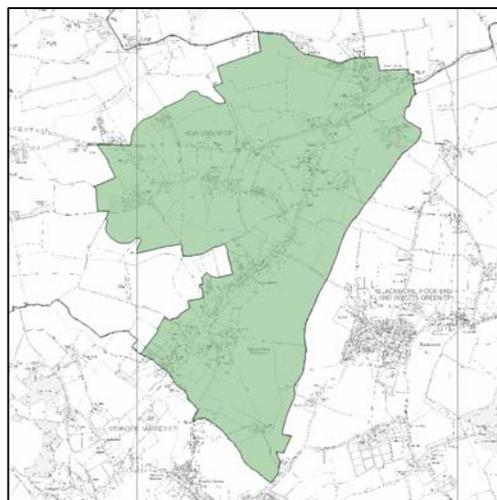
- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of Willingale;
- Conserve the predominantly rural character of this area;
- Ensure that any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles;
- Maintain characteristic panoramic, open views across farmland.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern (and associated headlands) and strengthen through planting using local provenance species;
- Conserve and manage areas of ancient and other woodland as important landscape, historic and nature conservation features;
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials, which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character;
- Conserve and protect small stream corridors from pollution associated with adjacent agricultural fields;
- Establish arable field margins as an important nature conservation habitat.

C5: NINE ASHES

Location and Boundaries



3.4.27 Nine Ashes Landscape Character Area is situated at the eastern edge of the District. To the north, it abuts Willingale Landscape Character Area (C4), whilst to the west it overlooks the Middle Roding Valley Landscape Character Area (B3).

Key Characteristics

- Linear village of Nine Ashes runs north-south across the area and is surrounded by a patchwork of small-scale fields which are lined with mature hedgerows, often containing hedgerow trees;
- To the east of the village, the large expanse of Paslow Wood Common dominates field pattern;
- To the west of the village and adjacent small-scale fields, field pattern is larger and more typical of the arable fields within much of the Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Type to the north;
- Settlement pattern is linear, with a series of houses or farmsteads lining most of the roads that cross the area;
- Sense of tranquillity is disturbed in the north of the area by the noise and movement of traffic on the A414 road corridor, which crosses the area.

Overall Character

3.4.28 The character of this area is dominated by the linear village of Nine Ashes, other buildings lining the road corridors which cross the area and an associated patchwork of small-scale fields. These fields are generally lined with mature hedgerows and often contain hedgerow trees. Despite the presence of the A414 road corridor within the north of the area, which disturbs the sense of tranquillity, this area has a predominantly rural character.

Visual Character

- Open views to the wooded horizons of landscapes to the east (within Brentwood Borough¹⁹);
- Long distance views across farmland, interrupted by hedgerows in places.

Historic Land Use

3.4.29 The small-scale field pattern lining both sides of the settlement of Nine Ashes displays a historic pattern of pre-18th century enclosure. To the east, Paslow Wood Common is also a key historic landscape feature. Other fields within the area have suffered post-1950s boundary loss and are consistent with the pattern of 20th century agriculture.

¹⁹ Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessments, September 2006, Chris Blandford Associates: Landscape Character Area F7 – Blackmore Wooded Farmland

Ecological Features

- 3.4.30 There are no international or nationally designated sites of nature conservation value within this area; however key ecological habitats include mature hedgerows and trees. An area of grassland near Chevers Hall has been designated as a County Wildlife Site.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential for the erection of new farm buildings within agricultural fields, or residential dwellings at the edges of Nine Ashes, which could be conspicuous on the skyline if not designed sensitively;
- Potential for expansion of the A414 road corridor;
- Potential further decline in the condition of field boundaries through further agricultural intensification;
- Potential increases in volume of traffic on narrow rural lanes and road corridors;
- Potential for loss of hedgerows due to inappropriate management.

Sensitivities to Change

- 3.4.31 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include hedgerows, pre-18th century field systems (around Nine Ashes) and Paslow Wood Common. The network of rural lanes which cross the landscape are sensitive to potential increased traffic flow, associated with new development. Views towards wooded farmland to the east and open views across farmland within the area are visually sensitive to new development that may be prominent within views across, to and from the area. The relatively strong sense of tranquillity throughout most of the area is also sensitive to potential new development. As a result of the above factors, overall this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **moderate** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Ensure that any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles;
- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of Nine Ashes;
- Maintain characteristic panoramic, open views across farmland;
- Conserve the predominantly rural character of this area.

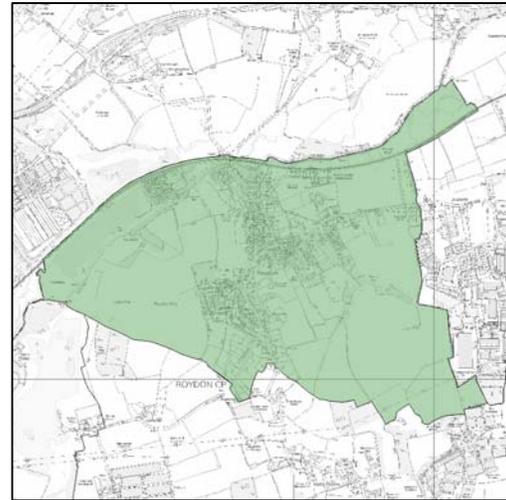
Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern (and adjacent headlands) and strengthen through planting using local provenance species;

- Conserve and promote the use of building materials which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character;
- Establish species rich field margins around arable fields as an important nature conservation habitat.

C6: ROYDON

Location and Boundaries



3.4.32 Roydon Landscape Character Area is situated at the north of the District. To the south, this area abuts Roydon Hamlet Landscape Character Area (C7) and Rye Meads River Valley Floodplain (A1) Landscape Character Area. To the east this area abuts the western settlement edge of Harlow (outside the District).

Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating fields of arable farmland plateau that overlook the valley of the River Stort to the north and River Lea to the west;
- Fields are lined with a network of mature hedgerows, often with hedgerow trees;
- Veteran trees are a feature of the area and contribute to historic landscape pattern;
- The large, nucleated village of Roydon is a key feature in the settlement pattern of the area.

Overall Character

3.4.33 This Landscape Character Area is dominated by the historic village of Roydon which is surrounded by a patchwork of predominantly arable fields. These fields are lined with a network of mature hedgerows and often contain mature veteran trees. As a result, there is a relatively strong sense of enclosure in proximity to the settlement. At distance from the immediate environs of Roydon, arable fields are larger and a combination of open and framed views can be gained into the Stort Valley to the north and to the western edge of Harlow urban area. Sense of tranquillity is strong throughout most of the area.

Visual Character

- Views to Industrial Estates at the western edges of Harlow from the east of this area;
- Framed views into and along the meandering corridor of the River Stort, to the north of the area;
- Views to the edges of Roydon village from adjacent fields.

Historic Land Use

3.4.34 The historic character of this area is dominated by the settlement of Roydon, the historic heart of which is a Conservation Area and Roydon Park to the west. In the Domesday Book, Roydon was already a substantial village of at least 20 households at the centre of a manor of 720 acres, and the manor held Harlow as a less valuable outlier. Medieval Roydon contained four manor houses, one of which was granted to the Order of the Knights Templar, and Temple Farm on the High Street still carries the name of these crusaders. Roydon Hall, a second manor, was owned by Christ College Cambridge until it passed to the Tudor monarchs. Henry VIII presented his infant son and heir, Edward, to the villagers at Roydon Hall in 1538. Whilst Roydon Hall was demolished in 1864, the village still contains several buildings of historic interest, including the 13th century church and the area of domestic closes behind the High Street. Removal of hedgerows to the southeast of Roydon village was a result of 19th century enclosure of common land. A key historic lane within the village (Blind Lane) is lined with

veteran trees. In addition, several field edges have important stands of female native Black Poplar.

Ecological Features

3.4.35 Part of Hunsdon Mead SSSI is nationally designated for its unimproved grassland (it is also a registered common and one of the last remaining sites in Essex still to be managed on the ancient Lammas system of hay making). Hunsdon Mead is also designated as a County Wildlife Site, alongside four other sites of local nature conservation interest. Other key ecological features include hedgerows and veteran trees. Roydon Countrycare (a volunteer organisation) together with Epping Forest Countrycare has replaced significant lengths of hedgerows over the last twenty five years within this area, which make a positive contribution to the landscape and are key ecological features.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential for the erection of new farm buildings within agricultural fields, or residential dwellings at the edges of Roydon, which could be conspicuous on the skyline if not designed sensitively;
- Potential increases in volume of traffic on narrow rural lanes and road corridors;
- Potential for loss of hedgerows or veteran trees due to inappropriate management.

Sensitivities to Change

3.4.36 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include hedgerows, veteran trees and sites of ecological interest, including Hunsdon Mead. Framed and open views into the corridor of the River Stort to the north are visually sensitive to new development. This area also forms the backdrop to views eastwards from the corridor of the River Lea to the west. Any potential new development within the area is therefore likely to be visually prominent if not designed sensitively. The relatively strong sense of tranquillity throughout most of the area is also sensitive to potential new development. As a result of the above factors, overall this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **moderate to high** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of Roydon;
- Conserve the predominantly rural character of this area;
- Maintain characteristic views across farmland and into the valleys of the Stort and Lea;

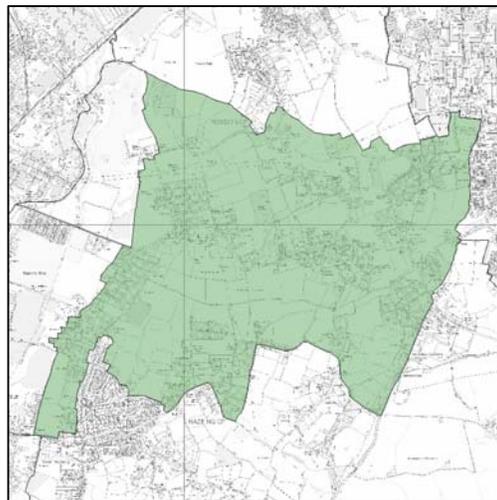
- Ensure that any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive buildings styles.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern (and adjacent headlands) and strengthen through planting using local provenance species;
- Conserve veteran trees as key landscape and ecological features;
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character;
- Establish species rich field margins within arable fields as an important nature conservation habitat.

C7: ROYDON HAMLET

Location and Boundaries



3.4.37 Roydon Hamlet Landscape Character Area is situated in the northwest of the District, between Roydon Farmland Plateau (C6) to the north and Bumble's Green Farmland Plateau (C8) to the south. The area also overlooks Rye Meads (A1) and Nazeing Mead (A2) Landscape Character Areas to the west.

Key Characteristics

- Dominant visible glasshouses are scattered throughout much of this area and contribute to landscape pattern;
- An undulating landscape of predominantly arable fields, which are lined with mature hedgerows, often containing veteran hedgerow trees;
- Open and framed views from the western half of the area into and across the Lea Valley;
- Small patches of deciduous woodland provide a sense of enclosure within views;
- Settlement pattern comprises scattered, isolated farmsteads and the small hamlets of Roydon Hamlet and Bumble's Green;
- Sense of tranquillity is relatively strong throughout much of the area; however this is disturbed in proximity to road corridors.

Overall Character

- 3.4.38 This Landscape Character Area encompasses a patchwork of small-scale, predominantly arable fields, which overlie gently undulating topography. Field boundaries are generally delineated with mature hedgerows, often containing veteran trees. Superimposed on this landscape are several clusters of horticultural glasshouses, which are key landscape features within views across the area and also contribute to recognisable sense of place. Several minor road corridors run across the character area, connecting Harlow to the east, with Roydon to the north and Nazeing to the south. Settlement pattern comprises small-scale linear settlements such as Roydon Hamlet and Halls Green and scattered, isolated farmsteads.

Visual Character

- Glasshouses are key landscape features within views across the area;
- Small pockets of woodland frame views to the north of Halls Green;
- Open and framed views into and across the Lea Valley from the western edge of the Character Area (however, these are limited in places by vegetation within the valley);
- Open views to the urban edges of Harlow from eastern parts of the area;
- Views are hidden and revealed, moving through this undulating landscape.

Historic Land Use

- 3.4.39 This area contains a number of roadside settlements, and is dominated by the glasshouses of the horticultural industry. This industry has a long heritage, with its roots in medieval market gardening. The industry received a boost in the mid-19th century with the removal of tax on glass, and blossomed in this area. Whilst the majority of the glasshouses in this area are of

modern construction, older remains of this industry still survive, including older water towers and other features.

- 3.4.40 Lower Nazeing is a large settlement to the southwest of the area. Once known as Nazeing Bury, the manor house attached to this settlement was the home to Catherine Parr, wife of Henry VIII, for a period of time. The medieval settlements of Halls Green and Roydon Hamlet are also located within this area. Historic medieval field systems have been largely retained throughout much of the area, for example, the rare closed field systems found near Halls Green.

Ecological Features

- 3.4.41 There are no internationally or nationally designated sites of nature conservation value within this Landscape Character Area. There are, however, four locally designated County Wildlife Sites. Other key ecological habitats and features include networks of hedgerows and veteran trees.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential for the erection of new farm buildings within agricultural fields, or residential dwellings at the edges of Roydon Hamlet or Halls Green, which could be conspicuous on the skyline if not designed sensitively;
- Potential further decline in the condition of field boundaries through further agricultural intensification;
- Potential increases in volume of traffic on narrow rural lanes and road corridors;
- Potential for loss of hedgerows or veteran trees due to inappropriate management.

Sensitivities to Change

- 3.4.42 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include hedgerows, veteran trees and sites of ecological interest. Historic Medieval field systems and glasshouses are sensitive historic landscape features. Framed and open views into the corridor of the River Lea to the west and open views across undulating farmland are visually sensitive to new development. This area also forms the backdrop to views eastwards from the corridor of the River Lea to the west. Any potential new development within the area is therefore likely to be visually prominent if not designed sensitively. The relatively strong sense of tranquillity throughout most of the area is also sensitive to potential new development. As a result of the above factors, overall this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **moderate to high** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of Roydon Hamlet and Halls Green;
- Conserve the predominantly rural character of this area;
- Ensure that any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles;
- Maintain characteristic views across farmland and into the Lea Valley.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern (and associated headlands), and strengthen through planting using local provenance species;
- Conserve the pattern of historic (Medieval) field systems;
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character;
- Conserve veteran trees as key landscape and ecological features;
- Establish species rich field margins within arable fields as an important nature conservation habitat.

C8: BUMBLE'S GREEN

Location and Boundaries



3.4.43 Bumble's Green Landscape Character Area is situated in the northwest of the District. To the north, it abuts Roydon Hamlet Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Area (C7), whilst to the south it is adjacent to Epping Green Farmland Plateau (C9) and Holyfield Ridges and Valleys (F1). This area also overlooks Lea Valley Marshes River Valley Floodplain (A3) Landscape Character Area to the west.

Key Characteristics

- Undulating area of predominantly arable fields, which are lined with mature hedgerows;
- Mature, veteran trees are key landscape features, both within fields and hedgerows;
- A series of small, pronounced hills create local variation in topography at the western edge of the area, overlooking the corridor of the Lea Valley to the west;
- The landscape is crossed by a network of narrow lanes, several of which are lined with mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees, which limit views across adjacent fields;
- An interconnected network of footpaths and National Trails (including the Three Forests Way and Stort Valley Way) provide access to the landscape and connect it to adjacent areas;
- Sense of tranquillity is relatively strong throughout most of the area;
- The relatively large settlement of Lower Nazeing at the western edge of the area contributes to settlement pattern, in addition to scattered farmsteads; and houses along road corridors;
- The narrow stream corridor of Nazeing Brook crosses the landscape, a tributary of the River Lea to the west.

Overall Character

- 3.4.44 This Landscape Character Area encompasses a patchwork of undulating arable fields that are lined within a network of mature hedgerows. Mature single trees are a distinctive feature of hedgerows and fields which contribute to recognisable sense of place. To the west, views across the Lea valley provide orientation, whilst in other areas; views are framed by the undulating topography and network of hedgerows and trees. An interconnected network of predominantly rural lanes connects scattered farmsteads and the relatively large settlement of Lower Nazeing which contains a mixture of historic buildings and more modern housing. Sense of tranquillity is strong throughout much of the area.

Visual Character

- Open views into and across the Lea Valley to the west contribute to recognisable sense of place;
- Glasshouses within Roydon Hamlet Landscape Character Area (to the north) are visible features within views northwards;
- Views of farmland and treed horizons unfold, moving through the landscape.

Historic Land Use

- 3.4.45 Of note historically within this area are the settlements of Bumbles Green and Nazeing. Nazeing was a possession of Waltham Abbey until the Dissolution. The Church of All Saints is

a major feature of Nazeing, dating from the 12th century and is listed Grade I. The Nazeing Park estate, a feature of the modern landscape, was developed through the 18th century, with a grand house and designed landscape; this house and park is now used as a school. The historic field pattern within this area is dominated by large, regular, prairie fields, which have suffered post-1950s boundary loss. Some small remnants of the historic field system can be seen within these.

Ecological Features

- 3.4.46 There are no internationally or nationally designated sites of nature conservation value within this Landscape Character Area. Nazeing Triangle is designated as a Local Nature Reserve for its large population of great crested newts, dragonflies, smooth newts and grass snakes. In addition, there are three County Wildlife Sites. Other key ecological features include mature hedgerows, field trees and the stream corridor of Nazeing Brook.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential for the erection of new farm buildings within agricultural fields; or residential dwellings at the edges of Nazeing, which could be conspicuous on the skyline if not designed sensitively;
- Potential further decline in the condition of field boundaries through further agricultural intensification;
- Potential increases in volume of traffic on narrow rural lanes and road corridors;
- Potential loss of mature hedgerow trees or other veteran trees;
- Potential for loss of hedgerows or veteran trees due to inappropriate management.

Sensitivities to Change

- 3.4.47 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include hedgerows, veteran trees and sites of ecological interest such as Nazeing Triangle. Designed historic landscapes and historic field boundary features are sensitive historic features. Framed and open views into the corridor of the River Lea to the west and open views across undulating farmland are visually sensitive to new development. This area also forms the backdrop to views eastwards from the corridor of the River Lea to the west. Any potential new development within the area is therefore likely to be visually prominent if not designed sensitively. The relatively strong sense of tranquillity throughout most of the area is also sensitive to potential new development. As a result of the above factors, overall this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **moderate to high** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

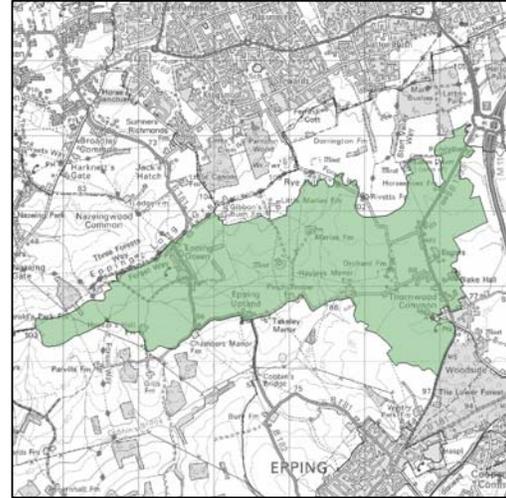
- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of Nazeing;
- Conserve the predominantly rural character of this area;
- Ensure that any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive buildings styles;
- Maintain characteristic views across farmland and into the Lea Valley.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern (and adjacent headlands) and strengthen through planting using local provenance species;
- Conserve designed historic landscapes;
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character;
- Conserve veteran trees as key landscape and ecological features;
- Conserve and protect small stream corridors, such as Nazeing brook from pollution associated with adjacent agricultural fields;
- Establish species rich field margins within arable fields as an important nature conservation habitat.

C9: EPPING GREEN

Location and Boundaries



3.4.48 Epping Green Landscape Character Area is situated in the north of the District. To the north it abuts Jack's Hatch to Church Langley Farmland Ridges (E1) and Bumble's Green Farmland Plateau (C8) Landscape Character Areas. To the south, it is adjacent to Uphire Ridges and Valleys (F2) and Cobbin's Bridge Ridges and Valleys (F3) Landscape Character Areas.

Key Characteristics

- Raised, high area of farmland, which overlooks surrounding areas of gently undulating Plateau Farmland;
- Patchwork of predominantly arable fields, which are lined with a network of mature hedgerows, often containing hedgerow trees;
- Small, linear belts of deciduous woodland contribute to a sense of enclosure within this otherwise generally open landscape;
- Several small ponds are scattered throughout the area;
- Narrow stream corridor of Cobbin's Brook, lined with mature deciduous trees forms a landscape feature;
- Scattered settlement pattern of isolated farmsteads and the small, linear settlement of Epping Green, connected by a network of road corridors;
- An interconnected network of public footpaths cross the area and connect to the Forest Way National Trail. The trail consists of which forms a green lane lined with mature deciduous trees along the northern edge of the area;
- Sense of tranquillity is strong throughout most of the area, but is disturbed in the east as a result of proximity to the corridor of the M11 motorway.

Overall Character

3.4.49 This area of farmland is higher and flatter than several adjacent areas and encompasses a patchwork of predominantly arable fields which are lined with a network of mature hedgerows, which contain frequent mature hedgerow trees. The narrow stream corridor of Cobbin's Brook is also lined with mature trees, as is the line of Forest Way National Trail at the northern edge of the area. The small, linear settlement of Epping Green punctuates surrounding farmland, in addition to the small hamlet of Epping Upland to the south and other scattered farmsteads. This area is in close proximity to the towns of Harlow to the north and Epping to the south, which results in traffic on the corridor of the B181 road often disturbing the overall sense of tranquillity during rush hour. The corridor of the M11 is also situated in close proximity to the eastern edge of the area, further disturbing sense of tranquillity.

Visual Character

- Panoramic, open views across surrounding areas of gently undulating arable farmland;
- Belts of linear deciduous woodland, mature hedgerows and trees contribute to an intermittent sense of enclosure within views from footpaths and road corridors.

Historic Land Use

- 3.4.50 There is widespread arable farmland within this Landscape Character Area. Most of the fields have suffered post 1950's boundary loss as a result of agricultural intensification.

Ecological Features

- 3.4.51 There are no internationally or nationally designated sites of nature conservation interest within this area, however, there are three County Wildlife Sites and a Local Nature Reserve (Thornwood Common Flood Meadow) which encompasses a designed wetland meadow. Other key ecological features include small ponds, the network of hedgerows and mature trees within fields and hedgerows.

Sensitivities to Change

- 3.4.52 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include hedgerows, veteran trees and sites of ecological interest such as Thornwood Common Flood Meadows. Open views from this high area across adjacent areas of undulating plateau farmland are visually sensitive to new development, particularly tall vertical elements. The skyline of this area also forms the backdrop to views from several adjacent Landscape Character Areas and is therefore visually sensitive to potential new development. Any potential new development within the area is likely to be visually prominent if not designed sensitively. As a result of the above factors, overall this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **moderate** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting Epping Upland;
- Conserve the predominantly rural character of this area;
- Ensure that any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive buildings styles;
- Maintain characteristic open views across surrounding gently undulating farmland.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern, and strengthen through planting using local provenance species;
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character;
- Conserve veteran trees as key landscape and ecological features;

- Establish species rich field margins within arable fields as an important nature conservation habitat.

3.5 Wooded Ridges and Hills: Landscape Character Type D

Location and Boundaries

3.5.1 The Wooded Ridges and Hills Landscape Character Type occurs in two locations within the study area, to the northeast and southwest of Epping. To the northeast, this Landscape Character Type abuts the Ridges and Valleys (F), Wooded Ridges and Valleys (G) and Farmland Plateau (C) Landscape Character Types. To the southeast, it abuts the northern settlement edge of Loughton and the Ridges and Valleys (F) and Wooded Ridges and Valleys (G) Landscape Character Types.

Key Characteristics

3.5.2 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

- Distinctive, broad ridge landform or series of pronounced hills, rising above the surrounding lower landform;
- Strongly wooded character, which often results in a strong sense of enclosure;
- Expanses of semi-natural and ancient woodland are a key feature;
- The raised landform facilitates long distance views across surrounding landscape, particularly from the edges of the ridges or hills;
- A series of narrow roads and lanes cross the landscape, which are often lined with mature trees, hedgerows and species-rich verges.
- The Wooded Ridges and Hills often provide the backdrop to views from surrounding, lower Landscape Character Types.

Landscape Character Areas

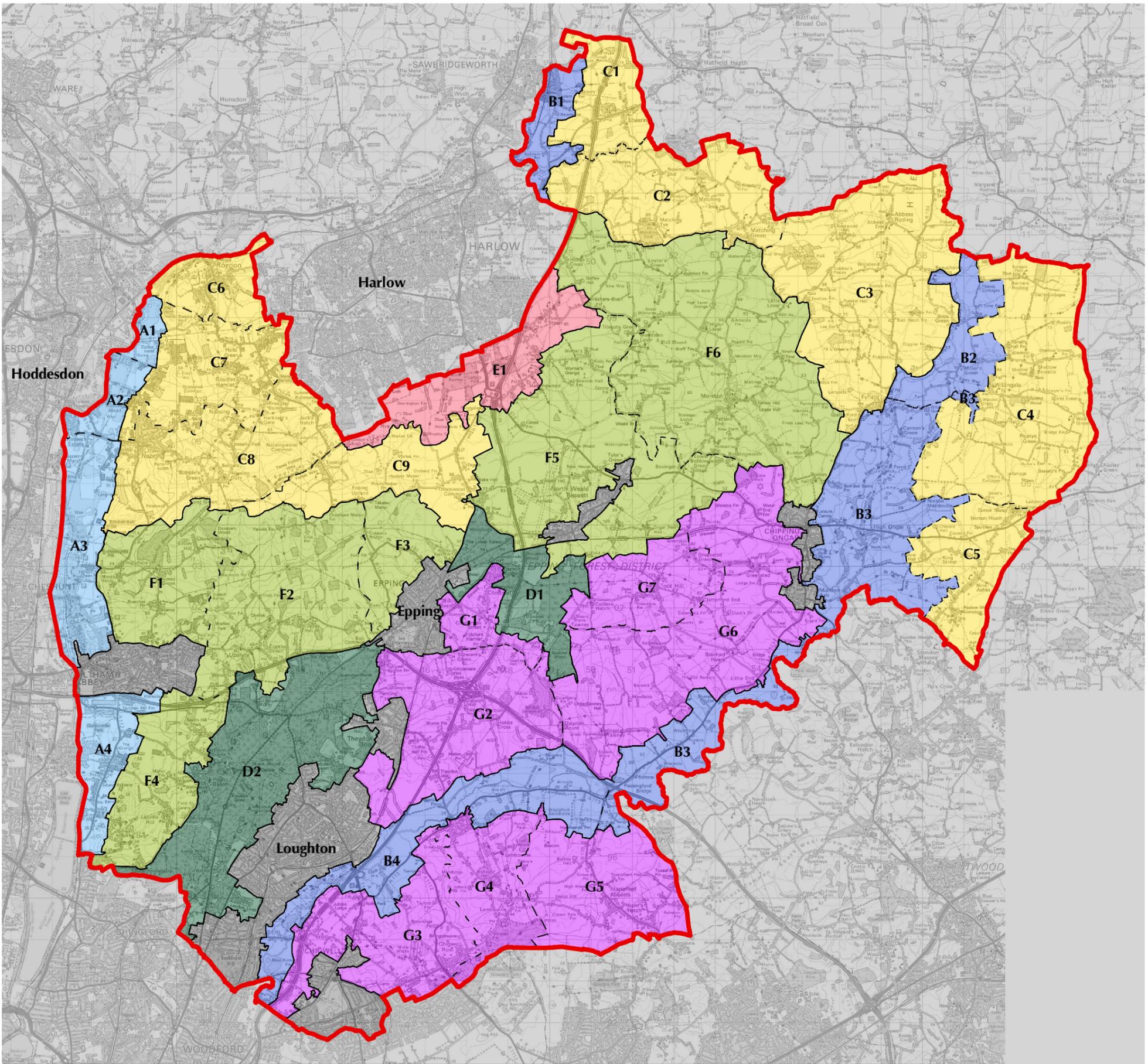
3.5.3 This Landscape Character Type contains the following Character Areas:

D1: Lower Forest to Beachet Wood Ridge

D2: Epping Forest Ridge

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

3.5.4 The proposed strategy objective for this Landscape Character Type and its constituent Landscape Character Areas is:

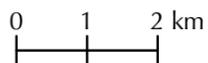


KEY



Epping Forest Landscape Character Types and Areas

- A River Valley Floodplain:
Flooded Gravel Pits and Marshes
A1 Rye Meads
A2 Nazeing Mead
A3 Lea Valley Marshes
A4 Rammey Marsh
- B River Valley
B1 River Stort
B2 Upper Roding
B3 Middle Roding
B4 Lower Roding
- C Farmland Plateau
C1 Sheering
C2 Matching
C3 Abbess
C4 Willingale
C5 Nine Ashes
C6 Roydon
C7 Roydon Hamlet
C8 Bumble's Green
C9 Epping Green
- D Wooded Ridges
D1 Lower Forest to Beachet Wood Ridge
D2 Epping Forest Ridge
- E Farmland Ridges
E1 Jack's Hatch to Church Langley
- F Ridges and Valleys
F1 Holyfield
F2 Uphire
F3 Cobbin's Bridge
F4 Lippitts and Daws Hills
F5 North Weald
F6 Magdalen Laver and Moreton
- G Wooded Ridges and Valleys
G1 Coopersale
G2 Theydon Garnon
G3 Chigwell
G4 Lambourne
G5 Stapleford Abbots
G6 Stapleford Tawney and Stanford Rivers
G7 Toot Hill
- Urban
- Study Area



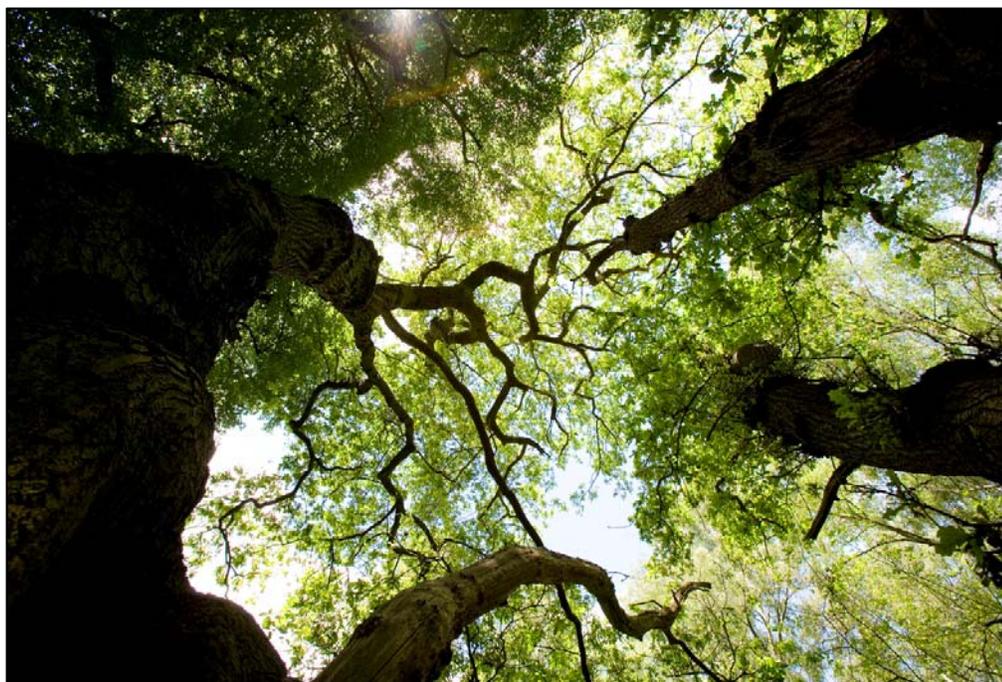
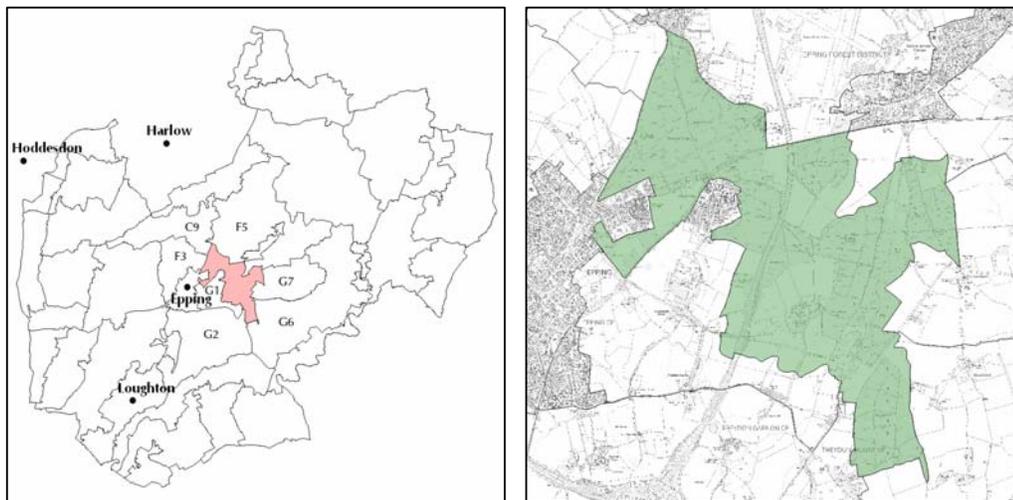
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Figure 3.1
Epping Forest Landscape Character Types and Areas

- 3.5.5 **Conserve** - seek to protect and enhance positive features (as set out within the 'sensitivities to change' sections for each Landscape Character Area below) that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.
- 3.5.6 Suggested landscape guidelines for planning and management of each Landscape Character Area, within the context of the above strategy objectives, are set out in the following section.

D1: LOWER FOREST TO BEACHET WOOD RIDGE

Location and Boundaries



- 3.5.7 The Lower Forest to Beachet Wood Ridge Landscape Character Area is located towards the centre of the District and partly abuts the northern edge of Epping settlement. To the south, this area is adjacent to several Landscape Character Areas within the Wooded Ridges and Valleys Landscape Character Type (G), including Coopersale (G1), Theydon Garnon (G2), Stapleford Tawney and Stanford Rivers (G6) and Toot Hill (G7). To the north, it abuts Epping Green

Farmland Plateau (C9), Cobbin's Bridge Ridges and Valleys (F3) and North Weald Ridges and Valleys (F5) Landscape Character Areas.

Key Characteristics

- Several areas of mixed woodland, situated on a ridge of higher land overlooking surrounding areas of gently undulating farmland;
- The high proportion of tree cover contributes to the sense that this is a wooded ridge, forming a landmark within views to the area from surrounding Landscape Character Areas and from the M11 road corridor;
- Outside the woodland small pockets of arable farmland are located on the slopes of the ridge;
- Relatively strong sense of tranquillity within parts of the area at distance from the M11 road corridor;
- Ancient hornbeam pollards are key historic and landscape features,

Overall Character

3.5.8 Set on a ridge of higher land that overlooks surrounding undulating farmland, this area is predominantly covered by mixed woodland, the majority of which is categorised as ancient and semi-natural. Distinctive ancient hornbeam pollards are located within part of the woodland, providing unusual historic landscape features. Coppicing is a feature of some areas of the woodland. There is a strong sense of enclosure within woodland and along the Epping Road corridor, which runs through the centre, however from roads at the edges (such as the B1393); open views across adjacent farmland contribute to a recognisable sense of place. The corridor of the M11 cuts through the centre of the area, introducing a source of noise and movement and disturbing the overall sense of tranquillity. At distance from this, however, there is relatively strong sense of tranquillity within the woodland; and a predominantly rural character. This ridge of woodland forms the backdrop to views from adjacent Landscape Character Areas and is a recognisable landmark within views from the M11 corridor. The western edge of the woodland in this area meets the settlement edges of Epping.

Visual Character

- Woodland provides a strong sense of enclosure and limits views across the area;
- This wooded ridge forms a recognisable landscape feature and backdrop to views from adjacent Landscape Character Areas and from the M11 road corridor;
- Open views across adjacent lower, gently undulating farmland from the edges of the woodland.

Historic Land Use

- 3.5.9 This Landscape Character Area contains a large area of ancient and semi-natural woodland. Though it has historically been continuously wooded, the northern part of the woodland has been subject to replanting during the 19th and 20th centuries. Part of the woodland is being managed using the traditional wood craft of coppicing. Attractive ancient hornbeam pollards are located within part of the woodland, providing an unusual historic landscape feature. The woodland was originally part of Waltham Forest, of which Epping Forest survives as a remnant. Waltham Forest was a large royal hunting area owned and managed by Waltham Abbey, and within which the king had the right to hunt. High ranking nobility were also appointed as his representatives to hunt deer in the forest, to supply the royal table with venison. Waltham Forest was a favourite hunting area of Henry VIII.

Ecological Features

- 3.5.10 This Landscape Character Area encompasses part of the Epping Forest SSSI, designated for its diverse range of habitats, including woodland and grassland. Most of the woodlands within the area are also designated as County Wildlife Sites.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Noise and visual intrusion associated with the corridor of the M11;
- Pressure of increased traffic on rural and minor lanes;
- Loss of mature woodland due to inappropriate management;
- Loss of veteran trees due to age and inappropriate management;
- Loss of woodland as a result of potential expansion of the northern edge of Epping.

Sensitivities to Change

- 3.5.11 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include extensive areas of mature woodland (most of which is ancient) and veteran trees (such as the distinctive hornbeam pollards) which are sensitive to changes in land management. This area has a strong sense of historic integrity and provides a key visual backdrop to several other Landscape Character Areas within the District. As a result, this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **high** sensitivity to change overall.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve the landscape setting of Epping;
- Conserve the relatively strong sense of tranquillity at distance from the M11 corridor.

- Ensure that any potential new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses local vernacular materials. Any such development should be well integrated into the surrounding landscape;

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve patches of woodland (consider the use of traditional methods, such as coppicing and pollarding where appropriate to locality and landscape character);
- Conserve and enhance areas of semi-natural and ancient woodland as important heritage, nature conservation and landscape features;
- Conserve and manage veteran trees as key historic landscape features.

Key Characteristics

- Prominent, densely wooded ridge which forms some of the highest land within the District and is a key feature within views across the landscape;
- Large expanses of semi-natural ancient woodland;
- A strong sense of enclosure along minor road corridors which cross the area east-west, with trees often forming green canopies;
- Relatively strong sense of tranquillity throughout the area, slightly disturbed in proximity to the A104 main road corridor which passes north-south through the area;
- A patchwork of woodland, grassland, river, pond and stream habitats;
- Distinctive pollarded veteran trees within the forest are historic and landscape features which contribute to recognisable sense of place.

Overall Character

3.5.13 Epping Forest lies on a long ridge which forms some of the highest land within the District and encompasses an extensive tract of mixed woodlands. Beech is dominant on the top of the ridge, giving way to hornbeam on the slopes where heavier soils emerge. This wooded ridge is a prominent landscape feature within several views across the District and also from major road corridors such as the M11 and M25, contributing to recognisable sense of place. Interspersed with areas of woodland are clearings of grassland, ponds, rivers and streams which all provide key ecological habitats. Sense of enclosure is strong on footpaths within the forest and also along minor road corridors which are often almost covered by a green canopy of trees. High Beach church provides a key built landmark within this area, where settlement is generally absent, other than the line of houses at Debden Green and Epping Forest Conservation Centre. From the edges of the ridge, panoramic, open views westwards across undulating farmland towards the Lea Valley contribute to recognisable sense of place, whilst views eastwards are dominated by the settlement of Loughton.

Visual Character

- Strong sense of enclosure within the woodland;
- Panoramic, framed and open views westwards across undulating farmland towards the Lea Valley;
- Views eastwards towards the settlement edges of Loughton and Theydon Bois.

Historic Land Use

3.5.14 'From the Neolithic to early Saxon period, the forest comprised lime-dominated woodland, and despite the presence of two hillforts on the Forest Ridge, Ambresbury Banks and Loughton

Camp, the woodland cover persisted through the Iron Age and Roman period. During the Middle Saxon period (600-850 AD), there was selective forest clearance and a dramatic decline in lime, which became extinct in the forest. It appears that this period saw the establishment of a wood-pasture system, with the ridge as an area of inter-commoning and a source of timber and underwood²⁰. This system continued and Epping was proclaimed a forest (a place where the king owned the rights to deer and timber) in the twelfth century. In 1878, virtually all of the trees in the Forest would have been pollards, which were cut by the commoners on a short rotation (generally 15 years) and often grown at dense spacing. By this time, pollarding was in decline over much of the Forest, as also was grazing. It is likely that the density was a response to the demand for faggots from London's bakers and malters.

- 3.5.15 'Epping Forest was saved from enclosure in the nineteenth century by the efforts of a conservation group – the Commons, Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society (founded in 1865)²¹' and the City of London. Two Acts of Parliament were passed in 1878. One of these entrusted the ownership and care of Epping Forest to the City, with the second making similar provision for other open spaces under similar threat. The Epping Forest Act of 1878 appointed the City of London as the Conservator of Epping Forest and its strictures still govern how the Forest is managed today. Today the Forest provides one of the largest open spaces in the London Area. It is a popular area for recreation and enjoyment.

Ecological Features

- 3.5.16 This Landscape Character Area encompasses part of the Epping Forest SSSI, designated for its diverse range of habitats, including woodland, grass, heath, rivers, bogs and ponds. The Forest is also designated as a County Wildlife Site and contains two Local Nature Reserves (Home Mead, designated for its interesting mosaic of woodland, scrub and acid grassland and Linders Field designated for its mixture of ancient woodland, scrub, grassland, wildflowers, grassland and ponds).

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Noise and visual intrusion associated with the corridors of the A104 and A121;
- Pressure of increased traffic on rural and minor lanes;
- Loss of mature woodland due to inappropriate management;
- Loss of veteran trees due to age and inappropriate management;
- Loss of woodland as a result of potential expansion of the settlement edges of Loughton and Theydon Bois.

²⁰ The Essex Landscape: A Study of its form and history, 1999, John Hunter, Essex Record Office.

²¹ Rural England: Our Countryside at the Crossroads, 1998, Derrik Mercer and David Puttnam.

Sensitivities to Change

3.5.17 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include extensive areas of mature woodland (most of which is ancient) and veteran trees, which are sensitive to changes in land management. This area has a strong sense of historic integrity and provides a key visual backdrop to several other Landscape Character Areas within the District. The skyline of the area is visually sensitive to any potential new development. As a result, this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **high** sensitivity to change overall.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve the landscape setting of Loughton and Theydon Bois;
- Conserve the relatively strong sense of tranquillity at distance from main road corridors;
- Conserve open and framed views across undulating farmland to the west;
- Ensure that any potential new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses local vernacular materials. Any such development should be well integrated into the surrounding landscape.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Refer to City of London: Conservators of Epping Forest - Land Management Guidelines;
- Conserve patches of woodland (consider the use of traditional methods, such as coppicing and pollarding where appropriate to locality and landscape character);
- Conserve and enhance areas of semi-natural and ancient woodland as important heritage, nature conservation and landscape features;
- Conserve and manage veteran trees as key historic landscape features;
- Conserve the patchwork of woodland, grassland, pond and stream habitats.

3.6 Farmland Ridges: Landscape Character Type E

Location and Boundaries

3.6.1 The Farmland Ridges Landscape Character Type occurs in the north of the District (to the south of Harlow, which is outside the District boundary). To the south and east, this Landscape Character Type abuts the Ridges and Valleys (F) Landscape Character Type, whilst to the west; this Type overlooks the Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Type (C).

Key Characteristics

3.6.2 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

- Broad, ridge-top landform, which encompasses a pattern of predominantly arable fields, often lined with hedgerows;
- Pronounced slopes lead up to the elevated ridges;
- The higher landform facilitates long-distance, often panoramic, views across adjacent Landscape Character Types;
- The ridges often form a backdrop to views from surrounding Landscape Character Types;
- Large areas of ancient woodland;
- Several distinctive veteran trees.

Landscape Character Areas

3.6.3 This Landscape Character Type contains one Landscape Character Area (as shown on **Figure 3.1**):

E1: Jack's Hatch to Church Langley

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

3.6.4 The proposed strategy objectives for this Landscape Character Type and its constituent Landscape Character Areas are:

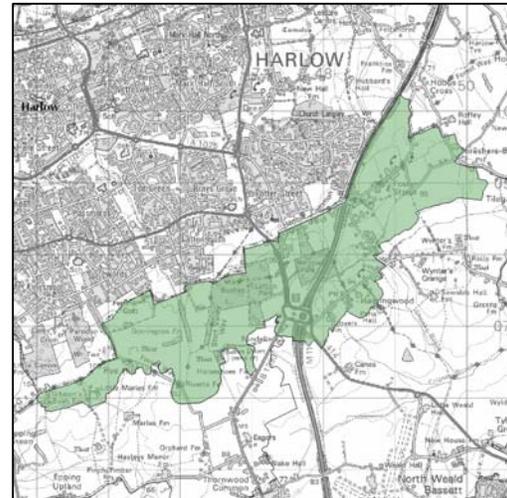
3.6.5 **Conserve** - seek to protect and enhance positive features (as set out within the 'sensitivities to change' sections for each Landscape Character Area below) that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.

Enhance – seek to improve the integrity of the landscape, and reinforce its character, by introducing new and/or enhanced elements where distinctive features or characteristics are absent.

- 3.6.6 Suggested landscape guidelines for planning and management of each Landscape Character Area, within the context of the above strategy objectives are set out in the following section.

E1: JACK'S HATCH TO CHURCH LANGLEY

Location and Boundaries



3.6.7 Jack's Hatch to Church Langley Ridge Landscape Character Area is situated in the north of the District, adjacent to the southern edge of Harlow (outside the District boundary). To the south, this area abuts Epping Green Farmland Plateau (C9) and North Weald Ridges and Valleys (F5) Landscape Character Areas.

Key Characteristics

- Ridge of farmland which forms some of the highest land within the District;
- Large woodland blocks are key landscape features within views across the area;
- Occasional scattered farmsteads and small linear hamlets such as Foster Street;
- Corridor of the M11 motorway crosses the area, introducing a source of noise and movement and disturbing overall sense of tranquillity;
- An interconnected network of public footpaths serve the area, including the Stort Valley Way National Trail.

Overall Character

- 3.6.8 Encompassing varying-sized arable fields, this area is dominated by large woodland blocks. Patches of open common, used for horse and pony grazing, provide variation in landscape pattern. The gradually sloping topography, culminating in a ridge at Rye Hill, allows extensive views northwards towards Harlow Urban Area and southwards across gently undulating farmlands, which contribute to recognisable sense of place. Harlow New Town was designed to sit within a bowl, which is formed at its southern edge by this Landscape Character Area.

Visual Character

- Open views southwards across adjacent Landscape Character Areas;
- Open views northwards to the settlement edges of Harlow Urban Area;
- Blocks of woodland are key landscape features within views across this area.

Historic Land Use

- 3.6.9 At the end of the 18th century, Latton Common (partly situated to the north of the Study Area) was part of a larger area of Common named Harlow Bush Common, which linked Hazlewood common to the south-east and formed a chain with Parndon Common, Broadley Common and Nazeingwood Common to the west. Much of this former extent of common has since been turned into arable farmland, with the exception of Harlow Common, Latton Common, and Nazeingwood Common to the west.
- 3.6.10 The common edge historically formed a focus for settlement, and a number of historic east-west and north-south communication links have been retained throughout the west of the area, along which a number of historic buildings are situated. Common edge and roadside settlements are the dominant forms of settlement pattern within this character area, which contains only one known moated site, representing the site of a medieval manor east of the

modern Rye Hill reservoir. However, this site is particularly visible in the landscape, containing the earthwork remains of the most as well as associated fishponds.

Ecological Features

- 3.6.11 There are no internationally or nationally designated sites of nature conservation importance within this Landscape Character Area, however, there are four locally designated County Wildlife Site (including Foster Street, Harlow park, Mark Bushes and Epping Long Green).

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential for the erection of new farm buildings within agricultural fields; or residential dwellings which could be conspicuous on the skyline if not designed sensitively;
- Potential further decline in the condition of field boundaries through further agricultural intensification;
- Potential increases in volume of traffic on narrow rural lanes and road corridors;
- Potential for loss of hedgerows due to inappropriate management.

Sensitivities to Change

- 3.6.12 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include hedgerows, veteran trees and locally designated sites of nature conservation interest such as Thornwood Common Flood Meadows. Areas of common land are sensitive historic features. Open views across undulating farmland to the south are visually sensitive to new development, particularly tall vertical elements. This area also forms the backdrop to views northwards from adjacent Landscape Character Areas. Any potential new development within the area is therefore likely to be visually prominent if not designed sensitively. As a result of the above factors, overall this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **moderate** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve the predominantly rural character of this area;
- Conserve the landscape setting of Harlow (to the north of the Study Area) and ensure that any potential new development at the settlement edges does not encroach onto the ridge which encloses Harlow (this Landscape Character Area);
- Consider the visual impact of any potential tall vertical developments within this area in relation to views from adjacent Landscape Character Areas;
- Ensure that any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive buildings styles;

- Maintain characteristic open views across surrounding gently undulating farmland.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern, and strengthen through planting using local provenance species;
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character;
- Conserve veteran trees as key landscape and ecological features;
- Establish species rich field margins within arable fields as an important nature conservation habitat.

3.7 Ridges and Valleys: Landscape Character Type F

Location and Boundaries

3.7.1 The Ridges and Valleys Landscape Character Type is situated towards the centre of the District and extends from Little Laver in the northeast to Holyfield in the west. To the north, this Landscape Character Type abuts the Farmland Plateau (C) and Ridges and Valleys (E) Landscape Character Types. To the south, it is adjacent to the Wooded Ridges (D) and Wooded Ridges and Valleys (G) Landscape Character Types, whilst in the east; it abuts the River Valley (B) Landscape Character Type as it follows the course of the River Roding.

Key Characteristics

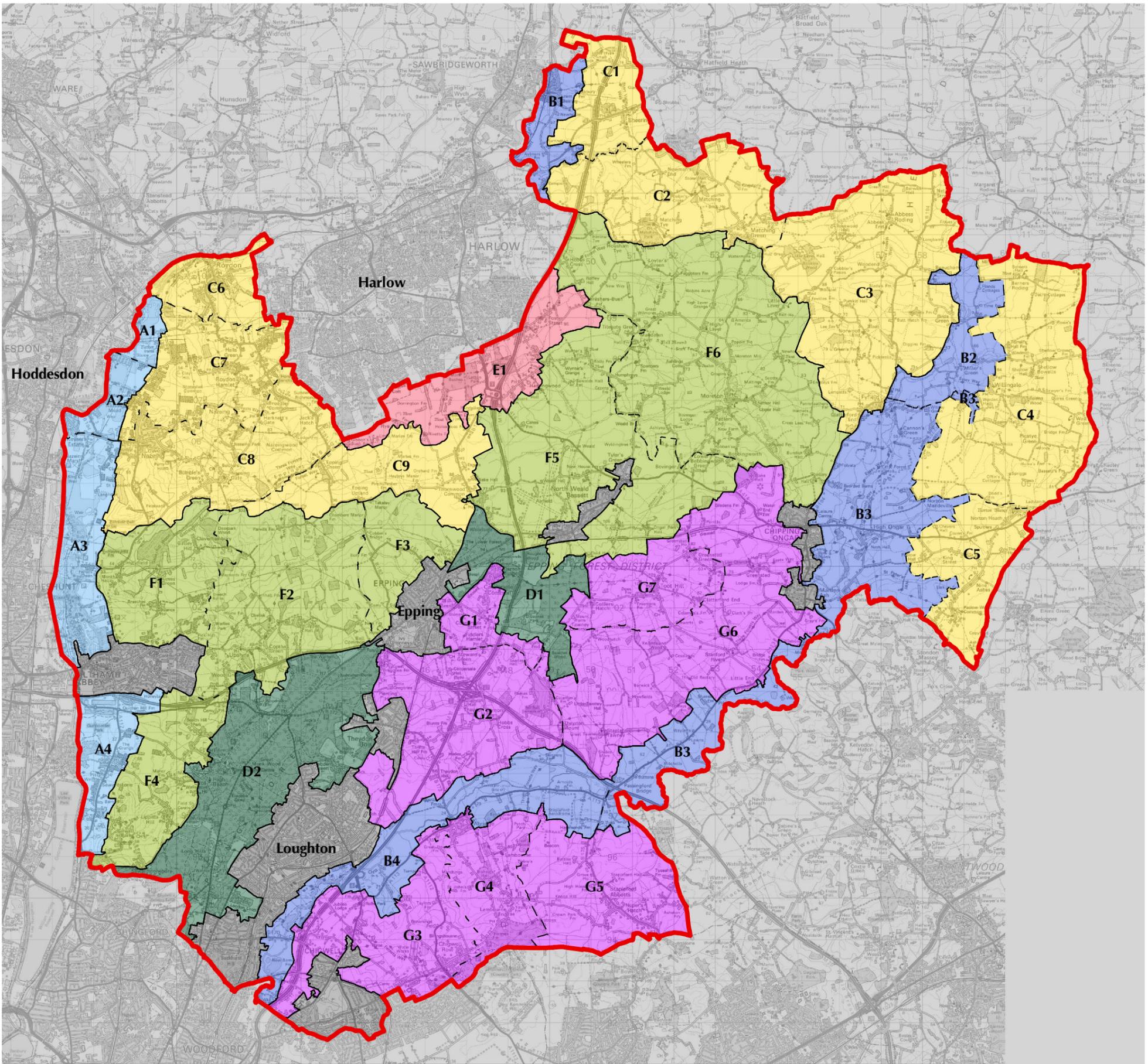
3.7.2 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

- Series of small valleys which are encapsulated by minor ridges, resulting in an undulating landform;
- Strong sense of tranquillity in places, at distance from major road corridors;
- A pattern of predominantly arable fields, which are interspersed with pockets of pasture;
- Field pattern is delineated by a series of hedgerows, which often contain mature deciduous trees;
- Mature deciduous field trees are also a key feature;
- A series of narrow, rural road corridors cross the landscape, and are often lined with mature hedgerows and deciduous trees.

Landscape Character Areas

3.7.3 This Landscape Character Type contains the following Character Areas (as shown on **Figure 3.1**):

- F1: Holyfield
- F2: Upshire
- F3: Cobbin's Bridge
- F4: Lippitts and Daws Hill
- F5: North Weald
- F6: Magdalen Laver and Moreton

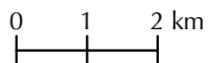


KEY



Epping Forest Landscape Character Types and Areas

- A River Valley Floodplain:
Flooded Gravel Pits and Marshes
A1 Rye Meads
A2 Nazeing Mead
A3 Lea Valley Marshes
A4 Rammey Marsh
- B River Valley
B1 River Stort
B2 Upper Roding
B3 Middle Roding
B4 Lower Roding
- C Farmland Plateau
C1 Sheering
C2 Matching
C3 Abbess
C4 Willingale
C5 Nine Ashes
C6 Roydon
C7 Roydon Hamlet
C8 Bumble's Green
C9 Epping Green
- D Wooded Ridges
D1 Lower Forest to Beachet Wood Ridge
D2 Epping Forest Ridge
- E Farmland Ridges
E1 Jack's Hatch to Church Langley
- F Ridges and Valleys
F1 Holyfield
F2 Uphire
F3 Cobbin's Bridge
F4 Lippitts and Daws Hills
F5 North Weald
F6 Magdalen Laver and Moreton
- G Wooded Ridges and Valleys
G1 Coopersale
G2 Theydon Garnon
G3 Chigwell
G4 Lambourne
G5 Stapleford Abbots
G6 Stapleford Tawney and Stanford Rivers
G7 Toot Hill
- Urban
- Study Area



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Figure 3.1
 Epping Forest Landscape Character Types and Areas

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

3.7.4 The proposed strategy objectives for this Landscape Character Type and its constituent Landscape Character Areas are:

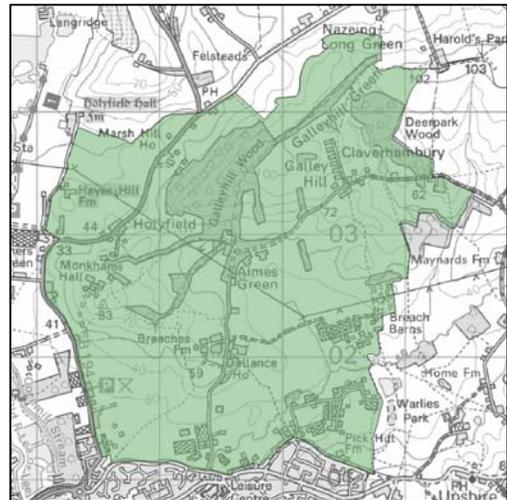
3.7.5 **Conserve** - seek to protect and enhance positive features (as set out within the 'sensitivities to change' sections for each Landscape Character Area below) that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.

Enhance – seek to improve the integrity of the landscape, and reinforce its character, by introducing new and/or enhanced elements where distinctive features or characteristics are absent.

3.7.6 Suggested landscape guidelines for planning and land management of each Landscape Character Area, within the context of the above strategy objectives, are set out in the following section.

F1: HOLYFIELD

Location and Boundaries



3.7.7 Holyfield Ridges and Valleys Landscape Character Area is situated in the west of the District. To the south, this area abuts the northern edge of Waltham Abbey and to the west it overlooks the Lea Valley Marshes River Valley Floodplain Landscape Character Area (A3). To the north, it is adjacent to Bumble’s Green Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Area (C8).

Key Characteristics

- Large patches of broadleaved woodland, situated on prominent ridges and slopes;
- Small-scale settlements and farmsteads;
- Occasional glasshouses are landscape features within the south of the area;
- An undulating patchwork of small, medium and large-scale irregular fields lined with a network of hedgerows;
- Several mature trees within fields and hedgerows;
- Large areas of woodland, such as Galleyhill and Deepark woods are key landscape features;
- A mosaic of arable and pastoral farming and horticulture.

Overall Character

- 3.7.8 This Landscape Character Area encompasses a patchwork of large, medium and small-scale, irregularly shaped arable fields, some of which have wooded field boundaries. These fields are interspersed with patches of broadleaved woodland which are located on prominent ridges and slopes within the area. In places, this results in views to wooded horizons. Settlement pattern comprises a mixture of scattered farmsteads and the two small linear hamlets of Galleyhill and Holyfield. To the north, the landscape is dominated by two large areas of broadleaved ancient woodland, Galleyhill Wood and Deepark Wood, whilst the south has several modern nurseries and glasshouse. Landform limits long views within the area; however, extensive views across the Lea Valley can be gained from the west near to Holyfield.

Visual Character

- Rows of electricity pylons form dominant vertical elements within certain views;
- Views across the area are often framed by mature hedgerows or areas of woodland;
- Views tend to unfold, moving through this gently undulating landscape;
- From the western edges of the area, open views into and across the Lea Valley contribute to recognisable sense of place;
- The area provides the rising backdrop to views westwards from the Lea Valley;
- Open views to the edge of Waltham Abbey urban area to the south.

Historic Land Use

- 3.7.9 At least part, if not all, of this Character Area once formed part of the extensive Waltham Forest, the larger precursor of Epping Forest, which survives as a remnant of this once great hunting ground to the east of Harlow. The land of Waltham Forest was owned by Waltham Abbey, who managed the land and the deer it supported on behalf of the king until the 16th century Dissolution by Henry VIII. In addition, this area also contained a private Medieval

deer park attached to Monkams Hall to the west of the area, of which the earthwork boundary may still survive.

- 3.7.10 After the Dissolution and through the post-medieval period, Waltham Forest became encroached upon by gradual enclosure to form agricultural land, a process known as assarting (which is visible within the historic landscape pattern of this Landscape Character Area. Through this process, the landscape became divided into small, irregularly shaped agricultural fields, often with shaws (strips of woodland) surviving between the fields as thick field boundaries. Assarts can be seen at the edges of the area's surviving woodland blocks. Later agricultural developments in this character area also include the creation of a number of nurseries with glasshouses.

Ecological Features

- 3.7.11 There are no internationally or nationally designated sites of nature conservation value within this area; however, there are three County Wildlife Sites (Galleyhill Wood, Deerpark Wood and Glasshouse Meadow). Smaller pockets of woodland and hedgerows are also key ecological features.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Pressure of increased traffic on rural and minor lanes;
- Potentially visually intrusive development of new farm buildings;
- Deterioration and eventual loss of mature treed hedgerows and single mature trees through lack of appropriate management;
- Potential deterioration or disuse of glasshouses;
- Potential for the expansion of the urban edges of Waltham Abbey to the south of the area.

Sensitivities to Change

- 3.7.12 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include hedgerows, hedgerow trees, large areas of woodland and locally designated sites of nature conservation interest. Open views into the Lea Valley to the west are visually sensitive to new development both within the area and within the Lea Valley (within Landscape Character Area A3). This area also forms the backdrop to views eastwards from the Lea Valley. Any potential new development within the area is therefore likely to be visually prominent if not designed sensitively. As a result of the above factors, overall this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **moderate to high** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

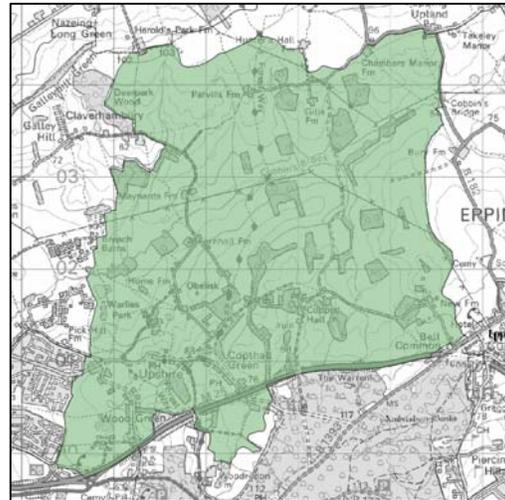
- Conserve the predominantly rural character of this area and associated relatively strong sense of tranquillity;
- Conserve the landscape setting of Waltham Abbey to the south;
- Ensure that any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive buildings styles;
- Maintain characteristic open views across surrounding gently undulating farmland and into the Lea Valley to the west.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern (and adjacent hedgebanks) and strengthen through planting using local provenance species;
- Conserve mature and veteran trees within fields and hedgerows key landscape and ecological features;
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character;
- Establish species rich field margins within arable fields as an important nature conservation habitat.

F2: UPSHIRE

Location and Boundaries



3.7.13 Upshire Ridges and Valleys Landscape Character Area is situated in the west of the District between Holyfield Ridges and Valleys (F1) and Cobbin’s Bridge Ridges and Valleys (F3) Landscape Character Areas. To the north it abuts Epping Green Farmland Plateau Landscape

Character Area (C9) and to the south, is adjacent to Epping Forest Ridge (D2) Landscape Character Area.

Key Characteristics

- A series of farmsteads and small-scale linear roadside settlements contribute to settlement pattern;
- Patchwork of arable farmland and parkland, often containing frequent small to medium-sized woodland blocks, which are key landscape features and frame views;
- Rows of electricity pylons often form tall vertical elements within views;
- A network of narrow lanes cross the area, often lined with hedgerows containing hedgerow trees;
- There is a relatively strong sense of tranquillity and predominantly rural character throughout the area;
- Strongly undulating landform.

Overall Character

- 3.7.14 This Landscape Character Area encompasses a patchwork of arable fields, interspersed with parkland, overlying strongly undulating topography. Small to medium-sized patches of broadleaved woodland are scattered throughout the area, where visible assarts (fields cut into woodland) reduce their extent. The woodland blocks provide a sense of enclosure and frame views across the farmland. Settlement is concentrated to the south of the area, where it encompasses small historic linear roadside settlements, such as Copthall Green and Upshire, in addition to scattered farmsteads. These settlements are connected by a series of narrow, sometimes sunken lanes.

Visual Character

- Rows of electricity pylons often form tall vertical elements within views;
- Views across this area are often framed by the numerous patches of woodland that are scattered within the area;
- The strongly undulating topography also limits long distance views across the landscape from several viewpoints;
- Views of Waltham Abbey urban edge from the southwestern corner of the area.

Historic Land Use

- 3.7.15 There are two key historic influences on the historic development of this area: the piecemeal enclosure of medieval royal hunting forest, and the development of private parkland. At least

part, if not all, of this Landscape Character Area once formed part of the extensive Waltham Forest. After the Dissolution and through the post-medieval period, Waltham Forest became encroached upon by gradual enclosure to form agricultural land, a process known as assarting (which is visible within the historic landscape pattern of this Landscape Character Area). Assarts can be seen at the edges of the area's surviving woodland blocks, such as Spratt's Hedgerow Wood. Some assarts have later been assimilated into modern prairie fields through the post-1950s removal of field boundaries. In the west of the area, a patch of small, irregular pre-18th century field systems are a feature of the landscape. To the south, the large areas of Warlies Park and Copped Hall both of which have their origins in the medieval period, dominate this area.

Ecological Features

- 3.7.16 There are no internationally or nationally designated sites of nature conservation value within the area, however nearly all of the woodlands are designated as County Wildlife Sites (a total of twenty-one within the area). In addition to the patches of woodland, hedgerows are also key ecological features.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Pressure of increased traffic on rural and minor lanes;
- Potentially visually intrusive development of new farm buildings;
- Deterioration and eventual loss of mature treed hedgerows and single mature trees through lack of appropriate management;
- Potential deterioration or disuse of glasshouses;
- Potential for the expansion of the urban edges of Waltham Abbey to the south of the area.

Sensitivities to Change

- 3.7.17 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include the numerous patches of broadleaved woodland, hedgerow trees, large areas of woodland and locally designated sites of nature conservation interest. Open and framed views across this area are sensitive to potential new development, particularly large-scale or tall vertical elements. Any potential new development within the area is therefore likely to be visually prominent if not designed or located sensitively. As a result of the above factors, overall this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **moderate to high** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

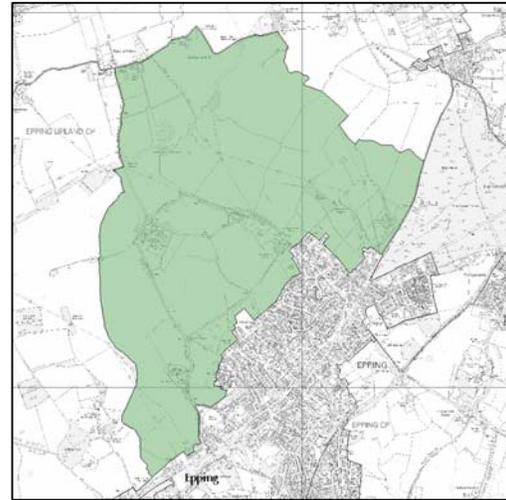
- Conserve the predominantly rural character of this area and associated relatively strong sense of tranquillity;
- Conserve the landscape setting of Waltham Abbey to the south-west;
- Ensure that any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive buildings styles;
- Maintain characteristic open and framed views across the area.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern (and adjacent headlands) and strengthen through planting using local provenance species;
- Conserve mature and veteran trees within fields and hedgerows as key landscape and ecological features;
- Conserve patches of broadleaved woodland as key landscape and ecological features;
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character;
- Establish species rich field margins within arable fields as an important nature conservation habitat.

F3: COBBIN'S BRIDGE

Location and Boundaries



3.7.18 Cobbin's Bridge Ridges and Valleys Landscape Character Area is situated towards the centre of the District. The eastern edge of the area abuts the western edge of Epping, whilst to the north it is adjacent to Epping Green Farmland Plateau (C9) Landscape Character Area.

Key Characteristics

- A patchwork of relatively regular, predominantly arable fields are interspersed with occasional small patches of woodland;
- Mature hedgerows delineate field boundaries, containing frequent mature trees;
- Small ponds and stream corridors are landscape features.
- A general absence of settlement within the area, other than infrequent scattered farmsteads.

Overall Character

3.7.19 This Landscape Character Area encompasses a patchwork of predominantly arable fields, which are lined with mature hedgerows, often containing hedgerow trees. Views to the settlement edges of Epping to the south and the wooded horizons of Wintry Wood to the east contribute to recognisable sense of place.

Visual Character

- Open and framed views across farmland are characteristic of this area;
- Open views to the settlement edges of Epping to the south;
- Open views to the wooded ridge of Wintry Wood (within Landscape Character Area D1) to the east.

Historic Land Use

3.7.20 Historic field pattern within this Landscape Character Area is dominated by 20th century agricultural fields, which have suffered boundary loss, post 1950. There are, however, pockets of pre-18th century enclosure remaining, within the northwest of the area.

Ecological Features

3.7.21 There are no internationally or nationally designated sites of nature conservation value within this area, however there is one locally designated County Wildlife Site. Other key ecological habitats include hedgerows, small stream corridors and ponds.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potentially visually intrusive development of new farm buildings;
- Deterioration and eventual loss of mature treed hedgerows and single mature trees through lack of appropriate management;
- Potential for the expansion of the urban edges of Epping to the south.

Sensitivities to Change

3.7.22 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include hedges, hedgerow trees, ponds and narrow stream corridors. Open views across this area are visually sensitive to potential new development, particularly large-scale or tall vertical elements. As a result of the above factors, overall this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **low to moderate** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

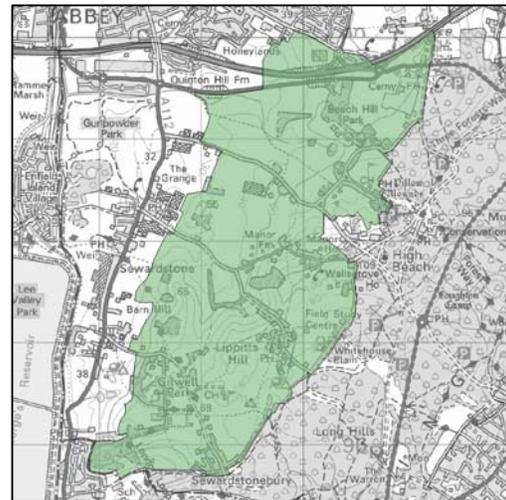
- Conserve the landscape setting of Epping to the south;
- Ensure that any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive buildings styles;
- Maintain characteristic open and framed views across the area.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern (and adjacent headlands) and strengthen through planting using local provenance species;
- Conserve mature and veteran trees within fields and hedgerows as key landscape and ecological features;
- Conserve patches of broadleaved woodland as key landscape and ecological features;
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character;
- Establish species rich field margins within arable fields as an important nature conservation habitat.

F4: LIPPITTS AND DAWS HILLS

Location and boundaries



3.7.23 Lippitts and Daws Hills Landscape Character Area is situated in the south of the District. To the west it abuts Rammey Marsh Landscape Character Area (A4) and to the east it is adjacent to Epping Forest Ridge (D2) Landscape Character Area.

Key Characteristics

- A series of pronounced hills are key features within this landscape, covered by a patchwork of arable and pastoral fields;
- To the east, views into the Lea Valley contribute to recognisable sense of place, whilst to the west, views to Epping Forest Ridge provide orientation;
- A relatively strong sense of tranquillity throughout the area;
- Small to medium sized patches of woodland are landscape features;
- Several minor roads and lanes cross the area west-east and connect Epping Forest in the west to the Lea Valley in the east.

Overall Character

- 3.7.24 The distinctive topography of this area encompasses a series of pronounced hills, which are overlain with a patchwork of arable and pastoral farmland. Fields are delineated with a network of mature hedgerows, often containing hedgerow trees. Open views eastwards into the Lea Valley and westwards towards Epping Forest Ridge contribute to recognisable sense of place. Settlement pattern comprises the Police Training camp at Lippitts Hill and other small areas of housing lining the road corridors that cross the area. Small patches of mixed woodland (shaws) contribute to an intermittent sense of enclosure within otherwise open views across the patchwork of fields.

Visual Character

- This area provides a backdrop to views eastwards from the Lea Valley, where the rolling hills are viewed against the backdrop of Epping Forest Wooded Ridge;
- Open views eastwards towards Epping Forest Ridge;
- Open views westwards into the Lea Valley, with King George's reservoir dominating the foreground of the view;
- Open views south to the urban edges of Chingford.

Historic Land Use

- 3.7.25 Historic landscape pattern within this Landscape Character Area comprises a patchwork of pre 18th century, 18th century and later enclosure. There is also a relatively extensive area of parkland on Lippitt's Hill. Although some of the fields within this area have suffered from post-1950s boundary loss, historic integrity of field boundaries is generally strong.

Ecological Features

- 3.7.26 There are twelve locally designated County Wildlife Sites (predominantly areas of woodland) within this Landscape Character Area. A small section of the area is also falls within the Epping Forest SSSI. Other key ecological habitats include the network of mature hedgerows.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Pressure of increased traffic on rural and minor lanes;
- Potentially visually intrusive development of new farm buildings;
- Deterioration and eventual loss of mature treed hedgerows and single mature trees through lack of appropriate management;
- Potential for the expansion of the urban edges of Waltham Abbey to the north of the area.

Sensitivities to Change

- 3.7.27 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include the numerous patches of broadleaved woodland, hedgerow trees and ponds. Open and framed views across this area are sensitive to new potentially new development, particularly large-scale or tall vertical elements. Any potential new development within the area is therefore likely to be visually prominent if not designed or located sensitively. As a result of the above factors, overall this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **moderate to high** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve the predominantly rural character of this area and associated relatively strong sense of tranquillity;
- Conserve the landscape setting of Waltham Abbey to the north;
- Ensure that any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive buildings styles;
- Maintain characteristic open and framed views across the area.

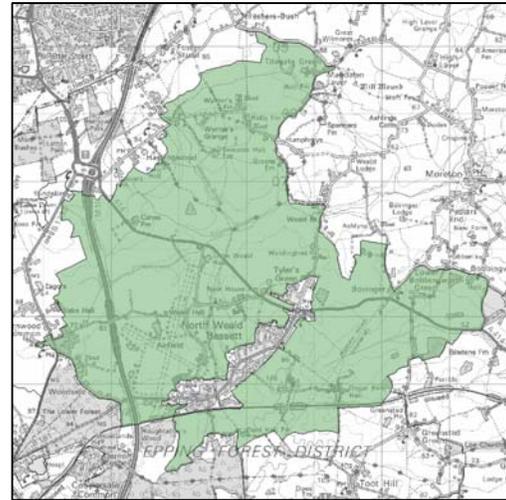
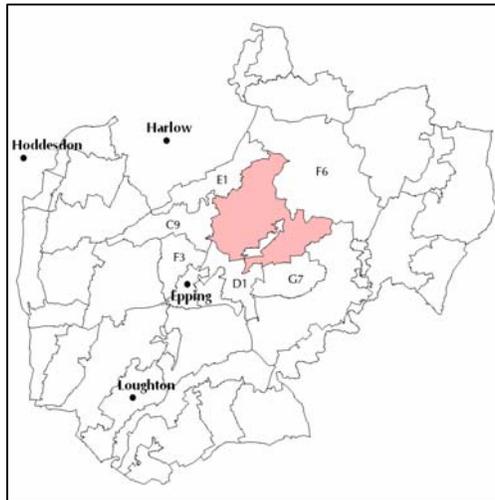
Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve mature and veteran trees within fields and hedgerows as key landscape and ecological features;
- Conserve patches of broadleaved woodland as key landscape and ecological features;
- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern, and strengthen through planting using local provenance species;

- Conserve and promote the use of building materials which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character;
- Establish species rich field margins within arable fields as an important nature conservation habitat.

F5: NORTH WEALD

Location and Boundaries



3.7.28 North Weald Ridges and Valleys Landscape Character Area is situated towards the centre of the District, to the south of Jack's Hatch to Church Langley Farmland Ridges (E1) Landscape Character Area and to the north of Epping Forest Ridge (D2) Landscape Character Area.

Key Characteristics

- Mature trees and hedgerows at field boundaries (of low to medium height);
- North Weald airfield is a dominant human element, with its associated metal railings, roadways and control tower;
- Overall sense of tranquillity is disturbed in the west by proximity to the noise of traffic on the M11 road corridor;
- A small-scale settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and occasional nurseries, other than the large linear settlement of North Weald Bassett towards the centre of the area.
- Predominantly arable farmland;
- Rural road corridors lined with verges and mature deciduous trees;
- Mature field trees and hedgerow trees are key landscape features;
- Copses of mature deciduous woodland contribute to a sense of enclosure.

Overall Character

3.7.29 In the south of this area, the large mass of North Weald airfield, with its surrounding metal railings, introduces a strong human element into this otherwise predominantly arable landscape. Surrounding the airfield and further to the north, arable fields are lined with mature hedgerows, which often contain hedgerow trees. Mature field trees are also key landscape features which contribute to recognisable sense of place. Several minor road roads cross the landscape and are lined with species-rich verges and mature deciduous trees, creating a sense of enclosure. Linear roadside settlements and scattered farmsteads interrupt the surrounding farmland landscape. The visible remains of earlier medieval manor houses are also apparent.

Visual Character

- Views to the urban edges of North Weald Bassett from surrounding areas of farmland;
- Views southwards from the southern edge of the area are dominated by the wooded ridge (Landscape Character Area D1: Lower Forest to Beachet Wood);
- Open and framed views across a patchwork of arable fields are characteristic of this landscape.

Historic Land Use

3.7.30 Historic field pattern within this Landscape Character Area is dominated by North Weald airfield which was founded in the summer of 1916 during the First World War by the Royal Flying Corps. The airfield played an important part in the air defence strategy of the UK during the Second World War. Today, the airfield is still operational for non-military use. Outside the airfield, pockets of pre 18th century enclosure are apparent and there is an area of parkland to

the east of North Weald Hall. In addition, several fields have suffered post 1950's boundary loss as a result of agricultural intensification.

Ecological Features

- 3.7.31 There are no internationally or nationally designated sites of nature conservation value within this Landscape Character Area, however there is one County Wildlife Site and two Local Nature Reserves (Church Lane Flood Meadow and Roughtalley's Wood). In addition, key ecological features include patches of deciduous woodland, species-rich verges, hedgerows and veteran trees.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potentially visually intrusive development of new farm buildings;
- Deterioration and eventual loss of mature treed hedgerows and single mature trees through lack of appropriate management;
- Potential for the expansion of the urban edges of North Weald Bassett to the south;
- Potential for the conversion or development of North Weald Bassett airfield.

Sensitivities to Change

- 3.7.32 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include hedges, hedgerow trees and species-rich verges. Open views across this area are visually sensitive to potential new development, particularly large-scale or tall vertical elements. As a result of the above factors, overall this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **moderate** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve the landscape setting of North Weald.
- Ensure that any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern of small villages, hamlets and scattered farmsteads, landscape setting and locally distinctive buildings styles;
- Maintain characteristic open and framed views across the area;

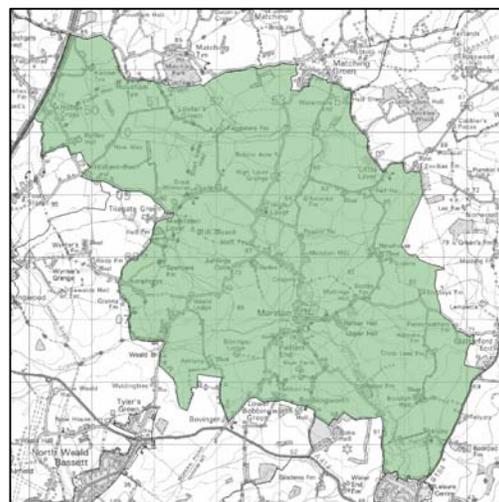
Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern (and associated headlands), and strengthen through planting using local provenance species;

- Conserve mature and veteran trees within fields and hedgerows as key landscape and ecological features;
- Conserve patches of broadleaved woodland as key landscape and ecological features;
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials, which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character;
- Establish species rich field margins within arable fields as an important nature conservation habitat.

F6: MAGDALEN LAVER AND MORETON

Location and Boundaries



3.7.33 Magdalen Laver and Moreton Landscape Character Area is situated within the east of the District. To the north it abuts Matching Farmland Plateau (C2) and Abbess Farmland Plateau (C3) Landscape Character Areas, whilst to the south, it is adjacent to North Weald Ridges and Valleys (F5) and Jack's Hatch to Church Langley Farmland Ridges (E1) Landscape Character Areas.

Key Characteristics

- Field boundaries are often delineated by a combination of hedges and ditches;
- Small-scale settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and small villages such as Moreton and Bobbingworth;
- Network of minor, narrow rural lanes, often lined with mature hedgerows containing hedgerow trees;
- Small, historic settlements with prominent historic buildings;
- Pockets of enclosed meadow pasture;
- Small patches of broadleaved woodland punctuate the landscape and provide an intermittent sense of enclosure;
- A relatively strong sense of tranquillity and associated predominantly rural character throughout.

Overall Character

3.7.34 Landscape pattern is dominated by a series of small to medium sized arable fields, which are interspersed with small, irregular historic field systems. Both ditches and hedges delineate field boundaries. Mature trees are a feature of fields and hedgerows. The area has an intimate historic character, provided by its two small, nucleated historic settlements, which are connected by a series of narrow, winding and sometimes sunken lanes. The villages of Moreton and Bobbingworth both have strong historic characters, with their timber-framed houses and historic churches. The earthworks of previously abandoned medieval settlement are visible across the character area; the historic pattern of scattered manor houses indicated by the moat earthwork remains is continued in the present day landscape by the scattered farmsteads and roadside houses. Small patches of broadleaved woodland provide breaks in the surrounding arable landscape.

Visual Character

- Panoramic, open views across gently undulating farmland are characteristic of this area;
- Views to the settlement edges of Chipping Ongar from the southern edge of the area.

Historic Land Use

3.7.35 This area has a strong and intimate historic rural character, with winding lanes and roads and small-scale scattered settlement, much of which has Medieval or earlier origins. These are set within a landscape dominated by post-1950s arable fields. There is a distinctive strip of enclosed meadow pasture running through the centre of the character area, north and west of Moreton. The historic core of Moreton is a designated Conservation Area, and developed at

the junction point of roads leading north-south and east-west, on the high ground overlooking Crispey Brook. This historic hamlet of Bobbingworth, with its 13th century listed church, and the large 17th and 18th century house and parkland of Blake Hall are also contained within a Conservation Area. In the medieval period the area was scattered by moated manor houses, which now survive as earthworks. There is a complex of earthworks at Magdalen Laver, relating to the fishponds and other features of the moated manor house that once stood here. Within this area, ditches, rather than hedges delineate field boundaries.

Ecological Features

- 3.7.36 There are no internationally or nationally designated sites of nature conservation value within this Landscape Character Area, however, there are five County Wildlife Sites scattered throughout the landscape.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potentially visually intrusive development of new farm buildings;
- Deterioration and eventual loss of mature treed hedgerows and single mature trees through lack of appropriate management;
- Potential expansion or development of small-scale historic villages;
- Potential introduction of tall vertical elements.

Sensitivities to Change

- 3.7.37 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include hedges, hedgerow trees, field trees, historic small-scale settlements, the overall relatively strong sense of tranquillity and associated predominantly rural character. Panoramic, open views across this area are visually sensitive to potential new development, particularly large-scale or tall vertical elements. As a result of the above factors, overall this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **moderate** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Maintain characteristic open, panoramic views across the area;
- Ensure that any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive buildings styles.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve mature and veteran trees within fields and hedgerows as key landscape and ecological features;
- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern (and associated headlands) and strengthen through planting using local provenance species;
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character;
- Establish species rich field margins within arable fields as an important nature conservation habitat.

3.8 Wooded Ridges and Valleys: Landscape Character Type G

Location and Boundaries

3.8.1 The Wooded Ridges and Valleys Landscape Character Type is situated in the south of the District and overlooks the River Valley (B) Landscape Character Type. To the north, it abuts the Wooded Ridges (D) and Wooded Ridges and Valleys (G) Landscape Character Types.

Key Characteristics

3.8.2 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

- Series of small valleys which are encapsulated by minor ridges, resulting in an undulating landform;
- Strong historic continuity, resulting from intact historic field systems, scatters of veteran trees and patches of ancient woodland;
- Frequent patches of woodland which provide an intermittent sense of enclosure within views across the landscape;
- Strong sense of tranquillity in places, at distance from major road corridors;
- A series of narrow, rural road corridors cross the landscape, and are often lined with mature hedgerows and deciduous trees.

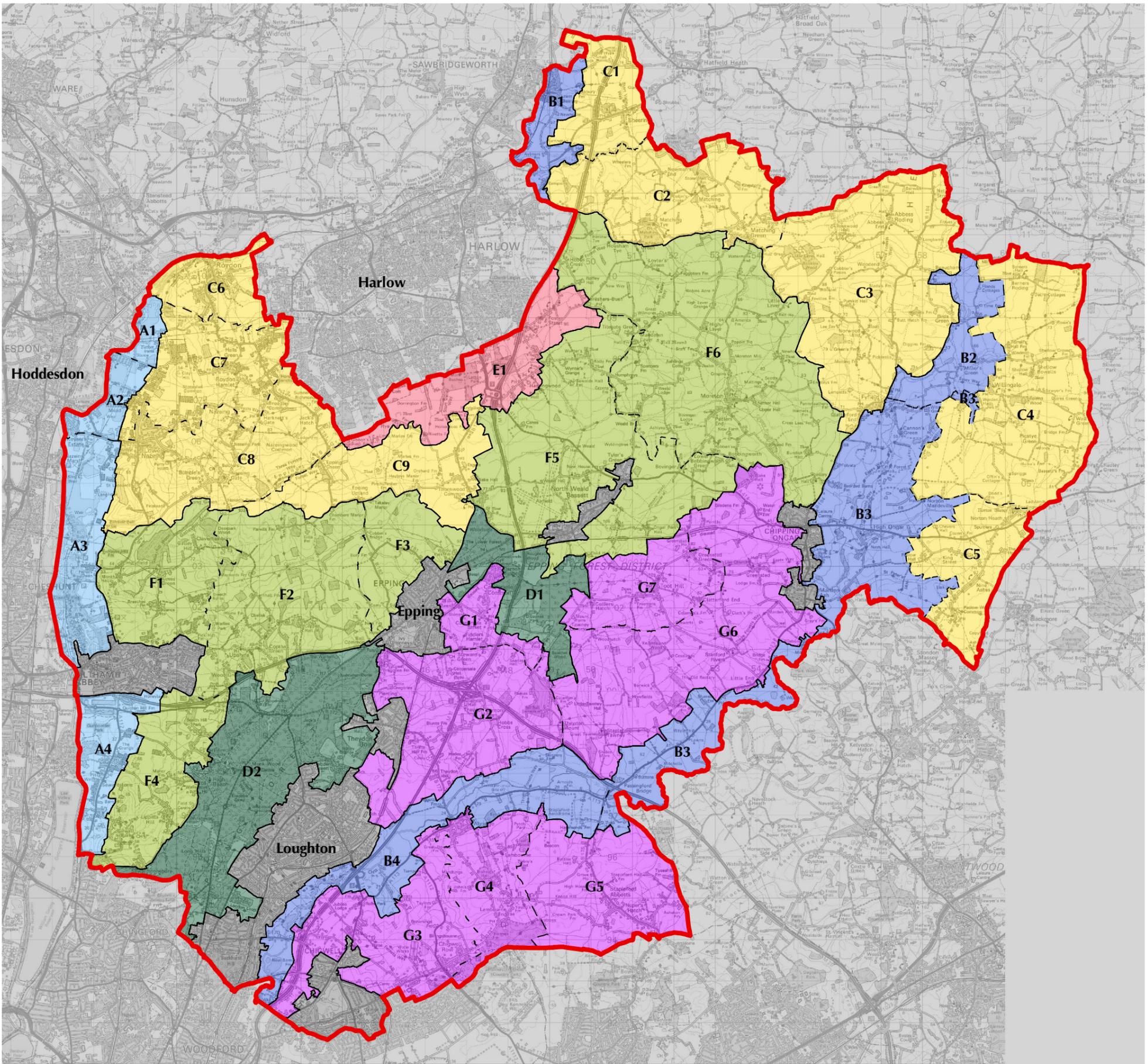
Landscape Character Areas

3.8.3 This Landscape Character Type contains the following Character Areas (as shown on **Figure 3.1**):

- G1: Coopersale
- G2: Theydon Garnon
- G3: Chigwell
- G4: Lambourne
- G5: Stapleford Abbots
- G6: Stapleford Tawney and Stanford Rivers
- G7: Toot Hill

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

3.8.4 The proposed landscape strategy objectives for this Landscape Character type and its constituent Landscape Character Areas are:

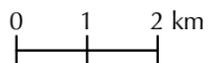


KEY



Epping Forest Landscape Character Types and Areas

- A River Valley Floodplain:
Flooded Gravel Pits and Marshes
A1 Rye Meads
A2 Nazeing Mead
A3 Lea Valley Marshes
A4 Rammey Marsh
- B River Valley
B1 River Stort
B2 Upper Roding
B3 Middle Roding
B4 Lower Roding
- C Farmland Plateau
C1 Sheering
C2 Matching
C3 Abbes
C4 Willingale
C5 Nine Ashes
C6 Roydon
C7 Roydon Hamlet
C8 Bumble's Green
C9 Epping Green
- D Wooded Ridges
D1 Lower Forest to Beachet Wood Ridge
D2 Epping Forest Ridge
- E Farmland Ridges
E1 Jack's Hatch to Church Langley
- F Ridges and Valleys
F1 Holyfield
F2 Uphire
F3 Cobbin's Bridge
F4 Lippitts and Daws Hills
F5 North Weald
F6 Magdalen Laver and Moreton
- G Wooded Ridges and Valleys
G1 Coopersale
G2 Theydon Garnon
G3 Chigwell
G4 Lambourne
G5 Stapleford Abbots
G6 Stapleford Tawney and Stanford Rivers
G7 Toot Hill
- Urban
- Study Area



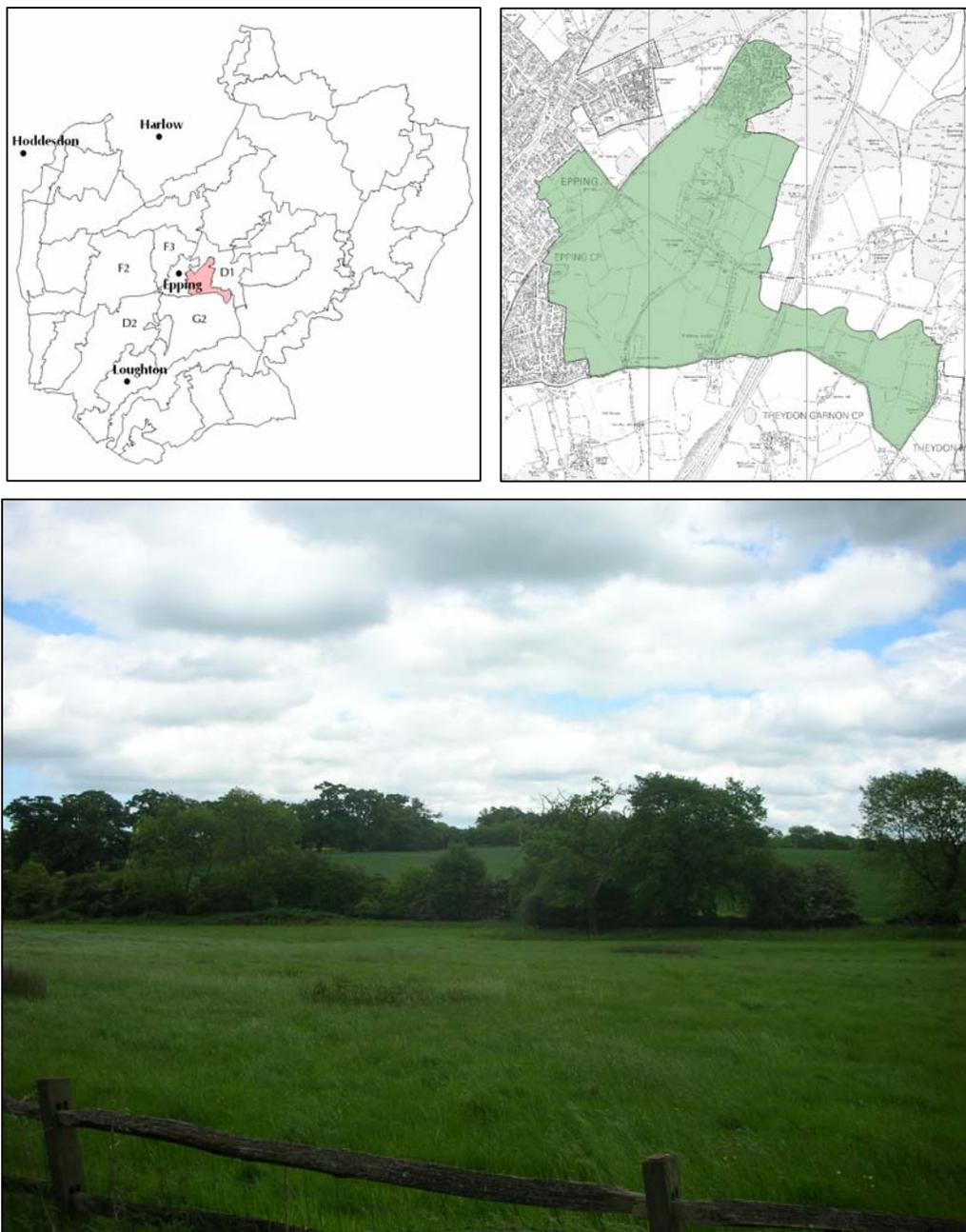
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Figure 3.1
 Epping Forest Landscape Character Types and Areas

- 3.8.5 **Conserve** - seek to protect and enhance positive features (as set out within the 'sensitivities to change' sections for each Landscape Character Area below) that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.
- 3.8.6 **Enhance** – seek to improve the integrity of the landscape, and reinforce its character, by introducing new and/or enhanced elements where distinctive features or characteristics are absent.

G1: COOPERSALE

Location and Boundaries



3.8.7 Coopersale Landscape Character Area is situated towards the centre of the District and abuts the eastern settlement edge of Epping. To the south, it borders Theydon Garnon Wooded Ridges and Valleys (G2) Landscape Character Area, whilst to the east it is adjacent to Lower Forest to Beachet Wood Ridge (D1) Landscape Character Area.

Key Characteristics

- A small-scale settlement pattern of dispersed linear settlements;
- Patchwork of medium-sized arable fields delineated by a network of mature hedgerows, often containing hedgerow trees;
- Sense of tranquillity is disturbed by noise and movement associated with the M11 motorway corridor;
- Patches of irregular, historic fields are visible within the current landscape pattern;
- Large houses with areas of associated designed parkland are key built elements within this area.

Overall Character

- 3.8.8 This undulating area is predominantly covered by small to medium sized arable fields with visible hedgerow-treed boundaries. Relicts of informal Medieval parkland, later redesigned as landscape parks, and ancient woodland are also visible within the area. The tranquillity of this area is greatly disturbed in proximity to the M11 and M25 motorways. The historic dispersed linear settlement of Coopersale Street is a distinctive feature in the centre of the character area, separating the two parks at Coopersale House and Gaynes Park.

Visual Character

- Open views to the urban edges of Epping to the west;
- Strong sense of enclosure provided by adjacent wooded ridge within views northwards;
- Framed views across the network of arable fields are characteristic of the area.

Historic Land Use

- 3.8.9 This area has a well-settled historic character, provided by the houses with large gardens in the Coopersale Street Conservation Areas, the large houses and parklands of Coopersale House and the farmsteads scattered across the area. Although the fieldscape is dominated by post 1950s arable fields, formed through removal of older field boundaries as a result of agricultural intensification, there are some patches of pre-18th century fields within the area. There are also small patches of ancient woodland within the area.

Ecological Features

- 3.8.10 There are no internationally or nationally designated sites of nature conservation importance within this Landscape Character Area, however there is one locally designated County Wildlife

Site (Steward's Green Lane). Other key ecological features include mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Noise and visual intrusion of the M11 and M25 road corridors;
- Potentially visually intrusive development of new farm buildings;
- Deterioration and eventual loss of mature treed hedgerows and single mature trees through lack of appropriate management;
- Potential expansion or development of small-scale historic villages.

Sensitivities to Change

- 3.8.11 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include the network of hedges and hedgerow trees; and the small-scale, historic settlement pattern. Framed views across this area are visually sensitive to new potentially new development, particularly large-scale or tall vertical elements. As a result of the above factors, overall this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **moderate to high** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

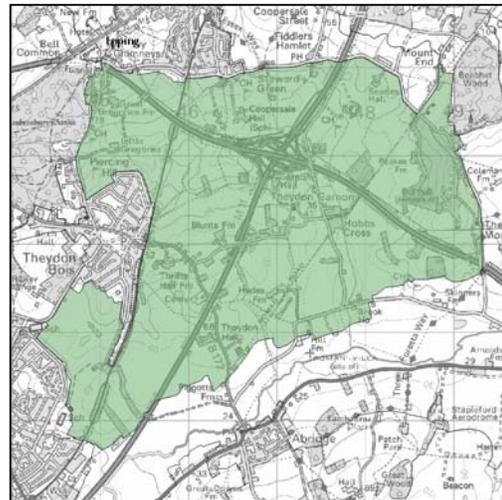
- Maintain characteristic framed views across the area;
- Ensure that any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive buildings styles.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern (and associated headlands), and strengthen through planting using local provenance species;
- Conserve mature and veteran trees within fields and hedgerows as key landscape and ecological features;
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character;
- Establish species rich field margins within arable fields as an important nature conservation habitat.

G2: THEYDON GARNON

Location and Boundaries



3.8.12 Theydon Garnon Landscape Character Area is situated towards the centre of the District and overlooks the Lower Roding Valley (B4) Landscape Character Area to the south. To the north it abuts Coopersale Wooded Ridges and Valleys Landscape Character Area (G1), to the east Stapleford Tawney and Stanford Rivers Wooded Ridges and Valleys (G6) Landscape Character Area; and west, Epping Forest Ridge (D2) Landscape Character Area.

Key Characteristics

- The interchange between the M11 and M25 road corridors dominates landscape pattern within this area;
- Both road corridors introduce a source of noise and movement into the area and disturb overall sense of tranquillity;
- Strongly undulating topography in places as a result of the series of ridges and slopes;
- A patchwork of arable and pastoral farmland, often lined with mature hedgerows, containing hedgerow trees;
- Rows of pylons form dominant vertical elements within certain views;
- A network of minor roads cross the area;
- Settlement pattern comprises a series of small, linear, historic hamlets, such as Fiddler's Hamlet.

Overall Character

- 3.8.13 The M11/M25 junction, with its constant source of noise and movement, dominates landscape pattern within this area. Adjacent to the road corridors, a patchwork of arable and pastoral fields is lined with mature hedgerows, which provide a sense of enclosure within views across the landscape. Settlement pattern is small-scale and incorporates several small, linear hamlets and isolated farmsteads. To the north of the area, the imposing buildings of Coopersale School are a key built element. At distance from the motorway corridors, this area has a predominantly rural character. Trees and woodland are often located on the brow of slopes, resulting in a treed skyline within several views across the area.

Visual Character

- Open views to the urban edges of Epping to the west;
- Views of this area from the M11 and M25 road corridors;
- Views to the urban edges of Theydon Garnon to the south.

Historic Land Use

- 3.8.14 Historic field pattern within this area has been overlain by the dominant presence of the M11 and M25 road junction and their motorway corridors. Many of the fields have suffered post-1950s boundary loss; however there are patches of pre 18th century enclosure remaining. There is a relatively large area of informal medieval parkland at hill hall and patches of other parkland within the area.

Ecological Features

- 3.8.15 There are no internationally or nationally designated sites of nature conservation value within this Landscape Character Area, however there are four County Wildlife Sites. Key ecological features also include hedgerows and mature trees.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potentially visually intrusive development of new farm buildings;
- Noise and movement associated with the M11 and M25 road corridors;
- Deterioration and eventual loss of mature treed hedgerows and single mature trees through lack of appropriate management;
- Potential expansion or development of small-scale historic villages;
- Potential expansion of the settlements of Epping or Loughton.

Sensitivities to Change

- 3.8.16 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include hedges, hedgerow trees, field trees and historic small-scale settlements. Open views across this area are visually sensitive to potential new development, particularly large-scale or tall vertical elements. As a result of the above factors, overall this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **low to moderate** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Ensure that any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern of small scale villages, hamlets and scattered farmsteads, landscape setting and locally distinctive buildings styles;
- Maintain characteristic open views across the area;

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern, and strengthen through planting using local provenance species;
- Conserve mature and veteran trees within fields and hedgerows (and associated headlands) as key landscape and ecological features;
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character.
- Establish species rich field margins within arable fields as an important nature conservation habitat.

G3: CHIGWELL

Location and Boundaries



3.8.17 Chigwell Landscape Character Area is situated in the south of the District. It abuts Lower Roding Valley (B4) Landscape Character Area to the north and Lambourne Wooded Ridges and Valleys (G4) Landscape Character Area to the east.

Key Characteristics

- A gently undulating patchwork of predominantly arable fields, which are delineated with mature hedgerows, often containing hedgerow trees;
- Sense of tranquillity is strong throughout much of the area (at distance from the M11 road corridor in the west, which introduces a source of noise and movement);
- Field pattern is generally small-scale and interspersed with small pockets of deciduous woodland which provide an intermittent sense of enclosure within views;
- To the south of the area there is a strong urban character as a result of the adjacent urban edges of Hainault and Grange Hill. The large nucleated settlement of Chigwell also contributes to settlement pattern within the area;
- The reservoir and water works to the north of Chigwell Row also introduces a built, human element to the area.

Overall Character

- 3.8.18 This Landscape Character Area encompasses a gently undulating patchwork of predominantly arable fields. Mature hedgerows line field boundaries and often contain trees, which are key landscape features within views across the area. Pockets of deciduous woodland frame open views across the patchwork of small fields. Views to the urban edges of Hainault and Grange Hill contribute to recognisable sense of place. Sense of tranquillity is strong throughout much of the area (at distance from the M11 road corridor in the west, which introduces a source of noise and movement).

Visual Character

- Open views of the urban edges of Chigwell;
- Open and framed views across gently undulating arable farmland.

Historic Land Use

- 3.8.19 There is a strong historic field pattern within this Landscape Character Area. Intricate patches of small-scale pre-18th century co-axial enclosure fields are visible, alongside pre-18th century enclosure. Areas where fields have lost boundaries as a result of agricultural intensification post 1950s still retain historic boundary elements. Part of Chigwell village is designated as a Conservation Area as a result of its arrangement of historic buildings. Chigwell once lay within the Forest of Essex on the main coaching route between London and Chipping Ongar (the High Road).

Ecological Features

- 3.8.20 There are no internationally or nationally designated sites of nature conservation value within the area. There are, however, three County Wildlife Sites and two Local Nature Reserves (Roding Valley Meadows and Chigwell Row Wood).

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potentially visually intrusive development of new farm buildings;
- Deterioration and eventual loss of mature treed hedgerows and single mature trees through lack of appropriate management;
- Potential expansion or development of small-scale historic villages.

Sensitivities to Change

- 3.8.21 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include the network of hedges and hedgerow trees; and the small-scale, historic settlement pattern. Framed views across this area are visually sensitive to potential new development, particularly large-scale or tall vertical elements. As a result of the above factors, overall this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **low to moderate** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

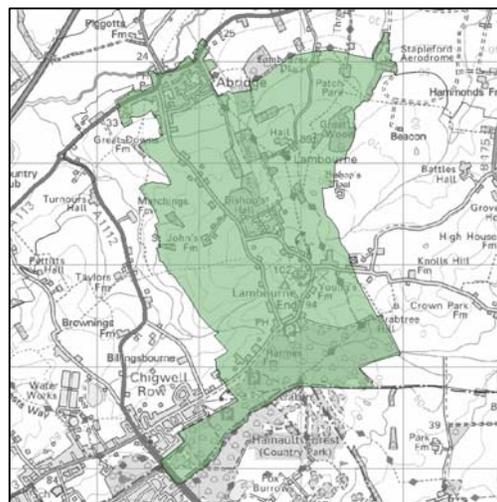
- Ensure that any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive buildings styles;
- Maintain characteristic framed views across the area.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern, and strengthen through planting using local provenance species;
- Conserve mature and veteran trees within fields and hedgerows as key landscape and ecological features;
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character;
- Establish species rich field margins within arable fields as an important nature conservation habitat.

G4: LAMBOURNE

Location and Boundaries



3.8.22 Lambourne Landscape Character Area is situated in the south of the District and abuts Lower Roding Valley (B4) Landscape Character Area to the north. To the east and west it is adjacent to Stapleford Abbotts Wooded Ridges and Valleys (G5) and Chigwell Wooded Ridges and Valleys (G3) Landscape Character Areas.

Key Characteristics

- Several linear belts of woodland within this area contribute to a relatively strong sense of enclosure throughout much of the area;
- A relatively small-scale patchwork of undulating, predominantly arable fields are delineated by a network of mature hedgerows, often containing hedgerow trees;
- An elevated area, which overlooks surrounding areas of farmland;
- Field trees are a key landscape feature in places.
- Small-scale settlement pattern of isolated farmsteads and houses, in addition to small linear hamlets of Lambourne and Lambourne End;
- Northern edge of Hainault Forest provides a strong sense of enclosure at the southern edge of the area.

Overall Character

3.8.23 This small-scale, intimate landscape encompasses an intricate patchwork of small-scale arable fields which are lined by a network of mature hedgerows. Mature hedgerow trees are key landscape features within views across the area. Views across adjacent areas of farmland and long distance views towards central London contribute to recognisable sense of place within this area. The landscape is crossed by a series of narrow, predominantly rural lanes and sense of tranquillity is strong throughout most of the area. To the south, the northern extent of Hainault Forest provides a sense of enclosure to views.

Visual Character

- The telecommunications mast is a landmark within several views to the area;
- Long distance views towards central London to the south and east contribute to recognisable sense of place.
- The northern edge of Hainault Forest is a key feature within views southwards, which provides a sense of enclosure and contributes to recognisable sense of place.

Historic Land Use

3.8.24 Although there is evidence of post-1950s boundary loss within this area, historic field pattern is dominated by fields of pre-19th century enclosure. This area would once have been much more wooded, situated at the northern edge of the historic forest of Hainault.

Ecological Features

- 3.8.25 Part of this Landscape Character Area is designated within the Hainault Forest SSSI. In addition, there are eight County Wildlife Sites, most of which encompass areas of woodland.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potentially visually intrusive development of new farm buildings;
- Loss of overall sense of tranquillity;
- Deterioration and eventual loss of mature treed hedgerows and single mature trees through lack of appropriate management;
- Potential expansion or development of small-scale historic villages.

Sensitivities to Change

- 3.8.26 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include the network of hedges and hedgerow trees; and the small-scale, historic settlement pattern. Framed views across this area are visually sensitive to new potentially new development, particularly large-scale or tall vertical elements. As a result of the above factors, overall this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **moderate to high** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

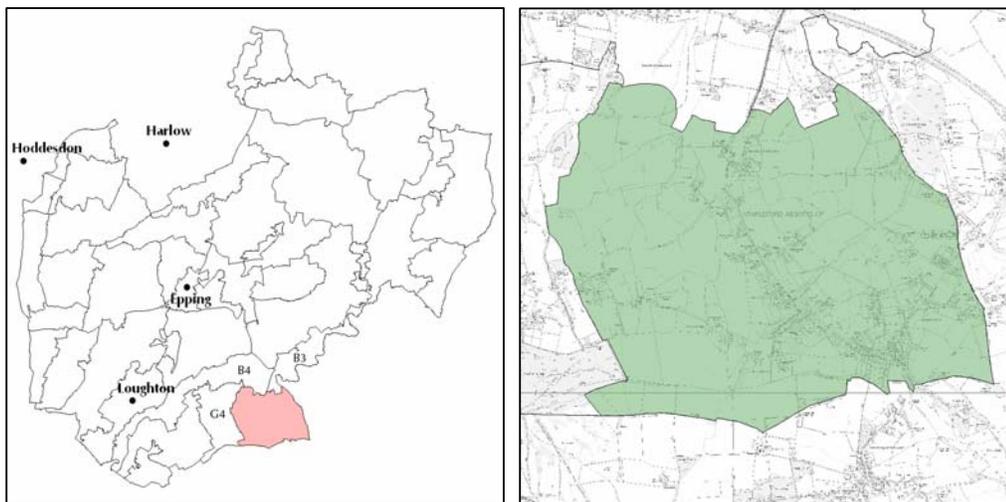
- Ensure that any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive buildings styles;
- Maintain characteristic framed views across the area.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern, and strengthen through planting using local provenance species;
- Conserve mature and veteran trees within fields and hedgerows as key landscape and ecological features;
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character;
- Establish species rich field margins within arable fields as an important nature conservation habitat.

G5: STAPLEFORD ABBOTTS

Location and Boundaries



3.8.27 Stapleford Abbots Landscape Character Area is situated in the south of the District and overlooks the Middle Roding (B3) Landscape Character Area to the north. To the west it abuts the Lambourne Wooded Ridges and Valleys Landscape Character Area (G4).

Key Characteristics

- A gently undulating patchwork of predominantly arable fields which are delineated by an intact network of hedgerows, often containing hedgerow trees;
- Undulating landform, which results in a varying sense of enclosure;
- Predominantly rural character throughout most of the area;
- A patchwork of trees give the sense that this is a partly wooded landscape;
- Settlement pattern is small-scale and encompasses the small linear village of Stapleford Abbots (containing a patchwork of historic and more modern buildings);
- Variable sense of tranquillity, which is sometimes disturbed by traffic on the road corridors.

Overall Character

- 3.8.28 This predominantly rural area encompasses an undulating patchwork of arable fields which are lined with an intact network of mature hedgerows, often containing hedgerow trees. The small, historic linear village of Stapleford Abbots contributes to settlement pattern, alongside scattered, isolated farmsteads. Sense of tranquillity varies within the area, depending on distance from the road corridors that cross the landscape, connecting settlements outside the area. From higher locations, open and framed views southwards towards Central London contribute to recognisable sense of place.

Visual Character

- Open and framed views southwards to central London from higher locations;
- Views towards Havering Country Park.

Historic Land Use

- 3.8.29 The historic landscape pattern of this area is dominated by modern fields, which have suffered boundary loss since the 1950s as a result of agricultural intensification. Pockets of pre-18th century fields are visible; however these are not a dominant feature of the area.

Ecological Features

- 3.8.30 There are no internationally or nationally designated sites of nature conservation interest within this Landscape Character Area, however there is one County Wildlife Site (Gabtree Hill). The mature network of hedgerows and hedgerow trees are also key ecological features.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potentially visually intrusive development of new farm buildings;
- Loss of overall sense of tranquillity;
- Deterioration and eventual loss of mature treed hedgerows and single mature trees through lack of appropriate management;
- Potential expansion or development of small-scale historic villages.

Sensitivities to Change

- 3.8.31 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include the network of hedges and hedgerow trees; and the small-scale, historic settlement pattern. Framed views across this area are visually sensitive to potential new development, particularly large-scale or tall vertical elements. As a result of the above factors, overall this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **moderate to high** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

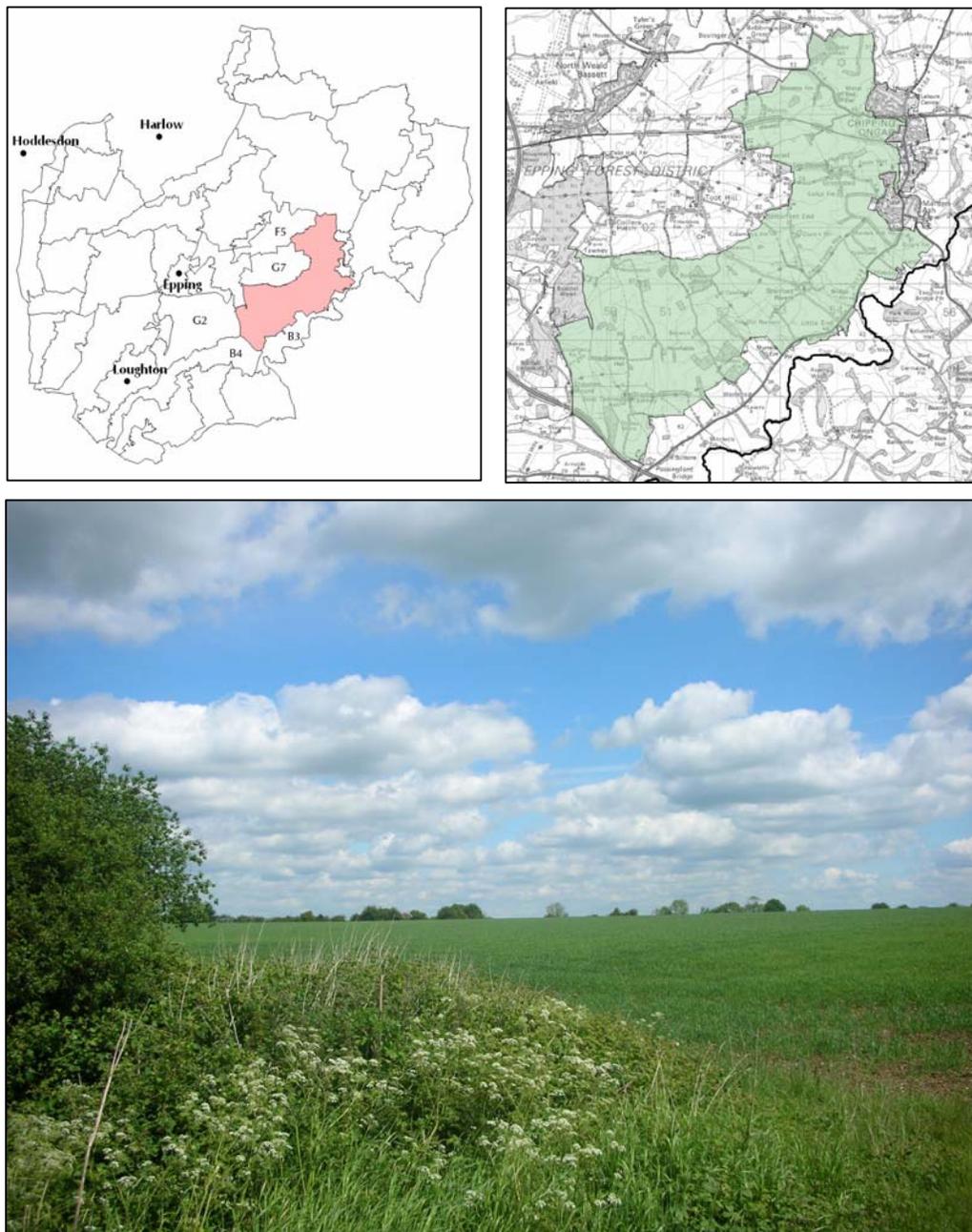
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character;
- Conserve the landscape setting of Stapleford Abbots;
- Maintain characteristic open and framed views across the area.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern (and associated headlands), and strengthen through planting using local provenance species;
- Conserve mature and veteran trees within hedgerows as key landscape and ecological features;
- Establish species rich field margins within arable fields as an important nature conservation habitat;
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials, which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character.

G6: STAPLEFORD TAWNEY AND STANFORD RIVERS

Location and Boundaries



3.8.32 Stapleford Tawney and Stanford River Wooded Ridges and Valleys Landscape Character Area is situated in the southeast of the District and overlooks the Middle Roding River Valley (B3) Landscape Character Area to the south.

Key Characteristics

- Very strong sense of tranquillity throughout most of the area, except in proximity to the M25 road corridor that crosses the south-western corner;
- Traditional, isolated houses, with red brick and occasional thatched barns;
- Mature deciduous field trees are a feature;
- Narrow, rural lanes, lined with mature trees and species-rich verges;
- Strong sense of enclosure along single track roads;
- Predominantly arable fields, lined with a network of mature hedgerows;
- Church at Stanford Rivers is a built landmark nestled within mature trees – with an avenue of trees leading to the door.
- Small-scale settlement pattern, encompassing isolated farmsteads and the small, nucleated villages of Stapleford Tawney and Stanford Rivers;
- Corridor of the M25 motorway crosses the area and introduces a source of noise and movement.

Overall Character

- 3.8.33 This predominantly rural area contains a patchwork of predominantly arable fields which are lined with a network of mature hedgerows, often containing hedgerow trees. In the south of the area, large blocks of predominantly deciduous woodland punctuate landscape pattern and frame views southwards to adjacent Landscape Character Areas outside the Study Area. There is a relatively strong sense of tranquillity throughout most of the area, at distance from the M25 road corridor, which introduces a source of noise and movement in the south-western corner. Settlement pattern is small-scale and encompasses the small, nucleated villages of Stapleford Tawney and Stanford Rivers, in addition to a series of scattered farmsteads.

Visual Character

- Open views to the urban edges of Chipping Ongar to the east;
- Open views to along the corridor of the M25;
- Open and framed views across gently undulating farmland are characteristic of this area;
- Blocks of mature woodland frame several views.

Historic Land Use

- 3.8.34 Several of the fields within this area have suffered boundary loss post-1950 as a result of agricultural intensification; however, large areas of pre-18th century enclosure fields are features of this area, alongside scattered pockets of ancient woodland.

Ecological Features

- 3.8.35 There are no internationally or nationally designated sites of nature conservation value within this Landscape Character Area, however there are nineteen sites locally designated County Wildlife Sites (most of which encompass areas of woodland). Mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees are also key ecological features.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potentially visually intrusive development of new farm buildings;
- Loss of overall sense of tranquillity;
- Deterioration and eventual loss of mature treed hedgerows and single mature trees through lack of appropriate management;
- Potential expansion or development of small-scale historic villages;
- Potential extension or widening of the M25 road corridor;
- Potential new development at the edges of Chipping Ongar.

Sensitivities to Change

- 3.8.36 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include the network of hedges and hedgerow trees; and the small-scale, historic settlement pattern. Framed views across this area are visually sensitive to potential new development, particularly large-scale or tall vertical elements. As a result of the above factors, overall this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **moderate to high** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Maintain characteristic framed and open views across the area;
- Ensure that any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive buildings styles;

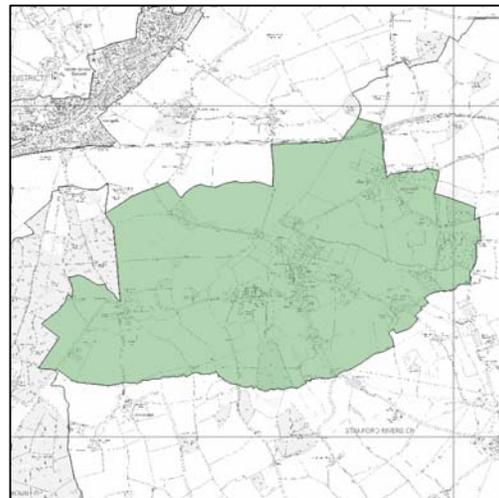
Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern (and associated headlands) and strengthen through planting using local provenance species;
- Conserve mature and veteran trees within fields and hedgerows as key landscape and ecological features;
- Establish species rich field margins within arable fields as an important nature conservation habitat;

- Conserve and promote the use of building materials which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character.

G7: TOOT HILL

Location and Boundaries



3.8.37 Toot Hill Landscape Character Area is situated towards the centre of the District. To the north it abuts North Weald Ridges and Valleys (F5) Landscape Character Area. To the west it is adjacent to Lower Forest to Beachet Wood Ridge (D1), whilst to the south and east it abuts Stapleford Tawney and Stanford Rivers (G6) Landscape Character Area.

Key Characteristics

- Subtle ridge landform which overlooks surrounding areas of lower undulating farmland;
- Small-scale settlement pattern of historic settlements and scattered farmsteads;
- Predominantly arable farmland, with some pockets of pasture;
- Medium to large-scale fields, with hedgerows which often contain hedgerow trees;
- Landscape is crossed by a series of narrow winding lanes;
- A predominantly rural character and relatively strong sense of tranquillity throughout.

Overall Character

- 3.8.38 This area of relatively high farmland (in comparison to adjacent Landscape Character Areas) is dominated by arable farmland with a patchwork of large arable fields. The field pattern is interspersed with small patches of pasture and several small blocks of woodland. A network of hedgerows line field boundaries, several of which, contain mature trees. Small-scale historic settlements are linked by narrow winding lanes. There is a predominantly rural character throughout, with an associated relatively strong sense of tranquillity.

Visual Character

- Views within the area are framed by small blocks of woodland;
- Due to the elevated nature of the area, open views across adjacent Landscape Character Areas can be gained from several locations.

Historic Land Use

- 3.8.39 This area is dominated by modern agricultural fields, some of which contain the remnants of earlier fields within their boundaries, and some localised patches of pre-18th century fields. The earliest historically identified deer park in Britain is located within this Landscape Character Area: Ongar Park, which dates to 1045. Of this emparked private hunting ground only the embanked boundary, or pale, partially survives, though the modern field system that overlies the park partially mirrors its previous extent. In the late 18th century a large area of woodland covered Ongar Park, though this has since been removed and made into agricultural fields.

Ecological Features

- 3.8.40 There are no internationally or nationally designated sites of nature conservation within this Landscape Character Area, however there are five County Wildlife Sites scattered throughout the area.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potentially visually intrusive development of new farm buildings;
- Deterioration and eventual loss of mature treed hedgerows and single mature trees through lack of appropriate management;
- Potential expansion or development of small-scale historic villages.

Sensitivities to Change

- 3.8.41 Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this Landscape Character Area include the network of hedges and hedgerow trees; and the small-scale, historic settlement pattern. Framed views across this area are visually sensitive to new potentially new development, particularly large-scale or tall vertical elements. As a result of the above factors, overall this Landscape Character Area is considered to have **moderate** sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Maintain characteristic framed views across the area;
- Ensure that any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive buildings styles.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern (and associated headlands) and strengthen through planting using local provenance species;
- Conserve mature and veteran trees within fields and hedgerows as key landscape and ecological features
- Establish species rich field margins within arable fields as an important nature conservation habitat;
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 General

4.1.1 This section sets out the consultant's recommendations to Epping Forest District Council for their consultation and action as appropriate.

4.1.2 Recommendations are provided for the application of the Landscape Character Assessment in relation to Local Development Framework policies for protecting and enhancing landscape character, and an outline framework for monitoring landscape change. Recommendations for further work required to enhance the evidence base on the landscape and settlement character of the study area are also included.

4.2 Key Applications of the Landscape Character Assessment

4.2.1 It is intended that this Landscape Character Assessment can be used by all those with an interest in landscape planning, design and management within the Study Area.

4.2.2 In line with the aims and objectives set out in Section 1.2, the principal recommended application of the Landscape Character Assessment is in relation to the local authority planning process. Practical uses of the Landscape Character Assessment in this regard include:

- Raising the general awareness in the planning process of the importance of landscape character in contributing to quality of life within the study area by recognising:
 - Both the differences and similarities between places;
 - What gives different places their special local identity and distinctiveness;
 - The need to protect and enhance special and valued characteristics;
 - That development needs to be sympathetic to these special qualities;
 - The need to actively improve the quality of places through good design.
- Informing the formulation of character-based landscape policies in the Local Development Framework;
- Providing the spatial framework for considering the landscape character implications of options for different scales and patterns of strategic development in the Local Development Framework;
- Informing development control decisions about proposals for built development and other forms of land use change;
- Informing the Strategic Environmental Assessment and evidence base of the Local Development Framework of the impact of new development on landscape character;

- Providing a framework for more detailed studies to enhance the evidence base, and for the targeting of landscape enhancements in concert with development schemes;
- Informing design guidance to promote higher quality landscape design;
- Providing a baseline for monitoring the impact of new development on landscape character and quality.

4.2.3 Planners, developers, architects, urban designers, landscape architects and other professionals may also find the characterisation information and guidelines useful as a reference source for informing the site masterplanning and building design process for specific development schemes. Other applications of the Landscape Character Assessments include its use by those involved in the targeting and delivery of environmental land management schemes - e.g. Environmental Stewardship advisers, landowners and managers. Local communities and other stakeholders may also find the Study useful as a basis for guiding their responses to consultations by the local planning authorities on plans, strategies and planning applications that may have significant implications for their local landscapes.

4.3 Incorporating Landscape Character into Local Development Frameworks

Key Issues to be addressed by Local Development Framework Policies

4.3.1 The landscape planning policy framework in the study area was outlined in Section 1.4. In summary, the focus of the current national and emerging regional planning policy framework in relation to the protection and enhancement of landscape character can be summarised as:

- Sustainable development is the overarching objective and priority.
- Landscape character, settlement character and local distinctiveness should be taken into consideration in development.
- Landscape character should inform but not constrain development.
- The countryside is to be protected for its own sake but development that supports the rural economy should be considered.
- Core policies need to be clear, concise and criteria-based.
- A strong evidence base is required to support policies and any Supplementary Planning Documents.
- Local landscape designations and green wedges/strategic gaps, where these are to be retained, need justification based on a formal and robust assessment.
- Design policy is an important means for achieving landscape character objectives.

4.3.2 The range of issues affecting landscape character in the study area was identified in Section 2.4. The key issues in relation to planning can be summarised as follows:

- **Built development** – expansion of suburban character and pattern; use of standardised housing designs/inappropriate building methods/materials/details that ignore local vernacular; expansion of industrial, leisure and retail developments on settlement edges; pressure on open character of countryside gaps.
- **Infrastructure** - loss of tranquillity from road and development growth/widespread lighting; increase in power lines, telecommunication masts and associated buildings.
- **Small-scale and incremental change** - gentrification, suburbanisation and extension of rural settlements, dwellings and gardens; planting of exotic species, urban style fencing and lighting; loss of locally distinctive features such as walls, fences, signs, etc; increased car use/erosion of narrow lanes/adverse impact on landscape and settlement character/obtrusive road signage and traffic calming measures.
- **Settlements in their landscape settings** - relationship between settlement core and landscape severed by settlement expansion; new development unsympathetic to original settlement pattern and relationship with landscape; poor relationships between settlement and landscape/key views/landmarks/other landscape features.
- **Recreation and tourism** – access infrastructure; horse-related developments, golf courses.
- **Climate change** - reducing the causes of climate change through energy conservation/efficiency and increased use of renewable energy sources; adapting to the consequences of climate change in relation to flood risk and sea level rise.

4.3.3 In order to most effectively address these issues, it is recommended that the District Council use this Landscape Character Assessment to underpin a character-based approach to landscape protection and enhancement in their Core Strategies. This is consistent with approaches by other authorities in England where criteria-based landscape character policies, with supporting guidance, are replacing the traditional reliance on Local Landscape Designations where these are considered to be too blunt an instrument for delivering sustainable development in landscape terms. The following approaches to incorporating landscape character within the respective Core Strategy documents are recommended based on existing and emerging best practice from Staffordshire²² and West Sussex²³.

Incorporating Landscape Character into the Vision

4.3.4 It is recommended that the role of landscape in contributing to quality of life should be incorporated into the Core Strategy's Vision. For example:

²² Planning for Landscape Change - an Introduction and User's Guide to Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Plan 1996-2011 (Staffordshire County Council, 1999).

²³ Countryside Agency Demonstration Project - Criteria-based Landscape Policies and Guidance in Local Development Documents : an Approach in West Sussex, Report No.1 Policies (White Consultants, February 2006)

'The District will be a place where distinctive and valued natural and historic landscapes and the built environment will be protected and enhanced over time, contributing to a high quality of life.'

Incorporating Character Objectives

- 4.3.5 It is recommended that a landscape character objective be included in the Core Strategy. This could be drafted as:

'To protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance the varied landscape character within the District reflecting landscape sensitivity and promoting local distinctiveness.'

- 4.3.6 In addition, it is recommended that a settlement character objective should also be included in the Core Strategy. This could be drafted as:

'To protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance the locally distinctive and historic character of the urban and rural settlements and their settings within the District and to retain the separation between settlements.'

- 4.3.7 To support the above character objectives, it is recommended that a design objective is also included, such as:

'To promote high quality design and a rigorous design process that embodies sustainable development and management principles, takes full account of site and context, respects and enhances the character of the area, and provides for inclusive access.'

Drafting Core Policies and Supporting Text

- 4.3.8 It is recommended that a criteria-based landscape character policy is included in the core strategy as a replacement for/in preference to Local Landscape Designations. The Policy should include reference to the following main components:

- Landscape character and local distinctiveness to be protected, conserved and, where possible, enhanced.
- Proposals for development to take into account the key characteristics, local distinctiveness and the sensitivities to change of the relevant Landscape Character Areas identified by this Landscape Character Assessment.
- Development to be permitted where it can protect, conserve and enhance:

- landscape character and local distinctiveness of the area (including its historical, ecological and cultural character and its tranquillity)
- the distinctive setting of, and relationship between, settlement and buildings and the landscape including important views
- the function of watercourses, woodland, trees, field boundaries, vegetation and other landscape features as ecological corridors
- the special qualities of rivers, waterways, wetlands and their surroundings
- the topography of the area including sensitive skylines, hillsides and geological features.

4.3.9 The policy needs to be drafted to reflect the predominant landscape character of the District as required.

4.3.10 It is recommended that the supporting text for the landscape character policy should include reference to the following:

- Landscape character is of fundamental importance to the quality of life for communities in all areas.
- High priority to be afforded to the protection, conservation and enhancement of landscape character in delivering sustainable development in line with Government policy.
- A clear definition of landscape character and local distinctiveness.
- The intended preparation of a joint Supplementary Planning Document (if appropriate) to provide guidance on how the overall character of each Landscape Character Area identified in the Landscape Character Assessment can be protected, conserved and enhanced.
- Other existing character studies (e.g. the Essex Historic Landscape Characterisation Study) and proposed studies that provide part of the evidence base for landscape and settlement character.
- Well-designed, high quality new development within rural areas that helps sustain and/or create landscapes with a strong sense of place and local identity to be encouraged.
- Encouragement for landscape enhancement schemes, submission of landscape design statement with planning applications and provision of landscape-scale management plans/strategies.

4.3.11 Based on the advice set out in paragraphs 4.3.4 to 4.3.8 above, a recommended draft policy for consistent use across all the local authorities' Core Strategies is included as **Appendix C**.

Incorporating Landscape Character into Other Core Policies

4.3.12 To support the above landscape/settlement character policies, it is recommended that local character considerations should also be incorporated into the following policies:

- Design Policy - to include reference to character, local distinctiveness, design process and use of design statements.
- Nature Conservation Policy - to include reference to European, national and locally designated wildlife sites, meeting BAP targets in ways that reinforce local landscape character, etc.
- Heritage Policy - to include reference to listed buildings, Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, etc.

Developing a Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document

4.3.13 Building on the partnership approach to the preparation of Landscape Character Assessments in Essex, it is recommended that consideration is given to developing a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the District. The aims of this 'Landscape Character SPD' would be to:

- Develop a co-ordinated approach or 'toolkit' for using the Landscape Character Assessment and other characterisation information to inform criteria-based planning policies and guidance in Local Development Documents (LDDs).
- Make the link between planning policy work and landscape management guidance for landowners and managers.
- Promote a consistent approach to development control.

4.3.14 This approach would help integrate development planning with conservation and land management, in line with the requirements of PPS12²⁴.

4.3.15 The purpose of the SPD would be to support the core and development control policies in the LDD and should therefore have a direct correlation with these policies. As advised by PPS12, the SPD should be relatively concise and criteria and process-based, without being over prescriptive. It should provide the link between the Landscape Character Assessment that forms the evidence base, and the LDD policies. Subject to development of appropriate evidence bases, it is recommended that the Landscape Character SPD could incorporate Settlement Character and Design issues, or be complemented by separate SPDs addressing such issues. Examples of this type of SPD include High Peak Borough Council's Landscape Character SPD²⁵.

²⁴ PPS12 Local Development Frameworks (ODPM, 2004).

²⁵ High Peak Borough Local Development Framework : Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document SPD5 (High Peak Borough Council, Adopted March 2006).

4.4 Monitoring Landscape Change

4.4.1 In order to measure the effectiveness of planning policies in protecting, conserving and enhancing landscape character, quality and local distinctiveness, it is recommended that the District Council gives consideration to developing a framework for monitoring landscape change within the Landscape Character Areas identified by this Study. An outline of a possible monitoring framework is set out below as a starting point for consideration and further development as appropriate.

Defining Landscape Change

4.4.2 Policies and proposals can affect landscape in two basic ways:

- By impacting on *landscape character* – the subtle cumulative effects of often small-scale and incremental development over time on the underlying characteristics that affect sense of a place and contribute to local identity and distinctiveness;
- By impacting on *landscape quality* – typically through abrupt changes of development that either enhance or cause the loss or deterioration in landscape features that are of particular value.

4.4.3 In both cases, it is often changes related to the intangible attributes of landscape character (e.g. scale, pattern, texture, enclosure, visual stimuli, sense of tranquillity, etc), rather than physical elements, that most affect quality and character. This makes monitoring landscape change problematic. In relation to the first type of change, it is recommended that the local planning authorities jointly commission a project to devise a methodology for monitoring and measuring the impact of small-scale and incremental change on landscape character.

Developing Monitoring Objectives

4.4.4 Taking into account the suggested components of the landscape character policy, the overall objective is to monitor the effectiveness of policies and proposals in protecting, conserving and enhancing elements that contribute to the character, quality and local distinctiveness of landscapes and settlements within the Study Area. This should use the relevant strategy objectives for each Landscape Character Area set out in Section 3.0 of this report as the basis against which to monitor change.

Developing Monitoring Targets

4.4.5 In line with the suggested policy approach, the target against which the monitoring should be carried out is for development to have no net significant adverse affect on the character or quality of landscape character as described in the relevant Landscape Character Area descriptions, and wherever possible development should contribute positively by enhancing landscape character through high quality and innovative design.

Developing Monitoring Indicators

4.4.6 The former Countryside Agency's guidance²⁶ advises that specific features or attributes need to be selected from the key characteristics of individual Landscape Character Areas to act as indicators for monitoring changes within different areas. In relation to this Study, the criteria for selection of features or attributes as indicators include that they must be:

- Central to the distinctive character of the individual Landscape Character Areas;
- Liable to experience change either in extent or in their condition;
- Capable of being measured against the key objectives for individual Landscape Character Areas and the overall monitoring target.

4.4.7 The selection of indicators also needs to consider the following:

- They need to be defined precisely in terms of desired trends;
- The desired direction of change (target) of the chosen indicator must be known;
- Where possible, local stakeholders should be involved in the choice of indicators, particularly where their participation is needed to collect information to monitor changes.

4.4.8 Taking the above considerations into account, suggested indicators for monitoring changes to individual Landscape Character Areas include:

- Change in the extent of existing characteristic elements in the landscape;
- Change in the condition of existing characteristic elements in the landscape;
- Change in the extent and form of new elements in the landscape;
- Change in the degree of key factors affecting landscape experience/sense of place (tranquillity/disturbance) and social benefits/well-being (access to wildlife, public open space);

²⁶ Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland : Topic Paper 2 – Links to Other Sustainability Tools (Countryside Agency/Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002).

- Alteration and loss of vernacular buildings and other structures that contribute local distinctiveness.

4.4.9 In addition, suggested process indicators for monitoring landscape change could include:

- Change in the coverage of landscape enhancement schemes;
- Change in the number of landscape design statements submitted with planning applications;
- Change in the coverage of completed landscape-scale management plans/strategies.

4.4.10 It is acknowledged that assembling data for monitoring landscape change against these indicators can potentially be a resource intensive process. As a minimum, it is recommended that the three process indicators set out in paragraph 4.4.7 are used to monitor the impact of the recommended policy set out in **Appendix C**.

4.5 Enhancing the Character Evidence Base

4.5.1 This Landscape Character Assessment provides information to help understand the distinctive character of landscapes within the Study Area, and it is expected that the evidence base will be treated as a material consideration in planning decisions. A variety of other character-based studies are needed to more fully inform the LDF policies and any SPDs. It is therefore recommended that, over time, Epping Forest District Council works together with Essex County Council and other key partners to enhance the current character evidence base within the framework provided by this Landscape Character Assessment.

4.5.2 Options for enhancing the evidence base in relation to the character of the landscape (and settlements) within the study area include:

- **Local Distinctiveness Studies** – these should complement and significantly expand upon the content of this Landscape Character Assessment to provide comprehensive illustrated information and analysis of distinctive settlement forms/patterns, building styles and materials, and countryside signage/furniture.
- **Landscape Design Guidance** – to promote sensitive and high quality landscape design, by providing guidance on how the settings of new development can be carried out in accordance with the design policies of the Local Development Framework in order to help retain local distinctiveness.
- **Settlement Studies** – including for example Townscape Character Assessments, urban archaeological surveys, Town and Village Design Statements, and Parish Plans.

- **Local Landscape Studies** - more detailed assessments of landscape character at the local/parish scale, undertaken to inform place-specific planning, design and management issues.
- **Historic Environment Characterisation Studies** - detailed integrated assessments of built heritage, historic landscape features and archaeological potential on a character area basis (in conjunction with Essex County Council).
- **Area-based Regeneration Initiatives** – detailed character appraisal studies to inform and underpin masterplans and design frameworks for the renewal and reuse of brownfield sites around settlement edges.
- **Green Infrastructure Network Plans** – long-term plans to establish networks of multi-functional green infrastructure sites, corridors and areas within the countryside in and around the District’s main settlements in concert with expansion proposals. This would extend and develop the Harlow area GI Plan to cover the remainder of the District. A key input to this would be to develop mapping of landscape assets and identify assets of conservation and enhancement opportunities to inform targeting of investment/action.
- **Green Space Strategies** – detailed strategies for delivering high quality parks and other public open spaces, based on PPG17²⁷ open space audits and need assessments, prepared in line with CABI Space guidance²⁸.
- **River Corridor Environmental Strategies** – including a coherent vision, objectives and an action plan for the long-term conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of key river corridors within the Study Area.

²⁷ PPG17 - Open Space, Sport and Recreation (HMSO, 2002).

²⁸ Green Space Strategies - a Good Practice Guide (CABI Space, Undated).

APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY

Agri-environmental Schemes

Agri-environmental Schemes encourage traditional farming practices to protect the environment by providing grants to land owners to manage their land in ways that conserve and enhance landscape features, wildlife and historic assets, and promote access.

Ancient woodland

Woodland area which has had a continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD and has only been cleared for underwood or timber production. It is an extremely valuable ecological resource, with an exceptionally high diversity of flora and fauna.

Biodiversity

The number and variety of organisms found within a specified area – an important measure of the health and vitality of an area's ecology

Coppicing

The traditional method of woodland management in which trees are cut down to near the ground to encourage the production of long, straight shoots, which can subsequently be harvested.

County Wildlife Site

County Wildlife Sites (CWS) are sites that have been identified for their local wildlife value.

Community Strategy

All local planning authorities have a duty to prepare community strategies under the Local Government Act 2000 in conjunction with other public, private and community sector organisations. Community Strategies should promote the economic, social and environmental well being of their areas and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Local Development Frameworks provide the spatial expression to those elements of the Community Strategy that relate to the use and development of land.

Conservation Area

Areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which is desirable to preserve or enhance, through strict control of new development, and protection of trees, and the need for demolition of buildings or walls to be subject to Conservation Area Consent.

Core Strategy

The Core Strategy sets out the long term vision and the strategic policies required to deliver that vision. Its main aim is to promote sustainable development. It will also seek to protect and enhance the environment, as well as defining the general locations for delivering strategic development including housing, employment, retail, leisure, community and transport. This Development Plan Document includes the existing national, regional and local strategies that have implications for the development and use of land. The Core Strategy includes a key diagram showing in broad terms the main policies and proposals, and also includes a number of strategic development policies that set out the broad criteria against which planning applications for the development and use of land and buildings will be considered. Such policies will ensure that any development in the area is in harmony with the spatial vision and objectives set out in the core strategy. They will also highlight the needs and characteristics of the local area.

Design Guides

A document providing guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with the design policies of a local authority or other organisation often with a view to retaining local distinctiveness.

Development Briefs

Inform developers and other interested parties of the constraints and opportunities presented by a site, and the type of development expected or encouraged by local planning policies.

Development Plan Document (DPD)

Development Plan Documents that a Council are required to prepare include the core strategy, site-specific allocations of land and area action plans. There will also be a proposals map, which will illustrate the spatial extent of policies that must be prepared and maintained to accompany all development plan documents. All Development Plan Documents must be subject to rigorous procedures of community involvement, consultation and independent examination, and adopted after receipt of the inspector's binding report.

Evidence Base

An up-to-date information base on key aspects of the social, economic and environmental characteristics of the area, to enable the preparation of a sound spatial plan that meets the objectives of sustainable development.

Feature

A prominent, eye-catching element (e.g. wooded hilltop, church spire).

Key Characteristic

An element that contributes to local distinctiveness (e.g. narrow winding lanes, strong sense of openness).

Landcover

Combinations of land use and vegetation that cover the land surface.

Landform

Combinations of slope and elevation that produce the shape and form of the land.

Landscape Character

A distinct pattern or combination of elements that occurs consistently in a particular landscape.

Landscape Character Area

A discrete geographical area of a particular Landscape Character Type with a distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently throughout the area.

Landscape Character Type

A generic unit of landscape with a distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently throughout the type.

Local Development Document (LDD)

Local Development Documents are those documents that together make up the Local Development Framework. They comprise of Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and the Statement of Community Involvement.

Local Development Framework (LDF)

This is the term given to the portfolio of Local Development Documents which will provide the framework for delivering the spatial planning strategy for the area.

Mesolithic

(c. 8,000 - 4,000 BC) An archaeological term meaning 'middle stone' age and used to describe the culture achieved during the early Post Glacial period. It was a period of transition in the early Holocene when mankind moved from the hunter gathering practices of the Palaeolithic of the last glaciation but had not yet adopted the farming practices of the Neolithic.

Neolithic

(c. 4,000 - 2,500 BC) An archaeological term used to mean 'new stone' age which describes the period of antiquity in which people began to use ground stone tools, cultivate plants and keep domesticated livestock.

National Nature Reserve

National Nature Reserves (NNRs) are established to protect the most important areas of wildlife habitat and geological formations in Britain, and as places for scientific research.

Natural England

Natural England is a governmental agency that works for people, places and nature to conserve and enhance biodiversity, landscapes and wildlife in rural, urban, coastal and marine areas. The agency seeks to conserve and enhance the natural environment for its intrinsic value, the wellbeing and enjoyment of people, and the economic prosperity it brings.

Palaeolithic

(c. 500,000 - 8000 BC) An archaeological term meaning 'old stone' age covering the period from the first appearance of tool-using humans to the retreat of the glacial ice and emergence of the Mesolithic.

Pollarding

A traditional woodland management practice in which the branches of a tree are cut back every few years to encourage new long, straight shoots for harvesting. Differs from coppicing because the cuts are made at sufficient distance from the ground to prevent them from being eaten by animals. Willow trees are often pollarded.

Registered Parks and Gardens

Registered Parks and Gardens are sites placed on the national 'Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest' compiled and maintained by English Heritage, to identify and increase awareness of the existence of such sites, and to help ensure that the features and qualities that make these parks and landscapes of national importance are protected and conserved.

Scheduled Monument

A Scheduled Monument is an archaeological site or historic building of national importance protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and the National Heritage Act 1983.

Site of Special Scientific Interest

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are designated under the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981 and as amended) to protect sites that are of national nature conservation importance because of the wildlife they support, or because of the geological features that are found there.

Site Specific Allocations

Land allocated for specific uses identified in specific Development Plan Documents. Specific policies that relate to these designations are set out in a Development Plan Document and cover principles such as design or specific requirements for implementation. Policies relating to the delivery of the Site Specific Allocations, such as any critical access requirements, any broad design principles or any planning obligations which may be sought are set out in a development plan document.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

This sets out the standards that a Council intends to achieve in relation to involving the community and all stakeholders in the preparation, alteration and continuing review of all Local Development Plan Documents and in significant planning applications, and also how the local planning authority intends to achieve those standards. A consultation statement showing how a council has complied with its Statement of Community Involvement should accompany all Local Development Documents.

Special Area of Conservation

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) are protected sites designated under the EC Habitats Directive.

Special Protection Area

Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are protected sites designated under the EC Habitats Directive on the conservation of wild birds.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

These documents contain policy guidance to supplement the policies and proposals in Development Plan Documents. They do not form part of the development plan, nor are they subject to independent examination.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

An appraisal of the economic, social and environmental effects of a plan from the outset of the preparation process, so that decisions can be made that accord with sustainable development.

APPENDIX B: SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

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APPENDIX C: DRAFT CORE STRATEGY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER POLICY

DRAFT CORE STRATEGY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER POLICY

POLICY X - PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE OF URBAN AREAS SHOULD BE INFORMED BY AND BE SYMPATHETIC TO LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, AND SHOULD CONTRIBUTE, AS APPROPRIATE, TO THE ACTIVE CONSERVATION, ENHANCEMENT AND/OR RESTORATION OF THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED.

DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE IT CAN PROTECT, CONSERVE AND/OR ENHANCE:

- * *LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS OF THE AREA (INCLUDING ITS HISTORICAL, BIODIVERSITY AND CULTURAL CHARACTER AND ITS TRANQUILLITY)*
- * *THE DISTINCTIVE SETTING OF, AND RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN, SETTLEMENTS AND BUILDINGS AND THE LANDSCAPE INCLUDING IMPORTANT VIEWS*
- * *THE FUNCTION OF WATERCOURSES, WOODLAND, TREES, FIELD BOUNDARIES, VEGETATION AND OTHER LANDSCAPE FEATURES AS ECOLOGICAL CORRIDORS*
- * *THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF RIVERS, WATERWAYS, WETLANDS AND THEIR SURROUNDINGS*
- * *THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE AREA INCLUDING SENSITIVE SKYLINES, HILLSIDES AND GEOLOGICAL FEATURES.*

Supporting Explanatory Text

The undeveloped countryside is part of the everyday surroundings for a large proportion of the population in the District, and the visual character of landscapes is a significant influence on the quality of life for communities in all areas. In line with Government policy, the Council affords high priority to the protection, conservation and enhancement of landscape character in delivering sustainable development within the District. The Council seeks to encourage well-designed, high quality new development that helps sustain and/or create landscapes with a strong sense of place and local identity.

A Landscape Character Assessment of the District (a technical study prepared by independent consultants) can be used to help protect, conserve and enhance the landscape. The study identifies and describes distinctive Landscape Character Areas throughout the District as a whole. This study sets out guidelines for conserving, enhancing and restoring the character of the Landscape Character Areas. This information can be used, along with other studies that provide part of the evidence base about landscape character, to inform considerations about the effects of development proposals on the distinctive character, qualities and sensitivities of landscapes throughout the District. Other studies include the Essex Historic Landscape Characterisation Study for example.



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