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Braintree District Council

**Braintree District Settlement Fringes
Landscape Capacity Analysis For Silver End**

November 2007

CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES

Environment Landscape Planning

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Signed: 

Position: Senior Associate

Date: 22 November 2007

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

1.1.1 In July 2007 Braintree District Council commissioned Chris Blandford Associates (CBA) to prepare a detailed landscape capacity analysis (at 1:10,000 scale) of the fringes of eight key settlements to provide an evidence base for informing the preferred options stage of the Core Strategy for the Local Development Framework (LDF). The study has been informed by the following:-

- The Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment (at 1:25,000 scale), which was prepared by CBA in September 2006.
- Historic landscape characterisation data provided by Essex County Council

1.1.2 The eight key settlements that were selected by Braintree District Council as having the potential for expansion are as follows:

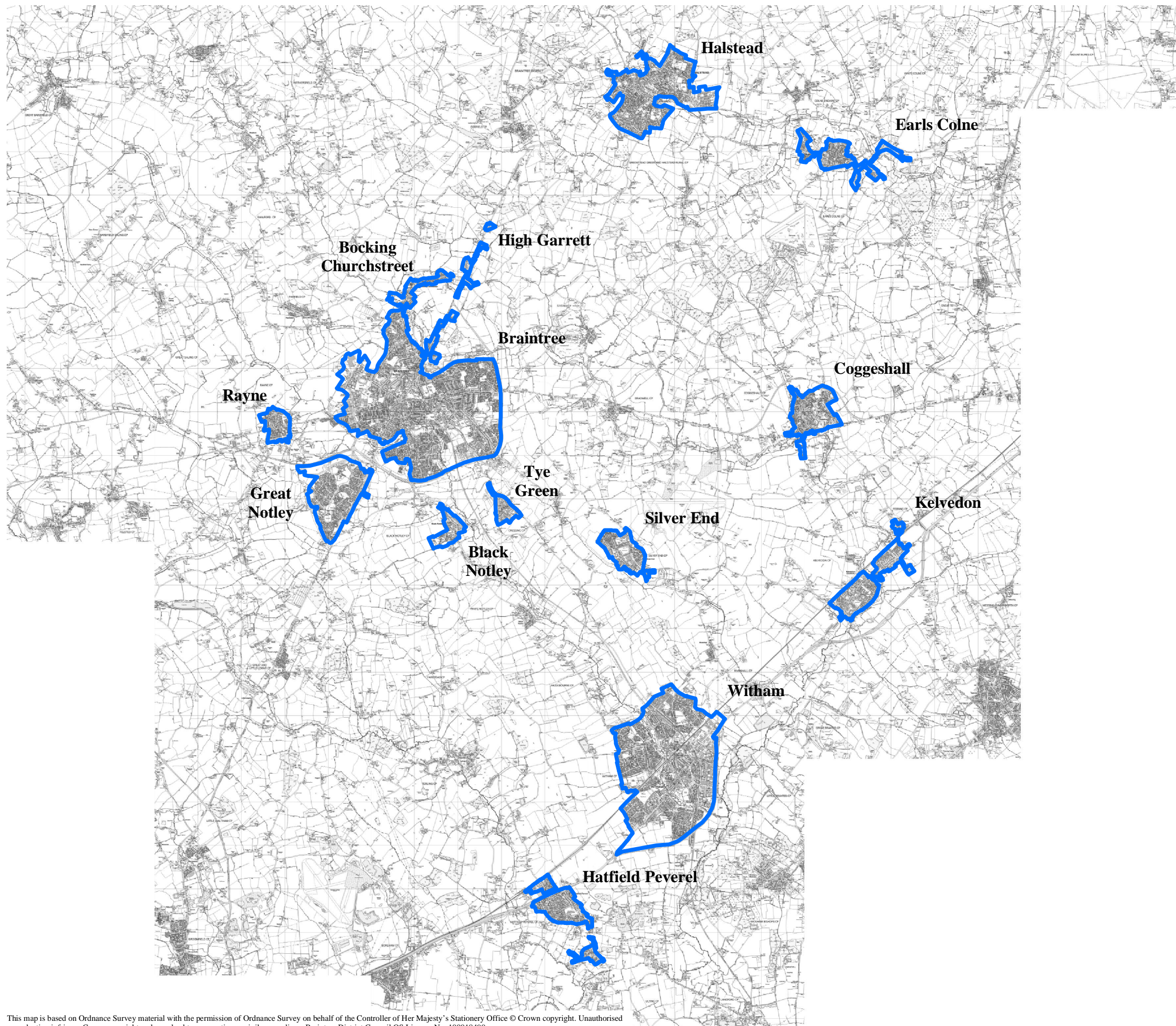
- Braintree and environs (including Bocking Churchstreet, Rayne, Great Notley, Black Notley and Cressing)
- Witham
- Halstead
- Silver End
- Hatfield Peverel
- Earls Colne
- Coggeshall
- Kelvedon

1.1.3 The locations of these settlements are identified at Figure 1.

1.2 Study Purpose and Objectives


1.2.1 The key objectives of the Study are to:

- provide a transparent, consistent and objective assessment of the sensitivity and capacity of the around the selected eight settlements to accommodate new development;



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KEY

 Settlements Within Study

0 1 2 Kilometres
1:90,000

- identify areas where new development could best be accommodated without unacceptable adverse landscape and visual impacts.

1.2.2 This report sets out the findings of the survey and analysis work for Silver End.

1.3 Approach and Methodology

1.3.1 The general approach of the Study has been informed by the Countryside Agency's '*Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland: Topic Paper 6 – Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity*' and by other landscape capacity studies undertaken by CBA. The methodology used to make judgements about landscape capacity and sensitivity is set out in Appendix A to this report.

1.3.2 For the purposes of this study, landscape sensitivity and capacity are defined as follows:

- **Landscape Sensitivity** – '*The extent to which a landscape type or area can accept change of a particular type and scale without unacceptable adverse effects on its character*'. (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 2002), based on judgements about landscape character sensitivity and visual sensitivity.
- **Landscape Capacity** – The relative ability of the landscape to accommodate new urban development without unacceptable adverse impacts, taking account of appropriate mitigation measures. It is a reflection of the interaction between (i) the inherent sensitivity or vulnerability of the landscape resource itself and (ii) the value attached to the landscape or specific elements.

1.3.3 The Study has used desk-based and field survey analysis to identify discrete 'Landscape Setting Areas', which have been primarily defined by the approximate extent of visibility for each settlement fringe, at a scale of 1:10,000. Each area has been analysed in terms of its visual, ecological and cultural sensitivity, taking into account the following three key factors (Refer to Appendix B for the Field Survey Sheet used for this study):

- Landscape Character – the range of natural, cultural and aesthetic factors that are unique to the setting area, and its overall landscape quality / condition;
- Visual Characteristics (Visual Prominence and Intervisibility) – the extent to which an area has prominent topography and/or is widely visible from surrounding areas, as well as its contribution to distinctive settlement setting e.g. the extent to which an area has distinctive backdrops, distinctive approaches/gateways, visually important woodland and trees, prominent skyline/ridgeline views, landmarks, urban edge description, green corridor linkages to the countryside, allows critical outward and inward views.
- Landscape Value – highlight existing national and/or local designations relating to each landscape setting area and any other criteria indicating landscape value e.g. tranquillity, remoteness, wildness, scenic beauty, cultural associations, conservation interests.

1.3.4 In order to assess the sensitivity of the landscape to development, assumptions have been made as to the likely form of any new built residential or employment development. It has been assumed that buildings would be either detached, semi-detached or terraced buildings, mostly 2 or 3 storeys in height. A strong structure of tree/shrub planting would be provided of an appropriate scale, extent and design to help ensure that the development sits well in the landscape. Employment buildings are likely to be large in scale, some 10 to 12 metres high, and again it has been assumed that these would be developed with an appropriate structure of tree/shrub planting to help integrate the buildings into the local landscape. It has not been possible at this stage in the LDF preparation process to make assumptions about the quantum of development required within the study area.

1.3.5 The assessment has comprised the following tasks:

(i) Desk Based Analysis

- Preparation of base maps for each settlement;
- Review of the relevant Landscape Character Types and Areas around each settlement from the Braintree District Landscape Character Assessment at the 1:25,000 contextual scale, and review of the intrinsic landscape qualities, sensitivities/vulnerabilities to change and guidelines as defined by the landscape character area study.

- Mapping of landscape features (vegetation, landform, key heritage features, water bodies/courses, etc.) and wildlife sites/heritage conservation designations. This has been based in part by data mapped in the Braintree District Landscape Character Assessment and from other available sources of data, such as the Essex Historic Landscape Characterisation datasets.
- Defining landscape setting areas by mapping the approximate extent of potential visibility of each settlement fringe (i.e. Landscape Setting Areas) derived from analysis of topography and woodland/tree cover mapping.
- Broadly defining and mapping the townscape character of each settlement at 1:10,000 scale to determine how it has developed and to identify the main features and areas that contribute to the built character of the settlement (e.g. greenspace, built form, viewing experience etc.)

(ii) Field Survey Analysis

- Identifying the extent of the landscape setting area for each settlement, based on the approximate extent of visibility of the settlement fringe, involving the validation and refinement of the preliminary 'Landscape Setting Areas' as necessary. A variety of open and partial views of the settlement fringe may be obtained from within each landscape setting area. It is possible that additional views may be obtained from outside the setting area but, in these cases, the settlement fringe would represent a significantly reduced component of these views compared to those obtained within the setting area. For example, glimpsed views may be obtained through or above trees/shrubs on the edge of the setting area or distant views may be obtained from elevated land located some distance beyond a setting area).
- Identifying and recording key views into and out of each settlement;
- Identifying and recording positive and negative qualities/features that contribute to the Landscape Setting Areas around each settlement – such as skylines/ridgelines, landmarks, visually important trees and woodland, distinctive approaches, tranquil areas, urban edges, green corridors/ 'bridges' to the countryside, urban and urban fringe land uses/activities, etc.
- Identifying and recording strategic opportunities for creating a strong landscape framework to mitigate development impact on landscape character and visual amenity through developing green networks, tree and woodland planting and other landscape enhancements.

(iii) Analysis/Reporting

Assessing the sensitivity/vulnerability of positive landscape qualities that contribute to the Landscape Setting Areas around each settlement to loss or alteration by development.

- Based on the assessment criteria set out in Appendix A, the capacity of each Landscape Setting Area to accommodate new housing and employment development has been identified. Opportunities have also been identified where housing and employment development would be least constrained in landscape and visual terms.
- Preparing a concise report setting out the purpose, methodology, main findings and recommendations as to the capacity of the fringes of each settlement to inform consideration of the general directions of growth to be included in the preferred options for the Core Strategy.

1.3.6 The extent of the study areas around each settlement broadly reflects the extent of visibility of each settlement fringe.

2.0 STUDY CONTEXT

2.1 Planning Policy Context

- 2.1.1 National planning policy relating to landscape sensitivity and capacity is contained in PPS1¹ and PPS7².

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development

- 2.1.2 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 the planning system is that planning 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 (para 5). In its key principles, PPS1 states that '*a spatial planning approach should be at the heart of planning for sustainable development*' (para 13.iii) and '*design which fails to take the opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area should not be accepted*' (para 13.iv). 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*' (para 27). PPS1 also requires new design to be integrated into the existing urban form and natural and built environments (para 35).

Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

- 2.1.3 The policies in this statement apply to the rural areas, including country towns and villages and the wider, largely undeveloped countryside up to the fringes of larger urban areas. Two of the key objectives in PPS7 include the delivery of sustainable patterns of development and sustainable communities in rural areas. In its key principles, PPS7 states that '*All development in rural areas should be well designed and inclusive, in keeping and scale with its location, and sensitive to the character of the countryside and local distinctiveness*' (para 1.vi). PPS7 advises that Planning authorities should continue to ensure that the quality and character of the wider countryside is protected and, where possible, enhanced (para 15).

¹ Planning Policy Statement 1 : Delivering Sustainable Development (ODPM, 2005).

² Planning Policy Statement 7 : Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (ODPM, 2004).

Regional Planning Context

- 2.1.4 The East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) is currently producing the 'East of England Plan'. Once finalised this will guide planning and transportation policy up to 2021 and provide the statutory framework for local authorities such as Braintree District Council to produce more detailed local development plans for their areas. Also known as the 'Regional Spatial Strategy' (RSS), the Plan has a key role in contributing to the development of the region.
- 2.1.5 The RSS is important to Braintree District in that it will determine where development will take place. More specifically, it will consider the amount of housing and employment land needed for each District up to 2021. It will formulate the Regional Transport Strategy which has implications for the local road and rail network, and other forms of transport. It will include policies on the environment, energy and waste, sport and tourism.
- 2.1.6 Policy H1 of the RSS includes guidance for annual average provision for net additional dwellings within the East of England. The strategy requires Essex to achieve an annual average rate of 5330 net additional dwellings between 2006 to March 2001.

Local Planning Context

- 2.1.7 Braintree District Local Plan Review, was adopted by the Council on 25th July 2005 and provides a framework for the development of the Braintree District. The Plan will shape the development of the District in the period up to 2011, or until it is replaced in whole, or part, by the Local Development Framework documents as they are produced.
- 2.1.8 One of the key elements of the Plan recognises Braintree, Witham and to a lesser extent, Halstead, as the primary settlements to concentrate new development. In respect to the RSS and the Essex & Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan, the Plan aims to achieve completion of 10,300 net dwelling in the District between 1996 and 2011; of which, 60% is targeted for completion on undeveloped land. In addition, the Local Plan Review stresses the importance of protecting the character of rural areas, which include areas that are sensitive to change.
- 2.1.9 This study looks at capacity for new development within the urban fringes of the eight selected settlements and will contribute to the evidence base that will inform

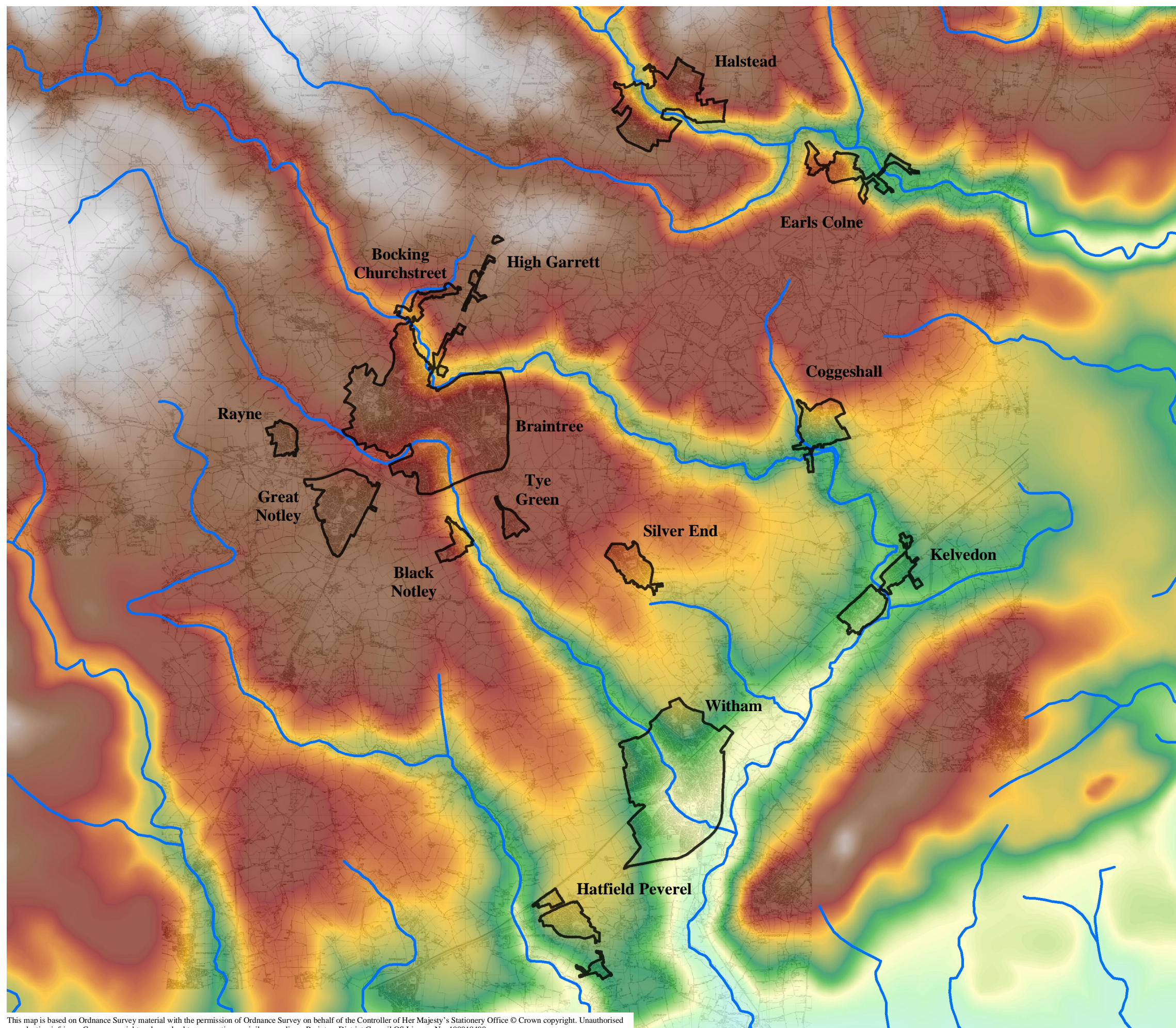
the Core Strategy, which is a Development Plan Document forming part of the Local Development Framework. The Core Strategy sets out the spatial vision, spatial objectives and strategy for the development of the District.

2.2 Landform and Drainage (See Figure 2)

- 2.2.1 Landform within the Braintree District is predominantly elevated gently rolling Boulder Clay/Chalky Til plateau landscape, incised by v-shaped or u-shaped shallow river valleys, which cut through flat or gently undulating valley floor. The Colne, Blackwater, Pant and Stour river valleys are major landscape features, comprising locally significant scenic qualities.
- 2.2.2 The meandering River Colne runs in a southeasterly direction through Halstead, towards Colchester. It is characterized by a shallow river valley with relatively steep valley sides, which varies in width throughout its length. There is a dense network of roads dissecting the river valley and bridging the river itself, providing access and creating interesting views along the river corridor.
- 2.2.3 The River Blackwater meanders from Braintree through Stisted, Bradwell, Coggeshall, Coggeshall Hamlet, Feering, Kelvedon, near Witham, Wickham Bishops, Langford to Beeleigh where it meets the Chelmer. As the river meanders down the valley, the valley floor becomes more wooded especially south of Coggeshall. The valley floor has large settlements such as Braintree and Witham along industries centered on the river such as watermills. Many of these mills have been converted to tourist attractions but maintain original features.
- 2.2.4 The River Stour is one of the County's earliest navigable rivers forms most of the County boundary between Essex and Suffolk. Running in a southerly direction through a wide pastoral and wooded valley in the north of the District, the river is an important recreational asset and forms a key focal point throughout the valley and surrounding slopes.

2.3 Landscape Character

- 2.3.1 A large proportion of the rural area in Braintree District consists of distinctive and attractive landscapes, which derive their intrinsic quality from a combination of

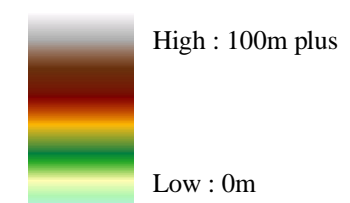


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KEY

Elevation (Indicative)



— Rivers

□ Settlements Within Study

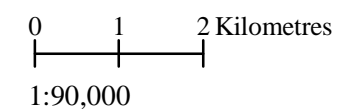


Figure 2
Landform and Drainage

natural and cultural features including topography, vegetation cover, river systems and historic features.

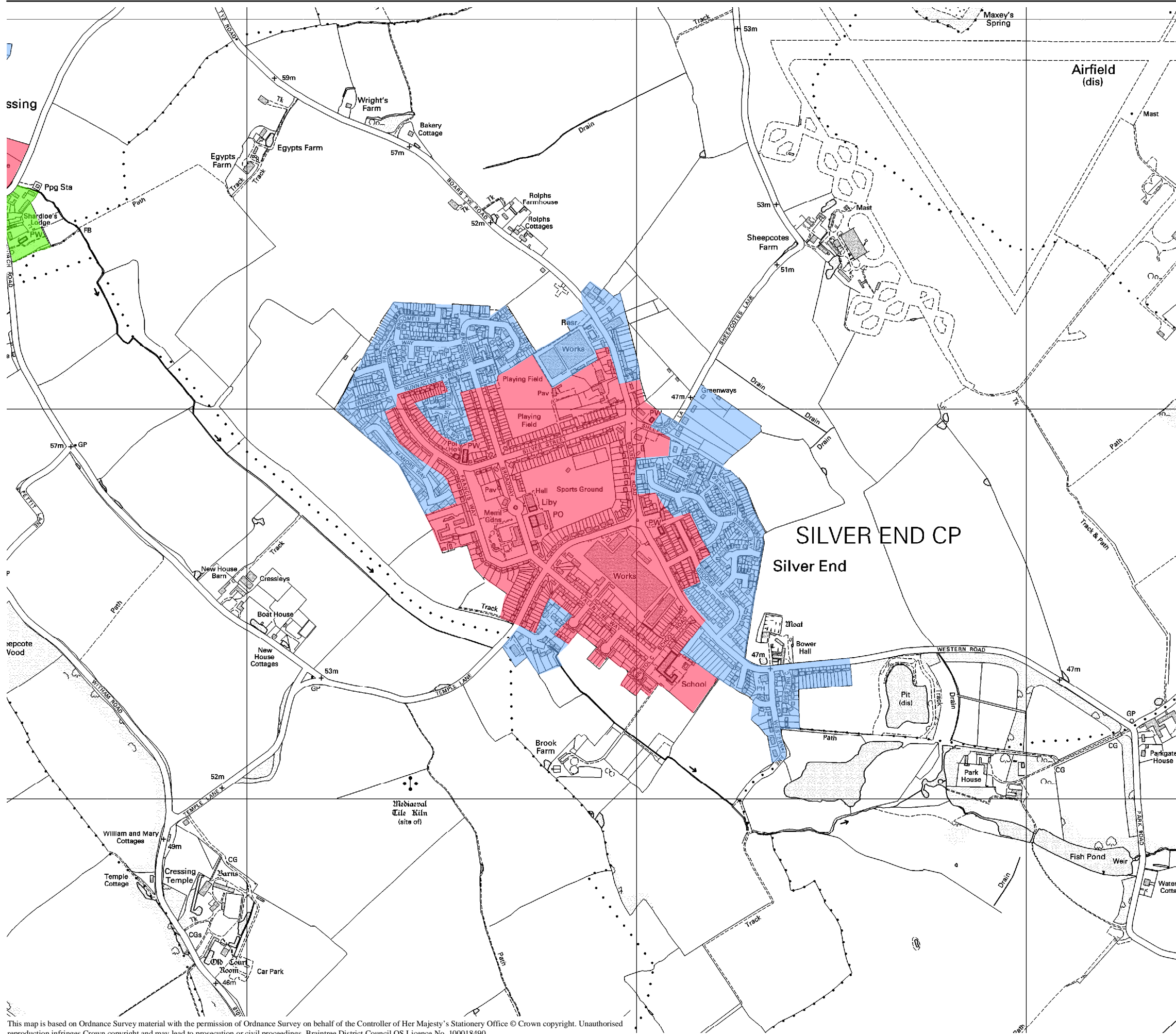
- 2.3.2 The Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment was undertaken to inform land use planning and land management decisions. The Study involved the combination of desk study research and field survey analysis that identified and mapped generic Landscape Types and geographically unique Landscape Character Areas at 1:25,000 scale.
- 2.3.3 Three different Landscape Character Types were identified in Braintree District: River Valley Landscapes, Farmland Plateau and Wooded Farmland Landscapes; all of which contribute to a varied landscape setting to settlements within the district.
- 2.3.4 The character of the landscape with Braintree district is predominantly elevated gently rolling Boulder Clay/Chalky Til plateau landscape, incised by shallow river valleys, which create subtle variety. Although the valleys are not prominent in terms height or steepness, they provide a distinct contrast to the flat or gently undulating landscape generally characteristic of the valley floor. The Valleys also give rise to variations in land use, such as traditional grazing pastures in the floodplain and arable cultivation on the drier slopes. Such variations contribute to the visual interest of the landscape setting to settlements within the District.
- 2.3.5 Many of District's settlements are multi-period in date and some have been occupied more or less continuously since the Late Iron Age or Roman period. However, they can be broken down into the following main period groupings:-
- The Roman towns fall into two groups; those founded on sites previously occupied in the Late Iron Age and those that appear to have been 'greenfield' sites. They are nearly all at important points on the communications network, and often take the form of ribbon development along a routeway with little planned internal layout.
 - The Saxon towns fall into two groups, those that were founded as *burhs* by Edward the Elder at the beginning of the 10th century and those that were monastic foundations. The Domesday Book shows that many of the medieval towns were thriving villages by the end of the Saxon period, although not necessarily urban in character.

- The medieval towns are mainly small market towns, but within that group there are variations on this theme. A number of medieval towns failed to develop in the later medieval and early post-medieval, and are now no more than villages, whilst others prospered and grew.

2.3.6 Essex is fortunate in the quality of its historic towns, particularly in regard to the built environment. Many still retain a definite 'historic' identity and show clearly the stages of their development through the centuries. The key stages in the evolution of Silver End are illustrated on Figure 3. The village of Silver End was founded between 1926 and 1932 as a 'garden village' and is recognised as holding an important place in the history of modern architecture and planning. The village was planned as a model village and the layout of roads, land uses and open spaces follows many of the ideas of the Garden City movement, which had been carried out on a larger scale at Letchworth and Welwyn. The village is also important for its architecture, with its housing comprising cottages and houses in the garden city tradition as well as early modern movement houses.

2.3.7 The historic landscape setting to Halstead and the form and character of surrounding settlements in the District are strongly related, both having developed over many centuries in response to changing patterns of land use. A mixture of settlement sizes characterise the District from farmsteads to large sprawling settlements with modern extensions and industrial units and derelict water mills. Settlements are generally aligned along the river, with some clustering at crossing-places, as at Earls Colne, Halstead, Sible Hedingham and Great Yeldham. On the valley sides, traditional small settlements and isolated farmsteads with limited modern development occur. Church towers, traditional villages, farmsteads, barns and mills form distinctive features. Away from the larger settlements, there is an overall sense of tranquility, with a network of quiet rural lanes and public rights of way winding through the landscape.

2.3.8 The vernacular architecture of settlements present important features in the landscape, including timber frames, colour wash walls and thatched roofs found along the river valley floor as well as the top of the valley sides. Ancient churches within small settlements or isolated amongst farmlands are a key characteristic of the district. Halls are often associated with villages such as Black Notley, Bocking Churchstreet, Maplestead Hall and Twinstead Hall, contributing to the character and overall strong sense of place within the area. The villages and hall provide



KEY

- Modern Expansion
- Victorian Expansion c1880's
- Historic Core

0 100 200 Metres
1:10,000

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landmarks in the views across the farmland. However, in some cases, the integrity of vernacular buildings is diluted by more recent encroaching developments.

- 2.3.9 The woodlands are a strong and unifying characteristic in the District, with blocks of mature mixed and deciduous woodland (including areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland); copses, hedges and mature single trees. Visibility within the District is commonly influenced by a combination of topography and woodland distribution. For example, views west of Halstead tend to be framed by the hedges and woodland, creating a mixture of enclosed and open views, with some distant channelled views to Halstead.
- 2.3.10 Trees, hedgerows and woodland make a significant and positive contribution to the appearance of the landscape in the strategy area. They help to break up extensive tracts of land into a more human scale, thus creating greater visual interest. They also provide valuable screening for new developments, allowing better integration with the existing landscape. This is particularly important in the open and plateau landscape, characteristic of many parts of the District.

3.0 LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND VALUE

Introduction

This section sets out an assessment of the sensitivities and value of the various landscape setting areas immediately surrounding the fringes of Silver End. A total of two Settlement Fringe Analysis Plans have been prepared to help identify the key landscape, visual, heritage, and ecological issues that are relevant to each Landscape Setting Area. The extent of each analysis plan is illustrated at Figure S0: Settlement Fringe Analysis Overview Plan.

3.1 LANDSCAPE SETTING AREA S1 (refer to Landscape Assessment Figure S1)

3.1.1 Location

Landscape Setting Area S1 abuts the western, northwestern and northern edges of Silver End, with its northern, western and southern boundaries broadly following land along the sides of Boars Tye Road, Church Road and Temple Lane.

Landscape and Visual Baseline

3.1.2 Landform and Drainage

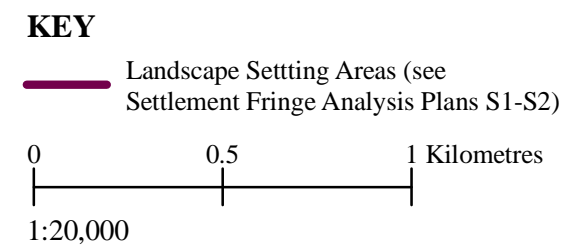
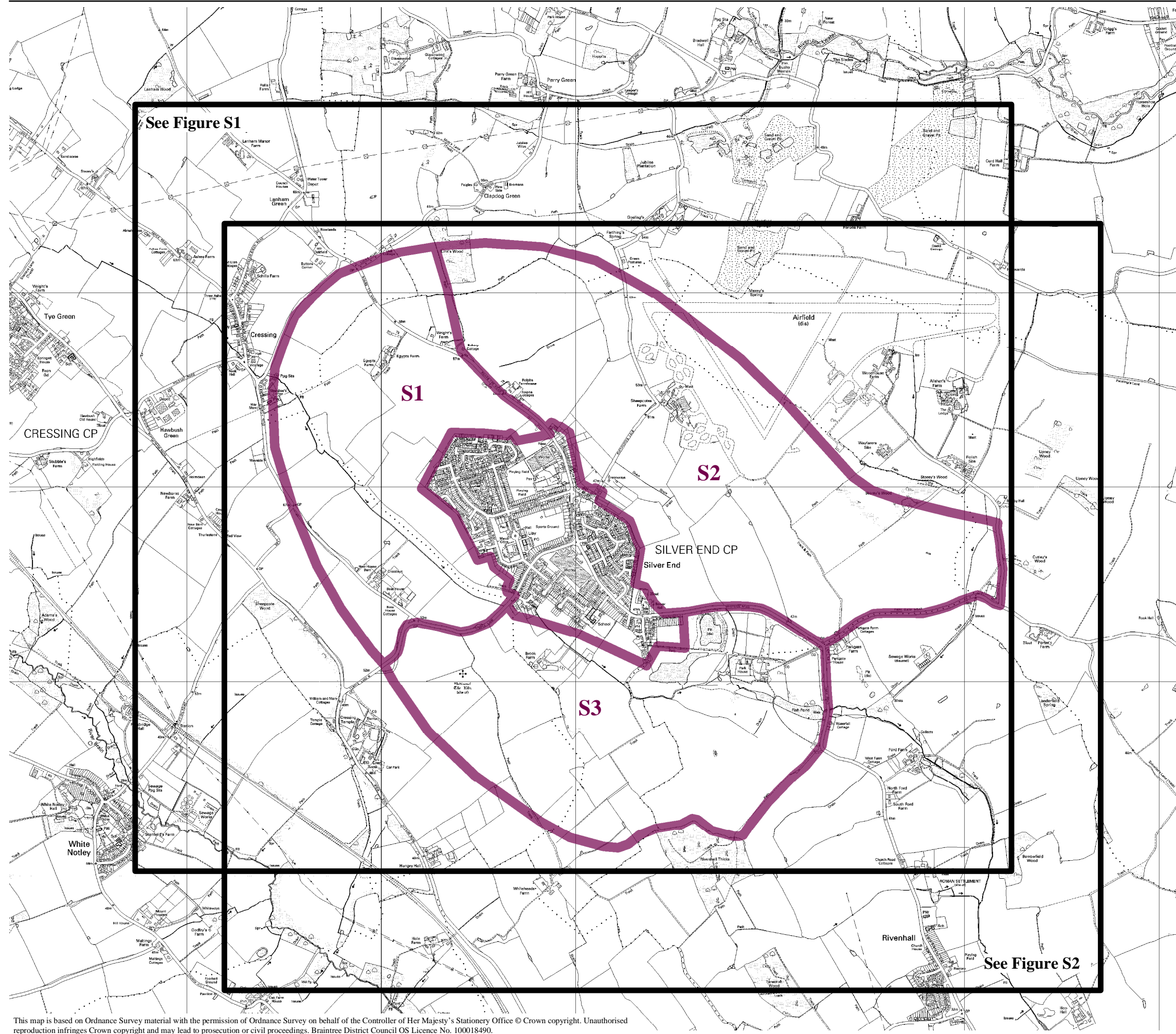
- The landform is generally flat but slopes very gently towards the northwest settlement fringe;
- Several small ponds and drainage channels, one covering several fields in the south of the area, parallel with the settlement edge, demarcate field boundaries;
- Land on the south-western settlement fringe slopes gently towards a stream valley to the southwest.

3.1.3 Land Uses

- Predominantly arable farmland with scattered farmhouses;
- Telecommunication tower near northern boundary;
- Block of woodland in northern part of area.

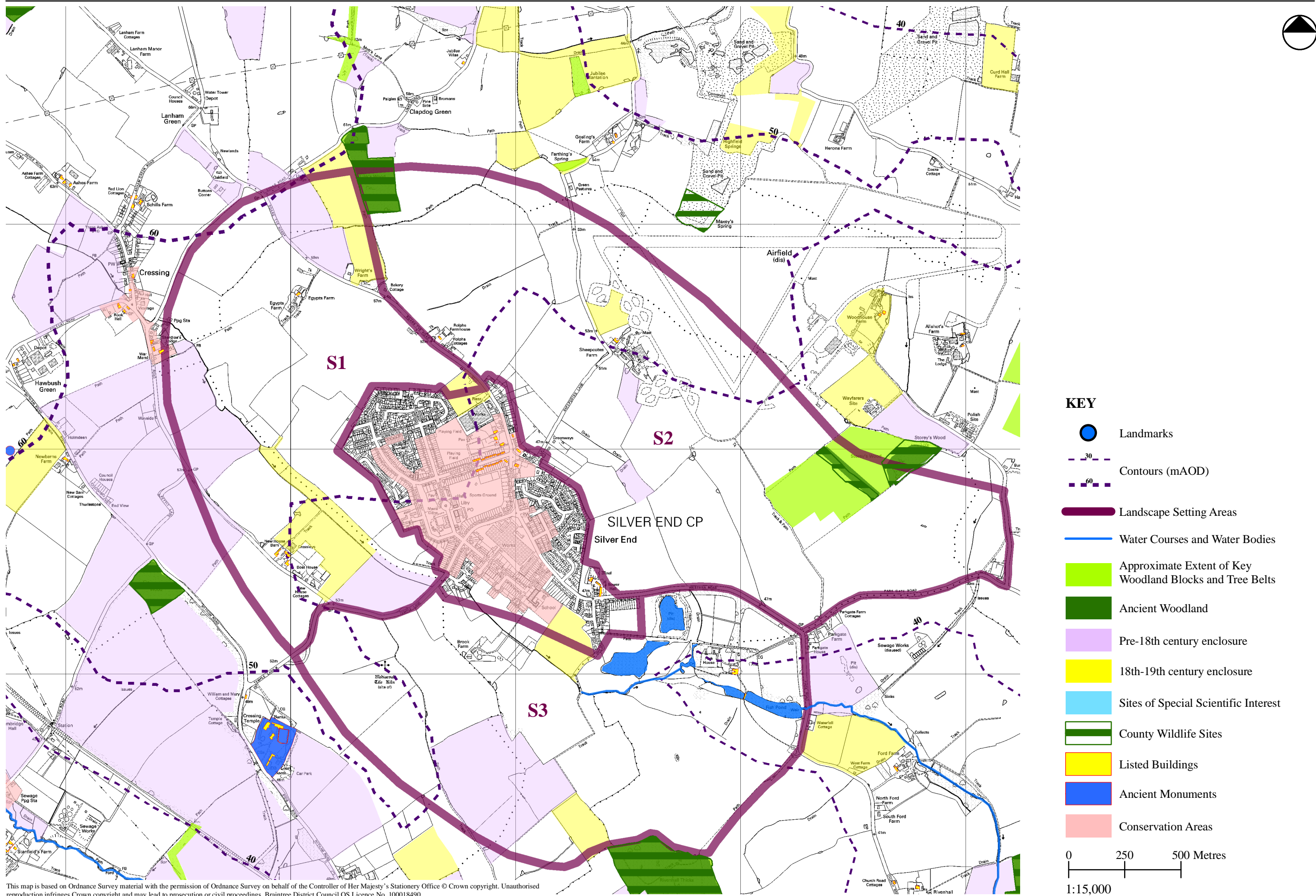
3.1.4 Vegetation

- A variety of field boundary hedgerows, many tall, unmanaged and robust with some mature trees, others low and trimmed and some fragmented;



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BRAINTREE DISTRICT SETTLEMENT FRINGE LANDSCAPE CAPACITY ANALYSIS

NOVEMBER 2007

Figure S1
Silver End Settlement
Fringe Analysis Plan 1

- Links Wood on northern boundary of area;
- Large sections of settlement boundary lined by native shrubs and occasional trees.

3.1.5 Access

- Poor provision of public footpaths – only one National Trail passing through northern part of area, connecting Church Road with Boars Tye Road, and heading to the northeast.

3.1.6 Settlement Edge

- Northwestern settlement fringe predominantly includes modern housing estates with detached, semi-detached and terraced housing;
- Settlement edge abrupt in outline, but generally well integrated into local landscape by field hedgerows and shrub/tree belts.

Evaluation

3.1.7 Visual Appraisal

- Views of houses along western edges of settlement are typically enclosed by adjacent tree/shrub belts, with partial views of some groups of houses seen through gaps in hedgerows or tree belts;
- Open views of houses along northwestern edge of settlement, seen from national trail adjacent to Egypt's Farm;
- Views of housing and church steeple at Cressing obtained from northern parts of the setting area;
- Open views in northern parts due to loss of hedgerows between settlement and Egypt's Farm;
- Electricity pylons and the water tower at Lanham Green, may be seen on the horizon in views to the north.

3.1.8 Landscape Character Sensitivity

- Medium to high sensitivity overall due to strength of rural character, high sense of tranquillity, its contribution to the setting of Silver End and its contribution to the physical and visual separation of Cressing and Silver End;
- Area provides low to moderate contribution to the wider landscape on account of the enclosure provided by hedgerows and landform;

- Sensitivity is decreased in northern parts due to hedgerow removal;
- Sensitivity increased in south-eastern part of area where land abuts conservation area and includes both pre 18th century and 18th-19th century field enclosures as well as group of historic buildings in the vicinity of New House Barn.

3.1.9 **Visual Sensitivity**

- Medium visual sensitivity overall within the area, due to enclosure provided by hedgerows and landform, with views of area only obtained by local residents, users of the national trail and users of adjacent roads;
- A well treed skyline is southern parts of area.

3.1.10 **Landscape Value**

- Proximity to Silver End conservation area to west of Temple Lane;
- National Trail in north-western part of area;
- Strong sense of tranquillity;
- Conservation areas along south-western edge of settlement and at Cressing;
- Listed buildings in vicinity of New House Barn, at Egypt' s Farm and along northern edge of Boars Tye Road;
- Reduced sensitivity to northwest of industrial buildings off Boars Tye Road.

3.1.11 Summary of Landscape Sensitivities and Value

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Landscape Value
Medium to high sensitivity overall due to strength of rural character, high sense of tranquillity, its contribution to the setting of Silver End and its contribution to the physical and visual separation of Cressing and Silver End.	Medium visual sensitivity overall within the area, due to enclosure provided by hedgerows and landform, with views of area only obtained by local residents, users of the national trail and users of adjacent roads	Medium to high value due to proximity to conservation area, numerous listed buildings and strong sense of tranquillity.
Medium to high	Medium	Medium to high

3.2 LANDSCAPE SETTING AREA S2 (refer to Landscape Assessment Figure S2)

3.2.1 Location

Landscape setting area S2 abuts the northeastern and eastern edges of Silver End and extends upslope to Sheepcotes Farm and Woodhouse Farm.

Landscape and Visual Baseline

3.2.2 Landform and Drainage

- Landform very gently rolling with several low ridges passing through area;
- Southern parts occupy part of shallow stream valley that drains to the southeast;
- Occasional drainage channels line field boundaries in places.

3.2.3 Land Uses

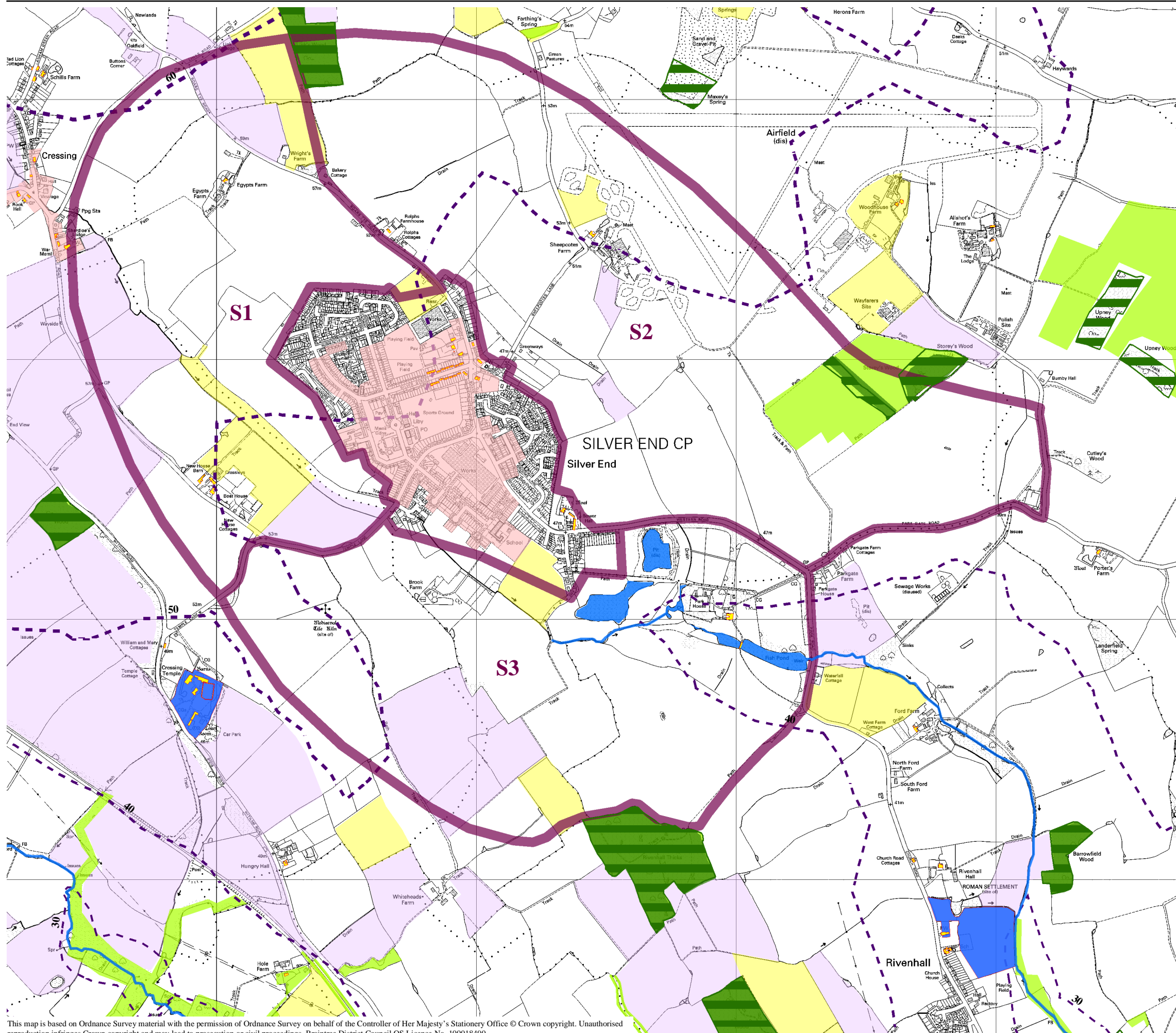
- Predominantly arable farmland;
- Telecommunication tower and large scale shed at Woodhouse Farm.

3.2.4 Vegetation

- Predominantly arable farmland with large arable fields in western part of area, medium size fields in eastern part of area and small areas of rough grassland/pasture (horse grazing) near settlement;
- Field boundaries generally demarcated by structure of hedgerows, the condition of which varies but predominantly fragmented in western parts, with occasional (both deciduous and coniferous) mature trees;
- Sheepcotes Lane, Western Road and Boars Tye Road lined by fragmented hedgerows with mature trees;
- Storey's Wood (ancient woodland) in eastern part of the area and Link's Wood (ancient woodland) in far northern parts of area;
- Large sections of settlement edge lined by tall, unmanaged hedgerows.

3.2.5 Access

- A public footpath network provides several routes for connection with the surrounding landscape.



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KEY

- Landmarks
- 30
- 60
- Landscape Setting Areas
- Water Courses and Water Bodies
- Approximate Extent of Key Woodland Blocks and Tree Belts
- Ancient Woodland
- Pre-18th century enclosure
- 18th-19th century enclosure
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- County Wildlife Sites
- Listed Buildings
- Ancient Monuments
- Conservation Areas

0 250 500 Metres
1:15,000

Figure S2
Silver End Settlement
Fringe Analysis Plan 2

3.2.6 Settlement Edge

- Northeastern settlement edge (east of Sheepcotes Land) has an abrupt edge which predominantly comprises modern detached, semi-detached and terraced housing (with some 1930s housing), parts of which are visually softened by mature garden vegetation;
- Some ribbon development along Western Road, opposite Bower Hall;
- Group of historic buildings at Bower Hall, adjacent to eastern settlement edge with mature trees and moat in grounds of hall;
- More varied settlement edges to west of Sheepcotes Lane, with variety of historic vernacular buildings fronting farmland and typically with mature trees in relatively large rear gardens.

Evaluation

3.2.7 Visual Appraisal

- Filtered and partial views of housing to west of Sheepcotes Lane, comprise a variety of housing forms, sizes and ages, generally well integrated into the local landscape by mature trees along settlement edge;
- Views of housing along settlement edge, to east of Sheepcotes Lane, substantially enclosed in views due to screening effects of landform and rear garden shrubs;
- Views north to Sheepcotes Farm, moderately enclosed by vegetation;
- Landform, combined with some robust field boundary hedgerows, enclose many views within area, with occasional long-distance views to north and northeast (towards Link's Wood) with electricity pylons beyond;
- Views southwards tend to be enclosed by trees and hedgerows along Western Road.

3.2.8 Landscape Character Sensitivity

- Medium to high sensitivity overall due to sense of time depth provided by historic buildings at Bower Hall and in conservation area that fronts farmland to west of Sheepcotes Lane, its strength of rural character and its contribution to the setting of the settlement;
- Moderately strong sense of tranquillity but with noise and traffic movement along Sheepcotes Lane and Boars Tye Road;

- Sensitivity slightly increased in some parts by ancient woodland and occasional pre-18th century field enclosures;
- Sensitivity decreased by the fragmented nature of the hedgerow structure.

3.2.9 Visual Sensitivity

- Medium visual sensitivity overall as many parts of area have views enclosed by landform and field hedgerows;
- Sensitivity increased in vicinity of historic buildings at Bower Hall and on edge of conservation area to west of Sheepcotes Lane.

3.2.10 Landscape Value

- Storey's Wood and Link's Wood (ancient woodlands) have been designated as County Wildlife Sites;
- Moderate sense of tranquillity away from roads;
- Network of public footpaths;
- Listed buildings at Bower Hall, Rolph's Farmhouse and in conservation area.

3.2.11 Summary of Landscape Sensitivities and Value

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Landscape Value
Medium to high sensitivity overall due to sense of time depth provided by historic buildings at Bower Hall and in conservation area that fronts farmland to west of Sheepcotes Lane, its strength of rural character and its contribution to the setting of the settlement.	Medium visual sensitivity overall as many parts of area have views enclosed by landform and field hedgerows.	Medium to high value due to proximity to conservation area, its listed buildings, proximity to County Wildlife Sites and moderate sense of tranquillity.
Medium to high	Medium	Medium to high

3.3 LANDSCAPE SETTING AREA S3 (refer to Landscape Assessment Figure S2)

3.3.1 Location

Landscape setting area S3 abuts the southern edge of Silver End and extends westwards to Temple Lane, eastwards to Park Road/Western Road and southwards to a ridge of relatively high land to the south.

Landscape and Visual Baseline

3.3.2 Landform and Drainage

- The landform is very gently rolling;
- Several large ponds located in the northeast of the area;
- Drainage channels line several field boundaries;
- Southern parts occupy part of shallow stream valley that drains to the southeast.

3.3.3 Land Uses

- Predominantly arable farmland with pockets of rough grassland and pastoral fields (with horse grazing) adjacent to settlement edge;
- Sewage works in western part of area
- Several lakes and historic Rivenhall Place in eastern part of area.

3.3.4 Vegetation

- Field boundaries are demarcated in many parts by robust, tall but fragmented hedgerows (with occasional mature trees);
- Tree and shrub belts associated with ponds, sewage works and school;
- Numerous mature trees associated with Rivenhall Place;
- Rivenhall Thicks (ancient woodland) abuts southern edge of area.

3.3.5 Access

- Good public footpath network.

3.3.6 Settlement Edge

- Eastern settlement fringe consists predominantly of modern, detached, terraced and semi-detached housing;

- Some ribbon development of houses along Western Road on eastern edge of settlement;
- Southern edge predominantly comprises cottages and houses within the Silver End Conservation Area (built between 1926 and 1932) and is well integrated into the local landscape by rear garden trees and hedges and by the hedgerows that enclose adjacent small-scale fields;
- One school and associated grounds on southern edge of settlement edge.

Evaluation

3.3.7 **Visual Appraisal**

- A mixture of filtered and partial views to houses on settlement fringe and to the upper parts of both the school and the industrial buildings in central Silver End, seen through and over field boundary hedgerows;
- In near-distance views, houses are typically well enclosed by field boundary hedgerows;
- Away from the settlement edge, most views are enclosed by combination of field boundary/roadside hedgerows and landform, with open, long distance views obtained towards Rivenhall Thicks;
- Filtered views from the western edge of the area towards housing on northern edge of Landscape Setting Area S1;
- Filtered views in places to housing along Witham Road, including Cressing Temple;
- Generally wooded horizon in all directions;
- Dismantled sewage works well enclosed by vegetation;
- Area generally well enclosed from external views by landform and well by treed hedgerows.

3.3.8 **Landscape Character Sensitivity**

- Medium to high sensitivity overall due to close proximity of conservation area, its strength of rural character, its listed structures at Rivenhall Place and its contribution to the setting of Silver End;
- Sensitivity is increased by the generally tranquil character of the setting area, but with noise disturbance from Temple Lane and Western Road;
- Electricity poles crossing through fields detract from the character of the area.

3.3.9 Visual Sensitivity

- Medium sensitivity overall as setting area is visually well enclosed (due to hedgerows, trees and landform) in views from the surrounding landscape.

3.3.10 Landscape Value

- Part of settlement edge designated as conservation area;
- A site of a medieval Tile Kiln in the central part of the area;
- Listed buildings and ancient monument at Cressing Temple, in close proximity to southern boundary of area;
- Abuts Rivenhall Thicks (a County Wildlife Site).

3.3.11 Summary of Landscape Sensitivities and Value

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Landscape Value
Medium to high sensitivity overall due to close proximity of conservation area, its strength of rural character, its listed structures at Rivenhall Place and its contribution to the setting of Silver End.	Medium sensitivity overall as setting area is visually well enclosed (due to hedgerows, trees and landform) in views from the surrounding landscape.	Medium to high sensitivity overall due to proximity to conservation area and County Wildlife Site, its listed buildings and its moderate sense of tranquillity.
Medium to high	Medium	Medium to high

4.0 LANDSCAPE CAPACITY EVALUATION

- 4.1 Landscape capacity refers to the degree to which a particular landscape is able to accommodate change without significant effects on its character. Reaching conclusions about capacity means making a judgement about whether the amount of change proposed can be accommodated without having unacceptable adverse effects on the character of the landscape (related to *landscape character sensitivity*), or the way that it is perceived (related to *visual sensitivity*), and without compromising the values attached to it (related to *landscape value*). Landscape capacity is the function of landscape character sensitivity, plus visual sensitivity, plus landscape value.
- 4.2 This section of the report considers the capacity of each Landscape Setting Area to accommodate a settlement extension.
- 4.3 The levels of landscape character sensitivity, visual sensitivity and landscape value for each Landscape Setting Area, as identified in Section 3.0, are set out in Table 4.1 below. The level of landscape capacity for each of these Landscape Setting Areas is also identified in this table using the matrices provided in Appendix A: Methodology for Judging Landscape Capacity.

Table 4.1: Schedule of Landscape Sensitivities, Landscape Value and Landscape Capacity.

Landscape Setting Area	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Landscape Capacity
S1	Medium to high	Medium	Medium to high	Low to medium
S2	Medium to high	Medium	Medium to high	Low to medium
S3	Medium to high	Medium	Medium to high	Low to medium

- 4.4 All three of the Landscape Setting Areas around Silver End have a ‘Low to Medium’ landscape capacity, as set out in Table 4.1 and illustrated on Figure S3: Landscape Capacity Evaluation Plan. These capacity levels are indicators of the likely amount of change, in terms of built development, which a particular

landscape setting area can accommodate without having unacceptable adverse effects on the character of a landscape, or the way that is perceived, and without compromising the values attached to it.

- 4.5 Landscape capacity is a complex issue and it may be possible that a certain amount of appropriately located and well-designed built development may be quite acceptable even in a moderately sensitive and highly valued landscape. Potential opportunities for incorporating new built development around Silver End are limited. However, there might be opportunities for any necessary residential or employment development to be accommodated subject to more detailed survey and analysis, e.g. along the northern edge of the settlement, to the north-west of the industrial buildings along Boars Tye Road, providing that robust belts of trees and shrubs are provided to help integrate any expanded settlement into the local landscape.
- 4.6 These potential opportunities would need to be verified through a more detailed assessment of this setting area. Any development in these setting areas would need to be consistent with the form and scale of the existing settlement fringe. New tree/shrub belts should be particularly robust if land is to accommodate new employment development.
- 4.7 Opportunities for helping accommodate built development within landscape setting areas also include enhancing local hedgerow structures, providing additional tree/shrub planting to help soften the appearance of some fringes of the settlement and building in local vernacular style.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 In accordance with the purpose and objectives of the study set out in the introduction to this report, the principal application of this landscape capacity study is to assist Braintree District Council in identifying a broad strategy for housing and employment development in the District and in directing this development to areas of higher landscape capacity.
- 5.2 The landscape capacity appraisal, which has been based on the findings of the landscape sensitivity and landscape value analysis, has identified a range of Landscape Setting Areas that could accommodate varying degrees of change in the form of new built development. Areas with low to medium landscape capacity or above could, in landscape and visual terms, accommodate some level of new development without significant adverse effects on the character of the landscape, providing that appropriate design and mitigation measures are put in place. Any such new development would need to be in scale with the existing settlement. This new development would need to respect the character and sensitivities of adjacent landscapes as well as the character, setting and form of the existing settlement fringe.
- 5.3 It should be noted that levels of landscape capacity may not be uniform across any one landscape setting area. Where capacity for development within any one landscape setting areas varies, proposals would need to respond to site-specific constraints. In such cases, development proposals should respond to the inherent landscape sensitivity of the setting area and take account of both its setting and potential impacts on the surrounding landscape.
- 5.4 Setting areas with low to medium, or even low, landscape capacity may contain locations that are suitable in landscape and visual terms, for limited development (e.g. minor settlement extensions). The landscapes are typically small in scale and have, at least, a moderate amount of visual enclosure.
- 5.5 It is recommended that development briefs should be prepared for all sites that are identified in the Core Strategy as having capacity for development. These briefs should take account of the setting area appraisals, identifying:-

- Landscape features or characteristics that give an area its special identity and local distinctiveness;
- Measures to protect and enhance the character of adjacent landscape setting areas, particularly high sensitivity landscapes;
- Measures to protect or enhance these landscape features and characteristics.

5.6 These landscape sensitivities and landscape values identified in the above assessments should inform the land use distribution and masterplanning process, so as to reinforce local landscape distinctiveness, minimise landscape impacts and build, in a consistent form, on the existing settlement pattern. In particular, they should inform the evolution of the development proposals and preparation of strategic landscape strategies so that they provide:

- A landscape strategy which is consistent with local landscape character, taking into account identified landscape sensitivities.
- A land use strategy and built form, which is characteristic of, and compatible with the existing settlement pattern, where appropriate.
- Proposals which avoid landscape and visual impacts on surrounding landscape setting areas or the setting to the District's landscape and heritage assets, and
- Development proposals which have regard for the setting of, and separation between, existing settlements.

5.7 Finally, reference should be made to the land management guidelines identified in the Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment. These management guidelines are prescriptive in nature and respond to local landscape character. They provide a robust basis for detailed landscape proposals, which should be prepared to accompany any new development proposals.

APPENDIX A
METHODOLOGY FOR JUDGING LANDSCAPE CAPACITY

METHODOLOGY FOR JUDGING LANDSCAPE CAPACITY

A1.0 Methodology for Judging Landscape Capacity

Landscape capacity to accommodate the proposed change is a function of landscape character sensitivity, plus visual sensitivity, plus landscape value. Reaching conclusions about capacity means making a judgement about whether the amount of change proposed can be accommodated without having unacceptable adverse effects on the character of the landscape (related to *landscape character sensitivity*), or the way that it is perceived (related to *visual sensitivity*), and without compromising the values attached to it (related to *landscape value*).

A1.1 Landscape Character Sensitivity

Landscape sensitivity is defined as ‘*the extent to which a landscape type or area can accept change of a particular type and scale without unacceptable adverse effects on its character*’. (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 2002). It is based on judgements about the sensitivity of aspects most likely to be affected:

Natural factors – extent and pattern of semi-natural habitat

Cultural factors – land use, enclosure pattern

Landscape condition – representation of typical character

Aesthetic factors – e.g. scale, enclosure, pattern form/line, movement

The sensitivities of the landscapes have been assessed using the following five-point scale and corresponding definitions: -

Table A1: Landscape Character Sensitivity Definitions

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Definition
Low	A landscape or landscape features of low sensitivity potentially tolerant of substantial change. This landscape is likely to have moderate to low levels of semi-natural vegetation and/or historic integrity, and few intrinsic landscape/townscape qualities. The loss or alteration of these qualities/features is likely to have only limited effects on the distinctiveness of the settlement's landscape setting. There is significant scope for enhancement of these landscape

Landscape Character Sensitivity	Definition
	qualities/features through good design and layout of development schemes. (e.g. developed or derelict landscape setting where new development could be accommodated without adversely affecting character).
Low to medium	Between low and medium
Medium	A landscape or landscape features of moderate sensitivity reasonably tolerant of change. This landscape is likely to have moderate levels of semi-natural vegetation and/or mixed historic integrity, and some intrinsic landscape/townscape qualities. The loss or alteration of these qualities/features is likely to partially erode the distinctiveness of the settlement's landscape setting. These landscape qualities/features are considered desirable to safeguard from development through sensitive location, design and layout.
Medium to high	Between medium and high
High	A landscape or landscape feature of particularly distinctive character susceptible to relatively small change. This landscape is likely to have high levels of semi-natural vegetation and/or strong historic integrity and thus low re-creatability, and many intrinsic landscape qualities. The loss or alteration of these qualities/features is likely to significantly erode the distinctiveness of the settlement's landscape setting. Those landscape qualities/features that are considered desirable to safeguard from development. (e.g. rural landscape with few uncharacteristic or detracting man-made features where new development could not be accommodated without adversely affecting character).

A1.2 Landscape Value

Landscape value is concerned with the relative value that is attached to different landscapes. In a policy context the usual basis for recognising certain highly valued landscapes is through the application of a local or national designation. Yet a landscape may be valued by different communities of interest for many different reasons without formal designation, recognising, for example, perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness; special cultural associations; the influence and presence of other conservation interests; or the existence of a consensus about importance, either nationally or locally. In the context of this study a professional judgement has been made on the value of the landscape within the setting of a zone, giving consideration to, for example, sites or areas designated for their landscape value.

Designations which are most relevant to this study are those which are related to protection of landscape or buildings partially or wholly for their contribution to the landscape. There are no national or regional designations in the study area. However, locally designated landscape or features include Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Conservation Areas, and Listed Buildings. Other designations, which are important components of the landscape and contribute towards landscape value, but are not protected for their contribution to the landscape, include nature conservations sites (e.g. ancient woodland) and ancient monuments.

As part of the judgement of landscape value lies in the views of communities of interest, and obtaining these views is not part of this study, in all cases landscape value is evaluated as medium unless there is an obvious reason to give a higher or lower value (e.g. elevate because of a landscape designation, or lower because of a high degree of disturbance and degradation). An indicator of higher landscape value is the extent of public rights of way within any particular landscape. The value of the landscapes has been assessed using the following five-point scale and corresponding definitions: -

Table A2: Landscape Value Definitions

Landscape Value	Definition
Low	No relevant designations. Degraded or possibly derelict landscape.
Low to medium	Between low and medium
Medium	All landscapes unless there is an obvious reason to give a higher or lower value. The zone lies within, or within the setting of, a relevant local designation but it is not considered that development would adversely affect it.
Medium to high	Between medium and high.
High	The zone lies within, or within the setting of, a relevant local designation and it is considered that development would adversely affect it.

A1.3 Visual Sensitivity

Visual sensitivity is based on the nature of change proposed and its interaction with visual aspects of the landscape. It is based on:

Nature of potential change – considering factors such as height, massing, colour, movement and how it would blend in with or contrast with other elements in its

setting. In the case of this study professional experience is used to judge what the nature of an urban extension might be.

General visibility of potential development within the zone – considering influences of enclosing or screening elements such as landform, hedgerows, trees, woodlands, and built development.

Population – numbers and types of views. The sensitivity of visual receptors (or viewers) is dependent on the location and context of the viewpoint and viewing opportunities, the occupation/pastime of the receptor and the importance of the view.

Sensitivity of view:

- Low – Viewers with a passing interest in their surroundings, e.g. motorists.
- Medium – Viewers with a moderate interest in their surroundings, e.g. users of recreation facilities.
- High – Viewers with proprietary interest and prolonged viewing opportunities, e.g. a residential property of users of public footpaths.

Visual sensitivity has been assessed using the following five-point scale and corresponding definitions: -

Table A3: Visual Sensitivity Definitions

Visual Sensitivity	Definition
Low	Nature of potential change – unobtrusive in the context of its setting General visibility of the potential development – enclosed, screened. Only visible from short distances. Population – Seen by few viewers, or predominantly by viewers with a passing interest in their surroundings, e.g. motorists
Low to medium	Between low and medium
Medium	Nature of potential change – moderately obtrusive in the context of its setting General visibility of the potential development – visible but partially enclosed or screened. Not visible from long distances. Population – seen by a moderate number of viewers. Seen by viewers of medium or lower sensitivity.
Medium to high	Between medium and high
High	Nature of potential change – highly obtrusive in the context

Visual Sensitivity	Definition
	of its setting General visibility of the potential development – highly visible due to the open, exposed nature of the surroundings. Might be visible from long distances. Population – seen by a large number of viewers. Seen predominantly by viewers of high or lower sensitivity.

A1.4 Defining Landscape Capacity

Information produced from the field survey is used to make transparent judgements about the sensitivity and indicative capacity of each Landscape Setting Area to accommodate new built development.

Reaching conclusions about capacity means making a judgement about whether the amount of change proposed can be accommodated without having unacceptable adverse effects on the character of the landscape (related to landscape character sensitivity), or the way that it is perceived (related to visual sensitivity), and without compromising the values attached to it (related to landscape value).

In order to identify the indicative capacity of each Landscape Setting Area to accommodate new built development, the overall sensitivity of each Landscape Setting Area has initially been determined by integrating landscape character sensitivity and visual sensitivity in accordance with the matrix set out in Table A4 overleaf.

The overall capacity of a Landscape Setting Area to accommodate new built development has been determined by integrating overall landscape sensitivity and landscape value in accordance with using the matrix set out in Table A5 overleaf.

Table A4: Combining Landscape Character Sensitivity and Visual Sensitivity to give Overall Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape Character Sensitivity	High	High	High	High	High	High
	Medium to High	Medium to High	Medium to High	Medium to High	Medium to High	High
	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium to High	High
	Low to Medium	Low to Medium	Low to Medium	Medium	Medium to High	High
	Low	Low	Low to Medium	Medium	Medium to High	High
		Low	Low to Medium	Medium	Medium to High	High
		Visual Sensitivity				

Table A5: Combining Overall Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Value to give Landscape Capacity

Overall Landscape Sensitivity	High	Medium	Low to Medium	Low	Low	Low
	Medium to High	Medium	Low to Medium	Low to Medium	Low to Medium	Low
	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low to Medium	Low
	Low to Medium	Medium to High	Medium to High	Medium	Low to Medium	Low to Medium
	Low	High	Medium to High	Medium	Medium	Medium
		Low	Low to Medium	Medium	Medium to High	High
		Landscape Value				

APPENDIX B
FIELD SURVEY SHEET

Local Landscape Setting name	
Date/ Time/ Weather	
Photograph Numbers	
Direction of View	

A. LOCAL LANDSCAPE SETTING

<p>LANDSCAPE CHARACTER SENSITIVITY</p> <p>Natural Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetation: Hedgerows, tree cover and type, woodland (visually important) • Water bodies / courses: River (s/m/l) Speed (f/m/s), river meanders, lake, ponds, bog/wetland, drainage channels, drainage ditches, locks/weirs • Water bodies / courses: River (s/m/l) Speed (f/m/s), river meanders, <p>Cultural Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Use: Farmland (A/P), Forestry/woodland, historic parkland, mineral working, natural, military, other. • Enclosure and pattern: Scale and shape of fields (refer to HLC data) <p>Landscape Quality / Condition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape Character: key features that contribute to the character of this area and make it differ from surrounding areas – land form, hydrology, land cover, field patterns and boundaries, communications, buildings etc. • Landscape Qualities / Features: Condition/ survival or intactness/ state of repair of individual features or elements, such as field boundaries, trees and woodland, historic features etc. • Urban Edge Description: Type and quality and character – how is the edge perceived? Well integrated / harsh / ad-hoc urban fringe 	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settlement Perception: views to – open, filtered or well screened. <p>Aesthetic Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built/ architectural character: Timber-frame, weatherboard, flint, brick (traditional/ modern), stone, slate, thatch, tile. • Scale: intimate, small, medium, large • Enclosure: expansive, open, enclosed, constrained • Stimulus: Monotonous, bland, interesting, inspiring • Movement: Remote, vacant, peaceful, active • Unity: unified, interrupted, fragmented, chaotic 	
OVERALL SENSITIVITY RATING	LOW / LOW TO MEDIUM / MEDIUM / MEDIUM TO HIGH / HIGH
<p>VISUAL SENSITIVITY</p> <p>General Visibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topography / Landform Influences: Flat, shelving, rolling, undulating, steep slopes, gentle slopes, floodplain, hills, plateau, broad valley, narrow valley, shallow valley • Skylines / ridgelines: Views – panoramic/ framed/ open/ channelled, key views to landmarks / landscape features • Tree / Woodland cover: Robust, filtered, open views; • General Intervisibility: The degree to which an area is widely visible from, and positively influences the character of, surrounding areas. • Broad description of potential views: Who will see the setting – nearby residents? Users of nearby motorways / roads? Users of public footpaths? • Distinctive Approaches / Gateways / Nodes: • Pedestrian Movement: Good access to or restricted? Green 	

corridors / bridges, links / connections to countryside.	
OVERALL SENSITIVITY RATING	LOW / LOW TO MEDIUM / MEDIUM / MEDIUM TO HIGH / HIGH
<u>LANDSCAPE VALUE</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic Integrity: Visually noted features of historic interest that contribute to the landscape setting – taking into account the intactness and integrity of historic landscape patterns and the presence of valued historic features within the area. • Ecological Integrity: Visually noted features of ecological interest that contribute to the character of the area e.g. Ecological/ nature conservation designations; Woodland (native? Deciduous?); rivers / streams / lakes / pond • Tranquillity: Noise disturbance; Very strong, strong, moderate, low; e.g. minor or major noise disturbance? Scenic beauty and value? Contribution to settlement i.e. amenity value – allotments, sports pitches, parks and gardens, public access and permeability? 	
OVERALL VALUE RATING	LOW / LOW TO MEDIUM / MEDIUM / MEDIUM TO HIGH / HIGH
OVERALL SETTING SUMMARY	

B. POTENTIAL MITIGATION OF LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACTS

<p>Overall opportunities:</p> <p>e.g. development of green links (public right of way provision)</p> <p>e.g. Screening of visual detractors through, for example, woodland linkages</p> <p>e.g. General enhancement of hedgerows</p>	
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/ woodlands

*e.g. Conserve and enhance the
landscape setting of settlements*

e.g. Conserve or enhance views



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