

**Braintree District Settlement Fringe Study:  
Landscape Sensitivity Assessment**

for

Braintree District Council

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

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# 1 Introduction

## Background

- 1.1 Braintree District Council is required by national planning policy to identify sufficient land to meet future housing needs within the District. As development on previously used land within existing towns and villages reaches its limit, it has become clear to the Council that future housing needs will have to be met on the outskirts of the main towns and larger settlements in sustainable locations.
- 1.2 Local Plans are prepared by councils and set out what types of development are permitted and where, and provide a framework for addressing housing needs.
- 1.3 Braintree District Council's current Local Plan, which covers the period 2013 to 2033, consists of two sections. Section 1, shared with Colchester City Council and Tendring District Council, and comprises a strategic plan for north Essex, and was adopted in February 2021. Section 2, contains policies, maps and sites for development, housing, employment, etc. for Braintree District Council only; it was adopted in July 2022.
- 1.4 The evidence base that informed the current Local Plan's housing strategy included an analysis of the landscape capacity of the fringes of nine key settlements within the District's to accommodate housing development. The nine settlements were:
1. Braintree (including Bocking Churchstreet, Rayne, Great Notley, Black Notley, and Cressing)
  2. Coggeshall
  3. Earls Colne
  4. Halstead
  5. Hatfield Peverel
  6. Kelvedon and Feering
  7. Sible Hedingham
  8. Silver End
  9. Witham
- 1.5 The Braintree District Settlement Fringes Landscape Capacity Analyses for each of the settlements were published in June 2015, and are referred to here as the 2015 Landscape Capacity Analyses.
- 1.6 The 2015 Landscape Capacity Analyses built on an earlier study published in November 2007, and considered the capacity of broad parcels of land (termed Landscape Setting Areas) around eight of the settlements [Sible Hedingham was added in 2014] to accommodate development. Each Landscape Setting Area was graded as having Low, Low to Medium, Medium, Medium to High or High capacity.
- 1.7 The aim of 2015 study was to prepare a clear and concise evaluation of these findings in order to provide a finer grain assessment of Landscape Setting Areas identified in the 2007 study as having a 'Low' or 'Low to Medium' capacity, to help determine which parts of these areas might absorb development with minimal impact on the landscape, assuming appropriate mitigation was in place.
- 1.8 For the 2015 Landscape Capacity Analysis, the 2007 setting areas were drilled down to create a finer sub-division of parcels within common characteristics. The parcels were assessed for their landscape sensitivity and capacity, based on a pre-defined set of criteria. These criteria reflected both national guidance and the particular circumstances for the rural landscape of the Braintree District.
- 1.9 Each parcel was assessed against the criteria using a five-point scale from most suitable to least suitable, guided by a set of definitions/descriptions that were developed to reflect local characteristics, and given an overall capacity profile score of Low, Medium-Low, Medium, Medium-High, or High Landscape Capacity.
- 1.10 Parcels that had a Medium, Medium-High or High landscape capacity were considered to be the most likely to be suitable as potential locations for development.

## **Scope and purpose of the study**

- 1.11 Braintree District Council is in the process of updating its Local Plan to address needs in the next plan period. It is evident that the earlier capacity studies have not identified sufficient land with potential for residential development to meet the demands of the current housing requirement numbers.
- 1.12 Braintree District has a pleasant and predominantly rural landscape that displays subtle variations in character. Future change needs to be managed in a way that is sympathetic to this landscape, allowing its special qualities to be maintained for future generations to enjoy.
- 1.13 As such, and in light of the need to accommodate future development, the Council has commissioned The Landscape Partnership to revisit those parcels identified within the 2015 Landscape Capacity Analysis as having a Low or Medium-Low landscape capacity, in order to determine whether any parts of these areas (when considered alone) could absorb development with minimal impact on the landscape, assuming appropriate mitigation was in place.
- 1.14 The Council has also commissioned The Landscape Partnership to review the existing green buffers within the District and their potential for retention or extension.
- 1.15 The findings of this analysis will be used to support the evidence base for the emerging new Local Plan, including informing potential site allocations.
- 1.16 Landscape capacity is just one of a number of factors which will need to be taken into account when deciding on the future spatial strategy for the District.
- 1.17 It is important to note that the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment considers only landscape-related aspects in its assessment of the ability of a parcel of land to accommodate development. For example, no account has been taken of access or highway issues, or the presence of ecologically important habitats. It is quite possible that a site could score well in terms of the ability of its landscape to accommodate development (e.g. it is relatively well screened or set in strong vegetation framework), but that such development is not deliverable on account of other aspects, e.g. access or flooding issues.
- 1.18 The LSA does not respect landownership boundaries and so takes no account of whether or not a landowner might wish to take land out of its current use and promote it for future development. Similarly, the study has been prepared to inform strategic spatial planning. It does not consider the merits of individual development proposals where these exist.
- 1.19 This report sets out the findings of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment and is structured as follows:
- Executive summary
  - Section 1: Introduction
  - Section 2: Assessment methodology
  - Section 3: Review of Green Buffers
  - Section 4 to 12: Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, summary of findings, presented settlement by settlement
  - Section 13 - Conclusions
- 1.20 The report is supported by a number of accompanying appendices:
- Appendix 01: Landscape Sensitivity Assessment proforma
  - Appendix 02: Completed Landscape Sensitivity Assessment proforma, settlement by settlement

## 2 Assessment methodology

### Guidance

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and that strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. This can include nationally and locally-designated landscapes but also the wider countryside.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.2 The European Landscape Convention<sup>2</sup> promotes achieving “sustainable development based on a balanced and harmonious relationship between social needs, economic activity and the environment”.
- 2.3 To help assess the type and scale of development that might be able to be accommodated without compromising landscape character, a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment can also be completed.<sup>3</sup>
- 2.4 The methodology for undertaking the Settlement Fringe Landscape Character Assessment is developed from the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study and is based on the process set out in *An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management* [ALSA], Natural England, June 2019, which requires landscape sensitivity assessments to be clear and concise to “enable associated decision making to be sequential, transparent and auditable.”
- 2.5 This approach to the study is supplemented by guidance in the Landscape Institute’s TGN 02-21: *Assessing landscape value outside national designations* [ALVOND], May 2021. Consideration has also been made to *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 3rd Edition, April 2013* (GLVIA).

1 Planning Practice Guidance Reference ID: 8-036-20190721

2 Council of Europe (2000), European Landscape Convention, Council of Europe, Florence, October 2000

3 Planning Practice Guidance Reference ID: 8-037-20190721

### Scope of Landscape Sensitivity Assessments

- 2.6 Landscape sensitivity may be regarded as a measure of the ability of a landscape to accept a specific type of change without undue negative effects on the character of that landscape.
- 2.7 The ALSA notes:
- Landscape sensitivity may be regarded as a measure of the resilience, or robustness, of a landscape to withstand specified change arising from development types or land management practices, without undue negative effects on the landscape and visual baseline and their value – such as changes to valued attributes of baseline landscape character and the visual resource. Landscape sensitivity assessment is a process that assesses the resilience/robustness of landscape character and the visual resource – and what we value - to a defined change, or changes. It can help decision makers to understand likely changes and the nature of change should particular courses of action - the development/land management scenarios – be taken forward. [page 5]*
- 2.8 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment is the process that assesses the resilience of landscape character to a defined change.
- 2.9 ALSA and GLVIA adopt a similar basic approach to the assessment of sensitivity, i.e. that sensitivity is a product of:
1. the susceptibility of a landscape or visual baseline to a specific change; and
  2. the value of the landscape and its visual characteristics.
- 2.10 However, there are some important distinctions to be made in terms of how sensitivity is considered by ALSA, compared to the approach within GLVIA:
- In GLVIA terms, sensitivity, and in particular susceptibility to change, is considered in regard to a known development, whereas ALSA allows a more strategic assessment of landscape sensitivity, and it’s the principle of a particular type of development change scenario that is considered.
  - Within the context of spatial planning, landscape sensitivity refers to landscape character and the associated visual resource.
- 2.11 Historically, there has been some confusion concerning the use of the words sensitivity and capacity, and on occasions the two terms have been used interchangeably. The ALSA notes:

*Sensitivity and capacity have different meanings. When dealing with an area's sensitivity the question is, 'to what'? When dealing with an area's landscape capacity perhaps to absorb a certain amount of development without unacceptable changes to landscape character – the question generally relates to, 'how much'? Importantly, a sensitivity study will identify areas of relative sensitivity to particular development scenarios, and inform place based objectives and guidance and possibly decisions concerning environmental capacity - perhaps by way of what some might call a Landscape Capacity Assessment. The latter might help decision makers to set more detailed objectives about the amount of acceptable change within a specified area, and therefore inform a more detailed strategy regarding desired amounts of development / change.*

- 2.12 A Landscape Sensitivity Assessment establishes the relative sensitivity of different areas of landscape. It can be assumed that less sensitive landscapes have a greater capacity to accept development than landscapes of higher sensitivity.

## **Overview of methodology**

### **Review of Green Buffers**

- 2.13 In order to establish the full baseline conditions for the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, a review was first undertaken of the effectiveness of the existing Green Buffers defined in Local Plan Policy LPP 68.

### **Landscape Sensitivity Assessment**

- 2.14 The process for determining landscape sensitivity of each sub-parcel was based on the following steps:
1. Assessment of susceptibility to landscape change
  2. Assessment of susceptibility to visual change
  3. Identification of landscape value
  4. Assessment of overall landscape sensitivity
- 2.15 The methodology was based on the earlier settlement fringe studies carried out by The Landscape Partnership on behalf of Braintree District Council in 2015. The methodology was, however, updated to reflect the current guidance from the Landscape Institute and Natural England.

## Green Buffers

- 2.16 Uncertainty over which locations in Braintree District may be appropriate for development has led to a need for further measures to be taken to ensure that gaps are maintained between urban areas and the surrounding villages. It is considered necessary for Green Buffers to be used to prevent the main towns and villages in the District coalescing with neighbouring villages. Development proposals outside of Green Buffers are still be considered on their merits through the presumption in favour of sustainable development and Local Plan policy.
- 2.17 The Green Buffers are identified on the Local Plan Proposals Map and are located where they would prevent the coalescence of two settlements. They are predominantly within areas of Low to Low Medium landscape capacity (as identified in the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study, or have other constraints such as flood zones, and group TPOs, etc.
- 2.18 When assessing proposals for development which are not allocated within a Local or Neighbourhood Plan, it will be necessary to assess the contribution a site makes to the physical separation between settlements.
- 2.19 Development proposals which would cause significant impact to the setting of towns and villages, cause coalescence, or have a harmful impact on the physical separation of settlements, would not be considered to be sustainable development due to their impact on the character of those settlements.
- 2.20 Green Buffers are identified around Braintree, Great Notley, Witham, and between Sible and Castle Hedingham, and Earls Colne and White Colne, in order to prevent to coalescence with neighbouring villages.

### **Policy LPP 68: Green Buffers**

*The following areas are identified on the Proposals Map as Green Buffers:*

- *Land between Braintree, Rayne, Deanery Hill, Panfield, Bocking and High Garrett*
- *Land between Earls Colne and White Colne*
- *Land between Great Notley and Black Notley*
- *Land between Witham, Rivenhall and Rivenhall End*
- *Land between Sible Hedingham and Castle Hedingham.*

*Uses considered appropriate in green buffers include agricultural and forestry development, formal and informal recreation, footpaths and cycle ways, cemeteries, the re-development of suitable brownfield sites, development which relates to an existing use, and the extension or replacement of existing homes. Proposals for strategic infrastructure within green buffers would be supported provided suitable consideration is given to their impact on the surrounding area.*

*Where development is necessary it will have regard to the local landscape character and be of a design, density and layout which minimises the coalescence and consolidation between built areas and preserves the setting of those areas.*

*An assessment of the local landscape and physical separation between settlements will be required, demonstrating that the development is to be located on an area which has the least detrimental impact to the character of the countryside and does not reduce the visually sensitive buffer between settlements or groups of houses.*

*Appropriate landscaping, comprising of local native species, will be required in order to enhance the countryside character of these areas, and encourage biodiversity.*

### **Green Buffer review**

- 2.21 Each Green Buffer was reviewed to determine:
- which settlements it is separating
  - the separate identities of the settlements
  - the effectiveness of the separation (including an analysis of the width of the gap, the main movement routes, and the visual experience)
  - the land uses present within the buffer
  - the case for retention, and
  - the case for extension
- 2.22 Where a Green Buffer (or component parts of it) are considered to no longer provide effective separation, they have not been recommended for retention. Conversely it may be possible or necessary to extend an existing Green Buffer to provide meaningful separation. Specific recommendations were made in regard to each of the existing Green Buffers.

- 2.23 If land is included within a Green Buffer, and is still considered important for achieving the aims of the policy, this will increase its sensitivity to development and this has been reflected in the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment.
- 2.24 To analyse the effectiveness of existing Green Buffers in maintaining separation between settlements, a structured assessment was conducted to determine the extent of land required to fulfil this function in a robust and defensible manner. It is important to note that this evaluation was carried out independently of the designated Green Buffer boundaries.
- 2.25 The process involved the following steps:
1. **Defining settlement limits** – Identifying the current outer built limits of each settlement while considering any known future changes, including developments already approved but not yet built out or which is in the process of being constructed.
  2. **Assessing existing coalescence** – Identifying areas where settlements have already merged.
  3. **Mapping neutral land** - Identifying land between the two settlements that did not reflect the distinct or special characteristics of each of the adjoining settlements.
  4. **Assessing form of neutral area** – Evaluating whether existing land uses within the neutral areas affect the effectiveness of the Green Buffer, e.g., brownfield or previously developed land may be less effective in providing a Green Buffer function compared to open countryside. Also, analysing the width and/or extent of the neutral area to ensure it is sufficient to afford meaningful separation.
  5. **Evaluating inter-visibility** – Determining points along the settlement edges where direct views of the opposing settlement exist.
  6. **Assessing intra-visibility** – Identifying locations in the surrounding landscape where both settlements can be seen within the same view.
  7. **Analysing the visual experience** – evaluating the separation perceived by those travelling on the main routes between settlement and through the neutral area, including on roads and public rights of way.
  8. **Conserving landscape setting** – Identifying any land that makes an important contribution to the landscape setting of a settlement.
9. **Defining buffer extent** – Establishing the necessary Green Buffer area to maintain settlement separation, ensuring its boundaries align with physical and defensible features.
  9. **Comparing with existing designations** – Reviewing the findings of the independent appraisal against the Green Buffers designated in Local Plan Policy LPP 68.
  10. **Recommending adjustments** – Proposing extensions or deletions of Green Buffer in whole or part(s) to ensure the policy effectively maintains settlement separation in a meaningful and defensible way.
- 2.26 This structured approach ensures that Green Buffers remain effective in preventing settlement coalescence and preserving the distinct identities of the individual communities they separate.
- Candidate Green Buffers**
- 2.27 As a broad generalisation, field study of the character of the District’s landscape and the success of the existing Green Buffers in maintaining separation, suggests that where the gap between two settlements is less than 500m, the sense of separation is particularly compromised. Notwithstanding this broad-brush judgement, the ability of each gap to maintain an appropriate and meaningful separation must be considered on the specific circumstances present, including topography, land use and vegetation.
- 2.28 To identify potential locations where new Green Buffers might assist in maintaining the separation of existing settlements, a nominal 500m buffer was applied around each of the nine key settlements considered in the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment. This process highlighted where the gap between two settlements was less than 500m, indicating where a Green Buffer might help conserve the existing separation.
- 2.29 The findings were also reviewed to establish whether the specific landscape conditions between two settlements required a wider gap to maintain appropriate separation. Where justified, these areas were added to the list of candidate Green Buffers.
- 2.30 Specific study was conducted for each identified candidate Green Buffer to provide initial observations on the extent of buffer required to fulfil its function.

## Assessment units

- 2.31 The study commenced with a review of the findings of the 2015 landscape capacity study to identify those parcels of land judged to have a Low or Medium-Low capacity to accommodate development.
- 2.32 A high-level review was undertaken in order to eliminate whole parcels or parts of parcels that fell within the bounds of designations or policy that would preclude development:
- Flood Zones 2 and 3
  - Environmental designations: SSSI, National Nature Reserves
  - Ancient Woodland
- 2.33 This was followed by a review of each individual parcel to determine whether the 2015 findings were still valid or if circumstances had changed. Since 2015, there has been new development and the settlement boundaries have been amended accordingly. Parcels that were previously remote may now have a closer connection to the settlement edge, and therefore greater potential to accommodate development.
- 2.34 The remaining parcels were then reviewed more generally to determine if there were any parts of the parcel which merited further assessment. This exercise included consideration of whether parts of a parcel:
- Related well to the current or future settlement edge.
  - Exhibited a variation in character across the parcel, such that some parts might have more ability to accommodate development than others.
  - Were well defined by built development and/or contained by topography or vegetation.
- 2.35 Those parcels that scored lowly in the 2015 study and displayed a consistency of character across their extent, and were divorced from the settlement edge were unlikely to be considered candidates for reassessment in whole or part.
- 2.36 Having undertaken this review it was possible to define smaller units within specific parcels to be reassessed in more detail. In other cases it was felt to be justified to provide an updated assessment of the parcel as a whole, due to changes in its relative circumstances; for example as a result of development that had taken place or been consented subsequent to the 2015 study.
- 2.37 The assessment units, referred to as sub-parcels, were defined by identifying an area of land with similar characteristics (making it a suitable unit for assessment).
- 2.38 A consequence of the desktop and field work was that, where the landscape was more complex in both the underlying natural elements and overlying land uses, so the size of the sub-parcel generally decreased. Conversely, in less complex landscapes, where the variation was more broad-brush, the form of the sub-parcels was less prescriptive.
- 2.39 The drawing of boundary lines was a necessary part of the process, but did not always mean that sub-parcels were dramatically different to either side of the line, as it is more typical for change to be a more gradual transition. The boundary lines for some sub-parcels mark more a watershed of character, where the balance of the defining elements has shifted from one landscape character to another.
- 2.40 For practical purposes, the boundary was aligned on features that could be identified on the ground, such as boundary features or landscape elements.
- 2.41 This analysis was typically at the field level scale with, where appropriate, some aggregation of field and landscape units of a similar character. Such a fine-grain study was required in order to identify any parts of the wider parcel that might have a greater potential to accommodate development than would the parcel as a whole.
- 2.42 Sub-parcels generally comprised one or two land units, e.g. fields. A single field or plot was taken as the smallest practical unit of assessment for a study of this type.

## **Sensitivity analysis**

- 2.43 The sensitivity of each of the sub-parcels was assessed using a combination of desktop and field work.
- 2.44 The field survey work was carried out by a team of Landscape Architects who used a standard proforma to record data in a consistent manner. The sub-parcels were photographed (where relevant) to capture landscape character, for internal purposes when reviewing and evaluating the character and analysis studies and compiling the report.
- 2.45 The fieldwork confirmed any important views that had been identified in the early in the previous studies were still relevant, as well as identifying any further important views – both close and distant. It also verified and assessed landmark landscape features and sensitive routes/corridors and their corresponding sensitivity to change.
- 2.46 Where appropriate, note was also made of prospects for mitigating adverse landscape effects, opportunities for landscape enhancements in keeping with local landscape character, and the potential for green infrastructure provision.

## **Susceptibility to landscape change**

- 2.47 The susceptibility of each sub-parcel to the type of change proposed, i.e. residential development, was assessed using a pre-defined set of criteria. These criteria reflected both the national guidance in the ALSA and the particular circumstances of the landscape within Braintree District. For each criterion, indicators of higher susceptibility and indicators of lower susceptibility were provided, to help guide judgements.
- 2.48 Table 1 sets out the various criteria which were used to assess the susceptibility of the landscape of each sub-parcel to change.
- 2.49 In considering a sub-parcel's susceptibility to change, the following assumptions were made regarding the form of any proposed development:
- Appropriate further study, e.g. by reference to the findings of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, would be used to inform emerging scheme proposals.
  - The scheme would be designed and laid out in a sensitive manner, appropriate to the receiving landscape, including in relation to existing vegetation and topography.

- It would comprise a mix of one and two storey properties, with two-and-a-half and three storey properties only used where appropriate in the receiving landscape.
  - Development would be of a low to moderate scale and density, that it would be of an architectural character that typically reflected vernacular qualities of existing properties in nearby settlements.
  - It would be accompanied by a comprehensive landscape and green infrastructure strategy to integrate it into the surrounding landscape.
  - Any landscape measures would be subject to management and maintenance requirements to ensure their establishment and long-term contribution to the landscape.
- 2.50 The susceptibility of the landscape of each sub-parcel to change from development of the type proposed was assessed against each of the specific criteria, using a five-point scale of High, Medium-High, Medium, Medium-Low or Low susceptibility to change.
- 2.51 If a sub-parcel was identified as having a lower susceptibility to development, this would not necessarily apply to the entire sub-parcel. For example, only a specific portion of the sub-parcel might be suitable for development, or the sub-parcel might have potential to accommodate a limited volume of development without a predetermined geographic allocation.
- 2.52 There can be tension between some of these criteria, for example, a parcel may be close to the settlement edge (indicating lower sensitivity), but important in preventing coalescence (indicating higher sensitivity). The various criteria have been clearly differentiated which enables the different factors to be clearly understood.

**Table 1:** Landscape susceptibility criteria

Criteria	High susceptibility	Medium-High susceptibility	Medium susceptibility	Medium-Low susceptibility	Low susceptibility
<b>Landform</b>	Elevated land, prominent slopes on valley-sides	Undulating landform, higher slopes	Lower valley slopes, gentle slopes	Within valley, on open plateau	Contained within valley, on plateau
<b>Enclosure by vegetation</b>	Open with minimal vegetation	Semi-open with limited or poor hedges	Moderate enclosure by vegetation - small woodlands, hedges. Enclosure on some sides but not others	Semi-enclosed by vegetation - moderate woodland cover, tall hedges or hedgerows with trees	Enclosed by mature vegetation - extensive tree belts/woodland
<b>Relationship to the main settlements</b>	Parcel is isolated from, and does not form any relationship with, the existing settlement	Parcel has limited associations with the existing settlement	Parcel has some association with the existing settlement	Parcel is closely associated with the existing settlement	Location where built development would form a natural extension of the settlement
<b>Land-cover</b>	Priority habitats (e.g. ancient woodland, deciduous woodland, floodplain grazing marsh, lowland meadows), nature reserves, registered parks and gardens, existing playing fields, allotments	Arable or pastoral land with no indication of priority habitats. Designed landscapes i.e. parkland	Existing garden areas which make an important contribution to rural character, or garden areas which are constrained by existing trees. Paddocks and partially developed land	Existing garden areas. Previously developed sites with important vegetation	Developed or previously developed land, derelict sites
<b>Maintaining separate identities</b>	Parcel is essential to maintaining separation	Parcel is important to maintaining separation	Parcel plays some role in maintaining separation	Parcel plays minor role in maintaining separation	Parcel has no material role in maintaining separation

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**Susceptibility to visual change**

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- 2.53 Visual susceptibility was assessed in relation to public views of the sub-parcel (e.g. from roads, public footpaths, bridleways, parks, etc.) and private views of the sub-parcel (e.g. from residential areas of employment areas). Again, judgements were made using a five-point scale of High, Medium-High, Medium, Medium-Low or Low susceptibility to change. Sub-parcels which were more open were considered to have higher susceptibility to visual change.
- 2.54 Table 2 sets out the criteria that was used to assess the susceptibility of the sub-parcel to visual change.
- 2.55 The assessment of susceptibility to visual change utilised similar assumptions as the assessment of landscape change.

**Table 2:** Visual susceptibility criteria

Criteria	High susceptibility	Medium-High susceptibility	Medium susceptibility	Medium-Low susceptibility	Low susceptibility
<b>Openness to public view</b>	Parcel is very open to public views. Strong sense of openness with far-reaching views	Parcel is open to public views. Intervisibility with surrounding landscape	Parcel is moderately contained. Some degree of visual filtering provided by landform and vegetation, or development	Parcel is generally well contained in relation to public viewpoints. Less sensitive receptors	Parcel is highly contained and enclosed. Views are restricted by dense vegetation, development or landform
<b>Openness to private view</b>	Parcel is very open to private views with a large number of receptors	Parcel is open to private views. Open or sensitive views from private properties	Parcel is partially contained from private views. Views from adjoining properties	Parcel is generally well contained from private views. Relatively few receptors	Parcel is well contained from private views. Screened views, few receptors
<b>Skylines</b>	Parcel lies on prominent or distinctive skyline. Skyline includes historic landmarks	Parcel lies on undeveloped skyline	Parcel lies on skyline, but skyline is already partially developed		Parcel does not form part of skyline e.g. parcel is located in valley, parcel is contained

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## Landscape value

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- 2.56 The importance which is placed on an area or the features it contains by those experiencing the landscape is referred to as Landscape Value.
- 2.57 Value is an inherent quality of the baseline conditions, which is independent of the development proposed. GLVIA3 recognises that landscape value is not always signified by designation. Landscape value should be determined by a review of existing assessments and, where appropriate, by new analysis. The Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21: *Assessing landscape value outside national designations* sets out a range of factors that can be considered when assessing landscape value. The different aspects of value are natural heritage, cultural heritage, landscape condition, associations, distinctiveness, recreational, perceptual, and functional. The guidance notes that the presentation of information about landscape value should be proportionate to the task at hand.
- 2.58 The landscape value of each site was assessed using a pre-defined set of criteria based on TGN 02/21. A definition was provided for each value criterion, together with examples of when these would be indicators of landscape value. These are reproduced at Table 3.
- 2.59 The value of the landscape of each sub-parcel was assessed against each of the specific criterion, using a scale of High, Medium-High, Medium, Medium-Low or Low value.
- 2.60 Importantly, TGN 02/21 notes that *“Value is best appreciated at the scale at which a landscape is perceived – rarely is this on a field-by-field basis.”* As such, the value judgements considered the sub-parcels and their landscape settings.
- 2.61 Sub-parcels should be understood to form part of a wider landscape continuum, and the assessment of landscape value takes the sub-parcel’s context into account. For example, the sub-parcel itself might not contain light sources, but it may be influenced by existing lighting in the adjoining town.
- 2.62 Similarly, the sub-parcel might be considered to make an important contribution to the integrity of a wider tract of countryside, and so have a higher landscape value than when it is considered in isolation.

**Table 3:** Landscape value criteria

Criteria	High value	Medium-High value	Medium value	Medium-Low value	Low value
<b>Natural heritage</b>	Landscape designation	Presence of priority habitat e.g. deciduous woodland	Adjacent to designated site, potentially part of supporting or interlinked habitat	No designations but potentially with some ecological interest e.g. grassland, hedges	Little obvious ecological value
<b>Cultural heritage</b>	Contains listed buildings, conservation areas and other heritage assets, or Ancient Woodland	Land which makes an important contribution to the landscape setting of heritage assets or Ancient Woodland	Land which makes some contribution to the landscape setting of Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas or Ancient Woodland	Land which makes limited contribution to the landscape setting of heritage assets	Land which makes very minor/ no discernible contribution to the landscape setting of heritage assets
<b>Distinctiveness</b>	Strong sense of local identity	Clear sense of local identity	Some sense of local identity	Little sense of local identity	No sense of local identity
<b>Scenic value</b>	Strong aesthetic qualities, memorable or distinctive views including local landmarks	Recognisable visual interest, presence of distinctive features including natural elements	Pleasant but more ordinary aesthetic qualities	Bland views with no special features	Presence of incongruous, detracting features
<b>Recreational value</b>	Existing playing fields, parks, village greens	Good accessibility with opportunities to enjoy outdoor recreation. Recreational facilities which are not open to the public e.g. allotments, fishing lakes, bowling greens	Some accessibility	Informal paths	No recreational value
<b>Tranquillity and dark skies</b>	Tranquil location with dark skies	Peaceful location with minimal disturbance. Rural, unlit location	Fairly peaceful but with some audible disturbance. Fairly dark but with some influence from existing light sources	Disturbance from road noise or quarry etc. Some existing light sources	No tranquillity. Lit urban environments

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## 2.5 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

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- 2.63 The key findings of the assessment of each sub-parcel were recorded on a summary form. This allowed the judgements made for each criterion for both susceptibility to change and value to be viewed in a transparent and consistent manner.
- 2.64 Professional judgment was used to make an overall Landscape Sensitivity judgment for each site, using a five-point scale of High, High/Medium, Medium, Medium/Low, Low landscape sensitivity.
- 2.65 In arriving at a judgement, there is sometimes tensions that between different criteria that might have opposing aims, and it is necessary for the assessor to balance these matters and make a judgement on a case by case basis.
- 2.66 In arriving at an overall judgement, proximity to the settlement edge was given considerable weight in order to protect more rural areas.

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## 2.6 Reporting the findings

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- 2.67 The findings of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment are summarised at Sections \*\*\* to \*\*\*\*, on a settlement-by-settlement basis.
- 2.68 For each settlement, the following information is provided:
- Mapping illustrating the findings of the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study
  - Mapping to define the sub-parcels
  - Mapping to present the findings of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
  - Narrative to describe the key findings of the assessment
- 2.69 The detailed findings for each settlement were compiled in a tabulated form and are reproduced at Appendix \*\*\*.

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## 2.7 Assumptions and limitations

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2.70 The following assumptions were made in respect of the assessment of effects:

2.71 The assessment Baseline Year was 2025.

- Existing vegetation would continue to grow at rates typical of the location, species and maturity of the vegetation.
- The receptor for a view from a public right of way, public open space and within a residential property was represented as an adult standing with an eye height of 1.6m.
- Visual effects were assessed on the basis of good visibility. Visual effects can be expected to vary, e.g. poor visibility at times of low cloud, rainfall and dusk. At these times a reduction in visual clarity, colour and contrast would be experienced. Reduced visibility would limit the extent of view possible particularly in mid to long distance views. Consequently, the assessment of effects is based on the worst-case scenario, where the proposed development would be most visible.
- Extent of use of public rights of way was based on known information (e.g. if the right of way forms part of a promoted route at a local or national level), signage, and circumstantial evidence at the time of the survey such as recent disturbance of grass and crops, a clearly defined path, extent of wear, and the number of people/horses using the right of way at the time of the survey.

2.72 A series of site visits was undertaken by Chartered Landscape Architects through 2024 and 2025. They viewed the sites from adjacent land, public rights of way, and public locations (e.g. areas with recreational access). Consideration was given to the seasonal effects of deciduous vegetation, and any consequent changes in visibility.

2.73 In undertaking the assessment of potential receptors, private property has not been accessed, as it is generally considered impracticable to seek approval to gain access to residential properties or other buildings to assess the effect on views from each window in a property, or from private land. Assessment is therefore based on the nearest publicly accessible location, which will usually be a road or public right of way. Professional judgement is used to extrapolate what the likely effect on views would be from windows, making allowances for changes in height, e.g. from a first-floor window.

## 3 Braintree

(including Bocking Churchstreet, Rayne, Great Notley, Black Notley, and Cressing)

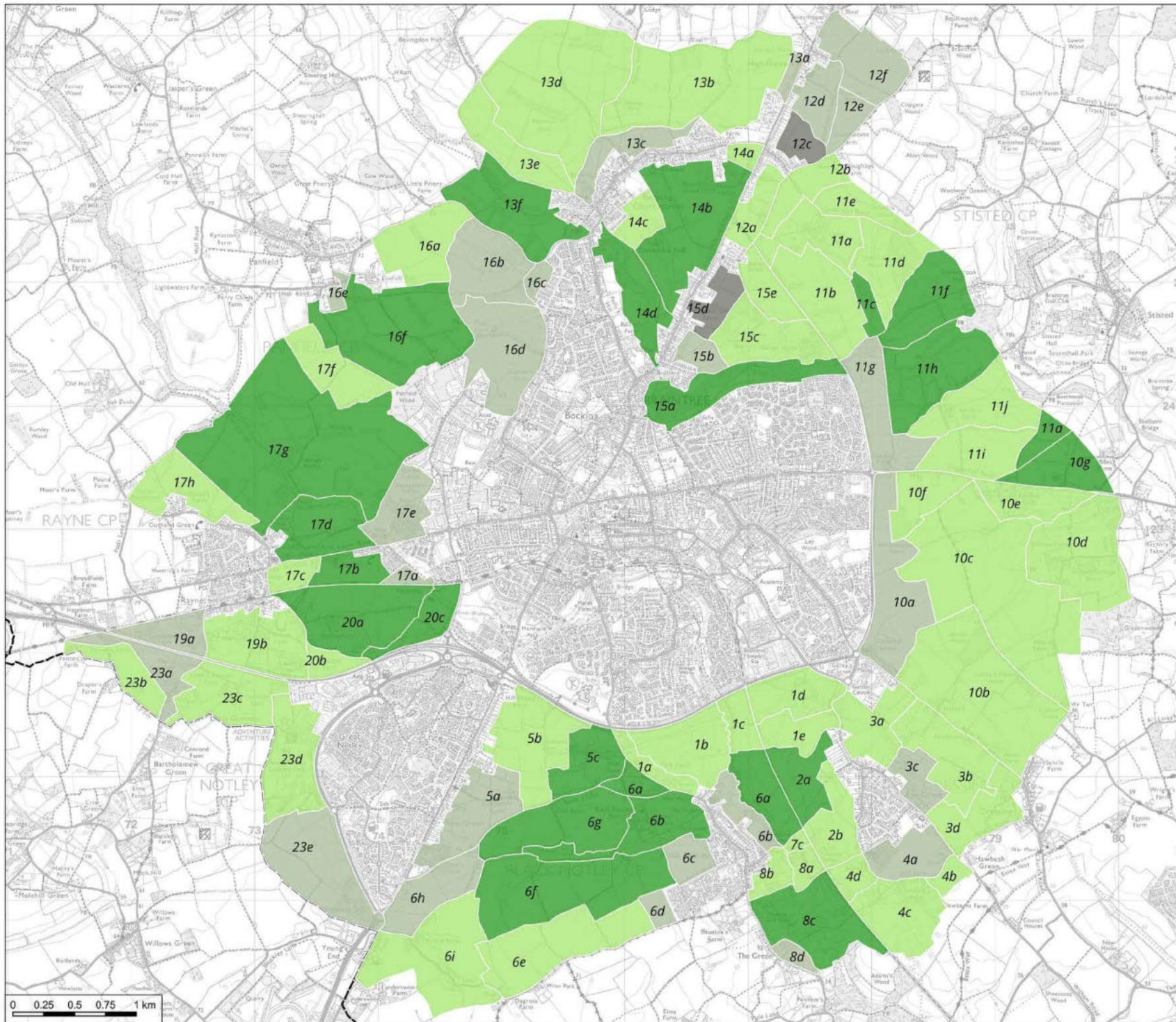
### Findings of 2015 Settlement Fringe Study

- 3.1 Figure 1 illustrates the findings of the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study in relation to Braintree (including the adjacent settlements of Bocking Church Street, Rayne, Great Notley, Black Notley, and Cressing).
- 3.2 Further information can be found in *Braintree District Settlement Fringes: Evaluation of Landscape Analysis Study of Braintree*, prepared by The Landscape Partnership for Braintree District Council and dated June 2015.
- 3.3 The study reached the following conclusions regarding those parcels that were judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity to accommodate development.

### Medium-Low landscape capacity

- 3.4 The analysis identified 47 Parcels that were considered to have a Medium-Low capacity to accommodate development. Factors such as limited relationship with the urban fabric, visibility from public and private receptors and encroachment on the separation between settlements were all overriding elements that reduced the capacity of the landscape. A summary of those factors (along with unique characteristics of the parcels) that limit opportunities for development are described below.
- 3.5 In the southern portion of Braintree's environs, several small towns or villages were found to be physically separated from Braintree (Rayne, Great Notley, Black Notley, Tye Green and Cressing). Having typically arable uses and little built development, parcels in the narrow intervening areas contributed to preventing coalescence. Due to their proximity to existing development and topography or vegetation condition, they were likely to be visible from private and public viewpoints, and in their current undeveloped state contributed to the rural setting of Braintree and its environs. Therefore, parcels in the intervening areas between Braintree and these settlements were typically assessed as having a Medium-Low capacity to accommodate future development:

- 3.6 Parcels 1a through 1e maintained separation between Braintree and Black Notley and Tye Green. In addition, they straddled the River Brain valley and their sloped topography increased the parcels' prominence in private and public views from those settlements, although strong boundary hedgerows and vegetation along the River Brain mitigated those to some extent. Parcel 20e, on the River Brain's north facing valley side between Great Notley and Braintree played a similar role there. Parcels 3a, 3b and 10b, and Parcel 5b also contributed to maintaining separation between Braintree and Tye Green and Cressing, and Braintree and Great Notley, respectively. While they were not situated on valley slopes, some hedgerow boundaries were in decline and other vegetation sparse in those areas meaning development in those parcels would likely be visible and would disrupt the visual setting of the settlements.
- 3.7 Further parcels were found to contribute to maintaining separation between the village settlements. Parcels 2b, 7c, 8a, and 3d were located on the River Brain's eastern valley slope and helped maintain separation between Black Notley and Tye Green. Parcel 3d performed a similar function between Tye Green and Cressing, and 4b between Tye Green and Hawbush Green, while 19b and 20a separated Great Notley and Rayne, and both also acted as a buffer between Rayne and the A120. In the northern portion of the study area, Parcel 14a was significant in maintaining separation between Bocking Church Street and High Garrett, while Parcel 12a separated development along High Garrett from the development extending north from Braintree on Broad Street.
- 3.8 Other Parcels assessed as Medium-Low were generally located around the edges of the Landscape Setting Areas, remote from existing towns and villages. Although most of these parcels did contain some built development such as farmsteads rural businesses or individual houses, they were not part of a wider developed area or were accessed from minor country roads. There were good networks of public rights of way which increased the parcels' visibility from public viewpoints. These parcels were also often stronger in terms of landscape character and likely to have more linked or widespread natural habitat. Parcels that could be described like this and which were assessed as Medium-Low were: 4c south of Tye Green, Parcels 6e and 6i south of Great Notley, Parcels 10c through 10f, 11i and 11j to the east of Braintree, Parcels 16a, 17f and 17h to the west of Braintree, and Parcels 23a and 23c.
- 3.9 As well as displaying the features described above, land surrounding existing settlements in the northern portion of the study area tended to be at higher



**Key**

**Figure 1**

**Braintree**

- Low capacity
- Medium-Low capacity
- Medium capacity
- Medium-High capacity

District Boundary

**Base**

OS Map Braintree

Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Findings of 2015 study

**Braintree Figure 1**

Scale: 1:30000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN



elevations, allowing long distance views from private and public viewpoints in villages and Braintree to these Parcels. In their current unbuilt condition, they contributed to the rural setting of the settlements, which would be disrupted by any new development. Although they were visually connected with the existing settlements, development on these slopes would disrupt the rural character of Braintree's character in long distance views.

- 3.10 Parcels 11a, 11b, 11d, and 11e; 12a and 12b; and 15c and 15e combined across a large area of land to the north-east of Braintree, located south of High Garrett and bordered to the south by the River Blackwater valley. The slopes were generally south facing towards Braintree. In addition, these parcels provided a rural setting to Lyons Hall, a listed building. 11b, 12a and 12b prevented coalescence between High Garrett and Braintree. Parcel 12a in particular maintained the separation between Braintree and High Garret where ribbon development extended towards High Garret from Braintree along the old Roman Road (B1053/A131). 15c contained sewage works and a working gravel pit, whose noise disrupted the tranquillity there.
- 3.11 Parcels 13b, 13d, and 13e were located on the south facing slopes to the north of Bocking Churchstreet. Although local undulations would protect some areas from view of public and private viewpoints, the parcels' capacity was also reduced by the lack of connections to the existing settlements and the intervening valley of a tributary of the River Pant.
- 3.12 14c was located adjacent to Bocking Churchstreet and had a close relationship with the existing urban fabric. However, it was located on slopes rising directly from the eastern edge of the village where future development would be prominent. As well as the setting for the village, it contributed to that of the listed buildings of Doreward's Hall and Bocking Windmill, a prominent landmark in the area.
- 3.13 17c abutted Rayne's eastern edge. It included a playground, the Rayne Village Hall, and was location for Rayne Cricket Club. Land cover included amenity sports fields and Oak Meadow Nature Reserve. Its strong habitat made these a less suitable site for accommodating future development.
- 3.14 Parcel 23d comprised Great Notley Country Park. It was located adjacent to Great Notley, divided from the village by the A131 but with access from this road. The Country Park had distinctive artificial landforms including a high hill that afforded long views over the surrounding area. Different habitats had

developed across the parcel, with the layout of the park following historic field boundaries consisting of mature shrubs and trees. They included mounds, rough grass, amenity grass, and a field with a mosaic of shrubs and trees, ponds and rough grass. The eastern edge included a recently planted shrub and tree belt at the base of the road embankment.

### **Low Landscape Capacity**

- 3.15 The analysis assessed 17 Parcels as having Low capacity to accommodate development. Factors such as isolation from the urban fabric, the good condition and strong character of the landscape, sensitive historic features and encroachment on the separation between settlements were all overriding elements that reduced the capacity of the landscape. Generally there were several factors present within each parcel that resulted in a Low capacity assessment. A summary of these factors, and the unique characteristics of the parcels that limited opportunities for development, are described below.
- 3.16 Parcels 2a and 7a; 5c, 6a, 6b, 6f, and 6g; 8c; 16f; 17b and 17d; 19b; and 20c played important roles in preserving the separation between Braintree and smaller settlements in its environs, or between these smaller settlements, namely between Black Notley and Tye Green; Black Notley, Braintree and Great Notley; Black Notley and The Green; Panfield and Braintree; Rayne and Braintree; Rayne and Great Notley; and Great Notley and Braintree respectively. However, they tended to not relate strongly to the existing urban fabric of these villages, and are landscapes sensitive to change as they provided a rural setting to the settlements. Access to the parcels is generally via minor roads or public rights of way. The public rights of way are also sensitive to change that detracts from the rural character.
- 3.17 Parcels 6a, 6b, 6f and 6g, and Parcel 8c spanned river valleys. Their location on the valley slopes and bottom meant they would be prominent in short and longer distance views across and along the valleys. Parcels within Landscape Setting Area B6 also contributed to the setting of the historic core of Black Notley, listed building and scheduled monuments at Black Notley Hall.
- 3.18 4.87 10g, 11c, 11f, 11h, 11k and 17g were identified as parcels with Low capacity due in part to their remote positions on or close to the landscape setting boundaries, and bear little relationship with the existing urban areas of Braintree or its surrounding settlements. Also, these parcels were all situated on valley sides and valley bottoms of the Rivers Brain, Blackwater and Pods Brook and were prominent in cross-valley views.

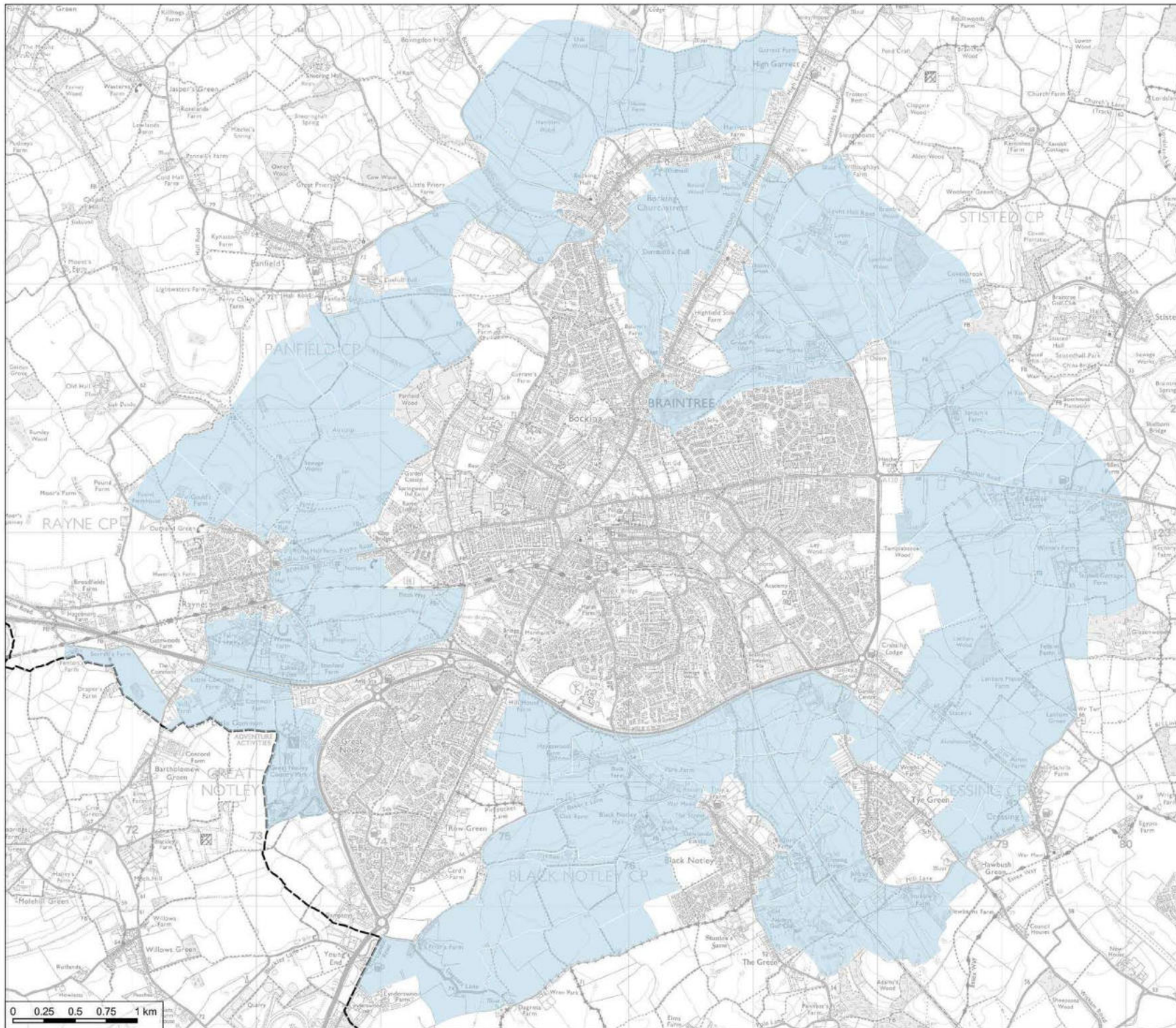
- 3.19 Parcel 13f was located on the River Pant to the north-west of Braintree and followed the river valley to where the River Pant flows through Bocking. At its north-western extents it was remote from settlements, while in its south-eastern portion had close associations with new built development. There were new areas of habitat being developed here too. The parcel was sensitive to viewpoints from the roads that formed its north-east and south-west boundaries and footpath along the southern edge of the river, as well as private viewpoints from the new housing development. As the edge of existing settlement, it was valued for its contribution to the rural setting.
- 3.20 Parcel 14b was located between Braintree and Bocking Churchstreet and High Garrett on land that rose north-eastwards from the River Brain (Parcel 14d). It had close associations with existing development in Braintree and Bocking Churchstreet; however, it was considered sensitive to development due to its prominence on the valley side and plateau edge in short and long distance views from existing development, as well as from public viewpoints on the public rights of way in and adjacent to the parcel. In addition, it was the setting to the sensitive historic sites of Doreward Hall and Bocking Windmill, also a landmark feature in the landscape.
- 3.21 Parcels 14d and 15a were located on the River Blackwater's flat flood plain, adjacent to the edges of Braintree in the north of the town. While having close connections with the existing settlement, they would be sensitive locations for new development due to their visibility with existing housing and footpaths that follow close to the river and their position their position as part of a wider network of managed habitats.

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**Study area**

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- 3.22 Figure 2 maps those parcels from the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study which were judged to have Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity. These parcels form the study area for the current study.



**Key**

**Figure 2**

**Braintree**

 Medium-Low and Low capacity parcels

 District Boundary

**Base**

**OS Map Braintree**

Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Study area

**Braintree Figure 2**

Scale: 1:30000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN

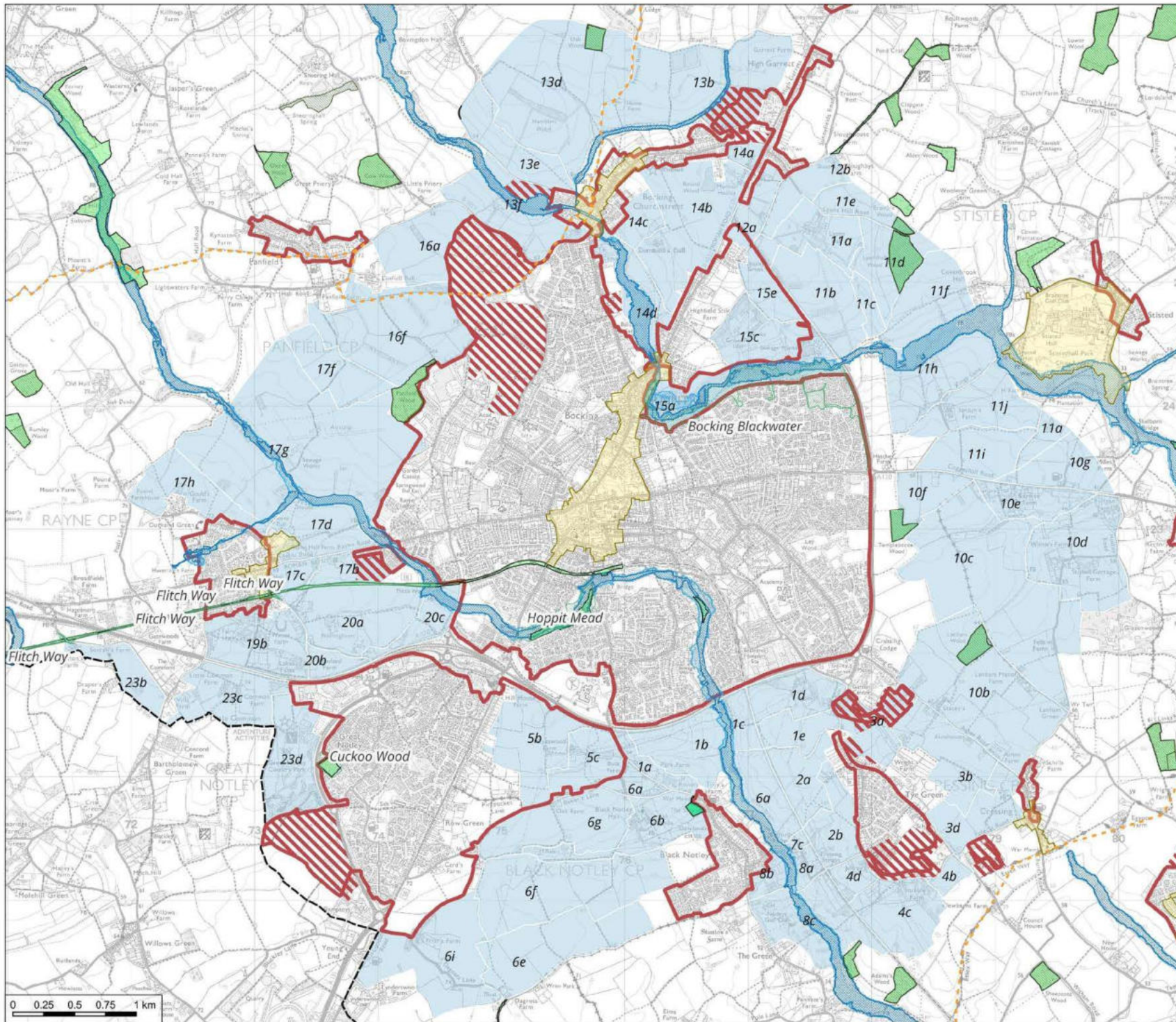


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## Subsequent development and constraints

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- 3.23 Figure 3 maps those parcels from the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity, overlaid with landscape-related constraints that would preclude residential development. The figure also shows areas of land that have gained planning permission since 2015.
- 3.24 Since 2015 there have been a number of planning consents in and around Braintree which include larger residential developments at:
- Land opposite Sandiacres, Long Green, Cressing
  - Land adjacent to Braintree Road, Cressing
  - Land East of Braintree Road, Cressing
  - Land North of Grove Field, High Garrett, Braintree
  - Land South of Bovingdon Road, Braintree
  - Towerlands, Panfield Road, Braintree
  - Land West of Panfield Lane, Braintree
  - Polly's Field Village, Church Lane, Braintree
  - Land to the rear of Gilda Terrace, Rayne Road, Braintree
- 3.25 These developments have altered the settlement boundary. Three large allocations have also been made in and around Braintree which have caused the development boundary to change. Parcels 5b, 5c, 15c and 15e now fall within the development boundary and are not therefore included within this study.
- 3.26 Constraints include the river floodplains of the Pant/Blackwater and Pods Brook/ the River Brain, Ancient Woodlands, Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites.



**Key**

**Figure 3**

- - - Long Distance Footpaths
- Local Nature Reserves
- Ancient Woodlands
- Local Wildlife Sites
- Conservation Areas
- Millennium Greens
- Flood zone 3
- Flood zone 2
- Planning consents
- Development boundaries
- District Boundary
- Braintree**
- Medium-Low and Low capacity parcels
- Base**
- OS Map Braintree
- Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Constraints

**Braintree Figure 3**

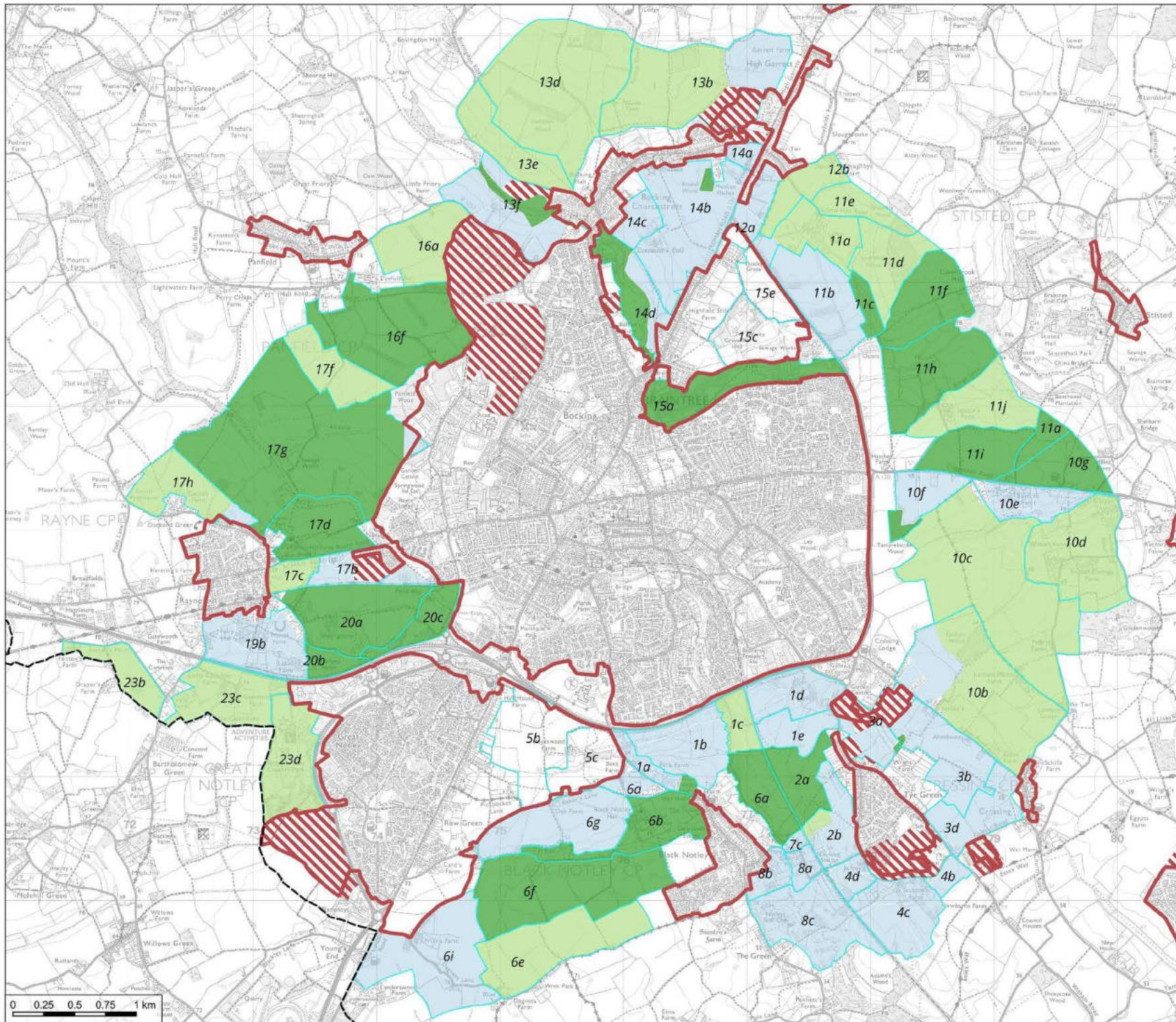
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## Identification of land for further assessment

- 3.27 Figure 4 maps the land around Braintree that has been considered within the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment.
- 3.28 The following areas of land around Braintree's settlement fringe have been excluded from re-assessment:
- Landscape Setting Areas, as identified in the 2007 Settlement Fringe Study, judged to have a Medium, Medium to High or High capacity to accommodate development.
  - Land Parcels, as identified in the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study, judged to have a Medium, Medium-High or High landscape capacity to accommodate development.
  - Flood Zones 2 and 3.
  - Ancient Woodland.
  - Land developed subsequent to the 2015 study, and land with consent for development.
  - Land Parcels with a consistent and uniform character (i.e. without localised variations) that were judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity in the 2015 study which still maintain the same relationship to the settlement.
  - Land distant from Braintree's settlement edge with a strong rural character.
- 3.29 The planning consents in the parish of Cressing have made it necessary to re-evaluate this area. It has also been possible to sub-divide some of the original parcels in this area to consider smaller areas.
- 3.30 Parcels 10e and 10f on Coggeshall Road include a certain amount of existing development as well as a former sand and gravel pit and have therefore been sub-divided for further assessment.
- 3.31 Parcel 11b is now adjacent to the development boundary so is proposed for reassessment. Similarly the configuration of Parcel 12a has been changed by a proposed allocation and the remaining part of the parcel is proposed for reassessment.
- 3.32 Part of parcel 13b has been developed. The parcel was always adjacent to the development boundary, which tends to suggest that the original conclusions are still valid, however a part of the parcel with a closer connection to the existing settlement is proposed for further assessment.
- 3.33 A planning consent has extended development westwards at Bocking Churchstreet and it is therefore necessary to reassess parcel 13f in some detail.
- 3.34 The large allocation to the East of Broad Road has altered the overall shape of the settlement, and it is therefore felt that the land between Broad Road and Bocking Churchstreet should be reappraised in light of these changes.
- 3.35 Parcels 16a and 16f are now adjacent to the development boundary, however the parcels play a key role in separating Braintree from Panfield and it is therefore considered that the capacity of these parcels remains at Medium-Low and Low respectively.
- 3.36 A part of parcel 17h with a closer connection to the existing settlement has been identified for further assessment.
- 3.37 Part of Parcel 17b has been removed due to a planning consent. The remaining part of the parcel includes some existing development, so the capacity of different sub-parcels will be assessed. Parcel 19b includes heterogeneous land uses including existing development, so is proposed for further assessment. Parcels 20a, 20b and 20c were previously found to have low capacity. These parcels form a contiguous piece of landscape which plays an important role in separation. The only part of this area which may have higher capacity is the westernmost portion of Parcel 20a.
- 3.38 The large allocation to the east of Great Notley means that it is necessary to reassess a number of parcels which are now adjacent to the development boundary. Parcels 6i and 6g are large, with no obvious sub-divisions, however they will be reassessed in light of the changes to the development boundary. Existing development has been removed from parcel 6a and the remainder of the parcel will be reassessed. The existing playing field in Parcel 1a is judged to have low capacity but the remainder of the parcel will be reassessed, as will parcel 1b. Parcels 2c and 6a are found within the Brain Valley and separate Black Notley from Tye Green. The findings of the previous study would therefore be unchanged.



**Key**

**Figure 4**

2015 parcels

□ District Boundary

▭ Development boundaries

▨ Planning consents

Braintree

□ 2015 parcels

Stage 1 review

Braintree

□ Areas for detailed assessment

■ Low capacity

■ Medium-Low capacity

Base

OS Map Braintree

Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Stage 1 review

**Braintree Figure 4**

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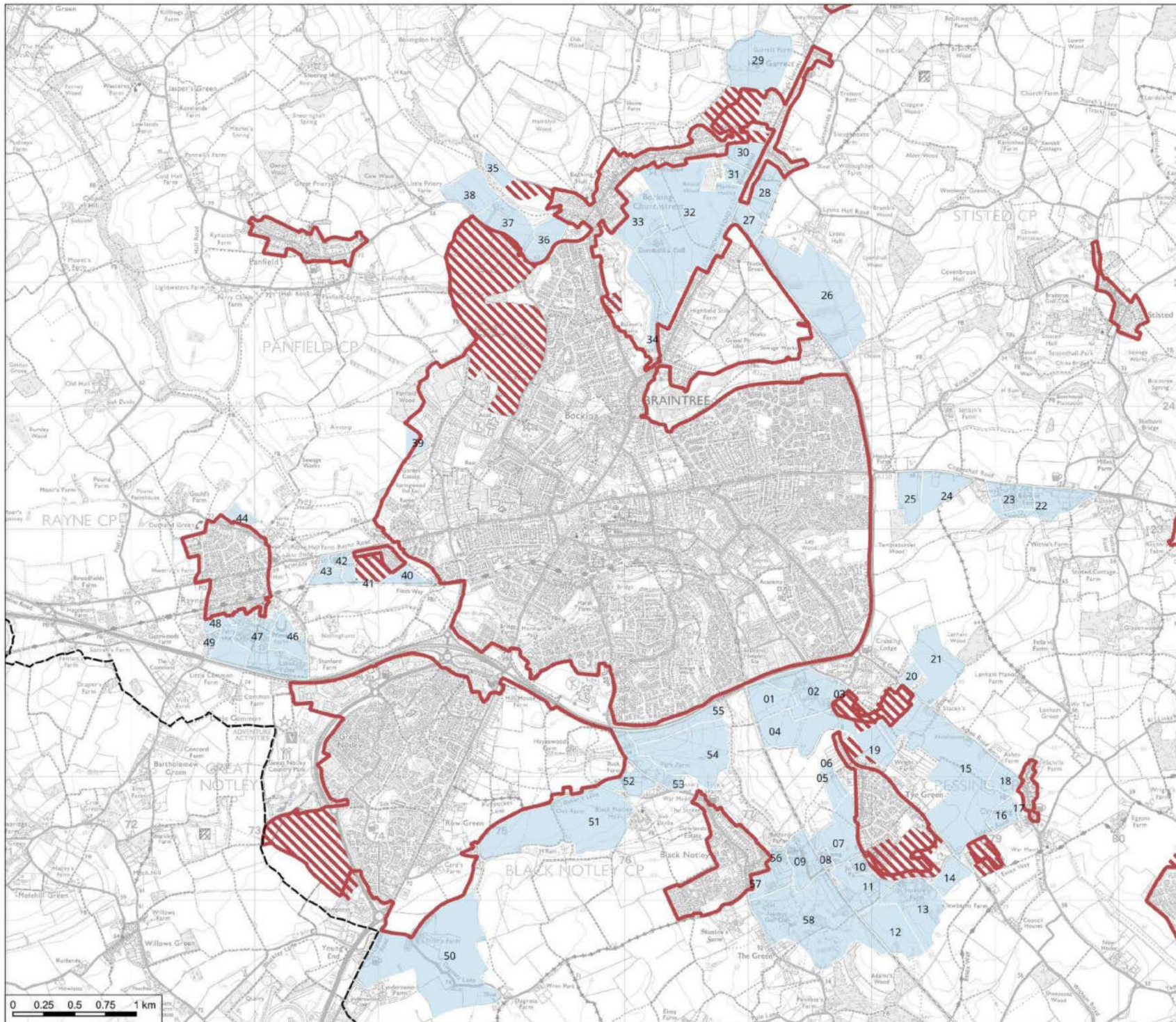


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**Identification of sub-parcels for further assessment**





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3.39 Figure 5 identifies a series of sub-parcels that have been used as the basis for assessment.



**Key**

**Figure 5**

-  District Boundary
-  Development boundaries
-  Planning consents
- Braintree**
-  Sub-parcels
- Base**
- OS Map Braintree
- Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Sub-parcels

**Braintree Figure 5**

Scale: 1:30000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN

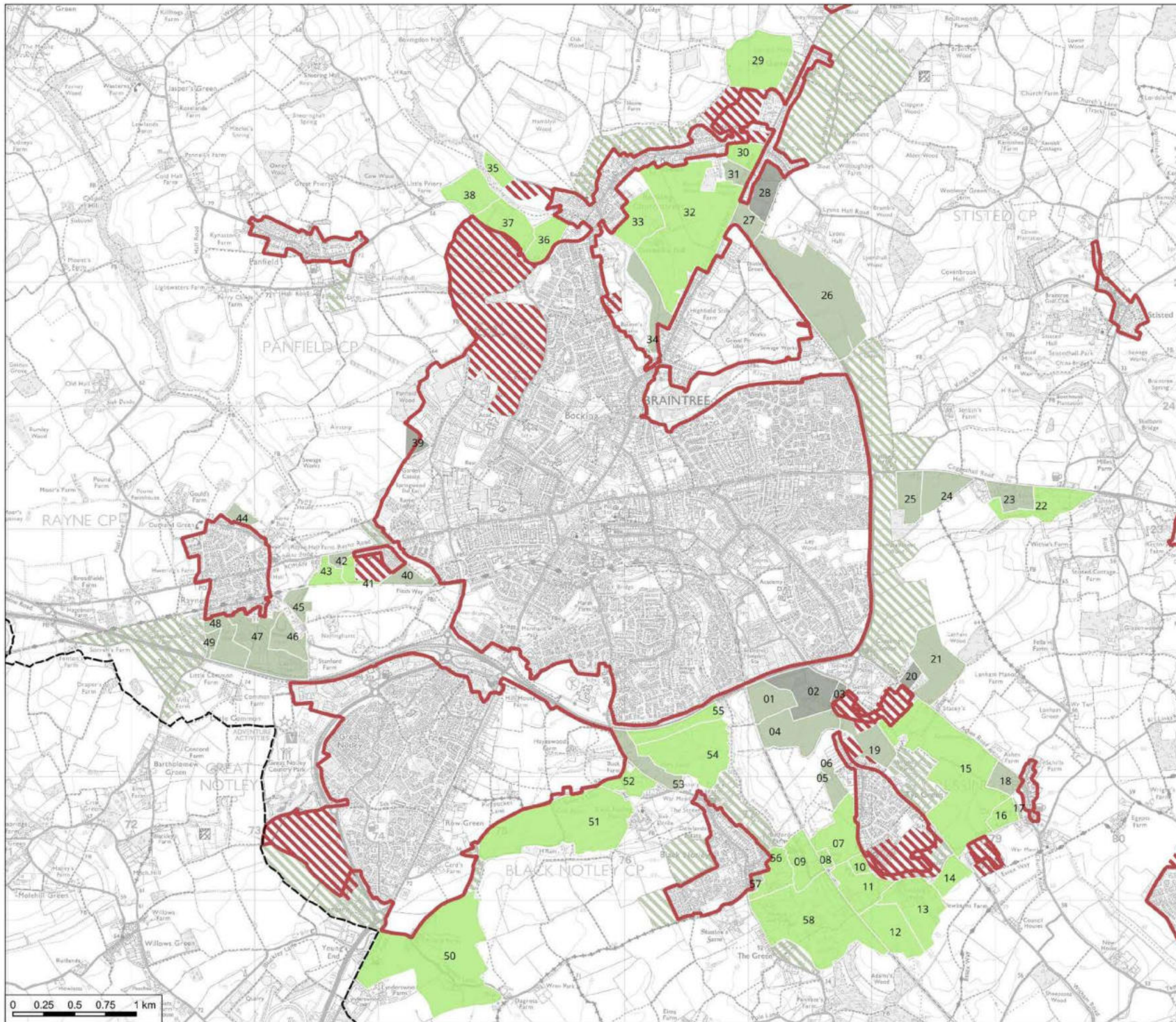


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**Landscape Sensitivity Assessment**








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- 3.40 Figure 6 summarises the findings of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment in relation to Braintree and its surroundings.
- 3.41 The detailed findings of the assessment are reproduced at Appendix 02-01.



**Key**

**Figure 6**

-  District Boundary
-  Development boundaries
-  Planning consents
- Braintree**
-  Medium-High Sensitivity
-  Medium Sensitivity
-  Medium-Low Sensitivity
-  Previously assessed as Medium capacity
- Base**
- OS Map Braintree
- Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Landscape sensitivity

**Braintree Figure 6**

Scale: 1:30000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN



## 4 Coggeshall

### Findings of 2015 Settlement Fringe Study

- 4.1 Figure 1 illustrates the findings of the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study, in relation to Coggeshall.
- 4.2 Further information can be found in *Braintree District Settlement Fringes: Evaluation of Landscape Analysis Study of Coggeshall*, prepared by The Landscape Partnership for Braintree District Council and dated June 2015.
- 4.3 The study reached the following conclusions regarding those parcels that were judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity to accommodate development.

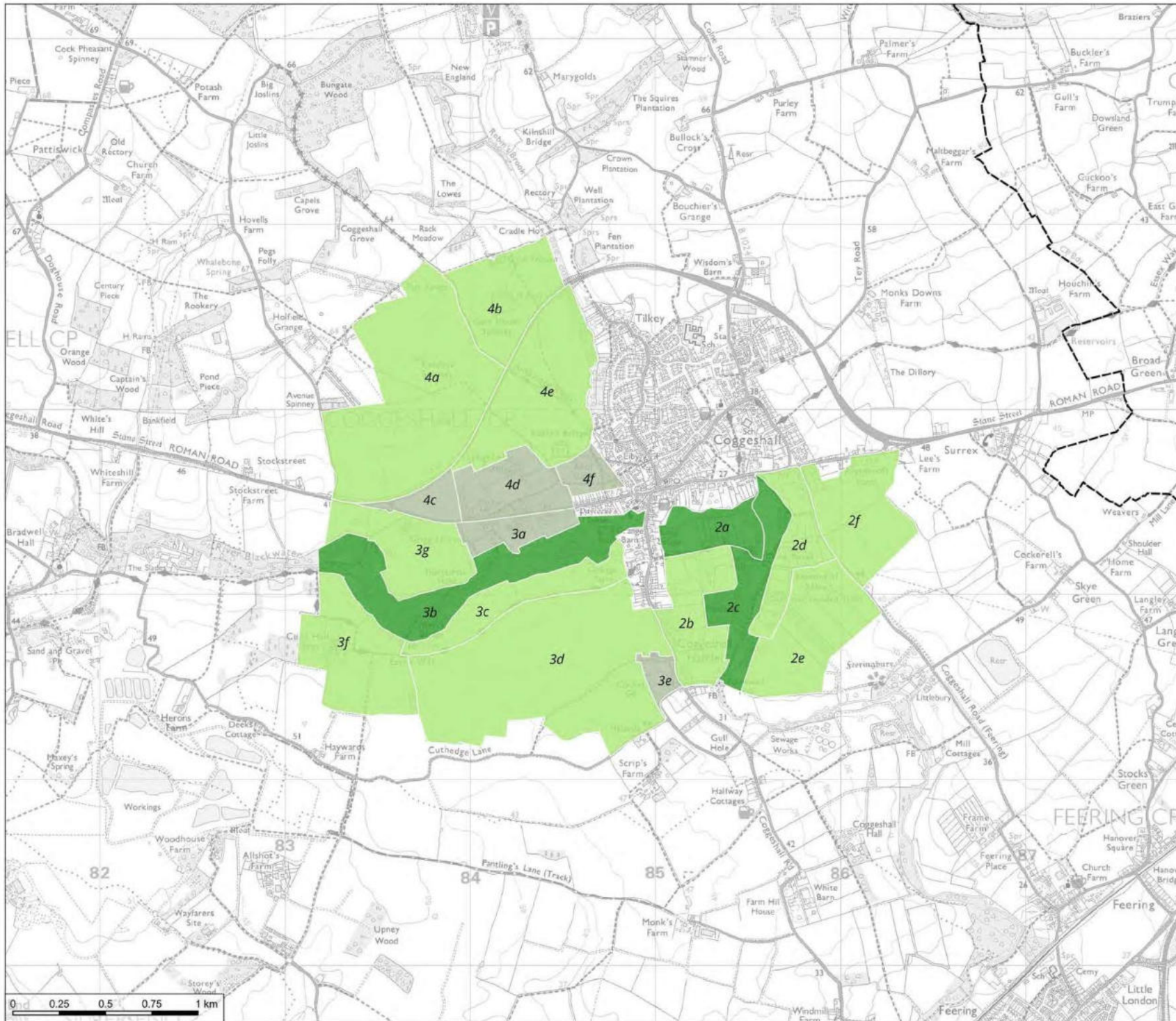
#### **Medium-Low landscape capacity**

- 4.4 The analysis found that areas on the more steeply sloping valley sides of the River Blackwater generally had a Medium-Low capacity to accommodate development. The prominence of these areas on the approach to Coggeshall and in views from the Essex Way path all reduced the landscape's ability to accommodate development in Parcels 3f, 3g and 3c. The reduced connection with the existing settlement edge and the rural context of the parcels also contributed. Parcel 4e was also found to be relatively prominent in views and disconnected from the settlement edge by the vegetated presence of eastern approach to the settlement, with long distance views to the western side of the river valley.
- 4.5 The analysis found that the elevated landscape to the upper valley slopes of the River Blackwater occupied by Parcels 4a, 4b and 3d had an increased prominence on the settlement fringe. The open nature of this farmland with long distant cross valley views and visibility from a wide area reduced the ability of the landscape to accommodate development and reduced the scope for it to be successfully mitigated. These areas were also relatively isolated from the existing settlement edge and contained a network of public rights of way including the promoted Essex Way. The agricultural land framed the western edge of Coggeshall and provided links from the village to informal recreation opportunities in the valley landscape.

- 4.6 To the south-west of Coggeshall, Parcel 2d had a rural character with a tranquil riverside walk including part of the Essex Way path. The area was strongly influenced by the historic fringes of the settlement, with historic field enclosures, Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings. The River Blackwater provided a strong visual feature containing the settlement and reducing visual connections with the urban fabric. These factors reduced the capacity of the parcels to accommodate development despite the framework provided by good quality, dense vegetation.
- 4.7 The impact of potential development on the physical and visual separation between Coggeshall and Coggeshall Hamlet was a further factor that affected the capacity of the landscape to the southern edge of Coggeshall. Development of Parcels 2b and 3d would cause complete coalescence between the village and the hamlet.

#### **Low landscape capacity**

- 4.8 The capacity of the floodplain in Landscape Setting Areas C2 and C3 was found to be consistently Low, due to the good condition and strong character of the valley landscape, and nature of landscape features and visual factors that underpin it. The Local Wildlife Site along the River Blackwater in Parcel 3b was a key wildlife corridor to be preserved.
- 4.9 The area to the south-east of Coggeshall was found to be highly sensitive due to the Conservation Area, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, historic field enclosures and the high quality of the river valley. These factors all contributed to a Low capacity to accommodate development in the historic southern fringe to Coggeshall which was reflected in the low capacity ratings for Parcels 2a and 2c.
- 4.10 Parcel 2e lay beyond this to the south-east where the presence of the River Blackwater and the historic river valley corridor physically and visually isolated the parcel from the settlement fringe.



**Key**

**Figure 1**

**Coggeshall**

- Low capacity
- Medium-Low capacity
- Medium capacity
- District Boundary

**Base**

OS Map Braintree  
Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Findings of 2015 study

**Coggeshall Figure 1**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: S.JN

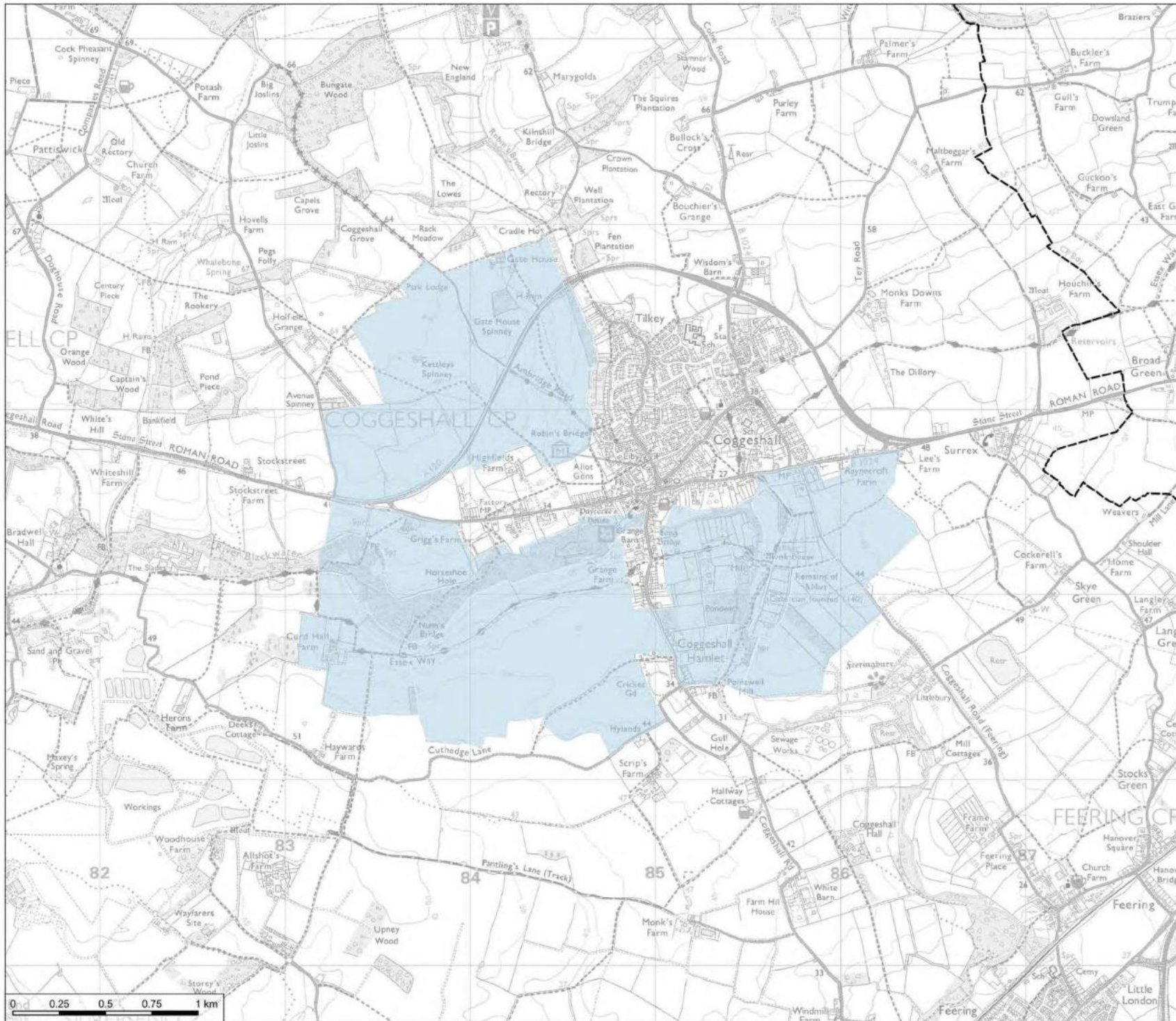


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**Study area**

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- 4.11 Figure 2 maps those parcels from the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study which were judged to have Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity. These parcels form the study area for the current study.



**Key**

**Figure 2**

**Coggeshall**

Medium-Low and Low capacity parcels

District Boundary

**Base**

OS Map Braintree

Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Study area

**Coggeshall Figure 2**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: S.JN



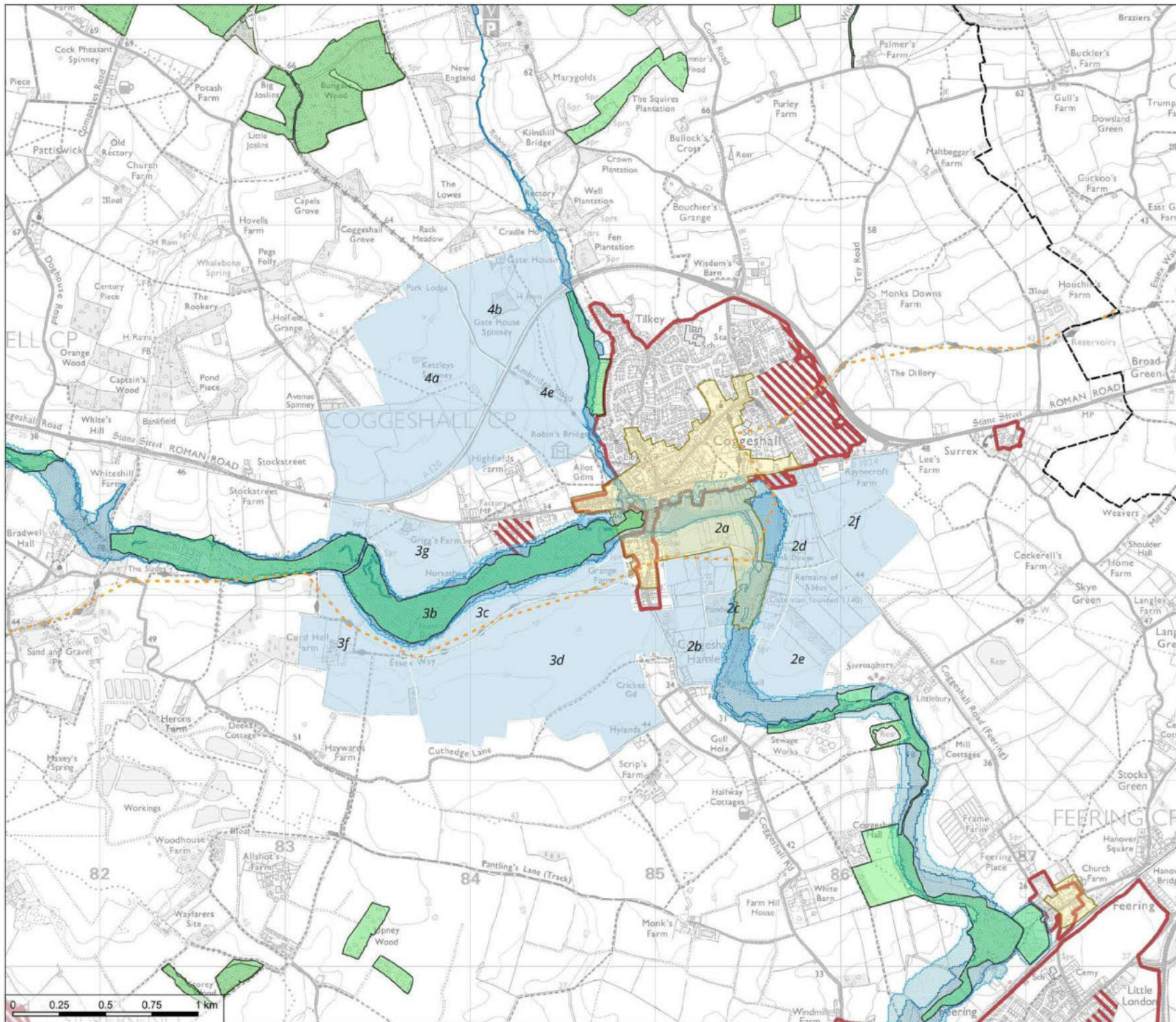
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### **Subsequent development and constraints**

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- 4.12 Figure 3 maps those parcels from the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity, overlaid with landscape-related constraints that would preclude residential development. The figure also shows areas of land that have gained planning permission since 2015.



**Key**

**Figure 3**

- Long Distance Footpaths
- Ancient Woodlands
- Local Wildlife Sites
- Conservation Areas
- Flood zone 3
- Flood zone 2
- Planning consents
- Development boundaries
- District Boundary
- Coggeshall**
- Medium-Low and Low capacity parcels
- Base**
- OS Map Braintree
- Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Constraints

**Coggeshall Figure 3**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN

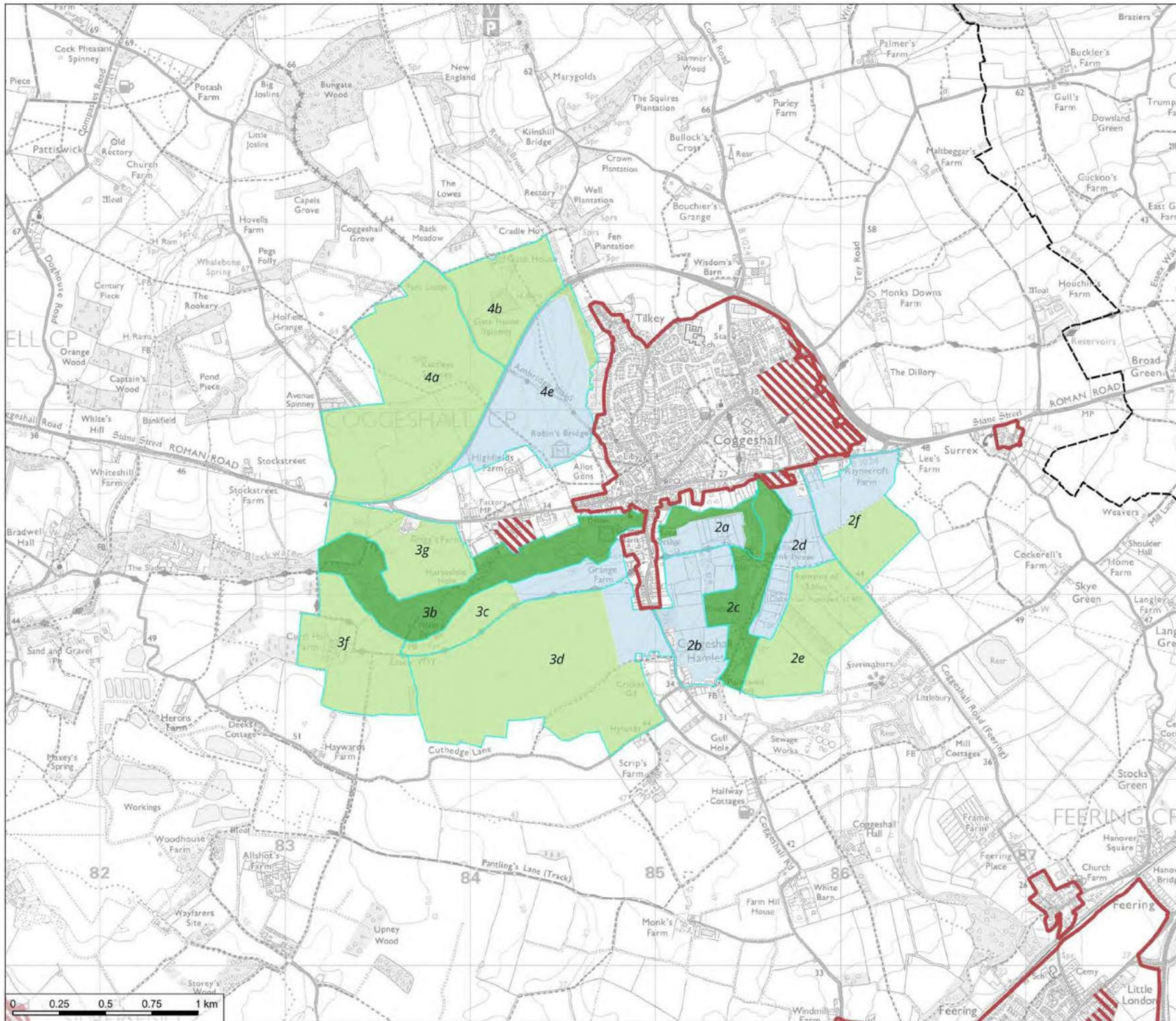


## Identification of land for further assessment

- 4.13 Figure 4 maps the land around Coggeshall that has been considered within the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment.
- 4.14 The following areas of land around Coggeshall's settlement fringe have been excluded from re-assessment:
- Landscape Setting Areas judged to have a Medium, Medium to High, or High capacity to accommodate residential development in the 2007 Settlement Fringe Study.
  - Land Parcels judged to have a Medium, Medium-High or High landscape capacity to accommodate residential development in the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study.
  - Flood Zones 2 and 3.
  - Ancient Woodland.
  - Land developed subsequent to the 2015 study, and land with consent for development.
  - Land Parcels with a consistent and uniform character (i.e. without localised variations) that were judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity in the 2015 study which still maintain the same relationship to the settlement.
  - Land distant from Coggeshall's settlement edge with a strong rural character.
- 4.15 The river valley is constrained by flood risk and by heritage designations including a Conservation Area and Listed Buildings.
- 4.16 The change since 2015 has been concentrated on the eastern edge of the village and has not affected the Medium-Low and Low capacity parcels.
- 4.17 The A12 forms a strong barrier to development and Parcels which lie beyond the A12 are therefore considered to still have Medium-Low capacity. Parcel 4e has been divided and the capacity of the arable land will be reappraised.
- 4.18 More remote parcels continue to have Medium-Low capacity on account of their location. The potential of smaller sub-parcels which have a closer relationship to the settlement will however be considered. The village of Coggeshall lies on the northern side of the river, with much more limited development to the

south. The potential of areas to the south of the river is nonetheless explored as part of this assessment.

- 4.19 The parts of Parcel 2f with a closer connection to the existing settlement are considered in terms of their potentially higher landscape capacity.



**Key**

**Figure 4**

**2015 parcels**

□ District Boundary

▭ Development boundaries

▨ Planning consents

**Coggeshall**

□ 2015 parcels

**Stage 1 review**

**Coggeshall**

□ Areas for detailed assessment

■ Low capacity

■ Medium-Low capacity

**Base**

OS Map Braintree

Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

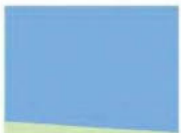
**Stage 1 review**

**Coggeshall Figure 4**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

March 2025

Drawn: SM Checked: S.JN

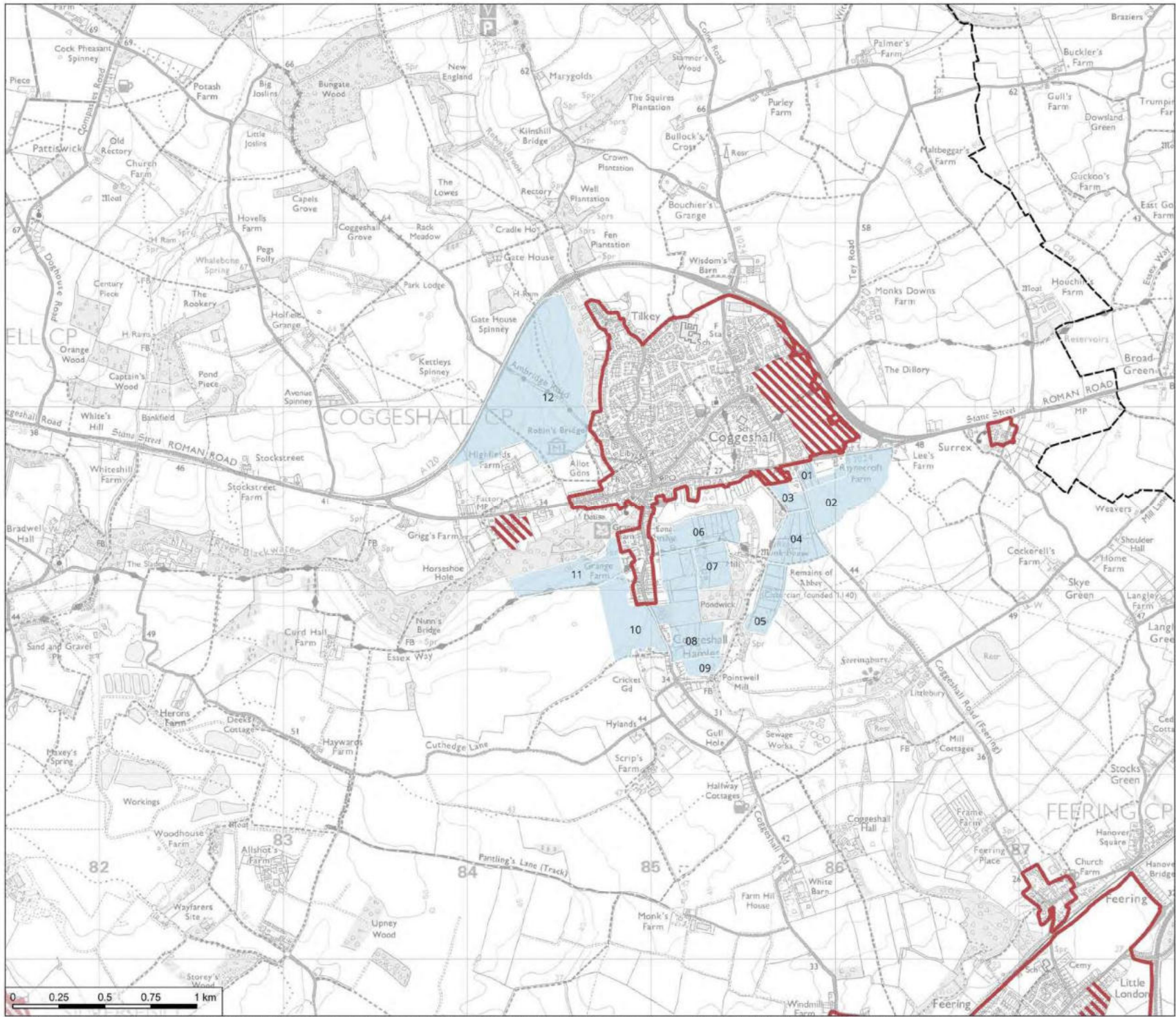


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**Identification of sub-parcels for further assessment**

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4.20 Figure 5 identifies a series of sub-parcels that have been used as the basis for assessment.



- Key**
- Figure 5**
- District Boundary
  - Development boundaries
  - Planning consents
- Coggeshall**
- Sub-parcels
- Base**
- OS Map Braintree  
Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Sub-parcels

**Coggeshall Figure 5**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: S.JN

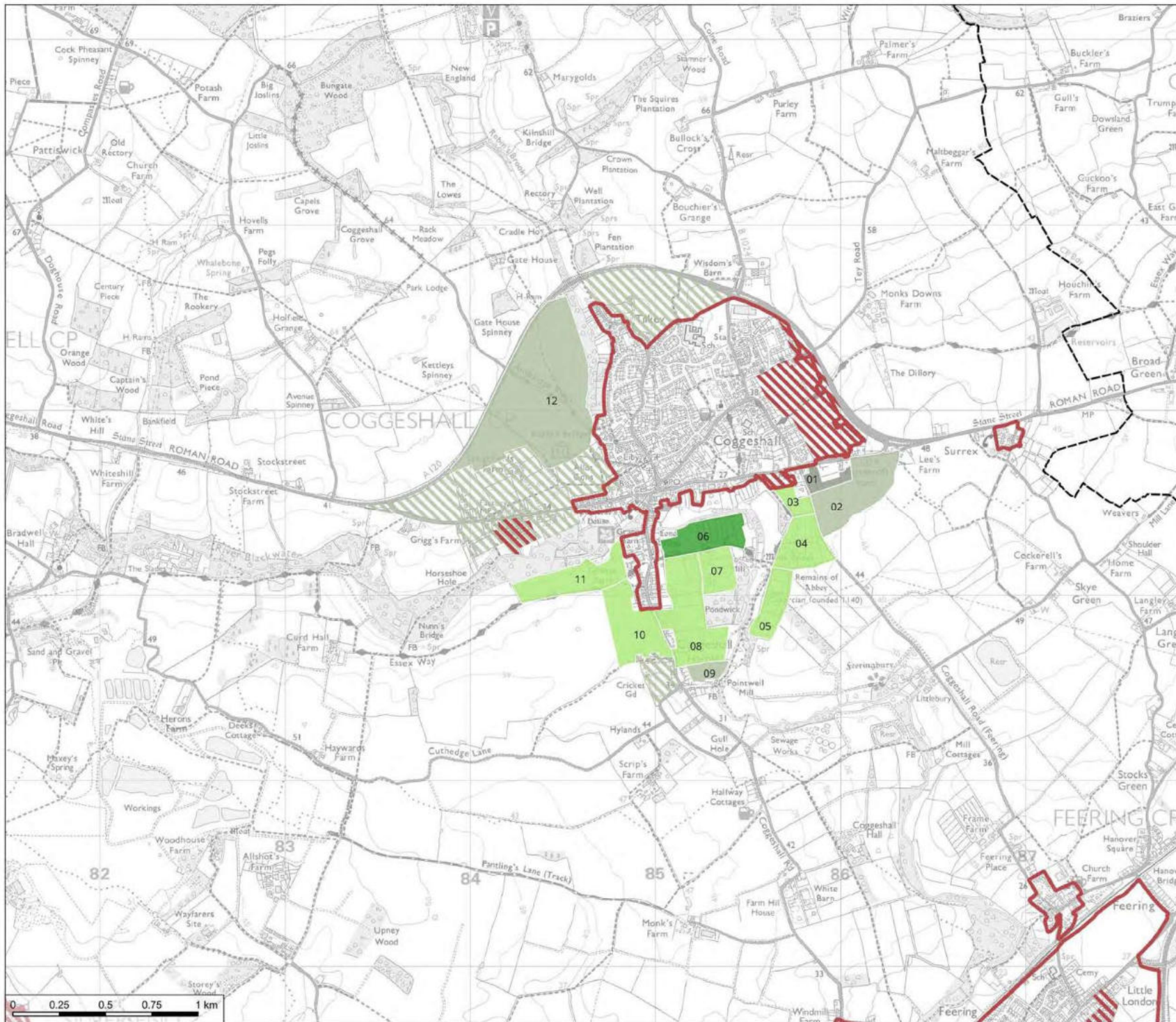


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**Landscape Sensitivity Assessment**

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- 4.21 Figure 6 summarises the findings of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment in relation to Coggeshall and its surroundings.
- 4.22 The detailed findings of the assessment are reproduced at Appendix 02-02.



**Key**

**Figure 6**

- District Boundary
- Development boundaries
- Planning consents
- Coggeshall**
- High Sensitivity
- Medium-High Sensitivity
- Medium Sensitivity
- Medium-Low Sensitivity
- Previously assessed as Medium capacity

**Base**

OS Map Braintree  
Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Landscape sensitivity

**Coggeshall Figure 6**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: S.JN



## 5 Earls Colne and White Colne

### Findings of 2015 Settlement Fringe Study

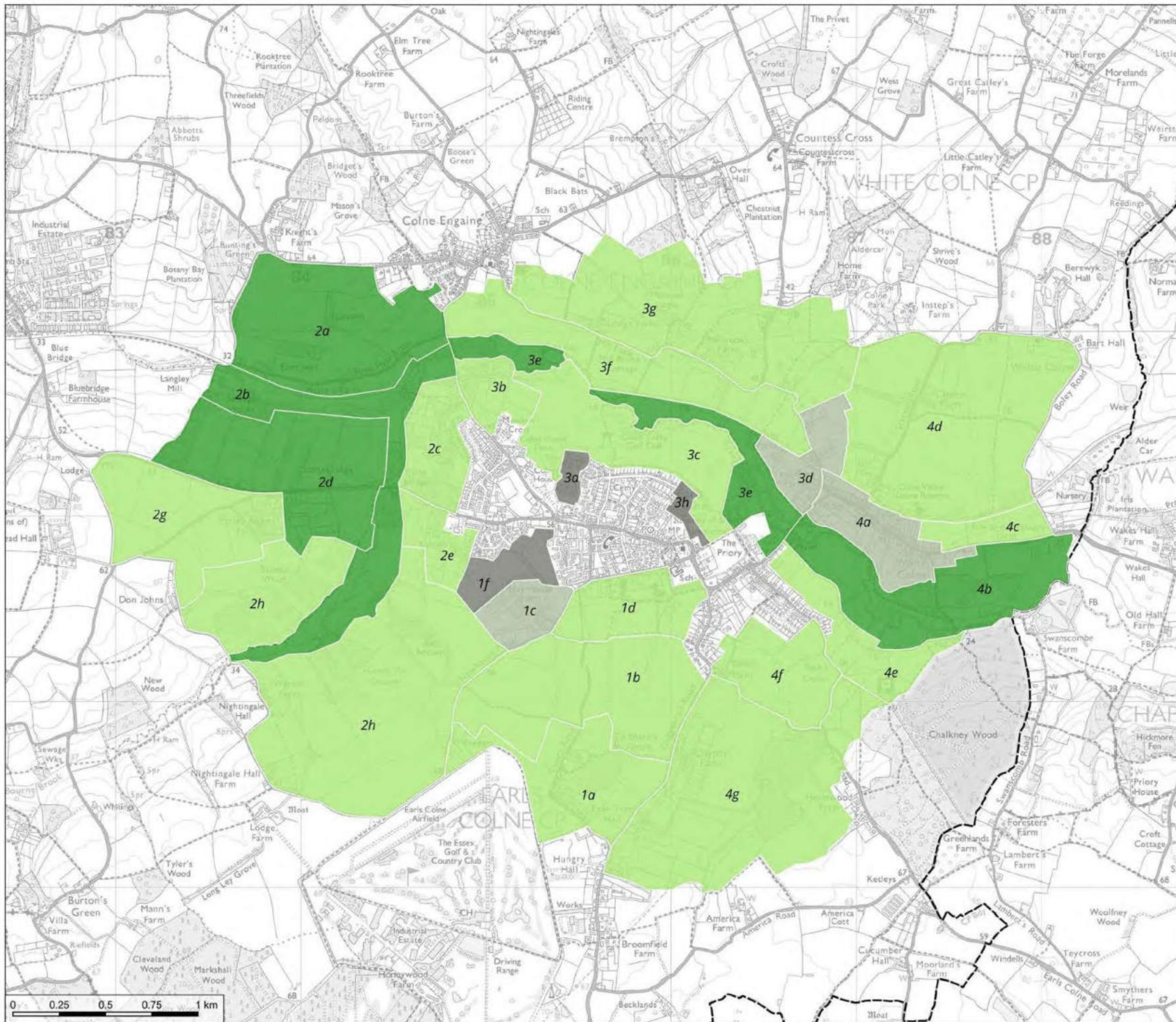
- 5.1 Figure 1 illustrates the findings of the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study.
- 5.2 Further information can be found in *Braintree District Settlement Fringes: Evaluation of Landscape Analysis Study of Halstead*, prepared by The Landscape Partnership for Braintree District Council and dated June 2015.
- 5.3 The study reached the following conclusions regarding those parcels that were judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity to accommodate development.

#### Medium-Low landscape capacity

- 5.4 The analysis found that the landscape around the main fringes of Earls Colne generally had a Medium-Low capacity to accommodate development, given the more elevated ground away from the valley landscape of the River Colne and Bourne Brook and corresponding visibility in both close and distant views.
- 5.5 The presence of landscape designations such as the County Wildlife Sites on the valley landscape of the Bourne Brook south-west of the village, historic parkland associated with Colne Park in the north-eastern corner, the tranquil nature of the landscape such as at Mill Brook on the northern slopes of the Colne, and the presence of numerous paths such as those in the vicinity of the dismantled Colne valley railway that extended as a green corridor across many of the parcels.
- 5.6 The commercial and leisure activity associated with the former USAAF WWII airfield and Earls Colne Business Park to the south of Landscape Setting Area E1 had no effect on the evaluation, due to the distance from the southern fringes of the settlement, and the screening effect of hedges and woodland blocks within Landscape Setting Area E1 and on the boundaries of the former airfield.

#### Low landscape capacity

- 5.7 The capacity of the floodplain in Landscape Setting Areas E2, E3 and E4 was consistently Low, due to the good condition and strong character of the valley landscape, and nature of landscape features and visual factors which underpin it.
- 5.8 The impact of potential development on the physical and visual separation between Halstead and the adjacent settlements of Sible Hedingham and Earls Colne up and downstream by approximately 3km respectively, was a factor that as found to affect the capacity of the floodplain and valley slopes on the upper reaches of the River Colne.
- 5.9 Parcels 2b, 3e and 4b based on the valley floor of the River Colne and Bourne Brook, together with Parcels 2a and 2d on the valley slopes upstream of the village, were found to have a Low landscape capacity. These areas were isolated from or had only limited associations with the existing urban fabric, and the effect of development would be to compromise the separation between the adjacent settlements. The potential effect of coalescence was evident in the floodplain and lower valley slopes between Earls Colne and the minor village of White Colne that straddled the river on the northern bank. White Colne was once part of the same parish and was found to have a distinct village core in which properties were arranged around the triangular village green; landscape characteristics that which would be affected by coalescence between the settlements.



**Key**

**Figure 1**

Earls Colne

- Low capacity
- Medium-Low capacity
- Medium capacity
- Medium-High capacity

District Boundary

Base

OS Map Braintree

Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Findings of 2015 study

**Earls Colne Figure 1**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: S.JN

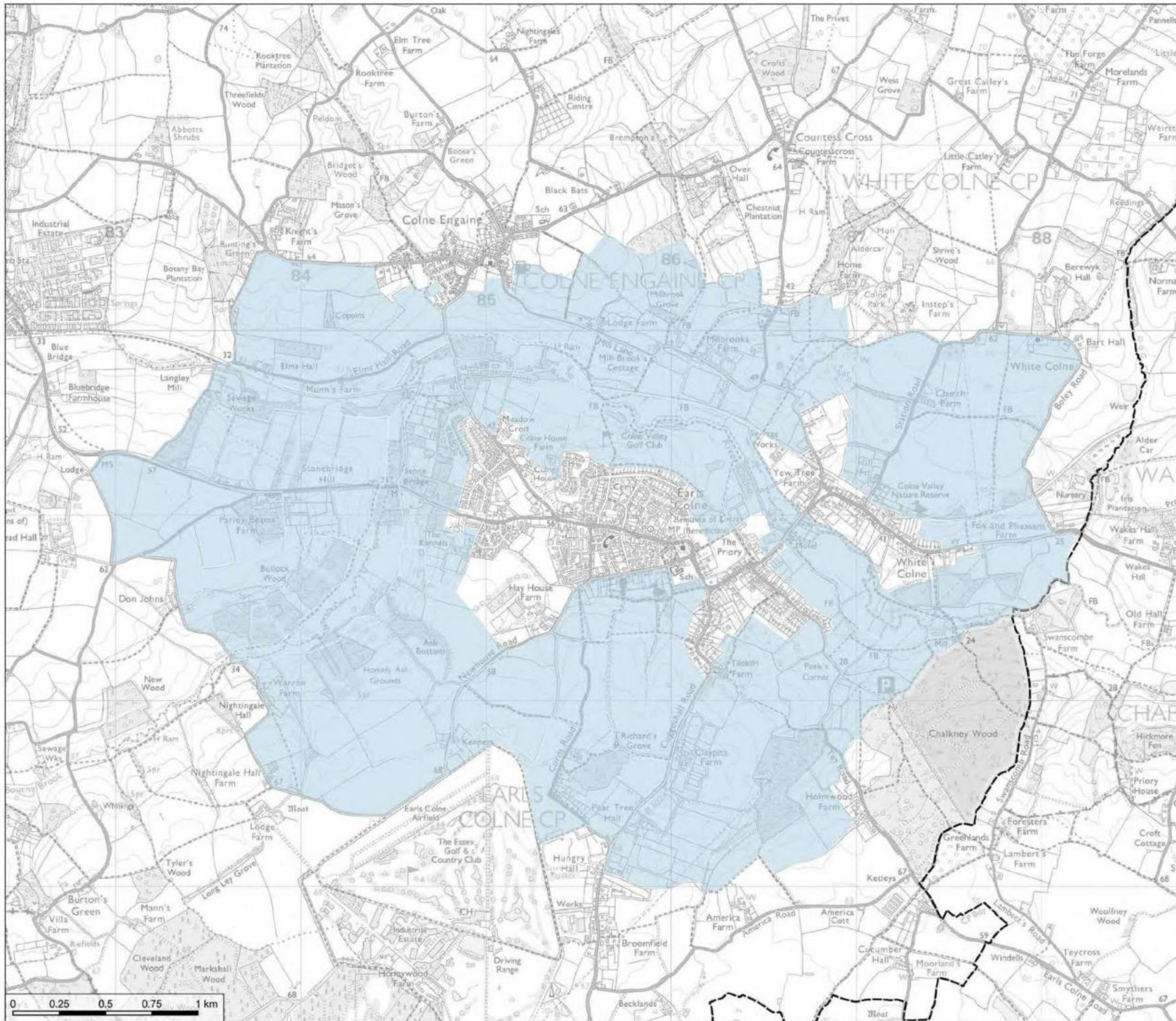


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**Study area**

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- 5.10 Figure 2 maps those parcels from the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study which were judged to have Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity. These parcels form the study area for the current study.



**Key**

**Figure 2**

Earls Colne

Medium-Low and Low capacity parcels

District Boundary

Base

OS Map Braintree

Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Study area

**Earls Colne Figure 2**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: S.J.N



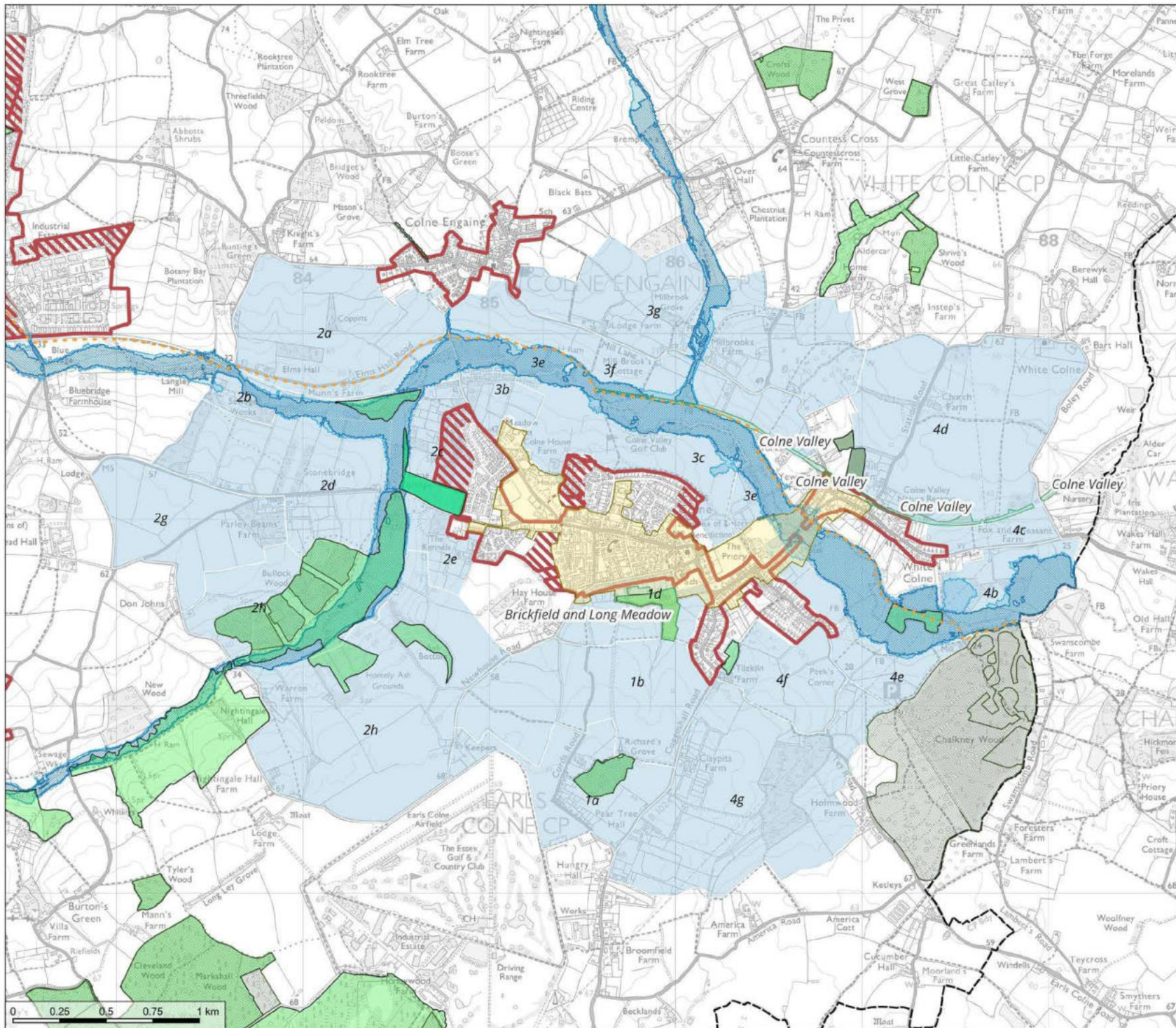
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**Subsequent development and constraints**

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- 5.11 Figure 3 maps those parcels from the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity, overlaid with landscape-related constraints that would preclude residential development. The figure also shows areas of land that have gained planning permission since 2015.



**Key**

**Figure 3**

- Long Distance Footpaths
- Local Nature Reserves
- Ancient Woodlands
- Local Wildlife Sites
- Conservation Areas
- Millennium Greens
- Doorstep Greens
- Flood zone 3
- Flood zone 2
- Planning consents
- Development boundaries
- District Boundary
- Earls Colne**
- Medium-Low and Low capacity parcels
- Base**
- OS Map Braintree
- Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Constraints

**Earls Colne Figure 3**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

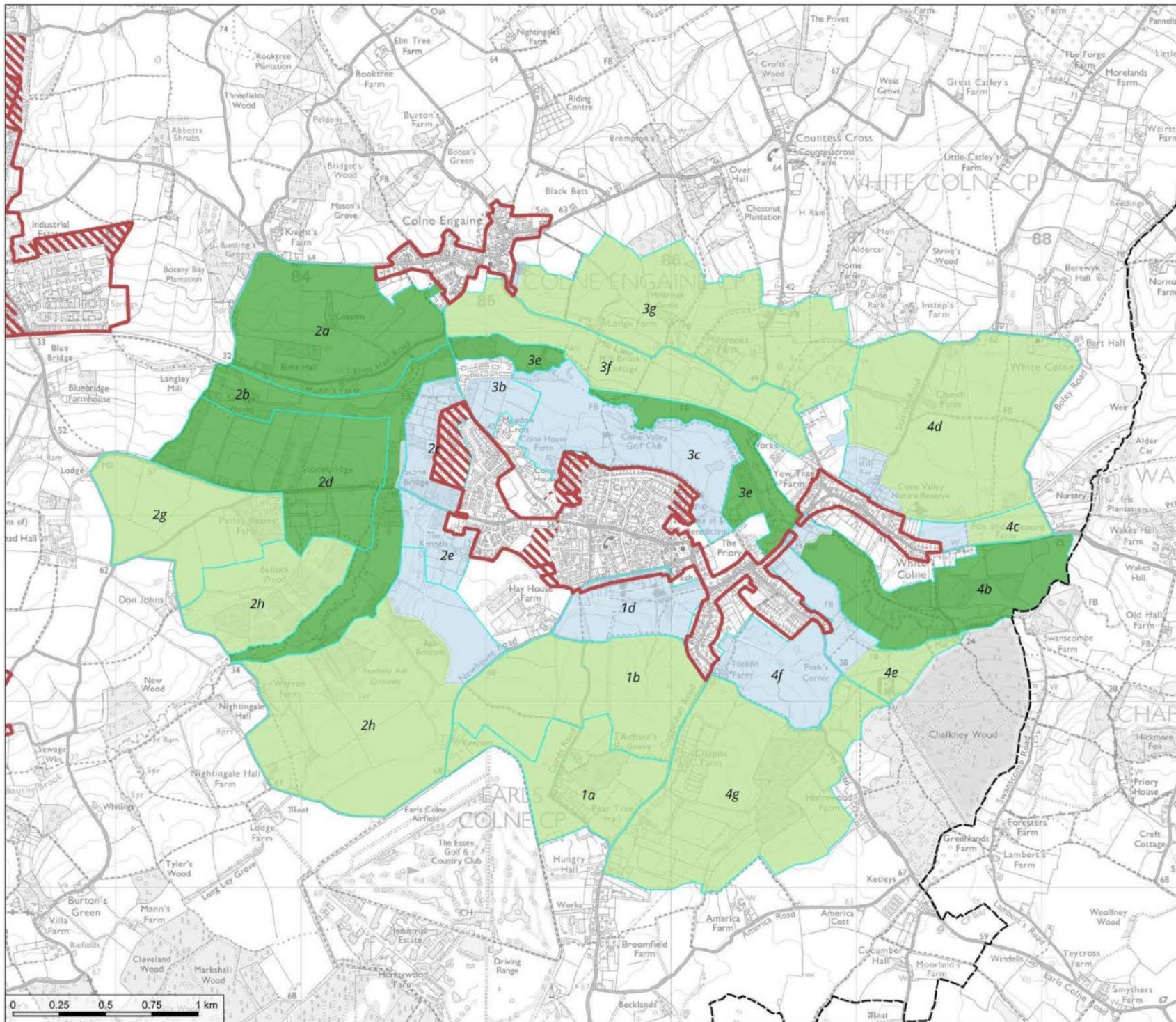
Drawn: SM Checked: SJN



## **Identification of land for further assessment**

- 5.12 Figure 4 maps the land around Earls Colne and White Colne that has been considered within the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment.
- 5.13 The following areas of land around Earls Colne and White Colne's settlement fringe have been excluded from re-assessment:
- Landscape Setting Areas judged to have a Medium, Medium to High, or High capacity to accommodate residential development in the 2007 Settlement Fringe Study.
  - Land Parcels judged to have a Medium, Medium-High or High landscape capacity to accommodate residential development in the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study.
  - Flood Zones 2 and 3.
  - Ancient Woodland.
  - Land developed subsequent to the 2015 study, and land with consent for development.
  - Land Parcels with a consistent and uniform character (i.e. without localised variations) that were judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity in the 2015 study which still maintain the same relationship to the settlement.
  - Land distant from Earls Colne's settlement edge with a strong rural character.
- 5.14 Subsequent planning consents have occurred in and around the settlement of Earls Colne. The main parcel to be affected by planning consents is Parcel 2a. The remaining part of Parcel 2a will therefore be reassessed in light of the changes to the development boundary.
- 5.15 The Colne Valley forms a strong feature within the landscape. The valley floor is constrained by flood risk and has Low landscape capacity. More remote parcels were assessed as having Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity. Any development within these parcels would be remote from the main settlement and it is therefore considered that these parcels continue to have Low and Medium-Low capacity. The only exception to this is a small parcel of land adjacent to Colne Engaine which potentially has higher capacity. Parcels with a closer relationship to the existing settlement have been broken down into

smaller assessment areas to determine if any parts of these parcels have higher capacity. Parcel 3c however has a uniform character and is therefore assessed as a whole.



**Key**

**Figure 4**

**2015 parcels**

District Boundary

Development boundaries

Planning consents

**Earls Colne**

2015 parcels

**Stage 1 review**

**Earls Colne**

Areas for detailed assessment

Low capacity

Medium-Low capacity

**Base**

OS Map Braintree

Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Stage 1 review

**Earls Colne Figure 4**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN



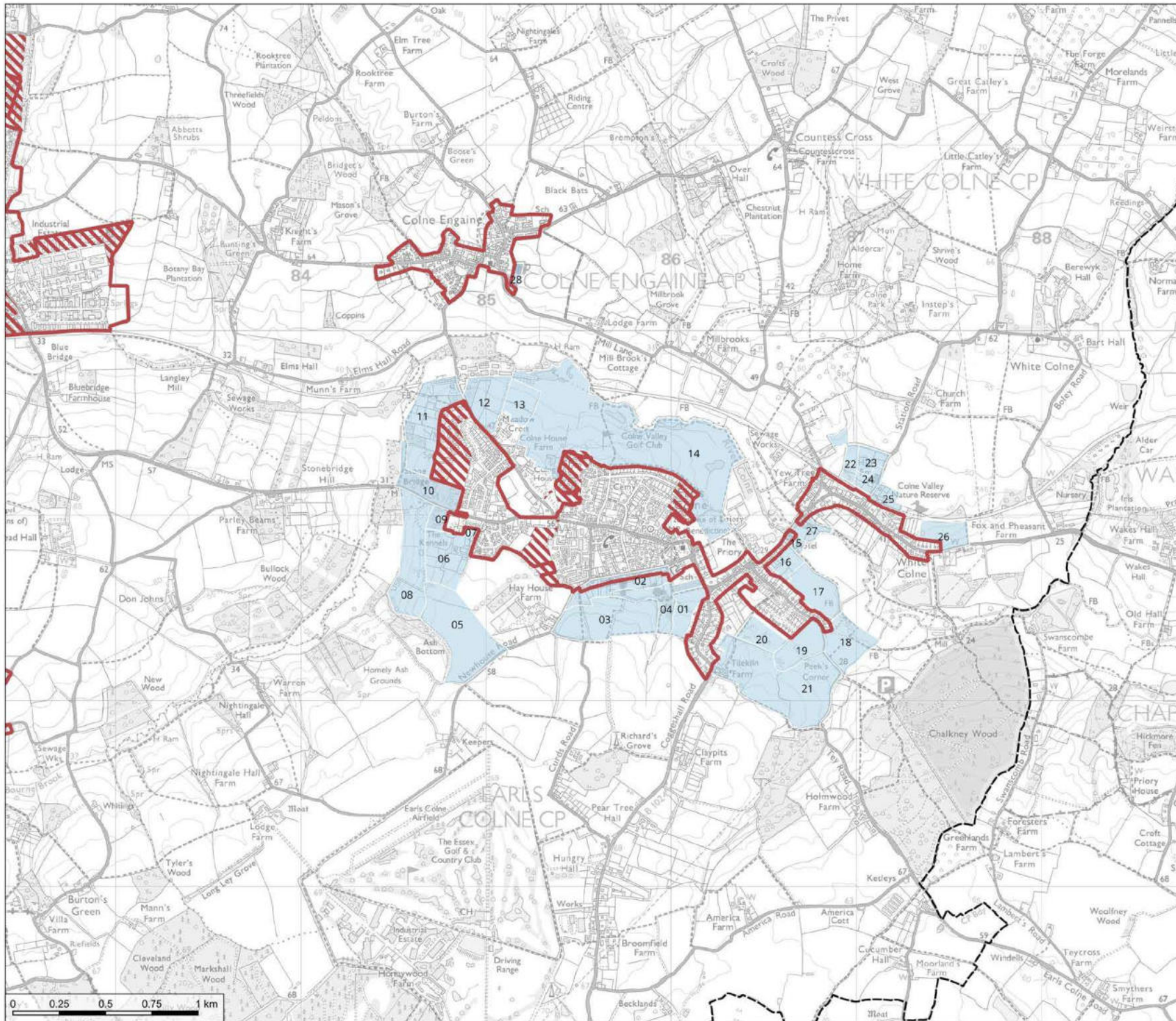
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**Identification of sub-parcels for further assessment**

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- 5.16 Figure 5 identifies a series of sub-parcels that have been used as the basis for assessment.



**Key**

**Figure 5**

- District Boundary
- Development boundaries
- Planning consents

**Earls Colne**

- Sub-parcels

**Base**

- OS Map Braintree
- Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Sub-parcels

**Earls Colne Figure 5**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN

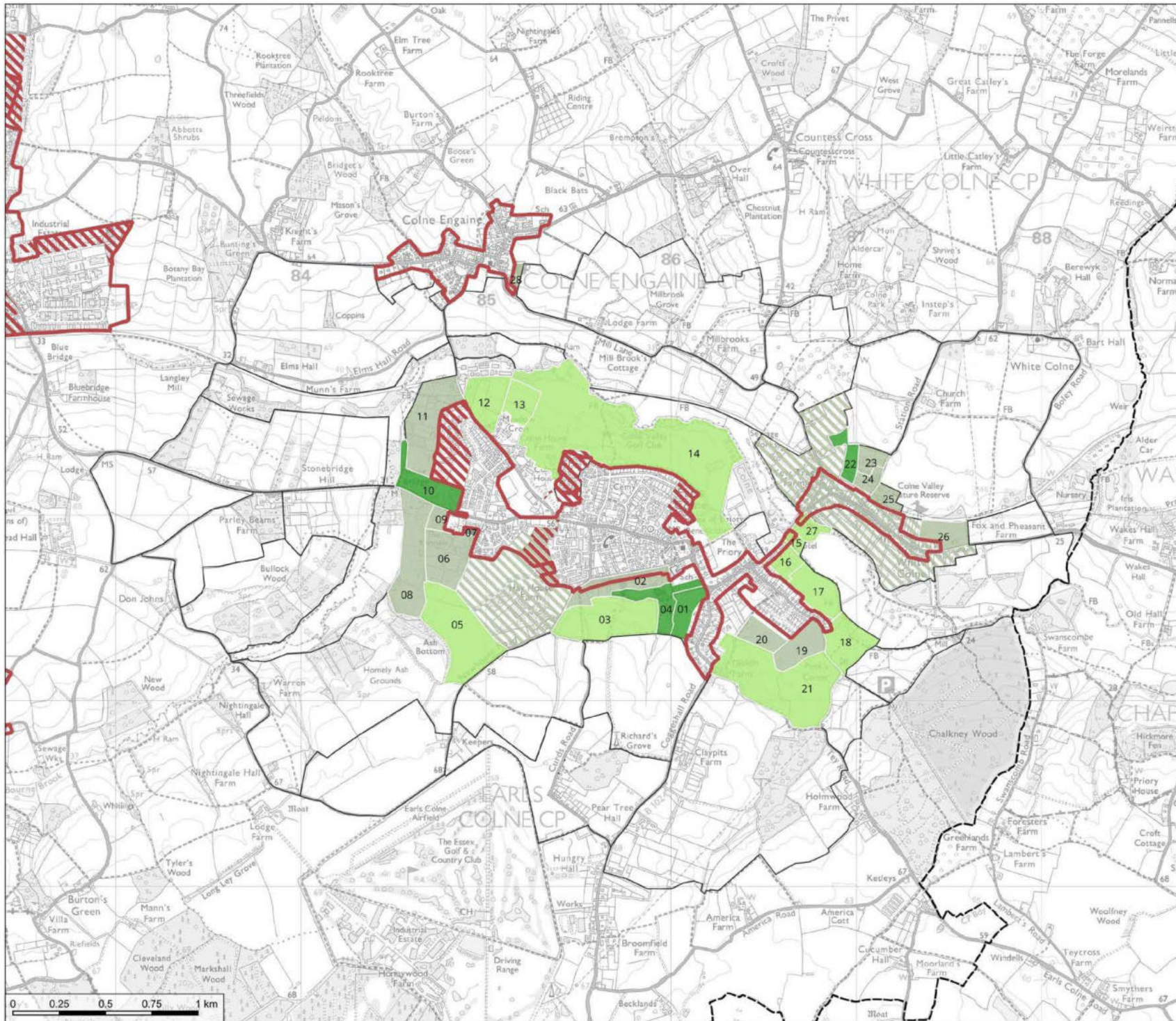


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**Landscape Sensitivity Assessment**









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- 5.17 Figure 6 summarises the findings of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment in relation to Earls Colne and White Colne.
- 5.18 The detailed findings of the assessment are reproduced at Appendix 02-03.



**Key**

**Figure 6**

-  District Boundary
  -  Development boundaries
  -  Planning consents
- Earls Colne**
-  High Sensitivity
  -  Medium-High Sensitivity
  -  Medium Sensitivity
  -  Medium-Low Sensitivity
  -  Previously assessed as Medium capacity
- Base**
- OS Map Braintree
  - Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Landscape sensitivity

**Earls Colne Figure 6**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN



## 6 Halstead

### Findings of 2015 Settlement Fringe Study

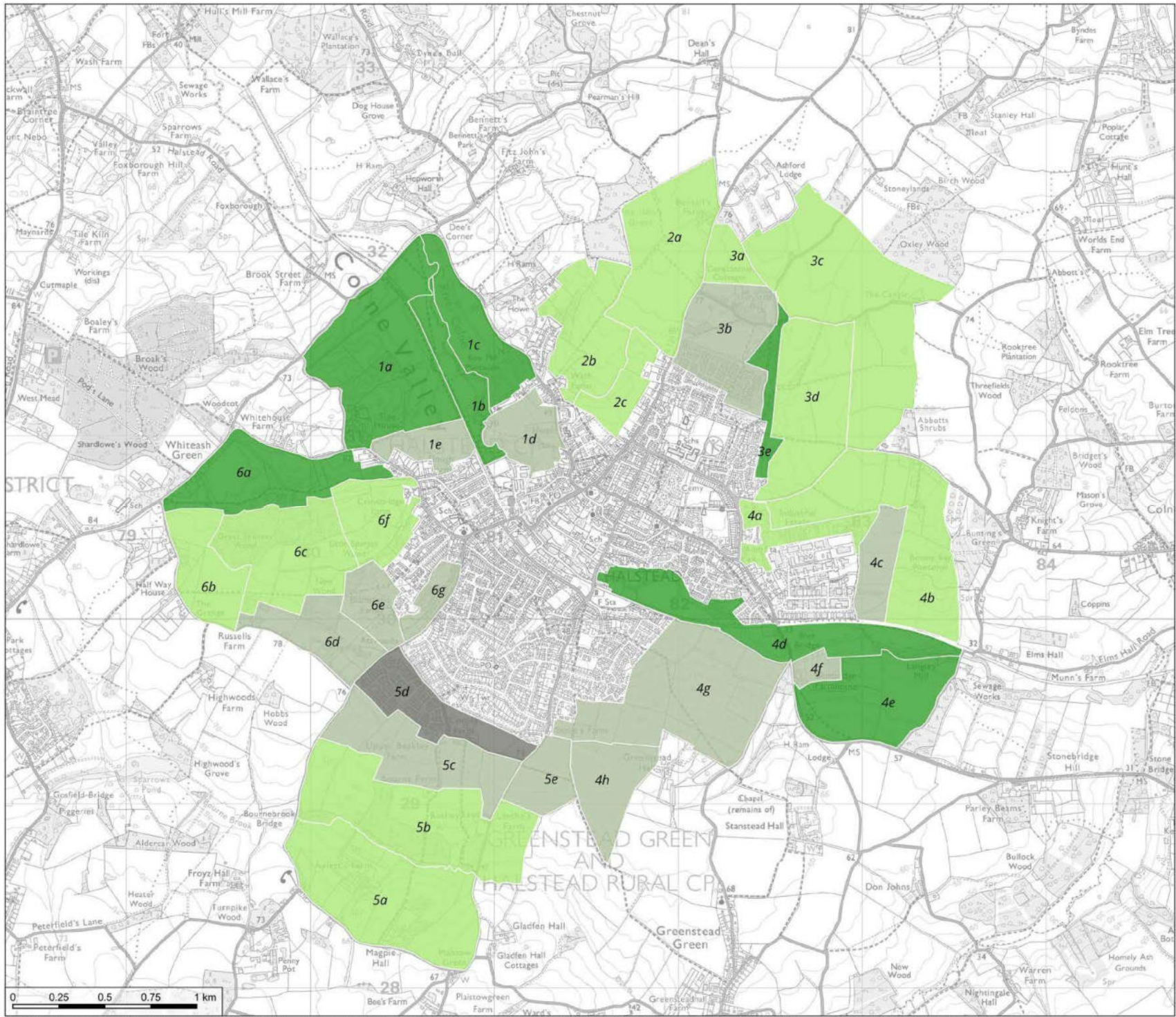
- 6.1 Figure 1 illustrates the findings of the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study in relation to Halstead.
- 6.2 Further information can be found in *Braintree District Settlement Fringes: Evaluation of Landscape Analysis Study of Halstead*, prepared by The Landscape Partnership for Braintree District Council and dated June 2015.
- 6.3 The study reached the following conclusions regarding those parcels that were judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity to accommodate development.

#### Medium-Low landscape capacity

- 6.4 The analysis found that the landscape around the more distant fringes of Halstead had Medium-Low capacity to accommodate development, given the more elevated ground away from the valley landscape of the River Colne and Bourne Brook and corresponding visibility in both close and distant views.
- 6.5 The combination of a sense of a distinctly rural farmland landscape, a sense of remoteness and tranquillity away from the busy road corridors, the presence of an intact network of both pre-18th century and 18th-19th century field enclosure, and a robust framework of boundary hedgerows and woodland blocks reduced the capacity of the landscape to absorb new residential or employment development without significantly affecting these key characteristics.
- 6.6 The presence of landscape designations such as the County Wildlife Sites at Great Spansey Wood in Parcel 6c, numerous Listed Buildings set within farmsteads in the gently undulating ground around the Bourne Brook valley in Parcels 5a and 5b, the tranquil nature of the landscape at The Cangle in the north-eastern corner of Parcel 3c, and numerous paths such as those in the vicinity of Wash Farm and Fitz John Grove in Parcels 2a and 2b, further to reduces the capacity of the landscape to absorb new built development.

#### Low landscape capacity

- 6.7 The capacity of the floodplain and lower valley slopes associated with the River Colne and associated minor stream valleys in Landscape Setting Areas 1, 3, 4 and 6 was found to be consistently Low, due to the good condition and strong character of the valley landscape, and nature of landscape features and visual factors which underpin it.
- 6.8 The impact of potential development on the physical and visual separation between Halstead and the adjacent settlements of Sible Hedingham and Earls Colne up and downstream by approximately 3km respectively, was a factor that affected the capacity of the floodplain and valley slopes on the upper reaches of the River Colne.
- 6.9 Parcels 1b and 4d, which were based on the valley floor of the River Colne, together with Parcels 1a and 1c on the valley slopes upstream of the town and Parcel 4e downstream of the town, were found to have Low landscape capacity. The open character of the valley slopes results in clear visibility across the parcels to the valley floor below and the plateau landscape at the fringes of the setting areas. The effect of potential development would be to affect the setting of the river valley landscape; built form would be both prominent in the landscape and compromise the separation between the adjacent settlements.
- 6.10 The potential effect of coalescence on the capacity of the landscape to accommodate development is also evident in the stream valley landscape that stretches from the north-western fringes of the town towards Whiteash Green. The gently falling valley slopes to either side of the valley are visible from the Halstead Road, around which properties are arranged in a linear fashion on the northern boundary of the setting area. Development would affect the distinctly rural characteristics of the parcel, and have only limited associations with the existing urban fabric, with the Halstead skyline, which would be only visible in distant views along the length of the stream valley.



**Key**

**Figure 1**

**Halstead**

- Low capacity
- Medium-Low capacity
- Medium capacity
- Medium-High capacity

District Boundary

Base

OS Map Braintree

Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Findings of 2015 study

**Halstead Figure 1**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN



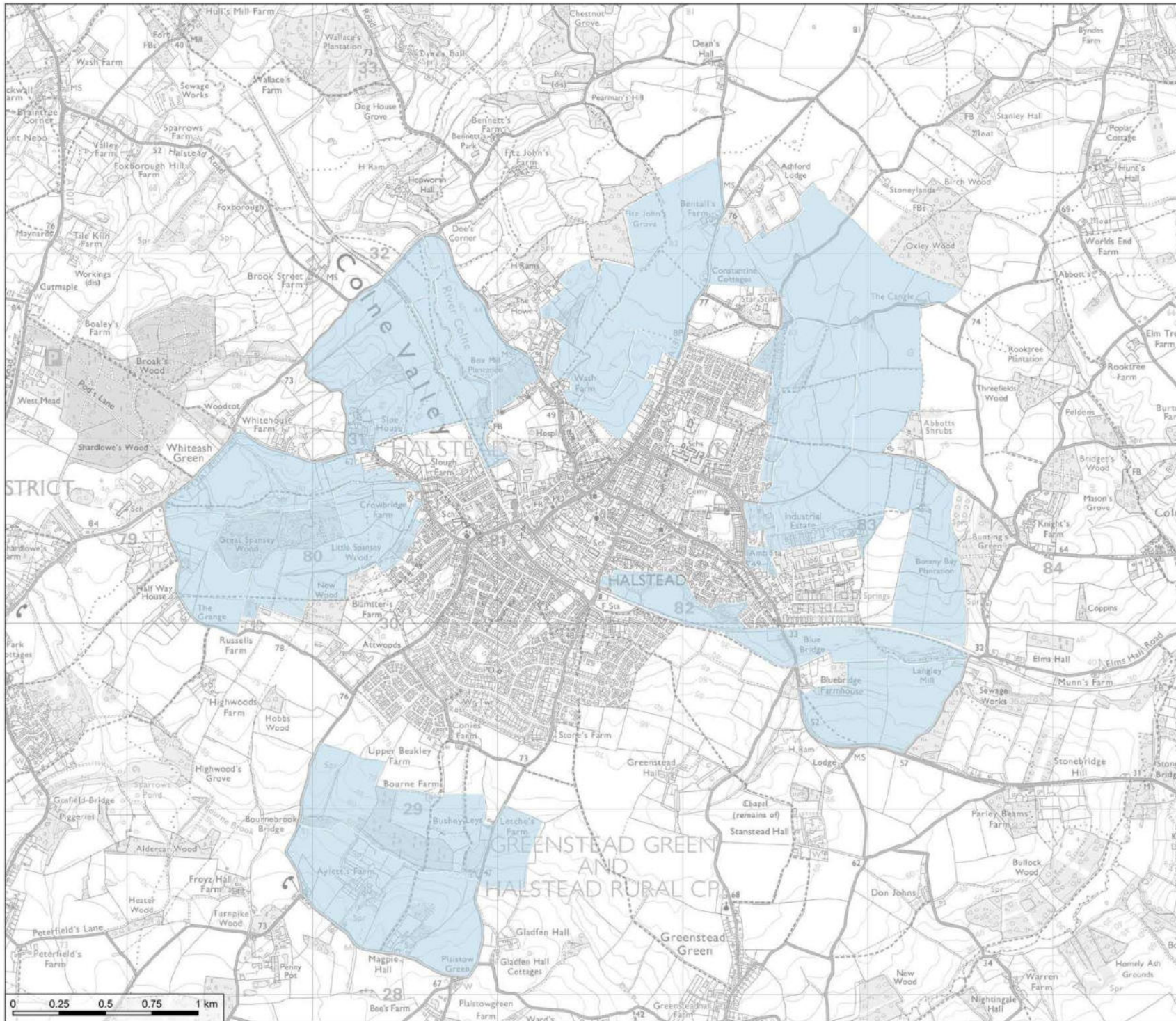
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**Study area**

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- 6.11 Figure 2 maps those parcels from the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study which were judged to have Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity. These parcels form the study area for the current study.



**Key**

Figure 2

Halstead

Medium-Low and Low capacity parcels

District Boundary

Base

OS Map Braintree

Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Medium-Low and Low capacity parcels

**Halstead Figure 2**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN

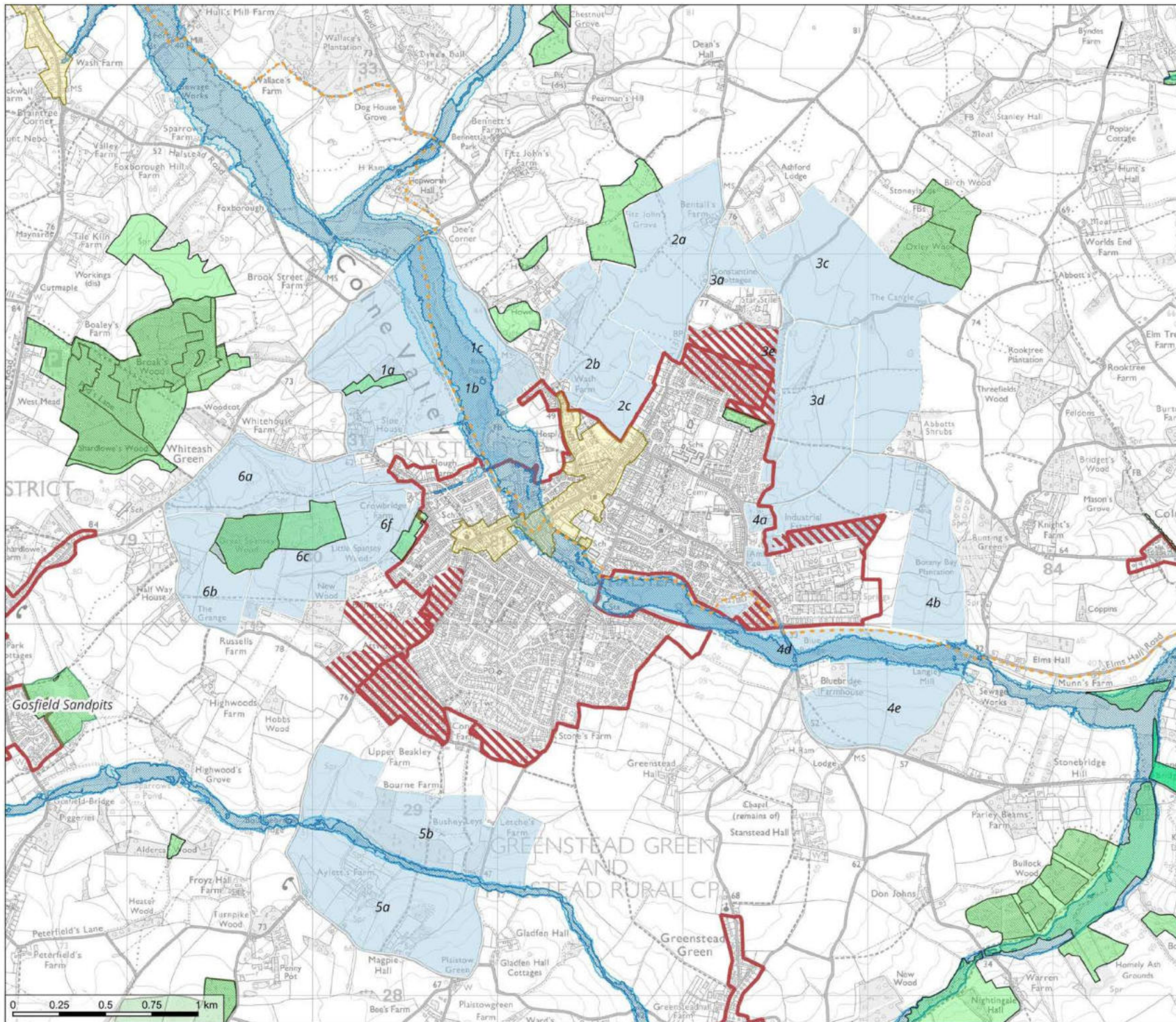


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**Subsequent development and constraints**

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- 6.12 Figure 3 maps those parcels from the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity, overlaid with landscape-related constraints that would preclude residential development. The figure also shows areas of land that have gained planning permission since 2015.



**Key**

**Figure 3**

-  Long Distance Footpaths
-  Local Nature Reserves
-  Ancient Woodlands
-  Local Wildlife Sites
-  Conservation Areas
-  Millennium Greens
-  Flood zone 3
-  Flood zone 2
-  Planning consents
-  Development boundaries
-  District Boundary
- Halstead**
-  Medium-Low and Low capacity parcels
- Base**
- OS Map Braintree
- Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Constraints

**Halstead Figure 3**

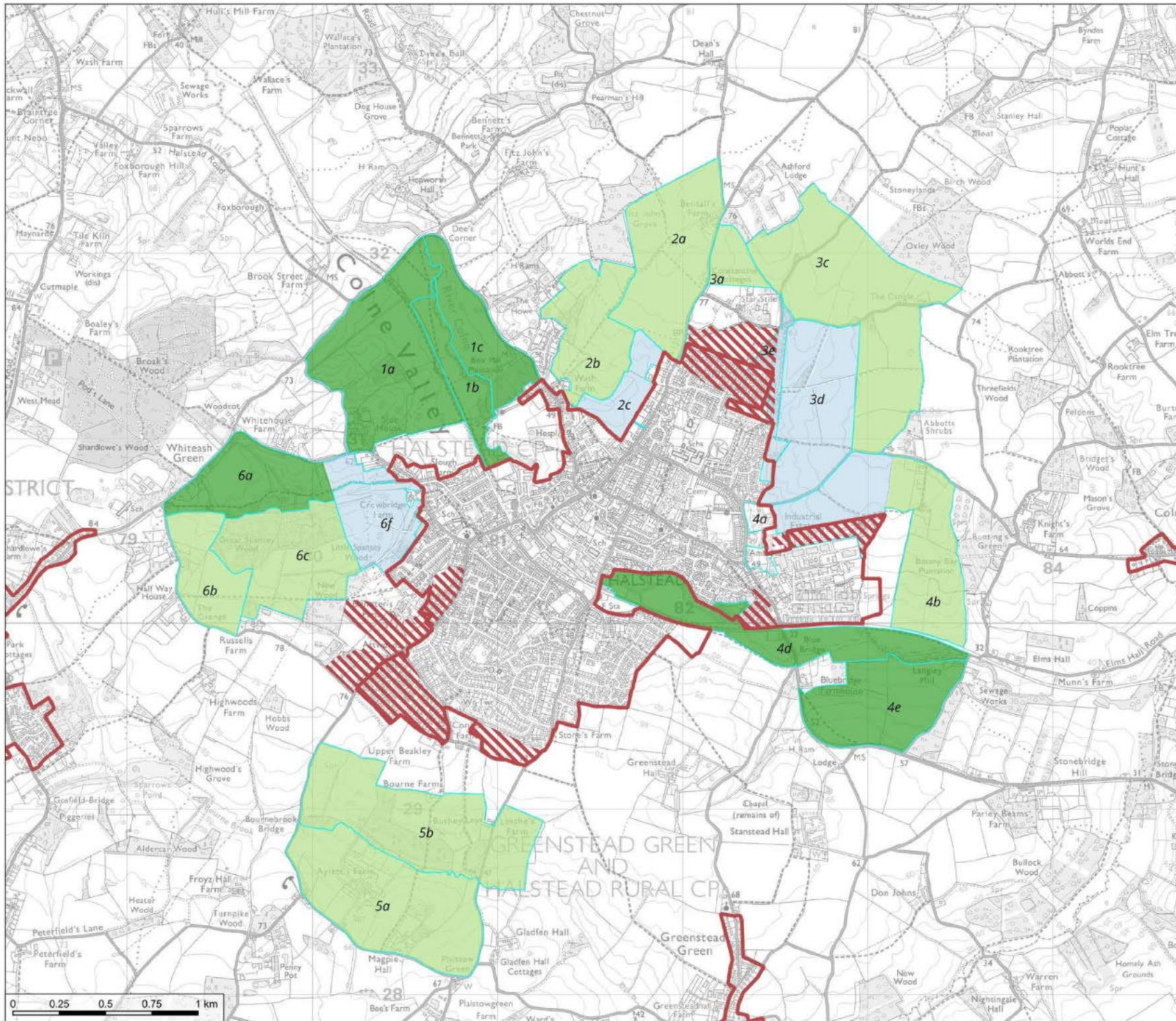
Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN



## **Identification of land for further assessment**

- 6.13 Figure 4 maps the land around Halstead that has been considered within the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment.
- 6.14 The following areas of land around Halstead's settlement fringe have been excluded from re-assessment:
- Landscape Setting Areas judged to have a Medium, Medium to High, or High capacity to accommodate residential development in the 2007 Settlement Fringe Study.
  - Land Parcels judged to have a Medium, Medium-High or High landscape capacity to accommodate residential development in the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study.
  - Flood Zones 2 and 3.
  - Ancient Woodland.
  - Land developed subsequent to the 2015 study, and land with consent for development.
  - Land Parcels with a consistent and uniform character (i.e. without localised variations) that were judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity in the 2015 study which still maintain the same relationship to the settlement.
  - Land distant from Halstead's settlement edge with a strong rural character.
- 6.15 Some of the land around Halstead was already found to have Medium capacity and is not therefore included within this study. The subsequent planning consents have expanded the town to the north and south, however these areas were previously found to have Medium capacity and the changes to the development boundary have not generally affected the Medium-Low and Low capacity parcels. Development could however be considered to have affected the setting of Parcels 3d and 3e, and these parcels now have more connection to the development boundary. Development has also extended northwards at Bluebridge Industrial Estate and part of Parcel 4b will be considered in the context of a wider re-appraisal of the north-eastern edge of Halstead.
- 6.16 Parcels 5a and 5b lie within the Bourne valley and are therefore completely unrelated to the town of Halstead, which lies within the Colne Valley. These parcels are therefore considered to have Medium-Low landscape capacity.
- 6.17 Parcels 6f and 6a adjoin the western edge of the town and are therefore explored in more detail. The remoter areas however would continue to have Medium-Low and Low landscape capacity.
- 6.18 The floodplain is constrained and has Low landscape capacity. Parcels 1a, 1c and 4e also lie within the valley. The parcels do not directly adjoin the settlement edge and it is not considered that any part of these parcels would have Medium capacity.
- 6.19 Parcels 2b, 3a and 3c have no connection to the settlement edge. There has been no material change to these parcels since 2015, and the conclusions of the previous study are therefore considered to remain valid. Parcel 2a has a limited connection to the settlement edge. The parcel however is composed of large arable fields and there is no subdivision of the parcel which might have higher capacity. Parcel 2c is adjoined by development on two sides and does therefore merit reassessment.



**Key**

Figure 4

2015 parcels

District Boundary

Development boundaries

Planning consents

Halstead

2015 parcels

Stage 1 review

Halstead

Areas for detailed assessment

Low capacity

Medium-Low capacity

Base

OS Map Braintree

Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Stage 1 review

**Halstead Figure 4**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN



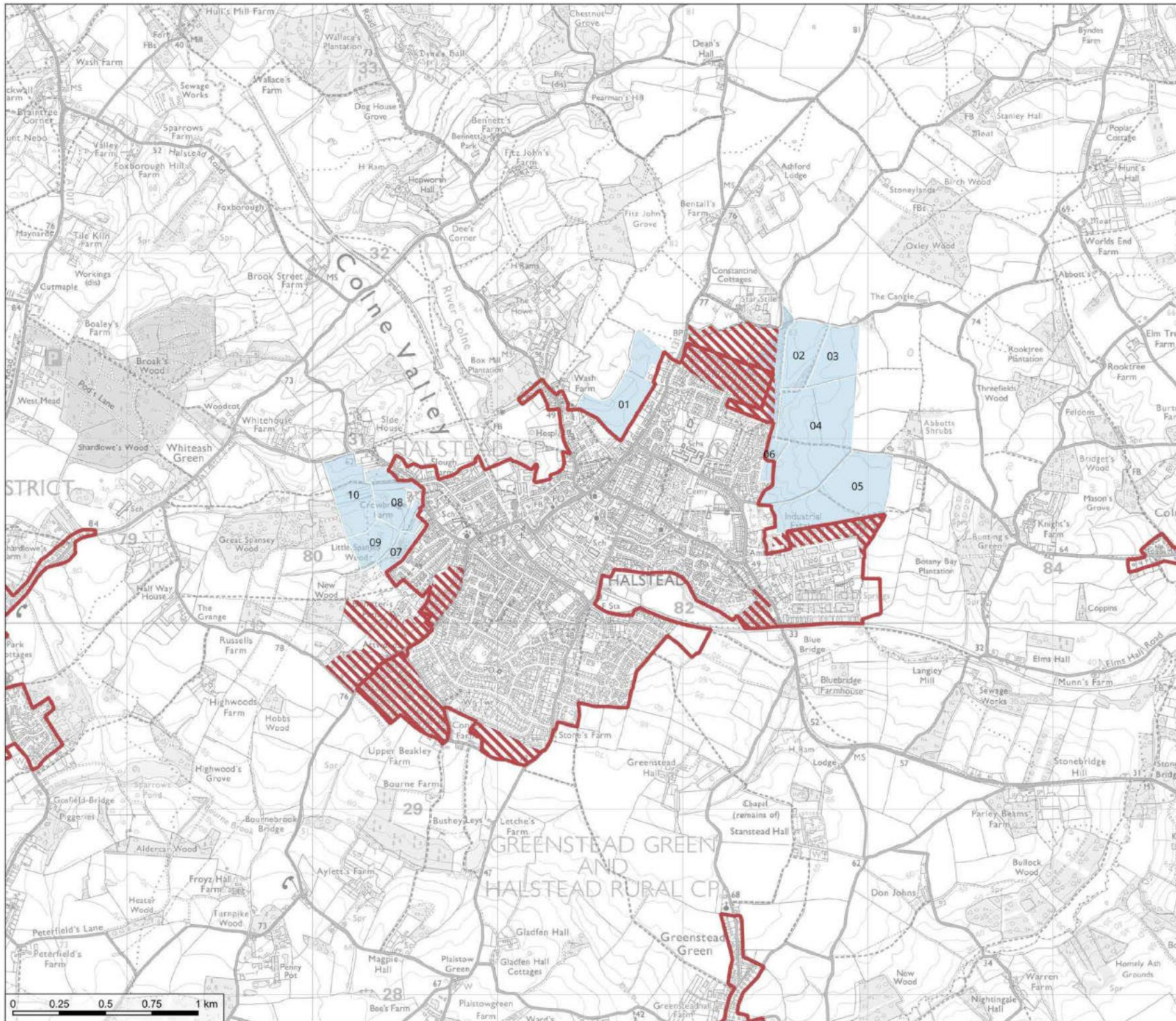
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**Identification of sub-parcels for further assessment**



---

6.20 Figure 5 identifies a series of sub-parcels that have been used as the basis for assessment.



**Key**

Figure 5

-  District Boundary
-  Development boundaries
-  Planning consents

**Halstead**

-  Sub-parcels

**Base**

- OS Map Braintree
- Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Sub-parcels

**Halstead Figure 5**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN

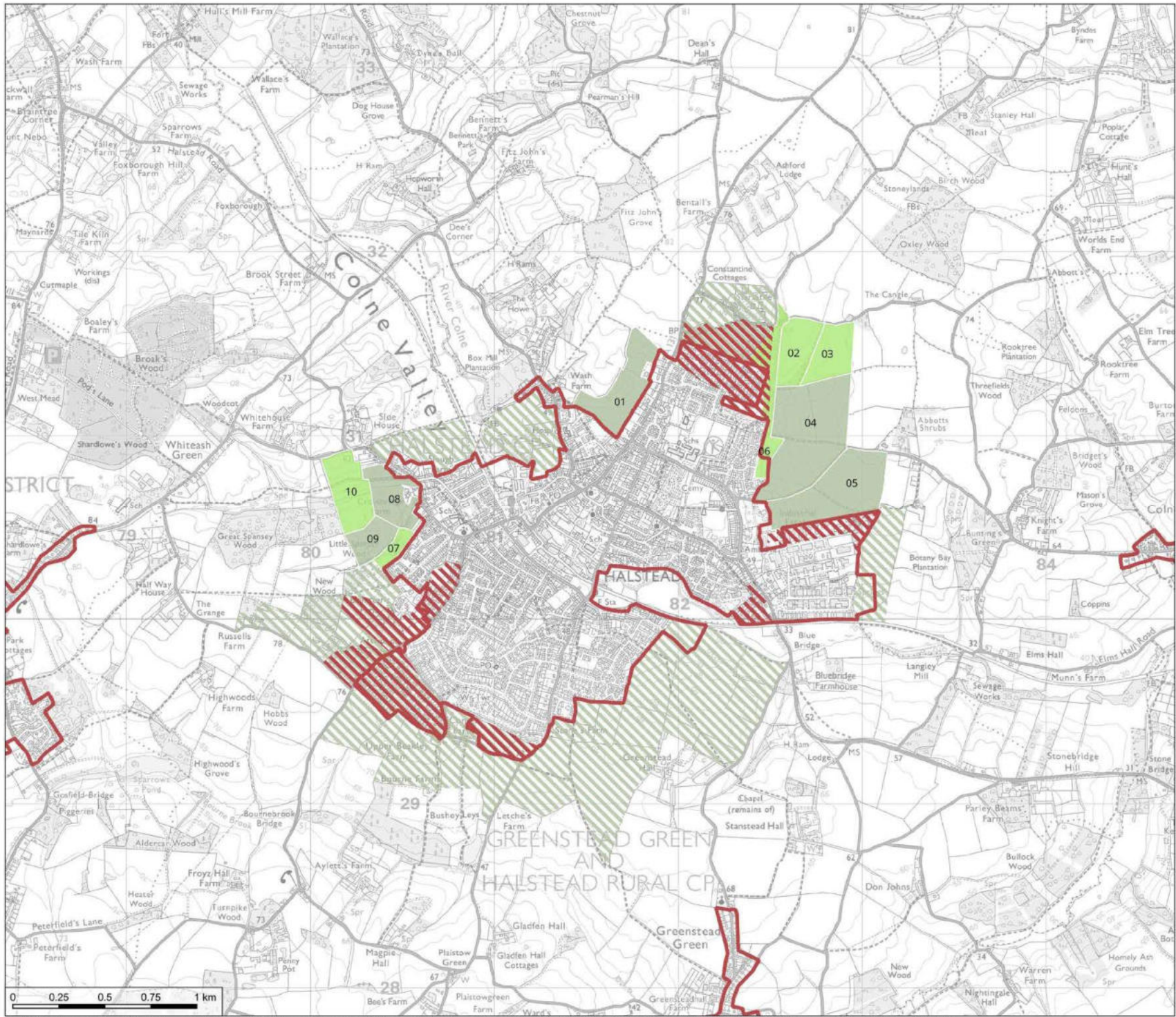


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**Landscape Sensitivity Assessment**

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- 6.21 Figure 6 summarises the findings of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment in relation to Halstead.
- 6.22 The detailed findings of the assessment are reproduced at Appendix 02-04.



**Key**

**Figure 6**

- District Boundary
- Development boundaries
- Planning consents

**Halstead**

- Medium-High Sensitivity
- Medium Sensitivity
- Previously assessed as Medium capacity

**Base**

OS Map Braintree  
Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Landscape sensitivity

**Halstead Figure 6**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN



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## 7 Hatfield Peverel

### Findings of 2015 Settlement Fringe Study

- 7.1 Figure 1 illustrates the findings of the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study in relation to Hatfield Peverel.
- 7.2 Further information can be found in *Braintree District Settlement Fringes: Evaluation of Landscape Analysis Study of Hatfield Peverel*, prepared by The Landscape Partnership for Braintree District Council and dated June 2015.
- 7.3 The study reached the following conclusions regarding those parcels that were judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity to accommodate development.

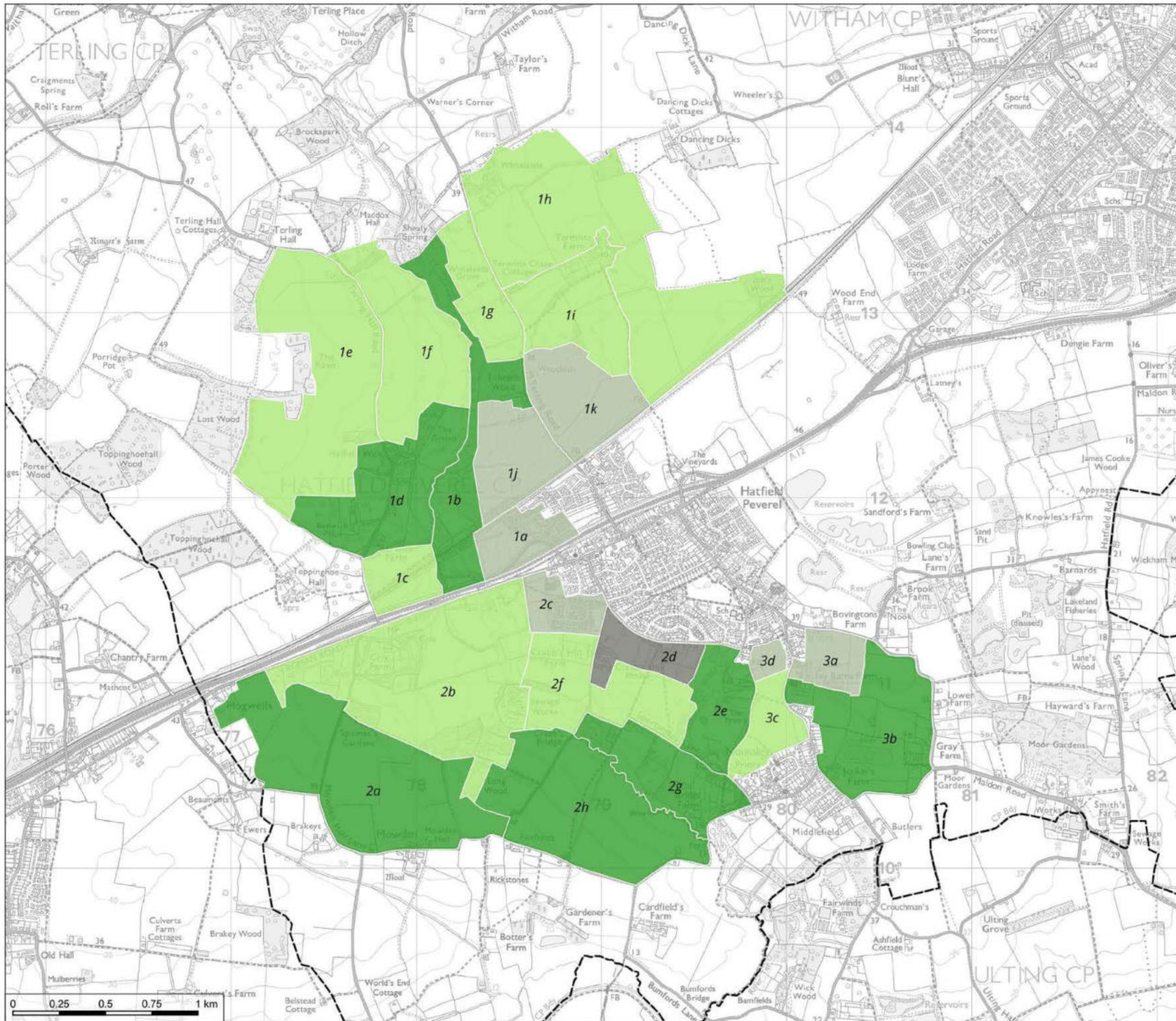
#### **Medium-Low landscape capacity**

- 7.4 Large scale Parcels 1e, 1h and 1i to the north of the London to Colchester railway line, were found to have Medium-Low capacity to accommodate development. These areas were isolated from or have only limited associations with the existing urban fabric. These parcels comprised large to medium scale arable fields with limited development and were a part of the rural landscape enclosing the settlement fringe. Development within these parcels would be adverse to the character of the landscape and would encroach slightly on the visual and physical separation between Hatfield Peverel and Terling.
- 7.5 The analysis found that the landscape to the south-west of Hatfield Peverel within Parcels 2f and 2b had a Medium-Low capacity to accommodate development. These areas were well wooded and interspersed with isolated manor houses and farmsteads including a number of Listed Buildings. The dense tree belts, woodland blocks and riparian vegetation along the River Ter was found to enclose the western settlement fringe and reduce the connections these parcels had with the urban fabric. Parts of these areas were also fairly prominent in cross valley views. The landscape had a tranquil character with minor rural lanes, some intact pre-19th century field enclosures and limited intrusive features. Parcel 1c was also detached from the settlement fringe, dissected by the London to Colchester railway line and abutted the busy A12 carriageway. These factors contributed to the limited scope to accommodate development within the parcel.

- 7.6 The sloping valley sides of the River Ter in Parcels 1f and 1g were also found to have Medium-Low capacity due to their contribution to the rural river valley landscape. Titbeech Wood and The Grove to the south of these parcels formed dense intervening features, reducing the visual connections the parcel had with the settlement fringe. The separation was increased by minor tributary streams crossing the landscape travelling east from the River Ter.
- 7.7 The capacity of Parcel 3c was found to be reduced by the openness to view from public footpaths and residential properties facing the parcels from the south and north and the fairly limited vegetation structure. The fields currently provided separation between Hatfield Peverel and Nounsley and the open nature of the parcel would increase the prominence of any proposed development, significantly compromising the separation between the two settlements.

#### **Low landscape capacity**

- 7.8 The parcels to the southern extent of Landscape Setting Area HP2, comprising the north and south facing slopes of the River Ter and open agricultural land to the south-west, were judged to be of Low capacity to accommodate development. This was on account of the rural setting the landscape provided to the southern settlement fringe of Hatfield Peverel. Development within these areas would be prominent in cross valley views and intrusive in the largely undeveloped landscape. The Grade II\* Listed Hatfield Priory with associated Registered Park and Garden to the south-east of the settlement was also of Low landscape capacity. As well as a valuable landscape feature providing a historic setting to the village, this area had an important role in preserving the physical and visual separation between Hatfield Peverel and Nounsley. The farmland within Parcel 3b played a similar role, defining the physical and visual separation between the two settlements.
- 7.9 The capacity of the floodplain and river corridor in Parcel 1b was judged to be Low, due to the good condition and strong character of the valley landscape, and nature of landscape features and visual factors that underpin it. Titbeech Wood, a local wildlife site and Ancient Woodland was included within the Parcel boundaries as an area of landscape value. Parcel 1d which slopes east towards the River Ter was found to have a Low capacity. This was on account of the good condition of the parkland style landscape, the listed buildings at Hatfield Wick Farm and Berwick Farm, and the strong intervening features of the A12 and the railway line which visually and physically separate the area from urban fabric associated with Hatfield Peverel.



**Key**

Figure 1

**Hatfield Peverel**

- Low capacity
- Medium-Low capacity
- Medium capacity
- Medium-High capacity
- District Boundary

**Base**

OS Map Braintree  
Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Findings of 2015 study

**Hatfield Peverel Figure 1**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN

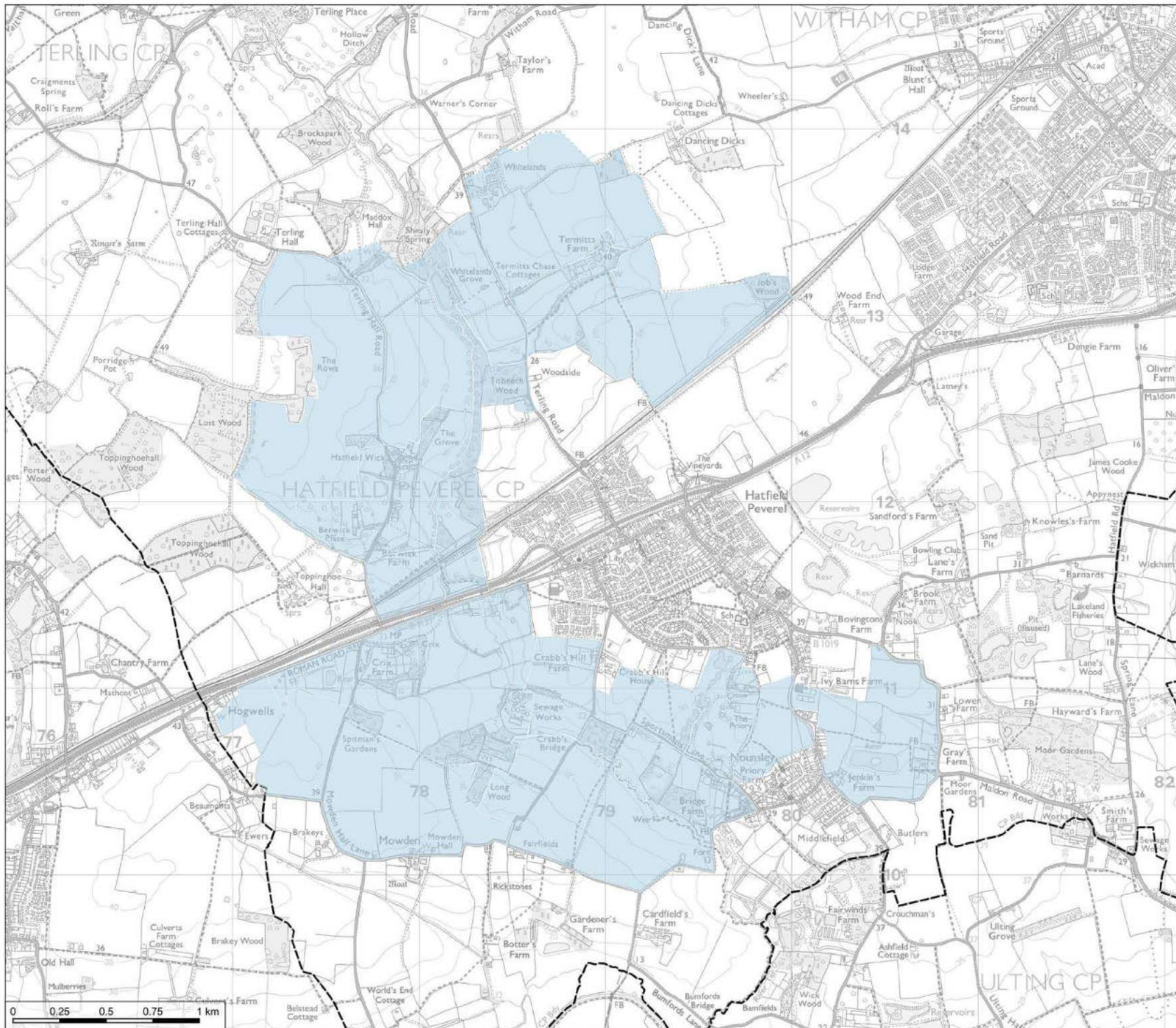


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**Study area**

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- 7.10 Figure 2 maps those parcels from the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study which were judged to have Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity. These parcels form the study area for the current study.



**Key**

Figure 2

Hatfield Peverel

Medium-Low and Low capacity parcels

District Boundary

Base

OS Map Braintree

Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Study area

**Hatfield Peverel Figure 2**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN

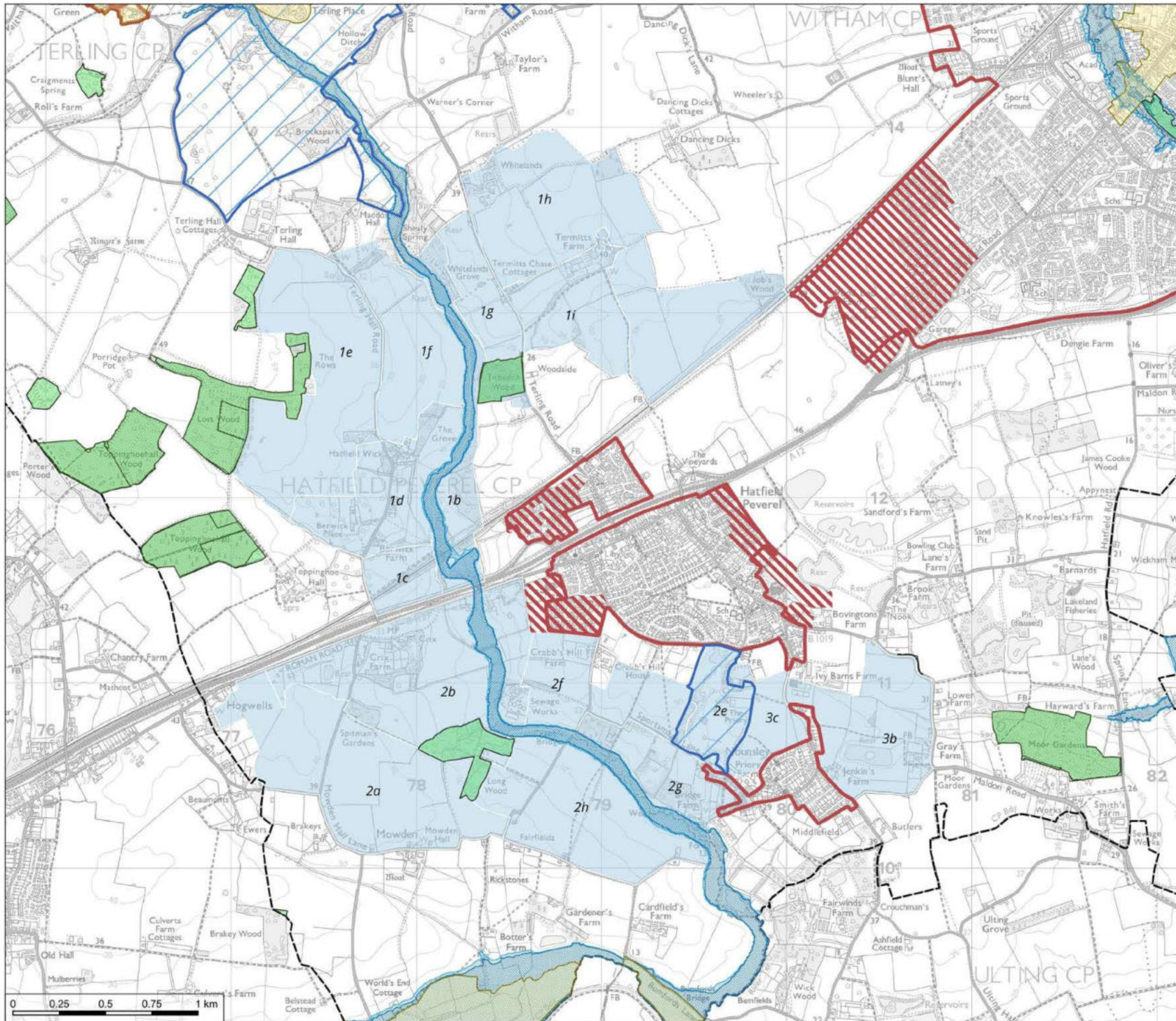


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**Subsequent development and constraints**

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- 7.11 Figure 3 maps those parcels from the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity, overlaid with landscape-related constraints that would preclude residential development. The figure also shows areas of land that have gained planning permission since 2015.



**Key**

**Figure 3**

-  Ancient Woodlands
-  Local Wildlife Sites
-  Conservation Areas
-  Registered Parks and Gardens
-  Flood zone 3
-  Flood zone 2
-  Planning consents
-  Development boundaries
-  District Boundary
- Hatfield Peverel**
-  Medium-Low and Low capacity parcels
- Base**
- OS Map Braintree
- Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Constraints

**Hatfield Peverel Figure 3**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN

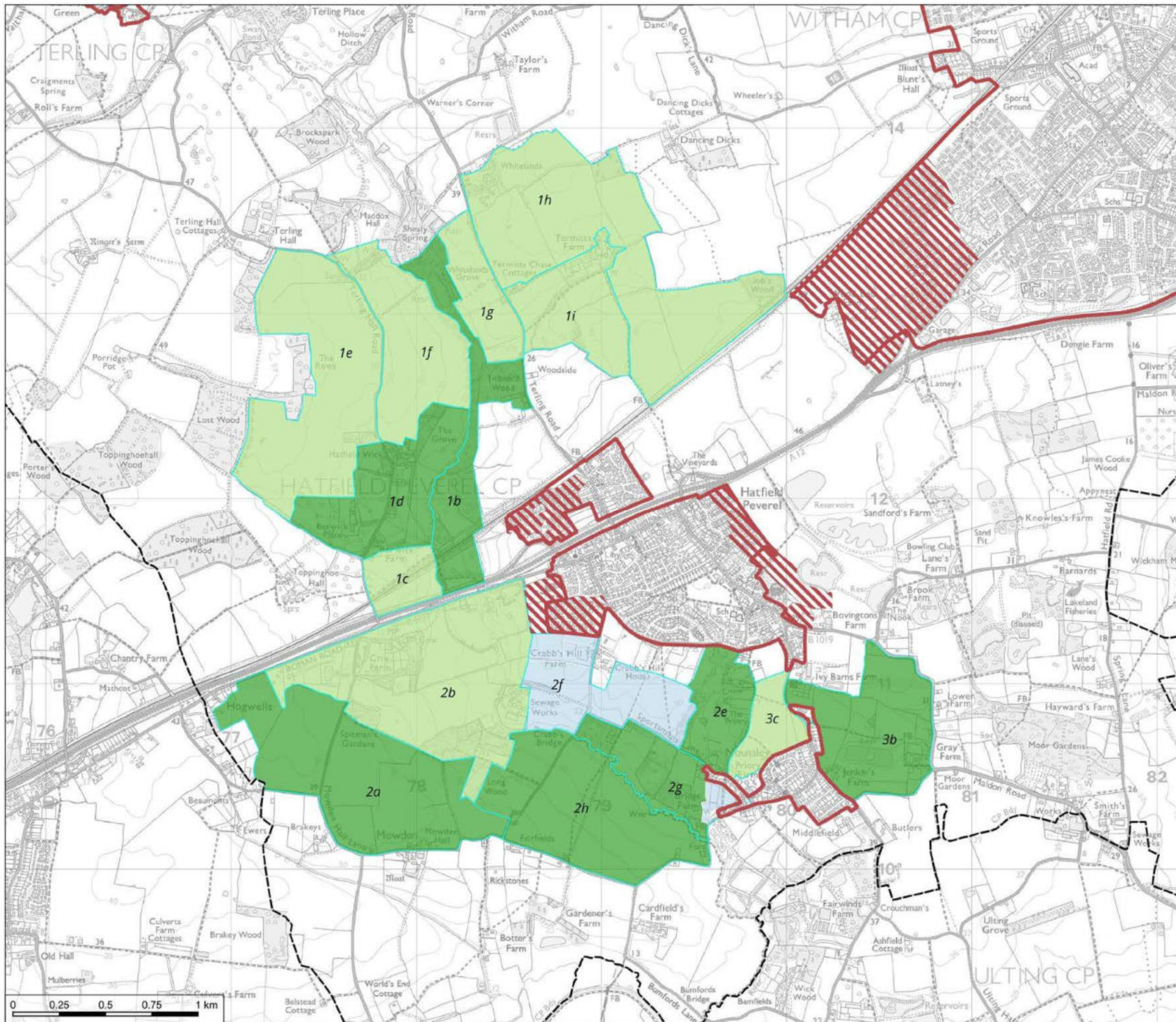


## Identification of land for further assessment

- 7.12 Figure 4 maps the land around Hatfield Peverel that has been considered within the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment.
- 7.13 The following areas of land around Hatfield Peverel's settlement fringe have been excluded from re-assessment:
- Landscape Setting Areas judged to have a Medium, Medium to High, or High capacity to accommodate residential development in the 2007 Settlement Fringe Study.
  - Land Parcels judged to have a Medium, Medium-High or High landscape capacity to accommodate residential development in the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study.
  - Flood Zones 2 and 3.
  - Ancient Woodland.
  - Land developed subsequent to the 2015 study, and land with consent for development.
  - Land Parcels with a consistent and uniform character (i.e. without localised variations) that were judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity in the 2015 study which still maintain the same relationship to the settlement.
  - Land distant from Hatfield Peverel's settlement edge with a strong rural character.
- 7.14 Subsequent planning consents have occurred on the eastern, western and northern edges of the village, however these relate to areas which were previously found to have Medium capacity, and the changes to the settlement boundary have not therefore affected the Medium-Low and Low capacity parcels. Parcel 2f has however come to be adjacent to the settlement boundary and is therefore the main parcel to be reconsidered in this study. This parcel has been divided into four parts for the purposes of assessment.
- 7.15 The only other parcels which adjoin the development boundary are Parcels 2e, 2g, 3b and 3c. Parcel 2e relates to a historic park and garden and continues to have Low capacity. Parcel 3c is vital to maintaining separation between Hatfield Peverel and Nounsley and it is not therefore considered that any part of this parcel would have medium capacity. Parcel 2g lies to the west of Nounsley. The

parcel is generally rural in character but it has been possible to identify an area adjacent to the settlement edge which merits detailed assessment. Parcel 3b lies to the east of Nounsley. Part of the parcel is necessary to maintain separation between Hatfield Peverel and Nounsley and there are no obvious sub-divisions of the parcel which might have higher capacity.

- 7.16 The other parcels are more remote. Any development within these parcels would be unconnected to the main settlements, and it is therefore considered that they have Medium-Low or Low capacity. These parcels include some existing development at Hatfield Place and Crix for example, however the historic character of the buildings and the surrounding landscape indicates relatively low landscape capacity.



**Key**

Figure 4

2015 parcels

□ District Boundary

▭ Development boundaries

▨ Planning consents

Hatfield Peverel

□ 2015 parcels

Stage 1 review

Hatfield Peverel

▭ Areas for detailed assessment

▭ Low capacity

▭ Medium-Low capacity

Base

OS Map Braintree

Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Stage 1 review

**Hatfield Peverel Figure 4**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN

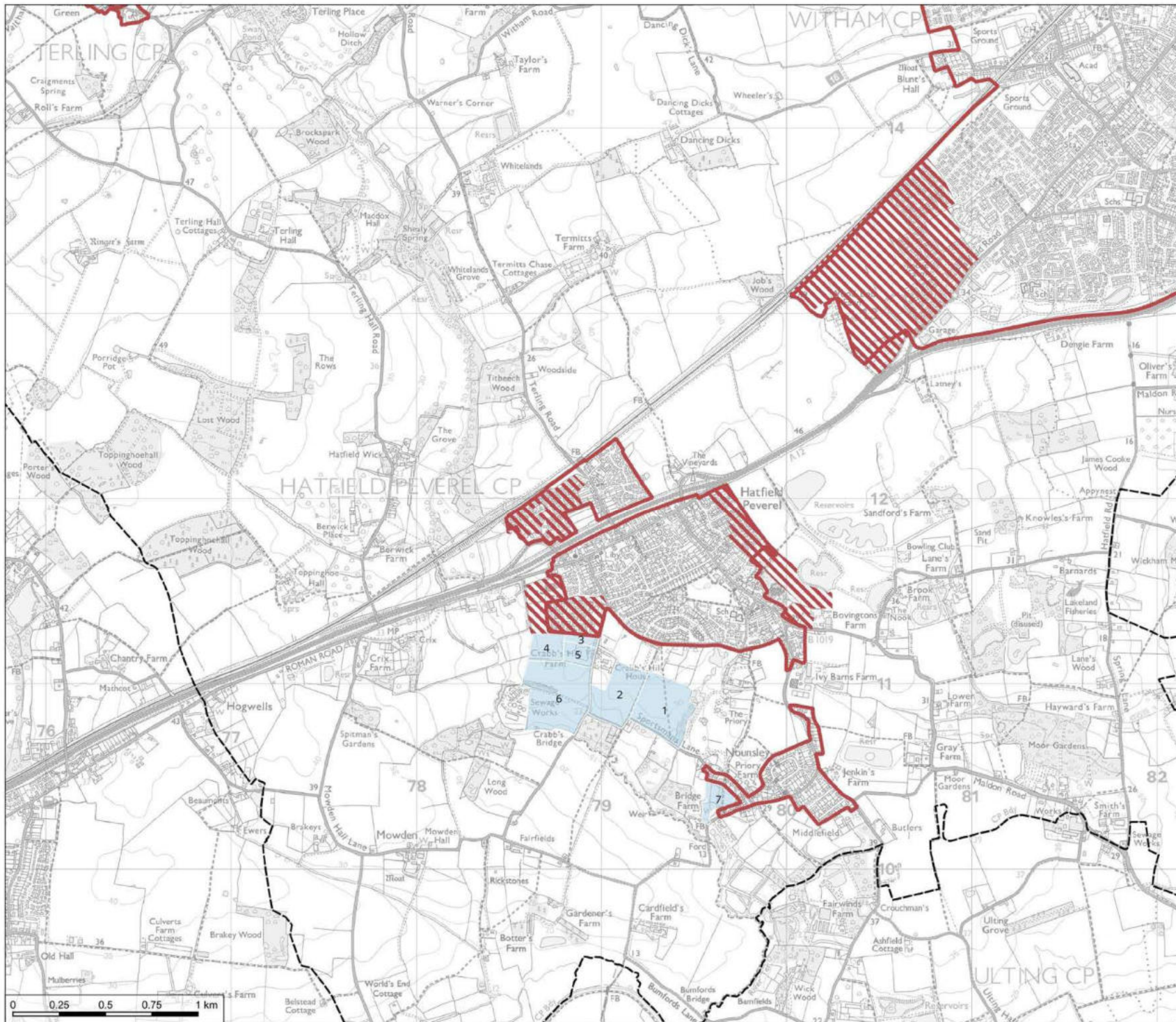


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**Identification of sub-parcels for further assessment**



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7.17 Figure 5 identifies a series of sub-parcels that have been used as the basis for assessment.



**Key**

Figure 5

-  District Boundary
-  Development boundaries
-  Planning consents

Hatfield Peverel  
 Sub-parcels

Base  
 OS Map Braintree  
 Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Sub-parcels

**Hatfield Peverel Figure 5**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN

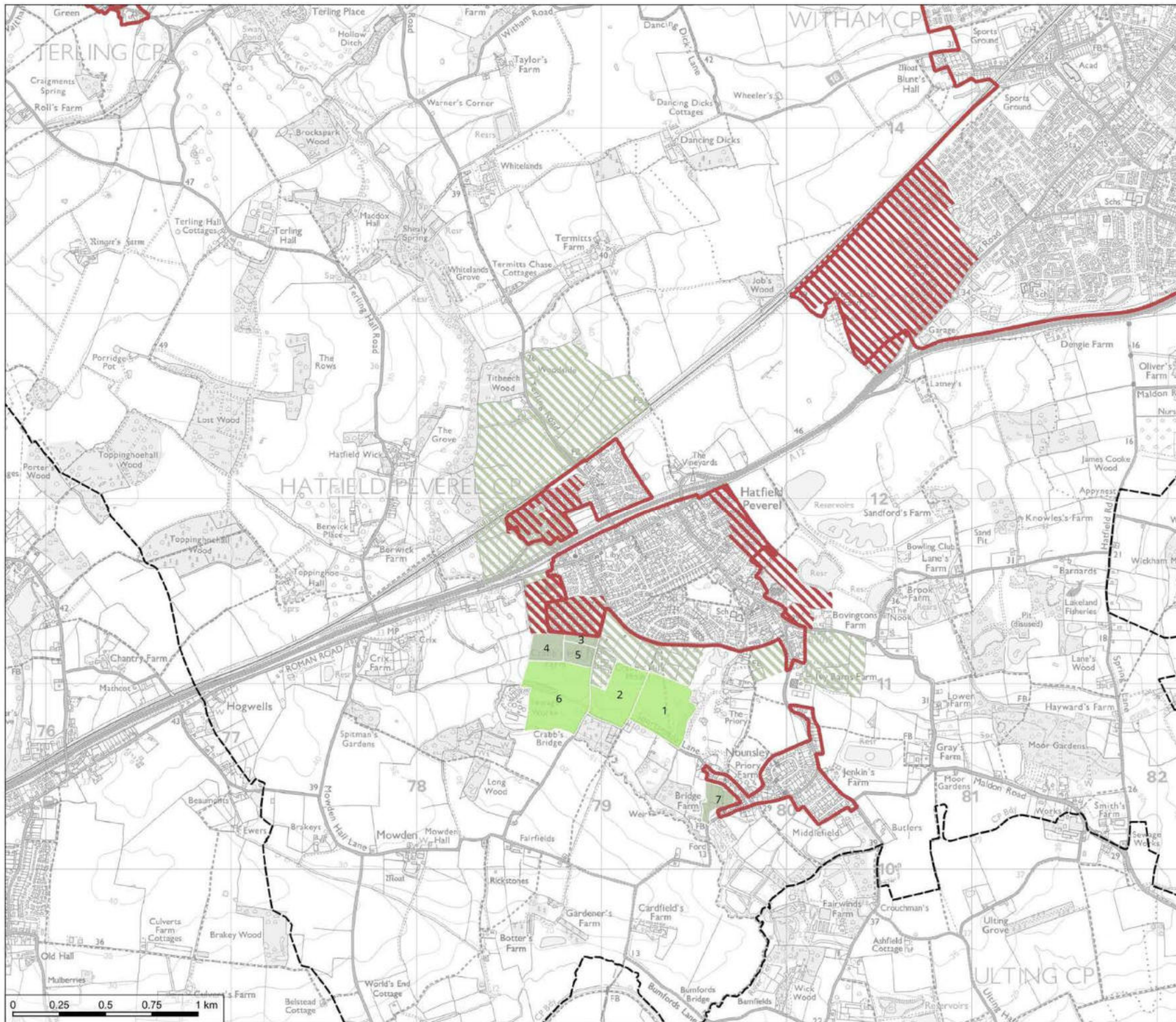


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**Landscape Sensitivity Assessment**

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- 7.18 Figure 6 summarises the findings of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment in relation to Hatfield Peverel.
- 7.19 The detailed findings of the assessment are reproduced at Appendix 02-05.



**Key**

Figure 6

-  District Boundary
-  Development boundaries
-  Planning consents
- Hatfield Peverel**
-  Medium-High Sensitivity
-  Medium Sensitivity
-  Previously assessed as Medium capacity
- Base**
- OS Map Braintree
- Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Landscape sensitivity

**Hatfield Peverel Figure 6**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN



## 8 Kelvedon and Feering

### Findings of 2015 Settlement Fringe Study

- 8.1 Figure 1 illustrates the findings of the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study in relation to Kelvedon and Feering.
- 8.2 Further information can be found in *Braintree District Settlement Fringes: Evaluation of Landscape Analysis Study of Kelvedon and Feering*, prepared by The Landscape Partnership for Braintree District Council and dated June 2015.
- 8.3 The study reached the following conclusions regarding those parcels that were judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity to accommodate development.

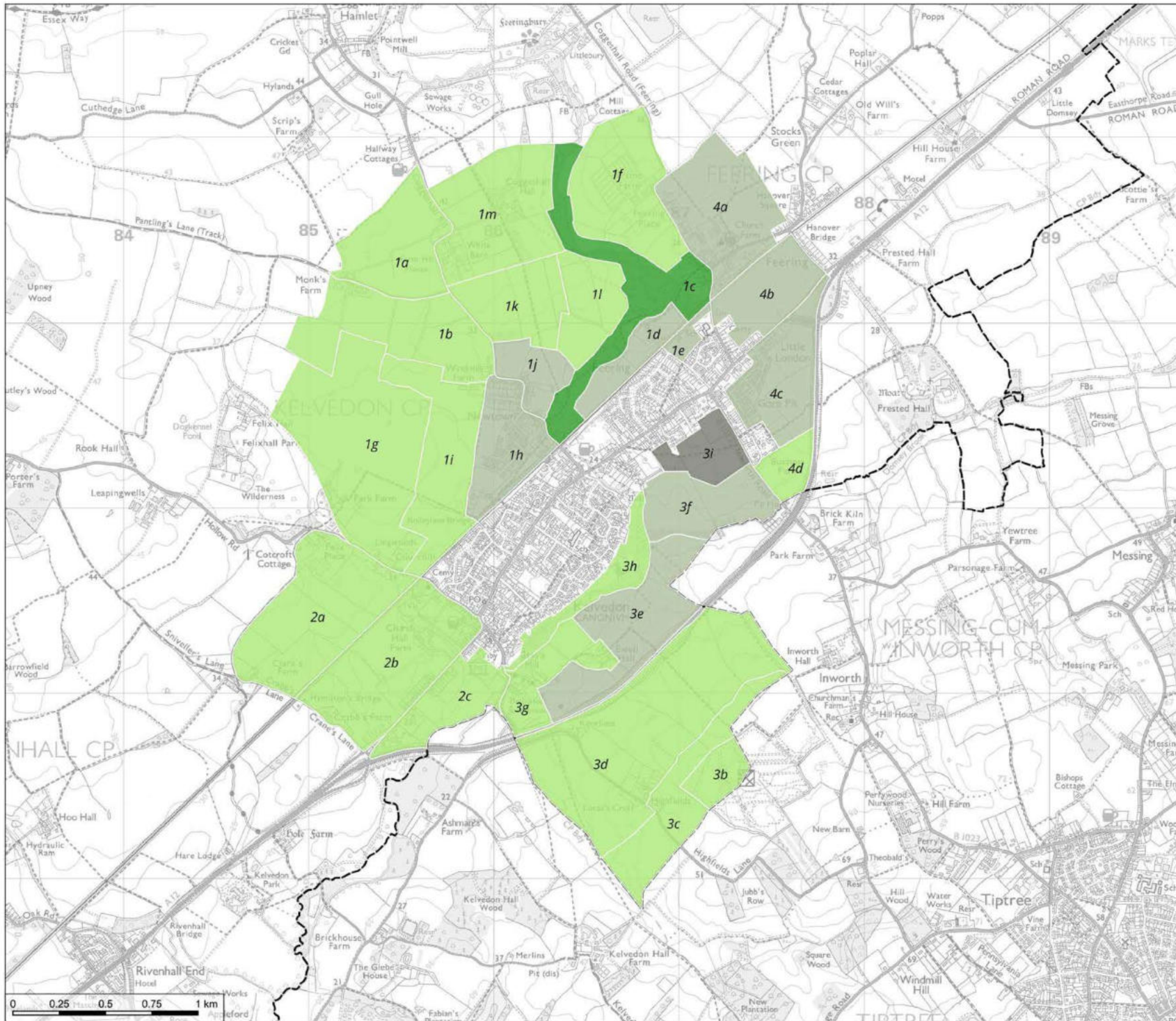
#### **Medium-Low landscape capacity**

- 8.4 The analysis found that the wider landscape to the north, west and south-west of the settlement generally had a Medium-Low capacity to accommodate development, given the more elevated ground away from the valley landscape of the River Blackwater and corresponding visibility in both close and distant views.
- 8.5 The well integrated settlement edge to Feering formed by the vegetated path of the River Blackwater reduced the scope for a settlement extension on the higher valley slopes of Parcels 1k, 1l, 1m and 1f. Parcels to the west of Coggeshall Road were found to be more expansive, open and generally isolated from the urban fabric despite views to the settlement fringe. Similar features reduced the capacity for development in Parcels 3b, 3c and 3d to the south-west of Kelvedon, with the A12 forming a prominent intervening feature between the settlement fringe and the wider rural landscape.
- 8.6 To the southern fringe of Kelvedon, and surrounding Easterford Mill, the landscape capacity for Parcels 3h and 3g was also judged to be Medium-Low. This was on account of their location partly within the floodplain of the River Blackwater and the valued and sensitive features of the landscape and built form. These included the Kelvedon Conservation Area and its setting, listed buildings, some intact historic field enclosures, a Local Wildlife Site and the good condition and strong character of the valley landscape.

- 8.7 To the west of Kelvedon, the landscape had an overall rural character with strong bands of vegetation that framed the edge of the settlement. The Conservation Area and large numbers of Listed Buildings lined this settlement edge. The strong band of vegetation following a tributary stream formed a well integrated settlement edge and enhanced the setting of the historic core of the settlement. The steeple of St Mary the Virgin Church was a landmark feature in the area. Development to this side of the village would be fairly prominent due to the declining field structure in Parcels 2a and 2b and have an adverse impact on the existing rural setting to the settlement.
- 8.8 Parcel 4d to the east of Feering sloped south towards Domsey Brook. The capacity of the landscape to accommodate development was reduced in this area by the poor vegetation structure and openness to view from the surrounding roads and public footpath to the northern boundary.

#### **Low landscape capacity**

- 8.9 The capacity of the floodplain in Landscape Setting Area 1 was found to be consistently Low, due to the good condition and strong character of the valley landscape, and nature of landscape features and visual factors that underpin it. The Local Wildlife Site in Parcel 1c, connecting to the River Blackwater was also a key wildlife corridor to be preserved.



**Key**

Figure 1

Kelvedon

- Low capacity
- Medium-Low capacity
- Medium capacity
- Medium-High capacity

District Boundary

Base

OS Map Braintree

Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Findings of 2015 study

**Kelvedon Figure 1**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN

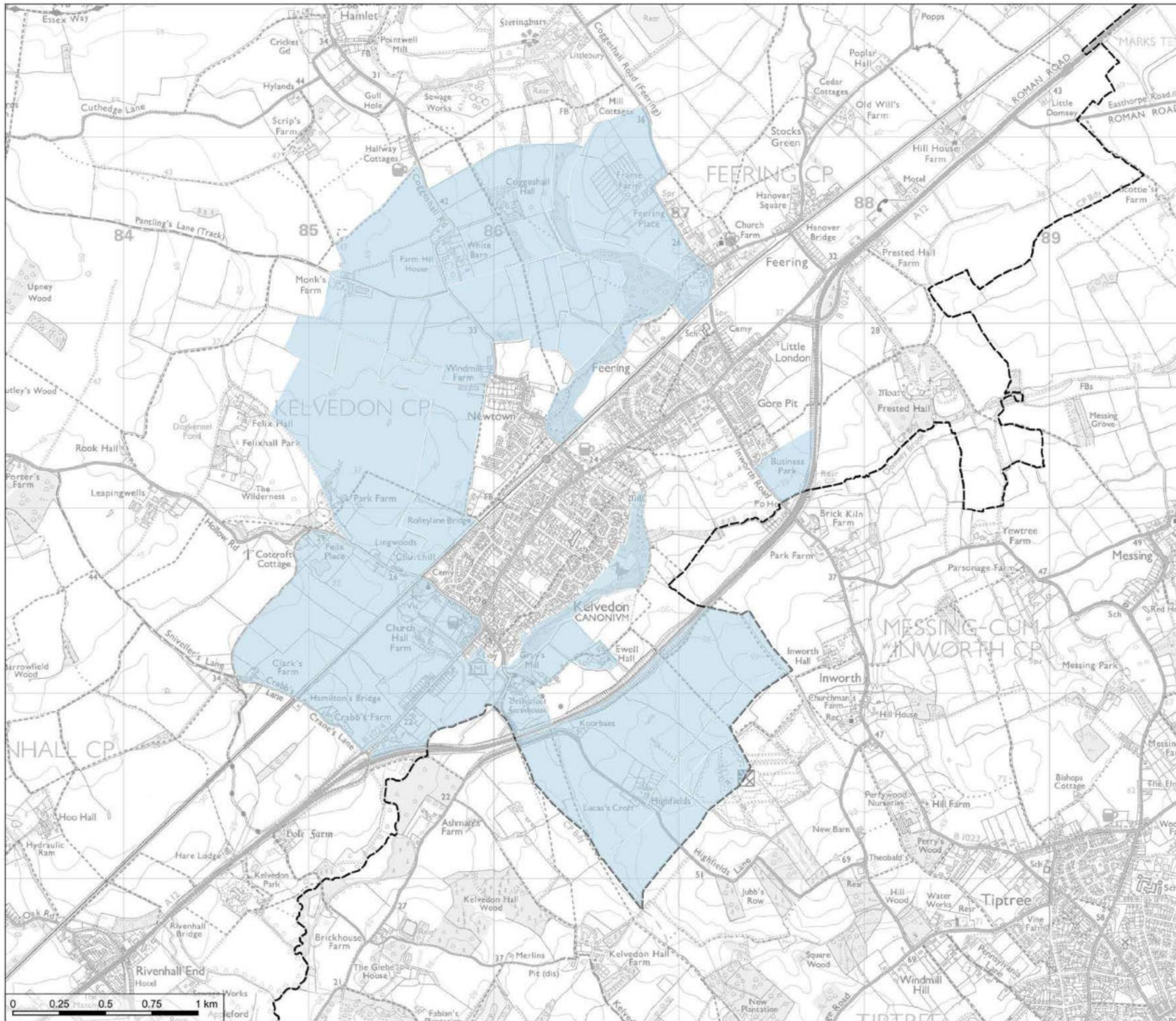


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**Study area**

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- 8.10 Figure 2 maps those parcels from the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study which were judged to have Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity. These parcels form the study area for the current study.



**Key**

Figure 2

Kelvedon

Medium-Low and Low capacity parcels

District Boundary

Base

OS Map Braintree

Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Study area

**Kelvedon Figure 2**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN

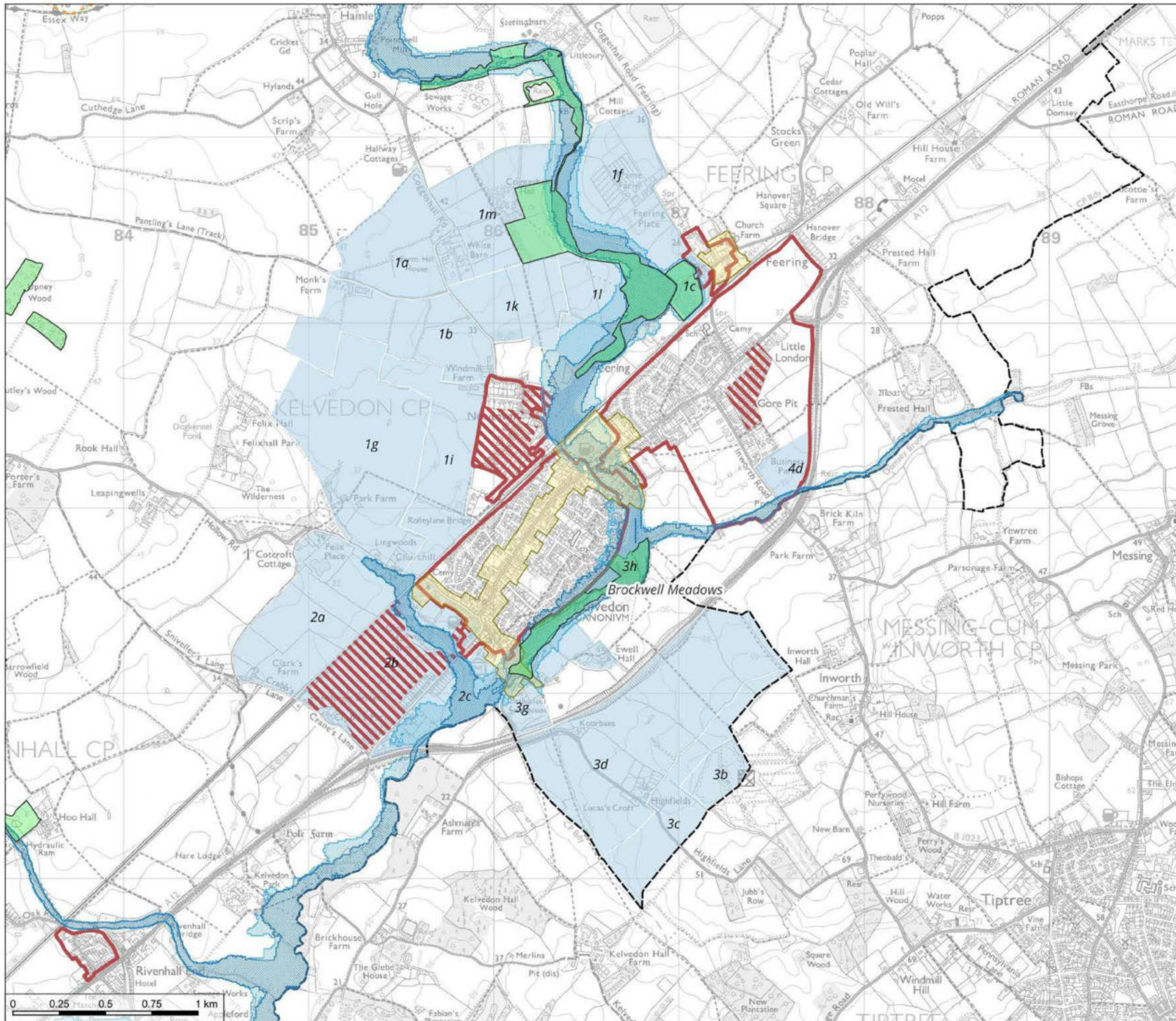


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### **Subsequent development and constraints**

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- 8.11 Figure 3 maps those parcels from the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity, overlaid with landscape-related constraints that would preclude residential development. The figure also shows areas of land that have gained planning permission since 2015.



**Key**

**Figure 3**

- - - Long Distance Footpaths
- Local Nature Reserves
- Ancient Woodlands
- Local Wildlife Sites
- Conservation Areas
- Flood zone 3
- Flood zone 2
- Planning consents
- Development boundaries
- District Boundary
- Kelvedon**
- Medium-Low and Low capacity parcels
- Base**
- OS Map Braintree
- Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Constraints

**Kelvedon Figure 3**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN

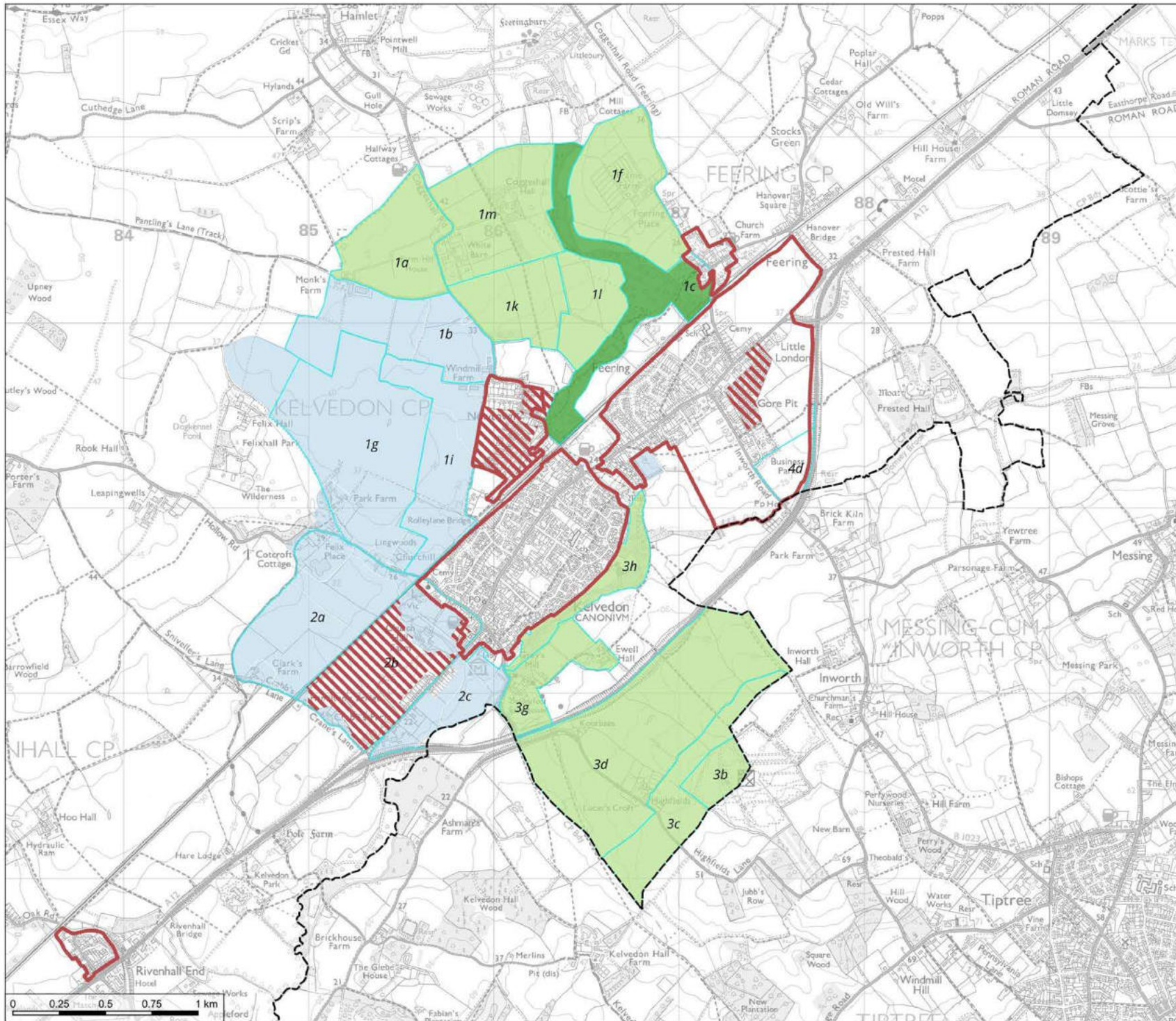


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**Identification of land for further assessment**

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- 8.12 Figure 4 maps the land around Kelvedon and Feering that has been considered within the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment.
- 8.13 The following areas of land around Kelvedon and Feering's settlement fringe have been excluded from re-assessment:
- Landscape Setting Areas judged to have a Medium, Medium to High or High capacity to accommodate development in the 2007 Settlement Fringe Study.
  - Land Parcels judged to have a Medium, Medium-High or High landscape capacity to accommodate development in the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study.
  - Flood Zones 2 and 3.
  - Ancient Woodland.
  - Land developed subsequent to the 2015 study, and land with consent for development.
  - Land Parcels with a consistent and uniform character (i.e. without localised variations) that were judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity in the 2015 study which still maintain the same relationship to the settlement.
  - Land distant from Kelvedon and Feering's settlement edge with a strong rural character.



**Key**

Figure 4

2015 parcels

District Boundary

Development boundaries

Planning consents

Kelvedon

2015 parcels

Stage 1 review

Kelvedon

Areas for detailed assessment

Low capacity

Medium-Low capacity

Base

OS Map Braintree

Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Stage 1 review

**Kelvedon Figure 4**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN

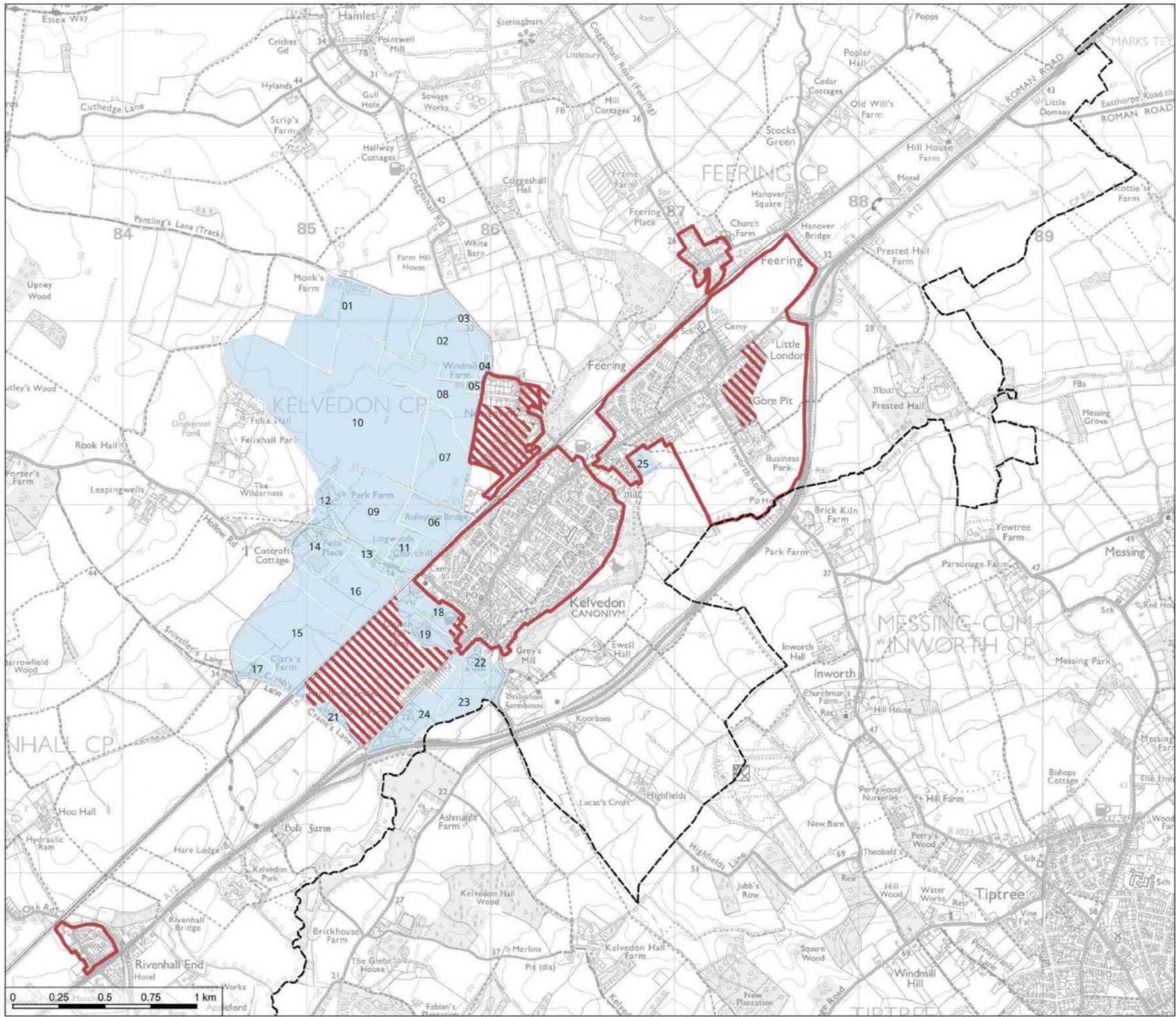


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**Identification of sub-parcels for further assessment**

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- 8.14 Figure 5 identifies a series of sub-parcels that have been used as the basis for assessment.



**Key**

Figure 5

-  District Boundary
-  Development boundaries
-  Planning consents
- Kelvedon**
-  Sub-parcels
- Base**
- OS Map Braintree
- Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Sub-parcels

**Kelvedon Figure 5**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN

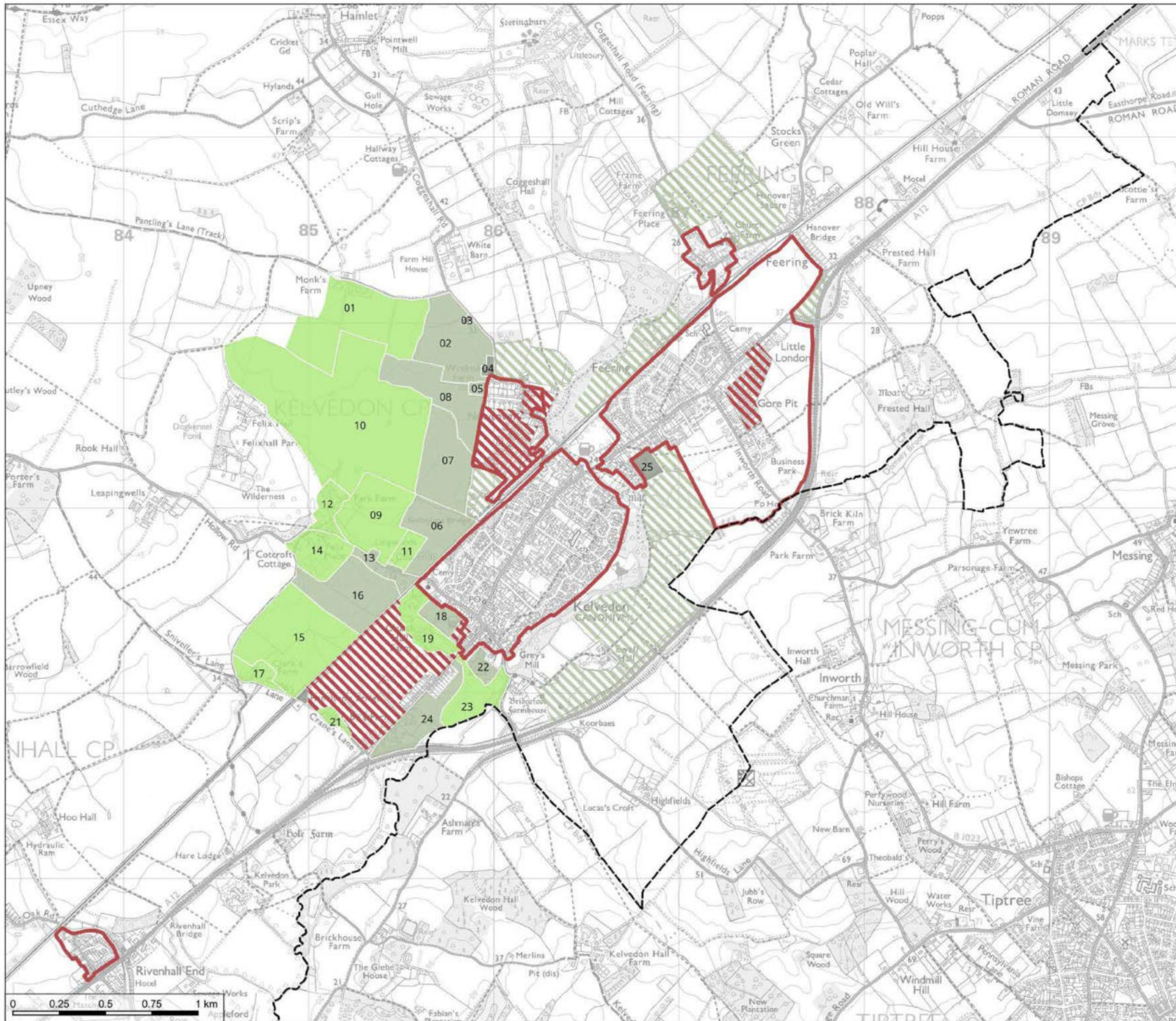


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**Landscape Sensitivity Assessment**

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- 8.15 Figure 6 summarises the findings of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment in relation to Kelvedon and Feering.
- 8.16 The detailed findings of the assessment are reproduced at Appendix 02-06.



**Key**

Figure 6

-  District Boundary
-  Development boundaries
-  Planning consents
- Kelvedon**
-  Medium-High Sensitivity
-  Medium Sensitivity
-  Medium-Low Sensitivity
-  Previously assessed as Medium capacity
- Base**
- OS Map Braintree
- Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Landscape sensitivity

**Kelvedon Figure 6**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN



## 9 Sible Hedingham and Castle Hedingham

### Findings of 2015 Settlement Fringe Study

- 9.1 Figure 10.1 illustrates the findings of the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study in relation to Sible Hedingham and Castle Hedingham.
- 9.2 Further information can be found in *Braintree District Settlement Fringes: Evaluation of Landscape Analysis Study of Sible Hedingham*, prepared by The Landscape Partnership for Braintree District Council and dated June 2015.
- 9.3 The study reached the following conclusions regarding those parcels that were judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity to accommodate development.

#### Medium-Low landscape capacity

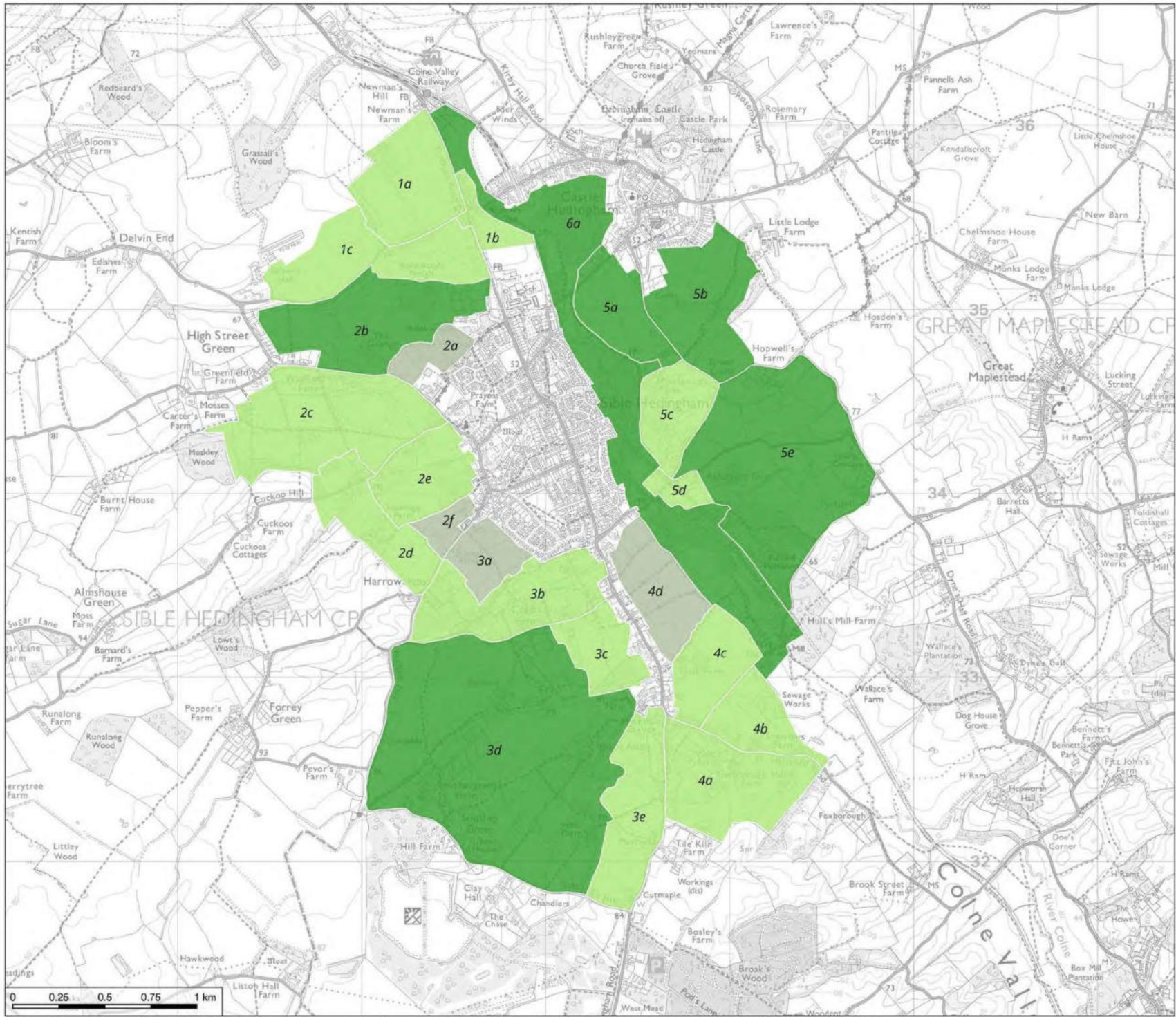
- 9.4 The appraisal found that the landscapes around the more distant fringes of Sible Hedingham have Medium to Low capacity to accommodate development. Such Parcels often occupy the upper and lower valley slopes of the River Colne, with clear visibility from within the valley and from adjacent landscapes, particularly where the characteristic landscape framework had been altered by the removal of hedgerows. For example, Parcels 1a Yeldham Road and 4c Wash Farm were visible in full from the adjacent A1017 and lane to Hull's Mill, any new built development being clearly visible as a consequence. Any scope to mitigate such development would be limited or moderate, given the complexities of screening rooflines that follow rising ground. The appraisal noted that, should any new development be necessary in Parcel 1a, it should be focussed on the easternmost boundary, to form a cluster around the existing properties at Crouch Green.
- 9.5 The combination of a sense of a distinctly rural farmland landscape, an overall sense of tranquillity, the presence of an intact network of historic field enclosure, and a robust framework of boundary hedgerows and woodland blocks reduced the capacity of the landscape to absorb new residential or employment development without significantly affecting these key characteristics. A number of parcels, such as those on the south-eastern at Foxborough Hill and alongside the Hedingham Road were either isolated from, or had limited associations with the existing urban fabric, this sense of separation exaggerated by the linear

form of the village and Alderford Conservation Area which formed a tail on the south side of the village.

- 9.6 Other Parcels, such as 3b Cobbs Fen and 2e Church Street, were found to be characterised by landscapes rich in pattern, texture and scale, within which numerous footpaths resulted in the moderate visibility of these features. Despite their proximity to the existing settlement edge, and a moderate association with the existing urban fabric, the strength of character and condition of the stream valley landscapes of these parcels reduced their capacity to absorb new residential or employment development without significantly affecting their key characteristics.
- 9.7 The presence of numerous Listed Buildings often set within farmsteads on the falling valley slopes, such as Sparrow Farm and Eckfield Farm in Parcel 4b, the gently undulating ground around the stream valley south of Washland's Farm in Parcel 2c, the tranquil nature of the landscape east of Grave's Hall in Parcel 1c, and numerous paths such as those in the vicinity of Hostage Farm in Parcel 2d, further reduced the capacity of these landscape to absorb new built development.

#### Low landscape capacity

- 9.8 The capacity of the floodplain of the River Colne and west facing valley slopes that extend southwards from Castle Hedingham to accommodate new residential or employment development was found to be Low, with the exception of Parcels 5c Maiden Ley Farm and 5d at Alderford Farm. Characterised by the gently falling valley slopes of the River Colne that are incised by a series of minor streams in southern parts, settlement in the parcel is limited to a number of dispersed houses and farmsteads.
- 9.9 Parcel 6 was based on the valley floor of the upper reaches of the River Colne. Despite the fact that, in physical terms, development within the parcel would form a natural extension of the easternmost edges of the settlement, the evaluation found that the floodplain had a Low landscape capacity. Any such development would have an extensive impact on a landscape with high value, with scope to mitigate these impacts being very limited over the medium to long term. The landscape around the river channel itself was considered to be intimate and organic, with richness in pattern, texture and scale that translates into strong character in a good condition. The open character of the adjacent valley slopes resulted in clear visibility to the valley floor and onwards to



**Key**

**Figure 1**

- Sible Hedingham
- Low capacity
- Medium-Low capacity
- Medium capacity
- District Boundary

**Base**

OS Map Braintree  
Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Findings of 2015 study

**Sible Hedingham Figure 1**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: S.JN



neighbouring Parcels on the opposite banks. The effect of potential development would be to affect the setting of the river valley landscape, built form being prominent in the landscape and affecting the function and characteristics of the existing bridging points.

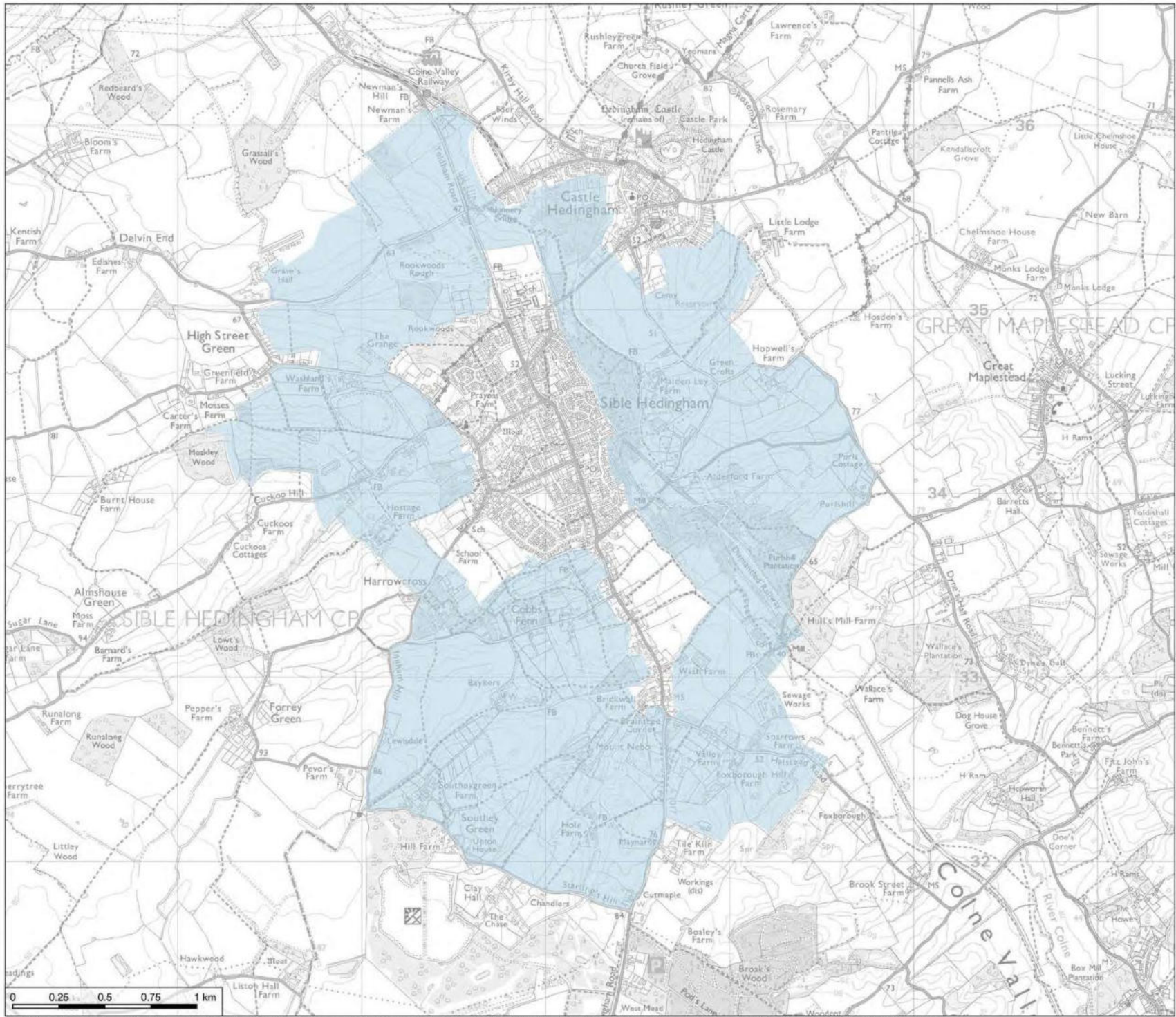
- 9.10 The impact of potential development on the physical and visual separation between Sible Hedingham and Castle Hedingham which, although different in size and form, straddle the river corridor to face each other on opposite sides of the valley, is a factor that would affect the capacity of the floodplain to accommodate such development.
- 9.11 The potential effect of coalescence on the capacity of the landscape to accommodate development is would also be evident in the stream valley landscapes that stretch from the western fringes of the settlement towards the plateau landscape, the brow of which is approximately 2km from the village itself. The hamlets of Highstreet Green, Forry's Green and Southey Green are loosely based on this transition from upper valley slope to the plateau landscape on which the former RAF Gosfield was located. Despite their small size, the effect of development in the landscape along the gently rising stream valleys would affect the definition of these settlements on the brow between plateau and valley slopes, whilst also affecting the characteristics of the loosely spaced properties and historic farmsteads. Development would affect the distinctly rural characteristics of Parcels 2b Rookwoods and 3d Southey Green, and have only limited associations with the existing urban fabric, with only glimpses of features on the Sible and Castle Hedingham skylines possible in distant views along the length of the stream valleys.

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## Study area

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- 9.12 Figure 2 maps those parcels from the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study which were judged to have Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity. These parcels form the study area for the current study.



**Key**

**Figure 2**  
 Sible Hedingham  
 Medium-Low and Low capacity parcels  
 District Boundary  
**Base**  
 OS Map Braintree  
 Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Study area

**Sible Hedingham Figure 2**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: S.JN

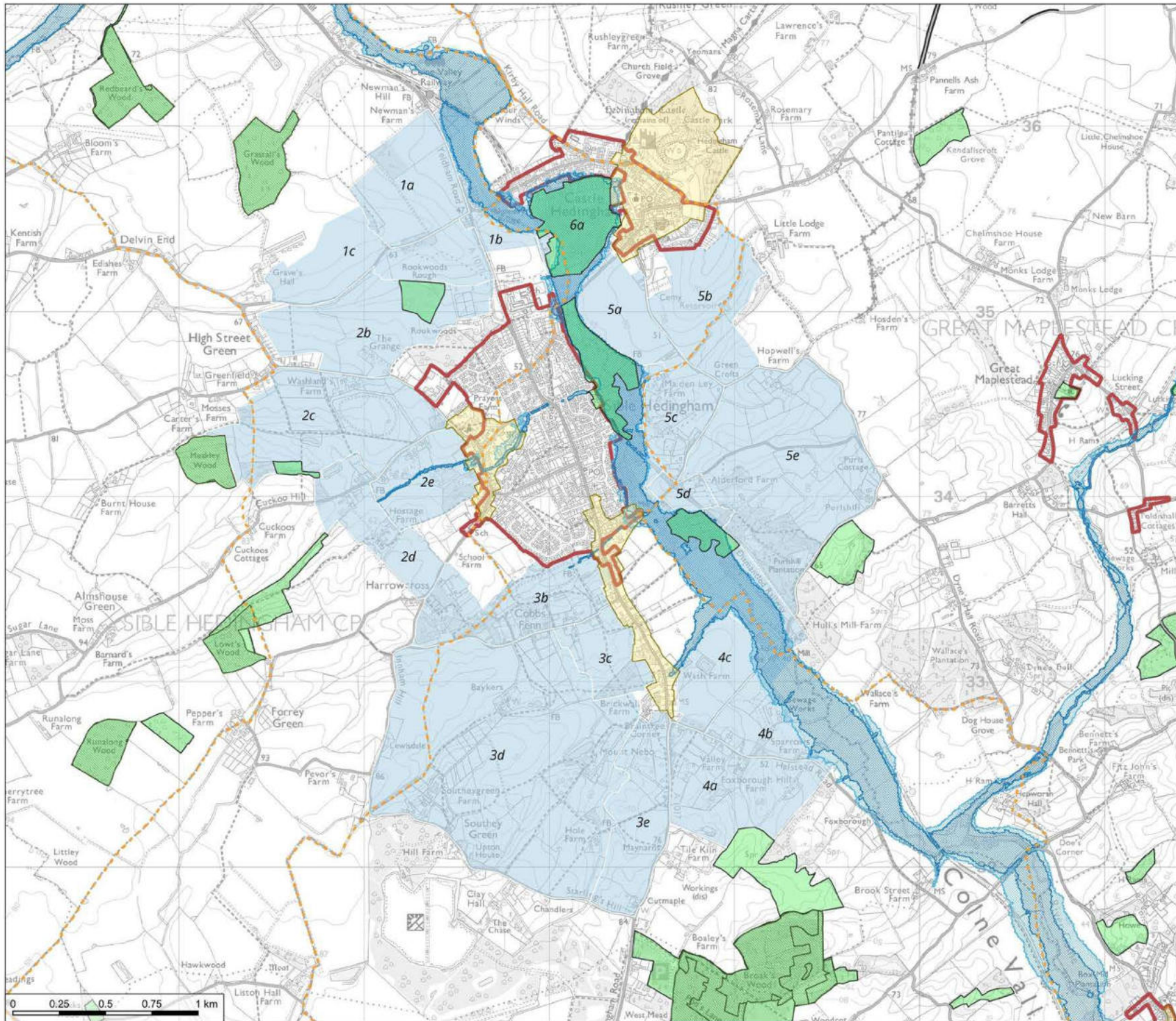


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**Subsequent development and constraints**

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- 9.13 Figure 3 maps those parcels from the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity, overlaid with landscape-related constraints that would preclude residential development.



**Key**

**Figure 3**

- Long Distance Footpaths
- Ancient Woodlands
- Local Wildlife Sites
- Conservation Areas
- Flood zone 3
- Flood zone 2
- Development boundaries
- District Boundary
- Sible Hedingham**
- Medium-Low and Low capacity parcels

**Base**

OS Map Braintree  
Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Constraints

**Sible Hedingham Figure 3**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN

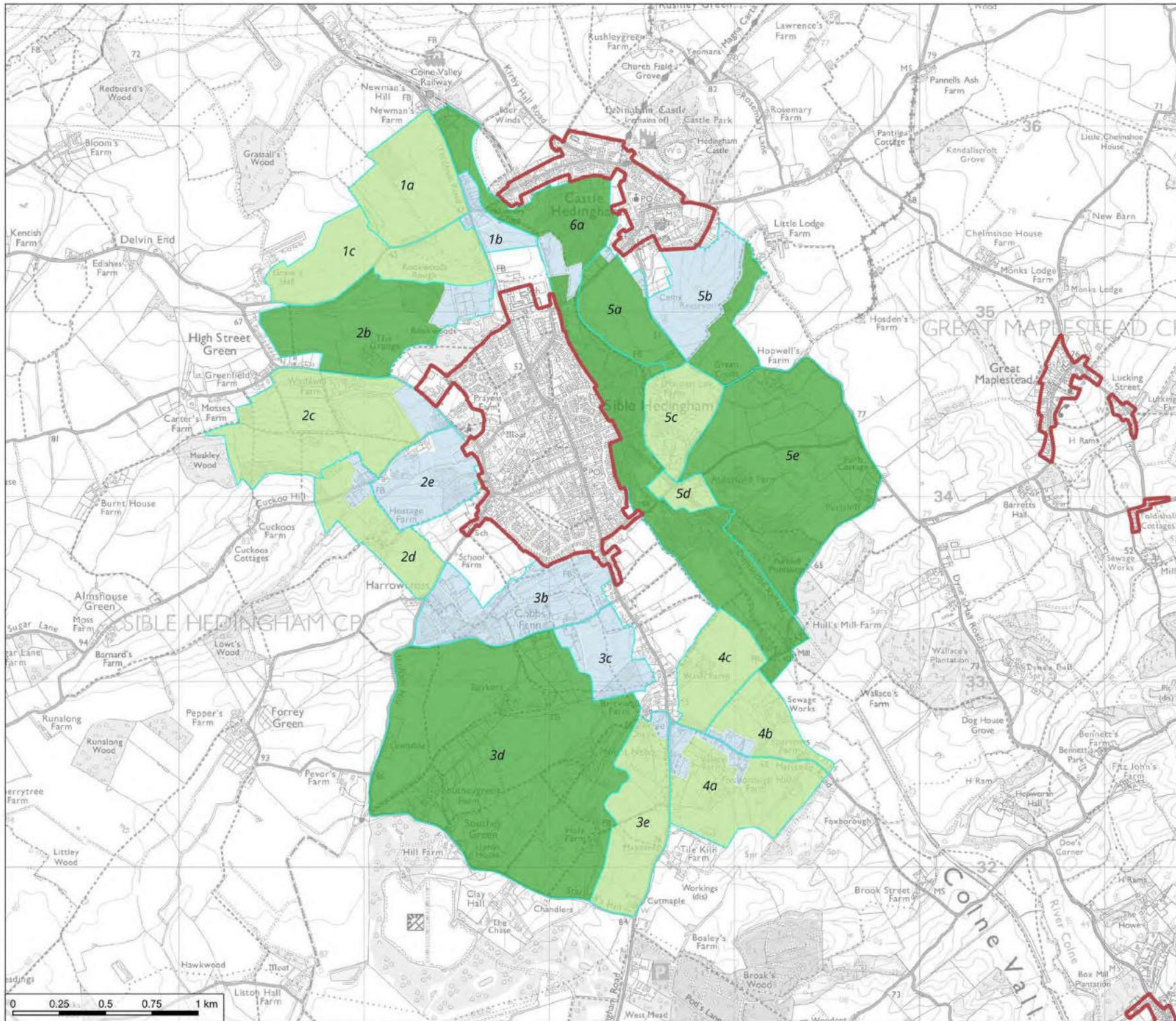


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**Identification of land for further assessment**

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- 9.14 Figure 4 maps the land around Sible Hedingham and Castle Hedingham that has been considered within the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment.
- 9.15 The following areas of land around Sible Hedingham and Castle Hedingham's settlement fringe have been excluded from re-assessment:
- Landscape Setting Areas judged to have a Medium, Medium to High, or High capacity to accommodate residential development in the 2007 Settlement Fringe Study.
  - Land Parcels judged to have a Medium, Medium-High or High landscape capacity to accommodate residential development in the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study.
  - Flood Zones 2 and 3.
  - Ancient Woodland.
  - Land developed subsequent to the 2015 study, and land with consent for development.
  - Land Parcels with a consistent and uniform character (i.e. without localised variations) that were judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity in the 2015 study which still maintain the same relationship to the settlement.
  - Land distant from Sible Hedingham's settlement edge with a strong rural character.



**Key**

**Figure 4**

2015 parcels

□ District Boundary

□ Development boundaries

Sible Hedingham

□ 2015 parcels

Stage 1 review

Sible Hedingham

□ Areas for detailed assessment

■ Low capacity

■ Medium-Low capacity

Base

OS Map Braintree

Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Areas for detailed assessment

**Sible Hedingham Figure 4**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: S.JN

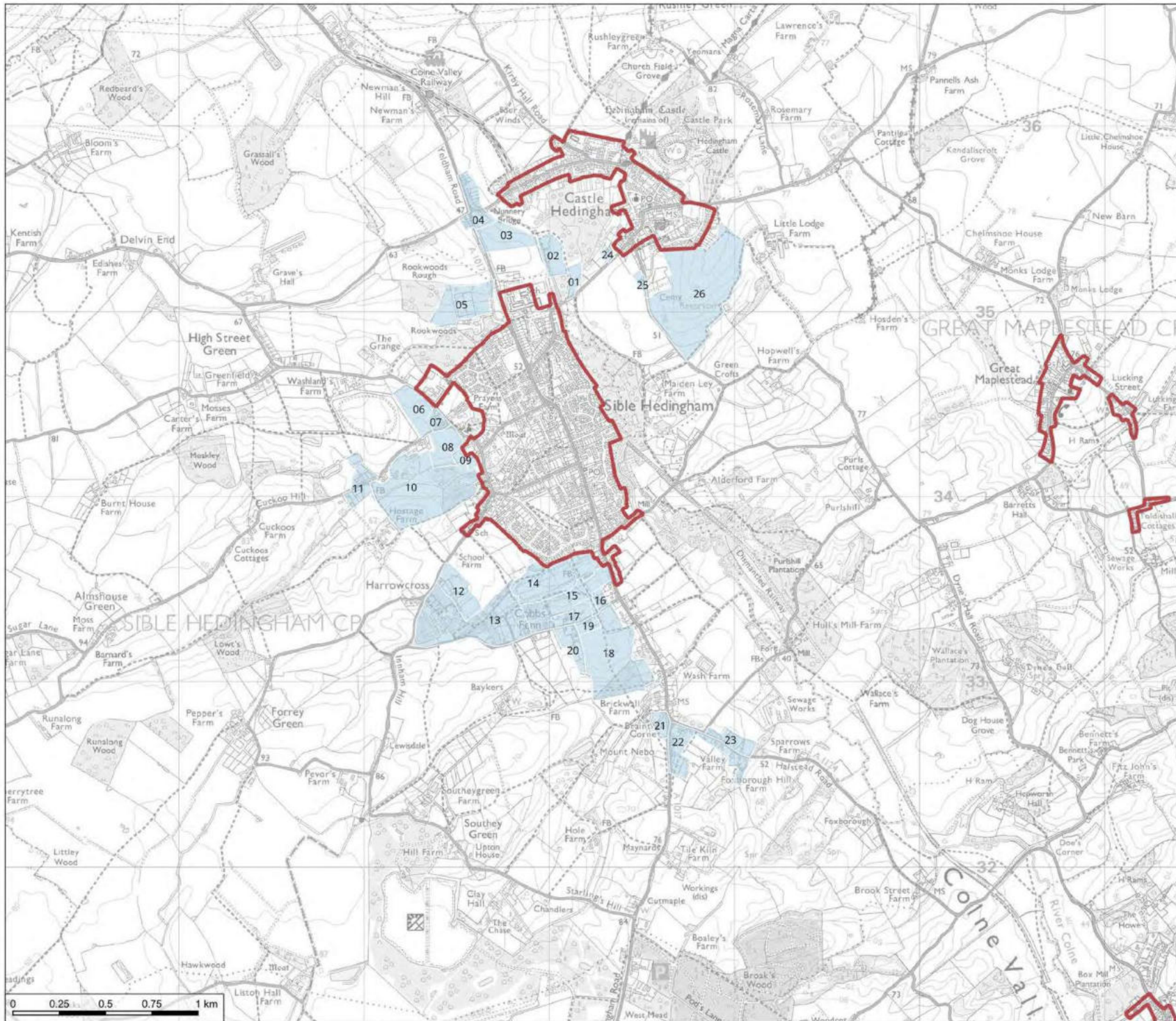


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**Identification of sub-parcels for further assessment**

---

9.16 Figure 5 identifies a series of sub-parcels that have been used as the basis for assessment.



**Key**

**Figure 5**

-  District Boundary
-  Development boundaries
- Sible Hedingham**
-  Sub-parcels

**Base**

OS Map Braintree  
Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Sub-parcels

**Sible Hedingham Figure 5**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: S.JN

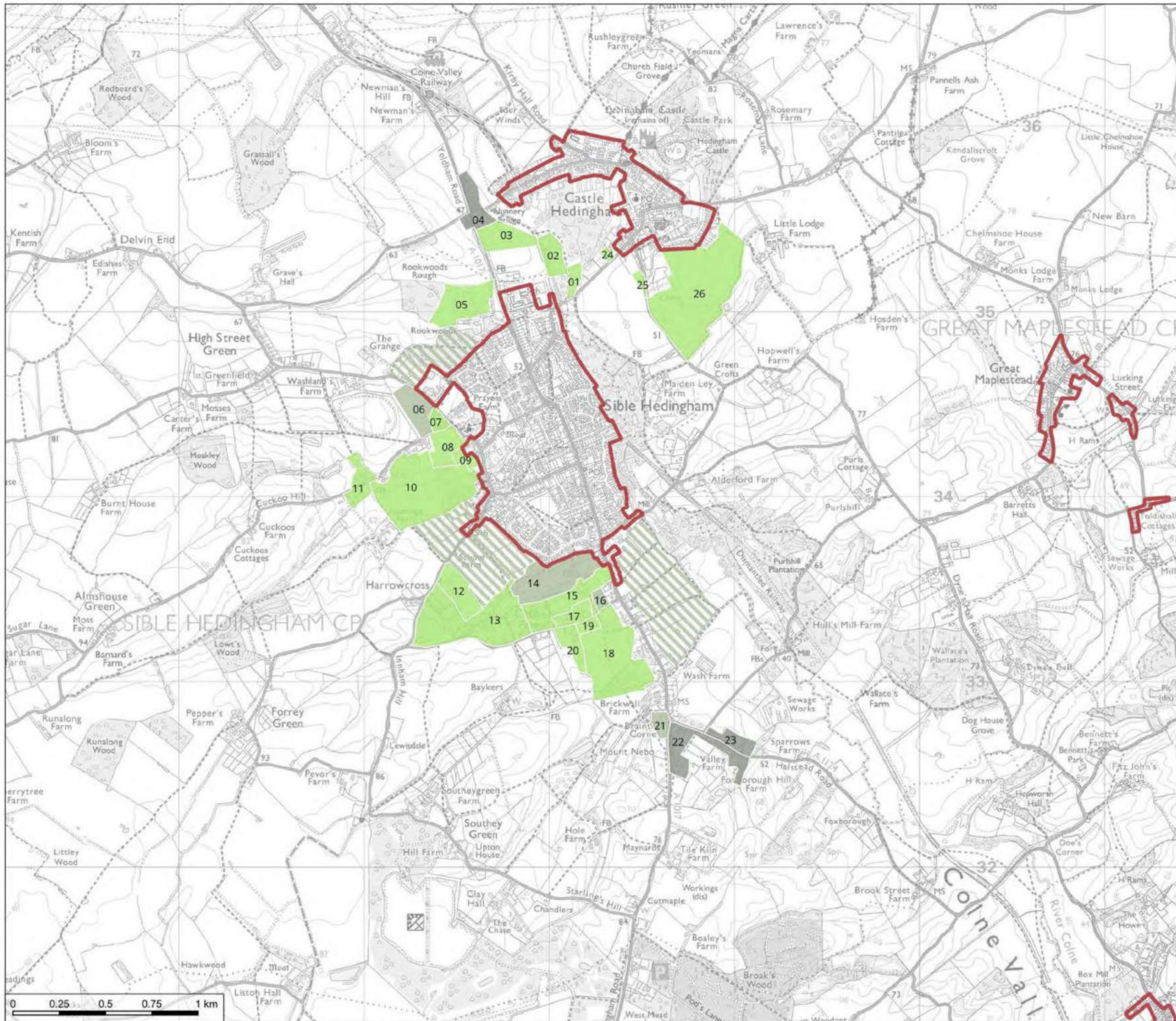


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**Findings of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment**

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- 9.17 Figure 6 summarises the findings of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment in relation to Sible Hedingham and Castle Hedingham.
- 9.18 The detailed findings of the assessment are reproduced at Appendix 02-07.



**Key**

**Figure 6**

- District Boundary
- Development boundaries
- Sible Hedingham**
- Medium-High Sensitivity
- Medium Sensitivity
- Medium-Low Sensitivity
- Previously assessed as Medium capacity

**Base**

OS Map Braintree

Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Landscape sensitivity

**Sible Hedingham Figure 6**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: S.JN



## 10 Silver End

### Findings of 2015 Settlement Fringe Study

- 10.1 Figure 1 illustrates the findings of the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study in relation to Silver End.
- 10.2 Further information can be found in *Braintree District Settlement Fringes: Evaluation of Landscape Analysis Study of Silver End*, prepared by The Landscape Partnership for Braintree District Council and dated June 2015.
- 10.3 The study reached the following conclusions regarding those parcels that were judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity to accommodate development.

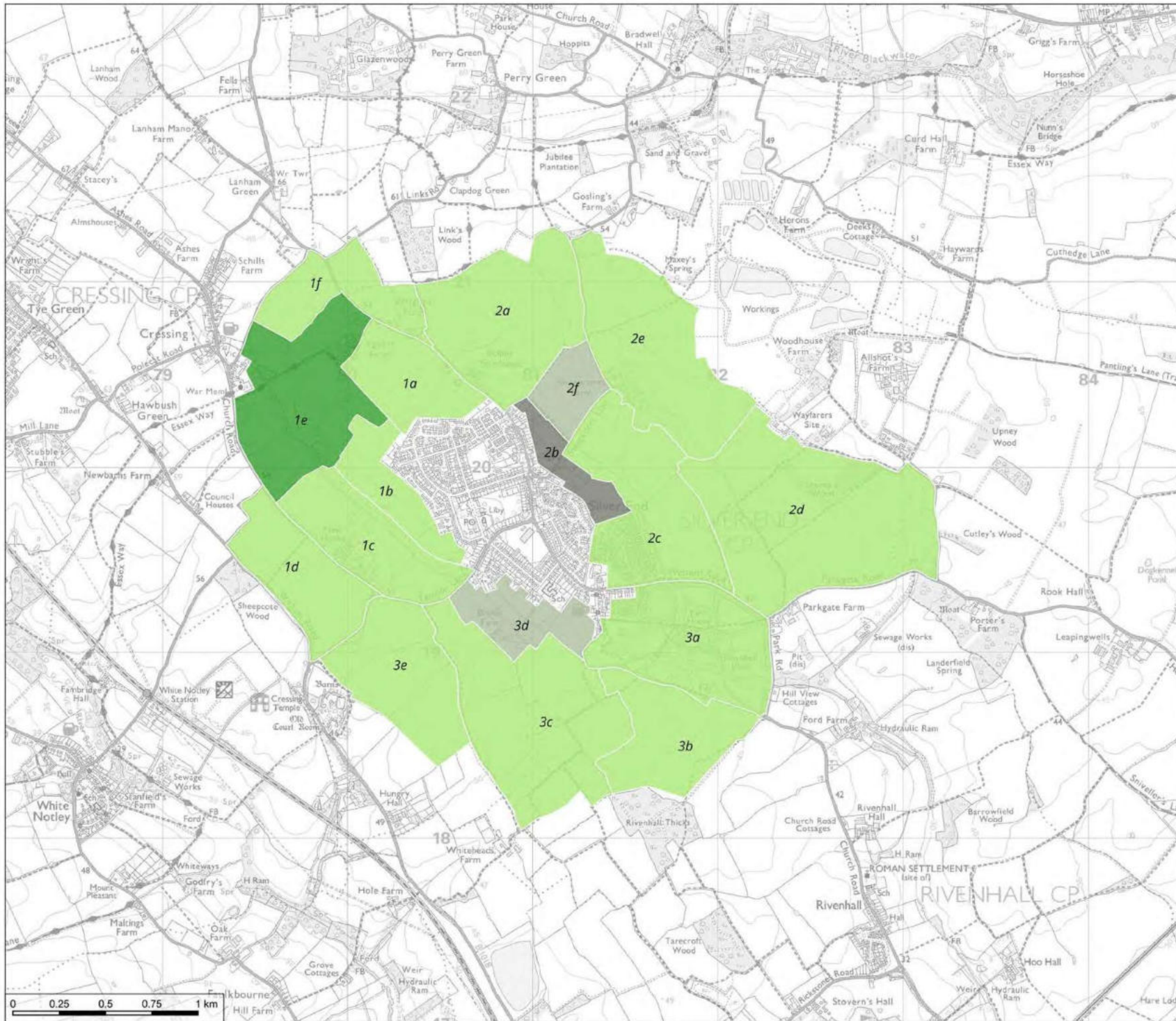
#### **Medium-Low landscape capacity**

- 10.4 The analysis found that the landscape to the outer fringes of the Setting Areas had a Medium-Low capacity to accommodate development. Large Parcels on the outskirts of the settlement had limited associations with the urban fabric and contribute to the rural setting of Silver End. The agricultural land was judged to frame the village and the good structure of hedgerows, trees and the landform helped to visually enclose the settlement in views from the surrounding landscape.
- 10.5 Areas to the south-east and north of Silver End were considered to have a good network of public rights of way which provided access to the countryside and opportunities for informal recreation. This included the promoted Essex Way which crossed Parcels 1a, 1e and 2a and increased the sensitivity of the landscape and views across it.
- 10.6 Parcels 1a and 1b wrapped around the existing settlement fringe. However, these areas were important to the setting of the Silver End Conservation Area and in preserving separation between Cressing and Silver End. The stretch of the Essex Way path within Parcel 1a provided open views across the arable fields. Development within these Parcels would be very open to view from adjacent housing, prominent in views from sensitive receptors and adverse to the rural character of the landscape.
- 10.7 The parkland and Listed Buildings at Rivenhall Place were considered to

be of increased sensitivity. Rivenhall Place is a Grade II\* Listed Building and the landscape surrounding it had a tranquil, rural character. Parcel 3a had good containment by good quality hedgerows and tree belts, and the undulating topography provided some visual containment to the existing built development within the parcel. However, the area was assessed to provide a strong contribution to the setting of Silver End, had a strong rural character, well maintained landscape features and provide valuable links between the settlement and the surrounding landscape.

#### **Low landscape capacity**

- 10.8 The location of Parcel 1e within intervening farmland providing separation to Silver End and Cressing was found to further reduce its capacity to accommodate development. The parcel contributed to the rural setting of the Cressing Conservation Area and a group of Listed Buildings including All Saints Church.
- 10.9 The Essex Way crossed the centre of the parcel with relatively open views across the farmland. Development within the parcel would have an intrusive impact on the historic setting of the village and significantly compromise the separation between settlements which have individual and distinct characteristics.



**Key**

Figure 1

**Silver End**

- Low capacity
- Medium-Low capacity
- Medium capacity
- Medium-High capacity

District Boundary

**Base**

OS Map Braintree  
Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Findings of 2015 study

**Silver End Figure 1**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: S.JN

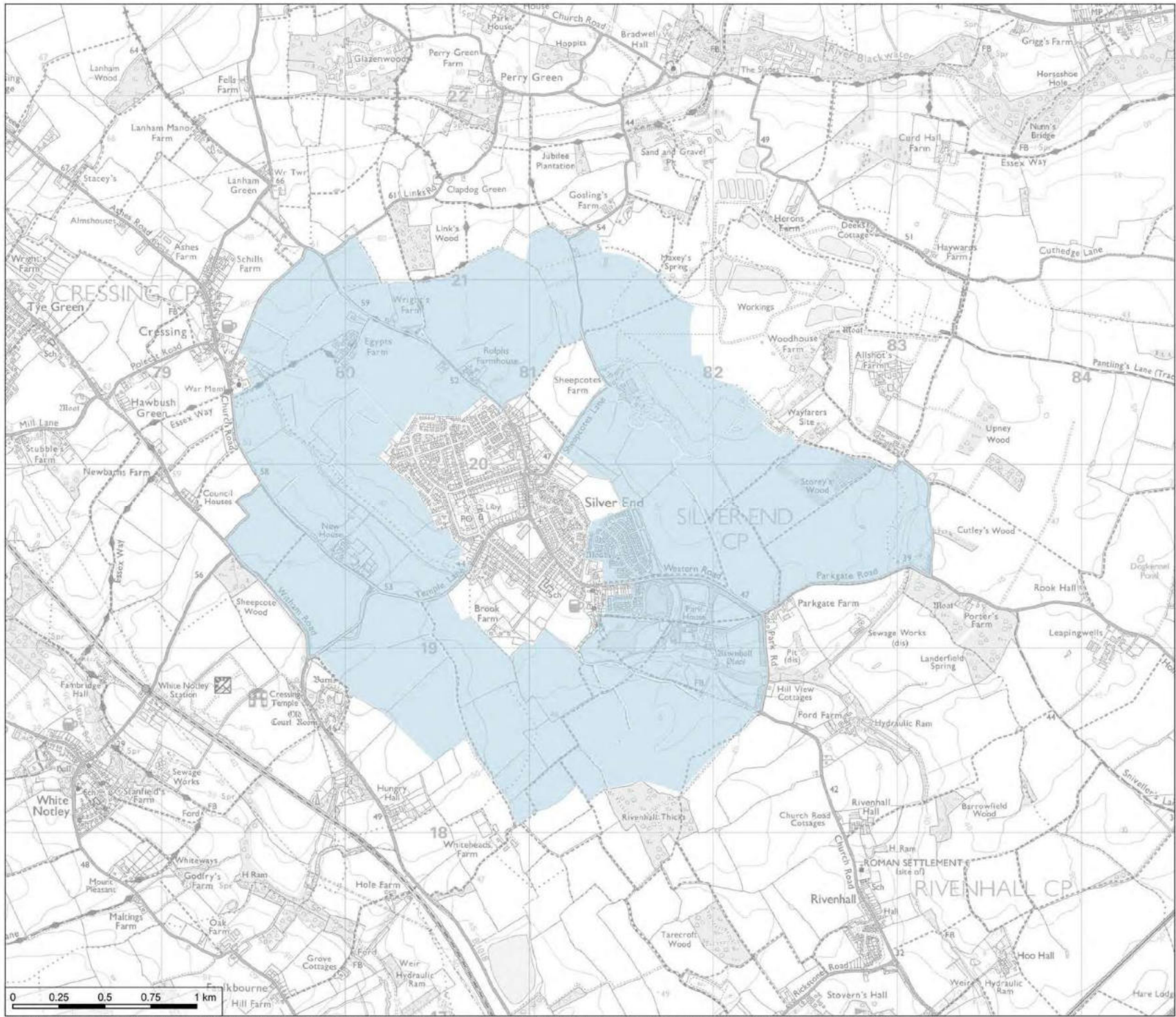


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**Study area**

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- 10.10 Figure 2 maps those parcels from the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study which were judged to have Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity. These parcels form the study area for the current study.



- Key**
- Figure 2
- Silver End
- Medium-Low and Low capacity parcels
  - District Boundary
- Base
- OS Map Braintree
- Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Study area

**Silver End Figure 2**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: S.J.N



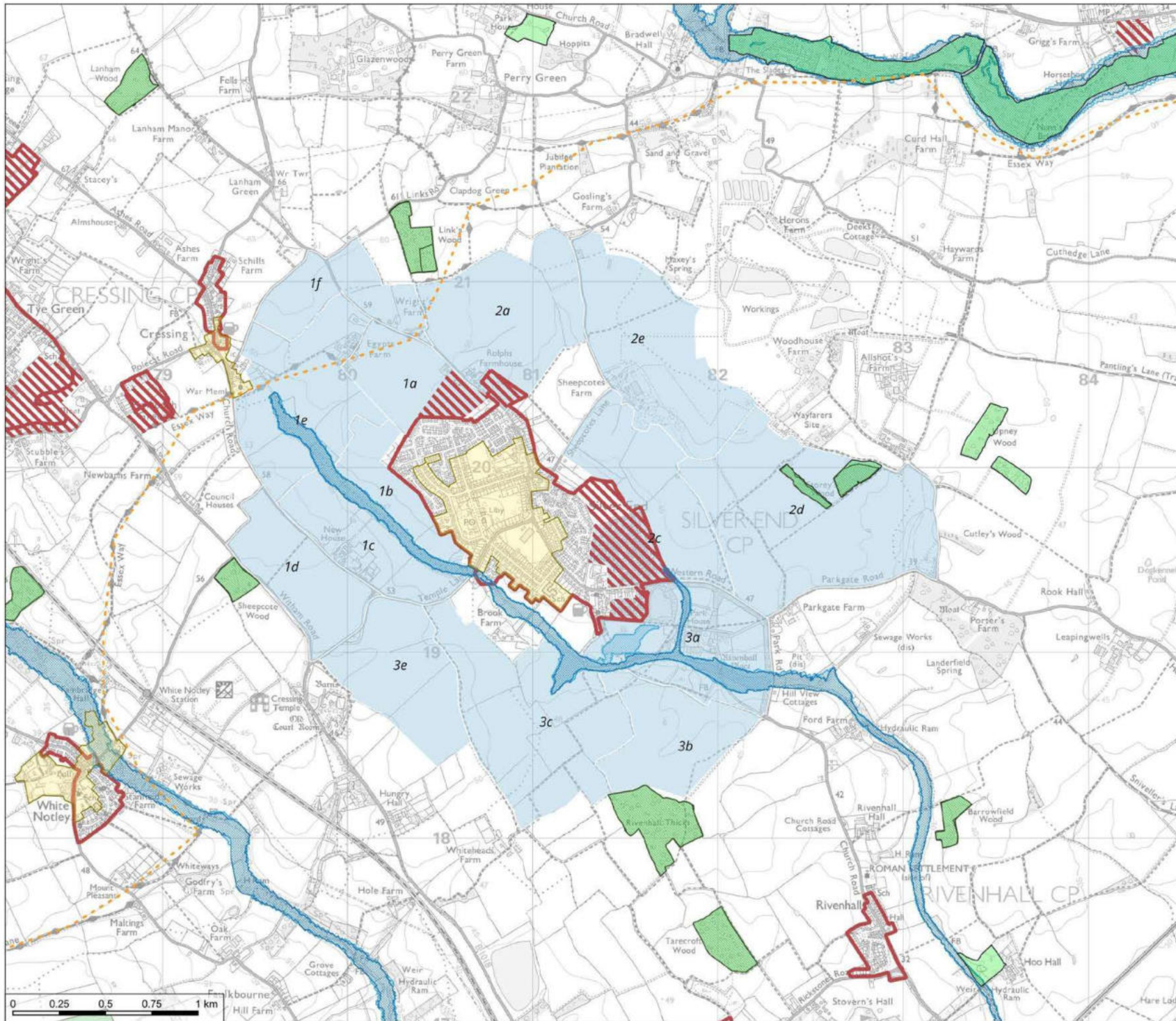
**the landscape partnership**  
planning and designing environments for life

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**Subsequent development and constraints**

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- 10.11 Figure 3 maps those parcels from the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity, overlaid with landscape-related constraints that would preclude residential development. The figure also shows areas of land that have gained planning permission since 2015.



**Key**

**Figure 3**

- Long Distance Footpaths
- Ancient Woodlands
- Local Wildlife Sites
- Conservation Areas
- Flood zone 3
- Flood zone 2
- Planning consents
- Development boundaries
- District Boundary
- Silver End**
- Medium-Low and Low capacity parcels
- Base**
- OS Map Braintree
- Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Constraints

**Silver End Figure 3**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN



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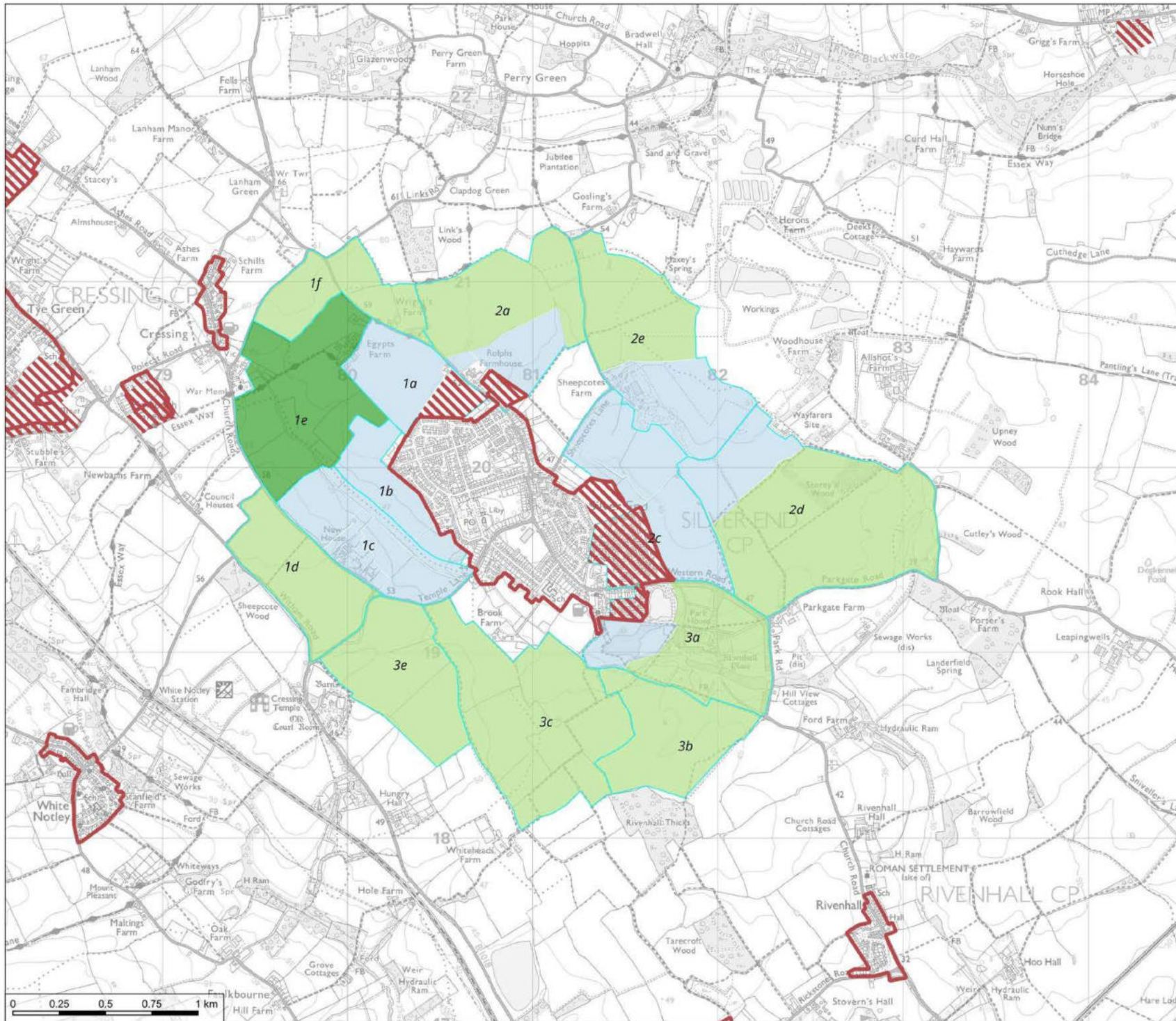
**Identification of land for further assessment**

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10.12 Figure 4 maps the land around Silver End that has been considered within the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment.

10.13 The following areas of land around Silver End's settlement fringe have been excluded from re-assessment:

- Landscape Setting Areas judged to have a Medium, Medium to High, or High capacity to accommodate residential development in the 2007 Settlement Fringe Study.
- Land Parcels judged to have a Medium, Medium-High or High landscape capacity to accommodate residential development in the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study..
- Flood Zones 2 and 3.
- Ancient Woodland.
- Land developed subsequent to the 2015 study, and land with consent for development.
- Land Parcels with a consistent and uniform character (i.e. without localised variations) that were judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity in the 2015 study which still maintain the same relationship to the settlement.
- Land distant from Silver End's settlement edge with a strong rural character.



**Key**

Figure 4

2015 parcels

District Boundary

Development boundaries

Planning consents

Silver End

2015 parcels

Stage 1 review

Silver End

Areas for detailed assessment

Low capacity

Medium-Low capacity

Base

OS Map Braintree

Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Stage 1 review

**Silver End Figure 4**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN

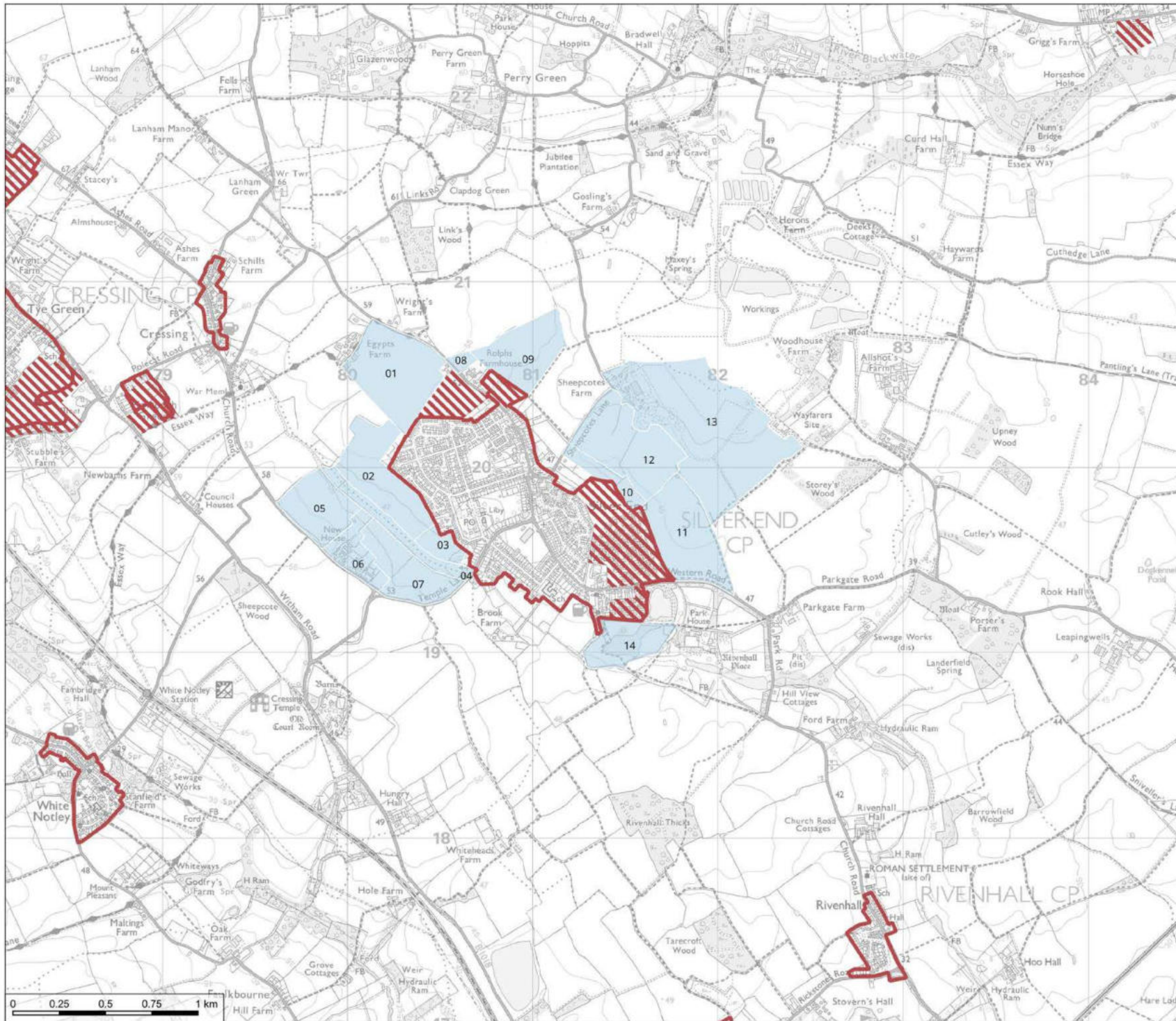


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**Identification of sub-parcels for further assessment**

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10.14 Figure 5 identifies a series of sub-parcels that have been used as the basis for assessment.



**Key**

Figure 5

District Boundary

Development boundaries

Planning consents

Silver End

Sub-parcels

Base

OS Map Braintree

Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Sub-parcels

**Silver End Figure 5**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN

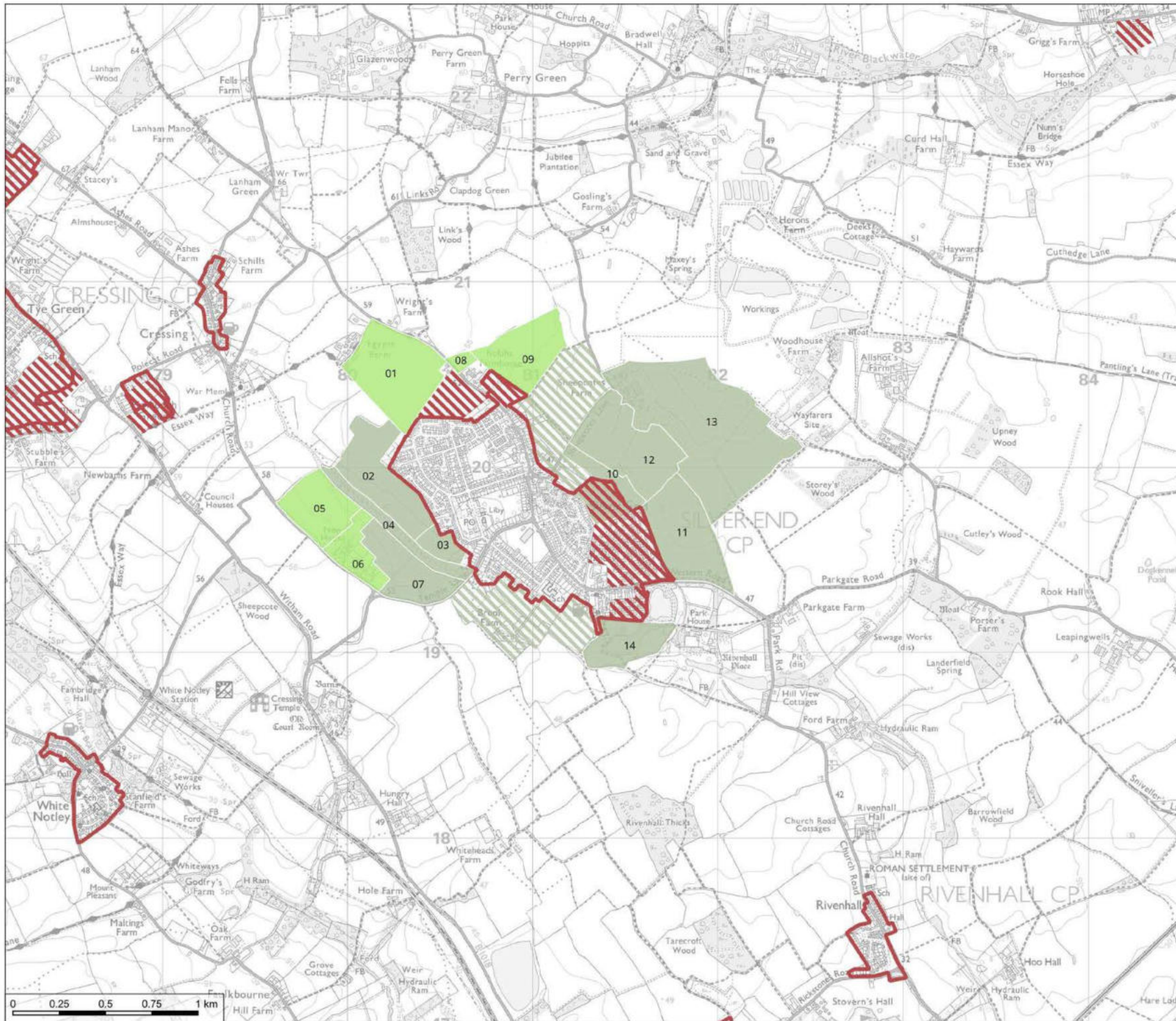


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**Landscape Sensitivity Assessment**

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- 10.15 Figure 6 summarises the findings of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment in relation to Silver End.
- 10.16 The detailed findings of the assessment are reproduced at Appendix 02-08.



**Key**

Figure 6

- District Boundary
- Development boundaries
- Planning consents

Silver End

- Medium-High Sensitivity
- Medium Sensitivity
- Previously assessed as Medium capacity

Base

- OS Map Braintree
- Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Landscape sensitivity

**Silver End Figure 6**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN



## 11 Witham

### Findings of 2015 Settlement Fringe Study

- 11.1 Figure 1 illustrates the findings of the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study.
- 11.2 Further information can be found in *Braintree District Settlement Fringes: Evaluation of Landscape Analysis Study of Witham*, prepared by The Landscape Partnership for Braintree District Council and dated June 2015.
- 11.3 The study reached the following conclusions regarding those parcels that were judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity to accommodate development.

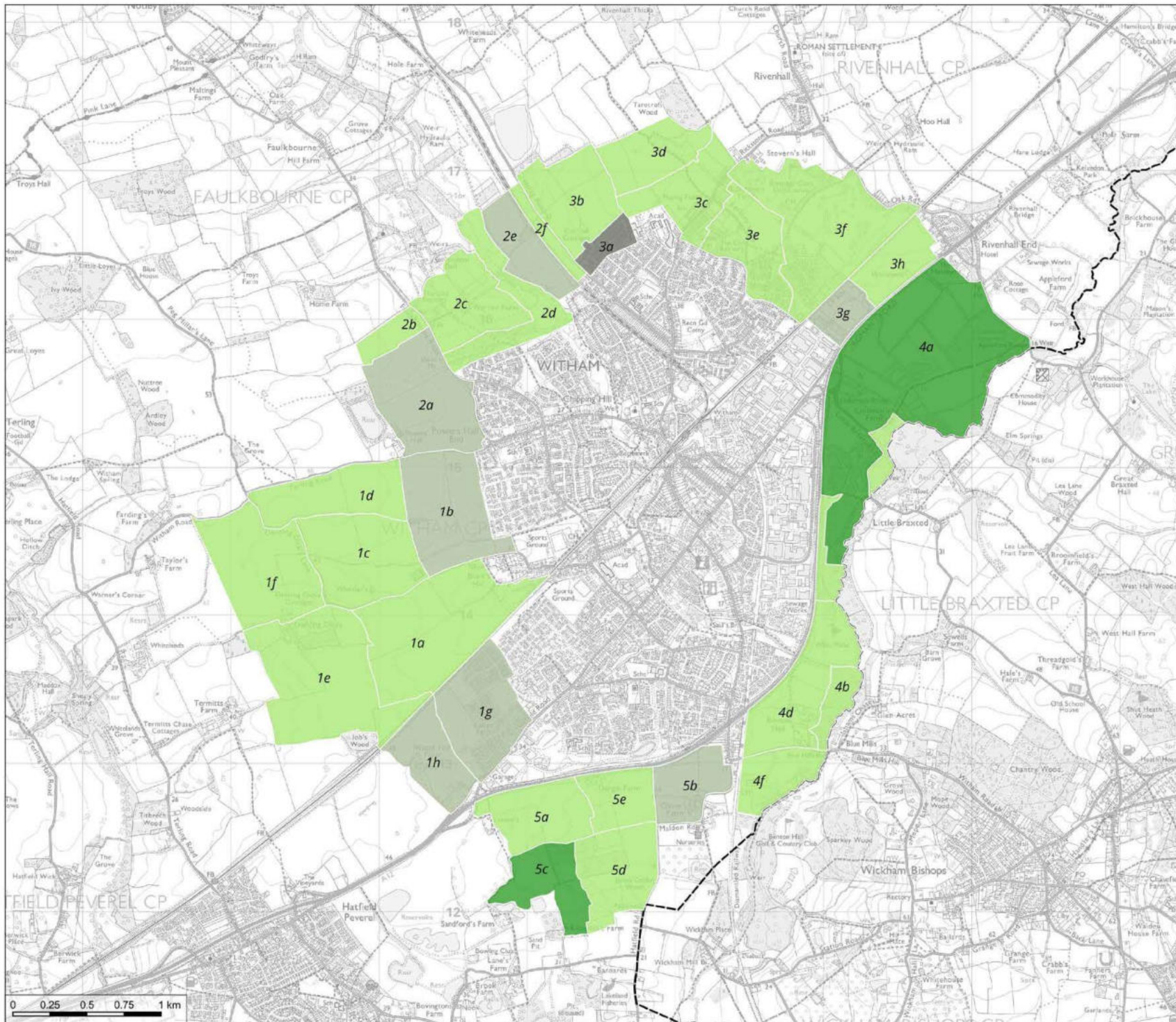
#### **Medium-Low landscape capacity**

- 11.4 The analysis found that the landscape around the more distant fringes of Witham had a Medium to Low capacity to accommodate development. The gradual rise away from the town and Rivers Brain and Blackwater (at c.20m AOD) towards the adjacent undulating farmland landscape (which rises to approximately 50m AOD) resulted in parcels being visible in distant views across the valley landscapes.
- 11.5 The combination of a sense of a distinctly rural farmland landscape, a sense of remoteness and tranquillity away from the busy road corridors and existing settlement edges, the network of both pre-18th century and 18th to 19th century field enclosure, and a framework of boundary hedgerows and woodland blocks reduced the capacity of the landscape to absorb new residential or employment development without significantly affecting these key characteristics.
- 11.6 The landscape framework of fields frequently reflected the pre-18th century and 18th-19th century pattern of enclosure, and are contained by well-managed hedgerows with associated trees, and woodland blocks which provide a sense of landscape in good condition. The distant views in and out of the Parcels are possible at local high points and at locations where the characteristic hedgerow enclosure is limited as at Parcel 1f (Dancing Dicks Lane).
- 11.7 The presence of landscape designations such as the County Wildlife Sites at the confluence of the rivers adjacent to the elevated corridor of the A12 in Parcel 4d, grassland alongside Rectory Lane in Parcel 3e, and pasture on the valley

floor of the River Brain in the south eastern corner of Parcel 2d; the numerous Listed Buildings set within farmsteads in the gently undulating farmland such as at Powers Hall in Parcel 2a and Benton Hall in Parcel 4d; the tranquil nature of the landscape around Dancing Dicks House and Dancing Dicks Lane in Parcels 1e and 1f; and presence of footpaths such as those south of the A12 corridor in the vicinity of Benton Hall and Ishams Chase in Parcel 4b, and adjacent to the New Rickstone's Academy on the northernmost fringes of Landscape Setting Area 03, further reduced the capacity of the landscape to absorb new built development.

#### **Low landscape capacity**

- 11.8 The capacity of the lower valley slopes associated with the River Blackwater in Parcels 4a Rivenhall End and 4c Little Braxted was found to be consistently Low due to the strong rural character, nature of the landscape features and visual factors that underpin them, and the close associations with the River Blackwater corridor that runs between them. The parcels were found to be unaffected by any intrusive developments, with Parcel 4a providing separation between Witham and the small village of Rivenhall End to the north-east. Development could affect the distinctly rural characteristics of Parcel 4c, which is isolated from the town and has only limited associations with the existing urban fabric, with the large scale industrial buildings on the northern fringes of Witham only visible beyond the vegetation lining the A12 road corridor.
- 11.9 Parcel 5c occupied the gentle east facing slopes of the River Blackwater, and as such its topography related to the wider landscape. It was considered that the footpath network and presence of the fishing lakes on the existing fringes of Hatfield Peverel would result in a clear impression of any new development in an otherwise open and rural farmland landscape.



**Key**

**Figure 1**

**Witham**

- Low capacity
- Medium-Low capacity
- Medium capacity
- Medium-High capacity

District Boundary

**Base**

OS Map Braintree

Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Findings of 2015 study

**Witham Figure 1**

Scale: 1:25000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN

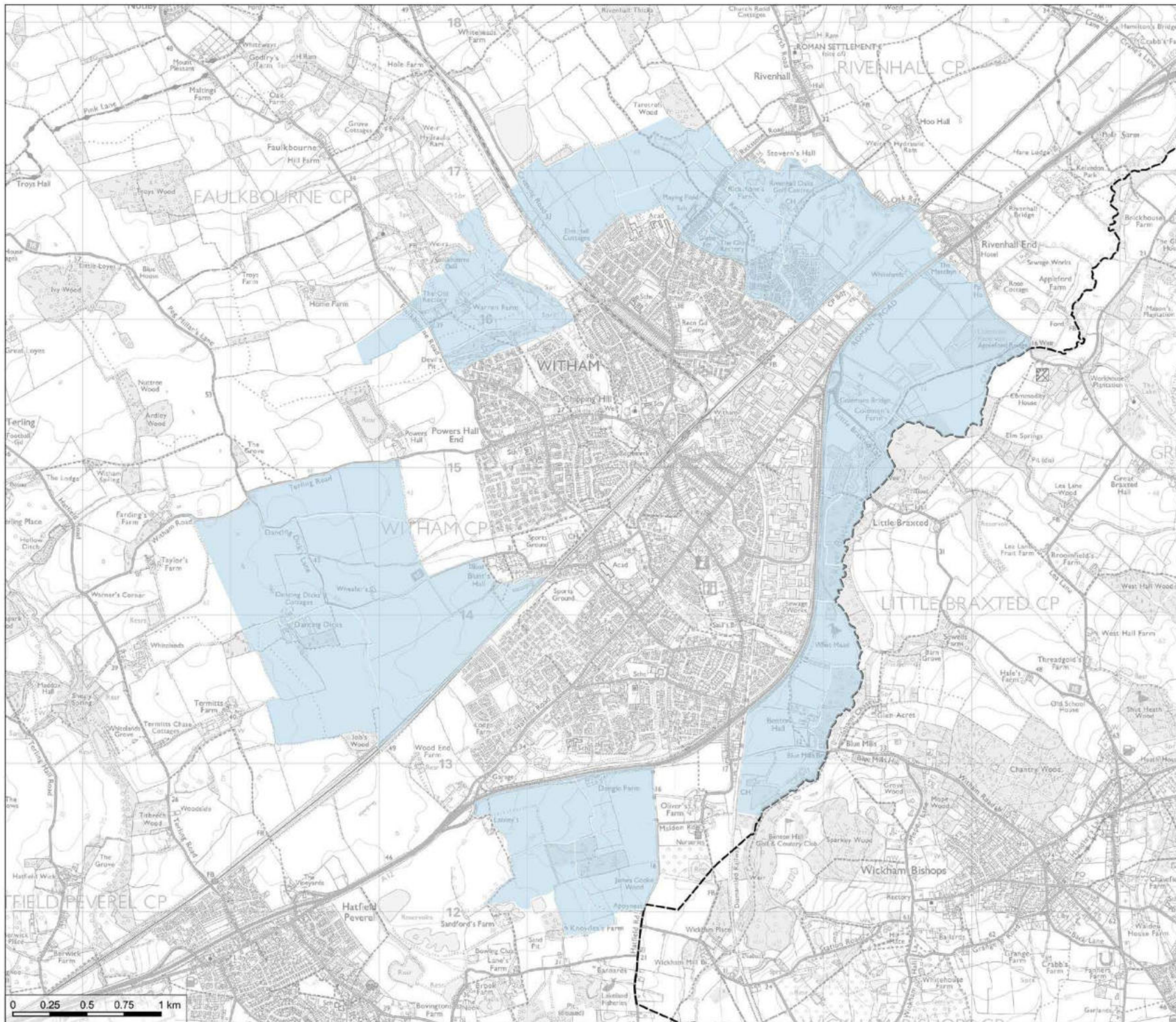


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**Study area**

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- 11.10 Figure 2 maps those parcels from the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study which were judged to have Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity. These parcels form the study area for the current study.




**Key**

**Figure 2**

**Witham**

 Medium-Low and Low capacity parcels

 District Boundary

**Base**

OS Map Braintree

Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Study area

**Witham Figure 2**

Scale: 1:25000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN

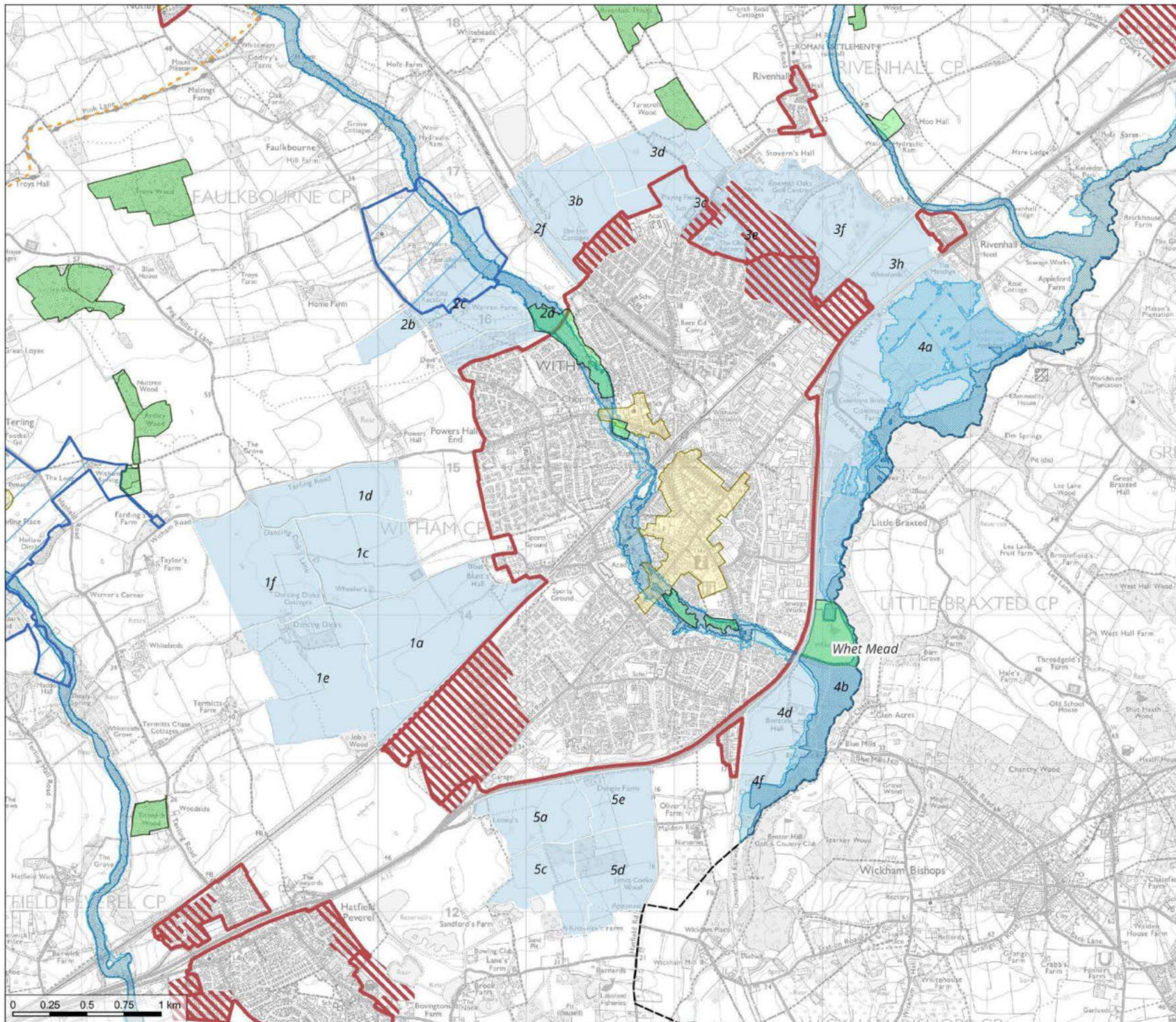


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**Subsequent development and constraints**

---

- 11.11 Figure 3 maps those parcels from the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity, overlaid with landscape-related constraints that would preclude residential development. The figure also shows areas of land that have gained planning permission since 2015.



**Key**

**Figure 3**

- Long Distance Footpaths
- Local Nature Reserves
- Ancient Woodlands
- Local Wildlife Sites
- Conservation Areas
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Flood zone 3
- Flood zone 2
- Planning consents
- Development boundaries
- District Boundary
- Witham**
- Medium-Low and Low capacity parcels
- Base**
- OS Map Braintree
- Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Constraints

**Witham Figure 3**

Scale: 1:25000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN

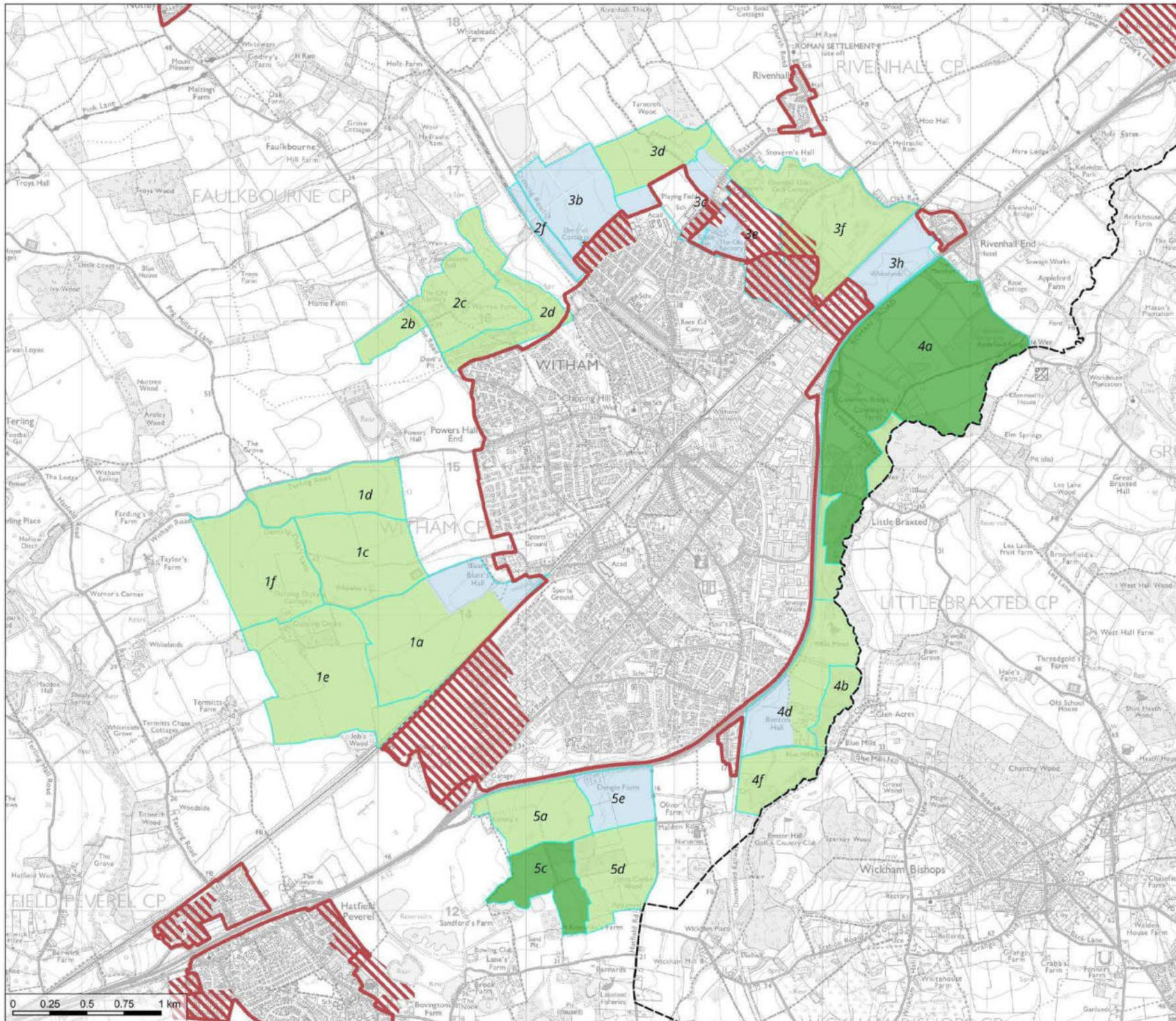


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**Identification of land for further assessment**

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- 11.12 Figure 4 maps the land around Witham that has been considered within the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment.
- 11.13 The following areas of land around Witham's settlement fringe have been excluded from re-assessment:
- Landscape Setting Areas judged to have a Medium, Medium to High, or High capacity to accommodate residential development in the 2007 Settlement Fringe Study.
  - Land Parcels judged to have a Medium, Medium-High or High landscape capacity to accommodate residential development in the 2015 Settlement Fringe Study.
  - Flood Zones 2 and 3.
  - Ancient Woodland.
  - Land developed subsequent to the 2015 study, and land with consent for development.
  - Land Parcels with a consistent and uniform character (i.e. without localised variations) that were judged to have a Medium-Low or Low landscape capacity in the 2015 study, which still maintain the same relationship to the settlement.
  - Land distant from Witham's settlement edge, with a strong rural character.



**Key**

Figure 4

2015 parcels

□ District Boundary

▭ Development boundaries

▨ Planning consents

Witham

□ 2015 parcels

Stage 1 review

Witham

▭ Areas for detailed assessment

▭ Low capacity

▭ Medium-Low capacity

Base

OS Map Braintree

Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Stage 1 review

**Witham Figure 4**

Scale: 1:25000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN

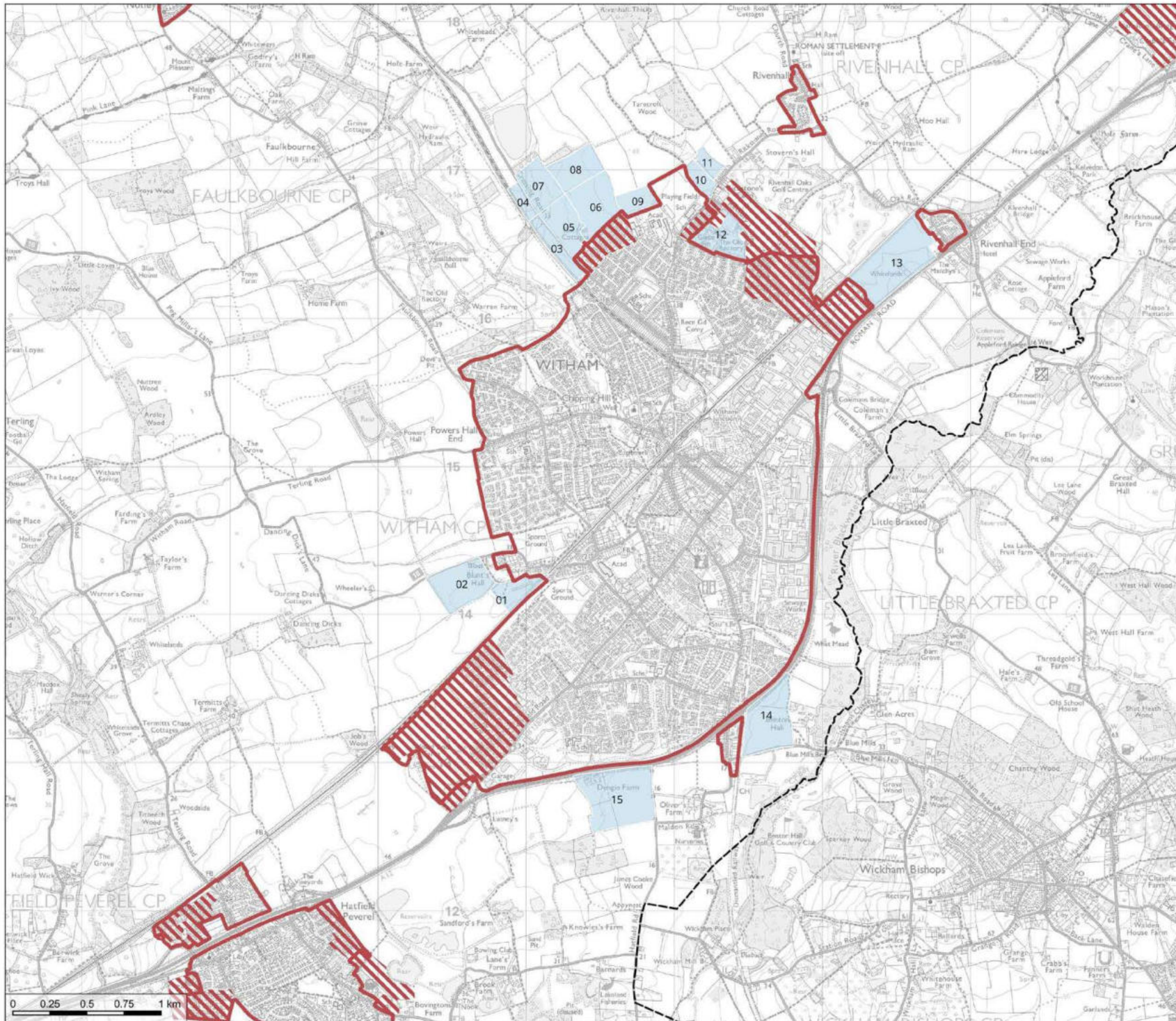


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**Identification of sub-parcels for further assessment**



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11.14 Figure 5 identifies a series of sub-parcels that have been used as the basis for assessment.




**Key**

**Figure 5**

-  District Boundary
-  Development boundaries
-  Planning consents

**Witham**

-  Sub-parcels

**Base**

- OS Map Braintree
- Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Sub-parcels

**Witham Figure 5**

Scale: 1:25000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN



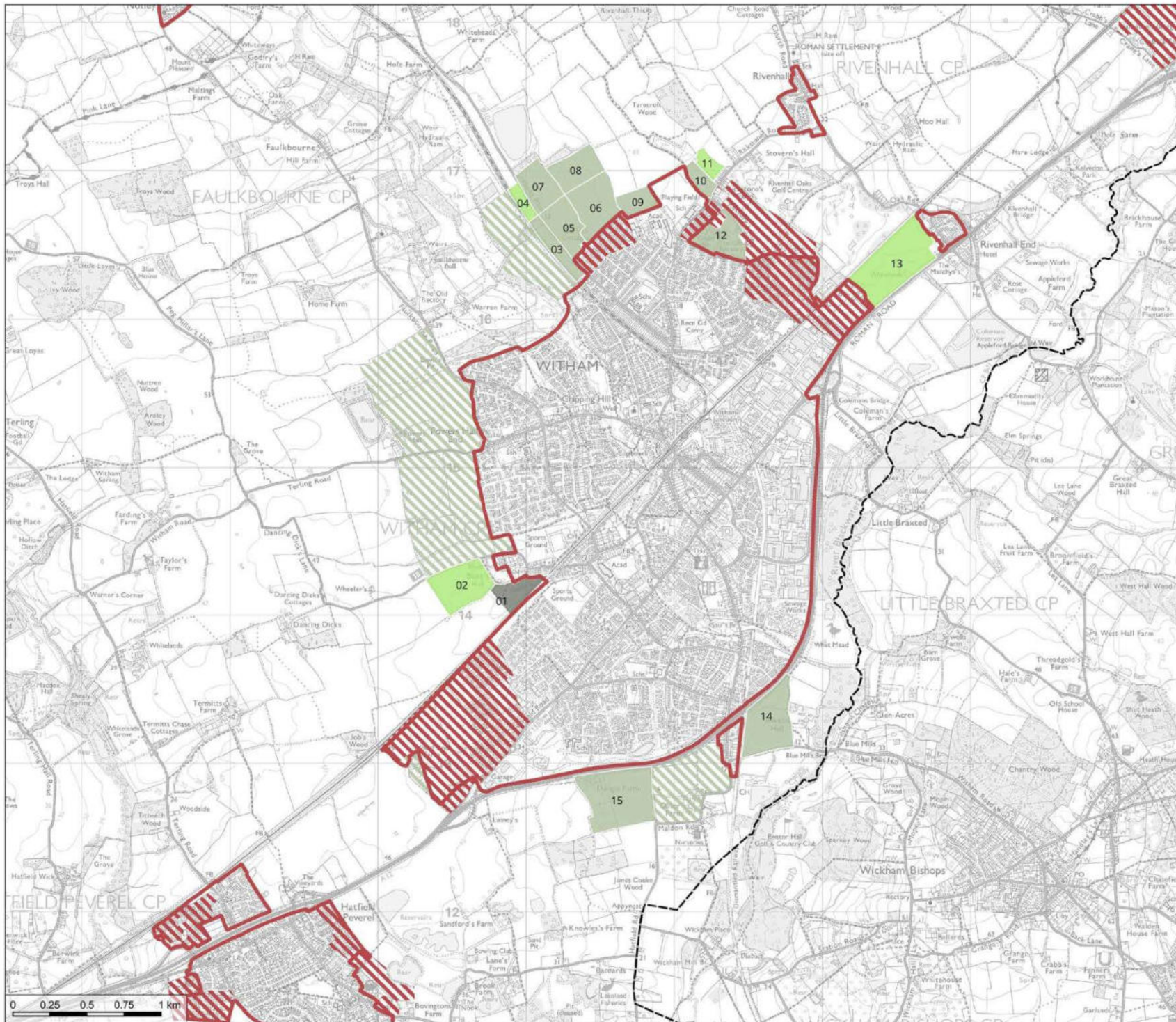
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**Landscape Sensitivity Assessment**

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11.15 Figure 6 summarises the findings of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment in relation to Witham.

11.16 The detailed findings of the assessment are reproduced at Appendix 02-09.



**Key**

Figure 6

-  District Boundary
-  Development boundaries
-  Planning consents
- Witham**
-  Medium-High Sensitivity
-  Medium Sensitivity
-  Medium-Low Sensitivity
-  Previously assessed as Medium capacity
- Base**
- OS Map Braintree
- Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Landscape sensitivity

**Witham Figure 6**

Scale: 1:25000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN



## 12 Review of Green Buffers

### Title

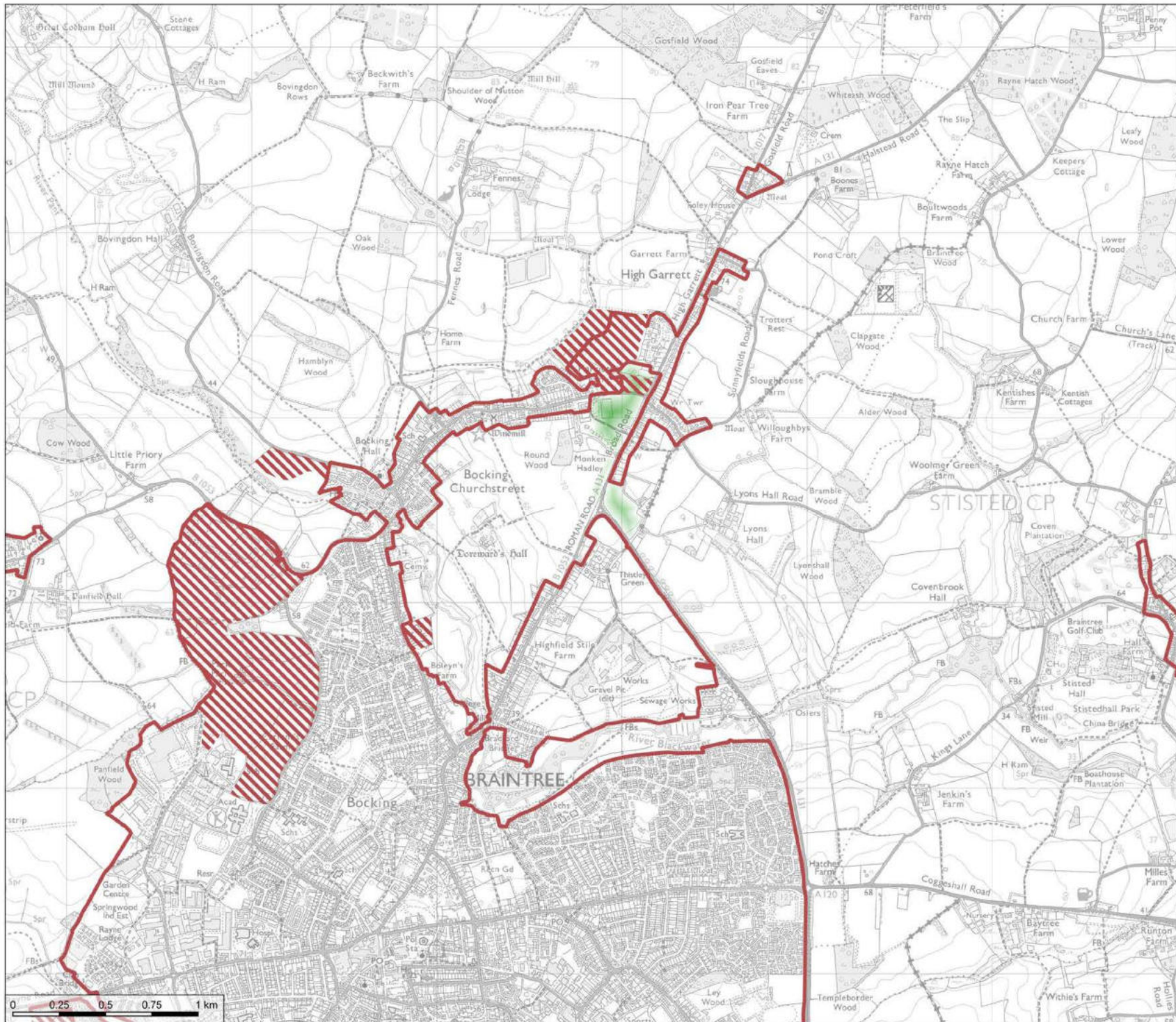
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12.1 The following Green Buffers have been identified in the Local Plan under policy LP68:

- Land between Bocking and High Garrett
- Land at Deanery Hill between Bocking and Bocking Churchstreet
- Land between Bocking and Panfield
- Land between Braintree and Rayne
- Land at the Bocking Blackwater Nature Reserve
- Land between Great Notley and Black Notley
- Land between Sible Hedingham and Castle Hedingham
- Land between Earls Colne and White Colne
- Land between Witham, Rivenhall and Rivenhall End







Land between Bocking and High Garrett	
The settlements which are separated	The Green Buffer falls within an unparished area which includes the settlements of Braintree, Bocking and High Garrett. The buffer separates High Garrett and Bocking/Bocking Churchstreet.
The separate identity of the settlements	<p>The settlements of Bocking and High Garrett have distinct historical origins, though they lie within the same original parish. Bocking refers to a former parish which extended north from Stane Street. The boundary between Braintree and Bocking originally lay in the centre of Stane Street, and houses on the northern side of the street fell within the settlement of Bocking. Historically the settlement consisted of development extending northwards from Stane Street along Bocking End/Bradford Street/Broad Road, and a separate area of settlement known as Bocking Church Street. The settlements of Braintree and Bocking have always been contiguous and are therefore sometimes referred to as 'Braintree and Bocking.'</p> <p>There is nonetheless a historic distinction between them which is still present to some extent. Administratively there is no longer any distinction between Braintree and Bocking, and 'Braintree' is sometimes used to refer to the town as a whole. In terms of addresses some areas to the north of Stane Street have Braintree in their address, and some addresses have dropped any reference to Bocking. Educational establishments, recreational facilities and businesses may also refer to Braintree in their name whilst technically being situated within Bocking. In this sense Bocking has been subsumed into Braintree. On the other hand there are other buildings and facilities which specifically refer to 'Bocking,' which help to create a distinct identity. Whilst Braintree and Bocking have always been contiguous subsequent development has only consolidated this, and the settlements can be considered to share a single town centre. Bocking is perhaps best conceived of as a distinct area within the larger Braintree and Bocking urban agglomeration, though some elements of identity are shared e.g. the 'Braintree and Bocking public gardens.'</p> <p>'Bocking Churchstreet' is referred to on maps and is included within addresses. There is a Bocking Church Street Community Primary School, but other facilities such as the village club and recreation ground refer simply to 'Bocking' in their name. There is a sign on the A131 for 'Bocking Church Street.' This marks the beginning of Church Street, but also seems to indicate a place. The southern end of Bocking Churchstreet however is not distinguished from the wider area of Bocking. The river creates a kind of separation, but urban development is effectively continuous along Church Lane and then Church Street. Bocking Churchstreet has a strong historical identity, but has now effectively coalesced with the other parts of Bocking. Bocking and Bocking Churchstreet now form part of the same contiguous built up area. Whilst it is possible to identify different identities, it is no longer possible to distinguish separate settlements.</p> <p>High Garrett originated as a small hamlet on 'High Garrett' road. Reference to historic maps shows a distinct settlement which was originally distant from the other areas of settlement within Bocking parish. The hamlet included Garret Farm and some cottages on Sunnyfields, a school, public house, Folly House, chapel and windmill. Many of these buildings are associated with the Courtauld Estate and are architecturally distinctive. Later development of a more generic type has extended along High Garrett road.</p>
The effectiveness of the separation	<p>Since the Local Plan was adopted an appeal has been allowed which has caused Bocking and High Garrett to coalesce. The planning approval has not impacted directly on the designated Green Buffer, but it has caused the settlements to effectively merge.</p> <p>Narrow gaps between the settlements are still experienced on the main movement routes. Moving along Church Street there was a short gap of around 240m length between Bocking and High Garrett. The subsequent planning approval has reduced the width of this gap to approximately 140m when travelling along the street. Moving along the A131 there is a short gap of around 315m between the northern edge of Bocking and the first properties in High Garrett.</p> <p>A road sign indicates the entry into High Garrett on the A1017, but there are no corresponding signs on the A131 or on Church Street. This reduces the sense of leaving one settlement and entering another as it is unclear whether a different settlement has been entered or not.</p>



**Key**

**Green buffers**

-  District Boundary
-  Development boundaries
-  Planning consents
-  Land between Bocking and High Garret

**Base**

OS Map Braintree  
Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

**Green Buffers**

**Figure 7.1**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

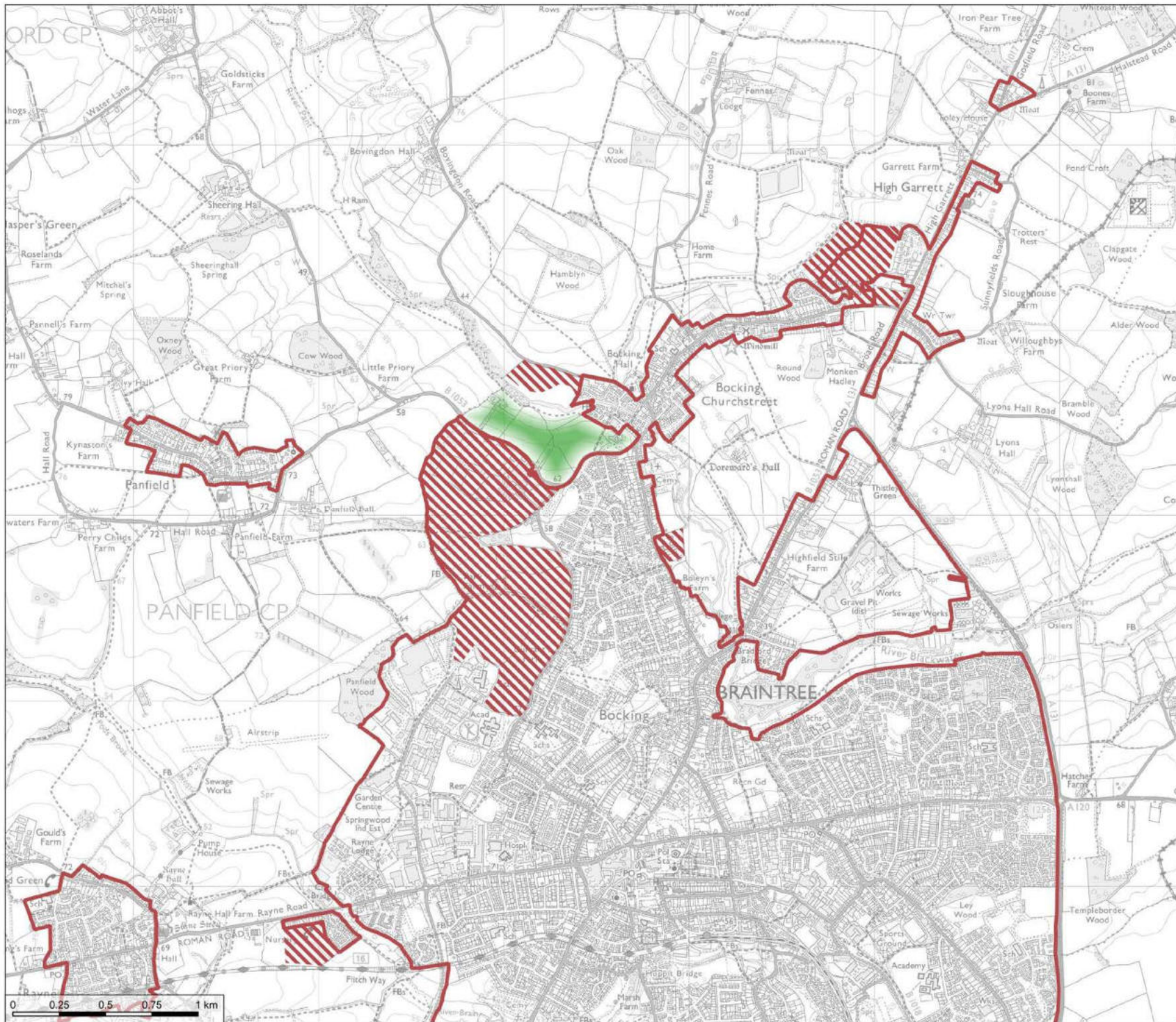
Drawn: SM Checked: SJN



<b>Land between Bocking and High Garrett</b>	
The land uses which are present within the buffer	The land uses within the gap consist of arable fields at the southern end of the gap , a large domestic garden and sports grounds in the centre of the gap and a small field and wood in the northern part of the gap. The gap is then largely undeveloped, but the garden and sports ground have an urban fringe character which reduces the sense of separation.
The case for retention	<p>High Garrett is different from Braintree and Bocking in terms of its form and history, and there are narrow gaps on the main movement routes which enable the settlements to be distinguished.</p> <p>Whilst the 2017 planning approval may not have affected the Green Buffer directly the effective coalescence between Bocking and High Garrett has reduced the sense of separate identities. The fact that there is coalescence also undermines the case for designating a Green Buffer as it is no longer possible to maintain physical separation if there is a continuous urban area. The case for retention then would have to be based on retention of distinct identities rather than maintenance of separation.</p> <p>The case for designating Green Buffers in the Local Plan was to ensure the maintenance of gaps between urban areas and the surrounding villages. Whilst High Garrett has some of its own services and facilities it is now physically joined to Bocking, and it is not possible to prevent coalescence once it has already occurred. The case for retention then would depend on the aims and wording of the proposed planning policy. If the aim is to prevent coalescence this would no longer be possible in this case, and there would then be no reason to retain this particular Green Buffer. Whilst High Garrett has some features of a separate and independent settlement it is not considered technically to be village. The settlement originated as a hamlet in Bocking parish and lacks features such as its own parish church, parish council, village hall or school. On balance then it is not considered that there is a strong case for retention.</p>
The case for extension	Not applicable.



<b>Land at Deanery Hill between Bocking and Bocking Churchstreet</b>	
The settlements which are separated	The Green Buffer falls within an unparished area which includes the settlements of Braintree, Bocking and High Garrett. The buffer separates Braintree and Bocking from Bocking Churchstreet.
The separate identity of the settlements	<p>Bocking and Bocking Churchstreet originated as separate areas of development within the same parish. Bocking refers to a former parish which extended north from Stane Street. The parish historically contained two distinct areas of settlement: one around the medieval church (Bocking Churchstreet), and another which was associated with Stane Street, Bocking End, Bradford Street and Broad Road. Braintree and Bocking form a single urban area with a shared town centre. Bocking has a geographical identity in as much as it refers to the northern part of the settlement, but in other cases references to Bocking have been lost, and the town is referred to simply as Braintree. Some road signs refer specifically to Bocking, and there are other elements of identity such as Bocking Sports Club, the Bocking Blackwater Nature Reserve and the Bocking Village Club. Bocking is perhaps best conceived of as a distinct area within the larger Braintree and Bocking urban agglomeration.</p> <p>'Bocking Churchstreet' is referred to on maps and is included within addresses. There is a Bocking Church Street Community Primary School, but other facilities such as the village club and recreation ground refer simply to 'Bocking' in their name. There is a sign on the A131 for 'Bocking Church Street.' This marks the beginning of Church Street, but also seems to indicate a place. The southern end of Bocking Churchstreet however is not distinguished from the wider area of Bocking. The river creates a kind of separation, but urban development is effectively continuous along Church Lane and then Church Street. Bocking Churchstreet has a strong historical identity, but has now effectively coalesced with the other parts of Bocking. Bocking and Bocking Churchstreet now form part of the same contiguous built up area. Whilst it is possible to identify different identities, it is no longer possible to distinguish separate settlements.</p> <p>The main part of Bocking is contiguous with Braintree and forms part of a large town which includes modern housing estates, industrial estates and retail development. Bocking Churchstreet has a different character. Historic development extends along Church Street and the settlement originally had a linear form. Much of this historic character survives, but the addition of a housing estate on the edge of the village and redevelopment of the former factory site has essentially introduced more modern forms of development, based around cul-de-sacs, which have reduced the distinctiveness of Bocking Churchstreet as a settlement. Bocking Churchstreet has more of a village character than Bocking, which is unmistakably part of a larger town.</p>
The effectiveness of the separation	<p>There is effectively contiguous urban development along Church Lane and Church Road. There is no experience of leaving one settlement and entering a new settlement on this route. There is no sign to announce Bocking Churchstreet, and travelling along this route the only indication of a separate identity is the more historic character of the buildings.</p> <p>Braintree and Bocking Footpath No. 27 offers an experience of leaving one settlement and entering another. The footpath commences on Deanery Hill and travels northwards towards Bocking Churchstreet. The width of the gap is around 150m.</p> <p>The river valley and the fields which surround Bocking Churchstreet provide separation from the wider settlement of Braintree and Bocking and are essential to the village character of Bocking Churchstreet. The different settlements of Bocking and Bocking Churchstreet can be perceived from the footpaths in the surrounding countryside. The settlements tend to be visible in the same view. As noted above there is some physical continuity in the built form, but the river valley nonetheless provides a strong physical barrier between the settlements.</p>
The land uses which are present within the buffer	The Buffer consists of meadows, paddocks, a farmstead, two residential plots, and The Deanery care home. The land is predominantly open but The Deanery has a more developed character.



**Key**

**Green buffers**

-  District Boundary
-  Development boundaries
-  Planning consents
-  Land between Bocking and Bocking Churchstreet

**Base**

OS Map Braintree  
Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

**Green Buffers**

**Figure 7.2**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

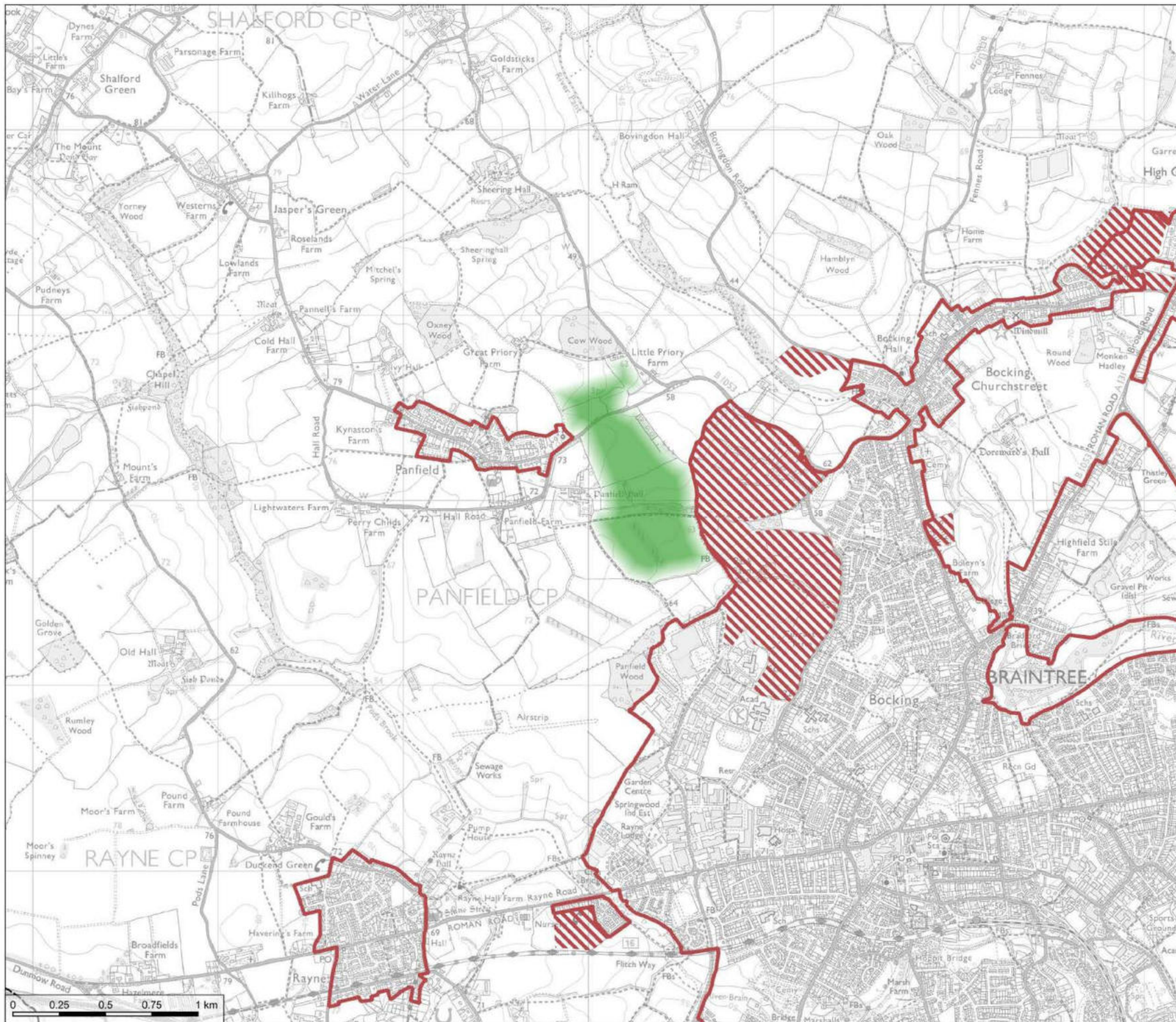
Drawn: SM Checked: SJN



<b>Land at Deanery Hill between Bocking and Bocking Churchstreet</b>	
The case for retention	<p>There have been no alterations to the Green Buffer itself since the Local Plan was adopted. An appeal has however been allowed on the northern side of the river which has altered the context of the Green Buffer, and will alter the form of Bocking Churchstreet.</p> <p>If the intention of the policy is to maintain gaps between Braintree and Bocking and surrounding villages there is a question of whether Bocking Churchstreet should be considered a separate village in its own right? It has been established that Bocking Churchstreet has a different character from the main part of Bocking, and the size of the settlement and its relationship with the surrounding countryside give it a village character. At the same time it has to be acknowledged that Bocking Churchstreet is contiguous with the larger settlement. In this sense then it is no longer possible to maintain a gap if coalescence has already occurred. The Green Buffer, if it is retained, would prevent further coalescence which could further dilute the separate identity of Bocking Churchstreet.</p> <p>Bocking Churchstreet does not meet all the criteria of being a separate settlement. Not only is there a lack of clear separation, but there are also historic links with Bocking, and there is an overlap in the identities of the places. Bocking Churchstreet has the character of a village, but in other respects it does not qualify as a separate village as it lacks certain aspects of an independent settlement, and is no longer physically separated from the main town. On balance then it is not considered that there is a strong case for retention.</p>
The case for extension	Not applicable.







<b>Land between Bocking and Panfield</b>	
The settlements which are separated	The buffer separates Braintree and Bocking from Panfield.
The separate identity of the settlements	<p>The character of Braintree and Bocking has been described above. Braintree and Bocking today form a single large town which includes peripheral development of modern housing estates and industrial estates.</p> <p>Panfield is an independent village. The parish includes a single nucleus of development which is situated centrally within the parish. The village is surrounded by countryside.</p>
The effectiveness of the separation	<p>Recent development within Braintree and Bocking has extended outwards from the historic core of the settlement up to the parish boundary. The Springfield Industrial Estate and the Towerlands residential development in particular have brought the urban edge much closer to Panfield, and have reduced the width of the countryside gap considerably. Whilst the width of the gap has been reduced a clear countryside gap remains.</p> <p>Panfield Road is principal vehicular route between the two settlements. Travelling along this road there is clear sense of leaving Panfield and travelling through countryside before arriving at Bocking. The sense of arriving at Bocking is a little indistinct, but there is in any case a clear sense of separation between the settlements.</p> <p>There are also public footpaths which connect Panfield with Bocking. Public footpaths commence from the centre of the village and pass through the countryside to the south of Panfield Hall. Footpath No.24 travels eastwards towards the Towerlands development while Footpath No.10 diverges from this and travels southwards towards the Springfield Industrial Estate.</p> <p>The width of the Green Buffer as defined in the Local Plan is around 315-570m. There is however a wider area of countryside which separates the two settlements, especially if Panfield Hall is included as countryside. The two settlements are situated on a low plateau and inter-visibility is prevented by tree belts, woods and hedges.</p>
The land uses which are present within the buffer	The Green Buffer encompasses fields, a small stream and a part of the parkland landscape which is associated with Panfield Hall.
The case for retention	The Local Plan included a committed residential development site at Towerlands which is currently being built out. This has reduced the width of the gap between Bocking and Panfield and makes the remaining land essential to the maintenance of separate identities. Bocking and Panfield clearly have separate identities. The Green Buffer lies between the two settlements and ensures their continued separation. There is then a clear case for retaining the Green Buffer.
The case for extension	The designated Green Buffer does not cover all of the open land between the two settlements. The Green Buffer as defined is just one field wide in places which represents an absolute minimum in terms of maintaining separation. An area of countryside would seem to imply a broad tract of rural land, and for settlements to be fully separated it is expected that there would be an area of countryside between them. Narrow gaps therefore, whilst maintaining formal separation, do not provide separation in its fullest sense. There would then be a case for extending the Green Buffer to take in all the countryside between Panfield and Bocking. In the case of residential properties within the countryside the garden or park can still contribute to the openness of the countryside, and can therefore contribute to separation. The designated Green Buffers include some partially developed rural properties so it would seem that Panfield Hall could be included within the Green Buffer.



**Key**

**Green buffers**

-  District Boundary
-  Development boundaries
-  Planning consents
-  Land between Bocking and Panfield

**Base**

- OS Map Braintree
- Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

**Green Buffers**

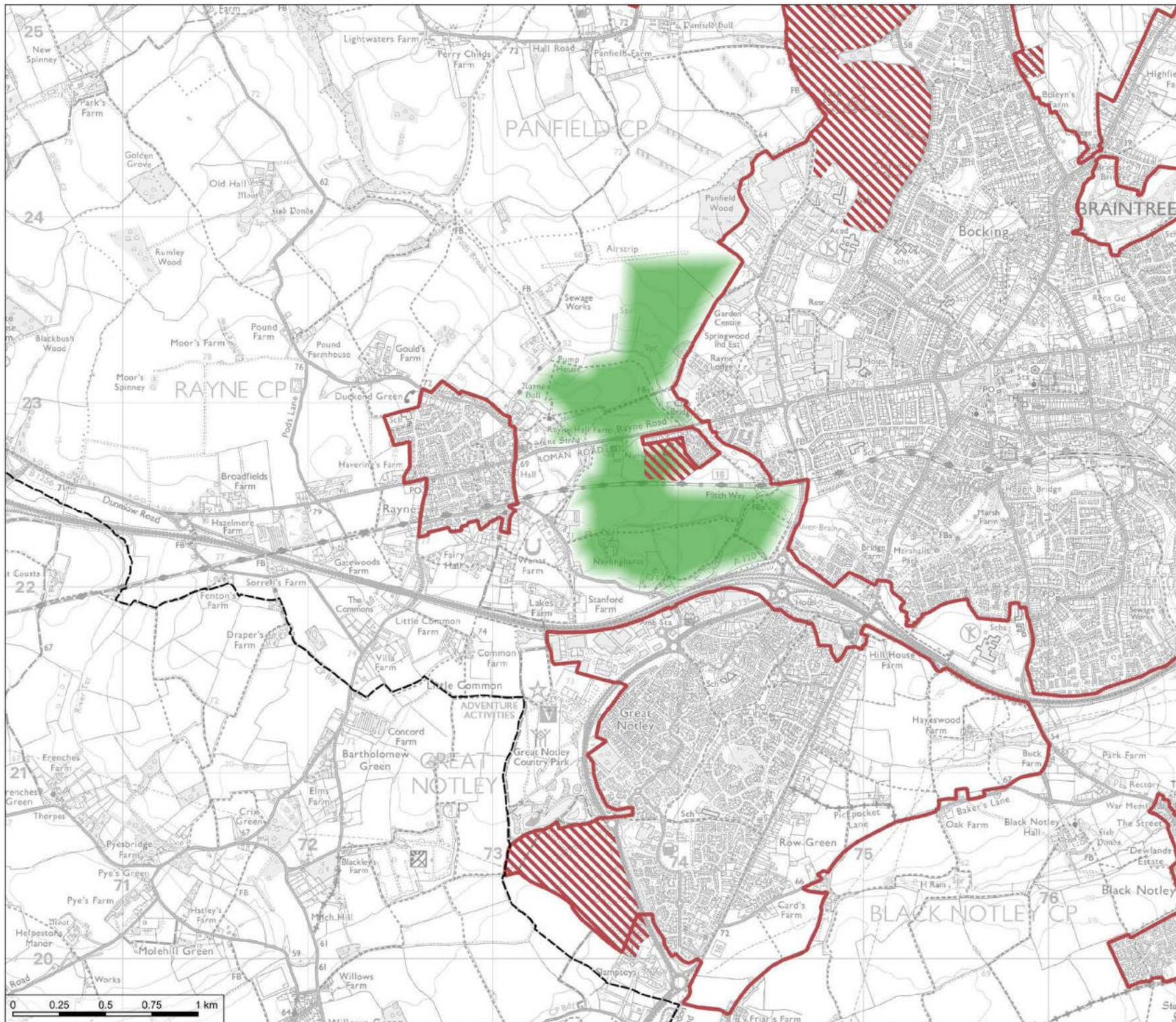
**Figure 7.3**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN



<b>Land between Braintree and Rayne</b>	
The settlements which are separated	<p>The buffer separates Braintree and Bocking from Rayne.</p> <p>Rayne is also relatively close to Great Notley but the aim of the Green Buffer is to separate Rayne from Braintree, not from Great Notley.</p>
The separate identity of the settlements	<p>The character of Braintree and Bocking has been described above. Braintree and Bocking today form a single large town which includes peripheral development of modern housing estates and industrial estates.</p> <p>Rayne is an independent village with some of its own facilities and services. The village is focused on Stane Street, and is the main area of settlement within the parish. The parish boundary originally ran down the centre of Stane Street, with properties to the south of the road being situated within Felsted parish. This situation meant that the station was also formerly within Felsted Parish. The parish boundaries have subsequently been revised and rationalised with the north-eastern corner of Felsted being transferred to Rayne. The village lies close to the edge of the parish. The Village Park and Oak Meadow Nature Reserve fall within Rayne, but the land beyond falls within Braintree. Some of the properties on Queenborough Lane also fall within Braintree. Rayne has most of the attributes of an independent village, and has a clear sense of identity which is different from that of Braintree.</p>
The effectiveness of the separation	<p>The Green Buffer has been eroded by an appeal decision which has allowed a residential development within the designated area.</p> <p>Several movement routes can be identified between the two settlements. These represent fairly straightforward movement routes which leave Rayne, travel through an area of countryside, and arrive at the edge of Braintree.</p> <p>Rayne Road is the principal vehicular route between the two settlements. The ribbon development at Gilda Terrace has effectively extended the settlement of Braintree towards Rayne, and has narrowed the gap between the settlements. The settlement of Rayne is left shortly after the crossroads, and the route has a well-vegetated character as it passes the Oak Meadow Nature Reserve. The northern side of Rayne Road adjoins open countryside, but some isolated development within the countryside is present on the southern side of the road. The width of the Green Buffer is just 260m on Rayne Road, but this is supplemented by the undeveloped nature reserve and park which are not included within the Green Buffer.</p> <p>The Flitch Way represents an important route between the two settlements. There is a clear sense of leaving the urban area of Braintree at the point where the route crosses over Pods Brook. The route then continues through countryside before arriving at the edges of Rayne. The central section of the gap is covered by the Green Buffer and there are further semi-rural sections to either side of the Green Buffer.</p> <p>Footpath routes are also present to the north of Rayne Road and to the south of The Flitch Way. Both these footpath routes offer an experience of passing through open fields between the two settlements. The countryside is slightly compromised by the visible presence of urban development, but this does not negate its role in providing separation.</p> <p>Braintree is visible quite prominently from certain points in the intervening countryside and there is inter-visibility between the settlements which reduces the sense of separation. Large sheds are also visible at Great Notley from certain points.</p>
The land uses which are present within the buffer	<p>The land uses are dominated by actively farmed fields, which comprise the main part of the buffer. The weakest part of the buffer is the former nursery site on Rayne Road which includes an element of existing development. The buffer also includes a farmstead at Naylinghurst.</p>
The case for retention	<p>The Braintree-Rayne Green Buffer has been tested in several planning appeals. Whilst a residential development has been allowed within the Green Buffer the inspector did not question the principle of the policy, and the aim of maintaining separation between Braintree and Rayne was upheld. The sense of separation has been weakened over time by development, but there is still a considerable difference between a weakened sense of separation and no separation. Rayne can still be understood and perceived as a village, but this would not be the case if coalescence were to occur. There is therefore a strong case for retention of the Green Buffer.</p>
The case for extension	<p>The buffer does not include all of the open land between Braintree and Rayne, but the policy area was no doubt carefully considered when the Local Plan was being prepared. There could be a case for extending the buffer to also separate Rayne from Great Notley. The existing development within this area would however complicate the designation of a Green Buffer, and the extent as it is currently defined is probably the most justified option.</p>



**Key**

- Green buffers
  -  District Boundary
  -  Development boundaries
  -  Planning consents
  -  Land between Braintree and Rayne
- Base  
 OS Map Braintree  
 Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Green Buffers

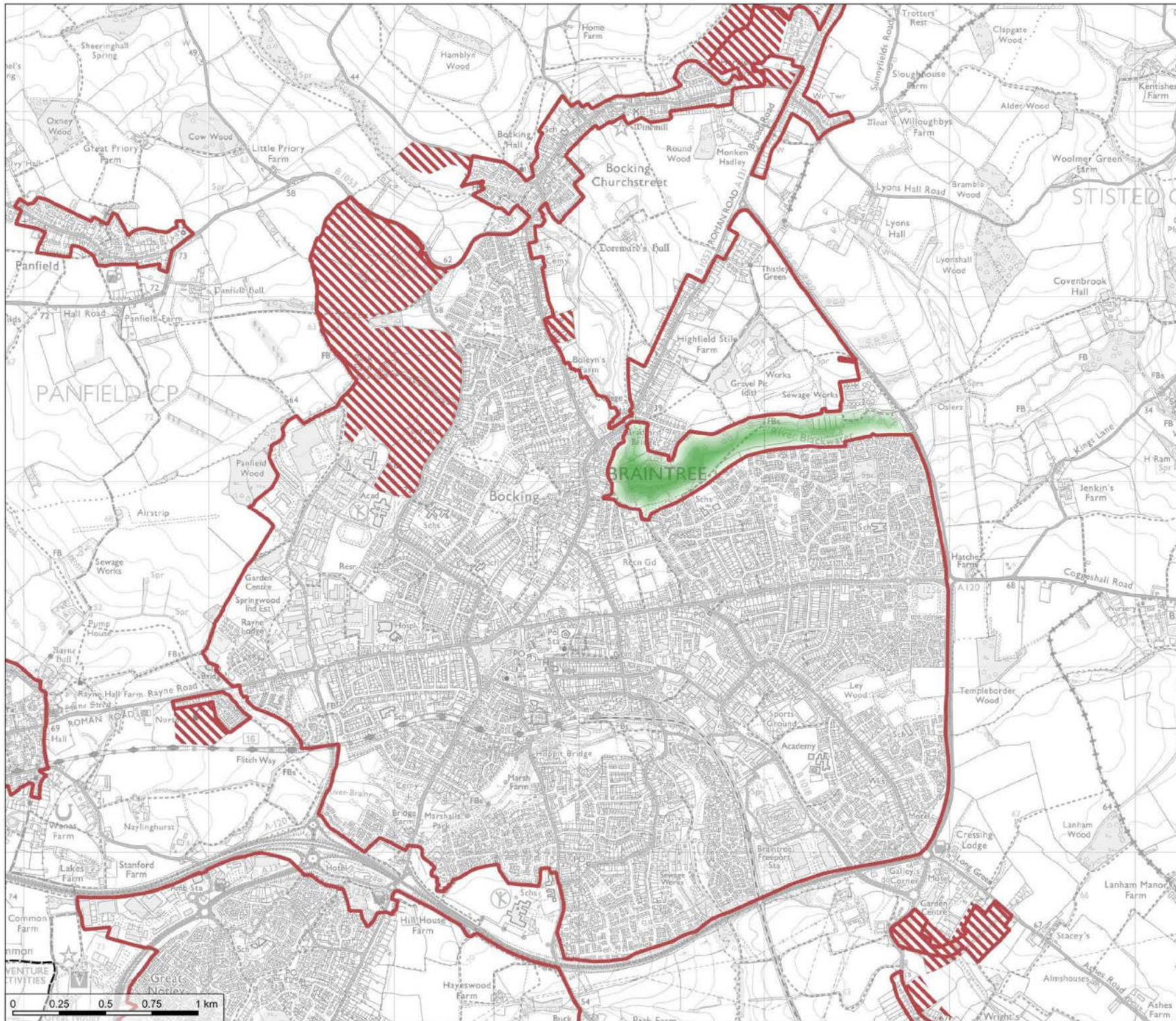
**Figure 7.4**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN



<b>Land at Bocking Blackwater Nature Reserve</b>	
The settlements which are separated	The buffer is intended to separate Braintree and Bocking.
The separate identity of the settlements	The extent to which Braintree and Bocking have separate identities has been discussed above in relation to the other Green Buffers. It has been concluded that Braintree and Bocking form a single settlement and that Bocking refers to an area within the wider settlement (not to a separate settlement). Bocking has some geographical meaning (referring to the northern part of the settlement), but there is no physical separation between Braintree and Bocking. The separate identity of Bocking has also to some degree been absorbed by Braintree. Bocking would seem to have always been closely connected with Braintree, and this is reflected in its form and historical development as well as its present character.
The effectiveness of the separation	Braintree and Bocking have always been contiguous, and this has been consolidated and expanded by modern development. There is no physical separation between Braintree and Bocking. Bocking has some elements of a separate identity e.g. the church, Bocking Village Club and Bocking Sports Club, but the settlements also have an element of shared identity e.g. the Braintree & Bocking Public Gardens. The physical continuity of the built form has now blurred the distinction between Braintree and Bocking, and there is no longer any administrative difference between the two settlements. The Green Buffer lies within the Blackwater Valley. The buffer separates suburban development to the south of the river with a less developed area to the north. The land to the north of the river has however been allocated within the Local Plan.
The land uses which are present within the buffer	The buffer consists of a nature reserve which is centred on a river floodplain. The nature reserve includes some lakes which have resulted from past mineral working. The buffer is undeveloped.
The case for retention	Bocking has always been contiguous with Braintree and some facilities are shared. If Braintree and Bocking are considered to be part of the same urban area it is not then possible to maintain separation, even if different identities can be distinguished. For a Green Buffer to be justified it should separate two settlements with different identities. The Green Buffer is intended to separate Braintree from Bocking. This would imply that the area to the south is Braintree and the area to the north is Bocking. The whole area however previously fell within the parish of Bocking, and Bradford Street is understood historically to be part of Bocking. The more recent development to the south of the buffer could be seen as suburbs of Braintree. For the Green Buffer to be meaningful however it would have to separate these suburbs from Bocking. The area to the north lies with the former parish of Bocking but does not constitute one of the main areas of settlement. The main areas of settlement were historically along Bradford Street (to the west of the buffer) and Church Street. The characterful development along Bradford Street has now been absorbed into the wider town. The development along Church Street does retain a rural setting to the north and south, but the land at the Bocking Blackwater Nature Reserve does not play any role in maintaining this. Taking all of the above into consideration the Green Buffer is not considered to maintain separation between different places in a meaningful way, and it is not therefore recommended for retention.
The case for extension	Not applicable.



**Key**

- Green buffers
- District Boundary
- Development boundaries
- Planning consents
- Braintree Bocking
- Base
- OS Map Braintree
- Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Green Buffers

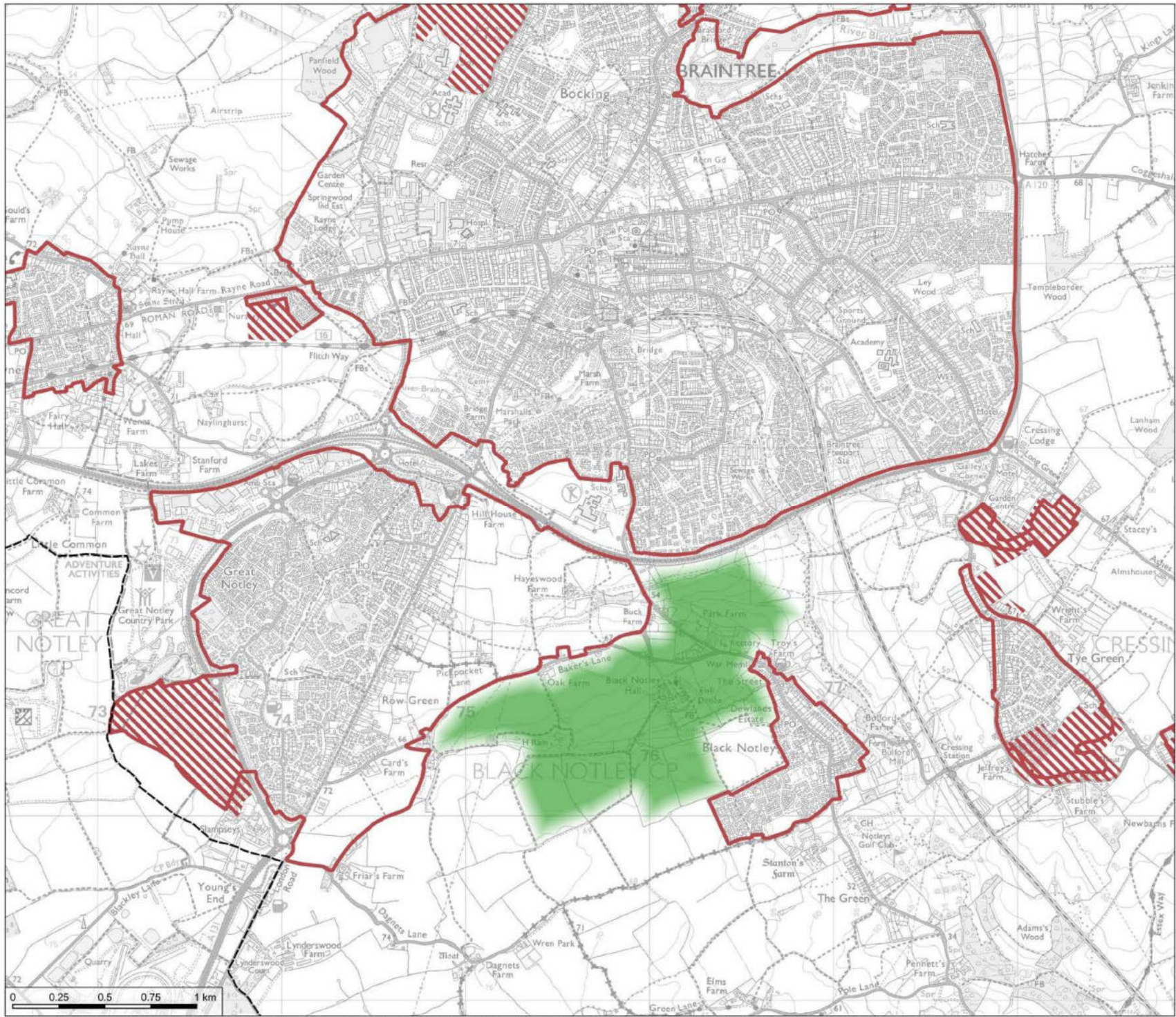
**Figure 7.5**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN



<b>Land between Black Notley, Great Notley and Braintree</b>	
The settlements which are separated	The buffer separates Great Notley and Black Notley. It also provides separation between Black Notley and Braintree.
The separate identity of the settlements	Great Notley is a relatively recent settlement which developed initially within the parishes of Braintree and Black Notley, though it has now become an independent civil parish. The settlement is described as a village, though it has a large population of around 10,000 people. The village has been developed in several stages, with the largest and most recent phase of development beginning in 1993. The settlement was designed as a 'Garden Village' and implements the principles of the Essex Design Guide. The village has also been provided with its own services and community facilities. Notley is mentioned in the Domesday book. The church at Black Notley is thought to date from the 12th century, and the church and adjacent hall create a classic church/manor complex. Manorial records for Black Notley date back to the 14th century. The village originally had a dispersed settlement pattern with sporadic development along what is now Witham Road and Notley Road. The parish boundary also originally extended northwards to the River Brain however this northern part of the parish has been absorbed by the suburbs of Braintree, and the parish boundary has subsequently been amended. A nucleated settlement has developed on Witham Road, and the redevelopment of the former hospital site has added a further 350 houses to the village. Black Notley is close to the southern edge of Braintree but retains its own character. The village has community facilities and some of its own services.
The effectiveness of the separation	<p>The Local Plan includes a large extension to the east of Great Notley. This is reflected in the development boundary, though detailed proposals have yet to be put forwards. Nonetheless it is assumed that this area will become part of the settlement. The Green Buffer therefore focusses on land between the Great Notley development boundary and the existing development at Black Notley. Although described as a buffer between Great Notley and Black Notley it also serves as a buffer between Black Notley and the southern edge of Braintree.</p> <p>The Green Buffer is around 550m wide. The main movement routes which pass through the buffer are The Street/Notley Road and The Street/Church Road. The Street/Notley Road provides a route northwards from Black Notley into Braintree. The development boundary for Great Notley extends to the road and there will then be a sense of passing the edge of Great Notley before crossing the A120 and entering Braintree. Some loose rural development is present along the road, and it is debatable whether there is a sense of passing through countryside or not. Travelling southwards the 30mph limit begins just beyond Park Farm Industries. Church Road also has some loose rural development along the road but there are undeveloped sections which create a clear break between settlements. There is also quite a strong rural character on this route.</p> <p>Bakers Lane lies at the northern edge of the Green Buffer. The route does not provide an experience of travelling from one settlement to the other, but it does provide an important sense of travelling through countryside.</p> <p>Footpaths within the Green Buffer offer access to the countryside, and there is a strong rural character.</p>
The land uses which are present within the buffer	The Green Buffer consists predominantly of agricultural land, but also includes some loose rural development, including the church and Black Notley Hall, Park Farm and The Old Rectory. Despite this development the Green Buffer retains a rural character which enables it to provide an effective break between settlements.
The case for retention	The settlements of Great and Black Notley clearly have different characters. Great Notley is an interesting example of a modern, planned settlement which has been built in the style of a village. Black Notley also includes elements of 20th century development but is a smaller, more historic settlement. Black Notley is close to the new Great Notley development boundary, but is a separate village in its own right. There is therefore a strong case for retaining separation between the two settlements. The presence of development along the roads weakens the sense of separation, but it is nonetheless desirable to maintain the separation which exists.
The case for extension	The existing Green Buffer provides separation between Black Notley and Braintree as well as between Black Notley and Great Notley. The north-eastern boundary of the buffer could be extended to a physical boundary, but this is not essential to its purpose or function.



**Key**

- Green buffers
- District Boundary
- ▭ Development boundaries
- ▨ Planning consents
- Land between Great Notley and Black Notley

**Base**

OS Map Braintree  
Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Green Buffers

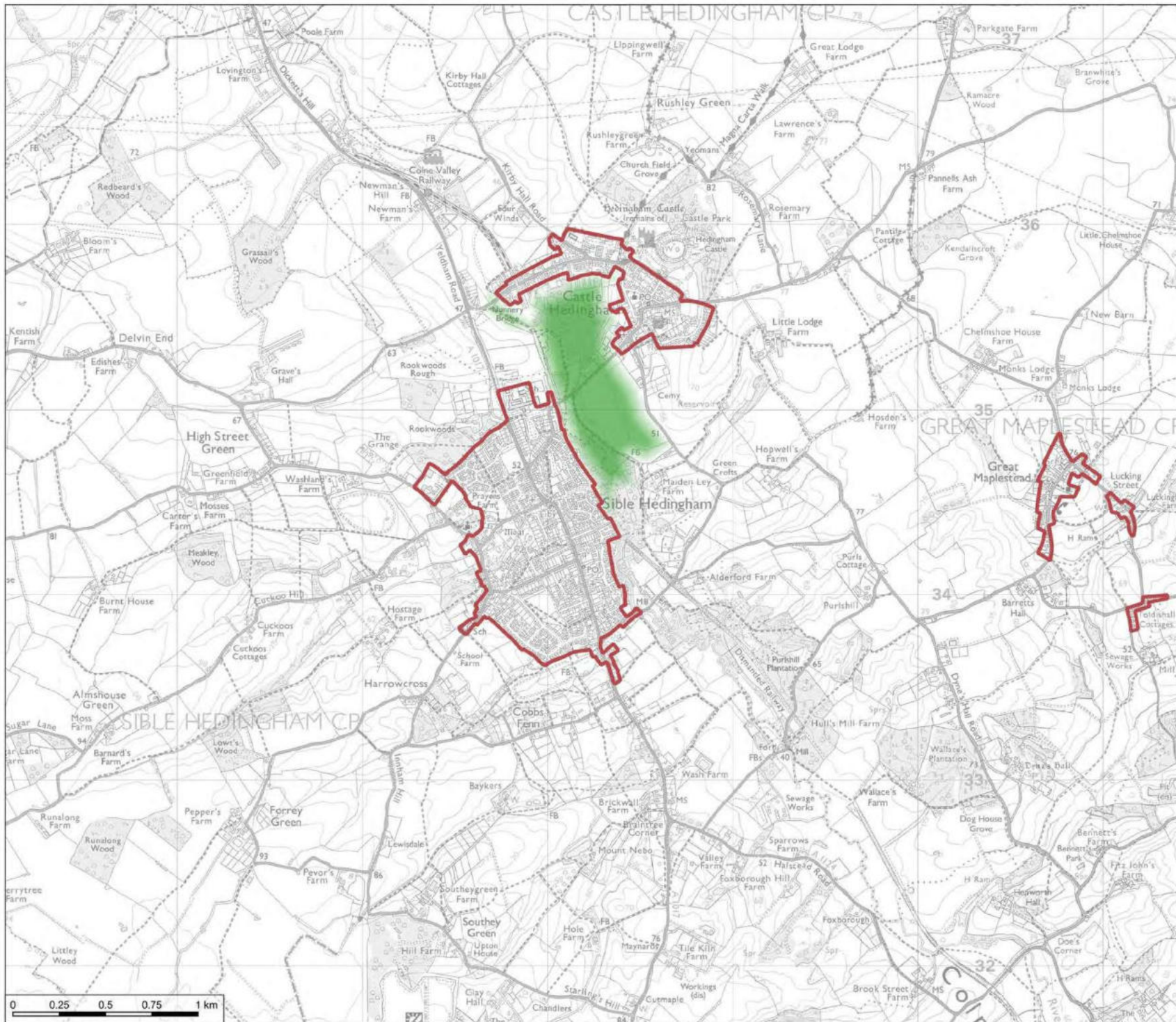
**Figure 7.6**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN






<b>Land between Sible Hedingham and Castle Hedingham</b>	
The settlements which are separated	The buffer separates Sible Hedingham and Castle Hedingham.
The separate identity of the settlements	<p>The settlements are separate parishes and villages which both have medieval churches. Sible Hedingham in particular is a large parish, but the villages are situated relatively close to each other in the Colne Valley. The river corridor provides to some extent a natural boundary between the villages. The parish boundary however deviates from the river in places, and Castle Hedingham extends over the river at Nunnery Bridge.</p> <p>Castle Hedingham has a clearly defined, unique historic core which is centred on the castle and church and the main historic streets. Historic buildings line the various streets, and modern additions to the village have been limited.</p> <p>Sible Hedingham is a larger parish which has two main historic areas of settlement. One of these is centred on the church and the other extends along Swan Street and Alderford Street to Alderford Mill. More recent development has however consolidated these two separate areas into a single settlement.</p> <p>The land to the north of Sible Hedingham falls within the parish of Castle Hedingham. There is a small area of development on Yeldham Road which falls within Castle Hedingham though it is on the western side of the river. The buildings are centred around a small green (Cooper's Green) and form part of Castle Hedingham, though the main part of the village is situated on the other side of the river.</p>
The effectiveness of the separation	<p>Travelling southwards along Yeldham Road road-users first encounter a small area of development within Castle Hedingham, and then continue beyond this towards Sible Hedingham. The road-sign at the entry to Sible Hedingham is situated outside of the Secondary School. The effective gap between the settlements is therefore formed by the school playing fields and the field to the north of this. This is not however reflected in the extent of the Green Buffer as currently defined. The width of the gap depends on how it is measured, but is at least 280m wide.</p> <p>Travelling between the settlements via Station Road/Queen Street there is a clearly defined break between the villages. The road leaves Sible Hedingham at the former railway line. The road then crosses the river and continues for several hundred meters until it reaches Castle Hedingham. The gap is 435m wide.</p> <p>There are also footpaths which follow the course of the river which lie within the Green Buffer. The footpath from Nunnery Street to Station Road connects Castle Hedingham and Sible Hedingham. There is some sense of separation on this route which is provided by the river corridor, but the settlement edges are also apparent from the route and there is only a narrow gap between settlements.</p>
The land uses which are present within the buffer	<p>Much of the Green Buffer lies within the flood plain and the buffer is largely undeveloped. The buffer includes Hedingham Station Marsh which is an identified Local Wildlife Site. The floodplain generally consists of deciduous woodland, cricket bat willow plantations and marsh/wet meadow habitat. The Green Buffer also includes a residential property at Allways, a yard, a large arable field, and a small area of equestrian use.</p>
The case for retention	<p>The settlements are distinct from one another and have different identities. The gap between the settlements is narrow, but there is still physical separation between the settlements which can be maintained. Physical coalescence would cause a blurring of identities. There is therefore a strong case for retention.</p>
The case for extension	<p>The development on the far side of the river at Coopers Green is part of Castle Hedingham. The narrow gap between this development and Sible Hedingham does represent a break between the settlements which helps them retain a separate identity. The open land includes a field and the school playing fields. If this land is not included in the Green Buffer there is a risk of coalescence which would weaken the separate identities of the settlements. There is then a good case for revising and extending the Green Buffer to include this land.</p>



**Key**

**Green buffers**

-  District Boundary
-  Development boundaries
-  Land between Castle Heddingham and Sible Heddingham

**Base**

- OS Map Braintree
- Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

**Green Buffers**

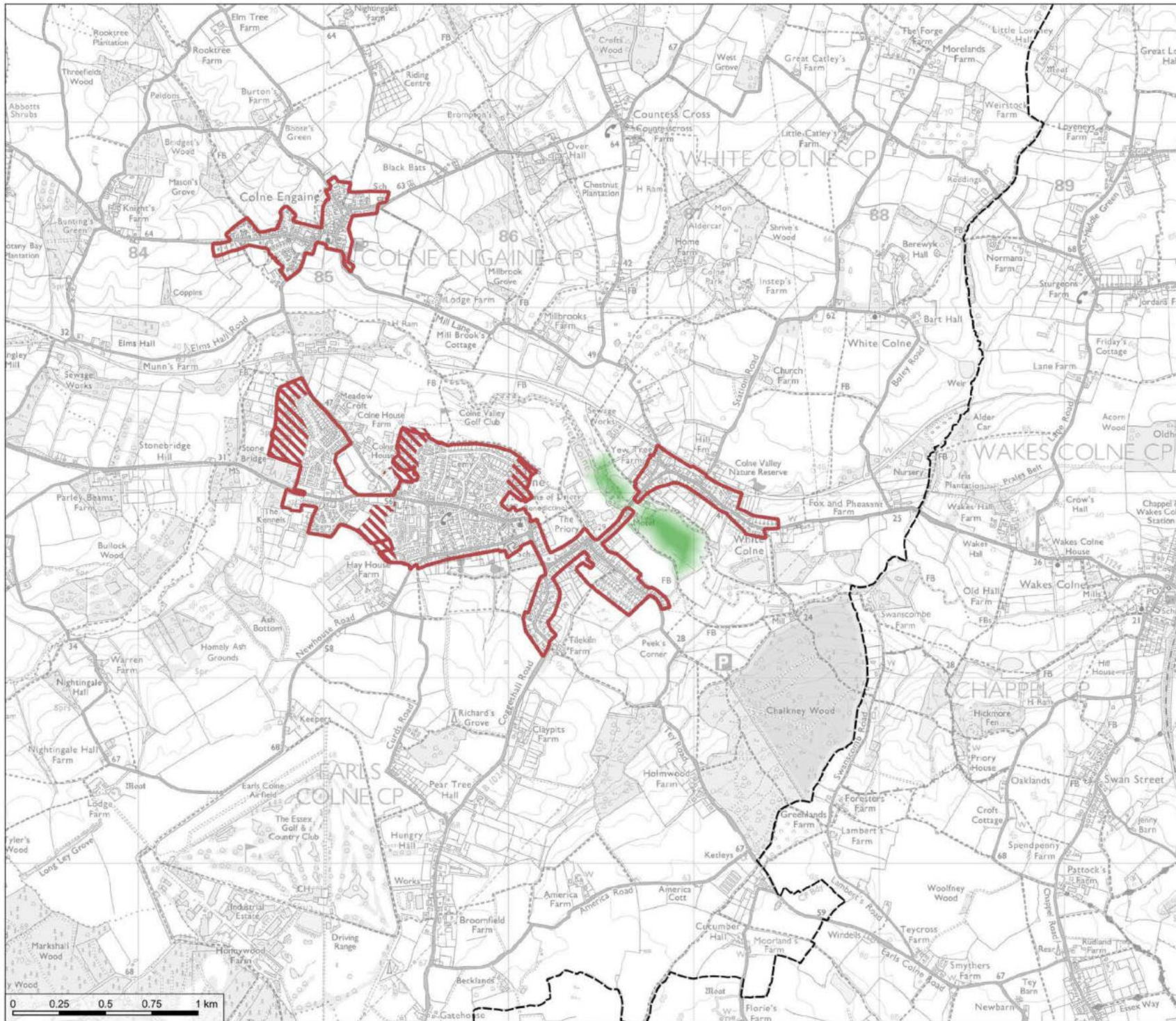
**Figure 7.7**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: S.J.N



<b>Land between Earls Colne and White Colne</b>	
The settlements which are separated	The buffer separates Earls Colne and White Colne.
The separate identity of the settlements	<p>Earls Colne and White Colne are separate parishes which form a group with Colne Engaine and Wakes Colne. The villages of Earls Colne and White Colne today have separate and fairly clearly distinguished identities, with the river forming the parish boundary. This however was not previously the case. Earls Colne previously extended to the far side of the river, and many of the properties which are now within White Colne were previously in Earls Colne. The area on the far side of the river is referred to on old maps as Colneford Hill. At the centre of Colneford Hill there was a small triangular green. The properties on the western side of the green fell within the Colne Engaine, the properties on the northern side fell within White Colne, while the properties on the southern side fell within Earls Colne. The redrawing of the parish boundary has created a clear identity for White Colne. The village has a parish council and there are many markers of identity including allotments, a doorstep green and a village hall. The consolidated area of development in the southern part of the parish forms the main nucleus of development within the parish.</p> <p>Earls Colne was historically a more developed settlement and is today a large village with a good range of facilities. The village has a strong historic core with a large conservation area. The village also historically included some industrial development at Atlas Works, and there is a strong legacy of 19th and early 20th century development which includes almshouses, a public library, places of worship and a village hall. The villages therefore have clear and separate identities.</p>
The effectiveness of the separation	<p>There is very little separation between Earls Colne and White Colne when travelling along Lower Holt Street and Colneford Hill. The bridge provides a clear transition from one settlement to the other, but there is only a break of 55m or so in the built form. Travelling along this route there is a change in identity (which is marked by a road sign), but one village transitions almost immediately into the other. This represents the narrowest part of the gap. Upstream of Colneford Bridge is an area of marshland and a water treatment works. The grounds of the former priory form part of the separation between the villages, and there is a large historic house on the site of a former watermill. Whilst there is some development associated with Colne Priory and River House the grounds of these properties can still be considered to contribute to separation. Further separation is provided by the golf course, and there is then a clear gap between the villages.</p> <p>Downstream of Colneford Bridge there are floodplain meadows and the gap between the domestic gardens is around 380m wide. Although there is some inter-visibility between settlements there is also a clear sense of separation between the villages.</p> <p>Whilst the separation on Colneford Hill is minimal the wider valley provides a clear sense of separation between the settlements.</p>
The land uses which are present within the buffer	The most common land uses are floodplain meadows and marshland. There are also some domestic gardens on Lower Holt Street and Colneford Hill which are included within the Green Buffer.
The case for retention	<p>As noted above the settlements have almost coalesced along Lower Holt Street and Colneford Hill and the identified Green Buffer includes on domestic gardens. It could even be said that the Green Buffer relies on certain domestic gardens to maintain a sense of separation. It could be argued that the settlements have almost coalesced and it is not therefore possible to maintain separation. Whilst the separation at its narrowest point is very narrow there is still a sense of different identities with White Colne being on the northern side of the Colne Valley, and Earls Colne being on the southern side. It is argued that the land within the valley provides a sense of separation irrespective of the narrowness of the gap on Colneford Hill. Even if it is argued that coalescence has effectively occurred there is a difference between some separation and no separation. The villages have clearly different identities which it is desirable to maintain. The Green Buffer is a tool to maintain separate identities within the wider context of the Local Plan, and there is therefore a strong case to retain this particular Green Buffer.</p>
The case for extension	The buffer as drawn maintains separation between the two villages, and is considered adequate in this regard. There would be a case for extending the designated area to include more of the open land between the settlements to maintain as much separation as possible. This is not however considered essential to the aims of the policy.



**Key**

Green buffers

District Boundary

Development boundaries

Planning consents

Land between Earls Colne and White Colne

Base

OS Map Braintree

Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

Green Buffers

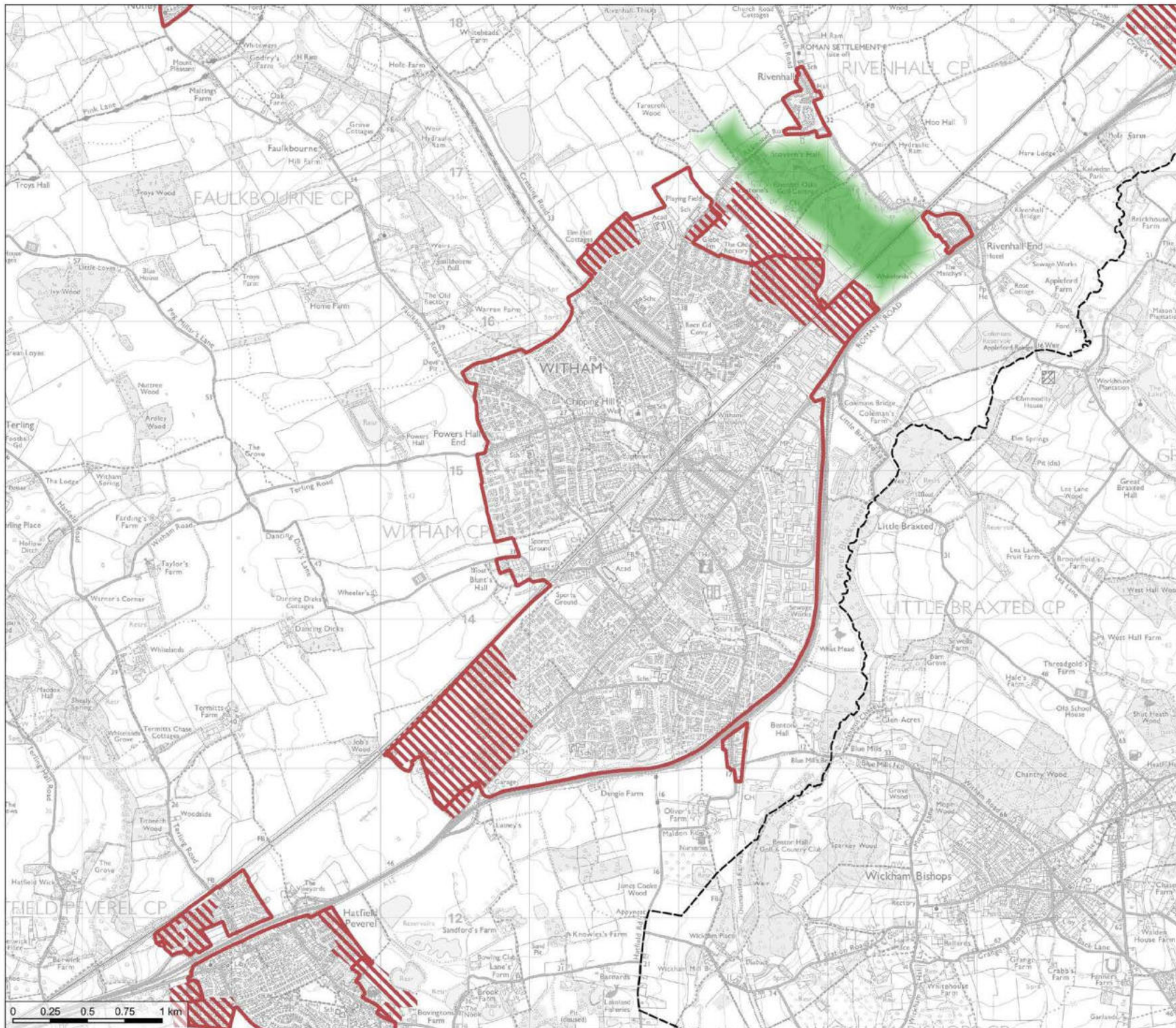
**Figure 7.8**

Scale: 1:20000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN



Land between Witham, Rivenhall and Rivenhall End	
The settlements which are separated	The buffer separates Witham from Rivenhall and Rivenhall End.
The separate identity of the settlements	<p>Witham is a large town. The settlement has two historic areas: one at Chippinghill, which is based on an Iron Age 'hill fort,' and another which is centred on Newland Street. Witham has a long and interesting history and was the centre of an Anglo-Saxon half-hundred. A 'burgh' or fort was established in 913AD by King Edward the Elder on the site of the ancient hill fort as part of an effort to retake East Anglia from the Danes. The principal manor within the parish continued to belong to the crown, and it is understood that there was an Anglo-Saxon market. The Domesday book records a large population and no less than five water mills. Chipping Hill formed the original centre of the settlement. In the 12th century Witham was given to the Knights Templar who were based at Cressing. The Knights Templar were responsible for establishing a new town in around 1200AD at Newlands, now Newland Street, and a charter for a Thursday market was granted to the Templars in 1212AD. The town had a certain amount of industry from the medieval times onwards, and the highway also supported economic activity. There were several traditional industries in Witham mostly connected to local agriculture, and the arrival of the railway in 1843 boosted some local industries. Further industry was developed in the Victorian era including Pinkhams glove factory. Crittalls window factory arrived in Witham in the inter-war period. The town has subsequently expanded considerably in the post-war era with the development of new estates such as the Templar estate, and a large industrial estate.</p> <p>Rivenhall is also an ancient settlement which has a Roman villa site. Archaeological investigation suggests that a timber church was built on the Roman villa site in the Saxon period, being later replaced with a masonry structure which partly reused the Roman building materials. The principal manor (Rivenhall Hall) was previously owned by Eustace III, Count of Boulogne and subsequently by his daughter Queen Matilda. The estate continued to be owned by the crown until the 1500s and has various royal associations. A medieval deer park (Rivenhall Park) existed in the vicinity of what was to become Rivenhall Place. Rivenhall Place was built later, in the 16th century, in the south-western corner of the park. The park was gradually reduced in size over time, and the remaining park was remodelled by Humphrey Repton in c.1790. The parish also includes halls at Stoverns Halls and Hoo Hall. The various halls and farms were dispersed throughout the parish, and the only area of nucleated settlement was at Rivenhall End. The 20th century saw the gradual development of housing on Rickstones Road and Church Road, and the development of a small nucleated village near the church.</p>
The effectiveness of the separation	<p>The suburbs of Witham have now extended into Rivenhall parish and The Old Rectory, Glebe Farm and Rickstone's Farm have been subsumed into the larger urban area. The Green Buffer provides a break between the recent development on the fringes of Witham which is actually within Rivenhall parish, and the village of Rivenhall itself. The Buffer also provides separation between the edge of Rivenhall industrial estate and the separate hamlet of Rivenhall End.</p> <p>The gap between settlements on Rickstones Road is not very wide, and there is some development along the road which reduces the sense of travelling through open countryside. The form of the existing development also makes it difficult to pinpoint exactly when the settlement has been left. The width of the buffer is 340m on this road, but this gap includes some existing development. Measuring to the first house in Rivenhall village the gap is 440m wide. The road-sign for Rivenhall is placed correctly on the parish boundary. The road however at this point is still within the urban area, and there is a significant amount of development which falls within Rivenhall parish. Technically the gap is between the suburban parts of Rivenhall and the recognised village of Rivenhall, and this does complicate the experience of separation on this route.</p> <p>The second movement route is Footpath No.59 Rivenhall which crosses the Green Buffer. There is a clear sense of leaving Witham and walking through the golf course to Oak Road. From there it is possible to walk to Rivenhall or Rivenhall End. The golf course is undeveloped and provides separation.</p> <p>The last main movement route to consider is the A12, which is a very heavily used route. The A12 passes through Rivenhall End (which is signed) and then continues c.900m to the Witham junction. The width of the undeveloped Green Buffer on this route is 540m. There is then a clear distinction and separation between settlements on this route.</p>



**Key**

- Green buffers
- District Boundary
- Development boundaries
- Planning consents
- Land between Witham and Riverhall

**Base**

- OS Map Braintree
- Leisure\_27700

**E24828 - Braintree Settlement Fringes**

**Green Buffers**

**Figure 7.9**

Scale: 1:25000 at A3

Drawn: SM Checked: SJN



<b>Land between Witham, Rivenhall and Rivenhall End</b>	
The land uses which are present within the buffer	The central part of the Green Buffer is composed of Rivenhall Oaks Golf Centre. The golf course can be considered an urban fringe land use which nonetheless provides a break between settlements. The buffer also includes Stovens Hall and some isolated rural dwellings on Rickstones Road. The northern and southern parts of the buffer comprise arable farmland.
The case for retention	Rivenhall and Witham both have a long history, and are clearly separate places with different characters. Witham has been defined as a town for many centuries, whereas Rivenhall has always been a rural area. Rivenhall has the characteristics of an independent village despite the relatively recent origin of much of the housing. The village has its own parish council, church, school and hall, as well as a shop. If residents depend on Witham for other services the village nonetheless remains a separate settlement. Despite its small size Rivenhall End has its own hall and allotments, and is separate from both Witham and Rivenhall. The surrounding countryside is however somewhat compromised by the A12, Rivenhall Golf Course and a large gravel pit. If the Green Buffer policy is intended to prevent towns and villages from merging into one another then there is a clear case for retaining this Green Buffer.
The case for extension	If the aim of the policy is legitimate and not too restrictive then there would seem to be a clear case for also including the arable field which adjoins Rivenhall which clearly contributes to the separation of the settlements. This separation is experienced not only on Rickstones Road but also on Footpath No.4 Rivenhall, which is likely to be well used by local residents.



