

Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment

Hartley Gardens, Clacton



Client
Tendring District
Council

Date:
December 2020

Version
Final Report



About Us

Place Services is a specialist provider of integrated Environmental Assessment, Planning, Design and Management Services. With a thorough and demonstrable understanding of environmental decision making within the public sector, Place Services has been established to specifically serve and actively embrace the new powers given to Local Authorities through the Localism Act. From our base at Essex County Council we combine our public sector knowhow with a competitive business approach and in doing so partner and support over 25 local authorities within Essex, London and the wider south eastern region.

Our combination of specialist skills and experience means that we are uniquely qualified to help organisations create and deliver innovative and practical design solutions. Place Services is a leading public sector service provider with a loyal and growing client base. We offer a multidisciplinary team, including Planners, Urban Designers, Landscape Architects, Historic Environment Advisors, Ecologists, Arboriculturists, Conservation, Public Art and Community Engagement specialists; we have a strong reputation for high quality work undertaken by highly skilled professionals.

With strong partnerships alongside a number of key specialist groups including Highways and Asset Management as well as our well established private sector associates, Place Services insightful position with experience on both sides of the public and private sectors enables us to add significant value when improving the operation of the planning process. We are astutely aware of how the public sector can benefit from a business-like approach as an effective and efficient way of working. Through our own experience we can assist local authorities to work with change in a truly empathetic way.

Our Values

We add lasting value to the people and environments we work with, achieving shared priorities for better places.

Enablement is a key value – we see ourselves as an extension of our client's team, sharing knowledge, ideas and innovative solutions to help officers, councillors and all stakeholders gain focused outcomes and maximum value for money.

Our Philosophy

Our approach is to engage and collaborate, sharing knowledge and understanding, whilst working collectively towards the generation of viable solutions which reconcile often competing agendas. We strive to forge joint working arrangements, trust and understanding with client officers, councillors and other key stakeholders. We believe that good communication is essential to developing valuable partnerships.

We bring an enthusiastic, flexible and integrated team approach; using our experience, dedication and skills to effectively meet your needs and expectations. By adhering to recognised principles and standards, we aim to make a positive impact on the people and places we work with. For these reasons, we're also keen to give something extra to the communities we work in.

We believe in helping improve our communities, which is why we commit up to four weeks of the year on community projects

Version	Date	Issued by	Reviewed by	Description of changes
1.0	09.10.2020	Ryan Mills	Peter Dawson	First Draft Report
2.0	23.10.2020	Ryan Mills	Peter Dawson	Final Draft Report
3.0	03.12.2020	Ryan Mills	Peter Dawson	Final Report
Title of report				
		Hartley Gardens Landscape Sensitivity and Character Assessment		
Client				
		Tendring District Council		
Client representative				
		Helen Flage		
Survey completed by				
		Ryan Mills CMLI & Megan Cowell		
Report contributors				
		Ryan Mills CMLI, Almudena Quiralte CMLI & Megan Cowell		

Copyright

This report may contain material that is non-Place Services copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Historic England), or the intellectual property of third parties, which Place Services is able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences or permissions, but for which copyright itself is not transferable by Place Services. Users of this report remain bound by the conditions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of the report.

Disclaimer

The material contained in this report was designed as an integral part of a report to an individual client and was prepared solely for the benefit of that client. The material contained in this report does not necessarily stand on its own and is not intended to nor should it be relied upon by a third party. To the fullest extent permitted by law Place Services will not be liable by reason of breach of contract, negligence, or otherwise for any loss or damage (whether direct, indirect or consequential) occasioned to any person acting or omitting to act or refraining from acting in reliance upon the material contained in the report. Loss or damage as referred to above shall be deemed to include, but is not limited to, any loss of profits or anticipated loss of profits damage to reputation or goodwill, loss of business, or anticipated loss of business, damages, costs, expense incurred or payable to any third party (in all cases whether direct, indirect or consequential) or any other direct, indirect or consequential loss or damage.

Contents

1. Introduction	5
2. Landscape Structure	10
3. Landscape Character	17
4. Landscape Sensitivity	34
5. Landscape Recommendations	41
Appendix	42

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this document

- 1.1.1 Tendring District Council (TDC) commissioned Place Services in September 2020 to undertake a landscape sensitivity and character assessment of the Hartley Gardens site which is subject to Policy SAMU 2 Hartley Gardens in the Tendring District Council section 2 publication Local Plan 2013-2033. The study is to provide evidence in support of Policy SAMU 2 Hartley Gardens on how any development layout of the site should respond to landscape character and sensitivity and that landscape constraints can effectively be overcome to allow well designed development. The local plan will be subject to examination early in 2021.
- 1.1.2 An assessment is required that allows TDC to understand the character and value of the landscape and the type and scale of development that might be able to be accommodated without compromising landscape character. The study will be used to inform a Green Infrastructure (GI) Framework and evidence to support the draft Policy SAMU2 at local plan examination. At this stage of the planning process evidence is required to understand how the existing landscape of the site will impact on development capacity, development layout and inform the wider Green Infrastructure Framework for the site (which will incorporate biodiversity net gain as well as accessible natural green space, sport and recreation, allotments, play, sustainable drainage and climate change).
1. Given the strategic nature of the site, multiple ownerships and likelihood of phased individual planning applications across the site it is essential the Council prepares a site wide Green Infrastructure Strategy so each application can contribute to achieving a comprehensive and multi-functional network across the site. This will ensure the following:
- The Council's obligations under the Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) are fulfilled (which provides a mechanism for LPAs to comply with their responsibilities to protect habitats and species in accordance with the UK Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017) and that suitable accessible natural green space is provided within the development in accordance with Natural England guidance
 - That 10% biodiversity net gain can be accommodated within the Green Infrastructure Network to support the recovery of nature loss and enhance biodiversity in line with the 25 year Environment Plan and Environment Bill
 - That accessible natural and semi-natural green space is provided for new and existing residents (who use the site currently for walking etc) in accordance with Policy HP5
 - That sufficient green amenity space, allotment space and play provision is provided in accordance with council policy HP5
 - That a site wide sustainable urban drainage network is achieved
 - That existing landscape and ecological value is protected and enhanced and ensure that the landscape setting and separate identity of Little Clacton is maintained.

1.2 Objectives

1.2.1 TDC's brief for Hartley Gardens Landscape Sensitivity and Character Assessment states that:

“The appraisal should comprise initial identification and agreement of parcel sizes for the study area. The following tasks are then required:

- A full site description of the site, landscape features, designations (including TPOs) topography and landscape character using published data, field trips, contour maps, illustrative plans, maps and photography.
- An assessment of the site's landscape features (including trees and hedgerows), their characteristics, qualities, condition and contribution to landscape value. Providing sub character areas where appropriate across the site.
- A visual appraisal identifying key viewpoints / visual receptors and general visual amenity of the site and their sensitivity
- Review and confirmation of aspects of proposed development scenario and attributes likely to affect the key landscape characteristics and values (with reference to indicative concept plan)
- An assessment (and rating) of the landscape capacity and sensitivity of the site (sub-dividing the site into parcels where required). This will assess each parcel in term of landscape and visual susceptibility.”

1.3 Site Description

1.3.1 Hartley Gardens is the largest proposed housing site in the emerging local plan. Policy SAMU 2 Hartley Gardens includes the provision of 1700 homes and 7 ha of employment land.

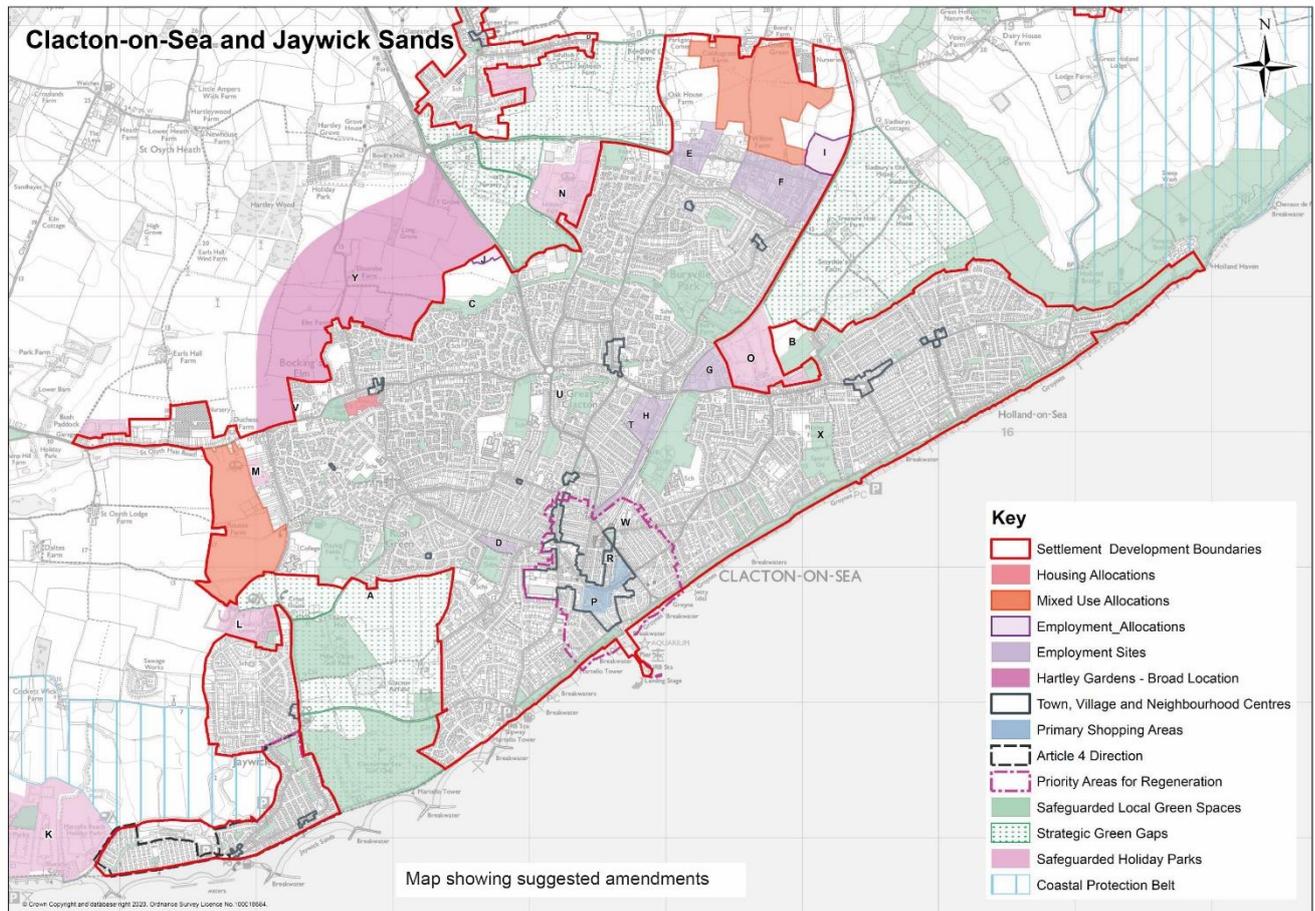


Figure 1: Proposed Hartley Gardens Broad Location Policy

- 1.3.2 The indicative boundaries are comprised of the A133 to the east and the built-up edge of Clacton to the south (to the north of St Johns Road). To the south there is also a small neighbourhood centre at Legerton Drive (including a small community centre and local Sainsbury's shop), Coppins Hall Wood (a local wildlife site) is also located to the direct south of St Johns Road (as shown in Figure 2). To the east of the site lies the Brook Retail Park with phase one anchored by a large Tesco superstore and phase 2 as described above. To the west lies open countryside with open valley views and a wider network of footpaths.
- 1.3.3 This land is predominantly open arable farmland with associated farmland ecology. In terms of landscape and ecological features, Hartley Woods (ancient woodland and local wildlife site) is located directly to the north west of the site. Hartley Brook extends through these woods across the site to Pickers Ditch in the south east corner. Two areas of deciduous woodland; T Grove and Long Grove are located in the northern part of the site. Both are registered on the Priority Habitat Inventory as deciduous woodland. There are a number of hedgerows remaining on site.
- 1.3.4 In the south of the site there are definitive footpaths linking the built-up area of Clacton to this area of countryside. They appear to be well used by local residents. There are

other permissive paths in the central and northern part of the site. There are overhead electricity pylons running east to west across the site but these are now been undergrounded on the Brook Part West part of the site. There are a series of wind turbines to the north east of the site.

- 1.3.5 Bovills Hall a C15/C16th century house is a Grade II listed building to the direct north of the site off St Osyth's Road in Little Clacton. The site includes an original moat and an extensive area of planting. There are 2 farm buildings on site both served from Little Clacton Road. There are a number of other listed buildings in the vicinity of the site.

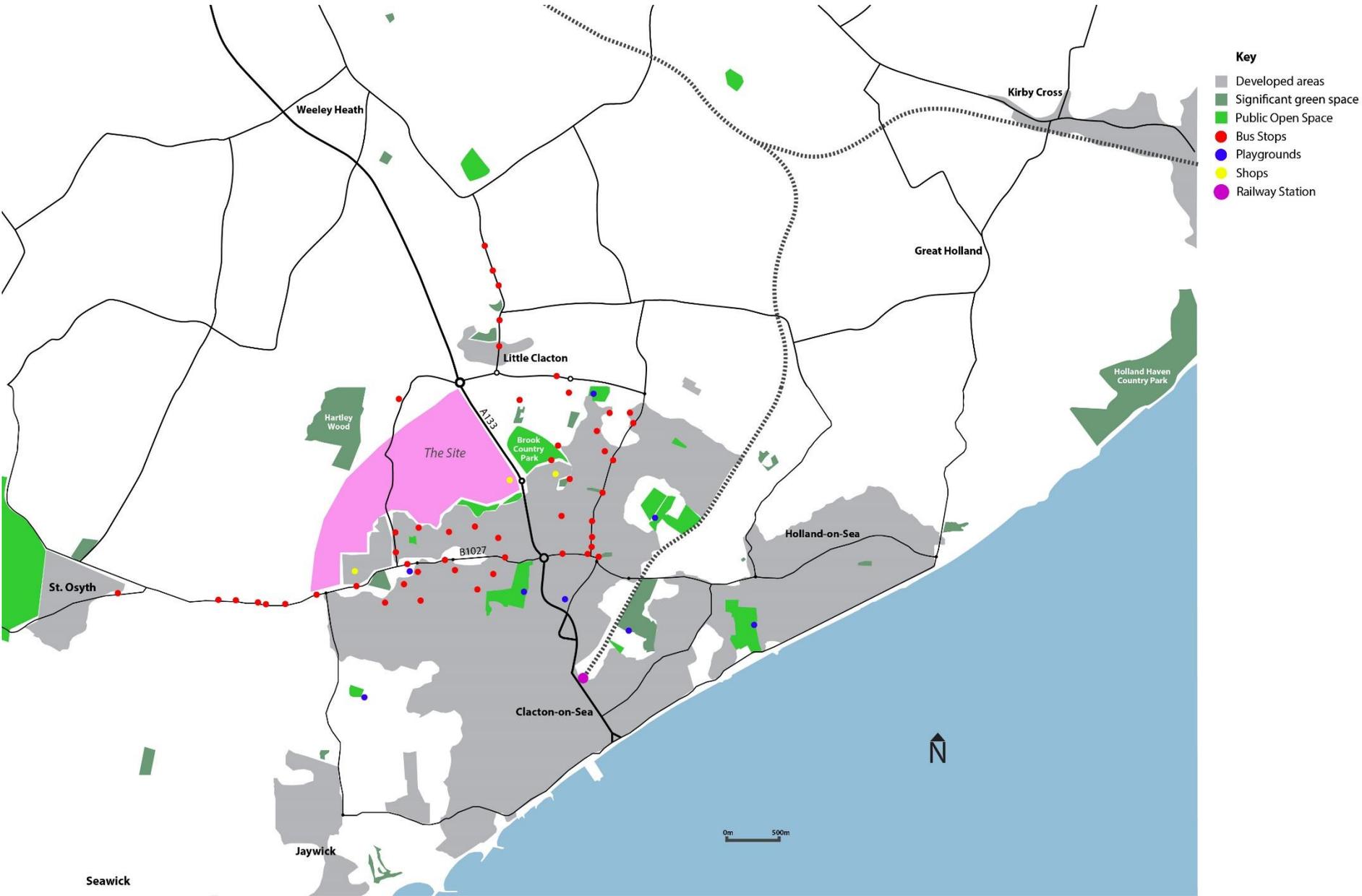


Figure 2: Site and Surrounding Map

2. Landscape Structure

2.1 The landscape in and around the Hartley Gardens study area contains designated areas and features, which are protected by legislation and / or National and Local planning policy. Figure 3 identifies landscape features, designations and other characteristics that affect the landscape value and sense of place.

Planning Policy

2.2 Landscape plays an important role within both the existing Tendring District (TD) Local Plan (2007) and the emerging TD Local Plan (Publication Draft Final). Policies that relate to landscape and the role it plays within development management are shown below:

TD Local Plan (2007)

2.2.1 Policy EN1 - Landscape Character

“The quality of the district’s landscape and its distinctive local character will be protected and, where possible, enhanced. Any development which would significantly harm landscape character or quality will not be permitted. Development control will seek in particular to conserve the following natural and manmade features which contribute to local distinctiveness:

- a. estuaries and rivers, and the undeveloped coast;*
- b. skylines and prominent views, including those of ridge tops and plateau edges;*
- c. the settings and character of settlements and of attractive and/or vernacular buildings within the landscape;*
- d. historic landscapes and listed parks and gardens, ancient woodlands, and other important woodland, hedgerows and trees;*
- e. native species of landscape planting and local building materials; and*
- f. the traditional character of protected lanes, other rural lanes, bridleways and footpaths. Where a local landscape is capable of accommodating development, any proposals shall include suitable measures for landscape conservation and enhancement.”*

TD Local Plan (2013-2033) Publication Draft

2.2.2 Policy PPL 3 - The Rural Landscape

“The Council will protect the rural landscape and refuse planning permission for any proposed development which would cause overriding harm to its character or appearance, including to:

- a. estuaries, rivers and undeveloped coast;*
- b. skylines and prominent views including ridge-tops and plateau edges;*
- c. traditional buildings and settlement settings;*
- d. native hedgerows, trees and woodlands;*
- e. protected lanes, other rural lanes, bridleways and footpaths; and*
- f. registered parks and gardens”*

“...development proposals should have regard to the Natural England Character Area profiles for the Greater Thames Estuary (No.81) and the Northern Thames Basin

(No.111) and the Council's Landscape Character Assessments, as relevant, and should protect and reinforce identified positive landscape qualities."

"New development within the rural landscape should minimise the impact of light pollution on the site and its surroundings, in order to protect rural amenity and biodiversity."

Policy PPL 4 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

"Sites designated for their local importance to nature conservation, including Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS), Ancient Woodlands Protected Verges and aged or veteran trees will be protected from development likely to have an adverse impact on such sites or features. Proposals for enhancement of special interest and features will be supported, subject to other material planning considerations."

"...Proposals for new infrastructure and major development should consider the potential for enhanced biodiversity, appropriate to the site and its location, including, where appropriate, within Green Infrastructure."

Development at Hartley Gardens

2.2.3 Policy SAMU2 (incorporating the Council's suggested policy amendments)

Land north of Bockings Elm and west of A133 shown on the Map SAMU2, is designated as a broad location for growth for mixed use development for the phased and comprehensive delivery of the following:

- a. approximately 1,700 new homes of mixed sizes and types to meet evidenced local housing need within the Council's most up to date Strategic Housing Market Assessment and to include 30% affordable housing as set out in Policy LP5*
- b. up to 7 hectares of land for employment;*
- c. 2.1 hectares of land for a new two-form entry primary school with co-located 56 place early years and childcare facility (D1 use) and/or financial contributions towards primary school and secondary school provision as required by the Local Education Authority;*
- d. New facilities and/or financial contributions to support new health provision based on evidenced need;*
- e. Green infrastructure which should provide a multi-functional and connected network, including amenity green space, parks, allotments and natural and semi natural green space (meeting the standards set out in Policy HP5) and provides for attractive green walking and cycling routes;*
- f. To deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain;*
- g. A sustainable movement network, including principal points of highway access, a hierarchy of streets, public transport and connected walking and cycling routes within the site and beyond; and*
- h. The provision of sufficient utility infrastructure working with the relevant infrastructure providers to ensure that such provision is achieved in a timely manner.*

No planning applications will be approved until a site specific Hartley Gardens DPD has been prepared and adopted by the Council. The purpose of the DPD will be as follows:

- i. To provide further detail on the geographical extent and boundary of the allocation, ensuring a defensible and sensitive boundary to the open countryside beyond*
- ii. To set out how Policy SAMU2 development objectives and masterplanning principles will be achieved through the site specific DPD which will provide the means to inform, assess and determine planning applications and secure comprehensive, co-ordinated and integrated sustainable development*
- iii. To facilitate and support the co-ordination and timely delivery of the green, social and physical infrastructure necessary to facilitate growth in this location*

This is to ensure the comprehensive and co-ordinated development of the site, to ensure the masterplanning principles below are addressed and to provide a clear delivery plan to ensure the right infrastructure is funded and delivered at the right place and at the right time.

The Council will not accept piecemeal development which does not address the policy requirements. Development within the broad location for growth in advance of the Hartley Gardens DPD may be permitted provided that:

- There would be no prejudice to the delivery of the wider Hartley Gardens development (including its infrastructure requirements) and would not undermine the integrated and co-ordinated approach to the wider development;*
- The development demonstrably conforms to the policy requirements and principles of Policy SAMU 2 Hartley Gardens;*
- A site wide highway infrastructure strategy has been agreed by the County Council and District Council, opportunities for sustainable modes of transport have been secured and will be delivered and that the residual impacts upon the transport network will not be severe*

Masterplanning Principles

The Hartley Gardens DPD will provide further guidance to meet the following principles and all development proposals should accord with these:

- a. To create a series of permeable and legible well-defined streets which are cycle and pedestrian friendly and link into the existing built up area and local facilities (e.g. retail and schools);*
- b. To identify off site highway works required to support new development, their phasing and funding;*
- c. To identify public transport measures to ensure sufficient access to the site by bus and rail and provide a series of walking and cycling routes within the site with strong and positive linkages to the existing network;*
- d. To create a high quality built and natural environment that respects the built and landscape character and context of the local area and is in accordance with the National Design Guide and the Essex Design Guide;*
- e. To incorporate in the design of new development measures to minimise the contribution to climate change and to ensure new development is resilient and adaptable to the effects of climate change;*
- f. To create a connected multi-functional green infrastructure network which protects and enhances existing site features of landscape and ecological value such as the expansion of the Pickers Ditch Green corridor to the south of the site, the copses at T Grove and Long Grove (both registered on the Priority Habitat*

Inventory as Deciduous Woodland and the National Forest Inventory as Broadleaved Woodland, ancient woodland (including Hartley Woods to the north of the site), any veteran trees, hedgerows and other important landscape features and important habitats;

- g. To ensure no net loss of biodiversity and to deliver positive benefits to biodiversity through the restoration, enhancement and creation of appropriate semi-natural habitats within and through the site to maintain, restore and create functional ecological networks;*
- h. To establish a sustainable drainage system across the site that integrates with the green infrastructure network and utilises where practicable existing watercourses (e.g. Hartley Brook and Pickers Ditch), ponds, ditches and any greenways associated with retained hedgerows and maximise habitat value;*
- i. To create a landscape structure that retains and utilises existing landscape features (such as hedgerows, trees, Hartley Brook and Pickers Ditch) and uses new planting and landscaping to sensitively integrate new built development and provide an attractive green setting;*
- j. To use structural planting and the location, orientation and design of new buildings to maintain the landscape setting and separate identity of Little Clacton and to carefully screen and sensitively integrate new infrastructure and buildings from the open countryside to the west to minimise any visual impact;*
- k. To identify opportunities to preserve and enhance the setting and significance of heritage assets at Bovills Hall, Earls Hall and Dutchess Farmhouse and Bluehouse Farm in accordance with the recommendations for avoiding harm, mitigating impacts and maximising enhancements in the Heritage Impact Assessment;*
- l. Where an archaeological evaluation (trial trenching where necessary) identifies surviving archaeological deposits, an appropriate mitigation strategy for preservation in situ or by excavation should be submitted;*
- m. To demonstrate that no internationally designated site would be adversely affected by the development either alone or in combination with other proposals as per the requirements of Policy PPL 4 and future proposals will need to demonstrate no adverse impact on water quality as per the requirements of Policy PPL5; and*
- n. To demonstrate how a phased approach to development can deliver the required infrastructure when it is required and create an integrated and sustainable community.*

Ecological designations

2.3 Areas of the study area are rich in ecological interest. Key designations include:

- Priority Habitat; Lowland deciduous woodland and hedgerows; and
- Ancient Woodland, Hartley Wood located beyond the western boundary of the site and Coppin's Hall Wood south of St Johns Road

Heritage

- 2.4 The area surrounding Hartley Gardens contains a number of heritage assets including Bovill's Hall and its associated pig sties and barn (Grade II listed), which are located adjacent to the site on the northern boundary. As well as, Duchess Farmhouse (Grade II listed), a timber framed 17th century house which is situated on St Johns Road, close to the southern boundary of the site.

Connectivity

- 2.5 In terms of public access, the majority of the site is inaccessible, with only two Public Rights of Way (PRoW) crossing a section of the site between Little Clacton Road and Pickers Ditch. PROW 167_8 crossing from east to west, from Elcombe Farm to the POS south of Pickers Ditch. Whereas, PROW 167_7 adjoins PROW 167_8 at the centre of the route, heading south into the existing settlement on Constable Avenue.

Watercourses

- 2.6 Pickers Ditch lies along the south eastern boundary of the study area, north of the existing settlement and the existing Public Open Space (POS). Much of this POS is Flood Zone 3 and will be used for water storage during flood events. This water course adjoins Hartley Wood Brook and intersects the site from east to west at its lowest point. Alongside this watercourse lies mature mixed hedgerow sections and mature hedgerow trees, some of which have roosting features.

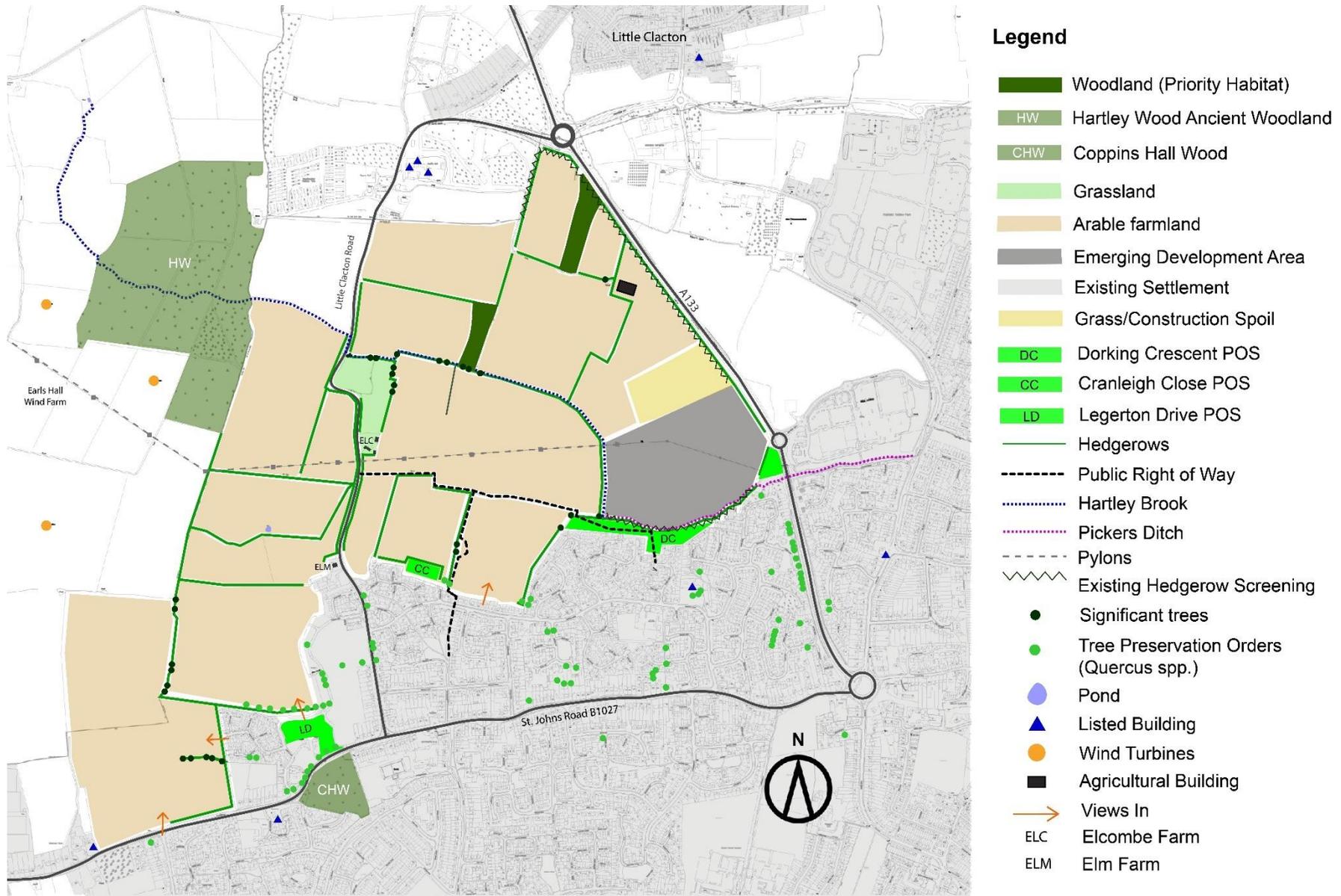


Figure 3: Hartley Gardens Landscape Structure

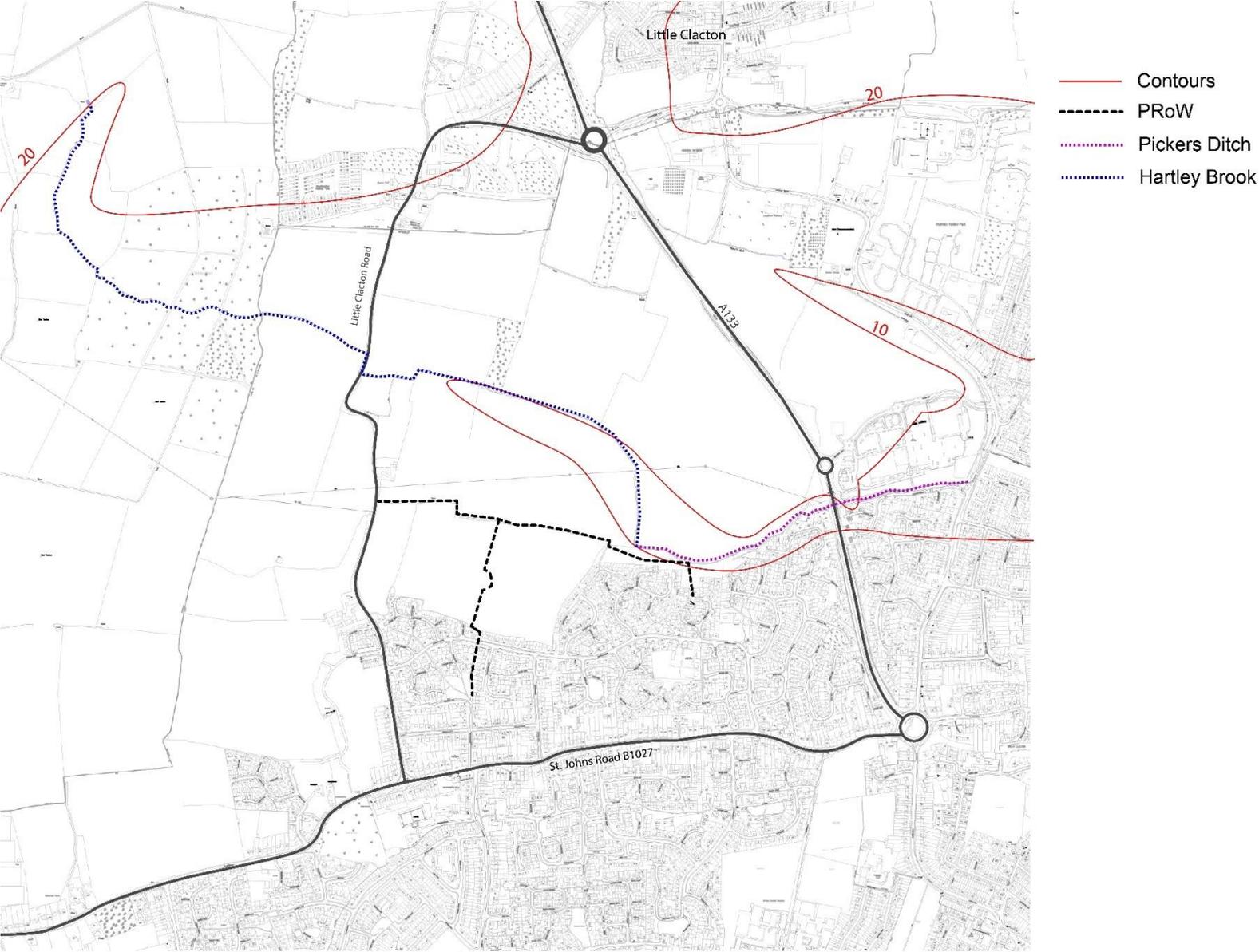


Figure 4: Contours

3. Landscape Character

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 LCA is the process of identifying and analysing variation in the character of the landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features (characteristics) that make landscapes distinctive and create a sense of place¹. It does this by mapping and describing the variations in physical, natural and cultural attributes and experiential characteristics that make one area distinctive from another. Landscape is a result of the interaction of the natural, physical components of the environment with the human element - historical and cultural land use and interventions. It is not just experienced visually, but through sounds, smells, memories and cultural associations.
- 3.1.2 LCA helps to inform, plan and manage change and can be useful when undertaken at a scale appropriate to local and neighbourhood plan-making. Landscape Character Assessment helps us to understand the ability of different landscape to withstand different types of development pressures and draw out the particular issues to which any future development should respond.
- 3.1.3 This landscape character assessment was completed in conjunction with a landscape sensitivity study. It is presented as section two in this report. The character study forms the baseline information on which the sensitivity assessment was based.
- 3.1.4 This is a site-wide assessment of the character of the landscape. It does not include the built-up area of Clacton itself, nor the fringes of the town and other emerging site allocations. The study area for this assessment is presented in Figure 3.

3.2 Methodology

- 3.2.1 The approach to this study followed best practice promoted by Natural England, as set out in the Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (2002) and Topic Paper 6 and reaffirmed by Natural England's 2014 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment'.
- 3.2.2 Baseline data has been collated and analysed and mapped in zones to cover all the sites to be considered, in order to identify existing landscape features, views and the main elements which contribute to the character, structure and setting of each site. Mapping has included:
- Geology and soils;
 - Topography;
 - Land use and landscape features (based initially on aerial photography and OS mapping);
 - Regional and county landscape character types and areas, and associated guidelines;

¹ Tudor, C (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, Natural England, October 2014.

- Local and Neighbourhood Plan designations including local landscape, nature conservation, and heritage designation;
- Extent of existing built development (settlement);
- Listed buildings, Conservation Areas, registered parks/gardens, Scheduled Monuments;
- Public rights of way (including long distance footpaths etc) and notable viewpoints; and
- Areas at risk of flooding.

3.2.3 Field survey work was undertaken in September 2020 to confirm and refine the baseline desk study, recording characteristics that cannot be recorded via the desk study alone, and informing the analysis and assessment. Findings were recorded onto survey sheets and OS mapping.

3.2.4 Drawing on the baseline work, field assessment and landscape structure analysis, the study area is then divided into site-scale Landscape Character Areas, which possess consistent characteristics. Character Area boundaries are defined by recognisable landscape features.

3.2.5 Summary descriptions of each Character Area were compiled in accordance with the guidelines.

3.3 Landscape Character Context

3.3.1 There are national, county and district scale landscape character assessments that cover the landscape within and around the Hartley Garden site. The national scale assessment has not been analysed for this assessment, as more detailed data is available.

3.3.2 The two relevant character assessment for this study are:
1. Essex LCA (2003), which covers the whole county (Figure 5); and
2. Tendring District Council LCA (2001) as shown in Figure 7.

3.3.3 Although both these studies could be classed as outdated, both assessments identify characteristics that applicable to the study area.

3.3.4 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) also identifies that the site is predominantly comprising of Grade 3 classification, with areas of Grade 4 land towards the centre and east of the site, and a small area of Grade 2 towards the south west along St John's Road.

3.3.5 The Essex LCA breaks up the study area into: E3 Tendring Plain and F7 Brightlingsea-Clacton-Frinton Coast-character areas (as shown in Figure 6). These are:

Table 1: Essex Landscape Character Areas

Landscape Type	Landscape Character Area	Key characteristics
London Clay Landscapes (E)	Tendring Plain (E3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large flat farmland plateau, dissected by occasional small narrow valleys. Arable land use dominates, but with some pasture and orchards. Straight and regular field patterns with mainly low trimmed hedgerows. Widely dispersed blocks of woodland/small copses, sparse tree cover in the north.
Coastal Landscape (F)	Brightlingsea-Clacton-Frinton Coast (F7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium to large coastal towns interspersed by open farmland and other land in mixed recreational use. Gently sloping or flat arable fields, with very few hedgerows and an absence of trees. Sand and shingle beaches along the southern and eastern coast, significant areas of saltmarsh and mudflats along the estuary and its connecting creeks in the west. Distinctive plotlands developments.

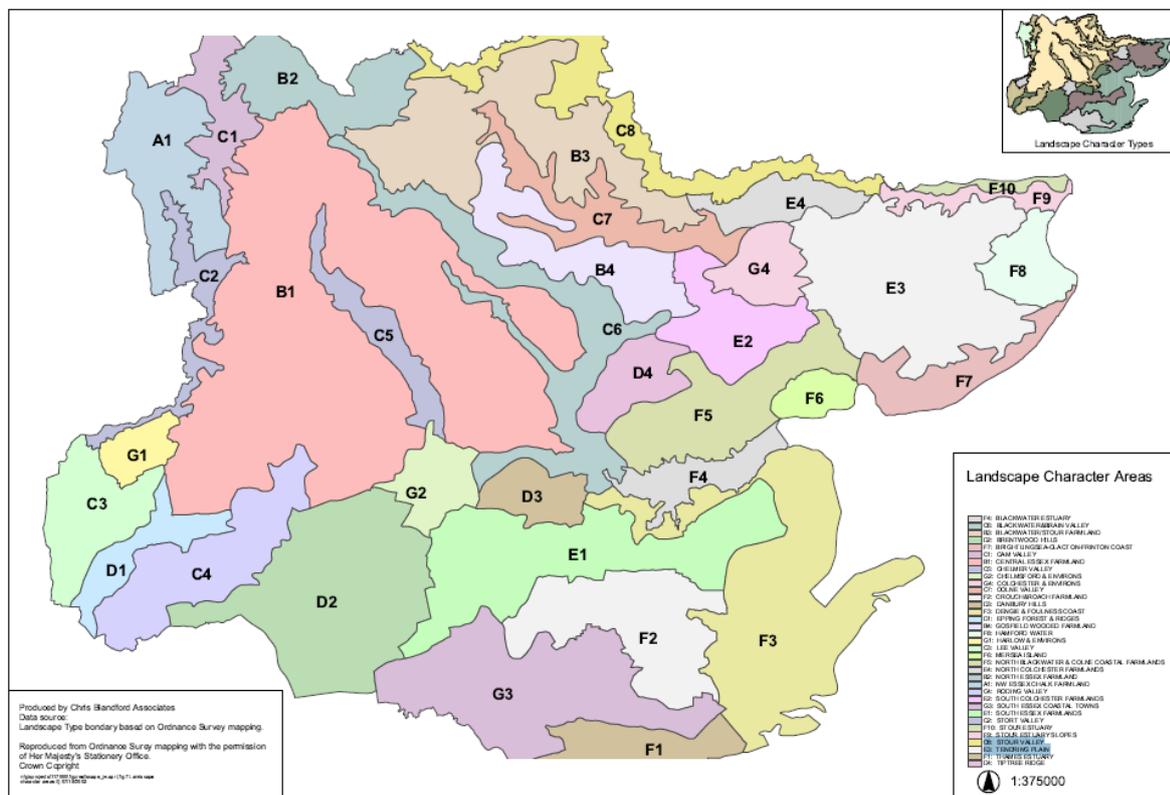


Figure 5: Essex Landscape Character Areas (Chris Blandford Associates, 2003)

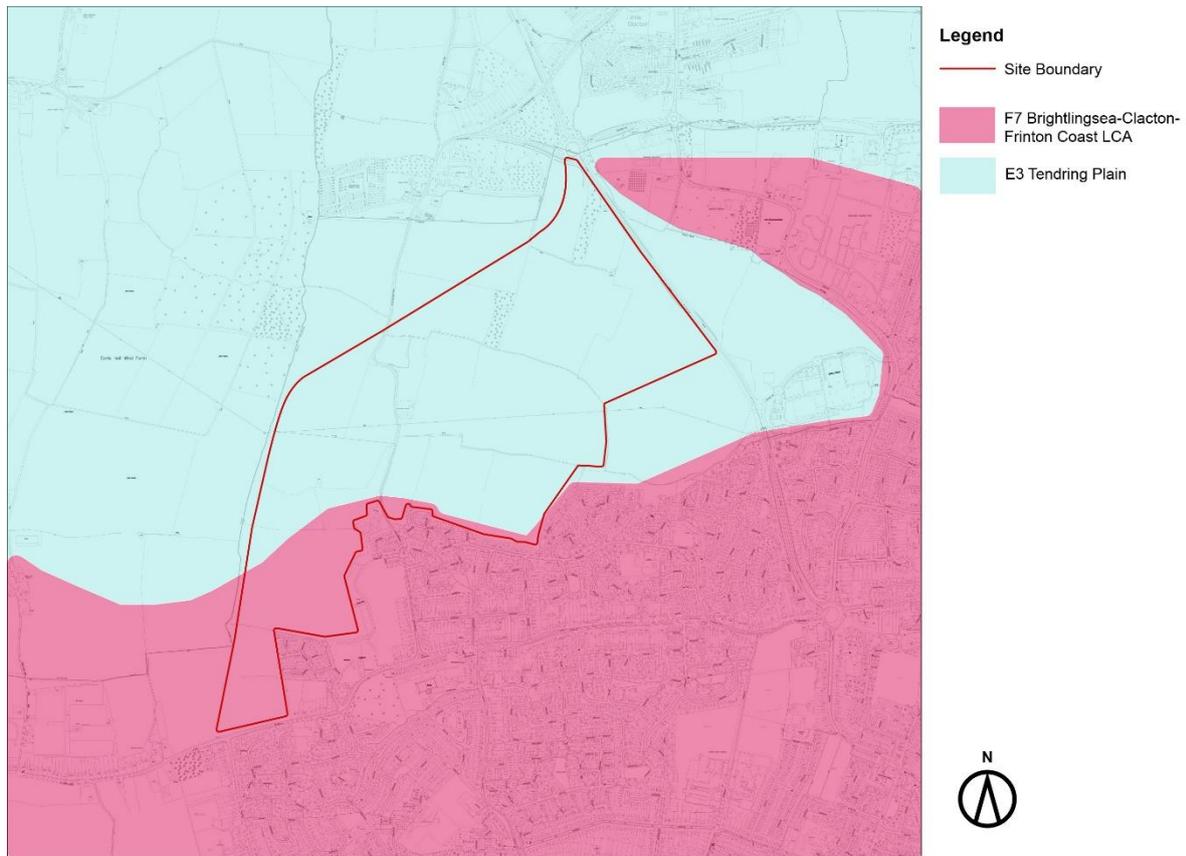


Figure 6: Essex Landscape Character Areas Site overlay (Place Services, 2020)

3.3.5 Similarly, the Tendring LCA identifies the study area falling within one LCA. This is 8B – Clacton and the Sokens Clay Plateau. Details of this LCA include:

Table 2: Tendring Landscape Character Areas

Landscape Type	Landscape Character Area	Key characteristics
Clay Plateaux (8)	Clacton and the Sokens Clay Plateau (8B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gently undulating agricultural plateau, drained by the Holland Brook Valley System, in the south-east of Tendring. Underlain by a solid geology of London Clay, which gives rise to slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged clayey soils and standing water. Low, gappy hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees divide arable fields. Remnants of ancient oak and sweet chestnut coppice woodland. Good access provided by the A133, B1033 and B144, which form a backbone for the ribbon development that dominates the areas around Clacton and Frinton.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Fringe character enhanced by presence of nurseries, caravan parks, paddocks, holiday parks and industrial estates on the edges of Clacton and Frinton.
--	--	--

3.3.6 The Tendring LCA states that the overall landscape character of the landscape weak and could be considered poor in some urban fringe locations. This is primarily due the loss of elms, hedgerow loss and associated agricultural intensification and built development on the urban fringes.

3.3.7 Furthermore, reference is made to Clacton and the Sokens Clay Plateau being one of the most “densely developed rural landscapes in Tendring” and therefore a strategy should be in place to strengthen and enhance the chacter of the landscape.

Enhancements include:

- Increase extent of native deciduous woodland using natural regeneration or locally occurring native species to enhance the wooded character of the landscape and link existing sites.
- Conserve hedgerows as important wildlife habitats and landscape features
- Consider opportunities for the creation of meadows to restore grassland habitats lost though agricultural classification.
- Maintain the historic leafy lanes with their ancient oaks and unimproved roadside verges. Resist road improvements or widening that would threaten the rural character.

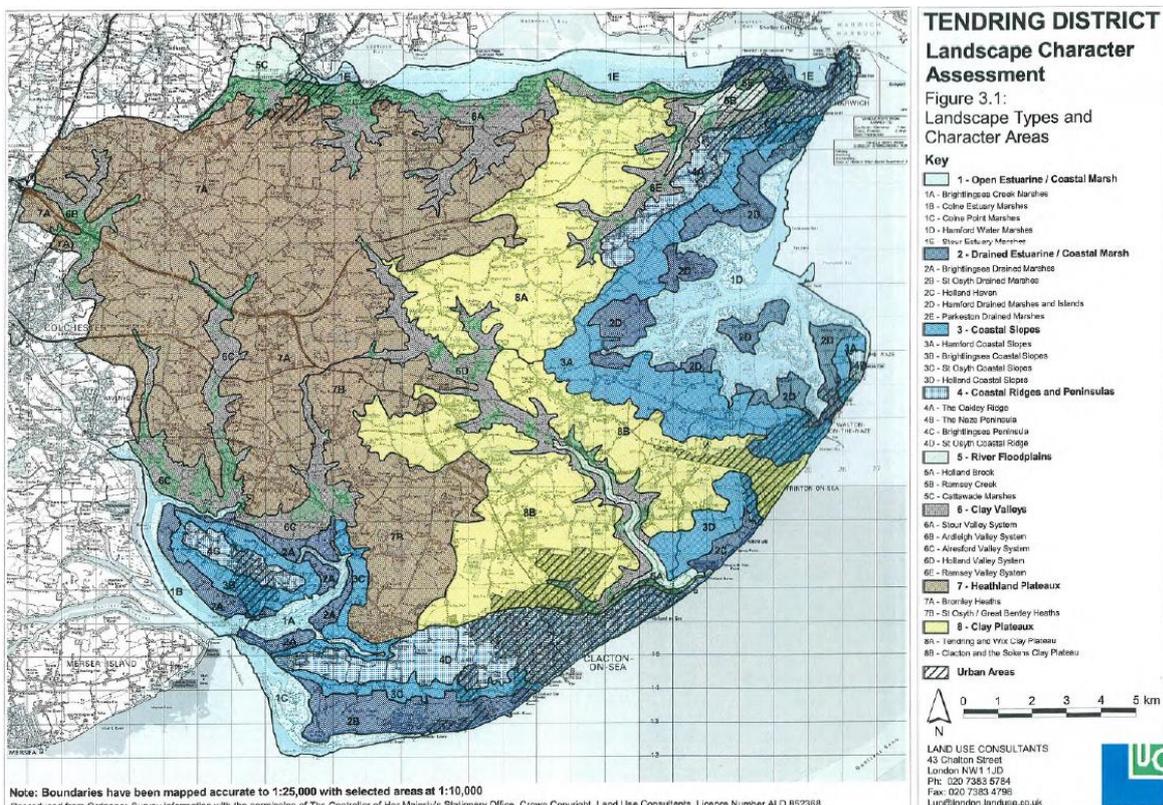


Figure 7: Tendring Landscape Types and Character Areas (Land Use Consultants, 2001)

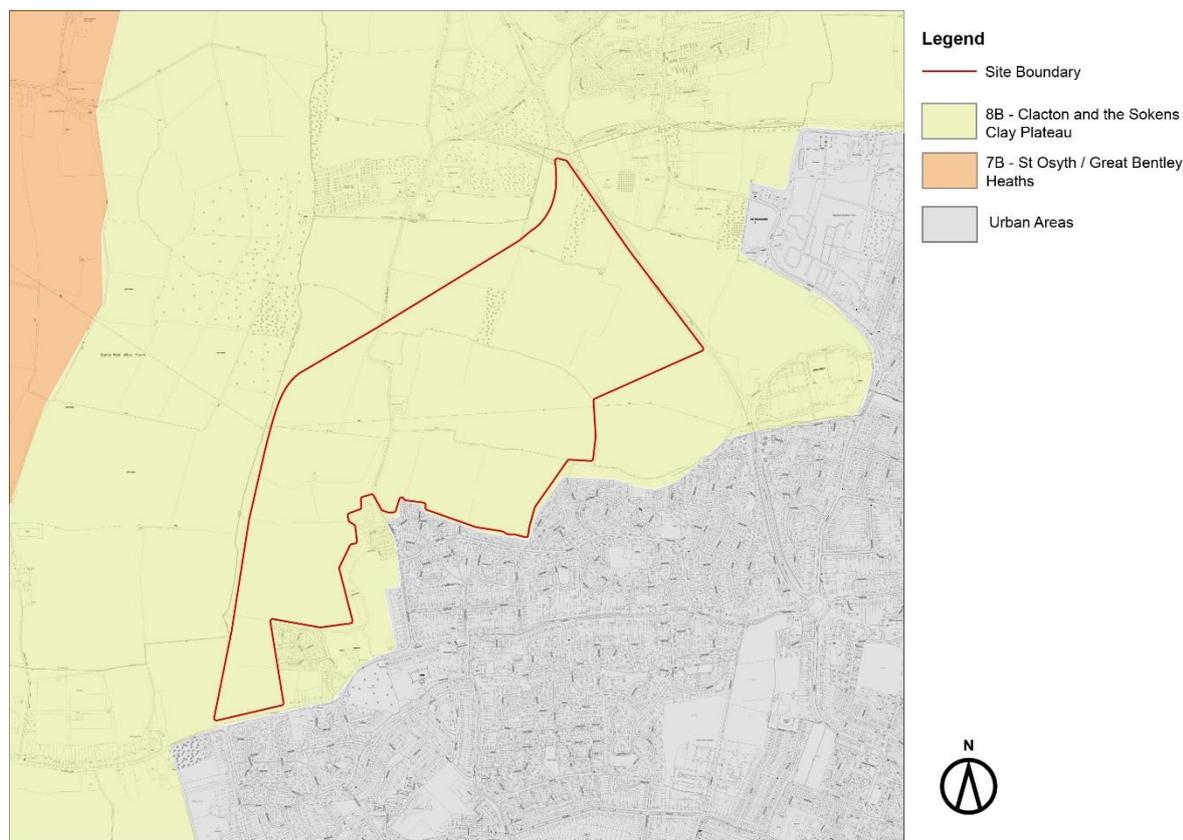


Figure 8: Tendring Landscape Character Areas Site Overlay (Place Services, 2020)

3.4 Site wide Landscape Characterisation

3.4.1 Drawing on the initial desk study, landscape structure analysis and the field assessment, the study divides the landscape into Site scale LCAs. Hartley Gardens study area has been divided into 9 Local Landscape Character Areas (see Figure 9 opposite).

3.4.2 The following is a list of the Harley Garden landscape character areas identified:

1. Wooded Fringe
2. Brook Fields
3. Eastern Fields
4. Urban Fringe
5. Arable Plains
6. Elcombe Edge
7. Hartley Fields
8. Constable Fringe
9. St Johns Edge

3.4.3 The characteristics of each Landscape Character Area is analysed against criteria identified in Natural England's 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment'. This information forms the basis for the landscape sensitivity and landscape value assessments.

3.4.4 For each character area there will be a description of landscape character and site photographs. Landscape and Visual sensitivity will be explored in Chapter 3 of this document.

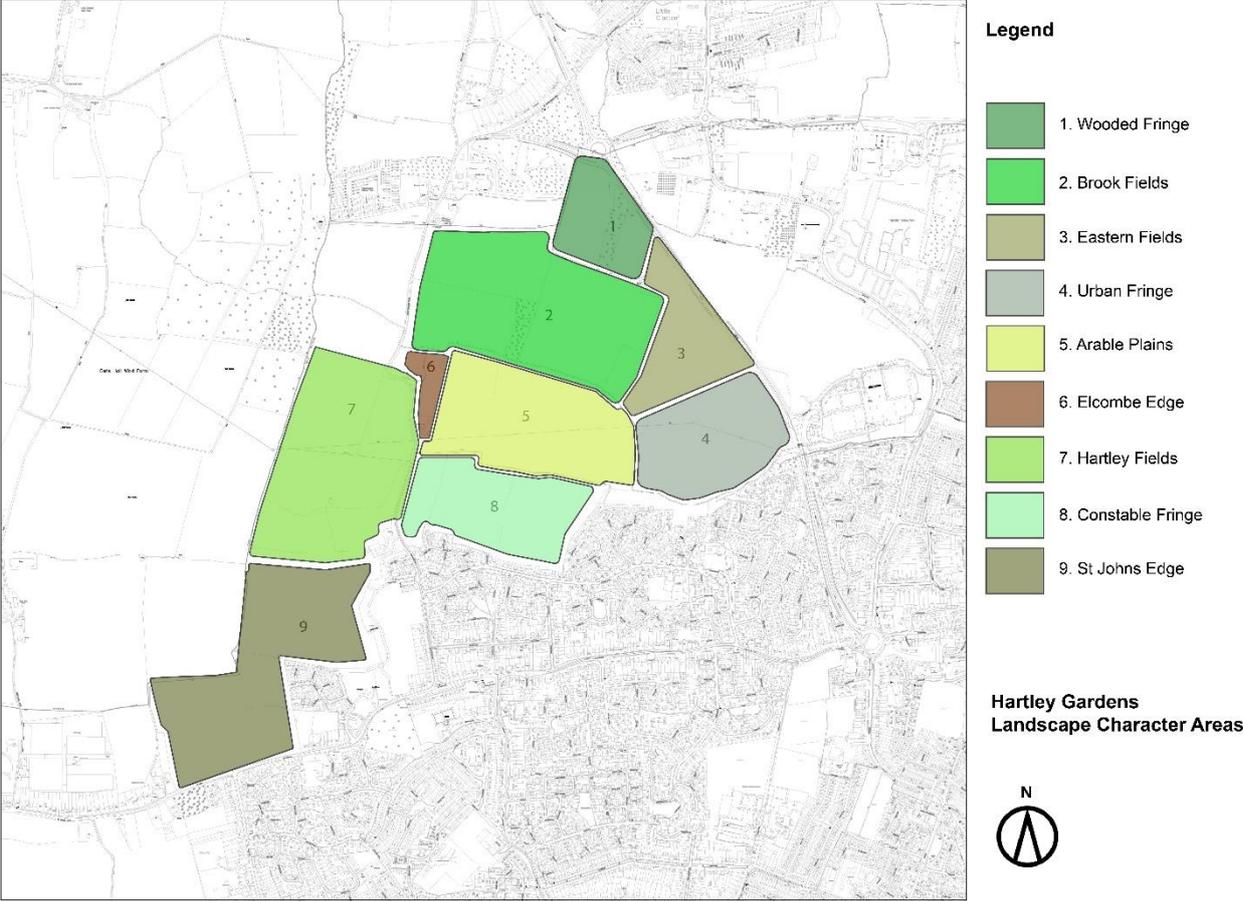


Figure 9: Hartley Gardens Landscape Character Areas (Place Services, 2020)

3.5 Site Wide Landscape Character Areas

LCA	LCA Context	Key Characteristics
<p>1 - Wooded Fringe</p> 	<p>E3 Tendring Plain (Essex)</p> <p>8B Clacton and the Sokens Clay Plateau (Tendring)</p>	<p>Forming the northern part of the Hartley Gardens Site is this arable landscape, framed by hedgerows, hedgerow trees and Lowland Deciduous Woodland (Priority Habitat) dominated by mature oak species.</p> <p>The field is generally small scale in relation to other fields on site. Lines of mature hedgerows and trees provide visual links to the areas historic land use.</p> <p>Gently undulating landscape rising to the ridgeline along the southern boundary. This creates quite an intimate setting with few views out into the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>Although located in close proximity to the Grade II listed Bovill's Hall, it is not visible due to mature trees and shrubs screening views.</p>



Figure 10: Rising landscape to the southern ridgeline



Figure 11: Woodland edge

Character Area	LCA Context	Key Characteristics
<p data-bbox="193 306 419 338">2 - Brook Fields</p> 	<p data-bbox="636 306 890 376">E3 Tendring Plain (Essex)</p> <p data-bbox="636 416 932 521">8B Clacton and the Sokens Clay Plateau (Tendring)</p>	<p data-bbox="971 306 1469 450">A large arable parcel of the Hartley Gardens site made up of medium sized geometric fields bounded by strong hedgerows.</p> <p data-bbox="971 490 1477 669">The parcel is situated south of Bovill's Hall, east of Little Clacton Road and includes a section of the Hartley Wood Brook on its southern boundary.</p> <p data-bbox="971 710 1469 1032">Historic landscape features include the Lowland Deciduous Woodland (Priority Habitat) through its centre, along with an elm dominated hedgerow on its eastern edge. Elm is especially characteristic of Essex Farmland and therefore is a key landscape feature within this landscape.</p> <p data-bbox="971 1072 1485 1178">The brook and the accompanied hedgerow and hedgerow trees are a key feature within this landscape.</p> <p data-bbox="971 1218 1465 1397">The landscape gently falls towards the brook, providing long distances south towards the existing settlement, but also north towards the woodland edge.</p>



Figure 12: Views across arable landscape



Figure 13: Hartley Wood Brook and associated hedgerow trees

Character Area	LCA Context	Key Characteristics
<p data-bbox="193 306 448 340">3 - Eastern Fields</p> 	<p data-bbox="632 306 887 376">E3 Tendring Plain (Essex)</p> <p data-bbox="632 416 927 521">8B Clacton and the Sokens Clay Plateau (Tendring)</p>	<p data-bbox="970 306 1465 412">The eastern edge of the Hartley Gardens site, adjacent to the A133 transport corridor.</p> <p data-bbox="970 452 1493 779">Previously arable fields, this relatively flat landscape is now being used for construction and retainment of spoil. Because of this, many areas are now bare soil or established grass spp. This along with traffic noise does reduce the sense of rurality significantly and reduce the value of the landscape.</p> <p data-bbox="970 819 1489 1072">The parcel is bounded by a strong well-established mixed hedgerow on the A133 embankment. Species include Hawthorn, Field Maple, Hazel and Blackthorn. To the north, a new agricultural building has also been erected (Figure 15).</p> <p data-bbox="970 1113 1485 1292">Open views of existing hedgerows and arable fields to the east are available, however the development construction to the south distracts from the setting.</p>



Figure 14: Bare soil and A133 hedgerow



Figure 15: New construction track and agricultural building

Character Area	LCA Context	Key Characteristics
<p data-bbox="193 306 427 340">4 - Urban Fringe</p> 	<p data-bbox="635 306 890 376">E3 Tendring Plain (Essex)</p> <p data-bbox="635 416 932 521">8B Clacton and the Sokens Clay Plateau (Tendring)</p>	<p data-bbox="973 306 1489 450">South eastern parcel outside the red line boundary of Hartley Gardens. Construction is underway on recently approved development.</p> <p data-bbox="973 490 1489 775">This landscape is bounded by Pickers Ditch, existing trees and existing residential development to the south. Newly formed public open space has also been provided, though landscape features such as trees, shrubs and planting are limited.</p> <p data-bbox="973 815 1461 920">Urban development such as commercial buildings and new highways dominate the landscape.</p> <p data-bbox="973 960 1485 1140">Areas to the west are primarily grassland, with views of Hartley Wood Brook, mature trees and hedgerows, as well as wind turbines in the distance.</p>



Figure 16: POS on southern edge



Figure 17: Open grasslands adjacent to urban development

Character Area	LCA Context	Key Characteristics
<p data-bbox="191 347 430 380">5 - Arable Plains</p> 	<p data-bbox="635 347 890 414">E3 Tendring Plain (Essex)</p> <p data-bbox="635 448 933 560">8B Clacton and the Sokens Clay Plateau (Tendring)</p>	<p data-bbox="975 347 1476 560">A large sparse arable field in the centre of the Hartley Gardens site. This parcel is bounded by a PRow and a mature mixed hedgerow with disperse mature hedgerow trees on the southern boundary.</p> <p data-bbox="975 593 1460 739">The landscape gently falls towards the Hartley Wood Brook situated beyond the northern and eastern boundaries.</p> <p data-bbox="975 772 1484 918">Open views of the landscape and the strong landscaped skyline to the north are available and are key characteristics of this LCA.</p> <p data-bbox="975 952 1476 1108">Built infrastructure is limited, with electricity pylons crossing from east to west, which detract from the rural setting to some extent.</p>



Figure 18: Electricity pylons crossing the site



Figure 19: Open view of arable landscape

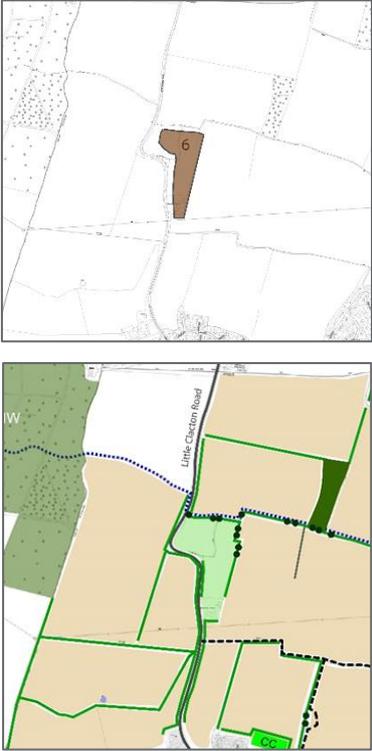
Character Area	LCA Context	Key Characteristics
<p data-bbox="193 306 448 340">6 - Elcombe Edge</p> 	<p data-bbox="635 306 890 376">E3 Tendring Plain (Essex)</p> <p data-bbox="635 416 932 521">8B Clacton and the Sokens Clay Plateau (Tendring)</p>	<p data-bbox="973 306 1485 412">A small contained residential parcel on the eastern edge of Little Clacton Road.</p> <p data-bbox="973 452 1485 741">Primarily made up of ornamental planting and amenity grass, which holds minimal landscape value. However, this landscape is bounded by a mature mixed hedgerow with hedgerow trees on its eastern edge which is valued from a landscape and ecological perspective.</p>



Figure 20: Views of residential parcel



Figure 21: Mixed hedgerow on eastern edge

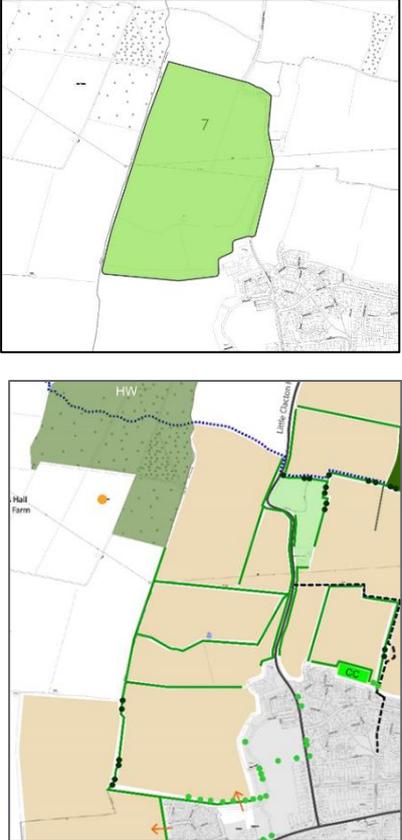
Character Area	LCA Context	Key Characteristics
<p data-bbox="193 340 437 371">7 - Hartley Fields</p> 	<p data-bbox="635 340 890 412">E3 Tendring Plain (Essex)</p> <p data-bbox="635 450 948 557">F7 Brightlingsea-Clacton-Frinton Coast (Essex)</p> <p data-bbox="635 595 932 703">8B Clacton and the Sokens Clay Plateau (Tendring)</p>	<p data-bbox="973 340 1465 557">This LCA is adjacent to Harley Wood – an Ancient Woodland and Site of Important Nature Conservation. Although it does not fall within the site, it provides a key landscape backdrop.</p> <p data-bbox="973 595 1485 741">The parcel is made up of large geometric arable and neutral grassland fields bounded by mature mixed hedgerows from east to west.</p> <p data-bbox="973 779 1490 996">The eastern boundary is bounded by Little Clacton Road. This single-laned road is bounded by mature mixed hedgerows on both sides, creating rural character that is key to this landscape.</p> <p data-bbox="973 1034 1485 1252">Built infrastructure is limited, with electricity pylons crossing from east to west. Wind turbines make up part of the skyline to the west, which detract from the rural setting to some extent.</p>



Figure 22: Hedgerow with hedgerow trees



Figure 23: Neutral grassland and electricity pylons

Character Area	LCA Context	Key Characteristics
<p data-bbox="193 306 485 338">8 - Constable Fringe</p> 	<p data-bbox="635 306 890 376">E3 Tendring Plain (Essex)</p> <p data-bbox="635 416 948 521">F7 Brightlingsea-Clacton-Frinton Coast (Essex)</p> <p data-bbox="635 562 932 667">8B Clacton and the Sokens Clay Plateau (Tendring)</p>	<p data-bbox="973 306 1495 595">Situated on the southern edge of Hartley Gardens, north of the existing settlement. This gently undulating arable landscape of medium sized regular fields is dissected by a mature hedgerow with hedgerow trees through the centre of the parcel, north to south.</p> <p data-bbox="973 636 1495 965">The landscape is overlooked from existing residential developments on its southern edge with standalone mature trees spread across the boundary. A small public open space known as Cranleigh Close on the southern edge has recently been installed, with a newly planted mixed hedgerow establishing.</p> <p data-bbox="973 1005 1469 1111">Important open views north and west towards a wooded skyline are available.</p> <p data-bbox="973 1151 1495 1256">The western boundary hedgerow is featuring tree loss and in turn a lot of dead wood is present.</p>



Figure 24: View of existing settlement to the south



Figure 25: Arable field with elm hedgerow

Character Area	LCA Context	Key Characteristics
<p data-bbox="193 304 448 338">9 - St Johns Edge</p> 	<p data-bbox="619 304 874 376">E3 Tendring Plain (Essex)</p> <p data-bbox="619 416 935 521">F7 Brightlingsea-Clacton-Frinton Coast (Essex)</p> <p data-bbox="619 562 919 667">8B Clacton and the Sokens Clay Plateau (Tendring)</p>	<p data-bbox="973 304 1469 483">On the south western boundary of Hartley Gardens. This flat, arable landscape of medium sized regular fields sits on the urban edge of Clacton-on-Sea.</p> <p data-bbox="973 524 1489 779">Mature mixed hedgerows with hedgerow trees dissect the fields. The landscape is overlooked from existing residential developments on its eastern and south eastern edge with standalone mature trees spread across the edge.</p> <p data-bbox="973 819 1493 1070">The southern boundary is bounded by St Johns Road, with open views across the arable field available. These urban features detract from the rural setting. Areas to the north west are significantly more open and uncontained.</p>



Figure 26: Overlooking existing development



Figure 27: Arable field with Hedgerow trees

4. Landscape Sensitivity

4.1 Methodology

- 4.1.1 The assessment considers sensitivity to the ‘principle’ of built development at Hartley Gardens. The assessment is based on a combination of desktop study and detailed field survey.
- 4.1.2 The study accords with best practice guidance and methodology and follows the techniques and criteria set out in ‘An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management²’ (Natural England, 2019). The Study is also consistent with the impact assessment guidance and methodology set out within the ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment³’ (Third Edition, 2013) (GLVIA3) and ‘An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment⁴’. In this study the following definition of landscape sensitivity has been used:
- 4.1.3 “Within the context of spatial planning and land management, landscape sensitivity is a term applied to landscape character and the associated visual resource, combining judgements of their susceptibility to the specific development type / development scenario or other change being considered together with the value(s) related to that landscape and visual resource. 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.”
- 4.1.4 This Landscape Sensitivity Assessment builds on the findings of landscape character assessment and is based upon data and information that is to a greater or lesser extent subjective, therefore some caution is required in its interpretation. This is particularly necessary to avoid the suggestion that certain landscape features or qualities can be absolutely associated with certain sensitivities, whereas the reality is that landscape sensitivity is the result of a complex interaction of often unequally weighted variables. Because of the complexity of the criteria and guidance by Natural England, the assessment will be based on a five-point sensitivity scale as proposed in Table 3.
- 4.1.5 The parcels are all at the same site scale, however they differ slightly to the defined LCA. These parcels are defined on Figure 28.

² Natural England. An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management (July 2019).

³ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment. Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (2013).

⁴ Natural England. An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (October 2014)



Figure 28: Sensitivity Parcels (Place Services, 2020)

Table 1: Landscape Sensitivity

High	Medium - High	Medium	Medium - Low	Low
Landscape and / or visual characteristics of the assessment unit are very susceptible to change and / or its values are high, and it is unable to accommodate the relevant type of development without	Landscape and / or visual characteristics of the assessment unit are susceptible to change and / or its values are medium through to high. It may be able to accommodate the relevant type of development but only in limited	Landscape and / or visual characteristics of the assessment unit are susceptible to change and / or its values are medium / low through to high / medium and / or it may have some potential to accommodate the relevant type of development in	Landscape and / or visual characteristics of the assessment unit are resilient and of low susceptibility to change and / or its values are medium / low or low and it can accommodate the relevant type of development in many	Landscape and / or visual characteristics of the assessment unit are robust or degraded and are not susceptible to change and / or its values are low, and it can accommodate the relevant type of

significant character change or adverse effects. Thresholds for significant change are very low.	situations without significant character change or adverse effects if defined in the relevant land parcel summary. Thresholds for significant change are low.	some defined situations without significant character change or adverse effects. Thresholds for significant change are intermediate.	situations without significant character change or adverse effects. Thresholds for significant change are high.	development without significant character change or adverse effects. Thresholds for significant change are very high.
--	---	--	---	---

Landscape and visual sensitivity have been assessed for each parcel with reference to 10 criteria, set out in **Appendix 1**.

4.3 Assessment Findings

4.3.1 The table below gives a summary of the comparative landscape and visual sensitivity of each assessment area for built development.

Table 2: Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Assessment Summary

Parcel Ref.	Landscape	Visual
1	ML	M
2	ML	M
3	M	M
4	L	L
5	ML	M
6	M	MH
7	M	ML
8	MH	M
9	MH	M
10	ML	ML
11	ML	ML

4.3.2 Details of both Landscape and Visual Sensitivity are presented over the following pages. These are presented using the 5-point scale (see Table 1 above) and accompanied by a short summary description of the site's landscape and visual sensitivities identified.

4.4 Landscape Sensitivity

4.4.1 The landscape sensitivity at Hartley Gardens site is generally higher towards the north at Parcels 7, 8 and 9, due to the presence of priority woodlands which increases the overall landscape sensitivity in terms of its enclosure, landscape features and ecological value. Located towards the centre of the site, Parcel 6 has a medium landscape sensitivity due to the lack of vegetative enclosure around its perimeters, and its proximity to Hartley Brook and a priority woodland on its northern and eastern boundaries. Looking towards the east of the site, Parcels 10 and 11 are graded medium-low landscape sensitivity, due to their proximity to the emerging development area, and their few valuable landscape and landform features. Areas located close to the existing settlement edge such as Parcel 1, 2 and 5, have a lower landscape sensitivity due to their urban context, although the presence of mature hedgerows and trees increase the overall complexity of these parcels. The medium rating for landscape sensitivity of Parcel 3 is attributed to its presence away from the settlement edge, in addition to its proximity to Hartley Wood Ancient Woodland on its north-western edge.

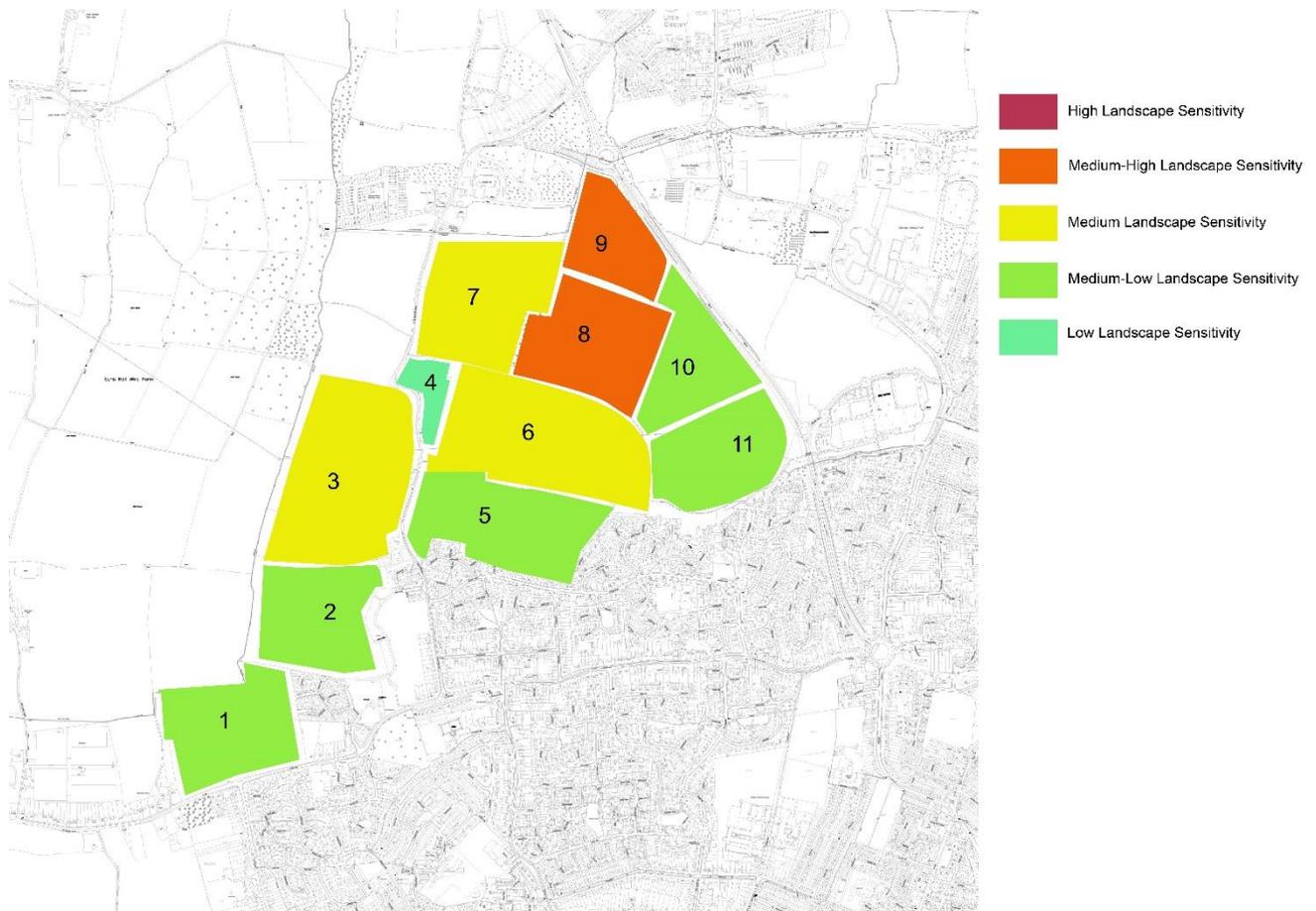


Figure 29: Landscape Sensitivity Results

Please see Appendix 2 for detailed assessment of Landscape Sensitivity

4.5 Visual Sensitivity

4.5.1 The visual sensitivity at Hartley Gardens is generally higher towards the centre of the site and in areas closely located to the settlement edge, which is attributed to the open public and private views into the parcels. The PRow forms extending views across Parcel 6, increasing the visual sensitivity of the site, and the existing development towards the south increases the sensitivity to private views over Parcels 1, 2 and 5. Whilst parcels towards the north of the site have less open public and private views which decreases the visual sensitivity, the perceptual quality of some parcels is attributed to the presence of the priority habitat woodlands that increase the sensitivity. The parcels in these northern locations are also sensitive due to their location in proximity to Little Clacton, which increases visual sensitivity in terms of prevention of merging and coalescence, where proposed development would be preferable towards the south on the settlement edge of Clacton.

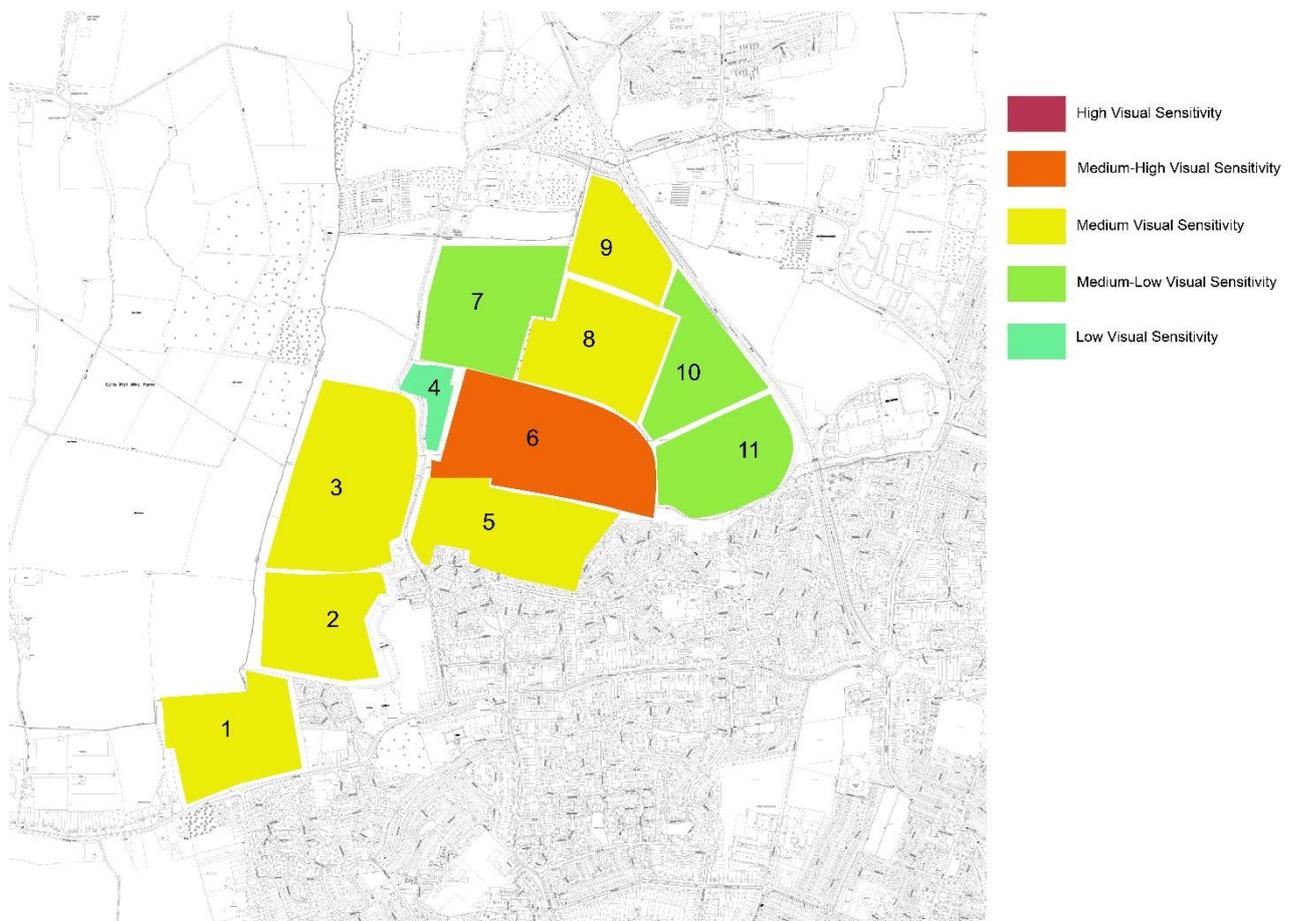


Figure 30: Visual Sensitivity Results

Please see Appendix 3 for detailed assessment of Visual Sensitivity

4.6 Overall Sensitivity

4.6.1 The landscape and visual sensitivity findings for all parcels have been combined to give an overall sensitivity grading, as shown in Table 3 and Figure 31 below. Overall, the landscape and visual sensitivity at Hartley Gardens site is highest in the northern parcels (Parcels 8 and 9), due to the presence of priority woodlands and the perceptual quality created by the enclosed nature of the landscape. Areas close to the existing settlement edge (Parcels 1,2 and 5) are of lower sensitivity due to the urban context surrounding them. Although it's important to note that there are important landscape features such as hedgerows and mature trees that provide landscape and ecological value and should be retained as part of any potential development design.

Table 3: Overall sensitivity findings

Parcel Ref.	Overall Sensitivity
1	Medium Low
2	Medium Low
3	Medium
4	Low
5	Medium – Low
6	Medium
7	Medium
8	Medium High
9	Medium High
10	Medium Low
11	Medium Low

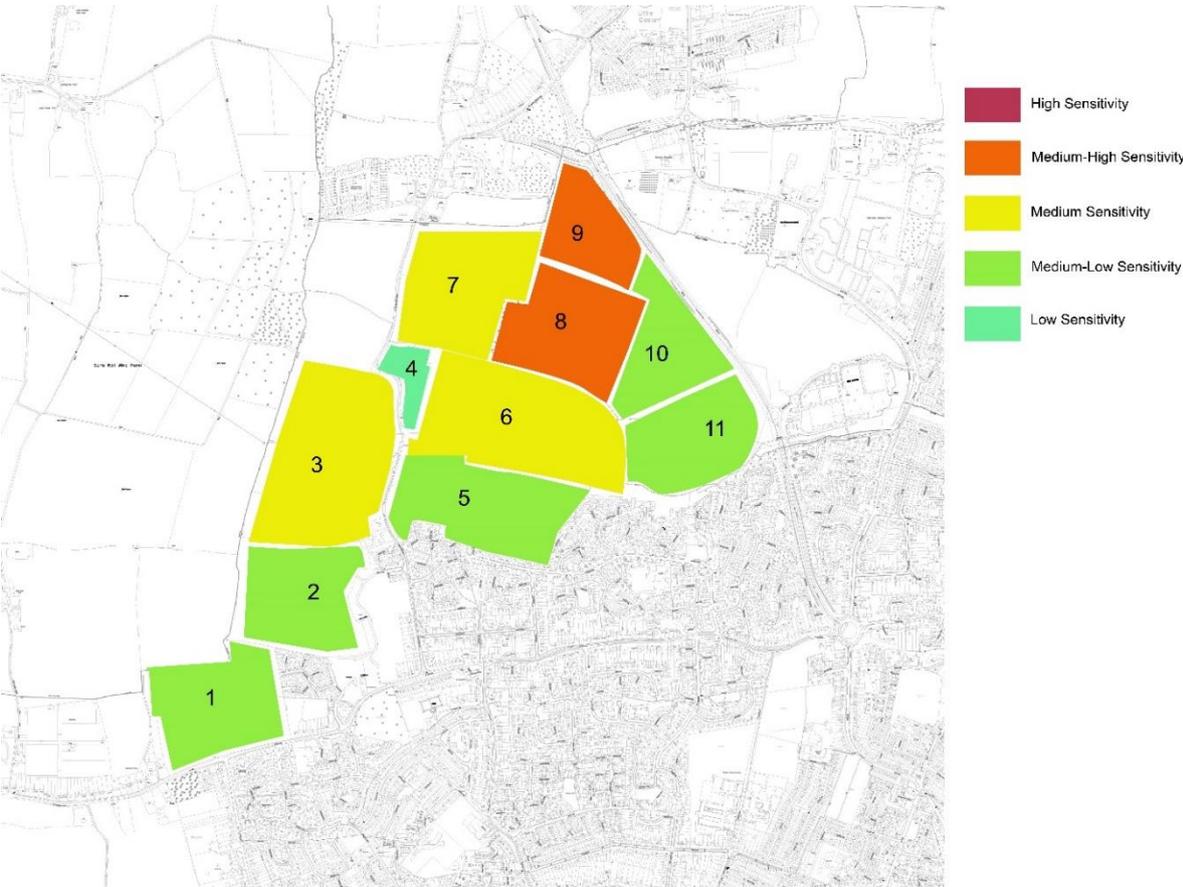


Figure 31: Overall Sensitivity Results

5. Landscape Recommendations

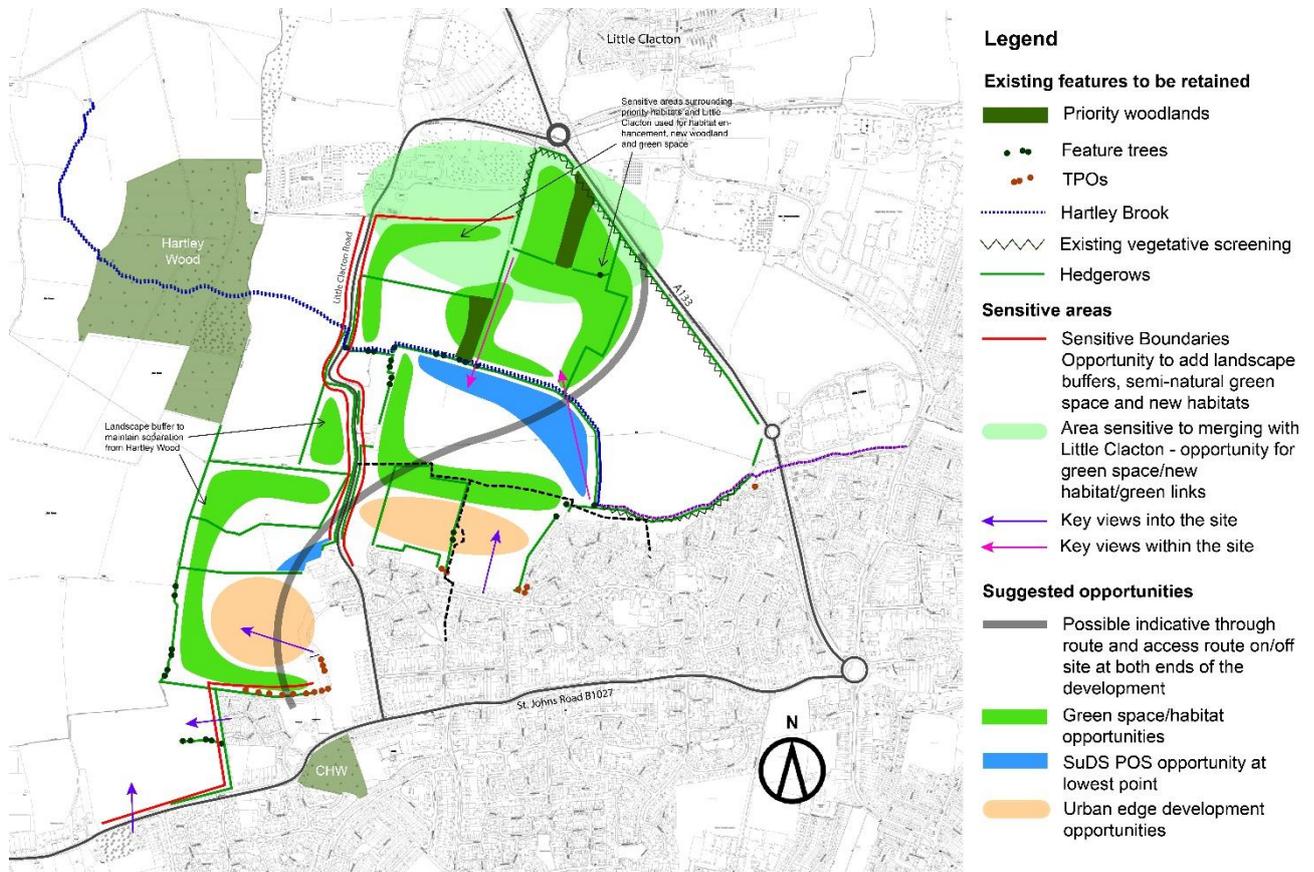


Figure 32: Landscape Framework

- 5.1 The recommendations below relate to general development and the landscape. They should be used to inform a site-wide green infrastructure framework and masterplan. The aim is to achieve sensitively sited, high quality design appropriate to the sensitivity and character of this area.
- 5.2 This report has highlighted that LCA 1 – Wooded Fringe is a highly sensitivity landscape, in terms of its enclosure, landscape features, ecological designations, rurality and locational proximity to Little Clacton. Therefore, we would recommend that any future Hartley Gardens development is sympathetic to its context and no inappropriate development takes place in this parcel.
- 5.3 The brook, deciduous woodland and extensive hedgerow networks are all important landscape features within this landscape. Specifically, the elm dominated hedgerows in Brook Fields LCA are key characteristics which are significant, especially in this part of Essex, and should be retained.
- 5.4 Areas close to the existing settlement edge such as Constable Fringe and St Johns Edge are of lower sensitivity due to the urban context surrounding them. Although it's important to note that there are important landscape features such as hedgerows and

- mature trees that provide landscape and ecological value and should be retained as part of any potential development design.
- 5.5 Long distance views north of the wooded skyline are available from the PRoW and surrounding area. Future proposals should encourage this wooded character to extend along green corridors within the site. Existing native deciduous woodland is priority habitat and therefore opportunities to connect these and create a wider green infrastructure (GI) network
 - 5.6 Other than a small parcel of neutral grassland, the site is primarily arable, which has lowered the landscape's value. Opportunities to introduce further grasslands and meadows should be explored to enhance and diversify habitats across the landscape.
 - 5.7 Little Clacton Road is key transport corridor, but also provides an important GI corridor, given its strong mature hedgerow boundaries. The lane has historic integrity, valued association and aesthetic value, which could warrant protection through a Protected Lane Designation. Road widening or re-alignment should be avoided as this would destroy this character.
 - 5.8 Due to the site topography, Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) are proposed at the lowest point of the site, running along the south side of Hartley Brook.
 - 5.9 The priority woodlands towards the north of the site are key landscape features within this landscape that need to be retained. Opportunities to enhance the habitats, woodlands and green spaces, whilst also forming a landscape buffer from Little Clacton and the listed buildings in the north west should be explored.
 - 5.10 Characteristic elm hedgerows are located throughout the site. These need to be preserved, and in turn a sensitive approach to development should be undertaken to ensure adequate landscape provision is provided that is sympathetic to existing features such as these hedgerows.
 - 5.11 To reduce the impact of the development proposals upon the existing PRoW, it is recommended that green space and vegetation is proposed along both edges of the PRoW to reduce the visual and landscape sensitivity.
 - 5.12 Woodland habitats should be enhanced where possible. These habitats are characteristic of this landscape and would also ensure visual separation from Little Clacton and the Ancient Woodland (Hartley Wood) to the west.
 - 5.13 Pickers Ditch and Hartley Brook are strong landscape features within the landscape and should be retained and enhanced to become part of the wider green corridors.

Appendix

1 Methodology criteria

Landscape Sensitivity of Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Measurement of Criteria	Comments
Landform and landscape features	<p><i>Low Sensitivity</i> Smooth, gently undulating or featureless landform; the area has fewer landscape features that are characteristic or valued.</p> <p><i>Medium Sensitivity</i> Undulating landform and some distinct landform features within it; the area has some landscape features that are characteristic or valued.</p> <p><i>High Sensitivity</i> Dramatic landforms or distinct landform features that contribute positively to landscape character; the area has a high density of landscape features that are characteristic or valued.</p>	<p>This considers the shape and scale of the landform, landscape pattern and landscape elements in relation to the scale of potential development. It also considers the presence of landscape features if they are important to landscape character (i.e. the representation of elements which are key characteristics or valued features, with reference to the Landscape Character Assessment) because these would potentially be liable to loss.</p>
Complexity	<p><i>Low Sensitivity</i> Large, simple landscape with single/limited land uses and variety</p> <p><i>Medium Sensitivity</i> Medium scale landscape with variations in pattern, texture and scale</p> <p><i>High Sensitivity</i> small and organic landscape with a variety in pattern, texture and scale</p>	<p>The complexity and scale of the landscape includes consideration of the land use, field boundaries and levels of enclosure</p>
Enclosure by Vegetation	<p><i>Low Sensitivity</i> Enclosed by mature vegetation extensive tree belts/ woodland</p> <p><i>Medium Sensitivity</i> Semi-enclosed by vegetation Small woodlands Moderate hedgerows with hedgerow trees</p> <p><i>High Sensitivity</i> Limited/poor hedges (with no trees) and/or isolated copses</p>	<p>Assumes hedgerows/tree belts/woodlands would provide screening of development and therefore reduce potential landscape and visual impact.</p>

	Largely open with minimal vegetation	
Historic character	<p><i>Low Sensitivity</i> Relatively few historic features important to the character of the area Nearly entirely of modern origin</p> <p><i>Medium Sensitivity</i> Some visible historic features of importance to character Some signs of historic origin</p> <p><i>High Sensitivity</i> <i>High density of historic features important to the character of the area</i> <i>Historic origin is diverse</i></p>	<p>Historic Character is derived from the relative presence or absence of local historic features or designations</p> <p>Pre 18th century landscapes are considered to be particularly important as they pre-date the main enclosure period and therefore the landscape and field patterns are potentially medieval or earlier in origin.</p>
Built development	<p><i>Low Sensitivity</i> Considerable presence of built development in the surrounding landscape already that have a significant affect the character of the area.</p> <p><i>Medium Sensitivity</i> Some built development features within the surrounding area that have an impact on the landscape</p> <p><i>High Sensitivity</i> Absence of any built development in the landscape and surrounding area.</p>	<p>Features include industrial or commercial buildings and infrastructure, residential dwellings, transport routes and power lines, brownfield land, and vertical structures.</p>

Visual Sensitivity Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Measurement of Criteria	Comments
Openness to Public View	<p><i>Low Sensitivity</i> Area is well contained from public views</p> <p><i>Medium Sensitivity</i> Area is partially contained from public views</p> <p><i>High Sensitivity</i> Area is very open to public views</p>	<p>Public views will include views from Roads, Rights of Way and public open space.</p> <p>The category will depend on the extent of the visibility from all the site perimeters and rights of way through site, as well as the number of likely viewers.</p>
Openness to Private View	<p><i>Low Sensitivity</i> Area is well contained from private views</p> <p><i>Medium Sensitivity</i></p>	<p>This relates to private views from residential properties and non-public buildings and facilities.</p>

	<p>Area is partially contained from private views <i>High Sensitivity</i> Area is very open to private views</p>	<p>The category will depend on the extent of the visibility from the site perimeters as well as the number of likely viewers.</p>
<p>Views towards landmark buildings/natural features</p>	<p><i>Low Sensitivity</i> Does not have or allow views towards any landmark buildings/natural features <i>Medium Sensitivity</i> Has or allows partial views towards landmark buildings/natural features <i>High Sensitivity</i> Has or allows very open views towards landmark buildings/natural features</p>	<p>Considers views towards landmark buildings such as; listed buildings and churches.</p> <p>Natural features including; long distance views across landscapes, specimen trees and characteristic features.</p>
<p>Perceptual Quality</p>	<p><i>Low Sensitivity</i> The area is significantly influenced by development/human activity, where new development would not be out of character. <i>Medium Sensitivity</i> A landscape with some sense of rurality, but with some modern elements and human influences. <i>High Sensitivity</i> A tranquil or highly rural landscape, lacking strong intrusive elements. Dark skies and a high perceived degree of rurality/naturalness with few modern human influences.</p>	<p>Considers qualities such as rurality (traditional land uses with few modern, human influences), sense of remoteness or tranquillity. Consistently high scenic value, perceived naturalness, freedom from human activity/disturbance and 'dark skies' would all add to sensitivity in relation to this criterion.</p>
<p>Prevention of merging/coalescence</p>	<p><i>Low Sensitivity</i> Development would not compromise any separation from nearby settlements <i>Medium Sensitivity</i> Development would have moderate impact on separation <i>High Sensitivity</i> Development would significantly compromise separation and cause coalescence.</p>	<p>Considers the potential effect on merging or coalescence of settlements or parts of existing settlements if the whole Green Belt area were to be developed.</p>

2 Landscape Sensitivity Assessments

Parcel name/ref:	1				
Criteria	Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landform and Landscape Features		•			
Complexity		•			
Enclosure by vegetation				•	
Historic Character	•				
Built Development		•			
Landscape Sensitivity Analysis				Medium Low	
<p>Located on the north side of St John's Road, the parcel is situated close to existing built development towards the North West corner of Clacton. The flat arable field has few notable landform or landscape characteristics, reducing the overall landscape sensitivity of the parcel. A row of mature trees and hedgerow extends out into the field from the east edge of the field as one of few notable landscape features that should aim to be retained. The south and east edges of the site have little vegetative enclosure to reduce open views into the site, increasing the overall landscape sensitivity of the site to medium-low.</p>					

Parcel name/ref:	2				
Criteria	Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landform and Landscape Features		•			
Complexity	•				
Enclosure by vegetation			•		
Historic Character		•			
Built Development		•			
Landscape Sensitivity Analysis				Medium Low	
<p>The arable farmland at this site is uncomplex with few notable landform or landscape features. Located on the north west edge of Clacton, adjacent to newly developed Legerton Drive on two sides, the parcel is situated in close proximity of existing development which reduces the overall sensitivity of this site. However, the lack of vegetative enclosure along Legerton Drive and associated properties creates both public and private open views of the site, increasing the overall landscape sensitivity of the parcel to a medium low rating.</p>					

Parcel name/ref:	3				
Criteria	Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landform and Landscape Features			•		
Complexity			•		
Enclosure by vegetation			•		
Historic Character				•	
Built Development				•	
Landscape Sensitivity Analysis				Medium	
<p>Encompassing four individual fields, the site complexity and presence of landscape features is increased due to the number of dividing hedgerows and mature trees present within the site boundaries. The sensitivity of the site is largely increased by its proximity to Ancient Woodland Hartley Wood, located beyond the north west of the site. The presence of Little Clacton Road on the eastern boundary provides open views to the site as a result of the sparse hedgerow and areas of unestablished vegetative enclosure along this boundary. The site is also situated away from existing built development, therefore increasing the overall sensitivity to medium.</p>					

Parcel name/ref:	4				
Criteria	Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landform and Landscape Features	•				
Complexity		•			
Enclosure by vegetation	•				
Historic Character		•			
Built Development	•				
Landscape Sensitivity Analysis				Low	
<p>The site comprises of a residential property with associated garden and lawn to the north, enclosed by mature hedgerows on all boundaries and feature oaks along the east edge. The landscape sensitivity of the parcel is decreased by the scale, and its limited landform and landscape features, reducing the overall sensitivity of the parcel to low.</p>					

Parcel name/ref:	5				
Criteria	Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landform and Landscape Features			•		
Complexity		•			
Enclosure by vegetation			•		
Historic Character	•				
Built Development		•			
Landscape Sensitivity Analysis				Medium Low	
<p>Comprising of three agricultural fields, the site is divided medium-quality hedgerows and a PRow running through the centre. These features increase the overall complexity and landscape features of the parcel. The parcel is enclosed by vegetation on the east and west, although the north and southern boundaries are open, with views from the PRow to the north and the residential properties along Constable Avenue to the south. However, the site is situated within close proximity of existing build development along the southern edge, reducing the overall landscape sensitivity to medium-low.</p>					

Parcel name/ref:	6				
Criteria	Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landform and Landscape Features			•		
Complexity		•			
Enclosure by vegetation				•	
Historic Character		•			
Built Development			•		
Landscape Sensitivity Analysis				Medium	
<p>Sloping down gently towards the north, the sites landform and landscape feature sensitivity is increased, in addition to the presence of mature woodland and oaks along the north and west boundaries. The south and east boundaries however have little vegetative enclosure and are defined by Hartley Brook to the east and a ditch to the south. These increase the overall landscape sensitivity of the site. The lack of build development on the immediate boundaries also increases the sensitivity of the site to a medium rating.</p>					

Parcel name/ref:	7				
Criteria	Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landform and Landscape Features			•		
Complexity			•		
Enclosure by vegetation		•			
Historic Character		•			
Built Development			•		
Landscape Sensitivity Analysis				Medium	
<p>Situated between Little Clacton Road and a small woodland, the site is largely enclosed by vegetation in the form of mature hedgerows and trees. The woodland located next to the east of the site increases the overall landscape sensitivity, by increasing the complexity of the parcel with mature landscape features. There is little built development located within the immediate setting of the parcel, although residential housing on the outskirts of Little Clacton are situated close to the northern edge. For these reasons, the site has a medium landscape sensitivity.</p>					

Parcel name/ref:	8				
Criteria	Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landform and Landscape Features				•	
Complexity				•	
Enclosure by vegetation				•	
Historic Character			•		
Built Development			•		
Landscape Sensitivity Analysis				Medium High	
<p>The site extends between the woodland parcel to the west and the emerging development parcel towards the east, comprising largely of arable land, priority habitat woodland and areas of grass/construction spoil. The site has key features within, include historic elm hedgerows which are significant within this part of Essex. For these reasons, the site has a medium-high rating.</p>					

Parcel name/ref:	9				
Criteria	Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landform and Landscape Features				•	
Complexity				•	
Enclosure by vegetation		•			
Historic Character			•		
Built Development			•		
Landscape Sensitivity Analysis				Medium High	
<p>The increased sensitivity of the complex site is attributed to the mix of arable farmland, bare ground and priority habitat woodland, that forms a parcel of varying landform and landscape features. The southern edge boundary is enclosed by mature hedgerows. Although the vegetated buffer along the A133 and the wooded area to the west of the site help to reduce overall landscape sensitivity, the lack of built development in the immediate setting and complex priority habitat site leads to a medium-high landscape sensitivity rating.</p>					

Parcel name/ref:	10				
Criteria	Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landform and Landscape Features	•				
Complexity	•				
Enclosure by vegetation			•		
Historic Character	•				
Built Development			•		
Landscape Sensitivity Analysis				Medium Low	
<p>Situated along the western edge of the A133, the site is only enclosed by vegetation along this boundary, and is open on all other boundaries, increasing the overall sensitivity. However, the site itself comprises of arable farmland, bare ground and grass/construction spoil, reducing the overall sensitivity in terms of landscape quality to a medium-low rating.</p>					

Parcel name/ref:	11				
Criteria	Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landform and Landscape Features	•				
Complexity	•				
Enclosure by vegetation				•	
Historic Character		•			
Built Development	•				
Landscape Sensitivity Analysis				Medium Low	
<p>The emerging development area within this parcel is located within the immediate vicinity of existing development, extending from the urban development on the south and eastern edge. Although there is vegetative enclosure on the southern edge between the existing residential development and the site, the remaining boundaries remain open, increasing the overall landscape sensitivity. The site comprises of emerging development and grass/construction spoil, with few notable landform or landscape features. For these reasons, the parcel has a medium-low rating.</p>					

6.2 Visual Sensitivity Assessments

Parcel name/ref:	1				
Criteria	Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Openness to Public View				•	
Openness to Private View				•	
Views towards landmark buildings/natural features		•			
Perceptual Quality		•			
Prevention of merging/coalescence	•				
Visual Sensitivity Analysis				Medium	
<p>The location of the parcel amongst the urban development of Clacton increases the public and private view from the neighbouring St John's Road and from new residential development at Legerton Drive. The increased visual sensitivity of open public and private views is reduced by its urban locality and low sensitivity to prevention of merging. The arable field site has little perceptual quality and has strong views of the wind turbines at Earls Hall Wind Farm to the north west, which are subjective in relation to visual impact. For these reasons, the parcel has a medium visual sensitivity to built development.</p>					

Parcel name/ref:	2				
Criteria	Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Openness to Public View			•		
Openness to Private View				•	
Views towards landmark buildings/natural features			•		
Perceptual Quality		•			
Prevention of merging/coalescence	•				
Visual Sensitivity Analysis				Medium	
<p>Situated in the immediate setting of the Legerton Drive residential development, the parcel has strong private views from houses backing onto the site, and open public views from Legerton Drive and associated public open space located to the south, separated by a sparse hedgerow. With strong views onto the site, the visual sensitivity of the site is increased. However, the arable farmland has little perceptual quality, and its locality does not lead to merging or coalescence. For these reasons, the parcel has a medium visual sensitivity.</p>					

Parcel name/ref:	3				
Criteria	Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Openness to Public View			•		
Openness to Private View		•			
Views towards landmark buildings/natural features				•	
Perceptual Quality			•		
Prevention of merging/coalescence				•	
Visual Sensitivity Analysis				Medium	
<p>Situated on the edge of Clacton, the parcel extends north towards Little Clacton, encouraging merging and coalescence between the town and the village. The increased sensitivity of merging two locations is decreased by the few private views onto the site due to the rural location. However, the presence of Hartley Wood Ancient Woodland close to the north west boundary increases the perceptual quality and natural landmark views, and therefore increases the sensitivity of this site. The backdrop of wind turbines at Earl Hall Wind Farm are strong skyline features, although the nature of the visual impact is subjective. For these reasons, the parcel has a medium visual sensitivity.</p>					

Parcel name/ref:	4				
Criteria	Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Openness to Public View		•			
Openness to Private View	•				
Views towards landmark buildings/natural features		•			
Perceptual Quality	•				
Prevention of merging/coalescence	•				
Visual Sensitivity Analysis				Low	
<p>Situated in a rural location, the residential parcel has very few private or public views into the site, with limited views from Little Clacton Road running to the west of the site. All boundaries of the parcel are defined by strong vegetative hedgerows and mature oak trees, which restrict most views into and out of the site. The site has therefore received a low score for visual sensitivity.</p>					

Parcel name/ref:	5				
Criteria	Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Openness to Public View				•	
Openness to Private View				•	
Views towards landmark buildings/natural features			•		
Perceptual Quality		•			
Prevention of merging/coalescence	•				
Visual Sensitivity Analysis				Medium	
<p>Located adjacent to two urban developments on Constable Avenue and Coulsdon Close, the site is subject to a large number of private views from residential homes on two sides. The public right of way running across the northern boundary and through the centre of the site also open public views across the site and make the parcel highly sensitive to both public and private views. Situated on the higher ground, the parcel has open views towards the northern gently undulating landscape, which increases the perceptual quality of the site and the overall visual sensitivity. For these reasons, the site has a medium visual sensitivity to built development.</p>					

Parcel name/ref:	6				
Criteria	Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Openness to Public View					•
Openness to Private View			•		
Views towards landmark buildings/natural features			•		
Perceptual Quality			•		
Prevention of merging/coalescence			•		
Visual Sensitivity Analysis				Medium High	
<p>Situated at the lowest point of the surrounding area, the strong public views from the public right of way (PRoW) to the south and from the emerging urban development are highly sensitive, in addition to the private views from Constable Avenue beyond the southern boundary. With open boundaries, the views from these locations provide panoramic views of the site. Towards the northern edge of the site, the separation from the built development in Clacton increases the perceptual quality of the site, with views towards the priority habitat woodland close by. For these reasons, the parcel has a medium-high visual sensitivity to built development.</p>					

Parcel name/ref:	7				
Criteria	Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Openness to Public View		•			
Openness to Private View		•			
Views towards landmark buildings/natural features			•		
Perceptual Quality			•		
Prevention of merging/coalescence		•			
Visual Sensitivity Analysis				Medium Low	
<p>The priority habitat woodland situated close to the east boundary of the parcel increases the overall visual sensitivity of site, in relation to perceptual quality and views towards landmark natural features. The overall sensitivity is reduced by the site's location away from most public and private views, with only limited view from Little Clacton Road and a few residential properties at the north of the site. For these reasons, the parcel has a medium-low visual sensitivity rating.</p>					

Parcel name/ref:	8				
Criteria	Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Openness to Public View			•		
Openness to Private View			•		
Views towards landmark buildings/natural features			•		
Perceptual Quality			•		
Prevention of merging/coalescence			•		
Visual Sensitivity Analysis				Medium	
<p>Located on a south facing slope, the parcel is exposed to both private and public views from the public right of way and from houses on Constable Avenue, increasing the overall sensitivity of the parcel. The perceptual quality of the site has both the rural qualities of the proximity to the priority habitat woodland, but also the road noise of the neighbouring A133. The overall visual sensitivity is therefore rated as medium.</p>					

Parcel name/ref:	9				
Criteria	Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Openness to Public View	•				
Openness to Private View	•				
Views towards landmark buildings/natural features				•	
Perceptual Quality				•	
Prevention of merging/coalescence	•				
Visual Sensitivity Analysis				Medium	
<p>Situated amongst the vegetative boundaries of the A133, neighbouring woodland and priority habitat, the parcel has few external views into the site, therefore reducing the sensitivity to low. However, the presence of the priority habitat within the centre of the site increases both the perceptual quality and the views towards natural features. Although the A133 roundabout is located within close proximity to the site, the overall visual sensitivity of the parcel is rated medium.</p>					

Parcel name/ref:	10				
Criteria	Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Openness to Public View		•			
Openness to Private View	•				
Views towards landmark buildings/natural features			•		
Perceptual Quality		•			
Prevention of merging/coalescence	•				
Visual Sensitivity Analysis				Medium Low	
<p>With elevated views towards the south across the arable landscape, the site has an increased sensitivity to views towards natural features. However, the mature vegetative boundary from the A133 reduces all private and public views onto the site. The perceptual quality of the parcel reduces the overall visual sensitivity, as a result of the A133 proximity and the views overlooking the emerging urban development. For these reasons, the overall visual sensitivity is rated as medium-low.</p>					

Parcel name/ref:	11				
Criteria	Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Openness to Public View				•	
Openness to Private View			•		
Views towards landmark buildings/natural features		•			
Perceptual Quality	•				
Prevention of merging/coalescence		•			
Visual Sensitivity Analysis				Medium Low	
<p>The parcels location on the edge of the urban development and close to the A133 increases the public views onto the site from the east. However, as the site is currently an emerging urban development, the overall visual sensitivity of the site is decreased by its lack of perceptual quality. For these reasons, the site is graded as medium-low visual sensitivity to built development.</p>					

Place Services

County Hall, Essex CM1 1QH

T: +44 (0)3330 136 844

E: enquiries@placeservices.co.uk

www.placeservices.co.uk

[@PlaceServices](https://twitter.com/PlaceServices)

