

November 2001

Tendring District Landscape Character Assessment

Volume One: Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Guidelines



Prepared for Tendring District Council by
Land Use Consultants





**LAND USE
CONSULTANTS**

ENVIRONMENTAL
PLANNING, DESIGN AND
MANAGEMENT

**Tendring District Landscape
Character Assessment
Volume 1: Baseline Report and
Landscape Guidelines**

**Prepared for Tendring District
Council
by
Land Use Consultants**

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	iv
1. Introduction	1
The Tendring Landscape.....	1
Landscape Character Assessment	1
Objectives of the Study.....	2
Methodology	3
Structure of the Report.....	5
2. Formative Influences	7
Physical Influences	7
Ecological Character.....	11
Human Influences.....	14
3. The Landscape Character of Tendring	21
1 Open Coastal Marsh.....	23
1A Brightlingsea Creek Marshes.....	25
1B Colne Estuary Marshes	28
1C Colne Point Marshes	31
1D Hamford Water Marshes	34
1E Stour Estuary Marshes	37
2 Drained Coastal Marsh	41
2A Brightlingsea Drained Marshes	45
2B St Osyth Drained Marshes.....	49
2C Holland Haven	53
2D Hamford Drained Marshes and Islands.....	56
2E Parkeston Drained Marshes.....	59
3 Coastal Slopes.....	63
3A Hamford Coastal Slopes	65
3B Brightlingsea Coastal Slopes	68
3C St Osyth Coastal Slopes.....	71

3D Holland Coastal Slopes	74
4 Coastal Ridges and Peninsulas	77
4A The Oakley Ridge	81
4B The Naze	84
4C Brightlingsea Peninsula.....	87
4D St Osyth Coastal Ridge.....	90
5 River Floodplains	93
5A Holland Brook Floodplain.....	95
5B Ramsey Creek Floodplain.....	98
5C Cattawade Marshes.....	101
6 Clay Valleys	105
6A Stour Valley System	109
6B Ardleigh Valley System.....	113
6C Alresford Valley System	116
6D Holland Valley System.....	120
6E Ramsey Creek Valley System.....	124
7 Heathland Plateaux	127
7A Bromley Heaths	131
7B St Osyth/Great Bentley Heaths	135
8 Clay Plateaux	139
8A Tendring and Wix Clay Plateau	143
8B Clacton and the Sokens Clay Plateau	147

Figures

- Figure 1.1 Location of Tendring District
- Figure 1.2 Process for Undertaking the Study
- Figure 1.3 The Character of England
- Figure 2.1 Geology
- Figure 2.2 Topography
- Figure 2.3 Nature Conservation Designations
- Figure 2.4 Historic Designations
- Figure 3.1 Landscape Types and Character Areas

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Field Survey Form
- Appendix 2 Bibliography
- Appendix 3 Compatibility between the County and District Assessments

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The study has been steered by an Advisory Group with the following members:

Phil Hornby	Tendring District Council
Phil Green	Tendring District Council
David Pugh	Tendring District Council
Sarah Green	Essex County Council
Lisa Pearce	Countryside Agency

We are grateful for the guidance and advice provided by the Advisory Group.

The study involved consultation and gathering of existing data and information and we appreciate the time and involvement of many individuals and organisations. In particular we have drawn upon information collected as part of a series of public consultation workshops. These workshops yielded a great deal of useful information and a level of local understanding that has contributed greatly to the study. The Rural Community Council for Essex (RCCE) assisted us in organising the workshops and the Countryside Agency provided financial support. We are very grateful for the involvement of all who participated in the workshops.

I. INTRODUCTION

THE TENDRING LANDSCAPE

- 1.1. The **Tendring Peninsula**, the most easterly point of the county of Essex, is an irregular shaped peninsula, about 13 miles in length and width, and drained by many rivulets flowing to the sea (**Figure 1.1**). It is bounded on the north by the estuary of the river Stour, which separates it from Suffolk; on the east and south by the North Sea; and on the west by the estuary of the river Colne and the Borough of Colchester. The port of Mistley/Manningtree is on the Stour, and that of Brightlingsea is on the Colne. The seafaring port of Harwich occupies the promontory of land which extends into the North Sea at the mouth of the Stour. About 5 miles to the south is the termination of the long promontory of the Naze. Sheltered between the two promontories is a wild and remote bay of winding creeks and saltmarsh known as Hamford Water.
- 1.2. Inland, the peninsula is a large scale open plain, drained by a number of brooks that flow within hidden river valleys. These river valleys provide local landform interest. Little more than a century ago, a large portion of the land was covered with woodland, and full of swampy ground, but is now well drained and intensively cultivated. The long, curved coast along the south-east of the district is called the "Essex Sunshine Coast", having many clean sandy beaches and a dry climate. This coastline has been developed over the last hundred years resulting in a string of small resorts, the most famous of which is Clacton-on-Sea, and all of which are accessible by train from Colchester (or London's Liverpool Street).

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Hierarchy of Assessment

- 1.3. The Countryside Character Initiative came about because it was recognised that there was a need for a new approach to landscape assessment which would look at the whole of England's countryside, rather than just specific designated areas, and provide a consistent national framework for more detailed local landscape assessments.
- 1.4. The Countryside Agency has mapped the whole country into 159 separate, distinctive character areas. The features that define the landscape of each area are recorded in individual descriptions which explain what makes one area different from another and shows how that character has arisen and how it is changing. Tendring District is covered by four different Countryside Character Areas, although the majority of the district is covered by two of these: Area No. 81: The **Greater Thames Estuary** and Area No. 111: The **Northern Thames Basin** (see **Figure 1.3**).
- 1.5. At the County level this classification is being refined to inform landscape planning decisions at a county scale. The Essex Landscape Character Assessment is currently in progress and forms a framework into which this, the district landscape character assessment, fits. **Appendix 3** illustrates the fit between the county and district scale assessments.

**National Level (Countryside Agency, English Nature
and English Heritage 1999)**

Joint Countryside Character Areas (1:250,000)



County Level (Essex County Council 2001)

County Types (1:50,000)

County Character Areas (1:50,000)



District Level (Tendring District Council 2001)

District Types (1:25,000/1:10,000)

District Character Areas (1:25,000/1:10,000)

1.6. The district assessment also takes account of the work contained in:

- Countryside Agency (1993) *Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB*;
- Countryside Agency (1997) *The Dedham Vale Landscape*;
- ADAS/MAFF (1994) *The Essex Coast ESA: Landscape Assessment*;
- Essex County Council (2001) *Mid-Essex Coast Landscape Assessment*.

1.7. The district assessment should, in turn, provide the framework for more detailed local studies such as Village Design Statements, prepared by the local community.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.8. This study has five principal objectives:

- to inform policy formulation in the current Local Plan Review;
- to inform decision making in the development control process;
- to guide landscape management decisions;
- to promote public awareness of landscape character in Tendring District; and
- to provide the basis for adoption as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

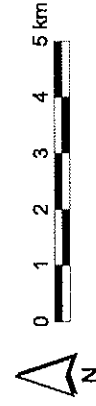
TENDRING DISTRICT

Landscape Character Assessment

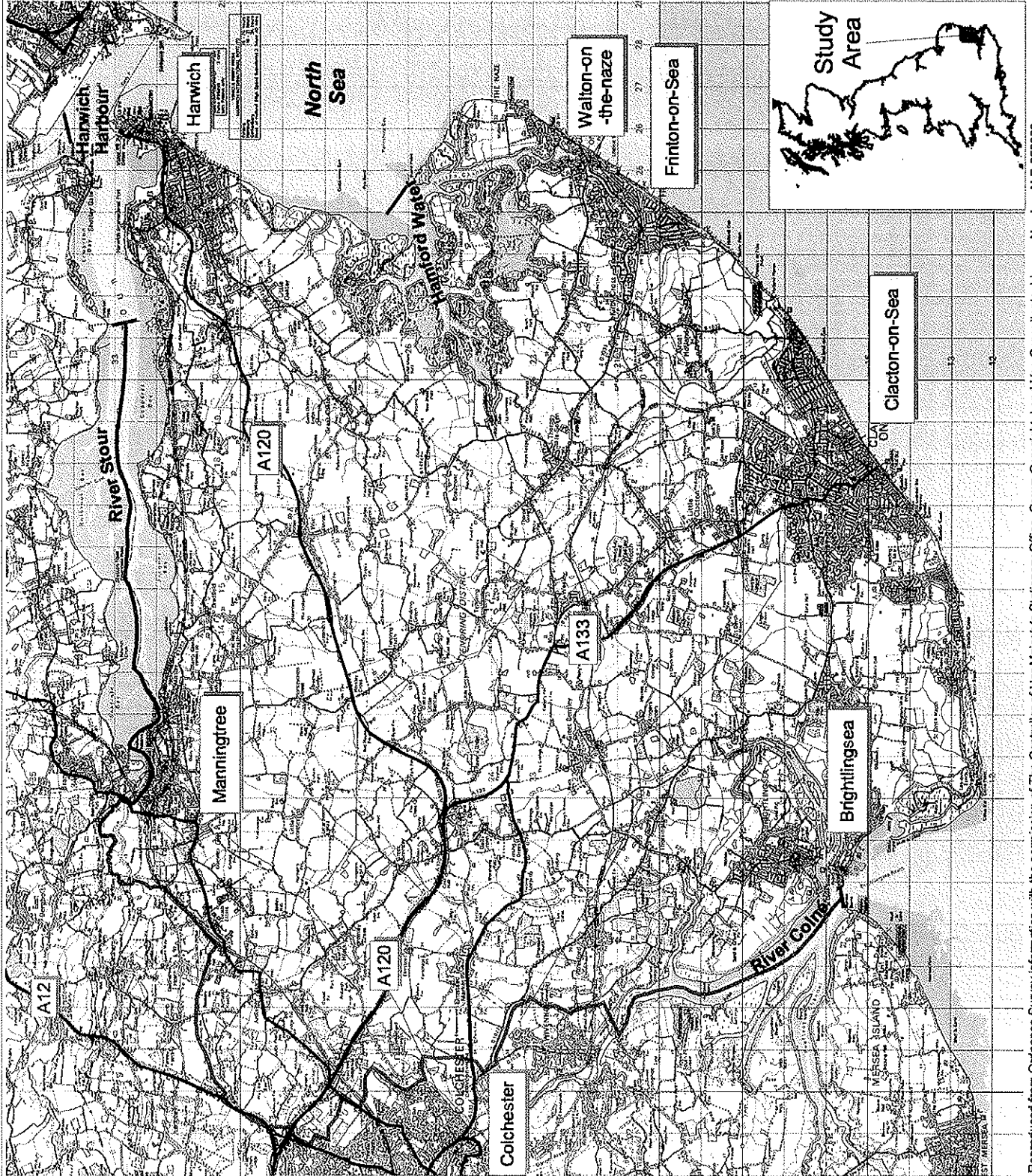
Figure 1.1:
Location of Tendring District

Key

 District / Study Area boundary

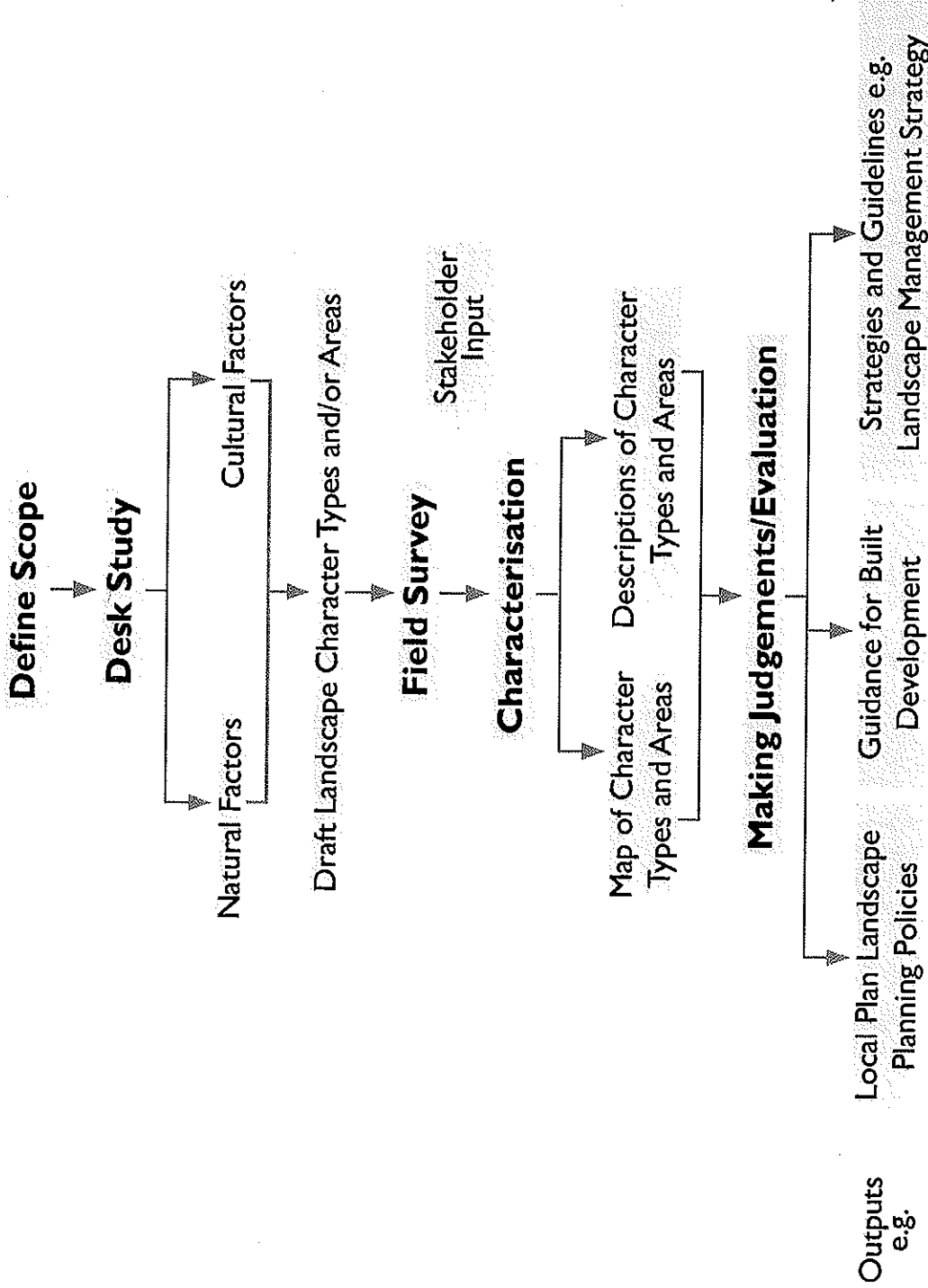


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Tendring Landscape Character Assessment: Method



Landscape Character Assessment

Figure 1.2:
Process for undertaking
the study

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METHODOLOGY

- 1.9. The method for undertaking the landscape character assessment follows the accepted method promoted by the Countryside Agency as set out in the document *Interim Landscape Character Assessment Guidance 1999*. This is summarised in the diagram in **Figure 1.2**.
- 1.10. The study has been prepared within the framework set by the Agency's Countryside Character Initiative as shown on the Character of England Map (see **Figure 1.3**). It is also compatible with the emerging results of the parallel Essex county-wide assessment.
- 1.11. The process for undertaking the study involved five main stages:
 - data collation;
 - characterisation;
 - field survey;
 - consultation; and
 - evaluation.

Data Collation

- 1.12. This stage involved the collation and mapping of a wide range of existing information on the characteristics of Tendring, including physical, ecological, historic/cultural and planning information.

Physical: geology, topography, soils, hydrology and agricultural land classification.

Ecological: Ramsar sites, Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), ancient woodland inventory, Essex Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP) and Habitat Action Plans (HAP) and Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC).

Historic/Cultural: Conservation area appraisals, English Heritage's registered historic parks and gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM).

- 1.13. GIS was used throughout the study as a tool for collating, manipulating and presenting data.

Characterisation

- 1.14. The process of characterisation drew together all the information outlined above, to develop a **draft classification**. The approach follows best practice as promoted by the Countryside Agency in the *Interim Landscape Character Assessment Guidance 1999* in maintaining a clear distinction between landscape types and landscape character areas, and developing a hierarchical classification as follows:

Landscape Types: which are generic and share common combinations of geology, topography, vegetation and human influences, e.g. River Floodplain or Open Coastal Marsh.

Character Areas: which are single and unique, discrete geographical areas of landscape type, e.g. Holland Brook Floodplain or Colne Estuary Marshes.

- 1.15. The draft classification was presented and discussed at a steering group meeting. This highlighted issues that required further refinement and appraisal during the field survey.

Field Survey

- 1.16. The field survey appraised the draft classification and collected additional data. A systematic and rigorous approach was adopted, recording information on tailored field survey sheets (see **Appendix I**) and a comprehensive photo record. This allowed verification and fine-tuning of the classification of landscape types and character areas, and recording of landscape characteristics, condition, key trends and forces for change visible in the landscape.
- 1.17. **Boundaries:** The boundaries of the landscape character areas were mapped accurate to 1:25,000, except in selected sensitive locations where the lines were mapped accurate to 1:10,000 scale. This more detailed scale of mapping applies to the upper boundary of the *Hamford Coastal Slopes* (3A) and the upper boundary of the *Stour Valley System* (6A). Some boundaries indicate transitions rather than marked changes on the ground, for example the boundary between the *St Osyth Coastal Ridge* (4D) and *Clacton and the Sokens Clay Plateau* (8B).

Consultation

- 1.18. A process of public consultation was undertaken, in association with the Rural Community Council for Essex, with support from the Countryside Agency. The purpose of the exercise was to strengthen the landscape character assessment by obtaining valuable information from the local community which would not otherwise come to light, such as local perceptions. The process of consultation also helped build local understanding of the process of landscape character assessment, its value and applications.
- 1.19. Three half-day participatory workshops were held in different venues across Tendring to gather input from the local community. The full details of the methodology, and results of this process, are contained in a separate report to the Countryside Agency entitled '*Public Participation in Landscape Character Assessment: Towards Better Practice*'.

Evaluation

- 1.20. The evaluation was based upon an appraisal of the condition and character of the landscape. A broad statement of sensitivity to change was also prepared for each character area.
- 1.21. The results emerging from analysis of condition and character of the landscape were used to determine an appropriate strategy for each landscape character area using the following table:

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conservate & Strengthen	Enhance
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conservate & Enhance	Conservate & Restore
	Poor	Create	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

- 1.22. A strategy and guidelines for landscape management were produced for each landscape character area, based upon the evaluation, appraisal of sensitivity and the key issues facing the landscape.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

- 1.23. This report is **Volume 1** of the Landscape Character Assessment and presents the findings of the landscape characterisation including a description, evaluation and landscape management strategy for each character area. The structure of Volume 1 is as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction: Introduces the objectives of the study and the methodology followed.

Chapter 2: Formative Influences: Establishes the factors that have influenced the character of the District as a whole, including physical, cultural and ecological characteristics.

Chapter 3: The Character of Tendring: This is the main body of the report and contains an introduction to each landscape type followed by the detailed assessments for each character area. These consist of a description, evaluation, landscape management strategy and guidelines.

Appendix 1: Field Survey Form

Appendix 2: Bibliography

Appendix 3: Compatibility between the County and District Assessments.

- 1.24. **Volume 1** forms a baseline for **Volume 2: 'Guidance for Built Development in Tendring'**.
- 1.25. In addition to the two volumes of the Landscape Character Assessment there is a separate report on the public consultation entitled '**Public Participation in Landscape Character Assessment: Towards Better Practice**'.

2. FORMATIVE INFLUENCES

- 2.1. The Tendring peninsula, like all landscapes, is a palimpsest of the various influences that have, over vastly different time-scales, acted upon it. The character of the landscape has evolved in response to the basic underlying geological characteristics of the land upon which natural processes and human activities have operated, in turn, influencing patterns of land use and ecological character.

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

- 2.2. The basic structure of any landscape is formed by its underlying relief and geology. The action of weathering, erosion and deposition alter the form of the landscape, drainage and soils and in turn patterns of vegetation and land use. The Tendring Peninsula is a lowland landscape, which occupies a coastal position in the north-east of Essex. It is bounded on the north by the estuary of the River Stour, and on the east and south by the North Sea. See **Figure 2.1** for a map showing the simplified geology underlying the district and **Figure 2.2** for a map illustrating the topography of the district.

Geology and Landform

- 2.3. The Tendring peninsula is situated on the edge of the London Basin, a plate of sedimentary rocks, which were distorted into a broad basin, or syncline. This area of coastal lowlands has been submerged under the sea many times in geological history. A fault, running from Chelmsford to Colchester, was responsible for a powerful earthquake in 1884. The Colchester Earthquake reached 5.2 on the Richter scale and destroyed many houses in and around Colchester. Another fault, some 7 km beneath the sea bed, was responsible for an earthquake in 1994 indicating that these plates are still active.
- 2.4. The area for the most part forms a lowland plateau, the highest points of which are on the western edge of the district. From here the ground falls eastwards with comparative regularity, except for the valleys. The geological interest of the district lies in the glacial drift, which forms a veneer of sands and gravels over the clay. The formation, distribution and influence of the surface geology on the landscape is summarised below.

Mesozoic Era

- 2.5. The Mesozoic Era saw deposition of sedimentary rocks through three distinct stages in time: the Triassic, the Jurassic and the Cretaceous. There is no evidence of any rocks from the Triassic or Jurassic periods beneath Tendring. It is likely that any sediments laid down were removed by erosion before the next formation. The earliest solid geology in Tendring originated in the Cretaceous period.
- 2.6. **Cretaceous Period:** Between 100 and 70 million years ago world sea levels began to rise and Tendring was submerged beneath a tropical sea. Water was remarkably pure and it was during this time that chalk was deposited on the sea bed. Silica nodules, or flints, were formed within the chalk. Much of the chalk formation was subsequently removed by erosion, the flint nodules being eroded to form sand and

pebbles. Although chalk is not exposed in Tendring, it lies beneath the more recent deposits.

Tertiary Era

- 2.7. Deposits from the Tertiary Era form the most widespread geological deposits in Tendring. This era may be split into the Eocene, Oligocene, Miocene and Pliocene periods of deposition.
- 2.8. **Eocene Period:** At the beginning of the Tertiary Era, some 60 million years ago, Tendring was submerged beneath a shallow, warm sea, similar to present day coastal areas of Indonesia or Malaysia. Rivers flowed into the sea bringing mud and silt which settled to form London Clay, the most widespread geological formation in Tendring. The lower layers of the deposit are rich in volcanic ash, indicating volcanic activity at this time, and several hard beds of the resulting cement stone can be seen today within the clay along the River Stour and on the beach at Harwich. Another feature of the London Clay are the 'septarian nodules' or 'copperas stones', produced as contraction cracks in the clay are filled with mineral calc-spar or pyrites. These nodules are hard-wearing and are popular as a building material in an area that lacks hard limestone or sandstone for building, for example as seen in the towers of Brightlingsea Church and the gatehouse of St Osyth Priory. The London Clay is exposed particularly in the eastern part of the district where it produces heavy, poorly drained soils.
- 2.9. **Oligocene and Miocene Periods:** During this period the sea became shallower with lagoons and estuaries. No deposits are evident from the Oligocene and Miocene periods in Tendring.
- 2.10. **Pliocene Period:** At the end of the Pliocene Period, Tendring once again underwent submergence by the sea. As the sea slowly advanced across Essex, shelly sand was deposited close to the shoreline. This is seen today as Red Crag, which remains in small, isolated pockets. The most spectacular exposure in Essex is seen at Walton-on-the-Naze where, in the cliffs to the north of the town, the red shelly sand can be seen resting on the blue-grey London Clay.

Quaternary Era

- 2.11. The landscape of Tendring is considerably influenced by Quaternary deposits, which overlie the simple solid geology of London Clay and Red Crag. These superficial deposits fall naturally into three divisions.
- 2.12. **Pre-Glacial:** The area between St Osyth and Clacton contains isolated deposits of Kesgrave Sands and Gravels, which were deposited by the early Thames/Medway, approximately 500,000 years ago, when its course ran north out of London and passed through Tendring between St Osyth and Clacton. The study of gravels in a quarry in St Osyth have revealed how, at the onset of the Ice Age, the Thames suddenly ceased to flow on this course due to an ice blockage upstream in Hertfordshire. When eventually the Thames spilled over it took a new course (the present route) to the sea. These sands and gravels are often difficult to tell apart from the glacial sands and gravels, but are nonetheless distinct features of the landscape history of the Thames and its course through Tendring.

TENDRING DISTRICT Landscape Character Assessment


Figure 2.1:
Geology

Key

 District / Study Area boundary

Drift Geology


 Alluvium


 Sand and Gravel
(post glacial)

 Gravel and Sand (glacial)

 Loam

Solid Geology

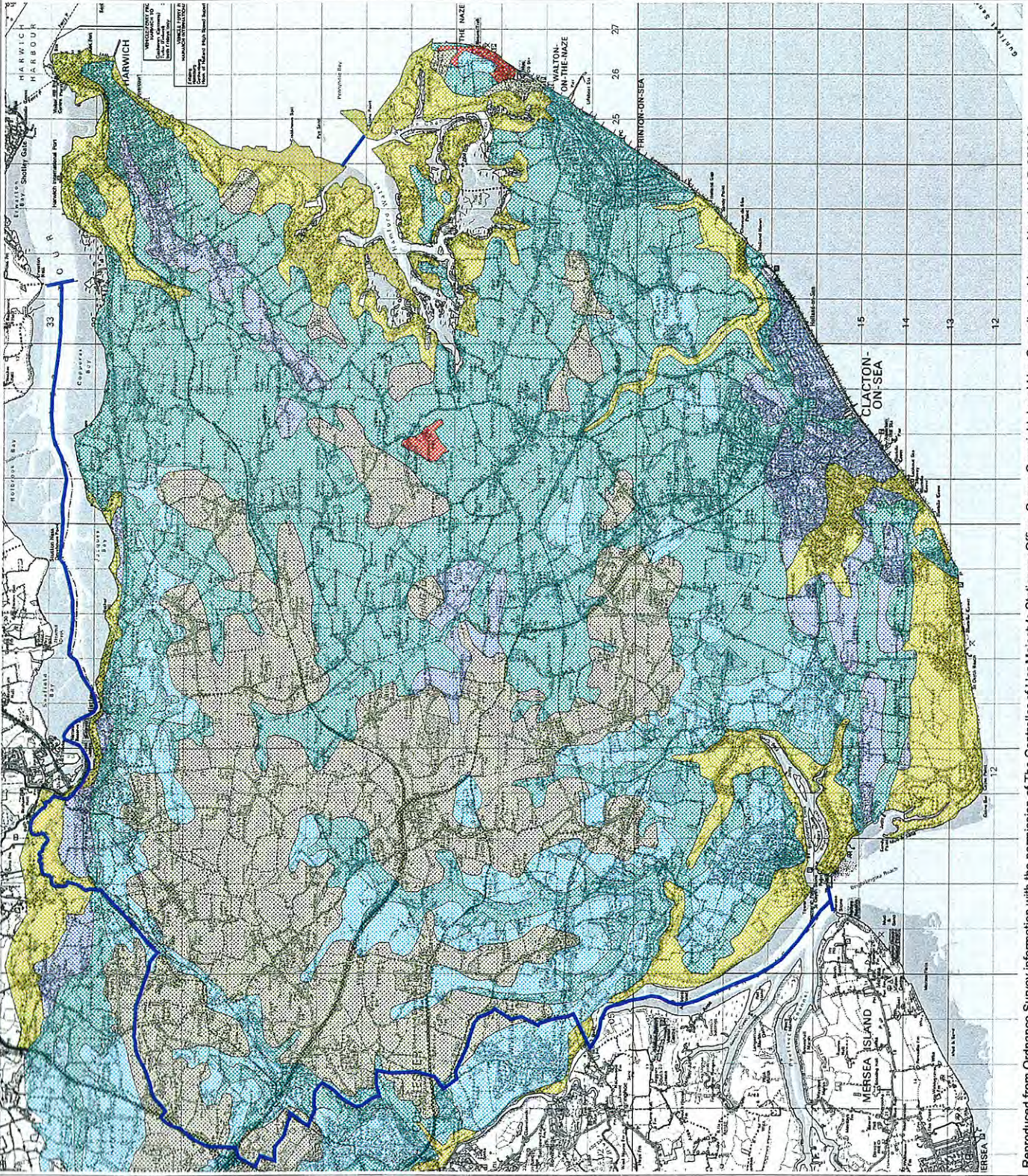
 Red Crag

 London Clay

Source:
1882 Geological Survey of England
and Wales

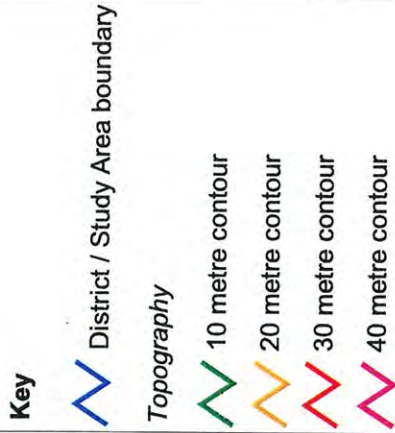


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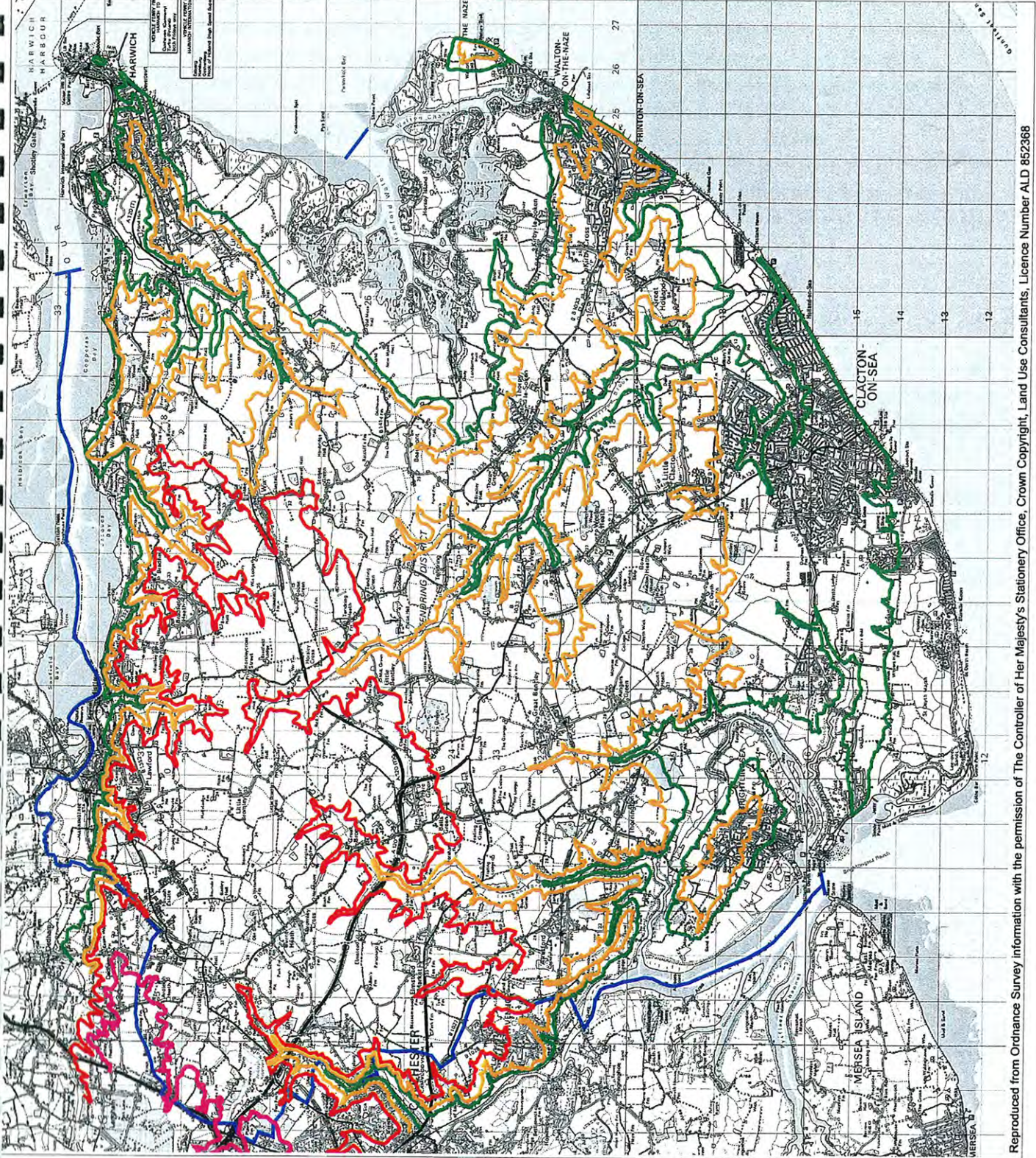


TENDRING DISTRICT Landscape Character Assessment

Figure 2.2:
Topography



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- 2.13. **Glacial:** During the Ice Age, some 450,000 years ago, the Anglian ice sheet did not reach as far south as Tendring so no boulder clay deposits are present in the District. However, glacial outwash deposited glacial loams, gravels and sands across much of the area, particularly in the west of the district. Glacial gravels and sands are found over the greater part of the higher ground and the sandy loams, covering most of the west of the district as far as Tendring, have an influence on the soils and vegetation, resulting in some heathland communities to the north and east of Colchester.
- 2.14. **Recent:** The distinctive landscape of Tendring's coast is influenced by marine erosion and deposition. Estuarine alluvium, sand and shingle beaches are all features of this dynamic on-going process. The most obvious example of the changing coastline is at Walton-on-the-Naze where the coastline of 1300 extended some 5 miles further out to sea than today. Since then much of the town and church of Walton has been lost to the sea and the rate of coastal erosion is now approximately 2m per year¹. This erosion of the Naze cliffs is a twofold process: the slippage of upper parts of the cliff over the London clay is lubricated by surface and ground water and the removal of material from the foot of the cliffs is a result of the sea's erosive action.

Drainage

- 2.15. During the Ice Age, most of East Anglia was covered by ice. As the ice sheet retreated northwards, the meltwaters drained east and south-east, eroding the river valleys that drain into the North Sea. Continuing subsidence and rising sea-levels subsequently drowned these glacially enlarged river valleys, creating the Stour and Colne Estuaries which define the limits of the Tendring peninsula.
- 2.16. The drainage pattern of the area is determined in the north by the Stour catchment and in the south by the Colne catchment, both of which drain into the North Sea. These major catchments extend their influence far beyond the boundary of the District. In addition to these is Holland Brook, a more local system of ditches, which falls entirely within Tendring District and drains the central area of the peninsula into the North Sea. The underlying clay has influenced the poorly drained character of the soils.

Soils and Agricultural Capability

- 2.17. Soils which have developed over the geological base influence the natural or semi-natural vegetation of an area as well as the nature and intensity of agricultural use. There are five soil associations found within the Tendring District; each having a direct relationship to the underlying landform and land use. There are:
- Pelo-stagno gley soils;
 - Pelo-alluvial gley soils;
 - Stagnogleyic paleo-argyllic brown earths;
 - Unripened gley soils; and

¹ The Naze Protection Society: The Erosion of the Naze:2 1300 to 1950: The Vanishing Naze.

- Gleyic argyllic brown earths.

Pelo-stagno Gley Soils

- 2.18. Pelo-stagno gley soils are found within the agricultural heartland of Tendring including the agricultural plateau landscapes present in an area stretching from the River Stour to the North, Clacton to the south, Little Bentley to the west and the coastal slopes of Hamford Water to the east. The soil is clayey and slowly permeable and causes seasonal waterlogging, although to a lesser degree on the slopes. The soils have a moderate agricultural capability, the dominant land use being dairy and arable farming interspersed with pockets of deciduous woodland.

Pelo-alluvial Gley Soils

- 2.19. Pelo-alluvial gley soils are found in scattered patches in low-lying coastal areas, moving inland alongside river corridors. Typical areas include the marshland abutting Hamford Water, marshland surrounding the mouth of the River Colne, Brightlingsea Creek and Colne Point and the floodplain and marshland abutting Holland Brook. These are low lying areas of flat land with deep calcareous and non-calcareous stoneless, clayey soils. These soils areas are prone to flooding and drainage is controlled by ditches and pumps.

Stagnogleyic Paleo-argyllic Brown Earths

- 2.20. Stagnogleyic paleo-argyllic brown earth is found in the extensive plateau landscapes of Tendring District, extending from the far western boundary of the district to the eastern half, abutting Harwich and Frinton. These soils are deep, coarse, loamy and often stoneless. Like the Pelo-stagno gley soils, they are slowly permeable causing seasonal waterlogging. These soils give rise to the best agricultural land in the district and support extensive arable farming, potato farming and some horticultural cropping.

Unripened Gley Soils

- 2.21. Unripened gley soils occur at certain points along the coast, namely Hamford Water, Colne Point, the River Colne Estuary and at the mouth of the Brightlingsea Creek. Here the soils are of variable texture, frequently calcareous and are flooded by high tides. Land use is generally saltmarsh habitats, recreation and some summer grazing.

Gleyic Argyllic Brown Earths

- 2.22. Gleyic argyllic brown earths are associated with the coastal ridges and sloping sides of the valley systems such as the River Stour and Brightlingsea Creek. Here, the soil is deeply permeable, coarse and loamy. It is associated with well-drained sandy soils, slowly permeable and seasonally waterlogged soils, and fine-loamy over clayey soils. This mix gives a patterned local land use of cereals, other arable crops and some grassland. There is some risk of water erosion in these areas.

ECOLOGICAL CHARACTER

- 2.23. Tendring is highly regarded for its flourishing natural environment. It is internationally recognised for many of its habitats, but perhaps most particularly the habitats found along its backwaters and estuaries (see **Figure 2.3**).

Context

- 2.24. Natural Areas are land areas identified by English Nature as being unique on the basis of their physical, wildlife, land use and cultural attributes. Tendring covers four different Natural Areas highlighting the varied and, in some instances, ecologically rich landscape that occurs within the district (see **Figure 1.3**). These are:
- Area No. 81: The Greater Thames Estuary;
 - Area No. 111: The Northern Thames Basin;
 - Area No. 82: The Suffolk Coast and Heaths; and
 - Area No. 86: South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland.
- 2.25. The majority of the district covers the Greater Thames Estuary and the Northern Thames Basin. The Northern Thames Basin is a large, trough-like basin which was formed around 50 million years ago, and is filled with mostly sands and clay sediments. In Tendring this appears as a central clay plateau dissected by valleys. This supports islands of semi-natural habitats including areas of ancient woodland, remnant heathland, acid grassland, freshwater habitats (including flooded gravel pits), streams, lowland meadows, grazing marsh, neutral grasslands and fens.
- 2.26. Surrounding the clay plateau of the Northern Thames Basin is the Greater Thames Estuary, comprising the coast and low-lying hinterland, indented by several estuaries. The intertidal zone is dominated by soft sediments, forming extensive saltmarshes and mudflats. These are separated from the low-lying land on alluvial soils by sea defences. Behind the sea defences is arable and pasture with some areas of grazing marsh.

Tendring's Wildlife Habitats

- 2.27. The most important habitats within Tendring District in terms of their wildlife value from a national and international perspective are the estuarine and intertidal habitats of the Rivers Stour and Colne Estuaries and the tidal inlet of Hamford Water. All three sites are designated as RAMSAR and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) on the basis of the wading birds and wildfowl they support. The Colne Estuary also forms part of the Essex Estuaries Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated as internationally important on the basis of its extensive intertidal mudflats and sandflats.

Internationally Important Sites

- 2.28. The **Stour Estuary** forms the eastern part of the Essex/Suffolk county boundary to the north of the District, and provides habitat for nationally important numbers of over-wintering wildfowl (shelduck, wigeon, pintail, brent geese and mute swan) and waders (redshank, grey plover and black-tailed godwit). Redshank, grey plover,

black-tailed godwit and shelduck occur in flocks of internationally important numbers. The ornithological value of the Stour Estuary can be attributed to a number of factors, notably its rich inter-tidal mud invertebrate fauna which provides a food source for wading birds, and the area's relative lack of human disturbance. The saltmarsh vegetation of the estuary is also of national nature conservation value in its own right and supports plant species that are nationally rare.

- 2.29. The **Colne Estuary** is of national importance for breeding little terns, and five species of over-wintering waders and wildfowl. Brent geese and black-tailed godwit also over-winter in internationally important numbers. The area supports a diverse range of habitats including inter-tidal mud, saltmarsh, grazing marsh, sand and shingle spits, disused gravel pits and reed beds which together are notable for their nationally significant assemblages of invertebrates and plants.
- 2.30. **Hamford Water** is of international importance for breeding little terns and wintering brent geese and is of national importance for a variety of other bird species. Hamford Water is also noted for its range of marine habitats and coastal plant species that are rare or extremely locally distributed in the UK.
- 2.31. The salt and grazing marsh habitats that occur in the upper reaches of the Colne, Stour (Cattawade Marshes), and Holland Haven are also recognised as being of national importance for nature conservation. In general these sites support a diverse mix of saltmarsh and coastal grazing marsh habitats of high ornithological value. The grazing marshes that occur in these areas also support networks of drainage ditches that provide habitat for distinct and diverse assemblages of aquatic plant and invertebrate species that reflect the prevailing water salinity, which often ranges from fresh to brackish across a single marsh.
- 2.32. Tendring District is also noted for its ancient broad-leaf woodland that occurs across a central belt within the District. Three of these woodlands are of national importance, and Stour and Copperas Woods SSSI together form, at 77ha, the largest area of broad leaf ancient woodland in north-east Essex.

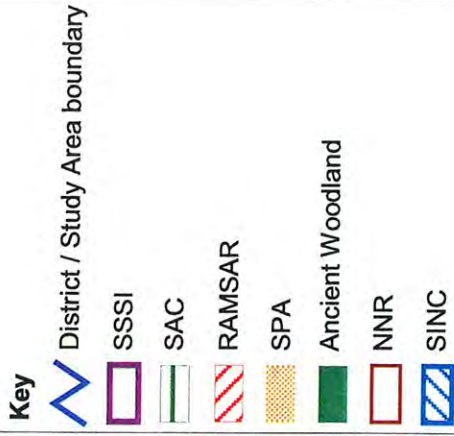
Regionally Important Sites

- 2.33. Aside from the sites of international importance, there are also many regionally important sites in the Tendring District. These are often fragments of once more widespread habitats and therefore provide a critical resource for the wildlife in the area and are a focus for conservation, enhancement and management. In particular the District supports good examples of ancient woodland, grassland and aquatic habitats.
- 2.34. There are over fifty woodlands in the district that have been identified as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), ranging from tiny remnants of 1 or 2 ha to more substantial blocks such as Thorringtonhall Wood (45.5 ha). The most common woodland type in this region is a hazel-ash-oak woodland. This type of wood is often managed on a coppice-with standard rotation, a traditional method, which encourages good structural and species diversity. Over recent years, however, many woodlands have suffered from a lack of management and in turn the wildlife has often experienced a decline. These sites though do remain important for both for conservation and recreation and provide good examples of where sensitive design and management can benefit wildlife and the local community.

TENDRING DISTRICT

Landscape Character Assessment

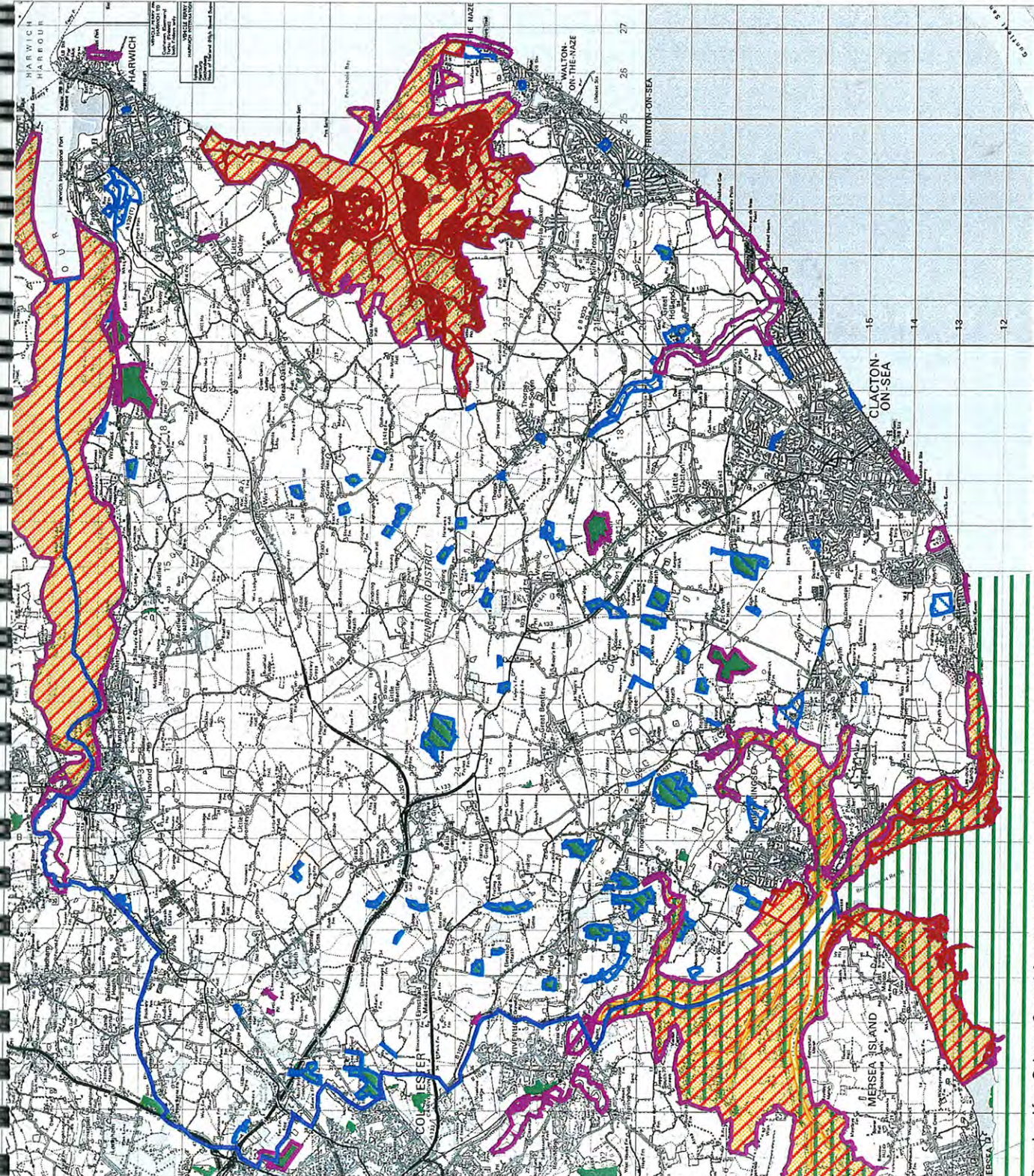
Figure 2.3:
Nature conservation
designations



Source:
English Nature and
Tendring District Council



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- 2.35. Of the other habitat types within the region Tendring District supports notable examples of a range of grassland types, from coastal pasture to acid grassland. Some of the best examples are now found as protected roadside verges such as Beaumonts Bridge Special Roadside Verge, which supports the nationally rare hogs fennel (*Peucedanum officinale*). Some of these grasslands provide interesting mosaics, and where scrub has encroached onto the meadows this often provides an added structural element.
- 2.36. Freshwater habitats such as rivers, streams, ponds and lakes provide important habitat for aquatic and margin vegetation, aquatic invertebrates and birds. Opportunities for landscape enhancement exist where the gravel extraction industry creates ideal areas for wetland creation.

Summary

- 2.37. Tendring possesses an important range of grassland, woodland, marine and wetland habitats that support distinct assemblages of plant and animal species, many of which have high individual nature conservation value. Of especial importance are the estuary and intertidal habitat.
- 2.38. However, the ecological value of Tendring is likely to depend heavily upon the varied rural landscape, in particular the mosaics of arable and pasture fields, network of hedgerows, remnant heaths, roadside verges, ditches, old hedgerow trees and woodland. Together these agricultural habitats provide refuges for wildlife. Sustainable protection and enhancement of these habitats may be achieved through appropriate landscape management.

HUMAN INFLUENCES

- 2.39. This section provides a very broad summary of the main phases in the evolution of Tendring's landscape and key events/processes that have influenced local character. It is based on a desk study of existing information. A **historic landscape characterisation of Tendring District** is due to be completed in 2002. The study, being undertaken by Essex County Council with support from English Heritage, will add depth and detail to our understanding of the historic landscape. In particular, it is likely that this study will provide detail on aspects such as the origin of fields and boundary patterns. Such information will be vital for developing and refining landscape conservation, enhancement and management recommendations.
- 2.40. The historic designations within Tendring District are illustrated on **Figure 2.4**.

Prehistoric Tendring 475,000 BC – AD43

- 2.41. The Tendring peninsula was once covered by a wildwood of oak and native small leaved lime with an understorey of hazel and alder in the damper valleys. Hunter-gatherer communities emerged around Clacton some 475-450,000 years ago – this is one of the earliest known occupied sites in Britain. Farming communities emerged much later, burning the wildwood to clear the better drained areas for farming. A Neolithic ring-ditch monument has been identified on the Brightlingsea peninsula and an important Neolithic site lies under the sea off Walton-on-the-Naze where flint tools are still washed ashore. There are few remaining archaeological remains due to a long history of cereal growing and the lack of local stone for megalithic structures, but the remains of cremation cemeteries dating to the Middle Bronze Age (1,500-1000BC) have been found at Ardleigh and Brightlingsea. The site at Ardleigh is the biggest Bronze Age burial site in England.
- 2.42. Woodland clearance continued into the Iron Age with the emergence of a mixed pastoral and tilled landscape. The Iron Age saw the introduction of the plough and fine metalwork. The woollen industry, supplied by marshland flocks, flourished. The saltmarshes of Tendring were considered a good place to graze sheep as the saline conditions minimised foot rot and liver fluke. Evidence of Iron Age enclosures and field systems may still be seen in Tendring as a series of crop marks.

The Roman Era AD43 – AD400

- 2.43. The Emperor Claudius launched an invasion in AD43 and captured Camulodunum, now known as Colchester. Roads were built from Colchester part way into Tendring and Roman villa remains have been found around the Colne Estuary and Brightlingsea, St Osyth and on the edge of Harwich. These Roman villas were agriculturally-based establishments with the principal residence constructed partly in masonry. The Romans introduced the salt industry, extracting sea salt on the unenclosed saltmarshes of the Colne Estuary. They also introduced a trading culture which relied on the many waterways for transport, and the Colne provided a port for trade with the continent. Many of the Roman roads have not survived in Tendring, although the course of the A12 is still along an ancient Roman route.

TENDRING DISTRICT


Landscape Character Assessment


Figure 2.4:
Historic Designations

Key

 District / Study Area boundary

 Scheduled Ancient Monument

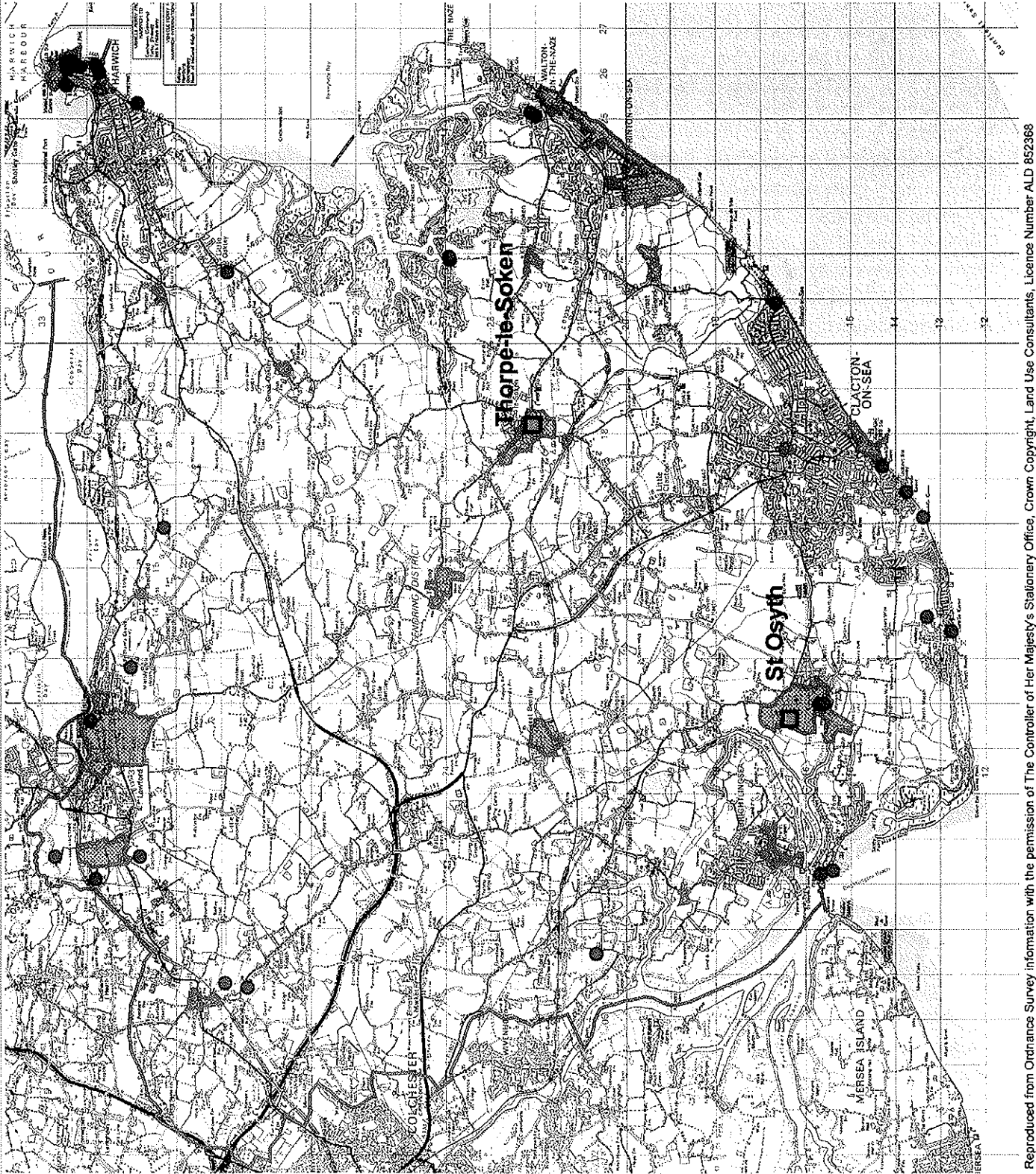
 Historic Parks and Gardens (with name)

 Conservation Area

Source:
English Heritage and
Tendring District Council



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Saxon Tendring AD400 – AD1066

- 2.44. The fifth to ninth centuries were some of the most turbulent of British history and known as the 'dark ages' as a result of the destruction of the civilised social structure of the Roman occupation as well as the lack of knowledge as to what actually took place. This was the time when England was born, the time of King Arthur, St. Augustine, King Offa, King Alfred, the Viking invasions and the foundation of the English church. The main people who settled during this time were Jutes (from the Frankish Rhineland), Saxons (from northern Germany) and Angles (from southern Denmark). In many areas much of the settlement was peaceful with farmers and craftsmen integrating themselves into existing communities. Villages were established on villa estates and featured a timber-framed 'hall' which was probably thatched and walled with wattle-and-daub. The hall was surrounded by sunken-floored huts which are characteristic of the pagan English period.
- 2.45. Christianity was reintroduced during the 7th century resulting in changing patterns of settlement and the building of churches. Saxon estates were major landholdings with control of large tracts of land. These were subdivided into manors and smallholdings. Manors of status had a church built near the hall, a feature of late Saxon Tendring. The Sokens also emerged at this time - Walton, Kirby and Thorpe - the word Soken deriving from 'Soca', or privilege, because these areas were exempt from all civil taxes. In Saxon times the site of Little Clacton formed part of a vast maritime estate, stretching from St Osyth to the Naze, which eventually belonged to St Paul's Cathedral in London. In the early 11th century the area around Clacton and St Osyth had been allocated to the Bishop of London who built a palace at Great Clacton. As the villages expanded more and more uncultivated land, or waste, was brought under cultivation. Hedgerows dating back to the Saxon period can be seen at Allfields, close to Dovercourt.

Medieval Period 1066 – 1500

- 2.46. Shortly after the Norman Conquest the Bishop's estate was divided into two parts which were held by two of the leading Anglo-Norman families, the Bovills and the Engaines. For centuries these farmsteads have stood in close proximity and can still be seen today as Gidea Hall and Bovill's Hall on the ancient road to Little Clacton. The defensive moat that was built around the original building of Bovill's Hall still survives.
- 2.47. The Domesday Book gives a picture of the Essex landscape in 1086. Domesday records describe sheep grazing the marshes - the grazing rights were owned by the inland manors abutting the marshlands. At Domesday Walton lay east of the huge manor of Adulfesness which stretched as a promontory into the North Sea. The harbour of 11th century Walton was a feature of the medieval landscape but has long since vanished beneath the sea. The introduction of the manorial system resulted in large areas of common land being enclosed by the lords of the manor and caused a major change in the landscape. By the 13th century Tendring had an established manorial agricultural economy with a progressive conversion of uncultivated land to arable and the introduction of mills which symbolised the industrial revolution of the 13th century. This was accompanied by rapid population growth. Farmsteads settled on the edges of greens, commons and heaths and these formed the basis for the villages we see today, for example Great Bentley, Weeley Heath and Frating

Green. At the same time was the emergence of the market towns of Manningtree, Wivenhoe and St Osyth which still survive today. Floods around this time resulted in the building of the first sea defences and Harwich developed as a medieval port at the northern tip of the peninsula where the medieval street pattern still survives.

- 2.48. This period also saw the growing influence of religious orders with many parishes containing monastic landholdings, for example St Osyth's Priory and Wix Abbey, both established in the 12th century. St Osyth's Priory is probably the finest monastic remains in Britain and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The manorial country house and its church, built to serve the lord of the manor, continued to be a familiar feature of the landscape. St Clair's Hall, just outside St Osyth, is a rare survival of an aisled hall dating to the early 14th century.

Post Medieval Tendring 1500 – 1700

- 2.49. During the 16th century brick was the material of fashion, baked from the fine London Clays of Tendring. A good surviving example of an early brick building is Jacobes, Brightlingsea. This period saw a flourish of rebuilding including many churches and buildings associated with Wix Abbey and St Osyth's Priory. Beaumont Hall demonstrates a good example of 17th century brick architecture, although the hall is actually earlier in origin. The coast also became important for shipbuilding, fisheries and trade and the towns continued to grow. Some of the earliest drainage of marshes occurred around this time - the marshes at the edge of the Walton Channel were drained and enclosed in the late 1600s by a group of Dutch engineers². At about the same time the original area known as the Naze was swept away into the sea along with the 11th century harbour of Walton.
- 2.50. For many centuries until the mid 1800s iron pyrite nodules (or copperas stones) were gathered on several beaches along the Essex coast. The copperas stones were encapsulated in the London Clay which made up the shore and were exposed and washed onto the beaches in great quantity after storms. Copperas stone gathering was a common occupation for many of the local people of Tendring. The collected stones were gathered into heaps on the shore from where they were loaded onto flat bottomed barges, which were used to transport them the short distance along the coast to one of the local Copperas Houses. Here the stones underwent the long water based leaching process which ultimately resulted in the production of hydrated iron sulphate, or copperas. Copperas was the principal raw material used in the production of many early black dyes and inks. In addition it was also used in the manufacture of brimstone (sulphur) and oil of vitriol (sulphuric acid). There are several Copperas Houses still named as such across the district.

The 18th and 19th Centuries

- 2.51. Enclosure Acts were passed by Parliament between 1750 and 1850 to modernise farming and increase crop productions. This resulted in the enclosure of large open medieval fields and common lands and planting of many miles of hedgerows. The ancient system of common cultivation was thus brought to an end and a Golden Age of agriculture began. The average landholding was probably 150 acres but improved

² Mike Todd (1998) History and Ecology of the Naze. Brief No.1 History. The Naze Protection Society.

drainage techniques, increasing mechanisation and the influence of the London market nearby spread throughout the area and brought new wealth.

- 2.52. The introduction of crop rotation, the improvement of farm implements and the building of sea defences to allow drainage and ploughing of marshes allowed increased productivity and by 1800 half of London's wheat consumption came from Essex³. The latter half of the 18th century was a time of high opportunity for the millers and there was a rapid increase in wind mills, tide mills and water mills. The 1777 map of Chapman and Andre included an accurate survey of the mills at this time - few of these have survived. One windmill remains at Ramsey Village, a tide mill at Thorrington and a water mill in Silent Valley.
- 2.53. Fishing and gathering shellfish was also very popular with the enclosure of oyster beds in the Colne Estuary in the 1700s. The development of navigable waterways and quays helped the transport of the increasing amounts of cereal crop and shellfish in flat bottomed barges. For example, Beaumont Quay was developed in 1832 in Hamford Water and by 1855 it included a house, wharf, warehouses, yards, coal and lime sheds. Wildfowling was also a popular activity and this saw the creation of star-shaped decoy ponds, some of which survive today. However, until the early 19th century Tendring was almost entirely dependent upon agriculture.
- 2.54. By this stage brick was in general use although timber boarding was used on domestic buildings as a cheaper alternative. The threat of French invasion led by Napoleon caused the building of Martello towers and the Harwich Redoubt in the early 19th century. These structures were constructed almost entirely of brick and based on the Torre della Mortella on the island of Corsica. Many of these still survive today and their importance is recognised through their designation as Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs). See **Figure 2.4** for locations of SAMs in Tendring.
- 2.55. There is little in the way of designed landscapes. Mistley Hall and St Osyth's Priory are shown on Chapman and Andre's map of 1777. Mistley Hall was demolished in 1835, although the lodges still survive. St Osyth's Priory is a good example of a mid-18th century landscaped park with mature tree avenues, open lawns, ponds and woodland. Its importance as a designed landscape is recognised by its inclusion on English Heritage's register of Historic Parks and Gardens as a Grade II site. Thorpe Hall grounds are also on the register (as a Grade II site) for their early 20th century formal and informal planting.

The 20th Century to the Present Day

- 2.56. The arrival of the steam-driven roller mill and improvements in sea, rail and road transport in the early to mid 19th century saw the decline of both wind and water mills. The effect of the arrival of steam and improvements in transport also resulted in an increase in travel and holidays, particularly seaside holidays. Walton was the first town to be adopted as a holiday destination followed by Clacton and then Frinton. In 1866 permission was granted to extend the railway to Clacton-on-Sea, with a new station just 50 yards from the cliffs, and to build a pier so that paddle steamers could visit the new resort. By the mid 1880's Clacton had already become

³ John Hunter (1999) *The Essex Landscape: A Study of its Form and History*. Essex Record Office Publications.

a busy seaside resort. The seaside resort of Frinton was also developed during the late 19th century. The new Colchester by-pass, which opened in 1933, encouraged the growth of Clacton, Frinton and Walton which expanded to engulf the surrounding rural settlements and villages.

- 2.57. Changes in the inter-war years were brought about by the migration of farming families to Essex, attracted by the cheap plotland on the edges of towns. Many bungalows sprang up along the coasts and on the edges of villages during this time. Also significant during this period was typhoid poisoning associated with the Brightlingsea oysters. This brought an abrupt end to the trade until a cleansing plant was set up on the site of the present Brightlingsea Sailing Club.
- 2.58. During the Second World War the Tendring Coastline became the first line of defence and a series of 'stop lines' were constructed, supported by pillboxes, tank traps and gun pits. Many of these pillboxes have survived and may be seen scattered along the coast, for example on the Naze. A number of defensive structures are now protected as Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM).
- 2.59. Following the Second World War agriculture was intensified in Tendring in response to national policy. Mixed farming was converted to arable production - meadows and pastures were ploughed, copses removed and fields enlarged. Many of the characteristic mills were lost by this time and those which remained continued to decline. The result was a much more open landscape. In the 1960s housing growth was significant and resulted in the spread of the suburbs of places such as Clacton, Frinton and Harwich. Also in the 1960s a strain of Dutch elm disease struck Tendring and by the 1970s many elms were dead. This had a devastating effect on the landscape - the elm was a dominant tree on the London Clays of Tendring and its loss totally altered the character of the landscape. Also in the 1960s disease struck the oyster beds again resulting in the final harvest of Brightlingsea oysters.
- 2.60. In 1972 Essex County Council published a valuable report titled 'Landscape in Decline?', in which it noted the danger that Essex would become 'bleak and ugly' if things continued the way they were. This was a very important publication for the Tendring landscape and for the first time it addressed the impact of built development and road improvements. The importance of historic hedgerows and lanes was noted and a tree planting programme put in place. In the 1980s there was a renewed interest in the countryside with the formation of many wildlife trusts and groups.
- 2.61. More recently the integration of conservation, sustainability and production objectives has been given added impetus within rural policy. This is being articulated through the Rural White Paper and the England Rural Development Programme (ERDP). The ERDP puts in place measures of the European Commission's Agenda 2000 and specifically those offered by the Rural Development Regulation - the second pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy. The objectives are to assist the adaptation and development of rural areas, economies and communities and the conservation and improvement of the rural environment. This is likely to increase in importance, with the review of agricultural policy, which is imminent in the UK. The results are yet to be realised within the Tendring landscape but this policy shift represents an important opportunity for the future.

- 2.62. The district landscape character assessment and its recommendations should guide and assist the implementation of rural policy within Tendring. A timely example is the targeting and prioritising of agri-environment management, through schemes, such as Countryside Stewardship which from 2002 will have a new focus on management of arable landscapes.

3. THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF TENDRING

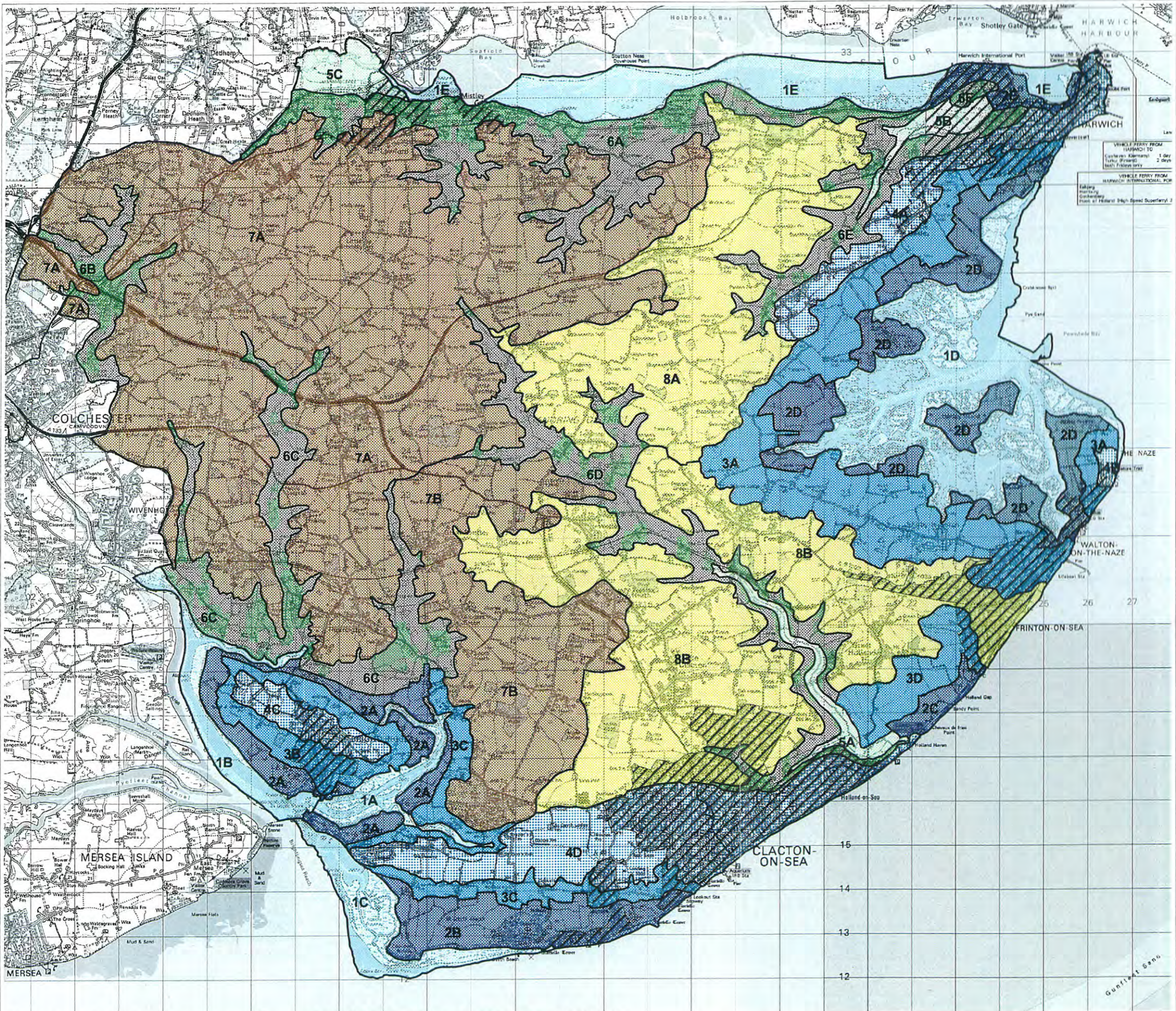
- 3.1. The Tendring landscape has evolved over thousands of years as the result of complex interactions between physical, natural and cultural forces. Some 8 distinct **landscape types** divided into 30 discrete **character areas** have been identified to represent the diversity of landscape within the district. They are illustrated on the map in **Figure 3.1**.
- 3.2. The boundaries of the landscape character areas were mapped accurate to 1:25,000, except in selected sensitive locations where the lines were mapped accurate to 1:10,000 scale. This more detailed scale of mapping applies to the upper boundary of the *Hamford Coastal Slopes (3A)* and the upper boundary of the *Stour Valley System (6A)*. Some boundaries indicate transitions rather than marked changes on the ground, for example the boundary between the *St Osyth Coastal Ridge (4D)* and *Clacton and the Sokens Clay Plateau (8B)*.

Broad Type	Landscape Type	Landscape Character Area
The Coast	1. Open Coastal Marsh	1A Brightlingsea Creek Marshes
		1B Colne Estuary Marshes
		1C Colne Point Marshes
		1D Hamford Water Marshes
		1E Stour Estuary Marshes
	2. Drained Coastal Marsh	2A Brightlingsea Drained Marshes
		2B St Osyth Drained Marshes
		2C Holland Haven
		2D Hamford Drained Marshes and Islands
		2E Parkeston Drained Marshes
	3. Coastal Slopes	3A Hamford Coastal Slopes
		3B Brightlingsea Coastal Slopes
		3C St Osyth Coastal Slopes
		3D Holland Coastal Slopes
	4. Coastal Ridges and Peninsulas	4A The Oakley Ridge
		4B The Naze Peninsula
		4C Brightlingsea Peninsula

		4D	St Osyth Coastal Ridge
River Valleys	5. River Floodplains	5A	Holland Brook
		5B	Ramsey Creek
		5C	Cattawade Marshes
	6. Clay Valleys	6A	Stour Valley System
		6B	Ardleigh Valley System
		6C	Alresford Valley System
		6D	Holland Valley System
		6E	Ramsey Valley System
Agricultural Heartland	7. Heathland Plateaux	7A	Bromley Heaths
		7B	St Osyth/Great Bentley Heaths
	8. Clay Plateaux	8A	Tendring and Wix Clay Plateau
		8B	Clacton and The Sokens Clay Plateau

TENDRING DISTRICT Landscape Character Assessment

Figure 3.1:
Landscape Types and
Character Areas



- Key**
- 1 - Open Estuarine / Coastal Marsh**
 - 1A - Brightlingsea Creek Marshes
 - 1B - Colne Estuary Marshes
 - 1C - Colne Point Marshes
 - 1D - Hamford Water Marshes
 - 1E - Stour Estuary Marshes
 - 2 - Drained Estuarine / Coastal Marsh**
 - 2A - Brightlingsea Drained Marshes
 - 2B - St Osyth Drained Marshes
 - 2C - Holland Haven
 - 2D - Hamford Drained Marshes and Islands
 - 2E - Parkeston Drained Marshes
 - 3 - Coastal Slopes**
 - 3A - Hamford Coastal Slopes
 - 3B - Brightlingsea Coastal Slopes
 - 3C - St Osyth Coastal Slopes
 - 3D - Holland Coastal Slopes
 - 4 - Coastal Ridges and Peninsulas**
 - 4A - The Oakley Ridge
 - 4B - The Naze Peninsula
 - 4C - Brightlingsea Peninsula
 - 4D - St Osyth Coastal Ridge
 - 5 - River Floodplains**
 - 5A - Holland Brook
 - 5B - Ramsey Creek
 - 5C - Cattawade Marshes
 - 6 - Clay Valleys**
 - 6A - Stour Valley System
 - 6B - Ardeigh Valley System
 - 6C - Alresford Valley System
 - 6D - Holland Valley System
 - 6E - Ramsey Valley System
 - 7 - Heathland Plateaux**
 - 7A - Bromley Heaths
 - 7B - St Osyth / Great Bentley Heaths
 - 8 - Clay Plateaux**
 - 8A - Tendring and Wix Clay Plateau
 - 8B - Clacton and the Sokens Clay Plateau
 - Urban Areas**



Note: Boundaries have been mapped accurate to 1:25,000 with selected areas at 1:10,000
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I. OPEN COASTAL MARSH



IA Brightlingsea Creek Marshes



IB Colne Estuary Marshes



IC Colne Point Marshes



ID Hamford Water Marshes



IE Stour Estuary Marshes

I OPEN COASTAL MARSH

Introduction

The *Open Coastal Marsh* landscape type includes all coastal areas down to the low water mark where sheltered conditions have led to the build up of sediment. These areas comprise saltmarsh, mudflats, shingle spits and tidal creeks and are notable for their absence of settlement and open, remote character. Their upper boundaries are defined by sea walls which separate the undrained open marsh from the drained marshes and mainland.

Physical Influences

The distinctive landscape of Tendring's coast is influenced by marine erosion and deposition. Estuarine alluvium, sand and shingle beaches are the building blocks of this delicate coastal environment. In sheltered areas, such as behind shingle spits or alongside inland creeks, sediment is trapped leading to the creation of mudflats which become progressively colonised by salt-tolerant vegetation and forming saltmarsh. Vegetation helps trap silt particles, accelerating the silting process until the marsh level is raised above high tides. The patterns of erosion and deposition continue to change in this dynamic landscape.

Human Influences

In the Iron Age the woollen industry, supplied by marshland flocks, flourished. The saltmarshes of Tendring were considered a good place to graze sheep as the saline conditions minimised foot rot and liver fluke. Grazing on the unenclosed saltmarshes is still seen, although rare.

The Romans introduced the salt industry, extracting sea salt on the unenclosed saltmarshes of the Colne Estuary. They also introduced a trading culture which relied on the many waterways for transport.

In the 17th century, the coast also became important for shipbuilding, fisheries and trade. Fishing and harvesting of oysters was also very popular with the enclosure of oyster beds in the Colne Estuary in the 1700s. The development of navigable waterways and quays helped in the transport of the increasing amounts of cereal crop and shellfish in flat bottomed barges. For example, Beaumont Quay was built in 1832 on the edge of Hamford Water.

Ecological Designations

Site Name	Character Area	Significance	Designation	Description
Essex Estuaries	IA, IB, IC	International	SAC	Extensive intertidal flats.
Colne Estuary	IA, IB, IC	International	SPA, Ramsar Site	A wetland of international importance for waterbirds.
Colne Estuary	IA, IB, IC	National and International	SSSI, NNR, SAC	Wetland habitats including mudflat, saltmarsh, grazing marsh, sand and shingle spits, disused gravel pits and reed beds.

Upper Colne Marshes	1B	National	SSSI	Grazing marshes with associated ditch and open water habitats.
Wivenhoe Marsh	1B	National	Part SSSI	An area containing numerous grassland types, ponds and a small area of scrub.
Skipper's Island	ID	National	Part of Hamford Water NNR, SSSI and EWT reserve	Formerly a grazing marsh, this is a reverted saltmarsh covering 94.3 hectares.
Hamford Water	ID	International	Ramsar site, SPA	Of particular importance to resident and migrating waterbirds.
Hamford Water	ID	National	SSSI, NNR	Large, shallow estuarine basin of tidal creeks, intertidal mud and sand flats, saltmarshes, beaches and marsh grassland.
Stour Estuary	IE	National	SSSI	Natural shoreline with rich intertidal flats and saltings.
Stour and Orwell Estuaries	IE	International	Ramsar Site, SPA	A wetland of international importance for waterbirds.

Settlement Form and Pattern

The open marshes are typically devoid of any built development except for landing stages and jetties protruding into the water from the mainland.

Landscape Character Areas

- IA Brightlingsea Creek Marshes
- IB Colne Estuary Marshes
- IC Colne Point Marshes
- ID Hamford Water Marshes
- IE Stour Estuary Marshes

IA BRIGHTLINGSEA CREEK MARSHES

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Tidal inlets of Brightlingsea Creek, Flag Creek and St Osyth Creek discharging into the Colne Estuary at Brightlingsea Reach.
- Open water, undrained saltmarshes, mudflats and reedbeds create an open, expansive landscape.
- Winding creeks and channels form intricate patterns in the open grazing marsh.
- Disused Oyster Pits are features of Cindery Island and on the edge of Brightlingsea.
- A remote and peaceful landscape relatively undisturbed by humans.
- Internationally important for nature conservation - rich in bird life.
- Long, uninterrupted views and large skies.

DESCRIPTION

Brightlingsea Creek and its tributaries form a tidal inlet, separating the towns of Brightlingsea and St Osyth, which discharges into the Colne Estuary at Brightlingsea Reach. The inlets are characterised by an expansive landscape of open water, undrained saltmarshes, mudflats and reedbeds that provide important bird feeding grounds. Its importance for migrating birds is reflected in its designation as a Ramsar site and SPA. It is also designated as a SSSI, SAC and National Nature Reserve for its extensive intertidal flats and diversity of wetland habitats. Winding channels form intricate patterns in the grazing marsh and boats, stranded at low tide, are landmarks in the flat, open landscape. Along most of its length the edge of the open marshes is marked by a sea wall or line of vegetation associated with the adjacent drained lowlands. However, some of the tributaries of the main creek reach far inland, for example St Osyth and Flag Creeks, where they are hidden amongst the adjacent intensively farmed landscapes. The marshes were once grazed by sheep and cattle but are now empty.

There are no settlements or communication routes through or over this area. The only built features are landing stages and disused oyster pits scattered across Cindery Island and on the edge of Brightlingsea, a reminder of the importance of Brightlingsea for Oysters between the 18th and 20th centuries. The inshore and deep-sea oyster smacks were often kept at moorings in Brightlingsea Creek. There is very little access into the area itself (one public footpath from East End Green) but the artificial sea walls around the edges provide a dry route for public footpaths. Mill Dam Lake is an artificially dammed lake used for water based recreation including sailing, but otherwise this is a tranquil, peaceful landscape relatively undisturbed by humans. The flat, open nature of the creek landscape allows long, uninterrupted views.

EVALUATION

Character: The open creek landscape has a natural, undisturbed character of great importance for nature conservation. The disused oyster pits indicate importance historically as a working landscape. Overall character is considered to be **strong**.

Condition: The open water, reed beds, mudflats and grazing marsh are seen as a cohesive visual unit and show good survival of characteristic features. There are few detracting features - derelict boats and rotting jetties enhance the remote character of this area. Condition is considered to be **good**.

Change

- Disused and derelict oyster pits reveal a disappearing cultural past.
- Derelict cars and boats lie abandoned in the landscape.
- Absence of grazing animals on the saltmarsh is resulting in growth of scrub and change in character of the open grazing marsh.
- Pollution run-off from adjacent areas - built development, car parks and holiday parks.
- Disturbance and erosion from water-based recreation.
- Sea level rises leading to changes in coastal habitats.
- Vulnerability to impact of change on adjacent marshes, coastal slopes and ridges.

Sensitivity

This landscape character area is highly sensitive to any change as a result of its remote and open character, long views and important ecological habitats reflected in the multitude of nature conservation designations. It is particularly sensitive to any form of built development – which would be highly visible and disrupt the special perceptual qualities of remoteness.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

The landscape of *Brightlingsea Creek Marshes* is remote, of strong character and generally in good condition. It is very sensitive to any change. The overall landscape strategy should be

to **conserve** the remote, tranquil landscape and open, undeveloped character. The strategy includes the following guidelines:

- Conserve the natural remote, undeveloped landscape of the Brightlingsea marshes;
- Conserve and enhance the natural marshland habitats through appropriate management including reintroduction of grazing management to halt the encroachment of scrub and maintain the open; expansive landscape;
- Conserve important cultural connections with the shellfish industry e.g. through survey and appropriate 'subtle' interpretation to promote understanding of the disused oyster pits.
- Encourage/promote recreation management including the zoning of motorised boats and leisure craft to protect to protect vulnerable habitats and maintain the peaceful character of the coastal edge.
- Encourage/promote additional research into the impact of sea level rises and increased temperatures on the important marshland habitats of the Essex coastline.
- Consider the impacts of any development in adjacent character e.g. the *Brightlingsea Drained Marshes (2A)* and *Coastal Slopes (3B)*. This could have an impact on the natural marshes both visually intruding on the sense of remoteness and through the effect of changes/run-off on the sensitive marshland habitats.

IB COLNE ESTUARY OPEN MARSHES

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Remote, peaceful coastal mosaic of open water, saltmarshes, mudflats and reedbeds alongside the River Colne and its tributary, Alresford Creek.
- Tides result in a continually changing, dynamic landscape.
- Internationally important for nature conservation - rich in bird life.
- Boat masts stand out as prominent vertical elements.
- Built development confined to Thorrington tidal mill, timber jetties and landing stages.
- Wooded slopes of the adjacent coastal lowlands form a rural backdrop to the marshes.

DESCRIPTION

The Colne Estuary separates the Tendring peninsula from Colchester District and Mersea Island. This character area extends into Colchester District and, within Tendring District, includes fringes of the River Colne and Alresford Creek. The open, expansive area of marshes, reedbeds, mudflats and winding waterways is a dynamic landscape, constantly changing with the tides. The mudflats, saltmarsh, grazing-marsh, sand and shingle spits and reed beds support an important variety of invertebrates and plants and the estuary is of international and national importance for over-wintering waders and wildfowl. Its importance for migrating birds is reflected in its designation as a Ramsar site and SPA. It is also designated as a SSSI, SAC and National Nature Reserve for its extensive intertidal flats and diversity of wetland habitats. Boat masts stand out as prominent vertical elements protruding above the low lying vegetation.

The Colne Estuary is important historically for its fisheries, maritime trade and distinctive sailing barges. Narrow lanes lead down to the waterside where they end at small rough-surfaced parking areas, historic landing stages and riverside walks. An historic ford provides access to Brightlingsea peninsula across Alresford Creek. The absence of through roads or bridges results in a peaceful, isolated character which adds to the charm of the place. The tidal mill at Thorrington, and timber jetties and landing stages form the only built development. These buildings are closely linked, both visually and functionally, to the water. The water is well used recreationally. Smack racing on the Colne can be traced back to the 18th century and still continues today. The wooded slopes of the adjacent coastal lowlands form a backdrop to the marshes.

EVALUATION

Character: The Colne Estuary has a remote, peaceful character and shows good survival of features characteristic of this landscape type, including mudflats, saltmarsh, sand and shingle spits and old landing stages. It is of great importance for nature conservation. Overall character is considered to be **strong**.

Condition: The open marshes, reedbeds, mudflats and winding waterways are a cohesive visual and ecological unit and show good survival of characteristic features. Despite erosion of some of the saltings condition is considered to be **good**.

Change

- Drainage of adjacent drained marshes (Character Area 2A) for agriculture, holiday parks and built development.
- Run-off (pollution) from adjacent areas - built development, car parks and holiday parks.
- Disturbance and erosion from water-based recreation.
- Dereliction and loss of traditional dwellings including mills.
- Lack of grazing of the marshes leading to reduction in vegetation diversity and encroachment of scrub.
- Impact of global warming and rising sea levels on the landscapes and habitats associated with the saltings.
- Vulnerability to impact of change on adjacent marshes, coastal slopes and ridges.

Sensitivity

This landscape character area is highly sensitive to any change as a result of its remote and open character, long views and ecologically rich habitats. Its high sensitivity is recognised by its multitude of nature conservation designations. It is particularly sensitive to built development that would be highly visible and disrupt the special perceptual qualities of remoteness.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

The *Colne Estuary Open Marshes* is a peaceful, unspoilt landscape dividing Tendring Peninsula from Colchester district. The landscape strategy should be to **conserve** the remote, peaceful character of the landscape. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Conserve the natural, undeveloped landscape of the Colne Estuary Marshes.

- Conserve and enhance the natural marshland habitats through appropriate management including reintroduction of grazing management to halt the encroachment of scrub and maintain the open; expansive landscape;
- Conserve natural habitats of the marshes that support the population of migrating birds. Consider providing board walks and wooden hides in certain areas to allow wildlife observation whilst minimising disturbance to wildlife
- Encourage/promote recreation management including the zoning of motorised boats and leisure craft to protect vulnerable habitats and maintain the peaceful character of the coastal edge.
- Encourage/promote additional research into the impact of sea level rises and increased temperatures on the important marshland habitats of the Essex coastline.
- Conserve historic links and vernacular character through the restoration of traditional dwellings such as mills.
- Consider the impacts of any development in adjacent character areas e.g. the *Brightlingsea Drained Marshes (2A)*, *Brightlingsea Coastal Slopes (3B)*, *Brightlingsea Coastal Ridge (4D)* and *Alresford Valley System (6C)*. This could have an impact on the natural marshes both visually intruding on the sense of remoteness and through the effect of changes/run-off on the sensitive marshland habitats.

IC COLNE POINT MARSHES

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Open coastal landscape at the mouth of the Colne Estuary.
- Extensive undrained saltmarshes and mudflats carved by an intricate pattern of winding creeks and channels.
- Shingle and sand ridges extend eastwards from Colne Point to form St Osyth beach and support rare plants and invertebrates.
- High nature conservation value - saltings support many wildfowl and waders that add movement to the landscape.
- Remote landscape with limited access from land.
- No settlement - the only built features are landing stages and jetties.
- Used for recreational boating.

DESCRIPTION

The *Colne Point Marshes* is a considerable area of mudflats and saltings, through which flows the Ray Creek, at the mouth of the Colne Estuary. The area includes a sandy spit between Colne Point and Sandy Point sheltering a 2.5km stretch of marsh that has formed in the lee of the spit. The marsh is characterised by extensive marsh grasses and sea purslane, with localised tracts of colourful sea lavender, golden samphire and scattered clumps of shrubby sea blight. The winding creeks and channels in the saltmarsh have carved an intricate pattern distinctive of a saltings landscape and it supports large numbers of wildfowl and waders which add movement to this dynamic coastal environment. Its importance for migrating birds is reflected in its designation as a Ramsar site and SPA. It is also designated as a SSSI, SAC and National Nature Reserve for its extensive intertidal flats and diversity of wetland habitats. The marsh is surrounded by shingle and sand ridges which extend eastwards from Colne Point to form St Osyth beach. A large area of shell beds and shingle banks is only exposed at low tide. Colne Point is important as a geomorphological feature and for the huge diversity of rare plants and invertebrates, many of which are highly localised and nationally rare.

The marshes are remote and unsettled with limited access from land. The only built features are a few landing stages, foot bridges and jetties connected to the land by informal tracks. At Lee-over-Sands there are also extensive Second World War remains including a pillbox. The Lower Colne is now extensively used for recreational boating, including sailing, windsurfing and powered craft.

EVALUATION

Character: The open marshes have remained undeveloped due to their remote coastal position. They show good survival of natural coastal landscapes and habitats with a particularly large area of saltings at Colne Point. Their natural, undisturbed character is of great importance for nature conservation. Overall character is considered to be **strong**.

Condition: The open water, reed beds, mudflats and saltings are a cohesive visual unit and show good survival of characteristic features. There are few detracting features in this remote natural landscape. Condition is considered to be **good**.

Change

- Pressure for drainage of marshes for agriculture, holiday parks and built development, particularly in association with existing development at Seawick (character area 2B).
- Run-off (pollution) from adjacent areas - built development, car parks and holiday parks.
- Interference with natural habitats, including bird overwintering grounds, by increased use of boats and leisure craft.
- Lack of grazing of the marshes leading to reduction in vegetation diversity and encroachment of scrub.
- Impact of global warming and rising sea levels on the landscapes and habitats associated with the saltings.
- Vulnerability to impact of change on adjacent marshes, coastal slopes and ridges.

Sensitivity

This landscape character area is highly sensitive to any change as a result of its remote and open character, long views and ecologically rich habitats. Its high sensitivity is recognised by its multitude of nature conservation designations. It is particularly sensitive to built development that would be highly visible and disrupt the special perceptual qualities of remoteness.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

The *Colne Point Marshes* is an open coastal landscape at the mouth of the Colne Estuary. The landscape strategy should seek to **conserve** the open, remote and natural character of this coastal landscape. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Conserve the remote, undeveloped landscape of the Colne Point Marshes.
- Conserve natural habitats of the marshes that support the population of migrating birds.

- Conserve and enhance the natural marshland habitats through appropriate management including reintroduction of grazing management to halt the encroachment of scrub and maintain the open; expansive landscape;
- Encourage/promote recreation management including the zoning of motorised boats and leisure craft to protect vulnerable habitats and maintain the peaceful character of the coastal edge.
- Encourage/promote additional research into the impact of sea level rises and increased temperatures on the important marshland habitats of the Essex coastline.
- Consider the impacts of any development in adjacent character areas e.g. the *Drained Marshes (2A and 2B)*, *Coastal Slopes (3C)* and *Coastal Ridges (4D)*. This could have an impact on the character of the marshes both visually intruding on the sense of remoteness and through the effect of changes/run-off on the sensitive marshland habitats.

ID HAMFORD WATER MARSHES

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Large shallow estuarine basin of Hamford Water enclosed by gently shelving slopes.
- Extensive area of tidal creeks, intertidal mud, sand flats, saltmarshes, reed beds, islands, beaches and marsh grasslands.
- High nature conservation value - saltings support many wildfowl and waders that add a dynamic element to the landscape.
- Skipper's Island includes thorn thickets providing shelter for breeding birds.
- A cluster of boat masts at Titchmarsh Marina is a feature of the open skyline.
- Absence of settlement.
- Wooden jetties, quays and landing stages are features of the coastal edge, many with historic connections to ancient trade routes
- Long views across the estuarine basin from the surrounding sea walls.
- Literary associations with Arthur Ransome.

DESCRIPTION

The *Hamford Water Marshes* is a large, shallow estuarine basin enclosed by the gently shelving *Hamford Coastal Slopes* on the east of the Tendring peninsula. It is a remote, wild landscape of tidal creeks, intertidal mud, sand flats, undrained saltmarshes, islands, beaches and marsh grasslands that formed a setting for Arthur Ransome's 'Secret Water'. It is of national and international importance for over-wintering wildfowl and waders. Skipper's Island was formerly grazing marsh, but has reverted to saltmarsh following breaches in the sea wall. The island includes thorn thickets which provide shelter for breeding birds including oystercatcher and shelduck. A small spinney of elm, also located on the island, is now mostly dead. Low dunes support distinctive flowering plants and it is the only place in the UK where Fisher's estuarine moth occurs along with its foodplant, hog's fennel. Its importance for resident and migrating water birds is reflected in its designation as a Ramsar site and SPA. Its diversity of wetland habitats is reflected in its designation as a SSSI and National Nature Reserve.

Boat masts are prominent vertical elements in such a flat, open landscape. This is most notable at the remote Titchmarsh Marina where the cluster of masts forms a distinctive feature on the skyline. There is no settlement in this landscape, but wooden jetties and landing stages are features of the coastal edge and the occasional derelict boat or wooden jetty struts loom mysteriously from the water at low tide. Landermere Quay is a historic site that has connections with Roman trade. The sheltered waters are popular for sailing and it is most easily accessed by water. There is very little access to the marshes from land except by informal tracks. One such track, Island Road, runs at low tide to Horsey Island, an area of enclosed grazing marsh within Hamford Water. A public footpath follows the sea wall around the edge from where there are great views across the estuarine basin.

EVALUATION

Character: The *Hamford Water Marshes* is set within a shallow basin at the most easterly point in Essex. This 'hidden' location means it has remained a remote and peaceful landscape and shows excellent survival of extensive areas of saltings and mudflats. The disused quays and landing stages indicate importance historically as a trade route. Overall character is considered to be **strong**.

Condition: The open water, reed beds, mudflats and saltings are seen as a cohesive visual unit and show good survival of characteristic features. There are few detracting features in this remote natural landscape. Condition is considered to be **good**.

Change

- Pressure for drainage of marshes for agriculture, holiday parks and built development, including marinas, plus potential effects of associated changes in run off (pollution) on the natural habitats.
- Interference with natural habitats, including bird overwintering grounds, by boats and leisure craft.
- Lack of grazing of the marshes leading to reduction in vegetation diversity.
- Impact of global warming and rising sea levels on the landscapes and habitats associated with the saltings, including erosion of the Naze promontory which contains and shelters the Hamford Waters.
- Vulnerability to impact of change on adjacent marshes, coastal slopes and ridges – this a particular threat for the Hamford marshes where development in association with Walton-on-the-Naze and Harwich could be very visible on the skyline of the surrounding coastal slopes. The impact of light pollution is also a concern.
- Potential impact of the development of offshore facilities such as renewable energy development, mineral extraction and effect on the view from the marshes and requirements for associated on shore infrastructure.

Sensitivity

Hamford Water is a remote landscape that is highly sensitive to any change as a result of its open character, long views and ecologically rich habitats, reflected in its multitude of nature conservation designations. It is particularly sensitive to any form of built development that would affect its open character, interrupt its long views and disrupt the special sense of remoteness. This includes sensitivity to development on the surrounding coastal slopes and skyline.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

The *Hamford Water Marshes* is an open estuarine basin of strong character and good condition. It is sensitive to changes that would affect its natural estuarine character, special perceptual sense of remoteness and its important wildlife habitats. The landscape strategy should be to **conserve** the existing remote and undeveloped character. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Conserve the remote, undeveloped landscape of the Hamford Water Marshes.
- Conserve and enhance the natural marshland habitats through appropriate management including reintroduction of grazing management.
- Consider opportunities for sensitive provision of board walks and wooden hides in certain areas to allow wildlife observation whilst minimising disturbance to wildlife.
- Encourage/promote recreation management including the zoning of motorised boats and leisure craft to protect vulnerable habitats and maintain the peaceful character of the basin.
- Encourage/promote additional research into the impact of sea level rises and increased temperatures on the important marshland habitats of the Essex coastline. Loss of the Naze promontory through erosion would have an impact on the landscapes of Hamford Water which it shelters.
- Conserve historic links and vernacular character through the conservation and restoration of historic quays.
- Consider the impacts of any development in adjacent character areas on the *Hamford Water Marshes* e.g. the *Hamford Drained Marshes (2D)* and *Coastal Slopes (3A)*. This could have an impact on the natural marshes both visually intruding, impacting on the sense of remoteness and through the effect of changes/run-off on the sensitive marshland habitats.

THE STOUR ESTUARY MARSHES

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Tidal estuary of the River Stour forming a dynamic landscape setting to the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB to the north.
- Intertidal muds are extremely rich in invertebrates and the estuary is of international importance for wildfowl and wading birds.
- Large scale working river landscape frequented by water-borne transport and bordered by historic ports of Mistley and Manningtree.
- Influenced by large scale shipping and activity surrounding Harwich International Port.
- Absence of settlement or infrastructure within area.
- Dramatic views across the estuary to the Suffolk coast.
- Wooded Stour slopes, in Suffolk to the north and Essex to the south, form a setting to the open estuary marshes.

DESCRIPTION

The *Stour Estuary Marshes* landscape character area is located along the tidal estuary of the River Stour and includes the shallows of Jacques and Copperas Bays as well as some deeper water channels. The Stour Estuary forms the boundary between Essex and Suffolk and is relatively undisturbed, although the waters adjacent to Harwich International Port and Harwich town quays, at the mouth of the Stour, are busy with water-borne traffic.

It is a landscape dominated by intertidal muds and open water, but with some important saltmarsh on the coastal edge, for example at Mistley Walls where the saltings are common grazing land. It is designated as a SSSI for its natural shoreline with rich intertidal flats and saltings. The intertidal muds are extremely rich in invertebrates and are of international importance for wildfowl and wading birds. This is reflected in its designation as a Ramsar site and SPA. At low tide many birds can be seen exploring the mud-flats and at high tide the estuary comes to life with large numbers of swans.

It is a scenic landscape that forms a setting to and integral part of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB to the north and to the wooded slopes to the south. The only built development in the marshes are the distinctive holiday huts at Wrabness Point, raised above the water level on stilts. There is no settlement or infrastructure in this landscape, although the character of the estuary is influenced by the proximity of industrial areas on the outskirts of Harwich and at Mistley Quays and the regular passing of ferries and boats. There are excellent open views into and across the Stour Estuary from the adjacent settlements, footpaths and roads/rail line.

EVALUATION

Character: The *Stour Estuary Marshes* landscape character area is a large scale working river landscape frequented by water-borne transport. It shows good survival of

characteristic features such as the open intertidal muds, coastal grazing marshes and open views and has a strong history of trade and industry. There are few detracting features. Overall character is considered to be **strong**.

Condition: The area has a strong visual unity which encompasses both sides of the estuary. There are few detracting features in this remote natural landscape. Condition is considered to be **good**.

Change

- Interference with natural habitats, including bird overwintering grounds, by shipping and water-based recreation.
- Pressure for encroaching urban development and expansion of industrial/port areas, for example at Bathside Bay.
- Impact of global warming and rising sea levels on the landscapes and habitats associated with the saltings and intertidal mudflats.
- Impact of change on the setting of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB.

Sensitivity

The Stour Estuary is a distinctive estuary that is highly sensitive to any change that would interrupt the open views across the estuary or affect its ecologically rich habitats. Its high sensitivity is recognised by the role it plays in the setting of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB and the multitude of nature conservation designations it holds, including SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

The *Stour Estuary* is an important river estuary separating Essex from Suffolk. It is of strong character and in good condition and considered to be of equal merit as the adjacent AONB landscape. The landscape strategy is to **conserve** its existing open character and rich habitats as a setting to the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB and its character as a working river with historic ports. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Conserve the natural character and remote, undeveloped landscape of the Stour Estuary Marshes.

- Conserve and enhance the natural marshland habitats through appropriate management including reintroduction of grazing.
- Consider sensitive provision of boardwalks and wooden hides in certain areas to allow wildlife observation whilst minimising disturbance to wildlife.
- Encourage/promote recreation management including the zoning of motorised boats and leisure craft to protect vulnerable habitats and maintain the peaceful character of the coastal edge.
- Encourage/promote additional research into the impact of sea level rises and increased temperatures on the important marshland habitats of the Essex coastline.
- Consider the impact of any proposed development within/adjacent to the estuary on the setting to the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB.
- Consider the impacts of development in adjacent character areas on the *Stour Estuary Marshes* e.g. the *Drained Marshes* (2E), *Clay Valleys* (6A and 6E) and edges of the inland *Plateaux* (7A and 8A). This could have an impact on the Stour Estuary both visually intruding on the sense of remoteness and through the effect of changes/run-off on the sensitive Stour Estuary habitats.

2. DRAINED COASTAL MARSHES



2A Brightlingsea Drained Marshes



2B St Osyth Drained Marshes



2C Holland Haven



2D Hamford Drained Marshes and Islands



2E Parkeston Drained Marshes

2 DRAINED COASTAL MARSH

Introduction

The *Drained Coastal Marsh* landscape type includes all areas of former saltmarsh, usually found next to areas of *Open Coastal Marsh*. These areas are defined by flat, lowlying alluvial fields criss-crossed with drainage ditches, contained behind a sea wall. The inland limits of the drained marshes are defined by a rise in topography.

Physical Influences

The drained marshes originally formed the open coastal marshes developing, in sheltered areas, on estuarine alluvium. The artificially enclosed and drained landscape is now isolated from tidal influences and forms an area of grassland and cultivated fields divided by drains and punctuated by intermittent scattered scrub. The landscape is protected from the natural processes of erosion and deposition by sea wall defences, traditionally built from clay dug from an adjacent ditch. The walls and ditches often support a range of important insects and plants.

Human Influences

In the Iron Age the woollen industry flourished, supplied by marshland flocks. The saltmarshes of Tendring were considered a good place to graze sheep as the saline conditions minimised footrot and liver fluke. Clay embankments have been built around the Tendring saltmarshes since at least the Middle Ages, and possibly much earlier. Medieval farmers enclosed small parcels of saltings along tidal ditches and creeks producing an irregular patchwork of fields. From the 17th century larger areas of marsh were enclosed and drained to a regular pattern using Dutch technology. Many more marshes were enclosed during the 18th and 19th centuries. The sea walls that enclose the marshes have been progressively strengthened and raised. During their history, grazing marshes have undergone drainage, levelling and cultivation. Much of the grazing marsh was lost during the 1950s and 1960s. A combination of grazing marsh and arable cultivation is typical of the landscape today.

During the 18th and 19th centuries wildfowling was a popular activity and this saw the creation of decoy ponds in the drained marshes. Some of these survive today, for example one pond lies west of Jaywick. Threat from Napoleonic invasions in the early 19th century resulted in a number of Martello towers being built as coastal defences.

The landscape type contains the following Scheduled Ancient Monuments:

Site Name/ SM Number	Character Area	Significance	Designation	Description
29429	2A	National	SAM	Martello tower A and associated battery at Stone Point
29430	2B	National	SAM	Martello tower C, St Osyth Beach, Clacton-on-Sea
29431	2B	National	SAM	Martello tower D, 450m SSW of the Club House, Clacton Golf Course

				Course
29432	2B	National	SAM	Martello tower E, 300m south west of junction of Marine Parade West and Wash Lane, Clacton-on-Sea
32412	2B	National	SAM	Lion Point decoy 810m south east of Cockett Wick Farm
29434	2D	National	SAM	Martello tower K and associated battery SW of Walton Mere
32443	2D	National	SAM	World War 2 bombing decoy HA2 Kirby-le-Soken
29445	2E	National	SAM	A Napoleonic coastal battery at Bath Side, 400m NW of Tower Hill

Ecological Designations

Site Name	Character Area	Significance	Designation	Description
Colne Estuary	2A	International	SPA	A wetland of international importance for waterbirds.
Colne Estuary	2A	National	NNR, SSSI	Diversity of wetland habitats including mudflat, saltmarsh, grazing marsh, sand and shingle spits, disused gravel pits and reed beds.
Noah's Ark Pit	2A	Regional	SINC	A large and small reed island both bordered by a range of water-loving species.
Jaywick Coastal Grassland	2B	Regional	SINC	An area of coastal grazing marsh and a remnant of the formerly extensive habitat type found in this area.
Holland Haven	2C	National	SSSI, SINC	Reclaimed estuarine saltmarsh and freshwater marsh representing outstanding example of freshwater-brackish water transition. The site forms the southernmost grassland wildlife corridor of the Holland Brook stream valley.
John Weston Reserve	2D	National	Part of Hamford Water NNR, SSSI and EWT Reserve	A coastal reserve forming the north-western part of the Naze peninsula.

Horse Island	2D	National	Part of Hamford Water SSSI	An island within the shallow estuarine basin of Hamford Water.
Barnes Spinney	2D	Regional	EWT Reserve	A two-acre grassland garden site containing displays of cultivated and wild flowers.

Settlement Form and Pattern

The coastal marshlands were historically devoid of any built development. In the early 19th century, Martello towers were introduced along the coastline as coastal defences. Recently there has been a dramatic increase in the amount of built development on the coastal marshlands. This includes extensive holiday parks of static caravans and associated facilities, residential estates, industrial buildings, sewage works, golf courses and their associated facilities including club houses, car parks and toilets. The pattern of built development is densely clustered, with extensive intervening open areas. Marinas, wharves and landing stages are also common.

Landscape Character Areas

- 2A Brightlingsea Drained Marshes
- 2B St Osyth Drained Marshes
- 2C Holland Haven
- 2D Hamford Drained Marshes and Islands
- 2E Parkeston Drained Marshes

2A BRIGHTLINGSEA DRAINED MARSHES

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Low, drained grazed marshland enclosing Brightlingsea 'island' and forming the immediate backdrop and setting to Brightlingsea Creek and the Colne Estuary.
- Open alluvial meadows comprising low, hummocky grassland and reed filled dykes trapped behind a sea wall.
- Depressions provide evidence of creeks that existed in the former saltmarsh before the sea wall was constructed.
- Patches of scrub or tree groupings, known as 'Furzes' punctuate the open landscape.
- Caravan parks, holiday complexes, car parks and golf course at Westmarsh Point and Point Clear.
- Sea walls provide footpaths with views across the open landscape.

DESCRIPTION

Brightlingsea Drained Marshes is an extensive flat area of drained marshes bordering Brightlingsea Creek and encircling Brightlingsea Island. It is an expansive, flat landscape of former saltmarsh underlain by estuarine alluvium. Narrow ditches, some straight, others meandering, and some with names such as the 'Great Divide', drain these coastal grasslands. There are many bodies of standing water, including man-made ponds which are fringed by a wide variety of water-loving species and provide important ornithological sites close to the Colne Estuary. The area west of Westmarsh Point falls within the Colne Estuary SSSI and National Nature Reserve. Its importance for migrating birds is reflected by its inclusion as part of the Colne Estuary SPA and Ramsar site.

The landscape is one of open alluvial meadows comprising low, hummocky grassland and reed filled dykes behind the sea wall. Post and wire field boundaries and intermittent scrub separate individual fields. Patches of scrub or tree groupings, located on sandy outcrops, punctuate the open landscape. Scot's pine and gorse are typical of these hillocks. Depressions provide evidence of creeks that existed in the former saltmarsh before the sea wall was constructed. The coastal grasslands were historically grazed, but this is becoming less common. For example, Howlands Marsh is one of the few coastal grazing marshes which still survives in Essex.

Historically the coastal landscapes have been important for trade. The waterfront at Brightlingsea indicates signs of this including ship buildings yards, smithies, a copperas yard and the Cinque Port Warehouse. The development of the beach huts, caravan park and boating lake at Brightlingsea (Westmarsh Point), and the caravan park, golf course and holiday complex at Point Clear have brought with them access roads, car parks and associated facilities such as toilet blocks. These developments have affected the typically tranquil and 'wild' character of the *Brightlingsea Drained Marshes*. The pattern of settlement is in dense clusters around key areas such as Westmarsh Point and Point Clear. Footpaths along the sea walls provide views over the open marsh in one direction and over the enclosed marsh in the other.

EVALUATION

Character: The *Brightlingsea Drained Marshes* retain a remote, 'wild' character, illustrating good survival of features characteristic of the drained marsh landscape such as open horizons, long views and a sense of 'remoteness'. Overall character is considered to be **strong**.

Condition: The coastal grazing marshes, reed lined ditches and open water bodies provide a cohesive visual unit that form an important setting to the open marshes (IA and IB). However, the presence of built development in the form of caravan parks, holiday complexes, car parks, and the golf course at Point Clear has introduced foreign urban elements and eroded the sense of remoteness and tranquillity. Agricultural change has also had an impact on the condition of the landscape. Condition is considered to be **declining**.

Change

- Pressure for built development on the edges of existing settlements, in prominent waterside locations and in key honeypot areas, including pressure for expansion of recreation and tourist development.
- On shore development, such as moorings, launching areas, social facilities and parking, linked to offshore activities such as boating and jet-skiing.
- Gradual urbanisation of the environment through piecemeal 'improvements' to roads, car parks and tourist facilities.
- Erosion of diversity and distinctiveness of seaside beach huts with ubiquitous garden sheds replacing the eclectic mix of colours traditional of the water's edge.
- Global warming and vulnerability to impact of sea level rise.
- Absence of grazing management on the coastal marshland is resulting in growth of scrub and change in character of the open marshes.
- Pressure for conversion of land to arable use.
- Loss of sea wall and ditch habitats through upgrading sea defences.

Sensitivity

This landscape character area is highly sensitive to change as a result of its flat topography, its open character and important ecological habitats. It is particularly sensitive to built development, which would be highly visible – it is also sensitive to changes/intensification in agricultural management.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

Brightlingsea Drained Marshes is a landscape of open alluvial meadows comprising low, hummocky grassland and reed filled dykes behind the sea wall. It of strong character, although considered to be declining condition as a result of changes in agricultural management and the impact of development. The overall landscape strategy for this highly sensitive landscape should be to **conserve** the remote, tranquil landscape character and **restore** the character of areas affected by development or those in decline. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Conserve the open, undeveloped character and valuable wetland habitats of the coastal marshes.
- Conserve important habitats and landscapes through appropriate management including grazing management of the marshes and reed cutting, within the drainage dykes.
- Conserve clay sea walls and borrowdykes where possible, minimising interference with habitats when upgrading works to sea defences.
- Seek opportunities for habitat enhancement to compensate for any loss of habitat through defence upgrading or management.
- Encourage restoration of areas affected by intensive agriculture including the conversion of arable areas to pasture and reintroduction of grazing management.
- Consider impact of change in adjacent landscapes such as the Open Marshes (IA, IB and IC).
- Conserve the remote rural character of the landscape by avoiding the use of concrete kerbs, street lights and tarmac and other features that would result in gradual urbanisation. Visitor facilities, such as car parks, should retain a rural, informal design.
- In some cases there may be a long term opportunity to restore a more natural character by encouraging relocation of facilities (e.g. caravan parks and holiday complexes) away from the most sensitive areas.
- Conserve the eclectic mix of colours and styles of beach hut traditionally lining the water's edge.

- Retain the open character of the marshes by restricting planting to low growing scrubby species typically found in the local landscape. Screening using tall or ornamental species is not appropriate in this area.

2B ST OSYTH DRAINED MARSHES

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Extensive area of drained marshes between Colne Point and Clacton-on-Sea that is vulnerable to flooding and sea invasion.
- Open alluvial grassland and improved agricultural land divided by post and wire fences and reed lined ditches.
- Exposed coast with a series of groynes and breakwaters help to keep sandy beaches from eroding into the sea.
- A decoy pond to the west of Jaywick is one of the few surviving from the 19th century.
- Coastal grazing marsh at Jaywick is a remnant of once extensive grazing marshes.
- Development includes the unique settlement of Jaywick, Seawick holiday village, numerous caravan parks and a golf course.
- Expansive coastal views.

DESCRIPTION

St Osyth Drained Marshes is an extensive area of drained marshes between Colne Point and Clacton-on-Sea. The area is exposed to the elements along this southern coast and a sea wall protects the marshes from the open coast. The exposed nature of this area means there is little open marsh bordering the coast - the other side of the sea wall is exposed to the open sea. The remote character is illustrated at Lee-over-Sands from where there are dramatic windswept coastal views. The sea defences have been re-built many times and a series of groynes and breakwaters help to keep the sandy beaches from eroding into the sea. Jaywick sands has been recently reconstructed with the addition of thousands of tonnes of sand.

It is a landscape of open alluvial grassland and improved agricultural land, much of which is in crop production. Fields are divided by reed filled drainage ditches and post and wire fences with intermittent scrub. There is no woodland and few trees. There are some bodies of standing water, including a decoy pond to the west of Jaywick, one of the few surviving from the 19th century when wildfowling was a popular activity. These water bodies are fringed by a wide variety of water-loving species and provide important wetland habitats. The coastal grasslands were historically grazed, but this is becoming less common as a result of agricultural improvement, drainage and urban/industrial encroachment. The area of coastal grazing marsh at Jaywick is a remnant of once extensive grazing marshes in Tendring and is important for its grassland and wetland habitats. This is reflected in its designation as a SSSI.

The marshes were historically devoid of development, except for the landmark coastal defence structures, the Martello towers, built to defend the Tendring coast from Napoleonic invasion. However, the present day settlement pattern is distinctive. Jaywick was the first settlement in this windswept coastal environment, planned as a holiday village for residents of London. The first of the chalets was built in 1928 and, by 1931, two thousand chalets had been constructed. Today, Jaywick is a unique and very distinctive

settlement, although suffering from neglect. Other built development along the coast includes Seawick holiday village, numerous caravan parks and a golf course. The fringes of Clacton have also spread into the drained marshes towards its most easterly point.

EVALUATION

Character: The *St Osyth Drained Marshes* illustrate good survival of features characteristic of the drained marsh landscape such as open horizons, long views and a sense of 'remoteness'. The grazing marsh, reed lined ditches and open water bodies provide a cohesive visual unit that form an important setting to the open marshes (IC). Overall character is considered to be **strong**.

Condition: The *St Osyth Drained Marshes* historically was coastal grazing marsh with a remote, rural character. This character has progressively been eroded and affected by the development of caravan parks, holiday villages, access roads, upgrading of sea defences and intensification of farming with conversion to arable. Condition is therefore considered to be **declining**.

Change

- Pressure for built development on the edges of existing settlements and in key honeypot locations, and in particular pressure for further/expansion of caravan parks.
- On shore development, such as moorings, launching areas, social facilities and parking, linked to offshore activities such as boating and jet-skiing.
- Potential impact of the development of offshore facilities such as renewable energy development, mineral extraction and effect on the view from the marshes and requirements for associated on shore infrastructure.
- Neglect and gradual decline of properties and facilities associated with holiday villages such as Jaywick and replacement by buildings of a more suburban character leading to loss of local distinctiveness.
- Global warming and vulnerability to impact of sea level rise.
- Gradual urbanisation of the environment through piecemeal 'improvements' to roads, car parks and tourist facilities.
- Agricultural intensification (arable) and urban development leading to loss of grazing marsh, plus lack of grazing animals for management.
- Pesticide run-off affecting ditch habitats and water quality.
- Loss of sea wall and ditch habitats through upgrading sea defences.

Sensitivity

This landscape character area is highly sensitive to any change as a result of its flat topography, its remote and open character and important habitats. It is particularly sensitive to built development that would be highly visible and further agricultural intensification that would affect the coastal grazing marshes and remaining wetland habitats.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

St Osyth Drained Marshes is a landscape of open drained marsh comprising grazing marsh, arable land and caravan parks. It retains a strong character, but is of declining condition as a result of intensive agricultural management and impact of development. The overall landscape strategy should therefore be to **conserve** the remaining grazing marsh and **restore** areas affected by urban development, drainage or agricultural intensification and features in decline. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Conserve the open, undeveloped character and valuable wetland habitats of the coastal marshes.
- Encourage appropriate management including grazing management and reed cutting.
- Conserve clay sea walls and borrowdykes where possible, minimising interference with habitats when upgrading works to sea defences.
- Seek opportunities for habitat enhancement and restoration to compensate for any loss of habitat through defence upgrading or management.
- Encourage restoration of areas affected by intensive agriculture by the re-establishment of grassland and reintroduction of grazing management.
- Consider impact of change in adjacent landscapes such as the Open Marshes (IC).
- Encourage restoration of derelict properties, particularly in Jaywick which is a unique coastal settlement.
- Conserve the Martello towers and their open settings as historic landmarks.
- Conserve the rural character of the landscape by avoiding the use of concrete kerbs, street lights and tarmac and other features that would result in gradual urbanisation of the rural landscape. Visitor facilities, such as car parks, that are of a rural, informal design will have least impact on the remote nature of the landscape.
- Consider long term plans to relocate caravan parks and holiday complexes to less sensitive areas.

- Retain the open character of the marshes by restricting planting to low growing scrubby species typically found in the local landscape. Screening using tall or ornamental species is not appropriate.

2C HOLLAND HAVEN

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Small character area on the coastal edge separating Clacton and Frinton.
- Former open estuarine marsh associated with Holland Brook, enclosed by a sea wall in the 17th century.
- Concrete sea wall withstands the eroding forces of the sea and a series of groynes and breakwaters along the coastal side of the wall protects the sandy beach.
- Golf course occupies part of former grazing marsh.
- A golf club house is the only built development resulting in a remote, tranquil character.
- Long views over the landscape from the coastal sea wall and from Great Holland.

DESCRIPTION

Holland Haven is an area of drained coastal marshland between Clacton and Frinton. It was former open estuarine marsh associated with Holland Brook before it was enclosed by a sea wall in the 17th century. This is an exposed length of coast where a concrete sea wall has been built to withstand the eroding forces of the sea. A series of groynes and breakwaters along the coastal side of the sea wall help to keep the sandy beach from eroding into the sea.

The landscape comprises open grassland over estuarine alluvium which was historically managed as grazing marsh. Holland Haven consists of a series of coastal grasslands and willow-lined water courses which stand out as landscape features. The marshes are of enormous value for wildlife and have been recognised as a SSSI. The continuation of the grassland corridor into the upper reaches of Holland Brook increases its value as a habitat. Part of the former grazing marsh is now managed as a golf course.

There is good public access to this coastal area with a footpath and bridleway following ditches down to the coast. There is also a public footpath along the sea wall allowing views across the open landscape. These estuarine marshes were historically devoid of development. This is still true today except for the golf club house and the thatched toilet block at Frinton. This results in a landscape with a remote, tranquil character which contrasts with the adjacent urban areas.

EVALUATION

Character: *Holland Haven* illustrates good survival of features characteristic of the drained marsh landscape including open horizons, long views and a sense of 'remoteness'. The grazing marsh, reed lined ditches and open water bodies provide a cohesive visual unit that form an important setting to Frinton and Holland on Sea. Overall character is considered to be **strong**.

Condition: *Holland Haven* was historically coastal grazing marsh with a remote, rural character. It has retained this natural coastal character despite the reduction in grazing and

development of a golf course across part of the area. As a result the condition of Holland Haven can be described as **good**.

Change

- Pressure for built development on the edges of existing settlements, for example on the edges of Frinton.
- Gradual urbanisation of the rural environment through piecemeal 'improvements' to roads, car parks and facilities.
- On shore development, such as moorings, launching areas, social facilities and parking, linked to offshore activities such as boating and jet-skiing.
- Potential impact of the development of offshore facilities such as renewable energy development, mineral extraction and effect on the view from the marshes and requirements for associated on shore infrastructure.
- Global warming and vulnerability to impact of sea level rise.
- Further agricultural intensification leading to loss of grazing marsh, plus impact of run-off from arable areas/golf course on sensitive habitats.
- Built development - particularly encroachment of the urban edges of Clacton and Frinton leading to loss of habitats/landscape loss.
- Loss of sea wall and ditch habitats through upgrading sea defences.
- Potential impact of development on adjacent coastal slopes/skyline (3D: *Holland Coastal Slopes*) – visual impact on sense of remoteness plus effect of changes in hydrology/run-off and light pollution.

Sensitivity

This landscape character area is highly sensitive to any built development as a result of its flat topography, its remote and open character and important ecological habitats. It is also sensitive to further agricultural intensification. The whole area forms an important rural/coastal gap between Holland on Sea and Frinton. The most sensitive parts of the landscape are the grazing marshes and open water bodies that provide important coastal grassland and wetland habitats. Its importance for nature conservation is recognised by its designation as a SSSI.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

Holland Haven is a landscape of open drained marsh comprising maritime grassland and a golf course contained behind a sea wall. The overall landscape strategy for this sensitive landscape should be to **conserve** the remaining grazing marsh and the remote, tranquil character of the marshes. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Conserve the open, undeveloped character and valuable wetland habitats of the coastal marshes.
- Conserve the remaining grazing marshes and consider extending this habitat through the re-establishment of grassland and reintroduction of grazing management where appropriate.
- Seek appropriate management of golf course roughs to enhance value for nature conservation.
- Consider impact of change in adjacent landscapes such as the Coastal Slopes (3D) and River Floodplains (5A).
- Conserve the rural character of the landscape by avoiding the use of concrete kerbs, street lights and tarmac and other features that would result in gradual urbanisation of the rural landscape.
- Retain the open character of the marshes by restricting planting to low growing scrubby species typically found in the local landscape. Screening using tall or ornamental species is not appropriate.
- Seek to avoid the use of pesticides or herbicides that could affect water quality.

2D HAMFORD DRAINED MARSHES AND ISLANDS

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Former saltmarsh, drained and enclosed in the late 17th century, bordering Hamford Water, incorporating the 'Walton Backwaters'.
- Enclosed by the gently shelving Hamford Coastal Slopes.
- Expansive landscape of alluvial grasslands intercepted by reed-lined drainage ditches and scattered patches of low lying scrub.
- Land use is a mixture of improved grassland and arable cultivation.
- Informal tracks terminate at a quay, dock or landing stage.
- Caravan parks, sewage works and sports grounds are features on the edges of Walton and Harwich.

DESCRIPTION

The *Hamford Drained Marshes and Islands* includes the drained marshes bordering Hamford Water, also known as the 'Walton Backwaters'. The marshes which form this character area are characterised by their flat, alluvial grasslands intercepted by reed-lined drainage ditches and scattered patches of low lying scrub. Intensive agriculture is now the most common land use with improved grassland and large scale arable cultivation across much of the former saltmarsh. Large harvesters stir up great clouds of chaff and dust in these fields during late summer. The improved grass fields of Horsey Island provide feeding and roosting sites for the Hamford Water flock of Brent geese and for many other bird species. Horsey Island is included within the Hamford Water SSSI and National Nature Reserve and its importance for birds is reflected in its inclusion with Hamford Water's SPA and Ramsar designations.

Many of these areas were drained and enclosed in the late 17th century by excavation of a borrowdyke and construction of a continuous clay sea wall to eliminate the risk of flooding. The sea wall now forms a coastal footpath along much of its length, popular with walkers and bird-watchers. The remoteness of the Hamford Marshes means they have, in the past been used for the location of hazardous industries such as the Great Oakley Works explosives factory at Bramble Island.

The landscape is marked by old jetties, quays and track-ways, many of which terminate at a quay, dock or landing stage. Most of the quays are now disused, but were important in the transport of grain, lime and coal before the arrival of the railway. They include Beaumont Quay, Old Moze Dock, Great Oakley Dock and Kirby Quay. Beaumont Quay was built using stone from Old London Bridge. The boat masts at Titchmarsh Marina make it a landmark of the Walton Backwaters.

The flat, open landscape of the drained marshes has seen expansion of urban development from towns such as Walton, across the former 'Walton Gap' to the Naze resulting in the obstruction of views to the Walton Backwaters. Expansion of Walton in the other direction has resulted in the merging of Walton and Frinton. Caravan parks, sewage works

and sports grounds on the edges of Walton and Harwich are now typical of the drained marsh landscape.

EVALUATION

Character: The *Hamford Drained Marshes and Islands* illustrate good survival of features characteristic of the drained marsh landscape including open horizons, long views and a sense of 'remoteness'. The arable fields, grazing marsh, reed lined ditches and open water bodies provide a cohesive visual unit that form an important setting to the open marshes (ID). Overall character is considered to be **strong**.

Condition: *Hamford Drained Marshes and Islands* character area was historically dominated by coastal grazing marsh. It has retained a rural, remote character but this has been progressively eroded by the gradual expansion of built development, particularly around Walton and intensification of agricultural land use. As a result, the condition of the drained marshes can be described as **declining**.

Change

- Pressure for built development on the edges of existing settlements, for example on the edges of Walton and Harwich.
- Pressure for large scale development, for example reservoirs, marinas and industrial developments.
- Gradual urbanisation of the rural environment through piecemeal 'improvements' to roads, car parks and facilities.
- On shore development, such as moorings, launching areas, social facilities and parking, linked to offshore activities such as boating and jet-skiing.
- Development on the adjacent coastal slopes and skyline that impacts on the remote character of the marshes.
- Agricultural intensification leading to loss of grazing marsh.
- Creation of nature conservation sites including creation of scrapes, generation of scrub and less intensively managed field margins.
- Loss of sea wall and ditch habitats through upgrading sea defences.

Sensitivity

This landscape character area is highly sensitive to any change. It is particularly sensitive to built development that would affect the open views and sense of remoteness or further agricultural intensification that would affect its important ecological habitats. Development on the adjacent coastal slopes/skyline (3A) would have a significant impact on the remote character of the area. The most sensitive parts of the landscape are the coastal grazing marshes and open water bodies that provide important coastal grassland and wetland habitats. The sensitivity of the area is enhanced by its position adjacent to the Hamford Water SPA, SSSI and Ramsar site.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Low	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

Hamford Drained Marshes and Islands borders the estuarine basin of Hamford Water. Much was enclosed in the 17th century and managed as grazing marsh. In recent years it has seen progressive agricultural intensification and intrusion of built development. The overall landscape strategy for this sensitive landscape should be to **conserve** the remote, tranquil character of Hamford Water and **restore** areas affected by urban development, drainage or agricultural intensification. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Conserve the open, undeveloped character and valuable wetland habitats of the coastal marshes.
- Encourage restoration of areas affected by intensive agriculture by the re-establishment of grassland and reintroduction of grazing management.
- Conserve the rural character of the landscape by avoiding the use of concrete kerbs, street lights and tarmac and other features that would result in gradual urbanisation of the rural landscape. Visitor facilities, such as car parks, that are of a rural, informal design will have least impact on the remote nature of the landscape.
- Consider impact of change on adjacent landscapes such as the Open Marshes (1D).
- Ensure that any development on the adjacent coastal slopes and skyline that form a setting of the marshes (3A) does not adversely affect the remote and peaceful character of Hamford Water.
- Consider long term plans to relocate caravan parks, holiday complexes and industrial works to less sensitive landscapes. This would restore views that have been obscured by development, e.g. in the 'Walton Gap'.
- Retain the open character of the marshes by restricting planting to low growing scrubby species typically found in the local landscape. Screening using tall or ornamental species is not appropriate.
- Conserve clay sea walls and borrowdykes where possible, minimising interference with habitats when upgrading works to sea defences.
- Seek opportunities for habitat enhancement and restoration to compensate for any loss of habitat through defence upgrading or management.

2E PARKESTON DRAINED MARSHES

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Reclaimed land enclosed by a curved embankment and dominated by industry and port related development, at the mouth of the Stour.
- Parkeston Quay forms the focal point for commerce and industry on the Stour Estuary.
- Ramsey Creek flows, confined between artificial floodbanks into the Stour Estuary.
- Dockside cranes of the container terminal at Parkeston dominate the skyline.
- Serviced by extensive transport infrastructure including the main A120(T) to Harwich and the Great Eastern Railway.
- Harwich Parkeston Quay Station is a landmark building.

DESCRIPTION

The *Parkeston Drained Marshes* is an area of reclaimed land located at the mouth of the River Stour close to Harwich. The Great Eastern Railway (GER) reclaimed the area from estuarine alluvium surrounding Ray Island between 1879 and 1883. A sea wall, which formed a curved embankment two and a half miles long enclosed about 600 acres of reclaimed land. In the centre a large pier was built and named Parkeston Quay after Charles H Parkes, the chairman of GER. In 1990 Parkeston Quay was sold to Stena Line and later renamed Harwich International Port

This landscape is dominated by industry and port related development, where few natural resources survive. Ramsey Creek is confined between artificial floodbanks and flows into the Stour Estuary. The creek provides important wetland habitats and vegetation along its banks, but follows a confined course between industrial areas. The dockside cranes of the container terminal dominate the skyline and are visible over long distances and as far away as The Naze. Parkeston Quay is the focal point for commerce and shipping along the Stour. The area also houses Harwich International Port, a large oil refinery, electricity generating station and retail/industrial parks. The area is serviced by extensive transport infrastructure including the main A120(T) to Harwich and the Great Eastern Railway. Harwich Parkeston Quay Station is a major landmark and one of the older buildings in the area, dating to 1883.

EVALUATION

Character: The *Parkeston Drained Marshes* was open estuarine marsh before it was reclaimed in the late 19th century. The land reclamation dramatically altered the character of the area and today it is dominated by industry and port related buildings. Overall character is considered to be **weak**.

Condition: The *Parkeston Drained Marshes* is a working landscape. The underlying marshland character has been eliminated by hardstanding or neglected and left as 'wasteland' between industrial areas. As a result, landscape condition can be described as **poor**.

Change

- High density of development has resulted in loss of natural habitats.
- Buildings are being constructed, in a universal design, from mass produced materials that bear no relation to the locality.
- The river has been diverted through a highly engineered course and is now not visible in the landscape.
- New planting associated with new buildings is not typical of the marshland landscape.

Sensitivity

This landscape character has a low sensitivity to change, as a result of its artificial environment and poor landscape quality. There are significant opportunities to recreate new landscapes and initiate positive landscape change, particularly in association with any proposals for new development.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

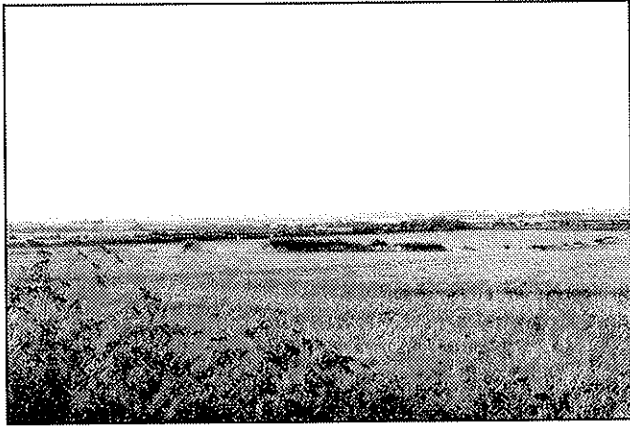
Landscape Management Strategy

Parkeston Drained Marshes is an area of reclaimed land which shows little sign of its former marshland character. The overall landscape strategy should be to **create** new habitats and landscapes that are appropriate to a coastal marsh landscape and to enhance existing features such as Ramsey Creek. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Seek opportunities for creation and reinstatement of habitats to compensate for any loss of habitat through built development.
- Create new landscapes associated with new buildings that are reminiscent of a marshland landscape. Reed filled ditches, wetland planting, low scrub are more suitable than ornamental species or tall screening elements.
- Consider opportunities for creating access to the waterfront by reinstating public footpaths.
- Reinstatement of the landscape setting to Ramsey Creek through planting and creation of a wildlife corridor between the Stour Estuary and Ramsey Creek Floodplain. Consider provision of public access to the river.

- Use references to local designs and materials when constructing new buildings. Use of wood would be appropriate in this environment.
- Conserve views to Parkeston Station as a landmark.

3. COASTAL SLOPES



3A Hamford Coastal Slopes



3B Brightlingsea Coastal Slopes



3C St Osyth Coastal Slopes



3D Holland Coastal Slopes

3 COASTAL SLOPES

Introduction

The *Coastal Slopes* landscape type forms the transition between the low lying *Drained Coastal Marsh* and the higher ground of the *Coastal Ridges and Peninsulas* or *Clay Plateaux*. There are often magnificent views from the coastal slopes over the adjacent lowlands and seascape.

Physical Influences

The lower boundary of the coastal slopes marks the end of the flat marshland where the land begins to rise towards the 5m contour. The crest line of the slope forms the upper boundary at between 20 and 25m AOD, often forming a prominent skyline. The coastal slopes have been eroded from London Clay and have characteristic smooth, concave slopes, which descend to the flat marshes below. They frequently contain pockets of sands and gravels.

The virulent strain of Dutch Elm Disease that hit Tendring in the 1960s caused a major change in the local landscape character - many of the hedgerows on the slopes are now littered with skeletons of dead elm trees.

There is one designation relating to the physical landscape:

Site Name	Character Area	Significance	Designation	Description
St Osyth Pits	3C	National	SSSI	Comprises an important sequence of Pleistocene deposits related to the diversion of the Thames during the Ice Age.

Human Influences

The Domesday book gives a picture of the Tendring landscape in 1086. Domesday records describe inland manors on the coastal slopes exploiting the resources of the adjacent marshlands. The land continues to be exploited for agriculture and exhibits a regular pattern of enclosure which indicates late enclosure and enhances the smooth concave topography of the slopes.

The landscape type contains the following Scheduled Ancient Monuments:

Site Name/ SM Number	Character Area	Significance	Designation	Description
29434	3A	National	SAM	Martello tower K and associated battery SW of Walton Mere
29437	3A	National	SAM	Dovercourt lighthouses and causeway

Ecological Designations

Site Name	Character Area	Significance	Designation	Description
Beaumont Bridge Special Roadside Verge	3A	Regional	SINC	Grassland habitat containing the nationally rare species of Hog's Fennel (<i>Peucedanum officinale</i>).
Pedlar's Wood	3A	Regional	LNR	Mainly ancient woodland undergoing management to restore traditional woodland flora and fauna habitats.
Thicks Wood	3B	Regional	SINC	A coppice with standards mixed woodland.
Wick's Wood	3B	Regional	SINC	An elm (<i>Ulmus spp</i>) dominated ancient woodland.
Alresford Lodge Pits	3E	Regional	SINC	A freshwater aquatic site of secluded disused gravel pits containing many birds, mammals and insects.

Settlement Form and Pattern

The landscape is typically rural with scattered farms dispersed along the slopes. The inland manors were often located on the shallow coastal slopes, close to the marshes, and are still seen today as large farms frequently located just above the 5m mark at the end of dead-end tracks.

Landscape Character Areas

- 3A Hamford Coastal Slopes
- 3B Brightlingsea Coastal Slopes
- 3C St Osyth Coastal Slopes
- 3D Holland Coastal Slopes

3A HAMFORD COASTAL SLOPES

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Gently sloping land encircling, and forming the setting of, the open marshes of Hamford Water.
- Low, scrubby and intermittent hedgerows divide regimented fields typical of late enclosure.
- Scattered farmsteads and manorial halls form a dispersed settlement pattern.
- Kirby-le-Soken is an historic settlement, located along the southern edge of Hamford Water.
- Outskirts of Harwich and Frinton continue to expand onto the coastal slopes overlooking Hamford Water.
- Panoramic views over Hamford Water towards Harwich.

DESCRIPTION

The *Hamford Coastal Slopes* is the gently sloping land encircling, and forming the setting of, the open marshes of Hamford Water. The boundary of the area is defined by the crest of the slope and is a visual boundary. Small streams flow between fields to drain into Hamford Water and in flatter areas standing water has accumulated forming ponds. The underlying geology of London Clay gives rise to heavy, waterlogged soils which have been improved and intensively cultivated.

The landscape is dominated by large scale, regimented fields that indicate late enclosure and enhance the smooth-sweeping landform and perspective of the slopes that encircle Hamford Water. The fields are predominantly arable and divided by low, scrubby and intermittent hedgerows. However, there are diverse roadside verges, for example at Beaumont Bridge. Tree cover is restricted to shelter belts and small mixed copses close to farms - belts of poplar are distinctive features.

The pattern of dispersed farms along the coastal slopes is distinctive. These farms are often on the sites of old manor halls dating to the time when grazing rights were owned by the inland manors abutting the marshlands. Examples of such halls are Old Moze Hall, New Moze Hall, Landemere Hall, Birch Hall and Kirby Hall. Kirby-le-Soken is an historic settlement, located along the southern edge of Hamford Water. During the Saxon period three villages - Kirby, Thorpe and Walton - were granted special privileges of tenure and given the suffix 'Le Soken'. Kirby was the most important of these and contains some important buildings including Kirby Hall and its church whose tower is a landmark. Quay Lane leads down to Kirby Quay on Walton Backwater from where grain and coal would have been transported by water before the railway was brought to Tendring. The outskirts of Harwich and Frinton continue to expand onto the coastal slopes overlooking Hamford Water. Roads, e.g. Landemere Road, tend to follow the contours of the coastal slopes providing magnificent views over Hamford Water to Harwich and Felixstowe, both by day and night.

EVALUATION

Character: The *Hamford Coastal Slopes* exhibits characteristics typical of the *Coastal Slopes* landscape type. This includes the smooth concave landform, rural agricultural landscape with manor halls and open panoramic view across Hamford Water. The gently shelving slopes provide a cohesive visual unit that form an important setting to the Hamford Water marshes (1D and 2D). Overall character is considered to be **strong**.

Condition: The *Hamford Coastal Slopes* is an intensively cultivated landscape. Despite the severe loss of elms in the 1960s and intensification of agriculture, landscape condition can generally be described as **good**.

Change

- Any changes in the landscape on the coastal slopes have the potential to be highly visible from Hamford Water.
- Expansion of residential built development onto the highly visible coastal slopes on the outskirts of Harwich and Frinton.
- Loss of elms in the past reducing sense of intimacy and enclosure.
- Pressure for further intensification of agricultural land including field expansion, hedgerow loss and the impact of agricultural run-off into the adjacent marshes.
- Habitat loss through built development.

Sensitivity

This landscape character area is highly sensitive to any change as a result of its visibility and its importance as a setting for Hamford Water. It is particularly sensitive to built development that would affect the open views and sense of remoteness. An area of particular sensitivity is the crest of the slope which forms the skyline from Hamford Water.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

The *Hamford Coastal Slopes* forms a rural setting for Hamford Water. The overall landscape strategy for this sensitive rural landscape should be to **conserve** the existing rural character and panoramic views over Hamford Water. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Conserve the rural, tranquil character as a setting for Hamford Water by resisting further encroachment of built development into the setting of Hamford Water, including on the skyline at the crest of slopes.
- Conserve the remaining hedgerows and copses and encourage management for wildlife. Seek opportunities for enhancement of the hedgerow network and replanting of hedgerow trees.
- Conserve the rural character by resisting introduction of urbanising elements such as lit approach roads or large areas of tarmac.
- Conserve the panoramic views across Hamford Water.
- Restrict use of pesticides and herbicides in areas that would result in polluting run-off into the adjacent marshes.
- Ensure expansion of built development does not intrude onto the highly sensitive crests of slopes where it would be conspicuous on the skyline or restrict important views.

3B BRIGHTLINGSEA COASTAL SLOPES

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Coastal slopes surrounding Brightlingsea Island.
- Dominated by a patchwork of large and small fields interspersed by deciduous copses and woodlands.
- Scattered farms, some on the sites of old manor halls accessed via dead-end lanes.
- Medieval settlement of Brightlingsea with historic links to the coast.
- Magnificent views over the Colne Estuary, Brightlingsea Creek, Flag Creek and Alresford Creek.
- Brightlingsea Church is a major historic landmark.

DESCRIPTION

The *Brightlingsea Coastal Slopes* is defined by the gently sloping land encircling *Brightlingsea Peninsula (4C)*. The lower boundary is defined by the lower break in slope and borders the *Brightlingsea Drained Marshes (2A)*. Small streams flow into the surrounding marshlands and ultimately into the River Colne. The underlying geology of London Clay gives rise to heavy, waterlogged soils which have been improved and cultivated.

The landscape is dominated by pasture, divided into fields which show great diversity in their size. The slopes are also characterised by deciduous copses and mixed plantations, some associated with the designed landscape of Brightlingsea Hall, which provide a wooded backdrop to the marshes. Hedgerows are low-lying, scrubby and intermittent - typical of the exposed coastal slopes.

The pattern of dispersed farms along the coastal slopes is distinctive. Some of these farms are often on the sites of old manor halls dating to the time when grazing rights were owned by the inland manors abutting the marshlands. Examples of such halls are Brightlingsea Hall and Lower Wapping Hall. Brightlingsea Hall and its 13th century church are in a commanding position at the entrance to the Brightlingsea Peninsula. The church tower is a major landmark whose tower is visible some 17 miles out to sea.

Brightlingsea is an historic settlement with its core located the other side of the peninsula from Brightlingsea Hall and church. It is a medieval town with a High Street flanked by ancient greens and lanes running from the High Street down the coastal slopes to the water's edge. These links with the water's edge were important for the trade of oysters, fish, salt, bricks and copperas before the advent of the railway. Most of the greens have been incorporated into the main fabric of Brightlingsea, although East End Green remains predominantly rural in character. The outskirts of Brightlingsea continue to expand into the landscape of the coastal slopes overlooking the Colne Estuary, as well as into the adjacent landscape of the *Brightlingsea Peninsula (4C)*. There are magnificent views over the Colne Estuary, Brightlingsea Creek, Flag Creek and Alresford Creek.

EVALUATION

Character: The *Brightlingsea Coastal Slopes* exhibits characteristics typical of the *Coastal Slopes* landscape type including the gently sloping landform, rural agricultural landscape with manor halls and panoramic views. The gently shelving slopes provide a cohesive visual unit that form an important setting to the Colne Estuary and tributaries (IA, IB, 2A). Overall character is considered to be **strong**.

Condition: The *Brightlingsea Coastal Slopes* is a rural mixed farmland landscape with some remnants of ancient woodland. Despite the severe loss of elms in the 1960s and intensification of agriculture landscape condition can be described as **good**.

Change

- Pressure for intensification of agricultural land including field expansion and hedgerow/tree loss.
- Loss of elms in the past reducing sense of intimacy and enclosure.
- Expansion of residential built development on the edges of Brightlingsea.
- Habitat loss through built development.
- Loss of historic features such as greens, lanes and buildings through new residential development and infill, road upgrades and development of visitor facilities.
- Agricultural run-off into the adjacent coastal marshes.

Sensitivity

This landscape character area is highly sensitive to change as a result of its visibility and its importance as a setting for the Colne Estuary and its tributaries. It is especially sensitive to built development that would affect the open views and sense of tranquillity. An area of particular sensitivity is the crest of the slope which forms the skyline as seen from the Colne Estuary.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

The *Brightlingsea Coastal Slopes* forms a rural setting for the Brightlingsea Peninsula. The overall landscape strategy for this sensitive rural landscape should be to **conserve** the

existing rural character, historic features (including ancient woodlands) and panoramic views over adjacent landscapes. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Conserve the hedgerows and woodlands that provide important cover for wildlife and a wooded backdrop to the Colne Estuary. Consider opportunities for restoration of the hedgerow network and replanting of hedgerow trees.
- Conserve the rural, tranquil character by resisting encroachment of built development into the setting of the quietest estuaries, particularly Alresford and Flag Creeks.
- Protect views to the tower of All Saints Church, which is an important landmark.
- Conserve the panoramic views across adjacent landscapes and consider providing more opportunities for views by creating viewpoints.
- Conserve the remnant ancient deciduous woodland.
- Conserve the rural character of the lanes by resisting road improvements, straightening or upgrades.
- Preserve historic links with the coast and conserve the setting of buildings along Brightlingsea seafront.
- Ensure expansion of built development does not intrude onto the highly sensitive crests of slopes where development would be conspicuous on the skyline or restrict important views.

3C ST OSYTH COASTAL SLOPES

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Narrow band of gently sloping land forming the setting to St Osyth and Brightlingsea Marshes.
- Dominated by large scale, regimented fields indicative of late enclosure, divided by intermittent hedges.
- Tree cover is restricted to shelter belts, small mixed farm copses and the designed landscape of St Osyth's Priory.
- Isolated farms accessed via minor lanes.
- Includes suburban development on the outskirts of Clacton and Point Clear.
- Extensive quarrying locally.
- Views over the adjacent marshes.

DESCRIPTION

The *Sty Osyth Coastal Slopes* is a narrow band of gently sloping land wrapping around the *St Osyth Coastal Ridge (4D)* forming the transition to the flat landscape of the *Brightlingsea Drained Marshes (2A)* and the *St Osyth Drained Marshes (2B)*. Although the topography of this character area is relatively shallow, it does exhibit all the characteristics typical of the *Coastal Slopes* landscape type and provides an important setting to the lower lying marshes.

The landscape is dominated by large scale, regular fields that are indicative of late enclosure. The underlying geology of London Clay gives rise to heavy, waterlogged soils which have been improved and cultivated, although there are also the geologically interesting gravel deposits of the old Thames terraces. These are a sought after resource and are extracted via large surface pits in the St Osyth area. The St Osyth Pit is a geological SSSI, comprising an important sequence of Pleistocene deposits relating to the diversion of the Thames. Arable fields dominate the slopes, divided by low, scrubby and intermittent hedgerows. Tree cover is restricted to shelter belts and small mixed copses close to farms.

The pattern of dispersed farms along the coastal slopes is distinctive. They typically occur at the end of dead-end tracks, although many of the tracks in this landscape character area continue into the adjacent drained marshes of the *St Osyth Drained Marshes* to access holiday parks and beaches. Residential areas of Jaywick and Clacton have expanded onto the coastal slopes where they disguise the underlying landscape pattern. An airfield and its associated landscaping dominates the area between these two settlements. This eastern part of the coastal slopes is therefore more suburban in character.

EVALUATION

Character: The *St Osyth Coastal Slopes* exhibits characteristics typical of the *Coastal Slopes* landscape type including the gently sloping landform, rural agricultural landscape and coastal

views. The gently shelving slopes provide a cohesive visual unit that form an important setting to the Drained Marshes (2A, 2B). Overall character is considered to be **strong**.

Condition: The *St Osyth Coastal Slopes* is a rural mixed farmland landscape with some woodland remnants. Suburbanisation on the outskirts of Clacton and Point Clear and hedgerow/tree loss due agricultural intensification has resulted in a **declining** landscape condition.

Change

- Intensification of agricultural land including field expansion and hedgerow/tree loss.
- Expansion of built development on the edges of Clacton, Jaywick and Point Clear leading to habitat loss and gradual suburbanisation.
- Extraction of river terrace gravels and formation of open water bodies.
- Loss of elms in the past reducing sense of intimacy and enclosure.
- Continued decrease in hedgerows and tree cover leading to visibility of farm storage and other intrusive land uses on the edges of farms.
- Impact of agricultural run-off into the adjacent coastal marshes.

Sensitivity

This landscape character area is highly sensitive to any change as a result of its visibility and its function as a setting to the adjacent marshes and creeks. It is particularly sensitive to built development that would affect the open views and sense of tranquillity. The most sensitive parts of the landscape are the 'skyline' at the crest of the slope, the remaining deciduous woodland and hedgerows and the wetlands around St Osyth Park.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

The *St Osyth Coastal Slopes* forms a rural setting for the *Brightlingsea* and *St Osyth Drained Marshes*. The overall landscape strategy should be to **conserve** the existing rural character, hedgerows and panoramic views over the adjacent marshes and to **restore** its habitat diversity. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Conserve the rural, undeveloped setting to the *Brightlingsea* and *St Osyth Drained Marshes*.
- Seek to restore the wooded character of the coastal slopes to provide shelter for wildlife and to provide a contrast to the adjacent open marshes.
- Restore hedgerows that have been affected by the loss of elms and lack of management.
- Seek opportunities for habitat enhancement to compensate for any loss of habitat through built development and to screen unsightly storage yards.
- Conserve the strategic gap between Clacton and Jaywick to maintain the identity of these two settlements.
- Ensure expansion of built development does not intrude onto the highly sensitive crests of slopes where development would be conspicuous on the skyline or restrict important views.
- Conserve the rural character of the rural lanes by avoiding road improvements, such as introduction of kerbs and lights or straightening.
- Restore gravel pits to benefit nature conservation and recreation.
- Conserve views across adjacent open marshes.

3D HOLLAND COASTAL SLOPES

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Coastal slopes between Clacton and Frinton descend, gradually and uniformly, to the flat marshes of the coastal edge.
- Large scale, regimented fields of late enclosure enhance the smooth descending landform.
- Arable fields divided by low, scrubby and intermittent hedgerows.
- Belts of poplar, but little woodland.
- The low density suburbs of Frinton expand onto the slopes.
- Views over Holland Haven.

DESCRIPTION

The *Holland Coastal Slopes* forms the rural strategic gap between the settlements of Clacton and Frinton. It forms the setting to *Holland Haven (2C)* and is dominated by large scale, regular fields that indicate late enclosure and enhance the smooth-sweeping landform and perspective of the slopes. The fields are predominantly arable and divided by low, scrubby and intermittent hedgerows. Tree cover is restricted to isolated hedgerow trees and shelter belts which stand out as features. Small streams flow between fields to drain into the Holland Haven. The underlying geology of London Clay gives rise to heavy, waterlogged soils which have been improved and intensively cultivated.

This character area is unusual in that there are no farmsteads - the farm buildings are located on the ridge top. One lane passes through the area, linking Great Holland at the top of the ridge to Clacton. It follows the field pattern, side-stepping down the slope. The low density suburbs of Frinton expand onto the slopes at its eastern end, but otherwise the landscape is highly rural and intensively cultivated.

EVALUATION

Character: The *Holland Coastal Slopes* exhibits characteristics typical of the *Coastal Slopes* landscape type. This includes the smooth descending landform, rural agricultural landscape and panoramic views. The gently shelving slopes provide a cohesive visual unit that form an important setting to *Holland Haven (3C)*. Overall character is considered to be **strong**.

Condition: The *Holland Coastal Slopes* is an intensively cultivated landscape. Hedgerow/tree loss due Dutch Elm disease and loss of historic features such as hedgerows and copses as a result of intensive agricultural practices has resulted in a **declining** landscape condition.

Change

- Loss of elms in the past reducing sense of intimacy and enclosure.

- Further loss of hedgerows and trees as field boundaries become redundant with the increase in arable crop production.
- Expansion of built development on the edges of Frinton.
- Agricultural run-off into the adjacent coastal marshes.

Sensitivity

This landscape character area is highly sensitive to any change as a result of its high visibility. It is particularly sensitive to built development that would encroach on the strategic gap between Clacton and Frinton and erode its function as a setting for the coastal marshes of *Holland Haven* (2C).

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

The *Holland Coastal Slopes* forms a rural setting for *Holland Haven* and an important strategic gap between Clacton and Frinton. The overall landscape strategy for this sensitive rural landscape should be to **conserve** the existing rural character and panoramic views over *Holland Haven* and **restore** the habitat and landscape diversity which has been eroded through intensive management practices. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Conserve the undeveloped rural character of the landscape.
- Conserve hedgerows as important wildlife habitats and landscape features and promote management of hedgerows as coppice, with oak standards left to form future timber trees.
- Restore habitat and landscape diversity of the agricultural landscape through less intensive management practices and promoting diversity of field margins.
- Seek to restore the wooded character of coastal slopes in contrast to the open marshes below by replanting hedgerows, copses and shelter belts whilst maintaining strategic views to the coast.
- Conserve the rural, tranquil character by resisting encroachment of built development from the edges of Frinton or Clacton, maintaining a strategic gap.

- Ensure expansion of built development does not intrude onto the highly sensitive crests of slopes where development would be conspicuous on the skyline or restrict important views.
- Conserve the panoramic views across Holland Haven and consider opportunities for providing accessible viewpoints.

4. COASTAL RIDGES AND PENINSULAS



4A The Oakley Ridge



4B The Naze Peninsula



4C Brightlingsea Peninsula



4D St Osyth Coastal Ridge

4 COASTAL RIDGES AND PENINSULAS

Introduction

The *Coastal Ridges and Peninsulas* landscape type is defined by prominent ridges in coastal locations. There are often magnificent views from the ridge top in both directions and at the top of the ridge there is a real sense of elevation. Landmark features on top of these ridges are visible for miles around.

Physical Influences

The coastal ridges and peninsulas have a distinctive and prominent landform, typically reaching a height of approximately 25m AOD. They are capped by sands and gravels - some of these are river terrace gravels and others were deposited by glacial meltwaters, but all influence the landform and vegetation. Extraction of the mineral resources has resulted in a number of active and disused sand and gravel workings. The flat-topped ridges have resisted erosion and stand out as prominent features in the landscape. They form cliffs where they have been subject to the erosive forces of the sea, for example at Clacton and The Naze. The cliffs and gravel deposits frequently reveal an interesting geological structure. Notable sites include:

Site Name	Character Area	Significance	Designation	Description
Little Oakley Channel Deposit	4A	National	SSSI	Reserve of Peistocene interglacial channel-filled sediments unique in Britain.
Harwich Foreshore	4A	National	SSSI	Yields fossil flora attributable to the lowest division of the Eocene London Clay.
The Naze	4B	National	SSSI	Excellent cliff exposures of the earliest sub-division of the Pleistocene Red Crag and many fossils.
Clacton Cliffs and Foreshore	4D	National	SSSI	Foreshore and cliff exposures revealing fossils.
Holland-on-Sea Cliff	4D	National	SSSI	Important stratigraphic site closely related to the diversion of the Thames.

Human Influences

Farming communities emerged after the hunter-gatherers, burning the wildwood to clear the better drained areas for farming. The improved drainage in these coastal ridge areas compared to the adjacent clays means they support good agricultural land. A Neolithic ring-ditch monument has been identified on the Brightlingsea peninsula. Woodland clearance continued into the Iron Age with the emergence of a mixed pastoral and tilled landscape. Roman villa remains have been found on these coastal peninsulas, for example around Brightlingsea, St Osyth and on the edge of Harwich. These Roman villas were agriculturally-based establishments with the principal residence constructed partly in masonry. They

formed the basis of the Saxon estates, and subsequently the Medieval farmsteads and today's villages. Many of these settlements were located on ridge tops where they commanded panoramic views of the surrounding land.

The landscape type includes a number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments:

Site Name/ SM Number	Character Area	Significance	Designation	Description
29438 and 29439	4A	National	SAM	Harwich low lighthouse and Harwich high lighthouse
29440	4A	National	SAM	The Harwich Treadmill Crane
29443	4A	National	SAM	Harwich redoubt
29446	4A	National	SAM	Beacon Hill Fort - a late 19th and 20th century coastal artillery fortification
32431	4A	National	SAM	Heavy anti-aircraft gunsite, 350m NE of Little Oakley Hall
29433	4D	National	SAM	Martello tower F, Marine Parade West, Clacton-on-Sea
32442	4D	National	SAM	Remains of the medieval parish church and cemetery, 70m NE of the junction of Hall Close and Frinton Road

Ecological Designations

Site Name	Character Area	Significance	Designation	Description
Bobbit's Hole	4A	Regional	SINC, LNR	A small local nature reserve containing a stream bed running northwards into a small lake.
The Naze	4B	Regional	SINC	Grasslands forming a large area of public open space and containing a number of notable species.
Robinson Road Lakes	4C	Regional	SINC	A freshwater aquatic site of flooded ex-gravel pits, associated marginal vegetation, grassland and scrub. Important to large numbers of migratory and resident bird species.
Bush Paddock Special Roadside Verges	4D	Regional	SINC	Grassland verges containing a population of wild clary (<i>Salvia verbenaca</i>).

Clacton North Cliff	4D	Regional	SINC	An area of seafront scrub containing nationally notable maritime species.
Reed Pond	4D	Regional	SINC	A large freshwater pond found at Mill Dam Lake's eastern end. Of particular importance to roosting birds.

Settlement Form and Pattern

The coastal ridges and peninsulas typically support villages and towns. This is partly due to their 'plateau' landform that enables them to be built upon. Most of these towns and villages are Medieval in origin and have seen subsequent expansion into large towns. The coastal ridges and peninsulas are typically densely settled by towns with expanding suburbs which have subsumed smaller villages close by.

Landscape Character Areas

- 4A The Oakley Ridge
- 4B The Naze Peninsula
- 4C Brightlingsea Peninsula
- 4D St Osyth Coastal Ridge

4A OAKLEY COASTAL RIDGE

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Prominent gravel-topped ridge between the Stour Estuary and Hamford Water with magnificent views in both directions.
- Extends north-eastwards, forming a promontory with the medieval seafaring settlement of Harwich at its tip.
- High grade agricultural landscape dominated by large scale arable fields.
- Hedgerows are intermittent and few trees are present.
- Historic ridge-top settlement linked by the B1414 that runs along the top of the ridge.
- Great Oakley is a distinct nucleated village around a medieval market square.
- Manorial halls of Great and Little Oakley are features of the rural landscape.
- Historic rural lanes.

DESCRIPTION

The *Oakley Coastal Ridge* is a distinct ridge between the Stour Estuary and Hamford Water. It extends north-eastwards, forming a promontory with the town of Harwich at its tip. It is a steep-sided ridge of London Clay, capped by post-glacial sands and gravels which have given rise to a flat-topped ridge. On top of the ridge there is a great sense of elevation and magnificent views, across Hamford Water in one direction and across the Stour Estuary in the other. Conversely, the skyline of the ridge is visible from Hamford Water and from the Stour Estuary.

The well drained ridge is dominated by a mixture of open fields and built development. The agricultural landscape is dominated by large scale arable fields divided by intermittent hedgerows and agricultural land quality is high. There is little vegetation cover, allowing long views across the open landscape. The settlements of Harwich, Dovercourt and Upper Dovercourt form part of Harwich and its suburbs. However, the underlying historic landscape punctuates the urban fabric, for example at Allfields (Saxon fields survive) and Beacon Hill (site of an historic fort). The B1414 runs along the top of the ridge connecting adjacent settlements.

Harwich, a medieval seafaring township was the base for expeditions by Hawkins, Frobisher and Drake in 1561. Its medieval town and quays have been preserved. It also contains two lighthouses and the Redoubt, a circular Napoleonic Martello tower, which is now a military museum. The coming of the railway in the mid 19th century brought with it further development. At that time there was open country between the lighthouse at Harwich and the Green at Dovercourt, and land at Lower Dovercourt was bought to develop as a 'new town'. Expansion has since continued to include Upper Dovercourt and Oakley Cross.

The village of Great Oakley (nucleated village around a medieval market square) has retained its individual identity as a rural village. The church tower is a landmark on top of

the ridge. It contains vernacular buildings including brick built cottages with steeply pitched clay tiled roofs, cottages with clapboarding and some thatch. Around this rural village are some older field patterns and historic lanes, such as Pesthouse Lane. The manorial halls of Great and Little Oakley, which are medieval in origin, are now set apart from the village centres and are features of the rural landscape of the ridge.

EVALUATION

Character: The *Oakley Coastal Ridge* exhibits characteristics typical of the *Coastal Ridges and Peninsulas* landscape type. This includes the prominent ridge landform, historic ridge-top settlements and panoramic views. Despite the encroachment of built development, overall character is considered to be **strong**.

Condition: The *Oakley Coastal Ridge* has been greatly influenced by the extent of built development. Urban fringe development, including garden centres, playing fields and factories, has begun to erode the character of the rural areas of the ridge. Agricultural intensification has resulted in the progressive loss of historic field patterns, hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Landscape condition is in **decline**.

Change

- Pressure for further built development along the B1414 and merging of individual villages.
- Encroachment of built development on the setting of historic landscapes and features.
- Obstruction of views by built development.
- Gradual loss of hedgerows and trees as field boundaries become redundant with the dominance of arable crop production.
- Road upgrades and widening creating a more urban character.

Sensitivity

The *Oakley Coastal Ridge* has a prominent landform with a skyline which is visually sensitive. The most sensitive parts of the landscape are the crest of the slopes to the ridge which are visible as the skyline from Hamford Water and the Stour Estuary. The flatter ridgetop, which is already densely settled is less sensitive, albeit large scale or tall buildings in this location would have the potential to be highly intrusive.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

The *Oakley Coastal Ridge* forms a prominent ridge between Hamford Water and the Stour Estuary. The overall landscape strategy for this sensitive ridge should be to **conserve** the pattern of distinct rural villages and panoramic views over (and setting for) Hamford Water. There are opportunities to **enhance** landscape diversity where it has been eroded through intensive management practices. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Maintain strategic gaps between adjacent villages of Little Oakley and Great Oakley to conserve their individual character.
- Conserve the rural setting of the manorial halls which are historic features of this landscape.
- Conserve an uncluttered skyline and ensure that new built development does not encroach onto the crest of the adjacent *Hamford Coastal Slopes*. Built development should be sited on the plateau top where it is not visible from surrounding sensitive areas.
- Preserve clear views from the ridge across Hamford Water and the Stour Estuary and consider providing more opportunities for views.
- Enhance hedgerows as important wildlife habitats and landscape features and promote management of hedgerows as coppice, with oak standards left to form future timber trees.
- Conserve the historic rural lanes and avoid road improvements that would erode their rural character, rich roadside verges and associated vegetation.
- Protect historic landscapes, for example the Saxon field patterns at Allfields and historic fort site at Beacon Hill.

4B THE NAZE

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Distinct gravel-topped promontory sheltering Hamford Water from the North Sea.
- Rare Red Crag formation is exposed in cliffs - a geological SSSI.
- Exposed to the North Sea where wave action and slippage is causing the Naze to erode at a rapid rate.
- Landscape of rough grassland and scrub forming public open space.
- Naze Tower is a grade II listed building and a prominent landmark of the Naze.
- Views across Hamford Water to Harwich.

DESCRIPTION

The Naze is a distinct peninsula which was historically separated from the mainland by the 'Walton Gap', an area of open marshland. This gap has now been reclaimed and a road built to join the Naze to the mainland. The Naze is of great geological interest as it exhibits the most spectacular exposure of Red Crag in Essex. This is recognised by its designation as a geological SSSI. The red shelly sand can be seen resting on the blue-grey London Clay at the Naze cliffs. This combination of geology causes slippage of the upper parts of the cliff over the London clay layer, lubricated by surface and ground water. This slippage, along with the wave action at the base of the cliffs is causing the Naze to erode at an alarming rate.

The Naze is an exposed, windswept plateau with dramatic views over Hamford Water and out to sea. It is a landscape rich in wildlife and history. The plateau is capped by a veneer of glacial gravel and sand which give rise to acidic soils that support coastal grassland and heath. This is an area of public open space consisting of rough grassland and scrub including gorse, bramble, elder, hawthorn and hazel.

The Naze is characterised by an absence of settlement. Walton Hall is a farmstead located on top of the Naze with access to the Walton Hall Marshes and views out across Hamford Water. The Naze Tower was built as a navigational aid in 1720. This grade II listed building is a prominent landmark of the Naze and is visible for many miles around. However, more recent development has expanded onto the Naze from the edges of Walton.

EVALUATION

Character: *The Naze* exhibits characteristics typical of the *Coastal Ridges and Peninsulas* landscape type. This includes the prominent ridge landform, heathy vegetation and panoramic coastal views. Overall character is considered to be **strong**.

Condition: The remaining open grassland and scrub is managed as public open space and as a result it retains its open coastal character, although some areas are intensively mown. Landscape condition is in decline as a result of the encroachment of built development into the remote landscape. The Naze is also vulnerable to erosion as a result of sea level rise. Landscape condition is in **decline**.

Sensitivity

This landscape character area is highly sensitive to change as a result of its high visibility and its importance as a setting for Hamford Water. It is particularly sensitive to built development that would erode the rural coastal character of this headland and encroach on the setting of Hamford Water. The most sensitive parts of the landscape are the crest of the slopes to the ridge, the rare geological exposures in the cliffs, the coastal heath vegetation and rich wildlife habitats.

Change

- Intensive grassland management of coastal heath habitats.
- Pressure for further built development along the approach road from Walton.
- Continued erosion and slippage of the Naze cliffs which may lead to the loss of the Naze Tower, an important landmark and grade II listed building.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

The Naze forms a promontory between Hamford Water and the open sea, sheltering Hamford Water from the erosive forces of the North Sea. The overall landscape strategy should be to **conserve** the remote character of the coastal heath, the Red Crag formation and the Naze Tower and to **restore** the habitat diversity which has been eroded through intensive management practices. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Conserve the remote, natural character of the peninsula by resisting further built development and promoting appropriate low key use of the landscape through informal recreation.
- Restore habitat diversity of the coastal grassland by promoting sympathetic management practices, for example grazing to the coastal grasslands.
- Conserve the clear views from the Naze across Hamford Water and out to sea by resisting ribbon development along the approach road from Walton.
- Conserve the Red Crag formations in the cliffs at the Naze as an important geological site.

- Conserve the Naze Tower as a prominent and historic landmark of the Naze and protect its setting from encroachment by built development..

4C BRIGHTLINGSEA PENINSULA

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Distinct flat-topped 'island' separated from the mainland by the *Brightlingsea Drained Marshes*.
- Steep-sided ridge of London Clay, capped by glacial gravel and sand.
- Patchwork of open fields, copses, mixed plantations and shelter belts.
- Extensive quarrying of river terrace gravels locally - open water bodies, provide important wetland habitats.
- Character of the ridge is greatly influenced by the suburbs of Brightlingsea.
- Sense of elevation and magnificent views, across the Colne Estuary, towards Mersea Island.

DESCRIPTION

The *Brightlingsea Peninsula* is a distinct flat-topped ridge located between the marshlands of the Colne Estuary and Flag Creek. It is a steep-sided ridge of London Clay, capped by glacial gravel and sand which has given rise to a flat-topped plateau. On top of the ridge there is a great sense of elevation and magnificent views, across the Colne Estuary towards Mersea Island in one direction and across the Ardleigh Valleys in the other.

The well drained ridge is dominated by a mixture of open fields, copses, mixed plantations and shelter belts. The agricultural landscape is composed of large scale arable fields divided by intermittent hedgerows. The sand and gravel resource has been exploited and open water bodies, once the sites of sand and gravel pits, are features of the landscape today. These are important wetland habitats, for example the Robinson Road Lakes which support a large number of migratory birds.

The character of the ridge is greatly influenced by the presence of built development. The medieval core of Brightlingsea lies on the south-eastern *Brightlingsea Coastal Slopes*. However, the suburbs of Brightlingsea spread up onto the coastal ridge during a period of expansion in the 1960s, almost reaching the 13th century church and Brightlingsea Hall which lie on the north-western *Brightlingsea Coastal Slopes*. The presence of high density residential estates, schools, sports centres and playing fields give the landscape a suburban character.

EVALUATION

Character: The *Brightlingsea Peninsula* exhibits characteristics typical of the *Coastal Ridges and Peninsulas* landscape type. This includes the prominent ridge landform, sense of elevation and panoramic coastal views. However, the rural character has been greatly influenced by the extent of urban fringe development on the edges of Brightlingsea including residential estates, schools, sports centres, playing fields and mineral extraction. Overall character is considered to be **moderate**.

Condition: The gradual spread of built development onto the ridge from Brightlingsea, the large scale gravel extraction and agricultural intensification has resulted in the progressive loss of landscape features. Landscape condition is in **decline**.

Change

- Pressure for further built development on the outskirts of Brightlingsea.
- Loss of views as a result of built development.
- Pressure for continued intensification of agricultural land including loss of key landscape and ecological features.
- Extraction of river terrace gravels and creation of new wetland habitats.
- Loss of rural character with the gradual conversion of agricultural land to employment or residential land.

Sensitivity

This distinctive ridge top landscape is sensitive to change as a result of its remote 'island' character and visible ridgelines. It is moderately sensitive to built development, although shelter belts and woodland provide some opportunity for screening. The most sensitive parts of the landscape are the slope crests forming the skyline and boundary with the *Coastal Slopes (3B)*, the remnant species rich hedgerows, historic buildings and wetland habitats of the gravel pits.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

The *Brightlingsea Peninsula* forms a prominent ridge between the Colne Estuary and Flag Creek. The overall landscape strategy should be to **conserve** the rural wooded character, sense of elevation and views across the estuary and **enhance** the landscape and habitat diversity which has been eroded through built development and intensive management practices. There are specific opportunities for enhancement and creation of new wetland habitats in connection with the mineral working sites. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Conserve the remaining open, undeveloped character of the ridge top and the clear views from the ridge across the Colne Estuary and Flag Creek.

- Conserve the strategic gap between the outskirts of Brightlingsea and All Saints Church/Brightlingsesa Hall.
- Enhance the wooded character of the ridge by managing existing plantations and ensuring tree planting is used to integrate new built development into the landscape.
- Enhance hedgerows as important wildlife habitats and landscape features and promote management of hedgerows as coppice, with oak standards left to form future timber trees.
- Enhance habitat diversity through positive restoration and management of gravel pits as new wetland habitats.
- Ensure expansion of built development does not intrude onto the highly sensitive crests of slopes where development would be conspicuous on the skyline or restrict important views.

4D ST OSYTH COASTAL RIDGE

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Gently rounded ridge that stretches from Point Clear eastwards to the Clacton Cliffs.
- Open, windswept landscape with little vegetation cover and views to the coast.
- Rural landscape dominated by large scale arable fields divided by low, intermittent scrubby hedgerows.
- Settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, often on the sites of former manorial halls.
- Modern seaside settlements and holiday resorts of Point Clear, Jaywick and Clacton.
- Clacton Pier is a landmark.

DESCRIPTION

The *St Osyth Coastal Ridge* is a gently rounded ridge that stretches from Point Clear eastwards to the Clacton Cliffs. The Clacton Cliffs reveal a natural cross-section of the landform and illustrates the gently domed appearance of the ridge, rising to cliffs of 15m. The cliffs are of nature conservation interest for their maritime plants. They also reveal their underlying geology, London Clay capped by post glacial sand and gravels, which supports good to moderate agricultural land.

It is an open, windswept landscape with little vegetation cover. The agricultural landscape is dominated by large scale arable fields divided by low, intermittent scrubby hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees. Sackett's Grove is the only remaining area of woodland. Standing water bodies occur in the Osyth Creek Valley and as part of the designed landscapes of the manorial halls. Reed Pond is a large freshwater pond at the eastern end of Mill Dam which has rare reed bed habitat that is important for roosting birds.

Historic lanes form the communication pattern in this rural landscape - these follow the field boundaries, side-stepping around field corners. Some of these road verges are important for their species rich grasslands and rare plants, for example at Bush Paddock. The B1027, St Osyth Main Road, links the historic settlements of St Osyth and Great Clacton. The settlement pattern is characterised by scattered farmsteads, often on the sites of former manorial halls, for example St Clere's Hall, a rare surviving example of an aisled hall dating to the early 14th century. Many other former farms and manorial halls have been subsumed within the settlements of Point Clear, Jaywick and Clacton.

The seaside town of Clacton began as a small village a little further inland, Great Clacton. During the early and mid 19th century permission was granted to extend the railway to Clacton on Sea and by the mid 1880's Clacton had already become a busy seaside resort. The new Colchester by pass which opened in 1933 encouraged the growth of Clacton which expanded to merge with the rural settlements and villages surrounding Great Clacton, for example Magdalen Green, Rush Green, and Copings Green. Although the late 1940's and 1950's showed Clacton to be a very popular holiday resort there were the signs of decline in the 1960's, 70's and 80's. Clacton is now a fairly quiet seaside resort.

EVALUATION

Character: The *St Osyth Coastal Ridge* exhibits characteristics typical of the *Coastal Ridges and Peninsulas* landscape type including a subtle ridge landform, sense of elevation and coastal views. However, urban fringe development on the outskirts of Clacton, such as glass houses, nurseries, garden centres, playing fields and caravan sites have begun to erode the rural character of the ridge. Overall the strength of character is considered to be **moderate**.

Condition: The gradual spread of built development onto the ridge from Clacton and Point Clear, the severe loss of trees and hedgerows and agricultural intensification has resulted in the progressive loss of landscape features. Landscape condition is in **decline**.

Change

- Loss of woodland, grassland and reed bed habitats through intensive agricultural management.
- Continued erosive forces on the Clacton Cliffs from the North Sea.
- Progressive loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees due to lack of management and reduction in need for stock proof field boundaries.
- Pressure for further urban development.
- Pressure of traffic on rural lanes, particularly in summer months.

Sensitivity

The declining condition of the landscape and the low density of distinctive landscape, ecological or historic features would suggest that the landscape has a moderate sensitivity to change. However, the *St Osyth Coastal Ridge* is a subtle ridge with a skyline that is visually sensitive, and forms a backdrop to the coastal marshes.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

The *St Osyth Coastal Ridge* forms a subtle ridge between Point Clear and Clacton-on-Sea. The overall landscape strategy for this coastal landscape should be to **conserve** the rural character and **enhance** the landscape and habitat diversity which has been eroded through

built development and intensive management practices. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Conserve remaining woodland at Sackett's Grove and encourage planting of more coastal groves and woodlands. Species typical of the area include pedunculate oak, sweet chestnut, ash, wild cherry and birch.
- Enhance the character of existing woodlands through traditional management techniques such as coppicing - many of the woodlands in this area would have had a coppice with standards structure.
- Protect the Clacton Cliffs for their nature conservation interest and natural vegetation cover - conservation of the natural landcover of the coastal edge should be priority.
- Conserve the open skyline of the ridge as viewed from the rural coastal landscapes to the south - consider the visual impact of any proposal for built development on the adjacent landscapes such as the Coastal Slopes (3C) and the adjacent Open Marshes (1A, 1C, 2A, 2B).
- Enhance the hedgerow network by promoting the replanting of hedgerows and encouraging management for species diversity.
- Conserve the rural landscape setting and scattered settlement pattern of farms, manorial halls and rural settlements.
- Preserve rural gaps between adjacent settlements to maintain their individual sense of place by restricting ribbon development along linking roads, for example along St Osyth Main Road.
- Conserve the historic courses of rural lanes and protect and manage their verges for species diversity.

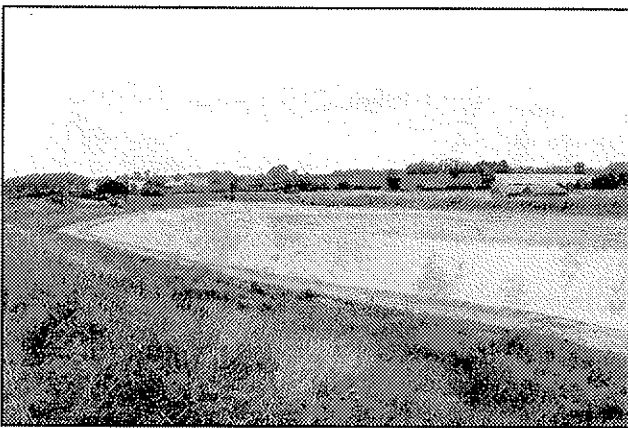
5. RIVER FLOODPLAINS



5A Holland Brook



5B Ramsey Creek



5C Cattawade Marshes

5 RIVER FLOODPLAINS

Introduction

The *River Floodplains* are defined by the flat, alluvial flood plains of the larger freshwater rivers within Tendring District.

Physical Influences

Relatively recent erosion and deposition processes of the Quaternary period formed the alluvial floodplains that define this landscape type. Eroded soil particles from higher up the river catchment are carried downstream and deposited as alluvium along valley floors. Valley widening has often occurred by lateral channel shifting bank erosion on the outside of channel bends and deposition of alluvium on the inside of channel bends. These alluvial floodplains tend to occur along large rivers where gradients are low. The regularly flooding environment of the floodplain naturally supports wetland habitats including marginal and riparian vegetation, reed beds, wet grassland and wetland woods.

Human Influences

The floodplains have largely remained free of built development because of the constant risk of flooding. They have traditionally been managed as summer grazed flood meadows. However, the construction of flood banks and introduction of drainage schemes has gradually allowed the land to be exploited, first for permanent pasture and then for arable crop production. More recently the floodplains have been encroached upon by infrastructure, sewage works and industrial buildings.

The landscape type includes one Scheduled Ancient Monument:

Site Name/ SM Number	Character Area	Significance	Designation	Description
175	5C	National	SAM	Ring ditches SW of Reed Island

Ecological Designations

Site Name	Character Area	Significance	Designation	Description
Central Holland Brook	5A	Regional	SINC	Damp stream-valley grasslands containing fields, ditches and hedges, form part of the Holland Brook/Picker's Ditch wildlife corridors.
Lower Holland Brook	5A	National	SSSI, SINC	A section of the Holland Brook stream-valley grassland which forms a transition between the maritime grasslands of Holland Haven and the inland grassland of the Upper Holland Brook.

Ramsey Creek Complex	5B	Regional	SINC	A mixed landscape of open water, marginal reedbed, grazed riverside grassland, scrub and a disused railway embankment with dense scrub cover.
Cattawade Marshes	5C	National	SINC, SSSI	Coastal grazing marshland, open water and fen habitats at the head of the Stour Estuary between freshwater and tidal channels of the River Stour.

Settlement Form and Pattern

The alluvial floodplains have traditionally been devoid of settlement because of the constant risk of flooding and laterally shifting river courses. However, recent development has resulted in the introduction of sewage works, industrial estates and other large scale buildings into the floodplain landscape.

Landscape Character Areas

- 5A Holland Brook
- 5B Ramsey Creek
- 5C Cattawade Marshes

5A HOLLAND BROOK FLOODPLAIN

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Lower reaches of Holland Brook and its alluvial floodplain in the south-east of Tendring.
- Pastoral landscape with cattle grazing in the shade of floodplain trees.
- Damp grasslands are of high nature conservation importance.
- Fields of unimproved and semi-improved pasture are divided by drainage ditches or hedgerows.
- Some important wet valley floor woodland.
- Course of the river is identifiable by the emergent marginal vegetation and bank-side willows.
- Historic river crossings marked by stone bridges.

DESCRIPTION

The *Holland Brook Floodplain* encompasses the lower reaches of Holland Brook and its adjacent alluvial floodplain in the south-east of Tendring, between Thorpe-le-Soken station and Holland Haven. It is a flat landscape underlain by London Clay and a mantle of floodplain alluvium which gives rise to waterlogged soils.

The floodplain is predominantly pastoral with cattle grazing in the shade of floodplain trees, typically oak and willow. The damp grass-rich fields are divided by drainage ditches or hedgerows reinforced by post and wire fences. These landscape elements create an important wildlife corridor along the Holland Brook valley. The damp streamside grasslands are the largest continuous area of this type of herb-rich grassland in the district and their importance is reflected in designation as a SSSI. The open floodplain landscape also contains small pockets of valley floor woodland, for example at Hunter's Bridge crossing. These wet woodlands typically consist of alder and willow and provide valuable shelter for wildlife. The course of the river itself is identifiable by the emergent marginal vegetation and willows along its banks.

There is no public access to the floodplain landscape, except for a public footpath crossing at Picker's Ditch. Three historic river crossings by minor roads are marked by stone bridges at Rice Bridge, Fan Bridge (formerly known as Jefferies Bridge) and Holland Bridge. There are views up and down stream at the crossing points. The area is characterised by the absence of settlement.

EVALUATION

Character: *The Holland Brook Floodplain* shows good survival of characteristic floodplain features including species-rich grasslands, floodplain trees and wet woodland. It remains a natural, rural landscape and has not been encroached upon by built development (unlike some other floodplains) and shows **strong** landscape character.

Condition: The SSSI status of the floodplain has ensured the conservation of the floodplain grasslands. It retains a natural, undeveloped character. River crossing points remain in their original form on narrow stone/brick bridges, forming a distinctive feature. Landscape condition is **good**.

Change

- Potential loss of species rich grassland due to intensive grassland management.
- Potential loss of wet woodland and other wetland vegetation as a result of drainage schemes for agriculture.
- Fertiliser and pesticide run-off from adjacent agricultural landscapes affecting water quality.
- Lack of public access to the river.

Sensitivity

The tranquil, undeveloped, rural character, ecological habitats and scenic quality of this distinctive floodplain landscape means it is highly sensitive to change, particularly built development or drainage schemes. The most sensitive features of the landscape are the herb-rich grasslands, riparian vegetation, floodplain trees, wet woodlands and historic stone/brick bridges. The sensitivity of the streamside grasslands is reflected by its designation as a SSSI.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

The *Holland Brook Floodplain* is a tranquil rural landscape with wetland habitats and pastoral land use creating a distinctive character. The overall landscape strategy for this landscape should be to **conserve** the open, undeveloped floodplain and unimproved grasslands. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Conserve the open, undeveloped nature of the floodplain.
- Conserve the wet species rich grasslands, maintaining grassland diversity through summer grazing.

- Consider extending the areas of wetland habitat such as reedbeds and grazing marsh through reducing drainage of less valuable agricultural land and allowing regular flooding of the landscape.
- Conserve floodplain trees, replanting trees in areas where natural regeneration is not occurring. Black poplar, once a distinctive feature of lowland river valleys, may be a suitable species for these floodplains.
- Conserve limited areas of scrub as landscape features and shelter for wildlife.
- Consider opportunities for creation of wet alder woods which would be beneficial for nature conservation as well as assisting with flood alleviation.
- Provision of riverside walks could enhance access to, and enjoyment of, the floodplain landscape.
- Conserve the historic stone/brick bridges which are features of the landscape.
- Controlling the use of pesticides and fertilisers in areas which run off into Holland Brook will help to maintain water quality and key wetland/riparian habitats.

5B RAMSEY CREEK FLOODPLAIN

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Flat alluvial floodplain containing the meandering course of Ramsey Creek.
- Small scale pastoral landscape of pastures and paddocks interspersed by floodplain trees and divided by low hedgerows.
- Lower section of the floodplain opens out into a wide, flat landscape dominated by large arable fields.
- The Delf Pond area has a diverse mosaic of open water, marginal reed beds, grazed species-rich grassland and scattered scrub.
- River is not a visible landscape feature.
- Industry and built development form a backdrop to views.
- Dismantled railway line crosses the floodplain on embankment.
- A 120(T) to Harwich follows the edge of the floodplain.

DESCRIPTION

The *Ramsey Creek Floodplain* is a flat alluvial floodplain that contains the meandering course of the lower reaches of Ramsey Creek, located in north-east Tendring. The creek flows into the reclaimed land of the *Parkeston Drained Marshes (2E)* where it follows a highly engineered course through an industrial landscape to the Stour Estuary. The *Ramsey Creek Floodplain* is a flat landscape underlain by London Clay and with a veneer of alluvium which gives rise to waterlogged soils.

The upper section of the floodplain is predominantly a small scale pastoral landscape of pastures and paddocks (and playing fields on the edge of Ramsey) interspersed by floodplain trees and divided by low hedgerows or post and wire fencing. These fields are drained by ditches which support wetland vegetation. Historically there was a mill pond east of Millpond Farm as marked on the Chapman and Andre map of 1777 but this has since been lost. The floodplain opens out into a wide, flat landscape that has been drained to create a landscape of large arable fields, divided by gappy hedgerows, and a golf course. There are few trees. The river runs an invisible course through this arable landscape.

The easterly section of the floodplain, around the railway embankment and Delf Pond, is the most diverse in terms of its ecology. The mosaic of open water, marginal reed beds, grazed species-rich grassland and scattered scrub has been recognised as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

The flat landscape creates a convenient route for transport - a dismantled railway line crosses the floodplain and the main A 120(T) to Harwich follows the edge of the floodplain. The railway embankments obstruct views across the floodplain and. There is little public access to the floodplain landscape or the river. The floodplain is affected by the industry and

built development of adjacent areas which forms a backdrop to views. The B1352 is a historic crossing point of the river at Ramsey.

EVALUATION

Character: *The Ramsey Creek Floodplain* shows some survival of characteristic floodplain features including the flat topography, open views and a small area of wetland habitats around Delf Pond. However, the floodplain has been extensively drained and intensively farmed for arable crops as well as subject to the encroachment of transport infrastructure and built development. The landscape character of the floodplain has therefore been somewhat eroded and strength of character can be described as **moderate**.

Condition: *The Ramsey Creek Floodplain* is a large-scale, open agricultural landscape that has undergone extensive drainage and has lost the majority of its floodplain features and wetland habitats. The intensively farmed landscape, lack of wetland habitats and industrial/built backdrop means that the condition of the landscape is in **decline**.

Change

- Loss of species rich grassland due to intensive grassland management and arable cultivation.
- Loss, in the past, of wet woodland and ponds as a result of drainage schemes for agriculture.
- Fertiliser and pesticide run-off from adjacent landscapes and road drainage run-off affecting water quality within the floodplain.
- Erosion of the natural river setting and lack of visibility of the river.
- Intrusion of industrial development and traffic into the tranquil floodplain landscape.
- Pressure for built development including industry.
- Ramsey Creek and its floodplain are separated from the Stour Estuary by the reclaimed industrial land at Parkeston.

Sensitivity

The historic importance of the Ramsey Creek as a tributary of the Stour means this floodplain landscape is highly sensitive. It is particularly sensitive to built development that would be highly visible and would impact on the open character of the floodplain. The most sensitive features of the landscape are the remaining wetland areas such as drainage ditches, the historic river course, the floodplain trees and the remnant herb-rich grasslands.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

The *Ramsey Creek Floodplain* is an intensively farmed landscape close to Harwich which is affected by adjacent industry and built development. The overall landscape strategy for this floodplain landscape should be to **conserve** its open, undeveloped character and to **enhance** character (particularly wetland habitats) where it has been eroded through drainage schemes and intensive agriculture. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Conserve the open, undeveloped character of the floodplain landscape.
- Enhance floodplain character and grassland diversity by considering reinstatement of a pastoral landscape with summer grazing.
- Consider extending the areas of wetland habitat such as seen in the Delf Pond area to other areas of the floodplain, particularly alongside the river course.
- Conserve water quality by controlling the use of pesticides and fertilisers in agricultural areas which run off into Ramsey Creek.
- Enhance access to, and enjoyment of, the floodplain landscape by providing riverside walks.
- Enhance the visual context of the floodplain by screening industrial development and traffic that intrudes into the tranquil floodplain landscape with floodplain woodland and trees.
- Consider providing wildlife, visual and physical links between *Ramsey Creek Floodplain* and the Stour Estuary by enhancing the course and setting of the creek as it flows through the reclaimed industrial land at Parkeston.
- Conserve floodplain trees, replanting trees in areas where natural regeneration is not occurring. Black poplar, once a distinctive feature of lowland river valleys, may be a suitable species for these floodplains.
- Conserve limited areas of scrub and hedgerows as landscape features and shelter for wildlife.

5C CATTAWADE MARSHES

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Tranquil floodplain upstream of Cattawade Bridge, forming part of the River Stour floodplain.
- North part of floodplain is a mosaic of herb-rich neutral grasslands, marshland, open water, fen and marginal vegetation.
- South part of floodplain is drained and improved grassland divided by low, scrubby hedgerows.
- Cattawade Marshes provides important bird nesting sites and for this reason is designated as a SSSI.
- Long distance footpath, St Edmund Way, from Manningtree to Flatford Mill.
- Forms part of the Dedham Vale AONB and has artistic associations with John Constable.
- Mainline railway on embankment. Manningtree Station is one of the few buildings on the floodplain.
- Industrial estate, sewage works and electricity pylons characterise the edges of Manningtree.

DESCRIPTION

The *Cattawade Marshes* form part of the Stour floodplain upstream of Cattawade Bridge and weir, between the freshwater and tidal channels of the River Stour. The meandering course of the lower reaches of the River Stour flows through the floodplain landscape. The area forms part of the Dedham Vale AONB.

The presence of the flood bank along the south of the river channel has affected the landscape character of the areas north and south of the river course. The northern part of the floodplain is allowed to flood regularly and is characterised by a mosaic of herb-rich neutral grasslands, marshland, open water, fen and marginal vegetation. This area of the Cattawade Marshes provides important bird nesting sites and for this reason is designated as a SSSI. In contrast, the area of floodplain south of the river course is drained and improved grassland. Regimented fields, indicative of late enclosure, are divided by low, scrubby hedgerows. The land is more intensively farmed and as a result is less diverse in the habitats and species it supports.

A public footpath follows the flood bank along the south side of the river channel from where there are views over the open marshes to the north and the enclosed fields to the south. A long distance footpath, St Edmund Way, connects Manningtree to Flatford Mill through a traditional pastoral landscape documented by the landscape painter, John Constable.

The mainline railway line cuts across the floodplain outside Manningtree and Manningtree Station stands out as one of the few buildings in the floodplain. The embankment of the railway line hides the industrial estate, sewage works and electricity pylons on the outskirts of Manningtree.

EVALUATION

Character: The *Cattawade Marshes* is a large scale landscape of open water, marshes and grassland that has undergone some drainage and improvement south of the river channel. It shows good survival of characteristic floodplain features including the flat topography and open views; species-rich grasslands and floodmeadows. It also provides a sense of remoteness and tranquillity. It shows **strong** landscape character.

Condition: Landscape condition within the SSSI is good, but the drainage and improvement of land south of the river and the encroachment of urban and industrial structures on the edge of Manningtree is eroding the remote and rural character of the floodplain. Overall landscape condition may be described as **declining**.

Change

- Loss of species rich grassland due to drainage and grassland improvement.
- Loss of wet woodland and other wetland vegetation as a result of drainage schemes for agriculture.
- Neglect of hedgerows as a result of conversion to more arable cultivation and the lack of need for stock-proof boundaries on the floodplain.
- Fertiliser and pesticide run-off from agricultural landscapes and road drainage run-off affecting water quality.
- Intrusion of industrial development and traffic into the tranquil floodplain landscape.
- Pressure for built development, including industry, on the edges of Manningtree.

Sensitivity

The remote rural character and regional importance of the River Stour as an historic, cultural and recreational feature means this floodplain landscape is highly sensitive to drainage, agricultural intensification or built development. Its location within the Dedham Vale AONB and connections with Constable, known for his landscape paintings, further enhance the sensitivity of this landscape.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

The *Cattawade Marshes* forms part of the Stour River floodplain, upstream of Cattawade Bridge, between the freshwater and tidal channels. Although the floodplain has been partially drained and developed for industry and infrastructure, it has retained a large area of undrained floodplain marsh. The overall landscape strategy should be to **conserve** the natural floodplain character and to **restore** wetland habitats that have been eroded through drainage schemes, intensive agriculture and built development. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Conserve the open, undeveloped character of the floodplain. Any further industrial development, residential development or transport infrastructure would be highly visible in this open floodplain landscape.
- Conserve the remaining species rich grassland by resisting drainage and grassland improvement schemes on the floodplain.
- Consider restoring floodplain wetland habitats including herb-rich neutral grasslands, marshland, open water, fen and marginal vegetation.
- Consider restoration of areas of wet woodland on the floodplain in areas where it will not obstruct important views across the floodplain. This type of planting could be used to screen existing industrial development and traffic that intrudes into the tranquil floodplain landscape.
- Monitor fertiliser, pesticide and road drainage run-off from adjacent landscapes and their effect on water quality.
- Conserve floodplain trees, replanting trees in areas where natural regeneration is not occurring. Black poplar, once a distinctive feature of lowland river valleys, may be a suitable species for the Stour floodplain.

6. CLAY VALLEYS



6A Stour Valley System



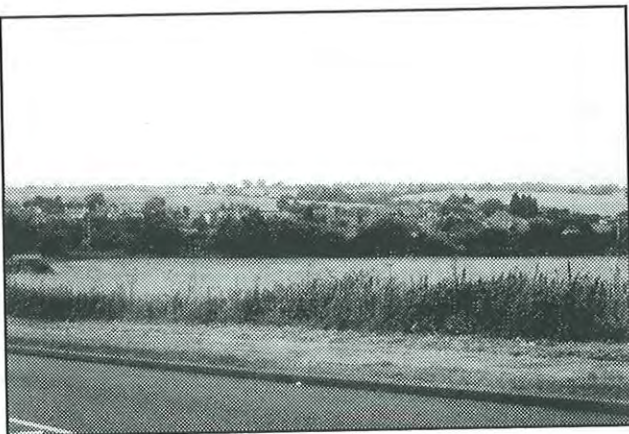
6B Ardleigh Valley System



6C Alresford Valley System



6D Holland Valley System



6E Ramsey Valley System

6 CLAY VALLEYS

Introduction

Steep sided 'hidden' valleys have eroded through the Quaternary deposits into the underlying London Clay. The valleys often extend to a long distance inland and these landscape features create topographical variety within the flat Tendring Plateau.

Physical Influences

Unlike the glacially enlarged valleys of the Colne and Stour, the inland clay valleys of this landscape type have been formed by relatively recent erosion of the underlying substrate producing narrow 'v' shaped valleys. The clayey soils are slowly permeable and seasonally waterlogged, supporting pasture and large areas of deciduous woodland. Permeable sandy soils, washed down from the adjacent plateaux, give rise to some good agricultural land and distinctive vegetation types.

Human Influences

The clay valleys have traditionally been devoid of settlement, supporting a high degree of woodland cover. The shallower slopes have been exploited for agriculture resulting in an open landscape of large fields, but the steeper slopes remain well wooded. The waterways were exploited for their power during the 18th and 19th century. Mill ponds and water mills were built and became features of the valleys. Stone bridges were built across the rivers.

More recently the introduction of the railway, trunk roads, sewage works, residential development and reservoirs have altered the rural character of the valleys. The exploitation of pockets of the gravel resource has also influenced the landscape through the creation of surface gravel pits.

The landscape type includes the following Scheduled Ancient Monuments:

Site Name/ SM Number	Character Area	Significance	Designation	Description
116	6A	National	SAM	Mistley Towers
215	6A	National	SAM	Round barrow west of Lawford Hill
32440	6C	National	SAM	Remains of St Peters Church, 460m south of Church Farm

Ecological Designations

Site Name	Character Area	Significance	Designation	Description
Brakey Grove	6A	Regional	SINC	An ancient woodland containing sweet chestnut (<i>Castanea sativa</i>) coppice, silver birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>) and ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>).
Copperas Wood	6A	National	SINC, SSSI, RSPB Reserve, EWT Reserve	The only site in the county (with Stour Wood) where coastal and woodland habitats meet.
East Grove	6A	Regional	SINC	A woodland dominated by sweet chestnut (<i>Castanea sativa</i>) and with a varied ground flora.
Stour Wood	6A	National	SINC, SSSI, RSPB reserve	A coppice-with-standards woodland which, combined with Copperas Woods comprises the largest area of woodland in north-east Essex.
West Grove	6A	Regional	SINC	A small ancient woodland with a neglected coppice.
Ardleigh Reservoir Wood	6B	Regional	SINC	A narrow and long dense-mature woodland with evidence of coppicing recognised through stools of hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>).
Churn Wood	6B	Regional	SINC	A large ancient woodland of mixed structure both broadleaved and coniferous.
Wall's Wood	6B	Regional	SINC	An old hazel coppice wood containing standards of pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>), sycamore (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>) and ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>).
Alexander Reserve	6C	Regional	SINC, EWT Conservation Area	A damp meadow containing small areas of scrub and Tenpenny Brook to the west.
Alresford Lodge Pits	6C	Regional	SINC	A freshwater aquatic site of secluded disused gravel pits containing many birds, mammals and insects.
Boudge Hill Wood	6C	Regional	SINC	A dense and scrubby ancient woodland now containing conifers. There are extensive areas of Scots pine.

Captains and Fratinghall Woods	6C	Regional	SINC	Two ancient woods of neglected hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) and silver birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>) coppice. Standards include pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus rour</i>), ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>) and sweet chestnut (<i>Castanea sativa</i>).
Crestland Wood	6C	Regional	SINC	An ancient woodland site now containing both deciduous and coniferous species.
Mill Wood	6C	Regional	SINC	A small woodland clinging to the valley-side and containing pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) and ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>).
Mill Wood, Hart and Stale Woods	6C	Regional	SINC	Three woodlands of semi-natural ancient woodland. Approximately 40 percent of the area is coniferous plantation.
Oldhall Wood	6C	Regional	SINC	An ancient woodland partly replanted with conifers and badly damaged by storms.
Tenpenny Heath Wood	6C	Regional	SINC	A woodland also known as Thorrington Plantation (OS maps) which contains a high percentage of sweet chestnut (<i>Castanea sativa</i>) coppice.
Thorrington Hall Wood	6C	Regional	SINC	One of the largest ancient woodlands in Tendring.
Thorrington Special Roadside Verge	6C	Regional	SINC	A grassland verge with interesting woodland -like flora including primrose (<i>Primula vulgaris</i>) and goldilocks buttercup (<i>Ranunculus auricomus</i>).
Great Holland Pits	6D	Regional	SINC, EWT Reserve	Previously a gravel pit and now containing a variety of habitats - grassland, pasture, remnant woodland, large and small pools and wet depressions.
Home Wood	6D	Regional	SINC	An ancient woodland of a coppice-with-standards structure. Extensively damaged during the 1987 storms.
Island Grove	6D	Regional	SINC	An ancient woodland dominated by pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>). It has been largely replanted with poplars (<i>Populus sp.</i>).

Roger's Grove	6D	Regional	SINC	A site containing ancient woodland (Roger's Grove) and a narrow strip of grassland linking to Island Grove.
Tendring Grove	6D	Regional	SINC	An ancient woodland with a large number of pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) and sweet chestnut (<i>Castanea sativa</i>) coppice.
Upper Holland Brook	6D	Regional	SINC	Making up the northernmost section of the Holland Brook stream-valley grasslands which represents the largest continual tract of grassland in Tendring.

Settlement Form and Pattern

The *Clay Valleys* are typically characterised by a low density, scattered settlement pattern of small hamlets scattered along minor lanes. These are usually a loose knit group of traditional buildings sheltered by woodland. Mills and maltings are, or were, often located at a river crossing points. Manor halls and large farm building are located on the upper slopes of the valley where they have views over the valley. Recent development has resulted in the introduction of sewage works, industrial estates and residential estates into the rural valleys.

Landscape Character Areas

- 6A Stour Valley System
- 6B Ardleigh Valley System
- 6C Alresford Valley System
- 6D Holland Valley System
- 6E Ramsey Valley System

6A STOUR VALLEY SYSTEM

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Southern slopes and scenic tributary valleys of the Stour, forming a setting to one of the most important wildlife estuaries in Europe and a setting to the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths AONB.
- Steep wooded sides form a rural backdrop to the open waters of the Stour Estuary.
- Tributary valleys provide hidden landscapes where thick hedgerows with hedgerow oaks divide fields of arable and pasture.
- Dramatic buildings, including quayside warehouses, maltings, church spires and towers, provide focal points along the river.
- Leafy lanes drop steeply down the valley sides providing scenic drives.
- B1352 and mainline railway pass along the coast with outstanding views of the estuary and Suffolk shore.
- Historic port of Manningtree and village of Mistley are located on the southern bank of the Stour Estuary facing the Suffolk landscape across the mile-wide river.
- The area north-west of Lawford forms part of the Dedham Vale AONB.

DESCRIPTION

The Stour Valley marks the county boundary that separates Suffolk to the north from Essex to the south. The Stour Valley was enlarged by glacial meltwaters at the end of the Ice Age and then 'drowned' by subsequent subsidence and changing sea levels giving rise to a characteristically wide estuary. It is one of the most important wildlife estuaries in Europe, and supports a sizeable population of swans. The *Stour Valley System* within Tendring district is composed of the southern Stour slopes and its tributary valleys, the upper limits of the character area defined by the break in slope.

The southern Stour slopes are typically undulating, forming a wooded backdrop to the open waters of the Stour Estuary. The underlying clay and glacial loams give rise to a *gleyic argyllic brown earth* soil type which is deeply permeable, coarse and loamy and supports medium grade agricultural land. The shallower valley sides support an agricultural landscape of fields of arable and pasture divided by thick hedgerows with hedgerow oaks while the steeper slopes support ancient deciduous woodland typically consisting of sweet chestnut, ash, oak, wild cherry, hornbeam, small-leaved lime, hazel and birch. These woodlands have a coppice with standards structure where the sweet chestnut, hornbeam, hazel and small-leaved lime form the coppice species and the ash, oak and wild cherry form the standards. The ground flora is typically bluebell and yellow archangel. Stour and Copperas Woods together form the largest area of woodland in north-east Essex and the only site in the county where coastal and woodland habitats meet. The tributary valleys have an intimate, wooded character which contrasts with the adjacent expansive Stour Estuary and the large scale arable landscapes of the plateau above. The slopes include ancient woodland as well as

mixed plantation woodland. Alder and willow are also found in the woodlands that dominate streamlines.

Ancient leafy lanes drop steeply down the valley sides. A good example is Wall Lane at Wrabness Point, which is Saxon in origin. The B1352 follows the Stour from Manningtree eastwards, bearing away from the coastal edge at Bradfield. This road emphasises the undulating nature of the area and provides some outstanding views of the Suffolk shore across the Stour Estuary. The railway line follows the coastal edge more closely, passing through Stour and Copperas Woods and the Essex Way long distance footpath also runs parallel with the Stour.

The Stour Estuary is famous for its trade in corn, coal, timber and fish. The historic port of Manningtree is located on the southern bank of the Stour Estuary facing the Suffolk landscape across the mile-wide river. Manningtree was a thriving port by Tudor times and received its Charter in 1238 and the ancient site of the market, at the crossroads in the town centre, is still known as Market Cross. Today Manningtree is a small market town and sailing centre with some fine Georgian buildings, historic pubs and restaurants. The village of Mistley forms an eastern suburb of the town and port of Manningtree. It was built in the 18th century to include a quay, wharves, warehouses, and a large steam-mill. In the latter part of the 19th century, Richard Rigby built many houses, with several granaries, warehouses, a large malting-house, and the spacious quay, which forms an extension of the port of Manningtree. The Swan Fountain at Mistley represents the one surviving example of local landowner Richard Rigby's attempt to develop Mistley into a fashionable spa. The town instead developed into a centre for the malting industry. Mistley Towers, designed by Robert Adam in 1776, still dominates the skyline - all that remains of the eighteenth century parish church. Parkeston Quay is now the focal point for commerce and shipping. Outside these towns the settlement pattern is typically one of scattered groups of farm buildings.

EVALUATION

Character: The *Stour Valley System* is rich in historic and ecological interest as well as being valued for its scenic qualities. It has escaped the pressures of agricultural intensification and built development associated with the more easily accessible, flatter areas of the district. The landscape shows good survival of characteristic features such as the steep wooded valleys sides, historic lanes and impressive buildings associated with ancient ports. It shows **strong** landscape character.

Condition: Landscape condition is good with well managed woodlands, actively managed farmland and survival of historic lanes and halls. The historic waterside ports and quays still convey a sense of a working landscape and where historic buildings are disused, they are being restored for alternative uses. Overall landscape condition may be described as **good**.

Change

- Loss of structure and species diversity of the traditionally coppiced woodlands through cessation of coppice management.
- Spread of sycamore, rhododendron and other invasive/exotic species into native deciduous woodland threatening the locally distinctive species composition of the woodlands.

- Loss of historic industrial and quayside buildings through changes in function of the ports of Manningtree and Mistley.
- Pressure for built development on the outskirts of Manningtree, Mistley and Lawford.
- Pressure for road improvements and faster links along the estuary threatening the rural character of the minor roads and leafy lanes.

Sensitivity

The valley sides are highly sensitive to visual change because they form an important rural setting to the open waters of the Stour Estuary and are visible from the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB as well as from craft on the open water. The valley sides north-west of Lawford form part of the Dedham Vale AONB. The ancient woodlands, streamside vegetation, historic lanes and landmark historic buildings are particularly sensitive to change.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

The *Stour Valley System* is a rural landscape that forms a setting to the Stour Estuary and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. The overall landscape strategy for this valley landscape should be to **conserve** the wooded setting to the Stour Estuary with its historic ports, ancient woodlands, rural lanes and low density rural settlement. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Conserve the ecological structure and landscape character of woodlands by re-introduction of traditional management techniques such as coppicing.
- Conserve the species diversity of the native woodlands of the Stour Valley by controlling of invasive species such as sycamore and rhododendron will.
- Conserve historic industrial and quayside buildings as landmarks in the landscape by restoring to employment, residential or other appropriate uses.
- Conserve the strategic gap between Manningtree and Mistley to maintain their individual identities and their rural settings.
- Conserve the historic quays of Manningtree and Mistley to preserve their character as historic ports and their links to the sea.

- Conserve the rural character of the lanes and minor roads, such as the B1352 and the historic lanes. Resist road improvements that would threaten this character.
- Conserve important views across the Stour, such as the views from Wrabness to Holbrook Bay and views from the B1352.
- Ensure built development does not intrude onto the highly sensitive crests of slopes where it would be conspicuous on the skyline or restrict important views.

6B ARDLEIGH VALLEY SYSTEM

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Steep sided wooded valley hidden from the surrounding farmed plateau.
- Ancient deciduous woodland clings to valley sides and alder and willow dominate streamlines.
- Leafy lanes drop steeply down the valley side and cross the streams on stone bridges e.g. Springvalley Lane.
- The A120 and railway line, in contrast, cut across the valley on embankments, fragment the valley both visually and physically.
- Spring Valley Mill is the only remaining example of a water mill in Tendring.
- Ardleigh Reservoir floods the two northernmost arms of the valley system.

DESCRIPTION

The *Ardleigh Valley System* is a series of steep sided river valleys, forming part of the Colne catchment. They have been eroded, through the quaternary deposits of glacial loam, into the basal London Clay and small, fast flowing streams are hidden amongst vegetation in the valley bottom.

These 'hidden' valleys have an intimate, wooded character which contrasts with the adjacent expansive large scale arable landscapes of the plateau above. The valley sides support small scale fields of pasture divided by thick hedgerows with hedgerow oaks and deciduous oak woodland which clings to the steeper slopes. The soils have an acidic character as a result of outwash from adjacent sandy/loamy soils on the plateau. This acidic character is visible in the vegetation it supports - deciduous woodland is dominated by oak, ash and hazel. Other trees include silver birch, rowan, sycamore and sweet chestnut. The understorey is typical of acid woodland soils and includes bramble and bracken, with a ground flora including foxglove and bluebell. Rhododendron is also present, dominating the understorey in places. Alder and willow dominate streamlines and old coppice stools are visible in many of the woodlands. The high deciduous tree cover means seasonal change is noticeable.

Leafy lanes are typical of the valleys - these drop steeply down the valley side and cross the streams on stone bridges - some are historic sunken lanes, for example Springvalley Lane. The A120 and railway line, in contrast, cut across the valley on embankments, fragmenting the valley both visually and physically. Built development is typically located at the top of the valley sides, on the edge of the adjacent plateau. Within the valley settlement is sparse and consists of small cottages and mill buildings located at river crossing points. Spring Valley Mill is the only remaining example of a water mill in Tendring. Traditional materials are brick (historically from the locally available London Clay), timber cladding (white or black painted) and clay tiles. The valleys have a peaceful, 'hidden' character, but there is always the background noise of traffic from the A120.

Ardleigh reservoir has flooded the valley system north of the dam adjacent to the A137. This part of the valley is now dominated by water and is used as a private fishing lake. Public

access to its shores is restricted along most of its length and nature conservation interest is high.

EVALUATION

Character: The *Ardleigh Valley System* has escaped the pressures of agricultural intensification and built development associated with the more easily accessible, flatter areas of the district. The landscape shows good survival of characteristic features such as the steep wooded valleys sides, historic lanes and Spring Valley Mill. It shows **strong** landscape character.

Condition: Hedgerows are well managed and woodlands, some of them ancient, remain as features of the landscape. However, dereliction of buildings (including the water mills) and the invasion of native woodlands by exotic species are beginning to degrade landscape condition. Overall landscape condition may be described as in **decline**.

Change

- Reservoir has obscured the valley landform and former pattern of deciduous woodland on the valley sides.
- Pressure for built development on the outskirts of Colchester.
- A120 Colchester by-pass and railway line cross the valley on embankment, obstructing visual and physical links up and downstream of the crossing point.
- Dereliction and loss of traditional dwellings leading to loss of distinct architectural style within the valley.
- Spread of invasive exotic species such as rhododendron and Himalayan balsam, displacing native species.
- Road improvements including signage, line painting and widening which threaten the intimate rural character of the winding leafy lanes.
- Poor public access to informal recreational resources such as the reservoir shores.
- Pressures for gravel extraction.

Sensitivity

The *Ardleigh* valleys are sensitive to change as a result of their rural, sometimes remote, character. However, their 'hidden' position and high tree cover provides some shelter and reduces visual sensitivity. The landscape is particularly sensitive to any change that would affect its ancient woodlands, streamside vegetation and sense of 'remoteness'. Overall sensitivity can be described as moderate.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

The *Ardleigh Valley System* is a rural landscape on the eastern outskirts of Colchester. The landscape strategy should be to **conserve** the remote, rural character of the Ardleigh Valleys with their steep wooded sides, leafy lanes, ancient woodland and low density rural settlement. There is also scope to **restore** individual landscape elements such as historic buildings and biodiversity. The management strategy includes the following recommendations:

- Conserve the sense of remoteness/tranquillity within these rural valleys and limit further linear, infill development that would change the traditional settlement pattern.
- Conserve clear visual and physical links along the valley by using road bridges rather than embankments to take roads across the valley.
- Conserve the character of the woodlands by controlling the spread of invasive exotic species such as rhododendron and Himalayan balsam.
- Restore the ecological structure and landscape character of the native woodlands by re-introducing traditional management techniques, such as coppicing.
- Conserve the intimate rural character of the winding leafy lanes by resisting road improvements, such as new signage, installation of modern street lamps, line painting and widening.
- Consider opportunities to enhance public access to the valleys for example by creating new circular walks, perhaps taking in the shores of the reservoir.
- Sensitive restoration of former gravel pits to wetland habitats will have a positive impact on the biodiversity, recreational potential and character of the landscape.

6C ALRESFORD VALLEY SYSTEM

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- A series of distinct river valleys, steep sided in places, containing Sixpenny, Tenpenny and Bentley Brooks and including the slopes descending to the Colne Estuary.
- The intimate, leafy character contrasts with the adjacent expansive open arable landscapes of the *Heathland Plateaux*.
- Large areas of deciduous woodland including Thorringtonhall Wood, one of the largest ancient woodlands in the district.
- Old coppice stools are visible in many of the woodlands.
- Historic lanes drop steeply down the valley side and cross the brooks at ancient crossing points.
- Sparse settlement consisting of scattered cottages and isolated farms.
- Recent infill has resulted in ribbon development on the edge of Thorrington Cross.
- Gravel pits and sewage works are present.

DESCRIPTION

The *Alresford Valley System* forms part of the Colne catchment. It is a series of distinct river valleys, steep sided in places, which have been eroded, through the quaternary deposits of glacial loam, into the basal London Clay. The underlying geology of clay and glacial drift gives rise to a range of soils, from clayey soils to deep permeable sandy and loamy soils. These soils give rise to some good agricultural land and support arable crops, grassland and woodland. The acidic character of the sandy loams is identifiable where gorse, bracken and broom appear in hedgerows.

The majority of the valley system has a 'hidden' character which contrasts with the adjacent expansive large scale open arable landscapes of the *Heathland Plateaux*. The steeper valley sides support small scale fields of pasture divided by thick hedgerows with hedgerow oaks. The south-facing slopes below Thorrington are much less steep and unusual in that they support an area of large scale arable land. The valleys are characterised by a comparatively high proportion of woodland cover, much of it ancient deciduous woodland. Thorringtonhall Wood is one of the largest ancient woodlands in the district. The woodlands are typically composed of sweet chestnut, hazel, birch or hornbeam coppice with oak, ash and poplar standards. Bramble and bracken often dominate the ground flora, although bluebells, wood anemone, dog's mercury and wood sorrell are present where conditions allow. Most of the woodlands are no longer actively coppiced, but old coppice stools are evident. The high deciduous tree cover means seasonal change is a feature of the valleys.

Small, fast flowing streams of Sixpenny, Tenpenny and Bentley Brooks are hidden amongst vegetation in the valley bottom. Alder and willow dominate streamlines and old pollards of willow and poplar often stand alongside streams. Damp meadows and unimproved neutral

grasslands are found in the less well drained areas, for example at the Essex Wildlife Trust's Alexander Reserve alongside Tenpenny Brook. Leafy lanes are typical of the valleys - these drop steeply down the valley side and cross the streams at historic crossing points often on stone bridges or newer bridges built in the place of historic fords. The railway line, in contrast, cuts across the valley on embankments, fragmenting the valley both visually and physically. Historically, the valleys have been devoid of built development as the farms and villages were located on the surrounding Plateaux. Farms are typically located at the top of the valley slopes where they overlook the valleys, for example Alresford Hall and Thorrington Hall. Within the valleys settlement remains sparse and consists of scattered cottages and isolated farms, although more recent infill has resulted in ribbon development, for example on the edge of Thorrington Cross. The ruined medieval church at the top of Ford Lane is an important historic feature with magnificent views over the valleys towards the Colne Estuary.

The glacial sands and gravels that border the valleys have been exploited. Some extraction sites have been restored, such as Alresford Lodge Pits, resulting in the formation of new habitats and landscape features. The valleys have also been used as a location for the siting of sewage works and caravan sites, but overall the valleys have a peaceful, rural character.

EVALUATION

Character: The *Alresford Valley System* has escaped the pressures of agricultural intensification, dense built development and roads upgrades associated with the more easily accessible, flatter areas of the district. They have therefore maintained characteristic features such as a rural, undeveloped character, steep wooded valleys sides, historic lanes and historic crossing points of the rivers. It shows **strong** landscape character.

Condition: Hedgerows are well managed and woodlands, some of them ancient, remain as features of the landscape. However, the progressive encroachment of built development along roadsides, the introduction of development such as sewage works, agricultural intensification and the decline in woodland management is resulting in a gradual **decline** in landscape condition.

Change

- Expansion of the coniferous content of woodlands which would result in a change in character of the woodland and have a negative impact on the ground flora.
- Lack of traditional woodland and tree management such as coppicing and pollarding.
- Pressure for built development along roadsides resulting in ribbon development and the impression of dense development.
- Spread of invasive exotic species such as sycamore and rhododendron, displacing native species in the woodlands.
- Road improvements including signage, line painting and widening which threaten the intimate rural character of the historic rural lanes.
- Relatively little access along the majority of valleys.
- Pressure for gravel extraction.

Sensitivity

The *Alresford* valleys are sensitive to changes that would affect their rural character. However, their 'hidden' position and high tree cover provides some shelter and reduces visual sensitivity. The landscape is particularly sensitive to changes that would affect the ancient woodlands, streamside vegetation and unimproved damp meadows and grasslands. Overall sensitivity can be described as moderate.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

The *Alresford Valley System* is a rural landscape that forms the tributary valleys to the Colne Estuary. The overall landscape strategy for this valley landscape should be to **conserve** the rural character with its historic lanes, ancient woodlands and low density rural settlement. The strategy should also seek to **restore** traditional management techniques where these have been lost. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Conserve the rural, undeveloped character of the valleys and in particular limit further spread of linear development along roads.
- Conserve the character of the woodlands by controlling the spread of invasive exotic species such as sycamore and rhododendron.
- Restore the ecological structure and landscape character of the native woodlands by re-introducing traditional management techniques, such as coppicing.
- Consider restoring/extending native deciduous woodland, particularly on the edges of existing woodlands, to enhance the wooded character of the valleys. Encourage natural regeneration or use of locally sourced native tree species for woodland creation.
- Restore traditional management techniques such as pollarding of willows and poplars along stream courses to enhance local character.
- Enhance public access and enjoyment of the valleys by considering the creation of riverside walks.
- Conserve the distinct character of individual settlements by resisting development of residential dwellings along roadsides that would lead to continuous ribbon development and merging of adjacent settlements.
- Conserve the setting of historic features, for example the ruined church on Ford Lane.

- Conserve the intimate rural character of the winding leafy lanes by resisting road improvements, such as new signage, installation of modern street lamps, line painting and widening.
- Conserve clear visual and physical links along the valley by using road bridges rather than embankments to take roads across the valley.
- Restoration of former gravel pits to wetland habitats can have a positive impact on the biodiversity, recreational potential and character of the landscape.

6D HOLLAND VALLEY SYSTEM

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Steep sided valley containing Holland Brook and its tributaries, Tendring Brook and Weeley Brook and Picker's Ditch.
- Contrast with the flat landscapes of the Tendring Plateau.
- Seasonally waterlogged soils support a mixed wooded and pastoral landscape.
- Ancient woodlands, typically dominated by oak, ash and sweet chestnut, are located in the wetter areas and on the steeper slopes.
- Lanes drop down the valley sides and cross the streams, at historic crossing points, on stone or brick bridges.
- Typically devoid of built development except for isolated cottages and a former corn mill at crow bridge.
- Picker's Ditch has been encroached upon by residential development at Clacton.
- Forms a setting to the Holland Floodplain SSSI.

DESCRIPTION

The *Holland Valley System* includes the distinctive steep sided Holland Brook Valley and its tributary valleys of Tendring Brook and Weeley Brook and Picker's Ditch that provide relief from the flat landscapes of the Tendring plateau. The underlying geology of London Clay has given rise to slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged soils with brown subsoils. These soils support a wooded pastoral landscape which is distinct from the surrounding flat arable land.

The valleys typically support small scale fields of pasture divided by thick hedgerows with hedgerow oaks. The valleys have lost much of their woodland cover, but ancient woodlands are located in the wetter areas on the steeper slopes. The woodlands are typically dominated by oak, ash and sweet chestnut but also contain hazel, hornbeam, field maple and wych elm. Larch and yew are also present in Home Wood. Most of the woodlands are no longer actively coppiced, but old coppice stools remain visible. Alder, willow, sedges and reeds are present in the woodlands along the streamlines and around standing water.

The pattern of infrastructure is distinctive and has not changed since Chapman and Andre's map of 1777. Lanes drop down the valley sides and cross the streams on stone or brick bridges. Historic crossing points include Holland Bridge, Fan Bridge and Rice Bridge. The railway line, in contrast, pays little attention to topography or landscapes features, crossing the valley in several places on embankment and passing through the middle of Roger's Grove, an ancient woodland.

Historically, the valleys have been devoid of built development except for a corn mill at crow bridge and scattered cottages. Settlement remains sparse today and consists of scattered cottages and farms on the approach to bridge crossings. However, there are

some hotspots for settlement along the valleys. There is a cluster of buildings, including Thorpe-le-Soken railway station, Thorpe Maltings and an industrial estate at Rice Bridge. Perhaps most notably through, the tributary valley of Picker's Ditch has been encroached upon by residential development on the edges of Clacton.

The glacial sands and gravels on the edge of Great Holland give rise to some heathy grassland. Gravel has been extracted from this area leaving a mosaic of grassland, ancient woodland, pools and wet depressions which support varied flora, birdlife and insect populations. This site is now an Essex Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve. There is relatively little public access into the valleys, particularly in the lower reaches resulting in a peaceful, rural character.

EVALUATION

Character: The *Holland Valley System* is a peaceful, rural landscape that shows good survival of characteristic features including unimproved grassland and woodland. It has escaped the pressures of agricultural intensification, dense built development and road upgrades associated with the more easily accessible, flatter areas of the district. It has a **strong** landscape character.

Condition: Hedgerows are well managed and woodlands, some of them ancient, are features of the valley. However, progressive agricultural improvement, encroachment of built development along roadsides and the decline in woodland management is resulting in a gradual **decline** in landscape condition.

Change

- Loss of ancient deciduous woodland and general shrinking woodland resource.
- Lack of traditional woodland and tree management such as coppicing and pollarding.
- Pressure for expansion of built development on the edges of Clacton/Holland-on-Sea and along roadsides.
- Dereliction and decline of historic buildings and features.
- Spread of invasive exotic species such as sycamore and rhododendron, displacing native species in the woodlands.
- Dereliction of traditional buildings such as the maltings at Thorpe Station.
- Road improvements including signage, line painting and widening which threaten the intimate rural character of the historic rural lanes and bridge crossing points.
- Lack of public access, particularly along the lower reaches of Holland Brook.

Sensitivity

The valleys are sensitive to change because they form an important setting to the Holland Floodplain SSSI and retain a peaceful, rural character. However, their topography and woodland cover provides some shelter and reduces visual sensitivity. The landscape is particularly sensitive to any changes that would affect its ancient woodlands, streamside

vegetation, unimproved damp meadows and historic features. Overall sensitivity is considered to be moderate.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

The *Holland Valley System* is a rural landscape cutting through the flat topography of the Clay Plateaux of eastern Tendring. The landscape strategy should be to **conserve** the rural character with its damp grasslands, ancient woodlands and low density rural settlement. The strategy should also seek to **restore** the wooded character and traditional land management. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Conserve the rural, undeveloped character of the valleys. Resist the encroachment of urban or suburban development into the valley.
- Conserve the character of the woodlands by controlling the spread of invasive species such as sycamore and rhododendron.
- Restore the ecological structure and landscape character of the native woodlands by re-introducing traditional management techniques, such as coppicing.
- Consider extending/restoring native deciduous woodland, particularly on the edges of existing woodlands, to enhance the wooded character of the valleys. Encourage woodland creation through natural regeneration or use locally sourced native tree species when re-planting.
- Enhance public access and enjoyment of the valleys by considering the creation of riverside walks for the large numbers of local residents in Clacton and Frinton.
- Conserve the distinct character of individual settlements by resisting development of residential dwellings along roadsides that would lead to continuous ribbon development and merging of adjacent settlements.
- Conserve historic features by promoting restoration and re-use of features such as mills, maltings and bridges.
- Conserve the intimate rural character of the winding leafy lanes by resisting road improvements, such as new signage, installation of modern street lamps, line painting and widening.

- Conserve clear visual and physical links along the valley by using road bridges rather than embankments to take roads across the valley.

6E RAMSEY CREEK VALLEY SYSTEM

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Distinctive steep sided valley of Ramsey Creek and its tributaries, extending inland from Harwich.
- Wooded pastoral landscape with valley sides supporting small scale pastoral fields divided by thick hedgerows with hedgerow oaks.
- Historic green lanes wind their way down the valley sides through woodland.
- Historic river crossing points still survive.
- A120(T) follows the contours on the floor of the valley.
- Distinctive pattern of settlement with farmsteads and halls along the rural lanes, plus the small linear settlement of Ramsey Street.
- Michaelstowe Hall is a landmark that overlooks the valley.
- Residential estates and large factory buildings have encroached into the rural valley landscape at Upper Dovercourt.

DESCRIPTION

The *Ramsey Creek Valley System* forms part of the Stour catchment and includes the distinctive steep sided valley of Ramsey Creek and its tributaries. The underlying geology of London Clay has given rise to slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged soils which support a wooded pastoral landscape. The steeper valley sides support small scale pastoral fields divided by thick hedgerows with hedgerow oaks. In the contrast, the less steep slopes are often intensively farmed, supporting large scale fields growing crops.

The *Ramsey Creek Valley System* has relatively little woodland compared to the other clay valleys in Tendring. However, the thick hedgerows contribute to a wooded character. The woodlands in this part of the district are typically dominated by oak, ash and sweet chestnut but also contain hazel, hornbeam, field maple and wych elm. Alder, willow, sedges and reeds are present in the woodlands along the streamlines and around standing water. The *Ramsey Creek Valley System* also contains more settlement than other valleys within Tendring. This is partly due to the proximity of Harwich and its suburbs and partly due to the presence of Ramsey Village, formerly 'Ramsey Street', at an historic crossing point of Ramsey Creek. The windmill above Ramsey Village is an important feature in views across the valley. Michaelstowe Hall sits in a prominent position on the valley side overlooking the valley. At Upper Dovercourt residential estates and large factory buildings have encroached into the rural valley landscape.

The pattern of infrastructure is almost the same as shown on Chapman and Andre's map of 1777, except for the addition of the A120(T) which follows the contours at the bottom of the valley and the disused railway line whose cutting, known as 'The Hangings', is an important recreational and wildlife resource. There are a number of reservoirs, particularly

in the upper reaches of the valleys. There is good public access into the valleys in the upper reaches. The lower parts are more inaccessible.

EVALUATION

Character: The *Ramsey Creek Valley System* is a peaceful, rural landscape that has maintained its historic landscape structure and shows good survival of characteristic features such as woodland, semi-improved grassland, historic lanes and bridges. The valley sides have escaped the pressures of agricultural intensification and infrastructure associated with the more easily accessible, flatter floodplain. It has a **strong** landscape character.

Condition: Hedgerows are well managed and woodlands, some of them ancient, are features of the valley. However, the progressive agricultural improvement, encroachment of built development on the edges of Harwich and the loss of woodland is resulting in a gradual **decline** in landscape condition.

Change

- The expansion of Harwich's ridgetop suburb of Upper Dovercourt has resulted in the encroachment of residential estates and large factory buildings into the rural valley landscape.
- Loss of ancient deciduous woodland and general shrinking of the woodland resource.
- Intrusion of traffic from the A120(T) into the rural landscape.
- Road improvements including signage, line painting and widening which threaten the intimate rural character of the historic rural lanes and bridge crossing points.

Sensitivity

The valley is sensitive to change as a result of its rural character, historic landscape structure and views across the landscape from the valley sides. However, the topography, thick hedgerows and tree cover provides some shelter and reduce visual sensitivity. The remaining woodlands, hedgerows, streamside vegetation, unimproved grasslands and historic lanes are particularly sensitive to change.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

The *Ramsey Creek Valley System* is a rural landscape that forms a break in the flat topography of the *Tendring and Wix Clay Plateau (8A)*. The landscape strategy for this valley landscape should be to **conserve** the rural character with its unimproved streamside grasslands, thick hedgerows and historic lanes. The strategy should also seek to **restore** the wooded character of the valley sides. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Conserve the rural character of the river valley by maintaining a low density of settlement and ensuring built development does not intrude onto ridgelines.
- Conserve the individual character and rural setting of settlements by avoiding ribbon development and merging of adjacent settlements.
- Restore/extending native deciduous woodland, particularly on the edges of existing woodlands, to enhance the wooded character of the valleys. Use natural regeneration or locally sourced native species for woodland creation.
- Conserve the intimate rural character of the historic lanes and their associated vegetation by resisting road improvements, such as new signage, installation of modern street lamps, line painting and widening.
- Conserve 'The Hangings' as a wildlife and recreational resource and a landscape feature of the valley.
- Conserve views to landmark features such as Ramsey Windmill and Michaelstowe Hall.

7. HEATHLAND PLATEAUX



7A Bromley Heaths



7B St Osyth/Great Bentley Heaths

7 HEATHLAND PLATEAUX

Introduction

The *Heathland Plateaux* are the large scale, flat agricultural plateaux, generally above 25m AOD, covering a large part of the western half of the Tendring District. Their extent is defined by the glacial loams and gravels that create acid soils giving them a heathy character and identifying them as separate landscape type from the *Clay Plateaux* to the east of the district.

Physical Influences

During the Ice Age, some 450,000 years ago, the Anglian ice sheet did not reach as far south as Tendring. However, glacial outwash deposited glacial loams, gravels and sands across much of the west of the district. These sandy deposits, which are found over the greater part of the higher ground as far as Tendring, have an influence on the soils and vegetation, resulting in remnant heathland communities in this area. The 1777 Chapman and Andre map illustrates the former distribution of heaths across this area. In contrast the deeper, loamy soils have been intensively cultivated.

There is one designation relating to the physical landscape:

Site Name	Character Area	Significance	Designation	Description
Ardleigh Gravel Pit	7A	National	SSSI	Exposed deposits belonging to the early Thames gravels containing rare plant macrofossils and evidence of an Early Middle Pleistocene age.

Human Influences

The deep, stoneless, coarse loamy soils of the *Heathland Plateaux* have been intensively cultivated. Saxon estates were major landholdings with control of large tracts of land. The introduction of the medieval manorial system with large areas of common land being enclosed by the lords of the manors caused a major change in the landscape. The manorial parks, of which the heaths formed part, are now gone, but some of the woods and boundaries have survived. This period also saw the growing influence of religious orders with many parishes containing monastic landholdings, for example St Osyth's Priory and Wix Abbey, both established in the 12th century. During the 16th century brick became fashionable, fired using the fine London Clays of Tendring. This period saw a flourish of rebuilding including many churches and halls.

Enclosure of the open medieval fields and common lands by the Enclosure Acts of the late 18th century brought the ancient system of common cultivation to an end. The introduction of crop rotation and the improvement of farm implements increased productivity. The latter half of the 18th century was a time of high opportunity for millers and there was a rapid increase in windmills on the windswept plateau. By this stage brick was in general use although timber boarding was used on domestic buildings as a cheaper alternative. Greenhouses, orchards, copses and shelter belts are features of the productive

landscape today and remnant heaths are now only identifiable by hedgerow vegetation and place names.

The landscape type includes the following Scheduled Ancient Monuments:

Site Name/ SM Number	Character Area	Significance	Designation	Description
133	7A	National	SAM	Settlement site NNE of Lawford House
194	7A	National	SAM	Site of Old St Mary's Church
199	7A	National	SAM	Crop mark site south of Ardleigh
32444	7A	National	SAM	World War 2 bombing decoy WRI Spinnels Farm
24	7B	National	SAM	St Osyth Priory (uninhabited portions) and gatehouse

Ecological Designations

Site Name	Character Area	Significance	Designation	Description
Bullock Wood	7A	National	SINC, SSSI	An ancient coppice-with-standards woodland is recognised for its nationally rare lowland hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) - sessile oak (<i>Quercus patraea</i>) stand type.
Cockaynes Wood	7A	Regional	SINC	Containing sweet chestnut (<i>Castanea sativa</i>) and pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) and having a sparse ground flora, this site is a popular public recreation site
Paleagate Wood	7A	Regional	SINC	A woodland dominated by sweet chestnut (<i>Castanea sativa</i>), honeysuckle (<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>) and bluebell (<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>) are amongst the ground flora.
Park Wood	7A	Regional	SINC	A small fragment of neglected ancient oak and sweet chestnut coppice. Only a narrow strip of woodland remains after much removed for extension of an orchard
Money Wood	7A	Regional	SINC	An ancient woodland of coppice-with-standards. It has been extensively storm damaged.

Crestland Wood	7A	Regional	SINC	An ancient woodland site now containing both deciduous and coniferous species.
Hockley Wood	7A	Regional	SINC	A large semi natural coppice-with-standards ancient woodland mature standard trees include alder (<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>) and ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>).
Little Bentleyhall Wood	7A	Regional	SINC	An ancient woodland dominated by pedunculate oak standards.
Crockleford Heath Special Roadside Verges	7A	Regional	SINC	Three linear grassland habitats of generally strong floristic and habitat interest.
Pyecats Corner Special Roadside Verges	7A	Regional	SINC	Grassland verges with interesting flora reflecting the acidic soil base.
Manor House Meadow	7A	Regional	SINC	An area of species-rich dry grassland rare within Tendring.
Riddles Wood	7B	National	SSSI	Best examples in Essex of chestnut coppice with rich and varied ground flora.
High Barn Wood	7B	Regional	SINC	An ancient woodland of sweet chestnut (<i>Castanea sativa</i>) and pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>).
Shair Wood	7B	Regional	SINC	An ancient woodland dominated by sweet chestnut (<i>Castanea sativa</i>) coppice and pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) standards.
Milton Wood	7B	Regional	SINC	Severely storm damaged, the remaining canopy comprises pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) and sweet chestnut (<i>Castanea sativa</i>).
Stockets Grove	7B	Regional	SINC	A small woodland dominated by pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) and sweet chestnut (<i>Castanea sativa</i>).
Simplebirch and Bowshots Wood	7B	Regional	SINC	Adjoining woodlands comprising mainly pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) and sweet chestnut (<i>Castanea sativa</i>).

High Grove	7B	Regional	SINC	A small wood where sweet chestnut (<i>Castanea sativa</i>), ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>), hornbeam (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>) and silver birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>) are dominant.
Maldon Wood	7B	Regional	SINC	An ancient woodland almost entirely dominated by sweet chestnut (<i>Castanea sativa</i>) and standards of pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>).
Dines Farm Special Roadside Verge	7B	Regional	SINC	A grassland verge afforded special designation due to the floristic content, including nationally rare species.
Aingers Green Special Roadside Verges	7B	Regional	SINC	Grassland verges with interesting acidic-soil flora.
St Osyth Parkland	7B	Regional	SINC	A mosaic parkland of marshy and semi-improved neutral grassland, woodland, scrub and ponds.

Settlement Form and Pattern

The *Heathland Plateaux* are typically characterised by scattered halls/churches, rural farms and villages. The pattern of halls/churches indicates an ancient settlement pattern, and the feudal system. Agricultural barns are distinctive landscape features in this area and often form landmarks. Many villages evolved from the manors. Other villages developed as farmsteads settled on the edges of greens, commons and heaths. Subsequent loss of heaths and infilling of village greens has progressively altered the character of these settlements, but their names often give a clue as to the origin of the settlement.

Landscape Character Areas

7A Bromley Heaths

7B St Osyth/Great Bentley Heaths

7A BROMLEY HEATHS

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Exposed and windswept plateau corresponding to the highest part of the district.
- Deep, coarse, loamy and often stoneless brown soils which support a high grade agricultural land.
- Large scale productive arable fields divided by low, gappy hedgerows where hedgerow oaks stand out as silhouettes against the skyline.
- Apple orchards around Ardleigh, Elmstead and Frating are sheltered by belts of poplar or fast growing *Leylandii*.
- Former heaths largely converted to smallholdings or regenerating as woodland. Small areas of remnant heath survive.
- Neglected oak/sweet chestnut coppice with ground flora typical of acidic woodland soils.
- Low density, rural settlement pattern of scattered farms and halls, hamlets, villages and small market towns.
- Network of narrow lanes connects the scattered farms and villages and roadside verges often contain gorse and bracken.
- Dramatic, dominating skyline.

DESCRIPTION

The *Bromley Heaths* is an elevated plateau that extends from Colchester to Wix in the east and Thorrington in the south. It corresponds to the highest part of the district and is underlain by a solid geology of London Clay capped by a veneer of glacial loam and gravels. These glacial loams have given rise to deep, coarse, loamy and often stoneless brown soils which support a high grade agricultural land.

The large scale, open plateau is dominated by large scale, geometric fields indicative of late enclosure that provide a strong pattern in views, for example around Little Bentley. These productive arable fields are divided by low, gappy hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees, usually oaks, which stand out as features in the open arable 'prairies'. The colour and texture of the cultivated landscape changes with the seasons. Apple orchards flourish in the sandy soils around Ardleigh, Elmstead and Frating and are sheltered by belts of poplar or, increasingly, the fast growing *Leylandii*. Horticulture is also a feature of the area with glasshouses located particularly to the north-east of Ardleigh.

The underlying sands and gravels have influenced landcover. Heathland stills survives at Mistley Heath and Furze Hill, and the Beth Chatto gardens are an example of gardens that have been created on gravel soils. Many of the former heaths have been converted to smallholdings or appear as areas of regenerated woodland that form a backdrop to the arable landscape. Green Island, south of Ardleigh, is one such example of woodland that was formerly Goldstons Heath. A large amount of ancient woodland has been lost to

cultivation. However, there are still some important woodland and copses, perhaps most notably Bentleyhall Wood, which is carpeted by bluebells in the spring. Many of these woodlands are neglected oak/sweet chestnut coppiced woodlands. They also contain ash, hazel and birch and the ground flora is typical of acidic woodland soil comprising species such as wood sage, foxglove, blue-bell and bracken. The sandy nature of the soil is apparent in the hedgerows and roadside verges which often contain gorse and bracken. Some roadside verges form important grassland habitats with flora indicative of the acidic soils. Those at Crockleford Heath and Pyecats Corner are identified as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

The present day settlement pattern and road infrastructure is based on the medieval system of farms and villages. It is a low density, rural settlement pattern of scattered farms and halls, hamlets, villages and small market towns such as Elmstead Market. The farmsteads are large and form visible clusters of agricultural buildings in the open landscape. The villages are traditionally focussed around a village green, heath or common although many of these have been infilled by inter-war and post-war smallholdings or more recent housing so that their structure is no longer visible. A network of narrow lanes connects the scattered farms and villages. Many of these are ancient, were previously grazed, and have important roadside trees or verges. By contrast, the A120(T) cuts across the landscape on embankment or in cutting.

This is an exposed and windswept plateau where the sky dominates in any view. As a result, landscape character is greatly affected by the state of the sky, and communication towers, pylons and other vertical structures stand out as prominent elements. The water tower at Horsley Cross is a prominent structure that now forms an important visual landmark in the open landscape. Church towers are also visible landmark features.

EVALUATION

Character: This area has strong field patterns, distinctive settlement character and supports areas of heathland, ancient woodland and apple orchards. However, the loss of landscape features such as heaths and commons, unimproved pastures, village greens, hedgerows and ancient woodlands as a result of agricultural intensification, development and Dutch elm disease means that landscape character of this area has been eroded. Overall, character is considered to be **moderate**.

Condition: This agricultural plateau landscape is intensively cultivated and well maintained, although the condition of the hedgerows and woodland has been declining through the loss of elm, reduction in need of stock proof field boundaries and lack of management of hedgerows and woodland. Important landscape features such as heathland have also been lost. Landscape condition is in **decline**.

Change

- Infilling of village greens and former heaths with built development leading to loss of settlement structure, communal areas and village focus.
- Loss of acid grassland and heath habitats.
- Introduction of dense coniferous shelter belts in place of poplar.

- Loss of ancient deciduous woodland, neglect of traditional management such as coppicing and general shrinking of the woodland resource.
- Hedgerow loss associated with expansion of fields and agricultural intensification.
- Urbanising impact of service facilities, including buildings and lighting, associated with the A120(T).
- Pressure for expansion of built development on the edges of Colchester and suburbanisation of the landscape.
- Pressure for large scale built development at major road junctions and some highly sensitive plateau edges – with potential for a very high visual impact.
- Pressure for communication masts on high ground, particularly on the edges of the plateau.
- Road improvements including signage, line painting and widening which threaten the intimate rural character of the historic lanes.
- Impact of light pollution on the landscape at night.

Sensitivity

The plateau landscape is visually sensitive as a result of its open and rural character and long views. The remaining heaths, village greens, ancient woodlands, hedgerow trees, historic lanes and unimproved grasslands/roadside verges are the features that are most sensitive to change. Areas of particular high sensitivity to built development are those on the edge of the plateau overlooking the *Stour Valley System (6A)*, the *Alresford Valley System (6C)* and the *Holland Valley System (6D)*.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

The landscape strategy for the *Bromley Heaths* landscape is to **conserve** the rural character and historic elements of the landscape and to **enhance** woodland cover, hedgerow condition and heathland character. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Consider opportunities for the restoration of heathland and acid grassland on former heathland areas.

- Conserve shelter belts of native species such as oak and poplar, resisting the use of *Leylandii* hedges or plastic sheeting in place of native windbreaks.
- Enhance the wooded character of the landscape by promoting the creation of new woodlands or extending existing ancient woodlands. Woodland creation should involve natural regeneration or use of species typical of the area including oak, sweet chestnut, ash, hazel and birch.
- Conserve all ancient woodland sites, and promote appropriate management through natural regeneration, control of non-native species and reintroduction coppicing as a management tool for neglected woodlands.
- Promote management of hedgerows as coppice, particularly elm hedges which would be attacked by Dutch Elm Disease if left to grow, with oak and ash standards left to form future timber trees.
- Maintain the historic lanes with their ancient oaks and unimproved roadside verges. Resist road improvements or widening would threaten their rural character and biodiversity interest.
- Conserve the historic dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets and scattered farmsteads, and the identity of individual settlements. Concrete kerbs, bright upward lighting and ornamental landscape planting all have an urbanising impact on the rural landscape.
- Service facilities, factories or employment sites that use local materials and informal native planting are likely to have less impact on landscape character.
- Ensure expansion of built development does not intrude onto the highly sensitive crests of slopes where development would be conspicuous on the skyline or restrict important views.
- Particular care should be taken in the siting of communication masts or other vertical elements - these have the potential to be highly visible in this open landscape. This also applies for large scale rural buildings e.g. for agriculture.
- Opportunities exist for creation of some innovative landscapes and architecture provided they fit with the scale of the landscape, utilise local materials and planting species and maintain the scattered rural settlement pattern.
- Use of full cut-off lights and sensitively designed lighting schemes can reduce the impact of light pollution on the rural environment and night skies.
- Conserve views to important landmarks such as manorial halls and church towers and conserve the setting of these features.

7B ST OSYTH/GREAT BENTLEY HEATHS

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Southern extension of the *Bromley Heaths* encompassing Great Bentley and St Osyth.
- Highly productive open plateau of arable fields divided by low, gappy hedgerows with occasional hedgerow oaks.
- Ancient woodlands form backdrop to views and are typically sweet chestnut coppice with oak standards.
- The underlying sandy/acidic soils result in characteristic vegetation – now largely restricted to the hedgerows and roadside verges which often contain gorse and bracken.
- Ancient settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, hamlets and villages, the villages traditionally focussed around a village green, heath or common.
- Network of narrow lanes connects the scattered farms and villages, some with important roadside trees or verges.
- Church towers are important landmark features.

DESCRIPTION

The *St Osyth/Great Bentley Heaths* is a southern extension of the *Bromley Heaths* encompassing Great Bentley and Osyth. Like the *Bromley Heaths* it is also underlain by a solid geology of London Clay and capped by a veneer of glacial loam and the deep, coarse, loamy brown soils support good agricultural land.

The flat, open plateau is dominated by large scale, geometric fields indicative of late enclosure. These productive arable fields are divided by low, gappy hedgerows with occasional hedgerow oaks. The colour and texture of the agricultural landscape changes with the seasons resulting in a dynamic landscape. Although much woodland cover has been lost over the years as a result of agricultural intensification, a number of ancient woodlands break the monotony of the intensively cultivated landscape. Maldon Wood and Riddles Wood are sweet chestnut coppice with oak standards, but also including species such as hornbeam, birch, ash and wild service tree. The ground flora is typical of acidic woodland soil comprising species such as wood sage, foxglove, bracken and bluebells that carpet the woodland floor in spring. The sandy nature of the soil is also visible in the hedgerows and roadside verges which often contain gorse and bracken. Some of these roadside verges have been identified as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) for their unusual acidic soil flora.

Groups of circular cropmarks unique to north-east Essex, and thought to be henges, are located at Little Bentley and Great Bentley indicating early settlement in this area. The low density, rural settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, hamlets and villages is an ancient one. The villages are traditionally focussed around a village green, heath or common although many of these have been infilled by inter-war smallholdings or more recent housing so that their structure is no longer visible. Great Bentley is a notable exception in that it has retained its village green and today boasts the largest village green in England. A number

of former heaths including Weeley Heath, St Osyth Heath, South Heath and Angel Heath have been converted to smallholdings or fields. For example, Angel Heath is now the settlement of Ainger's Green. A network of narrow lanes connects the scattered farms and villages. Many of these are ancient, were previously grazed, and have important roadside trees or verges. This is an exposed and windswept plateau where the sky dominates in any view. As a result, landscape character is greatly affected by the state of the sky and communication towers, pylons and other vertical structures stand out as prominent elements. Its elevation allows good views from the edge of the plateau over surrounding landscapes, for example from Ainger's Green towards Brightlingsea and the coast. Church towers are important landmark features.

EVALUATION

Character: This area has distinctive character field patterns, settlement character and vegetation types. However, the loss of landscape features such as heaths and commons, unimproved pastures, village greens, hedgerows and ancient woodlands as a result of agricultural intensification, development and Dutch elm disease means that landscape character of this area has been eroded. Overall, character is considered to be **moderate**.

Condition: This agricultural plateau landscape is intensively cultivated and well maintained, although the condition of the hedgerows and woodland has been declining through the loss of elm, reduction in need of stock proof field boundaries and lack of management of hedgerows and woodland. Landscape condition is therefore in **decline**.

Change

- Loss of ancient and other deciduous woodland as a result of conversion to agricultural use.
- Neglect of traditional woodland management such as coppicing plus invasion of species in some of the ancient coppice woodlands – leading to a decline in habitat quality.
- Loss of acid grassland and heath habitat and areas of common land.
- Infilling of village greens and former heaths with built development leading to loss of settlement structure, communal areas and village focus.
- Hedgerow loss associated with expansion of fields and agricultural intensification.
- Road improvements including signage, line painting and widening which threaten the intimate rural character of the historic lanes.
- Light pollution – impact on the night landscape.

Sensitivity

The plateau landscape is visually sensitive as a result of its open and rural character and long views. The remaining ancient woodlands, heaths, ancient lanes with diverse roadside verges, village greens and hedgerow oaks are particularly sensitive landscape features. Areas with high sensitivity to built development are those on the edge of the plateau overlooking the *St Osyth Coastal Slopes (3C)*, the *Alresford Valley System (6C)* and the *Holland Valley System (6D)*.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

The landscape strategy for this the rural landscape of the *St. Osyth/Great Bentley Heaths* is to **conserve** the rural character and historic elements of the landscape and to **enhance** woodland cover, hedgerow condition and heathland character. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Consider the regeneration and management of heathland and acid grassland on former heathland areas.
- Enhance the wooded character of the landscape by promoting the planting of new woodlands or extending existing woodlands. Woodland creation should be through natural regeneration or using species typical of the area including oak, sweet chestnut, ash, hazel and birch.
- Conserve all ancient woodland sites, and promote appropriate management through natural regeneration, control of non-native species and reintroduction coppicing as a management tool for neglected woodlands.
- Promote management of hedgerows as coppice, particularly elm hedges which would be attacked by Dutch Elm Disease if left to grow. Oak and ash standards should be left to form future timber trees.
- Maintain the historic lanes with their ancient oaks and unimproved roadside verges. Resist road improvements or widening would threaten their rural character and biodiversity interest.
- Conserve the historic dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets and scattered farmsteads, and the identity of individual settlements. Concrete kerbs, bright upward lighting and ornamental landscape planting all have an urbanising impact on the rural landscape.
- Service facilities, factories or employment sites that use local materials and informal native planting are likely to have less impact on landscape character.
- Ensure expansion of built development does not intrude onto the highly sensitive crests of slopes where development would be conspicuous on the skyline or restrict important views.

- Particular care should be taken in the siting of communication masts or other vertical elements - these have the potential to be highly visible in this open landscape. This also applies for large scale rural buildings e.g. for agriculture.
- Opportunities exist for creation of some innovative landscapes and architecture provided they fit with the scale of the landscape, utilise local materials and planting species and maintain the scattered rural settlement pattern.
- Use of full cut-off lights and sensitively designed lighting schemes can reduce the impact of light pollution on the rural environment and night skies.
- Conserve/maintain views to important landmarks such as manorial halls and church towers and conserve the setting of these features.

8. CLAY PLATEAUX



8A Tendring and Wix Clay Plateau



8B Clacton and The Sokens Clay Plateau

8 CLAY PLATEAUX

Introduction

The *Clay Plateaux* are the large scale, gently undulating agricultural clay landscapes that make up the eastern part of the Tendring Plateau. They are typically lower than the *Heathland Plateaux*, lying below 25m AOD.

Physical Influences

At the beginning of the Tertiary Era, some 60 million years ago, Tendring was submerged beneath a shallow, warm sea, similar to present day coastal areas of Indonesia or Malaysia. Rivers flowed into the sea bringing mud and silt which settled to form London Clay, the most widespread geological formation in Tendring. A feature of the London Clay is the 'septarian nodules' or 'copperas stones', produced as contraction cracks in the clay are filled with mineral calc-spar or pyrites. These nodules are hard-wearing and are used as a building material in an area that lacks hard lime or sandstone for building. Minor brooks and creeks drain the clay plateaux creating small-scale undulations in the landform.

Human Influences

The heavy clay soils and oak woods of this area would have made it difficult for early farming communities to cultivate the soils. However, woodland clearance in the Iron Age resulted in the emergence of a mixed pastoral and tilled landscape. The Sokens (Walton, Kirby and Thorpe) emerged during the Saxon period, the word Soken deriving from 'Soca', or privilege, because these areas were exempt from all civil taxes.

By the 13th century Tendring had an established manorial 'agribusiness' with a progressive conversion of uncultivated land to arable and the introduction of mills which symbolised the industrial revolution of the 13th century. During the 16th century brick emerged, baked from the fine London Clays of Tendring. The introduction of crop rotation and the improvement of farm implements increased productivity. The latter half of the 18th century was a time of high opportunity for the millers and there was a rapid increase in wind mills on the windswept plateaux. During the early and mid 19th century seaside holidays became popular and this resulted in the development of Clacton, Frinton and Walton along the 'Essex Sunshine Coast'. After WWII the intensity of farming in Tendring increased yet again and meadows were ploughed, copses removed and fields enlarged. In the 1960s a strain of Dutch Elm disease struck Tendring and by the 1970s many of the elms, a dominant tree on the London Clays, were dead.

Ecological Designations

Site Name	Character Area	Significance	Designation	Description
Stonehall Wood	8A	Regional	SINC	A woodland showing evidence of recent felling. Some species are actively managed i.e. sweet chestnut (<i>Castanea sativa</i>) and hornbeam (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>).

Simon's Wood	8A	Regional	SINC	An ancient woodland now densely replanted with conifers especially pine (<i>Pinus spp</i>). The ground flora is poor.
Gravel Wood	8A	Regional	SINC	An ancient coppice-with-standards woodland where Sweet chestnut (<i>Castanea sativa</i>) dominate and hornbeam (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>) appear frequently.
Killgrove Wood	8A	Regional	SINC	Pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) standards are dominant within this ancient woodland. Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>) and horse chestnut (<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>) are also common.
Dengewell Wood	8A	Regional	SINC	An ancient woodland dominated by pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) standards over a hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) and sweet chestnut (<i>Castanea sativa</i>) coppice layer.
Broadmeadow Wood	8A	Regional	SINC	An ancient coppice-with-standards woodland with an open understorey structure.
Glebe Wood	8A	Regional	SINC	One of a number of closely grouped ancient woodland in a generally poorly wooded area.
Oakhurst Wood	8B	Regional	SINC	A deciduous woodland defined y pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) and Alder (<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>) standards and hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) and sweet chestnut (<i>Castanea sativa</i>) coppice.
Gutteridge Wood	8B	Regional	SINC	A neglected hornbeam (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>) coppice woodland with dominant standards of pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) and silver birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>).

Hartley Wood	8B	Regional	SINC	An ancient woodland containing pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>), elm (<i>Ulmus spp.</i>) and hornbeam (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>). There is a coppice-with-standards structure
Coppin's Hall Wood	8B	Regional	SINC	A deciduous woodland containing hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) coppice and pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) and hornbeam (<i>Betulus carpinus</i>) standards.
Weeleyhall Wood	8B	National	SINC, SSSI, EWT Reserve	This is one of the best surviving woods in Tendring. There is an important ground flora including bluebell (<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>).
Hollandhall Wood	8B	Regional	SINC	An area of high forest of pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) and an understorey layer of hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>) and holly (<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>).
Witton Wood	8B	Regional	EWT Reserve	A small spinney consisting of both native and introduced tree species.
Thorpe Green	8B	Regional	SINC	A grassland habitat containing a strong mix of grass and herb species.

Settlement Form and Pattern

The *Clay Plateaux* are typically characterised by an ancient pattern of isolated farms, hamlets and villages interspersed with fields. The scattered halls are typically large, ornate country houses which have been remodelled on the sites of former manorial halls. Scattered farmsteads are often large and have extensive outbuildings. Also characteristic of this area are rural village streets where a number of cottages are scattered along a short stretch of road, sometimes just on one side of the street with views out over the landscape. Village greens are also a feature of the area and would have formed a focus for the villages before they were infilled by housing.

Landscape Character Areas

- 8A Tendring and Wix Clay Plateau
- 8B Clacton and The Sokens Clay Plateau

8A TENDRING AND WIX CLAY PLATEAU

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Gently undulating rural agricultural plateau in the north-east of Tendring underlain by London Clay.
- Remote rural arable landscape of large scale, geometric fields divided by low, gappy hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees.
- Small remnants of ancient woodlands have a neglected coppice with standards structure.
- Ancient settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and villages.
- Village greens are typical of villages, although many of these greens have been infilled by housing.
- Network of narrow lanes connects the scattered farms and villages.
- Views of church towers and spires across the landscape.

DESCRIPTION

The *Tendring and Wix Clay Plateau* is a gently undulating rural agricultural plateau, underlain by London Clay, in the north-east of Tendring. Topographical interest is provided by minor undulations resulting from the minor tributary streams which flow south into Holland Brook or east into Ramsey Creek and Hamford Water. Standing water is a common feature in areas of poorest drainage. An outcrop of Red Crag, which forms part of same line as the Naze cliffs, provides the high ground upon which Beaumont Hall sits, overlooking Hamford Water to the east and the agricultural plateau to the west.

The rural agricultural landscape is predominantly arable, resulting in changes in colour and texture through the seasons. The plateau is exposed to the easterly winds from the North Sea and rows of poplars are sometimes used as windbreaks, elsewhere the arable landscape is divided by low gappy hedgerows, with occasional mature hedgerow oaks. Although much woodland cover has been lost as a result of agricultural intensification, a number of small remnants of ancient woodlands survive including Stonehall, Gravel and Killgrove Woods. These woodlands typically have a coppice with standards structure with sweet chestnut, hornbeam, hazel and small-leaved lime coppice and oak standards dominating the canopy. Stour Wood is an important area of ancient woodland that extends down onto the Stour Valley slopes where it adjoins important wetland habitats.

The present day settlement pattern is a low density, rural settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and villages. Some hamlets have developed around a manor hall, for example Wrabness, Tendring and Beaumont. Other villages were built up around a village green, for example Bocking's Green, Wix Green, Stones Green, Tendring Green and Goose Green. Many of these greens have subsequently been infilled by housing or have been eliminated by road widening, although they have retained their names. Wix is the largest village in the character area, developing from a crossing of two roads at 'Wick's Cross' close to the medieval monastic settlement of Wix Abbey.

A network of narrow lanes connects the scattered farms and villages. These tend to follow ancient routes along ridges where there are good views over the landscape. The A120(T), by contrast, crosses the landscape on embankment and in cutting, bearing no relation to landscape structure or topography.

EVALUATION

Character: This is a highly rural agricultural landscape with a low density pattern of settlement. It is arable dominated but includes intact remnants of ancient woodland. However, the loss of landscape features as a result of past agricultural intensification and Dutch elm disease means that landscape character of this area has been eroded. Overall, character is considered to be **moderate**.

Condition: The agricultural landscape is intensively cultivated. The loss of important landscape features such as the village greens, roadside commons, hedgerows and ancient woodlands as a result of agricultural intensification and Dutch elm disease means that landscape diversity and condition has been **declining** over many years.

Change

- Loss of elms reducing sense of intimacy and enclosure.
- Loss of ancient deciduous woodland and general shrinking of the woodland resource.
- Neglect of traditional woodland and tree management such as coppicing and pollarding.
- Spread of invasive exotic species such as sycamore and rhododendron, displacing native species in the woodlands.
- Introduction of conifers into native deciduous woodlands resulting a change in character and loss of species diversity.
- Loss of traditional permanent pastures, and now absence of grazing animals to maintain areas of grassland.
- Hedgerow loss associated with expansion of fields and agricultural intensification.
- Infilling of village greens with built development or road building leading to loss of settlement structure and focus.
- Pressure for development and Incremental extension/enlargement of rural settlements – and loss of individual settlement identity.
- Road improvements including signage, line painting and widening which threatens the intimate rural character of the historic lanes.
- Light pollution – effect on 'dark skies' and the night landscape.

Sensitivity

The landscape is visually sensitive as a result of its open and rural character and long views – here the inappropriate siting or location of any development such as a farm building or tall structures has the potential to have a high visual impact. However, the woodlands and

gently undulating topography provide some opportunities to integrate development. Areas of particular sensitivity to built development are those on the edge of the plateau towards the *Hamford Coastal Slopes (3A)*, and overlooking the *Stour Valley System (6A)*, the *Holland Valley System (6D)* and *Ramsey Valley System (6E)*.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

The *Tendring and Wix Clay Plateau* is a highly rural landscape. The landscape strategy for this plateau landscape should be to **conserve** the rural character and settlement pattern and to **enhance** the condition of woodlands and hedgerows. The management strategy includes the following guidance:

- Conserve all ancient woodland sites, and promote appropriate management through natural regeneration, control of non-native species and reintroduction of coppicing as a management tool for neglected woodlands.
- Increasing extent of native deciduous woodland using natural regeneration or locally occurring native species would enhance the wooded character of the landscape. The aim should be to link existing sites.
- Consider opportunities for the creation of meadows and permanent pasture to restore grassland habitats lost through agricultural intensification, for example the creation of grassland field margins.
- Conserve hedgerows as important wildlife habitats and landscape features and promote management of hedgerows as coppice, with oak standards left to form future timber trees. Consider opportunities for reinstatement of hedges, particularly where they have been lost from highly visible locations.
- Conserve the historic lanes with their ancient oaks and unimproved roadside verges. Resist road improvements or widening that would threaten their rural character.
- Conserve the historic dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets and scattered farmsteads and resist further infilling of village greens.
- Consider the impact of any development on the margins of the plateau landscape - ensure built development does not intrude onto the highly sensitive crests of slopes where it would be conspicuous on the skyline or restrict important views.

- Particular care should be taken in the siting of communication masts or other vertical elements - these have the potential to be highly visible in this open landscape. This also applies for large scale rural buildings e.g. for agriculture.
- Use of full cut-off lights and sensitively designed lighting schemes can reduce the impact of light pollution on night skies.
- Maintain views to, and the settings of, important landmarks such as church towers and spires.

8B CLACTON AND THE SOKENS CLAY PLATEAU

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- 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, including Weeleyhall Wood, one of the finest woods in the district.
- Good access provided by the A133, B1033 and B1441 which form a backbone for the ribbon development that dominates the areas around Clacton and Frinton.
- Urban fringe character enhanced by presence of nurseries, caravan parks, paddocks, holiday parks and industrial estates on the edges of Clacton and Frinton.
- Thorpe-le-Soken is a rural settlement, important in medieval times, and has a wealth of historic buildings.

DESCRIPTION

The *North Clacton and the Sokens Clay Plateau* is a gently undulating agricultural plateau, divided in half by Holland Brook, in the south-east of Tendring. Topographical interest is provided by minor undulations as a result of minor tributary streams which flow into Holland Brook. Like the *Tendring and Wix Clay Plateau* it is also underlain by a solid geology of London Clay which gives rise to slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged clayey soils which support moderate/good agricultural land. Standing water is common as ponds or reservoirs.

The landscape is a rural agricultural landscape composed of fields of various sizes and shapes. It is predominantly an arable landscape with a great sense of space where colours and textures in the fields change through the seasons. Low, gappy hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees enclose the fields and small remnants of ancient woodland provide interesting features in an open arable scene. Weeleyhall Wood is one of the finest woods in the district, a sweet chestnut coppice with oak standards. The importance of this woodland is reflected in its designation as a SSSI.

This area is relatively densely settled as a result of the popularity of seaside resorts of Clacton and Frinton during the early and mid 19th century and the good access provided by the A133, B1033 and B1441. The roads form a backbone for development today and the original village centres are often hidden within newer built development. For example, the village of Great Clacton has been completely subsumed within the suburbs of the 19th century resort of Clacton-on-Sea. Ribbon development along the B1441 has almost totally joined the settlements of Great Clacton, Little Clacton and Weeley while ribbon development along the B1033 has merged Frinton with Kirby Cross. The open cliff tops provide important public open space where the underlying landscape shows through the

urban fabric. Despite the recent development, there are still signs of the historic settlement pattern, for example at Great Holland where the hall and church are set aside from the village where they command views over Holland Haven.

The landscape beyond the main settlements has an urban fringe character, particularly in the south of the area, with the presence of nurseries, caravan parks, paddocks, holiday parks and industrial estates on the edges of Clacton and Frinton. The A133 also has an influence on the landscape, bringing with it embankments cuttings, roundabouts and service areas. There is still a distinct rural gap between Kirby Cross and Thorpe-le-Soken. Thorpe-le-Soken was an important settlement in medieval times and has a wealth of historic buildings. Thorpe Hall grounds are of interest for their early 20th century formal and informal planting and is on English Heritage's register of historic parks and gardens.

EVALUATION

Character: This agricultural plateau landscape is intensively cultivated and influenced by urban fringe land uses. The presence of extensive areas of built development, urban fringe land uses around Clacton and the merging of settlements has masked the rural character of the landscape and the historic settlement pattern. The overall landscape character is **weak**, although could even be considered to be **poor** in some urban fringe locations.

Condition: The loss of landscape features such as unimproved pastures, village greens, hedgerows and ancient woodlands as a result of agricultural intensification, built development and Dutch elm disease means that landscape diversity and condition has been **declining** over many years. Within the urban fringe surrounding Clacton, development has frequently severed parcels of agricultural land and these marginal areas remain unmanaged/neglected or have been converted to amenity uses such as horse paddocks.

Change

- Loss of elms in the past reducing sense of intimacy and enclosure.
- Loss of ancient deciduous woodland and general shrinking of the woodland resource.
- Neglect of traditional woodland and tree management such as coppicing and pollarding.
- Spread of invasive exotic species such as Sycamore and Rhododendron, displacing native species in the woodlands.
- Loss of traditional permanent pastures and now, absence of grazing animals to manage areas of grassland.
- Loss of village greens.
- Hedgerow loss associated with agricultural intensification and built development.
- Road improvements including signage, line painting and widening which threaten the intimate rural character of the historic lanes.
- Decline and dereliction of historic buildings e.g. Great Holland Mill.
- Light pollution - effects on the night sky.

- Ribbon development along roads between settlements resulting in the merging of adjacent settlements into one continuous 'suburb' and loss of individual settlement identity.
- Severance of agricultural land on the urban fringe of land held for future development, no longer being actively managed.
- Introduction of typical urban fringe land uses, such as horse paddocks.

Sensitivity

The landscape is visually sensitive as a result of its open and rural character and long views. However, the woodlands and gently undulating topography provide some opportunities to integrate development. Sensitive features include the remaining ancient woodlands, village greens, historic lanes and hedgerow oaks. Areas of particular sensitivity to built development are those on the edge of the plateau towards the *Hamford Coastal Slopes (3A)*, *St. Osyth Coastal Slopes* and overlooking the *Holland Valley System (6D)*.

STRATEGY

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Enhance	Conserve & Enhance	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Creation	Restore & Enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Landscape Management Strategy

The *Clacton and the Sokens Clay Plateau* is one of the most densely developed rural landscapes in Tendring and has also suffered decline of landscape features. The strategy for this plateau landscape should be to **strengthen** and **enhance** the character of the individual villages and the rural wooded character of the landscape. There are particular opportunities to **enhance** the urban fringe around Frinton and Clacton through the creation of a new landscape character. The management strategy includes the following guidelines:

- Conserve all ancient woodland sites, and promote appropriate management through natural regeneration, control of non-native species and reintroduction of coppicing as a management tool for neglected woodlands.
- Increase extent of native deciduous woodland using natural regeneration or locally occurring native species to enhance the wooded character of the landscape. The aim should be to link existing sites.
- Conserve hedgerows as important wildlife habitats and landscape features and promote management of hedgerows as coppice, with oak standards left to form future timber trees. Consider opportunities for reinstatement of hedges, particularly where they have been lost from highly visible locations e.g. along roadsides.

- Consider opportunities for the creation of meadows or permanent pasture to restore grassland habitats lost through agricultural intensification, for example the creation of grassland field margins.
- Maintain the historic leafy lanes with their ancient oaks and unimproved roadside verges. Resist road improvements or widening that would threaten their rural character.
- Conserve the open cliff tops along the coastline - protecting the cliffs for their nature conservation interest, natural vegetation cover, public open space and views.
- Conserve views to historic features, for example Great Holland church tower.
- Consider the impact of any development on the margins of the plateau landscape – where it would have the potential to be highly visible on the adjacent character areas of the *Hamford Coastal Slopes (3A)*, *St. Osyth Coastal Slopes* and overlooking the *Holland Valley System (6D)*.
- Particular care should be taken in the siting of communication masts or other vertical elements – these have the potential to be highly visible in this open landscape. This also applies for large scale rural buildings e.g. for agriculture.
- Use of full cut-off lights and sensitively designed lighting schemes can reduce the impact of light pollution on night skies.
- Restrict further ribbon development and consider opportunities to strengthen and enhance the landscape setting to the villages through planting and enhancing, or creating new, village greens, which could help to maintain the individual character of individual settlements.
- Strengthen the landscape character around existing urban settlements (Clacton and Frinton). Ensure that development does not result in further severance and fragmentation of agricultural land and promote positive land management for remaining open areas.
- There are considerable opportunities for woodland creation in urban fringe areas to create new character and provide screening.

TENDING DISTRICT

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS (1:25,000)

FIELD SURVEY SHEET

Program Name and Location

Draft ICA:

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Topography

Geology/Soils

Hydrology

Landcover

APPENDIX I:

Field Survey Form

ECOLOGY/BIODIVERSITY

Habitats

Diversity

Designations

ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

Key visible historic components

Period of predominant character

Archaeology

LANDSCAPE PATTERNS

Communications

Settlement

Field boundaries

Woodland/meadows

Access/recreation

Tranquillity

Landmarks

SETTLEMENT WITHIN THE LANDSCAPE

Pattern

Density

Age, style, materials

Relationship to landscape

**TENDRING DISTRICT
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS (1:25,000)
FIELD SURVEY SHEET**

Photograph Nos and locations: _____

Draft LCA:

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Topography.....
Geology/Soils.....
Hydrology.....
Landcover.....

ECOLOGY/BIODIVERSITY

Habitats.....
.....
Diversity.....
Designations.....

ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

Key visible historic components.....
Period of predominant character.....
.....
Archaeology.....

LANDSCAPE PATTERNS

Communication.....
Settlement.....
Field Boundaries.....
Woodland/trees.....
Access/recreation.....
Tranquillity.....
Landmarks.....

SETTLEMENT WITHIN THE LANDSCAPE

Pattern.....
Density.....
Age, style, materials.....
Relationship to landscape.....

GENERAL DESCRIPTION/KEY CHARACTERISTICS

AESTHETIC AND PERCEPTUAL QUALITIES

VIEWS	distant	framed	intermittent	panoramic	corridor
SCALE	intimate	small	medium	large	
ENCLOSURE	confined	enclosed	semi-enclosed	open	exposed
VARIETY	complex	varied	simple	uniform	
TEXTURE	smooth	textured	rough	very rough	
COLOUR	monochrome	muted	colourful	garish	
MOVEMENT	remote	vacant	peaceful	active	
UNITY	unified	interrupted	fragmented	chaotic	
NATURALNESS	undisturbed	restrained	tamed	disturbed	

LANDSCAPE CONDITION

- Detracting Features.....
- Survival of characteristic features.....
- Visual unity.....
- Cultural Integrity.....
- Ecological integrity.....
- Functional integrity.....

LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

- Distinctiveness.....
- Strength of character.....
- Landform.....
- Extent of tree cover.....
- Visibility.....

VISIBLE FORCES FOR CHANGE

.....
.....
.....
.....

STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & Strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & Recreate	Conserve & Improve	Conserve & Restore
	Poor	Create	Restore & Improve	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong

Character

DESIGN GUIDANCE

(management issues and opportunities)

Settlement edges

.....
.....

New development sites

.....
.....

Employment sites

.....
.....

Design and Materials

.....
.....
.....

SKETCHES AND NOTES

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Landscape Character Areas

National Countryside Character Area (1:250,000)	Essex County Landscape Character Area Draft Assessment November 2007 (1:50,000)	District Landscape Character Areas (1:25,000/1:10,000)
No 31: Greater Thames Estuary	E3 Tendring Plain	2A Brightlingsea Drained Marshes
		2B St Oyston Drained Marshes
		2C Brightlingsea Coastal Slopes
		2D Holland Coastal Slopes
		4C Brightlingsea Peninsula
		4D St Oyston Coastal Ridge
		15 Colne Estuary Marshes
		1A Brightlingsea Creek Marshes
		4C Colne Point Marshes
		2A Brightlingsea Drained Marshes
E4 Harford Haven	E4 Harford Haven	2B St Oyston Drained Marshes
		2C Soland Haven
		2D Harford Drained Marshes and Islands
		3A Harford Coastal Slopes
		3B Brightlingsea Coastal Slopes
		3C St Oyston Coastal Slopes
		4C Brightlingsea Peninsula
		4D St Oyston Coastal Ridge
		15 Harford Water Marshes
		2B Harford Drained Marshes and Islands
E5 Harford Water	E5 Harford Water	2A Harford Coastal Slopes

APPENDIX 3

Compatibility between the County and District Assessments

Landscape Character Areas

National Countryside Character Area (1:250,000)	Essex County Landscape Character Area: Draft Assessment November 2001 (1:50,000)	District Landscape Character Areas (1:25,000/1:10,000)
No 81: Greater Thames Estuary	E3 Tendring Plain	2A Brightlingsea Drained Marshes 2B St Osyth Drained Marshes 2C Holland Haven 3B Brightlingsea Coastal Slopes 3C St Osyth Coastal Slopes 3D Holland Coastal Slopes 4C Brightlingsea Peninsula 4D St Osyth Coastal Ridge
	F6 Mersea Island	1B Colne Estuary Marshes
	F7 Brightlingsea-Clacton-Frinton Coast	1A Brightlingsea Creek Marshes 1C Colne Point Marshes 2A Brightlingsea Drained Marshes 2B St Osyth Drained Marshes 2C Holland Haven 2D Hamford Drained Marshes and Islands 3A Hamford Coastal Slopes 3B Brightlingsea Coastal Slopes 3C St Osyth Coastal Slopes 4C Brightlingsea Peninsula 4D St Osyth Coastal Ridge
	F8 Hamford Water	1D Hamford Water Marshes 2D Hamford Drained Marshes and Islands 3A Hamford Coastal Slopes

No 82: Suffolk Coast and Heaths	F9 Stour Estuary Slopes	2E Parkeston Drained Marshes 5B Ramsey Creek 6A Stour Valley System 6E Ramsey Valley System
	F10 Stour Estuary	1E Stour Estuary Marshes
No 86: South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland	C8 Stour Valley	5C Cattawade Marshes 6A Stour Valley System
No 111: Northern Thames Basin	F9 Stour Estuary Slopes	4A The Oakley Ridge 7A Bromley Heaths 8A Tendring and Wix Clay Plateau
	E3 Tendring Plain	5A Holland Brook 6B Ardleigh Valley System 6C Alresford Valley System 6D Holland Valley System 7A Bromley Heaths 7B St Osyth/Great Bentley Heaths 8A Tendring and Wix Clay Plateau 8B Clacton and The Sokens Clay Plateau

The Tendring District Landscape Character Assessment fits within the assessment hierarchy. Differences in the county and district boundaries are due to the difference in scales at which the assessments were undertaken. For example, the boundaries of County character areas F9, *Stour Estuary Slopes*, and E3, *Tendring Plain*, are accurate to 1:50,000 but in the District assessment they are accurate to 1:25,000 and show more precisely defined boundaries.

