

**Hatfield Peverel  
Local Landscape Character Assessment**

for

Hatfield Peverel Parish Council

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# 1 Introduction

## Background

- 1.1 The Landscape Partnership was commissioned by Hatfield Peverel Parish Council in August 2022 to provide an update to the original Local Landscape Character Assessment for the parish, which was undertaken by The Landscape Partnership in 2015.
- 1.2 The assessment is intended to assist the village in commenting on the appropriateness of the landscape aspects of any development within the village and/or its local setting that might come forward in the future.
- 1.3 This study builds on previous work undertaken at the national, county, district and parish levels. The areas identified are effectively 'sub areas' of the character areas already established in the Braintree District Landscape Character Assessment (2006). In the context of this study the relevant Landscape Character Areas are the 'Terling' and 'Boreham' Farmland Plateaux, and the 'Blackwater' and 'Lower Chelmer' River Valleys.
- 1.4 The brief for the project required the following main outputs, which will be used by Hatfield Peverel Parish Council to support their consideration and response to planning matters within the parish:
  - An assessment of the landscape character and sensitivity of the landscape character around both the village and the adjacent hamlet of Nounsley, building on work undertaken at a district level; and
  - A set of guidelines that inform opportunities for locating future green infrastructure and landscape enhancements to reinforce the landscape character of the village.
- 1.5 The assessment involved the identification of Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCAs), in both the vicinity of the existing settlement and in the more distant landscape around the fringes of the parish. It identifies the key characteristics present, as well as noting key features that should be retained and/or protected, and landscape-related opportunities and constraints. The assessment of each character area concludes with a set of landscape guidelines to inform potential locations for accommodating green infrastructure, opportunities for landscape enhancement, habitat improvements, and reinforcing the landscape character of the village.

## Local Landscape Character Assessment - 2022 update

- 1.6 A number of housing developments have been approved within the village since the original Local Landscape Character Assessment was undertaken. The parish boundary has also been amended in the intervening period to exclude a proposed development site at Mayfield Nursery/Wood End Farm, which will relate to the town of Witham. In addition to this, Braintree District Council has adopted a new Local Plan. The Parish Council therefore invited The Landscape Partnership to review the Local Landscape Character Assessment in light of the changes which have taken place, and to update it where necessary. The review considers the effects of the main developments that have taken place within the village, as well as any broader changes to the landscape.

## 2 Context

### District Context

- 2.1 In order to assist with the development of Local Development Frameworks, Braintree District Council commissioned a Landscape Character Assessment of the district, in conjunction with the neighbouring Brentwood and Chelmsford Borough Councils and Maldon and Uttlesford District Councils. The aim of the study, completed in September 2006, was to provide a comprehensive assessment of landscape character to inform land use planning and land management decisions.
- 2.2 Although the village itself lies within one character area, the assessment identified four different Landscape Character Areas (see Figure 04) across the overall Hatfield Peverel parish:
- A7 and A7a Lower Chelmer River Valley and Lower Chelmer River Valley Floor (shared with Maldon District)
  - A9 and A9a Blackwater River Valley and Blackwater River Valley Floor (shared with Maldon District)
  - B17 Terling Farmland Plateau (shared with Chelmsford Borough)
  - B21 Boreham Farmland Plateau, within which Hatfield Peverel and Nounsley are located (shared with Chelmsford Borough and Maldon District)
- 2.3 Each Landscape Character Area is described and the Key Characteristics are defined. Key planning and land management issues are identified, and the sensitivity to change of the key characteristics and landscape elements within each of the character areas discussed. The descriptions conclude with a series of Landscape Planning and Land Management Guidelines - see Appendix A for full Character Area descriptions of each area.
- 2.4 The key characteristics of the Lower Chelmer River Valley Landscape Character Area are described as:
- Shallow valley
  - Predominantly arable farmland on the valley slopes
  - The Lower Chelmer where it meets the River Blackwater has gentle valley sides
  - Overall strong sense of place and tranquillity away from Maldon and the A12 and the railway line
  - Mixture of arable and pastoral fields on the valley floor
  - The Lower Chelmer where it meets the River Blackwater has a wide flat valley floor
  - Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive feature in close proximity to the river
- 2.5 The key characteristics of the Blackwater River Valley Landscape Character Area are described as:
- Shallow valley
  - The valley sides slope gently up from the valley floor
  - Predominantly arable farmland on the valley slopes

- The Lower Blackwater near the confluence with the River Chelmer has gently valley slopes
- Overall strong sense of place and tranquillity away from the settlements of Braintree, Witham and Maldon and the A120, A12 and the railway line
- Mixture of arable and pastoral on the valley floor
- The River Blackwater Valley floor north of the A120 is narrow
- The River Blackwater near the confluence with the River Chelmer has a wide flat valley floor
- Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive features especially along the river banks

2.6 The key characteristics of the Terling Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Area are described as:

- Rolling arable farmland
- Irregular pattern of medium to large scale fields
- Scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small villages, typically with greens and ponds
- Network of narrow wining lanes
- Mostly tranquil away from the A12 and A131

2.7 The key characteristics of the Boreham Farmland Plateau Landscape Character Area are described as:

- Irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable and pastoral fields, marked by hedgerows, banks and ditches
- Small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape
- Scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small villages
- A concentration of isolated farmsteads
- Network of narrow winding lanes

### **Braintree District Local Plan**

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2.8 The Local Plan 2013-2033 is a document in two sections. Section 1 was adopted in February 2021, while Section 2 was adopted in July 2022. The Local Plan contains the main planning policy for the district and covers the period to 2033.

2.9 The Local Plan includes a set of policy maps, with the village of Hatfield Peverel being shown on Inset 36.

2.10 It is noted that the potential country park at Dannatt's Quarry is not shown in the new Local Plan for the District. It is understood, however, that the ownership of the site has now passed to Hatfield Peverel Parish Council (HPPC). It is the intention of HPPC to open the site as a proposed Community Park (Country Park) once landscape works have been completed. Currently the site is not open to the public with the exception of the public footpath which runs along part of the boundary.

2.11 The other landscape-related designations are unchanged since 2015.

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## Hatfield Peverel Neighbourhood Development Plan

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- 2.12 Hatfield Peverel Neighbourhood Development Plan was made in 2019 and now forms part of the statutory development plan.
- 2.13 The Neighbourhood Development Plan states that:
- A major attraction of the Parish is its rural location while being close to the road and rail networks, open spaces, countryside views and well established network of paths contributing to the overall appeal. It is this character that the community want to retain when considering any developments. A separate document, the Hatfield Peverel Landscape Character Assessment (2015) commissioned by the Parish Council, identifies areas of particular significance and describes the environment of the Parish. New building outside development boundaries should be appropriate to the countryside to protect and enhance the landscape character and biodiversity, geodiversity and amenity of the countryside.*
- 2.14 Two Local Green Spaces have been identified within the Neighbourhood Development Plan. These are protected open spaces which are important to the community. The designated Local Green Spaces are The Green and The Duck Pond. HPPC has also identified two additional Local Green Spaces which will be included in the updated Neighbourhood Development Plan. These are the proposed Community Park (Country Park) at Dannatts Quarry and the Community Land at Stonepath Meadow.
- 2.15 Policy HPE 5 seeks to protect the landscape setting of the village, and a number of important views have been identified in the Neighbourhood Development Plan. It is noted, however, that subsequently approved housing schemes have already altered Views 1 and 5 considerably. The Bellway development at Stonepath Meadow is also visible in View 9, which looks back towards the village.

## Planning permissions

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- 2.16 There are a number of housing developments that have been approved in Hatfield Peverel since 2015.
- 2.17 The Stonepath Meadow development by Bellway Homes (planning reference: 16/01813/OUT) is situated on the south-western edge of the village, in Local Landscape Character Area (LLCA) 2. The development, which is now complete, comprises 140 dwellings.
- 2.18 The eastern edge of the village will see considerable expansion with the following developments:
- Gleneagles (planning reference: 16/02156/OUT), which comprises 100 new dwellings
  - Land north of Maldon Road (planning reference: 20/01264/OUT), which comprises 110 new dwellings, and
  - Small Acres (planning reference: 21/02857/OUT), which comprises 17 new dwellings
- 2.19 These developments are situated within LLCA 4 and are yet to be built out. Also on the eastern side of the village are two smaller developments which have occurred within former garden areas, one at The Wheatsheaf (planning reference: 18/00851/FUL) and one at Heathers/Candletree (planning reference: 20/01465/FUL).
- 2.20 The former Arla site is situated at the northern edge of the village. This site, together with the neighbouring Hatfield Bury Farm, is designated as a Comprehensive Development Area within the

Local Plan. Planning permission has been granted at Hatfield Bury Farm to demolish the existing farm building and erect 54 new dwellings (planning reference: 19/01803/FUL), while the Arla site has planning permission for up to 145 new homes (planning reference: 16/02096/OUT). Also within the Comprehensive Development Area is the Sorrells Field site, which comprises 50 new dwellings (planning reference: 17/00973). The Hatfield Bury Farm development sits within LLCA 2.

2.21 The permitted housing developments are shown on Figure 02.

### **Changes to character since 2015**

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2.22 Several housing developments have been approved on the fringes of the village since 2015 as described above. The developments which have occurred since 2015 have reduced the extent of the countryside around Hatfield Peverel. This particularly concerns LLCA 2 and LLCA 4, which have been reduced in area. In addition to this, the proposed development site on the edge of Witham means that LLCA 6 has also been reduced in extent since 2015. Figure 02 shows the development sites which have come forward since 2015. Whilst these developments have had an inevitable effect on the countryside, they have all been located adjacent to the existing village.

2.23 In the wider countryside beyond the village fringe the only change which can be seen on maps is the addition of some small parcels of woodland in the river valley. It can be said therefore that the general pattern of fields, woods, lanes and settlement in the wider countryside shows a high level of stability. The growth (and decay) of individual trees, shrubs and hedges can be seen over the seven year period since the last assessment was undertaken. At the same time, there is a strong sense of stability, with mature trees and hedges remaining little changed.

2.24 The changes in the wider countryside beyond the settlement fringe have been subtle. The land use appears to be almost exactly as it was seven years ago with floodplain meadows and grassland in the river valley, and arable, parkland and paddocks on the higher ground. The pastures in the Ter Valley now have a rougher appearance, but are still actively grazed by cattle, thereby continuing the traditional use. It would seem that an avenue of trees on Mowden Hall Lane has been removed since 2015, while fencing has been introduced in some places. The sports ground for example now has heavy timber fencing around the football pitch, and a slightly more cluttered appearance in general. Very little development has occurred within the wider countryside, away from the village edge. Some buildings have undergone subtle changes of use, such as The Sportsmans Arms which is now a private dwelling. Happily however the owner has preserved the original sign, which adds to the local identity, and sense of history.

2.25 The loss of Hatfield Bury Farm is regrettable as the original farmstead had a vernacular character which contributed to the distinctiveness of the area. Changes in the type of development can also have a subtle influence on character. The Arla dairy site was clearly related to rural uses, whereas the housing development which has replaced it is not.

2.26 It should also be said that development can affect the character of the settlement itself, and not just the surrounding landscape. Changes in character can also be perceived along certain routes. Some sections of road are likely to take on a more urban character as the village expands (e.g. Maldon Road), while public footpaths which previously crossed fields are now contained within the village (as at Stonepath Meadow).

- 2.27 Recent developments have had an inevitable effect on the landscape, and there has been some loss of the landscape resource at the settlement fringe. The wider landscape, however, remains intact and still has a lot of charm.
- 2.28 This character is, however, sensitive to change, particularly if inappropriate development were to be allowed. According to local planning policy, development outside the village envelopes is limited to uses which are appropriate within the countryside, in order to protect the character of the countryside.

### 3 Local Landscape Character Assessment – Methodology

- 3.1 The methodology used was based on the national guidance found in ‘Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland’, published by Natural England in 2002, and ‘An approach to Landscape Character Assessment,’ which was authored by Christine Tudor of Natural England in 2014.

#### **Desk Based Stage**

- 3.2 The initial stage of the Local Landscape Character Assessment involved the assessment of the study area using the existing Braintree District Landscape Character Areas. Desk-based information was also gathered from Braintree District Council, and through research into landscape and environmental designations. This data was reviewed in order to identify the pattern of features that would help define the District Landscape Character Areas at a finer grain.
- 3.3 The assessment was informed by the report and corresponding mapping undertaken as part of the 2007 Landscape Capacity Analysis for Hatfield Peverel. The evaluation of key characteristics of the four Landscape Setting Areas were considered, together with the corresponding landscape sensitivity and value. The two Settlement Fringe Analysis Plans that accompanied the assessment, which identified the key landscape, visual, heritage and ecological issues relevant to each Landscape Setting Area, reinforced the desktop survey work for the Local Landscape Character Assessment.
- 3.4 Similarly, the finer grain study of the Landscape Setting Areas carried out as part of the 2015 Evaluation of Landscape Analysis Study was reviewed at the project outset. The number, size and arrangement of the 23 smaller sub-parcels on the northern, western and southern fringes of the village, together with the detailed descriptions of each landscape, informed the scale and arrangement of potential LLCAs.

#### **Field Survey**

- 3.5 The desk-based stage was followed by field survey work, which provided the opportunity to undertake a number of key tasks, including:
- incorporating the visual/aesthetic/perceptual dimension
  - recording the condition of the landscape
  - identifying and refining Character Areas boundaries
  - assessing any particular qualities, and/or problems in areas of particular pressure or sensitivity
  - noting distinctive features, local materials, plant species, etc.
- 3.6 A survey form was developed to ensure that a structured, consistent recording of information was achieved. Character and condition information was collected in distinct sections, in a mixture of guided

responses as well in sections of free text to provide greater opportunity for description. Field survey record sheets were used to record data. A sample of the two-page pro forma used is included as Appendix B. Additional notes and photographic records supplemented the use of forms. Both notes and photographs informed the process of drafting a description of and illustrating each character area in the final report.

- 3.7 The existing built-up areas of the village were not surveyed, but the interface of the settlement with rural areas was considered. The field survey was carried out in July and August 2015, visiting all land identified within the parish boundary provided by Hatfield Peverel Parish Council. The survey was undertaken by a Chartered Landscape Architect, who was responsible for drafting the text and defining the boundaries of each landscape character area surveyed. A further field survey was undertaken in August 2022 in order to understand how the landscape had changed.

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### **The characterisation process**

- 3.8 Following on from the desk study and fieldwork, coherent LLCAs were identified. For most people, landscape is strongly associated with place and Character Areas can provide an appropriate vehicle for presenting countryside information to a public audience. In this study ten Local Character Areas were identified to form the main units of the landscape in the vicinity of the village, subdividing the broader Character Areas identified in the previous District-wide study. Key characteristics and distinctive features of each sub area are reflected in the character areas statements in Section 4.

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### **Boundaries**

- 3.9 It should be recognised that although the drawing of boundary lines on a plan is an inevitable part of the process, this does not always mean that landscape character is dramatically different to either side of each and every line. Landscape character can suddenly change, e.g. at the interface of an historic parkland, at the foot of a locally steep scarp slope or at a settlement edge, but often there is a more gradual transition. In such cases the boundary line marks more a watershed of character, where the balance of the defining elements has shifted from one landscape type to another.

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### **Local Landscape Character Areas**

- 3.10 Landscape Character Areas have been defined using the survey data from the fieldwork, and are as follows:

**1 River Ter North**

Characterised as a stream and lower valley slopes

**2 River Ter South**

Characterised as a river and lower valley slopes

**3 Termitts Chase**

Characterised as elevated farmland

**4 Wickham Bishops Road**

Characterised as upper valley slopes with pits and reservoirs

**5 River Blackwater**

Characterised as lower valley slopes

**6 Jenkins Lane**

Characterised as mixed farmland

**7 Sportsmans Lane**

Characterised as farmland and parkland

**8 Mowden**

Characterised as a spur of elevated farmland between river valleys

**9 River Chelmer**

Characterised as lower valley slopes

**10 Terling Hall Road**

Characterised as elevated farmland

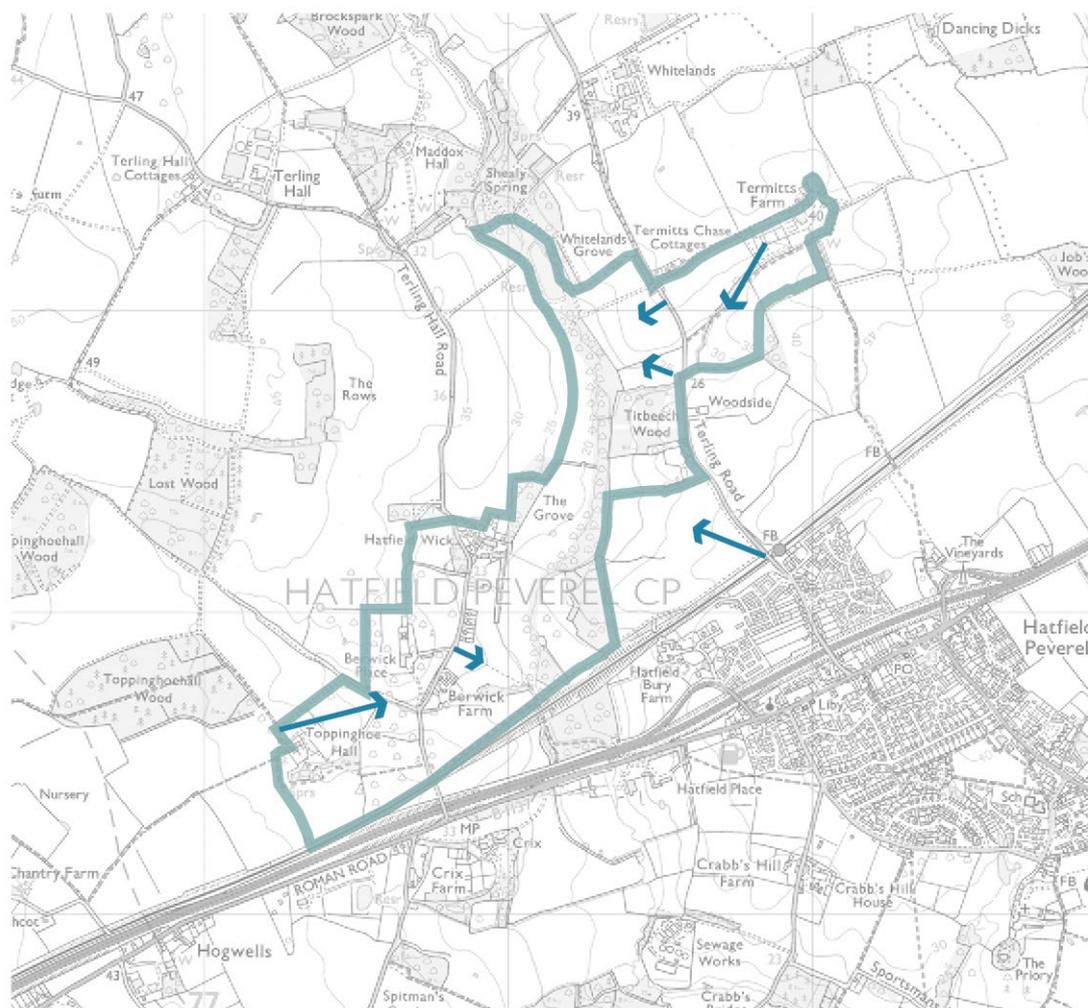
- 3.11 For each of the identified LLCAs, a description of the key characteristics has been provided – including topography, land cover, settlement, views, levels of public access and the relationship with the existing settlement.
- 3.12 The character area descriptions are supported with map extracts, overlaid with arrows to indicate the key views available within and across each of the areas, and photographs which reflect the key characteristics of each area. The length of the arrows corresponds to whether these views are short or long distance. They provide a set of guidelines around management and enhancement measures to reinforce the landscape character of both the areas and their contribution to the setting of the village, to inform opportunities for locating green infrastructure and undertaking landscape enhancements. These guidelines reference potential enhancements to public access around the village fringes, maintaining key views where relevant, the safeguarding of landscape features, and the reinforcement of the distinctive features of each area.

## 4 Landscape Character Assessment – Local Landscape Character Areas

- 4.1 The arrangement of each of the character areas within the parish is shown on Figure 06 – Local Landscape Character Areas.

## Local Landscape Character Area 1

### River Ter North – Stream and lower valley slopes



Local Landscape Character Area with key views indicated

#### General Commentary:

- Located to the north of Hatfield Peverel and main line railway, the area extends northwards towards the village of Terling. The boundary of the area is loosely defined by the 25m AOD contour.
- The character area comprises the river corridor, floodplain and lowest slopes of the River Ter. The river itself is a minor feature in the landscape, apparent only as a thread of trees and vegetation along the banks of the channel.
- The boundary wraps around minor tributaries that feed into the river – one rising to Termitts Farm on the east side of the valley, and another rising towards Lost Wood to the south of Berwick Place on the west side of the valley.
- Settlement in the area is limited, based on farmsteads and clusters of cottages at the edge of the floodplain, at the confluence of the tributaries on either side of the valley and the River Ter itself.
- Land cover comprises a series of small to medium and irregularly shaped fields arranged around the river channel, under a mix of pasture and arable production. Fields are enclosed with a

network of hedgerows and trees with species characteristic of a river valley landscape – alder/willow/oak etc, which link with blocks of woodland at the edge of the floodplain.

- In the south of the area, the arable farmland is interspersed with specimen trees – remnants of a former parkland landscape in the vicinity of Toppinghoe Hall.
- Berwick Place on the western fringes of the area, lies within gardens and grounds comprising grassland interspersed with mature trees, with hedgerows and substantial trees to the perimeter.
- Public access from the village is limited to a path leading from the A12 alongside the river and beneath the main line railway. This path rises westwards towards the Terling Hall Road north of Berwick Farm. Elsewhere in the character area, a path leads to Toppinghoe Hall and connects with paths in the vicinity of the Waltham Road on the west of the parish, with another path rising to Termitts Farm in the east.
- Views in and around the area are limited to views from footpaths and unenclosed sections of the roads on either side of the valley. The containment provided by vegetation along the river and on the floodplain results in short-distance views. Longer distance views into and across the valley are available at higher elevations associated with the minor tributaries, such as at Termitts Farm in the east and adjacent to Toppinghoe Hall in the west. However the framework of vegetation prevents any impression of the northern fringes of the village.



*View across Ter valley from Terling Hall Road*

#### **Landscape guidelines:**

- Enhance the ecological value of the valley corridor by preserving a landscape buffer to the narrow and meandering river running through the centre of the area. The existing thread of characteristic bankside vegetation to be retained and enhanced by regular management and planting with species matching the vegetation present in adjacent sections of the river valley (alder, willow, etc.).
- Opportunity to enhance and extend the existing woodland blocks in south-eastern sections, to maintain and reinforce the visual and acoustic screen between the predominantly pastoral

landscape of the character area and the mainline railway/A12 road corridor which cross the landscape directly to the south. The extension of such woodlands to the farmland to the west of Terling Hall Road would extend these screening effects to south-western sections of the area, notably to Toppinghoe Hall and footpaths leading from Terling Hall Road towards Toppinghoe Hall Wood.

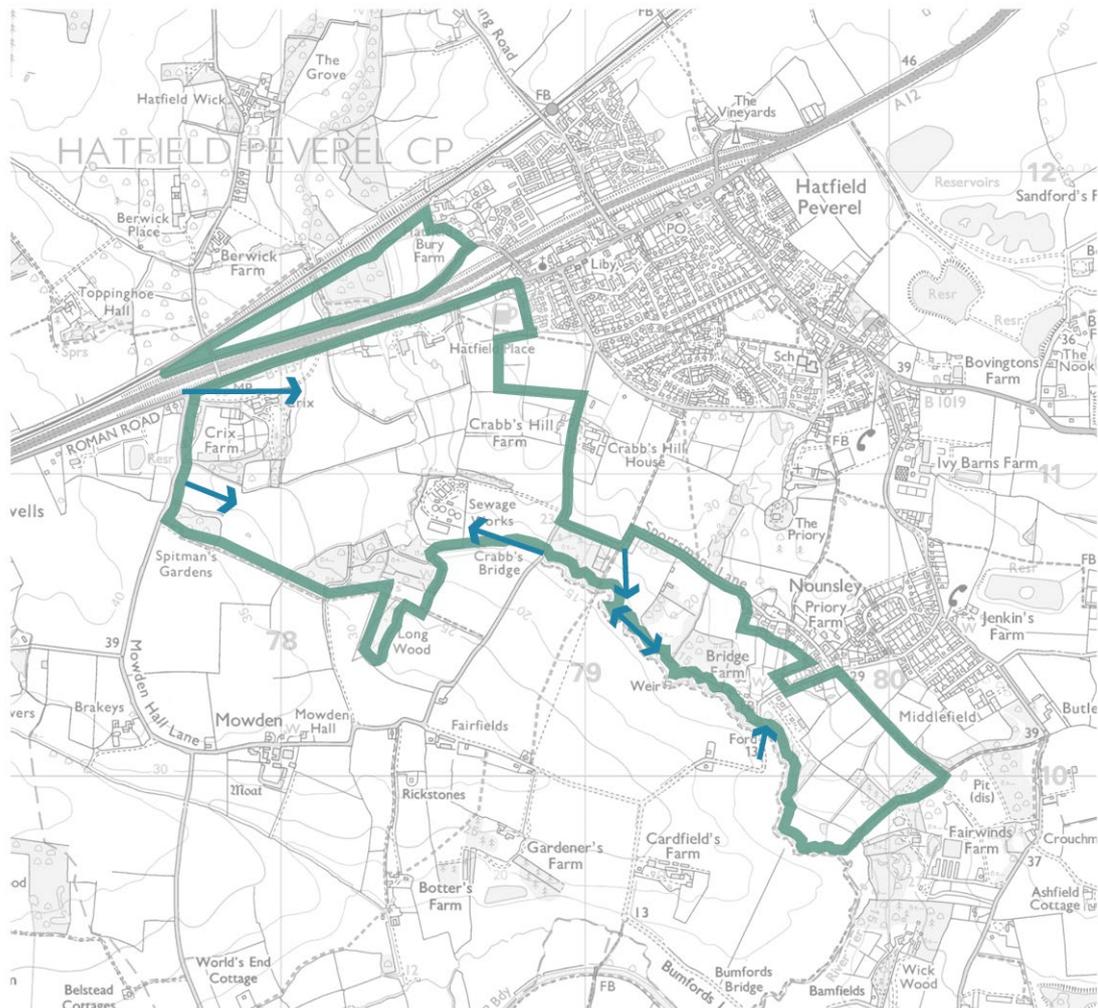
- Preserve the distinct rural qualities of the Terling Parish to the north of the area, including the setting of the Listed Buildings at Maddocks Hall and Terling Place directly to the north.
- Opportunities to improve the network of footpaths within the river valley landscape, which is currently limited to footpaths at Termitts Farm and Berwick Farm. Footpath connections from the north side of the town are limited to the footpath that passes beneath the railway via a path along the river beneath the embankment and bridge crossing, which then rises up the valley slopes to meet Terling Hall Road north of Berwick Farm. There is potential to extend this footpath, creating a new route based on the lower valley slopes on the west side of the river, connecting with the path at Terling Hall which leads towards the cricket ground at Church Road, Terling. A pedestrian bridge over the river, and field-edge footpath in farmland to the east, would provide the opportunity for circular walks around the northern fringes of the village. It would link paths in farmland around Terling Road and Terling Hall Road on the east and west side of the river valley respectively.
- Preserve the parkland landscape around Berwick Place and to the east of Toppinghoe Hall, characterised by mature trees in arable farmland and grassland which undulates around a minor stream valley which rises north-west away from the River Ter.
- Manage the habitat associated with the wash lane that falls from Lost Wood to the west of the character area to the gateway to Berwick Place on Terling Hall Road, to safeguard it as a corridor for wildlife connecting the elevated arable farmland to the west and the smaller scale landscape of the river valley in the character area.
- The block of ancient woodland at Titbeeche Wood to be managed appropriately to ensure its longevity, benefits to wildlife and value as a feature in the local landscape.
- Reinforce the characteristic native hedgerows and associated trees alongside Terling Road on the eastern side of the river valley, to provide visual containment to the valley landscape and provide definition between it and the larger scale arable farmland beyond.



*View towards Berwick Place from south*

## Local Landscape Character Area 2

### River Ter South – River and lower valley slopes



Local Landscape Character Area with key views indicated

#### General Commentary:

- Wrapping around the south-western fringes of Hatfield Peverel, the character area stretches from the main line railway in the north, to the landscape south of the hamlet of Nounsley in the south – where it meets the parish boundary.
- The character area comprises the river corridor, floodplain and lower slopes of the River Ter as it follows a downstream course on the south side of both Hatfield Peverel and Nounsley. The river itself is a minor feature in the landscape, apparent only as a thread of trees and vegetation along the banks of the channel.
- The boundary is loosely defined by the 25m AOD contour. However, the slopes that fall gently away from Stone Path Drive in the north fall within the character area, as well as the sloping parkland landscape with close physical and visual and connections with Crix House on the westernmost edge of the character area.
- The River Ter itself forms the boundary in eastern parts; as a result of the striking contrast with the large scale farmland on slopes rising away from the river in the adjacent character area at Mowden.
- Settlement in the area is limited to farms (Crabb's Hill Farm, Bridge Farm and Oakford Farm) and country houses (Hatfield Place and Crix), with occasional isolated dwellings such as 'Gregorys' on Sportsmans Lane, and Millfield Cottages on The Street.

- In the northern parts of the character area there is a clear impression of the village fringes. In the northernmost part of the area there is modern housing development at the former Hatfield Bury Farm site, while post-war housing developments also mark the western fringes of the village at Stone Path Drive. The lack of vegetation on the boundary of these developments creates an uncharacteristic open edge between the village and adjacent countryside.
- A range of substantial period farmhouses and country houses are present, including Hatfield Place (designed by John Johnson and constructed in the 1790s), the Grade II Listed Crix House in northernmost parts, and Bridge Farm adjacent to the fording point on the river on the southern fringes of Nounsley.
- Land cover comprises a series of small to medium and irregularly shaped fields arranged around the river channel, under a mix of pasture and arable production. Fields are enclosed with a network of hedgerows and trees with species characteristic of a river valley landscape – alder/willow/oak etc. These hedgerows connect with a series of woodlands, such as the substantial block at Long Wood and scattered groups of trees on the valley slopes on the south side of Sportsmans Lane, which link with blocks of woodland at the edge of the floodplain.
- A sewage works lies alongside a bend in the river to the west of Crabbs Hill, screened with mature vegetation characteristic of the river valley landscape.
- Public access from the village comprises paths leading from Church Road to Hatfield Place in the north, a path connecting Crix with Long Wood and onwards to Crabb’s Hill (road) in the south, and paths leading southwards from Church Road to Sportsmans Lane and the River Ter.
- Views in and around the area are limited to views from footpaths and unenclosed sections of the roads, such as the gateway at the entrance to Crix House. The containment provided by vegetation along the river results in short-distance views across and along the river in lower sections of the valley landscape. Longer distance views into and across the valley are available at higher elevations, such as to the south of Crix Farm – where a long view is framed by substantial blocks of woodland in the landscape – and from Mowden Hall Lane.
- The nature of the bridging points over the river varies considerably across the area. In the upstream sections, the crossings associated with the mainline railway and A12/B1137 road corridors are substantial and heavily engineered. As the river meanders downstream, the scale and nature of the crossings are more low-key, with a minor bridging point in the lane at Crabbs Hill, and the popular fording point at the foot of Mowden Hall Lane at the western tip of the hamlet of Nounsley



*Ford across the River Ter, Mowden Hall Lane, near Nounsley*



*View from the entrance to Crix House*

**Landscape guidelines:**

- Enhance the ecological value of the valley corridor by preserving a landscape buffer to the river channel which meanders and gradually widens along its downstream course. The existing thread of vegetation to be retained and enhanced by regular management and planting with species matching the vegetation present in adjacent sections of the river valley (alder, willow etc). New planting to unenclosed sections of the river, notably to the west of the bridge crossing at Crabbs Hill, would create both visual continuity and habitat connectivity along the length of the character area.
- Opportunity to enhance and extend the existing vegetation framework, to maintain and reinforce the scale and texture of the landscape. Hedge and tree planting in more open sections, such as to the north of Long Wood on the west side of the valley and alongside Crabbs Hill, would reinforce this framework and enhance the rural characteristics of the landscape to the south of the village.
- The setting of the period properties/vernacular farmhouses above the lower valley slopes in northern sections of the area (i.e. Crix and Hatfield Place) to be preserved. The setting to these properties is characterised by views across the grassland and pasture of the gently falling valley slopes, towards the narrow and meandering river channel which is perceptible only via the thread of trees to the banksides. The existing breaks in vegetation along the B1137 are to be retained, to maintain the impression of the river valley landscape on the approaches to Hatfield Peverel from the west.
- The substantial block of Ancient Woodland at Lost Wood to be safeguarded and buffered to ensure its longevity, benefits to wildlife and value as a feature in the local landscape. Direct links with hedges and field margins to be retained and enhanced to maximise habitat connectivity in and around the river valley landscape.
- Preserve the small to medium scale to the landscape, which is characterised by a network of fields which reflect the pre-18th century and 18th-19th century pattern of enclosure. These fields are generally well-enclosed by well-maintained hedges and small woodlands, particularly around the

hamlet of Nounsley in the east. These features to be preserved and managed to safeguard the rural character of the southern fringes of the village.

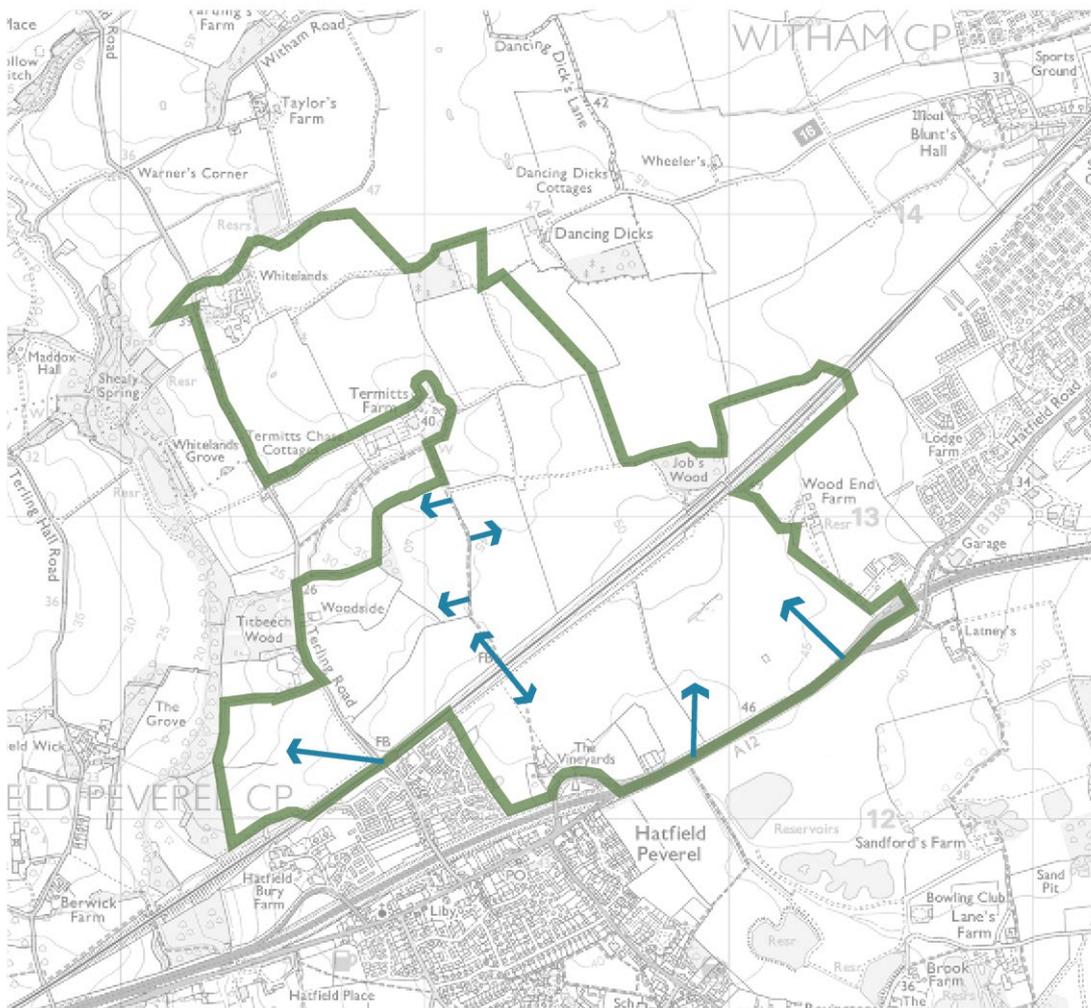
- The peaceful and rural qualities of the valley landscape, including the setting of the fording point on the western fringes of Nounsley, provides a green corridor wrapping around the southern fringes of the village. The distinctive landscape of the area is to be safeguarded to preserve the landscape setting to Hatfield Peverel.
- The existing views in the valley landscape around the southern fringes of the village are framed by blocks of woodland and hedges associated with the valley slopes and the stream corridor itself. Baddow Ridge is occasionally glimpsed in views from the valley slopes in the north of the character area, while the impression of Hatfield Peverel in views from the south is limited to glimpses of properties nestling within a framework of mature vegetation in the vicinity of Church Road and Sportsmans Lane. The location, characteristics and visual qualities of these views should be retained and enhanced to ensure the setting of the southern fringes of the village.
- Opportunities to improve the network of footpaths within the river valley landscape, which is currently limited to footpaths south of the river beyond the character area, and a path along the valley slopes in the south western corner. There is potential to extend these paths, creating a new route between Crabb's Bridge and the existing path along the river close to Hatfield Place in the north, to provide a continuous walk alongside the Ter. This path would link with bridge crossings in the area, creating a series of circular walks in the farmland landscape on the southern fringes of the village.



*View north from Crabb's Hill, near Crabb's Bridge*

## Local Landscape Character Area 3

### Termitts Chase – Elevated farmland



Local Landscape Character Area with key views indicated

#### General Commentary:

- Located to the north of Hatfield Peverel and main line railway, the area extends northwards towards the village of Terling and eastwards towards the residential fringes of Witham.
- The character area comprises an elevated farmland plateau between the valley landscapes of the Rivers Ter and Blackwater, with a high point of 50m AOD at Job's Wood. It falls gently eastwards to the upper valley slopes of the Ter and wraps around a minor tributary valley that rises towards Termitts Farm, punctuating the western boundary of the character area.
- The western boundary is loosely defined by the Terling Road which marks the transition with the valley slopes of the River Ter to the west. However, in the south western corner, the boundary wraps around a rectangular field with the same elevation and large scale as the remainder of the area.
- Settlement in the area is limited, based on farmsteads at the fringes, such as The Vineyard and Wood End Farm associated with the A12 on the southern boundary. The geometry of the residential development between the A12 road corridor and railway is a response to these transport corridors, with vegetation along garden boundaries providing a screen to the adjacent farmland. The farmstead at Whitelands in the north western corner includes a range of commercial uses in the former farmhouse itself, with associated parking along the Terling Road.

- Land cover comprises a series of large and geometric fields, frequently reflecting the pre 18<sup>th</sup> century and 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century pattern of field enclosure, under arable cultivation. Fields are enclosed with a generally intact network of hedgerows which link with small blocks of woodland at the fringes of the area.
- The landscape between the rail and road corridors forms part of the character area, sharing the same scale, elevation and land use as the landscape to the north. The rail line sits in a small cutting across this high ground, the line-side vegetation sharing similar qualities to the hedge network in the adjacent landscape.
- Public access from the village is limited to a single path which leads into the farmland landscape from the north-eastern fringes of the village at The Vineyards, with a footbridge crossing over the mainline railway. The path crosses farmland to the north as far as Termitts Hall, where it turns westwards to the River Ter.
- Broad open views are possible across the open arable farmland that characterises the area, as well as across the gently falling valley slopes to the west. These views are experienced from open sections of the Terling Road on the western edge, from the footpath that leads to Termitts Farm, and from farmland beyond the character area around Dancing Dick's Lane.



*Farmstead and businesses at Whitelands on the Terling Road*



*Southward view towards Termitts Farm from parish boundary*

**Landscape guidelines:**

- Preserve and enhance the pattern of boundary hedges and associated trees to maintain and enhance the pattern of pre 18th century and 18th-19th century field enclosure present in many parts of the landscape. Landscape management to be supplemented with new hedge and tree planting in gappy sections, and the introduction of small blocks of woodland where it would not compromise agricultural production. This landscape framework would ensure habitat connectivity between woods and hedges in the area, and the range of habitat types in the valley landscape of the River Ter to the west.
- Provide landscape definition to the southern boundary through the planting of tree belts in keeping with the scale of the A12 road corridor. Such planting would provide a visual break between the elevated farmland around Termitts Farm and the valley slopes of the River Blackwater to the south-east, whilst also contributing to the sense of separation between Hatfield Peverel and Witham.
- Maintain the characteristics of the empty landscape, free of settlement other than the business uses at Whitelands and farmsteads at the margins. The open farmland landscape contributes to a sense of separation between Hatfield Peverel and Witham which are just 1.8km apart. This sense of an empty landscape prevails across the swathe of farmland between the rail and road corridors, characterised by the same elevation, scale and rectangular arrangement.
- Retain key views from high points in the local landscape, such as around the local high point of 50m AOD at Job's Wood, to maintain an impression of landscapes associated with distant river valleys.
- The distinct rural nature of the landscape, across which broad views are possible should be safeguarded. New planting in southern parts, as described above, would reduce the impact of noise and light from the mainline railway and A12 road corridor, and reinforce this rural character.
- Opportunities to soften the existing village fringes in the vicinity of Woodland Close and Hawthorn Road with green open space, hedgerows and small groups of trees connecting with the existing pond and mixed vegetation to garden boundaries.
- Opportunities to improve the network of footpaths on the elevated farmland landscape between Hatfield Peverel and Witham, currently limited to a single route leading from 'The Vineyards' on the north eastern fringes of the village to Termitts Farm and onwards to Terling Road. There is potential to create new routes leading north east from Termitts Farm towards the Witham Road and Dancing Dicks Lane (following field edges and existing tracks such as the one skirting Whitelands in the

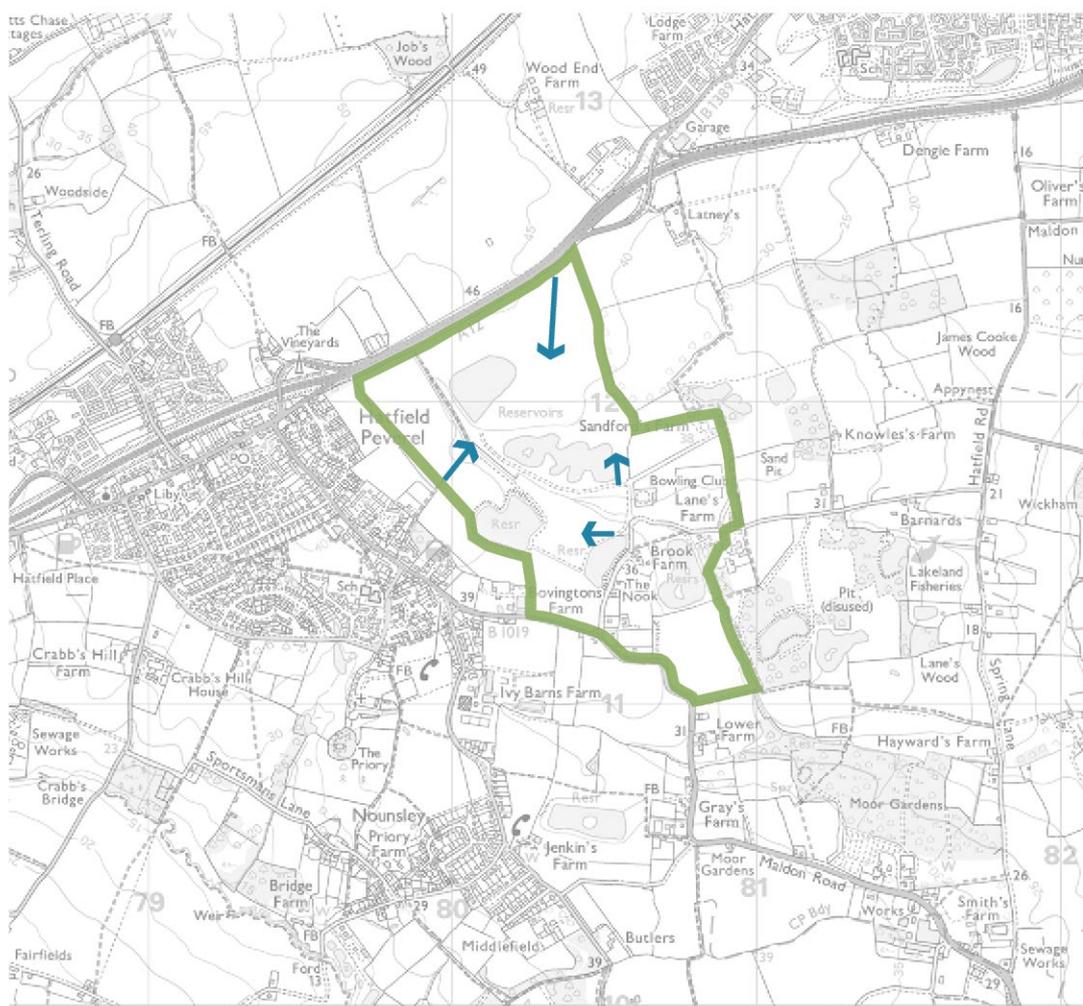
northernmost point in the area. Such routes would provide new circular walks for the benefit of residents in both Hatfield Peverel and Witham, and provide connections between the settlements.



*View across farmland east of Whitelands*

## Local Landscape Character Area 4

### Wickham Bishops Road – Upper valley slopes with pits/reservoirs



Local Landscape Character Area with key views indicated

#### General Commentary:

- Located directly to the east of the village, the area comprises the farmland landscape to the north of the B1019 Maldon Road. Recently approved housing developments mark the western boundary of the area while the heavily trafficked A12 provides a linear northern boundary.
- The eastern boundary of the area is characterised by the transition between farmland that has experienced man-made alterations, such as quarrying for sand and gravels, and the less disturbed farmland landscape in the character area to the east. Although both areas occupy the gently falling valley slopes to the River Blackwater, the man-made modifications are a key feature of the area.
- The character area marks the transition between the elevated farmland to the north, and the valley slopes to the River Blackwater to the east. It comprises farmland on the upper valley slopes, falling eastwards from approximately 40m AOD to 35m AOD.
- Land cover comprises a series of large and geometric fields under arable cultivation – with field hedges occasionally present. Within this farmland landscape are a series of irregularly shaped reservoirs, created as a result of former sand and gravel extraction. The reservoirs are fringed with a band of trees and scrub, including characteristic water's edge species such as alder and willow. A number of the lakes are used by angling clubs (Cleverley Mere Syndicate & Colchester Angling Preservation Society), with access for parking/fishing being from Wickham Bishops Road.

- Settlement in the area comprises a series of detached dwellings arranged along the Wickham Bishops and Maldon Roads, creating a residential cluster at their intersection.
- Recently approved development has created a new edge to the settlement. Housing at The Wheatsheaf site is prominent, while the Maldon Road development will create - initially - a harsh edge. New woodland planting is, however, proposed on this edge.
- The well-used Wickham Bishops Road rises up the valley slopes within the character area, providing access to the recreational facilities such as sports pitches and fishing lakes on the village fringes.
- The football pitches and bowling green occupy a restored quarry site on the lower valley slopes in the east.
- Farmland in the south of the area is smaller scale, with pockets of pasture fringed with mature hedgerows meeting rear garden boundaries. The pasture extends to a further fishing lake at Lakeland Fishery, accessed from the Wickham Bishops Road.
- Public access from the village is limited to a path which leads into the farmland landscape from the north-eastern fringes of the village at Old School Court, off the Maldon Road, which crosses a field and follows a hedge line to meet with a path that follows a line alongside the A12. The pedestrian route adjacent to the A12 continues to Ds Diner, which is on the edge of Hatfield Peverel. There is also a route which follows the track to Sandford's Farm, which lies on the boundary of the area.
- A hedge has grown up alongside the A12 and this has reduced views into the area from the north. Open views across the arable farmland are available from the footpath and tracks within the area, punctuated by the vegetation that fringes the reservoirs scattered across the landscape. Maldon Road and Wickham Bishops Road have an enclosed character.



*Farmland on village fringes east of Gleneagles Way – A12 visible on the horizon*

#### **Landscape guidelines:**

- Provide landscape definition to the northern boundary through the planting of tree belts in keeping with the scale of the A12. Such planting would provide a visual break between the noise, lighting and structures associated with the road and the gentle upper valley slopes of the River Backwater. Such planting would also provide a partial screen to the western fringes of Witham, which are currently visible on the horizon in views from the northern fringes of the village, whilst also contributing to the sense of separation between Hatfield Peverel and Witham.
- Enhance the ecological value of the area by retaining and enhancing the existing hedgerows across the valley slopes by management and new planting, and the restoration of the former network of hedgerows where they would not compromise agricultural production. This landscape framework would create both visual continuity and habitat connectivity across the character area, and enhance the rural characteristics of the landscape to the east of the village.
- The broad open views across arable farmland on the gently falling valley slopes, in which occasional glimpses towards the steep ridge at Wickham Bishops are possible, are to be safeguarded. The stands of trees that fringe the fishing lakes/reservoirs within the open farmland

landscape, punctuating these views, should be retained and enhanced through management and new planting with species characteristic of the valley landscape of the River Blackwater.

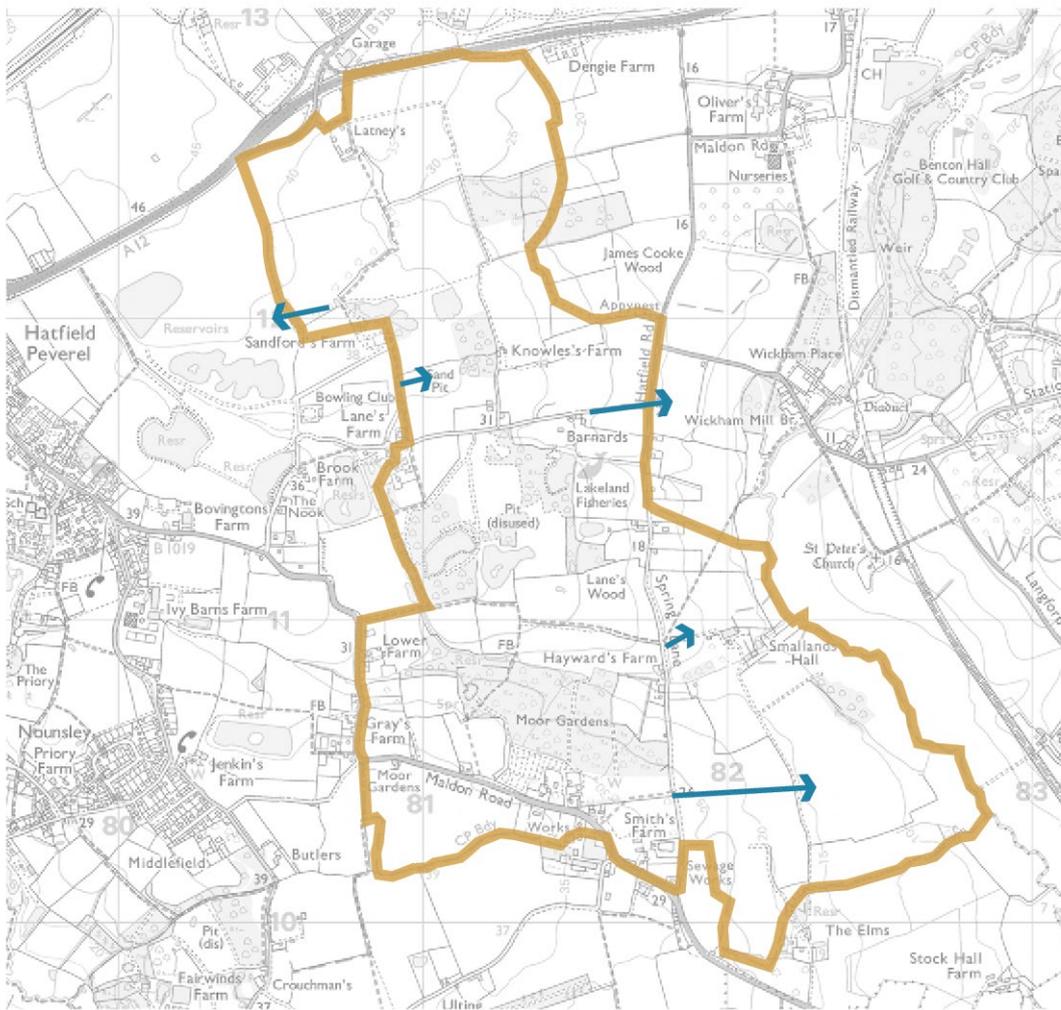
- Retain the smaller scale and finer grain of the landscape in the south of the area, characterised by smaller fields and pockets of pasture around Brook Farm to the east of Wickham Bishops Road.
- Opportunities to improve the network of footpaths in and around the upper valley slopes, which are currently limited to a short circuit around arable farmland, originating from a path at Old School Court. The introduction of new routes would provide connections with existing paths running along the lower valley slopes between 'Latneys' in the north and the future country park at Dannatt's Quarry in the south, creating a series of circular paths around the Wickham Bishop Road. These routes would also provide an off-road connection to the sports facilities at the Keith Bigden Memorial Ground, currently only accessible via the Wickham Bishops Road. The existing footpath intersection with the northern fringes of the village adjacent to 'D's Diner' should be improved as a pedestrian gateway to the village.



*Sports pitches at the Keith Bigden Memorial Ground, Wickham Bishops Road*

## Local Landscape Character Area 5

### River Blackwater – Lower valley slopes



Local Landscape Character Area with key views indicated

#### General Commentary:

- Located on the eastern fringes of the Parish, the character area stretches from the A12 road corridor on the westernmost fringes of Witham in the north, towards farmland on the fringes of Langford in the south.
- The character area comprises the river corridor, floodplain and lower slopes of the River Blackwater as it follows a downstream course to the south of Witham. The river itself is a minor feature in the landscape, apparent only as a thread of trees and vegetation along the banks of the channel, which gradually widens as the river follows its course downstream.
- The western boundary is loosely defined by the 35m AOD contour on the valley slopes, which fall to approximately 25m AOD adjacent to the Hatfield Road in the north eastern corner. The eastern boundary is broadly based on the edge of the floodplain and river corridor which define the Parish boundary, at a level of approximately 5m AOD.
- Land cover comprises a mix of medium to large scale arable farmland interspersed with pockets of grassland. A network of woodlands, tree belts and hedgerows on the steeper valley slopes to the west of Spring Lane provides a backdrop of mature vegetation in westward views towards the fringes of Hatfield Peverel from the valley landscape to the east, screening all impressions of the village beyond. Farmland to the east of Spring Lane has a more denuded feel, with no hedgerows present on the lane-side verges and an absence of hedges and woodland in an area of large-scale arable farmland.

- Uppermost parts include a number of former sand and gravel workings, largely invisible in the surrounding landscape as a result of screening by hedges and blocks of woodland in the local landscape. There are long-standing plans to deliver a country park at Dannatt's Quarry on the Wickham Bishops Road, on the site of one of these former workings in the centre of the area.
- The area is lightly settled, with a number of properties arranged along the Hatfield Road and Spring Lane that runs north-south along the lower valley slopes, together with occasional properties along the Wickham Bishops Road. These range from the chalet-style property at Lakeland Fisheries, to substantial period properties such as Pear Tree Hall and Smallands Hall, to a small Caravan Club site and tearoom at Haywards Farm on Spring Lane.
- A range of premises lie alongside the B1019 Maldon Road on the approach to the village in the south east, such as Cranham Leisure Sales and the Ernest Doe machinery sales and servicing depot, creating a pocket of commercial uses in the otherwise rural landscape.
- A number of paths exist in farmland between the Maldon Road and Spring Lane, providing access along and across the valley slopes. Footpaths are fewer in farmland in the northern and southernmost parts, limiting connections between Witham to the north and Wickham Bishops to the east.
- Views in and around the area are possible from footpaths and unenclosed sections of the roads, such as the Hatfield Road in the north, and elevated sections of Spring Lane in the south. The locally steep valley sides to the east of the River Blackwater and the spire of St Bartholomew's at Wickham Bishops are key features in these outward views.
- The eastern fringes of the village are not visible as a result of the rising landform to the west of the area. However, there is a clear impression of the residential and commercial fringes to Witham in views from northern parts of the landscape, seen beyond the busy road corridor that crosses the horizon line to the north.



*Hedges, broad verges and vernacular properties on Spring Lane*



*View east from track to Sandford's Farm – to the ridge and church spire at Wickham Bishops*

#### **Landscape guidelines:**

- Provide landscape definition to the northern boundary through the planting of tree belts in keeping with the scale of the A12. Such planting would provide a visual break between the noise, lighting and structures associated with the road and the gentle lower valley slopes of the River Backwater. Such planting would also provide an acoustic buffer between the road corridor and properties such as Appynest on the Hatfield Road and properties around the Wickham Bishops Road. This planting would provide a partial screen to the western fringes of Witham, which are currently visible on the horizon in views from northern parts of the area, whilst also contributing to the sense of separation between Hatfield Peverel and Witham.
- The setting of the period properties/vernacular farmhouses arranged around Spring Lane on the valley slopes (e.g. Pear Tree Hall and Smalllands Hall Farm) should be preserved. This setting is characterised by views across the medium to large scale arable fields on the gently falling valley slopes towards the distant meandering river, perceptible only via the thread of trees to the banksides.
- Opportunity to enhance and extend the existing vegetation framework, to maintain and reinforce the scale and texture of the landscape. Hedge and tree planting in more open sections, such as to the east of Spring Lane in the far east of the area, would reinforce this framework and enhance the rural characteristics of the landscape on the valley slopes of the River Blackwater.
- Enhance the ecological value of the area by retaining and enhancing the existing hedgerows across the lower valley slopes and edge of the floodplain by management and new planting. Opportunities to restore the former network of hedgerows, particularly where they reflect the pre-18th or 18th-19th century pattern of enclosure. This landscape framework would create both visual continuity and habitat connectivity across the character area, and enhance the rural characteristics of the landscape to the east of the village.
- Restore the characteristic roadside hedgerows to sections where they have been lost alongside Hatfield Road and Spring Lane, in keeping with adjacent sections.
- Enhance the ecological value of the valley corridor of the River Blackwater on the eastern side of the area by preserving a landscape buffer to the narrow and meandering river channel. The existing thread of characteristic bankside vegetation to be retained and enhanced by regular management

and planting with species matching the vegetation present in adjacent sections of the river valley (alder, willow, etc.).

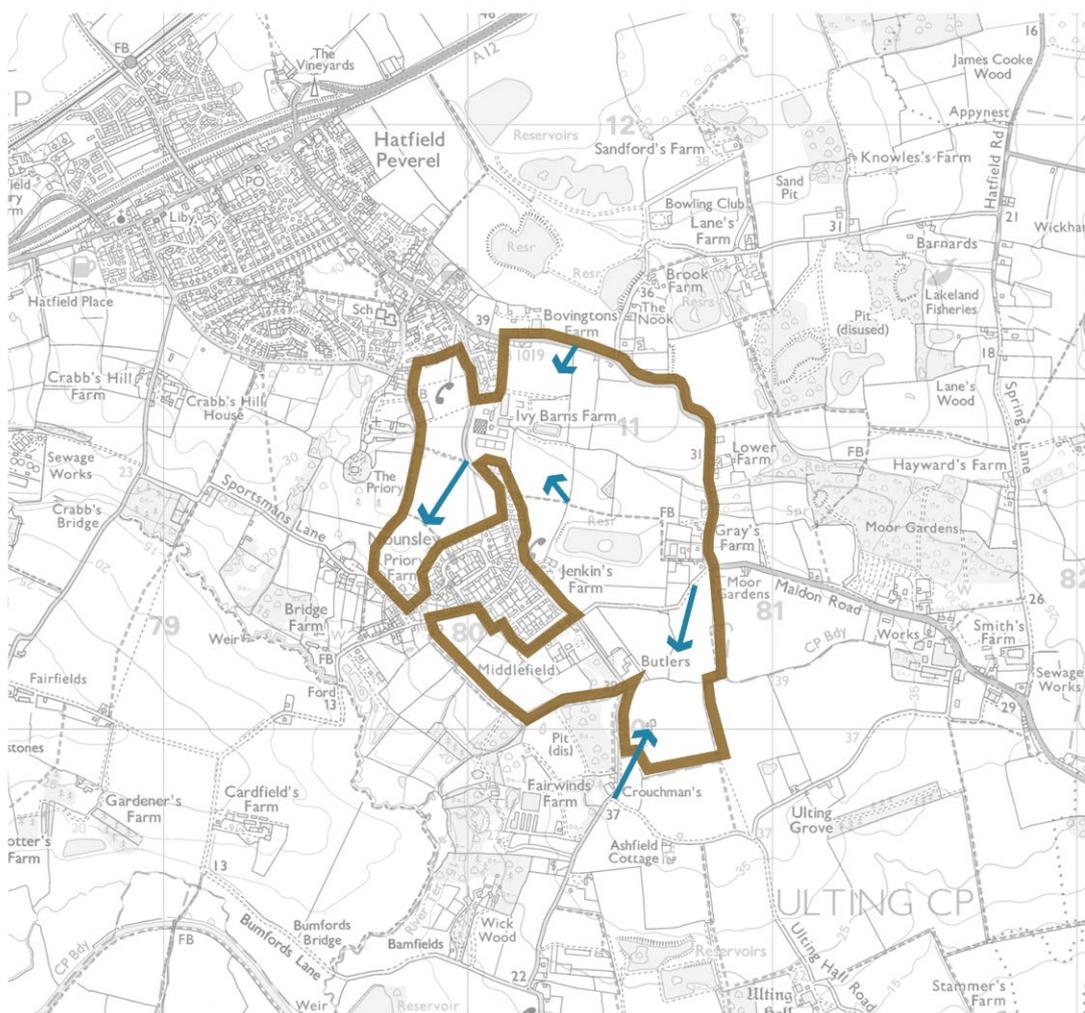
- The blocks of large and small woodlands between the Maldon Road and Spring Lane to be managed appropriately to ensure their longevity, benefits to wildlife and value as a feature in the local landscape. Direct links with hedges and field margins to be retained and enhanced to maximise habitat connectivity on the undulating valley slopes.
- The steep slopes and wooded ridge to the east of the River Blackwater at Wickham Bishops are a key feature of eastward views from footpaths and roads, with the church spire at the highest point forming a distinct landmark. The landform is seen rising away from a band of vegetation which defines the channel of the River Blackwater, creating a strong sense of a river valley landscape. Views to be safeguarded and enhanced to ensure the distinct setting to the eastern fringes of the village.
- Although there is a good network of footpaths on the valley slopes, there is the potential for additional routes which could connect with the B1018 Maldon Road and provide linkages between Hatfield Peverel and the southern fringes of Witham. Such a path would improve connections with the proposed Country Park at the centre of the character area.
- Any proposals to reflect the intentions for the proposed Country Park located on the site of the former Dannatts Quarry (Barnards Farm Pit) adjacent to the Wickham Bishops Road. The existing framework of hedges and small woodlands, and network of footpaths to the north of the Maldon Road, to be retained and enhanced to provide easy access between the eastern fringes of the village and the recreational landscape associated with the proposed Country Park.



*Open arable fields east of Spring Lane – view towards Wickham Bishops*

## Local Landscape Character Area 6

### Jenkins Lane – Mixed farmland



Local Landscape Character Area with key views indicated

#### General Commentary:

- Located directly south east of the village, the area wraps around the eastern fringes of Nounsley. It comprises a mix of rural uses between the B1019 Maldon Road and the Ulting Road.
- The character area is largely level and broadly based on the 35m AOD contour, marking the transition between the substantial village to the north, and the valley landscape of the River Ter to the south.
- Settlement in the area comprises scattered properties along the B1019 Maldon Road and a cluster of cottages at Letche's Green at the Jenkins Lane junction. A mix of properties and farm-related uses are arranged to either side of the Ulting Road as it runs through the character area, ranging from Upson's Farm Sales at Ivy Barns Farm in the north, to the substantial 'Middlefield' on the village fringes in the south. The fringes of both the village and hamlet are clearly visible from the adjacent farmland, given the intermittent vegetation along the garden boundaries of the detached houses and bungalows arranged alongside the roads.
- The area is well served with footpaths, with several links along field edges between the Ulting and Maldon Roads. To the east of the Ulting Road, three paths cross the landscape in an east-west direction, creating a series of circular routes in the farmland landscape between Hatfield Peverel and Ulting. A footpath runs along the length of a green lane along the western boundary of the area, connecting with Sportsmans Lane and providing direct access to the rural river valley landscape to the south of the village. The lane is set within mature hedges and trees, which provide a strong framework of vegetation on the western boundary of the character area.

- Land cover comprises a series of small to medium fields farmed as both pasture and for cereals, set within a largely intact framework of field hedges. A geometric shaped agricultural reservoir to the east of Jenkins Farm is imperceptible in this framework of vegetation.
- The open farmland to the west of the Ulting Road provides a degree of separation between properties on the southern fringes of Hatfield Peverel (at Ingelrica Avenue) and the northern fringes of the hamlet of Nounsley to the south. A recreation ground lies alongside the road, adjacent to properties on the northern fringes of Nounsley.
- In the north western corner, a plot of allotments provides a transition between the built up fringes of the village to the north and the arable farmland to the south. The western edge of the allotments meets the churchyard of St Andrew's church and grounds of The Priory beyond; the eastern edges stretches to rear gardens of the Ulting Road.
- Occasional views are possible, from footpaths and at breaks in the roadside and field hedgerows, of areas of pasture, with glimpses of the distant landscape beyond the River Ter in south-facing views. Any views from the Maldon Road are limited by the banked sides and roadside hedges; whereas views from the Ulting Road are more open – particularly on the approach to the village from the south, where the derelict farm cottage at 'Crouchmans' is a relic of the former pattern of farming/settlement in the area.
- Long distance views towards Baddow Ridge to the south of the River Chelmer are possible from the Ulting Road and associated footpaths.



*View north from Ulting Road towards the village fringes and allotments*



*Paddocks and footpath to the south of Nounsley*

**Landscape guidelines:**

- The open farmland to the west of the Ulting Road provides a distinct break between the main village and the hamlet at Nounsley, and provides open views across the field that falls gently towards the well-used green lane running along the eastern boundary of The Priory. The open nature of the landscape allows for distant views towards Baddow Ridge and Danbury on the south side of the Chelmer valley. The arable farmland provides a transition between properties around Church Road on the southern fringes of the village and the wider rural landscape to the south. The open farmland should be retained, to maintain the sense of separation between village and hamlet and preventing the coalescence of the two.
- Retain and enhance the amenities on the southern fringes of the village, including the allotments site off Church Road, burial ground to the east of St Andrew's Church, and playground alongside the Ulting Road. There is potential to integrate these facilities into the landscape by the introduction of hedge and tree planting to the perimeter, thereby enhancing the rural qualities of the landscape to the south of the village.
- Enhance the ecological value of the area by retaining and enhancing the existing hedgerows around field margins and roadsides, such as alongside Jenkins Lane, achieved by management and new planting. This landscape framework would enhance the impression of the small scale landscape and improve habitat connectivity across the character area, thereby reinforcing the rural characteristics of the landscape to the south of the village.
- Retain the small to medium scale and pastoral nature of the landscape, characterised by small fields and pockets of pasture to the east of Ivy Barns Farm, where the field pattern reflects the pre-18th century pattern of field enclosure.
- Retain the hedgerows and trees alongside the B1019 Maldon Road, to provide a landscape buffer to the busy road corridor and maintain an over-riding sense of a peaceful farmland landscape.
- The numerous public footpaths in the area to be retained and enhanced with hedge planting to either side, to enhance their function as corridors for wildlife in the landscape to the south of the village.
- Residential developments on the northern fringes of Nounsley, such as at Sportsmans Lane and Priory Farm Road are clearly visible in views from the southern fringes of Hatfield Peverel. New hedge and tree planting around the fringes of the hamlet would help to screen these properties in views from footpaths and properties around the Ulting Road, and enhance the rural characteristics of the hamlet.



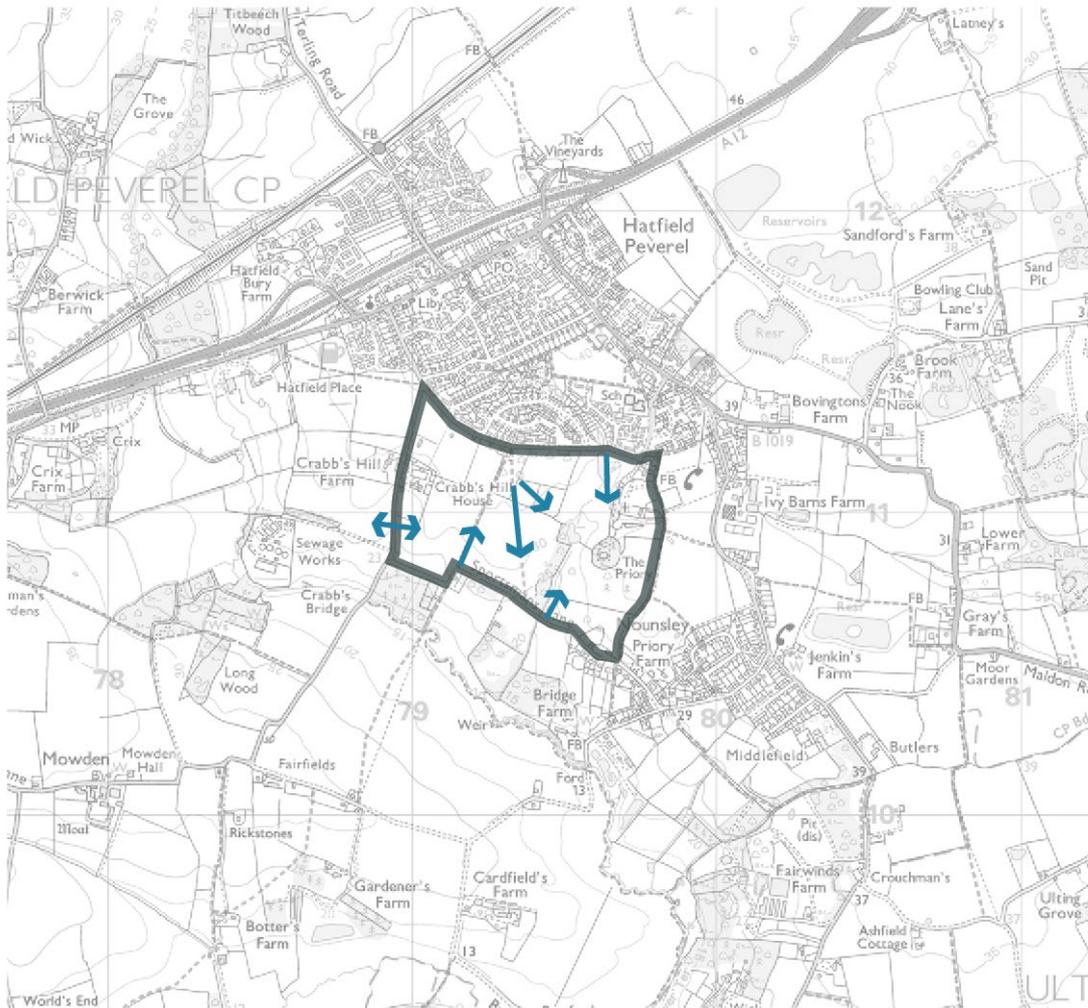
*Entrance to churchyard at St Andrew's church on western boundary*



*View south from Ulting Road with wooded ridge on distant horizon*

## Local Landscape Character Area 7

### Sportsmans Lane – Farmland and parkland



Local Landscape Character Area with key views indicated

#### General Commentary:

- Located directly to the south of the village, the area comprises a landscape compartment on the upper valley slopes of the River Ter between Church Road (at approximately 35m AOD) and Sportsmans Lane (at approximately 25m AOD).
- The busy Church Road forms the northern boundary of the character area, defining the edge of the residential fringes of Hatfield Peverel, skirting the southern fringes of the village between the B1137 and main village street in the west and the B1019 and village school/playground in the east.
- The village cricket ground, set within a framework of trees and hedgerows, lies alongside Church Road, accessed via a locked gate. To the west of the cricket ground, a small natural pond is set within an area of woodland on the Crabbs Hill/Church Road junction; forming part of a network of water bodies on the southern fringes of the village.
- The western boundary of the area is characterised by residential and commercial uses alongside Crabbs Hill, such as Hatfield Peverel Nursing Home at Crabbs Hill House. These properties are set within a framework of mature vegetation which provide a degree of visual containment on the western fringes.
- The landform undulates around a minor tributary valley which defines the western boundary to the grounds of The Priory (Registered Park and Garden), which is apparent as a series of ponds and larger water bodies, such as at Willow Rise and within the grounds of The Priory.

- Land cover comprises a range of village edge uses, ranging from paddocks and sports facilities mixed with small to medium sized arable fields and areas of grassland. The notable St Andrew's church and The Priory occupy the eastern parts, characterised by mature trees in a parkland setting.
- The substantial residential developments on the north side of Church Road are largely screened by the mature hedging on the south side of Church Road, providing a distinct transition between the village and adjacent countryside.
- As well as the footpath along the green lane on the eastern boundary of the area, two footpaths follow the falling valley slopes between Church Road and Sportsmans Lane. The paths meet at a small parking area adjacent to the Scout HQ on the southern fringes of the village, where they follow the edge of a plot of allotments to the rear of this building, and cross paddocks which lie between the car park and grounds to The Priory directly to the east.
- Occasional views into and across the landscape beyond the character area are possible, from breaks in the vegetation along Crabbs Hill, Church Road and Sportsmans Lane, as well as from footpaths across fields within the area. These include views into and across the valley landscape at breaks in the hedge line along Church Road, and from the footpaths that lead from the higher ground at the edge of the village on Church Road towards Sportsmans Lane on the lower valley slopes to the south. They include an impression of the River Ter in mid-distance, and glimpses towards the wooded Baddow Ridge on the horizon line. Further glimpses across the gently falling upper valley slopes are possible from breaks in the hedge line along Crabbs Hill, and between blocks of vegetation on the fringes of Hatfield Peverel Nursing Home.
- Glimpses of the house and grounds of The Priory are possible in oblique views along Church Road, and from the driveway opening adjacent to the former 'Sportsmans Arms'



*Field-edge footpath between Sportsmans Lane and Church Road*



*Paddocks and footpaths to the south of Church Road*

**Landscape guidelines:**

- Enhance the ecological value of the area by retaining and enhancing the existing hedgerows around residential boundaries, field margins and roadsides, such as vegetation around the fringes of the cricket club and Hatfield Peverel Nursing Home on Crabbs Hill. The management and reinforcement of the framework of trees and hedgerows with new planting would enhance the impression of the rural landscape on the southern fringes of the village and improve habitat connectivity across the character area. The vegetation also screens views back towards the village from the open farmland landscape around Mowden Hall Lane to the south, reducing the impact of the residential developments to the north of Church Lane in the otherwise rural views.
- The springs, ponds and water bodies present in the area should be retained and enhanced through informed management, given their function as part of a network of water bodies within the built up residential areas of the village as well as on its fringes.
- Retain and enhance the amenities on the southern fringes of the village, including the allotments site and Scout HQ on Church Road, as well as the cricket ground directly to the west.
- The glimpsed views towards and across the valley landscape on the southern fringes of the village provide a close connection between the village and the adjacent rural landscape, and should be safeguarded and enhanced through selective management of vegetation in and around the view corridor.
- The two public footpaths in the area to be retained and enhanced with hedge planting to either side, to enhance their function as corridors for wildlife in the landscape to the south of the village. There is an opportunity to provide a footpath link alongside the hedge line on the south side of the allotments, to provide a direct off-road connection to Crabbs Hill and the western fringes of the village.

**Note:**

- The guidelines exclude the privately owned and inaccessible 'The Priory' on Church Road. It is assumed that the ongoing management of the grounds (designated Registered Park and Garden) would be as per the guidance and advice of Historic England.



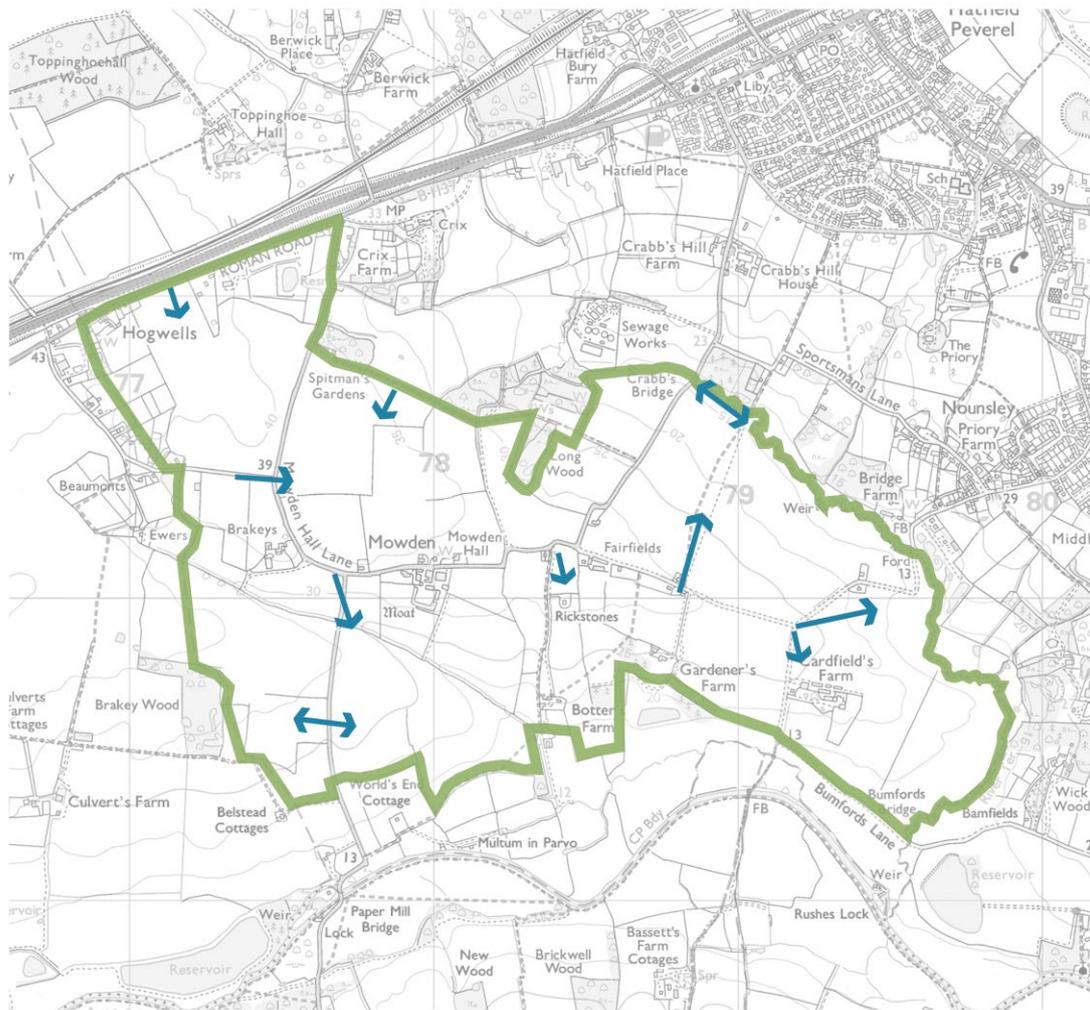
*View west along Sportsmans Lane*



*Ter valley and Baddow ridge*

## Local Landscape Character Area 8

### Mowden – Spur of elevated farmland between river valleys



Local Landscape Character Area with key views indicated

#### General Commentary:

- The character area is offset from the south-western fringes of Hatfield Peverel by the valley landscape of the River Ter. It comprises a spur of elevated farmland between the valley landscapes of the Rivers Ter and Chelmer on the southernmost edge of the parish.
- Land cover comprises open arable farmland, stretching from the road corridors of the B1137 and A12 in the north-west to the confluence of the two rivers in the far south-east.
- The boundary is loosely defined by the 20m contour that marks the transition between the edge of the floodplain/lower valley slopes, and the undulating farmland associated with the spur. In north-eastern parts, the channel of the River Ter itself forms the boundary, given that the farmland on the valley slopes shares the characteristics of the large scale farmland landscape.
- Settlement is dispersed across the landscape, with historic farmsteads and associated cottages arranged along a central vein that follows the elevated spur that stretches along the landscape. This spur falls from 40m AOD around Hogwells and Mowden Hall Lane, to approximately 15m AOD around the lower valley slopes to the east of Cardfield's Farm. The elevated cluster around Mowden Hall at the centre are notable features, clearly visible in the surrounding farmland landscape.
- There is little impression of the B1137 and A12 on the northern boundary, given the vegetation alongside the road corridor and associated with garden boundaries.

- Land cover comprises a series of large and geometric fields under arable cultivation. Fields are enclosed with a generally intact network of hedgerows which link with occasional and small blocks of woodland at the fringes of the area. The landscape in the easternmost parts is open and unenclosed, with clear views towards the village fringes from both Mowden Hall Lane and Bumfords Lane adjacent to Cardfield's Farm.
- Public access in the area is limited, and based largely on the fringes of the area. It comprises a path along the intimate and meandering channel of the River Ter on the northern boundary, connecting with a route that rises up the valley slopes towards 'Fairfields' on Mowden Hall Lane. This links with two paths that fall back down the valley slopes to the River Chelmer, which extend along the lower valley slopes towards the amenities at Paper Mill Bridge.
- Broad open views are possible across the open arable farmland that characterises the area. The lack of containment by vegetation allows for long distance views into and beyond the river valley landscapes on the boundaries of the area, with the wooded Baddow Ridge providing the backdrop in views to the south. Properties on the fringes of Hatfield Peverel are visible in views to the north, nestled within a framework of established hedges and woodlands - as per the view from Mowden Hall Lane below.



*View slopes to the south of Mowden Hall*

#### **Landscape guidelines:**

- Preserve and enhance the pattern of boundary hedges and associated trees to maintain and enhance the pattern of pre 18th century and 18th-19th century field enclosure present in parts of the landscape, notably on the high ground around Mowden Hall. Management of trees and hedges should be supplemented with new planting in gappy sections, and the introduction of small blocks of woodland where it would not compromise agricultural production. New hedging to be encouraged around Mowden Hall Lane and Cardfield's Farm in eastern parts, where little of the characteristic framework of hedging and associated trees remains intact. This landscape framework would ensure habitat connectivity between the character area, habitats in the neighbouring valley landscapes of the Rivers Ter and Chelmer which wrap around the area, and blocks of woodland in the adjacent landscape.
- Maintain the key characteristics of the open and medium to large scale landscape, in which the adjacent valley landscapes of the Rivers Ter and Chelmer are apparent. The sense of openness to the valley slopes should be retained, to reinforce the strong agricultural character and dispersed settlement pattern of properties based on the spur of ground between the valley landscapes of the Rivers Ter and Chelmer.

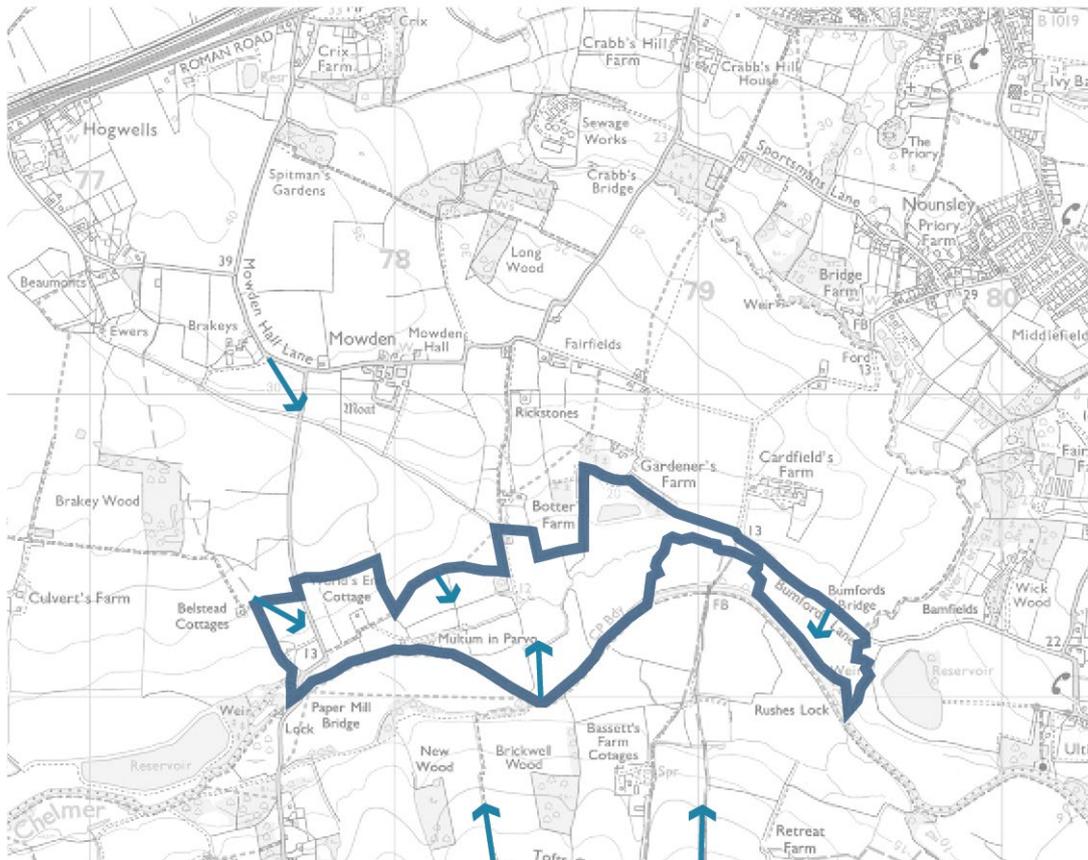
- Retain key views from high points in the local landscape, such as around Mowden Hall, to maintain an impression of landscapes associated with distant river valleys.
- The distinct rural nature of the landscape, across which broad views are possible, is to be safeguarded. New planting alongside the B1137 on the northern boundary of the area, as described above, would reduce the impact of noise and light from this road and the adjacent A12 road corridor and reinforce this rural character in northern parts.
- Opportunities to improve the network of footpaths on the spur of farmland which falls gently eastwards towards the confluence of the rivers, with additional links between the valley landscapes in the vicinity of Cardfield's Farm on Bumfords Lane.



*View north to Hatfield Peverel from Mowden Hall Lane*

## Local Landscape Character Area 9

### River Chelmer – Lower valley slopes



Local Landscape Character Area with key views indicated

#### General Commentary:

- Located on the southernmost fringes of the parish, the area is based on the floodplain and lower valley slopes of the River Chelmer.
- The River Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation river is apparent on the southernmost boundary, reflected by a swathe of vegetation along the gently curving channel line, which runs between Heybridge Basin on the Blackwater Estuary, and Springfield Basin close to the heart of Chelmsford.
- The boundary of the area is loosely defined by the belt of mature trees at the edge of the floodplain, loosely based on the 15m AOD contour. This vegetation frames, and occasionally limits, views between the character area and the adjacent valley slopes.
- Settlement in the area is limited to Worlds End Cottage and Smugglers Barn, which are set within pasture and mature trees on the north side of the floodplain, accessed via a track from the lane to Mowden.
- Land cover comprises a series of small to medium and irregularly shaped areas of grassland and pasture, defined by a network of drainage ditches and framed by hedgerows and tree line characteristic of a river valley landscape. The engineered waterway of the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation dissects this organic landscape pattern, creating a smooth line across the landscape.

- Paper Mill Lock on the western most tip of the area provides a hub of activity in an otherwise tranquil river valley landscape, with canal cruises, walks, tearooms and car parking around the bridges, weir and lock.
- Public access from the Hatfield Peverel is limited to a path leading from Paper Mill Lock towards Mowden on the northern boundary, from which occasional views into the valley floor are possible. A path on the southern bank of the river links with footpaths in the vicinity of Little Baddow to the south.
- Views are otherwise limited to those from boats on the canal on the southern boundary, and glimpses from Bumfords Lane on the valley slopes to the north of the area. Northward views into and across the river valley are possible along the length of Tofts Chase to the south of the River Chelmer, from which distant views towards the southern fringes of Hatfield Peverel are possible.



*Northwards view across the Chelmer Valley from Tofts Chase*

#### **Landscape guidelines:**

- Enhance the ecological value of the valley corridor by preserving a landscape buffer to the river which flows along the southern boundary of the parish. The thread of characteristic bankside vegetation to be retained and enhanced by regular management and planting with species matching the vegetation present in adjacent sections of the river valley (alder, willow etc).
- Opportunity to introduce small blocks of woodland, to maintain and reinforce the characteristics of the predominantly pastoral valley landscape, in keeping with adjacent sections of the river valley.
- Preserve the distinct setting of the facilities and attractions at Paper Mill Bridge and lock/wier, which provide a pocket of activity in an otherwise peaceful valley landscape.
- Opportunities to improve the network of footpaths within the river valley landscape, which is currently based on a footpath alongside the River Chelmer beyond the parish boundary to Hatfield Peverel. There is potential to extend the footpath that rises away from the valley towards Botter's Farm, creating a new route running eastwards along the valley slopes towards Bumfords Lane and Bumfords Bridge, thereby improving access on the north side of the river and linking with adjacent footpaths in the parish.

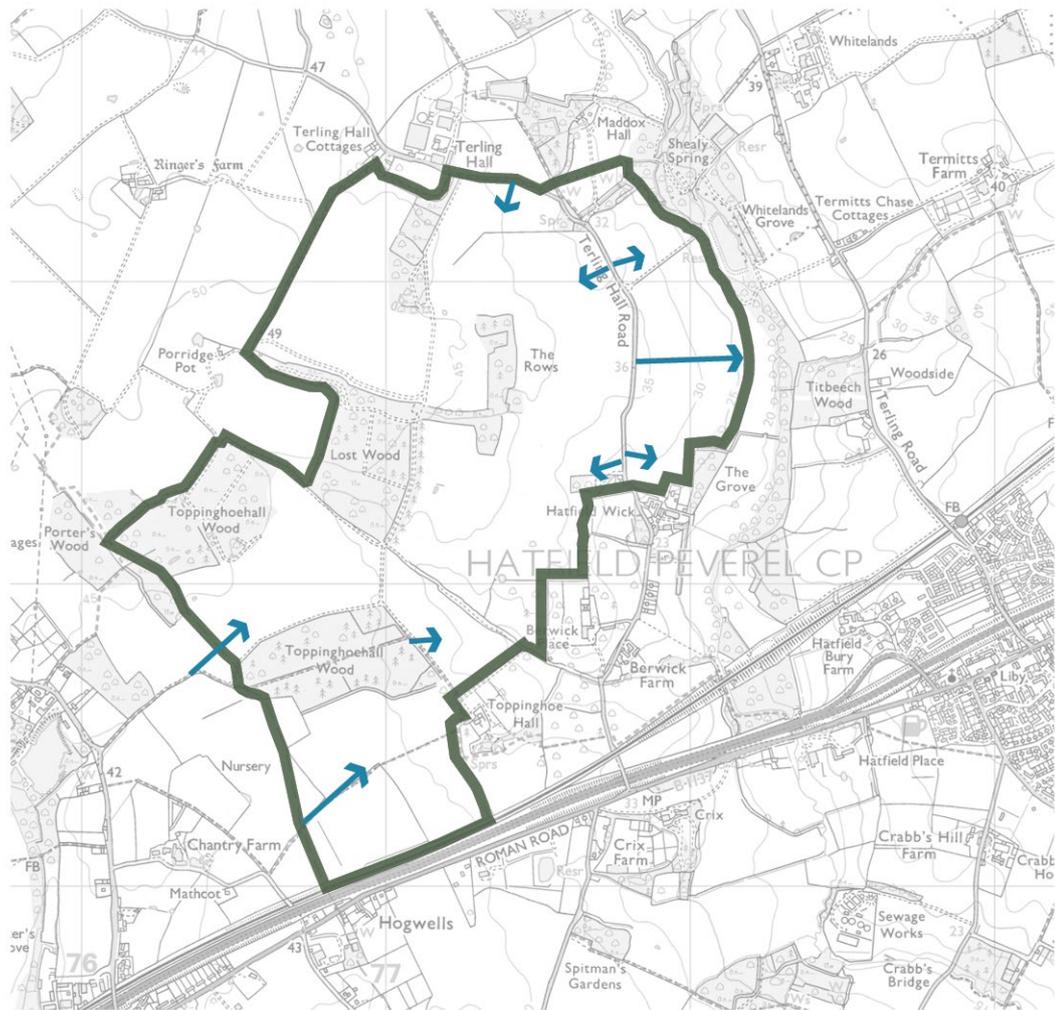
- Reinforce the characteristic landscape of pasture enclosed with native hedgerows and associated trees on the valley floor and lower valley slopes, to provide visual containment to the river landscape and provide definition between it and the larger scale arable farmland beyond.



*Footpath and valley landscape alongside World's End Cottage*

## Local Landscape Character Area 10

### Terling Hall Road – Elevated farmland



Local Landscape Character Area with key views indicated

#### General Commentary:

- Located to the north-west of Hatfield Peverel and offset from it by the valley landscape of the River Ter, the area extends northwards from the main line railway and the road corridors on the A12 and B1137 towards the village of Terling.
- The eastern boundary is loosely based on the 25 AOD contour that defines the transition between the gently falling valley slopes within the area and the adjacent floodplain. The boundary wraps around the minor tributary that rises around Toppinghoe Hall and Berwick Place on the eastern boundary, which is further defined by a transition to a landscape of grassland and pasture.
- The character area comprises large scale arable farmland on the upper valley slopes and on the westernmost edge of the parish, which levels out at approximately 50m AOD on the parish boundary where it meets the adjacent plateau.
- The landscape is rural and unsettled, with views towards the properties arranged along the Witham Road west of the area and Terling Hall Road east of the area limited by the substantial blocks of woodland present. The only impression of the nearby village is the occasional glimpses of the new development on the Arla site on the horizon to the east.
- The open large scale farmland provides a distinctly rural character on the northern fringes of the village, and contributes to a sense of separation between it and the fringes of Chelmsford approximately 4km to the west.

- Land cover comprises a series of large and geometric fields under arable cultivation, interspersed with a series of substantial and occasionally Ancient Woodland blocks. The network of field hedgerows is fragmented, with remnants of former hedgerows present along the Terling Hall road on the eastern boundary.
- The mainline railway, B1137 and A12 on the southern boundary are partially screened by a belt of highway planting along the transport corridors. This reduces the impact of the road on the otherwise open landscape to the south of Toppinghoe Hall Wood, where a footpath across arable farmland is unenclosed by hedgerows.
- Two footpaths cross the landscape in southern parts of the area, providing connections between Toppinghoe Hall on the eastern boundary and the Witham Road beyond the parish boundary. One of these crosses through and along the edge of the block of ancient woodland at Toppinghoehall Wood.
- Broad open views are possible across the open arable farmland that characterises the area, as well as across the gently falling valley slopes to the east. These views are experienced from open sections of the Terling Hall Road on the eastern edge, and from the farmstead at Terling Hall on the northernmost tip.



*View south east from farm hardstanding on Terling Hall Road*

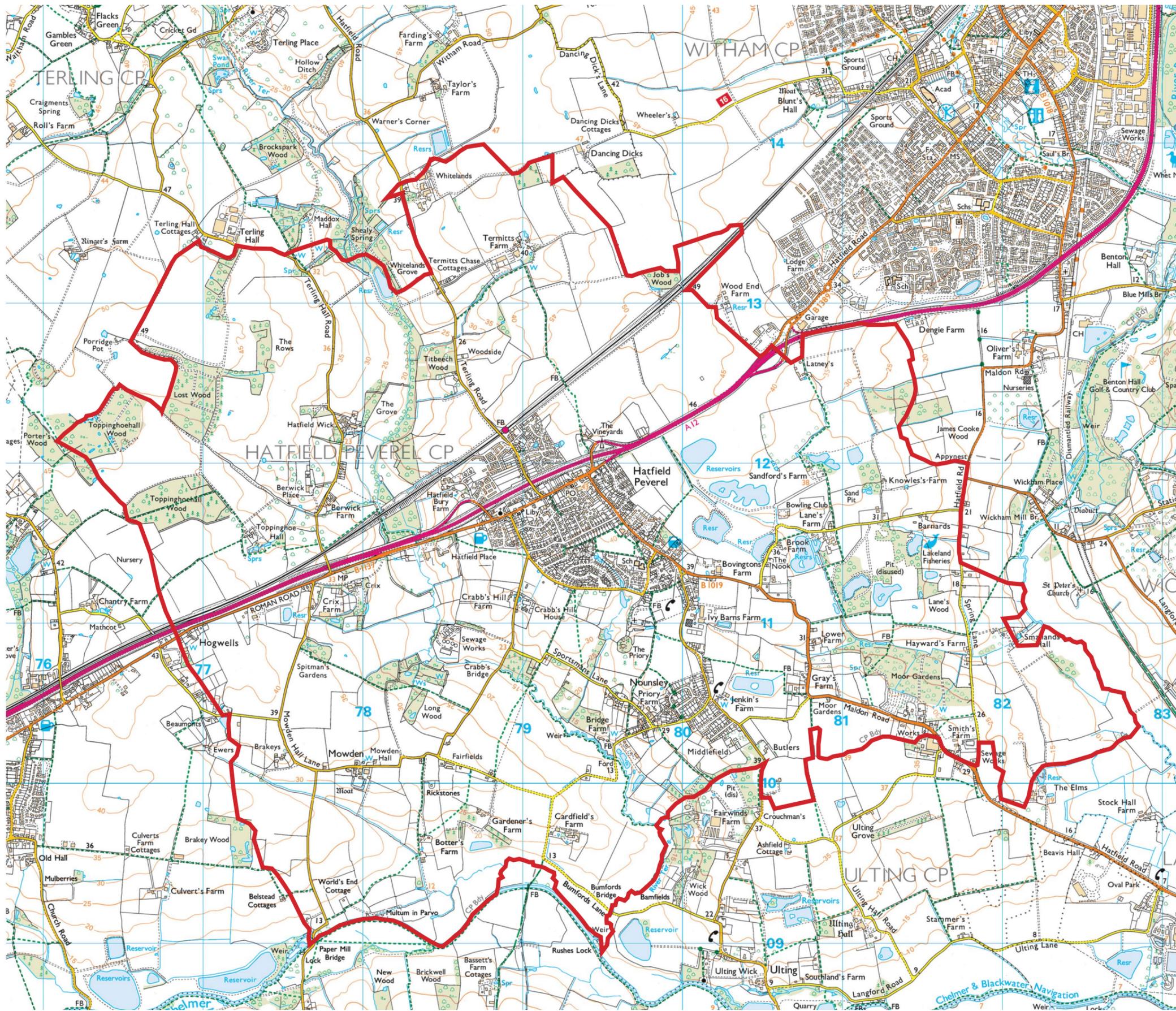
#### **Landscape guidelines:**

- Preserve and enhance the pattern of boundary hedges and associated trees to maintain and enhance the pattern of field enclosure, with new hedge and tree planting where gaps are present. This landscape framework would ensure habitat connectivity between the substantial blocks of woodland in the area and the range of habitat types in the valley landscape of the River Ter to the east.
- Restore hedgerows to the Terling Hall Road in the east of the area in keeping with the characteristic hedges in the landscape around Terling, with occasional breaks to allow for views across falling farmland towards the river valley to the east.
- Provide landscape definition to the southern boundary through the planting of tree belts in keeping with the scale of the A12 road corridor. Such planting would provide a visual break between the elevated farmland around Toppinghoe Hall and the valley slopes of the River Ter to the east, whilst also contributing to the sense of separation between Hatfield Peverel and Boreham to the west.
- Maintain the characteristics of the empty landscape, free of settlement other than the farmstead at Terling Hall adjacent to the northern boundary, and the Grade II Listed wing of the previously more substantial house at Toppinghoe Hall.

- Retain key views from high points in the local landscape, such as around the footpath which follows the eastern edge of Toppinghoe Hall Wood at approximately 40m AOD, to allow views into the river valley landscape to the east.
- The distinct rural nature of the landscape, across which broad views are possible is to be safeguarded. New planting in southern parts of the area, as described above, would reduce the impact of noise and light from the mainline railway and A12 road corridor, and reinforce this rural character.
- Opportunities to improve the network of footpaths on the elevated farmland landscape, using existing tracks within the farmland landscape. A new route from the existing path at Toppinghoe Hall Wood, running northwards towards Lost Wood and onwards to the farmstead at Terling Hall, would create a connection with the existing path leading from Terling Hall Road to the village of Terling. Additional paths running east-west across farmland in the area would improve access to the river valley landscape to the east, and connect with potential future links along the river valley corridor. Such routes would provide new circular walks for the benefit of residents in both Hatfield Peverel and Terling.



*View south to Toppinghoe Hall*



Key

Parish boundary

E15845 Hatfield Peverel

Figure 01

Location Plan

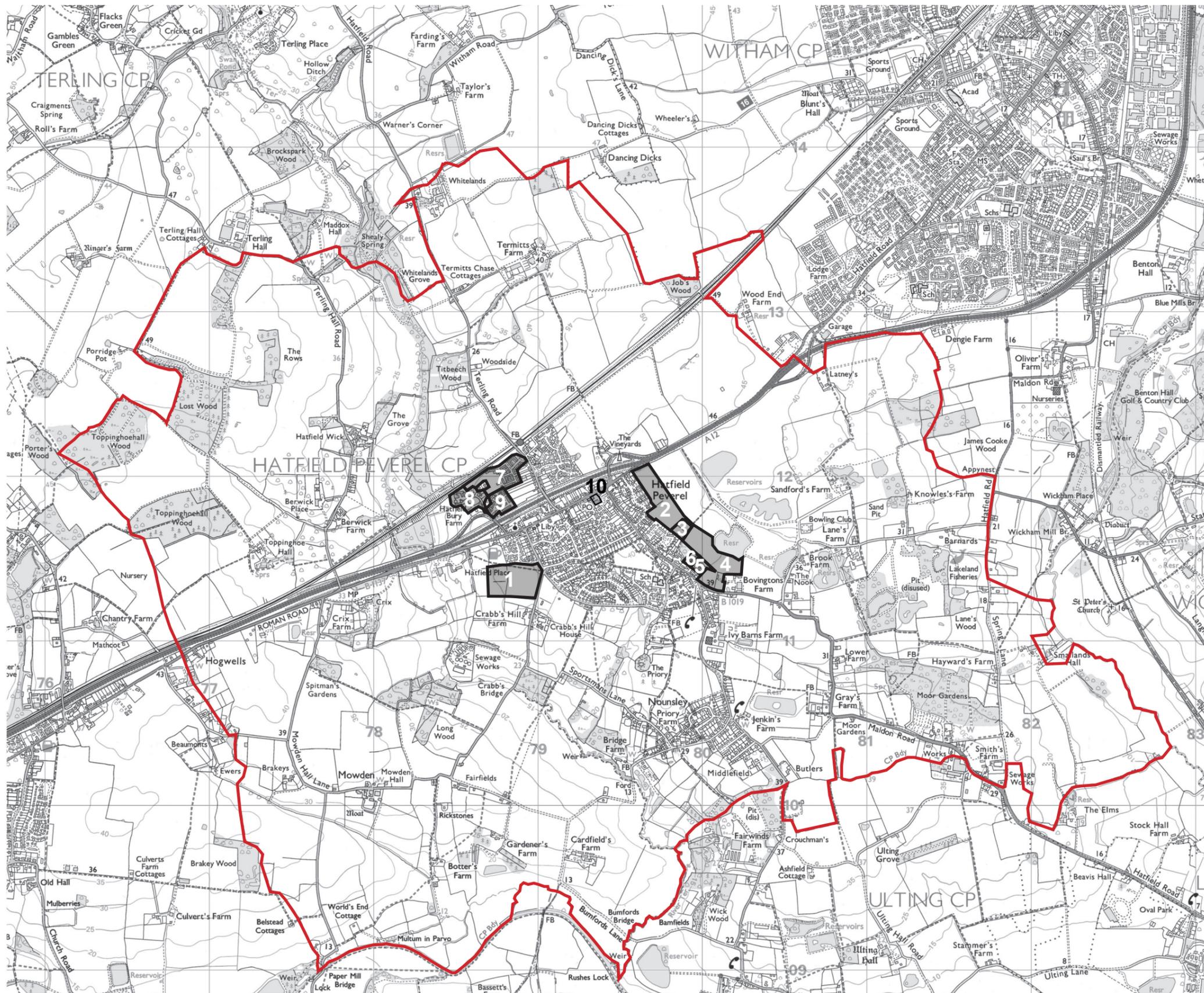
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November 2022



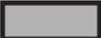
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thelandscapepartnership



Key

 Parish boundary

 Recent planning permissions for residential development

1. Stonepath Meadow 16/01813/OUT
2. Gleneagles 16/02156/OUT
3. Small Acres 21/02857/OUT
4. Maldon Road 20/01264/OUT
5. The Wheatsheaf 18/00851/FUL
6. Heathers/Candletree 20/01465/FUL
7. Former Arla site 16/02096/OUT
8. Hatfield Bury Farm 19/01803/FUL
9. Sorrell Field 17/00973/FUL
10. Cowards Garage 15/01103/OUT

E15845 Hatfield Peverel

Figure 02

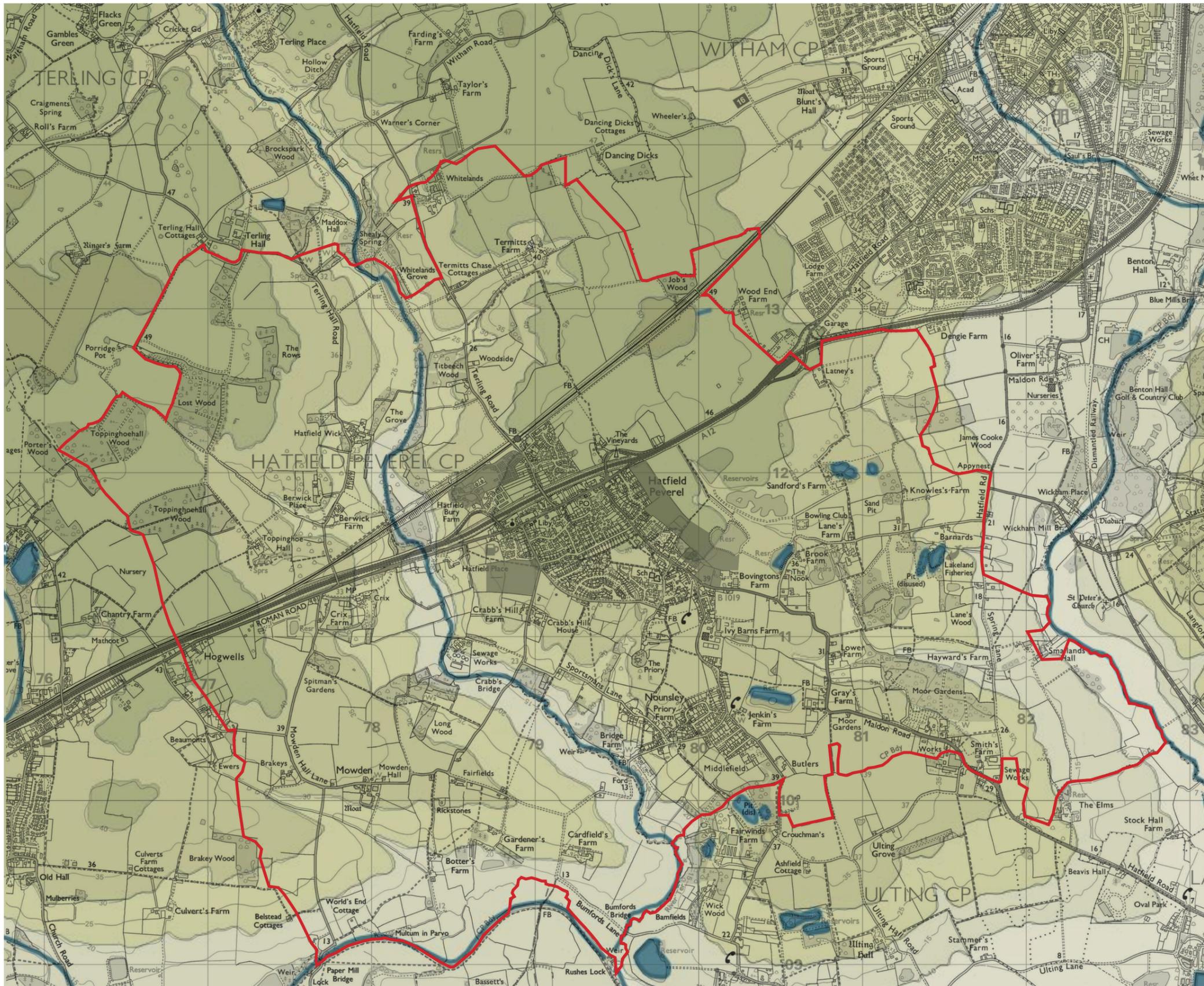
Planning Permissions

Scale: 1:25,000

November 2022



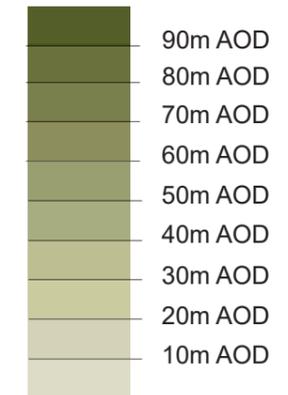
thelandscapepartnership



Key

 Parish boundary

Elevation



E15845 Hatfield Peverel

Figure 03

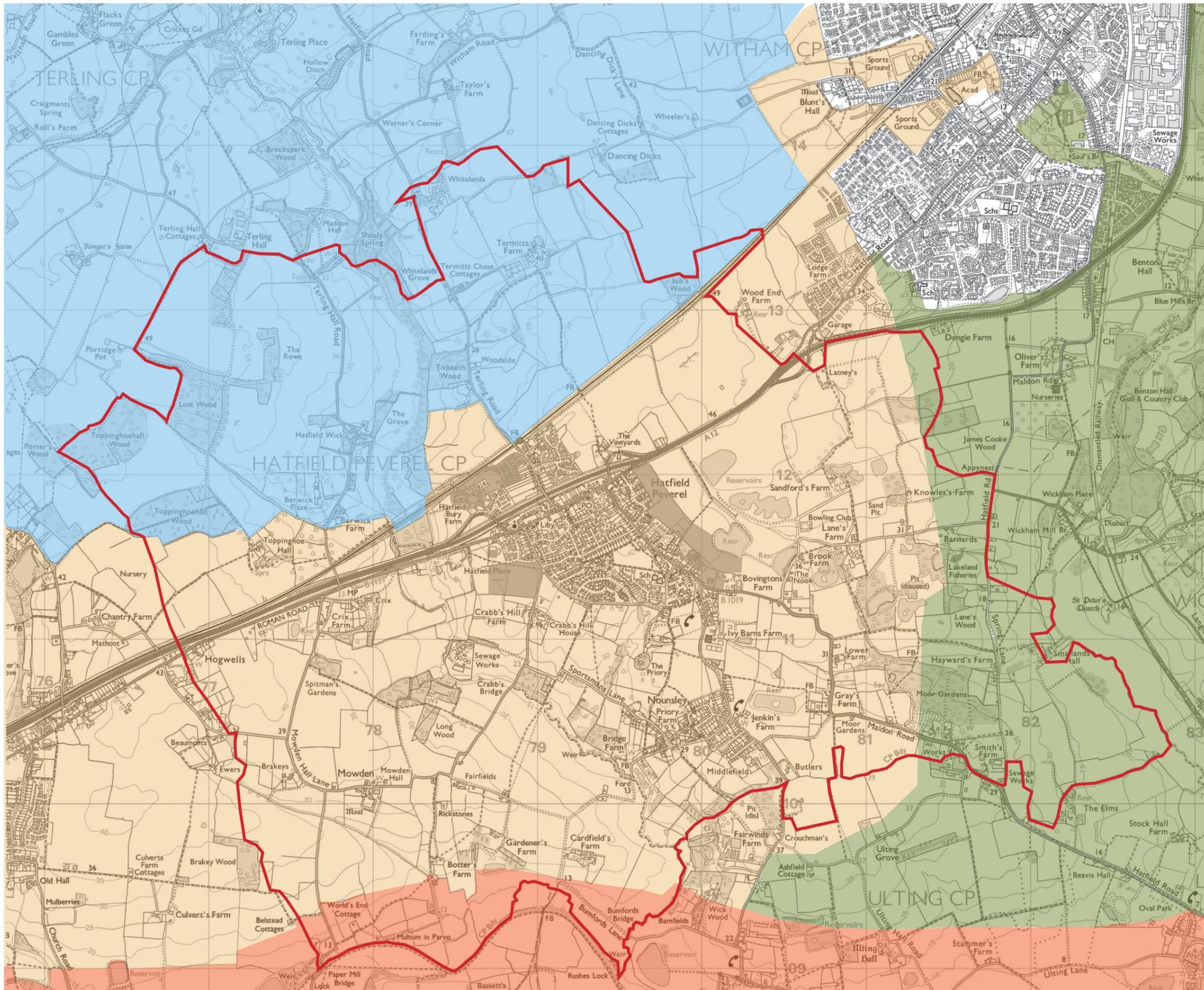
Topography Plan

Scale: 1:25,000

November 2022



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Key

 Parish boundary

Landscape Character Areas as defined within the Braintree District Landscape Character Assessment, September 2006

-  B17 Terling Farmland Plateau
-  B21 Boreham Farmland Plateau
-  A9/A9a Blackwater River Valley and Blackwater River Valley Floor
-  A7/A7a Lower Chelmer River Valley and Lower Chelmer river Valley Floor

E15845 Hatfield Peverel

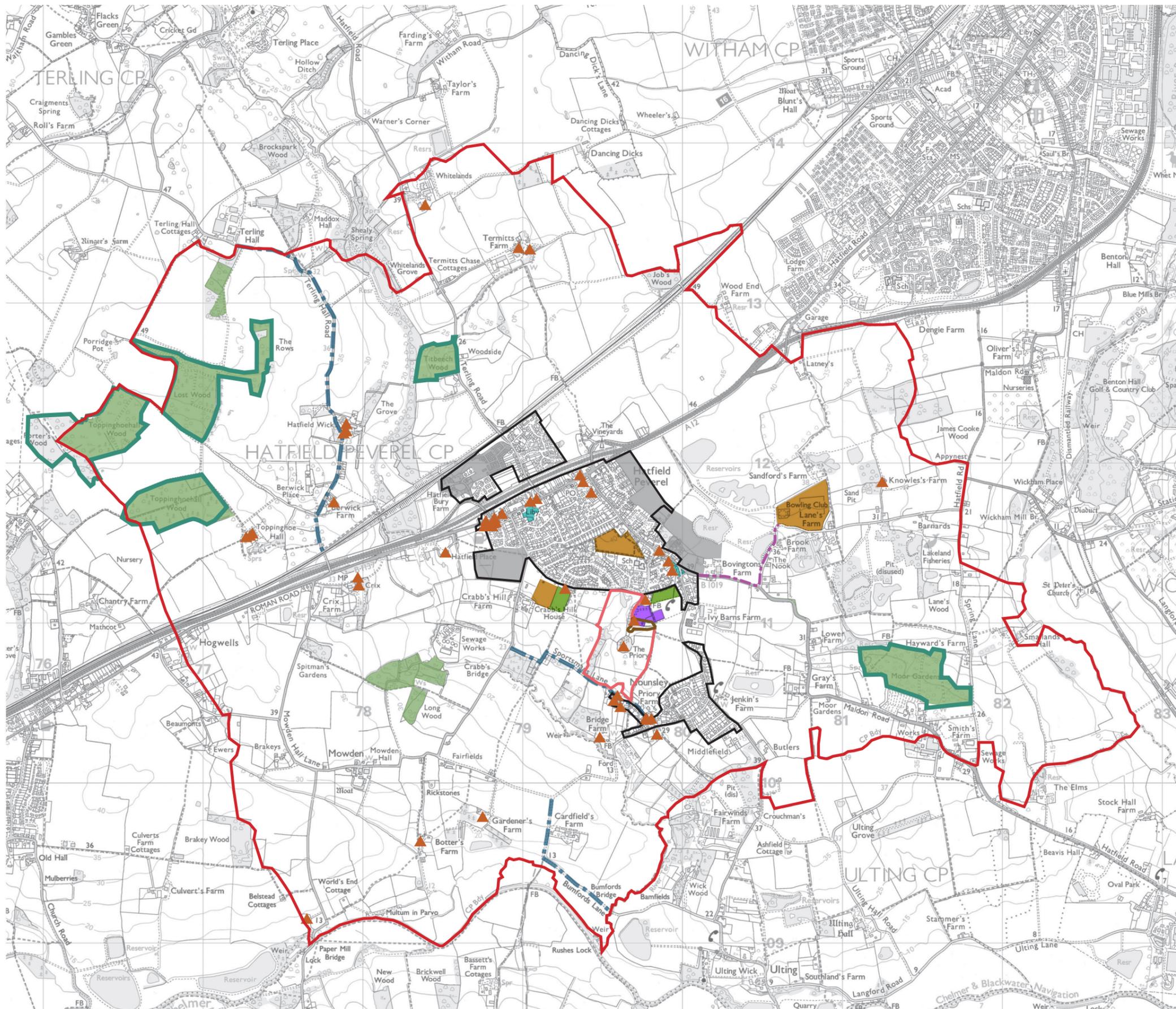
Figure 04  
Landscape Character Areas

Scale: 1:25,000

November 2022



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Key

- Parish boundary
- Scheduled Monument
- ▲ Listed building
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Ancient Woodland

Local Plan designations shown within Hatfield Peverel parish boundary (as shown on Inset 36 - Hatfield Peverel)

- Development Boundary (LPP1)
- Protected Lane (LPP69)
- Proposed Footpath/Cycleway (LPP42)
- Local Wildlife Site (LPP64)
- Cemetery / Churchyards (LPP62)
- Allotments (LPP50, LPP63)
- Formal Recreation (LPP50)
- Visually Important Space (LPP50)

E15845 Hatfield Peverel

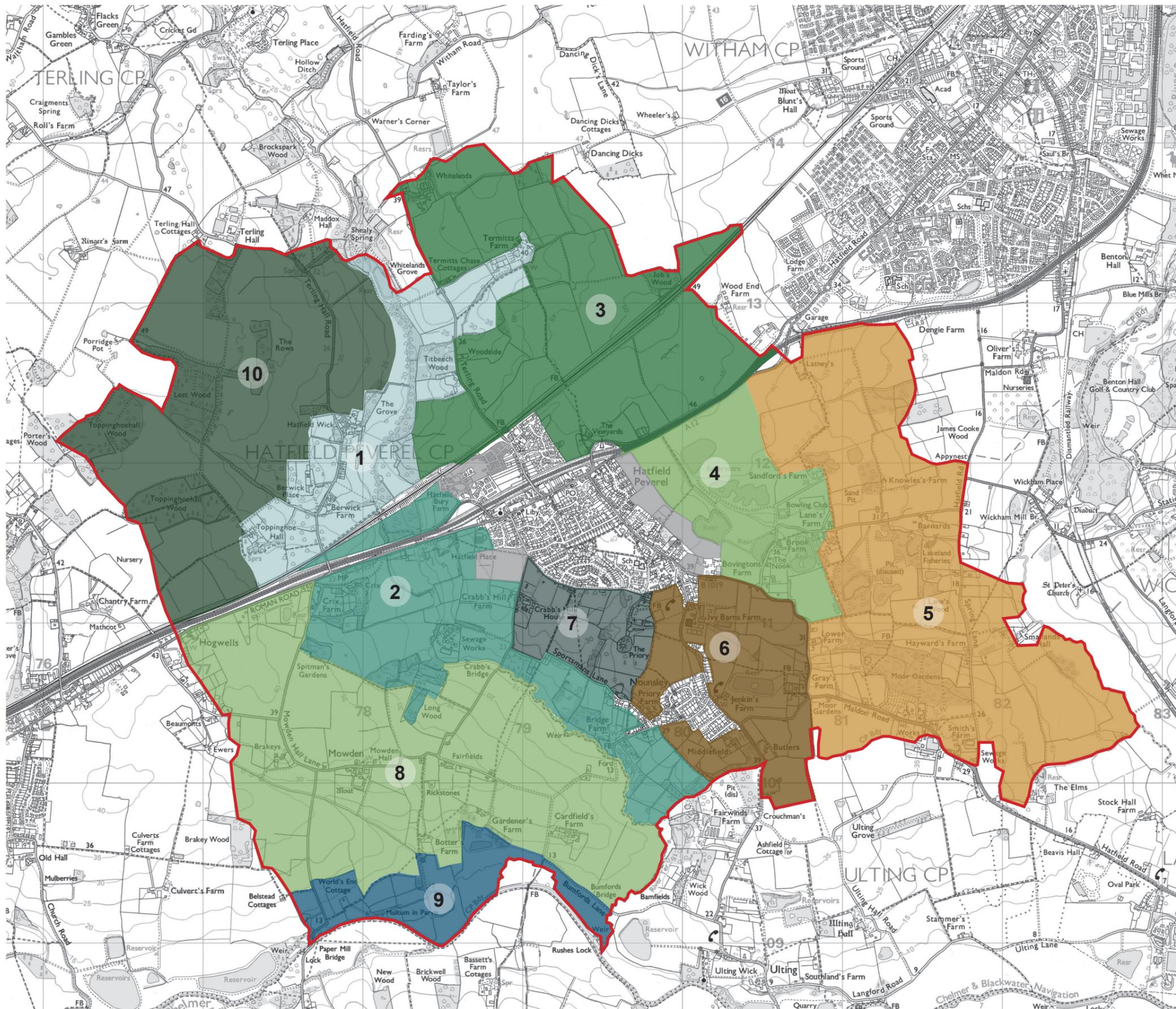
Figure 05

Landscape-related designations

Scale: 1:25,000

November 2022





Key

- Parish boundary
  
- 1. River Ter North:**  
Stream and lower valley slopes
- 2. River Ter South:**  
River and lower valley slopes
- 3. Termitts Chase:**  
Elevated farmland
- 4. Wickham Bishops Road:**  
Upper valley slopes with pits/  
reservoirs
- 5. River Blackwater:**  
Lower valley slopes
- 6. Jenkins Lane:**  
Mixed farmland
- 7. Sportsmans Lane:**  
Farmland and parkland
- 8. Mowden:**  
Spur of elevated farmland  
between river valleys
- 9. River Chelmer:**  
Lower valley slopes
- 10. Terling Hall Road:**  
Elevated farmland

E15845 Hatfield Peverel

Figure 06

Local Landscape Character Areas

Scale: 1:25,000

November 2022





Year 2015



Year 2022

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**E15845 Hatfield Peverel NDP**

Before and After (2015-2022)

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**LLCA 1**

November 2022

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Year 2015



Year 2022

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**E15845 Hatfield Peverel NDP**

Before and After (2015-2022)

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**LLCA 2**

November 2022

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Year 2015



Year 2022

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**E15845 Hatfield Peverel NDP**

Before and After (2015-2022)

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**LLCA 4**

November 2022

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Year 2015



Year 2022

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**E15845 Hatfield Peverel NDP**

Before and After (2015-2022)

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**LLCA 4**

November 2022

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Year 2015



Year 2022

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**E15845 Hatfield Peverel NDP**

Before and After (2015-2022)

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**LLCA 6**

November 2022

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Year 2015



Year 2022

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**E15845 Hatfield Peverel NDP**

Before and After (2015-2022)

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**LLCA 6**

November 2022

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Year 2015



Year 2022

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**E15845 Hatfield Peverel NDP**

Before and After (2015-2022)

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**LLCA 6**

November 2022

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Year 2015



Year 2022

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**E15845 Hatfield Peverel NDP**

Before and After (2015-2022)

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**LLCA 7**

November 2022

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Year 2015



Year 2022

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**E15845 Hatfield Peverel NDP**  
Before and After (2015-2022)

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**LLCA 7**

November 2022

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Year 2015



Year 2022

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**E15845 Hatfield Peverel NDP**

Before and After (2015-2022)

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**LLCA 8**

November 2022

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Year 2015



Year 2022

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**E15845 Hatfield Peverel NDP**

Before and After (2015-2022)

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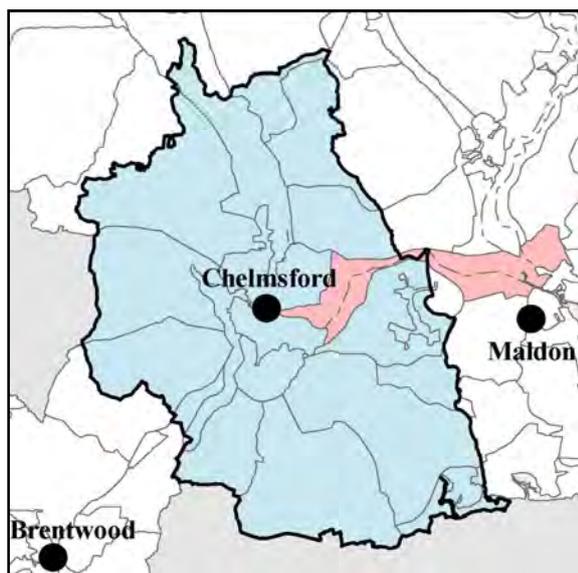
**LLCA 8**

November 2022

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**APPENDIX A** – Extract from Braintree District & Chelmsford  
Landscape Character Assessment

## A7 LOWER CHELMER RIVER VALLEY (shared with Maldon District)

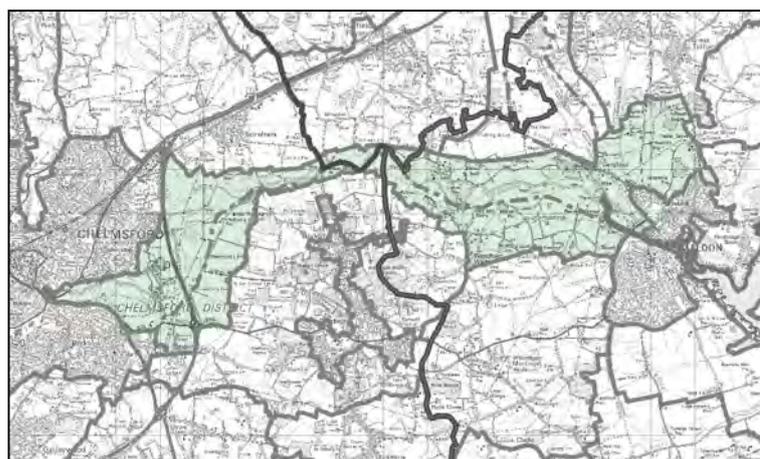


### Key Characteristics

- Shallow valley.
- Predominantly arable farmland on the valley slopes.
- The Lower Chelmer where it meets the River Blackwater has gentle valley sides.
- Overall strong sense of place and tranquillity away from Maldon and the A12 and the railway line.

### (Sub-Unit A7a)

- Mixture of arable and pastoral fields on the valley floor.
- The Lower Chelmer where it meets the River Blackwater has a wide flat valley floor
- Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive feature in close proximity to the river.



### Overall Character

The lower reaches of the River Chelmer between Chelmsford and Maldon are open in character, with a wide floodplain and gently sloping valley sides. South of Langford the narrower meandering River Blackwater joins the wider more mature River Chelmer to flow towards Maldon. Medium to large scale arable and pastoral fields with a regular pattern dominate its length. Hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees delineate their boundaries. In places the hedgerows are thick but fragmented. Where roads cross the river valley ditches with banks that are often vegetated with hedgerows bound them. Tree cover is high along the banks of the river with willow and poplar plantations common as well as pockets of wet alder/willow woodland. The majority of the river valley floor is sparsely populated adding to its open character. Small settlements are dispersed along valleysides or clustered around the few bridging points. Maldon occupies a valley-side location at the mouth of the river, but along with major roads that cross the area there is a limited impact on character. Within the valley floor are a

series of reservoirs in proximity to the river. There is an overall sense of tranquillity throughout the character area, with several quiet rural lanes winding through the landscape.

### **Visual Characteristics**

- The views are open and occasionally panoramic in the lower reaches of the river valley where they are unconstrained by hedgerow trees.
- Views along the valley corridor are framed.

### **Historic Land Use**

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by a predominance of medium to large pre-18<sup>th</sup> century fields with straight boundaries, including 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>-century enclosure in the south of the area, and with a pocket of small irregular fields to the northeast. On a micro-scale there is a considerable degree of co-axiality in their layout, usually relating directly to the immediate topography. The river valleys are marked by enclosed water meadows. Historic dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, isolated manors with some nucleated hamlets.

### **Ecological Features**

This Character Area is dominated by intensive and widespread arable agriculture. The area contains 10 sites of nature conservation value, including:

- Ten CWS along and including the River Chelmer of running water, wetland, grassland and semi-natural woodland habitats.
- Four areas of ancient woodland.

### **Key Planning and Land Management Issues**

- Potential for pollution of the ditches and the River Chelmer from fertiliser and pesticide run-off from the surrounding agricultural fields.
- Potential for erection of new farm buildings and houses within the open landscape, which would be conspicuous on the skyline.
- Increasing traffic on minor roads including large lorries and HGVs.
- Potential further decline in condition of field boundaries through further agricultural intensification.

### **Sensitivities to Change**

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include linear poplar and willow plantations and pockets of wet alder/willow woodland, which are sensitive to changes in land management. The overall sense of tranquillity throughout the character area would potentially be affected by new development. The skyline of the slopes of the lower valley are moderately visually sensitive, with open (and occasionally panoramic views) gained to and from the river corridor, which could be affected by new development. There is a sense of historic continuity resulting from water meadows along the river valley and a historic dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and isolated manors with some isolated hamlets. Wildlife habitats are scattered throughout the area (including 10 sites of importance for nature conservation, comprising ancient woodland, running water, wetland and grassland). Overall, this area has relatively high sensitivity to change.

### **Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives**

**Conserve** - seek to protect and enhance positive features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.

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

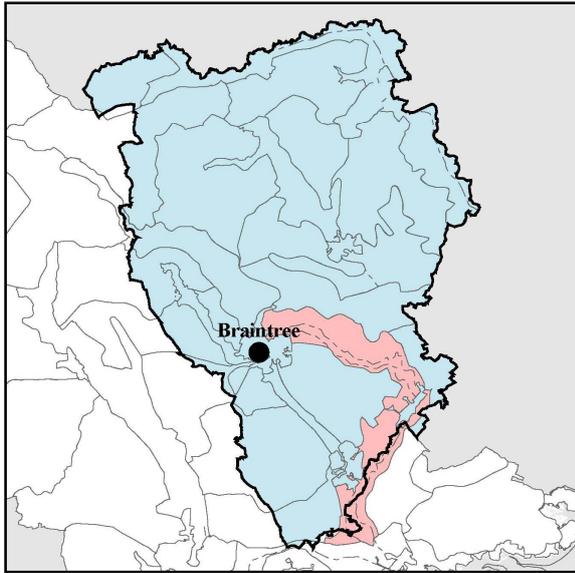
**Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines**

- Manage the traffic flows along the minor roads especially those not suitable for HGVs and lorries due to narrow bridges.
- Ensure that new built development is in keeping landscape character.
- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of settlements.
- Enhance the screening of the A12 and the railway line.

**Suggested Land Management Guidelines**

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern, and strengthen through planting where appropriate to local landscape character.
- Conserve and manage the ecological structure of hedges and ditches within the character area.
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials, which area in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character.

## A9 BLACKWATER RIVER VALLEY (shared with Maldon District)

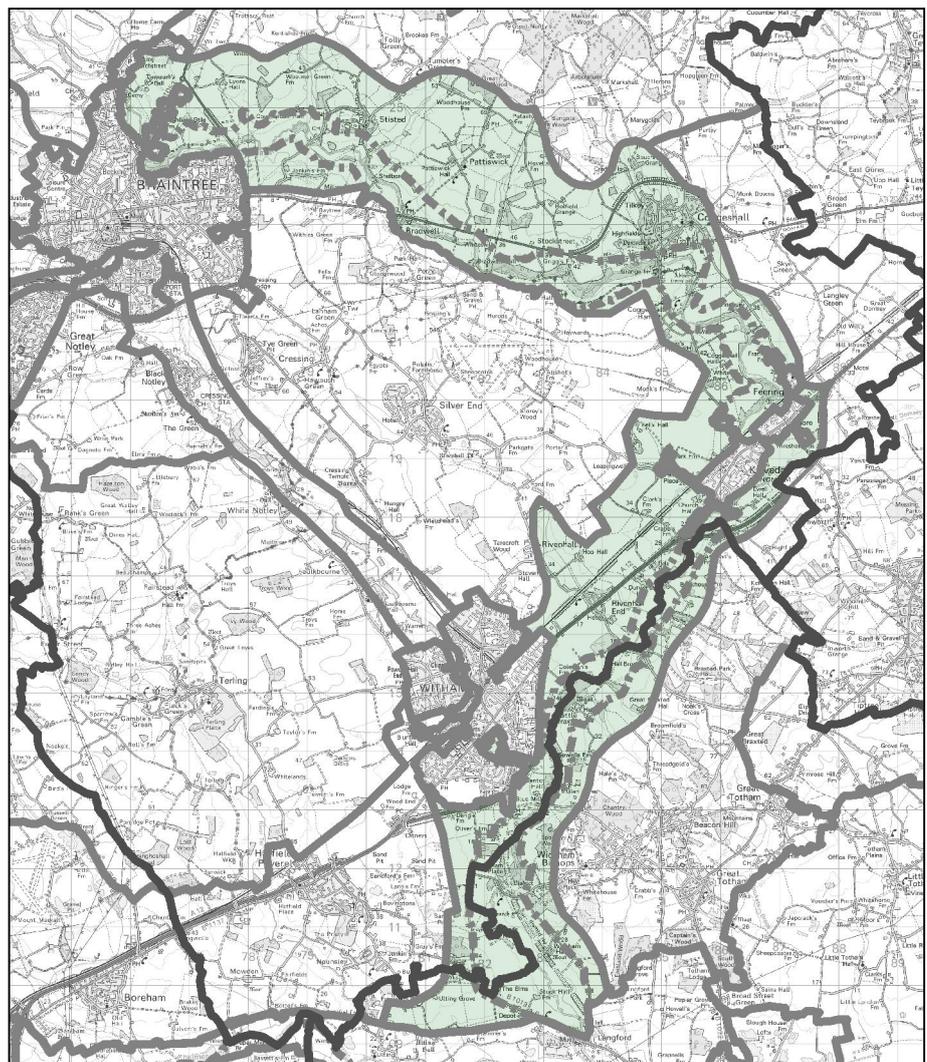


### Key Characteristics

- Shallow valley.
- The valley sides slope gently up from the valley floor.
- Predominantly arable farmland on the valley slopes.
- The Lower Blackwater near the confluence with the River Chelmer has gently valley slopes.
- Overall strong sense of place and tranquillity away from the settlements of Braintree, Witham and Maldon and the A120, A12 and the railway line.

### (Sub-Unit A9a)

- Mixture of arable and pastoral on the valley floor.
- The River Blackwater Valley floor north of the A120 is narrow.
- The River Blackwater near the confluence with the River Chelmer has a wide flat valley floor.



- Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive features especially along the river banks.

### **Overall Character**

The Upper Blackwater near Braintree is located in a relatively narrow valley with slopes that start gently at the top and get steeper the further into the valley to form a typical v-shape river valley centred on the river. There are areas of woodland located on valley slopes of the upper valley. As the river meanders down the valley, the valley floor becomes more wooded especially south of Coggeshall. Around Bradwell Village, the former sand and gravel pits are well vegetated with areas of poplar and willow plantations associated with the Blackwater River and its small tributary streams adding to the good tree cover and enclosure in the area. However in the lower reaches of the river until it joins the River Chelmer near Maldon the valley becomes wider with a flat valley floor with gently sloping valley sides. In this area there are few plantations and areas of woodland. The landscape becomes more open dominated by large open arable fields which benefit from the well drained fine loamy and sandy soils overlying chalk. Throughout the valley the hedgerows delineating field boundaries are in mixed condition with some well trimmed hedges and others that are more scrubby and fragmented with scattered hedgerow trees. The valley floor has large settlements such as Braintree and Witham along industries centred on the river such as watermills. Many of these mills have been converted to tourist attractions but maintain original features. On the valley slopes surrounding the river there are isolated farmsteads that are occasionally moated and small villages. The villages tend to be linear centred on the roads. All the settlements are well screened by deciduous trees. Interest is added to the landscape through the presence of a number of halls and large dwellings made from brick with a timber frame. The river valley has a strong sense of character and place with tranquil areas located along the narrow rural lanes away from the key settlements and busy roads.

### **Visual Characteristics**

- Holfield Grange and the churches at Langford and Ulting form key landmarks along and across the river valley.
- The views are open and occasionally panoramic in the lower reaches of the river valley where they are unconstrained by hedgerow trees.
- Views along the valley corridor.

### **Historic Land Use**

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by a mix of pre-18<sup>th</sup> century irregular fields probably of medieval origin and some maybe even older and pre-18<sup>th</sup> century co-axial fields, also of probable medieval origin. The valley bottom contains present and former enclosed meadow. The historic settlement pattern is largely dispersed, comprising isolated manors, church/hall complexes, farms, moated sites and villages. The main historic landscape features include:

- The valley to the south of Coggeshall which now contains extensive willow plantations.
- The historic settlements of Kelvedon and Coggeshall.
- The Roman roads of Stane Street and the former A12 which have left their imprint on the modern landscape, influencing field alignment and settlement distribution.
- Moderate post-1950s boundary loss.

### **Ecological Features**

This Character Area is dominated by intensive and widespread arable agriculture. The area contains 16 sites of nature conservation including:

- Ten CWSs with ancient and semi-natural woodland habitats including part of Barrowfield Wood, Blackwater Plantation, Tilkey Road, Coggeshall, Blackwater Plantation West, part of Bungate Wood, part of Great Monk Wood, Coven Plantation, Lyonshall Wood and Bramble Wood.

- Six CWSs with unimproved grassland, hedgerow and wetland habitats including Moor Gardens, Riverview Meadows, Disused Railway - Witham, Hoo Hall Meadow, Feering Marsh and Whet Mead, also a Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

### **Key Planning and Land Management Issues**

- Potential for pollution of the ditches and the River Blackwater from fertiliser and pesticide run-off from the surrounding agricultural fields.
- Potential for rubbish being thrown from car windows along the busy roads especially the A12.
- Potential for erection of new farm buildings and houses within the open landscape, which would be conspicuous on the skyline.
- Increasing traffic on minor roads including large lorries and HGVs.
- Potential further decline in condition of field boundaries through further agricultural intensification.

### **Sensitivities to Change**

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include distinctive linear poplar and willow plantations along the river banks, which are sensitive to changes in land management. The skyline of the valley slopes is visually sensitive, with potential new development being visible within several views to and from adjacent Landscape Character Areas and also within views across and along the valley. There is also a sense of historic integrity, resulting from enclosed meadows within the valley bottom, historic settlements (including Kelvedon and Coggeshall) and a dispersed settlement pattern, comprising isolated manors, church/hall complexes, farms and moated sites. There area also several important wildlife habitats within the area (including sixteen County Wildlife Sites, comprising a mixture of semi-natural woodland, unimproved grassland, hedgerows and wetland habitats) which are sensitive to changes in land management.

### **Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives**

*Conserve* - seek to protect and enhance positive features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.

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

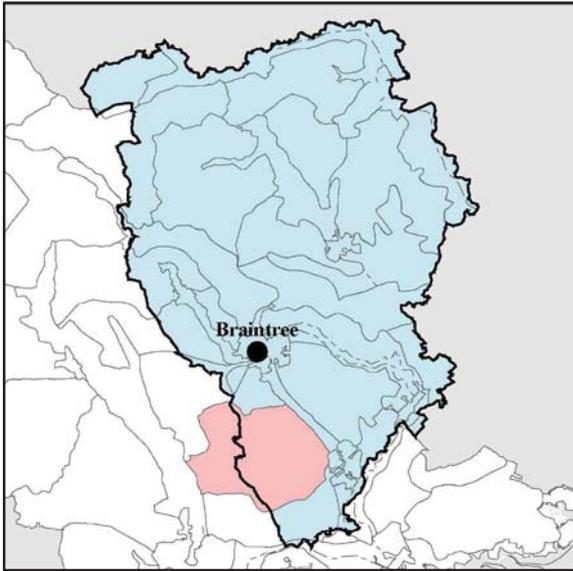
### **Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines**

- Manage the traffic flows along the minor roads especially those not suitable for HGVs and lorries due to narrow bridges.
- Ensure that new built development is in keeping landscape character.
- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of settlements.
- Enhance the screening of the A12 and the railway line.

### **Suggested Land Management Guidelines**

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern, and strengthen through planting where appropriate to local landscape character.
- Conserve and manage the ecological structure of hedges and ditches within the character area.
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials, which area in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character.
- Manage the roadside flytipping and rubbish thrown from cars that lands in the road verges.

## B17 TERLING FARMLAND PLATEAU (shared with Chelmsford Borough)

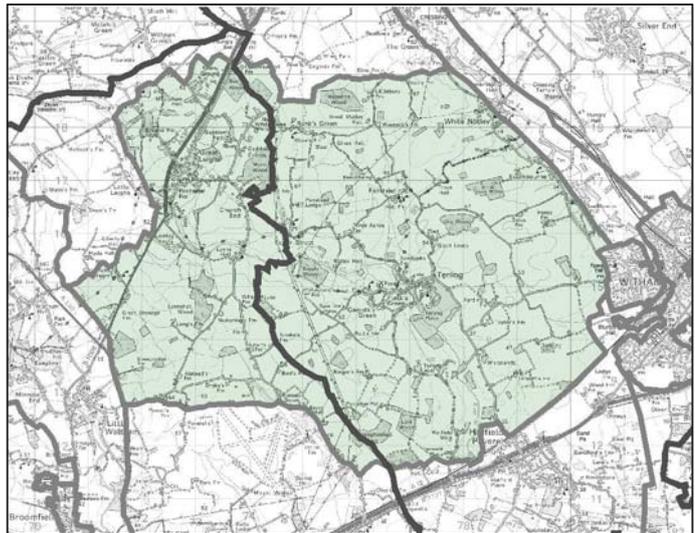


### Key Characteristics

- Rolling arable farmland.
- Irregular pattern of medium to large scale fields.
- Scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small villages, typically with greens and ponds.
- Network of narrow winding lanes.
- Mostly tranquil away from the A12 and A131.

### Overall Character

The farmland plateau surrounding Terling between the A12 and A131 is on rolling hills and valleys especially in the west. North east of Terling the farmland becomes flat and very open overlying deep well drained fine loams. The land is mainly arable with an irregular pattern of medium to large scale fields. Thick but intermittent hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees often delineate the field boundaries. In the north east of the area the grassy banks and ditches often mark field boundaries. There are many pockets of predominantly deciduous woodland with occasional mixed woodland. Some of these pockets form the remnants of ancient woodland. In addition there are several ponds or depressions in the middle of the larger fields that tend to be surrounded in trees. In long views these scattered small woods and copses, and hedgerow trees coalesce to create the illusion of a wooded horizon. The farmland is crossed by a comprehensive network of winding narrow lanes that are often bound by tall hedgerows and trees or where they are sunk below the surrounding fields by ditches and banks. In addition the Essex Way and the East Anglian Farm Rides Horse Riding Trail along with a network of footpaths cross the fields. Pylons cross the farmland creating a strong linear feature within the skyline. The dispersed settlement pattern is characterised by small isolated villages and farmsteads that are occasionally moated, often dispersed along lanes, with the larger village of Terling in the centre of the area. Away from the A12 and A131 there are areas with a tranquil character.



### Visual Characteristics

- Key Focal features are the Terling Church Spire which towers over the surrounding countryside and Terling Place.
- Views in the area vary between open and panoramic depending on the locality and density of trees within the view.

### Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by a historic pattern of irregular fields of various sizes. The historic pattern of dispersed settlements and scattered farmsteads survive. Some settlements would have been focussed on greens. The main historic landscape features include:

- Despite moderate to significant boundary loss, the field boundary pattern survives.
- Several areas of ancient woodland.
- The line of the Roman road from Chelmsford to Braintree, which bisects the Character Area.

### Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by intensive and widespread arable agriculture. The area contains 35 sites of nature conservation value:

- The River Ter SSSI and associated wetland habitats.
- 34 CWSs, including 25 with ancient and semi-natural woodland habitat.

### Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential for pollution of the streams and ditches from fertiliser and pesticide run-off from agricultural fields.
- Potential for erection of new farm buildings and residential dwellings on the edge of the settlements, which would be conspicuous on the skyline.
- Potential further decline in condition of field boundaries through further agricultural intensification.

### Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include thick (intermittent) hedgerows, frequent hedgerow trees, grassy banks and ditches and many pockets of predominantly deciduous woodland, (which are sensitive to changes in land management). The comprehensive network of quiet rural lanes and byways, which cross the landscape are sensitive to potential increased traffic flow, associated with new development. In association with this, the overall sense of tranquillity within the area is sensitive to change. The open skyline of higher areas of the farmland plateau is visually sensitive to new development that may be visible within views across, to and from the area. There is a sense of historic integrity, resulting from a dispersed historic settlement (comprising dispersed settlements and scattered farmsteads). Several areas of ancient woodland within the character area are also sensitive to changes in land management. Overall, this character area has moderate sensitivity to change.

### Landscape Strategy Option

**Conserve** - seek to protect and enhance positive features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.

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

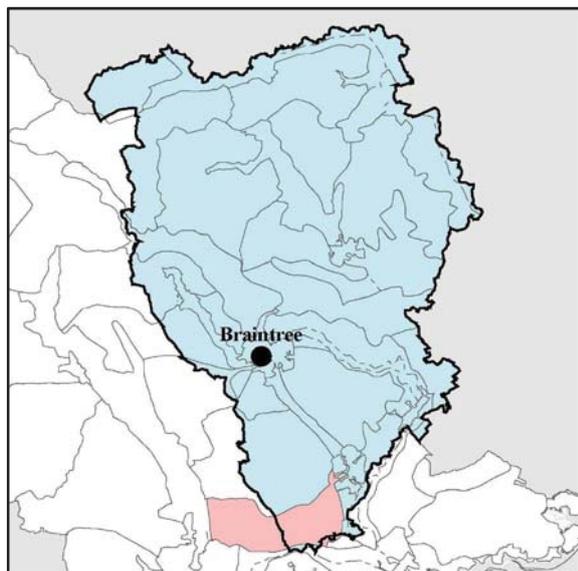
**Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines**

- Ensure that new build is in keeping with landscape character.
- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of settlements.
- Ensure any new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles.

**Suggested Land Management Guidelines**

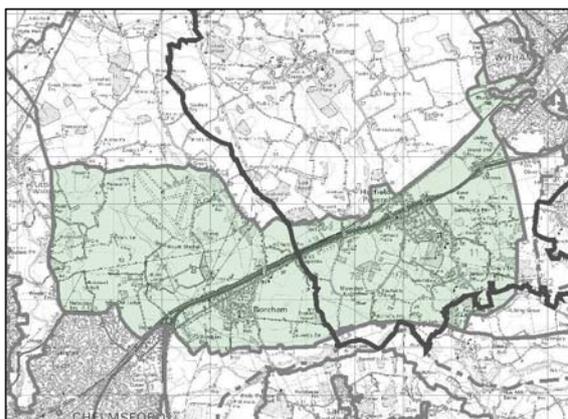
- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern, and strengthen through planting where appropriate to local landscape character.
- Conserve and manage areas of semi-natural woodland as important historical, landscape and nature conservation features.
- Conserve and manage the ecological structure of woodland, copses and hedges within the character area.
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials, which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character.

## B21 BOREHAM FARMLAND PLATEAU (shared with Chelmsford Borough and Maldon District)



### Key Characteristics

- Irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable and pastoral fields, marked by hedgerows, banks and ditches.
- Small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape.
- Scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small villages.
- A concentration of isolated farmsteads.
- Network of narrow winding lanes.



### Overall Character

Boreham Farmland Plateau is centred on Boreham and the A12 dual carriageway. The gently undulating landscape is fairly densely populated with the large settlements of Hatfield Peverel and Boreham and the scattered smaller villages such as Nounsley. Farmsteads line the roads outside of the main settlements. To the east and north of Boreham there are several disused sand and gravel pits. The pits have predominantly been filled in with water, the surrounding areas landscaped and trees have been planted. Some of these new lakes are used as fisheries and are surrounded by rough grassland and wire fences. Surrounding the settlements pastoral fields tend to be small to medium with their boundaries delineated by gappy and fragmented hedgerows with hedgerow trees. In the south west of the area are large open arable fields separated by banks and ditches providing extensive long distance views across the River Chelmer Valley. In these areas there are a few isolated dwellings and farmsteads and trees scattered across the landscape. Throughout the area outside the built up areas the roads tend to be sunk below the surrounding fields and lined with banks topped with tall hedges and hedgerow trees. The A12 dual carriageway splits the area visually into two with only a few crossing points to join the areas. The road is a very dominant feature as the traffic noise carries across large swathes of the area reducing the sense of tranquillity.

### **Visual Characteristics.**

- The A12 forms the key landmark in the area as it is raised above the surrounding landscape and is visible over a long distance.
- The views in the area are generally short distance and constrained by the tall hedges and small woodlands, however in the south and west of the area, the large arable fields provide very open panoramic views.

### **Historic Land Use**

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by a predominance of medium to large fields with straight boundaries, including 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>-century enclosure, with a pocket of small irregular fields to the northeast. Historically there is a dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, with nucleated settlement at Boreham. The main historic landscape features include:

- The Roman roads of Stane Street and the former A12 which have left their imprint on the modern landscape, influencing field alignment and settlement distribution.
- Modern development that is focussed around Boreham, but also within the Character Area these is also an airfield, the modern arterial route of the A12, and areas of gravel extraction.
- Water meadows along the river valleys.
- Historic park and gardens surrounding Boreham House.

### **Ecological Feature**

This Character Area is dominated by intensive and widespread arable agriculture with small pockets of woodland and narrow lanes. The area contains 9 sites of nature conservation value, including two with ancient and semi-natural woodland habitat. Ecological features also include ditches, reservoirs, streams and rivers and gravel and sand pits.

### **Key Planning and Land Management Issues**

- Potential for pollution of the streams, rivers and ditches from fertiliser and pesticide run-off from agricultural fields.
- Potential for erection of new farm buildings in the open agricultural land, which would be conspicuous on the sky line.
- Potential residential expansion of settlements, which would be conspicuous on the surrounding rural landscape.
- Increasing traffic on minor roads, especially during rush hour.
- Potential further decline in condition of field boundaries through further agricultural intensification.

### **Sensitivities to Change**

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include hedgerows, banks and ditches at field boundaries (which are sensitive to changes in land management). There is a sense of historic integrity, with a dispersed historic settlement pattern visible in places and occasional historic features such as New Hall and/or Boreham House and historic park/gardens visible within the landscape. Overall, this character area has low to- moderate sensitivity to change.

### **Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives**

**Conserve** - seek to protect and enhance positive features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.

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

**Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines**

- Consider the visual impact of new residential development and farm buildings in the surrounding agricultural fields.
- Ensure any new development is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles.

**Suggested Land Management Guidelines**

- Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern, and strengthen through planting where appropriate to local landscape character.
- Conserve and manage areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland as important historical, landscape and nature conservation features.
- Conserve and manage the ecological structure of woodland, copses and hedges within the character area.
- Strengthen the recreational role of the water filled sand and gravel pits.
- Conserve and promote the use of building materials, which are in keeping with local vernacular/landscape character.

## **APPENDIX B – Landscape Character Area Pro-forma**

APPENDIX A		FIELD SURVEY RECORD		SHEET No.	Page 1 of 2
<b>Date :</b>		<b>Surveyors' Name/s :</b>		<b>National Typology Code:</b>	
<b>Location :</b> <b>Landscape Character Area :</b> <b>Conditions :</b>				<b>LDU Nos:</b>	
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER					
LANDFORM (S1)		dominant prominent apparent (widespread/localised) insignificant			
<b>Description:</b> flat gently undulating strongly undulating steep broad valley narrow valley plain plateau upland sloping			<b>Hydrology:</b> river stream ponds lakes reservoir wetlands other		
			<b>Degree of slope:</b>		<b>Altitude:</b>
LANDCOVER (S2)		dominant prominent apparent (widespread/localised) insignificant			
<b>Description:</b> open farmland treed farmland wooded farmland parkland woodland grassland / common open water or wetlands			<b>Primary land use:</b> commercial / industrial farmland: arable/pastoral/mixed forestry: broadleaf/conifer/mixed common or green: grassed/treed nursery / allotments / orchard recreation or amenity: type reservoir disturbed : type		
<b>Associated features:</b> e.g. glasshouses/ marina.			<b>Secondary land use</b> (select from above)		
<b>Woodland cover:</b>  extensive interlocking linear discrete fragmented		<b>Species:</b>		<b>Field boundaries (in order of prominence):</b> hedgerow (with/without trees) tree rows hedgebank fence wall/wet ditch other  (high/medium/low)	
				<b>Species:</b>	
HISTORICAL PATTERN (S3)		dominant prominent apparent (widespread/localised) insignificant			
<b>Description:</b> organic planned unenclosed					
<b>Field pattern:</b> geometric (ordered) regular (rectilinear) subregular (interlocking – curved boundaries) irregular (organic, winding lanes) discontinuous (no discernable pattern)			<b>Transport pattern:</b> motorway A road B road track / lane canal railway  straight winding sinuous sunken		
<b>Field size:</b> 1- small < 2ha 2- small/medium 3- medium/large 4- large > 8ha			<b>Settlement:</b> Form: village / hamlet / isolated house or farm/ other Building style: vernacular / non-vernacular Age: Tudor/Stuart/Georgian/ Victorian/Edwardian/20thC Materials: walls and roof		
<b>Verges:</b> absent variable uniform wide / medium / narrow ditched			<b>Country houses:</b> Age: Tudor/Stuart/Georgian/Victorian/Edwardian 20thC Materials:		
<b>Other built features (function, age and materials):</b>					
<b>Other comments e.g. cultural features</b>					
VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION					
<b>Views of area from outside:</b> widely visible locally visible concealed			<b>Sense of enclosure:</b> confined contained open exposed		
<b>Tranquillity (S4):</b> tranquil/distant/discordant Source: Level and constancy::			<b>Rarity (S5):</b> unique rare unusual Frequent		

**CONDITION**

**HISTORICAL INTEGRITY**

<b>Extent and type of landcover change (C1):</b> pasture to arable change in extent of woodland/tree cover on farmland loss of field boundaries parkland to farmland minerals other	widespread localised insignificant	<b>Age structure of tree cover (C2):</b> over mature mature/young mixed	<b>Survival of cultural pattern (C5):</b> intact and well managed intact but poorly managed interrupted ( gen. intact but locally interrupted) declining (boundaries poorly managed) relic
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**Notes:**

**ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY**

<b>Extent of habitat/corridor survival (C3):</b> Widespread Linked Scattered relic	<b>Management of habitats (C4):</b> Good Not obvious Poor
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**Notes:**

**VISUAL IMPACT**

<b>Impact of built development (C6):</b> Urban/Transport corridor/rural housing/ utilities/structures/other	high moderate low	<b>Visual Unity (S6):</b> Unified Coherent Incoherent	high moderate low
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**Notes:**

**Boundary notes:**

**CHARACTER SUMMARY**

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER	WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
S1 Impact of landform* S2 Impact of landcover* S3 Historic pattern* S4 Tranquillity S5 Distinctiveness/rarity S6 Visual unity	Insignificant Insignificant Insignificant Discordant Frequent Incoherent	Apparent Apparent Apparent Moderate Unusual Coherent	Dominant/Prominent Dominant/Prominent Dominant/Prominent Tranquil Unique/rare Unified

**Totals** \* Prime character categories if tie

CONDITION	POOR	MODERATE	GOOD
C1 Landcover Change C2 Age Structure of Tree Cover* C3 Extent of semi-natural habitat survival* C4 Management of semi-natural habitats C5 Survival of cultural pattern (fields and hedges) C6 Impact of built development*	Widespread Overmature Relic Poor Declining/Relic High	Localised Mature or young Scattered Not obvious Interrupted Moderate	Insignificant Mixed Widespread/Linked Good Intact Low

**Totals** \* Prime condition categories if tie

<b>MATRIX</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Strengthen and reinforce</b>	<b>Conserve and strengthen</b>	<b>Safeguard and manage</b>
	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Improve and reinforce</b>	<b>Improve and conserve</b>	<b>Conserve and restore</b>
	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Reconstruct</b>	<b>Improve and restore</b>	<b>Restore condition to maintain character</b>
		<b>Weak</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Strong</b>
<b>Strength of Character</b>				

**SENSITIVITY CHECK**

Visual					Cultural				
Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High