

# Local Development Framework Committee

Town Hall, Colchester  
22 June 2009 at 6.00pm

The Local Development Framework Committee deals with the Council's responsibilities relating to the Local Development Framework.

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# Local Development Framework Committee

To deal with the Council's responsibilities relating to the Local Development Framework.

**COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL  
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK COMMITTEE  
22 June 2009 at 6:00pm**

**Members**

Chairman : Councillor Nick Cope.  
Deputy Chairman : Councillor Martin Goss.  
Councillors Elizabeth Blundell, Robert Davidson,  
Christopher Garnett, Chris Hall, John Jowers and Kim Naish.

**Substitute Members** : All members of the Council who are not members of the Planning Committee.

**Agenda - Part A**

(open to the public including the media)

**Pages**

**1. Welcome and Announcements**

(a) The Chairman to welcome members of the public and Councillors and to remind all speakers of the requirement for microphones to be used at all times.

(b) At the Chairman's discretion, to announce information on:

- action in the event of an emergency;
- mobile phones switched off or to silent;
- location of toilets;
- introduction of members of the meeting.

**2. Substitutions**

Members may arrange for a substitute councillor to attend a meeting on their behalf, subject to prior notice being given. The attendance of substitute councillors must be recorded.

**3. Urgent Items**

To announce any items not on the agenda which the Chairman has agreed to consider because they are urgent and to give reasons for the urgency.

**4. Declarations of Interest**

The Chairman to invite Councillors to declare individually any personal interests they may have in the items on the agenda.

If the personal interest arises because of a Councillor's membership of

or position of control or management on:

- any body to which the Councillor has been appointed or nominated by the Council; or
- another public body

then the interest need only be declared if the Councillor intends to speak on that item.

If a Councillor declares a personal interest they must also consider whether they have a prejudicial interest. If they have a prejudicial interest they must leave the room for that item.

If a Councillor wishes to make representations on an item on which they have a prejudicial interest they may do so if members of the public are allowed to make representations. In such circumstances a Councillor must leave the room immediately once they have finished speaking.

An interest is considered to be prejudicial if a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard it as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest.

Councillors should consult paragraph 7 of the Meetings General Procedure Rules for further guidance.

## **5. Have Your Say!**

(a) The Chairman to invite members of the public to indicate if they wish to speak or present a petition at this meeting – either on an item on the agenda or on a general matter not on this agenda. You should indicate your wish to speak at this point if your name has not been noted by Council staff.

(b) The Chairman to invite contributions from members of the public who wish to Have Your Say! on a general matter not on this agenda.

## **6. Minutes**

**1 - 7**

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 23 March 2009 and 20 May 2009.

## **7. Settlement Boundary Review**

**8 - 114**

See report by the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration.

## **8. Local Wildlife Sites Review**

**115 - 121**

See report by the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration.

## **9. Exclusion of the Public**

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public, including the press, from the meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example confidential personal, financial or legal advice), in Part B of this agenda (printed on yellow paper) can be decided. (Exempt information is defined in Section 100I and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK COMMITTEE  
23 MARCH 2009**

*Present :-* Councillor Nick Cope (Chairman)  
Councillors Christopher Garnett, Martin Goss,  
John Jowers, Kim Naish, Henry Spyvee and  
Terry Sutton

*Substitute Member :-* Councillor Richard Martin  
for Councillor Robert Davidson

**Councillor Christopher Garnett (in respect of his membership of Langham Parish Council) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

**Councillor Martin Goss (in respect of his membership of Myland Parish Council) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

#### **15. Have Your Say!**

Mr Ted Gittins addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3). In respect of the Site Allocations document he was concerned about the process, particularly in relation to the definition of settlement boundaries and he very much welcomed the recognition that a considerable amount of work needed to be undertaken in this matter. He was concerned that the methodology needs to be fair and asked if stakeholders could be involved at the outset so that there was a consensus in the way the exercise is conducted before the detailed work is undertaken. Secondly, housing growth area proposals cause him great difficulty as a planning consultant. Once areas of change are defined those who live on the boundaries have no idea what is going to happen, and when plans are delayed for fine tuning the area is subjected to planning blight. He requested urgent attention so the public are not left in this vacuum. Finally, he asked that pages and paragraphs in all consultation documents be numbered to make it easier to submit representations.

In response to a question from the Committee, Mr Gittins explained that the stakeholders he was referring to were parish councils in respect of the local interest; and the development industry generally, including builders, developers and consultants. In response it was explained that all the parish councils were invited to a meeting prior to publication of the last document and the vast majority either attended or indicated that they did not need to attend. The council has a number of developers who it uses as critical friends to test the methodology of the consultation process. Developers also have an opportunity to make representations during the consultation process and this process would continue.

The parish council consultation was welcomed. However, Mr Gittins was of the view that if a parish council considered there should be no further growth within their parish there should be a requirement to explain how they reached that decision, an example of

which would be the rationalisation of village envelopes. In response it was stated that the reverse could be argued, that there should be a presumption against such development, and that it was for parish councils and others to explain why development should be permitted. It was agreed that parish councils be requested to provide reasons for any views submitted. Members of the Committee welcomed the consultation that had already taken place with parish councils. With the development of village design statements and plans, the stakeholder base has been quite well broadened with considerable input resulting and good ideas generated by the villages.

## **16. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2008 were confirmed as a correct record.

**Councillor Kim Naish (in respect of his association with the Environment Agency and Sport England) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

**Councillor John Jowers (in respect of his membership of Essex County Council, the East of England Regional Planning Panel and the Regional Flood Defence Committee) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

**Councillor Christopher Garnett (in respect of his membership of Langham Parish Council) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

**Councillor Martin Goss (in respect of his membership of Myland Parish Council) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

## **17. Development Policies Development Plan Document // Consultation Results**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration together with a schedule of the outcomes of the consultation exercise on the Development Policies Development Plan Document (DPD), attached as Appendix A. The views put forward during the consultation would assist in the production of the Development Policies submission document, scheduled for publication in September 2009 and, following a six week consultation period, for submission to the Planning Inspectorate in November 2009.

Karen Syrett, Spatial Policy Manager, and Laura Chase, Planning Policy Manager, attended to assist the Committee in its deliberations.

The report highlighted the lack of best practice to draw on from other authorities



because only six stand-alone DPDs had been adopted. National guidance highlighted the importance of developing a reduced number of criteria based policies that do not duplicate policies found elsewhere. GO-East had highlighted a number of areas where they considered the policies did duplicate policies found elsewhere, and questioned whether some development policies might better be formulated as Supplementary Planning Documents or guidance. It was intended to meet with GO-East to discuss the issues they raised about duplication and the relationship between different levels of national, regional and local policies. Other comments related to the level of detail and prescriptive nature of standards. It was noted that parish councils and councillors supported the policy or a strengthened version of it, in contrast to representations from developer interest which raised concerns about the lack of flexibility in applying the policy. The policies would be revised taking into account the comments made in the response column of the appendix and the document will then be published in the autumn together with the Site Allocations DPD prior to submission to the Planning Inspectorate. Its examination will follow the Site Allocations DPD and adoption was scheduled for autumn 2010.

Members of the Committee raised a number of issues as follows:-

- there were issues concerning Ministry of Defence (MOD) land. The Spatial Policy Team have been involved in discussions with the MOD and those discussions have been deemed confidential for reasons of security;
- the complexities of drawing up policies which can be applied to urban and rural areas alike, whilst retaining flexibility;
- in respect of a parking policy, it was not clear whether or not the council would have to rely on the national DP16 Parking Policy. Clarity was required on appropriate places for car free zones. However, although there were very few cases where no or low car ownership was appropriate, it was noted that parts of the Garrison development would be car free. In some areas on-street parking was making it difficult for buses to get through so there should be adequate facilities to prevent on-street parking. This document should enable the car strategy to retain flexibility.

In response to a comment about the examination process, it was explained that the process included submission of the document to Government; being examined or not was outside the Council's control.

*RESOLVED* that –

(a) The Committee's comments on the Development Policies DPD be added to those set out in Appendix A to the report by the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration and taken into consideration in the production of the Development Policies DPD submission document to go out for consultation in November 2009.

(b) The Committee wished to convey its appreciation to the Spatial Policy Team for the quality of their work to date on the Development Policies Development Plan Document.

**Councillor Kim Naish (in respect of his association with the Environment Agency and Sport England) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

**Councillor John Jowers (in respect of his membership of Essex County Council, the East of England Regional Planning Panel and the Regional Flood Defence Committee) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

**Councillor Christopher Garnett (in respect of his membership of Langham Parish Council) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

**Councillor Martin Goss (in respect of his membership of Myland Parish Council) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

## **18. Site Allocations Development Plan Document // Consultation Results**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration together with a schedule of the outcomes of the consultation exercise on the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD), attached as Appendix A. The views put forward during the consultation will assist in the production of the Site Allocations submission document, scheduled for publication in September 2009 and, following a six week consultation period, for submission to the Government in November 2009. It was scheduled for adoption in autumn 2010.

The Site Allocations DPD and the proposals map will identify land allocations for every part of the borough based on principles established in the Core Strategy. The consultation material showed the boundaries of the areas identified for growth in the Core Strategy as well as the boundaries of areas protected by designations, ranging from the local to the international level. Comments on the suitability of sites for development will be considered as part of Colchester's further development of sustainability work for the sites and will inform the selection of sites to be included in the submission document. In some cases, comments applied to both the Development Policies and Site Allocations, such as specific uses preferred for employment zones or the policy links with proposals map allocations, and further work would be undertaken to ensure consistency between both documents. The presentation of the document was the subject of a number of comments and further work was planned to improve legibility and coverage of the maps.

The report and comments made by the Council where applicable were welcomed and more comments would be received at the second stage of consultation. Village Design Statements and Plans are assisting in maintaining interest levels.

Members of the Committee made a number of comments on the consultation document and Spatial Policy Team responses as follows:-

- the need for improvements in the quality of the maps and text;
- the content of the document not reflecting the views of Tiptree Parish Council and its perspective of what was required in terms of the housing allocation required and land use designations for open space, housing, employment and industrial uses in Tiptree;
- some of the information relating to Tiptree was believed to be inaccurate;
- it was considered that there were no policy justifications for the new dwellings requirement for Tiptree to be allocated to a large mixed use site in Kelvedon Road;
- a further period of consultation on a document incorporating revisions for Tiptree was requested;
- it was noted that Myland Parish Council favoured high density housing on the Cowdray Centre site. However, Cowdray Avenue was considered to be close to its capacity in terms of traffic, and whilst the additional traffic that will be generated by intensification on the Centre has to be accepted, the view was that high rise flats would be inappropriate;
- attention was drawn to the issue of the regeneration of rural areas. There were good policies for the urban areas but there was a tendency to sterilise the countryside. The forthcoming work to review the existing village envelopes and to establish settlement boundaries for Colchester and other significant centres of population was welcomed. Other significant rural issues were sustainability, the concept of core centres and employment and development in rural areas;
- there was some concern around the new housing trajectory which with the growth point excess could take Colchester's target to 19,000 new dwellings. The Regional Spatial Strategy is governed by the National Housing Policy Advisory Unit which has given Colchester housing targets further into the future which could be between 28,000-29,000;
- there was a concern that future policies could become just a refinement of what currently exists. It may not be enough to look at limited growth at the four local centres: Wivenhoe, Stanway, Tiptree and Mersea. It may be necessary to look at increasing opportunities for employment in rural areas, possibly also including hamlets;
- guidance on the difference between public open space and private space was recognised as an important issue. The response from Sport England regarding the designation of school fields as public open space with a presumption against development was contrasted with an opposing view from Essex County Council. In general the Committee supported the Council responses to such comments.

Karen Syrett, Spatial Policy Manager, and Laura Chase, Planning Policy Manager, attended to assist the Committee in its deliberations.

In response to comments relating to Tiptree, it was explained that the allocations in the document were founded on a robust evidence base which may have changed, but nonetheless the document remained relevant, up to date and appropriate. Allocations are determined in accordance with Government guidance and deliverability and an employment study had been undertaken which suggested that land for employment on a particular site in Kelvedon Road was unlikely to be developed within the plan period. The Inspector had required that any recommendation for its use as employment land

be removed and as a consequence of this decision there was a requirement to consider all other sites for employment and to consider the Kelvedon Road site for housing development. It was important not to confuse what the owners of land have put forward with what is the Council's current option which is 140 new dwellings on greenfield sites in Tiptree. The Council's awareness of the site went back a long time, prior to the start of the Local Development Framework, when it was suggested by the parish council for housing in order to release sports fields for the community. However, no assurances were given at that time. The request for a further period of consultation was not supported on the grounds that it was difficult to see what it would achieve and the delay would jeopardise the timescales set down.

In response to comments regarding the Cowdray Centre, it was explained that possible uses for the Centre would be included in work being done on the North Station Master plan. The initial view favoured mixed use but there were a number of issues still to be considered. The Centre needed to be well connected to the station and links may need to be improved.

Commercial development and employment in rural areas was supported. A number of sites have been put forward and in general terms Essex County Council Highways were supportive. The figure of 1,600 homes included a substantial number that have already been built because there is a requirement to go back to 2001. New sites included Rowhedge port, East Road West Mersea, and the 140 dwellings allocation in Tiptree. The review of settlement boundaries would be for the period to 2021.

*RESOLVED* that –

(a) The Committee's comments on the responses to the Site Allocations DPD consultation be added to those set out in Appendix A to the report by the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration and taken into consideration in the production of the Site Allocation DPD submission document to go out for consultation in November 2009.

(b) The Committee wished to convey its appreciation to the Spatial Policy Team for the quality of their work to date on the Site Allocation Development Plan Document.

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK COMMITTEE  
20 MAY 2009**

*Present :-* Councillors Elizabeth Blundell, Nick Cope,  
Robert Davidson, Christopher Garnett,  
Martin Goss, Chris Hall, John Jowers and  
Kim Naish

**1. Chairman**

RESOLVED that Councillor Cope be appointed Chairman for the ensuing Municipal Year.

**2. Deputy Chairman**

RESOLVED that Councillor Goss be appointed Deputy Chairman for the ensuing Municipal Year.



## Local Development Framework Committee

Item  
**7**

22 June 2009

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Laura Chase 282473</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Settlement Boundary Review</b>		
<b>Wards affected</b>	<b>All</b>		

### 1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 Members are asked to note the Settlement Boundary Review which has been developed to inform the Local Development Framework development process, in particular, the Site Allocations Development Policy Document (DPD) which is scheduled for submission in autumn 2009 and subsequent examination and adoption in 2010.

### 2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 To enable Colchester to move forward with the process of production of the Local Development Framework.

### 3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 None.

### 4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The Core Strategy, containing the Borough's vision, objectives and broad strategy to 2021, was adopted in December 2008 following an Examination in Public by a Government-appointed Inspector. Growth for the Borough was mapped in an indicative fashion in the Core Strategy's two Key Diagrams. The definition of precise boundaries was left to the Site Allocations Development Policies Document (DPD) and associated Proposals Map. Consultation on a draft Site Allocations DPD was held at the beginning of 2009 and it is intended to submit the final version to Government at the end of 2009, with an examination and adoption to follow in 2010.
- 4.2 The Inspector's Report into the Core Strategy noted that the Site Allocations DPD would need to both show boundaries for Colchester and the three rural District Centres as well as review the existing Local Plan village envelopes. The Inspector considered that this review should be linked to a consideration of the particular issues facing villages and District Centres to support 'fine tuning' of boundaries: The process needs to amount to fine tuning only since significant village expansion as a growth strategy was rejected at the Core Strategy stage following a full discussion of rural settlement boundaries as well as the overall spatial strategy.

4.3 A comprehensive review of the boundaries for Colchester, the three District Centres and the villages has now been undertaken in line with the Inspector's request. The review, attached as Appendix A, will form part of the Council's LDF evidence base and will be used to inform the boundaries set in the Site Allocations Proposals Map.

4.4 Following consideration by LDF Committee members, stakeholders will be advised of the review and the report will be put on the Colchester LDF website to allow opportunities for comment. Any comments received will then be used to inform development of the submission document being prepared for consultation in the autumn. It will however be made clear that this is not an opportunity for further new sites to be put forward. All site representations that have been received to date have been considered.

## **5. Strategic Plan References**

5.1 The LDF helps facilitate the delivery of Colchester's regeneration programme and the Sustainable Community Strategy.

## **6. Consultation**

6.1 The Settlement Boundary Review will form part of the Council's evidence base for the Local Development Framework and as such will be subject to review and consultation of LDF documents, as guided by the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

## **7. Publicity Considerations**

7.1 None

## **8. Financial Implications**

8.1 None.

## **9. Human Rights Implications**

9.1 The document was produced with regard to potential implications of gender, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age and race/ethnicity.

## **10. Community Safety Implications**

10.1 None

## **11. Health and Safety Implications**

11.1 None

## **12. Risk Management Implications**

12.1 The adoption of LDF Documents is intended to reduce the risk of inappropriate development. It provides the opportunity to offer consistent advice to landowners, developers, officers, Councillors and members of the public.

## **Appendix A**

### **Settlement Boundary Review and Village Survey**

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### **Maps of Proposed Changes to Settlement Boundaries**



## Settlement Boundary Review and Village Survey

### 1. Introduction

1.1 Colchester's Core Strategy (approved December 2008) outlines a clear future development framework for the Borough which focuses growth on the urban area of Colchester and the three District Centres. This growth was mapped in an indicative fashion in the Core Strategy's two Key Diagrams, but the definition of precise boundaries is now being determined as part of the preparation of the Site Allocations Development Policies Document (DPD) and associated Proposals Map.

1.2 The Inspector's Report into the Core Strategy notes in para 7.6: *The LP proposals map is not to be altered by the CS and it does not at present show boundaries for Colchester or the three rural District Centres. These will be defined in the Site Allocations DPD which will also review the existing LP village envelopes.* The Inspector considered that this review should be linked to a consideration of the particular issues facing villages and District Centres to support 'fine tuning' of boundaries: The process needs to amount to fine tuning only since significant village expansion as a growth strategy was rejected at the Core Strategy stage following a full discussion of rural settlement boundaries as well as the overall spatial strategy. The Inspector found that 'the strategy of focussing new development on the Regeneration and Growth Areas of Colchester meets national and regional policy and is the most appropriate in all the circumstances' (para 7.23). Appendix 1 includes a longer extract from the Inspector's report concluding that the Council's strategy for villages and their boundaries accorded with national and regional policy and was supported by local Parish Council views as well as national evidence on rural policies.

1.3 The review of village boundaries is therefore based on the principle that any limited changes proposed need to be justified by particular circumstances in a village and support their overall sustainability. The local planning policy context for the review is provided by Core Strategy policy ENV2 which states:

The Borough Council will enhance the vitality of rural communities by supporting appropriate development of infill sites and previously developed land (PDL) within the settlement development boundaries of villages. The design and construction of new village development must be high quality in all respects, including design, sustainability and compatibility with the distinctive character of the locality. Development should also contribute to the local community through the provision of relevant community needs such as affordable housing, open space, local employment, and community facilities.

Outside village boundaries, the Council will favourably consider small-scale rural business, leisure and tourism schemes that are appropriate to local employment needs, minimise negative environmental impacts and harmonise with the local character and surrounding natural environment. Development outside but contiguous to village settlement boundaries may be supported where it constitutes an exception to meet identified local affordable housing needs.

Towns and villages are encouraged to plan for the specific needs of their communities by developing Parish Plans and Village Design Statements for adoption as guidance.

The explanatory remarks which follow the policy include an acknowledgement of the need to look at the village settlement boundaries as part of developing

the Site Allocations DPD: Settlement boundaries are important in that provide a distinction between land where new development is generally considered acceptable (in principle and in relation to other relevant policies) and land where new development is generally not acceptable.

1.4 This report will review settlement boundaries by first giving a brief overview of policy and evidence on rural areas. It will next provide background on the current status of Colchester's villages to inform the review. The review then proposes criteria to guide the village settlement boundary review and analyses all the boundaries for Colchester villages . The Site Allocations DPD also needs to provide detail on the boundaries for larger settlements, so the report also presents the proposed boundaries for the urban area of Colchester and the district settlements of Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe.

## 2. Policy Background

### 2.1 National Evidence and Policy

2.1.1 The need to review settlement boundaries is in the first instance part of the requirement to have a comprehensive evidence base for the Borough's Local Development Framework. Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3) requires local planning authorities to carry out a 'Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment', to identify and assess suitable land for housing. Practice guidance issued to assist in the preparation of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment states that local authorities should assess the suitability of land within or abutting 'settlement boundaries' (p.8, paragraph 16).

2.1.2 The approach to this review is informed by national studies which have identified a number of trends in rural areas that are shaping life in Colchester's villages. The 'State of the Countryside 2008' report by the Countryside Commission identifies the following significant planning issues for rural areas:

- Planning policies have shaped rather than prevented development – small-scale residential infilling has occurred.
- High cost of rural houses relative to local earnings. House prices are higher in rural areas than urban areas.
- Agricultural land values are now rising.
- Increase in recreational activities in the countryside.
- Increasingly sophisticated environmental regulations and incentives.
- The need to adapt to and mitigate climate change is a major challenge for rural communities.
- The median population age for rural areas is nearly 6 years older than in urban areas.
- The overall number of service/retail outlets continue to decline in all areas, although supermarkets and cashpoints have increased.
- Rural residents travel greater distances and most of their travel is by car.
- Indicators that reflect community strength are difficult to interpret and most show a more complex pattern than other indicators, mainly because they are attempting to capture a multi-dimensional and complex aspect of social life.
- Rural poverty is dispersed – only 2.4% of the most deprived areas are rural, but 15% of deprived individuals live in rural areas.
- Between 1995 and 2005 rural areas experienced faster rates of economic growth than most urban areas. Rural areas experienced a growth in new firm foundation of 2.7% between 1998 and 2006 while urban areas experienced a decrease of 2.3%. The type of rural firm mirrored national averages for broad sectors. Wages for jobs in rural areas tend to be lower.

2.1.3 The overall picture of rural areas painted by the report is a complex one and reinforces the importance of planning policies and spatial plans that are flexible and responsive to local circumstances. The network of global and local trends shaping rural areas and their interconnectedness with urban

areas is acknowledged by the national guidance on rural planning policy found in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7:

*Planning policies in Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and Local Development Documents (LDDs) should facilitate and promote sustainable patterns of development and sustainable communities in rural areas. This should include policies to sustain, enhance and, where appropriate, revitalise country towns and villages (including through the provision of affordable housing) and for strong, diverse, economic activity, whilst maintaining local character and a high quality environment. To ensure these policies are relevant and effective, local planning authorities should be aware of the circumstances, needs and priorities of the rural communities and businesses in their area, and of the interdependence between urban and rural areas.*

2.1.4 Of particular relevance to Colchester policy on settlement boundaries is the PPS7 requirement that: *Planning authorities should set out in LDDs their policies for allowing some limited development in, or next to, rural settlements that are not designated as local service centres, in order to meet local business and community needs and to maintain the vitality of these communities.* This requirement is met by the provision in ENV2 for the favourable consideration of appropriate small-scale rural business, leisure and tourism schemes outside village boundaries and for affordable housing schemes outside but contiguous to village settlement boundaries. (See introduction above for full policy)

2.1.5 More recently, the Government has now responded to the Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing carried out by Matthew Taylor MP in July 2008. The Government agreed with the Taylor Review that the key to developing more affordable housing is the use of exception sites outside settlement boundaries, and that local planning authorities should engage with the community to achieve their delivery.

## **2.2 Regional Policy**

2.2.1 Policy in the East of England Plan reinforces the principle that the potential for additional growth in rural areas should be judged using the criteria of whether it would result in greater overall sustainability and vitality by enhancing housing for local needs, employment diversification, and/or local facilities.

## **POLICY SS4: Towns other than Key Centres and Rural Areas**

Local Development Documents should define the approach to development in towns other than those listed in Policy SS3 and in rural areas. Such towns include selected market towns and others with the potential to increase their economic and social sustainability through measures to:

- support urban and rural renaissance;
- secure appropriate amounts of new housing, including affordable housing, local employment and other facilities; and
- improve the town's accessibility, especially by public transport.

Local Development Documents should also consider the potential of other key service centres to accommodate development which is sympathetic to local character and of an appropriate scale and nature in relation to local housing and employment needs.

For other rural settlements they should seek to support the viability of agriculture and other economic activities, diversification of the economy, the provision of housing for local needs and the sustainability of local services.

### **2.3 Local Policy**

2.3.1 The settlement boundaries to be reviewed are those set in the 2004 Local Plan. They were defined on the basis of the following principles:

- (i) To safeguard the form and character of the village;
- (ii) To define the main nucleus of the settlement;
- (iii) To exclude ribbons or loose scatters of housing which it would be undesirable to consolidate.

The Inspector for the Local Plan adopted in 2004 supported the Council's approach to village settlement boundaries at that time:

*I and the Council look upon envelopes as the means of identifying those limited areas of land inside rural settlements where general housing can be accommodated without causing harm to the existing fabric of a village and preventing its expansion into more open areas, which would bring about undesirable sprawl. ...by expanding village envelopes to take in all potential village land, the opportunity to provide sites for rural exceptions affordable housing, which could meet a genuine local need, would be lost, because such sites should not be identified in local plans.*

(Para 2.4.1)

These points are considered to continue to remain relevant in the context of new Core Strategy objectives and thus support the principle of minimal alterations.

2.3.2 Research used by the Council to inform the development of Core Strategy rural policies questioned the assumption that directing new development to a tier of larger villages would automatically sustain services (*Are Villages Sustainable?* Countryside Agency 2002). Core Strategy Policy ENV2 was accordingly based on the principle that all Colchester villages are reliant on the urban area of Colchester for jobs and services and there are few functional differences between them that would warrant the allocation of greater growth to larger villages since it would not increase their self-sufficiency. The Inspector supported the deletion of the 'Principal Villages' tier found in the Local Plan from the Core Strategy, noting that since there weren't

any special policies for them in the Local Plan, 'their function in the Borough has thus not been materially altered by the omission of such a tier in the CS'. (see appendix A1 extract from the Inspector's Report).

### 3. Colchester Parishes – Statistics and Analysis

**Table 1**  
**Population, Housing and Employment of Colchester Parishes,**  
**excluding Colchester urban area and District Centres of Tiptree, West**  
**Mersea and Wivenhoe**

Parish	2001 Population	Housing Completions 2003/4-2007/8
Abberton	358	8
Aldham	513	1
Birch	817	3
Boxted	1,361	5
Chappel	546	1
Copford	1,643	10
Dedham	1,852	8
East Donyland	2,311	41
East Mersea	257	2
Eight Ash Green	1,750	17
Fingringhoe	783	4
Fordham	818	0
Gt and Lt Wigborough	239	4
Great Horkesley	2,259	41
Great Tey	937	4
Langenhoe	536	1
Langham	1,054	2
Layer Breton	296	1
Layer Marney	206	-1
Layer-de-la-Haye	1,868	4
Little Horkesley	216	1
Marks Tey	2,566	16
Messing-cum-Inworth	349	1
Mount Bures	236	2
Peldon	501	11
Salcott	221	0
Virley	61	0
Wakes Colne	532	1
West Bergholt	3,294	22
Wormingford	459	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28,839</b>	<b>211</b>

#### Population

3.1 Detailed population statistics for Colchester villages are only available in the decennial census, with updates in intervening years produced just for larger population groupings. Provisional data at ward level for the 2001-2006 period indicates Colchester villages within entirely non-urban wards are growing at a rate of between 2.5 and 7.1% over the five year period, while three parishes which include urban areas or large brownfield sites are growing at higher rates – Birch and Winstree (includes a portion of Tiptree) 16.9%,

Copford and West Stanway 9.4%, and East Donyland (includes redevelopment at Rowhedge). The figure for the Borough as a whole was 9.5%. The higher overall figure for the Borough reflects the focus on growth in urban areas but the parish-level figures indicate that villages are experiencing some limited population growth, as well as change in population composition arising from both out-migration and in-migration.

## Housing

3.2 Housing growth in the smallest villages largely comprises small infill developments and replacement dwellings. Larger villages have accommodated some larger developments, but the focus of development, in line with planning policy, has been in the urban areas, with a total of 5139 units built in Colchester and the District Centres of Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe in the 2003/4-2007/8 period.

3.3 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) provides information on accommodation types in Colchester rural areas and confirms the higher incidence of detached houses and bungalows in rural areas. 52.4% of households live in detached houses and bungalows in rural areas versus 29.7% in urban areas. Households in rural areas are far more likely to be owner-occupiers than those in the urban area (86.2% vs. 71.9%). Rural areas have a significantly lower proportion of rented housing (both social and private rented). These tenure patterns are reflected in the fact that rural households are wealthier than urban households, with an average income of £35,947 compared to £29,280 in urban areas. The SHMA accordingly assessed a lower level of housing need in rural areas, but while the percentage of overall need may be low in relation to the Borough total, at 10% of total Colchester housing need, this still translates into an ongoing need for more affordable housing in villages. The SHMA concludes that 242 units per annum would be needed to address in full the shortfall in newly arising need for affordable rural housing in Colchester.

3.4 The need for affordable housing in villages was addressed in the first instance through Local Plan H5 which provided for affordable housing on rural exception sites contiguous to village settlement boundaries and has been carried forward with Core Strategy Policy H4, which provides that *'Affordable housing development in the villages of rural Colchester Borough will be supported on rural exception sites contiguous with village settlement boundaries, provided a local need is demonstrated by the Parish Council on behalf of their residents.'*

Policy support for rural affordable exception sites is also given support in policy ENV2, as quoted above in the Introduction. Exception sites are by definition outside the village boundary and on that basis, no modifications to the village boundaries are proposed to show new affordable housing sites.

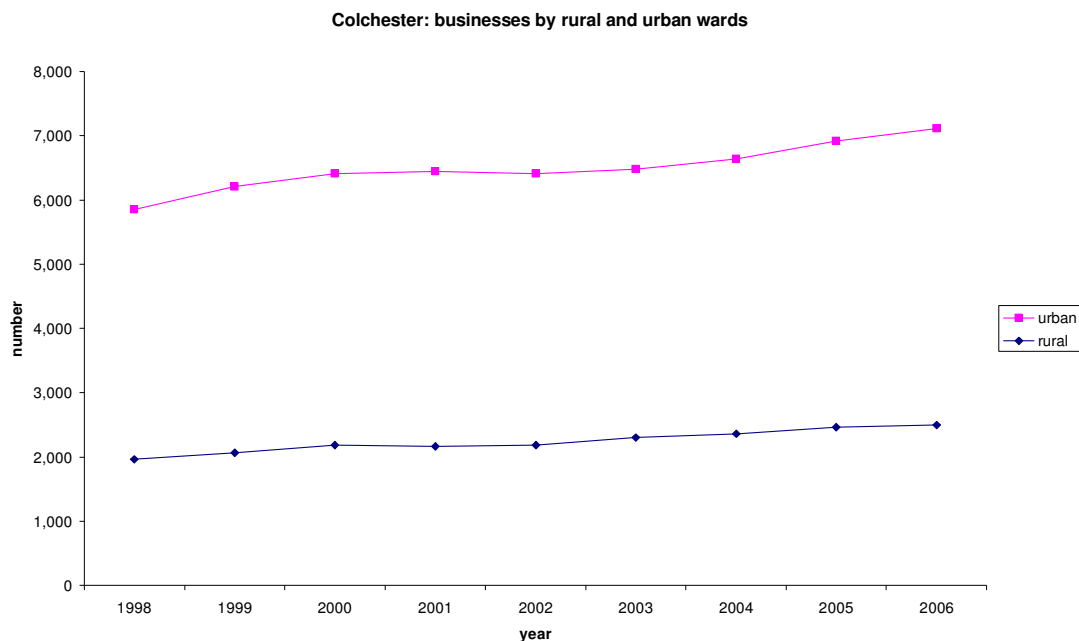
3.5 Further guidance to promote delivery of affordable housing on rural exception sites is being developed as part of an Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), scheduled for adoption in autumn 2009. The draft SPD provides detail on the Rural Housing Enabler who works



with rural communities to provide independent advice and support, in particular with the production of a Housing Needs Survey to establish local needs. The SPD also provides further information on the requirement for affordable housing to remain permanently available to local people and retained permanently as affordable housing.

## Employment

3.6 The number of rural businesses has generally increased over the period considered, although at a slightly lower rate between 2003-2006. (See graph below).

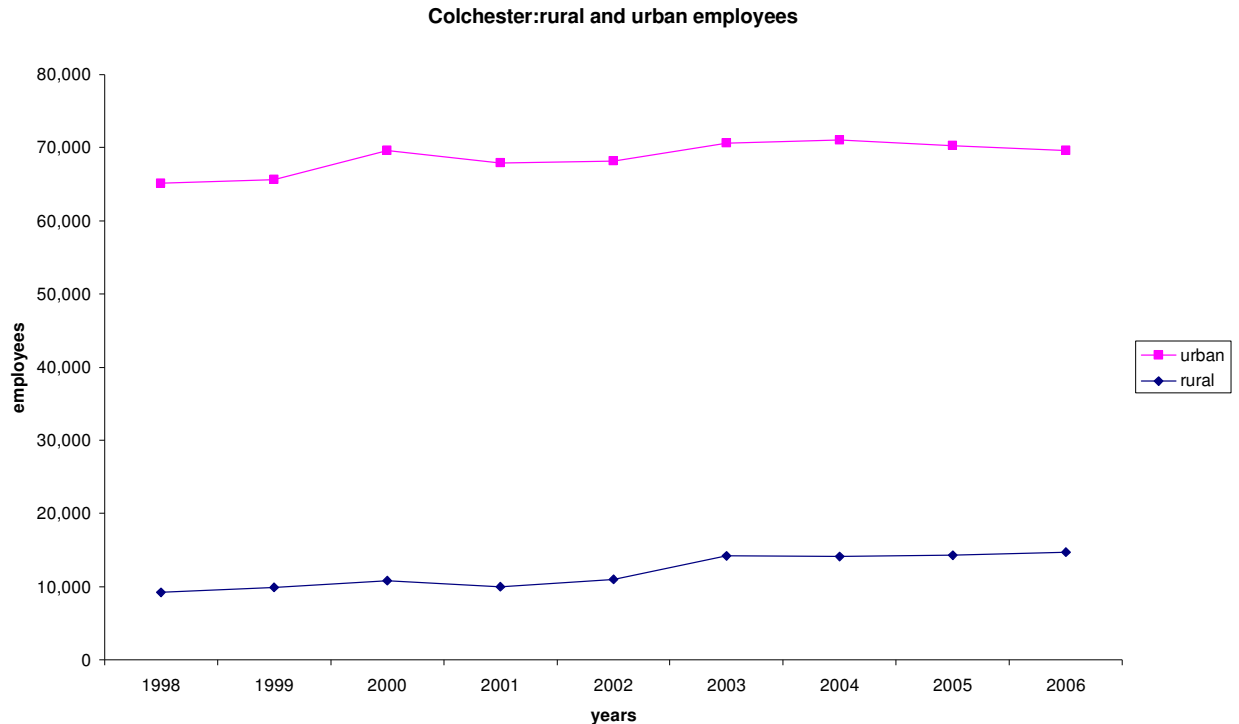


Source: ABI, ONS

On the other hand, the growth rate of urban business formation has been slightly more pronounced than that for rural businesses over the period but not such as to give concern.

## Rural and urban employees

3.7 Turning to consider the relative share of total employees located in the rural area, we find that this is much smaller than the urban share, accounting for around 21% of total employee jobs in the Borough in 2006; this share is to be expected given the concentration of larger employers and workplaces in general within the urban area. However, this share has evolved, absolutely and relatively from 14% in 1998, only due in part to the absolute decline in urban employee job numbers reported for 2003-2006. Nonetheless, the marked upward trend in rural job growth over the period suggests that there is no problem for rural businesses in expanding their workforce in line with their growing number of businesses.



Source: ABI, ONS

3.8 The data suggests that there are no obstacles to enterprise growth within the rural area of the Borough to the extent that it is appropriate in the context of encouraging major commercial space development to locate within the urban core and, secondarily, other urban areas in order to satisfy the sequential test.

### **The English Indices of Deprivation, 2007**

3.9 A more quantitative and certainly graphic definition of the lack of access to key resources can be found in the most recent version of the Index of Multiple Deprivation which shows that for the category Barriers to Housing and Services, rural areas in Colchester are highly over-represented within the worst off 20% of all such areas across the Borough on this key measure of access. This identification of need strengthens the case for improving rural household's accessibility to jobs and services and developing appropriate affordable housing and economic development opportunities in rural areas.

### **Community Facilities**

3.10 In 2005 the Council commissioned the Rural Community Council of Essex to carry out a consultation on Colchester village services and facilities to inform Core Strategy preparation. The consultation included the compilation of a list of the level of village facilities, including village halls, post offices, shops, pubs, doctors surgeries, primary schools and play areas. The list was circulated to Parish Councils for updating in February 2009 and the table below reflects the more recent information supplied in the italic annotations.

**Table 2  
Community Facilities in Colchester Villages**

<b>Parish</b>	<b>Village Hall</b>	<b>Post Office</b>	<b>Grocery/Farm Shop</b>	<b>Pub</b>	<b>Doctor</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Play Area</b>
Abberton	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Aldham	1	0	0	2	0	0	1
Birch	1	1	1	2	1	1	0
Boxted	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
Chappel	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Copford	1	0	0	1	0	1	2
Dedham	2	1	3	4	<i>1 as of 7/09</i>	1	1
East Mersea	1	1	1	1		0	0
Easthorpe	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fingringhoe	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Fordham	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Great Horkesley	1	1	0	3	0	1	0
Great Tey	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Inworth	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Langham	1	<i>PO now outreach service from shop</i>	1	1	0	1	1
Layer Breton	0		0	0	1	0	0
Layer de la Haye	1	0	<i>1 + 1 Farm Shop now open</i>	2	1	1	1
Little Horkesley	0	0		0	1	0	0
Marks Tey	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
Messing	1	0	0	1	0	1	1
Mount Bures	1	0	<i>1 Farm Shop now open</i>	1	0	0	0
Peldon	1	0		0	2	0	0
Rowhedge	2	1	2	3	1	1	1
Salcott	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
West Bergholt	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Wormingford	1	0	0	1	0	1	1

3.11 The level of community facilities reflects local situations as well as national trends and policies. Two farm shops have opened in Colchester villages. This is a small indicator of the changing profile of convenience services in villages which includes on the one hand the growth of locally produced fresh food outlets and, as the State of the Countryside report notes, increases in cash machines and in the number of supermarkets serving rural areas, and on the other hand the closure of village shops. In Colchester, the round of post office closures at national level resulted in four post offices in the urban area of Colchester closing rather than the closure of rural post offices. In Langham, post offices services are now being delivered as an outreach service two mornings a week in the community shop, which reflects the national trend for new forms of service delivery. Multi-purpose facilities are increasingly perceived as a way of improving rural services, blurring the distinction between categories. Other examples include after-hours use of school facilities; mobile vans providing a range of public sector services as well as library services, and the use of village halls for farmers markets and doctor's surgeries. The provision of community services, therefore, is as much about innovative and co-ordinated delivery as it is about increasing the amount of bricks and mortar needed to house them.

#### **Implications of Colchester village profile for boundary review**

3.12 The review of rural housing, employment and community facility needs in Colchester's village has highlighted the need to improve accessibility and service delivery rather than on increasing the quantum of development in villages. It has identified an overall need for additional affordable housing, a wide range of new employment opportunities, and new approaches to the delivery of community services. Sites for these are covered by LDF policies which allow for these uses outside but contiguous with village boundaries in the event that there are no redevelopment or infill sites within villages. The LDF consultation process has provided for the identification of specific shortfalls through individual meetings with parishes. 22 Parishes out of 31 met or corresponded with the Council in response to our request for a meeting. Chapter 5 of the Regulation 25 Site Allocations DPD summarises the responses of the Parish Councils who were invited to:

- a) Assess the extent of present village envelopes as shown in the adopted Local Plan for Colchester and identify/propose potential amendments/extensions to the existing boundaries where these were no longer considered appropriate
- b) Assess current Local Plan allocations for housing, open space, employment, etc.
- c) Identify any inaccuracies or omissions in the adopted Local Plan in existing allocations
- d) Assess the need/scope for residential development within the parishes including the need for affordable housing and identify suitable sites where it might be accommodated.

3.13 The discussions of each village settlement boundaries below note specific parish comments, but the prevailing view of the consultation

responses was that village boundaries should be retained as they are, given that LDF policies provide sufficient scope and flexibility for village needs to be met if necessary outside village settlement boundaries. Over the longer term, the production of Parish Plans and Village Design Statements, supported by planning policy, will provide the local evidence needed to advance the delivery of village affordable housing, employment schemes and community facilities.

## **4. Village Settlement Boundary Review**

### **4.1 Introduction and criteria for assessment of village settlement boundaries**

4.1.1 The following section which reviews village settlement boundaries includes all the villages classified as a rural community in the Core Strategy Settlement Hierarchy (Table SD1). The boundaries for the Regional Centre, (Colchester Town and Stanway), and the three District Centres (Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe) are covered in the next section.

4.1.2 The village settlement boundaries which are the subject of this review are based on those boundaries approved as part of the 2004 Local Plan which incorporate the primary continuous built up area of villages. This approach excluded low density housing located around the periphery of a settlement that is distinctly rural in character, meaning that it exhibits such characteristics as having large front gardens, large spaces between neighbouring properties, a high number of trees/shrubs, lack of pavement along the road-edge and lack of street lighting.

4.1.3 The Core Strategy continues the same policy of village growth restraint followed in the Local Plan so the decisions taken for the settlement boundaries prior to 2004 are considered to remain valid. The review identified that a number of small infill sites continue to be available within villages to accommodate incremental amounts of new residential development. The restrictive approach to growth outside settlement boundaries has meant that there has only been a very restricted amount of new development outside village settlement boundaries since 2004, given that new proposals would have had to demonstrate exceptional circumstances to justify permission.

4.1.4 The review has focused on the very limited amount of new development since 2004 to determine if any changes to the existing boundaries are warranted. This includes two categories:

- a) Development completed since 2004, and
- b) Proposed new village development which affects the settlement boundary and which has been received as part of the Site Allocation Development process. Such proposals have either been included in the draft Site Allocations document published in January 2009, or received as a more recent response to that consultation, and subsequently reported to the LDF Committee in March 2009.

4.1.5 To be considered for inclusion within the settlement boundary, new post-2004 development of all types outside the boundary should be adjacent to the built-up area and seen to form a natural part of the developed area of that settlement. Any revisions to boundaries around new development will be drawn tightly to exclude areas of open space such as gardens, playing fields, and car parks. Excluding these areas which are normally within the curtilage makes it clear that such areas are not suitable for development.

4.1.6 The review considers the views of Parish Councils who responded to our request for involvement in the Site Allocations process. During September and October 2008 a total of 22 out of 31 Colchester parish councils met or corresponded with the Council to give their views on their settlement boundaries, and these were then included in the Regulation 25 Site Allocations consultation document. In the majority of cases, the Parish Council felt that no changes should be made to settlement boundaries.

4.1.7 An Open Countryside Assessment Report to assess settlement separation was undertaken as a part of the boundary review. It is largely relevant to the subsequent section on Colchester and its settlement boundary, but it is referenced here as appropriate to its coverage of the village settlement boundaries of Boxted, Copford, Great Horkesley, Langham, Layer de la Haye, Little Tey, Marks Tey and West Bergholt.

4.1.8 As part of this review the Council has identified a few minor mapping errors in the Proposals Map where the existing settlement development boundary runs directly through a building. This makes it difficult to apply a consistent approach if part of the site is covered by policies applicable to development within settlement development boundaries and part of it is covered by the countryside policies which exist in both the Local Plan and the Core Strategy.

4.1.9 For the six villages where a change to settlement boundaries is proposed, either because it meets the criteria set for post-2004 development or because it is a minor mapping error, a table is included providing detail on the proposed change.

4.1.10 The inclusion of land within a settlement development boundary is only a broad indicator that it may be suitable for development. Areas of open space, woodland, areas at risk from flooding and other protected sites are examples of sites that would be inappropriate for development. Additionally, other material considerations may influence whether development within settlement boundaries is acceptable or not. Particular attention should be paid to design factors and whether the proposed development fits in with local character.

## **4.2 Review of Individual Village Settlement Boundaries**

### **Abberton**

4.2.1 In the Local Plan Langenhoe-Abberton is identified as a Principal Village and the existing settlement boundary can be seen on Local Plan Inset Map C1. The Core Strategy Table H1a does not identify a specific housing provision for Langenhoe-Abberton and therefore is to be considered under the “Other Villages” category within the Core Strategy which allows for limited development only on infill sites within the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.2. Six sites outside of the existing settlement boundary have come forward in response to the Site Allocations consultation. These have been reported to LDF Committee and it has been recommended that they are not taken forward in the Site Allocations process since they are not in accordance with Core Strategy Policy. The one site which has been supported so far is land at Pantiles Farm, Peldon Road which was considered as a Rural Employment Site lying outside of the settlement boundary. Subject to further work it is expected that the site will be shown on the Inset Map for Abberton as a Rural Employment site. No recent (post 2004) developments have taken place to necessitate a change to the settlement boundary. No comments have been received from the Parish Council concerning their views on the village settlement boundary.

4.2.3 The settlement boundary for Abberton should continue to be shown on one proposal map as seen in the Local Plan.

**Recommendation: Retain the current settlement boundary.**

### **Aldham**

4.2.4 In the Local Plan the village of Aldham is split across three settlement boundaries. One is centred on St Margaret’s Church and the other two are around Ford Street and the A1124 which runs through the village. Although many parts of the village are outside of the existing settlement boundary there is no justification to expand or propose changes to the current boundary as it is included within the “Other Villages” category in Core Strategy Table H1a which allows for limited development only on infill sites within the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.5 Two sites outside of the existing settlement boundary have come forward in response to the Site Allocations consultations period. These have been reported to LDF Committee and it has been recommended that they are not taken forward in the Site Allocations process since they are not in accordance with Core Strategy Policy. No recent (post 2004) developments have taken place to necessitate a change to the settlement boundary. No comments have been received from the Parish Council concerning their views on the village settlement boundary.



4.2.6 For clarity the three settlement boundaries should appear on one map to clearly demonstrate the relationship between the different parts of the village.

**Recommendation: Retain the current settlement boundary.**

### **Birch**

4.2.7 The Local Plan shows two settlement boundaries for the parish of Birch and also provides a boundary for the Conservation Area. The settlement boundary around Birch Green and Birch Street forms the largest part of the village with the second being around a small hamlet of properties known as Hardy's Green. Birch is combined within the "Other Villages" category so any future development will be limited to infill development on sites currently within the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.8 Prior to the Site Allocations Regulation 25 consultation document Birch Parish Council did not propose any changes to the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.9 Seven sites outside of the existing settlement boundary have come forward in response to the Site Allocations consultations period. These have been reported to LDF Committee and it has been recommended that they are not taken forward in the Site Allocations process since they are not in accordance with Core Strategy Policy. No recent (post 2004) developments have taken place to necessitate a change to the settlement boundary.

4.2.10 In the future the two maps for Birch will still be shown on separate maps as it is not possible to show the two settlement boundaries on one map at a useable scale.

**Recommendation: Retain the current settlement boundary.**

### **Boxted**

4.2.11 The village is split into three separate settlement boundaries with the main part of the village being centred on Boxted Cross and stretching along Boxted Straight Road. A Conservation Area is also identified. Core Strategy Table H1a does not identify a specific housing provision for Boxted and therefore it is to be considered under the "Other Villages" category which allows for limited development only on infill sites within the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.12 Two sites outside of the existing settlement boundary came forward in the Site Allocations consultation and were discussed in the Regulation 25 report. It was recommended that they should not be taken forward in the Site Allocations process since they are not in accordance with Core Strategy Policy. Since 2004 Boxted St Peters Primary School has been built on land at Carters Hill. As part of this review the school building could be included within the settlement boundary. The new building, however, is separate from the existing settlement boundary and does not continue the built up area of the

village and therefore does not necessitate a change to the settlement boundary.

4.2.13 In response to the Site Allocations Regulation 25 consultation two further sites for rural employment were put forward at 30a Straight Road (Classic Pot Emporium) and at 63 Straight Road (Tin Bins). The site at 30a Straight Road was reported to the 23 March 2009 LDF Committee, while the other site was received in April 2009. As these sites have not been considered previously further assessment work will need to be done to determine if they are suitable for allocation on the inset map in the submission Site Allocations as a Rural Employment site outside the settlement boundary.

4.2.14 The Open Countryside Assessment Report recommended safeguarding the land between Boxted and Colchester because of the key function it played in maintaining separation and the individual character between these two settlements. The Report's assessment of Boxted's boundary with Colchester is discussed below in the Review of Colchester and District Centre Settlement Boundaries (Section 5).

4.2.15 As part of this review the Council have identified a mapping error which can be corrected at this stage. The table below outlines this error which can be found on Local Plan Inset Map D6, Boxted – Workhouse Hill.

<b>Location:</b> The Old Orchard, Wet Lane	<b>Site Description:</b> A large property which is predominately rural and similar in form and character to the adjacent properties.
<b>Background:</b> The Old Orchard would not normally be considered appropriate for inclusion in a review of this nature because any future development of the large residential curtilage could lead to over urbanisation and intensification of the site. However the current settlement boundary for Boxted (Workhouse Hill) runs through the middle of the existing property which is considered to be a mapping error which can be rectified as part of this review.	
<b>Proposed Change:</b> To re-draw the settlement boundary to include the residential property but ensuring that this is drawn tightly to the property to avoid any future development of the curtilage as this would be considered inappropriate. A map showing the proposed boundary change is attached at the end of this report.	

4.2.16 The three settlement areas for Boxted and the Conservation Area boundary will need to be shown on two separate maps as it is not possible to show them on one map at a useable scale.

**Recommendation:** Amend the boundary for Boxted Workhouse Hill as shown above and retain the current boundaries for the two settlement areas shown in the Boxted Cross map.

## **Chappel**

4.2.17 The parish of Chappel is spread over four settlement boundaries and can be found on Local Plan Inset Maps D7 and D8. The Core Strategy Table H1a does not identify a specific housing provision for Chappel and therefore it is to be considered under the “Other Villages” Category which allows for limited development only on infill sites within the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.18 Two sites outside of the existing settlement boundary have come forward in response to the Site Allocations consultation. One of these site representations for land off Spring Gardens Road suggested the introduction of another settlement boundary to surround a small hamlet of approximately 14 properties along this road. This proposal has been reported to LDF Committee and it has been recommended that it is not taken forward in the Site Allocations process since it is not in accordance with Core Strategy Policy. No recent (post 2004) developments have taken place to necessitate a change to the settlement boundary.

4.2.19 Prior to the Site Allocations Regulation 25 consultation the Borough Council met with the Parish Council to discuss any possible changes to the Local Plan Inset Maps. No changes to the boundaries were proposed as part of this meeting but new Open Space allocations were suggested on various parcels of land including the Millennium Field and the Village Green. These sites have been identified in the PPG17 study which is part of the evidence base and will be shown as Open Space on the future proposals map for Chappel.

4.2.20 The four settlement boundaries should appear on one map to clearly demonstrate the relationship between the different parts of the village.

**Recommendation: Retain the current settlement boundary.**

## **Copford and Easthorpe**

4.2.21 In the Local Plan Copford and Easthorpe are spread across three separate settlement boundaries, which are shown on Inset Maps D9, D10 and D15 with the main built up residential area of Copford being on London Road which runs from Stanway to Marks Tey.

4.2.22 Three sites outside of the existing settlement boundaries relevant to the extent of the settlement boundary have come forward in response to the Site Allocations consultation as follows:

- a) A 41ha site to the rear of Wyvern Farm was put forward as a mixed use employment, Park and Ride and housing development as part of the Regulation 25 Site Allocations consultation. The eastern end of the site falls within the Stanway Growth Area while the western boundary falls with the Copford ward. In the Regulation 25 document, the council have proposed allocating only the 10ha at the eastern end of the site near Stanway to help deliver Core Strategy targets for Stanway and have rejected allocating the remaining land on the border with Copford

to prevent the boundaries of Copford and West Stanway from joining together.

b) A large site on the land between Marks Tey and Copford was discussed as part of the Core Strategy Alternative Sites Consultation in March 2008 but was discounted as part of the Core Strategy Examination in Public.

c) In response to the Site Allocations Regulation 25 consultation a site for a Continuing Care Retirement Community was put forward at Copford Place, London Road. The report to the 23 March 2009 LDF Committee noted the response and indicated that the site would be evaluated to determine if it warranted a change to the settlement boundary. The proposal would involve a large extension to the existing village envelope to extend the existing care home and expand the facilities provided. If such a scheme was needed in the Borough the Council considers there is opportunity to be within the Growth Areas or on land already allocated for residential uses. Accordingly, it is not recommended that the boundary be revised to include the proposal.

4.2.23 The Open Countryside Assessment Report recommended safeguarding the land between Copford and Marks Tey and between Easthorpe and Marks Tey because of the key function it played in maintaining separation and the individual character between these settlements. The Report's assessment of Copford's boundary with Colchester is discussed below in the Review of Colchester and District Centre Settlement Boundaries (Section 5).

4.2.24 Prior to the Site Allocations Regulation 25 consultation the Borough Council met with the Parish Council to discuss any possible changes to the Local Plan Inset Maps. The Parish Council did not consider it necessary to allocate any more land for housing and were unsupportive of the three sites put forward on grounds of scale, loss of important green breaks and lack of supporting infrastructure. Retention of the school playing fields and existing open spaces within the parish were also viewed as important and these will be shown as Open Space outside the village settlement boundary in the submission Inset Map.

4.2.25 No recent (post 2004) developments have taken place to necessitate a change to the settlement boundaries.

4.2.26 The three maps for Copford and Easthorpe will need to continue to be shown on separate maps as it is not possible to show the settlement boundaries on one map at a useable scale.

**Recommendation: Retain the current settlement boundary.**

## **Dedham**

4.2.27 The parish of Dedham is contained on numerous Local Plan Inset Maps with the main part of the village being shown on Inset Map C2 with three other areas being shown on Inset Maps D11, D12 and D13. The Local Plan identified Dedham as a Principal Village but the Core Strategy Table H1a outlines that Dedham is combined within the “Other Villages” category which allows for limited development only on infill sites within the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.28 Five sites outside of the existing settlement boundary have come forward in response to the Site Allocations consultation period. These have been reported to LDF Committee and it has been recommended that they are not taken forward in the Site Allocations process since they are not in accordance with Core Strategy Policy. The Site Allocations Regulation 25 document identifies land at the Depot, Old Ipswich Road as a Rural Employment Site outside the village settlement boundary. Subject to further work it is expected that the site will be shown on the Inset Map for Dedham as a Rural Employment site. Since 2004 a development at Roman Place, Manningtree Road for a health care facility and three dwellings have been built and this is to be included within the settlement boundary as outlined below.

**Location:** Roman Place,  
Manningtree Road, Dedham

**Site Description:** A health care facility with three dwellings built next to an affordable housing development which is outside of the existing settlement boundary.

**Background:** Approval was granted for the development of a health care facility and three dwellings in August 2006 on land outside of the existing settlement boundary which is not shown on the Local Plan Inset Map C2. The site has now been developed and forms part of the continuous residential built up area. The health care facility provides an important community facility and is adjacent to the existing residential properties

**Proposed Change:** To extend the settlement boundary to include the affordable housing development known as Constable Row and the health care facility at Roman Place as the new development meets the criteria for changes to the settlement boundary. As outlined within the criteria it will be important to draw the new boundary so that areas of car parking are excluded as these are not appropriate for future residential development. A map showing the proposed minor revision is attached at the end of the report.

4.2.29 Prior to the Site Allocations Regulation 25 consultation period the Borough Council met with Dedham Parish Council to discuss the settlement boundaries and current Local Plan allocations. The Parish Council were generally not supportive of sites outside of the existing settlement boundaries, however they did identify small minor extensions to support the growing need for first time buyers. The Council expect such sites to be delivered on rural exception sites and considered against the Dedham Village Design Statement

which is a material consideration. The Parish Council also highlighted a number of employment opportunities but did not identify the need to allocate these.

4.2.30 In response to the Site Allocations Regulation 25 consultation a site for rural employment was put forward at Ruby's Barn, Ipswich Road as reported to the 23 March 2009 LDF Committee. As this site has not been considered previously further assessment work will need to be done to determine if it is suitable for allocation on the inset map in the submission Site Allocations as a Rural Employment site outside the settlement boundary.

4.2.31 The four maps for Dedham will need to continue to be shown on separate maps as it is not possible to show the settlement boundaries on one map at a useable scale.

**Recommendation: To amend the village settlement boundary at Manningtree Road in the Dedham map as provided above. The settlement boundaries shown on the maps of Dedham Heath, Lamb Corner and Bargate Lane should remain unchanged.**

### **East Mersea**

4.2.32 In the Local Plan East Mersea is identified as a small village and can be seen on Inset Map D14. Core Strategy Table H1a does not identify a specific housing provision for East Mersea and therefore it is to be considered under the "Other Villages" category which allows for limited development only on infill sites within the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.33 No sites in East Mersea were put forward for consideration in response to the Site Allocations consultations to date. No recent (post 2004) developments have taken place to necessitate the change to the settlement boundary. No comments have been received from the Parish Council concerning their views on the village settlement boundary.

4.2.34 The settlement boundary for Abberton should continue to be shown on one proposal map as seen in the Local Plan.

**Recommendation: Retain the current settlement boundary.**

### **Eight Ash Green**

4.2.35 The Local Plan identifies Eight Ash Green as a Principal Village and shows the parish to have two settlement boundaries; Choats Corner and Fordham Heath. Core Strategy Table H1a does not identify a specific housing provision for Eight Ash Green and therefore it is to be considered under the "Other Villages" category which allows for limited development only on infill sites within the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.36 Eleven sites outside of the existing settlement boundary have come forward in response to the Site Allocations consultation. These have been

reported to LDF Committee and it has been recommended that they are not taken forward in the Site Allocations process since they are not in accordance with Core Strategy Policy. No recent (post 2004) developments have taken place to necessitate a change to the settlement boundary. The Open Countryside Assessment Report recommended safeguarding the land between Eight Ash Green and Colchester because of the key function it played in maintaining separation and the individual character between these settlements. The Report's assessment of Eight Ash Green's boundary with Colchester is discussed below in the Review of Colchester and District Centre Settlement Boundaries (Section 5).

4.2.37 Prior to the Site Allocations Regulation 25 consultation the Borough Council received a detailed written response from the Parish Council. The response outlined their opposition to the sites put forward as it would introduce ribbon development, coalescence between the village and Stanway and increase traffic within the parish. Eight Ash Green Parish Council also has concerns about the impact of multiple peripheral developments and wish to retain the rural nature of their village.

4.2.38 The two settlement boundaries of Eight Ash Green should appear on one map to clearly demonstrate the relationship between the different parts of the village.

**Recommendation: Retain the current settlement boundary.**

### **Fingringhoe**

4.2.39 The Local Plan identifies Fingringhoe as a small village which currently has two settlement boundaries as shown on Inset Maps D16 for Abberton Road and D17 for High Park Corner. There is also a Conservation Area between the two settlements. Core Strategy Table H1a does not identify a specific housing provision for Fingringhoe and therefore it is to be considered under the "Other Villages" category which allows for limited development only on infill sites within the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.40 Five sites outside of the existing settlement boundary have come forward in response to the Site Allocations consultations. These have been reported to LDF Committee and it has been recommended that four of them are not to be taken forward in the Site Allocations process since they are not in accordance with Core Strategy Policy. The one site which has been supported so far is Land at Picketts Farm, Abberton Road which was considered as a Rural Employment Site within the Site Allocations Regulation 25 consultation. Subject to further work it is expected that the site will be shown on the Inset Map for Fingringhoe as a Rural Employment site. No recent (post 2004) developments have taken place to necessitate a change to the settlement boundary. No comments have been received from the Parish Council concerning their views on the village settlement boundary.

4.2.41 The two maps for Fingringhoe will need to continue to be shown on separate maps as it is not possible to show the settlement boundaries on one map at a useable scale.

**Recommendation: Retain the current settlement boundary.**

### **Fordham**

4.2.42 Fordham is identified as a small village in the Local Plan and is shown with two settlement boundaries on Inset Map D18. Core Strategy Table H1a does not identify a specific housing provision for Fordham and therefore it is to be considered under the “Other Villages” category which allows for limited development only on infill sites within the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.43 Three sites outside of the existing settlement boundary have come forward in response to the Site Allocations consultation period. These have been reported to LDF Committee and it has been recommended that they are not taken forward in the Site Allocations process since they are not in accordance with Core Strategy Policy. In 2003 an affordable housing scheme for eleven units was granted planning permission and developed on the corner of Plummers Road and Rams Farm Road. Although this site is new development which could be considered for inclusion within the settlement boundary, it is sufficiently separated from the existing settlement to mean that it does not form part of the continuous residential built up area as required by the criteria. Accordingly, it is not proposed to amend the settlement boundary to include it.

4.2.44 Prior to the Site Allocations Regulation 25 consultation the Borough Council met with Fordham Parish Council to discuss the settlement boundary and Inset Map D18. As outlined in the Regulation 25 document the Parish Council are not in support of any sites put forward and do not see any need to change or extend the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.45 The two settlement boundaries should continue to be shown on one map to aid clarity and show the geographical relationship between these two areas

**Recommendation: Retain the current settlement boundary..**

### **Great Horkesley**

4.2.46 The village of Great Horkesley is identified in the Local Plan as a Principal Village and is split over two Inset Maps. The Core Strategy Table H1a indicates that the village will provide 150 dwellings over the plan period. These are expected to be delivered as part of the Tilehouse Farm development which is subject to a Development Brief adopted by the Council



in June 2005. The land identified as part of the Development Brief is already within the existing settlement boundary and this is to be retained.

4.2.47 Seven sites outside of the existing settlement boundary have come forward in response to the Site Allocations consultation period. These have been reported to LDF Committee and it has been recommended that they are not taken forward in the Site Allocations process since the Core Strategy policy requirement is met through the development at Tilehouse Farm. The open space allocations at Tilehouse Farm will need to be reviewed to accord with recent planning permissions. No recent (post 2004) developments have taken place to necessitate a change to the settlement boundary.

4.2.48 The Open Countryside Assessment Report recommended safeguarding the land between Great Horkesley and Colchester because of the key function it played in maintaining separation and the individual character between these two settlements. The Report's assessment of Great Horkesley's boundary with Colchester is discussed below in the Review of Colchester and District Centre Settlement Boundaries (Section 5).

4.2.49 In response to the Site Allocations Regulation 25 consultation a site for rural employment was put forward at 'The Mullions' which was reported to the 23 March LDF Committee. As this site has not been considered previously further assessment work will need to be done to determine if it is suitable for allocation on the inset map in the submission Site Allocations as a Rural Employment site outside the settlement boundary.

4.2.50 The three settlement boundaries for Great Horkesley will need to be shown on two maps as seen in the Local Plan as it is not possible to show the settlement boundaries on one map at a useable scale.

**Recommendation: Retain the current settlement boundary.**

### **Great Tey**

4.2.51 Great Tey is identified in the Local Plan as a small village and is shown on Inset Map D19. Within the Core Strategy Table H1a, Great Tey is not specifically identified and therefore is to be considered under the "Other Villages" category which allows for limited development only on infill sites within the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.52 Three sites outside of the existing settlement boundary have come forward in response to the Site Allocations consultation. These have been reported to LDF Committee and it has been recommended that they are not taken forward in the Site Allocations process since they are not in accordance with Core Strategy Policy. Since 2004, a small development in the north of the settlement boundary has taken place which is not shown on the Local Plan Inset Maps. The development at Manor Place, Chappel Road consists of four properties with the existing settlement boundary running through the middle of the property known as The Manor House as outlined below which is considered to be a mapping error that can be rectified as part of this review.

**Location:** The Manor House, Manor Place, Chappel Road, Great Tey

**Site Description:** A residential development of four properties which were granted planning permission in 2001.

**Background:** The four properties known as Manor Place were granted planning permission in 2001 and are not shown on the Local Plan Inset Map. The properties have now been built and at present the settlement boundary runs through the Manor House, one of the four properties. As this property forms part of the continuous residential built up area it is appropriate to include it within the settlement boundary.

**Proposed Change:** To redraw the settlement boundary along the eastern edge of the Manor House so that the all of the property is included within the Great Tey settlement boundary. A map showing the proposed minor settlement boundary change to Great Tey is attached at the end of this report.

4.2.53 Prior to the Site Allocations Regulation 25 consultation the Borough Council had communication with the Parish Council. In this the Parish Council confirmed that they would not be proposing any changes to the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.54 The settlement boundary for Great Tey should be shown on an individual map similar to that currently within the Local Plan.

**Recommendation: Retain the current settlement boundary subject to the minor change noted above.**

### **Great Wigborough**

4.2.55 The village of Great Wigborough is combined with a number of other villages (including Peldon and Salcott) to form part of Winstred Hundred Parish. Each of these villages are identified as small villages in the Local Plan. Core Strategy Table H1a does not identify a specific housing provision for Great Wigborough and therefore it is considered under the "Other Villages" category which allows for limited development only on infill sites within the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.56 One site outside of the existing settlement boundary was put forward in response to the Site Allocations consultation period. The site was reported to LDF Committee and it has been recommended that it is not taken forward in the Site Allocations process since it does not accord with the Core Strategy Policy. No recent (post) 2004 developments have taken place to necessitate a change to the settlement boundary..

4.2.57 Prior to the Site Allocations Regulation 25 consultation the Borough Council met with Winstred Hundred Parish Council who outlined the results of their recent parish survey. The Parish Council considered it important to retain the open space within the parish and some small scale residential development could be appropriate if it attracts families but at this stage no

changes to the allocations or boundaries of the Local Plan Inset Maps were proposed.

4.2.58 The settlement boundary for Great Wigborough should continue to be shown on one proposal map as seen in the Local Plan.

**Recommendation: Retain the current settlement boundary.**

### **Langham**

4.2.59 The village of Langham is split across two settlement boundaries and these are shown on Local Plan Inset Maps D21 (St Margarets Cross) and D22 (Langham Moor). Langham is identified as a small village in the Local Plan settlement hierarchy. The Core Strategy Table H1a does not identify a specific housing provision for Langham and therefore it is to be considered under the “Other Villages” category which allows for limited development only on infill sites within the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.60 Five sites outside of the existing settlement boundary have come forward in response to the Site Allocations consultation period. These were rejected for inclusion as strategic sites as part of the Core Strategy Examination process. The submissions to the Site Allocations process have been reported to LDF Committee and it has been recommended that they are not taken forward in the Site Allocations process since they are not in accordance with Core Strategy Policy. No recent (post 2004) developments have taken place to necessitate a change to the settlement boundary; however the Council have identified a mapping error at Butterfly Lodge, Chappel Road as outlined in the table below.

4.2.61 The Open Countryside Assessment Report recommended safeguarding the land between Langham and Colchester because of the key function it played in maintaining separation and the individual character between these two settlements. The Report’s assessment of Langham’s boundary with Colchester is discussed below in the Review of Colchester and District Centre Settlement Boundaries (Section 5).

**Location:** Land at Butterfly Lodge and the Old Chapel, Chapel Road

**Site Description:** Existing residential properties with the settlement boundary cutting through Butterfly Lodge.

**Background:** The current settlement boundary in this part of Langham does not follow the residential curtilages of these properties and as a result cuts through Butterfly Lodge. The properties are similar in character and form and are part of the continuous residential character of the village. The current boundary is considered to be a mapping error which can be rectified as part of this review.

**Proposed Change:** For the settlement boundary to follow the residential

curtilage of properties known as The Old Chapel, Butterfly Lodge and Oakleigh. A map showing the proposed minor boundary revision to Langham Moor is attached at the end of this report.

4.2.62 Prior to the Site Allocations Regulation 25 consultation the Borough Council met with Langham Parish Council to discuss the Langham settlement boundaries. At this meeting the Parish Council did not propose any changes to the current settlement boundaries but did highlight a number of employment sites they considered appropriate for allocation. The Borough Council has also adopted the Langham Parish Plan which will also be a material consideration and guide any future community projects and development that may take place within the village.

4.2.63 In response to the Site Allocations Regulation 25 consultation a site for rural employment was put forward at School Farm, School Road and reported to the 23 March 2009 LDF Committee. As this site has not been considered previously further assessment work will need to be done to determine if it is suitable for allocation on the inset map in the submission Site Allocations as a Rural Employment site outside the settlement boundary.

4.2.64 The two settlement boundaries for Langham should be shown on two maps as seen in the Local Plan as it is not possible to show the settlement boundaries on one map at a useable scale.

**Recommendation: Retain the current settlement boundary except for the minor change on Chapel Road noted above.**

### **Layer Breton**

4.2.65 The village of Layer Breton is identified in the Local Plan as a small village and is shown on Inset Map D23. Core Strategy Table H1a does not identify a specific housing provision for Layer Breton and therefore it is to be considered under the "Other Villages" category which allows for limited development only on infill sites within the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.66 One site outside of the existing settlement boundary has come forward in response to the Site Allocations consultation. This has been reported to LDF Committee and it has been recommended that it not be taken forward in the Site Allocations process as it does not accord with Core Strategy Policy. No recent (post 2004) developments have taken place to necessitate a change to the settlement boundary, however one minor mapping error has been identified as detailed in the box below which the Council considers appropriate to rectify as part of this review. No comments on settlement boundaries have been received from the Parish Council.

**Location:** Ash Lodge, Layer Breton Heath (off Layer Breton Hill).

**Site Description:** A single residential property with the settlement boundary cutting through the property.

**Background:** Ash Lodge was granted planning permission in 1976 and is considered to form part of the existing continuous residential built up area with

properties currently on two sides. The current boundary is considered to be a mapping error which can be rectified as part of this review.

**Proposed Change:** To re-draw the settlement boundary to include all of the residential property but ensuring that this is drawn tightly to the property to resist any future development of the curtilage as this would be considered inappropriate. A map showing the proposed minor change to the settlement boundary of Layer Breton is attached at the end of this report.

4.2.67 The settlement boundary of Layer Breton will continue to be shown on one map, similar to that currently within the Local Plan.

**Recommendation: Retain the current settlement boundary except for the minor change affecting Ash Lodge noted above.**

### **Layer-de-la-Haye**

4.2.68 The village of Layer-de-la-Haye was identified as a Principal Village in the Local Plan and was found on Inset Map C5. The Core Strategy Table H1a does not specifically mention Layer-de-la-Haye so it is therefore considered under the “Other Villages” category which allows for limited development only on infill sites within the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.69 Nine sites outside of the existing settlement boundary have come forward in response to the Site Allocations consultation. These have been reported to LDF Committee and it has been recommended that they are not taken forward in the Site Allocations process since they are not in accordance with Core Strategy Policy. The Site Allocations Regulation 25 document identifies Land at Queensmead, The Folley for a Rural Employment Site. Subject to further work it is expected that the site will be shown on the Inset Map for Layer de la Haye as a Rural Employment site. No recent (post 2004) developments have taken place to necessitate a change to the settlement boundary.

4.2.70 The Open Countryside Assessment Report recommended safeguarding the land between Layer-de-la-Haye and Colchester because of the key function it played in maintaining separation and the individual character between these two settlements. The Report’s assessment of Layer-de-la-Haye’s boundary with Colchester is discussed below in the Review of Colchester and District Centre Settlement Boundaries (Section 5).

4.2.71 Prior to the Site Allocations Regulation 25 Consultation period the Borough Council received communication from the Parish Council which indicated that they do not support any of the sites that have been identified to date and do not wish to see any changes to the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.72 The settlement boundary of Layer-de-la-Haye should continue to be shown on one map, similar to that currently within the Local Plan.

**Recommendation: Retain the current settlement boundary.**

### **Layer Marney – Smythes Green**

4.2.73 Layer Marney is identified in the Local Plan as a small village and can be seen on Inset Map D24. Core Strategy Table H1a does not identify a specific housing provision for Layer Marney and therefore it is to be considered under the “Other Villages” category which allows for limited development only on infill sites within the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.74 As no sites were put forward in response to the Site Allocations consultation period, Layer Marney Parish Council did not consider it necessary to meet with the Borough Council but requested that they be kept informed about future stages and developments of the Site Allocations document. No recent (post 2004) developments have taken place to necessitate a change to the settlement boundary.

4.2.75 The settlement boundary of Layer Marney should continue to be shown on one map, similar to that currently within the Local Plan.

**Recommendation: Retain the current settlement boundary.**

### **Little Horkesley**

4.2.76 The village of Little Horkesley is identified as a small village in the Local Plan and is shown on Inset Map D25. Core Strategy Table H1a does not identify a specific housing provision for Little Horkesley and therefore is to be considered under the “Other Villages” category which allows for limited development only on infill sites within the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.77 In response to the Site Allocations consultation the Council did not receive any sites for further consideration. Alongside this no recent (post 2004) developments have taken place to necessitate a change to the settlement boundary. No comments on settlement boundaries have been received from the Parish Council.

4.2.78 The settlement boundary of Little Horkesley will continue to be shown on one map, similar to that currently within the Local Plan

**Recommendation: Retain the current settlement boundary.**

### **Little Tey**

4.2.79 The village of Little Tey is identified as a small village in the Local Plan and is shown on Inset Map D26. Core Strategy Table H1a does not identify a specific housing provision for Little Tey and therefore is to be considered under the “Other Villages” category which allows for limited development only on infill sites within the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.80 Three sites outside of the existing settlement boundary have come forward in response to the Site Allocations consultation which formed part of the Core Strategy Alternative Sites for large scale growth around Marks Tey,

A120 and the A12 which was not supported in the Core Strategy or by the Inspector in her report following the Core Strategy Examination in Public. These sites have been reported to LDF Committee and it has been recommended that they are not taken forward in the Site Allocations process since they are not in accordance with Core Strategy Policy. No recent (post 2004) developments have taken place to necessitate a change to the settlement boundary. No comments on settlement boundaries have been received from the Parish Council.

4.2.81 The Open Countryside Assessment Report assessed the landscape around Little Tey for its contribution to settlement separation. It recommended safeguarding the land between between Little Tey and Marks Tey because of the key function the open countryside played there in maintaining separation and the individual character between settlements.

4.2.82 The settlement boundary of Little Tey will still be shown on one map, similar to that currently within the Local Plan

**Recommendation: Retain the current settlement boundary.**

### **Marks Tey**

4.2.83 The village of Marks Tey was identified in the Local Plan as a Principal Village and is expected to provide 70 units from 2001-2021 as outlined in Core Strategy Table H1a. The village is split across four separate settlement boundaries which are all drawn tightly to the existing residential area. The 70 units identified in the Core Strategy are expected to come forward through development on sites within the existing settlement boundary and many of these have already been accounted for (including application 08/1203 for 32 flats on brownfield land off London Road). Further sites within the village settlement boundary are expected to be delivered as outlined in the Schedule of Small Sites and Housing Trajectory which is part of the LDF Evidence Base.

4.2.84 Fifteen sites outside of the existing settlement boundary have come forward in response to Core Strategy and Site Allocations consultations. Some of these sites included large scale growth around the existing settlement, A120 and A12 which was considered as an Alternative Site Option to the Core Strategy. As part of the Core Strategy Examination in Public the option of large scale growth at Marks Tey was discounted. All the non-strategic sites put forward have been reported to LDF Committee and it has been recommended that they are not taken forward in the Site Allocations process since they are not in accordance with Core Strategy Policy. No recent (post 2004) developments have taken place to necessitate a change to the settlement boundary. It is accordingly proposed to retain the current settlement boundary and not make any changes as part of this review.

4.2.85 The Site Allocations Regulation 25 document identifies three possible Rural Employment Sites which could be shown on a future Inset Map for Marks Tey. As these sites are in close proximity to each other and would

have a major impact on the road network in Marks Tey it is important to consider the cumulative impact of these possible allocations through continued partnership working with stakeholders, Essex County Council and the Highways Agency. Any future allocations are subject to consultation responses and further work being undertaken for the Site Allocations document prior to the next round of consultation.

4.2.86 The Open Countryside Assessment Report assessed the landscape around Marks Tey for its contribution to settlement separation. It recommended safeguarding the land between Copford and Marks Tey and between Little Tey and Marks Tey because of the key function the open countryside played there in maintaining separation and the individual character between settlements. The Report's assessment of Marks Tey's boundary with Colchester is discussed below in the Review of Colchester and District Centre Settlement Boundaries (Section 5).

4.2.87 Prior to the Site Allocations Regulation 25 consultation the Borough Council met with representatives from Marks Tey Parish Council to discuss the current settlement boundaries and the Local Plan Inset Maps. A small number of potential housing sites were identified outside of the existing settlement boundaries. As referred to above, the Council is confident at least 70 dwellings can be delivered in Marks Tey within the existing village envelope. There is therefore no need to allocate further sites or extend the settlement boundaries. The sites identified by the Parish Council may come forward as rural exception sites providing affordable housing. Further discussions took place with regards to the allocation of areas of open space such as land near the village hall. Various sites were identified in the PPG17 study which forms part of the Council's evidence base and further work will be undertaken with regards to any further potential allocations as the Council develops the Site Allocations submission document.

4.2.88 In response to the Site Allocations Regulation 25 consultation a site for rural employment was put forward at Poplar Nurseries School Farm, School Road and reported to the 23 March 2009 LDF Committee. As this site has not been considered previously further assessment work will need to be done to determine if it is suitable for allocation on the inset map in the submission Site Allocations as a Rural Employment site outside the settlement boundary.

4.2.89 The settlement boundaries for Marks Tey will need to be shown on two maps as seen in the Local Plan as it is not possible to show the settlement boundaries on one map at a useable scale.

**Recommendation: Retain the current settlement boundary.**

### **Messing**

4.2.90 The Local Plan identifies Messing as a small village and it is shown on Local Plan Inset Map D27. The Core Strategy Table H1a does not identify a specific housing provision for Messing and therefore it is to be considered



under the “Other Villages” category which allows for limited development only on infill sites within the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.91 The Local Plan Table 3 identifies a minor allocation for 12 units at School Road Messing. These have been built and are included within the existing settlement boundary. Two representations on one site have come forward in response to the Site Allocations consultation. These have been reported to LDF Committee and it has been recommended that they are not taken forward in the Site Allocations process since it is not in accordance with Core Strategy Policy. No comments have been received from the Parish Council on settlement boundaries.

4.2.91 The settlement boundary of Messing should continue to be shown on one map, similar to that currently within the Local Plan

**Recommendation: Since the only recent (post 2004) development in Messing is within the existing settlement boundary it is accordingly proposed to retain the current settlement boundary.**

### **Mount Bures**

4.2.92 The village of Mount Bures is shown on Inset Map D28 and is identified as a small village in the Local Plan. The Core Strategy Table H1a does not identify a specific housing provision for Mount Bures and therefore the village is to be considered under the “Other Villages” category which allows for limited development only on infill sites within the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.93 No recent (post 2004) developments have taken place to necessitate a change to the settlement boundary. It is accordingly proposed to retain the current settlement boundary and not make any changes as part of this review.

4.2.94 Prior to the Site Allocations Regulation 25 consultation the Borough Council met with the Parish Council to discuss the current Inset Map and settlement boundary. No sites in the parish have come forward in response to the Site Allocations consultation period. The Parish Council did not support any change to the current settlement boundary.

4.2.95 The settlement boundary of Mount Bures should continue to be shown on one map, similar to that currently within the Local Plan

**Recommendation: Retain the current settlement boundary.**

### **Peldon**

4.2.96 The village of Peldon is part of Winstred Hundred Parish and is shown on Local Plan Inset Map D29. The Local Plan identified Peldon as a small village. Core Strategy Table H1a, does not identify a specific housing provision for Peldon and therefore it is to be considered under the “Other Villages” category which allows for limited development only on infill sites within the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.97 Seven sites outside of the existing settlement boundary have come forward in response to the Site Allocations consultation. These have been reported to LDF Committee and it has been recommended that they are not taken forward in the Site Allocations process since they are not in accordance with Core Strategy Policy. No recent (post 2004) developments have taken place to necessitate a change to the settlement boundary.

4.2.98 Prior to the Site Allocations Regulation 25 consultation the Borough Council met with Winstred Hundred Parish Council who outlined the results of their recent parish survey. The Parish Council considered it important to retain the open space within the parish and some small scale residential development could be appropriate if it attracts families but at this stage no changes to the allocations or boundaries of the Local Plan Inset Maps were proposed.

4.2.99 The settlement boundary for Peldon will continue to be shown on one proposal map as seen in the Local Plan.

**Recommendation: Retain the current settlement boundary.**

### **Salcott-cum-Virley**

4.2.100 The village of Salcott-cum-Virley is part of Winstred Hundred Parish and was identified as a small village in the Local Plan and is shown on Inset Map D30. Core Strategy Table H1a does not identify a specific housing provision for Salcott & Virley and therefore is to be considered under the "Other Villages" category which allows for limited development only on infill sites within the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.101 One site outside of the existing settlement boundary was put forward in response to the Site Allocations consultations period. This was reported to LDF Committee and it has been recommended that it not be taken forward in the Site Allocations process since it does not accord with the Core Strategy Policy. No recent (post 2004) developments have taken place to necessitate a change to the settlement boundary. .

4.2.102 Prior to the Site Allocations Regulation 25 consultation the Borough Council met with Winstred Hundred Parish Council who outlined the results of their recent parish survey. The Parish Council considered it important to retain the open space within the parish and some small scale residential development could be appropriate if it attracts families but at this stage no changes to the allocations or boundaries of the Local Plan Inset Maps were proposed.

4.2.103 The settlement boundary for Salcott-cum-Virley should be shown on one proposal map as seen in the Local Plan.

**Recommendation: Retain the current settlement boundary.**

## **Wakes Colne**

4.2.104 Wakes Colne is spread over four settlement boundaries and these are shown on Local Plan Inset Maps D7, D31(A) and D31(B) and is identified as a small village. Core Strategy Table H1a does not identify a specific housing provision for Wakes Colne and therefore it is to be considered under the “Other Villages” category which allows for limited development only on infill sites within the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.105 Four sites outside of the existing settlement boundaries have come forward in response to the Site Allocations consultation. These have been reported to LDF Committee and it has been recommended that they are not taken forward in the Site Allocations process since they are not in accordance with the Core Strategy Policy. No recent (post 2004) developments have taken place to necessitate a change to the settlement boundary.

4.2.106 Prior to the Site Allocations Regulation 25 consultation the Borough Council met with Wakes Colne Parish Council. The Parish Council were of the general opinion that none of the settlement boundaries should be extended as part of the Site Allocations document. Additional open space allocations across the parish were discussed including the cricket pitch and the church. Further work on these allocations will consider as the Borough Council continues to develop the Site Allocations Submission document.

4.2.107 The Wakes Colne settlement boundaries should be shown on two maps to aid the clarity and understanding of the relationship between the different parts of the parish.

**Recommendation: Retain the current settlement boundary.**

## **West Bergholt**

4.2.108 In the Local Plan West Bergholt was identified in the Local Plan as a Principal Village and can be seen on Inset Map C8. Core Strategy Table H1a identifies 50 units to be provided over the plan period. The Housing Trajectory and Schedule of Small Sites identifies that these units are expected to be provided on infill sites within the existing settlement boundary which is considered to have capacity to meet this target.

4.2.109 Four sites outside of the existing settlement boundary have come forward in response to the Site Allocations consultation period. These have been reported to LDF Committee and it has been recommended that they are not taken forward in the Site Allocations process since they are not in accordance with Core Strategy Policy. No recent (post 2004) developments have taken place to necessitate a change to the settlement boundary; however two minor mapping errors have been identified as detailed in the box below which the Council considers appropriate to rectify as part of this review.

4.2.110 The Open Countryside Assessment Report recommended safeguarding the land between West Bergholt and Colchester because of the

key function it played in maintaining separation and the individual character between these two settlements. The Report's assessment of West Bergholt's boundary with Colchester is discussed below in the Review of Colchester and District Centre Settlement Boundaries (Section 5).

<b>Location:</b> 50 Valley Crescent	<b>Site Description:</b> Residential property which the settlement boundary cuts through.
<b>Background:</b> The Local Plan Inset Map for West Bergholt shows the settlement boundary running through the middle of 50 Valley Crescent. Number 50 is considered to form part of the continuous residential area so this is a mapping error which can be rectified as part of this review.	
<b>Proposed Change:</b> For the settlement boundary to be redrawn so that 50 Valley Crescent is included inside but with the boundary drawn tightly to resist against inappropriate development which could lead to over-urbanisation and intensification. A map showing the proposed minor boundary change is attached at the end of this report.	

<b>Location:</b> Properties at Coopers Crescent	<b>Site Description:</b> Residential properties which were granted planning permission in 1997 as part of a larger development.
<b>Background:</b> The existing settlement boundary cuts through a number of the properties along Coopers Crescent. The properties were constructed as part of the same development phase and form part of the continuous residential character of the village. The current boundary is considered to be a mapping error which can be rectified as part of this review.	
<b>Proposed Change:</b> For the properties and all of the residential curtilages to be included within the West Bergholt settlement boundary. A map showing the proposed minor boundary change is attached at the end of this report.	

4.2.111 Prior to the Site Allocations Regulation 25 consultation the Borough Council met with the Parish Council. The Parish Council did not propose any extensions or amendments to the existing settlement boundary and were unsupportive of the sites which had come forward in response to the consultation. The Parish Council did identify a need for affordable housing within the parish, but this is expected to be provided as a rural exception site and therefore not to be shown on any future inset map.

4.2.112 In future the settlement boundary for West Bergholt will be shown on one proposal map as seen in the Local Plan.

**Recommendation: Retain the current settlement boundary, subject to the correction of the two mapping errors noted above.**

### Wormingford

4.2.113 The village of Wormingford is identified in the Local Plan as a small village and can be seen on Inset Map D32. The Core Strategy Table H1a does not identify a specific housing provision for Wormingford and therefore is

to be considered under the “Other Villages” category which allows for limited development only on infill sites within the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.114 No recent developments (post 2004) have taken place to necessitate a change to the existing settlement boundary.

4.2.115 The settlement boundary for Woringford should be shown on one proposal map as seen in the Local Plan.

**Recommendation: Retain the settlement boundary.**

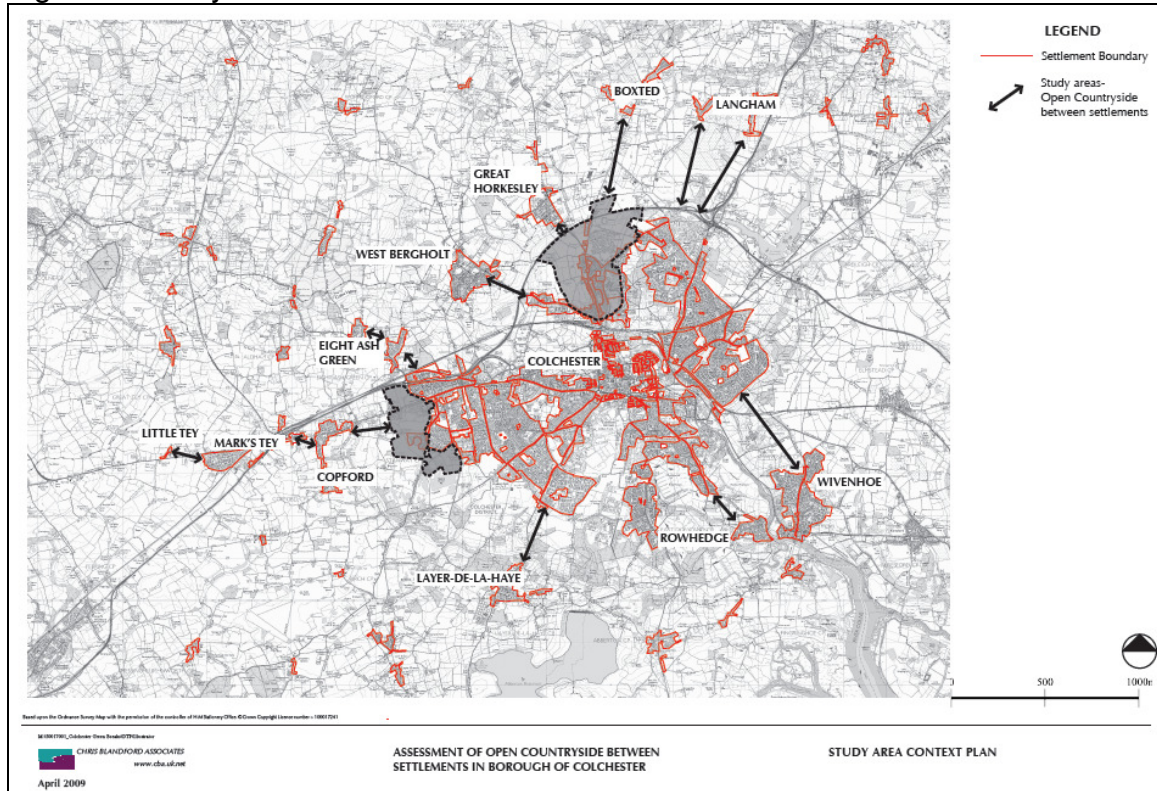
## **5. Review of Colchester and District Settlement Boundaries**

### **5.1 Background**

5.1.1 The following section covers the proposed settlement boundaries for Colchester and the three District Centres of Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe. For Colchester, the proposed boundary has been shown in the Regulation 25 consultation document published in January/February 2009. It is now being finalised following analysis of the Reg. 25 consultation responses and is attached at the end of this report. It largely follows the extent of the built up urban area, with the exception of new Growth Areas in Stanway and North Colchester. This reflects the spatial strategy in the adopted Core Strategy which directed new growth to the urban areas of Colchester and the District Centres and to the two new Growth Areas and protects the countryside outside settlement boundaries.

5.1.2 Decisions on Colchester's settlement boundaries were informed by a review of landscape character and function in breaks between Colchester and surrounding villages as well as all the other existing Local Development Framework evidence base documents. Colchester Borough Council commissioned Chris Blandford Associates (CBA) in 2008 to complete an Assessment of Open Countryside between settlements in the Borough of Colchester. CBA carried out a critical assessment of the role and function of open countryside in maintaining physical and visual separation and settlement character between the urban fringes of Colchester and the key settlements/villages surrounding it. The study focused on areas where settlement separation has been identified as an issue for the open countryside between Colchester and the villages of Boxted, Layer de La Haye, Langham, Rowhedge, Wivenhoe, Great Horkesley, West Bergholt and Eight Ash Green. The study also included a study of countryside between the settlements of Stanway and Copford, Copford to Marks Tey, Marks Tey to Little Tey and Marks Tey to Easthorpe which is mentioned in the village settlement boundary review above but is not relevant to the discussion below of Colchester and District Centre boundaries. The review meanwhile did not cover Tiptree or West Mersea since there were not felt to be any coalescence issues with neighbouring settlements, but the settlement boundaries for Tiptree and West Mersea are considered in this section because of their status as District Centres.

Figure 1- Study Area



5.1.3 The report was commissioned in response to the Planning Inspectors recommendations about the treatment of Green Breaks in the Core Strategy following the Examination in Public. In Colchester Borough Council's Core Strategy Submission document the designation of 'Green Breaks' was proposed to help prevent coalescence between the built up edge of Colchester and the surrounding villages. The document was subject to Examination in Public during 2008, and the Inspector's Final Report in October 2008 recommended the removal of 'Green Breaks' from both the Key Diagram and the proposed 'Environment' policy in the Core Strategy. As an alternative the Inspector suggested that the concerns, expressed by Colchester Borough Council (CBC) at the Examination in Public, about potential coalescence, should be addressed by a criteria based policy in line with the East of England Plan and Planning Policy Statement 7.

5.1.4 With regards to Green Breaks the Planning Inspector stated:  
 'These are included in policy NE1 and shown in KD1 and KD2 and are intended to prevent coalescence between the built up edge of Colchester and the surrounding villages. However, greenfield land outside settlement boundaries is already protected by policy NE1 and it is not clear what extra protection is needed. The same principles apply as in the case of ALCIs (Areas of Landscape Character) and in my view these concerns should be addressed by a criteria based policy in line with PPS7 and the EEP. The criteria should include one of maintaining settlement separation which would adequately cover this matter in conjunction with the Landscape Character Assessment. In order to make the CS sound in respect of test 4 it is

necessary to remove Green Breaks from policy NE1 and both Key Diagrams.<sup>1</sup>

5.1.5 The study completed by CBA involved an initial collection and review of data in the Local Plan, Core Strategy and current Landscape Character Assessment reports, followed by field surveys and assessments. The desk study and field assessments were synthesised and evaluated to provide an assessment of the function of open countryside in maintaining physical and visual separation and protecting character between Colchester Town and the villages surrounding it. The study considered the issues of Inter-visibility (visibility between settlements) and Intra-visibility (the ability to see the edges of two or more settlements from a single view point in the landscape) to help determine the risk of coalescence.

5.1.6 The key aims & objectives were to:

- (a) provide a critical assessment of the role and function of open countryside between key settlements in the Borough of Colchester in maintaining their physical and visual separation,
- (b) provide the technical background evidence to inform, guide and support the formulation and application of policies in Colchester Borough Council's Local Development Framework.

5.1.7 The objective of the study was to identify key areas of open countryside that were considered to be essential in helping retain the character and identity of the Borough's key settlements, and therefore required safeguarding from inappropriate development. As part of the assessment land between the urban Colchester and various settlements surrounding it were categorised as either making a high, medium or low contribution towards maintaining settlement separation and settlement character.

- Areas of countryside assessed as making a high contribution to settlement separation and individual character were identified as areas that needed to be safeguarded against inappropriate development.
- Land assessed as providing a medium contribution to settlement separation and individual character was considered to have some potential to accommodate some new built development but potentially with the loss of some significant landscape and visual resources.
- Land considered as making only a low contribution towards maintaining settlement separation and settlement character was regarded as having the potential to accommodate some new built development, if required, subject to appropriate design, and appropriate landscape and visual mitigation measures being implemented.

5.1.8 The report recommended that any development within areas identified as having medium or low contribution to settlement separation should ensure that the strength of rural character and sense of separation between

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<sup>1</sup> Report on the Examination into the Colchester Core Strategy Development Plan Document, 2008



settlements in the remaining areas of open countryside was not significantly diminished, to ensure that the distinctiveness of the settlement was maintained.

5.1.9 The findings from this study have been considered as part of a wider settlement boundary review which have been summarised in the following section of this report. These findings have been used to help determine where settlement boundaries should be established for the urban edge of Colchester and the district settlements and villages in the Borough.

## 5.2. Colchester – Rowhedge

Rowhedge is located between 0.8km and 1.1km to the southeast edge of Colchester with the River Colne flowing to the east of the village.

### **Settlement Edges**

5.2.1 The northern settlement edges of Rowhedge are generally softened by mature deciduous trees and hedgerows. However, there is a small section of housing located to the east of Rowhedge Road facing the Colne Valley, which has little peripheral vegetation and this consequently presents a relatively harsh settlement edge. Colchester's settlement edges extending along Mersea Road and Rowhedge Road are substantially softened by rear garden vegetation, mature hedgerows and linear woodland belts in nearby fields. To the north of the Middlewick Ranges, Colchester's settlement edge presents a visually harsh edge when viewed from the vicinity of Birch Brook. The Hythe sewage works on the south-eastern edge of Colchester has a visually soft edge, on account of robust landscaping around the outer edge of the works.

5.2.2 The Open Countryside Assessment Report identified that there was very little inter-visibility between Colchester and Rowhedge and visa versa. Views between the two settlements were substantially enclosed by mature field hedgerows, tree belts alongside Birch Brook and by the ridged land form between Rowhedge and the developed area of Colchester along Rowhedge Road. Similarly views from the southern edge of Colchester were enclosed by tree belts alongside Birch Brook and/or by trees along the southern edge of Middle Wick firing range.

5.2.3 The report confirmed that distant, glimpsed views of the southern edge of Colchester to the west of Rowhedge Road were possible looking northwards from highest point in the western side of Rowhedge village. There was also clear, but distant, inter-visibility across the Colne River Valley between the north-eastern edge of Rowhedge and the southern edge of Colchester near the sewage works.

5.2.4 Intra-visibility was considered difficult between Rowhedge and Colchester, due to the fairly long distance between the settlements and the screening effect of woodland, landform and field boundary hedgerows. Views northwards to Colchester from public footpaths off Weir Lane and Birch Brook were initially enclosed by vegetation lining the corridor of the brook however views of Colchester's southern settlement edge opened up past Birch Brook tree belt and the semi-enclosed fields along its northern edge. Heading southwards along the public footpath through the Rifle Ranges, views were also initially enclosed by trees and shrubs lining Birch Brook.

5.2.5 The report confirmed that views from Rowhedge Road towards the northern edge of Rowhedge and/or the southern edge of Colchester were mainly enclosed by hedgerows lining the road corridor and by trees associated with farmsteads and small groups of houses in the intervening landscape. There were also limited views north-eastwards across the open landscape of the River Colne towards the sewage works from Rowhedge

Road. The report identified clear intra-visibility between the north-eastern edge of Rowhedge and the southern edge of Colchester near the sewage works when viewed from the River Colne footpath.

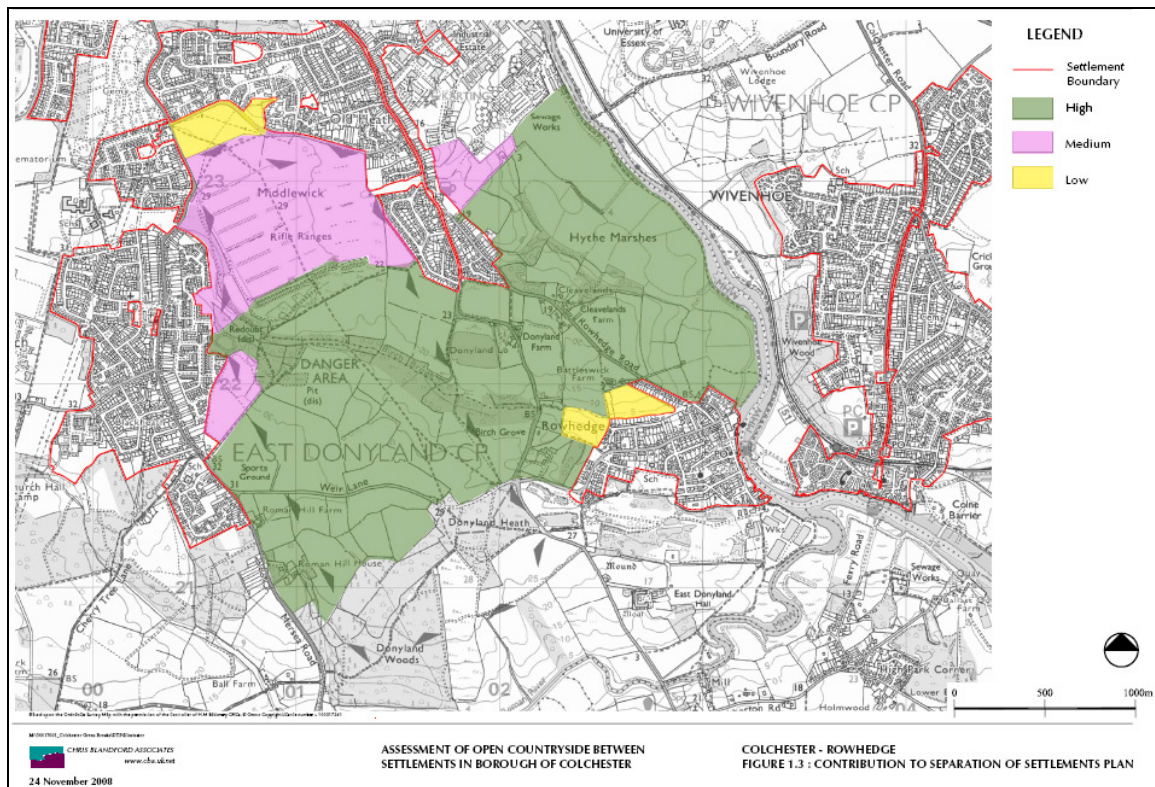
5.2.6 Overall the Open Countryside Assessment Report concluded that apart from distant views along the River Colne valley, there was a substantial lack of inter-visibility and intra-visibility between Rowhedge and Colchester which was considered to help achieve a strong sense of separation between the two settlements. The very low levels of inter-visibility and intra-visibility associated with these settlements was attributed to the screening effects of intervening landform and trees/hedgerows, and the partial location of Rowhedge within the smaller Roman River valley.

5.2.7 The report also concluded that the River Colne valley provided a strong sense of separation between Rowhedge and Colchester on account of the large distance between the settlements, the openness of the landscape and the sense of unity and intactness associated with the river valley.

5.2.8 Travelling southwards from Colchester along Rowhedge Road, there was a distinct sense of leaving the settlement and entering a rural landscape due to the distinct settlement edge and the strength of rural character of the open countryside. There was also a distinct sense of arrival when travelling into Rowhedge along Rowhedge Road on account of the sudden opening up of views of residential buildings along this route.

5.2.9 The contribution made by various areas of land between Colchester and Rowhedge to the separation of settlements was assessed according to whether they provided a high, medium or low contribution. The assessment findings are shown in Figure 2.0 and their relevance discussed below with respect to defining or redefining settlement boundaries for the two settlements.

Figure 2.0 Colchester - Rowhedge



5.2.10 The Open Countryside Assessment Report concluded that the open countryside between the western edge of Rowhedge and Mersea Road, as well as from the southern edge of the Middlewick Rifle Ranges to Donyland Woods and Rowhedge provided a significant physical and visual separation and a strong sense of rural character between Rowhedge and Colchester. This separation was enhanced by the numerous field hedgerows and the wooded corridor of Birch Brook which provided the perception of multiple layers of vegetation. The River Colne corridor northeast of Rowhedge was also considered to contribute significantly to the high physical and visual separation between Colchester and Rowhedge on account of its open and low-lying nature and views from the River Colne footpath which provided a strong sense of being in open countryside (see area shaded green in Figure 2.0). The strong contrast between the rural character of open countryside and the built up nature of the two settlements helped establish a distinct sense of leaving one settlement, passing through open countryside and entering another settlement. The limited inter-visibility between the settlements was also considered to help protect the setting and separate identity of the settlements and provide a strong rural character to the intervening land.

5.2.11 For these reasons, this area of land was considered to play a high role in maintaining both a physical and visual separation between Rowhedge and Colchester and the two settlements' distinct characters. For these reasons the report recommended safeguarding this land future inappropriate development to maintain this settlement separation and character.

5.2.12 The Open Countryside Assessment Report also identified areas close to both settlement edges where the countryside was considered to provide a more limited contribution to settlement separation. The sites on the edges of

Colchester and Rowhedge which were assessed as providing a moderate contribution to the separation of the two settlements included a large part of Middlewick Ranges, a field located to the north east of Nathan Court and south of The Redoubt off Mersea Road and a third group of fields situated to the southwest of the sewage works on the southern edge of Colchester. Middle Wick Ranges were considered to make a medium contribution to the separation of the two settlements by acting like an area of transition between the southern urban built edge of Colchester and the rural landscape to the south. The report stated that the Rifle Range's strong physical and visual relationship with the built up area of Colchester contributed to the physical separation between Colchester and Rowhedge. The report also stated that that there was a strong contrast between the character of the ranges and the character of the arable farming landscape to the south which played a role in terms of maintaining a sense settlement separation. The field located to the north east of Nathan Court and south of The Redoubt was considered as having a robust landscape structure on account of the mature hedgerows to the northwest and west, the line of mature trees to the southeast and the mature deciduous woodland along Birch Brook corridor to the northeast and east. This boundary vegetation was regarded as providing a moderate degree of visual enclosure. The character of the field was also considered to be in contrast with the relatively open character of the fields on its eastern boundary and due to these two factors the field was considered to provide a moderate contribution to the separation of settlements.

5.2.13 Finally two fields on the northern boundary of Rowhedge village and land on the north side of Middlewick Rifle Ranges were identified in the report as making only a low contribution to maintaining settlement separation and settlement character between Colchester and Rowhedge. (see areas shaded yellow in Figure 2.0)

5.2.14 The fields north of Rowhedge were considered to provide a strong level of visual separation between these fields and the landscape further to the north and west, where views of Rowhedge's settlement edges were generally difficult to perceive. Although, the northern edge of Rowhedge was generally enclosed by rear-garden vegetation and mature deciduous trees partial views were possible towards its settlement edge from Rowhedge Road. In addition, woodland and mature field boundaries at the edges of these fields were also thought to cause their visual separation from adjacent arable fields to the north and west. The report concluded that there was no intervisibility with Colchester's southern settlement edges from these fields, further adding to their low contribution to physical and visual separation between the two settlements. The small area of land on the north side of Middlewick Rifle Ranges was assessed as making a low contribution because whilst this land provided physical separation between the adjacent settlements, the visual separation of this land was considered low as a result of open views to all settlement edges.

#### Assessment

5.2.15 Much of the land between Colchester and Rowhedge has been assessed as making a high contribution to maintaining settlement separation

and settlement character and consequently needs to be safeguarded against inappropriate development if settlement separation and individual character is to be maintained in the future. The Open Countryside Assessment Report identified 6 areas on the existing settlement edges of both Colchester and Rowhedge where some level of development could potentially be accommodated. The future development of these sites needs to be considered against development need and demand in these parts of the Borough.

5.2.16 Colchester has been identified by Government as a significant area for growth and has been awarded Growth Point status. Between 2001 and 2021, Colchester has to deliver 17,100 new houses and 14,200 jobs as part of the growth agenda. The recently adopted Core Strategy has identified 5 Regeneration/ Growth Areas where this development will be targeted. These include the Town Centre, North Growth Area, South Growth Area, East Growth Area and Stanway Growth Area. In essence new development will be centred predominantly in the Town Centre and in the Growth/Regeneration Area around the fringes of the existing urban area with smaller levels of growth earmarked for Great Horkesley, Marks Tey, West Bergholt, Tiptree, Rowhedge/ Wivenhoe and West Mersea and additional limited growth in the remaining smaller villages surrounding Colchester.

### **Rowhedge**

5.2.17 The 2004 Local Plan did not identify a settlement boundary for the village of Rowhedge; instead the residential land allocation was used to define the extent of the built area of Rowhedge. A new settlement boundary has been proposed for Rowhedge in Appendices 5 & 9 of the Regulation 25 Site Allocations document based on the Local Plan allocation.

5.2.18 The Open Countryside Assessment Report identified land on the north west edge of Rowhedge village where development could potentially accommodate new development without significantly reducing separation between Colchester and Rowhedge (areas marked yellow in Figure 1.) As part of the Site Allocations Issues and Options consultation, 5 sites were put forward for consideration including the former Rowhedge Port Site. As part of this consultation a 6<sup>th</sup> site was proposed (S301) to the north west of Rowhedge. Five out of the six sites proposed were taken forward as they had either been built, were already allocated in the Local Plan for residential use or were required to meet Core Strategy targets. The Core Strategy included a housing provision of 635 houses split between Rowhedge & Wivenhoe up to 2021. The former port site allocated in the Local Plan was carried forward in the Site Allocation process for mixed use development. Site S301 (Battle Wick Farm) was not carried forward in the Site Allocations process as it fell well outside the existing Local Plan settlement boundary.

5.2.19 There is currently no need to identify additional development land in Rowhedge within this plan period. This is because the former Rowhedge Port site and other sites available within the settlement boundary will meet Core Strategy targets for housing and employment once developed. Due to a lack of need for more land to meet current housing and employment targets for

Rowhedge, the land to the north should not be included within the proposed settlement boundary for Rowhedge. Although the retention of the Local Plan settlement boundary for Rowhedge was supported by East Donyland Parish Council during Regulation 25 Site Allocations consultations an extension to include the former port site is considered appropriate as this site is identified in the Core Strategy and is required to meet Core Strategy targets. (see Appendix 5)

**Recommendation: The settlement boundary for Rowhedge shown on the Proposals Map has been extended to include Rowhedge Port. No other changes are proposed.**

### **Colchester and its boundaries with Rowhedge**

5.2.20 To date no settlement boundary has been defined for the urban area of Colchester. As per Rowhedge, the residential land allocation in the 2004 Local Plan was used to define the extent of the built area of Colchester. A settlement boundary was proposed for Colchester in Appendix 5 of the Regulation 25 Site Allocations document. The Open Countryside Assessment Report identified Middle Wick ranges on the south eastern edge of Colchester as an area with the potential to accommodate some development in the future (areas marked yellow and mauve in G Figure 1) . However as already highlighted 5 Regeneration/ Growth Areas have been identified in the adopted Core Strategy where future housing and employment growth will be directed up to 2021/2023 in and around Colchester. This includes The Garrison site in the South Growth Area which will deliver 3000 new houses as part of wider mixed use development proposals by 2021. Between the Garrison developments and existing Local Plan Allocations and schemes already approved or built, an adequate amount of development land has currently been identified to deliver current Core Strategy growth targets. It can therefore be concluded that within this plan period no additional land needs to be found within the existing urban area of Colchester Town to accommodate growth targets. The proposed settlement boundary for urban Colchester shown in Appendix 5 does not currently include Middle Wick Ranges. Whilst the report suggests that the northern part of the ranges could be included within any proposed settlement boundary for Colchester without causing Colchester and Rowhedge to join up there are other constraints on the land which could restrict its suitability for future development. It forms part of the larger Local Wildlife Site (Co122) and it would be undesirable ecologically to fragment this large Local Wildlife Site. Middle Wick Ranges are still in operational use by the MOD therefore allocating it for housing would not be appropriate. These factors coupled with the immediate lack of need for additional development land in urban Colchester suggests that the none Middlewick Ranges area does not need to be included in any future urban settlement boundary drawn for Colchester.

**Recommendation: The settlement boundary for Colchester as shown on the Proposals Map should exclude the Middle Wick Ranges and remain unchanged.**

## **5.3 Colchester – Wivenhoe**

5.3.1 The settlement of Wivenhoe is situated on the eastern side of the River Colne, approximately 2.2km south of Colchester. The two settlements are separated by an area of open countryside comprising a wide belt of arable farmland, the mature historic parkland landscape of the University of Essex campus and several small blocks of woodland. The corridor of the River Colne, including the Hythe Marshes, abuts the western edge of the area.

### **Land Use**

5.3.2 Land use between Wivenhoe and the section of the Colchester settlement edge to the east of the River Colne, is generally dominated by arable fields, delineated by mature hedgerows and interspersed by blocks of mixed woodland. The University of Essex campus lies within the historic and mature parkland of Wivenhoe Park, which lies within this belt of arable farmland. The campus includes many university buildings, some of which are many storeys taller than surrounding trees. The campus also includes parking areas, large areas of sports fields, grassland, historic parkland (Post-Medieval Deer Park) and the historic Wivenhoe Lodge. The eastern slopes of the River Colne are vegetated by a combination of pasture fields and rough grassland.

### **Settlement Edges**

5.3.3 The northern edges of Wivenhoe are softened by a belt of mature deciduous trees. Similarly, the western settlement edges are softened and enclosed by mature, predominantly deciduous woodland. In contrast, Colchester's southern settlement edge is visually harsh when viewed from the Salary Brook valley. However, in views from fields on the plateau to the south of the valley, the settlement is filtered or enclosed by views of mature hedgerows along field boundaries.

5.3.4 In the intervening landscape, the University of Essex and Wivenhoe Park are partly surrounded by peripheral mature deciduous trees and mature specimen deciduous trees within the University campus. These provide visual complexity to the parkland and soften the appearance of its tallest buildings.

### **Landscape**

5.3.5 The relatively enclosed, intimate, small-scale valley encompassing Salary Brook to the immediate south of Colchester, contrasts with the larger scale, more open landscape of arable fields to the north and south of both the A133 and Brightlingsea Road. Towards the centre of the area, the mature, semi-enclosed, designed landscape associated with Wivenhoe Hall, now forms a distinctive setting for the University of Essex buildings. Arable fields to the south of the University and Boundary Road are semi enclosed with mature deciduous hedges along field boundaries. Outside the university campus, there is generally a strong sense of rurality associated with the open countryside between the settlements.

### **Assessment**



5.3.6 The Open Countryside Assessment report identified a lack of inter-visibility between Wivenhoe and Colchester's southern edge located to the east of the railway. Views from this part of Colchester were enclosed by the densely vegetated southern side slopes of the Salary Brook valley, by boundary landscaping on the University of Essex campus and by mature field boundary hedgerows to the north of the A133. Views from the northern edge of Wivenhoe were enclosed by mature deciduous vegetation along the settlement edge, limiting views northwards towards the edges of Colchester. Northward views were also limited by hedgerows on farmland to the north of Wivenhoe and by the boundary vegetation and relatively high land within the University of Essex campus. Intra-visibility was also considered difficult due to the distance between the settlements and the screening effect of woodland, landform and field boundary hedgerows.

5.3.7 Partial and open views of housing on the northern edge of Wivenhoe were possible from Colchester Road and from the public footpath between Boundary Road and Wivenhoe. These views were softened along much of the settlement edge by groups of deciduous trees and by rear garden hedgerows. There were no views to the settlement edges of Colchester from this footpath, although views of upper parts of buildings within the university campus were visible over intervening hedgerows.

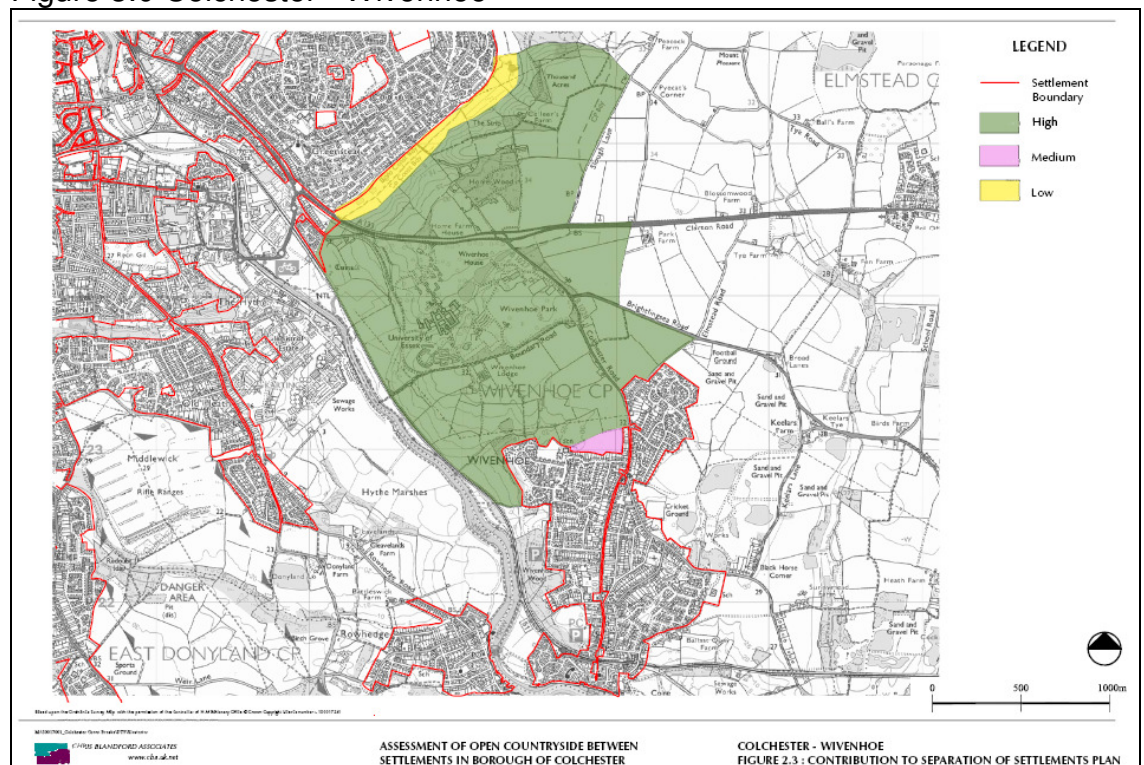
5.3.8 From Brightlingsea Road, mature hedgerows and occasional deciduous trees were found to restrict most views of housing on the northern edge of Wivenhoe and the southern edge of Colchester. Views towards Colchester were not possible. Glimpsed views towards Wivenhoe were possible from Boundary Road above the hedgerow lining the southern side of the road, however, no views of Colchester were obtainable from the southern section of Boundary Road. Views of the residential buildings on the southern edge of Colchester were difficult to obtain from the university campus on account of enclosure, provided by trees near the campus periphery.

5.3.9 Industrial and commercial buildings along the southern edge of Colchester, west of the railway line, were visible from the northern sections of Boundary Road and from western parts of the university campus. The university residential towers were also visible as isolated structures in the countryside protruding above the canopies of trees in views from outside the university campus.

5.3.10 In westward views from the public footpath connecting the northern edge of Wivenhoe with Wivenhoe Park and the University of Essex, housing on the far southern edge of Colchester west of the Hythe Marshes, were visible against a well-treed backdrop on the far side of the River Colne valley.

5.3.11 The contribution made by various areas of land between Colchester and Rowhedge to the separation of settlements was assessed according to whether they provided a high, medium or low contribution. The assessment findings are shown in Figure 2.0 and their relevance discussed below with respect to helping define or redefine settlement boundaries for Colchester and Wivenhoe settlements.

Figure 3.0 Colchester - Wivenhoe



## **Assessment**

5.3.12 In general the Open Countryside Assessment Report concluded that the lack of inter-visibility and general lack of intra-visibility between the settlements contributed to a strong sense of separation between Wivenhoe and Colchester.

5.3.13 The report also identified a large area of land between the eastern built edge of Colchester (Greenstead) and the northern edge of Wivenhoe as making a high contribution to maintaining settlement separation between these two areas. This included agricultural land to the north, west and east of the Essex University, the University Campus and the eastern side slopes of the River Colne valley to the west of Wivenhoe village. (see area shaded green in Figure 3.0)

5.3.14 The agricultural land to the north of Wivenhoe and to the north, east and west of the university campus was described as having a gently undulating rural character with a strong sense of openness with few blocks of trees and well-trimmed field hedgerows. The lack of inter-visibility between Colchester and Wivenhoe and very limited intra-visibility from public viewing points within this belt of agricultural land, was considered to contribute to the strength of rural character in this area. The report concluded that there was a strong sense of departure when leaving the edge of Colchester, as a result of a sudden change in topography and an increase in the degree of enclosure provided by roadside trees and woodland in the open countryside. The report concluded that there was also a strong sense of arrival/departure on the northern edge of Wivenhoe on account of the abrupt form of the settlement edge and the contrast between the open nature of the agricultural land and the built-up nature of the settlement. This sense of arrival and/or departure near the settlement edges were considered to contribute to the sense of settlement separation. For these reasons, the report concluded that the agricultural land therefore provided a high contribution to the sense of settlement separation.

5.3.15 Around the University, topography and the peripheral trees within the University of Essex parkland were also considered to play a key role in contributing to the visual separation of the two settlements. Mature tree planting along the periphery of the University of Essex campus was considered to provide visual enclosure to the campus and also give the impression of a significant block of woodland in many views from surrounding roads and public footpaths. The peripheral trees were considered to enclose views of many of the existing campus buildings, providing increased complexity and depth to the landscape. The enclosure provided by the trees, combined with the relatively high-lying landform within the campus was considered to contribute to the lack of inter-visibility between Colchester and Wivenhoe. The university residential towers were perceived as isolated structures in the countryside, rather than an extension of Colchester. For these reasons the report concluded that the contribution made by the campus parkland to the separation of the settlements was also high.

5.3.16 The well-treed eastern side slopes of the River Colne valley in the vicinity of Wivenhoe and the far western part of the university campus were identified as prominent features in views towards both Colchester and Wivenhoe when seen from viewpoints in the western parts of the River Colne valley and beyond. Views of Wivenhoe and the southern edge of Colchester to the east of the railway line were difficult to obtain in most of these views. On this basis, the topography and tree cover on these eastern side slopes were assessed as providing a high contribution to the physical and visual separation of the two settlements.

5.3.17 The Open Countryside Assessment report identified fields located to the northern edge of Wivenhoe which were considered to make a medium contribution to the physical and visual separation of settlements (see area shaded mauve in Figure 2.3) . The fields were considered to have mature, robust hedgerows along their boundaries, which provided a degree of visual separation from the agricultural fields further to the north. In terms of views from the northern edge of Wivenhoe, the fields were considered to contribute to the sense of separation between the settlements. A linear housing development along the western edge of the B1028, which substantially enclosed views of these fields from the road was considered to reduce the contribution they made to the visual separation of the two settlements in terms of perception obtained by people moving northwards from the settlement along the B1028. For this reason, these fields were considered as providing a medium contribution to the physical and visual separation of land between Colchester and Wivenhoe.

5.3.18 The report concluded that the lower and upper southern parts of Salary Brook valley to the south of Colchester's settlement edge provided only a low contribution to the separation of the settlements. Whilst the report recognised the generally open character of this land which provided views to Colchester's visually harsh urban edge, it concluded that views towards Wivenhoe were completely enclosed by the rising wooded southern valley slopes. In this context, therefore the bottom of the valley and its wooded southern slopes were considered to provide a low contribution to maintaining the visual and physical separation of Wivenhoe and Colchester.

5.3.19 Most of the land between Colchester and Wivenhoe has been identified as making a high contribution towards maintaining settlement separation and settlement character and the report recommended safeguarding it from inappropriate development in the future. There are significant development pressures on this land a large part of which is owned by the Essex University both to the north towards Colchester and south of the campus towards Wivenhoe.

### **Colchester and its boundaries with Wivenhoe**

5.3.20 No settlement boundary has been defined for the urban area of Colchester. The residential land allocation in the 2004 Local Plan was used to define the extent of the built area of Colchester. A new settlement boundary was proposed for urban Colchester in the Regulation 25 Site Allocations Document. This boundary has been increased to include areas where

planning permission has been secured or to reflect changes made to the Regeneration Area boundaries in this case the East Colchester Growth Area in the adopted Core Strategy.

5.3.21 The revised boundary for Colchester now includes land immediately north west of the campus adjacent to the A133 where the Essex University Research Park and land needed for enabling development will be developed. It has been included within the boundary of the East Growth Area as it is located very close to the eastern developed edge of Colchester, has been identified in the Core Strategy and outline planning permission has also been secured for this development. The boundary has therefore been altered to reflect this.

5.3.22 The thin strip of land in the vicinity of Salary Brook valley bordering the eastern built edge of Greenstead was considered to have potential to accommodate some development, subject to appropriate design, landscape and visual mitigation measures being implemented because of the low contribution it made to maintaining separation between Colchester and the University campus. Salary Brook valley has been not been included in the proposed settlement boundary for Colchester. It is unlikely that this land will be needed for development in the future as adequate residential and employment land has been identified in the 5 Regeneration Areas and Growth Areas included in Colchester's adopted Core Strategy. Furthermore there are other constraints on this land which may restrict its potential for development in the future. The land is unlikely to pass the Sequential Test on Flood risk grounds as it falls within Flood Zone 3. In addition Salary Brook itself is a Local Wildlife Site and ecologically the development of this site would be undesirable due to the impact on local biodiversity. Finally development along this boundary would further reduce the perception of settlement separation between Colchester and the university. For the reasons outlined above Salary Brook valley should not be included within the settlement boundary for urban Colchester

**Recommendation: The settlement boundary for Colchester as shown on the Proposals Map should include the University Research Park but exclude Salary Brook Valley.**

## **University to Wivenhoe**

5.3.23 No settlement boundary for Wivenhoe was defined in the 2004 Local Plan; instead the residential land allocation was used to define the extent of the built area of Wivenhoe. A settlement boundary was proposed in the Regulation 25 Site Allocations document which mirrored the 'boundary' shown in the Local Plan.

5.3.24 A large part of the land between the University and Wivenhoe plays a critical role in maintaining the physical and visual separation between these two areas and the Open Countryside Assessment Report recommended safeguarding this land from inappropriate development. Wivenhoe Town Council highlighted the importance of maintaining this sward of undeveloped land between the University and Wivenhoe as part of previous LDF consultations to prevent the two areas joining up. Much of it however is under threat from development pressure.

5.3.25 As part of the Regulation 25 Site Allocations consultation Essex University provided proposals for future expansion on this area of countryside. Proposals included an expansion of the campus buildings as well as the provision of a range of new sports pitches and supporting facilities on land between the southeast boundary of the University Campus and north west of Wivenhoe's northern settlement boundary.

5.3.26 As well as this proposal, a further 22 potential residential development sites were put forward as part of the Site Allocation Issues and Options consultation. Of these 22 sites, 11 were not taken forward in the Site Allocations process as they were located either outside or adjacent to the existing settlement boundary or the existing Local Plan Allocation was to be retained. This applied to 6 sites designated as open space. During the Regulation 25 Site Allocations consultation a new site was proposed off Spring Lane in Wivenhoe (S25/066). This site falls outside the existing settlement boundary for Wivenhoe. As this is a new site it will have to be fully assessed against the same selection criteria that all other proposed sites were assessed against. Of the 22 sites, 11 had already been allocated for residential use or were in the process of being built or were already completed and these were taken forward.

5.3.27 Wivenhoe has been identified as a District Settlement in the adopted Core Strategy. Along with Rowhedge it has been identified to accommodate 635 houses by 2021 (300 of these are to be provided in Rowhedge). Sufficient land has been identified (including the former Cooks Shipyard) to accommodate this level of development therefore no additional land needs to be allocated to meet Core Strategy housing targets.

5.3.28 As well as playing a key role in maintaining separation between the University and Wivenhoe this land is also important for its landscape and nature conservation value. In the 2004 Local Plan all of the land north from Wivenhoe to the University lay within the Countryside Conservation Area designation with a small area to the west of Wivenhoe was also designated as

Open Space. Many sites in the vicinity have been designated for their wildlife and historic interest. There are 4 Local Wildlife Sites, and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) close by including the Colne Estuary and Wivenhoe Park which is a registered historic landscape. All these could potentially be adversely affected by any significant level of development within this area. Any future applications to develop this land will need to be carefully considered to assess their likely potential to cause settlement coalescence but also to assess their ecological and landscape impacts. This will be particularly important for new buildings associated with new sports facilities in this stretch of countryside. It could be argued that the loss of land to the north of the university for the Research Park and enabling development increases the need to protect the land south of the campus even more to maintain separation between Colchester, the University and Wivenhoe.

5.3.29 The Open Countryside Assessment Report identified a field immediately due north of Wivenhoe which was considered as having potential to accommodate some new built development albeit with the loss of significant landscape and visual features. The site in question was not included within the proposed settlement boundary for Wivenhoe on the emerging Proposals Map. It falls within the area covered by the Essex Coastal Protection Belt a designation the Town Council were keen to remain unchanged. Finally this land forms part of the large area of land between Wivenhoe and the University that has been proposed as open space on the Proposals Map. Due to the lack of need of additional development land in Wivenhoe, the fact that a need to develop it was not identified in the Core Strategy and the important function it plays in maintaining separation between the University and Wivenhoe there is no need to extend the existing settlement boundary to include this land.

**Recommendation: The settlement boundary for Wivenhoe as shown on the Proposals Map should remain unchanged.**

## **5.4 . Colchester- Great Horkesley**

5.4.1 The village of Great Horkesley is situated approximately 350m to the northwest of the A12 dual carriageway, which skirts round the northern part of Colchester and the proposed North Growth Area. Great Horkesley occupies the western side of the A134, with only a few scattered houses on the eastern side of the road. The A12 is a strong physical and visual barrier in the landscape.

### **Settlement Edges**

5.4.2 The southern settlement edges of Great Horkesley are softened and substantially enclosed by dense blocks of mature deciduous woodland and rear garden vegetation. The northern edge of Colchester, as defined by the North Growth Area, abuts the A12. In this area, it is most likely that the settlement edge will comprise both residential and employment uses. It is anticipated that robust tree and shrub planting will be provided along the northern edges of these development zones.

### **Landscape Character**

5.4.3 The countryside between the settlements retains a strong rural character. North of the A12, land slopes steeply down towards the narrow valley bottom of St. Botolph's Brook, near the southern edge of Great Horkesley. The northern banks of the brook rise up to meet Great Horkesley which is situated on a plateau at approximately 49m AOD. To the west of Great Horkesley, the land slopes downwards towards a small stream corridor, which forms a tributary of St. Botolph's Brook. To the east of the village, the land slopes down towards Black Brook, also a tributary of St Botolph's Brook before rising back up to the level of the plateau further East.

5.4.4 North of the A12, arable farmland surrounds Great Horkesley and the corridor of St. Botolph's Brook. The fields north of the A12 support both pastoral and arable land uses. There are also blocks of orchard trees located within fields east of the A134. The fields surrounding Great Horkesley tend to be small in scale and semi-enclosed in character. The strength of rural character is not significantly diminished by the A12 as this highway is substantially enclosed from view by landform and highway vegetation.

### **Assessment**

5.4.5 Inter-visibility between Colchester and Great Horkesley was assessed as difficult to perceive. Views towards Great Horkesley from Colchester were substantially enclosed by the woodland along the Great Horkesley settlement edge, and by trees lining the A12 corridor.

5.4.6 Views towards Colchester from the southern edge of Great Horkesley were also enclosed by the vegetated hill slopes descending from the plateau south of the A12 and by intervening tree groups. Views to Colchester from the Essex Way public footpath which passes west of Great Horkesley were also limited by these features, as well as by landform and mature trees further to the west. Filtered views of housing at the Boxted Road/ A134 junction on the



northern edge of Colchester were possible from the public footpath that heads eastwards from the south-eastern corner of Great Horkesley

5.4.7 The Open Countryside Assessment Report concluded that there was low intra-visibility between Great Horkesley and Colchester, due to the screening effect of woodland, landform, field boundary hedgerows, the presence of the A12 and the undefined nature of the proposed development within the northern Growth Area.

5.4.8 Views south of the A12 were generally enclosed by the cumulative screening effects of woodland along the southern edge of Great Horkesley and trees along the A12. Great Horkesley in many of these views was only identified by the church steeple rising above tree canopies in the village.

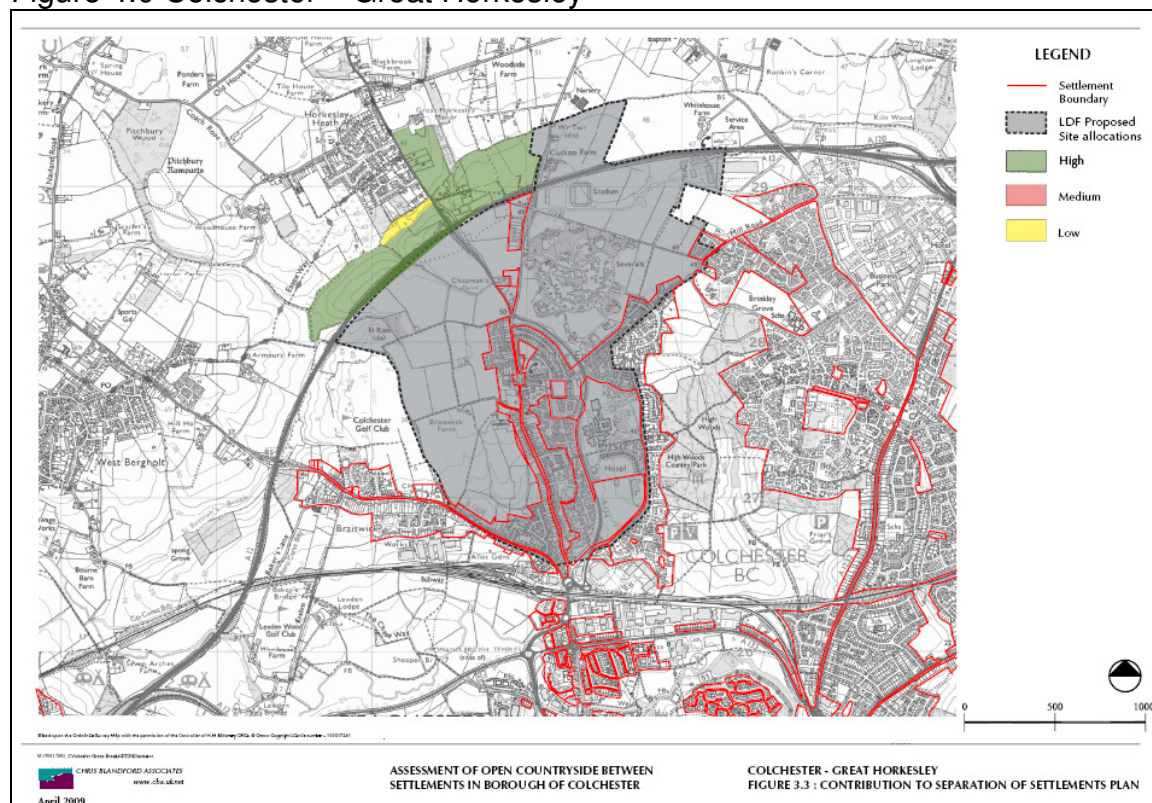
5.4.9 Whilst a mixture of open and partial views of the Colchester settlement edge were possible from viewpoints along the A134 and Bosted Road buildings along the southern edge of Great Horkesley were substantially enclosed by trees in views from these roads.

5.4.10 The Open Countryside Assessment Report concluded that landform and vegetation played a critical role in maintaining the separation between Colchester and Great Horkesley. Because of the elevated nature of the land (i.e. a raised plateau extends north-westwards from Colchester broadly up to the northern edge of the A12) the report concluded that the northern edge of the new Growth Area would potentially be visible in views from Great Horkesley. North of the A12, the land descends towards Great Horkesley. The outer edge of the plateau has a particularly high role in maintaining the visual separation of the two settlements, and this is further enhanced by trees on the plateau side slopes, by trees and hedgerows lining the boundaries of fields, by trees alongside the A12 and by tree belts and woodland near the Great Horkesley settlement edges.

5.4.11 Perception of settlement separation was considered to be heightened by the experience of leaving Colchester, crossing the A12 and descending the natural plateau edge before entering Great Horkesley along the A134. The contrast between the built-up settlement areas south of the A12 and the strongly rural character of the intervening countryside provided a clear sense of arrival and departure from the settlements. Furthermore, the stream corridor bisecting the area between the two settlements provided an area of relatively low land, over which unobstructed views were obtained. The resultant sense of space was considered to strengthen the perception of settlement separation.

5.4.12 The contribution made by various areas of land between Colchester and Great Horkesley to the separation of settlements was assessed according to whether they provided a high, medium or low contribution. The assessment findings are shown in Figure 3. and their relevance discussed below with respect to helping define or redefine settlement boundaries for Colchester and Great Horkesley settlements.

Figure 4.0 Colchester – Great Horkesley



5.4.13 The Open Countryside Assessment Report concluded that most of the open countryside between the A12 and Great Horkesley was considered to provide a high contribution to the visual and physical separation of the settlements (see area shaded green in Figure 4.0 ) This included St. Botolph’s Brook valley slopes at the southern edge of Great Horkesley which were considered to contribute significantly to visual and physical separation along with several blocks of mature woodland which were also considered to further limit views. It also included an area of land to the east of Great Horkesley village in the vicinity for Great Horkesley Manor. The area also included the numerous field hedgerows, tree belts alongside the A12 and the woodland alongside the southern edge of Great Horkesley. Collectively these were considered to provide multiple layers of vegetation that helped enclose views across the local landscape. This vegetation, together with the agricultural use of the land, the lack of inter-visibility, and the limited amount of intra-visibility, were considered to impart a strong sense of rural character and strong sense of settlement separation. When travelling through this landscape, particularly along the A134, the contrast between the rural character of open countryside and the built up nature of the settlements helped to establish a distinct sense of leaving one settlement, passing through open countryside and entering another settlement.

5.4.14 None of the land assessed was considered to provide a medium contribution to the separation of settlements. However the floor and lower slopes of the St. Botolph’s Brook valley, abutting the southern settlement edge

of Great Horkesley, were considered to provide a low contribution to the separation of settlements. Whilst open views were obtained from this area to Great Horkesley's settlement edge, views towards Colchester were completely enclosed by the upper valley slopes, with their scattered blocks of trees. In this context, the contribution of the lower valley slopes to the separation of settlements is low.

5.4.15 The Open Countryside Assessment Report recommended that land assessed as providing a high contribution to maintaining settlement separation and settlement character should be protected from inappropriate development as these areas play such a critical role in delivering these functions.

### **Great Horkesley**

5.4.16 Since Great Horkesley is classified as a village, its settlement boundaries are largely covered in the previous section in paragraphs 4.2.46-50. The Open Countryside Report, however, includes some further information relevant to the recommendation that boundaries in Great Horkesley remain unchanged. It recommended safeguarding most of the land between the northern of the A12 and the southern boundary of Great Horkesley from inappropriate development to maintain separation between the two settlements. (see area shaded green in Figure 4.0) However the report identified St Botolph's Brook valley south of Great Horkesley as an area with potential to accommodate some new development subject to appropriate design and landscape mitigation measures being implemented because of the low contribution this land was considered to make to maintaining separation. Topography and that fact this is a small stream valley may also make this area unsuitable for future development on flood risk grounds as it be unlikely to pass the Sequential Test.

### **Colchester and its boundaries with Great Horkesley**

5.4.17 No settlement boundary defined for the urban area of Colchester in the 2004 Local Plan. The residential land allocation in the Local Plan was used to define the extent of the built area of Colchester. As part of future development proposals for Colchester a number of Regeneration and Growth Areas have been identified in the adopted Core Strategy. One of these is the North Growth Area which has been identified for significant levels of growth up to 2021/2023. A boundary has been proposed for the North Growth Area in Appendix 5 of the draft Proposals Map for Colchester as part of the ongoing Site Allocations work.

5.4.18 The North Growth Area includes Mile End a suburb of Colchester that has already experienced significant levels of growth in the past. In addition to the 4000 houses already planned or developed, the North Growth Area has been identified for an additional 2,200 houses on greenfield land between 2016/2023. North Colchester has also been identified as a Strategic Employment Zone with 19.8ha of land available for employment uses. An area of land north of the A12 in the vicinity of Cuckoo Farm has also been proposed for allocation as a Park and Ride site. The northern most boundary of the Growth Area abuts the A12 with the exception of the Park and

Ride land which is located north of the A12. The proposed western boundary of the North Growth Area abuts Colchester Golf Club which limits the potential to develop in a westerly direction. The proposed southern and eastern boundaries of the North Growth Area are defined by existing developments in Colchester.

5.4.19 As part of the Site Allocations Issues and Options consultation 35 sites were out forward in the North Colchester/ Mile End area of Colchester. Of these 7 were not taken forward in the Site Allocations process as they were located in the open countryside outside or adjacent to the existing developed area of Colchester. A total of 28 sites were taken forward in the Site Allocations process. This included sites that were already allocated in the Local Plan and sites that had planning permission or where development was under way or completed. It also included the new greenfield site in North Colchester (S044) the planned development at Severalls and land at Axial Way (S037).

5.4.20 The Open Countryside Assessment Report identified the A12 as a strong physical and visual barrier in the landscape. As the report concluded that the majority of the land north of the A12 played a high role in maintaining separation between the North Growth Area and Great Horkeley the southern boundary of the North Growth Area abutting the A12 should form the northern urban edge of Colchester. Any development along this northern boundary is likely to be partially visible once built from the southern boundary of Great Horkeley and lead to reduction in the perception of separation between the two settlements unless significant landscape enhancements are implemented as part of future proposals for the area. Any development beyond the proposed Growth Area north of the A12 boundary would reduce the perceived and actual separation beyond Colchester and Great Horkeley. For this reason the settlement boundary for North Colchester should be contiguous with and follow the boundary of the North Growth Area south of the A12 as proposed in the Reg 25 Site Allocations proposals map. The exception to this is the area of land allocated for the proposed for Park and Ride north of the A12. This is the preferred site for Park and Ride due to its close proximity to the new planned A12 junction. In addition there is insufficient land for Park and Ride within the North Growth Area as most of the land has already will be needed for residential, employment or community uses. Although the Park and Ride site falls within the proposed boundary of the North Growth Area it should not be included within the settlement boundary for Colchester.

**Recommendation: The settlement boundaries separating Colchester and Great Horkeley as shown on the Proposals Map should remain unchanged.**

## **5.5 Colchester – West Bergholt**

5.5.1 The village of West Bergholt is situated approximately 1km to the north-west of Colchester with the two settlements separated by an area of open countryside. To the south-east of this area, housing within Colchester protrudes westwards in a linear form along the B1508 (Braiswick).

5.5.2 West Bergholt occupies the top of a small plateau at approximately 40-53m AOD. The south western edges of the plateau slope down towards the River Colne which meanders past West Bergholt in a west-east alignment towards the centre of Colchester. The south eastern and eastern edges slope down to St. Botolph's Brook before also draining into the River Colne at approximately 15m AOD. Colchester occupies a larger plateau on the far side of the St. Botolph's Brook valley, and is generally at the same elevation as West Bergholt. The villages of Great Horkesley and Eight Ash Green are situated approximately 1.5km to the northeast and 1.35km to the south-west of West Bergholt, respectively.

5.5.3 The valleys of St. Botolph's Brook and the River Colne form a strong topographical separation between West Bergholt and Colchester. The land slopes up on the far southern and eastern sides of these valleys, to meet the plateau on which Colchester sits, with its settlement occupying an elevation of between 35 to 50m AOD.

### **Land use**

5.5.4 Land use within this area of open countryside is dominated by arable agriculture but includes fields of pasture and rough grassland along the edges of West Bergholt. Towards the centre of the area, the corridor of St. Botolph's Brook is a notable landscape feature.

5.5.5 Colchester Golf Club occupies a large area north of this linear development along the B1508. Larger settled areas of Colchester lie approximately 1.2km to the south of this built development protrusion. The A12 dual carriageway bisects the open countryside between West Bergholt and Colchester, passing north to south between the settlements broadly following St. Botolph's Brook. The settlements are also separated by the railway corridor that lies 1km south of West Bergholt. A group of houses is located alongside the B1508 within this area, some 300m west of the Colchester settlement edge.

### **Settlement Edges**

5.5.6 The southern edges of West Bergholt are softened and substantially enclosed in views from areas to the south and from the B1508. This enclosure is provided by a combination of rear garden vegetation, mature hedgerows along adjacent field boundaries and small pockets of woodland. The western tip of the protrusion of Colchester's built development along the B1508 is softened by a mature block of deciduous woodland and trees lining the B1508 beyond the settlement. Rear-garden vegetation softens most other edges of the settlement closest to West Bergholt and the tree belt surrounding the golf course to its north encloses the settlement in views from the north.

## **Landscape Character**

5.5.7 The area predominantly comprises a patchwork of medium to large-scale fields to the south of West Bergholt, which have a variable sense of enclosure as a result of mature field boundary hedgerows of varying robustness. Smaller-scale fields immediately adjacent to West Bergholt are also lined with mature hedgerows. Both the River Colne corridor and the smaller more intimate and well-vegetated St. Botolph's Brook corridor are strongly recognisable features within this landscape. The degree of enclosure provided by trees alongside the A12 is such that the highway does not detract from the strong rural character within this area. The robust tree belts on the periphery of the golf course contribute to the strength of rural character.

5.5.8 The two largest blocks of woodland within this area of open countryside are situated on the southern slopes of St. Botolph's Brook, to the south-east of West Bergholt. Smaller clumps of deciduous trees lie alongside the brook and also abut the southern edge of West Bergholt. In addition, there are several linear belts of deciduous woodland lining parts of the A12 and the main railway line. Other roads in the area are generally lined by mature deciduous trees and/or by hedgerows.

5.5.9 Colchester Golf Club also contains dense blocks of mature trees between its fairways, as well as mature tree belts surrounding much of the golf course periphery which enclose the settlement in views from the north. The western tip of the protrusion of Colchester's built development along the B1508 is softened by a mature block of deciduous woodland and trees lining the B1508 beyond the settlement. Rear-garden vegetation also softens most other edges of the settlement closest to West Bergholt.

## **Assessment**

5.5.10 The Open Countryside Assessment Report concluded that there was little inter-visibility between Colchester and West Bergholt. At the western tip of Colchester, where housing protrudes outwards along the B1508, views out towards West Bergholt were considered to be substantially enclosed by the blocks of mature deciduous woodland on the eastern edge of the A12. These woodland blocks also enclosed views from West Bergholt to Colchester.

5.5.11 The report noted that inter-visibility was further restricted by a group of houses and associated trees in the open countryside, located to the south of the B1508 and on the western side of the A12. The hedgerows delineating the fields around the housing were also considered to help enclose views between West Bergholt and Colchester.

5.5.12 Intra-visibility was regarded as difficult from most areas between West Bergholt and Colchester due to the screening effect of woodland, tree belts, field boundary hedgerows as well as the intervening landform. Although the southern edges of West Bergholt were visible from certain points along the B1508 to the east of the A12, views of Colchester were difficult to obtain from these and other points along the road because of vegetation along the A12 embankment and the woodland blocks east of the A12.

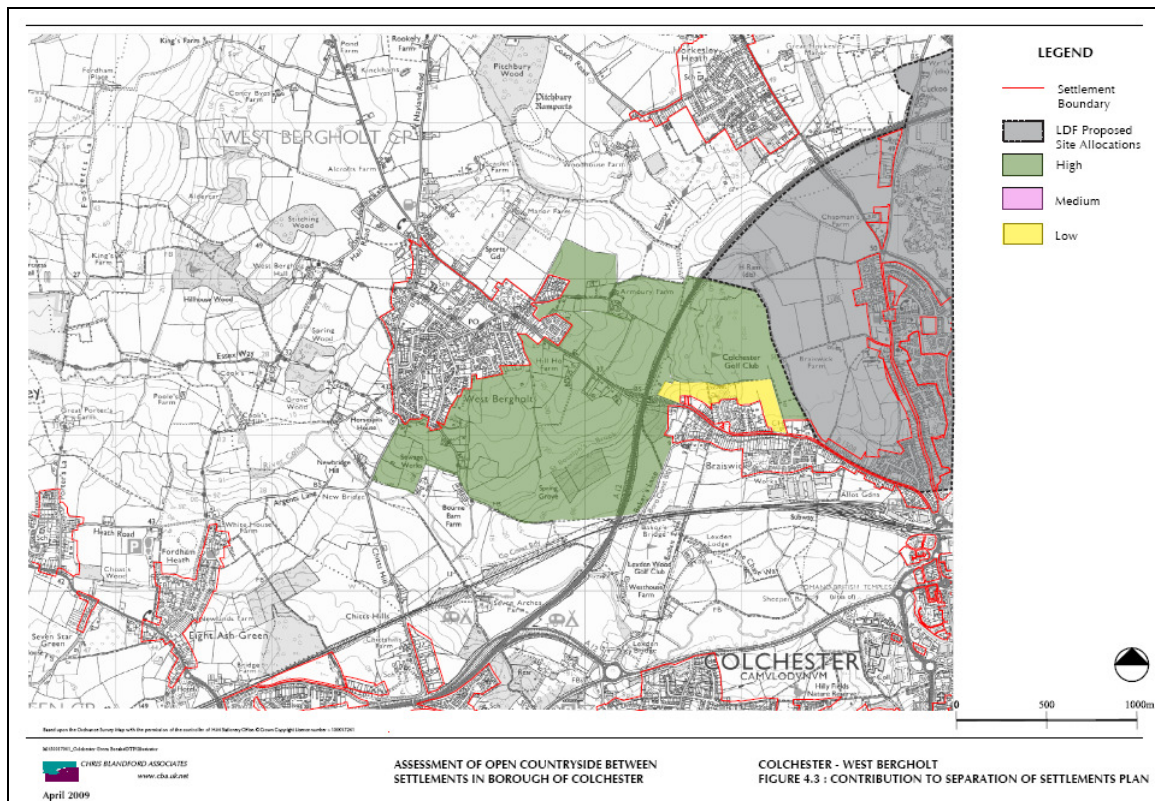
5.5.13 The report noted that when travelling westwards out of Colchester along the B1508, there was a distinct sense of leaving the settlement and entering a rural landscape on account of the woodland along the settlement edge and the subsequent sudden descent from the plateau edge to a relatively open agricultural landscape. The lack of inter-visibility and general lack of intra-visibility between the settlements were considered to contribute to a strong sense of settlement separation. Vegetation was also considered to play a primary role in restricting visibility between West Bergholt and Colchester. The topographical variation and sense of distance and openness provided by the St. Botolph's Brook valley were also considered to increase the perception of settlement separation.

5.5.14 The report noted that the location of both settlements close to the plateau edges overlooking St. Botolph's Brook valley created a relatively high potential for visual coalescence. Heading westwards out of Colchester along the B1508, it was noted that there was a fairly abrupt transition between the Colchester built-up area and the countryside beyond, with views of the countryside only opening up once past the tree belts alongside the A12.

5.5.15 The group of houses located 300m west of the Colchester settlement edge were perceived as buildings in the open countryside on account of views obtained of nearby arable fields and their location away from Colchester on the far western side of St. Botolph's Brook valley. However, the presence of these houses set amongst trees on the valley side slopes were not regarded to weaken the sense of having departed from Colchester when travelling between the settlements. Although there were small groups of houses in this area of open countryside, it was noted that there was an almost continuous belt of arable fields between the A12 and the south-eastern edge of West Bergholt. This belt of agricultural land, together with associated woodland, tree belts and hedgerows, were considered to provide a strong sense of rural character.

5.5.16 The contribution made by various areas of land between Colchester and West Bergholt to the separation of settlements was assessed according to whether they provided a high, medium or low contribution. The assessment findings are shown in Figure 4.0 and their relevance discussed below with respect to helping define or redefine settlement boundaries for Colchester and Great Horkesley settlements.

Figure 5.0 Colchester – West Bergholt



5.5.17 The Open Countryside Assessment Report identified a significant area of land between Colchester and West Bergholt as making a high contribution to maintaining separation between the two settlements. This was attributed to the strong rural character of the land between Colchester and West Bergholt, topographical variation, the distinct sense of departure and arrival at the settlement edges and the lack of intra-visibility and inter-visibility between them. Collectively these factors were considered to result in this land having a high overall contribution to the separation of settlements.

5.5.18 The area identified as making a high contribution to settlement separation included a significant area of Colchester Golf Club north of Braiswick up to the A12 as well as land to the east of the A12 in the vicinity of Westhouse Farm. All the land west of the A12 to the southern edge of West Bergholt was also included (see area shaded green in Figure 5.0)

5.5.19 The report also identified a group of fields immediately north of Braiswick and the Golf Club were considered to make only a low contribution to maintaining separation between the two settlements. (see areas shaded yellow in Figure 4.0). The report suggested that the fields had a closer visual and physical relationship with the built-up edge of Colchester than with the open countryside beyond as they abutted residential properties on their southern side. The fields were not considered to contribute to any inter-visibility or intra-visibility issues and were thought to have a reduced sense of rural character on account of their close proximity to existing buildings. Overall for these reasons they were considered to provide a low contribution to the separation of these settlements.



## **Conclusion**

### **West Bergholt**

5.5.20 Since West Bergholt is classified as a village, its settlement boundaries are largely covered in the Review of Village Settlement Boundaries above in paragraphs 4.2.108-112. The Open Countryside Report, however, includes some further information relevant to the recommendation that boundaries in West Bergholt remain unchanged except for two minor revisions. The report identified the need to safeguard all the land between the south/south eastern edge of West Bergholt and the north western built edge of Colchester with the exception of a group of fields between Braiswick and Colchester Golf Club from inappropriate development because of its importance in maintaining separation between these two settlements. This further justified retaining the existing settlement boundary as any further development along the southern or eastern edge of West Bergholt would reduce the sense of separation between the two settlements.

### **Colchester and its boundaries with West Bergholt**

5.5.21 No settlement boundary was defined for the urban area of Colchester in the 2004 Local Plan. Instead the residential land allocation in the Local Plan was used to define the extent of the built area of Colchester. Using this as a basis a boundary was proposed in the draft Proposals map for the urban area of Colchester. The proposed boundary for Colchester includes all the existing built up area of Braiswick. The Open Space Assessment Report identified a strip of fields immediately north of Braiswick that had the potential to accommodate some level of development because of their low contribution to maintaining settlement separation between West Bergholt and the north western edge of Colchester.

5.5.22 As part of future development proposals for Colchester 50f Regeneration and Growth Areas have been identified in the adopted Core Strategy. One of these is the North Growth Area which has been identified for significant levels of growth up to 2021/2023. The North Growth Area includes Mile End a suburb of Colchester that has already experienced significant levels of growth in the past. In addition to the 4000 houses already planned or developed, the North Growth Area has been identified for an additional 2,200 houses on greenfield land between 2016/2023. North Colchester has also been identified as a Strategic Employment Zone with 19.8ha of land available for employment uses. An area of land north of the A12 in the vicinity of Cuckoo Farm has also been proposed for allocation as a Park and Ride site.

5.5.23 The northern most boundary of the Growth Area abuts the A12 with the exception of the Park and Ride land which is located north of the A12. The most western boundary of the North Growth Area abuts Colchester Golf Club and is therefore located in very close proximity to the fields abutting Braiswick.

5.5.24 As part of the Site Allocations Issues and Options consultation 35 sites were put forward in the North Colchester/ Mile End area of Colchester. Of these 7 were not taken forward in the Site Allocations process as they were located in the open countryside outside or adjacent to the existing developed

area of Colchester. A total of 28 sites were taken forward in the Site Allocations process. This included sites that were already allocated in the Local Plan and sites that had planning permission or where development was under way or completed. It also included the new greenfield site in North Colchester (S044) the planned development at Severalls and land at Axial Way (S037). During the Regulation Site Allocation consultation a new site was proposed at Ramparts Farm, Braiswick. As this is new site it will need to be assessed against the same selection criteria that all other sites were assessed against.

5.5.25 The Open Space Assessment Report identified a strip of fields immediately north of Braiswick that had the potential to accommodate some level of development because of their low contribution to maintaining settlement separation between West Bergholt and the north western edge of Colchester. Three of the sites proposed but rejected from the Site Allocations process fell within this area. A new site proposed during the Regulation 25 Site Allocations process ( S025078) also fell within this area. As this is anew site it will have to be assessed against the same selection criteria that all the other sites were assessed against before a final decision can be made regarding this particular plot of land.

5.5.26 All the sites taken forward so far in the Site Allocations process are considered sufficient to provide enough land to meet Core Strategy targets so there is unlikely to be a need to identify additional development land in this north western part of Colchester so close to the Growth Area. In light of this it also means that there is no need to amend the settlement boundary for Colchester around Braiswick to include the fields to the north at this stage. West Bergholt Parish Council did not request any alteration to the settlement boundary during Site Allocations consultations.

**Recommendation: The preferred option for the settlement boundaries separating Colchester and West Bergholt as shown on the Proposals Map should remain unchanged.**

## **5. 6 Stanway – Copford**

5.6.1 The village of Copford is situated approximately 1.8km to the west of Colchester. The two settlements are separated by an area of open countryside with large-scale commercial development abutting Colchester's western settlement edge in the Stanway area. Scattered buildings line the B1408 road that runs east to west, connecting Copford to Stanway. Church Lane connects the western edge of Colchester with the central part of the B1408. The A12 dual carriageway is located approximately 100m to the north of Copford, passing the settlement in a north-east to south-west alignment. Whilst Copford is centred mainly on the B1408, there is a southward linear extension along School Road. This road continues to Copford Green, some 0.4km further south.

5.6.2 Copford and the western parts of Stanway both lie on a flat to gently undulating plateaux which is separated by the Roman River valley. Colchester (Stanway) lies on the eastern-most plateau at approximately 35-40m AOD

while Copford lies on the western-most plateau at approximately 30-37m AOD. The Roman River valley runs in a north to south direction between the two settlements, passing approximately 400m to the east of Copford. The valley sides are fairly steep on both sides of the river, with the floor of this narrow valley falling below 25m AOD.

### **Land Use**

5.6.3 Land uses are dominated by agricultural land, although there is significant built development along the B1408 corridor. This includes a group of houses, an industrial estate, a large garden centre, a rural church, a school and a public house interspersed amongst arable fields alongside the road. Relatively large areas of previously quarried land abut the western edge of Stanway and Colchester. The bottom of these quarries is much lower than the surrounding land, and one of them has a housing development built within its confines. Landscape restoration works have been completed in another former quarry.

### **Settlement Edges**

5.6.4 Stanway, on the western edge of Colchester, comprises large-scale commercial buildings with large associated car-parking areas. There is a moderate amount of tree/shrub vegetation along the western edge of Colchester and Stanway which serves to soften the appearance of the settlement edge. The commercial shopping centre at Stanway, just outside the settlement boundary, has many large-scale buildings and parking areas that are not generally screened or softened by vegetation. This development dominates most near-distance views from this area of open countryside towards the western edge of Stanway and Colchester. In addition, a new housing area, developed in a circular array (Lakelands), to the south of the commercial shopping centre has a visually harsh and abrupt edge. The urban fringe character of Stanway is accentuated by the presence of numerous roundabouts and street lighting columns.

5.6.5 Further to the west of Stanway, large-scale buildings in an industrial estate on the southern side of the B1408 appear visually harsh when seen from the B1408, Church Lane or from public footpaths across adjacent fields to the west and south. In spite of peripheral tree/shrub vegetation, these buildings are generally not well screened and are large in scale relative to the surrounding landscape features and built environment. Pockets of linear development along the B1408 also have a visually harsh edge when seen in northward views from Church Lane.

5.6.6 In contrast, the edges of Copford are generally softened and enclosed by mature deciduous trees in rear gardens and by hedgerows within fields to the east of the village. Woodland lining the corridor of the Roman River valley also contributes to providing a soft green settlement edge within views westwards towards Copford from Hall Road, from the B1408 and from public footpaths across nearby fields.

### **Landscape Character**

5.6.7 The area between Stanway and Copford has a complex landscape character, transitioning from an area with an urban fringe character (with large-scale commercial industrial buildings and disused sand and gravel works) westwards through to an agricultural landscape with a strongly rural character. The small settlement of Copford lies within this agricultural landscape, occupying an elevated plateau above the well-wooded valley of the Roman River. The village is surrounded on all sides by a mixture of small, medium and large agricultural fields, with the A12 dual carriageway passing just north of the village. Built development extends along long sections of the B1408 between Stanway and Copford. However, it is, in many places, only a narrow belt of built development and is surrounded by agricultural fields.

### **Assessment**

5.6.8 The Open Countryside Assessment Report concluded that there was no inter-visibility between Stanway and Copford due to the long distance between the two settlements, the intervening landform, buildings and trees and hedgerows which all served to visually separate the two settlements.

5.6.9 Eastwards from Hall Road, views towards Stanway and Colchester were enclosed by the upper eastern slopes of the Roman River Valley and their associated mature trees. Views eastwards towards Stanway and Colchester from Turkey Cock Lane to the north of the B1408 were limited by the gently rolling landform, field boundary hedgerows and groups of trees in the intervening landscape.

5.6.10 Views westwards from Church Lane towards Copford were also enclosed by the cumulative screening effects of landform, trees and mature hedgerows in the landscape between the lane and the Roman River. Views westwards towards Copford from the edge of Stanway were completely enclosed by housing and industrial buildings along the B1408 and by intervening landform and trees.

5.6.11 Intra-visibility was also considered difficult to perceive, due to the distance between the settlements and the screening effect of woodland, landform and field boundary hedgerows. It was observed however that there was a considerable degree of visual coalescence between groups of buildings in the open countryside alongside the B1408 between Stanway and Copford.

5.6.12 Land near the western edge of Stanway was considered to be under a strong urban influence. From Church Lane, there were open views of commercial development at Stanway and residential development on the western edge of Colchester. In addition, there were partial views of industrial development on the southern edge of the B1408. The strength of rural character in the open countryside was considered to increase rapidly along the western side of Church Lane, and on towards Copford.

5.6.13 The report highlighted a sense of ribbon development or coalescence of built development when moving westwards from the edge of Stanway along the B1408. The large-scale buildings in the commercial/shopping centre at Stanway abutted existing residential buildings in Colchester. The open land

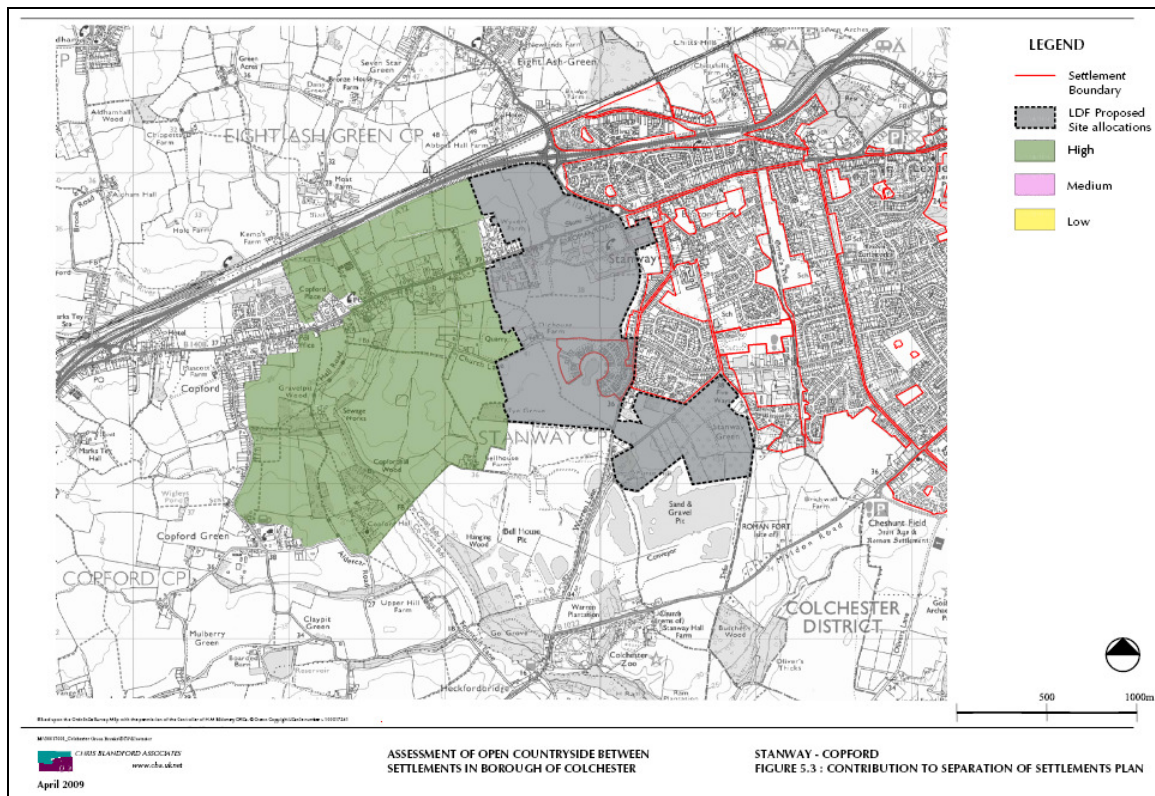
between these commercial buildings and the collection of residential and industrial buildings located approx. 150m further to the west was partially occupied by a distributor road with several roundabouts and tall lighting columns. The commercial, residential and industrial buildings were all visible in open views from one or more viewing positions in this narrow belt of open countryside and were visually dominant compared to the glimpsed views obtained of agricultural fields to the north and northeast.

5.6.14 Once past the industrial estate, the character of the road changed and glimpsed views of agricultural fields were obtained both to the north and south of the road, providing a sense of rural character. The presence of the old church near the junction with Church Lane was considered to enhance this sense of being in a rural landscape, in spite of sporadic groups of houses alongside the B1408.

5.6.15 Continuing westwards, there were distant glimpsed views of houses in Copford, along the axis of the road, seen amongst mature trees on the western side slopes of the Roman River valley. There was also a sense of ribbon development or coalescence of built development heading westwards past the garden centre and adjacent housing, before descending into the Roman River valley where there was a collection of residential and commercial buildings opposite Turkey Cock Lane near the eastern edge of Copford. The amount of mature tree growth alongside the road increased significantly on approach to Turkey Cock Lane and this provided a strong sense of departure from the predominantly rural land to the east. The density of trees abruptly declined and the density of roadside housing abruptly increased on ascent into Copford along the B1408 from the floor to the valley. In spite of the built development within the open countryside alongside the B1408, the report concluded that there was a strong sense of transition along the B1408 road corridor, from Stanway, through a rural area into Copford.

5.6.16 The contribution made by various areas of land between Stanway and Copford to the separation of settlements was assessed according to whether they provided a high, medium or low contribution. The assessment findings are shown in Figure 6.0 and their relevance discussed below with respect to helping define or redefine settlement boundaries for Stanway and Copford.

Figure 6.0 Stanway - Copford



5.6.17 The report concluded that all the land from the eastern edge of Coppord to the western edge of the Stanway Growth Area, including the corridor of the Roman River valley, provided a high contribution to settlement separation. (see area shaded green in Figure 6.0) The fields and woodland along the river valley were considered to provide a well-treed setting to Coppord that helped enclose views eastwards towards Stanway and Colchester. Furthermore, the topographical variation provided by the Roman River was considered to heighten the sense of physical separation between the two settlements. Elsewhere, the fields, hedgerows and trees contributed to a strong rural character, which was considered to starkly contrast with the built-up nature of the nearby settlements.

### Stanway

5.6.18 No settlement boundary was defined for the urban area of Colchester including Stanway in the 2004 Local Plan. Instead the residential land allocation in the Local Plan was used to define the extent of the built area of Colchester. Using this as a basis a settlement boundary was proposed in the draft Proposals map for Colchester. (see Appendix 5 Regulation 25 Site Allocations DPD)

5.6.19 As part of future development proposals for Colchester a number of Regeneration and Growth Areas were identified in the adopted Core Strategy. One of these is the Stanway Growth Area which has been identified for significant levels of growth i.e. 1800 new houses by 2021/2023. The proposed boundary of the Stanway Growth Area extends west from Tollgate Road to include the Tollgate Centre and is bound in the south east by Villa Road. It also includes land between Warren Road and Dyers Road and land east of Dyers Road and north of Colchester Quarry. The southern boundary of the

Growth Area is bound by the northern edge of Colchester Quarry while the western edge includes land to the west of Lakelands earmarked for development as a country park and employment land including the Westside Centre. To the north of the B1048, the Growth Area boundary includes Stane Park and 10ha of land forming part of Wyvern Farm.

5.6.20 In addition to the 1000 houses already with planning permission or developed, the Stanway Growth Area has been identified as a new green field development area for the delivery of an additional 800 houses by 2023. Stanway has also been identified as a Strategic Employment Zone and 2 Urban District Centres have been proposed within the Growth Area at Tollgate and Peartree Road. As part of the Site Allocations Issues and Options consultation 28 sites were put forward as potential residential development areas. As part of the Regulation 25 Site Allocations work, 24 of these sites were taken forward for further consideration as they were already allocated in the Local Plan, under construction or developed. Three sites around Stanway were rejected during the Regulation 25 Site Allocations process as they were located outside of the existing settlement boundary or in the open countryside.

5.6.21 Existing Local Plan employment allocations have also been taken forward to help deliver Core Strategy employment targets. Some new commercial/employment development sites have also been proposed. These include Stane Park located south of the A12 at Stanway, land north of London Road and at Evergreen House and Hollick Car Sales premises. An additional 41ha of land to the rear of Wyvern Farm was also put forward as a mixed use employment, Park and Ride and housing development as part of the Regulation 25 Site Allocations consultation. The eastern end of the site falls within the Stanway Growth Area while the western boundary falls with the Copford ward. The council have proposed allocating only 10ha at the eastern end of this site to help deliver Core Strategy targets for Stanway and have rejected allocating the remaining land on the border with Copford to prevent the boundaries of Copford and West Stanway from joining together. This approach is supported by Stanway Parish Council and Copford and Easthorpe Parish Council.

5.6.22 During the Regulation 25 Site Allocations process, a new residential site was proposed at Stanway (Fiveways Fruit Farm S025/097) for consideration. This is a new proposal and the site will have to be considered against the selection criteria that all the other site were assessed against. This site falls within the Stanway Growth Area however outside the existing settlement boundary. The settlement boundaries for the Growth Area and settlement boundary should be contiguous with each other.

5.6.23 Collectively all these sites will provide adequate land to meet current Core Strategy housing and employment targets for the Stanway Growth Area. It will also reduce the need to find additional sites around Stanway ensuring that the land between Stanway and Copford will be safeguarded from unnecessary development and the risk of the coalescence between the two settlements reduced.

## **Copford**

5.6.24 Since Copford is classified as a village, its settlement boundaries are largely covered in the Review of Village Settlement Boundaries above in paragraphs 4.2.21-26.

**Recommendation: The settlement boundaries separating Stanway and Copford as shown on the Proposals Map should remain unchanged.**

## **5.7 Colchester – Eight Ash Green**

5.7.1 Eight Ash Green is a small village situated to the northwest of Colchester. The village itself is in two parts, separated by an intimate landscape of small fields, hedgerows and copses. The settlements are approximately 240m apart at their narrowest point along the A1124 but the separation increases up to 1.2 kilometres in the northern part of the village.

5.7.2 Land in the vicinity of Eight Ash Green and the north-western part of Colchester sits on a plateau at approximately 40m AOD. To the north of the plateau, the land slopes gradually down to approximately 15m AOD on the floor of the River Colne valley, which wraps around the northern edge of Colchester.

5.7.3 The village straddles a small stream valley that is a tributary to the River Colne, and as a result the settlement drops from approximately 40m AOD along its southern edge to 30m AOD near its centre. It then rises again to 40m AOD along its northern edge. This side valley deepens and widens to the east of Eight Ash Green, thereby providing topographic variation between Colchester and Eight Ash Green.

### **Land Use**

5.7.4 Land use between the two parts of the Eight Ash Green village is mainly agriculture, with small scale, regular shaped fields, bordered by hedgerows with occasional trees. A small woodland copse is prominent and this extends eastwards along the tributary of the River Colne.

5.7.5 Land use between Colchester and Eight Ash Green mainly comprises open countryside dominated by medium-scale arable fields, with small areas of woodland, scrub and tree belts. A large hotel is located near the narrowest point between the two settlements, close to the western edge of the A1124. In addition, there are two small groups of houses located near this road within the open countryside – one group to the east along Halstead Road, and the other to the west of the hotel along Abbots Lane.

5.7.6 A railway corridor passes between Colchester and Eight Ash Green in a northeast southwest alignment, and this is lined by mature tree belts. The A12 dual carriageway lies approximately 250m to the south of Eight Ash Green, and there is a roundabout at its junction with the A1124. There is housing on either side of the A12 to the east of the roundabout, while a mixture of scrub, tree belts and fields lie adjacent to the A12 to the west. The area of



Colchester closest to Eight Ash Green is located north of the A12 and south of the railway line and it is accessed via Halstead Road.

### **Settlement Edges**

5.7.7 The settlement edges of Eight Ash Green are softened and partially enclosed by a combination of garden vegetation and mature deciduous hedgerows within adjacent fields. The area along the A1124 between the railway line and Eight Ash Green also contains trees and scrub that soften the edges of Eight Ash Green. This includes a scrub belt between the southern settlement edge and Halstead Road, trees at the A1124/Abbott's Lane junction and scrub between the A1124 and the hotel. Colchester's northern settlement edges are visually softened or substantially enclosed by Woodland, trees and shrubs along the railway line, the A1124, and between the A12 and the railway line.

### **Landscape Character**

5.7.8 Eight Ash Green has a strong character. It is set within a mosaic of small to medium-sized predominantly arable fields, some of which are bounded by hedgerows with mature trees. The countryside at the narrowest point between the settlements retains a degree of separation between the village and Colchester, but existing development within this area of countryside means that the effective separation is vulnerable.

### **Assessment**

5.7.9 The Open Countryside Assessment Report noted that inter-visibility between the two parts of the village was restricted by the dense network of hedgerows and by the visual enclosure provided by Choals' Wood. In contrast, the southern edge of Eight Ash Green was clearly visible from the A1124/A12 roundabout adjacent to the northern edge of Colchester. The report noted that housing on the northern edge of Colchester was not visible from the southern edge of Eight Ash Green on account of the enclosure provided by the elevated section A1124 and its associated roadside vegetation

5.7.10 The report also noted that intra-visibility was clearly perceived along the southern sections of the A1124 due to the visual prominence of buildings and the short distance between the settlements in this area. Some intra-visibility was perceived along a short section of Halstead Road near Colchester's northern settlement edge. From here the report noted that near distance views of houses on the northern edge of Colchester south of the railway were obtained, whilst middle distance views of housing in the north-eastern part of Eight Ash Green were also possible across agricultural fields to the north and northwest.

5.7.11 Despite the intra-visibility, the report concluded that there was a strong sense of separation between the settlements due to the distance involved, the robust hedgerows in the middle distance, which visually softened and partially enclosed views of houses, and the relatively low elevation of the intervening land where it sloped down from each settlement edge towards a central stream valley. The elevated views across the stream valley were considered

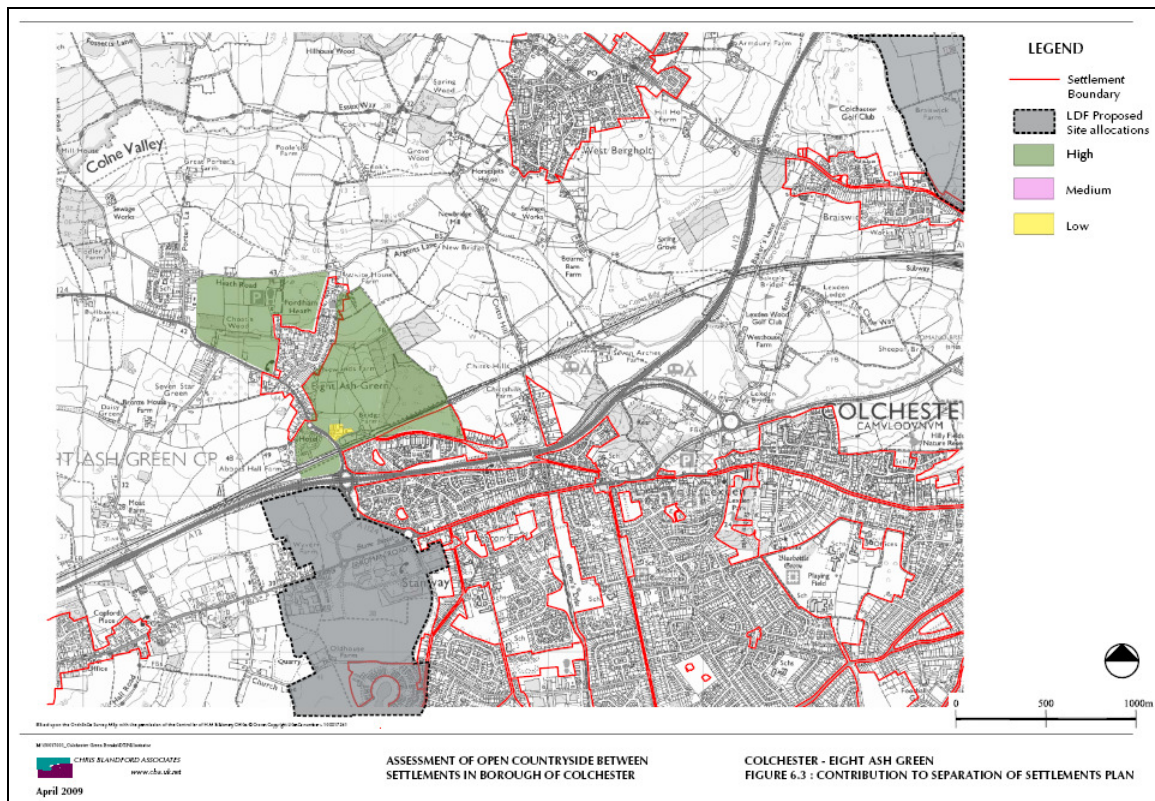
to provide a sense of space, which contributed to the perception of separation between the settlements.

5.7.12 Other areas of Eight Ash Green were reported to have very little inter-visibility with Colchester due to the screening effects of intervening vegetation, including field hedgerows, tree belts lining the railway, and the woodland lying between the two settlements. However distant, glimpsed views of tall buildings and structures in Colchester Town Centre were observed when looking southwards from Argent's Lane, to the northeast of Eight Ash Green.

5.7.13 The land between the settlements was recorded at its narrowest along the A1124 corridor, where there was a low level of visual separation between settlements. The houses and hotel in this area were considered to add to its vulnerability in terms of maintaining settlement separation. The remaining open land to the east of the A1124 was considered to provide a good sense of settlement separation on account of the small stream valley, woodland, hedgerows and rail-side tree belts in the intervening landscape.

5.7.14 Overall the report concluded that the two parts of Eight Ash Green remained largely separated visually despite their relatively close proximity, on account of the visual enclosure provided by the structure of vegetation in the intervening landscape. The contribution made by various areas of land between Colchester and Eight Ash Green to the separation of settlements was assessed according to whether they provided a high, medium or low contribution. The assessment findings are shown in Figure 7.0 and their relevance discussed below with respect to helping define or redefine settlement boundaries for Colchester and Eight Ash Green settlements.

Figure 7.0 Colchester – Eight Ash Green



5.7.15 The Open Countryside Assessment Report concluded that most of the land between the two parts of Eight Ash Green, and between Eight Ash Green and Colchester, provided a high contribution to the physical and visual separation between the settlements. The sense of separation was achieved primarily by the enclosure provided by hedgerows and woodland cover. The topographical depression associated with the small stream valley was also considered to provide a sense of depth to the landscape that enhanced the perception of separation between Eight Ash Green and Colchester.

5.7.16 The area of scrub between the A1124 and the hotel helped soften and enclose views of the hotel and other nearby buildings and contributed to the continuity of tree/scrub vegetation across the area. This area of scrub was also considered to provide a high contribution to the remaining sense of separation between the settlements.

5.7.17 A small group of residential properties to the east of the A1124 and to the north of Halstead Road were considered to provide a low contribution to the separation of settlements. They were perceived, from some viewpoints, as contributing to visual coalescence with other buildings in one or both of the adjacent settlements.

### Eight Ash Green

5.7.18 Since Eight Ash Green is classified as a village, its settlement boundaries are largely covered in the Review of Village Settlement Boundaries above in paragraphs 4.2.35-38.

**Colchester and its boundaries with Stanway and Eight Ash Green:**

5.7.19 No boundary was identified for the urban areas of Colchester in the 2004 Local Plan. Instead the residential land allocation in the Local Plan was used to define the extent of the built area of Colchester. Using this as a basis a boundary was proposed in the emerging Proposals Map for the urban area of Colchester. The adopted Core Strategy has identified 5 Regeneration and Growth Areas where a significant amount of the 17,100 houses and 14,200 jobs will be delivered by 2021. Sufficient land has been identified within these areas to meet Core Strategy targets. One of the Growth Areas is in Stanway and it has been identified to provide significant levels of housing and employment growth by 2023. Within this Growth Area in addition to the 1000 houses already with planning permission or developed, the Stanway Growth Area has been identified as a new green field development area for the delivery of an additional 800 houses by 2023. Stanway has also been identified as a Strategic Employment Zone and 2 Urban District Centres have been proposed within the Growth Area at Tollgate and Peartree Road. On top of these sites, a further 24 sites that already have either planning permission or have been developed or allocated in the Local Plan have been taken forward as part of the Site Allocations process.

5.7.20 A site (129) was put forward as a potential residential site in the Site Allocations Issues and Options consultation on land between the railway line and Halstead Road. The Open Space Assessment Report identified the need to protect undeveloped land in this area because of its important role in maintaining settlement separation. Because of this and the fact that adequate land already exists to meet Core Strategy targets in this part of Colchester, then there is no need to find additional sites. The settlement boundary for Colchester in the Stanway area does not need to be amended to include the Halstead Road site.

**Recommendation: The preferred option for the settlement boundaries between Colchester and Stanway and Eight Ash Green as shown on the Proposals Map should remain unchanged.**

## **5.8 Colchester to Layer de La Haye**

5.8.1 The village of Layer-de-la-Haye is situated approximately 1.6km to the south of Colchester with the two settlements separated by a belt of open countryside. Housing within Colchester abuts the northern edge of this area. The Roman River lies between the two settlements which are connected by the B1026 road which crosses through the river corridor from north to south. Layer-de-la-Haye forms a linear village along the B1026 as it rises up out of the river corridor, but expands to a larger nucleated form further to the south and fills much of the space between the B1026 and Malting Green Road.

5.8.2 The south-western parts of Colchester are located on a plateau at an elevation of approximately 35m AOD overlooking the Roman River valley, the bottom of which is situated at approximately 10m AOD. The plateau continues as relatively flat land for approximately 0.85km south of Colchester's boundary, before descending to the Roman River.

5.8.3 Layer-de-la-Haye occupies the western-most portion of a ridge above the Roman River, and is bordered to the northwest by a small side valley of the River. The northern boundary of the village is situated on land rising from the river, at approximately 25m AOD. The topography continues to rise to the south, and the main part of the village is located at about 35m AOD.

### **Land Use**

5.8.4 Land use in the area between Colchester and Layer-de-la-Haye is mixed, consisting of an Iron Age archaeological site, agricultural fields Birch Grove Golf Club, medium and large blocks of woodland, the well-wooded Roman River valley and a few isolated farmsteads. Oliver's Lane does not connect to Layer de-la-Haye, but provides access to the countryside northwest of the settlement. Oliver's Lane and the B1026 contains scattered houses and some farmsteads along their routes. At the northern boundary of Layer-de-la-Haye, a side road, the Folley, leads south through several small-scale agricultural fields, passes some farmsteads, and is bordered by a small group of houses. In the northern part of the area, built development along Cunobelin Way, Gosbecks Road and Berechurch Hall Road forms the southern boundary of Colchester. At the intersection of the B1026 and Berechurch Hall Road Colchester's boundary extends 150m south along the B1026 and 300m east along Berechurch Hall Road. This area contains a large cluster of housing bounded by a deciduous hedgerow.

5.8.5 Adjacent to the western end of this area of Colchester is Gosbeck's Archaeological Park and Cheshunt Field. The open fields in these areas are believed to be the site of an important Iron Age settlement, with part of them protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The eastern end of this area of Colchester is bordered by medium to large-scale arable fields bounded by hedgerows.

5.8.6 South of Gosbecks lie a mixture of small and medium-scale agricultural fields and farmsteads delineated by hedgerows, the well-wooded Birch Grove Golf Club and both medium and large blocks of woodland. The Roman River passes through this area with sections of its corridor lined with mature

woodland. Several small arable and pasture fields are interspersed with this woodland. South of the river and northwest of Layer-de-la-Haye lies a large woodland, Chest Wood. The area southeast of the village is dominated by small-scale agricultural fields and a cluster of housing along The Folley.

### **Settlement Edges**

5.8.7 The northern edges of Layer-de-la-Haye are generally softened and screened by robust belts of mature deciduous trees, hedgerows and woodland. Colchester's settlement edges along Gosbeck Road and Berechurch Hall Road are substantially softened by rear garden vegetation, mature hedgerows and tree belts that lining nearby fields and roads. To the north of the Gosbeck Archaeological Park and Cheshunt Field, Colchester generally presents a visually harsh edge when viewed from areas south of Cunobelin Way due to a lack of mature vegetation in this area.

### **Landscape Character**

5.8.8 In general, this area has a predominantly rural character despite its proximity to settlement edges. Tree belts and blocks of deciduous and coniferous woodland provide an intermittent sense of enclosure. The northern part of the area forms the southern extent of a broad area of plateau upon which Colchester is situated, to the north of the v-shaped Roman River valley. It abuts the southern edge of Colchester Urban Area, and contains both an open grassy landscape with Iron Age archaeological remains, and medium- to large-sized irregular arable fields with hedged field boundaries. The Roman River valley to the south of this area encompasses moderately steep v-shaped slopes, which are swathed in large areas of deciduous and coniferous woodland. These areas create an intimate, roughly textured and diverse character along the valley slopes. The northern valley slopes are characterised by a mixture of woodland and medium-sized fields. Bordered to the north by large patches of woodland, the field boundaries are substantially hedged. South of the river, there are concentrations of smaller fields with hedged boundaries.

### **Assessment**

5.8.9 The Open Countryside Assessment Report concluded that there was no inter-visibility between Colchester and Layer-de-la-Haye. Views between the settlements were substantially enclosed by mature field hedgerows and blocks of woodland. The deciduous and coniferous woodlands alongside the Roman River and northwest of Layer-de-la-Haye further obscured views between the two settlements. Views from Layer-de-la-Haye towards Colchester were enclosed by vegetation lining the river valley, the topographic change of the river corridor, and by curves in the tree-lined road. Views from Colchester were screened by intervening hedgerows and the long distance between the two settlements, as well as by winding the tree-lined road and topographic variation.

5.8.10 Intra-visibility was assessed as difficult to perceive between Layer-de-la-Haye and Colchester, due to the fairly long distance between the settlements and the screening effect of woodland and field boundary hedgerows. Whilst views of Colchester's edge were visible from the public

footpath north of Oliver's Lane, as well as from points along the Lane, views back to Layer-de-la- Haye were obscured by the intervening vegetation of hedgerows, the Roman River valley and Chest Wood.

5.8.11 Views from the B1026 towards the northern edge of Layer-de-la-Haye and/or the southern edge of Colchester were generally enclosed by mature hedgerows lining the road corridor, by trees associated with farmsteads and small groups of houses in the intervening landscape, and by deciduous and coniferous woodland lining the valley of the Roman River.

5.8.12 Views from the public footpath east of the B1026 towards the northern edge of Layer-de-la-Haye and the southern edge of Colchester were generally enclosed by mature hedgerows lining agricultural fields, by blocks of deciduous and coniferous woodland lining the valley of the Roman River, and the tree belt surrounding the northeast portion of the Birch Grove Golf Club.

5.8.13 Views of Colchester from footpaths northwest of Oliver's Lane were assessed as being very open due to the lack of vegetation and flat terrain. The edge of Colchester visible from these paths was considered harsh due to the lack of mature vegetation along the edge, but the sense of distance was considered to create a strong sense of separation. Layer-de-la-Haye was not visible from these footpaths due to the intervening landform and vegetation of the Roman River corridor, as well as the vegetation of the Oliver's and Chest Woods.

5.8.14 Views towards Colchester from footpaths to the south and east of the B1026 were generally enclosed by the screening effects of intervening vegetation and landform of the Roman River corridor, as well as by hedgerows and blocks of woodland in the area. The northernmost of these footpaths is approximately 0.9km from the edge of Colchester, and this distance combined with a block of woodland and hedgerow which screened views were considered to create a strong sense of distance to the settlement edge. Views towards Layer-de-la-Haye from these paths were screened by a dense pattern of hedgerows and a small block of woodland.

5.8.15 Overall the report concluded that there was a substantial lack of inter-visibility and intra-visibility between Layer-de-la-Haye and Colchester, which was considered to contribute to a strong sense of separation between the settlements. This was due mainly to the screening effects of the intervening landform of the Roman River, blocks of woodland, and trees/hedgerows.

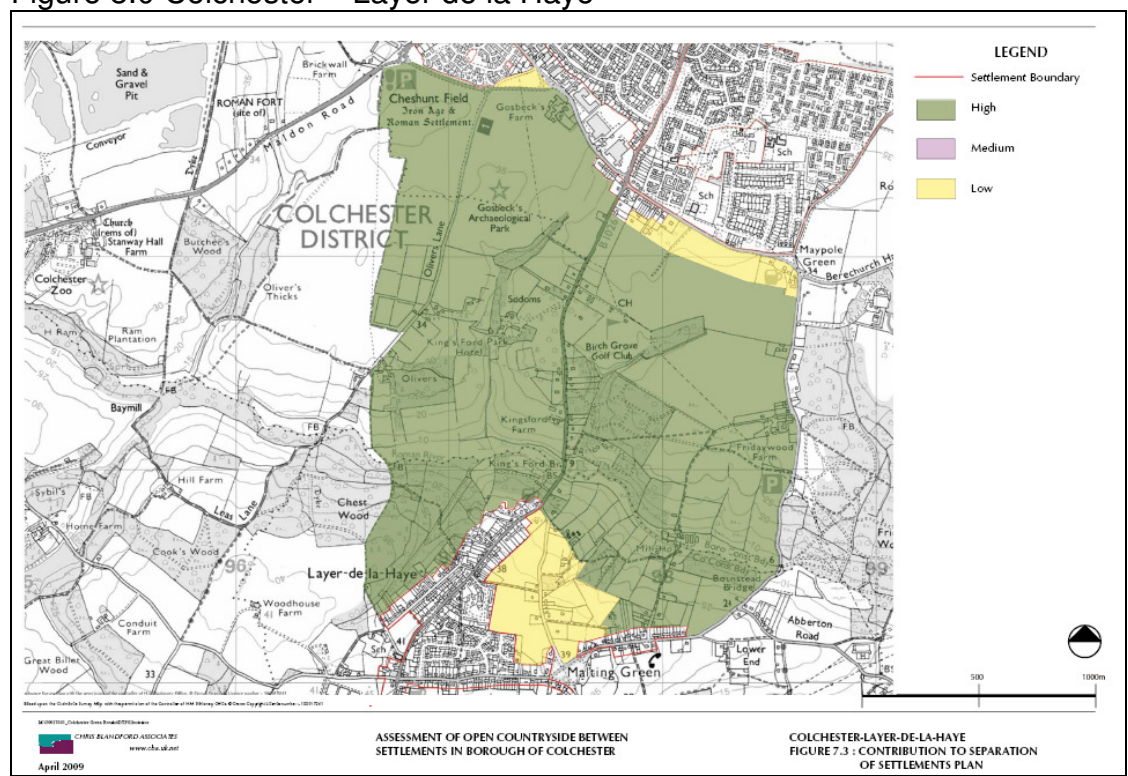
5.8.16 The report concluded that the Roman River valley provided a strong sense of separation between settlements. When travelling between the communities, either on foot or via car, crossing through the relatively intact and densely vegetated river corridor, leaving one plateau and entering another was considered to heighten the sense of separation. This helped create a distinct sense of arrival in Layer-de-la-Haye from the B1026, because its settlement edge was encountered climbing out of the Roman River valley.

5.8.17 When travelling southwards out of Colchester along the B1026, there was a gradual sense of leaving the settlement and entering a rural landscape on account of the settlement boundary extending beyond Berechurch Road. The B1026 is relatively straight at this location, and a cluster of housing is visible to the south. However, open fields on either side of the road between Colchester and the housing cluster supported the feeling of leaving the settlement, and a curve in the road along with roadside trees screened views of Layer de-la-Haye beyond. Further along the B1026 the road curved again, which with surrounding trees, served to further obscure views between the two settlements.

5.8.18 The open land associated with Gosbeck's Archaeological Park was considered to create an area of transition between the urban area of Colchester and the rural landscape to its south which contributed to physical separation between Colchester and Layer de la Haye. When walking southwards along the footpath through the Park, views of the built development on the edge of Colchester faded into the distance and created the sense of being in a rural area.

5.8.19 The contribution made by various areas of land between Colchester and Layer de La Haye to the separation of settlements was assessed according to whether they provided a high, medium or low contribution. The assessment findings are shown in Figure 8.0 and their relevance discussed below with respect to helping define or redefine settlement boundaries for Colchester and Great Horkesley settlements.

Figure 8.0 Colchester – Layer de la Haye





5.8.20 The Open Countryside Assessment Report identified a large swathe of land between Layer de la Haye and the south western edge of Colchester that was considered to make a high contribution towards maintaining settlement separation and settlement character between the two areas. (see area marked green in Figure 8.0) This was attributed to the lack of inter visibility and intra visibility, the open landscape character with long-distance views south of Colchester's built edge, trees and woodland blocks along the Roman River valley, the topographic change of the river corridor and the rural character.

5.8.21 The area included the countryside south of the south western edge of Colchester and encompassed Cheshunt Field, Gosbeck's Archaeological Park, the numerous hedgerows in the area and the wooded corridor of the Roman River. The area extended west of the B1026 and Oliver's Lane and abutted the boundary of Chest Wood and the northern edge of Layer- De-La Haye. To the east of the B1026 it included a large proportion of land north and south of Birch Golf Club.

5.8.22 Three areas were also assessed as providing only a low contribution to settlement physical and visual separation Colchester and Layer de La Haye.(see area shaded yellow in Figure 8.0) This included the fields south of Berechurch Hall Road between the B1026 and Bounstead Road which were surrounded by settlement on 3 sides, land north of Cunobolin Way on the north side of Gosbeck's Archaeological Park and a large area of land on the north eastern edge of Layer-de-la-Haye and north of Malting Green.

5.8.23 The report observed a strong level of visual separation between the fields south of Berechurch Hall Road and the landscape further to the south and west. This coupled with a lack of inter-visibility with Layer-de-la-Haye settlement edges from the fields resulted in their low contribution. The land north of Cunobolin Way was assessed as low because of its position to the north of the main road on the edge of this area of Colchester which led to the perception that it formed part of Colchester's existing built up area.

5.8.24 The land on the south eastern edge of Layer-de-la-Haye was considered to make a low contribution to the visual and physical separation between the two settlements because it was surrounded on three sides by existing development of Layer-de-la-Haye and the adjacent settlement of Malting Green. This was also because views of Layer de La Haye were visible from The Folley and local footpaths and the fact that the well vegetated Roman River and hedgerows and blocks of woodland to the north were considered to prevent inter-visibility and intra-visibility between this land and Colchester

#### **Layer de la Haye.**

5.8.25 As Layer de la Haye is classified as a village, its settlement boundaries are covered in the Review of Village Settlement Boundaries above in paragraphs 4.2.68-72.

#### **Colchester and its boundaries with Layer de la Haye**

5.8.26 No boundary was identified for the urban areas of Colchester in the 2004 Local Plan. Instead the residential land allocation in the Local Plan was used to define the extent of the built area of Colchester. Using this as a basis a boundary was proposed in the emerging Proposals Map for the urban area of Colchester. The adopted Core Strategy has identified 5 Regeneration and Growth Areas where a significant amount of the 17,100 houses and 14,200 jobs will be delivered by 2021. Sufficient land has been identified within these areas to meet Core Strategy targets. The Stanway Growth Area located on the western fringe of Colchester will deliver 1800 houses and employment opportunities by 2023. In addition The Garrison Regeneration Area will also provide 3000 new houses as part of wider mixed use development plans for this part of Colchester. In addition to the housing to be delivered through the Growth Areas, an adequate number of sites are already available within Colchester's urban area. These have either been allocated in the Local Plan or already have planning permission or are under construction or already built. These sites will also contribute towards Colchester's Core Strategy targets. A proposal was put forward during the Regulation 25 Site Allocations consultation for mixed use development at Gosbecks Farm (S25/050) to link in with development at Cunobelin Way. This was site was rejected due to the lack of need to allocated additional green filed land. Furthermore although the Open Countryside Report identified potential to develop north of this road, it recommended safeguarding the land to the south around Gosbecks Farm to help maintain the sense of separation between Layer de La Haye and Colchester. This coupled with the fact that adequate development sites are available reduces the need to amend the settlement boundary for this part of Colchester to include land north or south of Cunobelin Way or the land south of Berechurch Hall Road.

**Recommendation: The preferred option for the settlement boundaries separating Colchester and Layer de la Haye as shown on the Proposals Map should remain unchanged.**

## **5.9 Colchester to Langham and Boxted**

### **Langham**

5.9.1 The small linear settlement of Langham is situated approximately 2.2km to the north of Colchester along Perry Lane, Wick Road, and Park Lane. The two settlements are separated by an area of open countryside, which comprises a wide belt of arable farmland and several small blocks of woodland. The A12 dual carriageway borders the northern part of Colchester in this area, turning northeast and lies adjacent to the eastern boundary of Langham.

5.9.2 Langham and the northwest edge of Colchester occupy a plateau with each community being situated at approximately 45m AOD. Much of the area between these settlements is relatively flat, but is bisected by the headwaters of two small streams that flow east to west across the site. These are Salary Brook which lies north of the A12 near to Colchester and an unnamed stream that begins south of Park Lane Farm. The streams have shallow valleys with the bottom of Salary Brook being around 35m AOD, and the unnamed stream at 40m AOD near its crossing of the A12. As a result, they provide gentle undulations to the landscape, rather than steep slopes.

### **Land Use**

5.9.3 Land use between Langham and the northwest portion of the Colchester is dominated by large geometric arable fields delineated by hedgerows. Two small reservoirs lie along the course of the unnamed stream near Park Lane Farm. Much of this area consisted of many small fields with hedges before 1940, but these were converted for use as an airfield during World War II. Since its decommissioning agricultural fields follow its former geometry.

5.9.4 The wooded parkland of Langham Lodge is located in the southwest quadrant of the large agricultural fields between the two settlements, and the agricultural field pattern becomes smaller south and east of the Lodge. South of the lodge is a large block of deciduous woodland. Adjacent to Langham Lodge and set within deciduous woodland are Nissan huts and other businesses, many of which are housed in remaining wartime buildings that provided support for the airfield.

5.9.5 The northwest edge of Colchester consists mainly of a business park with large-scale industrial shed buildings, two- to three-storey office buildings, and a hotel. This is bordered to the north by the A12 roadway and its intersection with the A1232 and the A120. The A12 then turns to the northeast, and passes Langham. To the northeast, the roadway is bordered by agricultural fields, small clusters of housing, and farmsteads. Adjacent to the northwest side of the A12 are large blocks of arable farmland, a large block of woodland, clusters of housing, a hotel, a driving range, and farmsteads.

### **Settlement Edges**

5.9.6 The southern edges of Langham were softened by a rear-garden vegetation, the woodland block to the east of the settlement, and the deciduous hedgerows of agricultural fields to the south. The north western

edge of Colchester settlement edge was not completely blocked by vegetation from views from the north, due to the large-scale of the buildings in this area. However, intervening vegetation along Salary Brook and the A12 corridor filtered and softened views of these buildings.

### **Landscape Character**

5.9.7 Many of the regular fields contained within the outline of the former airfield have been/or are in the process of being converted into arable use. Field boundaries comprised clipped straight hedges. A smaller-scale more intricate field pattern, comprising regular small fields, enclosed by hedgerows containing mature deciduous trees was observed close to Langham. The A12 was considered a significant feature of the area, but dense tree belts surrounding the road limited its impact on the rural landscape.

### **Assessment**

5.9.8 The Open Countryside Assessment Report concluded that there was no inter-visibility between Langham and Colchester due to the long-distance between the two communities and the effects of intervening tree belts, hedgerows, woodland, and landform. Views to the north from this northern edge of Colchester were enclosed by the vegetation along the A12 and its densely vegetated intersection with the A120 and A1232.

5.9.9 Views from the southern edge of Langham were generally medium-distance across the large scale arable fields south of the village. However, the area's relatively flat topography combined with intervening hedgerows and woodland between Langham and Colchester were considered to restrict the visibility of areas south of Langham.

5.9.10 Intra-visibility was also recorded as difficult due to the distance between the settlements and the screening effect of woodland, landform and field boundary hedgerows. Partial and open views of industrial buildings on the northern edge of Colchester were possible from the southern parts of Langham Lane and from public footpaths that passed through the agricultural fields to the east. These views were softened along much of the settlement edge by deciduous trees along the A12, Salary Brook, and roads within the industrial buildings. There were no views of the settlement edges of Langham from either the lane or the footpath.

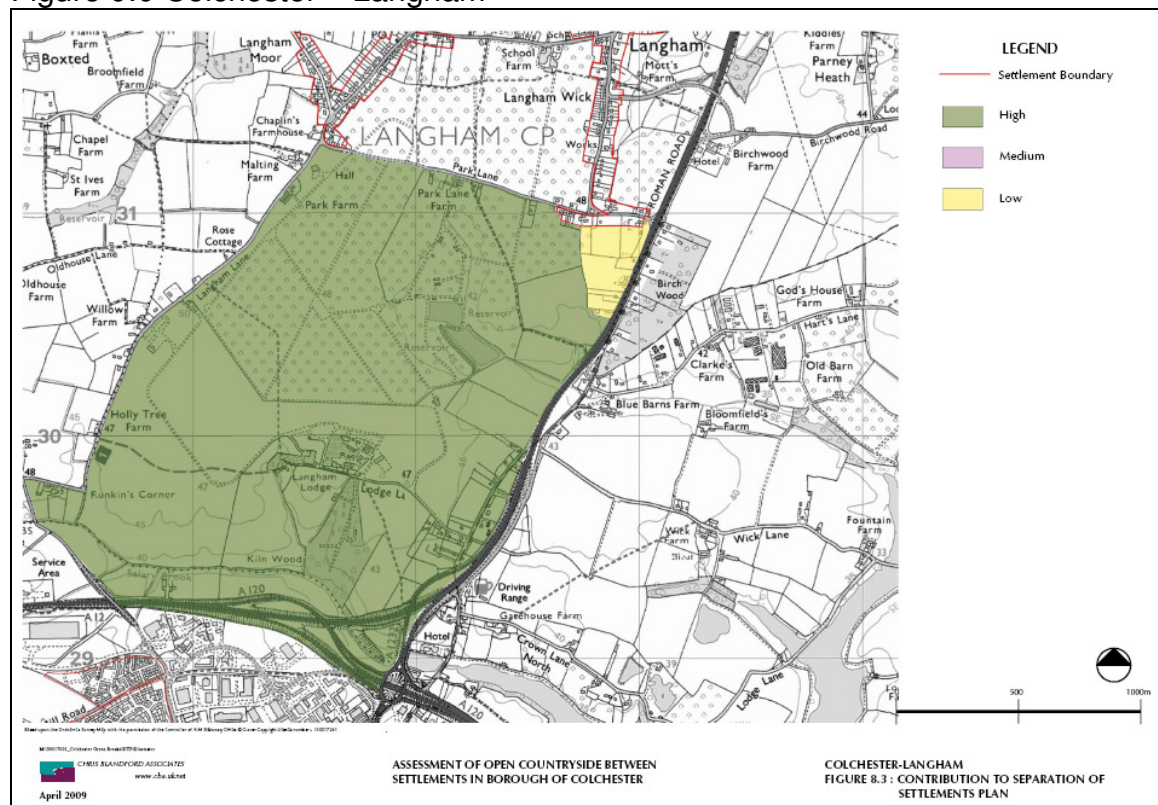
5.9.11 Views from the A12 of both Langham and Colchester were not possible due to the gently curving alignment to the road, tree belts lining its corridor and the intersection with the A120 and A1232.

5.9.12 The lack of inter-visibility and intra-visibility between the settlements was considered to contribute to a strong sense of separation between them. From the A12's intersection with the A120 and the A1232, the contrast between the large-scale buildings of the industrial park at Colchester's edge was considered to contrast greatly with the predominantly rural character of the landscape north of the intersection.

5.9.13 Severalls Lane was considered to provide a strong boundary between the large-scale buildings of the business park at Colchester's northern edge and the open countryside with its large-scale arable fields. Salary Brook was considered to provide a subtle topographic transition in this area, and while the edge of Colchester was visible from Runkin's Corner, a slight incline in the topography to the north was noted to block views into the fields and the settlement of Langham beyond. These fields provided long, open views which helped contribute to a sense of open countryside in views toward Langham from Langham Road.

5.9.14 The contribution made by various areas of land between Colchester and Langham to the separation of settlements was assessed according to whether they provided a high, medium or low contribution. The assessment findings are shown in Figure 9.0 and their relevance discussed below with respect to helping define or redefine settlement boundaries for Colchester and Langham settlements.

Figure 9.0 Colchester – Langham



5.9.15 The Open Countryside Assessment Report concluded that dense planting along the A12, and around its intersection with the A120 and A1232 provided visual enclosure to the business park in the north west area of Colchester. North of the road intersection, the topographical variation provided by Salary Brook was assessed as creating a subtle physical barrier between Colchester and areas further north. Mature trees surrounding Langham Lodge and the World War II airfield buildings were considered to provide a visual block to areas north of them which further heightened the sense of separation between the two settlements. Fields to the north of Langham Lodge provided

long views across the landscape, and these heightened the sense of distance and separation between the two settlements. This resulted in this land being assessed as providing a high contribution to the separation of settlements and to Langham's separate identity as a settlement.

5.9.16 Immediately south of Langham's settlement boundary along the A12 the report recorded several fields and a cluster of buildings. The pattern of these buildings and the arrangement of their garden vegetation was considered to be similar to that of Langham. Further south, there were several small-scale fields surrounded by dense tree belts and mature trees, which provided robust screening from the surrounding fields. Further visual enclosure was provided by a dense block of woodland along the edge of the A12 at its intersection with Park Lane. This area south of Langham appeared as a continuous extension of the settlement, and was assessed as being visually separate to a degree from the remaining parts of the countryside further south. In this context, this land was considered to provide a low contribution to the separation of settlements and to Langham's distinct character.

5.9.17 Since Langham is classified as a village, its settlement boundaries are largely covered in the previous section in paragraphs 4.. The Open Countryside Report, however, includes some further information relevant to the boundary for Langham. The Open Countryside Assessment Report recommended safeguarding most of the land north of the A12/A1232/A120 interchange to the north of Colchester as far as the southern boundary of Langham from inappropriate development because it played such a key role in maintaining settlement separation and settlement character between the two settlements. Only a small area south of Langham was considered to have potential to absorb some development because of its low contribution towards maintaining settlement separation. None of the sites put forward fell within this area.

### **Boxted**

5.9.18 Boxted village is situated to the north of Colchester along Straight Road. The two settlements are separated by an area of open countryside and the A12 which lies between the two communities and passes 2.5km to the south of Boxted and which forms the northern extent of Colchester's North Growth Area. The settlement occupies the western side of Straight Road, with a few scattered houses located on the eastern side of the road. Between Colchester and Boxted there are scattered houses and farmsteads along Straight Road, as well as along intersecting roads.

5.9.19 The northern part of Colchester lies on a flat plateau at approximately 50m AOD. North of this area, the land remains relatively level. The exception to this is the area northwest of Straight Road and north of the A12 where the land slopes to the west to form the beginning of St. Botolph's Brook. However, the slopes to the creek bottom are relatively shallow, decreasing to approximately 40m AOD at their confluence with Black Brook to the west.

### **Land Use**

5.9.20 Large-scale farmland extends north from the A12, although the scale and pattern of the fields becomes more variable further north towards Boxted. Clusters of houses and farmsteads line several of the roads between Colchester and Boxted, particularly Straight Road, Accommodation Road, Horkesley Road, and Langham Road. These buildings are generally surrounded by small-scale fields delineated by hedgerows or garden vegetation. This pattern appears more dense in the area just south of Boxted, due to the cluster of housing and two large farms to the east of Straight Road. A plot of land to the north of the A12 has been included within the Growth Area and this has been identified as a potential Park and Ride site.

5.9.21 To the south of Boxted lie several small-scale agricultural fields with farms and clusters of housing interspersed within them. These are surrounded by hedges and garden vegetation which softens and provides limited screening to the buildings in this area. The arrangement of these buildings in relation to Boxted is such that the settlement boundary seems to be further to the south than it actually is.

### **Settlement Edges**

5.9.22 The southern settlement edges of Boxted are softened by rear garden vegetation, however this does not completely screen the buildings from view. The northern settlement edge of Colchester is generally softened or screened by mature vegetation, particularly along the A12. As a result of the planned growth area in this part of Colchester, new development could increase the visibility of the town's northern edge, when viewed from the north, however existing screening along the A12, and the strong landscape structure to the north of the A12 should help reduce the extent of visibility.

5.9.23 The area between Colchester and Boxted is located on a gently rolling plateau and is characterised by a small-scale regular linear field pattern that extends from the straight, branch-like arrangement of roads. At the southern end of the area, linear, regular fields abut Colchester's northern settlement edge. Very small patches of deciduous woodland are found across the area, with some linear mature belts along field boundaries. Generally, hedged field boundaries appear to be well managed and clipped in places. Poplars are prevalent within parts of the area where they create striking field boundaries. Views from roads within the area are limited by hedgerow vegetation and trees. The strength of rural character is not significantly diminished by the A12 as this highway is substantially enclosed from view by the landform and roadside vegetation, and by its close proximity to the northern boundary of Colchester.

### **Assessment**

5.9.24 Inter-visibility between Colchester and Boxted was noted as difficult to perceive with views towards Boxted from Colchester substantially enclosed by trees lining the A12. Views towards Colchester from the southern edge of Boxted were enclosed and screened by field hedgerows as well as roadside vegetation.

5.9.25 Intra-visibility was also regarded as difficult between Boxted and Colchester due to the distance between the settlements and the screening effect of boundary hedgerows and trees adjacent to highways. There was no point where views of both settlements were visible because of this vegetation. Straight Road did not provide views of either settlement due to the long-distance between them, and the screening effect of boundary hedgerows and trees adjacent to the road.

5.9.26 Views from the public footpaths north of the A12 were generally enclosed by the cumulative screening effects of trees along the southern edge of Boxted, field hedgerows, and trees alongside the A12.

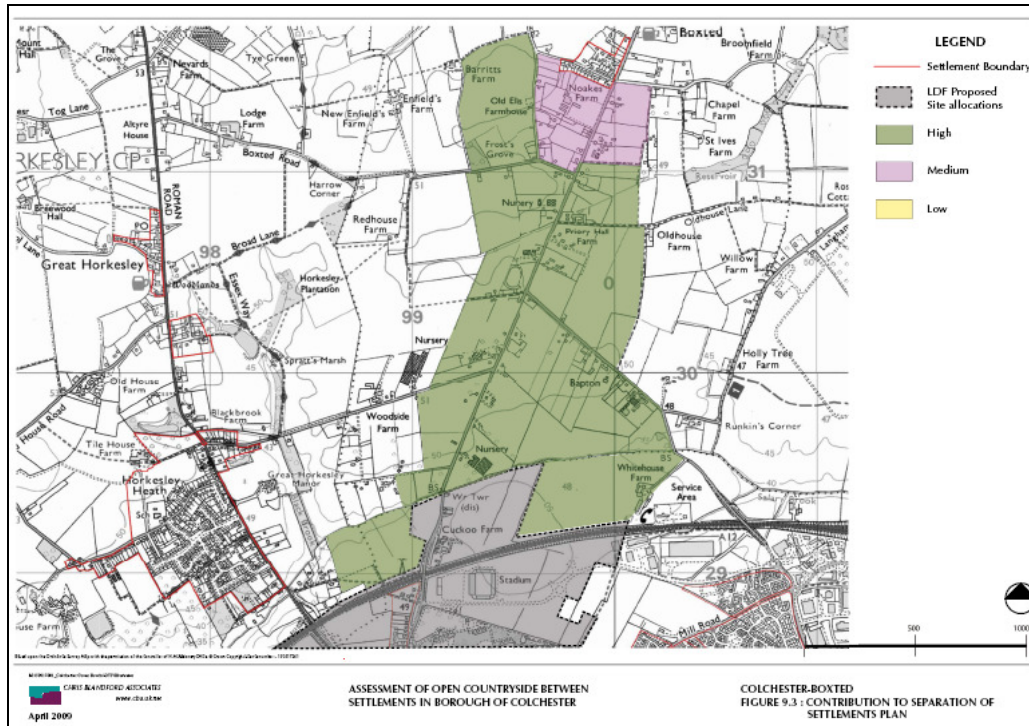
5.9.27 Vegetation and distance were considered to play the primary role in providing separation between these two settlements. However, the long distance between the settlements combined with intervening layers of vegetation was considered to prevent both inter-visibility and intravisibility between the two settlements.

5.9.28 Perception of settlement separation was heightened by the experience of leaving the urban area of Colchester, crossing the A12 and moving through a mixed rural landscape with farms and scattered houses. The contrast between the Colchester's built-up area and the mixed rural character of the intervening countryside provided a clear sense of arrival and departure from Colchester. However, the presence of large farm buildings and clusters of housing to the south of Boxted was considered to have the effect of enlarging the perceived extent of built development in the village.

5.9.29 The contribution made by various areas of land between Colchester and Boxted to the separation of settlements was assessed according to whether they provided a high, medium or low contribution. The assessment findings are shown in Figure 10.0 and their relevance discussed below with respect to helping define or redefine settlement boundaries for Colchester and Boxted.

Figure 10.0 Colchester - Langham





5.9.30 The Open Countryside Assessment Report concluded that much of the countryside between Colchester and Boxted provided a high contribution to the visual and physical separation of the two settlements. This included land surrounding the proposed park and ride site in the North Growth Area and the land running north just beyond Barritts Farm to the west of Boxted. The numerous field hedgerows, the tree belts alongside the A12, and the mature trees that line the area's roads combined to provide multiple layers of vegetation which helped enclose views across the local landscape. The vegetation, together with the agricultural use of the land, the lack of intervisibility and intra-visibility, were considered to impart a strong sense of rural character and strong sense of settlement separation. Furthermore, the A12 was considered to present a physical barrier that effectively separated Colchester's built-up area and the rural countryside. Although many of the area's roads were bordered by scattered houses and farms, these were generally small in scale and as a result, were perceived to relate more strongly with their rural setting than with the settlements of Boxted or Colchester.

5.9.31 An area of land to the east of Ellis Road, north of Mill Road/Chapel Road and east of Boxted Straight Road was area was considered to make a medium contribution to the perceived sense of separation between the two settlements. This was because this area seemed more densely developed than areas further to the south, and this led to the perceived point of entry into Boxted happening at the intersection of Queen's Head Road and Straight Road instead of at the Boxted's boundary. The lack of inter-visibility or intra-visibility with Colchester at this point, and the distance between this intersection and the A12 (2.2km), created the perception of a strong sense of separation between Colchester and this area.

5.9.33 Since Boxted is classified as a village, its settlement boundaries are largely covered in the previous section in paragraphs 4.2.11-16. The Open Countryside Report, however, includes some further information relevant to the boundary for Boxted. The Open Countryside Assessment Report recommended safeguarding the land between Boxted and Colchester that played an important role in maintaining settlement separation and settlement character (see area shaded green in Figure 10.0). None of the sites put forward as potential development sites fell within this area however they did fall within the area classed as making a medium contribution to maintaining settlement separation (see area shaded mauve in Figure 10.0) The report suggested that there was scope to accommodate some development in areas in this category however not without the risk that potential the potential loss of significant landscape and visual features. However as all of sites proposed as potential housing sites also fell outside existing settlement boundaries for Boxted and the fact that there was low demand for housing in Boxted generally, meant that none of these sites were taken forward in the Site Allocations processor amending the settlement boundary for Boxted and provided no justification for amending the existing settlement boundary for Boxted.

#### **Colchester and its boundaries with Langham and Boxted**

5.9.24 No boundary was identified for the urban areas of Colchester in the 2004 Local Plan. Instead the residential land allocation in the Local Plan was used to define the extent of the built area of Colchester. Using this as a basis a boundary was proposed in the emerging Proposals Map for the urban area of Colchester. The adopted Core Strategy has identified 5 Regeneration and Growth Areas where a significant amount of the 17,100 houses and 14,200 jobs will be delivered by 2021. One of these is the North Growth Area. Sufficient land has been identified in North Colchester Growth Area which will provide sufficient land to meet employment and housing targets set out in the Core Strategy. A boundary has been proposed for the North Growth Area in Appendix 5 of the draft Proposals Map for Colchester as part of the ongoing Site Allocations work.

5.9.25 The North Growth Area includes Mile End a suburb of Colchester that has already experienced significant levels of growth in the past. In addition to the 4000 houses already planned or developed, the North Growth Area has been identified for an additional 2,200 houses on greenfield land between 2016/2023. North Colchester has also been identified as a Strategic Employment Zone with 19.8ha of land available for employment uses. An area of land north of the A12 in the vicinity of Cuckoo Farm has also been proposed for allocation as a Park and Ride site.

5.9.26 The northern most boundary of the Growth Area abuts the A12 with the of the exception of the Park and Ride land which is located north of the A12. The proposed western boundary of the North Growth Area abuts Colchester Golf Club which limits the potential to develop in a westerly direction. The proposed southern and eastern boundaries of the North Growth Area are defined by existing developments in Colchester.

5.9.27 As part of the Site Allocations Issues and Options consultation 35 sites were out forward in the North Colchester/ Mile End area of Colchester. Of these 7 were not taken forward in the Site Allocations process as they were located in the open countryside outside or adjacent to the existing developed area of Colchester. A total of 28 sites were taken forward in the Site Allocations process. This included sites that were already allocated in the Local Plan and sites that had planning permission or where development was under way or completed. It also included the new greenfield site in North Colchester (S044) the planned development at Severalls and land at Axial Way (S037).

5.9.28 The proposed boundary for northern edge of Colchester extends right up to the A12/A120/A1232 road network. These act as strong physical barriers to development to the North. Development north could potentially increase the perception of coalescence between north Colchester and Langham therefore development beyond the A12 should be restricted to south of the A12. This does not apply to the Park and Ride proposed north of the A12 as it needs to be located outside of the North Growth Area as insufficient land exists with the Growth Area for this use and the Park and Rise needs to link effectively with the A12.

5.9.29 Sufficient land has been identified in North Growth Area which along with other existing sites allocated in the Local Plan will provide sufficient land to meet employment and housing targets set out in the Core Strategy. The Open Countryside Assessment Report has recommended safeguarding land north of the proposed Park and Ride site because of its important role in maintaining settlement separation between Colchester and Langham and Boxted therefore there is no need to extend the North Growth Area boundary further north than that proposed.

**Recommendation: The settlement boundaries separating the North Growth Area/ North Colchester from Langham and Boxted as shown on the Proposals Map should remain unchanged.**

## **5.10 Tiptree**

5.10.1 In the Local Plan Tiptree is identified as a Local Urban Centre and had two Allocations within Local Plan Table 3 which have both been developed within the existing settlement boundary and are currently allocated as residential land. The Core Strategy Table H1a identifies a figure of 680 units to be provided in Tiptree over the period 2001-2023. The Housing Trajectory and Schedule of Small Sites which formed part of the Core Strategy Evidence Base outlines that approximately 540 of these have been built (or granted planning permission) on various sites on land already allocated as residential or on previously developed land in line with Core Strategy Policies. The Housing Trajectory indicates that a greenfield allocation for 140 units is yet to be identified.

5.10.2 As part of the Site Allocations consultation period twelve sites outside of the existing residential area of Tiptree have come forward to meet the identified need. These have been reported to LDF Committee and it has been recommended that only one was to be taken forward as part of the Site Allocations process.

5.10.3 The site can be seen in the Site Allocations Regulation 25 consultation document is land at Grange Road. The site is considered to meet the Core Strategy housing target as well as providing sports facilities and public open space, in close proximity to the existing settlement. A revised scheme was submitted in response to the Regulation 25 consultation and this has been the basis for the proposed extension to the settlement boundary which is outlined further in the table below.

**Location:** Land at Grange Road, Tiptree

**Site Description:** A site to the west of Tiptree with the capacity to meet the housing target which is currently outside of the existing settlement boundary.

**Background:** The land at Grange Road is expected to be developed in different phases to provide a mixed development which will provide important community facilities and open space as well as meeting the Core Strategy target.

**Proposed Change:** To re-draw the Tiptree settlement boundary to include the land identified for residential purposes as part of the representation. A map showing the proposed changes is attached at the end of this report.

5.10.4 In the Local Plan Tiptree does not currently have a settlement boundary, but the Regulation 25 consultation document proposed a boundary which followed the line of the existing predominately residential allocation. As part of this review the Council consider it appropriate to continue this approach but include the area of land as identified above which is still subject to further consideration as the scheme is developed further through partnership working with key stakeholders and subsequent planning applications for different parts of the site.

5.10.5 In response to the Site Allocations Regulation 25 consultation a number of sites were re-submitted and asked that the Council re-consider their preferred option.

5.10.6 Of the sites submitted at this stage the Council has not previously considered two representations for land between Factory Hill and Chapel Road and land at the International Farm Camp off Hall Road. Both of these sites are also outside of the existing settlement boundary and could provide some of the required housing but without the associated sports and community facilities. As these sites have not been considered before the Council will have to assess each of them against the criteria used to date in the Site Allocations process. Should any of these new sites change the Council's preferred option it will be important to make the necessary amendments to the settlement boundary which is being proposed.

5.10.7 In future the Tiptree settlement boundary will be shown on a larger map similar to that seen currently in the Local Plan to ensure a useable scale is retained. The review did not cover Tiptree since there were not felt to be any coalescence issues with neighbouring settlements, but the settlement boundary for Tiptree is nevertheless considered in this section because of its status as a District Centre.

**Recommendation: The preferred option for the settlement boundary for Tiptree as shown on the Proposals Map should be revised to include land at Grange Road but should otherwise remain unchanged.**

### **5.11 West Mersea**

5.12 West Mersea is a small coastal town located approximately 8 miles to the south east of Colchester. The island has two very distinct settlements; East Mersea which is rural in character with a scattered population and West Mersea which is the principal settlement with a local economy based on maritime and leisure/tourism businesses. Three rural district settlements and one employment zone was designated in the West Mersea in the 2004 Local Plan. The western end of West Mersea is designated as a Conservation Area and is has also been designated as the West Mersea Waterside area of Special Character. The Essex Coastal Protection belt designation extends around all of Mersea Island and exists to restrict development in undeveloped stretches of the coast. Seaward of West Mersea, International (Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation Ramsar, national (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and local (Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation Local Wildlife Sites) provide protection to the coastal habitats and species in this area.

5.13 No settlement boundary was identified in the 2004 Local Plan for West Mersea instead the residential land allocation was used to define the extent of the built up area of West Mersea. A new settlement boundary was proposed for West Mersea in the Regulation 25 Site Allocations consultation document (Appendix 8). In the core Strategy West Mersea has been earmarked to deliver 280 houses by 2021. West Mersea has also been designated as a District Centre in the Core Strategy to ensure that local employment opportunities are maintained or enhanced on Mersea Island in line with growth plans. During the Issues and Options Site Allocations consultation, 51 sites were put forward for consideration as potential residential sites. Of these 7 were located either adjacent to or outside the Local Plan 'settlement boundary' and consequently were not taken forward to the next stage of the Site Allocations work. Many of the remaining sites, approximately 39, were carried forward in the Site Allocations process as they fell within the settlement boundary. In addition all the sites had either already been allocated for residential or employment use in the Local Plan or they had already been built, had permission or were under construction. These sites collectively will meet Core Strategy targets identified for West Mersea and there is therefore no need to allocate any additional land on the periphery of West Mersea for housing or employment.

### **Waldegraves Business Park/ Waldegraves Holiday Caravan Park**

5.14 As part of the Regulation 25 Site Allocations a proposal to extend the boundary of an existing Rural Employment Site at Waldegraves Business Park was submitted to the Council. This Business Park is already allocated as a Rural Employment Site as EMP5 (vii) in the local Plan. The area proposed for extension already had a legal certificate of use for parking and storing boats, planes and caravans issued in 2003. The Council is keen to support the existing Rural Employment Sites as stated in Policy CE3 of the Core Strategy. It accordingly supports the extension of the Rural Employment Site at Mersea as it will formalises the current land use and provides employment opportunities locally. A second proposal to extend the caravan park at Waldegraves Holiday Park was also submitted as part of the Regulation 25 Site Allocations process. The land is already currently used as part of the Holiday Park however it falls outside the current Holiday Caravan Allocation in the Local Plan. The Council supports this proposal as it promotes and supports the tourism industry within the Borough.

5.15 Waldegraves Farm where the Business Park and Holiday Caravan Park are located is situated approximately 1km for the eastern edge of West Mersea. The boundary of the Business Park and the boundary of the Holiday Caravan Park will need to be changed to include the extensions set out in the Regulation 25 Site Allocations. It would be inappropriate to extend the eastern settlement boundary of West Mersea to include the Business Park and Caravan Park due the distance of the Waldegraves from West Mersea. Increasing the settlement boundary of West Mersea to include these sites could increase development pressures on a large area of currently undeveloped land. This would not be in accordance with Colchester's Core Strategy or the Coastal Protection Belt policy. In addition the proposed allocations are appropriate land uses in rural areas and do not need to be confined to within settlement boundaries. Finally enough sites are available in West Mersea to meet Core Strategy targets therefore there is no need to amend West Mersea's settlement boundary. It will be necessary to amend the current boundary for the Rural Employment Site and Caravan Holiday Park to include the additional land

**Recommendation: The settlement boundary for West Mersea as shown on the Proposals Map should remain unchanged. The boundaries for the Rural Employment Site at Waldegraves Business Park and the Holiday Caravan Park at Waldegraves should be amended to include proposed extensions.**

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## Appendix A1

### Extract on village settlement boundaries and rural policy from the Inspector's Report on the Core Strategy, September 2008

#### ***Issue 3: Does the CS provide an appropriate strategy to take forward the vision and objectives for the rural parts of the Borough, helping to sustain thriving rural communities in line with national and regional policies?***

7.1 Tiptree, Wivenhoe and West Mersea are the three settlements that are separately identified in table CE1a as rural District Centres. They have housing allocations for the CS period in table H1a although some of this is already built or permitted. Their role is to provide for a small amount of new housing and to continue to provide services for the surrounding areas. Some new retail provision and additional facilities are planned for all three. It seems to me that they serve the function of 'key service centres' as described in EEP policy SS4.

7.2 A small area of greenfield land for 140 dwellings is identified at Tiptree in table H1a. However, this is not a strategic allocation and, in order to make the CS sound, it should be subsumed within the overall allocation for Tiptree. This is the largest of the three rural District Centres and the only one with a secondary school. There are good local facilities although employment and public transport are limited. It has had recent housing growth and there is concern about additional traffic from further housing passing through Kelvedon and Feering parishes in Braintree District. Nevertheless, having visited the area at peak traffic times and heard and read the evidence I do not find that the level of new housing proposed for Tiptree would make the CS unsound.

7.3 Policy NE2 supports appropriate development of infill sites and PDL within the boundaries of villages which are tightly drawn on the existing proposals map. Some consider that the CS places a virtual embargo on new housing in rural areas as most of the 705 dwellings shown for villages in table H1a are already built or permitted. The settlement hierarchy in Appendix B does not include a tier of principal villages as did the previous LP. I note, however, that the principal villages in the LP were not distinguished by any separate policy and did not feature in the LP housing allocations except for Great Horkelesley. Their function in the Borough has thus not been materially altered by the omission of such a tier in the CS.

7.4 I have already indicated that there has been a lack of analysis of the rural District Centres and villages compared with what is suggested in EEP policy SS4. On the other hand, no rural parish councils consider the CS to be unsound on the basis of the limited opportunities it provides for new housing in villages and only three have indicated their wish to accommodate further housing. The CS evidence base includes the Countryside Agency publication *Are Villages Sustainable? [CBC/NAT/049]*. This concludes that

the widespread approach of directing new development to a tier of larger villages in order to sustain services may be over-simplistic, failing to reflect the complexity of the dynamics of contemporary rural settlements, and in some cases promoting unsustainable outcomes. No evidence was provided to the examination to demonstrate the contrary.

7.5 The CS instead supports through policies H4 and NE2 the provision of relevant community needs such as local affordable housing on land outside but contiguous with village boundaries. Several such developments have come forward in the Borough already and it may be that limiting opportunities for market housing in villages will stimulate further such schemes and be the most effective way of addressing the lack of affordable housing in rural areas. The CS also encourages the production of parish plans (18 out of 32 are under way) and village design statements as inputs to the future development of villages. A forthcoming audit of community facilities will establish a baseline of needs.

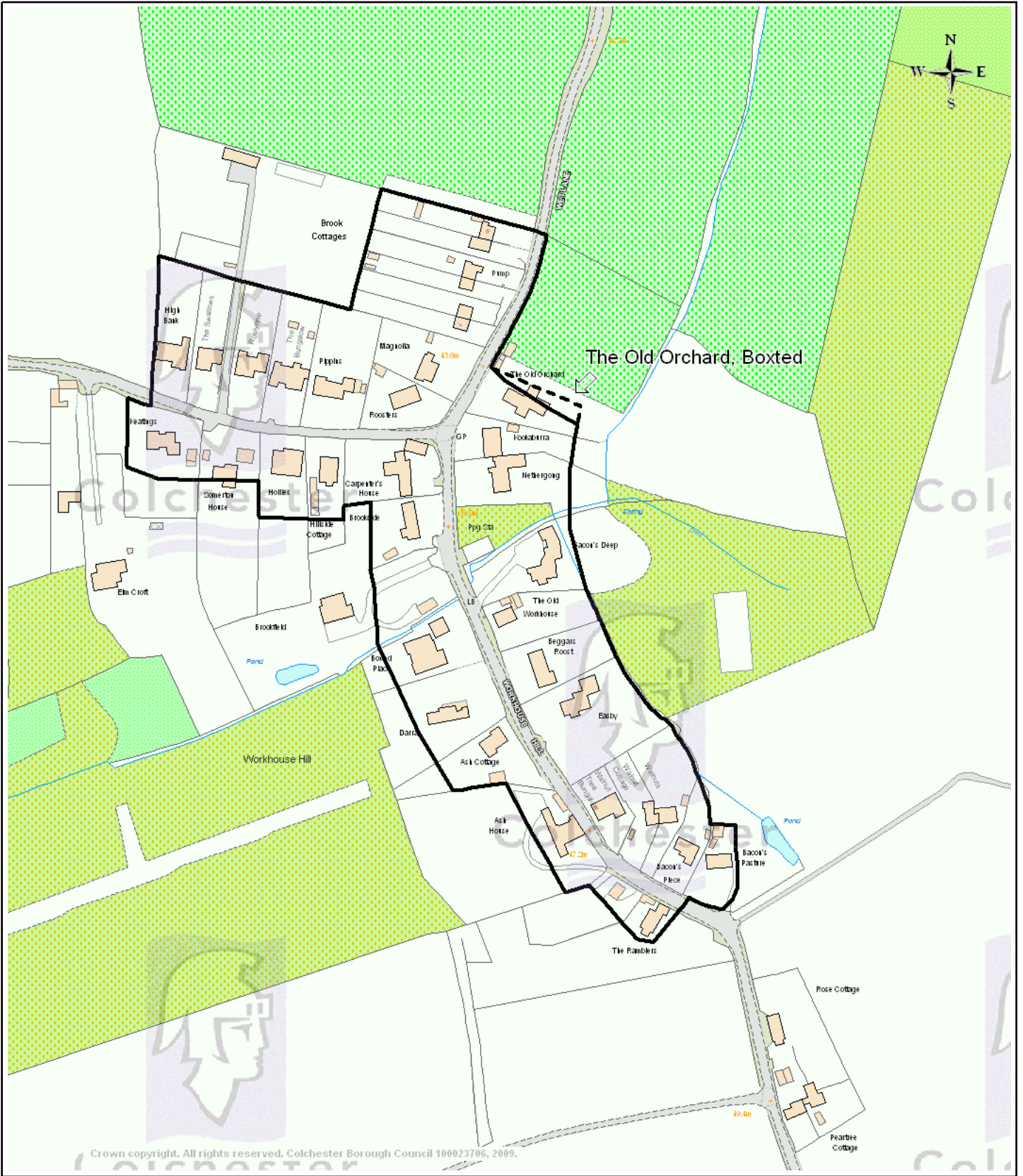
7.6 Policy NE1 (to be renamed ENV1) makes a general presumption against development on unallocated greenfield land but proposed changes clarify that it is greenfield land *outside settlement boundaries* that would be protected. Proposed changes to NE2 (to be renamed ENV2) state that the Site Allocations DPD will provide an opportunity to review the extent of village envelopes previously set through the LP process. I consider that these changes are needed to make the CS sound in terms of flexibility.

7.7 Policy NE2 allows for small scale employment development in the countryside where there are low travel needs and low impacts. The definition of 'small scale' is a matter that can more properly be dealt with in the forthcoming Development Policies DPD. Proposed changes to NE2 (to be renamed ENV2) and CE3 clarify the role of Local Employment Zones and add support for rural employment and tourism. I consider that without these the CS would not be sound in terms of test 4 because it would not conform with PPS7 in respect of rural business needs. Separate monitoring targets for rural employment and affordable housing will assist in highlighting the progress of the policies relating to rural communities and these are included in the Council's proposed changes to Appendix C dealt with later in my report.

7.8 Subject to these changes, I find that the CS conforms with national policy and the EEP and meets soundness tests 4 and 7 by providing an appropriate strategy that takes forward the vision and objectives for the rural areas.



# Change of Settlement Boundary at Boxted, Workhouse Hill



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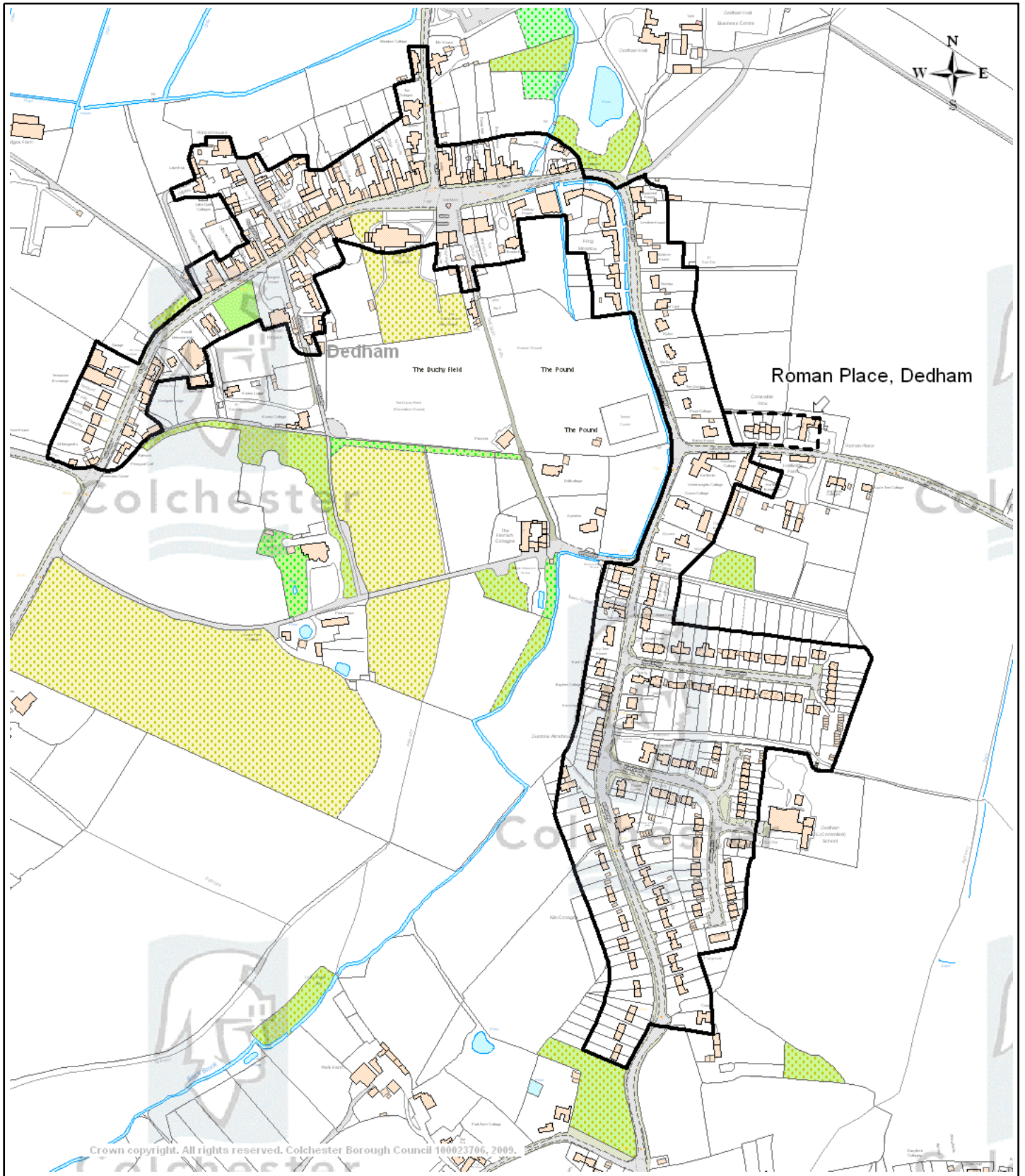
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Scale 1/2500

Date 9/6/2009

Centre = 599462 E 231933 N

# Change of Settlement Boundary at Dedham



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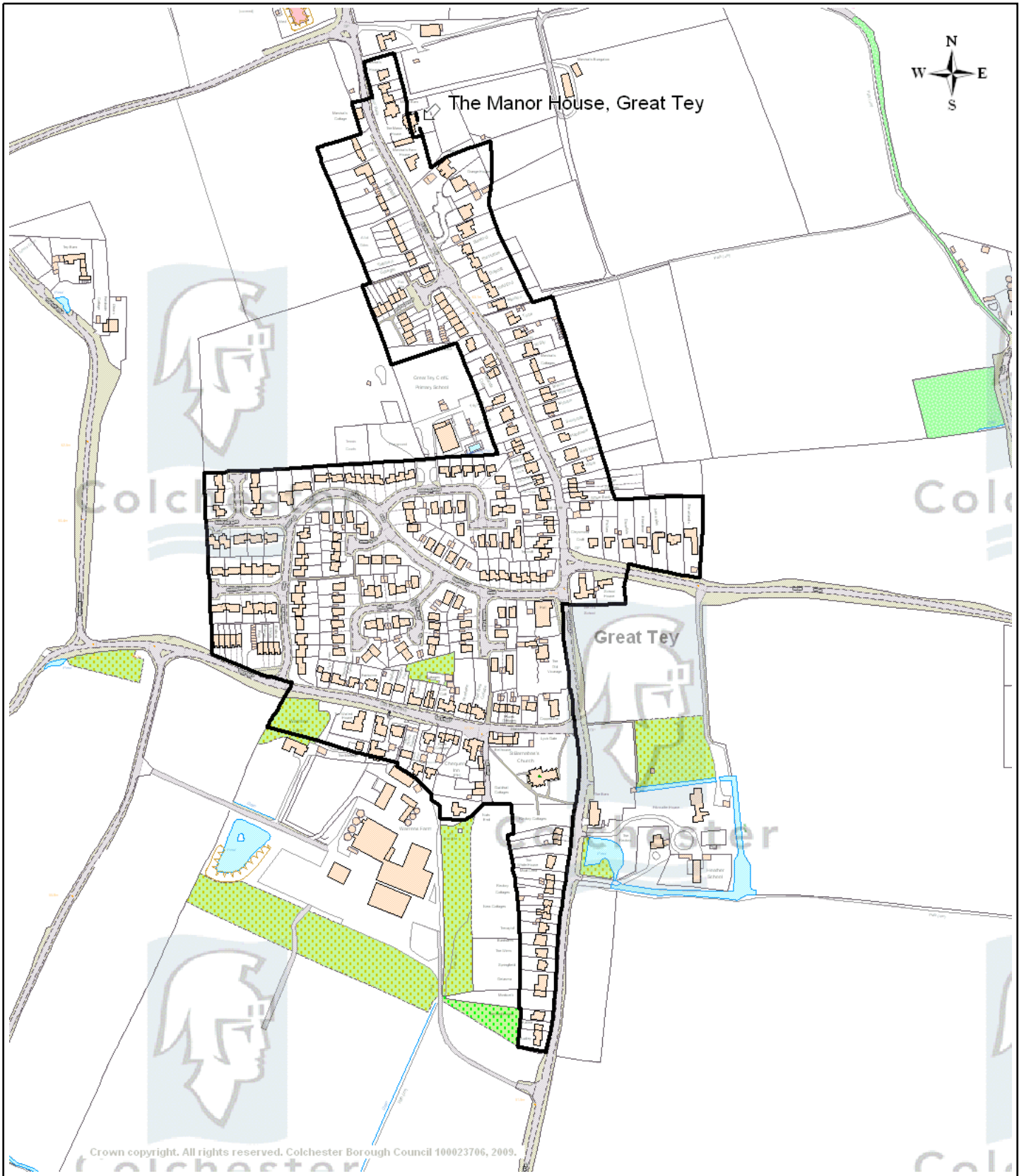
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# Change of Settlement Boundary at Great Tey



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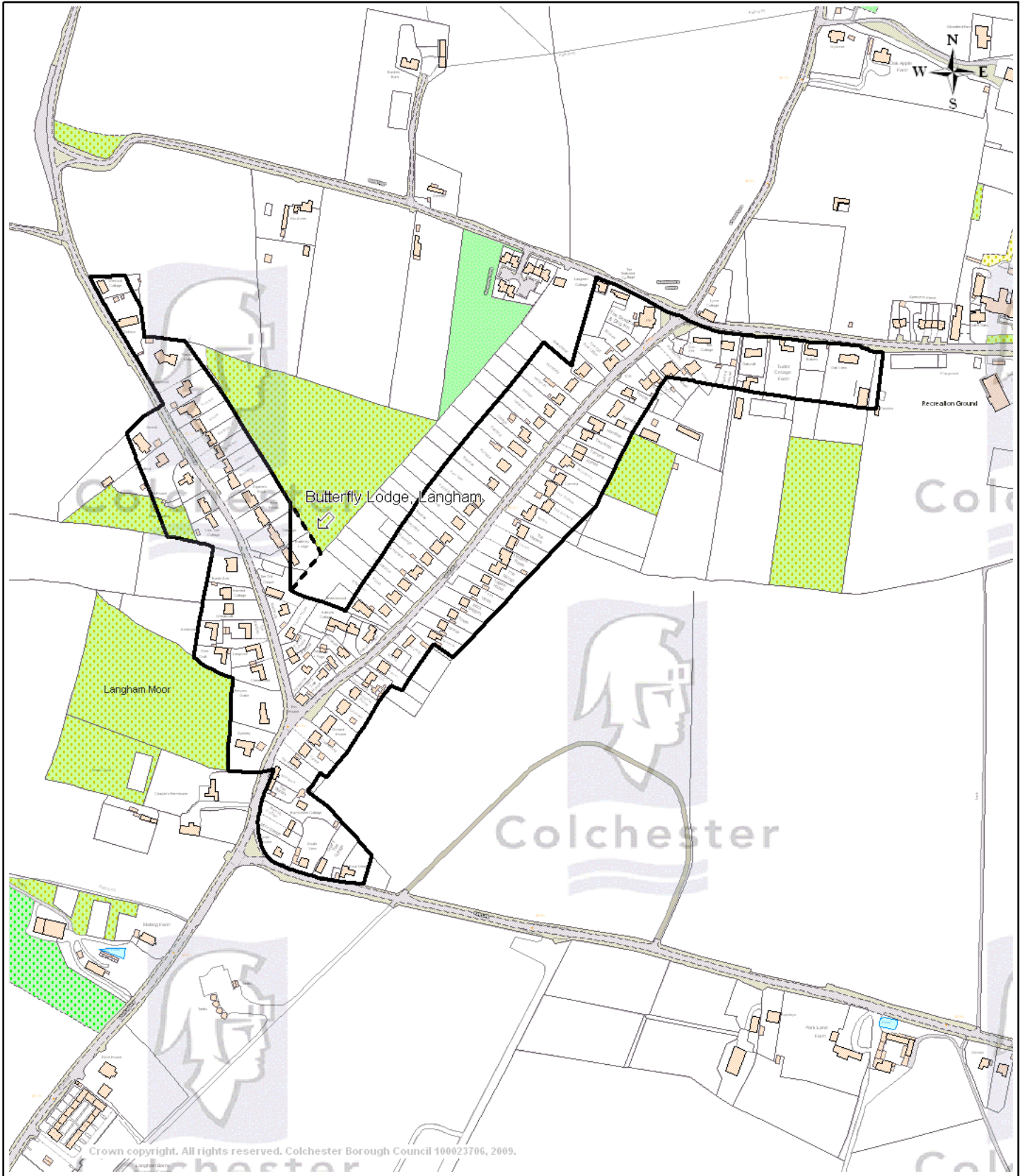
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# Change of Settlement Boundary at Langham



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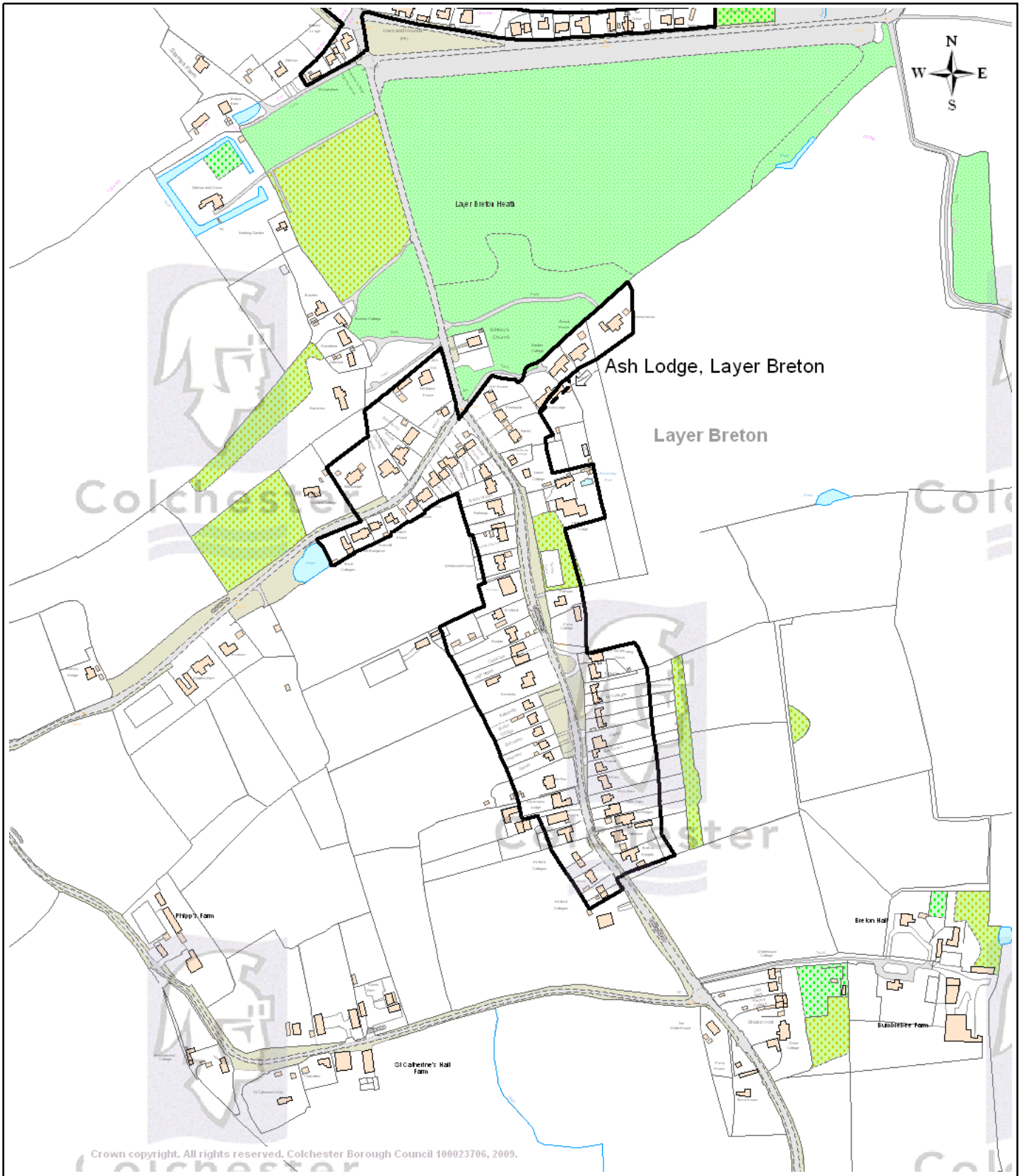
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# Change of Settlement Boundary at Layer Breton



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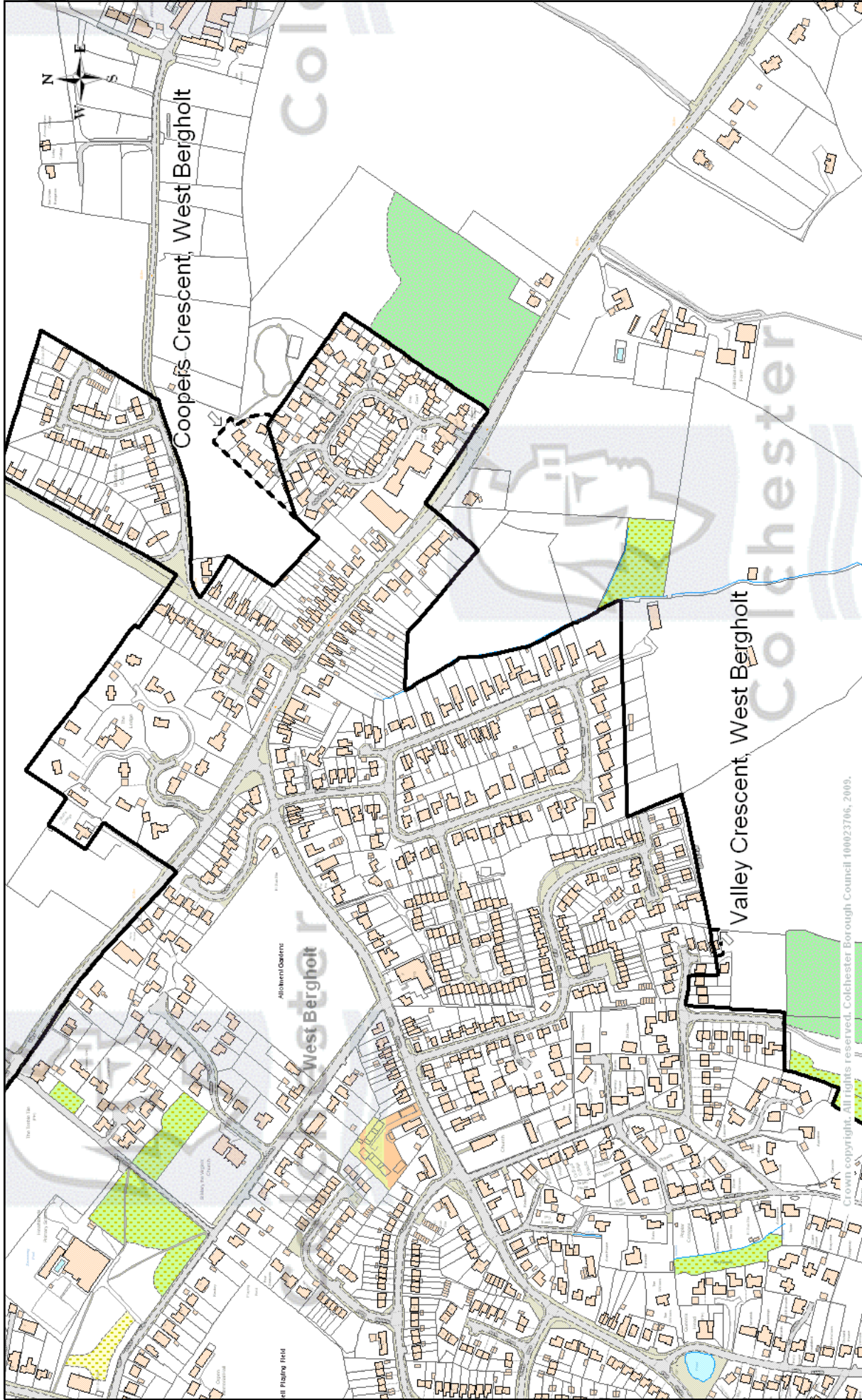
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Date 9/6/2009

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# Change of Settlement Boundary at West Bergholt



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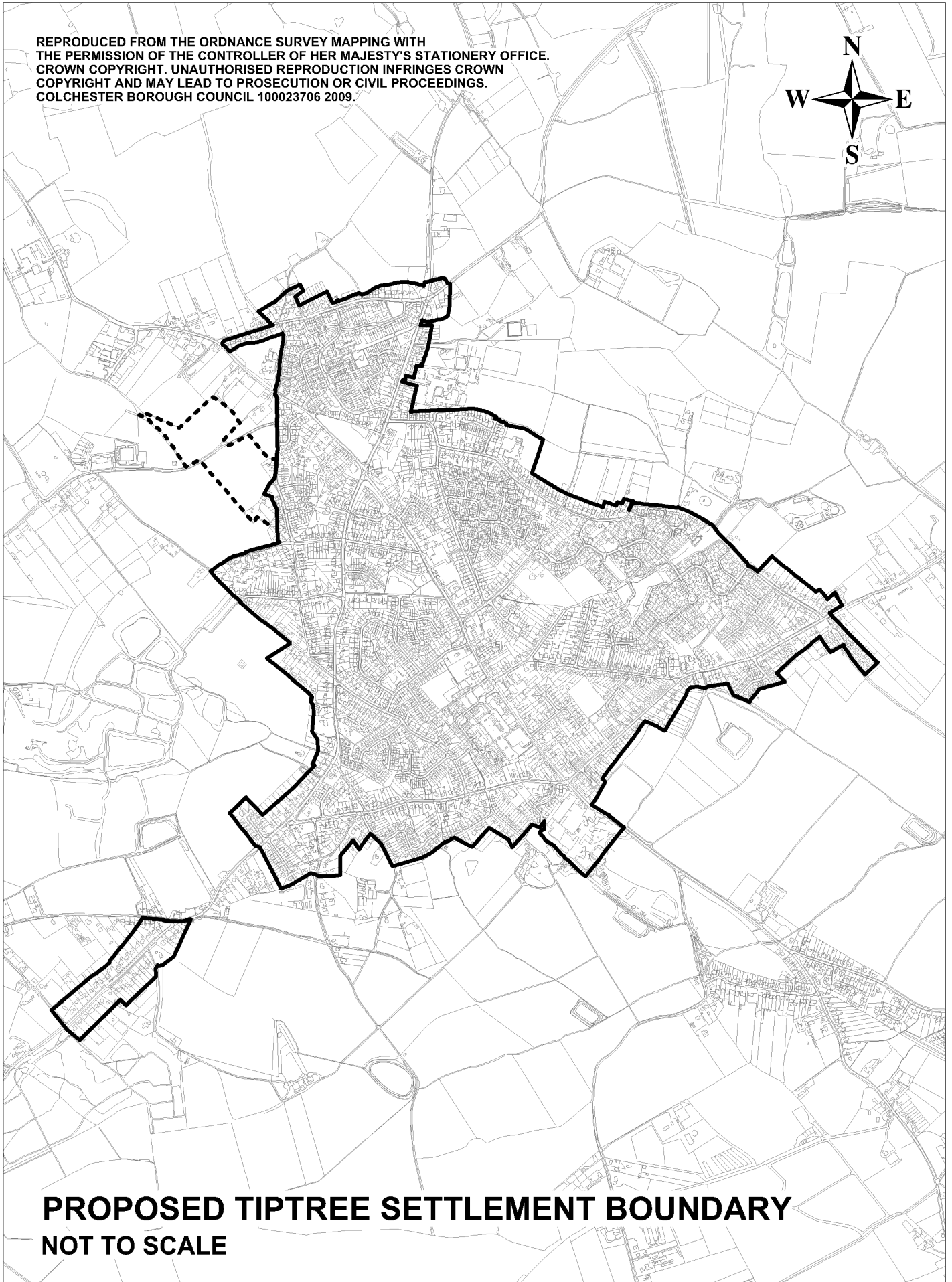
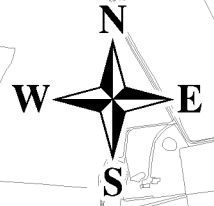
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Date 9/6/2009



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**PROPOSED TIPTREE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY**  
**NOT TO SCALE**



22 June 2009

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Beverley McClean 282480</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Local Wildlife Sites Review</b>		
<b>Wards affected</b>	<b>All</b>		

**1. Decision(s) Required**

- 1.1 Members are asked to note that a Local Wildlife Sites Review has been undertaken as part of the evidence base to inform the Local Development Framework, in particular the Site Allocations Development Policy Document (DPD) and the Development Policies DPD which are scheduled for submission in autumn 2009 and subsequent examination and adoption in 2010.

**2. Reasons for Decision(s)**

- 2.1 To enable Colchester to move forward with the process of production of the Local Development Framework.

**3. Alternative Options**

- 3.1 None.

**4. Supporting Information**

- 4.1 Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) previously known as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC's) are areas of land which locally in the Borough have significant wildlife value. Together with statutory protected areas, Local Wildlife Sites represent the minimum habitat needed to maintain the current levels of wildlife in Essex. Their nature conservation value lies in the role they play in protecting wildlife and habitats in the wider countryside. Local Wildlife Sites are protected within the local planning system as they are a 'material consideration' during the determination of planning applications. The Local Wildlife Sites report will also form part of the evidence base to support the development of Site Allocations and Development Policies DPD's.
- 4.2 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC) section 40, placed a duty on all public bodies to conserve biodiversity. The outputs from the Local Wildlife Sites review will help the Council meets its obligations under this legislation. The Council's aspiration to protect Local Wildlife Sites (and biodiversity) is included in Policy ENV2 (Environment) in the adopted Core Strategy.

- 4.3 The first Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC's) report was produced for Colchester in 1991. Following extensive field surveys, 147 sites covering 1463.7 hectares of land were designated as SINC's. Since the initial report was produced the selection process for designating Local Wildlife Sites has changed. A new robust set of site selection criteria was developed by DEFRA in 2006. In addition knowledge and availability of data about biodiversity in the County has improved considerably during the last 20 years.
- 4.4 In 2008 Essex Ecology Services Ltd were commissioned by Colchester Borough Council to undertake a review of the Borough's Local Wildlife Sites. A Borough wide land use and habitat survey was carried out across the Borough during 2008. Sites were assessed against the new DEFRA selection criteria which included 31 Habitat selection criteria and 15 Species criteria. The full list of criteria is listed in Appendix 1 of the Local Wildlife Sites report. The recent survey differed from the original survey as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) were not included. The removal of SSSI's was recommended in National Guidance produced to govern the selection and designation of LoWs. As a result 8 SSSI sites were removed from the LoWS register for Colchester. The other significant change was the inclusion of coastal inter-tidal habitats i.e. salt marsh and mudflats.
- 4.5 On completion of the review, a total of 168 Local Wildlife Sites covering 1957ha have been identified across the Borough. This represents an overall increase of 21 new Local Wildlife Sites. From the original list of sites, 22 were deleted because they were either SSSI's, failed to score well against the new criteria or because their nature conservation interest had decreased. A total of 48 new sites were added to the Local Wildlife Sites Register. In the new LoWS register some sites were also amalgamated. The relatively large number of new sites is a reflection of two main factors: firstly, the more wide-ranging and inclusive criteria and selection process which allowed the inclusion of several areas of post-industrial "brownfield" land, areas of saltmarsh, reed bed and sites where the invertebrate interest was a key factor. Secondly Colchester Borough was one of the first to be surveyed in the late 1980s as part of the original SINC review process and, as such, the list of Colchester SINC's was compiled using particularly old data. The recent review allowed for the inclusion of many small fragments of ancient woodland that were missed during the original SINC project. The changes proposed to the Local Sites Register were also verified through external consultation with local wildlife experts some of whom are County Recorders.
- 4.6 A full list of all the sites identified is included in Appendix 2 of the Local Wildlife Sites Review report. Appendix 3 of the report includes a map and site citation listing each sites nature conservation interest. The information from Appendix 3 sites is available on the Council's C-MAPS system.
- 4.6 The Local Wildlife Site Review identified a concentration of sites along the Roman, Colne and Stour rivers although there is good scattering of sites across the Borough. The report also identified that many sites were located on the suburban fringes rather than the farmed countryside. The report recognised that whilst development is a big threat to the countryside, loss of Local Wildlife Site land between 1991 to 2008 to development has been very slight (mainly garden extensions.) With the adoption of brownfield land as a site selection criterion there is greater potential for conflict between LoWS designation and development pressures. The existence of planning consent is likely to overrule identification of land as a LoWS but the designation as a LoWS should at least influence decision making about final landscaping schemes and biodiversity mitigation measures that could help lessen the impact of developments where conflicts arise.

4.7 The report recommended reviewing Local Wildlife Sites in the Borough every 4 years to take account of changes in site selection criteria, national policy and changes to sites. The Council have included a target of 0% net loss of Local Wildlife Sites in Appendix C of the Core Strategy and information about the area and size of LoWS will be reported annually through the Annual Monitoring Report.

## **5. Proposals**

5.1 The Review of Local Wildlife Sites will be used to inform the Site Allocations DPD. The actual sites will appear on the Proposals Maps. Appendix A to this report lists all the sites and breaks them down into categories; to be deleted, new sites and amended and unchanged sites.

## **6. Strategic Plan References**

6.1 The LDF helps facilitate the delivery of Colchester's regeneration programme and the Sustainable Community Strategy.

## **7. Consultation**

7.1 The Local Wildlife Sites Review will form part of the Council's evidence base for the Local Development Framework and as such will be subject to review and consultation, as guided by the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

## **8. Publicity Considerations**

8.1 None

## **9. Financial Implications**

9.1 There will be financial implications if the Council has to use external consultants to review the LoWS every 4 years.

## **10. Human Rights Implications**

10.1 Identification as a Local Wildlife Site does not confer any right of public access to the site, above and beyond any Public Rights of Way that may exist. The vast majority of the Sites are in private ownership and this should be respected at all times.

## **11. Community Safety Implications**

11.1 None

## **12. Health and Safety Implications**

12.1 None

## **13. Risk Management Implications**

13.1 The adoption of LDF documents is intended to reduce the risk of inappropriate development. It provides the opportunity to offer consistent advice to landowners, developers, officers, Councillors and members of the public.

## Appendix A

### Deletions

A few sites have been withdrawn from the Local Wildlife Sites register (old SINC identification numbers are given for ease of reference):

C1. Blackwater Estuary	Deleted – SSSIs now not included as LoWS
C3. Upper Colne Marshes	Deleted – SSSIs now not included as LoWS
C4. Colne Estuary	Deleted – SSSIs now not included as LoWS
C5. Tidal River Colne	Deleted – does not meet new criteria
FW4. Abberton Reservoir SSSI	Deleted – SSSIs now not included as LoWS
FW7. Judas Gap Reedbed	Deleted – declined condition
G5. Well Lane SRV	Deleted – does not meet criteria standards
G6. Wormingford to Bures SRV	Deleted – does not meet criteria standards
G9. Gallows Green	Deleted – deterioration in quality
G11. Claypit Heath SRV	Deleted – does not meet criteria standards
G13. Copfordhall Churchyard	Deleted – does not meet criteria standards
G24. Bounstead Bridge East	Deleted – does not meet criteria standards
G25. Fenn House Marsh	Deleted – deterioration in quality
G41. Dedham Bridge Banks	Deleted – does not meet criteria standards
G43. Dedham Special Roadside Verge	Deleted – deterioration in quality
G44. Cattawade Marshes SSSI	Deleted – SSSIs now not included as LoWS
H1. Tiptree Heath SSSI	Deleted – SSSIs now not included as LoWS
M1. Swanscomb Lakes	Deleted – does not meet criteria standards
M11. Roman River SSSI	Deleted – SSSIs now not included as LoWS
W17. The Rampart	Deleted – does not meet criteria standards
W18. Easthorpe Hall Wood	Deleted – does not meet criteria standards
W73. Bullock Wood SSSI	Deleted – SSSIs now not included as LoWS

### Additions

A number of new sites have been added to the Local Wildlife Sites register.

Co7. Tiptree Water Works	Co86. Olivers Woods
Co9. Alder Car, White Colne	Co95. Roman River Willow/Aldercar
Co11. Hickmore Fen	Co97. Irvine Road Orchard
Co13. Eden Wood	Co98. Mill Grove
Co16. St Luke's Church, Tiptree	Co102. Bounstead Bridge East
Co20. Domsey Brook Pasture	Co108. Layer Brook Pasture
Co23. Chappel Meadow	Co113. Colchester Cemetery
Co24. Mount Bures Churchyard	Co115. Langham Road Grassland
Co27. Stonefield Strip	Co120. Ball Grove
Co28. Sargeant's Orchard	Co130. Strood Marsh
Co29. Long/Round Grove	Co131. Langenhoe Lodge Churchyard
Co31. Marks Tey Brick Pit	Co132. Magdalen Wood
Co41. Lodge Hills	Co138. St Andrew's Churchyard, Greenstead
Co42. Rectory Wood	Co153. St Mary's Church, Langham
Co45. Fordham Bridge Meadow	Co155. Gun Hill Grassland
Co49. Copford Hall Wood North	Co156. Gun Hill Place
Co51. Keeper's Cottage Wood	Co157. The Coombs
Co52. Old Vicarage Grove, Wormingford	Co159. Brickhouse Farm Pits
Co61. Wood near Fordham Place	Co160. Reeveshall Reedbed
Co62. Stanway Pits	Co161. Wivenhoe Cross Pit
Co67. Warren Lane Pit	Co162. Dalethorpe Park
Co72. West Bergholt Hall Church	Co164. Manwood Grove
Co78. Gryme's Dyke	Co166. Fen Farm Saltmarsh
Co84. Abbots Hall Marshes	Co167. Dedham Old River Marshes

### Amended and Unchanged Sites

The majority of former sites have been revised, affected by both major and minor additions and deletions of land. The old SINC identification numbers are given for ease of reference.

<b>Amended sites</b>	
C2. West Mersea Foreshore	Boundary revisions
FW1. Chappel Ponds	Enlarged
FW3. Birch Lake	Amalgamated with other sites
FW5. River Colne	Partly deleted – does not meet new criteria
G3. Cambridge Brook Marsh	Boundary revisions
G4. Tiptree Parish Field	Amalgamated with other sites
G7. Blind Lane Plantation	Greatly reduce
G10. Fordham Churchyard	Enlarged
G12. Wormingford Churchyard	Enlarged
G15. Hardy's Green SRV	Enlarged and renamed
G16. Fordham Heath SRV	Absorbed into Fordham Heath site
G17. Birch Church and Valley	Amalgamated with other sites
G18. West Bergholt Heath	Enlarged
G20. Great Horkesley Churchyard	Enlarged
G23. Central Colne	Enlarged, renamed
G26. Mile End	Amalgamated with other sites
G28. Pete Tye Common	Some deletions and additions
G29. Manwood Chase	Significant additions
G32. Donyland Snipe Field	Amalgamated with new site; renamed
G33. Langenhoe Marshes	Minor amendments
G34. Roman River Valley, Fingringhoe	Additions to north of river
G35. University Marshes	Significant deteriorated area deleted
G36. Salary Brook	Some deletions
G37. Langham Special Roadside Verge	Very small addition
G39. Bridges Farm	Additions and deletions
G42. Cudmore Grove Country Park	Enlarged
G45. Beckingham Hall SRV	Significant additions and deletions
M2. Tiptree Lakes	Enlarged
M3. Grassreasons	Part deleted; amalgamated with other site
M5. Fordham Heath	Minor amendments
M6. Iron Latch	Amalgamated with other site
M7. Roman River Reserve	Amalgamated with other sites
M8. Lexden Spring	Minor revision; renamed
M10. Hilly Fields	Significantly enlarged
M12. Colchester Roman Walls	Enlarged
M13. High Woods Grasslands	Enlarged and amalgamated with other sites
M14. Bourne/Distillery Ponds	Some deletions; renamed
M16. Langham Lakes	Enlarged
M17. Black Brook	Some deletions
M18. Hythe Marshes	Significant amendments; renamed
M19. Rowhedge Pits	Minor boundary revisions
M20. Essex University	Enlarged; renamed
W1. Florie's Hedge	Enlarged
W4. Hill Wood	Some parts deleted
W6. Inworth Wood	Enlarged
W9. Conyfield Wood	Minor addition; amalgamated with other site
W10. Pods Wood	Enlarged and amalgamated with other site
W14. Fan Wood	Minor addition
W16. Green Lane, Tiptree	Amalgamated with other sites
W19. Cadgers Wood	Amalgamated with other sites
W20. Layer Wood	Amalgamated with another site
W23. Seller's Lane	Amalgamated with other sites
W24. Seller Wood	Amalgamated with other sites

W26. Potash Wood	Amalgamated with other sites
W27. Gravelpit Wood	Renamed
W28. Aldercar, Copford	Addition and deletion
W30. Aldercar, Wormingford	Minor addition
W32. Hillhouse Wood	Minor additions
W33. Aldercar, West Bergholt	Unchanged; amalgamated with a new site
W34. Calves Pasture	Reservoirs deleted
W35. Eight Ash Green Wood	Enlarged; amalgamated with other sites
W36. Spring/Grove Wood	Separated, with minor deletion
W38. Great/Little Billet Woods	Enlarged
W39. Ram Plantation Complex	Minor boundary revisions
W40. Cooks Wood	Enlarged
W41. Butcher's Wood/Oliver's Thicks	Significant addition and deletion
W43. Slough Grove West	Amalgamated with the following site
W44. Slough Grove East	Amalgamated with previous site
W45. Chest Wood	amalgamated with other sites
W46. Lexden Gathering Grounds	Significant additions and deletions
W47. Pitchbury Wood	Minor addition
W48. Heather Fields	Amalgamated with other sites
W49. Needles Eye Wood South	Amalgamated with other sites
W50. Needles Eye Wood Extension	Amalgamated with other sites
W52. Sodom Wood	Minor boundary revisions
W54. Lexden Dyke	Enlarged
W57. Harrow Corner	Enlarged
W58. Friday Wood North	Minor boundary revision
W60. Boxtedhall Great Wood	Split into two revised sites
W61. Berechurch	Only small section remains
W62. High Wood	Amalgamated with other sites
W63. Man Wood	Amalgamated with other sites
W64. Cophedge Wood West	Amalgamated with other site
W65. East Wood	Enlarged
W66. Friars Grove	Amalgamated with other sites
W67. Ash Wood	Enlarged
W68. Cophedge Wood East	Amalgamated with other site
W69. Haye Grove	Enlarged
W70. Donyland Wood	Only small section remains
W71. Birch Brook Wood	Minor boundary revisions
W72. Kiln Wood	Enlarged
W74. Welsh Wood	Enlarged
W75. Birch Wood, Langham	Boundary revisions
W76. Home Wood	Minor deletion
W77. Wivenhoe Wood	Enlarged
W78. Thousand Acres	Enlarged
<b>Unchanged sites</b>	
FW2. Wormingford Mere	Unchanged
FW6. Hythe Lagoons	Unchanged
G1. Wakes Colne Meadow	Unchanged
G2. Little Tey Churchyard	Unchanged
G8. Smythe's Green	Unchanged
G14. Seven Star Green	Unchanged
G19. Spring Lane Meadow	Unchanged, renamed
G21. Malting Green	Unchanged
G22. Bounstead Bridge West	Unchanged
G27. Bull Meadow LNR	Unchanged
G30. Cowdray Marsh	Unchanged
G31. Middlewick Ranges	Unchanged
G38. Barrage Marsh	Unchanged
G40. Dedham Churchyard	Unchanged
M4. Layer Breton Heath	Unchanged

M9. Kingsford Wood	Unchanged; renamed
M15. The Moors	Unchanged
W2. Buckler's Farm Wood	Unchanged
W3. New Wood	Unchanged
W5. Perry's Wood	Unchanged
W7. Woolfney Wood	Unchanged
W8. Acorn Wood	Unchanged
W11. Hoe Wood	Unchanged
W12. Birch Wood, Tiptree	Unchanged
W13. Ransomes Grove	Unchanged
W15. Church House Wood	Unchanged
W21. Aldhamhall Wood	Unchanged
W22. Long Wood	Unchanged
W25. Fiddlers Wood	Unchanged
W29. Copfordhall Woods	Unchanged
W31. Gol Grove/Hanging Wood	Unchanged
W37. Stitching Wood	Unchanged
W42. Creak's Grove	Unchanged
W51. Spring Wood	Unchanged
W53. Westhouse Wood	Unchanged
W55. Cophall Grove	Unchanged
W56. Bounstead Strip	Unchanged
W59. Little Wood	Unchanged

