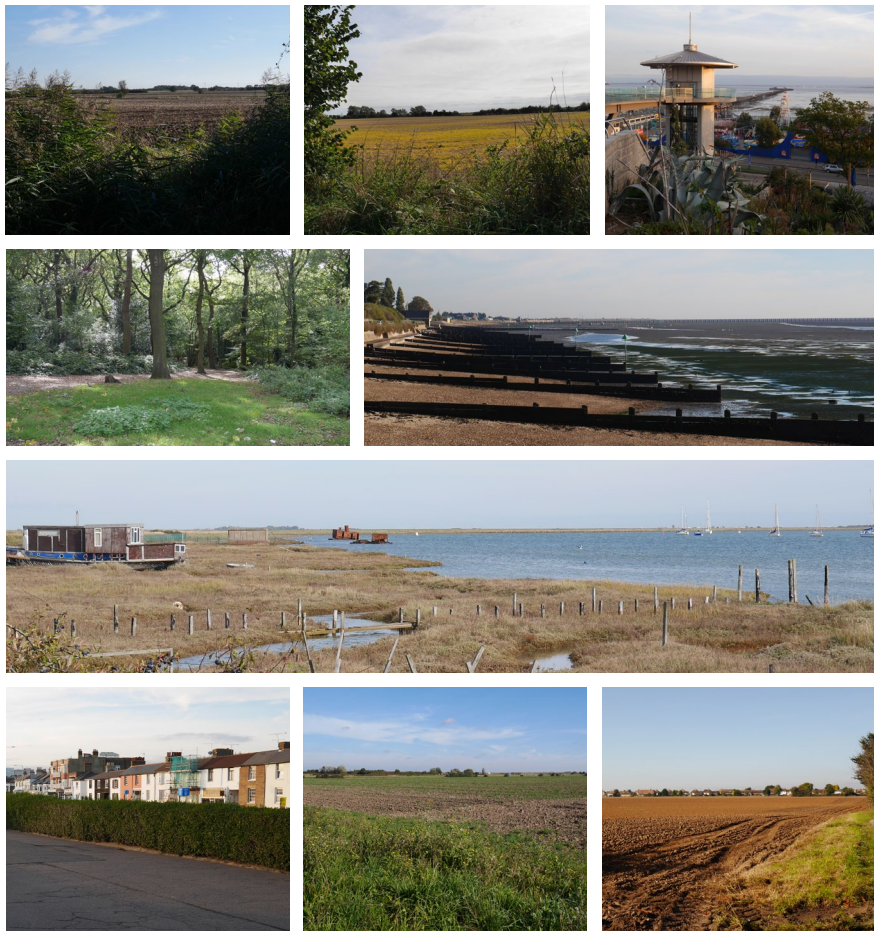


ADVISORY NOTE

This document is an evidence report that has been prepared for the Council's new Local Plan. It is not a statement of Council policy and is intended to inform decisions but does not bind the Council to any particular decision

Where the document contains findings, it is important these are understood in the context provided in the document. Publication of this document should not be interpreted as endorsement of these findings.

Rochford District Council
& Southend Borough Council
Landscape Character, Sensitivity
& Capacity Study



Rochford District Council
& Southend Borough Council
Landscape Character, Sensitivity
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Approved

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Watkins', enclosed within a large, loopy circular flourish.

Dominic Watkins

Position

Director

Date

1st July 2019

Revision

Final

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 In July 2018, Rochford District Council and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council commissioned Chris Blandford Associates (CBA) to prepare the Rochford and Southend Landscape Character Assessment and Sensitivity and Capacity Study (the Study), to inform both Councils' emerging planning policy and Local Plans.

Context

National Planning

- 1.1.2 Chapter 15 of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 sets out the Government's current policies on conserving and enhancing the natural environment in England. With regards to landscape conditions, the NPPF states:

- *"Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: (a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes... (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); (b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services..."¹;*
- *"Plans should: ...allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries..."²*

Local Planning

- 1.1.3 Rochford District Council and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council are currently preparing new Local Plans to guide future development to 2038.
- 1.1.4 As part of their duty to co-operate, Rochford and Southend Councils are working collaboratively with their four neighbouring South Essex authorities, and Essex County Council, to prepare a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) for South Essex. The JSP is expected to provide a strategic framework for the future growth and vitality of the sub-region, including by guiding the spatial distribution

¹ Paragraph 170, NPPF 2019

² Paragraph 171, NPPF 2019

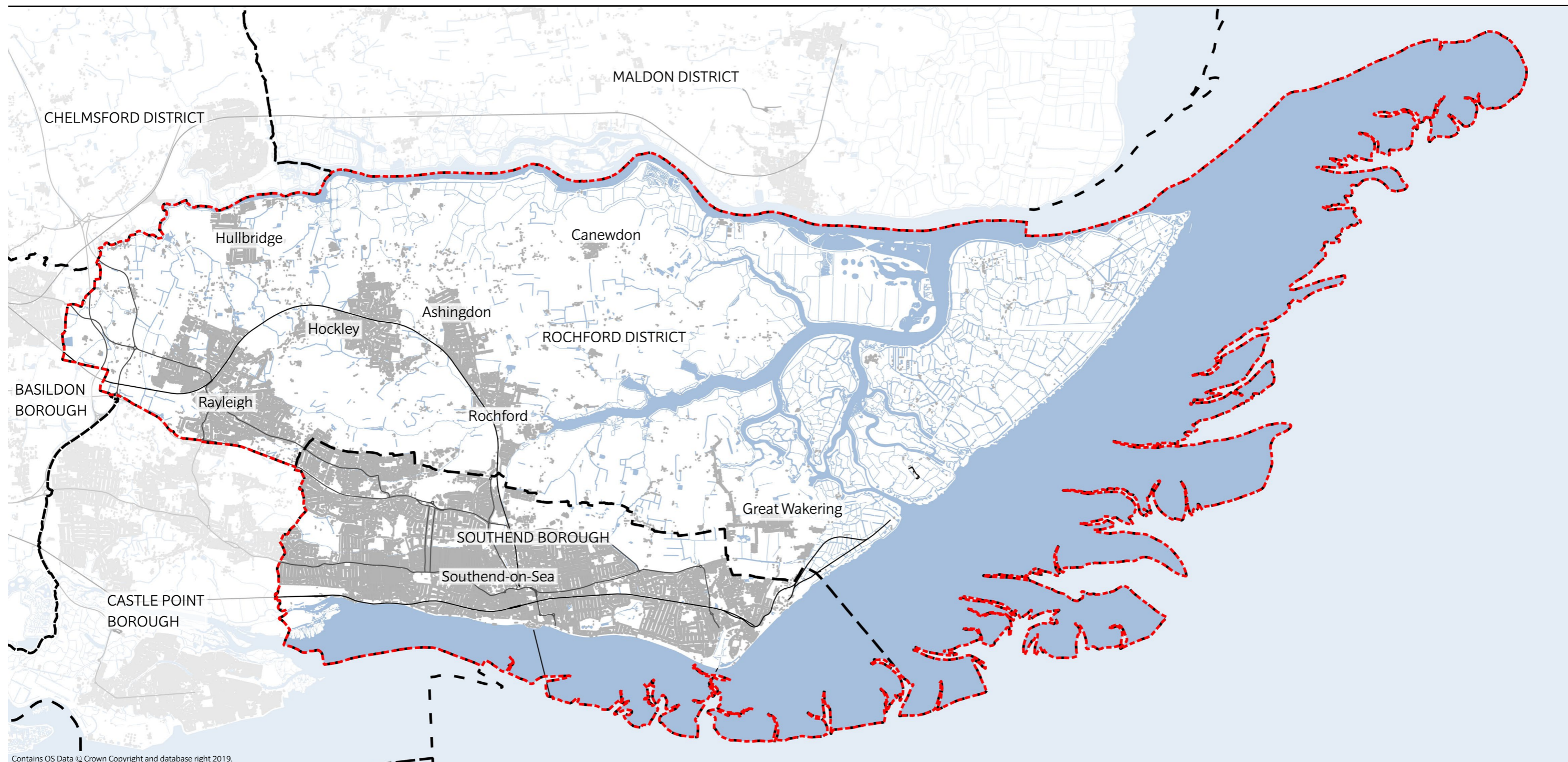
of growth and identifying areas of strategic opportunity. The JSP will form part of each authority's local development plan and will inform the preparation of other development plan documents, including local plans and site allocation plans as appropriate.

Landscape Context

- 1.1.5 The two authority areas have different and distinctive landscape features and character. It is important to understand the processes and influences that have led to the present situation (detailed in **Section 2.0**).
- 1.1.6 Rochford District sits within a peninsula between the River Thames and River Crouch in South Essex. Its eastern boundary is with the North Sea. Rochford has land boundaries with Basildon, Castle Point and Southend to the south and west, and marine boundaries with Maldon and Chelmsford to the north. The area contains several towns and villages with interconnecting infrastructure. The District has a significant land area outside the existing residential areas, much of which falls within the Metropolitan Green Belt and includes areas that are susceptible to flooding and/or have international and national environmental significance. In particular, the District's river channels and coastline are protected under a range of environmental designations, including the Foulness Ramsar Site, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Protection Areas (SPA), and form part of the Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- 1.1.7 Southend is a linear, predominantly urban area along the northern side of the Thames Estuary. It has land boundaries with Rochford and Castle Point to the north and west respectively. It is a densely populated urban area comprising a variety of housing types. Southend has developed as a tourist resort, with 7 miles of foreshore along the Thames Estuary. Outside of the urban area are four areas of the Metropolitan Green Belt, part of which contains areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland. The foreshore and mudflats form the Benfleet and Southend Marshes Ramsar Site, SSSI and SPA, and the eastern coastline is part of the Essex Estuaries SAC.

1.2 Objectives

- 1.2.1 The key purpose of the Study is to provide a detailed understanding of the character of the landscape across the study area (**Figure 1.1**), including settlement areas and coastal mudflats. The Study aims to assist in managing change, particularly to the settlement fringe and Green Belt landscapes, by providing advice on sensitivities of the landscape to accommodate development and offering guidance on opportunities to help protect and enhance landscape character.
- 1.2.2 The Study aims to strengthen and reinforce the sense of place for Rochford and Southend-on-Sea by considering how the landscape is perceived, experienced and valued by people. It provides



KEY

- Study Area
- Planning Authority Boundary

a high-level spatial planning, siting and design guidance framework in relation to future development, to inform the emerging spatial strategies, as well as aid future site briefs and development management in strategic terms.

- 1.2.3 The Study will assist decision-making with respect to planned changes that may affect the character of the landscapes, townscape and seascapes within and around the study area. It is intended to provide a valuable tool for the Councils and other users including neighbouring authorities, developers and a range of local stakeholders. It also provides baseline information for monitoring landscape change.

1.3 Methodology

Scope of Study

- 1.3.1 The study draws on and, where appropriate, updates existing landscape evidence to develop a more detailed Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment of the landscape, townscape and seascape within Rochford and Southend-on-Sea.
- 1.3.2 The study area for the Landscape Character Assessment (**Section 3.0**) spans Rochford District including the River Crouch and River Roach and mudflats to the east of the Foulness coastline, and Southend Borough including the mudflats to the south and east.
- 1.3.3 The study area for the Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Assessment (**Section 4.0**) is refined. It includes the landscape character areas that are outside of settlement boundaries and within the Green Belt as defined within the current Local Plans and including Foulness Island.
- 1.3.4 Informed by the assessment of landscape sensitivity, the Study includes recommendations on the potential capacity of the landscapes within the Green Belt and Foulness Island to accommodate development.
- 1.3.5 This evidence was commissioned by Rochford District Council in collaboration with Southend-on-Sea Borough Council. It should not be considered to be a material consideration for planning applications relating to land outside of the study area.

Landscape Character Assessment

- 1.3.6 The Landscape Character Assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the principles of Natural England's guidance *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*³ and *An Approach to Seascape Character Assessment*⁴.
- 1.3.7 Landscape Character Assessment is a tool that allows landscape character to be understood, explained and described in a transparent and objective way. It does this by identifying the variations in the patterns of physical, natural and cultural attributes, and experiential characteristics, that makes one area of landscape distinctive from another at a range of spatial scales. Landscape Character Assessment also recognises how landscapes have changed over time and acknowledges the influence of human activities on landscapes.
- 1.3.8 The term 'landscape' relates to natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas and includes land, inland water and marine areas. Increasingly, the landscape character assessment process is used to inform urban/townscape assessments and seascape character assessments.
- 1.3.9 In line with the Councils' specification and clarifications, the study area covers the whole of Rochford District and Southend Borough including all urban, rural and coastal areas.

Desk Studies

- 1.3.10 Before embarking on field survey work, preparatory desk-based studies were undertaken to collate and analyse available information about the landscape within the study area. An initial review of the following existing character studies was carried out:
- Rochford District Environmental Capacity Study 2015;
 - Rochford District Open Space Study 2009;
 - Rochford District Historic Environment Characterisation Project 2006;
 - Rochford District Conservation Area Character Appraisals;
 - Southend Borough Character Study 2011;
 - Southend Borough Conservation Area Character Appraisals;
 - Essex Coast Landscape Character Assessment 2005;
 - Essex Landscape Character Assessment 2002;
 - Thames Gateway Historic Environment Characterisation Project 2005.

³ Natural England, 2014

⁴ Natural England, 2012

1.3.11 Existing character studies for neighbouring areas were also reviewed as part of the process:

- Maldon District Landscape Character Assessment 2006;
- Chelmsford Borough Landscape Character Assessment 2006;
- Basildon Borough Landscape Character Assessment 2013;
- Castle Point Borough Landscape Character Assessment 2010.

1.3.12 In order to provide an appropriate scale for assessing the landscape sensitivity of the study area to development (and being suitable as a baseline for monitoring landscape change), district/local level landscape character areas have been defined. These character areas broadly provide sub-division of the existing county-scale character areas defined by the Essex Landscape Character Assessment⁵.

1.3.13 In accordance with Natural England's guidance, the definition of the Character Area boundaries would take into account the nature, extents and patterns created by the interplay of the following key "landscape attributes":

- Topography and Landform
- Geology and soils
- Water bodies and hydrology
- Field shapes and sizes
- Land uses
- Land cover and vegetation
- Historic landscape character
- Settlement patterns

1.3.14 These landscape attributes have been identified through the collation and review of relevant GIS datasets, Google/Bing aerial images and OS mapping.

1.3.15 The preliminary boundaries of the character areas defined by the desk studies were mapped in GIS. Where appropriate, the boundaries follow distinct features on the ground.

Field Surveys

1.3.16 The desk studies were supplemented by field survey work to verify/refine the boundaries of the preliminary character areas and inform the character descriptions by identifying landscape changes on the ground (e.g. new development, significant loss of landscape features etc).

⁵ Chris Blandford Associates, 2003

- 1.3.17 The field surveys identified the visual and sensory (aesthetic, perceptual and experiential) qualities of the landscape for each character area and identify the current condition/quality of key landscape features to inform the sensitivity assessment. Critically, the field surveys explored the visual relationship between the urban areas and the surrounding rural areas that provide the landscape/seascape setting and context in which the urban townscapes are experienced.

Stakeholder Consultation

- 1.3.18 Key stakeholders from neighbouring authorities and relevant statutory and non-statutory bodies were consulted following the first stage of the assessment process, to gather opinions and comments on the proposed names and boundaries for the character types and character areas, plus general commentary regarding the preliminary classification.

Character Descriptions

- 1.3.19 The study area was initially divided into character types. These are distinct types of landscape that are generally homogeneous in character and occur in different parts of the study area that share common characteristics. The character type descriptions comprise the key characteristics associated with the area.
- 1.3.20 Character areas are unique, individual areas that share generic characteristics with other areas within the character type they identified as being within. The character and condition of the constituent character areas within each character type are described, supported by landscape strategy recommendations for conserving, enhancing, protecting or restoring the character area features where applicable.
- 1.3.21 Historic landscape character information has been provided for areas included within The Historic Landscape Characterisation Report for Essex⁶ and does not include those character areas below the high water line.

Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Assessment

- 1.3.22 The aim of the Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment is to provide a key tool for informing the allocation of development sites outside of settlement boundaries in the Councils' new Local Plans.

⁶ Essex County Council in partnership with English Heritage, 2011

- 1.3.23 The assessment was undertaken in accordance with the principles of Topic Paper 6 on Techniques and Criteria for Judging Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity⁷.
- 1.3.24 The study area for the assessment includes the character areas (or parts thereof) identified in the Landscape Character Assessment, that are outside of settlement boundaries within the Green Belt including Foulness Island.
- 1.3.25 As part of the emerging Local Plans the Councils are looking at areas to locate future development. In reference to the South East Essex Strategic Growth Assessment (2019) they have requested that the landscape sensitivity and capacity assessment (Section 3) considers an area of search for strategic scale development. Where necessary the character areas within this area of search have been subdivided into land parcels to provide more detailed understanding of the landscape value, sensitivity and capacity of the area. The land parcels enable understanding of local variation within the broad brush character area, using the value, sensitivity and capacity scales set out below.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

- 1.3.26 The approach to the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment was based on the following definitions and concepts:
- **Landscape condition** is based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape, considering intactness and state of elements and features that make up the character area;
 - **Landscape sensitivity** is based on judgements about the relative value and the susceptibility of the landscape to the development scenario(s) being considered;
 - **Landscape value** is based on judgements about the relative value or importance attached to a landscape;
 - **Landscape susceptibility** is based on judgements about the ability of the landscape to accommodate change without undue negative consequences, having consideration of overall character and condition.

Assessing Landscape Value

- 1.3.27 In line with the revised National Planning Policy Framework⁸ (NPPF), the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment considers the relative landscape value of the study area.

⁷ Countryside Agency, 2002

⁸ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019

1.3.28 For the purposes of the study, landscape value would be assessed on the basis of the following criteria recommended by best practice guidance:

- Landscape quality: the physical state of the landscape, and its intactness, from visual, functional, and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements which make up the character in any one place;
- Scenic quality: the way in which landscapes appeal primarily to the visual and perceptual senses;
- Rarity: the presence or absence of unique/rare features and elements in the landscape;
- Representativeness: whether the landscape contains a particular character, and/or features and elements, which are judged to be worthy of representing (such as pockets of ancient remnant woodland or an intricate network of hedgerows for example);
- Conservation values: the presence of features of particular wildlife, geological, archaeological, historic/cultural conservation interest and value (as recognised by established designation systems) that add to the value of the landscape as well as having value in their own right;
- Sense of wildness/tranquillity: the existence of relatively remote areas in the landscape which provide a sense of wildness or tranquillity. Such areas are typically characterised by low levels of disturbance, an absence of detracting elements (such as built development, industry, traffic, noise, movement, the presence of people and artificial lighting) and the presence of positive landscape qualities (such as the naturalness of the landscape, presence and visibility of rivers and the visibility of woodland);
- Cultural associations: the cultural associations of the landscape with particular people, artists, writers or other media, or events in history.

1.3.29 The relative landscape value of the character areas within the context of the study area was assessed using the following five-point scale, which reflects the principles for assessing landscape value provided by current Landscape Institute guidance⁹:

- **Low Landscape Value** – generally undesignated landscape/features of lower value in a local context; in poorer condition; with limited sense of place due to lack of distinctive scenic and perceptual qualities and cultural associations; limited presence of cultural and natural heritage assets of local significance; and limited value for recreation.
- **Low to Medium Landscape Value** – generally non-statutory designated landscape/features of moderate value in a regional and local context; in moderate to poorer condition; some locally distinctive sense of place due to limited scenic and perceptual qualities and cultural associations; some presence of cultural and natural heritage assets of local significance; some

⁹ Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition, 2013 (LI and IEMA)

presence of particular characteristics/features which are considered important examples; and local value for recreation.

- **Medium Landscape Value** – generally non-statutory designated landscape/features of moderate value in a regional and local context; in moderate condition; with a locally distinctive sense of place due to scenic and perceptual qualities and cultural associations; presence of cultural and natural heritage assets of local significance; and locally valued for recreation.
- **Medium to High Landscape Value** – generally statutory or non-statutory designated landscape/features of moderate to higher value in a regional and local context; in moderate to good condition; with a locally distinctive sense of place due to scenic and perceptual qualities and cultural associations; presence of cultural and natural heritage assets of significance; presence of particular characteristics/features which are considered important examples; and local value for recreation.
- **High Landscape Value** – generally statutory designated landscape/features of higher value in a national and regional context; in good condition; with a stronger sense of place due to distinctive scenic and perceptual qualities (wildness/tranquility) and cultural associations; presence of cultural and natural heritage assets of highest significance; and highly valued for recreation.

Assessing Landscape Sensitivity

1.3.30 This step considers the inherent sensitivity of the landscape, which includes an understanding of landscape character and its visual characteristics. The assessment of landscape sensitivity has taken into account the following criteria:

- Natural factors – the nature, extent and pattern of vegetation, semi-natural habitats and landform/drainage;
- Cultural factors – the nature, extent and pattern of land uses, settlements and historical features;
- Perceptual/aesthetic factors – sense of scale, enclosure, diversity, texture, form, pattern, prominence of skyline, tranquillity/remoteness, scenic qualities;
- Landscape quality/condition – representativeness, intactness and state of repair;
- General visibility – the level of visibility/inter-visibility and nature of views (taking into account seasonal variations);
- Visual receptors – the type and nature of visual receptors, levels of activity and perceptions;
- Mitigation potential – opportunities for mitigating landscape and visual effects of development and compatibility of mitigation measures with local character.

1.3.31 The overall landscape sensitivity of each character area within the study area has been assessed using the following five-point scale:

- **Low Landscape Sensitivity** – typically a landscape that has relatively unimportant components or is an area of low quality and is potentially tolerant of substantial changes without undue negative consequences. For example, this category would apply where the landscape is assessed as having a lack of distinctiveness and continuity/time depth (i.e. the landscape is of recent origin with few features of historic interest), and it may also have very limited visibility due to dominant landforms and a high level of tree cover.
- **Low to Medium Landscape Sensitivity** – typically a landscape that has relatively unimportant components or is an area that is in low to moderate condition and is potentially tolerant of changes with undue negative consequences. For example, this category would apply where the landscape is assessed as having a lack of distinctiveness and continuity/time depth (i.e. the landscape is largely of recent origin with few features of historic interest), and it may also have limited to moderate intervisibility due to dominant/apparent landforms and intermittent tree cover.
- **Medium Landscape Sensitivity** – typically a landscape that has relatively ordinary components or is an area that is in moderate condition and is reasonably tolerant of changes without undue negative consequences. For example, this category would apply where the landscape is assessed as having some distinctive features and characteristics that provide continuity/time depth, and typically has moderate visibility due to apparent/insignificant landforms and intermittent/open tree cover.
- **Medium to High Landscape Sensitivity** – typically a landscape that has some important components or is an area that is in moderate to good condition, and has some limited tolerance to changes, without undue negative consequences. For example, this category would apply where the landscape is assessed as having distinctive features and characteristics, some of which may be unique/rare, that provide continuity/time depth, and typically has moderate to higher intervisibility due to apparent/insignificant landforms and intermittent/open tree cover.
- **High Landscape Sensitivity** – typically a landscape that has important components or is an area of particularly distinctive character that is good quality and is susceptible to relatively small changes which would result in undue negative consequences. For example, this category would apply where the landscape is assessed as having many unique/rare characteristics that are very distinctive and provide considerable continuity/time depth (i.e. the landscape is of ancient origin with many features of historic interest), and it may also have very high visibility due to very limited topographical variation and tree cover.

1.3.32 As with all criteria-based assessments based upon data and information which is to a greater or lesser extent subjective, some caution is required in its interpretation in order to avoid the

suggestion that certain landscape features or qualities can be absolutely associated with certain sensitivities. In reality, landscape sensitivity is the result of a complex interplay of often unequally weighted variables.

- 1.3.33 The assessments are based on professional judgement, taking account of the interplay between the criteria, as well as those which might be more important to landscape character in a particular character area.
- 1.3.34 In addition, it should be noted that within the overall landscape sensitivity assessment there may be variations in relation to individual landscape elements and land parcels. These are picked up in the reporting where appropriate.

Landscape Capacity Assessment

- 1.3.35 The study area for the assessment includes the character areas (or parts thereof) identified in the Landscape Character Assessment, that are outside of settlement boundaries within the Green Belt including Foulness Island.
- 1.3.36 For the purposes of this assessment the development scenarios outlined in **Table 1** were agreed with the Councils as being indicative of the nature of development likely to come forward in the next Local Plan period:

Table 1 Outline Development Scenarios

Scenario	Density Range	Indicative Heights	Mix of Uses
Small-scale	30 dwellings per hectare (dph)	Up to three storeys in height	55% residential; 33% open space; 12% community uses
Medium-scale	40 dwellings per hectare (dph)	Up to three storeys in height	55% residential; 33% open space; 12% community uses
Large-scale	50+ dwellings per hectare (dph)	Up to three storeys in height	55% residential; 33% open space; 12% community uses

- 1.3.37 In order to establish the potential landscape capacity of each character area/land parcel, the overall landscape sensitivity and landscape value have been combined using the matrix in **Table 2** below.

Table 2 Indicative Landscape Capacity Assessment Matrix

Overall Landscape Character Sensitivity	Low	Low to Medium	Medium	Medium to High	Medium to High	High
	Low to Medium	Low to Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium to High	Medium to High
	Medium	Low to Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
	Medium to High	Low to Medium	Low to Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
	High	Low	Low to Medium	Low to Medium	Low to Medium	Low to Medium
		High	Medium to High	Medium	Low to Medium	Low
		Landscape Value				

1.3.38 The indicative landscape capacity of each land parcel/character area within the study area has been assessed using the following five-point scale.

Landscape Capacity Scale

- **Low Landscape Capacity** – typically a landscape with very limited potential capacity to accommodate the development scenarios due to generally high landscape value and high landscape sensitivity of the character area. New development has a high potential of having a negative impact upon key features and characteristics of the landscape, which are desirable to safeguard in line with relevant national/local planning policy objectives.
- **Low to Medium Landscape Capacity** – typically a landscape assessed as having medium to high landscape sensitivity and medium to high landscape value. New development has potential to erode the positive key features and characteristics of the landscape, which are desirable to safeguard in line with relevant national/local planning policy objectives. Taking into account site-specific constraints, there may be potential to accommodate small-scale development in specific locations within parts of the landscape with lower sensitivity, subject to appropriate siting, design and landscape mitigation.

- **Medium Landscape Capacity** – typically a landscape assessed as having medium landscape value and medium landscape sensitivity (or other such similar combination). Subject to appropriate siting, design and landscaping mitigation, small and/or medium-scale new development could potentially be accommodated without negatively impacting upon key features and characteristics of the landscape, which are desirable to safeguard.
- **Medium to High Landscape Capacity** – typically a landscape assessed as having low to medium landscape value and low to medium landscape sensitivity (or other such similar combination). Subject to appropriate siting, design and landscape mitigation small to medium-scale new development could potentially be accommodated without negatively impacting upon key features and characteristics of the landscape, which are desirable to safeguard. Higher density development could potentially be accommodated, with careful consideration of design and context.
- **High Landscape Capacity** – typically a landscape with greater potential capacity to accommodate the development scenarios due to the generally low landscape value and low landscape sensitivity of the character area. Subject to appropriate siting, design and landscape mitigation, small to large-scale new development could potentially be accommodated without negatively impacting upon key features and characteristics of the landscape, which are desirable to safeguard.

- 1.3.39 It should be noted that evaluating a landscape’s capacity for development is a complex issue requiring professional judgement about the susceptibility/vulnerability of the landscape resource and its visual sensitivity to the type of change being considered, and the value attached to the landscape or to specific features.
- 1.3.40 In addition, it should not necessarily be assumed that the assessment score applies consistently across the entire character area. For example, it could be possible for a certain scale/type of development, where carefully sited, well-designed and with suitable mitigation, to be accommodated in a character area assessed as having an overall high or moderate sensitivity to the development scenario. Conversely, in a character area assessed as having an overall low sensitivity to the development scenario, it could be possible that the sensitivity is higher in parts of the character area due to locally specific constraints.
- 1.3.41 While the study provides an indication of the overall landscape sensitivity of the character areas within the study area, and their relative capacity to accommodate development, care should be taken not to interpret the results as a definitive statement on the suitability of a specific site/location to accommodate a particular type or scale of development. The findings of the Study would need to be supplemented by detailed studies at a site-specific level.

Recommended Development Scale

- 1.3.42 This is based upon professional judgement, with consideration of the assessed landscape value, landscape sensitivity and indicative landscape capacity. Having identified the potential capacity for development, the outline development scenarios are considered alongside the key characteristics and particular sensitivities of the character area in order to identify the most appropriate scale of development.

Landscape Planning Policy Review & Recommendations

- 1.3.43 A review of relevant existing landscape planning policies has been undertaken, giving consideration to the findings of the study. Where appropriate, recommendations for policy wording and changes to designation boundaries have been included as a guide for the emerging Local Plans.

2.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

2.1 Evolution of the Landscape & Townscapes

Physical Influences

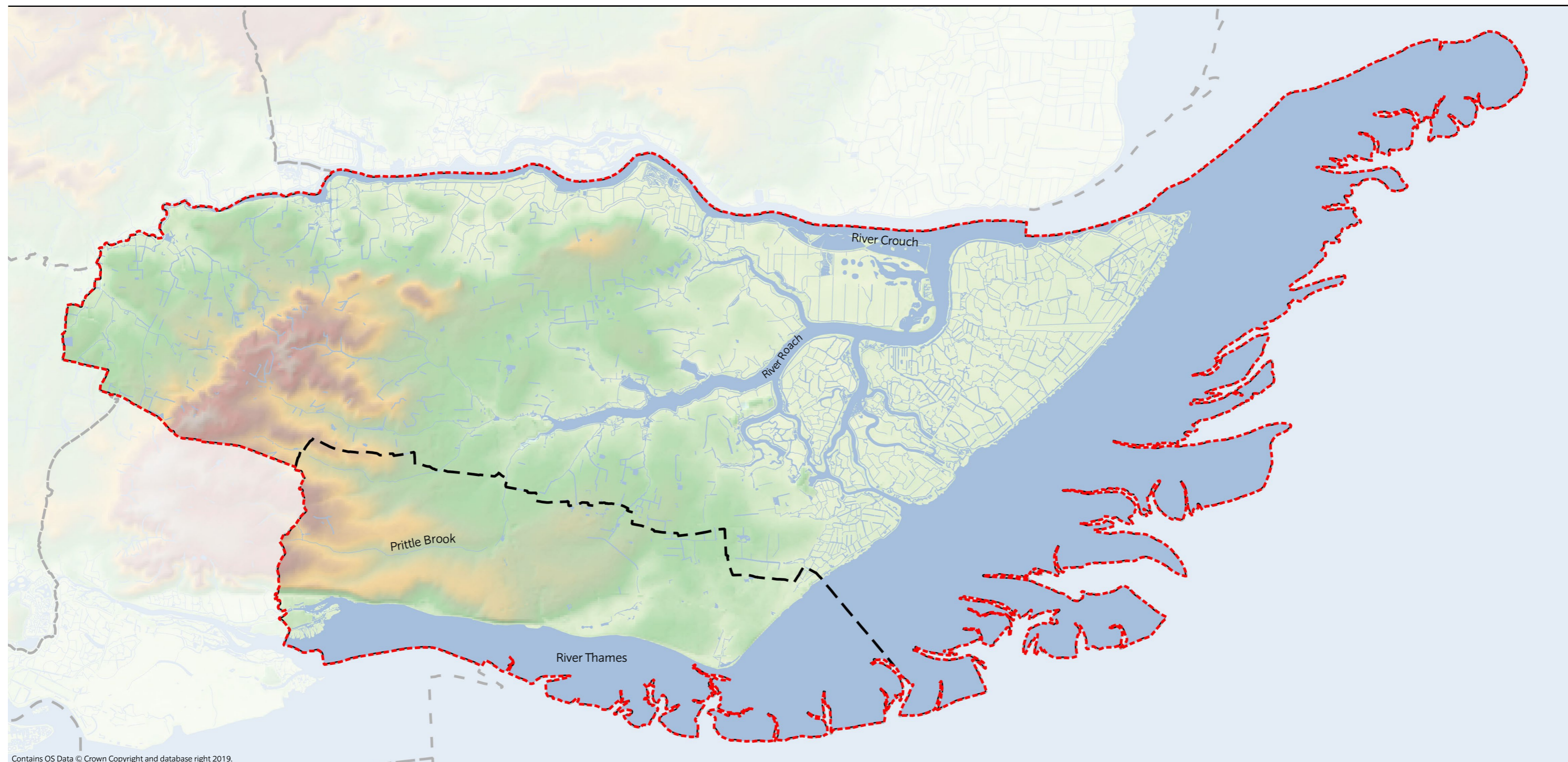
Topography

Study Area Overview

- 2.1.1 As illustrated on **Figure 2.1** the study area is generally formed by low-lying landform associated with the Thames Estuary and coastal location. Much of the area comprises extensive, flat, open land that has been historically reclaimed to form marshes. The landform rises gradually to the west from sea level on the east coast, through Southend-on-Sea to approximately 35m AOD at Westcliff-on-Sea. The highest topography within the study area is between Rayleigh and Hockley at approximately 70m AOD.
- 2.1.2 Inland the topography dips and rises again across ridges defined by small watercourses. These ridges have an east-west orientation following the shape of the coastline and sloping down to the mudflats and marshes to the east. They extend east from the hills that span north-south through Rochford and Castle Point.

Rochford District

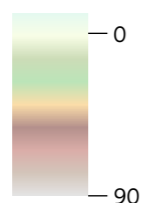
- 2.1.3 Rochford District is predominantly low-lying and flat, particularly in the east associated with the reclaimed land of the islands. Landform begins to gently rise west of the River Roach and Potton Creek through Paglesham and towards Stonebridge. On the northeast edge of the District, Canewdon is located on one of the highest hills of the Essex coastline. The land rises from the River Crouch to approximately 35m AOD within the village centre. This landform stands out from the surrounding topography in the east of the District, which ranges between 0-15m AOD.
- 2.1.4 Further inland, landform dips and rises to localised ridges. Contours rise from approximately 10m AOD on the eastern edge of Rochford to 70m AOD on the northern edge of Rayleigh. Beyond this, to the west the topography slopes down again through Rayleigh to the western edge of the District.



KEY

- Study Area
- Planning Authority Boundary
- Watercourses/
Waterbodies

Height AOD (m)



Southend Borough

- 2.1.5 The eastern seafront of Southend-on-Sea is low-lying, whilst an escarpment forms the western seafront providing clear views across the estuary. Inland the topography gently rises and dips around small watercourses. Overall, landform rises from sea level in the east of the Borough to approximately 50m AOD on the west Borough boundary. Landform gently dips north from the coastal escarpment towards Eastwood and into Rochford District.

Hydrology

Study Area Overview

- 2.1.6 As illustrated in **Figure 2.1** water is the defining feature of the study area. The landscape has been shaped by hydrology in a variety of ways. The study area forms part of the Thames Estuary, which is primarily defined by the River Thames which enters the North Sea to the south of Southend-on-Sea. The study area is defined by the River Crouch to the north and a number of tributaries flowing into the River Thames to the south.

Rochford District

- 2.1.7 The River Roach rises in the Rayleigh Hills and flows east, dissecting Rochford District in a west-east direction and joining the River Crouch between Wallasea and Foulness Islands.
- 2.1.8 Much of the coastal land has been historically reclaimed to form a variety of pastoral and arable farmland. A large number of watercourses cross the coastal landscape. These watercourses form an irregular pattern across Foulness Island, with more structured drainage pattern characterising Wallasea Island. Further inland the number of drains reduces, particularly as the topography begins to rise.
- 2.1.9 Small lakes and reservoirs have been formed in the west of Rochford District, associated with recreational and nursery farming land uses.

Southend Borough

- 2.1.10 There are fewer watercourses and features associated with Southend Borough. The coastal setting is the defining characteristic of the town. The Prittle Brook flows west-east following the direction of the ridges and coastline, through the west of the Borough before bending north into Rochford and becoming the River Roach. There are small ponds and watercourses associated

with recreational land use at Southchurch Park and Thorpe Hall Golf Club along the eastern edge of Southend, and also within Gunners Park at the southern point of the Borough.

Geology

Study Area Overview

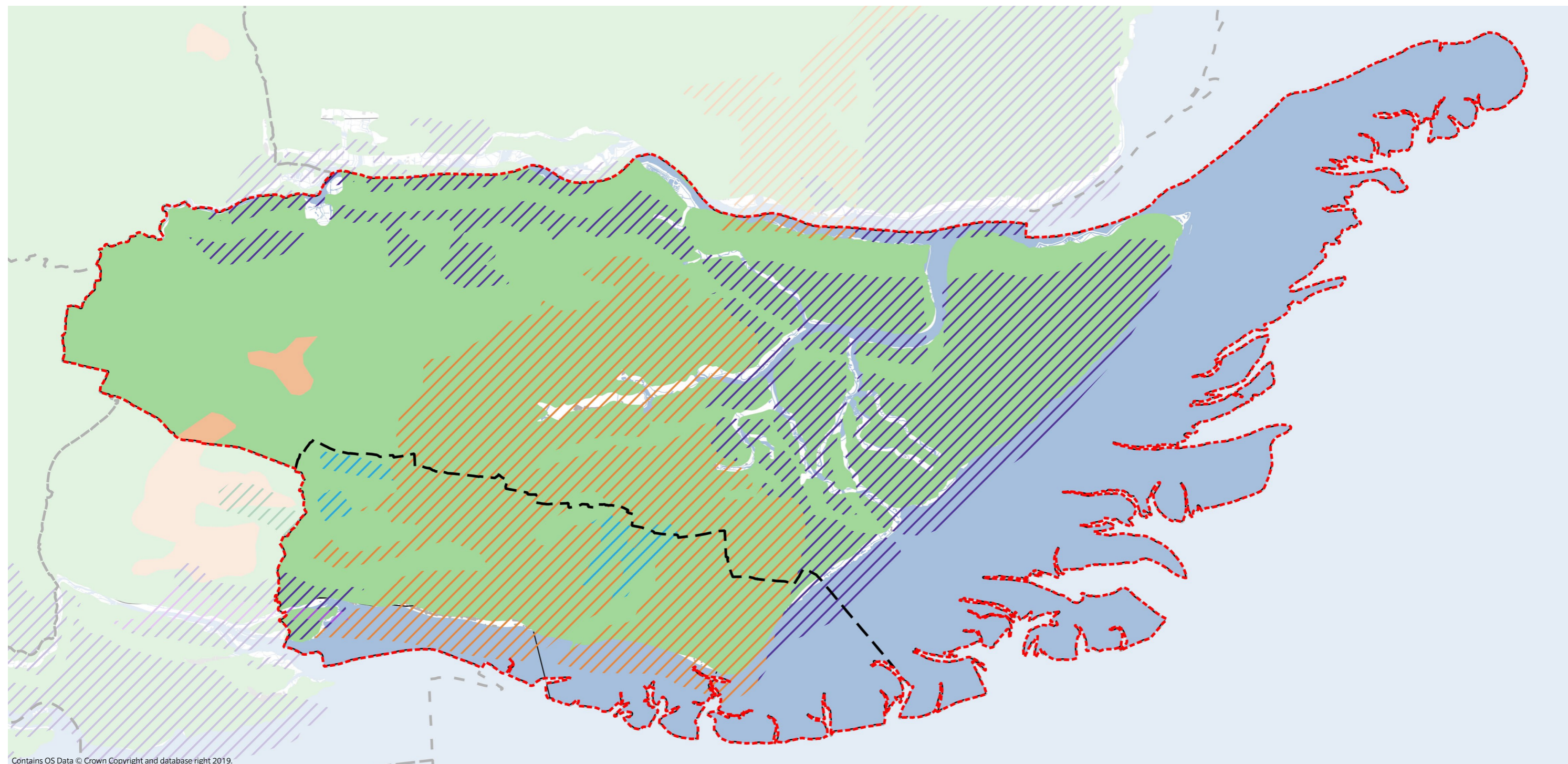
- 2.1.11 As illustrated on **Figure 2.2** the bedrock geology across the majority of Rochford and Southend forms part of the Thames Group. Thames Group comprises clay, silt, sand and gravel.
- 2.1.12 Historic sea level fluctuations and diversions of the rivers have resulted in extensive deposits of sand and gravel across the study area and wider county of Essex. The low-level East Essex Gravels contribute to the geology of the study area.
- 2.1.13 The intertidal alluvial muds have established drained loamy soils across the area, which provide fertile and productive land. Soils across the river terraces form some of the best agricultural land in the district. These are naturally free draining, particularly where brickearth is present, and easy to work.
- 2.1.14 Much of the east of the study area is reclaimed coastal marshes. The soils are heavy gleys that undergo periodic waterlogging from fluctuations in the water table.

Rochford District

- 2.1.15 The eastern part of the District comprises Thames Group bedrock overlain with alluvial deposits. These deposits stretch along the northern part of the district, parallel to the River Crouch. There are areas of Brecklesham Group and Barton Group bedrock in the west of the District, which correspond with the ridged landform.
- 2.1.16 The central part of the district is formed of river terrace deposits, which are extensive within the Thames Basin. These are largely formed of sand and gravel.

Southend Borough

- 2.1.17 The Thames Group bedrock extends across Southend Borough. Superficial geology is largely river terrace deposits, across much of the east and central part of the Borough. There are small areas of brickearth to the north and northwest.



KEY

- Study Area
- Planning Authority Boundary

Bedrock Geology:

- Thames Group - Clay, Silt, Sand & Gravel
- Bracklesham Group & Barton Group (Undifferentiated) - Sand, Silt & Clay

Superficial Geology:

- Alluvium
- Brickearth
- Landslip
- River Terrace Deposits (Undifferentiated)
- Sand & Gravel of Uncertain Age & Origin

Biodiversity

Study Area Overview

- 2.1.18 As illustrated in **Figure 2.3** there are several statutory and non-statutory biodiversity designations¹⁰ associated with this coastal area including Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar Sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Local Nature Reserves (LNR).

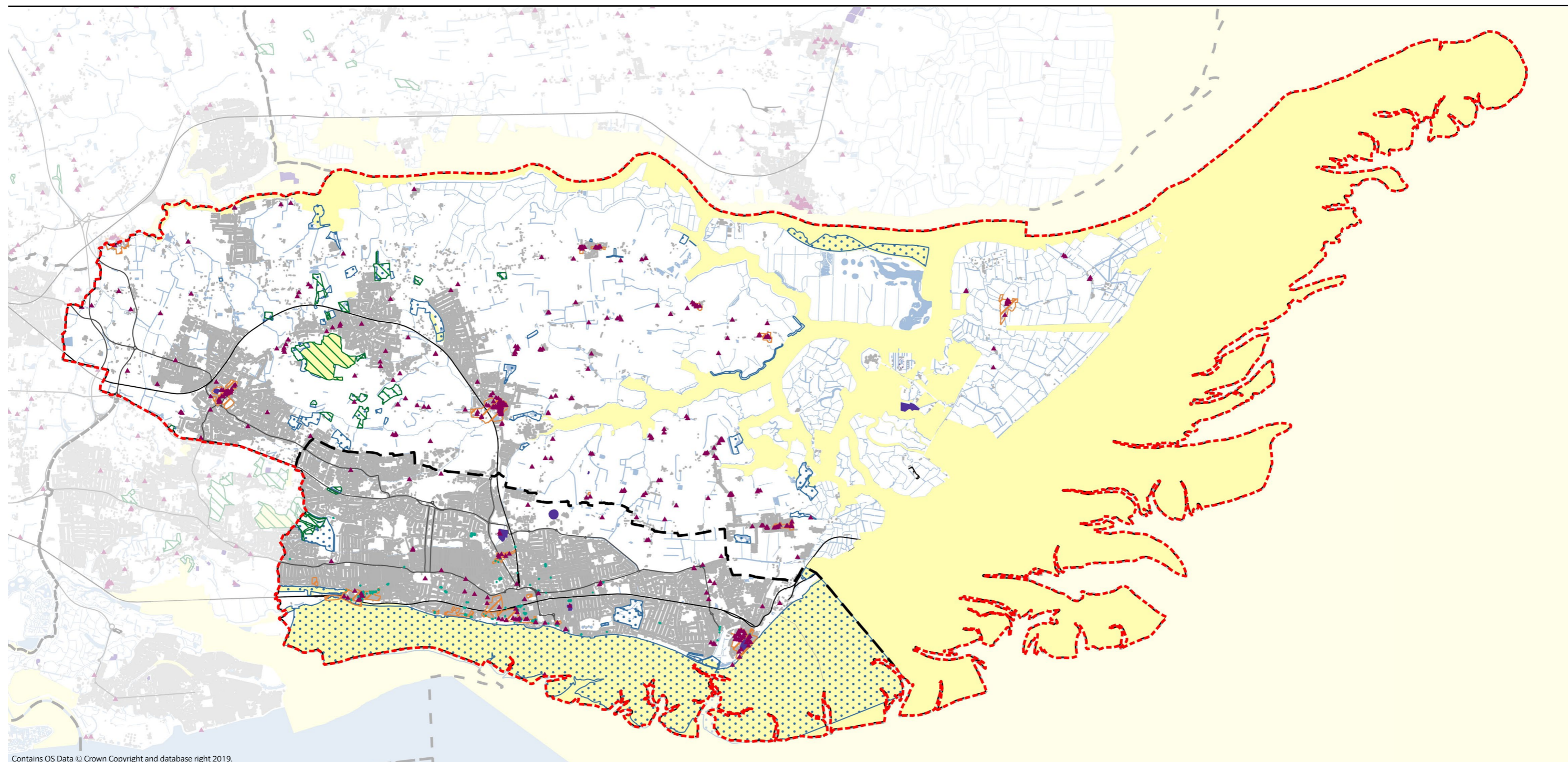
Rochford District

- 2.1.19 The Essex Estuaries SAC extends north from Shoeburyness, along the river channels of the Roach and Crouch and continues north along the Essex Coast.
- 2.1.20 The Crouch and Roach Estuaries and Foulness Ramsar Sites and Special Protection Areas (SPA) also extend along the coastline of Rochford District and along the mudflats of the river channels including the southern drained area of Foulness Island.
- 2.1.21 There are four Local Nature Reserves (LNR) in Rochford District. Hockley Woods is the largest, forming an area of Ancient Woodland to the south of Hockley. Marylands on the north side of Hockley is also a small area of Ancient Woodland. Magnolia Fields on the west of Ashingdon is a former brickworks site and Kendall Park is natural woodland on the shore of the River Crouch at Hullbridge.
- 2.1.22 As shown in **Figure 2.4** the majority of the rural area falls within the Metropolitan Green Belt. Foulness Island is outside of the Green Belt.
- 2.1.23 There are a number of non-statutory biodiversity designations scattered across the District including Local Wildlife Sites such as Wallasea Managed Retreat and Brandyhole Marsh Extension.

Southend Borough

- 2.1.24 The Benfleet and Southend Marshes SPA extends along the coastline from Canvey Island (west of the Borough boundary) to Shoeburyness, where it borders the Foulness SPA. The Benfleet and Southend Marshes Ramsar Site covers the same area. This is also designated a SSSI.

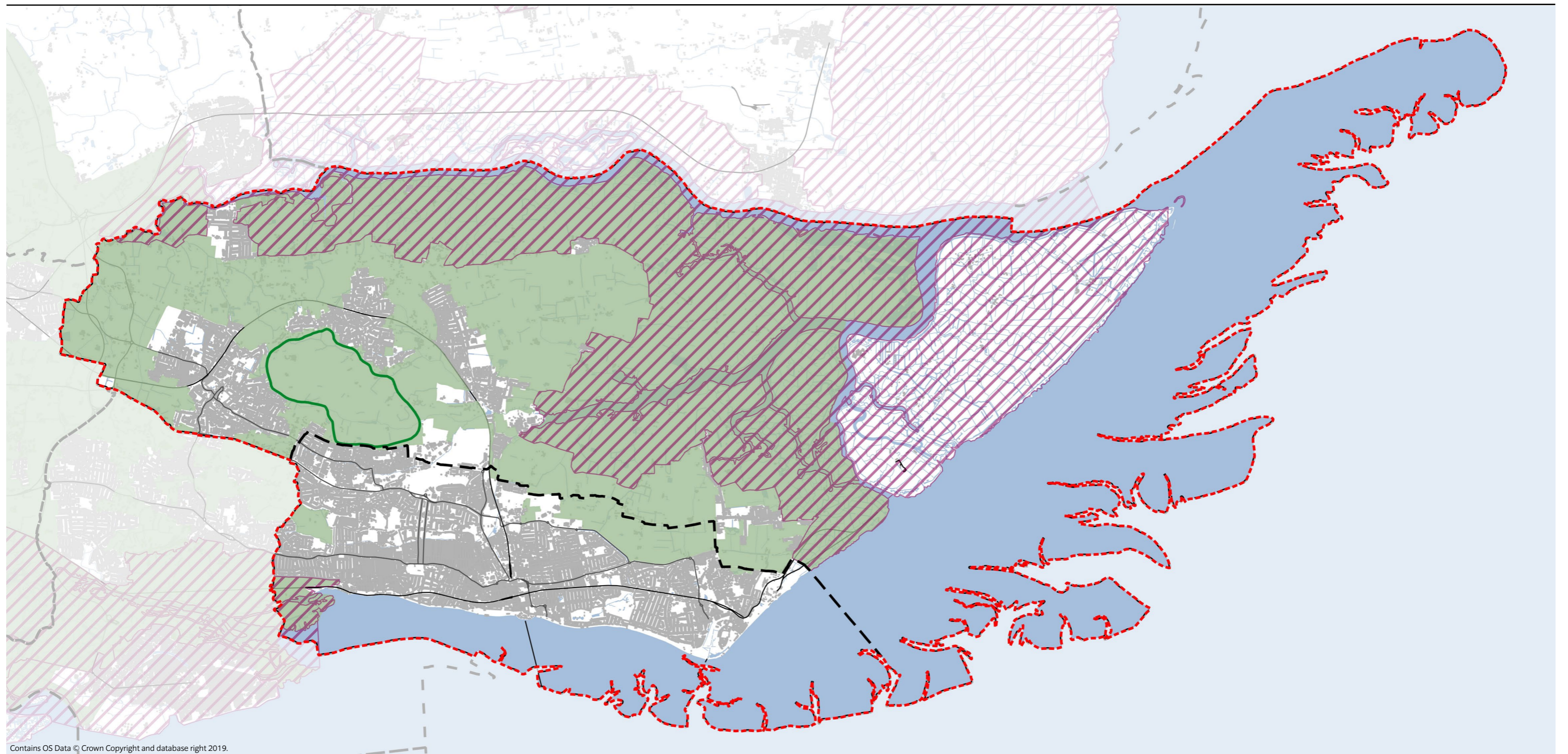
¹⁰ These include local wildlife sites and nature reserves in Rochford District and Southend-on-Sea Borough



KEY

- Study Area
- Planning Authority Boundary

- Listed Buildings
- Locally Listed Buildings
- Scheduled Monuments
- Conservation Areas
- Statutory Biodiversity Designations
- Non-Statutory Biodiversity Designations
- Ancient Woodland



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KEY

- Study Area
- Planning Authority Boundary
- Green Belt
- Coastal Protection Belt
- Upper Roach Valley

- 2.1.25 The Southend on Sea Foreshore LNR spans the coastline from Leigh Cliffs to Shoeburyness. Shoeburyness Old Ranges LNR is located at the southern point of the coastline at Shoeburyness. Belton Hills LNR is on the southwest edge of the Borough.
- 2.1.26 The Metropolitan Green Belt extends into the western edge of the Borough, within Belfairs Park and across Hadleigh Marsh and Two Trees Island on the southwest coastline. There is also an area of Green Belt on the northeast edge of the Borough, north of the A1159 and A13.
- 2.1.27 There are a number of non-statutory biodiversity designations scattered across the Borough including Local Wildlife Sites at Belfairs Park and Belton Hills.

Human Influences

Archaeology

Study Area Overview

- 2.1.28 There is archaeological evidence of human activity dating from the Mesolithic period including axes that may relate to clearance of former woodland.
- 2.1.29 The existing settlement pattern across Essex can be attributed to Roman settlement, with towns developed at communication nodal points. Numerous Roman finds have been recorded across southeast Essex. This was a densely occupied and productive agricultural zone but with dispersed settlement pattern.
- 2.1.30 There is strong evidence of Saxon settlement throughout southeast Essex, with many of the place names appearing to refer to early settlements.
- 2.1.31 There is clear evidence of an historic landscape created through a variety of human interactions. These have been further developed through further intensification of human activity particularly exploiting the grazing land of the marshes, and the fish and shellfish resources of the estuary.
- 2.1.32 The medieval settlement pattern of southeast Essex was generally dispersed, with church/hall complexes being the focal point. In the coastal settlements, the church is often on higher ground and the hall nearer to the sea. Much of present field system originates in 12th century, if not before and is characterised by small irregular fields. Extensive marshes along the northern border

of the District and across the islands form a flat, open landscape of medieval and post-medieval grazing marsh.

Rochford District

- 2.1.33 Geological deposits in Rochford contain evidence of Palaeolithic occupation, including an important site at Barling where various artefacts have been discovered.
- 2.1.34 Mesolithic sites have been documented along the Crouch Estuary at Rawreth, Hullbridge, South Fambridge and Canewdon. Neolithic activity is also documented along the river terraces, including flint artefacts at Canewdon. Further Neolithic sites are on the Barling Terrace between Great Wakering and Shoeburyness, and also at Hambro Hill, Rayleigh.
- 2.1.35 Various Bronze Age sites including Early Bronze Age burials and evidence of settlement through to Late Bronze Age and Iron Age have been excavated across Rochford, including settlement around North Shoebury and Great Wakering.
- 2.1.36 Documented Roman finds are concentrated to the area south of Rochford, associated with brickearth/gravel extraction sites. Plumberow Mount near Hockley is thought to represent the remains of a Roman burial mound. There is evidence of land use for cereal production and grazing of sheep in the coastal marshes, as well as exploitation of the coast for oysters and whelks.
- 2.1.37 Early Saxon artefacts have been documented from the brickfields at Great Wakering and excavations at Barling and Paglesham. A Saxon cemetery has also been excavated at Rayleigh. Some of the best evidence is from the banks of the Prittle Brook between Southend and Rochford District.
- 2.1.38 Rayleigh was the principal town in the Medieval period. Rayleigh Castle was built by Swein of Essex between 1066 and 1086 on a spur from the Rayleigh Hills. The castle was taken into royal ownership in 1163. The town established within the outer bailey of the castle and as ribbon development along the main road. Rochford was a market town some distance to the east of Rochford Hall (church and hall complex), formed around the Market Square and as ribbon development along South Street to the bridge over the River Roach. Medieval settlements were nucleated settlements including Great Wakering and Canewdon and dispersed settlements that comprised of a church/hall complex, moated sites, few cottages and scattered farms. Many of the existing farm sites can be traced back to the 13th and 14th centuries. Marsh pasture was particularly important for sheep farming. Manors within southeast Essex had grazing rights across

the Foulness Island archipelago and the pattern of enclaves continued into the post-medieval period. The present day settlement pattern across the marshes originates in the medieval period.

- 2.1.39 Southeast Essex remained essentially rural through the post-medieval period and sheep pasture on the marshes remained important. The exploitation of fish and shellfish continued to expand and contribute to the local economy.
- 2.1.40 Military activity around Foulness and at Shoebury dates from 1855 when the experimental range for artillery was established here. The military occupation of this coastline has resulted in much of the historic features and wildlife interest being preserved across the marshlands.

Southend Borough

- 2.1.41 Similarly to Rochford District, there is evidence of human activity across Southend Borough dating to the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods. The present day coastline was largely formed following these periods, as sea levels rose.
- 2.1.42 There is evidence of people first settling around Prittle Brook during the Mesolithic period and that the population gradually evolved from hunter-gatherer to more settled agricultural practices. Systems of ditched rectangular fields associated with the Bronze Age have been identified at North Shoebury. There is also evidence of prehistoric activity around the settlement of Shoebury and suggesting ramparts in the present Garrison protected an Iron Age settlement.
- 2.1.43 Roman occupation influenced the Borough and there have been various discoveries of Roman artefacts during road and rail construction in the early 20th century, which suggest that the settlement was of some significance. The Romans built a fortified settlement at the Ness, within the location of the current Garrison development.
- 2.1.44 It is thought that the first settlement at Prittlewell was a Saxon village close to the church that still contains part of a 7th century arch. A Saxon burial ground is also documented to the east of Priory Park. Human settlement at Leigh is also thought to date to this period. Saxon invaders re-established a settlement at Shoebury, which later became a base for the Danes.
- 2.1.45 Leigh, Prittlewell and Shoebury remained isolated settlements through the medieval and post-medieval periods with marsh fringing the coast around Leigh and Shoebury. Scattered farmhouses and labourer/fisherman cottages would have been scattered across the Borough, particularly relating to the coastline. Domesday records from 1086 document two manors near Prittlewell, one of which became Prittlewell Priory the lands of which extended south to the seafront. Leigh developed as a fishing hamlet, which increased trade through the Middle Ages

and had a parish church by the 13th century. Shoebury remained isolated, with the 12th century parish church and hall on slightly higher ground, inland to the west. The wider Borough comprised scattered farmhouses and halls with clusters of cottages. What is now Southend-on-Sea was a cluster of fisherman's cottages to the south of Prittlewell.

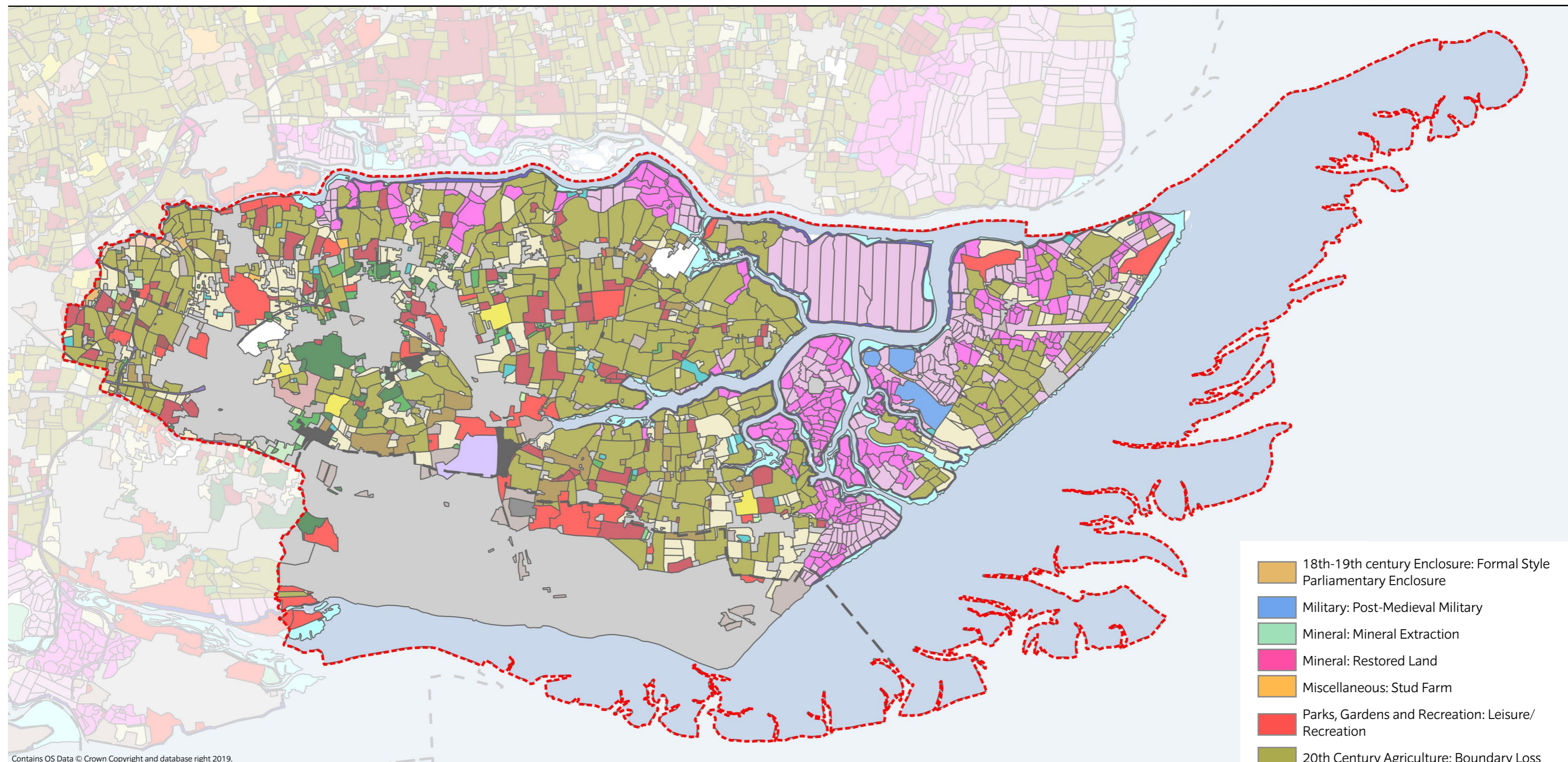
Historic Landscape

Study Area Overview

- 2.1.46 Historic Landscape Character Types (HLCT) identified within the study area by the Essex Historic Landscape Characterisation Project are shown in **Figure 2.5**. This demonstrates how the landscape has changed through the variety of land uses, resulting in 20th century agriculture appearing to dominate particularly inland within Rochford District. Southend Borough is largely a modern built-up area comprising urban development.
- 2.1.47 There are small areas of 18th-19th century enclosure scattered across the study area. More complex areas of coastal - drained enclosure are evident around the River Roach estuary. The western part of the study area is more densely settled, with modern built up areas forming northern extension to Southend. Areas of ancient woodland are remnant of what was historically a wooded landscape.

Rochford District

- 2.1.48 Rochford District HLCT vary with topography and proximity to watercourses. Agricultural land uses of varying enclosure patterns span the majority of the District. 20th century agriculture has resulted in enclosure boundary loss particularly through the central area of the District, with smaller areas of change on Foulness Island. Coaxial enclosure remains evident across the District, most often adjacent to settlement areas.
- 2.1.49 Along the River Crouch and across much of the Foulness Island archipelago coastal drained enclosure associated with the reclaimed marshland remains. Areas of this have been altered through the 19th to 20th century and a more rectilinear enclosure pattern introduced, particularly evident on Wallasea Island.
- 2.1.50 Urban settlement areas are grouped in the west of the District, with good communication links with Southend to the south and west of the District to Basildon and into London. Small settlements and clusters of cottages are scattered through the central and eastern parts. Plotland type settlement is still evident particularly at Ashingdon and north of Rayleigh.



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KEY

- Study Area
- Planning Authority Boundary

Essex County Historic Landscape Character Types:

- Pre-18th Century Enclosure: Coaxial Enclosure
- Pre-18th Century Enclosure: Dual-axis - Rectilinear 'co-axial' fields
- Pre-18th Century Enclosure: Irregular Enclosure
- Built-up areas - Historic: Religious Institutions
- Built-up areas - Modern: Built-up areas - urban development

- Built-up areas - Modern: Plotlands
- Coastal - drained enclosure: Drained reclamation - curvilinear - pre-18th C
- Coastal - drained enclosure: Drained reclamation - rectilinear - 19th/20th C
- Coastal - managed wetland: Oyster beds
- Coastal - managed wetland: Unimproved Intertidal
- Communications: Airfield - civilian

- Communications: Motorway, railway
- Horticulture: Allotments
- Horticulture: Orchard
- Horticulture: Nursery with Glasshouse
- Inland - Managed Wetland: Enclosed Meadow
- Industry: Industrial
- 18th-19th century Enclosure: Piecemeal Enclosure by Agreement

- 18th-19th century Enclosure: Formal Style Parliamentary Enclosure
- Military: Post-Medieval Military
- Mineral: Mineral Extraction
- Mineral: Restored Land
- Miscellaneous: Stud Farm
- Parks, Gardens and Recreation: Leisure/ Recreation
- 20th Century Agriculture: Boundary Loss
- 20th Century Agriculture: Boundary Loss - with Relict Elements
- 20th Century Agriculture: 20th Century Enclosure
- Water Features: Sea Defences
- Water Features: Water Reservoir
- Woodland: Ancient Woodland
- Woodland: 19th-20th Century Woodland Plantation

- 2.1.51 Woodland areas are concentrated on the slopes of the Rayleigh Hills with scattered, small woodlands to the north of Hockley and larger area defining the southern extent of Hockley. Small woodlands are also dispersed across the agricultural landscape between the settlement areas at the head of the River Roach.
- 2.1.52 The coastal part of the District is managed wetland that continues along the river channels and corresponds with the various biodiversity designations Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Foulness Ramsar Site, Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Protection Area (SPA).

Southend Borough

- 2.1.53 The majority of Southend comprises modern built up area with scattered pockets of industry to the east, northwest and central area.
- 2.1.54 An area of ancient woodland extends from Castle Point across the western Borough boundary at Belfairs Park with a small pocket bounding the A127 north of this.
- 2.1.55 The northeast edge of the Borough, outside of the urban area, is primarily rural comprising of 20th century agriculture. The western part of this strip is recreational land including a golf course and park that adjoin a crematorium and cemetery on the north edge of the urban area, encompassed by an industrial estate.
- 2.1.56 The coastal part of the Borough is managed wetland that continues along the river channels and corresponds with the various biodiversity designations across the estuary including Benfleet and Southend Marshes Ramsar Site and SSSI.

Settlement Development

Study Area Overview

- 2.1.57 The World Wars altered the Essex landscape, introducing features such as airfields and landing strips as well as pillboxes and the radar station at Canewdon.
- 2.1.58 The post-War re-building programme resulted in mineral extraction and the creation of broad, shallow brickearth quarries north and east of Southend. The material is evident in housing across the region.

- 2.1.59 There was massive expansion of the urban areas as a result of agricultural land being sold off as housing parcels in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. There are surviving plotland areas, although much have been regularised. Following this, the 1960s saw further expansion of rural areas as London overspill.
- 2.1.60 Expansion of industrialisation has also led to expansion of towns, with estates added to the settlement fringes. Latterly, recreational land uses including golf courses are located within the settlement edge landscapes.

Rochford District

- 2.1.61 Settlement patterns began to change with the introduction of the railways in the 19th century. The expansion of Southend as a seaside resort also impacted on settlement through Rochford District. The introduction of the Great Eastern Railway led to the expansion of the quiet village of Hockley as landowners sold their farmland for development.
- 2.1.62 Rochford was heavily defended during the World Wars, with pillboxes evident across the landscape today. Southend airport was a former fighter base and there is the former Radar station at Canewdon.
- 2.1.63 Agricultural depression in the 19th-20th century resulted in many farms being sold to entrepreneurs who divided the land and sold separate plots to people wanting to leave the crowded city of London. Informal 'plotland' development is evident in Ashingdon and Rochford, some of which has since been regularised.
- 2.1.64 Agriculture experienced changes in the mid to late 20th century, altering parts of the southeast Essex landscape. Levelling works and straightening of drainage channels on Wallasea Island has completely altered the historic landscape.
- 2.1.65 There are expanses of post-World War II housing within the main settlement areas of Rochford, Rayleigh and Hockley. This is interspersed with more recent suburbs. Prior to this the character was much less densely settled, with piecemeal plotland style development.

Southend Borough

- 2.1.66 Southend began to be developed in the late 18th century. Building of railways in the mid-19th century saw an increase in tourism at Southend, resulting in an expansion of the urban landscape.

- 2.1.67 Prior to the introduction of the railway growth was gradual. The historic cores of Leigh, Shoebury and Prittlewell were dispersed along the coast and Regency and early to mid-Victorian growth began to extend along the seafront at Southend. As the railway was extended east to Shoeburyness and the Liverpool Street line introduced to the north, Southend became popular as a seaside resort and the urban area began to grow. There was also expansion of Leigh-on-Sea and the Garrison was established at Shoeburyness.
- 2.1.68 Much of the early to mid-Victorian development in the central part of Southend was focussed around the first railway station and consisted of terraced streets ascending in size with the larger, grander properties on the seafront. Late Victorian development saw the introduction of larger villas in addition to more terraced housing following the regular street grid pattern extending out of the central area.
- 2.1.69 Rapid expansion of Southend took place in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods, much of which was built around a planned street network with grid pattern. A more piecemeal pattern of development followed during and after the First World War, which was more focussed around the north of Leigh-on-Sea, Westcliff and southern part of Prittlewell. Southchurch also began to develop north of the railway and along the seafront.
- 2.1.70 The majority of development continued to be focussed along the seafront and London Road through the inter-war period. Expansion also began to take place, pushing north and extending west at Leigh-on-Sea. Following World War II rapid expansion took place, with pre-fabricated systems introduced for speed. However, brick built houses soon took over once more.
- 2.1.71 Much of the existing settlement pattern was formed prior to the 1960s. Shoeburyness in particular, expanded post-war due to the development of the A127 along the northern edge of the main urban area. This also resulted in a focus for development including industrial and business in the northern part of the Borough.

Heritage Assets

Study Area Overview

- 2.1.72 As illustrated on **Figure 2.3**, nationally designated sites with statutory protection within the study area include 12 Scheduled Monuments (SMs) such as Rayleigh Castle, and the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment, Foulness.
- 2.1.73 There are 24 Conservation Areas within the study area, predominantly focussed within the historic centres of settlements.

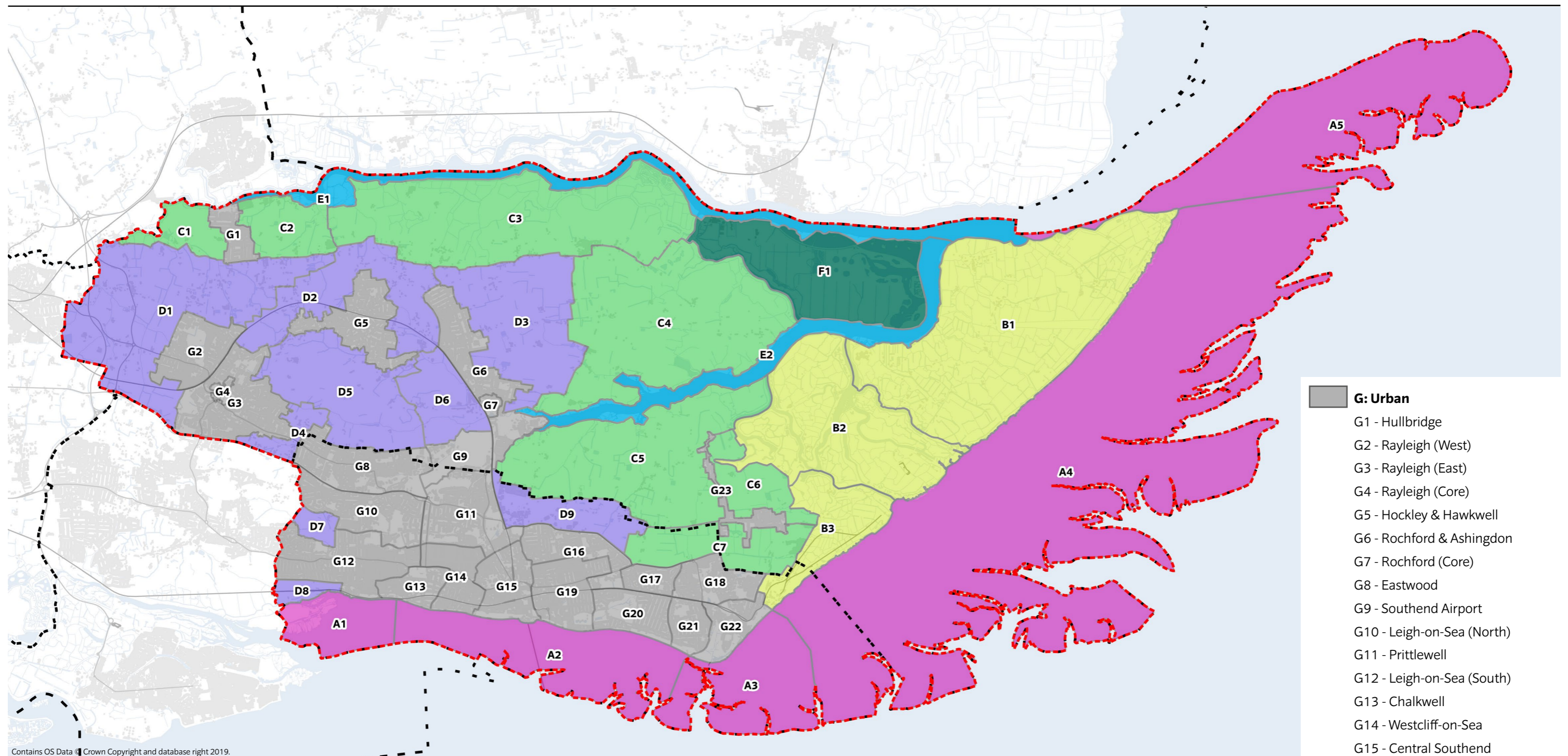
- 2.1.74 Listed Buildings are primarily focussed around the Conservation Areas. They are examples of historic building types dating from the medieval period and include churches, halls, cottages, timber framed and weather-boarded properties, Victorian and Edwardian houses.
- 2.1.75 There are a number of Listed Buildings scattered across the rural area. These are largely churches, halls and farmhouses.

Rochford District

- 2.1.76 There are six SMs in Rochford District including a Romano-British burial site on Foulness Island, Rayleigh Castle, Rochford Hall, Plumberow Mount, Heavy anti-aircraft gunsite and atomic weapons research establishment at Foulness Island.
- 2.1.77 A large number of Listed Buildings are scattered across the District, with clusters in the historic town centres of Rochford and Rayleigh, within villages including Great Wakering and Canewdon, and in smaller settlements such as Paglesham and associated with church/hall complexes across the rural area.
- 2.1.78 Listed Buildings in Rochford town centre are focussed along North, South, East and West Streets within the historic core. They include period houses along South Street, cottages along West Street, 18th/19th century weatherboard cottages, timber framed halls such as the Grade II* 14th century hall on South Street and 19th century red-brick carriage buildings. Further out from the town centre is Grade I listed Rochford Hall, which retains the agricultural setting in part. Grade II* listed Church of St Andrew is nearby.
- 2.1.79 Within Rayleigh the Listed Buildings are scattered along High Street onto Hockley Road and Church Street. Much of the historic core has been redeveloped through the 20th century. Listed Buildings include 17th and 19th century cottages, some of which are timber framed, Dutch Cottage, Rayleigh Windmill and Holy Trinity church that is thought to date back to the 12th century.
- 2.1.80 Conservation Areas are located in Rochford, Rayleigh, Battlesbridge on the northwest District boundary, Canewdon, Paglesham, Paglesham Eastend, Great Wakering, Foulness and Churchend.

Southend Borough

- 2.1.81 There are six SMs in Southend Borough including Prittlewell Camp hillfort, Southchurch Hall moated site, Danish Camp at Shoeburyness, Prittlewell Priory, World War II caisson and Cold War defence boom at Shoeburyness.
- 2.1.82 Listed Buildings are clustered in Shoeburyness, Leigh and central Southend. Those in Shoeburyness include a variety of Grade II structures and buildings associated with the Garrison including Commandant's House and Officer's Mess at Horseshoe Barracks. West of the Garrison is Grade II* Church of St Andrew and Grade II South Shoebury Hall Farmhouse.
- 2.1.83 Listed Buildings in Leigh include the Grade II Crooked Billet pub, white-washed cottages and Leigh Library and Grade II* Church of St Clement. These are located in Leigh Old Town Conservation Area, which is formed almost exclusively along one street lined with buildings that back onto the sea and the cliffs.
- 2.1.84 Listed Buildings in Southend include structures such as the Southend-on-Sea War Memorial and a telephone kiosk as well as the Pleasure Pier, Georgian terraces on the clifftop and Victorian hotels. There are several Conservation Areas along the frontage of Southend, that highlight the variety of development typologies associated with the expansion of the seaside destination.
- 2.1.85 Other Listed Buildings are within Prittlewell Conservation Area, along London Road, a small number in Eastwood and in the rural area in the northeast.



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KEY

- Study Area
- Planning Authority
- Boundary

Character Types/ Areas:

- A: Estuarine Marsh/Mudflats**
- A1 - Leigh Sand
 - A2 - Southend Flat
 - A3 - Shoebury Ness
 - A4 - Maplin Sands & Foulness Sands
 - A5 - Foulness Sands & Crouch Estuary

- B: Drained Estuarine Marsh**
- B1 - Foulness Island
 - B2 - Pottton, Havengore, Rushley & New England Islands
 - B3 - Shoeburyness North

- C: Coastal Farmland**
- C1 - West of Hullbridge
 - C2 - East of Hullbridge
 - C3 - Canewdon
 - C4 - Paglesham
 - C5 - Stonebridge
 - C6 - Little Wakering
 - C7 - Great Wakering

- D: Wooded Farmland and Hills**
- D1 - Rawreth
 - D2 - North of Hockley and Hawkwell
 - D3 - East of Rochford
 - D4 - Southeast of Rayleigh
 - D5 - Hockley Woods
 - D6 - Stroud Green

- E: River Valley**
- E1 - River Crouch
 - E2 - River Roach
- F: Coastal Mosaic**
- F1 - Wallasea Island

- G: Urban**
- G1 - Hullbridge
 - G2 - Rayleigh (West)
 - G3 - Rayleigh (East)
 - G4 - Rayleigh (Core)
 - G5 - Hockley & Hawkwell
 - G6 - Rochford & Ashingdon
 - G7 - Rochford (Core)
 - G8 - Eastwood
 - G9 - Southend Airport
 - G10 - Leigh-on-Sea (North)
 - G11 - Prittlewell
 - G12 - Leigh-on-Sea (South)
 - G13 - Chalkwell
 - G14 - Westcliff-on-Sea
 - G15 - Central Southend
 - G16 - Southchurch (North)
 - G17 - Bournes Green
 - G18 - North Shoebury
 - G19 - Southchurch (South)
 - G20 - Thorpe Hall
 - G21 - Thorpe Bay
 - G22 - Shoeburyness
 - G23 - Great Wakering & Little Wakering

D: Wooded Farmland and Hills



2.5 Landscape Character Type D: Wooded Farmland and Hills

Key Characteristics

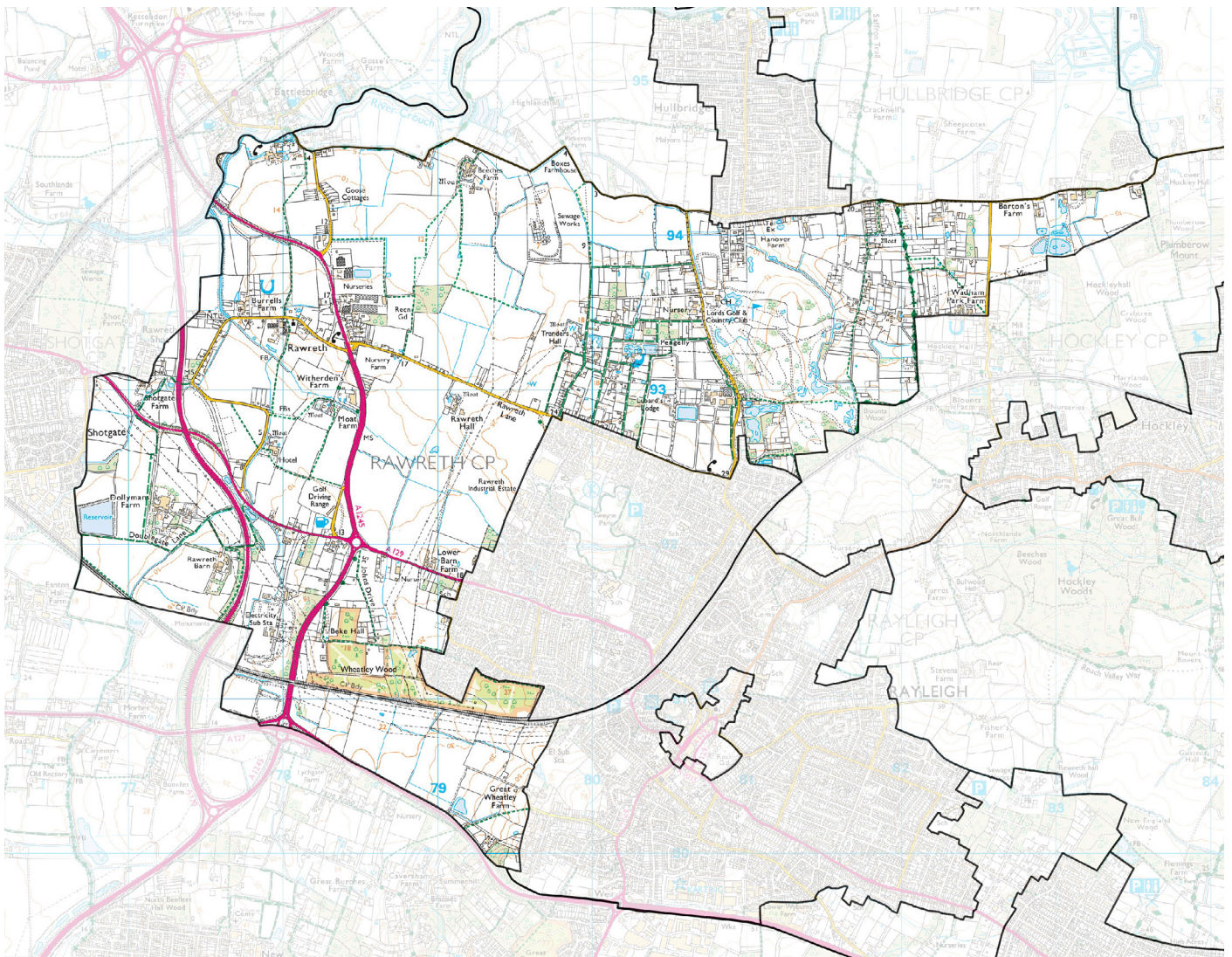
- Elevated, undulating hills and slopes forming the central and western part of the District;
- Blocks of mature mixed and deciduous woodland) including areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland, combine with copses, treed hedgerows, tree-lined roads and individual trees to create a wooded landscape;
- Hedgerows are well maintained and often form robust, roadside boundaries that create an enclosed, sunken character when travelling the more minor routes;
- Tree-lined roads are common, through lower density settled areas to the edge of the towns;
- A variety of property types are associated with this landscape type, with historic halls and farmsteads scattered through the rural area and 20th century properties often lining the roads;
- Small to medium scale field network, comprising both arable and pasture;
- Strong presence of horse grazing and livery land uses, particularly associated with the edges of settlement and clusters of properties along roads;
- Views are of wooded horizons that obscure views of built form associated with the adjacent settlement edges;
- Numerous public routes particularly across the central, wooded area and linking between Hockley Woods and Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park.

Landscape Character Areas

2.5.1 There are nine character areas of the Wooded Farmland and Hills Type within the study area:

- D1 - Rawreth
- D2 - North of Hockley and Hawkwell
- D3 - East of Rochford
- D4 - Southeast of Rayleigh
- D5 - Hockley Woods
- D6 - Stroud Green
- D7 - Belfairs Park
- D8 - Belton
- D9 - Garon Park

D: Wooded Farmland and Hills
D1: Rawreth



D1 – Rawreth

Character description

- 2.5.2 The Rawreth character area comprises wooded farmland and hills in the far west of the study area. The character area is bounded to the north by Hullbridge (G1) and the coastal farmland on its west and east (C1 and C2). On its eastern edge is the area of wooded farmland and hills north of Hockley and Hawkwell, and the urban area of Rayleigh (G2 and G3). The character area lies within Rochford District.
- 2.5.3 The land within this area is predominantly comprised of arable farmland, particularly in the west, with smaller pastoral fields close to settlement, and with a higher concentration in the east. Field boundaries, where they are apparent are mostly hedgerows, some of which have scattered hedgerow trees. This is quite a complex landscape, with a number of key transport routes dividing the area, including the A130 and A1245 which run north-south, the broadly east-west oriented A129, and the Shenfield-Southend Victoria Railway line; as well as a number of smaller roads.
- 2.5.4 This character area has a number of small blocks and belts of woodland, which in combination with the predominantly vegetated field boundaries give tree lined horizons and a sense of enclosure in places. Much of the settlement is also well screened by vegetation. To the north and northeast of Rayleigh the landscape is particularly enclosed, with small-scale, plotlands-type development. The golf course in this locality is also fairly well-treed.
- 2.5.5 The small village of Rawreth lies in the west of the area, and includes the grade II listed parish church of St Nicolas, some residential properties, industrial uses and plant nurseries. There are a number of large farmsteads and individual or small groups of properties scattered across the area. There is an electricity substation in the south, and the pylons that connect to it are a notable vertical feature in the landscape across this character area.
- 2.5.6 This landscape is gently undulating and locally fairly enclosed, offering some opportunities for long views, such as northwards from Rawreth Lane to the west of Rayleigh, looking towards the River Crouch and the landscapes beyond. Elsewhere, views are often shortened due to a combination of topography and vegetation, with tree lines horizons. There is some sense of tranquillity in this area, particularly when away from the main transport routes. There are a number of public rights of way scattered across this character area, including a short stretch of the Saffron Trail in the east.

Historic Character

- 2.5.7 While largely made up of 20th century agriculture with boundary loss and 20th century enclosure, it does contain some fields with relict elements, and this area is a mosaic of many different HLC types. These include pre-18th century enclosure – dual-axis, rectilinear ‘co-axial’ fields, 18th-19th century formal style parliamentary enclosure. There are several areas of leisure/recreational land including around The Rayleigh Club golf course.

Quality/condition

- 2.5.8 Hedgerows are regularly fragmented or missing and lacking in management. The scattered small-scale industrial premises and associated back land plots are in a neglected condition in some cases, which in combination with the fragmented nature of the landscape due to the number of significant transport corridors generally undermines landscape condition. The condition of this area is considered to be moderate to poor.

Landscape strategy recommendations

- Woodland blocks should be retained and managed, particularly where they contribute local screening of settlement edges, main roads and other potentially intrusive elements;
- Variety of field pattern should be retained and hedgerow maintenance and planting encouraged;
- Considering in particular the land allocation site¹⁶ on agricultural land to the east of the character area (and adjacent to allocated brownfield site¹⁷), any future development should be of an appropriate layout, type and scale, located in proximity to existing infrastructure and appropriately screened by landscape mitigation proposals;
- New planting should provide physical and visual links between existing woodland and hedgerows, contributing to the green infrastructure and connectivity between adjacent character area.

¹⁶ Reference SER1 LDF Allocations Document, 2014

¹⁷ Reference BFR4 LDF Allocations Document, 2014

3.0 LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY & CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

3.1 General

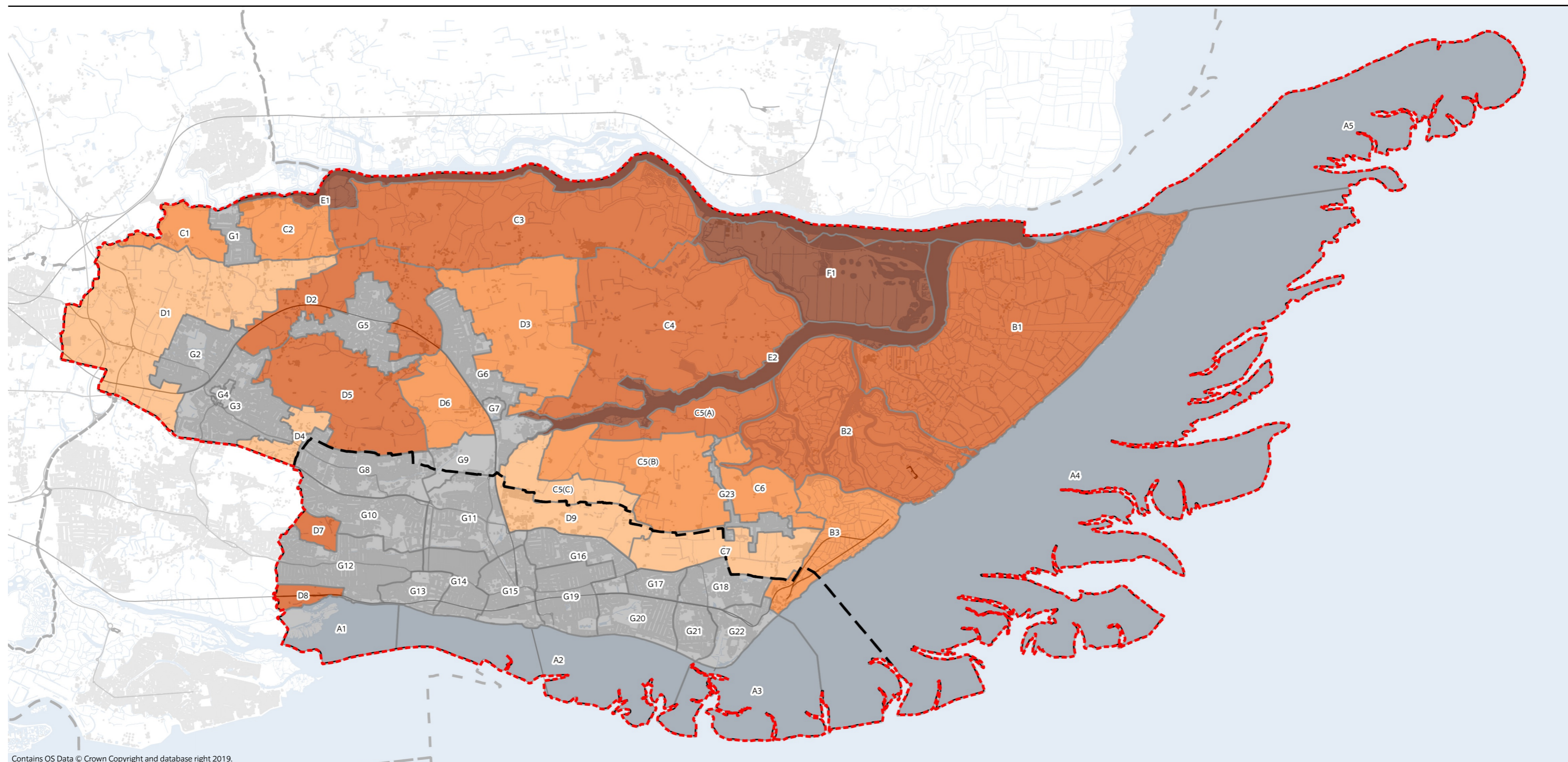
- 3.1.1 Informed by the findings of the Landscape Character Assessment in **Section 2.0**, this section sets out advice on the sensitivity of the character areas within the study area, that fall within the Green Belt and including Foulness Island. The landscape sensitivity assessment also includes recommendations on the potential capacity of the landscapes within Rochford District and Southend Borough to accommodate development, which can be used to inform the allocation of sites within the emerging Local Plans.

3.2 Sensitivity of Character Areas

- 3.2.1 The assessment of sensitivity of character areas within the study area to development-led change is set out in **Table 3** and illustrated spatially on **Figure 3.1**. This should be read in conjunction with the methodology and assessment criteria set out in **Section 1.0**.






3.3 Capacity of Character Areas

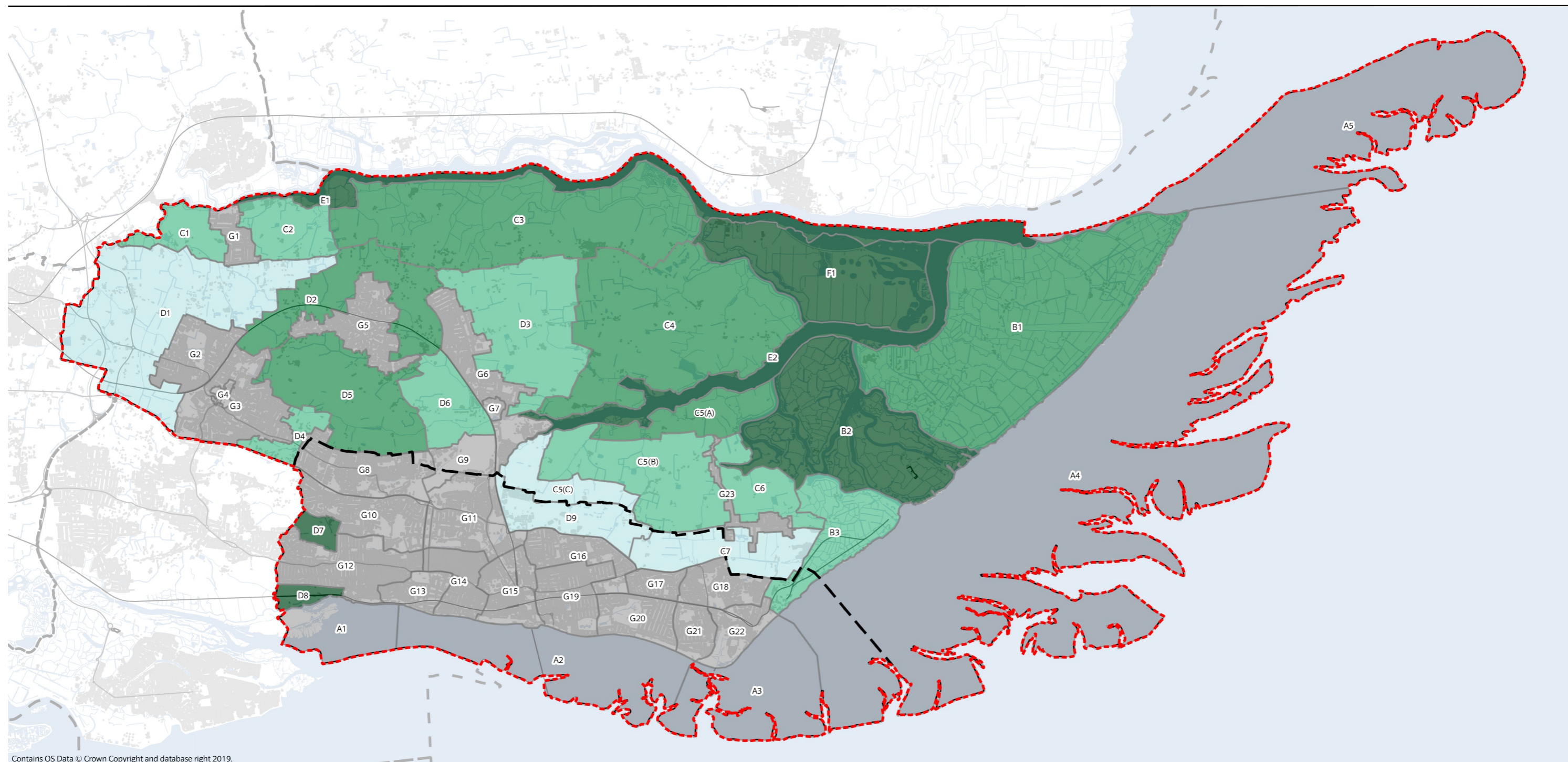
- 3.3.1 The assessment of the potential capacity of landscapes within Rochford District and Southend Borough to accommodate development is set out in **Table 3** and illustrated spatially on **Figure 3.2**. This should be read in conjunction with the methodology and assessment criteria set out in **Section 1.0**.



KEY

Landscape Sensitivity

	High
	Medium-High
	Medium
	Low-Medium
	N/A



KEY

- Study Area
- Planning Authority Boundary

Landscape Capacity

- Low
- Low-Medium
- Medium
- Medium-High
- N/A

Table 3 - Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment

Landscape Sensitivity within the study area				Landscape Capacity within the study area	
Character Area	Character Type	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Indicative Landscape Capacity	Recommended Development Scale ²⁵
B1 – Foulness Island	Drained Estuarine Marsh	This is a remote area that contains a number of natural areas. Historic and current military land use has resulted in scattered structures and military settlement across the large-scale landscape. There are long views across the open, often tranquil landscape, towards and across the North Sea. Tranquillity is reduced at times by military activity. It is a landscape of variable condition due to historic land use changes. This is a unique landscape within the study area, where historic and wildlife features are preserved as part of the military land. The Island forms part of the Foulness SPA, Ramsar and SSSI, Essex Estuaries SAC and the coastal protection belt. Medium to High Landscape Value	A historically drained land area with various historical features. Scattered settlement including military buildings and linear village of Churchend. It is a large-scale, remote landscape of arable fields and little tree and shrub cover. This enables wide views across the character area and across to adjacent character areas. Considering the land use it is in moderate condition, with some areas of value in relation to habitats. There is restricted public access to the island, therefore limited numbers of visual receptors. However, those who do visit have particular interest in the cultural and visual character of the island. Localised opportunities for mitigation of development. Medium to High Sensitivity	There are a variety of important landscape and historic features within this character area that are identified as having medium to high sensitivity. Wide, often uninterrupted views contribute to the remote qualities and limit the ability for this area to accommodate new development. The area contains a variety of built form including more dominant military structures, which lower the scenic quality in places. Local variation within the land parcel results in localised areas of lower sensitivity. However, the overall landscape qualities of this area result in limited capacity to accommodate the proposed development scenarios. Careful consideration of location and appropriate type, layout and scale is required. Low to Medium Capacity	Limited small-scale
B2 – Potton, Hevengore, Rushley & New England Islands	Drained Estuarine Marsh	This is a remote area that contains a number of natural areas. Historic and current military land use has resulted in scattered structures within the large-scale landscape. There are long views across the open, often tranquil landscape, towards and along water channels and across open fields, particularly from drainage bunds. Tranquillity is reduced at times by military activity. It is a landscape of variable condition due to historic and current land uses. This is a unique landscape within the study area, where water channels with high sides separate the drained marshlands. The Islands form part of the Foulness SPA, Ramsar and SSSI, Essex Estuaries SAC and the coastal protection belt. Medium to High Landscape Value	A historically drained land area with occasional historical features. Very limited settlement comprising scattered military and farm buildings. It is a large-scale, remote landscape of irregular, arable fields and little tree and shrub cover. This enables wide views across the character area and across to adjacent character areas. Considering the land use it is in moderate condition, with some areas of value in relation to habitats. There is restricted public access to the islands and no public footpaths, therefore limited numbers of visual receptors. Views of the edge of the area are available from the Broomway when access is permitted. Limited opportunity for mitigation of development. Medium to High Sensitivity	There are a variety of important landscape and historic features within this character area that are identified as having medium to high sensitivity. Wide, predominantly uninterrupted views and division of the land by channels and creeks contribute to the remote qualities that limit the ability for this area to accommodate new development. Combined with the very limited existing built form within this area, the remote character of this area restricts the capacity to accommodate the proposed development scenarios. Low Capacity	No scenario is appropriate
B3 – Shoeburyness North	Drained Estuarine Marsh	This area forms the southern part of the military land and is less remote than areas B1 and B2. There military structures and buildings scattered across the area, often obscured by surrounding shrubs and scrub. The southern part of the area is more developed around the railway head and on the edge of Shoeburyness. Landscape condition varies across the area. Field structure and boundaries are generally good. Military development has eroded this in part and reduces the levels of tranquillity that are associated with the wider estuarine marsh area. Parts of this area are within the SPA, Ramsar, SSSI, SAC and the coastal protection belt designations and there are some public footpaths in the north of the area. Medium Landscape Value	A historically drained land area with more recent military development in the southern part. A predominantly large-scale landscape associated with the drained land, with greater levels of enclosure in the south due to development and vegetation. Moderate levels of tranquillity are associated with this area, particularly north towards Foulness. It is an area of varying landscape quality due to the land uses and valuable habitat areas. Wide, open views are available across the drained landscape. Vegetation and built form restrict views in the south. There are a limited number of receptors within this area due to restricted access to public footpaths. Limited opportunity for mitigation of development. Medium Sensitivity	This area lacks the distinctive features found in the wider character type (such as in B1 and B2), has more recent time depth and moderate landscape condition. There is also a significant quantity of military development already present. However, there are areas of local tranquillity and a number of key designations. The area contains local variation in landscape value and sensitivity. Overall it is assessed as having medium capacity to accommodate small-scale development. Medium Capacity	Small-scale

²⁵ **Small-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 30dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Medium-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 40 dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Large-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 50+ dph and up to five storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses.

Landscape Sensitivity within the study area				Landscape Capacity within the study area	
Character Area	Character Type	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Indicative Landscape Capacity	Recommended Development Scale ²⁵
C1 – West of Hullbridge	Coastal Farmland	This is a partly enclosed agricultural landscape. Farms and dwellings are scattered along the southern edge, and Hullbridge forms the eastern edge. The River Crouch along the north of the character area is moderately tranquil, with some active waterfronts. Landscape condition varies with land use and ownership, particularly considering hedgerow structure which is gappy in places. The river channel forms part of the Crouch and Roach Estuaries Ramsar, SSSI, SPA and Essex Estuaries SAC, and the area is within the coastal protection belt. The Saffron Trail long distance path links through this area, along the River Crouch. There are open, often long-distance views available along the river, and of the more active waterfront further east. Medium Landscape Value	Vegetation structure comprises hedgerows in generally good condition, with some gapping. There are occasional tree groups around properties and along the main road. This is a medium-scale landscape established by the field pattern and character area edge features including the river, road and Hullbridge settlement edge. This results in generally contained visual character, with some longer views to the north from the Saffron Trail and higher topography at the west of Hullbridge. Users of the two public footpath routes and residents on the eastern edge of Battlesbridge and west of Hullbridge are the key receptors in this area. Some opportunity for mitigation of development. Medium Sensitivity	The area has variable landscape condition and sensitivity associated with key features and relationship to the existing settlement edge. The western part of the area has a higher sensitivity to development due to the relationship with the water's edge and presence of key features. The eastern part of the area has reduced sensitivity. The more modern field structure, proximity to existing settlement and relatively enclosed character contribute to a greater capacity to accommodate new development in the eastern part of the character area. Medium Capacity	Small to medium-scale
C2 – East of Hullbridge	Coastal Farmland	The sense of enclosure varies across this area, with more enclosed and smaller fields adjacent to Hullbridge and larger fields with gappy / partial hedgerows further west. This is an area of generally moderate landscape and scenic quality, associated with vegetation cover and views of the river to the north. Different land uses including farms, livery and boatyards, and proximity to settlement areas establishes a moderate level of activity experienced within the area. Typical of the coastal farmland character type, containing a number of key characteristic features. The river channel along the north edge of the area forms part of the Crouch and Roach Estuaries Ramsar, SSSI, SPA and Essex Estuaries SAC, and the area is within the coastal protection belt. Low to Medium Landscape Value	Vegetation structure comprises hedgerows in generally good condition, with some gapping and removal in places to create larger fields. The relationship of the farmland to the river has been altered by residential development along the water's edge. There are occasional tree groups including along settlement edges and woodland in the southeast. This is a medium-scale landscape established by the field and settlement pattern. This results in varied visual character, with some longer views across the fields and across the river. Users of the Saffron Trail and connecting paths, and residents of the scattered settlement areas are the key receptors in this area. Some opportunity for mitigation of development. Medium Sensitivity	The area has variable landscape condition and sensitivity associated with key features and relationship to the existing settlement edge. The existing settlement edge is relatively well-contained by field structure and boundaries. The area is of moderate condition considering landscape features and views. It has an overall medium sensitivity, with localised variation. Overall the area is evaluated as having medium capacity, associated with land adjacent to existing development. There is local variation considering long views, open character to the east and visibility of existing development. Medium Capacity	Small-scale
C3 – Canewdon	Coastal Farmland	The area comprises generally large-scale fields with hedgerow and ditch boundaries in varying condition. A more enclosed pattern persists in relation to settlement areas, with hedgerow field boundaries and small woodland blocks creating a rectilinear field pattern. Settlement along the southern edge of the area is generally well integrated by topography and vegetation. The church at Canewdon is a local landmark. Away from the settlement areas the open landscape often has a remote character, with wide views across the river channel to the expansive landscape to the north. The river channel forms part of the Crouch and Roach Estuaries Ramsar, SSSI, SPA and Essex Estuaries SAC, and the area is within the coastal protection belt. Medium Landscape Value	This is a large-scale, arable landscape with ditch and hedgerow field boundaries. There is scattered tree vegetation including occasional woodland blocks near to settlement. It is a generally open landscape, with more enclosed areas associated with areas of settlement such as Ashingdon and Canewdon. A number of footpaths link through the area, providing good connectivity with the river, the church at Canewdon and linking with the Roach Valley Way. Key visual receptors are users of these routes and residents particularly on the edges of settlement areas. Views are often expansive across the large fields, particularly from the higher topography at Canewdon. Limited opportunity for mitigation of development. Medium to High Sensitivity	The area has generally good overall landscape condition. Existing development is often well-contained and does not stand out despite the openness of this landscape. Due to the medium landscape value and medium to high overall sensitivity there is limited capacity to accommodate the proposed development scenarios. Where there is local variation, often considering the appearance of and relationship to existing settlement edges there is some capacity to accommodate small-scale development. Low to Medium Capacity	Small-scale

²⁵ **Small-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 30dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Medium-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 40 dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Large-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 50+ dph and up to five storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses.

Landscape Sensitivity within the study area				Landscape Capacity within the study area	
Character Area	Character Type	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Indicative Landscape Capacity	Recommended Development Scale ²⁵
C4 – Paglesham	Coastal Farmland	<p>The area is predominantly a large-scale arable landscape, with localised enclosed character associated with settlement areas, where a tighter field pattern exists with strong hedgerow boundaries and small tree groups. It is a generally intact landscape with good scenic quality. Often long, wide views are available across the open field network and towards the estuary, particularly from drainage banks along water channels and the river banks. An often exposed and remote landscape with very little intrusion from development. The Roach Valley Way long distance path and riverside footpaths are well linked with the scattered settlements and to the adjacent character areas. The River Roach forms part of the SPA, Ramsar, SSSI and SAC designations, and the area is partially within the coastal protection belt.</p> <p>Medium to High Landscape Value</p>	<p>Irregular fields with hedge and ditch boundaries result in varied enclosure patterns. It has a partly open character with areas of tighter enclosure around rural settlements including Paglesham Churchend and Paglesham, and where small woodland blocks and hedgerows group together. The area has a remote and often tranquil character. Landscape features are in varied condition, with some poorly managed hedgerows and settlement boundaries. Key visual receptors are users of the Roach Valley Way and linking paths between settlements, and residents of the scattered settlements. Views are occasionally expansive, particularly across the adjacent water channels, across the estuarine landscape. Limited opportunity for mitigation of development.</p> <p>Medium to High Sensitivity</p>	<p>This is an often exposed and remote landscape in moderate condition. It is an area containing limited existing development that is occasionally visible in longer views across the exposed landscape. The area has a strong relationship with the river channels that encompass the east. The overall landscape qualities of this area result in limited capacity to accommodate the proposed development scenarios. Careful consideration of location and appropriate type, layout and scale is required.</p> <p>Low to Medium Capacity</p>	Limited small-scale
C5 – Stonebridge	Coastal Farmland	<p><u>Land Parcel A:</u> The land parcel contains some characteristics of the adjacent drained estuarine marsh landscape type and forms the edge of the various biodiversity designations along the River Roach. It has remote characteristics, with areas of high tranquillity and containing scattered often listed buildings.</p> <p>Medium to High Landscape Value</p> <p><u>Land Parcel B:</u> This is an agricultural landscape containing scattered settlement within a tight field pattern and often encompassed by tree or hedgerow vegetation. Moderate levels of tranquillity and in generally moderate landscape condition.</p> <p>Medium Landscape Value</p> <p><u>Land Parcel C:</u> This parcel contains a greater variety of land uses, related to the proximity to the more urban settlement edges of Rochford and Southend. Views are more enclosed and contain urban built form. This results in lower levels of tranquillity and remoteness.</p> <p>Low to Medium Landscape Value</p>	<p><u>Land Parcel A:</u> This is a relatively flat landscape that has common characteristics with adjacent character areas to the north and east. Expansive views, particularly to the north across the estuarine landscape are associated with this land parcel. Skylines are undeveloped and there is an overall sense of tranquillity.</p> <p>Medium to High Sensitivity</p> <p><u>Land Parcel B:</u> This parcel contains scattered vegetation often around settlement areas, which offers a moderate sense of enclosure and reduced sense of scale compared to parcel A. Vegetation is in varying condition.</p> <p>Medium Sensitivity</p> <p><u>Land Parcel C:</u> The area contains clusters of development including equestrian and market gardening. The edge of the industrial estate is conspicuous in local views and reduces local levels of tranquillity within this area. Vegetation is in varying condition with often gappy hedgerow field boundaries.</p> <p>Low to Medium Sensitivity</p>	<p><u>Land Parcel A:</u> This is a partly exposed landscape that forms part of wide, open views from and to adjacent character areas. There are areas of tranquillity associated with this parcel, particularly to the east where there is a relationship with the adjacent estuarine landscape. There is limited opportunity to mitigate development in this parcel.</p> <p>Low to Medium Capacity</p> <p><u>Land Parcel B:</u> The scattered settlement and vegetation combined with variety of land uses has resulted in a landscape of moderate condition and varying levels of tranquillity. There is opportunity for this area to accommodate some development, of appropriate type, scale and form, that incorporates appropriate landscape mitigation and is considerate of the key characteristics of the landscape type and character.</p> <p>Medium Capacity</p> <p><u>Land Parcel C:</u> The area contains few distinctive features and has lower scenic value than the wider character area. The less sensitive and lower valued landscape of this parcel provides opportunity for development of appropriate type, scale and form that incorporates landscape mitigation that would contribute to and enhance the key landscape characteristics.</p> <p>Medium to High Capacity</p>	<p><u>Land Parcel A:</u> Limited small-scale</p> <p><u>Land Parcel B:</u> Small to medium-scale</p> <p><u>Land Parcel C:</u> Small to medium-scale</p>

²⁵ **Small-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 30dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Medium-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 40 dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Large-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 50+ dph and up to five storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses.

Landscape Sensitivity within the study area				Landscape Capacity within the study area	
Character Area	Character Type	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Indicative Landscape Capacity	Recommended Development Scale ²⁵
C6 – Little Waking	Coastal Farmland	A medium scale, often enclosed landscape due to intact hedgerow patter and vegetated settlement edges. More exposed, remote character is associated with the edges of the character area transitioning to the adjacent estuarine landscape type to the east. A large number of public footpaths pass through this area, linking between settlement areas and the watercourses that divide the estuarine landscape. Wide views of the estuarine landscape are often available, particularly from footpaths on the banks of the watercourses. The River Roach forms part of the SPA, Ramsar, SSSI and SAC designations, and the area is partially within the coastal protection belt. Medium Landscape Value	Hedgerows, tree belts including avenues, and small woodland areas are in generally good condition. They contribute to an enclosed character, particularly in proximity to the settlement edge and around Little Waking Hall. There are a scattered remnant historic/cultural features and buildings, including Little Waking Hall and Great Waking Common. Various public footpaths pass through the area and link with the river and estuarine landscape to the north and east. Key visual receptors are users of the footpaths, experiencing views of varying enclosure as they move through the landscape. More open views are available along the river, across the more open character areas to the north and east. Limited opportunity for mitigation of development. Medium Sensitivity	This area is a more enclosed coastal landscape with some valuable landscape and historic features. There is existing settlement on two sides of the parcel, with drained estuarine marsh landscape extending to the north and east. Local variation within the land parcel results in localised areas of higher and lower sensitivity. There is some capacity to accommodate small-scale development in proximity to existing settlement edges. Medium Capacity	Small-scale
C7 – Great Waking	Coastal Farmland	This is a medium scale, arable landscape on the edge of the urban area. It forms a transitional landscape between the urban landscape type to the south and estuarine landscape to the north. It contributes to the rural character of Great Waking, acting as a separating landscape between the suburbs of Southend-on-Sea and Great Waking. It has low levels of tranquillity with frequent views of settlement edges and localised intrusion from traffic on the A13. Occasional open, longer views are available across larger fields with more limited hedgerow boundaries, towards the adjacent coastal farmland areas. There is limited public footpath access or cultural associations with this landscape. Low to Medium Landscape Value	Hedgerows are fragmented within this area. There are scattered, small woodland blocks and tree groups in the south, and around small lakes in the northwest that are in generally good condition. In the east of the area, the combination of vegetation and settlement edges to the north and south, contribute to a contained landscape that is influenced by surrounding land uses. The west of the area has a more exposed character, with often open views across the flat landscape. The northern settlement edge of Southend is often identifiable in views by presence of tall hedgerows and trees that line the B1017 that forms the character area boundary. There is some tranquillity associated with this area. Key visual receptors are users of the linking footpaths across the area, between settlement edges, and local residents. There is opportunity for mitigation of development in this area. Low to Medium Sensitivity	This area has the character of a transitional landscape, between the urban edge of Shoebury and south of Great Waking, including military land use influences in the eastern part. The western part of the area contains less development, is more open and views are available across the fields to the coastal farmland further north. The area provides separation between the two settlement areas, that should be retained in order to conserve the identifiable village characteristics of Great Waking. This, therefore, limits the capacity to accommodate the development scenarios particularly within Southend Borough boundary due to potential visibility in views from more sensitive character areas. Where there is local variation in landscape value and sensitivity there is capacity for development of appropriate type and scale. Medium to High Capacity	Small to medium-scale
D1 – Rawreth	Wooded Farmland and Hills	This is a large character area containing a variety of land uses, which result in a variation in landscape and scenic quality across the area. It is predominantly an arable landscape with medium to large-scale fields that enable occasional long views. A number of detracting features are experienced within views and settlement edges are occasionally conspicuous. Vegetation structure is fragmented. Land uses such as industry and transport corridors reduce the overall quality and result in low tranquillity value. Low Landscape Value	The overall wooded character is intact although hedgerows vary in condition and woodland blocks are scattered, with greater concentration in the south. Scattered settlement and plotlands are evident. A variety of commercial development has more recently taken place in this area, in proximity to major roads. Vegetation contributes to screening this in part. Roads and associated lighting, signage etc. is locally detracting in part and tranquillity in this area is limited. Visibility across the area is varied. Views are generally enclosed by vegetation and built form, with occasional longer views north towards the flatter character areas associated with the river. There are limited public footpaths across the area and some open access land in the south. Key visual	The landscape of this area is evaluated as being in moderate to poor condition, with limited important landscape features. There is limited historic time depth and urban influences are conspicuous. There is variation in condition, value and sensitivity across the area, which influence the capacity to accommodate new development. However, there is capacity to accommodate small to medium-scale development in this area, through careful consideration of location and appropriate mitigation in order to maintain locally sensitive land parcels. Medium to High Capacity	Small to medium-scale

²⁵ **Small-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 30dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Medium-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 40 dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Large-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 50+ dph and up to five storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses.

Landscape Sensitivity within the study area				Landscape Capacity within the study area	
Character Area	Character Type	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Indicative Landscape Capacity	Recommended Development Scale ²⁵
			receptors are users of the footpaths and local residents. There is some opportunity for mitigation of development in this area. Low to Medium Sensitivity		
D2 – North of Hockley and Hawkwell	Wooded Farmland and Hills	This is a well-wooded character area, with a generally tight landscape pattern established by vegetation structure. There is an overall enclosed character with secluded and tranquil places away from settlement edges and scattered development. A number of public routes cross through the area, providing views of the arable landscape with wooded horizons and few detracting features. There area has good scenic and landscape quality. Woodland includes areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland, linked by robust hedgerows and other woodland planting. Medium Landscape Value	Several areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland are well linked by intact hedgerows and woodland blocks that often form the settlement edges. An enclosed, tight character persists, with scattered settlement away from the settlement edge of Hockley and Hawkwell. The level of vegetation and scattered development results in a moderately tranquil character, with few intrusions. Views are predominantly of a wooded landscape and are enclosed by vegetation and topography. A number of footpaths cross the area, including the Saffron Trail. Key visual receptors are users of these routes, as well as local residents, including those on the edges of adjacent urban areas. There is some opportunity for mitigation of development in this area. Medium to High Sensitivity	The area has a tight landscape structure established by the historic field pattern and woodland blocks. There are high levels of visual enclosure. It is a valued landscape containing a number of important features and patterns. It is a unique landscape within the study area and, therefore has limited capacity to accommodate development. There is some capacity for limited small-scale development to be accommodated adjacent to the existing settlement edge within the historic field structure. Careful consideration of location and appropriate type, layout and scale is required. Low to Medium Capacity	Limited small-scale
D3 – East of Rochford	Wooded Farmland and Hills	This is a generally medium scale, arable landscape with scattered woodland blocks and hedgerows of varying condition. There is limited scenic value associated with the character area and limited intervisibility with adjacent character areas. The character area displays key characteristics of the landscape type, although these have been eroded in part and the area provides a transition into the adjacent coastal farmland type. This is not a remote landscape and it is influenced by adjacent settlement, although vegetation limits this in part. Medium Landscape Value	Vegetation cover is in varying condition, comprising scattered woodland and linking hedgerows around an irregular field pattern. Settlement is clustered in tighter field networks, set within the large-scale arable landscape. It is a varied landscape with some areas of localised tranquillity. Parts of the landscape are more exposed where hedgerows are gappy. There are some longer views available, associated with broken hedgerows. Views are generally contained within the character area and characterised by wooded horizons. There are few footpaths in this area, and key visual receptors are primarily residents of the scattered properties and edge of Rochford. There is some opportunity for mitigation of development in this area. Medium Sensitivity	The area has varying landscape condition related to a variety land uses and scattered development. Existing development is often well-contained and does not stand out despite the openness of this landscape. Due to the medium landscape value and medium to high overall sensitivity there is limited capacity to accommodate the proposed development scenarios. Where there is local variation, often considering the appearance of and relationship to existing settlement edges there is some capacity to accommodate small-scale development. Careful consideration of location and appropriate type, layout and scale is required. Medium Capacity	Small-scale
D4 – Southeast of Rayleigh	Wooded Farmland and Hills	The variety and type of urban edge land uses within this area has resulted in varying landscape condition. Landscape features have been impacted upon by adjacent land uses. Hedgerows and woodland have been retained in part and create an enclosed, occasionally secluded character. Views into and out of the area are limited, and the area is not perceptible from adjacent character areas. Whilst it is a unique landscape within the study area, it has been absorbed into the surrounding urban areas and the key wooded farmland and hills characteristics have been eroded. Low Landscape Value	The area has a high proportion of woodland cover, which is linked by hedgerows around small fields and groups of development. The vegetation provides a screen for development within the area and adjacent settlement edges. Development has been established between the vegetation cover and there is limited tranquillity associated with the area. There are areas of poor quality landscape associated with the variety of land uses. Views are enclosed and there is limited perception of adjacent areas. Two footpaths provide links into adjacent areas to the north and south, with limited public access within the area itself. Key receptors are residents within the area and on adjacent	The area has varying landscape condition related to the number of land uses and influence of adjacent settlement edges. It is an enclosed, wooded landscape that provides separation of Rayleigh and Eastwood. Whilst the landscape is evaluated as being in poor to moderate condition, with limited value and low sensitivity, it is important to maintain the sense of separation between the settlement areas which reduces the capacity to accommodate development. Some small-scale development could be appropriate within the area. Careful consideration of location and appropriate type, layout and scale is required. Medium Capacity	Limited small-scale

²⁵ **Small-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 30dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Medium-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 40 dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Large-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 50+ dph and up to five storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses.

Landscape Sensitivity within the study area				Landscape Capacity within the study area	
Character Area	Character Type	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Indicative Landscape Capacity	Recommended Development Scale ²⁵
E1 – River Crouch	River Valley	<p>The majority of this area comprises the water channel itself, the edges of which form the transition into the adjacent urban, coastal farmland and drained estuarine marsh areas. The area has an overall tranquil character, with some riverside activity in proximity to settlement areas to the north and south. Generally high scenic quality is associated with the character area and moderate landscape condition. The area is designated as part of the Crouch and Roach Estuaries SPA, Ramsar and SSSI, Essex Estuaries SAC and coastal protection belt. The river has historic significance as a commercial, trading and fishing route.</p> <p>Medium to High Landscape Value</p>	<p>This area forms part of the important, wider estuary habitat area. It is an exposed area, with limited vegetation cover, particularly the exposed mudflats and water channel at low water. There is very little settlement along the edge of this area, generally limited to moorings and small-scale development, except at Burnham-on-Crouch, which has an active waterfront. It is a predominantly tranquil character area, with a sense of remoteness particularly to the east. There are often wide, open views available from footpaths on the river's edge, along the river and across the adjacent character areas to the north, south and east. Key receptors are users of the footpaths, as well as occasional residents in proximity to this area, due to the open character of their views. Very limited opportunity for mitigation of development.</p> <p>High Sensitivity</p>	<p>The physical area of this character area that could potentially accommodate development is limited. The landscape in this area is in moderate condition, is well valued and has high sensitivity. Overall there is limited capacity to accommodate development.</p> <p>Low Capacity</p>	No scenario is appropriate
E2 – River Roach	River Valley	<p>This area comprises the water channel itself with some wide banks in places. The edges of the area form the transition into the adjacent coastal farmland and drained estuarine marsh areas. The area has an overall tranquil character, with some industrial activity at the river head in Rochford. Generally high scenic quality is associated with the character area do to undeveloped river edges and often wide views across adjacent open landscapes. The area is designated as part of the Crouch and Roach Estuaries SPA, Ramsar and SSSI, Essex Estuaries SAC and coastal protection belt. The river has historic significance as a commercial, trading and fishing route.</p> <p>Medium to High Landscape Value</p>	<p>This area forms part of the important, wider estuary habitat area. It is an exposed area, with limited vegetation cover, particularly the exposed mudflats and water channel at low water. There is very little settlement along the edge of this area, limited to moorings at the village edge at Paglesham Eastend and industrial/boatyard development at the river head at Rochford. It is a predominantly tranquil character area, with a sense of remoteness particularly to the east. There are wide, open views available from footpaths on the river's edge, along the river and across the adjacent character areas. Key receptors are users of the footpaths, as well as occasional residents in proximity to this area, due to the open character of their views. Very limited opportunity for mitigation of development.</p> <p>High Sensitivity</p>	<p>The physical area of this character area that could potentially accommodate development is limited. The landscape in this area is in moderate condition, is well valued and has high sensitivity. Overall there is limited capacity to accommodate development.</p> <p>Low Capacity</p>	No scenario is appropriate
F1 – Wallasea Island	Coastal Mosaic	<p>This is a remote landscape in the north of the study area. Industry is a localised intrusion on the tranquillity in the west of the island. The majority of the area is tranquil and often wild. Habitat restoration work is improving both the landscape and scenic condition of the area. Wallasea Island forms part of the Foulness SPA, Ramsar and SSSI, Essex Estuaries SAC and coastal protection belt. There are wide views available across the River Crouch and surrounding marshes. This area has unique characteristics and some cultural significance.</p> <p>High Landscape Value</p>	<p>This is an important habitat area, that is undergoing various restoration works to the saltmarsh, mudflat and lagoon habitats. As such it contains a variety of landscape patterns and features. Vegetation is generally low level scrub, grassland and marsh species. As such, this is a remote, exposed landscape with high levels of tranquillity. There are wide, open, long-distance views across this area and into adjacent character areas and beyond. Key receptors are visitors to the nature reserve and users of the footpath network who are visiting to experience the unique habitat. Very limited opportunity for mitigation of development.</p> <p>High Sensitivity</p>	<p>This is an area of high landscape value and sensitivity. It is a remote and tranquil landscape with some local intrusion in the west. The restored wetland landscape is creating a unique landscape in the study area. There is very limited capacity to accommodate development in this area.</p> <p>Low Capacity</p>	No scenario is appropriate

²⁵ **Small-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 30dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Medium-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 40 dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses; **Large-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 50+ dph and up to five storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses.

3.4 Summary

Landscape Sensitivity

- 3.4.1 The key findings of the assessment of the sensitivity of character areas within the study area to development-led change are summarised in **Table 4**.

Table 4 – Summary of Landscape Sensitivity within the Study Area

Landscape Character Area (see Figure 2.6)	Overall Landscape Sensitivity (see Figure 3.1)
B1 Foulness Island	Medium to High
B2 Potton, Havengore, Rushley & New England Islands	Medium to High
B3 Shoeburyness North	Medium
C1 West of Hullbridge	Medium
C2 East of Hullbridge	Medium
C3 Canewdon	Medium to High
C4 Paglesham	Medium to High
C5 Stonebridge	Medium
C5A	Medium to High
C5B	Medium
C5C	Low to Medium
C6 Little Wakering	Medium
C7 Great Wakering	Low to Medium
D1 Rawreth	Low to Medium
D2 North of Hockley and Hawkwell	Medium to High
D3 East of Rochford	Medium
D4 Southeast of Rayleigh	Low to Medium
D5 Hockley Woods	Medium to High
D6 Stroud Green	Medium
D7 Belfairs Park	Medium to High
D8 Belton	Medium to High
D9 Garron Park	Low to Medium
E1 River Crouch	High
E2 River Roach	High
F1 Coastal Mosaic	High

- 3.4.2 The most sensitive character areas are assessed as being within the river valley and coastal mosaic landscape types within Rochford District. A number of character areas have been assessed as medium to high sensitivity landscapes, across the drained estuarine march, coastal farmland and wooded farmland and hills landscape types. These areas are predominantly across the north of Rochford District, extending south across Foulness Island archipelago and the localised ridge east of Rayleigh.
- 3.4.3 Lower sensitivity character areas are associated with landscapes that contain a greater diversity of features and including more urban elements, generally associated with the urban edges of Southend and Rayleigh.

Landscape Capacity

- 3.4.4 The key findings of the assessment of the capacity of character areas within the study area to development-led change are summarised in **Table 5**.

Table 5 – Summary of Landscape Capacity within the Study Area

Landscape Character Area (see Figure 2.6)	Indicative Landscape Capacity (see Figure 3.2)	Recommended Development Scale²⁶
B1 Foulness Island	Low to Medium	Limited small-scale
B2 Pottton, Havengore, Rushley & New England Islands	Low	No scenario
B3 Shoeburyness North	Medium	Small-scale
C1 West of Hullbridge	Medium	Small to medium-scale
C2 East of Hullbridge	Medium	Small-scale
C3 Canewdon	Low to Medium	Small-scale
C4 Paglesham	Low to Medium	Limited small-scale
C5 Stonebridge	Medium	Small to medium-scale
C5 A	Low to Medium	Limited small-scale
C5 B	Medium	Small to medium-scale
C5 C	Medium to High	Small to medium-scale
C6 Little Wakering	Medium	Small-scale
C7 Great Wakering	Medium to High	Small to medium-scale
D1 Rawreth	Medium to High	Small to medium-scale
D2 North of Hockley and Hawkwell	Low to Medium	Limited small-scale
D3 East of Rochford	Medium	Small-scale
D4 Southeast of Rayleigh	Medium	Limited small-scale
D5 Hockley Woods	Low to Medium	Limited small-scale
D6 Stroud Green	Medium	Small-scale
D7 Belfairs Park	Low	No scenario

²⁶ **Small-scale:** comprising 55% residential at 30dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses;
Medium-scale: comprising 55% residential at 40 dph and up to three storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses;
Large-scale: comprising 55% residential at 50+ dph and up to five storeys in height, 33% open space, 12% community uses.

Landscape Character Area (see Figure 2.6)	Indicative Landscape Capacity (see Figure 3.2)	Recommended Development Scale²⁶
D8 Belton	Low	No scenario
D9 Garron Park	Medium to High	Small to medium-scale with limited opportunity for large-scale
E1 River Crouch	Low	No scenario
E2 River Roach	Low	No scenario
F1 Coastal Mosaic	Low	No scenario

3.4.5 Areas of least capacity to accommodate development are generally the areas assessed as having high sensitivity, due to the vulnerability of the key landscape characteristics associated with them. These areas include the river valley, coastal mosaic and much of the coastal farmland landscapes.

3.4.6 Areas of greater capacity to accommodate a level of development are predominantly associated with urban fringe or as part of a transitional landscape where a diversity of urban and rural features are experienced and fewer unique characteristics are apparent. These areas include C7, D9 and parts of C5, C6 and B3 to the north and northeast of Southend, and D1 to the west of Rayleigh at the western edge of Rochford District.