

# Hoo Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Study / Draft

A review of Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA)  
and other Potential Development Sites for an  
enlarged settlement at Hoo St Werburgh



**Internal Consultation Draft V2**  
**Medway Council | February 2019**







Buttercrook Wharf, Hoo St Werburgh



## Executive Summary

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This Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Study provides a robust landscape evidence base that supports sustainable development proposals for an enlarged rural town on the Hoo Peninsula, based around the village of Hoo St Werbergh.

A Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study is a recognised method of developing an understanding of landscape sensitivity and value; and the capacity of a landscape to absorb change. It is commonly used when planning for new and enlarged settlements.

The main purpose of the study is to ensure that new development within the enlarged settlement is sited sensitively and appropriately within its landscape context. The study considers landscape character, visual amenity and landscape value. It incorporates a review of baseline data from related disciplines including public health, biodiversity, blue and green infrastructure, heritage and transport.

A Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Study is a recognised method of developing an understanding of landscape sensitivity and value; and the capacity of a landscape to absorb change. It is commonly used when planning for new and enlarged settlements.

The research methodology defines a *zone of influence* (this is then sub-divided into ten separate land parcels). The land parcels are assessed in the context of the predicted development, which is likely to consist predominantly of low, medium (and some higher) density housing, but also involves the creation of new employment areas and supporting infrastructure, including new and upgraded roads, schools, retail and sports facilities, public open space, community and extra care facilities. Predicted development is focussed principally on the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) sites; some sites that offer development opportunities but have not come forward through the formal SLAA process have also been considered.

The land parcels within the zone of influence are also reviewed in terms of their strategic function. Some parcels are considered to perform specific functional roles – for example, to separate communities and retain local identity, to act as strategic buffers for designated sites and to perform valuable Green and Blue Infrastructure functions.

The results of each parcel assessment delivers a sensitivity, value and capacity outcome. Some parcels are more complex and have a wider range of landscape features. These parcels, especially where subject to greater development pressure, have been given more detailed attention. Larger character zones have been split into sub-character zones with more detail on localised characteristics and issues.

Each parcel assessment concludes with a capacity outcome and a set of principal issues, characteristics and guidelines. Those parcels with a low capacity outcome are considered most able to absorb development; those with a high capacity outcome are those considered least able to absorb development. A traffic light system has been used for the purpose of clarity.

The assessment is supported by a series of baseline maps and a set of annotated parcel maps. These identify key receptors and features such as water courses, heritage assets, public rights of way and SSSI designations. Significant viewpoints have been identified; denoting representative (for different receptor groups) and specific (promoted and noteworthy) views.

The final section of the report summarises the capacity assessment outcomes and provides guidelines which consider the contextual landscape framework, treatment of settlement edges and green & blue infrastructure issues and priorities. It is intended that the outcomes of this study inform, from a landscape perspective, the emerging Development Framework proposals for an enlarged settlement. It is also recommended that a set of Design Codes and series of site-based Development Briefs are prepared, ensuring that development proposals for individual sites are considered not in isolation but contextually within their wider landscape context.

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# 1.0 Introduction

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Medway Council is currently considering a range of development options to meet its housing target within the emerging Local Plan. One of these options includes urban extensions around the village of Hoo St Werburgh to create an enlarged rural town.

In 2011 a Landscape Character assessment of the rural and urban fringe areas of Medway was completed. This study takes a criteria-based approach and is National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) consistent. In order to plan sustainably for the Hoo St Werburgh urban extension option, a more detailed landscape assessment process has been undertaken in the form of a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity study.

## 1.1 What is a landscape sensitivity and capacity study?

An assessment of a landscape's sensitivity and capacity to accept a particular type of change or development without significant effects on its character. Landscape capacity studies are often used to inform the allocation of development sites in development plans.

*Landscape Sensitivity* depends on the type, nature and magnitude of the proposed change as well as on the landscape's characteristics. *High sensitivity* indicates a landscape vulnerable to change and therefore less able to accommodate change without significant adverse effects. *Low sensitivity* indicates a landscape sufficiently robust to accommodate change without significant adverse effects

*Landscape capacity* is the extent to which a particular landscape type is able to accept a specific kind of change (e.g. housing, mining, forestry, wind farms) without significant effects on its character. Capacity evaluates landscape sensitivity against landscape value and considers the degree to which landscape character is either vulnerable to change, or robust enough to recover from harm.

A study of this kind is considered to be an important tool in helping to shape a sustainable enlarged settlement at Hoo St Werburgh that is fully respectful of potential impacts on the area's landscape character and visual amenity.

## 1.2 Purpose of study

- To provide a contextual landscape evidence base that supports land allocation proposals for an enlarged settlement at Hoo St Werburgh
- To ensure that new development proposals are sited sensitively and appropriately within the wider landscape; including consideration of the treatment of settlement edges
- To inform the preparation of a Development Framework for an enlarged settlement
- To inform the preparation of Landscape and Green Infrastructure policies within the emerging Local Plan
- To provide landscape guidance for the longer term, to include the preparation of development briefs for significant sites as they come forward through the planning process and the preparation of an overarching set of Design Codes that ensure an integrated approach is taken to creating a high quality and sustainable new settlement.
- To inform an update of the Medway Landscape Character Assessment (2011) when new development allocations have been agreed
- To inform the preparation of Landscape & Visual Impact Assessments (LVIA's) for individual and aggregated sites as they come forward following adoption of the new Local Plan.

## 1.3 Process

- Define a 'zone of influence' for the area surrounding existing settlements at Hoo St Werburgh, Chattenden and High Halstow
- Assess the landscape sensitivity, value and capacity of the SLAA sites that have come forward through the emerging Local Plan process
- Identify potential development sites that may not have come forward through the formal SLAA process but may offer sustainable development potential.
- Describe key characteristics and issues and provide a set of landscape guidelines; supported by a thorough analysis of baseline data and survey results





## 2.0 Planning context

### 2.1 National Policy

A number of paragraphs from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2018) are relevant to this study, which considers the close relationship between the natural and cultural influences on the landscape and is intended to feed into the development of independent Urban Design and Green Infrastructure Frameworks in support of the emerging Local Plan:

#### *Strategic policies*

- Para 20 - provision for the 'conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation'.

#### *Achieving well designed places*

- Para 127 - planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area over the lifetime of the development; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting; establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit; optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users;
- Paras 128 & 129 - supports the importance of engagement with the local community
- Para 130 - supports good design that takes the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions

#### *Planning for climate change*

- Para 149 - Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure.
- Para 150 - New development should be planned for in ways that: avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure;

#### *Conserving and enhancing the natural environment*

- Para 170 - Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils; recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services, including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland; maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate; minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- Para 171 - Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; 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.
- Para 172 - Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues;
- Para 180 - Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to

impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should: mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life; identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

## 2.2 Local Policy

The Medway Local Plan was adopted in 2003. The Council is currently in the process of preparing a new Local Plan which is scheduled for adoption in 2019. Until the new Local Plan is formally adopted, elements of the 2003 adopted Local Plan remain in force. The Secretary of State's Direction on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2007, details the saved policies of the Medway Local Plan (2003) extended beyond 27 September 2007.

The Medway Landscape Character Assessment (MLCA) was adopted by the Council in 2011. The MLCA provided an evidence base in support of the landscape and countryside policies within the Local Development Framework Draft Core Strategy, which was subsequently withdrawn in 2013.

This landscape guidance document is used by planning officers, developers and the local community and supports landscape-related planning decisions within Medway's countryside and urban-rural fringe. The MLCA will be revised and updated when new land allocation proposals have been agreed as part of the emerging Local Plan process.

## 2.3 Emerging Local Plan

The Council is preparing a new Local Plan for Medway to provide direction on the future growth of the area up to 2035.

The purpose of the plan is to meet the area's development needs for homes, jobs, infrastructure and services, whilst respecting and enhancing the natural and built environment. The strategic objectives align with the council's ambitions to deliver successful growth that benefits all, promoting opportunities and addressing inequalities. The plan provides certainty to investors and communities on areas suitable for development, and places that will be protected.

There have been three rounds of formal consultation on the emerging Local Plan – an Issues and Options stage in 2016, a Development Options stage in 2017, and a Development Strategy stage earlier in 2018. The Planning Service is now working to prepare the draft Local Plan, which will provide the last formal stage for consultation, before the council submits the plan for Independent Examination in 2020.

### 2.3.1 Local Plan Housing Target

The housing target is one of the most important aspects of the Local Plan. Government continues to promote its agenda to boost housebuilding across the country. It has introduced a number of amendments to the Planning system to encourage housebuilding and place higher housing targets on local authorities and this has increased uncertainty in the planning and development sectors. The council's own evidence base identified an objectively assessed need for housing of 1281 homes a year.

Using the government's standard method, and the latest household projections published in September 2018, this provided an annual Local Housing Need (LHN) of 1310 homes a year. The government has now published a consultation document confirming its intention to revise the methodology again to boost housing targets. This is likely to significant increase Medway's housing need figure. The consultation document signals government's intention to require local planning authorities to use this methodology from early 2019.

The council will need to have regard to the latest position on the definition of housing needs in preparing the Local Plan. The higher levels of housing being promoted by the government strengthen the case for the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bid being critical to the delivery of such a scale of growth.

### 2.3.2 Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF)

Medway Council is bidding for £170 million to invest in strategic infrastructure improvements to enable development on the Hoo Peninsula.

The bid will be submitted to Homes England in March 2019, with a decision expected in May 2019. If successful, the bid will address a number of constraints and allow significant growth on the Hoo Peninsula to form a key element of Medway's development strategy. If the bid is not successful, it is unlikely that such a



scale of growth could be supported, and the council would need to look at different approaches and levels of development.

### **2.33 Neighbourhood Plans**

Introduced in the Localism Act 2011, a Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led framework for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area. Government promotes neighbourhood planning as a means of involving local people in planning the future development of their areas. A Neighbourhood Plan may cover a wide range of economic, social and environmental issues, or may choose to focus on a small number of selected matters. The Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the statutory development plan for the area, alongside Medway Council's own planning policy documents.

There presently four emerging Neighbourhood Plans in Medway: Cliffe and Cliffe Woods, High Halstow, Hoo St. Werburgh and Luton Arches.





## 3.0 Methodology

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The methodology for this study is based on the approach outlined within recognised guidance documents, specifically *Landscape Character Assessment Topic Paper 6: Techniques and criteria for judging capacity and sensitivity* (Countryside Agency/SNH) 2002.

The methodology has been refined to address the specific purposes of this study, taking note of 'best practice' examples from similar studies by other local authorities.

### 3.1 Baseline data

The Medway Landscape Character Assessment (MLCA) has been used to inform land parcel delineation and provide existing data and analysis. Baseline data mapping has been assembled on Designations and Infrastructure (Power and hydrology) - see Appendices 6.4 and 6.5.

A range of other reference sources have been used. These include important Heritage (*Hoo Peninsula Historic Landscape Project*) and Bird disturbance studies (*Thames Medway & Swale Estuaries – Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy*). See Bibliography for further details.

### 3.2 Land parcels

The land parcels are based on previously defined areas within the Medway Landscape Character Assessment (2011). In some cases (mainly to the east of Hoo St Werburgh) the LCA parcels were larger and extended well beyond the defined zone of influence. In such circumstances the boundaries have been refined to reflect local character issues and accord with the purpose and extent of the study. The results have been arrived at through desktop analysis and site survey work.

In order to broadly reflect the landscape context the land parcels have been separated into two main zones. These are described as Areas 1 and 2. Area 1 covers the more complex and diverse landscape to the west of Hoo St Werburgh. Area 2 covers the predominantly flatter and more open landscape to the east of Hoo St Werburgh.

Whilst this sub-division reflects the broad landscape characteristics of the two areas, it is not finite and the spatial connections between the two areas remain; this understanding is reflected in the survey, analysis, guidelines and summary sections of the report.

In some cases, the landscape parcels have been further sub-divided to reflect more specific landscape characteristics and visual effects. The results of this work are reflected in the annotated parcel maps in Appendix 2. It is worth noting that landscape features are not always consistent with the boundaries of SLAA sites, which are often defined principally by land ownership interests.

### 3.3 Zone of influence

The zone of influence has been assessed in the context of the proposed development allocations (Regulation 18 Consultation - March 2018) and some more recent submissions. Consideration has been given to the anticipated type and scale. The zone of influence has been extended beyond the boundaries of the SLAA sites to consider the extent of anticipated landscape and visual impacts. The opportunity for potential new development sites (not currently SLAA's) to come forward has also been recognised.

### 3.4 Predicted development

This study considers predicted development with the defined zone of influence. Assumptions about the anticipated type of development have been based on the principal driver for an enlarged settlement on the Hoo Peninsula – to provide new housing to respond to predicted demographic changes and meet the Government's overall target for new housing over the new Local Plan period.

The methodology provides for an assessment of the land parcels in the context of this predicted development. Whilst this consists predominantly of low, medium (with some higher) density housing, it also involves the creation of new employment areas alongside the construction of supporting infrastructure, including new and upgraded roads, schools, retail and sports facilities, public open space, community and extra care facilities.

The precise detail regarding location of higher density development and new infrastructure within the enlarged settlement has not been finalised at this stage. A default assumption has been made that the majority of the predicted development areas will be allocated to low and medium density housing.

The assessment of each parcel also considers where relevant the capacity of that area to absorb higher density and larger scale development and the potential to mitigate adverse effects. Such areas may typically feature more contained and/or lower lying areas. Larger structures on upper slopes and ridgelines are likely to be considered unacceptable. See Landscape Framework Guidelines at the end of this report for more guidance on this.

In some cases a major new centre (for example around the proposed new rail station) will have a significant effect on the character of the landscape. Mitigation of effects when the scale of development is large is likely to be difficult and in such instance the Council would be seeking the highest standards of architecture, landscape and urban design in order to create a strong and distinctive place.

Certain parcels within the zone of influence do not include SLAA sites directly related to the expansion of Hoo but have been considered for their significance in other roles. This may include potential visual and landscape effects and/or strategic landscape functions, e.g. infrastructure and anti-coalescent roles. An example of such a role would be the Council's aspiration to maintain an open landscape and green buffer between the urban areas of Medway and the more rural communities of the Hoo Peninsula.

The main SLAA site parcels and immediately adjacent land have been subjected to the closest scrutiny, with the outcomes incorporated into a set of local area guidelines, with some general overarching contextual principles. Key strategic viewpoints have also been identified - see annotated maps in Appendix 2.

This study focuses on the SLAA sites that have come forward through the formal 'call for sites' process. It also recognises other sites that have not come forward through the formal process but may still offer sustainable development opportunities. These potential development sites are also shown on the annotated maps.

### 3.5 Survey Team

The site survey work and assessment was undertaken by the Council's Landscape Architect with support from Council Officers within the Planning Policy and Major Projects Teams. The site work was undertaken during the months of January 2018 – January 2019. This enabled an understanding of the character of the area through different seasons.

### 3.6 Survey Sheets

Each character area was assessed according to a consistent set of criteria related to landscape sensitivity and value. The headings that have been used are described below. See Appendix 5 for the survey sheet pro forma.

### 3.7 Landscape Capacity Assessment - the process

Each parcel considers landscape sensitivity and landscape value separately.

#### 3.7.1 Introduction

The following introductory sections assemble important baseline data but do not directly form part of the criteria analysis

- **Description** The parcel boundary in relation to the MLCA boundaries, the zone of influence and other local considerations
- **Characteristics** An overall assessment of the land parcel which considers topography, landform, land cover and land use. This provides background data on the character of the site that informs the key landscape features highlighted in the following section.
- **SLAA sites** Summarises the extent of SLAA sites within the parcel
- **Settlement edge** Records the character and quality of the existing settlement edge, based on development period and the degree to which it blends sympathetically with the surrounding countryside. An understanding of this is intended to inform development and mitigation opportunities and constraints.

#### 3.7.2 Landscape Sensitivity

Overall landscape sensitivity is arrived at by assessing landscape character and visual amenity separately and then comparing them using a matrix system (see table 1). In each case key landscape and visual amenity features within each land parcel and the significance and value of these features is evaluated. Each individual landscape and visual sensitivity criteria is assessed as being of equal weight.



### 3.7.3 Landscape Character Sensitivity - Assessment criteria

- **Designations** Analysis results of low, medium or high are based on both the number and significance of the designations contained within (or immediately adjacent to) the parcel. It is not simply a matter of numbers as certain types of designation may be of greater significance in the context of the particular landscape setting being considered. One significant designation (e.g. SSSI) could lead to a high rating. This would be a matter of professional judgement by the assessor team.
- **Landscape features** Considers the key distinctive landscape features of the parcel. Certain features may tend to increase levels of sensitivity - e.g. steep landform, prominent and distinctive ridges and woodland blocks, heritage assets. The impact of new development in such circumstances may lead to significant changes in the character of the landscape. Such impacts may be difficult (or inappropriate) to mitigate against and thereby reduce their significance. Each feature is considered within its overall landscape context including its relationship to adjacent features. An assessment of one or more highly sensitive landscape features in a sensitive setting would lead to a higher rating, average features in a less sensitive setting to a moderate rating, less sensitive features to a lower rating
- **Function of area** Considers the potential contribution that the parcel (and adjacent parcels) could make to the wider landscape framework. Green Infrastructure (GI), anti-coalescence, ecological buffer zones, agricultural/horticultural value (but not exclusively) are key topics for consideration. A wider contribution may consist of an important green buffer between existing settlements that also provides significant environmental and social benefits - clean air, water, recreational space and views (i.e. a multi-functional GI role) would lead to a higher rating. An average and less significant contribution would be assessed as moderate. An insignificant or no contribution would be assessed as low.
- **Mutual inter-dependence** Considers whether there is a mutual inter-reliance between this parcel and adjacent parcels and whether change to this landscape would impact significantly on adjacent landscapes. Higher levels of mutual inter-reliance would tend to lead to a higher sensitivity rating and the results are assessed accordingly
- **Sense of Place** Sense of place is what makes a particular space or area special and distinctive. A range of factors are considered, including field pattern, scale, containment, landscape features, time depth, tranquillity and remoteness. A strong sense of place is likely to be more sensitive to change. The results are rated strong (high), moderate (medium) or weak (low). A high rating indicates less tolerance to change.

### 3.7.4 Visual Amenity Sensitivity - Assessment criteria

- **Visual amenity** The overall pleasantness of the views people may enjoy of their surroundings. This section considers the characteristics and qualities of the landscape which contribute to visual amenity and may affect the setting of an enlarged settlement. The incidence of distinctive features like prominent skylines and ridges, steep slopes, green and wooded backdrops are likely to lead to a higher visual sensitivity rating. Less sensitive landscapes would be judged carefully on their merits but could include valley floors and lower slopes or flat and featureless landscapes adjoining existing development edges.
- **Receptors** The visual amenity receptor groups that are likely to be affected by a major new development; typically these include outdoor recreation users, road users, residents and people at their places of work. Outdoor recreation users are considered the most sensitive of these groups; road users and people at their places of work are less sensitive as they are focussed on other tasks - i.e. driving, working etc. Receptors within the land parcel and from surrounding land parcels are considered. A number of more sensitive receptors (e.g. outdoor recreation users) would indicate a higher overall level of sensitivity. Assessment includes for potential receptor groups - e.g. if site opened up to public access as result of development.
- **Strategic viewpoints** The annotated maps identify key viewpoints within each parcel. These views are from publicly accessible spaces or spaces that offer public access opportunities. They have been selected to highlight both (1) views that oversee SLAA and opportunity sites and are likely to change (in some cases) significantly as a result of new development, and (2) views that oversee the wider landscape setting of the development and are considered likely to have a strategic role in terms of green infrastructure and visual amenity benefits. These views may or may not include SLAA and opportunity sites. The viewpoints have been divided into two categories, representative and specific views (see Glossary for viewpoint definitions). For assessment purposes, the number and range/variety of significant strategic views within each particular land parcel is likely to lead to a higher sensitivity rating
- **Visual effects** Considers the effects of change as a result of development on the views available to people and their amenity; whether the effects of this change are beneficial, neutral or adverse and

whether there is potential to mitigate against any adverse effects. A higher sensitivity rating would be for adverse effects that are difficult to mitigate against. The lowest rating would be for beneficial effects that require no mitigation.

- **Inter-visibility** Assesses the degree of inter-visibility between the land parcel under review and adjacent land parcels. Higher degrees of inter-visibility between parcels is likely to lead to a higher sensitivity rating.

### 3.7.5 Sensitivity Assessment

The individual criteria for each category (landscape and visual) are evaluated to provide an overall result. Sensitivity is assessed at three levels (high, medium and low). Where Medium/High results arise these are assessed as High for the purposes of the Capacity outcome matrix. Where Low/Medium results arise these are assessed as low.

A matrix system (see table 1) is used to compare the landscape and visual sensitivity results and provide an overall sensitivity assessment.

Landscape Character Sensitivity	High	Medium	Medium/High	High
	Medium	Low/Medium	Medium	Medium/High
	Low	Low	Low/Medium	Medium
		Low	Medium	High
		Visual Sensitivity		

**Table 1** Sensitivity matrix

### 3.7.6 Landscape value - Assessment criteria\*

Landscape value criteria are split into seven sections for the purposes of analysis:

1. The presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare landscape character type; particularly important or representative examples.
2. Sense of place created by distinctive factors such as topography or field pattern. A stronger sense of place would lead to a higher rating.
3. Conservation interests – e.g. features with wildlife, earth science, heritage and cultural interest - including associations that contribute to perceptions of natural beauty.
4. Landscape condition - measure of physical state of landscape - incl. extent to which typical character represented in individual areas; intactness and coherence of landscape; condition of individual elements.
5. Whether the landscape provides or offers public recreational access opportunities in areas where experience of the landscape is important.
6. Whether the landscape provides or offers the opportunity to provide distinctive or promoted views.
7. Whether the landscape offers qualities including wildness, tranquillity and remoteness.

Each section is considered to be of equal weight for the purposes of evaluation. Strength in or predominance of the above listed features would lead to a higher value assessment rating. Where the situation arises, a medium/high sensitivity or value result is configured as a high outcome; a low/medium result as a low outcome.

\* *Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, 3rd edition (pp. 83-85) provides further guidance on this.



### 3.7.7 Landscape Capacity outcome

The results of the landscape sensitivity and landscape value assessments are set against one another on a Landscape Capacity matrix (see Table 2). High/Medium High values indicate High Sensitivity; Medium values indicate Medium Sensitivity; Low/Medium Low values indicate Low Sensitivity.

Landscape Sensitivity	High	Medium	Medium/High	High
	Medium	Low/Medium	Medium	Medium/High
	Low	Low	Low/Medium	Medium
		Low	Medium	High
		Landscape Value		

**Table 2** Capacity matrix

The results provide a Landscape Capacity outcome for each land parcel. The following table provides a definition for each outcome.

Some land parcels do not currently contain SLAA or opportunity sites but may be significant in terms of their role within the zone of influence. The assessment process considers these functional roles but also the potential that similar development proposals may come forward within these areas at some future date. The definitions are phrased in such a way as to accommodate these considerations.

Level	Definition
<b>Low</b>	<p>Landscape and/or visual characteristics of the overall parcel are robust or degraded and/or its values are low.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>The parcel can accommodate</b> the proposed type of development / an extension of the proposed type of development without significant character change</li> </ul> <p>Thresholds for significant change are very high</p>
<b>Low/Medium</b>	<p>Landscape and/or visual characteristics of the overall parcel are resilient to change and/or its values are medium/ low or low.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>The parcel can accommodate</b> the proposed type of development / an extension of the proposed type of development <b>in many situations</b> without significant character change</li> </ul> <p>Thresholds for significant change are high</p>
<b>Medium</b>	<p>Landscape and/or visual characteristics of the overall parcel are susceptible to change and/or its values are medium/low through to high/medium.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>The parcel can accommodate</b> the proposed type of development / an extension of the proposed type of development <b>in some situations</b> without significant character change</li> </ul> <p>Thresholds for significant change are intermediate</p>
<b>Medium/High</b>	<p>Landscape and/or visual characteristics of the overall parcel are vulnerable to change and/or its values are medium through to high.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>The parcel can accommodate</b> the proposed type of development / an extension of the proposed type of development <b>only in defined limited situations</b> without significant character change</li> </ul> <p>Thresholds for significant change are low</p>
<b>High</b>	<p>Landscape and/or visual characteristics of the overall parcel are very vulnerable to change and/or its values are high or high/medium.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>The parcel is unable to accommodate</b> the proposed type of development / an extension of the proposed type of development without significant character change</li> </ul> <p>Thresholds for significant change are very low</p>

Table 3 Outcome definitions

### 3.8 Development Guidelines

The site survey work and baseline mapping provides evidence for a broad assessment of the tolerance to change and overall extent of acceptability of development for SLAA or opportunity sites within each landscape parcel.

Where land parcels contain a number of SLAA and opportunity sites and are thereby subject to more intensive development pressure, these character areas have been further divided into sub-character areas. These areas are shown on the introductory parcel section maps and the annotated maps (see Appendix 6.2). The outcomes of the assessment identify more localised characteristics and variations within each parcel. A contextual approach has been taken; each parcel is considered in relationship to neighbouring parcels and the wider landscape framework opportunities.

This is a natural part of the landscape character assessment process, where character areas nest within larger ones - from national to local scale - and an important stage in the site analysis process where variations in character and sensitivity can be identified at an increasingly localised scale. The more detailed assessment ensures that key issues where development is likely to be most concentrated can be fleshed out and enables the preparation of a more focussed set of development guidelines.

For reasons of scale and practicality, the sub-character areas have not been evaluated separately within the overall capacity assessment. The assessment results therefore provide an overall assessment for each land parcel - weighing up landscape sensitivity and landscape value.



### 3.9 Summary – Outcomes & Guidelines

*Section 5.1* A Summary in tabular form showing the Capacity Assessment results for each land parcel

*Section 5.2* Landscape Framework Guidelines - Development and Edge of settlement guidelines including Green & Blue Infrastructure issues. These guidelines pull together some of the cross-cutting issues and recommendations that have emerged from the individual land parcel assessments.

#### 3.10 A note on terminology

This study uses the terminology and general approach to landscape and visual impact assessment outlined within *Guidelines on Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition*. Other key references include: *An approach to Landscape Character Assessment (2014)* and *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance, Topic paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity & Sensitivity (2002)*. See Bibliography for further details.

## 4.0 Land Parcel Assessment

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### 4.1 Zone A: Wainscott, Chattenden and the Upnors

*Land to the south and west of Hoo St Werburgh*

1. Hogmarsh Valley
2. Bald Top Hill
3. Chattenden Ridge
4. Deangate Ridge
5. Hoo Farmland
6. Cockham Farm Ridge

A desktop study was undertaken to consider the proposed SLAA sites, their zones of influence and the character of the landscape. The parcel boundaries that evolved from this analysis were developed further through site work which included a review of potential opportunity sites.

The land parcel boundaries within Area I are broadly consistent with the Medway LCA (2011). Details of adjustments, where relevant, can be found under the *Description* heading at the beginning of each section.



## 1.0 Hogmarsh Valley



### 1.1 Description

The boundaries of this parcel are consistent with the Hogmarsh Valley character area (Medway LCA, 2011) with minor adjustments to reflect anomalies along the Tower Hill and Bald Top Hill boundaries. See Introductory note under Section 4.1 for further detail.

In many ways this parcel is more closely linked to the urban edges of Wainscott and Frindsbury than the more rural characteristics of the Hoo Peninsula and the development opportunities for an enlarged settlement around Hoo St Werburgh. It is important however, alongside Bald Top Hill, for its strategic role as a welcoming green gateway into Medway, maintaining an attractive and valuable buffer separating the more densely occupied urban areas to the south west from the quieter and more remote outlying settlements along the estuary and across the wider Hoo Peninsula.

This land parcel contains a number of SLAA sites and is under considerable development pressure. For the reasons given above, this character area has been considered in its entirety.

### 1.2 Characteristics

- Broad valley with open character and mixed land uses including arable farmland, on valley sides and floor; framed with distinctive wooded backdrops along upper slopes and ridgelines
- Hogmarsh stream runs south from higher ground at Chattenden Ridge and Bald Top Hill out towards Whitewall Creek and into Medway estuary; includes marshland areas and sewage works to south
- Area forms an attractive and distinctive landscape setting and gateway for arrival into the Medway urban areas from the west;
- Contributes to an important strategic green buffer separating the Medway urban areas from the the Upnors and estuary shoreline; separates Wainscott from Chattenden and helps to retain the rural identity of settlements and countryside on the Hoo Peninsula
- Suffers from urban fringe pressures including adverse effects from infrastructure (e.g. RSME facilities, Four Elms Hill and A289 relief road) but retains overall intactness and coherence
- Offers significant multi-functional Green Infrastructure opportunities, including community access, flood alleviation, public health in close proximity to dense urban areas



### 1.3 SLAA sites

There are three large SLAA sites within this land parcel. These include a very large site (1087) that stretches north to south along a large section of the valley; an ancillary site to the east (1176) and a smaller site to the north (0718). Manor Farm (1088) sits to the south west. There are no current plans for the RSME to relocate but the long-term potential of this site, to the north west corner, for redevelopment at some point in the future should not be ignored.

### 1.4 Settlement edges

- Settlement edges to the west are 20th/21st Century - linear - development framed by A289 with some particularly prominent urban edges (e.g. properties along Frindsbury Hill) but also with some edges softened by tree planting; area would benefit from a stronger overall landscape structure along western edge
- Settlement edges to the east are 20th/21st Century - apart from the Castle Street development which is prominent in long views across the valley, most edges on this side are more sensitively screened by vegetation and topography
- Settlement edges to north are 20th and pre-20th Century - the RSME site (facilities and ponderosa area) are not sympathetic to the character of the landscape and blend unsympathetically from many surrounding viewpoints; Islingham Farm (see parcel 2) preserves the character of a traditional farmstead, including pond, and there would be opportunities to respect and restore this character in longer term development proposals for this area; land to the north west - this is a small potential development site fringed by SSSI woodland; development here would risk erosion of the strategic gap between Wainscott and Chattenden.

Landscape Sensitivity	
Designations	SSSI; Public Open Space (Tennis Courts and Cricket Ground); Public Rights of Way
Landscape features	Broad valley floor with gentle slopes and strong wooded framework to slopes along eastern edges; water and hydrology strong features that have shaped and define the character of this valley; arable farmland with mixed uses (including recreation, boot fair sites and allotments); provides attractive and welcoming green gateway with generous sense of space for arrival into Medway urban areas; includes pockets of relative tranquillity away from infrastructure. A289 and Four Elms Hill (including layby area), RSME facilities and sewage works are all adverse influences; despite this the area has an overall sense of visual coherence and intactness and retains its semi-rural sense of place (eg. arable farmland to north of cricket ground and tennis courts; rural character eroded along western edges by urban edges and to south at Frindsbury quarry (includes temporary approval quarry haul road); Medway City Estate; heavily trafficked and noisy road network – all introducing strong and adverse urban influences
Function of area	Provides major benefit as anti-coalescent green buffer between urban areas and the Upnors and separation between Wainscott from Chattenden - helping to protect rural identity of wider Hoo Peninsula; provides considerable GI opportunities - especially relating to ecology, water, public access and public health (clean air and exercise close to urban areas) benefits - all linking and strengthening communities; retains rural sense of place and provides agricultural value/benefits - linking town to countryside. Provides buffer to SSSI areas
Mutual inter-dependence	Strong inter-relationship between this and Bald Top Hill parcels; to lesser extent (because of topography and vegetation buffers) but connects also with Cockham Farm Ridge and Hoo Farmland parcels
Sense of place	Overall sense of place intact and coherent and predominantly rural but suffers from many adverse influences; strongest character away from roads and infrastructure; urban pressures greatest to south as development intensifies; tranquillity and remoteness strongest to north - eg. adjacent Islingham Farm, Noke Street and Haven Street
Landscape Sensitivity <b>High</b>	

<b>Visual Sensitivity</b>	
Visual amenity	Largely undeveloped and visually welcoming land parcel has strong sense of place; overall intactness, coherence and pastoral quality but with strong urban pressures; valuable green lung into urban areas, links countryside into town; good open views of farmland from elevated areas, public rights of way and road network - all provide strong sense of relief and openness from urban pressures; views to south include Medway City Estate industrial and waterfront infrastructure as well as Chatham Dockyard listed sheds; water strong but visually hidden feature that would benefit from being opened up; wooded backdrops to east frame and lend distinctive character to parcel
Receptors	<p><i>Within parcel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreation users using PRoW's within area; users of sports facilities, allotments and boot fair; opportunities to enhance access especially north south along the Hogmarsh stream valley floor- this would strengthen links from the urban areas into the wider countryside</li> <li>• Residents, road users and people at place of work - residents at Castle Street; along A289, Four Elms Hill, Upnor Road, Woodfield Way and Kitchener Road; RSME staff and students</li> </ul> <p><i>From outside parcel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are major opportunities to benefit from the extensive views of the Hogmarsh Valley and surrounding landscape from the top of Bald Top Hill - there are currently no Public Rights of Way through this area; users of footpaths in neighbouring parcels; users of Wainscott Public Open Space</li> <li>• Residents, road users and pedestrians - residents at Wainscott and Frindsbury; Hoo Road, Wainscott Road and Frindsbury Hil</li> </ul>
Strategic viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Castle Street looking west</li> <li>• Frindsbury Hill near Sans Pareil roundabout looking south towards Whitewall Creek and Dockyard</li> <li>• Pedestrian bridge over A289 - views looking north, south and east</li> <li>• PRoW from Wainscott to Upnor Road - views looking north and south</li> <li>• Elevated section of Upchat Road PRoW heading west towards Four Elms Hill - panoramic view</li> <li>• Woodfield Way from edge of ponderosa looking south - panorama</li> <li>• Islingham Farm Road - looking east / Higham Road - looking north</li> <li>• Haven Street - looking north and south</li> </ul>
Visual effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adverse effects - any development that diminishes the openness and overall coherence of this land parcel would reduce its benefits as a strategic gap that helps to define the local identity of the separate communities at Upnor and Chattenden; its distinctive character would be eroded and there would be adverse impacts on the significant GI opportunities that the area offers.</li> <li>• The RSME site is shown as an opportunity site. It is currently in use as an MOD educational facility. If the MOD vacated this site, there is potential for housing or employment uses if the character of the site and surrounding landscape are respected. There are development proposals for the Manor Farm site; it is important that the green backdrop between the A289 and the Grade I listed barn is protected from development.</li> </ul>
Inter-visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This parcel is inter-visible with the Bald Top Hill parcel</li> </ul>
Visual Sensitivity <b>High</b>	
Overall Sensitivity <b>High</b>	

Landscape value	
Rare elements or features	No rare elements
Sense of place	Yes - broad river valley with strong overall sense of coherence and intactness; strongest sense of place towards northern parts of parcel
Conservation interests	SSSI to north east; no other recognised features
Landscape condition - includes intactness and coherence	Overall sense of intactness and coherence; farmed areas in fair condition, poorer around RSME facilities, boot fair site, sewage works and edges of Whitewall Creek. Overall condition moderate
Public Recreation - access opportunities	Considerable opportunity to enhance access through this area, including strengthening the PROW network and opening up access to the water that makes this area so distinctive
Distinctive or promoted views	Includes long views up and down the valley with opportunities to strengthen, enhance and extend these views
Wildness, tranquillity and remoteness	Most tranquil and remote to north west corner; area still retains rural character despite urban pressures
Landscape Value <b>Medium</b>	
Landscape Capacity <b>Medium High</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>The parcel can accommodate</b> the proposed type of development / an extension of the proposed type of development <b>only in defined limited situations</b> without significant character change</li> </ul>	





## 1.5 Landscape issues and guidelines

There are no landscape sub-character areas defined within this land parcel. The character area is mapped and annotated in Appendix 6.2 and cross referenced where relevant in the text.

See Section 3.8 for further detail on the assessment process and character and sub character zones

## 1.6 Key characteristics and issues

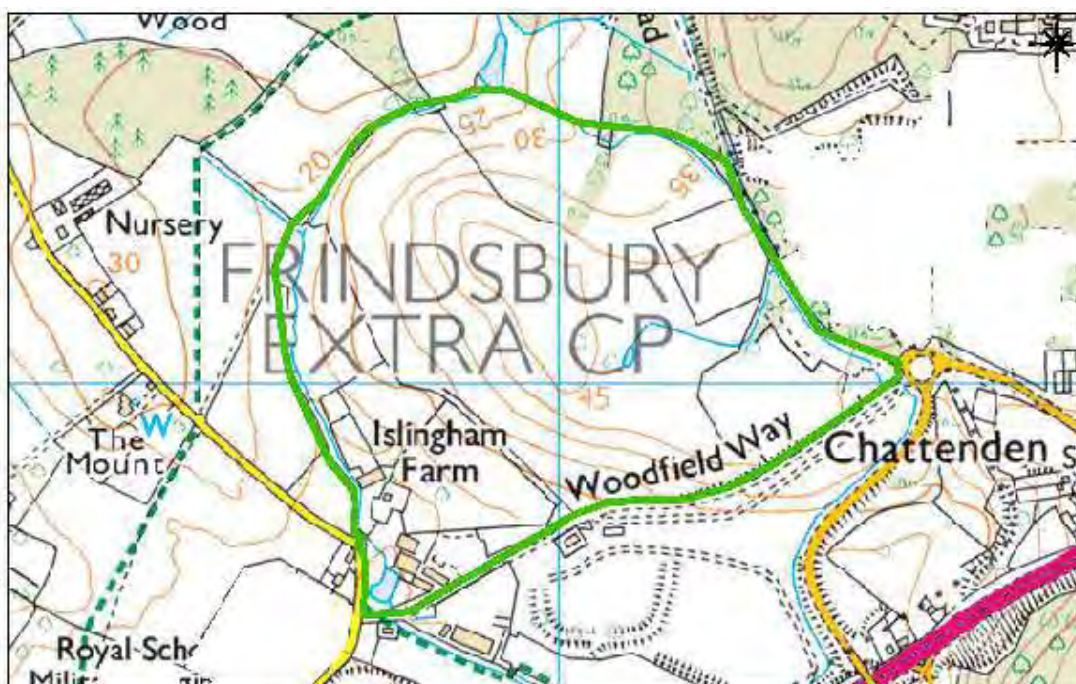
- This area plays an important functional role - as a strategic gap between the Medway urban areas and the sensitive estuary landscape and settlements at the Upnors; as a strategic gap between Wainscott and Chattenden, protecting the distinctive rural identity of the Hoo Peninsula; as a green and welcoming gateway into Medway's urban areas
- The area provides a 'green lung' an ecological and flood alleviation corridor that offers extensive GI opportunities to strengthen community and recreational links between the urban areas and the wider countryside, reducing air pollution and improving public health.
- Distinctive landscape features of the area include the wooded backdrops to the east and the green backdrop to the north at Bald Top Hill; the Hogmarsh stream is a hidden feature that runs along the valley floor
- Taking these important functional roles and constraints into account there are limited opportunities to introduce development into this area without significant adverse impacts on the area's character and strategic role
- A Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bid will be submitted in March 2019 that will include proposals for a new road onto the Hoo Peninsula. This road would pass through the northern section of this land parcel; see annotated map for indicative route. If these new road proposals proceed, they will significantly affect the RSME facilities, they will also need to address impacts on the SSSI and any identified adverse effects on the surrounding landscape. See also Bald Top Hill land parcel.



### 1.7 Development guidelines

- Soften and frame adverse effects of urbanised western edges by introducing native planting including hedgerows and blocks of woodland; seek to strengthen rural character of valley
- Protect views and characteristics of prominent green wooded backdrops to east and green backdrop to north at Bald Top Hill
- Open up the Hogmarsh stream and wetland areas as stronger and more accessible landscape features whilst protecting and enhancing their biodiversity value; explore potential for new waterside walks along the valley floor
- Seek to retain agricultural uses within this area and soften and screen urban fringe pressures, focussing particularly on central area, southern and western edges
- Identify funding and partnerships to expand and strengthen the wide-ranging Green Infrastructure opportunities that the area offers, balancing good farming practice with flood alleviation, ecology, protection of the natural environment and improved public access and recreational opportunities
- It is recommended that this area is protected from any substantial development and that strategies and processes are put in place to strengthen the area's rural character and openness
- The proposed new road scheme to the north of this parcel (see Islingham Farm area) will have a significant impact on the character and functioning of this area; a full assessment will be required and adverse impacts mitigated. See also Bald Top Hill parcel assessment.

## 2.0 Bald Top Hill



### 2.1 Description

The boundaries of this parcel are consistent with the Bald Top character area (Medway LCA, 2011) with minor adjustments to reflect anomalies along the southern boundary along Woodfield Way. See Area 1 Introductory Note for more detail.

#### 2.1.1 Characteristics

- Open grazed hilltop plateau, unspoilt, remote and tranquil; distinctive rural character in close proximity to urban settlement edges
- Wetland features to upper plateau with tributary stream from Chattenden Ridge following lower slopes along northern and western rims
- Islingham Farm to south west retains rural character; borders RSME facilities (see Parcel 1) more harmful in impact on landscape character
- Prominent feature in views from lower slopes and valley floor, including road users along A289
- Dramatic long views from plateau to south over Medway Towns, estuary and towards North Downs; local unspoilt views to north
- Includes tract of SSSI designated land to south east which border Chattenden Barracks site; borders Round Top Hill and Chattenden Ridge to north (see Parcel 3) which include large extents of Ancient Woodland and SSSI designated land
- Parcel performs important functional role in retaining separation between Medway urban areas and settlements at Chattenden, Hoo St Werburgh and wider Hoo Peninsula
- Offers extensive GI opportunities within a farmed landscape; opportunities include access to countryside and improved public health close to urban settlement; also biodiversity and hydrology opportunities for benefit of public and natural environment

#### 2.1.2 SLAA sites

This parcel sits within the zone of influence and is contiguous with and has views towards potential development allocation sites. It does not include any SLAA sites. The RSME site has been identified as a potential opportunity site that may come forward if the MOD decide (at some future date) to vacate this area.

### 2.1.3 Settlement edges

Settlement edges to south west are 20th Century - Islingham Farm (undated) and RSME site - see characteristics notes above

Landscape Sensitivity	
Designations	SSSI; no PRoW network or other designations
Landscape features	Distinctive open farmed (pasture) hill with dramatic long views to south; prominent in views from valley floor; tranquil and remote but close to urban settlement; water strong feature with wetland areas to plateau and stream to north and western rims; borders Round Top Hill and Chattenden Ridge to north; includes SSSI to south east corner
Function of area	Performs important functional role in retaining separation between Medway urban areas and settlements at Chattenden, Hoo St Werburgh and wider Hoo Peninsula; offers good green infrastructure opportunities
Mutual inter-dependence	Strong inter-relationship between this parcel and adjacent parcels at Hogmarsh Valley, Chattenden Ridge and Hoo Farmland
Sense of place	Strong sense of time depth; distinctive topography; strong rural quality undamaged by industrial activity or other human intervention; remote and tranquil; intact and coherent; main adverse impact from RSME works to south
Landscape Sensitivity <b>High</b>	

Visual Sensitivity	
Visual amenity	Open grazed pasture hilltop plateau, prominent in views from valley floor and along northern relief road. Provides long dramatic views over Medway Towns and towards North Downs. Distinctive landscape feature with strong sense of place and remote rural character
Receptors	<p><i>Within parcel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No existing Public Right of Way (PRoW) network but local community access area informally</li> <li>Opportunity to introduce new PRoW route that accesses parcel from south and links across to existing paths to north west</li> <li>Residents, road users and people at place of work - Islingham Farm and RSME staff and students; Woodfield Way, Lochat Road and Haven Street border site</li> </ul> <p><i>From outside parcel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreation users along footpaths to south and north west</li> <li>Road users and pedestrians - A289; Islingham Farm Road; Higham &amp; Bunters Farm Road; Upchat and Upnor Road</li> <li>Residents and people at place of work - Wainscott urban area; scattered farmsteads, rural businesses and dwellings</li> </ul>
Strategic viewpoints	<p><i>Within parcel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hilltop plateau area affords important views to south including urban areas and North Downs - opportunity site with no formal access at the moment</li> </ul> <p><i>From outside parcel</i></p> <p>Views from valley floor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A289 road users approaching Four Elms roundabout from west and east</li> <li>Recreation users on footpath to west from Haven Street</li> <li>Residents from Hoo Road Wainscott public open space</li> </ul>
Visual effects	<p>Adverse effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development extending beyond the RSME opportunity site area would diminish and weaken the important strategic gap between Wainscott and Chattenden;</li> <li>The slopes and plateau area are visually prominent - development is likely to have a significant adverse landscape and visual effect on the distinctive rural character of this area</li> </ul>
Inter-visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant inter-visibility between this area and Hogmarsh Valley and Chattenden Ridge parcels</li> </ul>
Visual Sensitivity <b>High</b>	
Overall Sensitivity <b>High</b>	





Islingham Farm

Landscape value	
Rare elements or features	Wetland areas along top of plateau - acid grassland
Sense of place	Remote and tranquil, strong sense of time depth - see further notes under landscape sensitivity section
Conservation interests	SSSI to south east corner
Landscape condition - includes intactness and coherence	Intact and coherent; farmed landscape undamaged and in good condition
Public Recreation - access opportunities	Potential to improve access and recreation opportunities by opening up new footpath across plateau hilltop; all as part of extending Green Infrastructure framework
Distinctive or promoted views	Includes dramatic long views across Medway Towns and towards North Downs; local unspoilt views available looking north from plateau and hilltop slopes
Wildness, tranquillity and remoteness	Tranquil and remote; area retains rural time depth character
Landscape Value <b>Medium</b>	

**Landscape Capacity Medium High**

- The parcel can accommodate the proposed type of development / an extension of the proposed type of development only in defined limited situations without significant character change

## 2.2 Landscape issues and guidelines

There are no landscape sub-character areas defined within this land parcel. The character area is mapped and annotated in Appendix 6.2 and cross referenced where relevant in the text.

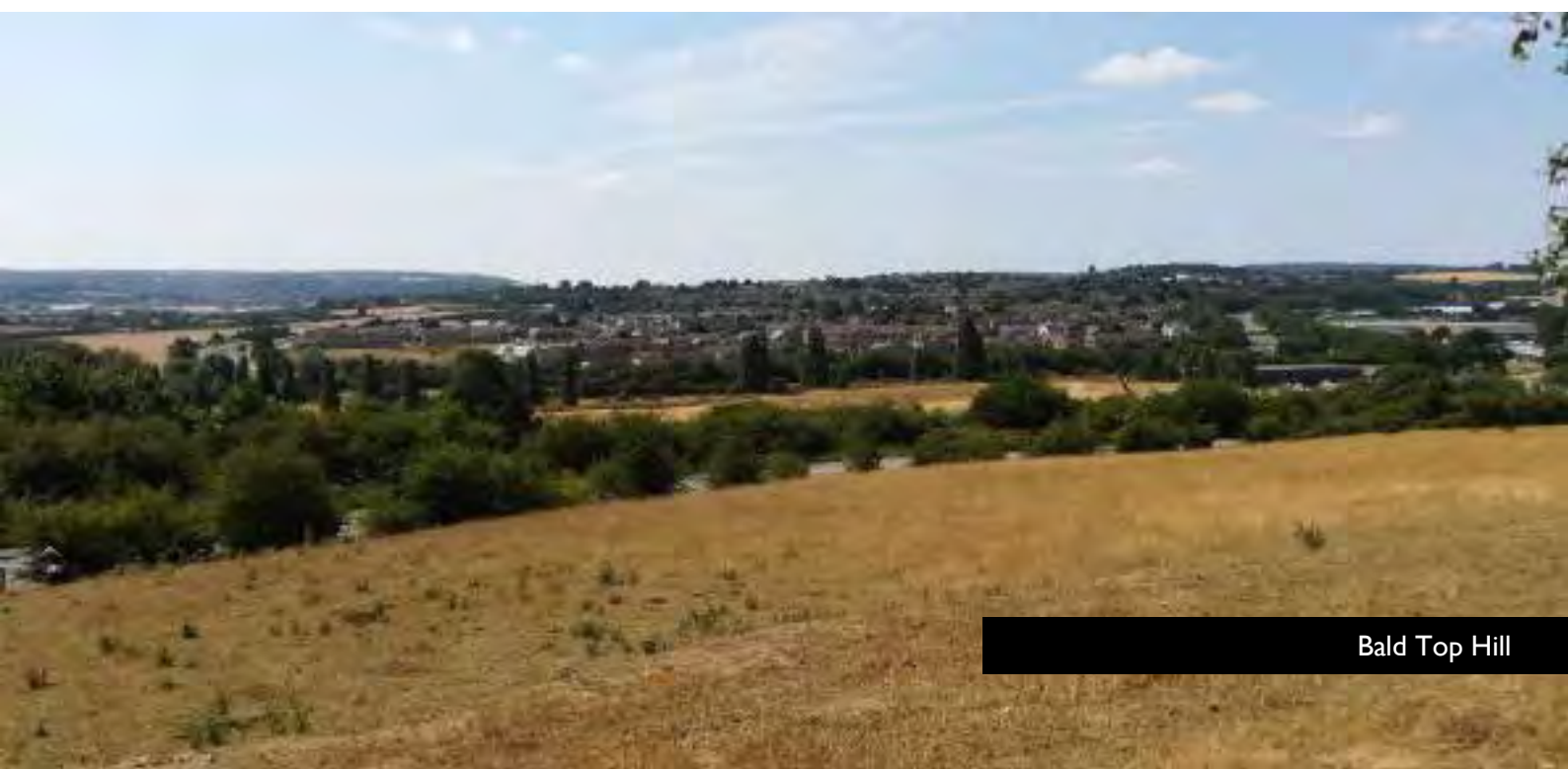
See Section 3.8 for further detail on the assessment process and character and sub character zones.

### 2.2.1 Key characteristics and issues

- This area is a highly sensitive and visually prominent landscape with strong rural character but situated close to the main urban settlement at Wainscott
- The area plays an important strategic role in buffering the highly designated Chattenden Ridge landscape to the north and separating the Wainscott urban edge from Chattenden, Hoo St Werburgh and the wider and more rural Hoo Peninsula
- The least sensitive part of this character area is the developed RSME site to the south west (also extends into Parcel 1)
- The close proximity of this area to the urban area offers good opportunities to open up public access to an area of open countryside with good views for the benefit of the community
- A Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bid will be submitted in March 2019 that will include proposals for a new road onto the Hoo Peninsula. This road would pass along the southern boundary of this area; see annotated map for indicative route. If these new road proposals proceed, they will significantly affect the RSME facilities. There will also be a requirement to address impacts on the SSSI and adverse effects on this distinctive and valued landscape. See also Hogmarsh Valley land parcel.

### 2.2.2 Development guidelines

- It is not generally recommended that new built development takes place within this area, beyond the extents of the RSME site; the slopes and plateau top are distinctive and visually prominent, the area has a strong sense of place; maintaining a sense of openness and the area's role as a green backdrop (see Hogmarsh Valley characteristics and guidelines) are considered to be important landscape functions
- All new development proposals should seek to enhance the green infrastructure opportunities within this area; ensuring that the wider community are able to benefit from access to this tranquil and remote area with outstanding views
- The proposed new road scheme to the southern boundary of this parcel will have a significant impact on the character and functioning of the area; a full assessment will be required and adverse impacts mitigated. See also Hogmarsh Valley notes.
- If the HIF bid is successful and a new road is proposed through this area, a more detailed sensitivity study (including an LVIA) will be required; ensuring that adequate mitigation is provided to support the proposals





### 3.0 Chattenden Ridge



#### 3.1 Description

This character area is broadly consistent with the character area defined in the Medway Landscape Character Assessment (2011). The principal change is an extension that includes the Northern and Central Terraces on the higher ground above Chattenden Village (shaded grey in MLCA).

##### 3.1.1 Characteristics

- A prominent steep wooded ridge; includes areas of scrub and grassland with open farmed slopes towards the eastern end.
- Water is a strong landscape feature; water course runs longitudinally through the site, forming a watershed to the south west into the Hogmarsh Valley, south towards Hoo St Werburgh and east towards Kingsnorth.
- Parcel includes extensive tracts of land designated as Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Parcel includes a number of blocks of Ancient Woodland (includes Wybornes, Lodge Hill, Deangate & Round Top Wood).
- Round Top Hill forms a distinctive and prominent landscape feature in the south west corner of the parcel.
- The farmed upper slopes to the east of the parcel offer dramatic open views of the Hoo Peninsula and estuaries - the Thames estuary to the north and the Medway estuary to the south.
- The character of the parcel is strongly influenced by its former military uses. Aside from the heritage features within the Training Camp itself (well documented in earlier proposals for Lodge Hill), it is worth noting that a series of heritage features run to the east and north of the parcel; these include the WW2 defence stop line (with pillboxes) and a scheduled WWI anti aircraft gun emplacement along the ridgeline. The Ammunition Depot has distinctive features, not formally scheduled but of heritage and landscape value.
- Heritage and water features are indicatively mapped on the Appendix 2 parcel plans.
- More detailed mapping for SSSI's and Ancient Woodland can be found on the Designations map in Appendix ..

##### 3.1.1 SLAA sites

- Lodge Hill Training Ground (SSSI) sits at the base of farmed and mixed grassland slopes on a predominantly flat plateau. Features include a mosaic of scrub, grassland and woodland. The southern

boundary of the Camp adjoins the former Deangate golf course site with land rising gently towards Deangate Ridge.

- Lodge Hill Camp site (western edges are SSSI) includes intact modern buildings and is situated to the west of Lodge Hill lane.
- The Northern Terrace (SSSI) and Central Terrace (SSSI surround on three sides) are situated to the south of the above sites
- The Ammunition Depot (SSSI) is a walled compound with intact period buildings and structures, situated to the west of the Northern Terrace
- These sites form part of the current Homes England regeneration proposals for this area - see also Chattenden Barracks and Playing Field SLAA sites under Parcel 4: Deangate Ridge.

### 3.1.2 Settlement edges

- The protected woodland that adjoins Cliffe Woods Village appears carved out in a crude and unsympathetic pattern
- The woodland that adjoins the western edge of Chattenden Village at Round Top Hill also blends in an unsympathetic fashion
- There is no evidence of a SSSI buffer to either of these settlement edges

Landscape Sensitivity	
Designations	SSSI; Ancient Woodland; Public Rights of Way; Area of Local Landscape Importance (2003 Local Plan); Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). SSSI predominates overall, extensive blocks of Ancient Woodland; extensive PRoW network but non-existent within former MOD owned sites. These offer opportunities - particularly for access along the ridgeline. Heritage features are plentiful particularly to north and east
Landscape features	Woodland ridge prominent feature in views from all directions - particularly from north and south; Round Top hill also prominent feature; extensive tracts of woodland and scrub; extensive network of streams, ponds, lakes and water bodies; former military infrastructure as heritage features; high biodiversity value.
Function of area	Provides anti-coalescent buffer between Cliffe Woods and Chattenden. Extensive water network in this area provides blue and green infrastructure opportunities (including health, access and hydrological benefits) to enhance value of landscape; interpretation of heritage features offers opportunity to understand history of area and links to surrounding heritage and landscape. Very few parts of parcel non-SSSI designated - only Lodge Hill Camp; farmland to east and upper farmed slopes below ridgeline. These areas are isolated farmland on prominent slopes and not considered suitable for development. Development at Lodge Hill Camp will require agreement on type of development and extent of buffer strip to protect SSSI.
Mutual inter-dependence	Chattenden Ridge, Deangate Ridge and Land south of High Halstow. Wooded ridgeline prominent elevated landscape feature
Sense of place	Complex historic landscape with strong sense of place and time depth; includes extensive areas of tranquillity and remoteness although some areas feel abandoned and under-used (relates to past military uses). New proposals should seek to reverse this trend and whilst managing access to SSSI areas, create a more welcoming environment for recreation users
Landscape Sensitivity <b>High</b>	





<b>Visual Sensitivity</b>	
Visual amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prominent wooded ridge and green backdrop</li> <li>Prominent landscape feature at Round Top Hill</li> <li>Extensive tracts of woodland with water features</li> <li>Long dramatic views from ridgeline towards Thames &amp; Medway estuaries</li> <li>Tranquil, remote and peaceful - strong sense of place</li> </ul>
Receptors	<p><i>Within parcel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreation users on PRoW's through site - opportunity to extend footpath network more widely across parcel. Includes users of archery club at Berry Court Wood</li> <li>Road users and pedestrians - Lodge Hill Lane and Dux Court Road</li> </ul> <p><i>Outside parcel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreation - Saxon Shore Way; former Golf course users; PRoW's on lower ground to north of parcel</li> <li>Road users and peds - Dux Court Lane, Chattenden Lane, Ratcliffe Highway and A228; roads on Peninsula to north of parcel</li> <li>Residents - Cliffe Woods, Chattenden, Hoo St Werburgh and High Halstow</li> </ul>
Strategic viewpoints	<p><i>Within parcel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Views along ridgeline looking north and south</li> <li>North facing views from Round Top Hill - within ammunition depot</li> <li>Many longer views screened by woodland</li> <li>See Appendix 2 plan for details</li> </ul> <p><i>Outside Parcel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Views from Cliffe, Cooling and smaller settlements to north of ridgeline</li> <li>Views from Saxon Shore Way, A228, edges of Hoo and Chattenden</li> </ul>
Visual effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing on proposed SLAA sites would in some cases be screened by topography and vegetation</li> <li>SSSI designation is a major detractor from the development potential of all SLAA sites; only one site in this parcel is not entirely covered by this designation (Lodge Hill Camp); would require SSSI buffer</li> <li>Lodge Hill Camp would be well screened from most longer views subject to scale of proposed development</li> <li>The Ammunition Depot site is considered to have high landscape value and a strong sense of place and tranquillity; it is also openly visible from strategic viewpoints on the ridgeline</li> </ul>
Inter-visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long views of wooded upper slopes and ridgeline from north and south</li> <li>Inter-visibility reduced by woodland screening; however open farmed slopes to east afford good views - especially to south</li> <li>Views towards High Halstow to east and into site from High Halstow</li> </ul>
Visual Sensitivity <b>Medium</b>	
Overall Sensitivity <b>Medium</b>	



Lodge Hill Camp and Round Top Wood

Landscape value	
Rare elements or features	Extensive Ancient woodland blocks; SSSI features; Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) and listed pillboxes
Sense of place	Woodland, topography, time depth and remoteness create strong sense of place
Conservation interests	SSSI; Heritage assets (including SAM and listed structures)
Landscape condition - includes intactness and coherence	Condition of woodland - intact and coherent but with some damage from trail bikes etc.; MOD owned SSSI sites undergoing regular ecological management regime; Northern and Central Terraces, Training Ground and Camp all have a neglected feel. Ammunition depot appears to be well cared for and in good condition.
Public Recreation - access opportunities	The area offers great opportunities if access to landscape can be managed in harmony with protection of ecological features
Distinctive or promoted views	Yes - particularly along the ridgeline
Wildness, tranquillity and remoteness	Yes - tranquil and remote in most areas
Landscape Value <b>High</b>	

Landscape Capacity **Medium/High**

**The parcel can accommodate** the proposed type of development / an extension of the proposed type of development **only in defined limited situations** without significant character change



Lodge Hill Training Area

### 3.2 Landscape issues and guidelines

There are no landscape sub-character areas defined within this land parcel. The character area is mapped and annotated in Appendix 6.2 and cross referenced where relevant in the text.

See Section 3.8 for further detail on the assessment process and character and sub character zones

#### 3.2.1 Key characteristics and issues

- Lodge Hill Camp This SLAA site is remote and reasonably well contained by topography and vegetation. It is fringed to the north, south and west by SSSI designated land and is located to the west of Lodge Hill Lane. The existing buildings have been largely maintained and some remain in occasional use. The character of the site is reflected in its previous uses and is not distinctive. The surrounding landscape is of high value. The SSSI edges would require a buffer to Natural England's requirements. Area not suitable for housing because of predation issues. Other controlled and low key uses (eg. small business units or wildlife related facilities) may be suitable on non SSSI designated land, subject to consultation with Natural England. Unexploded ordnance to be comprehensively cleared from all publicly accessible areas.
- Lodge Hill Training Ground This SLAA site is located at the western end of the fenced boundary of the site, adjacent to Lodge Hill Lane. Apart from a security compound at the entrance, the buildings appeared to be in disuse. The character of the built components of the site in this area is reflected in its previous uses roads and is not distinctive. There are however water bodies scrub, grassland and pockets of woodland that lend character and sense of place. The difficulty in promoting development on this SLAA site lies in the blanket SSSI designation that covers the whole training ground. Unexploded ordnance an issue to be addressed within future management proposals.
- Northern and Central Terraces Also known as the Police Barracks, these period terraces are intact but derelict. They are situated immediately to the west of Lodge Hill Lane. Both areas are surrounded by dense vegetation which is designated as SSSI. The SSSI covers the Northern terrace and tightly fringes the Central Terrace on three sides. The development potential of this area is limited and further constrained by the SSSI designation.
- Naval Magazines This remote walled compound is approached along a dedicated lane that forks off Lodge Hill Lane close to the Northern Terrace. It was constructed for ammunition storage (1875) and consists of five magazines (separated by broad earthen traverses to absorb any blast and set within a high perimeter enclosure wall). The magazines have fallen partly into disrepair and are currently in use for the storage of fireworks.

This is a distinctive and impressive landscape feature that can be best appreciated from the elevated grassland slopes within the compound to the south (as the ground rises up to Round Top Hill). The feature creates a green backdrop that is clearly visible in views from the ridgeline. A blanket SSSI designation covers the whole site. The landscape value and high visibility of this site from the north, plus the SSSI designation, make it unsuitable for any form of development that would significantly alter its distinctive character.

Details on the historic context of this and related military developments can be found in research reports from the *Hoo Peninsula Historic Landscape Project* – see Bibliography for further information.



### 3.2.2 Development guidelines

- Protect the wooded and farmed ridgeline and the upper slopes of Chattenden Ridge in key strategic views from the north and south; maintain this landscape feature as a distinctive, easily recognisable and undeveloped green backdrop
- Protect Round Top Hill and its openly visible slopes from any form of development that threatens to diminish its high landscape value and harm the visual amenity and tranquil rural character of the area.
- Control all new development within this parcel in a sensitive manner and ensure that the areas strong sense of place, tranquillity and distinctive rural character are maintained.
- Respect this parcel's SSSI and Ancient Woodland designations and the area's distinctive and well documented heritage features when considering any development proposals.
- Seek to derive a balance of community and wildlife value from the distinctive features of this character area and achieve a range of blue and green infrastructure benefits - including improved health, community access, flood alleviation and ecology
- Open up a new Public Right of Way along the private footpath that follows the upper ridgeline to the east of Berry Court Woods; multiple benefits will include linking communities along a high recreational value off-road link between Cliffe Woods and the western edges of High Halstow. This is the highest point on the peninsula and offers an opportunity for the wider community to enjoy this tranquil area and benefit from the dramatic views of the Thames & Medway marshes and estuary.



Great Chattenden Wood



## Deangate Ridge / Hoo Farmland

These character areas have been assessed separately but considered in the context of their close inter-relationship and shared functional roles. They are complex and diverse landscapes and include a large number of SLAA sites. They have been subject to a detailed evaluation.

### 4.0 Deangate Ridge



#### 4.1 Description

This character area is broadly consistent with the character area defined in the Medway Landscape Character Assessment (2011). It has been extended to the west to incorporate the higher ground around Chattenden Village (area shaded grey in MLCA). This area includes one SLAA (playing field) site and a small modern urban development to the north of Chattenden Barracks.

##### 4.1.1 Characteristics

- A complex and diverse landscape with a wide range of land uses and features.
- Forms the northern slopes of a broad valley rising towards Deangate Ridge before ground falls away to a plateau (Lodge Hill Training Ground) then rises up to Chattenden Ridge.
- Northern boundary broadly defined by Lodge Hill Training Ground; consistent with SSSI boundary
- Prominent ridgeline, plateau and upper slopes to north of A228 dominated by former golf course land uses; includes artificial ground profiling and blocks of woodland defining fairways not always sympathetic to the natural character of the landscape; lower slopes in agricultural use with a medium to large scale field pattern
- Ridgeline, plateau and upper slopes to south of A228 predominantly farmland (medium scale field pattern) with scattered dwellings along Ratcliffe Highway
- Ridgeline, plateau and upper slopes from strong and distinctive 'green' landscape backdrop; openly visible from adjacent slopes and along valley floor
- Parcel includes some distinctive hedgerows and woodland blocks worthy of preservation
- Strong rural quality in places but with urban intrusion from roads (A228), residential development to west and east and sports facilities in Dux Court Lane area; strong sense of tranquillity to higher ground to north (edges of SSSI and Training Ground)
- Western end (includes Chattenden Farm and cottages, playing field and small urban development) and eastern end (car depot and edges of Hoo St Werburgh) subject to urban fringe pressures; also major road bisecting parcel.

- Dramatic open views out from higher points of Deangate Ridge (to west and east of A228) looking south and east towards the Medway Estuary. These elevated areas contribute to a sense of separation and openness and provide a valuable green lung between the communities of Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden.

#### 4.1.2 SLAA sites

See notes under key characteristics & issues (zones A-K) and overview and parcel annotated maps.

#### 4.1.3 Settlement edges

- Settlement edges are 20th/21st Century.
- The Chattenden Lane development edge is linear and prominent in many views; it does not blend sympathetically with the surrounding countryside.
- The western edges of Hoo St Werburgh, although not screened by vegetation, are less prominent as a result of the moderate scale of the development edge
- The edges of Hoo are more indented and generally less prominent in local views; although the encroaching urban sprawl of Hoo St Werburgh up the slope towards the A228 has not been a sympathetic feature of 20th Century development in this area.

Landscape Sensitivity	
Designations	SSSI (forms northern boundary); Protected Open Space (former golf course, playing fields and sports ground); Public Right of Way (Windmill Public House); Area of Local Landscape Importance (2003 Local Plan); Ancient Woodland adjacent to north and west of parcel @ Deangate and Round Top Woods - see Parcel 3; Chattenden Ridge
Landscape features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prominent ridgeline and upper slopes of former golf course site with open farmland below following gently rising slopes; feature provides strong green backdrop that strengthens rural character and sense of legibility; area provides good place-making opportunity.</li> <li>• Ridgeline and upper slopes extend to east of A228 &amp; Ratcliffe Highway and border urban fringes of Hoo St Werburgh</li> <li>• Elevated areas on both sides of road offer dramatic long views towards Medway estuary</li> <li>• Strong wooded edge to Lodge Hill Training Ground - concurs with SSSI boundary</li> <li>• Contains a number of hedgerows and shaws that lend character to area; also includes intermittent scrub areas.</li> <li>• More open field pattern open below golf course; more contained and defined to western corner (at Chattenden Lane)</li> <li>• Edges of Chattenden Village - strong urban feature blends poorly with adjacent countryside</li> <li>• A228 intrusive noise and adverse effect on rural character especially near edges</li> <li>• Chattenden Farm &amp; Cottages, northern and central terraces, playing field and 20C development to west have strong man made influences</li> </ul>
Function of area	Contributes to sense of separation and openness and provides green lung between neighbourhoods at Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden; northern boundary contributes to SSSI green buffer (extent requirements not defined); provides multi-functional Green Infrastructure opportunities
Mutual inter-dependence	Strong inter-relationship between this area and surrounding land parcels; particularly Hoo Farmland on valley floor and adjacent side of valley and Chattenden Ridge to north and west
Sense of place	Diverse and varied landscape with strong man made influences. Sense of place strongest on upper slopes - particularly in contained areas adjacent to SSSI. Ridge and plateau to north of A228 open but also tranquil and remote with dramatic views of estuary. Sense of place weakest in areas closest to A228 and settlements.
Landscape Sensitivity <b>Medium</b>	

<b>Visual Sensitivity</b>	
Visual amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Green backdrop of Deangate and Chattenden Ridges in views from south</li> <li>Scalloped natural bowl effect sweeping towards valley floor; very open and prominent landscape</li> <li>Pastoral qualities of landscape and views - likely to be significantly altered by development</li> <li>Lower slopes and Chattenden Barracks closer to urban settlement and A228. Barracks site well contained. Lower slopes still open to longer views but closer to valley floor and less prominent than upper slopes and ridge</li> </ul>
Receptors	<p><i>Within parcel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreation access restricted - no PRoW's to north of A228; only one PRoW to east of Windmill PH; development should create new public spaces, rights of access and viewpoints</li> <li>Road users and pedestrians - A228 &amp; Ratcliffe Highway - serial views, Dux Court Lane and Chattenden Lane</li> <li>Residents - scattered farms and cottages within parcel</li> </ul> <p><i>From outside parcel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreation users along PRoW - Saxon Shore Way - on adjacent slopes to south</li> <li>Road users and peds - A228, Chattenden Lane, Main Road and Ratcliffe Highway</li> <li>People at place of work - Hundred of Hoo School</li> <li>Residents - Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden urban edges / Broad Street / High Halstow (check Tim)</li> </ul>
Strategic viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Views from Deangate Ridge on both sides of A228 - from Golf course and neighbouring farmland and Windmill PH PRoW - looking south</li> <li>Views from Golf Football area - looking north towards Chattenden Ridge</li> <li>Views from Golf Driving Range - upper slopes - looking north east</li> <li>Chattenden Lane - looking east</li> <li>Potential views - note linked view corridors with Hoo Farmland</li> </ul>
Visual effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prominence of ridges and upper slopes will lead to adverse effects on pastoral, open qualities of landscape unless extent of development is carefully controlled; assess control and mitigation measures to manage adverse effects</li> <li>Opportunities - develop lower slopes and valley floor (Hoo Farmland) only; provide strong landscape framework and GI interventions</li> <li>Note existing adverse effects of A228 and general trend towards coalescence if development not managed in a controlled way at a strategic level</li> </ul>
Inter-visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hoo Farmland and Chattenden Ridge parcels; noting also Cockham Farm Ridge as green backdrop and correspondence/connection between two sides of valley - including linked view corridors</li> </ul>
Visual Sensitivity <b>Medium</b>	
Overall Sensitivity <b>Medium</b>	





Landscape value	
Rare elements or features	No rare elements
Sense of place	Topography strengthens character and sense of place but diminished by man-made influences
Conservation interests	Adjoins SSSI along northern boundary; heritage assets (including stop line and pillboxes) to eastern corner
Landscape condition - includes intactness and coherence	Varies between sub-character areas; farmland generally well managed, management of former golf course areas in decline; MOD land managed for SSSI value; overall intactness and coherency weakened by urban influences
Public Recreation - access opportunities	Golf course and surrounding farmland not currently open to public access but area offers enormous potential for expanding access and vista opportunities; needs to be considered within wider green infrastructure context
Distinctive or promoted views	Yes - in some areas. Distinctive views from strategic viewpoints to north and east but not currently accessible; golf course and upper slopes of surrounding farmland offers potential for dramatic south easterly views
Wildness, tranquillity and remoteness	Yes - in some areas. Strong sense of tranquillity and remoteness in areas to north and north west - especially those areas near to SSSI and Ancient Woodland
Landscape Value <b>Medium</b>	

Landscape Capacity **Medium**

- **The parcel can accommodate** the proposed type of development / an extension of the proposed type of development in **some situations** without significant character change.

## 4.2 Landscape issues and guidelines

The site survey work identifies a series of landscape sub-character areas within each land parcel. These sub character areas are mapped on the introductory parcel maps and in Appendix 6.2 with details of distinctive features. These are cross referenced where relevant in the text.

See Section 3.8 for further detail on the assessment process and character and sub character zones.

### 4.2.1 Key characteristics and issues

- **Zone A** Small 20C development (includes Community Centre) and Playing Field to lower slopes of Deangate Ridge - set within curtilage of Chattenden Village. Site well contained and urban in character. Sensitive edges to SSSI along north and western boundary - will require buffer and predation controls if playing field site is developed.
- **Zone B** Chattenden Farm & Cottages - situated to upper slopes of Deangate Ridge and prominent in longer views but well contained with strong natural boundaries. Area retains rural character. SSSI along northern boundary. Area highly sensitive because of proximity to SSSI boundary and visual prominence along upper slopes of valley
- **Zone C** Upper and lower slopes of Deangate Ridge to the west of A228. Prominent open farmed landscape - adjoins northern part of Chattenden Village to west and lower slopes of valley to the south (see Zone B - Hoo Farmland). Strong hedgerow/wooded shaw feature to north. Landscape to west more contained, although still visible in longer views from south. Site has constraints including gas pipelines. Development plans may be constrained if proposals rise too high up the slope and impair the vision to maintain a strong green backdrop in views from the south, from the A228 and Saxon Shore Way (see also Hoo Farmland and Cockham Farm Ridge land parcels). May require lower density development in this area (particularly to north) with wooded backdrop to upper slopes and strong wooded buffer along edges of A228 to assist in softening and framing development.
- **Zone D** Deangate Ridge and the adjacent plateau area are distinctive and valuable landscape features that are open to (and afford opportunities for) expansive views. These features contribute to a strong sense of place and identity within the wider local context.

It is recommended that these areas are protected from development and public access for recreation is opened up. This will contribute to a network of differentiated Country Parks linked by green and blue



infrastructure corridors. It will help to strengthen and maintain the rural character of an enlarged Hoo St Werburgh, provide improved public access to the countryside and coastal areas of the wider peninsula

- **Zone E** SLAA site. This is a well contained (by topography and vegetation) but a damaged landscape with urban fringe uses and a HP Gas facility. It is located at grade and can be accessed easily from the A228. It has development potential; the existing planting around the edges contributes to its character and should be maintained
- **Zone F** Former Council owned golf course; includes road infrastructure, driving range, club house and indoor bowls facility to eastern corner of parcel. Golf course consists of an undulating, re-profiled landscape with fairways divided by belts of trees. Predominantly artificial in landscape character terms, this area is largely well contained (note exception of golf driving range) and set back from the more prominent ridgeline and plateau of Zone D. This zone has a strong sense of place, particularly along its northern edges where it bounds the SSSI woodland and scrub of the Lodge Hill Training Ground. Development proposals for this area will need to be sensitively handled in terms of land uses and address the need for buffering of the SSSI. The area immediately to the north of this parcel contains the highest concentration of nesting nightingales within the SSSI.
- **Zone G** Formerly in use as a 'football golf' area. This parcel is situated on elevated ground with the A228 along its southern boundary. The area has urban influences from the adjacent dual carriageway and the edges of Hoo St Werburgh on the south side of the A228. It includes a distinctive and strongly vegetated slope along its northern boundary. It is recommended that this is retained and enhanced within any development proposals.
- **Zone H** The Council owned Sports Ground, Deangate Cottage and adjoining land and Four Wents Field are all reasonably well contained and easily accessible from Dux Court Lane. They are subject to urban influences, particularly at the southern end. Existing vegetation that currently forms boundary features should be retained and enhanced in any development proposals. Note proximity to SSSI woodland and Natural England's requirement that this area retains its current openness and role as a buffer to the SSSI. The site should not be developed.
- **Zone I** Mill Farm, cottages and neighbouring land, depot and Recreation ground. Area is generally well contained with strong urban fringe influences from neighbouring Hoo St Werburgh settlement. Includes Recreation Ground. Neighbouring land to south likely to be visible in longer views and may require mitigation measures in any development proposals. Zone not submitted as a SLAA but presents opportunity site for housing or mixed use; area under a number of different land ownerships; recommend for review as part of development of Design Framework.
- **Zone J** Ridge, plateau and upper slopes to south of A228,. This is a sister site to Zone D situated on the adjacent side of the A228. These are distinctive and valuable landscape features open to and affording expansive views across the valley and estuary beyond. These features combined with Zone D contribute to an overall strong sense of place and identity within the wider local context. It is recommended that this area is protected from development with improved public access. It is intended that these areas will form part of a wider network of Country Parks linked by green and blue infrastructure corridors that help to strengthen and maintain the rural character of an enlarged Hoo St Werburgh, provide improved links to the countryside and coastal areas of the wider peninsula and reduce recreational pressure on the rich diversity of biodiversity designated sites in the surrounding area.
- **Zone K** Lower slopes of Deangate Ridge, broadly consistent with topography of Zone C to west of A228, adjoins Hoo Farmland Zone C along valley floor. Development proposals may be constrained in the context of the Council's vision to maintain a green backdrop in views from the south, particularly from the Saxon Shore Way (see also Hoo Farmland and Cockham Farm Ridge land parcels). The impact of development in views from the south will need to be tested through the preparation of verifiable wirelines and photomontages from agreed viewpoints. There is potential for a lower density development to the lower section of these slopes with landscape mitigation to the upper slopes that softens and frames the development but allows for southerly views towards Hoo St Werburgh and the Medway estuary. A strong woodland buffer is recommended along the edges of the A228 to soften and frame development, reduce the impact of the road and contribute to a new green infrastructure corridor (see indicative GI proposals on annotated maps).



#### 4.2.2 Development guidelines

- Strengthen road corridor vegetation along both sides of A228 especially along lower slope edges between Chattenden and Hoo St Werburgh; multi-functional benefits will include wildlife corridor, reduction in adverse effects of noisy and polluting road network and softening, screening and framing new development proposals
- Upper slopes and ridgelines/plateau areas especially sensitive to development impacts.
- Protect distinctive 'green backdrop' of Deangate Ridge (including plateau and upper slopes) in key strategic views
- Maximise benefits of undeveloped 'green backdrop' for multi-functional green infrastructure (GI) uses, focussing on community benefits of 'Country Park' vision, taking recreational pressure off SSSI areas to north and west and strengthening 'rural town' vision and sense of local identity
- Seek to create a strong GI link that connects country parks across A228; providing off road public access links from south (Upnor and Frindsbury), linking neighbourhoods of enlarged rural town and out to wider countryside
- Development proposals for Deangate Ridge to consider SSSI designation, an appropriate type and scale of development for this area and the extent of buffer required to protect designation.
- Maintain open views of Deangate Ridge 'green backdrop' by controlling extent of development on upper and lower slopes to both sides of the valley
- Development proposals for upper and lower slopes on both sides of A228 controlled to ensure that 'green backdrop' preserved in key views from valley floor and upper slopes to south of valley; note reciprocal guidance in Hoo Farmland assessment
- Protect views of Hoo Farmland green backdrop (rising up to Cockham Farm ridgeline) in key strategic views south from Deangate Ridge - see Hoo Farmland assessment
- Protect and enhance network of distinctive hedgerows, shaws and woodland blocks and use opportunity to frame and give identity to new communities and associated green infrastructure;
- Protect views of estuary from upper slopes and ridgeline
- Ensure a substantial swathe of open countryside is retained to the west of this land parcel to provide green buffer between communities of Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden. Maximise multi-functional GI value of this green buffer by opening area up to public access and link into wider GI framework that serves an enlarged and more sustainable settlement at Hoo St Werburgh
- Establish public access and community benefits from an opened-up watercourse along the valley floor; maximise flood alleviation and recreation opportunities
- Maximise development opportunities in area to west and east of Dux Court Lane and enhance GI links to Countryside Commissioners land to south of A228 (see Land east of Hoo assessment sheet); note heritage assets link through this area (including WW2 stop line).

## 5.0 Hoo Farmland



### 5.1 Description

This character area is broadly consistent with the character area defined in the Medway Landscape Character Assessment (2011). It has been extended to the west to incorporate the lower ground within Chattenden Village (area shaded grey in MLCA). Includes a large SLAA site at Chattenden Barracks.

#### 5.1.1 Characteristics

- A complex and diverse landscape that contains some urbanised areas but with an intact and working farmland.
- Forms the southern section of a broad valley with undulating arable farmland rising towards Deangate Ridge to the north and Cockham Farm Ridge to the south; slope falls gently towards Broad Street and the valley floor on both sides of the A228
- The Hundred of Hoo School playing fields complex defines much of northern edge; the southern edge is defined by the Saxon Shore Way; the western section includes the lower ground within Chattenden Village (to the west and east of the A228).
- A regular and predominantly medium scale field pattern with mixed (fragmented and intact) hedgerow network; long open views looking north from elevated ground
- Performs an important functional role in retaining separation between the settlements at Hoo St Werburgh, Chattenden and the Upnors.

#### 5.1.2 SLAA sites

See notes under key characteristics & issues (zones A-F) and overview and parcel annotated maps.



### 5.1.3 Settlement edges

- Settlement edges are predominantly 20th/21st Century - linear and indented
- Western edges of Chattenden at Tamarisk House blend sympathetically with countryside
- Chattenden Lane edge less sympathetic with limited planting to mitigate adverse effects
- New development at land north of Peninsula Way currently has harsh impact on countryside with limited boundary treatment; new planting should mature to soften but will remain prominent in elevated views
- Ribbon development at Broad Street - uncomfortable feature but period properties and mature vegetation help to soften and absorb
- Chattenden Barracks site well contained and largely screened by vegetation
- Hoo Village settlement and edges prominent in views from upper slopes

Landscape Sensitivity	
Designations	Public Open Space (Playing Fields); Public Rights of Way (includes Saxon Shore Way); Area of Local Landscape Importance (2003 Local Plan); SSSI (land to west of Chattenden Barracks)
Landscape features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North facing slopes of valley and valley floor between Deangate &amp; Cockham Farm ridges; land rises gently to south from Main Road towards Saxon Shore Way and ridgeline</li> <li>• Landscape has open aspect with long views; medium scale field pattern defined by north/south hedgerow network and small woodland blocks</li> <li>• Includes hidden water feature along valley floor linking Chattenden, Hoo St Werburgh and wider estuary; water management features alongside A228</li> <li>• Ribbon development at Broad Street includes some period properties; agricultural buildings to slopes; school complex with playing fields</li> <li>• Open farmland to west of A228 adjoining Chattenden village</li> <li>• Zone F has more intimate feel with land dropping away gently towards church</li> <li>• Zones B &amp; C - mixed uses - lower lying with stronger urban fringe influences</li> <li>• 12th Century grade I listed church to east a prominent and strong landscape feature</li> <li>• Barracks to west - well contained regeneration site with sensitive SSSI edges</li> </ul>
Function of area	Separates Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden and maintains gap between these areas and the Upnors/Medway estuary; at eastern end separates Hoo St Werburgh historic area from Marina Park; offers good green infrastructure opportunities as part of enlarged settlement - including links between urban areas, Upnors, enlarged settlement and wider peninsula; requires buffer to SSSI in development proposals for barracks site; current uses agricultural - value in retaining these as part of enlarged rural settlement ; hydrological and GI role of stream including flood alleviation/water management function
Mutual inter-dependence	Strong inter-relationship between this area and Deangate Ridge; also Cockham Farm Ridge, Bald Top Hill and Hogmarsh Valley land parcels
Sense of place	Strong at Zone F - close to historic core with sense of containment in large field to west of Church;; serial views of estuary along SSW heading east; moderate/weak sense of place to lower slopes and urban fringe and road traffic influenced areas; SSW feels remote and tranquil but can also feel monotonous and un-variegated on open stretches; area to west below Tamarisk has distinctive character and features
Landscape Sensitivity <b>Medium</b>	





Visual Sensitivity	
Visual amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Green backdrop in views looking north and north west</li> <li>North facing slopes to south of Main Road rising towards ridgeline</li> <li>North/south hedgerows and defined field pattern</li> <li>retains pastoral quality despite urban intrusion</li> <li>Church and estuary strong features from Saxon Shore Way and other viewpoints</li> </ul>
Receptors	<p><i>Within parcel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreation users along Saxon Shore Way and other PRow's</li> <li>Road users and peds - Main Road, A228 and Ratcliffe Highway</li> <li>People at place of work - Students &amp; staff at School</li> <li>Residents - Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden urban edges; Broad Street</li> </ul> <p><i>From outside parcel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Road users and peds - Ratcliffe Highway and A228 - elevated ground</li> <li>Recreation - PRow east of Windmill Public House; users of golf course and surrounding farmland</li> </ul>
Strategic viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Serial views to north and east along SSW - including Deangate Ridge and Estuary views</li> <li>Views north from A228, Main Road and Chattenden Village</li> <li>Views east from Chattenden Lane</li> <li>Note linked view corridors with Deangate Ridge</li> <li>View north near junction of Main Road and A228</li> </ul>
Visual effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adverse effects - noting existing adverse effects of development at Hoo and impact of A228, new development to upper slopes will require development controls and mitigation measures</li> <li>Development to upper slopes is likely to threaten pastoral quality and tranquillity; development to lower slopes and valley floor less harmful</li> <li>Potential for planting buffers to mitigate against adverse effects along edges of new development - by softening and anchoring. This becomes more difficult to achieve as ground rises and development becomes more prominent</li> <li>Chattenden Barracks is well screened and contained; vegetation features should be retained and enhanced within new development proposals</li> </ul>
Inter-visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inter-visible parcels include Deangate Ridge, Cockham Farm Ridge, Chattenden Ridge</li> <li>Note Deangate Ridge as green backdrop (on both sides of A228) and correspondence /connection between two sides of valley - linked view corridors</li> </ul>
Visual Sensitivity <b>Medium</b>	
Overall Sensitivity <b>Medium</b>	

Landscape value	
Rare elements or features	No rare elements
Sense of place	Topography strengthens character and sense of place; strongest on upper slopes and at western end of Zone D (area with agricultural buildings on slope) and within Zone F (near to church and estuary)
Conservation interests	No features of note
Landscape condition - includes intactness and coherence	Varies between sub character areas; farmland generally well managed; areas of fly tipping along Ratcliffe Highway; intactness and coherency weakened by urban intrusion - particularly affects Zones A, B, C & E. Overall condition moderate
Public Recreation - access opportunities	Saxon Shore Way runs full length of southern boundary with distinctive views towards north and east. Includes dramatic views over estuary and other features at eastern end. Potential to enhance and expand access and vista opportunities within context of wider green infrastructure (GI) network; hidden watercourse flows east/west along bottom of valley - offers good multi-functional GI opportunity

Distinctive or promoted views	Distinctive serial views along Saxon Shore Way; dramatic estuary views open up as ground falls away to east (Zones E & F)
Wildness, tranquillity and remoteness	Pockets of tranquillity and remoteness. Strongest at eastern end (Zone F) and to upper slopes of Saxon Shore Way
Landscape Value <b>Medium</b>	
Landscape Capacity <b>Medium</b>	
<b>The parcel can accommodate</b> the proposed type of development / an extension of the proposed type of development <b>in some situations</b> without significant character change.	

## 5.2 Landscape issues and guidelines

The site survey work identifies a series of landscape sub-character areas within each land parcel. These sub character areas are mapped on the introductory parcel maps and in Appendix 6.2 with details of distinctive features. These are cross referenced where relevant in the text.

See Section 3.8 for further detail on the assessment process and character and sub character zones.

### 5.2.1 Key characteristics and issues

- Zone A The Chattenden Barracks site is well contained and screened. It is also highly sensitive as it adjoins a number of SSSI areas along its western and northern edges. Beyond these edges lie areas of open and relatively unspoiled countryside. Subject to Natural England's requirements for SSSI buffer zones, there is some potential for a larger and / or denser scale of development in this area
- If the HIF bid (March 2019 submission) is successful there is a strong chance that a new road linking up the A289 with the A228 could pass through this site. This will present challenges to the creation of an enlarged settlement at Chattenden and will need to be designed sensitively. See also the Hogmarsh Valley and Bald Top Hill parcel sections for further details on this road proposal.
- Zone B Lower slopes of valley to the east of the Barracks site; contains tracts of open and visible farmland (note approved scheme to north of Peninsula Way under construction). This site has development potential if handled sensitively; note gas pipeline and watercourses in this area. Route of new road (see HIF bid) may have an impact on the design and layout of this area.
- Zone C Features include water treatment works, stream flowing towards Hoo St Werburgh, Ratcliffe Highway (under-used). An important functional role of this zone is maintaining separation and openness between Hoo and Chattenden; potential to play role as a multi-functional GI open space retaining rural qualities. Area also includes school playing field and sports facilities. Explore option for land swap that would enable development of playing fields (lower slopes less sensitive to development impacts) and relocation into GI gap.
- Zone D Land between Tamarisk and Cockham Farm
  - Western section includes farm building and is bounded by hedgerow and PRoW. This section provides opportunity to establish a GI link through farmland from the Upnors SSW towards Deangate Ridge; helping to maintain local identity for the enlarged Hoo and Chattenden settlements and retain a rural quality to the landscape.
  - Eastern section has development potential but also sensitivities in terms of inter-visibility from surrounding strategic viewpoints - particularly on upper slopes of Deangate Ridge.
  - It is important that the Cockham Farm Ridge green backdrop and the sense of interconnectivity and legibility is not lost as a result of development rising too high up this slope. Will require careful design treatment to retain green wooded backdrop and allow reasonable and sustainable quantum of development
  - Provide verifiable LVIA wirelines and photomontages to assess impacts from Deangate Ridge viewpoints; views north from Tamarisk also require open aspect towards Deangate Ridgeline – provide verifiable LVIA wirelines and photomontages
  - See annotated plans for recommended width / extent of GI gap through parcels 4 & 5 and recommended green bridge across A228
- Zone E Cockham Farm to Cockham Cottages - more sense of urban intrusion in this section; still clearly visible from adjacent upper slopes of valley. Dramatic serial views towards estuary open up travelling east

along SSW. Development potential for lower slopes; retain views of green backdrop from opposite side of valley

- Zone F Distinctive and well contained space to west of historic core provides important setting for 12C grade I listed church; dramatic views of estuary from elevated ground; potential for sensitive development within this area
- Distinctive green backdrop at Deangate Ridge (land to west and east of A228) prominent in views looking north from Saxon Shore Way. Green backdrop assists understanding of the landscape and relationship between two sides of the valley.
- Distinctive hedgerow network divides up fields and provides north south links between Saxon Shore Way and road/watercourse along valley floor
- Hoo Farmland and Deangate Ridge landscape parcels provide valuable anti-coalescent role in retaining separation of Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden
- Provides valuable green corridor to south of Saxon Shore Way separating Hoo St Werburgh historic area from Hoo Marina and waterfront
- Water course along valley floor - hidden but important natural feature offering recreational and flood alleviation opportunities

### **5.2.2 Development guidelines**

- Strengthen road corridor vegetation along both sides of A228 especially along lower slope edges between Chattenden and Hoo St Werburgh; multi-functional benefits will include wildlife corridor; reduction in adverse effects of noisy and polluting road network and softening, screening and framing new development proposals
- Zones E & F - protect views of estuary; note additional viewpoints and guidance within Cockham Farm Ridge parcel
- Zone F - ensure that development proposals respect character of historic core; maintain view corridors of church from surrounding area
- Retain views of Deangate Ridge green backdrop by controlling extent of development on upper slopes to both sides of A228 road corridor; protect views of Hoo Farmland green backdrop (rising up to Cockham Farm ridgeline) in strategic views south from Deangate Ridge. Assess impacts through verifiable wirelines and photomontages from agreed viewpoints and use woodland blocks to mitigate impacts and strengthen character of green backdrop
- Zones D, E & F - Protect hedgerow network and use as opportunity to establish local neighbourhood identity and strengthen GI links from upper slopes down to road, watercourse and development/facilities along lower slopes and valley floor; test visual effects from agreed viewpoints; use planting to soften and break up impact from adjacent ridgeline; retain a series of open views north towards Deangate Ridge
- Ensure a substantial swathe of open countryside is retained to the west of this land parcel to provide a strong green buffer between the communities of Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden. Maximise the multi-functional GI value of this green buffer by opening the area up to public access and link into a wider GI framework that serves an enlarged settlement at Hoo St Werburgh. See annotated maps (parcels 4 & 5) for a description of the full extent of recommended GI gap
- Development proposals to maximise potential of watercourse; includes opportunity to open up and realign watercourse in heart of enlarged settlement, promoting public access as multi-functional GI spine; enhance flood alleviation and recreation opportunities





## 6.0 Cockham Farm Ridge



### 6.1 Description

This character area is consistent with the character area defined in the Medway Landscape Character Assessment (2011).

#### 6.1.1 Characteristics

- Prominent ridgeline (includes Beacon Hill) with woodland to south and west; open farmed plateau and slopes to north and east
- Forms upper slopes of farmland (above Saxon Shore Way) within Hoo Farmland parcel
- Wooded shoreline along Medway estuary provides distinctive feature and green backdrop to Lower Upnor; eastern section predominantly remote and tranquil
- Performs an important functional role in retaining separation between settlements at Upnor, Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden
- Includes SSSI (geological designation), Ancient Woodland, MOD land at Beacon Hill, recreational uses to west (Hoo Common)

#### 6.1.2 SLAA sites

This parcel sits within the zone of influence and is contiguous with and has views of potential development allocation sites. It does not include any SLAA or opportunity sites.

#### 6.1.3 Settlement edges

- Settlement edges to north and east are predominantly 20th/21st Century - linear and indented
- Settlement edges to south west (at Lower Upnor) are pre-20th Century
- Western edges blend most sympathetically, assisted by woodland buffers which screen views

Landscape Sensitivity	
Designations	Public Open Space (Playing Fields); Public Rights of Way (includes Saxon Shore Way); Area of Local Landscape Importance (2003 Local Plan); SSSI; Ancient Woodland; 2no SAM's; borders SPA, Ramsar, SSSI (to south east)
Landscape features	Prominent wooded ridgeline and open farmed plateau with upper slopes forming green backdrop in views from south and north of land parcel; Beacon Hill features strongly in views from Hogmarsh Valley; Hoo Common public open space; shoreline includes scheduled fort
Function of area	Separates Lower Upnor from Chattenden; provides valuable landscape buffer between SSSI (includes Ancient Woodland) and highly designated estuary and ensures separation/anti coalescence between potentially enlarged Hoo St Werburgh, Hoo Marina and designated areas; Beacon Hill forms part of important anti-coalescent buffer between Chattenden and Wainscott (fringe of Medway urban area); area offers good green infrastructure opportunities as part of enlarged settlement; value in retaining agricultural land uses as part of enlarged rural settlement
Mutual inter-dependence	Strong inter-relationship between this area and Hoo Farmland; includes views from upper slopes across to Deangate Ridge land parcel
Sense of place	Overall fairly intact and coherent; strongest sense of place within north eastern open farmed area, less accessible woodland areas and along shoreline - tranquil and remote; weaker sense of place to west where there has been more human intervention
Landscape Sensitivity <b>High (Medium/High)</b>	

Visual Sensitivity	
Visual amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distinctive ridgeline and woodland dropping down to shore of river - prominent in views from south</li> <li>Distinctive farmed plateau and upper slopes serves as green backdrop in views from north; area retains rural/pastoral qualities</li> <li>Woodland to upper slopes frames Lower Upnor and Castle to south (see also Hogmarsh Valley parcel)</li> </ul>
Receptors	<p><i>Within parcel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreation users along Saxon Shore Way and other PRoW's within area (principally to west)</li> </ul> <p><i>From outside parcel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Road users and peds - Main Road, Ratcliffe Highway and A228 (especially elevated sections)</li> <li>Recreation users south of river (St Mary's Island); from Deangate Ridge and Hoo Flats</li> <li>Residents and People at places of work - Chattenden, Hoo St Werburgh and St Mary's Island</li> </ul>
Strategic viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>View from top of Elm Avenue looking north</li> <li>View from land to north of Ancient Woodland - across farmland looking east</li> <li>View from high point on ridge</li> <li>View from Hoo Lodge looking south east - to estuary, industrial areas and urban areas</li> <li>View from Gull Down plantation looking west</li> </ul>
Visual effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adverse effects - development to upper slopes and plateau area would be visually intrusive and lead to complete loss of green backdrop as viewed from opposite side of valley (ie. from within Deangate ridge parcel)</li> <li>Much of remaining area covered by SSSI and Ancient Woodland designations; but also very sensitive to adverse visual effects in views across river from south</li> <li>Land to west includes Beacon Hill, Hoo Common (POS) and Arethusa Playing Field (site permitted for development)</li> </ul>
Inter-visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intervisible between Hoo Farmland and Deangate Ridge; some views from east along shoreline (see Hoo Flats)</li> <li>Note linked view corridors on both sides of valley</li> </ul>
Visual Sensitivity <b>High (Medium/High)</b>	
Overall Sensitivity <b>High</b>	

Landscape value	
Rare elements or features	Woodland along estuary slopes meeting shoreline - rare and unusual feature
Sense of place	Overall strong. Topography and wooded slopes strengthens character and sense of place. Open rolling farmland is distinctive feature with strong pockets of tranquillity and remoteness.
Conservation interests	SSSI (geological feature); Ancient Woodland, 2no SAM's; borders ecological designations on estuary to south east corner
Landscape condition - includes intactness and coherence	Generally intact and coherent. Parts of woodland damaged by recreational overuse. Overall condition moderate.
Public Recreation - access opportunities	Many opportunities to enhance existing and provide new public access opportunities - eg Hoo Lodge surrounds, along ridgeline, upper slopes and Saxon Shore Way. Potential to enhance and expand access and vista opportunities within context of wider green infrastructure (GI) network
Distinctive or promoted views	Includes dramatic views over estuary and other features to south east of Hoo Lodge. Distinctive serial views across valley to north.
Wildness, tranquillity and remoteness	Extensive pockets of tranquillity and remoteness. Strongest at eastern end above Hoo Farmland
Landscape Value <b>Medium</b>	

Landscape Capacity **Medium/High**

- **The parcel can accommodate** the proposed type of development / an extension of the proposed type of development **only in defined limited situations** without significant character change.

## 6.2 Landscape issues and guidelines

The site survey work identifies a series of landscape sub-character areas within each land parcel. These sub character areas are mapped on the introductory parcel maps and in Appendix 6.2 with details of distinctive features. These are cross referenced where relevant in the text.

See Section 3.8 for further detail on the assessment process and character and sub character zones.





*Zone A*

- This area includes Beacon Hill, Hoo Common and a block of protected woodland to the north of Lower Upnor. This is a well contained area - assisted by topography and screening with vegetation. Development pressures are greatest here with Lower Upnor to the south and Chattenden to the north. There is one SLAA site within this area that may have potential for development
- This sub-parcel plays an important strategic role in providing an anti-coalescent buffer between Chattenden and Lower Upnor and ensuring separation between Chattenden and the Upnors and Wainscott
- The area also has enormous potential to enhance and provide new green infrastructure opportunities, linking communities and connecting into the wider landscape
- The Arethusa Playing field is subject to a planning application. Whilst this may be considered acceptable, further built development within this area is likely to have a severely adverse effect and is not recommended.

*Zone B*

- This is an area of open arable farmland with Hoo Lodge at its centre. It has strong rural qualities and feels remote and tranquil.
- It offers dramatic long and wide views of the estuary, including both urban areas to the south and industrial areas to the east
- While more contained on the lower slopes, the more elevated ridgeline to the north provides views across a number of proposed SLAA sites.
- This is a highly sensitive landscape - visually prominent and with a strong sense of place

*Zone C*

- A longitudinal section of woodland that follows the shoreline to the east of Lower Upnor
- Includes a block of Ancient woodland and an additional area designated as SSSI.
- Gull Down Plantation to the east is not protected but provides a valuable landscape and woodland feature. These areas are densely vegetated and appear to be largely inaccessible. This plantation adjoins the Hoo Marina site
- A small sailing club nestles along the shoreline (accessed from the north) with the remains of the scheduled Cockham Wood Fort to the east
- Issues of disturbance to highly designated estuary shoreline – mudflats and marshes; includes need to control/manage access to take recreational pressure off this area. The creation of new inland country parks can assist with this goal.

### 6.2.2 Development guidelines

- This land parcel is reasonably intact and coherent. Aside from its prominent and distinctive features it provides a number of valuable strategic benefits, including green backdrops and buffers which could help to frame and soften new development proposals, protect designated assets and ensure anti-coalescence between settlements
- Enhance green infrastructure benefits of this land parcel and improve public access to viewpoints to north and south from the upper slopes and ridgeline
- Introduce a new country park within this parcel that will enable recreational pressure to be taken off the highly designated Medway estuary and marshes and the SSSI woodland that follows the shoreline.
- Introduce a range of open spaces facilities within this area, with new public rights of ways linking into a wider Green Infrastructure network; take advantage of dramatic views of Medway estuary
- Consider option of community hub / café facilities at Cockham Farm (or thereabouts) linking in to new neighbourhood centre along main road near school and swimming pool.
- Seek to retain rural character of this area including options for areas dedicated to Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) enterprises
- Protect ridgeline and upper slopes in views from the north when considering development options to SLAA and potential development sites
- Note inter-reliance of this area with assessment results and guidelines for Hoo Farmland parcel.

## Land Parcel Assessment

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### 4.2 Zone B: High Halstow and Kingsnorth

*Land to the north and east of Hoo St Werburgh*

7. Hoo Flats
8. Land east of Hoo St Werburgh
9. Land south of High Halstow
10. Land east of High Halstow

A desktop study was undertaken to consider the proposed SLAA sites, their zones of influence and the character of the landscape. The parcel boundaries that evolved from this analysis were developed further through site work which included a review of potential opportunity sites.

The land parcel boundaries within Area 2 have changed from the Medway LCA in all cases with the exception of Hoo Flats LCA. Three new land parcels that have been identified. These have evolved from the Hoo Peninsula Farmland and Stoke Farmland LCA's - larger and more extensive character areas that extend well beyond the zones of influence of the sites under review in this study.

Details of boundary adjustments, where relevant, can be found under the *Description* heading at the beginning of each section.





## 7.0 Hoo Flats



### 7.1 Description

This character area is broadly consistent with the character area defined in the Medway Landscape Character Assessment (2011). There is one minor amendment to the east which corrects an anomaly.

#### 7.1.1 Characteristics

- Low lying reclaimed marshland area with remnant features, including creeks and ditches
- Mixed arable; grazed marshland and equine related influences
- Urban, industrial influences - power station, pylons, sewage works - with adverse impacts
- Restored landscape from industrial activities includes fishing lakes
- New mineral extraction works site covers central portion of parcel with safeguarding area extending across large proportion
- Extraction works have adverse impact short/medium term but offer long term opportunities to enhance landscape and biodiversity and include ecologically sensitive restoration plans that include new water features
- Medway Marshes along southern border have European and International designations; Ramsar, SPA and SSSI areas within parcel; a highly sensitive and valued landscape
- Saxon Shore way runs east west along estuary flood wall and passes north through character area; offers dramatic and changing views across estuary, including heritage interest at Hoo and Darnets forts; WW2 defence line passes north south through site
- Open views from public access land to south of land south of Stoke Road development sites; long views across estuary and along shore from Saxon Shore Way and public footpaths; includes views of green backdrop at eastern end of Cockham Farm Ridge

#### 7.1.2 SLAA sites

This parcel sits within the zone of influence, is contiguous with and has views of potential development allocation sites. It does not include any SLAA or opportunity sites.

#### 7.1.3 Settlement edges

- Settlement edges to far western top corner are predominantly 20th/21st Century - linear - blends more sympathetically to west than north west
- Settlement edges to east (industrial infrastructure at Kingsnorth) are 20th Century - large in scale and truncate land parcel abruptly - not sympathetic to landscape character of reclaimed marshland

Landscape Sensitivity	
Designations	SSSI/Ramsar/SPA; undeveloped coast; rural lane; flood zone - 2003 Local Plan; mineral extraction approval and safeguarding area; Public Rights of Way (includes Saxon Shore Way); WW2 defence line
Landscape features	Low lying reclaimed marshland, inland creeks, ditches, mudflats and saltmarsh; strong urban/industrial influences; arable and grazed farmland; distinctive views of estuary and historic forts from Saxon Shore way; plentiful views to west towards listed church at Hoo St Werburgh; views and strong influence of infrastructure to east, including power lines, Kingsnorth and Thamesport; well used PRoV network; inland areas include large mineral extraction scheme and sewage works
Function of area	Provides valuable buffer between highly designated estuary and inland settlements; enables local community to access tranquil and remote areas of the estuary and enjoy peace and views; separates Hoo St Werburgh from Kingsnorth industrial area; protected from built development by flood zone and mineral safeguarding areas; area offers opportunity to enhance green infrastructure on edge of enlarged settlement, including potential for part designation as wildlife reserve with managed access
Mutual inter-dependence	Strong inter-relationship between this area and land east of Hoo St Werburgh; also links to Cockham Farm Ridge and Hoo Farmland; open flat landscape with strong inter-visibility and long views
Sense of place	Flat reclaimed marshland with strong estuary influences and time depth reinforced by heritage features and traditional waterfront character; damaged by urban/industrial influences to west and east but many areas still retain strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity
Landscape Sensitivity <b>High</b>	



Visual Sensitivity	
Visual amenity	Strong marshland estuary character with water features; open flat landscape; wharf and marina area retain Dickensian character with salt marsh, mudflats, rotting boat hulks and influence of forts across estuary; internal areas more prosaic with urban fringe influences but provide valuable sense of space and openness
Receptors	<p><i>Within parcel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreation users along Saxon Shore Way and other PRoW's within area</li> <li>Road users, residents, people at place of work - limited local road network, employees and dwellings</li> </ul> <p><i>From outside parcel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreation users - south of river at Chatham and Gillingham - including St Mary's Island, Chatham docks, Saxon Shore Way towards Horrid Hill</li> <li>Road users and pedestrians - Stoke Road, Ropers Lane, Jacobs Lane, Eschol Road; Yososuka way</li> <li>Residents and People at places of work - Hoo St Werburgh, Kingsnorth, St Mary's Island and other sites to south of river</li> </ul>
Strategic viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>View along from eastern end of flood wall looking back to Hoo St Werburgh and Cockham Farm Ridge</li> <li>View of estuary and marina from Buttercrook Wharf area</li> <li>View across estuary towards forts and urban areas on south bank</li> <li>Views of Hoo St Werburgh church</li> <li>Views of land south of Stoke Road approved development sites</li> </ul>
Visual effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>View of Cockham Farm Ridge green backdrop - sensitive to adverse effects of development proposals</li> <li>Proposed eastern extension of Hoo St Werburgh (Church Commissioners land) – mitigate with planting at edges and internally.</li> <li>Land south of Stoke Road sites - development effects potentially adverse - consider scale, building materials, finish and landscape edge treatment</li> </ul>
Inter-visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inter-visible with Land east of Hoo St Werburgh, Cockham Farm Ridge and Hoo Farmland; some longer views from south of river and higher ground to north</li> </ul>
Visual Sensitivity <b>High</b>	
Overall Sensitivity <b>High</b>	

Landscape value	
Rare elements or features	Estuary, creeks, ditches and other features reflect historic character and strong sense of place
Sense of place	Strong sense of place along estuary, weaker inland and to edges
Conservation interests	SPA, Ramsar and SSSI; borders ecological designations along estuary to south; military history including pillboxes and WW2 defence line; Dickensian character to estuary shoreline with rotting hulks
Landscape condition - includes intactness and coherence	Varies - natural areas along estuary in good condition; farmland fair; urban and industrial fringe and mineral works (temporary) adverse effects; overall condition moderate.
Public Recreation - access opportunities	Good network of paths with some informal routes. Opportunity to formalise these paths. Mineral extraction scheme and restoration proposals provide good opportunities for improved public access. Enhance and expand access and vista opportunities within context of wider green infrastructure (GI) network
Distinctive or promoted views	Saxon Shore Way along waterfront provides dramatic serial views to south over estuary, including mudflats, salt marsh, wharfs, forts etc.
Wildness, tranquillity and remoteness	Pockets of tranquillity and remoteness along estuary away from developed areas
Landscape Value <b>High</b>	

Landscape Capacity **High**

- **The parcel is unable to accommodate** the proposed type of development / an extension of the proposed type of development without significant character change

## 7.2 Landscape issues and guidelines

There are no landscape sub-character areas defined within this land parcel. The character area is mapped and annotated in Appendix 6.2 and cross referenced where relevant in the text.

See Section 3.8 for further detail on the assessment process and character and sub character zones

### 7.2.1 Key characteristics and issues

- There are no SLAA or opportunity sites within this area; area is largely inappropriate for built development as a result of low lying land – nb. flood designations and mineral safeguarding
- Issues of disturbance to highly designated estuary shoreline – mudflats and marshes; includes need to control/manage access to take recreational pressure off this area. The creation of new inland country parks can assist with this goal.
- Distinctive features include reclaimed marshland within an estuary flood wall with some retained creeks, drains and ditches; heritage features include WW2 defence line with pillboxes
- This is a flat open landscape with mixed land uses - including arable farmland and valuable natural vegetation and water features
- The Saxon Shore Way footpath provides dramatic estuary views and a strong sense of place; linking into a wider network of public footpaths; open landscape affords plentiful views of grade I listed church on eastern edge of Hoo St Werburgh
- Plays an important strategic role in buffering designated and valued marshes from neighbouring settlements and providing a remote and tranquil space for the local community and visitors
- Area has enormous potential to expand biodiversity value with a new nature reserve whilst also expanding and enhancing green infrastructure opportunities, including public access and connections into the wider landscape
- This is a highly sensitive landscape - visually prominent and with a strong sense of place along the shoreline.

### 7.2.2 Development guidelines

- Protect strong sense of place along estuary shoreline and within hinterland areas; strengthen and retain natural and heritage features of area
- Continue to support public access to this highly valued landscape area, whilst seeking to manage access along waterfront and within hinterland to protect tranquil and remote qualities and ensure ecological designations are protected from recreational disturbance.
- Concerns re. recreational disturbance of wildlife, especially over-wintering birds, and the benefits of creating new inland country parks that take recreational pressure off designated estuary shoreline, mudflats and marshes
- Create a new wetland country park and bird reserve within a working landscape; develop existing water features including approved mineral restoration scheme; improve internal and shoreline access and balance community access and enjoyment with flood protection and biodiversity value



## 8.0 Land to east of Hoo St Werburgh



### 8.1 Introduction

See Introductory note re. parcel boundaries

#### 8.1.1 Characteristics

- Features of this parcel are largely consistent with the description in the Hoo Peninsula Farmland LCA. Undulating predominantly arable farmland with large open fields and little sense of enclosure; extensive views from higher ground towards Medway estuary.
- The parcel also contains some more intimate and contained areas to north and south of Stoke Road and at Sharnal Street.
- A freight rail line and a water course follow the valley floor; the land rising gently on either side to east and west.
- High power electricity lines that follow the rail line to the west traverse south across the parcel towards the Kingsnorth Power Station.
- The parcel is bounded by the A228 to the north west and includes an upgraded Ropers Lane and Stoke Road with more minor roads at Sharnal Street, Eschol Road and Jacobs Lane.
- There is a new temporary haul road to the south leading to a sand and gravel extraction site (see Hoo Flats) and the parcel includes part of a wider minerals safeguarding area.
- The parcel includes a number of scattered farmsteads.

#### 8.1.2 SLAA sites

See notes under key characteristics & issues (zones A-C) and overview and parcel annotated maps.

#### 8.1.3 Settlement edges

- Settlement edges are predominantly 20th/21st Century
- Bells Lane properties - linear and prominent in long views - blend unsympathetically, despite retained hedgerow
- Stoke Road - mix of period and contemporary properties - less prominent within more contained landscape; area retains rural/edge of village character
- Sharnal Street - mix of period and contemporary properties on larger plots blend sympathetically and retain rural character, assisted by strongly landscape buffer along Saxon Share Way

Landscape Sensitivity	
Designations	Public Open Space (Sports Field); Public Rights of Way (includes Saxon Shore Way); Grade I Agricultural land (subject to detailed survey)
Landscape features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flat and undulating open farmed landscape; limited hedgerow; large fields</li> <li>• Strong man made influences - road network, overhead power lines and freight rail line</li> <li>• Bells Lane development to south west forms eastern boundary of Hoo St Werburgh</li> <li>• More intimate and contained landscape to south with urban fringe influences, including radio mast and horse lotting</li> <li>• Sharnal Street - intimate small dispersed hamlet includes site of former passenger rail station</li> <li>• Strong estuary influences - large skies and open expansive views of Medway estuary, industry and urban areas to south of river</li> <li>• Stream along valley floor - part hidden feature, naturalised with vegetation; water bodies to south and within Hoo Flats land parcel</li> </ul>
Function of area	Water, rail and power lines along valley floor strengthen sense of separation between Hoo St Werburgh and Kingsnorth Industrial area and protects from coalescence; farmland characteristic of peninsula with high agricultural value; significant blue and green infrastructure opportunities and benefits - especially along route of stream and water features in land to south of Stoke Road, line of WWW2 defence stop line runs north south through site (opportunity to reflect this feature in settlement design); opportunity for improved pedestrian and cycle access through area that links communities and settlements and buffers new extensions. Opportunity to better connect extended employment land and enlarged settlement whilst retaining rural corridor as natural buffer
Mutual inter-dependence	Links to Hoo Flats and Land south of High Halstow
Sense of place	Damaged landscape with some local areas of distinctiveness - eg. Sharnal Street. Man-made influences and flat/undulating open farmland weaken sense of place; strongest in areas to south more influenced by marshland and estuary. Overall sense of place is weak
Landscape Sensitivity <b>Low</b>	



Land east of Hoo St Werburgh



<b>Visual Sensitivity</b>	
Visual amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open, flat expansive farmland to east of Bells Lane</li> <li>• More contained features to north east (Sharnal Street) and south (Stoke Road)</li> <li>• Includes mineral safeguarding area to south</li> <li>• Marshland influences on character and views from higher ground</li> <li>• Power lines, A228 and industrial areas to south east - adverse influence</li> <li>• Rail line and stream course naturalised edges - blend more sympathetically</li> </ul>
Receptors	<p><i>Within parcel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreation users - Saxon Shore Way and other PRoW's criss-cross parcel</li> <li>• Road users and pedestrians - Major arteries cross parcel to north and centre - A228 &amp; Ropers Lane, Stoke Road - more local road</li> <li>• Residents - includes dispersed farmsteads and dwellings</li> </ul> <p><i>From outside parcel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Road users and pedestrians - A228</li> <li>• Recreation - SSW and Marshes; PRoW's to north west on higher ground</li> <li>• People at place of work - Kingsnorth Industrial area; fruit packing stores</li> <li>• Residents - edges of Hoo St Werburgh &amp; High Halstow</li> </ul>
Strategic viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• View towards Bells Lane (edge of Hoo) from SSW at Sharnal Street- wide views of Hoo St Werburgh, Kingsnorth, estuary &amp; marshes</li> <li>• Views into Church Commissioners (CC) site from junction of Ropers Lane &amp; A228</li> <li>• Alternative views from higher ground to north east - see annotated map</li> <li>• Views south towards estuary from higher ground within CC site</li> </ul>
Visual effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Context - although openly visible landscape, character has been diminished by major roads and urban/industrial influences; reduced in sensitivity</li> <li>• Church Commissioners site will be openly visible from east (ground falls away gently) but development provides opportunity to treat edge more sympathetically than Bells Lane boundary with multi functional green buffers and generous network of internal spaces retaining estuary views and enhancing green, blue and heritage features.</li> </ul>
Inter-visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inter-visible with Hoo Flats &amp; Land south of High Halstow land parcels; also edges of Hoo Village</li> </ul>
Visual Sensitivity <b>High</b>	
Overall Sensitivity <b>Medium</b>	



Sharnal Street

Landscape value	
Rare elements or features	No rare elements
Sense of place	Weak sense of place overall; strongest at Sharnal Street and towards marshes
Conservation interests	WW2 defence line (north/south)
Landscape condition - includes intactness and coherence	Overall lack of intactness & coherence; indistinct in character; absence of strong landscape structure; large open fields with few hedgerows or trees; farmland character with estuary and industrial influences dominates
Public Recreation - access opportunities	Tremendous opportunities to improve access within SLAA sites and surrounding areas including estuary and neighbouring villages; note rail line, water course and potential new rail station at location serving employment area and enlarged settlement
Distinctive or promoted views	Yes - many dramatic estuarine views from higher ground within parcel
Wildness, tranquillity and remoteness	Most tranquil towards south and away from major roads but not distinctive feature of this parcel
Landscape Value <b>Low</b>	

#### Landscape Capacity **Low/Medium**

The parcel can accommodate the proposed type of development **in many situations** without significant character change.

## 8.2 Landscape issues and guidelines

The site survey work identifies a series of landscape sub-character areas within each land parcel. These sub character areas are mapped on the introductory parcel maps and in Appendix 6.2 with details of distinctive features. These are cross referenced where relevant in the text.

See Section 3.8 for further detail on the assessment process and character and sub character zones.

### 8.2.1 Key characteristics and issues

This SLAA parcel is broadly defined by the A228 to the north, Ropers Lane to the east and Stoke Road to the south. Three distinct sub-character areas have been identified - see below and annotated map in Appendix 2.

- **Zone A** Open farmed landscape to south of A228 and west of Roper Lane; includes Angel Farm to south (excluded from SLAA). Less tranquil to north; dramatic views of estuary to south along PRoW's that cross site
- **Zone B** Land south of Angel Farm access road and east of SSW; includes small lake/large pond to north west corner with strong character and wildlife potential/value; ground rises to south east; more sense of enclosure/containment than Zone A
- **Zone C** Urban fringe influenced sub-character area to north and south of Stoke Road; smaller scale field pattern; more containment; includes radio mast and horse lotting to north of Stoke Road; note there are 2no recently approved housing schemes to south of Stoke Road, open to views from south with estuary influences; also includes mineral safeguarding area.
- **Zone D** This is a large development site between Ropers Lane and Sharnal Street to the north and the Kingsnorth employment area to the south. Development of this large site depends on the success of the HIF bid with approval for an upgrade of the freight line to passenger use and an upgraded road network onto the peninsula. The overhead high power lines are a major constraint. A comprehensive assessment will be required when the precise nature of the development proposals becomes clearer.



### 8.2.2 Development guidelines

- Maximise opportunities to reflect assets of SLAA site within design proposals - eg. existing field pattern; water body to Zone B; heritage assets (WW2 stop line); views of estuary
- Soften impact of enlarged settlement in views from surrounding farmland; use green buffers, estate roads and outward facing housing to soften road impacts. Reduce development density towards edges to ensure a seamless relationship with the rural edges
- Seek multi-functional benefits from a strong GI framework - including access improvements, cycleways, water features for flood alleviation, ecology and community value (includes health benefits), through and around edges of site
- Strengthen community and recreational access links across this parcel, focussing on upgrades and improvements to the Saxon Shore Way
- Consider off road modal shift benefits of providing new cycleways/shared footpaths with a strong rural character
- A new station will provide opportunities for a new mixed use centre (including residential, schools, leisure facilities, retail and employment). Review situation once funding agreed and development framework proposals become clearer
- Consider visual impact of higher density development from surrounding viewpoints - especially views from higher ground
- Maintain strong landscape and GI network linking neighbourhoods and wider landscape of peninsula.
- Underground high power electricity lines to facilitate sustainable settlement extension within development triangle



Land south of Stoke Road



Settlement edges (to north) are 20th/21st Century - linear - prominent in long views / edges blend unsympathetically

Landscape Sensitivity	
Designations	Rural lane (Dux Court Lane); protected open space (Sports Ground); ALLI - all designated under 2003 Local Plan; public rights of way
Landscape features	Broad valley with prominent ridgeline along settlement edge of High Halstow; distinctive views of High Halstow from south and wider landscape (including Medway estuary) from north; overhead power lines (prominent), rail line and watercourses (largely hidden) follow valley floor; water catchment area; arable and fruit belt mixed farmland; scattered farmsteads; retain rural character
Function of area	Anti coalescent; maintains rural character and separation of High Halstow from Hoo St Werburgh within open farmland; ensures High Halstow retains separate identity within rural setting
Mutual inter-dependence	Strong landscape and visual inter-relationship between this area and land east of Hoo St Werburgh (parcel 8); relates also to parcel 3, 4 and 10
Sense of place	Open landscape with distinctive and visually prominent topography, limited woodland and large field pattern (excluding orchard areas); suffers from a number of adverse influences, notably intrusive overhead power lines; lacks intactness and coherence; strongest sense of place along valley floor at Salomons Farm and along old military tramway
Landscape Sensitivity <b>Medium</b>	

Visual Sensitivity	
Visual amenity	Ridgeline with settlement edge at High Halstow; broad valley with mixed farmland; open, expansive landscape; pastoral qualities depleted by power lines, fruit packing sheds and visual intrusion of settlement edges; prominent valley sides with long views to south including Medway estuary; water strong but largely hidden feature
Receptors	<p><i>Within parcel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreation users along PRoW network</li> <li>• People at places of work - fruit packing stores, farm employees</li> <li>• Road users - A228, Dux Court Lane, Christmas Lane</li> </ul> <p><i>From outside parcel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreation users - PRoW network (outside parcel)</li> <li>• Road users and pedestrians - A228 (outside parcel)</li> <li>• Residents at High Halstow and Hoo St Werburgh</li> </ul>
Strategic viewpoints	<p><i>Within parcel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serial views from ridgeline include view from: elevated position along PRoW above Salomon's Farm looking south; top of Dux Court Lane looking south; intermediate ridgeline views</li> <li>• Note: expansive views south, east and west across and along valley from PRoW between houses off Christmas Lane, including long views of industrial areas and estuary.</li> <li>• View along dismantled tramway looking west and south</li> <li>• Residents from High Halstow ridgeline.</li> </ul> <p><i>Outside parcel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• View from west of Dux Court Lane orchard looking north</li> </ul>
Visual effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adverse effects - SLAA and opportunity site within parcel would require careful consideration of scale, extent, materials and finish; note proximity to dismantled tramway with strong time depth qualities and sense of place; likely to require mitigation to soften effects</li> <li>• Requires controls on further development extensions to north to ensure strategic rural gap maintained</li> <li>• Upper slopes afford views of SLAA site (1084) but with man made influences (power lines, fruit stores and settlement edges reducing impacts</li> <li>• Long distance views of employment sites merge with industrial infrastructure to reduce adverse effects</li> <li>• Potential for Green Infrastructure to mitigate adverse effects and promote rural character at edges of new development</li> </ul>
Inter-visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inter-visible with Land south of Hoo, Chattenden Ridge, Deangate Ridge; slopes may be visible in longer views from estuary and shoreline at Hoo Flats</li> <li>• Note linked view corridors on adjacent sides of valley</li> </ul>
Visual Sensitivity <b>Medium</b>	
Overall Sensitivity <b>Medium</b>	



Landscape value	
Rare elements or features	None
Sense of place	Moderate in pockets; strongest at farmsteads along valley floor and along dismantled tramway
Conservation interests	None
Landscape condition - includes intactness and coherence	Farmed landscape in moderate condition. Lacks overall distinctive sense of intactness or coherence
Public Recreation - access opportunities	Many opportunities to enhance existing and provide new public access opportunities - e.g. Military tramway links to Chattenden and Deangate Ridge; repair gaps in PRow along ridgeline at Dux Court Lane along ridgeline. Enormous potential to enhance and expand access and vista opportunities within context of wider green infrastructure (GI) network
Distinctive or promoted views	Includes dramatic open views across open countryside and towards Medway estuary, but with adverse intrusions - see strategic views
Wildness, tranquillity and remoteness	Some pockets of tranquillity and remoteness - strongest along valley floor at farmsteads and along route of naval tramway
Landscape Value <b>Medium</b>	

#### Landscape Capacity **Medium**

- **The parcel can accommodate** the proposed type of development / an extension of the proposed type of development in **some situations** without significant character change.

## 9.2 Landscape issues and guidelines

The site survey work identifies a series of landscape sub-character areas within each land parcel. These sub character areas are mapped on the introductory parcel maps and in Appendix 6.2 with details of distinctive features. These are cross referenced where relevant in the text.

See Section 3.8 for further detail on the assessment process and character and sub character zones.



Former Naval Tramway



Land south of High Halstow

### 9.2.1 Key characteristics and issues

#### Zone A

- This sub-parcel encompasses the major part of this land parcel as described in characteristics section. A broad, predominantly rural, valley with some adverse man-made features along valley floor and long open views from higher ground.
- Plays an important strategic role in maintaining separation between High Halstow and Hoo St Werburgh and ensuring that High Halstow retains its own distinct and separate village identity
- The area offers generous opportunities to strengthen green infrastructure taking advantage of historic and natural features, improving links between new and existing communities and opening up connections into the wider landscape; note particularly the old naval tramway that linked Lodge Hill Camp with the station at Sharnal Street and is now an attractive tree lined trackway (not currently publicly accessible). See heritage section in Appendix for further details.

#### Zone B

- This sub parcel includes two SLAA sites and has been subject to recent development expansion as a fruit packing store and distribution unit; the fruit stores are prominent in many views, although the building finish and setting within orchard have helped to reduce adverse impacts
- The SLAA submission includes indicative proposals for further expansion of the fruit packing facilities. These include further storage, a Business Centre and accommodation for horticultural/agricultural workers
- The northern boundary follows a dismantled tramway line that has become naturalised with vegetation and an attractive landscape feature; route follows watershed from Chattenden Ridge towards main valley floor and out towards Kingsnorth; offers exciting green and blue infrastructure opportunities; this route is tranquil and has a strong sense of place; it's rural and remote character is highly sensitive to development pressure

### 9.2.2 Development guidelines

- Zone A Maintain the rural and open character of zone A as an anti-coalescent gap between High Halstow and Hoo St Werburgh
- Zone B Maintain generous undeveloped green corridor to north of this parcel and ensure tranquil rural qualities of military tramway are retained and enhanced. Retain orchard setting around all new development proposals to soften impacts and maintain semi-rural character. Ensure all new planting is native and representative of locally established native tree and shrub species

#### General issues

- Improve and enhance green (and blue) infrastructure links and open up public access opportunities between new and existing settlements; support modal shift, public health, biodiversity and access by opening up military tramway and water/rail routes for walking and cycling opportunities and improve public access.
- Create new public footpath and cycleway link along old Naval Tramway establishing off-road link between Chattenden / Hoo St Werburgh and High Halstow.
- Respect landscape sensitivities of natural and man-made features including farmsteads, military tramway, vegetation fringing water features and freight line.
- Reduce adverse impact of overhead power lines; seek funding to underground lines.



## 10.0 Land to east of High Halstow



### 10.1 Description

North and west boundaries consistent with Hoo Peninsula Farmland boundary (Medway LCA, 2011); boundary modified to east and south to reflect zone of influence and creation of new parcels to south (nos 8 & 9). See also Area 2 Introductory Note.

#### 10.1.1 Characteristics

- Open gently sloping ridgeline follows higher ground between Northward Hill and St Mary Hoo; this landscape feature stretches east (beyond parcel) towards All Hallows
- Includes serial views to Thames (and Medway) estuaries along footpath between Clinch Street Farm and Newlands Farm
- Land to east of Clinch Street and Walnut Tree Farms and north of Britannia Road - open farmed landscape predominantly in arable use with strong rural feel; includes several small farmsteads which retain rural distinctiveness
- Land to south west of Clinch Street and Walnut Tree Farms and to south of Britannia Road - a more contained landscape with urban fringe characteristics and pressures (including horse lotting); land to east includes ribbon development with larger plots at the northern end of Sharnal Street and a small settlement around Fenn Street roundabout.
- Features include St Mary Hoo Conservation area; Ancient woodland at Fishers Wood; Saxon Shore Way runs north south through parcel; Public Open Space to north west links to Northward Hill SSSI
- Land to east performs important functional role in retaining separation between St Mary Hoo and High Halstow; land to south east offers potential anti-coalescent and GI buffer between enlarged High Halstow and Sharnal Street ribbon development

#### 10.1.2 SLAA sites

Includes one substantial SLAA site to east of High Halstow; one further opportunity site identified to north of Britannia Road.

#### 10.1.3 Settlement edges

- Settlement edges to west are 20th/21st Century - linear - very arbitrary/blends unsympathetically
- Settlement edges to east are 20th Century - linear edges to east of Sharnal Street are very low density; non-invasive and semi-rural in character



Landscape Sensitivity	
Designations	North Kent Marshes Special Landscape area; Conservation area (St Mary Hoo); public open space (informal recreation area) - all designated in 2003 Local Plan; public rights of way (includes Saxon Shore Way); ancient woodland
Landscape features	Open farmed elevated landscape with distinctive views (especially towards Thames estuary); includes St Mary Hoo Church and Conservation area to east; ridgeline visible from Halstow and St Mary's Marshes; public open space to north of High Halstow; good network of footpaths; urban fringe pressures to south and west; more rural in character to north and east; dispersed farmsteads retain rural character; most contained areas at SLAA sites - refs 0835 and 1113
Function of area	Separates High Halstow and Sharnal/Fenn Street from St Mary Hoo; provides opportunity to retain separation between enlarged High Halstow and Sharnal/ Fenn Street; SSW through site links elevated ridge, Northward Hill and marshes to north; much of area retains strong historic character and rural feel
Mutual inter-dependence	Strong inter-relationship between this parcel and Land south of High Halstow; Land east of Hoo St Werburgh
Sense of place	Land to north and east intact and coherent; strong sense of place within open farmed area - tranquil and remote; weaker sense of place to south and west where damaged by development pressure (including roads)
Landscape Sensitivity <b>Medium</b>	



View towards St Mary Hoo

<b>Visual Sensitivity</b>	
Visual amenity	Open elevated farmed landscape (to north and east) with dispersed farmsteads; strong rural feel; land to south and west subject to strong urban fringe pressures and influences; good footpath network; distinctive open views towards marshes and Thames estuary
Receptors	<p><i>Within parcel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreation users along Saxon Shore Way (SSW) and other PRoW's within area</li> <li>• Residents, road users and people at place of work - Clinch Street, Christmas Lane, Sharnal Street, Fenn Street and St Mary Hoo</li> </ul> <p><i>From outside parcel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreation users along SSW and neighbouring footpaths</li> <li>• Road users and pedestrians - Ratcliffe Highway and A228</li> <li>• Residents - High Halstow</li> </ul>
Strategic viewpoints	<p>8.0 PRoW looking east towards St Mary Hoo and estuaries to north and south</p> <p>9.0 Clinch Street Farm looking south west</p> <p>10.0 St Mary Hoo Church looking west</p> <p>11.0 Sharnal St (Petrol Filling Station) looking west</p>
Visual effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adverse effects - development beyond the SLAA area and opportunity site would be detrimental to retaining scale and character of existing village; it would also impact adversely on rural character and strong sense of place in area to north and east</li> <li>• A physical break between Sharnal St and enlarged village would provide visual (and landscape) relief</li> </ul>
Inter-visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited inter-visibility between this parcel and 2no parcels to south</li> </ul>
Visual Sensitivity <b>Medium</b>	
Overall Sensitivity <b>Medium</b>	

<b>Landscape value</b>	
Rare elements or features	No rare elements
Sense of place	Strongest to north and east; remote and tranquil, open farmed landscape. less distinctive to south and west
Conservation interests	Ancient Woodland, Conservation area and Grade 2* listed church
Landscape condition - includes intactness and coherence	Intact and coherent to north and east; poorer condition to south and west. Overall condition moderate
Public Recreation - access opportunities	Existing access and recreation opportunities good. Opportunities to enhance further as part of new development proposals, including strengthening PRoW network and extending public recreation spaces
Distinctive or promoted views	Includes dramatic unspoilt views across open farmland towards Thames estuary and marshes
Wildness, tranquillity and remoteness	Tranquil and remote to north and east; area retains rural and historic character
Landscape Value <b>Medium</b>	
Landscape Capacity <b>Medium</b>	
<b>The parcel can accommodate</b> the proposed type of development / an extension of the proposed type of development <b>in some situations</b> without significant character change	

## 10.2 Landscape issues and guidelines

The site survey work identifies a series of landscape sub-character areas within each land parcel. These sub character areas are mapped on the introductory parcel maps and in Appendix 6.2 with details of distinctive features. These are cross referenced where relevant in the text.

See Section 3.8 for further detail on the assessment process and character and sub character zones.

### 10.2.1 Key characteristics and issues

#### Zone A

- This area, which is highly sensitive, features a predominantly open farmed and undamaged landscape rising up gently towards an elevated ridgeline with long views towards the Thames estuary and marshes
- This area has a strong rural feel and is prominent in views from the surrounding area
- It plays an important role in ensuring the village of St Mary Hoo remains separated by a substantial tranche of open rural farmland, respecting the area's remote and tranquil historic character

#### Zone B

- This zone is more contained, closer to road, built development and other infrastructure and subject to a range of urban fringe pressures. These factors all lead to a lower level of sensitivity and landscape value

The overall medium capacity evaluation of zones A & B reflects an averaging out of the different levels of sensitivity of the two areas

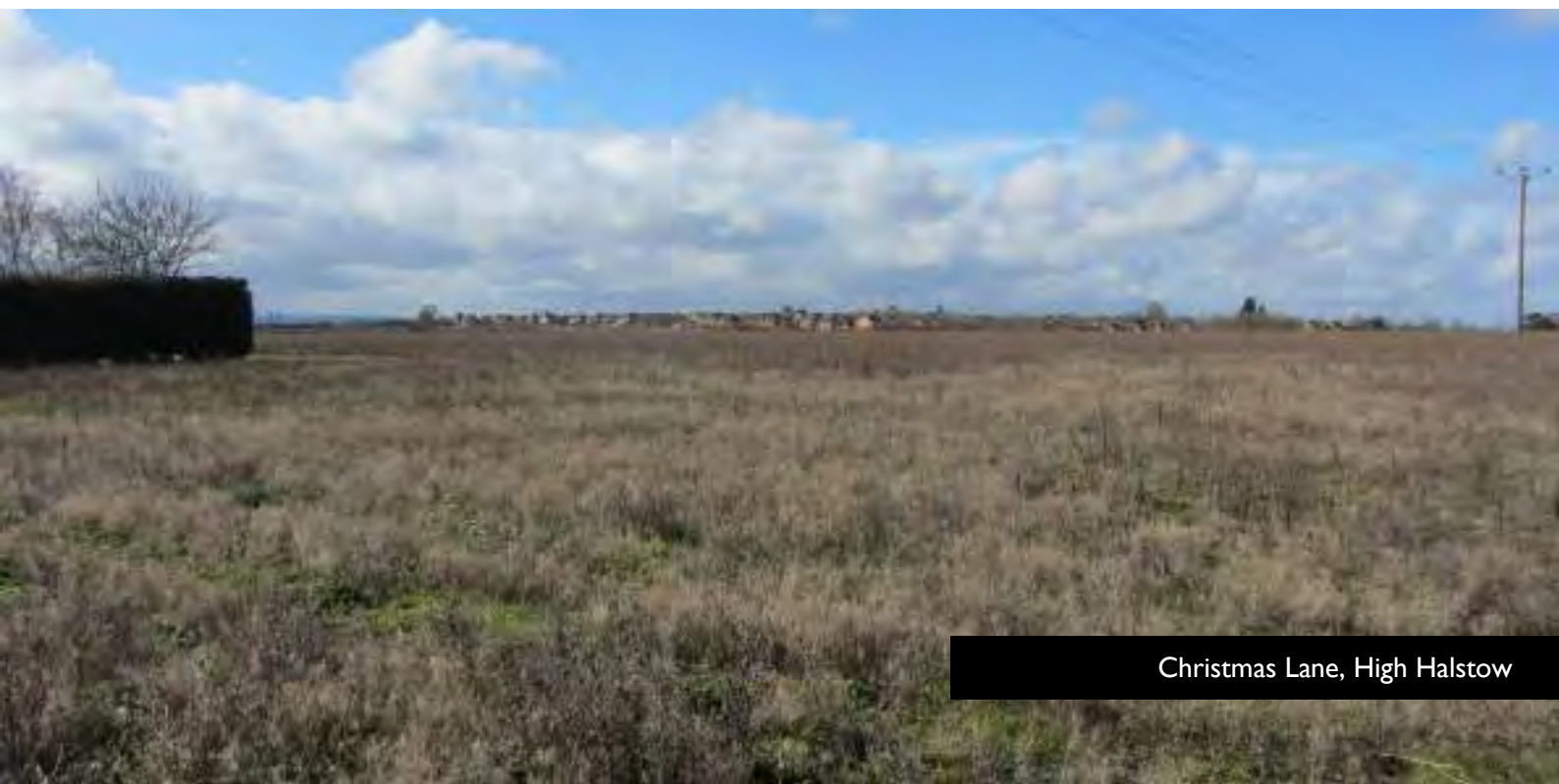
### 10.2.2 Development guidelines

#### Zone A

- It is not recommended that significant development takes place within this area, respecting the historic rural character of this tranche of open countryside
- Enhance the green infrastructure and ensure improved access for the wider community to this tranquil and remote area with outstanding views.

#### Zone B

- New development within this area is generally considered appropriate but should nevertheless be sited sensitively in order to protect and retain the rural character of Zone A
- The edges of proposed new development within this area should respond to natural features including topography and respect the character of the surrounding farmland; adverse impacts should be mitigated and softened with tree and shrub planting proposals that respect the character of the area and provide a multi-functional range of Green Infrastructure benefits
- Consider lower density development towards the edges of the enlarged settlement and ensure that harsh unsympathetic edges are avoided in all circumstances





## 5.0 Summary

### 5.1 Assessment outcomes

Ref	Character Area	Sensitivity	Value	Capacity
1	Hogmarsh Valley	High	Medium	Medium/High
2	Bald Top Hill	High	Medium	Medium/High
3	Chattenden Ridge	Medium	High	Medium/High
4	Deangate Ridge	Medium	Medium	Medium
5	Hoo Farmland	Medium	Medium	Medium
6	Cockham Farm Ridge	High	Medium	Medium/High
7	Hoo Flats	High	High	High
8	Land to east of Hoo St Werburgh	Medium	Low	Low/Medium
9	Land to south of High Halstow	Medium	Medium	Medium
10	Land to east of High Halstow	Medium	Medium	Medium

Level	Definition
Low	<b>The parcel can accommodate</b> the proposed type of development / an extension of the proposed type of development without significant character change
Low/Medium	<b>The parcel can accommodate</b> the proposed type of development / an extension of the proposed type of development <b>in many situations</b> without significant character change
Medium	<b>The parcel can accommodate</b> the proposed type of development / an extension of the proposed type of development <b>in some situations</b> without significant character change
Medium/High	<b>The parcel can accommodate</b> the proposed type of development / an extension of the proposed type of development <b>only in defined limited situations</b> without significant character change
High	<b>The parcel is unable to accommodate</b> the proposed type of development / an extension of the proposed type of development without significant character change

## 5.2 Landscape Framework Guidelines

### Development guidelines

- Develop an integrated approach to green, blue and transport infrastructure planning and ensure that this underpins the Development Framework design process
- Incorporate a clear understanding of the blue infrastructure opportunities at the beginning of design process to ensure that natural features are accessible and valued and can play a role in helping to define distinctiveness and sense of place for new and existing neighbourhoods; consider options of opening up, realigning and connecting watercourses for flood alleviation, ecology, access, health, biodiversity and wider community value.
- Resist coalescence; preserve and maintain separation and a strong sense of local identity for existing settlements at High Halstow and Chattenden when developing options for an enlarged rural town based around Hoo St Werburgh. To ensure this separation, the establishment and maintenance of a substantial green buffer is recommended. The annotated plans for parcels 4 & 5 describe the proposed extent of this buffer and recommends that this serves as a strategic multi-functional green corridor that links the urban areas of Medway into the enlarged rural town and the wider GI framework across the peninsula. These proposals also include a land bridge across the A228 (to be jointly funded by developers and the HIF bid - if the bid is successful)
- Protect and maintain a clear strategic green gap between the urban areas of Medway and the more rural settlements on the Hoo Peninsula, including Chattenden and the Upnors; to retain the more rural character of the Hoo Peninsula and a sustainable enlarged settlement at Hoo St Werburgh
- Maintain a clear strategic green gap between the villages of Chattenden, Hoo St Werburgh and High Halstow and establish these areas as distinctive neighbourhoods within an enlarged rural town
- There is considerable development pressure to merge the villages of Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden; this pressure should be resisted and a substantial green buffer maintained between the two settlements.
- Strengthen road corridor vegetation along both sides of A228 especially along lower slope edges between Chattenden and Hoo St Werburgh; multi-functional benefits will include a wildlife corridor, reduction in the adverse effects of noisy and polluting road network and softening, screening and framing new development proposals
- Protect and enhance the 'green backdrops' at Deangate Ridge and Cockham Farm Ridge; review the impact of development on valley slopes and ensure that a green backdrop can be maintained by assessing impacts from an agreed set of viewpoints with verifiable photomontages
- As a general principle, new development along ridgelines and upper valley slopes should be avoided; seek to concentrate development along valley floor and lower slopes; taking into account in all cases landscape functions, local characteristics, features and sensitivities
- Provide new Country Parks at Cockham Farm and Deangate Ridge with community open space benefits that support an enlarged rural town and reduce recreational pressure and bird disturbance to the highly designated sites at Cockham Farm Woods, Chattenden Woods and along the Medway estuary
- Develop proposals for a wetland reserve between the Hoo St Werburgh historic core and Kingsnorth, provided with footpath links and managed public access to sensitive areas; proposals to incorporate approved restoration plans for the mineral works scheme
- Protect Bald Top Hill as a tranquil landscape feature; open up public access to appreciate expansive views across the Medway Towns and the wider surrounding countryside
- Protect Chattenden Ridge as a tranquil landscape feature; open up public access to this area as part of wider GI framework to improve access between settlements and enable the wider community to appreciate the natural beauty of this area including the dramatic views from the highest point on the peninsula, including the Medway and Thames estuaries
- Protect the Hogmarsh Valley from built development and retain the area as a valued open space, landscape feature and gateway into the Medway Towns; enhance the biodiversity, recreational and public access value of the distinctive water features along the valley floor and provide improved community public health benefits from these improvements; develop an action plan for enhancement of the Hogmarsh Valley (and Bald Top Hill) working alongside the landowners
- Manage recreational disturbance along the Medway Estuary and at Lodge Hill, Chattenden Woods and Cockham Farm Woods; support the provision of alternative recreational open spaces and facilities that reduce pressure on the most highly designated biodiversity areas

- Maintain agricultural and horticultural (including orchards) uses around edges and along green corridors through the enlarged settlement; to ensure rural features retained and that Garden City principles of the countryside reaching into town are adopted; consider benefits of introducing a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) scheme
- Ensure new development respects field pattern; maintain, enhance and extend existing hedgerows and woodland blocks to break up homogeneity of built form and strengthen local identity and sense of place
- All strategic gaps/green buffers should provide a full range of multi-functional Green Infrastructure (GI) benefits, including health, ecology, flood alleviation, access and recreation
- Heritage – Incorporate an appreciation of the key heritage features within this area when preparing new Development Framework proposals; noting that former military uses have been a particularly strong component in shaping the character of the area. These features offer opportunities to reflect and strengthen that character within new development proposals; affording the local community a greater understanding of the forces that have helped shaped the landscape that surrounds them. See also the Council's Heritage Strategy and seek advice from Historic England whilst preparing a Development Framework for an enlarged settlement at Hoo St Werbergh.
- Climate change – Incorporate into Development Framework a comprehensive range of Landscape and Green Infrastructure improvements that contribute positively to climate change adaptation and mitigation; options include developing extended areas of woodland, scrub, grassland and wetland providing carbon sequestration, new habitats, stepping stones and climate regulation (including flood alleviation, shading and cooling of the atmosphere)
- Support modal shift and the public health benefits of an expanded GI network of footpaths and cycleways linking schools and local communities. New opportunities for GI links include connections along:
  - The route of the old Naval Tramway from Dux Court Lane towards High Halstow and Sharnal Street; this route offers potential for improved new off-road cycle and walking routes
  - The Chattenden Ridge trackway from Berry Court Woods towards High Halstow

Both of these new routes will link into new and existing off-road routes between Cliffe Woods, Chattenden and Hoo St Werbergh (see annotated maps for more detail on this)



Solomon's Farm, south of High Halstow





Saxon Shore Way, above Broad Street

### Edge of settlement guidelines

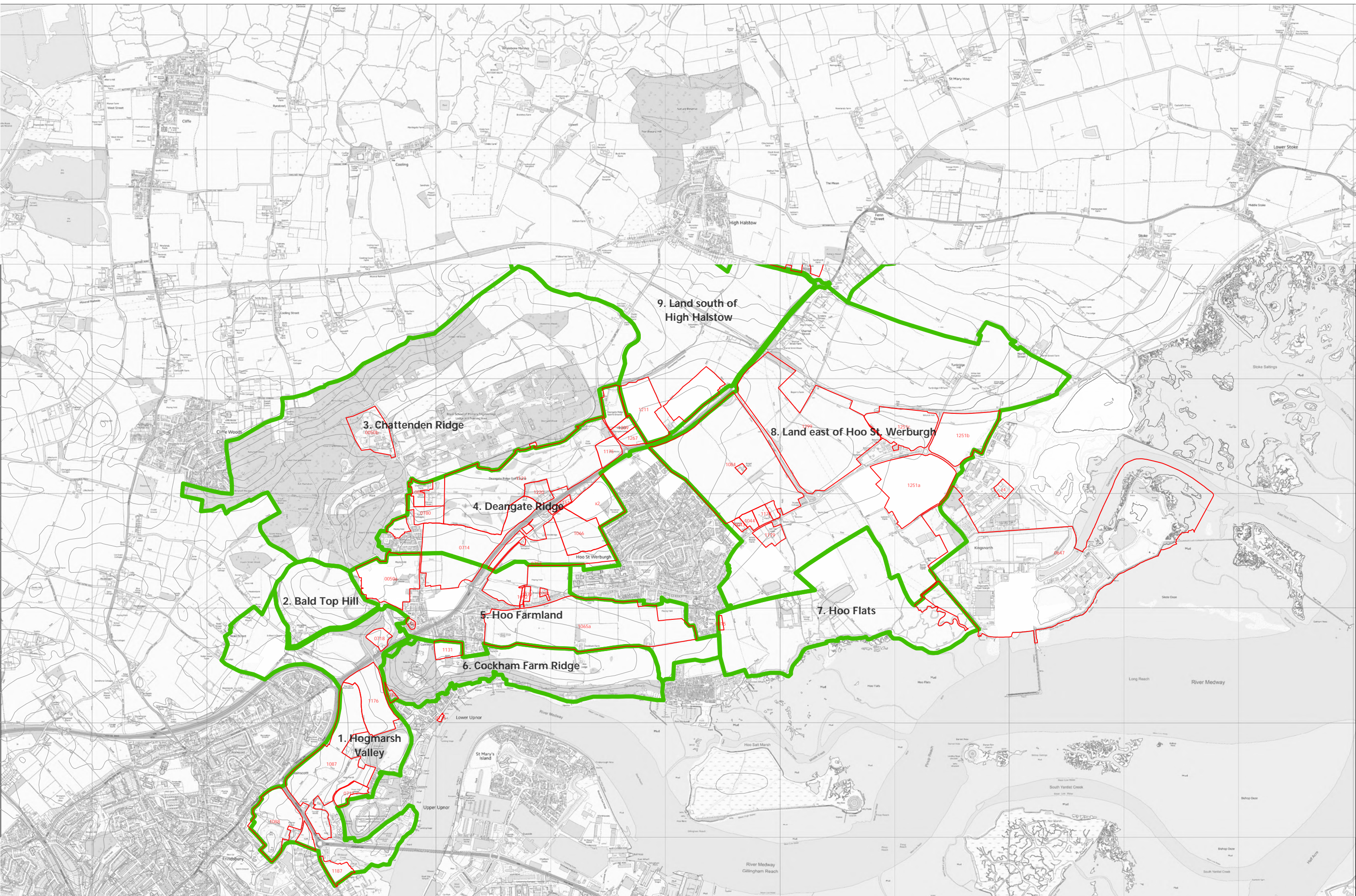
- Edge treatments should be considered within the wider Development Framework and Green & Blue Infrastructure framework established within the emerging Local Plan and should seek to deliver multi-functional GI benefits, including access, recreation, flood alleviation, wildlife and public health
- Successful treatment of settlement edges will depend on the detail of architectural form, scale, layout and finish. It is recommended that a set of design codes is prepared that responds to local character and seeks to integrate new development sensitively into the surrounding landscape
- Adequate space should be provided at the edges of new development to enable sensitive integration with the surrounding countryside; this is likely to involve lower densities of development along edges in most circumstances
- Edge treatments will vary according to location and setting but are likely to involve the integration of existing natural features including scrub, woodland blocks, hedgerows, grassland and wetland planting
- New development will benefit from the establishment of a strong internal and external landscape framework; this will be achieved through a variety of means that should include planting that softens, anchors, frames, and in some cases, screens development
- Flat open marshland landscapes may require more nuanced and subtle landscape treatments that respect the open character of the surrounding landscape
- In all circumstances it will be essential to respect existing landscape character, work sensitively with topography and respect existing field patterns and landscape features
- There should be no close board fences when development borders the countryside and public open spaces; blocks of native woodland and shrub planting and/or post and rail fencing with mixed native hedgerows are the recommended edge treatments in these circumstances.
- As a general principle new development should front rather than back onto the countryside and public green spaces; access roads, public footpaths and cycleways may be incorporated as appropriate into these edges, whilst allowing adequate surveillance and defensive space for properties
- Planting - should be representative of local character and features; consider ecological value and function and provide locally indigenous planting where practical

## 6.0 Appendices

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### 6.1 Overview map



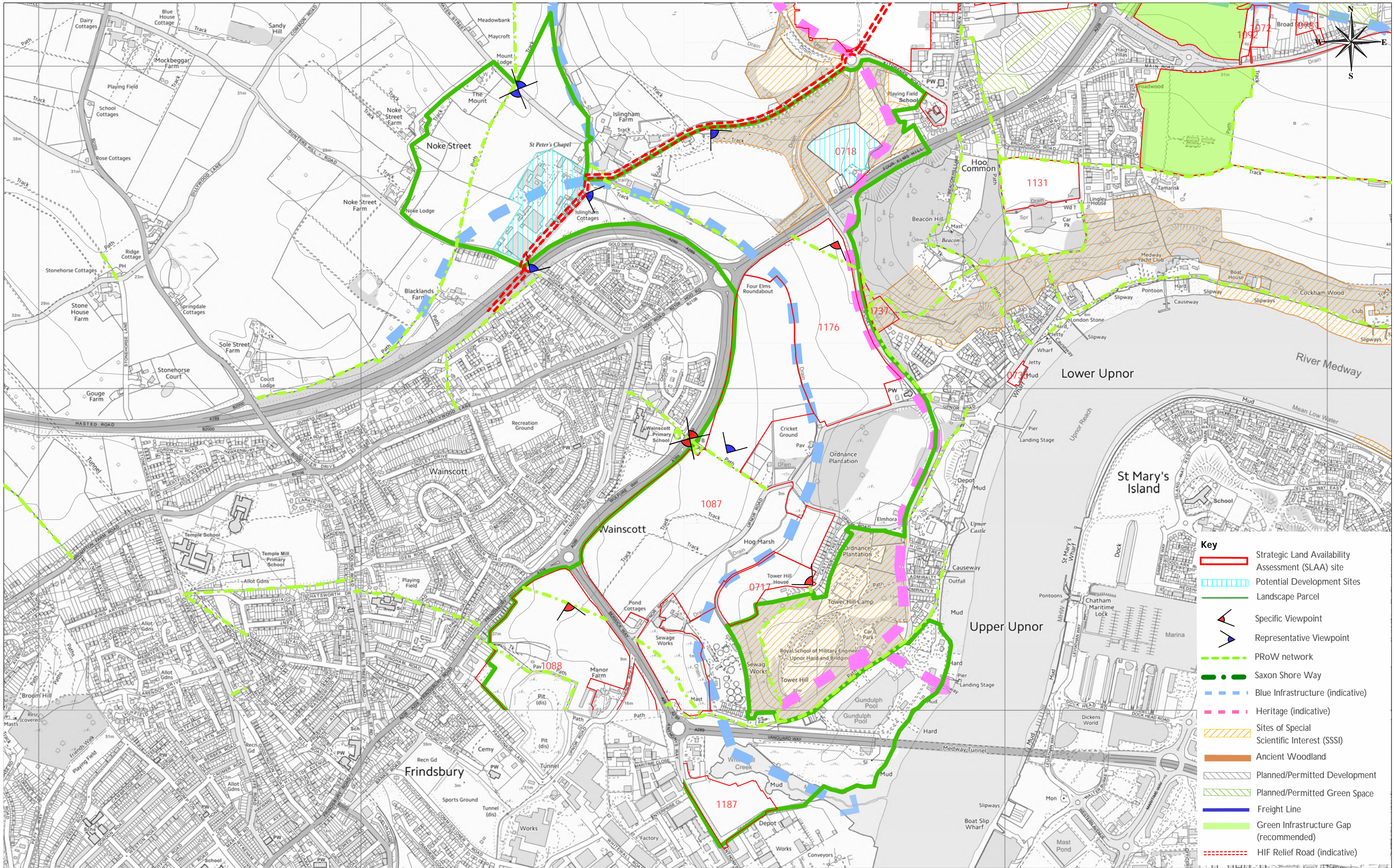


Overview Map



## **6.2 Land Parcels 1-10 – maps**

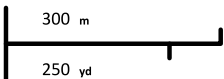




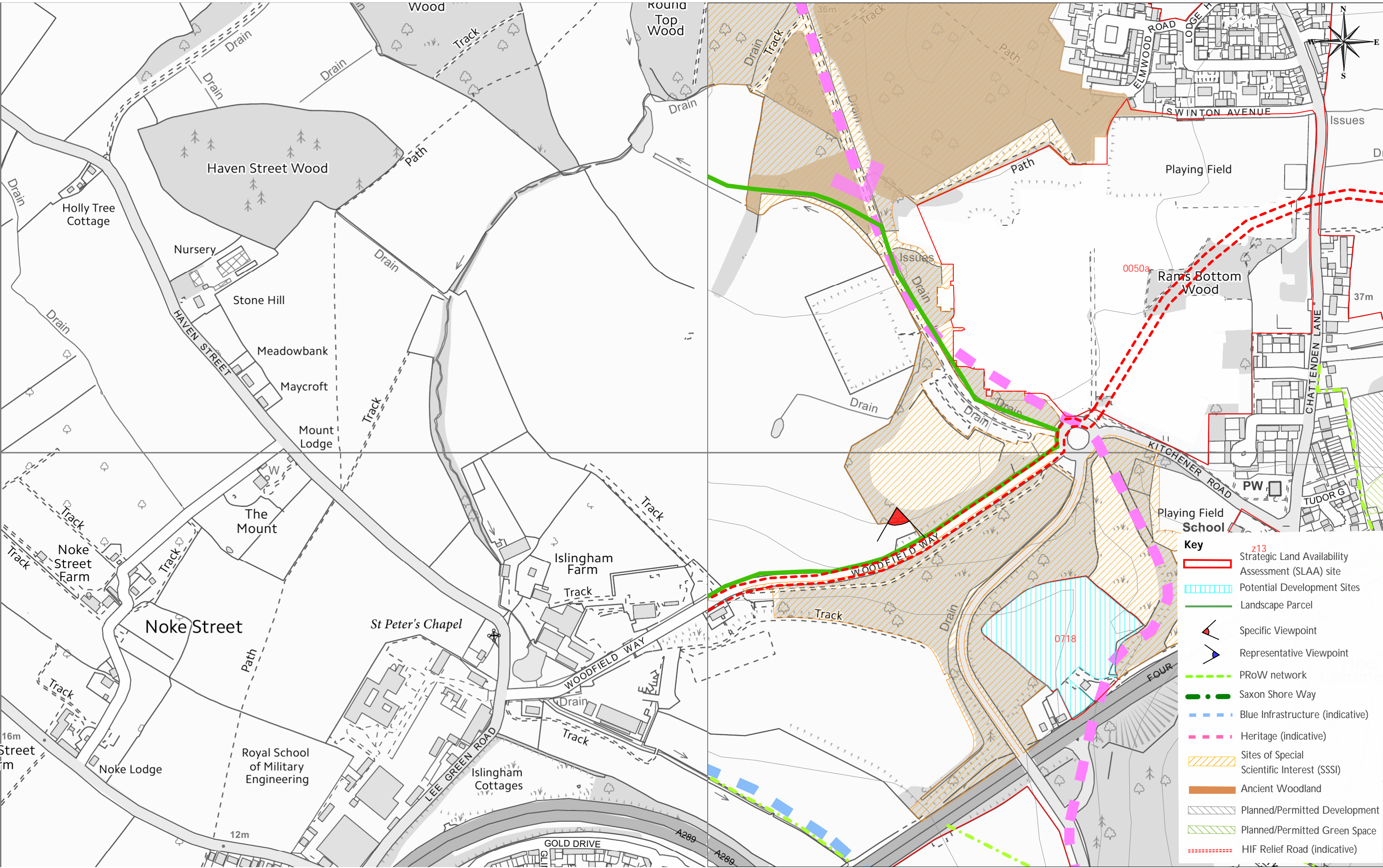
# 1. Hogmarsh Valley

## Revisions

Draft V1 - 07/08/2018  
Draft V2 - 10/09/2018  
Draft V3 - 24/09/2018  
Draft V4 - 31/10/2018  
Draft V5 - 25/02/2019



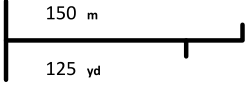




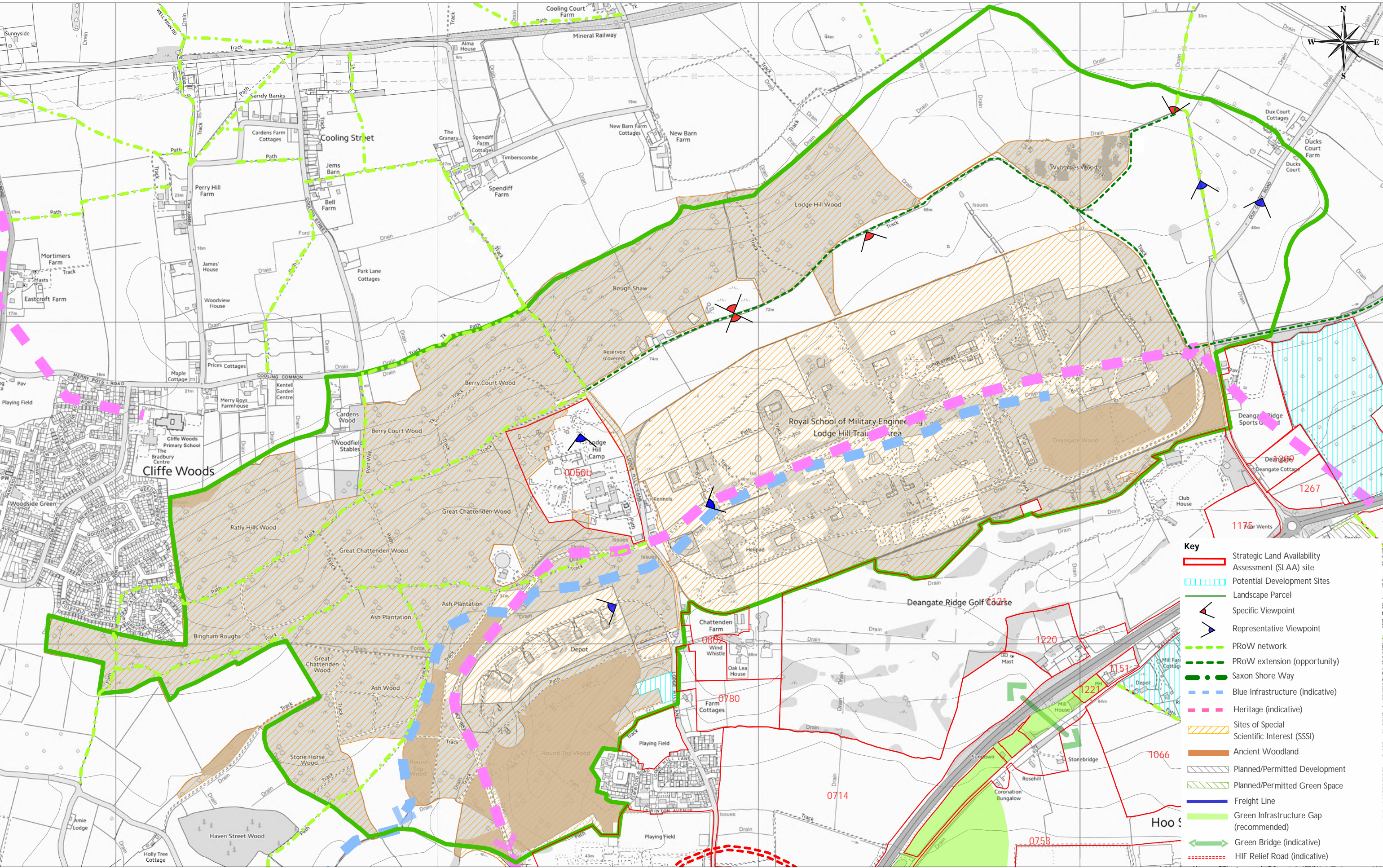
2. Bald Top Hill

Revisions

Draft V1 - 07/08/2018  
Draft V2 - 10/09/2018  
Draft V3 - 24/09/2018  
Draft V4 - 31/10/2018  
Draft V5 - 25/02/2019

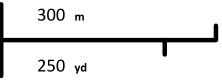




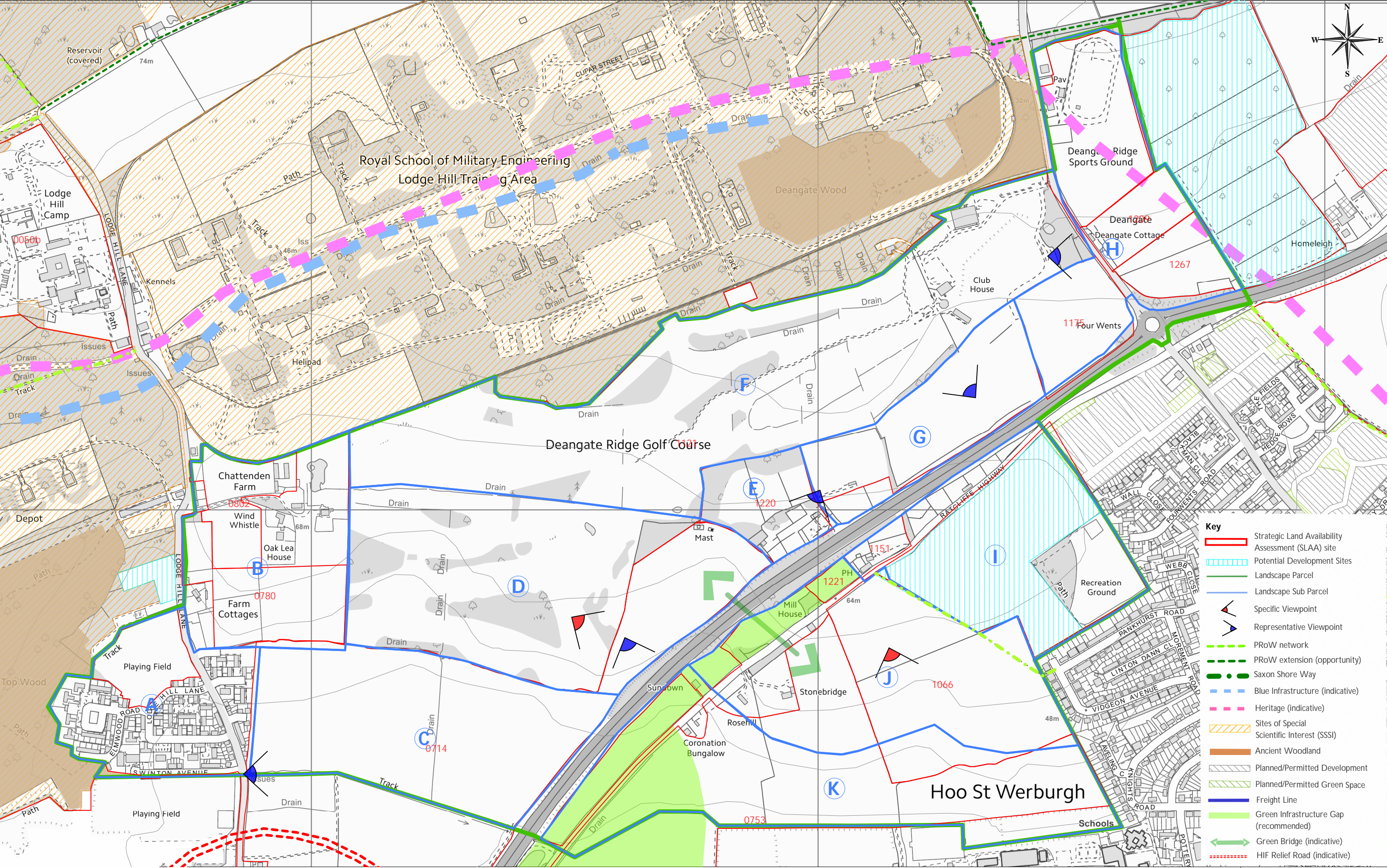


3. Chattenden Ridge

Revisions  
Draft V1 - 08/08/2018  
Draft V2 - 11/09/2018  
Draft V3 - 24/09/2018  
Draft V4 - 31/10/2018  
Draft V5 - 25/02/2019



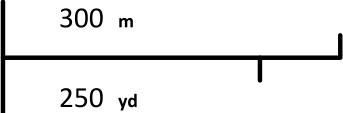




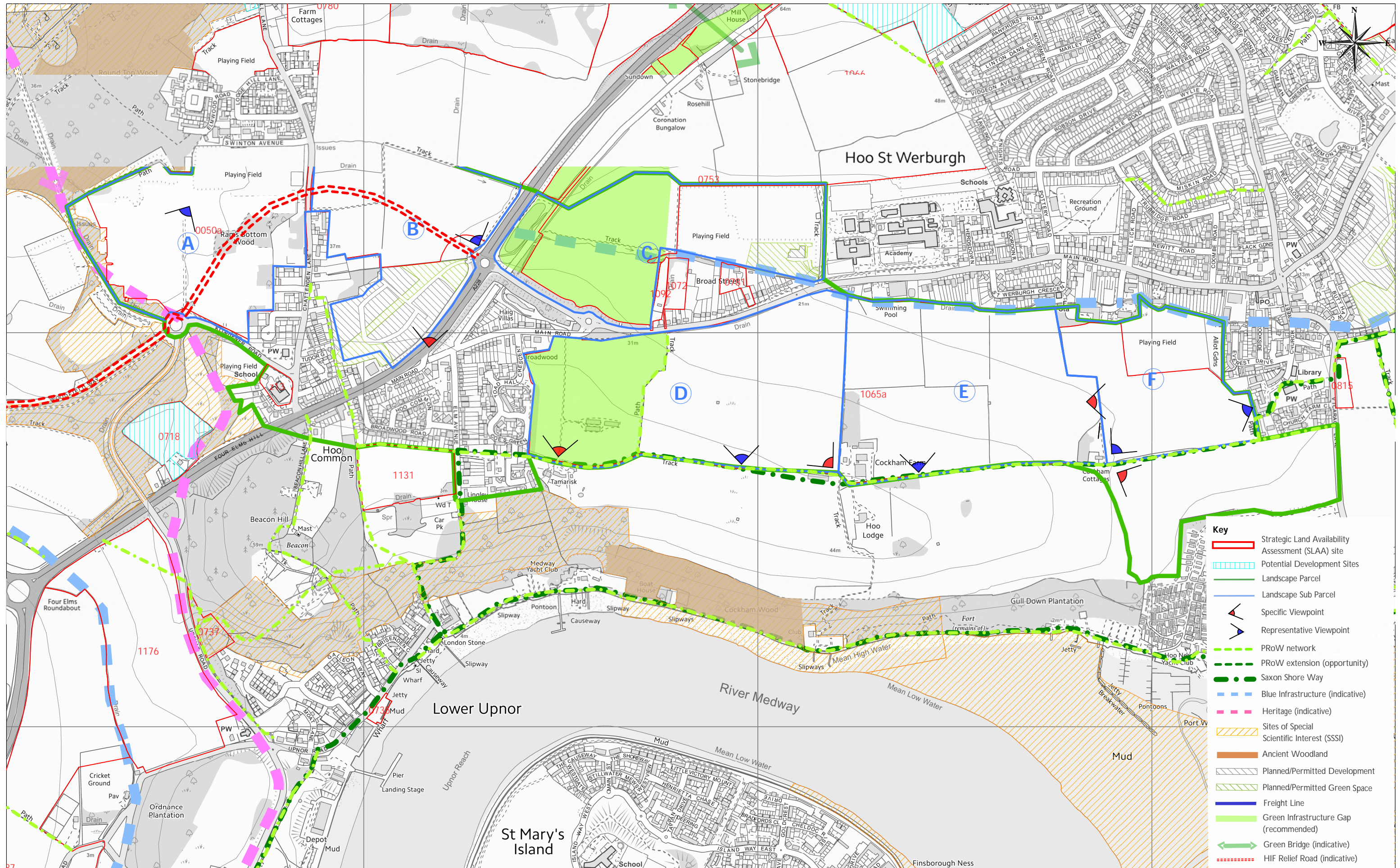
4. Deangate Ridge

Revisions

Draft V1 - 07/08/2018  
Draft V2 - 10/09/2018  
Draft V3 - 24/09/2018  
Draft V4 - 31/10/2018  
Draft V5 - 25/02/2019



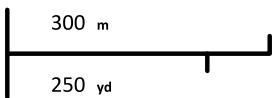




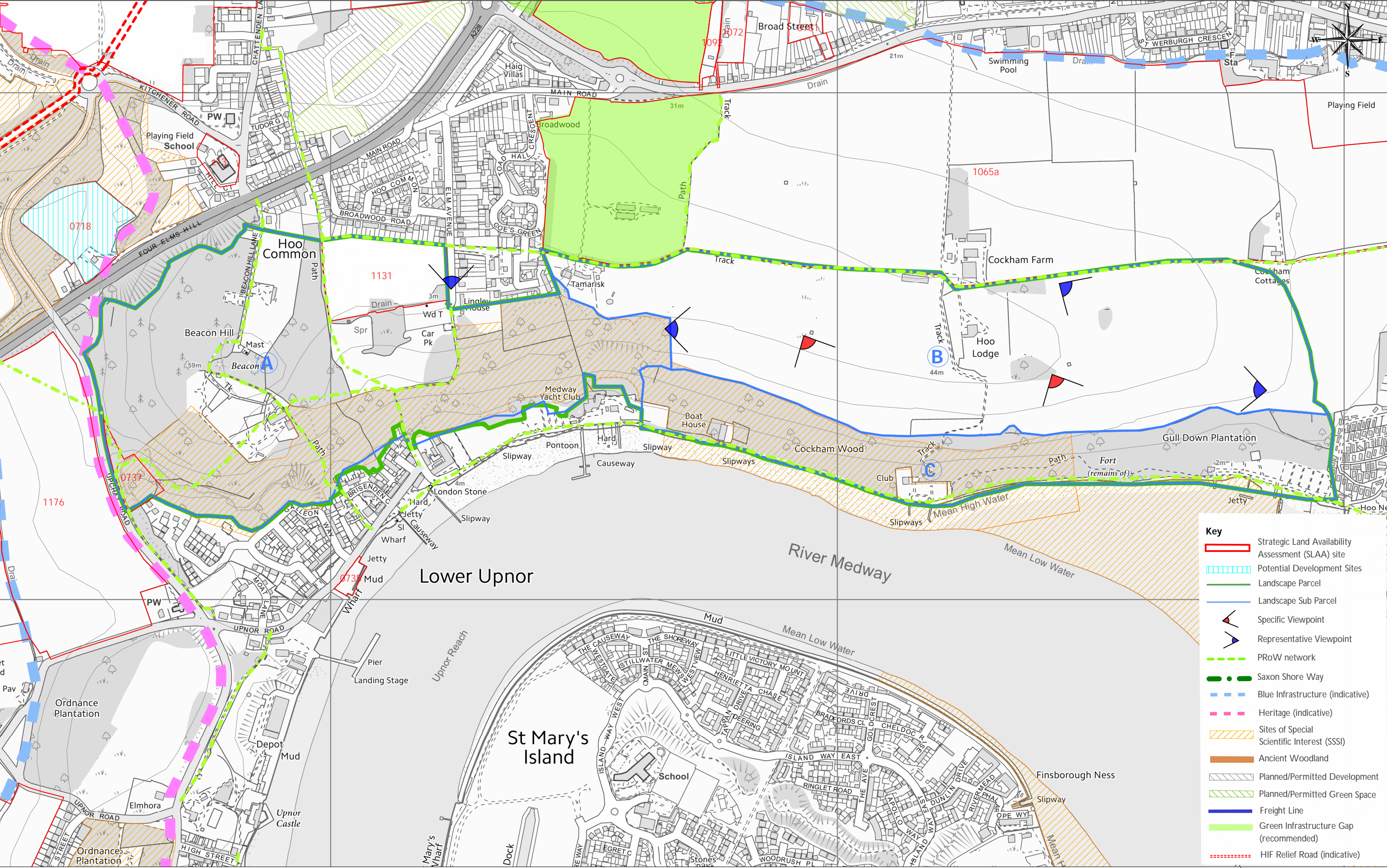
5. Hoo Farmland

Revisions

Draft V1 - 07/08/2018  
Draft V2 - 11/09/2018  
Draft V3 - 24/09/2018  
Draft V4 - 31/10/2018  
Draft V5 - 25/02/2019



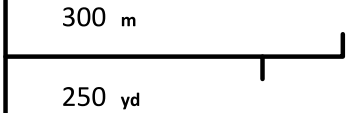




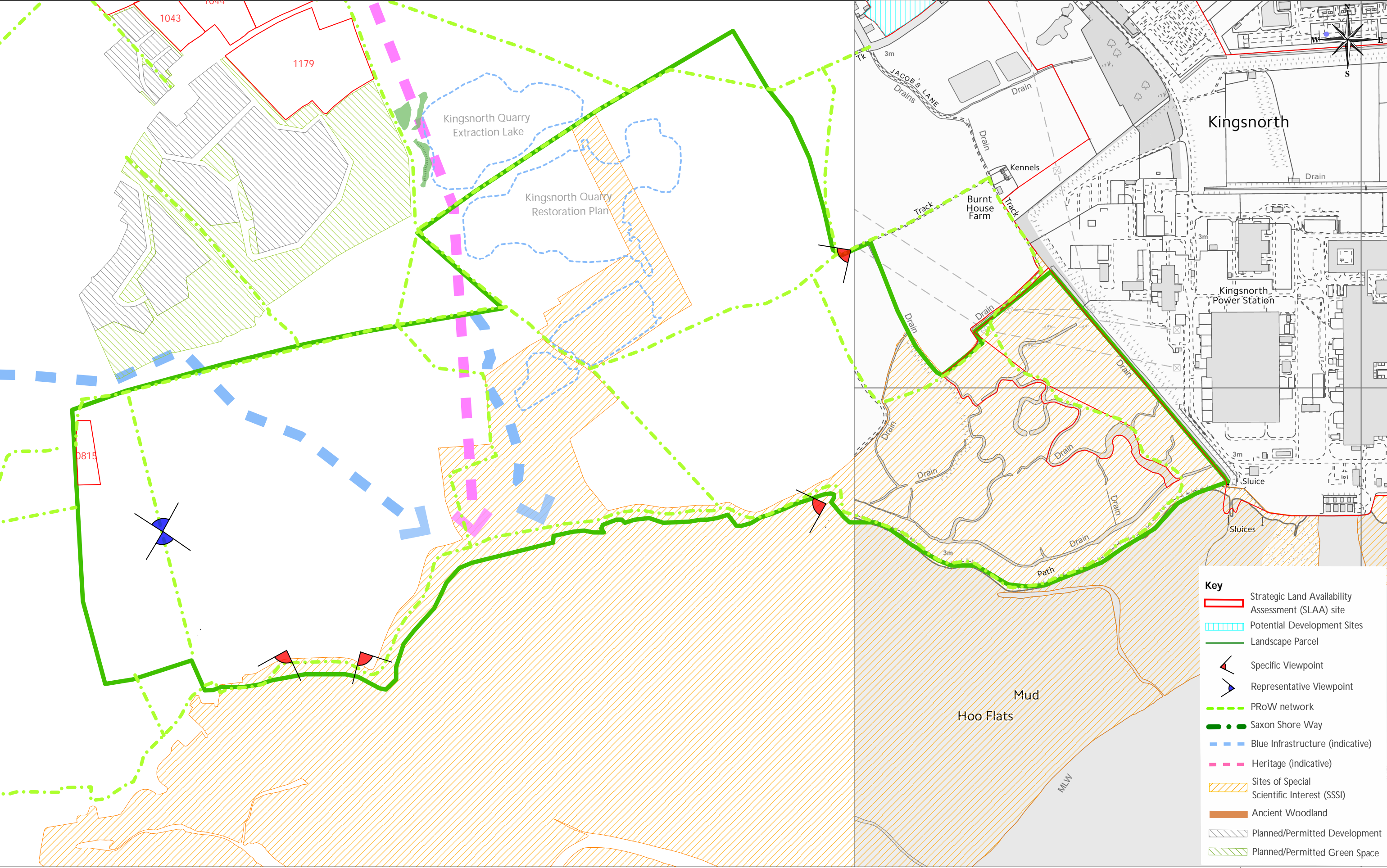
6. Cockham Farm Ridge

Revisions

Draft V1 - 07/08/2018  
Draft V2 - 11/09/2018  
Draft V3 - 24/09/2018  
Draft V4 - 31/10/2018  
Draft V5 - 25/02/2019



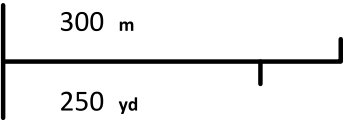


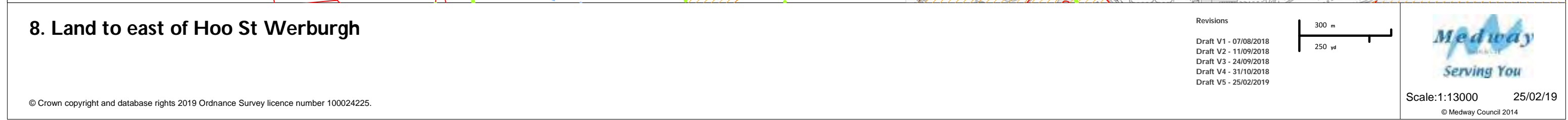


7. Hoo Flats

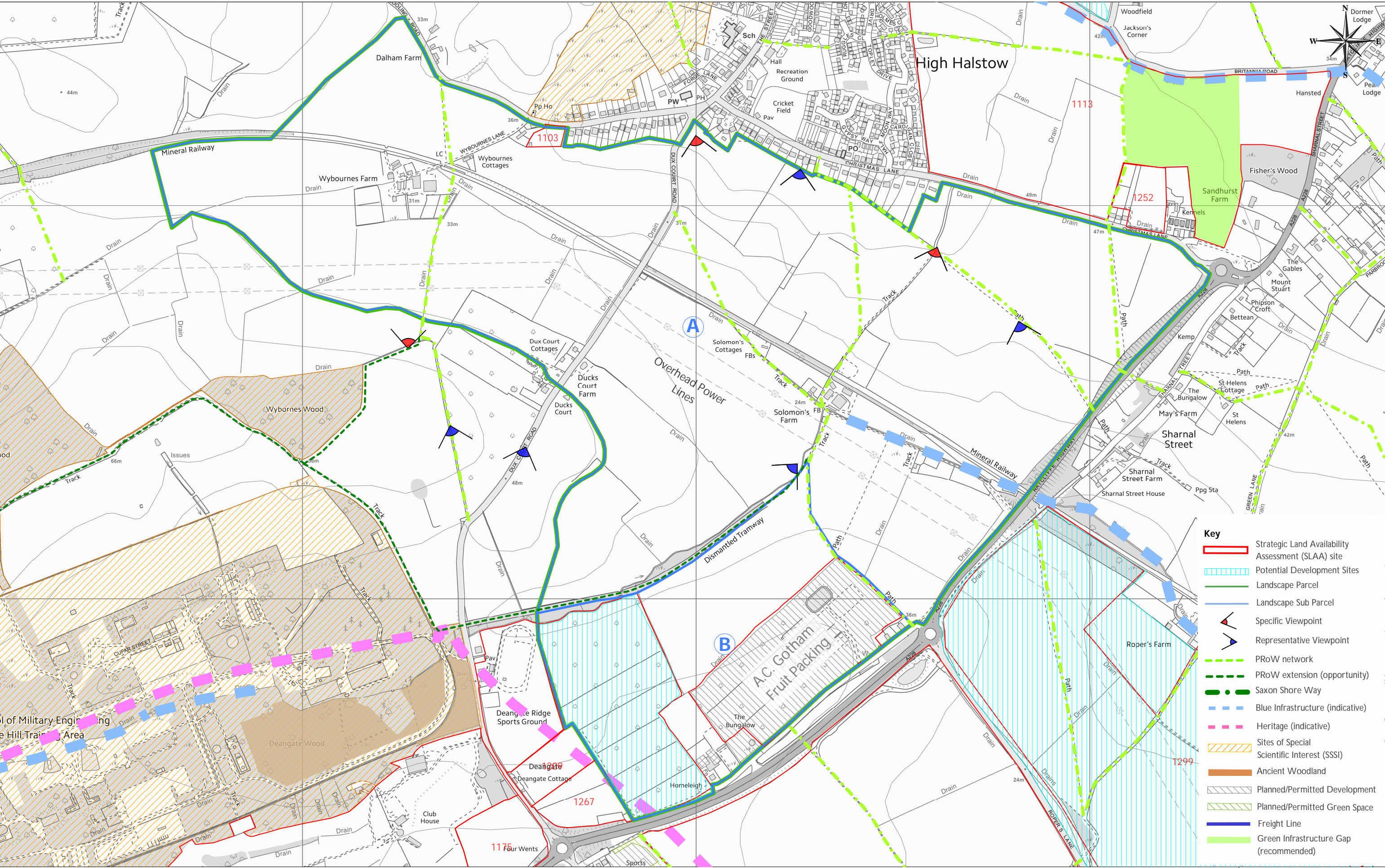
Revisions

Draft V1 - 07/08/2018  
Draft V2 - 11/09/2018  
Draft V3 - 24/09/2018  
Draft V4 - 31/10/2018  
Draft V5 - 25/02/2019





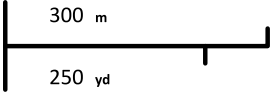




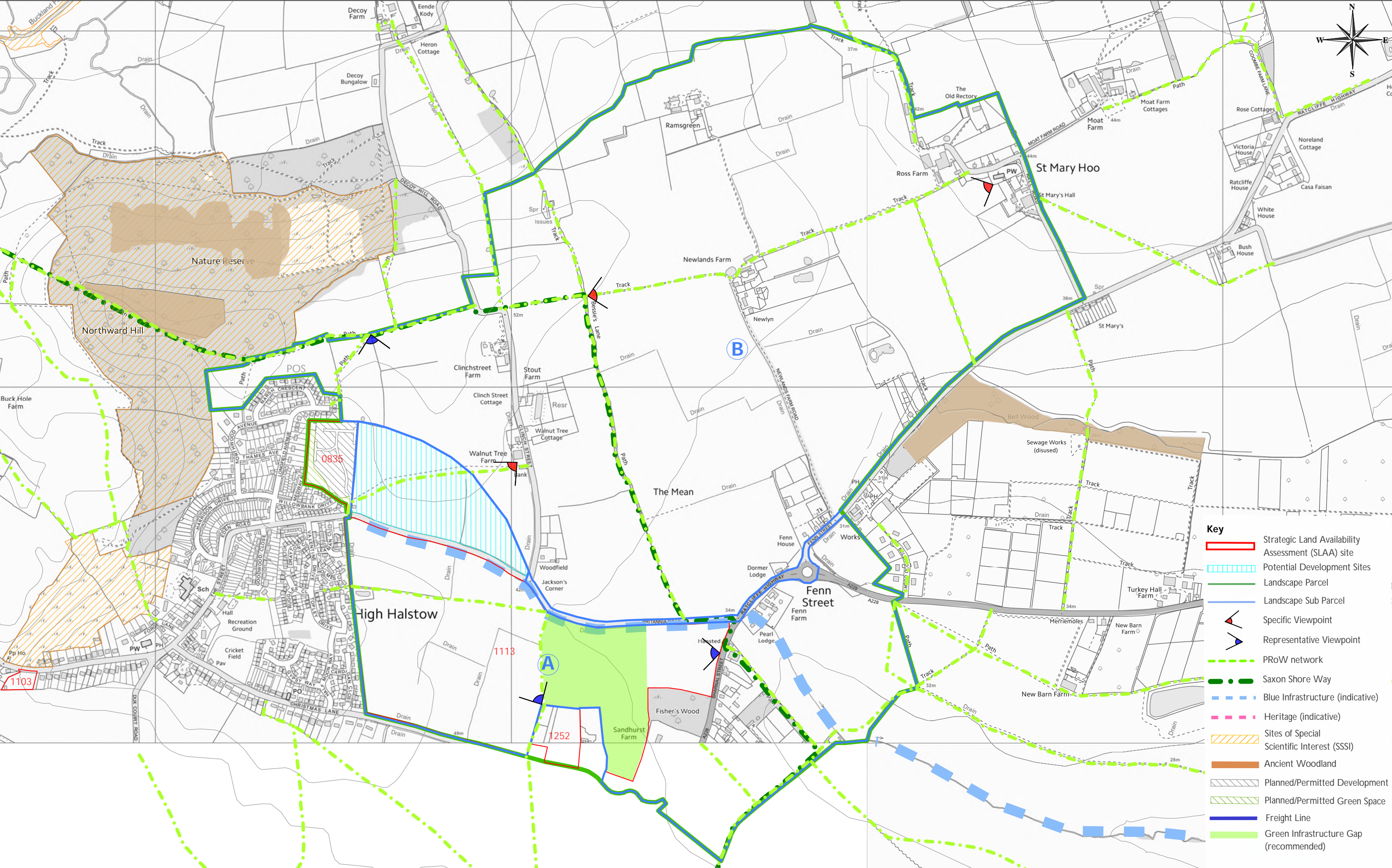
9. Land to south of High Halstow

Revisions

Draft V1 - 07/08/2018  
Draft V2 - 11/09/2018  
Draft V3 - 24/09/2018  
Draft V4 - 31/10/2018  
Draft V5 - 25/02/2019

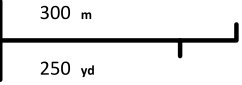






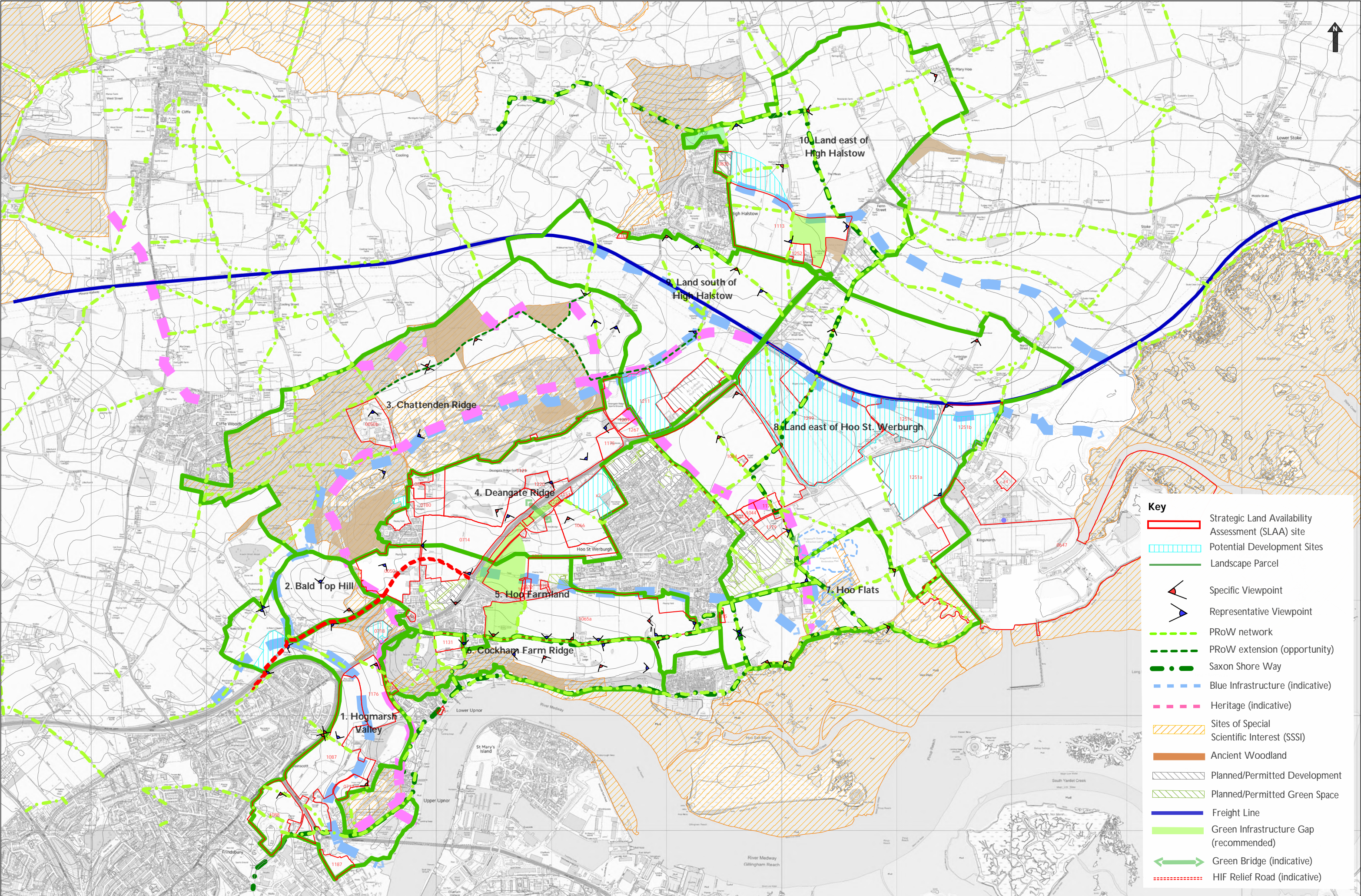
10. Land to east of High Halstow

Revisions  
Draft V1 - 07/08/2018  
Draft V2 - 11/09/2018  
Draft V3 - 24/09/2018  
Draft V4 - 31/10/2018  
Draft V5 - 25/02/2019



### 6.3 Survey map – all parcels





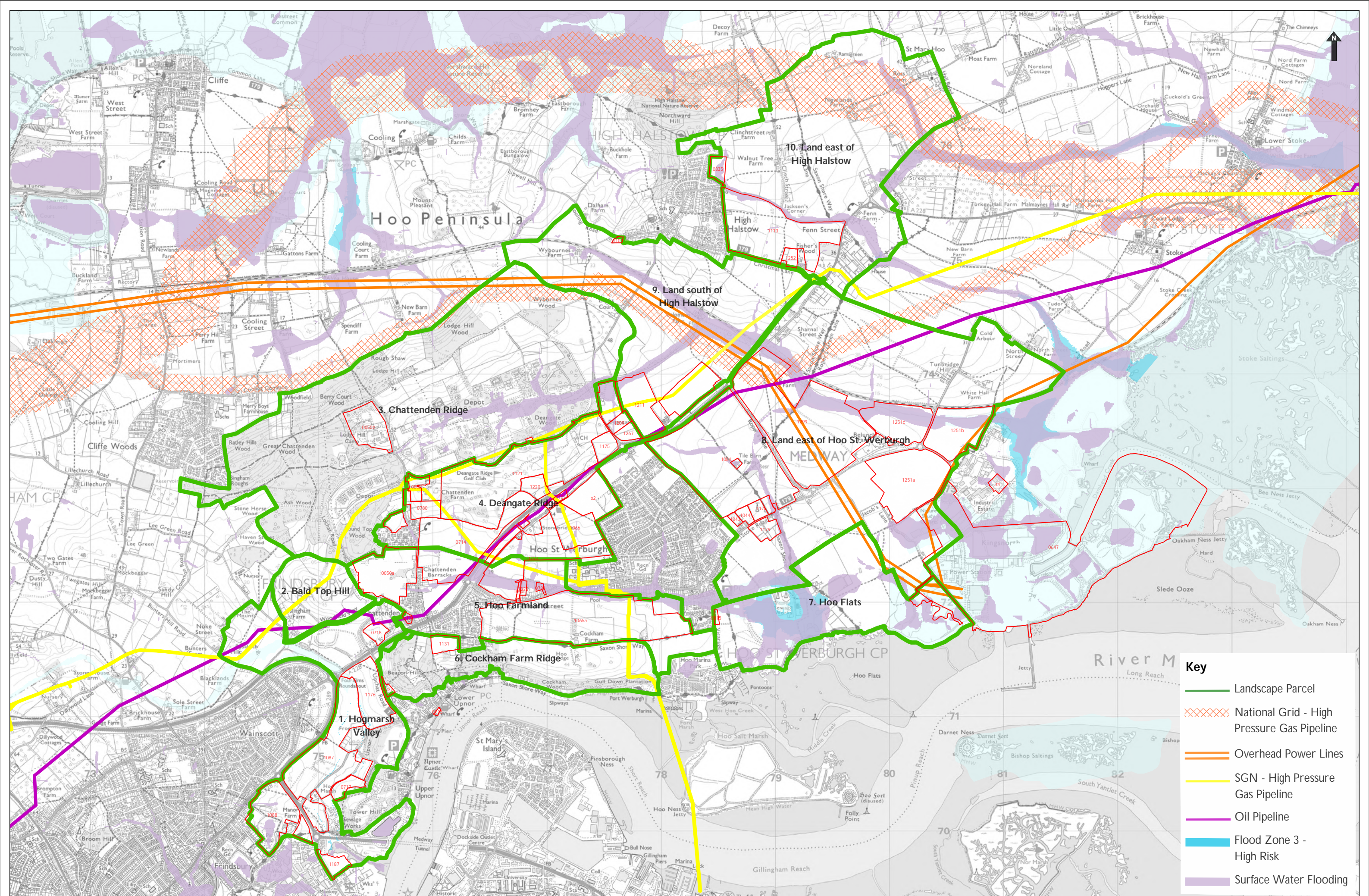
Survey Map - All Parcels

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## **6.4 Infrastructure map (power and hydrology)**





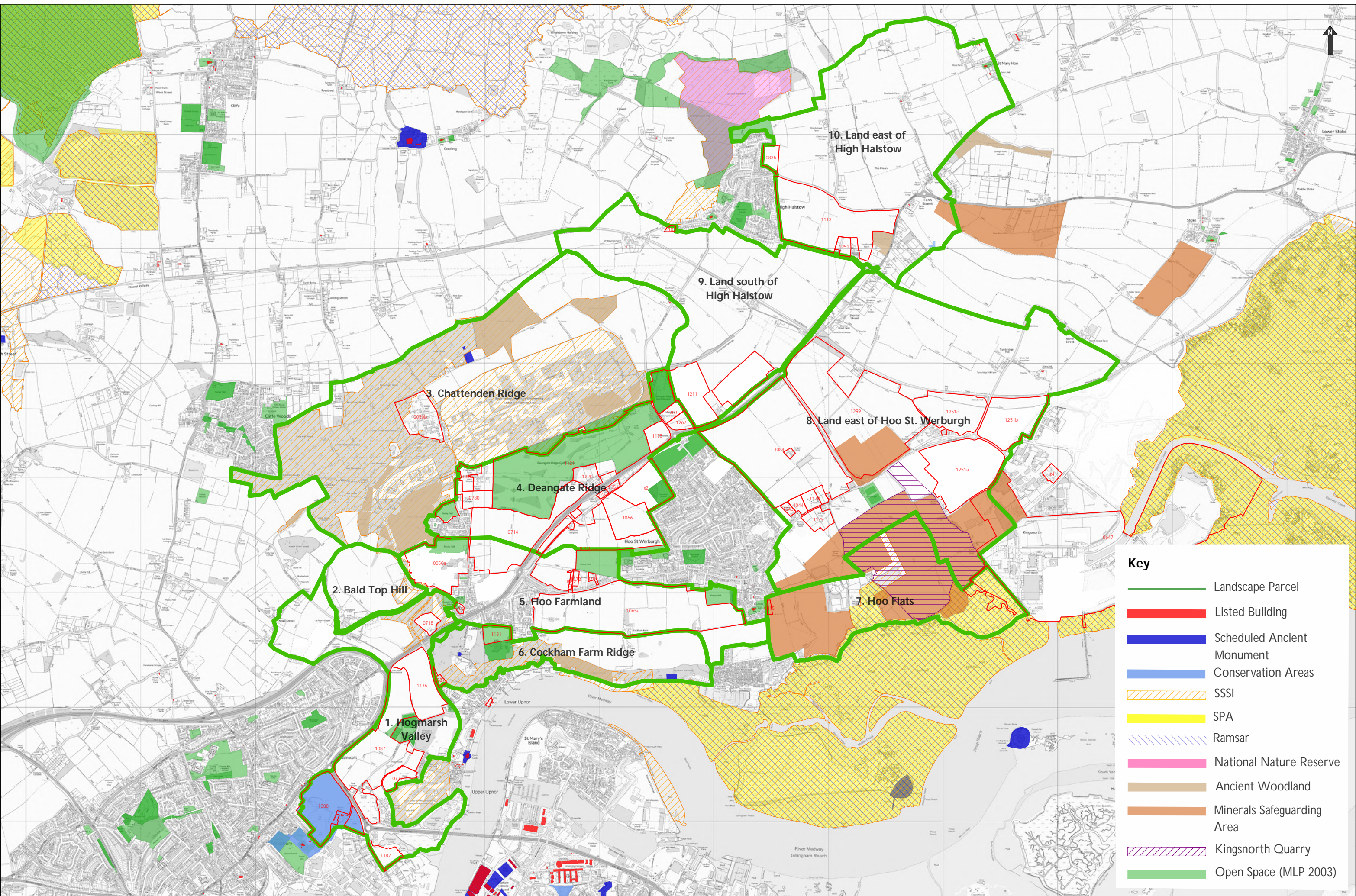
## Infrastructure - Power and Hydrology

Revisions  
 Draft V1 - 15/05/2018  
 Draft V2 - 06/09/2018  
 Draft V3 - 31/10/2018  
 Draft V4 - 19/02/2019 SLAAs Updated



## 6.5 Designations map





**Key**

- Landscape Parcel
- Listed Building
- Scheduled Ancient Monument
- Conservation Areas
- SSSI
- SPA
- Ramsar
- National Nature Reserve
- Ancient Woodland
- Minerals Safeguarding Area
- Kingsnorth Quarry
- Open Space (MLP 2003)

Designations Map

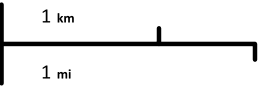


## **6.6 Marine Conservation Zone map**





Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)



## 6.7 Biodiversity Designations Table

Designation	Reason for Notification	Condition
Chattenden Woods and Lodge Hill Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	This site is of <b>biological interest</b> . Chattenden Woods and Lodge Hill SSSI comprises a mosaic of habitats, including ancient and other long-established semi-natural woodland, scrub and neutral grassland. The site is also of importance for its breeding nightingales <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i> .	Lodge Hill Training Area - Favourable
		Lodge Hill Wood and Wybornes Wood - Favourable
		Rough Shaw – Unfavourable/No Change <i>Low frequency of positive indicator species and excess cover of coarse grass.</i>
		Berry Court Wood - Favourable
		Great Chattenden Wood - Favourable
		Ash Wood - Favourable
		Round Top Wood - Favourable
		Chattenden Barracks - Favourable
Dalham Farm Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	This site is of <b>geological interest</b> . Dalham Farm is one of very few undisturbed areas which show mass movement phenomena on low-angled, inland slopes of London Clay. It illustrates the lowest angled slope failure in Great Britain and is important in demonstrating slope degradation in the absence of coastal erosion and removal of material from the base. This site is listed in the Geological Conservation Review.	Dalham Farm - Unfavourable/No Change <i>High level of scrub cover over most of the SSSI is obscuring features of special interest, i.e. the mass movement landslip topography.</i>
Medway Estuary and Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)/Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar and Marine Conservation Zone.	This site is of <b>biological interest</b> . The Medway Estuary and Marshes form the largest area of intertidal habitats which have been identified as of value for nature conservation in Kent and are representative of the estuarine habitats found on the North Kent coast. A complex of mudflats and saltmarsh is present with in places grazing marsh behind the sea walls which is intersected by dykes and fleets. The area holds internationally important populations of wintering and passage birds and is also of importance for its breeding birds.	Kingsnorth Grazing Marsh – Unfavourable/Recovering
		Abbots Court Marsh – Unfavourable/Recovering
		Hoo Island – Unfavourable/Recovering
		Medway Intertidal – Unfavourable/Declining <i>Algal blooms detected on Bartlett Spit and Bishops Ooze in 2016, directly in front of Motney Sewage treatment works outfall, smothering the mudflats and impacting upon food availability for the Medway bird assemblage</i>
Northward Hill Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	This site is of <b>biological interest</b> . The most important feature of the site is the heronry which at over 200, is the largest in Britain. There is a diverse breeding bird community and the insect fauna is also of interest, particularly moths and butterflies. The site consists of mixed deciduous woodland and scrub with some open areas of grassland and bracken. A number of small ponds are present and also a few open ditches. The site was declared a National Nature Reserve in 1951 and is managed by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).	Northward Hill - Favourable <i>Habitat conditions for breeding birds are very good, with lots of dense cover, high structural diversity and very little disturbance. Number of breeding herons remain high.</i>
Tower Hill to Cockham Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	This site is of both <b>biological and geological interest</b> . It contains woodland representative of that on Tertiary deposits in Kent and support a rich insect fauna. In addition, Upnor Quarry exposes a complete Tertiary stratigraphic sequence.	Tower Hill Camp – Favourable
		Quarry – Favourable
		Beacon Hill – Unfavourable/Declining <i>(Problems with recreational activities causing erosion and destruction of ground flora – topography is very steep and so management providing difficult)</i>
		Cockham Wood - Favourable

Source: Natural England, 2019



## 6.8 Heritage features

There are a number of significant heritage features within the zone of influence selected for this study. The following two features (the WW2 stop line and the former military railway alignments) are of particular interest as traces of them are still clearly visible in the landscape and offer potential for understanding the strong military history of this area and the opportunity to capture that history within new development proposals for the area.

The bibliography contains references to recent heritage studies that have been undertaken on the Hoo Peninsula and the approximate alignment of these and related features is described on the annotated maps (nos 1-10) and the composite parcel map (see Appendices 6.2 & 6.3).

Further detail can also be found in the following summaries. It is recommended that Historic England is consulted as Development Framework proposals for an enlarged settlement at Hoo St Werburgh are developed.

### 6.8.1 Second World War Stop Line: Hoo St Werburgh to Higham Marshes

Archaeological Report; Research Report Series no. 9-2014, English Heritage 2014

The Second World War stop line between Hoo St Werburgh and Higham Marshes is a notable surviving example of anti-invasion defence. It is the northern section of the Newhaven-Hoo General Headquarters (GHQ) Line where it crosses the Hoo Peninsula in Kent between the rivers Medway and Thames. It is an important remnant of the Second World War defended landscape of the peninsula and is a well-preserved example of this type of defence, which is part of a major chapter in the national story. The surviving remains form a coherent pattern of defence linked to the local topography and connect our perceptions of the current landscape with the fear of invasion experienced by a previous generation. The line was part of a national network of defences and was constructed in July and August 1940 to hinder invading forces from the Kent and Sussex coast. The defensive line used natural and manmade obstacles connected by sections of anti-tank ditch. The line was heavily defended and included pillboxes, anti-tank gun emplacements and road blocks. The surviving parts of the stop line, including buried and surface remains of the anti-tank ditch, provide a coherent and legible picture of how these defences were intended to work. The stop line was identified for further work during the English Heritage Hoo Peninsula Historic Landscape Project. This report describes the elements that make up the line on the Hoo Peninsula, recorded principally from 1940s aerial photographs, and includes an assessment of current survival from recent aerial photographs and field visits.

### 6.8.2 The Chattenden and Upnor Railway: Monument No: 1545587; Historic England

A late nineteenth and early twentieth century military narrow gauge railway, connecting Chattenden Barracks (Monument 1545088) and Chattenden Magazines (Monument 1481790) with the Royal Naval Ordnance Depot at Upnor (Monument 1543146) and Pontoon Hard, on the Medway. The line, also known as the Lodge Hill and Upnor Railway, was constructed by the Royal Engineers beginning in 1873, when it ran as far north as Chattenden Magazines. In about 1892 the railway was extended eastwards into the Lodge Hill enclosure. In the early years of the twentieth century, this extension formed the central spine of the Royal Naval Armament Depot (Monument 1077634), with internal spurs serving the magazines, stores and laboratory.

In about 1905 the railway was connected, via a transfer point in the Lodge Hill Depot, to the Chattenden Naval Tramway (Monument 1545591) and thereby linked with the main line at Sharnal Street to the east. The railway was used during the Second World War, although traffic declined after the end of the war, and it closed in 1961. The road from Chattenden Magazines to Upnor (Lochat Road and Upchat Road) follows the course of the railway. The railway as it existed in the Second World War has been mapped from aerial photographs as part of the English Heritage: Hoo Peninsula Landscape Project.

## 6.9 Survey Sheet



## Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Assessment - Sheet 1

Landscape Area		Date / Weather	Landscape Type
Description			Comments
Topography/ Landform	Flat/ undulating/ Rolling/ Steep/ Plain/Rolling lowland/ Plateau/ Scarp-Cliffs/ Dry valley/ Deep gorge/ Broad valley/ Narrow valley / Other		
Land cover/ Land use	Farmland - arable/pasture/ Farm buildings /Horticulture/ Woodland blocks/ Shaves-Shaws/ Scrub / Hedgerows with trees / Recreation /Water/ Tracks / Roads / Rail / Power lines /Settlements (Linear, Nucleated, Dispersed)/ Other		
Settlement edge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre 20C / 20-21C</li> <li>• Smooth - linear - indented</li> <li>• Positive - blends sympathetically</li> <li>• Negative - harsh/unsympathetic</li> </ul>		
SLAAS within parcel			
<b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>			
Category	Criteria	Comments	Analysis*
1. Designations	AONB / PRoW / Open Space / SSSI / RAMSAR / SPA / Ancient woodland / LNR -Wildlife site / Conservation area / SAM / RIGS / Other		
2. Landscape features	<p>Does this land parcel include distinctive landscape features that may make it more sensitive and vulnerable to development impacts and more difficult to mitigate against adverse effects – eg. skylines, green backdrops, openness, woodland blocks, steep or sloping ground.</p> <p>It may also contain features that make it less sensitive and less vulnerable to change or that provide opportunities to enhance the landscape – eg. water – and provide a net gain.</p> <p>Consider natural (incl biodiversity value) and cultural (made made) aspects of the landscape when making these judgements</p>	Describe key features	
3. Function of area	Does this area make a contribution to wider landscape framework? Include for assessment of land parcel inter-relationships. Green & Blue Infrastructure / Anti-coalescent / SSSI; SPA; RAMSAR buffer / Agricultural / horticultural value / other	Describe key functions	
4. Mutual inter-dependence	Is there a mutual inter-reliance between this area and adjacent areas – ie, would change to the landscape within this area affect adjacent areas?		
5. Sense of Place	Consider: topography / field pattern / enclosure / containment / intactness / complexity / pattern / scale / continuity / time depth / tranquillity / wildness / remoteness	Do these factors combine to create a strong, moderate or weak sense of place	
Landscape Sensitivity evaluation			

See criteria section within Methodology section of report which explains how the sensitivity of each category is assessed.

## Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Assessment - Sheet 2

Visual Sensitivity			
Category	Criteria	Comments	
1. Visual amenity*	<p>Describe landscape characteristics or qualities of the landscape which contribute to visual amenity and may affect setting of new settlement</p> <p>Examples may include prominent skylines, green backdrops, openness/expansiveness, pastoral qualities, distinctive blocks of woodland/hedgerow and other distinctive landmark features and characteristics</p> <p>* The overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings - p. 21 of GLVIA</p>		
2. Receptors *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor recreation users</li> <li>• Road users</li> <li>• People at place of work</li> <li>• Residents</li> <li>• Other groups</li> </ul> <p>Include for potential receptor groups - eg. if site opened up for public access</p> <p>* see pp 106-110 of GLVIA</p>	<p>Within parcel</p> <p>From outside parcel</p>	
3. Strategic viewpoints	<p>Consider key views – e.g. from representative and publicly accessible viewpoints</p> <p>List and number key and/or serial views on plan – may include from and towards existing and proposed settlement; from approach roads, distinctive skylines, rising or open flat ground</p> <p>Include for potential strategic views - eg. if site opened up for public access</p> <p>* see pp 106-110 of GLVIA</p>	<p>Within parcel</p> <p>From outside parcel</p>	
4. Visual effects*	<p>Consider the potential effects of change and development on the views available to people and their visual amenity</p> <p>Consider whether potential effects are beneficial / neutral / adverse</p> <p>If adverse are there opportunities to mitigate against these effects?</p> <p>- p.98 and p.106ff of GLVIA</p>		
5. Inter-visibility	Assess inter-visibility with adjacent land parcels		
Visual sensitivity evaluation			
Overall Sensitivity Evaluation			

See criteria section within Methodology section of report which explains how the sensitivity of each category is assessed.

Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Assessment - Sheet 3

Landscape Value (see pp 83-85 of GLVIA)		
Criteria	Comments	Analysis
1. The presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare landscape character type; particularly important or representative examples		
2. Sense of place created by distinctive factors such as topography or field pattern		
3. Conservation interests – e.g. features with wildlife, earth science, heritage and cultural interest - including associations that contribute to perceptions of natural beauty		
4. Landscape condition - measure of physical state of landscape - incl. extent to which typical character represented in individual areas; intactness and coherence of landscape; condition of individual elements		
5. Whether the landscape provides or offers public recreational access opportunities in areas where experience of the landscape is important		
6. Whether the landscape provides or offers the opportunity to provide distinctive or promoted views.		
7. Whether the landscape offers qualities including wildness, tranquillity and remoteness		
Landscape value evaluation		
Landscape Capacity Evaluation		



## 6.10 Glossary

### The purpose of a landscape capacity study

Exploration of how sensitive a landscape is to changes brought about by a specified development. A landscape capacity study is most commonly used when you want to:

- Explore whether or not a landscape can accommodate a specified development without significant change to its character or amenity;
- Find the best place to accommodate a specified development with the least disruption to the landscape character; and
- Identify which areas are likely to be most sensitive to changes brought about by introducing a specified development into the landscape.

### Common features of landscape capacity studies

- Studies focus on a single, specified development type. The planning authority is usually expected to accommodate an expansion of the specified development.
- Studies include an assessment of the sensitivity of the landscape and visual amenity to likely changes introduced by the specified development.
- The sensitivity assessment will be based on a list of 'criteria'. These are characteristics and qualities of the landscape and sometimes visual amenity, which are most likely to be affected by the specified development.
- A mapped subdivision of the landscape into character types or areas is usually used as the geographic basis of the assessment, generally based on the existing landscape character assessment.
- Studies include an assessment of either the sensitivity of each of the character areas to the specified development, or conversely the potential of the character areas to accommodate the specified development, based on the 'criteria' identified.
- Study conclusions usually include maps illustrating the sensitivity of the landscape to the specified development (or conversely, its potential to accommodate the specified development).  
Conclusions sometimes also include guidance on how the development might best be designed to fit in with the individual character areas.

**Landscape** An area as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors

**Landscape capacity** Landscape capacity refers to the degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate change without significant effects on its character, or overall change of landscape character type. Capacity is likely to vary according to the type and nature of change being proposed.'

**Landscape sensitivity** Landscape sensitivity is a professional assessment of the relative effects of changes to landscape character likely to be brought about by introducing a specified new development into the landscape.

**Visual sensitivity** Visual sensitivity is a professional assessment of the relative effects of changes to visual amenity or visibility likely to be brought about by introducing a specified new development into the landscape.

**Visual amenity** Characteristics or qualities of the landscape which contribute to visual appreciation of the landscape. Examples will be specific to the specified development, but may include prominent skylines, landmark features, or the settings of settlements.

**Viewpoints** Guidelines on Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) defines three categories of viewpoint - representative, specific and illustrative. The annotated maps consider the first two of these groups.

*Representative* - selected to represent the experience of different types of receptor

*Specific* - key and sometimes promoted viewpoints within the landscape, eg. local visitor attractions, areas of particularly noteworthy visual and/or recreational amenity significance

**Visual effects** The effects of change and development on the views available to people and their visual amenity

**Visibility assessment** An assessment of the potential visibility of a development or area of land from an identified viewpoint or viewpoints. It is often accompanied by an analysis of the number of people of different

types who are likely to see it and the scope to modify visual impacts of the specified development by appropriate mitigation measures.

**Landscape character type** Areas of landscape which are relatively homogeneous in character. They are generic in nature, sharing broadly similar combinations of natural and cultural characteristics. A character type is usually named after the broad geographic features which are common to the landscape character type, such as 'open moorland plateaux'.

**Landscape character area** A single, unique and discrete geographical area of a particular landscape character type, identified as an area with its own individual identity. Landscape character areas are usually named according to place names, rather than names describing generic characteristics, to reflect their distinct identity.

**Landscape Value** Landscape value is a measure of the relative value that is attached to different landscapes. It can be recognised through landscape designation, as well as perceptual aspects such as remoteness, tranquillity, conservation interests, wildness or scenic beauty.

**Green Infrastructure** Green infrastructure (GI) is the planned and managed network of green spaces and natural elements that intersperse and connect our cities, towns and villages. GI comprises many different elements including biodiversity, the landscape, the historic environment, the water environment (also known as blue infrastructure), public health, publicly accessible green spaces and informal recreation sites.

**Sense of place** How we perceive places such as streets, communities, cities or eco-regions - influences our well-being, how we describe and interact with a place, what we value in a place, our respect for ecosystems and other species ... Our sense of place also reflects our historical and experiential knowledge of a place, and helps us imagine its more sustainable future. (The nature of Cities, Adams, Greenwood and Thomashow, May 2016)

## 6.11 Common Terms

ALLI	Area of Local Landscape Importance
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
GI	Green Infrastructure
GIF	Green Infrastructure Framework
HIF	Housing Infrastructure Fund
LVIA	Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment
MHS	Medway Heritage Strategy
MLSCS	Medway Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Study
MCLA	Medway Landscape Character Assessment, 2011
MCZ	Marine Conservation Zone
NHP	Neighbourhood Plan
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PRoW	Public Right of Way
POS	Protected Open Space
ROWIP	Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan
SLAA	Strategic Land Availability Assessment
SSW	Saxon Shore Way
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest



## 6.12 Bibliography

### Landscape Guidance

- [An approach to Landscape Character Assessment, Natural England, 2014](#)
- [Landscape Character Assessment Guidance: Topic paper 6 - Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity & Sensitivity \(countryside Agency / Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002\)](#)
- Guidelines on Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition - Landscape Institute & Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2013

### Garden Cities & Villages Guidance

- Garden City Standards for the 21st Century: Practical Guides for Creating Successful New Communities – Nos 1-9. Town & Country Planning Association (TCPA)  
[Guide 3: Design and Masterplanning, TCPA 2017](#)  
[Guide 7: Planning for Green and Prosperous Places, TCPA 2018](#)  
[Guide 8: Creating Health-Promoting Environments, TCPA 2017](#)
- Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

### Blue Infrastructure Guidance

- [The SUDs Manual – CIRIA/DEFRA, 2015](#)

### Heritage Guidance

- [The Hoo Peninsula Landscape, Sarah Newsome, Edward Carpenter and Peter Kendall, Historic England 2015](#)
- [Hoo Peninsula Historic Landscape Project, Research Report Series 21-2013, English Heritage 2013](#)
- [Hoo Peninsula, Kent, Second World War Stop Line: Hoo St Werbergh to Higham Marshes; Archaeological Report; Research Report Series no. 9-2014, English Heritage 2014](#)
- Hoo Peninsula Historic Landscape Project: St Mary Hoo: Historic Area Assessment - English Heritage 2013

### Biodiversity Guidance

- [Mitigating bird disturbance](#) – see Medway Planning Policy Website for current guidance
- [Thames, Medway & Swale Estuaries – Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy, Footprint Ecology, July 2014](#)

The above reference list describes information available at time of publication of this document. Please check the current status as regards to updates, revises and final versions from publication source.



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