

BDC/047/3/27

**Braintree District Settlement Fringes
Evaluation of Landscape Analysis Study of
Braintree and environs**

for

Braintree District Council

June 2015

Final

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1 Introduction

Background to the study

- 1.1 In November 2014 Braintree District Council (BDC) commissioned The Landscape Partnership to undertake an evaluation of the findings of a suite of documents that analysed the capacity of the landscape around nine settlements within the District to accommodate new development. The results of this study are to be used as part of the evidence base to inform the forthcoming Local Plan, which will set out the Council's strategy for future development and growth up to 2033.
- 1.2 Eight of the Landscape Capacity Analyses were prepared in November 2007 by Chris Blandford Associates, and a ninth (Sible Hedingham) was commissioned in November 2014 and prepared by The Landscape Partnership. The nine settlements comprise:
- Braintree and environs
 - Coggeshall
 - Earls Colne
 - Halstead
 - Hatfield Peverel
 - Kelvedon and Feering
 - Sible Hedingham
 - Silver End
 - Witham

Objectives

- 1.3 The Council has commissioned this study to help determine the most appropriate directions for future residential and employment growth in the District, by providing an up to date evidence base for the new Local Plan. It will also support policy in the new Local Plan relating to Landscape Character Areas, biodiversity and the environment.
- 1.4 As development within the existing towns and villages on brownfield sites is reaching saturation point, it is inevitable that future development will be required to meet the District's Objectively Assessed Housing Needs (OAHN) figure, and that such development will need to be accommodated on the periphery of the main towns and larger settlements, in sustainable locations.
- 1.5 The Landscape Capacity Analyses identify the capacity of broad parcels of land (termed Landscape Setting Areas) around each of the settlements to accommodate development. Each Landscape Setting Area was graded as having one of the following levels of capacity: Low, Low to Medium, Medium, Medium to High or High.

- 1.6 The aim of this study is to undertake a clear and concise evaluation of these findings in order to provide a finer grain assessment of Landscape Setting Areas identified as having a 'Low' or 'Low to Medium' capacity to help determine which parts of these areas could absorb development with appropriate mitigation measures and minimal impact on the landscape.
- 1.7 This report sets out the findings of the survey and evaluation work for the Landscape Capacity Analysis for Braintree and environs.

Approach and Methodology

- 1.8 The methodology to evaluate the findings of the Landscape Capacity Analysis studies was based on the approach promoted in Topic Paper 6, 'Techniques and criteria for judging capacity and sensitivity' published in 2002, which forms part of the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage guidance 'Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland'. The paper explores thinking and recent practice on judging capacity and sensitivity. The recommended methodology developed for this study adopted the following premise from Topic Paper 6:

"existing landscape character sensitivity + visual sensitivity = Overall Landscape Sensitivity"

- 1.9 Alongside the development of the methodology, a desk-based study was undertaken, which involved gathering and reviewing current and background information, including the datasets and mapping that informed the original Landscape Capacity Analysis studies. This included an understanding of the current planning policy background, and in-depth review of the existing Landscape Capacity Analysis studies, including the Landscape Character Assessment 2006 (Chris Blandford Associates), and:

- Protected Lanes Assessment July 2013 (Essex County Council)
- Braintree District Historic Environmental Characterisation Project 2010 (Essex County Council)
- Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Project Management Plan
- Braintree District Core Strategy 2011
- Braintree District Local Plan Review 2005

Field survey work and results

- 1.10 The field survey work utilised information gathered from each of the Landscape Capacity Analysis studies, and involved a systematic survey of the Landscape Setting Areas identified in the studies as having Low or Low to Medium capacity for development.
- 1.11 The existing Landscape Setting Areas were 'drilled down' to create a finer sub-division of the landscape into 'Parcels' with common characteristics. This was based on desktop research that was then refined and adjusted in the light of findings in the field if necessary. Characteristics that informed the identification of the Parcels included:

- landform
- landscape designations
- hydrology
- landscape scale
- vegetation cover
- land uses
- pattern of settlement
- presence of views and landmarks features
- communications

1.12 These Parcels largely reflected the main natural elements of the landscape, such as rivers and floodplains, tributary valleys, valley slopes, ridgelines; and elements relating to land use, human influences, etc. The original assumption had been that each of the Landscape Setting Areas would be subdivided into, on average, four Parcels of various sizes but consistent character. A consequence of the desktop and field work was that, where the landscape was more complex in both the underlying natural elements and overlying land uses, up to seven or eight Parcels were identified in more complex landscapes.

1.13 The drawing of boundary lines was a necessary part of the process, but did not always mean that Parcels were dramatically different to either side of the line, as it is more typical for change to be a more gradual transition. The boundary lines for some Parcels mark more a watershed of character, where the balance of the defining elements has shifted from one landscape character to another. For practical purposes, the boundary was aligned on features that could be identified on the ground, such as boundary features or landscape elements.

1.14 This analysis was typically at the field level scale with, where appropriate, some aggregation of field and landscape units of a similar character. Such a fine-grain study was required in order to identify any parts of the overall Landscape Setting Area that have the potential to accommodate development.

1.15 The field survey work was carried out by a team of Landscape Architects who used a standard proforma (see Appendix A) to record data in a consistent manner. The Parcels were photographed (where relevant) to capture landscape character, for internal purposes when reviewing and evaluating the character and analysis studies and compiling the report. The fieldwork confirmed important views that had been identified in the Landscape Setting Areas in the previous studies, as well as identifying further important views – both close and distant. It also verified and assessed landmark landscape features and sensitive routes/corridors and their corresponding sensitivity to

change. Information was also gathered around opportunities for landscape enhancements in keeping with local landscape character, and the potential for green infrastructure provision.

- 1.16 Following the fieldwork the Parcels were reviewed, mapped and the field survey notes written up to provide a general commentary to describe and assess the key characteristics, distinctive features and landscape elements, as well as an indication of the 'Strength of Character' and 'Condition' of each Parcel.
- 1.17 The Parcels were assessed for their landscape sensitivity and capacity, based on a pre-defined set of criteria. These criteria reflect both the national guidance in Topic Paper 6 and the particular circumstances for the rural landscape of the Braintree District.
- 1.18 The criteria were grouped into primary factors (representing features that are more permanent in the landscape, such as landform, or those that would take a substantial period of time to vary) and secondary factors (representing features that are of a more temporary or transient nature or that could be subject to relatively rapid change or improvement).
- 1.19 The following criteria have been selected to reflect existing landscape features:
- slope analysis (primary)
 - vegetation enclosure (primary)
 - the complexity and scale of the landscape (secondary)
 - the condition of the landscape (secondary)
- 1.20 The following criteria have been selected to reflect visual sensitivity:
- openness to public view (secondary)
 - openness to private view (secondary)
 - relationship with existing urban conurbation (primary)
 - safeguarding the separation or coalescence between settlements (primary)
 - scope to mitigate the development (primary)
- 1.21 It is recognised that Topic Paper 6 refers to a wider range of factors within what is termed 'Landscape Character Sensitivity'. However, in the context of this study these are not considered to be relevant and would be picked up as part of other evidence base work, e.g. nature conservation or cultural heritage. It is considered that for the purpose of this evaluation, the main relevant existing landscape and visual factors are addressed in the above categories. These have been incorporated into the field survey forms used for each Parcel (refer to Appendix A).

1.22 The Overall Landscape Sensitivity provides an evaluation of the sensitivity of a Parcel in broad strategic terms. In order to assess the Overall Landscape Capacity of a Parcel, 'landscape value' was added to the equation, as follows.

$$\textit{"Overall Landscape Sensitivity + Landscape Value = Overall Landscape Capacity"}$$

1.23 Landscape value can be measured in a number of ways e.g. statutory landscape designations, local landscape designations, other ecological/cultural heritage designations, and local perceived value. There are no consensus studies as informed by stakeholders. Consequently, the value of the landscape has been scored based on the presence of: landscape designations (of which there are few, if any, in the study area), Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, the extent of public rights of way, perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, or the presence/influence of other conservation interests within the Parcel or its setting. Landscape Value is determined on the basis of the same five point scale as the other criteria, using a score of C as the default starting point for a Parcel with no positive or negative landscape-value attributes. This corresponds with the approach adopted by Chris Blandford Associates in the previous Landscape Capacity Analyses for each of the settlements, in which the methodology was based on the evaluation of landscape value as medium, unless an obvious reason existed to elevate or reduce it.

1.24 To assess the landscape capacity of a Parcel to accommodate development, certain assumptions need to be applied. For the purposes of this study it is assumed that development will include mainly two to two and a half storey residential units and commercial units of a similar height. It is not anticipated that there would be a need for taller structures, but if a Parcel is considered able to accommodate such structures, this is identified in the description of the Parcel.

1.25 Each Parcel was assessed against the criteria noted above, using a five-point scale from most suitable to least suitable (A to E), guided by a set of definitions/descriptions that have been developed for this study to reflect local characteristics (see Appendix B). An assessment has been made of each Parcel in order to determine a score for: Landscape Sensitivity Profile and Overall Capacity Profile. To build in weighting for the primary and secondary factors, a 1.5 x weighting is applied to primary factors.

1.26 The results were recorded on a set pro forma to provide a consistent approach reflecting each of the criteria.

1.27 The Overall Capacity Profile score identifies the Parcel's capacity based on the following range:

27 – 33.5	Low Landscape Capacity
34 – 40.5	Medium-Low Landscape Capacity
41 – 47.5	Medium Landscape Capacity
48 – 54.5	Medium-High Landscape Capacity
55 – 61.5	High Landscape Capacity

- 1.28 The principle of applying a numerical scale to define landscape capacity, has been used to help provide transparency through the field judgement process. However, it should be emphasized that scores should not be regarded as a precise and definitive judgement, but merely as a means to establish relative capacity and no absolute conclusion should be drawn from the numerical totals. The influence of individual criteria in a given Parcel and in the context of the wider landscape character should also be given due consideration. Those Parcels that are borderline in terms of suitability, are considered in more detail based on the overall spread and balance of the profiles and scope to mitigate in making a final judgement. To aid these considerations a commentary of the key points has been provided for each Parcel.
- 1.29 A general commentary has been provided for each Parcel based on the key characteristics and distinctive features. Parcels that have a Medium, Medium-High or High landscape capacity are considered to be the most likely to be suitable as a potential location for development. Where appropriate, further detail regarding the type, nature and principles for development are described for each Parcel to help provide guidance in identifying the most suitable locations and/or layouts for future development.

2 Summary of Landscape Capacity Evaluation, November 2007

- 2.1 The CBA study reached conclusions around the capacity of the landscape to accommodate change without significant effects on its character. This work involved making a judgement around whether the amount of change proposed can be accommodated without having unacceptable adverse effects on the character of the landscape (relating to *landscape character sensitivity*) or the way that it is perceived (relating to *visual sensitivity*), without compromising the values attached to it (relating to *landscape value*).
- 2.2 The summary schedule for levels of landscape character sensitivity, visual sensitivity and landscape value revealed that Landscape Setting Area B21 to the north-west of Great Notley has **High** capacity to accommodate additional development. Landscape Setting Areas B18 to the west of Rayne and B9 to the south of Black Notley were identified as having **Medium** capacity. As a result these areas have not been assessed further. Landscape Setting Areas B13, B14 and B11 to the north and north-east of Braintree and Bocking, and Areas B1, B6 and B23 located to the south of Braintree and south-west of Great Notley were identified as having **Low** Capacity. The remaining Landscape Setting Areas wrapping around the fringes of Braintree, and dividing Tye Green and Black Notley were identified as having **Medium to Low** capacity to accommodate additional development. Evaluations for the areas are shown in Figures B-03 and B-07.
- 2.3 The report concludes that levels of landscape capacity may not be uniform across any one setting area. It acknowledges that the Low or Low to Medium capacity setting areas around Braintree and its environs may include specific locations therein that are more suitable for development in landscape or visual terms, particularly where they are small in scale and have a moderate amount of visual enclosure. Where capacity within the setting areas varies, any development proposals would need to respond to the inherent landscape sensitivity and take account of both the setting and potential impacts on the surrounding landscape.
- 2.4 The report concluded that although potential opportunities for accommodating new built development around Braintree and its environs are limited, there may be capacity within even moderately sensitive or highly valued landscapes to accommodate some well-designed and appropriately located built development.
- 2.5 CBA's evaluations for each of the Landscape Setting Areas are summarised below, including the broad locations within which the study suggests that residential or employment development could be accommodated.

Landscape Setting Area B1:

2.6 Landscape Sensitivities & Value:

- The visibility of the area is increased to the eastern parts on the more prominent upper valley slopes. Views into the Area from road and rail corridors are filtered through vegetation. Views

from public rights of way are more open, particularly the riverside walkway that leads into Braintree. The visual sensitivity is reduced slightly by open views to visually harsh urban edges, power lines and the electrical substation. This results in a medium to high visual sensitivity overall.

- The landscape character has a High sensitivity overall due to the role the landscape plays in preserving the physical and visual separation between Black Notley and Tye Green. This is a historically open area between the two settlements. In the wider landscape the Area is generally well contained by landform and vegetation. The largely intact hedgerow structure, mature woodland belts and pre-18th century field enclosures also increase the sensitivity. However, overhead pylons, transmission towers and the electrical substation are intrusive features within the rural landscape.
- The Landscape Value is Medium to High overall on account of there being no nationally designated landscapes or features, but other important components such as Listed buildings to the north of Black Notley, a well-used public footpath network in western parts and the former Special Landscape Area designation.

2.7 The report identified very limited opportunities for accommodating new built development within the Setting Area as the land forms part of a historically open area to the north of Tye Green and Black Notley. Mitigation measures are identified in order to help accommodate future development such reinforcing the vegetation structure, additional shrub planting to integrate the electricity substation into the local landscape and enhancing public access connections.

Landscape Setting Area B2:

2.8 Landscape Sensitivities & Value:

- The visibility of the area is increased due to the open nature of the landscape, the visual prominence of the upper valley slopes, the visibility in filtered views from road and railway corridors and the open views from footpaths and housing. The lower parts of the Area are more enclosed by landform and vegetation lining the railway corridor. Transmission towers and power lines have a dominant intrusive effect on the skyline resulting in a medium to high visual sensitivity overall.
- The Landscape Character sensitivity is medium to high overall on account of the buffer zone the area creates between Tye Green and Black Notley. The open rural landscape is important in providing both visual and physical separation and forms a rural setting to Tye Green. There is pre-18th century field enclosure patterns to central and western parts. Factors that reduce the sensitivity include a decline in hedgerow structure, poorly integrated edge to an industrial site to the north, overhead power lines, transmission towers and slight noise intrusion from surrounding transport connections.

- There are no nationally designated landscapes or features but important landscape components include a well-used public footpath network, moderate sense of tranquillity and the former Special Landscape Area designation. This results in a Medium to High Landscape Sensitivity overall.

2.9 The report identified that new residential development could be accommodated along some of the fringes of Tye Green provided new tree and shrub belts are established to help accommodate development, the setting to the late 19th century part of the settlement is preserved and that other features of landscape importance are maintained.

Landscape Setting Area B3:

2.10 Landscape Sensitivities & Value:

- The Area has an increased visibility in central parts due to a declining hedgerow structure, which allows views to the western fringes of Tye Green and distant views to arable fields and Lanham Wood within Landscape Setting Area B10. There are open views from public footpaths and filtered views from Ashes Road. The visual sensitivity is reduced by transmission towers forming an intrusive feature on the skyline, and blocks of woodland interrupting views between northern and southern parts of Tye Green urban fringes.
- The Area has generally open, rural landscape character and provides opportunities for access to open countryside. There is a good structure of vegetation to northern parts, and historic field enclosure patterns to northern and southern parts. The sensitivity of the Area is increased in northern and southern parts due to the visual and physical separation it provides between settlements. The sensitivity is reduced due to intrusive urban fringe land uses, overhead power lines and transmission towers. The Landscape Character Sensitivity is Medium to High overall.
- A good public footpath network, moderate sense of tranquillity and listed buildings along Tye Green fringes contribute to a Medium sensitivity overall.

Landscape Setting Area B4:

2.11 Landscape Sensitivities & Value:

- A strong structure of vegetation contributes to a low to medium visual sensitivity overall. Mature trees and shrubs allow only filtered views into the area. There are expansive views within southern parts due to fragmentation of hedgerow structure and limited vegetation within golf course.
- Strong features of the landscape character include the rural setting to the southern extent of Tye Green, opportunities for access to the open countryside with connections to the Essex Way path and a strong vegetation structure which helps to integrate the settlement edge. The landscape character sensitivity is reduced on account of the lack of semi-natural habitats, lack

of distinctiveness along the settlement edge and a fragmented hedgerow structure. The Landscape Character sensitivity is moderate overall. The gently undulating topography and strong peripheral vegetation reduces the contribution the area provides to the wider landscape.

- The Landscape Value is judged as Medium to high overall due to the network of public footpaths, Hawbush Old House, Listed buildings within Stubble's and Jeffrey's Farm, Ancient Monument west of Newbarns Farm and the former Special Landscape Area designation.

2.12 The report identified that new residential development could be accommodated along some of the fringes of Tye Green provided new tree and shrub belts are established to help accommodate development, the setting to the late 19th century part of the settlement is preserved and that other features of landscape importance are maintained.

Landscape Setting Area B5:

2.13 Landscape Sensitivities & Value:

- The Visual sensitivity of the Area varies with a medium sensitivity to western parts where enclosure is provided by a good structure of hedgerows and trees close to Great Notley which encloses views of housing. The sensitivity is increased in the eastern parts due to the open nature and visual prominence in the wider landscape. Power lines and transmission towers are intrusive features on the skyline. Dense vegetation to both sides of the A120 Braintree Bypass reduce intervisibility between the area and Braintree to the north.
- The area provides a rural setting to Great Notley and Braintree and northern parts play an important role in preserving the visual and physical separation between the settlements. A swathe of intact pre-18th century field enclosure pattern add to the landscape character. The Great Notley fringe is well integrated through robust planting and there is semi-natural vegetation along the stream course. The sensitivity is reduced by noise intrusion from adjacent roads and visually prominent overhead power lines and transmission towers. The sensitivity of the landscape character is medium to high overall.
- A well-used public footpath network, moderate sense of tranquillity and listed buildings within Hayeswood Farm and the nursery contribute to a medium to high landscape value overall.

2.14 The report identified a potential area to accommodate residential development would be within some of the enclosed fields alongside the eastern fringe of Great Notley provided field boundary hedgerows were supplemented with additional tree and shrub belts.

Landscape Setting Area B6:

2.15 Landscape Sensitivities & Value:

- The open nature of the area and availability of long distance views between the Area and land to the north and west result in a High visual sensitivity overall. The landscape provides a visual setting to the historic Black Notley Hall. Elements that slightly reduce the visual sensitivity include elevated views to large-scale retail buildings to the south of Braintree, skyline views to overhead power lines and distant views to an electrical substation.
- The landscape has a strong rural character, which contributes to the setting of the historic core of Black Notley and Black Notley Hall. The area provides opportunities for access to the open countryside and preserves visual and physical separation between Black Notley and Great Notley. The landscape has a defined structure with a swathe of intact historic field enclosures. The overall landscape character sensitivity is high.
- There are no nationally, regionally and locally designated landscapes or features but the landscape value is medium to high overall on account of the well-used public footpath network, Black Notley Hall and grounds, Ancient monument and listed buildings and moderate sense of tranquillity away from roads and urban roads and urban fringes.

Landscape Setting Area B7:

2.16 Landscape Sensitivities & Value:

- The visibility of the Area is reduced by the enclosure provided by hedgerows and associated trees. Views from the eastern parts of the area are generally uninterrupted, with open views across large-scale fields with highly fragmented hedgerows. Views east towards Tye Green are enclosed by robust tree belts lining the railway. The visual sensitivity is Medium.
- The combination of strong semi-natural vegetation lining the river and stream, intact historic field enclosure patterns in western parts defined by mature hedgerows and trees and the contribution to the rural setting of Black Notley and the historic separation between Black Notley and Tye Green result in a medium to high landscape character sensitivity. The sensitivity is reduced slightly by overhead power lines. The enclosure of the Area by landform and vegetation results in only a low to moderate contribution to the wider landscape.
- The Landscape Value is medium to high due to a fairly well used public footpath network and the former Special Landscape Area designation.

2.17 The report identified that new residential development could be accommodated along some of the fringes of Black Notley provided new tree and shrub belts are established to help accommodate development, the setting to the historic core of the settlement is preserved and that other features of landscape importance are maintained. Opportunities also exist to provide a landscape recreational

corridor alongside the River Brain, which passes through Landscape Setting Areas B7 and B8 and to extend this towards the town centre to the north and open countryside to the south.

Landscape Setting Area B8:

Landscape Sensitivities & Value:

- There are very open views across central parts of the area due to sparse vegetation within the golf course and substantial hedgerow loss. The visual sensitivity is reduced in northern and southern parts due to enclosure provided by woodlands, tree belts and hedgerows. Transmission towers and power lines have a dominant, intrusive impact on the skyline. This visual sensitivity is Medium to high overall.
- The landscape character is strongly influenced by the golf course, with open views and weak vegetation structure. The landscape contributes to the rural setting to the south-eastern parts of Black Notley, provides a buffer between the settlement and the railway and contributes to the visual and physical separation between Black Notley and Tye Green. Pre-18th century field enclosure patterns and semi-natural vegetation and woodland lining the river corridor contribute to a medium landscape character sensitivity overall.
- There are no nationally designated landscapes or features within the area but the Ancient Woodland, public footpath and former Special Landscape Area designation contribute to a medium to high landscape value.

2.18 The report identified that new residential development could be accommodated along some of the fringes of Black Notley provided new tree and shrub belts are established to help accommodate development, the setting to the historic core of the settlement is preserved and that other features of landscape importance are maintained. Opportunities also exist to provide a landscape recreational corridor alongside the River Brain, which passes through Landscape Setting Areas B7 and B8 and to extend this towards the town centre to the north and open countryside to the south.

Landscape Setting Area B10:

2.19 Landscape Sensitivities & Value:

- Open, expansive views are characteristic of most of the area. There are medium distance views available from elevated land to the east of the River Blackwater. There are glimpsed and filtered views to the east and north-east of rolling rural landscape. The settlement fringe of Braintree is generally screened by well treed embankments and cuttings along the A120. Overhead power lines are prominent in some local views. The visual sensitivity is medium to high.
- The landscape character sensitivity is medium. The area forms an open rural setting to Braintree with a strong rural, undeveloped character. The area is generally tranquil away from the A120 and has a well treed horizon with two large blocks of Ancient Woodland. Elements

that reduce the sensitivity include a significant loss of historic field structure in central parts, overhead power lines and limited semi-natural vegetation.

- The combination of Local Wildlife Sites, ancient woodlands, mature hedgerows and trees defining field boundaries, good network of public footpaths, and a moderate sense of tranquillity result in a medium to high landscape value.

2.20 The report identified that the area adjacent the eastern fringe of Braintree could have potential to accommodate development. This would be provided that a new tree and shrub belt was established alongside the public byway that links Lanham Wood and Templeborder Wood. Enhancing the hedgerow structure in central and western parts, and providing additional shrub planting along the A120 may also help to provide opportunities to accommodate built development within the area.

Landscape Setting Area B11:

2.21 Landscape Sensitivities & Value:

- The Visual Sensitivity is High on account of the expansive and open nature of views and the visual prominence of the upper slopes in the wider landscape. Elevated parts provide medium and long distance panoramic views, often with a well-treed backdrop. The visual sensitivity is reduced in the stream valley. Vegetation along the River Blackwater screens views to the lower parts of the settlement fringe, whereas there are open views from the elevated western parts to the eastern urban fringes of Braintree.
- The combination of a strong rural character, tranquil areas along narrow rural lanes, semi-natural vegetation associated with the River Blackwater, a large block of ancient woodland, and the contribution to the rural setting and physical and visual separation between Stisted and Braintree, result in a Medium-High Landscape Character Sensitivity.
- The Landscape Value is Medium-High due to Lyonshall Wood and Local Wildlife Site, good access and well-used public footpath network, moderate tranquillity away from the A120, the former Special Landscape Area designation and historic Stisted Hall and Stisted Hall Conservation Area.

Landscape Setting Area B12:

2.22 Landscape Sensitivities & Value:

- A robust network of hedgerow and trees semi enclose most parts of the area. Woodlands contribute to a well treed skyline in views to the east. Intrusive features in views include overhead power lines and glimpses of the A131 and associated lighting at the Broad Road junction. The Visual Sensitivity is medium overall with increased sensitivity to southern parts on account of the visual separation the area provides between Braintree and High Garrett.

- The area has a generally good vegetation structure, it forms an open, rural setting to High Garrett and has few detractive landscape features. Other features which contribute to the Medium-High Landscape Character Sensitivity include pre-18th to 19th century field enclosures and two small ancient woodland blocks.
- The Landscape Value is Medium-High overall on account of moderate sense of tranquillity away from the A120, a good public right of way network, two ancient woodlands and Local Wildlife Sites, and the former Special Landscape Area designation.

2.23 The report identified that new development could be accommodated within the enclosed fields along the eastern fringes of High Garrett. This is provided new tree and shrub belts are established in association with the easternmost hedgerows.

Landscape Setting Area B13:

2.24 Landscape Sensitivities & Value:

- The visibility of the area is reduced due to the rolling topography and the strong vegetation structure. Peripheral trees and hedgerows soften the urban fringe of Bocking Churchstreet, although the elevated northern edge is more visually prominent. A range of vernacular housing and the landmark church are visible on the settlement fringe with a mix of filtered and open views. Views across the area generally have a well vegetated skyline. The Visual Sensitivity is Medium-High overall with overhead power lines slightly reducing the sensitivity on elevated land.
- The Area forms an open, rural setting to Bocking Churchstreet and High Garrett. Features that contribute to the High Landscape Character sensitivity include the good structure of semi-natural woodland and riparian vegetation, the contribution to the visual and physical separation between Bocking Churchstreet and Braintree, pre-18th century field enclosure to parts and the vernacular housing on the fringes of Bocking Churchstreet.
- The combination of a well-used public right of way network, moderate sense of tranquillity, proximity to the Bocking Churchstreet Conservation Area, Oak Wood ancient woodland and Local Wildlife Site, Historic moat located between Fennes and Garrett Farm and the former Special Landscape Area designation, result in a Medium-High Landscape Value.

Landscape Setting Area B14:

2.25 Landscape Sensitivities & Value:

- The visibility of the area is influenced by significant hedgerow loss resulting in expansive, open across farmland to surrounding urban fringes. The elevated slopes rising up from the river have an increased visual prominence and the Area is visible from a large number of houses including those within Bocking Churchstreet. There are views to landmark features such as

Bocking Churchstreet church tower and the windmill. The northern fringes of Braintree are screened lower riparian vegetation associated with the River Blackwater. The Visual Sensitivity of the Landscape Setting Area is High.

- The area contributes to the open rural setting of Doreward's Hall, Bocking Churchstreet and Braintree and provides visual and physical separation between the settlements. There is one block of woodland but the vegetation structure is generally poor, with substantial hedgerow loss and visually abrupt urban edges. Despite this the Landscape Character Sensitivity is High overall on account of the positive character, strong riverside vegetation, good sense of place and few detracting features aside from the sections of abrupt urban edge.
- The Landscape Value is Medium-High due to the listed building at Doreward's Hall, the proximity to Bocking Churchstreet Conservation Area, the former Special Landscape Area designation, riparian vegetation, ancient woodland and the well-used public footpath network.

Landscape Setting Area B15:

2.26 Landscape Sensitivities & Value:

- The Visual Sensitivity of the Setting Area is Medium. Significant hedgerow loss has resulted in open views across central and western parts. There are panoramic views to the northern fringes of Braintree and distant glimpses to arable fields within Landscape Setting Area B11. Enclosure to the Area is provided by housing to the west and south, ridgeline to the north-east and by a robust structure of woodlands, riparian vegetation and hedgerows. The visual sensitivity is reduced by the enclosure in the wider landscape and filtered views to the industrial site, communications tower, the urban fringes of Braintree and the sewage works.
- The Landscape Character has Medium-High sensitivity on account of the proximity to the historic core of Braintree, the strong structure of semi-natural vegetation lining the river corridor which provides some enclosure to the fringes of Braintree, partly intact historic field enclosures and generally good vegetation structure. The sensitivity is reduced by industrial works, power lines and areas that are noticeably unmanaged and neglected. There is moderate noise disturbance associated with roads and the industrial works.
- Good access networks, moderate sense of tranquillity and the former Special Landscape Designation contribute to a Medium-High Landscape Value.

2.27 The report identified there are some limited opportunities for accommodating new residential or employment development along the eastern fringe of Braintree provided existing hedgerows were supplemented with additional tree and shrub planting. This should be particularly robust if new employment development is to be accommodated. Opportunities should also be taken to provide a landscape recreational corridor alongside the River Blackwater which passes through the Setting Area.

Landscape Setting Area B16:

2.28 Landscape Sensitivities & Value:

- Visibility within the setting area is generally limited by land rising up on the sides of the central stream valley and by hedgerows and woodland within the area. The visual sensitivity is reduced in southern parts where there are open views to buildings, street lighting, the telecommunications tower in Braintree Enterprise Centre and where there are open views to houses along Panfield Lane. The upper valley slopes are more widely visible and have a higher sensitivity. The overall visual sensitivity is Medium.
- The Landscape Setting Area has a strong rural character which provides a setting to the north-western fringe of Braintree. The landscape is part of a wider area that provides physical and visual separation between Panfield and Braintree. A declining vegetation structure, and intrusive built development reduce the sensitivity of the landscape in parts. There is a strong structure of semi-natural vegetation in woodlands and lining the stream, whereas other parts have a neglected character. The overall Landscape Character Sensitivity is Medium-High.
- The combination of ancient woodland, Panfield Hall and surrounds, a well-used public footpath network and an overall sense of remoteness and tranquillity result in a Medium-High Landscape Value.

2.29 The report identified potential opportunities to accommodate residential or employment development along the western fringe of Braintree, particularly on the northern edges of Springwood Industrial Estate.

Landscape Setting Area B17:

2.30 Landscape Sensitivities & Value:

- The Visual Sensitivity is medium to high on account of the visually prominent hill slopes and generally open nature of views across the area often seen with a wooded skyline. The settlement fringe of Braintree is generally enclosed in views by intervening topography and vegetation. Panfield Wood is prominent in many long distance views. The low-lying enclosed land to the northern edge of Rayne has a reduced sensitivity. The sensitivity is reduced in eastern parts due to intrusive features associated with the industrial estate.
- The Landscape Character Sensitivity is medium to high due to the open rural setting and separation provided between Rayne and Braintree. Pods Brook river valley cuts through a farmland plateau landscape, with occasional woodland blocks and plantations. The hedgerow structure is highly fragmented in plateau areas, but historic field enclosures remain intact elsewhere. The influence of Springwood Industrial Estate and the harsh, abrupt edge to south-western Braintree locally reduce the sensitivity.

- Rayne Conservation Area, the former Special Landscape Designation, good public footpath network and an overall sense of tranquillity and remoteness away from roads and settlements contribute to a medium to high Landscape Value.

2.31 The report identified potential opportunities to accommodate residential or employment development along the western fringe of Braintree, particularly on the southern edges of Springwood Industrial Estate. Opportunities should also be taken to provide a landscape recreational corridor alongside the River Pant which passes through the Setting Area.

Landscape Setting Area B19:

2.32 Landscape Sensitivities & Value:

- Views within the area are typically seen against a well-treed skyline, or enclosed by a robust hedgerow and tree belt structure. There is limited inter-visibility between the area and Rayne. Intrusive features in views include the abrupt settlement edge of Little Paddocks and open views to poor quality industrial sheds and farm buildings within Fairy Hall. These factors contribute to a low to medium visual sensitivity.
- The Landscape Setting Area forms part of the rural setting to Rayne and provides access to the countryside and to nearby Great Notley Country Park. However, the landscape character sensitivity is reduced by poorly integrated settlement edges, fragmented hedgerow structure to central, southern and western parts and the presence of neglected industrial sheds and farm buildings, resulting in a medium Landscape Character Sensitivity.
- Components of landscape value within the area include Flitch Way recreational path which is also a Local Wildlife Site, network of public footpaths which includes a connecting overpass to Great Notley Country Park, Listed buildings and the proximity to Rayne Conservation Area. The overall Landscape Value is medium to high.

2.33 The report identified a potential area to accommodate residential development would be to the northern part of the Landscape Setting Area.

Landscape Setting Area B20:

2.34 Landscape Sensitivities & Value:

- The Visual Sensitivity is medium to high on account of views from recreational routes, mature belt of trees and shrubs lining Flitch Way providing a visual barrier between the area and Rayne, enclosure by vegetation to the A120 and eastern parts of the area, and the intrusive visual influence of Broomhill Industrial Estate and the A120.
- The Landscape Character Sensitivity is medium to high. The area provides a largely open, rural landscape setting to Rayne and Braintree and contributes to the separation between the settlements, but the enclosed nature of the landscape provides a limited contribution to the

wider landscape. The sensitivity is disturbed in part by noise intrusion from the A120, poorly integrated urban fringes and a partly fragmented hedgerow structure.

- The combination of the Flich Way recreational path and Local Wildlife Site, the network of public footpaths, and various listed buildings, result in a medium to high Landscape Value.

2.35 The report identified a potential area to accommodate residential development would be within the far eastern part of the Landscape Setting Area.

Landscape Setting Area B22:

2.36 Landscape Sensitivities & Value:

- The visibility of the area is increased by a lack of mature trees and hedgerows which allow open views into the area from nearby sports pitches, school and road. Built development within the area would be physically and visually associated with new residential areas on the urban fringe of Braintree. Mature tree belts lining the A120 embankment provide a visual barrier between the area and rural landscape to the south. The Visual Sensitivity is Medium.
- The landscape is strongly influenced by the adjacent road and although it contributes to the setting of Braintree it currently contains poorly used grassland. The area provides a valuable buffer between the A120 and the school which contributes to the medium to high Landscape Character Sensitivity.
- The Landscape Value is deemed high on account of the public footpath providing a link to rural areas east of Great Notley, despite having no national or local designations.

2.37 The report identified that additional tree and shrub planting along the A120 and London Road would be required in order to accommodate residential or employment development. The opportunity should also be taken to improve the legibility of public footpath networks and provide better connectivity with the countryside east of Great Notley.

Landscape Setting Area B23:

2.38 Landscape Sensitivities & Value:

- The visibility of the area is influenced by variations in landform, a strong structure of semi-natural vegetation and views obtained from the well-used public footpath network. Views from Great Notley are generally enclosed by robust roadside vegetation. There is increased sensitivity in northern and southern parts due to the fragmented hedgerow structure and high visibility from rural landscape to the west and south-west. The overall Visual Sensitivity is Medium.
- The Landscape Setting Area has high landscape character sensitivity resulting from extensive semi-natural vegetation and habitats lining the A131 and within Great Notley Country Park, the contribution to the rural setting to Rayne and Great Notley, recreational facilities and areas

of pre-18th century field enclosures. Elements that locally reduce the sensitivity of the landscape include traffic movement and large-scale commercial and office development to the east of the area and fragmented hedgerow structure to south-eastern parts.

- The combination of Great Notley Park as a locally important recreational resource, listed buildings at Slampseys Farm, well-used public footpath network and the moderate sense of tranquillity result in a High Landscape Value.

2.39 The report identified a potential area to accommodate residential or employment development would be within the open, large-scale fields in the southern part of the Setting Area provided the tree and shrub structure is enhanced and the setting of listed buildings at Slampseys Farm is preserved.

3 Evaluation of Landscape Capacity Analysis

3.1 The completed Landscape Capacity Analysis forms for each Parcel can be found at Appendix C.

4 Findings of evaluation of Landscape Capacity Analysis

Identification and arrangement of Parcels (See Figure B-04 Parcel Arrangement):

- 4.1 As described in the methodology, a combination of desktop and comprehensive fieldwork was used to 'drill down' the Landscape Setting Areas into Parcels with common characteristics. This involved a systematic survey of the natural elements of the landscape and overlying elements relating to land uses.
- 4.2 Although it has been assumed that no development would occur within the floodplains of the River Blackwater or the River Brain, the mapping and subsequent analysis of Parcels within the Setting Areas included the valley floors of these rivers and their tributaries associated with them.
- 4.3 It had been anticipated at the outset that approximately four Parcels would be identified in each Setting Area. However, the subtleties of the valley landscapes of the three rivers associated with the town, the varying influence of modern development across the landscape and the sensitivities of open land between the smaller settlements translated into more complex landscapes across many of the Landscape Setting Areas, with five to eleven Parcels being identified as a consequence. Equally, other Landscape Setting Areas were more uniform, smaller scale or simpler to define leading to four or less Parcels being identified.
- 4.4 An overview of the scale and arrangement of the Parcels reveals that they are smaller in scale and more intricate in form where they abut the existing village or town fringes, where the boundaries are responding to the varied landform, and where there is a mix between the historic grain and modern development along the existing settlement edges. For example Parcel 8b to the south-east of Black Notley and Parcel 13c to the north of Bocking Churchstreet follow the existing angular residential development to the village edges and extend to boundary features such as dense tree belts and well defined riparian corridors.
- 4.5 Parcel size generally increases away from the villages and the edge of Braintree, with substantial compartments lying in the most distant parts of the Setting Areas, comprising elevated large-scale arable fields disconnected from the settlement by clearly defined intervening features such as the A120, Pods Brook and the River Blackwater. For example Parcels 13d, 10b and 17g.
- 4.6 Initial research and site visits to Parcel 14e, Landscape Setting Area B22, and Parcel 20d revealed that they would not be suitable to consider for further residential development. These have been omitted from this analysis. Since the 2007 CBA study, portions within Parcel 14e have been allocated as a future care home, allotments and a cemetery. The remaining area of land has not been analysed at scale of this study. Landscape Setting Area B22 has been built upon with residential development and retirement accommodation and the remaining land serves as a buffer to the A120. Parcel 20d comprises Braintree Cemetery.

Parcel analysis

- 4.7 Six inherent landscape characteristics of the Parcel (comprising the impacts of landform and landcover; historic pattern; discordance or tranquillity, frequency or rarity, and visual unity) were reviewed and scored with the criteria 'Weak', 'Moderate' or 'Strong'. The landscape condition, partially reflecting the active management of the landscape for agriculture, amenity uses or nature conservation, together with the impact of development on the landscape, was similarly assessed and scored as either 'Poor', 'Moderate' or 'Good'.
- 4.8 A range of landscape and visual criteria were identified, assessed and scored in order to evaluate the capacity of the landscape, Parcel by Parcel, to accommodate development. The potential to alleviate the effects of built development on each Parcel was considered, based on the ability of the landscape to provide effective mitigation across the short – medium - long term. The consideration around mitigation was undertaken as part of the fieldwork, and based on factors such as scale, enclosure, pattern, type and maturity of vegetation, movement and visibility of each Parcel.

Description of results (See Figure B-05 Parcel Evaluation):

High Landscape Capacity

- 4.9 Evaluation of the landscape features, visual factors, potential landscape features and landscape value revealed that there are no Parcels with High capacity to accommodate residential or commercial development within the Landscape Setting Areas around the fringes of Braintree and environs.

Medium-High Landscape Capacity

- 4.10 Two Parcels, 12c and 15d, have been identified as having Medium- High capacity for potential future residential development. Corresponding with the findings of the earlier Landscape Capacity Analysis which place them in Landscape Setting Areas appraised as having Low to Medium capacity, these Parcels are located adjacent to the existing settlement fringes, where they can respond to the existing form and function:

- Parcel 12c

- 4.11 This Parcel is adjacent to existing residential development in High Garrett, located to the north of Braintree. It is generally bounded to the north-west, south-west and a portion of its south-east edge by the rear gardens boundaries of properties that face onto High Garrett, Lyons Hall Road, and Willoughby's Lane respectively. Some of these gardens extend further and are included within the Parcel. Willoughby's Lane continues along the south-east boundary to Willoughby's Farm opposite the south-east corner of the Parcel, then it turns northwards as Sunnyfields Road. Its north-east boundary is a hedgerow separating it from Parcel 12d. As well as the gardens extending into the Parcel, it consists of one main field with post and tape defined paddocks and arable uses, and two smaller fields defined by hedgerows. Public views into the Parcel are limited and filtered by

hedgerows including trees except at the south-east corner where there is access via a field gate. Private views into the Parcel are filtered by existing boundary vegetation. Within the Parcel, views across are partially obscured by internal hedgerows and, although the topography is generally flat, flat, local undulations partially obscure ground storeys in views across the Parcel.

- 4.12 Proposals should maintain and reinforce existing hedgerows (except where access to the Parcel is needed to be developed). Paddocks should be formed by post and rail fencing, not post and tape.
- 4.13 Where garden boundaries are removed, care should be taken to reinstate boundary vegetation to screen proposals from existing private viewpoints.
- 4.14 A water tower near the south-west corner of the Parcel is a prominent landmark in the Parcel, although it is not recognised as a listed building by Historic England.
- Parcel 15d
- 4.15 This Parcel is located in the north of Braintree, adjacent to the east of Broad Road and the existing dwellings and Larchwood Care Home on that road which extends towards High Garrett. The Parcel consists of a series of small geometric fields with hedgerow boundaries that are recognised as 18th-19th century enclosure. These are generally well maintained although there has been some hedgerow loss in the southern portion. With dense woodland belts along the public footpath along its eastern boundary and a tall, treed hedgerow along Broad Road to the west, public views into the Parcel are partially or entirely screened throughout the year. Similarly, good vegetation along the rear property boundaries limit private views into the Parcel too.
- 4.16 Internal hedgerows, of 18th-10th century origins, should be maintained and reinforced, providing screening within the Parcel and informing the layout of proposals, which will lend a time depth element to new development. The Public bridleway to the Parcel's south-east boundary should be retained, with its woodland belt setting contributing to its amenity value recognised and protected.

Medium Landscape Capacity

- 4.1 26 Parcels have been identified as having Medium capacity to accommodate development. Corresponding with the findings of the earlier Landscape Capacity Analysis, these are generally located immediately adjacent to the existing settlement fringes, where they respond to the existing landscape features and visual characteristics:
- Parcel 3c
- 4.2 Located immediately to the north-east of Tye Green. The south-western boundary is formed partly by the B1018 and partly by residential development; the other boundaries abut arable countryside. The land falls gently to the upper reaches of a stream on the north-eastern boundary that flows into the River Blackwater.

- 4.3 The Parcel encompasses Wright's Farm and associated buildings – typically large sheds and service yards. The main field pattern has been sub-divided into a series of horse paddocks defined by post and rail fencing. Vegetation is largely limited to the field boundaries, although it is largely absent from the north-eastern boundary. Two smaller and well vegetated paddocks remain in the northern portion of the Parcel. Overall, this is a landscape of weak character in a moderate condition.
- 4.4 Public footpaths follow the south-eastern boundary and part of the north-western one, as well as a line across the northern part of the Parcel. However, where present, the hedges limit public views. The Parcel is part of the tract of land that separates Tye Green and Cressing, and care would be required that development within it would not compromise this separation.
- 4.5 Any development within this Parcel would need to develop out of the Tye Green settlement edge and be accompanied by mitigation measures to strengthen the vegetation structure and provide a sense of containment, particularly to the north-east. Further planting within the development would help in reducing massing and retaining a rural character.
- 4.6 The layout and character of the development would also need to reinforce a separate identity for Tye Green, as distinct from Cressing and Braintree. The public footpaths around and through the Parcel provide opportunities for enhancing green infrastructure provision for the area.
- Parcel 4a
- 4.7 A semi-circular Parcel of land extending from the south-east edge of Tye Green and bounded to the east by the B1018 and to the south and west by Mill Lane. The Parcel comprises a large- to medium-scale pattern of fields with hedged boundaries, containing both arable and rough grass. The listed Hawbush Old House is located in the south-eastern corner. The Parcel is located on the higher plateau along with Tye Green. To the south-west, the land drops into the valley of the River Brain.
- 4.8 Public access is limited to a footpath along the settlement edge, and public views into the Parcel are limited. Neighbouring residential properties in Tye Green afford filtered views into the Parcel.
- 4.9 The Parcel's relationship to Tye Green settlement edge and its limited visual influence on the surrounding landscape afford it some opportunities to accommodate development. Such development would need to respect the setting of Hawbush Old House and maintain a separation with the hamlet of Hawbush Green.
- 4.10 Any development should be sensitive in scale, style and layout to the southern edge of Tye Green, and where possible should incorporate the key characteristics of the settlement. Existing vegetation along Mill Lane should be preserved and enhanced in order to reinforce the distinction between Tye Green and the river valley landscape beyond. Opportunities should be explored to improve public access provision through the Parcel, in particular, there is potential for a green link along the northern edge that could continue out towards Cressing Station.

- Parcels 5a and 6h

4.11 Parcel 5a is a triangular Parcel of land to the south-east of Great Notley and Parcel 6h is to the south of it, with Baker's Lane separating the two Parcels. Together they form a linear area separated from the bulk of the settlement by London Road. The Parcels contains a mix of small-scale horse paddocks divided by electric fences and medium-scale arable fields, together with occasional large residential properties and farms. There is an abattoir within close to the eastern edge of 6h, within the Parcel.

4.12 The topography is generally flat and there is a good framework of vegetation throughout. This limits long distance views and the vegetation gives a sense of containment to Parcel's fields. Visual tranquillity is disrupted by pylons in the 6h, and more are visible from 5a beyond its boundaries.

4.13 There are public rights of way across the Parcels; Pickpocket Lane, a Restricted Byway connecting Baker's Lane and London Road, and public footpaths also linking London Road and Baker's Lane give access to 5a. At Row Green a public footpath crosses London Road and passes south through 6h and then along its southern boundary to Friar's Farm and Dagnets Lane as a bridleway. Another public footpath joins this Bridleway from Card's Farm on Baker's Lane.

4.14 Proposed new development should be sensitive to the existing urban fabric of Great Notley and be at an appropriate scale and form to that of neighbouring residential areas, reflecting the local urban form and landscape characteristics of a garden village. The interface between the existing residential properties and any proposed development should be appropriately addressed through careful layout planning and tree and shrub planting, as well as to integrate a new settlement edge into the countryside. Proposed development should be sensitive to the topography and located away from plateau edges, or should be associated with existing development so that the skyline is not broken by new buildings when viewed from sensitive viewpoints such as public footpaths to the east of the Parcels. Despite the relatively well integrated existing settlement fringe, the analysis identifies scope to provide landscape mitigation to new development within the Parcels.

- Parcels 6c and 6d

4.15 Both Parcels abut the western settlement fringe of Black Notley which comprises residential streets relating to modern extension of the village. Parcel 6c occupies the north-east facing valley slopes of a tributary stream, feeding into the River Brain and Parcel 6d is located on the farmland plateau to the south. The Parcels comprise single arable fields with variable hedgerow enclosure. There is a distinctive band of conifers and open space to the southern boundary of Parcel 6c which helps to integrate the edge of built development. The structure of vegetation is also strong to the south and east of Parcel 6d and to the west and north of 6c. Vegetation to Parcel 6d is fragmented to the western boundary and lacking to the north, allowing views to the surrounding open countryside and cross-valley views to the north.

- 4.16 Public footpath routes follow the four boundaries of Parcel 6c providing some recreational access links between the residential streets and surrounding rural landscape and the historic core of Black Notley focused around Black Notley Hall. These routes provide open views of the arable field. A byway to the southern boundary of Parcel 6d and a footpath offset from the western boundary provide moderately open views to this area. Residential properties facing the Parcels have filtered views through tree belts and irregular garden vegetation.
- 4.17 Development within the Parcels would form close associations with the settlement fringe, with some parts forming a natural extension to neighbouring built development. The existing landscape framework of mature tree belts and hedgerows would reduce the visual influence of proposed development on the surrounding rural landscape provided it is located appropriately to avoid prominence in cross-valley views.
- 4.18 Despite the relatively well integrated existing settlement fringe, the analysis identifies scope to provide landscape mitigation to new development within the Parcels, with slightly more potential in 6c. The northern boundary of Parcel 6d would require containment from cross-valley views. The band of conifers and open space that provides enclosure to the existing development to the east could be extended forming a framework that is in keeping with the existing settlement pattern. Development should be at an appropriate scale and form to that of neighbouring residential areas, reflecting local vernacular features and landscape characteristics. Development should be sensitive to the setting of Black Notley Hall and the interface between the existing residential properties and any proposed development should be appropriately addressed.
- Parcels 7b and 8b
- 4.19 Set on the east facing valley slopes of the River Brain, the Parcels abut the eastern settlement fringes of Black Notley. There is a relatively consistent band of riparian vegetation along the river corridor. The Parcels comprise small- to medium-scale horse paddocks and rough grass fields defined by dense hedgerows and tree belts that provide relatively good enclosure to the land from the surrounding river valley landscape. This enclosure helps to contain parts of the existing settlement fringe and contrasts with the neighbouring arable farmland and Notleys golf course that have more open cross-valley views.
- 4.20 There are no public rights of way crossing the Parcels. However, partial views can be obtained of Parcel 7b from a public footpath to the eastern side of the River Brain and Brain Valley Avenue. Parcel 8b is relatively well contained from publically available viewpoints. Both Parcels are overlooked in part by residential properties, although garden vegetation and internal hedgerows filter these views. Where the boundary with Brain Valley Avenue is open, the houses have direct, open views of the neighbouring paddock. The close associations with settlement edge and containment in the wider present moderate scope to accommodate development within the Parcels. However, the rural

landscape has a role in preserving the separation between Black Notley and Tye Green, and any development would need to be sensitive to this.

- 4.21 The analysis highlights that the river corridor and associated riparian vegetation should be conserved and enhanced as a defined settlement boundary and valuable wildlife corridor. Development should be located in areas of reduced prominence in cross-valley views and away from areas vulnerable to flooding. The containment to development from this river corridor should be strengthened and utilised to reduce any prominence of development in views from Tye Green which would encroach on the visual separation between the two settlements. In Parcel 8b, development should be aligned with existing residential streets to the north where there is additional screening provided by a woodland block on the southern boundary. This would also ensure development is kept away from the floodplain and River Brain corridor.
- 4.22 Any proposed development should reflect the exiting settlement pattern, scale and style of built development within Black Notley and be sensitive to the rural context of the village. Enhanced open space could be provided to mitigate the impact on residential properties facing the Parcel from Brain Valley Avenue along with more consistent boundary treatment to roads. The internal hedgerow structure should be retained where possible to reduce the massing of any proposed development. Enhanced footpath connections and recreational green links with the River Brain could also be provided forming connections between the extended settlement fringe and the wider landscape.
- Parcel 8d
- 4.23 A small-scale Parcel located to the south-east of Black Notley. The Parcel is defined from the surrounding golf course within 8c by its continual hedgerow enclosure to the north and east relating to pre-18th century field enclosure. Within the Parcel is a medium-scale horse paddock, large industrial white sheds to the northern corner, The Plough a Grade II Listed public house, Hatchcroft House and a further residential property. A public footpath crosses the Parcel from Witham Road, providing moderately open views. The industrial sheds are intrusive features, as are electricity pylons visible to the north.
- 4.24 The Parcel contains some built development that is opposite a short stretch of ribbon development on Witham Road, collectively referred to as The Green. The southern edge of Black Notley is generally contained from views which reduces the Parcel's association with the urban fabric. The landscape framework formed by intact boundary hedgerows and trees presents moderate scope to accommodate further development within the Parcel, despite detachment from the main settlement.
- 4.25 Development should be subject to mitigation guidelines identified in the analysis. Boundary vegetation should be retained and enhanced to avoid intrusive impacts on cross-valley views. There is also the opportunity to enhance the visual qualities of built development within the Parcel. Development should be sensitive to the wider rural landscape and appropriate in scale in relation to the Parcel's location on the outskirts of Black Notley. The relationship with ribbon development on

Witham Road should be sensitively addressed. The public footpath route that crosses the Parcel should be retained with the opportunity to enhance the amenity value of the route by improving the industrial area of the Parcel and forming a green link between new development and the neighbouring valley landscape.

- Parcels 10a and 11g

4.26 Parcels 10a and 11g are located adjacent to the eastern edge of Braintree, save for the A120/A131 that divide the Parcels from the existing town. 10a is south of the A120 (Coggeshall Road) and north of Long Green road, and 11g is located north of the A120, extending north to the River Blackwater. 10a is relatively flat, being situated on a plateau between the River Blackwater and River Brain valleys, while 11g slopes down to the River Blackwater on its northern boundary.

4.27 Parcel 11g is part of a wider area of land identified as pre-18th century and 18th-19th century enclosure, with more fields similarly identified extending into Parcel 10a and Parcel 11h to the east.

4.28 Although the A120/A131 intervenes in free movement between the Parcels the existing built area of Braintree, there are private properties within both Parcels and tracks that have existing access points onto the main roads leading to Braintree and towards other settlements in the area.

4.29 There is a good network of field hedgerow boundaries and the Parcels' west boundaries has been developed as a wide belt of shrub and tree planting acting as a buffer to the A120/A131. There are opportunities to further reinforce and strengthen these hedgerows within the Parcels, particularly the southern portions of 10a and the eastern boundary of 11g. The hedgerows, which largely follow historic enclosure boundaries, contribute cultural depth to the area and habitat value. Any future development should be sensitive to them and seek to maintain and strengthen them while using them to influence the layout of proposals.

4.30 The analysis identifies that due to the topography of 11g, development should be guided away from the exposed slope where it would be more visible to users of the public footpath along the River Blackwater to the Parcel's north. It should be located towards the south of the Parcel, closer to the plateau topography and where proposals would relate more closely to existing development.

- Parcels 12d, 12e and 12f

4.31 Parcels 12d, 12e and 12f are located to the east of High Garrett, an area of ribbon development along the A131 to the north-east of Braintree. The western boundary of this group of Parcels is the A131 and rear boundaries of properties along this road. The south, north and east boundaries of these Parcels are strong existing hedgerows and woodland blocks including Clapgate Wood and Braintree Wood. Sunnyfields Road forms the boundary between 12d and 12f and 12e, with 12e to the east of the road having weaker connections to existing development. Willoughby Farm is situated immediately south of Parcel 12e. However strong boundary vegetation means this has little connection with 12e.

- 4.32 The land within these Parcels is very gently undulating, with steeper slopes down to the River Blackwater to the east beyond the edge of the Parcels. The Parcels comprise small- to medium-scale arable fields enclosed by partly fragmented hedgerows. There is a taller line of vegetation splitting the Parcel in two along the route of a public footpath. There is a prominent line of conifer trees enclosing an empty plot between groups of houses on the A131. Aside from this line of conifers, the rear of houses are relatively prominent in views across 12d and 12f, and partially screened to 12e by fragmented hedgerows along Sunnyfields Road.
- 4.33 The Parcel has medium capacity to accommodate development on account of the visual containment in the wider landscape provided by surrounding development, dense tree belts and woodland blocks, and the connections with the urban fabric to the west of which the Parcel forms a natural extension. The analysis highlights that development proposals should retain and reinforce vegetation on the field boundaries, especially to the northern Parcel boundary of 12f, to ensure screening to development and preserve the sense of tranquillity in the surrounding rural landscape. In addition, retaining the field patterns and using them to inform the layout of future development contribute to the time depth of new development. Development should be appropriate in scale to the rural context of the development in High Garrett and the low density settlement patterns on the outskirts of Braintree. Access should be developed from the west to limit urban features along the eastern edge of 12e. The public footpath routes and restricted byway on the eastern edge of 12e should be retained and enhanced as a green corridor connecting with further routes in the wider countryside. A portion of the Parcels should be retained as open space for existing and potential new residents. 12e, with its weaker connections to existing built development, would unlikely be suitable for development proposals that do not include 12d or 12f.
- Parcel 13a
- 4.34 A small linear Parcel of land located within ribbon development to the north-east of Braintree referred to as High Garrett. The Parcel is located on very gently undulating land at the top of the valley slopes of a tributary stream of the River Pant. The edge of the Parcel is slightly set back from the more prominent edge to the west. The Parcel is formed of a single, medium-scale arable field, divided in two by a post and wire fence. The hedgerow structure relates to 18th-19th century field enclosure. The vegetation is variable in condition and height and fragmented in parts on the eastern boundary. Mill Lodge is a Grade II Listed Building located in the north-eastern corner of the Parcel.
- 4.35 Through breaks in vegetation to the west there are views across the tributary valley and the surrounding arable farmland. To the east views are generally contained by the houses facing the Parcel on A131 High Garrett. A Public footpath runs adjacent to the northern boundary providing open views south across Parcel. Further views to the south are contained by the boundary hedgerow, houses on Grove Field and trees within gardens. The footpath provides connections between housing in High Garret and the wider rural landscape.

- 4.36 Development within the Parcel would form a natural extension to High Garrett, in filling the gap between existing residential areas to the south and north. The change in topography to the west provides separation between the Parcel that is connected to High Garrett and the sloping arable farmland that adjoins it. These factors and the existing landscape framework present good scope to provide landscape mitigation in the medium term. The analysis identifies that the hedgerow on the western boundary would need to be reinforced to provide screening to development in cross-valley views and to maintain separation between High Garrett and the adjoining open countryside. The setting of Mill Lodge would need to be sensitively addressed. Development should reflect the settlement patterns, scale and vernacular features of neighbouring development in High Garrett
- Parcel 13c
- 4.37 A sloping, crescent-shaped site adjacent to the north-west of Bock Churchstreet. The northern boundary follows the footpath that follows the route of a densely vegetated tributary stream flowing west towards the River Pant. The Parcel's southern boundary generally follows the rear garden boundaries. It excludes the schools' playing fields but encompasses the Grade I listed Church of St Mary the Virgin and its graveyard in the south-west corner of the Parcel. Fennes Road divides the Parcel into western and eastern portions. The eastern portion consists of portions of rear gardens, allotments, grass fields subdivided as paddocks sloping north down to the stream and woodland copses. The west portion comprises a grass field with occasional trees and copses sloping west down to the stream.
- 4.38 Development should be located away from the flood plain and avoid areas of the upper valley slopes which have increased prominence in cross-valley views from the surrounding countryside. Additional planting should be incorporated into any development layout to reduce the massing of the built form and reflect the existing containment to large parts of Bocking Churchstreet.
- 4.39 Development should be at an appropriate scale to reflect the characteristics of Bocking Churchstreet and incorporate vernacular features found within the Conservation Area. Development should be avoided where views of the Church of St Mary the Virgin in its current setting on the edge of the village would be compromised.
- 4.40 The good network of public rights of way extending from Bocking Churchstreet to the neighbouring farmland should be preserved and their amenity value protected. An alternative location should be provided for use as allotments if the existing are redeveloped for other uses.
- Parcel 15b
- 4.41 A Parcel comprising a field of rough grass rising northwards from Bocking on the River Blackwater valley side towards a woodland belt dividing the Parcel from Parcels 15c and 15d. It has several footpaths crossing it, linking to a wider network of public rights of way. A hedgerow sub-divides the Parcel with a smaller rough grass field to the south. Another public footpath follows its southern

edge, with a bund protecting views into the Parcel from it. This right of way is also used by vehicles to industry in the disused quarry of Parcel 15c and sewage works to the east.

4.42 The Parcel's south boundary abuts the private property boundaries of housing facing onto to Convent Lane. Boundary treatments here block most private views towards the Parcel. Trees and shrubs in the western portion of the Parcel act as a buffer to housing facing onto Broad Road. This filters views between the Parcel and this housing.

4.43 Although the Parcel is elevated, the woodland to the north and east rises behind it which should protect the skyline, provided any proposed development is located sensitively at lower elevations and at a height which will not rise above the woodland in views from outside the site. Any proposals should include additional tree and shrub planting to further soften cross-valley views towards new development.

4.44 Existing hedgerows and woodland within and along the boundaries of the Parcel should be retained and strengthened to enhance their screening properties and their contribution to habitat networks.

4.45 Public rights of way between existing housing and land to the north-east should be retained and its amenity value improved. Access to areas to the east should be formalised to reduce conflict with pedestrian users on the public footpath along the south-east Parcel boundary.

- Parcel 16b

4.46 This approximately triangular shaped Parcel comprises a redundant equestrian centre and golf course with routes through the site located between Panfield and the B1053 (Deanery Hill). Created landforms and planting remains, local undulations and copses screen local views. In addition there are open areas of former showgrounds and car parks, and large vacant buildings. A public footpath crosses the Parcel, closely following the southern boundary.

4.47 Close views into the Parcel are limited to views from the public footpath along the south of the Parcel and from the B1053 at the Parcel's eastern corner where the main vehicle entrance to the site is located. In addition there are views available from Panfield Lane at the eastern end of the southern boundary, where this road is adjacent to the boundary. The elevated topography of the Parcel in comparison to the B1053, as well as vegetation on the boundary, protects views of buildings on the Parcel and land to their west from users of that road. However there are longer distance views available from both public viewpoint on Bovingdon Road and public rights of way on the north-east valley side of the River Pant, and private from housing in Bocking.

4.48 Existing vegetation on the plateau slopes should be retained and strengthened to help screen views of development on the Parcel from the road, and soften the skyline from cross-valley viewpoints. Internal hedgerows should also be retained as a vegetation framework to maintain and reinstate linked habitats and could inform future development layouts. Conifer shelter belts are typical of the local area. This planting pattern could be copied to provide mitigating vegetation to protect public

views from the public right of way in the south of the Parcel. Access to the Parcel should be sensitively treated so that it does not disrupt the existing sense of arrival to Bocking.

- Parcel 16c

4.49 A small Parcel comprising the Queen Elizabeth II grass playing fields and a bmx track located adjacent to and open to existing residential development to its east and enclosed and subdivided by hedgerows elsewhere.

4.50 The Parcel is well screened from the road, with only glimpses of the Parcel from the access point on B1053, but open to users of the public footpath along the edge of the amenity grass and housing. Private housing have views overlooking the Parcel, at oblique angles.

4.51 Mitigation should ensure alternative provision of open green space and recreation opportunities. Existing hedgerows should be maintained and new planting used to mitigate the impact of any new development on the existing residential area. The layout of proposals should be sensitive to these existing viewpoints.

- Parcel 16d

4.52 Occupying gently sloping land to the west of Braintree, the Parcel is enclosed to two sides by built development. The eastern boundary is formed by Panfield Lane which has large residential estates branching from it. The northern boundary is defined by well-structured hedgerows and a woodland block, separating the Parcel from a redundant golf course and equestrian centre. This defined hedgerow structure continues on the western boundary with Parcel 16f which has a rectilinear field pattern dispersed by shelter belt planting. To the south the Parcel abuts Springwood Industrial Estate and Braintree Leisure Centre. The Parcel comprises arable fields defined by a good quality hedgerow and tree belt structure which contributes to the visual containment of the Parcel from the wider landscape. There are filtered views to parts of the Parcel from facing residential properties and public footpath routes.

4.53 Development within the Parcel would form a natural extension to the neighbouring settlement fringe. The landscape framework and containment from wider views also provide good scope for landscape mitigation. However, the Parcel occupies farmland that provides separation between Braintree and Panfield and development to the north-western side of the Parcel would encroach on this separation. Mitigation measures identified as part of the analysis include preserving and enhancing the hedgerow structure of the Parcel to provide visual containment to development and reduce the massing of built form in any potential views from the neighbouring open farmland. This would also provide a defined edge to Braintree, reducing the visual encroachment on land between Panfield and Braintree. Development should be sensitive to the rural context of the Parcel to the west and the scale and style of development within Braintree to the east. The relatively large-scale Parcel provides the potential to incorporate additional open space within any development proposals. Preserve and

enhance the access to countryside opportunities provided by public footpath links between residential areas and the wider rural landscape.

- Parcel 16e

4.54 A small Parcel adjacent to housing on Hall Road. It straddles this road and consists of small-scale fields comprising rough grass, grazed pasture, and paddocks that straddles Hall Road. It is generally well enclosed by vegetation but views into the Parcel may be gained from Hall Road over low to medium height boundary hedgerow and post and wire fencing. Hedgerows are typical boundaries in the area. The Parcel also includes a dense, tall conifer hedge on its south-east boundary and post and tape paddock fencing.

4.55 There is a public right of way through the Parcel from Hall Road connected to areas east. It is between boundary hedgerow vegetation and post and wire fencing. Post and wire fencing allows clear views into Parcel.

4.56 Development in this Parcel would be restricted to small-scale development. Existing buildings should be safeguarded, and particularly the setting of listed buildings in the vicinity. Proposals should include planting to integrate into the existing vegetation framework.

- Parcel 17a

4.57 Small triangular Parcel of land located to the rear of housing on south-west side of Braintree. Its north-west boundary adjoins the rear of residential properties on Springfields, leading from Rayne Road. The Flich Way, a promoted recreational route along a disused railway line, forms the southern boundary. The Parcel is partly set within the floodplain of the River Brain and partly on the valley's north-east facing slopes.

4.58 The Parcel comprises a triangular grass field, part of the River Brain corridor, and an area of open space for informal recreation associated with the housing to the north-east. There a well-defined hedgerow structure to the triangular field which has an 18th-19th century enclosure pattern. There is also good woodland cover and riparian planting alongside the path of the River Brain. There is limited vegetation to the north-eastern boundary, with Brook Close and Nayling Road and houses there generally having open views across the open space.

4.59 A public footpath runs alongside the north-eastern edge of the triangular field and provides partial views across the river. The footpath connects with the elevated path of the Flich Way. Coloured rendered houses with shed roofs can be seen rising up the facing valley slopes in occasional views from the elevated land to the south of the Parcel. However, the edge of development in Braintree is generally well enclosed by riparian vegetation and intact field boundaries. The Flich Way has planted embankments to both sides but occasional gaps in vegetation allow views to the triangular field. There are good footpath connections linking the residential development to resources for informal

recreation. The Parcel is relatively open to views from residential development to the north-east and north-west, especially the more elevated triangular field to the south.

4.60 The Parcel has some strong visual associations with the settlement edge of Braintree and is equally prominent in views from neighbouring residential areas. Informal open space alongside the River Brain and the well maintained Flitch Way cycle and walking route are valuable resources on the outskirts of the town.

4.61 Mitigation should include: planting to screen views and maintaining access to Flitch Way cycle and walking route. The location and layout of development should be sensitive to topography and potential cross-valley views to the Parcel and views from the Flitch Way which currently contribute to its amenity value. Vegetation should be used to soften and break up the impact of new housing where its visibility is unavoidable from existing viewpoints.

- Parcel 17e

4.62 Located to the immediate west of Springwood Industrial Estate, the Parcel comprises a mosaic of small-scale paddocks, rough grass fields and enclosed fishing ponds. A small number of residential properties and farmsteads are also located within the Parcel parameters. The Parcel has visual and physical associations with both existing residential development to the south of Rayne Road and existing industrial development within the estate to the east. The Parcel has relatively good containment from the wider landscape to the west by tall hedgerows on the western boundary and vegetation surrounding the ponds. These elements present good scope to provide mitigation to proposed development in keeping with the existing landscape pattern.

4.63 Mitigation measures identified as part of the analysis include the retention and reinforcement of hedges and tree belts to minimise the visual impact of any development from the wider landscape to the west and to reduce the visual encroachment on land preserving separation between Rayne and the Braintree western fringe. Development should be positioned to avoid intrusive impacts on cross-valley views from the Flitch Way. Public footpaths crossing the Parcel should be protected with the potential to enhance recreational green links with the edge of the settlement and the River Brain/Pods Brook corridors.

- Parcel 19a

4.64 A predominantly flat Parcel of land abutting the southern settlement fringe of Rayne. The Parcel is currently fragmented with pockets of land in a poor condition, presenting the opportunity to improve the overall condition of the area and incorporate features reflective of the character of Rayne. There are private properties, warehousing, rough grass and scrub, and pastures.

4.65 The fragmented small field pattern could allow options to incorporate smaller scale developments. The analysis highlights that development should protect the public rights of way crossing the Parcel and improve their amenity value. Development should be sensitive to the setting of the listed

building. Mitigation should include strengthening the vegetation along Flitch Way to further screen views south into the Parcel. Closeboard fencing lines the edge of the A120 and the south boundary of the Parcel. Vegetation should be reinforced along this boundary to strengthen screening of the Parcel from users of the A120. Private properties in this Parcel generally have good vegetation boundaries within the Parcel. If development necessitates exposing these properties, planting should be undertaken to mitigate changes to these viewpoints' views.

- Parcel 23a

4.66 The Parcel is located immediately south of the A120 and to the south-west of Rayne. Part of its north boundary is also formed by the Flitch Way Recreation Route and Country Park. The southern boundary follows Mill Lane and Fentons Road. To the east, the Parcel partly follows School Road and wraps around the rear of residential properties located on it. The Parcel is predominantly flat. There are small ponds located throughout the Parcel and localised flooding to the north-west corner. To the west, beyond the Parcel, land slopes gently to the River Ter.

4.67 The Parcel is formed of small-scale fragmented plots of land, interspersed with pockets of built development. This includes a number of farms with horse paddocks, sheds and agricultural equipment. The Parcel has a relatively well defined hedgerow structure with taller tree belts to the west alongside Flitch Way and Fentons Road. There is a good tree belt to A120 with a mix of horse fencing and clipped hedges to other areas. Noise from A120 is noticeable throughout the Parcel. To the west of School Road paddocks and rough grass fields are of 18th-19th century enclosure origins.

4.68 Boundary hedgerows partially screen views from adjoining roads. This stretch of the Flitch Way path on the northern boundary is partly raised above the Parcel extending from the A120 cross over. This raised pathway provides some views across the Parcel. There is no further public access through the Parcel. Potential views from the elevated landforms at Great Notley Park are screened by vegetation.

4.69 The Parcel has vehicular connections with Rayne and moderate visual associations with the scattered pockets of development to the north. The A120 currently forms a strong intervening feature separating the Parcel from the main settlement.

4.70 Development has the potential to enhance the Parcel by reflecting the character of Rayne and creating a more integrated identity to this part of the settlement. Development would likely be of a small-scale. The layout of proposals should be sensitive to views from Flitch Way and surrounding roads, and where necessary hedgerow planting to take place to reinforce boundaries and provide additional screening.

- Parcel 23e

4.71 Large-scale arable fields along the western edge of Great Notley, separated by the A131 which forms the east boundary. The Parcel consists of a large-scale arable field and a series of smaller medium-scale fields along its western boundary. Slampseys Farm is located in the south of the Parcel, with

access from Blaskley Lane to the south of the Farm and Parcel. There is pedestrian access to the Parcel by bridleway and footpath to the north and west of the Parcel, as well as a vehicular access point to an electrical substation from the A131 via a roundabout.

4.72 The public right of way through the Parcel allows public views of much of the Parcel, although hedgerows along the bridleway filters views on the opposite sides. Existing vegetation to the north screens views from the Country Park. A dense hedgerow of trees and shrub screens views between the Parcel and the A131 and Great Notley, although vehicular noise disrupts a sense of tranquillity within the Parcel. Sparser hedgerows filter views to west where land comprises arable fields and photo voltaic arrays. There are views into northern parts of the Parcel when facing south is of arable fields with hedgerow boundaries, and Slampseys Farm is visible at the southern point of the Parcel although there are no public viewpoints there.

4.73 Proposed new development should be sensitive to the existing urban fabric of Great Notley and be at an appropriate scale and form to that of neighbouring residential areas, reflecting the local urban form and landscape characteristics of a garden village. Access into the Parcel would need to be developed. There are also opportunities to create a substantial planting framework, particularly on the western portion of the Parcel where hedgerows are thinner but part of existing networks of hedgerow, and one which links with and complements the vegetation structure within the Great Notley Country Park. Proposals should be well integrated into the surrounding landscape where new settlement edges are proposed.

Medium-Low Landscape Capacity

4.74 The analysis identifies 47 Parcels that have Medium-Low capacity to accommodate development. There are: Parcels 1a to 1e, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3d, 4b to 4d, 5b, 6e, 6i, 7c, 8a, 10b to 10f, 11a, 11b, 11d, 11e, 12a, 12b, 13b, 13d, 13e, 14a, 14c, 15c, 15e, 16a, 17c, 17f, 17h, 19b, 20a, 20b, 20e, 23b, 23c, and 23d. Factors such as limited relationship with the urban fabric, visibility from public and private receptors and encroachment on the separation between settlements are all overriding elements that reduce the capacity of the landscape. A summary of these factors along with unique characteristics of the Parcels that limit opportunities for development are described below.

4.75 In the southern portion of Braintree's environs there are several small towns or villages that are settlements physically separated from Braintree, namely Rayne, Great Notley, Black Notley, Tye Green and Cressing. With typically arable uses and little built development, Parcels in the narrow intervening areas contribute to preventing coalescence. However, due to their proximity to existing development and topography or vegetation condition, they are likely to be visible from private and public viewpoints, and in their current undeveloped state contribute to the rural setting of Braintree and its Environs. Thus Parcels in the intervening areas between Braintree and these settlements have typically been assessed as having a Medium-Low capacity to accommodate future development:

- 4.76 Parcels 1a through 1e maintain separation between Braintree and Black Notley and Tye Green. In addition, they straddle the River Brain valley and their sloped topography increases the Parcels' prominence in private and public views from those settlements, although strong boundary hedgerows and vegetation along the River Brain mitigate those to some extent. Parcel 20e, on the River Brain's north facing valley side between Great Notley and Braintree plays a similar role there. Parcels 3a, 3b and 10b, and Parcel 5b also contribute to maintaining separation between Braintree and Tye Green and Cressing, and Braintree and Great Notley, respectively. While they are not situated on valley slopes, some hedgerow boundaries are in decline and other vegetation sparse in those areas meaning development in those Parcels would likely be visible and would disrupt the visual setting of the settlements.
- 4.77 Further Parcels contribute to maintaining separation between the village settlements. Parcels 2b, 7c, 8a, and 3d are located on the River Brain's eastern valley slope and help maintain separation between Black Notley and Tye Green. Parcel 3d performs a similar function between Tye Green and Cressing, and 4b between Tye Green and Hawbush Green, while 19b and 20a separate Great Notley and Rayne, and both also act as a buffer between Rayne and the A120. In the northern portion of the study area, Parcel 14a is significant in maintaining separation between Bocking Church Street and High Garrett, while Parcel 12a separates development along High Garrett from the development extending north from Braintree on Broad Street.
- 4.78 Other Parcels that are assessed as Medium-Low are generally located around the edges of the Landscape Setting Areas, remote from existing towns and villages. Although most of these Parcels do contain some built development such as farmsteads rural businesses or individual houses, many not part of a wider developed area or are accessed from minor country roads. There are good networks of public rights of way which increase the Parcels' visibility from public viewpoints. These Parcels are also often stronger in terms of landscape character and likely to have more linked or widespread natural habitat. Parcels that can be described like this and have been assessed as Medium-Low are: 4c south of Tye Green, Parcels 6e and 6i south of Great Notley, Parcels 10c through 10f, 11i and 11j to the east of Braintree, Parcels 16a, 17f and 17h to the west of Braintree, and Parcels 23a and 23c.
- 4.79 As well as displaying the features described above, land surrounding existing settlements in the northern portion of the study area tend to be at higher elevations, allowing long distance views from private and public viewpoints in villages and Braintree to these Parcels. In their current unbuilt condition, they contribute to the rural setting of the settlements, which would be disrupted by any new development. Although they are visually connected with the existing settlements, development on these slopes would disrupt the rural character of Braintree's character in long distance views.
- 4.80 Parcels 11a, 11b, 11d, and 11e; 12a and 12b; and 15c and 15e combine across a large area of land to the north-east of Braintree, located south of High Garrett and bordered to the south by the River

Blackwater valley. The slopes are generally south facing towards Braintree. In addition, these Parcels provide a rural setting to Lyons Hall, a listed building. 11b, 12a and 12b prevent coalescence between High Garrett and Braintree. Parcel 12a in particular maintains the separation between Braintree and High Garret where ribbon development extends towards High Garret from Braintree along the old Roman Road (B1053/A131). 15c contains sewage works and a working gravel pit, whose noise disrupts the tranquillity there.

- 4.81 Parcels 13b, 13d, and 13e are located on the south facing slopes to the north of Bocking Churchstreet. Although local undulations would protect some areas from view of public and private viewpoints, the Parcels' capacity is also reduced by the lack of connections to the existing settlements and the intervening valley of a tributary of the River Pant.
- 4.82 14c is located adjacent to Bocking Churchstreet and has a close relationship with the existing urban fabric. However it is located on slopes rising directly from the eastern edge of the village where future development. As well as the setting for the village, it contributes that of the listed buildings of Doreward's Hall and Bocking Windmill, a prominent landmark in the area.
- 4.83 17c abuts Rayne's eastern edge. It currently includes a playground, the Rayne Village Hall, and is location for Rayne Cricket Club. Land cover includes amenity sports fields and Oak Meadow Nature Reserve. Its strong habitat makes these a less suitable site for accommodating future development.
- 4.84 Parcel 23d comprises Great Notley Country Park. It is located adjacent to Great Notley, divided from the village by the A131 but with access from this road. The Country Park has distinctive artificial landforms including a high hill that gives long views over the surrounding area. Different habitats have been developed across the Parcel, with the layout of the Park following historic field boundaries consisting of mature shrubs and trees. They include mounds, rough grass, amenity grass, and a field with a mosaic of shrubs and trees, ponds and rough grass. The eastern edge includes a recently planted shrub and tree belt at the base of the road embankment.

Low Landscape Capacity

- 4.85 The analysis assesses 17 Parcels as having Low capacity to accommodate development. There are: Parcels 2a, 5c, 6a, 6b, 6f, 6g, 7a, 8c, 10g, 11c, 11f, 11h, 11k, 13f, 14b, 14d, 15a, 16f, 17b, 17d and 17g. Factors such as isolation from the urban fabric, the good condition and strong character of the landscape, sensitive historic features and encroachment on the separation between settlements are all overriding elements that reduce the capacity of the landscape. Generally there are several factors present within each Parcel which results in a Low capacity assessment. A summary of these factors, and the unique characteristics of the Parcels that limit opportunities for development, are described below.
- 4.86 Parcels 2a and 7a; 5c, 6a, 6b, 6f, and 6g; 8c; 16f; 17b and 17d; 19b; and 20c play important roles in preserving the separation between Braintree and smaller settlements in its environs, or between

these smaller settlements, namely between Black Notley and Tye Green; Black Notley, Braintree and Great Notley; Black Notley and The Green; Panfield and Braintree; Rayne and Braintree; Rayne and Great Notley; and Great Notley and Braintree respectively. However they tend to not relate strongly to the existing urban fabric of these villages, and are landscapes sensitive to change as they provide a rural setting to the settlements. Access to the Parcels is generally via minor roads or public rights of way. The public rights of way are also sensitive to change that detracts from the rural character. Parcels 6a, 6b, 6f and 6g, and Parcel 8c span river valleys. Their location on the valley slopes and bottom mean they would be prominent in short and longer distance views across and along the valleys. Parcels within Landscape Setting Area B6 also contribute to the setting of the historic core of Black Notley, listed building and scheduled monuments at Black Notley Hall.

- 4.87 10g, 11c, 11f, 11h, 11k and 17g are identified as Parcels with Low capacity due in part to their remote positions on or close to the landscape setting boundaries, and bear little relationship with the existing urban areas of Braintree or its surrounding settlements. Also, these Parcels are all situated on valley sides and valley bottoms of the Rivers Brain, Blackwater and Pods Brook and are prominent in cross-valley views.
- 4.88 Parcel 13f is located on the River Pant to the north-west of Braintree and follows the river valley to where the River Pant flows through Bocking. At its north-western extents it is remote to settlements while in its south-east portion it has close associations with new built development. There is new areas of habitat being developed here too. The Parcel is sensitive to viewpoints from the roads that form its north-east and south-west boundaries and footpath along the southern edge of the river, as well as private viewpoints from the new housing development. As the edge of existing settlement, it is valued for its contribution to the rural setting.
- 4.89 Parcel 14b is located between Braintree and Bocking Churchstreet and High Garrett on land that rises north-eastwards from the River Brain (Parcel 14d). It has close associations with existing development in Braintree and Bocking Churchstreet, however it is sensitive to development due to its prominence on the valley side and plateau edge in short and long distance views from existing development, as well as public viewpoints on the public rights of way in and adjacent to the Parcel. In addition it is the setting to the sensitive historic sites of Doreward Hall and Bocking Windmill, also a landmark feature in the landscape.
- 4.90 Parcels 14d and 15a are located on the River Blackwater's flat flood plain, adjacent to the edges of Braintree in the north of the town. While having close connections with the existing settlement, they would be sensitive locations for new development due to their visibility with existing housing and footpaths that follow close to the river and their position their position as part of a wider network of managed habitats.

Figures

Appendices