

**Uttlesford District Council**

# **Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Phase 2: New Settlements**

**Draft final report**  
Prepared by LUC  
November 2021



**Uttlesford District Council**

**Landscape Sensitivity Assessment**  
**Phase 2: New Settlements**

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of the study and presents the policy context

### Background and purpose of this study

**1.1** Uttlesford District Council (UDC) is in the early stages of preparing a new Local Plan to cover the period 2020 - 2040, which will need to accommodate a significant amount of new housing growth. As part of the evidence base for the Local Plan, the Council needs to consider whether the landscape around towns and villages in the district, as well as sites for new settlements, has the capacity to accommodate new development without causing significant adverse effects on its character.

**1.2** UDC commissioned LUC in June 2021 to prepare a landscape sensitivity assessment (hereafter referred to as the study) for the following:

- Phase 1: Towns and key villages
- Phase 2: Potential new settlement locations
- Phase 3: Allocations around other villages

**1.3** The purpose of the study is to provide a robust and up-to-date evidence base and assessment to inform the appropriate scale, form and location of future development to minimise harm to the landscape and the setting of settlements. By assessing and mapping the relative sensitivity of different landscapes the study will provide a tool for informing landscape change.

**1.4** The outputs of the study will be used by UDC to;

- Identify land where development would be most appropriate to minimise impact on landscape i.e. areas of least sensitivity.
- Help in refining broad growth areas and inform the evaluation of potential development locations.
- Help establish individual site options for consideration through the Sustainability Appraisal process and for future consultation.

**1.5** This report includes the results for **Phase 2** of the study: the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of potential new

settlement locations, and will help to inform the evaluation of potential new settlement locations within Uttlesford.

## Policy context

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

**1.6** The UK Government published an updated and revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in July 2021, which sets out the environmental, social and economic planning policies for England. Central to NPPF policies is a presumption in favour of sustainable development; that development should be planned for positively and individual proposals should be approved wherever possible.

**1.7** One of the overarching objectives that underpins the NPPF is set out in **Paragraph 8**: “an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.”

**1.8 Paragraph 174** states that “planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by **protecting and enhancing valued landscapes**” and “**recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside**”.

**1.9 Paragraph 20** states ‘Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for:

a) housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;

b) infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);

c) community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and

d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation’.

**1.10 Paragraph 130** states ‘Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not

preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit.

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience’.

**1.11 Paragraph 175** states ‘Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries’.

**1.12 Paragraph 185** contains one reference to sensitivity as follows:

‘Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development...’

### National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

Further guidance is provided in the NPPG. Paragraph: 037 Reference ID: 8-037-20190721 Revision date: 21 07 2019 notes the following under the heading of ‘How can the character of the landscape be assessed?’

**1.13** “...*Landscape sensitivity can inform policy development and appropriate locations for development and can also be one of the considerations to be taken into account when making decisions on planning applications.*

**1.14** *To help assess the type and scale of development that might be able to be accommodated without compromising landscape character, a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment can be completed. To demonstrate the likely effects of a proposed development on the landscape, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment can be used.*

## Local Plan

**1.15** The draft Local Plan 2019 was withdrawn in April 2020 following the Inspectors' Letter of January 2020. Preparation of the new Local Plan 2020-2040 is currently underway, with the first consultation stage completed in April 2021. The aim is to adopt the new Local Plan in December 2023.

**1.16** The 2005 Local Plan is the current adopted plan for Uttlesford. The following policies relate directly to the Local Plan's stance on the protection of landscapes:

- **Policy S8 The Countryside Protection Zone** states that development will not be permitted if it promotes coalescence between Stansted Airport and existing development in the surrounding countryside, or if it would adversely affect the open character of the landscape.
- **Policy GEN2 Design** states that new development should safeguard important environmental features in its setting, retaining them and using them to reduce the visual impact of the new development where possible.
- **Policy GEN5 Light Pollution** states that developments with lighting schemes must use the minimum level of lighting necessary to achieve its purpose, and minimise glare and light spillage.
- **Policy ENV3 Open Spaces and Trees** states that traditional open spaces, visually important spaces, groups of trees and fine individual trees should be maintained, unless the need for development outweighs their amenity value.
- **Policy ENV8 Other Landscape Elements of Importance for Nature Conservation** states that the following landscape features should be retained where possible, and mitigation provided if this is not possible:
  - Hedgerows
  - Linear tree belts
  - Larger semi natural or ancient woodlands
  - Semi-natural grasslands
  - Green lanes and special verges
  - Orchards
  - Plantations
  - Ponds
  - Reservoirs

- River corridors
- Linear wetland features
- Networks or patterns of other locally important habitats.
- **Policy ENV9 Historic Landscapes** states that significant local historic landscapes, historic parks and gardens and protected lanes should not be harmed by new development.

## Neighbourhood Plans

**1.17** Four settlements within Uttlesford have adopted Neighbourhood Plans:

- Felsted (adopted February 2020)
- Great Dunmow (adopted December 2016)
- Newport, Quendon and Rickling (adopted June 2021)
- Thaxted (adopted February 2019).

## Landscape character context

**1.18** Uttlesford is a large rural district. As set out in the Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment (2006)<sup>1</sup> the landscape is one of gently rolling plateaux, generally under arable cultivation. The landscape is incised by river valleys, including the main rivers Cam, Stort, Pant and Upper Chelmer. The west of the district is underlain by chalk and has a more strongly rolling landform of round backed ridges.

**1.19** The distinct rural character of the District with its attractive and historic market towns and villages is widely recognised. The settlement pattern is sparse, with small historic villages strung along winding rural lanes. There has been expansion of the main towns of Saffron Walden, Stansted Mountfitchet and Great Dunmow. The M11 and A120 cut through the district. London Stansted Airport is located in the south-west of the district. Although noise from the overhead flight paths reduces tranquillity, the airport is well-integrated in the landscape and screened from view.

**1.20** In order to help develop its policies and allocations for new housing and employment growth in new settlements, the Council needs to consider the sensitivity of the local landscape to new development and its capacity to accommodate development without causing significant adverse effects on its character.

<sup>1</sup> Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment (Chris Blandford Associates, 2006)

## Limitation of the landscape sensitivity assessment

**1.21** This study provides an assessment of the landscape sensitivity of different locations within Uttlesford that are being considered for potential new settlements, without knowing the exact mix of development types, location, layout, design or mitigation proposed.

**1.22** It should not be interpreted as a definitive statement on the suitability of certain locations for a particular development. It is not a replacement for detailed studies for specific siting and design and all developments will need to be assessed on their individual merits.

**1.23** The study is based on an assessment of landscape character using carefully defined criteria. Landscape sensitivity is the result of a complex interplay of often unequally weighted variables (or 'criteria'). We have sought to address this issue in the list of key landscape and visual sensitivities given for each site – and a conclusion which highlights sensitivities across the site and variations in sensitivity between different areas within the site. The assessments are based on professional judgement, taking account of the interplay between criteria, as well as those which might be more important to the landscape character of each site.

**1.24** It is also worth noting that the assessment considers the following:

- The natural character of the landscape but not specific ecological issues in relation to species or habitats;
- The historic and cultural character of the landscape but not specific cultural heritage/archaeological issues associated with individual designated heritage assets and their settings; and
- The visual character of the landscape but not visual amenity issues associated with specific receptors, such as public views from specific locations (e.g. promoted viewpoints), or private views and outlooks available to occupants of residential properties.

**1.25** These are all issues that will need to be taken into account in site selection and impacts will need to be reported at the time when individual proposals are put forward – as such they will be addressed through the Sustainability Appraisal, the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA), planning applications and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process including more detailed landscape and visual impact assessments and appraisals (LVIA).

**1.26** This study concentrates on understanding the sensitivities to development and does not address capacity. Capacity is a further stage of assessment that requires

consideration of cumulative development, landscape objectives, and thresholds of acceptable change to identify likely quantum of change that can be accommodated.

**1.27** Finally, this remains a strategic study which is based on the assessment of broad sites. There are likely to be spatial variations in character within any one site and these are generally described in the text. Individual site level investigations will likely indicate further differences and variations at the site scale. This study was undertaken at 1:25,000 scale, involving desk study and field work from public rights of way and public vantage points.

## Structure of the report

**1.28** Each phase of the study will be presented in its own report. Each report is structured as follows:

**Chapter 1** presents an introduction and policy context (this chapter)

**Chapter 2** sets out the methodology for the landscape sensitivity assessment.

**Chapter 3** sets out generic guidance to help accommodate development within the landscape.

**Appendix A** contains the sources of information used in the assessment.

**Appendix B** contains a glossary of terms.

**1.29 Appendix C** presents the landscape sensitivity assessment profiles for each site.

## Chapter 2

# Methodology

### This chapter sets out the approach to assessing landscape sensitivity

**2.1** The process for undertaking the landscape sensitivity assessment involved three main stages:

- Phase 1: Towns and villages
- Phase 2: Potential new settlements
- Phase 3: Additional sites around smaller villages

**2.2** The methodology for **Phase 2: Potential new settlements** is described below.

#### Development scenario

**2.3** The assessment considers the landscape sensitivity of twelve potential new settlements in Uttlesford District. The development scenario considered in the assessment was for a new settlement remote from the edges of existing towns and villages. Developers provided different levels of information in the SHLAA Call for Sites exercise. The approximate size of the development site and information provided on the number of proposed dwellings, educational and employment facilities are noted in each assessment.

#### Spatial framework for the assessment

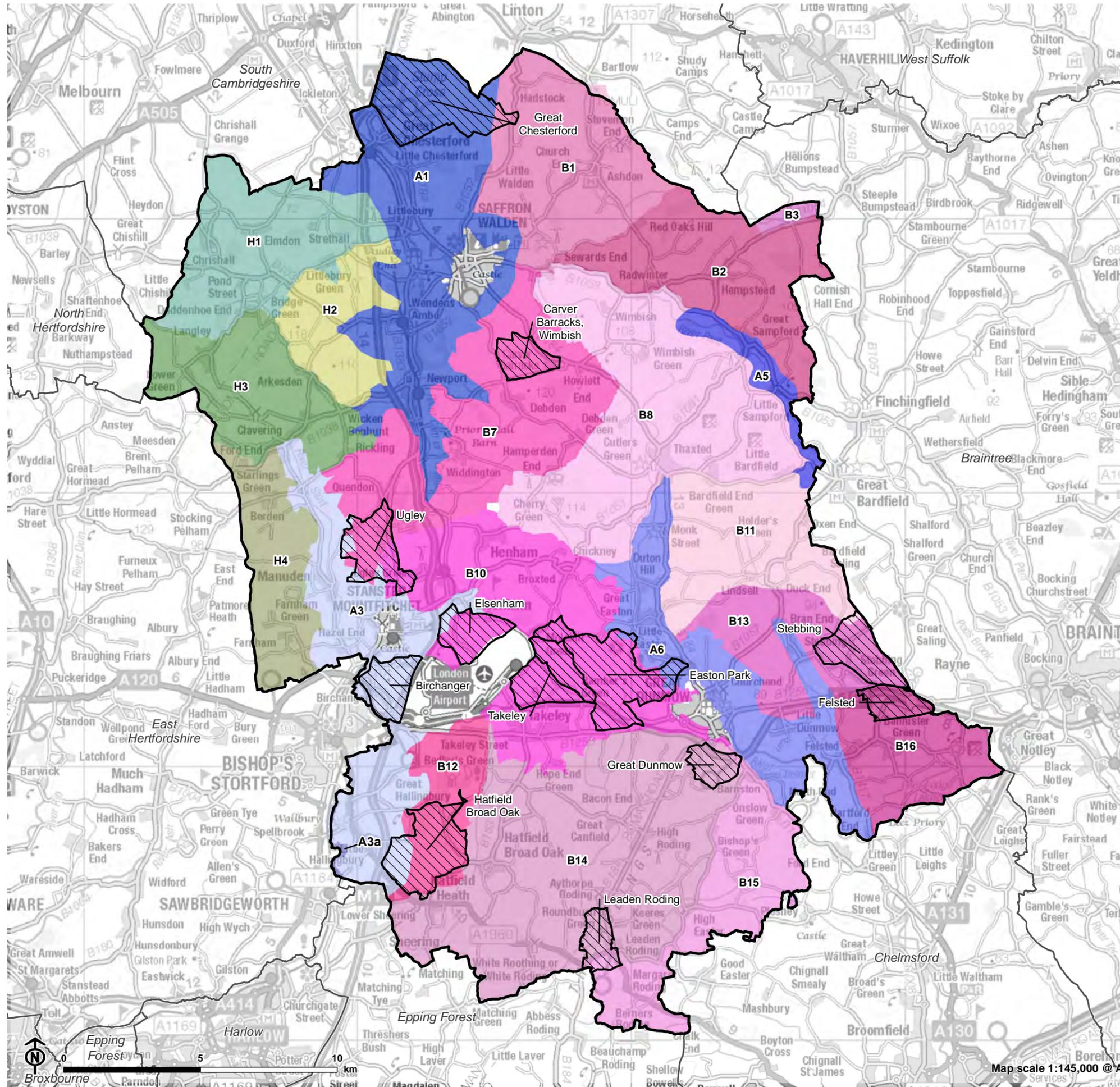
**2.4** The assessment uses the spatial framework of Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and components Landscape Character Areas (LCA) identified by the existing Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment (2006) which identifies 3 LCTs and 20 component LCAs.

**2.5** The LCTs and component LCAs which form the spatial framework for this study are shown in **Figure 2.1**.

#### Study areas

**2.6** The assessment focusses on twelve potential new settlement sites brought forward by developers in the 2021 SHLAA Call for Sites and as agreed with UDC. Study areas around these sites were defined and agreed with UDC, following a desktop analysis of the site proposed in the Call for Sites and the surrounding landscape.

Figure 2.1 Landscape Character context



- Uttlesford District boundary
- Potential new settlements
- Landscape Character Area**
- A - Chalk Uplands
- A1. Cam River Valley
- A3. Stort River Valley
- A3a. Stort River Valley Floor
- A5. Pant River Valley
- A6. Upper Chelmer River Valley
- B - Glacial Till Plateau
- B1. Ashdon Farmland Plateau
- B2. Hempstead Farmland Plateau
- B3. Bumpstead Farmland Plateau
- B7. Debdon Farmland Plateau
- B8. Thaxted Farmland Plateau
- B10. Broxted Farmland Plateau
- B11. Lindsell & Bardfield Farmland Plateau
- B12. Hatfield Forest Farmland Plateau
- B13. Rayne Farmland Plateau
- B14. Roding Farmland Plateau
- B15. Pleshey Farmland Plateau
- B16. Felsted Farmland Plateau
- H - Chalk Uplands
- H1. Elmdon Chalk Upland
- H2. Arkesden Chalk Upland
- H3. Langley Chalk Upland
- H4. Berden & Farnham Chalk upland



**2.7** No land within the site defined by the Call for Sites was scoped out of the assessment, although attention was paid to the absolute constraints identified in Phase 1 including:

- Flood Zone 3 (representing the highest level of flood risk);
- Statutory national ecological designations including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); and National Nature Reserves
- Statutory heritage designations (Scheduled Monuments and Registered Parks and Gardens)

**2.8** The twelve assessment sites are shown in **Figure 2.1** and listed below:

- Birchanger
- Carver Barracks, Wimbish
- Easton Park
- Elsenham
- Felsted
- Great Chesterford
- Great Dunmow
- Hatfield Broad Oak
- Leaden Roding
- Stebbing
- Takeley
- Ugley

## Evaluating landscape sensitivity

**2.9** This assessment draws on advice contained in Natural England's 'Approach to landscape sensitivity assessment' (2019)<sup>2</sup>. This describes the term 'landscape sensitivity', within the context of spatial planning and land management, as follows:

*"Landscape sensitivity may be regarded as a measure of the resilience, or robustness, of a landscape to withstand specified change arising from development types or land management practices, without undue negative effects on the landscape and visual baseline and their value."*

**2.10** It is a term applied to landscape character and the associated visual resource, combining judgements of their susceptibility to the specific development type / development

scenario or other change being considered together with the value(s) related to that landscape and visual resource.

## Assessment criteria

**2.11** Landscape sensitivity assessment requires judgements on both landscape susceptibility (how vulnerable the landscape is to change from the type being assessed, in this case a new settlement comprising residential, educational and commercial development) and landscape value (consensus about importance, which can be recognised through designation as well as through descriptions within the 2014 Landscape Character Assessment).

**2.12** The selection of landscape sensitivity indicators ('criteria') for this study is informed by the attributes of landscape that could be affected by residential, educational and commercial development. These consider the 'landscape', 'visual' and 'perceptual' aspects of sensitivity. Their selection is also based on current best practice and experience of LUC in undertaking similar studies elsewhere in the UK.

**2.13** The following six criteria headings are used for this study:

- Physical character (landform, scale and field pattern)
- Natural character
- Sense of time depth/ historic landscape character;
- Settlement character;
- Visual character (including skylines); and
- Perceptual and scenic qualities (including recreational value)

**2.14** **Table 2.1** provides guidance and examples of higher and lower sensitivity features/attributes for applying the criteria in Uttlesford to new settlement development. The assessments present a commentary against each criterion. A list of key landscape and visual sensitivities is then provided, which pull out the sensitivities from the criterion above. In agreement with UDC an in-depth commentary provides a conclusion on the differences in sensitivity across the site, and identifies areas within the site where development may have less of an impact on landscape and visual sensitivities.

**2.15** The initial stage of the assessment involved a thorough desk-based study drawing on sources of spatial and descriptive information regarding the landscape. This was supplemented by field survey work undertaken by a team of landscape professionals to verify the findings.

<sup>2</sup> <sup>1</sup> Natural England's 2019 approach document is available [here](#)

**Table 2.1: Criteria and guidance for assessing landscape sensitivity to new settlement development**

<b>Physical character (including landform, scale and field pattern)</b>				
<p>This considers the shape and scale of the landform, landscape pattern and landscape elements in relation to the scale of potential development. Smooth, gently undulating or flat landforms are likely to be less sensitive to development than a landscape with a more dramatic landform, distinct landform features or incised valleys with prominent slopes.</p> <p>This criterion considers how developments fit with the scale of the landform (understanding the scale of the development proposed is important when applying this criterion). Larger scale, simple landforms are likely to be less sensitive to larger scale developments than smaller scale, enclosed landforms (where large-scale developments could appear out of scale with the underlying landform). Conversely, smaller developments may be able to be screened within enclosed landforms, therefore reducing landscape sensitivity. Existing small-scale features in the landscape in the form of existing buildings or trees can also influence the scale of development that can be accommodated in the landscape. This criterion also needs to be considered in relation to visual character.</p>				
<b>Low</b>	<b>Low-Moderate</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Moderate-High</b>	<b>High</b>
The landscape has smooth, gently undulating or featureless landform with uniform large-scale landscape pattern and low density of overlying landscape features.		The landscape has an undulating landform and some distinct landform features; it is overlain by a mixture of small-scale and larger scale field patterns and a moderate density of small-scale landscape features.		The landscape has a dramatic landform or distinct landform features that contribute positively to landscape character; the area has a high density of small-scale landscape features and is overlain by a small-scale field pattern.
<b>Natural character</b>				
<p>This criterion considers the 'naturalistic' qualities of the landscape in terms of coverage of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features (e.g. trees, hedgerows) which could be vulnerable to loss from development.</p> <p>Areas with frequent natural features (including large areas of nationally or internationally designated habitats) result in increased sensitivity to development, while landscapes with limited natural features (including intensively farmed areas or areas with high levels of existing development) will be less sensitive.</p>				
<b>Low</b>	<b>Low-Moderate</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Moderate-High</b>	<b>High</b>
Much of the landscape is intensively farmed or developed with little semi-natural habitat coverage and few valued natural features.		There are areas of valued semi-natural habitats and features found in parts of the landscape, whilst other parts are intensively farmed or developed.		Large areas of the landscape are nationally or internationally designated for their nature conservation interest; there is a frequent occurrence of valued natural features across the landscape.
<b>Sense of time depth / historic landscape character</b>				
<p>This considers the extent to which the landscape has 'time-depth' (a sense of being an historic landscape), with reference to the Uttlesford District Historic Environment Project (2009) and/or the presence of heritage assets that are important to landscape character (i.e. Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, protected lanes, archaeological features and remains or other features listed in the landscape character assessment).</p> <p>Landscapes with small-scale, more irregular field patterns of historic origin are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than landscapes with large, regular scale parliamentary field patterns.</p>				
<b>Low</b>	<b>Low-Moderate</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Moderate-High</b>	<b>High</b>
A landscape with relatively few historic features important to the character of the area and little time depth (i.e. large intensively farmed fields).		A landscape with some visible historic features of importance to character, and a variety of time depths.		A landscape with a high density of historic features important to the character of the area and great time depth (i.e. piecemeal enclosure with irregular boundaries, ridge and furrow).
<b>Character and setting of settlement</b>				
<p>This considers the character of existing settlements within the site and considers the extent to which the landscape contributes to the identity and distinctiveness of settlements, by way of its character and/or scenic quality, for example by providing a backdrop/ setting, or playing an</p>				

important part in views from a settlement. This also considers the extent to which the area contributes to a perceived gap between settlements (the loss of which would increase coalescence).				
Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
The site does not contribute positively to the setting of the settlement or play a separation role.		The site provides a rural backdrop to existing settlements, plays some part in views from those settlements, or plays a role in the perception of a gap between settlements.		The site provides an attractive backdrop to existing settlements, plays an important part in views from those settlements, or forms an important part in the perception of a gap between settlements. Development in the site would adversely affect an existing settlement edge (which may be historic or distinctive).
Visual character				
<p>This considers the visual prominence of the site reflecting the extent of openness or enclosure in the landscape (due to landform or land cover), and the degree of intervisibility with the surrounding landscape (i.e. the extent to which potential development would be visible).</p> <p>Visually prominent landscapes are likely to be more sensitive to development than those which are not so visually prominent. Landscapes which are visually prominent and inter-visible with adjacent landscapes (both urban and rural) are likely to be more sensitive to development than those which are more hidden or less widely visible.</p> <p>It also considers the skyline character of the site including whether it forms a visually distinctive skyline or an important undeveloped skyline. Prominent and distinctive and/or undeveloped skylines, or skylines with important landmark features, are likely to be more sensitive to development because new buildings/structures may detract from these skylines as features in the landscape. Important landmark features on the skyline might include historic features or monuments.</p>				
Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
The site is enclosed/visually contained and/or has a low degree of visibility from surrounding landscapes and the site does not form a visually distinctive or important undeveloped skyline		The site is semi-enclosed or has some enclosed and some open areas. It is likely to have some inter-visibility with surrounding landscapes and may have some visually distinctive or undeveloped skylines within the area.		The site is open and/or has a high degree of visibility from surrounding landscapes, and/or the area forms a visually distinctive skyline or an important undeveloped skyline.
Perceptual and scenic qualities (including access and recreation)				
<p>This considers qualities such as the rural character of the landscape (traditional land uses with few modern human influences), scenic qualities, sense of remoteness and/or tranquillity, and the extent of public access via Public Rights of Way and/or Open Access Land.</p> <p>Landscapes that are relatively remote or tranquil (due to freedom from human activity and disturbance and having a perceived naturalness or a traditional rural feel with few modern human influences) tend to increase levels of sensitivity to development compared to landscapes that contain signs of modern development. High scenic value and dark night skies also add to sensitivity in relation to this criterion. This is because development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features (including flood lighting) which may detract from a sense of tranquillity, dark skies and or remoteness/naturalness.</p>				
Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
The site is significantly influenced by development/human activity, where new development would not be out of character. Low or no public access.		A landscape with some sense of rural character, but with some modern elements and human influences. Some Public Rights of Way.		A tranquil or highly rural landscape, with high scenic value, dark skies and a high perceived degree of rural character and naturalness with few modern human influences. Extensive public access via PRoWs / open access land.

### Desk study

**2.16** The first task in the assessment process, following the definition of the 12 assessment sites against the agreed criteria, was to carry out a desk-top analysis. This involved the mapping of multiple data sets within ArcGIS (Geographical Information System) to identify the potential sensitivities of each site.

**2.17** As with all assessments based upon data and information which is to a greater or lesser extent subjective, some caution is required in its interpretation. An assessment of landscape sensitivity is the result of a complex interplay of often unequally weighted variables (i.e. 'criteria'). Each site is assessed against each criterion in turn, with explanatory text indicating features or attributes of lower or higher sensitivity.

**2.18** While the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment provides an initial indication of landscape sensitivity, it should not be interpreted as definitive statements on the suitability of individual sites for a particular development. If a site is taken forward, once a masterplan is developed a comprehensive landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) will be required to guide the master planning process, including opportunities for mitigation and enhancement.

### Field Verification

**2.19** A structured process of field survey verification was undertaken in September 2021 by landscape experts in order to test and refine the outputs from the desk study. Each assessment site was visited to record information and take photographs. The field survey was undertaken from roads and public rights of way to gain an understanding of landscape character sensitivity.

**2.20** The fieldwork focused in particular on the perceptual and scenic character of the landscape.

### Reporting

**2.21** A pilot assessment was produced for agreement with UDC before the full report was prepared.

**2.22** The report for each of the assessment sites is structured as follows:

- An aerial photograph showing the boundary of the site;
- A short description of the site, including any details provided about the proposed number of houses, educational and commercial development;
- An OS map of the site with relevant designations and constraints;
- Representative photographs of the site;
- Landscape sensitivity profile, comprising:

- Description of the landscape character context i.e. which Landscape Character Area(s) the site falls within.
- Criteria-based landscape sensitivity assessment, with a description given against each assessment criterion and its sensitivity;
- A list of the key landscape and visual sensitivities within the site;
- A conclusion with a summary of the differences in sensitivity across the site.

## Chapter 3

# Landscape Guidance

**This section provides generic guidance to help accommodate development within the landscape.**

### Landscape guidance for accommodating residential and employment development in Uttlesford District

**3.1** This guidance should be read in conjunction with the more detailed information provided in the Uttlesford District Council Landscape Character Assessment (2006) and the Essex Design Guide (2018).

**3.2** All development should aim to:

- Utilise existing vegetation or plant new vegetation/trees to assimilate development into the landscape. Cues from the local landscape character should be used to design species and planting patterns.
- Avoid visually prominent locations, where development will be incongruous with the wider landscape context.
- Refer to the published landscape guidance in the Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment (2006), Neighbourhood Plans (in place for Felsted, Great Dunmow, Newport, Quendon and Rickling, and Thaxted) and The Essex Design Guide (2018) for ideas for mitigation and enhancement that will be in character with the landscape.
- Improve access networks and recreational opportunities to enable access to, and enjoyment of, the landscape where possible.
- Ensure the landscape components of the development are in character with the locality, form part of a coherent green infrastructure network and provides ecosystem services including increasing pollinating insects, providing water storage, preventing soil erosion, enhancing water quality and enhancing sense of place.
- Ensure a high quality and responsive design, making reference to the National Design Guide, Building for a Healthy Life and Essex Design Guide, particularly the sections on character and context.

- Be in-keeping with the existing settlement form and vernacular taking into account specific local information including Neighbourhood Plans.
- Where appropriate, use visual representations to understand impact of development proposals – as set out in Landscape Institute's Visual Representation of Development Proposals.
- Take opportunities to mitigate the impact of existing detracting features within the landscape, and where possible enhance landscape character in line with published guidance, including local landscape character assessments.

## Appendix A: Data and information sources



# Appendix A

## Data / information sources

**A.1** The following documents were used to inform the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment:

- Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment (Chris Blandford Associates, 2006)
- Conservation Area Appraisals:
  - Great Chesterford (2007)
  - Great Dunmow (2007)
  - Little Easton (2015)

- Quendon and Rickling (2015)

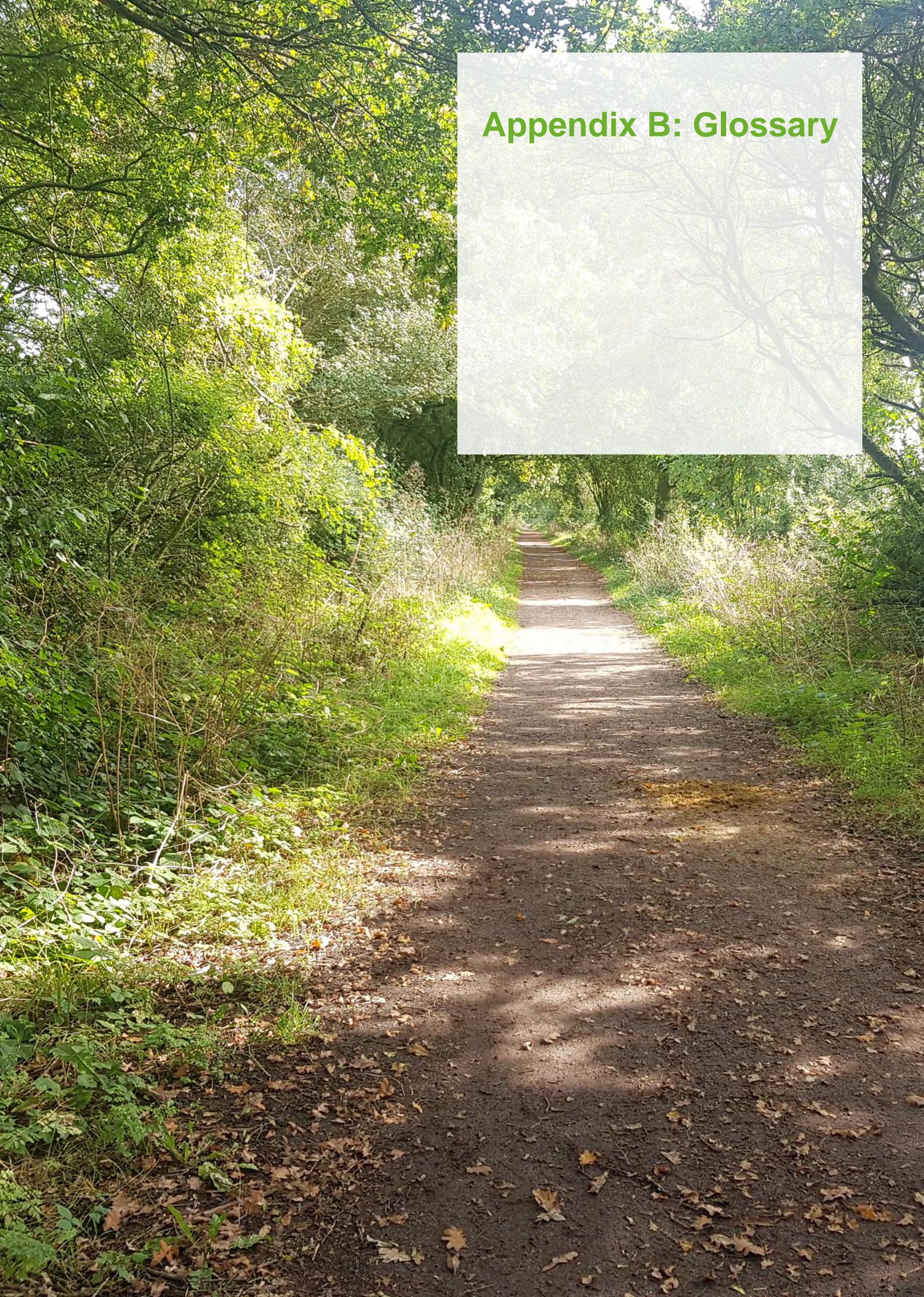
- Uttlesford Protected Lanes Assessment (Essex County Council, 2012)
- Uttlesford Call for Sites (2021) including forms submitted by developers

**A.2** In addition, the following table lists the main datasets collated and analysed in Geographic Information System (GIS) software as a key part of the evidence base for this study.

**Table A.1: GIS considered in the assessment**

GIS layer	Source
<b>Base maps</b>	
Local authority boundaries	Ordnance Survey
Ordnance Survey 1: 25K	Uttlesford Council
Ordnance Survey 1: 50K	Uttlesford Council
Ordnance Survey 1:250k	Ordnance Survey
Aerial imagery	ESRI
<b>Landscape</b>	
National Character Areas	Natural England
Agricultural Land Classification	Natural England
Light pollution	CPRE
Tranquillity	CPRE
CORINE Land Cover	EEA
<b>Historic environment</b>	
Conservation areas	Uttlesford Council
Listed buildings	Historic England
Registered Parks and Gardens	Historic England
Scheduled Monuments	Historic England
Registered battlefields	Historic England

GIS layer	Source
Locally listed buildings	Uttlesford Council
<b>Ecological environment</b>	
Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS)	Uttlesford Council
Priority Habitat Inventory (PHI)	Natural England
Local Nature Reserves (LNR)	Natural England
National Nature Reserves (NNR)	Natural England
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Natural England
Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI)	Natural England
<b>Access and recreation</b>	
Country Parks	Natural England
National Trails	Natural England
National and Regional Cycle Routes	Sustrans
Ordnance Survey Open Greenspace	Ordnance Survey
CRoW Act Open Access Land / Open Country	Natural England
National Trust Land – Always Open / Limited Access	National Trust

A dirt path winds through a dense forest. The path is covered in fallen leaves and leads into the distance. Sunlight filters through the trees, creating dappled light on the ground. The forest is lush with green foliage and tall trees.

## Appendix B: Glossary

# Appendix B

## Glossary

Term	Definition
Ancient woodland	An area of woodland which evidence shows has had continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD and has only been cleared for underwood or timber production. It is an extremely valuable ecological resource, with an exceptionally high diversity of flora and fauna.
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum (sea level)
Arable	Land used for growing crops
Biodiversity	The measure of the variety of organisms present in different ecosystems
Built form	The characteristic nature of built development
Feature	A prominent, eye-catching element (e.g. wooded hilltop, church spire)
Floodplain	The area that would naturally be affected by flooding if a river rises above its banks
GIS	Geographic Information System
Grassland	Land used for grazing. Grassland can be improved (by management practices), semi-improved (modified by management practices with a less diverse range of species than unimproved grasslands), or unimproved (not treated with fertiliser, herbicide or intensively grazed, and consequently has a high species diversity)
Habitat	The natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism
Intact	Not changed or diminished
Land cover	Combinations of land use and vegetation that cover the land surface
Landmark	An object or feature of a landscape that is easily seen and recognised from a distance, especially one that enables someone to establish their location
Landscape	The term refers primarily to the visual appearance of the land, including its shape, form and colours. However, the landscape is not a purely visual phenomenon; its character relies on a whole range of other dimensions, including geology, topography, soils, ecology, archaeology, landscape history, land use, architecture and cultural associations.
Landscape Character Areas (LCAs)	A unique geographic area with a consistent character and identity, which forms part of a landscape character type.
Landscape Character Types (LCTs)	Distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogenous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the district, but share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation, historic land use and settlement pattern.
Landscape value	The relative value that is attached to different landscapes. In a policy context the usual basis for recognising certain highly valued landscapes is through the application of a local or national landscape designation. Yet a landscape may be valued by different communities of interest for many different reasons without any formal

Term	Definition
	designation, recognising, for example, perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness; special cultural associations; the influence and presence of other conservation interests; or the existence of a consensus about importance, either nationally or locally.
Listed building	A building, object or structure that has been judged to be of national importance in terms of architectural or historic interest, designated by Historic England
Local Plan	A development plan prepared by local planning authorities
LSA	Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
LoWS	Local Wildlife Site
Natural character	Character as a result of natural or semi-natural features such as woodland, grassland, hedgerows
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
Nucleated settlement	A settlement that is clustered around a centre, in comparison to a linear or dispersed settlement
OS	Ordnance Survey
Pastoral	Land used for keeping or grazing sheep or cattle
Priority habitat	UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species and habitats were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK BAP. The original lists of UK BAP priority habitats were created between 1995 and 1999 and were subsequently updated in 2007. See <a href="http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5155">http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5155</a> for further information.
Riparian habitat	Riverbank habitat
Scheduled Monument	Nationally important archaeological sites or historic buildings, given protection against unauthorised change.
Semi-natural vegetation	Any type of natural vegetation which has been influenced by human activities, either directly or indirectly
Sense of place	A person's perception of a location's indigenous characteristics, based on the mix of uses, appearance and context that make a place memorable
Sensitive	The response to change or influence
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
Time depth	The time period expressed in the landscape, or the extent to which the landscape reflects a certain time period (a landscape with greater time depth will comprise older elements than a landscape with lesser time depth).
Topography	Combinations of slope and elevation that produce the shape and form of the land surface
Valued landscape attributes	Positive features and characteristics that are important to landscape character and that, if lost, would result in adverse change to the landscape
Vernacular	Buildings constructed in the local style from local materials. Concerned with ordinary rather than monumental buildings