



# Uttlesford Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2023

## Uttlesford District Council

**Draft Report**

Prepared by LUC

October 2023

Version	Status	Prepared	Checked	Approved	Date
1	Final	R Osborne H Germiot M Andrew J Baker	D McNab	D McNab	16.10.23
2					
3					



**Land Use Consultants Limited**

Registered in England. Registered number 2549296. Registered office: 250 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8RD. Printed on 100% recycled paper

Uttlesford Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy

# Contents

<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>6</b>
Introduction	

<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>7</b>
About the Strategy	

What is Green and Blue Infrastructure?	7
How does GBI add value?	10
What is the purpose of this strategy?	12
How did we prepare this strategy?	12

<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>15</b>
Uttlesford's GBI Context	

Policy Context	16
Uttlesford Context	19
Uttlesford GBI Network – Strengths and Challenges	23
Theme 1: Nature rich, beautiful places	23
Theme 2: Active and healthy places	35
Theme 3: Thriving and prosperous places	45
Theme 4: Improved water management	51

<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>59</b>
Vision and Objectives	
Objectives	

<b>Chapter 5</b>	<b>61</b>
------------------	-----------

## Contents

### Strategic Opportunities

Focus Area 1: North Uttlesford	67
Focus Area 2: South Uttlesford	84
Focus Area 3: Thaxted	109
District-wide strategic opportunities	119

## **Chapter 6** **129**

### Policy Implementation

Introduction	129
Embedding GBI in the new Local Plan	129
Green and blue infrastructure standards	137
Monitoring processes	142

## **Chapter 7** **144**

### Supplementary Guidance

Delivering GBI on new sites: a 'checklist' for planners and developers	145
Other tools to support GBI in the planning and design process	152

## **Appendix A** **155**

### Glossary

## **Appendix B** **162**

### Uttlesford's Policy Context

Nature rich, beautiful places	162
Active and healthy places	165
Thriving and prosperous places	168

**Contents**

Improved water management 170  
Resilient and climate positive places 172

**Appendix C 177**  
Uttlesford’s Main Settlements - Existing GBI Assets

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

**1.1** Welcome to the Uttlesford Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy.

**1.2** This report sets out the potential for delivering GBI priorities as part of Uttlesford's Local Plan. Produced with Uttlesford District Council, the strategy builds on previous work, existing data and targeted stakeholder consultation to present the current strengths and challenges associated with Uttlesford's GBI network. It also sets out a series of strategic opportunities to enhance the network, focussing on a number of priority areas. The strategy also provides design guidance for new GBI within allocated development sites identified in Uttlesford's draft Local Plan; and advice on GBI planning policy and monitoring.

**1.3** An online [interactive map](#) is available to view alongside this report to provide additional information and context.

# Chapter 2

## About the Strategy

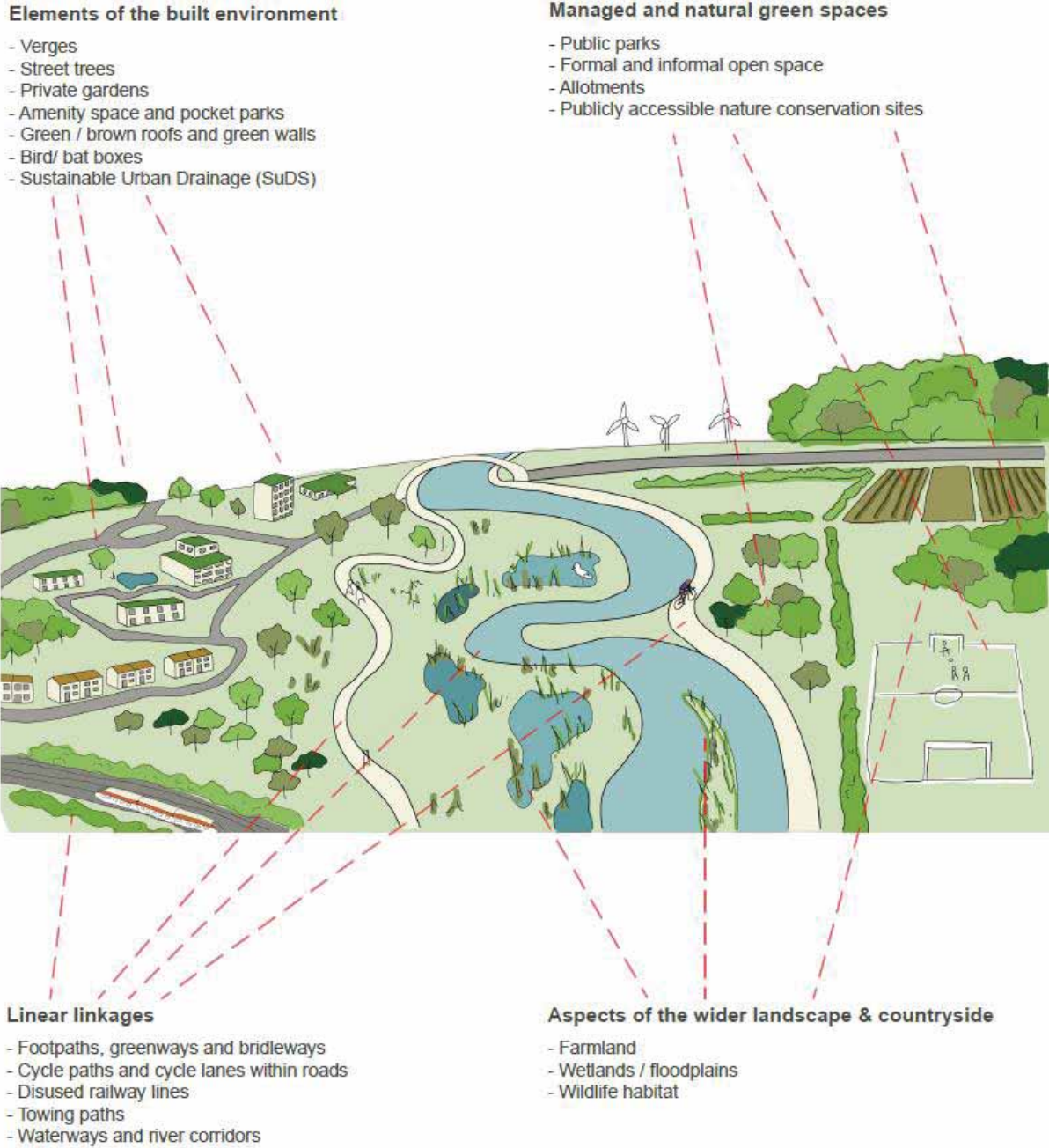
### What is Green and Blue Infrastructure?

**2.1** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) as ‘a network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity’.

**2.2** Elements of a GBI network can include:

- Managed and natural greenspace: public parks and gardens, recreation, sports pitches and play space, nature conservation sites, woodland, allotments and community gardens
- Linear linkages and corridors: footpaths, promoted walking routes and cycles routes, railway lines and river corridors
- Elements of the built environment: roadside verges, street trees, public realm, private gardens, greening features (such as green walls, green roofs and parklets) and sustainable drainage systems (such as rain gardens and swales)
- Aspects of the wider landscape and countryside: farmland, wetlands/floodplains and wildlife habitats

# Infographic 2.1: Elements of a Green and Blue Infrastructure Network



**2.3** More important than the individual elements are the connections between those assets and the functions they provide. Crucially, GBI should form a strategic network of high-quality green spaces and other natural features, which offer quality of life benefits for communities as well as supporting nature



recovery. It should thread through and around the built environment and connect the urban area to its wider rural framework.

**2.4** Unlike grey infrastructure, such as roads and drainage pipes, which tend to have a single function, GBI can deliver multiple functions or benefits. These include recreation, health and wellbeing, removing water pollution, providing homes for wildlife, providing flowers for bees and other pollinators and helping to keep urban areas cool.

### Infographic 2.2: Benefits of Green and Blue Infrastructure



**2.5** Benefits of Green and Blue Infrastructure include:

- Improving residents' and visitors' physical and mental health.
- Aesthetic value and reinforcing sense of place.
- Play, education and interaction with nature.

- Improving air quality and noise regulation.
- Active transport opportunities, such as walking and cycling.
- Reducing the risk of flooding and improving water quality.
- Opportunities for community growing of plants, herbs fruit and vegetables.
- Increased economic activity and attractiveness to inward investment.
- Space for biodiversity and improved ecological resilience.
- Opportunities for social interactions and community cohesion.
- Carbon sequestration and mitigating climate change.
- Urban cooling, natural air conditioning and shading.

## How does GBI add value?

**2.6** Green and Blue Infrastructure has often been treated within the planning and development system as a cost. However new approaches – such as the ‘natural capital’ approach – have helped to better understand the tangible value of investment in GBI.

**2.7** Natural capital refers to all elements of the natural environment (including soils, rivers, woodland and air) that humans get value from. A natural capital approach considers the value of the natural environment for people and the economy, looking at it in terms of assets (e.g. woodlands) and the benefits that flow from them. It recognises that nature should be seen as a large economic sector in its own right. This approach is an important part of a wider move to better understand ‘inclusive wealth’ – as set out in the Dasgupta Review commissioned by the government in 2021. [\[See reference 1\]](#)

**2.8** The UK’s Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) [\[See reference 2\]](#) states that “Green infrastructure is a natural capital asset that provides multiple benefits, at a range of scales. For communities, these benefits can include enhanced wellbeing, outdoor recreation and access, enhanced biodiversity and

landscapes, food and energy production, urban cooling, and the management of flood risk. These benefits are also known as ecosystem services”.

**2.9** This value is largely made up of:

- Provisioning services – products from nature such as food, water, energy and materials. This includes agriculture, water extraction, renewable energy and mineral extraction.
- Regulating services – services helping to maintain the quality of our environment, such as carbon sequestration to remove greenhouse gases, parks and blue spaces to cool, and vegetation to remove air pollutants.
- Cultural services – these are non-material benefits people obtain from natural capital, such as tourism, recreation and aesthetic experience.

### Infographic 2.3: Types of Ecosystem Services



**2.10** The Office for National Statistics (ONS) now produces a set of Natural Capital accounts. These estimate the financial and societal value of natural capital assets based on the contributions to people and the economy of all of the ecosystem services currently able to be valued. In 2020, they estimated that the stock of England’s natural capital is worth £1.4 trillion. The value of cultural services, predominantly recreation and tourism, and health benefits is particularly significant [\[See reference 3\]](#).

## What is the purpose of this strategy?

**2.11** This strategy has been produced to inform the GBI policy and design principles within the Uttlesford District Council's draft Local Plan, which will be published for consultation (first draft Regulation 18 version) in autumn 2023.

**2.12** The strategy forms the basis for a subsequent GBI delivery plan which will be additionally informed by the outcomes of the Local Plan consultation and further targeted consultation on the identified GBI opportunities.

## How did we prepare this strategy?

**2.13** This strategy has been developed using a three stage process and with ongoing engagement from key stakeholders.

**2.14** Firstly, baseline data was collated and analysed, including mapping data to build a picture of the Uttlesford context, what the current GBI network in Uttlesford looks like and what its main strengths and challenges are. Secondly, this understanding was used to produce a vision for GBI in Uttlesford and a set of objectives which support this vision.

**2.15** A set of three focus areas which reflect the areas identified for the production of 'area strategies' within the emerging Local Plan were identified for consistency between the GBI strategy and the Local Plan. Within each focus area several opportunities which will help to meet the objectives established for GBI in Uttlesford were identified. In addition to this several district-wide opportunities were identified which further enhance those identified in the focus areas and

**2.16** Finally, GBI policy recommendations for the draft Uttlesford Local Plan are provided to help enhance and create GBI as part of new development. A set of GBI design principles and accompanying checklist are provided to make clear

to developers what will be expected of them when preparing GBI proposals for new development.

**2.17** The strategy currently excludes an action plan which will be developed subsequently, informed by both the outcomes of the regulation 18 consultation on the Local Plan and possible GBI specific consultation.

**2.18** Natural England (NE) published a Green Infrastructure Framework in early 2023. The production of the strategy has followed Natural England’s process journey for Local Planning Authorities for developing a Green Infrastructure Strategy using the Green Infrastructure Framework principles and standards for England.

## A Themed Approach

**2.19** The NE GI Framework aims to support equitable access to greenspace across the country, with an overarching target for everyone being able to reach good quality greenspace in their local area. NE identify five key benefit principles of GBI. To establish a comprehensive baseline and be consistent with the GI Framework, a themed approach which reflects these principles has been used here. The five themes are outlined below.

### Nature rich beautiful places

**2.20** This theme explores areas requiring protection, connection, creation and enhancement, providing a framework for resilient networks of habitats and nature recovery.



## Active and healthy places

This theme examines how GI assets can provide health and societal benefits, including connections to nature and high-quality open space. This theme also explores active travel, the public right of way and informal countryside access network and the value it can play in the provision of recreational opportunities.



## Thriving and prosperous places

**2.21** This theme explores Uttlesford's distinctive character, including its historic towns and villages and wider agricultural landscape. It explores opportunities for associated economic development and enhanced social cohesion.



## Improved water management

**2.22** This theme examines Uttlesford's network of rivers, watercourses and sustainable drainage systems and the habitats they provide. It also addresses issues of flooding, water quality and water scarcity and opportunities associated with natural flood management.



## Resilient and climate positive places

**2.23** This cross-cutting theme explores how GBI can be used to mitigate the effects of climate change such as increased flood risk in winter and water shortages and extreme heat events in summer, as well as adaptation and improved resilience against these effects.



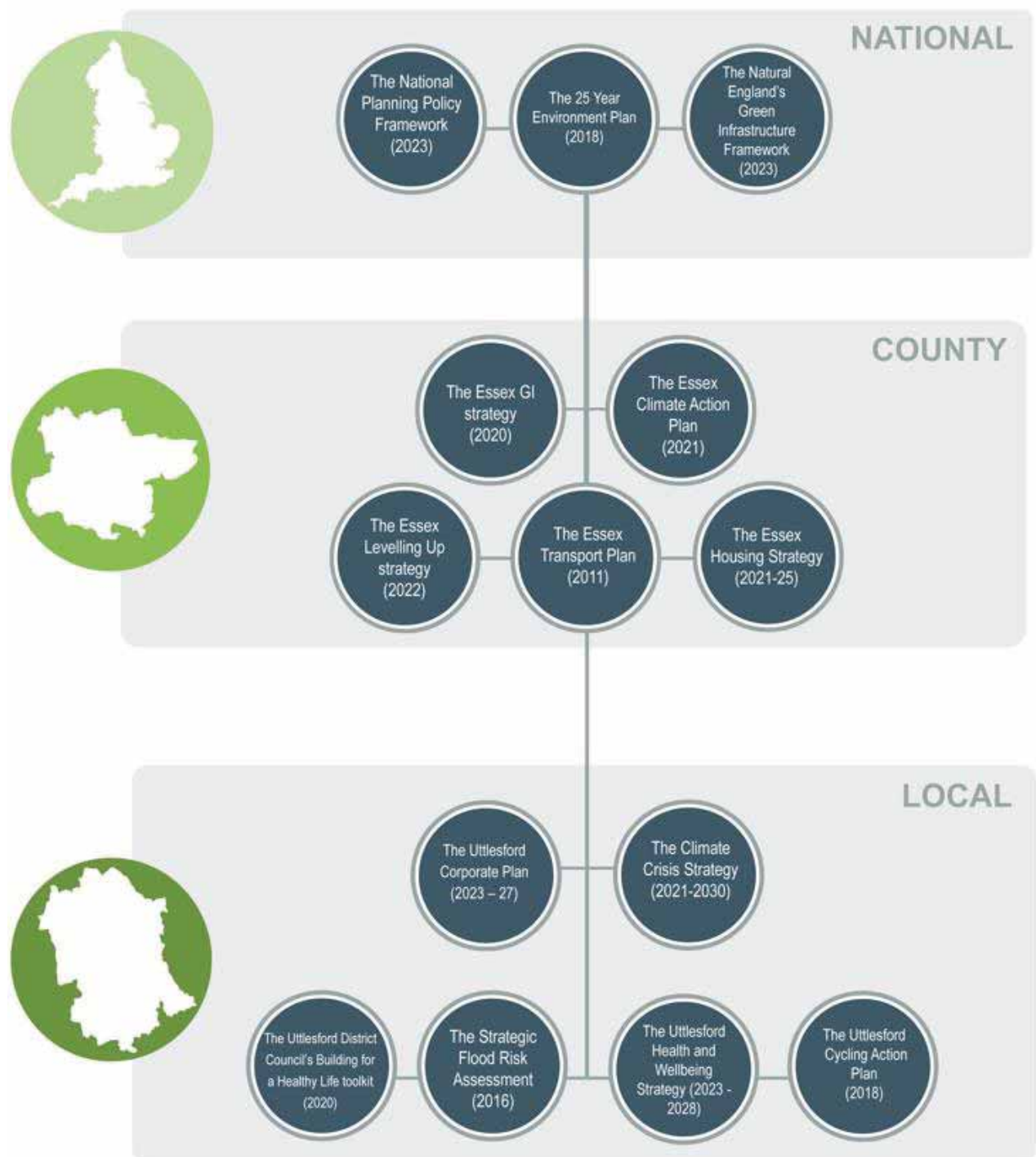
## Chapter 3

# Uttlesford's GBI Context

**3.1** This chapter provides the context to Uttlesford's GBI network. It summarises the policy context at a national, regional and local level, provides an overview of the landscape character and key GBI features seen across the district and then provides a more in-depth summary of Uttlesford's GBI network across the five GBI themes (as summarised in Chapter 2). Given the cross-cutting nature of the Resilient and Climate Positive Places theme, the context in relation to this theme is covered within the sections on each of the other themes.

# Policy Context

**Infographic 3.1: Policy Context at National, Regional and Local levels**





**3.2** A high-level summary of key plans and policies at a national, County and local level, relevant to Uttlesford's GBI context, is provided in this section, broken down by GBI theme. All plans reviewed are outlined in the infographic above and further detail is set out in **Appendix B: Uttlesford's Policy Context**.

- **Nature rich, beautiful places:** At national level, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023; section 15 on conserving and enhancing the natural environment), the UK Government's 25 Year Environment Plan (25YEP) (2018) and Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework [See reference 4] set standards for enhancing habitat networks, embedding the principle of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and supporting nature recovery. At a County level, the Essex GI Strategy (2020) [See reference 5] and Essex Climate Action Plan (2021) [See reference 6] set out the plan for GBI, meeting net-zero and habitat creation at a county level. Within Uttlesford, the UDC Healthy Life toolkit [See reference 7], Uttlesford Corporate Plan 2023-2027 [See reference 8] and Uttlesford Climate Crisis Strategy 2021-2030 [See reference 9] promote the natural environment and programmes to increase biodiversity locally. At the time of writing, the Draft Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 – 2041 (Regulation 18) includes a number of related core policies including Policy 38: The Natural Environment, 39: Green and Blue Infrastructure, 40: Biodiversity and 41: Landscape Character.
- **Active and healthy places:** At national level, the NPPF aims to promote healthy and safe communities and address local health and wellbeing needs. The 25YEP also aims to better connect people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing. At a County level, the Essex GI strategy focuses on delivering active and healthy places and the Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026 [See reference 10] looks to facilitate physical activity within people's everyday lives. The Essex Levelling Up Strategy (2022) [See reference 11] and Essex Transport Plan (2011) [See reference 12] encourage active travel and support mental and physical wellbeing. At local level, UDC have also created the Building for a Healthy Life toolkit [See reference 13] best practice guidance for developers. Other local strategies that support active and healthy lifestyles include the Uttlesford Corporate Plan 2023-27, the Climate Crisis Strategy (2021-2030), Uttlesford Cycling Action Plan (2018) [See reference 14], Uttlesford Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2023-28)

**[See reference 15]** and the new Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) which is under development. At the time of writing, the Draft Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 – 2041 (Regulation 18) includes a number of related core policies including Policy 5: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services, 66: Planning for Health and 67: Open Space.

- **Thriving and prosperous places:** Nationally, the NPPF and Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework seek to address barriers to investment and support neighbourhoods with high-quality environments. Within Essex, the Essex GI Strategy supports local landscape character and heritage whilst the Essex Levelling Up Strategy aims to improve access to green jobs, improve education opportunities and support local communities. At local level, the Uttlesford Corporate Plan (2023-2017) also aims to promote green business, encourage positive planning, and preserve heritage within Uttlesford. At the time of writing, the Draft Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 – 2041 (Regulation 18) includes a number of related core policies including Policies 45 – 51 which relate to the protection and development of employment opportunities, retail and town centres, and tourism and the visitor economy and Policies 62 – 65 which cover the protection and enhancement of cultural heritage.
- **Improved water management:** At national level, the NPPF and the 25YEP set standards for water management and water quality, as well as flood risk. At a County level, the Essex GI strategy sets out planning principles for natural flood management and the Essex Climate Action Plan aims to improve communities' resilience to flooding and tackle issues with water scarcity and quality. At local level, UDC's Building for a Healthy Life toolkit includes guidance on SuDS in new development. The Catchment flood Management Plans (CFMP) **[See reference 16]** for the district also outline long-term sustainable flood-risk management strategies. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) **[See reference 17]** has also been undertaken for the district. At the time of writing, the Draft Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 – 2041 (Regulation 18) includes a number of related core policies including Policy 34: Water Supply and Protection of Water Resources, 35: Chalk Streams Protection and Enhancement, 36: Flood Risk and 37: SuDS.

- **Resilient and climate positive places:** At national level, the NPPF and the 25YEP include goals to mitigate and adapt to climate change and Natural England's GI Framework outlines how green infrastructure can support these aims. Within Essex, the Essex GI Strategy and Essex Climate Action Plan include planning principles and targets relating to the creation of resilient and climate positive places. The Essex Housing Strategy 2021-2025 also sets out net zero carbon requirements for new and existing homes. Within Uttlesford, the Uttlesford Corporate Plan 2023-2027 and Climate Crisis Strategy 2021-2030 both support priorities that relate to climate mitigation, low carbon development, improved air quality and pollution reduction. At the time of writing, the Draft Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 – 2041 (Regulation 18) includes a number of related core policies including Policy 1: Addressing Climate Change, Policies 22-24 which relate to embodied and operational carbon, heating and net-zero targets, and Policy 26: Renewable Energy Infrastructure.

## Uttlesford Context

**3.3** Uttlesford District is situated in the north east of the County of Essex. It is a predominantly rural district and comprises the two historic market towns of Saffron Walden and Thaxted and around 100 villages set in an attractive agricultural landscape. Other important local centres include Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet.

**3.4** A local Landscape Character Assessment is currently being prepared for Uttlesford which splits the district into three landscape character types (Chalk Upland; Farmland Plateau and River Valley) and 19 landscape character areas (see figure 1).

**3.5** Chalk upland areas to the north west of the district are characterised by a strongly rolling landform of broad, round-backed ridges, large scale arable farmland, distinctive elevated, expansive and open character with panoramic views from ridgetops. There are dispersed blocks of woodland and isolated

copses and there is a sparse settlement pattern of small linear villages along stream courses and hamlets with greens.

**3.6** Areas within the River Valleys landscape type, along the rivers of the River Cam, Stort and Pant, are defined by their key characteristics of U-shaped or shallow landform, with a flat or gently undulating valley floor and a contrast between intimate and wooded character on the valley floor and open character on the valley sides where settlements are also concentrated.

**3.7** Farmland Plateau character types located across the majority of the district are characterised by elevated, gently rolling landscapes incised by river valleys, medium to large enclosed predominantly arable fields, pockets of woodland, including areas of semi-natural and ancient woodland and a network of winding minor roads.

**3.8** The M11 runs north-south through Uttlesford, connecting the district with Cambridge to the north and London to the south. The A120 is another key transport corridor in the District, running east-west and connecting Bishops Stortford with Braintree. London Stansted international airport is located in the south west of the District. Uttlesford is also well-connected to the railway network by the West Anglia Main Line, which runs between London and Cambridge stopping at Stansted Mountfitchet, London Stansted Airport, Elsenham, Newport, Audley End and Great Chesterford.

**3.9** Uttlesford contains the headwaters of three river catchment areas (Great Ouse, North Essex and Thames) with several rivers passing north-south through the District. The primary watercourses comprise the River Cam (and its tributaries the Slade and Bourn), Pant, Chelmer, Roding and Stort. These 'blue corridors' have numerous tributaries, most often set within agricultural fields; they have significant potential as continuous belts of aquatic, wetland terrestrial habitats.

**3.10** While Uttlesford's rural nature means that there is a significant amount of open, undeveloped space, pockets of priority habitats including woodland are fragmented and sparse. While there are no internationally designated sites,

there are 7 nationally designated sites (SSSI and NNR) as well as several Local Wildlife sites, and protected verges. There are also important habitats including Ancient Woodland, Floodplain Grazing Marsh and Chalk Streams.

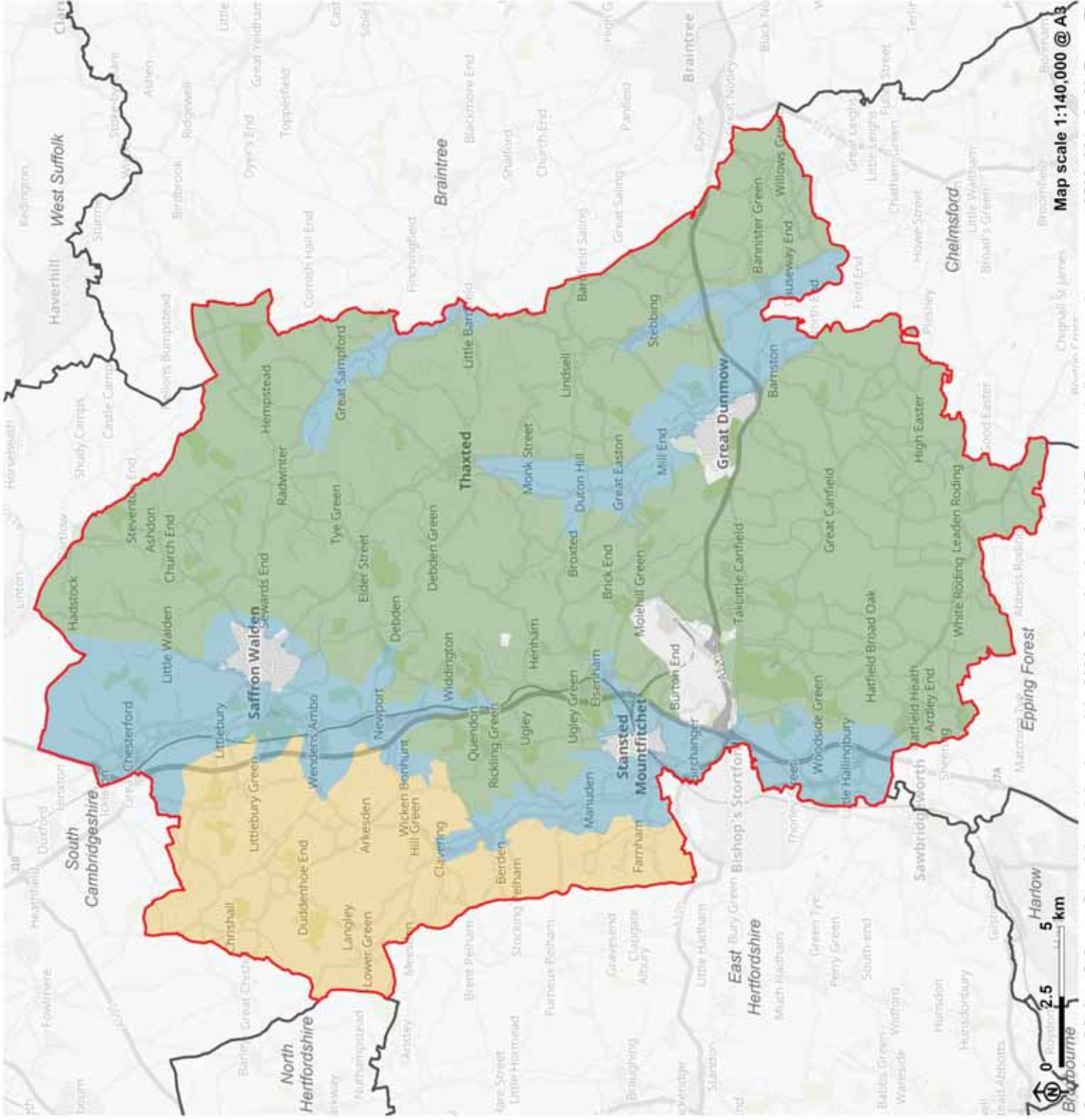
**3.11** There are two Country Parks in Uttlesford, Hatfield Forest – a former Royal Hunting Forest - and Flich Way - a 15-mile recreational route following the former railway line from Braintree to Bishops Stortford. These two district-scale greenspaces are located within the south of the district.

**3.12** In 2021 Uttlesford had a population of 91,300 **[See reference 18]**. Between the 2011 and 2021 census there was a 14.9% population increase in Uttlesford, which is significantly higher than the average increase across England of 6.6% and in the East of England of 8.3%. Uttlesford also has a rapidly ageing population with a 36.3% increase in people aged 65 years and older compared to an England average of 20.1%.

**3.13** Uttlesford residents experience excellent health and wellbeing outcomes overall, albeit with some disparities across the district. It was recently reported as the happiest place to live in Essex and one of the happiest in the UK **[See reference 19]**. However the increasingly ageing and growing population will put new pressures on the district's infrastructure and services including GBI and recreational spaces.

Figure 1: Uttlesford Landscape Character Types

- Uttlesford
- Landscape Character Type**
- Chalk Upland
- Farmland Plateau
- River Valley



Map scale 1:140,000 @ A3

## Uttlesford GBI Network – Strengths and Challenges

**3.14** The following sections of the report outline each of Natural England's GI Framework themes and why they are important before exploring the key strengths and challenges of Uttlesford's GBI network against each of these themes.

### Theme 1: Nature rich, beautiful places

#### Importance of theme

**3.15** Sustaining high levels of biodiversity is essential to building climate resilience into our ecosystems and landscapes. Ensuring connectivity between habitats is also important. The Lawton Review [\[See reference 20\]](#) highlighted the importance of better connecting areas of habitat to allow species to colonise new microhabitats and microclimates, therefore allowing for enhanced climate resilience. It also called for the creation of 'more' habitats, 'bigger' habitats (expanding on existing core sites) and 'better' habitats (improving the quality of existing core sites).

**3.16** The 2005 UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment report established that more than 60% of ecosystems worldwide were in the process of deteriorating [\[See reference 21\]](#). Within the UK, the 2023 State of Nature report also evidences a dramatic decline in biodiversity, and notes that this as an accelerating trend [\[See reference 22\]](#). As climate change continues to intensify, establishing spaces and networks which nurture and protect biodiversity has become critical.

**3.17** Green and blue corridors throughout the landscape should enhance the existing nature network, and bolster biodiversity. This is supported by the

increasing emphasis on embedding biodiversity in our landscapes, with legislation establishing requirements for Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) and, as a contributing delivery mechanism for this, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

**The Nature Recovery Network (NRN)** is a UK government commitment to establish an England-wide NRN to restore and enhance wildlife-rich places in order to tackle biodiversity loss, climate change and wellbeing. The NRN will be delivered through LNRS, which inform targeted action and investment in nature.

**Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS)** propose how and where to recover nature and improve the wider environment across England. Preparation of the plans will be carried out by 48 responsible authorities who will determine local priorities for nature recovery. Essex County Council is responsible for producing the Essex LNRS which includes Uttlesford district. This is currently in development.

**Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)** is a key mechanism developed by the UK Government to contribute to the recovery of nature while developing land. It will ensure that there is a net gain in habitat value after development. It is a requirement under the 2021 Environment Act that all local planning authorities will be required to set requirements for BNG in new developments, with an increase of at least 10%, for a minimum legacy period of 30 years.

**3.18** The Natural England GI Framework notes the following aspects of green infrastructure as necessary to achieving nature-rich and beautiful places:

- “Aim to strengthen ecological networks and reduce fragmentation of habitats,
- Help to deliver BNG requirements,



- Contribute to cross species objectives such as pollinator strategies,
- Integrate with the NRN and LNRS,
- Help to achieve targeted individual species recovery,
- Maintain and enhance geodiversity assets,
- Reduce soil degradation and loss,
- How to map and reference allocated growth sites without stating that they are a given
- Be designed to deliver multiple benefits including landscapes that have a distinct sense of place” **[See reference 23]**.

## Strengths and challenges in Uttlesford

### Designated sites

**3.19** Designated sites form the core of a nature network. Sites are not considered individually but as a network between which species disperse or migrate throughout their lifecycle and in response to climate change. The location of all of the designated sites within the district can be viewed in the [interactive mapping](#) (see data layers ‘Local wildlife sites’, ‘Local Nature Reserve’, ‘National Nature Reserve’ and ‘Sites of Specific Scientific Interest’ in Nature rich, beautiful places tab) and on figures 2 and 3.

**3.20** In Uttlesford there are ten Special Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI) (see figure 2). 51.9% the total SSSI units are in a favourable condition, those in an unfavourable condition have been assessed to be under grazed or inappropriately cut and would benefit from improved management (see ‘Sites of Special Scientific Interest Units’ data layer in Nature rich, beautiful places tab in [interactive mapping](#)). Most of these sites are woodland, with only two characterised by other habitat types – Ashton Meadows SSSI is characterised by unimproved grassland managed as hay meadows, and Debden Water SSSI

by the freshwater stream valley, associated marginal, grassland and woodland mosaic.

**3.21** Hatfield Forest is a nationally important area of ancient woodland within the district, located directly south of Stansted airport. Designated as a SSSI and National Nature Reserve (NNR) for its wide range of intact woodland habitats, it is also the only remaining area of medieval Royal Hunting Forest in the country and supports other highly valued habitats such as wood pasture and fen. Hatfield Forest is also a Country Park, being of both environmental and cultural importance and the largest area of woodland in the district (approximately 400 ha). It forms a large part of the area's access to district-scale open green space and is a critical wellbeing resource. However, it is subject to a high level of recreational pressure and the SSSI is, overall, assessed as 'unfavourable recovering'. It is subject to active management by the National Trust and a wider mitigation strategy agreed with relevant local authorities.

**3.22** In addition to Hatfield Forest, a second NNR is Hales Wood in the north of the district, which is predominantly comprised of ancient woodland. NNR contribute to the national level network. The designation relates not only to nature conservation but also to people's enjoyment and understanding of these sites.

**3.23** The Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) network comprises wildlife-rich sites that connect, buffer and, to some degree, dilute pressure on the SSSI network of the district. The distribution of the LWS is relatively even across the district, with a slightly higher density of sites alongside the course of the river Cam and tributaries, towards the north (see figure 3). The LWS network safeguards almost half of the Priority Habitat Inventory (PHI) habitats in the district and 61% of ancient woodland, with the rest mostly protected under SSSI designation.

**3.24** There are more than 100 Special Roadside Verges (SRV) in Essex as a whole. As remnants of larger grasslands, now lost to agricultural intensification and development, the SRV constitute important yet scarce assets, both in their own right, and as linear connecting grasslands. SRV provide habitat to species of national and local conservation importance and are managed under cutting

programmes tailored to the species composition. SRV around Saffron Walden and Chrishall, for example, represent the most significant stock of chalk grassland plant species remaining in Essex; true calcareous grassland is rare in the county.

**3.25** The Flitch Way disused rail corridor is the sole Local Nature Reserve (LNR) within Uttlesford, traversing the east-west reflecting its importance to nature conservation and people's enjoyment and understanding of these sites.

## Priority habitats and connectivity

**3.26** Natural England (NE) Priority Habitat Inventory (PHI) mapping captures the national distribution of habitats of principal importance. The NE habitat network mapping derived from this illustrates the zones of habitat restoration, creation and enhancement developed using a consistent methodology and informs the development of the national nature recovery network. Figure 4 illustrates the nature and distribution of each priority habitat type across the district, and Figure 5 illustrates the associated NE habitat network mapping. Priority habitats across the district comprises 9% of landcover (see also 'Priority Habitat Inventory' data in the Nature rich, beautiful places tab in the [interactive mapping](#)). Of this, the most prevalent priority habitat type is deciduous woodland, followed by semi-improved grassland. Protected species identified as a conservation priority within the Essex Biodiversity Action Plan and supported by these habitat types include oxlip, dormouse, stag beetles, skylark, water voles, great crested newts and Pipistrelle bats, among others.

**3.27** The existing habitat network across the district is fragmented (see figure 5 and Defra's 'Habitat Network' mapping layer in the Nature rich, beautiful places tab in the [interactive mapping](#)). This is particularly pronounced in the north and east surrounding Thaxted, where areas of priority habitat or ancient woodland are small and dispersed, separated by large areas of arable land. In the south, particularly near Hatfield Forest, there are more joined up areas of woodland and waterways. When linked, these patches provide increased wildlife mobility.

**3.28** Calcareous and chalk grassland is not identified in the PHI mapping, however this is an important habitat in the District. Chalk soils underlie the north-western extents of the district, and remnants of species-rich grassland can be found in verges in this area.

**3.29** Habitats will be put under increasing pressure by the impacts of climate change; high levels of fragmentation reduce the resilience of habitats against these impacts.

## Woodland cover

**3.30** Uttlesford is a largely agricultural and rural district. Arable land cover in the district sits at 97%, compared to 61% in Essex overall. The existing network of woodland and open habitats is distributed, broadly throughout, but is fragmented and sparse (see 'Corine Land Cover Europe (2018)' data in the Nature rich, beautiful places tab in the [interactive mapping](#) to see the different types of land use in Uttlesford).

**3.31** Woodland coverage within the district sits at 6.1%, a lower average figure compared with the wider region. Despite this, there is a higher concentration of ancient woodland than other areas in the county [**See reference 24**]. Ancient woodland occurs scattered throughout the rural district. Hatfield Forest SSSI (330 ha) represents the most substantial area with the next largest of Hempstead Wood (Hempstead, 46 ha), Prior's Wood (Widdington, 46 ha) and High Wood (Great Dunmow, 42 ha). The remaining ancient woodlands are smaller than 40 ha, with 76% of them being smaller than 15ha. The scattered distribution of ancient woodland lies within the wider mosaic of deciduous woodland, wood pasture and parkland, and traditional orchards which expand, buffer and connect the network. These habitats of canopy cover follow a similar scattered distribution but with clustering through the Stort Valley between Hatfield Forest to Little Chesterford, and arcing west from Elsenham and from Hatfield Forest to Great Dunmow. Woodland cover has diminished over the past century, particularly within areas of intense agricultural use.

**3.32** Ancient and/or species-rich hedgerows and green lanes are recognised as a significant habitat resource as well as offering linear connectivity. Hedgerow's have been subject to removal and ploughing over due to the intensive nature of agricultural practices seen in areas of the District [See reference 25]. As seen in the 'Priority Habitat Inventory' data in the Nature rich, beautiful places tab in the [interactive mapping](#), there is a higher concentration of woodland in and along the River Cam and its tributaries, forming a roughly assembled corridor running north-south from Great Chesterford through to Hatfield Forest, south of Stansted.

**3.33** Within larger settlements across the district such as Saffron Walden, street trees comprise most of the tree coverage. Parks and other undesignated green spaces provide additional publicly accessible green spaces and tree cover. Within historic town centres such as Saffron Walden and Thaxted hardscape is more dominant, with limited space for urban woodlands or street trees.

**3.34** Low tree coverage in the District means limited climate change mitigation and adaptation benefits including carbon storage and sequestration, reduction of flood risk, improved air quality and shade/temperature moderation.

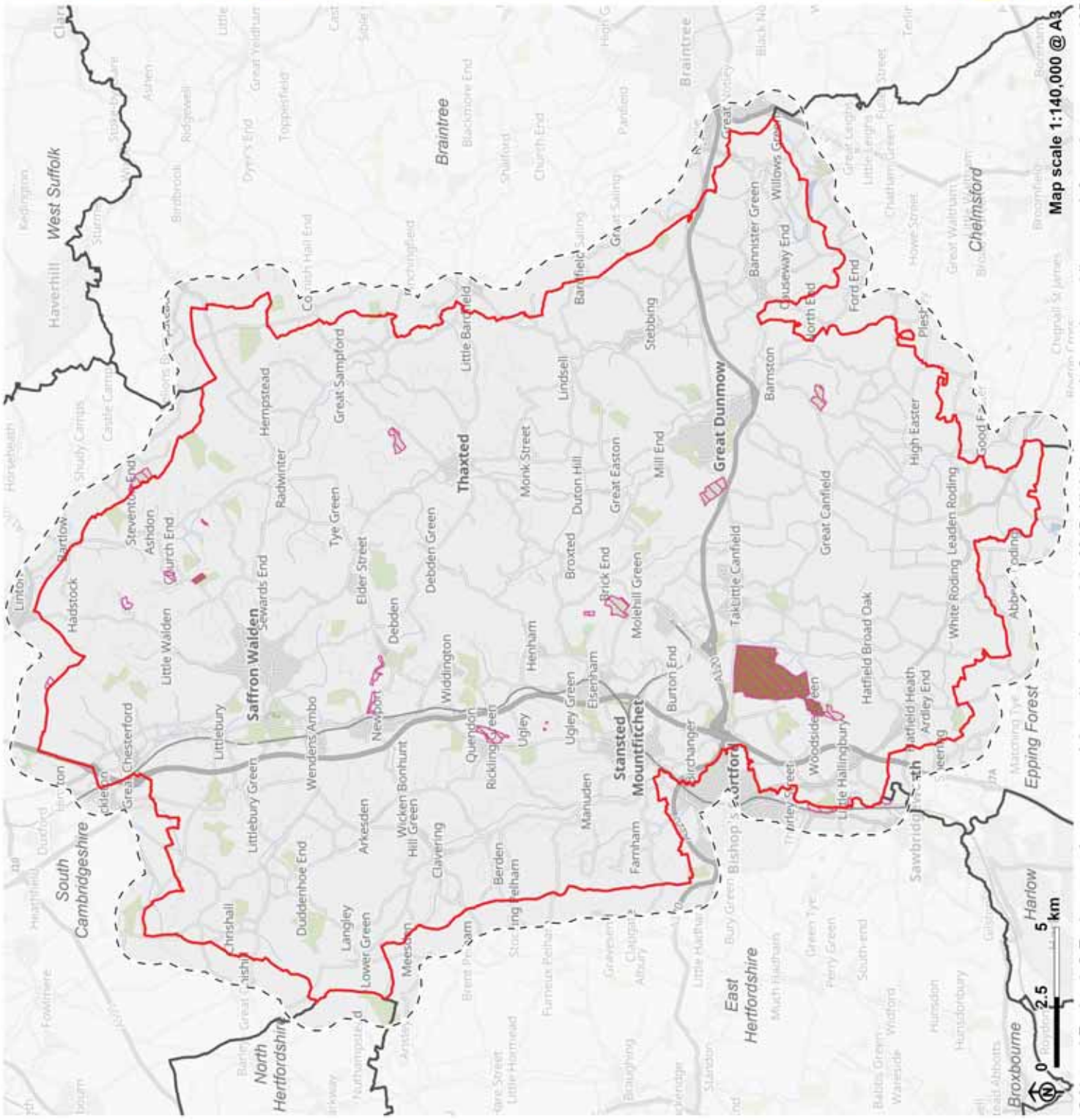
## Summary of Key Issues

- Tree cover is low, particularly in areas of intensively farmed landscape in the north and east of the district. Low tree cover is limiting the climate adaptation and mitigation benefits provided by trees.
- Many SSSI's are in an unfavourable condition due to inappropriate agricultural cutting or mowing or inappropriate grazing practices.
- Hatfield Forest's ancient woodland provides a critical piece of the GBI network but is subject to significant recreational pressure and links to the surrounding network are limited.
- Habitat connectivity throughout the district is poor, particularly in the landscape surrounding Thaxted and Saffron Walden. This fragmentation

will increase the vulnerability of priority habitats to the effects of climate change.

Figure 2: National designated site network

- Uttlesford
- Uttlesford 1km buffer
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- National Nature Reserves



Condition of SSSI units within Uttlesford



Map scale 1:140,000 @ A3

Figure 3: Local designated sites

- Uttlesford
- Uttlesford 1km buffer
- Local Wildlife Site
- Local Nature Reserve
- Road verges
- Priority Habitat Inventory**
- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh
- Deciduous woodland
- Good quality semi-improved grassland
- Lowland calcareous grassland
- No main habitat but additional habitats present
- Traditional orchard

Local designation	Number of sites in Uttlesford	Area (hectares)
Local Nature Reserve	1	34.9
Local Wildlife Site	300	1853.5
Roadside verge	67	26.1

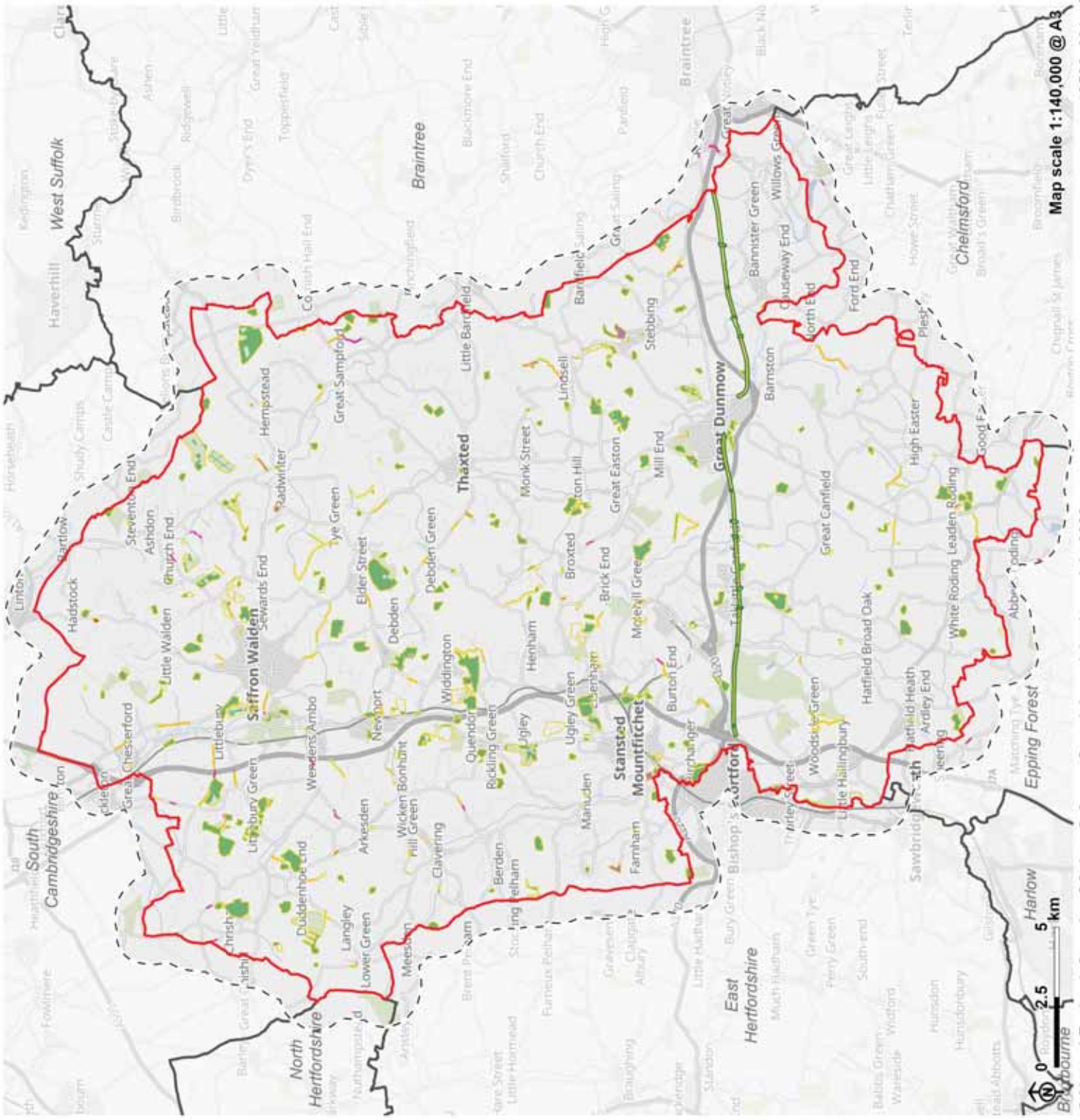
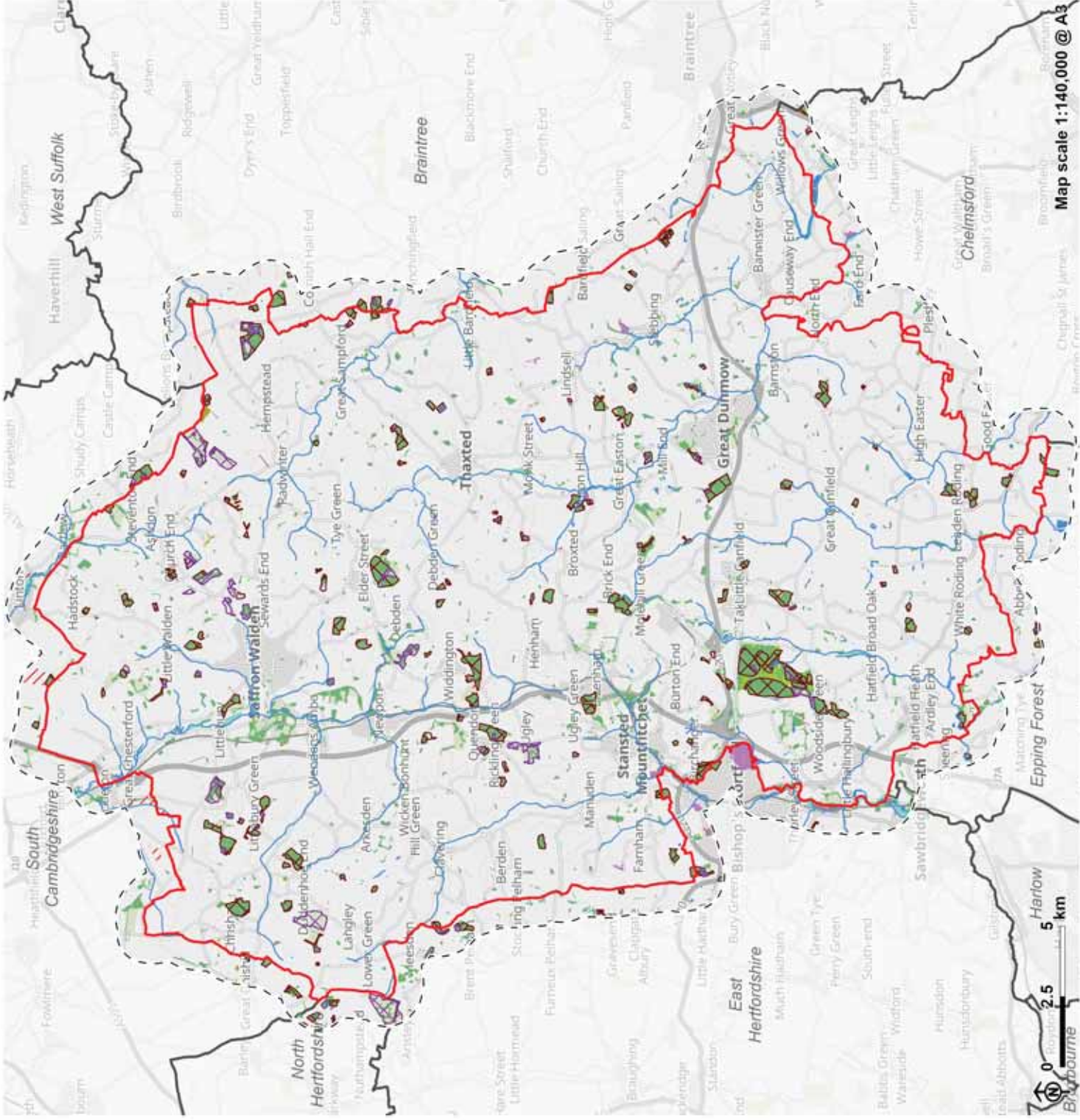




Figure 4: Notable and priority habitats

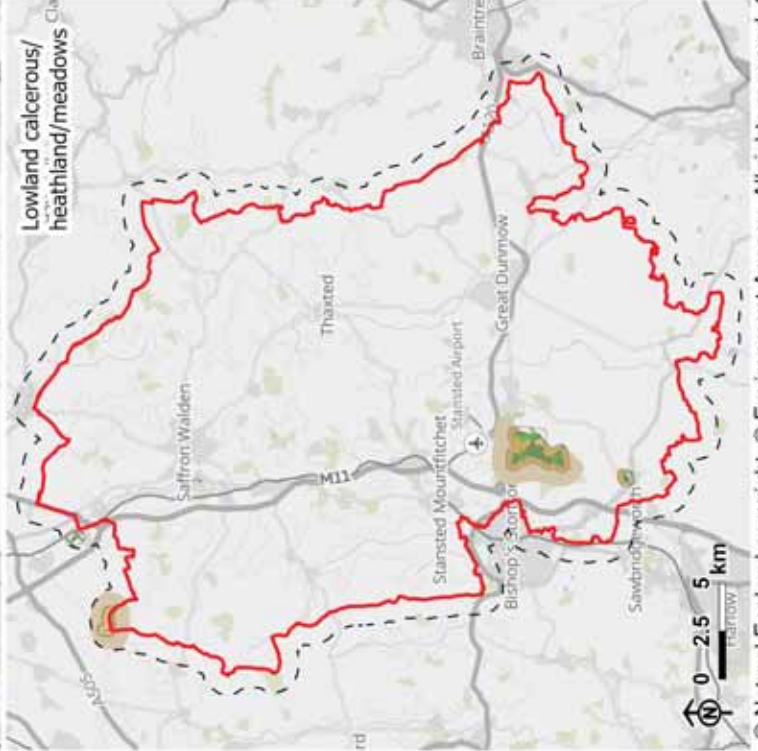
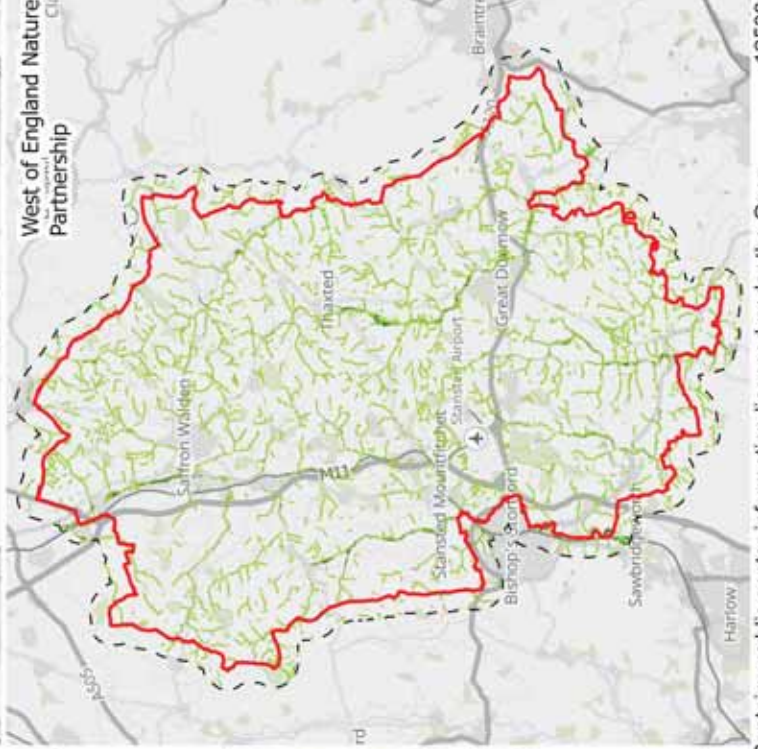
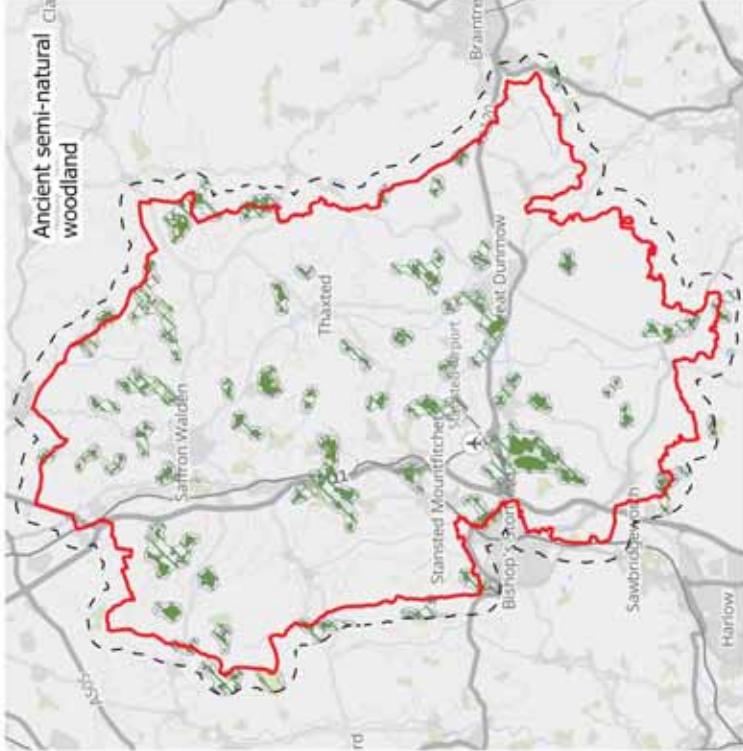
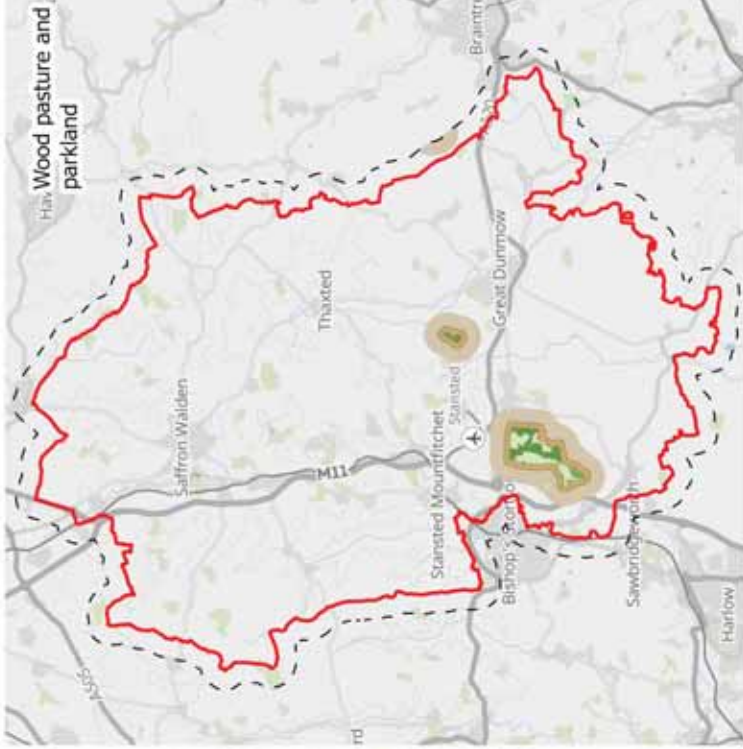
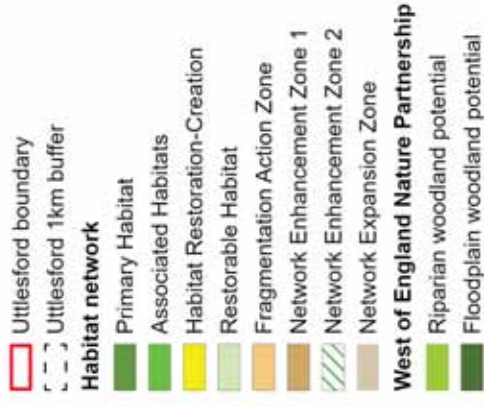
- Uttlesford
- Uttlesford 1km buffer
- Rivers and waterbodies
- Priority Habitat Inventory**
- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh
- Deciduous woodland
- Good quality semi-improved grassland
- Lowland calcareous grassland
- Lowland fens
- Lowland heathland
- Lowland meadows
- No main habitat but additional habitats present
- Traditional orchard
- Ancient Woodland**
- Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland
- Ancient Replanted Woodland

Priority Habitat	Area (hectares)	Coverage of Uttlesford (%)
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	72.4	0.1%
Deciduous woodland	3051.1	4.8%
Good quality semi-improved grassland	63.5	0.1%
Lowland calcareous grassland	1.1	0.002%
Lowland fens	6.6	0.01%
Lowland heathland	5.3	0.01%
Lowland meadows	64.9	0.1%
No main habitat but additional habitats present	108.3	0.2%
Traditional orchard	55.7	0.1%
Rivers and waterbodies*	512	0.8%
Ancient woodland	1767.2	2.8%



© Natural England. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. Contains data for OS Zoomstack, licence number 100018688.  
 \*OS Open River is a line dataset. This value may not represent the true coverage as the river width is unknown.  
 12538\_001\_r0\_GI\_Report/Figures/Notable and Priority Habitats 05/10/2023 EB:shayler\_h

Figure 5: Natural habitat



## Theme 2: Active and healthy places

### Importance of theme

**3.35** Green and Blue infrastructure has an important role in supporting physical and mental health and wellbeing by facilitating active lifestyles, providing spaces for community cohesion and creating links between people and nature. GI can also play a role in mitigating the negative health effects which can arise from urban heating, poor air quality, flooding and noise pollution.

**3.36** Access to good quality green and blue spaces close to home is widely recognised as being beneficial for both physical and mental health. The COVID-19 pandemic increased our collective awareness of these benefits. As well as access to parks, the provision of footpaths, greener streets and opportunities to participate in sports and play are all important features of GBI which can have positive benefits for our health and wellbeing.

**3.37** The UK is experiencing a nationwide health crisis with levels of illnesses such as diabetes, obesity and dementia rising as well as the number of people experiencing mental health issues. There is an increasing emphasis on preventative actions to improve health outcomes and this includes a focus on access to and use of GBI networks to facilitate active lifestyles and increase healthy behaviours. 'Green social prescribing' [See reference 26] is a tool used to improve health by linking people with local green activities such as walking groups, community gardens and food-growing projects.

**3.38** Walking, cycling and wheeling routes are an important part of the GBI network, connecting people to larger areas of greenspace as well as facilitating healthy activity in and of themselves. Identifying missing connections in the network and identifying ways to create green routes is an important part of enhancing the GBI network, increasing recreational access and encouraging active travel.

**3.39** When planning GBI it is important to consider the needs of different people to ensure everyone has equal opportunities to gain the health benefits from GBI. For example, while the provision of natural play spaces are important for healthy development in children, an ageing population may require more consideration of path surfacing or appropriate resting points to facilitate their access.

**3.40** The Natural England Green Framework states that to achieve active and healthy places, green infrastructure should aim to achieve the following:

- “Reflect public health authority, health leads, health and wellbeing boards or clinical commissions group strategic priorities,
- Help achieve area wide specific health targets for particular illnesses and goals,
- Align with health funding and support which can also deliver green infrastructure,
- Align with active travel plans” [\[See reference 27\]](#).

## Strengths and challenges in Uttlesford

### Population and Health

**3.41** Uttlesford district is a prosperous area with little health deprivation and good overall health outcomes with the highest life expectancy average for men throughout the entire east of England at 83.6 (significantly higher than the English average of 78.7) [\[See reference 28\]](#). For women, Uttlesford district holds the second highest life expectancy in the East of England at 85.7, also higher than the English average of 82.8 [\[See reference 29\]](#).

**3.42** While levels of health deprivation are low with no areas of significant deprivation compared to national averages, the national Indices of Multiple Deprivation data [\[See reference 30\]](#) (see ‘Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

2019 data in Active, healthy places tab on [interactive mapping](#)) shows that there is one datazone to the North of Saffron Walden of relative deprivation within Uttlesford, being in the 4<sup>th</sup> decile for the UK. There are also inequities across the district in healthy life expectancy with a nine year gap for females between Stansted South (68) and Wimbish and Debden (77) **[See reference 31]**.

**3.43** In Uttlesford the population increased by 14.9%; from 79,400 in 2011 to 91,300 in 2021. This was higher than the overall increase for England which was 6.6% and was most notable in the over 65s where there was a population growth of 36% **[See reference 32]**.

## Access to Greenspace

**3.44** Despite this, as of 2021, Uttlesford is the 6<sup>th</sup> least densely populated local authority area in the East of England. **[See reference 33]**. This needs to be considered when assessing access to greenspace. While the Natural England access to natural greenspace mapping (see 'Local semi-natural greenspace' and 'Local semi-natural greenspace -15min walk' data layers in Active, healthy places tab in the [interactive mapping](#)) shows that large areas of the District have low access to natural greenspace within a 15 minute walk, due to the low population density in these rural areas this affects a minimal population.

**3.45** Looking more closely at the mapping for areas of higher population density in the main rural centres of Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden and Stansted Mountfitchet and the local rural centres, there is a good provision of amenity greenspace within a 15 minute walk (see figure 6 and 'Local amenity greenspace and 'Local amenity greenspace - 15min walk' data in Active, healthy places tab in the [interactive mapping](#)). Amenity greenspaces are smaller doorstep spaces which include informal recreation spaces, green spaces in and around housing and village greens. They most commonly consist of mown grass with boundary planting and sometimes include play facilities providing opportunities for everyday access to greenspace. However, they often have low nature conservation value **[See reference 34]**.

**3.46** Semi-natural greenspaces are higher in nature-rich qualities and therefore provide greater contact with nature, enhancing the health benefits of use. They can include habitats such as woodlands, grasslands and wetlands. While there is reasonably good access to these spaces for most of the main population centres in Uttlesford, large areas of Stansted Mountfitchet are not within a 15 minute walk of a semi-natural greenspace. Similarly, the local rural centres of Elsenham and Newport do not have access to a semi-natural greenspace within a 15 minute walk.

**3.47** Access to district scale greenspaces is much more limited across Uttlesford. Natural England's accessible greenspace standard states that everyone should have access to a District natural greenspace of at least 100ha within 5km [See reference 35]. There are two Country Parks in Uttlesford; Hatfield Forest and Flitch Way. However, both are located in the south of the district and the mapping shows that Saffron Walden and local rural centres in the north of the district have low access to district scale natural greenspaces. The location of these spaces means that most people will rely on cars to get to them and at the moment the car is the dominant form of transport throughout Uttlesford.

**3.48** The M11, M120 and the London – Cambridge railway line act as barriers to access to natural greenspace for some communities, particularly in Stansted Mountfitchett, Elsenham, Newport and Great Chesterford but they do provide potential for undisturbed wildlife corridors.

## Active Travel

**3.49** The NCN16 connects south to west through Great Dunmow town centre with some sections of off-road cycle path. It eventually ties into an off-road route along the Flitch Way and connects to Hatfield Forest Country Park and further out of the District to Bishops Stortford. It provides an important active travel route and wildlife corridor connecting communities across the south of the District (see figure 7 and National Cycle Network data layer in Active, healthy places tab in the [interactive mapping](#)).

**Photo 3.2: NCN16 in the Flitch Way Country Park to the west of Great Dunmow**



**3.50** Moving away from reliance on cars for everyday journeys can have a huge impact on reducing the effects of climate change by lowering emissions and improving air quality. Just 1% of the journeys to work (500 people) in Uttlesford are made by bicycle, lower than the Essex average of 2.1% based on the latest 2011 Census data. A key reason for this may be that other than the above, there is very little dedicated cycling infrastructure in Uttlesford, which has resulted in in low levels of participation when compared with other Essex Boroughs / Districts. It may also be due to the topography of settlements, which are relatively hilly compared to other areas where cycling is a more popular way of getting around. The dispersed nature of the existing population and development in Uttlesford also means that residents need to travel greater distances to access workplaces, key facilities and services, making cycle travel

less attractive, or potentially unviable. This said, recreational cycling is popular in Uttlesford with approximately 17.5% of people cycling at least once per month in Uttlesford according to Sport England data. Uttlesford District Council recently ran a consultation to collect ideas on how to improve their active travel network which will feed into a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) [See reference 36].

**3.51** The public right of way network is also often fragmented within these population centres with few clear connections to local amenity greenspaces, semi-natural greenspaces and the wider rural area (see figure 7 and Public Right of Way data layer in the Active, healthy places tab in the [interactive mapping](#)). Notable exceptions where the public rights of way (PROW) network connects to existing greenspaces include:

- Blacklands Avenue and Seven Devils Lane in Saffron Walden
- Pound Lane and Alsa Wood near Elsenham
- Routes along the River Chelmer in Great Dunmow
- Cophthal Lane, adjacent to a blue/green corridor in Thaxted

**3.52** Many circular routes exist within the PROW network within the wider rural area and form an attractive recreational resource for walkers, cyclists and equestrians. Several long distance routes also traverse the district, including the Harcamlow Way, which forms a figure of 8 around the district, connecting Thaxted, Saffron Walden and Takeley, the Saffron Trail which connects from the south east boundary through Great Dunmow and north to Saffron Walden and the ancient Icknield Way Trail which traverses along the northern boundary of the district passing through Hadstock and Great Chesterford. The Essex County Council Rights of Way team also promote two walks around Aubrey Buxton and Manuden [See reference 37].

## Accessibility of Greenspace

**3.53** Physical activity is an important determinant of health outcomes. Census data from 2021 reported that 74.5 percent of adults in Uttlesford were physically



active; this is a high rate compared to the English average of 67.3%. While the percentage of physically inactive adults was 17.6 percent. [\[See reference 38\]](#). There is a good provision of GI features such as play, recreation areas, sports pitches and allotments in settlements which support this activity.

**3.54** It is not merely the presence of greenspaces and recreational facilities which determine their use. Quality and accessibility is also important and their suitability for the needs of different user groups. Uttlesford has an ageing population which means that Uttlesford's GBI network will need to be designed and managed to suit a range of accessibility needs.

**3.55** The activation of spaces is also important to encourage use. The Active Uttlesford programme [\[See reference 39\]](#) has been established to develop the physical activity offer in the district, including activity in outdoor spaces for groups who experience barriers to participation including women and girls; rural communities; older people and people with disabilities.

**3.56** This is complemented by a range of other outdoor activity groups operating within the district, including gardening and walking groups. Fritch Way Country Park has an 'friends of' group who organise a programmes of volunteer activity. The Wilderness Foundation facilitates school educational visits at Hatfield Forest [\[See reference 40\]](#).

## Air Quality

**3.57** There is one Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Saffron Walden town centre for Nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>x</sub>) primarily from vehicle emissions. This AQMA overlaps with the area of relative disadvantage highlighted in the mapping. This AQMA is currently under review and a district wide Air Quality Study has recently been commissioned. Although there is no data available, the presence of the heavily trafficked corridors of the M11, A11 & A120 will mean air quality mitigation will need to be considered in proposals for any new development near these roads.

## Summary of Key Issues

- Access to semi-natural greenspaces is low in some population centres including Stansted Mountfitchett, Elsenham and Newport.
- Access to district scale greenspaces is low, particularly in the north of the district and there is a high dependence on cars to access natural spaces.
- Active travel provision, particularly cycle routes, is poor within and between settlements.
- The public right of way network is fragmented and obvious connections between existing greenspaces are missed.
- An ageing population means that the GBI network will need to be designed and managed to suit a wider range of accessibility needs.
- There is an area of poor air quality in the centre of Saffron Walden.

Figure 6: Greenspace and accessibility

- Uttlesford
- Country park
- Areas within a 15 minute walk to local semi-natural greenspace
- Open Greenspace**
- Play Space
- Religious Grounds
- Playing Field
- Other Sports Facility
- Allotments Or Community Growing Spaces
- Public Park Or Garden
- Cemetery
- Tennis Court
- Bowling Green
- Golf Course

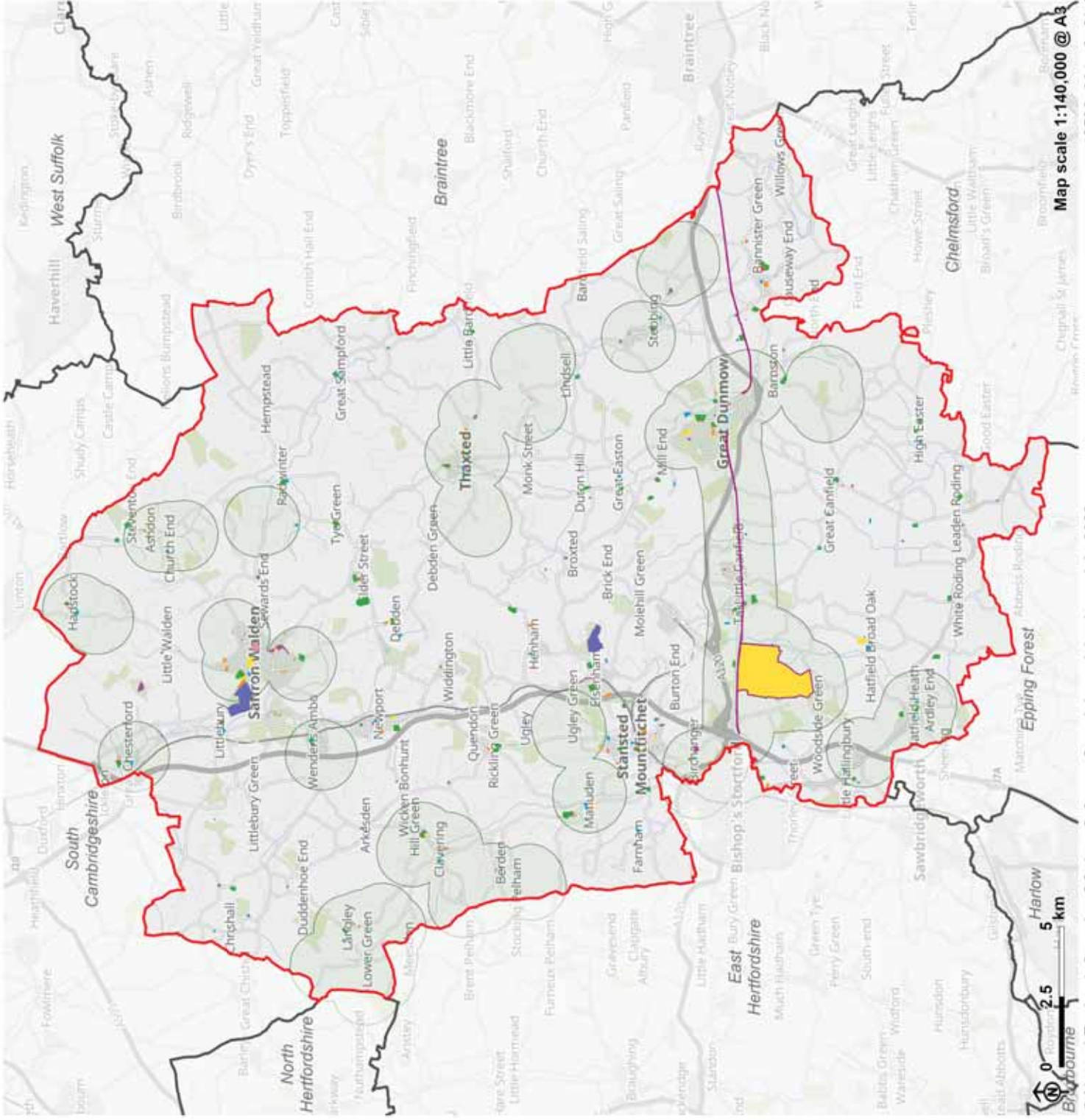
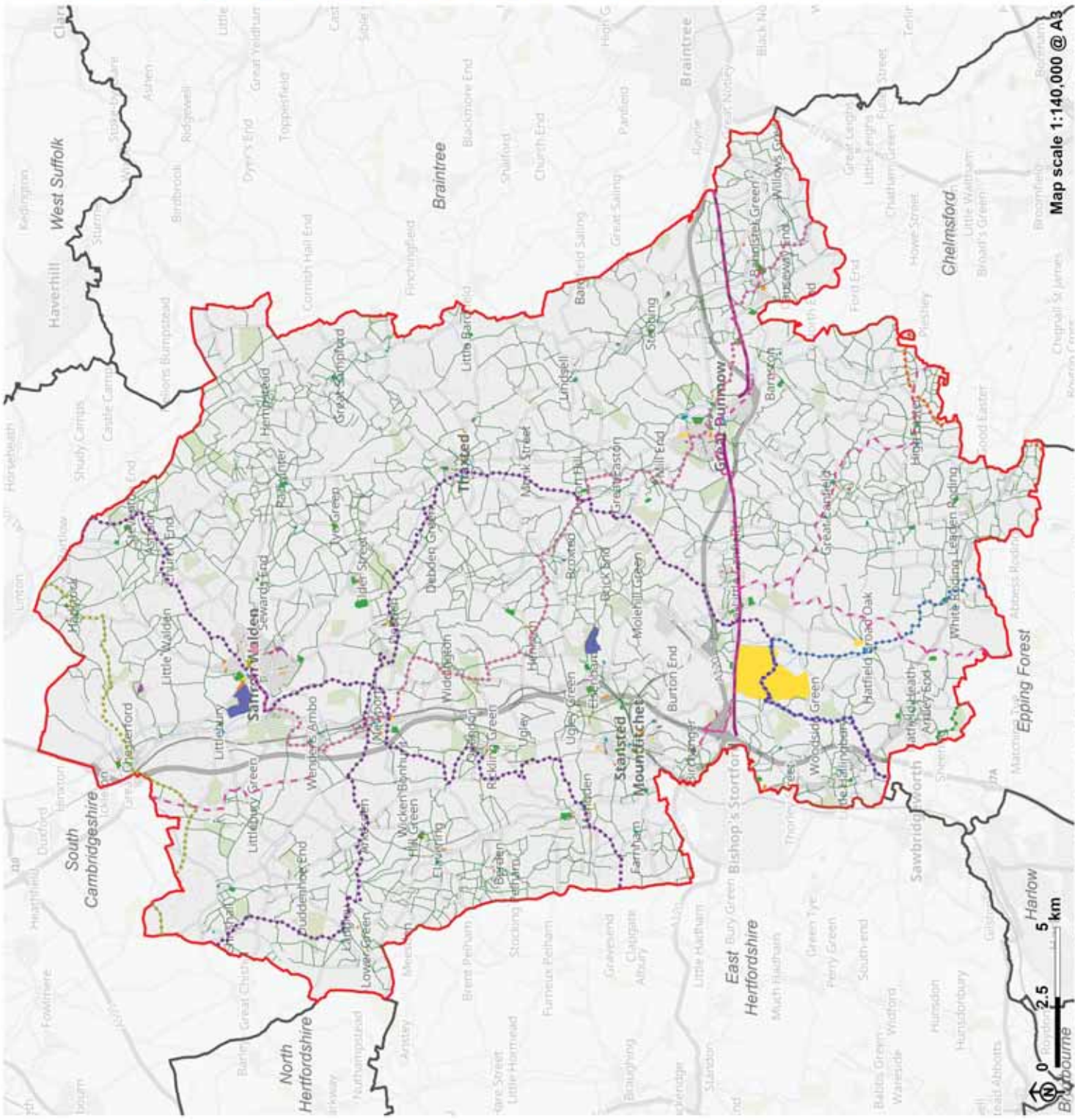


Figure 7: Access and connectivity

- ▭ Uttlesford
- ▭ Flitch way Country Park
- Open Greenspace**
- ▭ Play Space
- ▭ Religious Grounds
- ▭ Playing Field
- ▭ Other Sports Facility
- ▭ Allotments Or Community Growing Spaces
- ▭ Public Park Or Garden
- ▭ Cemetery
- ▭ Tennis Court
- ▭ Bowling Green
- ▭ Golf Course
- - - National Cycle Network
- Public Right of Way
- Long Distance Walking Route**
- ⋯ Essex Way
- ⋯ Harcamlow Way
- ⋯ IckneldWayTrail
- ⋯ Saffron Trail
- ⋯ Stort Valley Way
- ⋯ Three Forests Way



Map scale 1:140,000 @ A3

## Theme 3: Thriving and prosperous places

### Importance of theme

**3.58** Green and blue infrastructure adds value to places by helping to create high quality spaces which attract businesses, investors, tourism, support the local high street, create green jobs and can act as a catalyst for regeneration, with improved places enhancing community pride and social cohesion.

**3.59** Developers integrate greenspace within developments to add value to properties. It has been proven that properties closer to greenspace have a higher value, for example tree-lined streets within a development have been demonstrated to increase house prices by as much as 15% [\[See reference 41\]](#)

**3.60** Local high streets have been in decline for several years, largely influenced by the rise of online shopping reducing footfall. This pattern has been impacted further through the effects of COVID-19, with increased numbers of people working from home further reducing footfall (albeit sometimes benefiting local centres close to where people live) and leading to higher vacancies and the re-purposing of shops and office spaces. The integration of GBI into town centre regeneration programmes can play an important role in increasing the attractiveness of these spaces, encouraging people to visit and stay longer and thus attracting new investment. Some studies have shown that incorporating GBI into public open spaces in city centres can improve commercial trading by 40% [\[See reference 42\]](#).

**3.61** Heritage features are an important part of GBI networks. They tell the story of how a place has developed over time as well as influencing the unique character of towns and wider landscapes. Heritage features, including historic landscapes, are also significant in determining the future provision of GBI and

how it can be integrated within the historic character of a place to maintain and enhance that character.

**3.62** Evidence suggests that time spent within greenspaces can benefit people with improved motor skills, better academic performance and increased concentration. By establishing connectivity and spreading GBI through well planned networks rather than individual sites, it can ensure that the opportunities and benefits of access to GBI are widely available.

**3.63** Greenspaces can also act as informal meeting places, as venues for community events and provide opportunities for volunteering and education, all of which can improve social cohesion within our communities.

**3.64** To achieve thriving and prosperous communities, green infrastructure should aim to achieve the following:

- “Be an objective within plans and policies for new development and regeneration,
- Be placed within a framework which identifies gaps or pinch points where green infrastructure demand is not being met and development can contribute to the supply,
- Provide opportunities for investment from a broad range of businesses and investors,
- Enable opportunities for collaboration between Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and other strategic economic bodies on integrating green infrastructure into economic plans and proposals,
- Maximise economies of scale for projects through funding mechanisms which can pool resources for landscape or large-scale projects” **[See reference 43].**

## Strengths and challenges

### Historic Character

**3.65** Uttlesford is known for its historic markets towns and villages, agricultural countryside and woodland areas which form the distinctive character of the district. Important heritage features, monuments, parks and gardens are spread across the district and there are designated conservation areas within many of the settlements (see figure 8 and 'Conservation Areas', 'Scheduled Monuments', 'Registered Parks and Gardens' data layers in Thriving, prosperous places tab in the [interactive mapping](#)).

**3.66** The historic character of the markets towns is comprised of high building density and narrow streets [See reference 44]. Many town and village centres in Uttlesford contain conservation area designations which manage and protect the special archaeological and historic interest of a place. The introduction of new GBI within the existing built form, including the integration of active travel and biodiversity net gain, must consider and be complementary to this historic character.

### New Development

**3.67** A UK-wide design quality audit [See reference 45] for residential areas, carried out by Place Alliance in 2020 found that, across the country, new development scored poorly on character and sense of place – particularly on greenfield sites. In summary, the UK is often failing to establish a positive new character for development. In the context of the audit, Uttlesford lies in the East of England region where design quality overall for new housing was deemed to be 'mediocre'.

**3.68** Uttlesford District Council have been working with the community for over a year to create a Design Code for the district aimed at residents, planning

officers and developers and setting out rules and guidelines that will ensure all proposals are designed and built to the highest quality expected. The draft design code has been consulted on and is expected to be adopted soon [See reference 46]

## Local Economy and Tourism

**3.69** Uttlesford is a largely prosperous district with high employment rates and high levels of education attainment compared to the UK and Essex averages [See reference 47]. Local high streets have still experienced some decline in footfall comparative to UK trends and they lose some footfall for comparison goods to larger centres outside of Uttlesford such as Bishop's Stortford. Vacancy rates are higher than the national average in Saffron Walden (14.5%), however they are significantly lower in the Great Dunmow, Thaxted and Stansted Mountfitchett [See reference 48]. Local efforts to revitalise the high street have focussed on the promotion of the unique offer from independent shops and businesses in the area [See reference 49]. Local markets still form a key part of the town centre offer.

**3.70** Tourism, along with the rural economy and life sciences, research and innovation are the main sectors within Uttlesford's local economy. Local markets also still provide a key attraction and local service in Saffron Walden, Thaxted and Great Dunmow. Tourism is concentrated within the historic town centres as well as historic buildings and gardens including Walden Castle, Audley End House and Gardens Easton Lodge and Bridge End Gardens. All of the registered parks and gardens within Uttlesford, with the exclusion of the turf maze in Saffron Walden, charge a fee for entry.

## Community Networks

**3.71** There are active and vibrant existing community networks across Uttlesford. GBI can provide additional informal meeting and event spaces to support community cohesion and events/activities. The Great Dunmow Carnival



is held on the recreation ground in Great Dunmow every September and is one of the largest rural carnivals in the UK [See reference 50].

## Summary of key issues

- Unique historic character of towns, villages and landscape is critical to the success of the local economy and tourist offer in Uttlesford and must be carefully considered when integrating GBI into existing historic townscapes and landscapes.
- New development should be carefully planned and designed to retain local character and support community events/activities.



## Theme 4: Improved water management

### Importance of theme

**3.72** Green and Blue Infrastructure can be designed to reduce the risk of flooding (by reducing the speed and quantity of runoff heading towards drains, combined sewers and water courses), improve water quality (by using vegetation to filter out pollutants) and infiltration of water into the ground (which can help to replenish aquifers and maintain stream flows in dry weather), and contribute to the creation of biodiverse and beautiful places that provide a cool retreat when temperatures are high.

**3.73** Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) replicate nature within our built environment by capturing and cleansing surface water runoff and releasing it more slowly. SuDS interventions within urbanised areas can include green roofs and walls, rain gardens (a depressed areas of ground which receives run-off from hard surfaces), swales (shallow, broad, vegetated channels), soakaways and permeable pavements. SuDS can also capture and hold water, allowing it to be used for non-potable uses and thus reducing mains water demand.

**3.74** To achieve improved water management, green infrastructure should aim to achieve the following:

- “Work as part of drainage and wastewater management plans,
- Aim to reduce flooding at catchment and local scales, working with natural processes,
- Protect groundwater from over exploitation, improve water supply and quality,
- Provide water to create new or enhanced existing wetland habitats and water courses,
- Minimise water pollution and improve water quality,
- Reduce coastal erosion,

- Improve climate change resilience of freshwater habitats and species”  
[See reference 51].

## Strengths and challenges

### Waterways

**3.75** Uttlesford sits within the headwaters of three separate river catchment areas (Great Ouse, North Essex and Thames) with multiple Main Rivers passing north-south through the district. The Great Ouse catchment covers the north of the area, the Thames catchment covers the south-west, and the North Essex catchment the east. The primary watercourses comprise the Rivers Cam (and its tributaries the Slade and Bourn), Pant, Chelmer, Roding, and Stort. These blue corridors have numerous tributaries, most often winding through an arable landscape.

### Chalk streams

**3.76** Southern and eastern areas of England are home to 85% of the world's chalk streams, which are one of the planet's rarest habitats. Uttlesford contains several chalk streams, namely the River Cam and its tributaries (Wicken Water, Debden Water, Fulfen Slade, the Slade) and the River Stort. Chalk rivers emerge from chalk aquifers and are characterised by their naturally clear, nutrient-rich waters that support a diversity of species including water crowfoot, starwort, mayflies, stoneflies, damselflies, dragonflies, wild trout, grayling, bullhead and minnows, kingfishers, bats, otter, water voles and sea trout and salmon in some rivers [See reference 52].

**3.77** At national level, these rare habitats are under significant threat from water pollution and water abstraction as many are located within the country's most urbanised, industrialised and farmed areas [See reference 53]. The Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) Chalk Stream Restoration Group launched its first

Chalk Stream Strategy in 2021, which calls for the improved environmental status of England's 283 chalk streams [See reference 54]. In June 2023, the Environment Agency formally launched the Implementation Plan for the recommendations made in the strategy, which focus around improving water quantity, water quality and habitat quality [See reference 55]. Management plans for chalk streams should be included in emerging LNRS or NRN strategies.

## Flooding

**3.78** The Uttlesford Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) was published in 2016, forming an overview of the key flood risks within the district. The assessment also includes guidance for the removal of structures (e.g. weirs or culverts) where possible, and promotes Natural Flood Management and SuDs. Areas within flood zones 2 and 3 are shown on figure 9 and 'Flood Zone 2' and 'Flood Zone 3' data in the Water Management tab in the [interactive mapping](#).

**3.79** Catchment Flood Management Plans (CFMP) for each of the three catchments note that within the district there is an ongoing need to ensure the floodplain is protected from development. This is echoed in the SFRA, which recommends seeking opportunities for river restoration and re-meandering when considering new development, as well as a minimum 8m buffer from any watercourse.

**3.80** Numerous settlements across the district have experienced localised flooding in the past, mostly due to fluvial (river overflow) and surface water sources. The River Cam, passing near the settlements of Newport, Wendens Ambo and Great Chesterford, is the primary fluvial flood risk within the district, having the highest flow rate [See reference 56].

**3.81** The town of Saffron Walden is also highlighted as being at higher risk due to the River Slade and its tributaries, which go through and around the settlement. The SFRA notes that the River Slade is highly modified in proximity to the settlement, with much of it culverted. Culverts present increased risk of

flooding when blocked, as well as altering natural water flows and wildlife habitats. It recommends that culverts be replaced where possible, to encourage natural river flows and habitats [\[See reference 57\]](#).

## Natural flood management

**3.82** In cooperation with Essex County Council and in line with guidance from the SuDs Design Guide for Essex, there have been examples of natural flood management techniques deployed across the district. Near Thaxted, leaky dams have been installed which not only slow water flows during flood events, but also create new riparian habitat [\[See reference 58\]](#). As part of the Essex Woodland Project, the timber for this project was harvested sustainably from Garnett Woods, as part of its conservation management. Additional opportunities for similar projects should be pursued where possible.

**3.83** The Working with Natural Processes (WWNP) dataset for the district identifies extensive potential for additional riparian woodland planting along the district's watercourses (see figure 10 and 'WWNP: Riparian Woodland Potential' data layer in Nature rich, beautiful places tab in the [interactive mapping](#)). The dataset indicates where additional tree planting would most effectively slow flood waters. Although spread throughout the district, the potential planting areas are particularly concentrated within the central and eastern spines of the district.

**3.84** Creation of new areas of riparian planting would allow improved filtration of surface run-off before reaching the district's watercourses and could also help to reduce downstream flood risk by 'slowing the flow' of water off the land.

**3.85** Also identified by the WWNP dataset are potential areas for floodplain creation. These are concentrated along the River Cam, between Great Chesterford and Saffron Walden, and along the Rivers Chelmer, Roding and Stort.

**3.86** Seeking opportunities for floodplain creation would not only slow water flow and increase groundwater holding capacity, it would also create new habitat for wildlife. Additionally, by creating new areas of planting there are also opportunities to embed public space and transit links into the blue corridors. Consider expanding these areas, particularly near settlements, and look for opportunities to join up new footpaths where possible.

## Abstraction

**3.87** Climate change will increase flood risk and pressures on water supply, as extreme weather events become more frequent. Heavy rain events are more likely to occur, as are serious droughts. Uttlesford is identified as an area of serious water stress, and population growth is likely to exacerbate that pressure in the future [See reference 59].

**3.88** A chalk aquifer underlies the northern area of the district. Strategies for drawing down water into the aquifer and increasing groundwater holding capacity will be a priority as the issue of over-abstraction progresses. Mitigation should include SuDs which will capture rainfall and reduce run-off, allowing it to permeate into the ground.

**3.89** The threat of water scarcity has prompted the 'Water for Tomorrow' programme, which is currently piloting an innovative water management approach in the Cam and Ely Ouse management catchment in collaboration with the Environment Agency and Water Resources East. The Cam and Ely Ouse management catchment covers an area within the Great Ouse river catchment, in the north of the district between Saffron Walden and Thaxted.

## Water quality

**3.90** Approximately 97% of the land in the district is in agricultural use, and nutrient run-off is an ongoing issue which affects water quality. The Water Framework Directive (WFD) requires Member States to use their River Basin

Management Plans (RBMPs) and Programmes of Measures (PoMs) to protect and, where necessary, restore water bodies in order to reach good status, and to prevent deterioration.

**3.91** The WFD's mapping indicates that there are no waterways within the district in good ecological status (see figure 9 and 'WFD River, Canal and SWT Waterbody Classifications (2019) data layer in Water management tab in the [interactive mapping](#)). The majority of rivers and canals in the district are of moderate status, with a few in poor ecological status. Wendon Brook in the north-west of the district was previously classified in good ecological status, however in the latest assessment has been downgraded to moderate due to poor nutrient management resulting in elevated phosphate levels.

## Summary of Key Issues

- Flooding is a concern within localised areas, and new development should be sensitively sited and designed, including by incorporating GBI, to mitigate and manage increasing flood risk to climate change.
- A growing population means that pressure on the district water supply will continue, and the GBI network should assist in water retention and reuse.
- Existing tree cover along waterways within the district is low, particularly in the north, and there are opportunities to increase riparian planting.
- Chalk streams in the district are globally rare habitats that need to be protected from threats such as water pollution and over abstraction.



Figure 9: Water quality and flood risk

- Uttlesford
  - Uttlesford 1km buffer
  - Flood zone 3
  - Flood zone 2
- WFD River, Canal and SWT Waterbody classifications (2019)**
- High
  - Good
  - Moderate
  - Poor
  - Bad

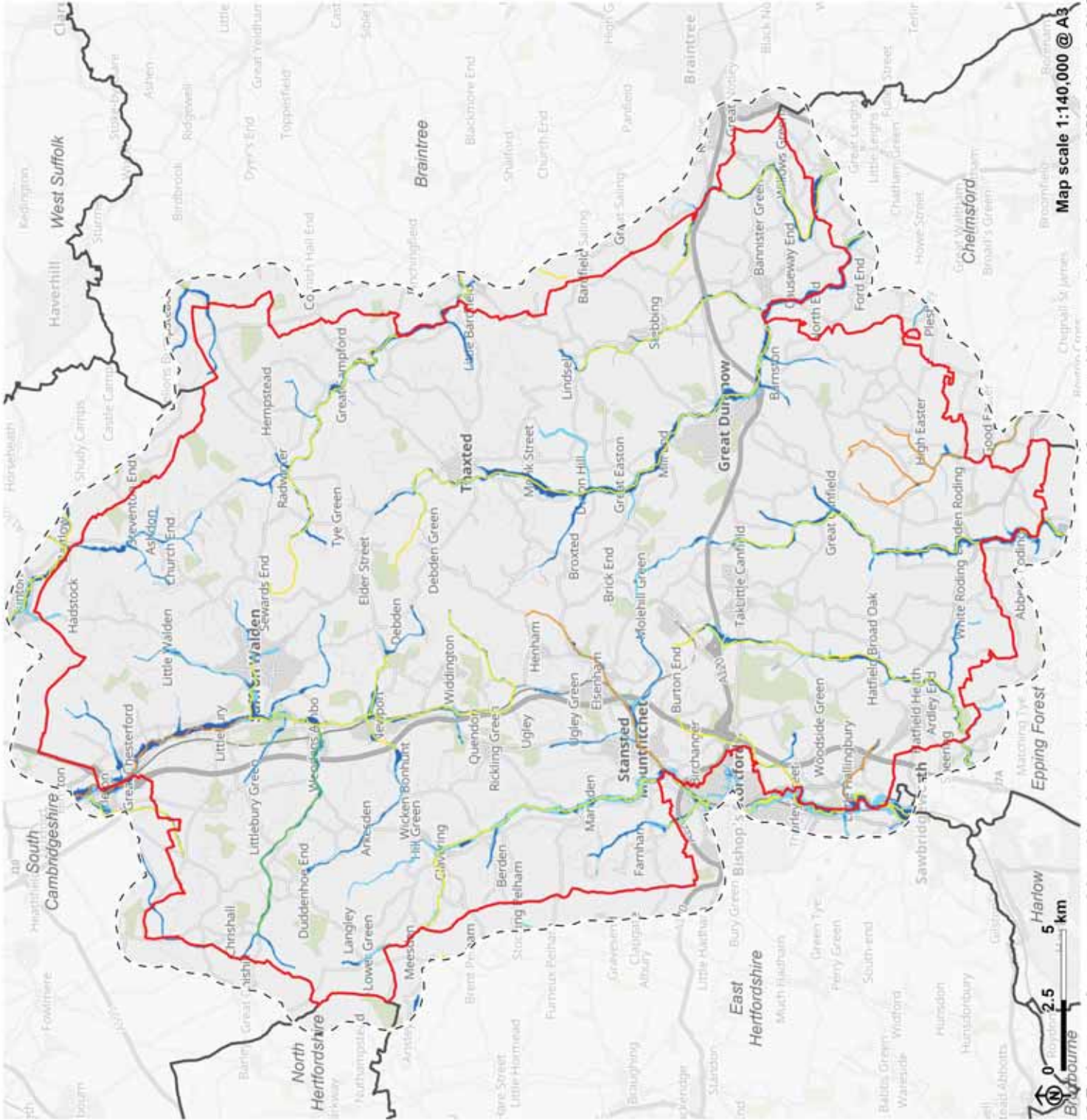
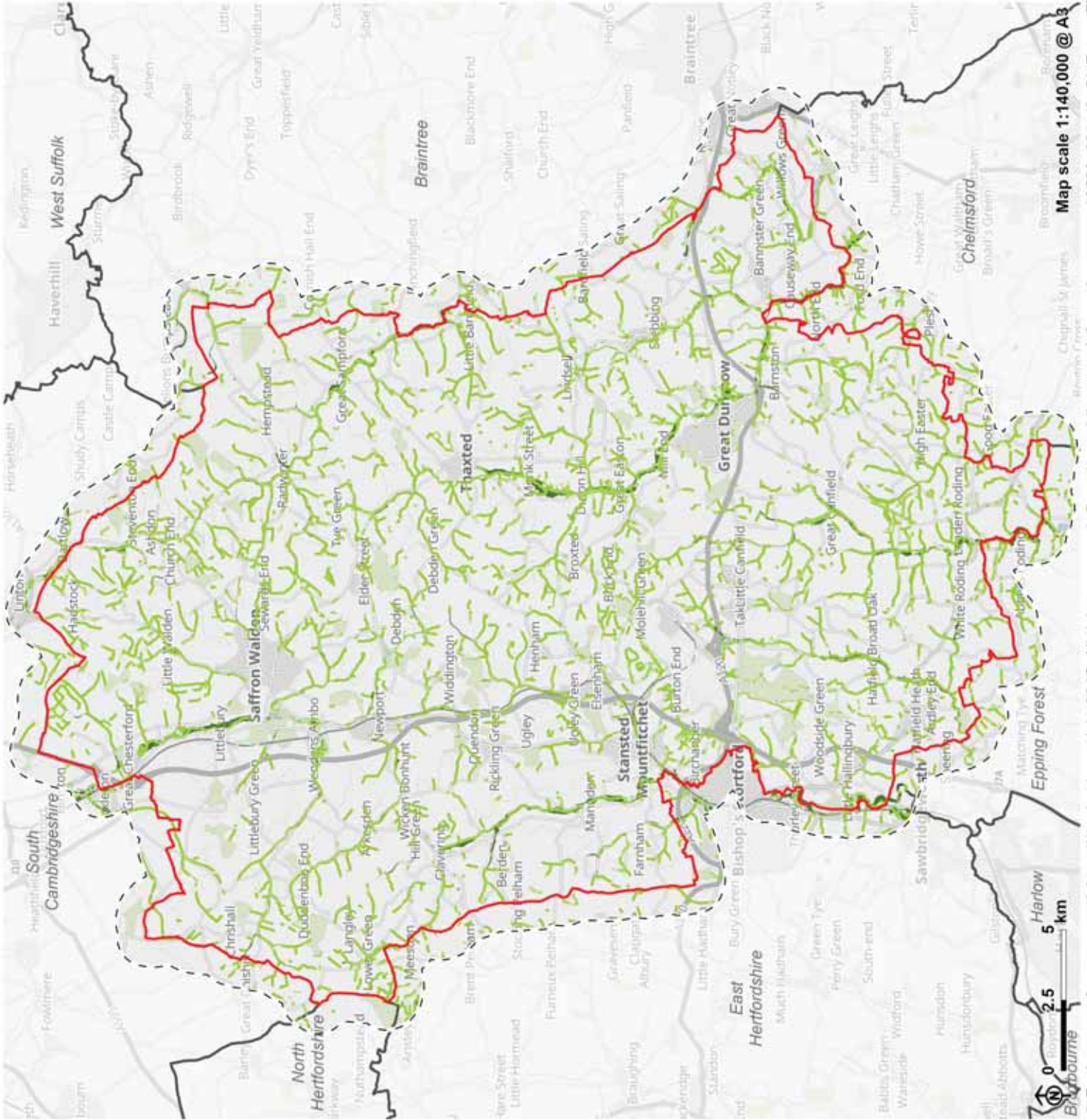


Figure 10: Natural flood management potential

- Uttlesford
- Uttlesford 1km buffer
- West of England Nature Partnership**
- Riparian woodland potential
- Floodplain woodland potential



## Chapter 4

# Vision and Objectives

### Vision

The unique historic and landscape character of Uttlesford and the high-quality of life the district offers to local communities will be enhanced and protected from the effects of climate change and ecological decline through a strategic and well-planned approach to the provision of high quality GBI which is attractive, well managed, resilient, multi-functional and designed to be meet the needs of a growing and ageing population.

Areas lacking in biodiversity and recreational opportunities (including attractive routes for walking and cycling) and areas that are anticipated to be hardest hit by the effects of climate change (such as increased flood risk) will be prioritised for new GBI.

Pressures on existing GBI assets will be relieved through better management and by improving movement through the district and access to alternative spaces.

GBI will support the integration of new development into the landscape, minimising its visual impacts while maximising the opportunities for outdoor recreation and for people to connect with nature.

# Objectives

4.1 This vision is given further definition by a series of 10 strategic objectives which in turn inform the opportunities identified within the focus areas.

- SO1: Improve the connectivity and quality of habitats across the District including designated sites.
- SO2: Increase woodland cover across the district, particularly on less productive agricultural land and along river corridors.
- SO3: Following Natural England's Accessible Greenspace Standard at a Neighbourhood scale, ensure all residents have access to a good quality natural greenspace of at least 10 hectares within 15 minutes of their homes.
- SO4: Improve access to district-scale greenspaces to maximise recreational opportunities and relieve pressure on existing high value sites (e.g. Hatfield Forest) through the identification of possible new country parks.
- SO5: Improve connectivity for people across the district by providing new active travel connections, filling in gaps in PROW and making the most of long distance routes.
- SO6: Ensure that the integration of new GBI into existing settlements complements their historic character and facilitates associated economic development.
- SO7: Ensure that GBI within new developments is designed to complement the landscape character of the area.
- SO8: Integrate SUDS into new development, prioritising areas where there is high risk of surface water flooding.
- SO9: Implement opportunities for water retention and reuse.
- SO10: Enhance the water and ecological quality of Uttlesford's precious chalk streams.

# Chapter 5

## Strategic Opportunities

**5.1** Using the baseline analysis, vision and strategic objectives as a guide a series of strategic opportunities have been identified. In order to most effectively identify and prioritise opportunities across the district the strategy has identified three 'focus areas'.

**5.2** Although the GBI strategy is strategic in scale and district-wide, having focus areas allows the strategy to better identify opportunities in areas where there are strategic GBI assets and corridors and/or where major future development is planned and therefore the GBI network requires protection and enhancement. The focus areas reflect the same areas of the district for which 'Area Strategies' are being produced alongside the new Local Plan.

**5.3** The three focus areas are;

- North Uttlesford
- South Uttlesford
- Thaxted

**5.4** In addition to the three focus areas, two 'district-scale' opportunities have been identified which cut across focus areas and link up individual opportunities within them, providing an opportunity to maximise the benefits of these.

**5.5** The strategic opportunities identified are presented in this chapter, broken down by focus area. Each section presents the following;

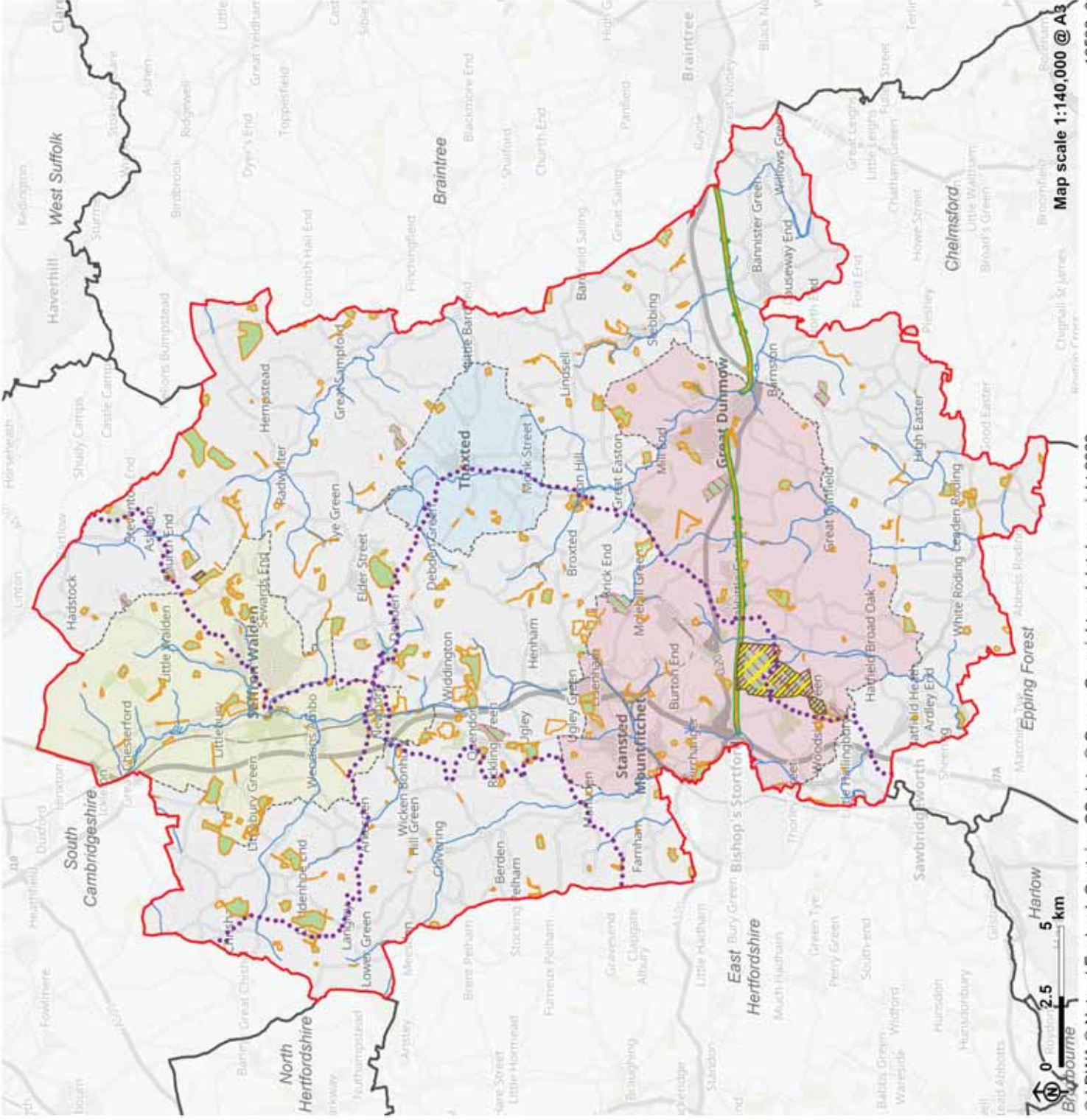
- A brief portrait of the focus area
- A brief summary of the key challenges it faces
- An overview of each strategic opportunity broken down by:

## Chapter 5 Strategic Opportunities

- An overview of the opportunity
- Its importance in meeting the strategic objectives for GBI in the district
- An overview of any potential challenges to delivery

Focus areas

- Uttlesford
- North Uttlesford focus area
- South Uttlesford focus area
- Thaxted focus area
- Country park
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- National Nature Reserve
- Ancient woodland
- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Wildlife Site
- River
- Harcamlow Way (Long Distance Walking route)



Map scale 1:140,000 @ A3

**Table 5.1: Strategic Opportunities and relevant Strategic Objectives**

Opportunity	S01	S02	S03	S04	S05	S06	S07	S08	S09	S10	Page no
1a: Continuous green/blue corridor along the River Cam	x	x	x						x	x	69
1b: Floodplain and riparian spaces along the River Cam and The Slade	x							x	x	x	71
1c: Restoration and improvement of ecological and water quality in the River Cam and the Slades	x									x	73
2: Chalk grassland enhancement, roadside verge connections											74
3: Improved footpath network across the landscape			x		x						76
4: Development of green corridors and enhanced pedestrian experience within Saffron Walden		x	x		x	x		x			78
5: New Country Park site near Saffron Walden	x			x	x						81
6: Enhancement of the Flich Way	x	x	x	x	x						85



Chapter 5 Strategic Opportunities

Opportunity	S01	S02	S03	S04	S05	S06	S07	S08	S09	S10	Page no
7: Hatfield Forest conservation and restoration	x			x							90
8: New Country Park at Easton Park	x	x									93
9: Greening Stansted Mountfitchet and enhancing access to the GBI network	x	x	x		x	x	x	x			97
10: River Roding/Pincey Brook woodland creation	x	x							x		101
11: River Chelmer green/blue corridor	x	x	x						x		103
12: Improved water retention, slowed water flow and erosion	x								x		111
13: Greening Thaxted and enhancing local experience						x	x	x			113
14: Create a connected north-south green spine south of Thaxted	x	x			x						115
15: Enhanced habitat networks within the arable landscape	x	x							x		116
16: Enhancing the Harcamlow Way	x		x	x	x						119
17: Creation of a nature network and woodland corridor from Hatfield Forest to Thaxted	x	x	x	x					x		121

Chapter 5 Strategic Opportunities

Opportunity	S01	S02	S03	S04	S05	S06	S07	S08	S09	S10	Page no
18: Creation of a pollinator network	x	x									124
19: Enhancing chalk streams	x									x	126

## Focus Area 1: North Uttlesford

**5.6** Focus Area 1 comprises the parish areas of Saffron Walden, Swards End, Wendens Ambo, Littlebury, Great Chesterford, Little Chesterford and Newport.

### North Uttlesford's GBI Network today

**5.7** The Focus Area contains Saffron Walden, one of Uttlesford's two market towns and the largest settlement in the District with a rich history, as well as a number of other villages and surrounding agricultural land.

**5.8** The landscape of the focus area is characterised by its broad valley, predominantly large-scale open arable farmland, enclosed valley floor with lush riverside vegetation, nucleated settlement pattern and extensive historic parkland, such as Audley End and Shortgrove, located between Littlebury and Newport. The M11 is also a prominent landscape feature [\[See reference 60\]](#).

**5.9** The River Cam and its tributaries run through the Focus Area, rising near Ugley Green and travelling north towards Cambridge, joined by its tributaries the Slade, Debden Water, Fulfen Slade and Wicken Water.

**5.10** The active travel connections within the focus area include an on-road section of NCN Route 11 which passes through the north of the area. Originating 3.5km west of Saffron Walden at Royston Road (B1039) near Wendens Ambo it runs north via Littlebury Green to Cambridgeshire, however, there is little other existing cycle infrastructure. Several long-distance paths (LDPs) traverse the Focus Area, including the Saffron Way, the Icknield Way and the Harcamlow Way (see **district wide Opportunity 1: Harcamlow Way**).

**5.11** At present, the north of Uttlesford lacks access to district-level greenspace, with both of the District's Country Parks (Hatfield Forest and the Flitch Way)

located in the south. Audley End House and Gardens is a large parkland situated to the west of Saffron Walden, currently in the stewardship of English Heritage. The grounds are open to the public but there is an entrance charge [See reference 61]. The Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan [See reference 62] identifies that Saffron Walden currently does not have enough accessible green space. Fields in Trust recommends 2.4ha per 1,000 of population which would equate to a requirement of approximately 54ha in Saffron Walden. Current provision in Saffron Walden is around 15ha.

**5.12** There is one nationally designated site within the Focus Area, Debden Water SSSI, east of Newport. Debden Water is a small freshwater stream which supports a range of habitat types including tall fen vegetation within the flood plain, unimproved neutral grassland, broad-leaved woodland and species-rich calcareous grassland. 12.8ha of the designated site's condition is recorded as 'Unfavourable – no change' and 8.5ha is considered 'Unfavourable – declining' due to inappropriate cutting/mowing and intensive agricultural practices [See reference 63].

**5.13** The Focus Area also contains a number of Ancient and Semi-Natural woodlands (ASNW) including Spring Wood (north-west of Saffron Walden), Green Wood, Lee Wood and Howe Wood (around Littlebury Green), Pounce Wood, Martins Wood, Robins Grove/Hills Wood and Whitehill Wood (north-east of Saffron Walden), Grimsditch Wood, Little Grimsditch, Westley Wood, Paddock Wood, and Burton Wood (dispersed throughout the north of the Focus Area). All of these ASNW sites are also designated LWSs.

**5.14** There are a number of settlements within this Focus Area; Saffron Walden, Newport, Wendens Ambo, Littlebury, and Great and Little Chesterford. A brief profile and summary of their key GBI assets are set out in **Appendix C**.

Key challenges to the GBI network in North Uttlesford considered in the identification of opportunities are:

- Identified areas of flood risk
- Fragmented nature of the woodland network

- Access to larger, district scale open spaces and country parks
- Water quality

## Strategic Opportunities

### Opportunity 1a: Continuous green/blue corridor along the River Cam

#### What is the opportunity?

**5.15** This opportunity would create a continuous green/blue corridor along the river Cam from the south of Newport to Great Chesterford. The river Cam runs north-south through the northern reaches of the district. This blue corridor passes in proximity to multiple settlements, and areas of woodland. The existing corridor could be improved through the following actions:

- **Improve connectivity** - there is an opportunity to further enhance this corridor by joining up the disparate areas of green space and woodlands, thereby developing an intact and well-functioning habitat corridor.
- **Integrate new access points** - create connections into existing footpath and cycle networks where possible, expanding public access to green space along the corridor. Specific connections have been identified near the following locations:
  - Little Chesterford and Saffron Walden: Bordeaux Pit - Springwell Nursery - Saffron Walden Golf course
  - Newport: Temple Plantation - Forty Acre Wood - Debden Water SSSI - Newport Chalk Pit
  - Quendon: Kiora Pasture - London Jock Wood
  - Ugley: London Jock Wood - M11 verges - Elsenham

- **Increase tree coverage** - there are also further opportunities to increase tree coverage where appropriate along the entirety of the watercourse, replacing trees in poor condition. A previous planting initiative took place in coordination with Cam Conservators and the Woodland Trust along the banks of the River Cam to the north past Cambridge. A similar initiative could be supported to enable this planting within Uttlesford.

## Why is it important?

**5.16** The creation of an interconnected blue/green network along the River Cam would provide multiple benefits. An interconnected habitat of varying kinds (deciduous woodland, grazing meadow and riparian) would provide support for diverse species and increase biodiversity (SO1). The creation of new woodland and riparian habitat would increase tree coverage across the district, thereby increasing carbon sequestration (SO2). Increasing connections between green spaces would also directly benefit residents, by providing new accessible green space and increasing access to nature (SO3). Riparian habitat also contributes to the slowing of water flows, and drawdown of precipitation into the ground water supply, reducing flood risk (SO9).

## What might be the challenges?

**5.17** There would be potential challenges in obtaining consents for planting where land ownership is not known. Any planting should be done in collaboration with landowners, making obvious the benefits of riparian planting/woodland creation, including flood protection and potential funding schemes such as Environmental Land Management Schemes or Biodiversity Net Gain credits. Particularly where the River Cam passes through arable fields, riparian buffers should be located in the areas most liable to flood, thereby reducing impacts on productive land. New access points and routes should be well defined and delineated to ensure that recreational access and biodiversity can coexist and habitats and species sensitive to disturbance can continue to thrive.

**5.18** Securing funding could be seen as a challenge, but there is significant government support available for tree planting and offsite mandatory biodiversity net gain could also support delivery.

## Opportunity 1b: Floodplain and riparian spaces along the River Cam and The Slade

What is the opportunity?

**5.19** The settlements of Littlebury and Saffron Walden are at risk of flooding, due to the proximity of the River Cam and its tributaries, the Slades (Flood Zone 3). There are opportunities close to these settlements to define and positively manage potential new areas for floodplain, and simultaneously provide improved and better connected wildlife habitat along the watercourses. Key areas of focus include:

- **Enhance habitats** - enhance existing areas of priority habitat floodplain grazing marsh in proximity to Littlebury and Saffron Walden. Provide increased ecological connectivity between these stretches along the River Cam and along the river's spines to mitigate flood risk and improve habitat corridors.
- **Enhance access** - enhance access to The Slade and the permeability of its surroundings as it enters the settlement of Saffron Walden from the east near the Noakes Grove nature reserve and The Common. Access and visibility of the waterway is highly restricted along its entire length, with fencing and structures. Frequently the waterway is culverted, with hard surfaced surroundings, including carparks.
- **Enhance greenspaces** - enhance existing public green spaces and increase permeability along the joining of The Slade and River Cam on the northern edge of Saffron Walden. Increased riparian planting along the peripheries of the golf course, gardens and playing fields could also be incorporated. Notably, along New Pond Lane (Flood Zone 2) there are

multiple car parks which border The Slade; opportunities to reduce the amount of hard surface in proximity to the waterway should be explored.

- **Remove grey infrastructure** - remove hard riverbanks and hard surfacing where possible. Where wholesale replacement of hard surfacing is not possible, consider SuDs with smaller-scale planting schemes. Context appropriate species (native) should be selected for the planting. In hard riverbanks which cannot be removed, space should be provided for colonisation by plants and birds, such as through the scattered removal of bricks.
- **Re-naturalise watercourses** - Where large alterations are possible, the waterways should be re-naturalised. Reprofiling riverbanks by reducing the slope gradient will increase stability, particularly when paired with appropriate planting which provides additional stability through their roots. Aquatic ledges or river terraces would support diverse species and habitats. The reprofiling of Swan Meadow Pond is an example of a successful project within Saffron Walden, with native species planted and benefits for local wildlife.

## Why is it important?

**5.20** Development of new areas of nature reserves and floodplains would encourage a greater species diversity, strengthening existing habitat corridors (SO1). Providing new areas of floodplain would also serve to reduce flood risk, and protect the settlements of Littlebury, Saffron Walden and further downstream (SO8). Removal of hard riverbanks and hard surfacing can slow flow rates, as well as cool water temperatures. Additionally, by creating areas of floodplain planting that slow water flows, this increases opportunities for water retention, supplementing the existing water supply (SO9).

## What are the challenges?

**5.21** In urban environments, creating areas of naturalised space is often constrained by existing land use, as well as being complicated by multiple



landowners. Green spaces in urban areas can also be subject to high recreational pressures through high usage or trampling. This can impact the quality of habitats and affect their restoration, and so access restrictions and educational awareness initiatives may need to be considered.

## Opportunity 1c: Restoration and improvement of Ecological and Water Quality in the River Cam and the Slade

What is the opportunity?

**5.22** There are no rivers with ‘good’ status within the north of the district, as determined by WFD’s water quality mapping [See reference 64]. The River Cam is recorded as being in ‘poor’ ecological health between Great Chesterford and Saffron Walden. This is a result of excessive nutrients in the water, partly due to agricultural run-off, as well as discharge from various industries. Interventions noted in Opportunity 1c would increase overall ecological health of the waterway by restoring stretches of the natural water flows and increasing areas of floodplain. However, additional interventions would be necessary to significantly improve the water quality.

**5.23** The greatest disruptor to the ecosystems of the River Cam is noted as ‘changes to the natural flow and level of water’ by the WFD. The River Cam is a chalk stream, fed by the underlying chalk aquifer (see district-wide **Opportunity 19: Chalk Streams**). Several actions could be undertaken to address this:

- **Reduce water abstraction** - water abstraction by agricultural and other industries can reduce the flow rate of the river. Limiting abstraction licenses, as outlined in the 2020 Cam and Ely Ouse abstraction licensing strategy (ALS) could mitigate this [See reference 65].
- **Plant woodland** - creating areas of riparian planting and woodland (see Opportunity 1b) will improve rainfall infiltration, replenishing groundwater supply. Riparian planting also improves water quality by both limiting the

amount of run-off that reaches the waterways, and by filtering pollutants from run-off. Some species of plant are more adept at filtration and can be targeted towards particular pollutants.

- **Incorporation of volunteer and education programmes** – riparian woodland proposed could be planted as part of a volunteer project with partners such as groundwork or The Conservation Volunteers. This woodland could also form a base for schools' outdoor learning, with lessons covering the importance of water quality and mitigating the effects of climate change and some of the nature based solutions to this.

## Why is it important?

**5.24** This opportunity is particularly important in meeting Strategic Objective 10, with both a reduction in water abstraction and planting of woodland having a significant impact on improving the water and ecological quality of chalk streams.

## What are the challenges?

**5.25** To be fully effective this opportunity should be carried out at a catchment wide scale in collaboration with multiple partners to develop initiatives and deliver projects.

## Opportunity 2: Chalk grassland enhancement, roadside verge connections

### What is the opportunity?

**5.26** Opportunity 2 seeks to protect and enhance chalk grassland habitats through the enhancement of roadside verge connections and creation of new species-rich grassland. The north of the district lies within NCA 87 East Anglian

Chalk, defining the underlying chalky soils and chalk aquifer which are unique within the district. Soils in this area are more likely to support important chalk assemblages, including support of the rare and important chalk streams. However, due to development and cultivation, much of the historic chalk grasslands have been lost. Key aspects of the opportunity are:

- **Expand and protect verge planting** - species-rich grasslands along road verges are the most common location of remnant chalk grasslands in the district, and many of these are designated as Special Roadside Verges. Expanding and protecting the existing grassland verges will be an important part of recreating these chalk habitats. Existing chalk habitats with wildflower rich grassland have been identified along Strethall Road and the B1038 near Wicken Bonhunt, and near Littlebury Green. These verges are maintained by Essex County Council and Essex Wildlife Trust, who carry out cuttings and surveys at appropriate times throughout the year. There are opportunities to seek out new corridors along these stretches which would serve to expand these habitats.
- **Improve habitat for pollinators** - this work could tie into Buglife's B-Line programme, which aims to create and restore at least 150,000 hectares of flower-rich habitat across the UK, helping support pollinators – such as butterflies and bees - to move through the country. Buglife has identified a corridor for increased pollinator habitat in the area (see further details under district-wide **Opportunity 18: pollinator network**).
- **Incorporate education** - educational elements should be integrated into this project, to increase knowledge of the rare habitats that were once abundant in the area and facilitate increased engagement with nature.

## Why is it important?

**5.27** Chalk grassland assemblages support unique species and provide important habitat (SO1). Once common within Essex, the endangered Crested Cow Wheat is now only found in Uttlesford, in the chalk verges. This is symbolic of the importance of these types of grassland, which support rare species as a niche habitat.

## What might be the challenges?

**5.28** Verges which border cultivated land may be impacted by both hedgerow encroachment and fertiliser inputs. Working with landowners to create an appropriate buffer to protect the verges will be important. Additionally, there may be impacts from vehicular traffic. Preventing off-road traffic or parking on these verges is essential to maintaining the vegetation structure and diversity. This could be done with bollards or clear signage. This will require liaison with and resource from the highways team at Essex County Council.

**5.29** The identification of appropriate conditions for chalk grassland requires knowledgeable surveyors. Volunteers with the Essex Wildlife Trust already carry out surveys of roadside verges throughout the county and should be a key contact for work of this nature.

## Opportunity 3: Improved footpath network across the landscape

### What is the opportunity?

**5.30** Opportunity 3 would extend and enhance the footpath network in the northern reaches of the district. The public footpath and cycle network across this area of the district is fragmented, particularly when moving east-west between smaller settlements. Across the existing network, there is a lack of signposting and consistency. The M11 divides the area down the middle with few crossings, which further disrupts connectivity. Improving footpath conditions in this area would encourage greater use of the wider landscape as a well-being resource for locals. Key areas of focus include:

- **Improve the existing path network** - enhance and join up the fragmented network of footpaths which connect the settlements of Chrishall, Littlebury Green, Littlebury and Saffron Walden. The promoted

Icknield Way Trail forms one part of the existing network and should form the core connector.

- **Address major barriers** – connections from Elmdon and Strethall to Littlebury Green and under the M11 towards Saffron Walden should be strengthened, with a consistency in both signage and planting. Enhancing connections for pedestrians and cyclists under/across the M11 should be a priority, by upgrading path surfacing and incorporating lighting where required.
- **Create habitat connections** - there are scattered woodland and nature reserves to the east and west of Saffron Walden. These provide the opportunity for additional green links or pocket parks, and a way of signposting through the landscape.
- **Improve accessibility and maintenance** - footpaths should be maintained to keep the path accessible and widened where possible. Wayfinding features should be enhanced and increased. In some instances, consistent paving will increase legibility of paths.
- **Reduce non-physical barriers to accessing greenspaces** – led walks sharing information on history, the natural environment and also teaching basic navigational skills can help to break down some of the psycho-social barriers of accessing the countryside.

## Why is it important?

**5.31** Enhancing existing green corridors throughout this area would increase local access to quality green spaces and provide an improved wellbeing resource (SO3). By updating surfacing, lighting (where appropriate), and wayfinding, use of the footpath network will increase. Additionally, improving these links would increase footfall into the various settlements throughout the north of the district, and improve overall connectivity (SO5).

## What are the challenges?

**5.32** Identifying landowners to work with to create a coherently joined up footpath network will require outreach and collaboration efforts. The advice of ecologists should also be sought to ensure that improving public access does not detrimentally impact habitats and species sensitive to disturbance.

**5.33** Providing safe passages along roadways will occasionally require reconfiguration of traffic layouts and widening. Maintenance of paths would require ongoing funding or volunteer support. Identification of delivery partners and relevant funding sources would be necessary.

**5.34** Any new planting proposed along the verges should be decided in collaboration with ecologists, to ensure that species are appropriately selected for the site and surrounding land use.

## Opportunity 4: Greening of Saffron Walden

### What is the opportunity?

**5.35** Opportunity 4 would improve access to natural and semi-natural greenspace for residents in the town and surrounding hamlets. Saffron Walden is compact, with a historic core which features limited areas of green space. The public footpath network is fragmented, particularly when moving from the peripheries of the settlement into the core.

**5.36** This opportunity would involve creating a framework for an enhanced active travel network along existing key routes, with green features near key hubs within the town centre. These opportunities should be cross referenced with the data collected and routes identified in the cycling and walking strategy that is currently in progress for Saffron Walden. Key focus areas include:

- **Improve wayfinding** - Audley End Road/Audley Road to Radwinter Road provides a strong east-west spine opportunity through the town. Providing consistent wayfinding and material palette along this route would connect from Audley End in the west (see Error! Reference source not found.) out beyond The Common and cemetery in the east.
- **Provide cycle and footpath infrastructure along the High Street** - create an enhanced hub where it intersects with Audley Road, with street trees, multifunctional planting, seating, and cycle storage. Continue consistent wayfinding through the historic core, including the Saffron Walden Market (**Photo 5.1**), and out towards The Common.
- **Incorporate the existing green spaces along these routes** - both have pockets of space which could be captured for enhanced pedestrian experience and signposting. Additionally, consider opportunities to incorporate SuDs in new pockets of planting or pedestrian space. Planting should be in character with the locality and should be sympathetic to the historic character of the settlement.
- **Integrate opportunities for community engagement in greenspace** – help to maximise the health and wellbeing benefits of the greening programme through volunteer maintenance programmes or installing spaces for community food growing.

**Photo 5.1: Saffron Walden Market Square**



### Why is it important?

**5.37** Improving the experience of pedestrians and cyclists within the town is essential to increasing active travel (and the health and wellbeing benefits this brings) and reducing reliance on private vehicles. These health and wellbeing benefits would be enhanced through participation in associated volunteer programmes. It could also draw more locals and visitors into the public realm (SO5) and encourage them to linger longer. Provision of pocket parks and multifunctional planting in the urban cores could provide increased tree coverage (SO2) and enhanced access to green spaces (SO3). It could also provide a calmed traffic experience and contribute to reducing peak summer temperatures. Additionally, multifunctional planting which increases water permeability would serve to mitigate surface water flooding (SO8).



## What are the challenges?

**5.38** Challenges for this opportunity will include balancing the preservation of the historic character of the town when integrating new GI. New routes must also come with maintenance plans to ensure that increased usage can be managed and retained in the long term.

## Opportunity 5: New Country Park near Saffron Walden

### What is the opportunity?

**5.39** There is potential to create a larger area of public space in the northern reaches of the district. This would reduce reliance on Hatfield Forest as the primary country park within the district, reducing recreational pressure on that important site. Additionally, the existing attractions near Saffron Walden (including the river Cam and significant woodland) could serve to enhance the attractiveness and pull of the surrounding area.

**5.40** The exact location of this site should be informed by a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) assessment which will follow on from this strategy. However, a possible location is to the south of the preferred development sites in Saffron Walden. This location would allow for habitat and access connections to be made between the semi-natural greenspace identified within the design frameworks for these sites and a new country park.

### Why is it important?

**5.41** A large-scale greenspace in the north of the district would provide recreation opportunities closer to population centres with easier access than other current options (SO4). It would also alleviate existing recreational

pressures at Hatfield Forest Country Park in the south of the district. This space, in proximity to multiple settlements with footpaths connecting into the existing network and identified preferred development sites would increase active travel connectivity (SO5). The location, near numerous areas of ancient woodland and priority habitat would also serve to improve the connectivity of habitats in this area (SO1).

## What are the challenges?

**5.42** Further discovery and discussion would be needed to identify landowners, such as Audley End Estate, and explore their willingness to open up access within this area.

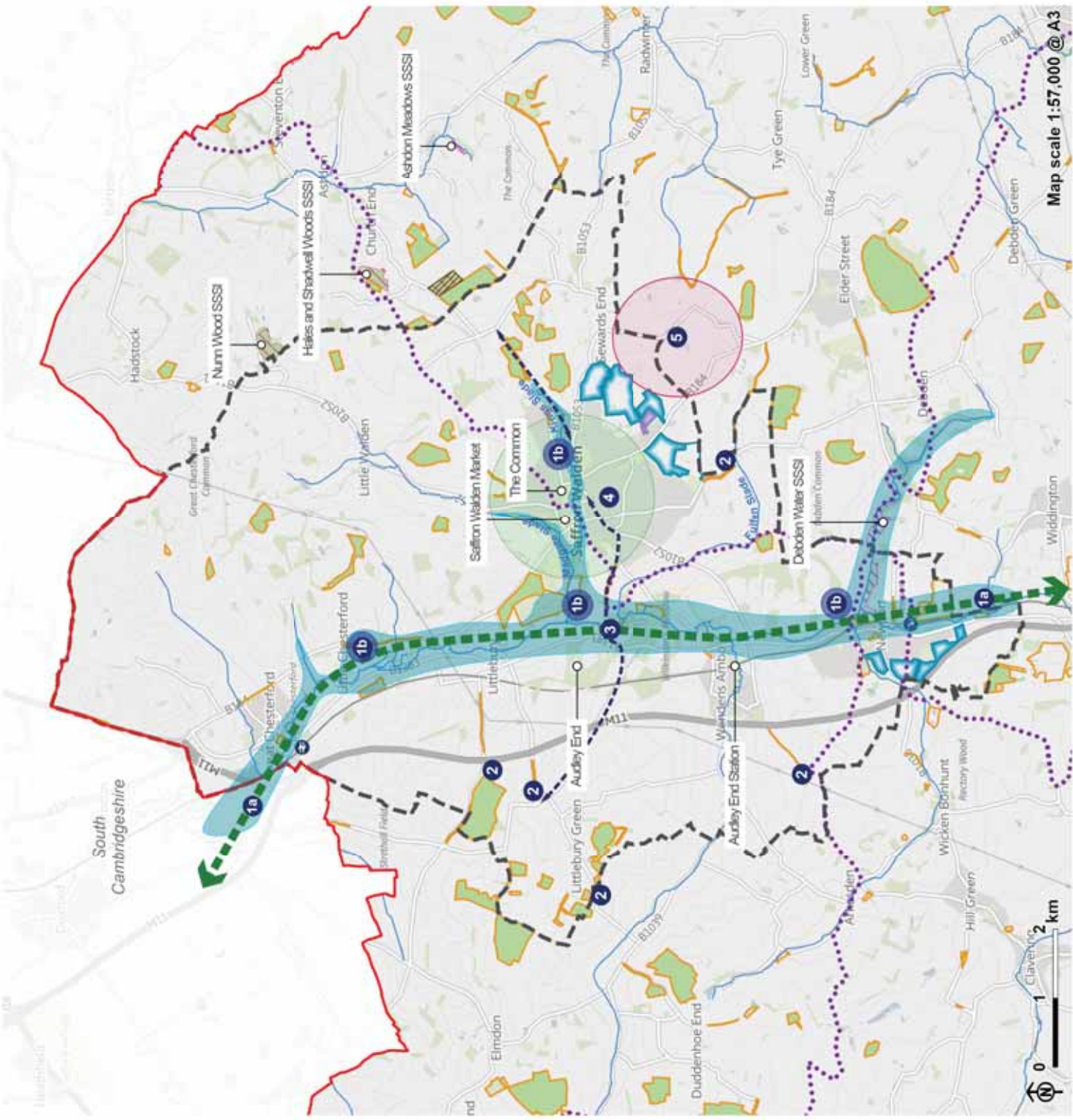
**5.43** There are a number of adjacent local wildlife sites and any development would need to be sensitively designed so as not to negatively impact on these.

North Uttlesford focus area

- Existing GBI**
- Uttlesford
  - North Uttlesford focus area
  - Site of Special Scientific Interest
  - National Nature Reserve
  - Ancient woodland
  - Local Nature Reserve
  - Local Wildlife Site
  - River
  - Harcamliow Way (Long Distance Walking route)
- Preferred site (land use)**
- Employment
  - Residential

**Strategic Opportunities for North Uttlesford's GBI network**

- 1** The River Cam and The Slades
- 1a** Green + blue corridor connections
- 1b** Floodplain and riparian spaces
- 1c** Restoration, improvement of water quality
- 2** Chalk grassland and verges
- 3** PRoW network - enhancements and expansions
- 4** Greening of Saffron Walden
- 5** New SANGS / Country Park site



## Focus Area 2: South Uttlesford

**5.44** Focus Area 2 comprises the local parishes of Stansted Mountfitchet, Elsenham, Birchanger, Great Hallingbury, Hatfield Broad Oak, Takeley, Great Canfield, Little Canfield, Little Easton, and Great Dunmow.

### South Uttlesford's GBI Network today

**5.45** The Focus Area covers much of the built-up area of the south of Uttlesford stretching east-west across the District including Great Dunmow, Takeley, Hatfield Forest Country Park, Stansted Airport and the village of Stansted Mountfitchet to the west of the M11. It is broadly focused along the A120 corridor, which Transport East has identified as a key east-west growth corridor, acting as a key route from the M11 and Stansted Airport with growing towns and cities to the east **[See reference 66]**.

**5.46** The south-west of Uttlesford contains an area of designated Green Belt, comprising the very extremity of the London Metropolitan Green Belt. The designation surrounds Bishop's Stortford and protects areas of open countryside west of the M11, as far as Stansted Mountfitchet. Further south, land surrounding Little Hallingbury, Hatfield Heath and south of White Roding and Leaden Roding also falls within the designation. Furthermore, surrounding Stansted Airport and Takeley, land is also a designated Countryside Protection Zone (CPZ) **[See reference 67]** – a policy which originated in 1984 to support Stansted's recognition as an 'airport in the countryside'. The policy aims to limit the physical size of the airport and protect its countryside setting.

**5.47** Uttlesford contains two Country Parks, both of which are located within Focus Area 2: Hatfield Forest and the Flitch Way.

**5.48** The proximity to Stansted Airport affects the tranquillity of this area. Throughout the remaining focus area, outside the main settlements, the

landscape is generally characterised by gently rolling, open, arable farmland, small river valleys, dispersed settlements and historic features.

**5.49** Focus Area 2 comprises three main settlements; Stansted Mountfitchet, Takeley and Great Dunmow. These settlements and their key GBI assets are described in **Appendix C**.

**5.50** The key challenges for South Uttlesford's GBI network which have informed the identification of the opportunities include:

- Areas of flood risk
- Limited and fragmented woodland cover and limited habitat connectivity
- Existing recreational pressures on country parks in the area
- Limited access to semi-natural greenspaces in some areas
- Recorded poor water quality in some watercourses

## Strategic Opportunities

### Opportunity 6: Enhancement of the Flich Way

What is the opportunity?

**5.51** Opportunity 6 is the enhancement of Flich Way, to improve surfacing and accessibility, access points, the integration and better management of habitats along the route and new onward connections at the western end of the route. The Flich Way is a 15-mile long Country Park, LNR, LWS, PRoW and traffic-free NCN route (NCN16) which runs east-west through Uttlesford. The route follows the decommissioned railway line from Braintree to Bishop's Stortford. The route passes through Little Dunmow, Great Dunmow, Little Canfield, Takeley and Hatfield Forest Park before terminating near Start Hill, just east of the M11. The western terminus of Flich Way is poorly connected to the

surrounding area, with barriers to Bishop's Stortford, Stansted Airport and surrounding villages provided by the M11, A120 and Junction 8.

**5.52** The need for improvements has already been recognised by local groups. Existing work to enhance the Flitch Way has been driven by the **Friends of Flitch Way and Associated Woodlands** [See reference 68] and the **Flitch Way Action Group** (FWAG) [See reference 69]. The Flitch Way Action Group have identified key delivery partners and support from Uttlesford District Council and Essex Highways (Public Right of Way team). Other key stakeholders include: Sustrans, Cycling UK (formerly the C.T.C.), The Ramblers Association, British Horse Society and most prominently Essex Bridleways Association. The local groups have already delivered a number of improvement projects along the Flitch Way, including ongoing maintenance, provision of interpretation boards and reconstruction of a number of historic railway halts including the Stane Street Halt near Hatfield Forest and Bannister Green Halt near Felsted [See reference 70].

**5.53** There are additional opportunities to further improve the Flitch Way identified from the FWAG Progress Report [See reference 71] and baseline mapping and aerial imagery. Specific enhancement opportunities which should be prioritised are set out below:

**5.54 Upgrade the condition and accessibility of the route**, for all users including:

- Improve the route surfacing to an even, level surface of bound or semi-bound material which is suitable for walking, cycling, horse-riding, wheelchair users and those with prams.
- Provision of safer road crossing points at key entrance points to the route.
- Upgraded signage and wayfinding to make the route easily navigable.
- Enhancement of natural and cultural heritage features of the former railway line, including the integration of interpretation boards and public art, to improve the visitor offer.

- Removal of a number of existing access barriers along the route (e.g., inaccessible kissing gates and narrow entrance points), and replacement with accessible gates and wider, more welcoming access points [See reference 72].
- Integrate seating along the route, providing resting points for less mobile users.

**5.55 Improve and extend connectivity:** Enhance access to Flitch Way to optimise it as a key route for both recreation and utility trips. This will enable it to fulfil its role as an important strategic route that plays a significant role in local travel. Priorities for improving the connectivity of the route include:

- Create and enhance active travel links between the western end of the Flitch Way (at Start Hill) and surrounding activity hubs including Bishop's Stortford, Stansted Airport, and Birchanger (onwards to Stansted Mountfitchet). At present, the M11, A120 and J8 provide significant barriers to movement in the south-west of Uttlesford and providing high-quality active travel links from the Flitch Way (at Start Hill) would become an important strategic link for both recreation and utility trips. Initial studies have taken place to determine the most effective and feasible routes for the extension of the Flitch Way [See reference 73].
- Re-connect the missing link through Great Dunmow, providing a well-defined, traffic-free connection. The integrity of the Flitch Way was hampered by both the original A120 bypass (B1256) and the new A120 bypass [See reference 74], contributing to a disjointed network through Great Dunmow. There is an opportunity to further engage with developers bringing forward sites in the south and west of Great Dunmow to ensure a high-quality, clear, and continuous link is provided for all users.
- Provide a series of distinctive, attractive and accessible gateway entrance points into the route from key settlements and destination points along the route. This will help to build a unique identity and further develop the route as a visitor attraction. These should integrate cycle parking, seating and bins. Key locations for these new gateways include;
  - Great Dunmow town centre and the River Chelmer green-blue corridor (see **Opportunity 11: River Chelmer Corridor**)

- Takeley and Little Canfield, e.g., creation of a linear pocket park and facilities at the former Station House, Sycamore Close.
- Hatfield Forest (see **Opportunity 7: Hatfield Forest**).

**Figure 5.2: Great Dunmow town centre**



**5.56 Enhance habitat connectivity along the Flich Way:** Strengthen the Flich Way as a biodiversity corridor and strengthen links with the wider GBI network. Opportunities include:

- Continued management and restoration of existing habitats along the route. Work has already been undertaken by local groups to restore and manage the unimproved grassland habitat at Dunmow Cutting, involving removal of invasive scrub and maintaining clearings for wildlife, including a variety of wildflowers, to prosper [See reference 75]. There is a range of other habitats along the Flich Way, including open grassland, woodlands, and wetlands which require ongoing maintenance and restoration.



- Creating space for connected habitat creation: Much of the land around the Flitch Way has been subject to intensive agriculture and urbanisation. In collaboration with landowners, there is opportunity to strengthen the wildlife offer of neighbouring land including broadleaved woodland planting, creating and strengthening hedgerows with diverse species, and planting of wildflower meadows to support the A120 B-Line [See reference 76]. Habitat creation opportunities along the route should be decided in collaboration with ecologists.
- Key connections include Hatfield Forest Park (see **Opportunity 7: Hatfield Forest**), with riparian habitat and woodland creation opportunities at Pincey Brook / the River Roding valleys (see **Opportunity 10: River Roding / Pincey Brook**), woodland sites west of Great Dunmow (e.g. High Wood, Oak Spring/Ash Grove, Olives Wood and Easton Park (see **Opportunity 8: Easton Park**), with the River Chelmer Corridor (see **Opportunity 11: River Chelmer Corridor**) and with other LWSs (e.g. Runnels Hay, Ash Grove/Oak Spring, Olives Wood, and Clobbs Wood). The project would also assist in the restoration of priority habitats along its route (mainly deciduous woodland sites, as well as areas of lowland meadows and floodplain grazing marsh).

## Why is it important?

**5.57** The enhancement of the Flitch Way would provide multiple benefits. Improving the accessibility, attractiveness and connectivity of the route would directly benefit both residents and visitors. Over 220,000 people live within two miles of the route [See reference 77] and would benefit from significantly improved access to a district-scale natural greenspace (SO3/SO4) and improved opportunities for both recreational and utility active travel trips (SO5), being made more attractive with opportunities for learning. The Flitch Way is an important green asset and strengthening the Flitch Way as a biodiversity corridor would improve habitat connectivity east-west across the south of the district (SO1) supporting priority species and increasing woodland cover (SO2), providing an important opportunity to link a number of other habitats and greenspaces in Uttlesford.

## What might be the challenges?

**5.58** Developer contributions have funded piecemeal improvements along the Flitch Way and other associated bridleways. The FWAG state that while all planning and design decisions are negotiated by UDC Planning Authority and Essex Highways, a positive relation with developers to communicate the needs and aspirations of the projects has been important to the progress made through Great Dunmow [See reference 78]. This should be continued for future development which would attract developer contributions, particularly for any of the preferred development sites identified in Great Dunmow and Takeley.

**5.59** There are several key stakeholders important to the success of the Flitch Way, particularly with its status as a Country Park, LNR, LWS, PRow and NCN Route 16. Partnership working will be key to harnessing all the of existing support for the project, with key groups including: the Friends of Flitch Way and Associated Woodlands, the FWAG, local landowners, Stansted Airport, Essex Wildlife Trust, UDC, Essex Highways (PRow team), Sustrans, Cycling UK, the Ramblers Association, British Horse Society and Essex Bridleways Association.

## Opportunity 7: Hatfield Forest conservation and restoration

### What is the opportunity?

**5.60** Opportunity 7 is the continued preservation, conservation and enhancement of Hatfield Forest Country Park. Hatfield Forest (SSSI and NNR) comprises a large area of ancient woodland, an assemblage of veteran pollard trees and a rich variety of open habitats. The Forest has been continuously wooded, uncultivated, and managed since the beginning of human settlement, providing a 'living link' to the 'wildwood' and a high degree of ecological continuity. However, Hatfield Forest is experiencing significant negative effects of recreational pressure. Threats and pressures on both the NNR and SSSI

include public disturbance, air pollution, under grazing, changes in species distribution, water pollution, invasive species and disease.

**5.61** The condition of Hatfield Forest's SSSI is currently recorded as 'Unfavourable, Recovering' by Natural England [See reference 79]. Key priorities for the conservation and enhancement of the Country Park include continued monitoring and management of visitor numbers and habitat conditions, improving sustainable travel access opportunities, upgrading path surfacing, and ongoing biodiversity restoration and enhancement interventions [See reference 80]. Key priorities are set out below:

- **Continued nature recovery:** with the aim of restoring the SSSI to 'favourable condition' in line with Natural England objectives [See reference 81]. Priority Habitats within the Park include ancient and deciduous woodland, lowland meadows and lowland fens. Ongoing and past interventions include woodland management (coppicing, pollarding and restoring wood pasture), conservation grazing, and focused restoration projects including Wall Wood, Woodside Green, the marsh, and creation of an artificial kingfisher bank [See reference 82].
- **Upgraded path surfacing of popular routes:** Some experimentation has taken place applying different types of temporary and permanent surfaces to paths, reducing the impacts of visitors. While this should continue to be explored, these measures must be balanced with the preservation of the historic soil profile and surface features [See reference 83].
- **Improve pedestrian and cycle access:** A National Trust survey found that 85% of interviewees had travelled to Hatfield Forest by car/van T[See reference 84]. Improving sustainable access to the park (particularly Fritch Way cycle access points (see **Opportunity 6: The Fritch Way enhancement**)) would help to reduce car dependency to access the park, as well as associated air quality and noise pollution.
- **Introduction of a Zone of Influence (Zol) and management strategy:** The nature and scale of impact on Hatfield Forest is being addressed using a similar approach to the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) process embedded in the legal protection of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). ISuch mitigation

strategies typically involve requirements being imposed on development located in a recognised buffer or Zol. Mitigation measures may include provision of suitable alternative natural greenspace (SANG) to divert recreational pressure away from the site under threat, or developer contributions towards access management and monitoring interventions within the designated site itself. A 10.4km Zol around Hatfield Forest was agreed by relevant local authorities in 2022. Natural England is currently leading the development of a Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy, as well as consideration of an extended Zol to 11.1km in line with other zones across the country.

## Why is it important?

**5.62** The ongoing restoration and enhancement of Hatfield Forest will provide support for its diverse species and the interconnected habitats it supports (ancient woodland, wood pasture and parkland, lowland meadows, lowland fen, and lakes) (SO1). Enhancing sustainable access to the Park will improve access to an existing district-scale greenspace (SO4) while also helping reduce the impacts of vehicular traffic on the designated site.

## What might be the challenges?

**5.63** The ongoing nature recovery of Hatfield Forest must be balanced with the continued provision of access to a district level, high-quality natural greenspace. The establishment of suitable alternative natural greenspaces (SANGs) within Uttlesford may take some time to establish and local housing development and population growth will increase pressures on the Country Park. Therefore, ongoing monitoring and management of visitor activity at Hatfield Forest is essential to managing its continued restoration and improvement of its habitats.

## Opportunity 8: New Country Park at Easton Park

### What is the opportunity?

**5.64** This opportunity involves the creation of a new Country Park within the wider Easton Park site in the south of Uttlesford, north-west of Great Dunmow. UDC's 2019 Open Space Assessment Report revealed that the district is short of 'natural and semi-natural green spaces' open to the general public. 75% of this limited provision is accounted for by Hatfield Forest which is experiencing significant recreational pressure [See reference 85].

**5.65** Easton Park could be a potential site for a new Country Park, in close proximity to existing settlements. Easton Park was once a large deer park owned by the Easton Lodge estate. The parkland in front of the lodge was laid out as formal avenues of trees radiating out from the central point ('patte d'oie' or 'goose foot'). In 1940, over 10,000 trees, including over 200 mature oak trees, were cleared from the parkland to accommodate the development of an airfield [See reference 86]

**5.66** The creation of a new designated Country Park at Easton Park has the potential to relieve some of the recreational pressures faced by Hatfield Forest (by diverting visitors to this alternative natural greenspace) and contribute to improving the provision of open space (particularly 'natural and semi-natural' open space) for a growing population, including linked to new housing development along the A120 corridor. In particular, the strategic expansion of Takeley and Great Dunmow will put pressure on the existing natural resources in the local area.

**5.67** Initial work has been undertaken by local groups in support of this opportunity. Stop Easton Park (SEP) campaign group is a resident's action group, set up to resist the plan to build a new town at Easton Park. They developed 'Easton Park: A Vision for a New Country Park in Uttlesford' [See reference 87], a visioning exercise for the creation of a Country Park at Easton Park. This identifies opportunities for recreation space, biodiversity

enhancement, woodland creation and carbon sequestration, and cultural and natural heritage enhancement. The vision presented by SEP includes re-establishing the historic 'patte d'oie' parkland design, significant afforestation, recreational use and development of a WWII museum alongside other facilities/opportunities [See reference 88].

**5.68** Biodiversity enhancements, such as woodland creation, at Easton Park have the potential to strengthen the Nature Network, linking Hatfield Forest, the valleys of the River Roding and Pincey Brook, the Flich Way and the River Chelmer green/blue corridor up to Thaxted. Key opportunities for the area include:

**5.69 Provide local access and recreation opportunities:**

- Provide visitor services, facilities and recreation opportunities in areas that are not sensitive to disturbance. This may include the provision of new paths, multi-use tracks, play spaces, a visitor centre/café, heritage trail, sports facilities and opportunities to connect with nature, supported by led-walks and activities, volunteer programmes and outdoor classrooms [See reference 89].
- Provide a defined and accessible route for pedestrians and cyclists from both the Flich Way (see **Opportunity 6: Flich Way**) and from Great Dunmow town centre.
- Contribute to the enhancement of long distance paths (LDPs) through the District, including the Harcamlow Way (see **District-wide Opportunity 16**) and the Saffron Trail, which both would connect through Easton Park.

**Figure 5.3: Family recreation**



#### **5.70 Enhance biodiversity and natural heritage:**

- Expansion of the broad-leaved canopy habitats. 10,000 trees were removed at Easton Park in 1942 to accommodate the development of the airfield [See reference 90]. There is opportunity to strengthen the nature network of wood pasture, parkland, and ancient and semi-natural woodland north-west of Great Dunmow, improving habitat connectivity and canopy cover between High Wood (SSSI and ASNW), Hoglands Wood/Broomhills (ASNW), Canfield Spring, Airfield Wood (ASNW), Broxted Common Wood, and Philipland Wood/Middlefield Wood (ASNW). This area has been identified as part of the ‘West Essex Forest and Woodland Cluster’, a project identified via The Big Green Internet [See reference 91] and likely to be adopted into the Essex LNRS [See reference 92], which spans from Epping, Epping Forest up to Thaxted, Uttlesford.

- Creation of flower-rich meadow habitats to complement the concept of a strong pollinator network along the A120 corridor [See reference 93] (see district-wide **Opportunity 18: Pollinator Network**).
- Support sustainable agricultural practices within the Park, balancing continued agricultural land use alongside habitat creation and open space provision.

## Why is it important?

**5.71** Habitat creation within Easton Park would help improve the connectivity of habitats across the District (SO1) and increase woodland cover (SO2), providing a significant opportunity for carbon sequestration and forming a key link between a number of habitats and other strategic opportunities (see **Opportunity 6: the Flich Way, Opportunity 10: River Roding/Pincey Brook and Opportunity 11: the River Chelmer Corridor**). The creation of a new Country Park and provision of district-scale greenspace would ensure residents have access to good quality natural greenspace (SO3) and relieve pressure on existing critical threshold sites (i.e., Hatfield Forest) (SO4). The opportunity would provide accessible routes and improve connectivity for people in the local area by enhancing the PRow network, improving LDPs and providing new active travel connections (SO5).

**5.72** Easton Park contains a number of designated heritage assets including Gardens of Easton Lodge (Grade II Registered Gardens), Brook End Stables, and Little Easton Conservation Area (Little Easton Manor and Grade I listed church). There is opportunity for the re-establishment of the historic landscape character of the parkland that was lost during WWII, ensuring that GBI protects and enhances historic character of the local area (SO6).

## What might be the challenges?

**5.73** Before Easton Park can be considered as a Country Park a review of the existing habitats and species on site is required to consider their sensitivity to



an increase in recreational access and means to avoid or mitigate negative impacts. Species reliant on open and undisturbed habitats include, for example, skylark.

**5.74** There are several existing land uses within the area including High Wood Quarry, agriculture, and private homes and gardens, which may pose challenges for public access and the creation of open spaces. Much of the land is high-quality ALC Grade 2 and therefore sustainable agricultural land use will likely need to be balanced alongside woodland planting, habitat creation and recreational land use.

**5.75** Any proposals must also address the need to conserve and enhance the designated heritage assets on the site.

**5.76** There has been significant development pressure on the land, including the proposal for the creation of an urban extension with ~1,200 dwellings. However, although Easton Park is owned by Landsec, UDC retains control of development in the Park through an agreement signed 1939 (with the intention of keeping the park as an open space and nature sanctuary). This agreement limits development by the landowners to a maximum of 10 dwellings [See reference 94].

## **Opportunity 9: Greening Stansted Mountfitchet and enhancing access to the GBI network**

What is the opportunity?

**5.77** Opportunity 9 relates to Stansted Mountfitchet and improving access to natural and semi-natural greenspace for residents in the village. Stansted Mountfitchet is an attractive village with a distinctive historic character. There are two commercial centres (one at Lower Street and one at Cambridge Street) divided by the steep incline of Chapel Hill. The local road network is under pressure from a high volume of vehicles and new development. Additionally, the

residents of Stansted Mountfitchet currently lack access to natural/semi-natural greenspace within a 15-minute walk. Key opportunities are set out below.

**Photo 5.4: Lower Street, Stansted Mountfitchet**



**5.78 Enhance access to natural and semi-natural greenspace and enhance local biodiversity:** In the area east of Stansted Mountfitchet, west of the M11 corridor there are existing areas of fragmented woodland habitats, some of which are designated Local Wildlife Sites. There is also a reasonably well connected PRow network and opportunities exist to create and improve access to natural and semi-natural greenspace for the residents of Stansted Mountfitchet. Key opportunities include:

- Woodland planting and habitat creation, including the creation of riparian and floodplain habitats along the Stansted Brook, Ugley Brook and at Stansted Park where there are areas of surrounding land within a flood risk zone 3. Providing increased habitat connectivity along these stretches along to mitigate flood risk and improve habitat corridors. There is an opportunity to extend these green links further north-east, strengthening

the 'Ancient Semi Natural Woodland: Network Enhancement Zone 2' between Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham. 'Network Enhancement Zone 2' has been identified as an area where other types of habitats may be created, or land management may be enhanced, to improve the overall quality of the priority habitat network [See reference 95]. There is also an opportunity (subject to land owner agreement) to maximise species diversity of surrounding land and provide space for new planting and natural growth. Embedding recreational access, where it will not impact on important habitats, will also improve access to natural and semi-natural greenspace for the residents of Stansted Mountfitchet.

- Additionally, upgrading Stansted Park, south of Dairy Lane, would provide an easily accessible, centrally located natural and semi-natural greenspace within Stansted Mountfitchet. There is also opportunity to incorporate significant new areas of natural and semi-natural open space within the identified preferred sites in the draft Local Plan, improving access at the north of village.

**5.79 Enhance local PRoW/cycle network, with key opportunities including:**

- Improved surfacing of paths to Aubrey Buxton Nature Reserve (LWS) from the north-east of Stansted Mountfitchet.
- Enhance the route along Stansted Brook, including improved wayfinding along Water Lane (between The Spinney/West Road and Stansted Mountfitchet train station) and with the wider countryside east of Church Road.
- Upgrade and extension of PRoW/cycle links to the south-east of Stansted Mountfitchet, particularly connections to Stansted Airport via Birchanger (improving surfacing of Parsonage Way PRoW and providing onwards connections to the Flich Way (see **Opportunity 6: the Flich Way enhancement**), as well as ensuring high-quality active travel connections are provided to the consented future Stansted Airport industrial estate. [See reference 96]. This may include the widening of pathways along Church Road to accommodate shared use with pedestrians, and the provision of a safe crossing point and onwards connection where Church Road meets Bury Lodge Lane.

**5.80 Greening the village centre:** Provide a greener, more accessible environment for pedestrians and cyclists within Stansted Mountfitchet village centre, with higher-quality public spaces. Priority should be given to key hubs of activity and the routes that connect them, including commercial areas at Lower Street and Cambridge Road and Stansted Mountfitchet train station.

Interventions may include:

- Traffic-calming and cycling infrastructure, facilitating the creation of greener, less car-dominated and people-friendly spaces without reducing the capacity of the road network. Urban greening, such as street trees, pocket parks and planters incorporating seating/resting points, would form part of a wider opportunity to turn car-dominated spaces into public hubs at the heart of the village. In particular, at Lower Street, Station Road and Cambridge Road there are opportunities to reduce on-street parking, widen pavements and provide bike lanes/create cycle-friendly streets.
- Provide wildflower verges (instead of planters), incorporating pollinator planting into new development, along existing verges, and in open spaces, supporting the strengthening of the M11 B-Line [\[See reference 97\]](#).
- Targeting nature-rich Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) features (such as “rain gardens”) in priority locations where drainage data points to increased risk of surface water flooding.
- Integrate opportunities for community food growing and volunteer activity to help facilitate greater use of these new greenspaces.

## Why is it important?

**5.81** This opportunity would improve habitat connectivity within and around Stansted Mountfitchet (SO1), incorporating opportunities to increase woodland cover particularly along river corridors (SO2). This opportunity would ensure that all residents of the village would have access to good quality natural greenspace within a 15-minute walk (SO3) and would generally improve local connectivity for people by enhancing active travel connections and strengthening the PRow network (SO5).

**5.82** The greening of the village centre(s) of Stansted Mountfitchet would integrate GBI into the village core, complementing its historic character and the townscape and helping create more people-friendly spaces, making the village more attractive and supporting local shops and businesses (SO6 and SO7). The integration of SuDS (including rain gardens and nature-based solutions e.g., riparian/floodplain planting) will help support reducing risks of fluvial and surface water flooding (SO8). Encouraging opportunities for walking, cycling and spending time outdoors and connected to nature within Stansted Mountfitchet will also offer health and wellbeing benefits to residents and visitors of the town.

### What might be the challenges?

**5.83** In relation to maximising urban greening and active travel opportunities, there may be challenges with the provision of adequate space in the historic village core while maintaining the road capacity of the existing road network, which is under significant pressure. Interventions must also respect and protect the historic townscape character of Stansted Mountfitchet.

**5.84** Securing land owner support will be critical to wider habitat creation initiatives in the countryside surround Stansted Mountfitchet.

## Opportunity 10: River Roding / Pincey Brook woodland creation

### What is the opportunity?

**5.85** Opportunity 10 is to create and restore woodland in the valleys of the River Roding and Pincey Brook, near Takeley. A Natural England River Habitat: Network Enhancement Zone 2 (land immediately adjoining existing habitat patches that are small or have excessive edge to area ratio where habitat creation is likely to help reduce the effects of habitat fragmentation) [See

[reference 98](#)] has been identified throughout this area. There is opportunity for the use of the watercourse network as a framework for the creation, restoration, and expansion of a rich and locally distinct mosaic of habitats, where soil types and land management practices permit. Three main actions make up the opportunity.

**5.86 Woodland Restoration** - Previous restoration work has been undertaken in the local area. The Pincey Valley Restoration Project was carried out by Essex Biodiversity Project, who identified Pincey Brook (south of Hatfield Forest to Hatfield Broad Oak) as a site for river restoration and the opportunity to reduce the risk of flooding, enhance the river valley for wildlife (particularly birds, invertebrates and fish populations) and enhance the landscape character. Approximately 1.4km of new river channel has been created and quickly naturalised and the existing riverside footpath improved [[See reference 99](#)].

**5.87 Woodland creation** – while this opportunity focuses on the restoration of floodplain and riparian habitats, there are broader opportunities for woodland creation throughout the catchment. The area has been identified by the Essex LNP within the Essex Farming Clusters ‘Roding Valley’ Local Nature Recovery opportunity area [[See reference 100](#)], a key location for woodland creation with cooperation from local farmers/landowners already identified. Habitat creation should also focus on reducing surface run-off with the aim of improving water quality and phosphate levels [[See reference 101](#)].

**5.88 Recreational access** - The Harcamlow Way passes through this landscape area, integrating a recreational opportunity within the green corridor for habitat enhancement throughout the District (see **district-wide Opportunity 16: Harcamlow Way**). Habitat creation within this opportunity area will support the enhancement of this LDP. Additionally, this opportunity area is strategically located within south Uttlesford. Woodland and habitat creation and enhancement in the Pincey Brook and River Roding valleys will provide key links for improved habitat connectivity across the wider District and contribute to a Nature Network spanning from the Flich Way (**Opportunity 6**) - Hatfield Forest (**Opportunity 7**) – Easton Park (**Opportunity 8**) – The River Chelmer green/blue corridor (**Opportunity 14**) – Thaxted.

## Why is it important?

**5.89** Provision of an interconnected habitat mosaic of varying kinds across the River Roding and Pincey Brook (deciduous woodland, grazing meadow, riparian habitat) would provide support for diverse species and increase biodiversity (SO1). The creation of new woodland and riparian habitat would increase tree coverage across the district, thereby increasing biodiversity and carbon sequestration (SO2). Riparian habitat also contributes to the slowing of water flows, and drawdown of precipitation into the ground water supply (SO9).

## What might be the challenges?

**5.90** Any planting would need to respect open habitats of existing ecological value including species rich swards and be informed by consultation and ecological surveys. There would be potential challenges in identifying landowners and obtaining consent for planting, as well as ongoing management and stewardship of new woodland areas. Any planting should be done in collaboration with landowners, making clear the benefits of riparian planting/woodland creation, including flood protection and potential funding schemes such as Environmental Land Management Schemes or Biodiversity Net Gain. Cooperation from local landowners, as part of the 'River Roding' farm cluster, has already been identified by the Essex LNP. Particularly where the rivers pass through arable fields, riparian buffers should be located in the areas most liable to flood, thereby reducing impacts on productive land.

## Opportunity 11: River Chelmer green/blue corridor

### What is the opportunity?

**5.91** This opportunity looks to enhance the green/blue corridor along the River Chelmer as it traverses through Great Dunmow, improving biodiversity, water

quality, recreational opportunities and reducing flood risk. The River Chelmer defines much of Great Dunmow's eastern boundary, with its valley located in Flood Zone 3 for fluvial flood risk. Most of the built-up area of Great Dunmow is located to the west of the river, with Church End and two large identified preferred sites in the draft Local Plan located to the east. The River Chelmer corridor forms one side of the triangle of wildlife corridors around Great Dunmow, along with the Flich Way to the south and the nature network to the west [\[See reference 102\]](#) (see **Opportunity 6** and **Opportunity 17**). Additionally, it provides a key recreational opportunity within Great Dunmow linking a number of important greenspaces and access routes.

**5.92** The section of the river from Great Easton to the River Can has moderate Water Framework Directive (WFD) status. This water body has problems with phosphate and dissolved oxygen levels but there is no data to confirm the origins of these problems. Fish populations have decreased since 2009 which means that the water body is failing for fish – specific reasons have not been identified however low levels of oxygen and redundant structures such as weirs (preventing fish migration) are likely to be contributing. Point source pollution from the local sewage treatment works is also suspected to contribute. Invasive species including signal crayfish, giant hogweed and American mink have been recorded in the waterbody [\[See reference 103\]](#).

**5.93** Essex Rivers Hub have identified a number of completed and potential projects along the River Chelmer. Between 2013 and 2015, works were undertaken by Essex Wildlife Trust downstream at Hoblongs Bridge. The project reinstated meanders cut off from the main river channel, returning the river to its original path whilst enhancing the wet woodland habitat nearby [\[See reference 104\]](#).



### Photo 5.5: River Chelmer green-blue corridor



**5.94** There are additional opportunities to further improve the river Chelmer as a high-quality green/blue corridor. Specific enhancement opportunities which should be prioritised are set out below.

**5.95 Improved connectivity, accessibility and network of green/recreational spaces** - enhancing connections along the River Chelmer corridor, linking up existing open and recreational spaces, improving signage and wayfinding, and enhancing accessibility along the blue-green corridor for all users. The aim would be to create a cohesive and nature-rich waterway park which provides well-defined biodiversity and recreational connections from Flitch Way, in the south of Great Dunmow, up to Church End and beyond.

- Enhance the continuity, accessibility, and attractiveness of the PRoW/footpath network from the Flitch Way (at Chelmsford Road) – B1256 - Braintree Road – Church End. There is an opportunity to further develop this PRoW/footpath network further north, improving the PRoW

along Bigods Lane and tying in with identified preferred strategic development sites to the north-east of Great Dunmow.

**5.96 Re-naturalise the river course** - the section of river through Great Dunmow Park has been notably straightened, although the old meander is still evident and retains some water. Essex Wildlife Trust together with Essex Biodiversity Project have identified the potential to reinstate this natural feature with additional bankside habitat created along this stretch [\[See reference 105\]](#).

**5.97 Create new spaces for habitat** - there is an opportunity to provide improved and better-connected wildlife habitat along the watercourses with the aim of delivery a well-connected mosaic of floodplain and riparian habitats (from the A120 up to Little Easton). Opportunities include riparian woodland creation, targeted where WWNP data has identified areas of riparian woodland potential, as well as other bankside habitat creation such as wetland and fen meadows, while also linking up existing recreational greenspaces. Riparian habitats should extend east, creating green/blue corridors linking with Markshill Wood ASNW.

**5.98** This opportunity provides an integral link with **district-wide Opportunity 17: Nature Network Hatfield Forest – Thaxted**, in which the river Chelmer provides a key green/blue corridor spanning north from Great Dunmow to Thaxted. As such, the opportunities set out above have the potential to span further north up the course of the river, improving habitat and recreational links up to Thaxted.

### Why is it important?

**5.99** The creation of an interconnected blue/green network along the river Chelmer would provide multiple benefits. An interconnected habitat mosaic of varying kinds would provide support for diverse species and increase biodiversity, improving habitat connectivity and links with other strategic opportunity areas (e.g. Easton Park and the Flitch Way) (SO1). The creation of new woodland and riparian habitat would increase tree coverage across the district, thereby increasing biodiversity and carbon sequestration (SO2).

Increasing connections between green spaces would also directly benefit residents, by increasing access to nature (SO3). Riparian habitat also contributes to the slowing of water flows, and drawdown of precipitation into the ground water supply (SO9).

## What might be the challenges?

**5.100** In urban environments, creating areas of naturalised space is often limited by existing land use, as well as being complicated by multiple landowners. Green spaces in urban areas can also be subject to high recreational pressures through high usage or trampling. This can impact the quality of habitats and disturb sensitive species. Increased access should be carefully managed and supported with signposting and educational programmes to increase awareness of responsible access and avoid negative impacts on sensitive ecology.

South Uttlesford focus area

Existing GBI

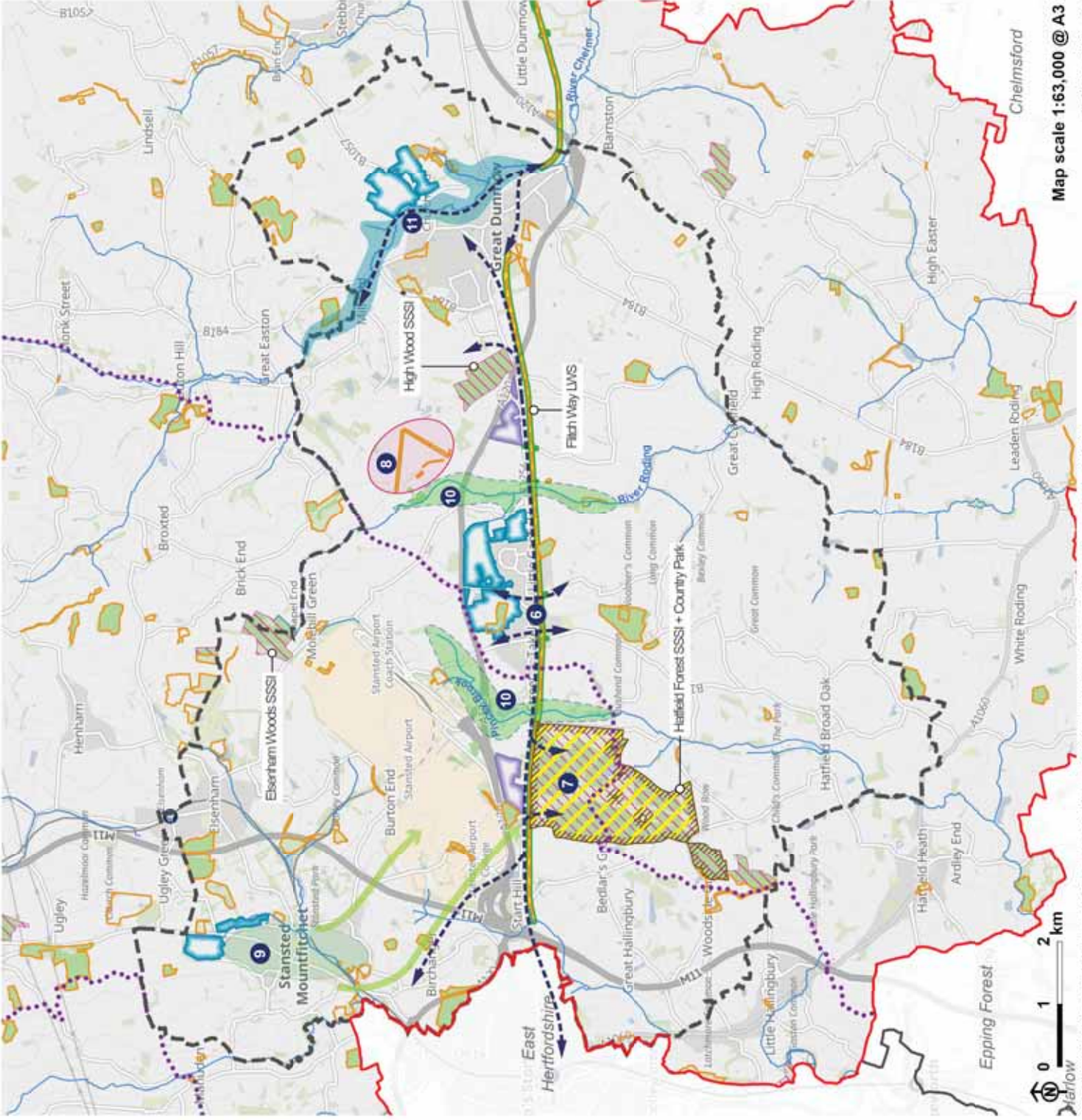
- Uttlesford
- South Uttlesford focus area
- Country park
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- National Nature Reserve
- Ancient woodland
- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Wildlife Site
- River
- Harcamlow Way (Long Distance Walking route)

Preferred site (land use)

- Employment
- Residential

Strategic Opportunities for South Uttlesford's GBI network

- Enhancement of the Flitch Way - - - - -
- Hatfield Forest conservation and restoration
- Potential SANGS / Country Park site
- Greening of Stansted Mountfitchet
- River Roding / Pincey Brook woodland creation
- River Chelmer GB corridor



Map scale 1:63,000 @ A3

## Focus Area 3: Thaxted

**5.101** Focus Area 3 comprises the local parish area of Thaxted. Thaxted is a picturesque small village in the east of Uttlesford, characterised by its historic environment and rural surroundings. Thaxted is set in the open countryside halfway between Saffron Walden (8km to the north-west) and Great Dunmow (7.5km to the south). It has a compact town centre, medieval buildings, thatched cottages and quaint streets and is considered to be an important local centre and key rural settlement. Beyond Thaxted, the wider Focus Area comprises mainly rolling arable farmland with one or two small, scattered hamlets [See reference 106].

**5.102** The Focus Area is covered by three LCAs: A6 - Upper Chelmer River Valley, B8 - Thaxted Farmland Plateau and B11 - Lindsell and Bardfield Farmland Plateau. The landscape of the Upper Chelmer Valley is mostly tranquil away from Great Dunmow and the A120. The historic integrity of the landscape is strong, with a surviving pattern of medieval dispersed settlements. The landscape is characterised by its narrow valley, small meandering river channel, dense riverside trees and arable valley sides. The wider areas surrounding Thaxted are characterised by gently rolling arable farmland. Fields are bounded by hedgerows which are often broken or gapped due to agricultural intensification and areas of deciduous woodland are scattered across the landscape [See reference 107].

**5.103** The Focus Area does not contain any nationally designated sites. It contains small, dispersed areas of ASNW within the broader countryside, namely Home Wood, Browns Wood, Marks Wood, Alrey Wood and Croft Wood.

**5.104** The local PRoW network provides access to the countryside. The Harcamlow Way LDP (see opportunity 16) traverses north-south through the Focus Area, passing through the west of Thaxted village.

**Photo 5.6: John Webb’s Windmill and Thaxted Parish Church from the Harcamlow Way, Thaxted**



**5.105** The key challenges which informed the identification of opportunities in the Thaxted area are:

- Areas of flood risk along water courses
- Fragmented woodland network and overall habitat connectivity
- The public right of way and cycle network is somewhat fragmented, with limited interconnectivity between smaller settlements

**5.106** Details of the existing GBI for Thaxted village are provided in **Appendix C**.

**Figure 5.7: Access to the countryside**



## Strategic Opportunities

### **Opportunity 12: Improved water retention, slowed water flow and erosion**

What is the opportunity?

**5.107** The east of the district is dominated by arable production, with limited tree cover or areas of green uncultivated spaces along the numerous waterways and there are areas of high flood risk and poor water quality along the main watercourses. Creating new or enhancing existing naturalised spaces will slow surface flows, increase water retention, groundwater supply and water quality, and will reduce run-off and erosion. Key focus areas should include:

- **Creation of naturalised spaces for water retention**, particularly in proximity to existing waterways; including ponds, wetland areas, and expansion of floodplains. Bolster the existing habitat network where possible, tying into areas of woodland, floodplain grazing marsh, or other riparian habitats.
- **Enhancement of existing pockets of woodland** throughout the landscape, particularly within field systems that have seen woodland or hedgerows entirely removed over the past century. If targeted on sloping ground, this could reduce surface run-off and soil erosion by slowing water flows.
- **New riparian planting**, targeted where WWNP data has identified areas of riparian woodland potential. Consider opportunities to create continuous networks of riparian woodland and marsh between the two major rivers in the area, the Rivers Chelmer and Pant.
- **Connecting habitats** - A key location is the West Wood SSSI, which sits between the two rivers and is adjacent to minor waterways. Connecting these with additional areas of planting would mitigate flood risk, as well as improve habitat connectivity across an area of the district that is currently low in biodiversity value.

## Why is it important?

**5.108** The arable landscape in this area is important for food production but it lacks diversity or variability in habitat structure. Riparian planting and areas of new water retention would mitigate against future effects of climate change and bolster water supply (SO9). Additionally the areas of new habitat would improve overall connectivity in an area with few intact habitat corridors (SO1).

## What are the challenges?

**5.109** Any change in land-use would need landowner permission and support. Ecological surveys would be required to determine the suitability of land for woodland planting.



## Opportunity 13: Greening Thaxted and enhancing local experience

### What is the opportunity?

**5.110** Similar to other historic settlements in Uttlesford, Thaxted retains a tight-knit core with limited areas of green space. However, central nodes within the settlement provide space which should be captured for enhanced pedestrian and cyclist experience, as well as incorporation of SuDs and multifunctional planting. Where possible and where compatible with the local character, planting strategies should be pursued to provide shade and ambient cooling for the hardscape-dominated urban centre. Key opportunities include:

- **Improved cycle lanes and pedestrian/cyclist signage** - along Newbiggen Street. Ensure there is adequate cycle storage and seating in shade, both in support of future active travel links and in support of an older population.
- **Integrate new greenspaces and planting** - Along Town Street and Newbiggen Street, a key node lies at the intersection of St John the Baptist Church and The Swan Pub, which coincides with the Harcamlow Way. Within the larger areas of non-vehicular paving, permeability could be introduced through planting and possibly even pocket parks. Consistent with the character of the wider landscape, wildflower verges and other pollinator friendly grasses should be considered instead of planters or rain gardens.
- **Incorporate rills and other urban drainage schemes** within hardscaped areas. These should be concentrated where this is highest risk of surface water flooding.
- **Small-scale and multifunctional planting** - particularly within verges that currently have limited biodiversity value and are either hardscape or mown lawn. Introduce permeable paving and a consistent material palette.

- **Integrate SuDS** - Any new development should incorporate areas of water retention, particularly in proximity to the River Chelmer or other minor waterways.
- **Incorporation of volunteer programmes** – new pocket parks could be both designed, delivered and maintained in partnership with the local community, offering ownership of public spaces which are designed to reflect a communities unique identity and increase community pride in the place they live.

## Why is it important?

The greening of the village centre of Thaxted would integrate GBI into the village core, providing more people-friendly spaces and making the village more attractive, potentially encouraging more visitors who linger longer (SO6 and SO7). Integrating SuDS, and other small-scale plantings and permeable surfaces would also mitigate flood risk (SO8). Encouraging opportunities for walking, cycling and spending time outdoors within the village centre will also offer health and wellbeing benefits to residents and visitors.

## What might be the challenges?

**5.111** Creating areas for urban greening and active travel opportunities may conflict with the availability of appropriate space in the historic village core. Additionally, there may be difficulty maintaining the capacity of the existing road network, when seeking to incorporate adequate cycle infrastructure. Interventions must also respect the historic character of Thaxted and will require sensitive design.

## Opportunity 14: Create a connected north-south green spine south of Thaxted

### What is the opportunity?

**5.112** This opportunity would see the creation of a connected blue/green corridor with embedded travel links along the existing Harcamlow Way and along the path of the River Chelmer. The PRow and cycle network surrounding Thaxted is somewhat fragmented, with limited interconnectivity between smaller settlements throughout the area. South of Thaxted the Harcamlow Way (see **district-wide Opportunity 16**) largely follows along the floodplain of the River Chelmer. It provides good access to potential new green spaces along the river, as well as into smaller settlements within the arable landscape, including Monk Street and Dutton Hill. Joining into this corridor will be a priority, creating a lattice of green connections out towards settlements to the east and west. Key elements to focus on include:

- **Protecting and enhancing the existing green corridor.** Naturalised spaces along the corridor should be expanded. Embed recreational access with educational elements where possible and appropriate, where it will not impact on important habitat.
- **Improving wayfinding and maintenance** of existing paths which connect from east and west into the central corridor. Join up missing links where possible, particularly those which directly connect to various surrounding settlements and hamlets and to identified preferred development sites. Consider formalising a path along the existing green corridor at Copthall Lane, which could tie into potential developments further east.
- **Providing active travel links** within and through preferred development sites, integrating into the existing footpath network and into Thaxted. Providing alternate active travel links to new developments would reduce reliance on cars, and reduce strains on road capacity. Developing a cycle path along this corridor would enable wider-reaching north-south connections and would fill in a missing link within the national cycle network. Tie into the Flitch Way in the south (**see opportunity 6**), and

continue past Radwinter, Swards End, and Saffron Walden to complete the connection.

## Why is it important?

**5.113** This opportunity would improve habitat connectivity within and around Thaxted (SO1) and would increase woodland cover (SO2). Additionally, the expanded and enhanced path network would ensure that both locals and visitors would have access to good quality natural greenspace. This opportunity would improve local connectivity for people by enhancing active travel connections and strengthening the PRoW network (SO5), encouraging people to spend time outdoors in nature and gain associated health and wellbeing benefits.

## What might be the challenges?

**5.114** Providing widened and improved surfaces along sections of the existing Harcamlow Way through more rural areas will require cooperation of landowners, and identification of various delivery partners. Increased access along the blue corridors may also create conflict within riparian habitats and will require protections from recreational pressures.

## **Opportunity 15: Enhanced habitat networks within the arable landscape**

### What is the opportunity?

**5.115** Opportunity 4 would contribute to a more joined up network of habitat within an intensively farmed landscape. The scattered areas of habitat, mainly deciduous woodland and hedgerows, and smaller areas of grassland and riparian, provide some diversity within rolling arable fields. These spaces do not

constitute a fully functional network in its current form but offer opportunities for joining up, subject to landowner support. Key priorities include:

- Enhancement and gapping up of hedgerows using diverse native species and connecting to the numerous and scattered small areas of woodland.
- Introduction of new riparian woodland areas along the numerous waterways in the area, augmenting habitat connections along blue corridors.
- Connections into existing areas of biodiversity and intact habitat. This includes the West Wood SSSI, as well as various protected verges and hedgerows that are still in existence in the area.
- Tie into larger opportunities, such as the proposed woodland corridor which connects from Hatfield Forest through Takeley, and further north to Thaxted (see **district-wide Opportunity 17**).

## Why is it important?

**5.116** Enhanced habitat networks within this intensively farmed landscape would provide various benefits, primarily through increased support for biodiversity (SO1) and resilience against the impacts of climate change (as species are better able to move through the landscape). The creation of new woodland and hedgerows would increase tree coverage across the district, thereby increasing areas of habitat and carbon sequestration (SO2). Added riparian woodland habitat also contributes to the slowing of water flows, and drawdown of precipitation into the ground water supply (SO9).

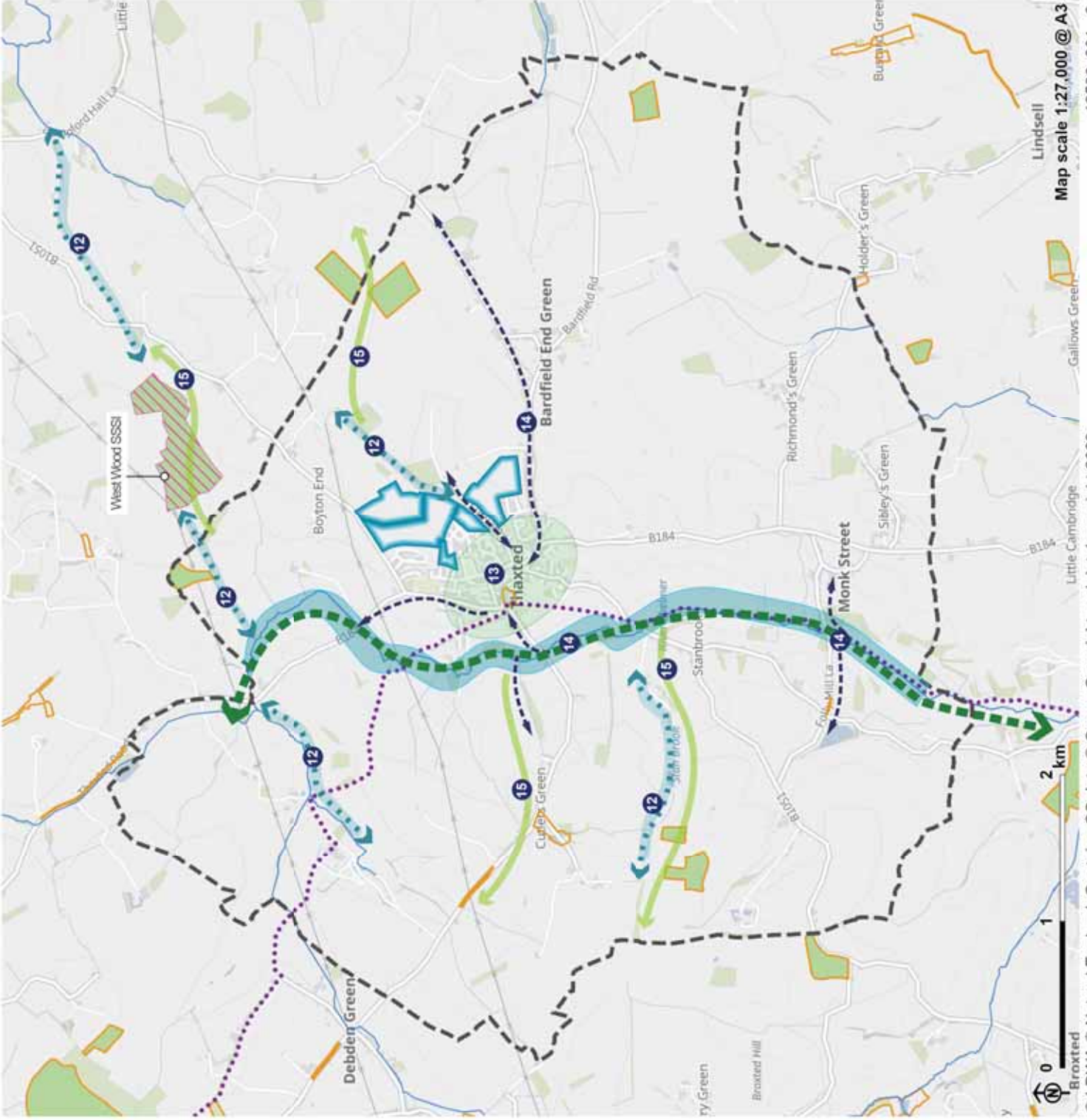
## What might be the challenges?

**5.117** Encouraging the planting up of hedgerows and new areas of woodland requires collaboration and input from landowners. This could be supported by new Environmental Land Management funding opportunities including funding for woodland creation, hedgerow management and in-field trees and flower-rich strips.

**Thaxted focus area**

- Existing GBI**
- Uttlesford
  - Thaxted focus area
  - Site of Special Scientific Interest
  - Ancient woodland
  - Local Nature Reserve
  - Local Wildlife Site
  - River
  - Harcamlow Way (Long Distance Walking route)
- Preferred site (land use)**
- Residential

- Strategic Opportunity for North Uttlesford's GBI network**
- 12 Creating riparian habitat + NFM
  - 13 Greening Thaxted, enhancing local experience
  - 14 Thaxted green spine, improved connectivity
  - 15 Enhanced habitat networks



Map scale 1:27,000 @ A3

## District-wide strategic opportunities

**5.118** Two ‘district-scale’ opportunities have been identified which cross focus areas and link up individual opportunities within them. These are set out below.

### Opportunity 16: Enhancing the Harcamlow Way

What is the opportunity?

**5.119** District-wide Opportunity 16 focuses on the Harcamlow Way, a 227km long-distance walking route (LDP) traversing much of the District. The route runs in a figure of eight between Cambridge in the north and Harlow in the south, with the intersection of the two loops at Newport, Uttlesford [**See reference 108**]. It passes through Saffron Walden, Newport, Debden, Thaxted, Takeley, Hatfield Forest and Manuden. There is a key opportunity to make the most of connections provided by the long distance route and utilise it as the spine of an important green corridor which runs throughout the District. Along the route, there are various opportunities to:

- **Address barriers to movement** – connections from Newport under the M11 at the B1038 should be made more attractive, upgrading surfacing or lighting where required and enhance the connection across the A120 at Smiths Green, north of Takeley, by providing off-road cycle routes.
- **Create habitat connections** - there are scattered local and national designated sites along the Harcamlow Way (Hatfield Forest SSSI and NNR, Debden Water SSSI, Shadwell Wood SSSI) as well as ancient and semi-natural woodlands and LWS. There is an opportunity to join-up and strengthen existing nature networks by providing green links and pocket parks, and a way of signposting through the landscape using the Harcamlow Way as a recreational spine. In the south and east of Uttlesford, this opportunity ties in with **District-wide Opportunity 17** which focuses on strengthening the Nature Network from Hatfield Forest – Thaxted.

- **Improve accessibility and maintenance of the Harcamlow Way** - footpaths should be maintained to keep the path accessible and widened where possible. Wayfinding features should be enhanced and increased. In some instances, particularly in more popular sections of the route, consistent paving will increase legibility of paths.
- **Promotion of the route as a tourist attraction** – given its route traverses a large area of the district there is a significant opportunity to promote the route to visitors and the wider district through this. The route would take visitors on a journey through the historic landscape of the district and linking them key heritage features and the historic town centres. A branding exercise and marketing plan could be initiated to raise the profile of the route, increase use and maximise tourism revenues from increased use of the route and linking visitors to local hospitality and tourism businesses.

## Why is it important?

**5.120** Enhancing an existing green corridor throughout the District would increase local access to quality green spaces and provide an improved wellbeing resource (SO3). By updating the profile of the route, as well as surfacing and wayfinding mechanisms, use of the footpath network will increase. Additionally, improving these links could increase footfall into the various settlements throughout the District, and make the most of connections provided by an existing long-distance route (SO5). Using the Harcamlow Way as a green corridor spine and opportunity area for habitat creation and improvement will also help improve the connectivity of habitats across the District (SO1). Upgrading the route will deliver improvements to the accessibility of existing and potential Country Parks (Hatfield Forest and at Easton Park) (SO4).

## What are the challenges?

**5.121** Providing safe routes along roads will occasionally require reconfiguration of traffic layouts and widening. Maintenance of paths would require ongoing



funding or volunteer support. Identification of delivery partners would be necessary. Any new planting along the verges or habitat creation opportunities along the route should be decided in collaboration with ecologists, to ensure that species are appropriately selected for the site and surrounding land use. Habitat improvement work must also be carefully balanced to ensure that increased recreational use does not impact on this.

## **Opportunity 17: Creation of a Nature Network and woodland corridor from Hatfield Forest to Thaxted**

What is the opportunity?

**5.122** As set out by Natural England, Nature Networks are ‘*a collection of high-quality and well-connected areas that allow wildlife to thrive and cope with climate change, as well as enhancing natural beauty and delivering benefits for people such as flood alleviation*’ **[See reference 109]**.

**5.123** This opportunity ties together several Focus Area opportunities previously set out in this Strategy, particularly in South Uttlesford and Thaxted. Based on initial identification of opportunities at a local scale, the opportunity emerged for the establishment of a strong Nature Network and woodland corridor from Hatfield Forest up to Thaxted. This Nature Network and woodland corridor forms part of the broader ‘West Essex Forest and Woodland Cluster’ identified as part of the Big Green Internet Project.

**5.124** The aim would be to protect and restore wildlife, improve habitat connectivity, boost carbon capture, improve water quality and flood management, and provide the public with greater access to and enjoyment of the countryside in Uttlesford.

**5.125** This Opportunity brings together the following opportunities to form a coherent, large scale, well-functioning Nature Network:

- Enhancement of the Flich Way (opportunity 6).
- Hatfield Forest conservation and restoration (opportunity 7).
- Creation of a new Country Park at Easton Park (opportunity 8).
- Woodland creation at the river Roding and Pincey Brook valleys (opportunity 10).
- the River Chelmer green/blue corridor (extending opportunities further north as far as Thaxted) (opportunity 11).
- Creation of a connected north-south green spine and increase connectivity south of Thaxted (opportunity 14).
- Enhancing the habitat network within the arable landscape (opportunity 15).
- enhancement of the Harcamlow Way LDP (opportunity 16).

## Why is it important?

**5.126** This opportunity provides a landscape-scale, District-wide ambition to deliver a joined-up approach to nature restoration. While all of the opportunities identified should be considered in the development of the Essex LNRS, this should be a particular consideration, given its district-wide, strategic nature. It provides an overall vision which local-level projects and opportunities can help deliver. It will improve the ecological connectivity and restoration of nature across Uttlesford, including around Thaxted where significant gaps have been identified (SO1). Woodland creation will increase canopy cover across the District, providing opportunities for carbon sequestration and mitigating against the effects of climate change (SO2). The high-level, landscape-scale considerations of both habitat and recreational links will improve residents' access to natural greenspace (SO3) and improve the accessibility of existing and potential Country Parks (Hatfield Forest and at Easton Park) (SO4). Additionally, by creating areas of floodplain planting that slow water flows, this

increases opportunities for water retention, supplementing the existing water supply (SO9).

## What are the challenges?

**5.127** There are several challenges associated with delivering landscape-scale nature restoration. Reversing habitat fragmentation and improving ecological connectivity throughout south and east Uttlesford via a 'joined-up' approach will require partnership working and collaboration across multiple landowners and wider stakeholders and amongst more local-scale GBI projects. Forming strong partnerships between local government, landowners, businesses, communities, organisations and local groups will be key to delivering actions with a cohesive aim.

**5.128** Habitat creation opportunities throughout the network should be decided in collaboration with ecologists, to ensure that species are appropriately selected for the site and surrounding land use. Additionally, mapping and data will play a major role in identifying the best locations to create, enhance and restore habitats and provide wider environmental benefits.

**5.129** Securing and maximising funding opportunities to support projects will be required. This could include new Environmental Land Management funding opportunities such as funding for woodland creation, hedgerow management and in-field trees and flower-rich strips; and emerging private finance opportunities such as selling Biodiversity Net Gain units generated by habitat creation or carbon credits generated by woodland creation under the Woodland Carbon Code.

## Opportunity 18: Creation of a pollinator network

### What is the opportunity?

**5.130** The nature charity Bug Life has identified corridors (insect pathways) for the joining up of existing wildflower-rich habitats across the UK. The B-Lines initiative aims to create and restore at least 150,000 hectares of flower-rich habitat across the UK, helping support pollinators – such as butterflies and bees - to move through the country. Within Uttlesford, the identified B-Lines span from the north-east of the District at Hempstead, through Saffron Walden, down the M11 to Stansted Mountfitchet, Hatfield Forest, and along the A120/Fritch Way to Great Dunmow and Felsted [\[See reference 110\]](#).

**5.131** Existing projects which have been identified by the initiative within the District include:

- Planting of wildflower margins within existing flower beds at Saffron Walden Museum (2021).
- Creation of an urban meadow on sloping land at Walden Castle, Saffron Walden (2022).
- Creation of a wildflower meadow in a former horse paddock, Stansted Mountfitchet (2019).
- Planting of 1500 native bluebell bulbs within Harp Mead woodland at the Recreation Ground, Great Dunmow (2020).
- Wildflower meadow creation within a private garden, Felsted (2022) [\[See reference 111\]](#).

**5.132** There is opportunity to support a coordinated and joined-up effort to help realise the vision developed by Bug Life, and in line with the National Pollinator Strategy for England (2014) [\[See reference 112\]](#), to help pollinating insects thrive. Within Uttlesford, there is an opportunity to improve connectivity of the habitat network by planting roadside verges, reducing fragmentation of existing hedgerow and grassland networks, restoring and creating wildflower-rich

habitats across agricultural landscapes, and incorporating wildflower-rich habitats into new development and town/village centres.

**Photo 5.8: Wildflowers**



**Why is it important?**

**5.133** Supporting B-Lines and the network of flower-rich habitats in Uttlesford with improve the connectivity of habitats across the District for pollinators (SO1). This will provide large areas of new habitat benefiting pollinating insects such as bees and butterflies – and also a host of other wildlife - which contribute to our food production and the diversity of our environment.

## What are the challenges?

**5.134** . The creation of flower-rich habitats will require funding or ongoing volunteer support, as well as maintenance and management. New options for farmers under the Environmental Land Management scheme will be one important source of funding. Any new planting along the verges or habitat creation opportunities along B-Lines should be decided in collaboration with ecologists, to ensure that species are appropriately selected for the site and surrounding land use.

## Opportunity 19: Enhancing chalk streams

### What is the opportunity?

**5.135** As highlighted in Chapter 3, Uttlesford is home to some of the planet's rarest habitats, chalk streams. Approximately a third of Uttlesford's waterways are chalk streams, including the River Cam and its tributaries (Wicken Water, Debden Water, Wendon Brook, Fulfen Slade, the Slade) and the River Stort.

**5.136** None of the district's chalk streams were considered to be in 'good' ecological condition in 2019 with majority afforded 'moderate' status. The River Cam is recorded as being in 'poor' ecological health between Great Chesterford and Saffron Walden. This is a result of excessive nutrients in the water, partly due to agricultural run-off, as well as discharge from industry [\[See reference 113\]](#).

**5.137** Within Uttlesford, there is opportunity to engage with and contribute to national efforts for the protection, restoration and improved environmental condition of chalk streams. Depending on local requirements, this could include improving river bank morphology, re-naturalising water flow, appropriate planting, and monitoring of plants and invertebrates. Additional interventions may also be necessary to significantly improve the water resource and quality, including limiting water abstraction and tackling sources of pollution. Ideally this

would involve coordinated action across administrative boundaries at a catchment scale.

**5.138** There is also an opportunity for community engagement to improve education and public awareness about the value of these unique and globally important habitats. This could include creating local 'River Champions' [See [reference 114](#)] and engaging in citizen science and community regeneration projects.

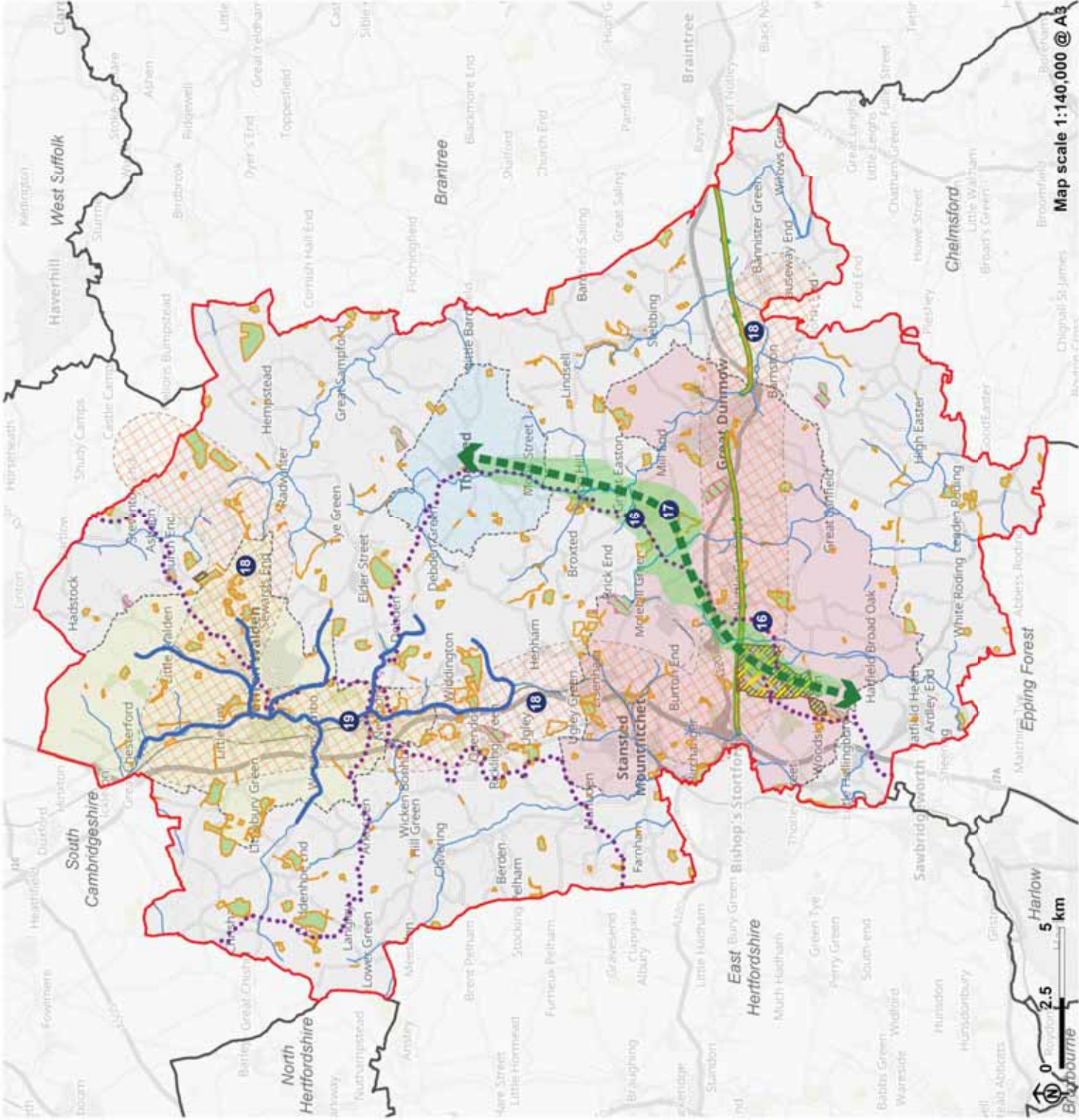
### Why is it important?

**5.139** Healthy chalk streams support a diversity of species (SO1). They are a rare and important habitat at national and global scale, due to their unique and diverse ecology, but they are under pressure and need protection.

### What are the challenges?

**5.140** Working with landowners, water companies, regulatory bodies such as the Environment Agency and wider stakeholders such as Essex Wildlife Trust at a catchment scale will be essential to coordinate action to protect and restore Uttlesford's chalk streams.

**5.141** Any measures proposed should be decided in collaboration with ecologists and hydrologists, ensuring that interventions are appropriately selected for the waterbody and surrounding land use, and are carefully monitored.



**Focus areas**

**Existing GBI**

- Uttlesford
- North Uttlesford focus area
- South Uttlesford focus area
- Thaxted focus area
- Country park
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- National Nature Reserve
- Ancient woodland
- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Wildlife Site
- River
- Harcamlow Way (Long Distance Walking route)

**Strategic Opportunities for Uttlesford's GBI network**

- 16**  Enhancing the Harcamlow Way
- 17**  Creation of a nature network
- 18**  Pollinator network
- 19**  Enhancing chalk streams



Map scale 1:140,000 @ A3



# Chapter 6

## Policy Implementation

### Introduction

**6.1** This chapter focuses on using planning policy and guidance to help to deliver green and blue infrastructure across Uttlesford, including contributing to the delivery of the GBI opportunities highlighted in the previous chapter.

**6.2** A wider delivery plan for the GBI opportunities was beyond the scope of this study but it is recommended this is developed as a follow-on activity. This would include the identification of key delivery partners (e.g. Natural England; Environment Agency; Essex Wildlife Trust; Essex Local Nature Partnership; Sustrans; Green Infrastructure Team at Essex CC; Saffron Walden BID) as well as key funding mechanisms. The latter will include new Environmental Land Management Scheme funding for land managers, government grant funding for woodland creation and management and active travel improvements, mandatory biodiversity net gain funding from developers for offsite habitat creation and enhancement and potentially also emerging private payments for ecosystem services e.g. carbon offsetting via the Woodland Carbon Code.

### Embedding GBI in the new Local Plan

**6.3** Planning policy can play a critical role in the delivery of GBI, by setting clear expectations for it as part of long-term development plans. Uttlesford Council has a responsibility to act on climate change, support a thriving local economy, maintain healthy functioning ecosystems, maximise physical and mental well-being, and protect and promote cultural and heritage assets. The opportunities identified in this strategy will help achieve these aims.

**6.4** Despite the recognised multiple benefits of GBI, it can often be difficult to deliver high quality GBI outcomes due to competing policy priorities and the need to avoid undermining the viability of development. Historically, GBI has often been treated as a secondary requirement at the application stage, particularly in Section 106 negotiations.

**6.5** New development needs to contribute to improved GBI. This study seeks to support delivery of robust GBI policies within the new Local Plan and a clear, structured approach to implementation. The council is advised to set out clear expectations of new development, guided by the evidence and opportunities set out in this study.

## ‘Mainstreaming’ green and blue infrastructure

**6.6** When considering future Local Plan policy requirements, it is important to ensure that GBI is fully embedded within the Local Plan rather than dealt with through an isolated policy alone. A dedicated GBI policy should be complemented by a wider Local Plan which ‘mainstreams’ GBI by weaving references to GBI throughout other policy areas. This will allow GBI to move outside any environmental policy ‘silo’ and interact with other agendas - including health, economic, and social policy areas.

**6.7** The ‘Green Infrastructure Planning Policy Assessment Tool’ [See reference 115] sets out an assessment process based on a content analysis of Plan wording. As well as GBI mainstreaming this also includes criteria related to integration of GBI into development, specific GBI functions and aftercare. The tool identifies seven key areas to address in a ‘good’ GBI planning policy, which are summarised below:

- **Design process:** it is important to emphasise the need to consider multi-functional GBI design from the pre-application stage onwards, including through engagement with relevant stakeholders.
- **Wider context:** GBI design should be informed by analysis of the site and wider context, including local needs, wider habitat networks, open space

provision and public access. A strategic policy can set certain performance standards for GBI based on this evidence.

- **Biodiversity:** GBI policy should link to policy on biodiversity net gain (mandatory BNG will be a key new driver of funding for GBI) and be designed to protect and enhance onsite biodiversity and habitat networks within and adjacent to the site.
- **Water management:** sustainable drainage (SUDS) should form an integral part of multi-functional GI design, maximising amenity and biodiversity benefits alongside flood management (and public access where safe and appropriate).
- **Access networks:** GBI design should retain and enhance active travel routes (linking key destinations such as housing to town centres and schools) to encourage walking and cycling.
- **Greenspace:** GBI should meet the council's quantity, quality and accessibility standards for open space, seeking to address deficiencies in access and be designed to cater for all in the community.
- **Stewardship:** appropriate management and maintenance agreements for GBI, supported by clear and long-term funding mechanisms, must be agreed with the council.

**6.8** The policy assessment tool and other National and Essex green infrastructure standards also emphasise the importance of strong policy wording. This includes the use of 'should' and 'must' rather than 'is advised' in order to provide strong direction and clarity to developers on what the requirements for GBI in development are.

**6.9** Note that draft Uttlesford Design Code will be a very useful tool for helping to deliver GBI as an integrated part of new development, but this is a Supplementary Planning Document and therefore whilst it can provide important guidance it cannot set requirements on developers. Only planning policies can do that.

**6.10** The Policy assessment criteria within the Green Infrastructure Planning Policy Assessment tool (see reference 87) have been used to carry out a rapid assessment of Uttlesford's draft Green Infrastructure Policy in the draft Local Plan and provide recommendations on how to strengthen this to improve the policy design and wording. The draft policy along with recommendations and justifications against these criteria is provided below.

## Policy recommendations

**6.11** Following a review of the draft GBI policy against the policy assessment tool, an edited version of the Policy has been produced for the consideration of Uttlesford District Council and potential integration into their Local Plan. The recommended policy has been produced with the following considerations:

- Wherever possible the wording of the policy has been strengthened, including more 'should' and 'must' to give stronger direction to developers and increase adherence to the policy.
- An additional line has been added at the beginning of the policy to highlight and position the importance of GBI to the district and in meeting the overall objectives of the Local Plan.
- The draft policy included a requirement for GBI to be integrated into new development at the earliest design stages; the recommended policy expands on this to provide a direct reference to the accompanying design checklist, ensuring this is used by developers. This requirement has also been re-ordered as the top line of the policy.
- Multiple benefits and functions of GBI are outlined in the draft policy; in the recommended policy, providing GBI which is 'multi-functional' is included as an explicit requirement both for the initial design of GBI and also as a consideration for ongoing stewardship and maintenance, to ensure that these multi-functional benefits are retained in the long-term.
- The requirement for development to avoid the loss and fragmentation of GBI networks is retained within the recommended policy. In the recommended policy this requirement is linked to the requirement to integrate existing landscape features, watercourses and habitats, which

form key parts of this network, into the new development. This requirement is further expanded to require opportunities for these to be enhanced and, where related to habitats, ties into the requirement for biodiversity net gain.

- In line with the policy assessment tool, a direct reference to the inclusion of SuDs is integrated into the recommended policy along with the requirement for these to be integrated to achieve benefits for biodiversity, recreation and aesthetic value as well as their use in reducing flood risk.
- Connectivity of green infrastructure is a clear and core requirement of the draft policy. This is retained in the recommended policy but the wording is strengthened and linked to requirements for active travel, recreation and open space provision within development. Connectivity requirements for access and movement of people are blended with the connectivity of habitats including a requirement for the consideration of opportunities to contribute to connections to the wider landscape and adjacent habitat networks to aid nature recovery.
- Ample guidance is available for developers in Uttlesford to assist in meeting requirements for GBI provision. To assist in the navigation of this guidance the GBI design checklist is signposted. This initial reference point provides direction to relevant parts of the design code and could be expanded to include reference to BNG guidance, open space strategies, the LNRS and Climate Change Action Plan as these are published and/or updated.
- Policy wording on ongoing stewardship and maintenance has been expanded to include a requirement for documentation detailing how maintenance will be funded and multi-functional benefits retained.
- Requirements within the draft policy for an evidence-based GBI strategy or plan to be submitted with a planning application, as well as a site masterplan for strategic sites, have been retained.
- Requirements for consultation with specific key stakeholder have been retained. The requirement to take into consideration the views of these stakeholders has also been added to line B of the policy.

## Core Policy: Green and Blue Infrastructure

Green and Blue Infrastructure plays an integral role in making the district sustainable, healthy and attractive and is important in meeting the Local Plan objectives.

All development should seek to maximise the provision of green and blue infrastructure to benefit both people and nature and support delivery of the GBI opportunities identified in the Uttlesford GBI strategy.

All major developments must:

- A. Take a green and blue infrastructure design led approach to development schemes, and utilise Uttlesford's green and blue Infrastructure design checklist, to ensure green infrastructure is considered and well-integrated into developments at the earliest stages.
- B. Ensure green and blue infrastructure is multi-functional, accessible to all and designed to meet local needs, taking into account the views of key stakeholders.
- C. Avoid the loss and fragmentation of existing green and blue infrastructure networks, including within the built environment. Existing landscape features, watercourses and habitats should be integrated into development, and green and blue infrastructure proposals must identify opportunities to maximise their quality and achieve biodiversity net-gain.

D. Integrate Sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) into the development, where appropriate, ensuring they are designed to have multi-functional benefits for biodiversity, recreation and aesthetic value.

E. Consider connectivity to be a core principle of green and blue infrastructure, integrating active travel and recreational routes which connect with open space which meets accessibility, quantity and quality standards for all users, and provide onward connections to existing communities and local facilities and services. Appropriate greening should be integrated into these routes and provide and improve connections to adjacent priority habitat networks especially where this would contribute to wider nature recovery.

F. Use native species and take account of biosecurity including the control of non-native invasive species, ensuring all plant stock is free of pests and disease and non-native species

All proposals for green and blue infrastructure provision within development should be checked against the design checklist set out in the Uttlesford green and blue infrastructure strategy. This checklist refers to other core guidance including relevant sections of Uttlesford's Design Code.

Applicants seeking planning permission for major developments must submit sufficient evidence with proposals to demonstrate all of the above through an acceptable green and blue infrastructure strategy or plan for the proposal, at a scale appropriate to the development and to the satisfaction of Uttlesford District Council.

Contributions towards local green infrastructure projects will be sought where these mitigate the impacts of new developments. Stewardship of green infrastructure and maintenance arrangements should be documented

within the green and blue infrastructure plan and should detail how any green infrastructure provision will be maintained, and its multi-functional benefits secured, for a minimum of 30 years, including details on how this will be funded.

Strategic Sites allocated in the local plan will need to be accompanied by a Strategic Masterplan, in accordance with the relevant allocation policy and site framework.

Applicants will be expected to seek the advice of Essex Wildlife Trust; Essex Wildlife Biological Records Centre; Place Services at Essex County Council (ECC); the Green Infrastructure Team at ECC; the Essex Local Nature Partnership; and Natural England where proposals affect or have the potential to enhance GI and nature conservation assets.

## Further recommendations for the Local Plan

**6.12** Beyond the specific Green Infrastructure Policy within the draft Local Plan, and in line with guidance on mainstreaming green infrastructure within policy, it is further recommended that:

- the Local Plan's overarching vision and objectives explicitly references and justifies the value of GBI
- that the benefits of GBI are stated within other environmental policies (including climate change, noise, air quality, landscape character, the natural environment, chalk streams and water supply and the protection of water resources) as well as related policies such as those for the local economy and health and wellbeing.



## Green and blue infrastructure standards

**6.13** Further to the recommended policy, Uttlesford District Council may wish to consider the integration of a robust set of quantitative Green Infrastructure Standards. The GI Framework launched by Natural England earlier this year sets out five different standards for local planning authorities to consider imposing on new development (with thresholds set based on local evidence) through their local plans. These standards vary in their applicability and complexity and require individual consideration, but all provide the opportunity to set clear and specific requirements for GI provision to developers, with easily measurable outcomes:

- S1: Green Infrastructure Strategy Standard
- S2: Accessible Greenspace Standard
- S3: Urban Nature Recovery Standard
- S4: Urban Greening Factor Standard
- S5: Urban Tree Canopy Cover Standard

**6.14** Each of these standards is outlined below, along with considerations required before inclusion in Uttlesford's GBI policy. Recommended policy wording is provided.

### S1: Green infrastructure strategy standard

**6.15** This standard aims to ensure that GI is strategically planned within the context of a local area to ensure it will achieve maximum benefits for local communities. For major developments<sup>1</sup> [See reference 116] this means that developers are required to submit a GI plan, potentially integrated into their design and access statement, setting out how the development will meet the GI principles within the framework plus Local Policy requirements, standards and design guidance. This plan should arrangements to ensure that GI is managed, maintained and monitored for a minimum of 30 years.

**6.16** The draft Uttlesford GI policy includes a requirement for developers to provide a Green Infrastructure plan. This is expanded upon in the recommended policy, including a requirement for maintenance plans to cover a 30-year period.

## S2: Accessible greenspace standard

**6.17** This standard aims to ensure that everyone has access to good quality green and blue spaces close to home for their health and wellbeing and encounter nature. It sets out quantity, size and distance criteria for greenspaces close to people's homes, which operates at 5 levels (see diagram below). This standard could be adopted by the Council for the amount, size and location of greenspace to be provided within or in proximity to a new development. Given the likely scale of new development within Uttlesford, we recommend that the Council adopt the Neighbourhood scale standard of 2ha of accessible greenspace within 1km (or a 15-minute walk).

**6.18** This standard could be accompanied by a greenspace capacity criteria which would assist in the identification of the quantity of greenspace to be provided within a new development, taking into account the anticipated number of greenspace users. The Fields in Trust standard of 2.4ha per 1,000 population could be an appropriate quantity standard to adopt.

**6.19** Whilst the abovementioned quantitative standards may not be achievable for all sites, they would set a clear standard and put the onus on the developer to demonstrate where this is not achievable.

**6.20** Standards for access and quantity should be supported by a quality standard to ensure that greenspaces provide a safe and pleasant environment with facilities that meet the needs of local communities. Many Councils have chosen to adopt the Green Flag Award criteria as their quality standard for greenspaces. It is recommended that the identification and adoption of this or another quality standard is done through the development of an Open Space

Audit and Strategy which assesses the type, quantity and quality of provision against local needs.

**6.21** Proposed wording to be incorporated into Local Plan Policy:

- 'All major new residential development must include access for residents to at least 2.4ha of good quality accessible greenspace per 1,000 population and this must meet the accessible greenspace neighbourhood standard, being within a 15 minute walk (or 1km) of people's homes (unless, in specific cases there are clear, justifiable and compelling reasons why these standards would not be deliverable)'

### S3: Urban nature recovery standard

**6.22** This standard aims to increase the proportion of green infrastructure that is designed and managed for nature recovery, with the exact proportion based on a locally defined baseline which takes into consideration local needs, opportunities and constraints. For major development the standard requires developers to identify within their green infrastructure plans their contribution to nature recovery and the creation and restoration of wildlife rich habitats which can contribute to the delivery of local nature recovery targets.

**6.23** To adopt this standard there is no requirement that an exact proportion be set and instead the requirement is on developers to clearly set out how GI will contribute to nature recovery. This should be done through the identification of opportunities drawing on the best available data on existing habitats and species. Once the Essex wide LNRS has been produced it is recommended that developers are advised to refer to this to assist in the identification of priority actions for nature recovery.

**6.24** It is recommended that the urban nature recovery standard is adopted by Uttlesford in the form of strong wording in the recommended policy in addition to requirements for contributions to nature recovery outlined in the design checklist and design code.

## S4: Urban greenspace factor

**6.25** The Urban Greenspace Factor (UGF) is a tool to increase the amount of green land cover within urban environments. The adoption of this standard for major development would involve setting a target UGF score for new development and sharing the calculation method. The target score can be set locally (informed by local context and GI needs) but Natural England recommend setting a score of 0.3 for commercial development, 0.4 for residential development and, where appropriate, 0.5 for residential greenfield development. The total UGF score for a development is calculated based on multiplying UGF scores for different land cover types by the spatial area covered by each and then dividing the total by the total site area [See [reference 117](#)]. Natural features such as street trees and hedgerows achieve higher scores than amenity grassland and permeable paving, which have a higher score than tarmac roads.

**6.26** The UGF standard can be used alongside BNG, and where the existing biodiversity value is low (and hence a 10% or even 20% BNG uplift delivers limited additional habitat) it can help to ensure that there is still good provision of nature-rich greenspace within development.

**6.27** The value of a UGF in improving the amount and quality of GI within a development has been evidenced. However, it has largely been applied in urban areas in England to date, having been adopted within the London Plan in 2021. The benefits of its application in a largely rural district have yet to be evidenced and before applying a UGF in Uttlesford it is recommended that locally based evidence is gathered, potentially through an empirical study evaluating the amount and type of greenspace provided in recently permitted developments. Such a study could calculate the UGF score of these sample schemes, comparing them to the recommended target scores proposed by Natural England, and where the total scores fall short it could explore if it would have been feasible to achieve the UGF score by specifying additional urban greening measures. It would be important that this study also consider any potential impacts on viability so that a robust justification for its adoption can be made.

## S5: Urban tree canopy cover standard

**6.28** This standard aims to increase urban tree canopy cover by an agreed percentage based on a locally defined baseline and taking into account local needs, opportunities and constraints. Adoption of this target into planning policy would mean that all applicable development would be designed to meet the identified target.

**6.29** The GI strategy has identified the relatively low tree canopy cover in Uttlesford District as a whole, 10.8% compared to a national average of 12.8%. The Uttlesford Climate Change Action Plan and Essex GI Strategy both include actions to increase tree planting (although a specific percentage of cover is not identified). Thus, the implementation of a tree canopy cover standard would be in line with local policy and ambitions and could play a notable role in contributing to these actions.

**6.30** The NPPF (paragraph 131) already states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that streets are tree-lined, opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments and existing trees are retained where possible. We anticipate there will also be a policy on trees in the new local plan which specifies something similar. The council therefore needs to consider if, in addition to such requirements, it is also useful to set a tree canopy cover standard for certain types of new development. Benefits of such an approach include setting a clear target for developers and enabling monitoring of delivery, although there will be competing demands to balance and any specified target may not be deliverable on all sites (though this is arguably the case for all policy requirements in our discretionary planning system). The Woodland Trust has advocated for a minimum 30% tree canopy cover on all development sites [\[See reference 118\]](#) so this figure could be a potential starting point, but the council is advised to undertake some research to help determine what target would be deliverable on allocated sites.

## Monitoring processes

**6.31** It is important that the implementation of the Green Infrastructure Policy and any Standards within the adopted Local Plan is monitored and evaluated to ensure its effectiveness in protecting, enhancing and maintaining the district's green infrastructure network over time.

**6.32** Evaluation of the adopted policy and standards can be carried out at two levels:

- Development level: to assess whether the design, delivery and maintenance of Green Infrastructure was carried out in accordance with the policy and standards
- Policy level: to assess the cumulative benefits of the policy and standards across the district

**6.33** An effective monitoring and evaluation process requires the production of a set of indicators which can be used to measure progress. When designing indicators it is important that these are both locally relevant, to monitor progress against local need, and specific to the policy and standards set.

**6.34** At a development level, indicators should be based on the Green Infrastructure plan for the development and the extent to which this has been delivered. They should also include ongoing monitoring to ensure that the green infrastructure continues to meet multi-functional benefits for the minimum term of 30 years.

**6.35** At a policy level, indicators could include:

- The number of developments approved which met all policy requirements
- The number of developments approved which met all green infrastructure standards set and what the trajectory is
- Performance against user surveys

- Delivery against the overall vision and objectives of the green infrastructure strategy

**6.36** The monitoring and evaluation processes established to evaluate performance should be carried out at an appropriate frequency and dovetailed into other review processes (e.g. for Biodiversity Net Gain) where possible to avoid the duplication of effort and provide more joined up results. Any learning from monitoring and evaluation should be directly addressed and lead to adaptations to policy and standards and their management.

# Chapter 7

## Supplementary Guidance

**7.1** The Council could consider supporting new GI planning policies by adopting a Supplementary Planning Document setting out what will be expected to be delivered through development on new sites. However, it is clear there is already a substantial amount of guidance available. This includes:

- Draft Uttlesford District Wide Design Code – this document, to be adopted as an SPD, aims to set a new standard for design across the district, shaping places that are popular to live and work in and visit by delivering more accessible, sustainable and beautiful development. It includes a chapter on ‘nature’ with a significant focus on green infrastructure.
- Essex GI Standards Technical Guidance – sets out Nine GI standards developed to support policy and development management in the planning and delivery of multifunctional GI. The standards aim to support GI delivery that goes beyond statutory requirements. The standards have been informed by NE’s GI Framework (see below) but are adapted to the Essex context. Includes a useful GI Checklist at Annex B listing out key documents expected at different stages of the planning process.
- Natural England’s GI Framework, launched in early 2023, comprises a set of principles, standards, maps, a design guide, and ‘process journeys’ which explain how to use the tools in different contexts (e.g. in the preparation of a Local Plan).

**7.2** Draft Uttlesford District Wide Design Code – this document, to be adopted as an SPD, aims to set a new standard for design across the district, shaping places that are popular to live and work in and visit by delivering more accessible, sustainable and beautiful development. It includes a chapter on ‘nature’ with a significant focus on green infrastructure.

**7.3** Essex GI Standards Technical Guidance – sets out Nine GI standards developed to support policy and development management in the planning and



delivery of multifunctional GI. The standards aim to support GI delivery that goes beyond statutory requirements. The standards have been informed by NE's GI Framework (see below) but are adapted to the Essex context. Includes a useful GI Checklist at Annex B listing out key documents expected at different stages of the planning process.

**7.4** Natural England's GI Framework, launched in early 2023, comprises a set of principles, standards, maps, a design guide, and 'process journeys' which explain how to use the tools in different contexts (e.g. in the preparation of a Local Plan).

## **Delivering GBI on new sites: a 'checklist' for planners and developers**

**7.5** This checklist provides a concise set of questions to be asked of any new development seeking planning permission. It will be most relevant to larger sites involving a masterplan process.

**7.6** This checklist should be supplemented with design frameworks and guidance which have been produced for specific development sites (see Appendix A), informed by specific recommendations arising from this strategy; as well as wider design guidance in the Uttlesford Design Code, Essex GI Standards and Natural England's GI Framework, including Design Guide.

**7.7** Amongst other issues, these sources provide further guidance on the process to follow in designing GBI as part of a development scheme, including the need to engage widely with stakeholders and analyse data on existing GBI assets and local environmental, social and economic challenges and needs. Further clarity on the structured approach that we want developers to follow is arguably required – further advice on this is provided in the section on other tools for supporting the GBI planning and design process below.

**7.8** Key overarching principles for informing GBI design are set out in Natural England's GI Framework and provide a useful starting point. GBI should be:

1. Multifunctional: GI delivers multiple functions and benefits for people, nature and places, addresses specific issues and meets their needs.
2. Varied: GI includes a mix of types and sizes that can provide a range of functions and benefits to address specific issues and needs.
3. Connected: GI connects as a living network for people and nature at all scales, connecting provision of GI with those who need its benefits.
4. Accessible: GI creates green, liveable places where everyone has access to good quality green and blue spaces routes and features.
5. Responsive to an area's landscape and character - so that it contributes to the conservation, enhancement and/or restoration of landscapes; or, in degraded areas, creates new high-quality landscapes to which local people feel connected.

**7.9** Planning GBI and planning to achieve biodiversity net gain (BNG) should be considered together. The Essex Local Nature Partnership provides useful guidance on BNG [See reference 119]; and good practice BNG principles [See reference 120] for development have been published by CIEEM with IEMA and CIRIA. Key BNG principles highlighted in these documents include:

- Apply the mitigation hierarchy i.e., do everything possible to first avoid and then minimise impacts on biodiversity before, as a last resort, compensating for losses that cannot be avoided.
- Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset elsewhere e.g., avoid impacts on irreplaceable habitats.
- Engage stakeholders early in the design process.

**7.10** Eight key GBI questions to ask of development schemes are set out below:

## **1. Has the landscape led the production of the masterplan?**

**7.11** High quality placemaking should take the landscape context as the starting point, drawing on the Uttlesford landscape character assessment, and should “work with” the landscape to create distinctive places. This means that features such as topography, drainage patterns and protection of existing landscape features such as woodland and hedgerows should demonstrably guide the very earliest design stages, including the layout of roads and buildings, rather than being retrofitted later.

**7.12** [See section 4.1 and 4.2 of the Uttlesford design code for further details on context and identity]

## **2. Has nature led the masterplan and does the site relate to wider ecological networks?**

**7.13** An understanding of existing habitats and BNG opportunities, informed by existing habitat and species data (see GI Study mapping) and early ecological surveys, should inform the masterplan. This should include careful consideration of how environmentally sensitive areas or high value habitats (e.g. veteran trees and ancient woodlands **[See reference 121]**) will be protected and enhanced.

**7.14** Proposals for new development should include a map of local habitat connectivity opportunities and provide evidence of how the development strengthens rather than weakens these networks; and how access to nature is improved for all. Habitats should be integrated throughout developments, including by using features such as street trees, hedges and micro-habitat

features (e.g. bird and bat boxes/bricks), rather than being limited to key greenspaces.

**7.15** BNG requirements will be an important mechanism for delivering new habitats. However, it is important that multi-functional GBI features are delivered on-site wherever possible, both to create and restore habitats and to maximise co-benefits to address local needs such as health and wellbeing and flood resilience.

**7.16** [See section 4.5 of the Uttlesford design code for further details on nature]

### **3. Has consideration of water and drainage led the masterplan?**

**7.17** The layout of development should take into account the opportunities and constraints posed by existing waterways and water bodies, maximising the amenity and biodiversity benefits of both existing and new 'blue infrastructure' and seeking to improve water quality. Opportunities to enhance and create new water bodies should be maximised, given their significant amenity and biodiversity benefits and noting that ponds are a priority habitat.

**7.18** Chalk streams are a rare and valuable habitat and developments proposals will need to maintain a 15m buffer and demonstrate how they will protect and where possible enhance them (see core policy on chalk streams).

**7.19** Where evidence indicates flood risk is significant, high-quality sustainable drainage (SuDS) measures should be designed into all new development - to be delivered as a network of measures as appropriate, including raingardens, permeable paving, swales (a traditional feature in many Uttlesford settlements), SuDS tree pits and wetland areas - rather than a single-function 'hole in the ground'. These should be designed to maximise benefits for amenity and biodiversity as well as flood risk management. Access should be provided where it is safe to do so. By slowing flows and encouraging infiltration (where

appropriate) SuDS can also help to capture and hold water and replenish aquifers, contributing to reduced water stress. They can also help to filter out water pollution, improving water quality.

**7.20** Opportunities to capture and store water for reuse for non-potable uses such as irrigation of gardens should also be maximised.

**7.21** Detailed design should be guided by the CIRIA SuDS Manual and the Essex SuDS Design Guide [\[See reference 122\]](#).

**7.22** [See also section 4.5 of the Uttlesford design code which includes further details on water management]

## **4. Does the development meet local open space and green space standards in a coordinated manner?**

**7.23** Developments should meet local open space standards (e.g. for play space and sports pitches) and address any existing deficiencies in access to greenspace (see mapping in GI study). All green spaces should have clear functions. They should also ensure open spaces are designed to cater for diverse needs, ensuring inclusive access for all.

**7.24** [See also section 4.5 of the Uttlesford design code which includes further details on open space provision]

## 5. Does the development support active travel, linking up with active travel routes beyond the site boundary?

**7.25** All development proposals should include a clear context map that illustrates how the proposed development will link into the wider active travel network (e.g. walking and cycling routes) and identify ways the development can strengthen the network, taking into account key destinations (e.g. schools, workplaces, public transport) that people will want to travel to both within the existing area and within the new development.

**7.26** The planning of safe and convenient active travel routes and GBI delivery should be integrated to support the creation of attractive, green active travel routes that are appealing to users as well as providing wider benefits.

**7.27** [See section 4.4 of the Uttlesford design code for further details on movement]

## 6. Is tree canopy cover across the site significantly expanded?

**7.28** Increasing woodland cover is important for mitigating climate change and can also provide a wide range of benefits for nature and people. Natural England's GI Framework encourages LPAs to set tree canopy targets, the Woodland Trust has advocated for a minimum 30% tree canopy cover on all development sites<sup>5</sup>, and the NPPF (paragraph 131) states that planning policies and decisions should:

- ensure all streets are tree lined (unless, in specific cases, there are clear, justifiable and compelling reasons why this would be inappropriate)
- ensure opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments

- retain existing trees wherever possible.

**7.29** Applicants should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users. Appropriate measures must be put in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly planted trees.

## **7. Does the masterplan address the design of GBI to meet wider needs?**

**7.30** Opportunities to design GBI to meet wider needs beyond those referred to above should also be fully explored. For example, is there an unmet local need for food growing space and if so how can this be designed into the masterplan? Or are there opportunities to use dense barriers of woodland or hedgerows to reduce noise from nearby roads or reduce the spread of air pollution from busy roads into the development?

## **8. How will the site be maintained in the long-term?**

**7.31** Long-term stewardship of GBI should be discussed at the earliest stages of design, to ensure stewardship in perpetuity. Models such as partnerships with the Land Trust or other charitable or community-led body should be explored. Maintenance arrangements, responsibilities and long-term funding arrangements must be clearly defined as part of all planning applications.

## Other tools to support GBI in the planning and design process

**7.32** The council is advised to set clear requirements for developers for submitting information on their GBI proposals as part of the planning validation checklist. This could take the form of discrete documents such as a GBI audit and plan, or requirements for the same information to be provided as part of a Design and Access Statement. These requirements should be aligned with the requirements specified in the draft GI policy and the final wording of the Uttlesford Design Code so that GI information requirements at both pre-application stage and planning application stage are clearly and consistently set out (note the draft Design Code currently specifies a checklist of information requirements at p.240 but there is also a different checklist of “documents expected” in the Essex GI standards technical guidance (p.124)) **[See reference 123]**.

### Building with Nature

**7.33** Building with Nature (BwN) **[See reference 124]** is an additional evidence-based standard that defines high quality GBI based on a set of 12 standards. It seeks to raise the bar for industry by showing clearly what ‘good’ GBI looks like at each stage of the development process.

**7.34** The Standard could be adopted by Uttlesford Council as a benchmark for assessing and accrediting the quality of GBI delivered as part of development. Developers could be signposted to use the BwN Standards to create better places for people and wildlife.

**7.35** The Essex Green Infrastructure Standards make reference to the Building with Nature (BwN) standards, which is suggests should be applied by “developers wishing to deliver exceptional sites”.



**7.36** Uttlesford Council could also encourage, or require, successful achievement of a BwN Award as a preferred mechanism for demonstrating a commitment to design and build quality. A BwN Award is an external verification that reassures a range of stakeholders that the benefits of high-quality green infrastructure will be more effectively secured at each stage of development, including implementation and post-construction, and by requiring evidence of effective arrangements for long-term management and maintenance. Training is available if the Council wanted to develop in-house BwN expertise, or there is a UK-wide BwN approved assessor network.

## Green flag award

**7.37** The Green Flag Awards [\[See reference 125\]](#) sets the benchmark for well managed parks and green spaces. Spaces that meet the benchmark can be entered for a coveted Green Flag Award. Developers could be encouraged to apply for this award, thus ensuring that all new GBI provided in new development meets a recognised quality standard.

## Biodiversity Net Gain

**7.38** Biodiversity Net Gain will become a mandatory requirement for all new major development from November 2023. The requirement for all new development to meet at least 10% BNG should assist in the provision of multi-functional benefits through GBI in new development. Further advice and guidance on BNG for LPAs is provided on the Planning Advisory Services website [\[See reference 126\]](#).

## Planning for ancient woodland

**7.39** The Woodland Trust's Planning for Ancient Woodland provides practical guidance on a range of planning issues relating to ancient woodland and veteran trees [\[See reference 127\]](#). This includes ensuring there is sufficient

clarity and detail on the protection of ancient woodland in local plans, providing definitions, supplying guiding principles such as the avoidance of harm and evidence of need and benefits and encouraging good practice such as the identification of impacts, implementation of mitigation measures and the provision of adequate buffers.

# Appendix A

## Glossary

**Accessible greenspace standard:** a Natural England standard within their Green Infrastructure Framework which defines the distance by which everyone should be able to access greenspaces of different sizes. The standard also includes criteria on capacity and quality.

**Active travel:** journeys made by physically active means such as walking, wheeling and cycling.

**Air Quality Management Area (AQMA):** a geographical area declared by a local authority where air quality does not meet the government's national air quality objectives for the presence of different pollutants such as benzene, nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter and sulphur dioxide. A local authority must develop an action plan to improve air quality in these areas.

**Ancient and semi-natural woodlands (ASNW):** a type of woodland that is composed of native tree species that have not obviously been planted. They are an extremely valuable ecological resource, with an exceptionally high diversity of flora and fauna, and so are defined as an irreplaceable habitat.

**Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):** a key mechanism developed by the UK Government to contribute to the recovery of nature while developing land. It will ensure that there is a net gain in habitat value after development. It is a requirement under the 2021 Environment Act that all local planning authorities will be required to set requirements for BNG in new developments, with an increase of at least 10%, for a minimum legacy period of 30 years.

**B-Lines:** an initiative created by the nature charity 'Bug Life' who have identified a series of 'insect pathways' running through the countryside and towns. Restoring and creating wildflower-rich habitats along these pathways will

## Appendix B Uttlesford's Policy Context

link existing wildlife areas together and create a network for pollinators across the UK.

**Blue corridors:** the linking together of areas of blue infrastructure including rivers and canals, wetlands, floodplains, flood storage areas, ponds, and parks, with the aim of mitigating flood risk, improving biodiversity and incorporating recreation opportunities.

**Building with Nature (BwN):** an evidence-based standard that defines high-quality GBI based on a set of 12 standards. It aims to raise the bar for industry by showing clearly what 'good' GBI looks like.

**Carbon sequestration:** a natural or artificial process by which carbon dioxide is removed from the atmosphere and stored.

**Catchment flood management plans (CFMP):** plans at river-basin district level which consider all types of inland flooding and help inform the most effective way to manage flood risk at a catchment level in the future.

**Chalk streams:** rivers that rise from springs in landscapes with chalk bedrock. They are a nationally important, rare and fragile habitat that exists in a swathe across England from north Norfolk to south Dorset.

**Countryside Protection Zone (CPZ):** a policy which originated in 1984 to support Stansted Airport's recognition as an 'airport in the countryside'. The policy aims to limit the physical size of the airport and protect its countryside setting.

**Ecosystem services:** are all of the processes and outputs that well-functioning ecosystems provide us with. These can be split into provisioning services (such as food, water and fuel). Regulating services (such as clean air or flood management), supporting services (such as healthy soils and spaces for wildlife) and cultural services (such as health and wellbeing and knowledge and learning).

## Appendix B Uttlesford's Policy Context

**Environmental Land Management (ELM) Schemes:** government schemes which pay farmers and land managers to deliver, alongside food production, positive environmental outcomes. Environmental goods and services funded may include habitat restoration and creation, improving water quality, increasing flood resilience, woodland planting and reducing carbon emissions.

**Green and blue infrastructure (GBI):** refers to the network of green and blue spaces that surround and run through out towns and cities.

**Green corridors:** the linking together of natural, semi-natural and man-made open greenspaces, creating an interconnected network of spaces that support wildlife and often recreation.

**Green flag award:** benchmark award for well managed parks and greenspaces, the assessment criteria for the award is often used as the quality criteria for parks and greenspaces.

**Green roofs:** a roof of a building that is partially or completely covered with vegetation.

**Green social prescribing:** a tool used to improve mental and physical health by supporting people to engage with nature based activities such as walking groups, community gardens and food-growing projects.

**Green walls:** walls which are partially or completely covered in vegetation.

**Historic character:** structures and features of architectural and historical interest in a place, and its development over time, which create local distinctiveness and a sense of place.

**Landscape character:** a distinct pattern or combination of elements that occurs consistently in a particular landscape and make one landscape different from another.

## Appendix B Uttlesford's Policy Context

**Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS):** propose how and where to recover nature and improve the wider environment across England. Preparation of the plans will be carried out by 48 responsible authorities who will determine local priorities for nature recovery.

**Local Wildlife Site (LWS):** non-statutory, locally-designated sites of importance for nature conservation.

**Long Distance Path (LDP):** a walking route generally over 20 miles in length and mainly off-road.

**National Nature Reserve (NNR):** sites designated under Section 35 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to protect some of the UK's most important habitats, species and geology and to provide outdoor laboratories for research.

**Natural and semi-natural greenspaces:** land, water and geological features which have been naturally colonised by plants and animals.

**Natural capital:** the term for all natural assets including geology, soil, air, water and plants and animals that combine to provide a flow of benefits to people.

**Natural Flood Management (NFM):** uses natural processes to protect, restore and mimic the natural functions of river catchments, floodplains and the coast to slow and store water with the aim of reducing the risk of flooding. It includes methods such as woodland planting, floodplain wetland restoration and improved soil and land management.

**Nature Network:** a joined-up network of nature-rich sites, including restoration areas and other environmental projects through a series of areas of suitable habitat, habitat corridors and stepping-stones.

**Nature Recovery Network (NRN):** is a UK government commitment to establish an England-wide NRN to restore and enhance wildlife-rich places in

## Appendix B Uttlesford's Policy Context

order to tackle biodiversity loss, climate change and wellbeing. The NRN will be delivered through LNRS, which inform targeted action and investment in nature.

**Pocket parks:** small outdoor public space, no more than 0.4ha, but mostly smaller, located in an urban area.

**Public Rights of Way (PRoW):** a route over which the public have a right to pass and repass. The route may be used on foot, on (or leading) a horse, on a pedal cycle or with a motor vehicle, depending on its status. Although the land may be owned by a private individual, the public may gain access across that land along a specific route. Public rights of way are broken down into several types:

- **Footpath:** for walking, running, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs.
- **Bridleway:** for walking, horse riding, bicycles, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs.
- **Restricted byways:** for any transport without a motor and mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs.
- **Byways open to all traffic:** for any kind of transport, including cars (but they are mainly used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders).
- **Unclassified unmetalled country road (UUCR):** a public road which does not have an A, B or C road classification.
- **Permissive paths:** not legally recorded Public Rights of Way but can be used with the permission of the landowner.
- **Promoted routes:** routes with significance in the area and popular with visitors.

**Priority Habitat Inventory (PHI):** data that describes the geographical extent and location of habitats of principal importance as listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

## Appendix B Uttlesford's Policy Context

**Priority habitats:** habitats deemed to be of principal importance for the purposes of conserving biodiversity, listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

**Riparian woodland:** woodland on or near riverbanks, often serving important functions such as mitigating flood risk and providing valuable habitat.

**River Basin Management Plan (RBMP):** plans which set out how organisations, stakeholders and communities will work together to improve the local water environment. These plans are produced by the Environment Agency and reviewed and updated every 6 years.

**Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI):** a conservation designation notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, denoting a protected area in the United Kingdom, designated due to special interest in its flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features. They are protected by law to conserve their wildlife or geology.

**Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA):** A study carried out by strategic policy-making authorities to assess the risk to an area from flooding from all sources, now and in the future, taking account of the impacts of climate change, and to assess the cumulative impact that land use changes and development in the area will have on flood risk. It identifies opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding and gathers information on the land that is likely to be needed for flood risk management infrastructure.

**Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG):** existing open spaces that are undergoing enhancements designed to attract more visitors by providing an enjoyable natural environment for recreation to reduce the number of visitors to other open spaces and designated sites that are under pressure.

**Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS):** encompass a range of techniques for holistically managing water runoff to reduce the quantity, and increase the quality, of surface water. SuDS should mimic natural systems, and differ from



## Appendix B Uttlesford's Policy Context

traditional drainage as they aim to manage rain water close to where it falls. Types include green roofs, permeable surfaces, swales and rain gardens.

**Urban greening:** the incorporation of greenery into public streets and spaces, including tree-planting and landscaping.

**Urban Greenspace Factor (UGF):** a tool to increase the amount of green land cover within urban environments by setting a target score for greenspace within new development. This is applied through setting a target score for new development which is calculated based on multiplying UGF scores for different land cover types by the spatial area covered by each and then dividing by the total site area.

**Urban heat island effect:** the process by which an urban area experiences warmer temperatures than nearby rural areas due to the lack of natural land cover and hard surfaces and buildings absorbing and retaining heat.

**Urban nature recovery standard:** a standard within the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework which aims to increase the proportion of green infrastructure that is designed and managed for nature recovery, with the exact proportion based on a locally defined baseline which takes into consideration local needs, opportunities and constraints.

**Water Framework Directive (WFD):** a European Union Directive which commits member states to achieve 'good' status of water bodies by reducing and removing pollution and ensuring there is enough water to support wildlife and human need.

**Working with Natural Processes (WWNP):** a dataset that identifies opportunities for working with natural processes to reduce flood risk. This includes the identification of areas for tree planting.

## Appendix B

# Uttlesford's Policy Context

## Nature rich, beautiful places

### National Policy

**B.1** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in 2021 sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. Section 15(175) of the NPPF – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment states that: plans should identify land for development with the least environmental or amenity value and where appropriate, take a strategic approach to maintain and enhance local networks of habitats and green infrastructure as well as planning for the enhancement of natural capital across local authority boundaries at a catchment or landscape scale [\[See reference 128\]](#).

**B.2** The UK Government's 25 Year Environment Plan (2018) specified requirements for habitat creation, committed to establishing an NRN and embedded the principle of BNG for new development. [\[See reference 129\]](#). It places greater emphasis on the role of GBI and committed to develop the Green Infrastructure Framework.

**B.3** Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework, published in 2023, sets out standards for GBI, including a urban nature recovery standard and urban greening factor standard for new developments [\[See reference 130\]](#):

- **Urban Nature Recovery Standard:** GBI is designed and based upon the local baseline information. This includes enhancing existing greenspace areas, assessing new areas that could qualify as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and providing one hectare of LNR per 1,000 population.

- **Urban Greening Factor Standard:** On average, urban greening is at least 40% within residential neighbourhoods. This standard should be the baseline area-wide.

## Regional policy

**B.4** The Essex GI strategy [\[See reference 131\]](#) contains key objectives to protect, improve, create and connect GBI in Essex to enhance the multi-functionality of GBI and improve overall benefits for nature and people. The strategy outlines key GBI delivery proposals including:

- Increased protection through the appropriate use of local designations and use new GI provision to buffer or extend existing designated sites
- Embed 'environmental net gain' as a development principle and use planning policy to secure BNG
- Improve management to benefit locally native species focussing on recognised nature conservation priorities
- Strategically identify areas for investment which could provide the most benefits for people and nature

**B.5** The Essex Climate Action Plan [\[See reference 132\]](#) outlines the council's response to net zero and making Essex carbon neutral. It includes targets to provide environmental benefits such as habitat creation. It also instigated The Forest Initiative which commits Essex County Council to planting 375,000 trees between 2019 and 2024.

- The Forest Initiative: Essex County Council has committed to plant 375,000 trees between 2019 – 2024 to help offset carbon emissions. The 2019 tree planting target was 25,000 but 38,615 trees were planted (13,615 ahead of target). Essex County Council secured additional funding from the Local Authority Treescape Fund and the Urban Tree Challenge Fund to plant additional trees and focus tree planting outside of woodland areas across the county [\[See reference 133\]](#).

## Local policy

**B.6** Uttlesford District Council's Building for a Healthy Life toolkit [See reference 134] showcases examples of best practice within Uttlesford for neighbourhoods, streets, homes and public spaces. This includes promotion of natural connections where people and places are well connected with water and nature. The Uttlesford Corporate Plan 2023 – 27 [See reference 135] includes priorities to conserve natural resources by actioning programmes which increase biodiversity, increase tree cover and work with rural partners and developers to maintain habitat and wildlife corridors. Uttlesford's Climate Crisis Strategy 2021 – 2030 [See reference 136] sets out a clear direction for tackling the climate crisis which includes targets for tree planting and actions to map opportunities for BNG.

**B.7** The Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 – 2041 is under preparation and will form part of the statutory development plan for the district, providing the basis for all planning decisions. Relevant policies within the Draft Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 – 2041 (Regulation 18) include:

- **Core Policy 38: The Natural Environment** covers the protection and enhancement of designated sites.
- **Core Policy 39: Green and Blue Infrastructure** requires development to adopt an approach that is environment and landscape-led so as to maximise the beneficial of GBI for people and nature.
- **Core Policy 40: Biodiversity** covers the conservation and enhancement of habitats, species and sites including the promotion of connections outside the site boundary. It also outlines requirements for BNG.
- **Core Policy 41: Landscape character** covers the preservation of the character and appearance of the landscape, ancient landscapes and geological sites.

The Draft Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 – 2041 (Regulation 18) also contains a number of area-specific policies for North Uttlesford, South Uttlesford, Thaxted and the district's rural areas.

## Active and healthy places

### National Policy

**B.8** Section 8 of the NPPF, Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities, states that where possible healthy lifestyles should be supported and enabled, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs. This could be through the provision of “safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling”.

**B.9** Paragraph 186 states that at the plan making stage opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts should be identified. This could be through “traffic and travel management, and green infrastructure provision and enhancement” [\[See reference 137\]](#).

**B.10** The 25YEP sets the UK Government’s ambitions to improve provision of nature close to people’s homes and better connect people and the environment to improve health and wellbeing, recognising the overall role of GBI in improving health and wellbeing. The plan also sets out goals for the provision of clean air and clean and plentiful water which are important determinants of healthy places.

### Regional policy

**B.11** The Essex GI strategy [\[See reference 138\]](#) provides key green infrastructure planning principles for the creation of active and health places. In particular it promotes the creation of ‘good accessible links for all between urban, rural and green infrastructure widening the green infrastructure network’. The Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-26 [\[See reference 139\]](#) outlines actions to tackle common preventative health issues in Essex through

## Appendix B Uttlesford's Policy Context

the facilitation of physical activity, particularly through finding new ways for people to integrate physical activity into their daily lives.

**B.12** The Essex Levelling Up strategy [See reference 140] outlines how Essex County Council will support all residents across the county to benefit from the same opportunities as the wider Essex population. Regarding Active and Healthy Places, the following focus area is:

- **Health and Wellbeing:** Supporting residents to live long, healthy and happy lives by prioritising mental and physical health, wellbeing, active and independent lives.

**B.13** The Essex Transport Plan [See reference 141] sets out the aspirations for improving active travel in the county. Regarding Active and Healthy Places, the following appropriate policies are:

- **Policy 14 – Cycling:** Promoting the benefits of cycling, continuing to improve the cycling facilities within urban areas, working with schools, employers, and public rights of way to improve facilities for cyclists.
- **Policy 15 – Walking and Public Rights of Way:** Promoting the benefits of walking. Developing safe, attractive, well signposted and accessible walking environments.

## Local policy

**B.14** Uttlesford District Council's Building for a Healthy Life toolkit [See reference 142] provides guidance to developers and showcases examples of best practice within Uttlesford for neighbourhoods, streets, homes and public spaces. The toolkit includes guidance on:

- **Natural Connections:** Places that are connected to the wider context, facilities and services. Direct connections through sites with well-connected pedestrian and cycle routes.

## Appendix B Uttlesford's Policy Context

- **Walking, Cycling and Public Transport:** Promoting cycle routes through green spaces, quiet streets and protected routes. Direct cycle and walking routes connecting key destinations.
- **Facilities and Services:** Assess the current sport and leisure facilities for people of all ages (in particular the needs of children, teenagers and older people) and adapt.
- **Healthy Streets:** Streets and neighbourhoods with low-speed rules to prioritise pedestrian and cyclists. Healthy streets improve people's physical and mental health. Encouraging walking, cycling, outdoor play and where it is safe for younger children to cycle (or scooter) to school can create opportunities for social interaction and street life bringing wider social benefits.
- **Cycle and Car Parking:** Provide cycle parking and storage so it is as convenient as using a car for short journeys as well as being attractive and safe for all types of residential developments.

**B.15** The Uttlesford Corporate Plan (2023 – 27) [See reference 143] and Climate Crisis Strategy (2021-2030) both set out ambitions to increase walking, cycling and sustainable transport. Uttlesford's Cycling Action Plan, 2018 [See reference 144] outlines that Uttlesford will double the number of cycling trips over the next 10 years. The Council is currently consulting on a new Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) which aims to beat UK government targets of active travel constituting over 50% of journeys within town centres by also providing better active travel links to the wider rural area around towns.

**B.16** The Uttlesford Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2023 – 28) [See reference 145] includes priorities to:

- Improve and support mental wellbeing.
- Enable people to live healthy, active lifestyles throughout their lives.
- Build healthy, resilient, active communities.

**B.17** Relevant policies within the Draft Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 – 2041 (Regulation 18) include:

- **Core Policy 5: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services** ensures that new services and facilities are delivered alongside new housing and employment.
- **Core Policy 66: Planning for Health** supports proposals that will reduce health inequalities and promote healthier lifestyles.
- **Core Policy 67: Open Space** covers the protection of existing open space, provision of open space in new development and maintenance.

The Draft Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 – 2041 (Regulation 18) also contains a number of area-specific policies for North Uttlesford, South Uttlesford, Thaxted and the district's rural areas.

## Thriving and prosperous places

### National Policy

**B.18** Chapter 6 of the NPPF, paragraph 82(c), states that planning policies should “seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment” [\[See reference 146\]](#).

**B.19** The Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework [\[See reference 147\]](#) sets a **Green Infrastructure Strategy Standard** that: Plans should set out how green infrastructure will help to create “greener, beautiful, healthier and more prosperous neighbourhoods with a thriving nature network that can reduce air and water pollution, support sustainable drainage and help places adapt to climate change.



## Regional policy

**B.20** The Essex GI strategy [See reference 148] states that by locating developments in the right place and ensuring good early design of GBI, local landscape character and heritage can be protected and enhanced.

**B.21** The Essex Levelling Up strategy [See reference 149] outlines how Essex County Council will support all residents across the county to benefit from the same opportunities in three main areas:

- **The Economy:** Improving access to green jobs which also have a high enough salary to support a good quality of life and career progression.
- **Education and Skills:** Improving educational skillsets with good quality, relevant skills that can support lifelong learning.
- **Families and Communities:** Supporting people to grow strong and resilient communities where people feel safe and have support for each other.

## Local policy

**B.22** The Uttlesford Corporate Plan (2023 – 27) [See reference 150] includes priorities to:

- Recognise the district's 'greenest' business and developers.
- Encourage positive planning that protects and values the heritage.
- Work with others to preserve the heritage and history within Uttlesford.

**B.23** Relevant policies within the Draft Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 – 2041 (Regulation 18) include:

- **Core Policies 45 – 51** includes policies relating to the protection and development of employment opportunities, for retail and town centres, and for tourism and the visitor economy.

- **Core Policies 62 – 65** cover protection and enhancement of the historic environment including, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and other designated and non-designated heritage assets.

The Draft Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 – 2041 (Regulation 18) also contains a number of area-specific policies for North Uttlesford, South Uttlesford, Thaxted and the district's rural areas.

# Improved water management

## National Policy

**B.24** Strategic policies 20(b) in the NPPF includes a requirement for an overall strategy to make a sufficient provision for the management of water supplies, wastewater, and flood risk.

**B.25** Chapter 15 of the NPPF, paragraph 174(e), states that there should be emphasis on the prevention of new and existing development not being adversely affected by “unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution”. Wherever possible developments should improve the local conditions including water quality [\[See reference 151\]](#).

**B.26** The UK Government has recently proposed changes to make sustainable drainage systems mandatory for all new development to reduce the risk of surface water flooding, pollution and alleviate pressures on traditional drainage and sewer systems. Regulations and processes are currently being devised and the approach is likely to be implemented in 2024 [\[See reference 152\]](#).

**B.27** The 25YEP [\[See reference 153\]](#) sets out goals to ensure the provision of clean and plentiful water and a reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards (flooding and drought).

## Regional policy

**B.28** Essex has five river catchments. The Essex GI strategy [See reference 154] outlines planning principles for natural flood management and states that GBI features including rain gardens, green roofs and bio-retention areas (landscaped depressions which are typically under drained and rely on engineered soils and vegetation to remove pollution and reduce runoff) should be integrated where possible to absorb urban water.

**B.29** The Essex Climate Action Plan [See reference 155] outlines the council's response to net zero and making Essex carbon neutral. This includes objectives to ensure communities are more resilient to flooding and that a country wide water strategy be produced which will include actions to maximise the use and benefits of green and blue infrastructure to reduce the risk of flooding and tackle issues with water scarcity and quality. The water strategy is currently in development and will be published in 2024.

## Local policy

**B.30** Uttlesford District Council's Building for a Healthy Life toolkit [See reference 156] includes guidance on the integration of sustainable drainage systems within new development. It also provides guidance to developers on researching how water flows and moves across a site and its surroundings and how it can enhance biodiversity, so they can respond appropriately.

**B.31** Actions associated with improved water management within Uttlesford's Climate Crisis Strategy (2021 – 2030) [See reference 157] include:

- Reduce consumption and protect water resources from pollution. Heating buildings and hot water equates to approximately 40% of carbon emissions in Uttlesford.
- Increase rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling.
- Protect and improve water quality.

## Appendix B Uttlesford's Policy Context

**B.32** Catchment Flood Management Plans (CFMP) for the district (which sits within three river catchment areas) outline sustainable flood risk management strategies for the long term [See reference 158]. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) was also undertaken for the district [See reference 159], which specifically outlines key flood risks, opportunities, and guidance for the district.

**B.33** Relevant policies within the Draft Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 – 2041 (Regulation 18) include:

- **Core Policy 34: Water Supply and Protection of Water Resources** covers issues of water supply, efficiency, recycling, contamination and infrastructure.
- **Core Policy 35: Chalk Streams Protection and Enhancement** creates a 15m riparian buffer zone excluding most forms of new development
- **Core Policy 36: Flood Risk** covers the requirement for proposals to avoid and reduce the risk of flooding, including the requirements for flood risk assessment.
- **Core Policy 37: Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems** sets out requirements for SuDS and support for natural flood management techniques.

The Draft Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 – 2041 (Regulation 18) also contains a number of area-specific policies for North Uttlesford, South Uttlesford, Thaxted and the district's rural areas.

## Resilient and climate positive places

### National Policy

**B.34** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) includes the following references to climate change:

## Appendix B Uttlesford's Policy Context

- Paragraph 152 states that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future and help shape places to improve resilience.
- Paragraph 153 states that “policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure”.
- Paragraph 154(a) states that new developments should “avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change” and “care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures”.

**B.35** The Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework’s (2023) GI Strategy Standard requires plan to [\[See reference 160\]](#) outline how green infrastructure will help to create a network “that can reduce air and water pollution, support sustainable drainage and help places adapt to climate change”.

**B.36** The 25YEP includes goals to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

## Regional policy

**B.37** The Essex GI strategy [\[See reference 161\]](#) outlines key green infrastructure planning principles relating to the creation of resilient and climate positive places including:

- Development will be directed to the most sustainable locations.
- The performance of places will be made more resilient to the effects of climate change.
- Greater awareness is achieved on the important contribution in responding to the impacts from climate change.

**B.38** The Essex Climate Action Plan [\[See reference 162\]](#) includes the following actions and targets:

## Appendix B Uttlesford's Policy Context

- 50% of farmland within Essex is to adopt sustainable land stewardship practices by 2030, 75% by 2040 and 100% by 2050.
- Help all communities enjoy a high-quality environment by making them more resilient to flooding, heat stress and water shortages. This will be through enhancing the county's green infrastructure and reducing air pollution.
- Prioritise reduction of surface water flooding and any projects delivered must incorporate natural flood management techniques.
- The Community Climate Resilience plan will work to help both local councils and the public to be more informed about the next steps they can take to address the climate emergency.
- The maintenance of green streets has multiple benefits including flood reduction and urban cooling to help make the built environment more resilient to the changing climate.

**B.39** The Essex Housing Strategy 2021-25 [See reference 163] states that any new housing developments built, and any existing homes are to be retrofitted to meet net zero carbon requirements. This will aid with the goal of bringing all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. This will also require a change to the design of new developments and neighbourhoods to support and encourage active travel and the use of public transport.

**B.40** The Essex Local Nature Partnership Board works with Essex County Council to coordinate LNP's across the county. The Essex LNPB has identified four targets for 2030:

- 14% of Natural Green Infrastructure of Essex to be increased to 25%.
- 50% of farmland in Essex to adopt sustainable stewardship practices (adopted from ECAC).
- 1 in 4 people in Essex taking action for Nature Recovery (adopted from Essex Wildlife Trust).
- Access to high quality green space for all.

## Local policy

**B.41** Council policy directly addresses issues relating to Climate Change. The Uttlesford Corporate Plan 2023 – 27 [\[See reference 164\]](#) sets out the key priorities for the council to achieve their vision - to make Uttlesford the best place to live, work and play; these include:

- Strive to deliver low carbon homes through specific policy integration.
- Improve the energy efficiency of council housing stock.
- Outline and implement the supporting policies for the council's Net Zero Carbon Goal.
- Increase air quality monitoring across the district.
- Locate the 'problem areas' and deliver reductions in pollution identified there.

**B.42** Uttlesford's Climate Crisis Strategy 2021 – 2030 [\[See reference 165\]](#) includes actions:

- Raising awareness and making information more readily available to highlight the dangers from pollution.
- Review all resilience plans in light of heatwaves and flooding and update where required.
- Improve air quality monitoring and reporting.
- Creation of a Nature Recovery Network for Uttlesford and mapping out opportunities for biodiversity.

**7.40** Relevant policies within the Draft Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 – 2041 (Regulation 18) include:

- **Core Policy 1: Addressing Climate Change** sets out criteria to ensure development responds to the challenges of climate change appropriately.

## Appendix B Uttlesford's Policy Context

- **Core Policies 22 – 24** set out requirements relating to net zero operational carbon development, overheating, and embodied carbon in new development.
- **Core Policy 26: Renewable Energy Infrastructure** provides support and requirements for renewable energy development.

The Draft Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 – 2041 (Regulation 18) also contains a number of area-specific policies for North Uttlesford, South Uttlesford, Thaxted and the district's rural areas.



## Appendix C

# Uttlesford's Main Settlements - Existing GBI Assets

## North Uttlesford

**C.1 Saffron Walden** functions as a key administrative and commercial centre in the District (with a train station at Audley End, 3km to the west, and wider bus connections) while also attracting many tourists. Conservation Areas cover much of the town centre, which has managed to preserve its medieval character [See reference 166] and contains many listed buildings/groups of buildings and attractive green spaces.

**C.2** Important open and recreational spaces within Saffron Walden include the Common, Bridge End Gardens, St. Mary's Churchyard, open space around the Castle remains and museum, Jubilee Gardens, as well as other recreation grounds, cemeteries, allotments and village greens. Throughout Saffron Walden, street trees, such as those lining the High Street, have been identified for their importance to the historic character of the town [See reference 167].

**C.3 Newport** is one of Uttlesford's larger villages. Although set in the countryside, access is restricted to the local PRow network. Large areas of parkland at Shortgrove and Quendon Hall are not open to the public. Existing open and recreational spaces within the village include Station Road Common, Meadow Ford, Newport Recreation Ground and Croquet Club, grounds at St Mary the Virgin Church and school facilities at Joyce Frankland Academy [See reference 168]. Allotment space exists off Frambury Lane.

**C.4 Wendens Ambo** is a small village located approximately 2km south-west of Saffron Walden containing Audley End railway station, which is the nearest train station for much of the population of the Focus Area. The village contains a few

accessible open spaces including Wendens Ambo Cricket Club, Duke Street playing fields and St. Mary's Church Yard.

**C.5 Littlebury** is a small village located 1.7km north-west of Saffron Walden, with Saffron Walden golf course forming a distinction between the two settlements. The River Cam defines the village's eastern boundary and the railway line defines the west. Existing open spaces within the village include Walden Road playing field/play space and Holy Trinity Church grounds.

**C.6 Great and Little Chesterford** are situated near Uttlesford's northern boundary. The villages sit on the River Cam and contain a number of open spaces including the Chesterfords Community Centre playgrounds, pitch, skatepark and allotments, playing fields off East Gate, Horse River Green, and All Saints' and St. Mary the Virgin church grounds.

## South Uttlesford

**C.7 Stansted Mountfitchet:** The village of Stansted Mountfitchet is the third largest settlement in Uttlesford, located in the south west of the District, 1.5km north of Bishop's Stratford and less than a kilometre west of London Stansted Airport, west of the M11. The settlement has a historic core but has undergone significant growth due to its transport links and strategic location.

**C.8** The village is surrounded by designated Green Belt to the south, south-west and south-east, protecting the open character of the landscape west of the M11 and preventing coalescence with Bishop's Stratford. The village is well connected, with direct access to the M11 to the east and served by Stansted Mountfitchet train station providing links to London Liverpool Street, Cambridge North and Stansted Airport. A network of PRow's connect the village with Birchanger, Elsenham and the surrounding countryside. Stansted Mountfitchet is largely surrounded by open countryside and high-quality ALC Grade 2/3 agricultural land. A number of small waterways pass through Stansted Mountfitchet, including Stansted Brook, connecting to the River Stort.

**C.9** There are several local amenity greenspaces within the village including the Recreation Ground, Chapel Hill War Memorial, Foresthall Park, Bentfield Green and Stansted Park. The village also contains two allotments (at Elms Farm and Walpole Meadow (under transfer) [See reference 169]), play spaces and other doorstep amenity spaces. However, Stansted Mountfitchet lacks access to semi-natural greenspaces with greater biodiversity value.

**C.10 Takeley:** Takeley is one of the District's larger villages, located 4km west of Great Dunmow and less than a kilometre to the south-east of Stansted Airport. Takeley is located south of the A120 and is bisected by Dunmow Road (B1256) which connects the village with the A120/M11. Several preferred strategic mixed-use and residential development sites have been identified in the draft Local Plan between Takeley/Little Canfield and the A120, demonstrating significant projected growth of the settlement over the plan period.

**C.11** Takeley is located in close proximity to the District's two Country Parks, Hatfield Forest and the Flitch Way and also contains some other important GI assets including Priors Wood (Ancient Woodland and LWS), Runnel's Hay (Ancient Woodland and LWS). Local greenspaces include Takeley Cricket Club, Smith's Green, Takeley Sports Field, and other residential amenity greenspaces and play areas.

**C.12** Takeley is connected to a number of active travel routes, intersected by both NCN 16 (the Flitch Way) and NCN 50. NCN 50 is an on-road NCN road connects which passes through many of the smaller villages in the south of Uttlesford. The Harcamlow Way LDP passes south-west to north-east through Takeley via Church Lane.

**C.13 Great Dunmow:** Great Dunmow is one of the District's two market towns, situated in the south-east of Uttlesford, north of the A120 and approximately 10km east of Bishop's Stortford and 10km west of Braintree. The River Chelmer passes north-south through the town, with the main built-up settlement area located west of the river. The area of Church End adjoins the north-east of

Great Dunmow, where two large residential preferred strategic development sites have been identified by the draft Local Plan, to the east of the river.

**C.14** Great Dunmow has several important green infrastructure assets and recreational links. The Flich Way connects to the town both in the west (at Dunmow Cutting, west of the B1256) and at the south-east (at Chelmsford Road/B1008 near the A120 junction). Currently, there is no continuous traffic-free connection for the Flich Way through Great Dunmow however the NCN16 provides an on-road route along Chelmsford Road and the B1256. The Saffron Trail LDP passes through the town from south-east to north-west (forming part of the longer route from Southend to Saffron Walden).

**C.15** There are a number of local amenity greenspaces within the town including the Downs, Great Dunmow Recreation Ground, amenity greenspace along the River Chelmer, Parsonage Downs, Newton Green, and Woodlands Walk. Great Dunmow is also surrounded by a number of biodiversity assets including High Wood SSSI to the west, ancient woodland sites Hoglands Wood/Broomhills (north-west) and Markshill Wood (east). There are also a number of LWS on the town's outskirts. The Fitch Way Country Park/LNR provides a key off-road active travel route and biodiversity corridor connecting Great Dunmow to both the east and west.

## East Uttlesford

**C.16 Thaxted** village has no train station and infrequent bus services. The nearest station is located at Elsenham, although more frequent trains serve Audley End, Stansted Mountfitchet and Stansted Airport. The village includes a number of local open and recreational spaces including Thaxted Greens playing fields, Weaverhead Close amenity greenspace, Walnut Tree Meadow (Cophall Lane semi-natural greenspace), Magdalen Green, Thaxted churchyard, Margaret Street gardens and allotments, the bowling green and a number of other small amenity spaces.

## References

- 1 HM Treasury, 2021. Final Report – The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/final-report-the-economics-of-biodiversity-the-dasgupta-review>
- 2 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2023. Planning Practice Guidance [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>
- 3 Office for National Statistics, 2023. England natural capital accounts: 2023 [online] Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/36624vuk>
- 4 Natural England, 2023. Green Infrastructure Standards [online] available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/GIStandards.aspx>
- 5 Essex County Council, 2020. Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy [online] Available at: [https://www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migration\\_data/files/downloads.ctfassets.net/knkzaf64jx5x/35jhjEoQZAc4f7bwGyLa38/fc90fbc5519874490047930aae371036/Essex\\_Green\\_Infrastructure\\_strategy.pdf](https://www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migration_data/files/downloads.ctfassets.net/knkzaf64jx5x/35jhjEoQZAc4f7bwGyLa38/fc90fbc5519874490047930aae371036/Essex_Green_Infrastructure_strategy.pdf)
- 6 Essex County Council, 2021. Climate Action Plan [online] Available at: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/running-council/plans-and-strategies/climate-action>
- 7 Uttlesford District Council, 2020. Building for a Healthy Life [online] Available at: [https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/11200/Building-for-a-healthy-life/pdf/Uttlesford\\_Building\\_for\\_a\\_Healthy\\_Life\\_accessible.pdf?m=638179352236870000](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/11200/Building-for-a-healthy-life/pdf/Uttlesford_Building_for_a_Healthy_Life_accessible.pdf?m=638179352236870000)
- 8 Uttlesford District Council, 2023. Corporate Plan 2023-27 [online] Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/6308/Corporate-Plan-2023-2027>
- 9 Uttlesford District Council, 2021. Climate Crisis Strategy 2021 – 30 [online] Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/climate-crisis-strategy>

- 10 Essex County Council, 2022. Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy [online] Available at: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/running-council/plans-and-strategies/essex-joint-health-and-wellbeing-strategy>
- 11 Essex County Council, 2022. Levelling Up Essex, An Essex White Paper [online] Available at: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/running-council/plans-and-strategies/levelling-essex-strategy>
- 12 Essex County Council, 2011. The Local Transport Plan for Essex [online] Available at: <https://www.essexhighways.org/local-transport-plan>
- 13 Uttlesford District Council, 2020. Building for a Healthy Life [online] Available at: [https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/11200/Building-for-a-healthy-life/pdf/Uttlesford\\_Building\\_for\\_a\\_Healthy\\_Life\\_accessible.pdf?m=638179352236870000](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/11200/Building-for-a-healthy-life/pdf/Uttlesford_Building_for_a_Healthy_Life_accessible.pdf?m=638179352236870000)
- 14 Essex Highways, 2018. Uttlesford District Cycle Action Plan [online] Available at: <https://www.essexhighways.org/uploads/files/getting%20around/cycling/uttlesford-district-cycle-action-plan.pdf>
- 15 Uttlesford District Council, 2023. Uttlesford Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-28 [online] Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/8253/Uttlesford-Health-and-Wellbeing-Strategy-2023-2028#:~:text=Our%20priorities&text=5%20Key%20Priorities%20are%3A,Build%20healthy%2C%20resilient%2C%20active%20communities>
- 16 Environment Agency, 2009. Catchment flood management plans. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/catchment-flood-management-plans>
- 17 Uttlesford District Council, 2016. Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. [online] Available at: [https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/5545/Uttlesford-Strategic-Flood-Risk-Assessment-May-2016/pdf/2015s2938\\_-\\_Uttlesford\\_SFRA\\_v3.0.pdf?m=636005689900470000](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/5545/Uttlesford-Strategic-Flood-Risk-Assessment-May-2016/pdf/2015s2938_-_Uttlesford_SFRA_v3.0.pdf?m=636005689900470000)
- 18 Office for National Statistics. Census data 2021 [online] Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censuspopulationchange/E07000077/>

- 19 Office for National Statistics , 2023, Annual Population Survey, life satisfaction. Available at:  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/nesscontent/dvc238/index.html>
- 20 J. Lawton for Defra, 2010. Making Space for Nature: a review of England's wildlife sites and ecological network [online] Available at:  
<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130402170324/http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity/documents/201009space-for-nature.pdf>
- 21 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005. Ecosystems and Human Wellbeing.[online] Available at:  
<https://www.millenniumassessment.org/documents/document.354.aspx.pdf>
- 22 State of Nature Partnership, 2023, State of Nature Available at:  
[https://stateofnature.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/TP25999-State-of-Nature-main-report\\_2023\\_FULL-DOC-v12.pdf](https://stateofnature.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/TP25999-State-of-Nature-main-report_2023_FULL-DOC-v12.pdf)
- 23 Natural England, 2023. Why GI should be provided – the benefits (nature rich beautiful places) [online] Available at:  
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Principles/WhyPrinciples.aspx>
- 24 Essex County Council, 2020. Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy [online] Available at:  
[https://www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migration\\_data/files/downloads.ctfassets.net/knkzaf64jx5x/35jihjEoQZAc4f7bwGyLa38/fc90fbc5519874490047930aae371036/Essex\\_Green\\_Infrastructure\\_strategy.pdf](https://www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migration_data/files/downloads.ctfassets.net/knkzaf64jx5x/35jihjEoQZAc4f7bwGyLa38/fc90fbc5519874490047930aae371036/Essex_Green_Infrastructure_strategy.pdf)
- 25 LUC, 2023, Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment.
- 26 Department of Health and Social Care, 2023. Green social prescribing: perceptions among clinicians and the public [online] Available at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/green-social-prescribing-perceptions-among-clinicians-and-the-public>
- 27 Natural England, 2023. Why GI should be provided – the benefits (active and healthy spaces) [online] Available at:  
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Principles/WhyPrinciples.aspx>

- 28** Office for Health Improvement & Disparities, 2023. Life expectancy at birth (Male, 1 year range) [online] Available at:  
<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles/data#page/3/qid/1938132696/pat/6/par/E12000006/ati/501/are/E07000077/iid/90366/age/1/sex/1/cat/-1/ctp/-1/yrr/1/cid/4/tbm/1/page-options/car-do-0>
- 29** Office for Health Improvement & Disparities, 2023. Life expectancy at Birth (Female, 1 year range) [online] Available at:  
<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles/data#page/3/qid/1938132696/pat/6/par/E12000006/ati/501/are/E07000077/iid/90366/age/1/sex/2/cat/-1/ctp/-1/yrr/1/cid/4/tbm/1/page-options/car-do-0>
- 30** Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2019. English Indices of Deprivation 2019: Mapping resources [online] Available at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019-mapping-resources>
- 31** Uttlesford District Council, 2023. Uttlesford Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-28 [online] Available at:  
<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/8253/Uttlesford-Health-and-Wellbeing-Strategy-2023-2028#:~:text=Our%20priorities&text=5%20Key%20Priorities%20are%3A,Build%20healthy%2C%20resilient%2C%20active%20communities>
- 32** Office for National Statistics, 2022. How the population changed in Uttlesford: Census 2021 [online] Available at:  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censuspopulationchange/E07000077/>
- 33** Office for National Statistics, 2022. How the population changed in Uttlesford: Census 2021 [online] Available at:  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censuspopulationchange/E07000077/>
- 34** Uttlesford District Council, 2012. Uttlesford Open Space, Sport Facility and Playing Pitch Strategy [online] Available at: 1.1  
<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/1720/Open-Space-Strategy-Green-Space->



- Audit/pdf/B11020\_Uttlesford\_Open\_Space\_Strategy\_Final\_Jan\_12\_GRE  
EN\_SPACE\_AUDIT\_STRATEGY.pdf
- 35** Natural England, 2023. Green Infrastructure Standards [online] available at:  
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/GIStandards.aspx>
- 36** Uttlesford District Council, 2023. Active Travel in Uttlesford [online] Available at: <https://letstalk.uttlesford.gov.uk/active-travel-in-uttlesford>
- 37** Uttlesford District Council (webpage) Available at:  
<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/5065/Public-Rights-of-Way>
- 38** Office for Health Improvement & Disparities, 2023. Percentage of physically active adults [online] Available at:  
<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/public-health-outcomes-framework/data#page/3/gid/1000042/pat/6/par/E12000006/ati/501/are/E07000077/iid/93014/age/298/sex/4/cat/-1/ctp/-1/yr/1/cid/4/tbm/1/page-options/car-do-0>
- 39** Active Essex, n.d. Find your Active Uttlesford [online] Available at:  
<https://www.activeessex.org/about-us/active-networks/active-uttlesford/>
- 40** Wilderness Foundation, n.d. Hatfield Forest – School Visits [online] Available at: <https://wildernessfoundation.org.uk/hatfield-forest/>
- 41** Treeconomics, 2015. Results of the London i-tree Eco Project - Valuing London's Urban Forest [online] Available at:  
<https://www.treeconomics.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/London-i-Tree-Report.pdf>
- 42** UK Green Building Council, 2015. Demystifying Green Infrastructure [online] Available at: <https://ukgbc.org/resources/demystifying-green-infrastructure/>
- 43** Natural England, 2023. Why GI should be provided – the benefits (thriving and prosperous communities) [online] Available at:  
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Principles/WhyPrinciples.aspx>

- 44 Moderngov.co.uk, 2020. The Community Stakeholder Forum – Uttlesford Local Plan (issues and options); Character and Heritage [online] Available at:  
<https://uttlesford.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s23769/Enc.%202%20Character%20Heritage%20summary.pdf#:~:text=Uttlesford%20was%20considered%20by%20most%20respondents%20to%20have,and%20village%20has%20a%20distinct%20and%20separate%20character.>
- 45 [Place Alliance \(2020\) A Housing Design Audit for England \[pdf\]](#)
- 46 Uttlesford District Council, 2021. You're your say on new Uttlesford Design Code [online] Available at:  
<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/8704/Have-your-say-on-new-Uttlesford-Design-Code>
- 47 SQW, 2021. The Local Economy of Uttlesford [online] Available at:  
<https://uttlesford.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s24598/Working%20Paper%20C%20Insights%20from%20Cambridge%20Econometrics%20Employment%20Projections%20July%202021.pdf>
- 48 Nexus Planning, 2021. Uttlesford Retail Capacity Study – Market Shares and Health Checks [online] Available at:  
<https://uttlesford.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s25156/Enc.%201%20Uttlesford%20Retail%20Capacity%20Study%20-%20Interim%20Findings%20Sept%202021.pdf>
- 49 Uttlesford District Council, 2016. Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan [online] Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/dunmownp>
- 50 Great Dunmow Carnival, 2023. The day, programme and entertainment [online] Available at: <https://www.dunmowcarnival.co.uk/the-day>
- 51 Natural England, 2023. Why GI should be provided – the benefits (understanding and managing water environment) [online] Available at:  
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Principles/WhyPrinciples.aspx>
- 52 University of Cambridge – Saving England's Chalk Streams (online) Available at: <https://www.cam.ac.uk/stories/saving-englands-chalk-streams>

- 53** Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) (2021) Chalk Stream Strategy (online) Available at: <https://catchmentbasedapproach.org/learn/chalk-stream-strategy-3/>
- 54** Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) (2021) Chalk Stream Strategy (online) Available at: <https://catchmentbasedapproach.org/learn/chalk-stream-strategy-3/>
- 55** Environment Agency (2023) Launch of Chalk Stream Strategy's Implementation Plan by Charles Rangeley-Wilson, Chair of the Chalk Stream Restoration Group (online) Available at: <https://environmentagency.blog.gov.uk/2023/06/15/launch-of-the-chalk-stream-strategys-implementation-plan-by-charles-rangeley-wilson-chair-of-the-chalk-stream-restoration-group/>
- 56** Uttlesford District Council, 2016. Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. [online] Available at: [https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/5545/Uttlesford-Strategic-Flood-Risk-Assessment-May-2016/pdf/2015s2938\\_-\\_Uttlesford\\_SFRA\\_v3.0.pdf?m=636005689900470000](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/5545/Uttlesford-Strategic-Flood-Risk-Assessment-May-2016/pdf/2015s2938_-_Uttlesford_SFRA_v3.0.pdf?m=636005689900470000)
- 57** Essex County Council, 2012. Culvert policy [online] Available at: [https://flood.essex.gov.uk/media/1263/essex\\_county\\_council\\_culvert\\_policy.pdf](https://flood.essex.gov.uk/media/1263/essex_county_council_culvert_policy.pdf)
- 58** Essex County Council, 2020. Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy [online] Available at: [https://www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migration\\_data/files/downloads.ctfassets.net/knkzaf64jx5x/35jihjEoQZAc4f7bwGyLa38/fc90fbc5519874490047930aae371036/Essex\\_Green\\_Infrastructure\\_strategy.pdf](https://www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migration_data/files/downloads.ctfassets.net/knkzaf64jx5x/35jihjEoQZAc4f7bwGyLa38/fc90fbc5519874490047930aae371036/Essex_Green_Infrastructure_strategy.pdf)
- 59** Uttlesford District Council, 2019. Water Cycle Study. [online] Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/8957/Water-Cycle-Study-2019/pdf/Water-Cycle-Study-01.2019.pdf?m=638176940094930000>
- 60** Chris Blandford Associates (2003) Essex Landscape Character Assessment (online) Available at: [https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/media/2277/lca\\_essex\\_2002.pdf](https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/media/2277/lca_essex_2002.pdf)
- 61** English Heritage – Audley End House and Gardens (online) Available at: <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/audley-end-house-and-gardens/>

- 62 Saffron Walden Town Council (2022) Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan 2021 – 2036 (online) Available at:  
[https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/11663/Saffron-Walden-Neighbourhood-Plan/pdf/Saffron\\_Walden\\_Neighbourhood\\_Plan\\_-\\_Made\\_10.22.pdf?m=638011846903100000](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/11663/Saffron-Walden-Neighbourhood-Plan/pdf/Saffron_Walden_Neighbourhood_Plan_-_Made_10.22.pdf?m=638011846903100000)
- 63 Natural England (2023) Debden Water SSSI (online) Available at:  
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=S1002925&SiteName=debden&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=>
- 64 <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody/GB105033037590>
- 65 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cam-and-ely-ouse-abstraction-licensing-strategy/cam-and-ely-ouse-abstraction-licensing-strategy>
- 66 Transport East (2020) Investment and Delivery Plan (online) Available at:  
<https://www.transporeast.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Investment-and-Delivery-Plan-1.0-1.pdf>
- 67 LUC (2016) Uttlesford Countryside Protection Zone Study (online) Available at: [https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/5896/Countryside-Protection-Zone-Study-LUC-2016/pdf/Uttlesford\\_CPZ\\_Study\\_Approved\\_Final.pdf?m=636015910846570000](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/5896/Countryside-Protection-Zone-Study-LUC-2016/pdf/Uttlesford_CPZ_Study_Approved_Final.pdf?m=636015910846570000)
- 68 The Friends of the Flich Way and Associated Woodlands (online) Available at: <https://www.friends-of-the-flich-way.org.uk/>
- 69 Flich Way Action Group – Progress Report, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023 (online) Available at: <https://www.flichwayactiongroup.org.uk/progress-report.html>
- 70 Friends of the Flich Way – Flich Way ramble with Hannah Pettifer of ITV Anglia (Youtube) available at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ExbquxaJbfg>
- 71 Flich Way Action Group – Progress Report, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023 (online) Available at: <https://www.flichwayactiongroup.org.uk/progress-report.html>

- 72** Transport Initiatives LLP (2023) Flitch Way Links – Options Study (Draft Report June 2023) (unpublished)
- 73** Transport Initiatives LLP (2023) Flitch Way Links – Options Study (Draft Report June 2023) (unpublished)
- 74** Great Dunmow Town Council (2016) Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan 2012-2032 (online) Available at:  
[https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/6350/Great-Dunmow-Neighbourhood-Plan-incorporating-examiner-s-amendments/pdf/GDNP\\_Final\\_inc\\_Maps\\_3.pdf?m=636233672062170000](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/6350/Great-Dunmow-Neighbourhood-Plan-incorporating-examiner-s-amendments/pdf/GDNP_Final_inc_Maps_3.pdf?m=636233672062170000)
- 75** Friends of the Flitch Way – Dunmow Cutting (online) available at:  
<https://www.friends-of-the-flitch-way.org.uk/dunmow-cutting.html>
- 76** Buglife – B-Lines (online) Available at: <https://www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/b-lines/>
- 77** Transport Initiatives LLP (2022) Flitch Way Links – Options Study (Draft Report October 2022) (unpublished)
- 78** Flitch Way Action Group Progress Report, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023 (online) Available at: <https://www.flitchwayactiongroup.org.uk/progress-report.html>
- 79** Natural England – Designated Sites Review – Hatfield Forest (online) Available at:  
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=S1003932&SiteName=hatfield%20forest&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAAarea=>
- 80** Footprint Ecology for the National Trust (2018) Hatfield Forest – Visitor Survey and Impact Management 2018 (online) Available at:  
<https://www.harlow.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/EX00333%20-%20Hatfield%20Forest%20Visitor%20Survey%20and%20Impact%20Management%202018.pdf>
- 81** Natural England (2023) SSSI: Managing your land (online) Available at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/protected-areas-sites-of-special-scientific-interest>

- 82** National Trust – Our Work at Hatfield Forest (online) Available at: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/essex-bedfordshire-hertfordshire/hatfield-forest/our-work-at-hatfield-forest>
- 83** Ibid.
- 84** Footprint Ecology (2018) Hatfield Forest – Visitor Survey and Impact Management 2018 (online) Available at: <https://www.harlow.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/EX0033%20-%20Hatfield%20Forest%20Visitor%20Survey%20and%20Impact%20Management%202018.pdf>
- 85** UDC (2019) Open Space Assessment Report (online) Available at: [https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/9619/ED14B-Uttlesford-Open-Space-Assessment-Report/pdf/ED14B\\_Uttlesford\\_Open\\_Space\\_Assessment\\_Report.pdf?m=637472620476370000](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/9619/ED14B-Uttlesford-Open-Space-Assessment-Report/pdf/ED14B_Uttlesford_Open_Space_Assessment_Report.pdf?m=637472620476370000)
- 86** Stop Easton Park (2020) Easton Park: A Vision for a New Country Park in Uttlesford (online) Available at: <https://www.stopeastonpark.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2020/08/Easton-Park-Brochure-Final-low-1.pdf>
- 87** Stop Easton Park (2020) Easton Park: A Vision for a New Country Park in Uttlesford (online) Available at: <https://www.stopeastonpark.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2020/08/Easton-Park-Brochure-Final-low-1.pdf>
- 88** SEP (2020) A New Country Park for Uttlesford (online) Available at: <https://www.stopeastonpark.co.uk/restoration/>
- 89** Ibid.
- 90** Stop Easton Park (2020) Easton Park: A Vision for a New Country Park in Uttlesford (online) Available at: <https://www.stopeastonpark.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2020/08/Easton-Park-Brochure-Final-low-1.pdf>
- 91** <https://thebiggreeninternet.co.uk/>
- 92** Essex Local Nature Partnership (online) Available at: <https://essexnaturepartnership.co.uk/>
- 93** Buglife – B-Lines (online) Available at: <https://www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/b-lines/>

- 94** Ibid.
- 95** Natural England – Habitat Networks (Individual Habitats) (England)
- 96** Land to the North of Stansted (online) Available at:  
<https://northofstansted.co.uk/>
- 97** Buglife – B-Lines (online) Available at: <https://www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/b-lines/>
- 98** Natural England (2021) Habitat Networks (England) (online) Available at:  
<https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/0ef2ed26-2f04-4e0f-9493-ffbdbfaeb159/habitat-networks-england>
- 99** Essex Rivers Hub – River Stort Projects – Pincey Valley Restoration Project (online) Available at:  
<http://essexrivershub.org.uk/index.php/catchments/river-stort-projects/169-pincey-valley-restoration-project>
- 100** Essex LNR / Land App – Essex Farm Clusters Plan (unpublished).
- 101** River Lea Catchment Partnership – Pincey Brook restoration (online) Available at: <https://www.riverleacatchment.org.uk/index.php/river-stort-cmp/river-stort-projects/113-pincey-brook-restoration>
- 102** Great Dunmow Town Council (2016) Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan 2015 – 2032 (online) Available at:  
[https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/6350/Great-Dunmow-Neighbourhood-Plan-incorporating-examiner-s-amendments/pdf/GDNP\\_Final\\_inc\\_Maps\\_3.pdf?m=636233672062170000](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/6350/Great-Dunmow-Neighbourhood-Plan-incorporating-examiner-s-amendments/pdf/GDNP_Final_inc_Maps_3.pdf?m=636233672062170000)
- 103** Essex Rivers Hub – River Chelmer – Great Easton to River Can Pressures (online) Available at:  
<http://www.essexrivershub.org.uk/index.php/river-chelmer-great-easton-to-river-can-pressures>
- 104** Essex Rives Hub – River Chelmer Projects (online) Available at:  
<http://www.essexrivershub.org.uk/index.php/catchments/river-chelmer-projects/191-hoblongs-bridge>

- 105** Essex Rives Hub – River Chelmer Projects (online) Available at: <http://www.essexrivershub.org.uk/index.php/catchments/river-chelmer-projects/193-great-dunmow-park>
- 106** Steering Group supported by Thaxted Parish Council (2019) Thaxted Neighbourhood Plan (online) Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/thaxtednp>
- 107** Chris Blandford Associates (2006) Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Appraisal (online) Available at: <https://www.braintree.gov.uk/downloads/file/2100/landscape-character-assessment-section-7-landscape-character-of-uttlesford-district-september-2006>
- 108** Long Distance Walking Association – Harcamlow Way (online) Available at: [https://ldwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show\\_path.php?path\\_name=Harcamlow+Way](https://ldwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show_path.php?path_name=Harcamlow+Way)
- 109** Natural England (2020) Natural England’s new Handbook on creating a Nature Network (online) Available at: <https://naturalengland.blog.gov.uk/2020/03/06/natural-englands-new-handbook-on-creating-a-nature-network/>
- 110** Buglife – B-lines [online] Available at: <https://www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/b-lines/>
- 111** Buglife – B-lines [online] Available at: <https://www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/b-lines/>
- 112** Defra (2014) The National Pollinator Strategy: for bees and other pollinators in England (online) Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/794706/national-pollinator-strategy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/794706/national-pollinator-strategy.pdf)
- 113** <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody/GB105033037590>
- 114** Essex Wildlife Trust – River Champions (online) Available at: <https://www.essexwt.org.uk/river-champions>



- 115** Mainstreaming Green Infrastructure – Green Infrastructure Planning Policy Assessment Tool (2019) (online) Available at: <https://mainstreaminggreeninfrastructure.com/project-page.php?green-infrastructure-planning-policy-assessment-tool>
- 116** 1 Major housing development is where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.
- 117** Natural England, Greenspace Factor User Guide (2023) Online Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/downloads/Urban%20Greening%20Factor%20for%20England%20User%20Guide.pdf>
- 118** Woodland Trust, Emergency tree plan for the UK (2020), Online, Available at: <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/47692/emergency-tree-plan.pdf>
- 119** Essex Local Nature Partnership, Guidance on BNG, Online, Available at: <https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/media/2632/biodiversity-net-gain-guidance-pack-essex-lnp.pdf>
- 120** CIEEM, BNG: Good practice principles for development, a practical guide (2020), Online, Available at: <https://cieem.net/resource/biodiversity-net-gain-good-practice-principles-for-development-a-practical-guide/>
- 121** UK Government, Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions (2022), Online, Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-ancient-trees-and-veteran-trees-advice-for-making-planning-decisions>
- 122** Essex County Council, SuDS Design Guide (2020), Online, Available at: <https://flood.essex.gov.uk/new-development-advice/suds-design-guide/>
- 123** Essex County Council, Green Infrastructure Standards Technical Guidance (2023) <https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/media/2637/essex-gi-standards-technical-guidance.pdf>

- 124** Building with Nature, online, The BwN Standards Framework  
<https://www.buildingwithnature.org.uk/standards-form>
- 125** Green Flag Awards, Online, Available at: <https://greenflagaward.org/>
- 126** Planning Advisory Service, Biodiversity Net Gain for Local Authorities (2023), Online, Available at:  
<https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/topics/environment/biodiversity-net-gain-local-authorities>
- 127** Woodland Trust, Planners manual for ancient woodland and veteran trees (2019), Online, Available at:  
<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/publications/2019/06/planners-manual-for-ancient-woodland/>
- 128** Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2021. National Planning Policy Framework [online] Available at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
- 129** Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2023. A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment [online] Available at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>
- 130** Natural England, 2023. Green Infrastructure Standards [online] available at:  
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/GIStandards.aspx>
- 131** Essex County Council, 2020. Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy [online] Available at:  
[https://www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migration\\_data/files/downloads.ctfassets.net/knkzaf64jx5x/35jhjEoQZAc4f7bwGyLa38/fc90fbc5519874490047930aae371036/Essex\\_Green\\_Infrastructure\\_strategy.pdf](https://www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migration_data/files/downloads.ctfassets.net/knkzaf64jx5x/35jhjEoQZAc4f7bwGyLa38/fc90fbc5519874490047930aae371036/Essex_Green_Infrastructure_strategy.pdf)
- 132** Essex County Council, 2021. Climate Action Plan [online] Available at:  
<https://www.essex.gov.uk/running-council/plans-and-strategies/climate-action>
- 133** Essex County Council, 2022. Essex Forest Initiative Secures More than £750,000 [online] Available at:

- <https://www.essex.gov.uk/news/2022/essex-forest-initiative-secures-more-ps750000>
- 134** Uttlesford District Council, 2020. Building for a Healthy Life [online] Available at: [https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/11200/Building-for-a-healthy-life/pdf/Uttlesford\\_Building\\_for\\_a\\_Healthy\\_Life\\_accessible.pdf?m=638179352236870000](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/11200/Building-for-a-healthy-life/pdf/Uttlesford_Building_for_a_Healthy_Life_accessible.pdf?m=638179352236870000)
- 135** Uttlesford District Council, 2023. Corporate Plan 2023-27 [online] Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/6308/Corporate-Plan-2023-2027>
- 136** Uttlesford District Council, 2021. Climate Crisis Strategy 2021 – 30 [online] Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/climate-crisis-strategy>
- 137** Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2021. National Planning Policy Framework [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
- 138** Essex County Council, 2020. Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy [online] Available at: [https://www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migration\\_data/files/downloads.ctfassets.net/knkzaf64jx5x/35jhjEoQZAc4f7bwGyLa38/fc90fbc5519874490047930aae371036/Essex\\_Green\\_Infrastructure\\_strategy.pdf](https://www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migration_data/files/downloads.ctfassets.net/knkzaf64jx5x/35jhjEoQZAc4f7bwGyLa38/fc90fbc5519874490047930aae371036/Essex_Green_Infrastructure_strategy.pdf)
- 139** Essex County Council, 2022. Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy [online] Available at: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/running-council/plans-and-strategies/essex-joint-health-and-wellbeing-strategy>
- 140** Essex County Council, 2022. Levelling Up Essex, An Essex White Paper [online] Available at: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/running-council/plans-and-strategies/levelling-essex-strategy>
- 141** Essex County Council, 2011. The Local Transport Plan for Essex [online] Available at: <https://www.essexhighways.org/local-transport-plan>
- 142** Uttlesford District Council, 2020. Building for a Healthy Life [online] Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/11200/Building-for-a-healthy->

- [life/pdf/Uttlesford\\_Building\\_for\\_a\\_Healthy\\_Life\\_accessible.pdf?m=638179352236870000](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/638179352236870000/life/pdf/Uttlesford_Building_for_a_Healthy_Life_accessible.pdf?m=638179352236870000)
- 143** Uttlesford District Council, 2023. Corporate Plan 2023-27 [online] Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/6308/Corporate-Plan-2023-2027>
- 144** Essex Highways, 2018. Uttlesford District Cycle Action Plan [online] Available at: <https://www.essexhighways.org/uploads/files/getting%20around/cycling/uttlesford-district-cycle-action-plan.pdf>
- 145** Uttlesford District Council, 2023. Uttlesford Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-28 [online] Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/8253/Uttlesford-Health-and-Wellbeing-Strategy-2023-2028#:~:text=Our%20priorities&text=5%20Key%20Priorities%20are%3A,Build%20healthy%2C%20resilient%2C%20active%20communities>
- 146** Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2021. National Planning Policy Framework [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
- 147** Natural England, 2023. Green Infrastructure Standards [online] available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/GIStandards.aspx>
- 148** Essex County Council, 2020. Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy [online] Available at: [https://www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migration\\_data/files/downloads.ctfassets.net/knkzaf64jx5x/35jihjEoQZAc4f7bwGyLa38/fc90fbc5519874490047930aae371036/Essex\\_Green\\_Infrastructure\\_strategy.pdf](https://www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migration_data/files/downloads.ctfassets.net/knkzaf64jx5x/35jihjEoQZAc4f7bwGyLa38/fc90fbc5519874490047930aae371036/Essex_Green_Infrastructure_strategy.pdf)
- 149** Essex County Council, 2022. Levelling Up Essex, An Essex White Paper [online] Available at: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/running-council/plans-and-strategies/levelling-essex-strategy>

- 150** Uttlesford District Council, 2023. Corporate Plan 2023-27 [online]  
Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/6308/Corporate-Plan-2023-2027>
- 151** Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2021. National Planning Policy Framework [online] Available at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
- 152** Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2023. New Approach to Sustainable Drainage Set to Reduce Flood Risk and Clean Up Rivers [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-approach-to-sustainable-drainage-set-to-reduce-flood-risk-and-clean-up-rivers>
- 153** Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2023. 25 Year Environment Plan [online] Available at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>
- 154** Essex County Council, 2020. Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy [online]  
Available at:  
[https://www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migration\\_data/files/downloads.ctfassets.net/knkzaf64jx5x/35jihjEoQZAc4f7bwGyLa38/fc90fbc5519874490047930aae371036/Essex\\_Green\\_Infrastructure\\_strategy.pdf](https://www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migration_data/files/downloads.ctfassets.net/knkzaf64jx5x/35jihjEoQZAc4f7bwGyLa38/fc90fbc5519874490047930aae371036/Essex_Green_Infrastructure_strategy.pdf)
- 155** Essex County Council, 2021. Climate Action Plan [online] Available at:  
<https://www.essex.gov.uk/running-council/plans-and-strategies/climate-action>
- 156** Uttlesford District Council, 2020. Building for a Healthy Life [online]  
Available at: [https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/11200/Building-for-a-healthy-life/pdf/Uttlesford\\_Building\\_for\\_a\\_Healthy\\_Life\\_accessible.pdf?m=638179352236870000](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/11200/Building-for-a-healthy-life/pdf/Uttlesford_Building_for_a_Healthy_Life_accessible.pdf?m=638179352236870000)
- 157** Uttlesford District Council, 2021. Climate Crisis Strategy 2021 – 30 [online]  
Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/climate-crisis-strategy>
- 158** Environment Agency, 2009. Catchment flood management plans. [online]  
Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/catchment-flood-management-plans>

- 159** Uttlesford District Council, 2016. Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. [online] Available at: [https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/5545/Uttlesford-Strategic-Flood-Risk-Assessment-May-2016/pdf/2015s2938\\_-\\_Uttlesford\\_SFRA\\_v3.0.pdf?m=636005689900470000](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/5545/Uttlesford-Strategic-Flood-Risk-Assessment-May-2016/pdf/2015s2938_-_Uttlesford_SFRA_v3.0.pdf?m=636005689900470000)
- 160** Natural England, 2023. Green Infrastructure Standards [online] available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/GIStandards.aspx>
- 161** Essex County Council, 2020. Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy [online] Available at: [https://www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migration\\_data/files/downloads.ctfassets.net/knkzaf64jx5x/35jhjEoQZAc4f7bwGyLa38/fc90fbc5519874490047930aae371036/Essex\\_Green\\_Infrastructure\\_strategy.pdf](https://www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migration_data/files/downloads.ctfassets.net/knkzaf64jx5x/35jhjEoQZAc4f7bwGyLa38/fc90fbc5519874490047930aae371036/Essex_Green_Infrastructure_strategy.pdf)
- 162** Essex County Council, 2021. Climate Action Plan [online] Available at: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/running-council/plans-and-strategies/climate-action>
- 163** Essex County Council (2023) Housing Strategy 2021-25 [online] Available at: [https://www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migration\\_data/files/assets.ctfassets.net/knkzaf64jx5x/CNLX0klVGimmGMpErquEU/10cadaeb15c668299eea05c6dc84b55e/Housing\\_Strategy\\_2021-2025.pdf](https://www.essex.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migration_data/files/assets.ctfassets.net/knkzaf64jx5x/CNLX0klVGimmGMpErquEU/10cadaeb15c668299eea05c6dc84b55e/Housing_Strategy_2021-2025.pdf)
- 164** Uttlesford District Council, 2023. Corporate Plan 2023-27 [online] Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/6308/Corporate-Plan-2023-2027>
- 165** Uttlesford District Council, 2021. Climate Crisis Strategy 2021 – 30 [online] Available at: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/climate-crisis-strategy>
- 166** Uttlesford District Council (2018) Saffron Walden Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals (online) Available at: [https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/7241/Saffron-Walden-Conservation-Area-Appraisal-2018/pdf/SW\\_CAA\\_FINAL\\_V1\\_low-res.pdf?m=636559537167330000](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/7241/Saffron-Walden-Conservation-Area-Appraisal-2018/pdf/SW_CAA_FINAL_V1_low-res.pdf?m=636559537167330000)
- 167** Uttlesford District Council (2018) Saffron Walden Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals (online) Available at:

[https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/7241/Saffron-Walden-Conservation-Area-Appraisal-2018/pdf/SW\\_CAA\\_FINAL\\_V1\\_low-res.pdf?m=636559537167330000](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/7241/Saffron-Walden-Conservation-Area-Appraisal-2018/pdf/SW_CAA_FINAL_V1_low-res.pdf?m=636559537167330000)

- 168** Newport Parish Council/Quendon and Rickling Parish Council (2021)  
Newport Quendon and Rickling Neighbourhood Plan 2018 – 2033 (online)  
Available at: [https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/11029/Newport-and-Quendon-Rickling-Neighbourhood-Plan/pdf/Newport\\_Quendon\\_Rickling\\_Neighbourhood\\_Plan\\_-\\_Made\\_version\\_m0rl8i21y949.pdf?m=637939300419830000](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/11029/Newport-and-Quendon-Rickling-Neighbourhood-Plan/pdf/Newport_Quendon_Rickling_Neighbourhood_Plan_-_Made_version_m0rl8i21y949.pdf?m=637939300419830000)
- 169** Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council – Allotments (online) Available at: <https://stanstedmountfitchet-pc.gov.uk/allotments/>

Report produced by LUC

# Report produced by LUC

## **Bristol**

12th Floor, Colston Tower, Colston Street, Bristol BS1 4XE  
0117 929 1997  
bristol@landuse.co.uk

## **Cardiff**

16A, 15th Floor, Brunel House, 2 Fitzalan Rd, Cardiff CF24 0EB  
0292 032 9006  
cardiff@landuse.co.uk

## **Edinburgh**

Atholl Exchange, 6 Canning Street, Edinburgh EH3 8EG  
0131 202 1616  
edinburgh@landuse.co.uk

## **Glasgow**

37 Otago Street, Glasgow G12 8JJ  
0141 334 9595  
glasgow@landuse.co.uk

## **London**

250 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8RD  
020 7383 5784  
london@landuse.co.uk

## **Manchester**

6th Floor, 55 King Street, Manchester M2 4LQ  
0161 537 5960  
manchester@landuse.co.uk

## **landuse.co.uk**

Landscape Design / Strategic Planning & Assessment  
Development Planning / Urban Design & Masterplanning  
Environmental Impact Assessment / Landscape Planning & Assessment  
Landscape Management / Ecology / Historic Environment / GIS & Visualisation