



APOLOGIES Committee Services  
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DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY,  
PERFORMANCE AND  
GOVERNANCE  
Paul Dodson

23 March 2022

Dear Councillor

You are summoned to attend the meeting of the;

**COUNCIL**

on **THURSDAY 31 MARCH 2022 at 7.30 pm**

in the **Council Chamber, Maldon District Council Offices, Princes Road, Maldon.**

Please Note: All meetings will continue to be live streamed on the [Council's YouTube channel](#) for those wishing to observe remotely.

There is no public speaking at Council meetings, however questions can be asked of the Leader of the Council or through the Leader to Chairmen of Committees. Questions must be submitted in writing by completion of a [Public Access form](#) (to be submitted by 12noon two clear working days before the day of the Council meeting).

A copy of the agenda is attached.

Yours faithfully

Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance





## AGENDA COUNCIL

THURSDAY 31 MARCH 2022

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1. **Chairman's notices**

2. **Apologies for Absence**

3. **Minutes - 24 February 2022** (Pages 7 - 32)

To confirm the Minutes of the council meeting held on 24 February 2022 (copy enclosed).

4. **Declaration of Interest**

To disclose the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, other Pecuniary Interests or Non-Pecuniary Interests relating to items of business on the agenda having regard to paragraphs 6 - 8 inclusive of the Code of Conduct for Members.

(Members are reminded that they are also required to disclose any such interests as soon as they become aware should the need arise throughout the meeting).

5. **Public Questions**

To receive questions from members of the public, of which prior notification in writing has been received (no later than noon two clear working days before the day of the Council meeting).

Should you wish to submit a question please complete the online form at [www.maldon.gov.uk/publicparticipation](http://www.maldon.gov.uk/publicparticipation).

6. **Chairman's Announcements**

7. **Minute Book**

To consider the recommendations coming forward from the Committee details at a) below. Please note the Minutes of this meeting are not enclosed as they have not been approved at Committee Level.

a) **South Eastern Area Planning Committee - 9 March 2022**

**Agenda Item 6 – Any other items of business that the Chairman of the Committee decides are urgent**

**Recommended:**

That the Council agrees that all future meetings of the South Eastern Area Planning Committee meetings be held at Burnham-on-Crouch Town Council Offices.

8. **Minutes of Meetings of the Council**

To note that since the last Council, up until Wednesday 23 March 2022 (Council agenda dispatch) the following Committees have met, and to receive any questions in accordance with Council and Committee Procedure Rule 6 (2).

District Planning Committee	<a href="#">3 March 2022</a>
South Eastern Area Planning Committee	<a href="#">9 March</a>
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (acting as the Crime and Disorder Committee)	<a href="#">10 March</a>
Central Area Planning Committee	<a href="#">16 March</a>

9. **Notice of Motion**

In accordance with notice duly given under Procedure Rule 4 to receive the following two Motions.

a) **Motion From Councillor K M H Lagan**

Councillor K M H Lagan to move the following motion, duly seconded by Councillor S P Nunn. Please note that tracked changes have been applied to this Motion to assist identification of the proposed changes.

“To ensure best value and scrutiny is undertaken as part of the council’s park and waterfront asset management and associated operational processes, that the scheme of delegation to the Director of Service Delivery (DOSD) be amended as follows:

17 – Asset Management

- (d) To negotiate the terms of new leases, including interim and initial rent both at market rent and in those cases where existing tenants have a statutory right to call for a new lease on expiry of the current term. ~~The Director of Service Delivery to provide options to the town ward members who will review and determine the review of existing or issuance of, and to authorise completion of such~~ new leases up to an annual value of £15,000 and duration not exceeding seven years.
- (e) ~~Provide detailed report options for determination by the towns ward members In consultation with the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Strategy and Resources Committee and the Leader,~~ as (d) above in relation to leases with an annual value in excess of £15,000, but not exceeding £25,000, or tenure in excess of 7 years but not exceeding 14 years.

~~Sections (d) and (e), the results of the recommendation by members to be ratified at Strategy and Resources Committee.~~

44. Operational issues relating to:

- a) Parks and public open spaces ~~including waterfront and Quays: To develop proposals and options for lettings and leases on buildings which must be referred to the Local Ward Member Review Group for determination.~~
- b) Formal recreation areas. ~~The development of proposals any any buildings therein and~~ for the letting of any stalls, kiosks and other operations thereon including lettings such as funfairs, circuses and

other short-term lettings shall be developed and submitted the Local Ward Member Group for determination.

- c) To provide proposals to the local Ward member review group on any community assets, including buildings, structures etc) on any potential change of use from that intended for determination. ~~Sponsorship of areas of land such as roundabouts released by the highway authority.~~"

b) Motion from Councillor C Swain

Councillor C Swain to move the following motion, duly seconded by Councillor M G Bassenger.

"Maldon District Council asks the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to review and reply to the Council accordingly on the justification and validity of the various mechanisms, formulas and procedures that go to determining the level of housing that Local Planning Authorities are required to provide in their Local Development Plans in the light of their impact on the sustainability, social and natural environment and character of local communities and on infrastructure demands, in particular:

- the application of ONS projections for population and household formation without a proper national or regional economic or housing strategy;
- the reliance on current housing market conditions as basis for policies extending far into the future;
- the disconnection between past housing delivery performance and calculation of the 5-year Housing Land Supply;
- the lack of economic rationale for the affordability formula that increases the housing requirement in areas of low income;
- the total reliance on landowners and developers for sites to be considered for development;
- the justifiability of a high guaranteed return for developers;
- the dependence on developers' commercial interests for the pace of housing construction;
- the unrealistic presumption that Section 106 charges are an adequate basis for financing development-related infrastructure."

10. Questions in accordance with Procedure Rule 6(3) of which notice has been given

11. Making the Langford and Ulting Neighbourhood Plan (Pages 33 - 76)

To consider the report of the Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance (copy enclosed).

12. Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan - Decision to send the Plan to Referendum (Pages 77 - 232)

To consider the report of the Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance, (copy enclosed).



13. **Commercial Options for Council Offices, Princes Road, Maldon** (Pages 233 - 236)

To consider the report of the Director of Service Delivery, (copy enclosed).

14. **Questions to the Leader of the Council in accordance with Procedure Rule 1 (3)(m)**

15. **Business by reason of special circumstances considered by the Chairman to be urgent**

16. **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

To resolve that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and that this satisfies the public interest test.

17. **Outstanding Loan - Financial Arrangements** (Pages 237 - 290)

To consider the report of the Director of Resources, (copy enclosed).

18. **Commercial Strategy 2022 - 27** (Pages 291 - 308)

To consider the report of the Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance (copy enclosed).

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### **NOTICES**

#### **Recording of Meeting**

Please note that the Council will be recording and publishing on the Council's website any part of this meeting held in open session.

#### **Fire**

In the event of a fire, a siren will sound. Please use the fire exits marked with the green running man. The fire assembly point is outside the main entrance to the Council Offices. Please gather there and await further instruction.

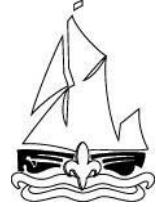
#### **Health and Safety**

Please be advised of the different levels of flooring within the Council Chamber. There are steps behind the main horseshoe as well as to the side of the room.

#### **Closed-Circuit Televisions (CCTV)**

Meetings held in the Council Chamber are being monitored and recorded by CCTV.

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**MINUTES of  
COUNCIL  
24 FEBRUARY 2022**

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**PRESENT**

Chairman                      Councillor M S Heard

Vice-Chairman              Councillor C Mayes

Councillors                  M G Bassenger, Miss A M Beale, B S Beale MBE,  
R G Boyce MBE, Mrs P A Channer, R P F Dewick,  
M F L Durham, CC, M R Edwards, Mrs J L Fleming, CC,  
A S Fluker, M W Helm, B B Heubner, A L Hull, J V Keyes,  
K M H Lagan, C P Morley, C Morris, S P Nunn,  
N G F Shaughnessy, N J Skeens, W Stamp, CC,  
E L Stephens, Mrs J C Stilts, C Swain, Mrs M E Thompson  
and Miss S White

**1. CHAIRMAN'S NOTICES**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and went through some general housekeeping arrangements for the meeting.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor V J Bell and R H Siddall.

**3. MINUTES - 2 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**RESOLVED**

- (i) that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 2 September 2021 be received.

**Minute No. 239 – Statement of Community Involvement – Adoption**

Councillor Mrs P A Channer referred to this item and how at this meeting she along with the Council had acknowledged the good work of an officer, Leonie Alpin, when this item was considered. She asked that the Minutes be amended to include the Officers' name. This was duly agreed.

**RESOLVED**

- (ii) that subject to the above amendment the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 2 September 2021 be confirmed.

#### 4. MINUTES - 4 NOVEMBER 2021

##### RESOLVED

- (iii) that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 4 November 2021 be received.

##### **Minute No. 354 – Chairman’s Notices**

In response to a query from Councillor C Morris as to why his Point of Order had not been recorded in the Minutes, the Chairman advised of the following amendment to the fifth paragraph of this Minute to address this matter:

*“~~Following interruptions by~~ Councillor C Morris ~~then raised a Point of Order. This was not taken by the Chairman and Councillor Morris kept repeating his Point of Order. Councillor Morris kept interrupting and other Members raised their voices.~~ The Chairman advised Councillor Morris that his behaviour was unacceptable and had breached the Council’s Code of Conduct.”*

Councillor Mrs P A Channer referred to the comments made by Councillor Morris and asked that his reference to ‘channer-itus’ be recorded in the Minutes. The Chairman agreed to this.

At this point Councillor Morris provided further comment on the procedure when a Point of Order is raised.

The Chairman put the Minutes, as amended, to the Council and they were duly agreed by assent.

##### RESOLVED

- (iv) that subject to the above amendment the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 4 November 2021 be confirmed.

#### 5. MINUTES - 16 DECEMBER 2021

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 16 December 2021 be approved and confirmed.

#### 6. MINUTES 18 JANUARY 2022 (EXTRAORDINARY)

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 18 January 2022 be approved and confirmed.

#### 7. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor W Stamp declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Member of Essex County Council (ECC).

Councillor M F L Durham declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Member of ECC, advising that ECC were the main beneficiaries for Council Tax.

Councillor C Mayes declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 9c – Discretionary Fees and Charges 2022 / 23 as she was the secretary for Maldon and Heybridge Heritage Harbour and the Brent Trust.

Councillor Mrs J L Fleming declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Member of ECC and any matter relating to them on the agenda.

Councillor A S Fluker advised that in relation to Agenda Item 13 – Updated Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief Policy, given his involvement with Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the District, how they worked and trained with regards to the Policy he would leave the chamber at the start of this item and not return.

Councillor M S Heard declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 9c – Discretionary Fees and Charges 2022 / 23 as a Trustee of the Brent Steam Tug Trust.

Councillor C Morris advised he would not be voting on anything to do with Council Tax. He made a brief statement at this point during which Councillor Mrs M E Thompson raised a Point of Order advising that declarations were for stating matters of fact. Councillor Morris continued referring to the legality of Council Tax in relation to the Local Government and Finance Act 1992.

Councillor K M H Lagan declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 9c – Discretionary Fees and Charges 2022 / 23 as a Member of the Maldon Heritage Harbour Association.

Councillor Miss S White declared in relation to Agenda Item 13 – Updated Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief Policy she ran a small business and would listen to the debate but not vote on this item of business.

Councillor R P F Dewick declared that as a recipient of Non-Domestic Rates he had a pecuniary interest and would leave the room for Agenda Item 13 – Updated Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief Policy.

Following the declarations Councillor Stamp raised a question regarding council tax arrears and during the discussion that followed Councillor Stamp asked that the Minutes note that Councillor Morris had made an allegation at this point.

## **8. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were none.

## **9. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman highlighted the work undertaken by the Council in light of the recent storms Eunice and Franklin. He outlined some of the work done by Council staff during this period, including the assistance provided to residents. The Chairman thanked all involved in the response for their work over this period, coming together as one team, at short notice. These thanks were echoed by Members.

At this point Councillor C Morris referred to a homeless person who had approached the Council for assistance prior to the storms and the response given which he felt was inadequate.

Councillor E L Stephens referred back to the previous item of business, Public Questions and commented that there was a member of the public in attendance who

had indicated he had a question. The Chairman sought clarification and it was confirmed that the Council had not received any notification from persons wanting to speak at this meeting. However, the Chairman advised that he would hear the question. The member of the public, Mr Bert Cottle, then addressed the Council and asked in respect of the budget why there was a need for a Non-Disclosure Agreement to be issued to people that work for the Council and whether the cost came out of the Council Tax budget. In response, the Chairman advised that this question would be passed to the Monitoring Officer who would respond outside of the meeting.

## **10. PERFORMANCE, GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE - 18 NOVEMBER 2021**

### **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the Minutes of the Performance, Governance and Audit Committee held on 18 November 2021 be received.

The Council considered the following recommendation set out in the Minutes.

### **Minute No. 388 – Decision to Opt into the National Scheme for Audit Appointments**

### **RESOLVED**

- (ii) that the public sector audit appointments' invitation to opt into the sector-led option for the appointment of external auditors to principal local government and police bodies for five financial years from 1 April 2023 be accepted.

### **RESOLVED**

- (iii) That the Minutes of the Performance, Governance and Audit Committee held on 18 November 2021 be agreed.

## **11. STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 6 JANUARY 2022**

### **RESOLVED**

- (iv) That the Minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 6 January 2022 be received.

The Council considered the following recommendation set out in the Minutes.

### **Minute No. 426 – Pay Policy Statement 2022 / 23**

### **RESOLVED**

- (v) that the Pay Policy Statement attached at Appendix 1 to the Minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee, be adopted for 2022.

### **RESOLVED**

- (vi) That the Minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 6 January 2022 be agreed.

## **12. PERFORMANCE, GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE - 13 JANUARY 2022**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Performance, Governance and Audit Committee held on 13 January 2022 be agreed.

## **13. STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 3 FEBRUARY 2022**

Councillor C Swain, Vice-Chairman of the Strategy and Resources Committee presented a number of recommendations coming forward from the last meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee. He advised Members that a number of the recommendations were not for consideration at this point as they formed part of Agenda Item 9 – 2023 / 23 Budget and Medium-Term financial Strategy.

The Council considered the following recommendations as set out on the agenda.

### **Review of Memorials in Cemeteries, Parks and Open Spaces Policy**

Councillor Swain moved the recommendations, these were duly seconded and agreed.

Councillor K M H Lagan asked that this dissent in respect of this item be recorded for the reasons as advised to the Strategy and Resources Committee. This was noted.

### **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the sale of benches as an individual item available for purchase, which are then installed in our Parks and Open spaces, cease;
- (ii) That a new scheme be introduced where customers can lease a plaque on a bench for ten-year periods;
- (iii) That the updated Memorials in Cemeteries, Parks and Open Spaces Policy (attached as Appendix 1 to the Minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee) be agreed and implemented no later than 1 April 2022;
- (iv) That the new scheme be introduced with effect from 1 April 2022 and will not be applied retrospectively.

### **Lease Agreement**

Councillor Swain moved the recommendations, these were duly seconded and agreed.

### **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the Director of Service Delivery seek legal clarification in relation to Clauses 16 and 19 of the lease;
- (ii) That subject to (i) above the Council agrees a new lease for 30 years for the organisation outlined in the report;
- (iii) That in consultation with the Chairman of the Strategy and Resources Committee, the Director of Service Delivery be given authority to agree the annual rent figure in line with a current market valuation with annual Retail Price Index (RPI) adjustment.

#### **14. JOINT STANDARDS COMMITTEE - 8 FEBRUARY 2022**

Councillor M G Bassenger, Chairman of the Joint Standards Committee presented the following recommendation coming forward from the last meeting of the Joint Standards Committee and set out on the Council agenda.

##### **Adoption of New Code of Conduct for Members**

Councillor Bassenger moved the recommendation, this were duly seconded and agreed. Councillor C Morris asked that his dissent in respect of this be noted.

**RESOLVED** that the Model Code of Conduct attached as Appendix 1 to the Council agenda, (version of May 2021) together with the amendment resolved at the Joint Standards Committee on 8 February 2022 to include 'or well-being' in Appendix B, paragraph 9 (a) of the code be adopted and that the code take effect by 1 November 2022 unless brought into effect prior by the Monitoring Officer depending on when Essex County Council bring into effect the New Code of Conduct.

#### **15. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL**

The Council noted the list of Committees that had met before and since the last meeting of the Council, up until Wednesday 16 February 2022 for which Minutes had been published.

#### **16. 2022 /23 BUDGET AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

The Council considered the reports of the Section 151 Officer, on the recommendations of the Strategy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 6 January 2022 relating to the revenue budget and the proposed level of Council for 2022 / 23.

The Leader of the Council made a budget speech (attached at **APPENDIX 1** to these Minutes), thanking the Director of Resources and his team for their hard work and commended the budget for 2022 / 23 to the Council.

In response to the budget speech, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Mrs J L Stilts, thanked the Leader of the Council and also acknowledged the hard work put into the budget for this and subsequent years in light of the current covid issues.

The Chairman of the Council proposed that the recommendations as set out in reports 9a to 9f be taken en-bloc. This was duly seconded.

The Director of Resources provided a brief summary of the reports highlighting the:

- Member engagement that had taken place;
- Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and forecast budget changes over the next three years;
- financial impact of Covid;
- use of General Funds.

Councillor A S Fluker advised that he wished to make an additional proposal in accordance with Procedure Rule 1(13)(b). He referred to the significant draw down on reserves necessary over the forthcoming year which he felt was unsustainable and highlighted the comments of the Section 151 Officer who cautioned that unless the



Council acted sooner its reserves would run out. Councillor Fluker then provided further explanation in respect of this. Referring to the work of the Finance Member Working Group (the Working Group) and given the Council's fiscal position he felt the membership of the Working Group should be expanded to include Members that did not sit on the Strategy and Resources Committee. Councillor Fluker advised that he had consulted with the Section 151 Officer and proposed that with immediate effect a full budget review be carried out by a cross chamber, cross Committee Working Group and that this Group report back to the Council with its recommendations in the spring. This proposal was duly seconded.

The Leader of the Council reminded Members of the Finance Working Group and suggested like the Planning Policy Working Group that this be opened up to Members from outside of the Working Group membership. She advised that Officers had been requested to ensure that all Members were briefed on such matters, with the next briefing being on commercial projects which she encouraged all Members to attend.

A lengthy discussion ensued during which further comments were made. It was suggested that the Finance Working Group and the Strategy and Resource Committee be asked to consider inviting Members from outside of the Committee. It was noted that the Terms of Reference for this Working Group sat with the Strategy and Resources Committee. Following further debate the Leader confirmed that other Members could be invited to the Finance Working Group to broaden its membership. Councillor Fluker highlighted urgency of the matter and therefore the need to ensure that something was brought back to the Council in the spring. With the Leader citing that other Members could be invited to attend the Finance Working Group he then withdrew his earlier proposal.

The Chairman reminded the Council that a recorded vote was required in respect of the following items:

- 9e - Revised 2021 / 22 and Original 2022 / 23 Budget Estimates and Council Tax 2022 / 23
- 9f – Council Tax 2022 / 23

He referred back to the earlier proposal that they be considered en-bloc and the voting was as follows:

For the recommendation:

Councillors M G Bassenger, Miss A M Beale, B S Beale, R G Boyce, Mrs P A Channer, R P F Dewick, M F L Durham, M R Edwards, Mrs J L Fleming, A S Fluker, M S Heard, M W Helm, B B Heubner, A L Hull, J V Keyes, K M H Lagan, C Mayes, C P Morley, S P Nunn, N G F Shaughnessy, N J Skeens, W Stamp, E L Stephens, Mrs J C Stilts, C Swain, Mrs M E Thompson and Miss S White.

Against the recommendation:

None.

Abstention:

None.

**Capital and Investment Strategies for 2021 / 22 and Minimum Reserve Strategy 2022 / 23**

**RESOLVED**

- (i) That the Capital and Investment Strategies for 2021 / 22 and Minimum Reserve Strategy 2022 / 23 report and following appendices be approved for 2022 / 23:

- the Capital Strategy (Appendix 1 to the report);
- the Capital Project Bids (Appendix 2);
- Investment Strategy (Appendix 3), and
- Minimum Revenue Provision Statement (Appendix 4).

### **Treasury Management Strategy 2022 / 23**

#### **RESOLVED**

- (ii) That the Treasury Management Strategy 2022 / 23 be approved, along with the following amendments:
  - a) The counterparty limit for Operational Banking be increased from £2m to £3m to allow for larger value transactions to be managed within the counterparty limit, as per Table 3 at Appendix 1 to the report.
  - b) The sector limit for Money Market Funds be increased from £12m to £20m to allow for larger investment within this safe and flexible sector without exceeding the sector limit, as per Tables 3 and 4 at Appendix 1 to the report.
- (iii) That the Treasury Management Policy (TMP 5) amendment be noted as being brought into line with the Treasury Management Strategy as per TMP 5 at Appendix 2 to the report.

### **Discretionary Fees and Charges 2022 / 23**

#### **RESOLVED**

- (iv) That the detailed Fees and Charges for 2022 / 23 as set out in Appendix A to the report be agreed.

### **Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2022 / 23 to 2024 / 25**

#### **RESOLVED**

- (v) That the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2022 / 23 to 2024 / 25 (as at 24 February 2022) at Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

### **Revised 2021 / 22 and Original 2022 / 23 Budget Estimates and Council Tax 2022 / 23**

#### **RESOLVED**

- (vi) that the following be approved:
  - (a) the Revised 2021 / 22 and Original 2022/23 General Fund Revenue Budget Estimates (Appendices 1, 2 and 3 to the report),
  - (b) an average Band D council tax of £212.40 (excluding parish precepts) (£5 increase) for 2021 / 22 (Appendix 1 to the report),
  - (c) policies on the designated use of financial reserves (Appendix 4 to the report),
  - (d) maintain the current policy of a minimum general fund balance of £2,600,000.

- (vii) that the Council gives due regard to the Director of Resources' (Section 151 Officer) statement on the robustness of budgets and adequacy of reserves in Appendix 5.

### **Council Tax 2022 / 23**

#### **RESOLVED**

- (viii) that Maldon District Council's Council Tax Requirement for 2022 / 23 is set at £5,421,362;
- (ix) that the Maldon District Council's Band D Council Tax (excluding Parish precepts) is set at £212.40, reflecting an increase of £5.00, all other bands being determined in accordance with the relevant Sections of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended;
- (x) that the precept demands and level of Band D Council Tax of the Essex County Council, the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority for both Police and Fire, and the various Parish Councils within the District be determined as set out in the report, all other bands being determined in accordance with the relevant Sections of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended;
- (x) That it be noted that at its meeting on 18 January 2022 the Council calculated its Council Tax Base for the year 2022 / 23:
- (a) for the whole district as 25,524.3 Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (the Act), as amended by the Localism Act 2011; and
- (b) for dwellings in those parts of its district to which a Parish precept relates as listed below:

Althorne	511.5
Asheldham	64.3
Bradwell-on-Sea	340.7
Burnham-on-Crouch	3,465.4
Cold Norton	504.3
Dengie	49.1
Goldhanger	313.9
Great Braxted	175.2
Great Totham	1,276.5
Hazeleigh	60.6
Heybridge	2,813.3
Heybridge Basin	272.0
Langford	90.8
Latchingdon	470.1
Little Braxted	82.2
Little Totham	196.1
Maldon	5,541.6
Mayland	1,493.9
Mundon	149.0
North Fambridge	435.5
Purleigh	578.3
Southminster	1,618.8
St. Lawrence	591.7

Steeple	189.8
Stow Maries	86.2
Tillingham	395.7
Tollesbury	998.9
Tolleshunt D'arcy	450.7
Tolleshunt Knights	421.8
Tolleshunt Major	276.1
Ulting	74.2
Wickham Bishops	1,004.4
Woodham Mortimer	259.6
Woodham Walter	271.9
	<b>25,524.3</b>

- (xi) Calculate that the Council Tax Requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2022/23 (excluding Parish precepts) is £5,421,362.
- (xii) That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2022 / 23 in accordance with new Sections 31 to 36 of the Act as amended:
- (a) £28,809,602 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act, taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils (**i.e. gross expenditure including Parish precepts**)
  - (b) £21,064,827 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act (**i.e. gross income including government grants**)
  - (c) £7,024,775 being the amount by which the aggregate at xii(a) above exceeds the aggregate at xii(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax Requirement for the year (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act) (**i.e. Council Tax Requirement including Parish precepts**).
  - (d) £275.22 being the amount at xii(c) above (Item R) divided by the amount at 1(a) above (Item T), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (**i.e. average Band D Council Tax including Parish precepts**)
  - (e) £1,603,414 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (**i.e. Parish Council precepts**)
  - (f) £212.40 being the amount at xii(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at xii(e) above by Item T (x(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates (**i.e. District**

**Council Band D Council Tax excluding Parish precepts).**

(g) Basic Amount of Council Tax by Parish 2022 / 23

<b>Town/Parish</b>	<b>Local Precept</b>	<b>Town/Parish Band D</b>	<b>District + Town/Parish Band D</b>
Althorne	25,000.00	48.88	261.28
Asheldham	3,569.95	55.52	267.92
Bradwell-on-Sea	27,540.00	80.83	293.23
Burnham-on-Crouch	198,390.00	57.24	269.64
Cold Norton	38,749.00	76.84	289.24
Dengie	2,726.05	55.52	267.92
Goldhanger	10,000.00	31.86	244.26
Great Braxted	9,550.00	54.51	266.91
Great Totham	17,054.00	13.36	225.76
Hazeleigh	1,161.47	19.15	231.55
Heybridge	200,000.00	71.09	283.49
Heybridge Basin	34,000.00	125.00	337.40
Langford	6,183.00	68.12	280.52
Latchingdon	54,590.00	116.12	328.52
Little Braxted	4,500.00	54.74	267.14
Little Totham	8,790.00	44.81	257.21
Maldon	380,581.00	68.68	281.08
Mayland	100,249.00	67.11	279.51
Mundon	5,500.00	36.91	249.31
North Fambridge	20,250.00	46.50	258.90
Purleigh	44,000.00	76.08	288.48
Southminster	140,990.00	87.10	299.50
St. Lawrence	26,763.00	45.23	257.63
Steeple	10,531.00	55.45	267.85
Stow Maries	6,695.00	77.66	290.06
Tillingham	36,200.00	91.49	303.89
Tollesbury	92,599.50	92.70	305.10
Tolleshunt D'arcy	21,514.00	47.73	260.13
Tolleshunt Knights	10,000.00	23.70	236.10
Tolleshunt Major	8,900.00	32.23	244.63
Ulting	4,317.00	58.20	270.60
Wickham Bishops	21,545.00	21.45	233.85
Woodham Mortimer	4,975.53	19.17	231.57
Woodham Walter	26,000.00	95.62	308.02

These amounts are calculated by adding to the amount at xii(f) above, the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Councils area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at x(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

(h) Calculation of Basic Amounts of Council Tax by Parish for Different Valuation Bands

PARISH	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
Althorne	174.19	203.22	232.25	261.28	319.34	377.40	435.47	522.56
Asheldham	178.61	208.38	238.15	267.92	327.46	387.00	446.53	535.84
Bradwell-on-Sea	195.49	228.07	260.65	293.23	358.39	423.55	488.72	586.46
Burnham-on-Crouch	179.76	209.72	239.68	269.64	329.56	389.48	449.40	539.28
Cold Norton	192.83	224.96	257.10	289.24	353.52	417.79	482.07	578.48
Dengie	178.61	208.38	238.15	267.92	327.46	387.00	446.53	535.84
Goldhanger	162.84	189.98	217.12	244.26	298.54	352.82	407.10	488.52
Great Braxted	177.94	207.60	237.25	266.91	326.22	385.54	444.85	533.82
Great Totham	150.51	175.59	200.68	225.76	275.93	326.10	376.27	451.52
Hazeleigh	154.37	180.09	205.82	231.55	283.01	334.46	385.92	463.10
Heybridge	188.99	220.49	251.99	283.49	346.49	409.49	472.48	566.98
Heybridge Basin	224.93	262.42	299.91	337.40	412.38	487.36	562.33	674.80
Langford	187.01	218.18	249.35	280.52	342.86	405.20	467.53	561.04
Latchingdon	219.01	255.52	292.02	328.52	401.52	474.53	547.53	657.04
Little Braxted	178.09	207.78	237.46	267.14	326.50	385.87	445.23	534.28
Little Totham	171.47	200.05	228.63	257.21	314.37	371.53	428.68	514.42
Maldon	187.39	218.62	249.85	281.08	343.54	406.00	468.47	562.16
Mayland	186.34	217.40	248.45	279.51	341.62	403.74	465.85	559.02
Mundon	166.21	193.91	221.61	249.31	304.71	360.11	415.52	498.62
North Fambridge	172.60	201.37	230.13	258.90	316.43	373.97	431.50	517.80
Purleigh	192.32	224.37	256.43	288.48	352.59	416.69	480.80	576.96
Southminster	199.67	232.94	266.22	299.50	366.06	432.61	499.17	599.00
St. Lawrence	171.75	200.38	229.00	257.63	314.88	372.13	429.38	515.26
Steeple	178.57	208.33	238.09	267.85	327.37	386.89	446.42	535.70
Stow Maries	193.37	225.60	257.83	290.06	354.52	418.98	483.43	580.12
Tillingham	202.59	236.36	270.12	303.89	371.42	438.95	506.48	607.78
Tollesbury	203.40	237.30	271.20	305.10	372.90	440.70	508.50	610.20
Tolleshunt D'arcy	173.42	202.32	231.23	260.13	317.94	375.74	433.55	520.26
Tolleshunt Knights	157.40	183.63	209.87	236.10	288.57	341.03	393.50	472.20
Tolleshunt Major	163.09	190.27	217.45	244.63	298.99	353.35	407.72	489.26
Ulting	180.40	210.47	240.53	270.60	330.73	390.87	451.00	541.20
Wickham Bishops	155.90	181.88	207.87	233.85	285.82	337.78	389.75	467.70
Woodham Mortimer	154.38	180.11	205.84	231.57	283.03	334.49	385.95	463.14
Woodham Walter	205.35	239.57	273.80	308.02	376.47	444.92	513.37	616.04

These amounts are calculated by multiplying the amounts at xii(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band, divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year, in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

- (xiii) That it be noted for the year 2022 / 23 the major precepting authorities have issued precepts to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the table below:

Precepting Authority	Valuation Bands			
Essex County Council	A	£934.08	E	£1,712.48
	B	£1,089.76	F	£2,023.24
	C	£1,245.44	G	£2,335.20
	D	£1,401.12	H	£2,802.24
Essex Police, Fire Crime Commissioner (PFCC) Fire and Rescue Association (F&RA) Essex Police and Crime Commissioner	A	£145.68	E	£267.08
	B	£169.96	F	£315.64
	C	£194.24	G	£364.20
	D	£218.52	H	£437.04
Essex PFCC F&RA Essex Fire and Rescue Authority	A	£50.22	E	£92.07
	B	£58.59	F	£108.81
	C	£66.96	G	£125.55
	D	£75.33	H	£150.66

- (xiv) That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at xii(h) and xiii above, the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2021 / 22 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwelling shown in Table A attached.
- (xv) Determines that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2022 / 23 is not excessive in accordance with the principles approved under Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended.

As the billing authority, the Council has not been notified by a major precepting authority that its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2022 / 23 is excessive and that the billing authority is not required to hold a referendum in accordance with Section 52ZK of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended.

**TABLE A**

**Total Council Tax Amounts (£) by Band and Area 2022 / 23**

Parish/Area	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
Althorne	1,304.17	1,521.53	1,738.89	1,956.25	2,390.97	2,825.69	3,260.42	3,912.50
Asheldham	1,308.59	1,526.69	1,744.79	1,962.89	2,399.09	2,835.29	3,271.48	3,925.78
Bradwell-on-Sea	1,325.47	1,546.38	1,767.29	1,988.20	2,430.02	2,871.84	3,313.67	3,976.40
Burnham-on-Crouch	1,309.74	1,528.03	1,746.32	1,964.61	2,401.19	2,837.77	3,274.35	3,929.22
Cold Norton	1,322.81	1,543.27	1,763.74	1,984.21	2,425.15	2,866.08	3,307.02	3,968.42
Dengie	1,308.59	1,526.69	1,744.79	1,962.89	2,399.09	2,835.29	3,271.48	3,925.78
Goldhanger	1,292.82	1,508.29	1,723.76	1,939.23	2,370.17	2,801.11	3,232.05	3,878.46
Great Braxted	1,307.92	1,525.91	1,743.89	1,961.88	2,397.85	2,833.83	3,269.80	3,923.76
Great Totham	1,280.49	1,493.90	1,707.32	1,920.73	2,347.56	2,774.39	3,201.22	3,841.46
Hazeleigh	1,284.35	1,498.40	1,712.46	1,926.52	2,354.64	2,782.75	3,210.87	3,853.04

Parish/Area	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
Heybridge	1,318.97	1,538.80	1,758.63	1,978.46	2,418.12	2,857.78	3,297.43	3,956.92
Heybridge Basin	1,354.91	1,580.73	1,806.55	2,032.37	2,484.01	2,935.65	3,387.28	4,064.74
Langford	1,316.99	1,536.49	1,755.99	1,975.49	2,414.49	2,853.49	3,292.48	3,950.98
Latchingdon	1,348.99	1,573.83	1,798.66	2,023.49	2,473.15	2,922.82	3,372.48	4,046.98
Little Braxted	1,308.07	1,526.09	1,744.10	1,962.11	2,398.13	2,834.16	3,270.18	3,924.22
Little Totham	1,301.45	1,518.36	1,735.27	1,952.18	2,386.00	2,819.82	3,253.63	3,904.36
Maldon	1,317.37	1,536.93	1,756.49	1,976.05	2,415.17	2,854.29	3,293.42	3,952.10
Mayland	1,316.32	1,535.71	1,755.09	1,974.48	2,413.25	2,852.03	3,290.80	3,948.96
Mundon	1,296.19	1,512.22	1,728.25	1,944.28	2,376.34	2,808.40	3,240.47	3,888.56
North Fambridge	1,302.58	1,519.68	1,736.77	1,953.87	2,388.06	2,822.26	3,256.45	3,907.74
Purleigh	1,322.30	1,542.68	1,763.07	1,983.45	2,424.22	2,864.98	3,305.75	3,966.90
Southminster	1,329.65	1,551.25	1,772.86	1,994.47	2,437.69	2,880.90	3,324.12	3,988.94
St. Lawrence	1,301.73	1,518.69	1,735.64	1,952.60	2,386.51	2,820.42	3,254.33	3,905.20
Steeple	1,308.55	1,526.64	1,744.73	1,962.82	2,399.00	2,835.18	3,271.37	3,925.64
Stow Maries	1,323.35	1,543.91	1,764.47	1,985.03	2,426.15	2,867.27	3,308.38	3,970.06
Tillingham	1,332.57	1,554.67	1,776.76	1,998.86	2,443.05	2,887.24	3,331.43	3,997.72
Tollesbury	1,333.38	1,555.61	1,777.84	2,000.07	2,444.53	2,888.99	3,333.45	4,000.14
Tolleshunt D'arcy	1,303.40	1,520.63	1,737.87	1,955.10	2,389.57	2,824.03	3,258.50	3,910.20
Tolleshunt Knights	1,287.38	1,501.94	1,716.51	1,931.07	2,360.20	2,789.32	3,218.45	3,862.14
Tolleshunt Major	1,293.07	1,508.58	1,724.09	1,939.60	2,370.62	2,801.64	3,232.67	3,879.20
Ulting	1,310.38	1,528.78	1,747.17	1,965.57	2,402.36	2,839.16	3,275.95	3,931.14
Wickham Bishops	1,285.88	1,500.19	1,714.51	1,928.82	2,357.45	2,786.07	3,214.70	3,857.64
Woodham Mortimer	1,284.36	1,498.42	1,712.48	1,926.54	2,354.66	2,782.78	3,210.90	3,853.08
Woodham Walter	1,335.33	1,557.88	1,780.44	2,002.99	2,448.10	2,893.21	3,338.32	4,005.98

## 17. NOTICE OF MOTION

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4, the Chairman advised that a motion proposed by Councillor C Morris and seconded by Councillor M G Bassenger had been received.

Councillor Morris read out his motion and proposed that the following amendments be agreed along to his the motion. This proposal and the amendments were duly seconded by Councillor Bassenger.

“That MDC resolves to write an open letter to MP John Whittingdale *and Priti Patel* asking ~~him~~ *them* to raise the lack of GP access (by possible parliamentary question, if necessary) in our District and enquire about emergency funding for Maldon District and any other areas with high *patient to* doctor ~~to-patient~~ ratios, to assist the residents and the emergency departments of our hospitals which are also under strain in these medically deprived areas.”

During the debate that followed the Leader of the Council and other Members outlined the work by the Council that had both taken place and was continuing in conjunction with Members of Parliament, the NHS and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in relation to this matter. It was noted that Mr Whittingdale had in December 2021 raised a question regarding this matter in Parliament.



The Leader of the Council proposed an amendment to the motion, that the suggested letter be updated to acknowledge the work that had been done and what had been found out so far but also seek the current state of play and an update on the situation. She suggested that an update be sought from both MPs as well as through the MP Liaison meeting. This proposal was duly seconded.

Councillor Morris responded to the proposed amendment from the Leader raising concern regarding requesting an update. He felt a solid, clear and concise question should be asked of both MPs and to agree the proposed amendment in the name of the Leader would dilute his motion.

In accordance with Procedure Rule No. 13 (3) Councillor C Morris requested a recorded vote.

Further debate ensued with comments being made in relation to the difficulty in accessing GPs including appointments and recent changes to healthcare provision. Some Members also provided updates following meetings they had attended with the CCG who were discussing similar concerns to those raised.

The Chairman moved the amendment to the original motion as proposed by Councillor Morris. This was duly agreed by assent.

The Chairman then put the proposal in the name of the Leader that the proposed letter be updated to acknowledge the work done, what has been found out so far on the current situation highlighting the need for access to GPs and that responses be reported back. The Leader suggested that these issues could also be taken up through the Leader / MP Liaison meetings. This was duly agreed by assent and the Chairman reported that this now became the substantive motion which following a further vote was agreed by assent.

**RESOLVED** that the Council writes an open letter to Members of Parliament, John Whittingdale and Priti Patel in respect of the lack of GP access in our District, acknowledging the work that they have done and seeking an update on the situation following the question being raised in Parliament. The letter should also highlight the need for access to GPs as well as enquiring about emergency funding for Maldon District and any other areas with high patient to doctor ratios, to assist the residents and the emergency departments of our hospitals which are also under strain in these medically deprived areas.

**18. QUESTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULE 6(3) OF WHICH NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN**

There were none.

**19. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2022 / 23**

The Council the report of the Director of Resources seeking Members' consideration of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS) and associated policies for 2022 / 23.

It was noted that the Scheme was significantly unchanged to support the delivery of a largely cost neutral LCTS within the proposed budget for 2022 / 23. Provision had been made to enable changes during the year and an Equality Impact Assessment had been carried out and was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The report suggested that the Council continued to offer the Exceptional Hardship Fund for 2022 / 23 and an updated framework to reflect universal credit arrangements was attached at Appendix 2.

The Leader of the Council moved the recommendations as set out in the report, these were duly seconded and agreed by assent.

## **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the following changes to the existing schemes are approved:
  - a. a cost of living increase in line with the Department for Work and Pensions schemes be included in the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022/23 for Pensioners only;
  - b. that any legislative changes being introduced to the Housing Benefit Scheme, for 2022 / 23 are mirrored in the Councils LCTS scheme to ensure consistency;
  - c. minor technical amendments to ensure that we are able to administer the scheme reflecting current local and national guidance;
- (ii) this decision has been made following Members careful reading of and regard to the Equality Impact Assessment at Appendix 1 to the report;
- (iii) That the updated Exceptional Hardship Fund for Council Tax Support Framework (Appendix 2 to the report) be endorsed.

Councillor M F L Durham advised that he was an election agent for the local election taking place today and had to attend the count. He left the meeting at this point and did not return.

Following their earlier declarations of interest Councillors R P F Dewick, A S Fluker and M W Helm left the meeting at this point and did not return.

Councillor Miss S White revised her earlier declaration of interest, advising that she would be leaving the chamber for the next item of business as her interest was pecuniary.

## **20. UPDATED DISCRETIONARY NON-DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF POLICY**

The Council considered the report of the Director of Resources seeking approval of the updated Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief Scheme attached at Appendix 1 to the report. It was noted that this updated and replaced existing policy to reflect changes announced by Central Government to support businesses. Central Government would be funding the new relief.

The Leader of the Council moved the recommendation set out in the report. This was duly seconded and agreed by assent.

**RESOLVED** that the proposed Discretionary Non-Domestic Relief Scheme (attached at Appendix 1 to the report) be approved.

Councillor Miss S White returned to the chamber at this point.

## **21. TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE POLICY AND LICENSING CONDITIONS**

The Council considered the report of the Director of Service Delivery providing feedback following consultation with the taxi trade and other stakeholders on the proposed Taxi and Private Hire Policy (the Policy) (attached as Appendix 4 to the report) and licensing conditions. The policy was based on statutory guidance issued by the Department of Transport in 2020 and its main purpose was to ensure safeguarding measures to better protect children and vulnerable adults.

Responses to the consultation were set out in Appendix 1 to the report. Based on the feedback received a number of amendments to the licensing conditions were proposed and set out in Appendices 2 and 3 to the report.

The Leader of the Council put the recommendations as set out in the report. These were duly seconded and agreed by assent.

### **RESOLVED**

- (i) that the amendments to the licensing conditions (set out in Appendices 2 and 3 to the report) be approved;
- (ii) that the Taxi and Private Hire Policy (Appendix 4 to the report) be approved.

## **22. COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND FUTURE OPTIONS**

The Council considered the report of the Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance seeking Members' consideration of ongoing arrangements for Committee meetings in light of changes to government restrictions.

The report set out the measure agreed by the Council at its meeting on 2 September 2021 and the current legislation / guidance in respect of them. In light of the changing restrictions the Risk Assessment had been updated and was attached at Appendix A to the report. Further changes agreed by the Corporate Leadership Team in January 2022 were set out in the report.

Details of the current arrangements to stream meetings via YouTube were set out in the report and Members were asked to consider this and whether they wished to continue the You Tube Stream.

The Leader of the Council put the recommendations as set out in the report to the Council. These were duly seconded.

Councillor K M H Lagan referred to the Government legal consent ending and enabling as many public to physically attend meetings as possible. He then proposed that Members and Officers are at liberty to take whatever measures they feel fit to protect their own health and safety and the Chamber should accommodate as many members of the public to observe / participate as reasonably practicable and working within guidance and regulations. This proposal was duly seconded and agreed.

During the discussion that followed support was given for the continuation of YouTube live streaming, although an upgrade to the sound quality was requested. It was also requested that face masks be made available for Officers attending meetings. At this point and in response to a question the Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance clarified that the proposal from Councillor Lagan removed all current measures. The Chairman further clarified that subject to the availability of masks for officers Members were agreeing the recommendations set out in the report.

**RESOLVED** that Members and Officers are at liberty to take whatever measures they feel fit to protect their own health and safety and the Chamber should accommodate as many members of the public to observe / participate as reasonably practicable and working within guidance and regulations, including:

- noting the updated risk assessment for physical meetings set out at Appendix A to the report;
- extending the emergency decision for physical public meeting attendance, subject to capacity numbers as outlined in Appendix A to the report;
- continuing YouTube live streaming of meetings past the removal of Covid restrictions in light of the information set out at section 3.8 of the report;
- for non-regulatory matters those members unable to physically attend be allowed to join meetings remotely to ask questions / engage in debate, subject to Chairman approval, (noting that they would not be able to vote).

## **23. UPDATE ON SOCIAL ENTERPRISE ACCELERATOR FUND AND MEMBER REPRESENTATION**

The Council considered the report of the Director of Service Delivery updating Members on the Additional Restriction Grant (ARG) funded to the Social Enterprise Accelerator Fund and seeking appointment of a Member representative to an Internal Awarding Panel.

The report provided background information following approval of the defrayal approach for the remaining Additional Restriction Grant (ARG) and the work the Council was undertaking in partnership with Social Enterprise East of England (SEEE) to deliver a Social Enterprise Accelerator Fund. £250,000 had been allocated to the project for grants up to £50,000 and the report outlined the grant application process developed and the proposal for an Internal Award Panel to review applications.

The Leader of the Council moved the recommendations set out in the report and proposed that in addition to those Members detailed in the report Councillor W Stamp be appointed to Internal Award Panel as a representative for Burnham-on-Crouch. This was duly seconded and agreed.

### **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the creation of an Internal Award Panel for the Social Enterprise Accelerator Fund be approved;
- (ii) That following Members be appointed to the Internal Award Panel for the Social Accelerator Fund for the remainder of the Municipal Year.
  - Councillor Mrs P A Channer, Leader of the Council;
  - Councillor R H Siddall, Chairman of the Strategy and Resources Committee;
  - Councillor C Mayes, Liaison with the Maldon Business Forum;
  - Councillor W Stamp, Burnham-on-Crouch representative.

**24. BUSINESS BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES CONSIDERED BY THE CHAIRMAN TO BE URGENT**

There was none.

**25. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and that this satisfies the public interest test.

Councillor N J Skeens left the meeting at this point and did not return.

**26. LEISURE CONTRACT UPDATE**

The Council considered the report of the Leisure Contract Task and Finish Working Group (the Working Group) advising Members of the on-going work from the Working Group in relation to the current position with the Leisure Services. The report also sought Members' approval for the Working Group to continue to meet to review the forecasted financial parameters.

The report set out the work undertaken by the Working Group since its last report to the Council. This included a summary of the current position as well as the historical financial impact on Maldon District Council Leisure Centres as a result of the pandemic.

A proposed variation to the contract and management fee for 2022 / 23 had been reviewed by the Working Group. The report set out the details of a counter proposal submitted, acknowledged and accepted in principle, subject to a formal Council decision.

The Leader of the Council presented the report and moved the recommendations as set out in the report. This was duly seconded.

Members expressed thanks to Mr Butcher, Commercial Manager, his team and the Working Group for the work that had been done.

The Chairman put the proposal in the name of the Leader which was duly agreed.

**RESOLVED**

- (i) That the Council agrees a variation to the Places Leisure contract for financial year 2022 / 23. Within this agreement Places Leisure will undertake responsibility for staffing and day to day management of the splash park for the 2022 season;
- (ii) That the Leisure Contract Working Group continues to meet on a regular basis to consider options for the future management of Leisure Centres.

There being no further items of business the Chairman closed the meeting at 10.05 pm.

M S HEARD  
CHAIRMAN

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## **Budget Speech 2022/23**

The financial year 2021/22 has been a challenging one for Maldon District Council, again impacted by the Covid-pandemic, but one in which much has been achieved.

The Council has continued supporting the national response to the Covid Pandemic assisting the Vaccination programme, by provision of the Maldon vaccination centre delivered, by the NHS, through our District Council offices.

We continued to support our businesses distributing over £10 million of government support to local businesses to ensure that they, associated jobs and livelihoods are protected.

Core services throughout the pandemic have been maintained, including:

- Maintaining kerbside collection of waste and recycling through working with our partners SUEZ, despite challenging operating conditions including the national driver shortage.
- Delivered Environmental Health service whilst meeting the increased challenges and regulation regarding Covid
- Ongoing delivery of customer engagement and service delivery whilst working remotely

We continued supporting the community response to Covid. We will build on the strong partnerships formed, with the establishment of 'One Maldon District'. Bringing together the public, private and community sectors to support health and wellbeing in the district.

We adopted our Climate Action Strategy – Our Home Our Future, - to bring about positive change for the District. The Strategy was welcomed and praised as excellent work by ECC's Climate Action Commission's Chairman.

The Maldon District Local Development Plan (LDP) is an essential important document. The LDP Review has started and the Issues and Options consultation is underway and I urge everyone to engage and respond.

Work continued to improve the efficiency of the Council via the process improvement programme funded through the 20/21 budget.

Other notable achievements include:

- Resilient IT systems meant we were not impacted by the national ‘Log4j’ cyber-attack in December 2021
- Shortlisted for the Workplace Transformation award for our work on Future Ways of Working ([Shortlist | Smarter Working Live 2021](#) )
- Jointly secured a Local Digital Fund (LDF) bid of £280k with Colchester and Tendring, to develop a Dynamics task allocation tool in line with our ICT strategy
- Continued commitment to encourage residents’ views, using them to shape services through running a budget survey as part of the budget setting process, plus our annual resident and business survey.
- The Council developed and approved a new Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy with a focus on how we can support and engage better with our communities.

In November, we launched the ‘Enough is Enough’ campaign highlighting the recent increase in unacceptable behaviour towards our staff and members. This has been supported by other local authorities. We look now to move on from these challenges but it remains we will challenge any form of unacceptable behaviour towards the Council.

I recently became Leader of the Council. I thank those that have gone before me.

I also thank all Councillors and Officers for their dedication, relentlessly defending in the fight against Covid. Working closely with partners and various other bodies all have applied great effort to support and protect our communities.

We now need to march positively and proactively forward in the recovery from Covid.

Promotion and support of our economy; environment; efficient, effective and value services are important.

We had to be innovative and adopt new ways of working during the pandemic and those foundations can be built upon in seeking further improvements in the delivery of accessible cost- effective services.

We need to do the right things. Continue to be a Council that is focussed on its residents. Services need to support people. It matters for them, we need to be



responsible. People need to have confidence in our Council, our ability to deliver.

Therefore, budgets need to be sustainable, it is not just about balancing budgets, it is important that use of reserves is not increasing year on year. We need to look ahead, organise things, consider, and take action .

With the challenges of the past year it is not totally unexpected that the budget for the year succumbed to some pressure. There was additional budget pressure that could not be offset, currently the forecast indicates £112k will be utilised from the general fund to balance the budget.

Council finances may appear healthy with the General Fund Reserve currently sitting at £5.6 million. However, the Medium-Term Financial Strategy shows increasing budgetary pressures in coming years forecasting the General Fund level will slip below the minimum reserve level of £2.6m by 2024/25, unless action is taken. This being against a potentially worsening picture with costs rising due to increased inflation at 5.5%. Regular review of the MTFS will maintain an accurate forecast.

The financial settlement from Government for 2022/23 is a one-year settlement. It includes Business Rates Baseline funding; Lower Tier Services Grant; Services Grant; Rural Services Delivery Grant plus New Homes Bonus with an increase to £961,172 from £929,981 in 2021 / 22. The Rural Services Delivery Grant allocation remains at £32,339 ,the same as 2021 /22 .The Services Grant allocation of £105,646, is to help alleviate the 1.25% increase in National Insurance. The provisional base Homelessness Prevention Grant is maintained at £142,320, with an additional £3,690 for Domestic Abuse New Burdens.

It is important to highlight that the settlement funding assessments calculation regarding the core spending power of local authorities includes Councils increasing Council tax by £5 per annum.

During the budget setting process for 2022/23 the Council's cross-party Finance Member Working Group has met on several occasions to provide input into the budget. I'm pleased that members have had the opportunity to work collaboratively and share their views at these and other meetings, particularly the Strategy and Resources Committee. Part of that process ensuring that any growth is kept to a minimum recognising the financial challenges and unknowns ahead of us.

However, some investment was considered right. This includes:

Some additional staffing to ensure services have the capacity to operate.

Investing in our commercial activity to bring forward income generation and wider benefits for the District

Ensuring capacity to deliver on Council policy such as the Climate Action Strategy.

Due to the financial challenges ahead, 2022/23 requirements are for consolidation, focus on delivery of existing policies and priorities, as per our Corporate plan 2021-23. The Council will be exploring the opportunities for the District that may emerge from the recently published Levelling Up White Paper.

Priorities will include:

- Deliver process improvement training for staff and build capacity for continual improvement work across the organisation
- Review major corporate contracts including waste and leisure.
- Explore opportunities for closer partnership working and shared service opportunities with other local authorities where they improve efficiency, enhance resilience and capacity of the individual councils.
- Deliver a Customer Access Strategy, linking with the ICT strategy and Process Improvement Framework and demonstrating how we will support our customers offline.
- Deliver an updated commercial strategy, seeking to increase Council income through an approach that brings together our strategy and commercial objectives.

Tourism is a key driver for our local economy and the council can help to create opportunities for further growth and prosperity, focussing again on our tourism offer now restrictions are lifting.

All Members need to be kept informed, engaged with, so enabling greater understanding and sound decision making. Officers have been charged to prepare briefings on, initially, Commercial Projects and the Levelling Up White Paper.

Constant challenge remains to ensure best value services and deal with the need for financial sustainability whilst acknowledging the pressures that households are also facing.

Bearing in mind our financial pressures and need for financial sustainability we are proposing that Maldon District Council's Band D Council Tax is increased by £5 for 2022/23; this equates to 42p per month for a band D Property. Whilst bringing in this increase, we note that:

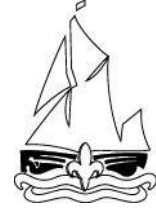
- Government has recognised the pressures currently facing both Councils and residents and has introduced a £150 refund for those in band A-D properties as well as allocating money for a discretionary fund.
- The Council tax rise of £5 equates to approx. 10p a week.
- The Council continues to be impacted by the cost of COVID
- Inflation is at 5.5%, Council tax increase is well below at 2.41%.
- Commercial activities being developed to generate income.

The Council is the guardian of the public purse and needs to spend wisely. To ensure our residents know how we perform, if services are efficient, effective, and best value, do we deliver on our priorities, officers are charged to prepare an easily readable understandable Annual Report for them.

I thank Chris Leslie, the Director of Resources and his team for all the hard work they have done regarding the budget.

CHAIRMAN I COMMEND THE BUDGET TO THE COUNCIL.

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**REPORT of  
DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY, PERFORMANCE AND GOVERNANCE**

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**to  
COUNCIL  
31 MARCH 2022**

**MAKING THE LANGFORD AND ULTING NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The Langford and Ulting Neighbourhood Plan (LUNP) (at **APPENDIX 1**) has successfully passed its referendum. Following the referendum, it automatically became part of the statutory Development Plan for the district. Maldon District Council now needs to formally 'make' the LUNP part of the Development Plan.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

That Council 'makes' the Langford and Ulting Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with section 38(A)(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

**3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES**

**3.1 Referendum**

- 3.1.1 On 18 January 2022, the District Council made the decision to accept the Examiner's recommendations and that the LUNP (as modified by the Examiner's Report) should proceed to referendum (Minute No. 454 refers).
- 3.1.2 The District Council published its decision statement on 19 January 2022 to confirm that the LUNP, as modified, met the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements.
- 3.1.3 The referendum was held on 3 March 2022. The Referendum asked the question "Do you want Maldon District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Langford and Ulting to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"
- 3.1.4 87.5% of those who voted were in favour of the Plan.

**Referendum Results**

YES	49
NO	7
Rejected ballots	0
Total votes cast	56

**3.2 Decision and reasons**

- 3.2.1 Under section 38A (4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended), the District Council is required to 'make' a Neighbourhood Plan if more than half of those voting have voted in favour of the Plan. 87.5% of the votes cast were in favour of this Plan.

- 3.2.2 Under section 38A(6), a Council is not subject to this duty if the making of the Plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation (as transposed into UK law) or any of the Convention Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998). Maldon District Council has assessed that the Plan, including its preparation, does not breach, and is not incompatible with these obligations. Therefore the LUNP can be 'made' part of the District's Development Plan.

### 3.3 Neighbourhood Development Plan status

- 3.3.1 Planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area must be considered against the Langford and Ulting Neighbourhood Development Plan, as well as existing planning policy such as the approved Maldon District Local Development Plan (2017) and the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance.

## 4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The LUNP was developed by the Parish Council through extensive engagement with the local community, culminating in a Referendum on the Plan on 3 March 2022. The majority of those who voted, voted for the Neighbourhood Plan. Following the referendum, the Plan automatically became part of the development plan for the district. The Council now needs to complete the statutory process by formally 'making' the Neighbourhood Plan part of the development plan for the district and publishing the Decision Statement (see draft at **APPENDIX 2**).

## 5. IMPACT ON STRATEGIC THEMES

- 5.1 The making of the Neighbourhood Plan will have positive impacts on the following corporate outcomes:
- (1) Promote civic pride and maintain the District's environmental quality;
  - (7) Supporting existing local businesses;
  - (9) Working with our communities and partners to improve the physical health and well-being of our residents;
  - (13) Building on the strengths of our communities and what they can do to support themselves and help each other to thrive;
  - (18) Meaningful engagement.

## 6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – Neighbourhood Planning gives communities the opportunity to directly plan the future of their area.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – Neighbourhood Planning has the potential to identify and manage local equalities issues and must be prepared taking into account relevant equalities legislation. The Neighbourhood Plan has been independently examined for its compliance with relevant legislative requirements including human rights. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was completed on the Plan in October 2021 and is available on the Council's website.

- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – Neighbourhood Plans can reduce risk in the development management process by providing support for the Council in determining planning applications and defending planning appeals.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – Maldon District Council is financially responsible for organising the Examination and Referendum for Neighbourhood Plans in their area. The Council can claim a grant from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for each Neighbourhood Plan, once the Decision Statement on sending the Plan to Referendum is published. These payments are made by Central Government to Local Planning Authorities to reflect the additional financial burdens associated with supporting Parish Councils or Neighbourhood Plan Forums to prepare Neighbourhood Plans.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – The Neighbourhood Plan adds to the development plan documents used in the determination of planning applications, and it further strengthens the planning policies for the parish. Neighbourhood Plans can reduce risk in the development management process by providing support for the Council in determining planning applications and defending planning appeals.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – Neighbourhood Plans have the potential to improve the local environment where plans are being produced. The making of the Neighbourhood Plan will help reduce the impact on the environment from inappropriate development.
- (vii) **Impact on Strengthening Communities** - Neighbourhood planning is intended to strengthen communities by giving them the opportunity to prepare statutory plans that shape the future development of the community.

**Background Papers:**

Information on the Langford and Ulting Neighbourhood Plan is available at:

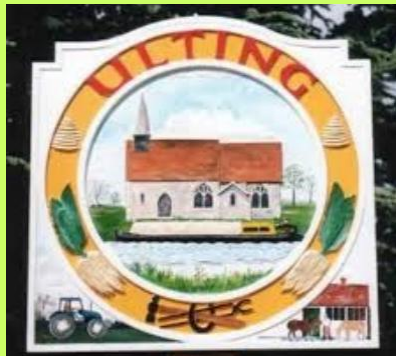
[https://www.maldon.gov.uk/info/7050/planning\\_policy/8112/community\\_led\\_planning\\_and\\_neighbourhood\\_plans/7](https://www.maldon.gov.uk/info/7050/planning_policy/8112/community_led_planning_and_neighbourhood_plans/7)

**Enquiries to:** Leonie Alpin, Specialist Local Plans.

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# Langford & Ulting Neighbourhood Plan 2014 - 2029





C. S.

## Foreword

Langford and Ulting are two very small villages historically closely linked to agriculture and in more recent times to the water company. The rural history is still reflected in the community today and the water company is still very much in evidence. It is a green and very pleasant place to live with the Chelmer and Blackwater Conservation Area at its heart and many interesting, beautiful and historic buildings scattered through the two communities.

In 2011 the Localism Act was introduced and a couple of years later the Parish Council decided that we should produce a Neighbourhood Plan to give us a voice in the future of our communities' development. Thus it was that I was asked to set up a Steering Group with Jenny Clemo, our Parish Clerk, and so our journey began.

Over the years we have engaged with our community with questionnaires, focus groups and engagement meetings at our annual art shows, village picnics and at any event where residents gathered in any number. We have, over the years, experienced real enthusiasm from a large number of people many of whom have given their help generously and we have been able to use their many talents freely. We have had great help from the Rural Community Council of Essex, Planning Aid, AECOM and Locality – the latter through their extremely good Planning Camps which were so informative and useful. Our most recent task has been to update all of the information contained within the Plan to bring it right up to date.

The very reason we started on this journey, being a small community, has turned out to be a benefit. The results of the surveys, questionnaires and other community engagement events showed that a large majority of residents wanted the same things for the future in our villages and this makes it possible for the final plan to really deliver the aspirations and aims of our communities; to embrace and manage change whilst allowing Langford and Ulting to continue to be a green and pleasant place to live.

**Vicky Anfilogoff**

Chairman

Langford & Ulting Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group



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## Section 1 - Introduction

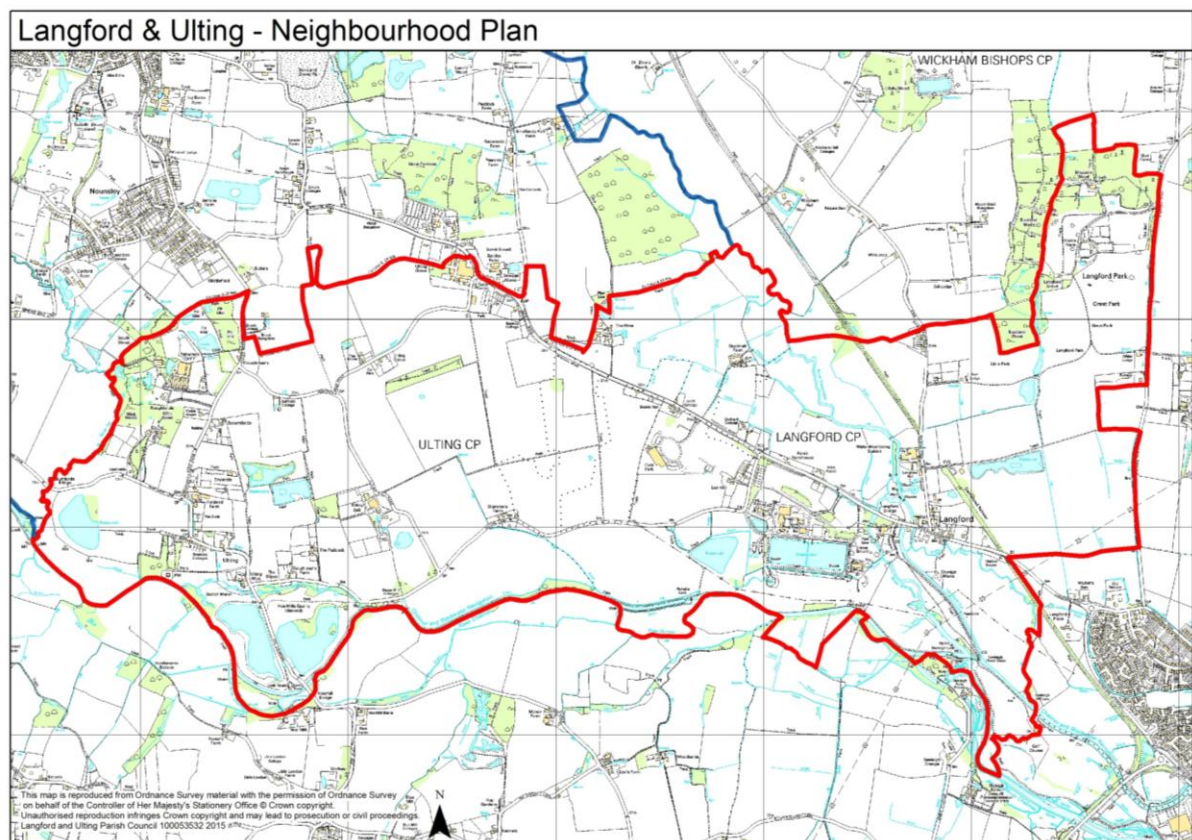
### What is Neighbourhood Planning?

- 1.1 “The Localism Act 2011 introduced statutory Neighbourhood Planning in England. It enables communities to draw up a Neighbourhood Plan for their area and is intended to give communities more of a say in the development of their local area within certain limits and parameters”.
- 1.2 Neighbourhood planning provides the local community with a powerful tool to guide the long-term future of Langford and Ulting and its surrounding countryside for the period 2014 to 2029.

### Which Area does The Neighbourhood Plan cover?

- 1.3 The Langford & Ulting Neighbourhood Plan covers all of Langford & Ulting parish and is contiguous with the parish boundary. An application for the Neighbourhood Plan area designation was approved by Maldon District Council in a letter dated 24<sup>th</sup> April 2013. See: <https://e-voice.org.uk/langford-ulting/assets/documents/designation-letter>
- 1.4 It should be noted that a small part of the Neighbourhood Plan area at its eastern end includes part of the North Heybridge Garden suburb urban extension. The North Heybridge Garden Suburb Strategic Masterplan Framework and policies of the Local Development Plan will apply.

The Plan area is shown in the map below:



Map 1 – Langford & Ulting Neighbourhood Plan Area

**What Time Period does The Neighbourhood Plan cover?**

1.5 The Plan covers the period from 2014 to 2029. This 15-year period has been selected to coincide with Maldon District Approved Local Development Plan 2014 – 2029. (LDP)

**Why do we want a Neighbourhood Plan?**

1.6 Neighbourhood planning provides the opportunity for communities to set out a positive vision for how they want the neighbourhood area to develop in ways that meet identified local need and make sense for local people. Langford & Ulting Parish Council therefore decided to set up a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group which would consult with the community and prepare a Neighbourhood Plan that would take into account local people's views on the appropriate amount and type of development in Langford and Ulting over the next 15 years.

**Your Involvement in the Neighbourhood Plan Process**

1.7 Community consultation events have included two residents' surveys (Autumn 2012 and May 2014), which were hand delivered to all properties in the parish. Two focus group events were held, one in Langford in June 2013 and another in Ulting in July 2013, where residents were able to comment on their vision for the future of Langford and Ulting.

1.8 Residents were also given the opportunity to make comments at the Village Art Shows in 2013 and 2014 and at the Ulting Village Picnic in June 2014.

1.9 A survey of local businesses was carried out in the summer of 2014.

1.10 From the analysis of the 2014 residents' survey, it was decided that more information was required and a Housing Needs Survey was hand delivered to all residents in November 2014.

1.11 Subsequent to the withdrawal of the Neighbourhood Plan in October 2016, a Call for Sites form was circulated to residents and landowners in June 2017. This was with the intention of possibly allocating housing through the Neighbourhood Plan. A Site Assessment Report prepared by AECOM was received in April 2018.

1.12 Before finalising the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan a further Housing Needs Survey was delivered to all residents by hand in February 2019.

1.13 Detailed information on the community consultation process can be found in the Consultation Statement.<sup>1</sup>

1.14 The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has taken the following steps to create the Neighbourhood Plan: (see next page).

<sup>1</sup> The Consultation Statement and related Evidence Base documents are available online (<https://e-voice.org.uk/langford-ulting/langford-ulting-neighbourhood/>)

## The Neighbourhood Plan Process

### 2012

April 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations published

Autumn 2012 Early engagement (first resident survey)

### 2013

Spring 2013 onwards Understanding the area – Data and evidence collection and interpretation

March 2013 Art Show – Opportunity for members of the public to make comments

June /July 2013 Focus Groups in Langford and Ulting

### 2014

April 2014 Art Show – Opportunity for members of the public to make comments

May 2014 Second survey – testing ideas for the future development of the village and the surrounding countryside

June 2014 Ulting Village Picnic – opportunity to talk to residents about the Plan

July 2014 Business Survey

November 2014 Housing Needs Survey

November 2014 Landscape Character Assessment

Autumn 2014 Plan Creation – Bringing together all the evidence and consultation results

### 2015

March/April 2015 Draft Neighbourhood Plan Pre-submission consultation - testing proposals for future development of the village and surrounding countryside (Draft Plan – 6 weeks)

July 2015 Plan amendment and finalisation

Winter 2015 Submission consultation (Final Plan – 6 weeks)

### 2016

March/April 2016 Examination – an Independent Examiner tested the plan

October 2016 The Parish Council agreed to withdraw the Neighbourhood Plan

### 2017

June 2017 Call for Sites

### 2018

November 2018 Plan amendments agreed by Parish Council

### 2019

February 2019 Housing Needs Survey

August/September 2019 SEA/HRA consultation

October/November 2019 Draft Neighbourhood Plan Pre-submission consultation - testing proposals for future development of the village and surrounding countryside

**2020**

February/August 2020	Plan amendment and finalisation
Winter 2020	Submission consultation (Final Plan – 6 weeks)

**2021**

February/March 2021	Examination – an Independent Examiner will test the plan
May 2021	Referendum
July 2021	Adoption – If approved at Referendum then Plan given full weight by Maldon District Council to determine planning applications

**How the Neighbourhood Plan fits into the Planning System** (see Diagram 1 below)

1.15 Although the Government's intention is for local people to decide what goes on in their parish, all Neighbourhood Plans must:

- have appropriate regard to national planning policy and guidance;
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- be in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan for the local area;
- be compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements; and
- the making of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site<sup>2</sup> or a European offshore marine site<sup>3</sup> either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

1.16 The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the LDP. In order to future-proof the Neighbourhood Plan, the Steering Group has ensured that the Neighbourhood Plan is appropriately in line with the up-to-date evidence, strategic needs identified for the area and the Local Development Plan.

1.17 Essex County Council is the Waste Planning Authority for the Plan area and is responsible for preparing planning policies and assessing applications for waste management development. The Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (WLP) was adopted in July 2017 forming part of the statutory Development Plan and should be read alongside the Maldon District Local Development Plan. The WLP cover the period from 2017 to 2032. It sets out where and how waste management developments can occur and contains the policies against which waste management planning applications are assessed.

1.18 Essex County Council is the Minerals Planning Authority for the Plan area and is responsible for preparing planning policies and assessing applications for mineral development. The Essex Minerals Local Plan 2014 (MLP) forms part of the statutory Development Plan and should be read alongside the Maldon District Local Development Plan. Active and unworked sand and gravel deposits are subject to a Minerals Safeguarding policy (MLP Policy S8), which seeks to prevent deposits being sterilised by non-mineral development. A large proportion of the Neighbourhood Plan area is covered by sand and gravel deposits, and any development of 5ha or more may require a minerals resource assessment to be undertaken, as required by Policy S8. The MLP also designates Mineral Consultation Areas at a distance of 250m around active quarries, mineral infrastructure and mineral deposits permitted for extraction. ECC must be

<sup>2</sup> As defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012

<sup>3</sup> As defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007



consulted on all non-mineral related development proposed within these Consultation Areas.



**Diagram 1: Planning Policy Hierarchy in Relation to Langford & Ulting Neighbourhood Plan**

### **What is in The Neighbourhood Plan?**

1.19 The Plan is for the parish as a whole and looks at a wide range of issues, including:

- achieving high quality development which fits well with the location;
- protecting the rurality of the parish as well as the surrounding countryside including the landscape, views and habitats;
- meeting local housing needs;
- promoting local businesses;
- public rights of way; and
- broadband and mobile connectivity.

### **How this Plan is Organised**

1.20 The Plan is divided into five sections:

- **Section 1 - Introduction**
- **Section 2 - About Langford & Ulting Today:** a brief description of the parish today and the key issues that have influenced the Plan.
- **Section 3 - Our Vision for Langford & Ulting:** over the next 15 years.
- **Section 4 - Neighbourhood Plan Policies:** this sets out policies to support the overall vision and objectives.
- **Section 5 - Monitoring and Review:** how the Plan will be monitored and reviewed.

## Section 2: About Langford & Ulting Today

### A Short History

- 2.1 The parish of Langford was so named because of the long ford along the side of the River Pant, or Blackwater, 'lang' in Saxon meaning 'long'. It is a tiny rural village with many iconic listed buildings. Its Mill was recorded in the Domesday Book although not the 11<sup>th</sup> Century church, St. Giles, which is unique for having the only extant western apse in the county and, possibly, England.
- 2.2 Langford Hall was built during Tudor times and was used as the manor house for many years. It was acquired by the Wescomb family in 1680 and in 1782 Nicholas Wescomb built Langford Grove, now demolished, letting out the Hall to tenants. In the 1890s it housed the Cleveland Bay stud. It was he who built a cut through from the Mill to the River Chelmer to take his grains and flour to London via Maldon. However, with the building of the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation Canal in 1793, The Cut became redundant, was filled in and today serves as a 'hazard' on the golf course. Two of the Wescomb daughters married cousins of Lord Byron and the village came under the Byron family control for a while. They eventually took up their seat in Nottinghamshire and left the village.
- 2.3 In 1848 the Langford and Ulting Halt was opened on the Witham-Maldon railway branch line and was closed by Dr. Beeching in 1964 as part of his programme of extensive cuts.
- 2.4 The village became prominent in 1927 when it was chosen as the site for a new Steam Water Pumping Station giving many jobs to villagers; the emphasis changing from agricultural to industrial for a while. In 1963 the steam operation closed and an electric pumping system was installed, with the old steam pumping station becoming a scheduled ancient monument in 1986 and is now the Museum of Power.
- 2.5 A village school ran from 1875 to 1920 and was then used as the Village Hall until 1993 when it was sold into private ownership. The old Victorian cowshed in the centre of the village was purchased by the Parish Council and converted into a new Village Hall. This is a vibrant part of village life where many varied activities take place, including a pre-school nursery and the annual Art Show.
- 2.6 Ulting is also a very rural parish with many scattered listed buildings. Agriculture continues to be at its heart with many residents now running small businesses from home.
- 2.7 The parish church of All Saints was built beside the River Chelmer in c.1150 with major restoration work in the 1870s. The cult of 'Our Lady of Ulting' began when a chantry of the Virgin Mary was established there and it became a place of pilgrimage ranking with Walsingham and other famous shrines.
- 2.8 In 1832 the first sugar beet factory in England was built in Ulting by Robert and James Marriage. They believed that refining sugar from locally grown beet would reduce the need to import sugar and, thereby, the need for slave labour. They built a steam mill – at a cost of £2,000 – adjacent to the current site of Sugar Mill Cottages and employed thirty men, women and children. Their enterprise and hopes were cut short by the import of cheap cane sugar.

2.9 In 1898, Ernest Doe started his business by taking over the lease of the blacksmith's shop in Ulting, at what is now known as 'Doe's Corner' and from this modest start Doe's has become a large, successful and well recognised agricultural business.

2.10 This is a very brief history but a longer version can be found at <https://e-voice.org.uk/langford-ulting/history-of-langford-ulting/>

## Village Descriptions

2.11 **Langford** is a small parish lying approximately 3 kilometres in a northwesterly direction from the picturesque market town and port of Maldon in Essex. The village is set in relatively low-lying countryside straddling the river Blackwater with the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation forming the southern boundary.

2.12 The centre of the village is within the Langford Conservation Area which adjoins the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation Conservation Area. Maypole Wood, Eastlands Wood and Langford Cut Meadows are designated as Local Wildlife Sites<sup>4</sup>.



2.13 "The settlement comprises a scatter of houses around the T-junction formed by the B1018 which runs north to Wickham Bishops"<sup>5</sup> and the B1019 which joins Heybridge to Hatfield Peverel. There are 76 dwellings which vary from cottages to substantial houses in their own grounds.

2.14 There are 19 listed residential properties with 11 listed other buildings and features which include a garden temple, walled garden, bridge and weir, a pump and railings. The predominant building materials are timber framed and plastered or red brick with handmade red plain tile roofs and red brick chimneystacks<sup>6</sup>. The village has many houses built between the 16th and 19th centuries. The more recent 20<sup>th</sup> century additions are either rendered or red brick with tiled roofs with a few exceptions. There are 8 listed structures associated with the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation.

2.15 "The village has important open spaces within it, notably the grounds of the Museum of Power"<sup>7</sup> which houses Langford Water Pumping Station, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, the closed and open churchyards in the centre of the village and the wide vistas along the rivers Chelmer and Blackwater. There is a significant amount of open space between buildings and boundary treatment is sensitive to the rural setting including natural hedges, trees and low picket fences.

2.16 Visitor attractions include the Museum of Power, Maldon Golf Club, the Blackwater Rail Trail and the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation. The Grade II\* listed St Giles church is also of interest.

<sup>4</sup> Maldon District Local Wildlife Sites Review – Essex Ecology Services Ltd, December 2007

<sup>5</sup> Langford Conservation Area Appraisal 2006, p3

<sup>6</sup> EB024 Building Materials

<sup>7</sup> Langford Conservation Area Appraisal 2006, p13

2.17 Langford has the following facilities:

- community shop run by volunteers (open 2 hours daily)
- Parish Church
- village hall
- mobile library (Once every 3 weeks stops at Ulting Lane green, Langford)

2.18 **Ulting** is a small parish lying approximately 5 kilometres in a west northwesterly direction from the picturesque market town and port of Maldon in Essex. "It is predominately rural in character with a dispersed settlement pattern. The southern part of the parish comprises the flood plain of the River Chelmer and this area of low-lying land rises gently to the north.

2.19 The main settlement, little more than a hamlet, overlooks the river on this higher ground,"<sup>8</sup> and is included in the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation Conservation Area. Wick and Fairwinds Woods are designated as Local Wildlife Sites<sup>9</sup> and are protected by a Tree Preservation Order.



2.20 There are 58 dwellings which vary from cottages to substantial houses in their own grounds and two narrow boats.

2.21 There are 17 listed residential properties with 14 listed other buildings and features including Ulting School, garden wall and railings. The predominant building materials are timber framed and plastered or red brick with handmade red plain tile roofs and red brick chimneystacks<sup>10</sup>. The village has many houses built between the 16th and 19th centuries. The more recent 20<sup>th</sup> century additions are either rendered or red brick with tiled roofs with a few exceptions. There are 2 listed structures associated with the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation. All Saints Church which is situated in a peaceful setting by the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation is Grade II\* listed.

2.22 Ulting has the following facilities:

- Parish Church

## Housing

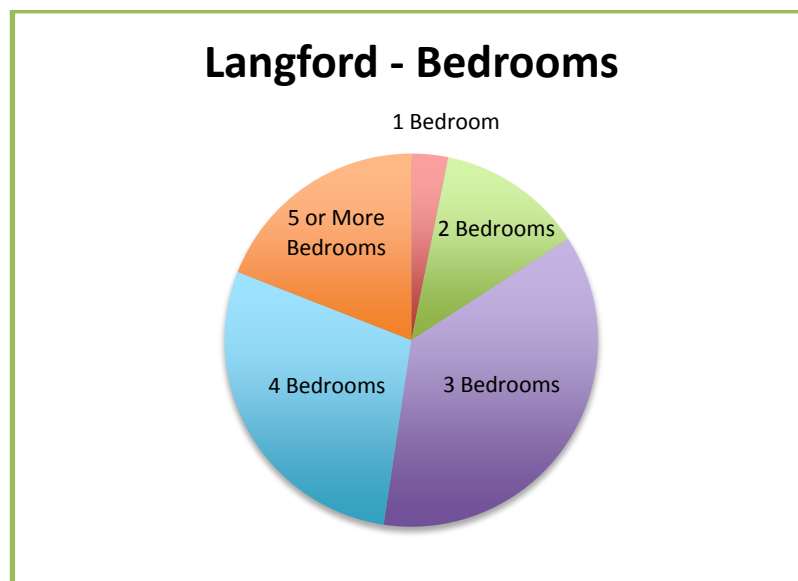
2.23 Overall there are 134 properties, including two narrow boats moored at Hoe Mill, Ulting, in the parish. Between 2001 and 2011 two agricultural buildings in Ulting were converted into dwellings. Under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 2015, a further five agricultural buildings in Ulting and one in Langford have been granted permission to be converted into dwellings. Maldon District Council granted planning permission for 11 large family homes on a piece of land adjacent to the Museum of Power in Langford. Building work commenced on these homes in December 2014, 9 are now occupied and work on the remaining two is almost complete. In March 2015, planning permission for 2 large family homes on a plot in Langford Conservation Area was granted and these have been completed.

<sup>8</sup> Maldon District Local Plan First Review, adopted August 1996. p 206

<sup>9</sup> Maldon District Local Wildlife Sites Review – Essex Ecology Services Ltd, December 2007

<sup>10</sup> EB024 Building Materials

2.24 In the 2011 Census Langford had 63 dwellings with a predominance of family housing (84% of homes have 3 bedrooms or more), 89% of homes are owned, with 6% available for social rent and 5% private rent.



2.25 In the 2011 Census Ulting had 56 dwellings and 2 narrow boats with a predominance of family housing (78% of homes have 3 bedrooms or more), 78% of homes are owned, with 3% available for social rent, 14% private rent and 5% rent free.



2.26 The residents' survey carried out in May 2014 revealed that residents would prefer development on individual plots rather than one large housing estate.

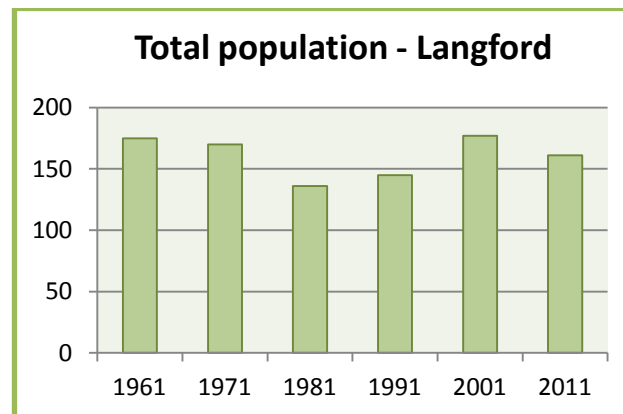
2.27 The Housing Needs Surveys undertaken in November 2014 and April 2019 revealed a local need for market and affordable housing but there is pressure from developers for Langford to accommodate significantly more housing than is necessary to meet local housing need.

### Population

2.28 From the 2011 Census, the total population of the parish of Langford & Ulting was 328.

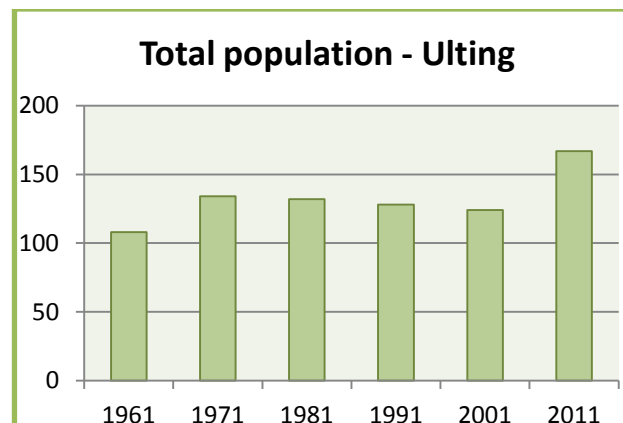
### Langford

2.29 "The population decreased by 3% between 1961 and 1971 and then decreased by a further 20% to 136 in 1981. In 1991 the population estimate was 145"<sup>11</sup> with four houses having been built in the previous 10 years. In 2001 the population was 177 and this had decreased by 9% to 161 in 2011. The population is also ageing with the share of residents above 60 years of age moving from 21% in 2001 to 30% in 2011. There are a significant lack of residents between the ages of 25 and 39 (6%).



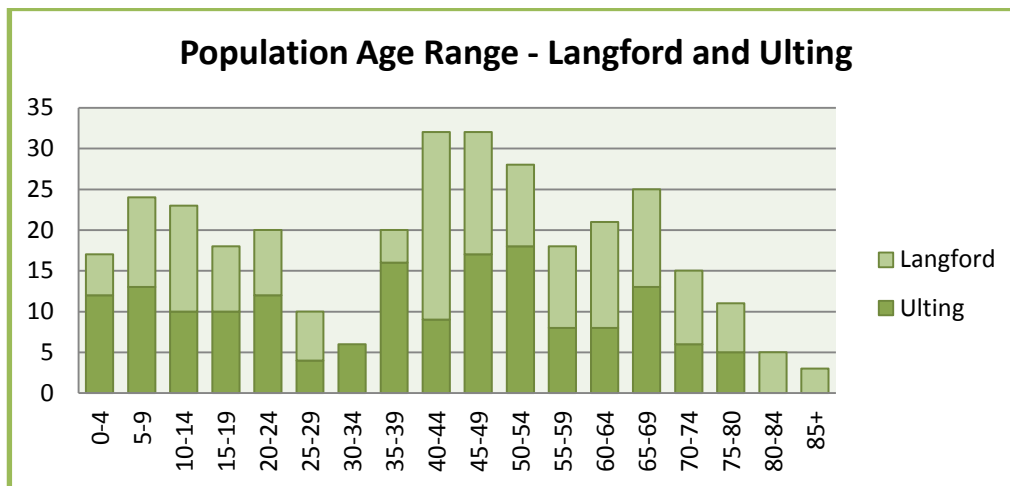
### Ulting

2.30 "The population increased from 108 in 1961 to 134 in 1971, but remained virtually static over the next ten years with a total of 132 in 1981"<sup>12</sup>. In 2001 the population was 124 but by 2011 the population had increased by 35% to 167. The proportion of residents above 60 years of age has remained fairly constant at approximately 19% between 2001 and 2011. There are a significant lack of residents between the ages of 25 and 34 (6%).



<sup>11</sup> Maldon District Local Plan First Review, adopted August 1996. p 130

<sup>12</sup> Maldon District Local Plan First Review, adopted August 1996. p 206



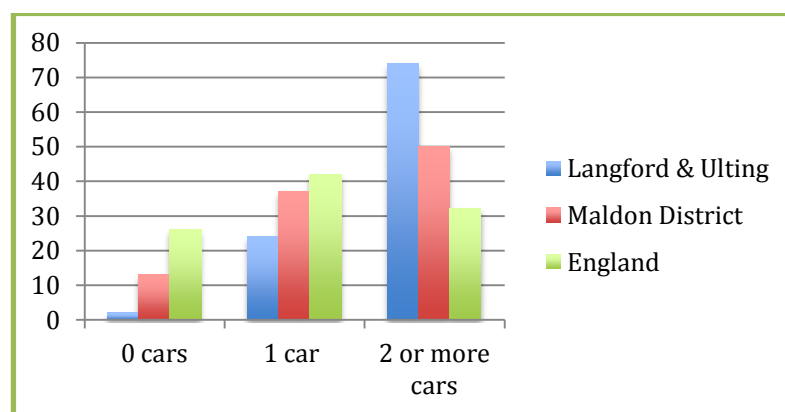
### Health

2.31 86% of residents are in very good or good health according to the 2011 Census.

### Transport

2.32 In 2011 there were 285 cars or vans available in Langford and Ulting. Two households (2%), did not own a car or van compared with England - 26% and Maldon District - 13%. 24% of households had one car compared with England - 42% and Maldon District - 37%. 74% of households in Langford and Ulting had 2 or more cars. This compares with an average of 32% for England and 50% for Maldon District.

2.33 Of the 163 residents who were in employment in 2011, 69% travelled to work by car. 11% travelled by train, but as it is approximately 4 miles from Langford to Hatfield Peverel station and 2.5 miles from Ulting, a car is almost certainly the usual way of getting to the station. 13.5% worked mainly from home and 2% caught a bus, coach or minibus.



### Car Ownership Comparison

2.34 There is a two to two and a half hourly bus service running six times on weekdays and Saturdays between Maldon and Chelmsford which has three stops along the B1019, Doe's Corner, Ulting Lane and Langford village.

### Economic Activity

2.35 Of the 245 people economically available in the parish, 68% are economically active. Of these, 67% are employed either full or part time and 30% are self-employed either full or part time. Of the 32% who are economically inactive, 57% are retired, 17% are students and 18% are looking after the home or family.



**Key Issues**

2.36 The Steering Group identified a number of key issues derived from the statistical content above and the results of the household questionnaire surveys, (2012 and 2014), the business survey (2014) and housing needs surveys (2014 and 2019), as follows:

- achieving high quality development which fits well with the location;
- protecting the rurality of the parish as well as the surrounding countryside including the landscape, views and habitats;
- meeting local housing needs
- promoting local businesses;
- public rights of way; and
- broadband and mobile connectivity.

2.37 These reflect the issues the community sought to see resolved in the neighbourhood planning process and have shaped and influenced the Langford & Ulting Neighbourhood Plan



## Section 3: Our Vision for Langford & Ulting

### 3.1 Our **vision** is:

**Langford & Ulting will continue to be a friendly and neighbourly place to live and work in. Future development will meet the needs of this rural community whilst retaining the special qualities of our countryside and waterway setting and reflecting the historically dispersed nature of and diversity of styles in the evolution of our parish.**

### 3.2 Following on from consultation and engagement with the community, the majority view is that we support the following **objectives**:

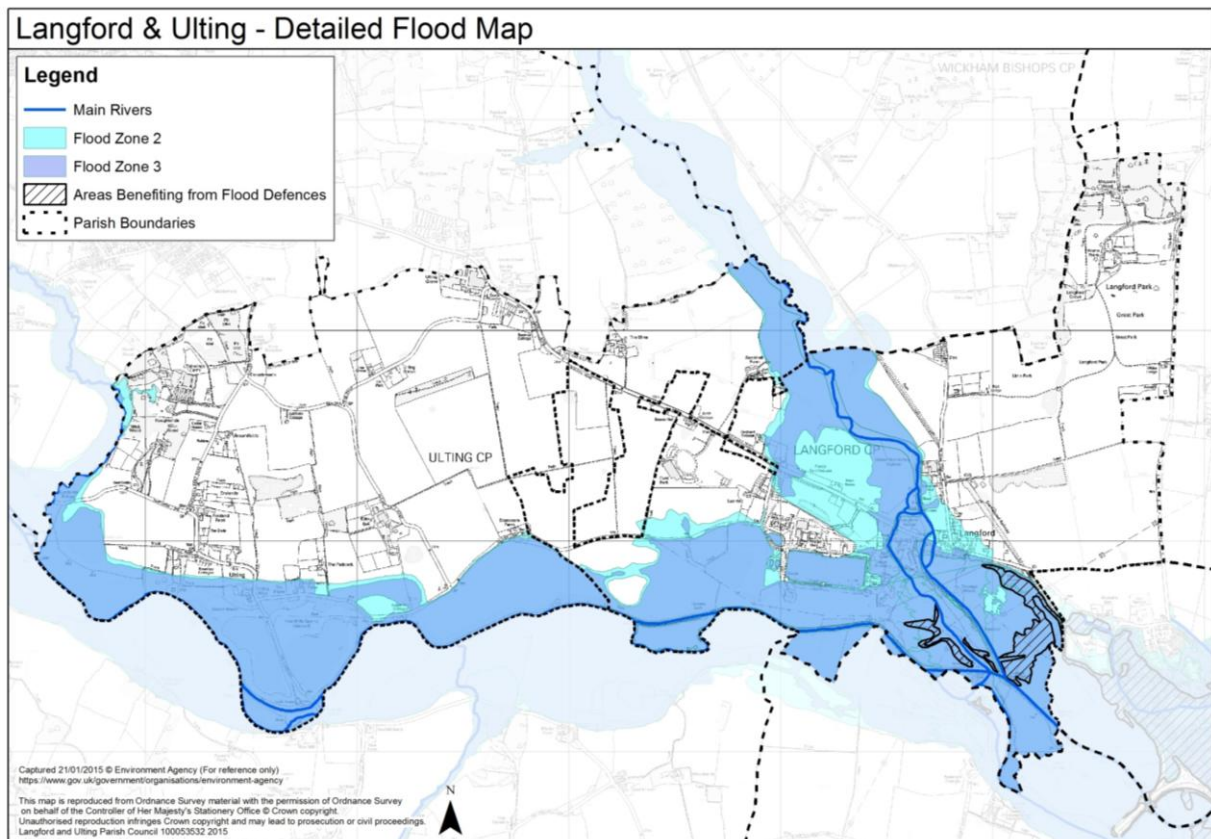
- to enhance the friendliness and neighbourliness of our community by increasing connectivity and providing opportunities for community engagement;
- to protect the parish's special landscape and countryside attributes;
- to protect and enhance the historic features that make our place unique;
- to achieve a high standard of design in new development;
- to adhere to the principles of sustainable development;
- to meet local housing needs;
- to support and encourage businesses through rural and agricultural diversification, the provision of suitable premises and tourism;
- to enhance the quality of life for residents;
- to protect and support local facilities and services; and
- to encourage healthy lifestyles.

## Section 4: The Neighbourhood Plan Policies

- 4.1 This part of the Plan contains the policies that will help to realise the community's vision and objectives for Langford & Ulting and address key issues that have been raised during consultation. Policies in this section relate to the use and development of land.
- 4.2 Once the Plan has been made by Maldon District Council these policies will be taken into account by the District Council in determining planning applications.
- 4.3 Each policy is preceded by a short introductory section which outlines the background and intent of the policy and refers to relevant evidence. The evidence documents are also listed in Appendix A and are available to read on the Parish Council's website or Maldon District Council's website.

### A High Quality Natural and Built Environment

- 4.4 The distinctive nature of the parish is defined by, and intrinsically linked to, the countryside and environment within which it is located. Many residents clearly value the rural feel of the area. The Residents' Surveys gave strong support to managing wildlife habitats in the parish.
- 4.5 It must also be acknowledged that the Environment Agency Flood Plain Extents map in the Mid Essex Strategic Flood Risk Assessment shows large areas surrounding the River Blackwater to be designated as Flood Zone 3b "Functional Floodplain". This is defined as "land where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood". According to Table 3 of the NPPF, 'more vulnerable' land uses (such as residential development) should not be permitted in this zone. This means that the Plan area is constrained in terms of flood risk. Whilst Map 2 shows the extent of the flood plain at the time of writing, reference should be made to the most up to date information on the Environment Agency's website.



Map 2 – Detailed Flood Map

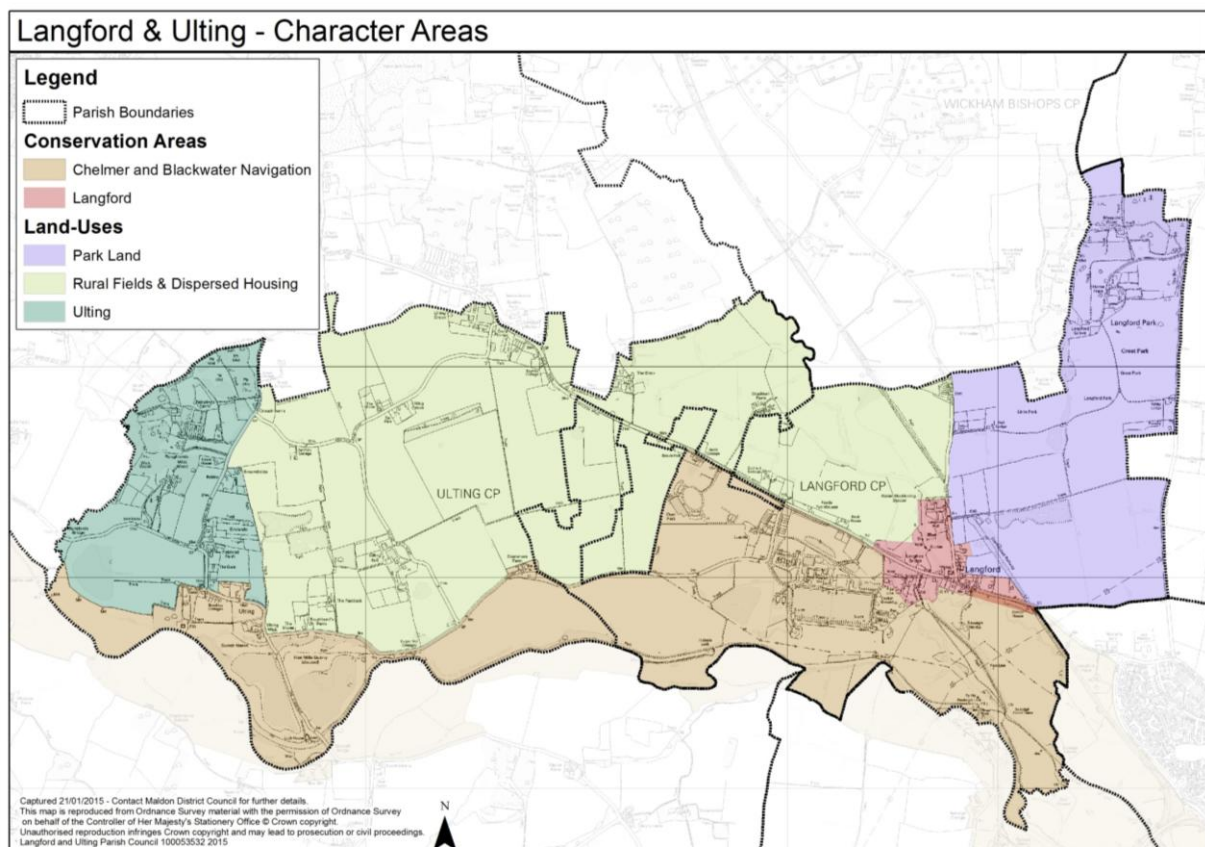
## Landscape Features

4.6 The Government's National Planning Practice Guidance underpins the NPPF and states: 'One of the core principles in the NPPF is that plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. This includes designated landscapes but also the wider countryside.' The guidance emphasises that landscape should be taken into account in plan-making and decision-taking on planning applications.

4.7 A Landscape Character Assessment has been carried out to help identify the particular features that make up the character of Langford & Ulting. The work on the assessment was undertaken by volunteers in the community and specifically developed as part of the Neighbourhood Plan evidence base in 2014. The assessment draws on the existing published documents available including the Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessments, the Chelmer and Blackwater Conservation Area – Landscape Character Assessment, Langford Conservation Area Review and Appraisal and the Maldon District Historic Environment Characterisation Project.

4.8 The Landscape Character Assessment identified five distinct Character Areas, which are shown on the map below. A brief description of the attributes of each Character Area is given below, but further information is available from the Character Assessment document. The Character Areas are:

- Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation
- Langford Conservation Area
- Ulting
- Fields
- Parkland



**Map 3 – Character Areas**

- 4.9 The key-defining characteristic of the **Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation** Character Area is its beautiful open countryside.
- 4.10 Positive aspects are the excellent walks along the canal and numerous footpaths and the magnificent views to be had. Hawthorn and blackthorn hedges provide a froth of blossom in the Spring and there are blackberries and sloes to pick in the Autumn. Sugar Mill Cottages stand as a testimony to the first sugar beet mill in England that was built in Ulting in 1832 by Robert and James Marriage in their attempt to promote the abolition of slavery by producing sugar by 'free labour'. Sadly the plantation owners and cheap imported sugar scuppered this venture. There is a marker on the canal bank to show where the mill once stood.
- 4.11 Negative aspects include the pylon routes crossing the Lower Chelmer/Blackwater valleys which are detrimental to the open character of the area and speeding vehicles on the narrow lanes.
- 4.12 The key defining characteristics of the **Langford Conservation Area** are its landmark features. The church is unique in Essex in having the only extant original western apse and is a lively working building with regular services and other social events. It now houses a small non-profit making community shop in the vestry.
- 4.13 The old General Stores and Homestead, which was once the village shop, is very poorly maintained and detracts greatly from the beauty of the Conservation Area.
- 4.14 The Southend Waterworks Company bought the Mill, designed by the architect Frederick Chancellor in 1879. In 1924 the machinery was removed and an extraction pump was installed. It is unfortunate that this very large building could not be used to more benefit for the village. A proposal to turn the building into flats sadly came to nothing as the ceiling heights do not comply with building regulations and access is still required to the pump.
- 4.15 The Mill House, once the residence of the Miller, has had many incarnations since the mill fell silent. In the 1980s it became an old people's home, then in the 1990s it housed asylum seekers, and is now back in use as a hotel.
- 4.16 The Museum of Power was the original steam pumping engine house for the waterworks, which came to the village in 1927. This materially altered the make-up of the village and transformed the rural village into an important water-pumping centre for the Southend area until 1963 when an electrical pumping station by the reservoirs replaced it. It is now open to the public, and although it is a positive feature that the building has been retained as a social and educational centre, it is unfortunate that, for security reasons in 2006, the museum had to install a high chain link fence and gates to the front boundary and high security railings to the east boundary, which although necessary, have a negative impact on the Conservation Area.
- 4.17 The lane from the Museum up to Beeleigh is well used by golfers, hikers and dog walkers, but is not well maintained. Unfortunately large ditches have been dug to stop travellers from setting up camp here. Although they are necessary, these and the problem of fly tipping along the lane, ruin the appearance of the open space which could be more appealing to walkers and visitors to the Museum. Many of the Museum's signs at the entrance to the Museum could also be replaced and improved.
- 4.18 The **Ulting Character Area** is totally rural and wonderfully 'out of the way'. It is characterised by the openness of the fields and the extensive vistas across them to hills and woodlands beyond. There is also a peacefulness here, which is quite wonderful, especially alongside All Saints Church, which sits beside the canal.

- 4.19 Negative aspects are the dilapidated buildings at the Nounsley end of Crouchmans Farm Road, which are an eyesore that detracts from the beauty of the surrounding countryside. In this group of buildings there are two dilapidated houses, which could easily be brought back into use. Although these are actually in the Braintree District Area and therefore outside the parish, they are very visible and detrimental to the rural scene.
- 4.20 There is also a problem with 'wild swimming' and sometimes unsocial behaviour on the canal by the Church in the summer months which is a great nuisance to residents.
- 4.21 **The Fields** is a beautiful open area with lots of space and the feeling of countryside. The fields are large with few hedges giving the feel of an expansive rural open space with beautiful old buildings. Although the road through this area is of good quality it is nevertheless liable to flood at the Langford end.
- 4.22 The **Parkland** character area is differentiated by its open spaces and long views with some occasional ancient pollarded oaks. The area has an open agricultural feel with arable fields either side of the road.
- 4.23 At times of traffic congestion in Heybridge, Maypole Road is used as a short cut by speeding traffic, which impacts on the otherwise peace and tranquility of this area.
- 4.24 In summary, the parish is characterised by a quiet and peaceful rural, agricultural quality.
- 4.25 As a result, the Neighbourhood Plan includes a suite of policies designed to enhance the natural and built environment of the parish. Policy 1 seeks to ensure that development proposals take full account of the character and appearance of the Character Area in which they are located.

#### **Policy 1 Landscape Features**

Development proposals should be designed to respect the natural landscape features that are important to the character and appearance of the area and as described in the Landscape Character Assessment.

Development proposals which would result in an unacceptable harm to the relevant natural features will not be supported unless appropriate mitigation to compensate for the loss or harm is incorporated in the planning application concerned or where there are overriding public benefits arising from the development.

- 4.26 The National Planning Policy Framework refers to the impacts that new development could have on the natural environment and wider area including:
- mitigating and reducing to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development and avoiding noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life;
  - protecting tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed for their amenity value;
  - limiting the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity; intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

#### **Biodiversity**

- 4.27 There are two key wildlife corridors which form important components of a district-wide ecological network. The Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation is a west-to-east river and canal

corridor also featuring a towpath and linear banks which are important green infrastructure routes for leisure users and wildlife. The Blackwater Rail Trail is the route of the dismantled railway which links Maldon to Witham and is a significant corridor for wildlife movement. While not a statutory right of way, the Rail Trail has potential to become an important walking and cycling route in the future.

- 4.28 Other locally designated ecological assets include Local Wildlife Sites as identified by Essex Wildlife Trust, designated Ancient Woodlands and water bodies. Any locally important designated assets identified in the future should also be considered by this policy.
- 4.29 The National Planning Policy Framework states that impacts on biodiversity should be minimised. Given that climate change will have a major impact on biodiversity, the impacts of development should be minimised through the use of sustainable drainage systems (unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate), whilst paying high regard to ecological networks.

### **Policy 2 Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity**

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location all development should protect and where appropriate enhance biodiversity by:

- a) protecting designated sites, protected species and ancient and species-rich hedgerows, grasslands and woodlands; and
- b) preserving ecological networks, and the migration and transit of flora and fauna; and
- c) protecting ancient trees or veteran trees of arboricultural value, or ancient woodlands; and
- d) promoting the mitigation, preservation, restoration and recreation of wildlife habitats, and the protection and recovery of priority species; and
- e) providing a net gain in flora and fauna; and
- f) adopting best practice in sustainable drainage.

Development proposals which would unacceptably harm biodiversity or wildlife will not be supported unless appropriate mitigation or compensatory measures are incorporated into the wider proposal.

### **Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation**

- 4.30 The Maldon District Local Development Plan, together with neighbouring Local Planning Authorities' Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans are likely to adversely affect the integrity of European designated nature conservation sites ('European Sites') due to increased recreational pressure from a growing population. Maldon District Council has worked with the other Greater Essex Local Planning Authorities and Natural England on the Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS).
- 4.31 The Essex coast RAMS focuses on the mitigation that is necessary to protect the wildlife of the Essex coast from the increased visitor pressure associated with new residential development in-combination with other plans and projects, and how this mitigation will be funded.
- 4.32 Financial contributions will be sought for all residential development, which falls within the zones of influence for the Essex coastal European Habitat sites, towards a package of measures to avoid and mitigate likely significant adverse effects on these sites. Details of the zones of



influence and the necessary measures are included in the Essex Coast RAMS Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)<sup>13</sup>.

4.33 The Essex Coast RAMS was adopted by Maldon District Council on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

4.34 Proposals within the zones of influence for recreational disturbance to European Sites will need to carry out a project level Habitat Regulations Assessment and implement bespoke mitigation measures to ensure that in-combination recreational disturbance effects are avoided and/or mitigated.

### **Policy 3 Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation**

All residential development within the zones of influence of European Sites are required to make a financial contribution towards mitigation measures, as detailed in the Essex Coast RAMS, to avoid adverse in-combination recreational disturbance effects on European Sites.

All residential development within the zones of influence will need to deliver all measures identified (including strategic measures) through project level Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRAs), or otherwise, to mitigate any recreational disturbance impacts in compliance with the Habitat Regulations and Habitats Directive.

### **Footpaths and Bridleways**

4.35 Footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways crisscross the parish and are an established means of providing access to the countryside. This provides a recreational resource, but also opportunities for social interaction and the promotion of healthy lifestyles and social wellbeing. They therefore make an important contribution to the quality of life and are valued by the community.

### **Policy 4 Footpaths and Bridleways**

Existing footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways provide good opportunities for well-connected access to local destinations by sustainable modes of transport across the parish and provide a high level of recreation and amenity value.

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location new developments should integrate with the current green infrastructure network, seeking to improve the connectivity between wildlife areas and green spaces through measures such as improving and extending the existing footpath and cycle path network, allowing greater access to housing, schools, work places and retail facilities, green spaces, public open spaces and the countryside.

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.maldon.gov.uk/info/20048/planning\\_policy/8114/other\\_local\\_plan\\_documents/9](https://www.maldon.gov.uk/info/20048/planning_policy/8114/other_local_plan_documents/9)

## Design and Character of New Development

- 4.36 The National Planning Policy Framework, states that ‘good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities’. It continues by stating that ‘plans should set out a clear design vision and expectations’ and that, ‘design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area’s defining characteristics’. Neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development. This is one way that sustainable development can be achieved and the quality of life can be improved and is reflected in the NPPF, to always seek to secure high quality design, sympathetic to local character and history, and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.
- 4.37 There was very strong unanimous support in the community that any new buildings should be sympathetic to their surroundings and that alterations to existing buildings should be carried out sensitively taking account of the location and character of the host property and those around it.
- 4.38 Comments emphasised the diversity of styles in the village and indicated this is what makes it special. A clear lack of support for pastiche and “sameness” bore this out. Turning this into a policy means that high quality design development which responds to the character of the existing parish and which reflects and respects the diversity of styles will be supported.
- 4.39 The parish has a dispersed settlement pattern which has evolved over time. With a rich plethora of listed buildings and Conservation Areas, the character is gained from the variety and diversity of building styles and materials. More recent developments have been architecturally undistinguished and have added dwellings of similar design together in one place rather than reflecting the range and diversity of existing architecture.
- 4.40 The Character Assessment work that the community has carried out together with the Langford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan describes and explains the distinctive character of the parish.
- 4.41 There is an opportunity to enhance the built environment and improve the quality of design, but also to embrace diversity and add to the richness of the parish’s character.
- 4.42 This policy intends to provide clear guidance to those preparing proposals for development that the community wishes to celebrate diversity and variety in any new buildings and an overall high quality. This approach is consistent with the design-led approach as captured in national planning policy. The Plan sets out the Council’s approach towards a clear design vision and expectations for development sites. This will ensure that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable.



### Policy 5 Design and Character

Proposals should plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design reinforcing the locally distinctive and aesthetic qualities of the buildings and landscape in the Parish. This means that:

- a) new buildings, alterations and extensions to existing buildings, should be individually designed but take their cue from the scale and character, form and materials of existing buildings, and where relevant the host building; and
- b) traditional boundary treatments should be respected and reinforced and high walls and fences should be avoided; and
- c) plot sizes and widths and gardens should reflect the existing grain and pattern of development in the locality; and
- d) good quality materials should be used; and
- e) new development should respect the historic environment of our Parish.

## Historic Environment

4.43 The residents' surveys gave strong support to the importance of living within a historic and beautiful environment.

4.44 There is evidence for settlement in the Langford and Ulting area from the Mesolithic period onwards. There are significant areas of cropmarks, including a round-barrow cemetery beside the river and Roman settlement, including a possible temple, on the gravel terraces. In total, 199 historic sites are recorded on the Historic Environment Record, of which 138 are undesignated. See also Langford Historic Settlement Assessment Report, 2006<sup>14</sup>.

4.45 The parish includes a number of designated heritage assets including three Grade II\* listed buildings – Ulting Hall (which is located outside the boundaries of the Conservation Areas), the Church of St. Giles, Langford (which is located within the boundary of the Langford Conservation Area) and the Church of All Saints, Ulting (which is located within the boundary of the Chelmer and Blackwater Conservation Area). There are a total of 55 Grade II listed buildings, most of which are located within the Conservation Areas, but there is also a significant minority located outside the Conservation Areas. There is one Scheduled Monument – Langford Pumping Station.

4.46 In the Neighbourhood Plan area, there are also a number of 'non-designated heritage assets'. These are historic buildings and structures which, although they may not meet the criteria for national listing, possess local value because of their architectural and historic interest. Local Planning Authorities are encouraged to identify 'non-designated heritage assets' against consistent criteria and recognise them in 'local lists'. The preparation of a local list for Langford and Ulting is programmed for 2020.

<sup>14</sup> <https://e-voice.org.uk/langford-ulting/assets/documents/langford-historic-settlement-a>

### Policy 6 Historic Environment

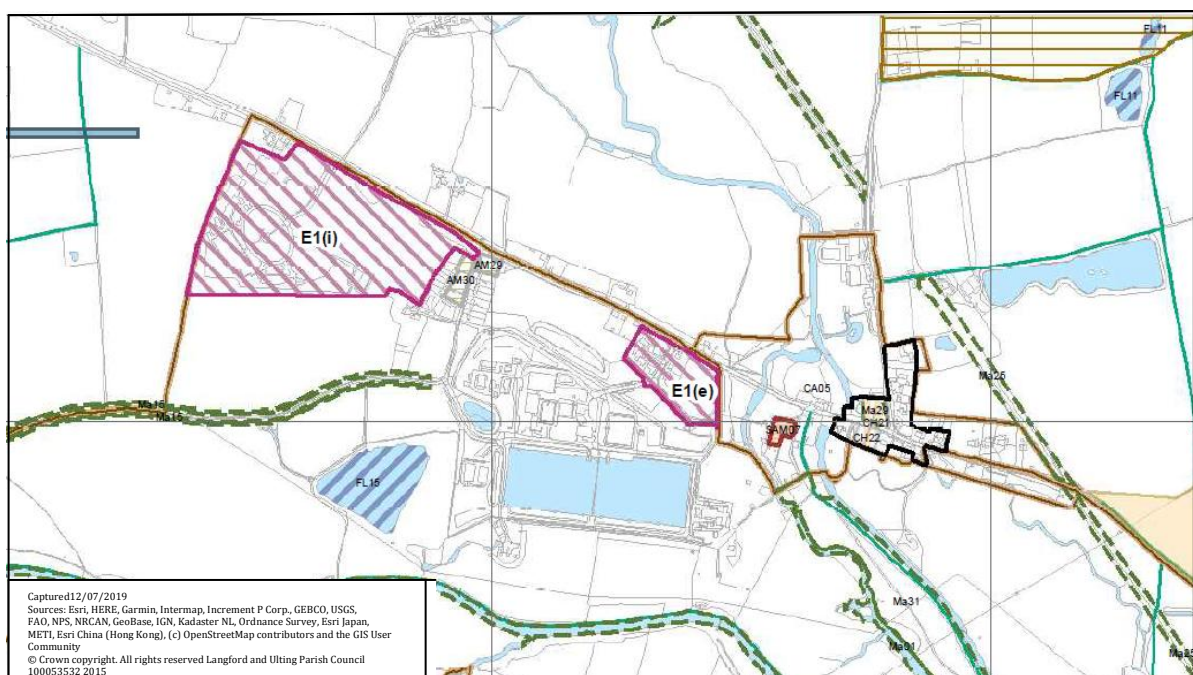
Any designated heritage assets in the Parish and their settings, will be conserved or enhanced for their historic significance and their importance with particular regard to their local distinctiveness, character and sense of place.

Proposals for development that affect non-designated heritage assets will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

## The Economy and Business

4.47 Maldon District is predominately rural in nature and has over 70 miles of coastline. Its natural landscape is dominated by two estuaries and the plain along the Rivers Blackwater and Crouch. Historically much of the economy was based on agriculture and land related activities, but in recent decades there has been a shift towards a more mixed economy with an increased service sector. The District Council recognises that the villages and rural areas make an important contribution to the overall economical strength of the District.

4.48 The District Council recognises that one of the District's key strengths is its entrepreneurial base with relatively high levels of self-employment. However, with changes to the global market, more constrained public sector investment and the need to improve competitiveness, building upon the strengths and diversity of the economy to provide a range of employment opportunities is key. Within the parish, there are three notable employers; Ernest Doe & Sons Ltd, CML Microsystems Plc and Essex & Suffolk Water. 11.75 hectares of the CML Microsystems site at Oval Park is allocated in the LDP for B1 and B2 development and also has an extant planning consent for future employment generating development to the benefit of the local economy. The allocated area at Oval Park is identified on the excerpt from the LDP Policies Map (North West) as E1(i) below:



Map 4 – Local Development Plan Policies Map

4.49 The Business Survey showed that the majority of businesses in the area operate from home. There was a wide mixture of businesses ranging from farming and agriculture to construction, knowledge based, retail and service industries and repair and manufacturing. Whilst the majority of businesses trade locally, some of the businesses within the parish operate nationally and internationally. Many of the businesses employ a significant number of people and over 60% of these people are local.

4.50 Of the things that made business life tougher, many were non-planning issues that are not appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan and will need to be addressed through other mechanisms. Nevertheless there was a clear indication that slow internet speed was a key issue and that local businesses would support an increase in population to help generate more jobs and to ensure that they can operate on equal terms with those in towns.

4.51 National planning policy highlights the need for planning policies to support economic growth in rural areas to help create jobs and prosperity and to take a positive approach to sustainable new development.

### **Small Business Use**

4.52 Given the rural nature of the parish there are a number of small businesses and home workers. This is borne out by the Business Survey. They are important to the parish and therefore this policy supports and encourages the establishment or growth of small businesses in suitable locations and those working from home. Small businesses are defined as those employing up to ten people.

4.53 This policy helps to provide a supply of suitable space for businesses to locate and grow within the parish bringing welcome employment opportunities to the parish and District as a whole.

### **Policy 7 Supporting and Encouraging Small Business**

The provision of employment generating space for small businesses will be supported. This can take the form of:

- new buildings or extensions to existing premises provided that they are of a high quality design, suitably accessed and would not adversely harm the amenities of adjoining or nearby residential occupiers or
- the change of use of an existing building which is sympathetically converted, in an accessible location and which would not adversely harm the amenities of adjoining or nearby residential occupiers.

### **Working from Home**

4.54 There has been a significant increase over the last ten years or so in home working. This ranges from more people working from home, perhaps for a day a week or by basing their business from home. Often working from home is regarded as a non-planning issue because planning permission is not required in most situations. However, the encouragement of working from home has much potential in contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. It can reduce out-commuting and help to boost local economies by enhanced spending power through lower levels of commuting costs and more use being made of local facilities and services.

4.55 Given the rural nature of the parish and the contribution that home workers can make, the policy positively promotes home working opportunities. It does this through encouraging designers of new homes or buildings to incorporate options and possibilities for creating a home office or workspace area. This can be achieved for example, by discouraging open plan

layouts or designing garages or roof spaces that are capable of conversion into suitable work areas.

### **Policy 8 Working from Home**

New dwellings should be designed to enable a home office to be accommodated through the conversion of a garage or roof space or a workspace area or by arranging the internal layout to provide appropriate or dedicated workspace. Development proposals to facilitate home working should retain car parking spaces or provide for replacement or additional parking spaces.

### **Farm and Other Rural Buildings**

4.56 There are a number of farm and other rural buildings within the parish that could provide opportunities for new or existing businesses to remain in, or locate to, the parish. This includes tourism uses. Subject to satisfactory design and location and the impact on the road network and any nearby residential occupiers, the reuse of such buildings can help to strengthen the local economy.

### **Policy 9 Farm and Other Rural Buildings**

The reuse of farm and other rural buildings will be supported for business or tourism purposes provided that the proposed use:

- a) would not have an unacceptable impact on the surrounding landscape; and
- b) can be satisfactorily accommodated within the local road network; and
- c) would be compatible with agricultural and other land based activities; and
- d) would not unacceptably harm the amenities of adjoining or nearby residential occupiers; and
- e) the building in question can be converted to a high standard using materials sympathetic to the local palette.

## **Community Facilities and Services**

4.57 Langford has a parish church, community shop run by volunteers, a village hall and a mobile library once every three weeks. Ulting has a parish church. Langford residents valued the village hall. The importance of village clubs and groups was also highlighted and both churches and the village hall are important in providing meeting places and for wider social interaction. The Museum of Power is also an important visitor attraction and has a café facility.

4.58 The National Planning Policy Framework promotes the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages highlighting local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

4.59 The policies aim to retain existing facilities and services and support the appropriate development of new ones.

### **Policy 10 Community Facilities and Services**

Proposals to retain and enhance existing community facilities and services or to provide new ones will be supported provided that:

- a) the service or facility does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of nearby residential uses; and
- b) the proposal would not lead to unacceptable traffic congestion or adversely affect the free-flow of traffic; and
- c) access arrangements are satisfactory and an appropriate level of parking can be provided.

### **Policy 11 Protecting Community Facilities**

The change of use of premises or redevelopment of sites that provide valued community facilities or services will only be supported where:

- a) the premises or site cannot be readily used for, or converted to any other community facility; or
- b) the facility or service which will be lost will be adequately supplied or met by an existing or new facility in the locality or settlement which shall be equivalent to or better than the facility that is being lost in terms of both quantity and quality.

4.60 Development proposals will be required to ensure the provision of all new community assets and open spaces, are designed for multi-purpose use, and link to the green infrastructure network.

## **Housing**

### **Langford**

4.61 The residents' survey confirmed that most respondents felt the amount of existing housing in Langford was 'about right'. However, support for a 'few more houses' was also given. Together these two categories of response accounted for 97%. This was also confirmed in responses to another question in the survey which asked about the number of new homes which should be built over the next 15-year period. Responses to this question which offered a wide range of options from '0' to '100+', indicated that 'up to 10' was most popular but some respondents favoured from '11 – 50', which equates to 5 new houses a year. A large majority of respondents preferred development on individual plots and were against one large estate with only one respondent being in favour.

4.62 The survey also asked about other aspects of housing. In relation to tenure across privately owned, privately rented, sheltered and housing association, again respondents felt that the existing spread of tenure was 'about right', but privately owned housing came out top in relation to the 'few more needed' category. This response was again consistent with another question in the survey on the variety of housing in Langford.

4.63 In relation to type and size of property, support was given for smaller houses and bungalows with greatest support for low cost and affordable housing.

### **Ulting**

4.64 The residents' survey confirmed that most respondents felt the amount of existing housing in Ulting was 'about right'. However, there was support for a 'few more houses'. Together these two categories of response accounted for 88%. This was also confirmed in responses to another question in the survey which asked about the number of new homes that should be built over the next 15-year period. Responses to this question which offered a wide range of options from '0' to '100+', indicated that 'up to 10' was most popular but some respondents favoured from '11 – 50'. A large majority of respondents preferred development on individual plots and were against one large estate.

4.65 The surveys also asked about other aspects of housing. In relation to tenure across privately owned, privately rented, sheltered and housing association, again respondents felt that the existing spread of tenure was 'about right', but privately owned housing came out top in relation to the 'few more needed' category. This response was again consistent with another question in the survey on the variety of housing in Ulting.

4.66 In relation to type and size of property, support was given for smaller houses and bungalows with greatest support for low cost and affordable housing.

### **Providing to Meet Local Housing Need**

4.67 Langford and Ulting form part of Maldon District's rural area for the purposes of housing land supply. Langford is identified as a smaller village in the LDP's settlement hierarchy and for the first time will have an identified settlement boundary within which housing development will be acceptable. The nature of Langford is such however, that opportunities for development will be small scale principally on individual plots and small areas of land. The village and parish contribution to housing land supply will therefore be limited to small scale development and is likely to amount to an average of 1 or 2 dwellings per year over the plan period.

#### **Policy 12 New Housing**

Small-scale infill residential development within the settlement boundary of Langford that does not unacceptably impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area or living conditions of future occupiers and neighbouring occupiers will be supported where it complies with other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and the Maldon District Local Development Plan. In particular proposals should respect the characteristics and local distinctiveness of the Langford Conservation Area. Proposals will be expected to have a direct highway frontage.

4.68 It is recognised that the District as a whole is very rural in nature and many live in dispersed rural communities. Whilst Langford and Ulting are small dispersed settlements they do have a number of services and facilities and many businesses. The community does not want to see the villages, or the parish as a whole, stagnate. In contrast, there is a desire to see the strong community identity of the parish and these two settlements reinforced and strengthened. For this reason the parish is keen to see that the needs of those already living and working in the parish are met.

4.69 However, the characteristics of the local area are also paramount. There are residents who have spent many years in the parish in family housing who now wish to move to more suitable accommodation but do not wish to leave family, friends and familiar surroundings by having to



move further afield. There are also younger families who wish to locate to the parish but cannot do so and young people born and brought up in the parish with no wish to leave but who cannot find suitable accommodation to rent or purchase.

- 4.70 The parish as part of its evidence base carried out a Housing Needs Survey in November 2014. Undertaken independently by the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE), the document is available as part of the supporting information for this Plan. This comprehensive survey found that there was an identified need for some affordable housing.
- 4.71 A second Housing Needs Survey was undertaken by the RCCE in April 2019. This survey also showed that there was an identified need for some affordable housing.
- 4.72 The Parish Council received technical support from AECOM and a call for potential sites was carried out in June 2017, with the intention of possibly allocating housing through the Neighbourhood Plan. Unfortunately, reduced Sites 9 and 10 as recommended in the Call for Sites Assessment report were no longer available.
- 4.73 The Parish Council feel that such affordable housing as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework can be supported through the rural exceptions route and that it is not necessary to either repeat higher level national and local policies on this or to identify and allocate sites in this Plan as this would in any case, go against the grain of an exception site.

## **Broadband and Mobile Connectivity**

- 4.74 High-speed broadband and better mobile connectivity can make a significant difference to those living and working in villages and rural areas. Both the householder and business surveys confirmed that broadband speed in some parts of the parish is slow. This affects the ability of residents and businesses to maximise their future potential as broadband is a key method of communication and contributes to quality of life. In addition, parts of the Parish have none or a very poor mobile signal.
- 4.75 In line with Broadband Delivery UK, part of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Government is keen to see improvements to broadband and mobile infrastructure. The National Planning Policy Framework supports high quality communications infrastructure. It specifically states that the development of high-speed broadband technology and other communication networks plays a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services.
- 4.76 The District Council also recognises the benefits of high speed broadband in encouraging home based working within the rural areas.
- 4.77 High-speed broadband will help to address these issues and bring additional opportunities for our communities.
- 4.78 The policy tries to ensure that developers have early regard to the connectivity of their proposals and that provision is factored into decisions about cost and investment. Opportunities to provide ducting during infrastructure works should be taken where possible.

**Policy 13 – New Broadband and Mobile Infrastructure**

Insofar as planning permission is required proposals for the installation of new broadband and mobile phone infrastructure will be supported provided that:

- Infrastructure is fully integrated into the design of future development proposals; and
- Where new masts or structures are required, they should be sympathetic to their surroundings.

All new residential and commercial developments should be designed to be served by a fast and reliable broadband connection to the premises. Connection should include the installation of appropriate cabling within the homes or business units as well as a fully enabled connection of the developed areas to the full main telecommunications network to provide the fastest available broadband access.



## Section 5: Monitoring and Review

- 5.1 Once the Neighbourhood Plan has been ‘made’ by Maldon District Council, the Council will determine all applications and other proposals in the light of policies set out in the plan.
- 5.2 There is no statutory requirement for the impact of this Plan and its policies to be monitored. Langford & Ulting Parish Council will periodically monitor the impact of policies on change in the Parish by considering the policies’ effectiveness in the planning application decision-making process. The Parish Council will do this by referring to this Plan when reviewing planning applications. The Parish Clerk will keep a record of the application, any applicable policies, and comment from the Parish Council together with the eventual outcome of the application.
- 5.3 Applicants will be expected to demonstrate in their applications how they conform to the Neighbourhood Plan policies.
- 5.4 A full or partial review of this Plan may be triggered by changes to legislation, changes to national or District-wide planning policies or significant planning issues being raised by the local community which cannot be dealt with effectively by a combination of national, district and/or existing Neighbourhood Plan policies. The District Council has now embarked on a review of the Local Development Plan. It is anticipated that the Plan will be adopted in late 2023. This will be an important event for the local planning policy context. The Parish Council will assess the need for a review of the neighbourhood plan within six months of the adoption of the emerging Local Development Plan Review.
- 5.5 Throughout the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan period, the Parish Council will seek to maintain and develop its working relationship with Maldon District Council and other organisations as well as engaging with its residents and the community.

## Section 6: Proposals Not Forming Part of the Plan

6.1 This section covers non-planning matters that are aspirations that we want to keep in mind for the future.

- 30mph speed limit on B1019/1018 through the whole of Langford including Maldon Road, Hatfield Road and Witham Road. With the additional 11 houses at the old waterworks site and two more large houses by the railway bridge this becomes more feasible.
- 30mph speed limit on Maypole Road. This may well be achieved with the advent of the North Heybridge Garden Suburb development.
- Reduced speed limit on B1019 between the Langford and Ulting village gateways.

## Appendix A: Evidence Base Documents

1. Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base Documents can be found on the Parish Council website:  
<https://e-voice.org.uk/langford-ulting/assets/documents/>

- EB001** Terms of Reference
- EB002** Designation Letter
- EB003** Website
- EB004** Newsletter Articles
- EB005** Village Plan 2010
- EB006** Questionnaire 2012
- EB007** First Residents' Survey
- EB008** Art Show 2013
- EB009** Langford Focus Group
- EB010** Ulting Focus Group
- EB011** SHLAA Owner's Letter
- EB012** Landowner Letter
- EB013** Landowner Map
- EB014** Art Show 2014
- EB015** Langford Questionnaire 2014
- EB016** Ulting Questionnaire 2014
- EB017** Second Residents' Survey
- EB018** Business Questionnaire
- EB019** Business Survey 2014
- EB020** Housing Needs Survey 2014
- EB021** Statutory Consultee Email
- EB022** Reg 14 Comment Form
- EB024** Building Materials
- EB025** Landscape Character Assessment
- EB026** Site Assessment Report
- EB027** Housing Needs Survey 2019
- EB028** Screening Opinion on need for SEA and HRA Assessment

2. The documents referred to below can be accessed by clicking on the link unless otherwise stated:

### Approved Maldon District Local Development Plan

- [https://www.maldon.gov.uk/info/20048/planning\\_policy/9712/approved\\_local\\_development\\_plan\\_21\\_july\\_2017](https://www.maldon.gov.uk/info/20048/planning_policy/9712/approved_local_development_plan_21_july_2017)

### Landscape Character Maldon District

- Landscape Character Assessment 2006:  
<https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/2%20Design%20and%20Climate%20Change/EB009a%20Landscape%20Character%20Assessment.pdf>
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2010:  
<https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/2%20Design%20and%20Climate%20Change/EB021%20Landscape%20and%20Visual%20Impact%20Assessment.pdf>
- Historic Designed Landscapes of Essex, Part 4, The District of Maldon, Essex Gardens Trust, 2010 (pp 51-58): <https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre->

[submission/1%20Spatial%20Vision%20and%20Development/EB024%20Historic%20Design%20Landscapes%20of%20Essex.pdf](#) (Langford Grove)

#### **Langford Historic Settlement Assessment Report, T O'Connor, ECC & MDC, 2006**

- <https://e-voice.org.uk/langford-ulting/assets/documents/langford-historic-settlement-a>

#### **Maldon District Historic Environment Characterisation Project:**

- Historic Designed Landscapes <https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/2%20Design%20and%20Climate%20Change/EB018%20Maldon%20District%20Historic%20Environment%20Characterisation%20Project.pdf>

#### **Conservation Areas**

- Langford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan: [https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/2%20Design%20and%20Climate%20Change/EB022e%20Conservation%20Area%20Review%20and%20Appraisal\\_Langford.pdf](https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/2%20Design%20and%20Climate%20Change/EB022e%20Conservation%20Area%20Review%20and%20Appraisal_Langford.pdf)
- Chelmer and Blackwater Conservation Area Character Assessment (1999): [https://www.maldon.gov.uk/downloads/file/10254/chelmer and blackwater navigation design](https://www.maldon.gov.uk/downloads/file/10254/chelmer_and_blackwater_navigation_design)

#### **Employment Land Assessment**

- Maldon District Employment Land Review: <https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/3%20Economic%20Prosperity/EB035a%20Maldon%20District%20Employment%20Land%20Review%20Report.pdf>

#### **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment**

- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment June 2012: <https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/4%20Housing/EB056a%20Strategic%20Housing%20Land%20Availability%20Assessment%20Report.pdf>
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Site Schedules: <https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/4%20Housing/EB056b%20Strategic%20Housing%20Land%20Availability%20Assessment%20Site%20Schedules%202012.pdf>
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Site Maps: <https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/4%20Housing/EB056c%20Strategic%20Housing%20Land%20Availability%20Assessment%20Site%20Maps%202012.pdf>
- Maldon District Council Historic Rate of Windfall Delivery: <https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/1%20Spatial%20Vision%20and%20Development/EB001a%20Maldon%20District%20Council%20Historic%20Rate%20of%20Windfall%20Delivery.pdf>

#### **Strategic Housing Market Assessment**

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update 2012: <https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/4%20Housing/EB010c%20Strategic%20Housing%20Market%20Assessment%20Update%202012.pdf>

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update Explanatory Note 2013  
<https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/4%20Housing/EB010d%20Strategic%20Housing%20Market%20Assessment%20Update%20Explanatory%20Note%202013.pdf>
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update 2014:  
<https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/4%20Housing/EB010e%20Strategic%20Housing%20Market%20Assessment%20Update%202014.pdf>
- Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement 2013/14:  
<https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/7%20Implementation%20and%20Monitoring/EB096b%20Five-Year%20Housing%20Land%20Supply%20Statement%20May%202014.pdf>
- LDP Evidence, Maldon District Council, Final Advice Note:  
<https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/1%20Spatial%20Vision%20and%20Development/EB051%20Maldon%20District%20LDP%20Evidence%20PAS%20Final%20Advice%20Note.pdf>

### **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment**

- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Appendix D Maldon Supplementary Report May 2008:  
<https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/2%20Design%20and%20Climate%20Change/EB031%20Mid%20Essex%20Strategic%20Flood%20Risk%20Assessment%20Maldon%20Report.pdf>

### **Affordable Housing**

- Affordable Housing Guide December 2005:  
<https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/4%20Housing/EB057%20Maldon%20District%20Affordable%20Housing%20Guide.pdf>

### **Older Person's Housing**

- Older Persons' Housing Strategy: <https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/4%20Housing/EB071%20Maldon%20District%20Older%20Persons'%20Housing%20Strategy.pdf>

### **Green Infrastructure**

- Maldon District Green Infrastructure Survey September 2011:  
<https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/5%20Natural%20Environment%20and%20Green%20Infrastructure/EB041a%20Maldon%20District%20Green%20Infrastructure%20Study%20Report.pdf>
- Maldon District Local Wildlife Sites Review December 2007:  
<https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/5%20Natural%20Environment%20and%20Green%20Infrastructure/EB047%20Maldon%20District%20Local%20Wildlife%20Sites%20Review.pdf>

### **Maldon District Infrastructure Delivery Plan**

- Maldon District Infrastructure Delivery Plan Part 1 – Baseline:  
<https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/7%20Implementation%20and%20Monitoring/EB059a%20Maldon%20District%20Infrastructure%20Delivery%20Plan%20Baseline%20Report.pdf>

- Maldon District Infrastructure Delivery Plan Update – December 2013:  
<https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/7%20Implementation%20and%20Monitoring/EB059c%20Maldon%20District%20Infrastructure%20Delivery%20Plan%20December%20Update.pdf>

#### Miscellaneous

- Maldon District Rural Facilities Survey February 2011:  
<https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/8%20General%20Other/EB038%20Maldon%20District%20Rural%20Facilities%20Survey.pdf>
- Maldon District Rural Facilities Survey January 2016:  
<https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/8%20General%20Other/EB038b%20Maldon%20District%20Rural%20Facilities%20Survey.pdf>
- Ward Profile – Wickham Bishops and Woodham:  
[https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/8%20General%20Other/EB046q%20Ward%20Profile\\_Wickham%20Bishops%20and%20Woodham.pdf](https://www.maldon.gov.uk/publications/LDP/pre-submission/8%20General%20Other/EB046q%20Ward%20Profile_Wickham%20Bishops%20and%20Woodham.pdf)
- Maldon District Vehicle Parking Standards SPD 2018:  
[https://www.maldon.gov.uk/info/20048/planning\\_policy/8114/other\\_local\\_plan\\_documents/5](https://www.maldon.gov.uk/info/20048/planning_policy/8114/other_local_plan_documents/5)

# Langford and Ulting Neighbourhood Plan

## Draft Decision Statement

### xx April 2022



#### Summary

Following an Independent Examination and Referendum, Maldon District Council is publicising its decision to 'make' the Langford and Ulting Neighbourhood Plan ("the Plan") part of the Maldon District Development Plan, in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The policies in the Plan can now be given full weight when assessing planning applications that affect land covered by the Plan.

1. This Decision Statement and the Plan can be viewed on the Maldon District Council website:  
[https://www.maldon.gov.uk/info/7050/planning\\_policy/8112/community\\_led\\_planning\\_and\\_neighbourhood\\_plans/7](https://www.maldon.gov.uk/info/7050/planning_policy/8112/community_led_planning_and_neighbourhood_plans/7)

#### Background

##### Neighbourhood Area

2. The Langford and Ulting Neighbourhood Area was approved by Maldon District Council on 24 April 2013. The Neighbourhood Area is the same area as the parish area for Langford and Ulting.

##### Submission

3. Langford and Ulting Parish Council submitted the Neighbourhood Plan proposal and supporting documentation to Maldon District Council for Examination in November 2020 Maldon District Council held a 6 week consultation (the Regulation 16 consultation) on the document from 15 January to 12 March 2021.

##### Independent examination

4. The District Council, with the agreement of Langford and Ulting Parish Council, appointed an Independent Examiner, Mr Andrew Ashcroft, to review whether the Plan met the Basic Conditions required by legislation and should proceed to referendum.
5. The Examiner's Report was received on 9 September 2021. The Report concluded that, subject to making the modifications proposed by the Examiner, the Plan met the Basic Conditions set out in legislation and should proceed to a Neighbourhood Planning referendum. The District Council agreed with this view, subject to some minor modifications to correct errors.
6. The District Council also agreed with the Examiner that the Neighbourhood Area (the parish of Langford and Ulting) would be an appropriate area within which to hold the referendum.

##### Referendum

7. On 18 January 2022 the District Council made the decision to accept the Examiner's recommendations and that the Langford and Ulting Neighbourhood Plan (as modified by the Examiner's Report) should proceed to referendum.
8. The District Council published a decision statement on 19 January 2022 to confirm that the Langford and Ulting Neighbourhood Plan, as modified, met the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements.

9. The referendum was held on 3 March 2022. The Referendum asked the question “Do you want Maldon District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Langford and Ulting to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”
10. 87.5% of those who voted were in favour of the Plan.

Referendum results	
Yes	49
No	7
Rejected Ballots	0
Total votes cast	56

#### **Decision and reasons**

11. Under section 38A (4)(a) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended), the District Council is required to make a neighbourhood plan if more than half of those voting have voted in favour of the Plan. 87.5% of the votes cast were in favour of this Plan.
12. Under section 38A(6), a council is not subject to this duty if the making of the Plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the Convention Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998). Maldon District Council has assessed that the Plan, including its preparation, does not breach, and is not incompatible with these obligations.
13. On 31 March 2022 Maldon District Council made the decision, in accordance with section 38A(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended), to ‘make’ the Langford and Ulting Neighbourhood Plan
14. Any person aggrieved by the decision to make the Langford and Ulting Neighbourhood Plan may apply to the High Court for permission to apply for judicial review of the decision to make the Plan. Any such application must be made promptly and no later than 6 weeks after the date on which the Plan was made.

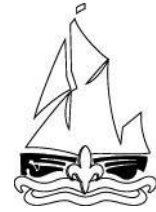
#### **Neighbourhood Development Plan status**

15. Planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area must be considered against the Langford and Ulting Neighbourhood Plan, as well as existing planning policy such as the approved Maldon District Local Development Plan (2017) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### **Availability of documents**

16. This Decision Statement and the Plan can be viewed on-line at:  
[https://www.maldon.gov.uk/info/7050/planning\\_policy/8112/community\\_led\\_planning\\_and\\_neighbourhood\\_plans/7](https://www.maldon.gov.uk/info/7050/planning_policy/8112/community_led_planning_and_neighbourhood_plans/7)
17. This information has also been brought to the attention of people who live, work or carry out business in the neighbourhood area.





**REPORT of  
DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY, PERFORMANCE AND GOVERNANCE**

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to  
**COUNCIL**  
**31 MARCH 2022**

**GREAT TOTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - DECISION ON EXAMINER'S REPORT**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Members of and seek their approval for the recommended modifications made in the Examiner's Report (at **APPENDIX 1**) for the Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan; and to seek Member's approval for the Neighbourhood Plan to proceed to Referendum.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (i) that the Examiner's modifications be agreed and that subject to these modifications the Neighbourhood Plan is determined to meet the Basic Conditions and other legislative requirements;
- (ii) that the draft Decision Statement attached at **APPENDIX 2** be approved to be published on the Council's website; and
- (iii) that the Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan be agreed as modified (at **APPENDIX 3**) enabling it to proceed to a local Referendum based on the boundary of Great Totham Neighbourhood Area as recommended by the Examiner.

**3. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN INTRODUCTION**

- 3.1 Neighbourhood planning is part of the Government's initiative to empower local communities to take forward planning proposals at a local level<sup>1</sup>. Neighbourhood Plans, once made, form part of the Development Plan. Following an update to Neighbourhood Planning guidance in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, a Neighbourhood Plan will now carry significant weight in decision making when it is approved to proceed to Referendum.
- 3.2 Neighbourhood planning is led by a town or parish council or neighbourhood forum, in this case the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan has been undertaken by Great Totham Parish Council.
- 3.3 The production of a Neighbourhood Plan must follow a regulatory process summarised below:

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<sup>1</sup> Section 116 of the Localism Act

<b>Key Stage</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Date</b>
1. Neighbourhood Area designation	Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan Area designation requested by Great Totham Parish Council and approved by Maldon District Council. This sets the area the Neighbourhood Plan will apply to.	7 November 2016
2. Pre-Submission Consultation	Regulation 14 consultation organised by the Parish Council (minimum six weeks).	3 Dec 2020- 31 Jan 2021
3. Submission	Great Totham Parish Council (LUPC) submitted the Neighbourhood Plan to Maldon District Council (MDC)	20 May 2021
4. Publication	Regulation 16 consultation organised by MDC (6 weeks)	24 September – 5 November 2021
5. Examination	Independent Examiner reviews the Plan against the statutory Basic Conditions. The Examiner either recommends that a Neighbourhood plan does not proceed to Referendum, or can proceed Referendum, with or without modifications, and recommends the extent of the area the Referendum applies to.	4 Jan-15 March 2022
6. Plan Proposal Decision	Maldon District Council considers the Examiner's report, including the recommended modifications, and if satisfied with the Plan proposal, agrees for it to proceed to Referendum.	31 March 2022
7. Referendum	Organised and funded by Maldon District Council. Where 50% or more of those voting are in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan, it comes into force, and must be 'made' by the Council and it forms part of the statutory Development Plan.	Date To Be Confirmed 2022

#### **4. EXAMINATION**

- 4.1 Following the Regulation 16 consultation, an Independent Examiner was appointed by Maldon District Council, with consent of the Parish Council, to carry out the examination of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Examiner, Andrew Ashcroft BA (Hons) MA, DMS, MRTPI, examined the Plan by written representations, and undertook an unaccompanied site visit of the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- 4.2 The role of the Examiner is to assess whether the Neighbourhood Plan meets certain legal requirements:
- the policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood plan area; and
  - the Plan must specify the period to which it has effect, must not include provision about development that is excluded development, and must not relate to more than one neighbourhood area<sup>2</sup>; and

<sup>2</sup> Requirements under Section 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

- the Plan has been prepared for an area that has been designated<sup>3</sup> and has been developed and submitted for examination by a qualifying body, in this case by Great Totham Parish Council.
- 4.3 The Examiner must consider whether the submitted Plan meets the Basic Conditions<sup>4</sup>. To comply with the basic conditions, the Plan must:
- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan;
  - The making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
  - The making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area;
  - The making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, European Union obligations and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR);
  - consider the additional condition set out under Regulation 32 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations: the making of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.
- 4.4 The Basic Conditions that refer to EU obligations have not been updated. The European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 converts much of EU law into domestic law. The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 make changes to the statutory instruments that transpose the Habitats and Wild Bird Directives into UK law, so that they continue to work following the UK's exit from the EU. The intention is to ensure habitat and species protection and standards as set out under these Directives are implemented in the same way or an equivalent way when the UK exits the EU. There is no change to national policy. Current references to "European site", "European Marine Site", "Special Area of Conservation" and "Special Protection Area" are retained in legislation. The ECHR is an international treaty the UK signed in 1950. EU Exit will have no direct impact on the UK's obligations under the ECHR.
- 4.5 The Examiner has now issued his report and recommends a number of modifications which are necessary to ensure that the Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions. A copy of the Examiner's report is attached at **APPENDIX 1**.
- 4.6 The Examiner's conclusion is that, subject to the modifications recommended in the report, the Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions and other statutory requirements outlined in the report. The Examiner recommends that, subject to the modifications proposed in the report, the Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan can proceed to Referendum.

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<sup>3</sup> Designated under Section 61G of the Localism Act

<sup>4</sup> Basic conditions are set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

## **5. THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY'S ROLE**

- 5.1 The Local Planning Authority (LPA) is responsible for determining whether the plan meets the basic conditions, with or without modifications, and for whether the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to Referendum. It must also decide on whether the Referendum area should be extended beyond the Neighbourhood Area.
- 5.2 Once the Council has received the Examiner's report it must decide what action to take. Regulation 18 of the Neighbourhood Plan (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) states that the LPA must decide:
- (a) to decline to consider a plan proposal;
  - (b) to refuse a plan proposal;
  - (c) what action to take in response to the recommendation of an examiner made in a report;
  - (d) what modifications, if any, they are to make to the draft plan;
  - (e) whether to extend the area to which the Referendum (or Referendums are) to take place; or
  - (f) that they are not satisfied with the plan proposal.
- 5.3 There are no grounds to decline to consider the Neighbourhood Plan under part (a) as this relates to repeat proposals; or to refuse to consider the Plan under part (b) as the legislative requirements have been met.
- 5.4 In relation to part (c), the Examiner has made a series of recommendations; the local authority needs to consider what action to take in relation to these. This is discussed in section 6 of this report. If the authority proposes to make a decision which differs from that recommended by the Examiner then a six week period must be given for people to make representations. If the local authority considers it appropriate, then the issue can be referred to further examination.
- 5.5 The local authority must also consider, under part (d) whether there are any other modifications which are required to ensure the basic conditions are met; to ensure the Neighbourhood Plan is compatible with the Convention rights, to ensure the requirements of legislation are met, and to correct errors. Minor modifications, for example to correct errors in the Plan's text are permissible, as they do not impact on the Plan itself. However, if the Council makes other modifications, for example by changing policy, those modifications will be subject to a six-week consultation period, and the Council's decision could be open to legal challenge. Officers are not recommending that further modifications are made to the Plan.
- 5.6 The local authority must consider whether to extend the area to which the Referendum is held under part (e). this is discussed in section 7 of this report.
- 5.7 If the local authority is not satisfied that the plan meets the basic conditions, is not compatible with Convention rights or requirements of legislation are not met then they must refuse the Neighbourhood Plan under part (f). This is not the case with this Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.8 The Neighbourhood Plan (General) Regulations 2012 state that a LPA must publish the actions which will be taken in response to the recommendations of the Examiner. This is known as a 'Decision Statement'.

## 6. CONSIDERATION OF THE EXAMINER'S REPORT AND PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS

- 6.1 The Examiner has recommended modifications to ensure that the Plan meets the basic conditions and have the clarity required by national guidance and ensure that the policies do what they are intended to do. The Examiner's modifications and Officers' recommendations for each of these are set out Table 1 in the draft Decision Statement attached at **APPENDIX 2**.
- 6.2 Having considered each of the recommendations made in the Examiner's Report and the reasons for them, Officers agree that the Examiner has undertaken a fair examination of the submitted Neighbourhood Plan, properly considering all duly made representations. Officers recommend that the Council accept all of the Examiner's modifications to the draft Plan.
- 6.3 Great Totham Neighbourhood Parish Council has advised that will be reviewing the modifications recommended by the Examiner at its Parish Council meeting on 21 March. The outcome of this meeting will be reported to the Council.
- 6.4 Officers have considered whether any other modifications are required to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan meets the required conditions. It is not considered that any additional modifications are required.
- 6.5 Officers consider that, subject to the Examiner's modifications being made to the Plan, the Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), is compatible with the Convention Rights and meets the requirements of paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act (as amended).

## 7. REFERENDUM

- 7.1 It is recommended that Members agree that the modifications to the Plan are made and that the modified Neighbourhood Plan proceeds to Referendum. The Neighbourhood Plan incorporating the Examiner's modifications is attached at **APPENDIX 3**. The Neighbourhood Plan (**APPENDIX 3**) incorporates the Village Design Statement.
- 7.2 It is recommended that Members agree the Decision Statement and that this is published as soon as possible and publicised in a manner to meet publicity requirements in the Regulations.
- 7.3 In relation to the Referendum area, the Examiner concluded that there is no reason to alter, or extend the Plan area, for the purpose of holding a Referendum. Officers agree with this recommendation and therefore recommend to Council that the area for the Referendum should be the Great Totham Neighbourhood Area as approved by Maldon District Council on 7 November 2016 (shown in **APPENDIX 3**). The Neighbourhood Area covers most of the parish, excluding that area covered by the Local Development Plan (LDP) North Heybridge Garden Suburb allocation.
- 7.4 Once the Council has published the Decision Statement detailing its intention to send a Neighbourhood Plan to Referendum, the plan can be given *significant weight* in decision-making. Therefore, once the Decision Statement has been published, the Council's Development Management team will be able to use the Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan, in determining planning applications within the Great Totham Neighbourhood Area.

- 7.5 Subject to the decision of Council recommended in this Report, arrangements will be made for the Referendum to be held in Great Totham Parish in 2022.
- 7.6 Following the Referendum, if more than 50% of those voting, vote 'yes' then the Neighbourhood Plan comes into force and must be 'made' within eight weeks of the Referendum.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan has been examined by an Independent Examiner. The Examiner has found that subject to modification, the plan meets the relevant legal, procedural and planning tests and can proceed to Referendum.
- 8.2 The Council has a statutory duty to decide whether to progress the plan to Referendum, with or without modifications, or to refuse the plan. The Council must publish a decision statement setting out the reasons for that decision as soon as possible after making it. The Council must consider each of the Examiner's recommendations, and the reasons for them, and decide what action to take in response.
- 8.3 It is recommended that the Examiner's recommendations are implemented, and that the modified Plan proceeds to Referendum.
- 8.4 Once a Decision Statement is approved and published, a Neighbourhood Plan is given significant weight in decision-making, for determining planning applications within its Neighbourhood Area.
- 8.5 If Council decides that the Neighbourhood Plan can proceed to Referendum, the Referendum will be arranged. A Neighbourhood Plan comes into force once it has been approved at Referendum. It has the same legal status as the Local Development Plan and will be used by Development Management to help determine applications for planning permission that are located within the parish boundary.

## **9. IMPACT ON STRATEGIC THEMES**

- 9.1 The Neighbourhood Plan supports the three themes of Prosperity, Place and Community through its policies that support business, protect the natural and built environment and protect community facilities in the neighbourhood area.

## **10. IMPLICATIONS**

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – The Neighbourhood Plan provides additional localised planning policies for future development in Great Totham. It will help to protect the residential amenity of existing and future residents in Great Totham.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – There are no negative impacts identified.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – The decision on the Examiner's Report and whether or not the Plan proceeds to Referendum create certainty over the status of the Neighbourhood Plan.

- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – The Council is required to pay for the Examination and the Referendum. Normally, a Council can apply for a LPA grant once the Referendum date has been set. Under the Covid Regulations 2020, once a Council has approved and published the Decision Statement, the Council can apply for the grant, at the next available application window.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – The Referendum is a statutory requirement that will be actioned by the Elections Team.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – The Neighbourhood Plan once made becomes part of the statutory Development Plan for the district. It provides locally specific policies to assess planning applications against. It should have positive impacts on the environment.
- (vii) **Impact on Strengthening Communities** – The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared through community engagement and refined through public consultation. The Plan, as modified, provides a local layer of planning policy to support the community's aspirations for the neighbourhood area.

**Background Papers:**

- Information on the Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan Area designation, Reg14 and 16 consultations and the Examination can be found on the MDC website at: [https://www.maldon.gov.uk/info/7050/planning\\_policy/8112/community\\_led\\_planning\\_and\\_neighbourhood\\_plans/3](https://www.maldon.gov.uk/info/7050/planning_policy/8112/community_led_planning_and_neighbourhood_plans/3)

**Enquiries to:** Leonie Alpin, Specialist – Local Plans.

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# **Great Totham Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020-2035**

**A report to Maldon District Council on the Great  
Totham Neighbourhood Development Plan**

**Andrew Ashcroft  
Independent Examiner  
BA (Hons) M.A. DMS M.R.T.P.I.**

**Director – Andrew Ashcroft Planning Limited**

**Executive Summary**

- 1 I was appointed by Maldon District Council in December 2021 to carry out the independent examination of the Great Totham Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 2 The examination was undertaken by written representations. I visited the neighbourhood area on 14 January 2022.
- 3 The Plan includes a range of policies and seeks to bring forward positive and sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. There is a very clear focus on safeguarding its local character and its landscape setting.
- 4 The Plan has been underpinned by community support and engagement. It is clear that all sections of the community have been actively engaged in its preparation.
- 5 Subject to a series of recommended modifications set out in this report I have concluded that the Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan meets all the necessary legal requirements and should proceed to referendum.
- 6 I recommend that the referendum should be held within the neighbourhood area.

**Andrew Ashcroft**  
**Independent Examiner**  
**15 March 2022**

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings of the independent examination of the Great Totham Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020-2035 (the 'Plan').
- 1.2 The Plan has been submitted to Maldon District Council (MDC) by Great Totham Parish Council (GTPC) in its capacity as the qualifying body responsible for preparing the neighbourhood plan.
- 1.3 Neighbourhood plans were introduced into the planning process by the Localism Act 2011. They aim to allow local communities to take responsibility for guiding development in their area. This approach was subsequently embedded in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012 and its updates in 2018, 2019 and 2021. The NPPF continues to be the principal element of national planning policy.
- 1.4 The role of an independent examiner is clearly defined in the legislation. I have been appointed to examine whether or not the submitted Plan meets the basic conditions and Convention Rights and other statutory requirements. It is not within my remit to examine or to propose an alternative plan, or a potentially more sustainable plan except where this arises as a result of my recommended modifications to ensure that the plan meets the basic conditions and the other relevant requirements.
- 1.5 A neighbourhood plan can be narrow or broad in scope. Any plan can include whatever range of policies it sees as appropriate to its designated neighbourhood area. The submitted plan has been designed to be distinctive in general terms, and to be complementary to the development plan in particular. It has a clear focus on maintaining the character and appearance of the neighbourhood area and safeguarding its natural assets.
- 1.6 Within the context set out above this report assesses whether the Plan is legally compliant and meets the basic conditions that apply to neighbourhood plans. It also considers the content of the Plan and, where necessary, recommends changes to its policies and supporting text.
- 1.7 This report also provides a recommendation as to whether the Plan should proceed to referendum. If this is the case, and that referendum results in a positive outcome, the Plan would then be used to determine planning applications within the Plan area and will sit as part of the wider development plan.

## 2 The Role of the Independent Examiner

- 2.1 The examiner's role is to ensure that any submitted neighbourhood plan meets the relevant legislative and procedural requirements.
- 2.2 I was appointed by MDC, with the consent of GTPC, to conduct the examination of the Plan and to prepare this report. I am independent of both MDC and GTPC. I do not have any interest in any land that may be affected by the Plan.
- 2.3 I possess the appropriate qualifications and experience to undertake this role. I am a Director of Andrew Ashcroft Planning Limited. In previous roles, I have over 35 years' experience in various local authorities at either Head of Planning or Service Director level. I am a chartered town planner and have significant experience of undertaking other neighbourhood plan examinations and health checks. I am a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral Service.

### *Examination Outcomes*

- 2.4 In my role as the independent examiner of the Plan I am required to recommend one of the following outcomes of the examination:
- (a) that the Plan as submitted proceeds to a referendum; or
  - (b) that the Plan should proceed to referendum as modified (based on my recommendations); or
  - (c) that the Plan does not proceed to referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.

- 2.5 The outcome of the examination is set out in Sections 7 and 8 of this report.

### *Other examination matters*

- 2.6 In examining the Plan I am required to check whether:
- the policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood plan area; and
  - the Plan meets the requirements of Section 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the Plan must specify the period to which it has effect, must not include provision about development that is excluded development, and must not relate to more than one neighbourhood area); and
  - the Plan has been prepared for an area that has been designated under Section 61G of the Localism Act and has been developed and submitted for examination by a qualifying body.
- 2.7 I have addressed the matters identified in paragraph 2.6 of this report. I am satisfied that the submitted Plan complies with the three requirements.

### 3 Procedural Matters

3.1 In undertaking this examination I have considered the following documents:

- the submitted Plan;
- the Basic Conditions Statement;
- the Consultation Statement;
- the Great Totham Village Design Statement;
- the SEA/HRA screening report;
- the representations made to the Plan;
- the Parish Council's responses to the Clarification Note;
- the approved Maldon District Local Development Plan;
- the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021);
- Planning Practice Guidance (March 2014 and subsequent updates); and
- relevant Ministerial Statements.

3.2 I visited the neighbourhood area on 14 January 2022. I looked at its overall character and appearance and at those areas affected by policies in the Plan in particular. My visit is covered in more detail in paragraphs 5.9 to 5.16 of this report.

3.3 It is a general rule that neighbourhood plan examinations should be held by written representations only. Having considered all the information before me, including the representations made to the submitted plan, I was satisfied that the Plan could be examined without the need for a public hearing. I advised MDC of this decision once I had received the responses to the clarification note.

## 4 Consultation

### *Consultation Process*

- 4.1 Policies in made neighbourhood plans become the basis for local planning and development control decisions. As such the regulations require neighbourhood plans to be supported and underpinned by public consultation.
- 4.2 In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 GTPC has prepared a Consultation Statement. The Statement sets out the mechanisms used to engage all concerned in the plan-making process. The events have taken place since late 2017. The Statement also provides specific details about the consultation process that took place on the pre-submission version of the Plan (December 2020 to January 2021). It captures the key issues in a proportionate way.
- 4.3 The Statement sets out details of the comprehensive range of consultation events that were carried out at the initial stages of the Plan. They included:
- the launch of a Facebook site and website (which was subsequently incorporated into the Parish Council website);
  - the village survey (November 2018);
  - the Open Weekend (September 2019); and
  - ongoing engagement with MDC and the Rural Community Council of Essex.
- 4.4 The Statement also provides details of the way in which GTPC engaged with statutory bodies. It is clear that the process has been proportionate and robust.
- 4.5 Appendix 12 of the Statement provides specific details on the issues raised during the consultation on pre-submission version of the Plan. It helpfully describes how the Plan was revised to take account of comments made at that stage (and which now feature in the submitted Plan).
- 4.6 It is clear that consultation has been an important element of the Plan's production. Advice on the neighbourhood planning process has been made available to the community in a positive and direct way by those responsible for the Plan's preparation.
- 4.7 From all the evidence provided to me as part of the examination, I can see that the Plan has promoted an inclusive approach to seeking the opinions of all concerned throughout the process. MDC has carried out its own assessment that the consultation process has complied with the requirements of the Regulations.

### *Representations Received*

- 4.8 Consultation on the submitted plan was undertaken by MDC and ended on 5 November 2021. This exercise generated comments from the following organisations:
- Phase 2 Planning

- Historic England
- Gladman Developments Limited
- Essex County Council
- Essex Bridleways Association
- National Grid
- Natural England
- Wickham Bishops Parish Council

4.9 Comments were also made by two local residents.

4.10 I have taken account of the various representations in examining the Plan. Where it is appropriate to do so, I make specific reference to the individual representations in Section 7 of this report.

## 5 The Neighbourhood Area and the Development Plan Context

### *The Neighbourhood Area*

- 5.1 The neighbourhood area consists of the parish of Great Totham except for the area covered by the Local Development Plan allocation for the North Heybridge Garden Suburb. Its population in 2011 was 2930 persons living in 1237 houses. It was designated as a neighbourhood area on 7 November 2016. It is located to the south-east of Witham and the A12 and to the north-west of Maldon/Heybridge. The neighbourhood area is predominantly rural in nature and much of its area is in agricultural use.
- 5.2 The principal settlements in the neighbourhood area are Totham North and Totham South. They are located on the Maldon Road (B1022) and sit approximately a mile from each other. They have clearly defined settlement boundaries. Each has its own series of community facilities.
- 5.3 The remainder of the neighbourhood area consists of a very attractive agricultural landscape which sits comfortably in the rural landscape to the west of Maldon/Heybridge.

### *Development Plan Context*

- 5.4 The Maldon District Local Development Plan was approved in July 2017. It sets out the basis for future development in the District up to 2029. Great Totham is identified as one of a series of larger villages in the Plan's settlement hierarchy (Policy S8). The Plan identifies larger villages as defined settlements with a limited range of services and opportunities for employment, retail and education. They serve a limited local catchment and contain a lower level of access to public transport.
- 5.5 Policy S8 of the Local Development Plan offers support for sustainable developments within defined settlement boundaries. It also comments that the countryside will be protected for its landscape, natural resources and ecological value as well as its intrinsic character and beauty. In this context outside of the defined settlement boundaries, the Garden Suburbs and the Strategic Allocations, planning permission for development will only be granted where the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside is not adversely impacted upon and provided it is for the limited range of development set out for such locations in national policy.
- 5.6 The following other policies in the Local Development Plan are also particularly relevant to the Great Totham Plan:

Policy S7	Prosperous Rural Communities
Policy D1	Design Quality and Built Environment
Policy D2	Climate Change and Environmental Impact of New Development
Policy E3	Community Services and Facilities
Policy E5	Tourism
Policy H2	Housing Mix



Policy N2	Natural Environment and Biodiversity
Policy T1	Sustainable Transport
Policy T2	Accessibility

- 5.7 Section 3 of the Basic Conditions Statement usefully highlights the key policies in the development plan and how they relate to policies in the submitted Plan. This is good practice. It provides confidence to all concerned that the submitted Plan sits within its local planning policy context. In doing so it has relied on up-to-date information and research that has underpinned previous and existing planning policy documents in the District. This is good practice and reflects key elements in Planning Practice Guidance on this matter.
- 5.8 MDC has now embarked on a review of the Local Development Plan (LDP). Consultation on an Issues and Options Report started in January 2022. Given that the LDP review is at a very early stage it has no direct impact on the examination of the neighbourhood plan itself. However, it may have an impact on the monitoring and review of the neighbourhood plan in the event that it is made. I address this matter later in this report.

#### *Unaccompanied Visit*

- 5.9 I visited the neighbourhood area on 14 January 2022.
- 5.10 I drove into Great Totham from Witham and Wickham Bishops to the west. This gave me an initial impression of its setting and character in general, and its relationship to the strategic highways network in particular. I saw the importance of the Primary School as I entered the village.
- 5.11 I looked initially at the Totham South settlement boundary. I saw the significance of the Village Hall and the adjacent Cricket Ground. I saw that with the Bull PH on the opposite side of the road that they formed a visually interesting element of the village. I walked along the Maldon Road to the village shop and post office.
- 5.12 I then drove to St Peter's Church. I saw the open landscape to the east of the Church Road.
- 5.13 I then drove back in the village. In doing so I saw the attractive modern houses in Beadle Place. I then drove along Prince of Wales Road. I saw the mansard roof houses by the Prince of Wales PH and then the very distinctive Barn Church.
- 5.14 I then drove to the Totham North settlement boundary. I saw the significance of The Compasses PH and the Florist on the Green shop.
- 5.15 I walked around this part of the parish. I saw the very impressive United Reform Church building and the interesting houses in Chapel Road.

- 5.16 Throughout the visit I looked at the Important Views as identified in the Plan. I finished my visit by driving to Tiptree and then to Kelvedon. This helped me to understand the relationship between the different settlements in this part of the District. It also highlighted the significance of the attractive countryside to the south and east of the A12.

## 6 The Neighbourhood Plan and the Basic Conditions

- 6.1 This section of the report deals with the submitted neighbourhood plan as a whole and the extent to which it meets the basic conditions. The submitted Basic Conditions Statement has helped considerably in the preparation of this section of the report. It is a well-presented and informative document. It is also proportionate to the Plan itself.
- 6.2 As part of this process I must consider whether the submitted Plan meets the Basic Conditions as set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. To comply with the basic conditions, the Plan must:
- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
  - contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
  - be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan in the area;
  - be compatible with European Union (EU) obligations and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR); and
  - not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.
- 6.3 I assess the Plan against the basic conditions under the following headings.
- National Planning Policies and Guidance*
- 6.4 For the purposes of this examination the key elements of national policy relating to planning matters are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued in July 2021.
- 6.5 The NPPF sets out a range of core land-use planning issues to underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. The following are of particular relevance to the Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan:
- a plan led system– in this case the relationship between the neighbourhood plan and the approved Maldon District Local Development Plan;
  - delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
  - building a strong, competitive economy;
  - recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving local communities;
  - taking account of the different roles and characters of different areas;
  - highlighting the importance high quality design and good standards of amenity for all future occupants of land and buildings; and
  - conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- 6.6 Neighbourhood plans sit within this wider context both generally, and within the more specific presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 13 of the NPPF indicates that neighbourhoods should both develop plans that support the strategic

needs set out in local plans and plan positively to support local development that is outside the strategic elements of the development plan.

- 6.7 In addition to the NPPF I have also taken account of other elements of national planning policy including Planning Practice Guidance and ministerial statements.
- 6.8 Having considered all the evidence and representations available as part of the examination I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has had regard to national planning policies and guidance in general terms subject to the recommended modifications included in this report. It sets out a positive vision for the future of the neighbourhood area within the context of its role in the settlement hierarchy. In particular it includes a policy on Arcadian design, and other policies to safeguard its special natural and built environment. The Basic Conditions Statement maps the policies in the Plan against the appropriate sections of the NPPF.
- 6.9 At a more practical level, the NPPF indicates that plans should provide a clear framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made and that they should give a clear indication of how a decision-maker should react to a development proposal (paragraph 16d). This was reinforced with the publication of Planning Practice Guidance. Paragraph ID:41-041-20140306 indicates that policies in neighbourhood plans should be drafted with sufficient clarity so that a decision-maker can apply them consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. Policies should also be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence.
- 6.10 As submitted the Plan does not fully accord with this range of practical issues. The majority of my recommended modifications in Section 7 relate to matters of clarity and precision. They are designed to ensure that the Plan fully accords with national policy.

*Contributing to sustainable development*

- 6.11 There are clear overlaps between national policy and the contribution that the submitted Plan makes to achieving sustainable development. Sustainable development has three principal dimensions – economic, social and environmental. It is clear that the submitted Plan has set out to achieve sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. In the economic dimension, the Plan includes a policy for new development within the two settlement boundaries (Policy GT01). In the social role, it includes policies on community and play facilities (Policies GT09 and GT10). In the environmental dimension, the Plan positively seeks to protect its natural, built and historic environment. It has specific policies on wildlife and biodiversity (Policies GT04 and GT05), and on design (Policy GT02). GTPC has undertaken its own assessment of this matter in the submitted Basic Conditions Statement.

*General conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan*

- 6.12 I have already commented in detail on the development plan context in Maldon in paragraphs 5.4 to 5.8 of this report.

- 6.13 I consider that the submitted Plan delivers a local dimension to this strategic context. The Basic Conditions Statement helpfully relates the Plan's policies to policies in the development plan. Subject to the recommended modifications in this report, I am satisfied that the submitted Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan.

*European Legislation and Habitat Regulations*

- 6.14 The Neighbourhood Plan General Regulations 2015 require a qualifying body either to submit an environmental report prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 or a statement of reasons why an environmental report is not required.
- 6.15 In order to comply with this requirement MDC undertook a screening exercise (August 2021) on the need or otherwise for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be prepared for the Plan. The report is thorough and well-constructed. As a result of this process, it concluded that the Plan is not likely to have any significant effects on the environment and accordingly would not require SEA.
- 6.16 The screening report also included a separate Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Plan. The HRA report is both thorough and comprehensive. It takes appropriate account of the significance of the Essex Estuaries SAC, the Blackwater Estuaries SPA/Ramsar and the Dengie SPA/Ramsar.
- 6.17 It concludes that the Plan is not likely to have significant environmental effects on a European nature conservation site or undermine their conservation objectives alone or in combination taking account of the precautionary principle. As such Appropriate Assessment is not required. The HRA advises that the principal reasons for this conclusion are:
- there are no sites identified for development in the Neighbourhood Plan;
  - the neighbourhood plan focuses on protecting the quality of the village and its environment and it is considered that the Plan's likely impact will have a positive effect on the environment;
  - the scale of the development supported by the Neighbourhood Plan is minor, and it is not expected to result in significant effects on the protected sites

The wider process provides assurance to all concerned that the submitted Plan takes appropriate account of important ecological and biodiversity matters.

- 6.18 Having reviewed the information provided to me as part of the examination, I am satisfied that a proportionate process has been undertaken in accordance with the various regulations. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, I am entirely satisfied that the submitted Plan is compatible with this aspect of European obligations.
- 6.19 In a similar fashion I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has had regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and that it complies with the Human Rights Act. There is no evidence that has been submitted to me to suggest otherwise. In addition, there has

been full and adequate opportunity for all interested parties to take part in the preparation of the Plan and to make their comments known. On the basis of all the evidence available to me, I conclude that the submitted Plan does not breach, nor is in any way incompatible with the ECHR.

*Summary*

- 6.20 On the basis of my assessment of the Plan in this section of my report I am satisfied that it meets the basic conditions subject to the incorporation of the recommended modifications contained in this report.

## 7 The Neighbourhood Plan policies

- 7.1 This section of the report comments on the policies in the Plan. In particular, it makes a series of recommended modifications to ensure that they have the necessary precision to meet the basic conditions.
- 7.2 My recommendations focus on the policies themselves given that the basic conditions relate primarily to this aspect of neighbourhood plans. In some cases, I have also recommended changes to the associated supporting text.
- 7.3 I am satisfied that the content and the form of the Plan is fit for purpose. It is distinctive and proportionate to the Plan area. The wider community and GTPC have spent time and energy in identifying the issues and objectives that they wish to be included in their Plan. This sits at the heart of the localism agenda.
- 7.4 The Plan has been designed to reflect Planning Practice Guidance (ID:41-004-20190509) which indicates that neighbourhood plans must address the development and use of land. It includes a separate section on non-land use aspirations.
- 7.5 I have addressed the policies in the order that they appear in the submitted Plan. Where necessary I have identified the inter-relationships between the policies.
- 7.6 For clarity this section of the report comments on all policies whether or not I have recommended modifications in order to ensure that the Plan meets the basic conditions.
- 7.7 Where modifications are recommended to policies they are highlighted in bold print. Any associated or free-standing changes to the text of the Plan are set out in italic print.

### *The initial section of the Plan (Sections 1-3)*

- 7.8 These initial parts of the Plan set the scene for the range of policies. They do so in a proportionate way. The Plan is presented in a professional way. It makes a very effective use of well-selected photographs and maps. A very clear distinction is made between its policies and the supporting text. It also highlights the links between the Plan's objectives and its resultant policies.
- 7.9 Section 1 sets the background to the Plan. It comments about how the Plan has been prepared and how it will be used within the Plan period. It defines both the neighbourhood area (in Figure 1.1) and the Plan period (in paragraph 1.1). It also sets out the broader planning policy context in a very comprehensive fashion.
- 7.10 Section 2 describes the neighbourhood area. It does so in a very effective fashion. It is comprehensive in its coverage and includes information on its location, its demographic profile, its accessibility and its economic base. It helpfully sets the scene for the Plan. It concludes by setting out a series of main issues and challenges (in paragraph 2.17 to 2.20). This provides both a summary of this section and a context for the remainder of the Plan.

- 7.11 Section 3 sets out a comprehensive vision and related objectives for the Plan. A key strength of the Plan is the way in which the objectives provide the basis for the resultant policies. In all cases the objectives are distinctive to the neighbourhood area. It is clear that the policies flow from the evidence base and the supporting text.
- 7.12 The remainder of this section of the report addresses each policy in turn in the context set out in paragraphs 7.5 to 7.7 of this report.

#### Policy GTO1 Spatial Strategy

- 7.13 As its title suggests, this policy sets out a spatial strategy for the Plan. The strategy is based around the definition of two settlement boundaries (one for North Totham and one for South Totham). The policy also addresses GTPC's views about the way in which new development should contribute towards the delivery of essential infrastructure.
- 7.14 I am satisfied that part A of the policy meets the basic conditions. It correctly focuses new development in the two settlement boundaries which are the most sustainable locations in the parish. Nevertheless, it is written in a non-prescriptive way which does not prevent development coming forward elsewhere.
- 7.15 Part B of the policy comments about proposals outside the settlement boundaries. I recommend that the wording used is modified so that it takes on a positive rather than a negative approach. Nevertheless, its effect remains unchanged. I also recommend that the fourth criteria (on not providing more development than the identified local housing need) is deleted. As submitted, it provides little clarity on its purpose in general, or what would represent 'significantly more' than the identified need.
- 7.16 Part C of the policy comments about the need for new development to contribute as necessary to community facilities. Plainly this is an important matter. However as submitted, the policy adds no distinctive or added value beyond the approach to developer contributions already applied by MDC and Essex County Council. As such, I recommend that it is deleted from the policy. Nevertheless, given the importance of this matter to GTPC I recommend that it is repositioned into the supporting text.

**In the opening element of Part B of the policy replace 'will only be permitted if' with 'will be supported where'**

**In part B of the policy delete criterion iv.**

**Delete part C of the policy**

*Relocate the deleted Part C of the policy to the end of paragraph 4.12*



### Policy GTO2 High Quality Arcadian Design

- 7.17 This policy sets out the Plan's ambitions for the delivery of high-quality residential development. It is based around the Plan's definition of the Arcadian character of the parish. The policy is also underpinned by the excellent Great Totham Village Design Statement. It is a very good example of the way in which a local community has responded positively to the enhanced design agenda in the NPPF 2021.
- 7.18 I recommend two detailed modifications to part B of the policy so that it has the clarity required by the NPPF.
- 7.19 I also recommend that part C of the policy is deleted and relocated into the supporting text. This acknowledges that it reads a process matter rather than as a policy. GTPC agreed to this approach in its response to the clarification note.

**In part B of the policy replace 'must' with 'should'**

**In part B of the policy replace 'The following are encouraged to be part of design proposals:' with 'Where appropriate, the following design features should be incorporated into design proposals'**

**Delete part C of the policy**

*Insert the deleted element of the policy at the end of paragraph 5.11.*

### Policy GTO3 Important Views and Setting of Totham Cricket Field

- 7.20 This policy identifies five important views within the neighbourhood area and seeks to ensure that new development should preserve those views. It also highlights GTPC's approach to the separate importance of the Cricket Field in the local landscape. Appendix B of the Plan provides greater detail on the identified views.
- 7.21 I took the opportunity to look at the views during the visit. I also looked at the Cricket Field. It was clear that the views attempt to capture the close relationship between the built parts of the parish and its surrounding countryside.
- 7.22 I have considered the issues raised by this policy very carefully. In particular I have taken account of the representation made by Gladman Developments Limited and the responses from GTPC to the clarification note. In general terms, I am satisfied that the approach taken meets the basic conditions. The identified important views capture the character and appearance of the neighbourhood area and have been carefully-chosen. Nevertheless, the first part of the policy is written in a manner which simply requires that the views are preserved. This would not directly relate to the development management process. To remedy this issue, I recommend that the first and second elements of the policy are combined to ensure that there is a clear linkage of the matter to the planning process. I also recommend that the wording of the third part of the policy is modified so that it has the clarity required by the NPPF.

- 7.23 I have taken account of Gladman Development's suggestion that the Plan comments about the proximity of houses to the southern boundary of the cricket pitch. I regard this as a statement of fact and observation rather than something which directly affects the policy itself. In addition, in my judgement, its suggested inclusion in the Plan is not a basic conditions matter.
- 7.24 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute significantly to the delivery of the environmental dimension of sustainable development.

**Replace parts A and B of the policy with:**

**'The Plan identifies the following key views which contribute to the character and the appearance of the neighbourhood area:**

**[At this point list the views included in the submitted policy]**

**The design, scale, massing and layout of development proposals should respect the identified key views and should not unacceptably impact from their significance in the neighbourhood area.**

**Development proposals which would unacceptably impact on the identified key views will not be supported'**

**Replace part C of the policy with: 'Development proposals should take account of the setting of the Totham cricket field (as shown on Figure 6.2). Any development proposals adjacent or close to the cricket field should be designed and arranged in a manner which would safeguard the setting of the cricket field and keep any impacts to the minimum necessary to achieve the delivery of the development proposed'**

Policy GTO4 Green/Blue Wildlife Corridors

- 7.25 This policy takes a comprehensive approach to biodiversity. It has four elements as follows:
- development proposals are expected to deliver net biodiversity gains in addition to protecting existing habitats and species;
  - the incorporation of design features into new development that encourages local wildlife to thrive, is strongly encouraged;
  - development should be designed to retain trees, shrubs and hedgerows of arboricultural, habitat and amenity value on-site and to conserve and enhance connectivity to the wider green and blue infrastructure networks; and
  - development should take into consideration the principles of sustainable drainage and natural flood management techniques.
- 7.26 The policy takes an appropriate approach to this matter in general terms. However, in some cases, the elements of the policy are written in a general way and fail to acknowledge that the majority of planning applications in the neighbourhood area

within the Plan period will be of a minor or domestic nature will not necessarily trigger the policy requirements.

- 7.27 I recommend a series of modifications so that it will have the clarity required by the NPPF. In particular, they focus on ensuring that the policy elements are applied either in a proportionate fashion and/or in a way which is appropriate to the development in question. This will ensure that they have the clarity required by the NPPF. Otherwise, the policy takes a positive and proactive approach to this important matter. It will make a significant contribution to the delivery of the environmental dimension of sustainable development.

**At the beginning of part A of the policy replace 'All' with: 'As appropriate to their scale nature and location'**

**At the end of part A of the policy replace 'are strongly encouraged' with 'will be particularly supported'**

**In part C of the policy replace 'As part.... gain, development' with 'As appropriate to their scale nature and location development proposals'**

**In part C of the policy replace the final sentence with: 'Where practicable, any new planting should consist of native species of trees, shrubs and grasses and be designed in a way which would allow their use as stepping stones for wildlife'**

**Replace part D of the policy with 'As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should incorporate sustainable drainage and natural flood management techniques'**

Policy GTO5 Recreational Disturbance and Mitigation

- 7.28 This policy takes account of an innovative local initiative. The Maldon District Local Development Plan, together with neighbouring local planning authorities' local plans and neighbourhood plans are likely to adversely affect the integrity of European designated nature conservation sites ('European Sites') due to increased recreational pressure from a growing population. Maldon District Council has worked with the other Greater Essex Local Planning Authorities and Natural England on the Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS).
- 7.29 The Essex Coast RAMS focuses on the mitigation that is necessary to protect the wildlife of the Essex coast from the increased visitor pressure associated with new residential development, in combination with other plans and projects, and how this mitigation will be funded.
- 7.30 MDC adopted the RAMS Supplementary Planning Document in August 2020. In particular it sets out the guidance to be followed in the determination of planning applications and formalises the arrangements for securing the developer contributions for new qualifying residential development.
- 7.31 I am satisfied that the submitted policy is appropriate for the submitted Plan to address this important strategic issue. It reflects the collaborative approach being taken by the
- Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan – Examiner's Report

relevant local authorities. The incorporation of a policy of this nature will ensure a positive outcome within the submitted Plan to an important strategic matter. It meets the basic conditions.

#### Policy GTO6 Energy Efficiency of Buildings and Renewables

- 7.32 This policy seeks to ensure that new buildings are developed in a sustainable way. It comments that proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, must demonstrate how the design of buildings and site layouts minimise consumption of energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources in order to provide resilience to the effects of climate change. It also comments that developments should demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate a series of identified measures to adapt to climate change.
- 7.33 The policy has been well-developed. It addresses energy efficiency matters in a proactive way. As submitted part B has a universal effect and not all of the matters expected to be delivered will be relevant to every new development. As such, I recommend that the policy is applied in a proportionate way which takes account of the scale, nature and location of the development proposed. Otherwise, it meets the basic conditions. It will do much to contribute towards the delivery of the environmental dimension of sustainable development.

**Replace the opening element of part B of the policy with: ‘All developments should demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should incorporate the following measures:’**

#### Policy GTO7 Parking Provision

- 7.34 This policy seeks to ensure that new developments comply with adopted parking standards. In particular, it comments that proposals for parking are encouraged to use car ports and/or communal parking. It also comments that parking provision must be permanently available for parking use.
- 7.35 As submitted part A of the policy does not bring any added value to the parking standards already applied by MDC and the County Council. As such, I recommend that it is deleted. Nevertheless, I recommend that the existing reference to these standards in the supporting text are expanded. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions.

#### **Delete part A of the policy**

*At the end of paragraph 7.5 add: ‘Policy GT07 takes account of this strategic approach. The same account will be taken of any updates to the parking standards.’*

#### Policy GTO8 Pedestrian and Cycle Access

- 7.36 This policy comments that proposals to improve pedestrian and cycle access will be supported. It also comments that proposals should focus on improving access between

Totham North and South and to Wickham Bishops and that new developments should seek to ensure safe pedestrian access to link up with existing footways.

- 7.37 The second sentence of part B of the policy reads as a statement rather than as a policy. In its response to the clarification note GTPC commented:

*‘The intention of the second sentence of Part B is to make clear that development which has no safe footpath access from its boundary is considered to be limited in sustainability terms. In this respect, it is sustainable movement that is limited because residents or users of these developments will have little choice but to access them by private car’*

- 7.38 In all the circumstances, I recommend that this part of the policy is deleted and repositioned into the supporting text.

**Delete the second sentence of part B of the policy.**

*At the end of paragraph 7.12 (as a free-standing sentence) add: ‘Development in locations where no connections with existing footways can be provided are considered to have limited sustainability’*

**Policy GTO9 Expansion of Community and Leisure Uses**

- 7.39 This policy comments about community and leisure uses. It has three separate but related elements as follows:

- proposals to improve community hub buildings in Totham North and Totham South will be supported, where they are of a high-quality design;
- proposals for expansion of leisure facilities outside the settlement boundary will be supported where such expansion is required in order to continue providing activities of benefit to the local community and are appropriate for their countryside setting; and
- proposals to enable the Compasses pub in Totham North to provide a range of community uses alongside the main pub use will be supported.

- 7.40 The policy takes full account of the role which the various community buildings perform in the parish. It is very distinctive to the parish. In addition, the policy has a non-prescriptive format. It meets the basic conditions. It will make a significant contribution to the delivery of the social dimension of sustainable development.

**Policy GTO10 Play Facilities**

- 7.41 This policy concentrates on play facilities. It has two related elements as follows:

- proposals to improve facilities at Totham North and Totham South Recreation Grounds will be supported; and
- any new or enhancement to existing facilities should be designed to provide a multiple purpose use that is sympathetic to its natural setting and the landscape character.

- 7.42 The policy takes a very positive approach to this matter. In this context I recommend two modifications. In part A, I recommend that the policy wording acknowledges that some development of this type may not need planning permission. In part B, I recommend that the policy includes the wording 'where practicable' to acknowledge that shared facilities may not always be capable of delivery or would apply to certain development proposal.
- 7.43 Otherwise it meets the basic conditions. It will make a significant contribution to the delivery of the social dimension of sustainable development.

**At the beginning of part A of the policy add 'Insofar as planning permission is required'**

**At the beginning of part B of the policy add 'Where practicable'**

#### Community Aspirations

- 7.44 The Plan includes a series of Community Actions and Non policy actions (in Section 9 of the Plan). They are issues where the residents of the parish have expressed a strong view, but which are not land use in nature. Other than the two transport related Community Actions, the various initiatives are included in a separate part of the Plan in accordance with national guidance.
- 7.45 The initiative addresses a series of points including:
- community transport issues;
  - environmental issues (including tree planting and works to highway verges);
  - community issues (including maintaining existing community facilities); and
  - transport issues (including a range of proposed speed restrictions).

- 7.46 I am satisfied that the aspirations and initiatives are both appropriate to the parish and locally distinctive.

#### Monitoring and Review of the Plan

- 7.47 Section 1 of the Plan (and paragraphs 1.14 and 1.15 in particular) addresses the way in which a 'made' Plan would be monitored and reviewed. It comments that an early review of the Plan may be required once the emerging Local Development Plan Review is adopted. This is entirely appropriate.
- 7.48 Nevertheless, I recommend that this element of the Plan is expanded so that it provides a degree of clarity about the process which would be followed. Plainly the extent of any full or partial review of a made neighbourhood plan would only become apparent once the review of the Local Development Plan reaches its final stages.

*At the end of paragraph 1.15 add: 'This will be an important matter for the local planning policy context. The Parish Council will assess the need or otherwise for a review of the neighbourhood plan within six months of the adoption of the emerging Local Development Plan'*

#### Other matters - General

- 7.49 This report has recommended a series of modifications both to the policies and to the text in the submitted Plan. Where consequential changes to the text are required directly as a result of my recommended modification to the policy concerned, I have highlighted them in this report. However other changes to the general text may be required elsewhere in the Plan as a result of the recommended modifications to the policies. It will be appropriate for MDC and GTPC to have the flexibility to make any necessary consequential changes to the general text. I recommend accordingly.

*Modification of general text (where necessary) to achieve consistency with the modified policies.*

## 8 Summary and Conclusions

### *Summary*

- 8.1 The Plan sets out a range of policies to guide and direct development proposals in the period up to 2035. It is distinctive in addressing a specific set of issues that have been identified and refined by the wider community.
- 8.2 Following the independent examination, I have concluded that Great Totham Neighbourhood Development Plan meets the basic conditions for the preparation of a neighbourhood plan subject to a series of recommended modifications.

### *Conclusion*

- 8.3 On the basis of the findings in this report I recommend to Maldon District Council that subject to the incorporation of the modifications set out in this report that the Great Totham Neighbourhood Development Plan should proceed to referendum.

### *Referendum Area*

- 8.4 I am required to consider whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the neighbourhood area. In my view, the neighbourhood area is entirely appropriate for this purpose and no evidence has been submitted to suggest that this is not the case. I therefore recommend that the Plan should proceed to referendum based on the neighbourhood area as originally approved by Maldon District Council on 7 November 2016.
- 8.5 I am grateful to everyone who has helped in any way to ensure that this examination has run in a smooth and efficient manner.

**Andrew Ashcroft**  
**Independent Examiner**  
**15 March 2022**





## **Maldon District Council Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan Draft Decision Statement**

### **Summary**

1. Following an independent examination, Maldon District Council confirms that the Great Totham Parish Neighbourhood Plan, as recommended to be modified by the Examiner, will proceed to a Neighbourhood Planning Referendum.
2. This Decision Statement sets out Maldon District Council's response to each of the Examiner's recommendations.
3. The Referendum will be held in 2022.

### **Background**

4. The Great Totham Parish Neighbourhood Plan relates to the Neighbourhood Area designated by Maldon District Council on 24 April 2013. This area comprises the majority of the Parish, except that area covered by the LDP North Heybridge Garden Suburb allocation (S2c). The Neighbourhood Area is within the Local Planning Authority area.
5. Great Totham Parish Council undertook pre-submission consultation on the draft Plan in accordance with Regulation 14 (3 December 2020 – 31 January 2021).
6. Following the submission of the Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan to the Council in May 2021 the Council publicised the draft Plan for a six-week period and representations were invited in accordance with Regulation 16 (24 September – 5 November 2021).
7. The Council appointed Mr Andrew Ashcroft, with the consent of Great Totham Parish Council, to undertake the Examination of the Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan. The Examiner's Report was sent to the District Council and Great Totham Parish Council on 15 March 2022.

### **Decision and reasons**

8. The Examiner's Report concludes that subject to making the recommended modifications, the Plan meets the basic conditions set out in the legislation and should proceed to a Neighbourhood Planning referendum. The Examiner also recommends that the referendum area is based on the Neighbourhood Area that was designated by the Council on 7 November 2016.
9. The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) requires in Regulation 18 the Local Planning Authority to outline what action to take in response to the recommendations of an Examiner in relation to a Neighbourhood Plan.

10. Having considered each of the recommendations in the Examiner's report and the reasons for them, the Council, with the agreement of Great Totham Parish Council, has decided to accept the recommended modifications to the Great Totham Parish Neighbourhood Plan set out in Table 1 below. This decision was made at Council on 31 March 2022.
11. The Council considers that subject to the modifications set out in Table 1 below, the Plan meets the basic conditions set out in the legislation.
12. The Council is also required to consider whether to extend the area to which the referendum is to take place under Regulation 18(1e). The Examiner recommended that the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a referendum based on the area that was designated by Maldon District Council as the Neighbourhood Area. The Council has considered this recommendation and the reasons for it, and has decided to accept it.
13. The Referendum on the Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan will be based on the designated Great Totham Parish Neighbourhood Area (see map on page 10)
14. To meet the requirements of the Localism Act 2011, a referendum which poses the question *"Do you want Maldon District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Great Totham to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"*, will be held in 2022.

1 April 2022

**Table 1 GTNP Independent Examiner's recommended changes**KeyUnderlined text is new textCrossed out text (~~example~~) is deleted

Section/policy	Examiner's recommended changes	Local Authority decision and reason
Para 4.12	It is important that this evidence is kept up to date, therefore any sites coming forward after 2025 (when the Housing Needs Survey has expired) will need to be supported by up-to-date evidence of need. <u>All development proposals will be expected to contribute as necessary towards infrastructure which shall include transport and movement (including community transport and infrastructure to improve pedestrian safety), health, education community facilities, utilities and environmental improvements, through direct provision and/or developer contributions (including Section 106 and/or, as appropriate, Community Infrastructure Levy).</u>	Agreed. Part C of policy GT01 is more appropriate as part of the text, rather than as part of the policy
GTO1 Spatial Strategy	<p>A. New development in Great Totham Parish will be focused within the settlement boundaries of North Totham and South Totham as shown in Figures 4.1 and 4.2.</p> <p>B. Development proposals to meet identified local housing needs on sites that are outside the settlement boundary will <del>only be permitted if</del> <u>be supported where</u> they meet all of the following criteria:</p> <p>i. It can be demonstrated that no available and deliverable site exists within the settlement boundary.</p> <p>ii. The site is well related to the settlement boundary, sharing a boundary on at least one side.</p> <p>iii. The site does not breach an existing defensible boundary, e.g. watercourse or main road, where there is not already development on both sides.</p> <p><del>iv. The site does not provide for significantly more than the identified local housing need.</del></p> <p><del>C. All development proposals will be expected to contribute as necessary towards infrastructure which shall include transport and movement (including community transport and infrastructure</del></p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Part B – the wording is modified so that it takes on a positive rather than a negative approach.</p> <p>Part iv deleted as it provides little clarity.</p> <p>Part C moved into the explanatory text.</p>

Section/policy	Examiner's recommended changes	Local Authority decision and reason
	<del>to improve pedestrian safety), health, education community facilities, utilities and environmental improvements, through direct provision and/or developer contributions (including Section 106 and/or, as appropriate, Community Infrastructure Levy)</del>	
Para 5.11	... <u>Each residential development proposal should include a proportionate statement and illustrations demonstrating how the principles and guidance in the Village Design Statement have been addressed.</u>	Agreed part C of policy GT02 is more appropriate as part of the text, rather than as part of the policy.
GT02High Quality Arcadian Design	<p>A. Residential development should demonstrate high quality design and layout which respects the 'Arcadian' nature, and local character identified in the Village Design Statement, of Great Totham. In particular this means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The layout avoiding an overly dense feel, including the configuration of parking provision (see Policy GTO8).</li> <li>ii. Opportunities are taken to retain views between buildings.</li> <li>iii. Where the topography of the landscape is not flat and development is very visual, it is designed to blend into the contours of the landscape.</li> <li>iv. Development provides sensitive lighting to retain the dark skies in Great Totham.</li> </ul> <p>B. In delivering high quality design, residential development proposals <del>must</del> <u>should</u> demonstrate that they reflect the Arcadian nature and the local character identified in the Village Design Statement of Great Totham through the use of design, materials and features. <del>The following are encouraged to be part of design proposals</del> <u>Where appropriate, the following design features should be incorporated into design proposals:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Provision of a variety of brick and render materials, roof styles and features. The choice of materials is expected to minimise the carbon footprint of development.</li> <li>ii. Development is set back from roads and boundary treatments are at a low level, creating an open feel.</li> <li>iii. Landscaping, including boundary treatments such as hedges, shall be used to ensure</li> </ul>	Agreed. The changes provide the clarity, as required by the NPPF

Section/policy	Examiner's recommended changes	Local Authority decision and reason
	<p>development does not create a hard edge.</p> <p><del>C. Each residential development proposal should include a proportionate statement and illustrations demonstrating how the principles and guidance in the Village Design Statement have been addressed</del></p>	
GT03 Important Views and Setting of Totham Cricket Field	<p>A. <del>The following views, as shown in Figure 6.2, should be preserved.</del> <u>The Plan identifies the following key views which contribute to the character and the appearance of the neighbourhood area:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. View of Strowling Wood and Mountains Grove from Braxted Lane</li> <li>2. View from Beacon Hill in Goat Lodge Road</li> <li>3. View south-east towards Goldhanger and Osea Island</li> <li>4. View from the footpaths close to Spickets Wood</li> <li>5. View towards St Peter's Church and along Church Road</li> </ol> <p><del>B. Development which may impact on any of these views must demonstrate through its layout how vistas from public viewpoints will be preserved.</del> <u>The design, scale, massing and layout of development proposals should respect the identified key views and should not unacceptably impact from their significance in the neighbourhood area.</u></p> <p><u>Development proposals which would unacceptably impact on the identified key views will not be supported</u></p> <p><del>C. Development must not have a detrimental impact on the setting of Totham cricket field. Any development proposals adjacent or close to the cricket field, as identified in Figure 6.2, must demonstrate that such impacts have been minimised to an acceptable degree through high quality design, scale and layout.</del></p> <p><u>B. Development proposals should take account of the setting of the Totham cricket field (as shown on Figure 6.2). Any development proposals adjacent or close to the cricket field should be designed and</u></p>	Agreed. The first and second elements of the policy are combined to ensure that there is a clear linkage of the matter to the planning process. The wording of the third part of the policy is modified so that it has the clarity required by the NPPF.

Section/policy	Examiner's recommended changes	Local Authority decision and reason
	<p><u>arranged in a manner which would safeguard the setting of the cricket field and keep any impacts to the minimum necessary to achieve the delivery of the development proposed.</u></p>	
GT04 Green/Blue Wildlife Corridors	<p>A. <del>All</del> <u>As appropriate to their scale nature and location</u> development proposals are expected to deliver net biodiversity gains in addition to protecting existing habitats and species. Development proposals on or adjacent to the green or blue wildlife corridors or stepping stones identified in Figures 6.4 and 6.5 must demonstrate a layout and design which ensures that wildlife is not impeded in its movement along the corridor. Proposals to enhance the green and blue wildlife corridors <del>are strongly encouraged.</del> <u>will be particularly supported</u></p> <p>B. In particular, the incorporation of design features into new development that encourages local wildlife to thrive, is strongly encouraged.</p> <p>C. <del>As part of its requirements to demonstrate net biodiversity gain, development</del> <u>As appropriate to their scale nature and location development proposals</u> should be designed to retain trees, shrubs and hedgerows of arboricultural, habitat and amenity value on-site and to conserve and enhance connectivity to the wider green and blue infrastructure networks. <del>Where this is accompanied by new planting, this should consist of native species of trees, shrubs and grasses acting as stepping stones for wildlife.</del> <u>Where practicable, any new planting should consist of native species of trees, shrubs and grasses and be designed in a way which would allow their use as stepping stones for wildlife'</u></p> <p>D. <del>Development is required to take into consideration the principles of Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDs) and natural flood management techniques, which will enhance biodiversity and ecosystems.</del> <u>As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should incorporate sustainable drainage and natural flood management techniques.</u></p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The modifications give the clarity required by the NPPF. In particular, they focus on ensuring that the policy elements are applied either in a proportionate fashion and/or in a way which is appropriate to the development in question</p>

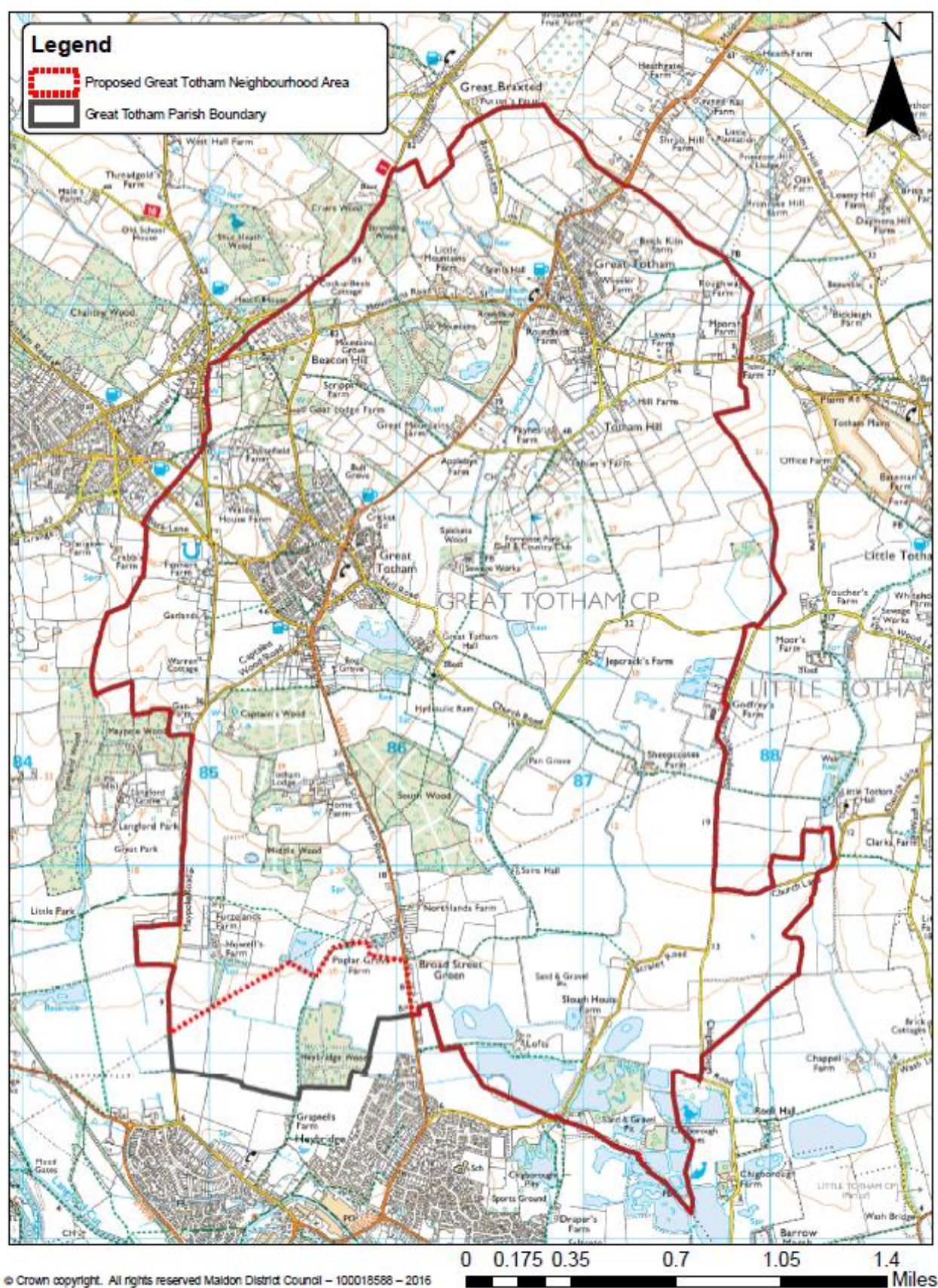
Section/policy	Examiner's recommended changes	Local Authority decision and reason
Policy GTO5 Recreational Disturbance and Mitigation	No change	
GTO6 Energy Efficiency of Buildings and Renewables	<p>A. Proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, must demonstrate how the design of buildings and site layouts minimise consumption of energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources in order to provide resilience to the effects of climate change.</p> <p><del>B. All developments will demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. The following measures shall be incorporated into development:</del></p> <p>B. <u>All developments should demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should incorporate the following measures:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Wherever possible, new buildings shall be orientated to maximise the opportunities for both natural heating and ventilation and reducing exposure to wind and other elements;</li> <li>ii. Proposals involving both new and existing buildings shall demonstrate how they have been designed to maximise resistance and resilience to climate change for example by including measures such as solar shading, thermal mass, heating and ventilation of the building and appropriately coloured materials in areas exposed to direct sunlight, green and brown roofs, green walls, etc;</li> <li>iii. Use of trees and other planting, where appropriate as part of a landscape scheme, to provide shading of amenity areas, buildings and streets and to help to connect habitat, designed with native plants that are carefully selected, managed and adaptable to meet the predicted changed climatic conditions; and</li> <li>iv. All development shall minimise surface</li> </ul>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>As submitted part B has a universal effect and not all of the matters expected to be delivered will be relevant to every new development. The modification ensures that the policy is applied in a proportionate way which takes account of the scale, nature and location of the development proposed.</p>

Section/policy	Examiner's recommended changes	Local Authority decision and reason
	<p>water runoff to prevent off-site flooding through the design of a suitable SuDS-based drainage system, and where possible incorporate mitigation and resilience measures for any increases in flood risk that may occur due to climate change.</p> <p>Opportunities should be taken to reduce flood risk to existing residential properties through new development, particularly if this is located within a Critical Drainage Area (CDA).</p>	
Para 7.5	<p><u>... Policy GT07 takes account of this strategic approach. The same account will be taken of any updates to the parking standards.</u></p>	Agreed. Examiner recommends that the existing reference to these standards in the supporting text is expanded
GT07 Parking Provision	<p><del>A. Development proposals that create an increased need for parking must meet the requirements of the Maldon Vehicle Parking Standards 2018 Supplementary Planning Document or any successor.</del></p> <p>B. In order to ensure good design and layout of development, particularly residential development, proposals for parking are encouraged to use car ports and/or communal parking to deliver their parking requirements. All parking provision must be permanently available for parking use.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>As submitted part A of the policy does not bring any added value to the parking standards already applied by MDC and the County Council. As such, I recommend that it is deleted.</p>
new para 7.13	<p><u>Development in locations where no connections with existing footways can be provided are considered to have limited sustainability.</u></p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Policy text transposed to supporting text.</p>
GT08 Pedestrian and Cycle Access	<p>A. Proposals to improve pedestrian and cycle access will be supported. In particular, such proposals should focus on improving access between Totham North and South and to Wickham Bishops.</p> <p>B. To help ensure that residents can walk safely to local facilities serving the community, new developments must seek to ensure safe pedestrian access to link up with existing footways.</p> <p><del>Development in locations where no connections with existing footways can be provided are</del></p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>B -2<sup>nd</sup> sentence reads as a statement rather than a policy. Repositioned into the supporting text.</p>



Section/policy	Examiner's recommended changes	Local Authority decision and reason
	<p><del>considered to have limited sustainability.</del></p> <p>C. Proposals to enhance the Pedestrian Walkway Routes identified in Figures 7.2 and 7.3 are strongly encouraged. Development that is immediately adjacent to these Pedestrian Walkway Routes will be expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. ensure the retention and where possible the enhancement of the Pedestrian Walkway Route; and</li> <li>ii. be designed so it does not have a detrimental impact on the Pedestrian Walkway Route and its environment to ensure the safety and flow of pedestrians.</li> </ul>	
GTO9 Expansion of Community and Leisure Uses	No change	
GTO10 Play Facilities	<p>A. <u>Insofar as planning permission is required</u> proposals to improve facilities at Totham North and Totham South Recreation Grounds will be supported. This includes improvement to the quality and range of play apparatus and seating.</p> <p>B. <u>Where practicable</u>, any new or enhancement to existing facilities should be designed to provide a multiple purpose use that is sympathetic to its natural setting and the landscape character.</p>	Agreed Policy now recognises that not all development requires planning permission., and that shared facilities may not always be capable of delivery or would apply.
Community Aspirations	No change	
Other matters	Recommend modification of general text (where necessary) to achieve consistency with the modified policies.	Noted This provides flexibility to make consequential changes to the general text as needed.

## Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan Area







# **GREAT TOTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2020-2035**

**Great Totham Parish Council  
Referendum Version  
March 2022**

Photographs credit: Roy McPherson

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**APPENDIX A      GREAT TOTHAM VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT (PROVIDED SEPARATELY)**

**APPENDIX B      LOCAL VIEWS**

**APPENDIX C      CIRCULAR WALKS AND CYCLE ROUTES**

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## Purpose of the plan

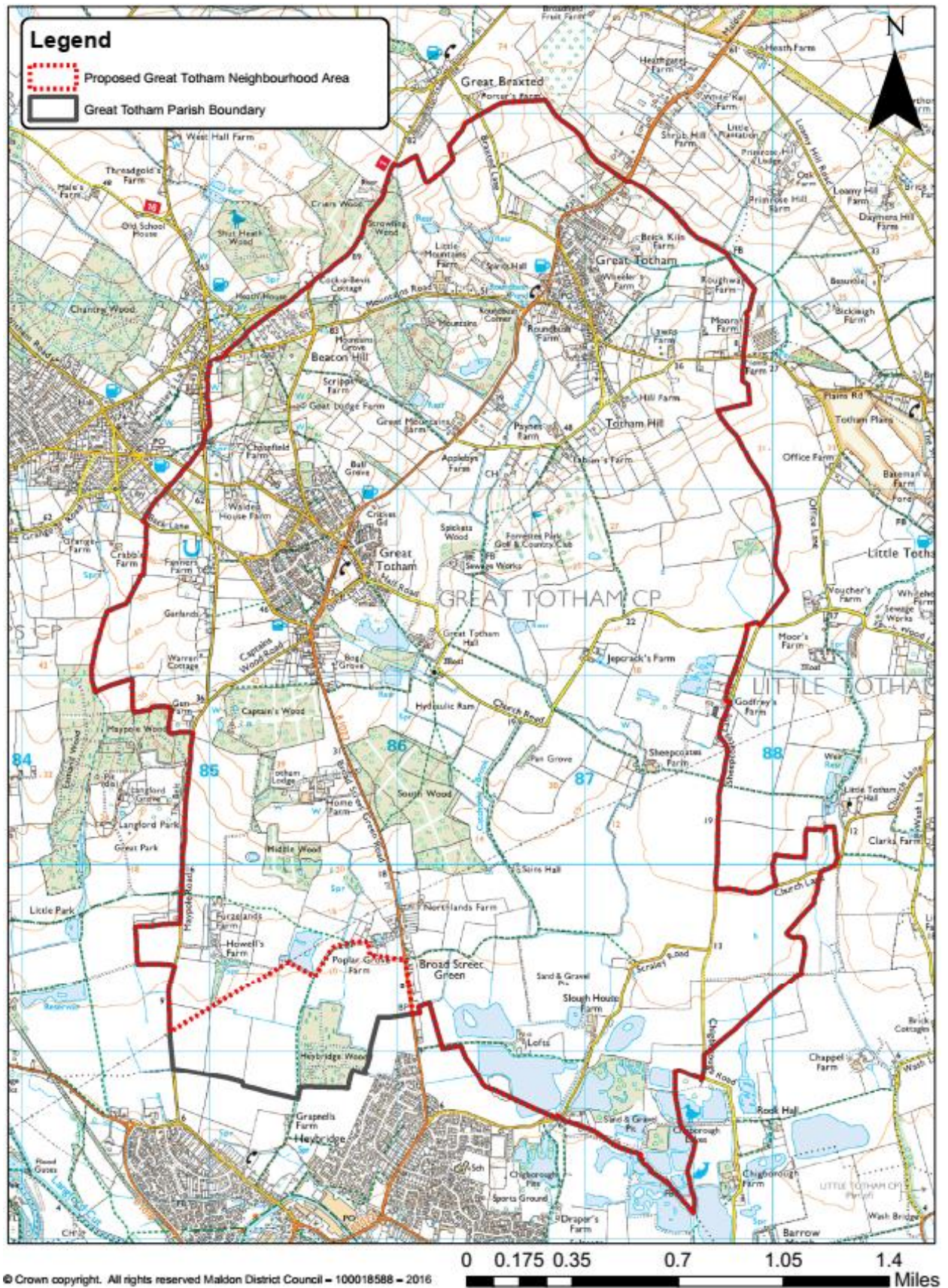
- 1.1 This document represents the Neighbourhood Plan for Great Totham parish for the period 2020 to 2035. The Plan contains a vision for the future of Great Totham and sets out clear planning policies and actions to realise this vision.
- 1.2 The principal purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to guide development within the Neighbourhood Area. It also provides guidance to anyone wishing to submit a planning application for development within the Area. The process of producing a plan has sought to involve the community as widely as possible. The different topic areas are reflective of matters that are of considerable importance to the Area's residents, businesses and community groups.
- 1.3 Some of the Neighbourhood Plan policies are general and apply throughout the Plan area, whilst others are site or area-specific and apply only to the appropriate areas illustrated on the relevant map. Nevertheless, in considering proposals for development, Maldon District Council will apply all relevant policies of the Plan. It is therefore assumed that the Plan will be read as a whole, although some cross-referencing between Plan policies has been provided.
- 1.4 The process of producing the Neighbourhood Plan has identified a number of actions which have not been included in the policies' sections. This is because these are not specifically related to land use matters and therefore sit outside the jurisdiction of a Neighbourhood Plan. These actions will be addressed outside of the Neighbourhood Plan process.

## Policy context

- 1.5 The Neighbourhood Plan represents one part of the development plan for the neighbourhood area over the period 2020 to 2035, the other parts being the Maldon District Local Plan (2017) which covers the period to 2029 and the Essex Minerals Local Plan (2014) and Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (2017).
- 1.6 Maldon District Council, as the local planning authority, designated the Great Totham Neighbourhood Area in November 2016 to enable Great Totham Parish Council to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan has been prepared by the community through the Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan (GTNP) Steering Group.
- 1.7 The GTNP has been prepared in accordance with the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended). The GTNP Steering Group has prepared the plan to establish a vision for the future of the Neighbourhood Area and to set out how that vision will be realised through planning and controlling land use and development change over the plan period.
- 1.8 The map in Figure 1.1 overleaf shows the boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan Area which is slightly smaller than the area of the civil parish. It excludes the parish area allocated in the Maldon District Local Development Plan for the development of the North Heybridge Garden Suburb.



Figure 1.1: Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan Area boundary



- 1.9 Minerals and waste local plans set out the policy framework within which minerals and waste planning applications are assessed. They also contain policies which safeguard known mineral bearing land from sterilisation, and existing, permitted and allocated mineral and waste infrastructure from proximal development which may compromise their operation.

***Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (WLP)***

- 1.10 Essex County Council is the Waste Planning Authority (WPA) for the Plan area and is responsible for preparing planning policies and assessing applications for waste management development. The WLP was adopted in July 2017 forming part of the statutory Development Plan and should be read alongside the adopted Maldon Local Development Plan. The WLP covers the period from 2017 to 2032. It sets out where and how waste management developments can occur and contains the policies against which waste management planning applications are assessed. Policy 2 of the WLP designates Waste Consultation Areas within 250m of active, allocated or permitted waste management facilities (400m in the case of Water Recycling Centres). These act to ensure that ECC are consulted on all non-waste related development proposals to ensure that there are no detrimental impacts which would compromise the operation of the existing facility or the newly proposed development.

***Essex Minerals Local Plan 2014 (MLP)***

- 1.11 The Essex Minerals Local Plan 2014 (MLP) forms part of the statutory Development Plan and should be read alongside the Maldon Local Development Plan. Sand and gravel deposits are subject to a Minerals Safeguarding policy (Policy S8), which seeks to prevent deposits being sterilised by on mineral development.
- 1.12 Mineral Consultation Areas are also established through Policy S8 and these act to ensure that ECC is consulted on all non-mineral related development within a distance of 250m around active, allocated and permitted quarries, and other mineral infrastructure.
- 1.13 Some of the Plan Area in the East, South and West and North West lie within a Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA) due to the presence of sand and gravel deposits beneath the ground (see Appendix 1). These areas are subject to the Minerals Safeguarding Policy S8 of the MLP, which seeks to prevent deposits being unnecessarily sterilised by non-mineral development. However, all housing allocations proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan fall below the site size threshold at which the provisions of Policy S8 are engaged.

**Monitoring the Plan**

- 1.14 Great Totham Parish Council, as the responsible body for the Neighbourhood Plan, will be responsible for maintaining and periodically revisiting the Plan to ensure relevance and to monitor delivery.
- 1.15 Maldon District Council has recently begun the review of the Maldon District Local Development Plan. It is recognised that an early review of the Neighbourhood Plan may be required following the adoption of the LDP, to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan remains in conformity with the LDP. This will be an important matter for the local planning policy

context. The Parish Council will assess the need or otherwise for a review of the neighbourhood plan within six months of the adoption of the emerging Local Development Plan.



## 2 LOCAL CONTEXT

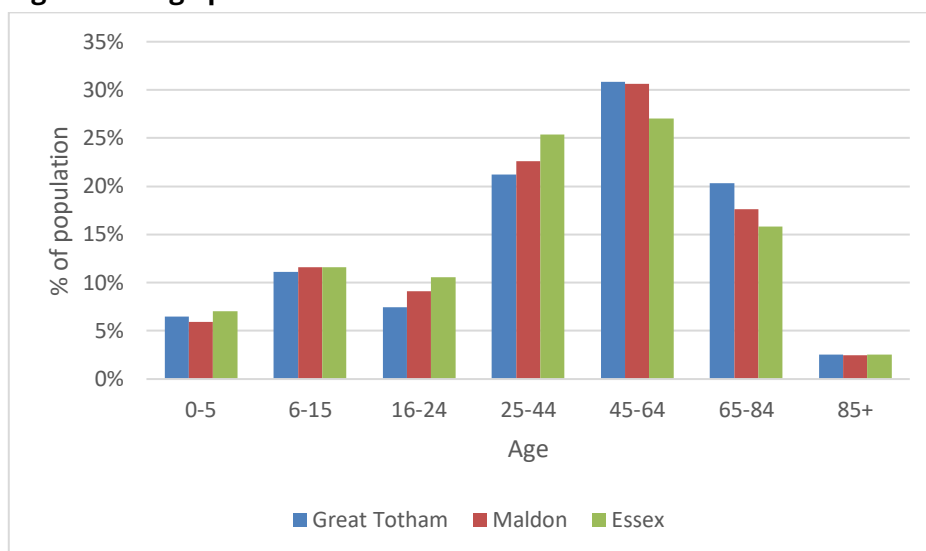
### History of Great Totham

- 2.1 Great Totham has been a settlement since the Saxons occupied it as a lookout place, taking advantage of its extensive open views over a long stretch of the Blackwater River. The village has always been open and dispersed therefore has not developed over time as a historic 'English village'. The thirteenth century church of St. Peter, the Vicarage and Totham Hall are separated from the main village population, even at the latter's current extent.
- 2.2 In the early nineteenth century the parish consisted of scattered farms, their houses and cottages. The small, principal settlements were around the Parish Gravel Pits (now Totham South), and Totham Hill (now part of Totham North). Population was rising at this time but this trend was checked from 1850 by agricultural decline, mechanisation and the drift to urban industry. By 1931 Totham's population at 982 was only a little above what it had been 80 years previously.
- 2.3 The beginning of the twentieth century saw some building; there were larger properties such as Beacons and Great Ruffins which date from this era but most houses were small, built for rent. Local authority housing provision began after the First World War. The Ordnance Survey map for 1958 shows a village little changed for half a century with most development around the crossroads at Totham South and some at the Green in Totham North, along with isolated farms and rural buildings elsewhere in the Parish.
- 2.4 The population had risen to 1228 by 1951 and from 1960 Great Totham began to grow into its current shape. Larger schemes from private developers and individual infill properties appeared in Totham North, Totham South, Broad Street Green and Beacon Hill. As a result the population reached 2,930 in 2011. This was linked to factors such as increased car ownership and consequent mobility so people could live further from work, coupled with a desire to live in a more rural environment.
- 2.5 Employment in Great Totham was historically in agriculture and related industries such as milling by wind and water, also brick, tile and pottery making from local clay pits. Today little of such employment remains and most residents work in neighbouring towns or commute to London.
- 2.6 Modern developments have, in the main, retained the open aspect of the earlier settlement, its 'Arcadian' quality as defined and discussed elsewhere. There has been little building of an inappropriate urban nature and buildings of different periods sit together in relative harmony. Surveys show that, while Great Totham may not be a conventionally historic village, its environment, views and landscape are cherished by its inhabitants.

## Profile of the community today

- 2.7 Data from the 2011 Census for Great Totham parish<sup>1</sup> identifies some key features of the population of Great Totham. Figure 2.1 shows that, compared with Maldon district and Essex county, the parish has a high proportion of retired people – nearly one-quarter of the population. It has a correspondingly low proportion of people of young working age (25-44).

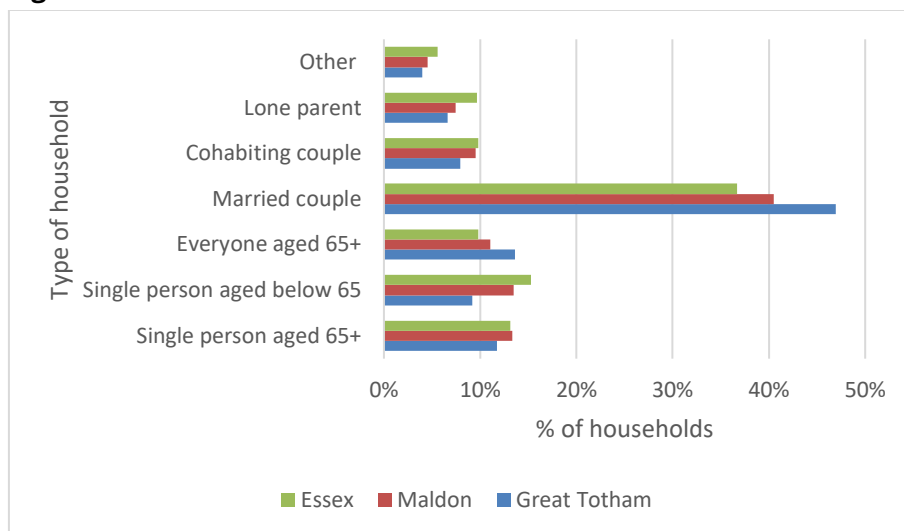
**Figure 2.1: Age profile**



Source: 2011 Census

- 2.8 Figure 2.2 shows that Great Totham has a high proportion of households with married couples and also households where every member is aged 65 or above. The profile is predominantly of small households, either of retired people or couples with no dependent children – although not shown in Figure 2.2, 27% of Great Totham's households consist of couples with either no children or no dependent children, compared with 23% for Maldon district and 20% for Essex county.

<sup>1</sup> Whilst the parish is a slightly larger area, there are few residents within the excluded area, therefore the statistics will be only slightly different to the Neighbourhood Area.

**Figure 2.2: Profile of households**

Source: 2011 Census

- 2.9 The majority of residential properties in Great Totham are detached. Figure 2.3 shows that nearly two-thirds are detached (which includes bungalows), with correspondingly low proportions of terraced properties or flats. It should be noted that since 2011, there has been some development of apartments which would serve to increase this share.

**Figure 2.3: Property type**

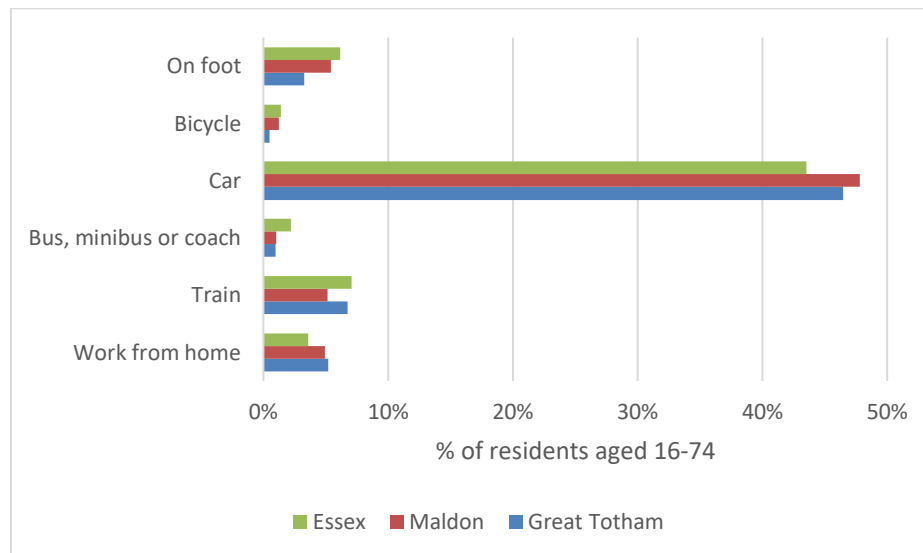
Source: 2011 Census

- 2.10 Reflecting the fact that many households in Great Totham are small yet the stock of properties is mostly large, detached properties, a significant proportion of the residences in the parish are under-occupied. Figure 2.4 shows that nearly 60% of properties have an occupancy rating of +2 or more. This means that these properties have at least two spare bedrooms based on the number of people in the household and the number of bedrooms that the property has.

**Figure 2.4: Occupancy rating of properties**

Source: 2011 Census

- 2.11 Travel to work is predominantly by car, with nearly 50% of residents aged 16 to 74 (which includes those not working) travelling by car, either as a driver or passenger. The proportion that travel by rail (7%) will also mainly travel to the nearest stations by car. This is shown in Figure 2.5.

**Figure 2.5: Mode of travel to work**

Source: 2011 Census

## Great Totham's assets

- 2.12 Great Totham is a village surrounded by larger settlements; people move here for a quieter and more rural lifestyle and they tend to stay. We all enjoy the open and extensive views over countryside, which in some places extend right down to the Blackwater River. The views, particularly from the Beacon, are very special and some of the finest in Essex; they are often cited as the first and most compelling reason to move here. We also have many interconnecting footpaths through the local countryside and some lightly trafficked country lanes to walk on. From these we can enjoy the whole Parish. It is almost impossible to take a photograph at any time of day, anywhere, without someone out on a walk with their dog appearing in it.



**The Beacon and its view**

Credit: Roy McPherson



**Footpath from Hall Road towards Sheepcoates Farm**

Credit: Kevin Bennett

- 2.13 There is also a very highly regarded school here, Great Totham Primary School rated good by Ofsted, which draws people from the parish and the surrounding area, if they can secure a place for their child. It is a great community hub for the generation who have children of school age. It provides a meeting place and social life outside the school gate and through organised extra-curricular events. It is another compelling reason to live in the parish; like many good schools it has a full roll across its two forms of entry. The site has no physical room for further growth.
- 2.14 There are a number of important opportunities for social and community interaction in Great Totham, provided through the wide range of activities. There are extensively used sports and playing fields in both Totham South and Totham North. There is a thriving cricket club with a number of different teams based in Totham South. The village also has Cubs, Scouts, Brownies and Guides groups. There is a thriving independent tennis club and Beacon Hill Sports Ground on the border between Great Totham South and Wickham Bishops. We have three very popular churches - St Peter's Church of England, the United Reformed Church and The Barn Church of free denomination. In addition to religious worship they also provide a

Sunday School, Parent and Toddler group and a wide range of social activities not necessarily linked to the church.



**The Barn Church**

Credit: Paul Mutton



**Allotment at the United Reformed Church**

Credit: Paul Mutton

- 2.15 The village has grown in a natural and some might say haphazard way, developing as a result, a charming, if not conventional, character. As a result of this evolutionary development the village has a number of centres which is reflected in the presence of three public halls. The United Reform Church in Great Totham North also serves as a well-equipped social hall. The largest Village Hall in Great Totham South is important, architecturally, as a Mackmurdo building, and socially with a wide range of activities, which include a five-day-per-week pre-school. There is a third, smaller historical building, Honywood Hall, which is an excellent and well utilised meeting facility for a wide range of village activities.
- 2.16 The parish benefits from a number of commercial sites for social interaction. The 18-hole Forrester Golf Club which has tennis courts, a swimming pool and croquet facilities. It also serves as a popular wedding venue. There are two busy pubs, The Bull and The Prince of Wales in Totham South. There is also a very popular riding stable at Marvens.

## **Main issues and challenges in Great Totham**

- 2.17 Great Totham faces a number of challenges as a community, notably its ageing demographic. This is growing a little each year and so there is a need to provide more affordable homes for young people to start a life here and also consider houses suitable for older 'downsizers'. It could be argued that there are already a considerable number of single storey houses suitable for downsizing which are occupied by older residents that will be released over time on the open market.
- 2.18 There are also some quite challenging road conditions which become very apparent during commuting hours and the school run periods. There is a badly designed 5-way junction between Totham South and Wickham Bishops (see picture below) which is at a critical meeting of some very busy de-restricted roads and the site of a number of accidents every year. Another area of concern is Walden House Road - this serves the primary school and is also a very important commuter road. At school times it becomes very heavily parked, congested



and difficult, effectively becoming a single lane road due to inconsiderate parking which prevents passing traffic. Obviously, the interaction of traffic with young children makes this a serious issue. There is also the issue of crossing the busy main B1022. There is a crossing at the centre of Totham South but there is no safe crossing in Totham North where recreation ground and bus stop access are both an issue, as are the lack of pedestrian and cycling links which residents of Totham North need to access the many facilities in Totham South.



**Junction of Kelvedon Road, Maypole Road, Prince of Wales Road and Back Lane**

Credit: Kevin Bennett

- 2.19 Like many rural communities, Great Totham faces issues with access to medical facilities as there are none in the village. The community and Parish Council has taken the path of realism in this regard and has begun serious investigation of the various transport options rather than following the unrealistic aspiration of securing a medical facility in Great Totham. With our ageing demographic this is not an issue that is taken lightly.
- 2.20 A further issue that it is felt must be addressed is the avoidance of further incursions from urban architecture that has been brought in through modern development, by infill and generally through the design eye of people moving from urban areas to a rural village. Many of these matters adversely inhibit the easy everyday interactions which help build a strong community and are covered in the Great Totham Village Design Statement (VDS). The main issues are overly dense buildings and layouts for an Arcadian environment, the mass of built form dominating plots, high fences and forbidding gate structures.

### 3 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

#### Vision for Great Totham

- 3.1 The following vision was established for Great Totham parish over the plan period:

***'Great Totham will continue to develop as a village in an historic rural landscape, with its own clear identity and character.'***

***We will continue to enjoy our green spaces, woodlands and open views over farmland to the Blackwater.***

***All residents will feel safe and part of a strong, friendly and open community atmosphere where our many neighbourhood groups and social activities continue to flourish.***

***We recognise that some growth will be needed to ensure the village remains vibrant and sustainable.***

***Development will be small in scale and appropriately designed to be in sympathy with the existing rural character and local environment.***

***We will have a sound village infrastructure with safe roads, good public transport, cycle routes and footpaths (including Public Rights of Way) connecting us with other communities, commercial centres, providing ready access to employment and schools as well as recreational and social facilities within the village and outside.'***

#### Objectives for the plan

- 3.2 The following were identified as objectives for the Plan, in order that the vision could be realised:

##### **Housing and design**

- Ensure high quality design of development which is in keeping with local, Arcadian character.
- Evaluate all opportunities to meet identified housing needs.

##### **Environment**

- Protect important green spaces, woodlands and valued open views.

##### **Transport and movement**

- Improve pedestrian and cycle access between North and South Totham and improve access into the surrounding countryside, including for equestrian users.
- Address road safety and traffic interactions with pedestrians and cyclists.

##### **Community activities**

- Help leisure and community activities in North Totham and South Totham to thrive.



## 4 SPATIAL STRATEGY AND HOUSING NEED

- 4.1 The Maldon Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted in 2017 and sets the spatial strategy for the district up to 2029. As a 'larger village', Great Totham does not have any specific requirement to deliver housing, employment or retail growth. However, Policy S7 (Prosperous Rural Communities) does seek to ensure that rural settlements such as Great Totham are able to prosper through rural diversification, tourism leisure opportunities and green infrastructure and by encouraging Rural Exception Sites<sup>2</sup> to be brought forward which can address local housing needs.
- 4.2 As stated above, the LDP does not have a specific requirement for the Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan to deliver a specific level of housing. The LDP requires all neighbourhood plans across the district to deliver at least 100 dwellings in aggregate. Also, across the plan area, an allowance has been made for at least 300 'windfall' dwellings to be delivered between 2014 to 2029. It is understood that these requirements have already largely been met. As of 31 March 2019 there were extant planning permissions for 48 dwellings in the parish, including one site for 30 dwellings in Hall Road.
- 4.3 The spatial strategy for Great Totham in this Neighbourhood Plan therefore seeks to ensure that development is focused within the settlement development boundaries of Great Totham, as shown in Figures 4.1 and 4.2. These boundaries are the same as those shown on the Maldon Local Plan Policies Map. However, it is recognised that there is a need for flexibility around the development of uses that would enhance Great Totham's role as a Larger Village.
- 4.4 Such flexibility is mainly to allow housing sites to come forward that can address local housing needs. These are principally likely to be as Rural Exception Sites although the Neighbourhood Plan has not identified any such sites. A clear message from the community was that Great Totham is generally not a sustainable location for large scale residential growth. Any such growth must be of a scale that can contribute towards addressing local housing needs but is of a high quality design and layout which minimises its impact on the surrounding countryside and environment. In particular, it is important that any such site is well related to the existing settlement boundary and does not breach obvious boundaries such as roads or watercourses where there is no significant development on the other side already.
- 4.5 The Plan also recognises that Beacon Hill and Broad Street Green are communities in their own right. Whilst neither has its own settlement boundary (as defined in the Maldon District Local Plan), both have grown over time through small scale infill development. The Neighbourhood Plan encourages this continued, organic growth of these settlements where it helps to sustain them and meets the policy requirements of growth outside settlement boundaries.

<sup>2</sup> Rural exception sites are small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. They seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local planning authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

Figure 4.1: Totham North settlement boundary

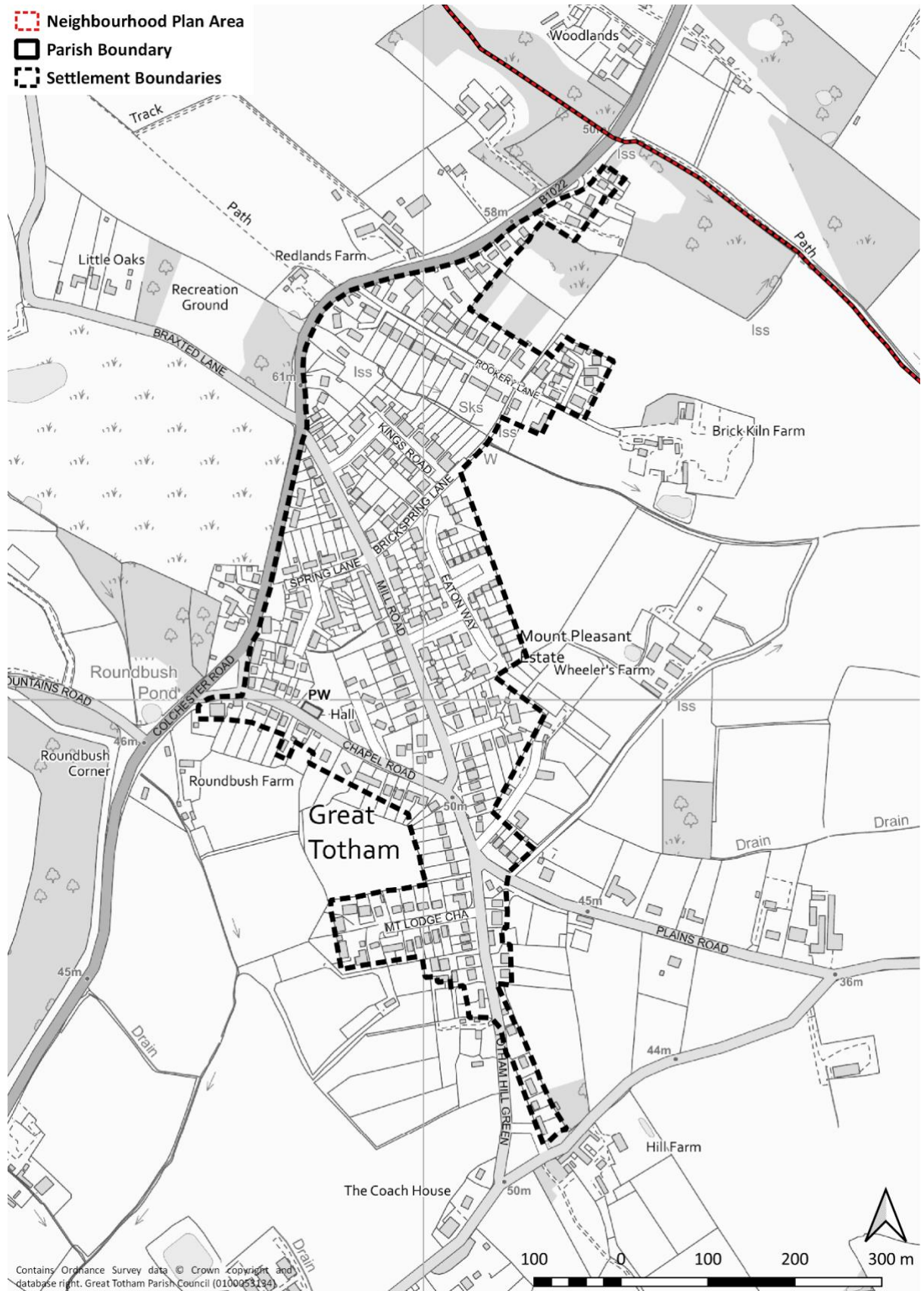
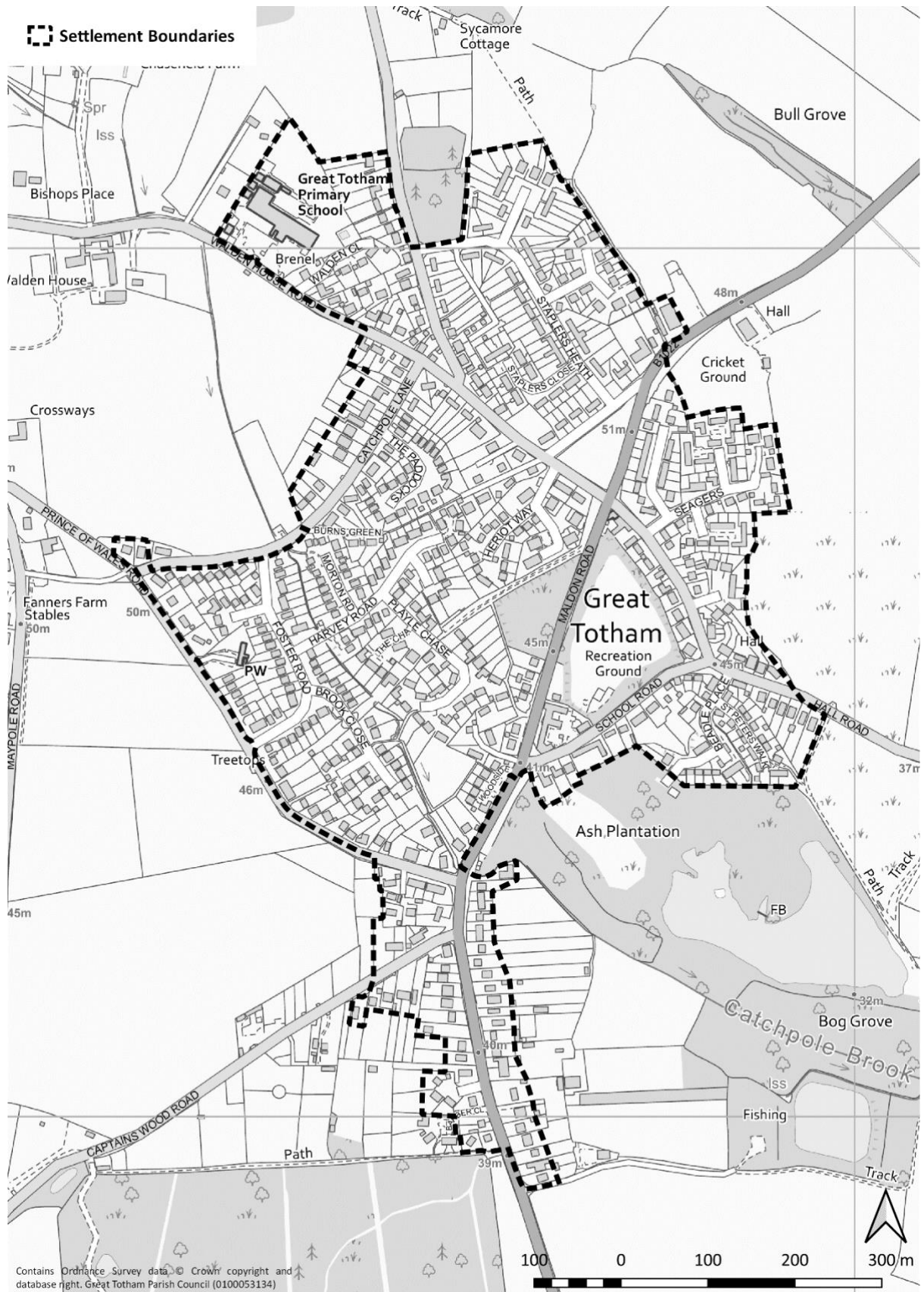


Figure 4.2: Totham South settlement boundary





4.6 The need for development to contribute towards the provision of necessary supporting infrastructure is important. This is principally negotiated on a case-by-case basis through Section 106 agreements. Essex County Council publishes a Developers Guide (updated in 2020) which provides details on the scope and range of contributions towards infrastructure which ECC may seek from developers and landowners in order to mitigate the impact and make development acceptable in planning terms. These contributions include:

- Education - Early Years and childcare; Schools (primary, secondary, post 16, Special Education Needs); School transport and sustainable travel
- Transport - Highways and Transportation; Sustainable Travel Planning; Passenger Transport; Public Rights of Way
- Employment and Skills Plans
- Waste Management
- Libraries
- Flood and Water Management and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

### **Housing need**

4.7 In March 2020, a Housing Needs Survey for Great Totham was published, based on a survey of needs of the local community undertaken in 2019<sup>3</sup>. The survey had a very good response rate of 34%. There was strong support for small development providing primarily affordable housing for local people. In total, 52 people completed the survey in full and expressed a housing need. This was split broadly evenly between those looking to set up their first/independent home and those wishing to downsize from their current property. This housing need was broken down as follows:

- Open market property – 13 units
- Affordable rent<sup>4</sup> – 11 units
- Shared ownership – 2 units
- Self-build – 1 unit
- Not enough information – 25 units (these were either people currently living with parents, people away at university, people in unsuitable accommodation or those looking to downsize).

<sup>3</sup> RCCE (2020) *Rural Community Council Essex Housing Needs Survey: Great Totham*, for Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

<sup>4</sup> Affordable housing for rent meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

- 4.8 The needs of those trying to get on the property ladder for the first time commonly relate to having insufficient equity whereas for the downsizers, the issue is more about the availability of suitable smaller properties, e.g. bungalows. In this regard, the younger people trying to get on the property ladder have a housing 'need' which they cannot address, even if properties are available, whereas the issue for older downsizers is more a lack of supply of the type of property they would like to live in.
- 4.9 Across all types of need/supply shortage, the main requirement was for 2-bed properties. For older downsizers this was preferably a bungalow.
- 4.10 The Housing Needs Survey considered that, based on the survey and reflecting the needs at present, there is justification to provide three 1-bed units and two 2-bed units to address local needs. It should be borne in mind that the recommendations of a Housing Needs Survey are applicable for five years, so there are likely to be further needs that arise later in the plan period.
- 4.11 Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan does not identify specific sites to deliver such needs, it supports the delivery of any rural exception sites or small, market-led sites which specifically address these needs for smaller properties, including bungalows.
- 4.12 It is important that this evidence is kept up to date, therefore any sites coming forward after 2025 (when the Housing Needs Survey has expired) will need to be supported by up-to-date evidence of need.
- 4.13 All development proposals will be expected to contribute as necessary towards infrastructure which shall include transport and movement (including community transport and infrastructure to improve pedestrian safety), health, education community facilities, utilities and environmental improvements, through direct provision and/or developer contributions (including Section 106 and/or, as appropriate, Community Infrastructure Levy).

#### **POLICY GTO1: SPATIAL STRATEGY**

- A. New development in Great Totham Parish will be focused within the settlement boundaries of North Totham and South Totham as shown in Figures 4.1 and 4.2.**
- B. Development proposals to meet identified local housing needs on sites that are outside the settlement boundary will be supported where they meet all of the following criteria:**
- i. It can be demonstrated that no available and deliverable site exists within the settlement boundary.**
  - ii. The site is well related to the settlement boundary, sharing a boundary on at least one side.**
  - iii. The site does not breach an existing defensible boundary, e.g. watercourse or main road, where there is not already development on both sides.**

## 5 HIGH QUALITY ARCADIAN DESIGN

- 5.1 Great Totham parish sits at the western edge of a band of Essex landscape stretching from the Suffolk border to the River Thames. This contains former heathland and wooded hills, overlapping with the low-lying coastal zone of the River Blackwater. The village lies on a generally south-east facing slope from Beacon Hill (at 292 feet, the highest point in Maldon district and one of the highest in South Essex), to near sea level at Chigborough Farm. From Beacon Hill views stretch to Southend-on-Sea, Mersea Island and the coast of North Kent. The natural landscape has helped form the character of Great Totham and is a key influence on the village's social and economic development.

### Layout

- 5.2 Great Totham is regarded as an 'Arcadian' settlement. This means that it is dispersed and does not cluster around a street or green. As a result there is no sense of enclosure or an urban configuration. This has been a fundamental principle that has informed the way that Great Totham has evolved as a village over time. Unfortunately, some recent development has not adhered to these principles and feels out of character with the rest of the village. The community considers it very important to re-establish these Arcadian principles in the design of new development.

**Definition: 'ARCADIAN SETTLEMENT'**

***'One that is dispersed and does not have a core street or green at their heart. Instead there are various dispersed groupings or hamlets each with its own specific, but fairly small historic core. There is no scale or sense of enclosure approaching an almost urban configuration.'***

*Source: Maldon District Characterisation Assessment 2012*

- 5.3 A description of local character is given in the Village Design Statement 2022. Responding to and respecting local character should be the starting point for every new design. The following section is an abridged version of the Great Totham Village Design Statement (VDS). The full VDS is available at Appendix A of the Neighbourhood Plan (due to file size, this is provided as a separate downloadable document).
- 5.4 Most of Great Totham's present stock of properties have been developed since the 1920s. Analysis of the density of the development since this time has shown that in Totham South, densities generally varied between 15 and 20 dwellings per hectare (dph) and in Totham North, between 13 and 20 dph. There are some exceptions but these have been where apartment development has been included, e.g. Heriot Way and Beadle Place. Whilst no absolute constraint should necessarily be placed on density, this highlights how development has been designed at comparatively low densities and has shaped the feeling of space in the Arcadian settlement areas.



**Well-spaced bungalows set back from the road**

Credit: Kevin Bennett

- 5.5 Properties of various periods sit in close proximity but do not generally 'jar'. The village's open configuration means that houses sit back from the road with front gardens; hedges and low walls predominate rather than fences. Developments are interspersed with trees and are generally laid out to follow and respect the natural lie of the land.
- 5.6 In established areas and the more open plan estates, houses look outwards and towards roads. By contrast, some recent additions have a more enclosed feel with single road access points, higher densities, smaller plots and taller buildings. One example is Beadle Place, built on re-used industrial land.



**Tall houses with small front gardens, Beadle Place**

Credit: Google Maps

- 5.7 The open feel of the Arcadian settlement means that there are myriad views between buildings. Development in keeping is generally laid out to enable this; one modern example is Barber Close. Development should be laid out in such a way as to offer views between buildings. This includes small infill development within the settlement boundaries.



**Housing laid out to allow glimpses of countryside to rear, Barber Close**

Credit: Kevin Bennett

- 5.8 The topography of the landscape has also influenced the visual impact of development in certain parts of Great Totham. One example of flats built in a former quarry (Heriot Way) is a good example of how new development can be sensitively blended in with the contours of the landscape. Where development is likely to have a visual impact, this should be an important consideration of the design and layout.



**Flats at Heriot Way**

Credit: Kevin Bennett

## Style and materials

- 5.9 As the development of the village was incremental, houses with different styles and finishes jostle together. Some larger twentieth century developments have generally succeeded in breaking up their impact and softening their appearance through judicious variations in materials and finishes. This is seen as a good thing.
- 5.10 The Great Totham Village Design Statement 2022 identifies a number of features of the design of buildings across the parish. These include:
- A variety of modern brick colours which introduce variety within streets.





### Variety of brick and wall finish

Credit: Kevin Bennett

- Render, which is used throughout the village, both on individual properties and in estate locations and gives welcome variety and contrast to brick.



### Variety of render finishes

Credit: Kevin Bennett

- A great variety of roof styles, with pitched roofs of varying angles, hipped roofs and a few mansard roofs. They also exhibit a variety of roof materials.



### Roof styles

Credit: Kevin Bennett

- Dormers are found on houses of all ages, providing a welcome variety in roof lines and adding a degree of individuality to streetscapes.



### Dormer windows

Credit: Kevin Bennett

- The great majority of village dwellings sit back from the road with front gardens. Boundaries are defined by low hedges, stone or brick walls, shrubs or even simply the edge of lawns. Properties should avoid sitting very close to the road or jutting aggressively into sightlines.
- 5.11 Given that most new building in Great Totham will be small scale infill within the settlement, their suitability in relation to existing, neighbouring buildings is important. The watchword in the Village Design Statement is “Architectural Good Manners”. Each residential development proposal should include a proportionate statement and illustrations demonstrating how the principles and guidance in the Village Design Statement have been addressed.
- 5.12 Policy GTO2 focuses on residential development. It is considered that the limited amount of commercial development is satisfactorily addressed by the policies in the Maldon Local Plan.

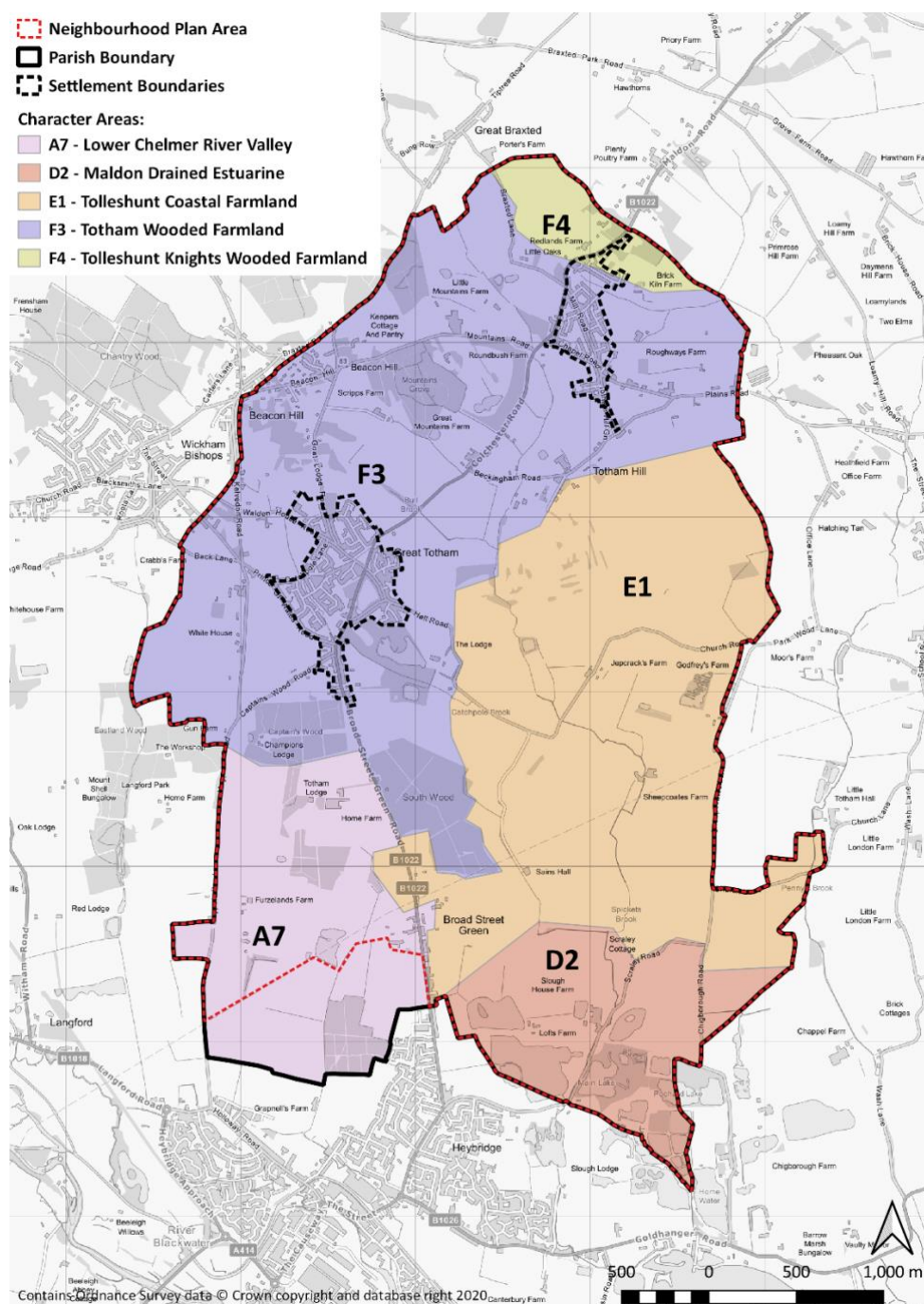
#### **POLICY GTO2: HIGH QUALITY ARCADIAN DESIGN**

- A. Residential development should demonstrate high quality design and layout which respects the ‘Arcadian’ nature, and local character identified in the Village Design Statement, of Great Totham. In particular this means:**
- i. The layout avoiding an overly dense feel, including the configuration of parking provision (see Policy GTO8).
  - ii. Opportunities are taken to retain views between buildings.
  - iii. Where the topography of the landscape is not flat and development is very visual, it is designed to blend into the contours of the landscape.
  - iv. Development provides sensitive lighting to retain the dark skies in Great Totham.
- B. In delivering high quality design, residential development proposals should demonstrate that they reflect the Arcadian nature and the local character identified in the Village Design Statement of Great Totham through the use of design, materials and features. Where appropriate, the following design features should be incorporated into design proposals:**
- i. Provision of a variety of brick and render materials, roof styles and features. The choice of materials is expected to minimise the carbon footprint of development.
  - ii. Development is set back from roads and boundary treatments are at a low level, creating an open feel.
  - iii. Landscaping, including boundary treatments such as hedges, shall be used to ensure development does not create a hard edge.
- C.**

## 6 ENVIRONMENT

- 6.1 The landscape and natural environment of Great Totham is varied and diverse and highly appreciated by residents. This variety is shown by the assessment<sup>5</sup> which identified its distinct landscape character areas. These are shown in Figure 6.1 below.

**Figure 6.1: Landscape Character Areas across Great Totham parish**



Source: From 2006 Landscape Character Assessment (Chris Blandford Associates)

<sup>5</sup> Chris Blandford Associates (2006) *Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessments*, for the respective District Councils



6.2 This shows that the majority of the parish where the settlements are is classified as 'Totham Wooded Farmland'. Its key characteristics are:

- Wooded ridges and hillsides to the east of the River Blackwater.
- Predominantly agricultural fields enclosed by woodland patches or hedgerows with mature trees.
- Some field boundaries are thickly enclosed, as at Beacon Hill, whereas some are more open with gappy hedges.



**Strowling Wood viewed from Braxted Lane, Great Totham North**

Credit: Roy McPherson

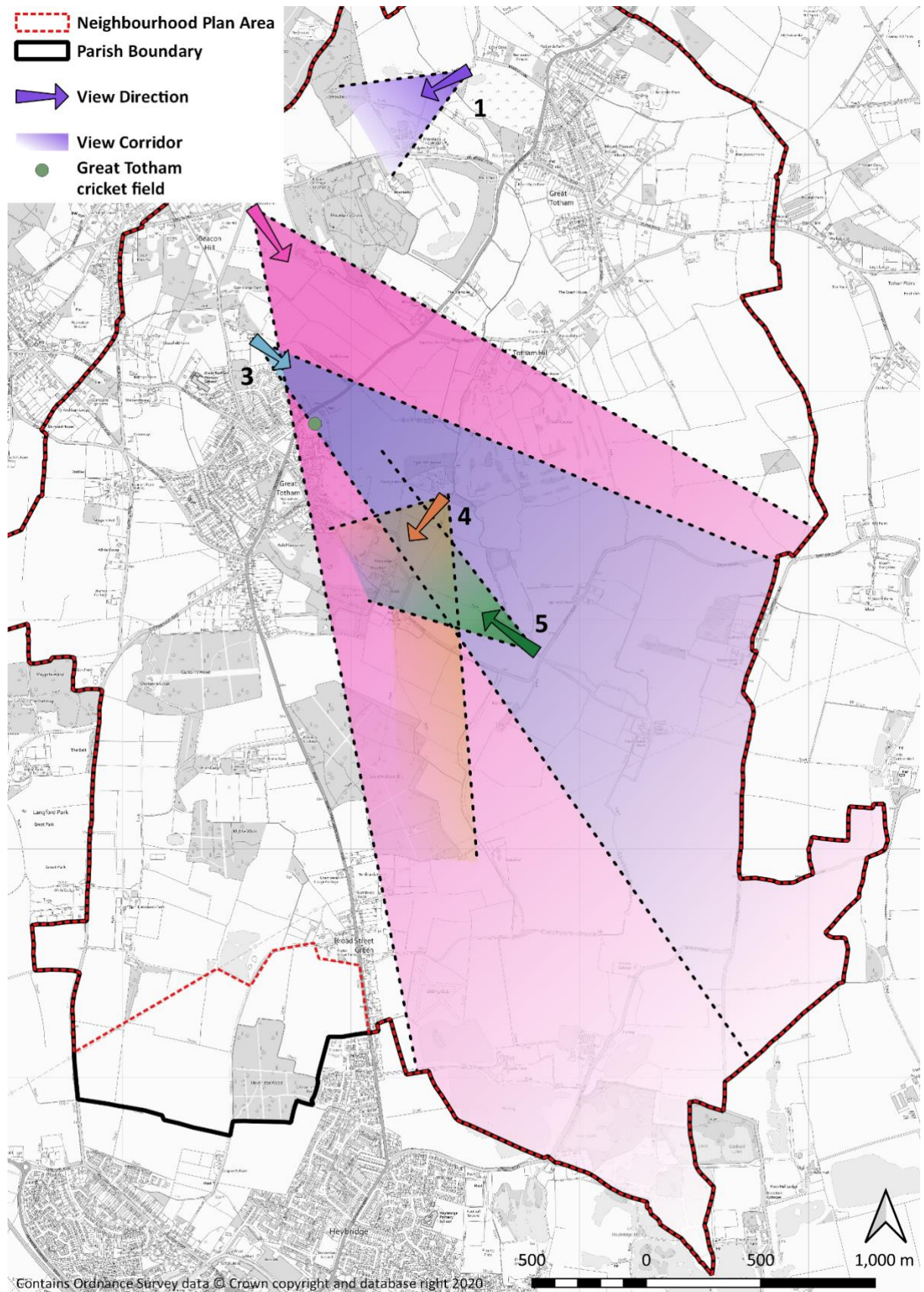
6.3 The comparatively well-wooded nature of the majority of the parish is recognised in the Landscape Character Assessment. This not only provides a very visually attractive landscape but also provides a range of habitats for a wide variety of flora and fauna.

## **Views**

6.4 In contrast to the generally flat topography of much of the wider surrounding area, the land rises up around Great Totham, culminating with Beacon Hill being the highest point in Maldon district and one of the highest in South Essex. Coupled with the wooded farmland across much of the parish, there are some significant views of value.

6.5 The views that must be preserved are not only where the land slopes over a distance. Along with the long distance views from Beacon Hill and St Peters Church towards the edges of the parish are more localised views which, to the existing community, represent the best examples of the farmed and wooded landscapes in the parish. A summary of the views is shown in Figure 6.2, with the detail of each view shown in Appendix B.

Figure 6.2: Views



Note: Views 2 and 3 are long distance and extent to in excess of 20km and 12km respectively



**View 1: View of Strowling Wood and Mountains Grove from Braxted Lane**

Credit: Roy McPherson

- 6.6 This is a medium-distance view that displays very well the character of the Totham Farmed Woodland character, with a series of ancient woodlands on the top of the ridge. Strowling Wood is seen in the centre-right of the picture. Braxted Lane is a quiet country lane which makes it a popular route for walkers and cyclists.

**View 2: View from Beacon Hill in Goat Lodge Road**

Credit: Kevin Bennett

- 6.7 This is one of the longest distance views in Essex, stretching to Southend-on-Sea, Mersea Island and the coast of North Kent. It also shows the Tolleshunt Coastal Farmland character of the more open area to the east and includes the village gateway at the village hall, as well as glimpses of Totham Hill Green.

**View 3: View south-east towards Goldhanger and Osea Island**

Credit: Kevin Bennett

- 6.8 This is a medium- to long-distance view across the Tolleshunt Coastal farmland and the River Blackwater towards Goldhanger and Osea Island. The view can be seen from the footpath that moves towards the Beacon from close to the Bull Inn. This footpath is sandwiched between garden fences and a hedgerow boundary of the Bull Meadow. At the top of Staplers Heath estate, it opens out and within a few metres exposes the vista. It would be particularly vulnerable to inappropriate development of Totham South.

**View 4: View from the footpaths close to Spickets Wood**

Credit: Andrew Boorman

- 6.9 This is a short- to medium-distance view up to the Beacon across Bull Meadow, in which the village hall, cricket ground and Bull Inn catch your eye. From the permissive bridlepath, the view widens to include a view up to Totham North and Totham Green. This vista highlights the sensitivity of the landscape to ribbon development along the B1022 between Totham North and South, as well as outside the southern settlement boundary of Totham North. There is a water recycling plant in Spickets Wood. Whilst this does not add to to the view, it is recognised that there may need to be future upgrades to this in order to provide sewerage services. Development to support such upgrades is supported in principle.

**View 5: View towards St Peter's Church and along Church Road**

Credit: Roy McPherson



- 6.10 One half of this view is a short-distance view from the bridge over Spickets Brook near Jepcracks Farm towards St Peter's Church. It is the best view of St Peter's Church, a grade II\* listed church with its Grade II listed monuments and rectory, in the parish.



Credit: Roy McPherson

- 6.11 As you scan towards the north-west and move along Church Road, a medium-distance view towards Spickets Wood and then further in the distance, the Beacon, can be seen.
- 6.12 Totham's cricket field is seen as one of the most precious assets in the community. Not only does it enable Great Totham Cricket Club to play matches and for spectators to enjoy this, but it provides this in a very attractive setting. Whilst this attractive setting is not a view like those identified above, development in the sight line across the cricket field looking towards the village hall and pavilion would have a detrimental impact on the character of the setting unless it is well designed.

**View north-east across Totham cricket field towards the pavilion**



Credit: Paul Mutton

- 6.13 Any development that is highly visible in this view would have a detrimental impact on its setting. Given the line of the settlement boundary, such risks would be most likely to come

from development encroaching on either side of the field, thereby narrowing the view. Therefore, it is necessary that any development proposals must clearly show how their scale, design and layout minimise this and safeguard the setting of the cricket field generally.

#### **POLICY GTO3: IMPORTANT VIEWS AND SETTING OF TOTHAM CRICKET FIELD**

**A. The Plan identifies the following key views which contribute to the character and the appearance of the neighbourhood area:**

1. View of Stowling Wood and Mountains Grove from Braxted Lane
2. View from Beacon Hill in Goat Lodge Road
3. View south-east towards Goldhanger and Osea Island
4. View from the footpaths close to Spickets Wood
5. View towards St Peter's Church and along Church Road

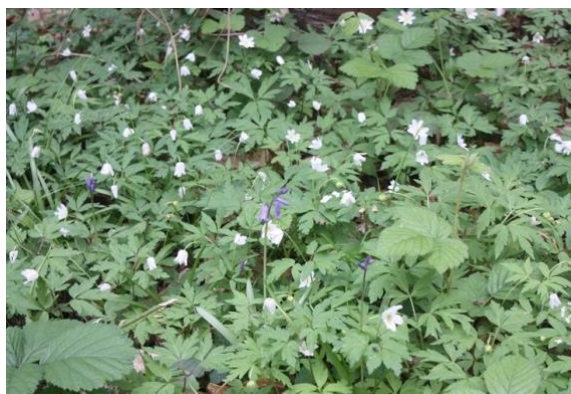
The design, scale, massing and layout of development proposals should respect the identified key views and should not unacceptably impact from their significance in the neighbourhood area.

Development proposals which would unacceptably impact on the identified key views will not be supported.

**B. Development should take account of the setting of Totham cricket field (as shown on Figure 6.2). Any development proposals adjacent or close to the cricket field should be designed and arranged in a manner which would safeguard the setting of the cricket field and keep any impacts to the minimum necessary to achieve the delivery of the development proposed.**

### **Green wildlife corridors and wildlife-friendly design**

- 6.14 Traveling on Kelvedon Road or Mountains Road and walking the nearby footpaths, it is easy to see why this is classified as the Totham Wooded Farmland landscape character area. This part of the parish with its deciduous woodlands, mature hedgerows, mixed sized arable and pasture fields, and long scale views out toward the Blackwater Estuary, is the epitome of this landscape designation.



**Wood Anemones and Bluebells in South Wood, Totham South**

Credit: Andrew Boorman

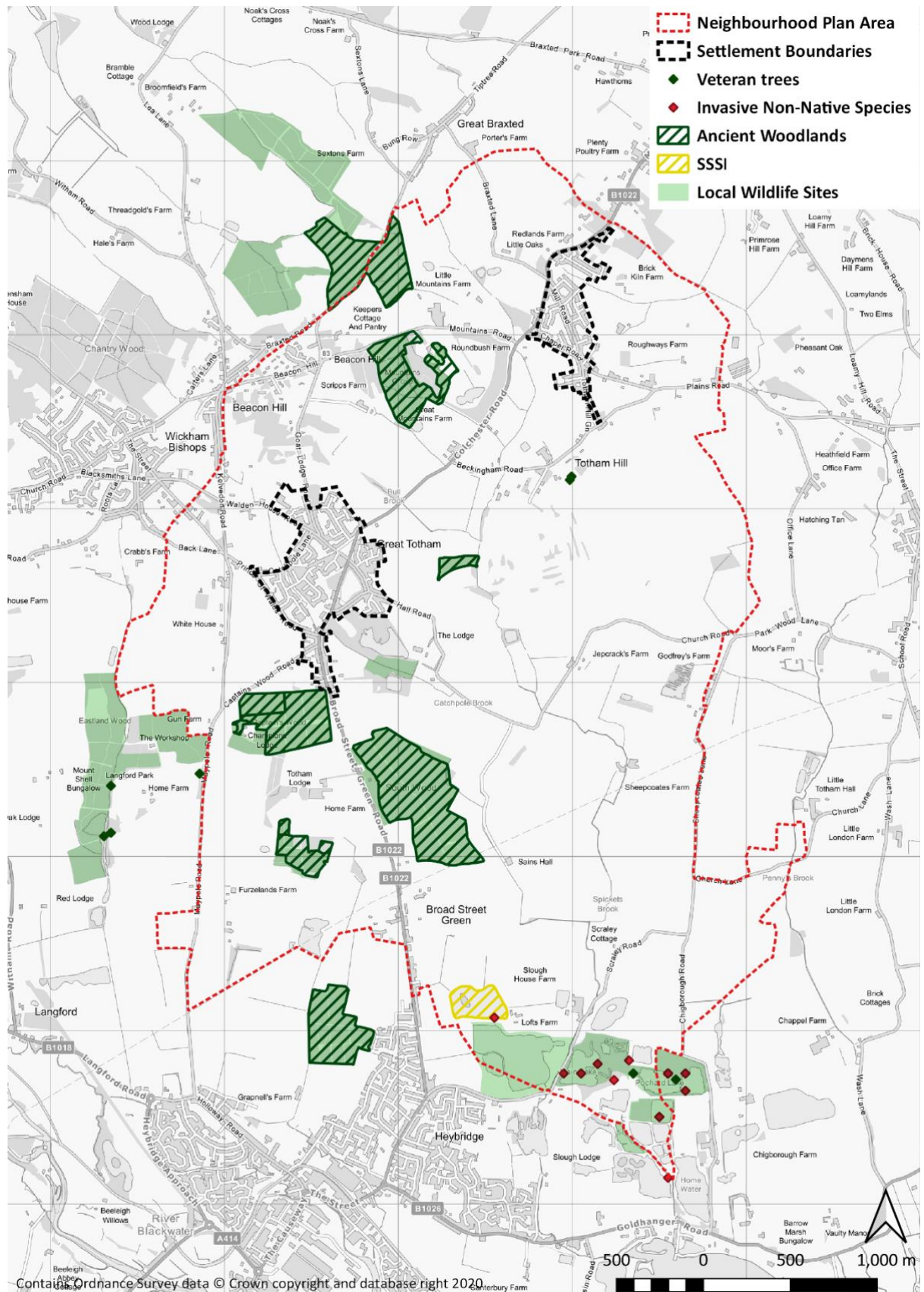


**Wildlife corridor along Mountains Road, from the Beacon to Mountains Grove**

Credit: Andrew Boorman



Figure 6.3: Environmental designations in the Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan area

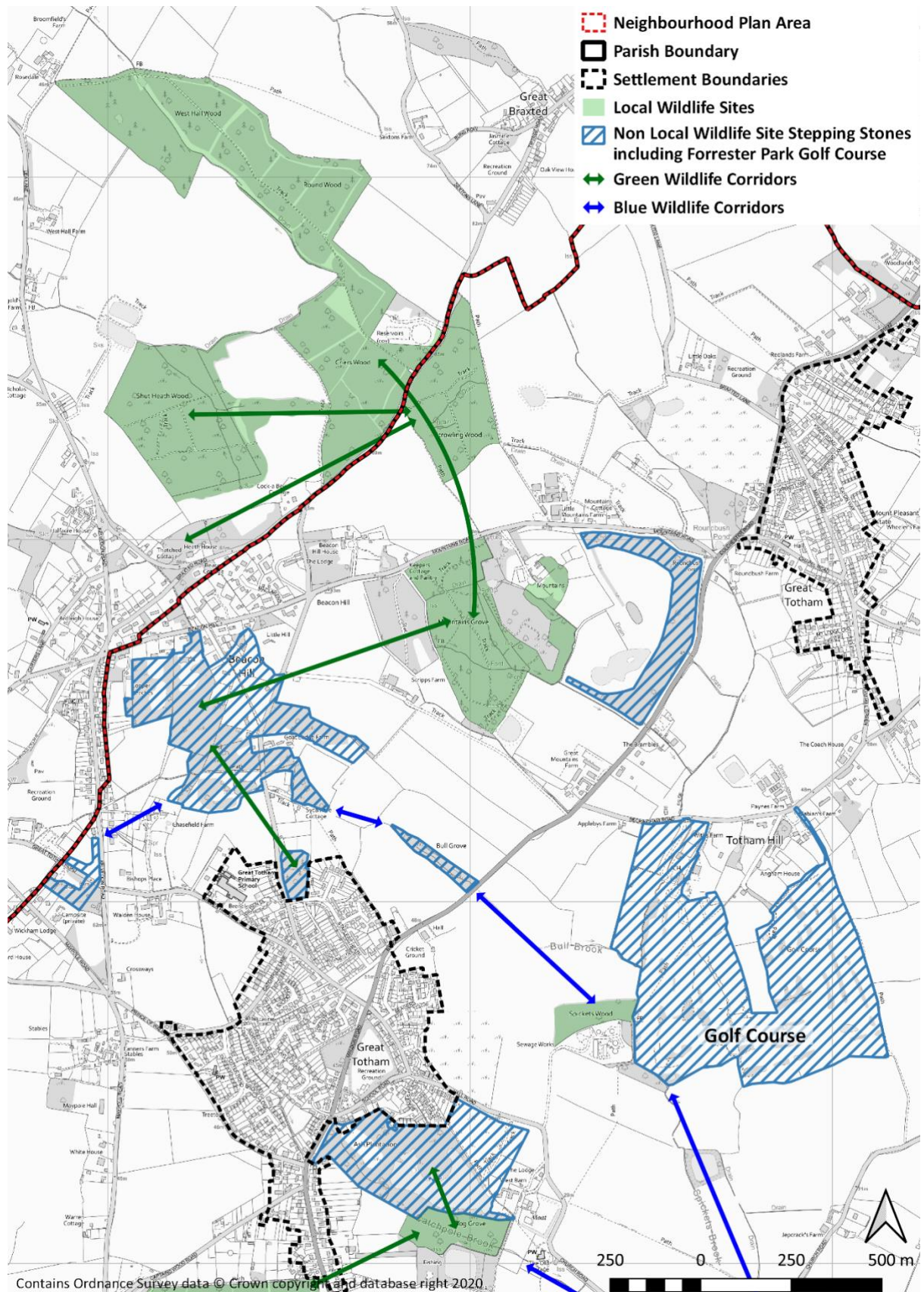


- 6.15 The parish has a number of ancient woodlands – including South Wood and Spickets Wood – Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Local Wildlife Sites<sup>6</sup> that are fundamental components of the landscape (see Figure 6.3). An objective of the Neighbourhood Plan is to better link them for local animals through the identification of green/wildlife corridors. Using the existing network of mature hedgerows, streams and copses it is possible to create these wildlife corridor linkages. However, the network has significant gaps and this is one area where working with landowners could enhance habitat connectivity. This system must be seen in totality in order that it can become a functioning ecosystem. Habitat fragmentation is now seen as one of the major threats to species.
- 6.16 Using recorded data on the presence of species it has been possible to refine a concept of ‘stepping stones’ and green and blue wildlife corridors. This has helped visualise Great Totham’s habitats, their fragmentation, but also more importantly their connectivity. ‘Stepping stones’ are discrete areas of identifiable habitat capable of supporting a range of associated flora and fauna. They also provide for migration of fauna around the parish.
- 6.17 Green wildlife corridors are typically linear features composed of hedgerows and field margins that have been found to link the stepping stones. Ideally, they should be free of gaps although field entrances are not seen as important. The more species diverse the hedgerow and margins the better and those close to the Totham Wooded Farmland landscape character area are excellent examples.
- 6.18 Similar to green wildlife corridors, blue wildlife corridors differ by the presence of historic streams and water courses. The Parish does not have rivers and Catchpole Brook tends to run dry in summer. However, irrespective of the presence or absence of running water, blue wildlife corridors provided the same benefits as green wildlife corridors. However, there are likely to be additional invertebrates, which will be attractive to species such as bat and swallow.
- 6.19 Figures 6.4 and 6.5 show the stepping stones and wildlife corridors in the north and the south of the neighbourhood area respectively.

<sup>6</sup> Mountain’s Wood, Strowling Wood, Spickets Wood, Captain’s Wood, Ash Plantation/Bog Grove, South Wood and Middle Wood

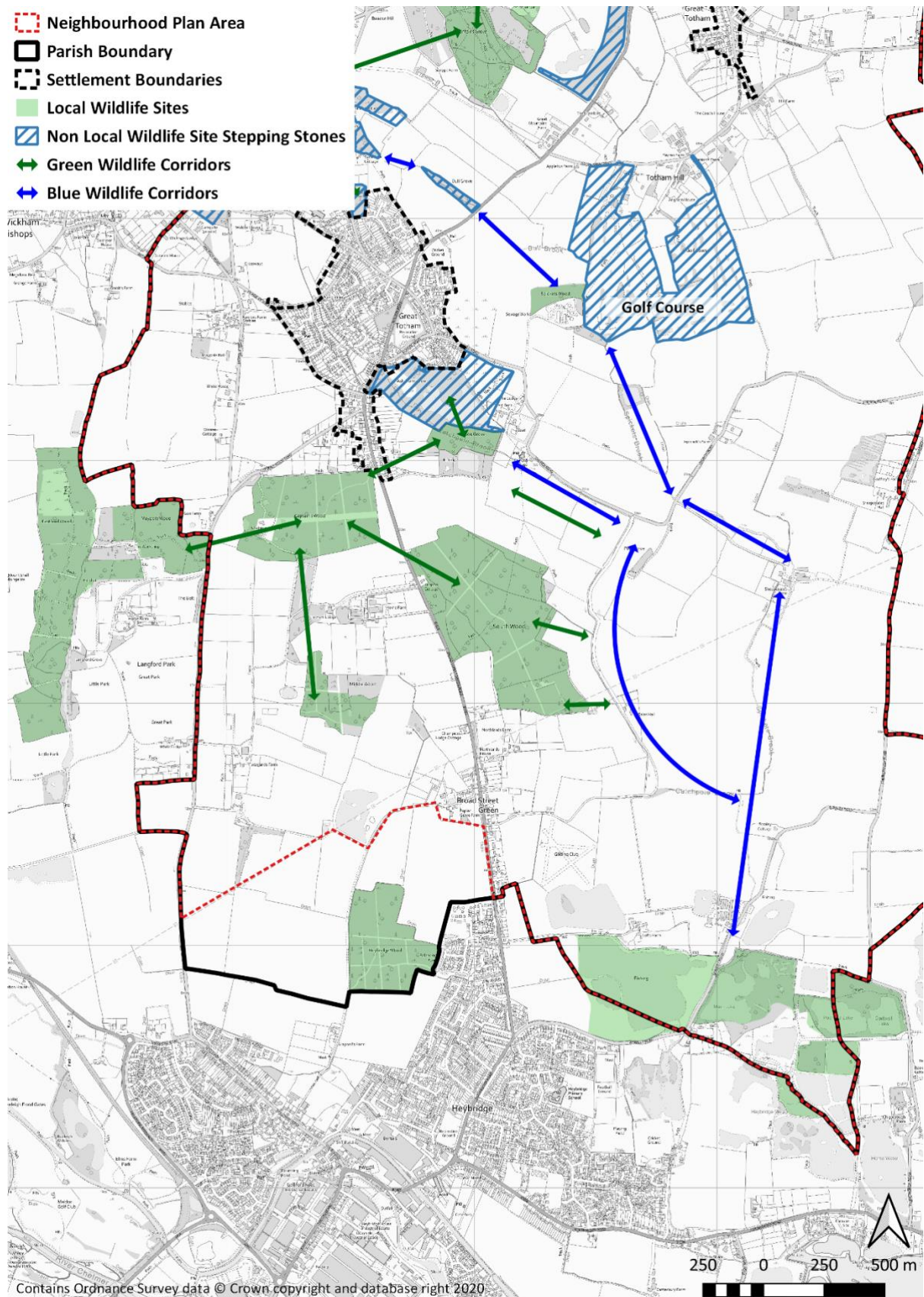


**Figure 6.4: Stepping stones and wildlife corridors in Totham parish - north**





**Figure 6.5: Stepping stones and wildlife corridors in Totham parish – south**



6.20 Where the protection and enhancement of green corridors can most easily be compromised is where development is poorly designed with little thought for wildlife movement. The design of individual buildings and of neighbourhood scale green and open spaces, including private gardens, will help to ensure that the species present in Great Totham can thrive. This is in line with the national planning guidance for achieving net biodiversity gain through all new development. Examples of the simple solutions that well-thought out design can easily incorporate are:

- Integral bird and bat boxes under the eaves of the new houses, or artificial nests sited in places away from windows and doors, can create vital new roosting sites to support populations of birds and bats.
- Boundaries between dwellings can be made hedgehog friendly by including pre-cut holes for hedgehogs to more effectively move across neighbourhoods to forage.
- New planting schemes can support bees and other pollinators by including nectar-rich plants.



**Bricks that allow birds to nest**

Credit: Pinterest



**Hedgehog-friendly fencing**

Credit: Pinterest

6.21 Planting is an important aspect of development. Not only does a well-considered planting scheme provide high quality landscaping, it is a fundamental aspect of enhancing biodiversity that otherwise would be lost. This is particularly the case with development of greenfield sites. Planting schemes should not simply be trees, but a range of shrubs and grasses too, and should seek to include native species.



**Hawthorn in bloom**

Credit: Andrew Boorman



**Mature planting in Hall Road, Totham South**

Credit: Andrew Boorman



**POLICY GTO4: GREEN/BLUE WILDLIFE CORRIDORS AND WILDLIFE-FRIENDLY DEVELOPMENT**

- A. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals are expected to deliver net biodiversity gains in addition to protecting existing habitats and species. Development proposals on or adjacent to the green or blue wildlife corridors or stepping stones identified in Figures 6.4 and 6.5 must demonstrate a layout and design which ensures that wildlife is not impeded in its movement along the corridor. Proposals to enhance the green and blue wildlife corridors will be particularly supported.**
- B. In particular, the incorporation of design features into new development that encourages local wildlife to thrive, is strongly encouraged.**
- C. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should be designed to retain trees, shrubs and hedgerows of arboricultural, habitat and amenity value on-site and to conserve and enhance connectivity to the wider green and blue infrastructure networks. Where practicable, any new planting should consist of native species of trees, shrubs and grasses and be designed in a way that would allow their use as stepping stones for wildlife.**
- D. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should incorporate sustainable drainage and natural flood management techniques.**

## **Recreational disturbance**

- 6.22 The published Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRAs) for the emerging Local Plans in Essex have identified recreational disturbance as an issue for all of the Essex coastal habitat sites. Mitigation measures have been identified but, at this scale and across a number of local planning authorities, is best tackled strategically and through a partnership approach. This ensures maximum effectiveness of conservation outcomes and cost efficiency. In recognition of this, Natural England recommended a strategic approach to mitigation along the Essex coast. This is referred to as the Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy ('the Essex Coast RAMS') and aims to deliver the mitigation necessary to avoid significant adverse effects from 'in-combination' impacts of residential development that is anticipated across Essex. This will protect the Habitats (European) sites on the Essex coast from adverse effect on site integrity. All new residential developments within the evidenced Zone of Influence where there is a net increase in dwelling numbers are included in the Essex Coast RAMS.
- 6.23 Financial contributions will be sought for all residential development which falls within the zones of influence towards a package of measures to avoid and mitigate likely significant adverse effects.
- 6.24 Great Totham parish is entirely within one of the Essex Coast RAMS zones of influence. Details of the zones of influence and the necessary measures are included in the Essex Coast RAMS

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which was adopted by Maldon District Council in August 2020.

#### **POLICY GTO5: RECREATIONAL DISTURBANCE AND MITIGATION**

- A. All residential development within the zones of influence of European Sites will make an appropriate financial contribution towards mitigation measures, as detailed in the Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) Supplementary Planning Document, to avoid adverse in-combination recreational disturbance effects on European Sites.**
- B. All residential development within the zones of influence should deliver all measures identified (including strategic measures) through project level Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRAs), or otherwise, to mitigate any recreational disturbance impacts in compliance with the Habitat Regulations and Habitats Directive.**

### **Environmental impact of development**

- 6.25 The Climate Change Act 2008 committed the UK to an 80% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2050. In June 2019, an announcement was made by Government to reduce this further to almost 100% by 2050. This will be a major task that will require everyone to be engaged, from households and communities, to businesses and local and national government.
- 6.26 In 2016, the residential sector alone accounted for over 16% of the UK's annual greenhouse gas emissions (source: Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy). The total emissions from all building types will therefore be much greater. Standards for ecologically sustainable homes and developments are now optional<sup>7</sup>.



**Green roof**

Credit: Pinterest



**Rainwater harvesting system**

Credit: Pinterest

<sup>7</sup> The Code for Sustainable Homes was withdrawn by the Government in 2015 and this has been replaced by national technical standards, which include optional Building Regulations standards regarding water and access as well as a national space standard (this is in addition to the existing mandatory Building Regulations).

- 6.27 It is vital that new homes and other buildings are built to the highest possible standards and are designed in a way that minimises their carbon footprint. This not only means that they should be exceptionally well insulated, but they must have low water demand (and maximise use of grey water) and maximise renewable sources in the provision of their energy.
- 6.28 Yet the ability to cope with the impacts of climate change impact is not simply about the physical structure of buildings. Development must be able to adapt to more intense rainfall, the possibility of flooding, plus heat waves and droughts. The design of developments therefore needs to more carefully consider matters such as shading, insulation and ventilation, surface water runoff and storage and the use of appropriate tree and other planting.

#### **POLICY GTO6: ENERGY EFFICIENCY OF BUILDINGS AND RENEWABLES**

- A. Proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, must demonstrate how the design of buildings and site layouts minimise consumption of energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources in order to provide resilience to the effects of climate change.**
- B. All developments should demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should incorporate the following measures:**
- i. Wherever possible, new buildings shall be orientated to maximise the opportunities for both natural heating and ventilation and reducing exposure to wind and other elements;**
  - ii. Proposals involving both new and existing buildings shall demonstrate how they have been designed to maximise resistance and resilience to climate change for example by including measures such as solar shading, thermal mass, heating and ventilation of the building and appropriately coloured materials in areas exposed to direct sunlight, green and brown roofs, green walls, etc;**
  - iii. Use of trees and other planting, where appropriate as part of a landscape scheme, to provide shading of amenity areas, buildings and streets and to help to connect habitat, designed with native plants that are carefully selected, managed and adaptable to meet the predicted changed climatic conditions; and**
  - iv. All development shall minimise surface water runoff to prevent off-site flooding through the design of a suitable SuDS-based drainage system, and where possible incorporate mitigation and resilience measures for any increases in flood risk that may occur due to climate change. Opportunities should be taken to reduce flood risk to existing residential properties through new development, particularly if this is located within a Critical Drainage Area (CDA)..**

## 7 TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

- 7.1 In a rural community such as Great Totham, it is inevitable that a significant proportion of journeys are made by car and that households have high levels of car ownership. In 2011, each household in the parish had access to an average of 1.8 vehicles, compared with 1.6 vehicles across Maldon district and 1.37 vehicles in Essex county. Only 6% of households did not have access to a vehicle, compared with 13% in Maldon district and 18% in Essex county<sup>8</sup>.
- 7.2 Issues of traffic flow and safety along the narrow lanes around Great Totham are important to the local community. Whilst highway matters are not issues that a neighbourhood plan can directly address, there are infrastructure improvements that could be made to slow the traffic passing through the villages and at key junctions along the B1022 Maldon Road. These improvements – which could include digital speed signs, better signage and changes to road alignments – could be funded through developer contributions secured from development. The intention by Maldon District Council to put in place a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charge would make this more certain, as not all development can be required to make such contributions through Section 106. Section 9 contains a list of priority actions that the community would wish to see delivered. It is recognised that that these actions would need to be agreed by Essex County Council as highway authority.

### Car parking

- 7.3 Another effect of high car ownership is parking issues. Inadequate off-street parking provision can lead to indiscriminate parking, which not only can affect the amenity and convenience of residents but may also prejudice the safety of pedestrians, drivers and the passage of utility and emergency vehicles. Poorly planned on-street parking often results in parking on footways and verges, which not only affects the appearance of the street scene, but can present difficulties for pedestrians, those using push chairs, and people with impaired mobility, especially if using mobility equipment.



**Pavement parking in Heriot Way**

Credit: Graham Thorne

<sup>8</sup> Source: 2011 Census



- 7.4 The intensification of use of existing housing stock, specifically adding loft bedrooms and filling in garages, has not always considered parking implications where additional cars supporting larger household numbers are pushed off the property onto pavements and access roads.
- 7.5 In 2018, Maldon District Council adopted its own Vehicle Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)<sup>9</sup>. This provides up-to-date parking standards for all types of development and is a material consideration in planning applications. For residential development, there is a requirement for a certain number of spaces per dwelling, depending on the number of bedrooms. There is also a requirement to provide visitor parking. This can be provided in a range of different ways, although if provided in garages, it must be demonstrated that the garages are large enough to accommodate a modern vehicle. Policy GT07 takes account of this strategic approach. The same account will be taken of any updates to the parking standards.



**Garage space that is not large enough even for a small car**

Credit: Bob Tarpey

- 7.6 The Neighbourhood Plan is supportive of these parking standards and in Great Totham adherence to them is considered vital to the delivery of high quality development. In this regard, alternatives to garages are encouraged. Whilst car ports and communal parking areas provide less storage space – a common and sometimes primary use of garages – they do provide spaces that are used for their intended purpose more fully. In particular, given the need for development to use space efficiently, such alternative forms of parking provision can be an important part of delivering higher quality schemes. A good example is the parking provision in Beadle Place.

<sup>9</sup> Maldon District Council (2018) *Vehicle Parking Standards*, Maldon District Local Development Plan Supplementary Planning Document



**Covered communal parking in Beadle Place**

Credit: Google Maps

#### **POLICY GT07: PARKING PROVISION**

**In order to ensure good design and layout of development, particularly residential development, proposals for parking are encouraged to use car ports and/or communal parking to deliver their parking requirements. All parking provision must be permanently available for parking use.**

### **Walking and cycling**

- 7.7 Alongside the bus, providing opportunities to walk and cycle to local services and facilities is equally important. Great Totham is a community with two distinct built-up areas not far from one another. Many important facilities such as the primary school, the main village hall, the local shop and the Post Office are based in Totham South, with the United Reform Church hall, allotments and flower shop in Totham North. Midway between the two is Forrester Park Golf and Country Club which provides numerous social activities. As a result, a good proportion of the community want to be able to walk between Totham North and South yet feel restricted by the limited options and quality of routes for walking.
- 7.8 Figure 7.1 below shows that, whilst there is a network of footpaths and bridleways, the linkages between Totham North and South and between Totham North and Wickham Bishops are poor. Also, this map does not show the quality of the routes, with some being overgrown and difficult to use in winter because of poor drainage. Certainly there are a number of these routes that can only be used as recreational walking routes, rather than as realistic alternatives for providing pedestrian access to services and facilities in the settlements. Nearly half of those that completed the community survey stated that the footpaths needed improvement.

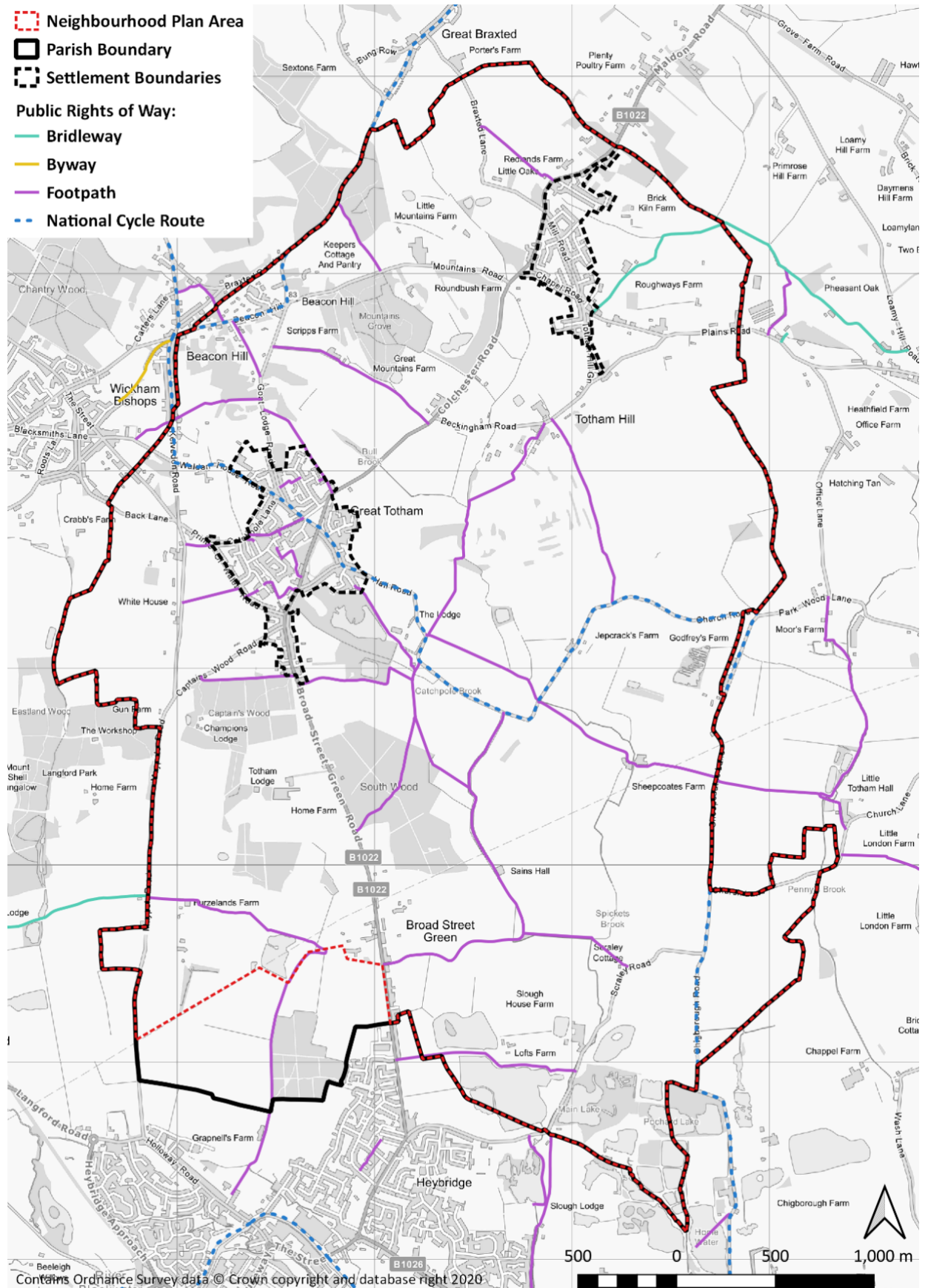


**Footpath from Beckingham Road South towards Jepcracks Farm**

Credit: Kevin Bennett

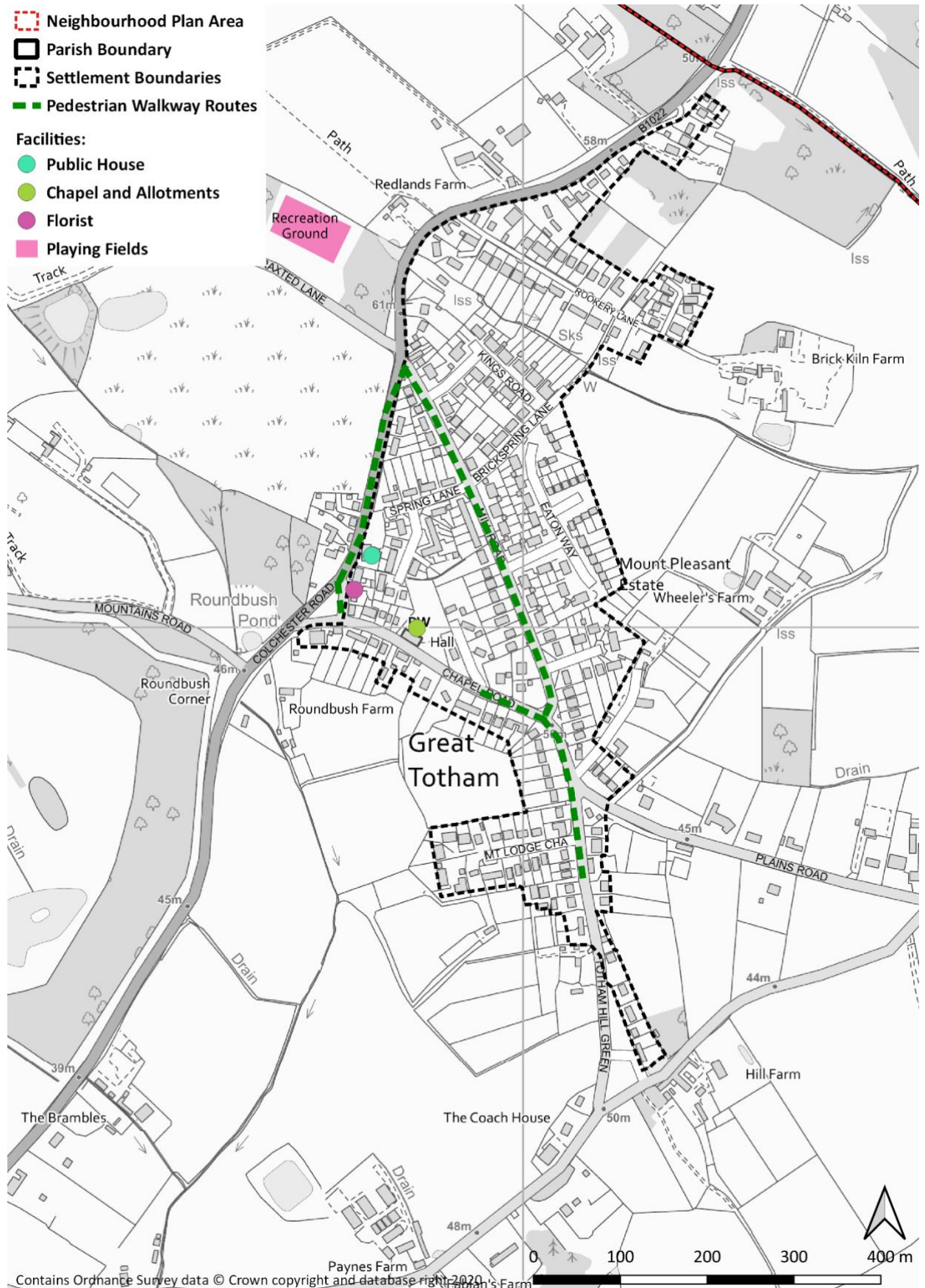
- 7.9 Through the Neighbourhood Plan, a series of three short circular walks, a longer, ramblers walk and a circular cycle route have been developed (see Appendix D). These routes connect up existing footpaths and bridleways using some on-road sections. Whilst not ideal to have on-road route sections, this does help to create some attractive walking and cycling routes which were well received when tested through the process of community consultation. Proposals to enhance these routes through improved signage and by making them more accessible for a greater part of the year would be welcomed.
- 7.10 In terms of directly linking Totham North and South, the creation of a continuous footpath is not without significant hurdles but with goodwill, negotiation and sufficient funding there are enough options to see it completed. Every opportunity should be considered including, where appropriate, funding through developer contributions.

Figure 7.1: Map of footpaths and bridleways

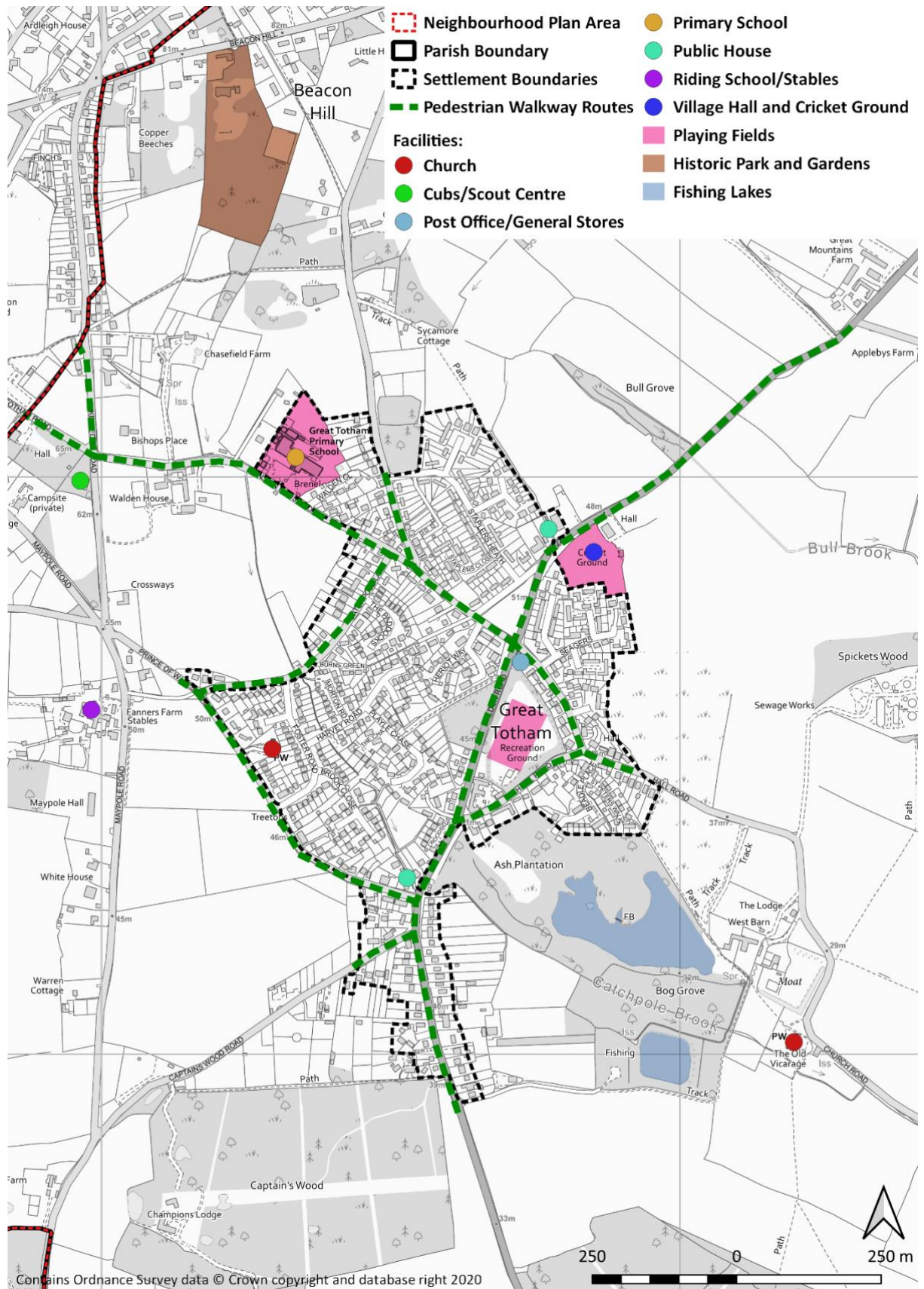




**Figure 7.2: Map of Pedestrian Walkway Routes in Totham North**



**Figure 7.3: Map of Pedestrian Walkway Routes in Totham South**





- 7.11 Alongside this, a network of Pedestrian Walkway Routes has been identified (see Figures 7.2 and 7.3). The purpose of these routes is to better link up the main residential areas of Great Totham with key services and facilities in the villages for pedestrians.
- 7.12 Linking any new housing development into the network of footways within the built-up areas and then to footpaths into the countryside is vital to encourage more walking and less use of the car but also to connect these areas and their residents to other parts of the community. Such improvements have a range of benefits including:
- Providing health benefits through increased walking and cycling;
  - Facilitating less congestion at busy times by encouraging children to walk and cycle to and from school and people to walk and cycle to the shop and other facilities rather than 'jumping in the car' for a short journey;
  - Providing a safer environment for the community, including for vulnerable users;
  - Providing access to green spaces for users such as dog walkers, so addressing the potential adverse impacts of development on European designated sites.
- 7.13 Development in locations where no connections with existing footways can be provided are considered to have limited sustainability.
- 7.14 Development adjacent to these Pedestrian Walkway Routes will be expected to provide direct, safe pedestrian access to them and proposals for their enhancement – including providing longer stretches of dedicated footways wide enough for pushchairs and disability access – are encouraged.

#### **POLICY GTO8: PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE ACCESS**

- A. Proposals to improve pedestrian and cycle access will be supported. In particular, such proposals should focus on improving access between Totham North and South and to Wickham Bishops.**
- B. Proposals to enhance the Pedestrian Walkway Routes identified in Figures 7.2 and 7.3 are strongly encouraged. Development that is immediately adjacent to these Pedestrian Walkway Routes will be expected to:**
- i. ensure the retention and where possible the enhancement of the Pedestrian Walkway Route; and**
  - ii. be designed so it does not have a detrimental impact on the Pedestrian Walkway Route and its environment to ensure the safety and flow of pedestrians.**

## Public and community bus provision

- 7.15 Whilst in a rural community such as Great Totham, the private car is the predominant method of travel, the community is clear that it wishes to maximise the potential to travel by other modes. Bus transport is a lifeline, both for people unable to afford a car and for older people who feel unable to drive. With the ageing population, more people are likely to fit into the latter category and yet many will want to stay in the local community if possible.
- 7.16 Great Totham is served by two public bus routes. The number 75 goes to Maldon and Colchester every 30 minutes. The number 90 goes to Maldon and Witham (including Witham railway station) and is a more frequent service, including during peak commuter hours. However, the number 90 bus does not pass through Totham North. One important community action is to engage with the bus provider to see if the number 90 can be re-routed to serve Totham North as well as Totham South.
- 7.17 Separately, plans are being pursued to provide a bespoke 'taxi-bus' service, equivalent to the 'Dengie Dart', to transfer older, less mobile residents to the nearest medical facilities. The Dengie Dart is operated by a local taxi company and passengers can use their bus passes in a minibus. Typically, passengers can wait at bus stops and hail it to and from Maldon town centre or Broomfield Hospital or they can ring the company and arrange a ride.
- 7.18 The possibility of introducing a similar service for Great Totham and other local parishes without bus services has been championed by the GTNP Steering Group. This is now being actively pursued by the parish's Maldon District Councillor, Essex County Council and the two local Members of Parliament.

### **GTNP COMMUNITY ACTION: PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES**

***Engage with operator of number 90 bus to get North Totham included on the route.***

### **GTNP INVESTMENT PRIORITY: COMMUNITY TRANSPORT**

***As a priority for the spending of developer contributions, the Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan identifies the need to invest in a local community bus service.***

- 7.19 Although it is recognised that improving community and public bus services is outside the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan, it is included in the Transport and Movement section of the Neighbourhood Plan as bus services are an important component of the transport options available to local residents.

## 8 COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- 8.1 Great Totham, due to its arcadian nature, is not a village that incorporates one central community hub. Whilst the village hall in Totham South serves as the main focal point due to its size, Totham North has the well-placed United Reform Church. Along with Honywood Hall in Totham South, it is considered that these facilities are able to serve the local community at the present time. Therefore, it is felt that Great Totham has accessible venues that serve as village hubs in both the north and south settlement areas.



**Village Hall, Totham South**

Credit: Martin Flook



**United Reform Church, Totham North**

Credit: Martin Flook

- 8.2 It is recognised however, that with a growing population in Great Totham and a desire to make it a more sustainable place through the provision of a wider range of services, that these community hubs should be allowed to expand in the future if that was considered to be appropriate.
- 8.3 Alongside these hubs are a range of other activities that provide for people of all ages. These include Marven's Stables, Forrester Park Golf and Country Club (which has tennis courts and a swimming pool) and Great Totham Cricket Club. Whilst these facilities are away from the heart of the built-up areas and are therefore less accessible than the community hubs, they are established and successful facilities that serve the rural community. They should therefore be supported in their activities by being allowed to grow, albeit recognising that they are in a countryside location.



**Marven's Stables**

Credit: Marven's Stables brochure

- 8.4 Great Totham has three established pubs serving its residents. Whilst the Bull and The Prince of Wales in Totham South are doing well, the Compasses in Totham North is currently closed and stands empty, with its future giving cause for concern to the community.
- 8.5 The Compasses is listed as an Asset of Community Value which is a material consideration if an application were submitted for an alternative use of the building. However, the community is very keen to retain the only pub in Totham North and would support any reasonable approach that would increase the prospect of it re-opening and thriving. This could include the pub providing other services such as a community shop or a community library. If it was necessary for expansion of the pub to facilitate this, then this is supported.

**POLICY GTO9: EXPANSION OF COMMUNITY AND LEISURE FACILITIES**

- A. Proposals to improve Community Hub buildings in Totham North and Totham South will be supported, subject to demonstrating that they are of a high quality design.**
- B. Proposals for expansion of leisure facilities outside the settlement boundary will be supported where such expansion is required in order to continue providing activities of benefit to the local community. Such proposals must ensure that they are appropriate for their countryside setting.**
- C. Proposals to enable the Compasses pub in Totham North to provide a range of community uses alongside the main pub use will be supported.**

- 8.6 Both Totham North and Totham South have play areas that are popular and well used by families and youths throughout the whole year. Totham South Recreational Ground - known locally as 'The Pit' - has play apparatus for young and older children to use as well as a basketball hoop and a sheltered seating area. There is also a full-size football pitch with goals and a changing room for players to use. Totham North Recreation Ground has a smaller range of play facilities mainly for younger children, a basketball hoop and open space.



**Totham North Recreation Ground**

Credit: Martin Flook



**Totham South Recreation Ground**

Credit: Paul Firman

It is important that both recreation areas are maintained and continue to provide an attractive offer to families with younger children and youths alike. In addition, parking provision at Totham North Recreation Ground would benefit from improvement as it is difficult to reach on foot for children without adult supervision.

- 8.7 There are excellent and wide-ranging facilities provided by the Beacon Hill Sports Association. This is a broad coalition of clubs and organisations that serve both Wickham Bishops and Great Totham villages. The sports activities on the boundary between the two villages, adjacent to Rainbow Field, include football fields and a thriving tennis club. Both are supported by clubhouses and car parking.



**Rainbow Field with the tennis club in the background**

Credit: Kevin Bennett

#### **POLICY GTO10: PLAY FACILITIES IN TOTHAM NORTH AND TOTHAM SOUTH**

- A. Insofar as planning permission is required, proposals to improve facilities at Totham North and Totham South Recreation Grounds will be supported. This includes improvement to the quality and range of play apparatus and seating.**
- B. Where practicable, any new or enhancement to existing facilities should be designed to provide a multiple purpose use that is sympathetic to its natural setting and the landscape character.**



## 9 NON-POLICY ACTIONS

- 9.1 Table 9.1 below identifies a series of actions that have arisen through the community engagement in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan. These were considered by the community to be important matters but do not necessarily require planning permission. As such, they are not the subject of planning policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. These non-policy actions will be reviewed in line with the rest of the Neighbourhood Plan as part of any subsequent review, to take account of changing circumstances and community aspirations.

**Table 9.1: Non-land use issues to be addressed**

Issue	Possible actions	Lead agencies and partner
<b>Environment</b>		
Exploring environmental improvements	Undertake a feasibility study for environmental improvements, which might include; improving the environmental audit, engaging with residents including landowners, finding land for projects, identifying stakeholders and funding possibilities and most importantly establish priorities.	Great Totham Parish Council with Maldon District Council, Essex County Council, Essex Wildlife Trust
Tree planting	Identify land and work with landowners to deliver an appropriate planting scheme.	Great Totham Parish Council with Lonsdale Small Woods Group
Establish woodland and shelterbelts	Identify and develop opportunities through the MOREwoods scheme. Apply to tree provision programmes.	Great Totham Parish Council with Woodland Trust and other parties
Improve planting on road verges	Identify verges where planting could be improved	Great Totham Parish Council with Essex County Council
<b>Community</b>		
Improve community awareness of what's on	Expand community website and range of contributors	
Upgrade and maintain community facilities	Scope out specific needs and priorities. Bid for funds to undertake work	Great Totham Parish Council
<b>Transport</b>		
Highway safety	Introduce 40mph limit along Broad Street Green Road and B1022 between North and South Totham.	Great Totham Parish Council with Essex County Council
Highway safety	Reduce speed limit to 30mph in the built-up area of Colchester Road, North Totham	Great Totham Parish Council with Essex County Council
Highway safety	Reduce speed limit to 20mph in Walden House Road	Great Totham Parish Council



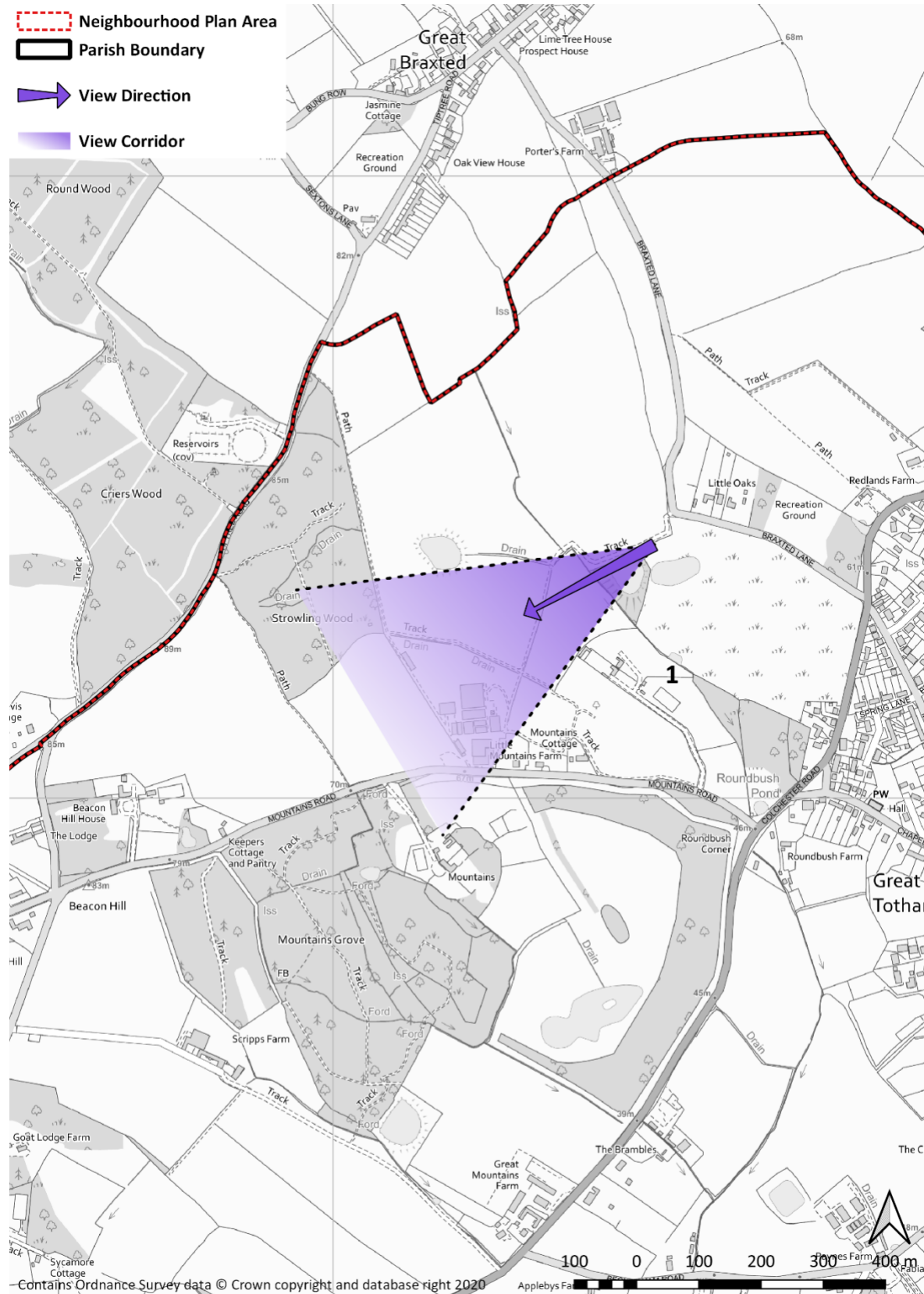
Issue	Possible actions	Lead agencies and partner
		with Essex County Council
Highway safety	Refurbish and improve the junction at Five Corners, Maypole Road.	Essex County Council
Highway safety	Introduce 40mph speed limit from Captains Wood Road to Five Corners and beyond to existing 30 mph Wickham Bishops sign.	Essex County Council
Highway safety	Extension, improvement and refurbishment and road signage	Great Totham Parish Council with Essex County Council
Highway safety	New signage for HGVs to deter them from using minor roads.	Great Totham Parish Council with Essex County Council
Traffic and parking	Preparation of a travel plan to identify solutions to parking and safety problems associated with school drop-off and pick-up. Includes the 'Walking Bus'	Great Totham Parish Council with Great Totham School, Essex County Council
Traffic safety	More use of Essex County Council 'Ranger' resources to carry out minor maintenance on signs and vegetation	Great Totham Parish Council
Bus services	Improvements to bus service – reroute the 90 away from Walden House Road and investigate the possibility of a stop in Gt Totham North.	Great Totham Parish Council with Essex County Council
Community bus service	Take every opportunity to support and encourage investment in a community bus service for older and less mobile residents to access medical facilities in Maldon and Broomfield.	Great Totham Parish Council with Maldon District Council and Essex County Council
Access and Leisure	Maintain and expand the footpath/bridleway network in order to create safe off-road rights of way for vulnerable road users and equestrian users in accordance with relevant legislation.	Great Totham Parish Council, with Maldon District Council, Essex County Council
Cycling and walking	Introduction of a dedicated footpath/cycle path that links the settlements of Great Totham North and South.	Great Totham Parish Council, Maldon District Council, Essex County Council
Circular Walks/rides	Publicise the new circular walks and the existing Parish Council walks	GTNP Steering Group with Great Totham Parish Council

## **APPENDIX A      GREAT TOTHAM VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT**

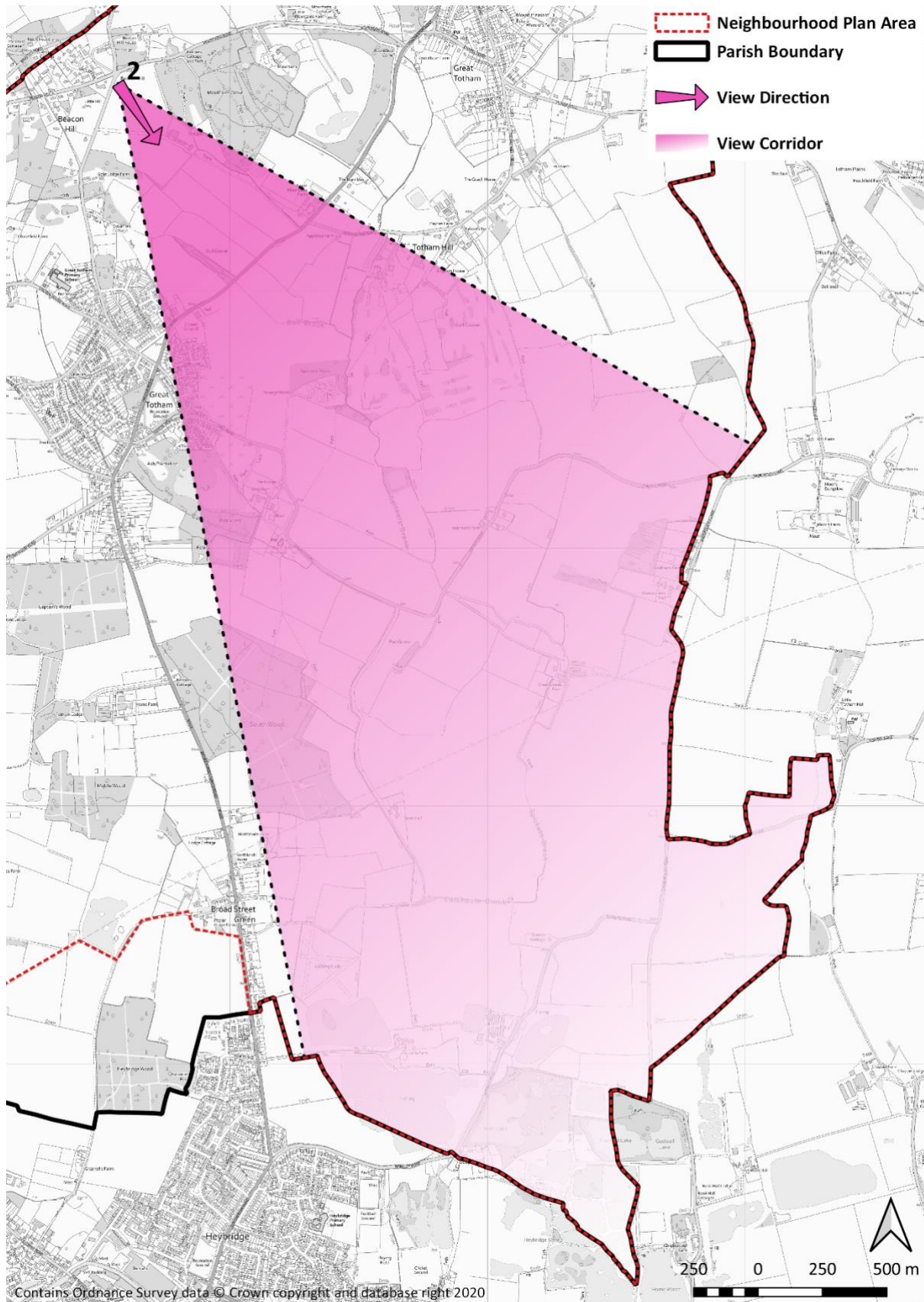
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## APPENDIX B LOCAL VIEWS

View 1

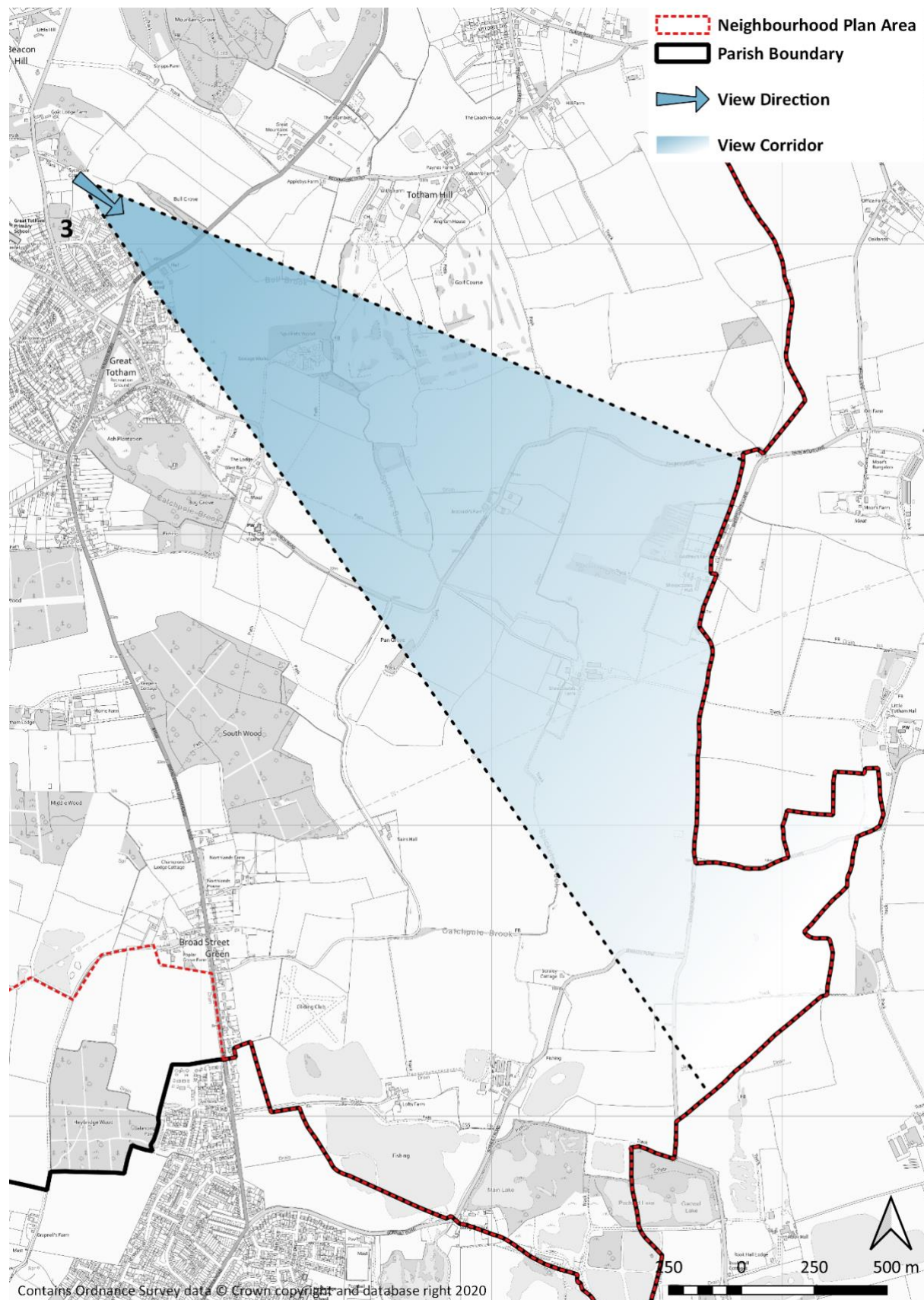


## View 2





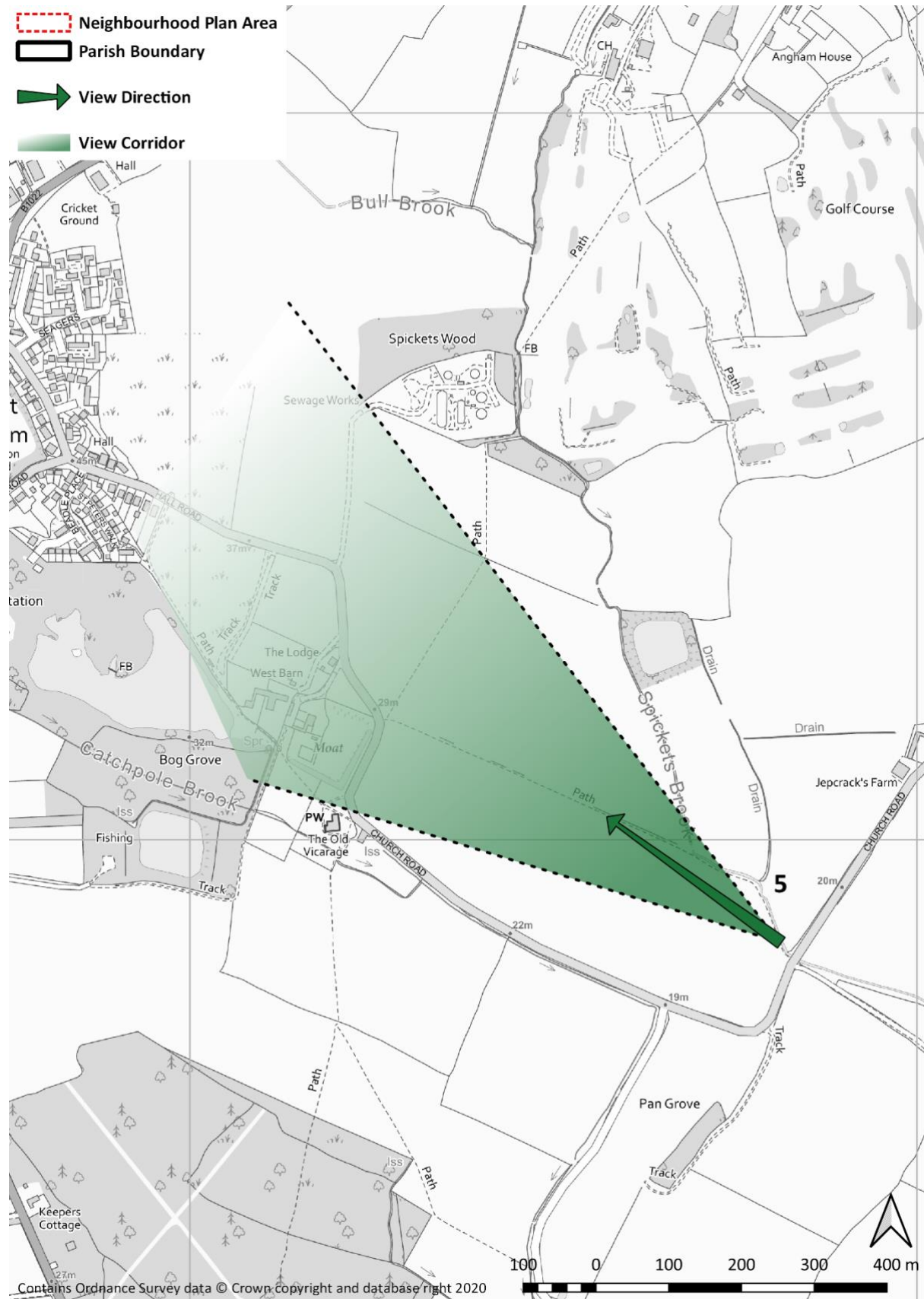
## View 3



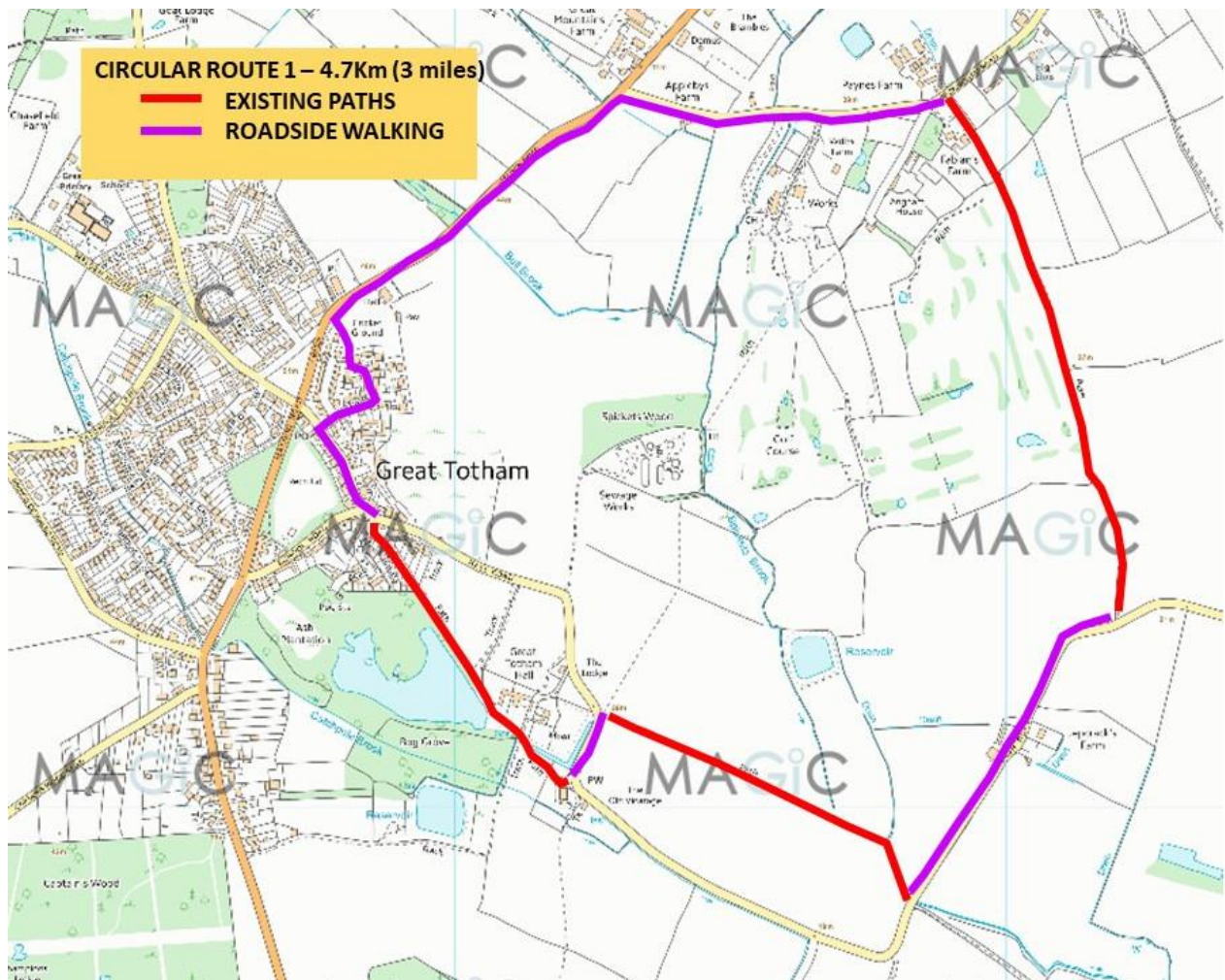




## View 5

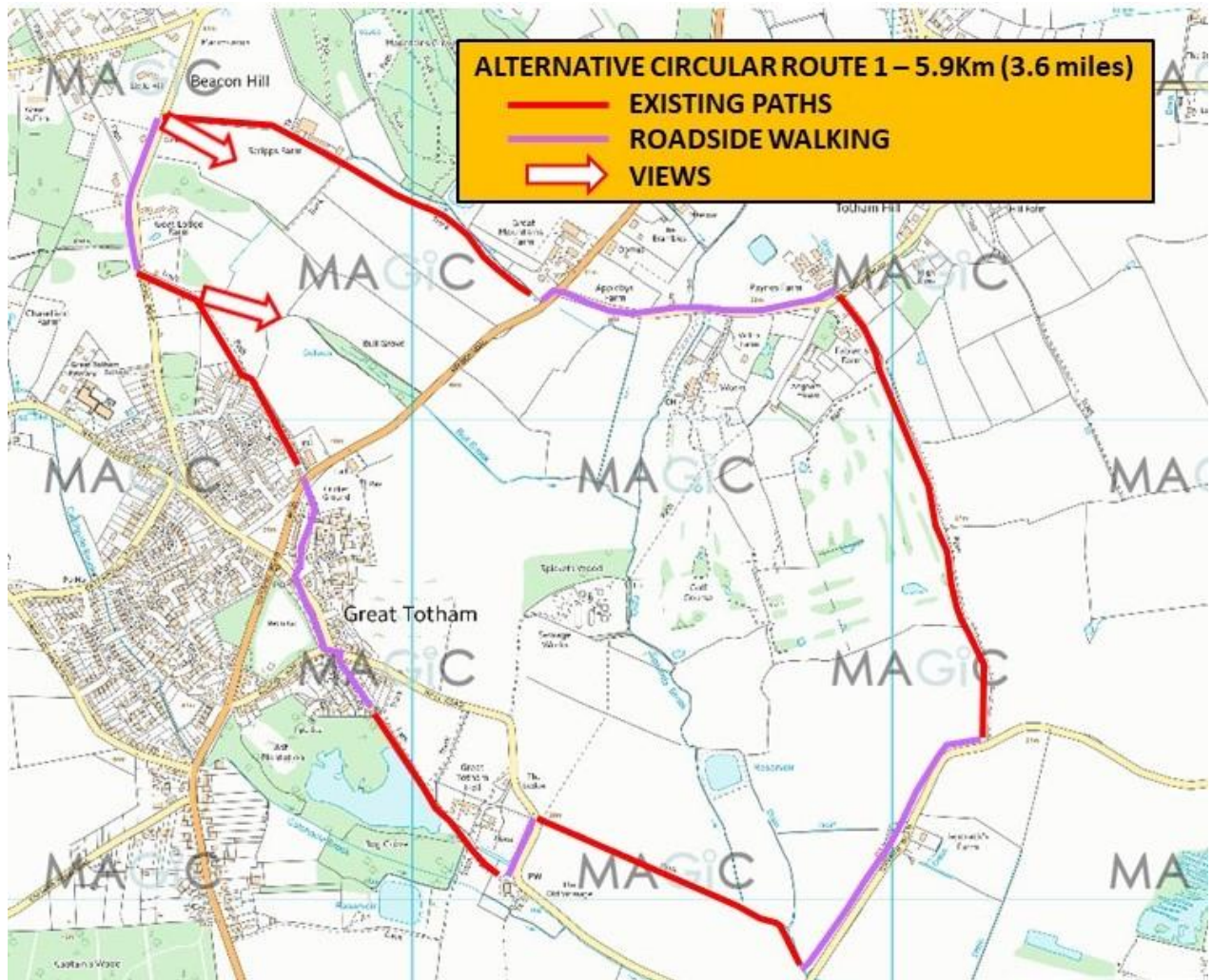


## APPENDIX C CIRCULAR WALKS AND CYCLE ROUTES



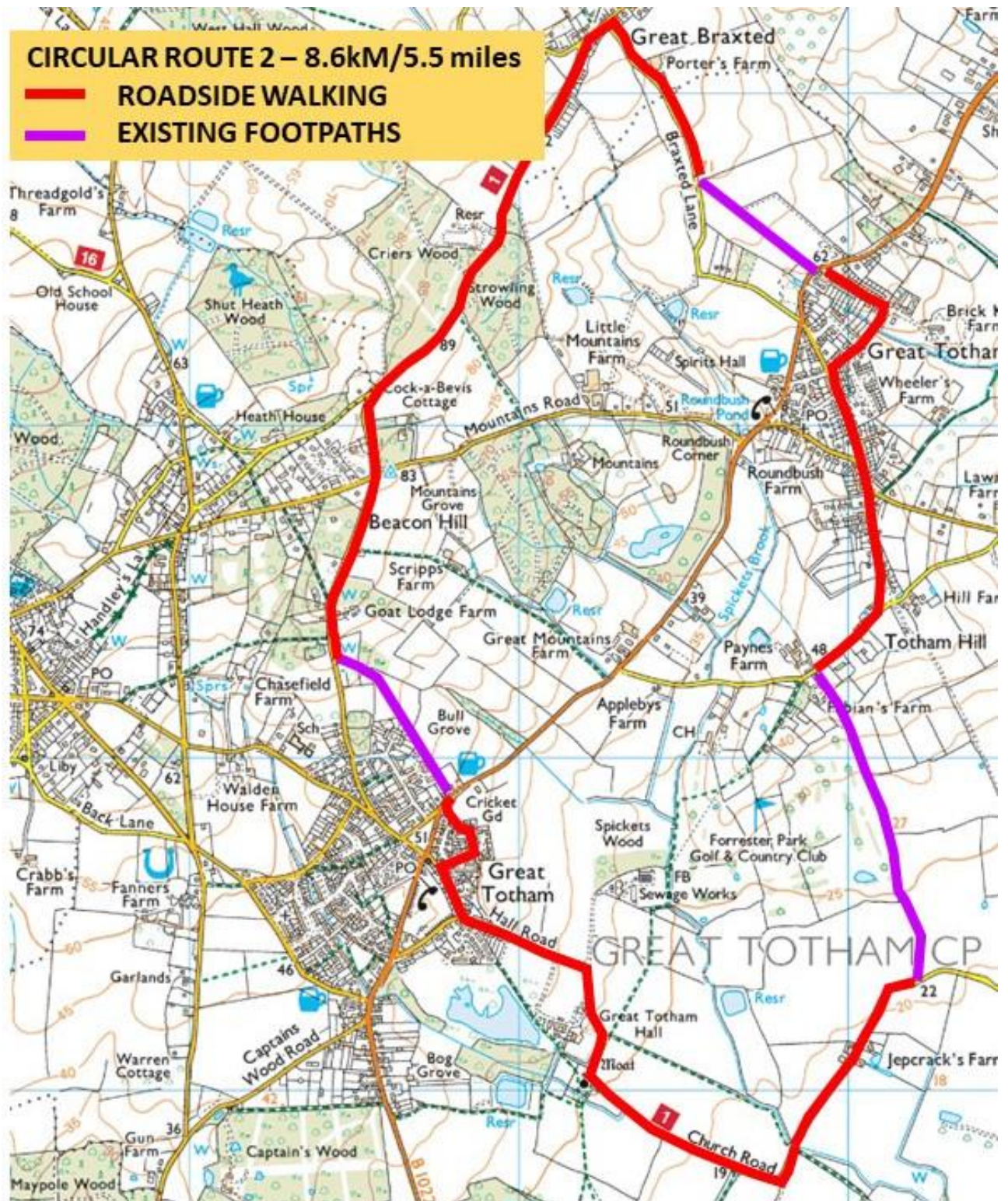
Source: Magic Map





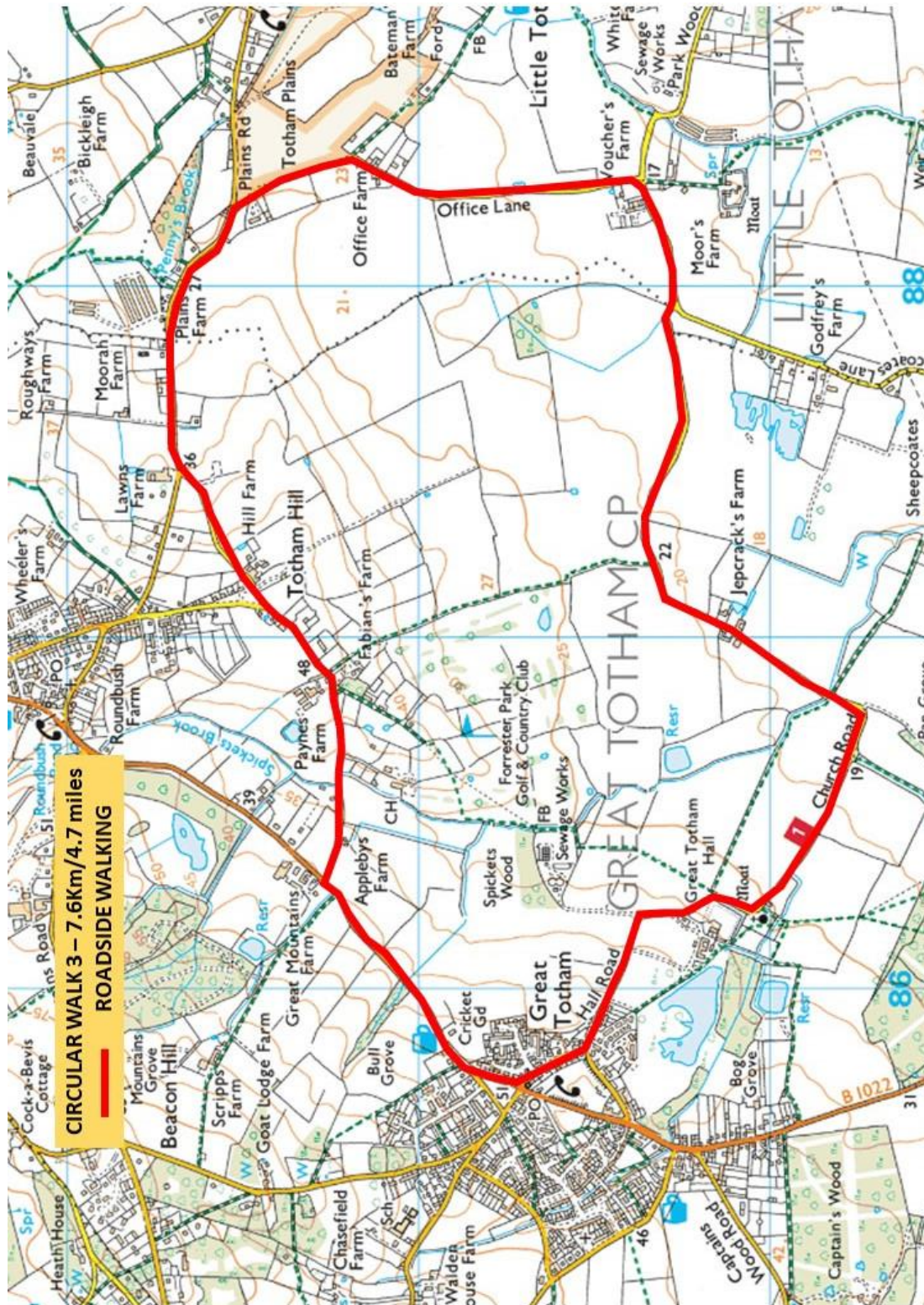
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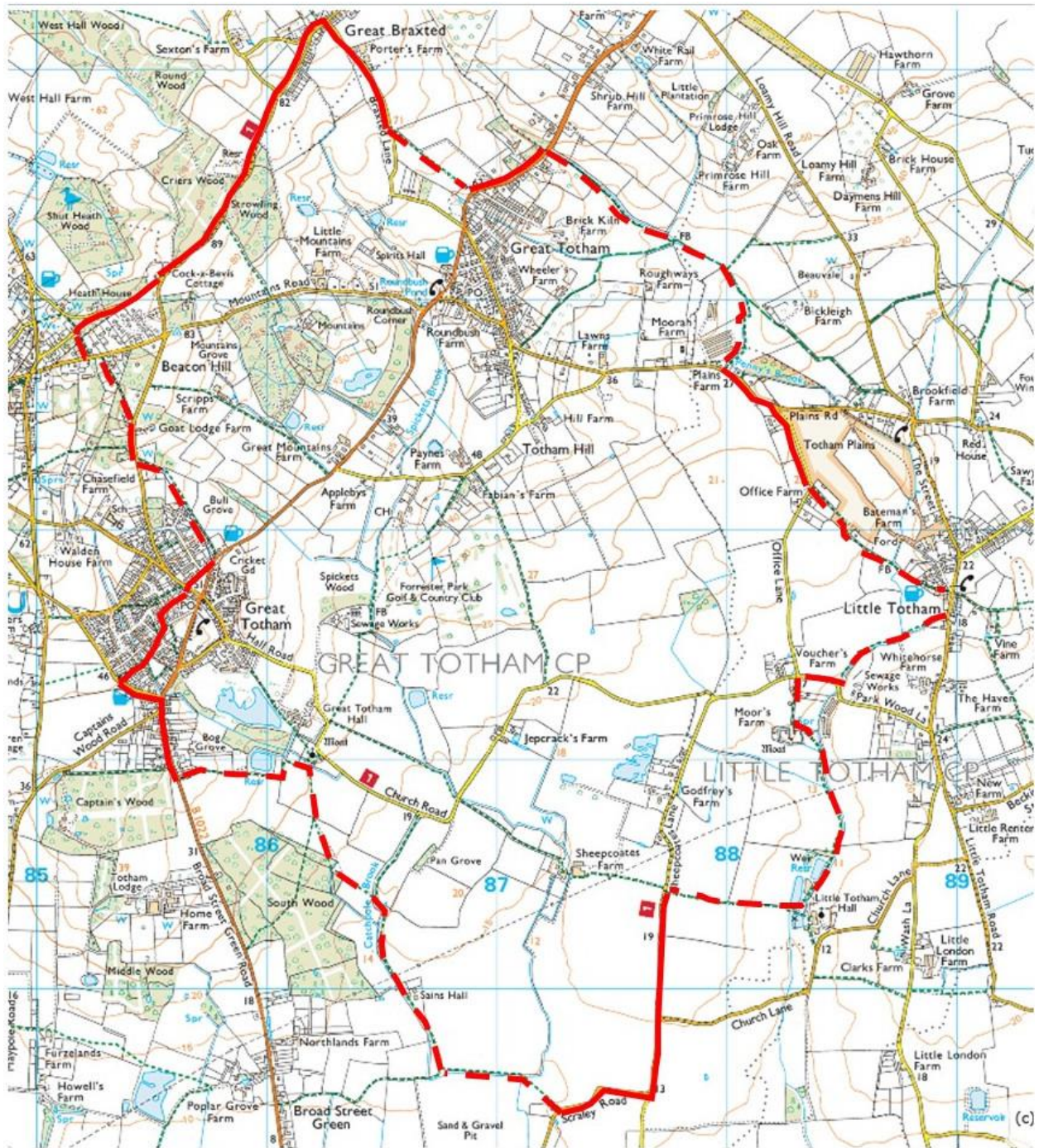
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Source: Magic Maps





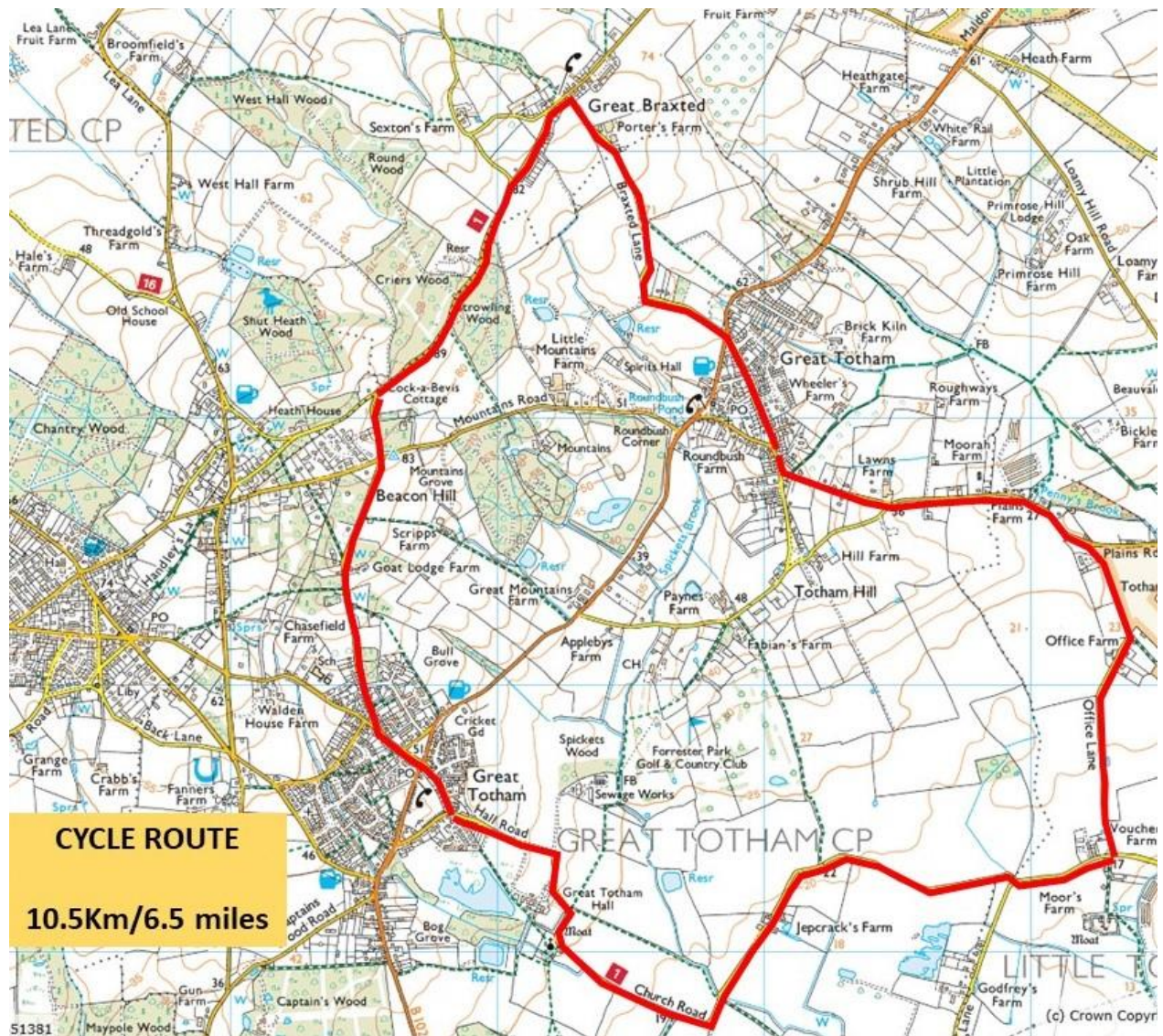
**RAMBLERS WALK – 15Km/9.5 miles**

**--- OFF ROAD WALKING**

**— ROADSIDE WALKING**

Source: Magic Maps





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## THE GREAT TOTHAM VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT 2022

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## **1. Introduction**

The Great Totham Village Design Statement (VDS) has been developed by a Sub-Group of the village's Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NSPG) as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process. It seeks to support the Plan and to identify and record the major characteristics of Great Totham and its appearance. The VDS has been presented to villagers who have had the opportunity to comment and input at the drafting stage. The VDS should now become a working tool to guide the character and appearance of development in the future.

### **Purpose of the VDS**

The Great Totham VDS will:

- Actively influence change and development in Great Totham to meet our future needs.
- Assist those who bring forward proposals for development to ensure they are acceptable to the expressed wishes of the community and in keeping with the village character.
- Identify and help to protect key buildings, settings and views and promote the use of appropriate designs and materials.
- Improve and protect the village character with particular reference to views and open spaces.
- Support modest and appropriate development in the village's rural surroundings.
- Assist Maldon District Council, as planning authority, in their determination of planning applications.

### **Consultation Process**

The Great Totham Village Design Statement has been produced by a Sub-Group of the Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The Group consists of interested Parishioners with a strong representation from the Parish Council. The VDS and the Neighbourhood Plan have been developed in parallel. A full village survey has been undertaken along with a weekend exhibition at the Village Hall. The results of both survey and event have been fed back into the Plan and VDS. Consultation has also been undertaken with Maldon District Council and the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE).

### **Status of the Village Design Statement and Relation to Relevant Planning Documents**

The intention is for the VDS (presented as Appendix A of the Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan) to be endorsed by Maldon District Council and used as material consideration and a key document of standing in determining planning applications for Great Totham.

In this way the VDS will ensure informed local involvement in planning applications for the village.

The VDS supports, and builds upon, the objectives of the building and environmental policies for the Maldon District, as expressed in the Maldon District Local Development Plan (2014-2029) and the Essex Design Guide 1997 in offering guidance to ensure that new developments respect their local environment and are in keeping with traditional housing in towns and villages.



#### The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Development 1997

The Design Guide was first published by Essex County Council in 1973 and has been influential in the planning of new housing, encouraging the use of vernacular design and local materials to create good design in varying locations throughout the county. The Guide was revised in 1997 by the Essex Planning Officers Association and adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by local authorities. The Guide aims to encourage all new developments to respect, and be in keeping with, traditional housing in towns and villages and addresses such considerations as spatial organisation (layout), building heights, distances between dwellings, roof styles, window patterns, materials, treatment of ground surfaces and use of landscaping. All these elements should reflect the context of existing development, creating housing of distinctive character and identity.

#### **Summary**

The Great Totham Design Guide covers the main Settlement Areas of the village and the rural hinterland of the parish.

Its aims are:

- To assist and guide the initiators of future development proposals in Great Totham as to what is acceptable to the local community. This should assist such proposals and avoid conflict during the planning process.
- To demonstrate clearly which buildings, open spaces and views are of major importance to the community and should be protected.
- To give local insight into conformance with the principles of the Essex Design Guide

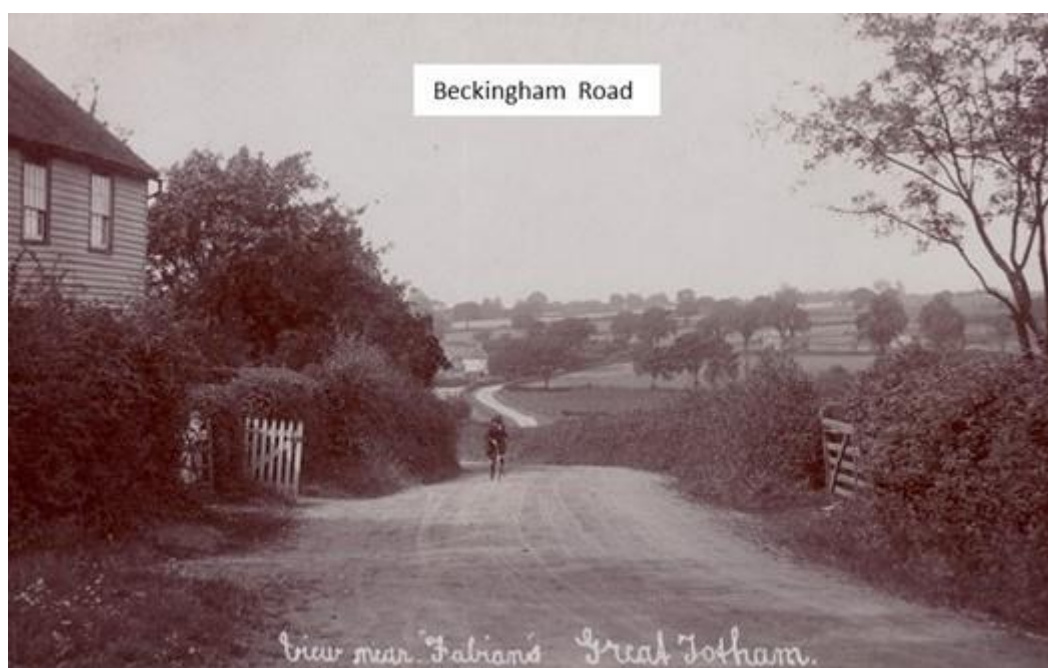
## 2. Great Totham Village



### Historical Context

Archaeological investigation has revealed human activity from Prehistoric and Early Medieval times in the extreme south-east of the parish. This consisted of animal husbandry and arable farming. There is evidence of Bronze Age metalworking. The population at Domesday, 1086, is estimated at around 150. At the Norman Conquest Great Totham was awarded to three Norman supporters of King William the First.

The early village of Great Totham was a collection of dispersed farmhouses and buildings such as Lofts. There was no central core of church, village green and dwellings, generally seen as the typical English village. Instead there were isolated farms with small settlements developing on heathland near to services. The largest settlements were around the Parish Pits (one of which is now the Jubilee Recreation Ground), near the windmill, wheelwright, blacksmith and saddler, school and shop; the second at Totham Hill also had a mill and blacksmith as well as its brickworks.



The first census in 1801 showed a population of 528, by 1851 it had reached 840. The latter half of the nineteenth century saw a steady decline, due mainly to changes in agricultural methods and the beginning of industry in neighbouring towns. In 1901 Totham was home to 589 souls. In the first half of the twentieth century, population again rose as travel to neighbouring centres became cheaper and easier. By 1931 population was 982 and by 1951 it had reached 1,221.

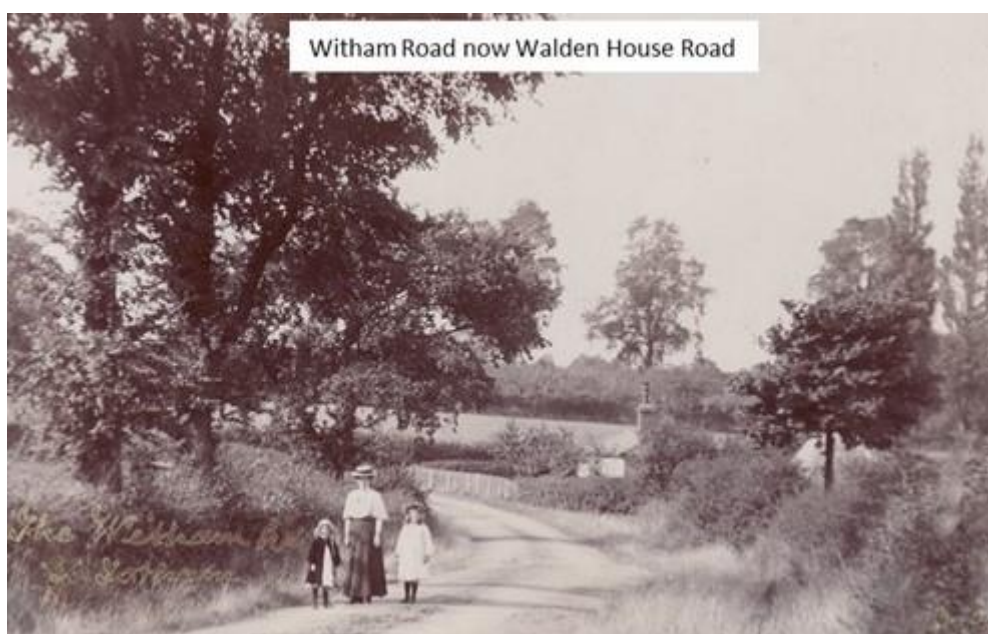
Housing was needed to meet the rise in population. 18 houses were built from 1895 to 1913. The large houses, Beacons and Great Ruffins date from this period but most properties were much smaller and to rent. The period after the First World War saw the beginning of local authority housing; Maldon RDC erected 26 dwellings in the 1920s and 1930s, 12 in Spring Lane and Colchester Road, 8 facing Bull Green and 6 in Goat Lodge Road.

From 1950 onwards Great Totham saw consistent major growth so that by 2011 the population was 2930. There was further new local authority housing, notably at Staplers Heath and Mill Road but the market now began to provide housing by private developers with a sequence of developments from Kings Road and Eaton Way to Chasefields, Seagers, Heriot Way and Beadle Place. In addition there was a good deal of infill and some smaller developments around the village. The Willie Almshouses, dating from 1855 provided housing for three widows and three couples who had resided in the village for 20 years; the Village Workhouse was at what is now the Prince of Wales pub from 1805 to 1830.



Employment up to the mid nineteenth century was in agriculture and related industries. There were two windmills, remembered by Millways and Mill Road and a tide mill at the very south of the village near the jetty at Saltcote. A major industry, now totally extinct, was brick, tile and pottery making. This was mainly in the north of the parish and is remembered in names such as Brick Spring Lane, Brick Hall and Brick Kiln Farm. The soft red bricks from local pits can be seen in many older village buildings.

Schooling took place at the Congregational (United Reform) Church and for Anglicans at the Honywood School. A Board School was built in the 1870s and the present school dates from a century later. Religious life centred on the Parish Church but Non-conformists built the chapels at Mill Road (Wesleyan, now demolished) and Chapel Road (Congregational) in the nineteenth century. The use of a barn as an Evangelical Church in Prince of Wales Road is a very early example of such conversions. The Village Hall (1929-30) is one of a number designed by resident architect, A H Mackmurdo, under the aegis of Rural Community Council of Essex.



The number of pubs in the village has varied over the years. Of the survivors, the Compasses at Totham North and the Bull both date from the early eighteenth century, and are conversions from houses. The Prince of Wales was a conversion of the old Workhouse c1860; it was rebuilt after a disastrous fire in 1990. For the rest The Star and Blacksmiths Arms are now houses on Compasses Green and Totham Hill Green; there were also beer houses at Slough House and the Post Office. The Bird in Hand, near Myrtle Villas, and the Crown at Broad Street Green have been demolished.

The current parish boundary dates from a 1934 Review. At this time the land between Maypole Road and Broad Street Green Road, a narrow strip to the east of the latter and Captain's Wood were transferred from Heybridge to Great Totham. An area at the south of the parish near the river, and Osea Island were transferred to Maldon but are now in Heybridge. The ecclesiastical parish was unaffected.

Today Great Totham is generally referred to as Great Totham North and Great Totham South. This derives from the titles of the two electoral registers which cover the whole parish and the labels

given to the two largest settlement areas, whose cores have defined development limits. Sadly for travellers this distinction is not recognised by the Ordnance Survey.

There are in fact four recognised settlements, as well as outlying farms and small hamlets. The largest is Great Totham South (formerly just Great Totham) with the School, Village Hall and Shop, while Great Totham North (formerly Totham Hill) is smaller; Beacon Hill where the parish meets Wickham Bishops and the Braxteds, and Broad Street Green which sits mainly on the east of the road with the same name. Smaller settlements are at Maypole and Beckingham Roads with one at Sheepcoates Lane overlapping with Little Totham.

### **Landscape Character**

The natural landscape helps form the character of Great Totham and is a key influence on the village's social and economic development. The Parish sits at the western edge of a band of Essex landscape stretching from the Suffolk border to the River Thames. This contains former heathland and wooded hills, overlapping with the low-lying coastal zone of the River Blackwater. The village lies on a generally south-east facing slope from Beacon Hill (at 292 feet, the highest point in Maldon District and third highest in Essex), to near sea level at Chigborough Farm. From Beacon Hill views stretch to Southend on Sea, Mersea Island and the coast of North Kent. This viewpoint has been used for defence and early warning purposes from the Armada to the Cold War. Crowds from the parish and neighbouring parishes still gather here when the reproduction beacon is lit on significant anniversaries.

Much of the land is gravel bearing with clay veins and a brickearth layer. The centre and south of the parish has evidence of gravel workings over a considerable period. Several are now lakes for fishing and wildlife conservation as at Totham Hall and Chigborough. Modern developments such as Seagers, Beadle Place and Heriot Way sit partly on old workings. Workings at Lofts Farm have been restored to farm land and two old workings, owned by the Parish Council, are used as recreation grounds at Maldon Road and Braxted Lane, with a third at Maldon Road, used informally for leisure.

There is significant woodland landscape with Captains, Heybridge, Middle, South and Spickets Woods in the South with Strowling Wood and Mountains Grove in the North. Most are ancient and appear on Chapman and Andre's County Map of 1777. There are a number of smaller copses.

The 1777 map shows a significant original landscape feature of Great Totham – the central belt of sandy heath and wasteland, which, varying in width, stretches from the Suffolk Sandlings to Southend on Sea. Part of this, Tiptree Heath, ran from Messing to Heybridge spanning a mile wide at Great Totham to 100 yards at Broad Street Green. This formed the central belt of Great Totham with only small areas being enclosed prior to the nineteenth century.

This Heath was open waste, of use only for common grazing and collecting firewood but a growing population and demand for food, together with farm mechanisation and growing techniques, eyes turned to this hitherto unviable land. Enclosure began in 1805 and totally changed the landscape, leaving only the present Tiptree Heath conserved for nature. In Great Totham remnants of the old waste survive as wide road verges and two Greens of common grazing land in the north of the Parish.

Three distinct landscape character areas have been identified in the parish which all contribute to its unique atmosphere. The enclosed Totham Wooded Farmland extends from Beacon Hill and



Mountains Road through the settlements to the open arable dominated Tolleshunt Coastal and Maldon Drained Estuarine Farmlands to the south.

The natural features and resources of the land had an important influence on the way the Parish developed and was shaped by people and their activities satisfying economic and social needs over the centuries. All this led to changes in the visual landscape.

### **An 'Arcadian' Landscape**

Great Totham, North and South is regarded as an Arcadian settlement and is defined as such in the *Maldon District Characterisation Assessment* of June 2012, an evidence base document to the LDP. The main characteristics of such settlements are that they are dispersed and not nucleated with a main street or green at their centre. The church and hall are remote from the growth concentrations of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and there are dispersed groupings each with its own small historic core. There is no scale or sense of enclosure or anything approaching an urban configuration. Trees and soft landscaping mean that houses sit within a planted setting. New developments have in the main respected this overall appearance though there has been some loss of trees and soft landscape.

The Characterisation Assessment details 'Threats to this character' as including 'the infilling of gaps between houses, the rebuilding of houses with a larger footprint than their predecessors and the addition of large groups or small estates to the edge of villages'. Care should be taken to retain trees and planting and with the impact of new vehicular accesses, footways and parking areas, all of which can jeopardise the sense of soft enclosure and seclusion.

### **Environment and Habitats**

The landscape and natural environment of Great Totham is varied and diverse; ranging from intimate wooded farmland around Beacon Hill to lower lying arable countryside on the eastern boundaries. Just as our settlements are well defined with a diversity of street patterns and buildings which reflect our historical development, so too are our habitats, which include ancient remnant woodland, scrub, gardens, churchyards, hedgerows and fishing ponds. These support a variety of flora and fauna from orchids to humble grasses and buzzards to butterflies.

Although a full biological survey has not been undertaken, local knowledge has identified a good range of habitats and species. The only habitat lacking in the parish is species rich grassland but roadside verges and field margins could be more diverse. Scrubland is an undervalued habitat which takes time to develop its richness but responds to sympathetic if minimal management. There is no co-ordinated planning to replace existing tree stock although some active projects have been undertaken by landowners.

#### **Wildlife**

The rural environment of the parish provides a sustainable habitat for a range of species.

#### **Trees**

Most native species are to be found, including:

Ash, Beech, Birch, Blackthorn, Buckthorn, Hazel, Hawthorn, Holly Hornbeam, Horse Chestnut, Oak, Rowan, Spruce, Sycamore, Walnut, Willow and Yew. In gardens are more exotic species such as the Monkey Puzzle; there is also a variety of fruit trees – Apple, Plum, Pear, Greengage, Damson & Cherry.

Mammal: Fox, Badger, Bats, Hare, Rabbit, Hedgehog, Muntjac Deer, Grey Squirrel.

Avian: House Sparrow, Blackbird, Coal Tit, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Long Tailed Tit, Robin, Dunnock, Thrush, Collared Dove, Wood Pigeon, Pheasant, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Greenfinch, Chaffinch, Goldfinch, Siskin, Wren, Pied Wagtail, Redpoll, Green Woodpecker, Song Thrush, Mistle Thrush, Tree Sparrow, Sparrowhawk, Cuckoo, Black Cap, Willow Warbler, Chiff Chaff

Corvids: Jackdaw, Magpie, Crow, Jay

Raptor: Buzzard, Kestrel, Little Owl, Tawny Owl, Barn Owl

Reptile/Amphibian: Adder, Grass Snake, Slow Worm, Pond Frog, Newt, Toad

Mustelid: Stoat, Weasel

Otters have been observed in adjoining local waterways and Red Kites are sometimes seen overhead.

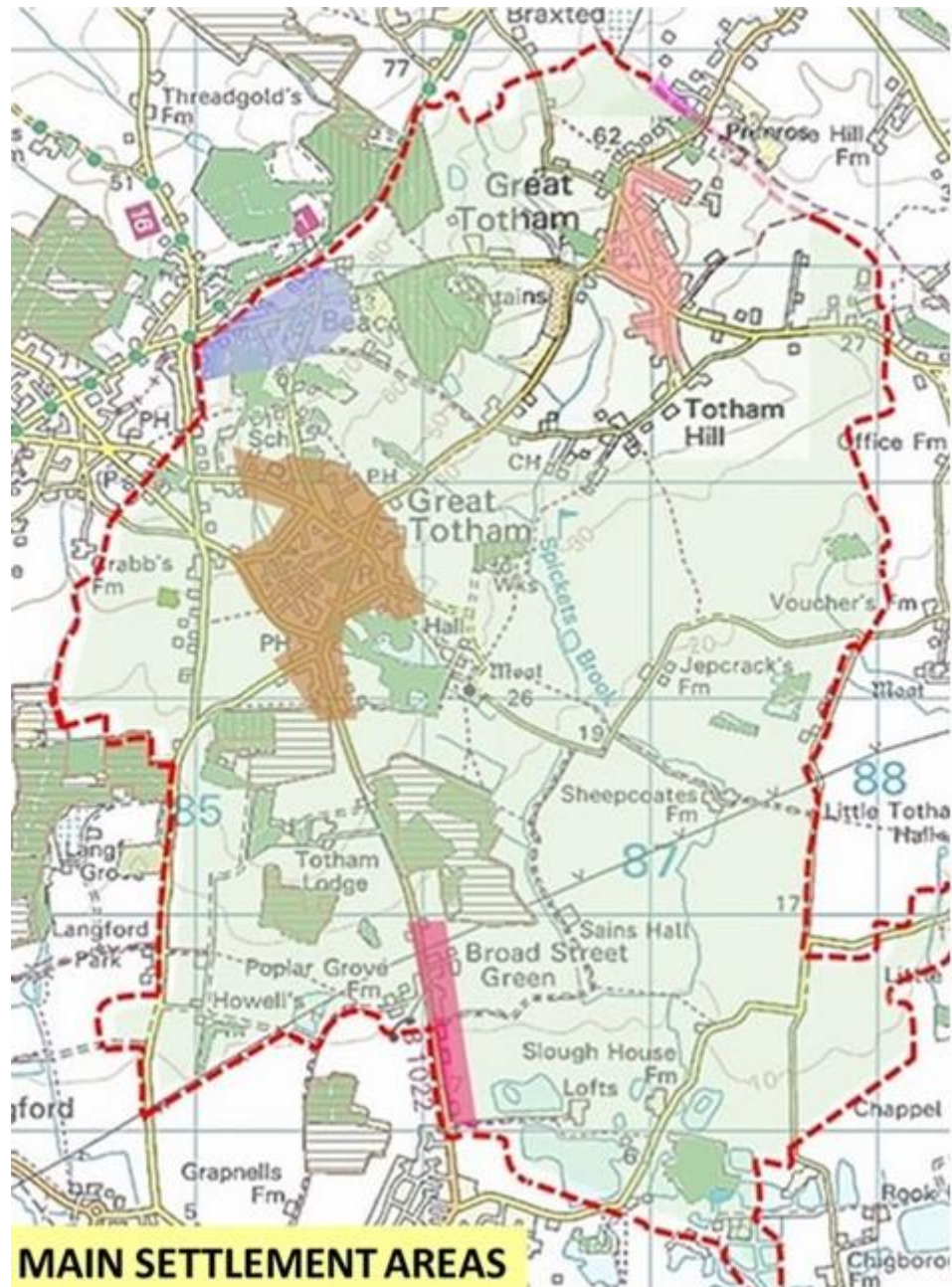
#### Our Landscape Vision

- To conserve the parish's essentially rural character
- Retain the three character areas of Great Totham
- Maintain views to adjacent character areas and east and south to the Blackwater Estuary
- Ensure new development respects the landscape in scale, pattern and materials
- Ensure new and replacement farm buildings are sensitively designed and located

#### Our Vision for Habitats and Biodiversity

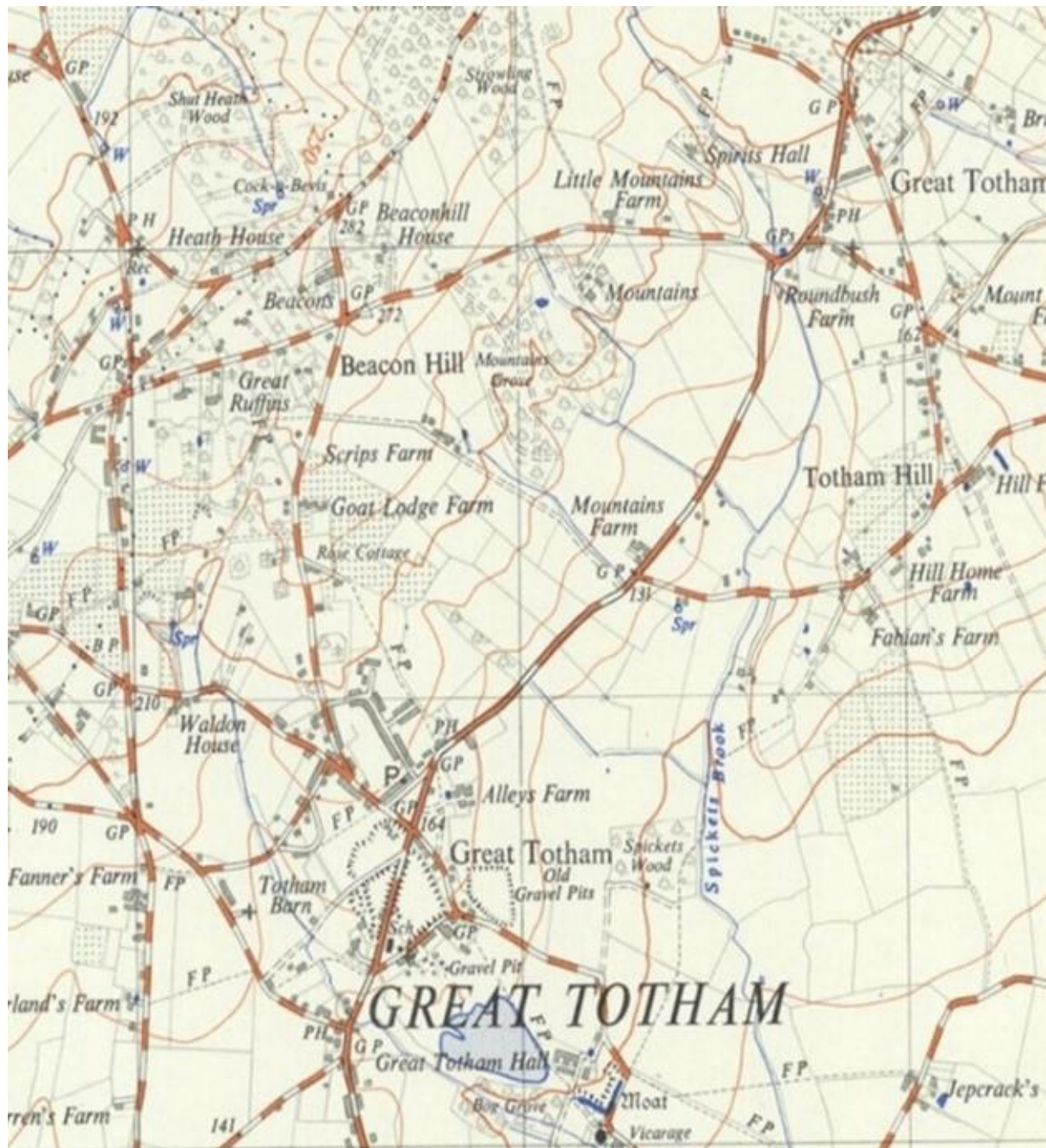
- Natural habitats to be conserved, protected and managed as part of the Essex Biodiversity Plan
- Woodland and hedgerows to be maintained and enhanced as wildlife corridors
- Degraded areas such as roadside verges and field margins to be proactively restored
- Seek to identify and develop new habitat areas on suitable sites
- Monitor protected and unprotected species
- Develop plans and take actions to maintain and increase variety of flora and fauna

### 3. The Settlement Areas



KEY			
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:10px; background-color:lightcoral;"></span>	GREAT TOTHAM NORTH	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:10px; background-color:lightorange;"></span>	GREAT TOTHAM SOUTH
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:10px; background-color:lightblue;"></span>	BEACON HILL	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:10px; background-color:lightpink;"></span>	BROAD STREET GREEN
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:10px; background-color:lightgreen;"></span>	OUTLYING AREAS		

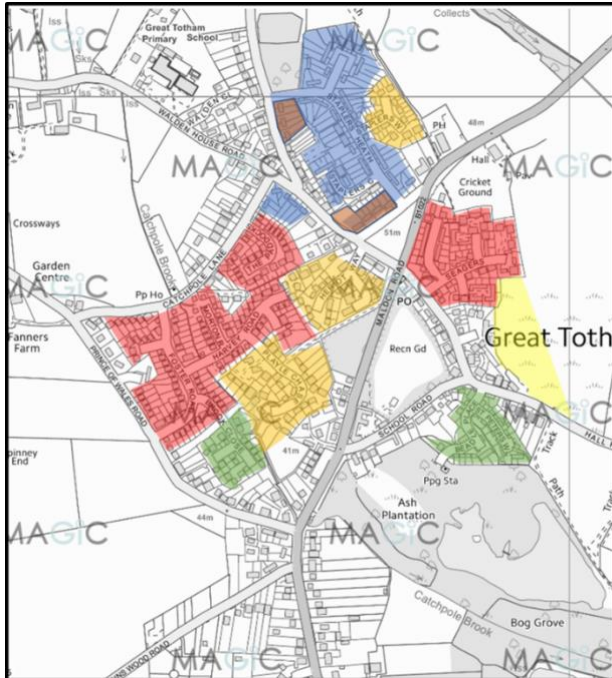
### Settlement history and character



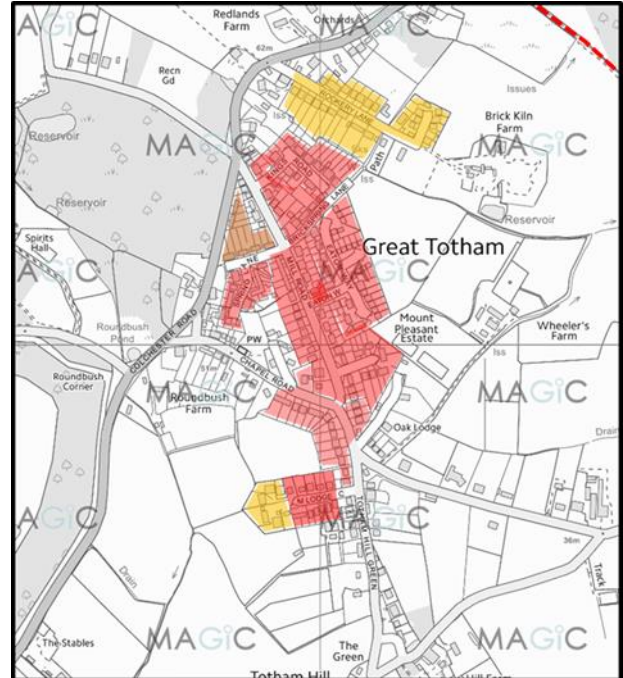
### Great Totham - 1958



**GREAT TOTHAM – DEVELOPMENT HISTORY**



South



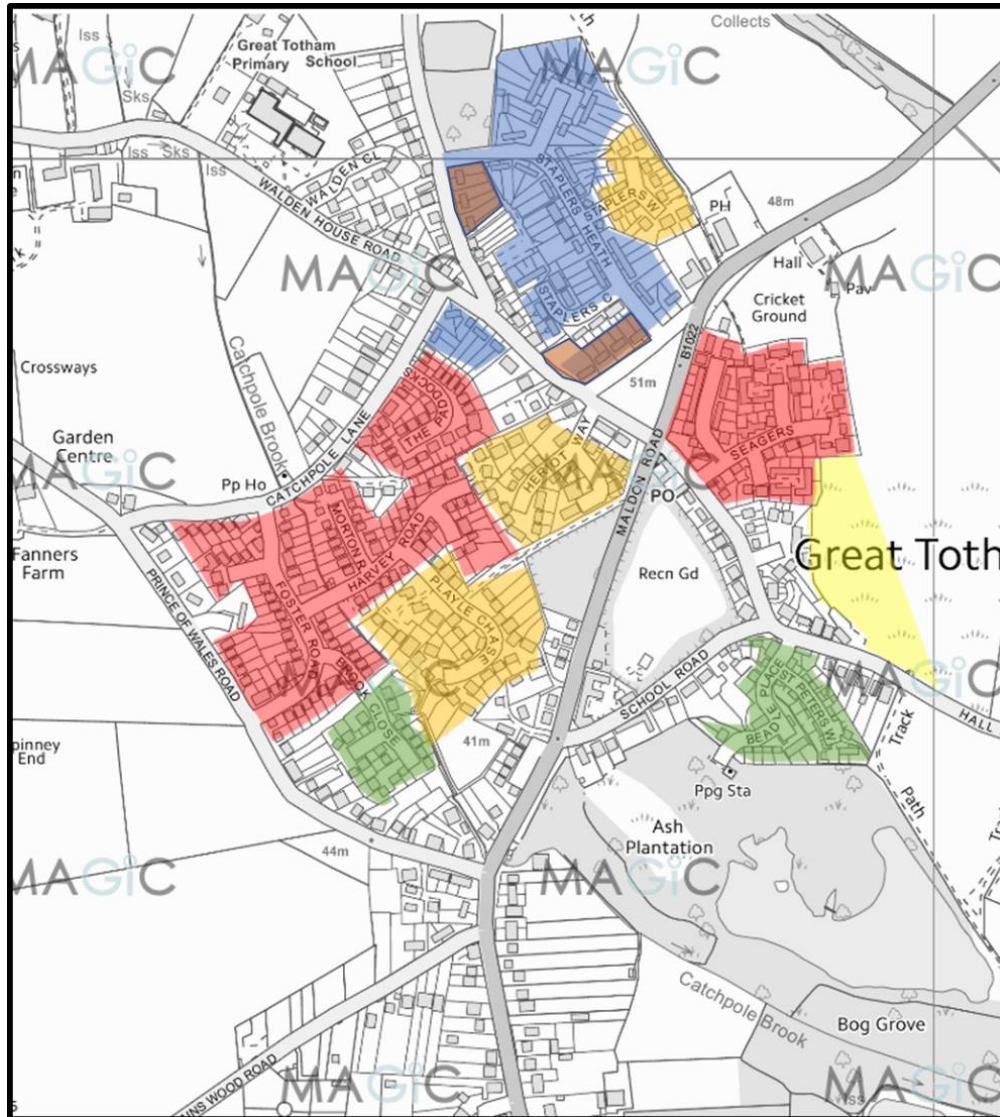
North

**KEY:**

1920s/30s
1950s
1960s/70s
1980s/90s
2000/2010
Outline planning granted 2018

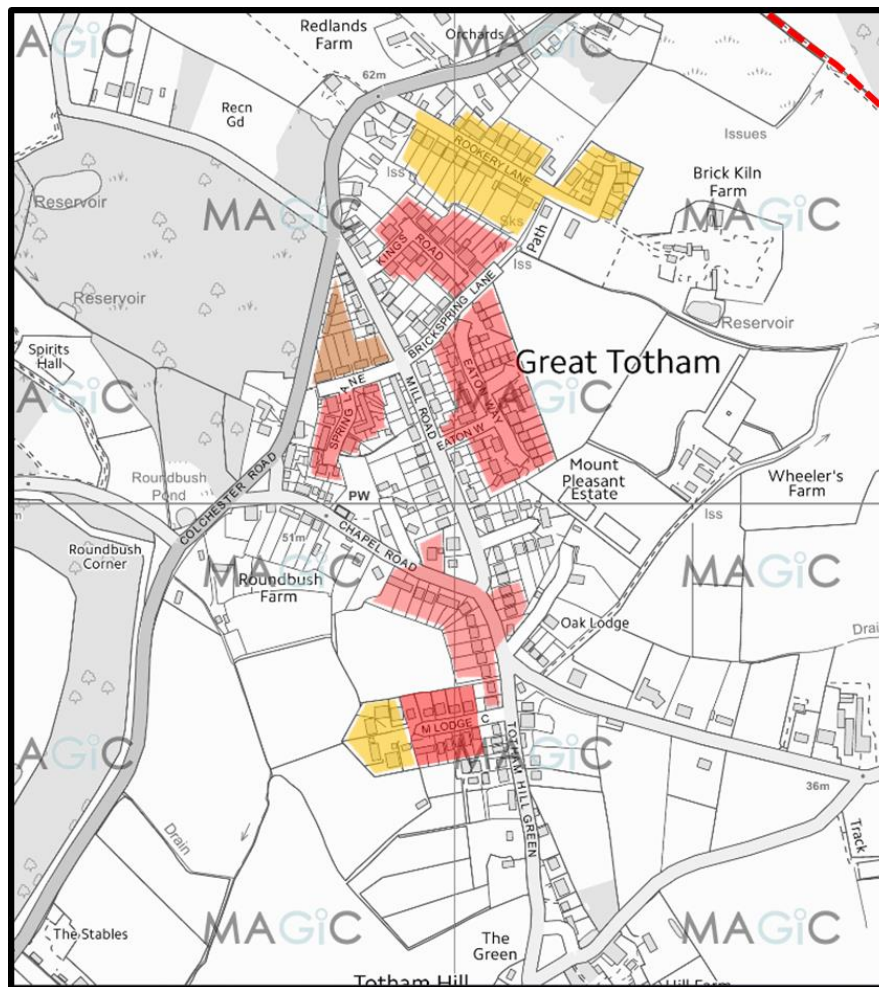


**GREAT TOTHAM SOUTH – HOUSING DENSITY**



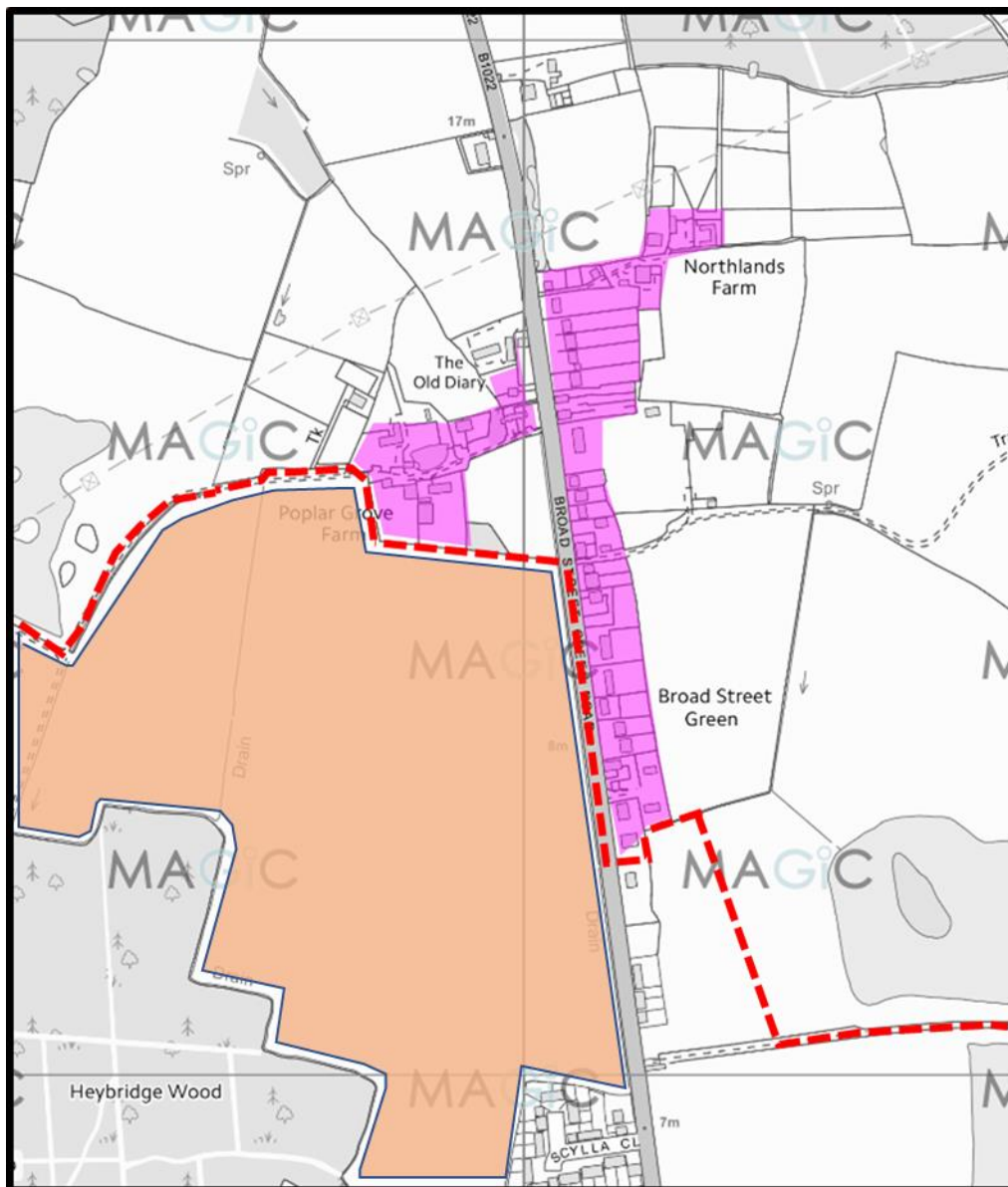
Location	When built	Area (hectares)	Number of homes	Density/ hectare	Comments
Staplers Heath	1920s/30s	0.7	14	20.0	
Staplers Heath	1950/60s	4.1	74	18.0	
Foster Road	1960s/70s	6.0	89	14.8	
Seagers	1960s/70s	2.8	53	18.9	
Heriot Way	1980s/90s	1.2	44	36.6	Includes 18 apartments
Playle Chase	1980s/90s	2.1	31	14.7	
Staplers Walk	1980s/90s	0.9	15	16.6	
Beadle Place	2000-10	1.3	37	28.4	Includes 9 apartments
Brook Close	2000-10	0.9	23	16.4	
Hall Road	2018	1.4	30	21.4	Outline planning granted 2018

**GREAT TOTHAM NORTH – HOUSING DENSITY**



Location	When built	Area (hectares)	Number of homes	Density/ hectare	Comments
Colchester Road	1920s/30s	0.59	12	20.3	
Eaton Way	1960s/70s	2.1	40	19.0	
Kings Road	1960s/70s	1.19	19	15.9	
Spring Lane	1960s/70s	0.8	17	21.25	15 are semi-detached bungalows
Mount Lodge Chase	1960s/70s	0.7	10	14.2	
Chapel Road	1960s/70s	1.4	19	13.5	
Rookery Lane	1980s/90s	2.14	28	13.1	
Mount Lodge Chase	1980s/90s	0.54	6	11.1	

**BROAD STREET GREEN – HOUSING DENSITY**



Neighbourhood Plan boundary

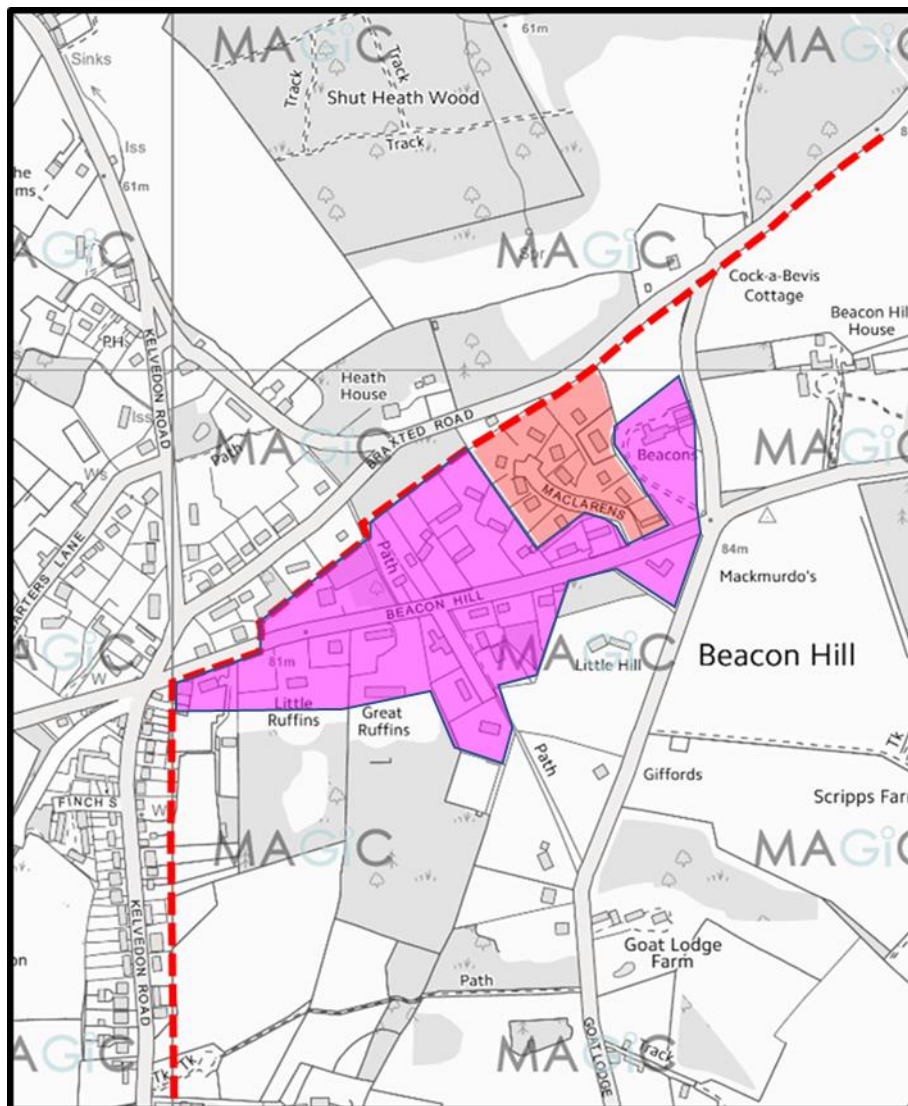


Site of the North Heybridge Garden Suburb

This underlying map for Broad Street Green is not current but comparison with other mapping and Google Maps shows the developed area of Broad Street Green covers some 5.9 hectares with 55 houses giving a density of 9.3 houses per hectare. Property ages are from around 1900 to the present day.



## **BEACON HILL – HOUSING DENSITY**



### Neighbourhood Plan boundary

Location	When built	Area (hectares)	Number of homes	Density/ hectare	Comments
McLarens	1970s	1.9	12	6.3	

Great Totham village is overwhelmingly a twentieth century construct; before this the area consisted almost entirely of small farms and cottages. Significant development began only from the 1950s and this has led to a village of four settlement areas plus remaining open country. Ours is not an historic village nor does it contain many high quality individual buildings. Buildings are in a mixture of styles and periods with no sense of enclosure. Such villages are described as 'Arcadian'; they are dispersed and do not cluster around a street or green; there is no sense of enclosure or an urban configuration.

Properties of various periods sit in close proximity but do not generally 'jar'. The village's open configuration means that houses sit back from the road with front gardens; hedges and low walls predominate rather than fences. Where there are gates, they tend to be left open. Planned developments are interspersed with trees and are generally laid out to follow and respect the natural lie of the land.

Great Totham has significant numbers of bungalows; houses are largely of two stories, some with dormer windows and others of chalet configuration. Properties are well separated, often by up to two yards. Overall there is a balanced mix of housing with provision for most age groups. The largest current need is starter homes for couples and young families. These have been largely missing from recent developments.



Examples of Chalets with Dormer windows in Mount Lodge Chase, Totham North

In established areas and the more open plan estates, houses look outwards and towards roads. Some recent additions have a more enclosed feel with single road access points, higher densities, smaller plots and taller buildings. This tendency needs to be kept under review and the density of future developments carefully monitored. Consideration for neighbours and the style of their properties – in other words, 'Architectural Good Manners' – should be a guiding principle, with new housing generally in keeping with existing village character. Walking is important to our village and where houses crowd to the road, an open *village* feeling is lost. Generally Great Totham is well served with pavements and footpaths and this amenity should be safeguarded.





Examples of taller houses with small front gardens in Beadle Place

As the development of the village was incremental, houses with different styles and finishes jostle together. Lately larger twentieth century developments have succeeded, to a greater or lesser degree, in breaking up their impact and softening their appearance through judicious variations in materials and finishes. This should be encouraged as a general policy.

The last decade has seen an increase in large detached properties, individually designed, on large plots with enclosed, gated grounds. Such developments should be regarded as exceptional. Smaller, older properties have been sacrificed for these and others remain vulnerable.



Replacement dwelling with gated entrance

### **Great Totham South**

This is the most populated area of the Parish. It grew up around the crossroads on the B1022 and is surrounded by open countryside. There are significant and far reaching views from many points See Section 2. This part of the village contains several of the significant listed buildings inside the development boundary, notably The Willie Alms Houses, The Honywood School, The Barn Church and 'The Bull' Public House, all Grade II. Some older buildings like the windmill and Alley's Farm have been demolished to make way for more modern schemes. The Parish Church of St Peter, the Old Vicarage and Totham Hall lie a short distance south east of the settlement area.



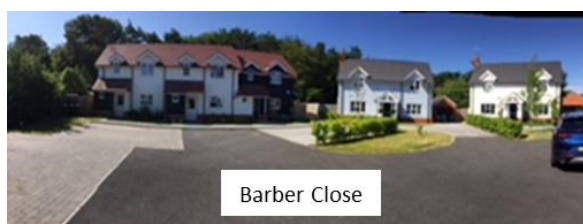
The majority of development has taken place since the 1950s starting with Staplers Heath. More development was carried out in the 1970s (Foster Road and Seagers), 1980s (Heriot Way) and the 1990s (St Peter's Walk/Beadle Place).





Over this period, developments have tended to become more enclosed, denser and urban in feel. This tendency should be resisted or at least kept in check, as should any unwelcome move to higher and bulkier buildings. There is one group of former municipal housing at Staplers; some have been purchased by tenants, the remainder are run by Moat Housing.

Infilling of sites has been a constant feature in the evolution of the village. Heriot Way and St Peter's Walk were formerly centres of employment – the former a transport yard and the latter a truckbuilders. Such reuse of brownfield sites should be encouraged. In addition to large detached homes, both Heriot Way and Beadle Place contain a number of flats. As a result, at locations within the village, properties from a number of periods and of various types, may be found in close conjunction; in most cases these bring a welcome variety to the streetscape and can still be defined as 'good manners' in architectural terms.



The Post Office/general stores and Great Totham Garage are located close to the B1022 and Hall Road junction. Here too is the village green, which with the shop and The Bull forms the closest we have to a village centre in Totham South.





Southwood Timber, suppliers of wood and manufacturers of wooden outbuildings operates from the wood of the same name situated on the B1022 just south of the settlement.

-Great Totham School is deservedly well regarded and popular. It also serves the villages of Wickham Bishops and the Braxteds; this extended catchment area is now causing major traffic and safety issues for Great Totham residents.



#### **GUIDANCE**

- **New developments or extensions near old buildings should be designed sympathetically to complement the existing buildings.**
- **The 'Arcadian' nature of Great Totham should be given significant weight in considering development proposals.**
- **Existing open spaces and views should be retained and respected.**

The northern entrance to the village is 'framed' by 'The Bull', the Village Hall and cricket field. 'The Bull' is a listed building and the Village Hall, designed by Arthur Mackmurdo, renowned Arts and Crafts architect and local resident, is a listed Local Heritage Asset.



Mackmurdo was also responsible for the design of Great Ruffins and Beacons on Beacon Hill and several other village halls in Essex. The Village Hall is home to the Great Totham Nursery School and plays host to numerous other clubs and associations. The aspect of this northern entrance is a very important visual feature of Great Totham and has been recognised as such by the Planning Inspectorate.

The Jubilee Recreation Ground was formed on the site of an old gravel working during the 1950s. It contains a football pitch, play equipment and a youth shelter.



The village has a substantial village green, with trees and a bench. This space might benefit from a more active and imaginative conservation approach. A layby has been constructed alongside the green to enable safer parking for customers visiting the Post Office and stores.

Totham Lodge, (Grade II), once the manor house of the De Crespigny family is now a care home.



A second public house, The Prince of Wales is found at the B1022/Prince of Wales Road junction. This is a replacement building – the C18 original was demolished by fire in the 1990s – but is broadly similar in style to the original.



### **Great Totham North**

There is a long standing story to the effect that the settlement of Great Totham North was formed when some residents of the original Great Totham moved away to form a new community as a way of avoiding the plague of the 1600s. It is surrounded by open countryside. Although the population of Great Totham North is significantly smaller than Great Totham South, the Settlement Areas are closer in size, giving Great Totham North a more open aspect.



The first major development took place in the 1920s around Spring Lane and Cochester Road and comprises semi detached houses; this was followed by further developments around Mount Lodge Chase, Mill Road and Eaton Way in the 1970s and 1980s. These later developments contain detached houses, chalets and bungalows. The Eaton Way development has an open feel which is characterised by the lack of defined boundaries at the front of the properties.



Some of the properties built here in the 1970s are similar in style to their counterparts in Great Totham South. As the planned developments in Totham North are smaller in scale than those to the South, the North has a more rural feel. In general though, the same principles apply as in Totham South and the principles applied to development in the North should be no different from that outlined above for Totham South.

Although smaller in size than its neighbour, Great Totham North has a greater number of bungalows, 124 against 67 in Great Totham South. There is a small number of former local authority houses on the B1022 and in Spring Lane.



1920s houses in Spring Lane



Detached bungalows in Mount Lodge Chase





Great Totham North has a recreation ground for public use and there are some allotments within the grounds of the United Reformed Church (URC). The URC hosts a number of clubs and associations and is an attractive structure dating in part from 1831 when it was built as an Evangelical Arminian Chapel.



The recreation ground has a football pitch and some play equipment and there is a small village green



on the B1022. This green, though small in size, is most attractively laid out. It should be regarded as a major village asset; the green and its setting should be rigorously protected. Great Totham North also

has an area of open land, known locally as ‘Donkey Green’ at the junction of Totham Hill Green and Beckingham Road.



**GUIDANCE**

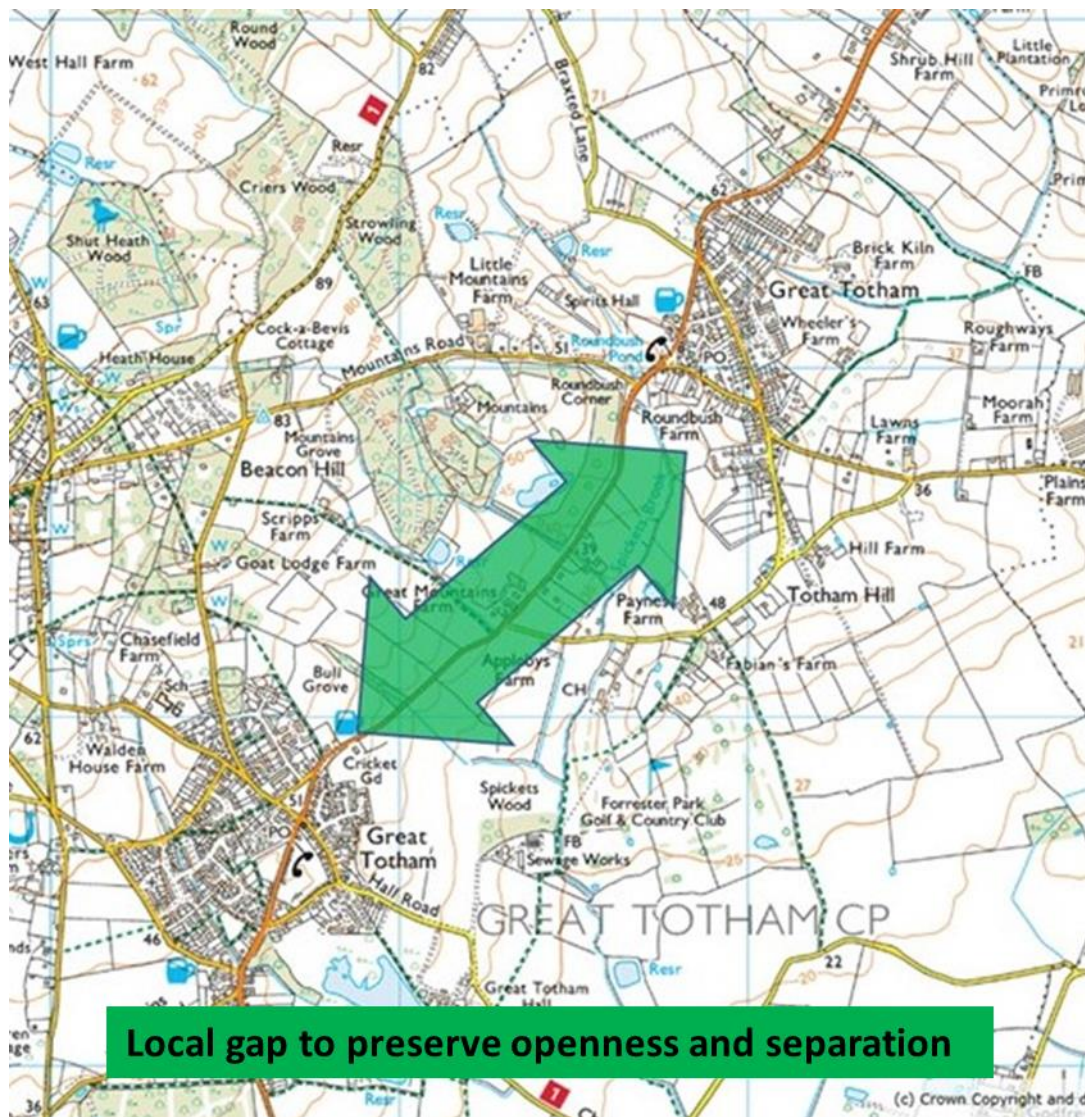
- The context of listed buildings should be considered as a significant influence on design.
- Good design to enhance and preserve the Arcadian environment.
- It is important that the openness and rural aspect of our village is constantly kept in mind and protected.

There are limited retail facilities in North Totham; the village contains a Florist and a Public House – The Compasses – which has been listed as an asset of community value.



Development in the ‘green corridor’ between Totham North and South and its associated vistas should be regarded as exceptional to preserve openness and separation.





### Beacon Hill

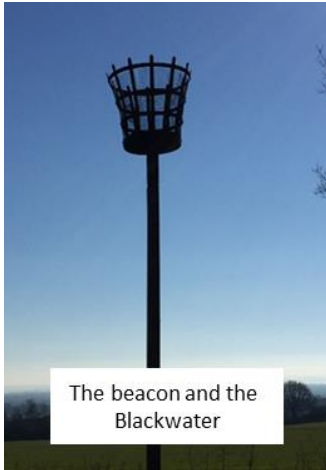
Although not a settlement in its own right, over the years Beacon Hill tends to look towards Wickham Bishops. It is a largely mixed development of individual houses stretching along Mountains Road. There are some older timber framed cottages and more recent, individually designed buildings constructed from the 1960s. Some smaller properties with large plots have been demolished and replaced with larger, more modern homes. Houses at Beacon Hill are hidden away far more than in the rest of Great Totham; there is a preponderance of gated entrances and high thick hedges. The whole aspect is much less open.

There are five listed buildings along Beacon Hill and Mountains Road. Maclarens is a development of large detached homes situated on the North side of Beacon Hill. It has a spacious layout, excellent landscaping and welcome variety in its houses and their treatment. Arthur Mackmurdo lived on Beacon Hill in a bungalow relatively recently demolished.





Great Ruffins, the large house he built for himself, is listed Grade II\*. Bettley & Pevsner (Buildings of England: Essex) say that “the comparison of it to a South American railway station is not altogether unfair”.



The village beacon, a look-out since Saxon times and the third highest point in Essex, is situated at the top of Goat Lodge Road and many villagers and visitors enjoy the far reaching views of the Blackwater Estuary and the Dengie Peninsula.



The protection of the vistas from the Beacon should be absolutely paramount; their value has also been recognised by the Planning Inspectorate and they are of far more than local significance. On a clear day chimney stacks on the North Kent coast are visible. The beacon is regularly lit for national celebrations or commemorations – the most recent was to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1918 Armistice. ‘Beacons’ near the junction with Goat Lodge Road is a listed building (Grade II) but this is largely hidden from view.



#### GUIDANCE

- Improve access to the beacon viewpoint to attract more visitors.
- Proposals to replace older, smaller dwellings with large, modern houses need careful monitoring

#### Broad Street Green

This settlement at the south end of Great Totham Parish along the eastern side of the B1022 (an old Roman Road) would historically have been part of Tiptree Heath. The ribbon of houses, built on the heathland, is of mixed dates from C19 to the present, with one or two possibly earlier. Buildings vary from farm cottages to large modern detached houses. Lofts Farm and associated buildings east of the B1022 include listed structures and lakes resulting from gravel workings.



Broad Street Green doesn't benefit from retail or community facilities but does have a chapel, The Searchlight Church.

The parish boundary between Broad Street Green and Heybridge crosses the B1022 by the chapel. At its southern extremity Broad Street Green is already affected by the developing Heybridge Garden Suburb which will continue to expand during the life of the Neighbourhood Plan. In recognition of this uncertainty, a small part of Great Totham Parish, west of the B1022 and containing no dwellings, has been excluded from the Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan.

The main concern here is the long term need to constrain the northward march of Heybridge which takes the form of large suburban estates. The differentiation of these developments from Great Totham South, while not an immediate issue, will require vigilance over the life of the current Neighbourhood Plan and beyond.





### The outlying areas

St Peter's Church (Grade II\*) is located outside of Great Totham South, it is co-located with the old Vicarage and Totham Hall. Both are listed Grade II. The church lych gate was rebuilt in 2018. The church owns the Honywood School (Grade II) and both buildings are used for many different village activities.



#### GUIDANCE

- People in Great Totham value the open landscape and rural views, both in the settlement areas and the outlying landscape context.
- Protect and manage woodland effectively.
- Protect the green space between Great Totham and Wickham Bishops which is getting smaller.

Away from the village centres the only real development of note has taken place along Sheepcoats Lane, Plains Road and Beckingham Road. These are mainly detached homes of varying styles and ages. A number of the older properties along Beckingham Road are listed. Sheepcoats Lane and Plains Road have both seen some infilling and redevelopment/replacement of older properties.

The landscape is mainly arable interspersed with woodland and hedgerows. There are several large farms which produce a range of cereals and Mountains Farm is well known for Turkey rearing.

Development in these areas should be minimal with priority given to cases of clear need. The adaptive re-use of redundant agricultural and industrial buildings should be encouraged.



#### **4. Village Style and Elements Explained**

##### **Building Styles**

Great Totham consists of predominantly C20 and C21 development, with pockets of earlier houses and scattered farms representing the earlier landscape. There is ribbon development along the B1022 towards Heybridge. Building styles are various but generally sit together comfortably. Recent developments have been of higher densities and properties have tended to be at the large end of the spectrum.

The village has developed with buildings that are predominantly set back from roads with open frontages. Where there are gates, they tend to be low, not solid and often left open. Recent years have seen deviations from this in two respects. Some more recently developed properties are aggressively close to roads and neighbouring properties giving an enclosed, separate and urban feel, while others, particularly larger dwellings, hide behind high hedges and solid gates which does not fit with the open rural aspect and feeling that most residents enjoy.

##### **Material Finishes to Buildings**

The predominant material is brick in various shades. Many houses are rendered wholly or in part, predominantly in shades of cream. A number of estates have used render to give welcome variety to identical properties. Timber is also used in this way. A recent fashion for cladding refers to some earlier buildings which are weather boarded in traditional fashion. Similarly, there are examples of pargetting, even on quite recent houses.



##### **Brick**

A number of listed structures, for example, The Honywood and the Willie Almshouses are in traditional red brick, as are the few surviving pre C20 buildings. More recent buildings, particularly the estates, use a variety of modern brick colours to introduce variety within streets or closes.



##### **Render**



Render is used throughout the village, both on individual properties and in estate locations. This gives welcome variety and contrast to brick and breaks up the look.



### **Roofs**

The village has a great variety of roof styles, pitched roofs of varying angles, hipped roofs and a few mansard roofs; gables from main roofs and dormers are also to be seen.



### **Roofing Materials**

A variety of roof tiles are to be found in Great Totham from traditional peg tiles to all manner of variations. Concrete tiles are also found with some natural slate on older properties.

### **Dormers**

Dormers are to be found on houses of all ages; they provide welcome variety in roof lines and add a degree of individuality to streetscapes.



### **Doors and Windows**

Doors and windows are a major factor in the appearance of buildings and the village as whole. There is large variety in the styles of doors and windows in Great Totham. Many houses – even those of relatively recent construction – are already seeing doors and windows replaced with PVC and double glazing. These are sympathetic in varying degrees but do not require planning consent.

**“Good Manners”**

In line with village preferences, as expressed in the Neighbourhood Plan and Housing Needs Survey, it is anticipated that most new building in Great Totham will be of infill within the settlement boundaries, and in modest numbers. Such schemes should be rigorously examined for their suitability in relation to existing, neighbouring buildings. In this as elsewhere, the watchword should be “Architectural Good Manners”. Only a few buildings in the village are of the highest quality but their variety should be cherished, and this should not imply that the village heritage can be treated lightly or with contempt.



### **Boundary Treatments**

The great majority of village dwellings sit back from the road with front gardens. Boundaries are defined by low hedges, stone or brick walls, shrubs or even simply the edge of lawns. Where there are gates, these tend to be openwork and are often left open. Low boundaries give large sections of the village an open and welcoming aspect. Some larger properties have high walls of hard landscaping or tall green planting. There is a fashion for severe solid gates, often controlled by the occupant. There is also a tendency for newer properties to sit very close to the road or jut aggressively into sightlines. This tendency should be kept in check.



#### Guidance Notes

- New buildings should respect neighbouring properties and not impose themselves in their scale, height or close proximity, they should have adequate space around the property to maintain a rural feel and to the side of the property for garages.
- The recent trend towards building urban style houses with three storeys imposing themselves on the street scene and neighbours is not in keeping with the village architecture and should only be approved by exception. Skyline views allowing sunlight through should be protected.
- Property extensions should replicate the details of their parent building e.g. windows, doors and roofing and not impose on street views or neighbouring properties.
- Pitched roofs should be the norm in new development but exceptions may be made for submissions of high architectural merit.
- Hedge boundaries to be of native species and wildlife friendly.
- Fences, railings and walls should be traditional in design and appearance.
- The open frontages and low boundaries common in large areas of the village should be the norm in any future developments.

#### Buildings Listed and of Special Interest

Great Totham has 41 Listed Buildings which are scattered across the parish.

**Parish Church of St Peter, II\*:** C13 and C14 with major C19 alterations. Walls are of flint, puddingstone, freestone and oolite. Also five **Churchyard Monuments**

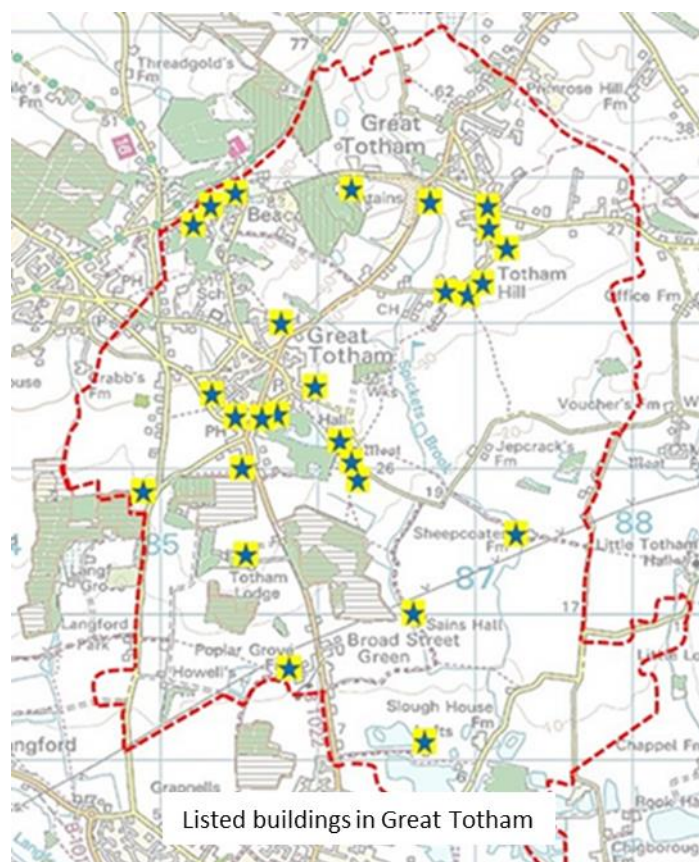
**Old Vicarage II:** C18 with later alterations. Group value with Church and Totham Hall.

**Great Totham Hall II:** C17 with alterations and additions. Timber framed and plastered. Also **Barn II**.

**Totham Barn Chapel, Evangelical Free Church II:** C17 Timber framed, weather-boarded with thatched roof. Listed as remarkably early barn conversion, 1822

**Totham Lodge II:** 1880. Red brick home of the De Crespigny family. Now a Care Home.





**Honywood School II:** 1857 Former village school, red brick. Gift of former lay rector.

**Willie Almshouses II:** 1855 Two rows with chapel in brick. Modern extensions.

**The Bull Public House II:** C17 or earlier. Timber frame and brick, plastered. **Stables II** adjacent.

**Mountains II\*:** House C15/16 with C18/20 extensions. Listing includes garden wall.

**Beacons II:** 1902, Mackmurdo house. Red brick and render, with observation tower. Listing notes group value with 1903 Beacons Cottage for gardener.

**Great Ruffins II;** 1904 Mackmurdo house. Italianate with tower and lantern. Also **Gates II**.

Farmhouses in outlying area listed Grade II, most of C16/17 origins. **Fabians C17: Gun**, formerly the Shoulder of Mutton Inn, C15: **Hill** c1500 and **Barn: Lofts C16** with **Granary** and **Cart Lodge: Paynes 1777: Poplar Grove C17** with **Cart Lodge, Stable** and **Wheel Pump: Roundbush C17** or earlier and two **Barns: Sheepcoates C16** or earlier.

Cottages listed Grade II: **76-78 Oak Cottages, Maldon Road C18/19** with 'Royal Insurance' plaque: **8, Prince of Wales Road C18: 16 School Road C17** or earlier: **Bean and Walnut Tree Cottages, Totham Hill Green C18: Croft Cottage Totham Hill Green C16: 1 and 2 Beacon Cottages, Beacon Hill C18**, extended C20 now two dwellings.

Maldon District Council's **List of Heritage Assets** has the following entries for Great Totham Parish



Listed as part of a group of Mackmurdo buildings are **Little Ruffins**, 1901, much altered, **Ruffins Lodge** (to Great Ruffins), 1903, and **Great Totham Village Hall, 1929-30**. **Mackmurdos**, a 1920 bungalow was also included in this group but demolished in 2014. The **K6 Telephone Box** on Totham North village green is also listed for landscape value.

Also of significance locally is the Bus Shelter adjacent to Totham South Post Office which houses the village War Memorial.

### **Village Facilities, Community and Leisure**

Great Totham is a rural community whose population is a mix of established village families and incomers who have chosen to move into the village. Residents made clear in our survey that they value the open rural aspects of the village, its setting in open country and its views across neighbouring countryside (88%). They also felt that the looks and appearance of the village were a major contribution to its character (95%). The population of the parish is 2930 (Source 2011 Census). The majority of residents are retired (xx%) or in full time employment (xx%). Of the latter our survey showed that most commute to work with journeys of over 20 minutes.

The facilities which make Great Totham a thriving and desirable place to live are its churches, shops and Post Office as well as a range of social, sports and recreation facilities.

- St Peter's Church, Barn Evangelical Church, United Reform Church
- Village Hall
- The Honywood
- Village Stores and Post Office, Florist's Shop
- Recreation Grounds, North and South
- Village Greens, North and South
- Totham Garage
- Totham School
- The Bull, Prince of Wales and Compasses Public Houses
- Forrester Park Golf and Country Club
- Cricket Pitch
- Marven's Riding School
- Network of footpaths and views
- Clubs such as Carpet Bowls, Art Club, Knit and natter, The Lunch Club and The Garden Society

### **Guidance**

Broader communication of all the facilities and activities available in the village to all age groups would improve their accessibility, encourage greater use and strengthen community spirit.

### **Commerce, Industry and Employment**

There are relatively few employers within the parish. Two shops, one including the Post office, three public houses, the garage, the riding school, a garden centre and some of the farms. A nursery school uses the village hall. Some farm premises have seen adaptive reuse for small businesses, and one has converted properties for holiday rental. This is a welcome trend. Great Totham has mercifully not seen the level of local business closures of some neighbouring settlements.

#### **Some of the businesses in Great Totham**

Crisell Internet Consultancy	Essex Wedding Discos
The Florist on the Green	Worldwood Products
The Compasses	Marlin Components Online
Soundmagic Studios	11 Plus Swot
Upton Mowers	Totham Lodge Care Home
Southwood Timber	R A Lee
Forrester Park	Great Totham Garage
The Bull	B P A Kennedy
The Prince of Wales	Sigma Electrical
Bourne Engineering	Joe Murrell
Little Mountains Farm	Hughes and Son Landscapes
Delta Performance	Maypole Health
Stan's Coaches	Hayward and Barratt Holdings
Naio Environmental	Carports, Canopies and Verandas in UK
Quadbikes R Us	PC Doctor Operations Ltd
Car Masts UK	Maypole Pet and Garden Centre
Kit Car Electronics	Hawkes Plastering
Landscape Photography	Innov8 Driving School
Great Totham Post Office and Stores	Jepcracks Barn Self Catering
Marvens Riding Stables	

### **Guidance**

- Local commerce and employment are important to the village. Existing services and facilities should be supported.
- Small scale commercial activity should be welcomed as long as it does not conflict with the village's rural character.
- Sensitive reuse of redundant premises should be encouraged and welcomed.

## **5. Highways and Infrastructure**

### **Transport and Roads**

#### **Guidance**

- Continue to press for rationalisation of speed limits particularly on the B1022.
- Seek to enhance the village footpath network and secure a safe pedestrian route for all between Totham North and South.
- Work with all involved to reduce traffic related to Totham School.
- Ensure new developments provide sufficient off-street parking which does not adversely affect street scenes or look urban in character.
- Resist any increase in street lighting.

The two main settlement areas, North and South are bisected by the B1022 main distributor road. This is very busy during travel to work times morning and evening and steady all day. Speeding is an issue, as is the variety of limits on the road during its traverse of the parish. Proposed developments at Heybridge will substantially increase traffic on the B1022. The junction of Walden House Road and the B1022 is busy with traffic from Witham Station and the A12 accessing routes to Maldon and Tiptree. Totham School, serving as it does, neighbouring villages, generates significant congestion morning and evening.

#### **Pedestrians and Cycling**

National Cycle Route 1 passes through the parish. There are no dedicated cycle routes but our quiet roads are popular with residents and visitors.

Pedestrian routes are generally good throughout settlement areas, with minor gaps. The absence of a metalled path between North and South Totham, suitable for families including push chairs is a source of discontent. Our network of footpaths is well used but could be significantly improved with a small number of new links.

#### **Parking**

Most properties in the village have a degree of off street parking. However, developments built as recently as the 1980s are now seeing significant amounts of street, and even pavement, parking. This seems to be due to increased number of vehicles per household and young people remaining longer at home with parents. Future developments should be scrutinised carefully for levels of off street parking.

#### **Street Furniture**

Although it would not be practicable to carry out major retrospective work, when signage is being replaced it is recommended that signage should, wherever possible, be combined, and its need be closely questioned.



Street name combined with 'cul de sac' signage.

### **Verges and Ditches**

#### **Verges:**

Although not privately owned by either the property owner or Essex Highways, many householders voluntarily maintain the verges outside their homes. Indeed, many take the trouble to look after considerable distances of grass verge which is highly commendable.

#### **Ditches:**

Many ditches are well maintained and consequently drain efficiently but there are also instances where landowners do very little maintenance. Consequently, some ditches around the village are becoming silted up and hedges overgrown which impairs maintenance of the ditch. At the open weekend, 2 residents expressed concern that their gardens were in danger of becoming waterlogged due to an absentee landowner neglecting the ditches adjacent to their property.

### **Utilities**

There is a strong majority feeling in our village which does not wish to see any extension of street lighting.

## **6. Protection, Enhancement and Development**

### **Protection, Enhancement & Development**

Great Totham is a village surrounded by larger settlements in an area where there is continuing demand for housing. The Survey undertaken as part of the Neighbourhood Planning process showed that residents cherish its rural character, open landscape and views. There was an acceptance of modest developments within settlement boundaries with an emphasis on housing for young families and older residents.

The aim must be to provide housing for expressed local needs while retaining the character which brings people to live here. All age groups need to be catered for if our village is to thrive. Our public consultation has given a clear steer on this.

Great Totham is not a conventionally pretty village. Its growth has been haphazard and as a result buildings of various periods and styles jostle together. But that does not mean it is without character and, even if that character is hard to define, it is precious to those who live here and it needs to be cared for. This requires interest and vigilance on the part of planners, elected representatives and residents.

### **Guidance to Residents**

- When thinking of changes to property exteriors and details – building, garden or frontage – consider their visual impact.
- Consider the scale, character of changes, how they may affect neighbours and the immediate vicinity.

### **New Development**

- Should respect the natural and historic environment, village character and landscape in its scale, design and materials.
- 'In fill' should be appropriate in scale and appearance and show 'Good Manners' to existing neighbours.
- Existing properties should be considered for sympathetic restoration or adaptive re-use.
- Landscaping and open space for new schemes should be as important as building finishes.
- Impact of development on identified and valued views must be considered.
- Development should be designed so that lighting minimises the impact on the 'dark skies' of Great Totham.
- Vehicle and pedestrian access should be open and linked carefully to existing networks.
- Development should avoid worsening traffic issues in problem areas such as that adjacent to the village school and on the B1022.

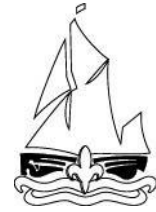


- Consideration of the effect on wildlife and the natural environment of all development should be automatic with particular reference to green spaces, woodland and wildlife corridors.

**7. Thanks and acknowledgments**

This Village Design Statement has been produced by a Sub-Group of the Great Totham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, Kevin Bennett, Andrew Boorman, Martin Flook, Roy McPherson, Paul Mutton & Graham Thorne. Thanks also to Chris Bowden, Navigus Planning for advice and support, Clive Potter, Parish Clerk, for advice and information and Philip Smith for historic photographs.

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**REPORT of  
DIRECTOR OF SERVICE DELIVERY**

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**to  
COUNCIL  
31 MARCH 2022**

**COMMERCIAL OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL OFFICES, PRINCES ROAD, MALDON**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To update Members on exploratory work regarding options for the Council Offices, Princes Road, Maldon and seek support for a feasibility study to be completed and reported back to the Council later in the 2022 / 23 financial year.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (i) That support be given to a feasibility study and associated work to further explore the options for a new office and potential development of the Princes Road site utilising One Public Estate funding, at no cost to the authority.
- (ii) That the Corporate Projects Working Group will have oversight of this project with a feasibility study coming back to the Council later in the 2022 / 23 financial year.

**3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES**

**3.1 Introduction**

- 3.1.1 The Covid pandemic has accelerated the move to agile working as set out in the transformation blueprint and has changed the way we use the Council office. The majority of staff are now working in an agile way with the office being used for monthly team meetings, training and development, essential face to face appointments and democratic functions. A limited number of business-critical staff have a full-time presence in the office, including the Community Engagement, General Office and Facilities teams.
- 3.1.2 The Commercial Options Project team has been working with Essex Housing and the Corporate Projects Working Group since October 2021 to assess options for the site at Princes Road. The Corporate Projects Working Group attended two workshops in November and December 2021 to review the feasibility of these options based on high-level estimated costs. Members have received a presentation and had the option to attend a briefing.
- 3.1.3 Essex Housing will support Maldon District Council to coordinate this work as the One Public Estate lead for Essex. Further expertise will be drawn into the project as required (e.g. valuations, specialist surveys, cost consultants).

## 3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 Agile working (introduced as part of the transformation programme) has enabled a significant reduction in the number of staff working in the office, so the building is under occupied. This presents an opportunity to review the best use of Council assets.
- 3.2.2 The existing Council building is not compliant with the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.2.3 Annual running and maintenance costs are higher than the current income received from partners largely due to the age of the building.
- 3.2.4 There is limited potential to rent additional office space with the national shift to hybrid working, and also with the current office layout and inaccessibility issues.
- 3.2.5 It will cost circa £4 million to refurbish the office, but this cost will be significantly higher if we want a fully accessible building.
- 3.2.6 By 1 April 2030, all commercial rented buildings must have improved the building to an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ≥B or register a valid exemption. These changes are a precursor to reaching net zero emissions by 2050 as set out in the Government energy white paper.
- 3.2.7 The existing building is below an EPC B rating and does not achieve Maldon District Council's Climate Action Plan targets, nor will it meet net zero emissions targets by 2050.
- 3.2.8 Do nothing does not provide best value or longer-term financial stability or meet our Climate Action Plan targets.

## 4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 It is recommended that the options for building a new council office and developing the site at Princes Road are taken forward to a feasibility review based on the financial, environmental and social benefits outlined in the presentation.

## 5. IMPACT ON STRATEGIC THEMES

- 5.1 This project supports a number of Corporate Plan priorities and strategic theme objectives in relation to Place and Community. The Princes Road site has been put forward as part of the Five-Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS) call for sites and would potentially assist the authority in achieving its targets for affordable housing in the District.

## 6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – This is dependent on the office location, but the way services are accessed forms part of a separate 'Customer Service Strategy' which is out of scope of this project (although the requirements will feed-in to the Commercial Options Project as one of our key stakeholders).



- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – This is improved if we continue to support flexible working for staff with more inclusive recruitment but can offer a fully accessible office for staff and members to use when they want to.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – There is significant risk throughout this project due to the potential demolition of the building, development of the site and fluctuation in building materials and house prices. Greater risk is introduced if we continue to have partners on-site. All risks will be recorded and tracked as part of the project governance, with regular reporting back to the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and members.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – This project will require funding through the various stages, although the feasibility review is being funded through the initial One Public Estate grant of £80k, and there is the possibility of further funding through this scheme. It is also possible that if we build 100% affordable homes on the site, the costs could be met in full through commuted sums, although this option needs to be investigated through the feasibility review.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – The project will need a dedicated project manager with support from staff across Resources, Strategy, Performance and Governance (SPG) and Service Delivery. A Working Group has already been established with key stakeholders identified.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – If the project outcomes are achieved, there will be a positive impact on the surrounding area and environment through reduced car usage, greener housing and a zero net carbon Council office.
- (vii) **Impact on Strengthening Communities** – If we can provide additional affordable housing, some of it designed to be accessible, this will help meet the needs of residents on low incomes or with mobility issues. The new Council office could have partners on-site, delivering shared services as part of a 'Customer Hub' that deliver essential services under one roof.

Background Papers: None.

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