



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

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

Photographs credit: Roy McPherson

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

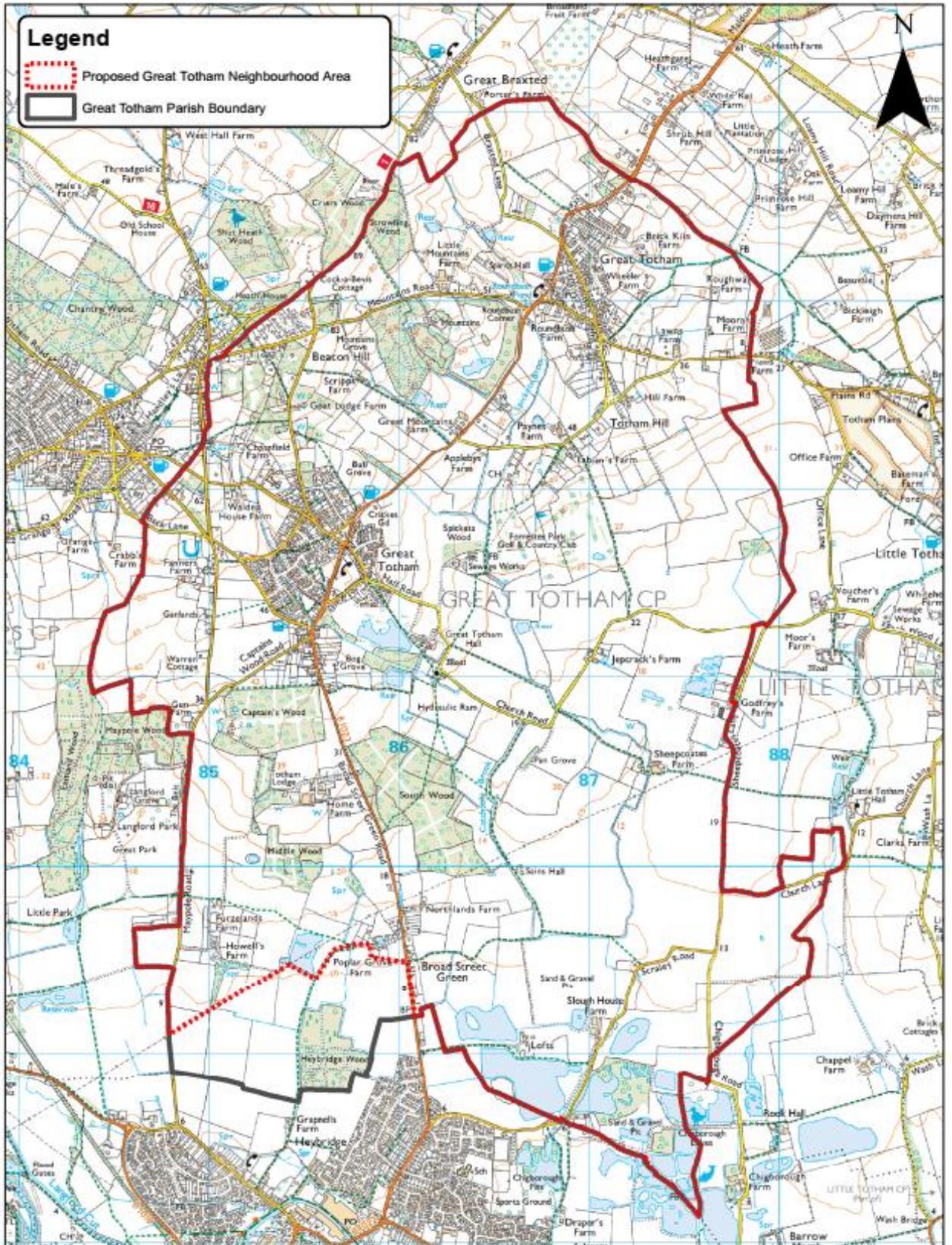
## Purpose of the plan

- 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

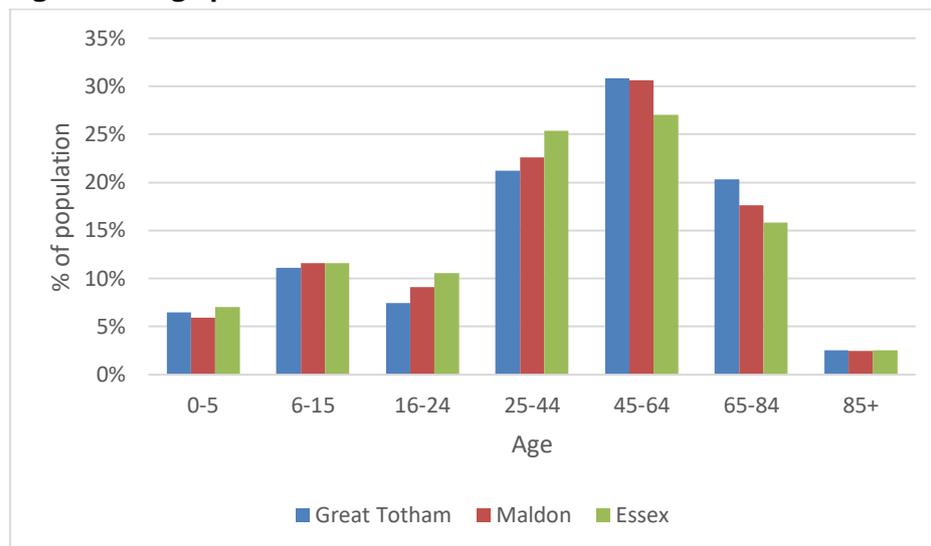
### History of Great Totham

- 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).

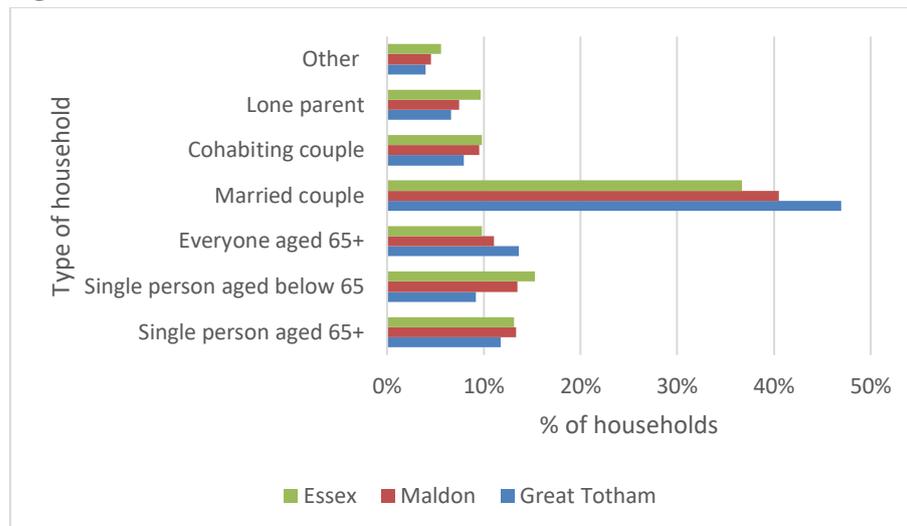
**Figure 2.1: Age profile**



Source: 2011 Census

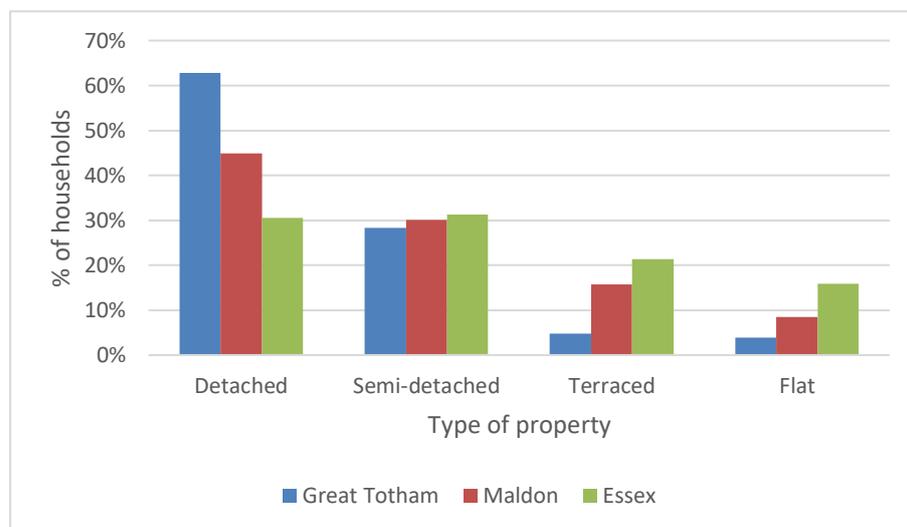
- 2.8 Figure 2.2 shows that Great Totham has a high proportion of households with married couples and also households where every member is aged 65 or above. The profile is predominantly of small households, either of retired people or couples with no dependent children – although not shown in Figure 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**

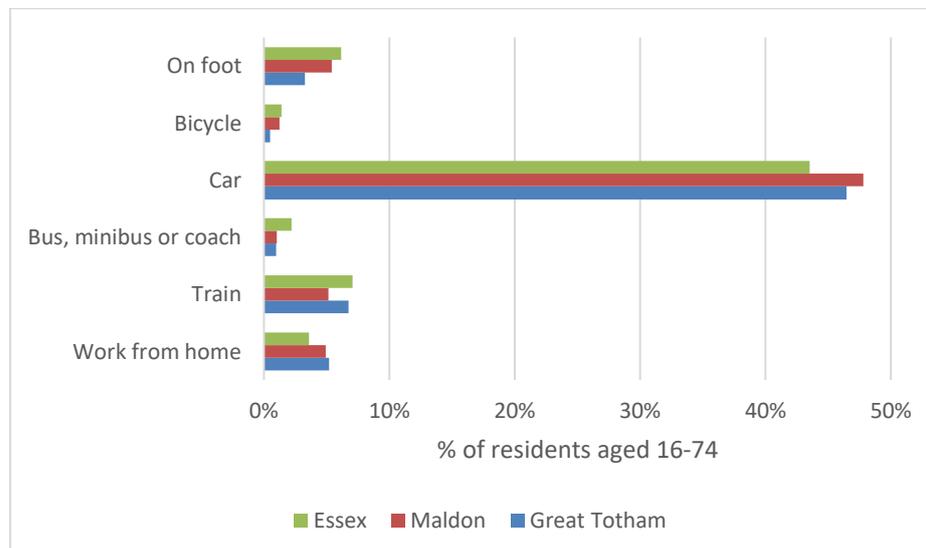
Source: 2011 Census

- 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

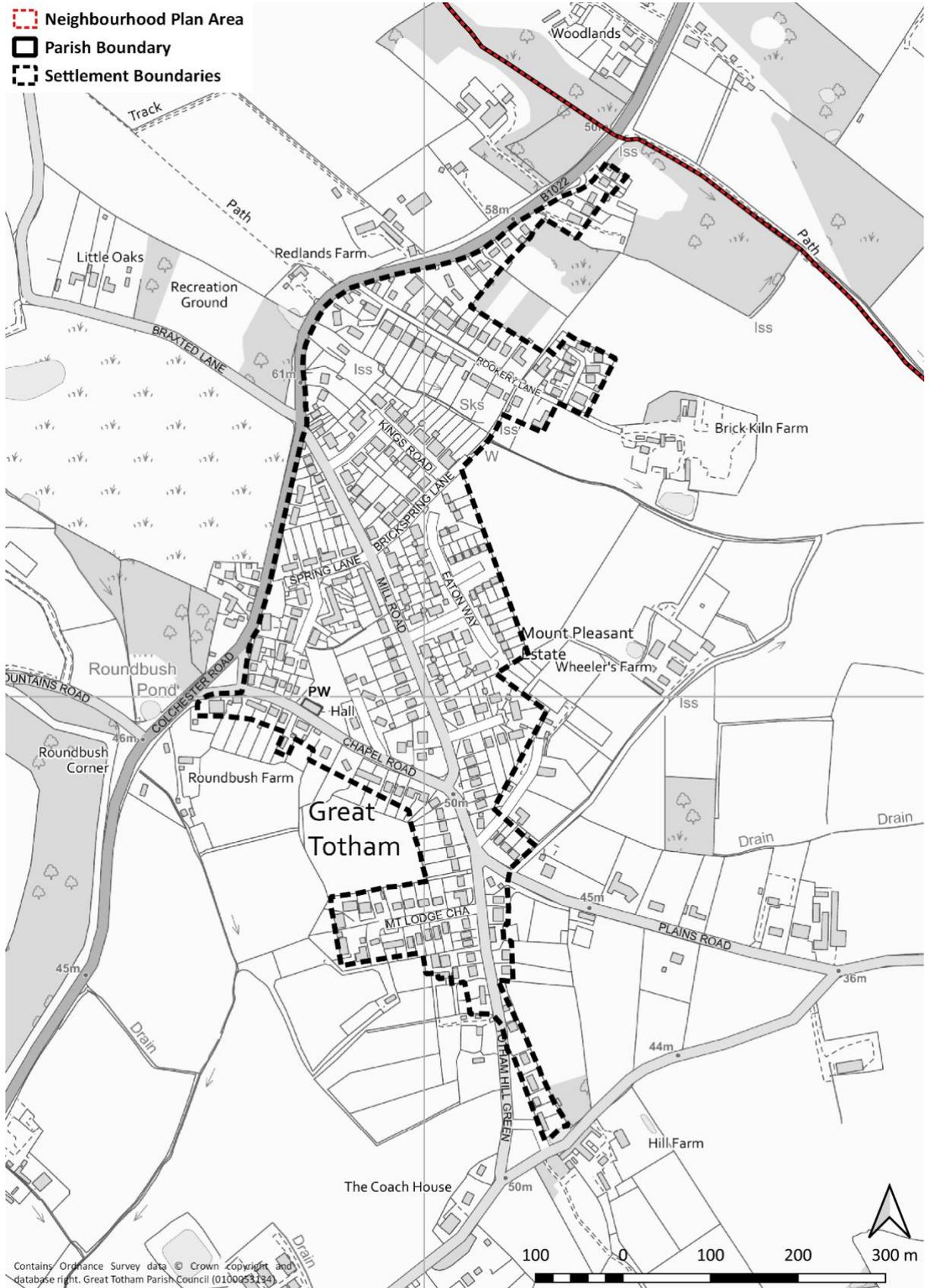
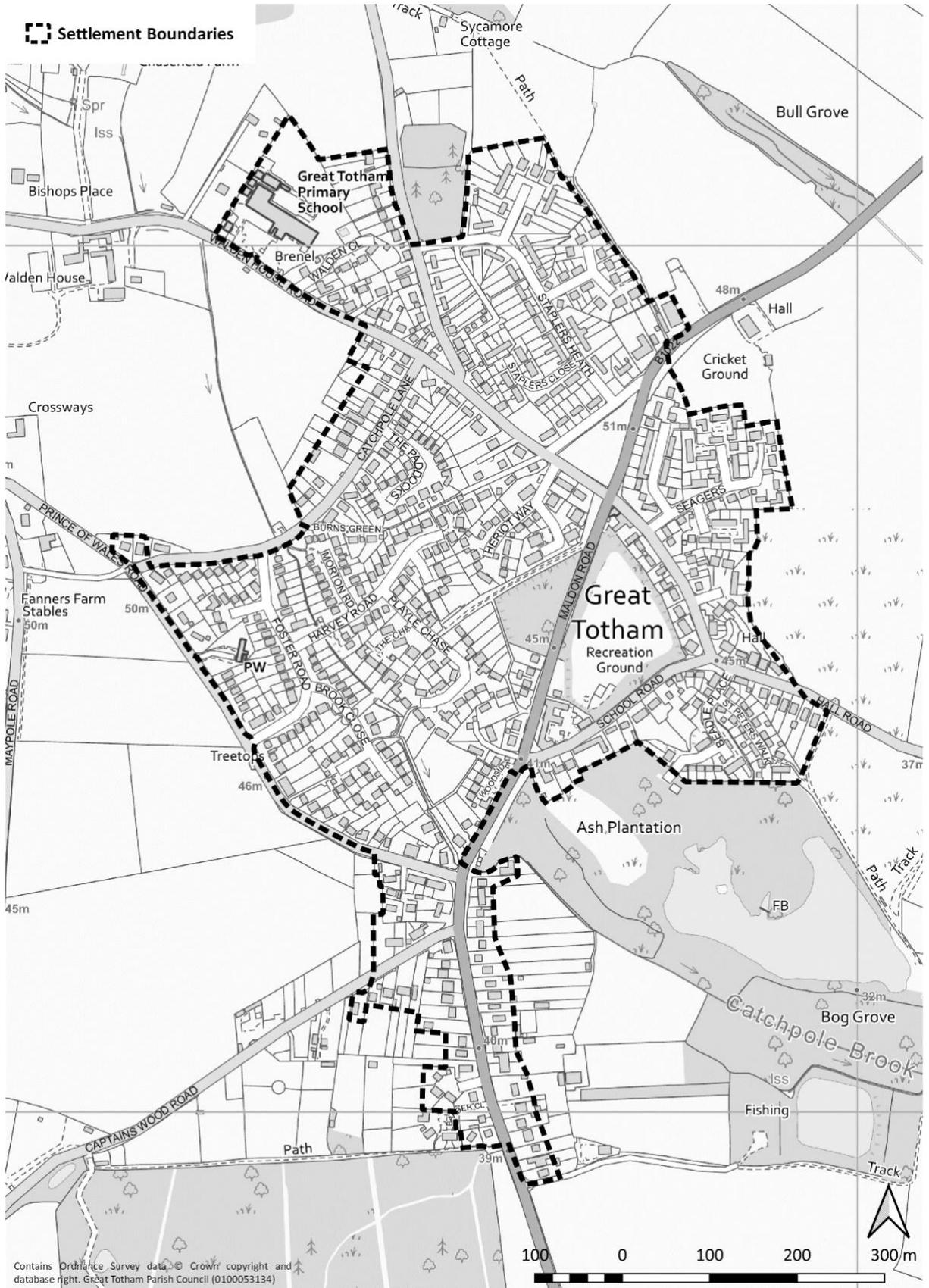


Figure 4.2: Totham South settlement boundary



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 GTO3).
- 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:**

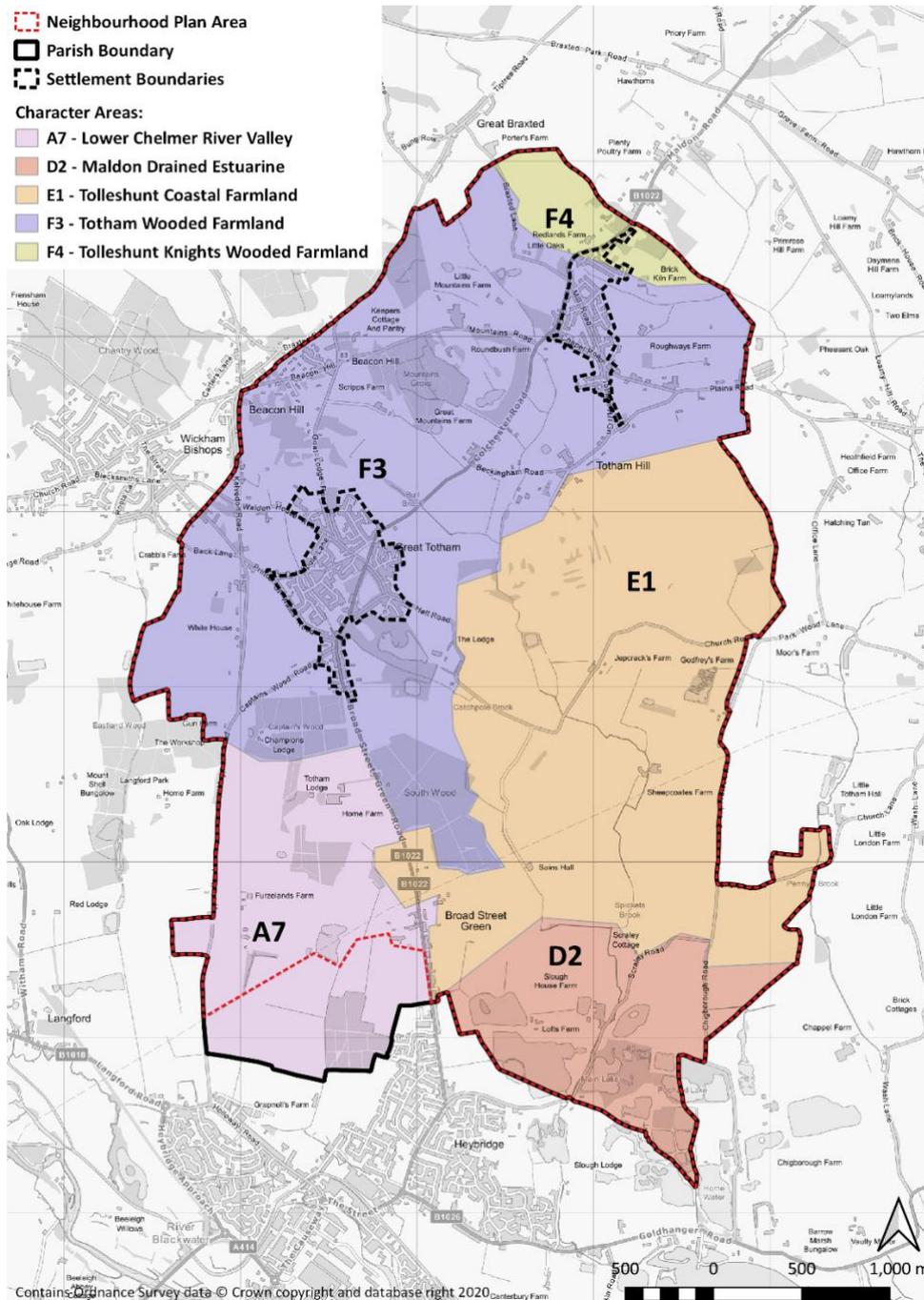
- i. Provision of a variety of brick and render materials, roof styles and features. The choice of materials is expected to minimise the carbon footprint of development.
- ii. Development is set back from roads and boundary treatments are at a low level, creating an open feel.
- iii. Landscaping, including 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

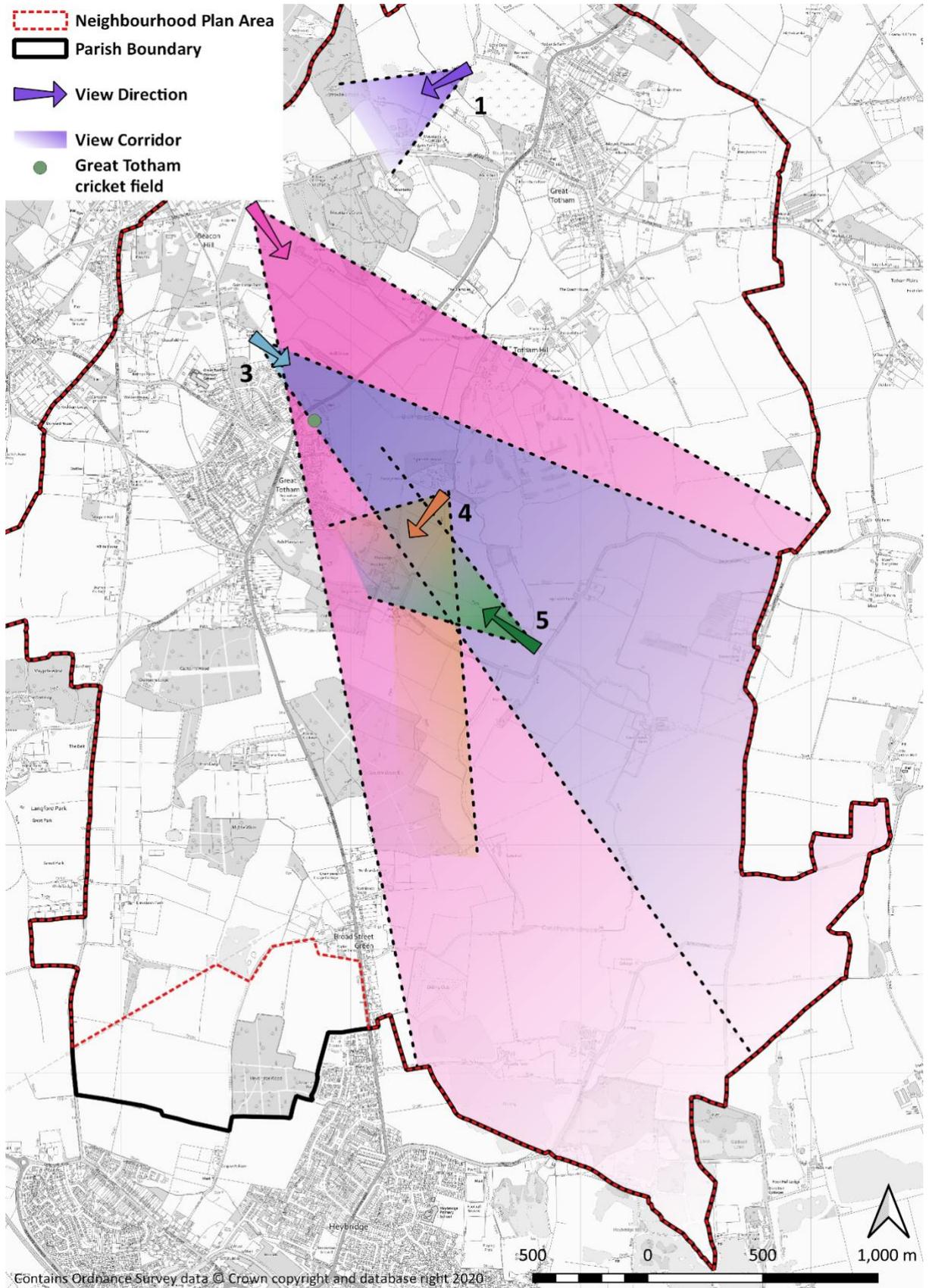
6.3 The comparatively well-wooded nature of the majority of the parish is recognised in the Landscape Character Assessment. This not only provides a very visually attractive landscape but also provides a range of habitats for a wide variety of flora and fauna.

## 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 Stowling 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. Stowling 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 Spicketts 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 Spicketts 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 Spicketts 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 Spicketts 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



- 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





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 GTO7: 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 Jecracks 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

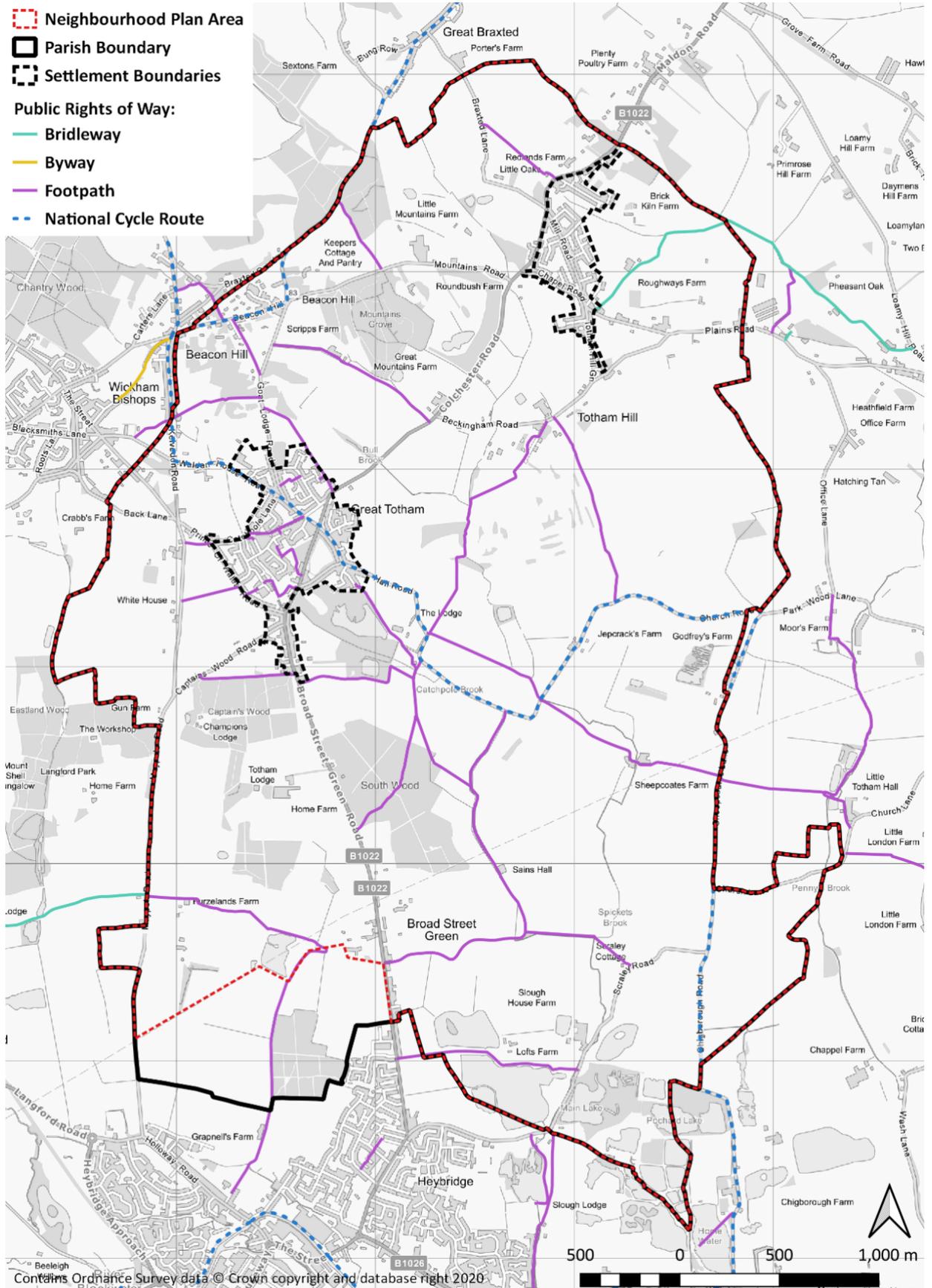


Figure 7.2: Map of Pedestrian Walkway Routes in Totham North

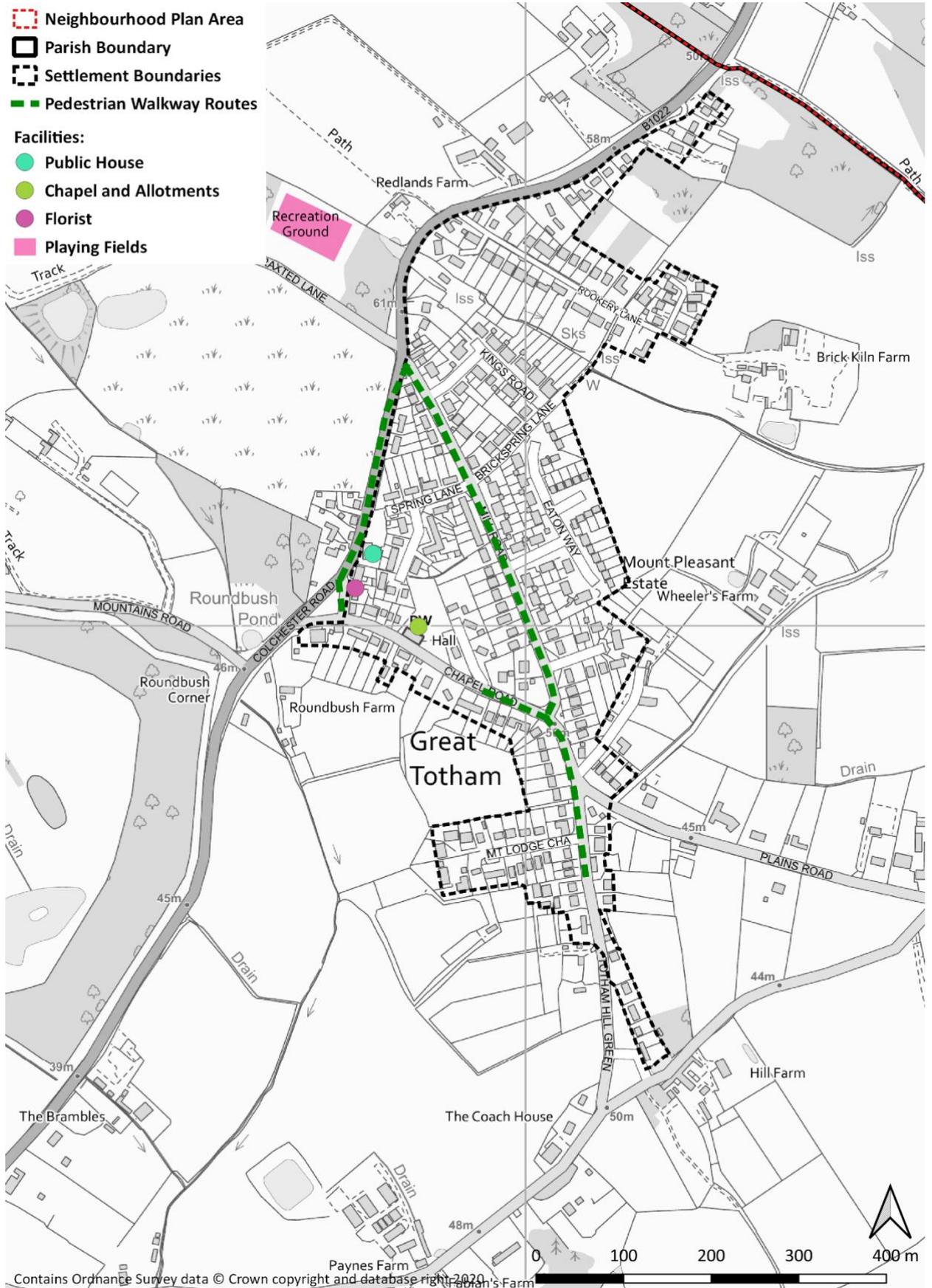
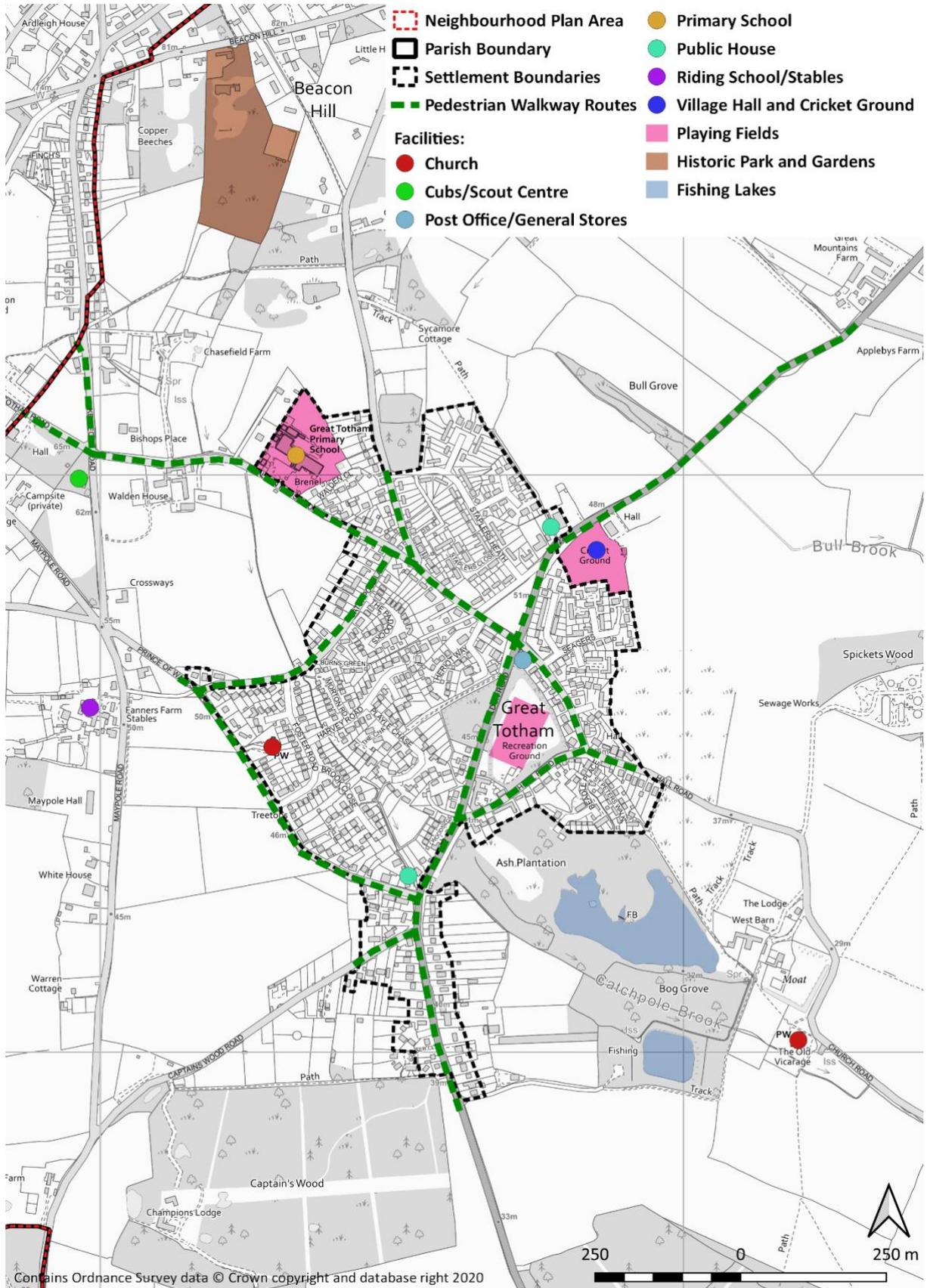


Figure 7.3: Map of Pedestrian Walkway Routes in Totham South



- 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 the 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

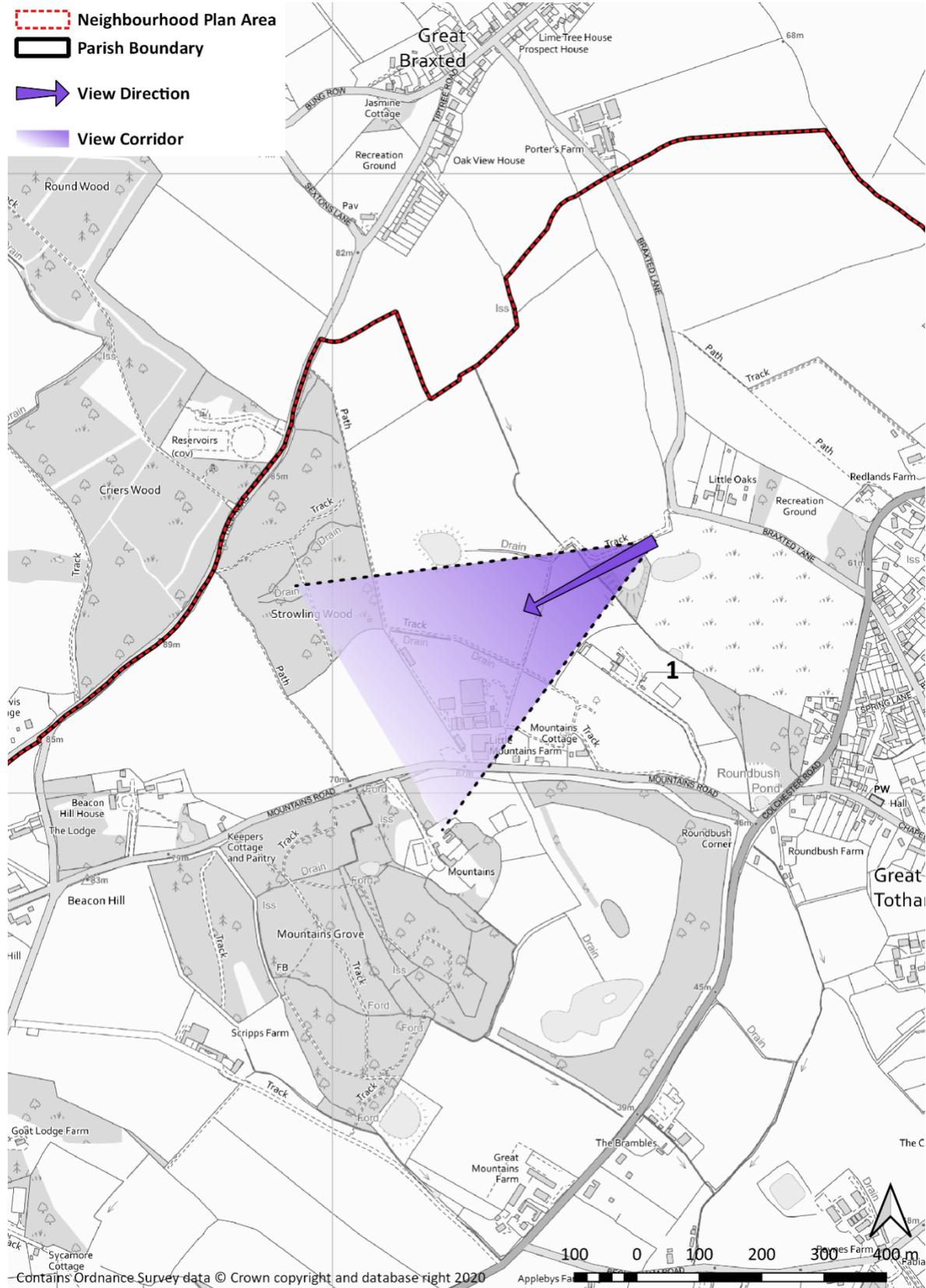
Issue	Possible actions	Lead agencies and partner
		with Essex County Council
Highway safety	Refurbish and improve the junction at Five Corners, Maypole Road.	Essex County Council
Highway safety	Introduce 40mph speed limit from Captains Wood Road to Five Corners and beyond to existing 30 mph Wickham Bishops 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**

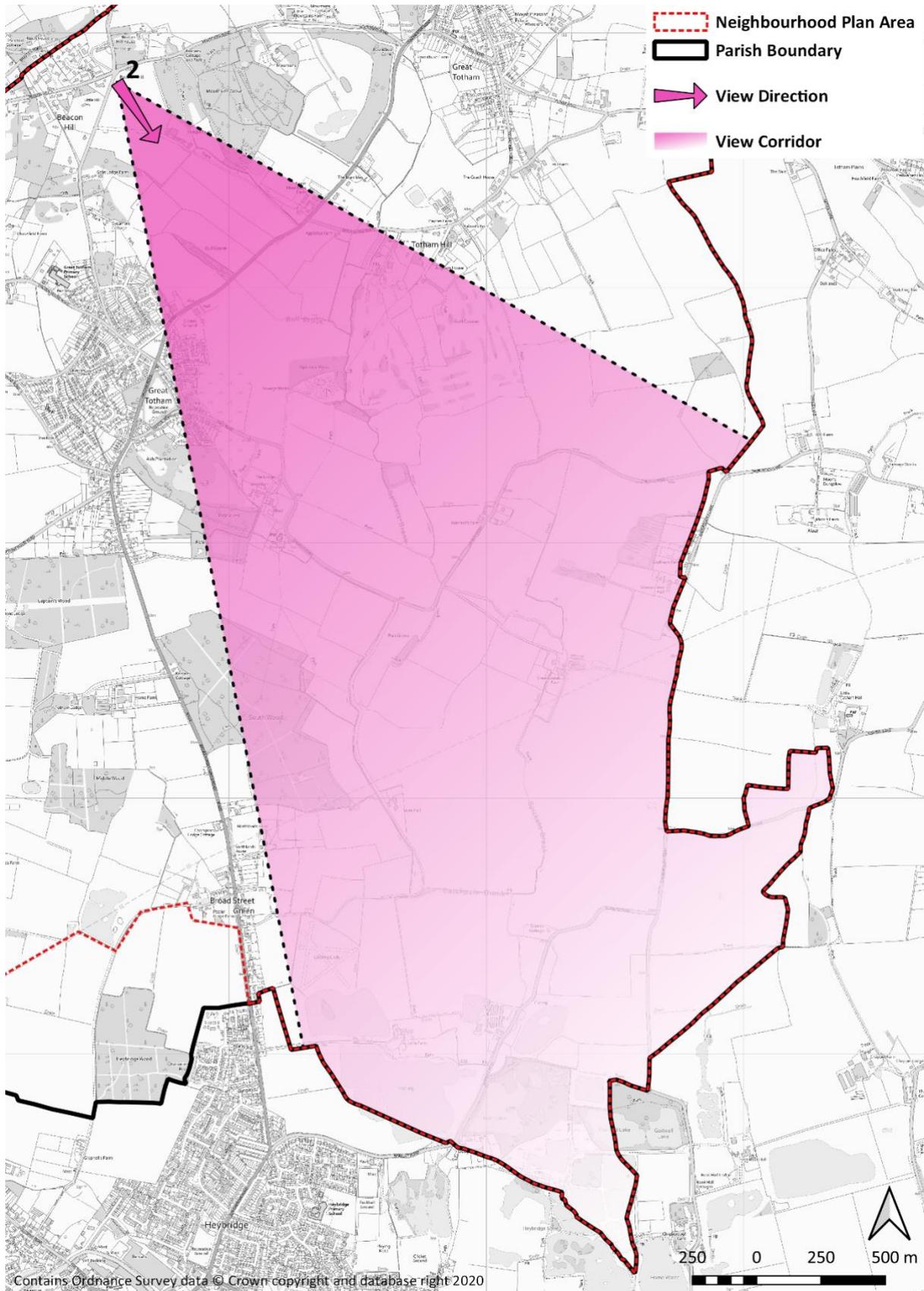
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# APPENDIX B LOCAL VIEWS

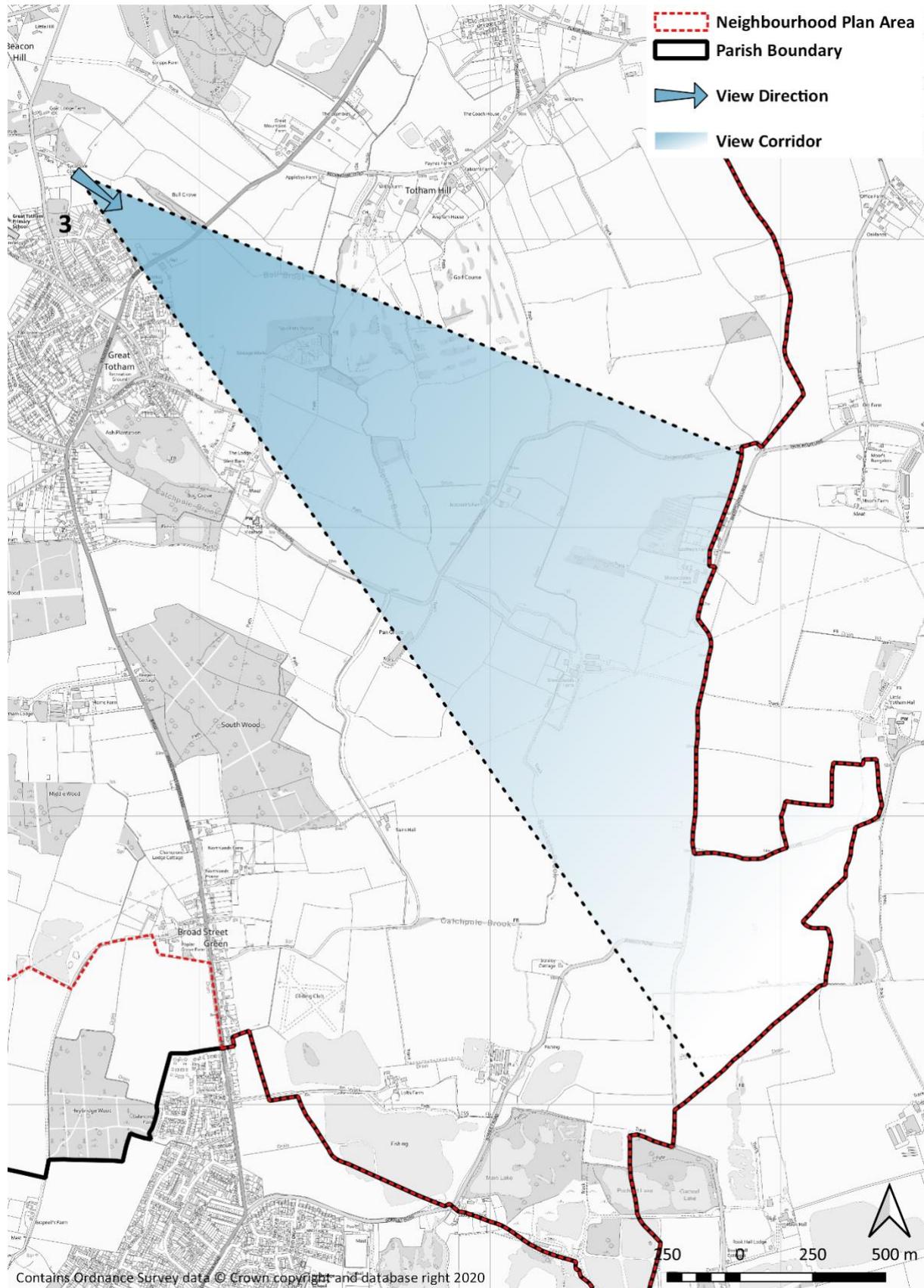
## View 1



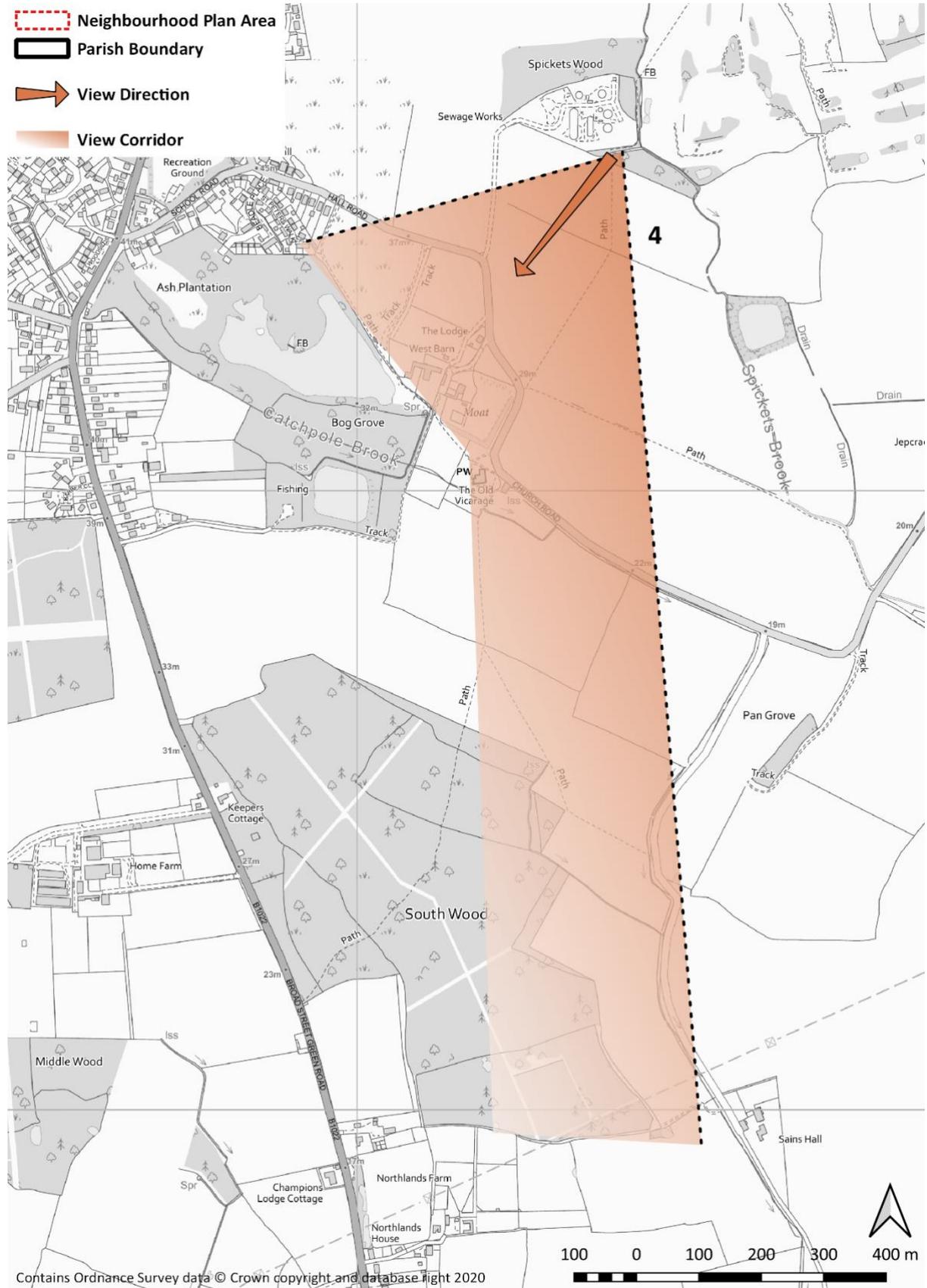
View 2



View 3

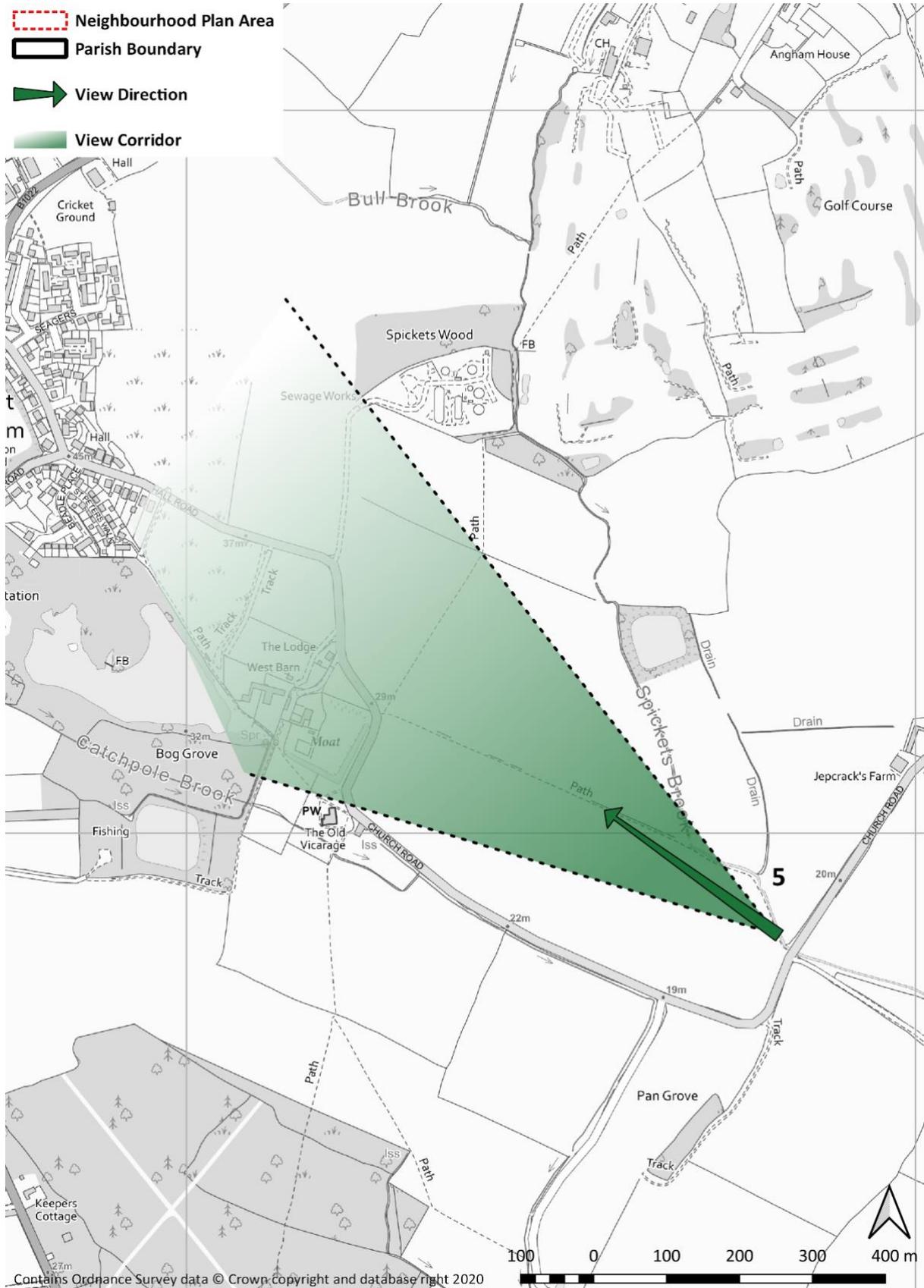


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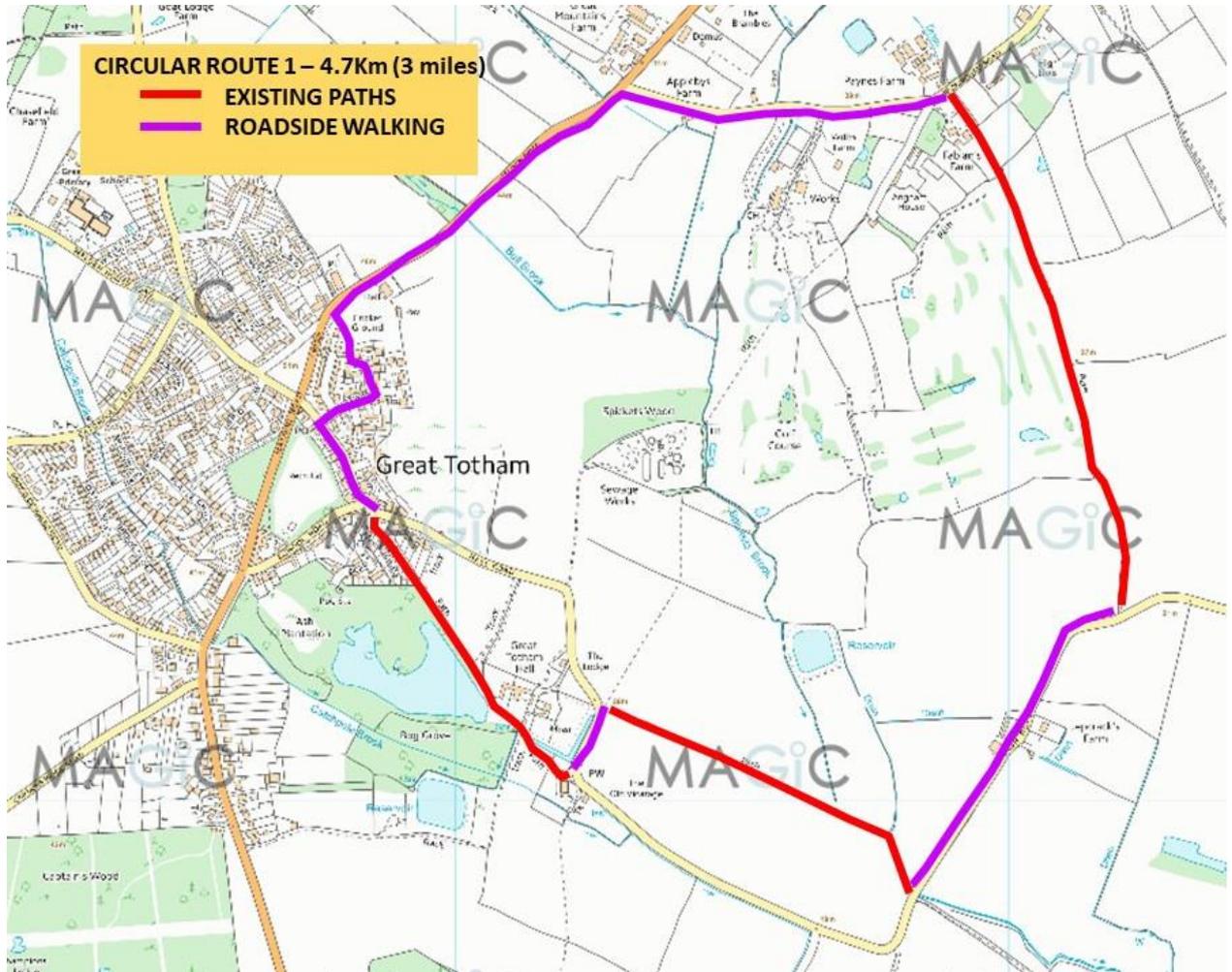


View 5

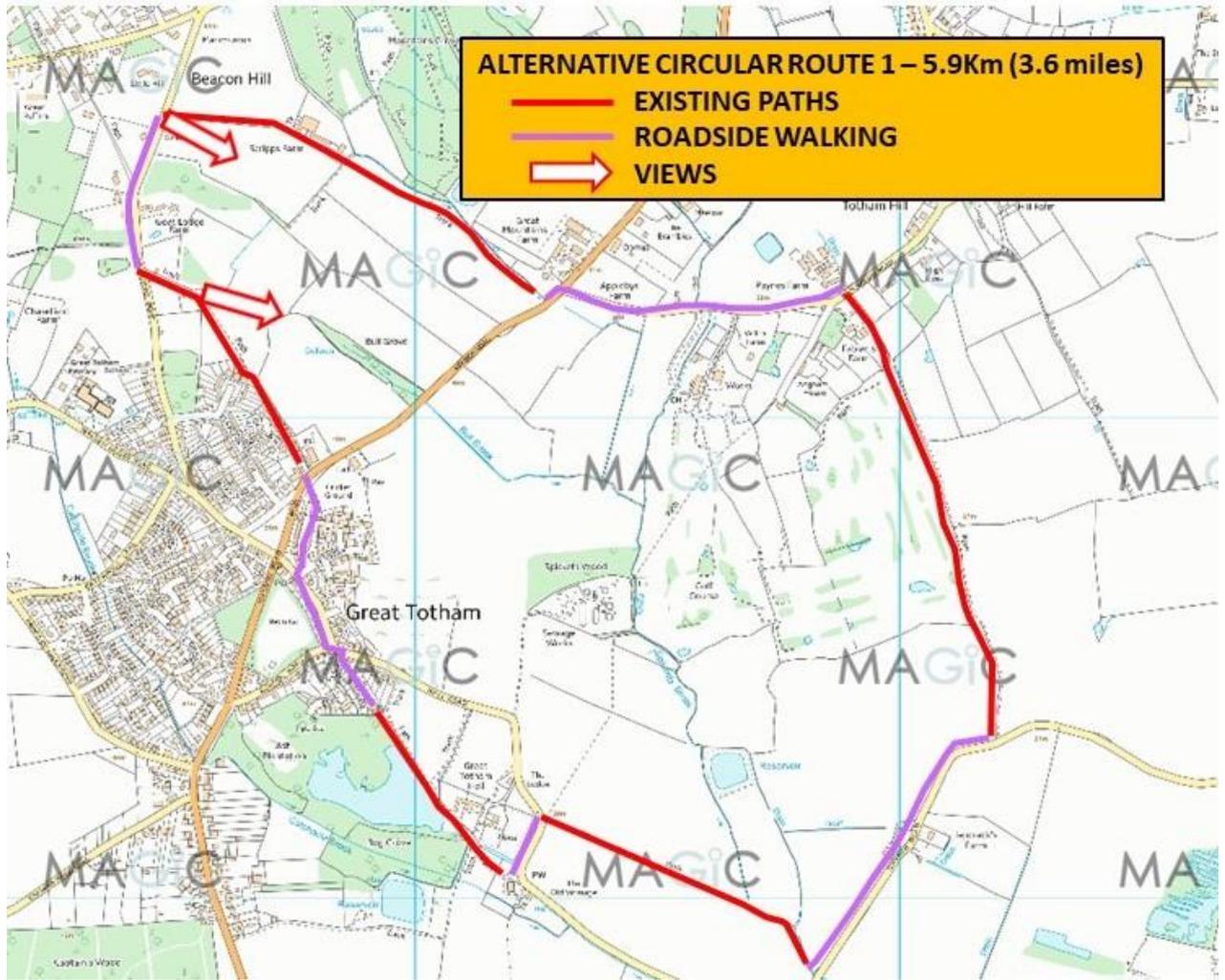
- Neighbourhood Plan Area
- Parish Boundary
- ➔ View Direction
- View Corridor



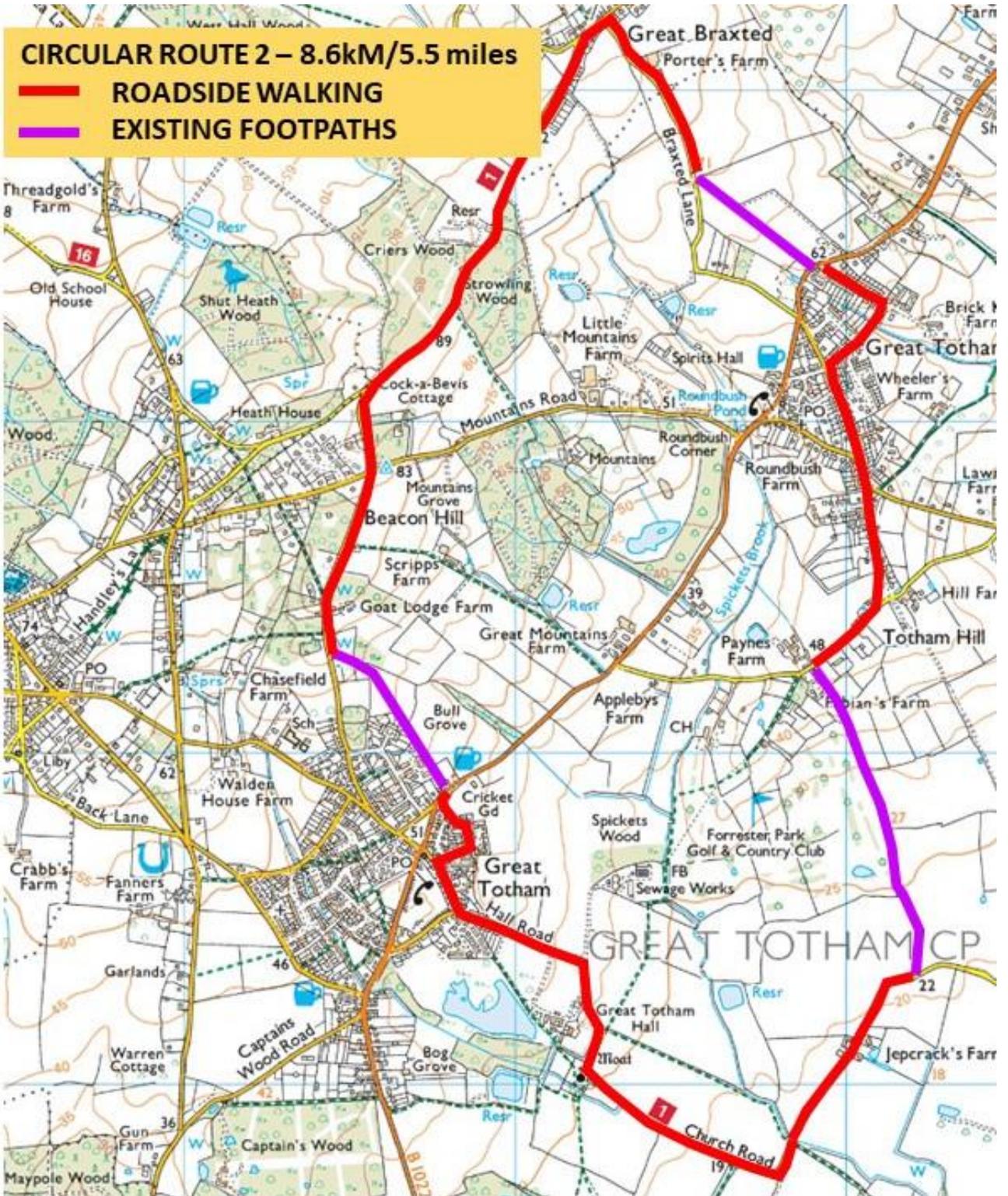
# APPENDIX C CIRCULAR WALKS AND CYCLE ROUTES



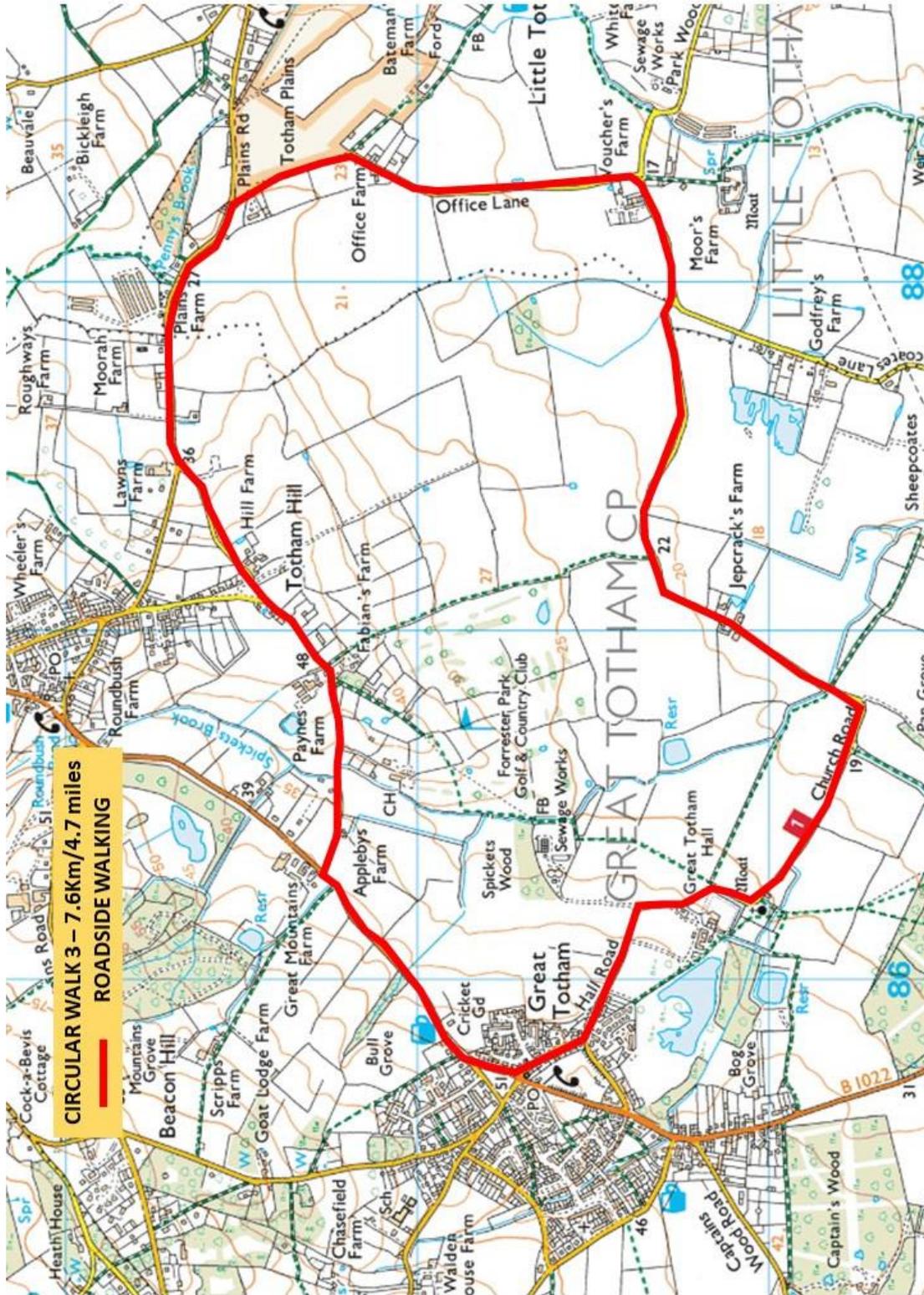
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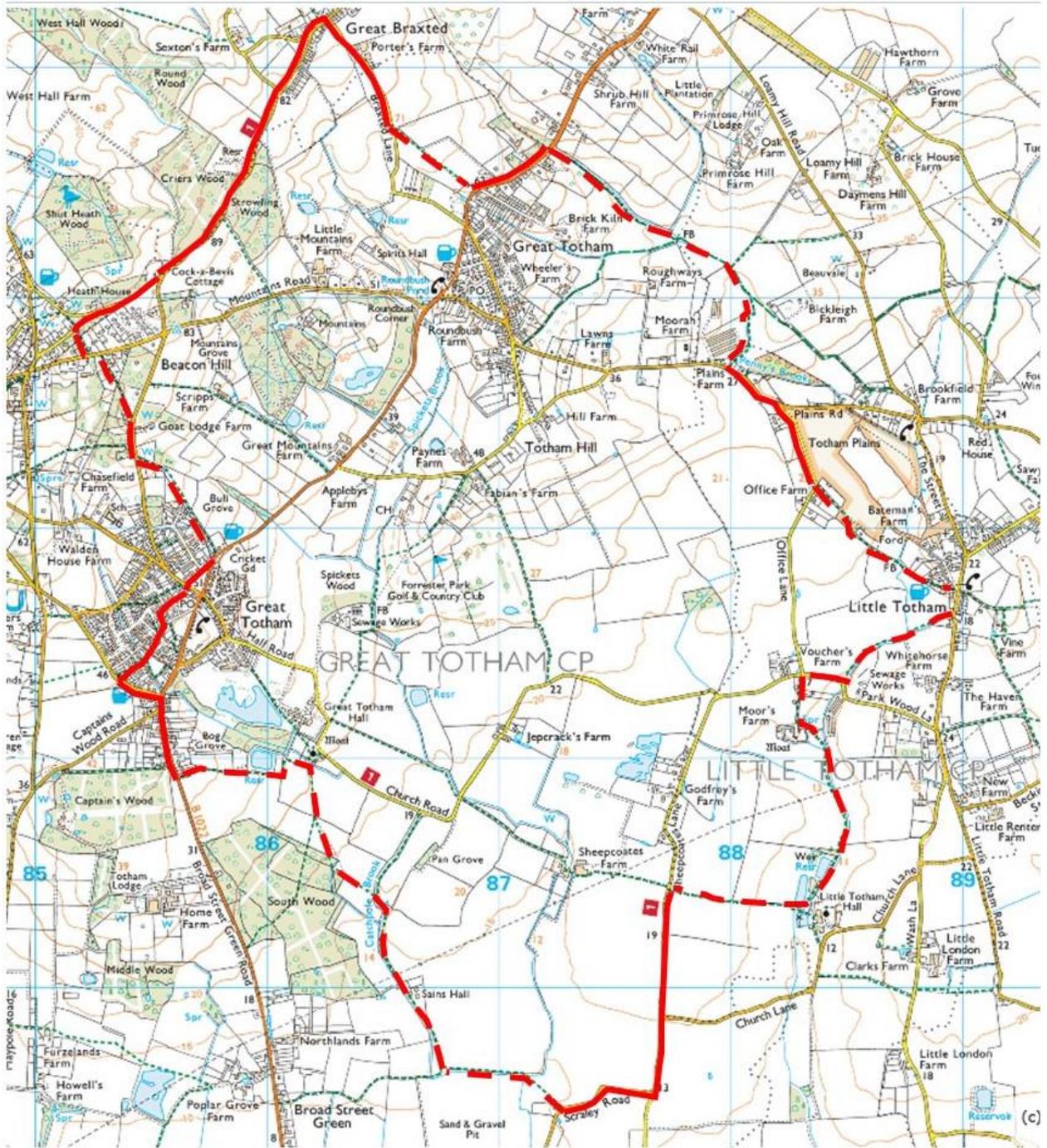
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Source: Magic Maps

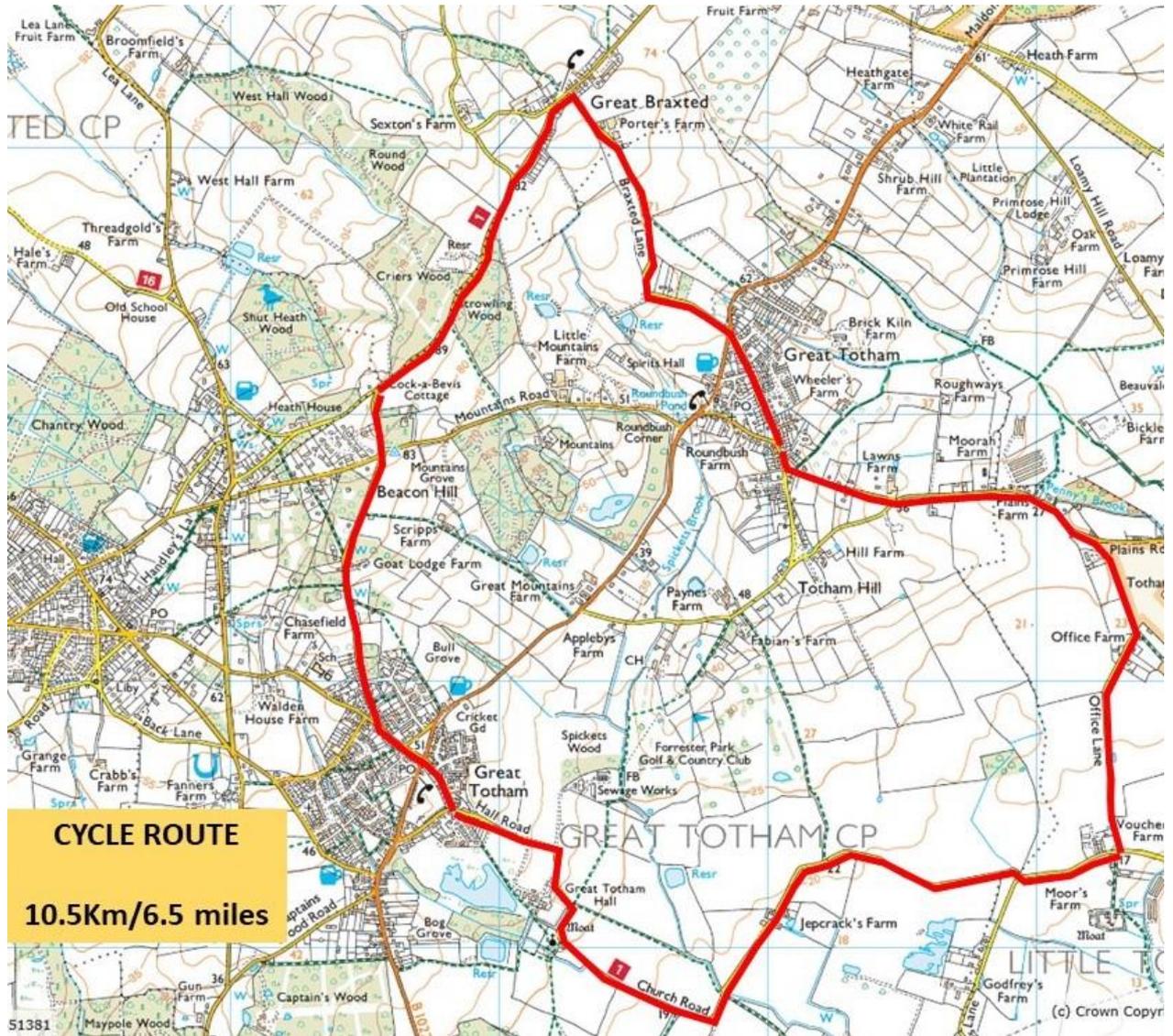


Source: Magic Maps



**RAMBLERS WALK – 15Km/9.5 miles**  
- - - OFF ROAD WALKING  
— ROADSIDE WALKING

Source: Magic Maps



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

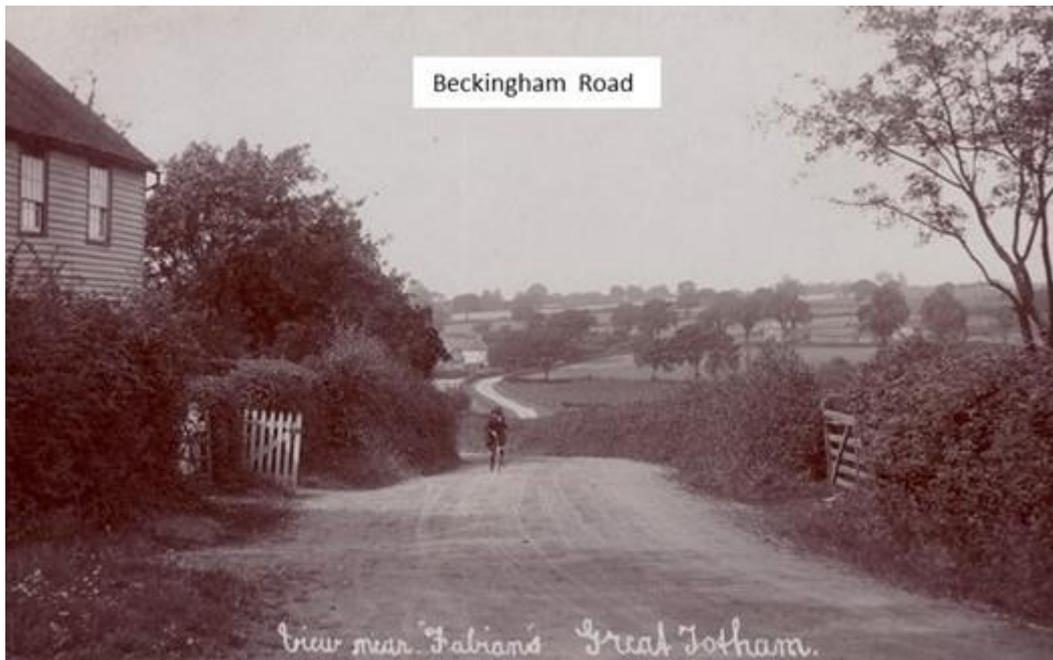
## 2. Great Totham Village



### 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.



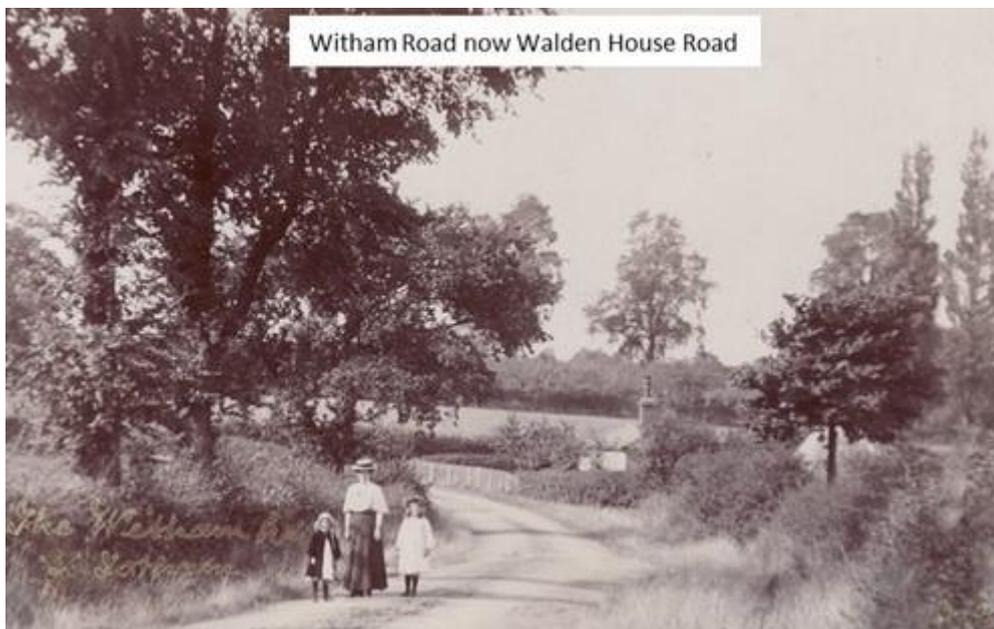
The first census in 1801 showed a population of 528, by 1851 it had reached 840. The latter half of the nineteenth century saw a steady decline, due mainly to changes in agricultural methods and the beginning of industry in neighbouring towns. In 1901 Totham was home to 589 souls. In the first half of 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 1230s, 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.

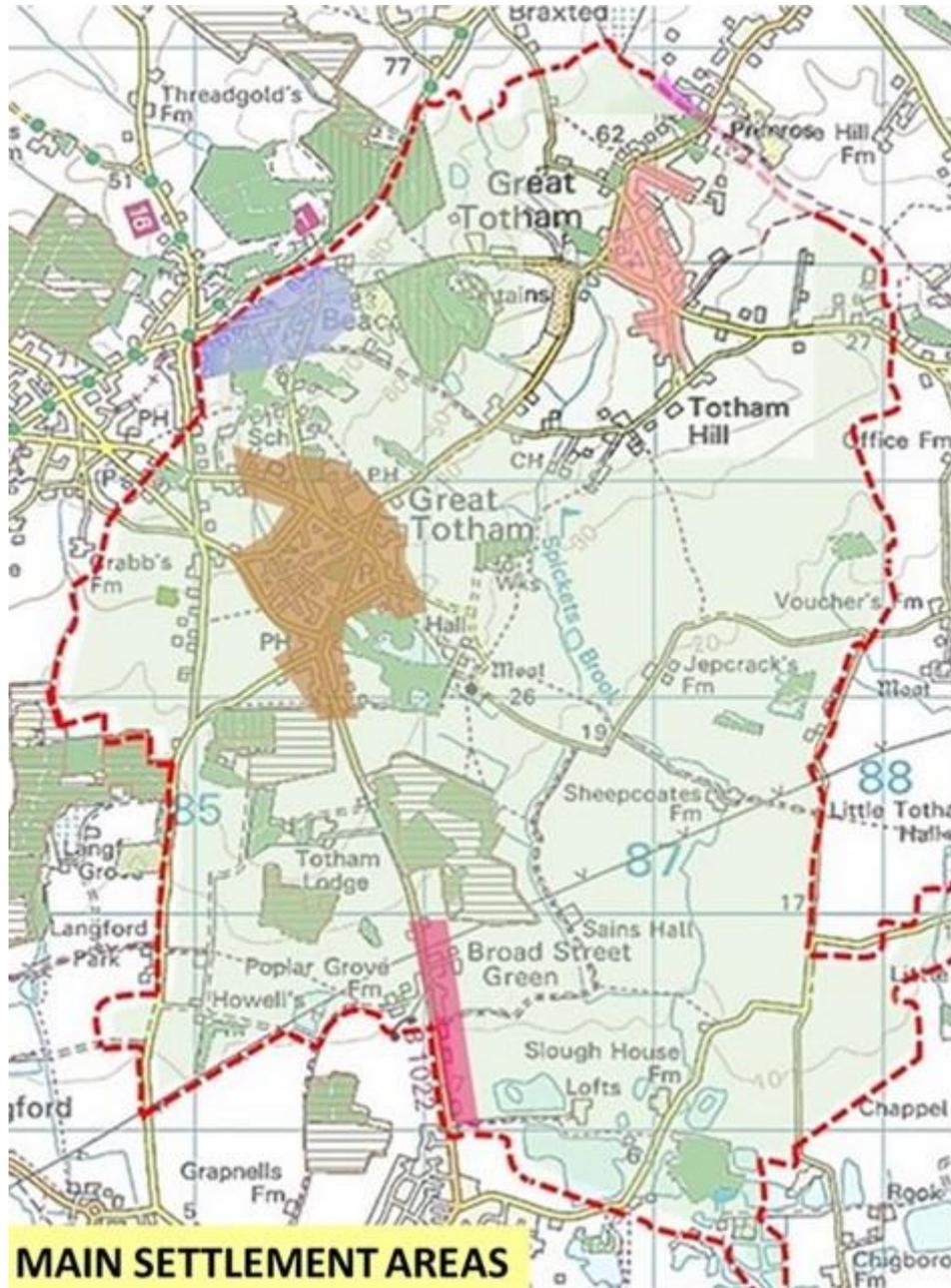
#### Our Landscape Vision

- 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

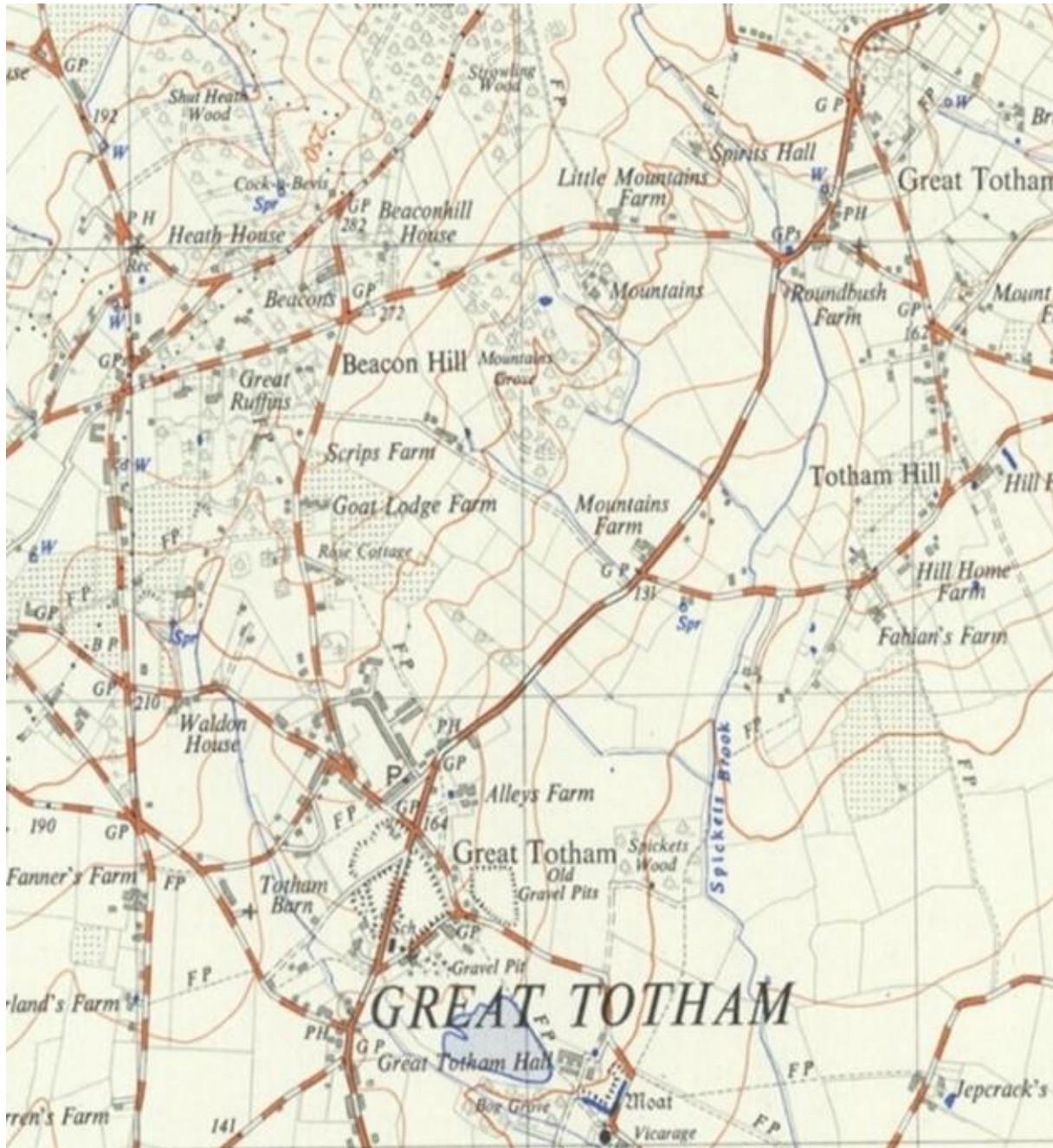
- Natural habitats to be conserved, protected and managed as part of the Essex Biodiversity Plan
- Woodland and hedgerows to be maintained and enhanced as wildlife corridors
- Degraded areas such as roadside verges and field margins to be proactively restored
- Seek to identify and develop new habitat 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



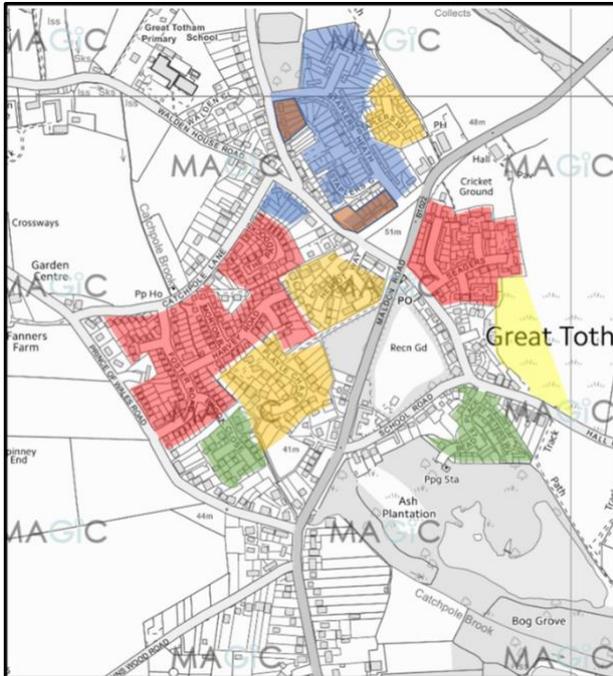
KEY			
	GREAT TOTHAM NORTH		GREAT TOTHAM SOUTH
	BEACON HILL		BROAD STREET GREEN
	OUTLYING AREAS		

Settlement history and character

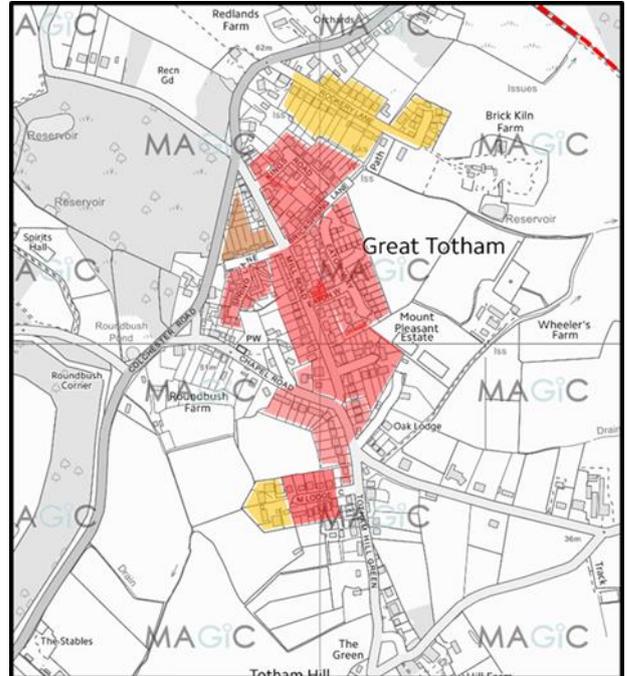


Great Totham - 1958

**GREAT TOTHAM – DEVELOPMENT HISTORY**



South

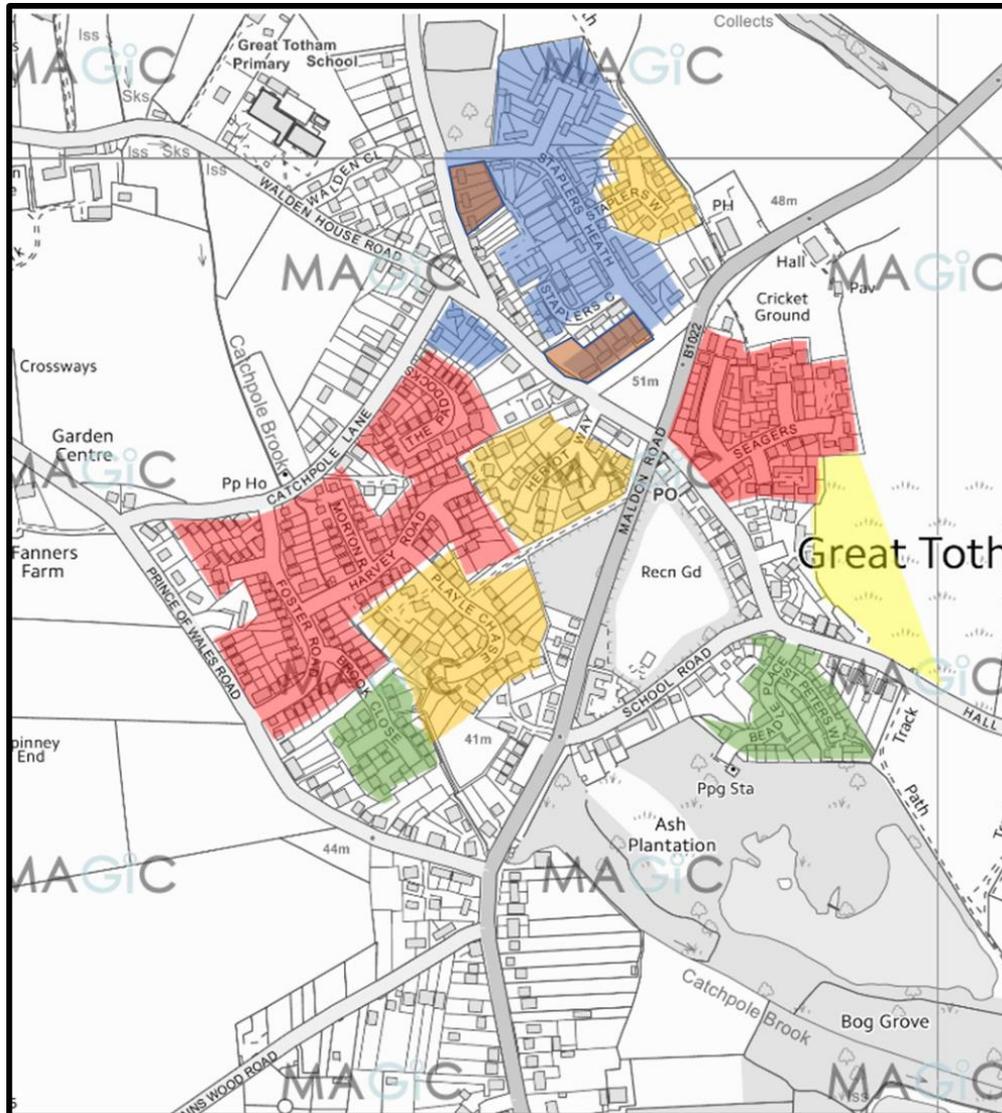


North

**KEY:**

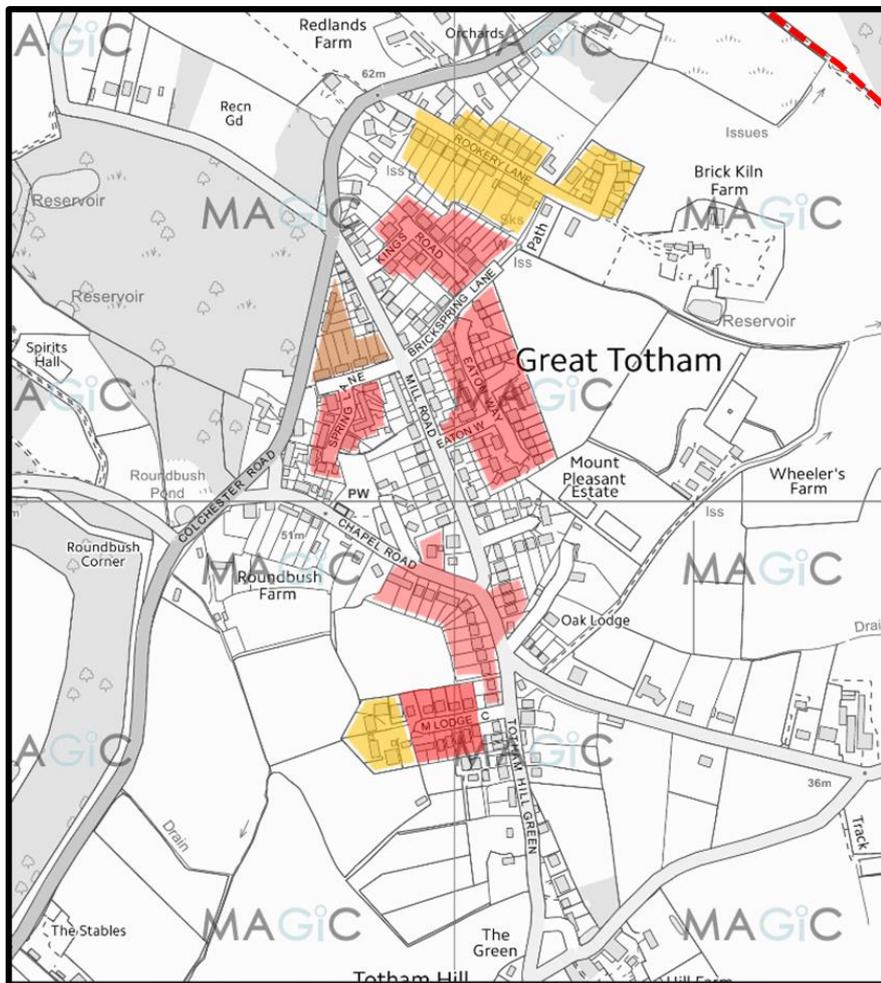
1920s/30s
1950s
1960s/70s
1980s/90s
2000/2010
Outline planning granted 2018

**GREAT TOTHAM SOUTH – HOUSING DENSITY**



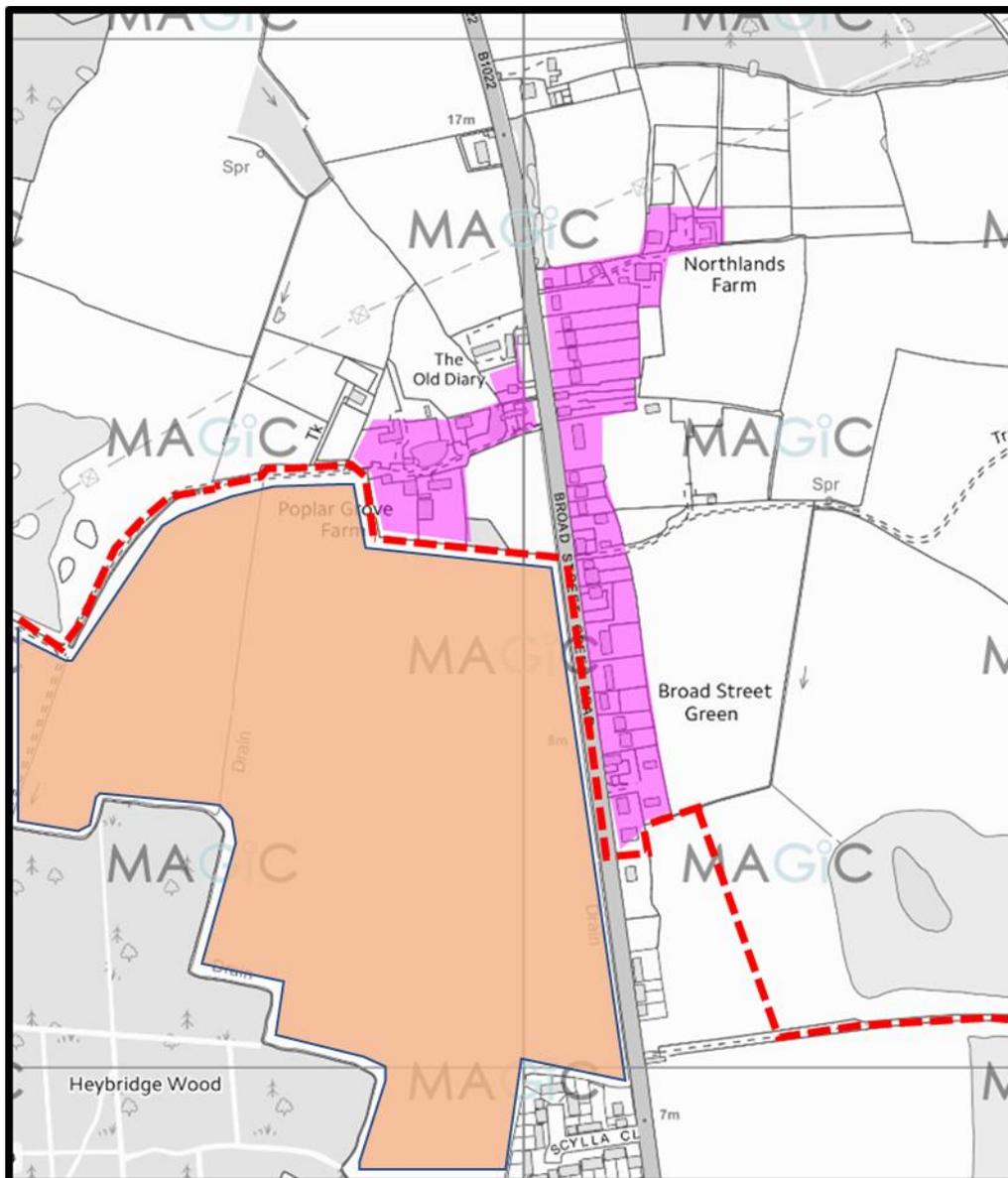
Location	When built	Area (hectares)	Number of homes	Density/ hectare	Comments
Staplers Heath	1920s/30s	0.7	14	20.0	
Staplers Heath	1950/60s	4.1	74	18.0	
Foster Road	1960s/70s	6.0	89	14.8	
Seagers	1960s/70s	2.8	53	18.9	
Heriot Way	1980s/90s	1.2	44	36.6	Includes 18 apartments
Playle Chase	1980s/90s	2.1	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	

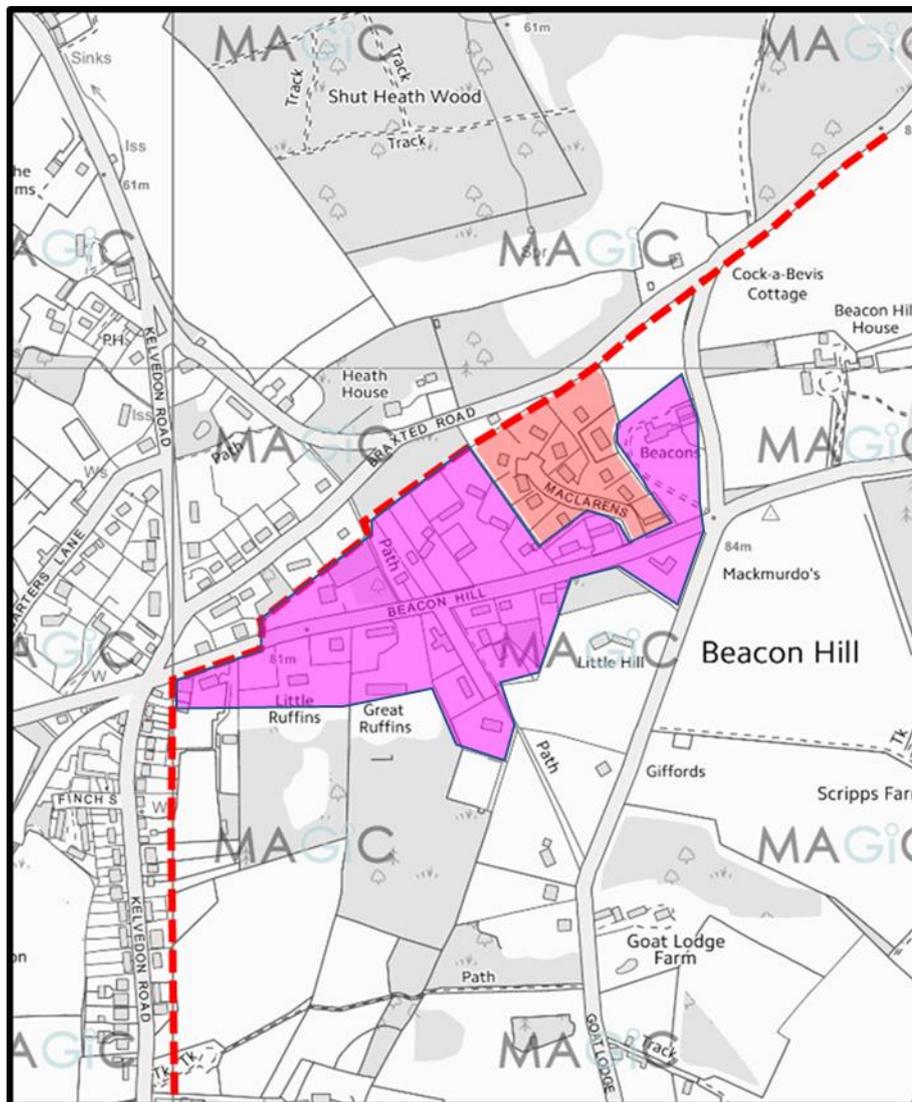
**BROAD STREET GREEN – HOUSING DENSITY**



-  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 a 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.



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.



**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.

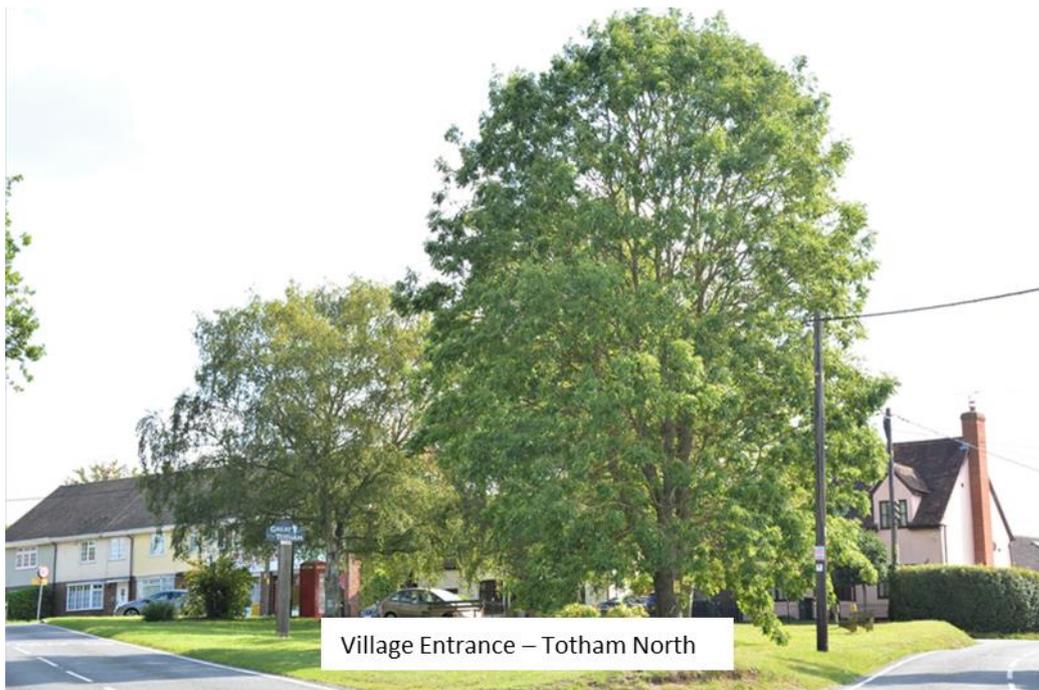
A second public house, The Prince of Wales is found at the B1022/Prince of Wales Road junction. This is a replacement building – the C18 original was demolished by fire in the 1990s – but is broadly similar in style to the original.



The Prince of Wales

### **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.



Village Entrance – Totham North

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.





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.



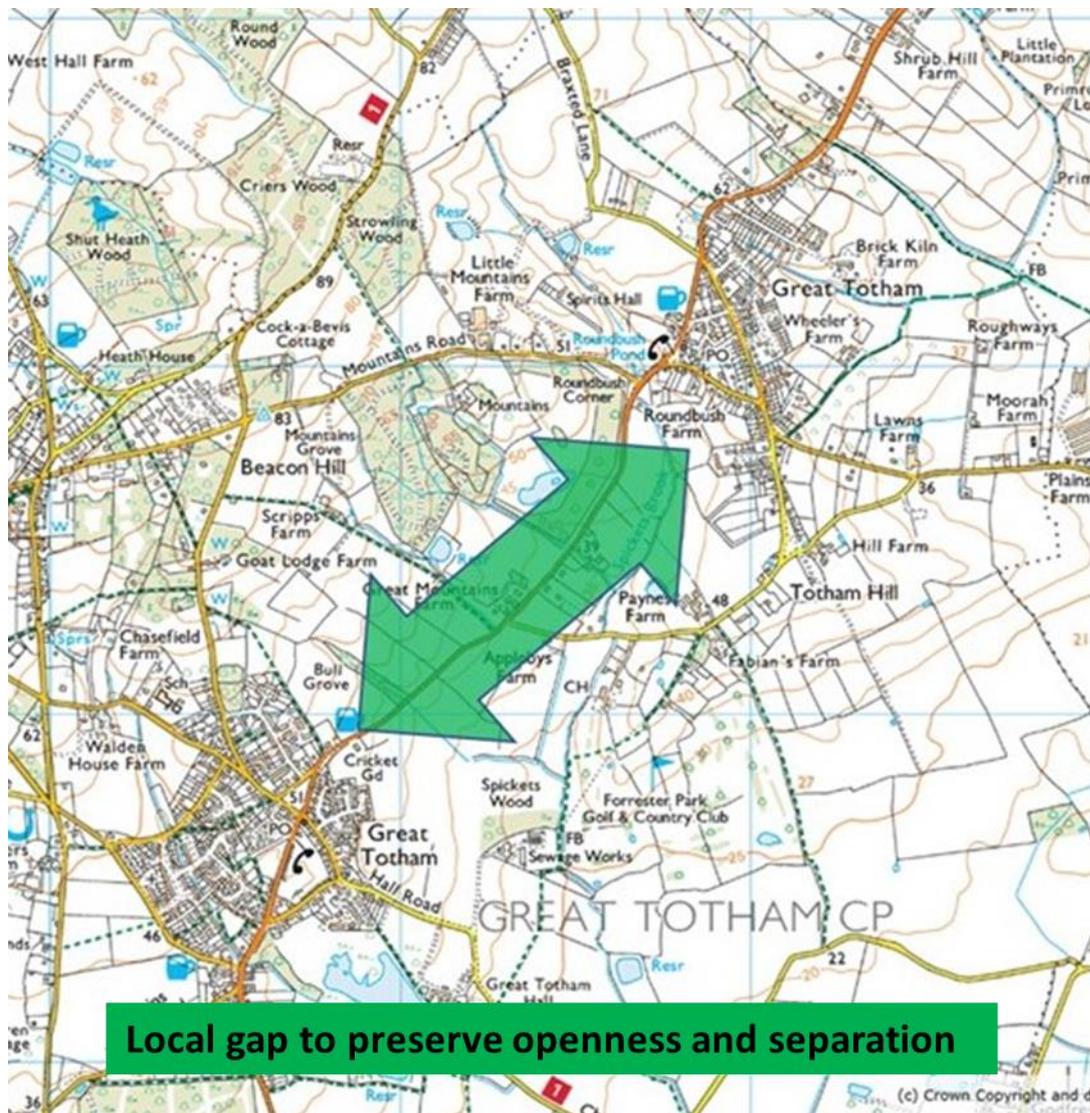
**GUIDANCE**

- **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.



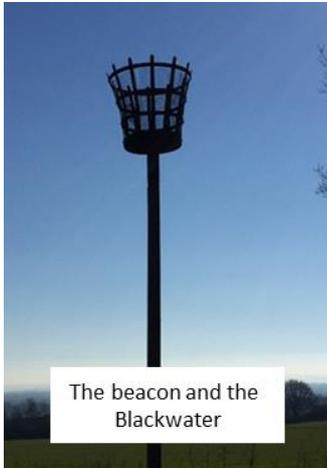
### Beacon Hill

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. Maclrens 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 Honeywood 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.

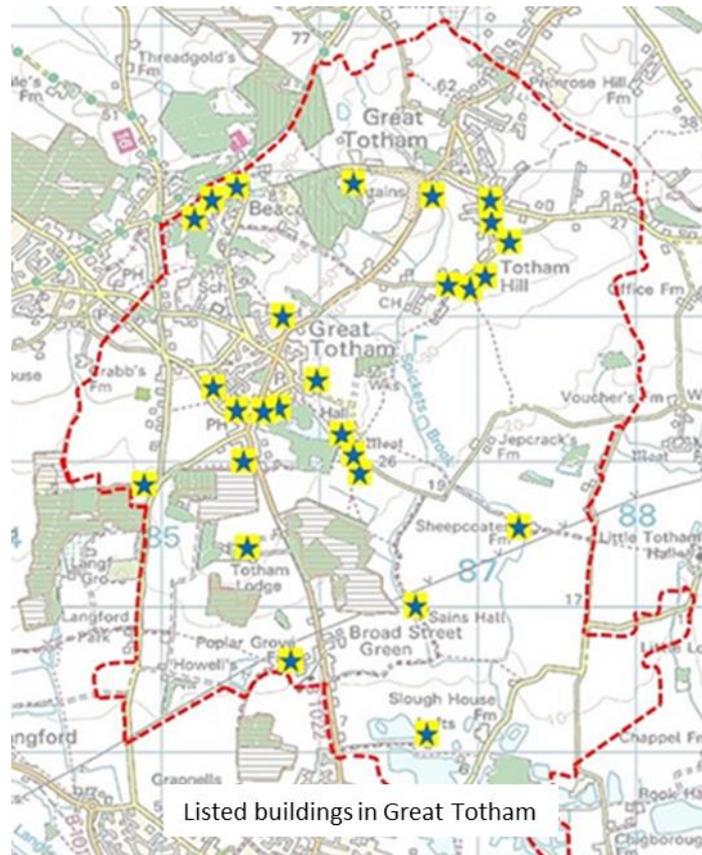
**Parish Church of St Peter, II\***: C13 and C14 with major C19 alterations. Walls are of flint, puddingstone, freestone and oolite. Also five **Churchyard Monuments**

**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.