

Review of Essex Minerals Local Plan 2014

Assessment of Candidate Sand and Gravel Sites

Appendix B

Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Detailed RAG Assessment Methodology and Results

Introduction

The assessment considers sensitivity to the ‘principle’ of mineral type development on the proposed Sites. Assessment is based on an outline site area only, unless supported by further information from the promoter, using a combination of desktop study and detailed field survey. As such, this landscape assessment is at a higher level than would be the case at the planning application stage, where the siting, scale and access of associated plant would be more definitively known. The principal source of written information for carrying out the sensitivity assessment is the Essex Landscape Character Assessment (2003). This describes the variations in character between different types of landscape in the county.

Methodology

The study accords with best practice guidance and methodology and follows the techniques and criteria set out in ‘An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management¹’ (Natural England, 2019). The Study is also consistent with the impact assessment guidance and methodology set out within the ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment²’ (Third Edition, 2013) (GLVIA3) and ‘An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment³’. In this study the following definition of landscape sensitivity has been used:

“Within the context of spatial planning and land management, landscape sensitivity is a term applied to landscape character and the associated visual resource, combining judgements of their susceptibility to the specific development type / development scenario or other change being considered together with the value(s) related to that landscape and visual resource. Landscape sensitivity may be regarded as a measure of the resilience, or robustness, of a landscape to withstand specified change arising from development types or land management practices, without undue negative effects on the landscape and visual baseline and their value.”

The Landscape Sensitivity Assessment is based on an assessment of landscape character, quality and value using carefully defined variables. As with all analyses this is based upon data and information that is to a greater or lesser extent subjective, therefore some caution is required in its interpretation. This is particularly necessary to avoid the suggestion that certain landscape features or qualities can be absolutely associated with certain sensitivities, whereas the reality is that landscape sensitivity is the result of a complex interaction of often unequally weighted variables. The complexity of the criteria and guidance by Natural England has been adapted to report on a five-point sensitivity scale as proposed in Table 1.

¹ Natural England. An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management (July 2019).

² Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment. Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (2013).

³ Natural England. An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (October 2014)

Landscape sensitivity relates to the ability of the receiving landscape/townscape to accommodate change of the type and scale proposed without adverse effects on its character. This is defined in the glossary of the GLVIA as:

‘The extent to which a landscape can accept change of a particular type and scale without unacceptable adverse effects on its character.’ It is noted in the GLVIA that this varies with:

- (i) existing land use;
- (ii) the pattern and scale of the landscape;
- (iii) visual enclosure/openness of views, and distribution of visual receptors;
- (iv) the scope for mitigation, which would be in character with the existing landscape;
and
- (v) the value placed on the landscape.

Table 1: Landscape RAG Sensitivity Grade Table

RAG Sensitivity Grade				
RED	RED-AMBER	AMBER	AMBER-GREEN	GREEN
<p>Landscape and / or visual characteristics of the assessment unit(s) are very susceptible to change and / or its values are high and it is unable to accommodate mineral working development without significant character change or adverse effects. Thresholds for significant change are very low.</p> <p>Mitigation in order to make the Site acceptable is difficult.</p>	<p>Landscape and /or visual characteristics of the assessment unit are susceptible to change and / or its values are medium through to high. It may be able to accommodate mineral working development but only in limited situations without significant character change or adverse effects if defined in the relevant land parcel summary. Thresholds for significant change are low.</p> <p>Likely to require high levels of mitigation in order to make the Site acceptable.</p>	<p>Landscape and / or visual characteristics of the assessment unit are susceptible to change and / or its values are medium / low through to high / medium and / or it may have some potential to accommodate mineral working development in some defined situations without significant character change or adverse effects. Thresholds for significant change are intermediate.</p> <p>Likely to require medium levels of mitigation in order to make the Site acceptable.</p>	<p>Landscape and / or visual characteristics of the assessment unit are resilient and of low susceptibility to change and / or its values are medium / low or low and it can accommodate mineral working development in many situations without significant character change or adverse effects. Thresholds for significant change are high.</p> <p>May require low levels of mitigation in order to make the Site acceptable.</p>	<p>Landscape and / or visual characteristics of the assessment unit are robust or degraded and are not susceptible to change and / or its values are low and it can accommodate mineral working development without significant character change or adverse effects. Thresholds for significant change are very high.</p> <p>Mitigation not necessarily required but beneficial.</p>

Landscape and visual sensitivity has been assessed for each Site with reference to 9 criteria as set out in **Table 2** and **Table 3** below.

Table 2: Landscape sensitivity assessment criteria

Criteria	Measurement of criteria	Comments
Landform and landscape features	<p><i>Low Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Smooth, gently undulating or featureless landform; the area has fewer landscape features that are characteristic or valued. <p><i>Medium Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undulating landform and some distinct landform features within it; the area has some landscape features that are characteristic or valued. <p><i>High Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dramatic landforms or distinct landform features that contribute positively to landscape character; the area has a high density of landscape features that are characteristic or valued. 	<p>This considers the shape and scale of the landform, landscape pattern and landscape elements in relation to the scale of potential development. It also considers the presence of landscape features if they are important to landscape character (i.e. the representation of elements which are key characteristics or valued features, with reference to the Landscape Character Assessment) because these would potentially be liable to loss.</p>
Complexity	<p><i>Low Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Large, simple landscape with single/limited land uses and variety. <p><i>Medium Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medium scale landscape with variations in pattern, texture and scale <p><i>High Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - small and organic landscape with a variety in pattern, texture and scale 	<p>The complexity and scale of the landscape includes consideration of the land use, field boundaries and levels of enclosure</p>
Enclosure by Vegetation	<p><i>Low Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enclosed by mature vegetation - extensive tree belts/ woodland <p><i>Medium Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Semi-enclosed by vegetation - Small woodlands - Moderate hedgerows with hedgerow trees <p><i>High Sensitivity</i></p>	<p>Assumes hedgerows/tree belts/woodlands would provide screening of development and therefore reduce potential landscape and visual impact.</p>

Criteria	Measurement of criteria	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited/poor hedges (with no trees) and/or isolated copses - Largely open with minimal vegetation 	
Historic character	<p><i>Low Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relatively few historic features important to the character of the area - Nearly entirely of modern origin <p><i>Medium Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some visible historic features of importance to character - Some signs of historic origin <p><i>High Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High density of historic features important to the character of the area - Historic origin is diverse 	Historic Character is derived from the relative presence or absence of local historic features or designations Pre 18 th century landscapes are considered to be particularly important as they pre-date the main enclosure period and therefore the landscape and field patterns are potentially medieval or earlier in origin.
Built development	<p><i>Low Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Considerable presence of built development in the surrounding landscape already that have a significant affect the character of the area. <p><i>Medium Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some built development features within the surrounding area that have an impact on the landscape <p><i>High Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Absence of any built development in the landscape and surrounding area. 	Features include industrial or commercial buildings and infrastructure, residential dwellings, transport routes and power lines, brownfield land, and vertical structures.

Table 3: Visual sensitivity assessment criteria

Criteria	Measurement of criteria	Comments
Openness to Public View	<p><i>Low Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Area is well contained from public views <p><i>Medium Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Area is partially contained from public views 	<p>Public views will include views from Roads, Rights of Way and public open space.</p> <p>The category will depend on the extent of the visibility from</p>

Criteria	Measurement of criteria	Comments
	<p><i>High Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Area is very open to public views 	<p>all the Site perimeters and rights of way through site, as well as the number of likely viewers.</p>
Openness to Private View	<p><i>Low Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Area is well contained from private views <p><i>Medium Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Area is partially contained from private views <p><i>High Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Area is very open to private views 	<p>This relates to private views from residential properties and non-public buildings and facilities.</p> <p>The category will depend on the extent of the visibility from the Site perimeters as well as the number of likely viewers.</p>
Views towards landmark buildings/natural features	<p><i>Low Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does not have or allow views towards any landmark buildings/natural features <p><i>Medium Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has or allows partial views towards landmark buildings/natural features <p><i>High Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has or allows very open views towards landmark buildings/natural features 	<p>Considers views towards landmark buildings such as; listed buildings and churches.</p> <p>Natural features including; long distance views across landscapes, specimen trees and characteristic features.</p>
Perceptual Quality	<p><i>Low Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The area is significantly influenced by development/ human activity, where new development would not be out of character. <p><i>Medium Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A landscape with some sense of rurality, but with some modern elements and human influences. <p><i>High Sensitivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A tranquil or highly rural landscape, lacking strong intrusive elements. Dark skies and a high perceived degree of rurality/naturalness with few modern human influences. <p>-</p>	<p>Considers qualities such as rurality (traditional land uses with few modern, human influences), sense of remoteness or tranquillity. Consistently high scenic value, perceived naturalness, freedom from human activity/disturbance and 'dark skies' would all add to sensitivity in relation to this criterion.</p>

Table 4: Matrix showing derivation of combined sensitivity value

This table shows how the separate landscape and visual sensitivity judgements combine.

Landscape sensitivity	High	MEDIUM	MEDIUM-HIGH	HIGH
	Med	MEDIUM-LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM-HIGH
	Low	LOW	MEDIUM-LOW	MEDIUM
		Low	Medium	High
Visual and perceptual sensitivity				

- HIGH = RED
- MEDIUM-HIGH = RED-AMBER
- MEDIUM = AMBER
- MEDIUM-LOW = AMBER-GREEN
- LOW = GREEN

Cumulative landscape and visual effects

Cumulative effects generally occur where there may be simultaneous or sequential visibility of two or more development of the same type and scale, or where the consideration of other schemes would increase an effect identified.

Cumulative landscape effects, either additional or combined are likely to include effects:

- on the fabric of the landscape as a result of removal of or changes in individual elements of features of the landscape and/or the introduction of new elements or features;
- on the aesthetic aspects of the landscape – for example its scale, sense of enclosure, diversity, pattern and colour, and/or on its perceptual or experiential attributes such as a sense of naturalness, remoteness or tranquillity;
- on the overall character of the landscape as a result of changes in the landscape fabric and/or in aesthetic or perceptual aspects, leading to modification of key

characteristics and possible creation on new landscape character if the changes are substantial enough.

Cumulative landscape effects as effects that 'can impact on either the physical fabric or character of the landscape, or any special values attached to it'. With the highest significance where the character of the landscape is changed to such an extent that it becomes a new landscape type or sub-type.

Cumulative landscape visual effects as effects that can be caused by combined visibility, which 'occurs where the observer is able to see two or more developments from one viewpoint' and/or sequential effects which 'occur when the observer has to move to another viewpoint to see different developments.

Candidate Site Reference A6 - Bradwell Quarry (a)

Red-Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site possesses few characteristic features of the Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys (C6) Landscape Character Area (LCA), which includes the predominantly arable farmland and well hedged fields. The River Blackwater and associated valley features have limited presence within the immediate landscape, and therefore reduces the sensitivity of the Site to minerals extraction. Consideration for appropriate enhancement of field hedgerow condition should be considered to mitigate the impacts on landscape and visual impact.
- Stoney's Wood Ancient Woodland is located on the southern boundary of the Site. Other Priority Habitats (Deciduous Woodland) are located partially within the south part of the Site, with other woodlands on the western boundary. Various Priority Habitats (Deciduous Woodland) are also located along the River Blackwater Valley approximately 1.5km to the north of the Site.
- Two listed buildings and structures are located within the A6 site boundary at Allshots Farm, with three further listed buildings on the Site periphery at Woodhouse Farm. The listed buildings at Allshots Farm are situated within an industrial area with commercial activity and equine facilities within the immediate area. The listed buildings at Woodhouse Farm are currently derelict and fenced off from the footpath that runs through the yard. Minerals extraction works surrounding these listed buildings could substantially alter the setting. Noise levels and visual impact would need to be managed with appropriate siting of the proposed works.
- The Site is in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding), with no high probability flood zones (Zones 2 or 3) within 500m of the Site.
- The Site will be accessed from Sheepcotes Lane and Church Lane, which currently have a number of potential open access points into the Site. These entrances are currently used as access to the industrial area and to Bradwell Quarry. Any additional entrances that may need to be created to provide access to the Site will need to consider visibility splays. Appropriate transport and access arrangements and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- Public rights of way (PRoW) run along the southern, eastern and northern boundaries of the Site, with an additional connective footpath running through the centre of the Site. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the visual impacts of the PRoW's on the Site peripheries, and consideration for whether any of these PRoWs and the central footpath need diversions is also required.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located to the north-east of Silver End, the Site is accessed from the existing Bradwell Quarry entrance from Church Lane and Sheepcotes Lane. The Site comprises a number of arable fields, woodland copses and industrial units. The Site boundaries are largely defined by the existing field boundaries and Bradwell Quarry to the north and west.

Late 19th Century maps show the surrounding road network also Woodhouse Farm and Allshots Farm. Upney Wood is located to the east although only partially exists now which is also true for Storey's Wood to the south.

The Site is largely accessible by Public Rights of Way. Footpath 8 (Kelvedon) runs along the western boundary connecting Woodhouse Farm to Woodhouse Lane in the south-east corner. Bridleway 70 (Bradwell) runs along the northern boundary, connecting to Footpath 7 (Kelvedon 7) on the east and south boundary.

The Site is located within the countryside and surrounded by arable farmland fields of medium to large scale. There are several clusters of settlements and farmsteads located in the landscape surrounding the Site, some of which have listed buildings. The Site is largely level although falls slightly towards the south, whilst the wider landscape generally rises to a ridge into the north-west at Cressing and Braintree.

Candidate Site A47 and A48 are located close by and occupy several fields. Bradwell Quarry also sits adjacent to the Site which has extensive minerals works in operation, and has a strong presence within this Site.

The Site falls within Enclosed Agriculture – Amalgamated Fields, Post War Enclosed Land and Unplanned Fields (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is classified as Grade 2 – Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

A total of 2 listed buildings are located on the Site, including Allshot's Farmhouse (1337612) and Barn (1169906) 3 listed building are located just outside on the Site, including Woodhouse Farm (1123843), the Ancillary Buildings (1123844) and Pump (1169918) are also listed.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys (C6)

- Shallow valleys.
- Predominantly arable farmland with well hedged medium to large fields.
- The Brain and the Upper Blackwater Valleys are narrow with undulating valleysides.
- The Lower Chelmer, and the Blackwater near Maldon, have wide flat valley floors, and gentle valleysides.

- Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive feature.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of the valley floor
- Some visually exposed valleysides/open valley floors
- Tranquil character in parts
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

- Storey's Wood Ancient Woodland (south boundary)
- Priority Habitats (Deciduous Woodland)

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features				•	
	Complexity					•
	Enclosure by Vegetation			•		
	Historic Character				•	
	Built development		•			
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View				•	
	Openness to Private View			•		
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features				•	
	Perceptual Quality		•			

The Site is a complex mix of landscape features, including arable farmland, grazing and grassland, woodland, industrial units, dwellings and listed buildings which increases the overall sensitivity.

Storey's Woodland (Ancient Woodland) located on the southern boundary increases the Site sensitivity, in combination with Priority Habitats (Deciduous Woodland) located within and surrounding the Site.

The historic character of the Site is increased by virtue of the 5 listed buildings located within and around the Site, where the context would be adversely affected by mineral extraction. There is however a strong presence of built development within the landscape, owed to industrial units, buildings and roads.

The extensive public right of way network throughout the Site invites open views to the listed buildings and that exist within the Site, which increases the overall sensitivity.

A6 also has large stretches of open boundaries with little enclosure by vegetation, which allows open views of the Site from roads, private dwellings, commercial areas and rights of way.

Whilst complex, the overall sensitivity of the Site is marginally reduced by the presence of built development, industrial buildings and quarry workings within the surrounding landscape, which significantly reduces the perceptual quality of the area.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

The Site (A6) is located close to Bradwell Quarry, an existing working mineral extraction area. Bradwell Quarry defines the north and west boundaries of the Site, and therefore has a substantial presence within the area. Candidate Sites A47 and A48 are located within 0.6 kilometres of the Site A6, and will further contribute to the cumulative impact of minerals extraction sites within the surrounding area. Public views from the surrounding roads and the public right of way network will be impacted, with the wider landscape becoming further excavated and changing the character of the River Blackwater valley.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

An application for a solar voltaic farm with battery storage and infrastructure (Ref: 21/01878/FUL – Land East of Periwinkle Hall Links Road) has been granted permission approximately 1km to the north-west of the Site, on the opposite edge of existing working Bradwell Quarry. A solar farm is also pending consideration 1.5km to the south-west of the Site (Ref: 21/03735 – Land West of Park Road). The proposed solar farms are unlikely to be seen in context with the Site however they contribute to the cumulative change in the surrounding landscape of Silver End.

Candidate Site Reference A22 – Little Bullocks Farm, (a)

Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is Central Essex Farmlands (B1) and possesses some characteristic features of the LCA, which includes the arable farmland landscape. The works would erode the existing attractive features of the small, secluded valley, (which is most attractive at the east) and the views of it from the public footpath. Overall, sensitive Mitigation for visual impact toward public receptors will be required to keep in context with the local landscape character.
- The Essex Historic Environment Records show this area lays within Historic landscape area 8 Hatfield Forest and the Hallingburys. The historic mapping shows that part of this area used to be woodland. The surviving historic field boundaries are likely to be of ancient origin. It is likely that a range of historic landscape feature may survive, and any environmental assessment should include a walk over survey.
- Canfield End Pastures located on the eastern boundary is a designated Local Wildlife Site (LoWS). Protection through appropriate buffer will be required, including the areas immediately to the small river.
- Existing vegetation to the south of the Site should be protected and retained.
- A Public Right of Way (PRoW) within the LoWS to the east connects to the wider PRoW network. Mitigation through screening with advance planting should be considered.
- The Site is located within a flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding) and Zone 2 (medium probability of flooding).
- The Site will likely be accessed from the existing extraction site to the north via a haul road (not within the red line boundary). An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads, local amenity and existing vegetation would be required.
- The Site would be generally screened from the south by vegetation on the boundary and by landform however, the Site would be overlooked from the other (north) slope of the valley. Mitigation to reduce any impact on these views should be considered where appropriate.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located approximately 2km to the southeast of Takeley, no access has been proposed for the allocation however the Site can be accessed via the arable field (Northwest) from Cuckoos Lane through Bullocks Farm yard. Topographically, the Site is generally flat although rises slightly towards the west. The Site comprises arable fields.

The Site is broadly rectangular in shape, the northern boundary is open onto the extended arable field. The east is bound by hedgerow and River Roding. The south and west boundaries are defined by existing hedgerows.

One footpath runs adjacent to the Site to the east named Footpath 19 Little Canfield; this connects to a significant network of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) to the southeast.

The Site is located within the countryside setting amongst the wider arable farmland landscape. To the west is an existing historical extraction site. Hatfield Forest is located approx. 2 miles east.

The Site is largely within the classification of Enclosed Agriculture (Post-War Enclosed) classification (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is Grade 2 – Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

There is only one listed building in the vicinity; Grade II Listed Lavenhams (1141965), which is located to the west of the Site.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Central Essex Farmlands (B1)

- Irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable fields, marked by sinuous hedgerows and ditches.
- Many small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape.
- Scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small hamlets, typically with greens and ponds.
- A concentration of isolated moated farmsteads.
- Network of narrow, winding lanes.
- Mostly tranquil character away from major roads and Stansted Airport.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of hedgerow and woodland pattern
- Moderate intervisibility
- Tranquil character away from existing major road corridors/Stansted
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

In close proximity to the Site:

- Runnels Hay Ancient Woodland
- Flitch Way Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
- Canfield End Pastures Local Wildlife Site (LoWS)
- Canfield Hart Ancient Woodland
- Priors Wood Ancient Woodland

Hatfield Forest contains a number of designations including:

- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Country Park
- Various Ancient Woodland
- Warren in Collins Coppice Scheduled Monument

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features			•		
	Complexity		•			
	Enclosure by Vegetation			•		
	Historic Character	•				
	Built development				•	
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View			•		
	Openness to Private View		•			
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features		•			
	Perceptual Quality				•	

The Site is an uncomplex single arable field with a which possesses some important features that are considered sensitive to the landscape including irregular field pattern of a medium size. The adjacent industrial presence of existing working Crumps Farm Quarry reduces the overall perceptual quality on Site. Notwithstanding this, immediately east of the Site along the PRow within the LoWS is considered tranquil and of high

quality and value within the rural setting. Public views from the footpath include panoramic vistas across the landscape incorporating the Site and wider undulating landscape, this increases the overall sensitivity. There are few opportunities for private views into the Site.

For these reasons, Site A22 has been assessed as having **Medium** sensitivity.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

The Site is a proposed extension of the existing Crumps Farm Quarry located to the north and therefore cumulative impact on the extensive PRow network would be impacted.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A23 – Little Bullocks Farm, (b)

Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is Central Essex Farmlands (B1) and possesses only limited characteristic features of the LCA, which includes the arable farmland landscape.
- Runnel's Hay located on the north-western boundary is a designated Local Wildlife Site (LoWS) and Ancient Woodland. This extends and connects with the Flich Way LoWS, a significant green corridor spanning from Bishops Stortford to Braintree to the north of the Site. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity through appropriate buffer.
- The Site is not located within a flood zone. Flood zones 1 and 2 (low and medium probability of flooding) are within proximity of the Site to the east along River Roding.
- The Site will likely be accessed through the existing extraction site to the east with little to no impact aside from a ditch which will need appropriate measures of access without impeding on drainage. However, access should be avoided towards the southern part of the Site as it will impact on existing vegetation.
- A Public Right of Way (PRoW) runs into the Site at the south boundary and continues along the western boundary connecting with the wider PRoW network via Flich Way. Temporary diversion during operations will be required.
- The existing hedgerows on Site and any identified important landscape feature should be retained and enhanced. Opportunities for landscape character enhancement should be considered as part of any mitigation.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located approximately 2km to the southeast of Takeley, the Site appears to be accessed via the existing extraction site (Crumps Farm Quarry) to the east. Topographically, the Site is generally flat although rises slightly towards the west. The Site comprises grassland.

The Site is broadly triangular in shape, the northern boundary abuts an ancient woodland. The east is bound by an open ditch. To the south the boundary is open to the wider arable field. The west boundary is undefined and opens onto further grassland.

Footpath 2 (Great Canfield) follows the western boundary and connects to the south to Footpath 8 (Little Canfield), this connects to Bridleway 38 (Little Canfield), locally known as the Flich Way.

The Site is located within the countryside setting amongst the wider arable farmland landscape. To the east is an existing historical extraction site. Hatfield Forest is located approx. 3km east.

The Site is largely within the classification of Enclosed Agriculture (Post-War Enclosed) classification (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is Grade 2 – Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

There is only one listed building in the vicinity; Grade II Listed Lavenhams (1141965), which is located to the west of the Site.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Central Essex Farmlands (B1)

- Irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable fields, marked by sinuous hedgerows and ditches.
- Many small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape.
- Scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small hamlets, typically with greens and ponds.
- A concentration of isolated moated farmsteads.
- Network of narrow, winding lanes.
- Mostly tranquil character away from major roads and Stansted Airport.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of hedgerow and woodland pattern
- Moderate intervisibility
- Tranquil character away from existing major road corridors/Stansted
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations, within a 3-mile radius are the following:

- Runnel's Hay Ancient Woodland
- Runnel's Hay Local Wildlife Site (LoWS)
- Flitch Way Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
- Canfield Hart Ancient Woodland
- Priors Wood Ancient Woodland

Hatfield Forest contains a number of designations including:

- Site of Special Scientific Interest

- Country Park
- Various Ancient Woodland
- Warren in Collins Coppice Scheduled Monument

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features	•				
	Complexity			•		
	Enclosure by Vegetation		•			
	Historic Character	•				
	Built development			•		
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View					•
	Openness to Private View		•			
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features					•
	Perceptual Quality			•		

The Site comprises a combination of grassland and an arable field with intervening hedgerow, which possesses some features that are considered sensitive to the landscape. The Site is open to much of its boundaries reducing the enclosure sensitivity.

The existing extraction site to the east reduces the sensitivity in terms of perceptual quality. While private views are generally limited, public views from the public footpath covering the whole site and the wider landscape including views of All Saints Church and Canfield End, increases visual sensitivity. Where screening is encouraged, this view should be maintained. The presence of Runnel's Hay to the northern boundary greatly increases sensitivity of views towards natural features.

For these reasons, Site A23 has been assessed as having **Medium** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

The Site is a proposed extension of the existing Crumps Farm Quarry located to the east and therefore cumulative impact on the extensive PRow network would be impacted.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A31 – Maldon Road

Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site lies in historic landscape area 28, the Abberton Area with good field boundary survival. On the southern boundary two areas of ancient woodland are preserved. Any Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or planning application submitted would need to contain a full assessment of the historic environment including an intrusive evaluation report covering the whole of the proposed area.
- There are a number of woodland blocks adjacent to the southern boundary of the Site alongside gappy but established hedgerow and hedgerow trees. The Site itself is divided in several parcels by a mix of well-established hedgerow, hedgerow trees and tree belt. The Site has some attractive varying landform with a number of landscape features such as feature mature trees to the eastern boundary. Existing vegetation should be retained, protected and strengthened as it contributing to the characteristics of the landscape character area in which the Site is located.
- Taking account of the vegetation and landform, much of the Site would be overlooked from the road by the long north-west boundary. A bund could prevent this, but would in itself, be intrusive. There would be some views of the Site from quite distant houses to the north and through the gaps in vegetation from footpath to the east.
- There are a number of properties in close proximity to the Site, with Roundbush bungalow to the south-west corner at most risk of adverse impact unless protected by keeping development away with sufficient buffer distance.
- The need for screening views from the footpath to the south varies depending on landform and gaps through existing vegetation.
- There would be some views of the Site from quite distant houses to the north and through the gaps in vegetation from footpath to the east.
- Mitigation from noise and visual impact from various receptors would need considering in the form of advance planting for screening and bunding where appropriate.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located adjacent to the village of Birch and Birch Green, the Site is accessed from Maldon Road B1022 to the north, and from Caper Lane (east) and Roundbush Road (west). The southern boundary is defined by existing hedgerow boundaries which are occasionally met by copses. The Site comprises several arable fields, located on a gently sloping landform down to the north-west as it reaches a stream within the Site.

Late 19th Century maps show Maldon Road to the northern boundary of the Site and the presence of the two copses that are located on the southern boundary of the Site. The stream that runs from east to west within the Site is also present. The proposal lies in historic landscape area 28, the Abberton Area with good field boundary survival. On the southern boundary two areas of ancient woodland are preserved. Any EIA or planning application submitted would need to contain a full assessment of the historic environment including an intrusive evaluation report covering the whole of the proposed area.

Public Right of Way Footpath 40 (Birch) runs along the eastern boundary on Caper Lane, which connects to Footpath 13 (Birch) which runs parallel to the south of the Site.

The Site is located within the countryside and surrounded by arable farmland fields of large to medium scale. A number of farmsteads are located close to the Site between villages. Existing working Birch Quarry also defines a large part of the immediate setting. Notably the land rises to the south at Birch Green.

Birch Quarry is located adjacent to the Site on the north-western edge, on the opposite side of B1022 Maldon Road.

The Site falls within a mix of Enclosed Agriculture – Amalgamated Fields and Unplanned Fields, and Extractive Industry (Mineral) classification (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is classified as Grade 3 – Good to Moderate Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

There are clusters of listed buildings located within Birch and Birch Green village, however some listed buildings are located closer to the Site, including Roundbush Farmhouse (1238544) and Barn, White House (1238506) and Brakes Farmhouse (1238503). Roundbush bungalow to the south-west corner is at most risk of adverse impact.

The Site is screened from views along the public footpath to the south, with occasional views through gaps in vegetation that enables views of the Site. However, the Site is open on its western boundary. Topography aids to screen part of the Site but it opens up towards the road junction to the north, where the Site is clearly visible at this point.

The road that runs along its long north-west boundary has views over much of the Site. Although there is some screening from vegetation by the road & along the bottom of the valley, much of this is elm which will die, much of it has large gaps or is missing (especially on the west half) and the landform increases the visual prominence of the south slope of the valley.

The eastern boundary is open along the bottom half with young hedging to the top half of the eastern boundary. Feature trees are present along this boundary. Gaps along this boundary allow for long and attractive distance views towards the west of the Site and existing vegetation.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

The Site lies in the South Colchester Farmlands character area in the county landscape character assessment.

South Colchester Farmlands (E2)

- Large flat farmland plateau, dissected by occasional small narrow valleys.
- Arable land use dominates, but with some pasture and orchards.
- Straight and regular field patterns with mainly low trimmed hedgerows.
- Widely dispersed blocks of woodland/small copses, sparse tree cover in the north.
- Former heathland character near Colchester

The key landscape sensitivity and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Moderate Intervisibility
- Tranquil character away from edge of Colchester
- Integrity of woodlands, hedgerow field pattern
- Landscape Sensitivity Level: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations:

- Priority Habitats – Deciduous Woodland (4 parcels)
- Ancient Woodland – Calves Pastures

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features			•		
	Complexity			•		
	Enclosure by Vegetation		•			
	Historic Character					
	Built development		•			
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View			•		
	Openness to Private View			•		
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features			•		
	Perceptual Quality		•			

There are a number of woodland blocks adjacent to the southern boundary of the Site alongside a gappy but established hedgerow with hedgerow trees, characteristics of the LCA. The Site itself is divided in several parcels by a mix of well-established hedgerow, hedgerow trees and tree belt. The Site has some attractive varying landform with a number of landscape features such as feature mature trees to the eastern boundary. These features contribute to an increase on sensitivity levels.

The tranquillity and attractive qualities of the Site are somehow degraded by the existing works at Birch Quarry to the north, particularly towards the western part of the Site and by neighbouring sewage works site to the east, reducing the sensitivity on this Site.

Site A31 has been assessed as having an overall **Medium** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

Active Birch Quarry is to the north of the Site. Birch Quarry is visible through gaps in the vegetation along the footpath to the running to the south. Its presence becomes more prominent in terms of noise and visual impact when travelling along Roundbush Road. There will be a cumulative impact to Bungalow property and Roundbush Farmhouse

listed building as a result of increase in noise levels and overall changes on landscape character. These cumulative effects will be both simultaneous and sequential.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

No such developments in relation to this Site known or identified.

Candidate Site Reference A47 – Bradwell – Monk’s Farm

Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site possesses few characteristic features of the Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys (C6) Landscape Character Area (LCA), which includes the predominantly arable farmland and well hedged fields. The River Blackwater and associated valley features has limited presence within the immediate landscape, and therefore reduces the sensitivity of the Site to minerals extraction. Consideration for appropriate enhancement of field hedgerow condition should be considered to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity.
- There are few important landscape designations within the surrounding landscape, with the exception of a few Priority Habitats (Deciduous Woodland and Woodpasture/Parkland) within the wider landscape. Brockwell Meadows Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located approximately 2km to the south-east of the Site adjacent to Kelvedon.
- Monk’s Farmhouse (Grade II Listed) is located centrally to the Site, however, is not included within the Site boundary. Pound Farmhouse (Grade II) to the east and Felix Hall, Orangery and The Clock House (Grade II) are also located to the south of the Site. Minerals extraction works surrounding these listed buildings will substantially alter the setting. Appropriate mitigation will need to be considered to mitigate the impacts on the listed buildings would be required.
- The Site is in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding), however Flood Zone 2 and 3 (medium and high probability of flooding) are located 1km to the east of the Site surrounding the River Blackwater.
- There are currently potential access points into the Site, namely Pantlings Lane to the east which accesses the Site from the B1024 Coggeshall Road. Any additional entrances that may need to be created to provide access to the Site will need to consider visibility splays. Appropriate transport and access arrangements and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- Public Rights of Way (PRoW) runs into the Site from the north and then travel throughout Site, exiting in the south-west corner. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the visual impacts of the PRoW’s travelling through the Site, and consideration for whether any of these PRoWs and the central footpath need diversions is also required.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located to the west of Kelvedon and the railway line, the Site is accessed via Pantlings Lane and Coggeshall Road. The north, south and west boundaries are defined by existing hedgerows and ditch lines that form a pattern of irregular arable fields. The eastern boundary cuts through part of two larger fields distancing itself from a linear settlement of houses on Coggeshall Road. A farmstead is located to the centre of the Site although is not located within the Site boundary.

Late 19th Century maps show Pantlings Lane along the northern site boundary and Monks Farm which is located centrally. Upney Woods are shown to have once extended right to the Site boundary, however is now significantly smaller in size. Felix Hall to the south is also a notable feature and is situated along the southern boundary of the Site.

Public Right of Way Footpath 5 (Kelvedon) runs along the southern boundary and then through the centre of the Site, where it reaches Bridleway 1 (Kelvedon) which defined the northern boundary along the previous Pantlings Lane. Footpath 2 (Kelvedon) runs towards the north-east and defines the northern boundary of part of the Site.

The Site is located within the countryside and surrounded by arable farmland fields of medium to large scale. There are several clusters of settlements and farmsteads located in the landscape surrounding the Site, some of which have listed buildings. Notably, the Site falls towards the east as it reaches the River Blackwater valley.

Candidate Site A48 is located two fields north of the Site and occupies 6 large fields. Site A48 also connects onto the existing Bradwell Quarry which has extensive minerals works operating to the west of this Site.

The Site falls within Enclosed Agriculture – Amalgamated Fields and Unplanned Fields (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is classified as Grade 2 – Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

There are a number of listed buildings located within the settlements surrounding the Site, however Pound Farmhouse (1123812) is of particular note as the eastern site boundary has been drawn back from the field boundary to avoid proximation with this building and settlement. Monk's Fam Cottages (1171147) is also located centrally to the Site but outside the boundary. At Felix Hall to the south, The Orangery (1227627), The Clockhouse (1305802) and Felix Hall (1123797) are of note.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys (C6)

- Shallow valleys.
- Predominantly arable farmland with well hedged medium to large fields.
- The Brain and the Upper Blackwater Valleys are narrow with undulating valleysides.

- The Lower Chelmer, and the Blackwater near Maldon, have wide flat valley floors, and gentle valleysides.
- Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive feature.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of the valley floor
- Some visually exposed valleysides/open valley floors
- Tranquil character in parts
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations:

- Priority Habitat – Woodpasture and Parkland (south-west)

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features				•	
	Complexity		•			
	Enclosure by Vegetation			•		
	Historic Character			•		
	Built development			•		
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View				•	
	Openness to Private View					•
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features			•		
	Perceptual Quality				•	

The Site is an uncomplex group of arable fields, separated by strong established hedgerows which break up the landscape. The surrounding wider landscape comprising arable farmlands and hedgerows is highly visible from the southern areas of the Site,

which strongly resemble the Landscape Character Area and increases the overall sensitivity.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW) throughout the Site provide open views of the landscape, with additional private views being obtained from Monk's Farm located centrally to the Site. Located away from many roads with minimal built development within the surrounding views, the overall sensitivity of perceptual quality is increased.

For these reasons, Site A47 has been assessed as having **Medium** sensitivity.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

The Site (A47) is located within 2km of Bradwell Quarry, an existing working mineral extraction area. Bradwell Quarry however is not visible or present within the setting of the Site. Candidate Sites A6 and A48 are located within 0.6km kilometres of the Site, and will further contribute to the cumulative impact of minerals extraction sites within the surrounding area. Public views from the surrounding roads and the public right of way network will be impacted, with the wider landscape becoming further excavated and changing the character of the River Blackwater valley.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

A Scoping Opinion for 600 dwellings and primary school (Ref: 21/01631/SCO – Land South West of Coggeshall Road) is located on the immediate eastern boundary of the Site, and partially overlaps boundaries adjacent to Pantlings Lane. The proposed residential development would connect Kelvedon village to the proposed A47 quarry and contribute to the cumulative effects in the area surrounding Kelvedon village.

Candidate Site Reference A48 – Bradwell – Grange Farm

Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site possesses few characteristic features of the Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys (C6) Landscape Character Area (LCA), which includes the predominantly arable farmland and well hedged fields. However, the River Blackwater and associated valley features run along the northern boundary of the Site, separated by The Essex Way public footpath. The extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive feature within the setting of 'The Essex Way' and northern areas of the Site. Consideration for appropriately mitigating the impacts on the Local Wildlife Site (LoWS) at the River Blackwater and The Essex Way should be sought.
- The River Blackwater Local Wildlife Site (LoWS) is located approximately 0.15km from the Site and has strong intervisibility with northern parts of the Site. A number of Priority Habitats (Deciduous Woodland) are also located along the River Blackwater to the north. Appropriate consideration for mitigating the landscape and visual impacts of mineral extraction should be sort, particularly on the northern boundary.
- The Essex Way public footpath runs along the northern boundary, connecting the Conservation Area at Coggeshall with other listed buildings along the footpath (i.e. Curd Hall Grade II). There is a high density of listed buildings located within Coggeshall village approximately 0.15km from the north-eastern corner of the Site, including The Grange Barn (Grade I listed). The strong presence of listed buildings within close proximity of the Site may be sensitive to mineral extraction works, and therefore appropriate mitigation is sort to reduce the impact of works on the setting of these buildings and features.
- The Site is in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding), however Flood Zone 2 and 3 (medium and high probability of flooding) are located directly adjacent to the northern Site Boundary within the floodplain of the River Blackwater. Consideration for an appropriate buffer from the floodplain should be sought to reduce the impact on the setting of the LoWS river corridor.
- Cuthedge Lane runs along the full extent of the southern boundary, which is currently utilised for access to Bradwell Quarry to the south. There are a number of opportunities for site access however any additional entrances that may need to be created to provide access to the Site will need to consider visibility splays. Appropriate transport and access arrangements and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.

- Public Rights of Way (ProW) cross the Site in two locations, and also along the northern boundary at The Essex Way. A PRow also runs along the southern boundary adjacent to Cuthedge Lane, separating the Site from Bradwell Quarry. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the visual impacts affecting PRow's travelling through and adjacent to the Site, and consideration for whether any of these PRow's and the central footpath need diversions is also required. Particular consideration must be held for providing an adequate buffer to The Essex Way.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located to the south-west of Coggeshall, the Site is accessed from Cuthedge Lane that also defined the southern boundary. The remaining boundaries are also largely defined by existing field boundaries of medium to large arable fields. The boundaries are defined by mixed quality hedgerows and trees, which are fragmented in places. Coggeshall Hamlet sits directly adjacent to the east of the Site, and existing Bradwell Quarry to the west. The River Blackwater also runs just beyond the northern boundary.

Late 19th Century maps show the surrounding road network and also a few farmsteads and buildings including Capon's Farm, Haywards Farm, Curd Hall and Grange Farm.

Public Right of Way (PRow) Footpath 35 (Coggeshall) cuts through the Site from north to south, connecting to Footpath 34 (Coggeshall) 'The Essex Way' which runs along the northern site boundary. Footpath 39 (Coggeshall) also runs across the Site towards the eastern edge.

The Site is located within the countryside and surrounded by arable farmland fields of medium to large scale. There are several clusters of settlements and farmsteads located in the landscape surrounding the Site, some of which have listed buildings. Notably, the Site falls towards the north as it reaches the River Blackwater valley.

Candidate Site A47 is located two fields south of the Site and occupies several fields. Bradwell Quarry also sits adjacent to the Site which has extensive minerals works in operation.

The Site falls within Enclosed Agriculture – Amalgamated Fields (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is classified as Grade 2 – Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

Curd Hall (1123140) listed building is located on the northern boundary of the Site and Nunn's Bridge (1471715) sits just beyond the north crossing the River Blackwater. There are a large number of other listed buildings located within the villages of Coggeshall and Coggeshall Hamlet which are situated to the immediate east of the Site. Notable listed buildings within the village include the National Trust's Grange barn (Grade 1 – 1123112), Paycocke's House (Grade 1 – 1337597), Church of St Nicholas (Grade 1 – 1337925) and Coggeshall Abbey.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys (C6)

- Shallow valleys.
- Predominantly arable farmland with well hedged medium to large fields.
- The Brain and the Upper Blackwater Valleys are narrow with undulating valleysides.
- The Lower Chelmer, and the Blackwater near Maldon, have wide flat valley floors, and gentle valleysides.
- Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive feature.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of the valley floor
- Some visually exposed valleysides/open valley floors
- Tranquil character in parts
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

There are no landscape designations within or around the Site.

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features			•		
	Complexity		•			
	Enclosure by Vegetation				•	
	Historic Character				•	
	Built development			•		
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View				•	
	Openness to Private View			•		
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features			•		
	Perceptual Quality		•			

The Site is an undulating landscape of uncomplex arable fields, separated by mixed condition hedgerows which limit some views to the surrounding landscape. The Essex Way public footpath on the northern boundary provides access from The Grange Barn (Grade I) alongside the River Blackwater Local Wildlife Site (LoWS) which increases the sensitivity to public views, historic character and landscape features, however these are both separated from the Site by established hedgerows.

There are a number of other footpaths that run through the Site, providing access to Cuthedge Lane to the south which increases the overall sensitivity. Existing working Bradwell Quarry is located close to the south of the Site and has a strong presence within the local area, which impacts the perceptual quality of the landscape to the south. The Site is also largely open to the south with little enclosure by vegetation.

For these reasons, Site A48 has been assessed as having **Medium** sensitivity.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

The Site (A48) is located adjacent to existing working Bradwell Quarry, which is located to the south of the Site on the opposing side of Cuthedge Lane. There are strong views towards Bradwell Quarry and the mineral extraction works have a strong presence

within the Site. Candidate Sites A6 and A47 are also located within 0.6km of the Site and will further contribute to cumulative impact of minerals extraction sites within the surrounding area. Public views from the surrounding roads and the public right of way network will be impacted, with the wider landscape becoming further excavated and changing the character of the River Blackwater valley.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A49 - Colemans Farm - Hill Broad Farm Full Site

Red-Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site is very characteristic of the Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer (C6) Landscape Character Area (LCA). Located on the edge of the River Blackwater, the western parcel of the Site comprises linear willow and poplar plantation which is a strong local feature of the landscape. The remainder of the Site comprises arable fields separated by established hedgerows, also located on the valley sides. With open views of the river, appropriate consideration is required to protect the characteristic features of the LCA, particularly on the setting of the River Blackwater valley floor, and mitigate the impacts on the landscape.
- Elm Springs Priority Habitat (Deciduous Woodland) defines the western site boundary, and Stowling & Crierswood Ancient Woodland is located 0.3km to the south of the Site. The River Blackwater valley is located on the immediate boundary to the west, with strong intervisibility between the Site and the river. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the physical impacts on Elm Springs with a suitable buffer. Mineral extraction within this location would significantly alter the setting of the River Blackwater valley, where a substantial buffer would be required.
- Three Grade II Listed buildings are located along Braxted Park Road to the east, including Appleford Bridge, Appleford Bridge Cottage and 1 & 2 School House. Grade II* listed Braxted Park is also located in very close proximity to the east of the Site. The intimate river setting of Appleford Bridge could be significantly altered and therefore appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts.
- The eastern parcel of the Site is located in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding); the western parcel is partially located within Flood Zone 3 (high probability of flooding) owed to its location directly adjacent to the River Blackwater.
- Access opportunities are available from Nero Road which runs through the centre of the Site, connecting Braxted Park Road to Little Braxted Lane. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- Public Right of Way (PRoW) Footpath 1 (Great Braxted) runs through the Site close to the River Blackwater on the north-western boundary. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts of the PRoW which may include diversion or visual screening.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located to the east of Witham, the Site is accessed via a private farm road off Braxted Road. The Site is located within Little Braxted village and is topographically lower towards the north-west towards the River Blackwater.

The Site comprises approximately 5 fields, an immature tree plantation, the private road Nero Road and a carpark associated with the neighbouring farm buildings. The north-eastern boundary is defined by open edges onto arable land with the associated farm yard on the boundary. The south-east boundary is defined largely by hedgerows further south. The south to west boundary abuts a woodland immediately west and River Blackwater north-west.

Public Right of Way (PRoW) Footpath 1 (Great Braxted) follows the private farm road and the River Blackwater.

The Site is located in close proximity to previous workings associated with Colemans Quarry. The wider landscape comprises arable fields and a reservoir from previous workings. A north-east to south-west ridge is located to the east of the Site through Great Braxted, whilst the Site is in the valley of the River Blackwater.

The Site is largely falling within Enclosed Agriculture (Amalgamated Fields) classification, and a majority of the Site is classified as Grade 2 – Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification), with some of the Site classified as Grade 3 – Good to Moderate Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

A number of listed buildings are located in all directions of the Site. Of particular note are those located along Braxted Park Road and within Braxted Park:

Grade II 1 and 2 School House (1400105)
Grade II Appleford Bridge Cottage (1317172)
Grade II Appleford Bridge (1111108)
Grade II* Church Of All Saints (1165777)

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys (C6)

- Shallow valleys.
- Predominantly arable farmland with well hedged medium to large fields.
- The Brain and the Upper Blackwater Valleys are narrow with undulating valleysides.
- The Lower Chelmer, and the Blackwater near Maldon, have wide flat valley floors, and gentle valleysides.
- Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive feature.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of the valley floor
- Some visually exposed valleysides/open valley floors
- Tranquil character in parts
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations:

- Elm Springs Priority Habitat (Deciduous Woodland)

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features				•	
	Complexity			•		
	Enclosure by Vegetation			•		
	Historic Character			•		
	Built development			•		
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View				•	
	Openness to Private View				•	
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features					•
	Perceptual Quality			•		

The Site is located directly adjacent to the River Blackwater, where the Site boundary line extends to the river edge. The Site partially comprises the linear willow and poplar plantation that runs along the river edge, which is a strong characteristic feature of the landscape character, this significantly increases landscape sensitivity. The combination with these natural features being located within the Site boundary, the overall sensitivity of the Site is increased.

Public right of way Footpath 1 (Great Braxted) runs through the Site towards the west providing open views of the Site and of the River Blackwater valley, increasing the sensitivity to public views and views towards natural features.

Towards the east, the Site comprises arable fields separated by hedgerows; however, it is located almost adjacent to Grade II* listed Braxted Park and directly adjacent Elm Springs Priority Habitat (Deciduous Woodland), increasing the sensitivity to historic character and landscape features.

For these reasons, Site A49 has been assessed as having **Medium-High** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

Candidate Sites A82 is located adjacent to the west of the Site, partially separated by Elm Springs priority habitat (deciduous woodland). Candidate Site A52 is located on the opposing river edge of the River Blackwater. Candidate Site A51 also comprises the western parcel of the Site.

There are also a number of other Candidate sites which stretch further north-east along the River Blackwater valley, including A50, A84, A83 and D7, which contribute to the cumulative effects of mineral extraction along the river.

Previous mineral extraction sites are also evident in the immediate setting of the Site, where several reservoirs, including Colemans Reservoir, are situated in the surrounding fields along the valley. Existing working quarries at Coleman's Farm are also present to the north-west of the Site, located adjacent to the A12 road at Rivenhall End.

We have strong concerns that there would be significant cumulative impact on the local landscape character if mineral extraction works continue along the River Blackwater valley.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and other cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A50 - Colemans Farm - Eastern Extension (Appleford Farm)

Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site is significantly characteristic of the Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer (C6) Landscape Character Area (LCA). Located close to the River Blackwater, the Site is lined by linear willow and poplar trees which are a strong local feature of the landscape. The remainder of the Site comprises arable fields with open views of the river. Appropriate consideration is required to protect the characteristic features of the LCA, particularly on the setting of the River Blackwater valley floor, and mitigate the impacts on the landscape.
- The River Blackwater valley is located close to the boundary to the east with strong intervisibility between the Site and the river. A number of Priority Habitats (Deciduous Woodland) are located close to the eastern boundary of the Site, largely along the river edge. Mineral extraction within this location would significantly alter the setting of the River Blackwater valley, where a substantial buffer would be required.
- There are few listed buildings located close to the Site, however Appleford Bridge and Appleford Bridge Cottage (Grade II) are located along Braxted Park Road. Grade II* Listed Braxted Park is also located close to the east of the Site, although is separated by the River Blackwater and Braxted Road. The intimate river setting of Appleford Bridge and the walled setting of Braxted Park could be significantly altered and therefore appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts.
- The western edge of the Site is located in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding); however, the eastern edge is located within Flood Zone 3 (high probability of flooding) owed to its location directly adjacent to the River Blackwater.
- Access opportunities are available from the existing access road to the industrial units located adjacent to the Site. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required. Visibility splays may also have to be considered if any alternative entrances are proposed.
- No public rights of way (PRoW) are located within or around the Site, limiting all potential public views.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located to the east of Witham, the Site is accessed via Braxted Road. The Site sits within Little Braxted village and is topographically falls towards the south approaching the River Blackwater.

The Site comprises arable fields surrounding Appleford Farm and encompassing a small copse woodland. The Site is bound on all sides by fragmented hedgerows and vegetation.

No Public Rights of Way (PRoW) intersect the Site. However, Footpath 36 (Rivenhall) is located to the north linked to wider PROW network. And Footpath 29 (Rivenhall) terminates directly opposite the access point on the western boundary.

The Site is located in close proximity to previous excavation sites associated with Colemans Quarry. The wider landscape comprises arable fields and a reservoir from previous workings. A north-east to south-west ridge is located to the east of the Site through Great Braxted, whilst the Site is in the valley of the River Blackwater.

The Site is largely falling within Enclosed Agriculture (Amalgamated Fields) classification with a small portion classified as Enclosed Agriculture (Unplanned Fields), and a majority of the Site is classified as Grade 2 – Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification), with some of the Site classified as Grade 3 – Good to Moderate Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

A number of listed buildings are located in all directions of the Site. Of particular note are those located along Braxted Road:

- Grade II Appleford Bridge Cottage (1317172)
- Grade II Appleford Bridge (1111108)
- Grade II Kelvedon Lodge (1166087)

Scheduled monument 'Neolithic long mortuary enclosure at Appleford Farm, Rivenhall End' (1008980) is located within the abutting field to the north.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys (C6)

- Shallow valleys.
- Predominantly arable farmland with well hedged medium to large fields.
- The Brain and the Upper Blackwater Valleys are narrow with undulating valleysides.
- The Lower Chelmer, and the Blackwater near Maldon, have wide flat valley floors, and gentle valleysides.
- Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive feature.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of the valley floor
- Some visually exposed valleysides/open valley floors
- Tranquil character in parts
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site.

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features				•	
	Complexity			•		
	Enclosure by Vegetation			•		
	Historic Character		•			
	Built development		•			
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View	•				
	Openness to Private View				•	
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features				•	
	Perceptual Quality		•			

The Site is located directly adjacent to the River Blackwater, where the Site boundary line extends to the river edge. The Site partially comprises the linear willow and poplar plantation that runs along the river edge, which is a strong characteristic feature of the landscape character, this increases the sensitivity despite the Site being largely comprised of arable farmland.

The Site contains a small copse which is surrounded by arable farmland which increases the overall complexity. Whilst there are no public rights of way (PRoW) within or around the Site, there are strong private views from the access road and industrial units which are located within the fields within this Site, increasing the sensitivity.

For these reasons, Site A50 has been assessed as having **Medium** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

Candidate Sites A84 is located adjacent to the north-east of the Site, separated by an established hedgerow. Candidate Sites A49 and A51 are also located adjacent to the south of the Site, on the opposite side of the River Blackwater and Braxted Road.

There are also a number of other Candidate sites which stretch further north-east along the River Blackwater valley, including A82, A52, A83 and D7, which contribute to the cumulative effects of mineral extraction along the river.

Previous mineral extraction sites are also evident to the south-west, where several reservoirs, including Colemans Reservoir, are situated in the surrounding fields along the valley. Existing working quarries at Coleman's Farm are also present to the west of the Site, located adjacent to the A12 road at Rivenhall End.

We have strong concerns that there would be significant cumulative impact on the local landscape character if mineral extraction works continue along the River Blackwater valley.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and other cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A51 – Colemans Farm – North extension (Hill Broad Farm)

Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site is significantly characteristic of the Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer (C6) Landscape Character Area (LCA). Located on the river edge of the River Blackwater, the Site comprises linear willow and poplar plantation which is a strong local feature of the landscape which increases the complexity of the Site. The remainder of the Site comprises arable fields separated by established hedgerows, also located on the valley sides. With open views of the river, appropriate consideration is required to protect the characteristic features of the LCA, particularly on the setting of the River Blackwater valley floor, and mitigate the impacts on the landscape.
- Elm Springs Priority Habitat (Deciduous Woodland) defines the western site boundary, and Stowling & Crierswood Ancient Woodland is located 0.5km to the south of the Site. The River Blackwater valley is located on the immediate boundary to the west, with strong intervisibility between the Site and the river. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the physical impacts on Elm Springs with a suitable buffer. Mineral extraction within this location would significantly alter the setting of the River Blackwater valley, where a substantial buffer would be required.
- Two Grade II Listed buildings are located along Braxted Park Road to the east, including Appleford Bridge and Appleford Bridge Cottage. Grade II* listed Braxted Park is also located in very close proximity to the east of the Site. The intimate river setting of Appleford Bridge could be significantly altered and therefore appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts.
- The eastern part of the Site is located in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding) however the western edge is partially located within Flood Zone 3 (high probability of flooding) owed to its location directly adjacent to the River Blackwater.
- Access opportunities are available from Nero Road which runs along the south-east edge of the Site, connecting Braxted Park Road to Little Braxted Lane. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- Public Right of Way Footpath 1 (Great Braxted) runs through the Site close to the River Blackwater on the north-western boundary. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts of the PRow which may include diversion or visual screening.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located to the east of Witham, the Site is accessed via a private farm road off Braxted Park Road. The Site sits within Little Braxted village and is topographically lower in the north-west towards the River Blackwater.

The Site comprises arable fields, an immature tree plantation, the private road Nero Road and a carpark associated with the neighbouring farm buildings. To the north, the Site is bound by riparian edging along the Blackwater River. The eastern boundary is defined by open access onto arable land with the associated farm yard on the boundary. The south and west is defined by existing hedgerow and Elm Springs. The Site is part of the full site allocation A49.

Public Right of Way (PRoW) Footpath 1 (Great Braxted) intersects the Site to the north, vaguely parallel with the private farm road.

The Site is located in close proximity to previous excavation sites associated with Colemans Quarry. The wider landscape comprises arable fields and a reservoir from previous excavations. A north-east to south-west ridge is located to the east of the Site through Great Braxted, whilst the Site is in the valley of the River Blackwater.

The Site is largely falling within Enclosed Agriculture (Amalgamated Fields) classification, and a majority of the Site is classified as Grade 2 – Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification), with a small portion of the Site classified as Grade 3 – Good to Moderate Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

A number of listed buildings are located in all directions of the Site. Of particular note are those located along Braxted Park Road and within Braxted Park:

- Grade II 1 and 2 School House (1400105)
- Grade II Appleford Bridge Cottage (1317172)
- Grade II Appleford Bridge (1111108)
- Grade II* Church Of All Saints (1165777)

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys (C6)

- Shallow valleys.
- Predominantly arable farmland with well hedged medium to large fields.
- The Brain and the Upper Blackwater Valleys are narrow with undulating valleysides.
- The Lower Chelmer, and the Blackwater near Maldon, have wide flat valley floors, and
- gentle valleysides.
- Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive feature.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of the valley floor
- Some visually exposed valleysides/open valley floors
- Tranquil character in parts
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations:

- Elm Springs Priority Habitat (Deciduous Woodland)

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features			•		
	Complexity			•		
	Enclosure by Vegetation			•		
	Historic Character		•			
	Built development			•		
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View				•	
	Openness to Private View		•			
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features					•
	Perceptual Quality			•		

The Site is located directly adjacent to the River Blackwater, where the Site boundary line extends to the river edge. The Site partially comprises the linear willow and poplar plantation that runs along the river edge, which is a strong characteristic feature of the landscape character, this significantly increases landscape sensitivity. The combination with these natural features being located within the Site boundary, the overall sensitivity of the Site is increased.

Public right of way Footpath 1 (Great Braxted) runs through the Site towards the west providing open views of the Site and of the River Blackwater valley, increasing the sensitivity to public views and views towards natural features. The presence of a farmyard to the north-east corner increases the overall sensitivity to private views. The remainder of the Site is uncomplex and comprises arable farmland.

For these reasons, Site A51 has been assessed as having **Medium** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

Candidate Sites A82 is located to the south of the Site, separated by Elm Springs priority habitat (deciduous woodland). Candidate Site A52 is located on the opposing river edge of the River Blackwater. Candidate Site A49 also comprises the Site and extends west to include another parcel of land of a similar size.

There are also a number of other Candidate sites which stretch further north-east along the River Blackwater valley, including A50, A84, A83 and D7, which contribute to the cumulative effects of mineral extraction along the river.

Previous mineral extraction sites are also evident in the immediate setting of the Site, where several reservoirs, including Colemans Reservoir, are situated in the surrounding fields along the valley. Existing working quarries at Coleman's Farm are also present to the north-west of the Site, located adjacent to the A12 road at Rivenhall End.

We have strong concerns that there would be significant cumulative impact on the local landscape character if mineral extraction works continue along the River Blackwater valley.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and other cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A52 – Colemans Farm – Southern Extension

Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site is located within the River Blackwater valley floor and is therefore very characteristic of the Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer (C6) Landscape Character Area (LCA). The east, south and west boundaries are defined by the linear poplar and willow plantations that line the banks of the River Blackwater that runs close to the boundary of the Site. The Site itself is very flat and comprises grassland which makes up the valley floor landscape character. Mineral extraction of the Site will significantly alter the setting of the River Blackwater and surrounding character.
- Elm Springs Priority Habitat (Deciduous Woodland) is located 0.1km to the east of the Site, and Strowling & Crierswood Ancient Woodland is located 0.4km to the south-east of the Site. The River Blackwater valley defines the southern boundary and is a prominent feature within the immediate landscape. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the physical impacts on The River Blackwater with a suitable buffer.
- A cluster of listed buildings are located 0.6km to the south-west of the Site surrounding Little Braxted Hall (Grade II) and the Church of St Nicholas (Grade I). Grade II* listed Braxted Park is also located 0.4km to the east of the Site. All listed buildings and parks are not visible from the Site by virtue of the intervening vegetation; however, the wider landscape setting of the altered and appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impact.
- The Site is located entirely within Flood Zone 3 (high probability of flooding) owed to the presence of the River Blackwater located directly adjacent.
- The Site is located away from any existing roads or entrances so additional accesses will be required for implementation to facilitate mineral extraction. Hedgerow removal may be required to facilitate an entrance into the proposed Site. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- Public Rights of Way (PRoW) are not located immediately adjacent to the Site; however, a footpath runs to the south of the River Blackwater (Footpath 1) and a bridleway to the north (Bridleway 29). The PRoWs provide open views of the Site in the context of the River Blackwater and linear plantations which acts as a prominent feature in the foreground/background respectively. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts of both PRoWs which will require visual screening.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located to the east of Witham, the Site is accessed via a private farm road off Braxted Park Road. The Site sits within Little Braxted village and is topographically relatively flat.

The Site comprises a small grassland field bound by vegetation on all sides and is located on the river valley floor. The River Blackwater and associated linear willow and poplar plantations are located on the southern boundary of the Site, but extend round to define most of the east, south and west boundaries.

Late 19th Century maps show the River Blackwater running along the Site boundary with Elm Springs Wood located to the south.

No Public Rights of Way (PRoW) intersect the Site; however, two footpaths are in proximity; Footpath 1 (Great Braxted) to the east of the Site and Bridleway 29 (Rivenhall) to the north.

The Site is located in close proximity to previous excavation sites associated with Colemans Quarry. The wider landscape comprises arable fields and a reservoir from previous excavations. A north-east to south-west ridge is located to the east of the Site through Great Braxted, whilst the Site is in the valley of the River Blackwater.

The Site is largely falling within Enclosed Agriculture (Amalgamated Fields) classification, the Site is located solely within Grade 3 – Good to Moderate Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

A number of listed buildings are located in all directions of the Site. Of particular note are those located along Braxted Park Road:

- Grade II Appleford Bridge Cottage (1317172)
- Grade II Appleford Bridge (1111108)

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys (C6)

- Shallow valleys.
- Predominantly arable farmland with well hedged medium to large fields.
- The Brain and the Upper Blackwater Valleys are narrow with undulating valleysides.
- The Lower Chelmer, and the Blackwater near Maldon, have wide flat valley floors, and gentle valleysides.

- Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive feature.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of the valley floor
- Some visually exposed valleysides/open valley floors
- Tranquil character in parts
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of:

- Elm Springs Priority Habitat (Deciduous Woodland)

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features				•	
	Complexity			•		
	Enclosure by Vegetation				•	
	Historic Character		•			
	Built development		•			
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View		•			
	Openness to Private View		•			
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features					•
	Perceptual Quality			•		

Located within the River Blackwater valley floor, the Site has strong views towards natural features that are considered significantly characteristic of the landscape character, including the linear plantations of poplar and willow along the shallow valley floor.

The River Blackwater and plantations extend around three sides of the Site and therefore it has an increased perceptual quality sensitivity. The Site also has limited vegetative enclosure and can be viewed from Footpath 1 (Great Braxted) from the opposite site of the River Blackwater.

For these reasons, Site A52 has been assessed as having **Medium** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

Candidate Sites A49 and A51 are located close to the south-eastern boundary of the Site, separated by the River Blackwater.

Candidate Site A82 is also located close to the Site and can be viewed across the River Blackwater valley.

There are also a number of other Candidate sites which stretch further north-east along the River Blackwater valley, including A50, A84, A83 and D7, which contribute to the cumulative effects of mineral extraction along the river.

Previous mineral extraction sites are also evident in the immediate setting of the Site, where several reservoirs, including Colemans Reservoir, are situated in the surrounding fields along the valley. Existing working quarries at Coleman's Farm are also present to the north-west of the Site, located adjacent to the A12 road at Rivenhall End.

We have strong concerns that there would be significant cumulative impact on the local landscape character if mineral extraction works continue along the River Blackwater valley.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and other cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A54 – Whiteheads

Amber-Green

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site comprises several characteristics of the Central Essex Farmlands (B1) Landscape Character Area (LCA), including the medium sized arable fields marked by hedgerows, with woods and copses providing structure and edges in the landscape. Appropriate consideration is required to protect characteristic features of the LCA, particularly the woodland on the southern boundary, which would require an adequate buffer to mitigate potential impacts on the landscape.
- A Priority Habitat (Deciduous Woodland) is located on the southern boundary, separating the Site visually from the wider landscape. Tarecroft Ancient Woodland is also located 0.4km to the north-east of the Site, although is separated by a number of other arable fields. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity, particularly to the woodland on the Site boundary.
- There are no listed buildings in the immediate vicinity of the Site, however Faulkbourne Hall (Grade II) and Parish Church of St Germanus (Grade I) are located 0.4km to the south-west of the Site on the opposing side of Cressing Road and the River Brain. Mineral extraction is therefore unlikely to alter the setting of these buildings.
- The Site is in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding), however Flood Zones 2 and 3 (high probability of flooding) are located 0.5km to the south-west at the River Brain.
- Access to the Site is available from an existing entrance on Cressing Road. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required. Visibility splays and mitigating hedgerow removal may also have to be considered if any alternative entrances are proposed.
- There are no Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within the area surrounding the Site.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located to the north of Witham, the Site is accessed from Cressing Road via an existing entrance. The southern boundary of the Site is defined by copses and woodlands which sit on the Site edge. The other boundaries are defined by fragmented hedgerows and trees separating the Site from the wider arable landscape. A water body is located to the west of the Site, resulting from previous excavation restoration. The Site comprises one arable field, and topographically falls to the south-west.

Late 19th Century maps show minimal features that are present within the Site, however the railway and Cressing Road still exist to the south-west.

There are no Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) within or surrounding the Site, however Rivenhall Footpaths 7, 2, 8 and 12 (Rivenhall) may have views towards the Site.

The Site is located within the countryside and surrounded by arable farmland fields of medium to large scale. There are few buildings within the area surrounding the Site, however it is located close to the northern extent of Witham town. Notably the land falls towards the south-west as it reaches the River Brain on the opposite side of Cressing Road and the railway.

There are no Candidate Sites or existing working mineral sites within proximity of the Site, however the Site sits adjacent to a previous excavation which has now been restored to a body of water.

The Site falls within Enclosed Agriculture – Amalgamated Fields National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is classified as Grade 2 – Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

There are few listed buildings within proximity of the Site, however Faulkbourne Hall Registered Park & Garden is located on the opposite side of Cressing Road, which also sites Parish Church of St Germanus (Grade 1 – 1336803), Faulkbourne Hall (Grade 1 – 1337782) and wall (1308798).

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Central Essex Farmlands (B1)

- Irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable fields, marked by sinuous hedgerows and ditches.
- Many small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape.
- Scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small hamlets, typically with greens and ponds.
- A concentration of isolated moated farmsteads.
- Network of narrow, winding lanes.
- Mostly tranquil character away from major roads and Stansted Airport.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of hedgerow and woodland pattern
- Moderate intervisibility
- Tranquil character away from existing major road corridors/Stansted
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations:

- Priority Habitats – Deciduous Woodland (southern boundary)
- Tarecroft Wood Ancient Woodland
- Ancient Woodland (unnamed)
- Faulkbourne Hall Registered Park & Garden

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features		•			
	Complexity	•				
	Enclosure by Vegetation	•				
	Historic Character	•				
	Built development			•		
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View	•				
	Openness to Private View	•				
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features				•	
	Perceptual Quality		•			

The Site is an uncomplex flat arable field, enclosed by mature vegetation which reduces the Site sensitivity to public and private views from the surrounding landscape.

There are no surrounding footpaths with views into the Site and is located away from any private views. There are few important landscape features within the Site, however the Priority Habitat (Deciduous Woodland) on the southern boundary increases the sensitivity to views towards natural features.

For these reasons, Site A54 has been assessed as having **Medium-Low** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

A previous mineral extraction site is located directly adjacent to the western boundary of the Site, which has now been restored as a reservoir. There are no other Candidate Sites in the nearby landscape, however there are substantial previous, existing working and Candidate sites on the opposite side of the A12 to the east.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A55 – Sheepcotes – Southern

Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is Central Essex Farmlands (B1). The Site possesses limited characteristic features of the LCA including the irregular field pattern of arable farmland reducing the sensitivity of the landscape. The Site largely comprises three arable fields with hedgerow boundaries and a small portion of grazing to the north. Appropriate consideration is required to protect the characteristic features of the LCA and mitigate the impacts on the landscape
- Sheepcotes Wood located to the north is a designated Local Wildlife Site (LoWS) and Ancient Woodland and demonstrates a moderate contribution toward the local green infrastructure and visual amenity. Although not designated, there are two areas of ecological interest on the boundary of the Site, on the north is Titelands Spring and to the west is a moderately sized water body, presumably as a result of previous mineral workings as historic maps indicate so. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity.
- Grade II Listed Buildings are located within the surrounding area, notably Spartigans Hall, Alsteads Farmhouse and Wilderness. The settings of these Grade II Listed Buildings surrounding the Site could be altered and therefore appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impact on these buildings.
- The Site is located within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding).
- The Site will likely be accessed via the existing quarry to the north of the Site using the area of grassland within the red line boundary. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- A number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) intersect the Site from all boundaries and connect to a significantly wider network of PRoWs. Of particular concern is PRoW Footpath 16 (Little Waltham) where the assumed access route crosses the path. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts of the PRoW which may include diversion or visual screening.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located approximately 1.5 km to the east of Little Waltham, the Site is accessible from the Sheepcotes Lane to the north. The Site comprises several arable fields and is situated on a gently undulating valley side which drops towards the River Chelmer to the west.

The Site is bound by mixed quality trees and hedgerows on all boundaries. The north and east boundary is defined by Sheepcotes Lane. The western and southern boundaries are bound by hedgerows and trees which separate the Site from other arable fields.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW) intersecting the Site including Footpath 16 (Little Waltham) which runs along the full extent of the northern site boundary and connects to Footpath 14 & 15 (Little Waltham) on the eastern boundary. Footpath 17 and 19 (Little Waltham) run through the Site.

The Site is located within the countryside between Chelmsford and Braintree although is situated adjacent to a major road. Medium sized irregular fields are distributed evenly across the immediate landscape and are marked by sinuous hedgerows. Notably the landform is elevated to the east and drops away to the west and the land falls towards the River Chelmer.

A56 mineral schemes is proposed adjacent to the Site, and an existing working quarry is located 500m to the south-east.

Majority of the Site falls within Enclosed Agriculture – Unplanned Fields classification (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is classified as Grade 2 - Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

A number of listed buildings are located within 500 metres of the Site, including [inter alia]; Hobbits (1172594), Shoulderstick Haul (1122049), Shuttleworth (1122029), Spartigans Hall (1263954), Alsteads Farmhouse (1172595) and Wilderness (1122050).

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Central Essex Farmlands (B1)

- Irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable fields, marked by sinuous hedgerows and ditches.
- Many small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape.
- Scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small hamlets, typically with greens and ponds.
- A concentration of isolated moated farmsteads.
- Network of narrow, winding lanes.
- Mostly tranquil character away from major roads and Stansted Airport

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of hedgerow and woodland pattern
- Moderate intervisibility
- Tranquil character away from existing major road corridors/Stansted

- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations:

- Lyonshall Ancient Woodland and Local Wildlife Site (LoWS)
- Sheepcotes Wood Ancient Woodland and Local Wildlife Site (LoWS)

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features			•		
	Complexity		•			
	Enclosure by Vegetation		•			
	Historic Character			•		
	Built development		•			
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View				•	
	Openness to Private View			•		
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features			•		
	Perceptual Quality			•		

The Site is a combination of 3 arable fields with two hedgerows, ditches and hedgerow trees separating them, creating a less complex landscape. Whilst the Site demonstrates a limited number of distinctive characteristics of the LCA, the notably irregular field pattern of arable farmland intersected by hedgerows and tranquil character increases the sensitivity of landscape features.

Despite the Sites' proximity to Essex Regiment Way, vegetation to the west offers visual and audible screening. There PRowS running along the Site boundaries provide open views across the entire site, which creates a moderate perceptual quality for public receptors of the PRowS within the Site. There are limited views outside the Site to the east and views to the north frame the existing workings. Views west are moderately long distance and include the main road and farm buildings, this combination creates a balanced visual sensitivity for public receptors toward natural features.

The historic sensitivity of the Site is concentrated to the eastern corner where 3 listed buildings are present and clearly visible from within the Site, vegetation here is fragmented increasing the sensitivity to these properties.

For these reasons, Site A55 has been assessed as having **Medium** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

Two mineral schemes are proposed beyond the south of the Site, and an existing working quarry is located immediately north. A56 proposes a western extension of the existing Quarry along with A55.

Cumulative effects would likely occur particularly given the strong network of PRowS connecting all the Sites.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

The Site is located less than 300m from an existing application 23/00124/FUL - one 3 Chelmsford Garden Community Beaulieu Parkway Chelmsford for up to 1250 residential units. By virtue of existing vegetation and topography it is unlikely that Site A55 will be visible from this Site however, this is subject to changes to landform and natural features within and on the northern boundary of 23/00124/FUL.

Candidate Site Reference A56 – Sheepcotes – Western

Amber-Green

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is Central Essex Farmlands (B1). The Site possesses few characteristic features of the LCA, only a single arable field with hedgerow boundaries, reducing the sensitivity of the landscape. Appropriate consideration is required to protect and/or enhance the characteristic features of the LCA and mitigate the impacts on the landscape.
- Sheepcotes Wood located immediately on the northern boundary is a designated Local Wildlife Site (LoWS) and Ancient Woodland, demonstrating a moderate contribution toward the local green infrastructure and visual amenity. Impacts on Sheepcotes Wood must be mitigated through a substantial buffer.
- Although not designated, there are two areas of ecological interest in close proximity to the Site. To the south-east is Titelands Spring and to the south is a moderately sized water body, presumably as a result of previous mineral workings as historic maps indicate so. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity.
- Grade II Listed Buildings are located within the surrounding area, notably Spartigans Hall, Alsteads Farmhouse and Wilderness. The settings of these Grade II Listed Buildings surrounding the Site could be altered and therefore appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impact on these buildings.
- The Site is located within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding).
- The Site will likely be accessed via the existing quarry to the east of the Site. This will likely result in the removal of some hedgerow along this boundary, where mitigation planting will be required. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- While there are no Public Rights of Way (PRoW) crossing the Site, there is a footpath following Sheepcotes Lane adjacent to the Site to the south. Due to the elevated nature of the Site, the mineral extraction works will be difficult to screen from the PRoW. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts of the PRoW including visual screening through a bund or planting.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located approximately 1.5km to the east of Little Waltham, the Site is accessible from Essex Regiment Way to the west. The Site comprises a singular arable field and is situated on a gently undulating valley side which drops towards the south into the River Chelmer valley.

The Site is bound by mixed quality trees and hedgerows on the east and south boundaries. The north is defined by Sheepcotes Ancient Woodland and the west is marked by Essex Regiment Way.

No Public Rights of Way (PRoW) run through or adjacent to the Site, however PRoW 16 (Little Waltham) runs beyond the southern boundary on Sheepcotes Lane.

The Site is located within the countryside between Chelmsford and Braintree although is situated adjacent to a major road. Medium sized irregular fields are distributed evenly across the immediate landscape and are marked by sinuous hedgerows. Notably the landform is elevated to the east and drops away to the west and south as the land falls towards the River Chelmer.

A55 mineral schemes is proposed adjacent to the Site, and an existing working quarry is located 500m to the south-east.

Majority of the Site falls within Enclosed Agriculture – Unplanned Fields classification (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is classified as Grade 2 - Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

A number of listed buildings are located within 500 metres of the Site, including [inter alia]; Hobbits (1172594), Shoulderstick Haul (1122049), Shuttleworth (1122029), Spartigans Hall (1263954).

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Central Essex Farmlands (B1)

- Irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable fields, marked by sinuous hedgerows and ditches.
- Many small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape.
- Scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small hamlets, typically with greens and ponds.
- A concentration of isolated moated farmsteads.
- Network of narrow, winding lanes.
- Mostly tranquil character away from major roads and Stansted Airport.

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations:

- Lyonshall Ancient Woodland
- Sheepcotes Ancient Woodland

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features			•		
	Complexity	•				
	Enclosure by Vegetation		•			
	Historic Character	•				
	Built development		•			
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View	•				
	Openness to Private View		•			
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features				•	
	Perceptual Quality		•			

The Site is a single arable field with hedgerow boundaries adjacent to an ancient woodland on the north boundary. The site itself is therefore uncomplex, however there are strong views to an important landscape feature adjacent, increasing the sensitivity. The Site itself demonstrates a limited number of distinctive characteristics of the LCA reducing the sensitivity of landscape features.

Despite the Sites' proximity to Essex Regiment Way, vegetation to the west offers visual and audible screening creating a moderate perceptual quality for public receptors of the PRow within the Site. Views to the east frame the existing workings whilst long distance views are restricted by virtue of existing vegetation. Notwithstanding this, views toward the ancient woodland north from the PRow are highly prominent and therefore significantly increases visual sensitivity for public receptors toward natural features.

The historic sensitivity of the Site is limited as vegetation screens any listed buildings surrounding the vicinity of the Site.

For these reasons, Site A56 has been assessed as having **Medium-low** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

Two mineral schemes are proposed beyond the Site, and an existing working quarry is located immediately east. A55 proposes a southern extension of the existing Quarry along with A56.

Cumulative effects would likely occur particularly along the network of PRowS connecting all the Sites.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

The Site is located less than 750m from an existing application 23/00124/FUL – Zone 3 Chelmsford Garden Community Beaulieu Parkway Chelmsford for up to 1250 residential units. By virtue of existing vegetation and topography it is unlikely that Site A56 will be visible from this Site however, this is subject to changes to landform and natural features within and on the northern boundary of 23/00124/FUL.

Candidate Site Reference A57 – Chalk End

Amber-Green

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is Central Essex Farmlands (B1) of which the Site possesses a number of distinct characteristic features of the LCA including the irregular field pattern of arable farmland intersected by hedgerows. Appropriate consideration is required to protect the characteristic features of the LCA and mitigate the impacts on the landscape
- Chalk Spring is located west of the Site and is a designated priority habitat. The woodland demonstrates a significant contribution toward the local green infrastructure and visual amenity. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity.
- Grade II Listed Buildings are located within the immediate area, notably Mountneys House, Newland Hall, Skreens Lodge and Shellow Cross Farmhouse. The settings of these Grade II Listed Buildings surrounding the Site could be altered and therefore appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impact on these buildings.
- The Site is located in close proximity to a Flood Zone 3 (high probability of flooding) located at Newland Brook.
- The Site will likely be accessed via Salt's Green Road (A1060). An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- A Public Right of Way (PRoW) borders the south boundary of the Site, this connects to a significantly wider network of PRoWs. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts of the PRoW which may include visual screening.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located to the north-east of Shellow Bowells and to the south of Chalk End, the application Site is accessed from Salts Green A1060 to the north. The Site comprises part of an irregular sized arable field that drops slightly in elevation towards the south as it heads towards Newlands Brook and Roxwell Brook.

The north-eastern boundary is defined by Salts Green Road and is separated by fragmented hedgerows which continue along the eastern boundary. Since the Site is part of a larger field, the western boundary remains open to the wider landscape. Footpath 13 (Roxwell) runs along the south-western boundary, separating the Site from Chalk End Spring (Priority Habitat – Deciduous Woodland).

The Site is located within the rural countryside between several small settlements and villages. Medium sized irregular fields are distributed evenly across the immediate landscape and are marked by sinuous hedgerows. Notably the landform is elevated to towards the west at the north-south ridge through Shellow Bowells.

Majority of the Site falls within Enclosed Agriculture – Amalgamated Fields classification (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLC) and is classified as mostly Grade 2 - Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

There are few listed buildings are located close to the Site, however Newland Hall (1235663) and associated Barn (1237443) and Mountneys House (1235719) are all located nearby.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Central Essex Farmlands (B1)

- Irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable fields, marked by sinuous hedgerows and ditches.
- Many small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape.
- Scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small hamlets, typically with greens and ponds.
- A concentration of isolated moated farmsteads.
- Network of narrow, winding lanes.
- Mostly tranquil character away from major roads and Stansted Airport.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of hedgerow and woodland pattern
- Moderate intervisibility
- Tranquil character away from existing major road corridors/Stansted
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

- Chalk End Spring is located adjacent to the Site and is a Priority Habitat (Deciduous Woodland)

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features	•				
	Complexity	•				
	Enclosure by Vegetation			•		
	Historic Character			•		
	Built development			•		
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View		•			
	Openness to Private View		•			
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features		•			
	Perceptual Quality		•			

The Site is a single arable field with limited boundary vegetation, creating a less complex landscape. The Site demonstrates a limited number of distinctive characteristics of the LCA, notably irregular field pattern of arable farmland, this reduces the sensitivity of landscape features. The Site is open on two boundaries, with open views to Salts Green Road, this creates reduced perceptual quality. Public receptors of the PRoW to the south are protected by established vegetation, which should be retained and enhanced. Long distance views are limited and include the main road, this combination creates a significantly reduced visual sensitivity for public receptors toward natural features.

The historic sensitivity of the Site is concentrated to the eastern boundary at Newland Hall, vegetation here is well established and screens the Site effectively, reducing the sensitivity to these properties.

For these reasons, Site A57 has been assessed as having **Medium-low** sensitivity to mineral extraction

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

A60a and A60b are moderately sized proposed mineral schemes immediately west and south-west of the Site. Cumulative effects are likely for users of the PRoW network.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A58 – Little Smiths

Amber-Green

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is Danbury Hills (D3) and the Site itself possess little to no characteristic features of the LCA, this is influenced largely by the small scale of the Site. The surrounding landscape however does demonstrate the wooded hills particularly immediately east abutting the boundary where Thrift Wood is located
- Thrift Wood is a Priority Habitat of Deciduous Woodland and extends along the full length of the eastern boundary of the Site. This coincides with National Historic Landscape Characterisation (NHLC) defining the Site as typically ancient in origin. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity. Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Woodham Walter Common is located approximately 2km north-west.
- One Grade II Listed Building is located within the surrounding area, which includes Brock's Farmhouse. Given the mature vegetation surrounding the Site, views and setting of surrounding listed buildings is inconsequential, but should be retained where necessary.
- The Site is no located within a flood zone.
- On the assumption the Site will be access from the existing quarry there appears to be little to no consequence.
- One Public Rights of Way (PRoW) footpath 4 (Woodham Mortimer) offers views of the Site and it set within Thrift Wood where vegetation screens the view for the most part.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located approx. 1.5km east of Danbury, the Site is accessible via A414 Maldon Road/Chelmsford Road through the existing quarry site. The Site comprises a rectilinear arable field, which is generally of a flat topography.

The Site appears to have no historical value and has never been covered by Thrift Wood.

The Site is bound to the east by Thrift Wood, which is bisected by Footpath 4 (Woodham Mortimer) connecting to Footpath 5 (Woodham Mortimer) on the northern boundary. Thrift Wood is designated an Ancient Replanted Woodland and Priority Habitat.

The western boundary is defined by The Street with established hedgerow with individual hedgerow. The southern boundary remains fairly open to other arable fields, separated only by a ditch and occasional trees.

The Site is located within a rural setting abutting a medium sized settlement to the west, Runsell Green. Large irregular field patterns are distributed evenly across the immediate landscape bar the west where ribbon settlement continues in a north-west direction. Notably the landform is significantly elevated to the west at Danbury forming a peak in the landscape with well wooded areas of which the Site begins to form the plateau that extends east.

Neighbouring minerals & waste schemes include A66 - White House Farm (Woodham Walter) located 1.5km north-east of the Site. An existing working quarry is already located beyond the south of the Site, which abuts Thrift Wood on the southern side.

The Site is broadly covered by two classifications of Woodland And Forestry (Ancient Woodland) and Enclosed Agricultural Land (Typically Ancient Form) (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLC) and is classified as Grade 2 - Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

A number of listed buildings are located within proximity of the Site, of particular note: Brock's Farmhouse (1366157)

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Wooded Hill and Ridge Landscapes - Danbury Hills (D3)

- Distinctive landform of a very large gently domed hill, and a broad connecting ridge eroded into small, rounded hills in the south east.
- Dense woodland on Danbury Hill, fairly open arable farmland to the east.
- Historic parklands, grassy commons, pockets of heathland and orchards diversify character.
- Long views across the Chelmer Valley from high ground.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of woodlands, commons, small scale hedgerow field pattern
- Low to moderate intervisibility
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations:

- Woodham Walter Common SSSI
- Danbury Common SSSI
- Blake's Wood & Lingwood Common SSSI
- Thrift Wood - Ancient Replanted Woodland & Priority Habitat Inventory - Deciduous Woodland (England)

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features	•				
	Complexity	•				
	Enclosure by Vegetation			•		
	Historic Character			•		
	Built development		•			
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View		•			
	Openness to Private View	•				
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features					•
	Perceptual Quality		•			

The Site comprises a small extension of the existing Quarry and has limited sensitivity across all parameters due to its size and scale. The Site is well enclosed with limited built development reducing the sensitivity of the landscape and private views. The length of the eastern boundary is abutted by the Ancient

Woodland 'Thrift Wood' therefore increases the visual sensitivity for public receptors of the PRow within the woods.

Site A58 has been assessed as having an overall **Medium Low** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

The Site (A58) is located adjacent to existing working Little Smiths Quarry, which defines the Site boundary to the south. Public views along Footpath 4 (Woodham Mortimer) and from the surrounding public footpath network will be impacted with cumulative minerals works.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A59 – Lowleys Farm

Red-Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is Central Essex Farmlands (B1) of which the Site possesses a number of distinct characteristic features of the LCA including the irregular field pattern of arable farmland intersected by a complex matrix of hedgerows. In turn this creates a strong sense of complexity increasing the sensitivity to the landscape features. Appropriate consideration is required to protect the characteristic features of the LCA and mitigate the impacts on the landscape
- Lyonshall Wood located on the eastern boundary is a designated Local Wildlife Site (LoWS) and Ancient Woodland and demonstrates a significant contribution toward the local green infrastructure and visual amenity. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity. A buffer would also be required to mitigate any impacts on the woodland.
- Grade II Listed Buildings are located within the surrounding area, notably Lowleys Farmhouse, Goodmans Farmhouse and Stonage Farmhouse. The immediate setting of this is not considered sensitive by virtue of the mature intervening vegetation.
- The Site is not located within a flood zone. However, flood zones 1 and 2 are within proximity of the Site to the north along River Ter.
- The Site will likely be accessed via Braintree Road (A131). An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- A large number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) intersect the Site from all boundaries and connect to a significantly wider network of PRoWs. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts of the PRoW which may include diversion or visual screening.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located approximately 1 mile to the south of Great Leighs, the Site is accessible from the A131 Braintree Road to the west and Goodmans Lane to the north. The Site comprises roughly 10 arable fields and is situated on a gently undulating valley side which drops towards the River Ter to the north.

The Site is bound by variable boundary treatments, largely comprising mixed quality trees and hedgerows. The northern boundary is defined by Lowleys Farm on Goodmans Lane, and the western boundary is defined by Braintree Road. An area of

woodland defines part of the eastern boundary, whereas the southern boundary comprises various hedgerows and ditches along arable field boundaries.

A number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) intersect the Site, including Footpaths 43, 44, 45, 46, 47 and 48, Bridleway 42 (Great and Little Leigh's) and Footpaths 5 and 7 (Little Waltham), making the Site very accessible to the public.

The Site is located within the countryside between Chelmsford and Braintree although is situated adjacent to a major road. Medium sized irregular fields are distributed evenly across the immediate landscape and are marked by sinuous hedgerows. Areas of copses and woodlands are prominent within the immediate landscape of the Site. Notably the landform is significantly elevated to the north between Great Leighs and Great Notley, although the Site itself is located within the river valley.

A55 and A56 mineral schemes are proposed beyond the south of the Site, and an existing working quarry is located 2km to the south.

Majority of the Site falls within Enclosed Agriculture – Amalgamated Fields classification (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is classified as Grade 2 - Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

A number of listed buildings are located within proximity of the Site, including Longs Farmhouse (1171557), Evergreens and Cozi Cot (1172487), Lowleys Farmhouse (1305642), Goodmans Farmhouse (1122135) and Barn (1171336).

Landscape Character Area

Central Essex Farmlands (B1)

- Irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable fields, marked by sinuous hedgerows and ditches.
- Many small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape.
- Scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small hamlets, typically with greens and ponds.
- A concentration of isolated moated farmsteads.
- Network of narrow, winding lanes.
- Mostly tranquil character away from major roads and Stansted Airport.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of hedgerow and woodland pattern
- Moderate intervisibility
- Tranquil character away from existing major road corridors/Stansted
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations:

- Lyonshall Ancient Woodland
- Lyonshall Local Wildlife Site (LoWS)
- River Ter SSSI
- Sheepcotes Ancient Woodland

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features					•
	Complexity				•	
	Enclosure by Vegetation	•				
	Historic Character		•			
	Built development			•		
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View					•
	Openness to Private View		•			
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features				•	
	Perceptual Quality			•		

The Site is a combination of small arable fields with intervening hedgerows, ditches and hedgerow trees creating a sensitive complex landscape. The Site demonstrates a number of distinctive characteristics of the LCA, notably irregular field pattern of arable farmland intersected by a complex matrix of hedgerows and tranquil character, this greatly increases the sensitivity of landscape features. The Site is also located adjacent to the Braintree Road (A313) which decreases the overall perceptual quality.

The mature vegetation and elevated position toward the west with long open landscape views further west create a strong perceptual aspect for public receptors of the PRowS within the Site, increasing visual sensitivity.

Given the number of PRowS within and around the Site, we consider public views to be significantly sensitive, particularly as the Site appears to link to a much wider network of

PRoWs and likely receives high traffic. Although the enclosed field boundaries of the Site as a whole make for effective screening, resulting in a low sensitive grade by the methodology, we would consider the Site sensitive regardless due to the elevation in the centre of the Site. This would be particularly prominent should internal hedgerows be removed, for this reason we strongly recommend hedgerows and hedgerow trees with associated ditches are retained and protected.

The historic value of the Site is limited as present intervening vegetation between the Site and listed buildings significantly reduce views to and from these properties, as previously stated this vegetation should be retained and protected. Furthermore, views to private receptors and long distance are reduced by the wider vegetation.

For these reasons, Site A59 has been assessed as having **Medium-high** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

A55 and A56 mineral schemes are proposed beyond the south of the Site, and an existing working quarry is located 2km to the south. Cumulative effects would likely occur particularly given the strong network of PRoWs connecting all the Sites.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

Application 21/02050/CM - Chelmsford North East Bypass (CNEB) is a proposed new bypass stretching from Braintree Road south into Chelmsford, part of the red line boundary is also within A59 to the west.

Candidate Site Reference A60a - Shellow Cross Farm (A60a) – Chelmsford

Red-Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is Central Essex Farmlands (B1) of which the Site possesses a number of distinct characteristic features of the LCA including the irregular field pattern of arable farmland intersected by hedgerows and small woodlands, this creates a strong sense of complexity increasing the sensitivity to the landscape features. Appropriate consideration is required to protect the characteristic features of the LCA and mitigate the impacts on the landscape
- Bushey-Hays Spring Wood is located within the centre of the southern parcel and is a designated Ancient Woodland with two thirds of the area designated as a Local Wildlife Site (LoWS). The woodland demonstrates a significant contribution toward the local green infrastructure and visual amenity. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity.
- Grade II Listed Buildings are located within the immediate area, notably Mountneys House, Newland Hall, Skreens Lodge and Shellow Cross Farmhouse. The settings of these Grade II Listed Buildings surrounding the Site could be altered and therefore appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impact on these buildings.
- The Site is located in close proximity to a Flood Zone 3 (high probability of flooding) located at Newland Brook.
- The Site will likely be accessed via Salt's Green (A1060). An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would still be required.
- A large number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) intersect the Site from all boundaries and connect to a significantly wider network of PRoWs. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts of the PRoW which may include diversion or visual screening.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located to the east of Shellow Bowells and to the west of Roxwell, the application Site is accessed from Skreens Park Road to the south. The Site comprises several irregular sized arable fields and an access route that heads north across other fields.

The Site is largely bound by hedgerows and trees which line the ditches along fields edges. The southern boundary is defined by Skreens Park Road, and the eastern boundary is defined by a single width road. The northern and western boundaries are

defined by the field edges, which open up into other arable fields in the wider landscape.

Footpath 21 (Willingale) runs along the western boundary of the southern Site, and Footpath 17 (Roxwell) runs through the centre of the Site connecting to Footpath 15 & 16 (Roxwell) on the northern boundary. Footpaths 2 & 3 (Roxwell) intersect and abut the northern parcel respectively.

The Site is located within the rural countryside between several small settlements and villages. Medium sized irregular fields are distributed evenly across the immediate landscape and are marked by sinuous hedgerows. Notably the landform is elevated to the western edge as the Site meets the north-south ridge through Shellow Bowells. Bushey Hays-Spring Ancient Woodland is located within the Site, and Rowe's Ancient Woodland is located on the northern boundary. Skreens Ancient Woodland is also located to the north.

A57 Chalk End (Roxwell) is located to the north of the Site and A40 Shellows Cross has the same boundary as the Site.

Majority of the Site falls within Enclosed Agriculture – Amalgamated Fields classification (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLC) and is classified as mostly Grade 2 - Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

Listed buildings are located to the south-western corner of the Site, which includes Shellow Cross Farmhouse (1366203), Barn (1168923) and Cottages (1306778), Skreens Lodge (1111251) and Scheduled Monument moated site of Skreens Lodge (1016801).

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Central Essex Farmlands (B1)

- Irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable fields, marked by sinuous hedgerows and ditches.
- Many small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape.
- Scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small hamlets, typically with greens and ponds.
- A concentration of isolated moated farmsteads.
- Network of narrow, winding lanes.
- Mostly tranquil character away from major roads and Stansted Airport.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of hedgerow and woodland pattern
- Moderate intervisibility

- Tranquil character away from existing major road corridors/Stansted
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

Bushey Hays-Spring Ancient Woodland is located within the Site of which two thirds is designated Local Wildlife Site (LoWS). The woodland is valued as ‘moderate value’ (National Habitat Network All Habitats Combined) buffered by National Habitat Network Enhancement Zone 2.

Other designations within close proximity:

- Rowe’s Ancient Woodland
- Skreens Ancient Woodland
- Skreens Lodge moat Scheduled Monument
- Chalk End Priority Habitat

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features				•	
	Complexity			•		
	Enclosure by Vegetation				•	
	Historic Character		•			
	Built development			•		
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View				•	
	Openness to Private View			•		
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features					•
	Perceptual Quality				•	

The Site is a combination of small arable fields with intervening hedgerows, ditches and hedgerow trees. The ancient woodland within the centre of the Site creates a significantly sensitive complex landscape.

The Site demonstrates a number of distinctive characteristics of the LCA, notably irregular field pattern of arable farmland intersected by a complex matrix of hedgerows and tranquil character. These features greatly increase the sensitivity of landscape

features. The Sites' southern boundary is located parallel to Skreens Park Road. This boundary lacks continuous hedgerows allowing for open view directly onto and across the road, greatly increasing sensitivity to public and private receptors. Furthermore, properties along this boundary increase historical sensitivity, particularly given the open nature of the views.

Telegraph poles are evident across much of the Site reducing perceptual quality, however, the rurality and omission of built settlements creates a moderately isolated landscape. Given the number of PRowS within and around the Site, we consider public views to be significantly sensitive, particularly as the Site appears to link to a much wider network of PRowS and likely receives high traffic.

For these reasons, Site A60a has been assessed as having **Medium-high** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

A57 mineral scheme is proposed to the north-west of the Site. A60b is a proposed alternative boundary to A60a.

Cumulative effects would likely occur particularly given the strong network of PRowS connecting all the Sites.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A60b - Shellow Cross Farm (A60b) – Chelmsford

Red-Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is Central Essex Farmlands (B1) of which the Site possesses a number of distinct characteristic features of the LCA including the irregular field pattern of arable farmland intersected by hedgerows and small woodlands, this creates a strong sense of complexity increasing the sensitivity to the landscape features. Appropriate consideration is required to protect the characteristic features of the LCA and mitigate the impacts on the landscape
- Bushey-Hays Spring is located within the centre of the southern parcel and is a designated Ancient Woodland with two thirds of the area designated as a Local Wildlife Site (LoWS). The woodland demonstrates a significant contribution toward the local green infrastructure and visual amenity and is surrounded by National Habitat Network Enhancement Zone 2 which connects a corridor of habitats. The proposed access route also completely severs this connection. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity.
- Grade II Listed Buildings are located within the immediate area, notably Mountneys House, Newland Hall, Skreens Lodge and Shellow Cross Farmhouse. The settings of these Grade II Listed Buildings surrounding the Site could be altered and therefore appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impact on these buildings.
- The Site is located in close proximity to a Flood Zone 3 (high probability of flooding) located at Newland Brook.
- The Site will likely be accessed via Salt's Green (A1060). An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- A large number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) intersect the Site from all boundaries and connect to a significantly wider network of PRoWs. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts of the PRoW which may include diversion or visual screening.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located to the east of Shellow Bowells and to the west of Roxwell, the application Site is accessed from Skreens Park Road to the south and from Salts Green Road to the north. The southern parcel bridges across Chelmsford and Epping Forest District. The Site comprises several irregular sized arable fields and an access route that heads north across other fields.

The southern part of the Site is largely bound by hedgerows and trees which line the ditches along fields edges. The southern boundary is defined by Skreens Park Road, and the eastern boundary is defined by a single width road. The northern and western boundaries are defined by the field edges, which open up into other arable fields in the wider landscape. Footpath 21 (Willingale) runs along the western boundary of the southern Site, and Footpath 17 (Roxwell) runs through the centre of the Site connecting to Footpath 15 & 16 (Roxwell) on the northern boundary. Footpaths 2 & 3 (Roxwell) intersect and abut the northern parcel respectively.

The northern part of the Site is bound to the north by a priority habitat. This area of the Site encompasses one arable field which is bound by fragmented hedgerows and sits amongst other arable fields.

The Site is located within the rural countryside between several small settlements and villages. Medium sized irregular fields are distributed evenly across the immediate landscape and are marked by sinuous hedgerows. Notably the landform is elevated to the western edge as the Site meets the north-south ridge through Shellow Bowells. Bushey Hays-Spring Ancient Woodland is located within the Site, and Rowe's Ancient Woodland is located on the northern boundary. Skreens Ancient Woodland is also located to the north.

A57 Chalk End (Roxwell) is located to the north of the Site and A40 Shellows Cross has the same boundary as the Site.

Majority of the Site falls within Enclosed Agriculture – Amalgamated Fields classification (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHL) and is classified as mostly Grade 2 - Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

Listed buildings are located to the south-western corner of the Site, which includes Shellow Cross Farmhouse (1366203), Barn (1168923) and Cottages (1306778), Skreens Lodge (1111251) and Scheduled Monument moated site of Skreens Lodge (1016801). Newland Hall (1235663) and associated Barn (1237443) and Mountneys House (1235719) are also all located nearby to the north.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Central Essex Farmlands (B1)

- Irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable fields, marked by sinuous hedgerows and ditches.
- Many small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape.
- Scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small hamlets, typically with greens and ponds.
- A concentration of isolated moated farmsteads.
- Network of narrow, winding lanes.
- Mostly tranquil character away from major roads and Stansted Airport.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of hedgerow and woodland pattern
- Moderate intervisibility
- Tranquil character away from existing major road corridors/Stansted
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

Bushey Hays-Spring Ancient Woodland is located within the Site of which two thirds is designated Local Wildlife Site (LoWS). The woodland is valued as ‘moderate value’ (National Habitat Network All Habitats Combined) buffered by National Habitat Network Enhancement Zone 2.

Other designations within close proximity:

- Rowe’s Ancient Woodland
- Skreens Ancient Woodland
- Skreens Lodge moat Scheduled Monument
- Chalk End Priority Habitat

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features				•	
	Complexity			•		
	Enclosure by Vegetation				•	
	Historic Character		•			
	Built development			•		
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View				•	
	Openness to Private View			•		
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features					•
	Perceptual Quality				•	

The Site is a combination of small arable fields with intervening hedgerows, ditches and hedgerow trees the addition of ancient woodland within the centre of the Site creates a significantly sensitive complex landscape.

The Site demonstrates a number of distinctive characteristics of the LCA, notably irregular field pattern of arable farmland intersected by a complex matrix of hedgerows and tranquil character, this greatly increases the sensitivity of landscape features. The Sites' southern boundary is located parallel to Skreens Park Road, this boundary lacks continuous hedgerows allowing for open view directly onto and across the road, greatly increasing sensitivity to public and private receptors. Furthermore, properties along this boundary increase historical sensitivity, particularly given the open nature of the views.

Telegraph poles are evident across much of the Site reducing perceptual quality, however, the rurality and omission of built settlements creates a moderately isolated landscape. Given the number of PRowWs within and around the Site, we consider public views to be significantly sensitive, particularly as the Site appears to link to a much wider network of PRowWs and likely receives high traffic.

For these reasons, Site A60b has been assessed as having **Medium-high** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

A57 mineral scheme is proposed to the north-west of the Site. A60a is a proposed alternative boundary to A60b.

Cumulative effects would likely occur particularly given the strong network of PRowWs connecting all the Sites.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A61 – Heckfordbridge – Site 1

Red-Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site is within an attractive undulating landscape with landscape and historic features in view. Perceived as a rural landscape with some sense of tranquillity although these qualities are affected and reduced by the presence of Colchester Quarry. Consideration should be given to preserving and enhancing the characteristics of the landscape character area for the Site.
- Feature trees and hedgerows as field boundaries with some historic value. Retention, protection and strengthening should be considered as part of mitigation. Appropriate distance buffer areas from field boundaries will be required.
- There are attractive panoramic views of the surrounding landscape from the public footpath crossing the Site. There will be an adverse effect on the public rights of way users and other receptors with regards visual impact, in particular long-distance view of St Peters Church to the south. It will be difficult to mitigate for the loss of this view and existing panoramic views from this public footpath. Temporary diversion of the public footpath as mitigation during working operations should be considered.
- The Site is in close proximity to listed buildings, in particular clusters to the north-west, south-west corner and south-east corner. Noise levels and visual impact would need to be managed with appropriate siting of the proposed working areas.
- Potential impacts on the nearby Ancient Woodland and local wildlife sites needs considering.
- Mitigation of impacts on Birch Business Centre will be required in the form of distance buffer area and temporary bunding.
- The Site could be accessed by existing access points at Fountain Lane and Birch Road. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required. There should be consideration to keep vegetation removal to a minimum and mitigate if required.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located between the settlements of Heckfordbridge and Hardy's Green, the Site can be accessed on three boundaries from B1022 Maldon Road (east), Fountain Lane (north) Birch Road (west). The Site comprises of two large arable fields situated on a gently valley side which drops down to the north at the Roman River.

Late 19th Century maps show that all road boundaries surrounding the Site are still in the same location. A field boundary to parts of the south of the Site is also present, in addition to surrounding Beckingham Hall, Bockingham Hall and Smithy's Inn. The Roman River also runs along the northern boundary.

Public Right of Way Footpath 5 (Birch) crosses the Site east to west, connecting to Footpath 7 (Birch) which heads north within the Site.

The Site is located within the countryside but is surrounded by the road network which provides access to a number of small settlements and farmsteads located around the Site edge. Large and medium sized arable fields are distributed across the immediate landscape with some areas of copses and woodlands. Notably the land rises to the south-west at Hardys Green and falls to the north as it reaches the Roman River. Colchester Zoo is also located close to the north-eastern corner of the Site.

Colchester Sand and Gravel existing working quarry is located to the north of the Site, which extends to the other side of Warren Lane, situated to the south of Stanway. Candidate site A95 is located beyond the north of the Site.

Hanging Wood and Gol Grove Ancient Woodland is located to the north of the Site, but on the opposite edge of the Roman River. Other Ancient Woodlands located to the west include Potash Wood and Seller Wood.

Majority of the Site falls within Enclosed Agriculture – Amalgamated Fields classification (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is classified as Grade 2 - Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

Several listed buildings are located on the edges of the Site, including Bockingham Hall (1306200) and barn, and Walnut Tree Farm (1110901) and barn to the north-west. The Post Office cottages (1387257) is located to the south-east and Beckingham Hall (1238478) to the south-west.

The public footpath crossing the Site sits on an elevated position allowing attractive and long distant panoramic views of the surrounding landscape and distinctive landscape and historic features such as Ancient Woodlands, Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS), field boundaries, woodland copse, farm listed buildings and St Peters Church in the distance looking south from the public footpath.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

South Colchester Farmlands (E2)

- Large flat farmland plateau, dissected by occasional small narrow valleys.
- Arable land use dominates, but with some pasture and orchards.
- Straight and regular field patterns with mainly low trimmed hedgerows.
- Widely dispersed blocks of woodland/small copses, sparse tree cover in the north.

- Former heathland character near Colchester

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are:

- Moderate intervisibility
- Tranquil character away from edge of Colchester
- Integrity of woodlands hedgerow field pattern
- Strength of character of the Roman river valley
- Landscape sensitivity level: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations:

- Potash Wood Ancient Woodland and Local Wildlife Site
- Seller Wood Ancient Woodland and Local Wildlife Site
- Hanging Wood Ancient Woodland and Local Wildlife Site
- Aldercar Local Wildlife Site

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features			•		
	Complexity		•			
	Enclosure by Vegetation			•		
	Historic Character			•		
	Built development	•				
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View					•
	Openness to Private View					•
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features					•
	Perceptual Quality		•			

The Site is made of two large arable fields divided by hedgerows with hedgerow trees (field boundaries). The landform is of an undulating character with a moderate steep

profile towards the Roman river to the north. The field boundaries within the Site have some historic value. The combination of these features and historic value has an effect in the sensitivity of the Site.

The existing vegetation on Site and boundaries is well-established with some significant mature trees. Overall, the Site is quite exposed from all boundaries apart from the north. Some hedgerow planting is present along Fountain Lane, but partial views of the Site are available through gaps and due to the Site's topography. The southern boundary is made of mature hedgerow planting but open towards the west. There are some partial views of the Site northern slopes from Upper Hill Farm.

The sensitivity is further increased by the PRow through the site and the limited boundary vegetation coverage leaves the Site exposed to open views both in and out and attractive and long distant panoramic views of the surrounding landscape and distinctive landscape and historic features such as Ancient Woodlands, Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS), field boundaries, woodland copse, farm listed buildings and St Peters Church.

The overall perception of the Site is of a rural landscape with some development scattered around the edges, telegraph poles and some sense of tranquillity. However, these qualities are affected and reduced by the noise and visual intrusion of the prominent position of Colchester Quarry. Because of these, the sensitivity of the Site is reduced.

Site A61 has been assessed as having an overall **Medium High** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

There will be cumulative landscape and visual effects due to the existing working Colchester Quarry to the north-east of the Site as these will be seen simultaneously and sequentially. Identified effects include:

- On the fabric of the landscape as a result of changes on existing landform and existing field boundaries, introduction of bunding as screening mitigation
- Additional degrading of the perceptual qualities of the Site and increase of noise levels from combined Sites operations.
- Effects on the overall character of the landscape as a result of changes to the undulating character, views and openness.

Candidate Site A95 is approximately 900m to the north. It is unlikely that both sites will be visible simultaneously, however sequential cumulative effects will occur when using the public footpath network connecting both sites.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

An application for a solar photovoltaic (PV) farm and battery storage (Ref. 222151; Land to the north west of, Hardys Green, Birch Colchester) has been granted permission immediately to the west of the Site. The proposed solar farm would potentially be seen in context with the Site from Birch Road and also contribute to effects in the landscape character from surrounding public rights of way network.

Candidate Site Reference A62 – Heckfordbridge – Site 2

Red-Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site is within an attractive undulating landscape with landscape and historic features in view. Perceived as a rural landscape with some sense of tranquillity although these qualities are affected and reduced by the presence of Colchester Quarry. Consideration should be given to preserving and enhancing the characteristics of the landscape character area for the Site.
- There are significant oak trees and hedgerow field boundaries with some historic value. Their retention, protection, and strengthening should be considered as part of mitigation and appropriate distance buffer areas will be required.
- There are attractive panoramic views of the surrounding landscape from the public footpath crossing the Site. There will be an adverse effect on the public rights of way users and other receptors with regards visual impact. Long distance view of St Peters Church to the south. It will be difficult to mitigate for the loss of this view and existing panoramic views from this public footpath. Temporary diversion of the public footpath as mitigation during working operations should be considered.
- The Site is in close proximity to listed buildings, in particular farm cluster to the north-west, south-west corner and south-east corner. Noise levels and visual impact would need to be managed with appropriate siting of the proposed working areas.
- Potential impacts on the nearby Ancient Woodland and local wildlife sites needs considering.
- Mitigation for impacts on Birch Business Centre will be required, including, but not limited to distance buffer area and temporary bunding.
- The Site's parcel to the south is exposed along its west south and eastern boundaries. A bund could help with this, but would, in itself, be intrusive. Advance planting along this boundary could help to provide mitigation more in keeping with the existing character.
- The Site could be accessed by existing access points at Fountain Lane (east), unnamed road (south) and Birch Road (west). An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required. There should be consideration to keep vegetation removal to a minimum and mitigate if required.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located between the settlements of Heckfordbridge and Hardy's Green, the Site can be approached from all four boundaries: B1022 Maldon Road (east), Fountain Lane (north) Birch Road (west) and unnamed road to the south. The Site comprises several arable fields situated on a gently valley side which drops down to the north towards the Roman River. A small woodland copse is also located within the Site.

Late 19th Century maps show that all road boundaries surrounding the Site are still in the same location. A field boundary that crosses the Site from east to west is also present, in addition to surrounding Beckingham Hall, Bockingham Hall and Smithy's Inn. The Roman River also runs along the northern boundary.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW) Footpath 5 (Birch) crosses the Site east to west, connecting to Footpath 7 (Birch) heading north .

The Site is located within the countryside but is surrounded by road network which provides access to a number of small settlements and farmsteads located around the Site edges. Large and medium sized arable fields are distributed across the immediate landscape with some areas of copses and woodlands. Notably the land rises to the south-west at Hardys Green and falls to the north as it reaches the Roman River. Colchester Zoo is also located close to the north-eastern corner of the Site.

Colchester Sand and Gravel existing working quarry is located to the north of the Site, which extends to the other side of Warren Lane, situated to the south of Stanway. Candidate site A95 is located beyond the north of the Site.

Hanging Wood and Gol Grove Ancient Woodland is located to the north of the Site, but on the opposite edge of the Roman River. Other Ancient Woodlands located to the west include Potash Wood and Seller Wood.

Majority of the Site falls within Enclosed Agriculture – Amalgamated Fields classification (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is classified as Grade 2 - Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

Several listed buildings are located on the edges of the Site, including Bockingham Hall (1306200) and barn, and Walnut Tree Farm (1110901) and barn to the north-west. The Post Office cottages (1387257) is located to the south-east and Beckingham Hall (1238478) to the south-west.

The existing vegetation on Site and boundaries is well-established with some significant mature oaks. Views of the southern part of the Site from the footpath that crosses the Site are limited due to the existing vegetated field boundary and woodland copse and topography. However, the southern parcel is visible from public footpath to the south-west and public footpath to the south-eastern corner, along the un-named road running

along the Site's south boundary and sections of Maldon Road and Fountain Lane. There are some partial views of the Site northern slopes from Upper Hill Farm.

The public footpath crossing the Site sits on an elevated position allowing attractive and long distant panoramic views of the surrounding landscape and distinctive landscape and historic features such as Ancient Woodlands, Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS), field boundaries, woodland copse, farm listed buildings and St Peters Church in the distance looking south from the public footpath.

Overall, the Site is quite exposed from all boundaries apart from the north. Some hedgerow is present along Fountain Lane, but partial views of the Site are available through gaps and due to the Site's topography. Views here are very open due to lack of boundary vegetation.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

South Colchester Farmlands (E2)

- Large flat farmland plateau, dissected by occasional small narrow valleys.
- Arable land use dominates, but with some pasture and orchards.
- Straight and regular field patterns with mainly low trimmed hedgerows.
- Widely dispersed blocks of woodland/small copses, sparse tree cover in the north.
- Former heathland character near Colchester

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are:

- Moderate intervisibility
- Tranquil character away from edge of Colchester
- Integrity of woodlands hedgerow field pattern
- Strength of character of the Roman river valley
- Landscape sensitivity level: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations:

- Potash Wood Ancient Woodland and Local Wildlife Site
- Seller Wood Ancient Woodland and Local Wildlife Site
- Hanging Wood Ancient Woodland and Local Wildlife Site
- Aldercar Local Wildlife Site

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features			•		
	Complexity			•		
	Enclosure by Vegetation			•		
	Historic Character			•		
	Built development	•				
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View					•
	Openness to Private View					•
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features					•
	Perceptual Quality		•			

The Site is made of a series of arable fields divided by hedgerows with hedgerow trees (field boundaries), with a small woodland copse to the south-east part of the Site. The landform is of an undulating character with a moderate steep profile towards the Roman river to the north. The field boundaries within the Site have some historic value. The combination of these features and historic value has an effect in the sensitivity of the Site.

The sensitivity is further increased by the PRoW through the Site and the limited boundary vegetation coverage leaves the Site exposed to open views both in and out and attractive and long distant panoramic views of the surrounding landscape and distinctive landscape and historic features such as Ancient Woodlands, Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS), field boundaries, woodland copse, farm listed buildings and St Peters Church.

The overall perception of the Site is of a rural landscape with some development scattered around the edges, telegraph poles and some sense of tranquillity. However, these qualities are affected and reduced by the noise and visual intrusion of the prominent position of Colchester Quarry. Because of these, the sensitivity of the Site is reduced.

For these reasons, Site A62 has been assessed as having **Medium High** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

There will be cumulative landscape and visual effects due to the existing working Colchester Quarry to the north-east of the Site as these will be seen simultaneously and sequentially. Identified effects include:

- On the fabric of the landscape as a result of changes on existing landform and existing field boundaries, introduction of bunding as screening mitigation
- Additional degrading of the perceptual qualities of the Site and increase of noise levels from combined Sites operations.
- Effects on the overall character of the landscape as a result of changes to the undulating character, views and openness.

Candidate Site A95 is approximately 900m to the north. It is unlikely that both sites will be visible simultaneously, however sequential cumulative effects will occur when using the public footpath network connecting both sites.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

An application for a solar photovoltaic (PV) farm and battery storage (Ref. 222151; Land to the north west of, Hardys Green, Birch Colchester) has been granted permission immediately to the west of the Site. The proposed solar farm would potentially be seen in context with the Site from Birch Road and also contribute to effects in the landscape character from surrounding public rights of way network.

Candidate Site Reference A63 – Patch Park, Abridge

Red-Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is Roding Valley (C4), the Site possesses a number of distinctive characteristic features of the LCA, including the wide valley bottom, thick hedgerows with hedgerow trees and riverside trees. The combination of varied landscape features within the Site increases the sensitivity of this landscape. It would not be possible to screen views of the Site from receptors on the valley slopes and distant views.
- The eastern extent of the Site is designated as a Local Wildlife Site Priority Habitat Inventory as Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh increasing the views to natural features.
- Grade II Listed Buildings located to the north include Skinners Farmhouse and Brook Farmhouse. Impacts on the landscape character could potentially affect the setting of some listed buildings. Mitigation for visual impact will be required from the most affected properties.
- A large portion of the Site is located within flood zone 1 (low probability of flooding) and 2 (medium probability of flooding).
- The Site will likely be accessed from two points. It is assumed that the main area will access via Epping Road to the north, while new access is to be gained via Ongar Road to the south for a small portion of the Site. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- Two Public Rights of Way (PRoW) intersect the Site with open views of the Site. The footpaths on the lower levels would lose their existing views. Mitigation through diversion or bunding, where appropriate should be considered, but we noted that one of these footpaths is part of the Three Forests Way. Due to landform, any bunding could appear as an intrusive element from the valley slopes.
- There are a number of mature trees within the Site which form part of the landscape views. These should be protected alongside the existing vegetated field boundaries as part of mitigation strategy. Opportunities should be considered for landscape enhancement and restoration where landscape condition is poor.
- The Site includes landscape of very high quality. The proposal would have a large effect on this stretch of the Roding valley and could cause lasting damage.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located approximately 1.5km to the north-east of Abridge, the Site is accessed via the A113 Ongar Road, which runs beyond the southern boundary.

Topographically, the Site is generally flat with minimal undulations, however, landform begins to rise in the north-eastern corner adjacent to Epping Lane. The Site comprises arable farmland and grazing divided into six fields, each separated by hedgerows and ditches. The Site is generally bound by hedgerows and ditches.

The south and east boundary is defined by the River Roding, which is lined with trees and planting along the full extent. The River Roding and a narrow field also separate the Site from Ongar Road which runs close to the south of the Site.

The northern boundary is defined by hedgerows and ditches which separate the Site from Theydon Mount Park, Mays Shooting Club and Norton Trout Fishery Lake. There are also a number of other properties and buildings located close to the Site on this boundary, which are accessed from Epping Lane.

Two connecting Public Rights of Way (PRoW) run across the centre of the Site. Footpath 18 (Theydon Garnon) runs from Hobbs Cross Road on the northern boundary to Park Lane to the south, it crosses the Site again to connect with Footpath 14 (Theydon Mount).

The Site is located close to the M25 Orbital Motorway although is situated within a rural setting. The wider landscape comprises irregular field patterns and small villages to the east of Abridge. Located adjacent to the River Roding, the surrounding landform is generally elevated with two ridges forming to the north and to the south.

The Site covers three landscape classifications: with majority falling within Enclosed Agriculture (Typically Ancient Form) classification, and a majority of the Site is classified as Grade 3 – Good to Moderate Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

There are a number of listed buildings located close to the Site, these include: Skinners Farmhouse (1306362) and Outbuilding (1337557), Brook Farmhouse (1123967) and Barn (1169830). Skinners Farmhouse is visible from the Site and views from the property onto the Site would also be available.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Roding Valley (C4)

- Wide valley, deepening to the south.
- Gently to moderately undulating valleysides, occasionally intersected by small tributary valleys.

- Strong pattern of valleyside vegetation with thick hedgerow field boundaries, many hedgerow trees and scattered small woodlands.
- Meadows on flat valley floor, with occasional riverside trees.
- Tranquil character except in the south.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Some visually exposed valleysides
- Intrinsic character of the valley bottom
- Integrity of hedgerow pattern/small woodlands
- Mostly tranquil character
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

Part of the Site is classified in the Priority Habitat Inventory as Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh.

The Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations including:

- Priority Habitat Inventory – Deciduous Woodland
- Priority Habitat Inventory – Woodpasture and Parkland
- Apes Grove Ancient Woodland
- Alder Wood Ancient Woodland
- Soapley's Wood Ancient Woodland
- Shales More Ancient Woodland
- Barber's Wood and Lane Ancient Woodland
- Hill Hall Park and Garden
- Curtismill Green Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features				•	
	Complexity				•	
	Enclosure by Vegetation			•		
	Historic Character	•				
	Built development			•		
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View			•		
	Openness to Private View				•	
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features				•	
	Perceptual Quality			•		

The Site is a combination of arable and grazing fields with intervening hedgerows, although the River Roding is located outside of the red line boundary, the associated riparian edge is within the Site and therefore increases the complexity. The Site demonstrates a number of distinctive characteristics of the LCA, notably the wide valley floor with strong pattern of valley side vegetation, this greatly increases the sensitivity of landscape features and landscape quality. Despite the Site being located in close proximity to the M25, the location on the valley floor and the presence of the River Roding creates a strong perceptual aspect for public users of the PRowS within the Site increasing sensitivity of both.

The historic value of the Site is moderate as intervening vegetation along the ridge of Epping Lane limit some views between the Site and listed buildings. Notwithstanding this, long distant and significant views are obtained of Skinners Farmhouse from within the Site along much of the PRowS, this considerably increases visual sensitivity. For these reasons, Site A63 has been assessed as having **Medium-high** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further. Where such development arises, appropriate mitigation is recommended.

Candidate Site Reference A64 – Land East of Asheldham Quarry

Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) for this Site is Dengie and Foulness Coast (F3) and the Site possesses a number of characteristic features, which includes the large scale, flat landscape with a sense of openness and wide views toward the North Sea. Views are obtained of the reclaimed marshlands for arable farmland which are located close to the south-east. Located away from Dengie Crops and the working Asheldham Quarry, parts of the Site also have a rural tranquil character. Appropriate consideration is required to protect the characteristic features of the LCA and mitigate the impacts on the landscape.
- Dengie National Nature Reserve (NNR) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lies approximately 5km to the east of the Site. A Priority Habitat of Deciduous Woodland is located 0.8km to the north-west of the Site surrounding Silver Lake which was previously excavated and restored to a recreation lake. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on existing habitats.
- Three Grade II Listed Buildings are located within the surrounding area, which includes Asheldham Youth Church, Church Of St Lawrence, Asheldham Hall and New Hall Farmhouse. The settings of these Grade II Listed Buildings surrounding the Site could be altered and therefore appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impact on these buildings.
- The Site is in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding), with no high probability flood zones (Zones 2 or 3) within 500m of the Site.
- The Site will either be accessed from Hall Road on the southern boundary, or from the existing entrance into Asheldham Quarry to the west. Access from Hall Road would need to be obtained from a new entrance through the hedgerow, where visibility splays would need to be considered. Access from the existing Asheldham Quarry would be obtained by creating a gap in the bund. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- Public Rights of Way (PRoW) run along the western and northern boundary. PRoW 'Asheldham 10' runs along the western boundary and 'Asheldham 11' along the northern boundary, inside the Site. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts of the PRoW which may include diversion or visual screening.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Asheldham Hall (1346226) and New Hall Farmhouse (1110969). A Scheduled Monument titled 'Slight univallate hillfort south of End Way Farm' (1014142) is located to the west off Southminster Road.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Coastal Landscapes - Dengie and Foulness Coast (F3)

- Large scale, flat landscape.
- Sense of openness/space. Wide views.
- Vast tidal mudflats and sands, and extensive fringing saltmarshes, rich in wildlife.
- Mainly arable farmland of the reclaimed marshlands, intersected by ditches and dykes.
- Absence of woodland, only a few hedgerows.
- Isolated farms and barns, with small villages restricted to the fringes.
- Bradwell Nuclear Power Station is a significant landmark.
- Remote tranquil character.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- High intervisibility
- Landform character
- Landscape sensitivity value: High

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations, within a 3-mile radius are the following:

- Blackwater Estuary SSSI (to the north)
- Blackwater Estuary (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 4) RAMSAR
- Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne Estuaries MCZ (to the north)
- Essex Estuaries SAC (to the north and east)
- Dengie SSSI (to the east)
- Dengie (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 1) RAMSAR (to the east)
- Goldsands Road Pit SSSI (to the southwest)

Located approx. 2 miles northeast of Southminster, the Site is accessible via Hall Road. The Site comprises a large rectilinear arable field and small area of woodland on the eastern boundary, which topographically falls towards the east.

The Site is largely bound by fragmented hedgerows and trees, although the southern section of the eastern boundary is defined only by an access track that crosses the open field. An area of woodland and water body also defines a section of the eastern boundary towards the north of the Site.

The western boundary is defined by sections of fragmented hedgerow that separate the Site from a public footpath (PRoW 10 – Asheldham) and the existing working Asheldham Quarry, which sits adjacent to the Site. The footpath connects to PRoW 11 which runs the length of the vegetated northern boundary. Hall Road defines the southern boundary, which is lined by hedgerows and trees separating the Site from Grade II Listed New Hall Farmhouse.

The Site is located within an isolated rural setting with a combination of regular and irregular field patterns distributed evenly across the immediate landscape. This is surrounded by arable fields along with small, dispersed settlements within the wider landscape. Notably the landform is elevated to the west (approx. 2 miles/ Batts Rd) forming a ridge orientated SW to NE.

Long distance views from the Site are observed towards the east, extending as far as the North Sea. Open views of the Site are also obtained from Hall Road and Manor Road, owed to the elevated and rolling landform with little vegetative screening in the surrounding landscape.

Neighbouring minerals & waste schemes include candidate Site A65 – Land South of Asheldham Quarry and the existing Asheldham Quarry west of the Site which incorporates a number of open water bodies.

The Site covers three landscape classifications: with majority falling within Enclosed Agriculture (Typically Ancient Form); Enclosed Agriculture (Typically Modern Form) classification and a small portion classified as Industry - Extractive Industry (Mineral) (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and majority of the Site is classified as Grade 2 - Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

There are a number of listed buildings located within 500 metres of the Site, these include: Asheldham Youth Church, Church Of St Lawrence (1110970); Asheldham

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features			•		
	Complexity	•				
	Enclosure by Vegetation				•	
	Historic Character			•		
	Built development			•		
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View					•
	Openness to Private View		•			
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features				•	
	Perceptual Quality			•		

The Site is an uncomplex single arable field which possesses minimal notable features that are considered sensitive to the landscape. The adjacent industrial presence of existing working Asheldham Quarry and Dengie Crops reduces the overall perceptual quality of the rural setting. Public views from the footpath that runs along the full extent of the west boundary and within the Site along the north increases the overall sensitivity of public views. The Site only possesses few characteristics of the Dengie and Foulness Coast LCA but does include the flat arable character and hedgerow boundaries. Long distance views are also available across the arable and marshland landscape to the North Sea and to the neighbouring copse, which in combination increases the sensitivity of views towards local natural features.

For these reasons, Site A64 has been assessed as having **Medium** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

The Site (A64) is located adjacent to existing working Asheldham Quarry, which defines the part of the Site boundary to the west. Candidate site A65 (Land South of Asheldham Quarry) is located to the west of the Site and would further contribute to the cumulative impact of minerals extraction sites. Public views along Hall Road and from the surrounding public footpath network will be impacted with cumulative effects from

minerals works, in addition to the private views from Manor Road to the east and from Hall Road to the south.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

An application for a Solar PV Array (Ref: 23/00244/FULM) is currently pending consideration approximately 0.5km to the south-east of the Site, located within an arable field adjacent to Asheldham Brook and the wider characteristically flat landscape. For users of Hall Road and the surrounding public right of way network, the Site (A64) and the proposed solar array could be seen within the landscape in quick succession.

In neighbouring village Southminster (approximately 2-3km), two residential developments for 249 (23/00459/OUTM) and 110 (23/00459/OUTM) dwellings are pending consideration.

Candidate Site Reference A65 – Land South of Asheldham Quarry

Amber-Green

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is Dengie and Foulness Coast (F3) and possesses only limited characteristic features of the LCA, only including the arable farmland landscape. The limited sense of openness and absence of wide views of the mudflats and saltmarshes reduces the potential sensitivity of the Site.
- Dengie National Nature Reserve (NNR) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lies approximately 5km to the east of the Site. A Priority Habitat of Deciduous Woodland is located 0.5km to the north-west of the Site surrounding Silver Lake which was previously excavated and restored to a recreation lake.
- Three Grade II Listed Buildings are located within the surrounding area, which includes Asheldham Youth Church, Church Of St Lawrence, Asheldham Hall and New Hall Farmhouse. The settings of these Grade II Listed Buildings surrounding the Site could be altered and therefore appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impact on these buildings.
- The Site is in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding), with no high probability flood zones (Zones 2 or 3) within 750m of the Site.
- The Site will either be accessed from Hall Road on the southern boundary, or from the existing entrance into Asheldham Quarry to the west. Access from Hall Road would need to be obtained from a new entrance through the hedgerow, where visibility splays would need to be considered. Access from the existing Asheldham Quarry would be obtained by creating a gap in the bund. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- Public Rights of Way (PRoW) run along the eastern boundary. PRoW Essex 240 10 runs along the eastern boundary, inside the Site. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts of the PRoW which may include diversion or visual screening. A bund could help with this but would in itself be intrusive. Advance planting along this boundary could help to provide mitigation more in keeping with the existing character.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located approx. 2 miles northeast of Southminster, the Site is accessible via Hall Road. The Site is generally a flat plateau, which comprises a small to medium sized square arable field.

The Site is bound on the north by a managed hedgerow, and the east is largely open with occasional trees and direct views/access to the associated agricultural buildings. The southern boundary is defined by managed hedgerows and Hall Road beyond. The western boundary is defined by mature hedgerows.

A public footpath (Essex 240 10) begins in the Site corner to the southeast of the Site and runs adjacent with the eastern boundary south to north and continues to connect to footpath Essex 240 11. The southwestern corner is associated with access to footpath Essex 240 8, this continues to join further PRowS.

The Site is located within an isolated rural setting with a combination of regular and irregular field patterns distributed evenly across the immediate landscape. This is surrounded by arable fields along with small, dispersed settlements within the wider landscape. Notably the landform is elevated to the west (approx. 2 miles/ Batts Rd) forming a ridge orientated SW to NE.

Neighbouring minerals & waste schemes include A64 – Land East of Asheldham Quarry. The existing Asheldham Quarry is located immediately west of the Site which incorporates a number of open water bodies. The industrial influence on Asheldham Quarry and Dengie Crops is apparent within the Site and along the adjacent PRow.

The Site is solely within the classification of Industry - Extractive Industry (Mineral) classification (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is Grade 3 - Good To Moderate Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

Four listed buildings are located within 500 metres of the Site, these include:

Asheldham Youth Church, Church Of St Lawrence (1110970); Asheldham Hall (1346226) and New Hall Farmhouse (1110969)

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Coastal Landscapes - Dengie and Foulness Coast (F3)

- Large scale, flat landscape.
- Sense of openness/space. Wide views.
- Vast tidal mudflats and sands, and extensive fringing saltmarshes, rich in wildlife.
- Mainly arable farmland of the reclaimed marshlands, intersected by ditches and dykes.
- Absence of woodland, only a few hedgerows.
- Isolated farms and barns, with small villages restricted to the fringes.
- Bradwell Nuclear Power Station is a significant landmark.
- Remote tranquil character.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- High intervisibility
- Landform character
- Landscape sensitivity value: High

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations, of particular note are the following:

- Blackwater Estuary SSSI (to the north)
- Blackwater Estuary (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 4) RAMSAR
- Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne Estuaries MCZ (to the north)
- Essex Estuaries SAC (to the north and east)
- Dengie SSSI (to the east)
- Dengie (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 1) RAMSAR (to the east)
- Goldsands Road Pit SSSI (to the southwest)

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features	•				
	Complexity	•				
	Enclosure by Vegetation			•		
	Historic Character			•		
	Built development		•			
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View					•
	Openness to Private View		•			
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features		•			
	Perceptual Quality	•				

The Site is an uncomplex single arable field which possesses minimal important features that are considered sensitive to the landscape. The adjacent industrial presence of existing working Asheldham Quarry and Dengie Crops reduces the overall perceptual quality of the rural setting. Public views from the footpath on the eastern boundary and the presence of Hall Road to the south increases the overall sensitivity, however there are few opportunities for private views into the Site. The Site only

possesses few characteristics of the Dengie and Foulness Coast LCA but does include the flat arable character and hedgerow boundaries.

For these reasons, Site A65 has been assessed as having **Medium Low** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

The Site (A65) is located adjacent to existing working Asheldham Quarry, which defines the Site boundary to the north and west. Candidate site A64 (Land East of Asheldham Quarry) is located to the east of the Site and would further contribute to the cumulative impact of minerals extraction sites. Public views along Hall Road and from the surrounding public footpath network will be impacted with cumulative minerals works, in addition to the private views from Manor Road to the east and from Hall Road to the south.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

An application for a Solar PV Array (Ref: 23/00244/FULM) is currently pending consideration approximately 0.5km to the south-east of the Site, located within an arable field adjacent to Asheldham Brook and the wider characteristically flat landscape. For users of Hall Road and the surrounding public right of way network, the Site (A64) and the proposed solar array could be seen within the landscape in quick succession.

In neighbouring village Southminster (approximately 2-3km), two residential developments for 249 (23/00459/OUTM) and 110 (23/00459/OUTM) dwellings are pending consideration.

Candidate Site Reference A66 – White House Farm

Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys (C6), and the Site possesses a small portion of characteristic features of this LCA, including landform and particularly gentle valley sides. The modern loss of historical field boundaries limits the potential sensitivity of the Site.
- The Wilderness is a woodland immediately abutting the Site's west boundary and is a designated priority habitat. According to historical mapping, a significant area of The Wilderness and other woodland within the Site has been removed and cultivated. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity.
- The Site is surrounded by a large number of Grade II listed buildings including Ashman's Farmhouse and Black Cottage along Curling Tye Road. The settings of these Grade II Listed Buildings surrounding the Site could be altered and therefore appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impact on these buildings.
- The Site is currently accessed off Curling Tye Lane, a single-track road with limited visibility. Appropriate transport and access arrangements must be proposed and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required, particularly where hedgerow(s) are to be removed.
- Public Rights of Way (PRoW) run within the Site and along the Site's northern boundary some of which provide circular walks from Woodham Walter through the woodlands and across the open arable landscape. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on the PRoW users which may include visual screening.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located approx. 1.5km west of Maldon, the Site is accessible via Curling Tye Lane. The Site generally comprises arable farmland, which is broken up into two large fields separated by a ditch. The Site is an elevated plateau, falling towards the east and western boundaries with open views across the valleys on all sides.

Historically the Site has undergone significant changes since 25inch mapping (~100yrs) where field boundaries have amalgamated a number of small fields into the large one today. In addition to this, significant areas of woodland have since been removed including a portion of The Wilderness.

A majority of the northern boundary is open to wider arable landscape; the NE boundary corner is vegetated with fragmented hedgerows and hedgerow trees, with hedgerows continuing along the eastern and southern boundaries. The western boundary is defined by open grassland with associated woodland, The Wilderness further west.

The western area of the Site is intersected by a number of PRowS: Footpath 14, 16 & 19 (Woodham Walter), which provide circular walks from Woodham Walter through the woodlands and across the open arable landscape.

The Site is located within an isolated rural setting almost halfway between Maldon and Danbury. Irregular field patterns are distributed evenly across the immediate landscape. Notably the landform is significantly elevated to the west at Danbury forming a peak in the landscape with well wooded areas. To the east the landform gently declines down toward the coastal inlet edge.

Neighbouring minerals & waste schemes include A58 - Little Smiths (Danbury) located 1.5km southwest of the Site.

The Site is confined solely within Enclosed Agricultural Land (Typically Modern Form) classification (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is classified as Grade 2 - Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

A number of listed buildings are located within 500 metres of the Site. Of particular note: Ashman's Farmhouse (1308659); Granary Approximately 7 Metres South East Of Barn (1110962) and Black Cottage (1147136) all located to the north of the Site. Notably, A Scheduled Monument: Woodham Walter Hall: an early C16 house and its associated garden earthworks (1021442) is located to the SW and abuts the corner boundary.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

River Valley Landscapes - Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys (C6)

- Shallow valleys.
- Predominantly arable farmland with well hedged medium to large fields.
- The Brain and the Upper Blackwater Valleys are narrow with undulating valleysides.
- The Lower Chelmer, and the Blackwater near Maldon, have wide flat valley floors, and gentle valleysides.
- Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive feature.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of the valley floor
- Some visually exposed valleysides/open valley floors
- Tranquil character in parts
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations, of particular note are the following:

- Blackwater Estuary SSSI to the east
- Blackwater Estuary (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 4) RAMSAR to the east
- Blackwater Estuary (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 4) Special Protection Area (SPA) to the east
- Essex Estuaries Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) to the east
- Woodham Walter Common SSSI to the west – A significant number of SSSI sites continue inland toward the west.
- The Wilderness – Local Wildlife Site (LoWS) and Priority Habitat Inventory - Deciduous Woodland (England)

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features			•		
	Complexity	•				
	Enclosure by Vegetation			•		
	Historic Character		•			
	Built development			•		
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View					•
	Openness to Private View			•		
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features					•
	Perceptual Quality			•		

- The Site is an uncomplex single arable field which possesses minimal important features that are considered sensitive to the landscape. While the Site was once dissected into multiple smaller fields delineated by hedgerows and copses, the present-day removal of hedgerows has resulted in the amalgamation into one field and therefore reduces historic value and sensitivity. The elevated nature of the Site allows for long distance views north which include a vista of landscape and prominent buildings such as church spires increasing the visual sensitivity. The scale

of the Site increases its rurality and perceptual sensitivity with limited built development within proximity of the PRowS.

- For these reasons, Site A66 has been assessed as having **Medium** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A67 – Church Farm

Amber-Green

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is Tendring Plain (E3) of which the Site possesses a limited number of distinct characteristic features including large flat farmland plateau, with straight and regular field patterns.
- A number of Ancient Woodlands and Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) scatter the landscape particularly south of the Site. In addition, the landscape to the south contains a significant number of designations including Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA). Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity.
- A listed building, Church Farmhouse is located to the east and has open clear views of the majority of the Site. The setting of this property could be significantly altered and therefore appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impact on these buildings.
- The main extraction Site is located within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding). The assumed accessed road to the south-west travels through flood zone 2 & 3 (high probability of flooding).
- The Sites' current access is via Ford Lane. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required. Visibility splays may also have to be considered if any alternative entrances are proposed.
- Remains of St Peter's Church Scheduled Monument is located to the south of the Site. The Church can be viewed above the vegetation and can be seen from within the Site. However, there is little intervisibility between visitors of the Church and the proposed Site. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the visual impacts of mineral extraction from the Scheduled Monument through proposed bunding or planting.
- No Public Rights of Way (PRoW) cross the Site.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located centrally south of Alresford, the Site is accessed via Ford Lane and sits within the parish of Alresford. Topographically the Site is located on a flat plateau falling toward the valley to the west.

The Site comprises a single arable field with grassland edge to the west. The northern boundary is open to the wider field and garden curtilages further. Similarly, the eastern boundary is set back from domestic curtilages. The southern boundary is defined by a farm track.

No Public Rights of Way (PRoW) intersect the Site.

The wider landscape comprises arable fields, scattered ancient woodlands and small settlements.

The Site is largely falling within Enclosed Agriculture (Amalgamated Fields) classification (National Historic Landscape Characterisation), the Site is classified as Grade 2 – Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

Some listed buildings surround the Site notably; Grade II Church Farmhouse (1168950) and Remains of St Peter's Church Scheduled Monument (1337180).

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Tendring Plain (E3)

- Large flat farmland plateau, dissected by occasional small narrow valleys.
- Arable land use dominates, but with some pasture and orchards.
- Straight and regular field patterns with mainly low trimmed hedgerows.
- Widely dispersed blocks of woodland/small copses, sparse tree cover in the north.
- Former heathland character near Colchester.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Moderate to high intervisibility
- Tranquil areas in the northeast and south of the area
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations:

- Colne Estuary (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 2) – Special Protection Area & RAMSAR
- Essex Coast - Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- Crestland Wood - Ancient Woodland & Local Wildlife Site
- Oldhall Wood - Ancient Woodland & Local Wildlife Site
- Colne Estuary - Site of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI)
- Alresford Lodge Pits - Local Wildlife Site
- Remains of St Peter's Church Scheduled Monument

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features		•			
	Complexity	•				
	Enclosure by Vegetation					•
	Historic Character			•		
	Built development		•			
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View	•				
	Openness to Private View					•
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features				•	
	Perceptual Quality		•			

The Site combines a single arable field with a portion of grassland to the west, there is a distinct lack of variety within the Site significantly reducing the complexity and sensitivity of the landscape. The Site demonstrates minimal characteristics of the LCA, notably large flat farmland plateau, reducing the sensitivity of landscape features. The Site has limited vegetation on all boundaries and therefore is very open, increasing sensitivity to enclosure by vegetation. Whilst the Site itself has limited historic character, it is located directly adjacent to the Remains of St Peter's Church Scheduled Monument which is situated to the south and is visible from the Site, increasing sensitivity.

The Site is moderately exposed to significant views out toward the domestic curtilage, increasing private view sensitivity. The lack of footpaths reduces public sensitivity.

For these reasons, Site A67 has been assessed as having **Medium-low** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

A67 is within close proximity to A71 to the south and an existing extraction site.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A68 – Crabtree Farm

Amber-Green

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is Tendring Plain (E3) of which the Site possesses a limited number of distinct characteristic features including large flat farmland plateau straight and regular field patterns.
- Bentley Brook is located to the west contributing toward the local blue infrastructure. The brook is also surrounded by some areas of Ancient Woodland. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity.
- The Site is surrounded by a number of Grade II Listed Buildings, notably, Grange Farmhouse, Crabtree Farmhouse and Sturrick Farmhouse. By virtue of established vegetation each property has limited connection to the Site. Furthermore, Great Bentley Conservation Area is located south-east of the Site.
- The Site is located within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding).
- The Site will likely be accessed via Colchester Road (A133). An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- A Public Rights of Way (PRoW) bisects the Site following the existing farm track connecting Crabtree Farmhouse and Sturrick Lane. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts of the PRoW which may include diversion or visual screening.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located centrally north of Great Bentley, the Site is accessed via Colchester Road (A133) and sits within the parish of Great Bentley. Topographically the Site is located on a flat plateau at the base of a peak at Little Bentley falling toward the valley at Great Bentley.

The Site comprises approximately 4 arable fields. All boundaries are generally open to the wider landscape. Bentley Brook runs along the western Site boundary, separated by some existing small waterbodies. The brook is also surrounded by areas of vegetation and woodland, including Alder Carr Ancient Woodland which can be viewed from the Site.

One Public Right of Way (PRoW) intersect the Site, Bridleway 2 (Great Bentley) which runs north to south central within the Site.

The wider landscape comprises arable fields, scattered ancient woodlands.

The Site is largely falling within Enclosed Agriculture (Amalgamated Fields) classification, the Site is classified as Grade 1 – Excellent Quality Agricultural Land and Grade 2 – Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

A number of listed buildings surround the Site notably; Grade II Crabtree Farmhouse (1111405), Grade II Grange Farmhouse (1111409), Grade II Sturrick Farmhouse (1169253).

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Tendring Plain (E3)

- Large flat farmland plateau, dissected by occasional small narrow valleys.
- Arable land use dominates, but with some pasture and orchards.
- Straight and regular field patterns with mainly low trimmed hedgerows.
- Widely dispersed blocks of woodland/small copses, sparse tree cover in the north.
- Former heathland character near Colchester.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Moderate to high intervisibility
- Tranquil areas in the northeast and south of the area
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations:

- Bentley Brook - Local Wildlife Site
- Alder Carr Ancient Woodland
- Little Bentley Hall Wood – Ancient Woodland & Local Wildlife Site
- Bentley Green (West) - Local Wildlife Site
- Great Bentley Pumping Station – Local Wildlife Site
- Great Bentley Conservation Area

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features		•			
	Complexity	•				
	Enclosure by Vegetation				•	
	Historic Character		•			
	Built development		•			
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View				•	
	Openness to Private View				•	
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features			•		
	Perceptual Quality	•				

The Site combines various sections of arable fields with limited hedgerows and ditches, reducing complexity and sensitivity of the landscape. The Site demonstrates limited distinctive characteristics of the LCA, notably straight and regular field patterns, this reduces the sensitivity of landscape features. The Site boundary does not follow existing field boundaries and therefore the Site boundaries remain open which increases the sensitivity. The historic value of the Site is increased by the number of listed buildings surrounding it, however, intervening vegetation between the Site and listed buildings significantly reduce views to and from all properties. A combination of the new development north of Great Bentley and the visual presence of other industrial buildings in the landscape reduces the Site sensitivity in the context of surrounding built development.

Given the location of Bridlepath 2 (Great Bentley) down the centre of the Site allows 360° public views continuously following the PRoW, which are considered to be significantly sensitive. There are also substantial private views into the Site, with the new development to the north of Great Bentley providing open views across the Site from a number of properties. Views are also obtained to the west of the Ancient Woodland and Bentley Brook, increasing overall sensitivity. The mineral extraction works adjacent to the west of the Site do however reduce the perceptual quality of the Site.

For these reasons, Site A68 has been assessed as having **Medium-low** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

A68 is central proximity to two another mineral schemes to the west and east, there is potential for PRoWs connecting all three Site creating a cumulative effect for public receptors using these. Furthermore, users of the A133 would likely experience a cumulative effect.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A69 – Frating Hall

Amber-Green

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is Tendring Plain (E3) of which the Site possesses a limited number of distinct characteristic features including large flat farmland plateau, with straight and regular field patterns.
- A number of Ancient Woodlands and Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) scatter the landscape west – south-west of the Site. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity.
- There is a large cluster of Listed buildings to the west and further surrounding the north and east boundaries. The established vegetation limits intervisibility between the properties and the Site.
- The Site is located within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding).
- The Sites' current access is via Frating Hall Farm off Church Road, a single-track lane. If new access is proposed via Main Road (A133) or Great Bentley Road (B1029), an appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required. Visibility splays may also have to be considered if any alternative entrances are proposed. It is recommended to retain hedgerows as these contribute a significant benefit toward the screening of the Site.
- Several Public Rights of Way (PRoW) cross the Site, including a footpath that follows the existing farm track connecting Frating Hall Farmhouse and Main Road (A133). The network of PRoWs would be difficult to mitigate against considering the numerous connections within the Site. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts of the PRoW which may include diversion or visual screening.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located centrally north-east of Alresford and north-west of Great Bentley, the Site is accessed via Main Road (A133) and sits within the parish of Great Bentley. Topographically the Site is located on a flat plateau falling toward the valley to the west.

The Site comprises approximately 5 arable fields. The northern boundary is well vegetated and screened from Main Road (A133). Similarly, the eastern boundary is defined by mature hedgerow alongside B1029. Boundaries to the south and west are also well vegetated with fragmentation around Frating Hall Farm.

Three Public Rights of Way (PRoW) intersect the Site, Footpaths 1, 10 & 8 (Frating). Footpath 5 (Frating) runs adjacent to the west boundary.

The wider landscape comprises arable fields, scattered ancient woodlands and small settlements.

The Site is largely falling within Enclosed Agriculture (Amalgamated Fields) classification, with the south falls within Orchards Horticulture And Aquaculture (National Historic Landscape Characterisation), the Site is classified as Grade 1 – Excellent Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

A number of listed buildings surround the Site notably; Grade II Forge Cottages, Adjoining The Forge To The East (1111446), Grade II Pudners (1146948), Grade II Thatched Cottage (1111447), Grade II Ivy Lodge (1308724), Grade II Old Church House (1111440), and a cluster west at Fratling Hall (1111441).

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Tendring Plain (E3)

- Large flat farmland plateau, dissected by occasional small narrow valleys.
- Arable land use dominates, but with some pasture and orchards.
- Straight and regular field patterns with mainly low trimmed hedgerows.
- Widely dispersed blocks of woodland/small copses, sparse tree cover in the north.
- Former heathland character near Colchester.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Moderate too high intervisibility
- Tranquil areas in the northeast and south of the area
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations:

- Church Road Wood - Local Wildlife Site
- Bentley Brook – Local Wildlife Site
- Captains Wood – Ancient Woodland & Local Wildlife Site
- Hockley Wood – Ancient Woodland & Local Wildlife Site
- Hockley Farm Woods – Local Wildlife Site
- Great Bentley Conservation Area

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features		•			
	Complexity		•			
	Enclosure by Vegetation		•			
	Historic Character	•				
	Built development		•			
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View				•	
	Openness to Private View			•		
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features	•				
	Perceptual Quality		•			

The Site combines a number of arable fields with limited hedgerows and ditches, reducing complexity and sensitivity of the landscape. The Site demonstrates limited distinctive characteristics of the LCA, notably straight and regular field patterns, this reduces the sensitivity of landscape features. The Site is moderately enclosed with limited views out toward the wider landscape, owed to the intervening vegetation on the Site boundaries. The presence of agricultural buildings decreases the Site sensitivity to build development.

Traffic can be seen and heard from the Great Bentley Road reducing perceptual quality. Footpaths 1 & 10 (Frating) cross the centre of the Site allowing 360° views continuously, due to this, we consider public views to be significantly sensitive. Whilst there are a number of listed buildings surrounding the Site, we consider sensitivity to be reduced by virtue of the mature and established vegetation minimising the connection between the two.

For these reasons, Site A69 has been assessed as having **Medium-low** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

A69 is located to the west of two other mineral schemes, there is potential for PRoWs connecting all three Site creating a cumulative effect for public receptors using these. Furthermore, users of the A133 would likely experience a cumulative effect.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A71 – Lodge Farm

Red-Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is Tendring Plain (E3), notwithstanding this, the Site is close to the border of Dengie and Foulness Coast (F3) of which the Site is more aligned with in terms of remote tranquil character, demonstrating a number of distinct characteristic features from both LCAs including arable farmland with widely dispersed blocks of woodland/small copses with open views. Appropriate consideration is required to protect the characteristic features of the LCA.
- A number of Ancient Woodlands and Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) scatter the landscape particularly north of the Site. In addition, the landscape to the south contains a significant number of designations including Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA). Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity.
- Alresford Lodge Grade II listed building is located to the south. Views of the lodge are very limited by virtue of the intervening vegetation. However, the setting of this property could be significantly altered and therefore appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impact on these buildings.
- The Site is located within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding).
- The Sites' access is likely via Ford Lane through the existing quarry. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required. Visibility splays may also have to be considered if any alternative entrances are proposed.
- Two Public Rights of Way (PRoW) travel along and through the Site allowing views west across toward the River Colne. The views allowed of the River Colne are considered sensitive, and proposed mineral extraction would be located between the PRoW and the river. We would therefore expect these views to be screened and the perceptual quality from these receptors to be adversely impacted, with limited mitigation options.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located centrally south of Alresford, the Site is accessed via Ford Lane through the existing quarry to the east and sits within the parish of Alresford. Topographically the Site is located on a steep valley side falling toward the valley bottom River Colne.

The Site comprises approximately 2 arable fields and an area of grassland which appears to be naturalising. All boundaries are well vegetated with some views south toward the River Colne.

Two Public Rights of Way (PRoW) intersect the Site, Bridleway 13 (Alresford) follows the northern boundary and Footpath 14 (Alresford) crosses the Site connecting to the wider PRoW network.

The wider landscape comprises arable fields, scattered ancient woodlands and the Colne River.

The Site is largely falling within Enclosed Agriculture (Amalgamated Fields) classification, some areas to the south are classified as Industry (Extractive Industry (Mineral)) (National Historic Landscape Characterisation), the Site is classified as Grade 2 – Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

Some listed buildings surround the Site notably; Grade II Alresford Lodge (1168961).

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Tendring Plain (E3)

- Large flat farmland plateau, dissected by occasional small narrow valleys.
- Arable land use dominates, but with some pasture and orchards.
- Straight and regular field patterns with mainly low trimmed hedgerows.
- Widely dispersed blocks of woodland/small copses, sparse tree cover in the north.
- Former heathland character near Colchester

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Moderate to high intervisibility
- Tranquil areas in the northeast and south of the area
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Dengie and Foulness Coast (F3)

- Large scale, flat landscape.
- Sense of openness/space. Wide views.
- Vast tidal mudflats and sands, and extensive fringing saltmarshes, rich in wildlife.
- Mainly arable farmland of the reclaimed marshlands, intersected by ditches and dykes.
- Absence of woodland, only a few hedgerows.
- Isolated farms and barns, with small villages restricted to the fringes.
- Bradwell Nuclear Power Station is a significant landmark.
- Remote tranquil character.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- High intervisibility
- Landform character
- Landscape sensitivity value: High

Landscape Designations

There are some designations located within the Site including:

- Essex Coast - Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- Alresford Lodge Pits - Local Wildlife Site

Furthermore, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations:

- Colne Estuary (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 2) – Special Protection Area & RAMSAR
- Crestland Wood - Ancient Woodland & Local Wildlife Site
- Oldhall Wood - Ancient Woodland & Local Wildlife Site
- Colne Estuary - Site of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI)
- Alresford Lodge Pits - Local Wildlife Site

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features					•
	Complexity					•
	Enclosure by Vegetation	•				
	Historic Character	•				
	Built development				•	
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View				•	
	Openness to Private View		•			
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features					•
	Perceptual Quality					•

The Site is a combination of arable fields, grassland and intervening mature hedgerows with notable specimen trees, this greatly contributes to a sensitive complex landscape. The Sites demonstrates a unique combination of characteristics of two LCA's, notably the remote tranquil character of F3 and widely dispersed blocks of woodland/small copses with open views of E3, this greatly increases the sensitivity of landscape features.

Despite the Site being located in close proximity to an existing quarry, the location on the valley side and the presence of the river Colne creates a strong perceptual aspect for public users of the PRow's within the Site increasing visual sensitivity. Although the enclosed field boundaries of the Site as a whole make for effective screening, resulting in a low sensitive grade by the methodology, we would consider the Site sensitive regardless due to the location of the PRow, and views toward landscape features.

The historic value of the Site is limited as intervening vegetation between the Site and Alresford Lodge significantly reduce views to and from the property. Furthermore, views to private receptors and long distance are reduced to the south boundary toward river Colne.

For these reasons, the Site has been assessed as having Medium-High sensitivity.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

A71 is a proposed extension of the existing quarry to the east. A67 is located in close proximity to the north. Cumulative impacts are not considered to be significant due to the lack of connecting views and PRow's.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A72 – Martells – Southern Extension

Amber-Green

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site is located in Landscape Character Area (LCA) Tendring Plain (E3), and possesses a number of characteristic features, including the large flat arable plateau, straight regular field pattern, low trimmed hedgerows and woodland copses. Appropriate consideration is required to protect the characteristic features of the LCA and mitigate the impacts on the landscape.
- Wall's Wood Ancient Woodland (and Priority Habitat) is located close to the west of the Site on both sides of the A120 road that dissects the woodland. A Priority Habitat (Deciduous Woodland) defines the northern boundary of the Site. Church Wood (Ancient Woodland) and Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh (Priority Habitat) along Salary Brook are also located 1km to the south of the Site. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity, particularly on the northern Site boundary.
- There are few listed buildings within the surrounding landscape, however Grade II listed Hulls Farmhouse is located close to the north of the Site. The setting of the farmhouse could be significantly altered and therefore appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts.
- The Site is located within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding). Flood Zones 2 and 3 are located 0.4km to the west of the Site surrounding Salary Brook.
- Access opportunities are available from Slough Lane on the eastern boundary and from the proposed additional access road from close to Martells Industrial Estate. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required. Visibility splays and mitigating hedgerow removal may also have to be considered if any alternative entrances are proposed.
- There are no footpaths which run through or close to the Site, however vegetative screening may be required along the field boundaries adjacent to roads.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located approximately 1km to the north of Crockleford Heath, the Site is bound by the A120 to the south-west, Bromley Road to the south and Slough Lane to the east, with gated entrances on the eastern boundary. The Site comprises a singular arable field which is topographically flat. An access route is also included within the Site boundary, connecting the main parcel to Martells Industrial Estate to the north.

Late 19th Century maps show the Priority Habitat (Deciduous Woodland) on the northern boundary and a road which once existed running through the centre of the Site.

The Site is bound by hedgerows of varying conditions, with a fragmented hedgerow on the roadside boundary and a small copse to the north. The southern boundary remains open, owed to the Site comprising only part of the existing arable field.

The Site is located within an isolated rural setting with a combination of regular and irregular field patterns distributed evenly across the immediate landscape. This is surrounded by arable fields and working quarry sites towards to north, with the A120 as a strong presence adjacent to the Site. Notably the landform falls to the west, beyond the Site boundary, as it reaches Salary Brook.

Neighbouring minerals and waste schemes include Candidate Site A73 (Martells West Extension) to the north of the Site, and existing working Martells Quarry which is accessed via Slough Lane.

The Site largely falls within Enclosed Agriculture (Amalgamated Fields) classification (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and majority of the Site is classified as Grade 2 - Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

There are few listed buildings located close to the Site, however Grade II listed Hulls Farmhouse (1112055), Spring Valley Mill House (1112053) and Grade II* listed Spring Valley Mill (1112053) are all located to the north-west of the Site.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Tendring Plain (E3)

- Large flat farmland plateau, dissected by occasional small narrow valleys.
- Arable land use dominates, but with some pasture and orchards.
- Straight and regular field patterns with mainly low trimmed hedgerows.
- Widely dispersed blocks of woodland/small copses, sparse tree cover in the north.
- Former heathland character near Colchester.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Moderate to high intervisibility
- Tranquil areas in the northeast and south of the area
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations:

- Walls Wood – Ancient Woodland
- Ardleigh Gravel Pit – SSSI
- Crop Mark Site South of Ardleigh – Scheduled Monument
- Churn Wood – Ancient Woodland
- Priority Habitat – Deciduous Woodland (north boundary of Site)

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features		•			
	Complexity	•				
	Enclosure by Vegetation		•			
	Historic Character	•				
	Built development			•		
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View		•			
	Openness to Private View	•				
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features		•			
	Perceptual Quality		•			

The Site is an uncomplex single arable field which possess minimal important features that are considered sensitive to the landscape. The adjacent presence of Martells Quarry and the A120 reduces the overall perceptual quality of the rural setting.

Whilst there are no public footpaths within the vicinity, the low level fragmented roadside hedgerows provide some open views into the Site from Slough Lane.

The Site possesses a number of characteristic features of the Tendring Plain LCA, including the predominant flat arable plateau with surrounding woodland copse. The Site is however reduced in sensitivity by the limited private views and lack of historic landscape features.

For these reasons, Site A64 has been assessed as having **Medium-Low** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

The Site (A72) is located close to Candidate Site A73 (Martells West Extension), which is situated to the north-west of the Site. The access track proposed as part of the Site connects with a similar track proposed for A73. Existing working Martells Quarry would further contribute to the cumulative impacts of mineral extraction within the area, located to the north-east of the Site on the opposing side of Slough Lane.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A73 – Martells – Western Extension

Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site is located in Landscape Character Area (LCA) Tendring Plain (E3), and possesses a number of characteristic features, including the large flat arable plateau, straight regular field pattern, low trimmed hedgerows and woodland copses. Appropriate consideration is required to protect the characteristic features of the LCA and mitigate the impacts on the landscape.
- Wall's Wood Ancient Woodland (and Priority Habitat) is located 0.5km to the south-west of the Site on both sides of the A120 road that dissects the woodland. A Priority Habitat (Deciduous Woodland) also defines parts of the boundaries Site, adjacent to Salary Brook. Church Wood (Ancient Woodland) and Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh (Priority Habitat) along Salary Brook are also located 1.5km to the south of the Site. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity. Mineral extraction within this location would significantly alter the setting Salary Brook where a substantial buffer would be required.
- There are few listed buildings within the surrounding landscape.
- The Site is predominantly located within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding), however by virtue of its proximity to Salary Brook, the north-western boundary abuts Flood Zones 2 and 3 (high probability of flooding).
- Access opportunities are available from Slough Lane to the east of the Site and from the proposed additional access road from close to Martells Industrial Estate. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required. Visibility splays and mitigating hedgerow removal may also have to be considered if any alternative entrances are proposed.
- There are no footpaths which run through or close to the Site, however vegetative screening may be required along the field boundaries adjacent to roads.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Located approximately 0.5km to the south of Ardleigh, the Site sits to the west of Martells Industrial Estate. The Site comprises a singular arable field which fall towards the north-west corner as it reaches Salary Brook. An access route is also included within the Site boundary, connecting the main parcel to Martells Industrial Estate to the north.

Late 19th Century maps show Salary Brook and the railway line to the north-west of the Site.

The Site is bound by hedgerows on all sides, with an area of woodland defining the northern boundary. Martells Industrial Estate sits to the east and several bodies of water sit to the immediate west.

The Site is located within an isolated rural setting with a combination of regular and irregular field patterns distributed evenly across the immediate landscape. This is surrounded by arable fields and working quarry sites towards to east, with the A120 and the railway as a strong presence close to the Site.

Neighbouring minerals and waste schemes include Candidate Site A72 (Martells South Extension) to the south of the Site, and existing working Martells Quarry which is accessed via Slough Lane.

The Site largely falls within Orchards Horticulture and Aquaculture (Orchards and Vineyards) classification (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is split between Grade 3 - Good to Moderate and Grade 2 - Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

There are few listed buildings located close to the Site.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Tendring Plain (E3)

- Large flat farmland plateau, dissected by occasional small narrow valleys.
- Arable land use dominates, but with some pasture and orchards.
- Straight and regular field patterns with mainly low trimmed hedgerows.
- Widely dispersed blocks of woodland/small copses, sparse tree cover in the north.
- Former heathland character near Colchester.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Moderate to high intervisibility
- Tranquil areas in the northeast and south of the area
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations:

- Walls Wood – Ancient Woodland

- Ardleigh Gravel Pit – SSSI
- Crop Mark Site South of Ardleigh – Scheduled Monument
- Churn Wood – Ancient Woodland
- Priority Habitat – Deciduous
- Manor House Meadow Local Wildlife Site
- Springhead Corner Meadow Local Wildlife Site

Sensitivity assessment		Measurement				
Criteria Group	Criteria	Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
		Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features	•		
Complexity	•					
Enclosure by Vegetation				•		
Historic Character	•					
Built development			•			
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View		•			
	Openness to Private View		•			
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features			•		
	Perceptual Quality	•				

The Site comprises one large arable field with no important landscape features. Owing to its uncomplex nature, the Site has a reduced sensitivity. The Site is bound on some edges with vegetation; however, other boundaries are fragmented, resulting in a balance of enclosure. Located next to Martells Industrial Estate, the Site has a reduced sensitivity to built development and perceptual quality.

There are few public and private views into the Site due to the lack of roads and footpaths surrounding the Site, however the proposed access route is highly visible from Slough Lane. A river and surrounding vegetation follow the northern boundary, with other waterbodies also providing views towards natural features from within the Site. For these reasons, the Site has been assessed as having **Medium-Low** sensitivity

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

The Site (A73) is located close to Candidate Site A72 (Martells South Extension), which is situated to the south-east of the Site. The access track proposed as part of the Site connects with a similar track proposed for A72. Existing working Martells Quarry would further contribute to the cumulative impacts of mineral extraction within the area, located to the east of the Site on the opposing side of Slough Lane.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A74 – Thorrington Hall

Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is Tendring Plain (E3) of which the Site possesses a limited number of distinct characteristic features including large flat farmland plateau, with straight and regular field patterns.
- Thorrington Hall Ancient Woodland is located on the eastern boundary, abutting the Site. Considering the close proximity of the woodland to the Site, a substantial buffer should be given to protect the woodland from the impacts of mineral extraction. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity.
- There is a large cluster of Listed buildings to the west and further surrounding the north and east boundaries, however the established vegetation surrounding the properties reduces the intervisibility to the Site.
- The Site is located in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding).
- Access opportunities are available from the north-west field onto Clacton Road. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- Two Public Rights of Way (PRoW) cross the Site. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts of the PRoW which may include diversion or visual screening.
- St Mary Magdalen Church (Grade II* listed) is located on the north-eastern boundary of the Site, directly adjacent to the Ancient Woodland. There are strong views of the Church over the field hedgerows from the public footpath 8 (Thorrington) that runs through the Site. Whilst the immediate setting of the Church may have little impact as a result of mineral extraction, the wider setting of the Church are views in will be adversely affected.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located south of Thorrington and 1km north of Brightlingsea, the Site is accessed via Clacton Road (B1027). Topographically the Site is located on a flat plateau before the landscape falls toward the valley to the south.

The Site comprises a large number of moderately sized arable fields including a water body toward the south-east corner. The northernmost boundary is open to Clacton Road (B1027). The eastern boundary abuts Thorringtonhall Wood Ancient Woodland. Much of the southern boundary is defined by a wide tree belt connected to Rook Wood Ancient

Woodland. The western boundary is a combination of mature vegetation and open views to Brightlingsea Road (B1029).

Three Public Rights of Way (PRoW) intersect the Site, Footpaths 8, 12 & 13 (Thorrington).

The wider landscape comprises arable fields, scattered ancient woodlands and small settlements. Essex Coast Environmentally Sensitive Area is located to the south of the Site and abuts the Site boundary in the south-east corner.

The Site is largely falling within Enclosed Agriculture (Amalgamated Fields) and Enclosed Agriculture (Unplanned Fields) classification (National Historic Landscape Characterisation), the Site is classified as Grade 3 – Good To Moderate Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

Some listed buildings surround the Site notably; Grade II Thorrington Hall (1235267), Thorrington Mill House (1235270), Pear Tree Cottage (1235266). Brightlingsea Hall and All Saints Church conservation area is located to the south-west.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Tendring Plain (E3)

- Large flat farmland plateau, dissected by occasional small narrow valleys.
- Arable land use dominates, but with some pasture and orchards.
- Straight and regular field patterns with mainly low trimmed hedgerows.
- Widely dispersed blocks of woodland/small copses, sparse tree cover in the north.
- Former heathland character near Colchester.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Moderate to high intervisibility
- Tranquil areas in the northeast and south of the area
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations:

- Colne Estuary (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 2) – Special Protection Area & RAMSAR
- Essex Coast - Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- Thorringtonhall Wood – Ancient Woodland & Local Wildlife Site
- Colne Estuary – Site of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI)
- Thors Park Meadow – Local Wildlife Site

- Rook Wood Ancient Woodland

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features			•		
	Complexity			•		
	Enclosure by Vegetation		•			
	Historic Character			•		
	Built development			•		
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View				•	
	Openness to Private View		•			
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features					•
	Perceptual Quality			•		

The Site combines a number of arable and grassland fields, significant hedgerows and tree belts bounding most sides and a water body within the Site, this significantly increases the complexity and sensitivity of the landscape. The Site demonstrates some distinctive characteristics of the LCA, notably straight and regular field patterns and widely dispersed blocks of woodland/small copses, this balances the sensitivity of landscape features. The Site is moderately enclosed with limited views out toward the wider landscape limited to the south-eastern corner. There are however some historic features in the surrounding landscape, notably St Magdalens Church which is viewed from PRow 8 (Thorrington) within the Site.

Footpaths span the Site allowing 360° views, by virtue we consider public views to be significantly sensitive. Whilst there are a number of listed buildings surrounding the Site, we consider sensitivity to be reduced by virtue of the mature and established vegetation minimising the connection between the two. There are however strong views of Ancient Woodland's surrounding the Site, notably Thorrington Hall Wood which defines the eastern boundary. This significantly increases the sensitivity of the Site.

For these reasons, Site A74 has been assessed as having **Medium** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A75 – Land at Orford

Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The majority of the Site is covered by Landscape Character Area (LCA) North West Essex Chalk Farmland (A1) on the boundary of Stort Valley (C2). The Site possess high-quality characteristic features of the LCA, demonstrating strong examples of distinct landform including strongly rolling landform with panoramic views from ridgetops.
- There are no designations within the Site however, abutting Site in the south-west corner, is a Local Wildlife Site (LoWS) also designated as a Priority Habitat – Deciduous Woodland. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate impacts on biodiversity.
- There are a number of listed buildings surrounding the Site notably Grade II* Orford House. Given the mature vegetation surrounding the Site, views and setting of surrounding listed buildings is inconsequential, but should be retained where necessary.
- The Site itself is not within a flood zone. However, the extent of the west boundary abuts an area of Flood Zone 3 (High probability).
- There appears to be no obvious access into the Site, where new access is proposed, an appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- Three Public Rights of Way are associated with the Site, notably Bridleway 28 (Ugley) crosses the entirety of the Site east to west.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located approximately 0.5km north of Stansted Mountfitchet, the Site is accessible via Cambridge Road B1383 which runs to the western boundary. Topographically, the Site falls to the west down towards Ugley Brook. The Site comprises three arable fields which are dissected by ditches and hedgerows. The Site is in close proximity to a historic sand and gravel pit located to the south-west.

The western boundary is defined by Cambridge Road lined by hedgerows and trees. These vegetated boundaries extend to the northern and southern boundaries. To the east, the boundary is open to the wider arable farmland landscape with no definitive boundaries.

Bridleway 28 (Ugley) crosses the Site east to west, connecting Pennington Lane to Footpath 16 (Stansted Mountfitchet) and 17 (Ugley), which runs along the east of the Site.

The Site is located within the countryside amongst a combination of regular and irregular field patterns distributed evenly across the immediate landscape, although is also surrounded by towns and villages including Elsenham, Stansted Mountfitchet and the M11. The wider landform is elevated to the NW and also to the NE.

The Site is largely within the classification of Enclosed Agriculture (Unplanned Fields) classification and partly in Enclosed Agriculture (Amalgamated Fields) (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is Grade 3 - Good To Moderate Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

There are a number of listed buildings located to the north of the Site on Pound Lane, including Orford House (1221630), Cottage and Garage (1273750), Barn (1273751) and Dovecote (1221686) and Ivy Cottage (1221629). Other surrounding Listed Buildings include other cottages on Pounds Lane and Snakes Lane and residential properties in Ugley Green.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

North West Essex Chalk Farmland (A1)

- Strongly rolling landform of broad roundbacked ridges.
- Large scale arable farmland.
- Distinctive elevated, expansive and generally open character.
- Panoramic views from ridgetops.
- Dispersed blocks of woodland and isolated copses.
- Sparse settlement pattern, small linear villages alongside stream courses, and hamlets with greens.
- Mostly tranquil and remote character

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Landform character
- Visual exposed landscape
- Most tranquil
- Landscape sensitivity value: High

Stort Valley (C2)

- Shallow and narrow valley with moderately sloping arable valleysides.
- Fairly enclosed character due to the frequency of hedgerows/hedgerow trees, small woods/copses and riverside trees.

- Small pastures and large floodplain meadows on the valley floor.
- Numerous small estates and parklands.
- Substantially undeveloped character

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of valley floor/small parklands
- Tranquil character in the north
- Uncommon intrusive influences
- Strong strength of character/good condition of much of the landscape
- Landscape sensitivity value: High

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations, within a 3-mile radius are the following:

- Hall's Quarry SSSI
- Aubrey Buxton Reserve
- Alsa Wood Ancient Woodland
- Houghtey Wood Ancient Woodland
- Aubrey Buxton Nature Reserve SSSI

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features				•	
	Complexity					•
	Enclosure by Vegetation		•			
	Historic Character	•				
	Built development			•		
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View				•	
	Openness to Private View		•			
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features					•
	Perceptual Quality			•		

The Site contains a large number of landscape features that contribute positively toward the LCA and considered sensitive aspects of the landscape. Namely, the rolling landform with open countryside views particularly for users of the PRowS travelling east to west where the view toward the natural features is considered sensitive. The combination of mature hedgerow, Ugley Brook and established grassland contribute toward the complexity of the Site where these features offer a perceptual quality of tranquillity despite the presence of a main transport road to the west (Cambridge Road). Although there are surrounding historic buildings, these are well screened by mature vegetation within the Site, this would be sensitive to change if vegetation were to be removed.

For these reasons, Site A75 has been assessed as having **Medium** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

Immediately west of the Site is an application for a Screening Opinion (UTT/23/0102/SCO - Land North Of Walpole Meadows West Of Cambridge Road, Stansted.) for up to 350 dwellings and parkland.

Candidate Site Reference A76 – Elsenham

Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is Central Essex Farmlands (B1) and the Site possesses only limited characteristic features of this LCA, which includes the arable farmland landscape. The limited sense of complexity due to historic hedgerow removal reduces potential sensitivity of the Site.
- Elsenham Woods - Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lies less than 0.5km to the south of the Site. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity.
- Grade II Listed Buildings are located within the surrounding area, which includes Palegate Farmhouse, Pledgdon Hall and Pledgdon Green Farmhouse. The settings of these Grade II Listed Buildings surrounding the Site could be altered and therefore appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impact on these buildings.
- The Site has areas within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding) and Flood Zone 2 (medium probability of flooding). Some parts of the road along the north (B1051) are within Flood Zone 3 (High probability of flooding).
- The Site will either be accessed from B1051 on the northern boundary, or from the existing entrance access through Pledgdon Hall Farm yard. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- Public Rights of Way (PRoW) run along the eastern and southern boundary and connect to the wider PRoW network.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located approximately 2.5km to the north-east of Elsenham, the Site is accessible from B1051. Topographically, the Site is generally flat although rises slightly towards the south-east. Within the context of the wider landscape, the Site forms part of the valley side from the elevated ridge along brick end road and valley bottom west along mill road. The Site comprises arable fields and is intersected by open ditches. Historic mapping suggests the field was once split into 7 individual fields until 1960/70s.

The Site is rectangular in shape and its boundaries are defined by open ditches, fragmented infrequent hedgerows with open countryside views. The northern boundary is abutted with the B1051 and the eastern bound by Brick Lane End. The southern boundary abuts a small cluster of residential houses in the south-east corner and an

existing landfill site on the south-west corner. The western boundary abuts a small tree belt.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW) associated with the Site include footpath 18 (Henham) to the south-east corner and footpath 25 (Henham) along the western boundary. Both footpaths link to the wider PRoW network. NB footpaths to the south have been diverted presumably to accommodate the landfill and follow the headland of the Site.

The Site is located within the countryside setting amongst the wider arable farmland landscape. The wider landscape is generally elevated on all sides bar the west, Elsenham.

The Site is largely within the classification of Enclosed Agriculture (Typically Modern Form) Classification (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is Grade 2 – Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

Listed buildings in the vicinity; Grade II Listed Plegdon Hall (1278392) and Pledgdon Green Farmhouse (1231098). To note further is Elm Cottage (1230893) and Palegate Farmhouse across Brick End Road to the east.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Central Essex Farmlands (B1)

- Irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable fields, marked by sinuous hedgerows and ditches.
- Many small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape.
- Scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small hamlets, typically with greens and ponds.
- A concentration of isolated moated farmsteads.
- Network of narrow, winding lanes.
- Mostly tranquil character away from major roads and Stansted Airport.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of hedgerow and woodland pattern
- Moderate intervisibility
- Tranquil character away from existing major road corridors/Stansted
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations, within a 3-mile radius are the following:

- Elsenham Woods SSSI
- Hall's Quarry SSSI
- Quendon Wood SSI

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features			•		
	Complexity		•			
	Enclosure by Vegetation			•		
	Historic Character					
	Built development			•		
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View					•
	Openness to Private View				•	
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features				•	
	Perceptual Quality			•		

The Site is an uncomplex single arable field which possesses some important features that are considered sensitive to the landscape. The adjacent landfill site

located to the south in combination with being located within the flight path of Stansted Airport reduces the perceptual quality of the Site however the presence of numerous PRowS within the Site increases sensitivity of public view. In addition, Footpath 12 (Henham) is also covered by the long-distance walk The Saffron Trail, located to the north, this offers extensive long-distance views south incorporating the Site within the landscape vista.

For these reasons, Site A76 has been assessed as having **Medium** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A77 – Westward Extension to Highwood Quarry

Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is Central Essex Farmlands (B1) and possesses only limited characteristic features of the LCA, which includes the arable farmland landscape. The limited sense of complexity due to the scale and single land use reduces potential sensitivity of the Site.
- The tree belt abutting the western boundary is designated as a Local Wildlife Site (LoWS) increasing the views to natural features. Historic land use and Little Easton Conservation area increases the sensitivity of the historic value of the Site. In addition, historic mapping provides evidence the Site was once parkland associated with Easton Lodge. Appropriate mitigation to manage impact on historic landscape character should be considered as well as mitigation of potential impacts to the LoWS through buffer zone. Restoration should have regards to preserve existing characteristics and avoid introducing new features.
- Grade II Listed Buildings are located within the surrounding area, which includes Stone Hall, a Cluster within Little Easton and a Cluster in Easton Lodge. The settings of these Grade II Listed Buildings surrounding the Site could be altered and therefore appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impact on these buildings.
- The Site is not within a flood zone, nor is it in proximity of a flood zone.
- The Site will likely be accessed from the existing Site to the east. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- Public Rights of Way (PRoW) intersect the Site from 4 access point spanning the length of the Site boundary, this dramatically increases public visual sensitivity. There would be a direct impact on the PRoW users. Footpath diversion and screening would be required.
- Existing vegetation to Site's boundaries and within the Site should be protected.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located approximately 1km to the west of Great Dunmow, the Site is accessible from the existing Highwood Quarry Access Road which connected to the A120. Topographically, the Site is generally flat although rises slightly towards the south. The Site comprises arable fields and is situated on RAF Great Dunmow Airfield (1 July 1943 – 1946).

The Site is rectangular in shape and its boundaries are defined by existing airfield roads. Highwood Quarry is located to the east of the Site and Canfield Spring Wood located to the south, separating the Site from the A120. A linear tree belt defines the western boundary.

Several footpaths and bridleways cross the Site from south-west to north-east, including Footpath 4 (Little Canfield), Footpath 19 and 21 (Little Easton) and Bridleway 20 (Little Easton).

The Site is located within the countryside setting amongst the wider arable farmland landscape. Highwood Quarry and the A120 are also strong landscape features within the immediate setting of the Site. The wider landscape is generally elevated towards the north-west surrounding Molehill Green.

The Site is largely within the classification of Enclosed Agriculture (Post-War Enclosed) classification (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is Grade 2 – Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

There is one listed building in close proximity of the Site; Grade II Listed Stone Hall (1334091), which is located to the south of the Site.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Central Essex Farmlands (B1)

- Irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable fields, marked by sinuous hedgerows and ditches.
- Many small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape.
- Scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small hamlets, typically with greens and ponds.
- A concentration of isolated moated farmsteads.
- Network of narrow, winding lanes.
- Mostly tranquil character away from major roads and Stansted Airport.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of hedgerow and woodland pattern
- Moderate intervisibility
- Tranquil character away from existing major road corridors/Stansted
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations, including:

- Airfield Wood Ancient Woodland
- High Wood Ancient Woodland
- Little Easton Conservation Area

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features	•				
	Complexity	•				
	Enclosure by Vegetation				•	
	Historic Character					•
	Built development				•	
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View					•
	Openness to Private View	•				
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features			•		
	Perceptual Quality			•		

The Site is an uncomplex single arable field which possesses little important features that are considered sensitive to the landscape. The adjacent quarry site located to the east in combination with the close proximity of the A120 reduces the perceptual quality of the Site however the presence of numerous PRowS within the Site increases sensitivity of public view. The historic value of the Site as previous parkland and then wartime airfield increases the sensitivity of historic character, particularly as the runways remain and create a distinct field pattern. Views to private receptors and long distance are reduced by the wider vegetation.

For these reasons, Site A77 has been assessed as having **Medium** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

The Site is a proposed extension of the existing Highwood Quarry located to the east and therefore there would be cumulative impact effects on the extensive PRow

network. In addition, the proposed extension closes in on the historic landscape and buildings on the area.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site.

Candidate Site Reference A79 – Crown Quarry – North of Wick Lane

Amber-Green

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site is very characteristic of the Tendring Plain (E3) Landscape Character Area (LCA), comprising the large flat arable farmland plateau which is broken up by low trimmed hedgerows and woodland copses. Whilst the Site is characteristic of the area, the level plateau and hedgerows reduce the sensitivity of the Site to mineral extraction.
- Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located 1km to the north of the Site, however the flat plateau and hedgerows limit potential views from the Site. Priority Habitats (Deciduous Woodland) are located along the northern boundary of the Site and require a buffer area to minimise potential harm to this area of woodland. Birch Wood Ancient Woodland is also located 0.5k to the north-west of the Site.
- Four Grade II listed Farmhouses and Barns are located on the western site peripheries of the Site, separated by intervening hedgerows. Noise levels and visual impact would still need to be managed with appropriate siting of the proposed works.
- The Site is in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding) however Zones 2 and 3 (high probability flood zone) are located close to the north-eastern boundary at the edge of Abberton Reservoir.
- The Site currently has available access points from the south onto Wick Lane, where existing gaps in the hedgerows provide access to agricultural machinery. Any additional entrances that may need to be created to provide access to the Site will need to consider visibility splays. Appropriate transport and access arrangements and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- Residential properties are located on the east and west boundaries of the Site. Noise levels, a sufficient buffer and visual impact would still need to be managed with appropriate siting of the proposed works.
- There are number of mature substantial trees located along the boundaries of the Site, notably on the southern boundary. Retention, protection and strengthening should be consider as part of mitigation. Appropriate buffer distance areas will be required.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

The Site is located 1km to the west of Ardleigh and 1km to the south of Langham and is accessible from an existing farmyard on Wick Lane to the south. The Site comprises one large arable field and an established hedgerow which runs partly through the centre of the Site.

The southern boundary of the Site is defined by Wick Lane and an established hedgerow which separates the Site from the road. The other boundaries are also bound by established hedgerows and trees, which separate the Site from residential properties and associated gardens.

Late 19th Century maps show Wick Lane, Ardleigh Wick and Fountain Farm adjacent to the Site. Bluebarn Farm also sits to the north of the Site, adjacent to a watercourse which connects to Abberton Reservoir. The watercourse is surrounded by river edge vegetation and trees.

There are no Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within or around the Site, however Footpath 19 (Ardleigh) meets the Site from the south at Wick Lane.

The Site is located close to Colchester City and the A120 and A12 junction. The Site is however located within a countryside setting despite the built influence. The topography of the Site is generally flat, falling very slightly to the east, however the wider landscape positions the Site on a ridge between the River Colne and River Stour.

The Site falls within Enclosed Agriculture – Amalgamated Fields (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is classified as Grade 2 – Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

Four listed buildings are located just outside the Site boundaries. Grade II listed Wick Farmhouse (1253913) and Barn (1253914) are located to the south-west and Bloomfields Farmhouse (1253915) and Barn (1261548) are located to the north-west.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Tendring Plain (E3)

- Large flat farmland plateau, dissected by occasional small narrow valleys.
- Arable land use dominates, but with some pasture and orchards.
- Straight and regular field patterns with mainly low trimmed hedgerows.
- Widely dispersed blocks of woodland/small copses, sparse tree cover in the north.
- Former heathland character near Colchester.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Moderate to high intervisibility
- Tranquil areas in the northeast and south of the area
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations:

- Birch Wood Ancient Woodland
- Priority Habitat – Deciduous Woodland (northern boundary)
- Ardleigh Reservoir Grassland Local Wildlife Site
- Ardleigh Reservoir Wood Local Wildlife Site
- Kiln Wood Ancient Woodland
- Ardleigh Gravel Pit – SSSI
- Crop Mark Site South of Ardleigh – Scheduled Monument
- Manor House Meadow Local Wildlife Site
- Springhead Corner Meadow Local Wildlife Site

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features		•			
	Complexity		•			
	Enclosure by Vegetation	•				
	Historic Character			•		
	Built development			•		
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View		•			
	Openness to Private View			•		
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features	•				
	Perceptual Quality		•			

The Site has few internal features of landscape importance considering its predominant singular use arable field, however the linear hedgerow that runs partially through the

Site increases the complexity sensitivity. The boundaries are very well vegetated and create a strong sense of enclosure, reducing the sensitivity of the Site.

There are four listed buildings surrounding the Site, which are only partially separated from the Site by well-established hedgerows and trees, increasing the sensitivity. There are however other built development features within and around the surrounding landscape, such as the farmyard and residential properties, which reduce the sensitivity of the landscape.

There are few public views into the Site, with only some glimpses into the Site along Wick Lane to the south. Private views are stronger, with views available from the farmyard and from the surrounding residential properties.

The sites strong enclosure reduces the sensitivity to views towards landmark buildings/natural features. The perceptual quality is reduced due to the farmyard and the noise from the two major roads nearby.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

Candidate site A80 is located adjacent to the south of the Site, separated by Wick Lane and two boundary hedgerows that define the field perimeters. The presence of mineral extraction on both boundaries of Wick Lane will cause a cumulative impact for road users along this route, where mineral extraction will occupy both sides of this intimate country lane.

Existing working Crown Quarry is located just beyond the south of neighbouring A80. Although there is little intervisibility between the two sites, Footpath 19 (Ardleigh) travels from Crown Quarry to Wick Lane, which will contribute to the cumulative impacts of users on this route.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A80 – Crown Quarry – South of Wick Lane

Amber-Green

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site is very characteristic of the Tendring Plain (E3) Landscape Character Area (LCA), comprising the large flat arable farmland plateau which is broken up by low trimmed hedgerows and woodland copses. Whilst the Site is characteristic of the area, the level plateau and hedgerows reduce the sensitivity of the Site to mineral extraction.
- Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located 1km to the north of the Site, however the flat plateau and hedgerows limit potential views from the Site. Priority Habitats (Deciduous Woodland) are located along the northern boundary of the Site and require a buffer area to minimise potential harm to this area of woodland. Birch Wood Ancient Woodland is also located 0.5k to the north-west of the Site.
- Two Grade II listed buildings are located on the western boundary of the Site, with open views into the Site. The setting of these listed buildings is likely to be altered as a result of mineral extraction. Noise levels and visual impact would still need to be managed with appropriate siting of the proposed works. A bund or advanced planting may need to be proposed along this boundary.
- The Site is in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding) however Zones 2 or 3 (medium and high probability flood zone) are located close to the east at the edge of Abberton Reservoir.
- The Site currently has access points from Wick Farm to the west and from Wick Lane to the north. Any additional entrances that may need to be created to provide access to the Site will need to consider visibility splays. Appropriate transport and access arrangements and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- There are number of mature substantial trees located along the boundaries of the Site, notably on the northern boundary. Retention, protection and strengthening should be consider as part of mitigation. Appropriate buffer distance areas will be required.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

The Site is located 1km to the west of Ardleigh and 1km to the south of Langham and is accessible from an existing farmyard on Wick Lane to the south. The Site comprises one large arable field.

Part of the northern boundary of the Site is defined by Wick Lane and an established hedgerow which separates the Site from the road. The Site comprises part of a larger field, and therefore most boundaries remain open.

Late 19th Century maps show the northern road, Ardleigh Wick and Fountain Farm to the north and Abberton Reservoir to the east.

There are no Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within or around the Site.

The Site is located close to Colchester City and the A120 and A12 junction. The Site is however located within a countryside setting despite the built influence. The topography of the Site is generally flat, falling very slightly to the east, however the wider landscape positions the Site on a ridge between the River Colne and River Stour.

The Site falls within Enclosed Agriculture – Amalgamated Fields (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is classified as Grade 2 – Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

Three listed buildings are located close to the Site boundaries. Grade II listed Wick Farmhouse (1253913) and Barn (1253914) are located to the west and Fountain Farmhouse (1253912) to the east.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Tendring Plain (E3)

- Large flat farmland plateau, dissected by occasional small narrow valleys.
- Arable land use dominates, but with some pasture and orchards.
- Straight and regular field patterns with mainly low trimmed hedgerows.
- Widely dispersed blocks of woodland/small copses, sparse tree cover in the north.
- Former heathland character near Colchester.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Moderate to high intervisibility
- Tranquil areas in the northeast and south of the area
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations:

- Birch Wood Ancient Woodland
- Priority Habitat – Deciduous Woodland (northern boundary)
- Ardleigh Reservoir Grassland Local Wildlife Site

- Ardleigh Reservoir Wood Local Wildlife Site
- Kiln Wood Ancient Woodland
- Ardleigh Gravel Pit – SSSI
- Crop Mark Site South of Ardleigh – Scheduled Monument
- Manor House Meadow Local Wildlife Site
- Springhead Corner Meadow Local Wildlife Site

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features		•			
	Complexity	•				
	Enclosure by Vegetation			•		
	Historic Character			•		
	Built development		•			
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View		•			
	Openness to Private View			•		
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features		•			
	Perceptual Quality		•			

The Site is an uncomplex singular arable field with no distinctive or important features within the Site which reduces the Site sensitivity. Whilst the field has a strong vegetated boundary on the northern edge which abuts the road, the Site does not follow the existing field boundaries and therefore leaves the boundaries open, increasing site sensitivity.

There are three listed buildings in the vicinity of the Site, two of which are at Wick Farm to the east and have open views of the Site. This increases the historic character sensitivity of the Site.

The enclosed nature of the Site limits the opportunities for public views into the Site, with views restricted to gaps in the hedgerow along the northern boundary. Private views are available from neighbouring Wick Farm, which is located on the Site boundary. The enclosed nature also restricts views towards landmark buildings and natural features which reduces the sensitivity of the Site. The presence of the working farm and the noise of the A120 and A12 reduces the perceptual quality of the Site.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

Candidate site A79 is located adjacent to the north of the Site, separated by Wick Lane and two boundary hedgerows that define the field perimeters. The presence of mineral extraction on both boundaries of Wick Lane will cause a cumulative impact for road users along this route, where mineral extraction will occupy both sides of this intimate country lane.

Existing working Crown Quarry is located just beyond the south of the Site. Although there is little intervisibility between the two sites, Footpath 19 (Ardleigh) travels from Crown Quarry to Wick Lane, which will contribute to the cumulative impacts of users on this route.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A82 – Colemans Farm – Elm Springs Extension

Amber-Green

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site is significantly characteristic of the Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys (C6) Landscape Character Area. The Site itself is arable farmland with well hedged boundaries, located on the valley side of the River Blackwater. Linear poplar and willow plantations are visible from the Site towards the north-west, where the valley floor runs close to the boundary. Appropriate consideration is required to protect the characteristic features of the LCA, particularly on the setting of the River Blackwater valley floor, and mitigate the impacts on the landscape.
- Elm Springs Priority Habitat (Deciduous Woodland) defines the north-eastern site boundary, and Stowling & Crierswood Ancient Woodland is located 0.3km to the south-east of the Site. The River Blackwater valley is located 0.1km to the north, with strong intervisibility between the Site and the river. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the physical impacts on Elm Springs with a suitable buffer, and consideration for the visual impact on the River Blackwater valley landscape will also need to be considered.
- A cluster of listed buildings are located 0.4km to the west of the Site surrounding Little Braxted Hall (Grade II) and the Church of St Nicholas (Grade I). Grade II* listed Braxted Park is also located 0.4km to the east of the Site. No listed buildings or parks are visible from the Site by virtue of the intervening vegetation; however, the wider landscape setting of these may be altered and appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impact.
- The Site is in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding); however, Flood Zones 2 & 3 are located on the immediate northern boundary to Site surrounding the River Blackwater.
- There are opportunities for the Site to be accessed from the farm road to the north-west boundary, which is currently used as access to the farm buildings located adjacent to the Site. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- Public Rights of Way (PRoW) run along the south-western boundary and to the north-west of the Site. Footpath 1 (Little Braxted) provides occasional views into the Site in field entrances although is largely separated from the Site by established hedgerows. Footpath 2 (Great Braxted) has open views of the Site from the valley floor, although is partially screened owed to the elevation changes. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts of both PRoWs which will require visual screening.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located to the east of Witham, the Site is accessed via a farm road from Little Braxted Lane. The Site is located within Little Braxted village. Topographically, the Site falls towards the north-west approaching the River Blackwater.

Late 19th Century maps show the presence of Braxted Park to the east and the Elm Springs woodland on the northern boundary.

The Site comprises one arable field and one small area of grassland adjacent to the neighbouring woodland. The north-western boundary is open to the rest of the arable field and a farmyard on the western corner. A woodland defines the north-east boundary, and an area of grassland and planting defining the south-east edge.

No Public Rights Of Way (PRoW) run through the Site however Footpath 2 (Little Braxted) runs along the south-western boundary, and Footpath 1 (Great Braxted) runs beyond the north-western boundary.

The Site is located adjacent to previous excavation sites associated with Colemans Quarry. The wider landscape comprises arable fields and a reservoir from previous workings. A north-east to south-west ridge is located to the east of the Site through Great Braxted, whilst the Site is in the valley of the River Blackwater.

The Site is largely falling within Enclosed Agriculture (Amalgamated Fields) classification, and a majority of the Site is classified as Grade 3 – Good to Moderate Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

A cluster of listed buildings are located to the south-west of the Site on Witham Road.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys (C6)

- Shallow valleys.
- Predominantly arable farmland with well hedged medium to large fields.
- The Brain and the Upper Blackwater Valleys are narrow with undulating valleysides.
- The Lower Chelmer, and the Blackwater near Maldon, have wide flat valley floors, and gentle valleysides.
- Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive feature.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of the valley floor
- Some visually exposed valleysides/open valley floors
- Tranquil character in parts

- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

Elm Springs Priority Habitat (Deciduous Woodland) is located on the northern boundary of the Site.

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features			•		
	Complexity	•				
	Enclosure by Vegetation			•		
	Historic Character		•			
	Built development		•			
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View		•			
	Openness to Private View		•			
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features				•	
	Perceptual Quality			•		

The Site is uncomplex, comprising only one open arable field which reduces the overall sensitivity of the Site. Most boundaries are enclosed by established hedgerows and trees which restrict public and private views into the Site, however the open north-western boundary does provide open views from Footpath 1 (Little Braxted) and adjacent farm buildings.

Elm Springs priority habitat (deciduous woodland) defines the north-eastern boundary and is a prominent landscape feature from within the Site which increases the overall sensitivity.

For these reasons, Site A82 has been assessed as having **Medium-Low** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

Candidate Sites A49 and A51 abut the north-eastern boundary of the Site, separated partially by Elm Springs priority habitat (deciduous woodland). Candidate Site A52 is also located close to the Site and can be viewed across the River Blackwater valley.

There are a number of other Candidate sites which stretch further north-east along the River Blackwater valley, including A50, A84, A83 and D7, which contribute to the cumulative effects of mineral extraction along the river.

Previous mineral extraction sites are also evident in the immediate setting of the Site, where several reservoirs, including Colemans Reservoir, are situated in the surrounding fields along the valley. Existing working quarries at Coleman's Farm are also present to the north-west of the Site, located adjacent to the A12 road at Rivenhall End.

We have strong concerns that there would be significant cumulative impact on the local landscape character if mineral extraction works continue along the River Blackwater valley.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and other cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A83 – Colemans Farm – Hole Farm

Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site is very characteristic of the Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer (C6) Landscape Character Area (LCA). Located close to the River Blackwater, the Site is lined by linear willow and poplar trees which are a strong local feature of the landscape. The remainder of the Site comprises arable fields with open views of the river. Appropriate consideration is required to protect the characteristic features of the LCA, particularly on the setting of the River Blackwater valley floor, and mitigate the impacts on the landscape.
- Priority Habitats (Deciduous Woodland) are located along the full extent of the south-eastern boundary, adjacent to the River Blackwater. Kelvedon Hall Wood (Ancient Woodland) is located approximately 0.5km to the east of the Site, on the opposing side of the River. Mineral extraction within this location would significantly alter the setting of the River Blackwater valley, where a substantial buffer would be required.
- Hole Farm (Grade II*) listed building is located directly adjacent to the western boundary of the Site, also adjacent to the A12. Mineral extraction works would further degrade the setting of the listed building, in combination with the A12 road, and therefore appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts.
- The western edge of the Site is located in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding); however, the eastern edge is located within Flood Zone 3 (high probability of flooding) owed to its location directly adjacent to the River Blackwater.
- Access opportunities are available from the B1024 road bridge that crosses the A12 and provides access to Hole Farm. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required. Visibility splays may also have to be considered if any alternative entrances are proposed.
- A public right of way (PRoW) Footpath 27 (Kelvedon) enters the Site on the south-eastern edge, crossing the River Blackwater. The footpath then runs through the Site to Hole Farm and provides open views across the whole site. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts of the PRoW which may include diversion or visual screening.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located to the north-east of Witham, the Site is accessed via the slip road off the A12 London Road joining B1024. The Site sits within the parish of Kelvedon and is topographically generally flat gently falling towards the south-east towards the River Blackwater.

The Site comprises arable fields surrounding Hole Farm. The Site is largely undefined with fixed boundaries and has open access to further arable fields. The south boundary comprises fragmented tree plantation.

One Public Rights of Way (PRoW) intersect the Site through Hole Farm yard named Footpath 27 (Kelvedon). Also of note is Footpath 30 (Kelvedon) located close to the north boundary

The Site is located in close proximity to previous excavation sites associated with Colemans Quarry. The A12 London Road is a prominent feature in the wider landscape. A north-east to south-west ridge is located to the east of the Site through Great Braxted, whilst the Site is in the valley of the River Blackwater.

The Site evenly falls within Enclosed Agriculture (Amalgamated Fields) and Enclosed Agriculture (Unplanned Fields) (National Historic Landscape Characterisation). Majority of the Site is classified as Grade 2 – Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification), with some of the Site classified as Grade 3 – Good to Moderate Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

A number of listed buildings are located in proximity of the Site. Of particular note:

- Grade II* Hole Farmhouse (1123803)
- Grade II The Mill House and Attached Mill Bridge (1166135)

Scheduled monument 'Neolithic long mortuary enclosure at Appleford Farm, Rivenhall End' (1008980) is located within the abutting field to the south.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys (C6)

- Shallow valleys.
- Predominantly arable farmland with well hedged medium to large fields.
- The Brain and the Upper Blackwater Valleys are narrow with undulating valleysides.
- The Lower Chelmer, and the Blackwater near Maldon, have wide flat valley floors, and gentle valleysides.
- Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive feature.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of the valley floor
- Some visually exposed valleysides/open valley floors
- Tranquil character in parts
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, there are a small number within proximity:

- Kelvedon Hall Wood Ancient Woodland

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features			•		
	Complexity		•			
	Enclosure by Vegetation				•	
	Historic Character			•		
	Built development		•			
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View				•	
	Openness to Private View		•			
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features				•	
	Perceptual Quality		•			

The Site is located close to the western boundary of the River Blackwater which is characteristically lined by linear plantations of poplar and willow, increasing the sensitivity of the Site. These features are characteristic of the landscape character increasing the sensitivity, despite the Site being largely comprised of arable farmland.

The Site boundary is not defined by existing field boundaries therefore opening up the Site edges, increasing the sensitivity. Whilst the public footpaths running through the Site adjacent to the River Blackwater provide open views of the Site in context of the

characteristic river valley landscape features, the overall perceptual quality is reduced owed to the A12 road located on the elevated ride on the western boundary of the Site. Strong public views are available from the A12 and Footpath 27 (Kelvedon), with some private views from the dwelling at Hole Farm.

For these reasons, Site A83 has been assessed as having **Medium** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

Candidate Sites A84 is located adjacent to the south of the Site, separated by an established hedgerow. Candidate Site A94 is also located to the north-east of the Site, separated by several fields and the River Blackwater.

There are also a number of other Candidate sites which stretch further south-west along the River Blackwater valley, including A82, A52, A51, A49, A50 and D7, which contribute to the cumulative effects of mineral extraction along the river.

Previous mineral extraction sites are also evident to the south-west, where several reservoirs, including Colemans Reservoir, are situated in the surrounding fields along the valley. Existing working quarries at Coleman's Farm are also present, located adjacent to the A12 road at Rivenhall End.

We have strong concerns that there would be significant cumulative impact on the local landscape character if mineral extraction works continue along the River Blackwater valley.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and other cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A84 – Colemans Farm – Appleford Farm North Extension

Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site is very characteristic of the Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer (C6) Landscape Character Area (LCA). Located close to the River Blackwater, the Site is lined by linear willow and poplar trees which are a strong local feature of the landscape. The remainder of the Site comprises arable fields with open views of the river. Appropriate consideration is required to protect the characteristic features of the LCA, particularly on the setting of the River Blackwater valley floor, and mitigate the impacts on the landscape.
- Priority Habitats (Deciduous Woodland) are located along part of the eastern boundary, adjacent to the River Blackwater. Kelvedon Hall Wood (Ancient Woodland) is located approximately 0.5km to the east of the Site, on the opposing side of the River. Mineral extraction within this location would significantly alter the setting of the River Blackwater valley, where a substantial buffer would be required.
- Hole Farm (Grade II*) listed building is located in the adjacent field to the north, also adjacent to the A12. There are no other listed buildings located in the vicinity of the Site.
- The western edge of the Site is located in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding); however, the eastern edge is located within Flood Zone 3 (high probability of flooding) owed to its location directly adjacent to the River Blackwater.
- Access opportunities are available from Essex Fire & Rescue HQ to the north of the Site. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required. Visibility splays may also have to be considered if any alternative entrances are proposed.
- Two public right of way (PRoW) run through the Site (Footpath 36 (Rivenhall) and Footpath 28 (Kelvedon)) providing open public views of the Site with the River Blackwater valley in the background. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts of the PRoW which may include diversion or visual screening.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located to the north-east of Witham, the Site is accessed via a private farm road located to the west off Braxted Road. The Site sits within the parish of Rivenhall and is topographically generally flat in rough level with the River Blackwater.

The Site comprises 2 arable fields dissected by a hedgerow. The Site is generally undefined to the north abutting Essex County Fire & Rescue Service HQ to the north. All other boundaries are defined by fragmented hedgerows.

Two Public Rights of Way (PRoW) intersect the Site named Footpath 28 (Kelvedon) & Footpath 36 (Rivenhall). Also of note is Footpath 35 (Rivenhall) which passes through the north and terminates adjoining the two previously mentioned PRoWs.

The Site is located in close proximity to previous excavation sites associated with Colemans Quarry. The A12 London Road is a prominent feature in the wider landscape. A north-east to south-west ridge is located to the east of the Site through Great Braxted, whilst the Site is in the valley of the River Blackwater.

The Site largely falls within Enclosed Agriculture (Amalgamated Fields) (National Historic Landscape Characterisation). Majority of the Site is classified Grade 3 – Good to Moderate Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

A number of listed buildings are located in proximity of the Site. Of particular note:

- Grade II* Hole Farmhouse (1123803)
- Grade II The Mill House And Attached Mill Bridge (1166135)
- Grade II Kelvedon Lodge (1166087)

Scheduled monument 'Neolithic long mortuary enclosure at Appleford Farm, Rivenhall End' (1008980) is located within the centre of the Site.

Grade II* Braxted Park (1000455) is located to the south.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys (C6)

- Shallow valleys.
- Predominantly arable farmland with well hedged medium to large fields.
- The Brain and the Upper Blackwater Valleys are narrow with undulating valleysides.
- The Lower Chelmer, and the Blackwater near Maldon, have wide flat valley floors, and gentle valleysides.
- Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive feature.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of the valley floor
- Some visually exposed valleysides/open valley floors
- Tranquil character in parts
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, there are a small number within proximity:

- Kelvedon Hall Wood Ancient Woodland

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features			•		
	Complexity		•			
	Enclosure by Vegetation			•		
	Historic Character		•			
	Built development		•			
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View			•		
	Openness to Private View		•			
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features				•	
	Perceptual Quality		•			

The Site is located close to the western boundary of the River Blackwater which is characteristically lined by linear plantations of poplar and willow, increasing the sensitivity of the Site.

The Site has an open north-western boundary, however the road level of the A12 drops below a bank and established hedgerow so has limited public views, lowering the sensitivity.

There are two footpaths; Footpath 36 (Rivenhall) and Footpath 28 (Kelvedon) that run through the Site and provide open public views. Whilst the public footpaths running through the Site adjacent to the River Blackwater provide open views of the Site in context of the characteristic river valley landscape features, the overall perceptual quality is reduced owed to the A12 road located on the elevated ride on the western boundary of the Site.

For these reasons, Site A84 has been assessed as having **Medium** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

Candidate Sites A83 is located adjacent to the north of the Site, separated by an established hedgerow. Candidate Site A94 is also located to the north-east of the Site, separated by A83, several fields and the River Blackwater.

There are also a number of other Candidate sites which stretch further south-west along the River Blackwater valley, including A82, A52, A51, A49, A50 and D7, which contribute to the cumulative effects of mineral extraction along the river.

Previous mineral extraction sites are also evident to the south-west, where several reservoirs, including Colemans Reservoir, are situated in the surrounding fields along the valley. Existing working quarries at Coleman's Farm are also present, located adjacent to the A12 road at Rivenhall End.

We have strong concerns that there would be significant cumulative impact on the local landscape character if mineral extraction works continue along the River Blackwater valley.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and other cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A85 – Martells – North of Frating Road (East)

Amber-Green

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site is very characteristic of the Tendring Plan (E3) Landscape Character Area (LCA), comprising the large flat arable farmland plateau which is broken up by low trimmed hedgerows. Other characteristic features such as the woodland copses are not prevalent within this location. Whilst the Site is characteristic of the area, the level plateau and hedgerows reduce the sensitivity of the Site to mineral extraction.
- Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located 1km to the north of the Site, with the Stour and Orwell Estuaries Ramsar and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located 2.5km to the north-east. The flat plateau and hedgerows limit potential views from the Site towards the Ramsar, AONB and SSSI.
- Grade II listed buildings are located 0.3km from the Site, however the intervening vegetation and flat plateau contributes to limiting the impact on the setting of these buildings. Noise levels and visual impact would still need to be managed with appropriate siting of the proposed works.
- The Site is in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding), with no high probability flood zones (Zones 2 or 3) within 1km of the Site.
- The Site currently has two available access points from the north-west and south-west corners of the field, where existing gaps in the hedgerows provide access to agricultural machinery. Any additional entrances that may need to be created to provide access to the Site will need to consider visibility splays. Appropriate transport and access arrangements and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- Footpath 28 (Ardleigh) runs through the centre of the Site, providing open views of the field. There will be an adverse effect on the public rights of way users and other receptors with regards visual impact. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the visual impacts of the PRow, with a likely requirement to divert the footpath to the Site peripheries.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located 1km to the east of Ardleigh village, the Site is accessed from Morrow Lane and Little Bromley Road which define three of the Site boundaries. The Site is bound by established hedgerows and trees which are fragmented in places. The Site comprises a singular arable field that is topographically flat.

Late 19th Century maps show the surrounding road network that defines the Site boundaries and Old Sheilds located to the south of the Site.

Public Right of Way (PRoW) Footpath 28 (Ardleigh) runs through the centre of the Site from Morrow Lane in the west to Little Bromley Road in the east. The footpath crosses Morrow Lane to connect to Footpath 29 (Ardleigh) which connects to Ardleigh village in the west.

The Site is located within the countryside and is surrounded by flat arable farmland fields of medium to large scale. There are several farmsteads and businesses scattered within the surrounding area. Although the immediate setting is generally flat, the land notably rises to the west in the area north of Colchester.

The Site predominantly falls within Enclosed Agriculture – Amalgamated Fields and partly within Orchards, Horticulture and Aquaculture (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is classified as Grade 1 – Excellent Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

There are few listed buildings close to the Site, however Grade II listed Rose Cottage (1253911) is located to the south and Bounds Farmhouse (1253911) is located to the north-east. Scheduled Monument Crop Mark Site South of Ardleigh (1002146) is located very close to the western boundary of the Site in the adjacent field.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Tendring Plain (E3)

- Large flat farmland plateau, dissected by occasional small narrow valleys.
- Arable land use dominates, but with some pasture and orchards.
- Straight and regular field patterns with mainly low trimmed hedgerows.
- Widely dispersed blocks of woodland/small copses, sparse tree cover in the north.
- Former heathland character near Colchester.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Moderate to high intervisibility
- Tranquil areas in the northeast and south of the area
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations:

- Ardleigh Gravel Pit – SSSI
- Crop Mark Site South of Ardleigh – Scheduled Monument (southern boundary)
- Priority Habitat – Deciduous Woodland (western boundary)
- Manor House Meadow Local Wildlife Site

- Springhead Corner Meadow Local Wildlife Site

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features		•			
	Complexity	•				
	Enclosure by Vegetation	•				
	Historic Character		•			
	Built development		•			
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View			•		
	Openness to Private View	•				
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features		•			
	Perceptual Quality		•			

The Site is an uncomplex flat arable field with few important landform and landscape features, reducing the overall site sensitivity. Established hedgerows and trees are present on all boundaries surrounding the Site, however these are fragmented in some places, notably the south-west corner, providing some views into the Site.

There are few listed buildings in the surrounding area however a Scheduled Monument is present in the neighbouring field which increases the local historic character sensitivity. Whilst there are few buildings in the surrounding area, the surrounding road network and presence of telephone wires that run through the Site show the built development that exists within the area.

Footpath 28 (Ardleigh) runs through the centre of the Site providing open views of the field, which in combination with the fragmented hedgerow reduces the Site sensitivity to public views. There are however no private views into the Site owed to few surrounding buildings and the established hedgerow that surrounds most of the Site, reducing sensitivity. There are few landmark buildings and natural features locally, with the established hedgerows also contributing to limiting views out of the Site. The arable farmland context and telephone wires reduce the overall perceptual quality of the Site. For these reasons, the Site has been assessed as having **Medium-Low**

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

Candidate site A86 is located adjacent to the west of the Site, separated by Morrows Lane and two boundary hedgerows that define the field perimeters. Footpath 28 (Ardleigh) crosses from the Site into the adjacent Candidate site A86. Public views along the footpath and from the surrounding public footpath network will be impacted with cumulative minerals works, particularly from pedestrians using the footpaths from Ardleigh village. Road users along Morrow Lane will also experience a change in the landscape with mineral extraction proposals on both sides of the road, contributing to the wider cumulative impact.

Candidate Site A85 and existing working Martells Quarry is also located to the south-west and will further contribute to the cumulative impact of mineral extraction within the area.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

A solar farm is currently located both to the south and north of the Site. The area of solar farm to the north occupies a significant number of fields within the landscape and could cumulatively contribute to impacting the character of the surrounding landscape.

Candidate Site Reference A86 – Martells – North of Frating Road (West)

Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site is very characteristic of the Tendring Plan (E3) Landscape Character Area (LCA), comprising the large flat arable farmland plateau which is broken up by low trimmed hedgerows. Other characteristic features such as the woodland copses are not prevalent within this location. The lack of hedgerows on the Site peripheries increase the sensitivity, as the characteristic landscape is highly visible from the wider landscape.
- Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located 1km to the north of the Site, with the Stour and Orwell Estuaries Ramsar and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located 2.5km to the north-east. The flat plateau and hedgerows limit potential views from the Site towards the Ramsar, AONB and SSSI.
- Crop Mark Site South of Ardleigh Scheduled Monument is located within the Site boundary. Excavation of this impact would adversely affect this historic landscape feature. Appropriate siting of the works would need to be considered to provide an adequate buffer to the Scheduled Monument.
- The Site is in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding), with a high probability flood zone (Zones 2 or 3) 0.2km to the west of the Site.
- The Site currently has an access point from the north on Little Bromley Road, which currently provide access to agricultural machinery. Any additional entrances that may need to be created to provide access to the Site will need to consider visibility splays. Appropriate transport and access arrangements and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- Footpaths 27 and 28 (Ardleigh) run through the centre of the Site, providing open views of the field. There will be an adverse effect on the public rights of way users and other receptors with regards visual impact. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the visual impacts of the PRow, with a likely requirement to divert the footpaths to the Site peripheries.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located 0.2km to the south-east of Ardleigh, the Site is accessible from Little Bromley Road to the north. A railway line defines the western boundary, separating the Site from Ardleigh village. Little Bromley Road and Morrow Lane define the northern and eastern boundaries, whilst the southern boundary remains open to the rest of the arable field in which the Site is situated.

Late 19th Century maps show the surrounding road network that defines the Site boundaries and the railway line to the western boundary.

Public Right of Way (PRoW) Footpath 28 (Ardleigh) runs across the Site connecting Morrow Lane to Ardleigh village via a crossing over the railway. The footpath railway crossing is currently closed. The footpath also connects to Footpath 27 (Ardleigh) which crosses a small section of the Site towards the east.

The Site is located within the arable countryside and is surrounded by other arable fields, with Ardleigh village located close to the west. Although the immediate setting is generally flat, the land notably rises to the west in the area north of Colchester.

The Site predominantly falls within Enclosed Agriculture – Amalgamated Fields and partly within Orchards, Horticulture and Aquaculture (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is classified as Grade 1 – Excellent Quality Grade 2 – Very Good to Moderate Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

Crop Marks Site South of Ardleigh Scheduled Monument (1002146) is partially located within the Site boundary along the southern edge. Grade II listed Bovill's Hall (1307139) is located 0.1km to the south-west, with few other listed buildings in the surrounding landscape.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Tendring Plain (E3)

- Large flat farmland plateau, dissected by occasional small narrow valleys.
- Arable land use dominates, but with some pasture and orchards.
- Straight and regular field patterns with mainly low trimmed hedgerows.
- Widely dispersed blocks of woodland/small copses, sparse tree cover in the north.
- Former heathland character near Colchester.

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations:

- Ardleigh Gravel Pit – SSSI
- Crop Mark Site South of Ardleigh – Scheduled Monument (southern boundary)
- Priority Habitat – Deciduous Woodland (western boundary)
- Manor House Meadow Local Wildlife Site
- Springhead Corner Meadow Local Wildlife Site

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Moderate to high intervisibility
- Tranquil areas in the northeast and south of the area
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features		•			
	Complexity	•				
	Enclosure by Vegetation				•	
	Historic Character					•
	Built development		•			
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View					•
	Openness to Private View				•	
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features		•			
	Perceptual Quality		•			

The Site is an uncomplex singular arable field that has few internal features which could contribute to increasing the sensitivity of the Site. The Site is however very open to the wider countryside owed to the lack of established hedgerows on the boundaries, with sections of fragmented hedgerows on the eastern boundary.

The Site also comprises part of a larger arable field, therefore leaving the southern boundary open. The lack of vegetative enclosure surrounding the Site increases the overall sensitivity. The presence of the Scheduled Monument contributes to the historic character sensitivity within area, despite having few listed buildings surrounding the Site.

Built development is very apparent within the surrounding area, with the railway line and roads on the Site boundaries, Ardleigh village to the north-west and pylons within the Site all contributing to reducing sensitivity.

Footpaths 27 and 28 (Ardleigh) runs through the centre of the Site providing open views of the field, which in combination with the lack of hedgerows reduces the Site sensitivity to public views. There are also open private views from Ardleigh village which increases the sensitivity. There are few landmark buildings and natural features locally which

reduce site sensitivity, in combination with the reduced perceptual quality owed to the railway line and other built features.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

Candidate site A85 is located adjacent to the east of the Site, separated by Morrows Lane and two boundary hedgerows that define the field perimeters. Footpaths 28 and 27 (Ardleigh) crosses from the Site into the adjacent Candidate site A85. Public views along the footpath and from the surrounding public footpath network will be impacted with cumulative minerals works, particularly from pedestrians using the footpaths from Ardleigh village. Road users along Morrow Lane will also experience a change in the landscape with mineral extraction proposals on both sides of the road, contributing to the wider cumulative impact.

Existing working Martells Quarry is located to the south-west and will further contribute to the cumulative impact of mineral extraction within the area.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

A solar farm is currently located both to the south-east and north-east of the Site. The area of solar farm to the north-east occupies a significant number of fields within the landscape and could cumulatively contribute to impacting the character of the surrounding landscape.

Candidate Site Reference A87 – Martells – East of Slough Lane

Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site is located in Landscape Character Area (LCA) Tendring Plain (E3), and possesses a number of characteristic features, including the large flat arable plateau, straight regular field pattern, low trimmed hedgerows and woodland copses. Appropriate consideration is required to protect the characteristic features of the LCA and mitigate the impacts on the landscape.
- There are few important habitats within the vicinity of the Site, however a number of Priority Habitats (Deciduous Woodland) are located in the surrounding area although do not border the Site boundaries.
- Crop Mark Site South of Ardleigh (Scheduled Monument) is located directly adjacent to the Site and defines the north-eastern boundary. The Scheduled Monument is separated from the Site by a hedgerow; however, excavation of the neighbouring field may impact the setting. Therefore, appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impact on the Scheduled Monument, and a substantial buffer would need to be considered.
- The Site is in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding); however, Flood Zones 2 & 3 (high probability of flooding) are located 0.5km to the north-west of the Site at Salary Brook.
- The Site has no definitive access points from Park Road. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required. Visibility splays and mitigating hedgerow removal may also have to be considered if any alternative entrances are proposed.
- Footpath 12 (Ardleigh) runs along the north-eastern boundary of the Site, providing open views of the flat farmland plateau. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts of Footpath 12 (Ardleigh) which may include diversion or visual screening.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located 0.5km to the south of Ardleigh village, the Site is situated away from any public roads and is accessible via a farm track from Park Road. The Site comprises two arable fields which is topographically flat.

Late 19th Century maps show the surrounding road network, Redbarn Farm, Park Farm and Ardleigh Park to the south.

The Site is defined on three boundaries by the field edges, which comprise planting on the north-western boundary which separates the Site from restored excavation land, and a bund from existing working Martells Quarry on the western boundary. A low intact hedgerow runs along the north-eastern boundary separating the Site from other arable fields.

The Site is located within an isolated rural setting with a combination of regular and irregular field patterns distributed evenly across the immediate landscape. This is surrounded by arable fields and working quarry sites towards to the west.

Public right of way (PRoW) Footpath 12 (Ardleigh) runs along the north-eastern boundary of the Site, within the Site perimeter. The footpath then connects to Footpath 31 (Ardleigh) in the northern corner of the Site.

The Site falls within Enclosed Agriculture – Post-War Enclosed Land and Enclosed Lane (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is classified as Grade 1 – Excellent Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

There are few listed buildings within the immediate vicinity of the Site, with a cluster of buildings at Ardleigh Park (1112050) and to the south of, including; Wood Cottage (1112083), Collierswood Farmhouse (1112083) and Barn (1112082). However, Crop Mark Site South of Ardleigh (Scheduled Monument) is located to the immediate north-east of the Site, separated by a hedgerow and PRoW.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Tendring Plain (E3)

- Large flat farmland plateau, dissected by occasional small narrow valleys.
- Arable land use dominates, but with some pasture and orchards.
- Straight and regular field patterns with mainly low trimmed hedgerows.
- Widely dispersed blocks of woodland/small copses, sparse tree cover in the north.
- Former heathland character near Colchester.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Moderate to high intervisibility
- Tranquil areas in the northeast and south of the area
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations:

- Walls Wood – Ancient Woodland
- Ardleigh Gravel Pit – SSSI (western boundary)
- Crop Mark Site South of Ardleigh – Scheduled Monument (northern boundary)
- Priority Habitat – Deciduous Woodland (southern boundary)
- Manor House Meadow Local Wildlife Site
- Springhead Corner Meadow Local Wildlife Site

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features		•			
	Complexity	•				
	Enclosure by Vegetation				•	
	Historic Character					•
	Built development		•			
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View			•		
	Openness to Private View			•		
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features					•
	Perceptual Quality	•				

The Site comprises two uncomplex flat arable fields which reduces the overall sensitivity of the Site. The overall sensitivity of the Site is significantly increased due to the proximity to the Crop Marks Scheduled Monument which is located directly adjacent to north-eastern boundary. Footpath 12 (Ardleigh) follows this boundary, providing open views of the Site and then crosses into the Site of the Scheduled Monument, the combination of this greatly increases visual sensitivity.

The Site boundaries are open providing views from the footpath and Park Road to the south-east, increasing sensitivity. The overall perceptual quality is reduced however, owed to the presence of existing working Martells Quarry which is located on the south-western edge.

For these reasons, Site A89 has been assessed as having **Medium** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

Existing working Martells Quarry is located directly adjacent to the Site and is situated on the immediate western boundary. Waterbodies created as a result of previous excavation are also situated on the immediate north-western boundary. There is significant quarry extraction presence within the landscape to the west, where Candidate Sites A72 and A73 are also located.

There may be significant cumulative impact on the local landscape character if mineral extraction works continue to progress east from the existing working site.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

An existing solar photovoltaic power plant is located close to east of the Site at Chancery Farm on the opposite site of Park Road.

Candidate Site Reference A88 – Gurnhams Farm

Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is Tendring Plain (E3) of which the Site possesses a moderate number of distinct characteristic features including straight and regular field patterns with mainly low trimmed hedgerows matrix of hedgerows with specimen hedgerow trees. Appropriate consideration is required to protect the characteristic features of the LCA and mitigate the impacts on the landscape.
- High Barn Wood and Shair Wood abut the Site boundary and are designated Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) and Ancient Woodland. Both demonstrate a significant contribution toward the local green infrastructure and visual amenity. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity. An appropriate buffer distance should also be provided around the woodlands to mitigate against any potential impacts from nearby mineral extraction.
- The Site surrounds a Grade II Listed Building, Gurnhams. Although the property is moderately vegetated on the western boundary, the immediate setting is considered highly sensitive and would be significantly impacted.
- The Site is located within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding). However, Flood Zone 3 (high probability of flooding) runs along the northern boundary.
- The Site will likely be accessed via Colchester Road (A133). An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- Three Public Rights of Way (PRoW) intersect the Site in particular a footpath follows the existing private road accessing Gurnhams. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts of the PRoW which may include diversion or visual screening.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located centrally north-east of Great Bentley and south-west of Tendring, the Site is accessed via Colchester Road (A133). The Site sits within the parish of Tendring with a small portion in the south-west corner covered by Little Bentley parish. Topographically the Site is located on a flat plateau at the base of a peak at Little Bentley falling toward the valley at Weeley.

The Site comprises approximately 9 arable fields. The northern and eastern boundary is generally open to the wider landscape. Mature managed hedgerow defines the southern boundary. The western boundary is defined by fragmented mature hedgerow.

Three Public Rights of Way (PRoW) intersect the Site, Footpath 11 (Tendring) along the north boundary. Footpath 21 (Tendring) is approximately 200m south parallel with Footpath 11. Footpath 13 (Tendring) runs north to south down the centre of the Site.

The wider landscape comprises arable fields and scattered ancient woodlands.

The Site is largely falling within Enclosed Agriculture (Amalgamated Fields) classification, and a majority of the Site is classified as Grade 2 – Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

A number of listed buildings surround the Site notably; Grade II Gurnhams (1169294), Grade II Fisher's Farmhouse (1111417), Grade II Warren's Farmhouse (1308683).

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Tendring Plain (E3)

- Large flat farmland plateau, dissected by occasional small narrow valleys.
- Arable land use dominates, but with some pasture and orchards.
- Straight and regular field patterns with mainly low trimmed hedgerows.
- Widely dispersed blocks of woodland/small copses, sparse tree cover in the north.
- Former heathland character near Colchester.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Moderate to high intervisibility
- Tranquil areas in the northeast and south of the area
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations:

- High Barn Wood – Ancient Woodland & Local Wildlife Site
- Shair Wood – Ancient Woodland & Local Wildlife Site
- Little Bentley Hall Wood – Ancient Woodland & Local Wildlife Site
- Hilllands Wood – Ancient Woodland & Local Wildlife Site
- Great Bentley Pumping Station – Local Wildlife Site

Sensitivity assessment		Measurement				
Criteria Group	Criteria	Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features			•		
	Complexity			•		
	Enclosure by Vegetation	•				
	Historic Character				•	
	Built development			•		
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View				•	
	Openness to Private View			•		
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features					•
	Perceptual Quality			•		

The Site is a combination of medium arable and grassland fields with intervening hedgerows, ditches and specimen hedgerow trees. The strong presence of Oak contributed to a sensitive complex landscape. The Site demonstrates a number of distinctive characteristics of the LCA, notably straight and regular field patterns with mainly low trimmed hedgerows, this greatly increases the sensitivity of landscape features. The well-hedged site boundaries create an enclosed landscape that reduces external views into the Site.

The historic value of the Site is increased by the nature of the red line boundary surrounding the listed building Gurnhams on 3 sides, Intervening vegetation between the Site and listed buildings significantly reduce views to and from this property on the west. While screening is usually recommended to protect such buildings, this would not be appropriate on this Site due to the orientation of the house and countryside setting it sits within with open long-distance views.

Despite the Site being located adjacent to the Colchester Road (A133) the surrounding vegetation and open landscape views east means the Site has a strong perceptual aspect for public receptors of the PRow within the Site, increasing visual sensitivity. Given the location of Footpath 13 (Tendering) down the centre of the Site, allowing 360° views continuously following the PRow, we consider public views to be significantly sensitive. Although the enclosed field boundaries of the Site as a whole make for effective screening, resulting in a low sensitive grade by the methodology, we would consider the Site sensitive regardless due to the location of the PRow.

There are also strong views to the two Ancient Woodlands that are located on the Site boundaries and have increased sensitivity due to their proximity to the Site.

For these reasons, Site A88 has been assessed as having **Medium-high** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

A88 is within close proximity to two another mineral schemes to the west, there is potential for PRoWs connecting all three Site creating a cumulative effect for public receptors using these. Furthermore, users of the A133 would likely experience a cumulative effect.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A89 – Covenbrooke Hall Farm

Amber-Green

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site bridges two Landscape Character Areas (LCA), and possesses features of both areas, including arable farmland with well-hedged medium to large fields (Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys, C6) and small woods and copses that provide structure and edges to the landscape (Central Essex Farmlands, B1). Appropriate consideration is required to protect the characteristic features of the LCA, particularly the effect on the established tall hedgerows and trees that line the field boundaries.
- Priority Habitat (Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh) is located 0.3km to the north-east of the Site, which is also surrounding by Priority Habitats (Deciduous Woodland) located along the River Blackwater. Belcher's & Broadfield Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located 3km to the north-east. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity.
- There are several listed buildings located close to the Site, including Baytree Farmhouse (Grade II*) in the south-east corner on the opposite side of Coggeshall Road, and a cluster of Grade II listed buildings associated with Jenkins Farm. The settings of these Grade II Listed Buildings surrounding the Site could be altered and therefore appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impact on these buildings.
- The Site is in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding) however Flood Zones 2 & 3 (high probability of flooding) are located 0.2km to the north of the Site at the River Blackwater.
- The Site will either be accessed from Coggeshall Road to the south or from Kings Lane to the western boundary. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required. Visibility splays and mitigating hedgerow removal may also have to be considered if any alternative entrances are proposed.
- Footpath 21 (Stisted) runs through the Site and along the northern boundary, providing open views of the enclosed fields. Footpath 22 (Stisted) runs along the eastern boundary, although the extent of established field boundaries restricts views into the Site. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts of Footpath 21 (Stisted) which may include diversion or visual screening.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located to the east of Braintree, the Site is situated on the immediate boundary of the A120. The Site is access from Kings Lane which also defines the western boundary although is separated by established hedgerow and trees. The boundaries are defined by the established hedgerow boundaries and ditches that surround the three arable farmland fields. Two tree belts are also visible along the northern edge and through the centre of the Site.

Late 19th Century maps show the outer field boundaries of the Site, plus neighbouring Jenkins Farm and Hatches Farm.

Public Right of Way (PRoW) Footpath 21 (Stisted) runs through the centre of the Site from north to south and continues along the northern boundary. The footpath then connects to Footpath 22 (Stisted) that runs along the eastern boundary.

Whilst in the countryside, the Site is located in very close proximity to Braintree town. The surrounding landscape comprises other arable farmland fields and areas of settlement and industrial usage. Topographically, the Site is elevated to the west on the edge of Braintree and falls to the east into the River Blackwater valley.

The Site largely falls within Enclosed Agriculture – Amalgamated Fields and Unplanned Fields (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is classified as Grade 2 – Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

There is a cluster of listed buildings located to the north of the Site, which includes Jenkins Farmhouse (1123903) and three associated barns and cart lodge. Baytree Farmhouse (1171048) is located to the south-east corner, and there is a cluster of other listed buildings at Braintree Golf Course to the north.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Central Essex Farmlands (B1)

- Irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable fields, marked by sinuous hedgerows and ditches.
- Many small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape.
- Scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small hamlets, typically with greens and ponds.
- A concentration of isolated moated farmsteads.
- Network of narrow, winding lanes.
- Mostly tranquil character away from major roads and Stansted Airport

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of hedgerow and woodland pattern
- Moderate intervisibility
- Tranquil character away from existing major road corridors/Stansted
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys (C6)

- Shallow valleys.
- Predominantly arable farmland with well hedged medium to large fields.
- The Brain and the Upper Blackwater Valleys are narrow with undulating valleysides.
- The Lower Chelmer, and the Blackwater near Maldon, have wide flat valley floors, and gentle valleysides.
- Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive feature.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of the valley floor
- Some visually exposed valleysides/open valley floors
- Tranquil character in parts
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

There are no landscape designations within the Site, however the following designations are located nearby:

- Templeborder Wood Ancient Woodland
- Bocking Blackwater Local Nature Reserve

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features		•			
	Complexity		•			
	Enclosure by Vegetation	•				
	Historic Character		•			
	Built development		•			
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View				•	
	Openness to Private View	•				
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features				•	
	Perceptual Quality		•			

The Site comprises three flat arable fields which are enclosed by very strong hedgerows and trees, screening the Site from the surrounding landscape. The Site sensitivity is also reduced by the limited private views into the Site.

Although screened, Cressing Road runs adjacent to the southern boundary of the Site which reduces the sensitivity to built development and the perceptual quality. Footpath 21 (Stisted) runs through the centre of the Site, providing public views of the enclosed site and increasing the overall sensitivity.

For these reasons, Site A89 has been assessed as having **Medium-Low** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

Candidate Sites A92 and A93 are located 1km to the east of the Site, which are also accessed from Coggeshall Road which runs along the southern boundary of all three sites.

There are no other existing working quarries within the local area.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A90 – Rayne Quarry – Northern Extension

Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is Central Essex Farmlands (B1), the Site possesses limited characteristic features of this including an arable landscape of medium sized fields. Appropriate consideration is required to protect the characteristic features of the LCA.
- Rumley Wood and Golden Grove Ancient Woodlands are located 0.3km to the north-west of the Site. The two Ancient Woodlands have strong intervisibility with the Site, with Footpath 4 (Rayne) also providing direct access from the Site to Golden Grove. Diverting the footpath would have an adverse impact on the PRow network to the Ancient Woodlands. Mineral extraction in this area would also have significantly alter the setting of the Ancient Woodlands. Appropriate consideration is therefore required to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity and views from the PRow.
- Public Right of Way (PRow) Footpath 4 (Rayne) crosses the Site and connects to wider PRow network. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts of the PRow which may include diversion or visual screening.
- Four Grade II listed buildings are located in the south-east corner of the Site. The setting of these four buildings would be significantly altered and therefore appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts. A buffer and planting should be included into proposed mitigation.
- The Site is located in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding).
- The Site will likely be accessed via Pods Lane or via existing Rayne Quarry. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required. Visibility splays and mitigating hedgerow removal may also have to be considered if any alternative entrances are proposed.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located approximately 200m from the north-west corner of Duckend Green and Rayne village, the Site is accessible from Pods Lane which defines the eastern boundary. The Site comprises one medium-sized arable field which topographically falls towards the north-east as it heads towards Pods Brook.

The south and west boundaries are largely defined by established hedgerows and woodland belts, which also separates the Site from Moor's Farm. The northern and eastern boundaries comprise fragmented hedgerows, occasional trees, and in some

parts an open ditch. Open views to the north-west are provided of Golden Grove Ancient Woodland and Rumley Ancient Woodland.

Late 19th Century maps show the presence of the surrounding road network, connecting to Pound Lane and Moor's Farm, in addition to the Old Hall towards the north.

The surrounding landscape comprises arable fields of varying sizes, with copses and woodlands scattered throughout. Public Right of Way (PRoW) Footpath 4 (Rayne) runs through the Site, running from the north-west across the corner to Pods Lane.

Topographically, the landform surrounding the Site rises to the south-west to form a ridge from Great Saling to Rayne.

Neighbouring minerals & waste schemes include Rayne Quarry to the south of the Site, and also Candidate Site A96 which occurs beyond the south of the existing Rayne Quarry.

The Site is located within Enclosed Agriculture (Amalgamated Fields) classification (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and majority of the Site is classified as Grade 2 - Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification)

There is a cluster of listed buildings located in the south-east corner, outside of the Site boundary at Pound Farm. The Farmhouse (1338151), outbuilding (1122760), barn and cartlodge (1122761) and cottage (1122762) are located within this cluster.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Central Essex Farmlands (B1)

- Irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable fields, marked by sinuous hedgerows and ditches.
- Many small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape.
- Scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small hamlets, typically with greens and ponds.
- A concentration of isolated moated farmsteads.
- Network of narrow, winding lanes.
- Mostly tranquil character away from major roads and Stansted Airport.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of hedgerow and woodland pattern
- Moderate intervisibility
- Tranquil character away from existing major road corridors/Stansted
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations, including:

- Priority Habitat – Deciduous Woodland
- Rumley Wood Ancient Woodland
- Golden Grove Ancient Woodland
- Boxted Ancient Woodland
- Fritch Way Local Nature Reserves

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features		•			
	Complexity	•				
	Enclosure by Vegetation			•		
	Historic Character			•		
	Built development			•		
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View			•		
	Openness to Private View			•		
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features				•	
	Perceptual Quality			•		

The Site comprises a combination of a single arable field, with limited fragmented hedgerows, it would therefore be considered uncomplex with reduced landscape sensitivity. Whilst mostly enclosed on the roadside boundary, once within the Site, there are open views towards the north-east owed to the lack of vegetation along this boundary. Four listed buildings located in the south-east corner of the Site reduce the Site sensitivity. There is however few other built features within the surrounding landscape, increasing the sensitivity.

Presence of existing working Rayne Quarry to the south reduce the overall perceptual quality of the rural setting. Public views are limited to a single PRow for a short distance and road users reducing the overall sensitivity of public views. There are however strong views across to the north-west of Rumley Wood and Golden Grove ancient

Woodlands, which are situated at the end of the PRoW that runs through the Site. The strong intervisibility with the Ancient Woodland increases site sensitivity to views towards natural features and the overall perceptual quality of the Site.

For these reasons, Site A90 has been assessed as having **Medium** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

Existing Rayne Quarry is located immediately south of the Site. Neighbouring A96 is located further south of the existing Site and cumulative effects are likely limited to road users and residents of properties along Dunmow Road.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

Located approx. 600m east of the Site is an outline application, Land To The South Of Dunmow Road Rayne Essex - 22/00864/FUL - Change of use from agricultural land to a residential park home site for the over 55s; involving the siting of 79 single-storey residential units, associated access, internal road layout, parking and landscaping.

Cumulative effects would be limited to road users and would not have significant impact.

Candidate Site Reference A91 – Land at Chignal St James

Amber-Green

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is Central Essex Farmlands (B1). The Site possesses limited characteristic features of the LCA including the irregular field pattern of arable farmland located within a network of narrow lanes, reducing the sensitivity of the landscape. The Site spans across areas of two arable fields bisected by a ditch. Appropriate consideration is required to protect the characteristic features of the LCA and mitigate the impacts on the landscape.
- The Site contains a Priority Habitat (Deciduous Woodland) where the access road cuts through.
- Grade II Listed Buildings are located within the surrounding area, notably Stevens Farmhouse and Buildings, Former Church of St James and associated Cottages. The settings of these Grade II Listed Buildings surrounding the Site could be altered and therefore appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impact on these buildings.
- Whilst most of the Site is within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding), the Sites' access road crosses a Flood Zone 2 and 3 (high probability of flooding)
- The Site will likely be accessed via the existing road to the east of Boyton Hall from the south of the extraction site. This will likely result in traffic crossing Mashbury Road. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required. Visibility splays may also have to be considered if any alternative entrances are proposed.
- No Public Rights of Way (PRoW) intersect the extraction Site. One footpath and one bridlepath run along the northern field boundary associated with the Site. A number of footpaths cross the access road although this would not impact the existing arrangement. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts of the PRoW which may include visual screening.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located approximately 3km to the north-west of Chelmsford, the Site is situated between the villages of Chignal St James and Chignal Smealy. The Site includes a proposed access route from the A1060 to the south, although is more closely accessed from Mashbury Road. The Site comprises part of two arable fields and is situated on a gently undulating valley side which drops towards the River Can to the south-west. The Site is bound to the west and south by hedgerows and trees which separates the Site from Mashbury Road and a farm track. The north and east boundaries are open to

the wider countryside, since the application boundary comprises part of larger arable fields. The proposed access route from the A1060 runs partly adjacent to the River Can before joining a long existing access road.

There are no Public Rights of Way (PRoW) which cross over the main field associated with the Site, however Footpath 11 (Chignal) and Bridleway 12 run along the north of the field boundary. Several PRoWs cross the access road to the A1060, including Footpath 35, 37, 38 and 40 (Roxwell)

The Site is located within the rural countryside between several small settlements and villages. Medium sized irregular fields are distributed evenly across the immediate landscape and are marked by sinuous hedgerows. Notably the landform is elevated to the north-west of the Site towards Pleshey and the Easters and falls towards the Site and Chelmsford surrounding the number of rivers and brooks.

Majority of the Site falls within Enclosed Agriculture – Amalgamated Fields classification (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA), although part falls within Industry – Extractive Industry (Mineral) and Enclosed Agriculture (Planned Fields) and is classified as mostly Grade 2 - Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification) and partly Grade 3.

Several listed buildings are located close to Mashbury Road and the main section of the Site, which includes; Stevens Farmhouse (1263975) and Buildings (1247730), Former Church of St James (1122199) and associated Cottages (1122200).

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Central Essex Farmlands (B1)

- Irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable fields, marked by sinuous hedgerows and ditches.
- Many small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape.
- Scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small hamlets, typically with greens and ponds.
- A concentration of isolated moated farmsteads.
- Network of narrow, winding lanes.
- Mostly tranquil character away from major roads and Stansted Airport.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of hedgerow and woodland pattern
- Moderate intervisibility
- Tranquil character away from existing major road corridors/Stansted
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

A Priority Habitat – Deciduous Woodland is located within the Site. It is also located near to two designations:

- Scheduled Monument: Roman villa 200m east of Howletts
- Nightingale Ancient Woodland

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features		•			
	Complexity	•				
	Enclosure by Vegetation				•	
	Historic Character		•			
	Built development		•			
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View			•		
	Openness to Private View		•			
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features	•				
	Perceptual Quality		•			

The Site comprises sections of 2 arable fields with a bisecting ditch separating them, creating a less complex landscape and limited landform features. The lack of designations on and surrounding the Site reduce sensitivity to landmark natural features. Furthermore, the Site demonstrates a limited number of distinctive characteristics of the LCA, notably irregular field pattern of arable farmland, this reduces the sensitivity of landscape features.

The extraction Site has limited perceptual features, in combination with the existing access road which carries commercial traffic, the Site overall has a limited perceptual quality. Public receptors of the PROWs within the Site along the access road would not likely sustain change, however users of the Bridlepath and Footpath to the north may experience change and we recommend screening this view. There are moderate views outside the Site with limited value.

The historic sensitivity of the Site is limited to the properties either side of the access road to the north, vegetation here is fragmented slightly increasing the sensitivity to these properties from Site traffic.

For these reasons, Site A91 has been assessed as having **Medium-low** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are no such developments in relation to this Site, and cumulative effects are not considered further.

Candidate Site Reference A92 - Land at Pattiswick Hall Farm – Small Site

Red-Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site possesses few characteristic features of the Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys (C6) Landscape Character Area (LCA), which includes the predominantly arable farmland and well hedged fields. The River Blackwater and linear plantations are visible from the Site at the foot of the valley near Bradwell, although are not located within the Site. Strong views are obtained from the Site into the surrounding characteristic landscape. Consideration for appropriate enhancement of field hedgerow condition should be considered to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity and views from the surrounding immediate landscape.
- There are few important landscape designations within the surrounding landscape, with the exception of a few Priority Habitats (Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh and Deciduous Woodland) surrounding the River Blackwater to the south and south-west. There are a number of other Priority Habitats (Deciduous Woodland) in the landscape surrounding the Site, such as Prior's Wood and Captain's Wood.
- Pattiswick Hall (Grade II) and associated building, Church of St Mary the Virgin (Grade II*) and Wrens Cottage (Grade II) are located close to the north of the Site however are largely screened by established vegetation on the boundaries. Minerals extraction works surrounding these listed buildings will alter the wider setting of the settlement. Appropriate mitigation will need to be considered to mitigate the impacts on the listed buildings would be required.
- The Site is in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding), however Flood Zone 2 and 3 are located close to the south of the Site surrounding the River Blackwater.
- Coggeshall Road (A120) and Doghouse Road run along two boundaries of the Site and provide many opportunities for site access without removal of any existing hedgerows. Any additional entrances that may need to be created to provide access to the Site will need to consider visibility splays. Appropriate transport and access arrangements and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- Public Right of Way (PRoW) Footpath 45 (Bradwell) runs through the centre of the Site between Bradwell and Pattiswick and provides strong views of the entire Site. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the visual impacts of the PRoW's travelling through the Site, and consideration for whether any of these PRoWs need diversions is also required.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located to the north-east of Bradwell, the Site is accessed from Dog House Road which runs along the eastern boundary. The Site comprises several arable fields of medium to large size. The western edge of the Site is not defined by field boundaries and comprises part of a much larger field. The remaining boundaries are defined by hedgerows and ditches.

Late 19th Century maps shows Pattiswick Hall located centrally to the Site, in addition to surrounding Mill's Farm, Shelbourne Bridge, and Church of St Mary the Virgin, Pattiswick (Grade II*).

The parcel is only accessible by one Public Right of Way; Footpath 45 (Bradwell) that runs through the Site to Pattiswick.

The Site is located within the countryside and surrounded by arable farmland fields of medium to large scale. Farmsteads and settlements are located towards the north-east at Pattiswick and Bradwell village is located to the south.

There are several clusters of settlements and farmsteads located in the landscape surrounding the Site, some of which have listed buildings. The Site falls slightly towards the south, whilst the wider landscape generally rises to a ridge into the north-west at Cressing and Braintree. The Site visually falls from the north-eastern corner at Pattiswick down the river valley in the south-west at the River Blackwater.

Candidate Site A93 comprises Site A92 (the southern parcel) but also includes an additional parcel to the north-west. Bradwell Quarry is located beyond the south of the Site.

The Site largely falls within Enclosed Agriculture – Amalgamated Fields (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is classified as Grade 2 – Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

There are a number of listed buildings located around the Site, particularly focused in Bradwell. However, listed buildings located on the immediate edges include Pattiswick Hall (1337592) and Ancillary Building (1123881), Harvey's Farmhouse (1337613) and Buildings (1123849) and Church of St Mary the Virgin (Grade II* - 1168451).

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys (C6)

- Shallow valleys.
- Predominantly arable farmland with well hedged medium to large fields.
- The Brain and the Upper Blackwater Valleys are narrow with undulating valleysides.

- The Lower Chelmer, and the Blackwater near Maldon, have wide flat valley floors, and gentle valleysides.
- Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive feature.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of the valley floor
- Some visually exposed valleysides/open valley floors
- Tranquil character in parts
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

There are no landscape designations within the Site, however the following designations are located nearby:

- River Blackwater: Priority Habitat – Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features		•			
	Complexity		•			
	Enclosure by Vegetation				•	
	Historic Character			•		
	Built development			•		
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View					•
	Openness to Private View				•	
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features				•	
	Perceptual Quality				•	

The Site comprises four arable fields separated by hedgerows and trees, with limited other landscape features that contribute to the complexity of the Site, therefore reducing the sensitivity.

The southern and eastern boundaries have few hedgerows and trees that could contribute to the enclosure of the Site, and therefore the Site has an open aspect and increased visual sensitivity. The setting of the two listed buildings located to the north of the Site at Pattiswick Hall, will be adversely impacted through mineral extraction of the surrounding landscape further, considering that the buildings are located on a ridge with strong views from the south at Bradwell.

The Site is very open to public views, with a footpath that runs through the centre of the Site. There are also strong views from the A120 and Doghouse Road. Furthermore, there are other views available from Bradwell where strong private views from Bradwell village to the south are found, resulting in an increased overall sensitivity.

Significant views are obtained towards the River Blackwater and surrounding green/blue corridor, which runs adjacent to Bradwell village, increasing the perceptual quality of the undulating valley landscape.

For these reasons, the Site is assessed as having **Medium-High** sensitivity.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

Candidate Site A93 comprises the southern parcel of the Site, A92. There are no other potential cumulative impacts assessed nearby to the Site.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are few other planning permissions which could result in cumulative impacts within the landscape surrounding A92, however a screening opinion for a solar photovoltaic farm has been approved on the opposing valley side to the River Blackwater, located towards the south.

Candidate Site Reference A93 - Land at Pattiswick Hall Farm – Full Site

Red-Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site possesses few characteristic features of the Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys (C6) Landscape Character Area (LCA), which includes the predominantly arable farmland and well hedged fields. The River Blackwater and linear plantations are located on the south-west boundary, although are not located within the Site. Strong views are obtained from the Site into the surrounding characteristic landscape. Consideration for appropriate enhancement of field hedgerow condition should be considered to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity and views from the surrounding immediate landscape.
- There are few important landscape designations within the surrounding landscape, with the exception of a few Priority Habitats (Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh and Deciduous Woodland) surrounding the River Blackwater to the south and south-west. There are a number of other Priority Habitats (Deciduous Woodland) in the landscape surrounding the Site, such as Prior's Wood.
- Pattiswick Hall (Grade II) and associated building, Church of St Mary the Virgin (Grade II*) and Wrens Cottage (Grade II) are located close to the north of the Site however are largely screened by established vegetation on the boundaries. Minerals extraction works surrounding these listed buildings will alter the wider setting of the settlement. Appropriate mitigation will need to be considered to mitigate the impacts on the listed buildings would be required.
- All Saints Church (Grade I) at Stisted is a prominent feature within the landscape within the northern parcel and is emphasised by the presence of Footpath 19 (Bradwell) which provides historic direct access across the Site. The setting of the PRoW and church views would be significantly impacted as a result of mineral extraction works within this Site.
- A majority of the Site is in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding); however a tributary of the River Blackwater runs along the north-western boundary of the northern parcel and is in Flood Zone 3.
- Coggeshall Road (A120) and Doghouse Road run along two boundaries of the southern parcel of the Site and provide many opportunities for site access without removal of any existing hedgerows. Any additional entrances that may need to be created to provide access to the Site will need to consider visibility splays. Appropriate transport and access arrangements and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.

- Public Right of Way (PRoW) Footpath 45 (Bradwell) runs through the centre of the southern parcel between Bradwell and Pattiswick and provides strong views of the entire Site. The footpath connects to Footpath 19 (Bradwell) within the northern parcel which provides further views across the Blackwater Valley. The views experienced by these footpaths and paths in the wider network would be significantly affected by mineral extraction works and would have limited opportunities to mitigate the impacts. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the visual impacts of the PRoW's travelling through the Site, and consideration for whether any of these PRoW's need diversions is also required.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located to the north and east of Bradwell, the Site is accessed from Dog House Road and Old Road which runs along the eastern boundary of both parcels of the Site. The Site comprises two parcels of land made up of several arable fields of medium to large size. The western edge of the Site is not defined by field boundaries and comprises part of a much larger field. The remaining boundaries are defined by hedgerows and ditches, whilst the north-western boundary is defined by a stream that leads into the River Blackwater.

Late 19th Century maps shows Pattiswick Hall located north of the Site, in addition to surrounding Mill's Farm, Shelbourne Bridge, and Church of St Mary the Virgin, Pattiswick (Grade II*). Footpath 19 (Bradwell) provides a direct route from Pattiswick to All Saints Stisted Church which has some strong historical value to the landscape pattern. Footpath 45 (Bradwell) also crosses the southern Site to from Pattiswick to Bradwell.

The southern parcel is only accessible by one Public Right of Way; Footpath 45 (Bradwell) that runs through the Site to Pattiswick. Footpath 19 (Stisted) crosses the northern parcel, connecting to Footpath 2 (Bradwell) and Footpath 8 (Bradwell), which run along the Site boundary.

The Site is located within the countryside and surrounded by arable farmland fields of medium to large scale. Farmsteads and settlements are located towards the east at Pattiswick and Bradwell village is located to the south.

There are several clusters of settlements and farmsteads located in the landscape surrounding the Site, some of which have listed buildings. The Site is largely level although falls slightly towards the south, whilst the wider landscape generally rises to a ridge into the north-west at Cressing and Braintree. The Site visually falls from the north-eastern corner at Pattiswick down the river valley in the south-west at the River Blackwater.

Candidate Site A92 comprises the southern parcel of the Site, and Bradwell Quarry is located beyond the south of the Site.

The Site largely falls within Enclosed Agriculture – Amalgamated Fields (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is classified as Grade 2 – Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

There are a number of listed buildings located around the Site, particularly focused in Bradwell and Stisted. However, listed buildings located on the immediate edges include Pattiswick Hall (1337592) and Ancillary Building (1123881), Harvey's Farmhouse (1337613) and Buildings (1123849), 109 Water Lane (1337590) and Church of St Mary the Virgin (Grade II* - 1168451).

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Central Essex Farmlands (B1)

- Shallow valleys.
- Predominantly arable farmland with well hedged medium to large fields.
- The Brain and the Upper Blackwater Valleys are narrow with undulating valleysides.
- The Lower Chelmer, and the Blackwater near Maldon, have wide flat valley floors, and
- gentle valleysides.
- Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive feature

Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys (C6)

- Shallow valleys.
- Predominantly arable farmland with well hedged medium to large fields.
- The Brain and the Upper Blackwater Valleys are narrow with undulating valleysides.
- The Lower Chelmer, and the Blackwater near Maldon, have wide flat valley floors, and
- gentle valleysides.
- Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive feature.

Landscape Designations

There are no landscape designations within the Site, however the following designations are located nearby:

- River Blackwater: Priority Habitat – Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features				•	
	Complexity		•			
	Enclosure by Vegetation			•		
	Historic Character				•	
	Built development			•		
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View				•	
	Openness to Private View					•
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features					•
	Perceptual Quality					•

The Site is located on the Blackwater River valley side which falls towards the west, creating sensitive open public and private views of the northern field from Stisted village on the opposite valley side. Footpath 19 (Stisted) provides a direct view and route across the Site towards Parish Church of All Saints (Grade I) which is a prominent landmark within the surrounding landscape and significantly increases the overall historic sensitivity of the Site.

The southern parcel offers open views to and from the south at Bradwell and the wider surrounding landscape which increases the overall sensitivity considerably.

Whilst the Site itself is uncomplex containing only arable fields, the setting of the undulating landscape which is characteristic of the LCA increases the overall sensitivity of the Site.

For these reasons, the Site has been assessed as having **medium-high** sensitivity.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

Candidate Site A92 comprises the southern parcel of the Candidate Site, A93. There are no other potential cumulative impacts assessed nearby to the Site.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There are few other planning permissions which could result in cumulative impacts within the landscape surrounding A92, however a screening opinion for a solar photovoltaic farm has been approved on the opposing valley side to the River Blackwater, located towards the south.

Candidate Site Reference A94 – Land at Highfields Farm

Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site possesses a number of features of the Tiptree Ridge (D4) Landscape Character Area (LCA), including its location on the ridge providing views north-west across the Blackwater valley, the tall, dense hedgerows and the medium scale field pattern. Appropriate consideration is required to protect the characteristic features of the LCA, particularly concerning views of the Site from across the River Blackwater.
- Kelvedon Hall Wood (Ancient Woodland) is located 0.3km to the south of the Site, and other Priority Habitats (Deciduous Woodland) are located within the River Blackwater valley to the immediate west of the Site. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity.
- Highfields Farmhouse and Attached Cottage to North-east (Grade II) listed building is located between the two parcels and has strong intervisibility between. The settings of this Grade II Listed Buildings could be altered and therefore appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impact on these buildings.
- The Site is in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding), however Flood Zones 2 and 3 (high probability of flooding) are located 0.4km from the western corner of the Site in the River Blackwater valley.
- The Site is surrounded by a number of public roads including Highfields Road; the proposed access utilises an existing entrance on Windmill Hill. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required. Visibility splays may also have to be considered if any alternative entrances are proposed.
- Four Public Rights of Way (PRoW) run through and adjacent to the Site parcels. Footpath 2 (Great Braxted) and Footpaths 25 & 26 (Kelvedon) run through the centres of the Sites, where appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts of the PRoW which may include diversion or visual screening.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located to the south of Kelvedon, the Site is accessed from Highfields Lane through the centre and is adjacent to the A12. Topographically, the Site is generally flat although falls towards the west as it approaches the River Blackwater.

Late 19th Century maps show Footpath 26 (Kelvedon) running through the Site, Highfields Lane and All Saint's Church to the east of Site.

The Site is broken up by several arable fields and connected via an access road which had been proposed between the fields. The fields are dissected in several places by linear hedgerows. A solar farm exists to the south-east of the Site.

Four Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) are relevant to this Site, crossing the Site from north-west to south-east in four places. Footpath 2 (Great Braxted) and Footpath 26 (Kelvedon) cross the Site towards the south. Footpath 16 (Messing Cum Inworth) crosses towards the north of the Site, whilst Footpath 20 (Kelvedon) defines the north-east Site boundary.

The Site is in close proximity to previous excavation sites associated with Colemans Quarry. The A12 London Road is a prominent feature in the wider landscape. A north-east to south-west ridge is located to the east of the Site through Great Braxted, whilst the Site is in the valley of the River Blackwater.

The Site largely falls within Enclosed Agriculture (Typically Modern Form) (National Historic Landscape Characterisation). The Site is classified as both Grade 2 – Very Good and Grade 3 – Good to Moderate Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification)

Highfields Farmhouse and Attached Cottage (1337626) is located outside of the Site boundary but located centrally between the two parcels of land associated with the Site.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Tiptree Ridge (D4)

- Elevated, broad ridge.
- Strongly wooded western ridgeside.
- Small - medium scale field pattern.
- Enclosed character provided by many tall, thick hedgerows and woodland.
- Framed views over the Blackwater Valley and the Blackwater coastal farmlands

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of woodland hedgerow field pattern
- Small areas of tranquillity in the west
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site.

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features			•		
	Complexity		•			
	Enclosure by Vegetation				•	
	Historic Character		•			
	Built development		•			
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View				•	
	Openness to Private View			•		
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features		•			
	Perceptual Quality	•				

The Site comprises a number of gently undulating arable fields surrounded by hedgerows, which are characteristic of the Tiptree Ridge (D4) Landscape Character Area (LCA).

Whilst the wider landscape has well established hedgerows, the Site boundaries do not follow field boundaries therefore increasing the Site sensitivity to enclosure by vegetation.

Four footpaths cross the Site increasing the sensitivity to public views. A listed building at Highfields Cottage is located between the two parcels, increasing the sensitivity to private views. The adjacent A12 however reduces the Site sensitivity to built development and perceptual quality.

For these reasons, Site A94 has been assessed as having **Medium** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

Candidate Sites A83 and A84 are located to the south-west of the Site, situated within the River Blackwater valley. There are other Candidate Sites located further along the

river valley, including A50, D7, A49, A51, A52 and A82, which contribute to the cumulative effects of mineral extraction along the river.

Previous mineral extraction sites are also evident to the south-west, where several reservoirs, including Colemans Reservoir, are situated in the surrounding fields along the valley. Existing working quarries at Coleman's Farm are also present, located adjacent to the A12 road at Rivenhall End.

We have strong concerns that there would be significant cumulative impact on the local landscape character if mineral extraction works continue along the River Blackwater valley.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

A photovoltaic solar farm is located directly adjacent to the Site (Ref: 12/01472/FUL) comprising 36 hectares of land. For users of the surrounding public right of way network, the Site (A94) would be seen in context of the solar farm and would therefore contribute to the cumulative impacts of development within the surrounding landscape.

Candidate Site Reference A95 – Land at Bellhouse Farm South

Red-Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site possesses a number of characteristic features of the South Colchester Farmlands LCA, which includes the large flat farmland plateau, dissected by occasional small narrow valleys, with arable land use, dispersed blocks of woodland and straight regular fields. Views are obtained from either side of the Roman River valley of the characteristic arable landscape, with views partially obscured by the woodland presence surrounding the river. Appropriate consideration is required to protect the characteristic features of the LCA and mitigate the impacts on the landscape character. However, the undulating character of the Site will make mitigation difficult.
- Hanging Wood Ancient Woodland and Copford Hall Priority Habitat (Woodpasture and Parkland) are located in close proximity to the Site, with other Priority Habitats (Deciduous Woodland) located within the surrounding landscape and along the Roman River valley. Appropriate buffer will be required to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity within the surrounding habitats.
- A cluster of listed buildings at Bellhouse Farm are located adjacent to the north of the Site and are highly visible from the public rights of way (PRoW) which run next to the Site. The setting of the listed buildings will be further impacted by extraction of minerals within this Site. Another cluster of Listed buildings including the Church of St Michael and All Angels and associated grounds area located to the south-west of the Site. The works will impact on both the setting and the perceptive qualities such as tranquillity. Overall, the proximity of the Site to listed buildings will make mitigation difficult in terms of noise impact.
- The majority of the Site is located in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding), however Flood Zones 2 and 3 run along the southern boundary of the Site surrounding the Roman River. Consideration for providing a buffer to the Roman River will be required.
- The Site has potential access points from the north at Bellhouse Farm, which is accessed via a small road from Warren Lane. Any additional entrances that may need to be created to provide access to the Site will need to consider visibility splays. Appropriate transport and access arrangements and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- Public Rights of Way (PRoW) runs along the full extent of the western and northern boundaries of the Site. The footpath to the south provides the user with open views of the Site within the context of the listed buildings (Bellhouse Farm), the Ancient Woodland and the Roman River. Mineral extraction within this Site would significantly alter the perceptual quality of the surrounding landscape and undulating

landscape character of the Site within this view. Mitigation would be difficult due to the topography and elevated position of the public footpath.

- There are to mature trees within the arable field. Its protection and retention should be prioritised. Significant mature trees are located along the PRow route to the west alongside hedgerow planting. Protection and retention of these landscape elements will be required. Opportunities to strengthen existing hedgerow planting should be considered as part of any mitigation.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located approximately 0.5km from the Stanway Western Bypass around the south-west corner of Colchester, the Site is accessed via a track from Warren Lane. The Site comprises a singular arable field and is situated on a valley side which drops towards the south into the Roman River valley.

Late 19th Century maps show Bellhouse Farm to the north and Copford Hall to the west of the Site. The Roman River that runs along the south-west boundary is also present, with the north-west and north boundaries also defined by a track or field boundary.

Public Right of Way Footpath 15 (Stanway) runs along the full extent of the north-west and northern boundaries of the Site. Footpath 12 (Copford) PRow joins the Site at the Roman River, and Footpath 12 (Stanway) also meets the Site at Bellhouse Farm.

The Site is located within the countryside to the east of Copford Green but is also located close to Colchester City. The Site is located away from many major roads and has limited access via two private roads from Church Lane (to the north) and Warren Lane (to the east). Large and medium sized irregular fields are distributed across the immediate landscape before it transforms into the City edge and other small settlements such as Heckfordbridge, Copford Green and Copford. Notably the landform raises to the north and south of the Site on either side of the Roman River valley.

Colchester Sand and Gravel existing working quarry is located directly to the east of the Site, which extends to the other side of Warren Lane, situated to the south of Stanway.

Hanging Wood and Gol Grove Ancient Woodland is located directly to the south of the Site, following the edge of the Roman River. An extensive area of Priority Habitat (Woodpasture and Parkland) is also located to the west of the Site surrounding St Michael's & All Angel's Church.

Majority of the Site falls within Enclosed Agriculture – Amalgamated Fields classification (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and is classified as Grade 2 - Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

Three listed buildings are located directly to the north of the Site as Bellhouse Farm, including Bellhouse Farmhouse (1224861) and two Barns (1266618 and 1224838). On

the opposite side of the Roman River, St Michaels Church (1274018) and Copford Hall (1238819) are important listed buildings.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

South Colchester Farmlands (E2)

- Large flat farmland plateau, dissected by occasional small narrow valleys.
- Arable land use dominates, but with some pasture and orchards.
- Straight and regular field patterns with mainly low trimmed hedgerows.
- Widely dispersed blocks of woodland/small copses, sparse tree cover in the north.
- Former heathland character near Colchester

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Moderate intervisibility
- Tranquil character away from edge of Colchester
- Integrity of woodland hedgerow field pattern
- Strength of character of the Roman River Valley
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations:

- Copford Hall Priority Habitat – Woodpasture and Parkland
- Hanging Wood Ancient Woodland

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features					•
	Complexity		•			
	Enclosure by Vegetation			•		
	Historic Character			•		
	Built development				•	
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View					•
	Openness to Private View					•
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features					•
	Perceptual Quality			•		

Located adjacent to Hanging Wood Ancient Woodland and the Roman River on the southern boundary, the views towards these natural features and undulating landscape towards the south provides the Site with high sensitivity, which is further increased by the proximity to Copford Hall and Bellhouse Farmhouse listed buildings. The presence of the Roman River creates open views across the valley which is characteristic of the small narrow dissecting valleys within the LCA, increasing the overall sensitivity. The openness of the landscape to both public and private views from the PROWs and Bellhouse Farmhouse significantly increases the Site sensitivity. However, the presence of existing Bellhouse Quarry immediately to the east has an effect on the perceptual quality of the Site. Apart from the presence of Bellhouse Farmhouse cluster, there is very little presence of built development within the landscape views. For these reasons, Site A95 has been assessed as having **Medium High** sensitivity.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

Existing Bellhouse Quarry is located adjacent to the eastern boundary of the Site, which extends west to Stanway Quarry and Colchester Quarry. The Site (A95) contributes to the cumulative effects of the quarry landscape extending further west through the landscape, which has particular impact on the public footpath network and views within the Roman River valley.

There will be sequential cumulative impact to the footpath to the west and north-west site boundaries.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

There has been substantial residential and road infrastructure development on the western edge of Colchester at Stanway and Beacon End, which is located 0.5km from the Site. Whilst the residential development is not visually read in conjunction with the Site, the local landscape character may be affected as a result of the cumulative impacts arising from the works.

Candidate Site Reference A96 – Rayne Quarry – Southern Extension

Red-Amber

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Landscape Character Area (LCA) is Central Essex Farmlands (B1), the Site possesses some characteristic features of this, notably, small woods and copses that provide structure and edges to the landscape within an arable landscape of medium sized fields. Appropriate consideration is required to protect the characteristic features of the LCA, particularly the effect on the established tall hedgerows and wooded plantation that bound the southern boundary.
- A large portion of the Site is currently woodland and 1ha of this was planted under English Woodland Grant Schemes – Broadfields Farm with a Woodland Creation Grant in 2012. This area should be retained and enhanced with an appropriate buffer. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on biodiversity along the entirety of the southern boundary.
- The River Ter crosses the length of the Site, the area surrounding this is in Flood Zones 2 & 3 (high probability of flooding) along the entirety of the southern boundary.
- A buffer should be provided surrounding the River Ter which runs through the Site. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on the river.
- The Site will likely be accessed via Dunmow Road (B1256). An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required. Visibility splays and mitigating hedgerow removal may also have to be considered if any alternative entrances are proposed.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located approximately 1 mile west of Rayne village, the Site is accessible from the B1256 Dunmow Road which also defines the northern boundary. The Site comprises two arable fields, an access road, the River Ter, pond, grassland and planting.

The east, west and south boundaries are defined by established hedgerows and trees, however the northern boundary remains open to Dunmow Road. Beyond the boundaries, a roundabout sits on the eastern boundary, the A120 to the south and the B1417 to the west.

Late 19th Century maps show Dunmow Road to the north of Site, connecting to Rayne to Gransmore Green and Blake End and also the Bishop's Stortford, Dunmow & Braintree Branch of train line.

The Site is located within an industrial area, with a number of garages, industrial units, self-storage units, mineral extraction works and the A120 to the south. The wider landscape comprises other mineral extraction works at Rayne Quarry to the north-east, the Flitch Way and other arable fields of medium to large scale. There are few dwellings within the immediate vicinity of the Site, however settlement occurs at Rayne, Duckend Green, Gransmore Green and Blake End.

Topographically, the Site is generally flat as it is located within the river valley basin of the River Ter which runs through the centre of the Site. The landform is notably raised towards the north-west at Great Saling.

Neighbouring minerals & waste schemes include Rayne Quarry to the north-east of the Site, and also Candidate Site A90 which occurs beyond the north of the existing Rayne Quarry.

The Site is located within Enclosed Agriculture classification, but spread between Floodplain and Meadows, Unspecified and Amalgamated Fields (National Historic Landscape Characterisation, NHLA) and majority of the Site is classified as Grade 2 - Very Good Quality Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

There are no listed buildings within close proximity of the Site, however there are several clusters of listed buildings at Blake End, Gransmore Green and farmsteads on the south of the A120.

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Central Essex Farmlands (B1)

- Irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable fields, marked by sinuous hedgerows and ditches.
- Many small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape.
- Scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small hamlets, typically with greens and ponds.
- A concentration of isolated moated farmsteads.
- Network of narrow, winding lanes.
- Mostly tranquil character away from major roads and Stansted Airport.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of hedgerow and woodland pattern
- Moderate intervisibility
- Tranquil character away from existing major road corridors/Stansted
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site. However, the Site is located in close proximity of a number of designations, including:

- Priority Habitat – Deciduous Woodland
- Boxted Ancient Woodland
- Flitch Way Local Nature Reserves.

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features				•	
	Complexity				•	
	Enclosure by Vegetation				•	
	Historic Character	•				
	Built development		•			
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View			•		
	Openness to Private View				•	
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features					•
	Perceptual Quality		•			

The Site comprises a combination of two arable fields, grassland, a river and established woodland, it would therefore be considered significantly complex with increased landscape sensitivity, the presence of these on Site also significantly increases the sensitivity of views towards local natural features. The Site is moderately enclosed on the southern boundary however remains open on the northern boundary adjacent to Dunmow Road, increasing the overall sensitivity.

The open views along much of the Dunmow Road increasing visual sensitivity for public receptors, however these views are limited to road users with no public footpaths surrounding the Site. The presence of some residential properties along the northern boundary of the Site increases the Site sensitivity to private views. The presence of existing working Rayne Quarry to the north and the A120 to the south reduce the overall perceptual quality of the rural setting.

For these reasons, Site A96 has been assessed as having **Medium-high** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

Existing Rayne Quarry is located immediately north of the Site. Neighbouring A90 is located further north of the existing Site and cumulative effects are likely limited to road users and residents of properties along Dunmow Road.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

Located approx. 600m east of the Site is an outline application, Land To The South Of Dunmow Road Rayne Essex - 22/00864/FUL - Change of use from agricultural land to a residential park home site for the over 55s; involving the siting of 79 single-storey residential units, associated access, internal road layout, parking and landscaping.

Cumulative effects would be limited to road users and would not have significant impact.

Candidate Site Reference D7 – Land at Pond Farm

Amber-Green

Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- The Site possesses few characteristics of the Brain/Blackwater/Lower Chelmer (C6) Landscape Character Area (LCA) with the exception of the arable farmland with well hedged boundaries. The limited number of characteristic features and the Site's disconnect from the wider characteristic landscape, owed to the A12 and railway separation, reduces the sensitivity of the Site.
- There are no important landscape features located within the immediate vicinity of the Site, however a number of small Priority Habitats (Deciduous Woodland) are located on the opposite side of the A12. The limited number of important designations reduces the overall sensitivity of the Site.
- Three listed buildings; Pond Farmhouse and two barns are located in the northern corner of the Site, accessed from Oak Road. The buildings are located within the built envelope of Rivenhall End. The settings of these Grade II Listed Buildings surrounding the Site could be altered and therefore appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impact on these buildings.
- The Site is located in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding), however areas of Flood Zone 2 (medium probability of flooding) and 3 (high probability of flooding) are located on the opposite side of the A12 to the south, and to the north of the Site.
- The Site can currently be accessed from Oak Road to the north of the Site. An appropriate transport and access arrangement and consideration to mitigate the impacts on roads and local amenity would be required.
- No Public Rights of Way (PRoW) are located within the Site or in the surrounding area. However, a pavement and cycleway running along the A12 major road provides open views into the Site. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts of the PRoW which may include diversion or visual screening.

Results of the technical RAG assessment

Located to the east of Witham, the Site is accessed via Oak Road to the north. The Site sits within Rivenhall End and is topographically relatively flat falling very slightly to the south toward the A12 London Road.

The Site comprises an arable field surrounding a residential dwelling. The Site is bound by fragmented vegetation on all sides with open views to the A12 London Road to the south and the Great Western Main Line railway to the north.

Late 19th century maps show the railway line and The Roman Road (now the A12) running on either boundary of the Site.

No Public Rights of Way (PRoW) intersect the Site, however Footpath 47 (Rivenhall) terminates in the northern most corner of the Site. Footpath 48 and 59 (Rivenhall) extend across the landscape to the north parallel to the Site.

The wider landscape comprises Rivenhall Oaks Golf centre located to the north-west where the landform rises, residential development to the north-east and existing and proposed excavation sites across A12 London Road to the south-east.

The Site falls wholly within Enclosed Agriculture (Amalgamated Fields) classification (National Historic Landscape Characterisation), the Site is located solely within Grade 2 – Very Good Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Classification).

Three listed buildings are noted on the north-eastern corner of the Site of particular note:

- Grade II Pond Farmhouse (1122597)

Landscape Character Area – key characteristics present

Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys (C6)

- Shallow valleys.
- Predominantly arable farmland with well hedged medium to large fields.
- The Brain and the Upper Blackwater Valleys are narrow with undulating valleysides.
- The Lower Chelmer, and the Blackwater near Maldon, have wide flat valley floors, and gentle valleysides.
- Extensive linear poplar and willow plantations are a distinctive feature.

The key landscape sensitivities and accommodation of change issues for this Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- Integrity of the valley floor
- Some visually exposed valleysides/open valley floors
- Tranquil character in parts
- Landscape sensitivity value: Medium

Landscape Designations

No landscape designations within the Site.

Sensitivity assessment

Criteria Group	Criteria	Measurement				
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
Landscape Sensitivity	Landform and landscape features	•				
	Complexity	•				
	Enclosure by Vegetation		•			
	Historic Character		•			
	Built development	•				
Visual Sensitivity	Openness to Public View			•		
	Openness to Private View			•		
	Views towards landmark buildings/natural features	•				
	Perceptual Quality	•				

The Site is located between the A12 major transport route and the railway line from London to Norwich and is abutted on two sides by these infrastructure features, this significantly reduces landscape sensitivity, particularly perceptual quality and surrounding built development.

The Site is publicly viewed from a small road to the north-east, although has some open views from private dwellings along Oak Road, increasing the overall sensitivity.

The fragmented hedgerows alongside the A12 allow open views from the road and from the adjacent pavement and cycleway, allowing strong public views into the Site. The Site also has limited historic character apart from a small group of listed buildings barns and houses adjacent at Pond Farm in Rivenhall End.

For these reasons, Site D7 has been assessed as having **Medium-Low** sensitivity to mineral extraction.

Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impact with other existing and/or candidate mineral sites.

Existing working quarry at Colemans Farm is located on the opposing side of the A12 road, which defines the south-eastern boundary of the Site. However, there is little intervisibility between the two Sites.

Previous mineral extraction sites are also evident in the area surrounding Colemans Farm quarry on the opposite side of the A12, where several reservoirs, including Colemans Reservoir, are situated in the surrounding fields along the valley.

Although separated from the River Blackwater valley by the A12, there are concerns that there would be significant cumulative impact on the local landscape character if mineral extraction works continue along the river.

Other Cumulative impacts i.e., those outside MPA ability to control e.g., planning permission for nearby residential development, potential existing local plan allocation etc if known.

A residential development for 100 dwellings (Ref: 23/00816/OUT – Land at Cranes Lane) is currently pending consideration within the narrow strip of land located between the A12 and the railway line, located over 1km to the north-east.