


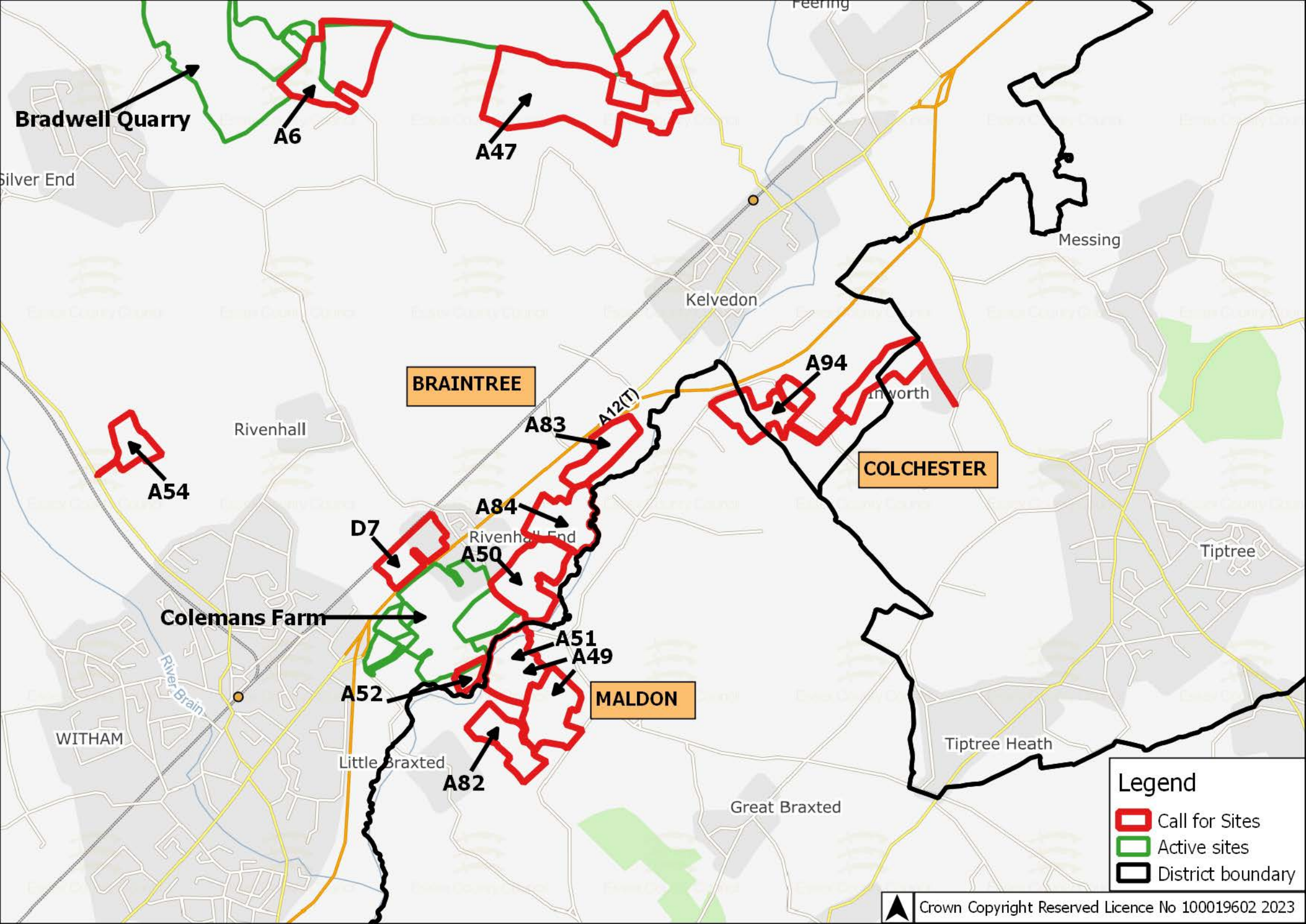


**Whiteheads
A54**

Legend

 Site Boundary

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<i>Candidate Site Reference</i>	<i>Candidate Site Name</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Existing use</i>	<i>Site Area (ha)</i>	<i>Potential Yield (million tonnes)</i>
A54	Whiteheads	Braintree	Agricultural	10.22	0.4

The Site is proposed to be a new Site at Whiteheads Field, Crossing Road, Witham. This Site area is approximately 10.22 ha and is proposed for 0.4 million tonnes of sand and gravel extraction and the creation of a reservoir to support existing farm operations. Additional infrastructure needed on site includes a gravel wash plant. The adjoining uses include agricultural fields, woodland and a reservoir. The town of Witham is located to the south of the Site. Access is proposed via the B1018. See Appendix J for a detailed map of the Site.

Summary of RAG Assessment

The results of the technical and desktop RAG assessment are detailed below.

Landscape and Visual Sensitivity	Biodiversity	Historic Buildings	Archaeology	Flooding	Transport	Access	Public Rights of Way	Geo-Environmental	Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Drainage	Air Quality	Soil Quality	Services & Utilities	Health & Amenity	Green Belt	Airport Safeguarding Zones
Amber /Green	Amber	Amber	Amber /Green	Amber	Green	Amber /Green	Green	Green	Amber /Green	Green	Amber	Red/ Amber	Green	Green	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.
- Site A54 comprises a single arable field bounded by hedgerows and is adjacent to a large farm reservoir. The haul road would pass between the reservoir and a narrow strip of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland Priority habitat woodland with a boundary hedgerow, before joining the B1018. The Site's boundary hedgerows include standard mature trees and (dry) ditches and are Priority habitat. There is a strip of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland Priority habitat on the southern boundary, some of which falls within the Site boundary including a pond and two trees protruding into the field.
- One of the trees protruding into the field is a candidate veteran tree because it has some of the required veteran features and could develop further features through the life cycle that were not captured at the time of the survey. There

are at least two other candidate veteran trees on or near to the Site boundary. Veteran trees are an irreplaceable habitat.

- The Site is graded Amber because ecological impacts are likely to be moderate and it is likely to require medium levels of mitigation to make it acceptable. The Site could have moderate impacts upon irreplaceable habitats due to the presence of candidate veteran trees. The Site could have a moderate impact upon the natural environment particularly the adjacent Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland and Hedgerow Priority habitats, upon Priority species and the large adjacent waterbody.
- Any application would require demonstration that it would not affect the hydrology of the woodlands, candidate veteran trees, Hedgerows, ditches, and waterbody, and appropriate buffers should be provided; the water quality of the waterbody should not be allowed to deteriorate. Other mitigation measures should be used, such as watering to suppress dust and wildlife sensitive lighting.
- The allocation of the Site would likely result in 'less than substantial' harm at a low level to the significance of two Grade II listed buildings through change within their settings: Hungry Hall Farmhouse (List UID: 1123868); Hole Farmhouse (List UID: 1146854).
- The allocation of the Site would likely result in 'less than substantial' harm at a low level to the significance of one registered park and garden: Faulkbourne Hall (List UID: 1000341).
- The undeveloped, agrarian landscape of the Site contributes to the setting and significance of these assets and the fundamental change in land use and land character would undermine the ability to understand and appreciate their significance.
- The Site lies within an area of discreet recorded multi-period archaeological activity as revealed by archaeological investigations within the Site and adjacent quarry.
- There is a high probability for the continuation of postmedieval ditches into the Site which represent historic field boundaries.
- Middle Iron Age and Medieval settlement activity may continue into areas of the Site which have received no previous archaeological investigation.
- The Site is assessed as having a 'medium' potential for surface water flood risk as identified within the SFRA.
- The Site has been identified as having a 'low' groundwater flood risk.
- The Site is entirely within Flood Risk Zone 1 and therefore is not at risk from fluvial flooding.

- Access is proposed via an existing access onto the B1018 which includes a ghost island right turn lane. This access has been used previously by HGVs but will require re-modelling/mitigation to bring it back up to an appropriate standard.
- The Site has medium to low groundwater vulnerability. The Site is within a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone (Surface Water) and is within Drinking Water Protection Areas (Surface Water). The Site is likely to have a minor impact on hydrology, hydrogeology, and drainage. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate potential impacts on hydrology, hydrogeology, and drainage.
- The Site contains Grade 2 quality soil (very good quality agricultural land) which is BMV land. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate the impacts on soil quality and agricultural land – this is likely to include removal of soils for stockpiling prior to reuse, potentially in site restoration.
- The Site contains low voltage underground cables within the Site boundary. The Site is within 100m of a high pressure gas mains (Cadent Gas). Further investigation and consultation would be needed to determine appropriate mitigation measures to avoid impact on the gas main to make the Site acceptable which may include diversion and/or protection.

The information and maps above represent a summary of the site assessment. You are encouraged to view the methodology and more detailed assessment for each site within appendices B-I. These can be found on the Candidate Sites Assessment webpage on our consultation pages:

www.essex.gov.uk/minerals-review

Appendix B - Landscape and Visual Sensitivity

Appendix C - Biodiversity

Appendix D - Historic Buildings

Appendix E - Archaeology

Appendix F - Flooding

Appendix G - Transport

Appendix H – Access

Appendix I - Public Rights of Way, Geo-Environmental, Hydrology, Hydrogeology & Drainage, Air Quality, Soil Quality, Services & Utilities, Health & Amenity, Green Belt, and Airport Safeguarding Zones