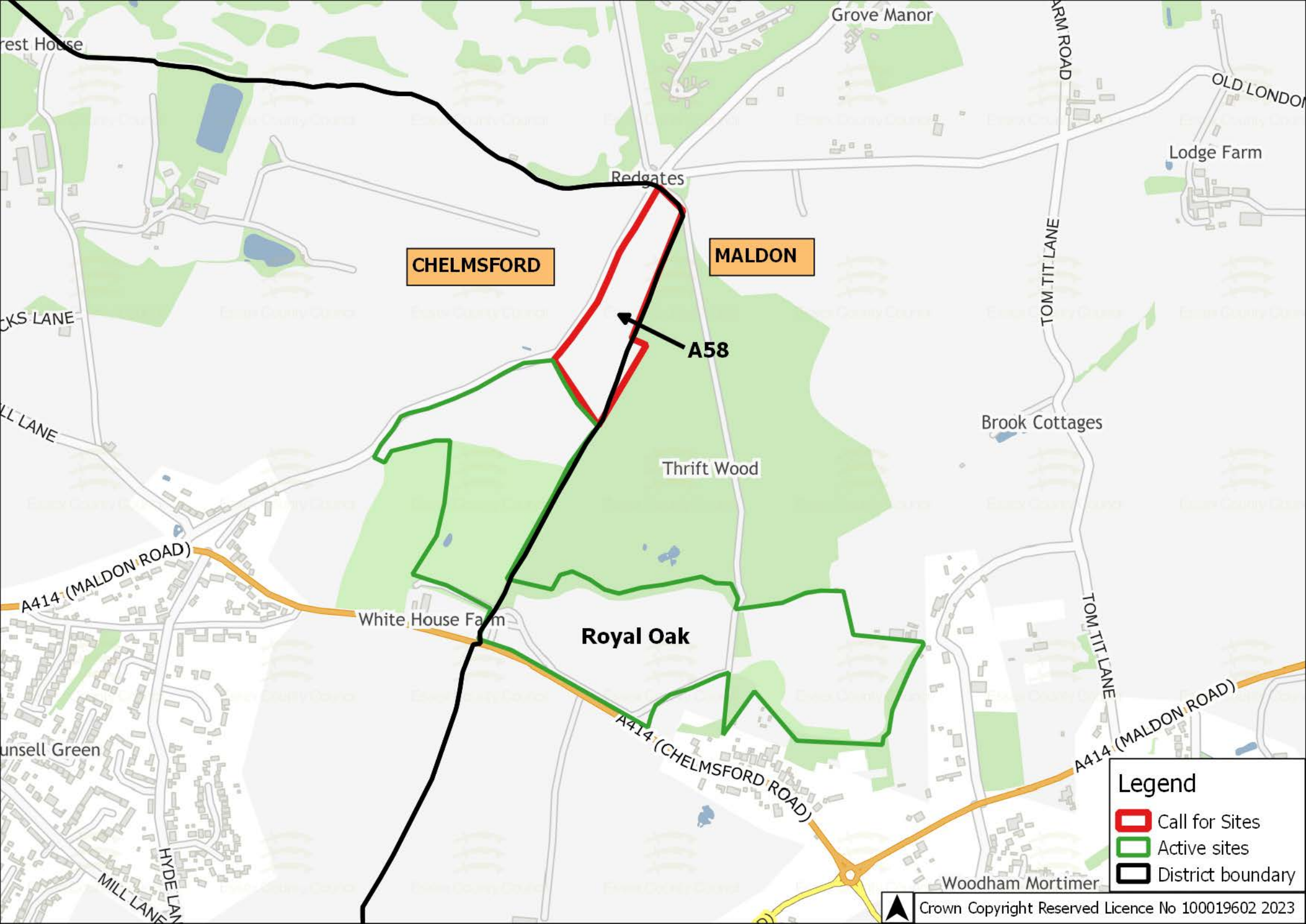


**Little Smiths
A58**

Legend
Site Boundary

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CHELMSFORD

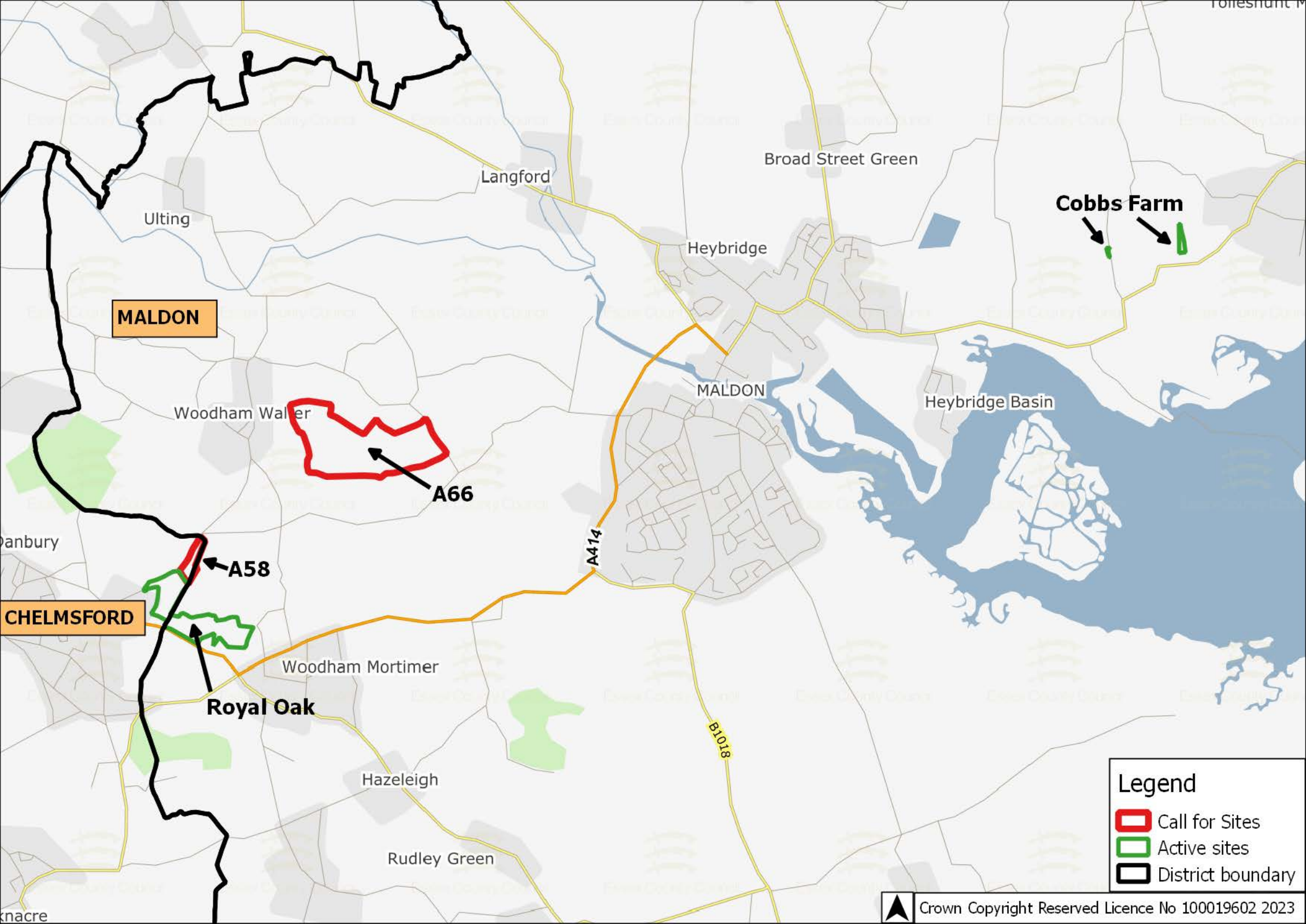
MALDON

A58

Royal Oak

Legend

-  Call for Sites
-  Active sites
-  District boundary



MALDON

Cobbs Farm

A66

A58




A414

MALDON

CHELMSFORD

Royal Oak

Legend

-  Call for Sites
-  Active sites
-  District boundary

<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>
A58	Little Smiths	Chelmsford	Agricultural	3.8	0.31

The Site is promoted as an extension to an existing mineral Site (Royal Oak Quarry) and is located north of Royal Oak Quarry. This Site area is approximately 3.8 ha and is proposed for 0.31 million tonnes of sand and gravel extraction. The operations of the Site would follow on from the existing Royal Oak Quarry consented operations. The adjoining uses include woodland, agricultural fields, and residential buildings. The village of Danbury is located to the west and south-west of the Site. Site access and connection to the highway network is already approved by an existing permission at Royal Oak Quarry. 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	Red/Amber	Green	Amber/Green	Amber	Green	Red/Amber	Green	Green	Amber	Amber	Amber	Green	Red/Amber	Green	Green

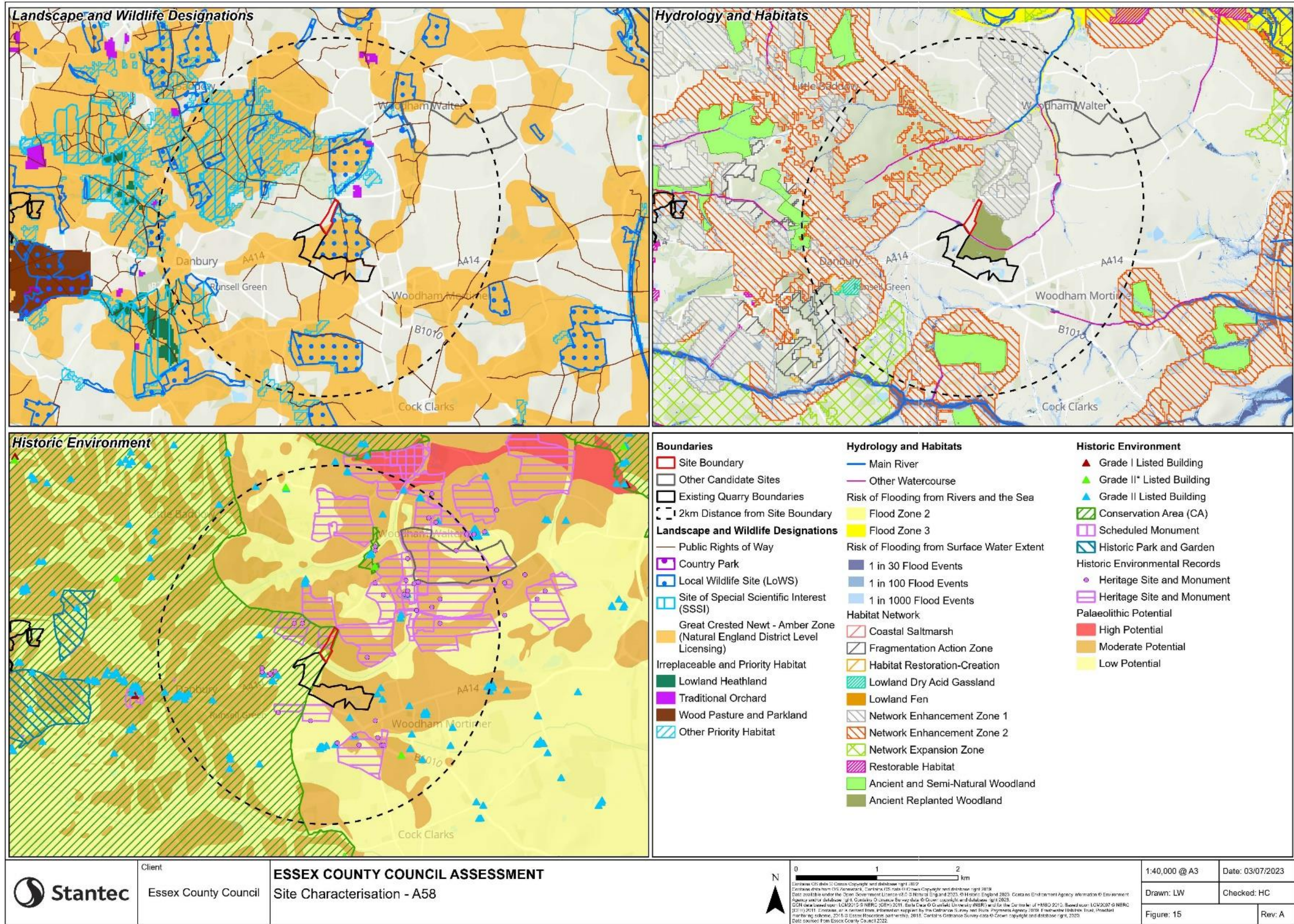
Key findings of the assessment are as follows:

- 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.
- 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.
- There is a potential pollution pathway for water quality between the watercourse on the edge of Site A58 and a number of statutory wildlife sites.

The potential for Likely Significant Effects to the Blackwater Estuary Special Protection Area and Ramsar site and the Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation will need to be considered through a plan-level Habitats Regulations Assessment.

- Site A58 is within the Impact Risk Zone for the Woodham Walter Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which is located approximately 1km north-west. The intervening land use is currently farmland with hedgerows and a golf course, creating habitat connectivity between Site A58 the SSSI.
- Thrift Wood Local Wildlife Site (Ma7) is immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary. It is Ancient Replanted Woodland and therefore classed as irreplaceable habitat. Warren Pit (Ma8) Local Wildlife Site (LoWS) is 10 metres to the north of the Site and there are two other LoWS within 1km.
- A candidate veteran Oak tree is located on the eastern boundary on the edge of the adjacent Thrift Wood, and another candidate is to the north of the Site on the western boundary. Candidate veteran trees have some of the required veteran features and have the potential to develop further features during the tree's life cycle that were not captured at the time of the survey. Veteran trees are classed as irreplaceable habitat.
- The Site is a relatively narrow field following along the north-western boundary of Thrift Wood LoWS. It is bordered by mature Hedgerow Priority habitat with mature standard trees on the north and western boundaries. The southern boundary comprises a partially wet stream valley and hedgerow with no mature trees. This watercourse runs eastwards into the adjacent ancient woodland.
- The Site is graded Red-Amber because it could have major impacts upon the adjacent ancient woodland, which is irreplaceable habitat, and a serious impact upon the LoWS and Priority habitats and species and it is likely to require high levels of mitigation to make the Site acceptable. It could have a moderate impact upon the candidate veteran trees (irreplaceable habitat). Impacts may include changes to the hydrology of the ancient woodland, candidate veteran trees and Hedgerows and watercourse, smothering of leaves by dust, disturbance e.g. by noise and lighting. It could result in disturbance and loss of habitat for Priority farmland species.
- Any application would require demonstration that it would not affect the hydrology of the ancient woodland and other habitats listed above. It is likely that mitigation would require a substantial buffer from the ancient woodland and candidate veteran trees in accordance with Government Advice. Water run-off from the Site should not be allowed to directly enter the watercourse.
- The Essex Historic Environment Record records the presence of cropmarks within the Site. Evidence from aerial photographs also indicates the presence of a potential trackway and enclosure. The enclosure may be related to the historic woodland or be of earlier date.

- The Site is assessed as having a 'low' potential for surface water flood risk as identified within the SFRA.
- The Site has been identified as having a 'high' 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 the existing quarry access off A414 Maldon Road. The existing ghost island right turn lane is not of sufficient width to accommodate a HGV clear of the running lanes, and visibility splays from the access is limited due to overgrown vegetation.
- 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). A watercourse is within the Site boundary. Appropriate consideration would be required to mitigate potential impacts on hydrology, hydrogeology, and drainage.
- An AQMA was designated 1.73km south west of the Site between Gay Bowers Lane and Danbury Village Green, adjacent to Eves Corner. An Air Quality Action Plan is being prepared by Chelmsford City Council. Medium levels of mitigation are likely to be required to ensure the Site does not have an unacceptable impact on air quality which take account of how traffic to and from the Site may impact the AQMA.
- 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.
- One sports facility (golf course) and one residential building are outside the Site boundary less than or equal to 20m from the Site. One residential building is more than 20m but less than or equal to 50m from the Site. One residential building is more than 50m but less than or equal to 250m from the Site. Given the proximity of sensitive receptors, high levels of mitigation are likely to be required to make the Site acceptable in terms of impacts on health and amenity e.g. high level noise screening and extensive dust suppression measures.



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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