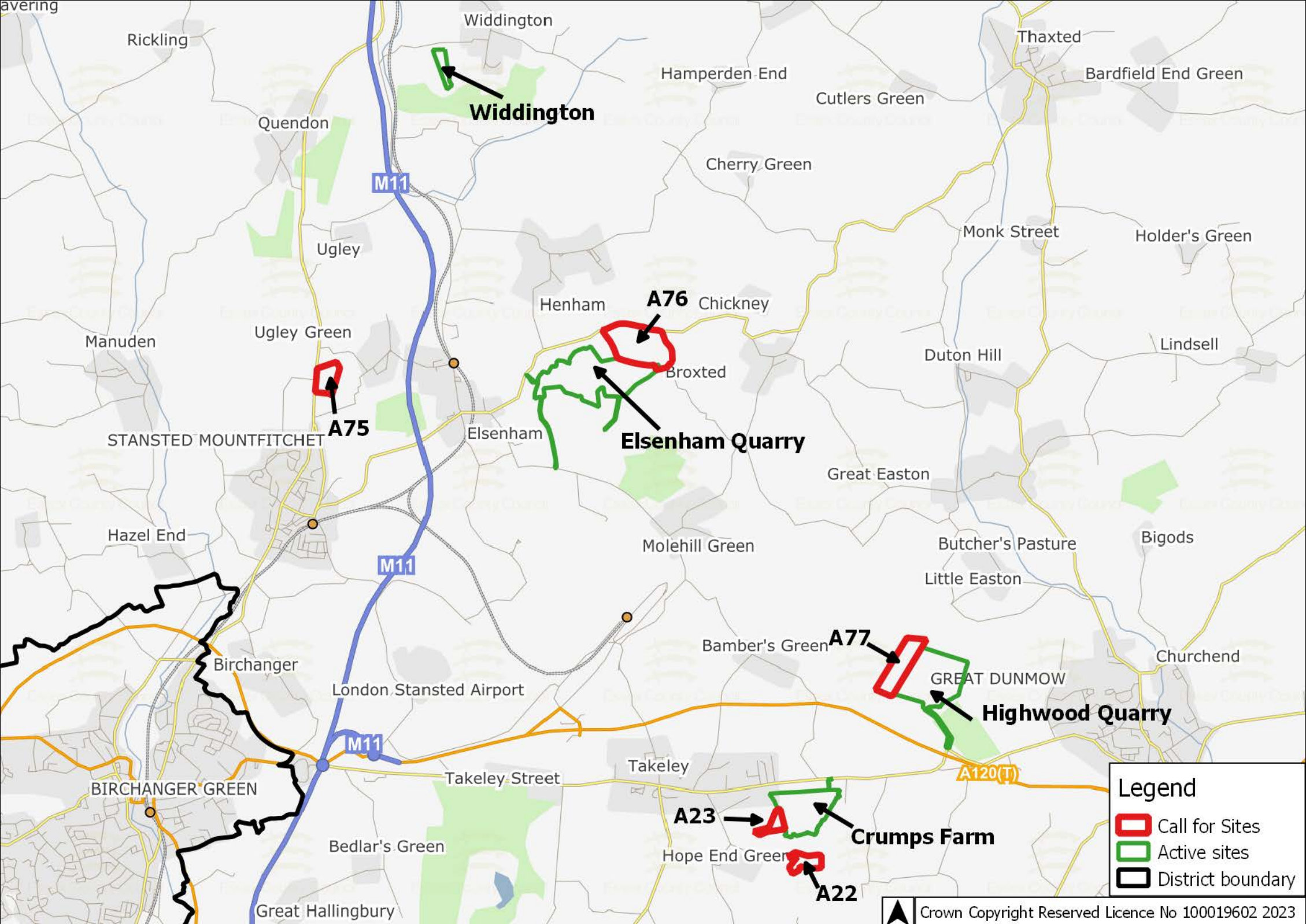


**Highwood Quarry
A77**

Legend
[Red Outline] 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>
A77	Westward Extension to Highwood Quarry	Uttlesford	Agricultural	19.45	1.23

The Site is promoted as an extension to an existing mineral site (Highwood Quarry) and is located adjacent to the western boundary of Highwood Quarry. The Site area is approximately 19.46 ha and is proposed for 1.23 million tonnes of sand and gravel extraction with processing and distribution from the adjacent Highwood Quarry. The Site operations would commence in sequence to Highwood Quarry. The adjoining uses include agricultural fields, woodland, and Highwood Quarry. The town of Great Dunmow is located to the east of the Site. The Site would be accessed using existing Highwood Quarry access to A120 via B1056. 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	Amber	Amber	Amber /Green	Amber	Green	Green	Red/ Amber	Green	Amber	Green	Amber	Amber	Amber	Green	Amber /Green

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.
- Existing vegetation to Site's boundaries and within the Site should be protected.
- Site A77 is within the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone for High Woods, Dunmow SSSI which is an ancient woodland site. The SSSI is located c. 500 metres southeast of the Site, in close proximity to the existing Highwood Quarry. Ancient woodlands are classed as irreplaceable habitat. The Site borders the existing quarry site Highwood Quarry to the east. Hatfield Forest SSSI and National Nature Reserve (NNR) is c. 4.7 kilometres

from the Site. Hatfield Forest is one of the largest woodlands in Essex and includes a wide range of habitats including Woodpasture and Parkland Priority habitat. The River Roding is located c. 370 metres west.

- A mature willow, located along the western boundary was assessed as being likely to qualify as an ancient tree specimen. Ancient and veteran trees are irreplaceable habitats. There are a number of mature trees present along the western boundary. There are no hedgerows present on Site.
- Little Easton Airfield Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) is partially within the Site, along the western boundary and extends one kilometre west.
- 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 the Site acceptable. The proposals could have a moderate impact upon the natural environment including Priority habitats and species. This includes the direct impact to the on Site/ adjacent LoWS, ancient trees, which are an irreplaceable habitat, as well as potential hydrological impacts to retained habitats, and loss of and disturbance to habitats for Priority farmland species. Any application would require demonstration that there would be no adverse effects on the integrity of the High Woods, Dunmow SSSI, and ancient woodland and that the operations would not affect the hydrology of the River Roding.
- The allocation of The Site would likely result in 'less than substantial' harm at a low level to the significance of the Grade II* listed building, Stone Hall (*List UID: 1334091*).
- The undeveloped, agrarian landscape of the Site contributes to the setting and significance of this asset and the fundamental change in land use and land character would undermine the ability to understand and appreciate its significance. The proximity of the Site to the heritage asset also presents challenges.
- It is considered likely that medium levels of mitigation would be required, efforts should be made to avoid structures/buildings to the south of The Site and a robust landscaping scheme implemented.
- The Site lies within an area known to contain areas of multi-period archaeology from the Late Bronze Age to the medieval period.
- Archaeological evaluation on the existing quarry area has found evidence of Late Prehistoric and medieval occupation. This worked proved there was limited impact from the later development of the Site as an airfield.
- The Site lies within a medieval deer park associated with Little Easton Manor that was redeveloped into an airfield in the Second World War

- The Site is assessed as having a 'high' potential for surface water flood risk as identified within the SFRA.
- The Site has been identified as having a 'medium' groundwater flood risk.
- The Site is entirely within Flood Risk Zone 1 and therefore is not at risk from fluvial flooding.
- 4 Public Rights of Way cross the Site. Appropriate consideration would be needed to mitigate potential impacts on these Public Rights of Way and high levels of mitigation may be required which is likely to include diversion especially with regard to those Public Rights of Way crossing the Site.
- The Site is within Zone III - Total Catchment Groundwater SPZ and has low groundwater vulnerability. Hydrogeological issues were identified for the adjacent site, due to potential impact on Little Easton ponds and mitigation was required. It is likely similar mitigation would be required for this site. The Site is likely to have a moderate 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 a high pressure gas mains (Cadent Gas) within 250m of the Site. An underground Openreach BT power line is within the Site boundary. Further investigation and consultation would be needed to determine appropriate mitigation measures to make the Site acceptable which may include diversion and/or protection of services and utilities.
- One residential building is more than 50m but less than or equal to 250m from the Site. Given the proximity of sensitive receptors, medium levels of mitigation are likely to be required to make the Site acceptable in terms of impacts on health and amenity e.g. low level noise attenuation measures.
- The Site is within an Airport Safeguarding Zone (Stansted Outer Zone). Restoration proposals assume the Site would be returned to agricultural use meaning the nature of the Site is unlikely to attract birds and therefore is likely to have a minor impact on aircraft safety and should not increase the risk of bird strike for aircrafts. Detailed assessment of this matter would need to accompany any planning application.

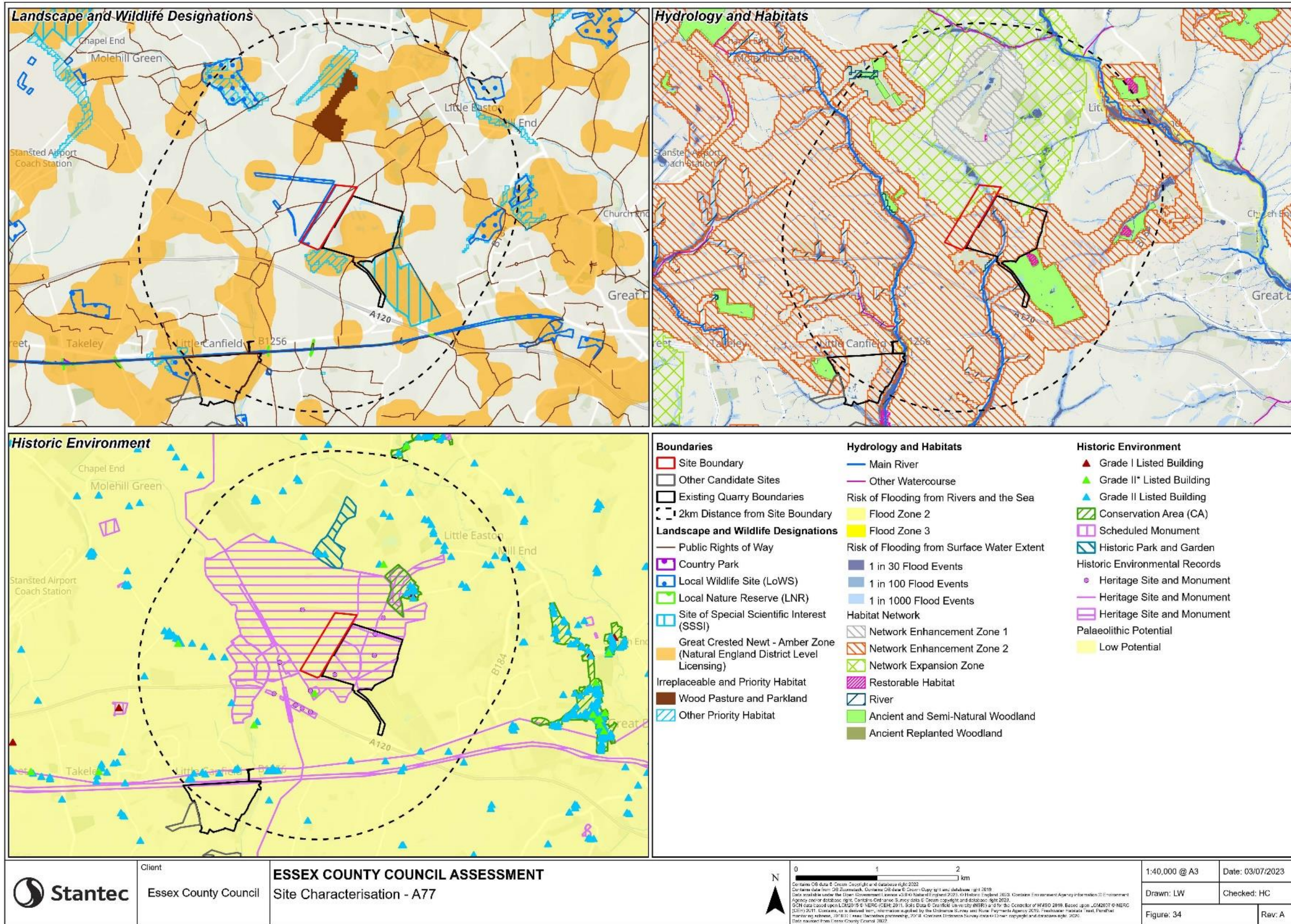


Figure 3.34: A77 - Westward Extension to Highwood Quarry

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