

ONGAR PARK ESTATE, NORTH WEALD
BASSETT

PROPOSED SITE ALLOCATIONS REVIEW:
ENVIRONMENTAL, GREEN BELT, LANDSCAPE AND
ECOLOGY

EXTRACT FROM SETTLEMENT EDGE LANDSCAPE
SENSITIVITY STUDY

January 2018

Epping Forest District Council

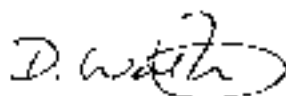
Settlement Edge Landscape Sensitivity Study

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Approved

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Watkins', enclosed within a hand-drawn oval.

Dominic Watkins

Position

Director

Date

11 January 2010

Revision

Final Report V2

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Preface

In April 2009, Epping Forest District Council commissioned Chris Blandford Associates (CBA) to undertake two Landscape Studies of the District to enable a better understanding of its landscapes and provide an evidence base for informing policies within the forthcoming Local Development Framework (LDF). The Studies comprise two inputs:

- A Settlement-edge Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (this report); and
- A district-wide Landscape Character Assessment.

Informed by the contextual characterisation mapping from the district-wide Landscape Character Assessment, this Study provides a more detailed understanding of sensitive landscape and environmental features around the edges of the twenty-two principal settlements within the District. The Study identifies the sensitivities of landscape and environmental features around the immediate fringes of these principal settlements and assesses how areas of similar landscape character and environmental features around the settlements contribute to their structure, character and setting. The report will inform options for settlement growth in landscape terms by providing a key part of the evidence base for a Green Belt review and informing land allocations in the LDF.

We are grateful for the advice and guidance provided by the Steering Group, namely:

Chris Neilan – Landscape Officer and Arboriculturist, Epping Forest District Council,
Ian White – Forward Planning Manager
Paul Hewitt - Countryside Manager

The Consultant team comprised:

Dominic Watkins
Emma Clarke
Emma Wigley
Sarah De Vos

Chris Blandford Associates
January 2010

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

1.1.1 In April 2009, Epping Forest District Council commissioned Chris Blandford Associates to undertake two Landscape Studies of the District to enable a better understanding of its landscapes and provide an evidence base for informing policies within the forthcoming Local Development Framework. The studies comprise two inputs:

- A Settlement-edge Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (this report); and
- A District-wide Landscape Character Assessment

1.1.2 The District of Epping Forest abuts the north-eastern edge of London and is located in the south-west corner of the County of Essex. It contains the towns of Loughton/Buckhurst Hill, Waltham Abbey, Chigwell, Epping and Chipping Ongar, together with several villages, the largest of which are Theydon Bois, North Weald Bassett, Roydon and Nazeing.

1.2 Study Areas

1.2.1 In line within the brief, Landscape Sensitivity Analysis was undertaken for areas around the twenty-two 'principal' settlements within the District, to inform the appraisal of land allocations in the LDF. In agreement with the Steering Group, these settlements were grouped into sixteen discrete zones according to their spatial distribution within the District, as set out below:

North West District

- Epping/Coopersale Common
- Thornwood Common
- Waltham Abbey
- Lower Nazeing
- Epping Green
- Lower Sheering/Sheering
- Roydon

South West District

- Loughton/Buckhurst Hill/Theydon Bois
- Sewardstone

North East District

- North Weald Bassett

- Chipping Ongar/High Ongar
- Fyfield
- Moreton

South East District

- Chigwell/Chigwell Row
- Abridge
- Stapleford Abbots

1.3 Purpose of the Study

- 1.3.1 This assessment seeks to provide a landscape sensitivity study of areas around the principal settlements (as listed above) to inform policy within the Epping Forest District Local LDF. It also outlines the extent to which these areas of landscape contribute towards the purposes of including land within the Green Belt and how they contribute now, and potentially in the future, towards Green Belt objectives.

1.4 Planning Policy relevant to the Green Belt

General

- 1.4.1 The planning policy context relevant to the Green Belt has been reviewed at national and regional level, as set out below:

National Policy

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2005)

- 1.4.2 PPS1 aims for sustainable development to be enshrined as the core principal underpinning planning. It states that planning should facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of urban and rural development by:
- Making suitable land available for development in line with economic, social and environment objectives to improve people's quality of life;
 - Contributing to sustainable economic development;
 - Protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of the countryside, and existing communities;



KEY

- Epping Forest District Boundary
- Green Belt
- Key Traffic Route
- Extent of Study Area for each Settlement
- Settlement Boundary

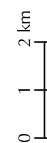
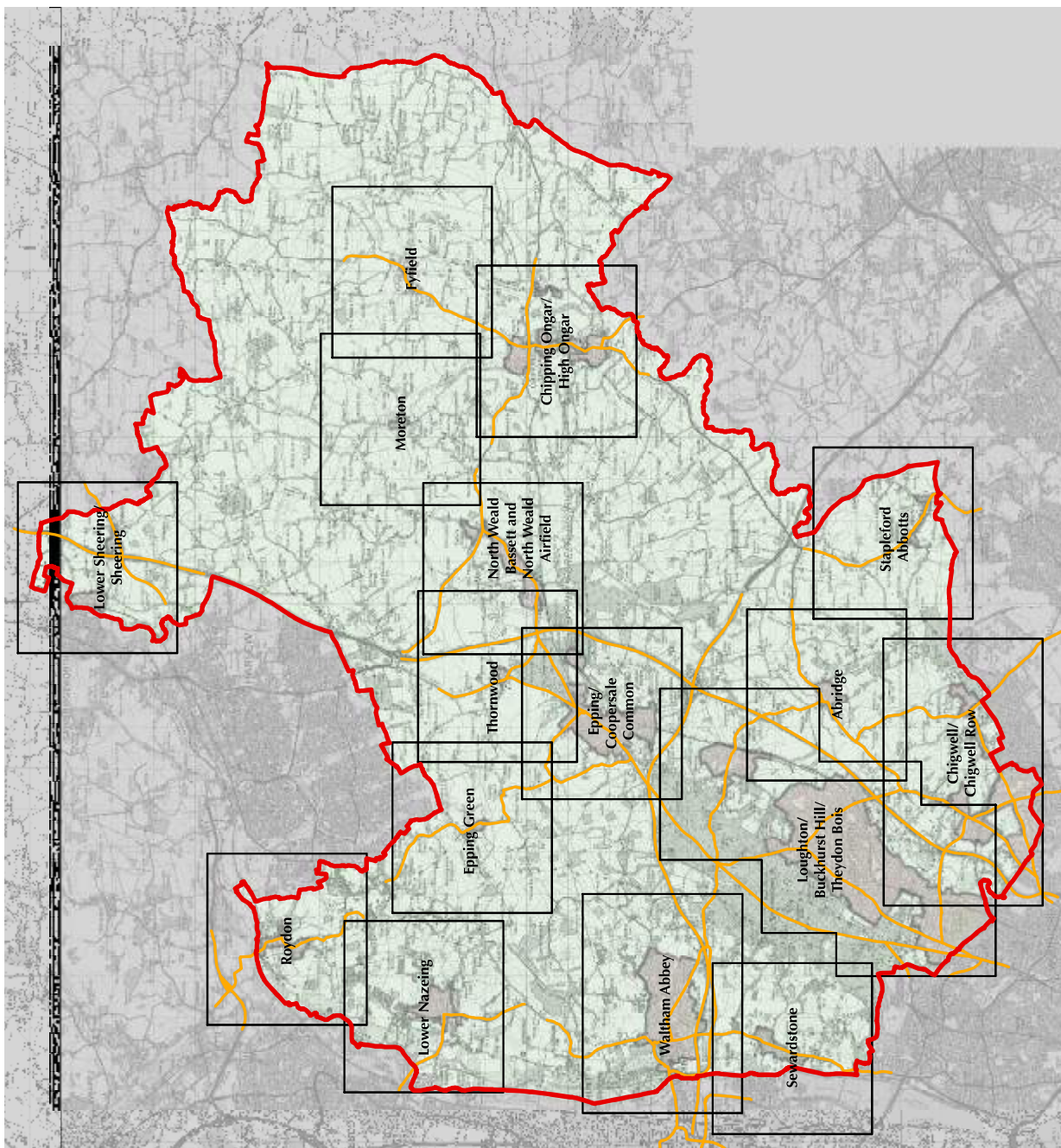


Figure 1.1
Settlement Locations
and Study Areas

EPHING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL LANDSCAPE STUDIES LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY

CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES
www.cba.uk.net

December 2009

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- Ensuring high quality development through good and inclusive design, and the efficient use of resources; and
- Ensuring that development supports existing communities and contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services for all members of the community.

1.4.3 The policy statement requires development plan policies to be based upon up to date information on the environmental characteristics of the area.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: green Belts (PPG2, Department for Communities and Local Government, 1995)

1.4.4 PPG2 is the key Government planning policy document relating to Green Belts that includes the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy and the purposes of including land within them. This document defines the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy, which is:

‘..to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open: the most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness. Green Belts can shape patterns of urban development at sub-regional and regional scale, and help to ensure that development occurs in locations allocated in development plans. They help to protect the countryside, be it in agricultural, forestry or other use. They can assist in moving towards more sustainable patterns of urban development’ (paragraph 1.4).

1.4.5 PPG2 also defines, in paragraph 1.5, the five purposes of including land in Green Belts:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

1.4.6 The guidance note then addresses the use of land in Green Belts stating that, *‘once Green Belts have been defined the use of land in them has a positive role to play in fulfilling the following objectives:*

- *To provide opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population;*
- *To provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas;*
- *To retain attractive landscapes and enhance landscapes, near to where people live;*

- *To improve damaged and derelict land around towns;*
- *To secure nature conservation interest; and*
- *To retain land in agricultural, forestry and related uses' (paragraph 1.6)'.*

1.4.7 PPG2 then clarifies that the extent to which land fulfils the above objectives is not in itself a material factor in the inclusion of land within a Green Belt or its continued protection (paragraph 1.7).

1.5 Approach and Methodology

1.5.1 The general approach of the Study has been informed by the Countryside Agency's 'Landscape character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland: Topic Paper 6 – Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity'. For consistency with neighbouring Local Authority areas, this methodology was based on the approach set out within the Harlow Area Landscape and Environment Study¹ and refined through discussions with the Steering Group. In agreement with the Steering Group, the assessment has been carried out a scale of 1:10,000, which is considered appropriate for this scale of Study.

1.5.2 The assessment comprised the following tasks:

Desk-based Analysis

- Preparation of base maps for each settlement;
- Review of the relevant Landscape Character Types and Areas around each settlement from the Epping Forest District Landscape Character Assessment at the 1:25,000 contextual scale and review of the inherent landscape and visual sensitivities for each Landscape Character Area defined within the District;
- Analysis of the historic landscape character data² to provide an overview of different types /ages of historic fields and field boundaries which are still visible within the current landscape;
- Mapping of designated environmental constraints; and
- Definition of preliminary landscape setting areas, based on local variations in landscape character at the settlement edges (which fit within the broader landscape character areas defined within the Landscape Character Assessment at a scale of 1:25,000).

¹ Harlow Area Landscape and Environment Study: Detailed Analysis of Harlow's Fringes, Chris Blandford Associates, September 2009.

² Data provided by Essex County Council from the Essex Historic Landscape Characterisation Project

Field Survey Analysis

- Identifying the extent of the landscape setting areas and refining the boundaries of the preliminarily defined areas;
- Identifying and recording key views into and out of each settlement;
- Identifying and recording positive and negative qualities/features that contribute to the Landscape Setting Areas around each settlement – such as visually significant slopes, landmarks and visual detractors; and
- Evaluating the overall landscape sensitivity of each defined landscape setting area.

Evaluation of Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

1.5.3 The Epping Forest District Landscape Character Assessment (part one of this Study) was based on the latest guidance published by the Countryside Agency³, taking into account current best practice. The Landscape Character Assessment report provides an evaluation of the inherent landscape and visual sensitivities for each Landscape Character Area defined within the District at a scale of 1:25,000. This evaluation involved a strong degree of professional judgement in distilling out the landscape character and visual qualities that are sensitive to change. The judgements recognised that some attributes of the landscape may be more important in defining character than others and may therefore be more sensitive in relative terms.

1.5.4 Topic Paper 6⁴ states that overall landscape sensitivity of an area of landscape is a function of two aspects:

- Landscape character sensitivity; and
- Visual sensitivity

1.5.5 For the purposes of this study, **overall landscape sensitivity** is defined as follows:

‘The inherent sensitivity of the landscape itself, irrespective of the type of change that may be under consideration. It considers the sensitivity of the landscape resource, its stability of character, the degree to which that character is robust enough to be able to recuperate from loss or damage’⁵.

1.5.6 **Landscape Character Sensitivity** is defined in this study as ‘the degree to which a particular area of landscape is vulnerable to change with potentially adverse effects on its character’.

³ Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland (Countryside Agency/Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002).

⁴ Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland: Topic Paper 6 – Techniques and Criteria for Judging Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity (Countryside Agency/Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002).

⁵ Landscape Character Assessment, Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity, The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage,

1.5.7 **Visual Sensitivity** is defined in this study as ‘the degree to which a particular view or visual experience is vulnerable to change with potentially adverse effects on character’.

1.5.8 The following landscape character and visual characteristics/distinctive qualities are most likely to affect sensitivity:

Landscape Character Sensitivity

Natural Factors

- Vegetation types
- Tree cover type/pattern
- Extent and pattern of semi-natural habitat

Cultural Factors

- Land use
- Settlement pattern
- Field boundaries
- Enclosure pattern
- Time depth

Landscape Quality/Condition

- Intactness
- Representation of typical character
- State of repair of individual elements

Aesthetic Factors

- Scale
- Enclosure
- Diversity
- Texture
- Pattern
- Colours
- Form/Line
- Balance
- Movement

Visual Sensitivity

- Visual connections with adjacent landscapes
- Views
- Skyline
- Land form influences
- Tree and woodland cover
- Numbers and types of viewers

1.5.9 These factors are closely linked and, to an extent, interchangeable; for example, scale, enclosure and land cover will influence the extent that any development is visible within the landscape.

1.5.10 An analysis of the landscape character and visual sensitivity of each Landscape Setting Area was undertaken. Based on this, a judgement was reached about the overall sensitivity of each landscape setting area, focussing on the information set out within the matrix below:

Landscape Setting Area	Landscape Character Sensitivity									Visual Sensitivity									Overall Sensitivity to change
	Representation of typical character			Number of sensitive natural, cultural and historic features			Overall Landscape Character Sensitivity			Intervisibility			Visual Prominence			Overall Visual Sensitivity			
	Positive	Moderate	Limited	Many	Some	Few	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	
1																			
2																			
3																			

Criteria

1.5.11 A definition of the criteria used within the above assessment is set out below:

Representation of Typical Character

1.5.12 Using the information set out within the overview and visual character sections for each settlement, an assessment was made about the extent to which each Landscape Setting Area reflects local landscape character. Definitions of the criteria used are set out below:

Positive

- 1.5.13 The structure of the landscape is apparent and the character of the setting area has many features that are representative of local landscape character (as defined within the Epping Forest District Landscape Character Assessment).

Moderate

- 1.5.14 The character of the setting area contains some features representative of the local landscape character. There are, however, some incongruous elements but these do not detract from the overall setting of the settlement.

Limited

- 1.5.15 The character of the setting area contains few features that are representative of the local landscape character and incongruous elements detract from the setting of the settlement.

Number of Natural, Cultural and Historic Features

- 1.5.16 Using the information set out within the Historic Character and Landscape Sensitivity sections for each settlement, an assessment was made about the number of natural, cultural and historic features within the landscape setting area.

Many

- 1.5.17 The landscape setting area contains many intact sensitive landscape and historic landscape features (as shown on Landscape Sensitivity plan).

Some

- 1.5.18 The landscape setting area contains some intact sensitive landscape and historic landscape features; however there are areas where few sensitive features are present.

Few

- 1.5.19 The landscape setting area contains few intact sensitive landscape and historic landscape features.

Intervisibility

- 1.5.20 Using the information set out within the visual character sections for each settlement, an assessment of the intervisibility of each Landscape Setting Area was assessed. For the purposes of this Study, intervisibility has been defined as 'the visibility of this area from other landscape setting areas or when viewed against a backdrop of adjacent landscape setting areas from key viewpoints'.

Visual Prominence

- 1.5.21 Using the information set out within the visual character sections for each settlement, an assessment of the visual prominence of each Landscape Setting Area was assessed. For the purposes of this Study, visual prominence has been defined as 'the extent to which an area is visually dominant within views from surrounding areas, resulting from its topographical prominence and overlying pattern of landscape elements'.

Overall Sensitivity

- 1.5.22 Judgements on the overall sensitivity of each Landscape Setting Area were based upon the matrix below and are summarised on the corresponding Landscape Sensitivity Figures for each settlement:

Landscape Character			Visual Sensitivity			Overall Sensitivity		
High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low

Evaluation of Contribution to Green Belt

- 1.5.23 For each settlement identified within Section 1.2.1 above, the following analysis was undertaken for areas surrounding the settlement:
- The extent to which they contribute towards the purposes of including land in the Green Belt; and
 - How they contribute now, and potentially in the future towards Green Belt objectives – i.e. providing the evidence base for policies which may be required under paragraph 2.12 of PPG2.

- 1.5.24 Assessment criteria have been identified, informed by the review of the relevant planning policy context for Green Belts (as set out in Section 1.4). An explanation and justification of the choice of each criterion is set out below:

Requirements of PPG2

- 1.5.25 PPG2 clearly sets out the policy requirements for consideration or inclusion of Green Belt land under the following categories:
- Contribution to the fundamental aim of retaining openness of Green Belts (*paragraph 1.4*)
 - Contribution to purposes of including land in the Green Belt (*paragraph 1.5*)

Contribution of Openness to Green Belts

- 1.5.26 As set out in PPG2, the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and a specific criterion has been identified that seeks to address the contribution of the landscape units and the Site to the openness of the Green Belt. In terms of relevance to the assessment of Green Belt land in the Study Area, this is a key criterion. The first criterion is therefore:

- Contribution to openness of Green Belt?

Contribution to Purposes of including Land in the Green Belt

- 1.5.27 A number of criteria have been identified representing all five purposes for inclusion of land in the Green Belt, and the landscape setting of each settlement has been assessed in terms of their contribution to these. Criteria two to six are as follows:

- Checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas?

- 1.5.28 For the purposes of this Study, 'large built up areas' have been taken to mean 'Key Centres for development and change' as defined in the East of England Plan (May 2008) as urban areas that will be the main focus for development and redevelopment within the Region. Therefore, the large built up area of Harlow, to the north of the Study Area and the large, built-up edge of London (at the inner edge of the Metropolitan Green Belt) would constitute large built up areas under this definition. The landscape setting of the settlements has been assessed for their contribution of checking unrestricted urban sprawl from these large built up areas. This is a key criterion in assessing the role and function of Green Belt land at the setting of settlements.

- Preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another?
- 1.5.29 In order to assess the contribution of the landscape settings to the purpose of preventing neighbouring towns from merging with one another, the assessment has considered the physical separation relationships between neighbouring towns in the Study Area. This is a key criterion in assessing the role and function of Green Belt land at the setting of settlements.
- Assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment?
- 1.5.30 The Landscape Units have been assessed to consider their contribution to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. In seeking to define such a contribution, the Study has taken this purpose to mean the aim of preventing that which is intrusive in the countryside from occurring and therefore involves some overlap with the concept of the physical openness of the Green Belt, in terms of absence of built development.
- Preserving the setting and character of historic towns?
- 1.5.31 While there appears to be no statutory definition of the term "historic towns", Essex County Council published supplementary planning guidance on "Essex Historic Towns" in 1999. This was part of a nationwide re-assessment of urban archaeological and historic resources commissioned by English Heritage in 1992. The County Council surveyed Roman, Late Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval settlements. Modern towns that did not exhibit urban characteristics prior to 1700 AD (the beginning of the Industrial Age) were not included. Chipping Ongar, Epping and Waltham Abbey are thus defined as historic towns. Plans of the towns show (i) Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM) where they have been identified; (ii) areas of urban archaeological potential and (iii) areas of archaeological destruction - the latter generally referring to areas of previous archaeological excavations or where quarrying or gravel extraction has taken place.
- Assisting in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land?
- 1.5.32 The assessment has considered the extent to which the landscape setting of settlements currently contribute towards this purpose, namely how they currently assist in encouraging the recycling of derelict land.
- 1.5.33 In order to assist in assessing the contribution that Landscape Setting Areas surrounding the principal settlements within the Study Area (as identified in Section 1.2) make towards the fundamental aims and purposes of the Green Belt, the following criteria were identified:

Degree of Contribution to Green Belt Fundamental Aims and Purposes

Major contribution to Green Belt fundamental aim and purposes
The Landscape Setting Area is considered to wholly or predominantly contribute towards the particular Green Belt aim or purpose with regards to its key characteristics. There are few or no built elements within the landscape and these have little visual dominance within views across the area.
Moderate contribution to Green Belt fundamental aim and purposes
The Landscape Setting Area is considered to partially contribute towards the particular Green Belt aim or purpose with regards to its key characteristics. There are some built elements within the landscape (for example, scattered farmsteads or linear development along road corridors) which are visible within certain views across the area. Generally, however, these built elements are not visually dominant or of a large-scale, massing or density.
Limited contribution to Green Belt fundamental aim and purposes
The Landscape Setting Area is considered to make a very limited contribution towards the particular Green Belt aim or purpose with regards to its key characteristics. Many built elements are present within the landscape, which are visually dominant within views across the area. Built elements are large-scale and of a high density. Settlement pattern may also comprise a number of smaller areas of development which are situated in close proximity to one another, resulting in a cumulative visual sense of development within the landscape.

Contribution to Green Belt Objectives

1.5.34 PPG2 also addresses the use of land in Green Belts stating that, *‘once Green Belts have been defined, the use of land in them has a positive role to play in fulfilling the following objectives’*:

- *to provide opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population;*
- *to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas;*
- *to retain attractive landscapes and enhance landscapes, near to where people live;*
- *to improve damaged and derelict land around towns;*
- *to secure nature conservation interest;*
- *to retain land in agricultural, forestry and related uses’* (paragraph 1.6).

1.5.35 PPG2 then clarifies that the extent to which land fulfils the above objectives is not in itself a material factor in the inclusion of land within a Green Belt or its continued protection (paragraph 1.7).

1.5.36 The Study identifies the Green Belt land use objectives for which the landscape setting around each settlement is considered to play a key role in fulfilling, based on an assessment of the available evidence. Retention of attractive landscapes and improvement of damaged land are inherent to the sections on visual and historic character analysis for each of the settlements.

- 1.5.37 It is important to recognise that the information in this report is not intended to provide an indication of likely planning consent for any given proposal, or to be interpreted as an indication of where Green Belt land might be released for development by the Council in the future. Land designated as Green Belt in the adopted Local Plan will be treated as such, unless its status is changed through the statutory planning process.

11.0 NORTH WEALD BASSETT & NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD FRINGES

11.1 Overview

North Weald Bassett

- 11.1.1 North Weald Bassett is situated towards the centre of Epping Forest District, to the north-east of Epping and west of Chipping Ongar. The village is located within the North Weald Ridges and Valleys Landscape Character Area (F5)⁷. At the south-western tip of the village, the Lower Forest to Beachet Wood Landscape Character Area (D1) provides landscape setting to the settlement.
- 11.1.2 The southern fringe of the village is characterised by medium to large-scale, predominantly arable, gently undulating fields, which are lined in places with mature hedgerows, often containing hedgerow trees. At the south-eastern edge of the village, a relatively large golf course contributes a human influence to an otherwise predominantly rural landscape. The corridor of the Epping-Ongar railway crosses the southern fringe, lined along much of its route with mature deciduous trees.
- 11.1.3 Settlement within the village is split to the north by the corridor of the A414 main road. The northern landscape fringe of the village encompasses a patchwork of small, medium and large-scale arable fields, which are lined with mature hedgerows, often containing hedgerow trees. Outside the village, occasional farmsteads are scattered within the landscape.
- 11.1.4 The north-western fringe, to the south of the A414 road corridor encompasses a patchwork of small and large-scale arable fields, associated with farmsteads along Vicarage Lane. To the west of this (at distance from the settlement edge), North Weald golf course exerts a human influence over the otherwise, predominantly rural landscape within this area.
- 11.1.5 Landscape at the north-western edge of the village is dominated by the large, flat expanse of North Weald Airfield. The runway associated mown grassland and areas of hardstanding are surrounded by metal fences which separate this area physically and visually from adjacent areas of landscape setting. The Airfield also separates the North Weald Bassett (to the east) from the corridor of the M11 motorway, which runs north-south across the landscape to the west. At the south-western edge of the village a large block of mature deciduous woodland (Roughalley's Wood) provides a sense of enclosure and forms the eastern extent of a broad

⁷ See Epping Forest Landscape Studies: Landscape Character Assessment, Chris Blandford Associates for Epping Forest District Council, July 2009.

swathe of woodland which extends to the west of the M11 within Landscape Character Area D1 (Lower Forest to Beachet Wood).

North Weald Airfield

- 11.1.6 North Weald Airfield is situated to the west of North Weald Bassett village within the North Weald Ridges and Valleys Landscape Character Area (F5)⁸. In the south-west, the Lower Forest to Beachet Wood Landscape Character Area (D1) provides landscape setting to the Airfield.
- 11.1.7 To the north, the tree lined corridor of Cripsey Brook abuts the edge of the Airfield. Beyond this the landscape encompasses a patchwork of medium scale, gently undulating arable fields dissected by the A414 road corridor, which runs east-west close to the edge of the Airfield.
- 11.1.8 The southern and western fringes of North Weald Airfield are bounded by the B181 Epping Road and the M11 motorway. To the north and west of these roads, the landscape comprises a mixture of arable fields, blocks of woodland and a relatively large golf course.
- 11.1.9 Along the south western fringes of the Airfield, the M11 motorway corridor runs north-south and dominates the landscape, introducing a source of noise and movement. At the north western fringes of the Airfield the predominantly rural landscape setting encompasses a farmstead and medium sized arable fields delineated by hedgerows.
- 11.1.10 Along the eastern edges of the Airfield the landscape is subject to further human influences in the form of North Weald Bassett village at its south-eastern edges and North Weald Golf Course to the north-east. Between the village edge and the golf course, the Airfield is fringed by arable fields.

11.2 Visual Character

North Weald Bassett

- 11.2.1 The analysis of key visual characteristics and attributes that contribute variations in to the overall character of the landscape as defined by 'Landscape Setting Areas' within the fringes of North Weald Bassett are illustrated on **Figure 11.1**, and described in summary below:
- The majority of the settlement edges of the village are lined with mature hedgerows or trees, which create a soft, green edge;

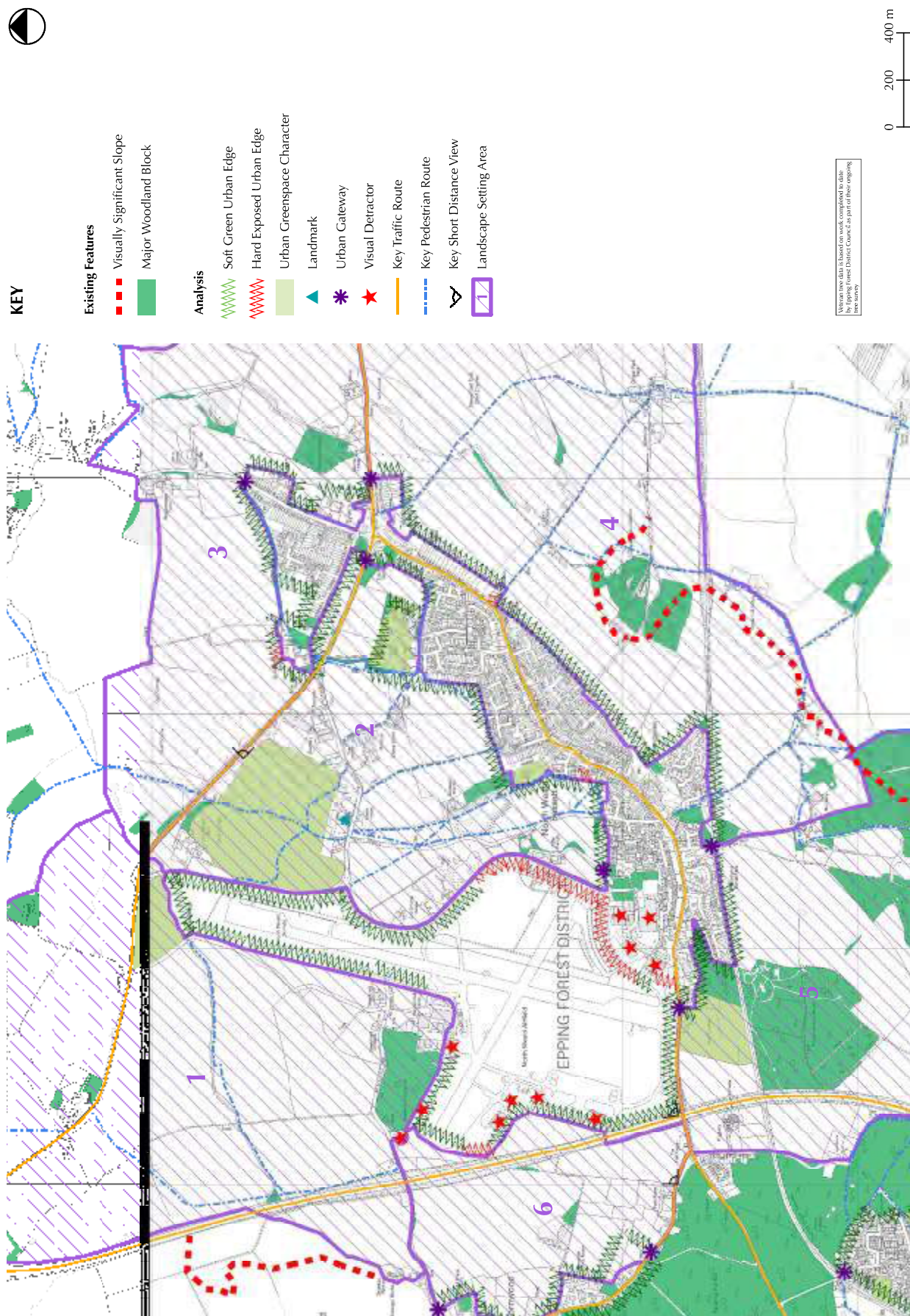
⁸ See Epping Forest Landscape Studies: Landscape Character Assessment, Chris Blandford Associates for Epping Forest District Council, July 2009.

- The northern edge of North Weald Bassett industrial estate (at the north-western edge of the village, to the south of the airfield) has a hard, exposed urban edge when viewed from the north, as a result of the large pre-fabricated warehouses. As a result, the industrial estate is also a visual detractor within the north-western fringe;
- Other small pockets of harsh urban edge occur where there are gaps in hedgerows;
- There are several areas of urban greenspace within the northern and southern fringes of the village, which generally encompass school playing fields or sports fields;
- There are four urban gateways, along the A414 and B181 road corridors, which mark the transition between the village and surrounding, predominantly rural landscape;
- The village is served by an interconnecting network of main road corridors. To the north of the settlement, the A414 provides access to the M11 motorway to the west and Chipping Ongar to the east. The B181 road corridor runs through the centre of the village, connecting North Weald Bassett with Epping to the south and the A414 to the north;
- The tower of North Weald church (to the north of the main area of settlement) is a landmark within short-distance views from fields to the north;
- There is a comprehensive network of public footpaths within the setting of the village. These connect with other footpaths to the north and south of the village, including the Essex Way and Stort Valley Way National Trails (to the south and north respectively);
- As a result of the predominantly intact network of hedgerows lining fields within the setting of the village and the gently undulating topography of the landscape, there are no key long distance views;
- Key short distance views of settlement edges from footpaths and road corridors can be gained from a few locations, however these are also limited by mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees; and
- To the south of North Weald village, large blocks of woodland (including High Wood and Birching Coppice) provide a sense of distant enclosure and limit views of adjacent landscapes to the south.

North Weald Airfield

11.2.2 The analysis of key visual characteristics and attributes that contribute variations in to the overall character of the landscape as defined by 'Landscape Setting Areas' within the fringes of North Weald Airfield are illustrated on **Figure 11.1**, and described in summary below:

- The majority of the Airfield is lined by hedgerows and trees that form a soft green edge;
- Some stretches along the south-eastern edges of the Airfield have a hard exposed urban edge. Here, the Airfield abuts North Weald Bassett industrial estate, with no soft landscaping between them. Along the south-eastern edge there is also a lack of vegetation



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Figure 11.1
North Weald Bassett and North Weald Airfield -
Visual Character

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December 2009

resulting in a hard exposed urban edge. Likewise, a hard exposed urban edge is visible along a short stretch of the western edge where there is a gap in the hedgerow;

- There are two areas of urban greenspace within the fringes of North Weald Airfield, comprising playing fields to the north and a golf course to the northeast;
- Access to the Airfield is provided along Merlin Way which lines the eastern edge and is accessible from the B181 Epping Road to the south and the A414 to the north;
- There is an interconnected network of Public Rights of Way at the eastern edge of the Airfield and a few to the north west, some of which are situated in close proximity to the edge of the Airfield. None of the footpaths enter into the vicinity of the Airfield, the boundaries of which are lined by fencing. These footpaths also connect with other footpaths to the north and south of the village, including the Essex Way and Stort Valley Way National Trails;
- The presence of hedgerows and trees restrict long distance views of the Airfield;
- Short distance views of the Airfield can be gained from certain locations along Woodside Road to the west of the M11 motorway and also from parts of the M11 motorway corridor itself where it is raised on embankments; and
- To the south, large blocks of woodland within Epping Forest limit views to landscapes to the south and provide a sense of enclosure. The M11 motorway which stretches along the western edge of the Airfield also provides some visual and physical enclosure from the landscape to the west.

11.3 Historic Character

North Weald Bassett

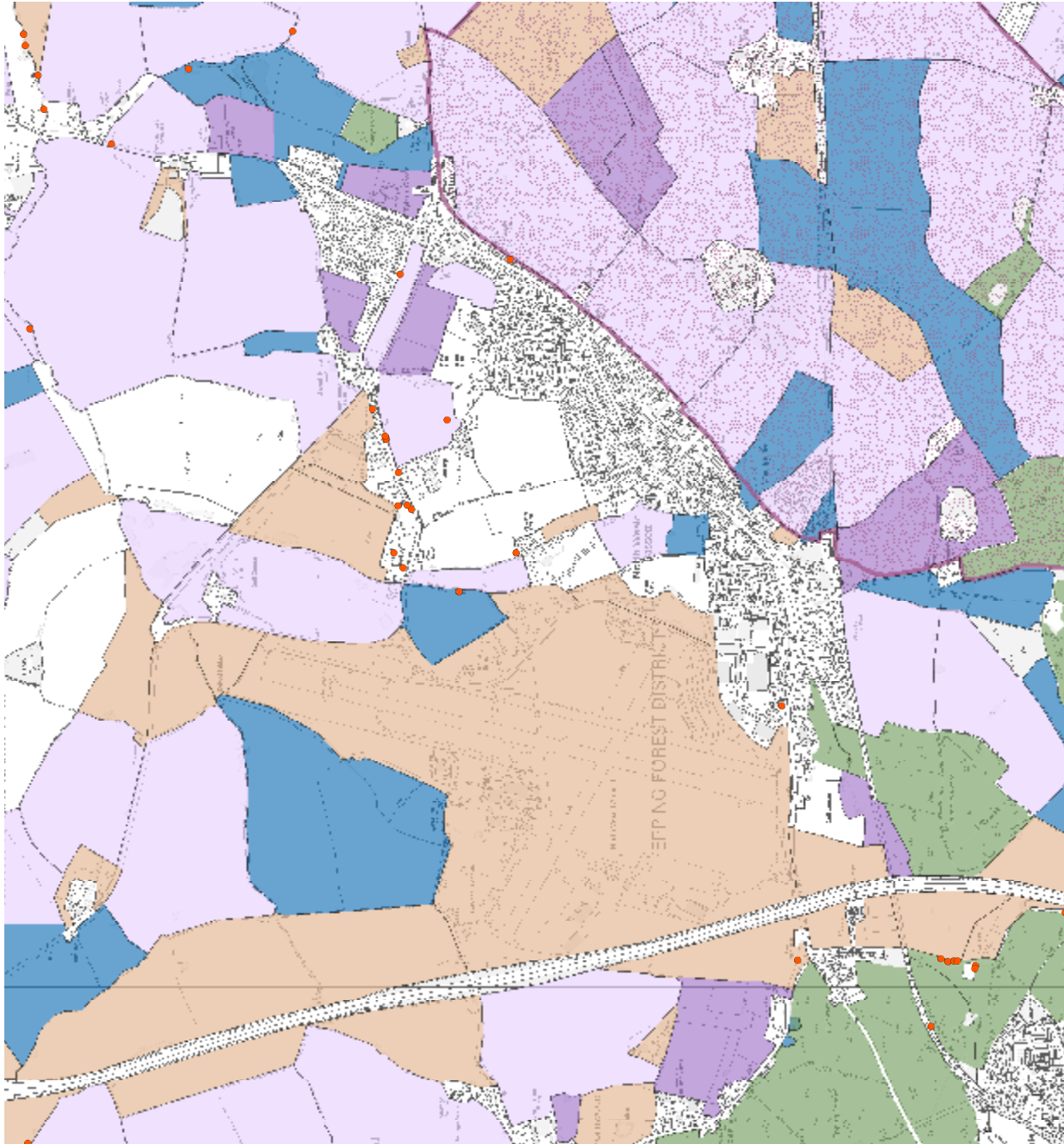
11.3.1 The analysis of historic patterns of land use and how they contribute to the overall character of the modern landscape within the fringes of North Weald Bassett is illustrated on **Figure 11.2** and described in summary below:

- With the exception of the North Weald Airfield to the west of North Weald Bassett and blocks of woodland to the south west, the majority of fields within the southern fringe have suffered loss of historic boundaries (varying in size from small to large, irregular fields);
- There is a scattering of pre 18th Century fields at the northeastern and southwestern edges of North Weald Bassett, varying in size from small to large fields;
- There are some small areas of 18th to 19th Century enclosure at the northern and southern edges of North Weald Bassett;
- There is a scattering of small areas of post 1950s modern fields to the east of North Weald Bassett, and some large modern fields to the north west. The Historic Landscape Character



KEY

- Ancient Woodland (pre 1600)
- Veteran trees
- Pre 18th century fields
- Ancient Landscape
- 18th to 19th century enclosure
- Historic fields with boundary lost
- Modern fields: post 1950
- No data / Unclassified



Notes: this map is based on aerial photography and is not a definitive statement of the current state of the landscape. It is a summary of the landscape and should not be used for planning purposes.

0 200 400 m

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Figure 11.2
North Weald Bassett and North Weald Airfield-
Historic Landscape Analysis

data classifies North Weald Airfield as post 1950s, modern fields, however the airfield was established in the early part of the 20th Century and is still a working airfield;

- The majority of woodland lies to the south west of North Weald Bassett in medium to large blocks, the majority of which are Ancient Woodland including High Wood and Roughtalleys Wood with the exception of Wintry Wood. There is also a small block of Ancient Woodland to the north east of the North Weald Bassett (Reynkyns Wood);
- There are a few veteran trees scattered within the northern and southern landscape settings of the settlement; and
- The southeastern setting of the village is an ancient landscape which encompasses the former radio station site.

North Weald Airfield

11.3.2 The analysis of historic patterns of land use and how they contribute to the overall character of the modern landscape within the fringes of North Weald Airfield is illustrated on **Figure 11.2** and described in summary below:

- Several medium sized fields that have suffered historic boundary loss to the west, north and east of the Airfield;
- There is a large area of pre 18th Century fields on the north-western fringe of the Airfield and a smaller area to the east;
- There are some small areas of 18th to 19th Century enclosure to the south of the Airfield;
- The Airfield itself and some surrounding fields to the north, south, east and west are classed as modern fields post 1950s;
- Large woodland blocks to the south of the Airfield including parts of Epping Forest and Roughtalleys Wood are designated as Ancient Woodland; and
- There is a scattering of veteran trees at the southwestern and northeastern edges of the Airfield.

11.4 Designated Environmental Constraints

11.4.1 The analysis of the critical and less critical environmental designations within North Weald Bassett and North Weald Airfield edges related to nature conservation, the historic environment, landscape and other aspects such as protected floodplains, is illustrated in **Figure 11.3**, and described in summary below. The weighting between constraints reflects the statutory (critical) and non-statutory (less critical) or 'moderate' status of individual environmental designations:

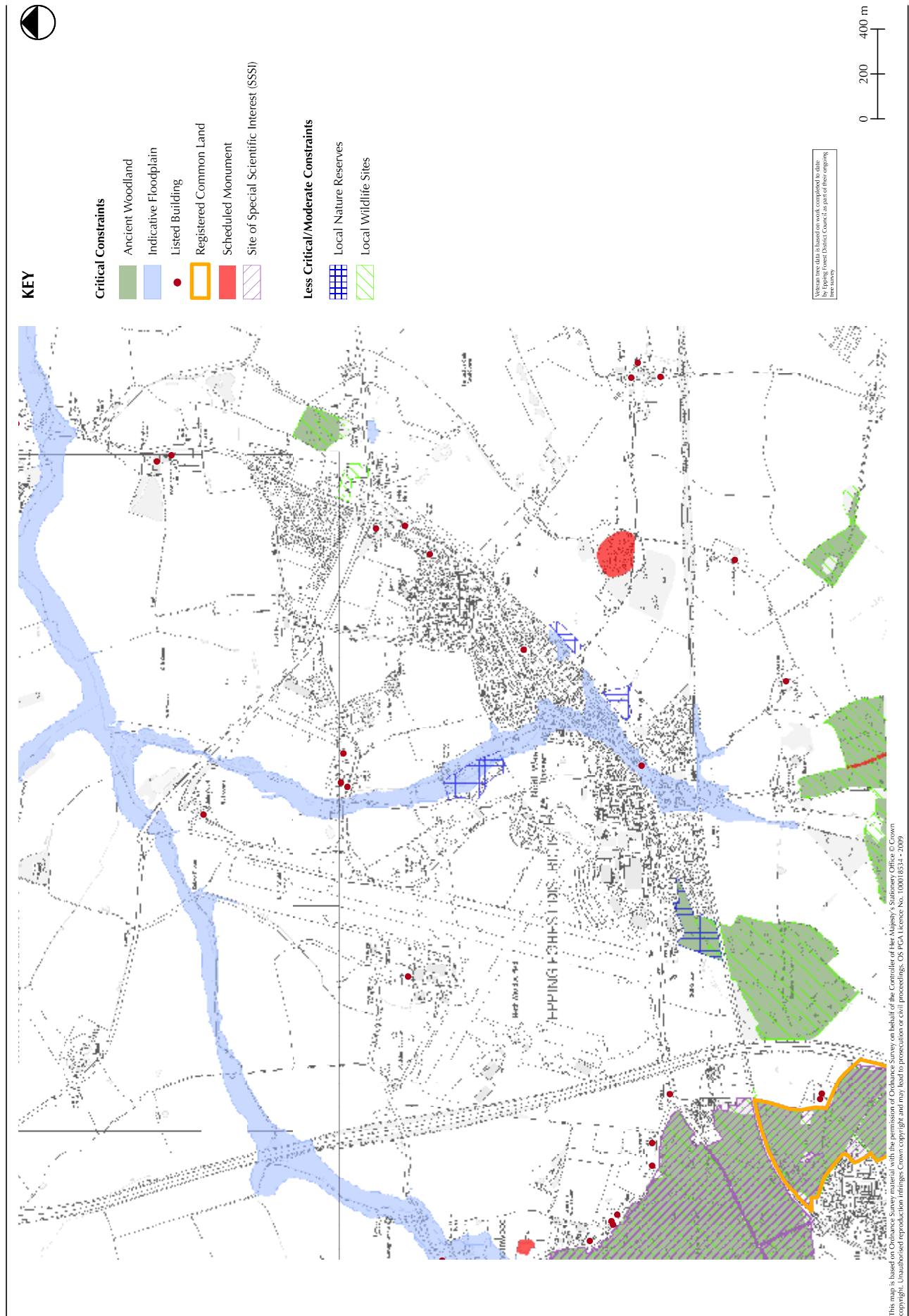


Figure 11.3
North Weald Bassett and North Weald Airfield-
Designated Environmental Constraints

Critical Constraints

- There is one Scheduled Monument to the east of North Weald Bassett, encompassing the site of the former Ongar radio station;
- There is a scattering of listed buildings within North Weald Bassett village and throughout the surrounding area (in particular concentrated along Woodside Road to the southwest of North Weald Airfield);
- There are two areas of floodplain within the vicinity of the settlement and the Airfield, one which runs north-south across the settlement encompassing the course of Shonks Brook and the other which runs southwest to northeast encompassing the course of the Cripsey Brook north of the Airfield;
- There is one area of Registered Common Land to the south of North Weald Airfield situated within Epping Forest; and
- There are several areas of Ancient Woodland that surround North Weald Bassett and North Weald Airfield, including Reynkyns Wood, Roughtalleys Wood (which touches the edge of the settlement), High Wood and a large part of Epping Forest to the southwest of the Airfield.

Moderate Constraints

- There are several County Wildlife Sites within the southern fringes of the North Weald Bassett village and North Weald Airfield (including Roughtalleys Wood, High Wood and Epping Forest) and one to the northwest (Reynkyns Wood); and
- There are four Local Nature Reserves within the landscape setting of the village and Airfield.

11.5 Landscape Sensitivity

11.5.1 Drawing on the above analysis, the key sensitive landscape/environmental features that are considered desirable to safeguard within the fringes of North Weald Bassett and North Weald Airfield are shown on **Figure 11.4** and described in summary below:

- There are significant patches of sensitive historic landscape at the north-eastern and western edges of the village, which encompass patches of surviving pre 18th Century and 18th-19th century fields and a large area of Ancient Landscape to the south of the village. Also to the west and east of North Weald Airfield sensitive areas of historic landscape comprise surviving pre 18th Century and 18th-19th century fields;
- Five areas with urban greenspace character provide accessible areas for sport and recreation, whilst also contributing to the landscape character of the area;

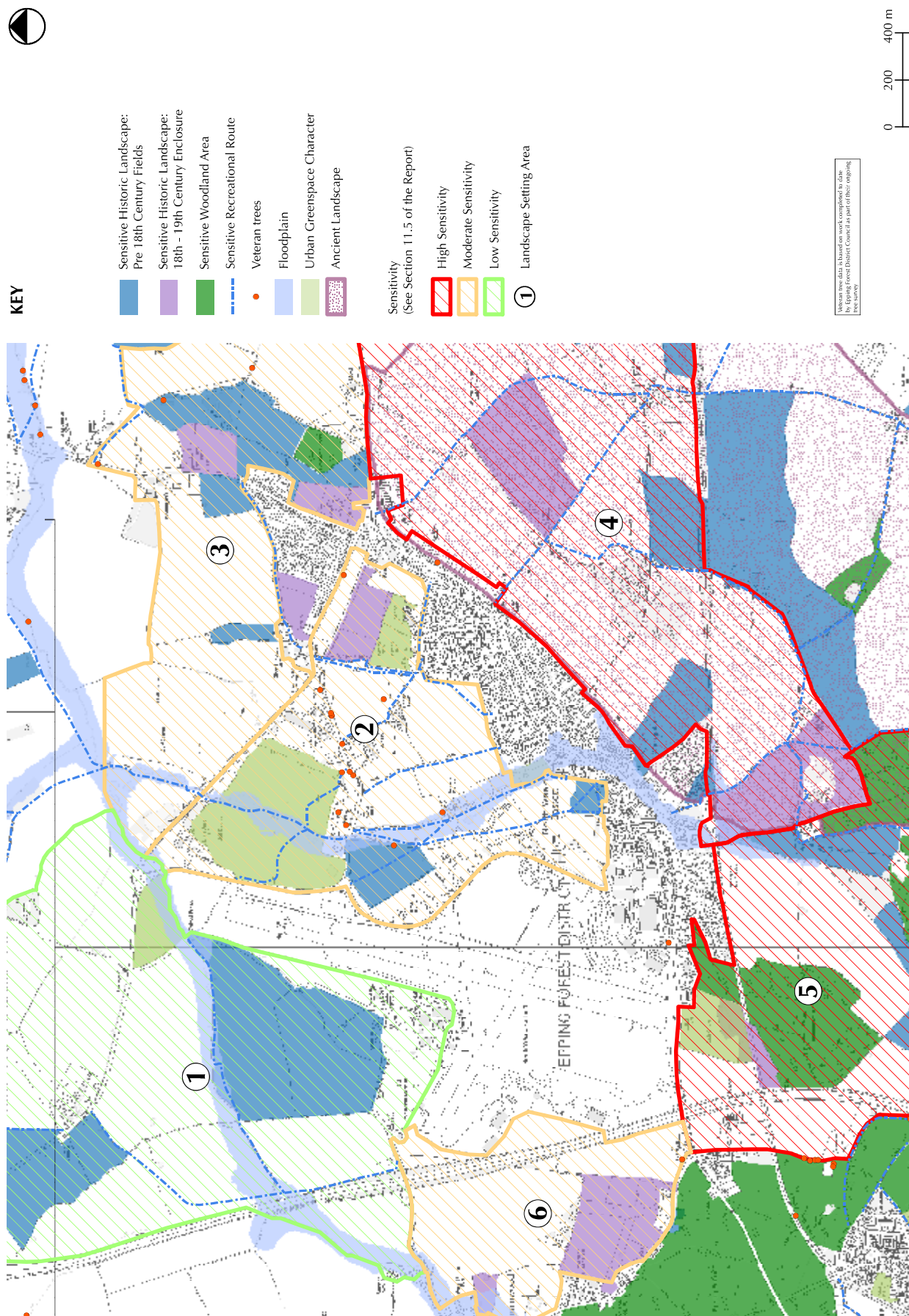


Figure 11.4
North Weald Bassett and North Weald Airfield-
Landscape Sensitivity

- There are five sensitive woodland areas within the fringes, which are significant elements within the local landscape. Several of these are defined as Ancient Woodland and County Wildlife Sites, highlighting their importance as wildlife and nature conservation assets;
- An interconnected network of public footpaths creates sensitive recreational routes within the fringes of the village and Airfield. These provide access for pedestrians and cyclists throughout the area; and
- Two floodplains run through the landscape setting of the village and Airfield.

Sensitivity of Landscape Setting Areas

11.5.2 Taking into account the above, the sensitivity of each Landscape Setting Area is evaluated as follows, based on the criteria set out in section 1.5.3:

North Weald Bassett Landscape Setting Area	Landscape Character Sensitivity									Visual Sensitivity									Overall Sensitivity to change
	Representation of typical character			Number of sensitive natural, cultural and historic features			Overall Landscape Character Sensitivity			Intervisibility			Visual Prominence			Overall Visual Sensitivity			
	Positive	Moderate	Limited	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	
1																			Low
2																			Moderate
3																			Moderate
4																			High
5																			High
6																			Moderate

11.6 Key Opportunities for Growth

11.6.1 Drawing on the above analysis, those Landscape Setting Areas identified as high or moderate overall sensitivity are considered desirable to safeguard in landscape terms and are considered to have a significant role in contributing to the structure, character and setting of the settlement. Landscape Setting Areas that have been identified as low sensitivity may be suitable for development in landscape terms and are considered to have a less significant role in contributing to the structure, character and setting of the settlement. Further assessment work would, however, be needed to examine site-specific landscape and visual sensitivities.

11.7 Contribution to Green Belt

- 11.7.1 In line with methodology set out within Section 1.5.27, an evaluation of the contribution that the landscape setting of North Weald Bassett makes to the purposes of including land within the Green Belt (PPG2: Paragraph 1.5) is set out within the table below:

Contribution to Green Belt Purpose

Green Belt Aim	Summary Evaluation: Based on the Visual Character Information set out within Section 11.2 above and Figure 11.1	Landscape Setting Areas					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
Contribution to openness of Green Belt?	The setting of North Weald Bassett and North Weald Airfield is considered to be semi-enclosed. There are generally few areas of built development, other than scattered, isolated farmsteads. There is a high degree of visual enclosure to the south, provided by woodland within Epping Forest, which limits views from and to Epping to the southwest. Only transient, glimpsed views of the settlement and Airfield are obtained from most sections of adjacent road corridors.	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Major	Moderate	Moderate
Green Belt Purposes	Summary Evaluation: Based on the Visual Character Information set out within Section 11.2 above and Figure 11.1						
Checking unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas?	The landscape settings of North Weald Bassett and the Airfield are situated at distance from large built up areas.	Major	Major	Major	Major	Major	Major
Preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another?	There is little built development other than scattered farmsteads and North Weald Airfield. The setting to both the village and the Airfield is predominantly rural. The landscape setting area to the west of North Weald Airfield however is close to Thornwood but there is little built development between these two areas. An area of predominantly rural landscape also provides separation between the southern edges of the village and Airfield and the edges of the town of Epping to the south-west.	Major	Limited	Major	Major	Major	Moderate

Assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment?	There is little built development other than scattered farmsteads and the M11 motorway which encroach into the countryside.	Moderate	Not applicable	Limited	Moderate	Not applicable	Limited	Moderate	Not applicable	Limited	Major	Not applicable	Moderate	Not applicable	Limited
Preserving the setting and character of historic towns?	Not applicable.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Limited	Not applicable	Not applicable	Limited	Not applicable	Not applicable	Limited	Not applicable	Not applicable	Moderate	Not applicable	Limited
Assisting in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land?	The landscape setting is considered to make a limited contribution to assisting in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	Limited	Not applicable	Limited	Not applicable	Not applicable	Limited	Not applicable	Not applicable	Limited	Not applicable	Not applicable	Moderate	Not applicable	Limited

Contribution to Green Belt Objectives

11.7.2 In relation to Paragraph 1.6 of PPG2, the landscape setting to North Weald Bassett and North Weald Airfield is considered to play a role in fulfilling the following objectives:

- *To provide opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population:* There are several key pedestrian routes which cross the landscape, connecting the settlement with adjacent landscapes;
- *To provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas:* There are two areas of urban greenspace at the settlement edge;
- *To secure nature conservation interest:* There are several sites of nature conservation interest and areas of Ancient Woodland within the landscape setting to the settlements; and
- *To retain land in agricultural, forestry and related uses:* A relatively high proportion of the land within the landscape setting of the settlements is under one of these uses.

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