

Tendring Local Plan Review

Strategic Green Gap Study

for

Tendring District Council

Evidence Base | E26825 R01

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Contents

1. Introduction

- Aims and scope of the study
- Background
- Previous studies
- Planning policy overview

2. Methodology

- Separation of settlements
- Strategic Policy PPL6: Strategic Green Gaps
- Area of study
- The review process
- Stage 1: Desktop review
- Stage 2: Field work
- Stage 3: Review of different aspects of separation
- Assessment criteria

3. Green Gap Assessments

- Land between Clacton and Little Clacton
- Land between Clacton and Jaywick
- Land between Clacton and Holland-on-Sea
- Land between Ramsey, Little Oakley and Dovercourt
- Land between Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken
- Land between Mistley and Manningtree
- Land between Lawford and Mistley/Manningtree
- Land between Elmstead Market and Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community
- Land between Little Clacton and Weeley Heath

4. Policy justification

Appendix 1

- Parcel analysis

1. Introduction

Aims and scope of the study

- 1.1. The Landscape Partnership has been commissioned by Tendring District Council to undertake a review of the proposed Strategic Green Gaps which form part of the Regulation 18 Local Plan Review. The aims of the study are to establish whether each gap continues to fulfil the objectives of Policy PPL6 in the Local Plan Review, and whether the boundaries remain justified and defensible. The assessment will also respond to the significant planned growth within the district, ensuring that Strategic Green Gaps remain effective in preventing coalescence and maintaining settlement identity in the context of increased development pressure.
- 1.2. The designated areas are intended to support the ultimate aim of the policy which is to protect the distinct identity of individual settlements.

Background

- 1.3. Tendring District Council is currently carrying out a review of the Tendring District Local Plan to ensure it remains up to date, effective, and capable of guiding development in the District up to 2043. The Council completed consultation on the Regulation 18 Preferred Options Local Plan in March 2026.
- 1.4. A Strategic Green Gaps Policy is included in the adopted Local Plan. The Regulation 18 Local Plan proposed that the existing Strategic Green Gaps are retained. It also proposed extensions to the Kirby Cross, Kirby-le-Soken gap and the Ramsey, Little Oakley and Dovercourt gap, and the creation of two new gaps: one between the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community and Elmstead Market, and another between Little Clacton and Weeley Heath.
- 1.5. The justification for the inclusion of two new gaps will be considered in Chapter 4 of this report. Recommended changes to the boundaries of the Strategic Green Gaps are explained in the Proposed Boundary sections in Chapter 3.

Previous studies

- 1.6. The district’s Strategic Green Gaps were previously reviewed in 2020 and the findings were presented in the document Strategic Green Gaps Review, published in December 2020.
- 1.7. The aim of the review was to provide an evidence base on the role the gaps played in providing a sense of separation and maintaining individual settlement identity and character, and whether the gaps fulfilled the objectives of the Strategic Green Gap policy in the emerging Tendring District Local Plan 2013-2033 (2017 Publication Draft, as submitted).
- 1.8. The 2026 Strategic Green Gap Study builds on the findings of and methodology used in the 2020 review.

Planning policy overview

- 1.9. The following planning policy documents have been consulted:

- The National Planning Policy Framework 2026
- Tendring Local Plan 2013-2033
- Tendring Local Plan Review Regulation 18 Consultation Document

National planning policy

- 1.10. The NPPF sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how they should be applied. It provides guidance on the preparation of Local Plans, and also establishes a set of national planning policies which are relevant to decision-making.
- 1.11. The 2026 version of the NPPF specifically supports the designation of gaps between settlements in certain circumstances.

Policy S2: Producing a spatial strategy

The development plan should set out a spatial strategy setting clear expectations for the location of development and where land should be protected or enhanced for specific purposes, by identifying at the most appropriate plan level:

- c. Land that is protected or proposed to be enhanced for specific purposes (such as habitat improvement) and which places limits on whether development proposals may be acceptable or where specific policies apply. Designations and associated policies to safeguard gaps between settlements should be used only where they are necessary to maintain the separate identities of the settlements and their physical separation, should be no larger than needed to achieve this aim, and should not apply to land in the Green Belt.

- 1.12. The requirements of the NPPF and the justification for the policy will be addressed in Chapter 4 of this report.

District level planning policy

Evolution of Green Gap Policy

- 1.13. Some form of Strategic Green Gap policy has been contained within the Local Plans for the District since 1998, though the policy has had different names during that period.
- 1.14. The Council's 1998 Local Plan contained a number of designated 'Local Green Wedges' which included:
 - Land between Clacton and Little Clacton
 - Land between Clacton and Holland-on-Sea
 - Land between Clacton and Jaywick
 - Land in the centre of Little Clacton
 - Land between Dovercourt and Parkeston

- Land between Ramsey and Little Oakley
- Land between Kirby Cross, Frinton, Great Holland and Kirby-le-Soken

- 1.15. The 2007 Local Plan retained these same areas but renamed them 'Local Green Gaps.' The 2007 Local Plan also included additional green gaps in the Lawford and Mistley areas.

- 1.16. The Local Green Gaps were renamed 'Strategic Green Gaps' in the 2020 Local Plan. The number and location of the Strategic Green Gaps had to be rationalised during the preparation of the 2020 Local Plan in response to increased development pressures. A notable change at this time was the deletion of the Little Clacton Green Gap. The other gaps were, however, retained.

Tendring Local Plan (adopted 2020)

- 1.17. The Strategic Green Gap policy within the adopted Local Plan reads as follows:

Policy PPL6 - Strategic Green Gaps

"The Strategic Green Gaps as shown on the Policies Maps and Local Maps will be protected in order to retain the separate identity and prevent coalescence of settlements. Any development permitted must be consistent with other policies in the plan and must not (individually or cumulatively) lead to the coalescence of settlements."

Tendring Local Plan Review

- 1.18. This section provides an overview of the relevant planning policies contained within the Tendring Local Plan Review 2025-2042 and Beyond Preferred Options Consultation Document January 2026.

PPL6 – Strategic Green Gaps (remains unchanged from the current adopted planning policy)

SPL1 – Managing Growth

The overall spatial strategy for growth across the District is underpinned by a ‘Settlement Hierarchy’. The scale and nature of growth proposed in this Local Plan and how it is will differ across the locations identified in different tiers of this hierarchy is described in the supporting text above. The Settlement Hierarchy in Tendring is as follows:

Strategic Urban Settlements:

- Clacton-on-Sea (comprising Central Clacton, Jaywick Sands, West Clacton, Great Clacton (North), East Clacton and Holland-on-Sea)
- Harwich and Dovercourt (including Parkeston, Little Oakley village, and part of Ramsey)
- Colchester (of which part of the urban area falls within Tendring)

Garden Communities and Garden Villages

- *The Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community (see Policy SAMU1)*
- *Hare Green Garden Village (see Policy SAMU8)*
- *Horsley Cross Garden Village (see Policy SAMU9)*
- *Weeley Green Garden Village (See Policy SAMU6)*

Smaller Urban Settlements

- *Frinton, Walton and Kirby Cross*
- *Manningtree, Lawford and Mistley*
- *Brightlingsea*

Rural Service Centres

- *Alresford*
- *Elmstead Market*
- *Great Bentley*
- *Little Clacton*
- *St. Osyth*
- *Thorpe-le-Soken with Thorpe Station and Thorpe Maltings*

Smaller Rural Settlements

- *Ardleigh*
- *Beaumont-Cum-Moze*
- *Bradfield*
- *Frating*
- *Fox Street*
- *Great Bromley*
- *Great Holland*
- *Great Oakley*
- *Kirby-le-Soken*
- *Lanswood, Elmstead Market*
- *Little Bentley*
- *Little Bromley*
- *Little Oakley*
- *Point Clear*

- *Ramsey Village*
- *Tendring Village*
- *Tendring Heath*
- *Thorrington*
- *Weeley Heath*
- *Wix*
- *Wrabness*

SPL2 – Settlement Development Boundaries

To encourage sustainable patterns of growth and carefully control urban sprawl, each settlement listed in Policy SPL1 (with the exception of the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community) is defined within a ‘Settlement Development Boundary’ as shown on the relevant Policies Map and Local Map. Within the Settlement Development Boundaries, there will be a general presumption in favour of new development subject to detailed consideration against other relevant Local Plan policies and any approved Neighbourhood Plans.

Outside of Settlement Development Boundaries, the Council will generally look to refuse planning permission for new development unless there are specific policies in this Local Plan or other material considerations that either allow or would justify otherwise. When this is the case and the Council is considering the grant of planning permission for development outside of the Settlement Development Boundaries, it will have regard to the pattern and scales of growth for different locations promoted through the Settlement Hierarchy in Policy SPL1 and any other relevant policies in this plan.

An exemption to this policy is provided through the Rural Exception Site Policy LP6 and Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Policy LP7, and other site-specific policies within the Local Plan.

The Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community is the subject of a separate Development Plan Document (DPD) containing its own policies designed to guide the location of development in the broad location identified on Diagram SAMU1 and Map B.7. The Hare Green and Garden Villages will also be the subject of separate DPDs which will contain their own policies designed to guide the location of development in the broad location identified on Diagrams SAMU8 and SAMU9 and Maps B.14a and B.15a.

PPL3 – The Rural Landscape

The Council will protect the rural landscape and refuse planning permission for any proposed development which would cause overriding harm to its character or appearance, including to:

- a. estuaries, rivers and undeveloped coast;*

- b. skylines and prominent views including ridge-tops and plateau edges;*
- c. traditional buildings and settlement settings;*
- d. native hedgerows, trees and woodlands;*
- e. protected lanes, other rural lanes, bridleways and footpaths; and*
- f. designated and non-designated heritage assets and historic landscapes including registered parks and gardens.*

Development proposals affecting protected landscapes must pay particular regard to the conservation and enhancement of the special character and appearance of the Dedham Vale and Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONBs, and their settings, including any relevant AONB Management Plan objectives. Elsewhere, development proposals should have regard to the Natural England Character Area profiles for the Greater Thames Estuary (No.81) and the Northern Thames Basin (No.111) and the Council’s Landscape Character Assessments, as relevant, and should protect and reinforce identified positive landscape qualities.

New development within the rural landscape should minimise the impact of light pollution on the site and its surroundings, in order to protect rural amenity and biodiversity.

Development across the District should consider nature in a holistic and integrated manner. Measures may include, where appropriate, the preparation of a countryside management plan, participation in recognised nature-positive accreditation schemes, or other approaches that demonstrate long-term stewardship of the natural environment.

PPL4 – Biodiversity & Geodiversity

Sites designated for their international, European and national importance to nature conservation: including Ramsar sites; Special Protection Areas (SPAs); Special Areas of Conservation (SACs); Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs); National Nature Reserves (NNRs); and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) will be protected from development likely to have an adverse effect on their integrity....

As a minimum, there should be no significant impacts upon any protected species, including European Protected Species and schemes should consider (and include provision, as may be relevant for) the preservation, restoration or re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations.

Sites designated for their local importance to nature conservation, including Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS), Ancient Woodlands Protected Verges and aged or veteran trees will be protected from development likely to have an adverse impact on such sites or features. Proposals for enhancement of special interest and features will be supported, subject to other material planning considerations....

Any new or existing green and blue Infrastructure will be protected, managed and where necessary enhanced by:

- a. aligning GI design with the LNRS on development proposals and managing development to secure a net gain in green infrastructure;
- b. supporting projects set out in the Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy;
- c. not permitting development that compromises the integrity of the overall Green Infrastructure networks;
- d. investing in enhancement and restoration where opportunities exist; and
- e. using developer contributions to facilitate improvements to their quality and accessibility.

PPL4a – Biodiversity Net Gain in Tendring

Alongside the requirements in relation to Biodiversity and Geodiversity set out in Policy PPL4, development in Tendring will be subject to the legal and national requirements for ‘Biodiversity Net Gain’ (BNG). Development proposals that qualify for BNG will be expected to deliver a minimum 20% increase in biodiversity value relative to the predevelopment biodiversity of onsite habitat within the development site to meet the biodiversity objective in line with the national minimum requirement.

To enable off-site BNG provision to be delivered in a coordinated way that brings about the creation of bigger, better and more connected habitats that are resilient, manageable and contribute effectively to the aims and objectives of the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy; the Council will support the setting up of ‘Habitat Banks’ in the District from which biodiversity units can be bought – so long as:

- i. the applicant has the legal right to sell biodiversity units for the purpose of mandatory BNG;
- ii. the habitat creation/enhancement proposals are appropriate and likely to succeed;
- iii. the uplift in biodiversity units is genuinely additional (i.e. there is no double-counting with conservation schemes in place or funded by other means);
- iv. the applicant enters into a legal agreement with the Council or a conservation covenant with a responsible body, detailing the arrangements for provision, management, monitoring, remediation and enforcement;
- v. the location would not prejudice either the integrity of existing habits or the planned growth of the District proposed in the Local Plan; and

- vi. the site meets the criteria for registration and is subsequently registered on the biodiversity gain site register.

The Council will give particular support to the establishment of Habitat Banks in the following locations:

- a. on land adjoining existing sites designated for their international, national or local importance that will bring about expansion of and/or connectivity between those habitats;
- b. on land within the District’s ‘Strategic Green Gaps’ (see Policy PPL6);
- c. on land at or adjoining the District’s Registered Parks and Gardens, Local Green Spaces and safeguarded open spaces; and
- d. sites within locations identified in the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy as strategic opportunities for habitat creation.

To formalise these Habitat Banks, they need to be officially registered with Natural England which would first require landowners to either enter into a legal agreement with the Council (that, amongst other things, will define the nature of proposed habitat creation and put in place long-term arrangements for management and monitoring); or enter into a ‘conservation covenant’ with another responsible body recognised by Natural England.

SAMU1 - Development and delivery of Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community

Land identified in the adopted Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community Development Plan Document (DPD) and shown on the Policies Map is allocated for the development of the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community.

The Development Plan Document (DPD) allocates and protects land for the following uses:

- a. delivery of circa 7,500 new homes including 30% affordable housing, together with a range of shops, jobs, services and community facilities, including education and early years and childcare;
- b. a new ‘Salary Brook Country Park’ incorporating land and woodland at and around the Salary Brook Local Nature Reserve in Colchester;
- c. a ‘Wivenhoe Strategic Green Gap’ incorporating land north of Brightlingsea Road and west of Elmstead Road;
- d. an ‘Elmstead Strategic Green Gap’ east of the new A1331 Link Road;

SAMU2 - Development at Hartley Gardens, Clacton

Land north of Bockings Elm and west of A133 shown on the Map SAMU2

is allocated for long-term mixed-use development for the phased and comprehensive delivery of the following:

- a. Approximately 1,700 new homes of mixed sizes and types to meet evidenced local housing need within the Council’s most up-to-date Strategic Housing Market Assessment including affordable housing....

SAMU4 - Development at Rouses Farm, Jaywick Lane, Clacton

Land at Rouses Farm, west of Jaywick Lane and south of St. John’s Road, Clacton-on-Sea, as defined on Map SAMU4, is allocated for a mix of residential development, community facilities and public open space as follows:

- a. up to 950 new homes of mixed sizes and types to include affordable housing as per the Council’s requirements, and features to support a range of housing sizes and types to reflect the needs of the area requirements;

SAH2 - Development north of Thorpe Road, Kirby Cross

Land north of Thorpe Road, Kirby Cross, shown on the Map SAH2 is allocated for residential development. The site shall deliver:

- a. a minimum of 420 new dwellings comprising a mix of sizes and types, including affordable housing in accordance with the Council’s requirements as set out in policy LP5;
- b. Public open space as required by Policy HP5, with consideration given to how this integrates with and enhances the existing playing fields and sporting facilities at Kirby Playing Fields.

2. Methodology

Separation of settlements

- 2.1. Maintaining separation between settlements and preventing their coalescence has long been an important objective of spatial planning. This approach helps to preserve the distinct identity, history and character of individual towns and villages. Without clear gaps between settlements, there is a risk that they begin to merge, leading to a loss of local identity and the spread of undifferentiated urban development.
- 2.2. By maintaining physical and perceptual separation, gaps between settlements can reinforce a sense of place, helping to safeguard the individual identity of communities and their distinctive history, character and culture.
- 2.3. The Tendring District Local Plan Review (2025–2042 and Beyond) describes Tendring as a coastal district comprising a number of individual seaside and riverside towns, alongside a substantial rural heartland containing many distinctive villages and hamlets. The District’s open countryside, varied landscapes and network of green and blue infrastructure contribute to the character and identity of its settlements.
- 2.4. While significant housing and employment growth is planned, including new garden villages and other strategic development, the Local Plan seeks to balance these development needs with the protection and enhancement of the natural, historic and built environment. Maintaining the distinction and identity of individual settlements, and the open areas between them, therefore forms an important part of managing growth sustainably and ensuring that development does not erode the established settlement pattern and landscape character of the District.
- 2.5. National planning policy, through the NPPF, reinforces the importance of recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities.

Strategic Policy PPL6: Strategic Green Gaps

- 2.6. The objective of Local Plan Review Strategic Policy PPL6: Strategic Green Gaps is to "retain the separate identity and prevent coalescence of settlements." (TLP emphasis)
- 2.7. These functions are reflected in the supporting text, which notes (at paragraph 7.36) that:
“Strategic Green Gaps have been identified in this local plan in specific location between settlements. The Strategic Green Gaps are valued for the role they will play in preventing the coalescence of settlements and retaining the distinct identity of settlements.”
- 2.8. The supporting text identifies the following characteristics of the areas defined as Strategic Green Gaps:
 - their open and undeveloped character
 - they form visual breaks between settlements

- their boundaries follow physical features on the ground, and/or
- they encompass only land required to secure the objectives of the Strategic Green Gaps.
- 2.9. Maintaining the separate identity of settlements within the District is also considered to contribute to the wider objectives underpinning the Local Plan policies, including:
 - Objective 7: The Historic Environment. “To conserve and enhance Tendring District’s historic environment, including heritage; respecting historic buildings and their settings; heritage assets; landscapes; links; and views”; and
 - Objective 8: Biodiversity and green and blue infrastructure. “Tendring District Local Plan Review 2025 – 2042 and Beyond Preferred Options Consultation Document "To provide a network of interconnected multi-functional natural green and blue infrastructure and spaces which secures a net gain in biodiversity and geodiversity; contributes to local nature recovery; promotes healthy lifestyles; and enhances the quality of the natural and built environment.”
- 2.10. Coalescence is described in the Cambridge Dictionary as “the process of coming or growing together to form one thing or system.” In this case, two distinct settlements expanding to become one combined settlement, with a resulting loss of separate identity.
- 2.11. For the purposes of this study, coalescence is understood as both the physical merging of settlements and the process by which the distinction between them is progressively reduced. Complete physical continuity is therefore not required for development to have an effect on settlement separation.
- 2.12. Settlement separation and separate identity are closely related, but not identical, concepts. Physical separation provides an important spatial basis for maintaining the perception of settlements as distinct places, while separate identity is also influenced by factors such as settlement form, scale, landscape setting, topography, vegetation, views and the character of the intervening land.
- 2.13. Development within the gap between settlements may therefore affect their separate identity before physical coalescence occurs. This may arise through a reduction in the width or openness of the gap, increased intervisibility of built development, erosion of a clear countryside break, or development that creates the perception of one settlement extending towards another.
- 2.14. Conversely, the significance of a reduction in physical distance will depend on the character and function of the land that remains between settlements. A relatively narrow but strongly defined landscape gap may continue to provide a clear sense of separation, whereas a wider gap may perform this function less effectively where development,

- infrastructure or other urbanising influences already weaken the distinction between settlements.
- 2.15. This assessment therefore considers not only whether development would physically merge settlements, but the degree to which it would reduce their physical and perceptual separation and weaken their separate identity.

Study area

- 2.16. The purpose of this review is to test the seven existing Strategic Green Gaps to establish whether they continue to meet the policy objectives of retaining the separate identity of the specified settlements and preventing their coalescence.
- 2.17. In order to provide an up-to-date and robust evidence base, it was considered important that the assessment did not make any preconceived assumptions as to whether land that separated two settlements should be included within, or excluded from, a Strategic Green Gap. The study therefore considered both the land within the existing Strategic Green Gaps and within neighbouring areas that could plausibly contribute to the separation of the settlements. For the purposes of this assessment, these extended areas of study are referred to as gaps (i.e. lower case) or, for example, Land between Clacton and Jaywick, rather than Strategic Green Gaps, which is reserved for the area designated in policy.
- 2.18. As such, where appropriate, the review identifies areas of land that could usefully be incorporated into an existing Strategic Green Gap to strengthen its function. Conversely, it also identifies parts of an existing Strategic Green Gap that do not contribute to the policy objectives or are not necessary for the gap to perform its intended function.
- 2.19. The review also considers the gaps between two further pairs of settlements, as proposed by Tendring District Council, to determine whether their designation as Strategic Green Gaps would help to deliver the objectives of Strategic Policy PPL6 in relation to the relevant settlements.

Identifying land which contributes to the objectives of the policy

- 2.20. A key aspect of the commission was to identify the land which contributes to the objectives of the Strategic Green Gap policy. To understand the nuances of how different parts of each gap perform, each tract of land between the relevant settlements was subdivided into a number of smaller parcels. These parcels form the basis for the more detailed assessment.
- 2.21. Parcel boundaries were defined using identifiable physical features on the ground and, as far as practicable, were drawn to encompass areas with broadly consistent physical and visual character. Areas with particular distinguishing characteristics were generally identified as separate parcels. The parcels were kept relatively small to enable differences in character and function across each gap to be identified.

2.22. The physical and visual characteristics of each parcel, together with its position in relation to the settlements, were then assessed to determine whether, and to what extent, it contributes to maintaining separation and the distinct identity of the settlements. This parcel-based approach enables the assessment to identify those areas of land that make a particular contribution to the objectives of the Strategic Green Gap policy and provides a basis for reviewing the appropriateness of the existing or potential gap boundaries.

The review process

- 2.23. An essential element in reviewing the application of planning policy is the adoption of a consistent, systematic and transparent methodology.
- 2.24. There is currently no prescribed methodology for assessing Strategic Green Gaps. In the absence of a prescribed methodology, the review has sought to provide a robust and up-to-date evidence base that clearly identifies the purpose of each gap and justifies the extent of the land required to perform that function.
- 2.25. The following stages of work were undertaken to review the land between settlements where Strategic Green Gaps already exist and to test the suitability of the candidate gaps.

Stage 1: Desktop review

- 2.26. The initial phase of the study comprised a desktop review. The aim was to examine the existing Strategic Green Gaps, identify any changes within their footprint or vicinity that have taken place since the Strategic Green Gaps were last reviewed in 2020, and review other relevant information which could inform the study. A similar exercise was undertaken for the candidate gaps. This included mapping of the following features:
- Regulation 18 settlement boundaries
 - Regulation 18 mixed use allocations
 - Regulation 18 housing allocations
 - Planning permissions since 2020
 - Local Nature Reserves
 - Registered Common Land
 - Listed Buildings
 - Conservation Areas
 - Local Wildlife Sites
 - Local Open Space
- 2.27. The findings are presented in a figure for each of the gaps considered.

Stage 2: Fieldwork

- 2.28. Following the completion of the desktop review, field work was undertaken to ground-truth the findings, assess the characteristics of the gaps, and make informed professional judgements regarding the role they played in maintaining the separate identity of settlements and preventing their coalescence.
- 2.29. Site visits were undertaken by a Chartered Landscape Architect in June, July and August 2026. The area was viewed from publicly accessible locations on local roads and public rights of way. At the time of the visits, deciduous trees were generally in full leaf, and ephemeral vegetation was present in verges, etc. As such, the screening provided by vegetation was generally at or close to its greatest. Consideration was given to the likely visibility in winter months, when deciduous trees were devoid of leaves and ephemeral vegetation had died back, and when the gaps would generally be experienced in a more visually open condition.

Stage 3: Review of different aspects of separation

- 2.30. A detailed analysis of how the land between the various settlements performed in terms of their separation function was undertaken with reference to the following topics:
- Settlement identity
 - Extent and integrity of the gap
 - Recent and proposed changes to settlement form
 - Relationship of the gap to the settlements (parcel-by-parcel assessment)
 - Physical character of the gap (parcel-by-parcel assessment)
 - Visual character of the gap (parcel-by-parcel assessment)
 - Appropriateness of the gap boundaries
 - Consideration of any other functions of the gap
 - Opportunities for enhancement
- 2.31. There is inevitably some interrelationship between these topics. For example, the physical characteristics of the land influence how the gap is perceived and, in turn, its effectiveness in maintaining a sense of separation between settlements. Nonetheless, the different aspects of separation have, as far as practicable, been considered individually to provide a systematic and transparent basis for the assessment for understanding how and why different areas of land contribute to the physical and perceptual separation of settlements and the maintenance of their separate identity.

Settlement identity

- 2.32. This aspect of the assessment considered the different settlements separated by each gap and the extent to which they possess separate and distinctive identities. Settlement identity can arise from a combination of factors, including the historical development of a settlement, its size and form, the presence of local facilities and organisations, and characteristics that distinguish it from neighbouring settlements. Indicators of identity can include shops, public houses, churches, schools and community facilities; separate parish or administrative arrangements; place names, postal addresses and road signs; and differences in the character and appearance of the settlements themselves.
- 2.33. The assessment was undertaken on a narrative basis, drawing on desktop research and observations made during the site survey. Consideration was given to the characteristics of each settlement and to the features that provide evidence of a distinct identity, as well as to the relationship between neighbouring settlements. The assessment also considered whether that identity is readily apparent on the ground, including through changes in settlement character, identifiable settlement edges, signage and the experience of leaving one settlement before entering another.
- 2.34. Settlement distinctness is not solely a function of physical separation. Settlements in relatively close proximity can retain strong individual identities, while settlements separated by greater distances may have a closer functional or perceptual relationship. Nonetheless, maintaining physical and perceptual separation can make an important contribution to retaining settlement identity by providing a clear break between built-up areas and helping each settlement to remain legible as a distinct place.
- 2.35. An important way in which intervening land can reinforce the separate identity of neighbouring settlements is by providing an area of relatively ‘neutral’ character that is not perceived as forming part of either settlement. This is most clearly achieved where a tract of open, undeveloped land, such as countryside, provides a transition between the two. In perceptual terms, there is an experience of leaving Settlement A, passing through an area that is distinct from either settlement, before arriving at Settlement B.
- 2.36. The settlement identity assessment therefore provides context for considering the importance of the land within each gap. Where neighbouring settlements have strong and distinct identities, consideration was given to the role that the intervening land and any area of relatively neutral character plays in maintaining that distinction and to the potential effects that a reduction in separation could have on the perception of the settlements as separate places.

Extent and integrity of the gap

- 2.37. This aspect of the assessment considered the basic spatial properties of the gap between the settlements, including its width at various points

between opposing settlement edges and its overall form and integrity. Consideration was given to the distances between settlements, including at the narrowest points, and also to the consistency of the gap and whether particular areas of land form important components in maintaining effective separation.

- 2.38. The width of a gap provides a useful indication of the degree of physical separation between settlements, but distance alone does not determine how effectively a gap performs its function. A relatively narrow gap may still provide a clear sense of separation where its character and relationship with the adjoining settlement edges reinforce the distinction between settlements. Conversely, parts of a wider gap may make a more limited contribution where development or other urbanising influences reduce the perception of separation. Thus the assessment of extent must be considered alongside the evaluation of the physical and visual characteristics of the gap.
- 2.39. Particular consideration was given to locations where the gap narrows, where settlement edges extend towards one another, or where development has the potential to result in a more fragmented or irregular gap. Such areas may be particularly important to the overall integrity of the gap, as relatively limited changes can have a disproportionate effect on the physical or perceived relationship between settlements.

Recent and proposed changes to settlement form

- 2.40. Consideration was also given to changes in settlement form that have arisen since the 2020 review and the extent to which these have influenced the physical and perceptual separation between settlements. Similarly, the assessment considered likely future changes arising from the development of allocations identified in the Local Plan Review, including whether these would alter the width, form or integrity of the gap or change the relationship between opposing settlement edges.

Relationship of the gap to the settlements

- 2.41. Parcels which lie directly between opposing settlement edges are generally of particular importance in maintaining physical and perceptual separation. However, parcels which have a more indirect relationship to the settlements can also contribute to their separation, for example where they form part of the wider open setting to a settlement, maintain a clear distinction between built-up areas, or contribute to the sense of separation experienced in views or when travelling between settlements.
- 2.42. The assessment therefore considered the position of each parcel in relation to the settlements and the role that it plays in maintaining their separation. Consideration was given to whether development of the parcel would extend built form towards another settlement, reduce the amount or continuity of open land between settlements, or otherwise result in the settlements being perceived as more closely related.
- 2.43. Particular consideration was given to whether development of a parcel

would compromise the function of adjoining land in maintaining separation. A parcel does not necessarily need to lie on the shortest route between two settlement edges to make an important contribution where its openness, position or relationship with adjoining parcels forms part of the wider gap between the settlements.

Physical character of the gap

- 2.44. This aspect of the assessment considered the physical character of the land within the gap, including its land use, the presence or absence of existing development, and notable landscape features. As settlements are principally defined by their built form, land which retains an open and undeveloped character will generally make the clearest contribution to the physical separation between them. Agricultural land, woodland and other areas of open land can therefore make an important contribution to separation. Other open uses, including parks, playing fields, golf courses and recreational land, can also provide a clear physical break between settlements.
- 2.45. The presence of development does not necessarily mean that land makes no contribution to separation. However, the amount, density, character and distribution of built form can influence the extent to which an area is perceived as forming part of the intervening gap. Sporadic or low-density development beyond the settlement boundary may retain a predominantly rural or open character, whereas more concentrated development (particularly that with a more urban character) can weaken the physical distinction between settlements.
- 2.46. Development lying outside a defined settlement boundary may nevertheless be perceived on the ground as forming part of the settlement, particularly where it is closely associated with, or largely indistinguishable from, the existing settlement edge. Conversely, buildings characteristic of the countryside, such as isolated dwellings, farms and other rural development, do not necessarily undermine the overall open character or separating function of the gap.
- 2.47. Caravan sites generally lie outside the defined settlement boundaries. Historically, the Strategic Gaps have not encompassed these sites as they do not have open qualities.
- 2.48. Consideration was given to the character of the land use within each parcel and the extent to which it could be perceived as relatively ‘neutral’ in relation to the adjoining settlements. Where land retained a character distinct from either settlement, it generally made a stronger contribution to the experience of passing between separate places. Conversely, where its land use or built form had a strong affinity with one settlement edge, this could reduce its contribution to the separating function of the gap.

Visual character of the gap

- 2.49. The analysis of the visual character of the gap considered views to and from the settlements and the extent to which the intervening land

provides a sense of visual separation between them. Where there is little or no intervisibility between settlements, they are generally perceived as visually separate. Where there is intervisibility, the character and composition of the intervening gap becomes particularly important, as changes to the gap may influence the extent to which the settlements are perceived as separate places.

- 2.50. Visual perception is experienced by people moving through and around the gap. The assessment therefore considered views available to visual receptors using publicly accessible routes and locations, including roads, public footpaths, bridleways and other rights of way. Consideration was given both to individual views and to the sequential experience of travelling between or around settlements, including whether there is a perceptible experience of leaving one settlement, passing through an area of open or relatively neutral character, and subsequently arriving at another.
- 2.51. Consideration was given to the openness or enclosure of each parcel, the extent to which it is visible, and the role that it plays in views towards or between settlements. Landform, woodland, hedgerows, trees, buildings and other features can screen, filter or frame views and influence the perceived relationship between settlement edges. A parcel may therefore make an important contribution to visual separation even where it represents only a relatively small part of the overall physical gap.
- 2.52. The assessment considered intervisibility between settlements, including the extent to which built form associated with one settlement can be seen from the other, and intravisibility within the gap, where both settlements or their edges can be perceived within the same view. Where opposing settlement edges are visible together, particular consideration was given to the apparent extent and character of the open land between them and whether this provides a clear visual break. In some circumstances, a relatively narrow area of open land can make a greater contribution to perceived separation than might be expected from its physical dimensions in plan, for example where it forms a prominent or clearly defined break between built-up areas.
- 2.53. Conversely, the physical width of a gap does not necessarily result in strong visual separation. Development extending towards another settlement, prominent built form, or other urbanising influences may reduce the apparent separation between settlements even where a substantial physical distance remains.
- 2.54. The assessment therefore considered whether development within each parcel would be likely to reduce the visual distinction between settlements, including by narrowing or interrupting an important open break, extending built form into views between settlements, or causing opposing settlement edges to appear more closely related.

Presentation of findings

- 2.55. For each of the gaps, the findings of the baseline study and the

assessment of each of the topics is presented as follows.

- A figure illustrating existing landscape-related planning designations and policy.
- A narrative description was provided of the identity of each of the neighbouring settlements, together with a judgement as to whether the distinction between their identities was Strong, Partial or Weak/None.
- The extent and nature of the gap between the settlements was described, together with a judgement as to whether the physical separation between them was Strong, Partial or Weak/None.
- A narrative description was provided of any recent changes to settlement form since the 2020 review and any proposed changes arising from allocations identified in the Local Plan Review.
- A photographic record of the aspect afforded from key movement routes through the gap.
- A parcel-by-parcel assessment was then undertaken of the relationship of each parcel to the settlements, its physical character and its visual character. For each of these topics, the contribution made by the parcel to maintaining separation was judged to be Strong, Partial or Weak/None. The parcel-by-parcel assessment is presented at Appendix 1.

2.56. Drawing these assessments together, an overall judgement was made as to whether each parcel made an identifiable contribution to the physical or perceptual separation of the settlements and the maintenance of their separate identity. This overall judgement informed the subsequent review of the appropriate extent of the Strategic Green Gap.

2.57. The overall judgement was made on a reasoned basis using professional judgment and taking account of the findings for each topic; the individual judgements were not combined using a numerical scoring or weighting system.

Appropriateness of the gap boundaries

2.58. The analysis then considered the appropriateness of the boundaries of each Strategic Green Gap. The defined settlement boundaries provided the starting point for identifying the settlement edges between which separation is to be maintained. The parcel-level assessment was then used to identify the land that makes an identifiable contribution to maintaining that separation and the separate identity of the settlements.

2.59. Strategic Green Gap boundaries were formulated to include those parcels considered necessary to secure the objectives of the policy. Where practicable, boundaries followed readily identifiable and durable physical features on the ground. As previously, caravan sites were excluded from the potential policy area. Land which made only a marginal or incidental contribution to separation, and which was

not necessary for the effective functioning of the gap as a whole, was excluded from the proposed policy area.

2.60. It is recognised that land outside the proposed boundaries may also make some contribution to the wider setting or separation of the settlements. The purpose of defining the Strategic Green Gap is not, however, to include all land from which some contribution can be identified, but to identify a focused and coherent area sufficient to secure the objectives of the policy: retaining the separate identity of settlements and preventing their coalescence.

2.61. For each gap, plans are provided illustrating:

- The existing policy areas, overlain with any potential additional areas or areas for deletion
- The proposed policy boundaries

Other functions and enhancements

2.62. It is recognised that land within the Strategic Green Gaps can also perform other functions, for example in relation to landscape, biodiversity, green and blue infrastructure, recreation and the historic environment. The analysis of each gap therefore concluded by identifying relevant additional functions and any opportunities for enhancement. These considerations did not determine whether land was required for the purposes of the Strategic Green Gap policy, but provide wider context and identify opportunities for the gaps to deliver complementary benefits.

Table 1: Strategic Green Gap Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Strong distinction / Strong separation	Partial distinction / Partial separation	Weak/no distinction / Weak/no separation
Settlement identity The extent to which the settlements have distinct identities	Distinct and separate identities Settlements are easy to distinguish and have different characters	Distinct identities but with some similarities or merging	Weak sense of differentiation between settlements Settlements have similar character Settlements do not have their own facilities or institutions Settlements have already merged Settlements are difficult to distinguish
Extent and integrity of the gap The qualities of the existing gap	Wide tract of rural land separating settlements Clear sense of leaving one settlement and traveling through countryside before arriving at the next settlement	Clearly identifiable but narrow gap between settlements Clearly identifiable gap, but weakened by existing development	Very narrow gap Coalescence has already occurred in places No sense of separation on certain movement routes

Table 2: Parcel Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Strong contribution	Partial contribution	Weak contribution / no contribution
Relationship to the settlements The physical position of the parcel in relation to the settlements	Parcel lies directly in between settlements	Parcel does not lie directly in between settlements but nonetheless contributes to separation as part of wider countryside which separates the settlements The parcel contributes to certain views If parcel were to be developed it would affect separation	The parcel makes no discernible contribution to the separation of the settlements If parcel were to be developed it would have no effect on separation
Physical character Contribution to open and undeveloped character	Fields or woodland with no buildings Fields or woodland with occasional rural buildings such as farms	Land which is open but which has some associations with the adjoining settlement e.g. parks, golf courses, balancing ponds Low density development which still makes some contribution to separation	Development which is difficult to distinguish from the built up areas
Visual character Contribution to visual separation	Parcel contributes to views of countryside Settlements are not intervisible	Parcel contributes to visual openness, but the settlements are intervisible Parcel includes buildings or other features which weaken its contribution to visual openness Parcel is open but makes limited contribution to views	Parcel has developed character and does not contribute to visual openness

3. Green Gap Assessments

3.1. The following section presents an analysis of each of the proposed Strategic Green Gaps within the district. The following Strategic Green Gaps have been proposed:

- Land between Clacton and Little Clacton
- Land between Clacton and Jaywick
- Land between Clacton and Holland-on-Sea
- Land between Ramsey, Little Oakley and Dovercourt
- Land between Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken
- Land between Mistley and Manningtree
- Land between Lawford and Mistley/Manningtree
- Land between Elmstead Market and Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community
- Land between Little Clacton and Weeley Heath

Land between Clacton and Little Clacton

Land between Clacton and Little Clacton

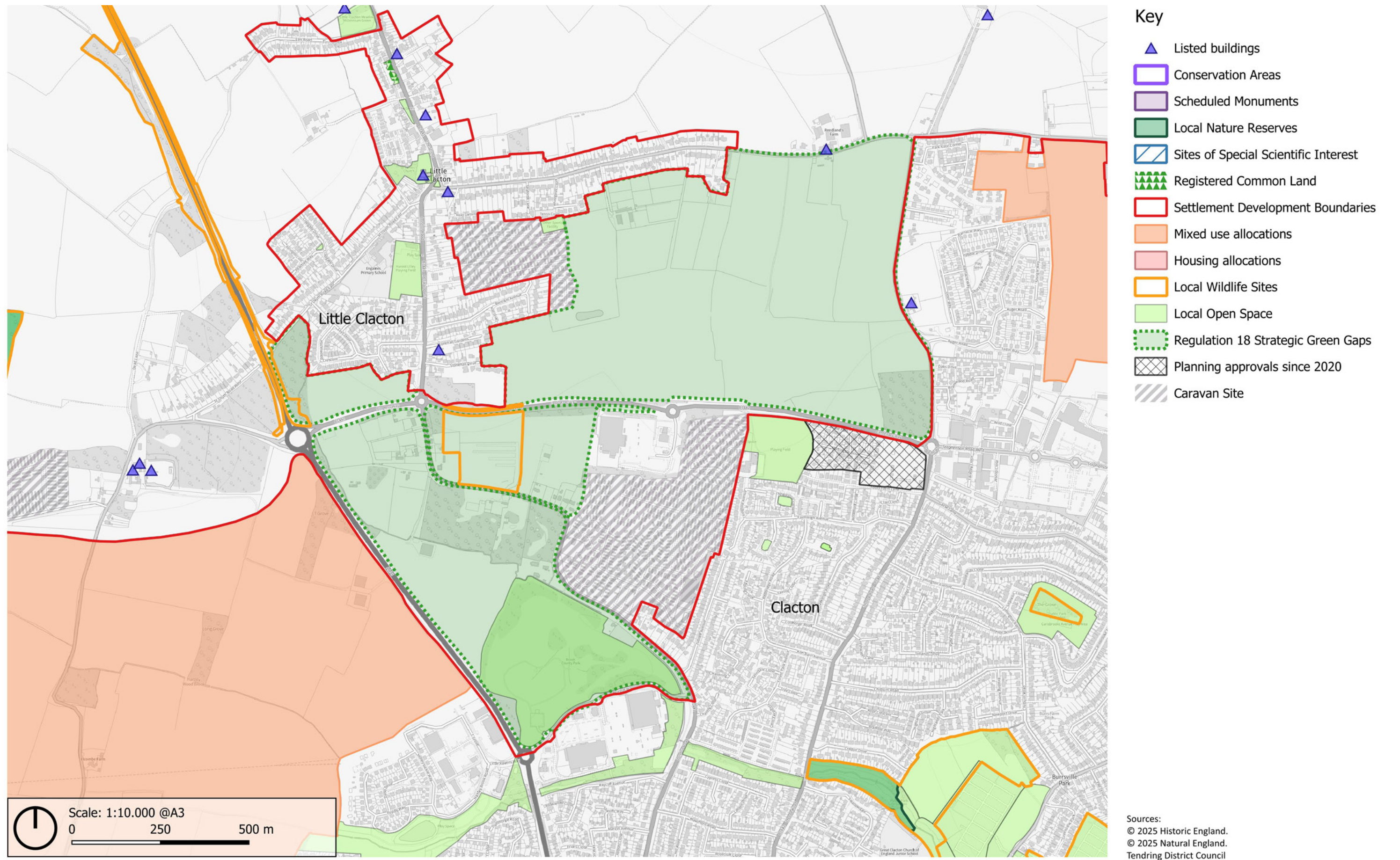


Figure 1.1: Designations and Planning Policy

Land between Clacton and Little Clacton

Settlement identity

Clacton-on-Sea or simply Clacton is a large town which developed primarily as a seaside resort. The land which would become the centre of the resort was purchased at auction in 1865 by a speculator. Clacton did not at this time have a railway connection. The Woolwich Steam Packet Company, which was successfully running steamers from London to Margate, was at the time looking for an additional stopover point to increase trade on their Ipswich route. The company agreed to finance the building of the pier, which was completed in 1871, and the first visitors to the new town arrived via steamship. The Great Eastern Railway opened a branch line to Clacton-on-Sea in 1882, and the town developed fairly rapidly into a large seaside resort. Whilst traditional seaside holidays have subsequently declined, the town has continued to expand steadily inland. The seaside resort was given the name of Clacton-on-Sea to distinguish it from the village of Great Clacton, which was already in existence prior to the development of the resort. The town centre and seafront have a planned character, but the more suburban areas incorporate pre-existing lanes and hamlets such as Rush Green. The village of Great Clacton is also now completely subsumed into the larger town. Little Clacton retains a village character which is distinct from the larger settlement of Clacton-on-Sea. The village is set within its own parish and has always been distinct from Great Clacton/Clacton-on-Sea. The suburban areas of Clacton lack strong identity, but there is nonetheless a clear distinction between a large town with its associated housing estates, retail parks and industrial areas, and smaller settlements such as Little Clacton which have a village character.

There is a strong distinction between the settlements

The extent and integrity of the gap

There is a clearly identifiable tract of open land between the settlements and there is an awareness of a break in the urban form on the key movement routes. The gap between the settlements is relatively narrow and the presence of development weakens the overall sense of separation on London Road in particular. Other key movement routes such as Centenary Way and Thorpe Road lie at the edge of the settlement and are open on one side. The gap contains some significant highway infrastructure including the Little Clacton Bypass, and the connecting roads and roundabouts, which have a modern, engineered character. The gap is mainly open, but there is an awareness of proximity to settlement and the quality of the gap varies. The northern part of the gap consists of actively farmed fields and has a more intact rural character. The southern part of the gap includes land-uses which are more typical of the urban fringe, including bypasses and roundabouts, former plant nurseries, a country park, and a car boot site, as well as parcels of woodland (where agricultural use has ceased). The proposed allocation to the west of the A133 will reduce the extent of the gap, and the remaining gap at this point will be narrow. Blocks of woodland and other undeveloped land will nonetheless continue to provide some separation.

The gap provides partial separation between the settlements

Changes to the settlement form

The biggest anticipated change in relation to this gap is the proposed Hartley Gardens allocation on the northern edge of Clacton, which will bring the settlements closer together. Some minor development is anticipated on the southern edge of Little Clacton on land which was not previously included within the gap (17/00790/FUL - proposed development for 30no. detached bungalows). This development will adjoin the edge of the gap, but will not impinge on the policy area itself. The Hartley Gardens development will extend the edge of Clacton northwards and westwards, and it is therefore necessary to consider whether the gap should also be extended to respond to the changes in the settlement form. Permission has been granted since the previous study for 122no. dwellings to the south of Centenary Way (20/01130/FUL). This site lies within the defined settlement boundary and does not directly affect the gap, though it creates a more developed context. Development has also been continuing to the east of Thorpe Road. This area lies within the settlement boundary for Clacton and is not within the gap itself. The development is nonetheless extending Clacton northwards, which is in turn creating a stronger need to maintain separation to the east of Little Clacton. This change was however already anticipated in 2020, and is reflected in the shape of the current policy area.

Land between Clacton and Little Clacton

Key Movement Routes



Little Clacton Bypass (A133)



London Road (B1441)



Bovills Way



St Osyth Road West



St Osyth Road East



Progress Way (B1442)

Land between Clacton and Little Clacton

Key Movement Routes



Centenary Way (B1442)



Thorpe Road



Holland Road



Brook Country Park

Land between Clacton and Little Clacton

Proposed boundary

The proposed gap encompasses the open land between the northern edge of Clacton and the southern edge of Little Clacton. The extent of the gap is largely defined by the Regulation 18 settlement boundaries, but excludes Firs Caravan Park, Anchor Caravan Camp, Highfield Grange Holiday Park, and the Morrisons supermarket site. The northern boundary of the Strategic Green Gap is defined by Holland Road.

The proposed boundary includes land which is already defined as a Strategic Green Gap within the adopted Local Plan (Parcels 1.3, 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6). There has been no substantive change within this part of the gap and this boundary has therefore been retained as it was before.

The allocation at Hartley Gardens will change the settlement form to the west of the A133 and will effectively extend Clacton northwards towards Little Clacton. It is therefore proposed to add two additional parcels (Parcels 1.1 and 1.2) to ensure that some sense of separation is retained between Hartley Gardens and Little Clacton. The boundary of the proposed parcels is centred on existing wooded areas which provide clear boundaries for the proposed gap.

It is also anticipated that further open land would be provided within the northernmost part of the allocation. The extent of this land is not sufficiently established to enable it to be included within the proposed policy area, but it will nonetheless help to provide additional separation between the settlements.

Other functions of the gap

Besides providing separation the gap also supports other functions. Brook Country Park provides an important and well-used amenity function at the northern edge of Clacton. Brook Country Park also contains a mix of habitats including wildflower meadow and woodland which contribute to the biodiversity of the area. Local Wildlife Sites alongside Weeley Bypass (the A133) and at Burcart's Meadow (the car boot site) contribute to the ecology of the area. The gap also contains arable farmland which contributes to food security.

Opportunities for enhancement

- There are opportunities for enhancement to the landscape and visual character and Green Infrastructure within the gap. This could include:
- Preserve and where possible enhance views from the settlements to contribute to the amenity of the area and strengthen the sense of visual separation.
 - Enhance public access to the countryside, particularly in the east of the gap, by introducing new public rights of way.
 - Enhance the urban fringe landscape around the edge of Clacton by promoting positive landscape management; consider opportunities for woodland creation to enhance landscape character and provide screening of existing buildings.
 - Increase the extent of native deciduous woodland using locally occurring native species (including oak and sweet chestnut).
 - Promote management of hedgerows; consider reinstatement of hedges, particularly where they have been lost from highly visible locations e.g. along roadsides.

Land between Clacton and Little Clacton

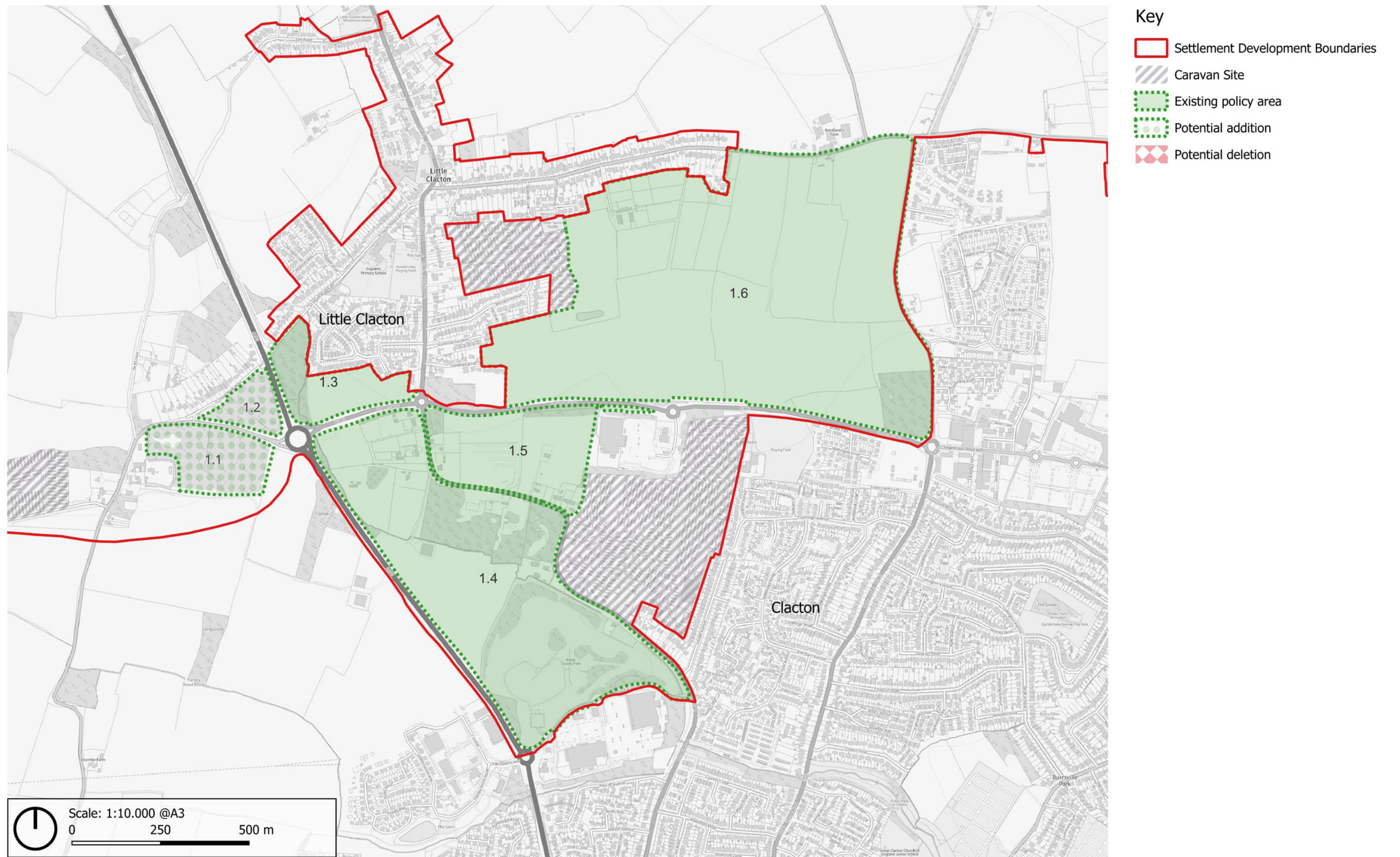


Figure 1.2: Parcels

Land between Clacton and Little Clacton

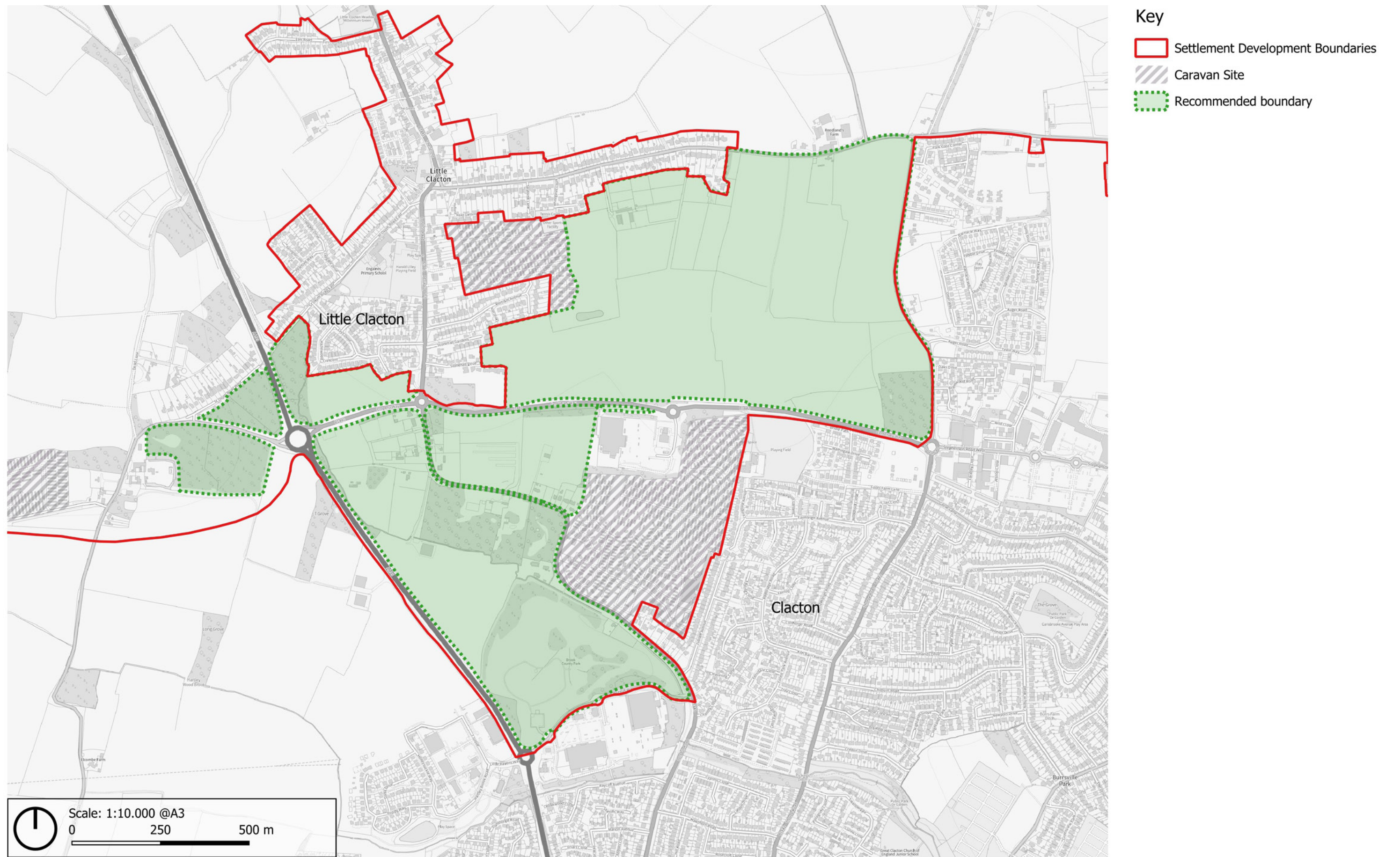


Figure 1.3: Recommended boundary

Land between Clacton and Jaywick

Land between Clacton and Jaywick

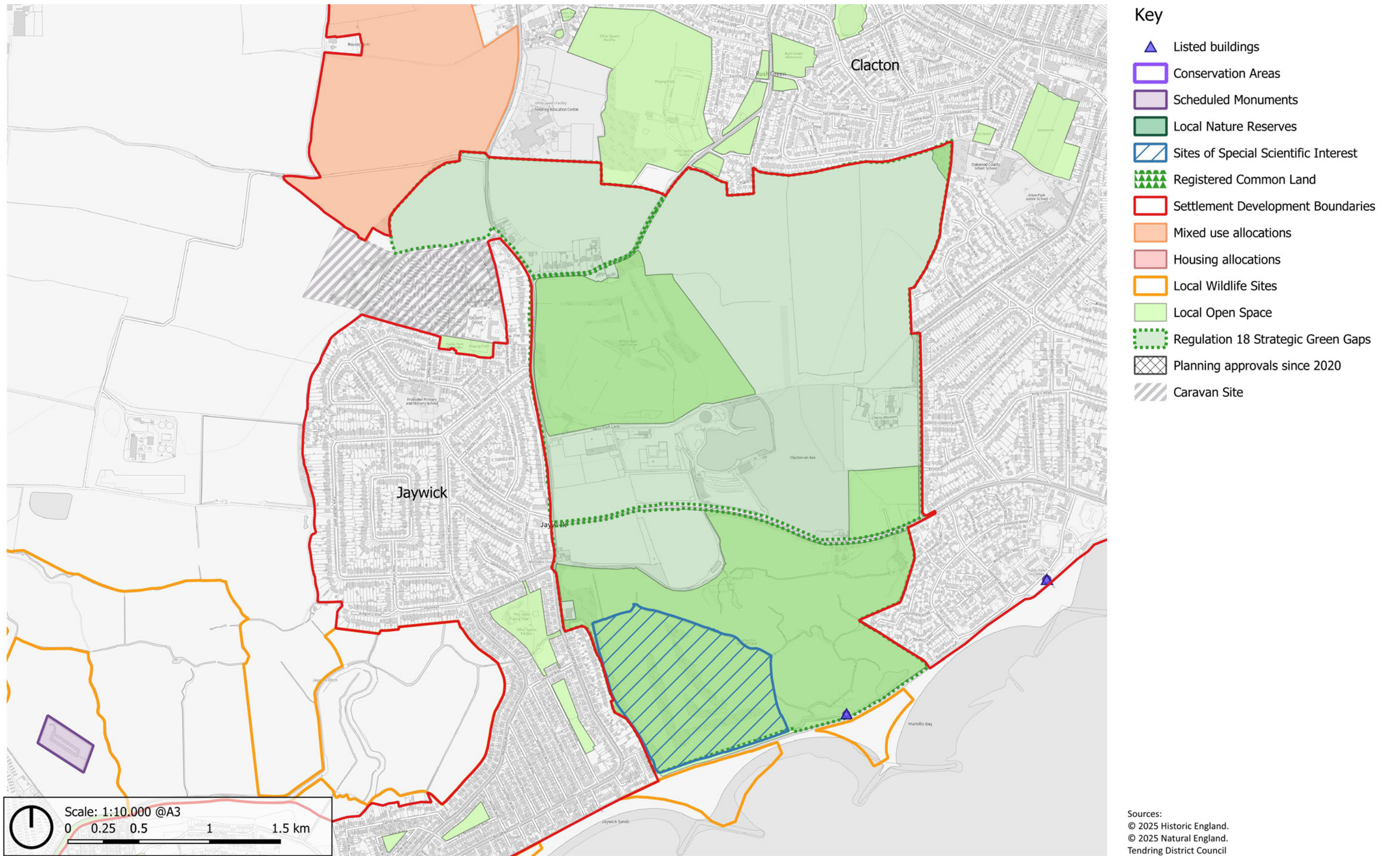


Figure 2.1: Designations and Planning Policy

Land between Clacton and Jaywick

Settlement identity

The gap separates suburban areas of Clacton-on-Sea from the settlement of Jaywick. The wider southern part of the gap separates Jaywick from the western edge of Clacton, and the narrower northern part of the gap separates Jaywick from the suburban area of Rush Green. Rush Green originated as a green within the parish of Great Clacton, but it is now a suburb of Clacton-on-Sea. The outline of the green is still visible within the settlement form, though its use has now changed to allotments. Rush Green is used as a name (e.g. Rush Green Road and Rush Green Recreation Ground), but other than that it lacks distinct identity, and is simply part of Clacton.

Jaywick is described as a unique and very distinct settlement. Jaywick originated as a marshland dairy farm. It's subsequent development however commenced in 1928 when the land was purchased by an entrepreneur. Beach chalets were built for summer use, West Road was constructed to give easy access to Clacton-on-Sea, and other features were also provided. People gradually started staying in their chalets for longer and longer periods, and the area eventually took on a more permanent residential character. The layout of streets and chalets give Jaywick a distinct and recognisable character which is clearly different from that of Clacton. It has recently been decided to create separate councils for Jaywick and Clacton; a move which is strongly supported by local residents. This suggests that people feel a strong sense of belonging to either Jaywick or Clacton.

Jaywick has basic local services, but residents also rely on Clacton for broader amenities. Despite this, the settlements clearly have different characters and identities, and there is a strong sense of distinction.

There is a strong distinction between the settlements

The extent and integrity of the gap

There is a clearly identifiable tract of open land between the settlements. The width of the gap varies, but is particularly narrow to the north of Jaywick (where it is just one field wide). The width of the gap from east to west is 750m to 1000m wide, with an undeveloped stretch of 840m on the coast path (Footpath 29 Great Clacton). The gap between the Tendring Education Centre (on the southern edge of Clacton) and residential properties on the northern edge of Jaywick is around 225m. The gap between the Rouses Farm development and the northern edge of Jaywick will be a similar width.

The gap is traversed by two relatively busy roads (Jaywick Lane and West Road) as well as the quieter Rush Green Road.

The land within the gap is generally open, and includes a range of land-uses. The northern part of the gap includes actively farmed land, but the southern part of the gap includes land-uses which are more typical of the urban fringe such as golf courses, an open farm, and the Clacton Aeroclub site.

There is little to no intervisibility between settlements in the southern part of the gap due to existing trees. There is however intervisibility in the northern part of the gap on Jaywick Lane.

The gap provides partial separation between the settlements

Changes to the settlement form

A recent planning permission (17/01229/OUT) at Rouses Farm on the western edge of Clacton will alter the settlement form once the development is complete.

The Regulation 18 settlement boundaries show virtual physical coalescence between Clacton and Jaywick, however the southernmost part of the Rouses Farm development would consist of open space, and a narrow gap of undeveloped land would therefore be retained between the settlements.

The recent planning approval will alter the settlement form of Clacton, and there is therefore a case for extending the gap in response to the new settlement boundaries.

Land between Clacton and Jaywick

Key Movement Routes



Footpath 29 Great Clacton



West Road



Footpath 15 Great Clacton



Footpath 13 Great Clacton



Rush Green Road



Jaywick Lane

Land between Clacton and Jaywick

Key Movement Routes



Footpath 30 Great Clacton

Land between Clacton and Jaywick

Proposed boundary

The proposed gap encompasses the open land between the western edges of Clacton (including the suburb of Rush Green) and the northern and eastern edges of Jaywick. The extent of the gap is largely defined by the Regulation 18 settlement boundaries which include the consented development at Rouses Farm, on the western edge of Clacton. The park homes at Sackett's Grove Park, Saddlebrook Chase and Sandpiper Gardens have been excluded from the proposed boundary as they do not contribute to the openness of the gap. The southern boundary of the gap is defined by the sea wall.

The proposed boundary includes land which is already defined as a Strategic Green Gap within the adopted Local Plan (Parcels 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7). There has been no substantive change within this part of the gap, and this boundary has therefore been retained as it was before.

The consented development at Rouses Farm will effectively extend the edge of Clacton westwards to Rouses Lane. It is therefore proposed to add two additional parcels (Parcels 2.1 and 2.2) to ensure that some sense of separation is retained between the Rouses Farm development and Jaywick. The boundary of the extended gap is centred on two existing fields, which provide clear and defensible boundaries for the proposed gap. One of these fields will effectively become public open space in the future, but will continue to provide a separation function, and it is therefore appropriate to include this land within the Strategic Green Gap.

Other functions of the gap

Besides providing separation the gap also supports other functions. The gap contains sports facilities in the shape of two golf courses. Four public footpaths provide further recreational opportunities on the edge of the settlement, and the coast path in particular is popular and well-used. The southern part of the gap provides the setting to a Grade II listed Martello Tower. The gap contains part of the Clacton Cliffs and Foreshore SSSI, and can be considered therefore to have ecological value. The gap also contains arable farmland which contributes to food security.

Opportunities for enhancement

- There are opportunities for enhancement to the landscape and visual character and Green Infrastructure within the gap. This could include:
- Encourage the planting of woodlands, with species typical of the area, to restore the wooded character of the coastal slopes and to reduce the influence of settlement edges where these are prominent.
 - Enhance the hedgerow network by promoting the replanting of hedgerows and encouraging management for species diversity.
 - Promote positive land management for remaining open areas of agricultural land.
 - Conserve the open setting provided by the SGG to the Martello Tower.
 - Retain the open undeveloped character of the coastal marshes by restricting planting to low scrubby species typically found in the local landscape and seek opportunities for their enhancement and restoration.
 - Enhance public access within the SGG, by introducing new rights of way to link up with existing PRoW.
 - Conserve expansive coastal views.

Land between Clacton and Jaywick

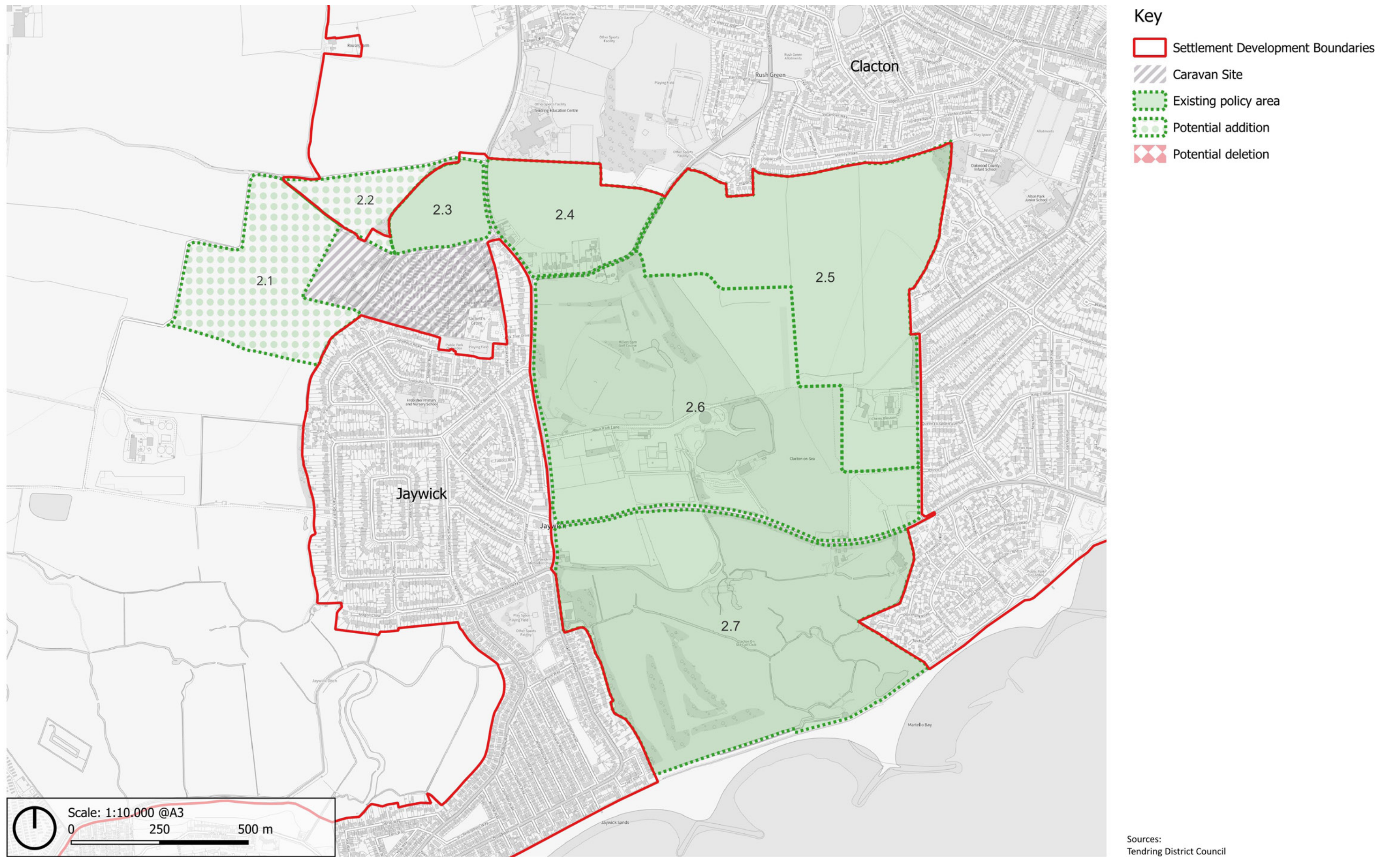


Figure 2.2: Parcels

Land between Clacton and Jaywick

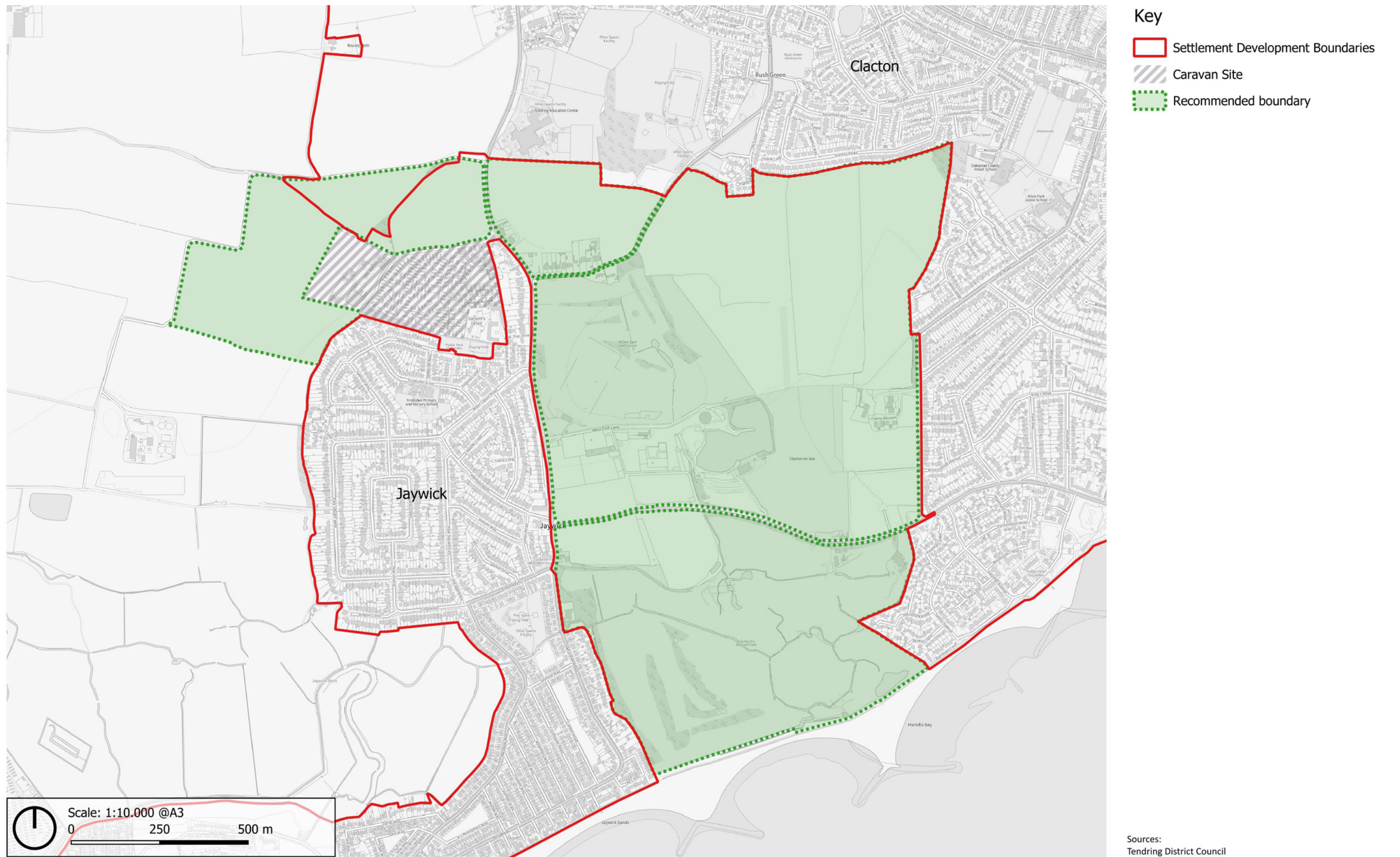


Figure 2.3: Recommended boundary

Land between Clacton and Holland-on-Sea

Land between Clacton and Holland-on-Sea

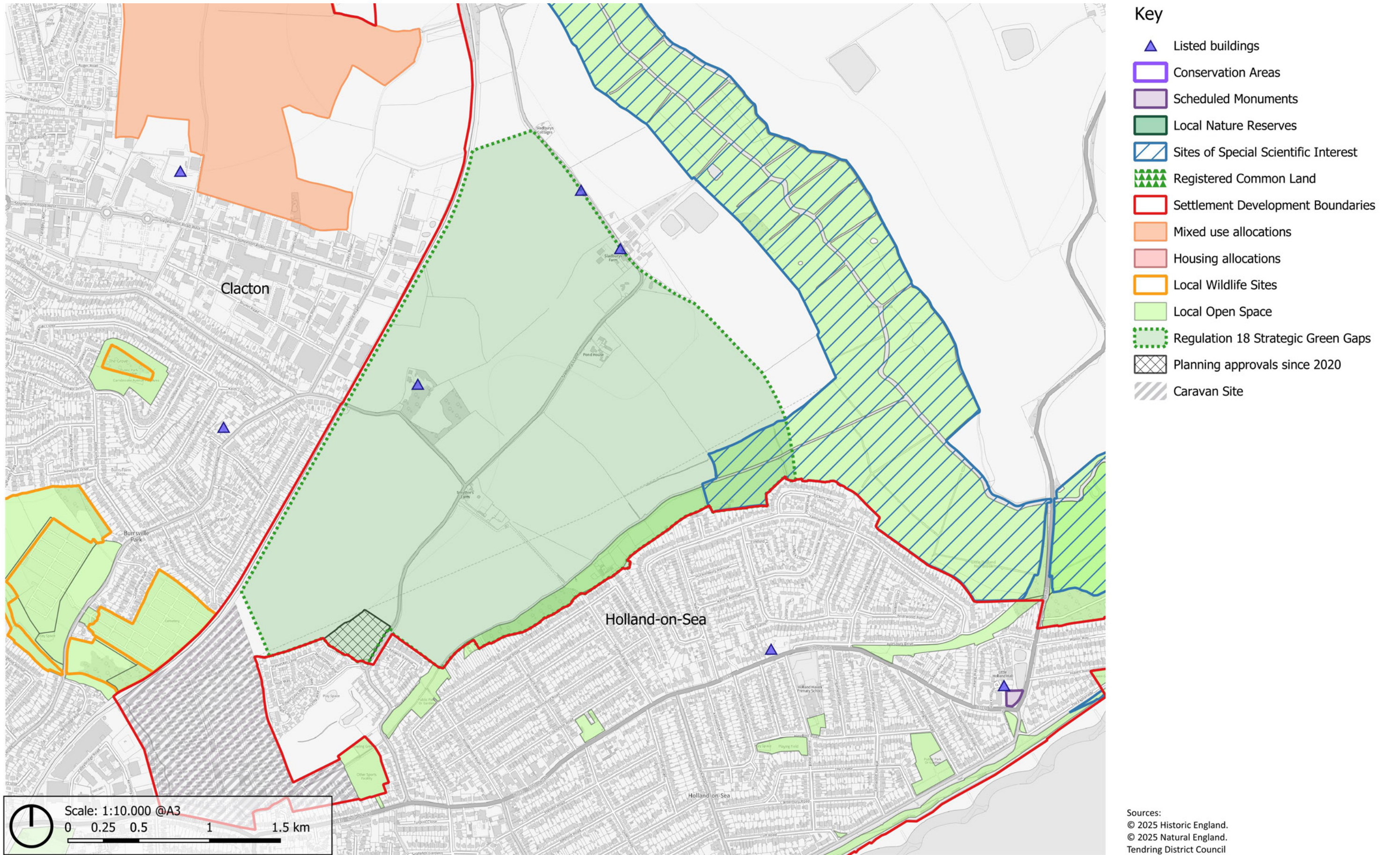


Figure 3.1: Designations and Planning Policy

Land between Clacton and Holland-on-Sea

Settlement identity

Holland-on-Sea has its own identity, but is also sometimes described as a suburb of Clacton. Whilst the development of Holland-on-Sea occurred at the same time as Clacton-on-Sea the settlement previously formed part of a separate parish (Little Holland), and the town has a distinct history.

Holland-on-Sea is mainly residential, and has a quieter character than Clacton. It is noted that the area has its own residents association who describe it as a unique community with its own clear identity. Holland-on-Sea does to some extent have its own character and it also has its own facilities. Holland-on-Sea is used extensively as a name, and features in addresses and on road-signs.

Clacton-on-Sea is a large seaside town with various suburban areas. It is therefore somewhat different in scale and character to Holland-on-Sea.

In administrative terms the two settlements currently form part of the same urban area (which is unparished). It has recently been decided however to create separate parish councils for Holland-on-Sea and Clacton-on-Sea, which is strongly favoured by the local communities. This suggests that residents feel a strong sense of belonging to either Holland-on-Sea or Clacton-on-Sea.

The settlements are partially distinct

The extent and integrity of the gap

The two settlements are already physically connected at certain points, and there is a physical continuity between the settlements on Holland Road and Deanhill Avenue. The Eastcliffe Playing Fields do nonetheless help to create partial separation. To the north of Picker's Ditch is a more extensive area of countryside which provides clear separation between the settlements.

Recent planning consents to the north of Picker's Ditch have extended the urban area of Holland-on-Sea and reduced the separation and distinction from the suburban areas of Clacton to the west and north. A large caravan site adjoining the settlement edge has also eroded the gap between the settlements. A large tract of open countryside to either side of Sladbury's Lane nonetheless provides some sense of separation between Holland-on-Sea and Clacton-on-Sea. The gap has a wedge form i.e. it adjoins open countryside to the east, but is enclosed by development to the south, west and north-west. Valley Farm Holiday Park is not included within the gap as it does not have open characteristics. The width of the gap varies from 200m wide at the western end to over 1200m wide at the eastern end.

The key movement routes within the Strategic Green Gap are Sladbury's Lane and Burr's Road. Footpath 27 Great Clacton is also located within the gap.

The gap provides partial separation between the settlements

Changes to the settlement form

A recent development to the north of Picker's Ditch (15/01351/OUT) has reduced the separation between Clacton-on-Sea and Holland-on-Sea. This development forms a part of Holland-on-Sea.

Consent has recently been granted at appeal for a further 30 dwellings off Sladbury's Lane (25/01011/OUT) which will further reduce the extent of the Strategic Green Gap.

Land between Clacton and Holland-on-Sea

Key Movement Routes



Sladbury's Lane



Footpath 27 Great Clacton



Burrs Road

Land between Clacton and Holland-on-Sea

Proposed boundary

The proposed gap lies between the suburban area of Burrsville Park within Clacton, and Holland-on-Sea. The railway line provides a strong, clearly delineated edge to the settlement of Clacton which also serves as the north-western boundary of the Strategic Green Gap. The southern edge of the Strategic Green Gap is defined by the settlement boundary of Holland-on-Sea. The settlement of Holland-on-Sea is generally contained by Picker's Ditch, but development has also extended onto the far side of Picker's Ditch in the western part of the gap. The western edge of the Strategic Green Gap adjoins the Valley Farm Holiday Park, which lies on the edge of Clacton. The eastern boundary of the Strategic Green Gap is defined by rural roads and hedgerows. The extent of the gap corresponds to land which lies directly in-between the settlements, and the boundary is therefore logical and defensible.

The proposed boundary includes land which is already defined as a Strategic Green Gap within the adopted Local Plan (Parcel 3.2). This parcel of open land is defined by the existing settlement boundaries to the north-west and south, and the existing boundary is therefore the most logical and defensible one. The only change since 2020 is the recent decision to allow 30 dwellings on a piece of land at Sladbury's Lane (Parcel 3.1). It is therefore recommended that this parcel is removed from the Strategic Green Gap.

Other functions of the gap

Besides providing separation the gap also supports other functions. The gap provides a setting to listed buildings at Treasure Holt Farmhouse, Sladbury's Old House, and Cartlodge opposite and approximately 30 metres north west of Sladbury's Old House. The gap also contains part of the Holland Haven Marshes SSSI. The gap contains arable farmland which contributes to food security.

Opportunities for enhancement

- There are opportunities for enhancement to the landscape and visual character and Green Infrastructure within the gap. This could include:
- Strengthen the landscape character around existing urban settlements of Clacton and Holland-on-Sea, and enhance vegetation cover along the Colchester-Clacton railway to reduce the visual influence of the edge of Clacton.
 - Promote positive land management of open areas, such as through conserving and restoring hedgerows, creation of grassland field margins around intensive arable fields.
 - Conserve and extend areas of wetland habitat including grazing marsh, by allowing regular flooding and reducing drainage of less valuable agricultural land around Picker's Ditch. This is particularly important along the Holland Haven Marshes SSSI, and its immediate surrounding in the south of the SGG.
 - Increase the extent of native deciduous woodland to enhance the wooded character of the landscape, and link existing sites.
 - Conserve the rural character of Sladbury's Lane by resisting road improvements such as new signage, installation of street lights and pavements, or widening.
 - Enhance public access and enjoyment of the SGG by creating walks along Picker's Ditch and linking this to the Holland Brook valley.

Land between Clacton and Holland-on-Sea

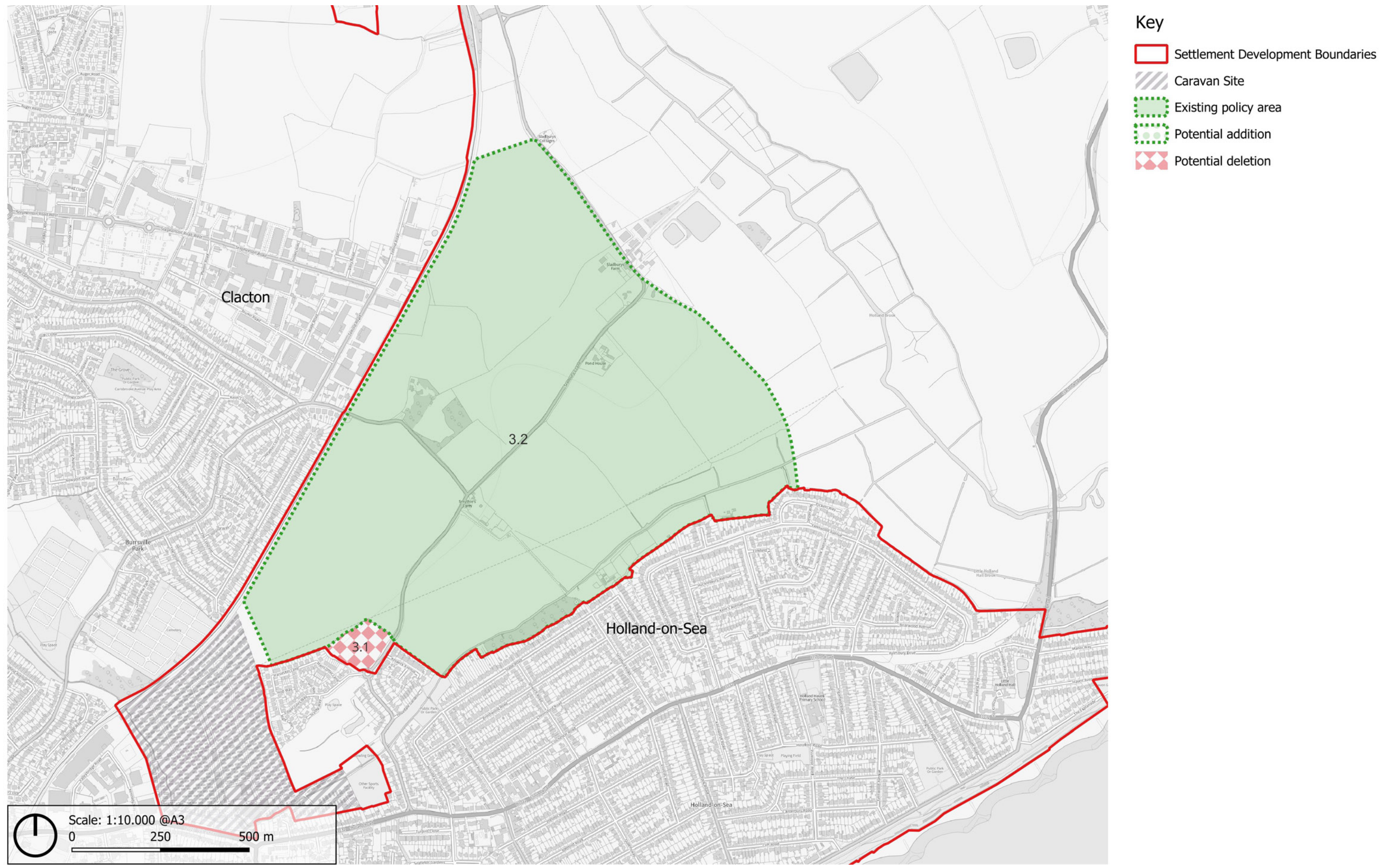


Figure 3.2: Parcels

Land between Clacton and Holland-on-Sea

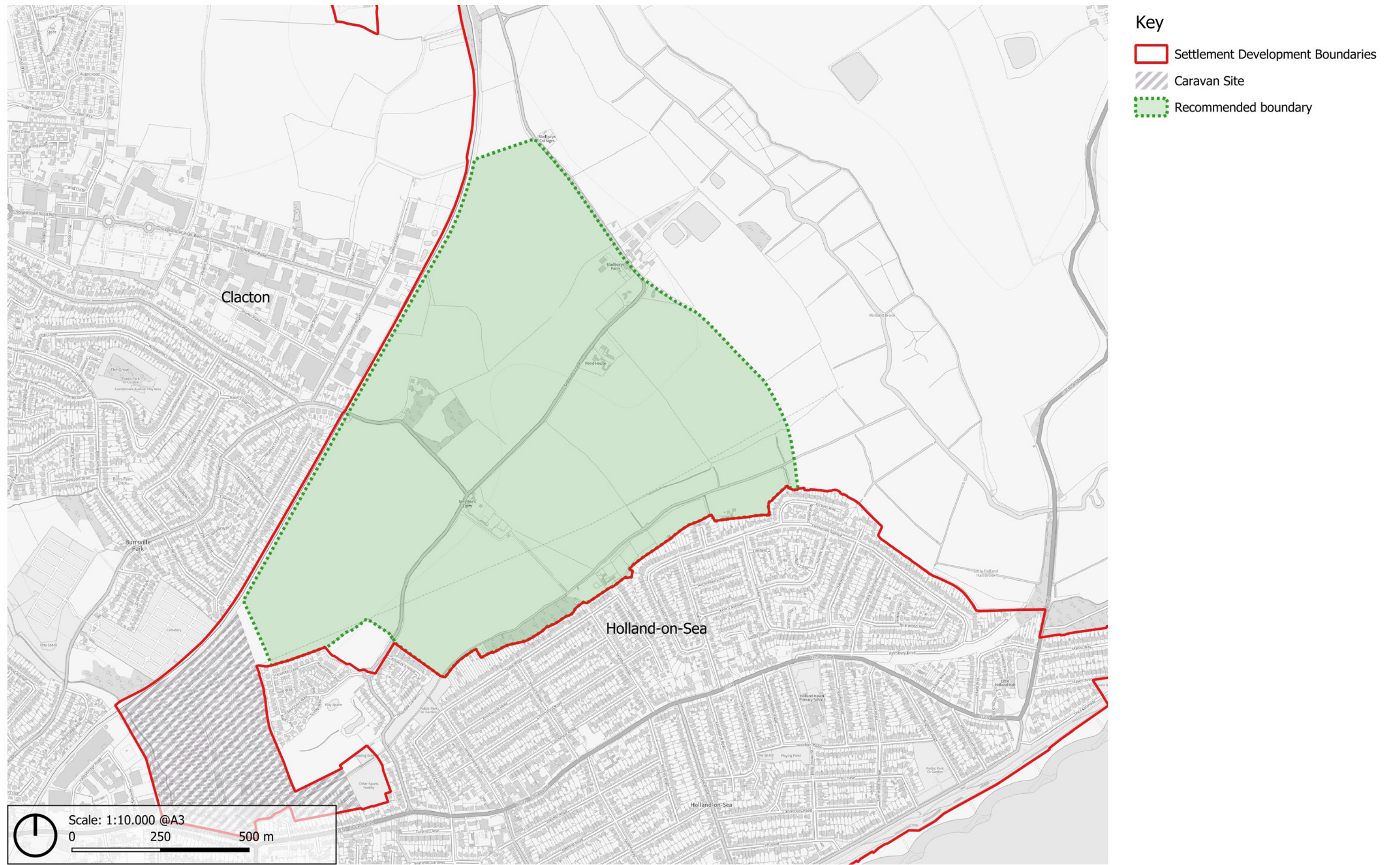


Figure 3.3: Recommended boundary

Land between Ramsey, Little Oakley and Dovercourt

Land between Ramsey, Little Oakley and Dovercourt

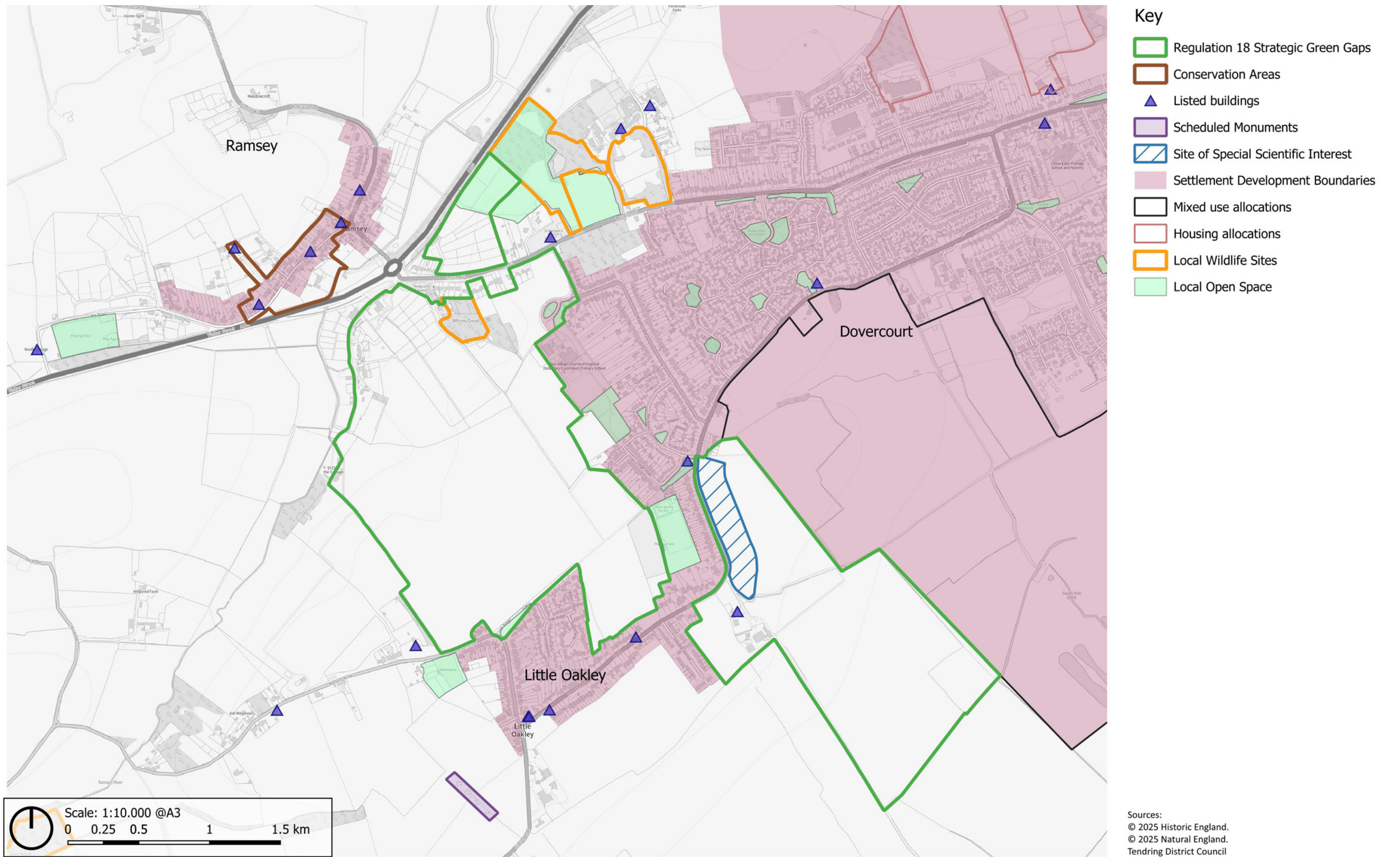


Figure 4.1: Designations and Planning Policy

Land between Ramsey, Little Oakley and Dovercourt

Settlement identity

Ramsey, Dovercourt and Oakley are all recorded as separate settlements in the Domesday Book.

Ramsey and Little Oakley both originated as villages, and continue to be separate parishes.

Dovercourt originated as a village, but is now a part of Harwich. Harwich and Dovercourt have been administered together for some time, and are represented by Harwich Town Council. Harwich and Dovercourt function as a single settlement e.g. Dovercourt High Street now serves as the main town centre for Harwich. Despite this Dovercourt can still be recognised as an area within Harwich and it is used as a name, including on road signs. Whilst Dovercourt has elements of its own identity it is not an independent settlement i.e. it forms a contiguous part of the larger Harwich-Dovercourt urban area. Dovercourt has also lost some of its individual identity in as much as the settlement as a whole is often simply referred to as Harwich.

Whilst Dovercourt, Ramsey and Little Oakley are all distinct settlements the settlement form complicates the sense of separation. Both Ramsey and Little Oakley include development which relates to the edge of Dovercourt. This development effectively forms part of the Harwich-Dovercourt built up area.

Little Oakley consists of an area which retains the form of a village, but also includes some streets which are more associated with the edge of Dovercourt.

Ramsey and Little Oakley have a village character which contrasts with Dovercourt, but the distinction between the settlements is obscured to some extent by the existing settlement pattern.

The settlements are partially distinct

The extent and integrity of the gap

There are areas of open land between the settlements but ribbon development is also present on Church Hill and Harwich Road.

The experience of separation on Church Hill and Harwich Road is relatively weak. Both roads feature a mix of developed and undeveloped frontages. Road users on Church Hill travel past sporadic development before reaching the official entrance to Dovercourt, which is located to the east.

All three settlements are technically joined at certain points, but Ramsey in particular has a distinct part which is unconnected to the larger settlement. Little Oakley is connected to Dovercourt on Harwich Road, but retains a village character.

The gap does provide some separation between the three settlements and helps to conserve the village character of Ramsey and Great Oakley.

The gap provides partial separation between the settlements

Changes to the settlement form

There are three relatively recent minor developments on Church Hill which have affected the gap between the settlements (17/00873/OUT - erection of three dwellings, 16/01010/OUT - erection of three dwellings, and 14/01931/OUT - demolition of industrial and commercial buildings and construction of six dwellings). These developments lie outside the defined settlement boundaries but have nonetheless extended the existing ribbon development on Church Hill. The implications of these developments for the gap have been considered within the study.

Land between Ramsey, Little Oakley and Dovercourt

Key Movement Routes



Church Hill (B1352)



Footpath 20 Ramsey



Footpath 8 Little Oakley



Footpath 5 Little Oakley



Footpath 18 Little Oakley



Harwich Road B1414

Land between Ramsey, Little Oakley and Dovercourt

Key Movement Routes



Bridleway 36 Ramsey

Land between Ramsey, Little Oakley and Dovercourt

Proposed boundary

The proposed gap separates three settlements and has a somewhat complex form which is illustrated on Figure 4.3. The gap lies between, and separates, Little Oakley (to the south), Dovercourt (to the east) and Ramsey (to the north).

The proposed boundary includes land which is already defined as a Strategic Green Gap within the adopted Local Plan (Parcels 4.1 and 4.2). These parcels continue to provide a separation function and have therefore been retained within the proposed Policy Area. Parcel 4.1 is located to the north of Church Hill (the B1352), The boundaries of this parcel are defined by roads and field boundaries. Parcel 4.2 lies to the south of Church Hill, and is the largest parcel within the gap. The southern and eastern edges of this parcel are generally defined by the existing settlement edges. The proposed boundary follows a strong hedgerow feature within the Little Oakley Football Club site which separates the more developed parts of the football club site from the grass pitches to the west. The pitches to the west do make a tangible contribution to separation and have therefore been retained within the Policy Area. The northern boundary of Parcel 4.2 is defined by ribbon development on Church Hill, Ramsey. Parcels 4.3 and 4.4 consist of recently constructed housing on Church Hill, and have been excluded from the policy area. Parcel 4.5 forms part of the school grounds and has also been excluded.

The proposed allocation to the south of Oakley Road will effectively extend the settlement of Dovercourt southwards and westwards, towards Little Oakley. It is therefore proposed to add an additional parcel of land to the south of Oakley Road to prevent Little Oakley from being subsumed into the larger Harwich-Dovercourt settlement. The boundary of the extended gap would be defined by the Regulation 18 settlement boundary, which is delineated by physical features on the ground. The boundary of the proposed allocation is defined by a hedgerow, and the boundary of Little Oakley is defined by Harwich Road (the B1414) and by existing property boundaries.

Other functions of the gap

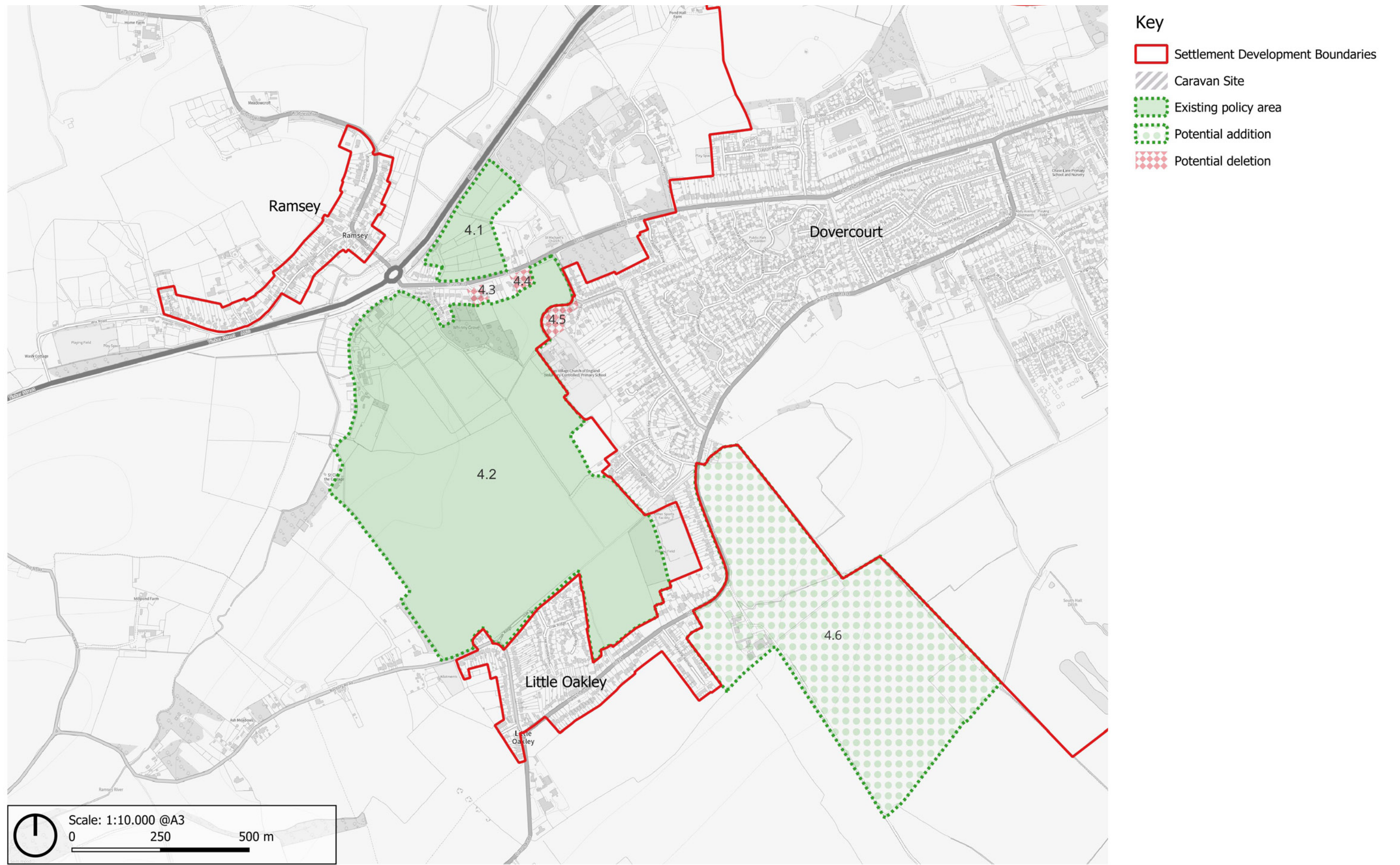
Besides providing separation the gap also supports other functions. The gap contains sports facilities at Little Oakley Football Club, and there are a number of public rights of way which provide further recreational opportunities on the edge of the settlement. The gap contains a Local Wildlife Site at Whinny Grove which contributes to the biodiversity of the area. The gap provides part of the setting to nearby listed buildings such as the Parish Church of St Michael, Ramsey, Ramsey Windmill, Little Oakley Rectory, and Foulton Hall Farmhouse, and contributes to the setting of the Ramsey Conservation Area. The gap also contains arable farmland which contributes to food security.

Opportunities for enhancement

There are opportunities for enhancement to the landscape and visual character and Green Infrastructure within the gap. This could include:

- Promote positive land management of open areas, such as through conserving and restoring hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Restore and extend native deciduous woodland, particularly on the edges of existing woodlands, for example at Whinny Grove and along settlement edges.
- Preserve clear views across Ramsey Creek, conserving the rural character of the valley.
- Conserve the rural setting to heritage assets outside of the gap, including the Church of St Michael, Ramsey.

Land between Ramsey, Little Oakley and Dovercourt



Land between Ramsey, Little Oakley and Dovercourt

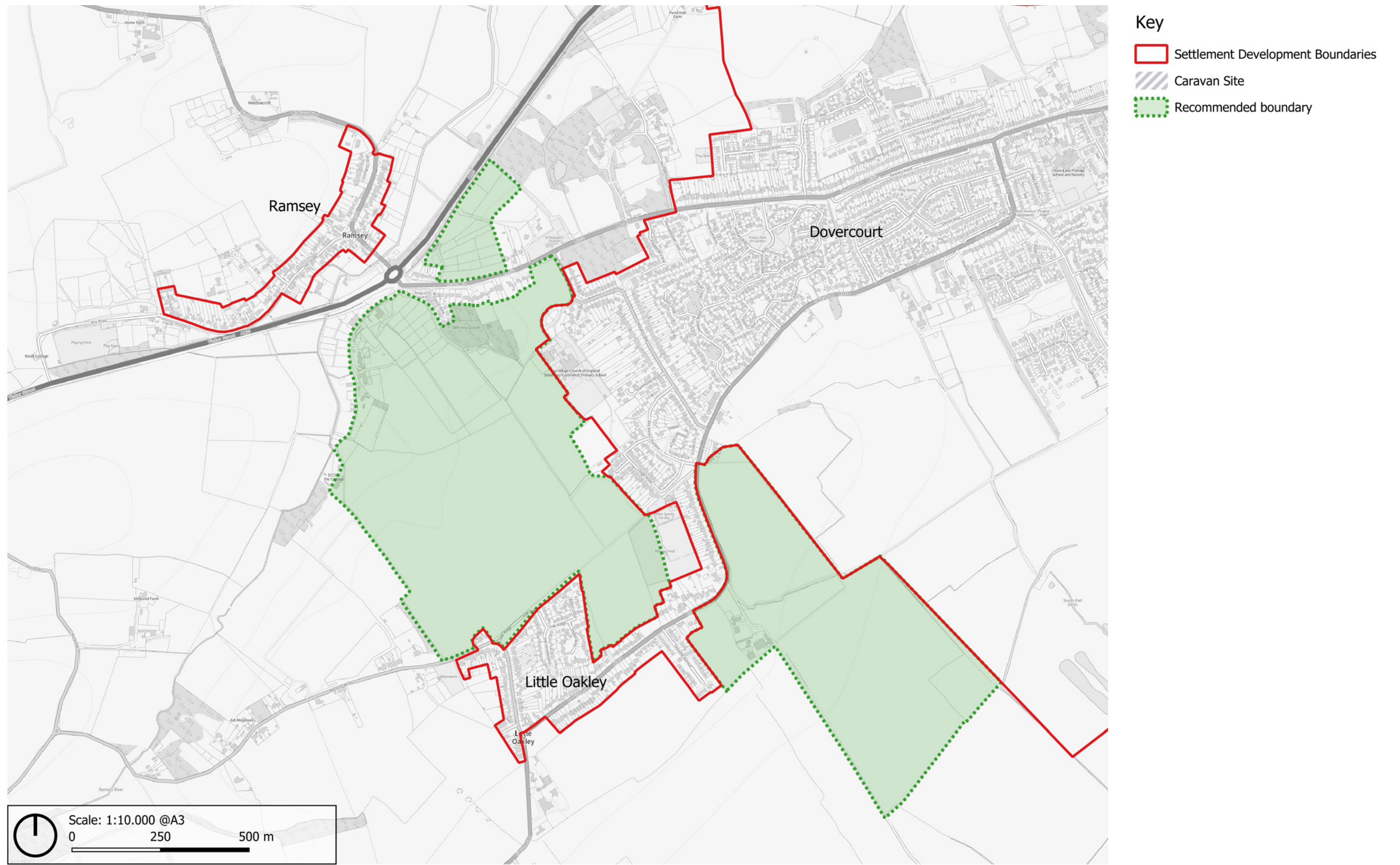


Figure 4.3: Recommended boundary

Land between Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken

Land between Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken

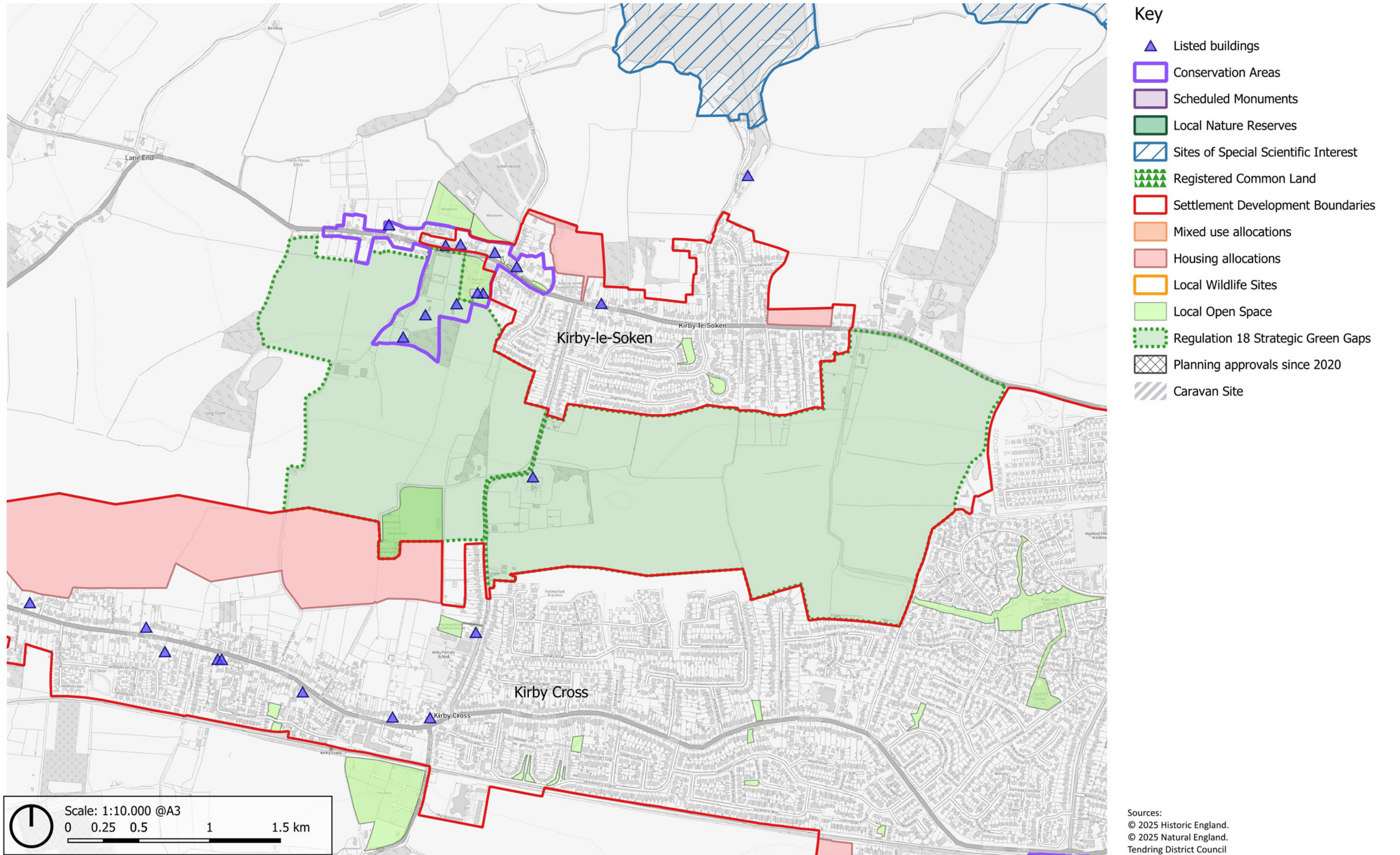


Figure 5.1: Designations and Planning Policy

Land between Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken

Settlement identity

Kirby Cross originated as a hamlet within the parish of Kirby-le-Soken. Kirby Cross today is described as a village and retains to some extent a distinct identity. It is however physically joined to Frinton-on-Sea.

Administratively Kirby-le-Soken and Kirby Cross form part of the Frinton and Walton area.

Although they are physically distinct Kirby-le-Soken and Kirby Cross appear to share certain amenities e.g. the Kirby Tennis Club. The settlements also historically formed part of the same parish so there is an element of shared identity.

Kirby-le-Soken relates to the area of settlement which developed along Lower Street. The settlement retains a recognisable village character and is clearly distinct from the built up area of Kirby Cross, Walton-on-the-Naze and Frinton-on-Sea.

The gap also provides separation between Kirby-le-Soken and Walton-on-the Naze, which is located to the east.

The extent and integrity of the gap

There is a clear tract of open land between the settlements.

The gap forms part of a contiguous belt of countryside which separates the village of Kirby-le-Soken from the larger amalgamated settlements of Kirby Cross, Walton-on-the-Naze and Frinton-on-Sea.

The gap is quite narrow, but there is a clear sense of separation.

The key movement routes include Walton Road, Halstead Road/Shums Hill and Mumfords Lane (which is a green lane). The gap is crossed by several public footpaths, and there are further informal paths within the gap.

Changes to the settlement form

The recent housing development to the south of Walton Road has narrowed the gap on Walton Road, and the gap is now effectively one field wide.

Recent development on the northern edge of Kirby Cross has similarly narrowed the actual gap between the settlements (though it has not affected the policy area).

The proposed housing allocation on the northern edge of Kirby Cross will change the settlement form and narrow the gap between settlements, and there is a case for extending the gap to the west which will be explored within this study.

The settlements are partially distinct

The gap provides strong separation between the settlements

Land between Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken

Key Movement Routes



Footpath 20 Frinton and Walton



Mumfords Lane



Footpath 21 Frinton and Walton



Footpath 22 Frinton and Walton



Footpath 23 Frinton and Walton



Halstead Road

Land between Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken

Key Movement Routes



Footpath 24 Frinton and Walton



Footpath 25 Frinton and Walton



Footpath 26 Frinton and Walton



Turpins Lane

Land between Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken

Proposed boundary

The proposed boundary includes land which is already defined as a Strategic Green Gap within the adopted Local Plan (Parcel 5.5). This parcel continues to provide a separation function and has therefore been retained within the proposed Policy Area. The boundaries of this parcel are defined by the Regulation 18 settlement boundaries for Walton-on-the-Naze / Kirby Cross to the east and south, and Kirby-le-Soken to the north. Part of the northern boundary is defined by Walton Road. The western boundary of the parcel is defined by Halstead Road.

It is also proposed to extend the gap to include land to the west of Halstead Road which also provides a separation function (Parcels 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4). The southern boundary is generally defined by a proposed housing allocation on the northern edge of Kirby Cross which will bring the settlements closer together. The northern edge of the Strategic Green Gap is defined by existing development within Kirby-le-Soken. The western edge adjoins open countryside. The western boundary is defined by hedgerows and a small wood at Long Grove.

Other functions of the gap

Besides providing separation the gap also supports other functions. A wide range of sports facilities are provided at Kirby Playing Fields, and there are a number of public rights of way which provide further recreational opportunities on the edge of the settlement. The gap contains part of the Kirby-le-Soken Conservation Area and provides a rural setting to the south. The gap contributes to the setting of several listed buildings within the Conservation Area including the Church of St Michael, Kirby-le-Soken. The gap also contains arable farmland which contributes to food security.

Opportunities for enhancement

- There are opportunities for enhancement to the landscape and visual character and Green Infrastructure within the gap. This could include:
- Conserve the rural, tranquil character as a setting for Hamford Water, including resisting further encroachment of built development on the skyline at the crest of slopes.
 - Conserve and enhance the hedgerow network, including replanting of hedgerow trees, to encourage management for wildlife and as important landscape features. Seek opportunities to join the hedgerow network with small copses.
 - Consider opportunities to create meadows or permanent pasture to restore grassland habitats lost through agricultural intensification, including the creation of grassland field margins.
 - Maintain the character of Halstead Road and Walton Road
 - Increase the extent of native deciduous woodland using locally occurring native species to enhance the character of the landscape.
 - Consider opportunities to enhance the landscape setting of the settlements through woodland creation along the settlement edge of Frinton and Kirby-le-Soken, particularly in the vicinity of recently constructed developments to create new character and provide screening.

Land between Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken

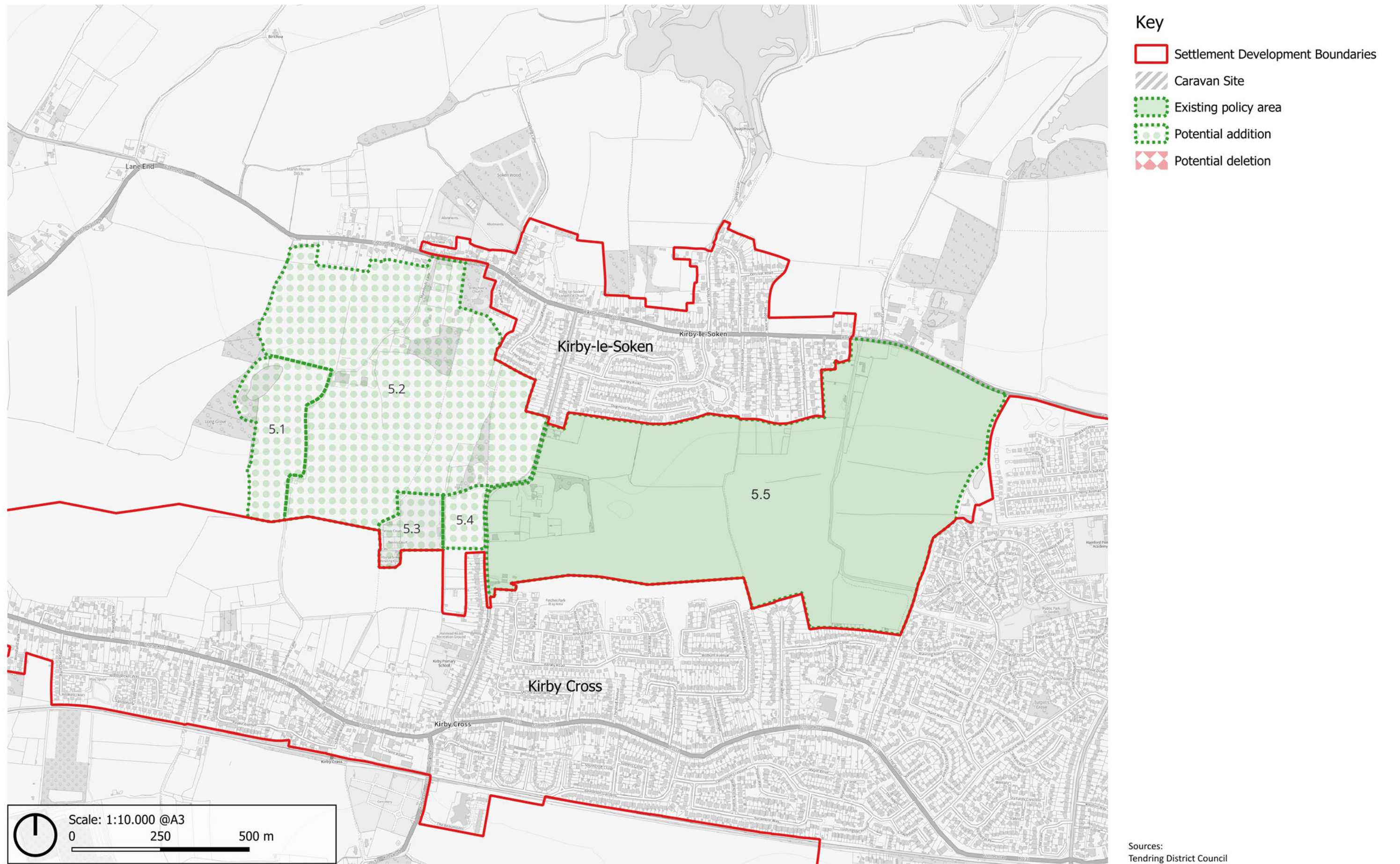


Figure 5.2: Parcels

Land between Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken

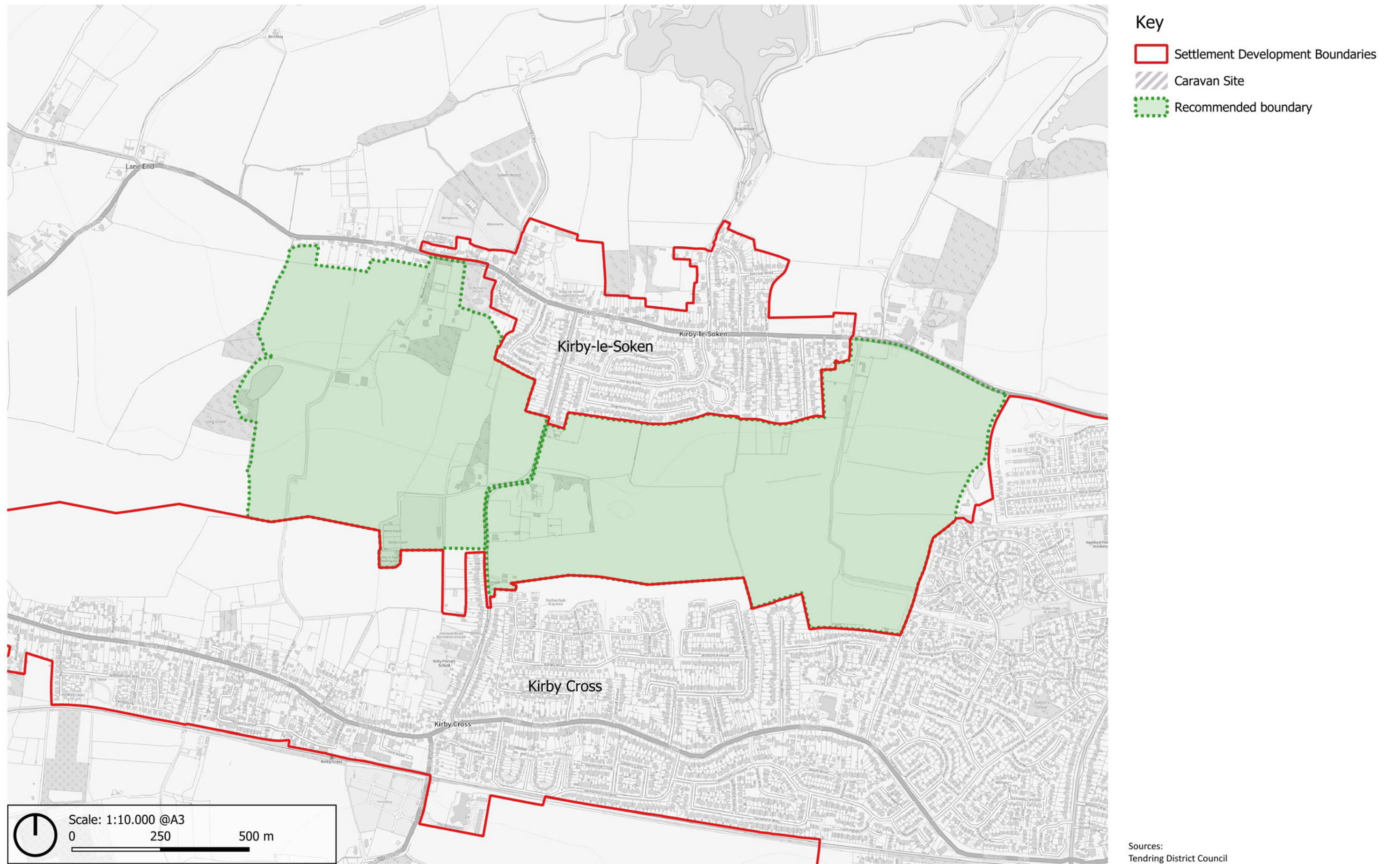


Figure 5.3: Recommended boundary

Land between Mistley and Manningtree

Land between Mistley and Manningtree

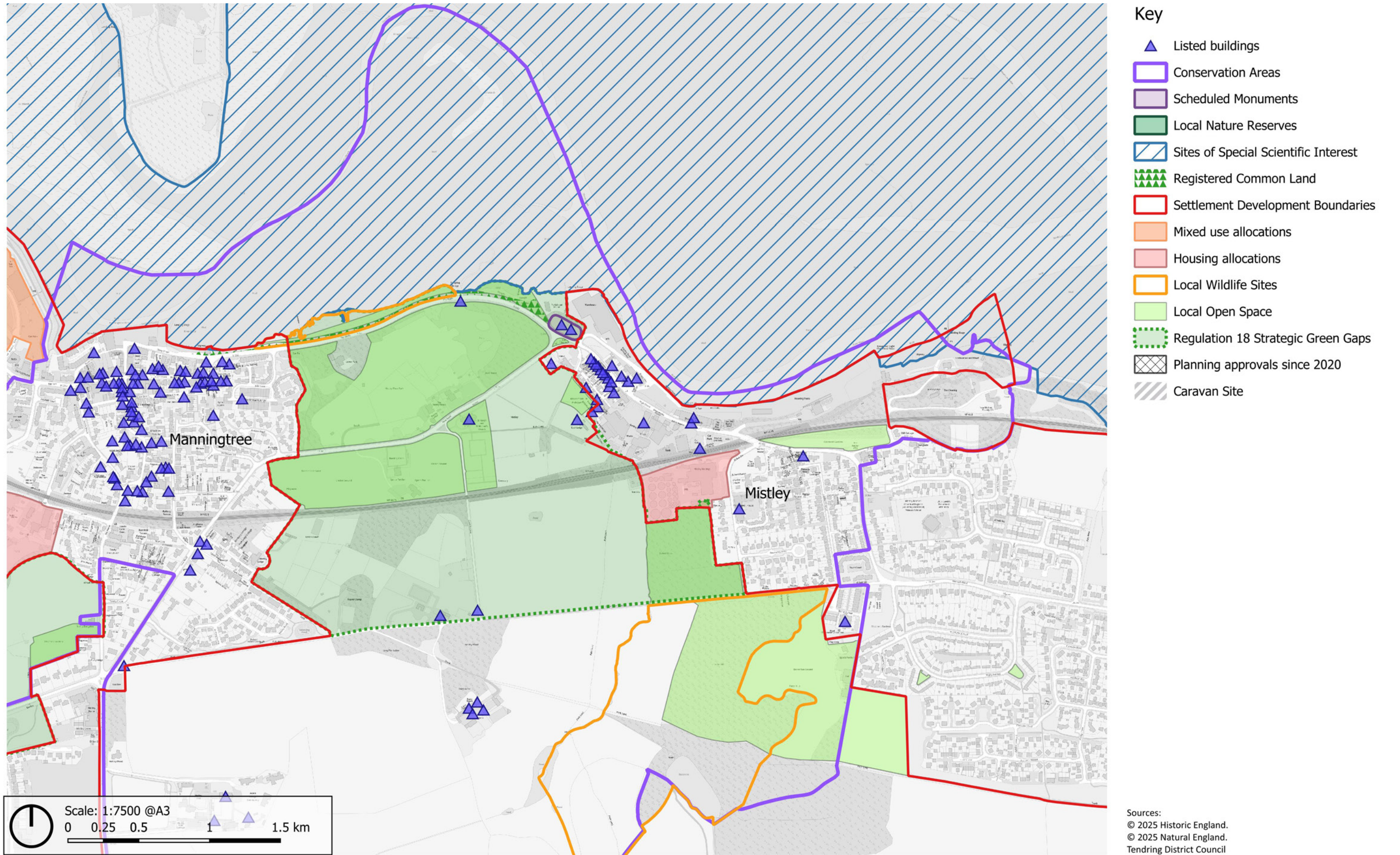


Figure 6.1: Designations and Planning Policy

Land between Mistley and Manningtree

Settlement identity

Manningtree and Mistley have distinct histories. Both settlements have a strong individual character and they are also clearly distinct from each other. Manningtree has ceased to be a working port but Mistley continues to operate as a port. Manningtree is known as the smallest town in England. Mistley was developed in the 18th century by local landowner Richard Rigby MP who attempted to develop Mistley into a fashionable spa town. The settlement retains many attractive Georgian and Victorian buildings. Mistley is described as village whereas Manningtree is a town. There is also development within the parish of Mistley which adjoins Manningtree. This complicates the overall sense of distinction between the settlements, and it is therefore judged that there is only partial distinction between the settlements as some parts of Mistley are contiguous with Manningtree.

The settlements are partially distinct

The extent and integrity of the gap

Mistley and Manningtree are separated by a clear tract of open space which is 500m wide. The gap is formed by what was Mistley Place Park. The gap includes St Mary's and St Michael's Church, the recreation ground, bowling green, and cricket ground, a lake and woodland and other areas of open space and occasional buildings within the former park. Whilst the gap consists partly of recreational uses rather than open countryside it nonetheless provides a clear break between settlements.

The gap provides strong separation between the settlements

Changes to the settlement form

There have not been any significant planning applications since 2020 which have affected the Strategic Green Gap, but some earlier permissions have been implemented. Earlier planning permissions have not had a direct impact on the Strategic Green Gap, but they have created a more developed context, with housing at St Michael's Road now extending to the edge of the gap.

Land between Mistley and Manningtree

Key Movement Routes



The Walls (B1352)



New Road (B1352)



Footpath 19 Mistley



Footpath 16 Mistley



Footpath 15 Mistley



Footpath 18 Mistley

Land between Mistley and Manningtree

Proposed boundary

The proposed boundary includes land which is already defined as a Strategic Green Gap within the adopted Local Plan, and the proposed boundary is unchanged from 2020, when the current Local Plan was adopted. The proposed boundary is defined by the Regulation 18 Settlement boundaries to the east and west. The northern boundary of the Strategic Green Gap is defined by the high water mark in the Stour Estuary. The southern boundary is delineated by Footpath 16 Mistley which follows a straight drive within what was Mistley Park. This provides a convenient and recognisable boundary feature. The land to the south of Footpath 16 Mistley also makes a plausible contribution to separation, but the proposed boundary includes the land which is most important to maintaining physical and visual separation between settlements.

Other functions of the gap

Besides providing separation the gap also supports other functions. A range of sports facilities (including cricket pitches and a bowls greens) are provided within the gap. There are a number of public rights of way as well as the Greensward at the riverside Registered Common Land and The Walls, which provide attractive recreational opportunities. The gap forms part of the Manningtree and Mistley Conservation Area and contains several listed buildings and structures such as the Church of St Mary and St Michael, Mistley and the South Face of Hopping Bridge, and the gap therefore contributes to conserving the historic character of the area. The gap contains a Local Wildlife Site at Hopping Bridge Marsh which contributes to the biodiversity of the area.

Opportunities for enhancement

- There are opportunities for enhancement to the landscape and visual character and Green Infrastructure within the gap. This could include:
- Conserve and enhance the ecological structure and landscape character of woodlands.
 - Conserve the setting of the Scheduled Monument and Grade I listed Mistley Towers, and the other Grade II listed historic buildings within the SGG and conserve views to these prominent landmarks.
 - Maintain the wooded character of New Road and The Walls, resisting road improvements or widening that would threaten their character.
 - Conserve and enhance views across the Stour Estuary, within the Coast and Heaths National Landscape.

Land between Mistley and Manningtree

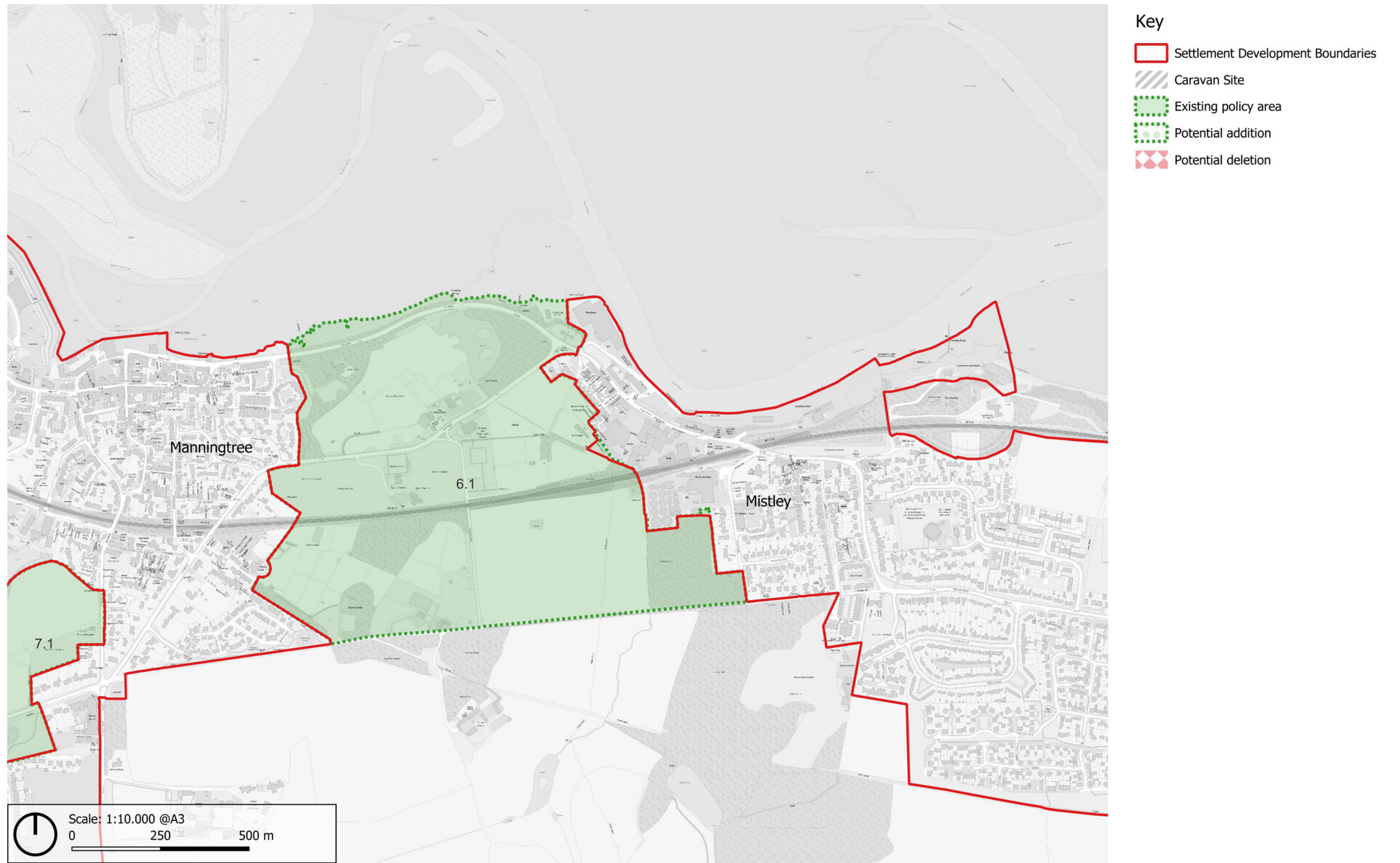


Figure 6.2: Parcels

Land between Mistley and Manningtree

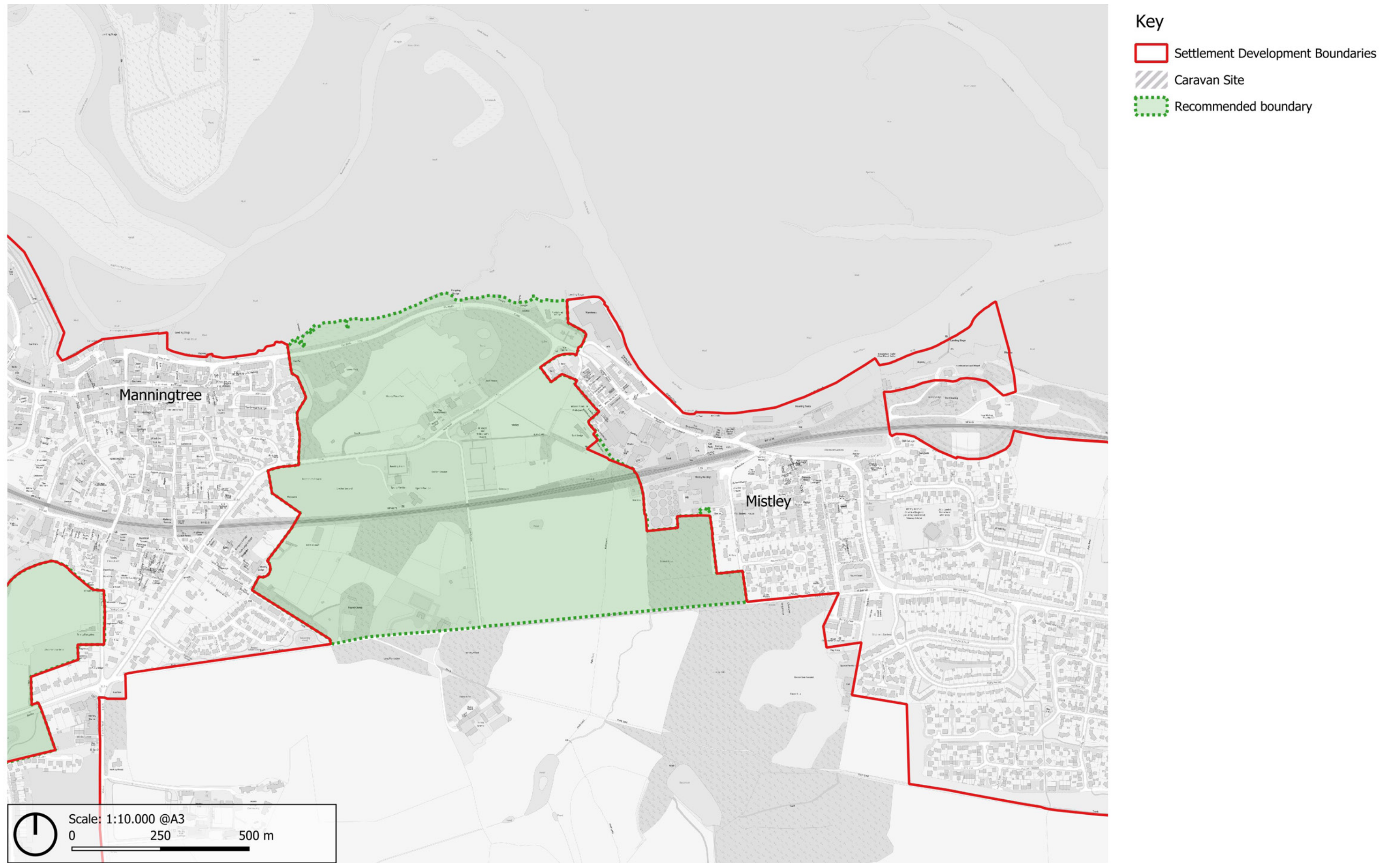


Figure 6.3: Recommended boundary

Land between Lawford and Mistley/Manningtree

Land between Lawford and Mistley/Manningtree

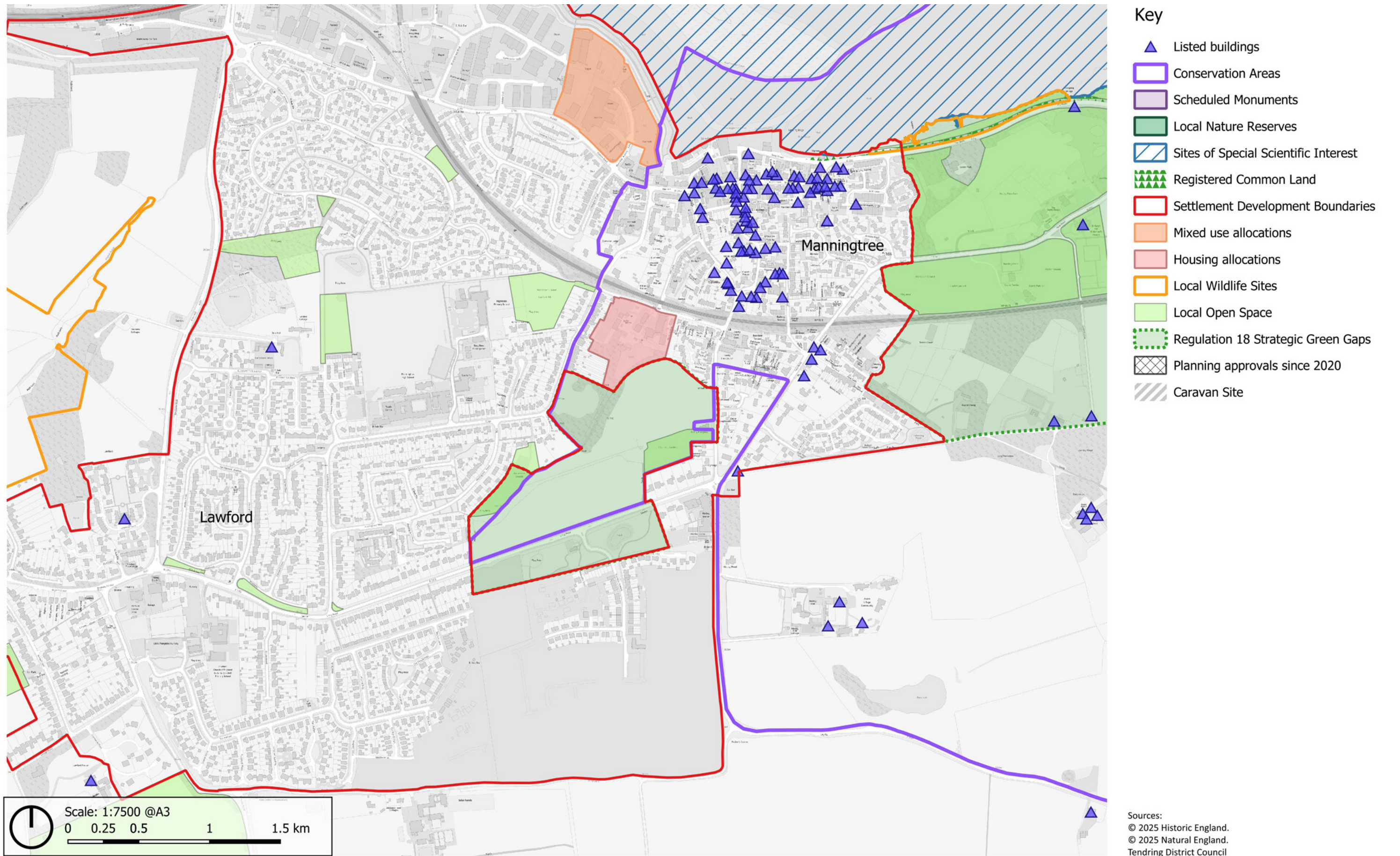


Figure 7.1: Designations and Planning Policy

Land between Lawford and Mistley/Manningtree

Settlement identity

Lawford and Manningtree originated as separated settlements and still retain to some extent different characters, despite the increasing coalescence that has occurred.

Manningtree is a historic settlement located on the southern bank of the Stour Estuary. Manningtree was a historic port and medieval planned town, and a group of historic buildings continue to mark the historic core of the town today. Manningtree has been described as England's smallest town. The settlement had already begun to expand beyond the parish boundary in the 19th century, and this continued more rapidly in the 20th century. The waterside industrial estate falls within the parish of Lawford, and there is a roadsign on Station Road on the parish boundary.

Lawford originated as a more inland village, though the parish boundary extends to the River Stour. Historically the village included a large house and park and a small nucleus of settlement on Wignall Street/Tye Hill. The village has subsequently expanded with the development of 20th century housing and industrial estates.

There is already some coalescence between Manningtree and Lawford. Some of this is longstanding e.g. the waterfront area, and some of it is due to the more recent development of housing estates. It is therefore considered that there is only partial distinction between the two settlements.

The extent and integrity of the gap

The gap separates residential areas within Lawford (to the west) and Mistley/Manningtree (to the north, east and south). The development to the north, east and south forms part of the Manningtree built up area, but is within Mistley parish. The addresses in this area are generally written "Mistley, Manningtree" which reflects the identity of the area.

The defined gap is undeveloped and features various land-uses including playgrounds, a recreation ground, allotment gardens, a pond, and vacant agricultural land.

The main movement route within the gap is Long Road (B1352) which extends from Lawford, through the gap to Mistley. Travelling westwards along Long Road there is a road sign on the edge of the Strategic Green Gap which signifies arrival within Lawford. Similarly travelling eastwards there is a sign which announces arrival within Mistley.

Whilst the gap provides some separation between Lawford and Mistley the settlements are physically joined in other places. The overall sense of separation is therefore judged to be weak.

Changes to the settlement form

The settlement form will be altered by a development of up to 300 dwellings on land to the south of Long Road (15/00761/OUT), which is currently under construction. This development will effectively join existing residential areas within Lawford and Mistley.

The settlements are partially distinct

The gap provides weak separation between the settlements

Land between Lawford and Mistley/Manningtree

Key Movement Routes



Long Road (B1352)



Long Road (B1352)



Long Road (B1352)

Land between Lawford and Mistley/Manningtree

Proposed boundary

The proposed boundary includes land which is already defined as a Strategic Green Gap within the adopted Local Plan, and the proposed boundary is unchanged from 2020, when the current Local Plan was adopted. The proposed boundary is defined by the Regulation 18 Settlement boundaries.

Other functions of the gap

Besides providing separation the gap also supports other functions. The gap contains a recreation ground, playgrounds and allotments, all of which serve a recreational function. The gap also includes SuDS infrastructure to manage runoff. The northern part of the gap forms part of the Manningtree and Mistley Conservation Area i.e. it contributes to the conservation of historic character. The gap provides open views northwards over the Stour Estuary i.e. it contributes to the visual amenity of the area.

Opportunities for enhancement

- There are opportunities for enhancement to the landscape and visual character and Green Infrastructure within the gap. This could include:
- Conserve and enhance the ecological structure and landscape character of woodlands and stream-side habitats.
 - Promote and improve public access and enjoyment of the area, connecting with existing PRoW outside the SGG.
 - Enhance vegetation cover to the south of Long Road to reduce visual influence of the recent development to the south of the road..

Land between Lawford and Mistley/Manningtree

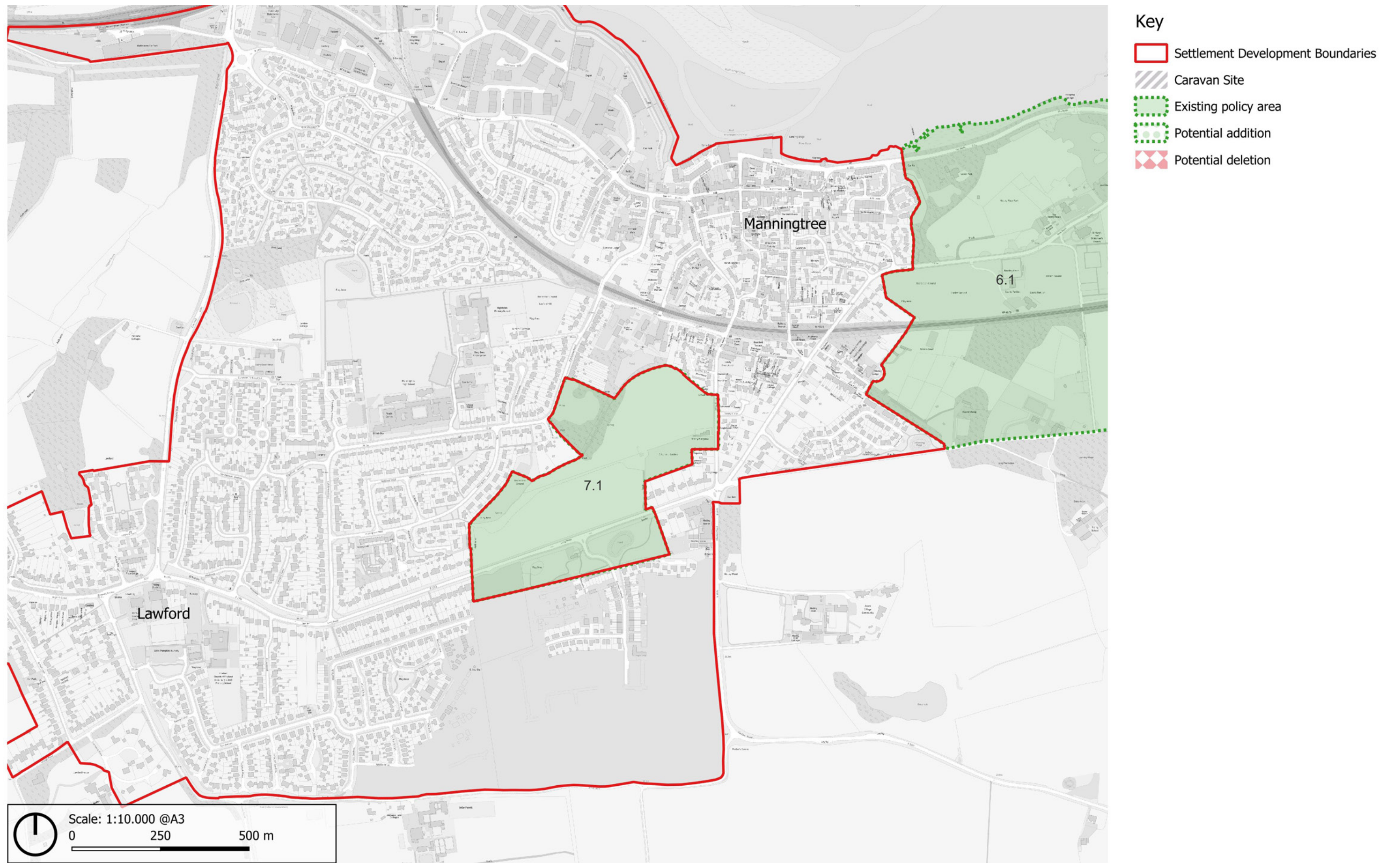


Figure 7.2: Parcels

Land between Lawford and Mistley/Manningtree

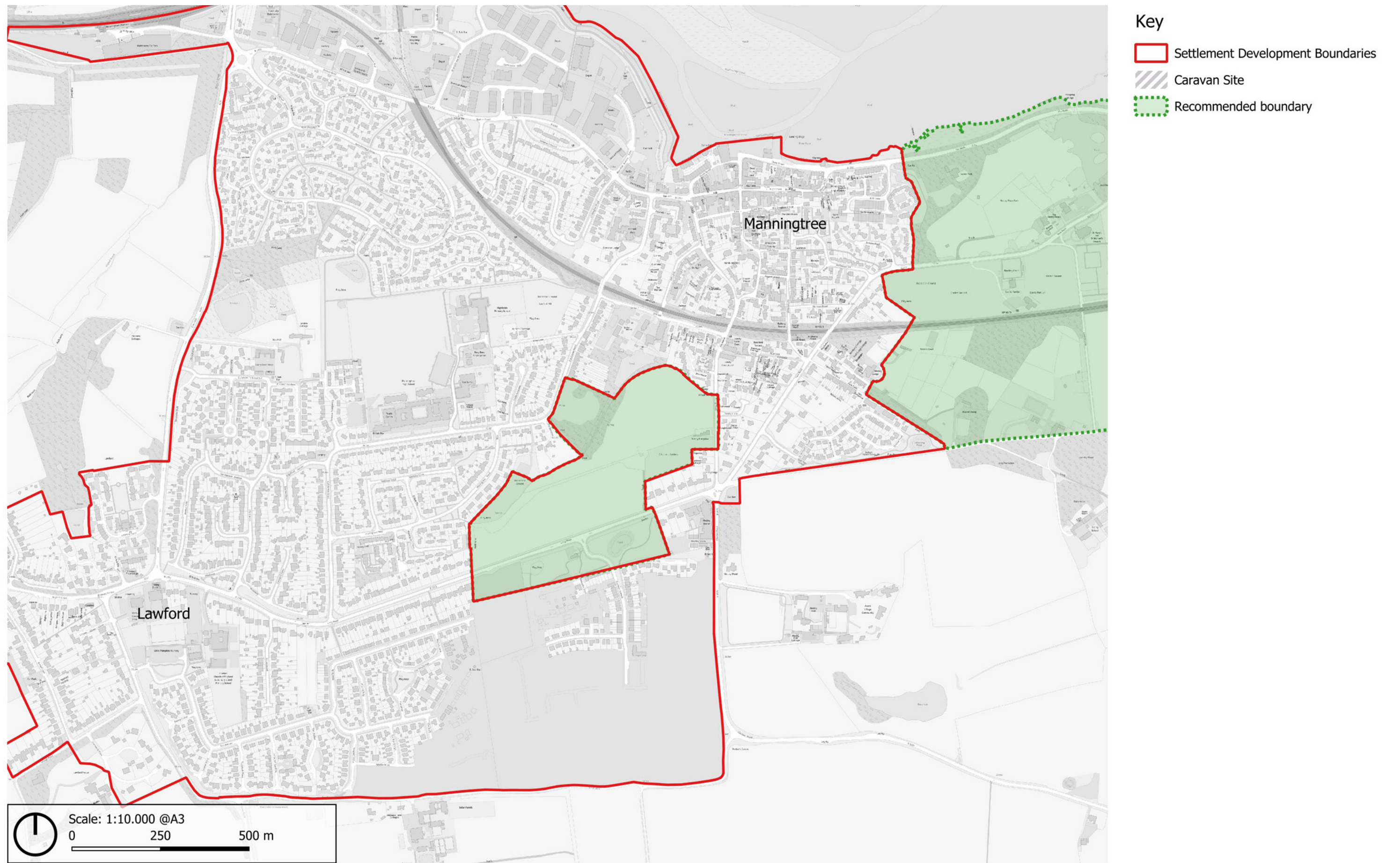


Figure 7.3: Recommended boundary

Land between Elmstead Market and Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community

Land between Elmstead Market and Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community

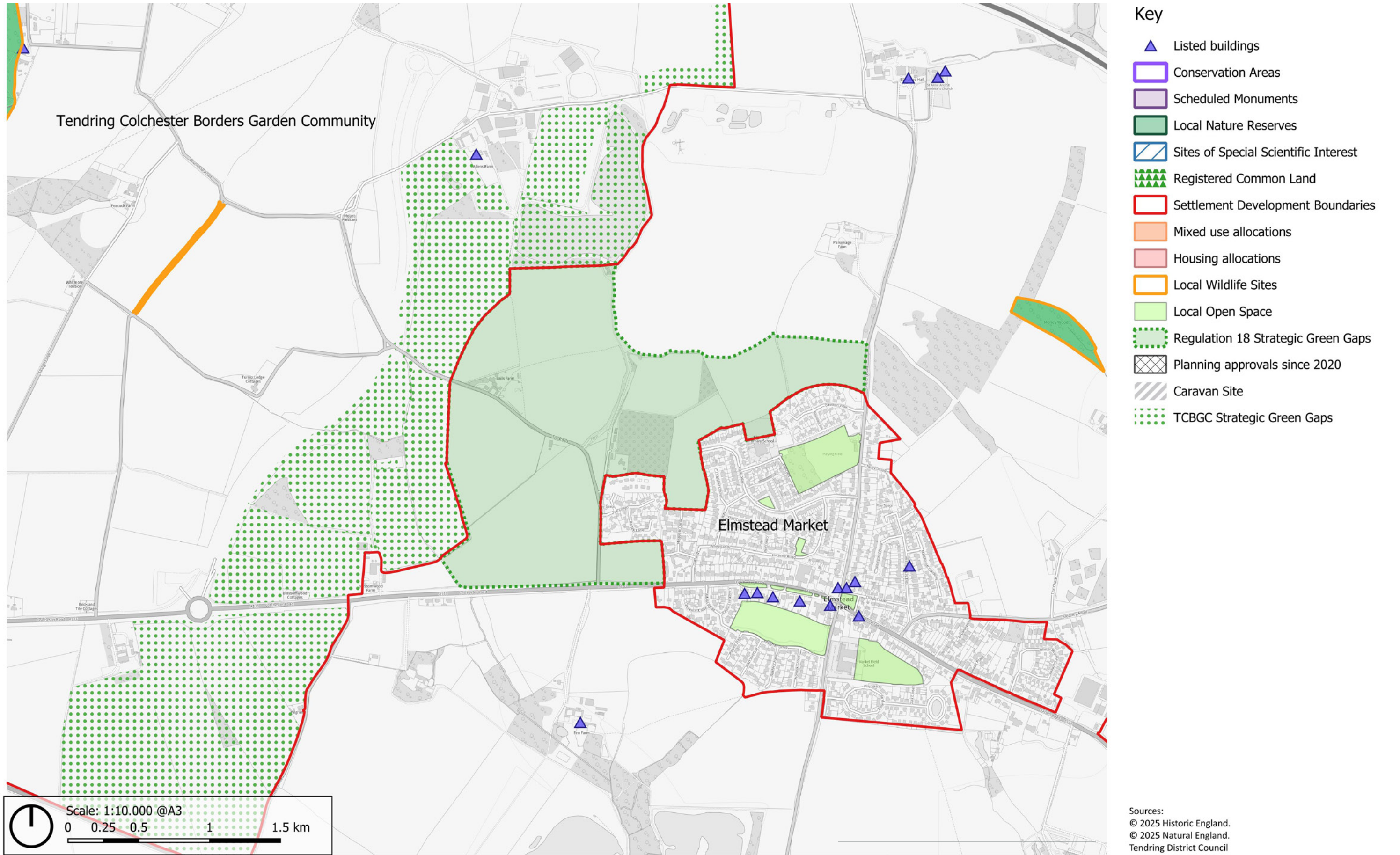


Figure 8.1: Designations and Planning Policy

Land between Elmstead Market and Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community

Settlement identity

The Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community is a planned community to the east of Colchester which will be large enough to accommodate circa 7,500 new homes and supporting community facilities and services, alongside employment land for business and industrial use. The garden community will also incorporate a network of green spaces to promote wildlife, attractive places, healthy living, recreational activity, sustainable drainage and to tackle the climate emergency. The garden community will include new transport infrastructure include a new Rapid Transit System (RTS) and a new dual carriageway link road between the A120 and the A133.

Elmstead Market in contrast is an established settlement which was centred originally around a crossroads. Elmstead Market forms the main area of settlement within the parish of Elmstead. The village includes a small green, and some historic properties remain in the centre of the village. The village has seen some expansion in the 20th and 21st centuries, but remains a relatively small settlement compared to the proposed Garden Community. The Garden Community has not yet been built, but the two settlements will have distinct characters and identities, and will be different in scale. There will therefore be strong distinction between the settlements.

There is a strong distinction between the settlements

The extent and integrity of the gap

The proposed gap shows a high degree of integrity. The only development within the gap consists of isolated farmsteads and cottages, which are typical features of the countryside.

The main movement route will be the A133 Colchester Road. There will be a clear sense of leaving one settlement and travelling through countryside before arriving at a different settlement on this route. The other routes within the gap would be for pedestrians/cyclists. These routes would also offer a sense of being in, or moving through, countryside.

The gap consists predominantly of actively farmed agricultural land, but some other land-uses are present. These comprise some remnant orchards on the north-western edge of Elmstead Market, a sand and gravel pit in the northern part of the gap, and meadows and woodland which are associated with the Sixpenny Brook. The gap also contains lanes and footpaths.

The gap will be wide enough to be perceived as countryside, and the land is also generally in active agricultural use, which strengthens the sense of countryside. The gap is therefore considered to provide strong separation.

The gap provides strong separation between the settlements

Changes to the settlement form

This is a new gap which is being proposed so there have not been any changes since the previous study.

Land between Elmstead Market and Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community

Key Movement Routes



Tye Road



Footpath 7 Elmstead



Church Road



Footpath 22 Elmstead



Colchester Road (A133)



Colchester Road (A133)

Land between Elmstead Market and Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community

Proposed boundary

This is a new gap which has been proposed in response to the anticipated Garden Community. The central part of the gap (Parcel 8.2) was included in the regulation 18 consultation document, but this study recommends adding land to the north and south (Parcels 8.1 and 8.3) which is also important to the definition of a robust gap.

The proposed boundary for the gap is defined by the settlement boundary for Elmstead Market to the east, and the boundary of the proposed Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community to the west. It should be noted that within the Garden Community boundary there is further open space to the east of the new link road (A1331) which will add to the overall width of the gap. This land is already covered within the Garden Community DPD and there are no proposals to develop this area so it was not considered necessary to include this land within the policy area. The western boundary of the policy area is defined by the boundary of the Garden Community. This avoids duplication of planning policies and represents the most logical boundary for the Strategic Green Gap.

The northern boundary of the Strategic Green Gap is defined by Church Road and a farm track (Footpath 2 Elmstead). The southern boundary of the gap is defined by ditches, field boundaries, tracks and small woods. A part of this boundary is also defined by the Sixpenny Brook which creates a clear boundary feature. Both the northern and southern boundaries are defined by physical features on the ground which make for clear boundaries. The proposed policy area would create effective separation between the settlements.

Other functions of the gap

Besides providing separation the gap also supports other functions. The gap contains three public rights of way, which have a recreational function. The gap provides part of the setting to listed buildings at Fen Farmhouse, Elmstead Hall and the Church of St Anne and Lawrence, Elmstead. The gap is actively contributing to the supply of minerals, and it also contains arable farmland which contributes to food security.

Opportunities for enhancement

There are opportunities for enhancement to the landscape and visual character and Green Infrastructure within the gap. This could include:

- Strengthen the landscape character around the existing settlement of Elmstead Market.
- Promote positive land management of open areas, such as through conserving and restoring hedgerows, creation of grassland field margins around intensive arable fields. Encourage the continued agricultural use of this area.
- Consider the future of the orchard areas. Ensure that these areas continue to remain part of the countryside.
- Ensure that the active sand and gravel pit is adequately restored to reintegrate with the countryside.
- Conserve and extend the meadow areas adjoining Sixpenny Brook and encourage appropriate management.
- Conserve the rural character of Tye Road by resisting road improvements.
- Enhance public access to, and enjoyment of, the SGG by creating new footpaths.

Land between Elmstead Market and Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community

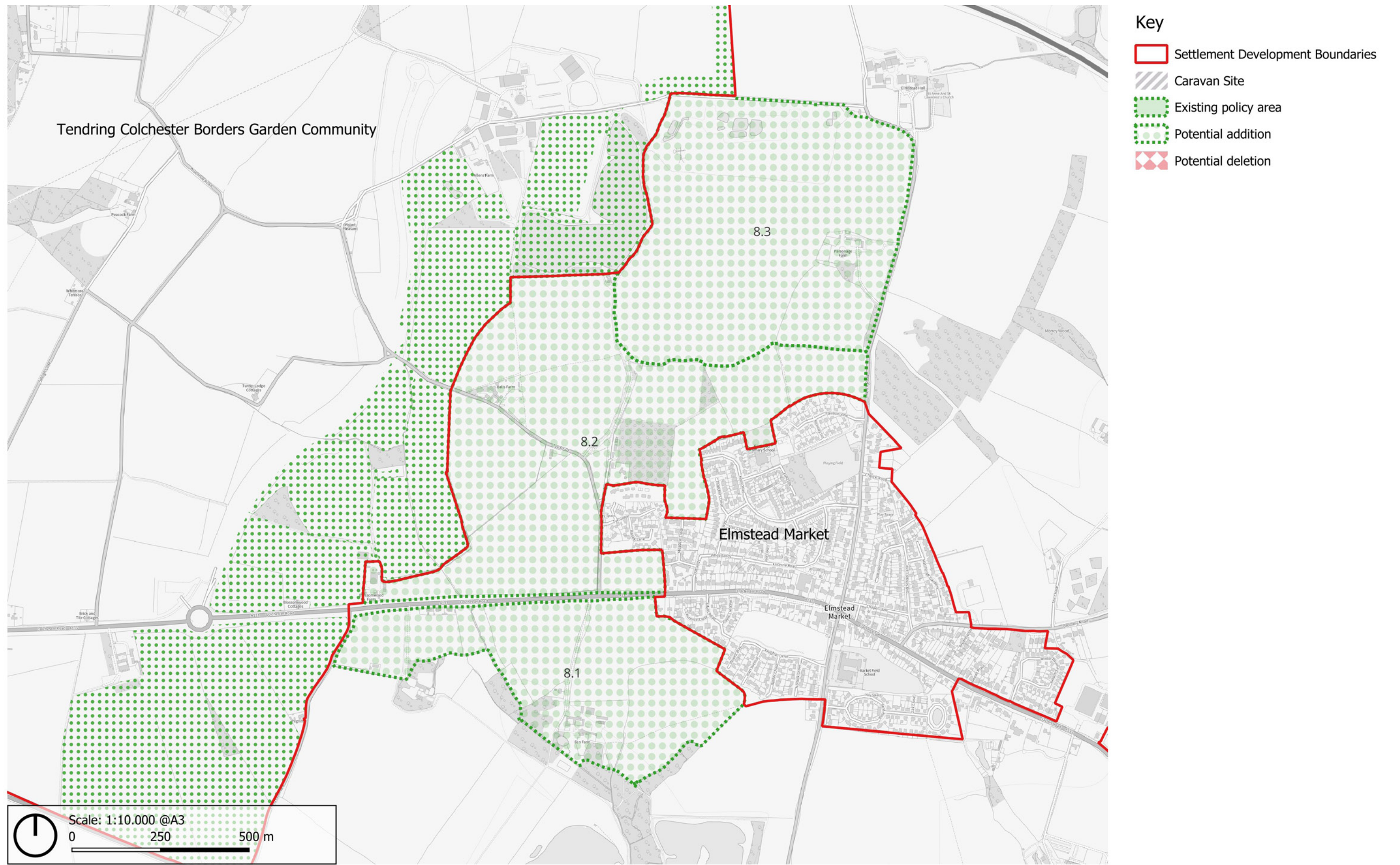


Figure 8.2: Parcels

Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community

Scale: 1:10,000 @A3
0 250 500 m

Map labels include: Pearrock Farm, Whitmore Terrace, Turpin Lodge Cottages, Moorcroft Cottages, Elmstead Hall, St Anne And St Lawrence's Church, Elmstead Market, Market Field School, Elm Farm, and various roads like Elmstead Road and Market Road.

August 2026 | Page 72

Land between Little Clacton and Weeley Heath

Land between Little Clacton and Weeley Heath

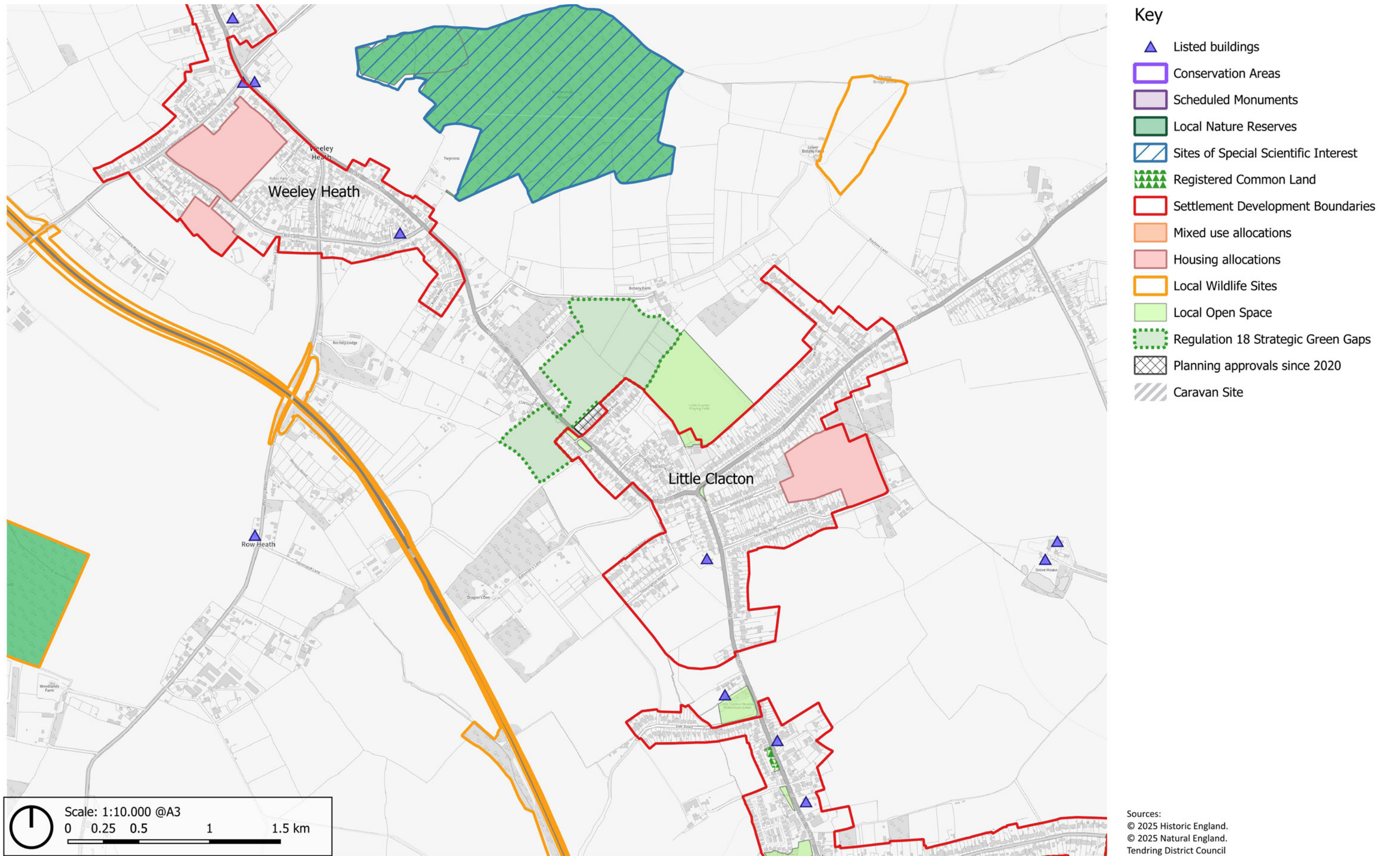


Figure 9.1: Designations and Planning Policy

Land between Little Clacton and Weeley Heath

Settlement identity

Weeley Heath and Little Clacton are two adjacent villages. Little Clacton originated as a small nucleated settlement which extended northwards from St James's Church along The Street. The historic centre also includes a small village green (which is still present).

Weeley Heath originated as a distinct area of settlement within the parish of Weeley. Weeley Heath is clearly indicated (as a heath) on the Chapman and Andre Map of Essex, which was published in 1777. The map shows some scattered settlement around the edges of the heath which later developed into a more consolidated village in its own right. 19th century maps show a loose collection buildings including farms, cottage, a Methodist chapel and mill which together made up the hamlet of Weeley Heath. These maps also show that the heathland had been enclosed by this time, presumably by act of parliament. 20th century maps show increasing ribbon development along Clacton Road/Weeley Road which has had the effect of reducing the distinction between the villages.

20th century expansion is evident in both villages along the pre-existing roads and also to some extent on new residential streets. Both settlements have expanded in the 20th century, and the settlements are architecturally somewhat similar, however they remain separate villages and places. They are therefore judged to be partially distinct.

The settlements are partially distinct

The extent of the gap

The extent of the gap between Weeley Heath and Little Clacton is narrow, but there is a break between the settlements which can be observed and identified. The main movement route between the villages is the Clacton Road/Weeley Road (B1441). The break between the settlements lies close to the parish boundary with the actual open land being located within Weeley parish. Houses and bungalows on Connaught Road and at Kempton Park technically lie within Weeley Parish, but are contiguous with Little Clacton. These properties effectively lie on the edge of Little Clacton, and there is a road sign on Clacton Road which announces the entrance to Little Clacton.

The gap between the settlements is weakened by loose development along Clacton Road which includes some small residential cul-de-sacs. This forms an extension to the main settlement of Weeley Heath and weakens the distinction between settlements. There are however some undeveloped frontages, particularly on the northern side of the road, and there is a short section of road with undeveloped frontages on both sides. It is therefore judged that there is partial separation between the villages.

It should also be noted that development does not extend far back from Clacton Road and is often only one plot deep. This helps to maintain the village character of both settlements, and also contributes to separation.

The gap provides partial separation between the settlements

Changes to the settlement form

The gap between Weeley Heath and Little Clacton is a new gap which is not identified within the adopted Local Plan. Setting aside the fact that it was not previously identified as a Strategic Green Gap, there has been a small change to the settlement form since 2020 which has impinged on the gap between the settlements. This consists of a row of bungalows which have been constructed on the north-western side of Connaught Road which have narrowed the identifiable break between the villages.

Land between Little Clacton and Weeley Heath

Key Movement Routes



Clacton Road (B1441)



Bridleway 12 Little Clacton



Footpath 10 Weeley



Footpath 20 Weeley



Footpath 17 Weeley (Botany Lane)

Land between Little Clacton and Weeley Heath

Proposed boundary

This is a new gap which is being proposed. Parcels 9.2 and 9.5 were included in the regulation 18 consultation document, but this study recommends adding Parcels 9.1, 9.3 and 9.4 which also make a certain contribution to separation.

The south-eastern boundary of the proposed policy area is defined by the existing settlement edge for the Little Clacton built up area. The settlement edge is delineated by houses and bungalows on Connaught Road and Kempton Park which fall within Weeley parish, but form part of the Little Clacton settlement boundary.

Weeley Heath includes sporadic development along Clacton Road which is beyond the official settlement boundary. It would not therefore be appropriate in this case to extend the Strategic Green Gap to the settlement boundary as the settlement boundary does not reflect the experience of separation on the ground. It was decided to exclude the more developed areas from the gap as these areas read as part of the settlement rather than as part of any gap. The proposed gap does include light settlement with parcels 9.3 and 9.4. Whilst these parcels include some residential properties they were considered overall to make some contribution to separation, and are therefore suitable for inclusion within the policy area. The parcels include notable vegetation and undeveloped frontages on Clacton Road which make a contribution to visual and physical separation.

The north-western edges of the policy area adjoin existing property boundaries at Barnfields and on Botany Lane. The northern boundary is conveniently defined by Botany Lane, which makes a strong boundary feature. The eastern boundary is defined by Little Clacton Playing Fields, by existing property boundaries, and by Bridleway 12 Little Clacton (which follows the route of a track along the parish boundary). The southern boundary is defined by Bridleway 26 St Osyth, and the undeveloped part of the north-western boundary is defined by Footpath 13 St Osyth (which follows the edge of a field).

Other functions of the gap

Besides providing separation the gap also supports other functions. The gap contains several public rights of way, which have a recreational function.

Opportunities for enhancement

There are opportunities for enhancement to the landscape and visual character and Green Infrastructure within the gap. This could include:

- Promote positive land management of open areas, such as through conserving and restoring hedgerows. Encourage the active agricultural use of this area.
- Ensure the continued contribution of mature hedgerow trees to the landscape.

Land between Little Clacton and Weeley Heath

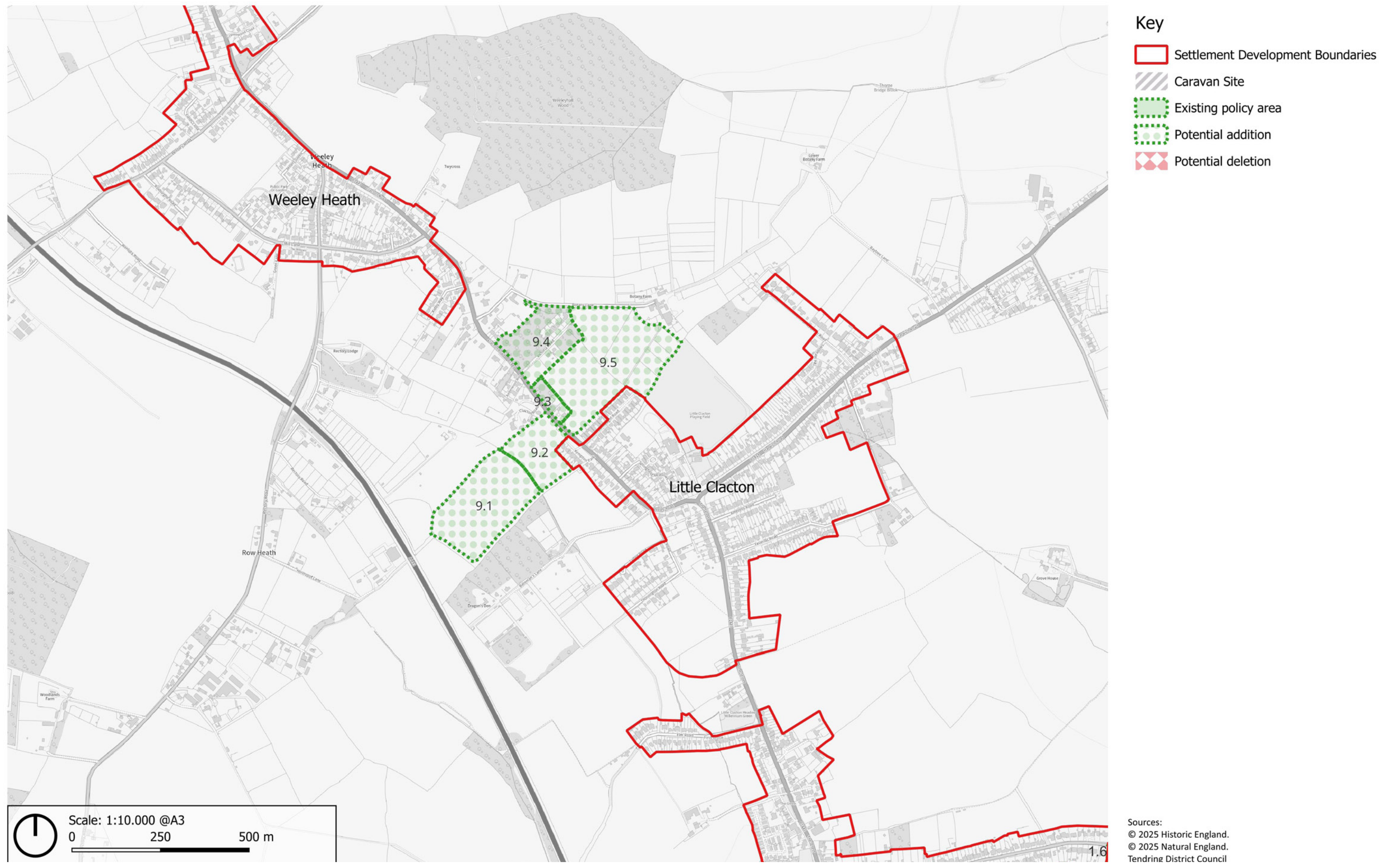


Figure 9.2: Parcels

Land between Little Clacton and Weeley Heath

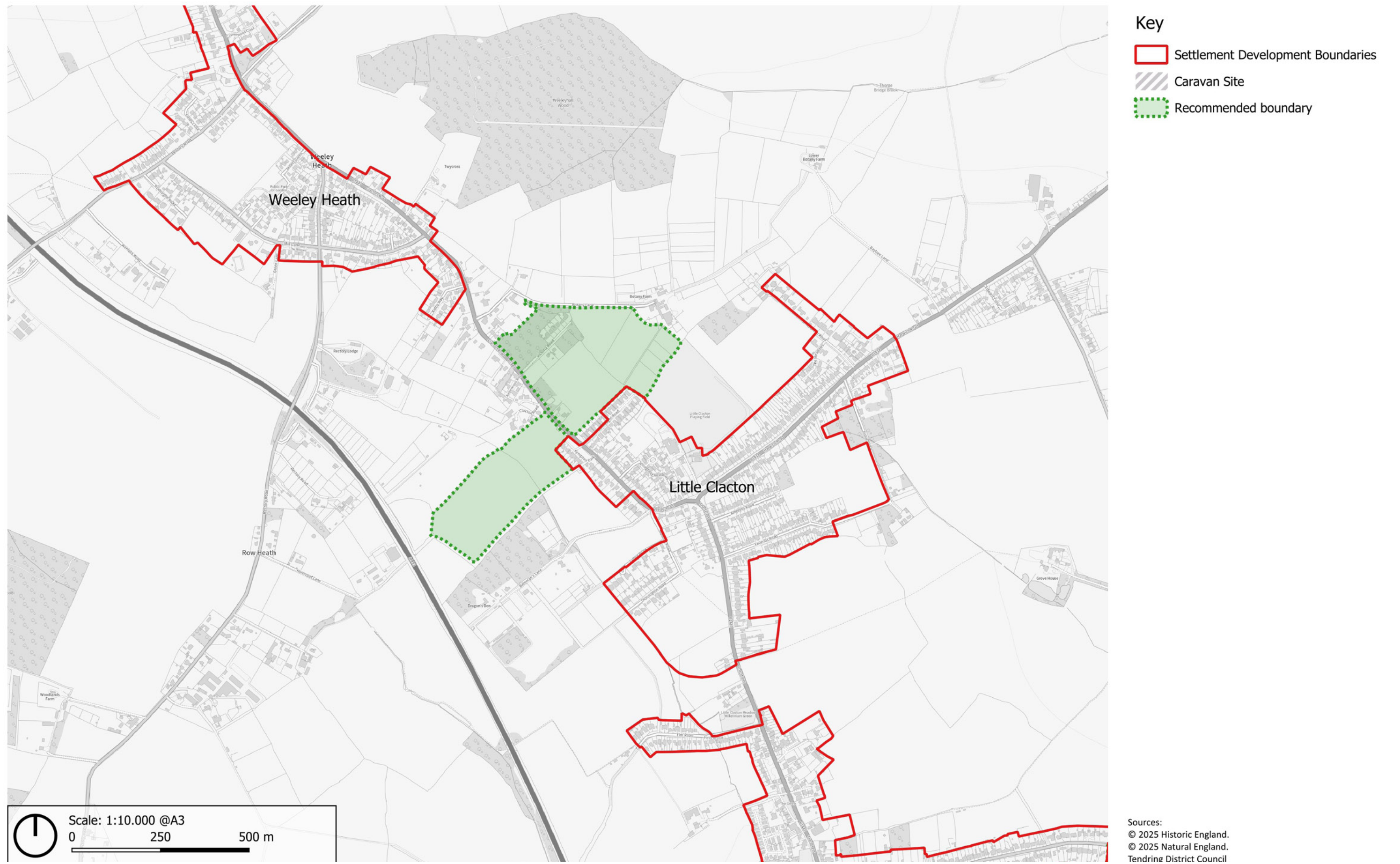


Figure 9.3: Recommended boundary

4. Policy justification

Review of existing Strategic Green Gaps

Do the existing gaps continue to fulfil the objectives of Policy PPL6 in the Tendring Local Plan?

4.1. Whether each gap continues to fulfil the objectives of Policy PPL6 was assessed by looking at various aspects of separation in turn i.e. are there two or more settlements with different identities, is there a gap between them, what are the physical qualities of the gap and how is it perceived?

New strategic gaps

- 4.2. The Local Plan Review is proposing two new Strategic Green Gaps. These gaps are between:
- Elmstead Market and Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community, and
 - Little Clacton and Weeley Heath.
- 4.3. Green Gap policies has been an established feature of Tendring District Local Plans for some time. Green Gaps or similar policies feature in other Local Plans which have been independently examined. Further, the issue of separation is material to decision-making, and has been referred to in appeal decisions. It is therefore considered that this type of policy is acceptable in principle.
- 4.4. The Elmstead Market - Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community gap has been proposed in response to a new Garden Community which did not feature within the 2020 Local Plan. The gap therefore is proposed in response to changed circumstances, but the principle of maintaining separation between individual settlements has already been established as an acceptable planning aim.
- 4.5. The designated gap between Little Clacton and Weeley Heath was not included within previous versions of the Tendring District Local Plan. It is not known why this gap was not included in previous Local Plans. Development pressure was however less in the past, and it may therefore have been felt that the settlement boundaries were sufficient to contain development. It is noted that development has recently been allowed on Connaught Road which has narrowed the gap. This illustrates that, without a Strategic Greep Gap policy, gaps can be eroded, and the issue of separation may be overlooked, or given limited weight.

Why existing policy is insufficient?

4.6. The existing Local Plan includes a Strategic Green Gap policy, but it was considered appropriate to also extend the policy area to include two further pairs of settlements. Maintaining separation is considered to be a legitimate planning aim as long as the policy accords with national policy. The pairs of settlements are sufficiently close to each other to be at risk of losing their separate identity, so it is considered justified to look to designate new Strategic Green Gaps between Elmstead Market and the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community, and between

Little Clacton and Weeley Heath.

Why settlement boundaries alone would not achieve the objective?

- 4.7. It could be argued that the settlement development boundaries (Strategic Policy SPL2) already provide a constraint to development. It is, however ,widely acknowledged that land for housing in particular will have to be found beyond the existing settlement boundaries in order to meet the identified need. Whilst the Local Plan includes allocated sites there is still a scenario where, at some point in the future, the Council is unable to demonstrate a five year land supply. In this case it is likely that development would have to be allowed outside the settlement development boundaries, so the settlement development boundary does not by itself guarantee that land would remain open.
- 4.8. Furthermore the settlement development boundaries do not define which land is important to keep open to maintain separation. If settlement development boundaries help to maintain separation this is incidental and not the main aim of the policy. In our opinion it is preferable to have a separate, more targeted policy to deal specifically with separation. A separate Green Gap policy helps to define the areas where maintaining settlement separation is a particularly relevant planning consideration, which provides greater clarity.

Why a Strategic Green Gap policy is necessary?

- 4.9. The proposed Strategic Green Policy would help to guide development to the right place in the event that Strategic Policy SPL2 became out of date. Without this policy, separation could still be a material issue, but this would have to be established in relation to each individual application. By designating a policy area the Council seeks to establish where they believe separation to be particularly important and material. This can provide more certainty to a number of stakeholders including development managers, land owners, land agents and the general public, and helps to improve the predictability of the planning system.
- 4.10. A strategic Green Gap policy defines an area of higher sensitivity where it is appropriate to restrict growth for a specific reason. Whilst the policy itself is restrictive it only applies to relatively small areas, and is useful to direct growth to less sensitive areas.

Conformity with the NPPF

- 4.11. The NPPF 2026 provides specific support for the designation of gaps between settlements. The reference to gaps is found within *Policy S2: Producing a spatial strategy*, which is a plan-making policy.
- 4.12. Given that the issue of separation applies to various settlements within the District, it is considered that the district-wide Local Plan is the appropriate plan level to consider this issue at. The NPPF policy relates to the preparation of a spatial strategy, which is something that is usually undertaken at the district level.
- 4.13. Whilst Local Plans have to be positively prepared Policy S2, speciifiically

refers to the identification of land that should be safeguarded for specific purposes. This suggests that policies which restrict development can be compatible with the NPPF within the context of a wider Local Plan which meets the identified development needs. Policy S2 does nonetheless set out certain restrictions in relation to the use of this type of policy.

- 4.14. Policy S2 states that *"Designations and associated policies to safeguard gaps between settlements should be used only where they are necessary to maintain the separate identities of the settlements and their physical separation, should be no larger than needed to achieve this aim, and should not apply to land in the Green Belt."*
- 4.15. It is notable that Policy S2 endorses the maintenance not only of separate identity, but also of physical separation. It has already been noted in this study that separate identity is subtly different from physical separation, and separate identities can to some extent remain after settlements have joined. The policy implies that it can be appropriate to seek to maintain physical separation, and not just separate identities. This is necessary as, without physical separation, individual settlements become part of a larger, potentially undifferentiated, urban area and lose part of their individual identity. It is considered that the status of smaller settlements is particularly vulnerable to coalescence, and the Strategic Green Gap policy ensures that villages in the District remain as independent settlements.

The necessity of the policy

4.16. The Strategic Green Gap policy is considered to be necessary in Tendring to maintain the separate identities of certain pairs (or groups) of settlements where there is a realistic prospect of coalescence. It is not necessary or justifiable to designate Strategic Green Gaps where there is a wide gap between settlements. The policy only becomes necessary where settlements are at risk of merging, or of losing their differentiation. All the proposed gaps in the study are less than 1km wide (at their narrowest point) and in places the gaps are less than 300m wide, or are reduced to a single field.

The size of the gaps

- 4.17. The NPPF states that gaps *"should be no larger than necessary"* to achieve the aim of maintaining separate identities.
- 4.18. There is no national planning standard in England that specifies the minimum distance or width of gap between settlements. Instead, planning policy focuses on preventing the coalescence of settlements and maintaining their separate identity.
- 4.19. In practice, local authorities assess physical separation, visual separation and settlement character rather than applying a fixed distance. This study has followed a similar approach of identifying land which makes an identifiable contribution to separation, and which would therefore be suitable for inclusion within the proposed policy area. It should also be noted that the characteristics of the land can affect the sense of

separation i.e. the quality of the gap is important as well as the size.

- 4.20. The most effective gaps are those which are wide enough to be perceived as countryside i.e. an area that is clearly outside of, and different from, the two settlements. It is therefore necessary to include relatively large areas of open land, where these exist, to maintain a genuine sense of separation. It is suggested that a single field provides a limited sense of separation, and gaps which are at least two fields wide are more effective. Similarly the gap should be wide enough to prevent intervisibility if possible. The policy area must, however, be limited to only the land which is necessary to achieve the aim of the policy i.e. overly wide gaps are not permissible. The policy area should be limited to land which is important to maintain as open land.

The proposed boundaries

- 4.21. The proposed boundaries were determined in an objective manner by undertaking an appraisal of different parcels of land and analysing their contribution to the objectives of the policy. Parcels were analysed in terms of their relationship to the settlements, their contribution to the physical openness of the gap, and their contribution to the visual openness of the gap.
- 4.22. The preamble to Policy PP6 states that *"Only land required to secure the objectives of the Strategic Green Gaps has been included."* It is therefore important that this criteria is met.
- 4.23. The proposed policy area is composed of land which makes a strong or partial contribution to the objectives of the policy. Land which makes a weak contribution to separation has not been included within the policy area.

Amendments to boundaries

- 4.24. The study re-evaluated seven existing gaps. It was found that these gaps are continuing to fulfil their function, and the gaps are recommended for retention within the Local Plan Review. The study recommended a number of adjustments to the policy area. The Regulation 18 Local Plan Review recommended extensions to the Ramsey, Little Oakley and Dovercourt gap and the Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken gap. Both these extensions were in response to draft allocations which make an extension of the gap necessary. This study also proposed modest extensions to the Clacton and Little Clacton gap, and the Clacton and Jaywick gap in response to draft allocations.
- 4.25. Some small areas which did not contribute to the objectives of the policy were removed from the policy area.

Justification for the proposed boundaries

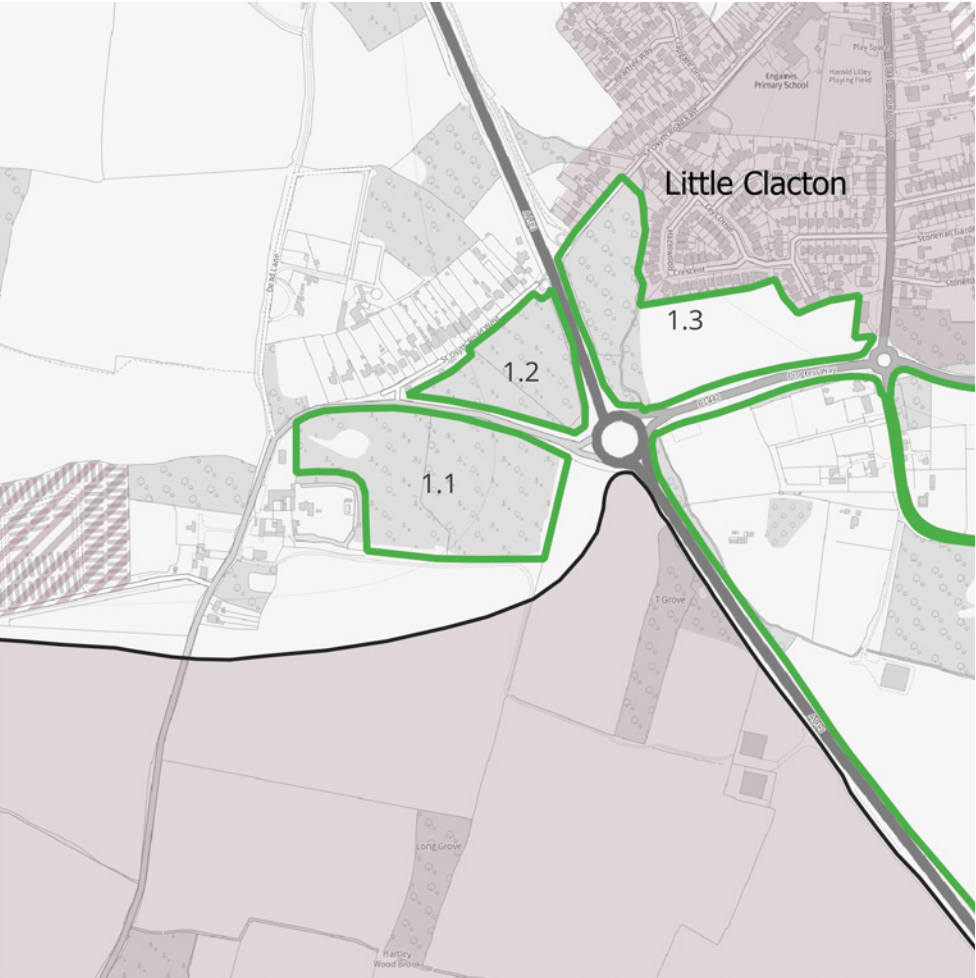
- 4.26. The study is based on the idea that there are different levels of separation.
- 4.27. Where the gap is already very narrow, or there is already an element of coalescence, it is judged that there is partial separation. In this case

it is still considered worthwhile to maintain the level of separation that there is. Where there is already some level of coalescence or blurring between settlements it is considered that the settlements are vulnerable to further coalescence, and there is therefore a rationale for including all the remaining open land within the gap within the policy area, as long as it makes an identifiable contribution to separation.

- 4.28. Where there is a strong level of separation between settlements the gap should be wide enough to maintain the sense of separation. In this case the identified policy area does not necessarily need to encompass all of the open land within the gap.
- 4.29. In the context of the proposed Strategic Green Gaps within Tendring District the only strongly distinct settlements with strong separation between them were judged to be Elmstead Market and the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community. The northern part of the gap is less than 1km wide, and the edge of the Garden Community will potentially be visible across the flat arable landscape. It is therefore considered that this land is needed to maintain separation. The southern part of the gap is broader. The A133 Colchester Road represents an important movement route, and the proposed gap should be wide enough to maintain visual separation on this route.
- 4.30. The other pairs or groups of settlements are already very close to each other and there is very little potential to define a narrower gap without eroding the current sense of separation. All of the land within the proposed policy area was found to contribute to separation, and it is considered that the policy area is limited to only the land which is required to fulfil the aims of the policy.
- 4.31. It was also considered whether existing residential plots should be included within the policy area or not. Inclusion within the policy area would not affect residents' permitted development rights. Should residents wish to make an application then the effect on separation would be considered objectively. The policy does not rule out all development, only development which would be harmful to separation. It was therefore considered to be justified to include residential plots within the policy area.

Appendix 1

Parcel 1.1



Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies in the gap between Little Clacton (to the north-east) and the proposed mixed use allocation at Hartley Gardens (to the south). Assuming that the allocated site is built out the parcel will lie directly in between the settlements. The parcel adjoins ribbon development on St Osyth Road West which creates a semi-developed context and interrupts the connection to the wider countryside.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel consists of woodland. The parcel does not contain any buildings.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Strong contribution	The wooded nature of the parcel prevents inter-visibility. The parcel is perceived as undeveloped land between settlements. The parcel will combine with parcel 1.2 to provide some sense of separation when moving along St Osyth Road/Bovills Way. The wooded nature of these parcels would tend to prevent views of either Little Clacton or Hartley Gardens.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 1.2

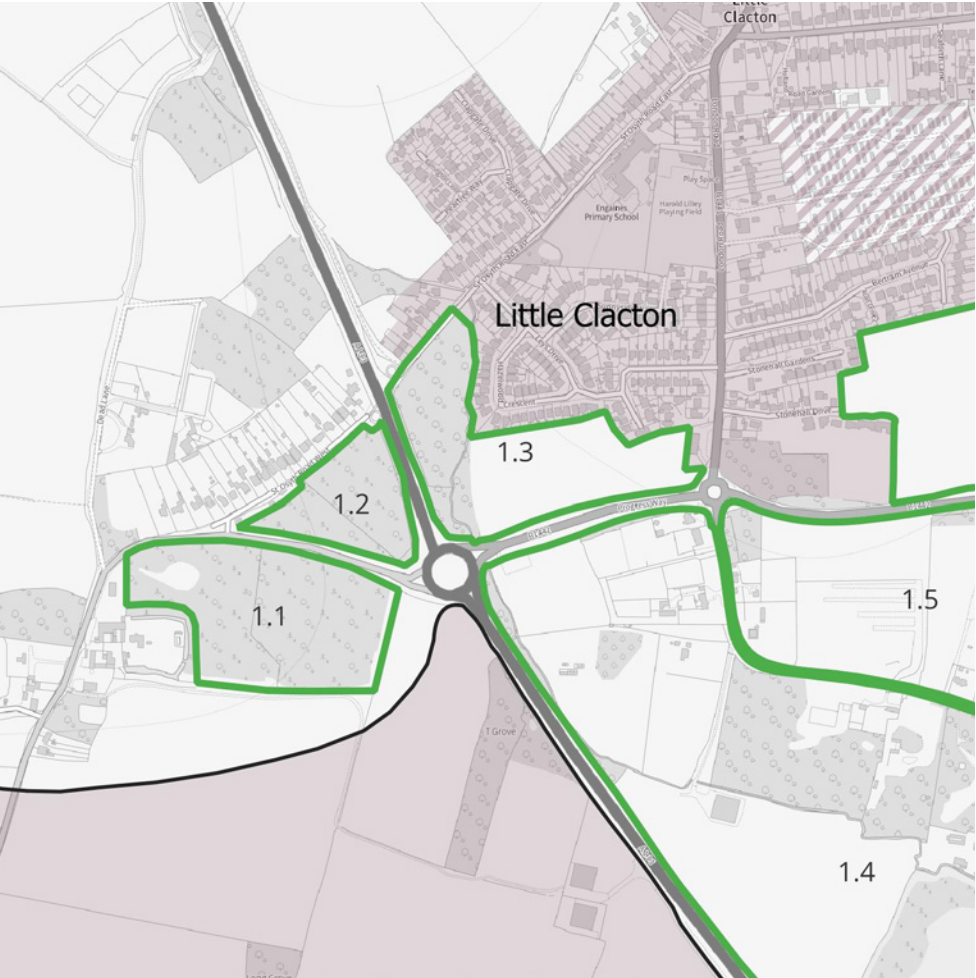


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies in the gap between Little Clacton (to the north-east) and the proposed mixed use allocation at Hartley Gardens (to the south). Assuming that the allocated site is built out the parcel will lie directly in between the settlements. The parcel adjoins ribbon development on St Osyth Road West which creates a semi-developed context and interrupts the connection to the wider countryside.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel consists of woodland. The parcel does not contain any buildings.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Strong contribution	The wooded nature of the parcel prevents inter-visibility. The parcel is perceived as undeveloped land between settlements. The parcel will combine with parcel 1.1 to provide some sense of separation when moving along St Osyth Road/Bovills Way. The wooded nature of these parcels would tend to prevent views of either Little Clacton or Hartley Gardens.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 1.3

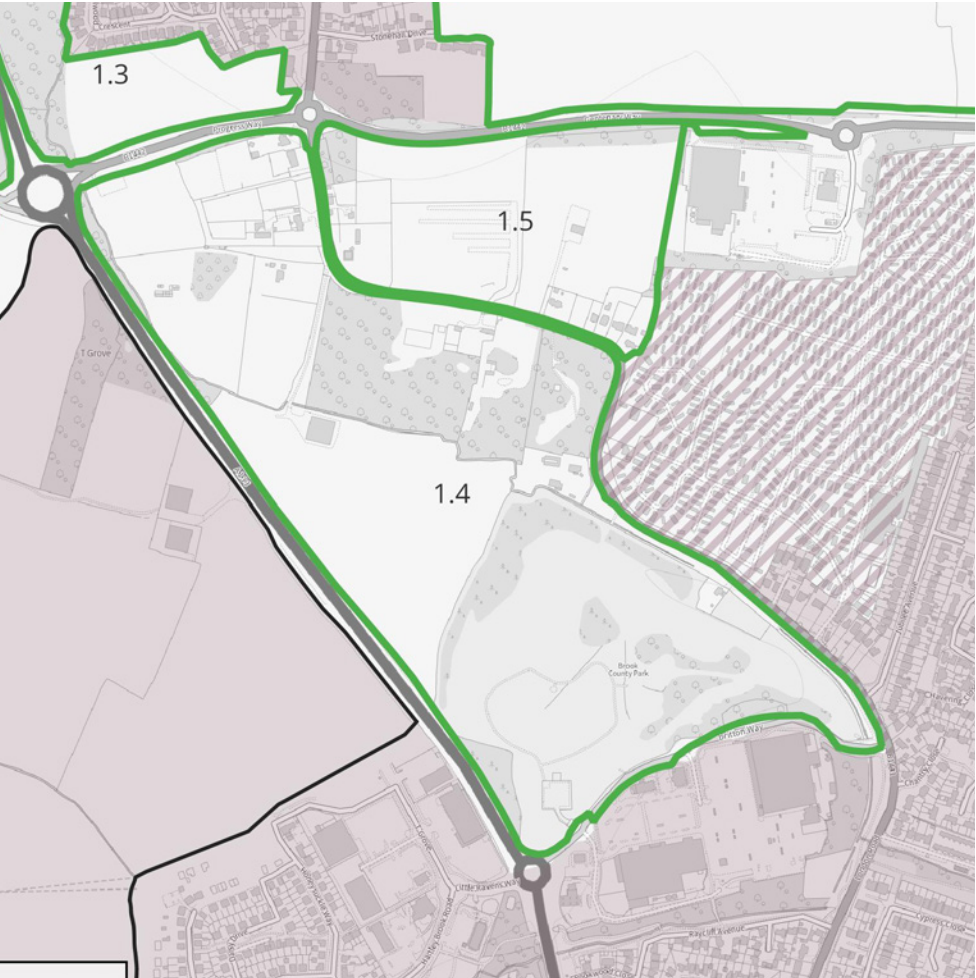


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies in the gap between Little Clacton (to the north) and the proposed mixed use allocation at Hartley Gardens (to the south). Assuming that the allocated site is built out the parcel will lie directly in between the settlements. The parcel will form the main separation between the settlements at this point.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel consists of two fields. A stream crosses the centre of the parcel and the boundaries to St Osyth Road East, the A133 and Progress Way are all heavily vegetated. The parcel does not contain any buildings.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel provides an important context to the A133 and Progress Way and creates the perception of an undeveloped gap. The boundaries which adjoin the roads are heavily vegetated and views into the centre of the parcel are limited. The existing vegetation prevents any views of the settlement edge at Little Clacton.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 1.4

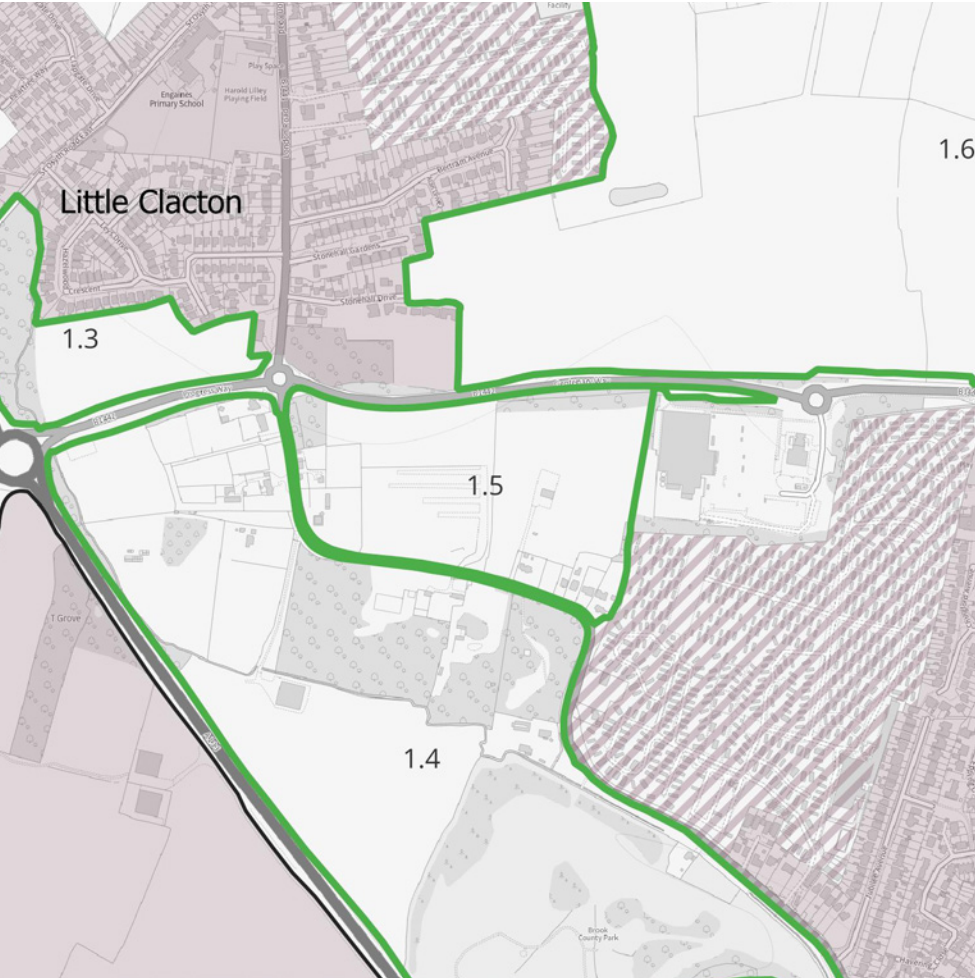


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies directly in between Clacton (to the south) and Little Clacton (to the north). Assuming the allocated site is built out the parcel will take on increasing importance as it will form a large part of the remaining gap to the south of Little Clacton.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Partial contribution	The parcel is mainly open but contains some low density development along London Road which includes former plant nurseries for example. The parcel contains a mix of land-uses including the former plant nursery sites (which have partially reverted to woodland), Brook Country Park, an arable field, and some further fields with indeterminate use.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Partial contribution	The parcel is perceived as a gap between settlements. Travelling along London Road there is a certain amount of ribbon development and urban fringe type land-uses, and there is not a strong sense of countryside per se. The existing development is nonetheless low density, and there are well-vegetated frontages and open spaces which provide a break between settlements. On the A133 there is a sense of travelling through countryside, though the highway planting tends to limit views into the centre of the parcel. The proposed allocation will create a more developed context to the parcel, particularly when travelling along the A133. Brook Country Park provides an important opportunity for people to experience open space at the edge of the town, and the country park has an attractive open character.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 1.5

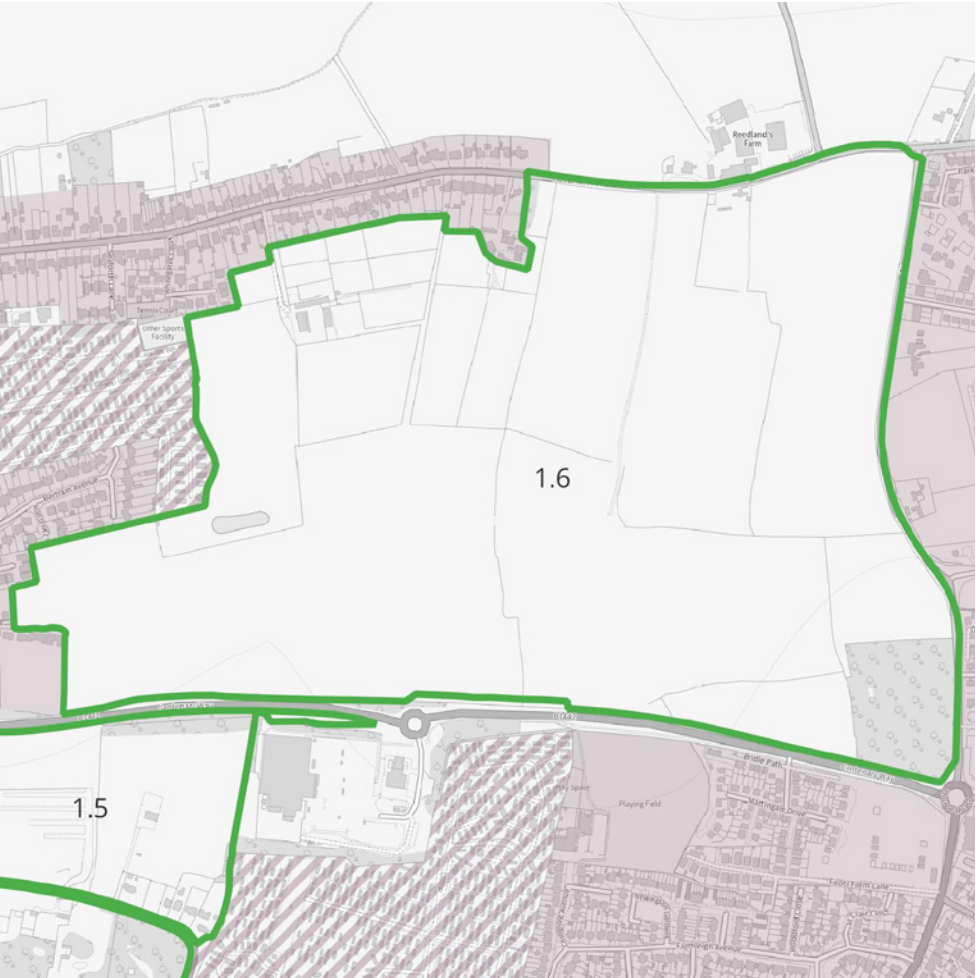


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel is situated to the south of Centenary Way and lies directly in between the settlements. The parcel provides the main separation between the southern edge of Little Clacton and the Highfield Grange Holiday Park and supermarket to the east.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Partial contribution	The parcel is mainly open but contains some low density development along London Road. The parcel contains a mix of land-uses including some residential plots, a car boot site, and a field.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Partial contribution	The parcel is perceived as a gap between settlements. Travelling along London Road there is a certain amount of ribbon development and urban fringe type land-uses, and there is not a strong sense of countryside per se. The existing development is nonetheless low density, and there well-vegetated frontages and open spaces which provide a break between settlements. The parcel provides an important piece of undeveloped land to the south of Centenary Way which is vital to maintaining a sense of separation between Little Clacton and Clacton. The parcel contributes to the only genuine gap on Centenary Way (where there is undeveloped land to both sides of the road).

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 1.6

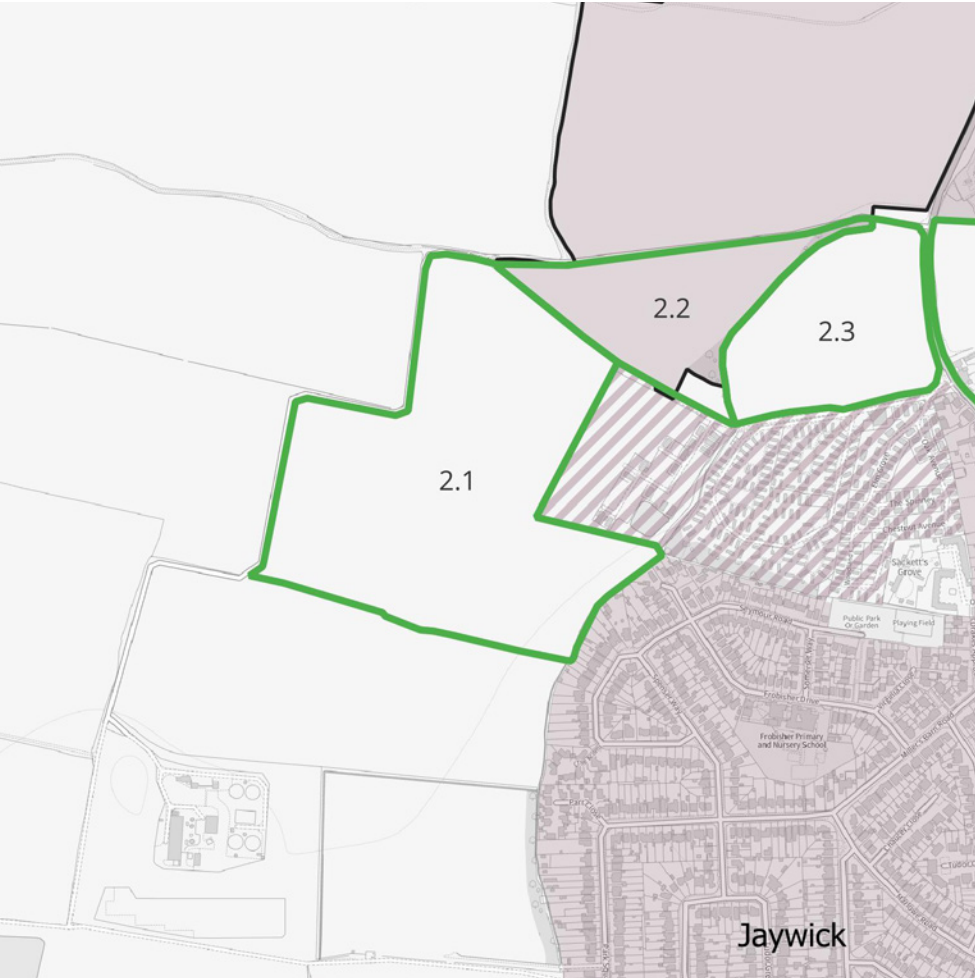


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies directly in between Little Clacton (to the west) and the recent developments to the east of Thorpe Road which lie within Clacton.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel is almost completely free of development except for a cottage at Reedlands and a former piggery site. The parcel consists predominantly of arable farmland but also contains some paddocks and a small parcel of secondary woodland.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel has an intact rural character, and is wide enough to be perceived as countryside. There is also a connection to the wider countryside to the north, and there is a genuine gap between settlements on Holland Road. Travelling along Thorpe Road or Centenary Way there is a sense of countryside to the west and north of the road respectively. Field boundaries are defined by hedgerows and there is little to no inter-visibility between the settlements.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 2.1

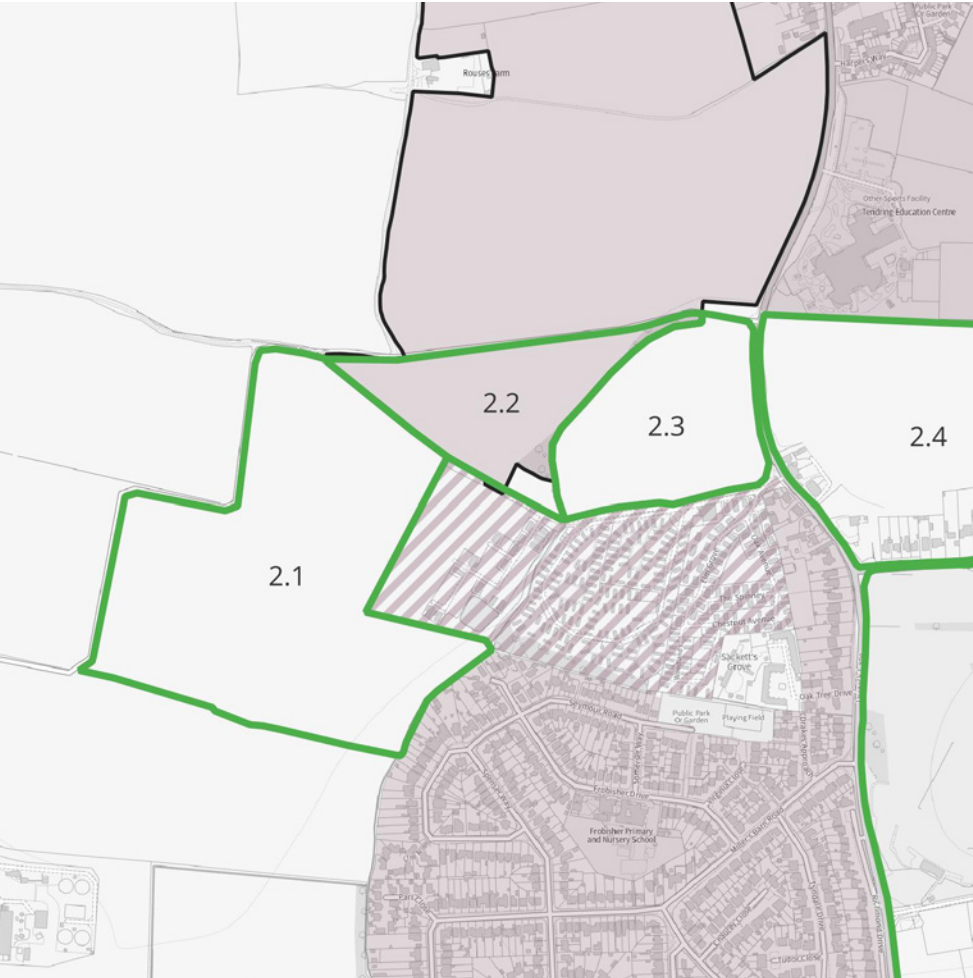


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Partial contribution	The parcel lies to the west of Sandpiper Gardens and Jaywick, and is not directly in between the settlements. Were the parcel to be developed however it would cause near coalescence of the settlements, and the parcel is therefore important to maintaining separation.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel consists of an arable field. The western edge of the parcel is defined by a private track. The parcel adjoins, and forms part of, open countryside to the west of Jaywick and Clacton. The parcel does not contain any built features. The parcel makes a strong contribution to the open and undeveloped character of the area.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Partial contribution	The parcel is physically open and there are views across it from Footpath 3 and Footpath 30 Great Clacton. The park homes at Sandpiper Gardens are visible, but the parcel itself forms part of the countryside. Parcels 2.1 and 2.2 together will maintain a belt of open space between the northern edge of Jaywick and the southern edge of the Rouses Farm development which will connect to the wider countryside. This openness and connection will also be appreciable from the existing public rights of way. The settlements will both be visible at this point, with a narrow gap between, and it is therefore judged that there will be partial visual separation.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 2.2

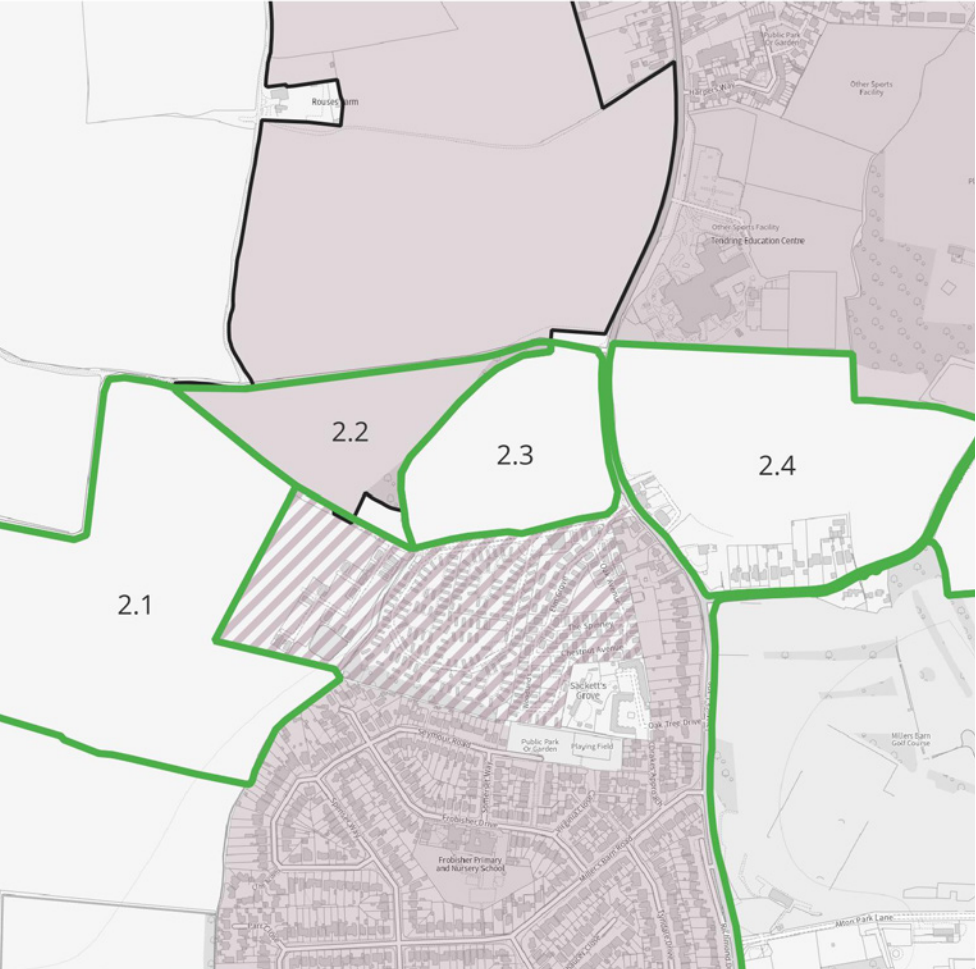


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies directly in between the proposed development at Rouses Farm (to the north) and the Sandpiper Gardens residential park (to the south). The parcel lies within the narrowest part of the gap and is critical to maintaining separation.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Partial contribution	The parcels consists of a triangular arable field. It is anticipated that the parcel will become open space within the Rouses Farm development and will still have an open and undeveloped character. The open space will have an association with the adjacent settlement. The parcel could include more engineered features such as basins or paths, and it is judged that the parcel will provide a partial contribution to maintaining physical separation.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Partial contribution	Parcels 2.1 and 2.2 together will maintain a belt of open space between the northern edge of Jaywick and the southern edge of the Rouses Farm development which will connect to the wider countryside. This openness and connection will also be appreciable from the existing public rights of way. The settlements will both be visible at this point, with a narrow gap between, and it is therefore judged that there will be partial visual separation.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 2.3

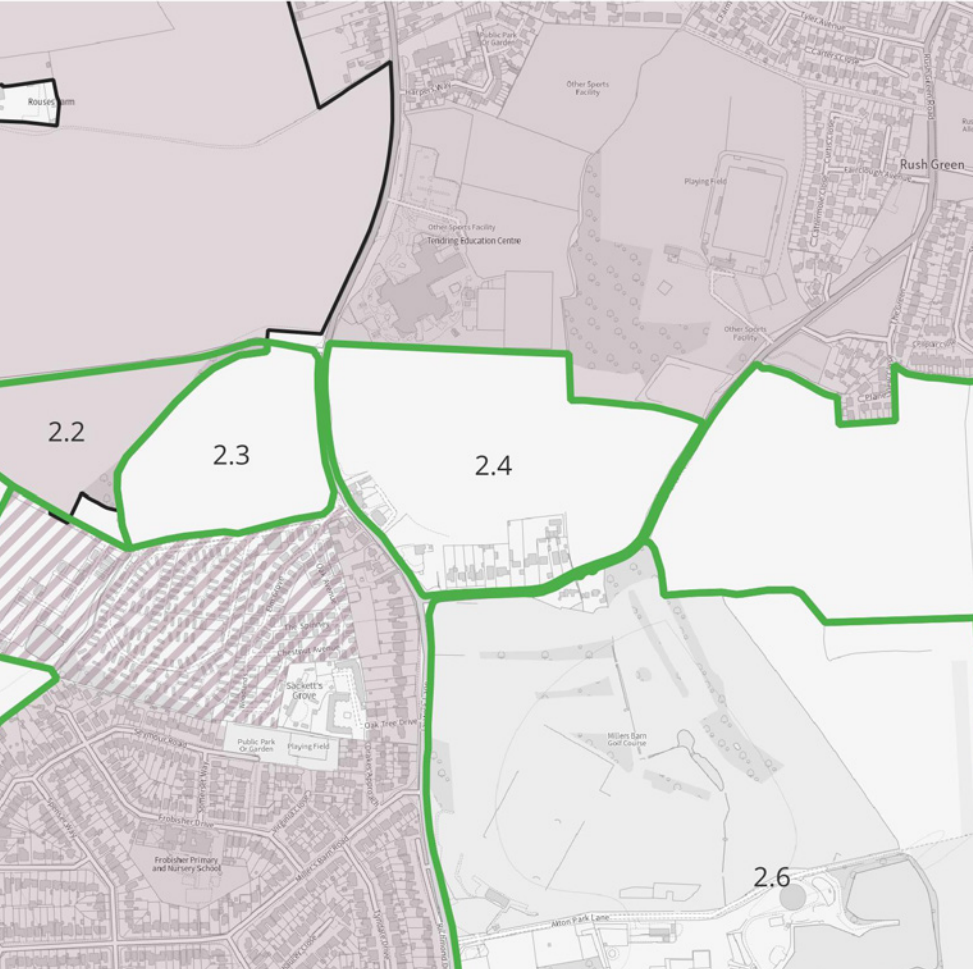


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies directly in between the proposed development at Rouses Farm (to the north) and Saddlebrook Chase / Sackett's Grove (to the south).
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel consists of an arable field. The parcel does not contain any built features. This field will combine with Parcels 2.2 and 2.4 to provide a narrow belt of open land which is critical to maintaining separation between the settlements. The parcel will also connect to the wider countryside to the west via parcel 2.2.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Partial contribution	The parcel itself is open and it is assumed that the land to either side in Parcels 2.2 and 2.4 will also remain open. Together these parcels will provide a narrow belt of open land which will provide visual separation between the settlements. The visible gap between settlements will be experienced primarily on Jaywick Lane, but is also appreciable from Footpath 30 Great Clacton and Footpath 3 Great Clacton. The settlements will both be visible within views, with a narrow gap between, and it is therefore judged that there will be partial visual separation.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 2.4

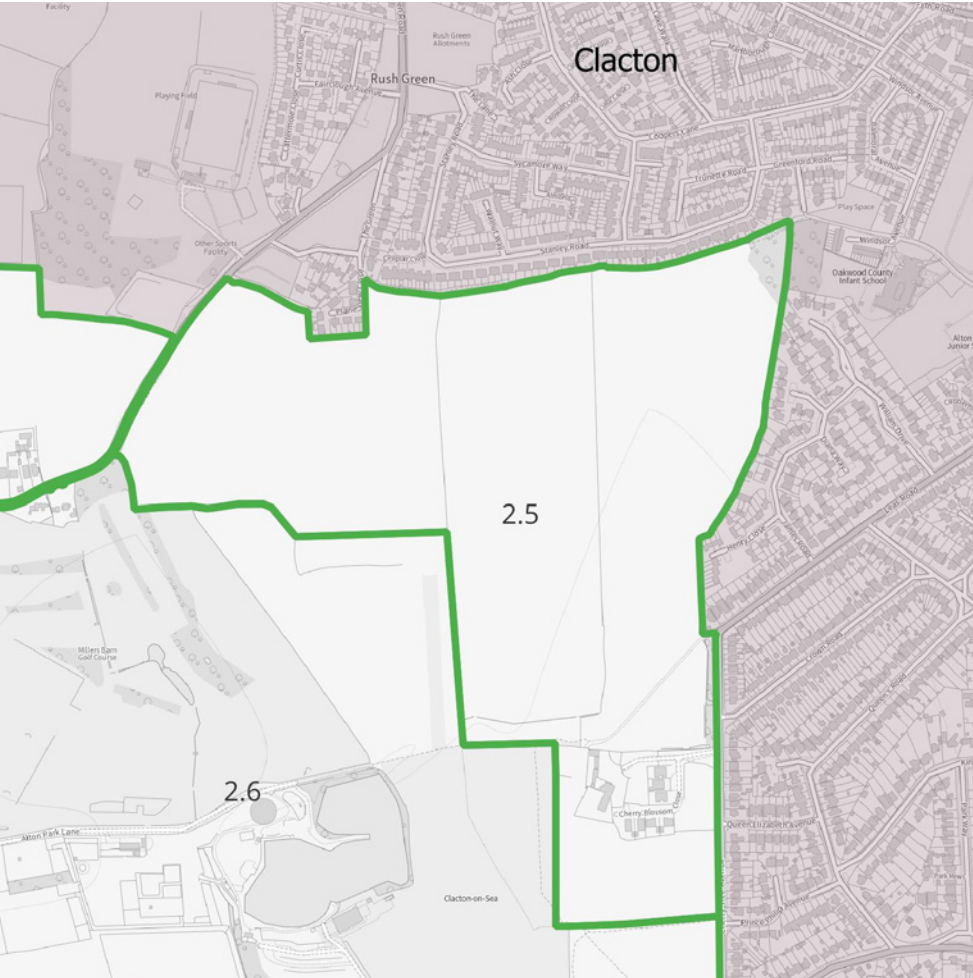


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies to the south of the Tendring Education Centre and the Rush Green Recreation Ground which lie within the Clacton settlement boundary. The parcel lies between Clacton (to the north) and Jaywick (to the south-west).
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Partial contribution	The parcel consists of a relatively large, irregularly shaped arable field and some ribbon development fronting Jaywick Lane and Rush Green Road. The field provides a strong contribution, but the overall contribution of the parcel is weakened by the ribbon development which is present.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Partial contribution	The parcel contributes to the gaps between the settlements which are present on both Jaywick Lane and Rush Green Road. Rush Green Road has a vegetated character, and inter-visibility across the gap is limited. There is therefore a strong sense of visual separation, but the length of the undeveloped gap is short. Jaywick Lane is adjoined by a hedged field boundary, and there is some sense of a gap, but there are also clear views to the northern edge of Jaywick. Houses within the Rouses Farm development are also likely to be visible from the road once built. The undeveloped gap between settlements on Jaywick Lane is short and it is therefore judged that the parcel provides partial visual separation.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 2.5

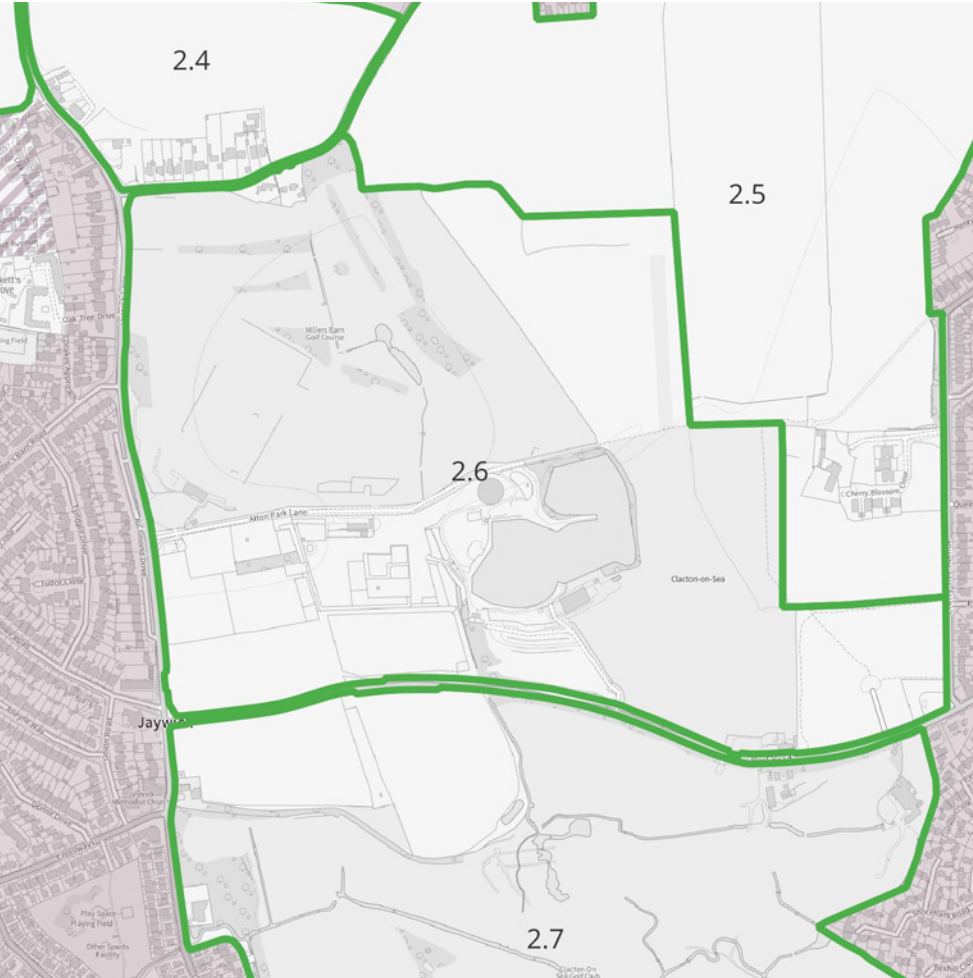


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies within a wider part of the gap which provides separation between the suburban areas of Clacton (to the north and east) and Jaywick (to the west).
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel predominantly consists of actively farmed arable land. The southern part of the parcel contains a small group of dwellings at Cherry Blossom Close, and there are two small pieces of woodland. The large open fields are the main feature of the parcel, and it is therefore considered to make a strong contribution to physical separation.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Strong contribution	The edge of Clacton is apparent from within the parcel, but Jaywick is hidden by intervening trees. The visual openness of the parcel can be appreciated from two footpath routes. The gap at this point is wide enough to be experienced as countryside, though there is some urban influence. The settlements are not inter-visible, so it is judged that there is strong visual separation.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 2.6

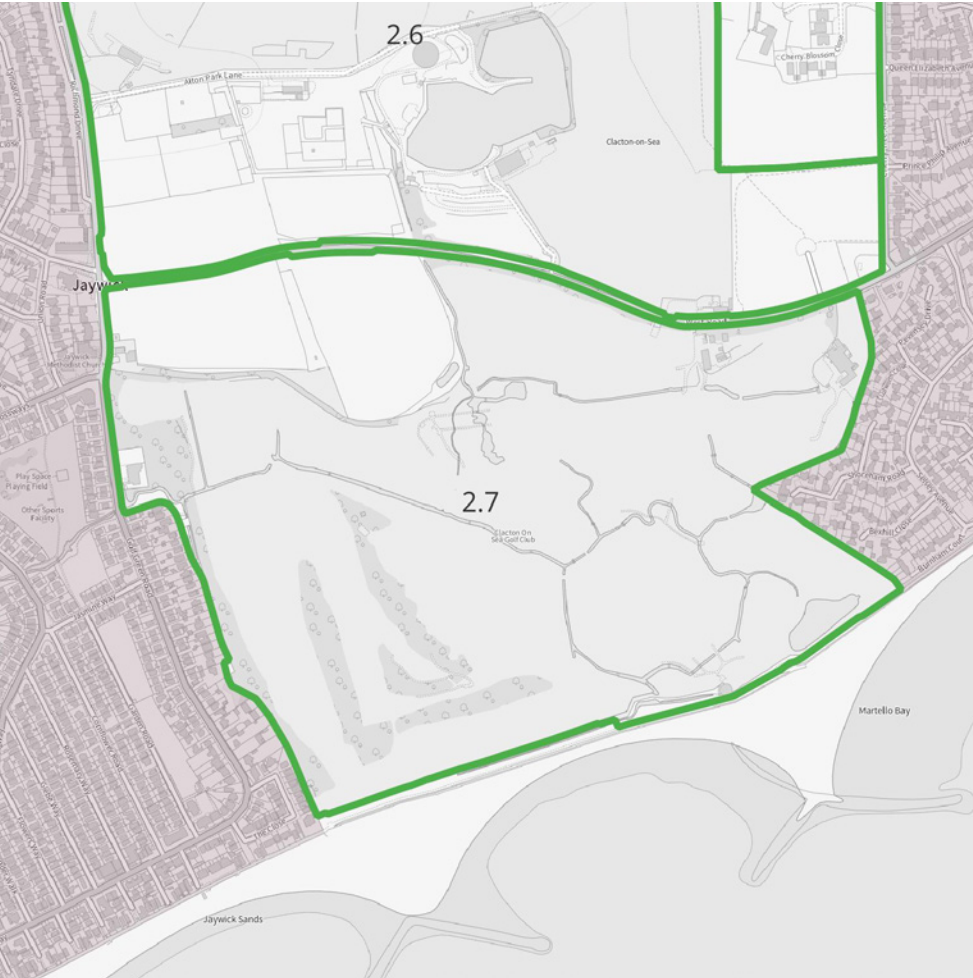


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies within a wider part of the gap which provides separation between the suburban areas of Clacton (to the north and east) and Jaywick (to the west).
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Partial contribution	The land-uses have generally transitioned away from traditional agriculture and include a golf course, an open farm, an airfield, and a dog park. The land-uses are associated with the adjoining settlements, and the parcel is considered to make a partial contribution to maintaining physical separation.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Partial contribution	The gap is relatively wide at this point. The gap is well-vegetated and there is no inter-visibility between settlements. Footpath 15 Great Clacton follows the route of Alton Park Lane and is enclosed by hedges. West Road has a somewhat urban fringe character with pavements and street lights. The sense of countryside is weakened by the land-uses which are present, and it is therefore judged that the parcel makes a partial contribution to maintaining visual separation.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 2.7



Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies directly in between the suburbs of Clacton (to the east) and Jaywick (to the west).
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Partial contribution	The parcel consists of a golf course, two smaller arable fields, and a small developed plot on West Road. The main golf course use is associated with the adjoining settlement, and the parcel is considered to make a partial contribution to maintaining physical separation.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Partial contribution	The gap is relatively wide at this point. Travelling along West Road there is no inter-visibility between settlements. There is however a somewhat urban fringe character with pavements and street lights, non-agricultural land-uses, and occasional buildings. From the coast path there is a wide undeveloped gap between settlements, but there is inter-visibility across the gap.

Recommendations

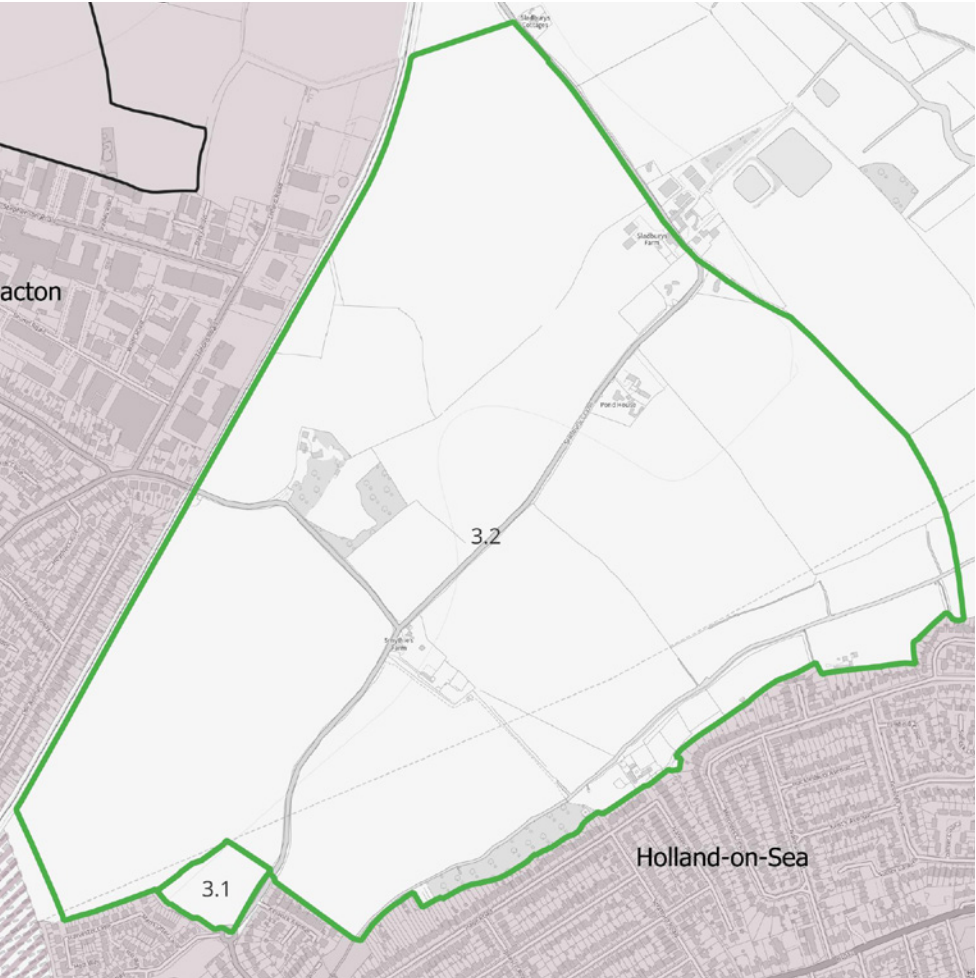
The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

The map displays a residential area with a green boundary line. The area is divided into two sections, 3.1 and 3.2. Section 3.1 is a smaller, irregularly shaped area in the lower-left, while Section 3.2 is a larger, more rectangular area in the upper-right. The map includes various landmarks such as 'Pond House', 'Smyth's Farm', and 'Other Sports Facility'. The surrounding area is densely packed with residential streets and buildings, with a cemetery visible in the lower-left corner.

Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies directly in between Holland-on-Sea and Clacton-on-Sea.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	No contribution	The parcel is currently open albeit it contains some hard surfacing. Permission has recently been granted for up to 30 dwellings within this parcel. These dwellings will become part of Holland-on-Sea, and the parcel will no longer make any contribution to the physical openness of the gap.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	No contribution	The proposed dwellings will also have a visual presence and the parcel will not make any contribution to visual separation once the buildings are constructed.

The parcel is not recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 3.2

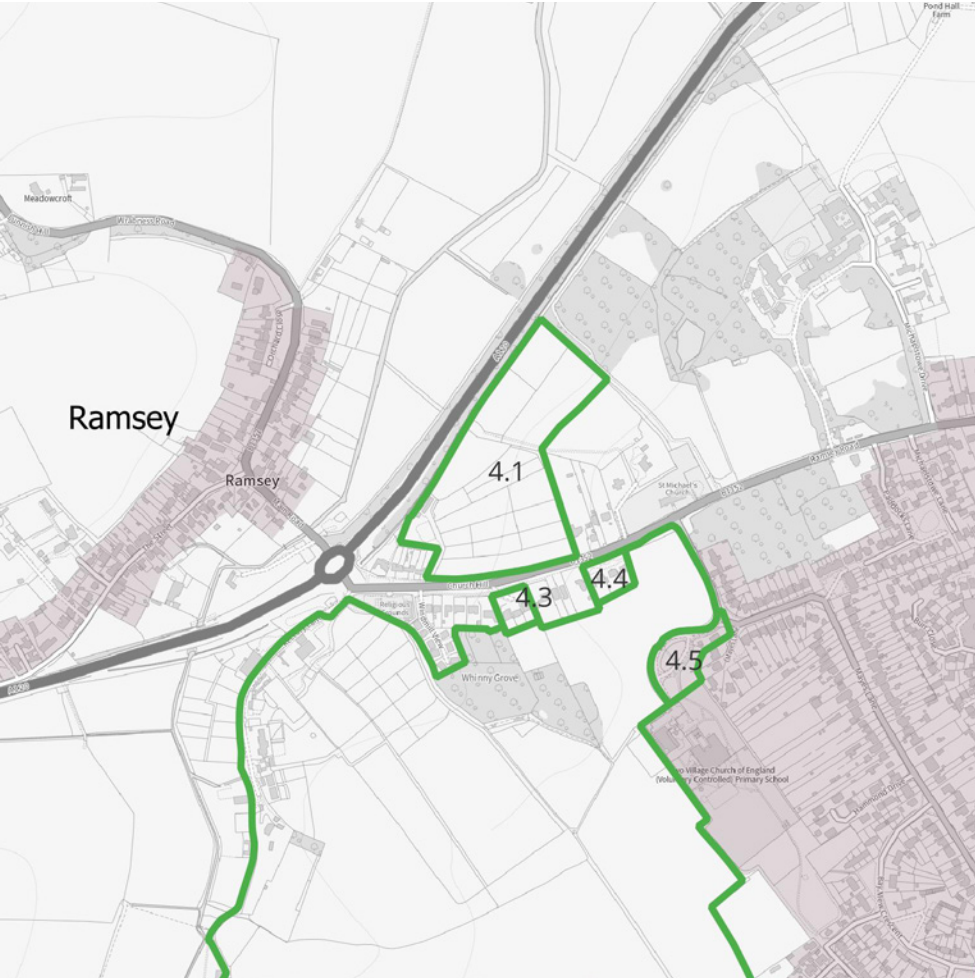


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies directly in between Holland-on-Sea (to the south) and the suburbs of Clacton-on-Sea (to the north-west of the railway line). The gap forms the main remaining open land between Clacton-on-Sea and Holland-on-Sea, and the only area of countryside between the two settlements.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel consists predominantly of farmland, with occasional isolated rural dwellings and farms. The parcel also includes a small area of equestrian use, a small garden centre, a storage yard, and some marsh. Whilst the parcel includes some buildings these are long established and appropriate to the countryside and it is therefore judged that the parcel makes a strong contribution to maintaining physical separation.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Partial contribution	The lanes and adjoining farmland have strong visual qualities which provide a sense of countryside. There is nonetheless some awareness of the existing settlements, particularly Holland-on-Sea to the south. The gap is relatively wide but there is nonetheless some potential inter-visibility between settlements. Burrs Road and Sladbury's Lane provide a strong sense of leaving one settlement and travelling through countryside before arriving at a different settlement, and there is a clearly defined transition between the urban areas and the adjoining countryside.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 4.1

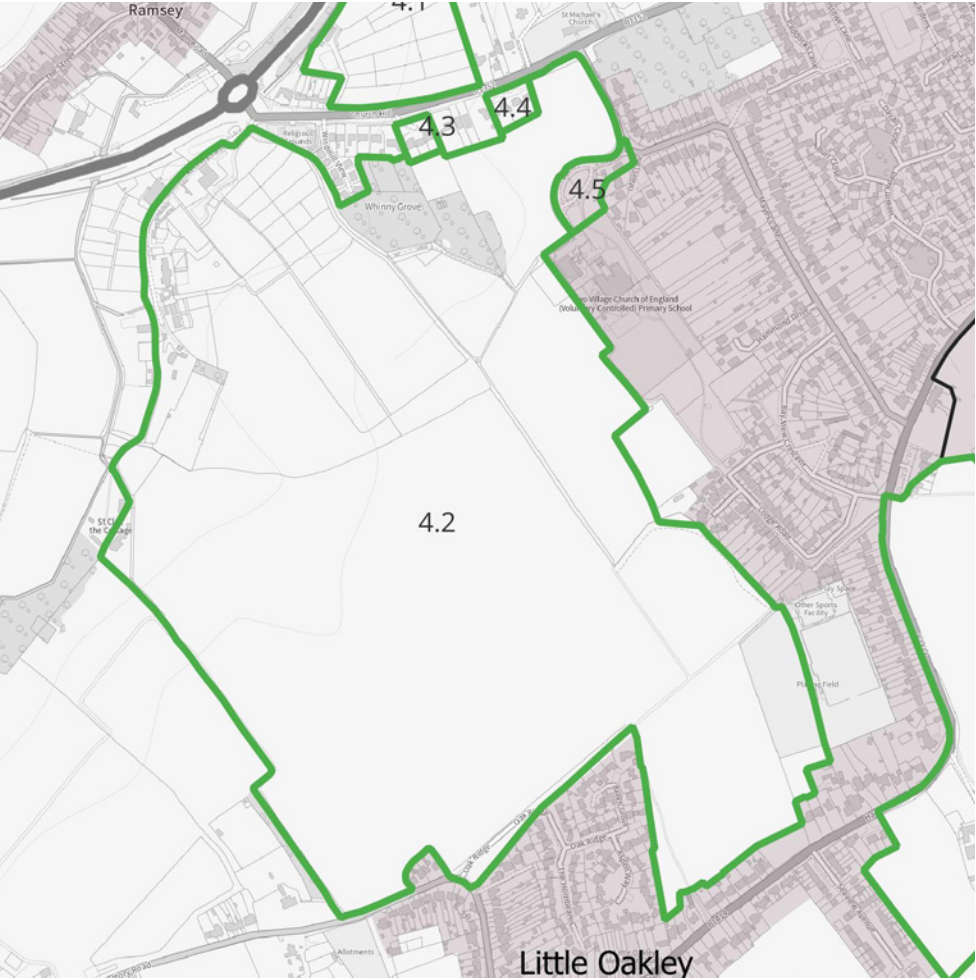


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies directly in between a part of Ramsey which is centred on The Street and Wrabness Road (to the west) and the built up area of Harwich-Dovercourt (to the east).
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Partial contribution	The parcel consists of equestrian use. The parcel is generally open except for some small stables buildings. The land use is associated with the adjoining settlement and the parcel is therefore considered to make a partial contribution to maintaining physical separation.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel occupies rising land on the eastern side of Ramsey Creek and is considered to play an important part in certain views, including those from the village of Ramsey. The parcel also provides an undeveloped frontage to Church Hill which is important to the maintenance of visual separation on this route. The parcel helps to maintain visual separation in certain views. The overall experience of visual separation is weakened by existing ribbon development on Church Hill, but the parcel itself makes a strong contribution to maintaining visual separation.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 4.2

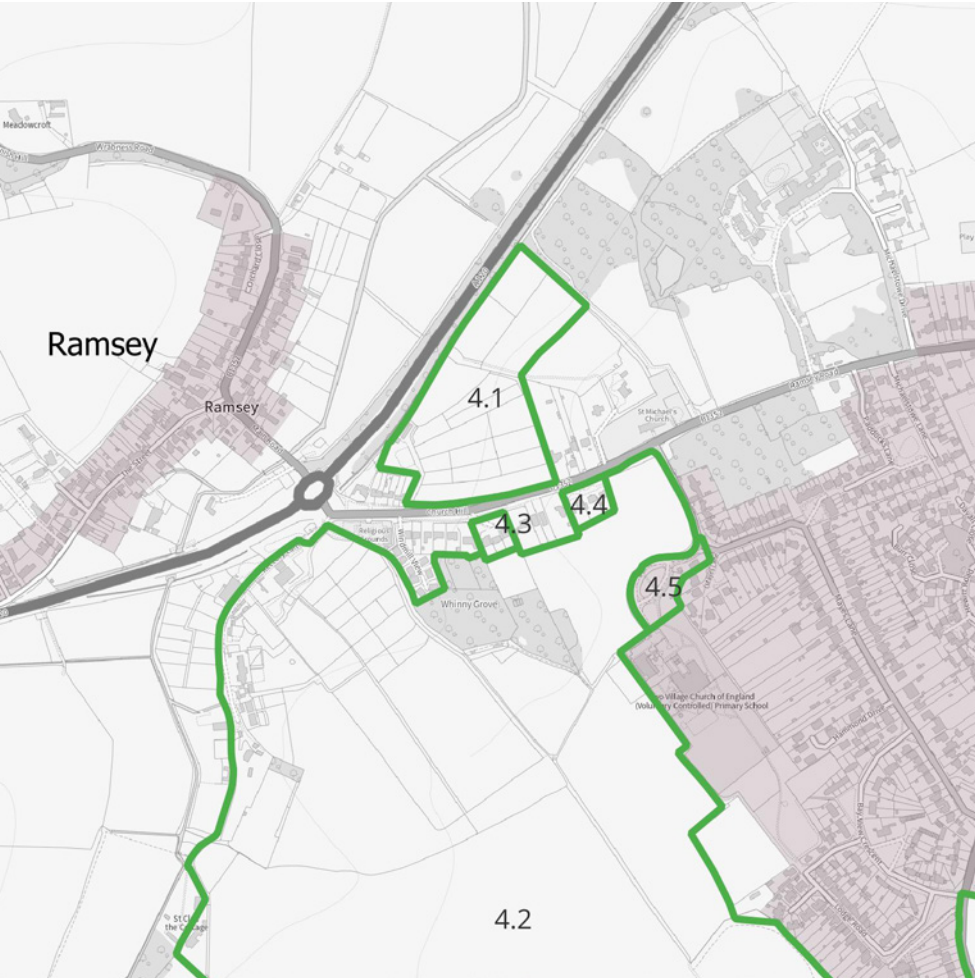


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies to the south of Ramsey, to the west of the Harwich-Dovercourt built up area, and to the north of Little Oakley. The parcel therefore provides separation between all three settlements.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel consists of fields, paddocks, a football field, and a small wood at Whinny Grove. The parcel is generally free of buildings except at the northern edge on Rectory Lane where there is a some development. The parcel forms part of a wider expanse of countryside which extends to the west. The main part of the parcel is open, and the parcel is considered to make a strong contribution to physical separation.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Partial contribution	The parcel contributes to views of the countryside and there are attractive views from within the parcel towards Ramsey Windmill for example. Ramsey and Little Oakley are both visible within views, which reduces the overall sense of visual separation.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 4.3

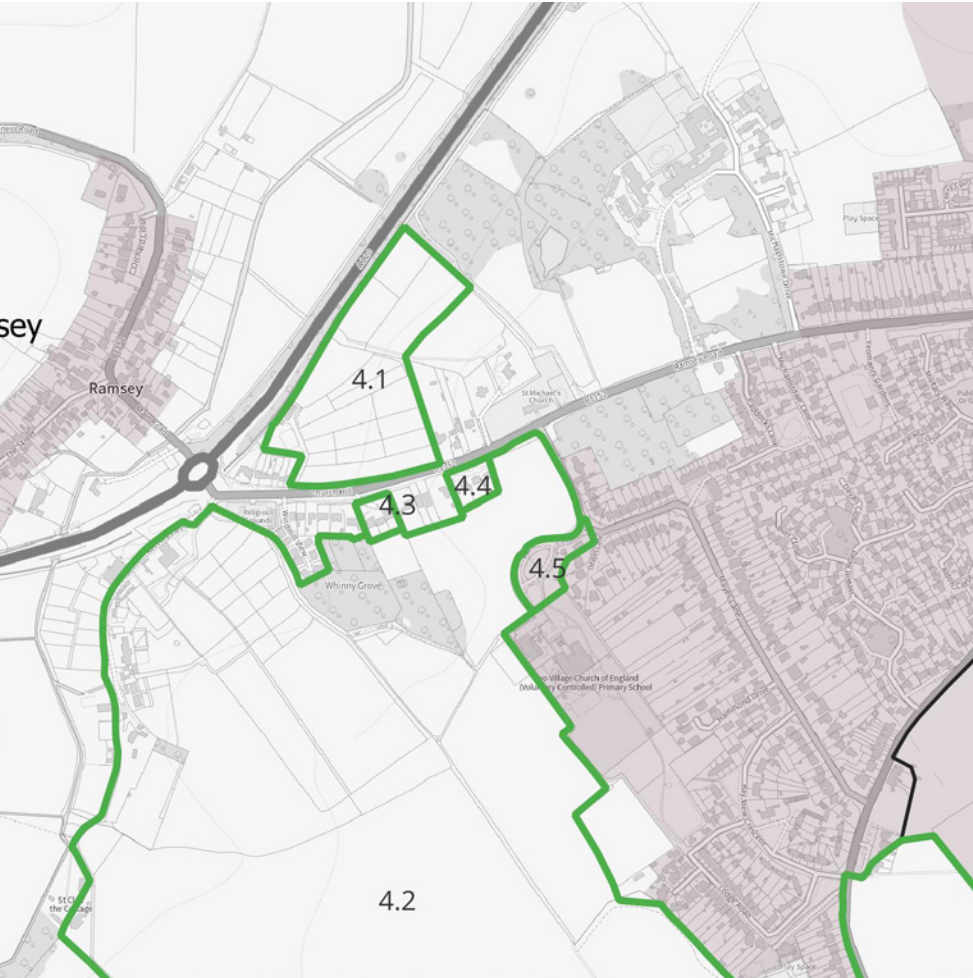


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies between the part of Ramsey which is centered on The Street / Wrabness Road and the built up area of Harwich-Dovercourt. The parcel does therefore lie within the gap between settlements.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	No contribution	The parcel forms part of the existing ribbon development on Church Hill. The parcel contains residential properties and has a developed character.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	No contribution	The parcel already contains residential development and it is not therefore considered to contribute to the visual openness of the gap.

Recommendations

The parcel is not recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 4.4

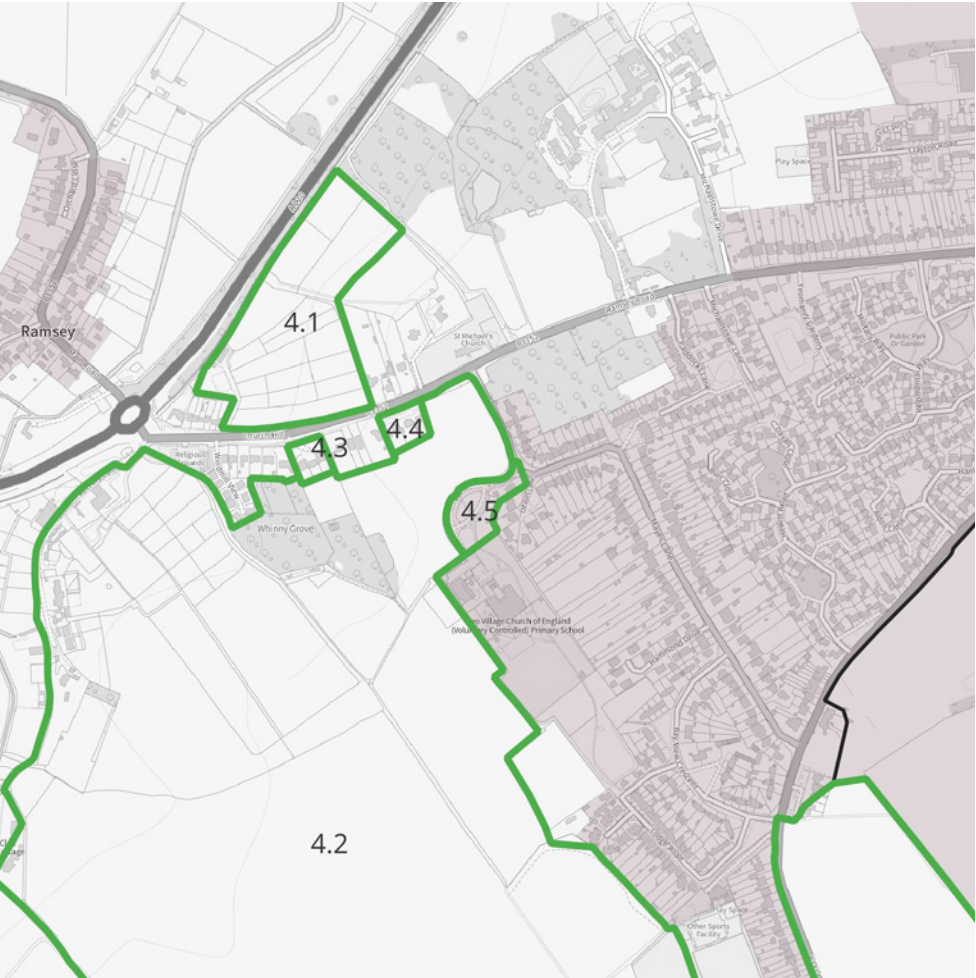


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies between the part of Ramsey which is centered on The Street / Wrabness Road and the built up area of Harwich-Dovercourt. The parcel does therefore lie within the gap between settlements.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	No contribution	The parcel forms part of the existing ribbon development on Church Hill. The parcel contains residential properties and has a developed character.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	No contribution	The parcel already contains residential development and it is not therefore considered to contribute to the visual openness of the gap.

Recommendations

The parcel is not recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 4.5

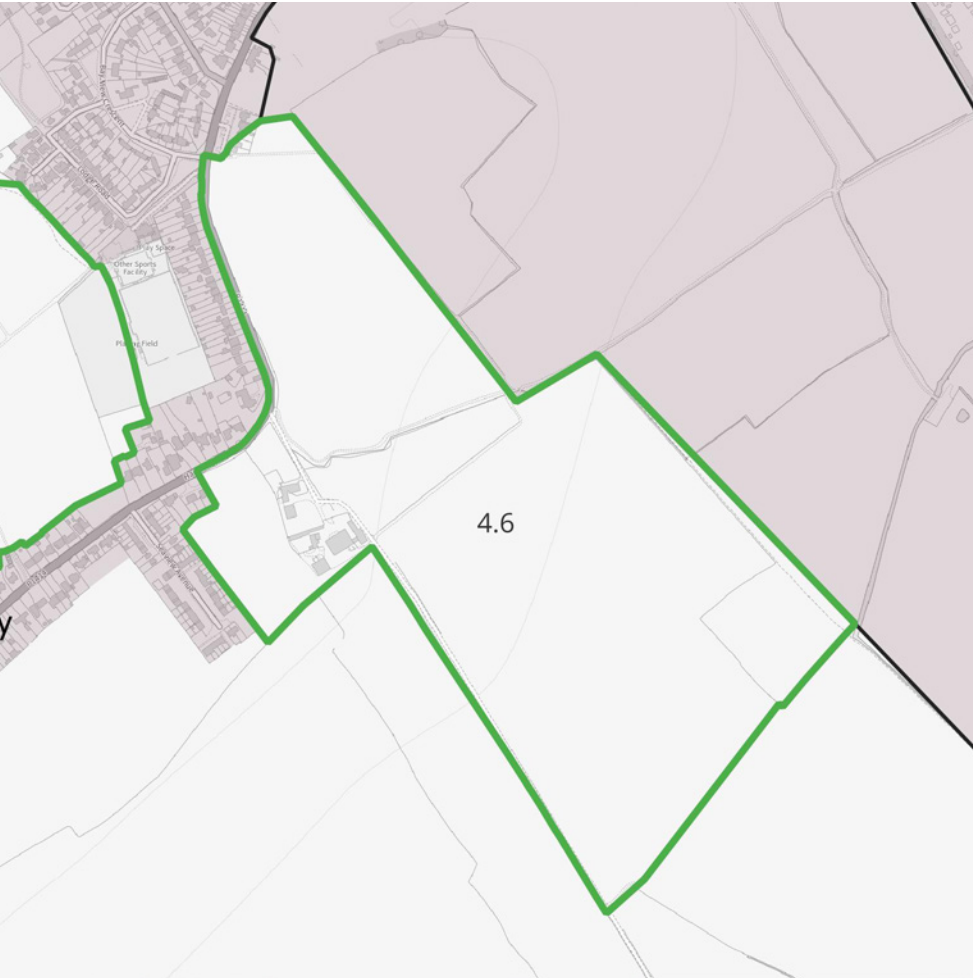


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Ambivalent	The parcel lies at the edge of the Harwich-Dovercourt built up area and consists of part of the school grounds and a residential property. The parcel does lie within the gap between settlements, but could also be considered to already form part of the settlement.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Weak contribution	The parcel is partially developed with a residential property, and a road leading to the school. The parcel reads as part of the school grounds i.e. part of the settlement. Overall then it is considered to make a weak contribution to physical separation.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Weak contribution	The parcel is enclosed by a dense hedge which separates it from the field to the west. The parcel reads as part of the settlement and is therefore considered to make a weak contribution to visual separation.

Recommendations

The parcel is not recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 4.6

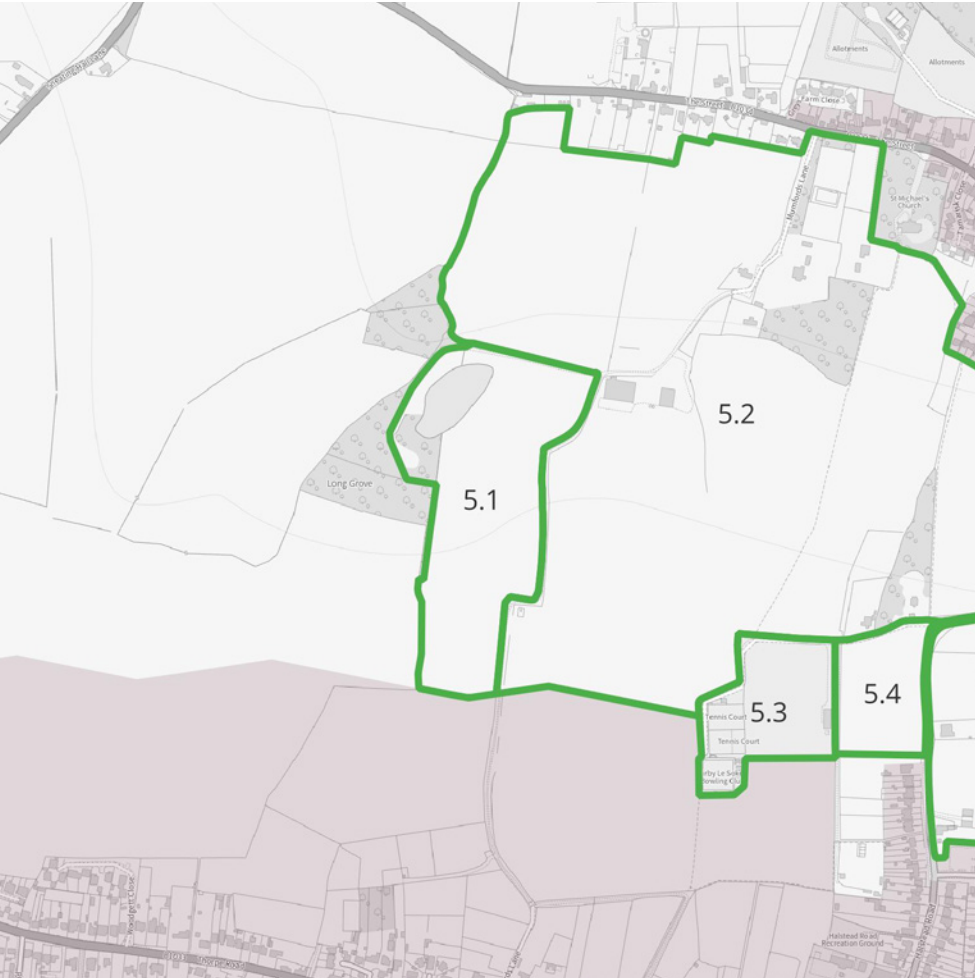


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies directly in between Little Oakley to the west and a proposed mixed use allocation to the east. The parcel is essential to maintaining separation between Little Oakley and the wider Harwich-Dovercourt built up area.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel consists of arable fields and a hall and farmstead at Foulton Hall. The parcel includes some rural forms of development, but the parcel as a whole has an open character and makes a strong contribution to physical separation. The parcel also connects to the wider countryside to the south.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Partial contribution	The parcel contributes to views of the countryside and there are attractive views southwards towards the sea. Both settlements are visible, and development will be increasingly apparent once the allocated site is developed. The field will provide some visual separation between settlements, but an element of coalescence has already occurred on Harwich Road.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 5.1

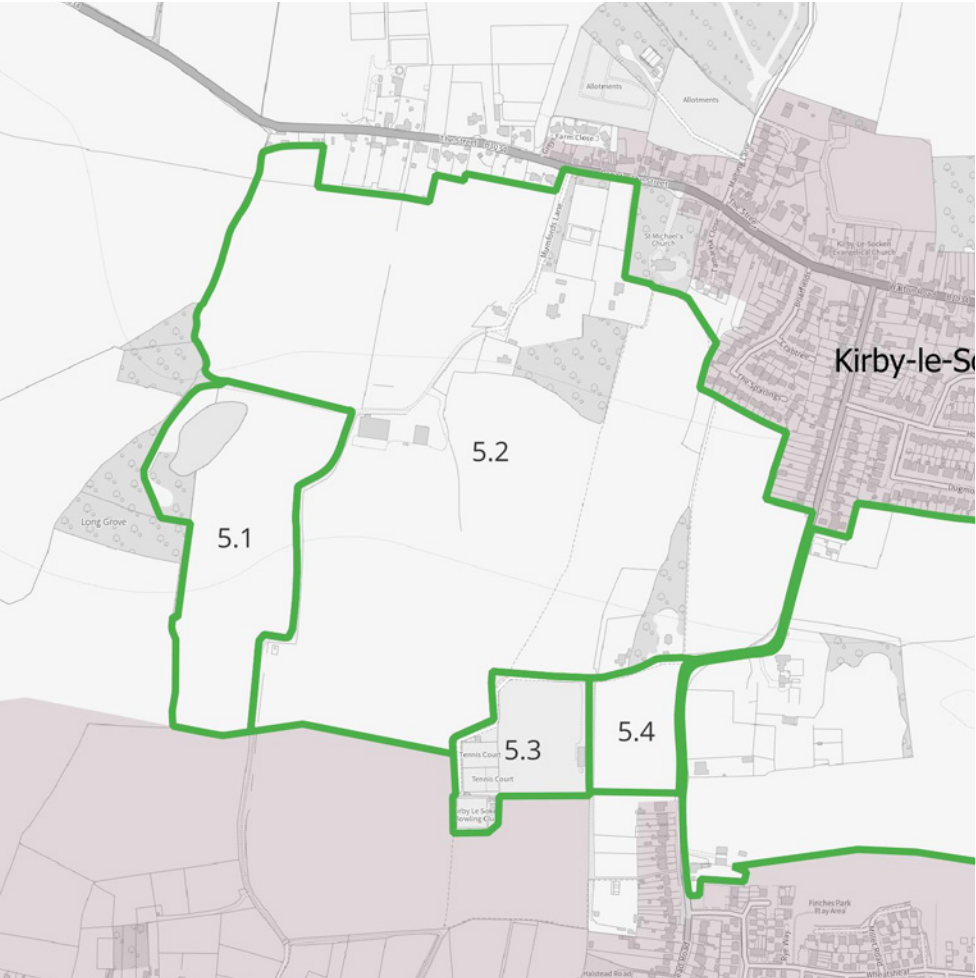


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies directly in between the northern edge of Kirby Cross and the south-western edge of Kirby-le-Soken. The parcel currently lies within a wide rural gap, but this will be narrowed by the proposed housing allocation on the northern edge of Kirby Cross.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel consists of an arable field, a pond, some grassland and tree planting. The land-uses are typical of the countryside. The parcel forms part of a wider belt of countryside between the settlements. Overall the parcel is considered to make a strong contribution to maintaining physical separation
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel is perceived primarily from Mumfords Lane and will directly adjoin the northern edge of Kirby Cross. The parcel is enclosed by trees and hedges and it currently has a strong rural character. The rural qualities of the parcel and the lack of inter-visibility between the settlements contribute to a strong sense of visual separation.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 5.2

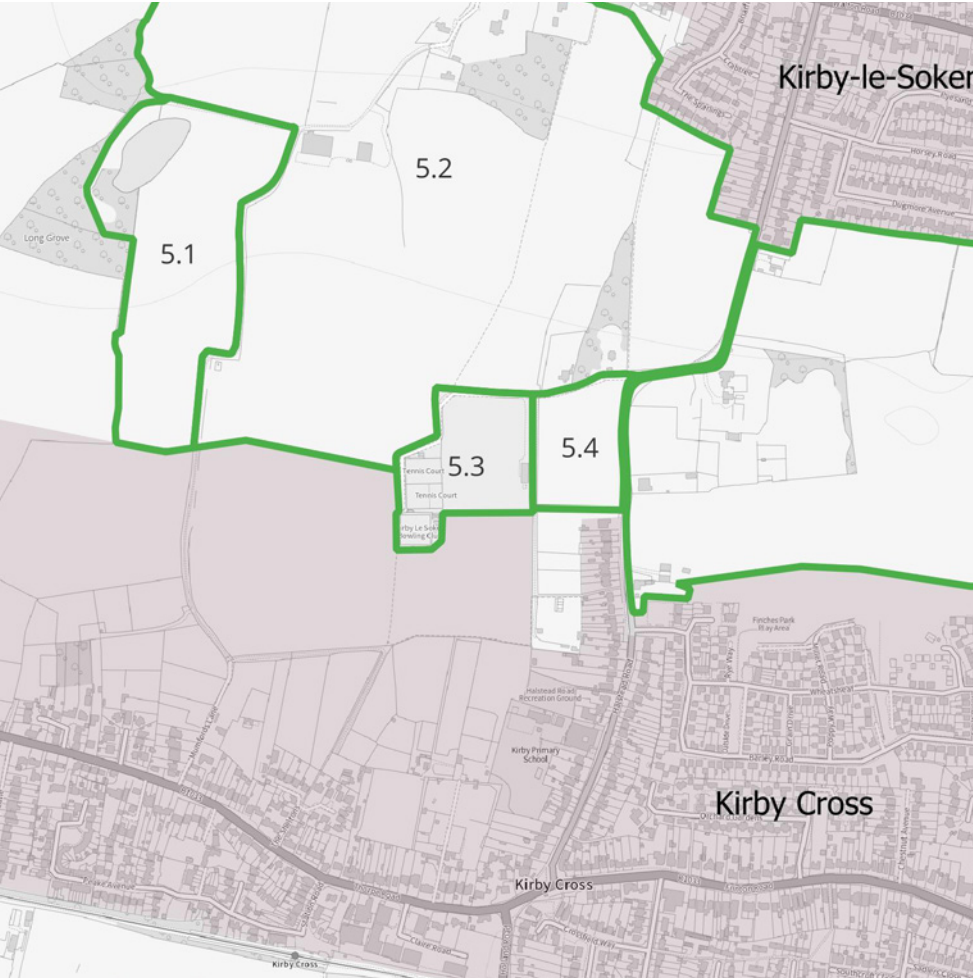


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies directly in between the northern edge of Kirby Cross and the south-western edge of Kirby-le-Soken. The parcel currently lies within a wide rural gap, but this will be narrowed by the proposed housing allocation on the northern edge of Kirby Cross.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel consists predominantly of arable farmland but also contains a barn, low density residential development and two small woods. The main part of the parcel is open and has a rural character. The parcel forms part of a wider belt of countryside between the settlements. Overall the parcel is considered to make a strong contribution to maintaining physical separation
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel is perceived from a number of public footpaths, Kirby Playing Fields, Halstead Road, the churchyard, and from residential properties on the edge of the village. The rising landform tends to prevent inter-visibility between settlements, and contributes to a strong sense of visual separation. The rural qualities of the gap also mean that it provides strong visual separation.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 5.3

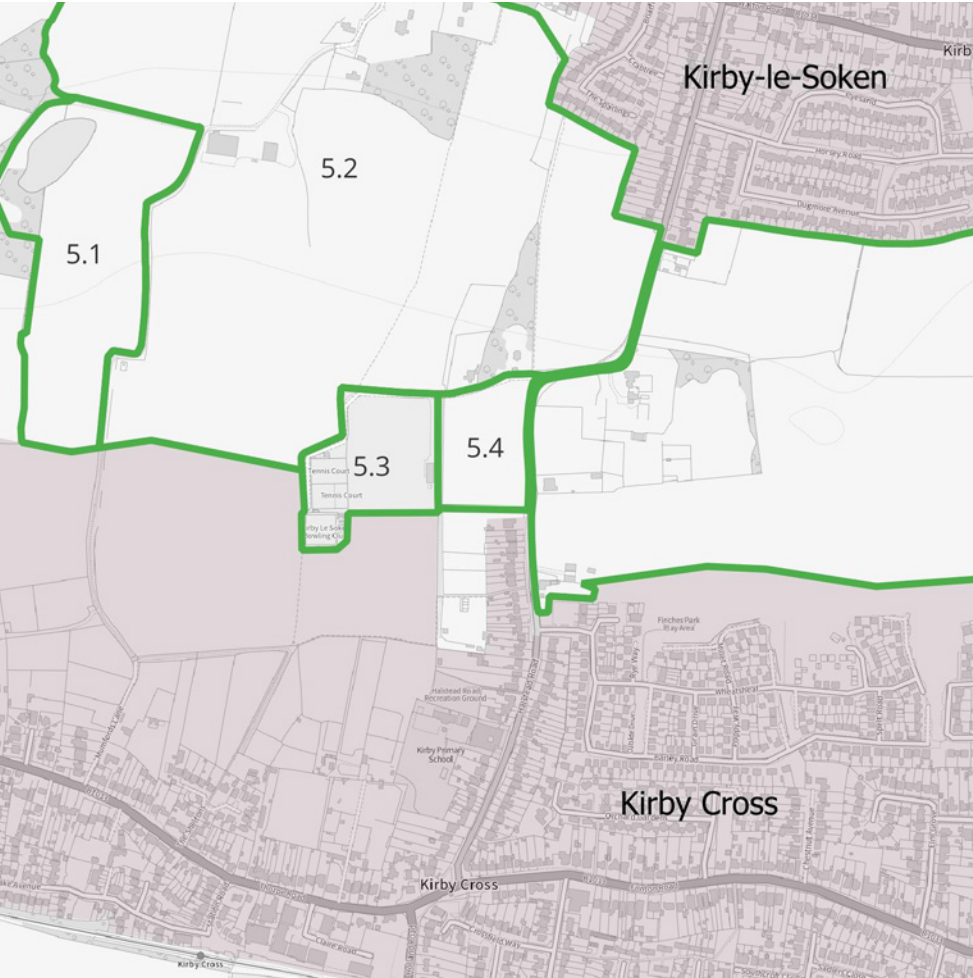


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies directly in between the settlements of Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken. The parcel currently lies within the countryside and has no connection to the settlement edge. The proposed housing allocation on the northern edge of Kirby Cross will however extend to the edge of the parcel, and will reduce the overall width of the gap.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Partial contribution	The parcel relates to Kirby Playing Fields. The playing fields provide various sports facilities including tennis courts, a bowls green and a cricket pitch. The cricket pitch is open and forms part of the countryside. The parcel as a whole however does contain buildings and hard surfacing. The land use is related to the nearby settlements and it is considered that the parcel makes a partial contribution to maintaining physical separation.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Partial contribution	The cricket pitch currently has an attractive rural setting. The proposed housing allocation will give the parcel more of a settlement-edge character, though it will still be open to the north. There is a sense of connection to the adjoining countryside, and there are some views northwards from the cricket pitch. The parcel also makes some contribution to views from public footpaths.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 5.4



Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies directly in between Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel consists of a relatively small rectangular field. The field adjoins Halstead Road to the east, a track to the west, and a track and two isolated residential properties to the north. There is also ribbon development on Halstead Road to the immediate south of the site. The parcel itself does not contain any buildings. The parcel is considered to make a strong contribution to maintaining physical separation despite its semi-developed context.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Strong contribution	Halstead Road is enclosed by hedges, but there is nonetheless a sense of open land beyond. There are open views across the parcel from the track leading to the sports ground. The parcel makes an important contribution to the overall experience of separation, particularly on Halstead Road.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 5.5

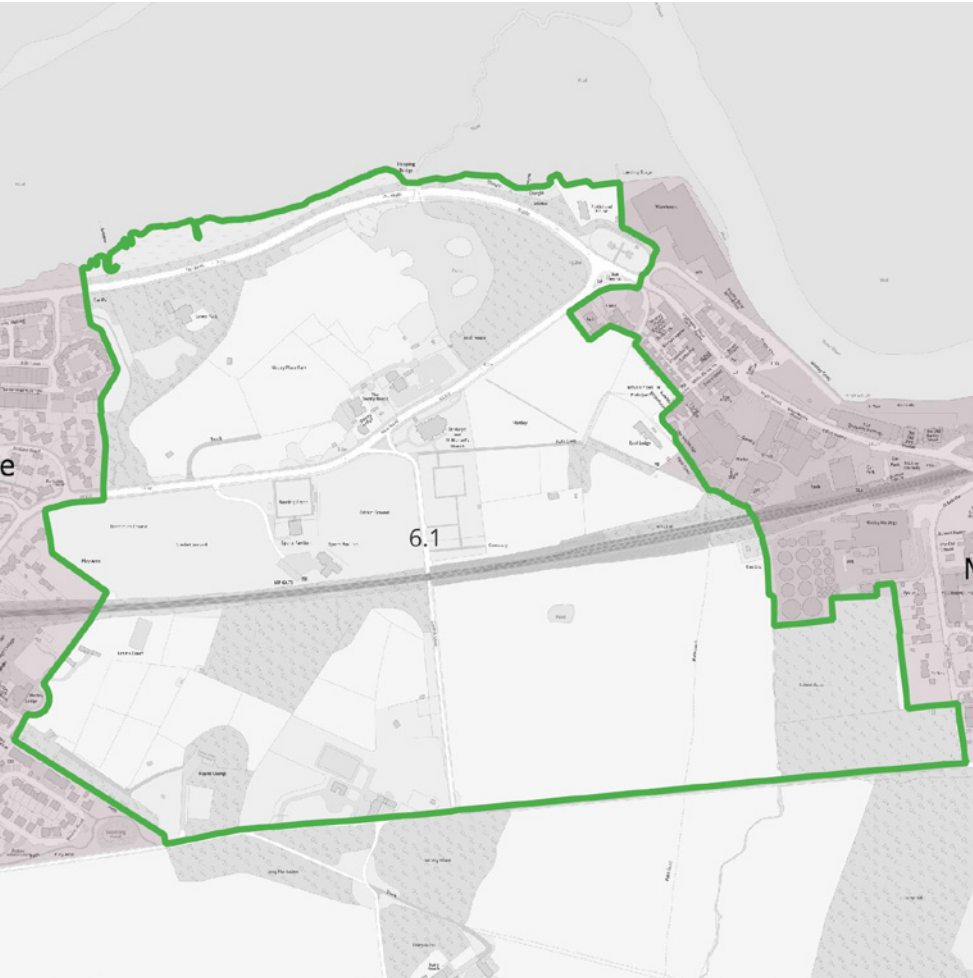


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies directly in between Kirby-le-Soken and the edge of the Kirby Cross, Frinton-on-Sea, Walton-on-the-Naze urban area. The parcel is vital to preventing coalescence at this point.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel contains a mix of land-uses including large arable fields, some grass fields associated with the residential development to the south, a small number of isolated properties/farms and associated land within the curtilage, and an area of scrub. The parcel is generally open despite the occasional building. Some strong hedgerows also contribute to perceptions of separation.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel is crossed by a number of official public rights of way and unofficial paths which appear to be well used. The edges of both settlements are apparent from various points, but the area is wide enough to be perceived as countryside. The landform also allows more extensive views northwards over Kirby-le-Soken towards the sea.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 6.1

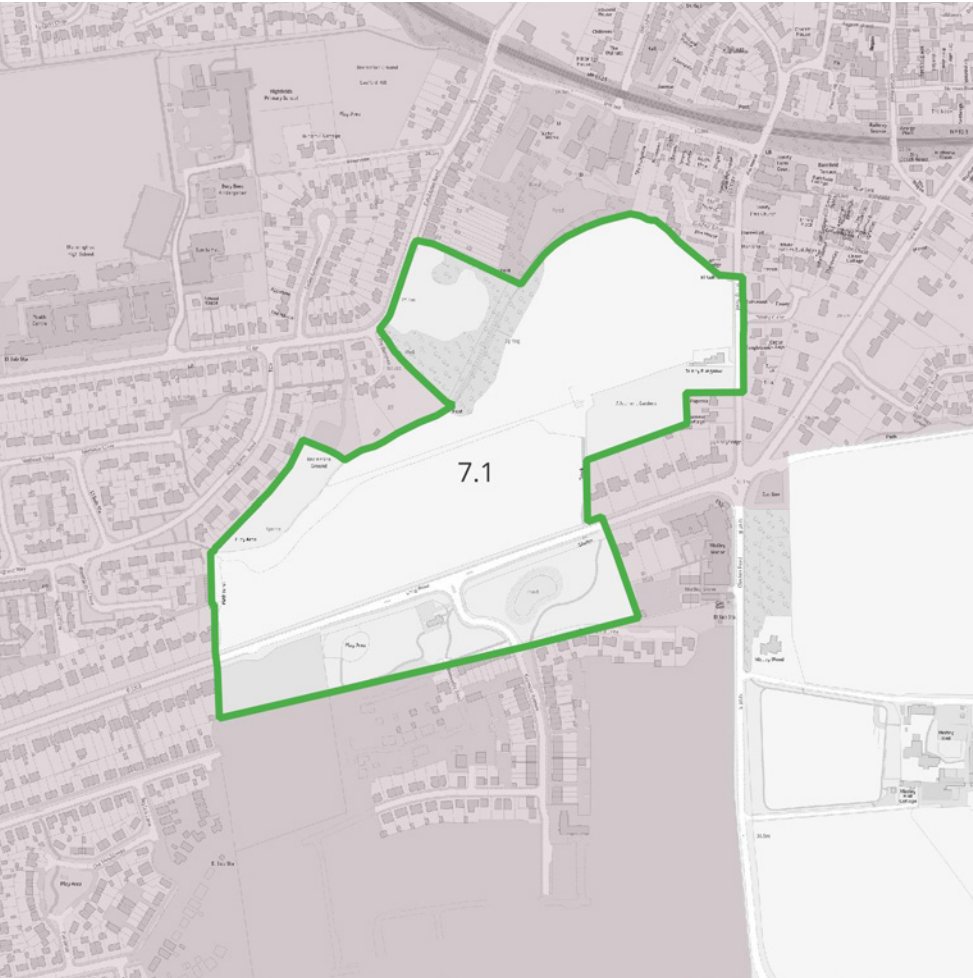


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The development on both sides of the gap technically lies within the parish of Mistley, but the development to the west fringes Manningtree, while the development to the east comprises the main part of the village. The parcel lies directly in between the two urban areas, and is essential to maintaining separation.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Partial contribution	The parcel consists of the former Mistley Park and includes a range of land-uses. The former parkland includes a cricket ground and bowls green, cemeteries, a lake, wooded areas, fields, paddocks, and two roads. Occasional buildings including Mistley Towers, the Old Hall, St Mary's and St Michael's Church and Dormy Lodge and East Lodge are contained within the former park. Further to this there are also sports pavilions and car parks. The parcel is largely open but some of the land-uses are more associated with the adjoining settlement, and the parcel is not completely undeveloped.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel is well vegetated and the mature trees and woodland contribute to a strong sense of visual separation. The parcel does contain some buildings but these tend to be historic parkland buildings or sports pavilions, and there is a clear sense of a gap between settlements. The settlements are not inter-visible. The gap is experienced via two roads, and several public rights of way.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 7.1

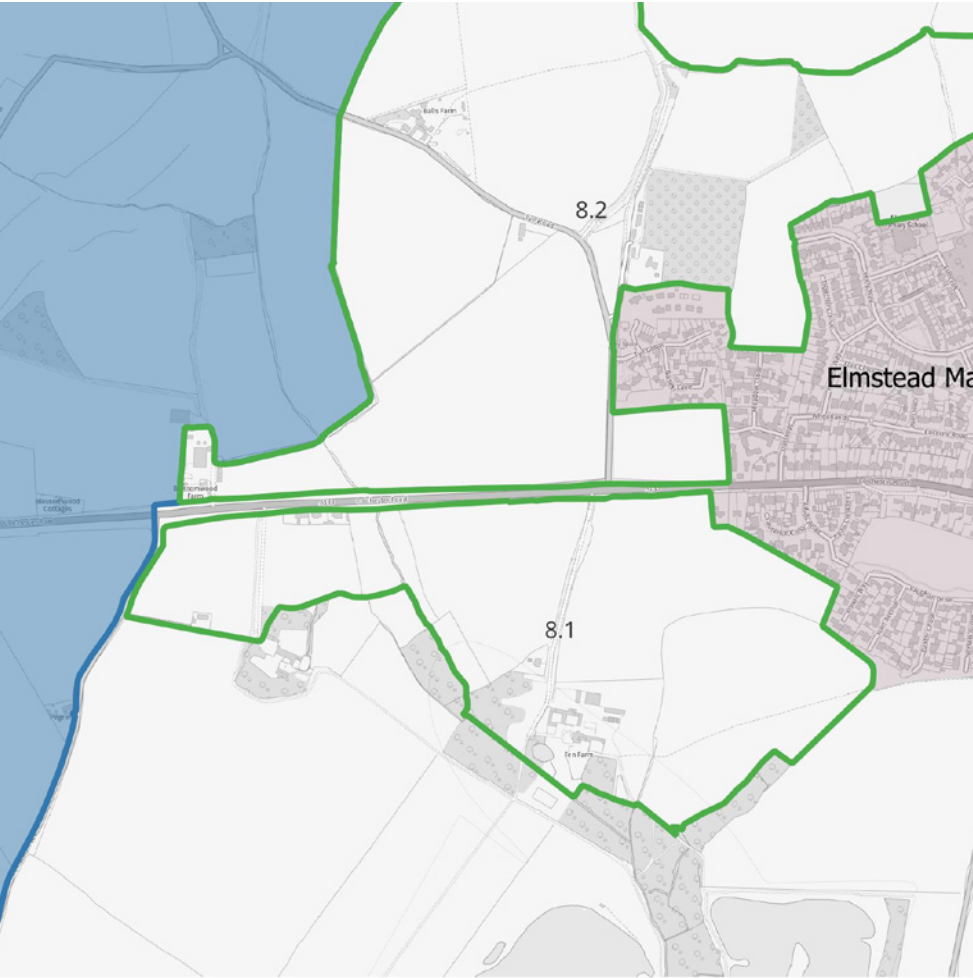


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies directly in between Lawford (to the west) and Mistley (to the east). The parcel comprises the totality of the remaining open land between the settlements.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Partial contribution	The parcel is contained by urban development and has no connection to the wider countryside. The parcel contains three roads, a bungalow and a sales building, but is otherwise undeveloped. The land-uses comprise playgrounds, playing fields and recreational land, abandoned farmland, allotments, and a small wooded area.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Partial contribution	The main movement route through the gap is Long Road (B1352). The gap provides a clear break between settlements on this route, but the overall sense of visual separation is weakened the recently permitted development to the south of the road. The northern edge of the road is adjoined by a hedge which limits views over the parcel.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 8.1

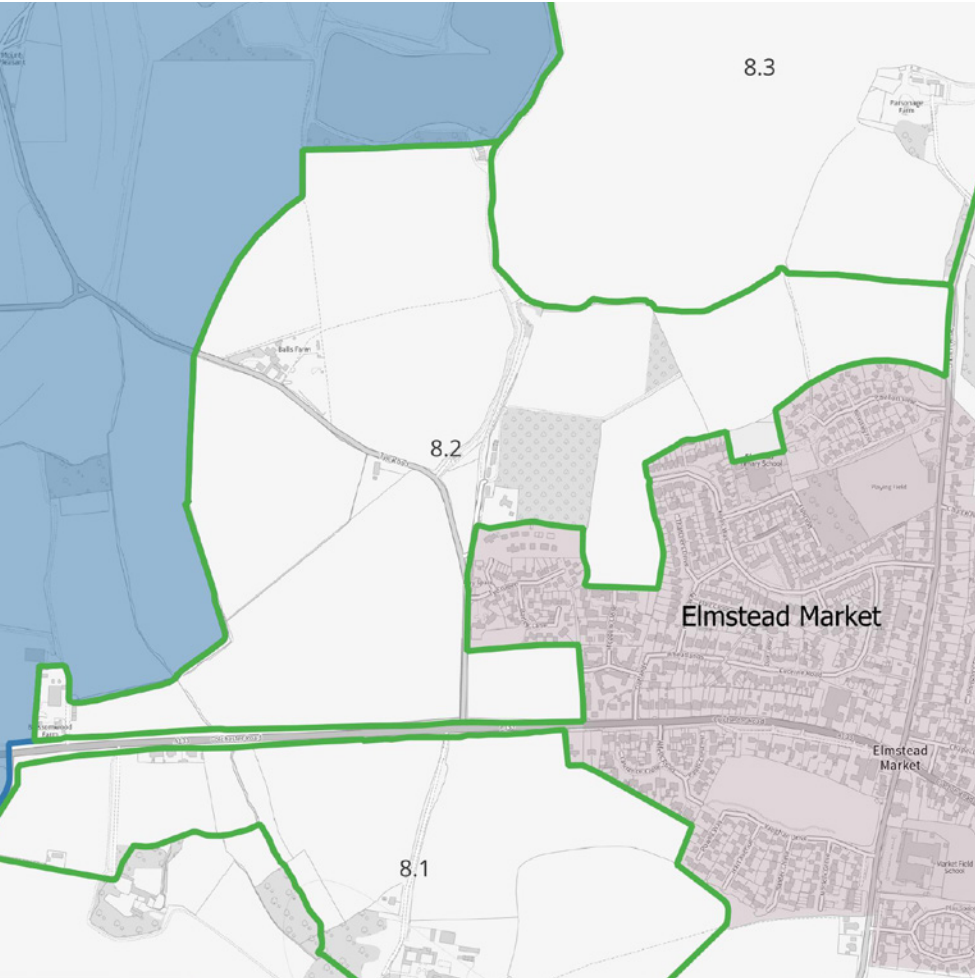


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies directly in between Elmstead Market (to the east) and the proposed Garden Community (to the west).
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel consists of arable fields, meadows and small wooded areas, a farmstead and some isolated cottages. The land-uses are typical of the countryside. The parcel is generally open, and its physical characteristics make a strong contribution to separation.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Strong contribution	The main movement route between the settlements is Colchester Road. The parcel provides a rural setting to the southern side of the road and there is a sense of travelling through countryside on this route before arriving at a different settlement. Footpath 22 Elmstead also provides an experience of the countryside. The parcel mainly consists of farmland, and trees and hedges reduce visibility across the parcel. It is unlikely that the settlements will be inter-visible. The visual characteristics of the parcel make a strong contribution to separation.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 8.2

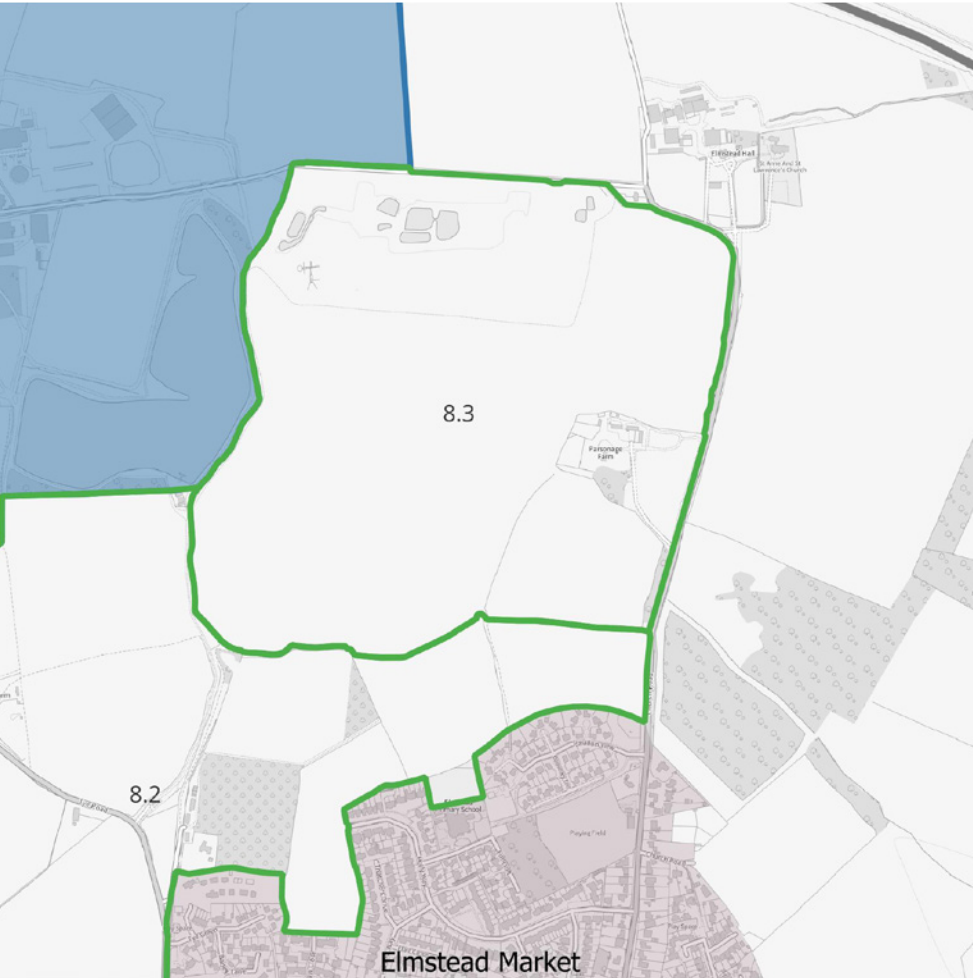


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies directly in between Elmstead Market (to the east) and the proposed Garden Community (to the west).
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel consists of arable fields, meadows and small wooded areas, a farmstead and some isolated cottages. The land-uses are typical of the countryside. The parcel is generally open, and its physical characteristics make a strong contribution to separation.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Strong contribution	The main movement route between the settlements is Colchester Road. The parcel provides a rural setting to the northern side of the road, and there is a sense of travelling through countryside before arriving at a different settlement. Tye Road and Footpath 7 Elmstead also provide an experience of the countryside. The parcel also provides a rural setting to Church Road. The parcel mainly consists of farmland, and trees and hedges reduce visibility across the parcel. It is unlikely that the settlements will be inter-visible. The visual characteristics of the parcel make a strong contribution to separation.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 8.3

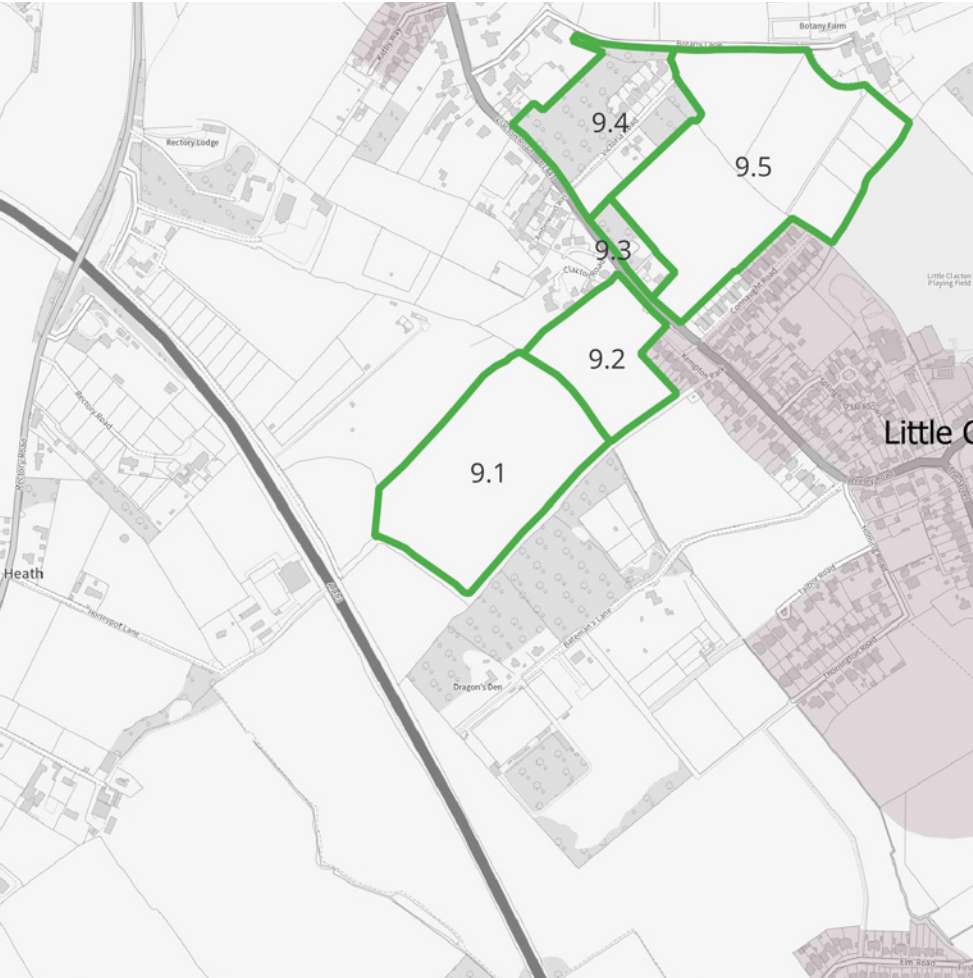


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies between the northern edge of Elmstead Market and an area which is allocated for employment use in the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community DPD.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel consists predominantly of arable farmland but also contains an active sand and gravel pit, and a farmstead at Parsonage Farm. It is assumed that the sand and gravel pit once restored will still contribute to the open character of the countryside. The parcel forms part of a wider expanse of countryside to the north of Elmstead Market.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Strong contribution	The active sand and gravel pit creates visual disruption but it is assumed that the site would be restored and would reintegrate with the countryside. The parcel is perceived from Footpaths 2 and 7 Elmstead and from Church Road. Taller buildings within the Garden Community would potentially be visible beyond the parcel. The edge of Elmstead Market however is not generally perceptible, and there would therefore be a relatively strong sense of visual separation.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 9.1

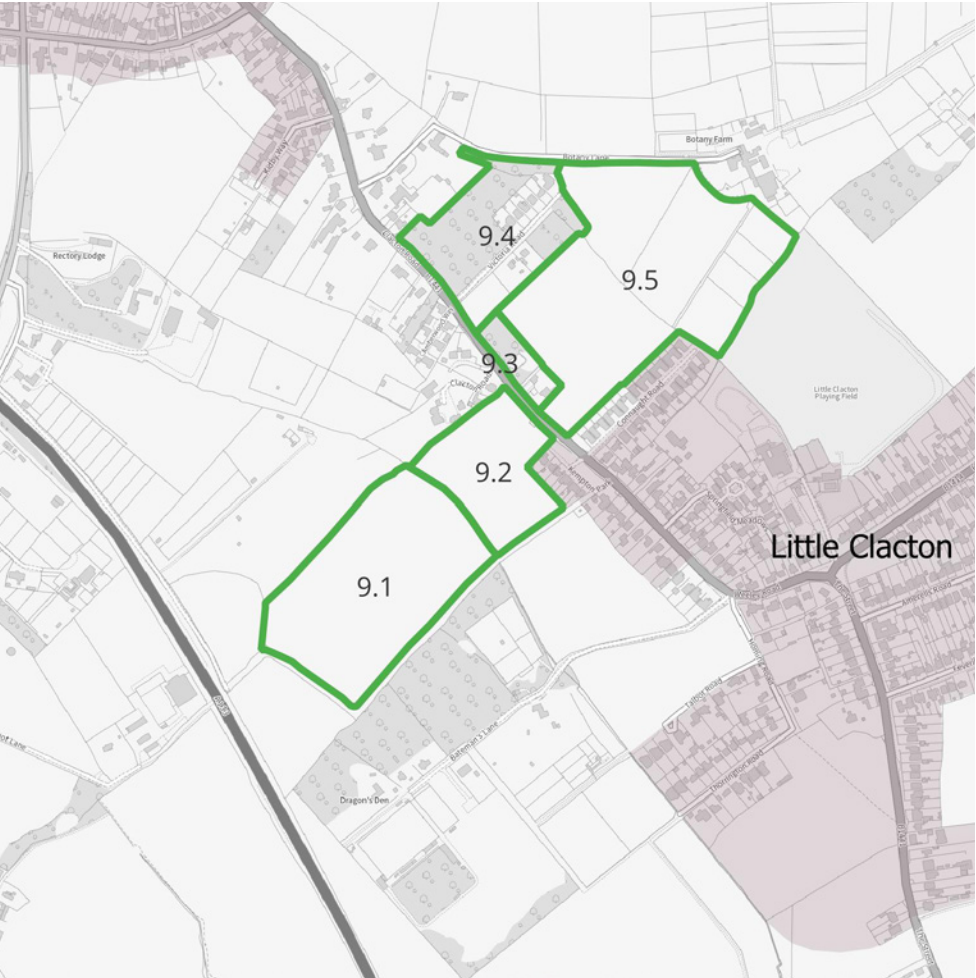


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Partial contribution	The parcel does not lie directly in between the settlements as they currently exist, but it does contribute to separation as part of the wider countryside in which both villages are experienced. The parcel provides an important link to the wider countryside to the south-east of the villages.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel consist of an arable field. The parcel is enclosed by mature native hedges which enhance the sense of separation. The parcel does not contain any buildings or hard-surfacing.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Partial contribution	The south-eastern boundary of the parcel is adjoined by Footpath 12 Little Clacton which follows the route of a green lane known as Honey Pot Lane. The parcel provides an open agricultural context to the lane, and the route has an attractive character. There are further public rights of way on the other boundaries which provide access around the edges of the parcel. The parcel forms part of an appreciable break between settlements. The parcel has strong visual characteristics, though there is some awareness of the settlement edge at Kempton Park for example.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 9.2

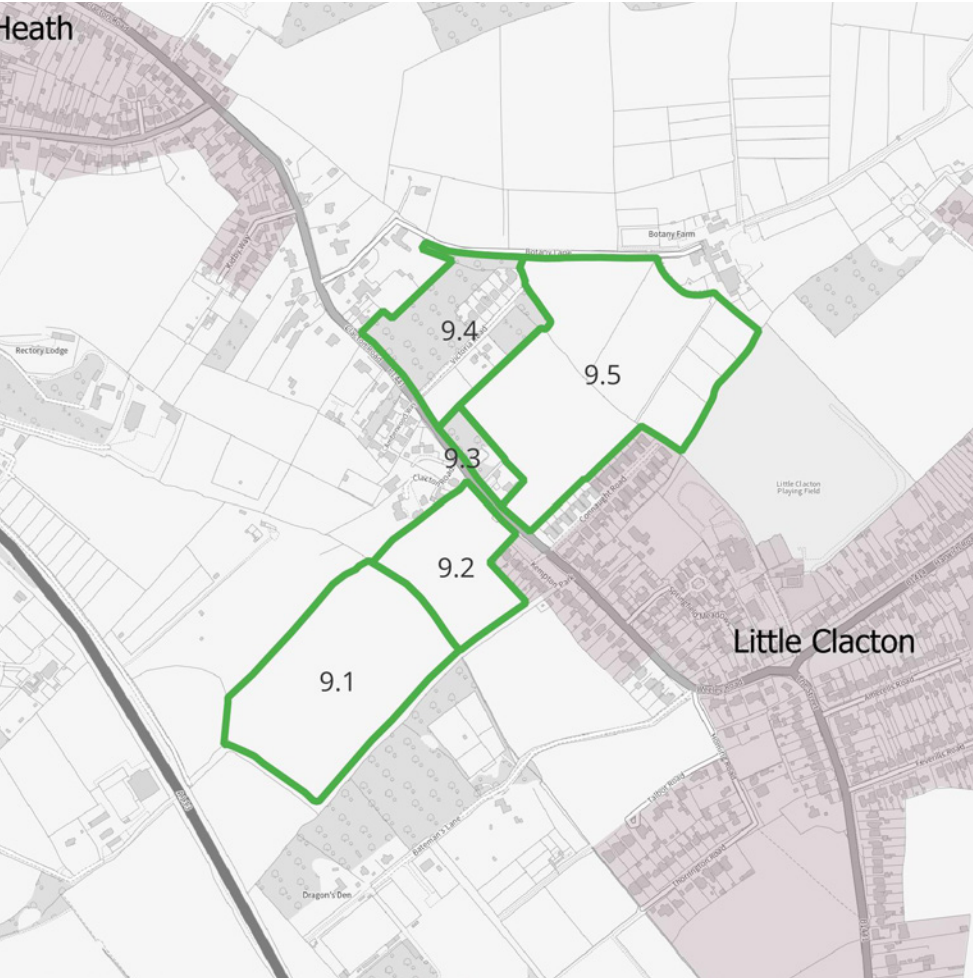


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies directly in between the settlements and forms the main gap on the southern side of Clacton Road.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel consists of an unused arable field. The parcel does not contain any buildings or hard-surfacing except for a future road access which has been created. The parcel is enclosed by native hedges which enhance the sense of separation.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Partial contribution	Travelling along Clacton Road the parcel provides a narrow break between Weeley Heath and Little Clacton. The parcel provides an agricultural context to Honey Pot Lane, though this section of the lane is quite enclosed. The openness of the parcel can be experienced from Footpath 10 Weeley, which follows the north-western edge of the field. The parcel makes an appreciable contribution to views. The parcel itself is open, but the settlement edge is also readily apparent. The parcel is too narrow to be experienced as countryside.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 9.3

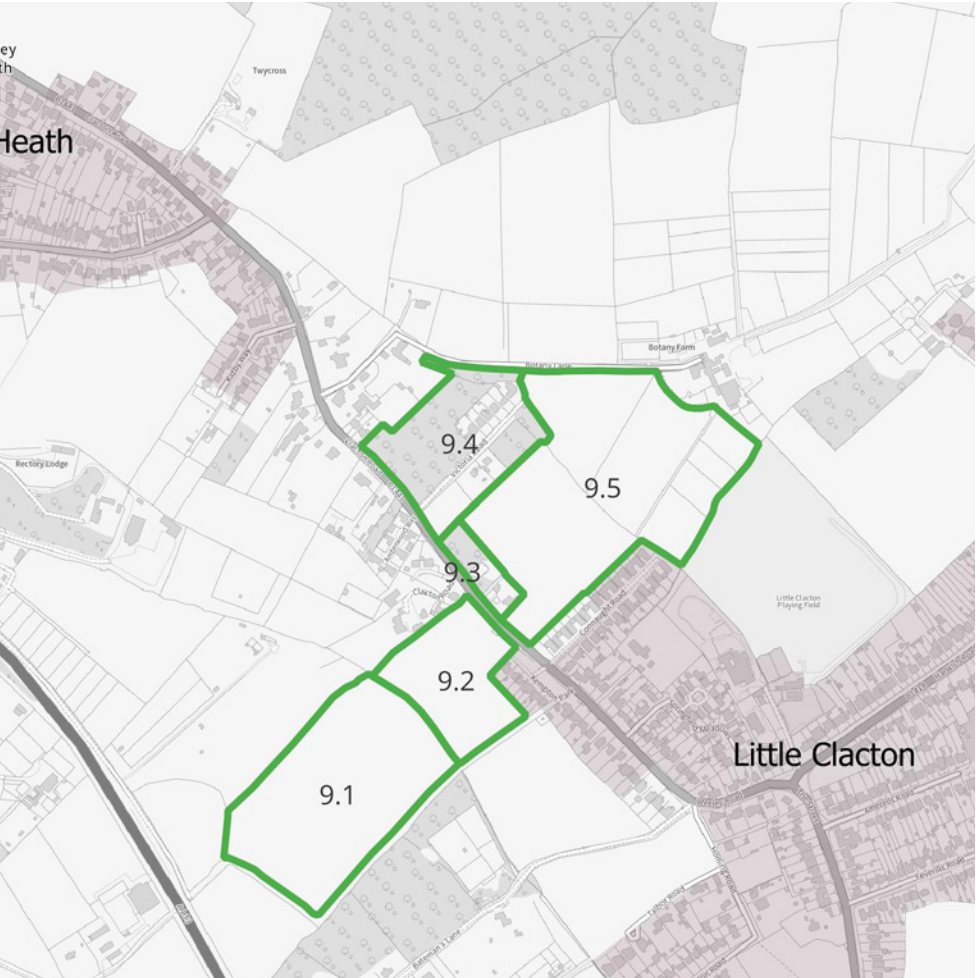


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies directly in between the settlements of Weeley Heath and Little Clacton.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Partial contribution	The parcel includes an existing residential dwelling which weakens its overall contribution to physical separation. The parcel does however also contain a parcel of woodland which contributes to the open and undeveloped character of the gap.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Partial contribution	The main movement route between the villages is Clacton Road and the small wooded area within this parcel helps to create a break between settlements. The wood is perceived as an undeveloped area and provides a strong visual break between the villages. The sense of visual separation is however weakened by development on the opposite side of Clacton Road. Despite this the parcel is considered to contribute to a longer length of undeveloped frontage on the northern side Clacton Road which provides some sense of separation between the settlements.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 9.4

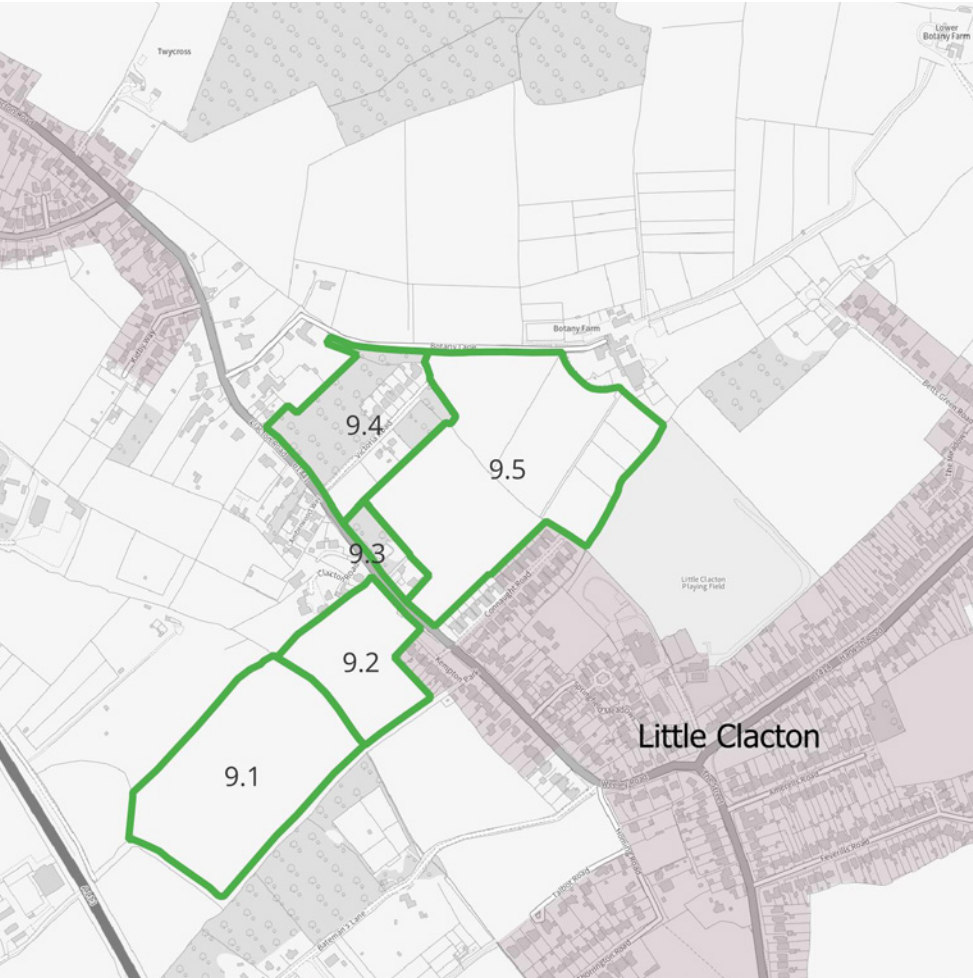


Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies directly in between the settlements of Weeley Heath and Little Clacton.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Partial contribution	The parcel includes some residential plots which are similar in character to the settlement, though they do not physically adjoin other development. The parcel also includes quite extensive and well vegetated undeveloped areas which contribute to the open and undeveloped character of the gap.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Partial contribution	The main movement route between the villages is Clacton Road and the undeveloped plots within this parcel helps to create a break between settlements. The road frontage in particular is undeveloped and well vegetated, and provides a visual break between the villages. The sense of visual separation is however weakened by development on the opposite side of Clacton Road. Despite this the parcel is considered to contribute to a longer length of undeveloped frontage on the northern side Clacton Road which provides some sense of separation between the settlements.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.

Parcel 9.5



Assessment criteria	Judgement	Commentary
Relationship to the settlements <i>The relationship of the parcel to the settlements</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel lies directly in between the settlements.
Physical character <i>Contribution to open and undeveloped character</i>	Strong contribution	The parcel consists of a field (sown with a pollen and nectar mix at the time of the survey) and paddocks. The parcel does not contain any buildings or hard surfacing. The parcel is considered to make a strong contribution to the open and undeveloped character of the gap.
Visual character <i>Contribution to visual separation</i>	Partial contribution	The parcel can be perceived from the adjoining properties on Connaught Road, from Footpath 20 Weeley, from Botany Lane, and from a short section of Clacton Road. The parcel forms part of a small undeveloped gap on Clacton Road which is too narrow to be experienced as countryside. The parcel itself contributes to visual openness, but sporadic development along Clacton Road weakens the overall sense of separation.

Recommendations

The parcel is recommended for inclusion within the proposed policy area.