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Swale Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

An assessment of the landscape sensitivity of the main settlement edges within Swale Borough

Final Report Prepared by LUC for Swale Borough Council
Incorporating consultation comments

October 2019



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Introduction



1 Introduction

Background & Purpose of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

- 1.1 Swale Borough Council (SBC) is in the early stages of preparing a Local Plan Review, which is expected to cover the period 2022-2038 and which will need to accommodate a significant amount of new housing growth. As part of the evidence base for the Local Plan, the Council needs to consider whether the landscape around the main urban areas, as well as sites for new settlements, has the capacity to accommodate new development without causing significant adverse effects on its character.
- 1.2 SBC commissioned LUC in September 2018 to prepare a landscape sensitivity assessment (hereafter referred to as the '**study**') for the land surrounding the main urban areas and larger villages within the Borough. The purpose of the study is to provide a robust and up-to-date evidence base and assessment to inform the appropriate scale, form and location of future development to minimise harm to landscape and the setting of settlements. By assessing and mapping the relative sensitivity of different landscapes the study will provide a tool for informing landscape change.
- 1.3 The outputs of this work will be used by the local planning authority to:
 - Identify land where development would be most appropriate to minimise impact on landscape i.e. areas of least sensitivity.
 - Help in refining broad growth areas and inform the evaluation of potential development locations.
 - Help establish site options for consideration through the Sustainability Appraisal process and for future consultation.
- 1.4 Preliminary landscape and visual appraisals have been carried out for four distinct areas of land being promoted as potential locations for new settlements, in response to SBC's New Garden Communities Prospectus. The new settlement appraisals complement and can be read in conjunction with this study; however, they are separate pieces of work with a different scope, as the landscape sensitivity assessment looks at strategic patterns of sensitivity to a generic scale and form of residential and employment development, whereas the appraisals consider specific emerging masterplans of a generally larger scale of overall development.

Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2019

- 1.5 The following extracts from the NPPF are those most relevant to landscape sensitivity. Words in bold are emphasised for the purposes of this report.
- 1.6 The NPPF 2019 has a commitment to conserving and enhancing the natural environment, including protecting and enhancing valued landscapes (including – but not limited to - designated landscapes such as AONBs and National Parks) and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside (Paragraph 170).
- 1.7 Paragraph 20 states '**Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for:**
 - a) housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;

- b) infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);*
- c) community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and*
- d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation’.*
- 1.8 Paragraph 127 states ‘**Planning policies** and decisions should ensure that developments:
- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience’.*
- 1.9 Paragraph 171 states ‘**Plans should: distinguish** between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries’.
- 1.10 Paragraph 180 contains one reference to sensitivity as follows:
- 1.11 ‘*Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development...*’

Planning Practice Guidance

The recent update of Planning Practice Guidance on the Natural Environment (*Paragraph: 037 Reference ID: 8-037-20190721 Revision date: 21 07 2019*) notes the following under the heading of ‘How can the character of the landscape be assessed?’

Landscape sensitivity can inform policy development and appropriate locations for development and can also be one of the considerations to be taken into account when making decisions on planning applications.

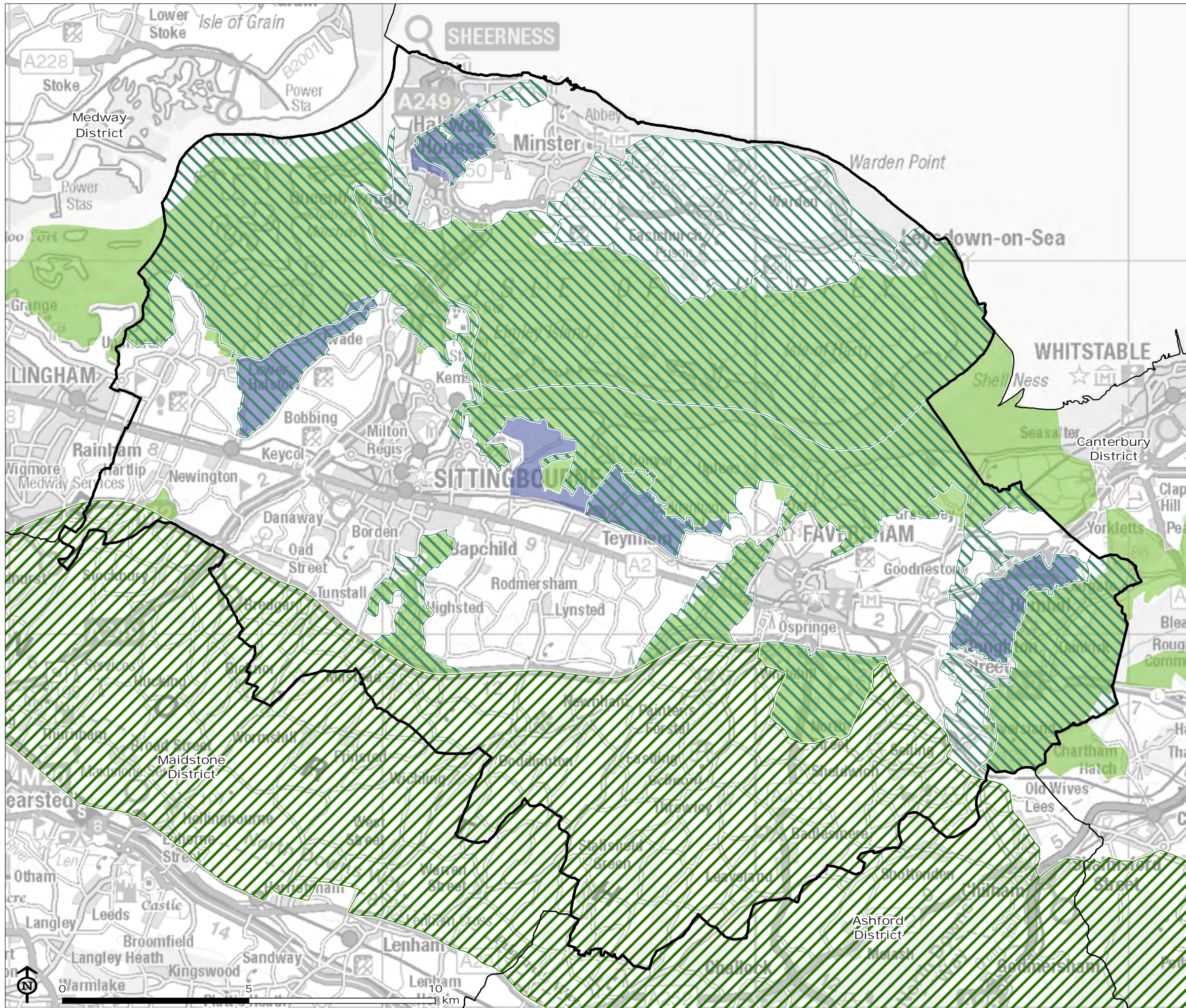
To help assess the type and scale of development that might be able to be accommodated without compromising landscape character, a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment can be completed.

To demonstrate the likely effects of a proposed development on the landscape, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment can be used.

Landscape Context

- 1.12 Swale contains some of **the nation's** finest landscapes, with around 20% of the Borough nationally designated as part of the Kent Downs AONB. Its quality is furthermore represented by Areas of High Landscape Value (AHLV) at Kent Level and Swale Level which cover a further 39% of the area.
- 1.13 **The local designations were reviewed by LUC in 2018 in the report 'Swale Local Landscape Designations – Review and Recommendations'. A number of changes to the current local designation boundaries were recommended, and subsequently agreed by Swale's Local Plan Panel to take forward in the Local Plan Review. The current landscape designations within Swale are illustrated on Figure 1.1 below.**
- 1.14 The Swale Borough Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal¹ (LCA) identifies 42 individual Landscape Character Areas, which form the primary evidence base and assessment area boundaries for this Landscape Sensitivity Assessment. Figure 1.2 below illustrates the Swale landscape character framework.

¹ Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal, September 2011 by Jacobs for Swale Borough Council



Swale Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 1.1: Current National and Local Landscape Designations in Swale

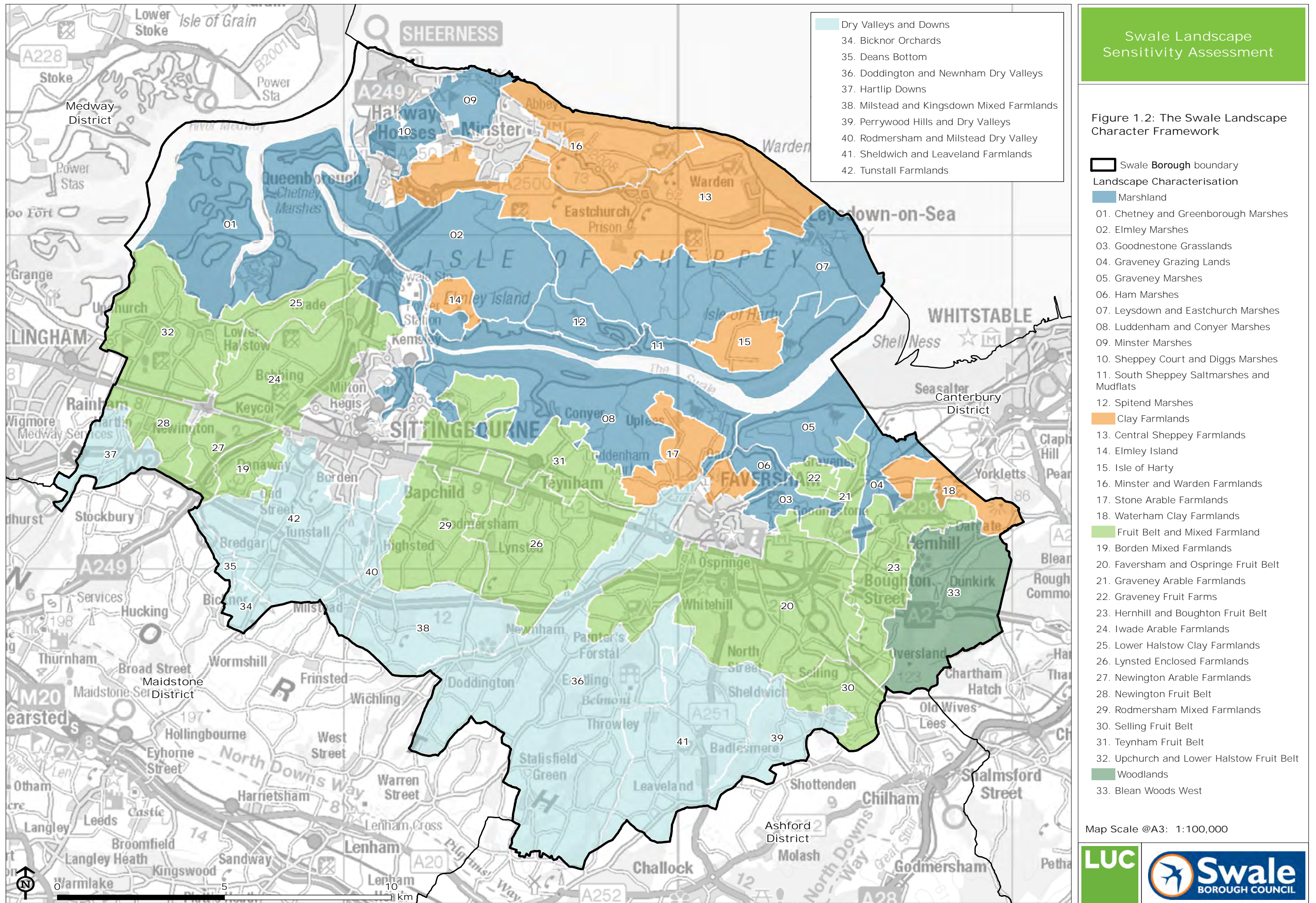
-  Swale Borough boundary
-  Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
-  Areas Of High Landscape Value - Kent Level
-  Areas Of High Landscape Value - Swale Level
-  Proposed Local Landscape Designation

Map Scale @A3: 1:100,000



Swale Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 1.2: The Swale Landscape Character Framework



Using this Study

Limitations of the landscape sensitivity assessment

- 1.15 This study provides an assessment of the relative landscape sensitivities of different landscape areas to residential and employment development, without knowing the exact location, layout, design or mitigation proposed.
- 1.16 It therefore should not be interpreted as a definitive statement on the suitability of a certain location for a particular development. It is not a replacement for detailed studies for specific siting and design and all developments will need to be assessed on their individual merits. The study is based on an assessment of landscape character using carefully defined criteria. Landscape sensitivity is the result of a complex interplay of often unequally weighted variables (or 'criteria'). We have sought to address this issue in our summary of overall landscape sensitivity given for each assessment area – which considers how the criteria based assessments combine to give an overall sensitivity result for the two different development types under consideration. The assessments are based on professional judgement, taking account of the interplay between criteria, as well as those which might be more important to the landscape character of the assessment area.
- 1.17 It is also worth noting that the assessment considers the following:
- The natural character of the landscape but not specific ecological issues in relation to species or habitats;
 - The historic and cultural character of the landscape but not specific cultural heritage/archaeological issues associated with individual designated heritage assets and their settings; and
 - The visual character of the landscape but not visual amenity issues associated with specific receptors, such as the overall quality, experience and nature of public views from specific locations such as promoted viewpoints, or of private views and outlook available to occupants of residential properties.
- 1.18 These are all issues that will need to be taken into account in site selection and impacts will need to be reported at the time when individual proposals are put forward – as such they will be addressed through the Sustainability Appraisal, the SHLAA, planning applications and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process including more detailed landscape and visual impact assessments and appraisals (LVIA).
- 1.19 This report concentrates on understanding the sensitivities to development and does not address capacity. Capacity is a further stage of assessment that requires consideration of cumulative development, landscape objectives, and thresholds of acceptable change to identify likely quantum of change that can be accommodated.
- 1.20 Finally, the report remains a strategic study and is based on the assessment of broad settlement edge assessment areas. There are likely to be spatial variations in character within any one assessment area and these are generally described in the text. Individual site level investigations will likely indicate further differences and variations at the site scale. This study was undertaken at 1:25,000 scale and involved a character level assessment involving desk study and field work from public rights of way and public vantage points.

Structure of this report

1.21 This report is set out as follows:

- Section 1 presents an introduction and policy context (this chapter).
- Section 2 presents the methodology and approach to the landscape sensitivity assessment, including the characteristics of the development types that form the focus of the study, together with the assessment criteria.
- Section 3 presents the overall landscape sensitivity assessment results.

1.22 The report is supported by the following appendix:

- Appendix 1 presents the landscape **sensitivity assessment 'profiles'** by individual area.

Methodology



2 Methodology

- 2.1 The information contained in the Swale LCA is the primary evidence base used for the assessment, backed up with site visits to record information at the sub-character area/settlement edge level and landscape changes.
- 2.2 The study addresses the following types of development. The scenarios were agreed with SBC as representative of specific development types coming forward.
- 2.3 Two development types are considered by this assessment, as described below:

Residential development

Scenario description: Housing developments up to circa 2 hectares in area, including typical dwellings of 2/3 storeys with gardens, at a net density range of 40-60 dwellings per hectare.

Examples of typical housing developments within Swale



Employment development (Use Class B)

Scenario description: Large block warehouse-type buildings, up to circa 2 hectares in area, and typically two storeys high. These could be stand-alone buildings or located within a larger complex of similar warehouses.

Examples of typical commercial/industrial units at Eurolink, Sittingbourne



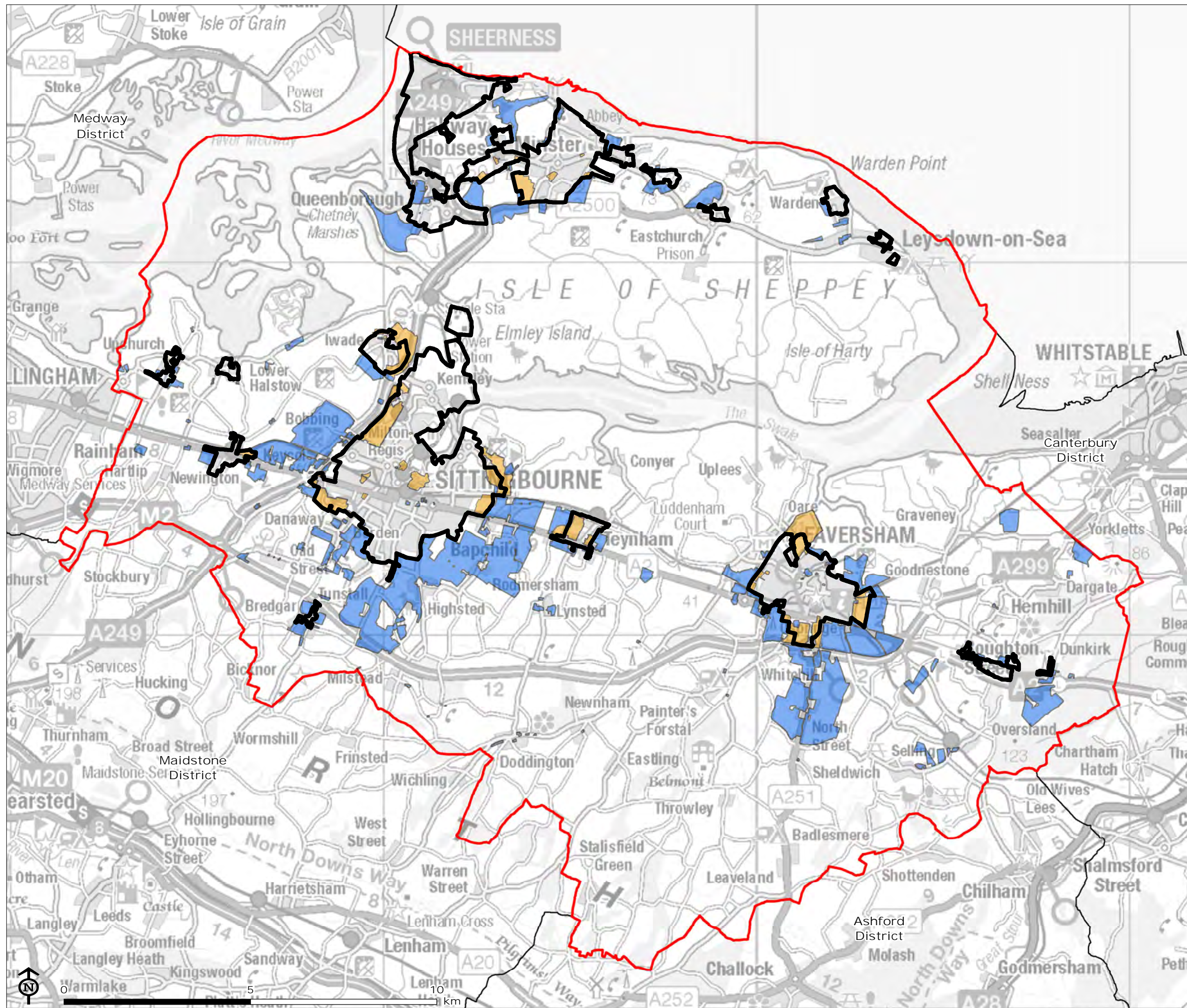
Defining the Spatial Framework for assessment

- 2.4 The main centres within Swale Borough are Sittingbourne, Faversham, Sheerness (with Queenborough) and Minster. Sittingbourne (population circa 49,300) is the main town, acting as the population, employment and service centre for the Borough.
- 2.5 Faversham (population circa 19,600) is an historic small market town at the centre of a rich farming hinterland. Sheerness (population circa 12,500) is the main shopping and service centre for the Isle of Sheppey and Minster is a neighbouring larger settlement on the island.
- 2.6 Larger villages along the main transport routes (principally the historic A2 Watling Street) like Newington, Teynham and Boughton have a range of local facilities and services.
- 2.7 Study areas were defined, following a desktop analysis of the following:
 - Built-up area boundaries as defined in the adopted Swale Borough Local Plan 2017
 - Housing, mixed use and employment allocations from the Swale Borough Local Plan 2017
 - The extent of Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) sites submitted 2017-2018
 - The extent of Employment Sites as set out in the Employment Land Review, 2018
 - Sites submitted through the Looking Ahead and New Garden Communities Prospectus consultations, April-June 2018
 - Landscape, heritage and ecological designations
 - Swale Landscape and Biodiversity Appraisal landscape character areas, 2011
 - Relevant information from Natural England (e.g. NCAs) and the Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation study
- 2.8 Clear landscape boundaries were defined for the study areas, generally based on the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal (LCA) but with reference to the above data and agreed with SBC. The extent of site allocations within the Local Plan 2017, together with the SHLAA sites submitted to the Council for consideration in 2017-2018, are shown within Figure 2.1 below.
- 2.9 The individual sensitivity assessment search areas for each of the main centres and towns were based on an outer radius of up to 2km from the settlement edge for the main towns, and up to 1km from the rural settlements. Within the 2km and 1km search areas for the main centres and smaller centres, respectively, land was scoped out of the assessment if there was no physical connection with the settlement (i.e. if another assessment area 'intervened' between the land and the settlement). Land was also scoped out based on defined key constraints, as agreed with SBC. The presence of the following constraints led to some land being automatically scoped out of the assessment:
 - Swale Flood Zone 3 (representing the highest level of flood risk);
 - Statutory national and international ecological designations including Ramsar sites, Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); and
 - Local Green Spaces, sports and playing fields
- 2.10 The Borough-wide key constraints which determined the scoping are shown within Figure 2.2. Occasionally it was not feasible to exclude particularly small or narrow areas of land subject to these constraints.
- 2.11 Figure 2.3 shows an example of the defined assessment areas around Iwade, following the removal of land via the scoping out process.

Swale Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

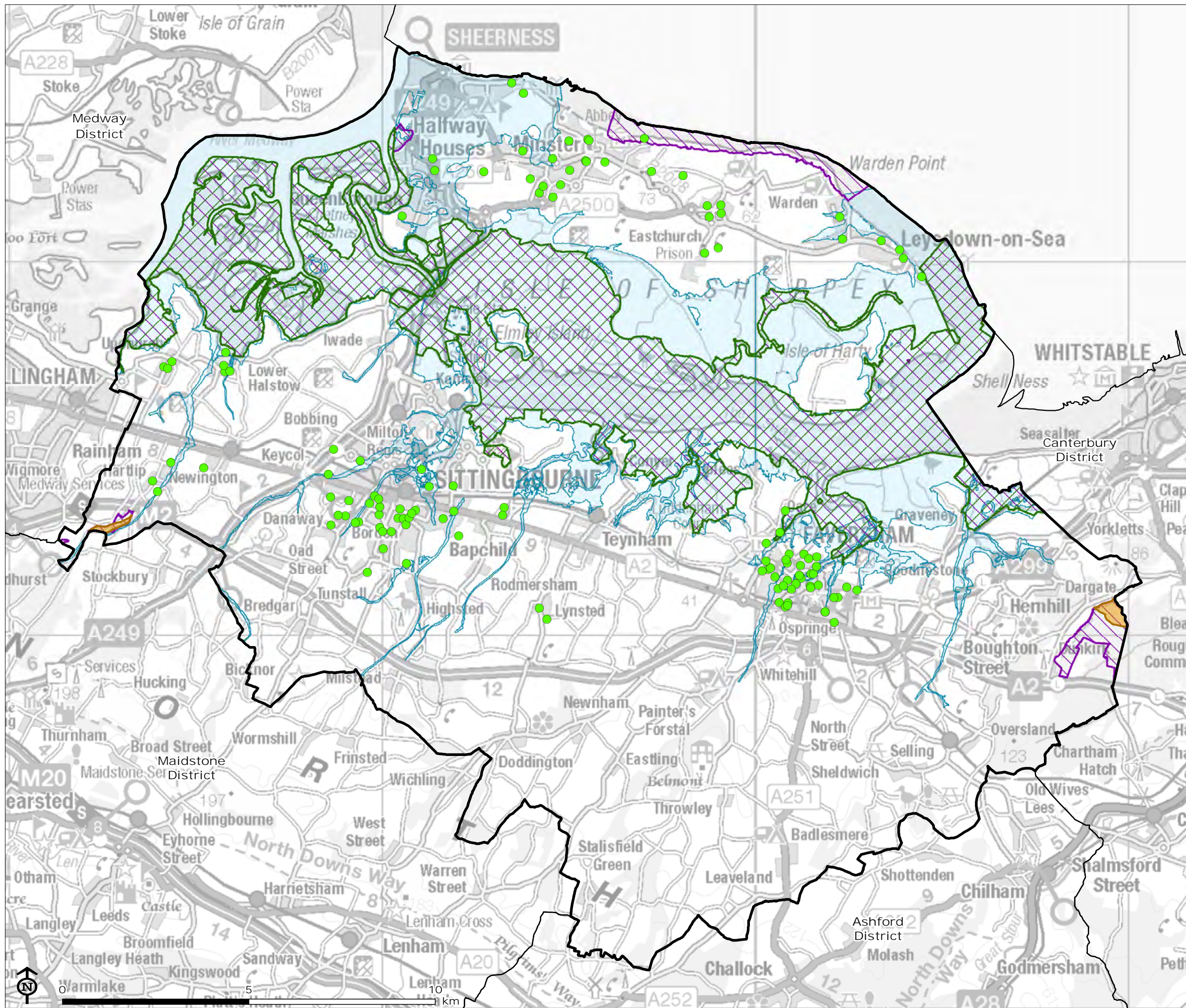
Figure 2.1: Location and extent of Local Plan 2017 Allocated Sites and SHLAA Call for Sites

- ▭ Swale Borough Boundary
- Built up Area Boundary
- SHLAA Call for Sites
- Allocations from Local Plan 2017



Map Scale @A3: 1:100,000





Swale Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

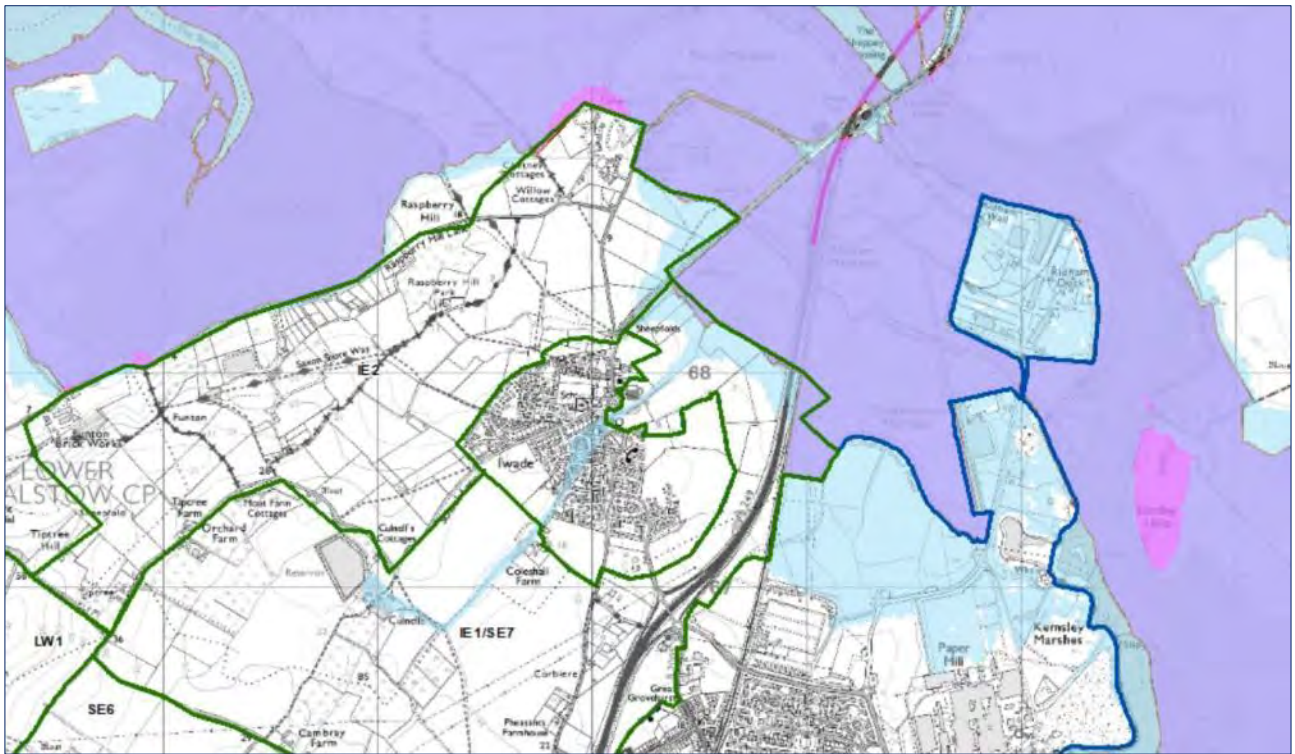
Figure 2.2: Borough-wide key constraints determining the scoping for assessment area

- Swale Borough boundary
- Special Protection Area and Ramsar
- Special Areas Of Conservation
- Sites Of Special Scientific Interest
- Flood Zone 3
- Local Green Space

Map Scale @A3: 1:100,000



Figure 2.3 ArcGIS screenshot of defined assessment areas around Iwade following scoping out process (shaded areas scoped out due to flood risk and ecological designations)





2.12 The scoping out process resulted in a total of 47 geographically distinct landscape sensitivity assessment areas being identified. These are outlined within Table 2.1 below and shown within a Borough-wide context in Figure 2.4 below.

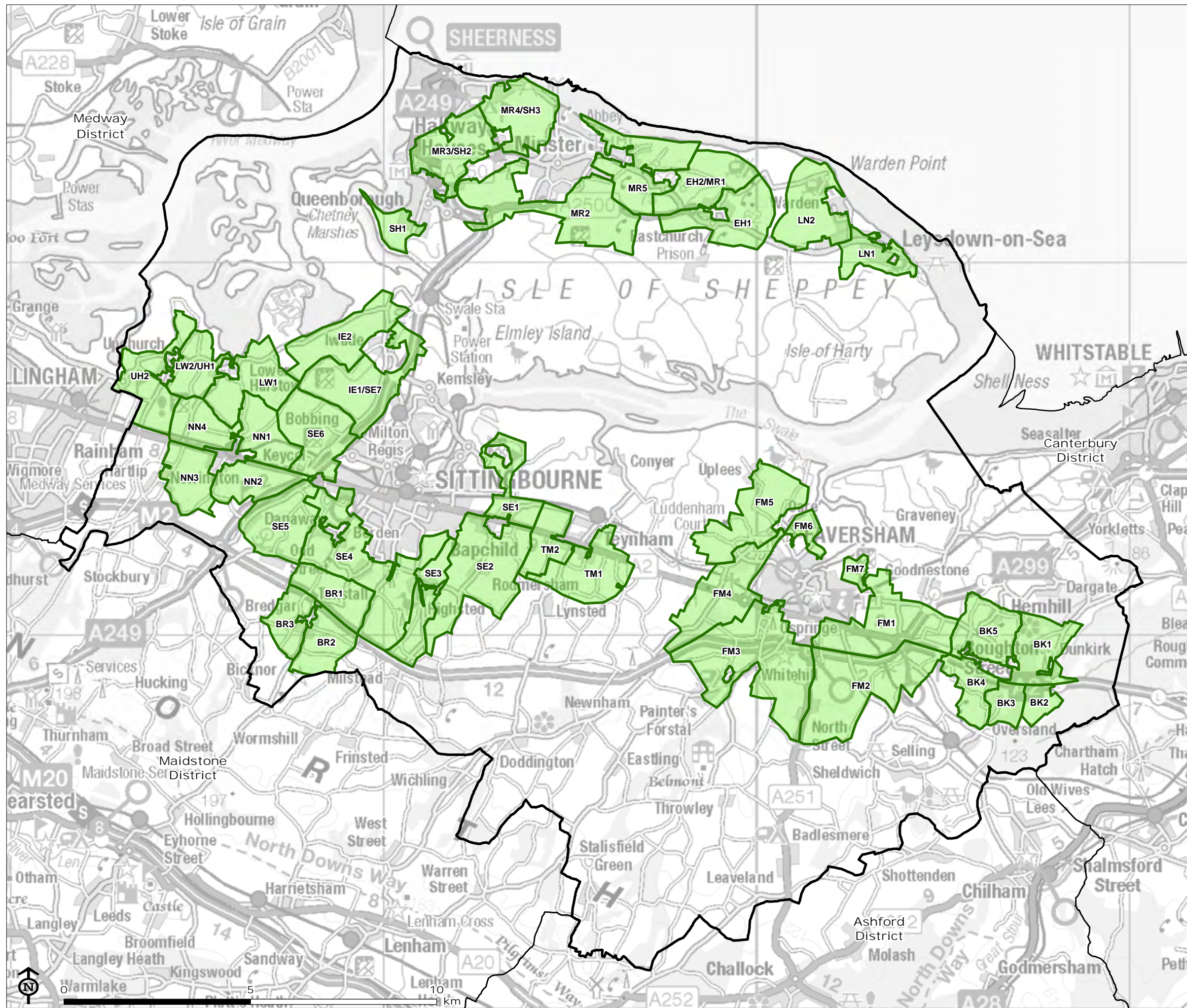
Table 2.1 Landscape sensitivity assessment areas within Swale Borough

Swale Borough settlements	Distinct landscape sensitivity assessment areas
Main urban areas	
Sittingbourne	7
Faversham	7
Sheerness/Queenborough	4
Minster	5
Larger rural settlements/villages	
Iwade	2
Teynham	2
Leysdown (including Warden)	2
Upchurch	2
Lower Halstow	2
Eastchurch	2
Bredgar	3
Newington	4
Boughton and Dunkirk	5
Total	47

Swale Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 2.4: Landscape sensitivity areas within Swale

-  Swale Borough boundary
-  Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Area



Map Scale @A3: 1:100,000



Process of Assessment

2.13 At the time of preparing this study (reporting May 2019) there was no prescribed method for assessing landscape sensitivity. The *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity* (Scottish Natural Heritage and the former Countryside Agency, 2004) is a discussion paper on landscape sensitivity and capacity **and has informed LUC's approach** over the years, along with experience of undertaking similar studies.

2.14 Paragraph 4.2 of Topic Paper 6 states that:

'Judging landscape character sensitivity requires professional judgement about the degree to which the landscape in question is robust, in that it is able to accommodate change without adverse impacts on character. This involves making decisions about whether or not significant characteristic elements of the landscape will be liable to loss... and whether important aesthetic aspects of character will be liable to change'.

2.15 In this study the following definition of sensitivity has been used. It is also compliant with the third edition of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA 3, 2013) as well as definitions used in other landscape sensitivity studies of this type:

Landscape sensitivity is the relative extent to which the character and quality/values of an area (including its visual attributes) is likely to change.

June 2019, 'An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment'

2.16 Following publication of the Swale Landscape Sensitivity Assessment in May 2019, Natural England published their long awaited 'An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management'. LUC was involved in the preparation of this document and were aware of its main themes and contents in undertaking the Swale study. We have reviewed Natural England's June 2019 approach and consider that the Swale study is fully compliant:

- Study is concise and proportionate
- Uses appropriate definitions
- Follows the four-step process – clear transparent and logical
- Uses appropriate susceptibility criteria
- Set out an appropriate approach for incorporating an understanding of landscape value at the strategic scale

A criteria-based assessment

2.17 The landscape sensitivity assessment uses carefully defined criteria. Criteria selection is based on the attributes of the landscape most likely to be affected by residential and employment **development, and considers both 'landscape' and 'visual' aspects of sensitivity**². The criteria used by this study are defined in Table 2.3, providing examples of the types of landscape character or features that could indicate low or high sensitivity against each.

Dealing with landscape value

2.18 The 2019 approach confirms that landscape values are more than just designations. In the Swale study we identify:

- Landscape designations – whether the assessment area is located within a nationally (AONB) or locally (AHLV/LLD) designated landscape

² In assessing visual sensitivity we considered the visual character of the landscape. A study of visual receptors was not part of this study and will be required at the site level for an LVIA.

- How the values associated with these designation landscapes are articulated within the susceptibility criteria - topography, perceptual qualities, cultural and historic features, biodiversity, for example if an assessment area expresses any of the relevant special qualities of the AONB or Local Landscape Designation
- Other values associated with an area – e.g. community values, recreational values

Making an overall judgement on levels of landscape sensitivity

2.19 A five-point rating from 'low' to high' landscape sensitivity is used to illustrate overall levels of landscape sensitivity i.e. how susceptible the character and quality of the landscape would be to change. These definitions are shown in the Error! Reference source not found..2 below.

Table 2.2 Five-point scale of landscape sensitivity

Sensitivity judgement	Definition
High	The key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are highly sensitive to change. It is unlikely to be able to accommodate the proposed change without significant character change/adverse effects.
Moderate-high	The key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are sensitive to change. There may be very limited situations/locations where the relevant change can be accommodated.
Moderate	Some of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are sensitive to change. It may have some potential to accommodate the relevant change in defined locations.
Low-moderate	Few of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are sensitive to change. They are resilient and have some potential to accommodate the change proposed.
Low	The key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are robust and are either unlikely to be subject to change or are not sensitive to the change proposed.

2.20 The assessment criteria include those relating to landscape and visual character and those relating to value are set out in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3 Sensitivity assessment criteria and definitions

Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Assessment Criteria				
<i>Topography and scale</i>				
This considers the shape and scale of the landform, landscape pattern and landscape elements in relation to the scale of potential development. Smooth, gently undulating or flat landforms are likely to be less sensitive to development than a landscape with a more dramatic landform, distinct landform features or incised valleys with prominent slopes.				
This criterion considers how developments fit with the scale of the landform (understanding the scale of the development proposed is important when applying this criterion). Larger scale, simple landforms are likely to be less sensitive to larger scale developments than smaller scale, enclosed landforms (where large scale developments could appear out of scale with the underlying landform). Conversely, smaller developments may be able to be screened within enclosed landforms, therefore reducing landscape sensitivity. Existing small-scale features in the landscape in the form of existing buildings or trees can also influence the scale of development that can be accommodated in the landscape. This criteria also needs to be considered in relation to visual character.				
Low sensitivity	Low-moderate sensitivity	Moderate sensitivity	Moderate-high sensitivity	High sensitivity

Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Assessment Criteria				
<i>e.g. the landscape has smooth, gently undulating or featureless landform with uniform large-scale landscape pattern and low density of overlying landscape features.</i>		<i>e.g. the landscape has an undulating landform and some distinct landform features: it is overlain by a mixture of small-scale and larger scale field patterns and a moderate density of small-scale landscape features.</i>		<i>e.g. the landscape has a dramatic landform or distinct landform features that contribute positively to landscape character: the area has a high density of small-scale landscape features and is overlain by a small-scale field pattern.</i>
<p><i>Natural character</i></p> <p>This criterion considers the 'natural' qualities of the landscape in terms of coverage of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features (e.g. trees, hedgerows) which could be vulnerable to loss from development. Areas with frequent natural features (including large areas of nationally or internationally designated habitats) result in increased sensitivity to development, while landscapes with limited natural features (including intensively farmed areas or areas with high levels of existing development) will be less sensitive. This criterion also looks at role as part of a wider network of natural features (Nature Recovery Network).</p>				
Low sensitivity	Low-moderate sensitivity	Moderate sensitivity	Moderate-high sensitivity	High sensitivity
<i>e.g. much of the landscape is intensively farmed or developed with little semi-natural habitat coverage and few valued natural features.</i>		<i>e.g. there are areas of valued semi-natural habitats and features found in parts of the landscape, whilst other parts are intensively farmed or developed.</i>		<i>e.g. large areas of the landscape are nationally or internationally designated for their nature conservation interest: there is a frequent occurrence of valued natural features across the landscape.</i>
<p><i>Sense of time depth / historic landscape character</i></p> <p>This considers the extent to which the landscape has 'time-depth' (a sense of being an historic landscape, with reference to the Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation) and/or the presence of heritage assets that are important to landscape character (i.e. Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, archaeological features and remains or other features listed in the landscape character assessment).</p> <p>Landscapes with small-scale, more irregular field patterns of historic origin are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than landscapes with large, regular scale parliamentary field patterns. These differences in historic character are known as 'Historic Landscape Types', and were defined within Swale by the Kent HLC project in 2001. Each Landscape Area within this study typically contains more than one, or several, distinct Historic Landscape Types, for example 'small fields with wavy boundaries'; 'medium regular fields'; 'orchards'; 'pre 1801 coppices' and 'post 1801 settlement', with reference to whether these features were present or absent on the First Edition 1 inch Ordnance Survey map of Kent produced in 1801.</p>				
Low sensitivity	Low-moderate sensitivity	Moderate sensitivity	Moderate-high sensitivity	High sensitivity
<i>e.g. A landscape with relatively few historic features important to the character of the area and little time depth (i.e. large intensively farmed fields).</i>		<i>e.g. A landscape with some visible historic features of importance to character, and a variety of time depths.</i>		<i>e.g. A landscape with a high density of historic features important to the character of the area and great time depth (i.e. piecemeal enclosure with irregular boundaries, ridge and furrow)</i>
<p><i>Visual character</i></p> <p>This considers the visual prominence of the assessment area, reflecting the extent of openness or enclosure in the landscape (due to landform or land cover), and the degree of inter-visibility with the surrounding landscape (i.e. the extent to which potential development would be visible).</p> <p>Visually prominent landscapes are likely to be more sensitive to development than those which are not so visually prominent. Landscapes which are visually prominent and inter-visible with adjacent landscapes (both urban and rural)</p>				

Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Assessment Criteria

are likely to be more sensitive to development than those which are more hidden or less widely visible.

It also considers the skyline character of the area including whether it forms a visually distinctive skyline or an important undeveloped skyline. Prominent and distinctive and/or undeveloped skylines, or skylines with important landmark features, are likely to be more sensitive to development because new buildings/structures may detract from these skylines as features in the landscape. Important landmark features on the skyline might include historic features or monuments.

Low sensitivity	Low-moderate sensitivity	Moderate sensitivity	Moderate-high sensitivity	High sensitivity
<i>e.g. the area is enclosed/visually contained and/or has a low degree of visibility from surrounding landscapes and the area does not form a visually distinctive or important undeveloped skyline</i>		<i>e.g. the area is semi-enclosed or has some enclosed and some open areas. It is likely to have some inter-visibility with surrounding landscapes, and may have some visually distinctive or undeveloped skylines within the area.</i>		<i>e.g. the area is open and/or has a high degree of visibility from surrounding landscapes, and/or the area forms a visually distinctive skyline or an important undeveloped skyline.</i>

Perceptual and experiential qualities

This considers qualities such as the rural character of the landscape (traditional land uses with few modern human influences), scenic qualities associated with valued landscapes e.g. AONB special qualities, sense of remoteness and/or tranquillity, and the extent of public access via Public Rights of Way and/or Open Access Land. Landscapes that are relatively remote or tranquil (due to freedom from human activity and disturbance and having a perceived naturalness or a traditional rural feel with few modern human influences) tend to increase levels of sensitivity to development compared to landscapes that contain signs of modern development. High scenic value and dark night skies also add to sensitivity in relation to this criterion. This is because development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from a sense of tranquillity and or remoteness/naturalness.

Low sensitivity	Low-moderate sensitivity	Moderate sensitivity	Moderate-high sensitivity	High sensitivity
<i>e.g. the area is significantly influenced by development/ human activity, where new development would not be out of character. Low or no public access.</i>		<i>e.g. A landscape with some sense of rural character, but with some modern elements and human influences. Some Public Rights of Way.</i>		<i>e.g. A tranquil or highly rural landscape, lacking strong intrusive elements. A landscape of high scenic value with dark skies and a high perceived degree of rural character and naturalness with few modern human influences. Extensive public access via PRowS / open access land.</i>

Character and setting of settlement

This considers the overall settlement form and character of existing settlement and considers whether development in the landscape would be in accordance with the general pattern, setting and form of current development and relationship with the existing settlement edge. It includes an understanding of the landscape pattern associated with settlement edges (where relevant), for example if it is well integrated by woodland cover or open and exposed to form a 'hard edge' to the adjoining landscape.

This criterion also considers the extent to which the landscape contributes to the identity and distinctiveness of settlements, by way of its character and/or scenic quality, for example by providing a backdrop/ setting, or playing an important part in views from a settlement. This also considers the extent to which the area contributes to a perceived gap between settlements (the loss of which would increase coalescence).

Low sensitivity	Low-moderate sensitivity	Moderate sensitivity	Moderate-high sensitivity	High sensitivity

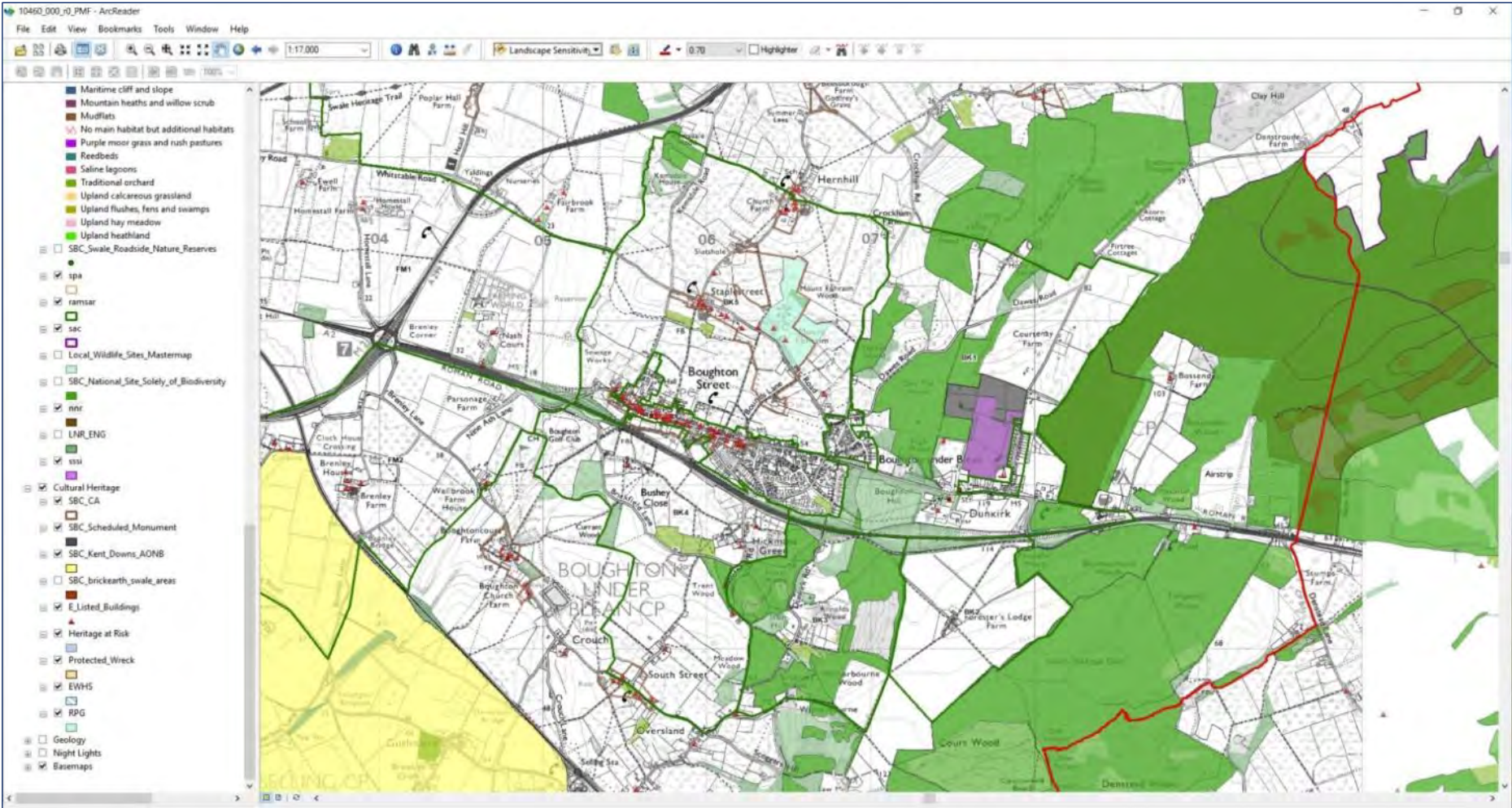
Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Assessment Criteria

<p><i>e.g. the area does not contribute positively to the setting of the settlement or play a separation role. Development in the assessment area would have a good relationship with the existing settlement form/ pattern, and could provide the opportunity to improve an existing settlement edge.</i></p>		<p><i>e.g. the area provides some contribution to the setting of the settlement by providing, or plays some part in views from the settlement, or play a role in the perception of a gap between settlements. Development in the assessment area may be slightly at odds with the settlement form/ pattern, and may adversely affect the existing edge to some extent.</i></p>		<p><i>e.g. the area provides an attractive backdrop/ setting to the settlement, plays an important part in views from the settlement, or forms an important part in the perception of a gap between settlements. Development in the assessment area would have a poor relationship with the existing settlement form/pattern, and would adversely affect an existing settlement edge (which may be historic or distinctive).</i></p>
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Desk Study

- 2.21 The first task in the assessment process, following the definition of the 47 spatially distinct study areas against the agreed criteria, was to carry out a desk-top analysis of each settlement and its component study areas. This involved the mapping of multiple data sets within ArcGIS (Geographical Information System) to identify the potential sensitivities of each area. An example of the data sets used is shown in a screenshot from ArcGIS in Figure 2.5 below.

Figure 2.5 Screenshot from ArcGIS showing key data sets used for spatial sensitivity analysis



Field Verification

- 2.22 A structured process of field survey verification was undertaken by landscape experts in order to test and refine the outputs from the desk study. Each assessment area was visited in turn to record information and take photographs. The field survey was undertaken from roads and public rights of way to gain a understanding of landscape character sensitivity.
- 2.23 The landscape assessment fieldwork focused in particular on the relationships between the assessment sites and adjoining settlement edges, landscape settings and wider views, including the relationship with locally or nationally designated landscapes (e.g. Kent Downs AONB), their settings and special qualities. It also noted any important features within each area that would be sensitive to change, and examined potential opportunities for landscape enhancement, mitigation and Green Infrastructure.

Consultation

- 2.24 A 6 week informal consultation was carried out on this assessment over the summer of 2019. Parish and town councils were invited to make comments and the consultation was advertised on the Emerging Local Plan for Swale (Swale Borough Council) website. A total of 15 sets of representations were received from parish councils, amenity groups, developers and their agents. All comments were reviewed and considered by Swale Borough Council and LUC and amendments made to the assessment report where relevant.

Reporting

- 2.25 A pilot assessment was produced to agreement with SBC before the full report was prepared.
- 2.26 Each settlement report produced as part of this study contains the individual landscape sensitivity area **'profiles' focussed around the settlement edge**. The reports are structured as follows:
- An aerial photograph showing the boundaries of the assessment areas identified for the settlement;
 - An overview of the settlement in terms of its location, form, character and setting;
 - A short description of each assessment area surrounding the settlement;
 - Identification of any areas scoped out of the assessment;
 - Landscape sensitivity profiles for each assessment area, comprising: and
 - Detailed map of the site, with relevant designations and constraints.
 - Representative photographs.
 - Overall description of the location and landscape character context – i.e. which Landscape Character Area(s) the area falls within.
 - Landscape value context, in terms of any relevant national and local landscape designations (noting that value information is included in the individual criteria assessment).
 - Criteria-based landscape sensitivity assessment, with a description given against each assessment criterion.
 - Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential and employment development, including the five-point scale rating.
 - General guidance applicable to potential development within each area.

Results



3 Results

3.1 Table 3.1 below provides a summary of the overall landscape sensitivity judgement ratings for each of the assessment areas. These ratings are also mapped in Figures 3.1 and 3.2.

Note that the overall judgement scores should always be interpreted in conjunction with the information contained in the detailed profiles within each of the reports for the individual settlements. It should also not be assumed that all areas with lower sensitivity ratings could be considered suitable for development, as cumulative issues would need to be considered.

Table 3.1 Overall landscape sensitivity




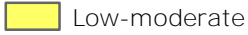



Settlement	Assessment Area	Overall Landscape Sensitivity to Residential	Overall Landscape Sensitivity to Employment
Sittingbourne	SE1	M	M
	SE2	M-H	M-H
	SE3	H	H
	SE4	M-H	M-H
	SE5	M-H	M-H
	SE6	M	M
	SE7	L-M	L-M
Faversham	FM1	M	M
	FM2	H	H
	FM3	H	H
	FM4	H	H
	FM5	H	H
	FM6	H	H
	FM7	M-H	M-H
Sheerness/Queenborough	SH1	M-H	H
	SH2	H	H

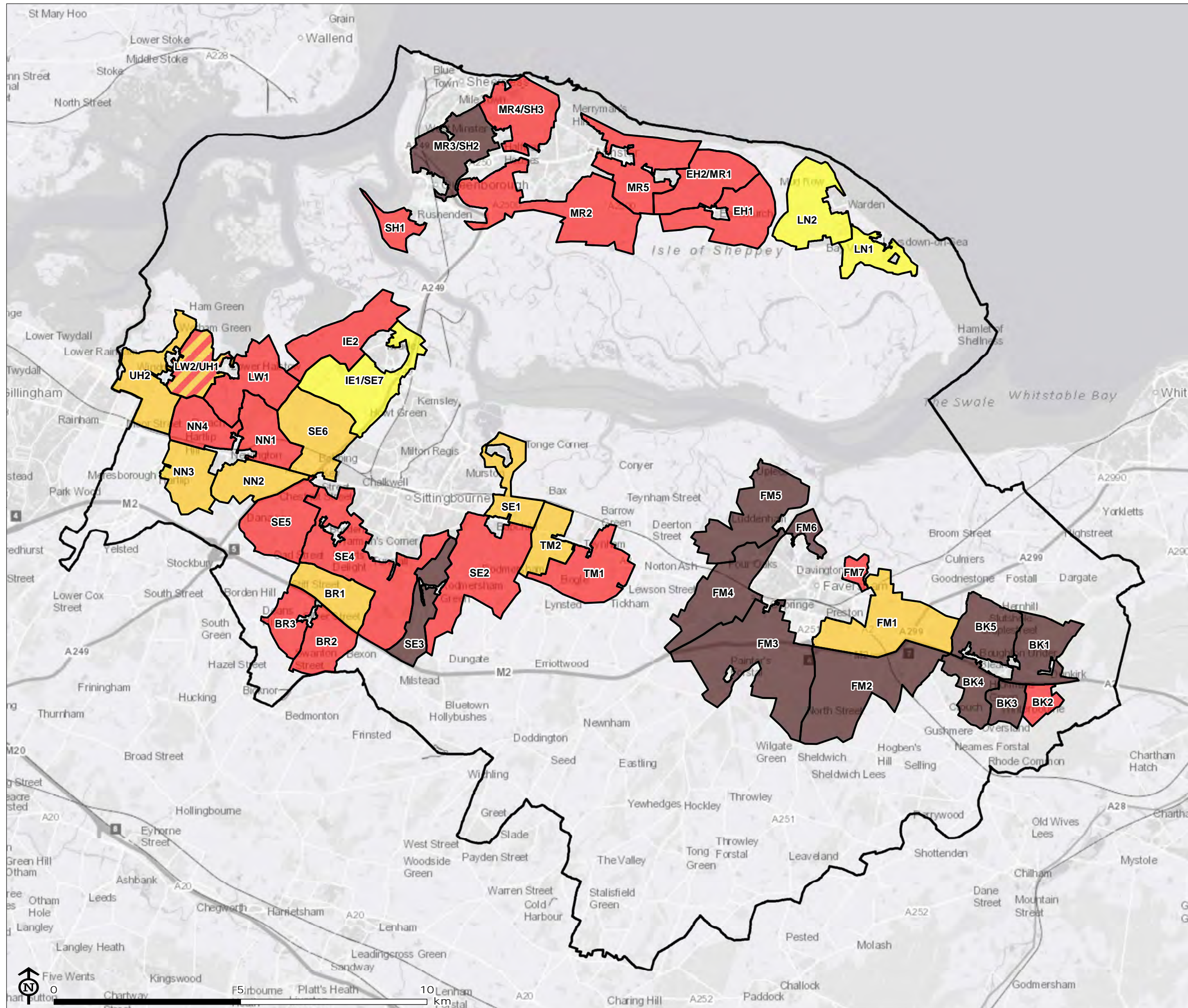
Settlement	Assessment Area	Overall Landscape Sensitivity to Residential	Overall Landscape Sensitivity to Employment
	SH3	M-H	M-H
Minster	MR1	M-H	M-H
	MR2	M-H	M-H
	MR3	H	H
	MR4	M-H	M-H
	MR5	M-H	H
Iwade	IE1	L-M	L-M
	IE2	M-H	H
Teynham	TM1	M-H	M-H
	TM2	M	M
Leysdown (including Warden)	LN1	L-M	M
	LN2	L-M	M
Upchurch	UH1	M	M-H
	UH2	M	M-H
Lower Halstow	LW1	M-H	H
	LW2	M-H	H
Eastchurch	EH1	M-H	M-H
	EH2	M-H	M-H
Bredgar	BR1	M	M-H
	BR2	M-H	H
	BR3	M-H	H
Newington	NN1	M-H	M-H
	NN2	M	M
	NN3	M	M

Settlement	Assessment Area	Overall Landscape Sensitivity to Residential	Overall Landscape Sensitivity to Employment
	NN4	M-H	M-H
Boughton and Dunkirk	BK1	H	H
	BK2	M-H	M-H
	BK3	H	H
	BK4	H	H
	BK5	H	H

Swale Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Fig 3.1: Overall Landscape Sensitivity to Residential Development

-  Swale Borough Boundary
-  Sensitivity to Residential Development
-  Low
-  Low-moderate
-  Moderate
-  Moderate-high
-  High



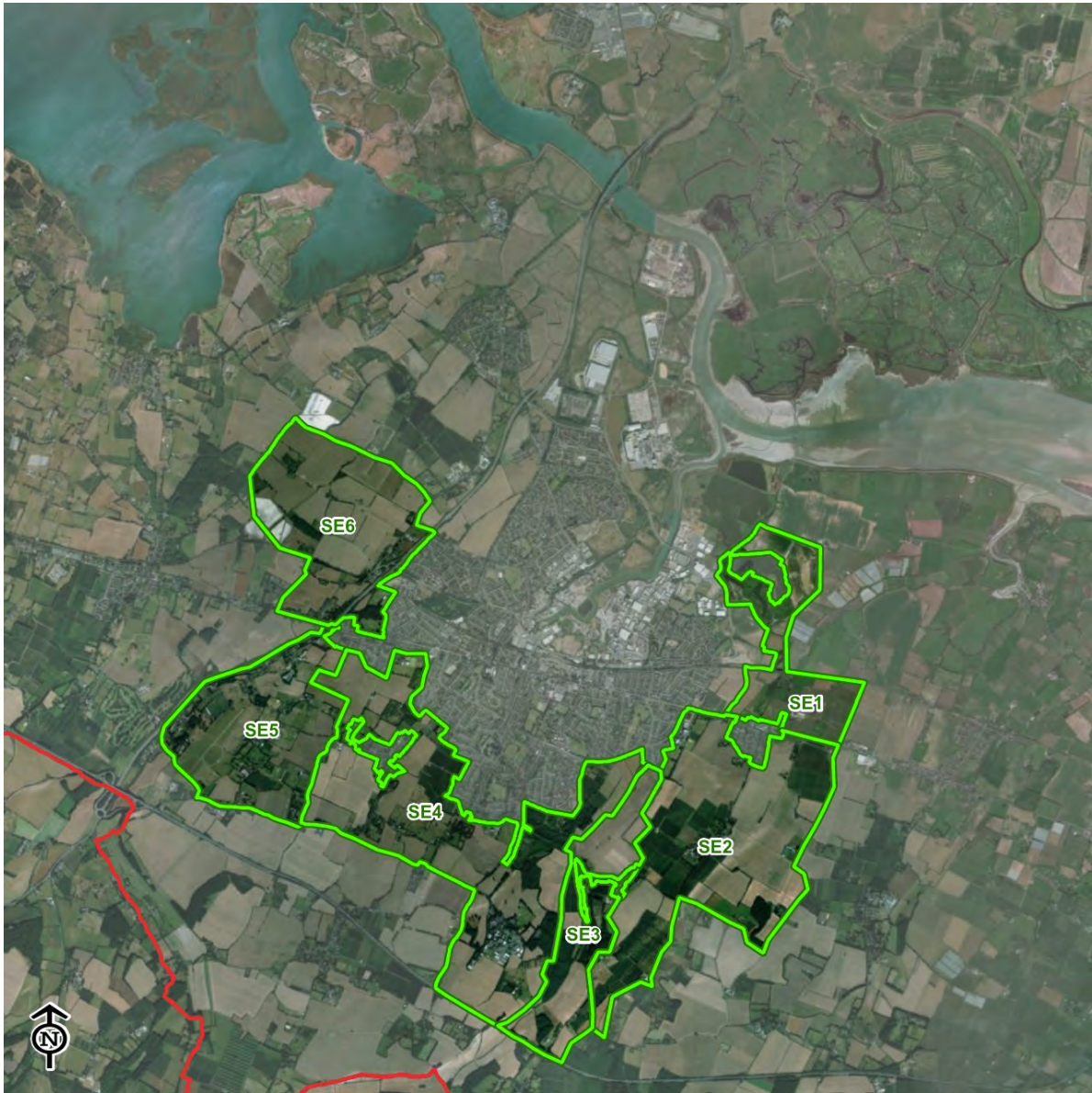
Map Scale @A3: 1:100,000



Appendix 1: Landscape Sensitivity Assessments



Settlement Area: Sittingbourne



Sittingbourne

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Location and Description

The town of Sittingbourne is located in the west of Swale Borough, and is characterised by a linear historic settlement core running alongside the Roman Road of Watling Street, now the route of the A2, and the neighbouring settlement of Milton Regis (now within modern Sittingbourne). The town contains a variety of building styles and periods, including coaching inns, 18th century urban townhouses, manufacturing industries around Milton Creek and 20th century commuter homes.

The settlement edge is divided into seven areas for assessment of sensitivity to residential and employment development. These largely relate to the landscape character areas and comprise:

SE1 – The low-lying, gently undulating mixed arable and grazing fields to the east and north-east of Sittingbourne.

SE2 – The open, gently rolling mixed farmlands of arable, pasture and orchards to the south-east of Sittingbourne.

SE3 – The dry chalk valley with rounded ridgelines and arable, orchards and woodland to the south of Sittingbourne.

SE4 – the arable fields, orchards and horticulture, and Kent Science Park to the south of Sittingbourne.

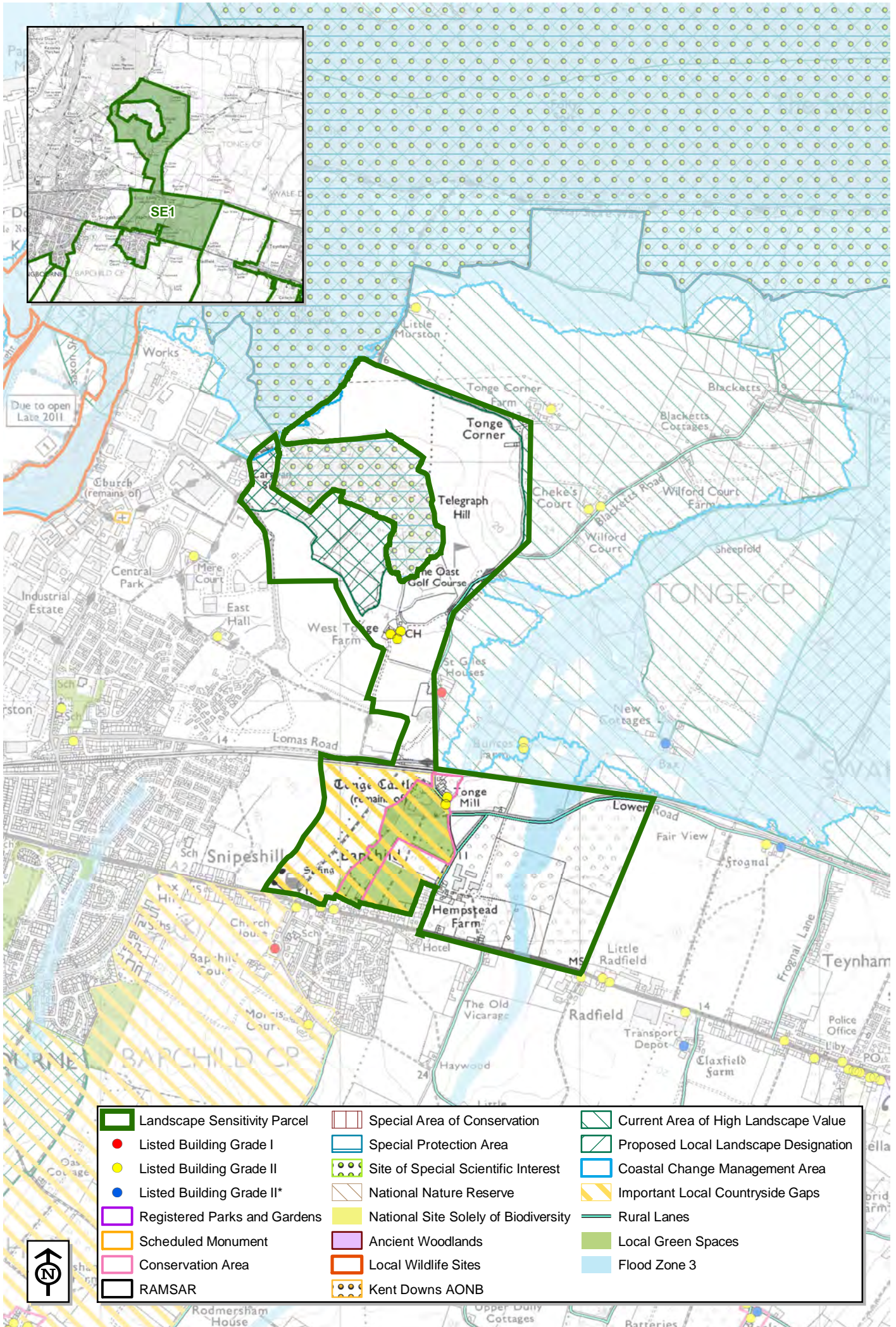
SE5 – the arable fields and remnant orchards to the south west of Sittingbourne.

SE6 – the arable fields and woodland to the west of Sittingbourne.

SE7 – the arable fields and commercial areas at Howt Green, north west of Sittingbourne (see also IE1).

Areas beyond the northern settlement edge and further to the east have been scoped out of the assessment due to flood risk (Environment Agency Flood Zone 3) and nature conservation constraints (e.g. SSSI and SAC).

Sittingbourne Area SE1: Designations and Constraints



Representative photographs



View south-west to edge of Sittingbourne from Church Road.



View north-west to Telegraph Hill from Church Road

Location and landscape character

The landscape area to the north-east of Sittingbourne lies predominantly within the Teynham Fruit Belt landscape character area (No.26). A very small part of it also lies within the Luddenham and Conyer Marshes landscape character area (No.8). It comprises a combination of arable and pasture fields, areas of commercial orchards and horticulture, a small golf centre and a solar farm in the far north.

Landscape value

A small, low-lying area of woodland and open land with a grazing marsh character directly to the east of Swale Way is within the AHLV – Kent Level. The remainder of the area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local).

The small area is recommended in the 2018 study for designation as part of the North Kent Marshes – South Swale LLD.

Assessment Criterion

Sensitivity description

Topography and scale

The topography is low lying and flat to gently undulating, except in the north at Telegraph Hill where the land slopes upwards quite steeply to over 20m AOD. There is a minor watercourse running north from Bapchild with a very shallow valley landform.

The landscape scale is predominantly medium, although the elevated arable area at Telegraph Hill, which also contains a solar farm, has a larger scale, and the area around Tonge Mill has a smaller scale with many human scale features.

Natural character

There is a limited network of identified Priority Habitats within this area. These are confined to isolated, small blocks of deciduous woodland in the north around the marshy area and the south around Tonge Mill; and a traditional orchard around Tonge Mill. These features exist within and alongside areas of intensive arable farmland which do not exhibit a natural character.

There are no statutory ecological designations in the area, although the outlying area of Swale marshes which it surrounds is part of the Swale SPA, SSSI and Ramsar site.

Hempstead Lane, Church Road, Scraps Hill and Lower Road are all locally designated Rural Lanes.

<p>Sense of time depth / historic character</p>	<p>The Swale HLC identifies a range of landscape types within the area, including: prairie fields in the north (parliamentary type enclosures with extensive boundary loss); small regular parliamentary type enclosures; fields predominantly bounded by tracks, roads and other rights of way; orchards and miscellaneous valley bottom paddocks and pastures (around Tonge).</p> <p>Tonge Conservation Area is located south of the railway line and is an important feature within this landscape area. It comprises a cluster of historic vernacular buildings set around a scenic mill pond, including the Grade II listed Tonge Mill and Old Mill House, and the earthworks relating to what is thought to be a moated medieval manor house.</p> <p>West Tonge Farm, north of the railway line, contains another cluster of Grade II listed buildings comprising a farmhouse, distinctive oasthouse and stables.</p> <p>Time-depth is also provided by the continuity of agriculture and fruit cultivation within the area, with commercial orchards east of Tonge, although some traditional orchards and hedgerows have been lost in recent decades.</p>
<p>Visual character</p>	<p>The open area around Telegraph Hill in the north has some visually prominent slopes, from where expansive panoramic views along Church Road over the lower lying parts of the landscape area are possible. A pylon route crosses this elevated area, resulting in a modern large scale feature on the skyline. There is some inter-visibility here with the marshes and the AHLV.</p> <p>Elsewhere, the broadly flat landform with arable, pasture and orchards and intermittent enclosure from hedgerows and hedgerow trees results in a generally undeveloped and undistinctive skyline.</p> <p>Visual prominence within the area is variable due to the mixture of field sizes, although the general degree of enclosure is not as strong as within other landscape areas.</p>
<p>Perceptual and experiential qualities</p>	<p>The sense of rural character and tranquillity increases with distance from the edge of Sittingbourne and the A2. An overhead powerline crosses a minor part of the area close to Little Murston.</p> <p>Tonge and Church Road have a relatively isolated, rural and tranquil feel, although in the north there are frequent views of large scale warehouses and industry around Sittingbourne, and the pylon route.</p> <p>The open space around Tonge Mill Pond, which includes a community orchard and woodland, is used informally for recreation, and is locally designated as a local green space.</p> <p>Bapchild Cricket Club ground is also present within the area, north of the A2.</p> <p>There is no public access within the landscape area north of the railway line, although the Swale Heritage Trail promoted recreational route runs along Church Road, and a footpath runs along the north-western site boundary. South of the railway line there are two footpaths running between Bapchild and Tonge Mill.</p>
<p>Character and setting of existing settlement</p>	<p>The north-eastern settlement edge of Sittingbourne which adjoins this landscape area is subject to significant new mixed-use development and ongoing construction works along Swale Way (Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road). At present this exhibits a relatively hard edge, as new integrating landscaping and screening vegetation is either absent or immature. The landscape here has a marshy character consistent with its proximity to neighbouring marshland and the Swale, which contributes a sense of place and distinct backdrop to the area.</p> <p>Further south, the shallow valley area provides a scenic backdrop to linear housing along the A2 at Bapchild, and properties along Hempstead Road and Church Road,</p>

Tonge. This area also has importance as a perceived rural gap between Sittingbourne and Bapchild.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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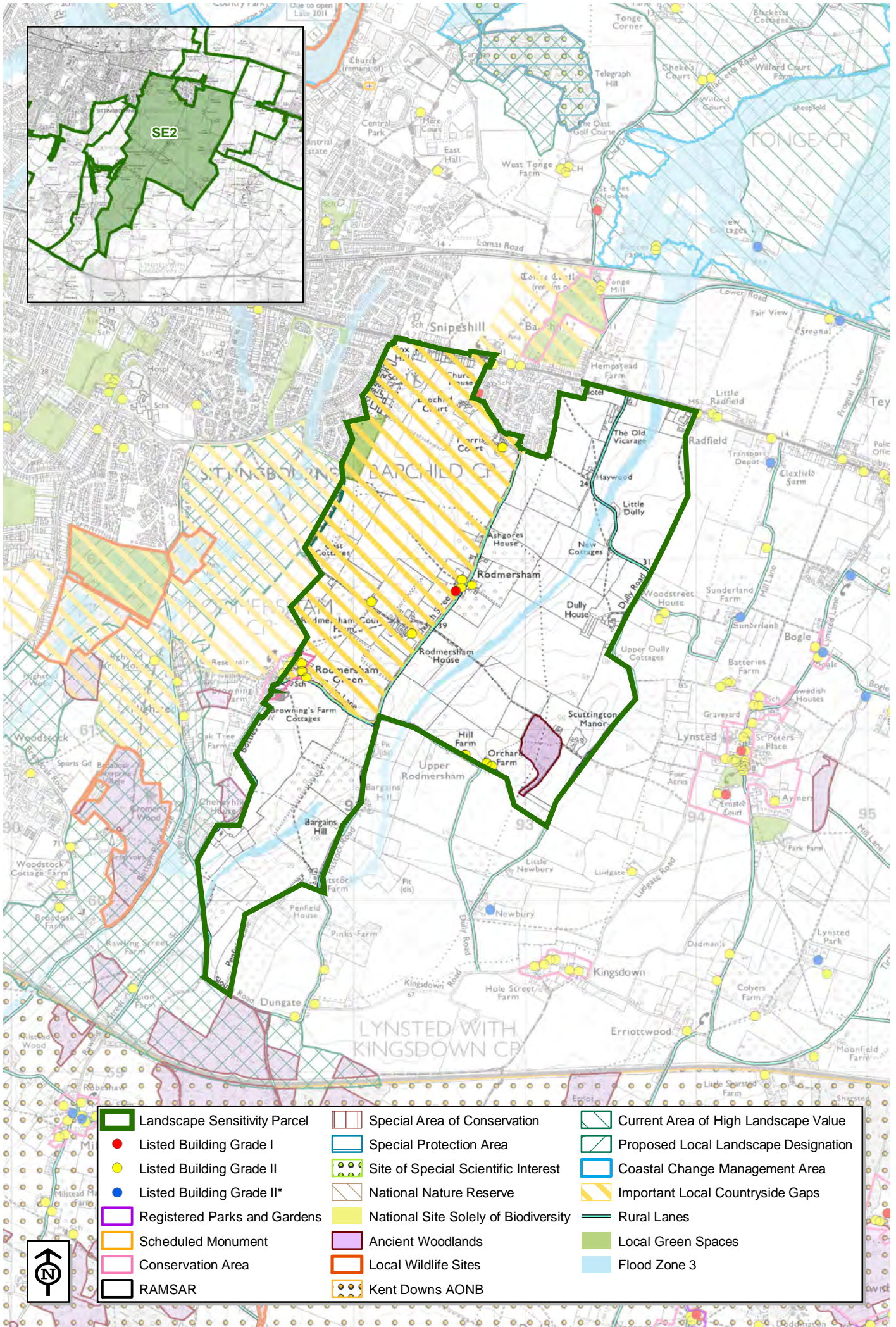
This is a relatively varied area of landscape character, with a mixture of open fields and more intimate areas, particularly south of the railway line around Tonge. These attributes, in combination with the absence of landscape designations within the majority of the area, indicate a moderate overall sensitivity to future change from residential and employment development.

Spatial variations in sensitivity within the area: The area south of the railway line around Tonge has a higher sensitivity due its smaller scale, higher scenic quality and greater prevalence of valued historic and natural features. The small area within the AHLV with a semi-natural woodland and grazing marsh character, which adjoins the Swale ecological designations, also has a higher sensitivity.

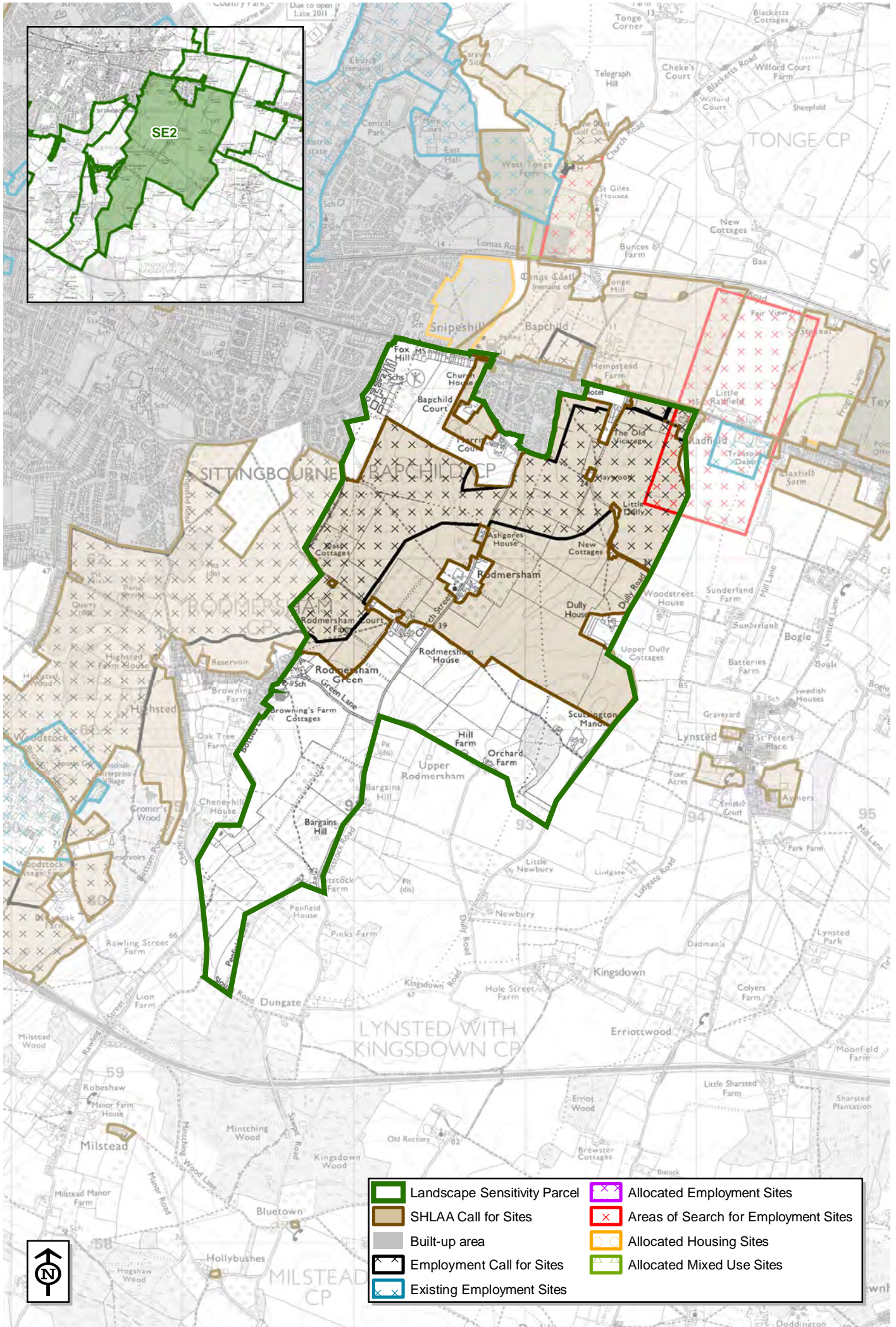
Guidance

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Consider any new development in relation to the setting of the locally designated landscapes (AHLV).
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost, for example the traditionally managed orchards. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure consideration is given to sensitive heritage assets including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and their settings.
- Consider incorporating important and locally distinctive skyline features and views within the general layout/design and key vistas of any new development e.g. maintain the open views to the neighbouring grazing marsh and marshlands in the north of the area.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building scale, massing, style and materials, incorporating sensitive lighting design and native plant species of local provenance. New development should also seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: Hempstead Lane, Church Road, Scraps Hill and Lower Road.
- Maintain the rural approach to Sittingbourne along the A2, including the important undeveloped gap between Bapchild/Tonge and the edge of Sittingbourne.

Sittingbourne Area SE2: Designations and Constraints



Sittingbourne Area SE2: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View north-west over pasture and arable at Dully Road



View north-east to Rodmersham church from Rodmersham Green

Location and landscape character

The landscape to the south-east of Sittingbourne lies within the Rodmersham Mixed Farmlands landscape character area (No.29). It comprises a combination of predominantly open arable fields and some areas of more enclosed commercial orchards, overlying a gently rolling landform.

Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local), although it adjoins the AHLV – Kent Level within the dry valley to the west.

Assessment Criterion

Sensitivity description

Topography and scale

The landscape has a gently rolling topography and is fairly elevated, with a general incline to the south of the area which reaches over 70m AOD forming part of the wider Kent Downs dip slope.

There are some relatively large, open arable fields throughout the area, but particularly on the higher, more exposed slopes. There is an area of commercial orchards screened by immature shelterbelts, concentrated on the lower slopes on either side of Church Street, Rodmersham. Overall, this results in a medium to large scale landscape, except around the settlements of Rodmersham and Rodmersham Green, where the greater enclosure by vegetation and presence of frequent human scale features results in a smaller scale.

Natural character

Valued natural features and semi-natural habitats are not prevalent within this area, with the sparse network of hedgerows and shelterbelts providing the main feature throughout the landscape. Identified Priority Habitats include some traditional orchards, although some of these, for example along Church Street and Dully Road, have been removed in recent years and replaced with more intensive commercial orchards and pasture. There is an important block of designated ancient woodland in the east around Scuttington Manor.

The majority of roads within and adjoining this area are locally designated Rural Lanes.

There are no ecological designations (national or local) present within the area.

<p>Sense of time depth / historic character</p>	<p>The Swale HLC identifies a range of landscape types within the area, including: small and medium regular parliamentary type enclosures; fields predominantly bounded by tracks, roads and other rights of way; orchards; a discrete area of pre-19th century coppices (designated ancient woodland) in the east around Scuttington Manor; village/hamlet (1810 extent) at Rodmersham and the edge of Bapchild; and post 1810 settlement in relation to isolated properties and the edges of Rodmersham Green and Sittingbourne.</p> <p>The time-depth of the landscape relates predominantly to the continuity of agriculture and fruit cultivation within the area, together with historic settlement at Rodmersham and Rodmersham Green (the latter is a Conservation Area), and presence of scattered Grade II listed historic farmsteads, some with pasture and notable mature trees. The Grade I listed Church of St. Nicholas, Rodmersham, forms an important local landmark and skyline feature.</p> <p>It is evident that there have been changes in land cover in recent years, with the conversion of areas of commercial orchards to arable, and vice versa, for example along Church Street and Pitstock Road. However, this does not change the fundamental character of the landscape.</p> <p>The loss of some areas of traditionally managed orchards has adversely affected the historic and scenic character of the landscape, although more intensive commercial orchards remain an important feature which contributes to a distinctive sense of place.</p>
<p>Visual character</p>	<p>There are some long views north from the higher ground, e.g. at the edge of Rodmersham Green, which include the Isle of Sheppey, pylons and wind turbines in the background on the skyline. Expansive views are also possible from the edges of the larger arable fields. These more elevated and open areas have a high degree of visual prominence within the wider landscape.</p> <p>Where present, mature hedgerows and shelterbelts provide significant enclosure, although despite these elements, the underlying gently rolling and elevated landform results in a generally open and exposed visual character throughout much of the area.</p> <p>The skyline within the landscape area is generally undeveloped, with the exception of the local landmark of St. Nicholas Church, Rodmersham. Views to and from the church, which is prominently located within this open landscape, are particularly sensitive.</p>
<p>Perceptual and experiential qualities</p>	<p>There are no intrusive modern features, such as major powerlines or main roads, within this area, contributing to a relatively strong sense of rural character and tranquillity, except in the far north where the area adjoins the A2.</p> <p>Public access is provided by a number of PRoWs throughout the area.</p>
<p>Character and setting of existing settlement</p>	<p>The settlement edges of Sittingbourne and Bapchild adjoin this area in the north. The landscape area forms an important rural landscape and backdrop between these built-up areas. This is particularly the case with Bapchild, where historic farmsteads on its edge have an important visual relationship with the surrounding farmland. At the edge of Sittingbourne sports fields bounded by mature trees associated with Sittingbourne Community College and Meadowfield School provide a buffer and softer transition between settlement and the wider landscape. Further south, the much smaller settlements of Rodmersham and Rodmersham Green are well integrated and have a strong visual and historical relationship with the surrounding landscape, which contributes positively to their individual sense of place.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
---	-----	---	-----	---

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
---	-----	---	-----	---

Much of the landscape has a strongly rural, historic and tranquil character, a high degree of visual prominence, and provides a rural landscape providing separation between Sittingbourne and Bapchild. These attributes, indicate a moderate-high overall sensitivity to future change from both residential and employment development.

Spatial variations in sensitivity within the area: There are no significant variations in overall sensitivity within this landscape area, although it is noted that the sense of rural character and tranquillity within the area increases further to the south away from the A2.

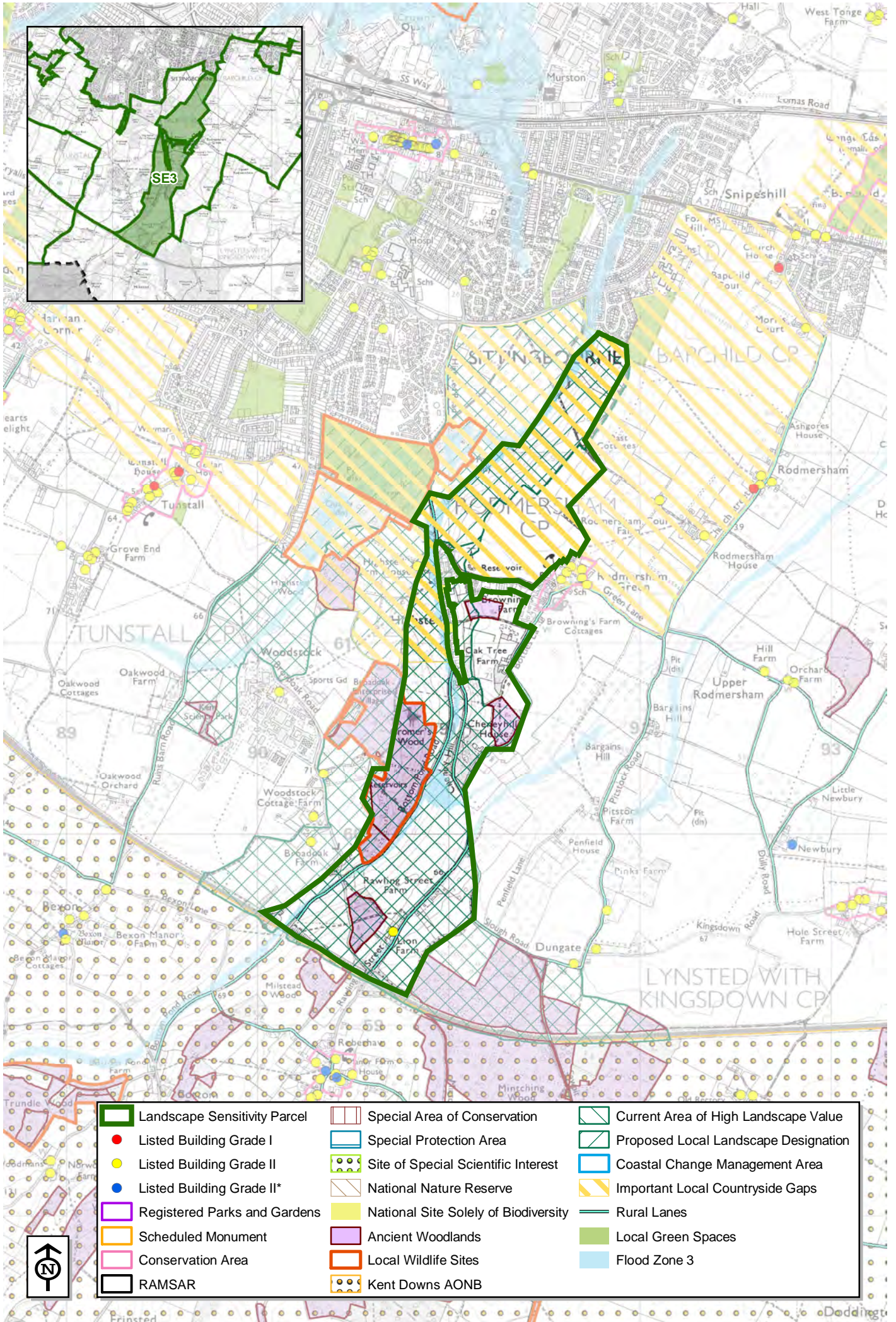
Guidance

Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

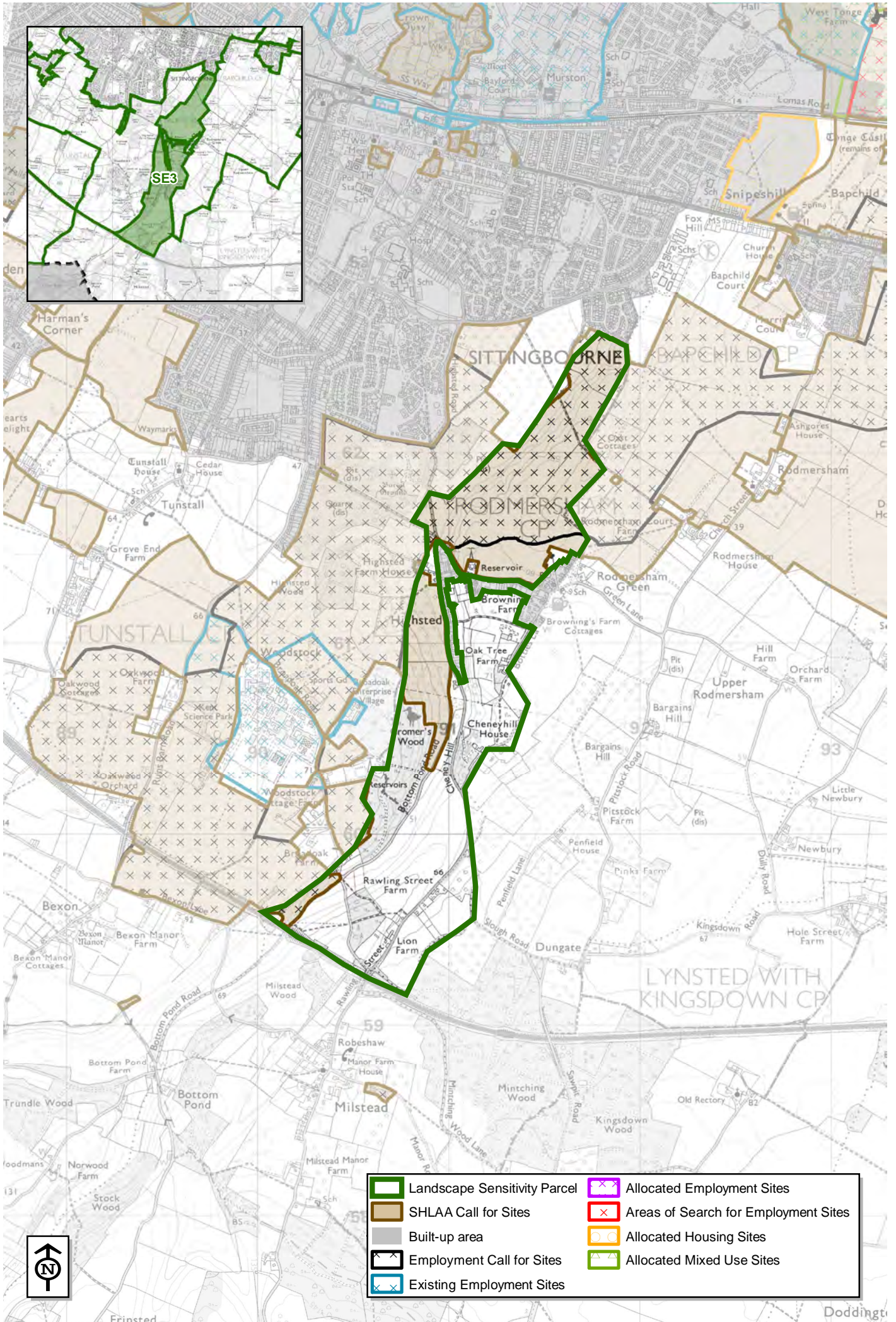
- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Consider any new development in relation to the setting of neighbouring locally and nationally designated landscapes (AHLV and AONB).
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost, for example the traditionally managed orchards. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure consideration is given to sensitive heritage assets including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and their settings.
- Consider incorporating important and locally distinctive skyline features and views within the general layout/design and key vistas of any new development e.g. maintain the open views from the high ground to the Isle of Sheppey to the north; maintain and focus views to the Church of St Nicholas, Rodmersham.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building scale, massing, style and materials, incorporating sensitive lighting design and native plant species of local provenance. New development should also seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes, e.g. Church Street.
- Maintain the rural approach to Sittingbourne along the A2.

- Maintain the important undeveloped gap between Bapchild/Tonge and the edge of Sittingbourne.

Sittingbourne Area SE3: Designations and Constraints



Sittingbourne Area SE3: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View south along valley bottom at Bottom Pond Road, showing M2 on viaduct



View north-west over Sittingbourne from crest of dry valley north of Rodmersham Green

Location and landscape character

The landscape area to the south of Sittingbourne lies within the Rodmersham and Milstead Dry Valley landscape character area (No.40). It is a steeply sloping dry chalk valley with rounded ridgelines, and large arable fields with some areas of orchard enclosed by small to medium woodlands.

Landscape value

With the exception of the area immediately around Rodmersham Green, the majority of this landscape area is within the AHLV – Kent Level, and it also lies adjacent to the Kent Downs AONB, further to the south beyond the M2.

The same area is recommended in the 2018 study for designation as part of the Kent Downs - Rodmersham Milstead and Highsted Dry Valley LLD.

Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	<p>Topography is that of a steeply sloping dry chalk valley with rounded ridgelines, running north to south and contiguous with the AONB further to the south beyond the M2.</p> <p>The landscape scale is variable, with large open arable fields on the valley crests having a large sense of scale, and contrasting with the smaller scale areas lower down within the valley, enclosed by the landform and woodland, and the network of orchards, shelterbelts and hedgerows.</p>
Natural character	<p>Valued natural features and semi-natural habitats within the area include several blocks of deciduous woodland, most of which are ancient woodland, such as Cromer's Wood (which is also a locally designated Local Wildlife Site), and a small number of remnant traditional orchards</p> <p>Narrow rural lanes run through the valley, connecting farms and linear settlements e.g. Highsted, and contributing to the scenic and historic landscape character. The majority of these are locally designated Rural Lanes.</p>
Sense of time depth / historic character	<p>The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by small regular parliamentary type enclosures in the north; orchards; fields predominantly bounded by tracks, roads and other rights of way in the south; pre-19th century coppices and other pre-1810 woodland; and post 1810 settlement around Highsted and Rodmersham Green.</p>

	<p>The time-depth of the landscape relates predominantly to the continuity of agriculture and fruit cultivation within the area, together with the presence of scattered historic houses and farmsteads, some with pasture and traditional orchards. There is only one statutorily listed building within this landscape area: the Grade II Lion Farmhouse on Rawling Street in the south. However, the area also surrounds the small settlements of Highsted and Rodmersham Green, which contain a number of listed buildings and a Conservation Area.</p> <p>Some extensive areas of orchard have been lost to arable post-1960, together with field boundaries, resulting in more open, larger fields, e.g. north of Rodmersham Green.</p>
Visual character	<p>This area has visual continuity and integrity with the Kent Downs AONB and the dry chalk valleys are identified as one of its special qualities.</p> <p>The skyline is generally undeveloped, with some prominent and exposed slopes to the rolling arable fields. This is contrasted by lower areas enclosed by woodland and landform. In the far south the M2 crosses over Bottom Pond Road on a viaduct, which is relatively prominent and intrusive on localised views to the south.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>No major powerlines and relatively tranquil, with a strongly rural and isolated/remote character and dark night skies, except in proximity to the M2, which is a source of noise disturbance and light pollution.</p> <p>Public access is provided via a number of PRoWs which run within and along the boundary of the landscape area.</p> <p>The area has high scenic value and represents special qualities of the AONB.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	<p>The north of the landscape area, characterised by the open arable fields on the visually prominent slopes of the dry valley, is visible from the well-defined settlement edge of Sittingbourne, and although it does not physically adjoin much of this edge, forms a prominent scenic rural backdrop to this part of the town.</p> <p>Further to the south, the landscape area surrounds the linear village of Highsted, and partly surrounds the adjacent village of Rodmersham Green. It forms the immediate landscape setting to these settlements, characterised by enclosing orchards, arable and woodland on the valley sides above the linear housing along Highsted Valley Road, and very open, elevated and expansive arable fields north of Stockers Hill and Rodmersham Green, allowing long views north. The landscape area therefore has an intimate visual and historical relationship with, and makes an important contribution to the individual sense of place of Highsted, Rodmersham and Sittingbourne.</p> <p>The landscape area plays an important role in providing rural separation between Sittingbourne and the outlying villages.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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This is a highly sensitive landscape due to its combination of prominent open areas, high scenic value, strongly rural, tranquil and remote character despite its proximity to Sittingbourne, and continuity/physical integrity with the

adjacent AONB including dry chalk valley qualities and ancient woodland. These attributes, in combination with the presence of the AHLV within the area and the setting of the AONB, indicate a high overall sensitivity to future change from residential and employment development.

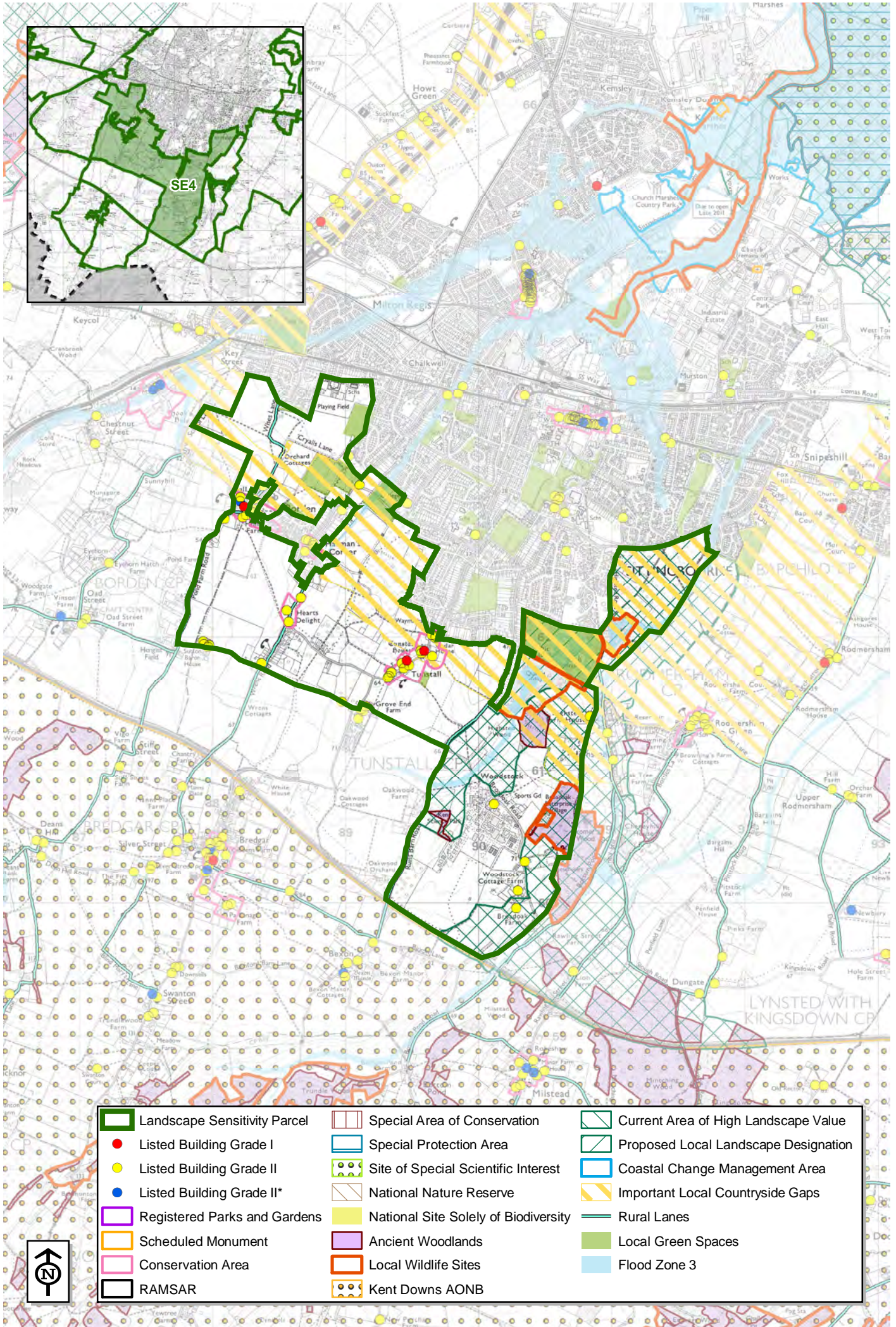
Spatial variations in sensitivity within the area: There are no significant variations in overall landscape sensitivity within this area.

Guidance

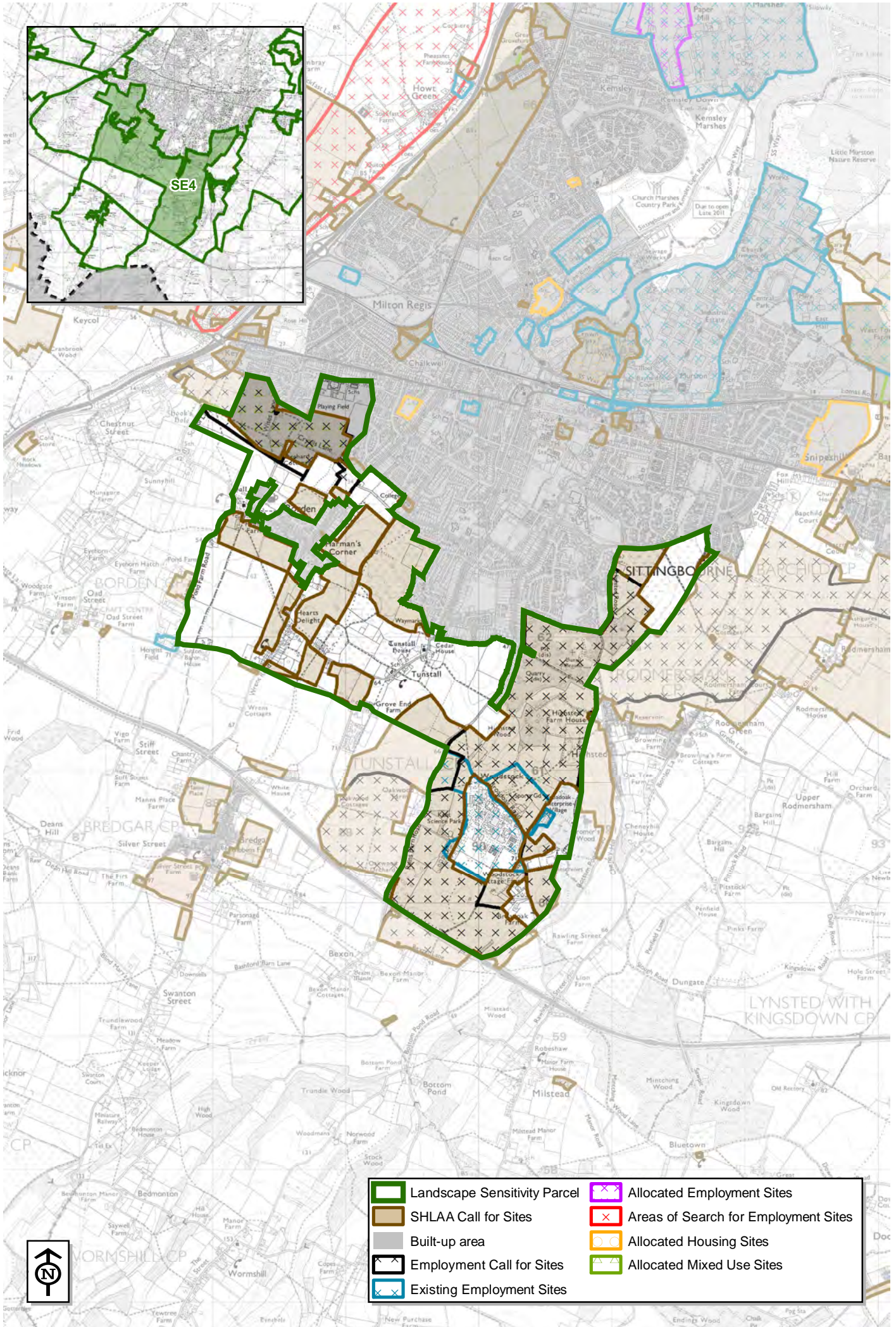
Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Consider any new development in relation to the locally and nationally designated landscapes (AHLV and AONB).
- Conserve the dry valley landform which links to the Kent Downs AONB, and conserve the open and undeveloped character of the ridge.
- Conserve the setting of the Kent Downs AONB and protect special qualities of the AONB avoiding any development that would visually intrude on the AONB or impact on qualities such as tranquillity for example by generating greater traffic on the rural lanes.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost, for example the traditionally managed orchards. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Conserve and manage areas of ancient woodland including provision of buffers and copses to enhance woodland connectivity.
- Ensure consideration is given to sensitive heritage assets including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and their settings.
- Consider incorporating important and locally distinctive skyline features and views within the general layout/design and key vistas of any new development e.g. maintain the open views north to the Isle of Sheppey from Stockers Hill.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building scale, massing, style and materials, incorporating sensitive lighting design and native plant species of local provenance. New development should also seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes, e.g. Bottom Pond Road and Cheney Hill.
- Maintain the sense of Sittingbourne as a distinct settlement. Conserve the rural gap that exists between the urban edge of Sittingbourne and the outlying small villages.

Sittingbourne Area SE4: Designations and Constraints



Sittingbourne Area SE4: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View from Broadoak Road of dry valley.



View from Swanstree Avenue looking south-east.

Location and landscape character

The landscape to the south of Sittingbourne lies within the Tunstall Farmlands landscape character area (No.42). It comprises a combination of arable fields, areas of commercial orchards and horticulture. It includes the small rural villages of Tunstall and Heart's Delight as well as the larger development of the Kent Science Park. The larger village of Borden is in the west of the area. The area includes some variation between the edge of Sittingbourne and the AONB, although the dry valley landform provides continuity.

Landscape value

The Kent Downs AONB lies immediately to the south of the M2 and the area has some visual continuity and integrity with the AONB, with some inter-visibility with the area around the Kent Science Park. Parts of the area to the east of Ruins Barn Road are locally designated as the Rodmersham, Milstead and Highsted dry valleys Area of High Landscape Value – Kent Level.

The area currently designated as AHLV, plus an extension around Highsted Quarries, is recommended in the 2018 study for designation as part of the Kent Downs – Rodmersham Milstead and Highsted Dry Valley LLD.

Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	The landscape is undulating, rising gently to the south from 34m AOD to 65m AOD forming part of the wider dip slope of the Kent Downs AONB which lies directly to the south. It is cut by a tributary dry valley in the east of the area, just west of the Kent Science Park, which has continuity with the AONB. Field sizes are mixed, with some smaller scale fields around Borden and Harman's Corner and areas of remnant orchard on the edges of Sittingbourne. Elsewhere are larger arable fields with removed field boundaries, emphasising their scale.
Natural character	<p>Priority habitat deciduous woodland and traditional orchard are present throughout the area. Highsted Quarries and Cromer's Wood are both designated as Local Wildlife Sites and contain significant amounts of priority habitat deciduous woodland. Cromer's Wood and Highsted Wood are also Ancient Woodland. There is a parkland landscape including mature parkland trees around the Kent Science Park. Remnant orchards, shelterbelts and hedgerows within the area provide a habitat network.</p> <p>Elsewhere there are larger open arable fields and absence of hedgerows.</p> <p>Pond Farm Road, Wises Lane, Wrens Road and Ruins Barn Road are all designated as Rural Lanes.</p>

<p>Sense of time depth / historic character</p>	<p>The Swale HLC indicates that the majority of the area is characterised by fields predominantly bounded by tracks, roads and other rights of way. In the north west around Cryalls Lane there are larger fields of 19th century enclosure with extensive boundary loss; orchard around Heart's Delight Tunstall and Highsted; disused gravel and clay workings at Highsted Quarries; and coppices and woodland.</p> <p>There are four Conservation Areas which extend into this landscape area of Heart's Delight, Borden; Tunstall; Harman's Corner; and The Street, Borden.</p> <p>The time depth of the landscape relates predominantly to the continuity of agriculture and fruit cultivation within the area, together with the presence of scattered historic houses and farmsteads, some with parkland, pasture and traditional orchards. Areas of orchard have been lost in recent decades, together with field boundaries, resulting in more open, larger fields.</p>
<p>Visual character</p>	<p>Within the dry valley landform in the east there is an enclosed character, with views limited by topography and woodland. Throughout the area the rural lanes are lined by mature vegetation which restricts views. Where hedgerows are gappy or missing along the lanes, views are into arable fields and then limited by enclosing shelterbelts, hedgerows or topography. The dip slope towards Tunstall has an open and visually exposed character, with views north to the Swale and Isle of Sheppey. In the south east there are views across the M2 into the Kent Downs AONB and views back from the AONB. The area forms part of the setting for the AONB.</p> <p>The skyline is generally undeveloped, although electricity pylons and telegraph poles are visible throughout much of the area.</p>
<p>Perceptual and experiential qualities</p>	<p>There is a relative strong sense of rurality throughout the area, although this is impacted by the edge of Sittingbourne and Kent Science Park. In the centre and south of the area there is a good experience of 'dark skies'. An electricity pylon line runs in the east of the area, and there is a communications mast south of Highsted Quarries. The M2 forms part of the southern boundary, however it is in a cutting and it is not intrusive, albeit with some noise impacts locally.</p> <p>There is very good access by PRowWs throughout the area.</p>
<p>Character and setting of existing settlement</p>	<p>The edge of Sittingbourne is well defined in the east by Swanstree Avenue and Highsted Road. Although the majority of houses are inward facing, the area provides a rural backdrop, and the changes in topography are visually appealing. In contrast, the quarries provide a wooded backdrop to the settlement and in views from the wider landscape. The ribbon development along the north of Ruins Barn Road also experiences rural views to the west, and is well integrated into the landscape with mature vegetation. The south western edge of Sittingbourne also experiences views out across arable fields and orchards. Here, the landscape also forms an important narrow rural separation between the villages of Tunstall, Borden and Sittingbourne.</p> <p>There are Conservation Areas at The Street, Borden; Heart's Delight; Harman's Corner; and Tunstall, and the rural landscape setting of these settlements is important to their character, as is their continuing separation from each other.</p> <p>To the south the Kent Science Park is relatively well integrated in terms of landform, and the land south of the development provides an important rural and visual separation between the Kent Downs AONB and the Kent Science Park.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The landscape has a distinctive dry valley in the east, evidenced by its local landscape designation, and a rolling and undulating landform in the centre and west. There is a strong rural character through much of the area, and a resource of valued natural features and semi-natural habitats. There are high levels of enclosure and a well-defined urban edge to Sittingbourne. It is in close proximity and partially visible from the AONB which lies to the south of the M2. These attributes indicate a moderate-high overall sensitivity to future change from residential development.

For the reasons stated above, this landscape also has a moderate-high overall sensitivity to future change from employment development, given its rural, undeveloped character.

Key spatial variations include the dry valley in the east which is of higher sensitivity due to its topographic form and areas of deciduous and ancient woodland plus parkland. The area to the south is more sensitive given its proximity to the AONB and role in setting. Parts of the area to the north and west are more related to Sittingbourne, and potentially include small areas of lower sensitivity.

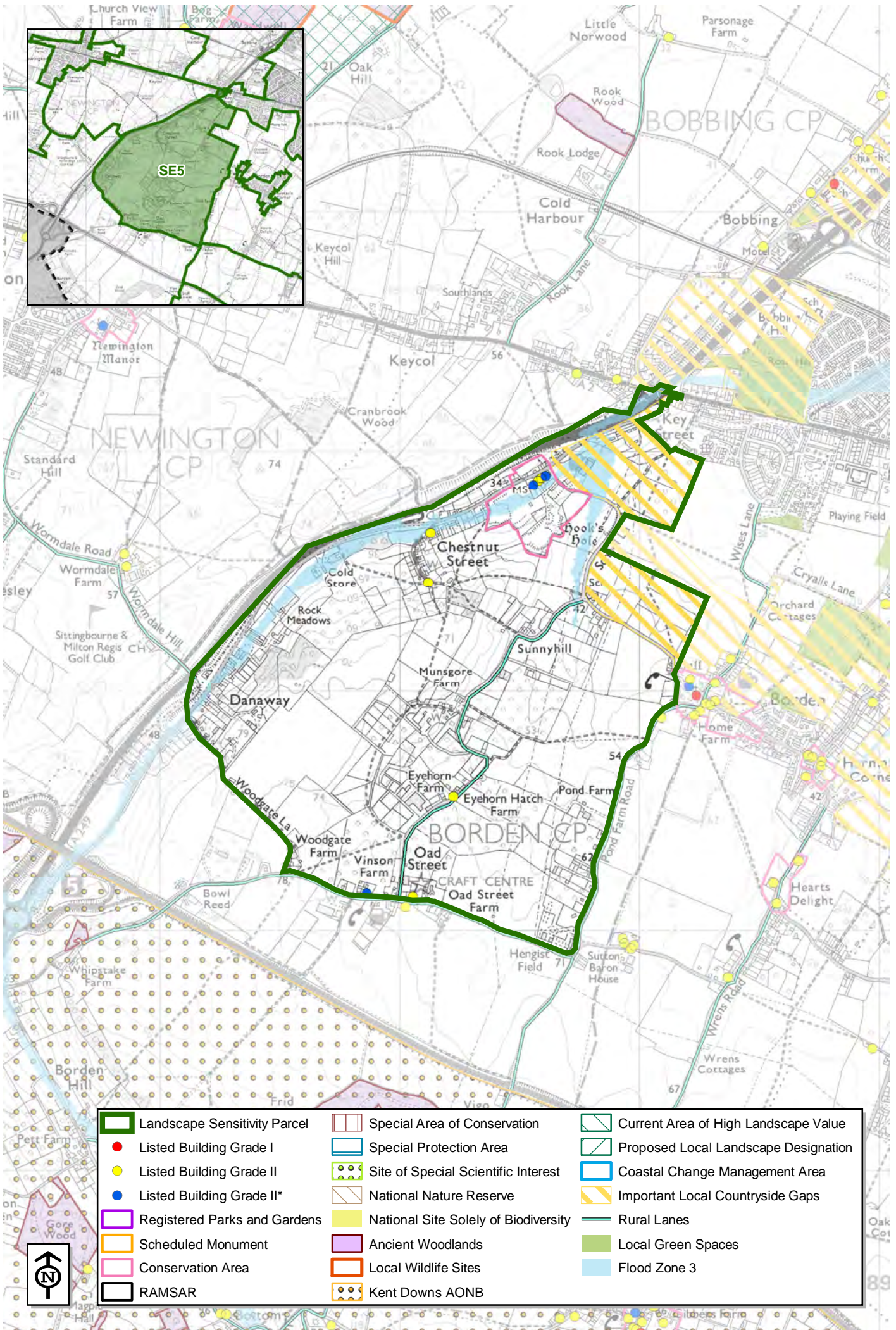
Guidance

Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

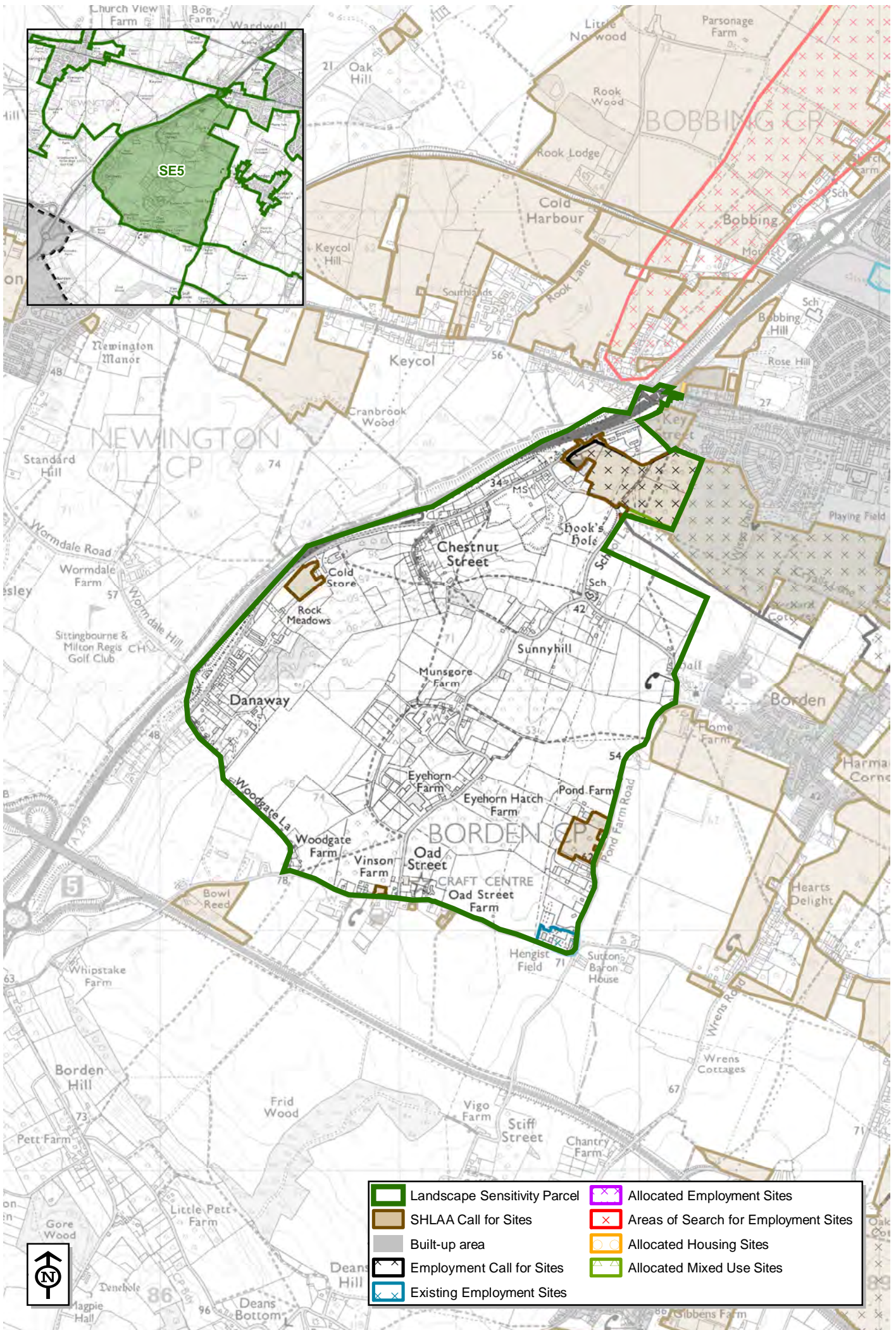
- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide, Kent AONB Management Plan, and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost, for example the traditionally managed orchards. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Conserve the dry valley landform which links to the Kent Downs AONB, and conserve the open and undeveloped character of the ridge.
- Conserve the setting of the Kent Downs AONB and protect special qualities of the AONB avoiding any development that would visually intrude on the AONB or impact on qualities such as tranquillity for example by generating greater traffic on the rural lanes.
- Conserve and manage areas of ancient woodland including provision of buffers and copses to enhance woodland connectivity, and consider opportunities for new woodland planting to enhance and integrate existing settlement edges.
- Conserve and enhance/replant parkland trees to the west of Kent Science Park and maintain as a grazed parkland landscape.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building styles, materials, scale and massing and includes sensitive lighting design in this rural area.
- Conserve the rural landscape setting of the Conservation Areas at The Street, Borden; Heart's Delight; Harman's Corner; and Tunstall.
- New development should seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: Pond Farm Road, Wises Lane, Wrens Road and Ruins Barn Road.

- Maintain the sense of Sittingbourne as a distinct settlement. Avoid linear development giving the impression of a continuous urban area between Tunstall, Heart's Delight, Borden and Sittingbourne. Conserve the narrow rural gap that exists between the urban edge of Sittingbourne and the outlying small villages.

Sittingbourne Area SE5: Designations and Constraints



Sittingbourne Area SE5: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View into the area from Wormdale Hill



View south west from School Lane

Location and landscape character

The landscape to the south and south west of Sittingbourne lies within the Borden Mixed Farmlands landscape character area (No.19). It is a relatively complex chalk landscape forming two dry valleys and contains combination of predominantly arable fields, some pasture, and mature and remnant orchards. It is contained by the A249 to the west.

Landscape value

This area is not subject to any national or local landscape designations.

Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	<p>This is a rolling landscape ranging from 35m AOD by the A249 to 79m AOD at Danaway, and incorporates distinctive dry two valleys. Fields are predominantly small scale and irregular, with mature hedgerows along the narrow rural lanes creating further enclosure.</p> <p>There has been some amalgamation of fields for arable farming, and some sub-division for horse grazing with replacement of hedgerows by post and rail fencing, plus areas of racehorse gallops/horse training in the fields west of Oad Street.</p>
Natural character	<p>There are small areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland and traditional orchard throughout the area. There are also hedgerows, remnant shelterbelts and grassland, isolated woodland and scrub which provide important habitats. These are set within increasingly intensively farmed arable fields and overgrown orchards.</p> <p>Oad Street, Sunnyhill Road and Pond Farm Road are all designated as Rural Lanes. There are no nature conservation designations (national or local) present within the area.</p>
Sense of time depth / historic character	<p>The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by parliamentary type enclosures (small regular fields); small rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries east of Chestnut Street; orchards, paddocks and the small settlements of Oad Street, Danaway and Chestnut Street.</p> <p>Chestnut Street has a Conservation Area and the area contains a number of Grade II and II* Listed buildings. The time-depth of the landscape relates predominantly to the continuity of agriculture, together with the presence of scattered historic</p>

	houses and farmsteads. Areas of orchard and their associated field boundaries have been lost in recent decades, particularly in the south of the area.
Visual character	<p>Views are often limited by the rolling topography and vegetation along lanes and within fields. There are some views to Keycol Hill across the A249. More open fields in the south of the area allow longer views including south to the Kent Downs AONB and north to the Isle of Sheppey and beyond.</p> <p>The skyline is largely undeveloped, although electricity pylons are visible within and outside the area. The edge of Sittingbourne is also visible from some lanes, and there are some large agricultural buildings within the area.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>Despite its proximity to the edge of Sittingbourne and the A249, the wider area to the south is relatively tranquil and has a good experience of 'dark skies', particularly in the south. The distinctive dry valleys are a key attribute quality of the AONB.</p> <p>The A249 is partially set down within the valley, and there is some mature vegetation separating it from Maidstone Road/Chestnut Street, however where this is lacking it brings the character of the busy A249 into the smaller road. Settlement is limited to linear settlements of Danaway and Chestnut Street, and there are scattered farms, some with large modern agricultural storage buildings. Two electricity pylon lines run through the east and are disruptive elements in the landscape. There has been some loss of hedgerow boundaries and replacement with post and wire/post and rail fencing.</p> <p>There is good access by PRoW throughout the area.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	The area borders a small edge of Sittingbourne at Key Street, which is generally contained by mature vegetation. The landscape is important in retaining rural separation of Chestnut Street's historic core and Conservation Area from more modern development, and in retaining the separation between Sittingbourne and Chestnut Street. The edges of the linear settlements of Chestnut Street and Danaway are not well contained and include a large number of equestrian paddocks.

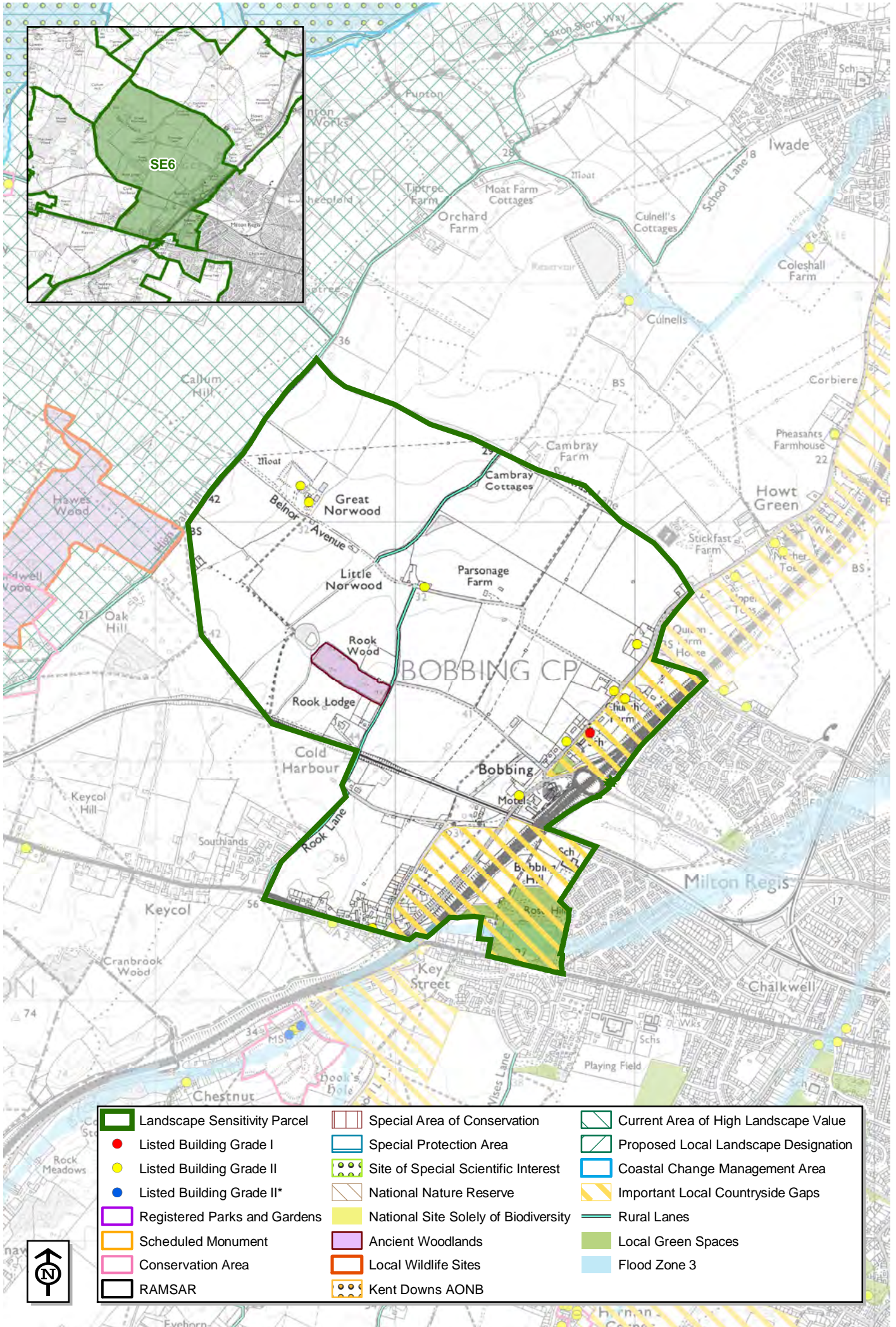
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
<p>The landscape has an interesting rolling landform, including dry valleys, a sense of rural character with some modern human influences, a degree of visual prominence and areas of enclosure, moderate time depth with heritage assets concentrated at Chestnut Street and some valued natural features and semi-natural habitats. These attributes indicate a moderate-high overall sensitivity to future change from residential development. It is largely detached from the existing settlement edge of Sittingbourne, apart from a small area at Key Street and does not relate to the urban form.</p> <p>The area is considered to have a moderate-high overall sensitivity to future change from employment development.</p> <p>Spatial variations are found in the west, where the A249 disturbs the tranquillity of the landscape. There may be some areas with lower moderate sensitivity to small scale residential development.</p>				

Guidance

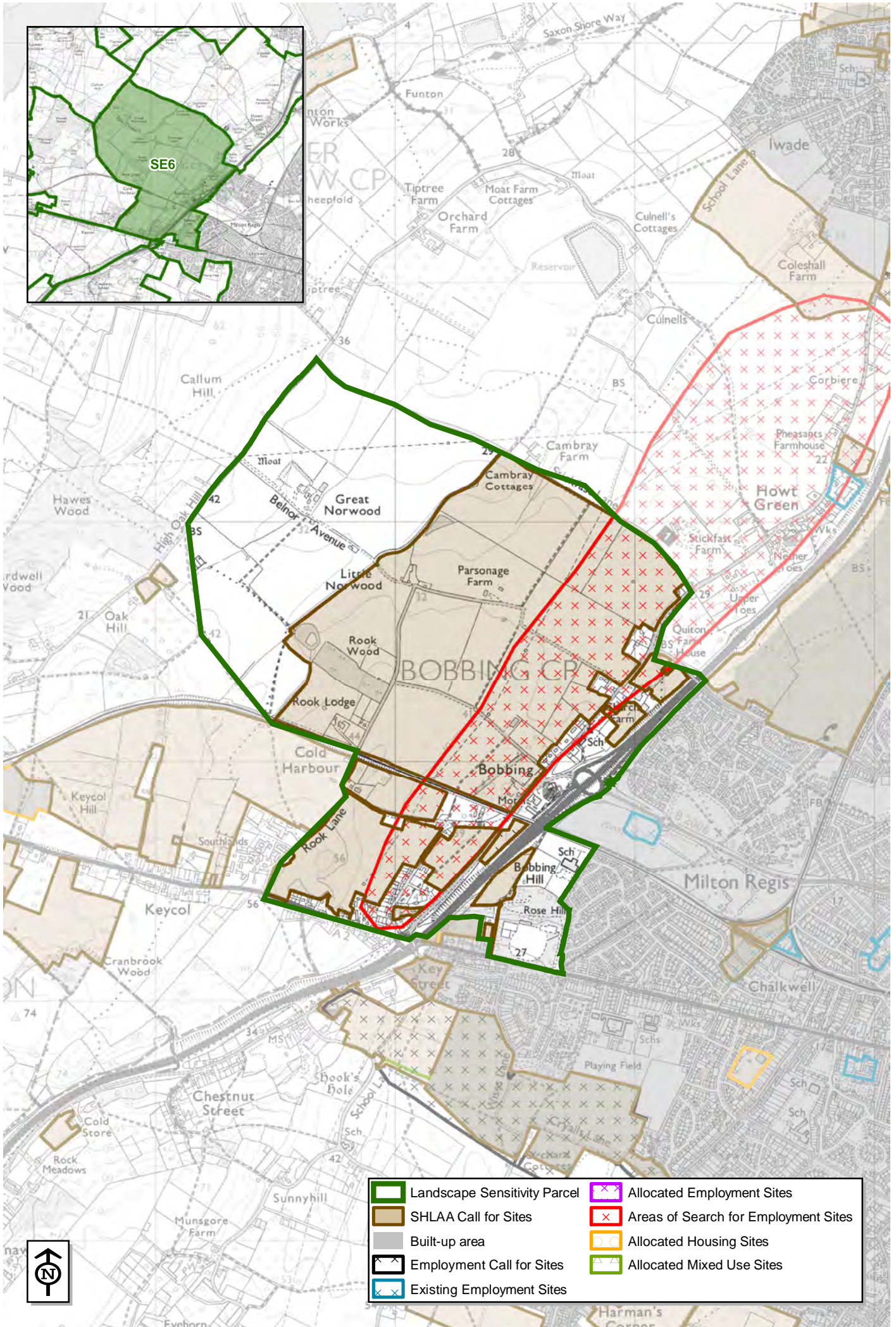
Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost, for example the traditionally managed orchards. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Seek opportunities for landscape enhancement of the paddock/equestrian landscape through boundary restoration, sward management and sensitive location of associated buildings.
- Maintain the open and relatively undeveloped skyline, particularly in the south where views to the Kent Downs AONB and Isle of Sheppey should be incorporated into the design of any new development.
- Consider planting as a buffer between the A249 and the wider landscape, to reduce its impacts, particularly on Maidstone Road/Chestnut Street.
- Seek opportunities for landscape enhancement of the paddock/equestrian landscape through boundary restoration, sward management and sensitive location of associated buildings.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building styles, materials, scale and massing and includes sensitive lighting design in this rural area.
- New development should seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: Oad Street, Sunnyhill Road and Pond Farm Road.
- Conserve the landscape gap between Chestnut Street and Danaway to protect the integrity of the two settlements.
- Conserve the landscape gap between Sittingbourne and Chestnut Street, maintaining the contrast between the distinct rural linear settlements and the more urban edge of Sittingbourne.
- Conserve the setting of the Chestnut Street Conservation Area and its Listed Buildings.

Sittingbourne Area SE6: Designations and Constraints



Sittingbourne Area SE6: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View south from footpath off Parsonage Lane.



View east to Rook Wood from footpath north of railway line.

Location and landscape character

The landscape to the east of Sittingbourne lies within the Iwade Arable Farmlands landscape character area (No.24). It comprises arable fields, a small woodland at Rook Wood, and the linear village of Bobbing.

Landscape value

This area is not subject to any national landscape designations. There is an area of High Landscape Value – Swale Level adjacent to the area, west of High Oak Hill. This area is recommended in the 2018 study for designation as the Lower Halstow Iwade Ridge LLD.

Assessment Criterion

Sensitivity description

Topography and scale

The majority of the landscape has a flat to gently undulating landform, ranging from 27m AOD at Rose Hill in the south east to 44m AOD at Rook Lodge. There is a more pronounced rolling landform in the south west leading up to Keycol Hill (outside of the area), which is of higher sensitivity. The highest point is 56m AOD at a hill east of Rook Lane. Fields are predominantly medium to large scale, and there is a limited fragmented hedgerow network.

Natural character

Rook Wood to the west of Rook Lane contains priority habitat deciduous woodland, and is designated as Ancient Woodland. There is also a good area of priority habitat deciduous woodland at Rose Hill in the south east. There are occasional infield clumps of trees and hedgerows, including mature oak and ash and orchard trees. These features exist within and alongside areas of arable farmland which do not exhibit a natural character.

Rook Lane/Cold Harbour Lane, High Oak Hill and part of Parsonage Lane are designated as Rural Lanes.

There are no nature conservation designations (national or local) present within the area.

Sense of time depth / historic character

The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by parliamentary type enclosures (small and medium regular) and fields predominantly bounded by tracks, roads and other rights of way. There has been a considerable change in field boundaries since the 1898 six-inch OS map, which indicates a weak time depth.

	The time depth of the landscape relates predominantly to the continuity of agriculture and fruit cultivation within the area, together with historic farmsteads and houses in Bobbing, and the Grade I listed St Bartholomew's Church.
Visual character	<p>This is an open and partially elevated area, and there are some expansive long views to Iwade, Bobbing and Keycol; across the Swale and Isle of Sheppey to the north east; and south to the wooded dip slopes of the Kent Downs AONB. To the west, the local ridgeline of Callum Hill, including Hawes and Wardwell Woods (Area of High Landscape Value – Swale Level), provides visual containment and a scenic rural backdrop in views from the area. Views also contain pylons and overhead powerlines, with views out to the edge of Sittingbourne and the A249/Sheppey Way.</p> <p>The tower of St Bartholomew, Bobbing is a landmark skyline feature in some views from the east, while the tower of St Mary, Newington can be seen from the elevated area east of Rook Lane.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>The east of the area is strongly influenced by the urban edge of Sittingbourne and Bobbing, the A2, Sheppey Way and A249. East of Rook Lane the area is more tranquil and has a good experience of 'dark skies', although there is no sense of remoteness due to proximity to development and infrastructure. This area offers extensive views across Sittingbourne to the Swale and Sheppey.</p> <p>The majority of buildings are centred around Bobbing and along the A2. There are some modern agricultural storage sheds within the area, a solar farm north of the railway at Cold Harbour, and electricity pylons and transmission lines are dominant and intrusive features within the landscape.</p> <p>There is some access by PRoW, although the Sheppey Way/A249 cuts off the eastern and western parts of this area.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	This area is separated from the urban edge of Sittingbourne by the A249. The existing residential edge of Sittingbourne is strongly defined by the public open space and cricket field at Rose Hill, and further by the A249. The rest of the area does not contribute to the setting of Sittingbourne as views are limited by vegetation along the A249 and Sheppey Way. Bobbing village is a linear settlement with intermittent low density properties, which have well-vegetated curtilages along Sheppey Way. The views within the village are focussed around the church as a landmark feature. The area has a role in providing rural separation between Bobbing, Newington and Sittingbourne.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
The landscape has an undulating landform, moderate sense of rural character with modern human influences, high visual prominence, moderate time depth with some heritage assets, and moderate valued natural features and semi-natural habitats. These attributes, in combination with the role of the area as a rural landscape separating Sittingbourne, Key Street, Keycol and Newington, indicate a moderate overall sensitivity to future change from residential development.				

For the reasons listed above, this area has a moderate overall sensitivity to future change from employment development, as the skyline already contains modern features including electricity pylons and overhead wires as well as larger agricultural buildings.

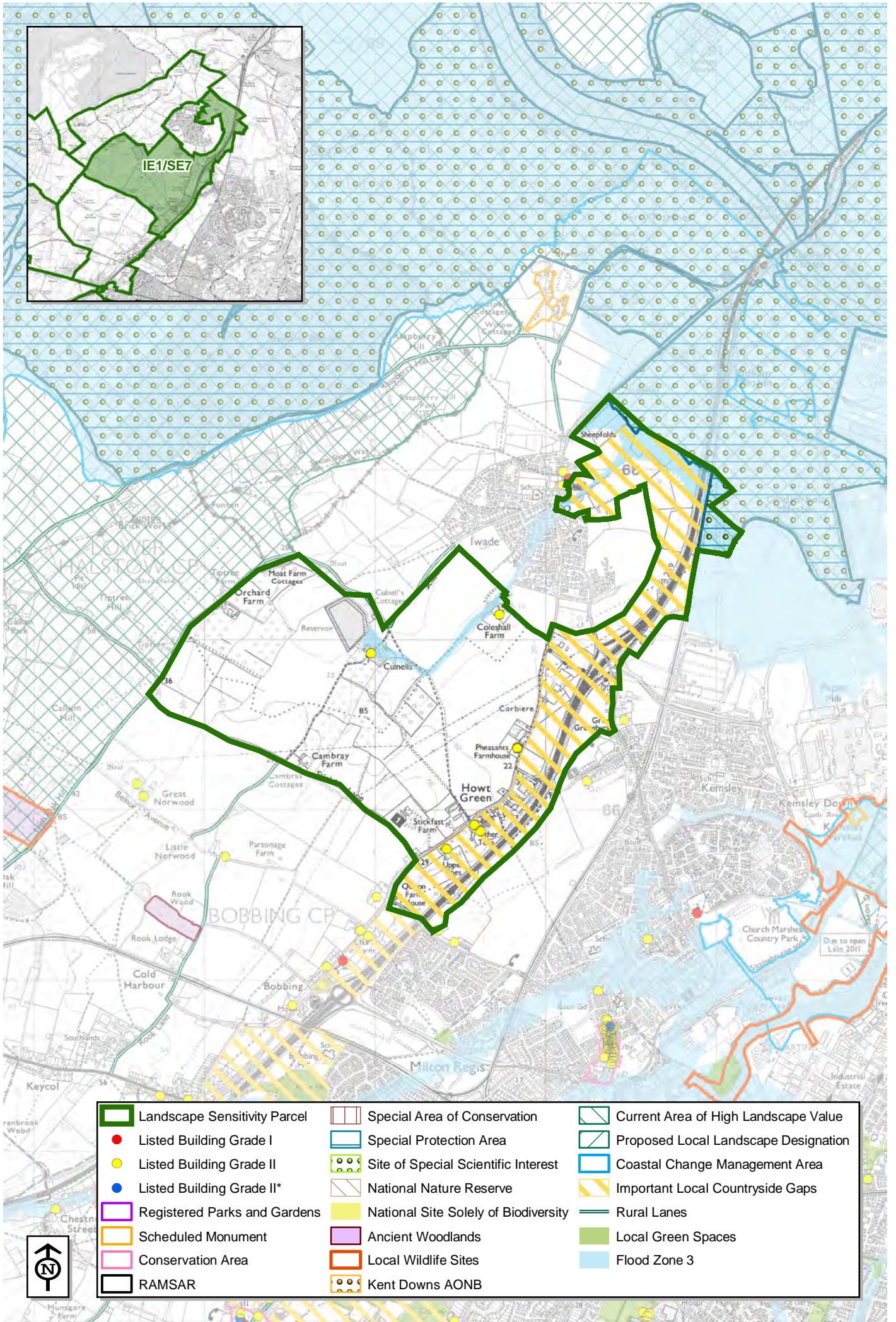
Spatial variations in sensitivity are found south of the railway line which is of higher sensitivity since it forms an important area of separation between Sittingbourne, Key Street, Keycol and Newington. Rook Wood and its immediate setting, and the area to the west of High Oak Hill as the setting of the Area of High Landscape Value – Swale Level are also of higher sensitivity.

Guidance

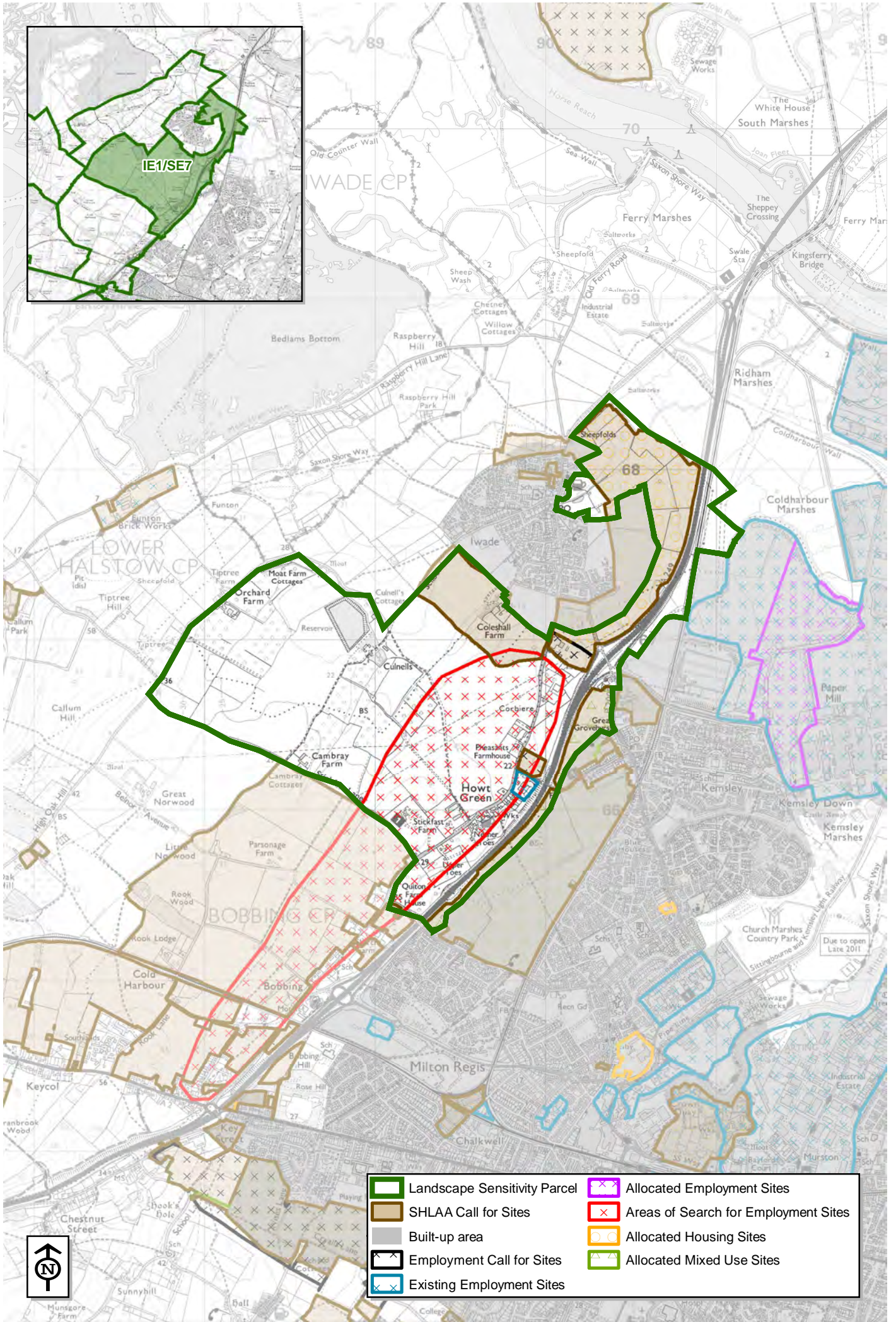
Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost, for example the traditionally managed orchards. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Increase woodland cover, where appropriate, to limit visual impact and enhance habitat connectivity, particularly ensuring Rook Wood is connected to new native woodland and hedgerow planting and has an open space buffer from any new development.
- Conserve and manage areas of ancient woodland at Rook Wood including provision of buffers and copses to enhance woodland connectivity.
- Incorporate and conserve views to local landmarks in conjunction with any new development, e.g. St Mary's Church, Newington and St Bartholomew's Church, Bobbing. Conserve key views from elevated areas across the Swale to Sheppey.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local context in terms of building styles, materials, scale and massing.
- Ensure new development includes sensitive lighting design, particularly at the rural edges towards Wardwell Hill and Callum Hill.
- Conserve the relatively undeveloped skyline character by avoiding new development on upper slopes, ridgelines or other high points within the area, particularly in the south west, east of Rook Lane.
- New development should seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: Rook Lane/Cold Harbour Lane, High Oak Hill and Parsonage Lane.
- Avoid development which creates a visual link across the A249/Sheppey Way.

Sittingbourne Area IE1/SE7: Designations and Constraints



Sittingbourne Area IE1/SE7: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



Orchards at Howt Green, west of Sheppey Way.



Open fields east of Iwade.

Location and landscape character

The landscape to the west and north of Sittingbourne lies within the Iwade Arable Farmlands landscape character area (No.24). It comprises a combination of predominantly arable fields and commercial areas at Howt Green and brickearth extraction at Orchard Farm, School Lane.

The area is also considered as IE1 in relation to sensitivities east of Iwade.

Landscape value

This area is not subject to any national landscape designations.

To the north Ridham and Ferry marshes form part of the Medway marshes (Area of High Landscape Value – Kent Level) and to the west and north is the locally designated Iwade Ridge Area of High Landscape Value – Swale Level. These areas are recommended in the 2018 study for designation as the North Kent Marshes – Medway Marshes LLD and Lower Halstow Iwade Ridge LLD respectively.

Assessment Criterion

Sensitivity description

Topography and scale

A flat to gently sloping topography elevated above the surrounding marshes and coastline. Fields are predominantly medium or large scale with arable crops and generally very open. Occasional shelterbelts, orchards and hedgerows in the south and west of the area provide enclosure and locally reduce the apparent scale of the landscape. Overall it is medium scale, with some long views across the open arable landscape.

Natural character

There is a limited network of valued natural features and semi-natural habitats within the area. This includes hedgerows, shelterbelts and occasional orchards. These features exist within and alongside areas of intensive arable farmland. School Lane, which forms the western boundary, is designated as a Rural Lane.

There are no nature conservation designations (national or local) present within the area.

Sense of time depth / historic character

The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by 19th century enclosure, Parliamentary type enclosure fields with small regular straight boundaries south and west of reservoir by School Lane. Many of the fields to the east and southeast of Iwade have experienced significant boundary loss, which indicates a lower time depth. This also results in more open and larger fields – a predominantly modern intensive arable landscape.

	<p>Areas of former orchard in the southwest have been converted to arable farmland, and further converted to host a solar farm in the southwest north of Stickfast Lane and brickearth extraction to the east of School Road by Orchard Farm.</p> <p>There are a number of Listed historic houses and farmsteads, with a concentration in the linear hamlet of Howt Green, which also has low rise industrial and agricultural buildings.</p>
Visual character	<p>There is some visual containment by roadside vegetation and shelterbelts, however in general it is open and exposed and there are long views north, east and south. Views to the west are curtailed by more undulating topography. There are long distance views north across the marshes and Swale to the Isle of Sheppey. The Sheppey Crossing is also visible.</p> <p>The skyline is very open. Pylons running through the eastern part of the area, and outside of the area to the north and east are very prominent in views. Industrial warehouses to the east at Ridham Dock are also visible.</p> <p>The visual prominence of the area is low. It can however be seen from the Sheppey Crossing.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>This is not a tranquil landscape and does not have a strong rural character. Major powerlines and proximity to the A249 impact on the rural nature of the area. The brickearth extraction along School Lane is also a source of noise disturbance.</p> <p>There are PRoWs running from Culnell's Cottages to Howt Green in the south east and to Cambray Cottages on Stickfast Lane. Featherbed Lane in the east is also publically accessible.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	<p>The A249 and railway line provide strong edges to the west of Sittingbourne and results in no physical relationship between the area west of the A249 and Sittingbourne. The A249 is in a cutting by Howt Green, and the surrounding planting limits views across the A249, particularly in the south of the landscape area. There are clear views from the A249 to Iwade in the north of the area, however views to Sittingbourne are limited by roadside vegetation and warehouses along the east of the A249. This again limits the relationship between the area and Sittingbourne. The area also provides an important role as a landscape gap between Sittingbourne and Iwade.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
<p>The landscape has a typical flat to very gently undulating topography, with a low-moderate sense of rural character due to modern human influences from transport links and the 20th century edges of Sittingbourne and Iwade. The area has a low visual prominence except from the Sheppey Crossing, and low-moderate time depth with some heritage assets. There are limited valued natural features and semi-natural habitats, and there is some public access to the area. These attributes, in combination with the absence of landscape designations, indicate a low-moderate overall sensitivity to future change from residential development. The landscape character of this area lends itself to further planting which could help integrate and mitigate existing and new development.</p>				

For the reasons noted above the landscape is considered to have a low-moderate overall sensitivity to future change from employment development. Small areas of employment development could be accommodated along Sheppey Way, creating a commercial hub at Howt Green.

Key spatial variations are areas of lower tranquillity immediately east of the Sheppey Way south of Iwade as a result of the A429, and around Orchard Farm due to the brickearth extraction.

Guidance

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Utilise these features within developments to inform master planning. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building styles, materials, scale and massing. Sensitive lighting design should be considered particularly in the context of the marsh landscapes to the north.
- New development should seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of School Lane designated Rural Lane.
- Maintain the sense of separation between Sittingbourne and Iwade, and avoid the visual impression of a continuous urban area extending from Sittingbourne. Creation of a woodland buffer along the A249 could help create a greener corridor.
- Consider any new development in relation to the sensitive landscapes of the Swale to the north (SSSI, SPA, Ramsar) and the Areas of High Landscape Value to the north and west.

Settlement Area: Faversham



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Location and Description

Faversham is an historic small market town located in the east of Swale Borough, at the head of two tidal creeks and surrounded by areas of highly productive agricultural land. With a population of circa 20,000 it is one of the three largest settlements within the Borough, and has pre-Roman origins, with a rich built heritage.

The settlement edge is divided into seven areas for assessment of sensitivity to residential and employment development. These largely relate to the landscape character areas, together with physical boundaries such as roads, and comprise:

FM1 – the gently undulating fruit belt and arable farmlands to the south and east.

FM4 – the wooded dry valley at Syndale with mixed farmlands and parkland to the west and south west.

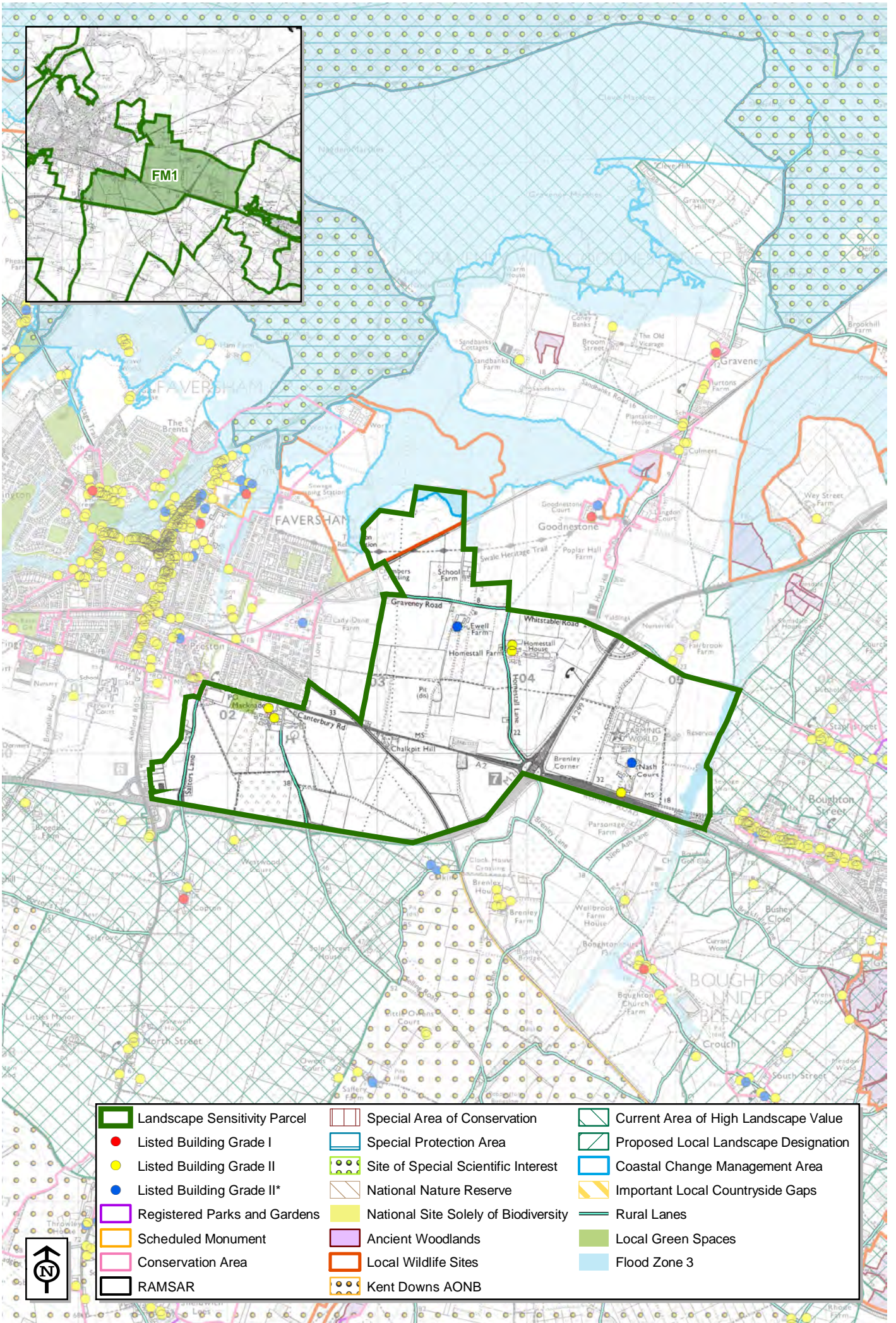
FM5 – the rolling arable farmlands to the north west.

FM6 – an area of flat arable farmland and gravel works bordering the marshlands to the north.

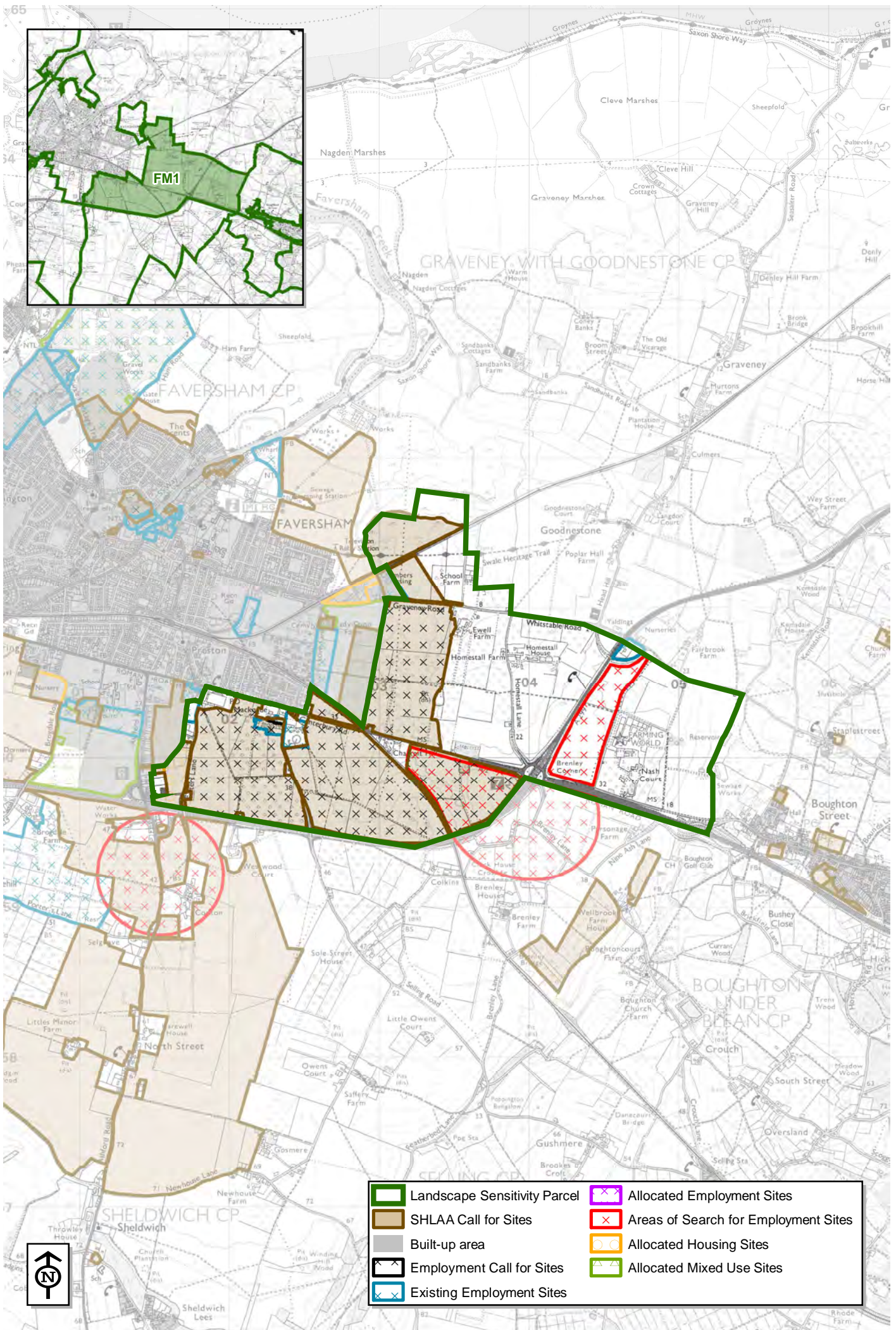
FM7 – a small area of flat arable farmland and sewage works bordering the marshlands to the north-west.

Areas up to the 2km buffer to the north of the settlement edge have been largely scoped out of the assessment due to flood and coastal change risk (Environment Agency/Swale Flood Zone 3 and Coastal Change Management Area) and nature conservation constraints (e.g. SSSI and SAC).

Faversham Area FM1: Designations and Constraints



Faversham Area FM1: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View east over large arable field towards the Blean



View north over currant field towards Faversham

Location and landscape character

The landscape to the south and east of Faversham lies within the Faversham and Ospringe Fruit Belt landscape character area (No.20). It comprises a combination of predominantly arable fields and areas of commercial fruit cultivation and horticulture.

Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local).

An AHLV – Kent Level (North Street Dip Slope) lies adjacent to this area, to the south beyond the M2, and the Blean Edge Fruit Belt AHLV – Swale Level lies adjacent to the area's easternmost boundary. These areas are recommended in the 2018 study for designation as Kent Downs – North Street Dip Slope LLD and Blean Edge Fruit Belt LLD respectively.

Assessment Criterion

Sensitivity description

Topography and scale

The landscape has a gently undulating topography, with a slight incline in the south away from the marshlands and towards the Kent Downs dip slope. Fields are predominantly medium scale with regular boundaries, although there are some large to very large arable fields in the east on either side of the M2 / A299. The presence of some commercial orchards and an associated network of shelterbelts and hedgerows throughout the area provide enclosure and help contain the apparent scale of the landscape.

Natural character

There is a relatively limited network of valued natural features and semi-natural habitats within the area. This includes small, isolated blocks of deciduous woodland, e.g. east of Chalkpit Hill, and traditional orchards including a relatively large example at School Farm, Graveney Road. These features exist within and alongside areas of intensive arable farmland which do not exhibit a natural character.

Salters Lane, Selling Road, Homestalls Lane, Graveney Road and Staple Street are locally designated Rural Lanes.

There are no nature conservation designations (national or local) present within the area.

Sense of time depth / historic character

The Swale HLC indicates that the area is dominated by a combination of orchards and prairie fields (19th century enclosure, with extensive boundary loss occurring post-WW2 and into the 21st century). In addition, there is an area of medium regular parliamentary type enclosure in the north, post 1801 settlement around the edge of Faversham, and scattered settlement with paddocks (post 1800 extent) in

	<p>the east around the junction of the A299 and Staple Street.</p> <p>The time-depth of the landscape relates predominantly to the continuity of agriculture and fruit cultivation within the area, together with the presence of scattered historic farmsteads, with occasional pasture and traditional orchards. Some areas of orchard have been lost in recent decades, together with field boundaries, resulting in more open, larger arable fields, particularly in the north and east of the area. Built heritage features comprise a number of listed farmhouses, including Nash Court (Grade II*), Ewell House (Grade II*), Homestall House and barn (Grade II), Macknade and related oasts (Grade II). There are also unlisted oasts at School Farm, off Whitstable Road.</p>
Visual character	<p>There are some long views across the larger scale fields to the north across the Swale to the Isle of Sheppey, which include wind turbines; and to the east to the wooded high ground of the Blean. Views are occasionally curtailed by established shelterbelts of tall poplars, although given the scale of some fields this does not diminish the sense of this being a relatively open landscape area.</p> <p>The visual prominence and openness of parts of the area, notably the north and east, appears to have increased recently with an enlargement of arable fields and loss of some shelterbelts, hedgerows and orchards. Large scale polytunnels north of the A2 are also quite prominent features which reflect sunlight.</p> <p>The skyline character is generally undeveloped and non-prominent, given the subtlety of landform; occasionally this is punctuated by modern features such as telecoms masts, low-level electricity transmission lines (on poles) and gantries / signage along the M2 corridor; although none of these features are particularly intrusive.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>The presence of major road infrastructure and heavy traffic levels within the area significantly impacts on the sense of rurality and tranquillity, although away from these routes the rural character increases, for example along the minor lanes (Selling Road and Homestall Lane), with some relatively intact stretches of hedgerow. These rural lanes are sensitive to increased traffic form development.</p> <p>Public access comprises a number of PRowS, including the promoted Swale Heritage Trail Recreational Route, which crosses the far north of the area.</p> <p>Faversham Cricket Club ground is a designated local green space.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	<p>Besides the scattered farmsteads, there is little settlement within the landscape area itself. The settlement edge of Faversham adjoins the north west of the area, beyond the A2 and the B2040 Love Lane. This settlement edge is characterised by a combination of historic features within the Preston-next-Faversham and Faversham Conservation Areas, such as Faversham Cemetery, together with 19th and 20th century housing, and is well-contained by these roads, of a low rise character and relatively well-screened by established roadside hedgerows. As such, there is not a strong visual relationship with the landscape area. Nevertheless, there is some intervisibility between the two, with the local landmark of the spire of St. Mary of Charity Church, Faversham visible on the skyline from some parts of the area, and the open recreational spaces of Faversham Cricket Club and Faversham Town Football Club grounds are located within the landscape area, immediately south of the A2, imparting a transitional character between the settlement and the agricultural land beyond. The area forms a strong agricultural setting for the market town.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Despite the proximity to Faversham, the area retains a strongly agricultural character, albeit with limited tranquillity and a recent trend towards some enlarged arable fields and a loss of structural features such as shelterbelts, hedgerows and orchards, imparting a greater openness to the landscape, accentuated by the flat to gently undulating landform. Heritage assets include occasional historic farmsteads, together with natural features such as woodland and remnant traditional orchards, have the impression of being quite isolated within the modern agricultural landscape and road network. These attributes, in combination with the visual exposure of the area and the absence of landscape designations, indicate a moderate overall sensitivity to future change from residential and employment development.

The area is valuable as the agricultural setting and rural approach to the market town of Faversham and extends a considerable distance to the east of the existing settlement.

Spatial variations in sensitivity within the area: The area around Nash Court, north of the A2/east of the A299 is considered more sensitive, as it forms the open rural backdrop to views from Boughton and the surrounding AHLV. The area to the north of the Whitstable railway adjacent to the marshes is also more remote/isolated and of greater sensitivity.

Guidance

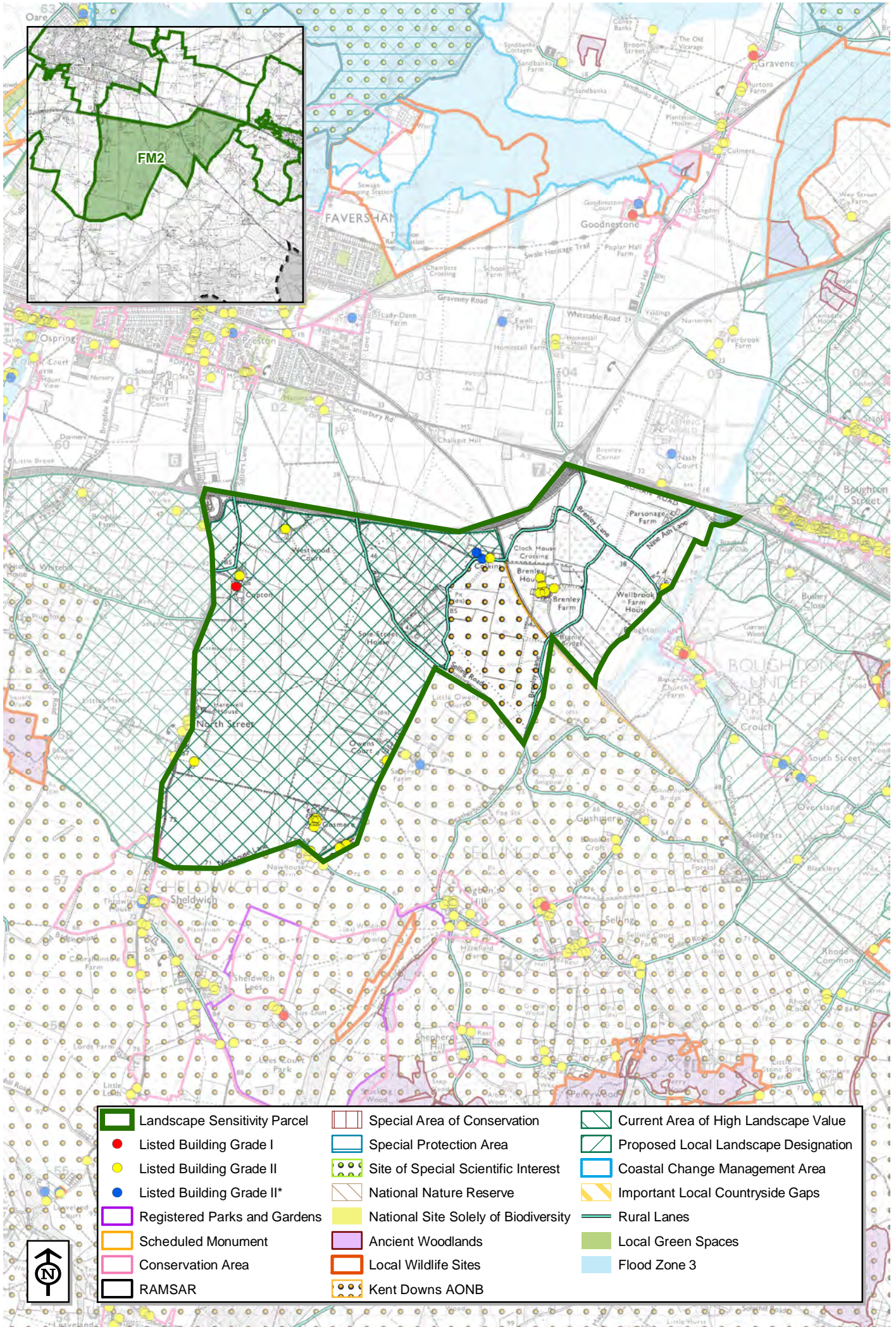
Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Consider any new development in relation to the setting of neighbouring locally and nationally designated landscapes (AHLV and AONB).
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening, such as those to the south of the A2. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost, such as in the north of the landscape area beyond the A2. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure consideration is given to sensitive heritage assets including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and their settings.
- Consider incorporating important and locally distinctive skyline features and views within the general layout/design and key vistas of any new development e.g. maintain the open views to the Blean wooded ridgeline to the east, and to the Isle of Sheppey to the north; maintain and focus views to the Church of St Mary of Charity, Faversham.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building scale, massing, style and materials, incorporating sensitive lighting design and native plant species of local provenance.
- New development should also seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural

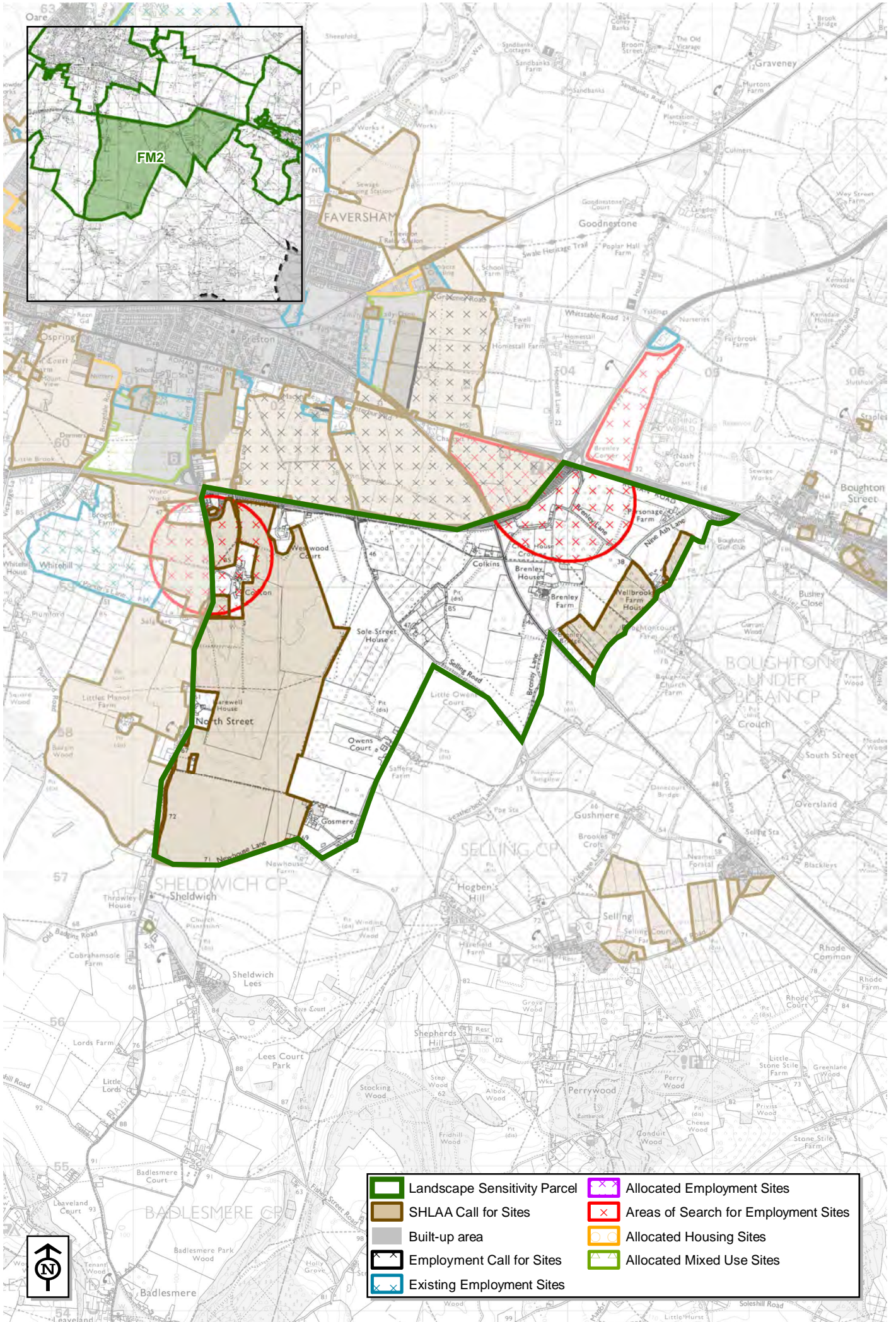
Lanes: Salters Lane, Selling Road, Homestalls Lane, Graveney Road and Staple Street and consider the impact of increased traffic within the wider rural area.

- Maintain the rural approach to Faversham along the A2, and provide a landscape integrated edge in relation to the existing roads.

Faversham Area FM2: Designations and Constraints



Faversham Area FM2: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



- Landscape Sensitivity Parcel
- SHLAA Call for Sites
- Built-up area
- Employment Call for Sites
- Existing Employment Sites
- Allocated Employment Sites
- Areas of Search for Employment Sites
- Allocated Housing Sites
- Allocated Mixed Use Sites

Representative photographs



View north-west towards North Street/A251



View north from Salters Lane towards M2

Location and landscape character

The landscape area to the south of the M2 and the east of the A251 lies within the Faversham and Ospringe Fruit Belt landscape character area (No.20). It comprises a combination of medium and large-scale arable fields and extensive areas of commercial orchards, with some pasture and parkland around farmsteads and other properties.

Landscape value

A large proportion of the area is within the AHLV – Kent Level and confirmed in the 2018 Local Landscape designation study. A wedge of land defined by Clockhouse Lane, Selling Road, Brenley Lane and the railway line is within the Kent Downs AONB which continues forming the southern boundary of the assessment area.

The smaller area east of the railway line is not subject to any landscape designations.

Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	Gently undulating landscape, comprising the lower dip slope of the Kent Downs, with a steady incline from around 30m AOD in the north rising to 72m AOD in the south at Newhouse Lane. The landscape scale is variable, with some large, open arable fields which have never been enclosed, in the west of the area bordering the A251, and much smaller scale orchards and hop fields further east, enclosed by a shelterbelt network.
Natural character	<p>There are very few identified areas of priority habitats within the landscape area; these being restricted to small blocks of deciduous woodland and remnant traditional orchards, usually associated with farmsteads. The network of established shelterbelts and hedgerows within and around the commercial orchards, and along the roads and lanes, represents the most extensive semi-natural feature within the area.</p> <p>There are a number of locally designated Rural Lanes within this area, including Salters Lane, Selling Road, Clockhouse Lane, Brenley Lane, South Street and Nine Ash Lane.</p>
Sense of time depth / historic character	The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by a combination of large prairie fields in the west (there is historical evidence that this area has never been enclosed), orchards, small and medium parliamentary type enclosures (regular boundaries), together with scattered settlement with paddocks (post 1800 extent) associated with historic farmsteads in the south (Gosmere) and east (Wellbrook Farm House).

	<p>The time-depth of the landscape relates predominantly to the continuity of agriculture, fruit and hop cultivation within the area, together with the presence of many scattered historic houses, farmsteads and associated barns, oasts, stables and granaries in the Kentish vernacular styles (including timber framed, weather boarded and red brick), some with parkland containing notable mature trees, pasture and traditional orchards. Many of these buildings and structures are statutorily listed, including the Grade I Copton Manor (of Medieval origins) and the Grade II* Colkins and Saffery Farmhouse. Some areas of traditionally managed orchards have been lost in recent years, together with field boundaries, resulting in more open, larger fields.</p>
Visual character	<p>Important views include the long views north to the Isle of Sheppey and Thames Estuary, east and south-east to the wooded ridgeline of the Blean and Perrywood from the more elevated south of the area.</p> <p>The predominantly open and exposed areas of large scale arable fields are less sensitive in terms of land cover and scale but also have high visibility within the surrounding landscape and local settlements at North Street and Sheldwich and the AONB.</p> <p>There is intervisibility between the AONB and the surrounding area outside the AONB, which also displays some of its special identified qualities, including the long views.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>Away from the M2 and A251 corridors the landscape becomes increasingly tranquil, with a strong sense of rural character and few modern built features and human influences.</p> <p>The railway line is not a particularly intrusive feature within this landscape, as it runs mostly in a well-screened shallow cutting through the area.</p> <p>Several PRoWs traverse this area, although the majority are concentrated to the east of Selling Road.</p>
Character and setting of settlement	<p>Settlement within this landscape area is restricted to the historic properties, typically farmsteads, scattered throughout the area, which have a longstanding and integral visual relationship with the surrounding land; plus the linear 19th and 20th century housing along North Street (A251) forming the western boundary of the area, which is visible from the open fields further east. The surrounding area provides a rural setting and backdrop to this settlement.</p> <p>There is no connection with the settlement edge of Faversham.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H

The landscape has a gently undulating landform, with many open and visually exposed areas that have a visual relationship with the AONB. The generally strong sense of rural character is reinforced by the absence of modern larger scale built form and other human influences, and the presence of many listed farmsteads and rural lanes, which provide human scale features and time depth to the landscape. These attributes, in combination with the extent of local and national landscape designations, indicate a high overall sensitivity to future change from residential and employment development.

Spatial variations in sensitivity within the area: There are no notable variations in overall sensitivity within this landscape area. Whilst areas in close proximity to the M2 have a lower tranquillity than is typical for the remainder of

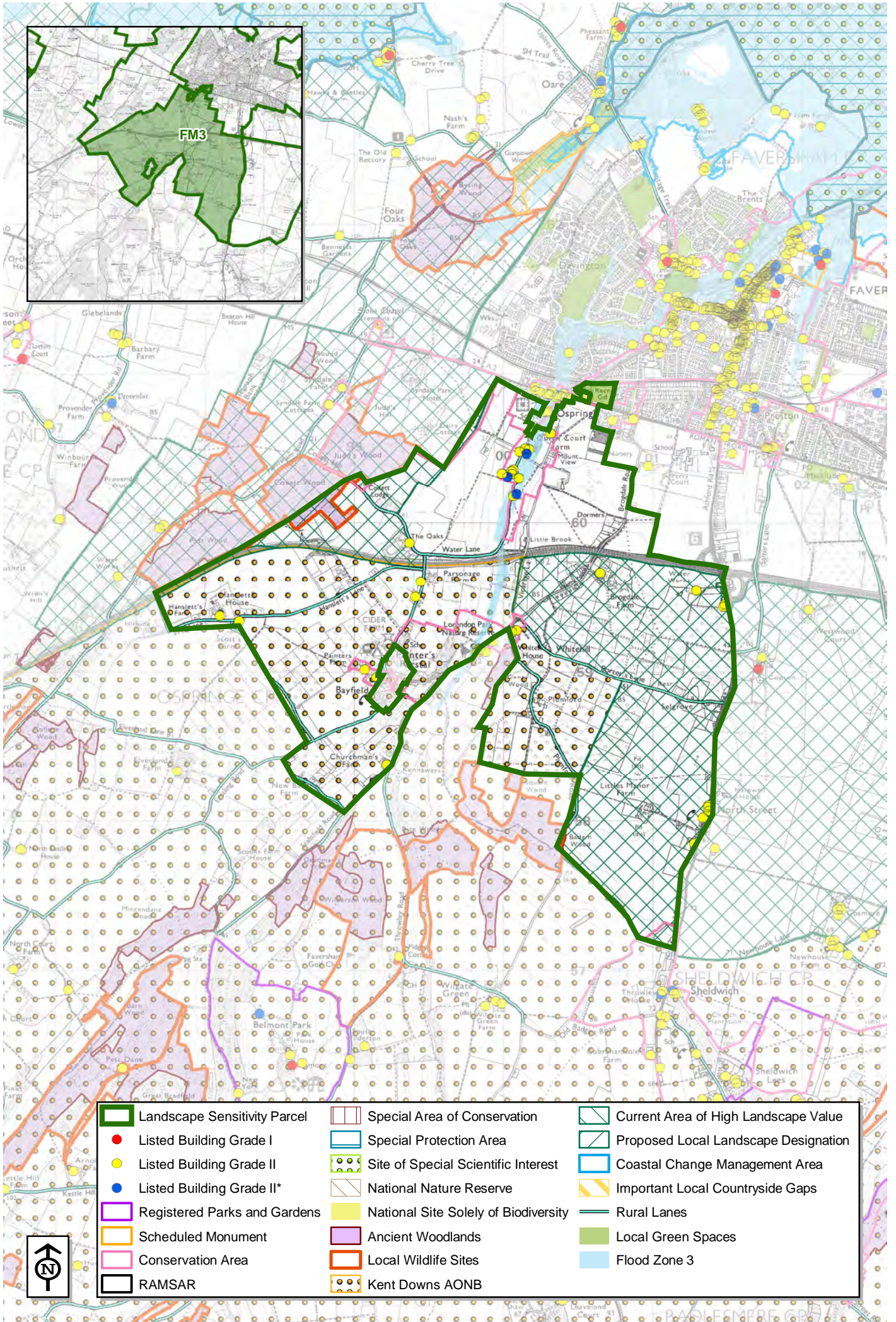
the area, the visual influence of the motorway within this area is limited.

Guidance

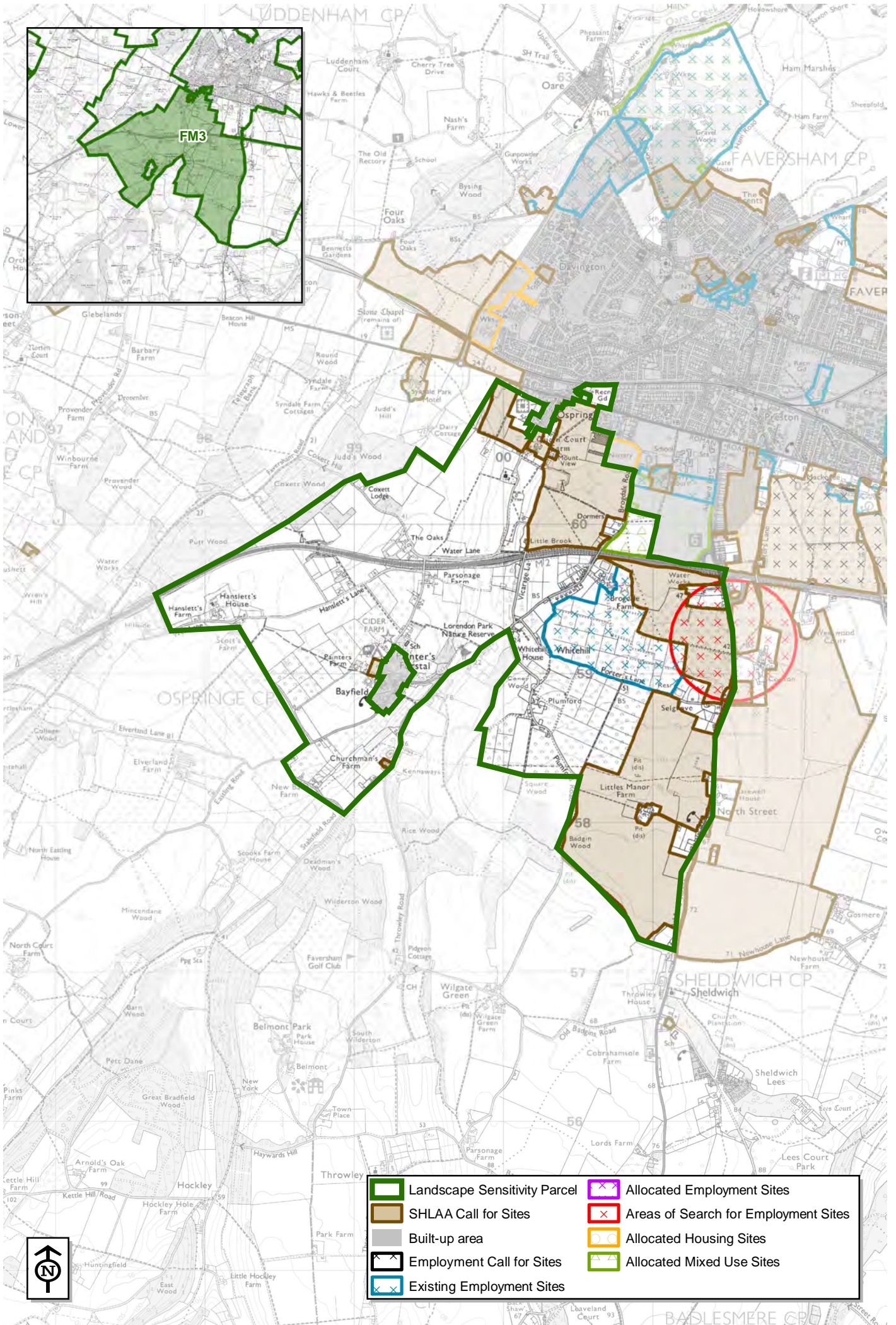
Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Consider any new development in relation to the sensitive landscape character, setting and special qualities of the AHLV and the AONB.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure consideration is given to sensitive heritage assets including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and their settings.
- Consider incorporating important and locally distinctive skyline features and views within the general layout/design and key vistas of any new development e.g. maintain the long views north to the Thames Estuary and Isle of Sheppey, and east / south-east to the wooded high ground of the Blean and Perrywood.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building scale, massing, style and materials, incorporating sensitive lighting design and native plant species of local provenance. New development should also seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: Salters Lane, Selling Road, Clockhouse Lane, Brenley Lane, South Street and Nine Ash Lane.
- Maintain the rural approach to Faversham along the A251.

Faversham Area FM3: Designations and Constraints



Faversham Area FM3: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View east from Plumford Road towards Painters Forstal and the Blean beyond



View west of orchard near Plumford

Location and landscape character

Landscape Area FM3 extends from Ospringe, just beyond the south western edge of Faversham, south beyond the M2 into the Kent Downs AONB. It lies within the Faversham and Ospringe Fruit Belt landscape character area (No.20), and is characterised by a combination of small to large-scale arable fields, extensive areas of commercial orchards and some pasture and woodland around Ospringe and Painters Forstal.

Landscape value

South of the M2 the landscape area is nationally designated as the Kent Downs AONB (in the west) and locally designated as the AHLV- Kent Level (in the east). North of the M2 there is a wedge of land within the AHLV- Kent Level in the west around Abbots Hill. The Local Landscape Designations have been confirmed in the 2018 study. Only the area north of the M2 around Ospringe has no designation.

Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	<p>The topography within the area is relatively diverse, combining the Kent Downs dip slope in the east (characterised by a gentle incline upwards to the south to c.70m AOD) with a more pronounced valley landform in the centre and west of the area, running south-west to north-east, which ranges from c.15m AOD up to c.65m AOD. The local dry valley at Ospringe is a distinctive feature.</p> <p>Scale also varies, with many small scale intimate areas within the valley and around the orchards, pasture fields and rural lanes, with enclosure provided by landform, woodland, shelterbelts and hedgerows. This is contrasted by areas of much larger, open arable fields, particularly around Ospringe and further south alongside the route of the A251.</p>
Natural character	<p>Valued natural features within this area primarily relate to the extensive network of hedgerows, shelterbelts and orchards (predominantly commercial, but including some traditionally managed orchards around settlement and farmsteads). In addition, there are areas of Priority Habitat deciduous woodland along the valley sides at Painters Forstal, and the separate Syndale valley ridge to the north, which is also ancient woodland.</p> <p>There are a number of locally designated Rural Lanes throughout the area, including Plumford Road, Porter's Lane, Hanslett's Lane, Well Lane, Scotts Lane, Eastling Road, Painter's Forstal Road, Water Lane, Box Lane and Stalisfield Lane.</p>
Sense of time depth / historic	The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by a diverse mixture of

<p>character</p>	<p>landscape types, including: small, medium, large and prairie fields (regular parliamentary type enclosures, and some areas which have never been enclosed); fields predominantly bounded by tracks, roads and other rights of way; rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries (late Medieval to 17th / 18th century enclosures); orchards; scattered settlement with paddocks (post 1800 extent); and post 1810 settlement.</p> <p>The time-depth of the landscape relates predominantly to the continuity of agriculture and fruit cultivation within the area, including some historic field patterns, together with a concentration of listed buildings within several Conservation Areas (Ospringe, Painters Forstal, Whitehill and the edges of Sheldwich and Syndale), and scattered listed historic houses, farmsteads and cottages across the wider landscape, many in the Kentish vernacular styles (many of which are timber framed). Ospringe has a number of Grade II* listed buildings, including the Church of St Peter and St Paul and its vicarage. The National Fruit Collection, based at Brogdale Farm just south of the M2, is a promoted visitor attraction and research centre, reinforcing the historical and ongoing importance of this area for fruit cultivation.</p> <p>The presence of the AONB south of the M2 (with its special identified qualities including the traditionally farmed landscape and rich historic and cultural heritage), also indicates a strong time depth to this part of the landscape.</p>
<p>Visual character</p>	<p>The visual character of this area is variable, with both intimate and open parts, largely influenced by the degree of enclosure provided by landform and vegetation. There are long views north, east and south from some of the larger, more elevated open fields, e.g. along Plumford Road, towards the Isle of Sheppey and the high ground of the Blean and Perrywood. Elsewhere, the valley and sunken lanes strongly limit and contain views.</p> <p>The skyline is generally undeveloped, and in some views south is characterised by the wooded higher ground beyond, further within the Kent Downs AONB.</p> <p>The M2, which cuts across the landscape east to west, is generally well screened by vegetation, limiting its visual influence.</p>
<p>Perceptual and experiential qualities</p>	<p>Despite the presence of the M2, the landscape has a strong sense of traditional rural character and tranquillity in most parts, and a sense of remoteness along the quieter lanes in the south.</p> <p>The National Fruit Collection at Brogdale Farm is a notable visitor attraction that contributes to public interpretation of the history and value of fruit cultivation within this landscape.</p> <p>A network of PRoWs provides reasonably extensive public access through the area.</p>
<p>Character and setting of settlement</p>	<p>Settlement within the area is focussed within the villages of Ospringe and Painters Forstal, linear housing along North Street and Brogdale Road, and elsewhere as scattered farmsteads and houses integrated within the landscape.</p> <p>Ospringe has partly developed along the A2 (Watling Street), and is strongly related to the edge of Faversham. Despite the presence of the busy A2 and proximity to Faversham, the landscape area around Ospringe has largely retained its rural character, including orchards and an intimacy of scale in parts, and provides a scenic backdrop and setting to the village and the edge of Faversham.</p> <p>Painters Forstal is a nucleated village with a small historic core and extensive post WW2 housing beyond this. It is wholly within the AONB and has a strongly rural setting, with surrounding orchards and a steep wooded valley leading east out of the village along Eastling Road.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The majority of this landscape area is within the AONB or AHLV or their immediate setting. The combination of this landscape value at a national and local level, its strongly rural and scenic character, including a range of historic features that contribute to landscape character and time depth, its visual openness in many parts contrasted by small scale intimate areas of dry valley, pasture and orchards, and winding rural lanes, indicate a high overall sensitivity to future change from residential and employment development.

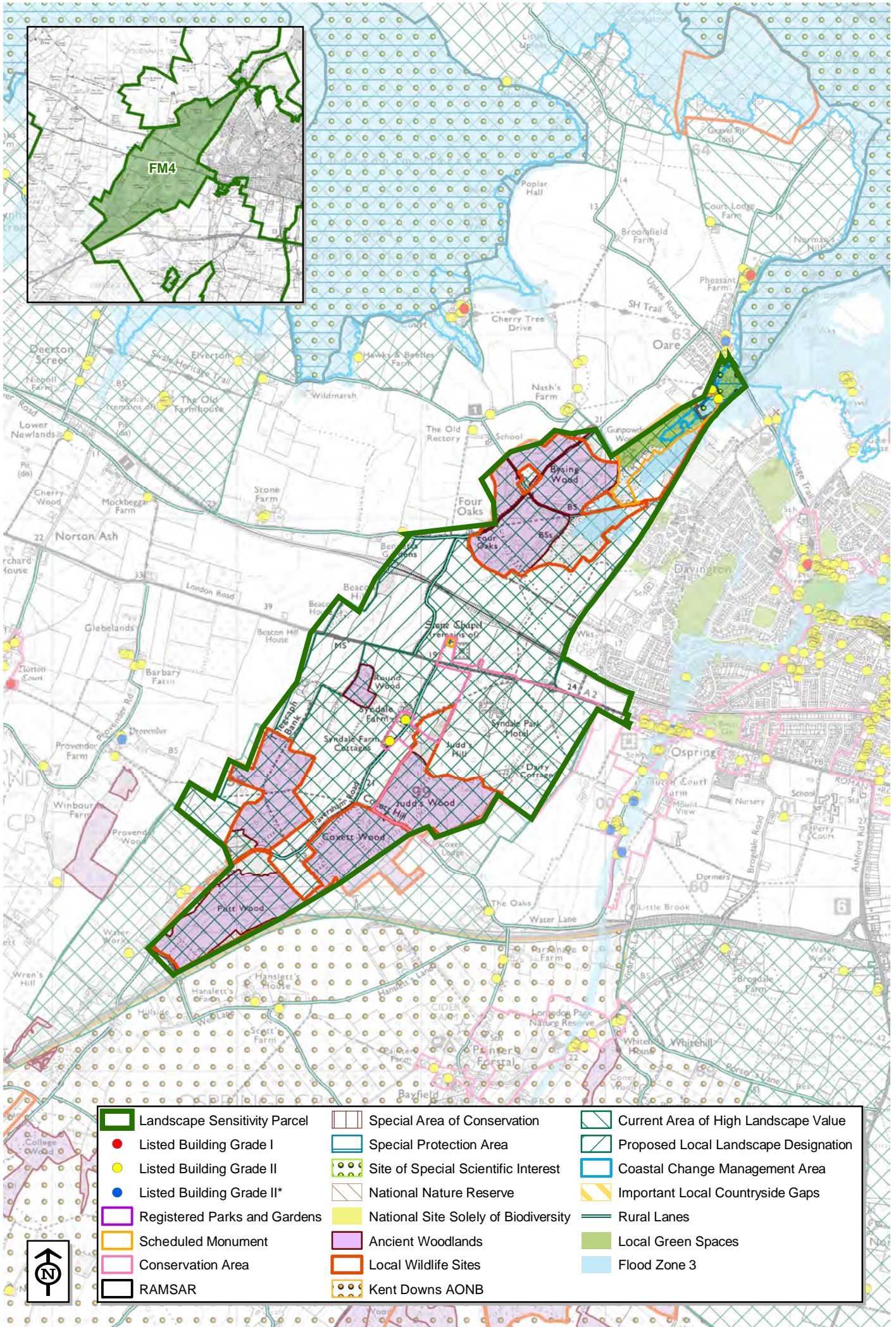
Spatial variations in sensitivity within the area: There are some smaller areas of relatively large and flat arable fields around Brogdale Road north of the M2 which have a less scenic and tranquil character than is typical for the remainder of the area, indicating lower sensitivity. In comparison, the area of minor valley landscape at Ospringe remains highly sensitive.

Guidance

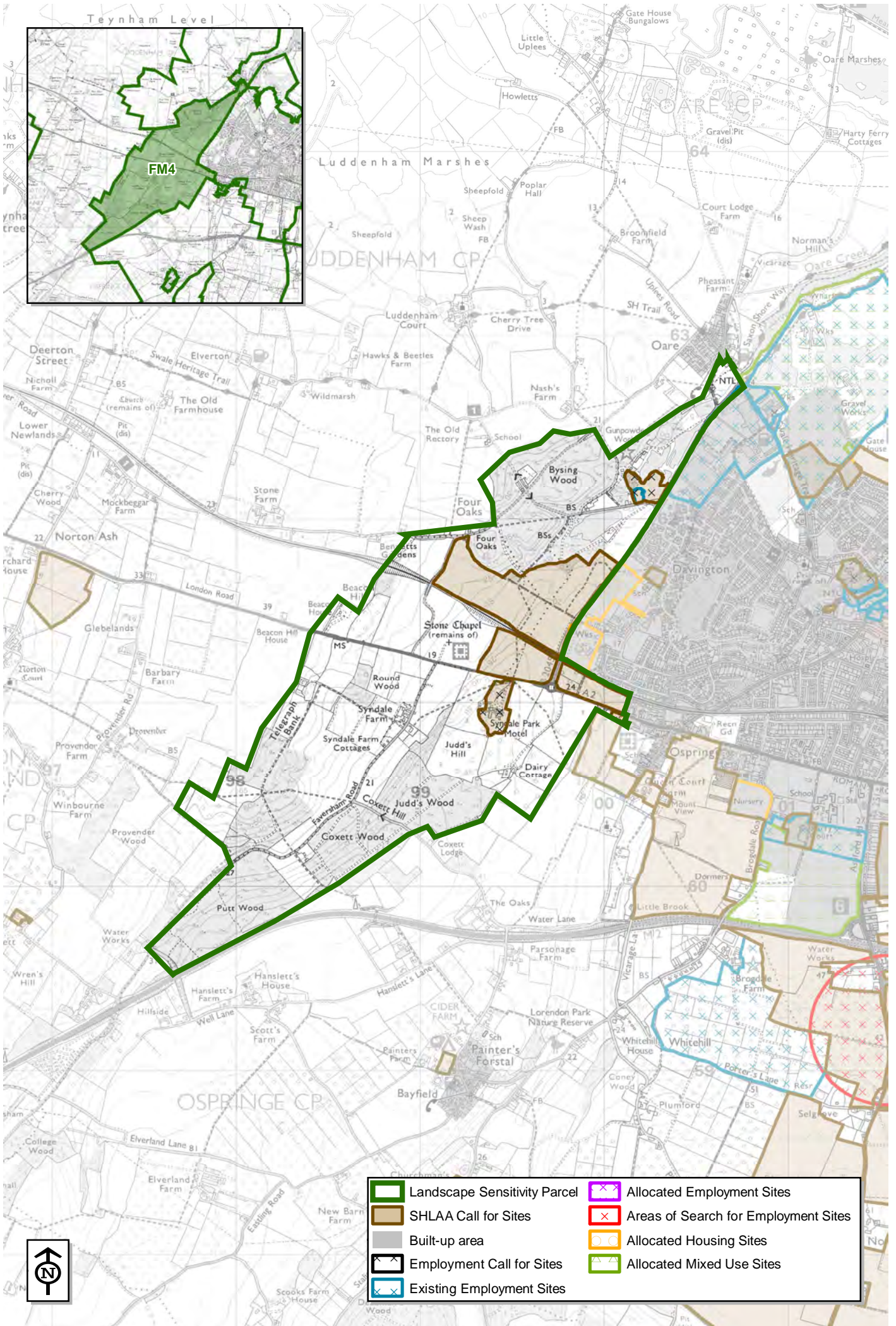
Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Consider any new development in relation to the sensitive landscape character, setting and special qualities of the AHLV and the AONB.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure consideration is given to sensitive heritage assets including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and their settings.
- Consider incorporating important and locally distinctive skyline features and views within the general layout/design and key vistas of any new development e.g. maintain the long views east / south-east to the wooded high ground of the Blean and Perrywood; maintain and focus views to the Church of St Peter and St Paul, Ospringe.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building scale, massing, style and materials, incorporating sensitive lighting design and native plant species of local provenance. New development should also seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: Plumford Road, Porter’s Lane, Hanslett’s Lane, Well Lane, Scotts Lane, Eastling Road, Painter’s Forstal Road, Water Lane, Box Lane and Stalisfield Lane.
- Maintain the rural approach to Ospringe along Water Lane and Vicarage Lane, and to Faversham along the A251.

Faversham Area FM4: Designations and Constraints



Faversham Area FM4: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View of valley landform with pasture and woodland along Faversham Road



View of sunken lane at Bysing Wood

Location and landscape character	
<p>The landscape to the west and south west of Faversham lies within the Doddington and Newnham Dry Valleys landscape character area (No.36). It is known by its local name of the Syndale Valley and is characterised by a distinctive dry chalk valley landscape, with mixed land cover of grazed pasture, arable and hop fields on the valley sides, with extensive areas of woodland which extend up onto the valley crests.</p>	
Landscape value	
<p>The majority of the area is within an AHLV – Kent Level, and confirmed in the 2018 Local Landscape Designations study.</p>	
Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	<p>Distinctive, relatively steep sided dry valley landform with rounded crests. The landscape scale varies, with some large arable fields, but in general the significant enclosure provided by the valley landform and frequent woodland, shelterbelts and hedgerows limits openness and views, except those of a linear nature along the valley bottom, resulting in a typically small to medium scale.</p>
Natural character	<p>The valley is characterised by frequent intact blocks of designated ancient woodland, which are also Local Wildlife Sites. There are also isolated areas of Priority Habitat traditional orchards and lowland calcareous grassland, and a relatively extensive area of historic parkland with notable mature trees at Syndale Park, to the immediate south of the A2.</p> <p>The extent and frequency of valued semi-natural woodland and other natural features indicates higher sensitivity to development.</p> <p>Locally designated Rural Lanes within the area include Faversham Road, Well Lane, Coxett Hill, Four Oaks Road, Bysing Wood Road and Lower Road.</p>
Sense of time depth / historic character	<p>The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by pre-19th century coppices and other pre-1810 woodland (corresponding with the ancient woodland); small and medium regular fields (parliamentary type enclosures); rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries (late medieval to 17th/18th century enclosures); 19th century and later parkland (corresponding with Syndale Park); and abandoned industry (including gunpowder works – now the Oare Gunpowder Works Country Park).</p> <p>The time-depth of the landscape relates predominantly to the continuity of semi-natural woodland cover, historic parkland and agriculture, including hop farming,</p>

	<p>extensive pasture and orchards, together with built heritage features. These include the extensive Syndale Conservation Area, incorporating the elevated parkland (un-registered) surrounding the site of Syndale House, destroyed by fire in 1961. This is one of the best-preserved designed landscapes within the Borough, with many notable mature trees, and is also of archaeological interest, with the remains of a Roman fort. The Conservation Area also includes Judd's Wood, and Syndale Farm and Cottages (Grade II listed) along the valley bottom, together with the remains of a parish church and a Romano-British mausoleum (a Scheduled Monument). The Oare Gunpowder Works, an important part of Faversham's industrial heritage and in continuous use from the early 18th century to 1934, are also an extensive Scheduled Monument in the far north of the area.</p>
Visual character	<p>The enclosing steep landform and frequent mature woodlands tend to limit and focus views along the valley bottom, with little inter-visibility with surrounding areas. The prevailing visual character is of an enclosed, strongly rural landscape with an undeveloped skyline and few modern intrusive elements. However, there are locations, such as open parts of the Bysing Wood ridgeline, where longer range views of modern infrastructure are possible, including wind turbines, pylon routes and industry to the north around the Isle of Sheppey. Close range views of larger scale warehouses on the western edge of Faversham are also possible along the Western Link.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>Despite its proximity to Faversham, much of the landscape has a strongly rural and tranquil character, and a sense of isolation or remoteness, influenced by the enclosing valley landform and woodland. Bysing Wood Road is a particularly characterful deeply sunken lane with enclosing mature woodland, and the prominent mature parkland at Syndale Park also imparts a distinct time depth to the landscape.</p> <p>The busy A2 adversely affects these landscape qualities to some extent within its sphere of visual and aural influence.</p> <p>A number of PRoWs provide public access through the landscape, and the country park is a promoted visitor attraction and area for recreation.</p>
Character and setting of settlement	<p>The landscape area forms the immediate setting for the western and south western settlement edge of Faversham, largely formed of modern housing and commercial development, of little or no historic character. There are limited longer views out of these areas which incorporate the surrounding countryside, including the wooded ridgeline of Bysing Wood, but there is also enclosure provided by intervening vegetation.</p> <p>The far north of the landscape area, where the wooded country park gives way to open, traditionally grazed marshy land, also provides an important part of the setting of the village of Oare, situated on a tidal creek leading out to the Swale.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
<p>The landscape exhibits a cohesive and scenic dry valley landform contiguous with the AONB. This is combined with a strong sense of rurality, time depth, areas of tranquillity and remoteness and important woodland, parkland and historic features which all positively influence landscape character. These attributes, in combination with the identified recreational value and local landscape value indicate a high overall sensitivity to future change from residential and employment development.</p>				

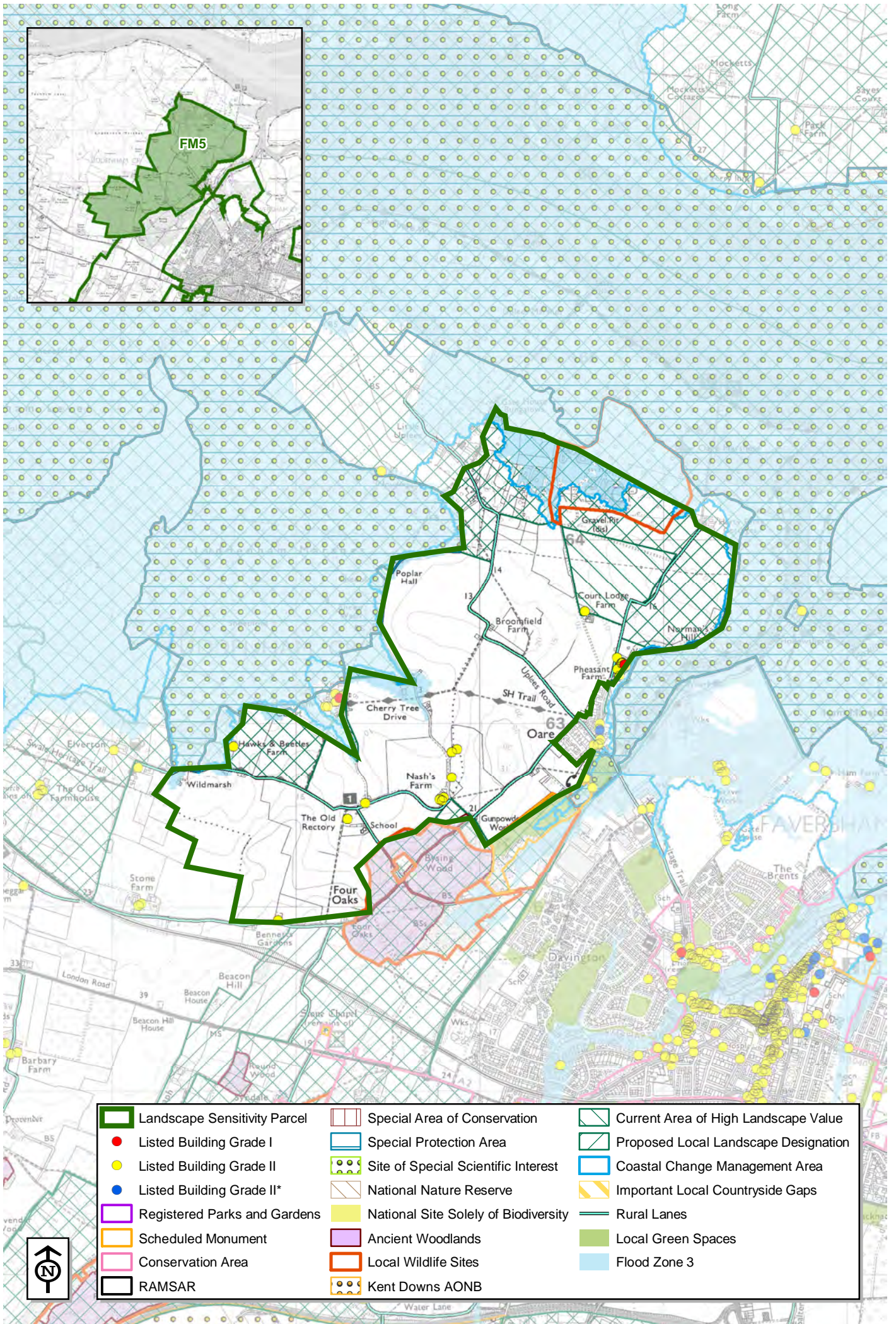
Spatial variations in sensitivity within the area: There are no notable variations in overall sensitivity within this landscape area.

Guidance

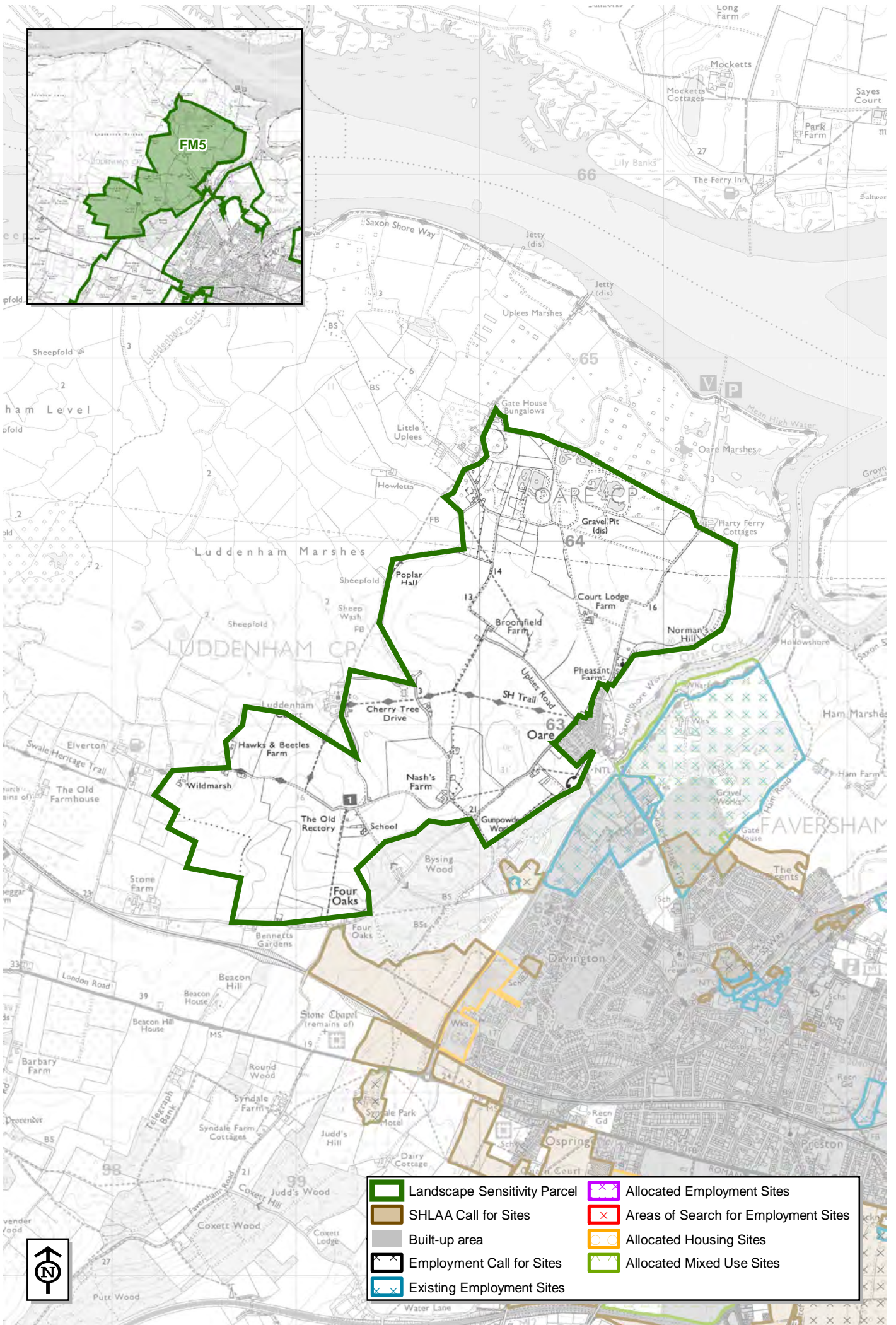
Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Consider any new development in relation to the sensitive landscape character, setting and special qualities of the AHLV and the AONB.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses, orchards and traditionally managed woodlands, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure consideration is given to sensitive heritage assets including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and their settings.
- Consider incorporating important and locally distinctive skyline features and views within the general layout/design and key vistas of any new development e.g. maintain the long views north and west to the Isle of Sheppey, and south to Syndale Park from the high ground around Bysing Wood.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building scale, massing, style and materials, incorporating sensitive lighting design and native plant species of local provenance. New development should also seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: Faversham Road, Well Lane, Coxett Hill, Four Oaks Road, Bysing Wood Road and Lower Road.

Faversham Area FM5: Designations and Constraints



Faversham Area FM5: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View north-west from Uplees Road towards the Swale



View north-west over Nash's Farm from Colegates Road

Location and landscape character

The landscape to the north-west of Faversham lies within the Stone Arable Farmlands landscape character area (No.17). It comprises medium and large scale rolling arable farmland.

Landscape value

The north of the area adjoining the marshes incorporates part of the AHLV – Kent Level, and a small area at Hawkes and Beetles Farm is part of the AHLV – Swale Level.

The 2018 Local Landscape Designations study recommends small changes to the boundaries in the north, but the extent of locally designated landscape remains broadly the same.

Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	This is a predominantly rolling landform which rises slightly to the south, away from the marshland edge. Although the elevation only reaches c.30m AOD, the wider landscape is broadly low and flat, giving the impression of higher elevation, with some far- reaching views over medium to large scale, expansive arable fields with limited enclosure. Some historic farmsteads are located within the dips between the higher ground, and these areas are characterised by a smaller scale, more enclosed feel.
Natural character	<p>There is a concentration of identified Priority Habitats and valued natural features in the far north of this area around the hamlet of Little Uplees and the former gravel pits (disused), which includes deciduous woodland, traditional orchards and coastal / floodplain grazing marsh. The gravel pits are within the Uplees Lake and Marsh Local Wildlife Site, and the landscape area also adjoins the Oare Marshes Local Nature Reserve. The nationally and internationally designated Swale SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site also adjoins parts of this landscape area.</p> <p>Elsewhere, the area contains limited valued natural features or semi-natural habitats, comprising grassland and trees around farmsteads and a gappy, managed hedgerow network along some lanes and field boundaries. It is evident that some orchards and hedgerows were removed in the 20th century to open up the fields for intensive arable farming practices.</p> <p>The south of the area adjoins ancient woodland and a Local Wildlife Site at Bysing Wood (within landscape area FM4).</p> <p>Locally designated Rural Lanes within the area include Bysing Wood Road, Uplees Road, Church Road and an unnamed lane in Luddenham.</p>

	<p>The absence of significant valued natural features from the majority of the area indicates lower sensitivity to development, although this is counterbalanced by the proximity of much of the landscape to the sensitive ecological designations of the Swale.</p>
Sense of time depth / historic character	<p>The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by small and medium regular fields (parliamentary type enclosures); rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries (late medieval to 17th/18th century enclosures); village/hamlet (1810 extent); post 1801 settlement; active and disused gravel and clay workings.</p> <p>The time-depth of the landscape relates predominantly to the continuity of agriculture and fruit cultivation within the area, together with the presence of scattered historic farmsteads containing Grade II listed buildings in the local vernacular styles, some with pasture and traditionally managed orchards.</p> <p>There is an important concentration of historic buildings around the Grade I listed Church of St Peter, along Church Road north of Oare. There is also a complex of listed buildings around the Grade I listed Church of St Mary, Luddenham, situated just outside the landscape area, on the edge of Luddenham marshes.</p>
Visual character	<p>Long views are available from the higher ground across the large open fields to the marshes and Swale, incorporating small-scale historic buildings and local landmarks such as St. Mary's Church, Luddenham and Nash's Farm, together with larger modern features such as wind turbines.</p> <p>Overhead power lines and pylons are dominant features across much of this landscape, often appearing out of scale with the small historic farmsteads.</p> <p>There is a contrasting visual character immediately around some of the settlement, such as at Little Uplees and Church Road, Oare, where the many human scale features result in a more intimate, enclosed character, although this quickly diminishes when passing back out into the arable farmland.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>Again, this is a landscape of contrasting qualities, with a prevailing rural, tranquil and relatively remote character accentuated by the absence of major roads. The pylon routes and longer views towards surrounding infrastructure are frequent reminders of the presence of modern development, which somewhat limits the sense of traditional rural character and scenic qualities of the landscape.</p> <p>The Swale Heritage Trail promoted recreational route runs through the centre and south of the landscape area. In addition, some further PRoWs provide public access through the area.</p>
Character and setting of settlement	<p>The area provides a rural setting to the western settlement edge of Oare, which is well-contained and characterised by linear 19th and 20th century low-rise housing along Colegates Road and Church Road.</p> <p>Little Uplees is situated at the interface between the marshes and the rolling arable farmland within FM5, both of which provide a rural setting of contrasting character.</p> <p>The area has no direct relationship with the edge of Faversham, as this is across Oare Creek and valley.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H

The rolling landform and predominantly large scale, open character results in areas of visually prominent slopes and skylines forming the backdrop to the marshes. The landscape is only crossed by minor lanes and retains an isolated, rural character and strong tranquillity, but this has been eroded to an extent by the intrusive pylon routes and field enlargements. The historic farmsteads and remnant orchards and pasture fields, which typically occupy the lower ground, lend a strong time depth and more scenic, intimate character to the landscape. Valued natural features are concentrated in the north of the area along the marshland edge. These attributes indicate a high overall sensitivity to future change from residential and employment development.

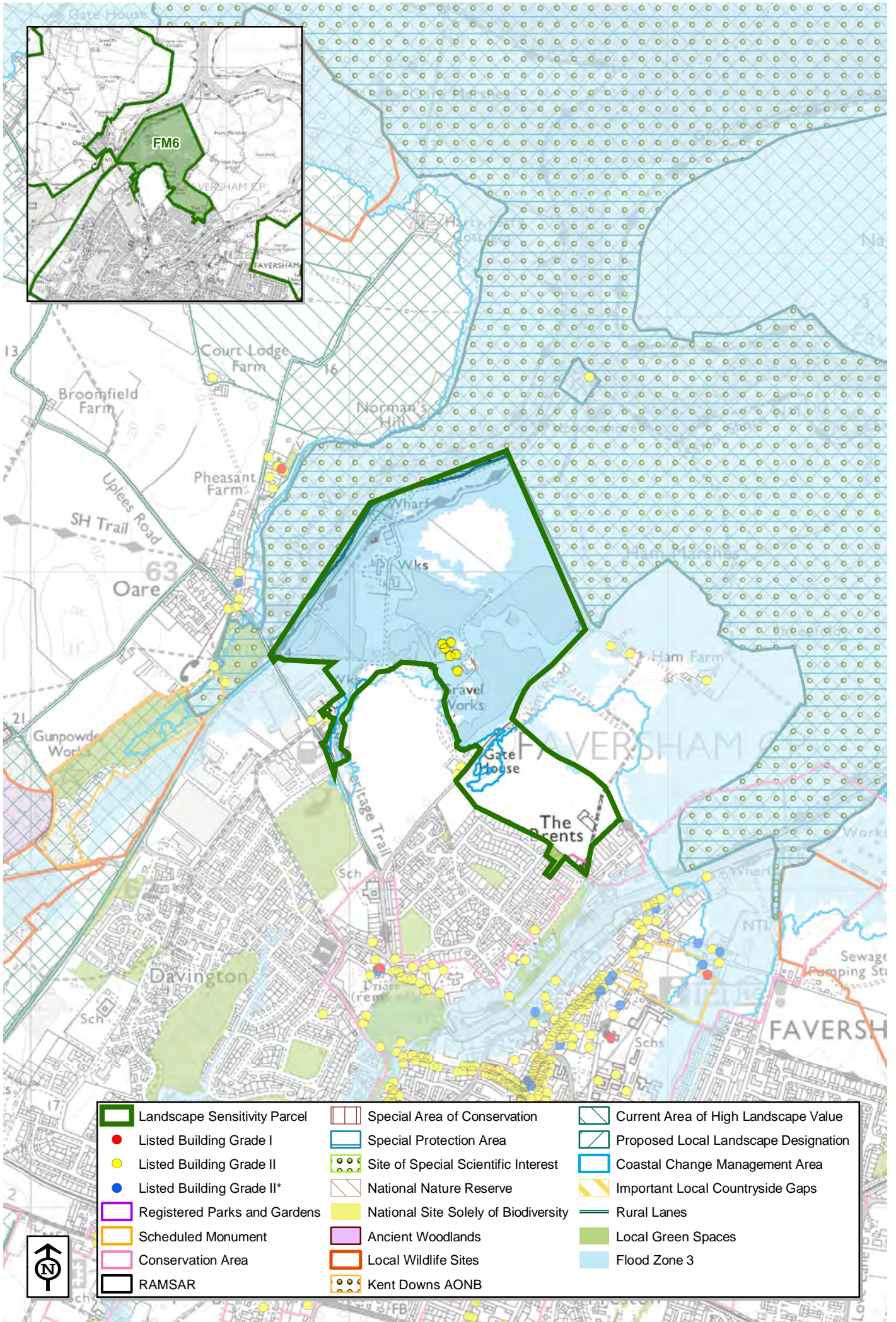
There are no spatial variations in sensitivity within the area.

Guidance

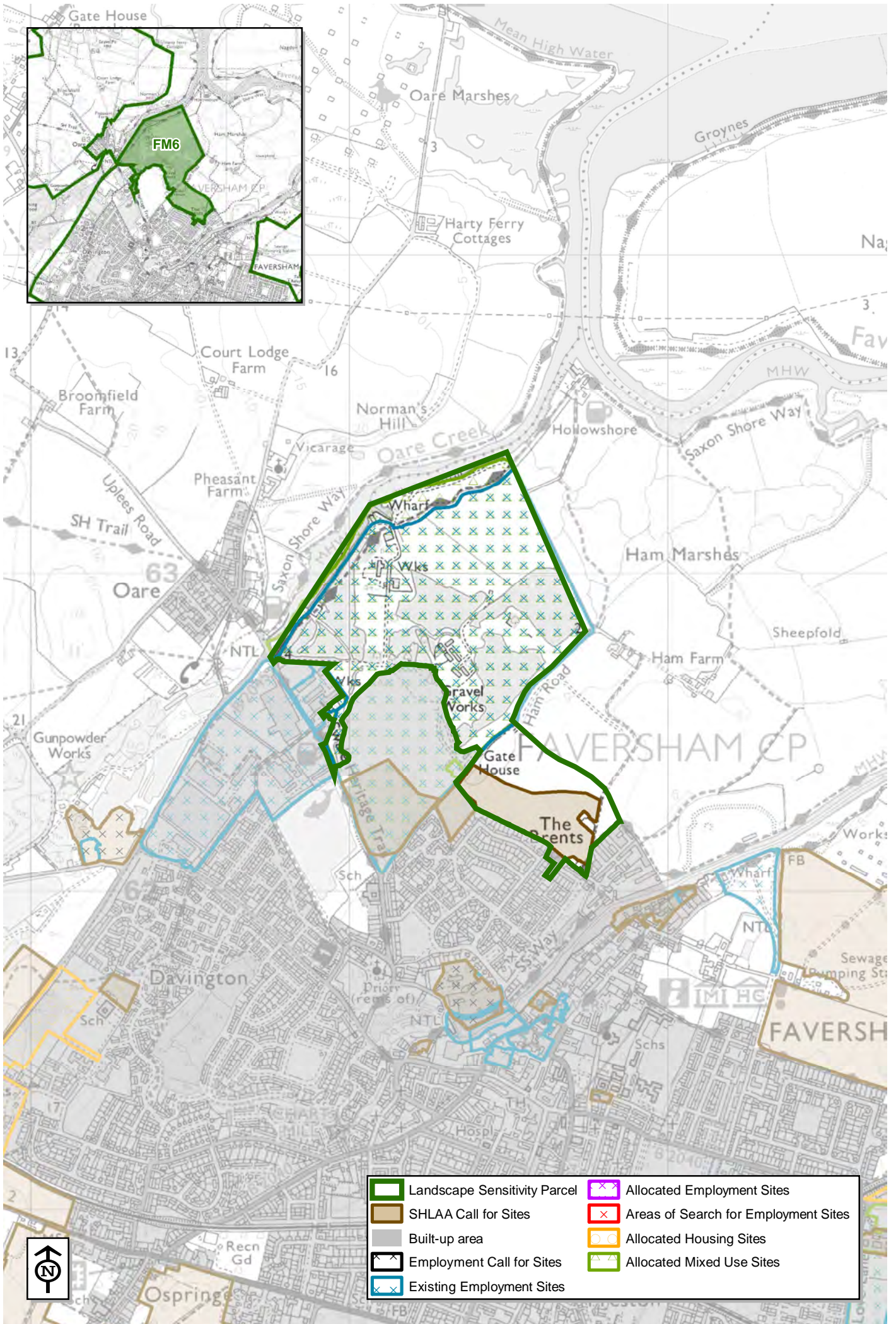
Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Consider any new development in relation to the sensitive landscape character and setting of the AHLV.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure consideration is given to sensitive heritage assets including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and their settings.
- Consider incorporating important and locally distinctive skyline features and views within the general layout/design and key vistas of any new development e.g. maintain the long, panoramic views over the marshes from the high ground; maintain and focus views to the Church of St Peter, Oare, and the Church of St Mary, Luddenham.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building scale, massing, style and materials, incorporating sensitive lighting design and native plant species of local provenance. New development should also seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: Bysing Wood Road, Uplees Road, Church Road and an unnamed lane in Luddenham.

Faversham Area FM6: Designations and Constraints



Faversham Area FM6: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View south-east from Ham Road across the lake at Oare Gravel Works.



View looking south from Saxon Shore Way in the north.

Location and landscape character

The landscape area to the north of Faversham lies within the Stone Arable Farmlands landscape character area (No.17). It is related to an area of former gravel workings north-west of Ham Road, and arable farmland south-east of Ham Road.

Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local), although the north of the gravel workings adjoins Oare Creek and Ham Marshes which are within the AHLV - Kent Level.

Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	The landform is uniformly flat, rising to little more than 5m AOD. The landscape scale is relatively large, with little enclosure, and is accentuated by the open expanses of the adjoining marshes.
Natural character	<p>Within the gravel workings site there are identified discrete areas of Priority Habitat coastal grazing marsh and deciduous woodland. There are also a number of lakes and pools created from the former gravel pits which have a biodiversity value, as well as stretches of hedgerow along the Ham Road boundary.</p> <p>There are no statutory ecological designations within the area, although it does adjoin the internationally and nationally designated Swale SPA, SSSI and Ramsar site to the north.</p>
Sense of time depth / historic character	<p>The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by active and disused gravel workings north-west of Ham Road, and prairie fields (19th century enclosure with extensive boundary loss) south-east of Ham Road. There is a minor ribbon of small irregular enclosures in the far north, bordering Oare Creek.</p> <p>The gravel workings were formerly used as the Marsh Gunpowder Works, part of the Royal Gunpowder Work established on this site in 1786. There is an important surviving cluster of late 18th and early 19th century Grade II listed buildings relating to the gunpowder works, in the centre of the area, along with a Grade II gate house and proof house at the site entrance on Ham Road. As such, the site has historical importance and time depth in relation to Faversham's industrial heritage.</p> <p>The south-eastern corner of the site adjoins the Faversham Conservation Area at</p>

	Upper Brents, although there is not a strong visual relationship between the two areas at this point.
Visual character	<p>Long views over the open lakes and fields to the surrounding marshes and creeks beyond.</p> <p>Overhead power lines and pylons are visible on the skyline to the north. The Oare Windmill, situated just outside the site off Oare Road, is also a Grade II listed local landmark and skyline feature.</p> <p>Given its degree of visual exposure, the area has strong intervisibility with surrounding areas, including the marshes and creeks within the AHLV and the settlement edges of Faversham and Oare.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>Despite the ongoing gravel works within part of the area, proximity to Faversham and adjacent commercial development along Oare Road, the area has some sense of tranquillity and remoteness; particularly further north along Ham Road. The visual relationship with the neighbouring creeks and marshes, including views of boat masts along Oare Creek, imparts a degree of maritime character to the area.</p> <p>Further south towards the settlement edge, the area has more of an urban fringe character.</p> <p>There is very limited public access within the area, although Ham Road runs through its centre and the Saxon Shore Way promoted recreational route runs along the northern edge of the site, adjacent to Oare Creek. There are also two footpaths along the south-eastern boundary of the area which provide access from Faversham out onto the marshlands.</p>
Character and setting of settlement	<p>There is no settlement within the landscape area, although it adjoins low-rise 20th century housing along Springhead Road and Upper Brents, Faversham, and commercial/industrial warehouse premises on Waterside Close and Oare Road, Faversham.</p> <p>The arable fields south-east of Ham Road provide an undeveloped setting, of limited scenic character, to this area of adjacent housing.</p>

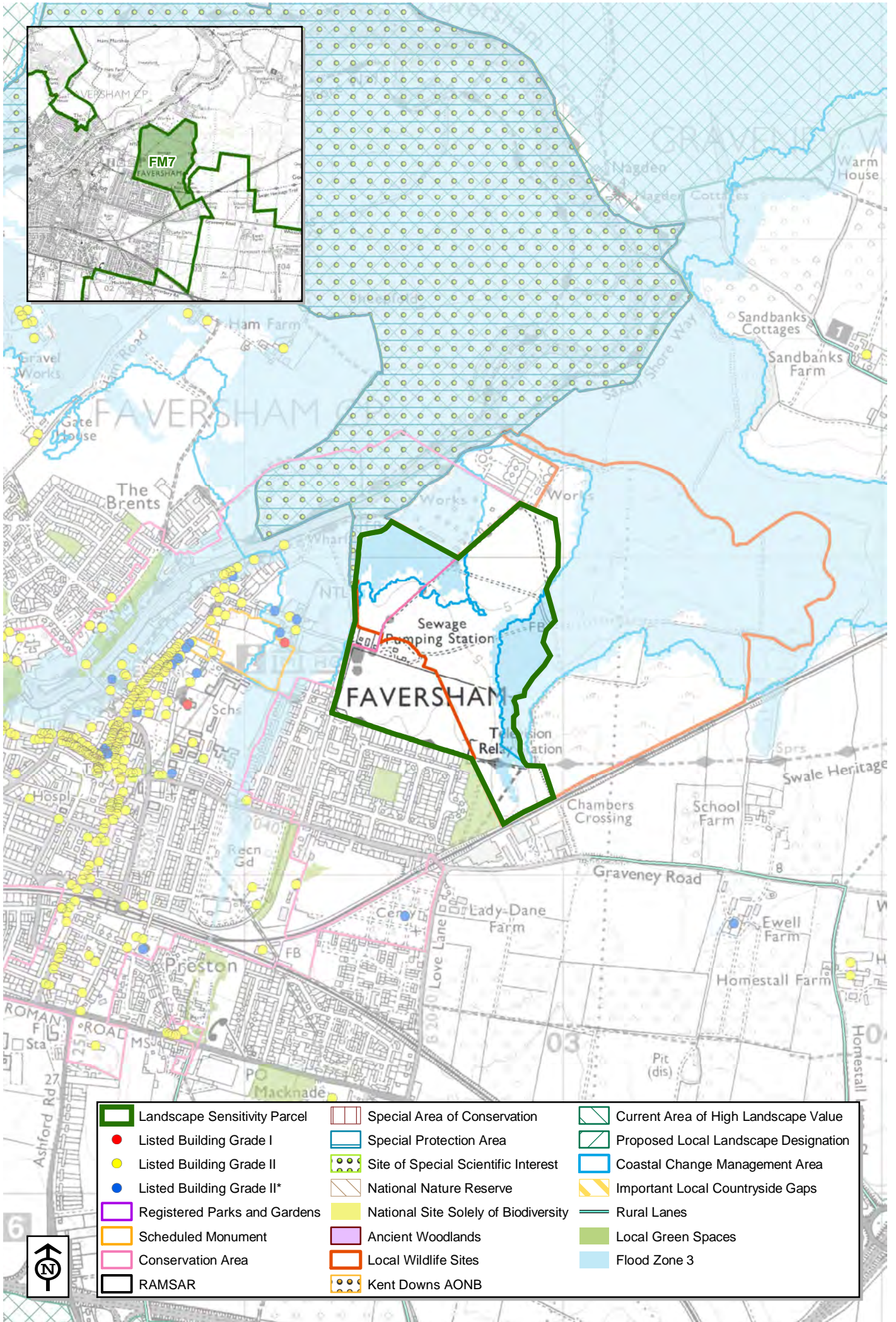
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
<p>This flat, visually exposed area on the edge of the marshes forms part of the wider setting to Faversham and Oare, and has a strong relationship with the adjoining Locally designated landscape. These attributes indicate a high overall sensitivity to future change from residential and employment development.</p> <p>Spatial variations in sensitivity within the area: The part of the landscape area to the south-east of Ham Road is considered slightly less sensitive, as it has a weaker visual relationship with Oare Creek and the adjacent marshlands.</p>				

Guidance

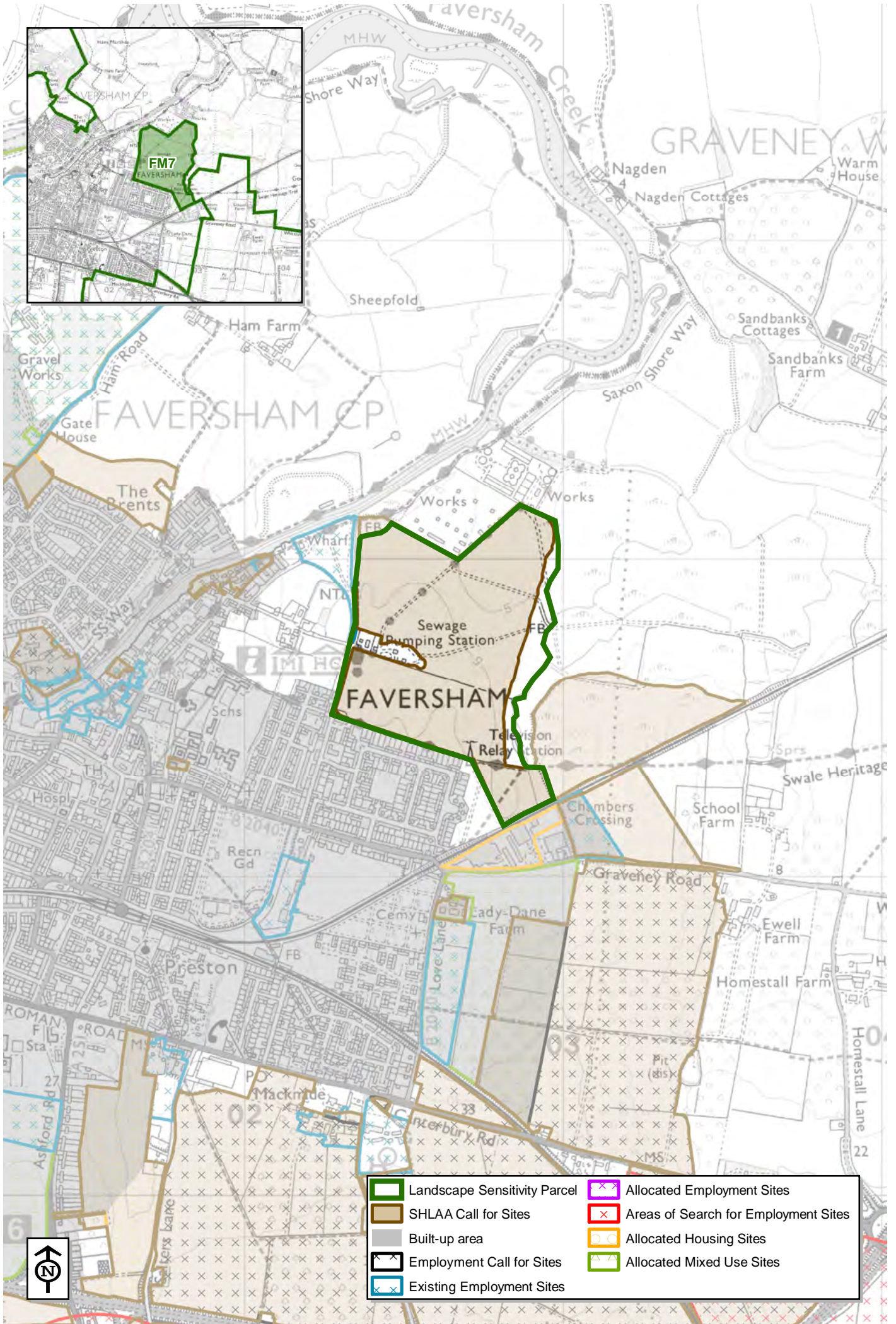
Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Consider any new development in relation to the sensitive landscape character and setting of the AHLV.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach; with the land north-west of Ham Road used as open space and managed for wildlife, including creating and restoring a network of lakes, pools and other wetland habitats such as grazing marsh. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure consideration is given to sensitive heritage assets including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and their settings.
- Consider incorporating important and locally distinctive skyline features and views within the general layout/design and key vistas of any new development e.g. maintain the long views north over the marshes towards the Isle of Sheppey.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building scale, massing, style and materials, incorporating sensitive lighting design and native plant species of local provenance.
- Maintain the undeveloped backdrop to Oare Creek and its scenic character and setting.

Faversham Area FM7: Designations and Constraints



Faversham Area FM7: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View north-west from footpath behind Abbots Road



View south-east from Abbey Fields towards the wooded high ground of the Blean

Location and landscape character	
<p>The landscape area to the north-east of Faversham lies within the Goodnestone Grasslands landscape character area (No.3). It is a small area characterised by flat, arable fields and a solar farm on drained former marshland.</p>	
Landscape value	
<p>This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local). It lies adjacent to the AHLV – Kent Level within the Swale and surrounding marshes. This adjacent area was confirmed in the 2018 Local Landscape Designations study.</p>	
Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	<p>The landform is broadly flat, being in close proximity to the marshland and tidal creek leading from Faversham out to the Swale.</p> <p>This is a generally medium scale landscape, with open medium arable fields bounded by ditches, scrub and hedgerows. There is a feeling of expansiveness within this flat landform, with relatively little enclosure and some panoramic views; however the sense of scale is contained by the presence of housing and some small historic industrial buildings and boat masts around the tidal creek area.</p>
Natural character	<p>Priority Habitat coastal and floodplain grazing marsh is identified within this area, although it is evident that some of this has been lost in recent years to arable, and a solar farm has also been constructed in the east of the area. Elsewhere, natural features are limited to some remnant hedgerows, species rich ditches and pools, and areas of scrub.</p> <p>Part of the area is within the locally designated Abbey Fields Local Wildlife Site, which extends further east beyond FM7 to incorporate a more intact area of grazing marsh. The adjacent tidal creek area is part of the Swale SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site.</p> <p>Elsewhere this is largely open intensively farmed arable land on former grazing marsh.</p>
Sense of time depth / historic character	<p>The Swale HLC indicates that the entirety of the area is characterised by medium regular fields (parliamentary type enclosures).</p> <p>There is limited historic character and time-depth within this discrete landscape area; although the north-western edge (comprising an arable field) lies within the much more extensive Faversham Conservation Area, which incorporates the whole</p>

	<p>of the historic town core and tidal creek area further to the west.</p> <p>The wider views and visual relationship with the surrounding marshland and tidal creek (including a boat yard) and the local landmark of St. Mary's Church, Faversham on the skyline provide a relatively strong sense of place. The disused 19th century sewage pumping station and brick works buildings also have some historic and visual interest, the small surviving chimney of which forms a local landmark and contributes to the sense of past industry around the tidal creek area.</p>
Visual character	<p>This is a predominantly flat, open area allowing for long uninterrupted views (and intervisibility) north over the AHLV and east towards the Blean, including pylon routes on the skyline further north, although these are sufficiently distant to not be intrusive. The recently constructed solar farm, with immature boundary screening, is prominent in some views.</p> <p>The settlement edge of Faversham is a prominent but not intrusive element in views within this area.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>Despite its proximity to Faversham, this is a largely tranquil area undisturbed by significant vehicular traffic due to very limited access.</p> <p>In some areas there is more of a rural fringe character and some recreational value, being crossed by a national cycle route and bounded by two promoted recreational routes (the Saxon Shore Way which follows Faversham Creek in the north, and the Swale Heritage Trail in the south).</p> <p>The sewage works and solar farm and incongruous elements</p>
Character and setting of settlement	<p>The adjacent settlement edge of Faversham comprises modern 20th century housing around Abbots Road and Abbey Fields, with mature rear gardens. The landscape area provides a setting to these properties.</p> <p>To the west of Abbey Fields, beyond the landscape area is a more historic part of Faversham, which includes some surviving buildings of Faversham Abbey (Grade II*) and historic buildings further away along the main creek. The landscape area is not considered to form a prominent part of the backdrop to this area, due to the flat landform and presence of some intervening vegetation screening.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
<p>Whilst the inherent sensitivity of these flat, open arable fields is relatively low, they are visually prominent in views from the edge of Faversham as well as from the wider landscape beyond, including the marshland and creeks within the AHLV. Part of the area also falls within the Faversham Conservation Area and consequently is of importance to the historic character and setting of the town as well as being part of Abbey Fields LWS, linking to the marshes. These attributes indicate a moderate-high overall sensitivity to future change from residential and employment development.</p> <p>Spatial variations in sensitivity within the area: The part of the landscape area within/adjoining the Faversham Conservation Area, which also adjoins Faversham Creek and the Swale ecological designations and AHLV, is of higher sensitivity. There may be small areas well related to the existing urban edge with lower sensitivity.</p>				

Guidance

Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Consider any new development in relation to the sensitive landscape character and setting of the AHLV and the flat open grazing marsh landscape.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach; including creating and restoring wetland and species rich grassland habitats within the site and improving connectivity to adjacent habitats. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure consideration is given to sensitive heritage assets including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and their settings.
- Consider incorporating important and locally distinctive skyline features and views within the general layout/design and key vistas of any new development e.g. maintain the long views north over the marshes towards the Isle of Sheppey; maintain and focus views to the Church of St Mary of Charity.
- Seek to restore elements of the grazing marsh landscape.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building scale, massing, style and materials, incorporating sensitive lighting design and native plant species of local provenance.

Settlement Area: Sheerness/Queenborough



Sheerness/Queenborough

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Location and Description

Sheerness and Queenborough are historic port settlements strategically located on north west Sheppey at the mouth of the Medway and Swale onto the Thames Estuary.

Sheerness is a small town established around a fort and later the Royal Naval Dockyard and associated Blue Town, commanding the eastern approaches into the Medway from the Thames Estuary and the sea at Garrison Point (now the commercial port). Mile Town and Marine Town, developed in the nineteenth century, have since merged to form a single development with terraces of workers dwelling and holiday resort development all contained by the Queenborough Lines.

Queenborough, to the south of Sheerness, is a small maritime town of Medieval origin providing a sheltered harbour at Queenborough Creek commanding the western approaches to The Swale from the Medway. It is slightly raised above the surrounding marshes. Queenborough Castle was built in 1361 and razed to the ground following the Civil Wars in the 17th century. It survives as a grassy mound as a feature in the Conservation Area. To the south of Queenborough is the 20th century modern settlement of Rushenden.

The settlements are all surrounded by low lying marshland.

The settlement edges are divided into three zones for assessment of sensitivity to residential and employment development. These largely relate to the landscape character areas and comprise:

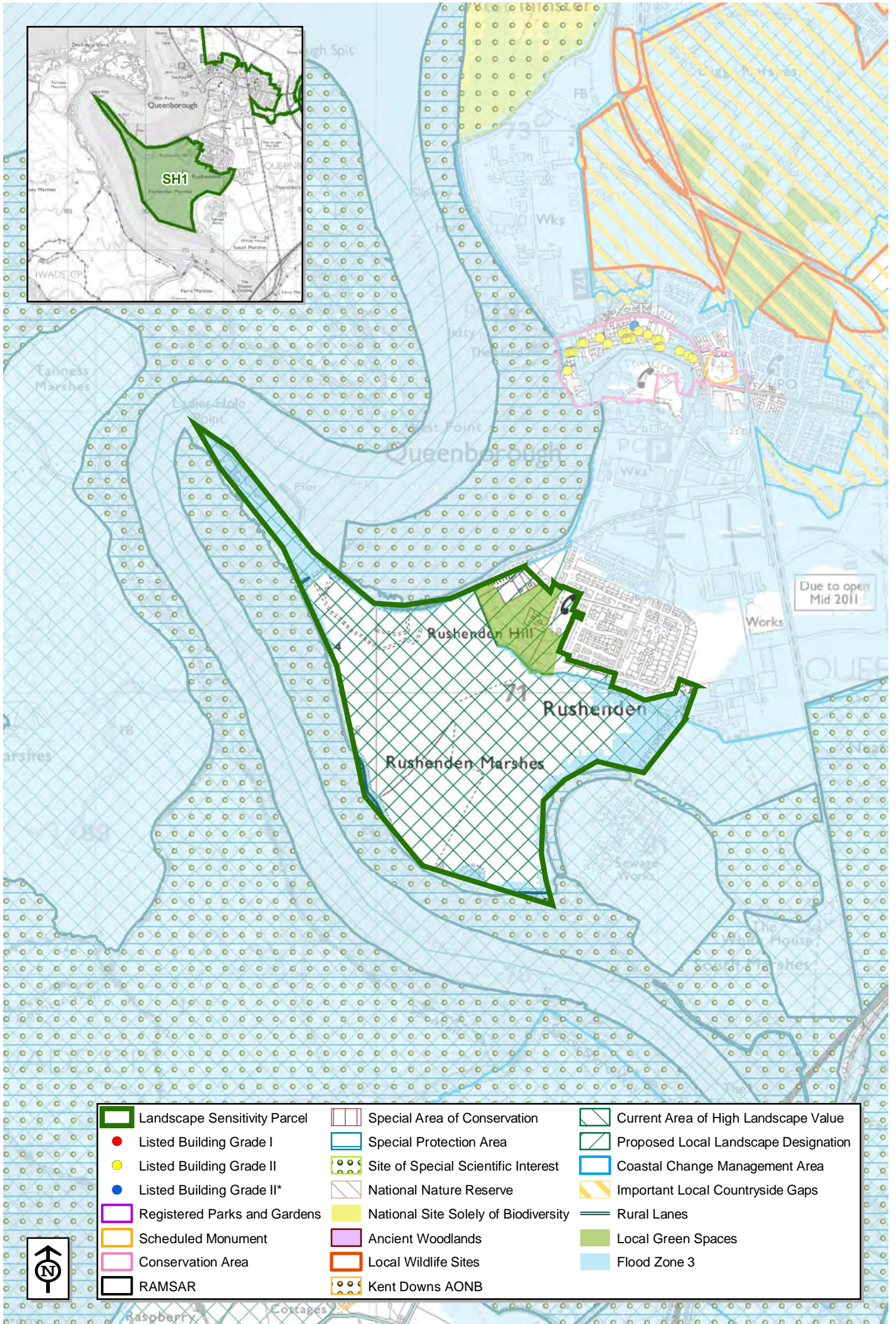
SH1 – Rushenden Marshes which are part of the wider Elmley Marshes landscape character area (No.2).

SH2 - the area of marshland at Sheppey Court and Diggs Marsh landscape character area (No 10) between Queenborough/Halfway Houses and Sheerness (also recorded as MR3).

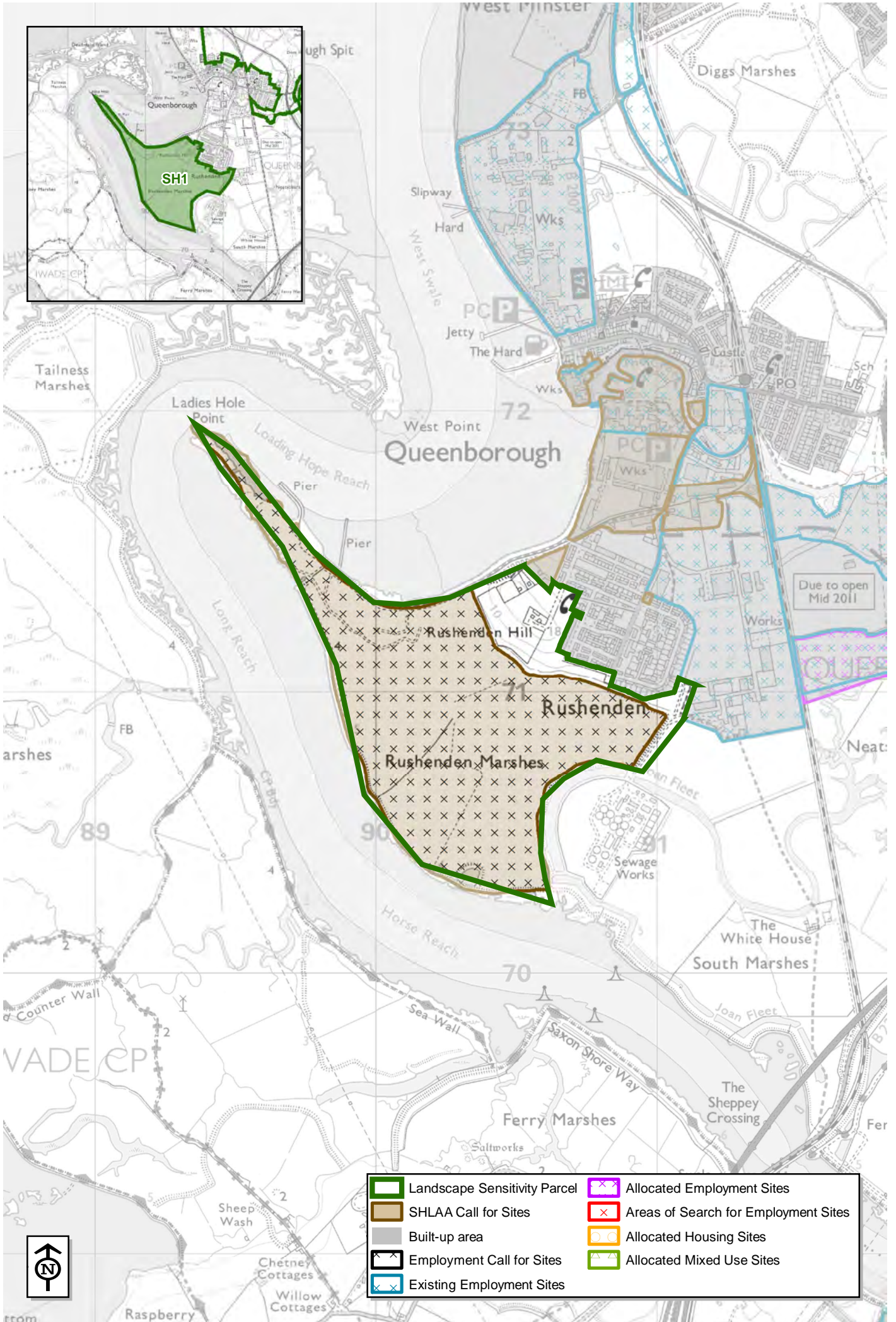
SH3 – the area of marshland between Minster and Sheerness - Minster Marshes landscape character area (No.9) and encompassing Barton's Point (also recorded as MR4).

The Lappel is an open area to the west of Sheerness located between The Medway Channel and A249 forms part of the port facilities, and does not form part of this assessment.

Sheerness/Queenborough Area SH1: Designations and Constraints



Sheerness/Queenborough Area SH1: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View from southern edge of Rushenden, facing the marshes.



View from southern edge of Rushenden, facing the marshes.

Location and landscape character

The landscape zone to the south of Queenborough/Rushenden known as Rushenden Marshes forms part of the continuous area of the Elmley Marshes landscape character area (No.2). It is an isolated area contained by the tidal Swale channel to the north and west and extending a promontory to the north at Ladies Hole Point.

Landscape value

The area is a locally designated landscape – North Swale Marshes Area of High Landscape Value (Kent Level).

The whole area is recommended in the 2018 study for designation as part of the North Kent Marshes – North Swale (Sheppey) LLD.

Assessment Criterion

Sensitivity description

Topography and scale

The area is low lying and flat, typical of the wider areas of marshland although it appears to be raised slightly above sea level, potentially as a result of tipping of dredged material and is therefore out of the SBC flood zone 3. Rushenden Hill is an area of slightly higher land adjoining the settlement.

Natural character

The area includes rough grassland to the north as well as grazing marsh to the south. It is not within the nationally designated marshes (SSSI/SPA) although it borders the designated area along the Swale Channel and Joan Fleet (to the east of the area). The rough grassland is therefore likely to have value for bird species associated with the adjacent waters.

Sense of time depth / historic character

The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by irregular enclosures. There are no designated historic features. Historical land uses are related to the port and known to include an area in the north used for coal washing.

Visual character

The area provides open and expansive views across the low lying marshes including the adjacent Chetney Marshes with The Sheppey Crossing and Kingsferry Bridge forming prominent features. Looking from the marshes, the settlement of Rushenden can be seen on the rising landform and the open area of Rushenden Hill.

Perceptual and experiential qualities

The area is less remote than other areas of marshes and is to an extent influenced by urban fringe activities, including the adjacent sewage works. There are no prominent vertical features, such as pylons, and it retains an isolated character. The area is not readily accessible other than along the sea wall and a footpath to the north, although there is evidence of informal recreational use including bikes.

Character and setting of existing settlement	This area forms part of the typical marshland setting of Rushenden forming a vast open area adjacent to the Swale. The settlement edge itself comprises low rise 1960/70s terraces and bungalows mostly with vegetated back gardens or occasional fronting directly onto the marshes as along Manor Road. The immediate edge includes amenity and playground areas forming a relatively well-integrated landscape setting. The area as a whole provides continuity with the other areas of marshland along the Swale on the south of Sheppey.
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Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The landscape is typical of the marshland setting along the Swale despite a history of industrial use in part of the area and evidence of slight land-raising. It retains a remote, isolated character with physical and visual continuity with the wider area of marshes on Sheppey, north of the Swale. It is a locally designated landscape as part of the North Swale Marshes. These attributes indicate a moderate-high overall sensitivity to future change from residential development.

The area is considered to have a high overall sensitivity to employment development. A greater bulk/height of development would be very visible in this open horizontal landscape.

Spatial variations in sensitivity within the zone: The area on the slopes of Rushenden Hill has particularly high visual visibility providing an open setting to the marshes in contrast to the more developed area of Rushenden.

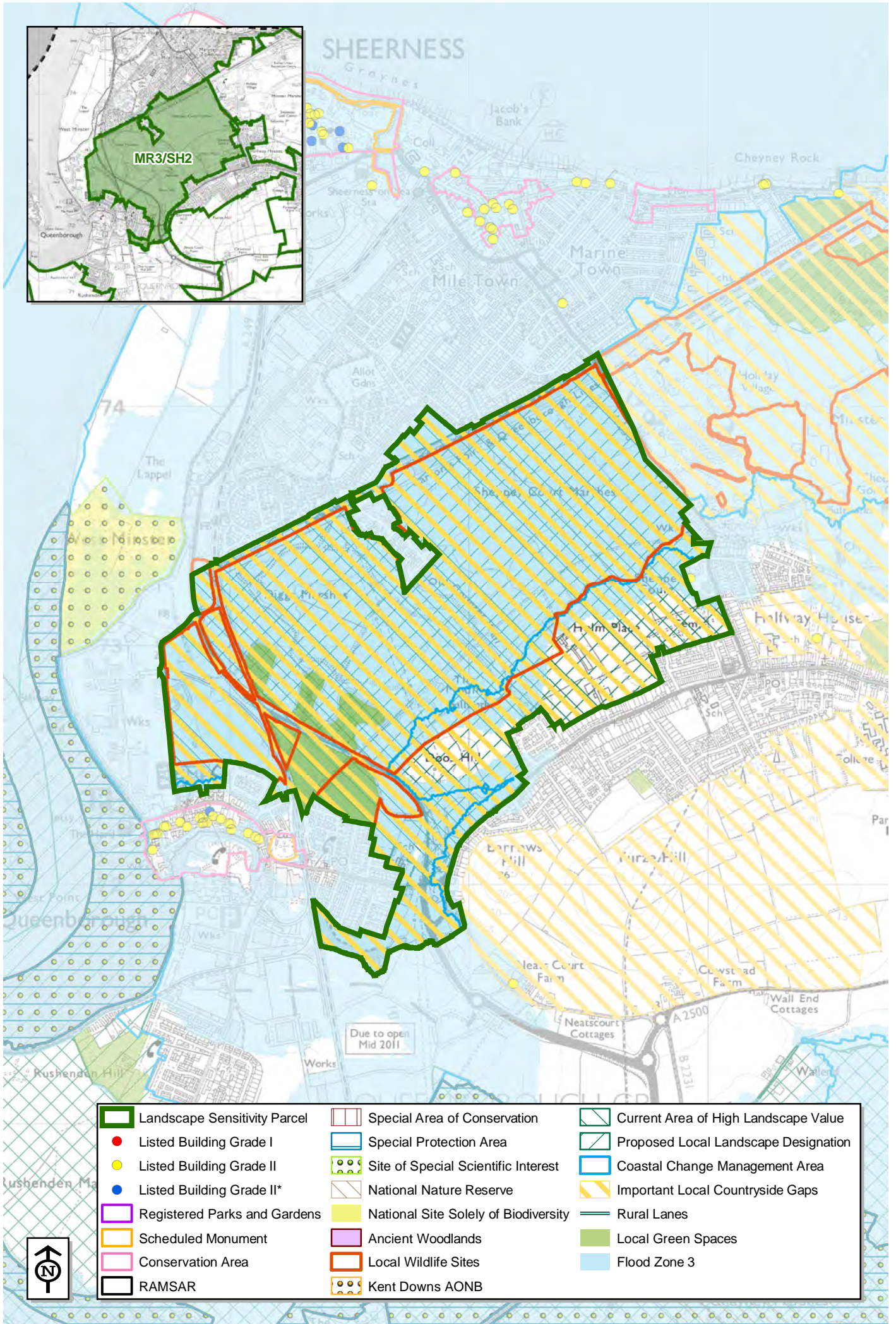
Guidance

Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

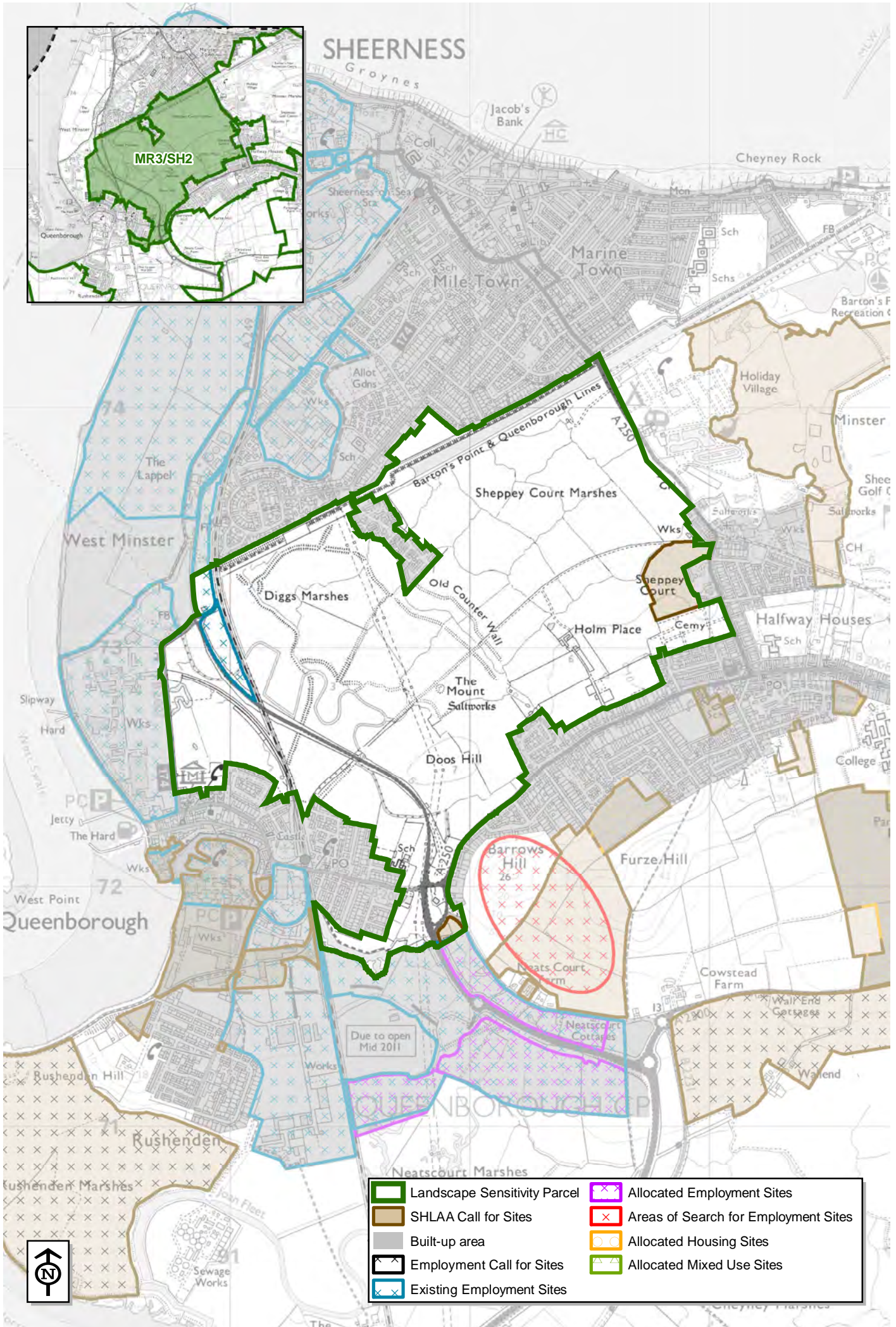
- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Conserve the open 'marshland' setting to Rushenden.
- Conserve and enhance the marshland character and features, with management to enhance habitats and biodiversity interest. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building styles, materials, scale and massing and includes sensitive lighting design in this rural area.
- Maintain and enhance the well-integrated edges of Rushenden so that development is not generally visible from the surrounding rural landscape. Avoid urban style boundaries/fencing and stark/harsh interfaces with the marshland.
- Maintain the open and expansive views across the low lying marshes including the adjacent Chetney Marshes.

- Consider the impact of any new development in relation to the sensitive landscapes of the Swale SSSI/SPA/Ramsar.
- Seek to minimise existing and new lighting on the night time character of the marshland landscape.
- Maintain the open landscape at Rushenden Hill.

Minster Area MR3/SH2: Designations and Constraints



Minster Area MR3/SH2: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View west from the A250.



View west from the A250.

Location and landscape character

The landscape comprises an area of grazing marsh encapsulated between Sheerness, Halfway Houses and Queenborough. It forms the whole of a single landscape character area Sheppey Court and Diggs Marshes (No.10). The area is largely within SBC Flood Zone 3 and the majority of the area is therefore not under pressure for development. Pressures relate to the immediate edge north of Halfway, which is not an area of flood risk.

The area is also considered as MR3 in relation to sensitivities west of Minster.

Landscape value

The area is a locally designated landscape – Sheppey Court, Diggs and Minster Marshes Area of High Landscape Value (Swale Level), excluding the area south of the B2007.

The area east of the A249 is recommended in the 2018 study for designation as part of the Sheppey Court, Diggs and Minster Marshes LLD.

Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	A flat marshland, with a medium sense of scale with local variation created by the presence of meandering creeks and minor undulations as at Doos Hill. It generally has an open and exposed character.
Natural character	Diggs and Sheppey Court form an encapsulated area of remnant marshland and is designated as a Local Wildlife Site. It support grazing animals and retains typical marshland habitats/flora and fauna.
Sense of time depth / historic character	<p>The area has a relatively strong time depth and includes historic features associated with the marshes including evidence of salt works and counterwalls. It would have formed common grazing marsh for the adjacent settlements. The Queenborough Lines fortifications, built to protect Sheerness dockyard from land attack, is a Scheduled Monument. Sheppey Court is a Grade II Listed Building. The area also has a role in the setting and views from the Queenborough Conservation Area and Castle Scheduled Monument.</p> <p>The HLC indicates a mix of boundary types, predominantly small irregular enclosures, some small rectilinear with an area of regular Parliamentary enclosures along the southern edge adjacent to Halfway Houses.</p>

Visual character	The area generally has an open and exposed character with some extensive views foreshortened by the urban edges and transport corridors/pylons notable to the west. There are long and distinctive views across the marshes from Minster.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	The small areas of marsh are localised areas of tranquillity and remoteness in contrast to the adjacent urban areas. They lack the sense of scale, remoteness and tranquillity associated with the greater area of the North Kent Marshes and do not retain dark skies. To the west at Diggs Marsh the transport corridors and pylons are detracting features. One PRow runs along the Queenborough lines fortification.
Character and setting of settlement	The area performs an important function as an open gap creating visual and physical separation between Minster, Queenborough, Sheerness and Halfway Houses, and is designated as an Important Local Countryside Gap. The marshland setting is important to the character of these settlements and along with SH3 provides a contrast and visual setting to Minster on the adjacent ridge. At Queenborough the area has a role in the setting and views from the Conservation Area and Queenborough Castle Scheduled Monument. The urban edge of Sheerness is largely contained to the south by the Queenborough Lines Scheduled Monument. The edge of Halfway Houses is filtered by back gardens backing onto playing fields/cemetery. The urban edge of Queenborough is perceived as more degraded with unmanaged scrubby vegetation and large scale infrastructure.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2 ha)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B, light industrial)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H

The majority of this area is of high sensitivity to residential development due to its importance as a remnant marshland setting for the urban areas, sense of openness and value as a wildlife habitat recognised by designation as a Local Wildlife Site. There is no capacity to extend development south of Sheerness across the Queenborough Lines Scheduled Monument.

The majority of this area has a high sensitivity to employment development for the reasons outlined above and the potential for such development to be highly visible and impact on the distinctive marshland landscape/setting. The exception is the area south/west of the A249, outside the proposed boundary of the LLD, which may be able to accommodate small scale development providing the guidance below is taken into account, particularly in relation to the setting of Queenborough.

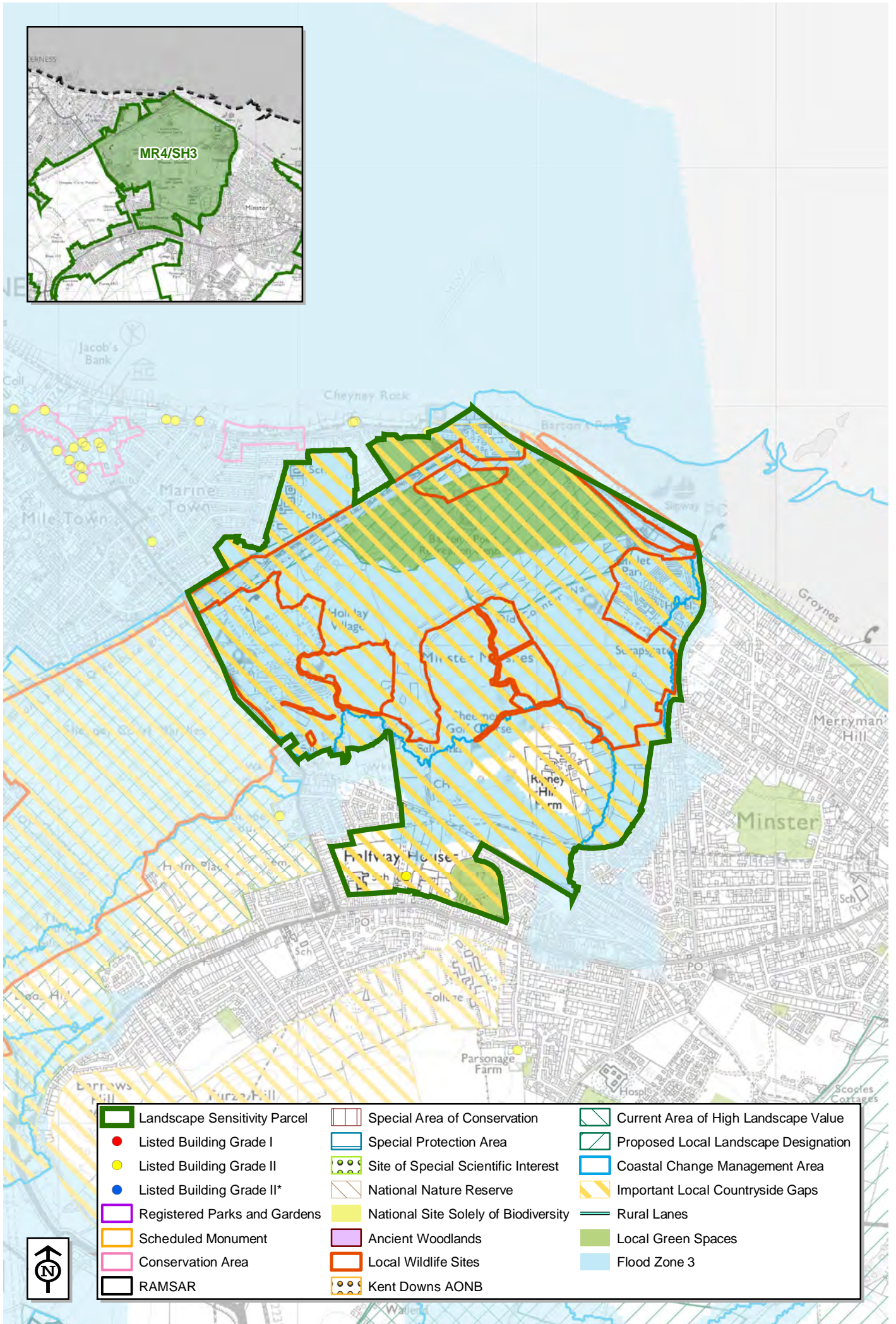
Key spatial variations are found in the area immediately edge north of Halfway/A250 which has been enclosed and has reduced biodiversity interest is of slightly lower sensitivity. The area to the west at Diggs Marsh is of lower landscape quality and sensitivity due to the existing linear infrastructure.

Guidance

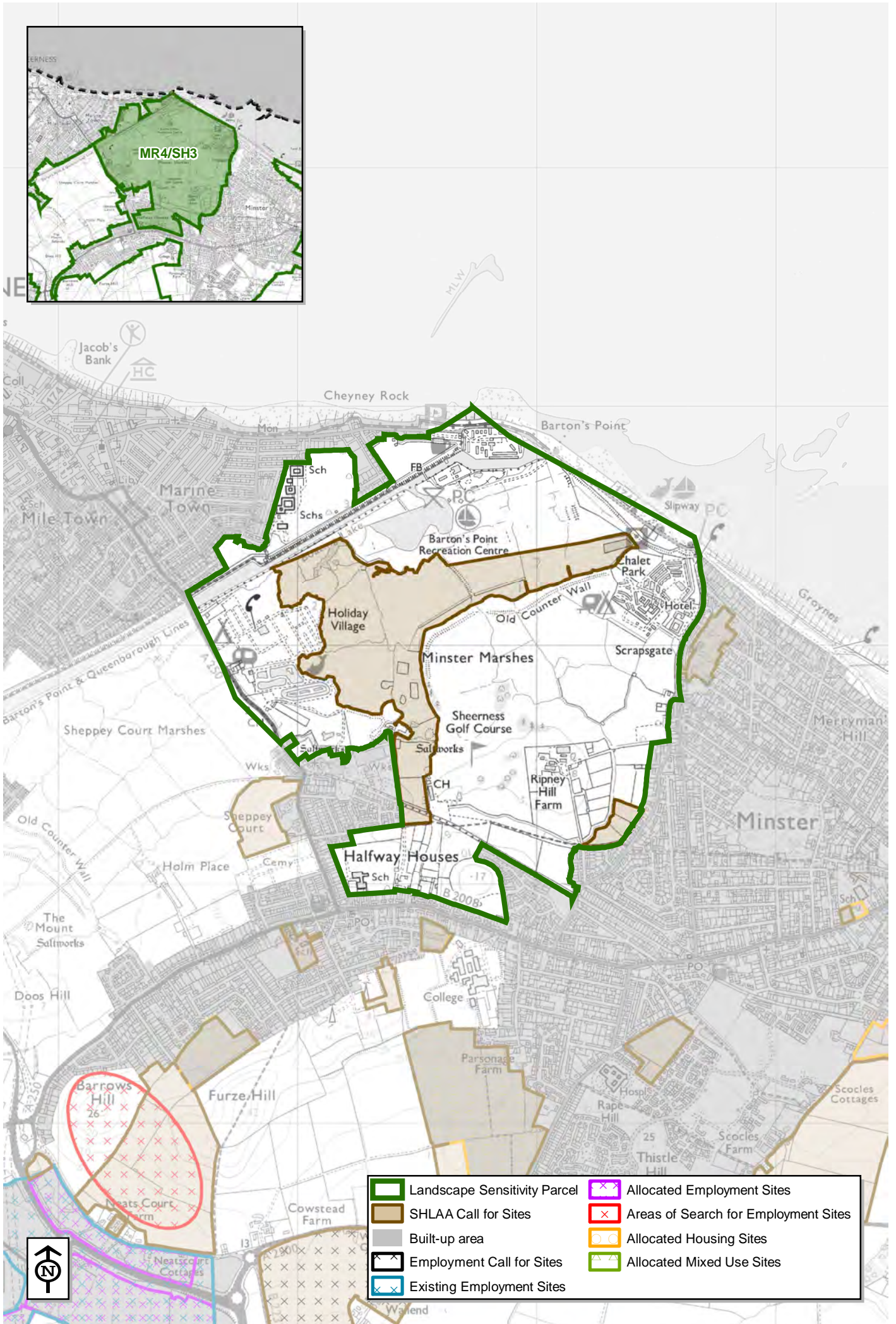
Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Conserve the landscape gap between Minster and Queenborough to protect the integrity of the two settlements maintain the contrast between the distinctive ridge top and estuary/port settlements. Ensure no extension of Sheerness to the south beyond the Queenborough Lines.
- Conserve and enhance the marshland character and features, with management to enhance habitats and biodiversity interest and integrate wildlife corridors within any development. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Conserve the site and setting of Queenborough Lines Scheduled Monument, Queenborough Castle Scheduled Monument and Sheppey Court Listed Building.
- Maintain and enhance the filtered urban edge at Halfway avoiding stark/harsh interfaces with the marshland.
- Seek to enhance the urban edge at Queenborough (Conservation Area) with attention to design of any new development and targeted vegetation management. In general tree planting will not be appropriate as screening within this open marshland landscape. Willow scrub may be an option.
- Seek to minimise existing and new lighting on the night time character of the marshland landscape.

Minster Area MR4/SH3: Designations and Constraints



Minster Area MR4/SH3: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View east from Holiday Village.



View north-west from footpath running east from Scrapsgate.

Location and landscape character

The landscape of grazing marsh lies to the south of Sheerness, west of Minster and north/east of Halfway. It forms the whole of a single landscape character area Minster Marshes (No.9). As the name suggests it is an area likely to have formed common grazing marsh for Minster and is therefore strongly linked to the settlement.

A large part of the area is within SBC Flood Zone 3 although remains subject to development pressures. The whole character has therefore been included for an assessment of sensitivity.

The area is also considered as MR4 in relation to Minster.

Landscape value

The area is not currently designated.

Part of the area (Barton's Point and Queenborough Lines) is recommended in the 2018 study for designation as part of the adjacent Sheppey Court, Diggs and Minster Marshes LLD.

Assessment Criterion

Sensitivity description

Topography and scale

A mainly flat marshland, with a medium sense of scale with local variation created by the presence of a mix of land uses including golf course, garden centre, holiday village and fishing lake, which reduce the sense of scale.

Natural character

The undeveloped areas of Minster Marshes are remnant marshland and designated as a Local Wildlife Site. It support grazing animals and retains typical marshland habitats/flora and fauna. Other areas have been improved for recreational use and are less natural in character. Barton's Point contains an important area of 'natural' character.

Sense of time depth / historic character

The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised mainly by small irregular enclosures with recreational and industrial uses. There are some features of the historic marsh landscape including saltworks and counterwalls remaining, although much has been lost due to new recreational land uses. It would originally have formed common grazing marsh for Minster. The Queenborough Lines fortifications, built to protect Sheerness dockyard from land attack, is a Scheduled Monument. The area has a role in the setting and views from historic Minster on the ridge top.

Visual character

The area generally has an open and exposed character with some views foreshortened by the urban edges, recreational development and transport corridors. There are long and distinctive views across the marshes from Minster.

Perceptual and experiential qualities	There are isolated areas of marsh which retain a sense of tranquillity for example around Barton's Point which provide a contrast to the adjacent urban areas. They lack the sense of scale, remoteness and tranquillity associated with the greater area of the North Kent Marshes and do not retain dark skies and much of the area has been degraded. Nevertheless, this remains an area highly valued by local people and particularly the recreational landscape associated with Barton's Point.
Character and setting of settlement	<p>The area performs an important function as an open gap creating visual and physical separation between Minster, Queenborough, Sheerness and Halfway Houses, and is designated as an Important Local Countryside Gap. The marshland setting is important to the character of these settlements and along with SH2/MR3 provides a contrast and visual setting to Minster on the adjacent ridge.</p> <p>The urban edge of Sheerness is largely contained by the Queenborough Lines Scheduled Monument and associated recreational space at Barton's Point. Minster is clearly defined to the west by the rising landform above the marshes. The edge of Halfway Houses is filtered by back gardens, playing fields and areas of paddocks/scrubland.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B, light industrial)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
<p>The majority of this area is of moderate-high sensitivity due to its importance as a remnant marshland setting for the urban areas, sense of openness and value as a wildlife habitat recognised by designation of much of the area as a Local Wildlife Site.</p> <p>The majority of this area has moderate-high sensitivity to employment development for the reasons outlined above and the potential for such development to be highly visible and impact on the distinctive marshland landscape/setting, although recognising that many of these qualities are already degraded by recreation and caravan developments.</p> <p>The area immediately north of Halfway, adjacent to the school, which has been enclosed and has reduced biodiversity interest is of slightly lower sensitivity. Despite the lower quality of much of the marshland there is limited capacity for development given its role in providing openness and the setting of settlements.</p>				

Guidance
<p><i>Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal. • Conserve the landscape gap between Minster and Sheerness to protect the integrity of the two settlements and maintain the contrast between the distinctive ridge top and estuary settlements. • Conserve and enhance the marshland character and features, with management to enhance habitats and biodiversity interest and integrate wildlife corridors within any development. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued

landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

- Conserve and manage the natural recreational space at Barton's Point.
- Prevent further development of recreational land uses e.g. holiday parks and seek opportunities to integrate into their landscape setting.
- Conserve the site and setting of Queenborough Lines Scheduled Monument and Danley Farm Grade II Listed Building.
- Maintain and enhance the filtered urban edge at Halfway avoiding stark/harsh interfaces with the marshland and ensure appropriate boundary treatments in associations with any new development.
- Seek to minimise existing and new lighting on the night time character of the marshland landscape.

Settlement Area: Minster



Minster

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Location and Description

Minster is a large village on the north coast of Sheppey. The settlement is based around the Saxon Abbey on the hilltop. It substantially expanded with residential development in the second half of the 20th century with suburban estates extending north to the coastal edge and southwards down the slopes towards the low lying marshes in the southern part of Sheppey.

The settlement edge is divided into five areas for assessment of sensitivity to residential and employment development. These largely relate to the landscape character areas, comprising the marshes enclosing the settlement to the north-west (09: Minster Marshes and 10: Sheppey Court and Diggs Marsh) with farmlands on the slopes to the south and east (13: Central Sheppey Farmlands 16: Minster and Warden Farmlands).

MR1 - the open slopes to the east and extending to the edge of Eastchurch (see also EH2).

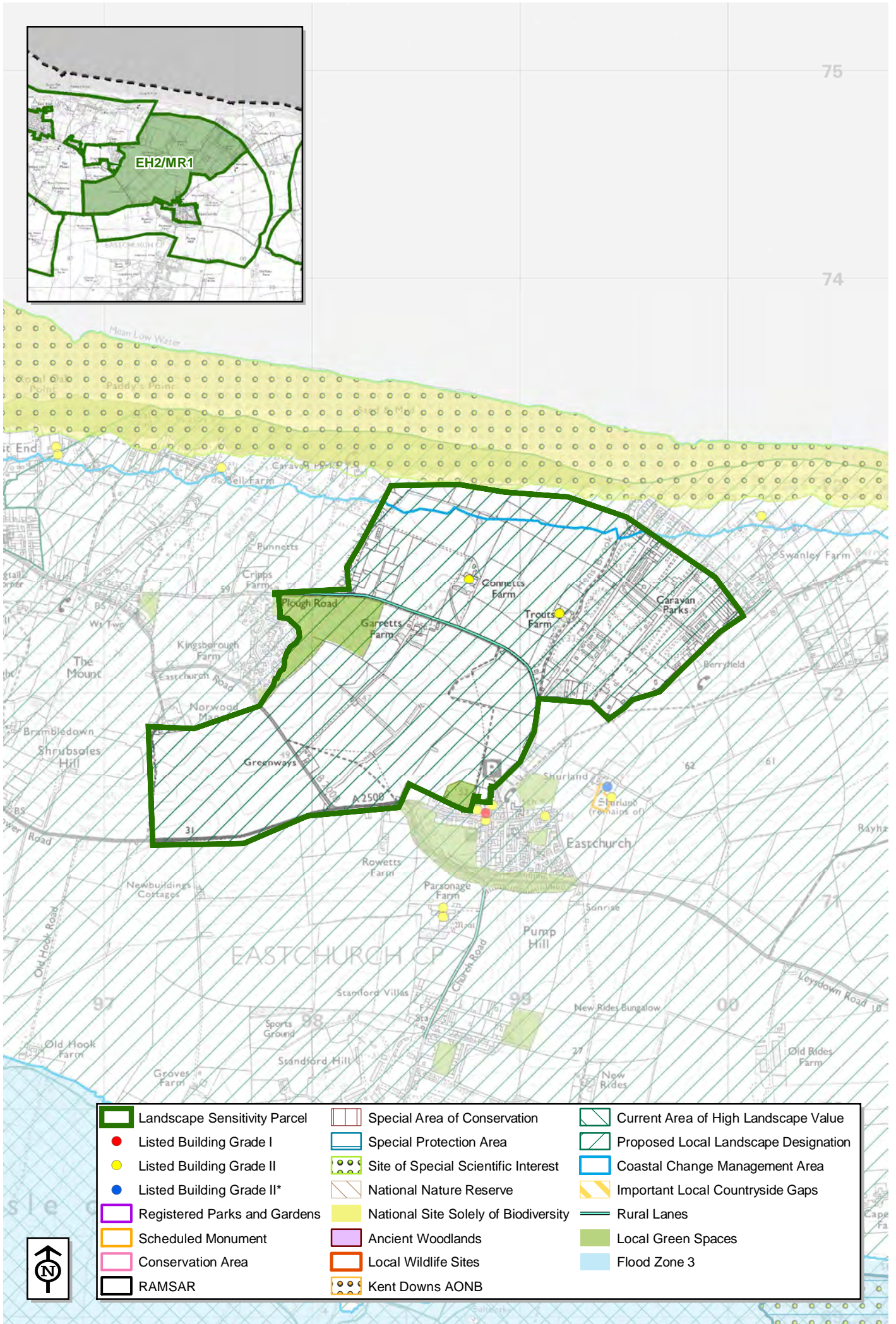
MR2 - the open lower lying farmlands to the south descending to the marshes.

MR3 - the area of marshland (Sheppey Court and Diggs Marsh) between Halfway Houses and Sheerness (see also SH1).

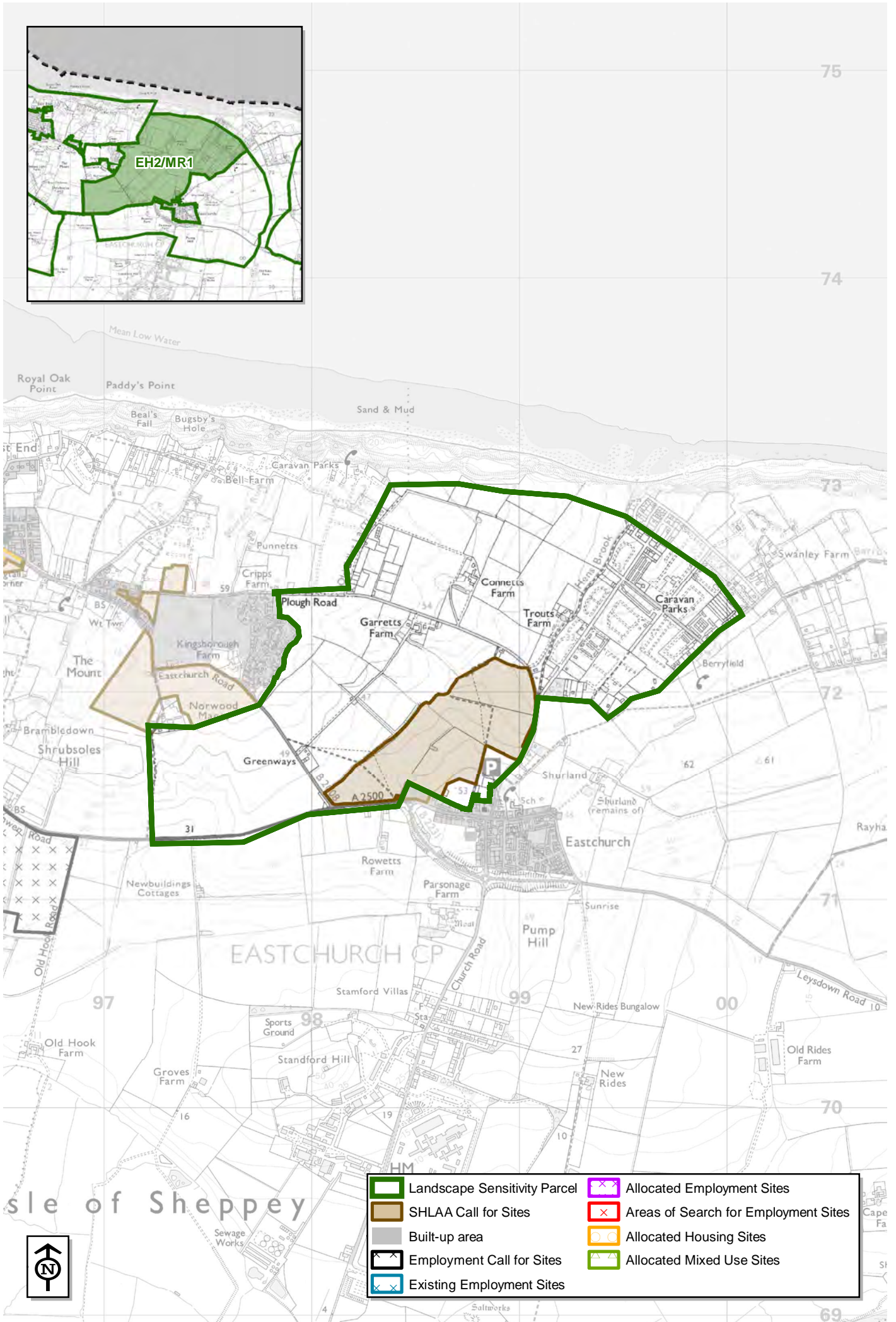
MR4 – the area of marshland between Minster and Sheerness (Minster Marshes) and encompassing Barton's Point (see also SH2).

MR5 – the area to the immediate north east of Sheerness comprising the coastal slopes and cliffs and the prominent hills at the Mount/Shrubsoles Hill overlooking the South Sheppey Marshes.

Minster Area MR1: Designations and Constraints



Minster Area MR1: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View of paddocks along the western edge of Eastchurch.



View of community woodland which effectively enclosed new development at Kingsborough Manor.

Location and landscape character

The landscape comprises the open arable slopes to the east and extends to the edge of Eastchurch. It is within the Minster and Warden Farmlands landscape character area (No.16). It is a medium-large scale open arable landscape and includes an extensive area of caravan park.

The area is also considered as EH2 in relation to sensitivities west of Eastchurch.

Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local).

Assessment Criterion

Sensitivity description

Topography and scale

The landscape has an elevated undulating topography, forming prominent clay ridge with slopes rising from the A2500 and extending to the north coast cliffs. It is a medium-large scale landscape with regular fields, with some smaller scale paddocks. In some areas there is a strong sense of openness and long views.

Natural character

There is a limited network of valued natural features and semi-natural habitats with few hedgerow boundaries within the arable farmland. The northern boundary is formed by the Sheppey Cliffs and Foreshore SSSI. There are no nature conservation designations (national or local) present within the area, although the farmland is likely to have value for birds in relation to the marshland landscapes on the south of Sheppey.

Plough Road is designated as a Rural Lane.

Sense of time depth / historic character

The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by Parliamentary type enclosures medium regular in size. Connets Farm and Trouts Farm are both Grade II Listed Buildings.

Visual character

The area has a distinctive visual character forming part of the clay ridge backbone across the northern part of Sheppey. There is generally a very open character with long views, including north of Plough Road to the Thames Estuary and south to the Swale and mainland Kent. It forms part of the elevated backdrop to the marshes and the slopes are visually prominent in views from the marshes. Some areas along lanes are enclosed by higher hedgerows/shelterbelts.

Perceptual and experiential

The area retains a relative rural character with long ranging and open views creating a sense of tranquillity in places. The arable landscape is fragmented in parts and

qualities	there are some urban fringe elements.
Character and setting of existing settlement	The area adjoins the eastern most settlement edge of Minster, at Kingsborough Farm, where development extends along Eastchurch Road. It is therefore at some distance from and separate to the main developed area of Minster. The settlement 'edge' comprises modern relatively isolated residential development at Cripps Farm/Kingsborough Manor, which is well contained by a tree and shrub buffer (Community Woodland) along the eastern edge. There are several large scale caravan parks which are generally well integrated in the landscape.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The area has an elevated landform which is visually prominent, moderate sense of rural character with some development influences. It is detached from the main settlement edge of Minster and modern development is relatively well integrated providing separation between Minster and Eastchurch. For these reasons it is considered to have a moderate-high overall sensitivity to future change from residential development.

For the reasons noted above - elevation, rural character and visual prominence the area is considered to have moderate- high sensitivity to employment development. The rural character, detachment from existing settlement and relatively narrow lanes means that the majority of this area is not easily accessible for employment.

There is some spatial variation within the area for example in relation to the northern edge of Eastchurch (considered further in EH2). The area is sensitive to further eastwards expansion of Minster along the ridge due to the openness and gap between Minster and Eastchurch.

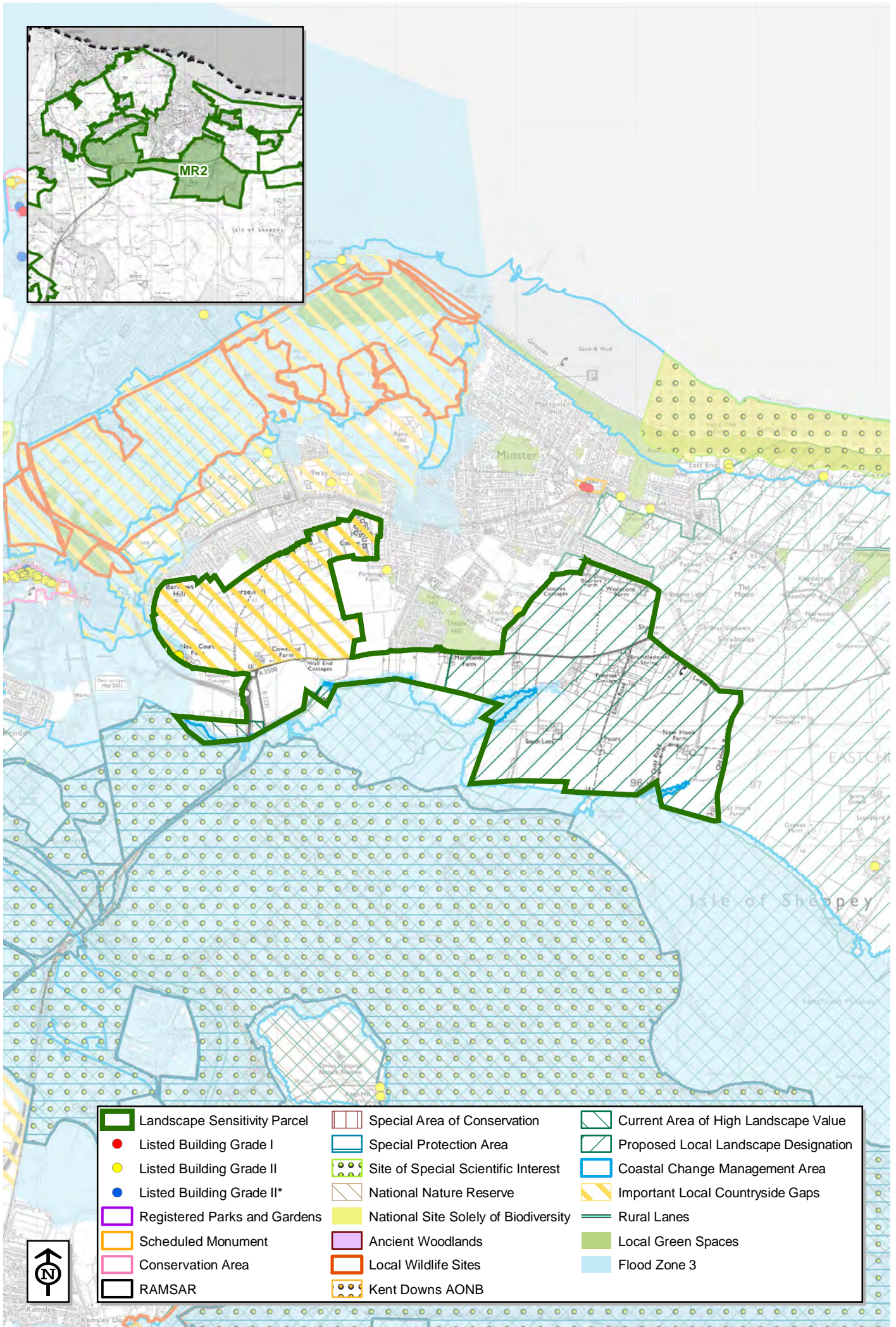
Guidance

Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

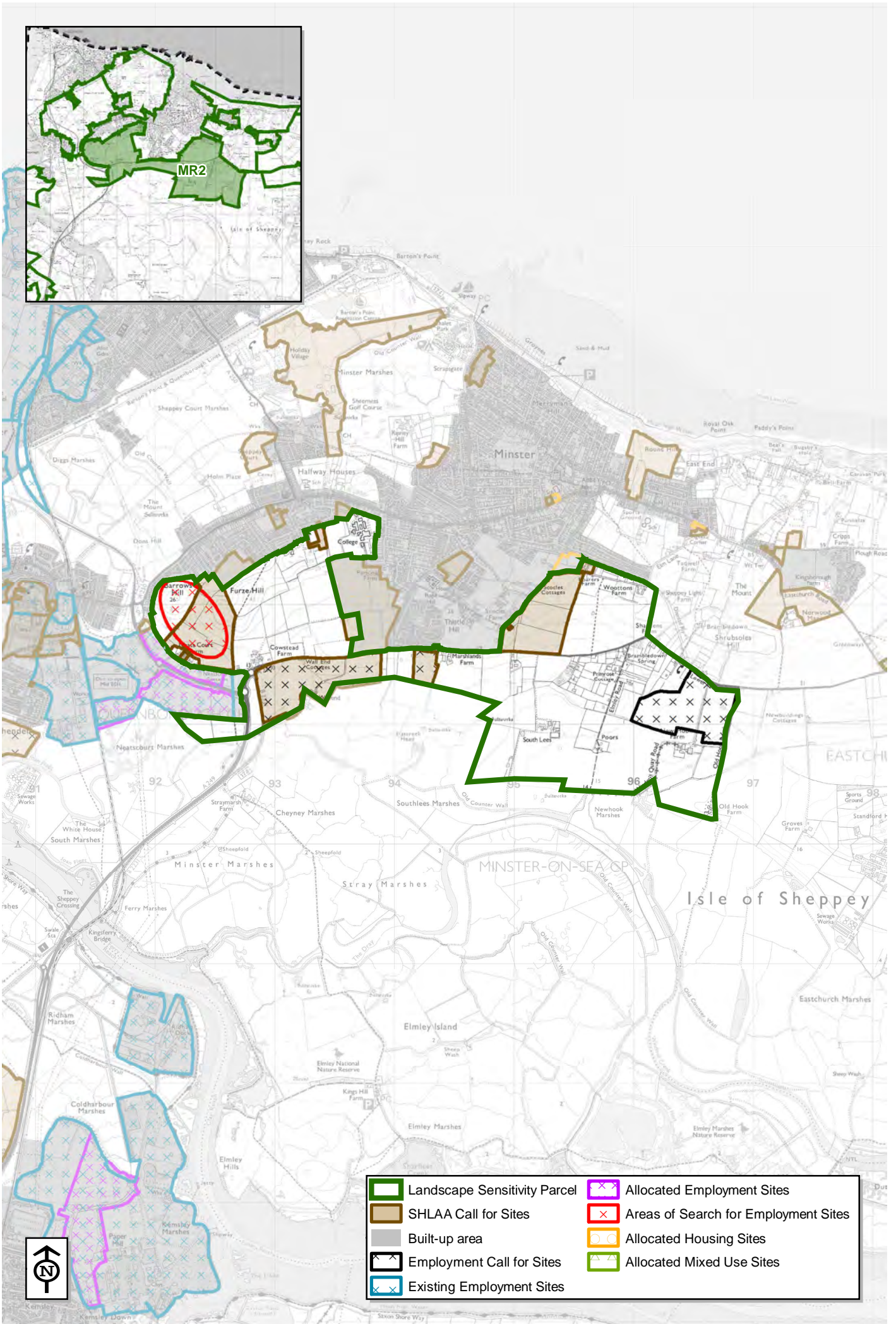
- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal Guidelines
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of hedgerows, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Conserve the rural character and sense of openness of this ridge which forms a setting to the existing settlement of Minster and Eastchurch and to the marshes to the south.
- Maintain the open undeveloped character of the north coast cliffs between Minster and Warden.
- New development should conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of Plough Road designated Rural Lane.
- Maintain the sense of Minster and Eastchurch as distinct rural settlements and avoid further linear development along the ridge.

- Conserve and reinforce the network of hedgerows and seek to create a stronger landscape structure to integrate development using native woodland planting of copses and shelterbelts.
- Enhance the role of the arable farmland for birds in relation to adjacent marshland habitats including use of field margins and recreation of acid grassland where appropriate.
- Avoid tall structures on the visually prominent ridgeline.
- Conserve and respect the settings of the Listed Buildings (farmhouses).
- Minimise the effect of night time lighting on more sensitive marshland landscapes to the south.
- Conserve and enhance the minor waterways, field ditches and brooks which run to the north coast.

Minster Area MR2: Designations and Constraints



Minster Area MR2: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View from footpath of Furze Hill, which provides containment and separation between Minster and Halfway.



View from new development at Thistle looking north towards Minster on the ridge.

Location and landscape character	
<p>The landscape comprises the sloping farmland to the south of Minster extending to the edge of the south Sheppey Marshes. It is the western part of the Central Sheppey Farmlands landscape character area (No.13). There is an extended urban area to the west comprising Minster, Half Way Houses to Queenborough.</p>	
Landscape value	
<p>This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local).</p>	
Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	<p>An area of sloping land extending from Minster on the ridge line to the low lying South Sheppey marshes. Includes distinctive topographic features of Furze Hill and Barrows Hill to the west forming prominent landmarks. The landscape scale is generally medium to large, due to the expansive arable fields with low and fragmented hedgerows.</p>
Natural character	<p>There is a limited network of valued natural features and semi-natural habitats within the area, with few hedgerow boundaries within the arable farmland. To the south the marshes are designated as SSSI, SPA, Ramsar and NNR. There are no nature conservation designations (national or local) present within the area, although the farmland is likely to have value for birds in relation to the marsh habitats to the south.</p>
Sense of time depth / historic character	<p>The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by medium regular fields (parliamentary type enclosures); with some areas of paddocks in association with scattered settlement.</p> <p>The area itself does not have a strong historic character but is important as part of the rural setting for the historic core of Minster/Minster Abbey on the ridge.</p>
Visual character	<p>The slopes are visually prominent rising above the flat marshlands to the south and conversely provide open panoramic views across the marshes, The Swale and mainland Kent. Furze Hill and Barrows Hill are visually prominent features within the area, and are designated as an Important Local Countryside Gap.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>The landscape has a relatively strong rural character and some sense of tranquillity (despite the degraded arable landscape). This character is enhanced by the panoramic views. The A2500 is a busy road and, along with intermittent</p>

	development e.g. at Thistle Hill/Barton Hill reduces the sense of tranquillity.
Character and setting of settlement	<p>The urban edge of Minster is mixed with some areas being well integrated by the landform and planting and others forming stark hard urban edges which are particularly visible on the rising landform. To the west along the B2008 there is extended residential development.</p> <p>The area is important as the rural foreground and setting to Minster Abbey on the ridge. Furze Hill and Barrows Hill provides topographic containment to development south of Halfway Houses.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2 ha)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B, light industrial)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The landscape has a sloping landform, moderate sense of rural character, is visually prominent in relation to views from the lower lying marshes and provides a rural setting to the historic core of Minster. It has been subject to extensive new development such that the wider area of Minster extends down the slopes away from its historic core. There is moderate-high sensitivity to further residential development, recognising that there may be opportunities for limited further housing infill particularly where this can help achieve better overall integration of the urban edges with their landscape setting.

For the reasons noted above the area is considered to have a moderate-high overall sensitivity to future change from employment development. Development of greater height or bulk than residential development would be more visually prominent on these slopes.

Key spatial variations are the distinctive landforms of Barrows Hill and Furze Hill to the west which have higher sensitivity, the retention of an open rural setting along the A2500 and the relationship to the adjacent marshes, plus the role of the slopes as a rural setting to Minster Abbey, notably in the area south of Woottons Farm rising from the A2500, which are especially sensitive. There may be areas of lower sensitivity on lower lying land to the west associated with existing development.

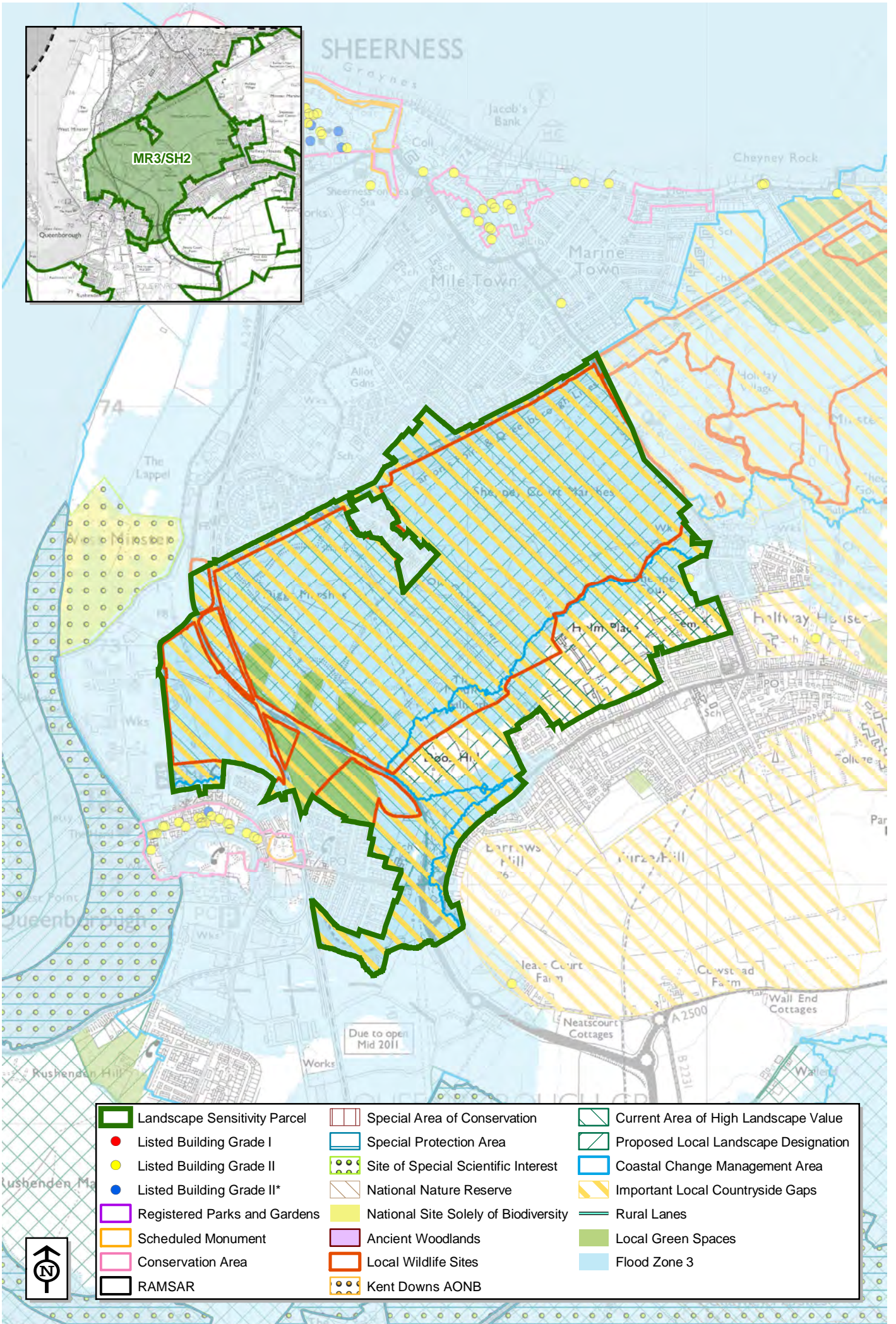
Guidance

Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

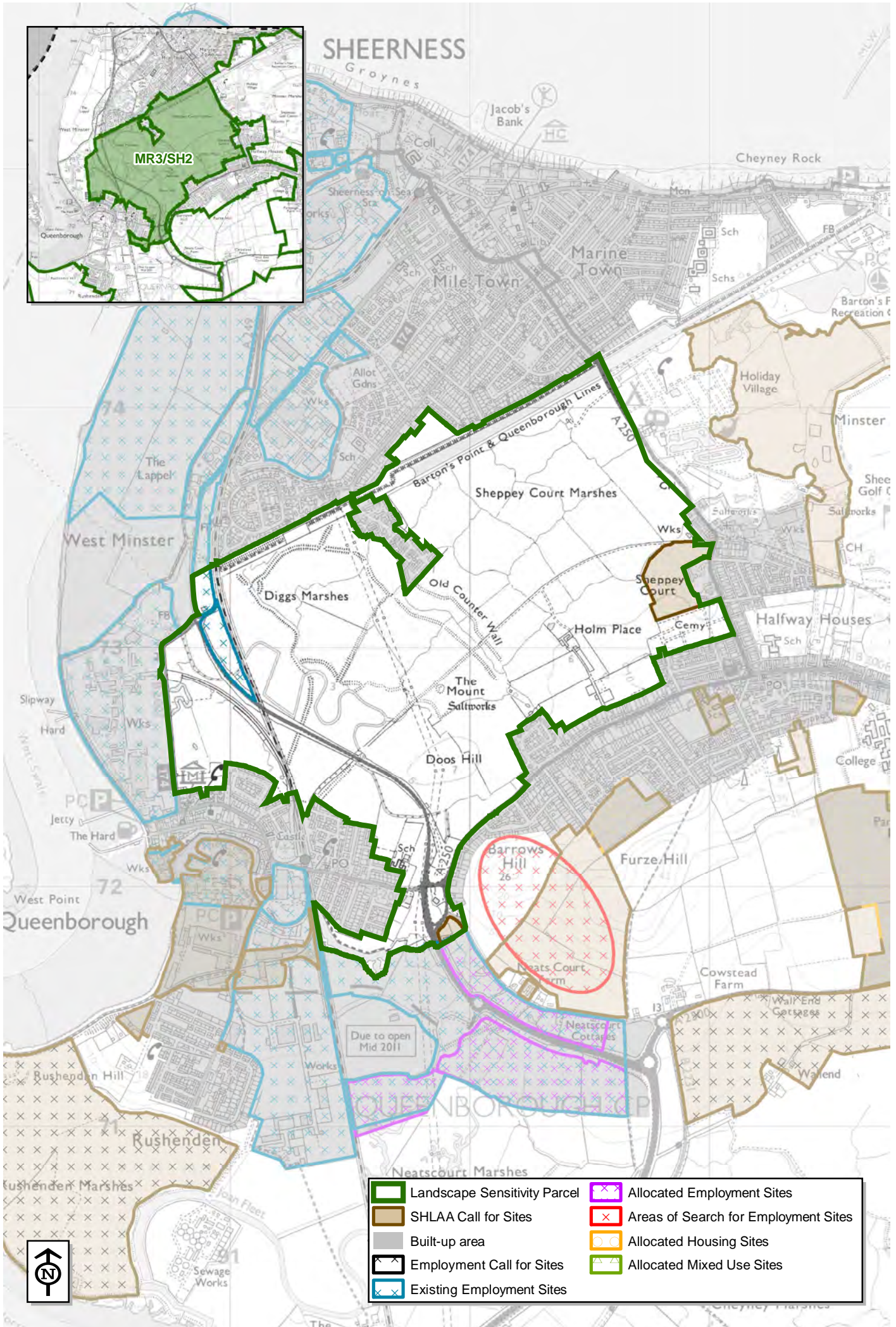
- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal Guidelines.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of hedgerows, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Conserve the open rural slopes which are prominent in views from the marshland to the south and form a rural setting and foreground to Minster Abbey.

- Consider the impact of any new development in relation to the sensitive landscapes to the south e.g. Swale SSSI, SPA and Ramsar.
- Avoid any further development to the west of Minster (following the allocation at Barton's Hill Drive) which would impinge on the distinctive landforms of Furze Hill and Barrows Hill.
- Maintain a predominantly rural setting along the A2500 and minimise development south of the A2500 which would form physically discrete isolated areas unrelated to the existing edge of Minster and with potential to impact on the adjacent designated marshland habitats.
- Ensure development is low rise and avoid any large scale or vertical development would be visually prominent on these slopes.
- Conserve and reinforce the network of hedgerows and seek to create a stronger landscape structure to integrate and soften edges of existing and new development using native woodland planting of copses and shelterbelts.
- Enhance the role of the arable farmland for birds in relation to adjacent marshland habitats including use of field margins and recreation of acid grassland where appropriate.
- Avoid tall, bulky reflective structures on the visually prominent ridgeline and slopes.
- Minimise the effect of night time lighting on more sensitive marshland landscapes to the south.

Minster Area MR3/SH2: Designations and Constraints



Minster Area MR3/SH2: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View west from the A250.



View west from the A250.

Location and landscape character

The landscape is located to the west of Minster, north of Halfway and south of Sheerness. It forms the whole of a single landscape character area Sheppey Court and Diggs Marshes (No.10). It comprises an area of grazing marsh encapsulated between Sheerness, Minster, Halfway Houses and Queenborough.

The area is largely within SBC Flood Zone 3 and the majority of the area is therefore not under pressure for development. Pressures relate to the immediate edge north of Half Way, which is not in an area of flood risk.

The area is also considered as SH1 in relation to sensitivities east of Queenborough and south of Sheerness.

Landscape value

The area is a locally designated landscape – Sheppey Court, Diggs and Minster Marshes Area of High Landscape Value (Swale Level), excluding the area south of the B2007.

The area east of the A249 is recommended in the 2018 study for designation as part of Sheppey Court, Diggs and Minster Marshes LLD.

Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	A flat marshland, with a medium sense of scale with local variation created by the presence of meandering creeks and minor undulations as at Doos Hill. It generally has an open and exposed character.
Natural character	Diggs and Sheppey Court form an encapsulated area of remnant marshland and is designated as a Local Wildlife Site. It supports grazing animals and retains typical marshland habitats/flora and fauna.
Sense of time depth / historic character	<p>The area has a relatively strong time depth and includes historic features associated with the marshes including evidence of salt works and counterwalls. It would have formed common grazing marsh for the adjacent settlements. The Queenborough Lines fortifications, built to protect Sheerness dockyard from land attack, is a Scheduled Monument. Sheppey Court is a Grade II Listed Building. The area also has a role in the setting and views from the Queenborough Conservation Area and Castle Scheduled Monument.</p> <p>The HLC indicates a mix of boundary types, predominantly small irregular enclosures, some small rectilinear with an area of regular Parliamentary enclosures along the southern edge adjacent to Halfway Houses.</p>

Visual character	The area generally has an open and exposed character with some extensive views foreshortened by the urban edges and transport corridors/pylons notable to the west. There are long and distinctive views across the marshes from Minster.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	The small areas of marsh are localised areas of tranquillity and remoteness in contrast to the adjacent urban areas. They lack the sense of scale, remoteness and tranquillity associated with the greater area of the North Kent Marshes and do not retain dark skies. To the west at Diggs Marsh the transport corridors and pylons are detracting features. One PRow runs along the Queenborough lines fortification.
Character and setting of settlement	The area performs an important function as an open gap creating visual and physical separation between Minster, Queenborough, Sheerness and Halfway Houses, and is designated as an Important Local Countryside Gap. The marshland setting is important to the character of these settlements and along with MR4 provides a contrast and visual setting to Minster on the adjacent ridge. At Queenborough the area has a role in the setting and views from the Conservation Area and Queenborough Castle Scheduled Monument. The urban edge of Sheerness is largely contained by the Queenborough Lines Scheduled Monument, and the edge of Minster by the rising landform. The edge of Halfway Houses is filtered by back gardens backing onto playing fields/cemetery. The urban edge of Queenborough is perceived as more degraded with unmanaged scrubby vegetation and large scale infrastructure.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2 ha)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B, light industrial)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H

The majority of this area is of high sensitivity to residential development due to its importance as a remnant marshland setting for the urban areas, sense of openness and value as a wildlife habitat recognised by designation as a Local Wildlife Site. There is no capacity to extend development south of Sheerness across the Queenborough Lines Scheduled Monument.

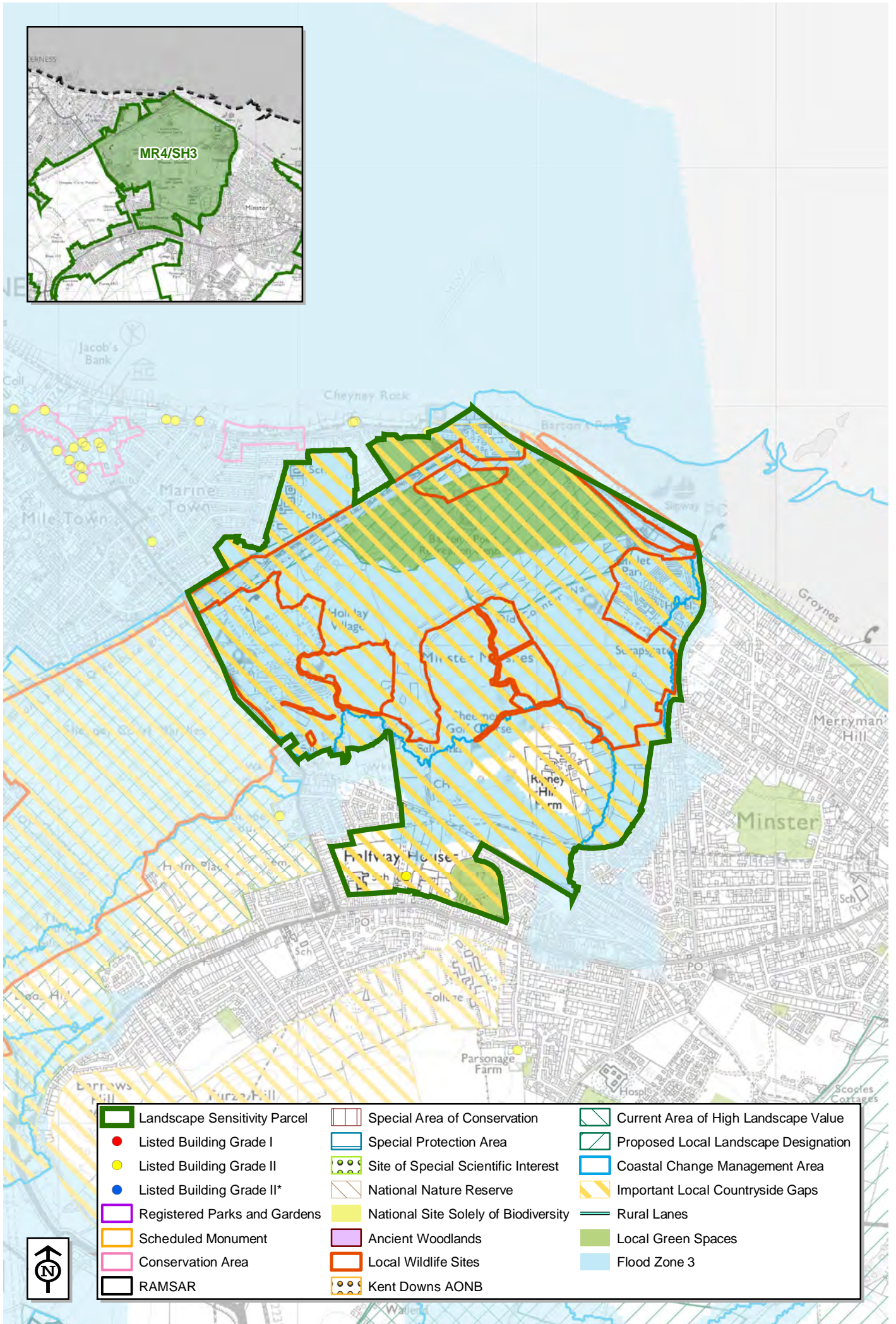
The majority of this area has a high sensitivity to employment development for the reasons outlined above and the potential for such development to be highly visible and impact on the distinctive marshland landscape/setting. The exception is the area south/west of the A249, outside the proposed boundary of the LLD, which may be able to accommodate small scale development providing the guidance below is taken into account, particularly in relation to the setting of Queenborough.

Key spatial variations are found in the area immediately north of Halfway/A250 which has been enclosed and has reduced biodiversity interest and is therefore of slightly lower sensitivity. The area to the west at Diggs Marsh is of lower landscape quality and sensitivity due to the existing linear infrastructure.

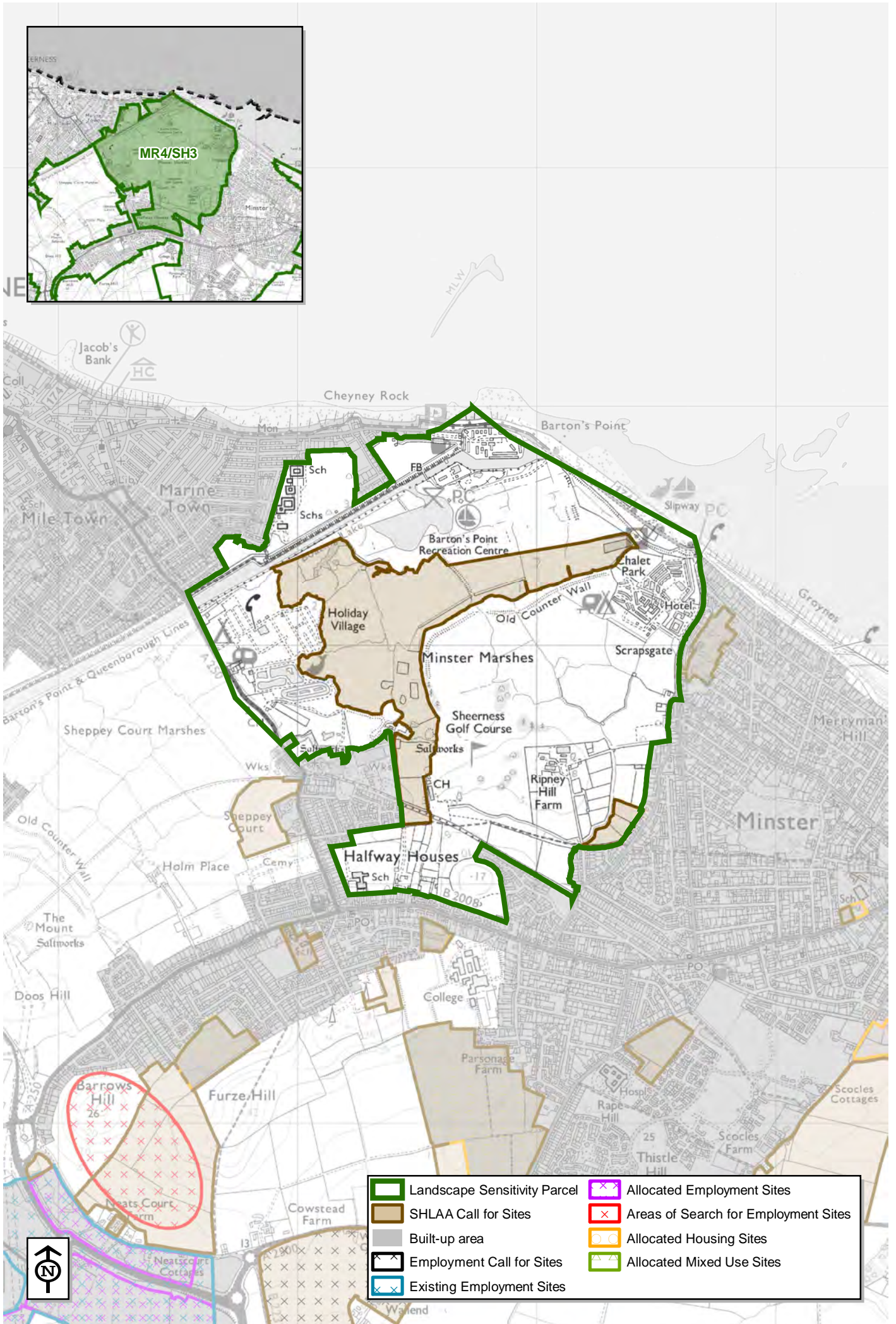
Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing marshland character. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Conserve the landscape gap between Minster and Queenborough to protect the integrity of the two settlements maintain the contrast between the distinctive ridge top and estuary/port settlements.
- Conserve and enhance the marshland character and features, with management to enhance habitats and biodiversity interest and integrate wildlife corridors within any development.
- Conserve the site and setting of Queenborough Lines Scheduled Monument and Sheppey Court Listed Building.
- Maintain and enhance the filtered urban edge at Halfway avoiding stark/harsh interfaces with the marshland.
- Seek to enhance the urban edge at Queenborough with attention to design of any new development and targeted vegetation management. In general tree planting will not be appropriate as screening within this open marshland landscape. Willow scrub may be an option.
- Seek to minimise existing and new lighting on the night time character of the marshland landscape.

Minster Area MR4/SH3: Designations and Constraints



Minster Area MR4/SH3: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View east from Holiday Village.



View north-west from footpath running east from Scrapsgate.

Location and landscape character

The landscape lies to the west of Minster, north/east of Halfway and south of Sheerness. It forms the whole of a single landscape character area Minster Marshes (No.9). It comprises an area of grazing marsh encapsulated between Sheerness, Minster, Halfway Houses and Queenborough. As the name suggests it is an area likely to have formed common grazing marsh for Minster and is therefore strongly linked to the settlement.

A large part of the area is within SBC Flood Zone 3 although remains subject to development pressures. The whole character has therefore been included for an assessment of sensitivity.

The area is also considered as SH3 in relation to sensitivities south of Sheerness.

Landscape value

The area is not currently designated.

Part of the area (Barton's Point and Queenborough Lines) is recommended in the 2018 study for designation as part of the adjacent Sheppey Court, Diggs and Minster Marshes LLD.

Assessment Criterion

Sensitivity description

Topography and scale

A mainly flat marshland, with a medium sense of scale with local variation created by the presence of a mix of land uses including golf course, garden centre, holiday village and fishing lake, which reduce the sense of scale.

Natural character

The undeveloped areas of Minster Marshes are remnant marshland and designated as a Local Wildlife Site. It supports grazing animals and retains typical marshland habitats/flora and fauna. Other areas have been improved for recreational use and are less natural in character. Barton's Point contains an important area of 'natural' character.

Sense of time depth / historic character

The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised mainly by small irregular enclosures with recreational and industrial uses. There are some features of the historic marsh landscape including saltworks and counterwalls remaining, although much has been lost due to new recreational land uses. It would originally have formed common grazing marsh for Minster. The Queenborough Lines fortifications, built to protect Sheerness dockyard from land attack, is a Scheduled Monument. The area has a role in the setting and views from historic Minster on the ridge top.

Visual character

The area generally has an open and exposed character with some views foreshortened by the urban edges, recreational development and transport

	corridors. There are long and distinctive views across the marshes from Minster.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	There are isolated areas of marsh which retain a sense of tranquillity for example around Barton's Point which provide a contrast to the adjacent urban areas. They lack the sense of scale, remoteness and tranquillity associated with the greater area of the North Kent Marshes and do not retain dark skies and much of the area has been degraded. Nevertheless, this remains an area highly valued by local people and particularly the recreational landscape associated with Barton's Point.
Character and setting of settlement	<p>The area performs an important function as an open gap creating visual and physical separation between Minster, Queenborough, Sheerness and Halfway Houses, and is designated as an Important Local Countryside Gap. The marshland setting is important to the character of these settlements and along with MR3/SH2 provides a contrast and visual setting to Minster on the adjacent ridge.</p> <p>The urban edge of Sheerness is largely contained by the Queenborough Lines Scheduled Monument and associated recreational space at Barton's Point. Minster is clearly defined to the west by the rising landform above the marshes. The edge of Halfway Houses is filtered by back gardens, playing fields and areas of paddocks/scrubland.</p>

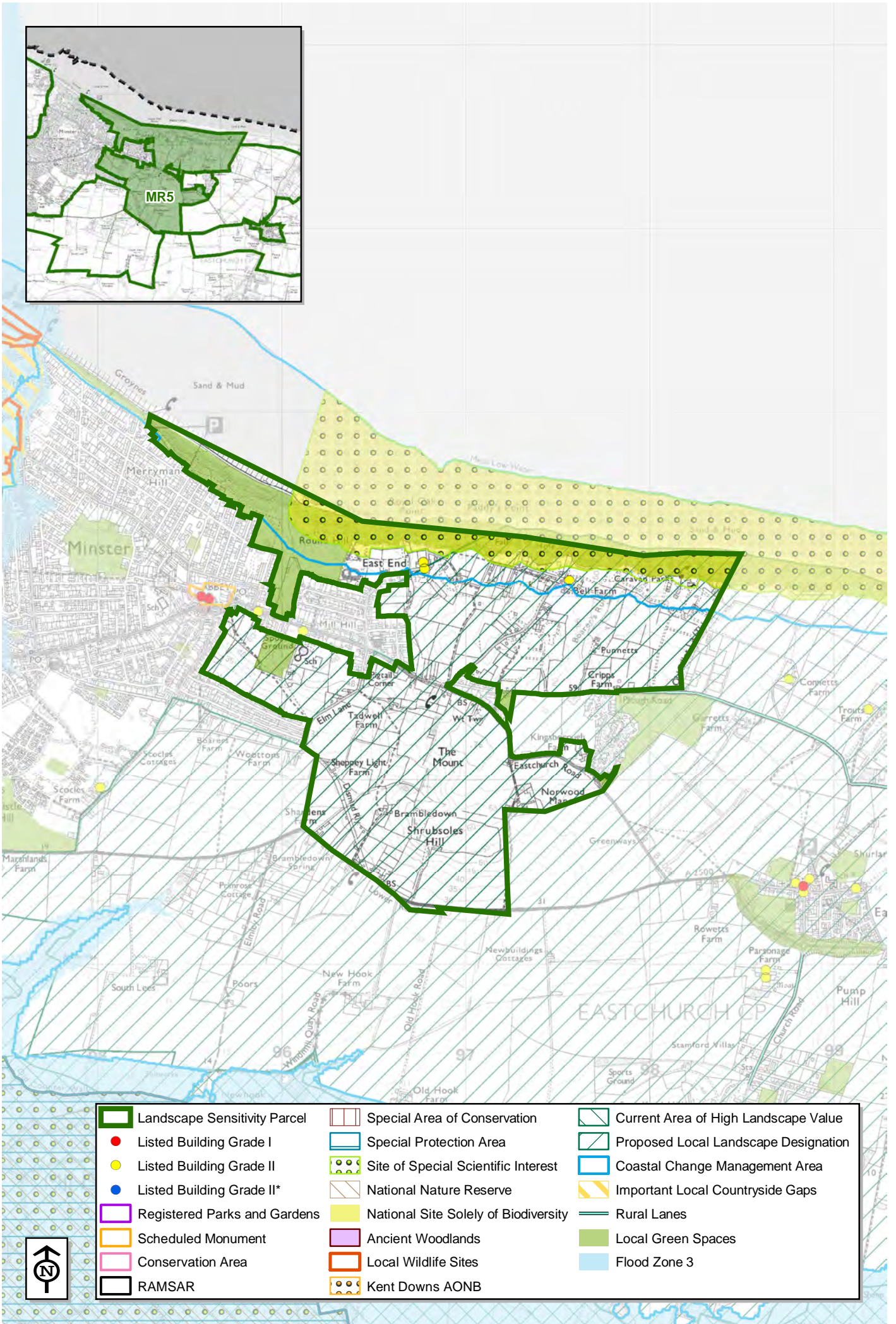
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B, light industrial)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
<p>The majority of this area is of moderate-high sensitivity due to its importance as a remnant marshland setting for the urban areas, sense of openness and value as a wildlife habitat recognised by designation of much of the area as a Local Wildlife Site.</p> <p>The majority of this area has moderate-high sensitivity to employment development for the reasons outlined above and the potential for such development to be highly visible and impact on the distinctive marshland landscape/setting, although recognising that many of these qualities are already degraded by recreation and caravan developments.</p> <p>The area immediately north of Halfway, adjacent to the school, which has been enclosed and has reduced biodiversity interest is of slightly lower sensitivity. Despite the lower quality of much of the marshland there is limited capacity for development given its role in providing openness and the setting of settlements.</p>				

Guidance
<p><i>Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal. • Conserve the landscape gap between Minster and Sheerness to protect the integrity of the two settlements and maintain the contrast between the distinctive ridge top and estuary settlements. • Conserve and enhance the marshland character and features, with management to enhance habitats and biodiversity interest and integrate wildlife corridors within any development. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued

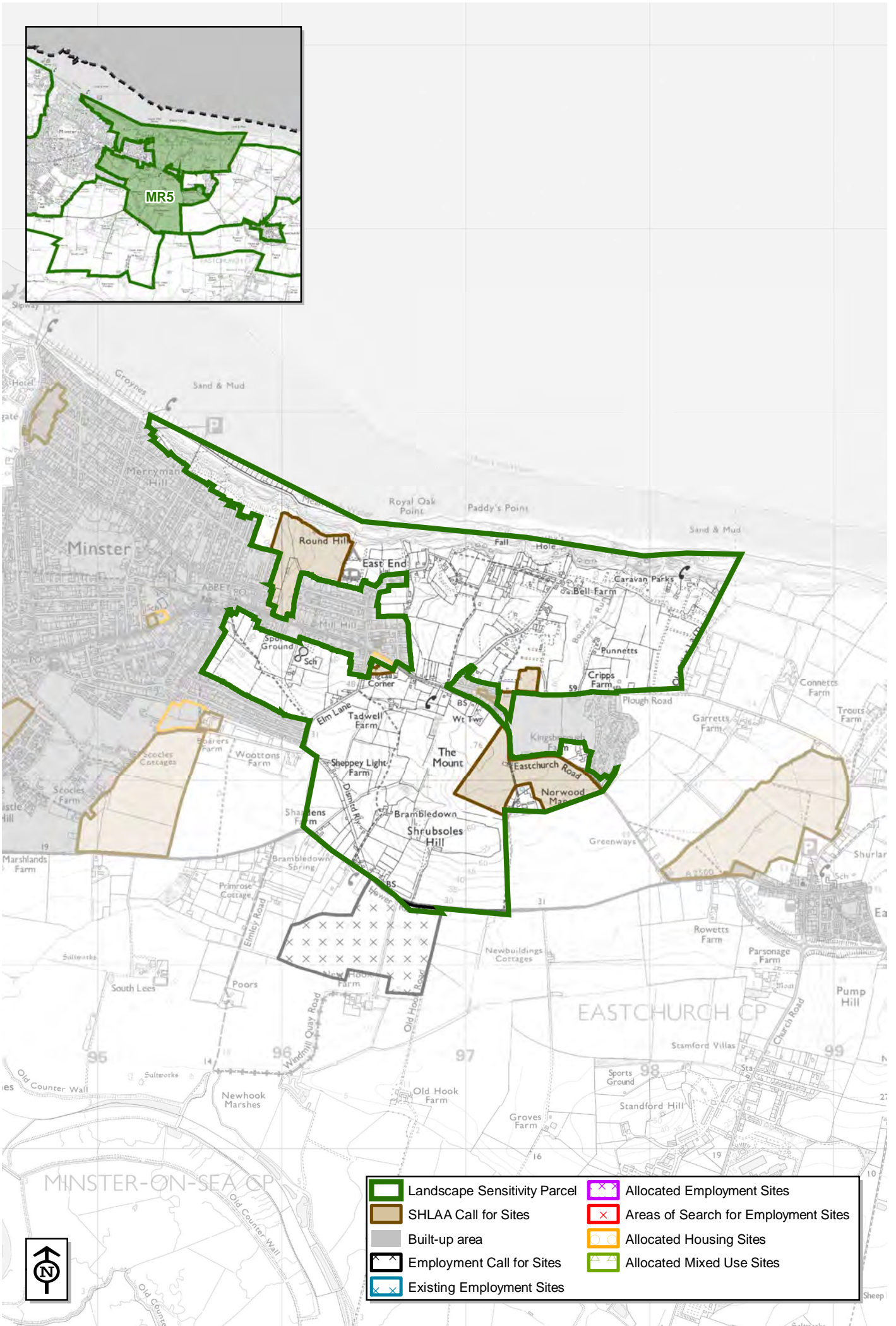
landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

- Conserve and manage the natural recreational space at Barton's Point.
- Prevent further development of recreational land uses e.g. holiday parks and seek opportunities to integrate into their landscape setting.
- Conserve the site and setting of Queenborough Lines Scheduled Monument and Danley Farm Grade II Listed Building.
- Maintain and enhance the filtered urban edge at Halfway avoiding stark/harsh interfaces with the marshland and ensure appropriate boundary treatments in associations with any new development.
- Seek to minimise the impact of existing and new lighting on the night time character of the marshland landscape.

Minster Area MR5: Designations and Constraints



Minster Area MR5: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View from eastern edge of Minster, minor valley dipping to the north coast with views over the estuary to Southend.



View south from the ridge looking over open slopes and across The Swale.

Location and landscape character

The landscape area comprises the ridge along the coastal edge to the north and west of Minster, incorporating the slumped clay coastal cliffs, caravan park developments and areas of agricultural land arable /paddocks. It falls within the western part of the Minster and Warden Farmlands LCA (No. 16). It falls into two distinct areas north and south of the B2008/Plough Road, north being more orientated to the coast and south composed of slopes falling down to the marshes.

Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local).

Assessment Criterion

Sensitivity description

Topography and scale

An elevated undulating area falling away at the north coast to distinctive clay cliffs and south towards the marshes. Small hills such as Round Hill, Shrubsoles Hill and The Mount are prominent features. The area is dissected by minor stream valleys running to the coast. The scale is medium overall as a result of the undulations and smaller scale land uses and equestrian paddocks, with a larger scale present where there are open sea views/ views over the marshes.

Natural character

There are no national or local biodiversity designations and the area itself is of limited biodiversity interest. The area is adjacent to the Sheppey Cliff and Foreshore SSSI designated for its geological interest. This classic coastal section is one of the best known Palaeogene sites in Britain (also Geological Conservation Review Site), with botanical interest associated with the cliffs. To the south, the Swale marshes are designated as SSSI, SPA, Ramsar and NNR and the arable slopes are likely to have value for birds.

A small section of Plough Road in the east of the area is a designated Rural Lane.

Sense of time depth / historic character

There are three Grade II listed farmsteads along the north coast in the area at East End and Bell Farm. The Swale HLC indicates an area of small and medium parliamentary type enclosures. The slopes to the south are part of the wider foreground and rural setting to the historic core of Minster and Abbey.

Visual character

The elevated ridge provides panoramic views to the south across the marshes and to mainland Kent, and also forms a prominent backdrop in views from the marshes. To the north there are open and expansive sea views across the Thames Estuary. The water tower is a prominent vertical feature on the skyline in views from the

	south.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>There are scenic qualities associated with the elevation and associated open sea views to the north and expansive panoramas to the south which engender a sense of tranquillity. The landscape retains a rural character despite modern developments and a degraded landscape condition in places.</p> <p>There are some PRowS running through the area.</p>
Character and setting of settlement	<p>The existing urban edge of Minster is relatively well integrated, although there is intermittent development along the B2008/ Eastchurch Road which extends development along the ridge towards the new Kingsborough Manor development which is relatively isolated to the east of Minster. This new development is set back on the ridge and therefore does not impact on views from marshes. However, it is a significant new urban area within a rural setting, partially integrated with buffer planting and existing mature boundaries.</p> <p>The area has a role in providing a rural gap between Minster and Eastchurch maintaining the distinction and separation of the two settlements. To the north caravan parks form prominent features on the edge of Minster. The slopes in the south of the area around Shrubsoles Hill and the Mount form part of the wider rural foreground and setting to Minster on the ridge.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2 ha)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B, light industrial)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The undulating landform, with distinctive hills forms a backdrop to much of Sheppey, is visually prominent and offers expansive views to the north and south. It also has an important role as part of the rural setting for Minster and provides separation from Eastchurch, and a rural gap along the undeveloped coast to the north. These attributes, indicate a moderate-high overall sensitivity to residential development.

The visual prominence of this area and the fact that any large scale development has the potential to be a highly visible within this sensitive landscape means that the area has a high overall sensitivity to employment development

There are no notable variations in overall sensitivity within this landscape, although minor areas of infill may be acceptable in relation to existing urban edges providing the guidelines below are followed.

Guidance

Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a

wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

- Conserve the rural character of the slopes and undulations ensuring landform features remain as distinctive features.
- Conserve the role of the area as the rural setting/foreground for Minster particular in views from the south as a backdrop to the marshes.
- Seek to minimise the impact of existing and new lighting on the night time character of the marshland landscape to the south.
- Conserve the site and setting of Listed Farmsteads.
- Conserve the open gaps and links to the north coast along the B2008, avoiding infill development.
- Conserve the landscape gap between Minster and Eastchurch to protect the integrity of the two settlements.
- Avoid any tall development on the ridgeline or slopes which would have the potential to be highly prominent over Sheppey and beyond. Avoid any development which would break the ridgeline.
- Seek to improve the landscape structure including management of existing boundaries and creation of new native woodland screening and buffer planting in relation to harsh urban edges including caravan sites.
- Consider opportunities to improve GI linkages along the north coast cliffs.

Settlement Area: Iwade



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Location and Description

The village of Iwade is located in the west of Swale Borough northwest of Sittingbourne. Sheppey Way/Ferry Road/The Street runs north-south through the village, formerly the main route to Sheppey prior to the construction of the A249 which bypassed the village. The small historic core of the village is in the north around the All Saints' church. The majority of the development in Iwade is from the late 20th and early 21st century in a variety of building styles, predominantly brick. The village now includes extensive residential estates and has a more modern character.

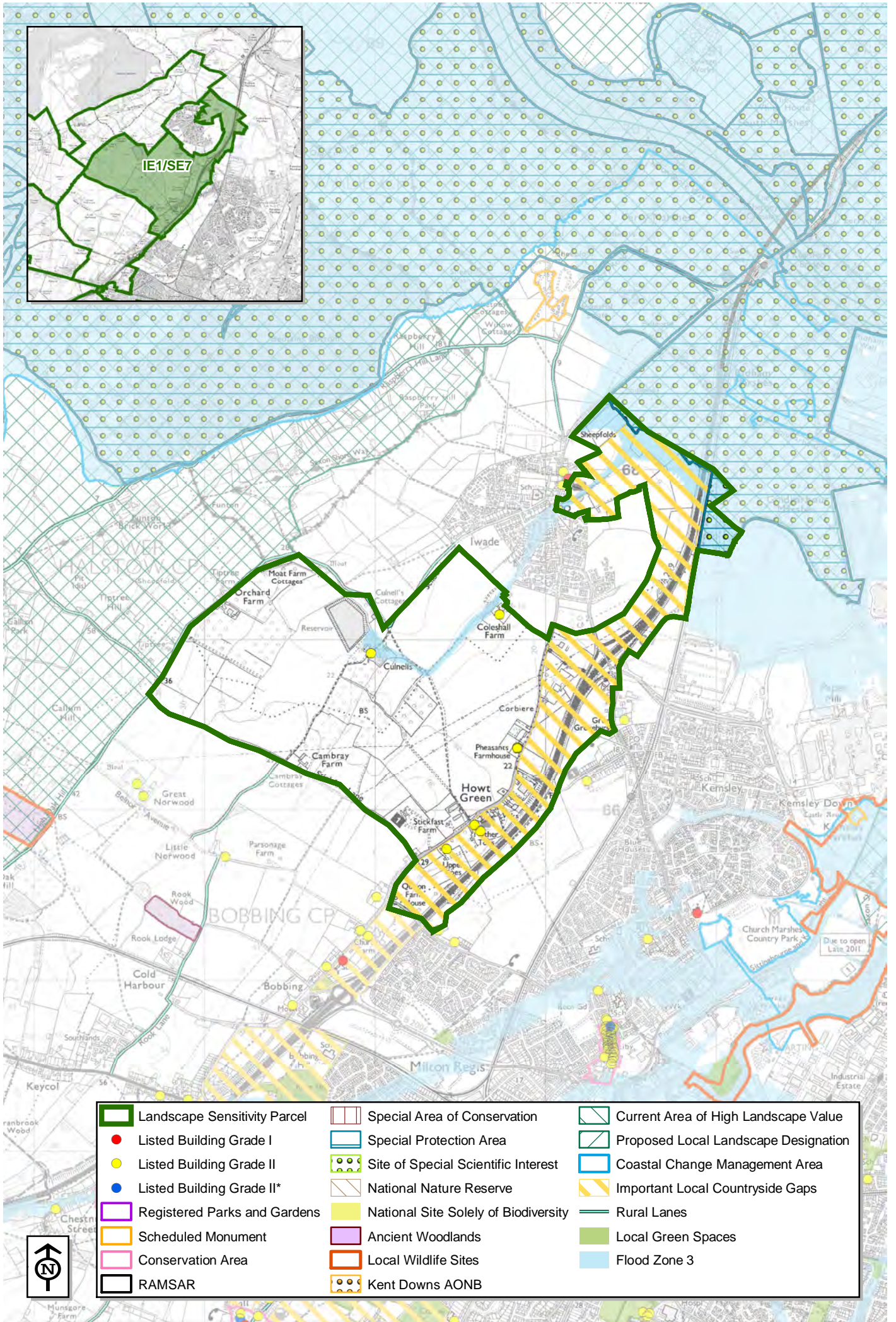
The settlement edge is divided into two areas for assessment of sensitivity to residential and employment development. These largely relate to the landscape character areas and comprise:

IE1 – the mixed farmlands to the east and south, extending to the A249 and including the small settlement of Howt Green (see also SE7).

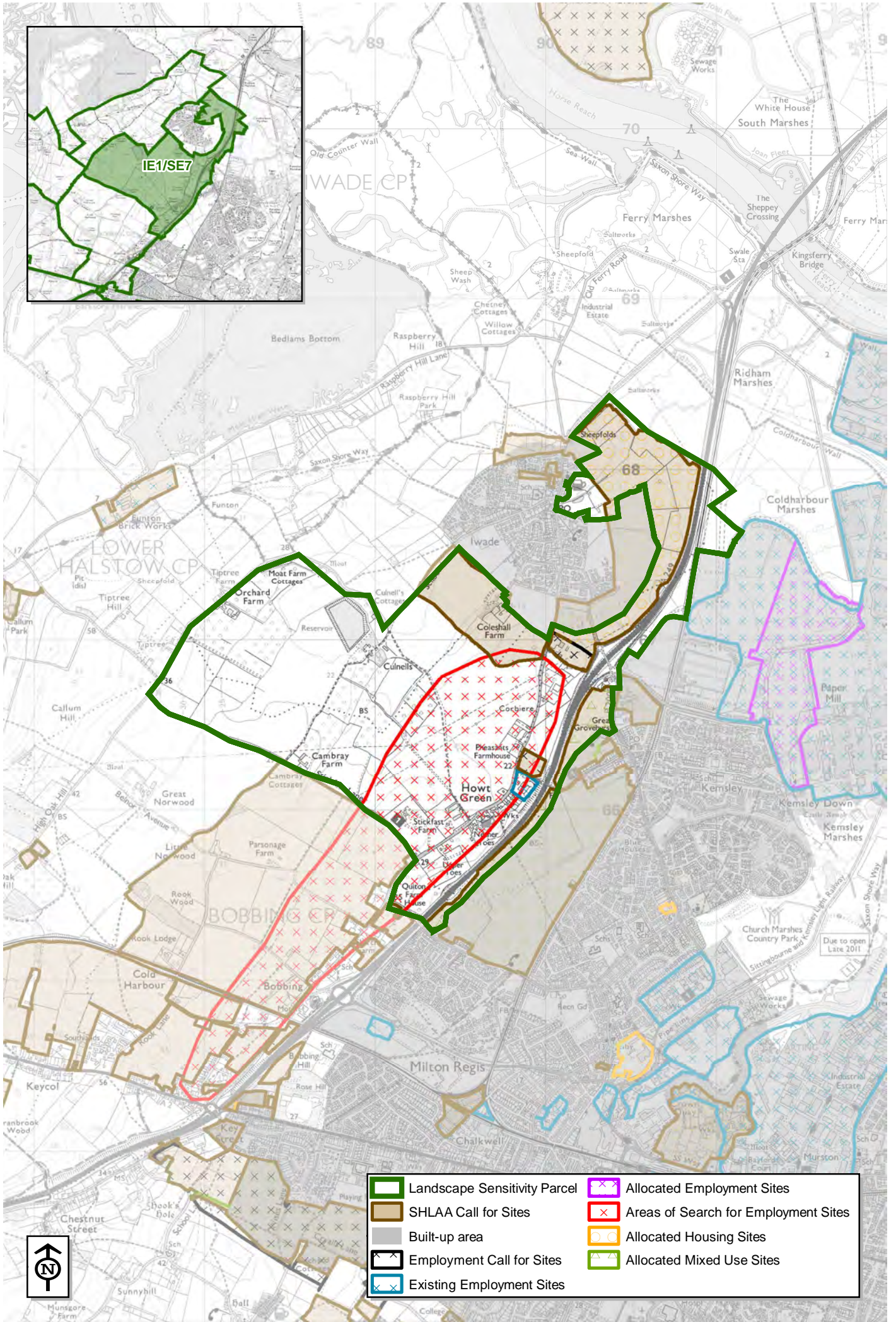
IE2 - the mixed clay farmlands to the west and northwest which descend to the marshes and estuary at Raspberry Hill Lane.

Areas beyond the north eastern settlement edge and further west have been scoped out of the assessment due to flood risk (Environment Agency Flood Zone 3) and nature conservation constraints (e.g. SSSI and SAC).

Iwade Area IE1/SE7: Designations and Constraints



Iwade Area IE1/SE7: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View north from footpath west of Sheppey Way



Open fields east of Iwade

Location and landscape character

The landscape to the east and south of Iwade lies within the Iwade Arable Farmlands landscape character area (No.24). It comprises a combination of predominantly arable fields and commercial areas at Howt Green and brickearth extraction at Orchard Farm, School Lane.

The area is also considered as SE7 in relation to sensitivities west of Sittingbourne.

Landscape value

This area is not subject to any national landscape designations.

To the north Ridham and Ferry marshes form part of the Medway marshes (Area of High Landscape Value – Kent Level) and to the east and north is the locally designated Iwade Ridge Area of High Landscape Value – Swale Level. These areas have been recommended by the 2018 study for designation as the North Kent Marshes – Medway Marshes LLD and Lower Halstow Iwade Ridge LLD respectively.

Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	A flat to gently sloping topography elevated above the surrounding marshes and coastline. Fields are predominantly medium or large scale with arable crops and generally very open. Occasional shelterbelts, orchards and hedgerows in the south and west of the area provide enclosure and locally reduce the apparent scale of the landscape. Overall it is medium scale, with some long views across the open arable landscape.
Natural character	There is a limited network of valued natural features and semi-natural habitats within the area. This includes hedgerows, shelterbelts and occasional orchards. These features exist within and alongside areas of intensive arable farmland. School Lane, which forms the western boundary, is designated as a Rural Lane. There are no nature conservation designations (national or local) present within the area.
Sense of time depth / historic character	The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by 19th century enclosure, Parliamentary type enclosure fields with small regular straight boundaries south and west of the reservoir by School Lane. Many of the fields to the east and southeast of Iwade have experienced significant boundary loss, which indicates a lower time depth. This also results in more open and larger fields – a predominantly modern intensive arable landscape.

	<p>Areas of former orchard in the southwest have been converted to arable farmland, and further converted to host a solar farm in the southwest north of Stickfast Lane and brickearth extraction to the east of School Road by Orchard Farm.</p> <p>There are a number of Listed historic houses and farmsteads, with a concentration in the linear hamlet of Howt Green, which also has low rise industrial and agricultural buildings.</p>
Visual character	<p>There is some visual containment by roadside vegetation and shelterbelts, however in general it is open and exposed and there are long views north, east and south. Views to the west are curtailed by more undulating topography. There are long distance views north across the marshes and Swale to the Isle of Sheppey. The Sheppey Crossing is also visible.</p> <p>The skyline is very open. Pylons running through the eastern part of the area, and outside of the area to the north and east are very prominent in views. Industrial warehouses to the east at Ridham Dock are also visible.</p> <p>The visual prominence of the area is low. It can however be seen from the Sheppey Crossing.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>This is not a tranquil landscape and does not have a strong rural character. Major powerlines and proximity to the A249 impact on the rural nature of the area. The brickearth extraction along School Lane is also a source of noise disturbance.</p> <p>There are PRoWs running from Culnell's Cottages to Howt Green in the south east and to Cambray Cottages on Stickfast Lane. Featherbed Lane in the east is also publically accessible.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	<p>There is currently a 'green gap' between the abrupt current edge of development in Iwade and the settlement boundary. There is little established woodland, trees or hedgerows to integrate or soften the built form within the surrounding landscape. The area provides an open, rural setting to Iwade, particularly in the south, and provides an open space between Iwade, Howt Green and Sittingbourne. The landscape north of Iwade, at Sheepfolds, provides a rural setting to the historic core of Iwade and this area has a more rural and distinctive character.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The landscape has a typical flat to very gently undulating topography, with a low-moderate sense of rural character due to modern human influences from transport links and the 20th century edges of Iwade. The area has a low visual prominence except from the Sheppey Crossing, and low-moderate time depth with some heritage assets. There are limited valued natural features and semi-natural habitats, and there is some public access to the area. The area provides a rural separation between Iwade and Howt Green. The A249 provides a strong barrier between Iwade and Sittingbourne. These attributes, in combination with the absence of landscape designations, indicate a low-moderate overall sensitivity to future change from residential development. The landscape character of this area lends itself to further planting which could help integrate and mitigate existing and new development. Small employment development could be accommodated along Sheppey Way, creating a commercial hub at Howt Green.

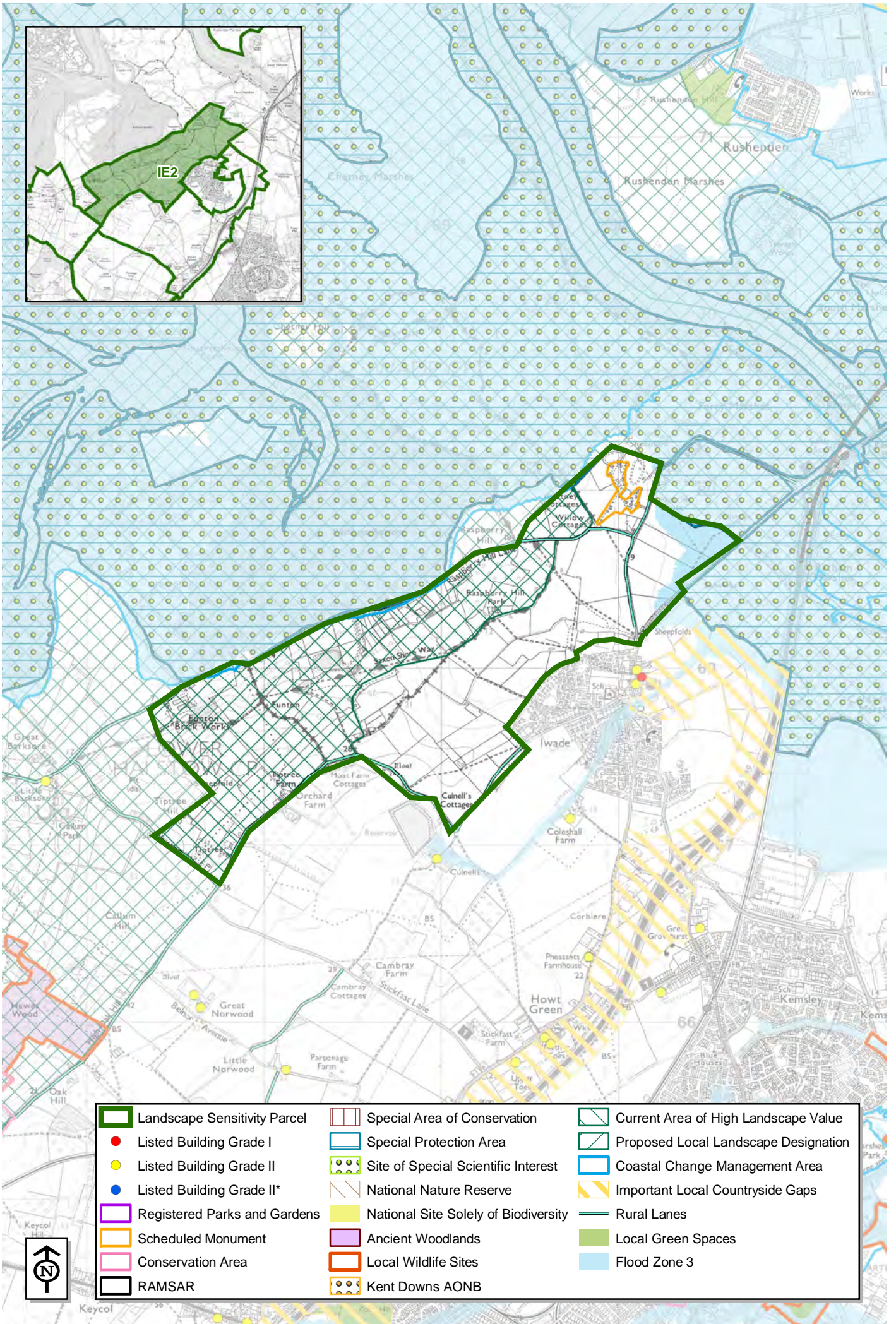
For the reasons noted above the landscape is considered to have a low-moderate overall sensitivity to future change from employment development.

Key spatial variations are the lower tranquillity immediately east of the Sheppey Way south of Iwade as a result of the A429, and around Orchard Farm due to the brickearth extraction. North of Iwade around Sheepfolds is of higher sensitivity as it contributes a rural backdrop to the historic core of Iwade, and the area north of Stickfast Lane provides a rural setting to the south of Iwade.

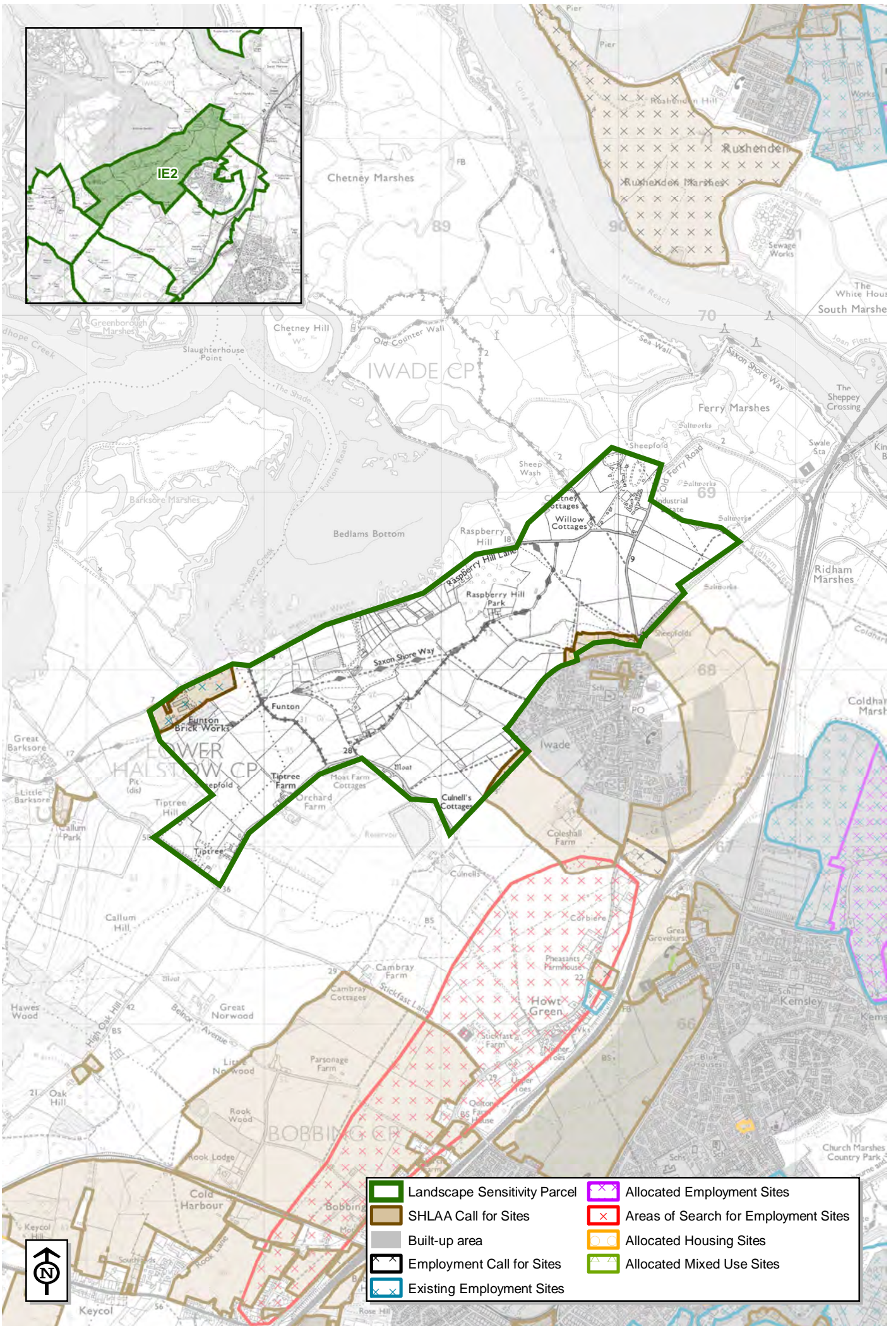
Guidance

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Utilise these features within developments to inform master planning. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Consider the creation and restoration of orchards and copses/shelterbelt of native tree and shrub species to soften the harsh urban edges of Iwade and integrate within the surrounding landscape.
- Conserve the rural settlement of the historic core of Iwade around the church and the wider rural setting south of Iwade, and setting of historic farmsteads.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building styles, materials, scale and massing. Sensitive lighting design should be considered particularly in the context of the marsh landscapes to the north.
- New development should seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of School Lane designated Rural Lane.
- Maintain the sense of Iwade as a distinct rural settlement and avoid the visual impression of a continuous urban area extending from Sittingbourne. Creation of a woodland buffer along the A249 could help create a greener corridor.
- Consider any new development in relation to the sensitive landscapes of the Swale to the north (SSSI, SPA, Ramsar) and the Areas of High Landscape Value to the north and west.

Iwade Area IE2: Designations and Constraints



Iwade Area IE2: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View north from Basser Lane



View east from Raspberry Hill Lane

Location and landscape character

The landscape west and south west of Iwade lies within the Lower Halstow Clay Farmlands landscape character area (No.25). It comprises a combination of small-medium scale arable fields on a slope descending towards the marshes and estuary and small areas of industrial use at Funton brick works and in the northeast, to the west of Old Ferry Road.

Landscape value

Much of the area to the north is part of the Iwade Ridge Area of High Landscape Value – Swale Level. To the north this landscape joins the North Kent Marshes Area of High Landscape Value – Kent Level.

Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	The landscape has an undulating topography, rising from the marshes to Tiptree Hill in the south, which continues to a prominent ridge outside of the area. There is greater variety in topography south of Raspberry Hill Park. The northern area is flatter. Fields are predominantly small, representing former orchards or medium/large scale and there are a few small areas of remaining orchard. The topography and remnant orchards and associated shelterbelts south of Raspberry Hill Lane reduce the apparent scale of the landscape in this area; elsewhere it is more open and exposed with a large scale.
Natural character	There is a limited network of valued natural features and semi-natural habitats within the area. This includes priority habitat grazing marsh in the north around Raspberry Hill, hedgerows, shelterbelts and remnant traditional orchards. These features exist within and alongside areas of intensive arable farmland which do not exhibit a natural character. There are no nature conservation designations (national or local) present within the area. Immediately adjacent to the area to the north is the Medway Estuary and Marshes SSSI, SPA and Ramsar. Basser Hill, Raspberry Hill Lane and School Lane are designated as Rural Lanes.
Sense of time depth / historic character	The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by small regular Parliamentary type enclosures with straight boundaries. These boundaries are predominantly still in place, indicating a strong time depth. Around Raspberry Hill there are small rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries, and the HLC indicates orchards were present east of Funton brickworks and south of Raspberry Hill Lane.

	<p>Many of the orchards have been converted to arable farmland or for horse grazing, although remnant orchards and windbreaks are still present along the eastern section of Raspberry Hill Lane.</p> <p>The built environment consists of isolated farms and cottages and small-scale industrial works at Funton brickworks and south of Sheepfolds. A Second World War heavy anti-aircraft battery in the north, between Raspberry Hill Lane and Old Ferry Road is a Scheduled Monument.</p>
Visual character	<p>There is some visual containment by roadside vegetation and shelterbelts, however in general there are long open views including across the marshes to the north and the Swale to the Isle of Sheppey, where wind turbines, industrial buildings and the Sheppey Crossing are visible. Views inland from Raspberry Hill Lane are contained by the undulating topography. The undulating ridge forms an important undeveloped rural backdrop to the marshes and views from the estuary and is one of the few areas in Swale where rising land backs the coastline in this way.</p> <p>The skyline is very open, and forms an undeveloped horizon in views. Pylons outside this area can be seen in views to the north, east and south.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>The majority of the area has relative dark skies and a sense of tranquillity, and there is little development within the area forming a rural backdrop to the marshes. It has an open, exposed character with big open skies and long views across the marshes. The rural nature of the landscape is impacted by the small-scale industrial uses at Funton brickworks and around Willow Cottages in the north.</p> <p>The area is well served by PRowS including the regionally promoted Saxon Shore Way.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	<p>The residential settlement edge to the west/north of Iwade is very stark/abrupt, and is clear in views from the wider landscape. There is little established woodland, trees or hedgerows to integrate or soften the built form within the surrounding area. The area provides an undeveloped and scenic setting to Iwade, and a 'green gap' between the marshes and Iwade.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H

The landscape has a flat to undulating topography, with a relative sense of tranquillity and exposure derived from its landform, big skies and the long views out over the marshes. Overall sensitivity is considered to be moderate-high for residential development, due to the role of this area in providing an undeveloped backdrop and setting to the marshes. However it is recognised that a small amount of residential development associated with the immediate urban edge of Iwade could be accommodated and designed in a way to provide better integration with the wider rural landscape and soften the harsh urban edge.

For the reasons noted above, the landscape is considered to have a high sensitivity to employment development. Any development of greater height or bulk than 2-3 storey housing would have an impact on the undeveloped skyline, and the landscape's role as a setting to the marshes.

There are no notable spatial variations in landscape sensitivity.

Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost, for example the traditionally managed orchards. Utilise these features within developments to inform master planning. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure the creation and restoration of orchards and copses/shelterbelt of native tree and shrub species to soften the harsh urban edges of Iwade and integrate within the surrounding landscape.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building styles, materials, scale and massing. Sensitive lighting design should be considered particularly in the context of the marsh landscapes to the north.
- Avoid any development which would break the undeveloped skyline.
- New development should seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes Basser Hill, Raspberry Hill Lane and School Lane.
- Maintain the sense of Iwade as a distinct rural settlement and avoid the visual impression of a continuous urban area extending from Sittingbourne.
- Consider any new development in relation to the sensitive landscapes of the Swale to the north and west (SSSI, SPA, Ramsar) and the Areas of High Landscape Value in the west of the area (Lower Halstow – Iwade Ridge) and to the north and west (Medway marshes).

Settlement Area: Teynham



Location and Description

The village of Teynham is located in the centre of Swale Borough between Sittingbourne and Faversham, and is characterised by a linear historic settlement core running alongside the Roman Road of Watling Street, now the route of the A2, and more modern development along Station Road linking with the railway station to the north. The settlement contains a variety of building styles and periods, predominantly of residential use, including listed timber framed thatched cottages on Cellar Hill and larger Victorian brick residences along the A2.

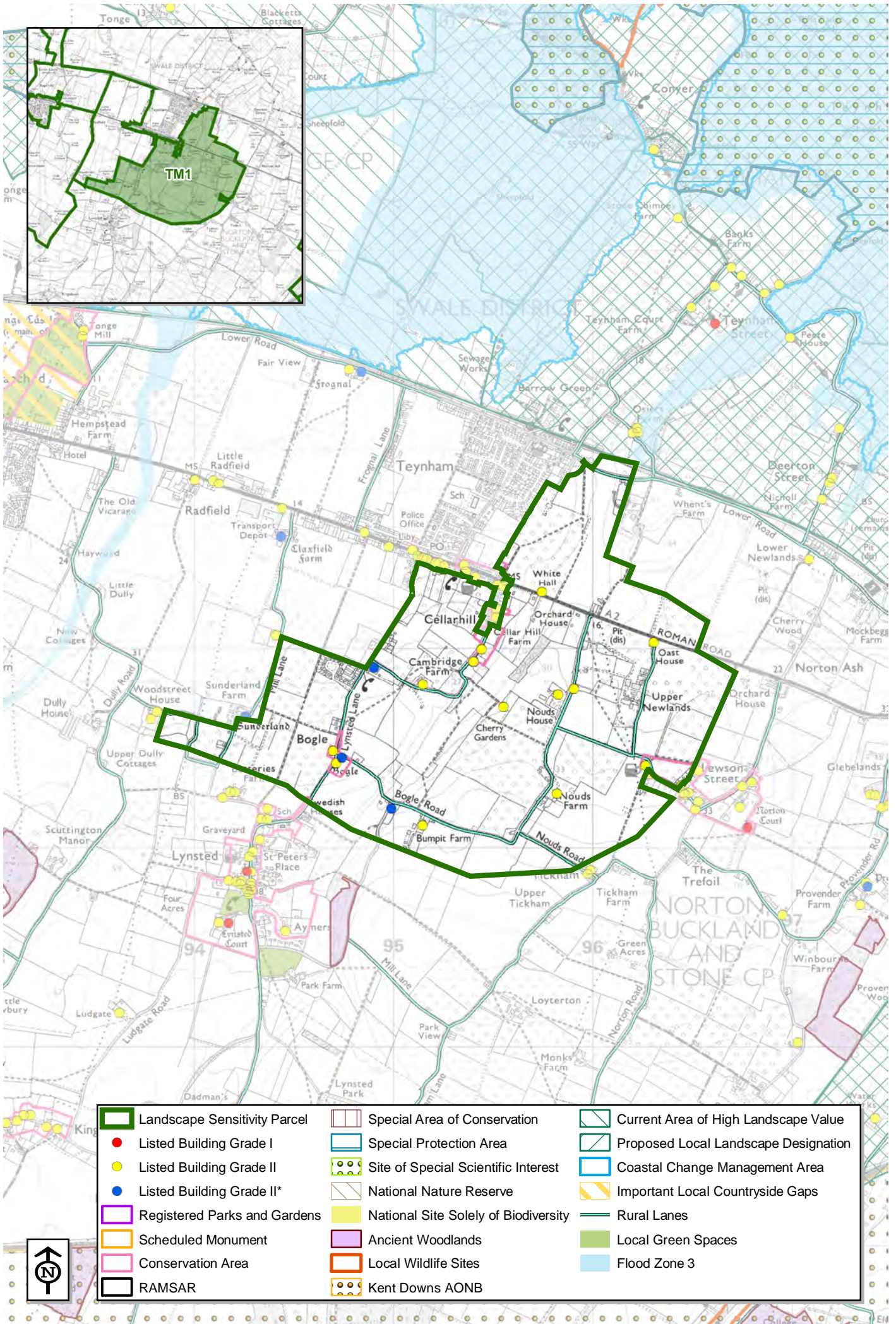
The settlement edge is divided into two areas for assessment of sensitivity to residential and employment development. These largely relate to the landscape character areas, together with physical boundaries such as roads, and comprise:

TN1 - the enclosed farmlands to the east and south east.

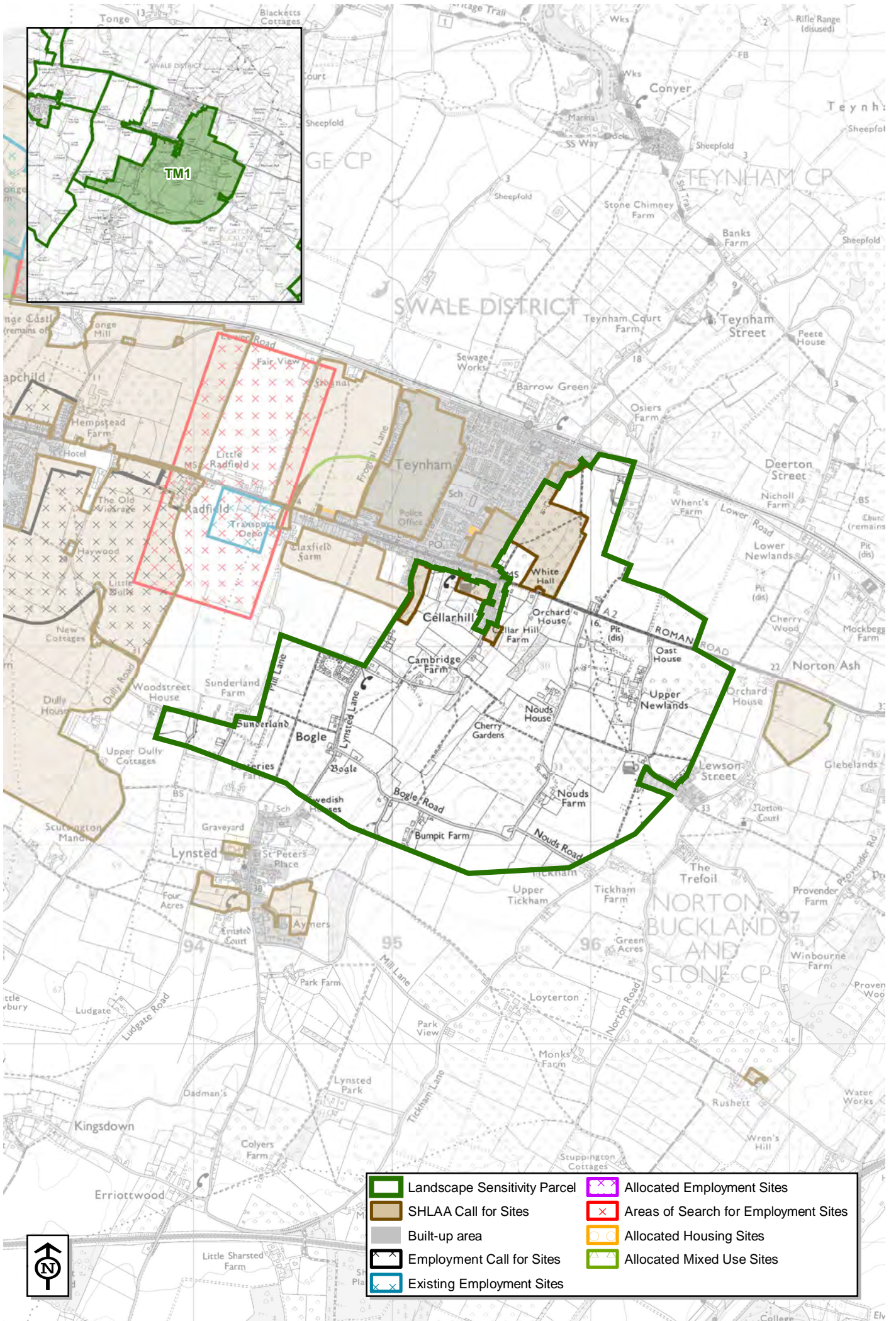
TN2 - the mixed farmlands to the west.

Areas beyond the northern settlement edge (broadly defined by the railway line) have been scoped out of the assessment due to flood risk (Environment Agency Flood Zone 3) and nature conservation constraints (e.g. SSSI and SAC), and because the Council received no housing or employment site submissions for these areas.

Teynham Area TM1: Designations and Constraints



Teynham Area TM1: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View north-west over the dry valley south of Bogle Road



View south-east from footpath, east of Station Road (north of A2)

Location and landscape character

The area of the landscape to the east and south-east of Teynham lies within the Lynsted Enclosed Farmlands landscape character area (No.26). It comprises a combination of arable and pasture fields and fairly extensive areas of commercial orchards and horticulture, with a scattered pattern of farmsteads.

Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local).

The adjacent area to the immediate north of the railway line forms the Tonge and Luddenham Area of High Landscape Value (Swale Level), and beyond this to the north is the South Swale Marshes Area of High Landscape Value (Kent Level). Both these areas are confirmed in the 2018 Local landscape Designations study.

Assessment Criterion

Sensitivity description

Topography and scale

The landscape has a gently sloping and undulating topography, with a central dry chalk valley running broadly north to south, with relatively steep sides and rounded tops. Fields are predominantly medium scale and regular; however, the presence of some commercial orchards and an associated network of shelterbelts and hedgerows in the centre and south of the area provide enclosure and reduce the apparent scale of the landscape.

Natural character

There is a limited network of valued natural features and semi-natural habitats within the area. This includes an area of deciduous woodland around Nouds House, hedgerows, shelterbelts and remnant traditional orchards. These features exist within and alongside areas of intensive arable farmland which do not exhibit a natural character.

There are no nature conservation designations (national or local) present within the area.

Locally designated Rural Lanes within the area include Lynsted Lane, Bogle Road, Nouds Lane, Cambridge Lane, Lewson Street, Lower Road, Claxfield Road and Wood Street.

Sense of time depth / historic character

The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by parliamentary type enclosures (small and medium regular); fields predominantly bounded by tracks, roads and other rights of way; orchards, paddocks and the hamlet of Bogle.

The time-depth of the landscape relates predominantly to the continuity of

	<p>agriculture and fruit cultivation within the area, together with the presence of scattered historic minor settlements and farmsteads, including Conservation Areas at Cellarhill, Bogle, Lewson Street (partially within the area) and Lynsted (adjacent to the area), with an associated concentration of listed buildings. The presence of pasture and traditional orchards within the area also contributes to its time depth. Some areas of orchard have been lost in recent decades, together with field boundaries, resulting in more open, larger fields, particularly in the north of the area.</p>
Visual character	<p>There are some long views to the north across the Swale to the Isle of Sheppey, which include wind turbines. The Grade I listed St. Mary's Church, Teynham Street (outside the landscape area) is a locally prominent feature. Long views south encompass the distant dip slope and wooded ridgeline of the Kent Downs AONB. To the east views are curtailed by more undulating topography.</p> <p>The visual prominence of the area is varied, with medium to large-scale fields east of Teynham and north of the A2 having an open and exposed character, whilst the landscape south of the A2, particularly within the dry valley, has an enclosed character with more frequent hedgerows and shelterbelts.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>No major powerlines and relatively tranquil, with a rural character, except in proximity to the A2, which is a source of significant noise disturbance. Access to experience the landscape is enhanced by the network of public rights of way which cross the area.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	<p>Teynham is broadly contained between the railway line and the A2. In general, the settlement edge is 'hard', particularly in relation to the modern housing, with little established woodland, trees and hedgerows to integrate and soften the built form within the surrounding landscape. Older, lower density properties along Cellar Hill are better integrated by established gardens, including orchards. There is limited urban development south of the A2.</p>

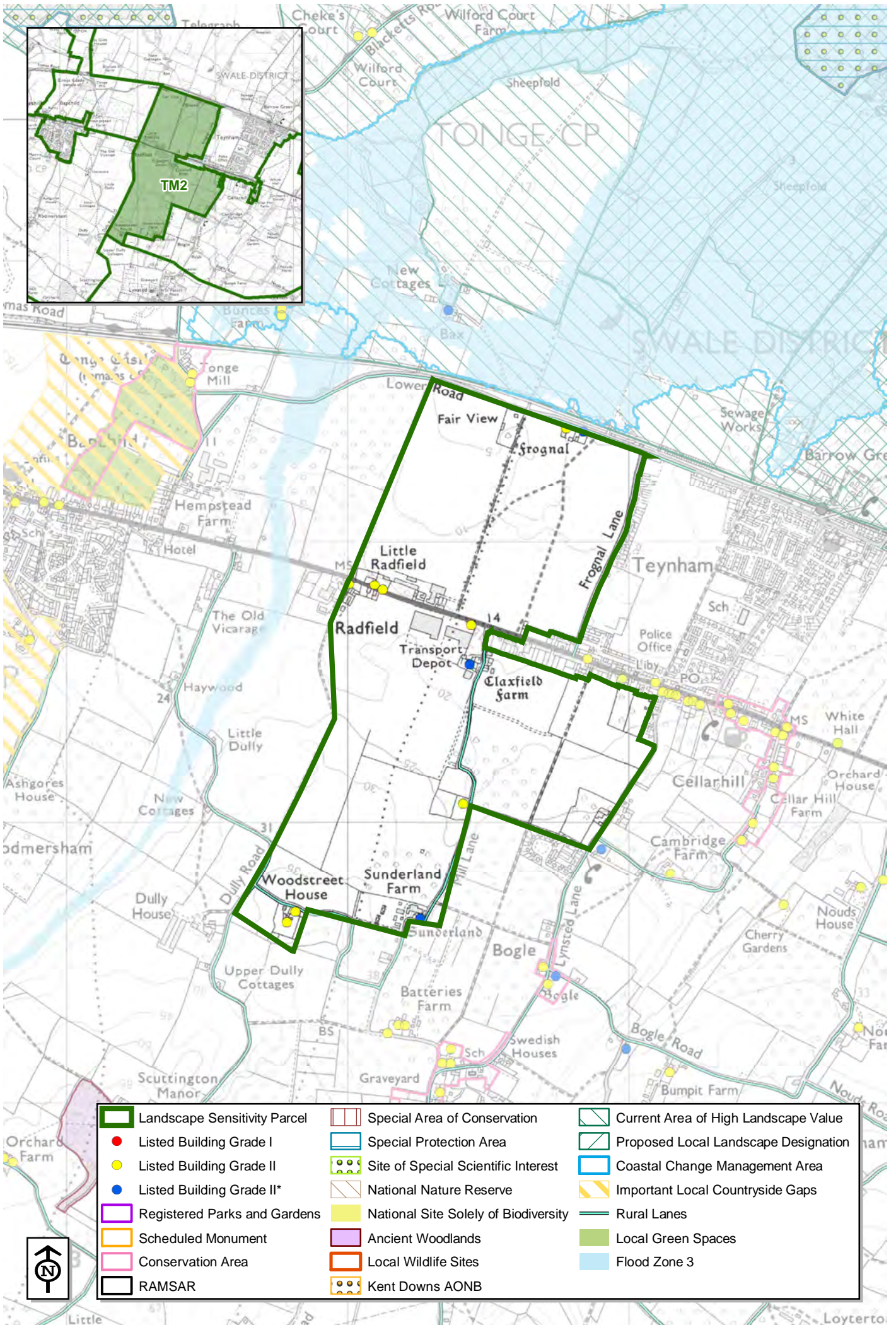
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
<p>The landscape has a typically gently undulating landform, moderate to high sense of rural character with some modern human influences, varying visual prominence and enclosure, moderate to high time depth with frequent heritage assets and limited valued natural features and semi-natural habitats. Teynham is generally well contained north of the A2. These attributes indicate a moderate to high overall sensitivity to future change from residential and employment development, albeit noting that there may be opportunities to enhance the settlement edge to the west, north of the A2.</p> <p>Spatial variations in sensitivity within the area: The area immediately east of the Teynham settlement boundary, between the A2 and the railway line, has lower tranquillity, larger than average fields with fewer natural features, and an open and exposed character resulting in greater visual prominence than the more enclosed areas further south. Overall this area is considered to have a slightly lower sensitivity than is typical for TM1. The dry chalk valley to the south of the A2 has a smaller scale, higher scenic value, tranquillity and time depth, indicating high overall sensitivity.</p>				

Guidance

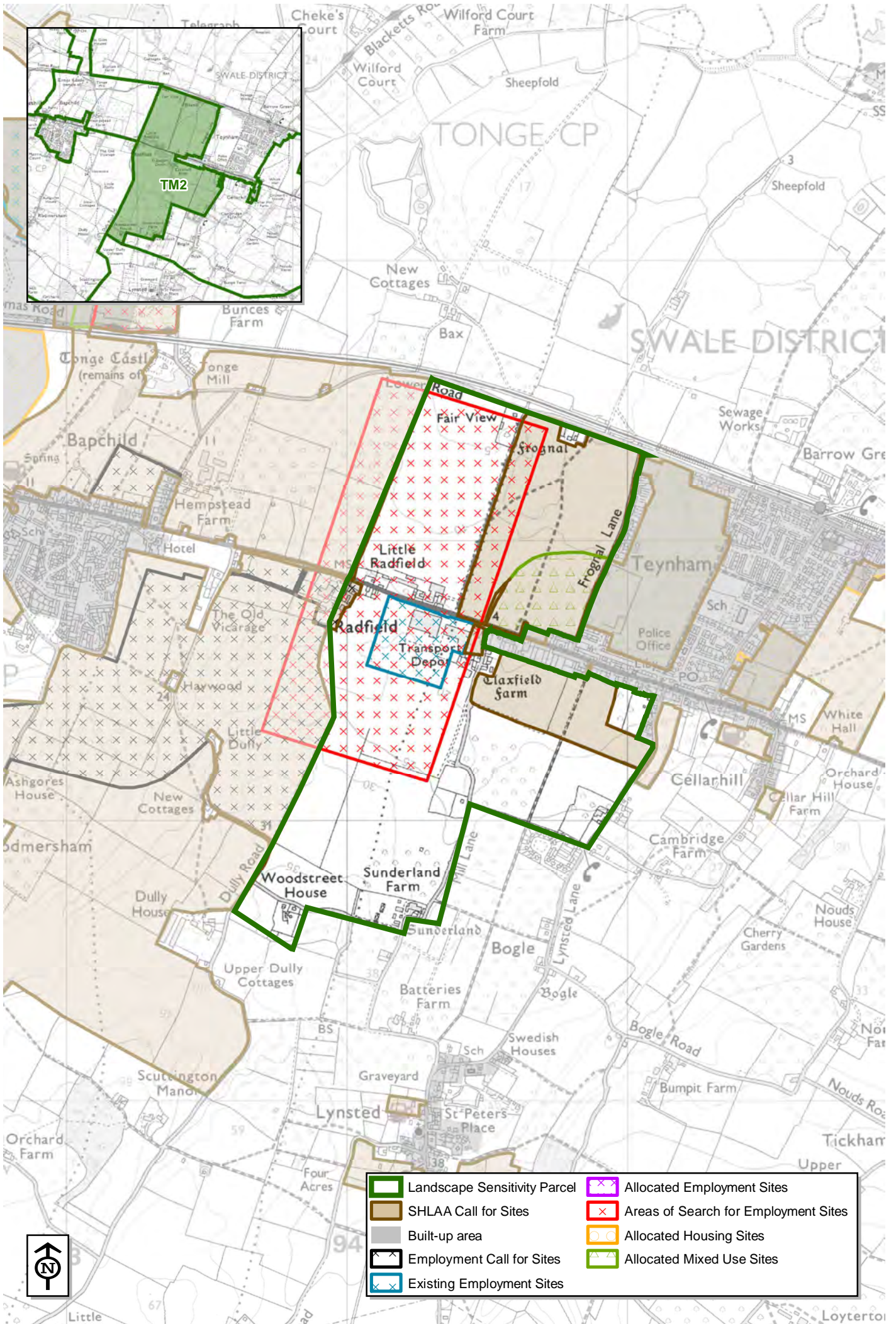
Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide, the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal and the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan (where relevant).
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost, such as in the north of the area beyond the A2. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure consideration is given to sensitive heritage assets including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and their settings.
- Incorporate and conserve views to local landmarks in conjunction with any new development, e.g. St. Mary's Church, Teynham Street.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building scale, massing, style and materials, incorporating sensitive lighting design and native plant species of local provenance. New development should also seek to maintain a rural character along the A2, and conserve and enhance the special qualities of the locally designated Rural Lanes: Lynsted Lane, Bogle Road, Nouds Lane, Cambridge Lane, Lewson Street, Lower Road, Claxfield Road and Wood Street.
- Maintain the sense of Teynham as a distinct large rural village and avoid extensive linear development along the A2 giving the impression of a more continuous urban area (Teynham, Bapchild, Siittingbourne).

Teynham Area TM2: Designations and Constraints



Teynham Area TM2: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View west from Frogmal Lane



View from Dully Road north-east towards Teynham.

Location and landscape character

The landscape to the west and south-west of Teynham lies within the Rodmersham Mixed Farmlands landscape character area (No.29). It comprises a combination of medium and large-scale arable fields and an extensive area of commercial orchards north of the A2. Development has extended to an extent along the A2 and there are scattered historic farmsteads

Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local).

Assessment Criterion

Sensitivity description

Topography and scale

Broadly flat or gently undulating topography. The landscape scale is generally medium to large, due to the predominance of expansive arable fields with limited hedgerows. There is an area of recently planted commercial orchard north of the A2, which has a smaller sense of scale due to the associated shelterbelt screening.

Natural character

The area contains limited valued natural features or semi-natural habitats; these being restricted to the fragmented hedgerow and shelterbelt network and small, remnant traditionally managed orchards around farmsteads. There is no woodland within the area. In recent years some of the farmland has been converted to intensively managed commercial fruit cultivation.

The absence of significant valued natural features indicates a lower sensitivity to development, compared with an area where such features are more prevalent.

Locally designated Rural Lanes within the area include Claxfield Road, Wood Street, Dully Road and Lower Road.

Sense of time depth / historic character

The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by small and large regular fields (parliamentary type enclosures); fields predominantly bounded by tracks, roads and other rights of way; and orchards.

The time-depth of the landscape relates predominantly to the continuity of agriculture and fruit cultivation within the area, together with the presence of scattered historic houses and farmsteads in the local vernacular styles (many of which are timber framed), some with parkland characteristics including notable mature trees, pasture and traditional orchards. Some areas of traditionally managed orchards have been lost in recent years, together with field boundaries,

	resulting in more open, larger fields. There are fewer designated heritage assets than within TM1.
Visual character	<p>Long views north-west from Frogmal Lane incorporate prominent industrial development north of Sittingbourne, together with wind turbines on the Isle of Sheppey beyond. There are also some long views west from Dully Road in the far west of the landscape area, towards the local landmark of St. Nicholas Church, Rodmersham.</p> <p>Overhead power lines and pylons are visible on the skyline to the north-west.</p> <p>There is limited visual containment within the landscape, which consequently has some inter-visibility with surrounding areas, increasing sensitivity.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>The landscape has some sense of rural character, but also some modern elements and human influences; notably development along the A2 and noise disturbance from the road itself, which adversely affects tranquillity.</p> <p>There are several PRoWs, predominantly running north to south through or alongside the boundary of the landscape area.</p>
Character and setting of settlement	<p>There is an extended modern edge to Teyham along the A2, and a major mixed-use development allocation on land at Frogmal Lane.</p> <p>The linear nature of the settlement core extending along the A2 is visible from the higher ground to the south, e.g. along Dully Road. The modern, large-scale Teyham Distribution Centre building on the A2 is quite prominent, whereas the smaller scale historic buildings are less prominent and better integrated through established screening planting.</p> <p>The area has a role in providing a break and settlement gap along the A2 maintaining the distinction of the larger rural villages of Teyham and Bapchild from Sittingbourne.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
<p>The landscape has a broadly flat or gently undulating landform, moderate sense of rural character with some modern human influences, limited time depth with some heritage assets, limited valued natural features and semi-natural habitats, and is visually prominent from some neighbouring areas. It has a role as a rural setting to Teyham maintaining distinction from Sittingbourne. These attributes indicate a moderate overall sensitivity to future change from residential and employment development, with opportunities should such development occur to improve the existing urban edge.</p> <p>Spatial variations in sensitivity within the area: There are no notable variations in overall sensitivity within this landscape area, with the exception of the areas immediately adjacent to the A2, which have low tranquillity and rural character, indicating lower sensitivity. The sense of rurality becomes stronger further southwards along Dully Road.</p>				

Guidance

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide, the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal and the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan (where relevant).
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost, such as in the north of the area beyond the A2. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure consideration is given to sensitive heritage assets including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and their settings.
- Incorporate and conserve views to local landmarks in conjunction with any new development, e.g. St. Nicholas' Church, Rodmersham.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building scale, massing, style and materials, incorporating sensitive lighting design and native plant species of local provenance. New development should also seek to maintain a rural character along the A2, and conserve and enhance the special qualities of the locally designated Rural Lanes: Claxfield Road, Wood Street, Dully Road and Lower Road.
- Conserve the setting of the historic houses and farmsteads, e.g. Woodstreet House, which contain attractive mature trees and contribute to the time depth, scenic value and sense of place within the landscape.
- Maintain the sense of Teynham as a distinct large rural village and avoid extensive linear development along the A2 giving the impression of a more continuous urban area (Teynham, Bapchild, Sittingbourne).

Settlement Area: Leysdown and Warden



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Location and Description

Leysdown-on-Sea is a coastal settlement on the east side of Sheppey's north coast. It is a well-established seaside resort on the Thames Estuary with caravan parks, amusements and arcades, and low density estates of bungalows. There is a central area of open green space known as The Spinney. To the north, Warden is a small residential and holiday village. The largest residential part is known as Warden Bay with houses developed along unmade roads. The clay cliffs rise to the north at Warden Point, which is a visible landmark from the coast of mainland Kent.

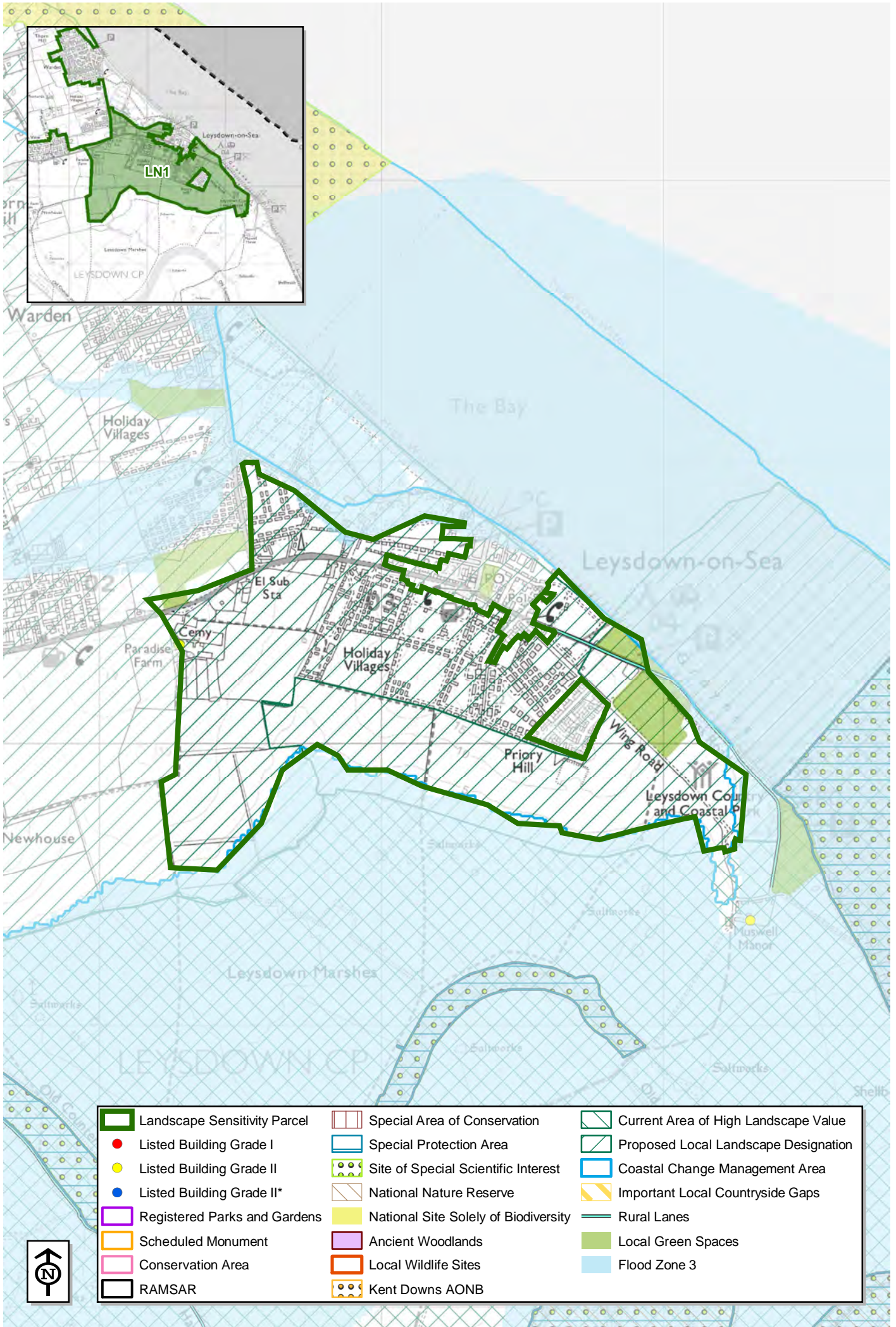
The settlement edge is divided into two areas for assessment of sensitivity to residential and employment development.

LN1 - the slightly raised area surrounding Leysdown-on-Sea which sits above Leysdown Marshes to the south.

LN2 - the undulating farmlands north of Leysdown Road which rise up to Thorn Hill and Warden Point surrounding Warden.

The small open area along the coast to the east of the settlement edge between Warden and Leysdown including caravan parks immediately fronting The Bay has been scoped out of the assessment due to flood risk (Environment Agency Flood Zone 3).

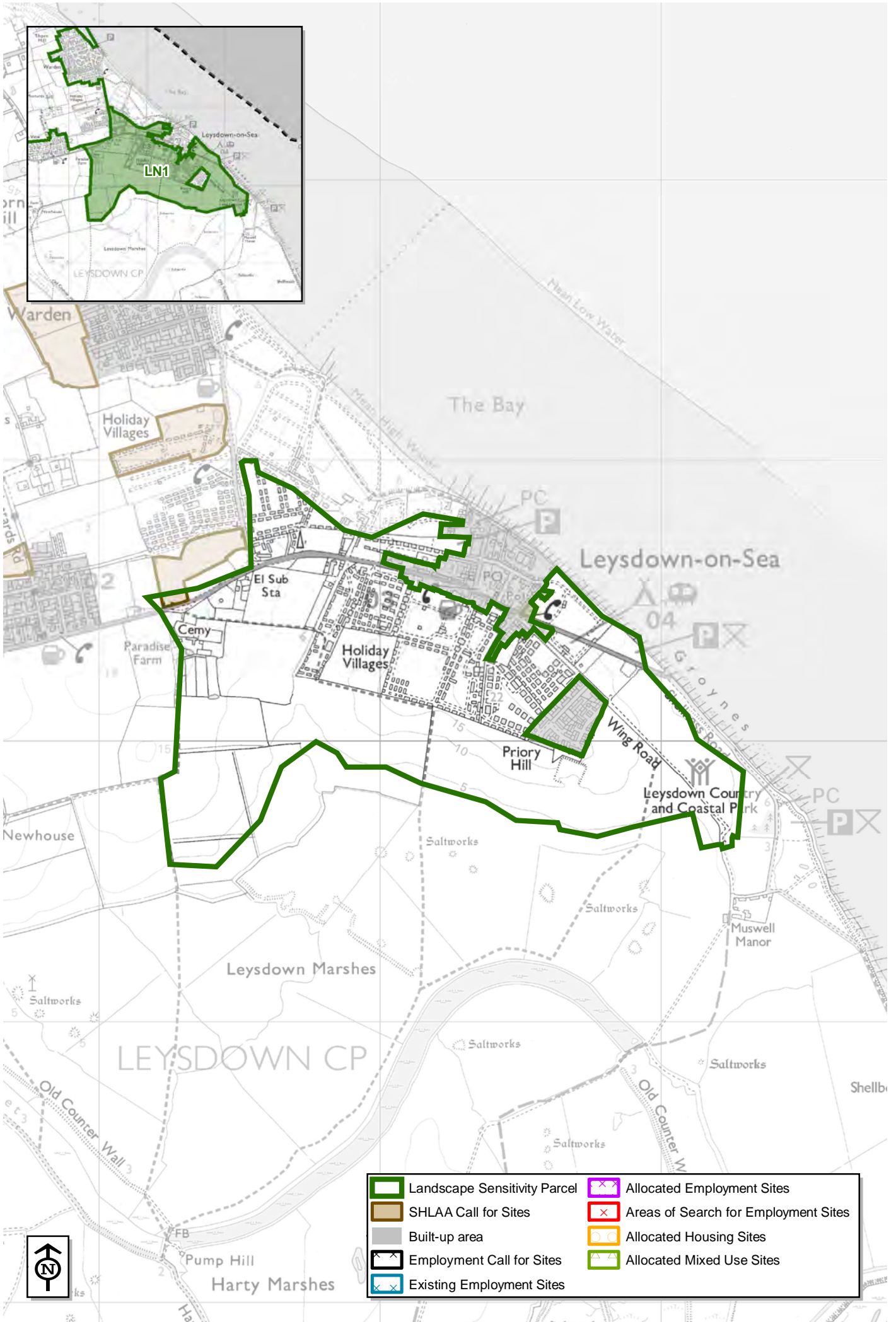
Leysdown and Warden Area LN1: Designations and Constraints



	Landscape Sensitivity Parcel		Special Area of Conservation		Current Area of High Landscape Value
	Listed Building Grade I		Special Protection Area		Proposed Local Landscape Designation
	Listed Building Grade II		Site of Special Scientific Interest		Coastal Change Management Area
	Listed Building Grade II*		National Nature Reserve		Important Local Countryside Gaps
	Registered Parks and Gardens		National Site Solely of Biodiversity		Rural Lanes
	Scheduled Monument		Ancient Woodlands		Local Green Spaces
	Conservation Area		Local Wildlife Sites		Flood Zone 3
	RAMSAR		Kent Downs AONB		



Leysdown and Warden Area LN1: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View from footpath looking north at the low density settlement edge at Priory Hill.



View from footpath looking east to holiday parks and paddocks forming settlement edge to west of Leysdown-on-Sea

Location and landscape character

The landscape area to the south, east, west and north of Leysdown-on-Sea lies partially within the Leysdown and Eastchurch Marshes character area (No.7) and partially within the Central Sheppey Farmlands (No.13). It is included here as one area as it all lies on slightly raised farmed/scrubby slopes rising away from the marshes, the southern area forming part of the Leysdown Country and Coastal Park.

Landscape value

The area is not currently designated, although the North Kent Marshes Area of High Landscape Value (Kent Level) lies immediately south of the assessment area.

The 2018 LLD review recommends that this designation is extended to the settlement edge as part of the North Swale (Sheppey) marshes LLD. This would result in a more robust boundary taking in the sloping areas framing the marshes forming part of the country park. The farmland area to the west of the settlement is not within this designation.

Assessment Criterion

Sensitivity description

Topography and scale

The area has a gently sloping and slightly undulating topography, descending to the marshes. It is medium scale formed of scrubby land and part of the golf course at Leysdown Country and Coastal Park, plus larger scale arable fields west of Leysdown along with some smaller scale paddocks at Paradise Farm and the approach along Leysdown Road.

Natural character

There are no nature conservation designations (national or local) present within the area. The area is partly low scrubby grassland and forms a backdrop to the designated marshland landscapes located to the south, including The Swale National Nature Reserve.

Sense of time depth / historic character

The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by a mix of rectilinear and parliamentary type enclosures. Paradise Farmhouse on the western boundary is a Grade II Listed building.

Visual character

Priory Hill provides some long views to the Swale/Thames Estuary and associated marshland landscapes with wind turbines. The open character allow views to the extensive caravan sites and holiday parks which extend around the southern and western settlement edges of Leysdown. There are glimpses of the sea on the approach to Leysdown.

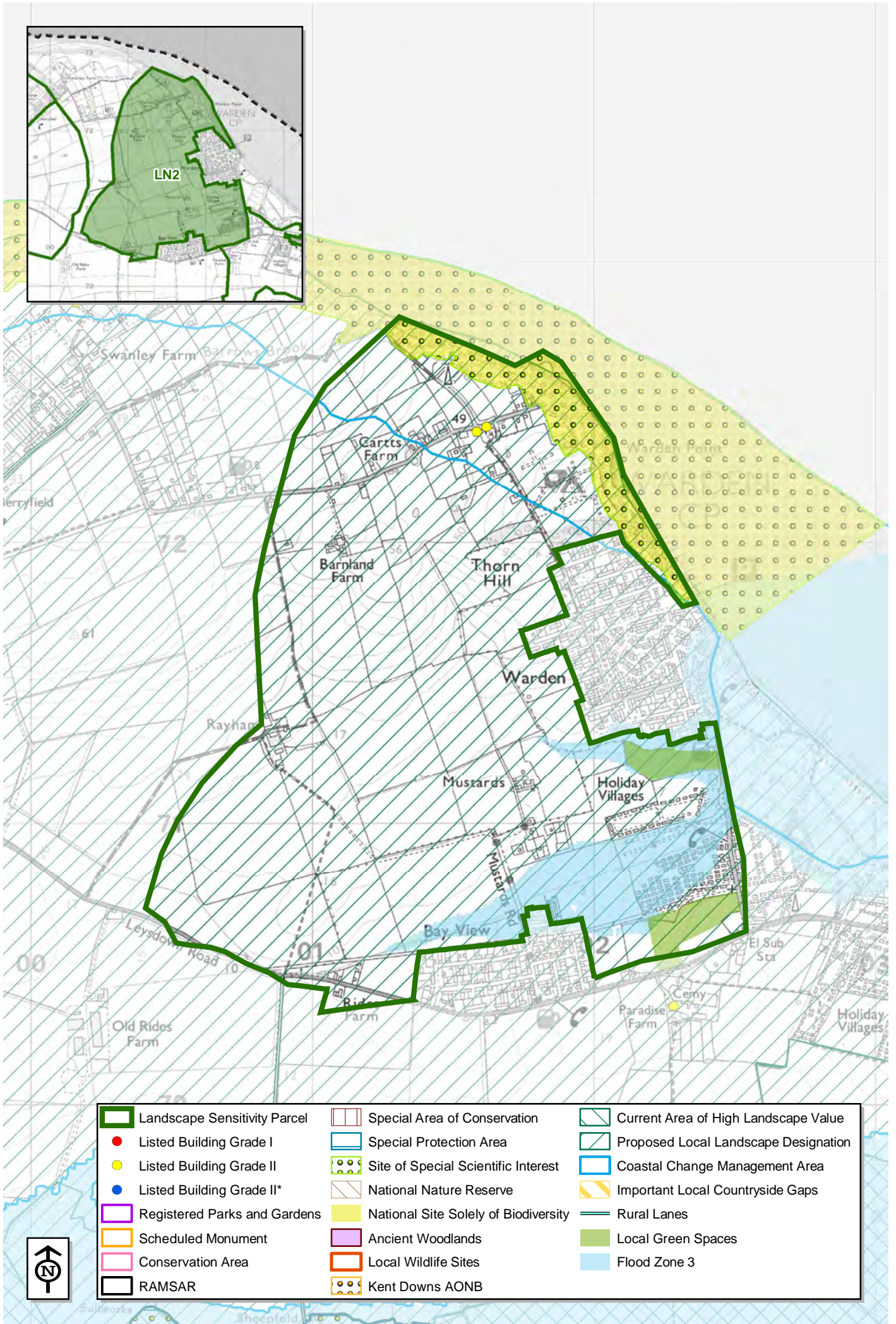
Perceptual and experiential qualities	Priory Hill and Leysdown Country and Coastal Park have a more natural and tranquil character plus associations with the marshland landscapes to the south. The Country Park is an important recreational resource, including the golf course. There are a number of footpath links south of Leysdown to the Marshes. Elsewhere the landscape is mainly arable fields set between areas of development and caravan parks and therefore has a moderate sense of rural character
Character and setting of existing settlement	The edge of Leysdown is poorly integrated with extensive holiday park/caravan site and a small area of bungalow development at Priory Hill. The lower slopes of Priory Hill provide an important open setting to Leysdown, descending to the marshland landscapes to the south. On the approach to Leysdown from the west horse paddocks are prominent in the landscape creating a slightly degraded setting, although offering glimpses of the sea beyond the development. There is a relatively small open gap between the development at Bay View and the holiday villages.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
<p>The landscape has a gently undulating landform, moderate sense of rural character with limited time depth and semi natural habitats with some modern human influences, varying visual prominence and enclosure. These attributes, in combination indicate a low-moderate overall sensitivity to future change from residential development. There is potential for development to enhance the settlement edge and integration.</p> <p>The settlement edge is considered to be of moderate sensitivity to employment development. Development of greater bulk/height would potentially breach sensitive skylines particularly in views from the lower lying marshes.</p> <p>Spatial variations in sensitivity within the area: The area forming the slopes at Priory Hill is more sensitive due to its role in the setting of the marshes, visual prominence and recreational use. This area south and east of the settlement boundary is recommended for inclusion in the North Swale (Sheppey) marshes LLD.</p>				

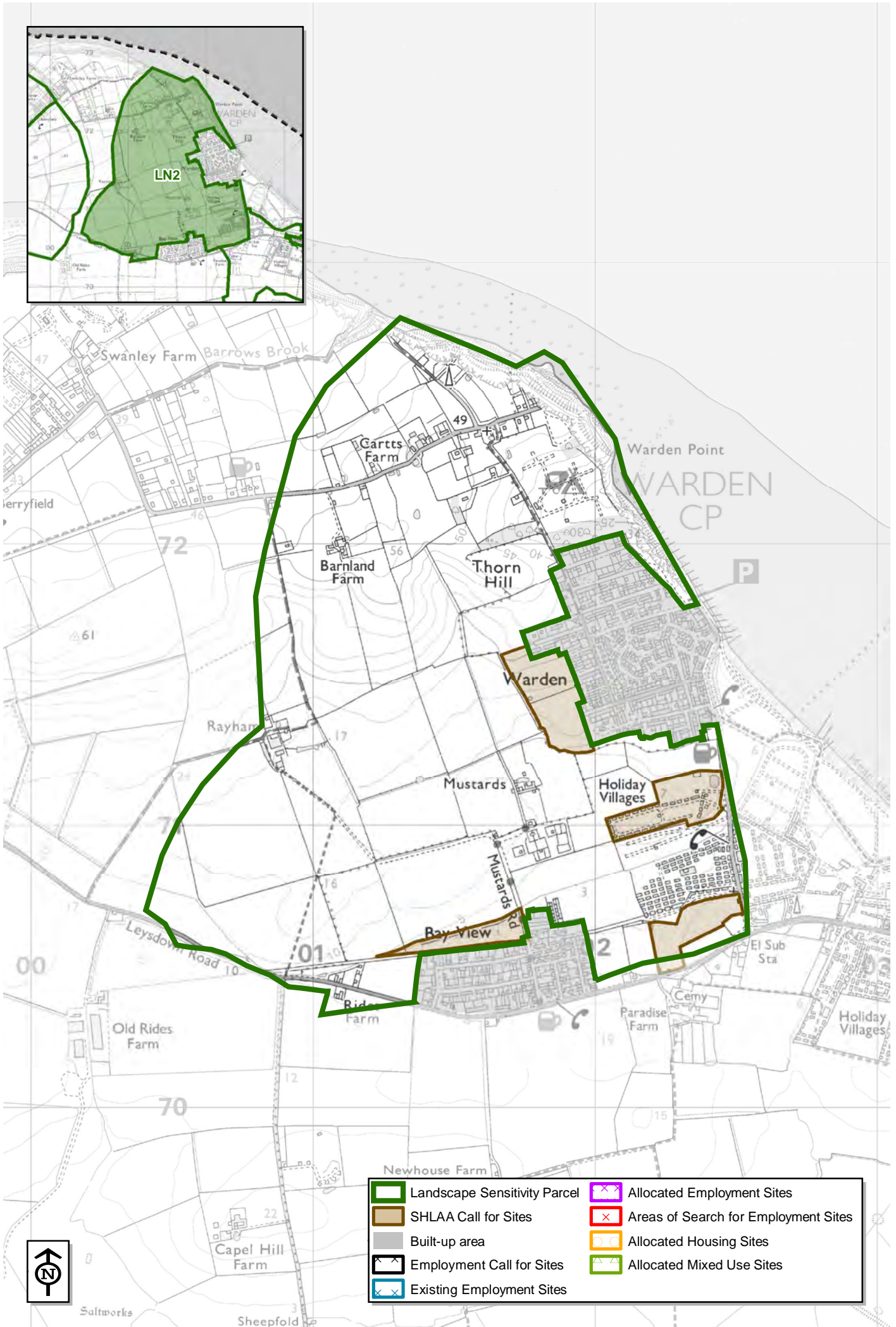
Guidance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal. • Conserve and reinforce the existing network of hedgerows which provide a degree of landscape structure particularly in the area to the west of Leysdown. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. • Maintain and enhance the well-integrated edges of the settlement so that development is not generally visible from the surrounding rural landscape. Avoid urban style boundaries/fencing and use native tree and hedgerow planting to provide screening. • Seek opportunities for landscape enhancement of the paddock/equestrian landscape through boundary restoration, sward management and sensitive location of associated buildings.

- Manage the grassland as scrub at Priory Hill in association with the Country Park to form a natural 'setting' on the edge of the settlement and marshes.
- Avoid any development onto the slopes at Priory Hill south of Leysdown.
- Consider opportunities to further integrate and enhance the settlement edges including the edges of holiday villages/caravan sites.
- Enhance the approach to Leysdown and maintain open gaps and glimpses to the sea beyond.
- Maintain the low rise, low density 'seaside' resort character of the settlement.

Leysdown and Warden Area LN2: Designations and Constraints



Leysdown and Warden Area LN2: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View looking north east to holiday parks and edge of Warden with rising topography of Thorn Hill.



View of the settlement edge of Warden

Location and landscape character	
<p>The landscape to the north of Leysdown and west of Warden lies within the Central Sheppey Farmlands (No.13). It comprises a combination of medium and large-scale arable fields plus areas of paddocks. Scattered settlement extends along the road at Cartts Farm to the north.</p>	
Landscape value	
<p>This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local).</p>	
Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	A distinctive topography rising to the relatively steep slopes of Thorn Hill north west of Warden which form a strong skyline over much of the area – part of the clay hills 'backbone' of Sheppey.
Natural character	The northern boundary is formed by the Sheppey Cliffs and Foreshore SSSI. The farmland area contains limited valued natural features or semi-natural habitats; these are restricted to the fragmented hedgerow network around the arable fields.
Sense of time depth / historic character	The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by medium regular fields (parliamentary type enclosures). Other than two Listed Buildings the landscape has a relatively modern character with intensively farmed arable land surrounding modern settlement.
Visual character	The higher land offers long views out to the coast and Thames Estuary as well as south over the lower lying areas of Sheppey, and has an open, exposed character.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	The higher land of Thorn Hill and along Warden Road has a more rural character with some sense of tranquillity enhanced by the long open views and links with the sea.
Character and setting of settlement	Warden has developed as an informal settlement of low density housing along un-adopted roads. Although it has abrupt edges it is relatively well contained within the landscape by existing hedgerows and the landform. Holiday parks are also reasonably well contained along the coast although form dominant features in views from the sea. Bay View is a low density bungalow development on Leysdown Road, with boundaries formed by back gardens.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The landscape has a distinctive topography which forms a strong skyline, moderate sense of rural character with limited time depth and semi natural habitats. These attributes, in combination with the absence of landscape designations, indicate overall a low-moderate sensitivity to future change from residential development. There is potential for development to enhance the settlement edge and integration. The settlement edge is considered to be of moderate sensitivity to employment development. Overall, the settlement edge has a low density informal character and absence of development within the wider rural area other than occasional houses. Any employment type development would only be appropriate in landscape terms on the lower slopes adjacent to Leysdown Road

Spatial variations in sensitivity within the area: The area forming the slopes at Thorn Hill is more sensitive due to its relative elevation and visual prominence. The area to the north at Warden Point is also important for its distinctive clay cliffs (SSSI), sea views and the more rural character inland.

Guidance

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Conserve and reinforce the existing network of hedgerows which provide a degree of landscape structure particularly in the area to the west of Warden. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Avoid any development onto the slopes at Thorn Hill which would be visually prominent in views.
- Consider opportunities to further integrate and enhance the settlement edges including edges of holiday villages/caravan sites. In this area shelterbelt and hedgerow planting will provide effective integration.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building styles, materials, scale and massing and includes sensitive lighting design in this rural area.
- Maintain the low rise, low density 'informal' character of the settlement and avoid coalescence with Leysdown to the south.
- Conserve and enhance the distinctive clay cliff at Warden Point.
- Consider the impact of any new development in relation to the sensitive landscapes of the Warden Point SSSI.
- Maintain the relatively rural character of Warden Road avoiding infill development in this area.

Settlement Area: Upchurch



Location and Description

The village of Upchurch is located in the west of Swale Borough between Lower Halstow and Rainham (Medway District) on the southern edge of the Medway estuary. Upchurch was a small, remote nucleated village centred around the church located on spur of elevated ground overlooking the estuary to the north. Small scale 20th century housing estates have expanded the settlement from its historic core. The housing is predominantly brick, although some has been rendered. Many of the properties no longer have a visual link with the estuary or marshes.

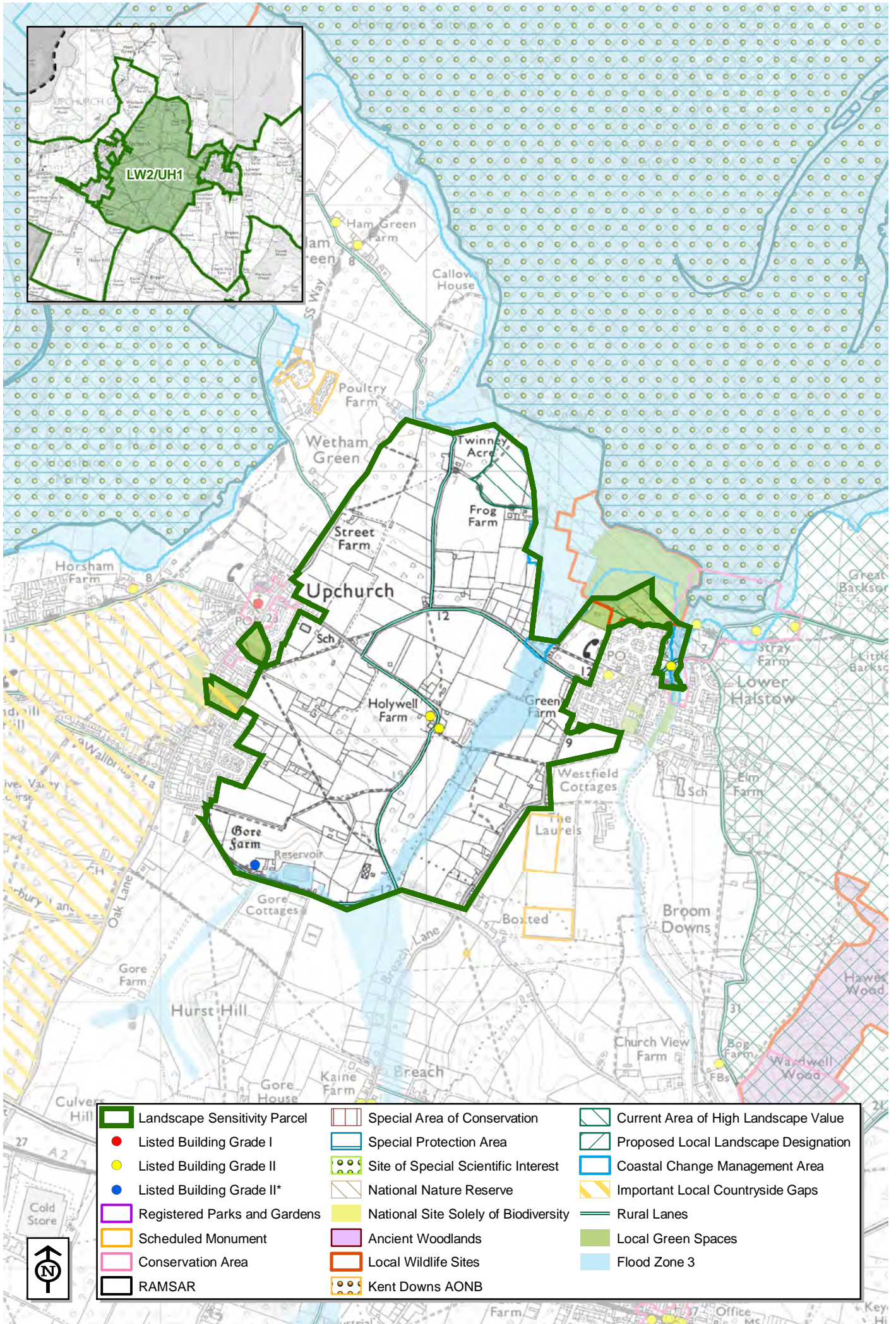
The settlement edge is divided into two areas for assessment of sensitivity to residential and employment development. These relate to the landscape character areas and physical boundaries such as roads and comprise:

UH1 - the enclosed farmlands, orchards and scattered houses to the east (see also LW2).

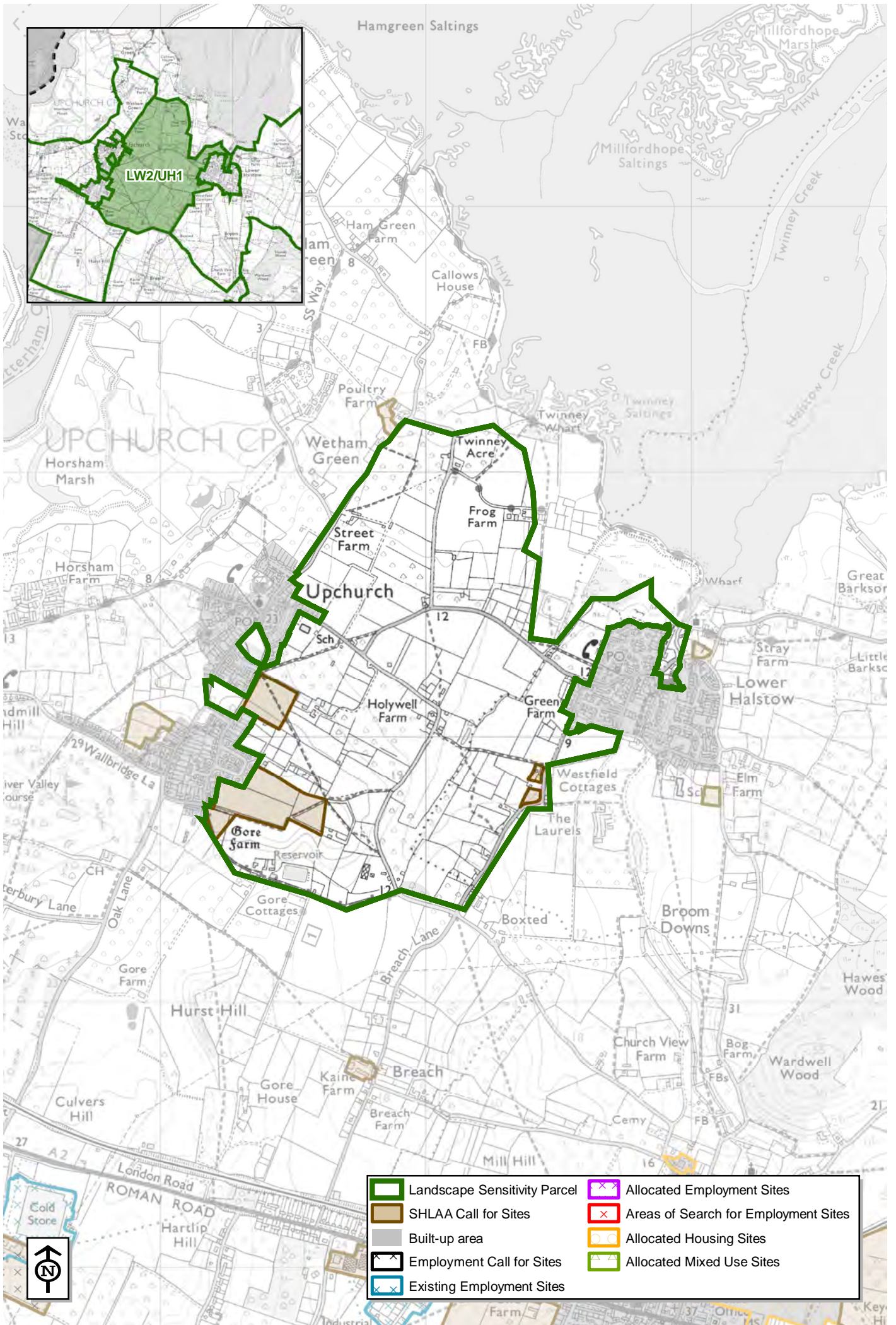
UH2 - the farmlands, orchard and golf course to the south and west.

Areas to the northeast and northwest have been scoped out of the assessment due to flood risk (Environment Agency Flood Zone 3) and nature conservation constraints (e.g. SSSI and SAC).

Upchurch Area LW2/UH1: Designations and Constraints



Upchurch Area LW2/UH1: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View west from Breach Lane



View north from Oad Lane

Location and landscape character

The landscape to the west of Lower Halstow lies within the Upchurch and Lower Halstow Fruit Belt landscape character area (No.32). It comprises a small-scale pasture and arable fields and some areas of commercial orchard, mainly dwarf/half standard fruit trees.

The area is also considered as LW2 in relation to sensitivities west of Lower Halstow.

Landscape value

The marshes north of Susans Lane are designated as part of the North Kent Marshes Area of High Landscape Value - Kent Level.

This area has been recommended in the 2018 study for designation as an LLD.

Assessment Criterion

Sensitivity description

Topography and scale

This is a low-lying, relatively flat landscape, although there is some undulation south of Holywell Lane and around Gore Farm. The landscape is generally small scale emphasised by the field pattern, hedgerows, shelterbelts and areas of orchard. The rows of fruit trees contained by shelterbelts provide a link to traditional Kent orchard landscapes.

Natural character

The area contains limited valued natural features or semi-natural habitats; these being restricted to the hedgerow and shelterbelt network and small traditionally managed orchards around farmsteads. A small section of the Lower Halstow Brickworks LWS and Local Designated Site of Biodiversity is in the northeast. There is no woodland within the area. The absence of significant valued natural features indicates lower sensitivity to development.

Twinney Lane, The Street and Holywell Lane are designated as Rural Lanes.

The landscape is separate from the Medway Estuary and Marshes SSSI which lies to the north/north east, however the area provides an important setting to the marshes.

Sense of time depth / historic character

The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by small fields with straight boundaries. These are of irregular form south of Holywell Farm and more regular and of Parliamentary origin in the east of the area. Orchards dominate in the west, closest to Upchurch.

The time-depth of the landscape relates predominantly to the continuity of agriculture and fruit cultivation within the area, together with the presence of

	scattered historic houses and farmsteads (including Listed Buildings) in the local vernacular styles (predominantly brick), pasture and traditional orchards. There has been some subdivision of fields since the 1898 OS six-inch map, particularly west of Breach Lane. Some caravans are present west of Holywell Lane which create a more modern intrusion.
Visual character	Some of the narrow lanes are enclosed by mature hedgerows, which in places contain mature standard oaks and limit views within and across the landscape. Where there are no hedgerows lining the lanes the open views are limited by shelterbelts, mature trees and areas of orchard, although there are some views east towards Callum Hill. There are also occasional views north to the marshes and Isle of Grain. There are few visually prominent features within the area, and very little inter-visibility from outside of this area due to containment by vegetation.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	The landscape has a rural character emphasised by its traditional land uses including orchards, and it contains dark night skies. The landscape contains few prominent modern human/built influences, although there are occasional views to the power station on the Isle of Grain. There is good access by PRoWs throughout the area.
Character and setting of settlement	The Upchurch Conservation Area extends to the settlement edge in the northwest of this area. Forge Lane leading into Upchurch from the east is largely visually contained by hedgerows but where views across the area are present, the area provides a rural setting to the Conservation Area. The original nucleated form of Upchurch has expanded both around its historic core at the Church of St Mary the Virgin, but has also extended south down Chaffe's Lane and the historic core now has a limited relationship with the surrounding countryside/marshes. The new housing is not generally well integrated into the landscape, although is low density and at low heights and therefore does not interrupt the skyline. The landscape provides a wider rural setting to Upchurch and contributes in providing a break and settlement gap between Upchurch and Lower Halstow. There are opportunities to provide better landscape integration of the settlement edge east of Upchurch.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
<p>The landscape has an undulating landform, low-moderate valued natural features and semi-natural habitats, a moderate sense of rural character with limited modern human influences, limited visual prominence and strong enclosure and moderate-high time depth with heritage assets. The elevation of Upchurch increases its sensitivity, although the settlement edge is not well integrated. These attributes, in combination with the local and regional landscape designations in the north and east of the area, indicate a moderate overall sensitivity to future change from residential development. The sensitivity to development is lower than the same area discussed in relation to Lower Halstow (LW2) as the settlement edge at Upchurch is less-well defined. There is an opportunity to create a better settlement edge for Upchurch by small scale development, although this should remain contained by Chaffe's Lane in the south and should not extend beyond 1 or 2 fields east to maintain the clear landscape gap between Upchurch and Lower Halstow.</p> <p>For the reasons noted above, and due to the slight elevation of the settlement the landscape is considered to have a moderate-high overall sensitivity to employment development as development taller than 2-3 storeys would have potential to break through above the trees and orchards, and further disrupt the settlement edge in this rural area.</p>				

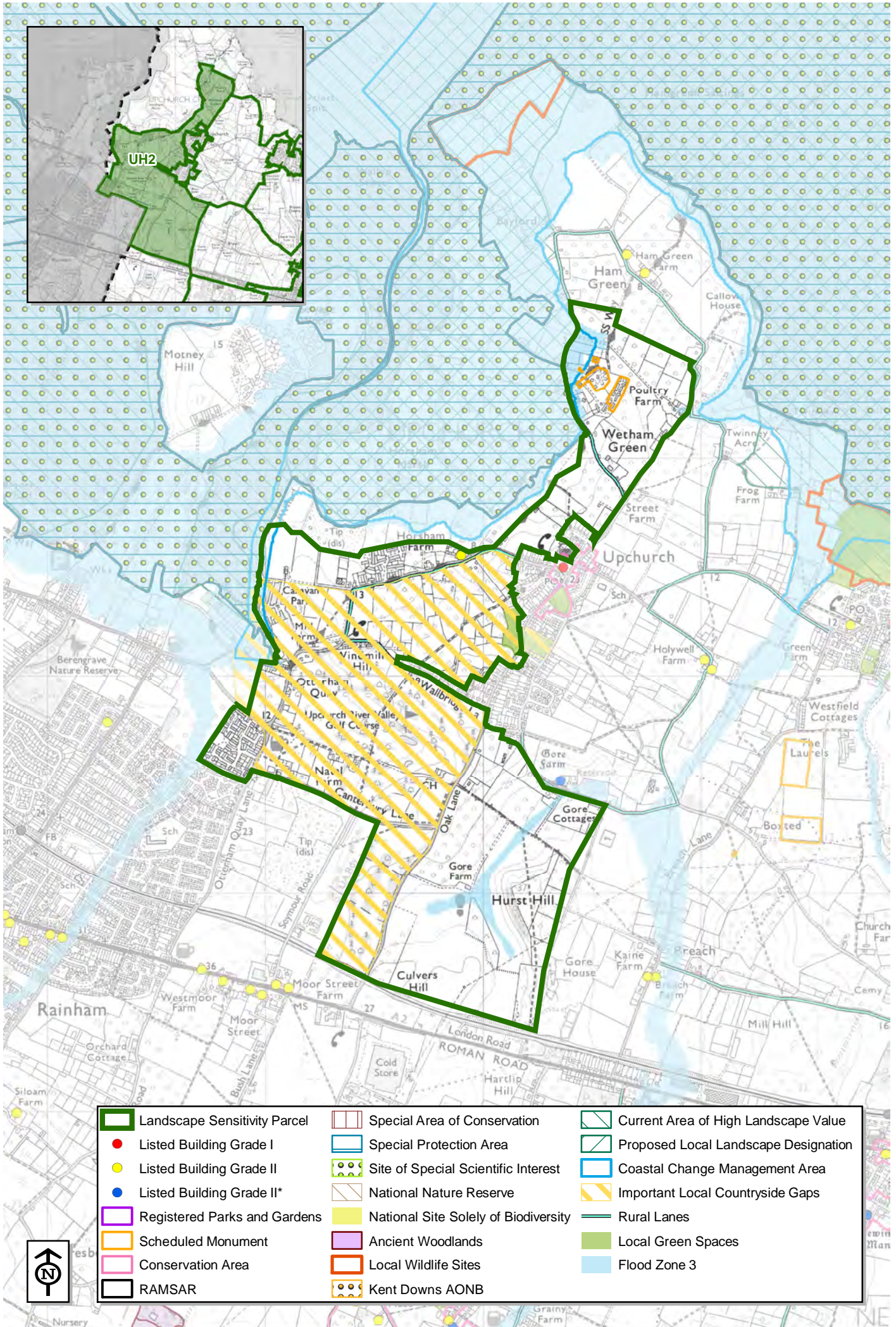
Key spatial variations are the area around Gore Farm in the south, which is of higher topographic sensitivity. Sensitivity increases to the north and east in relation to the marshes and edge of Lower Halstow.

Guidance

Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

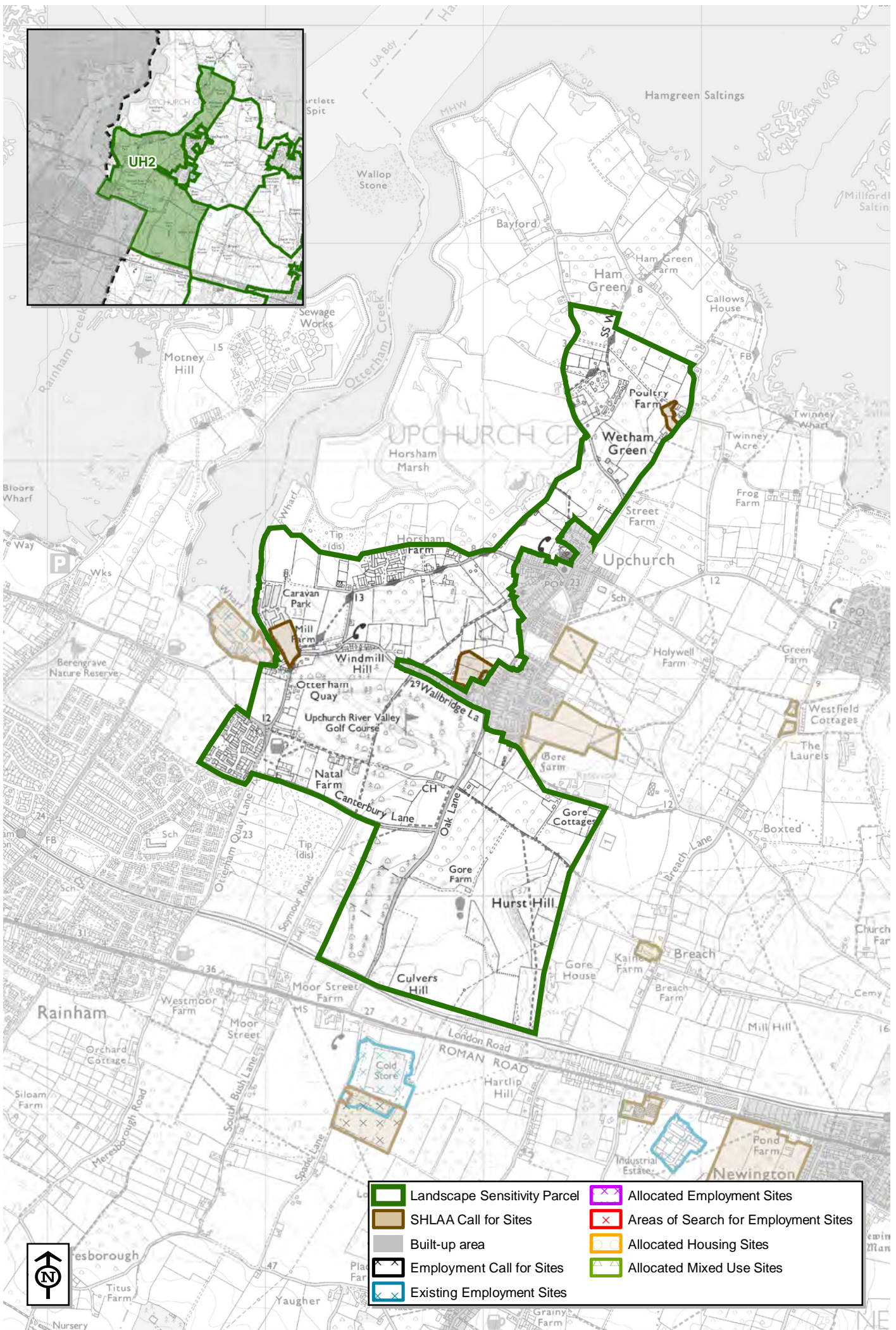
- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost, for example the traditionally managed orchards. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Maintain and enhance the well-integrated edges of the village so that development is not generally visible from the surrounding rural landscape. Avoid urban style boundaries/fencing and use native tree and hedgerow planting to provide screening.
- Seek opportunities for landscape enhancement of the paddock/equestrian landscape through boundary restoration, sward management and sensitive location of associated buildings.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building styles, materials, scale and massing and includes sensitive lighting design in this rural area.
- New development should seek to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: Twinney Lane, The Street and Holywell Lane.
- Maintain Upchurch as a distinct rural village, with landscape separation from Newington and Lower Halstow.
- Any development on the eastern edge of Upchurch should create a more well-integrated settlement edge, through hedges/shelterbelts and community orchard planting.
- Consider the impact of any new development in relation to the sensitive landscapes of the Swale to the north (SSSI, SPA, Ramsar, Area of High Landscape Value - Kent Level).

Upchurch Area UH2: Designations and Constraints



	Landscape Sensitivity Parcel		Special Area of Conservation		Current Area of High Landscape Value
	Listed Building Grade I		Special Protection Area		Proposed Local Landscape Designation
	Listed Building Grade II		Site of Special Scientific Interest		Coastal Change Management Area
	Listed Building Grade II*		National Nature Reserve		Important Local Countryside Gaps
	Registered Parks and Gardens		National Site Solely of Biodiversity		Rural Lanes
	Scheduled Monument		Ancient Woodlands		Local Green Spaces
	Conservation Area		Local Wildlife Sites		Flood Zone 3
	RAMSAR		Kent Downs AONB		

Upchurch Area UH2: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View east from Oak Lane towards Hurst Hill



View west from Saxon Shore Way along Horsham Hill

Location and landscape character

The landscape to the south and west of Upchurch lies within the Upchurch and Lower Halstow Fruit Belt landscape character area (No.32). It comprises fields of a variety of scales used as orchard, arable and grazing land and a golf course in the southwest. The area provides an important open break between Upchurch and the Medway Towns (Rainham)

Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local). To the northwest and northeast the North Kent Marshes are designated as part of an Area of High Landscape Value – Kent Level covering the Medway marshes. The same area is recommended in the 2018 study for designation as the North Kent Marshes – Medway Marshes LLD.

Assessment Criterion

Sensitivity description

Topography and scale

This is an undulating landscape, ranging from 5m AOD in the north and west to 37m AOD along Oak Lane and at Hurst Hill in the south. The landscape scale is generally small, and although the Upchurch River Valley Golf Course west of Oak Lane, and east towards Hurst Hill, has a larger field size, the associated planting keeps the scale small. Hedgerows, shelterbelts and the areas of orchard all emphasise the small scale nature of this landscape.

Natural character

The landscape contains limited valued natural features or semi-natural habitats; these are restricted to the hedgerow and shelterbelt network and traditionally managed orchards around farmsteads. Horsham Marsh and Ham Green outside of the area contain grazing marsh, and some of this priority habitat may extend into the edge of this area. There is a small area of woodland on Hurst Hill in the southeast, as well as trees within the Upchurch River Valley Golf Course west of Oak Lane. Wallbridge Lane, Horsham Lane and Poot Lane are all locally designated as Rural Lanes and enclosed by hedgerows and trees.

The absence of significant valued natural features indicates lower sensitivity to development.

Sense of time depth / historic character

The Swale HLC indicates that the area around Horsham Farm is characterised by small fields with regular straight boundaries. In the south around Hurst Hill the fields are predominantly bounded by tracks, roads and other rights of way. Orchards dominate to the immediate north, west and south of Upchurch, interspersed with small scattered settlements with paddocks as at Wetham Green.

The time-depth of the landscape relates predominantly to the continuity of

	<p>agriculture and fruit cultivation within the area, together with the presence of a historic farmstead at Horsham Farmhouse, two heavy anti-aircraft gun sites at Wetham Green designated as Scheduled Monuments, and traditional land uses of pasture and orchards.</p> <p>The Upchurch River Valley Golf Course and caravan park north of Otterham Quay Lane reduce the sense of time-depth in the west.</p>
Visual character	<p>There are occasional views across the marshes and to the sewage works in Rainham in the west of the area, and east of Oak Lane open views to Hurst Hill. In general however this is a visually contained and enclosed landscape, due to mature hedgerows along the lanes restricting views within and out of the landscape area. Some of the lanes are sunken e.g. Otterham Quay Lane, which further adds to the enclosed landscape.</p> <p>The low lying land, hedgerows, shelterbelts and areas of orchard all limit views into and out of the landscape area, and there is very little inter-visibility with other areas due to containment by vegetation. Electricity poles and wires are visible within this landscape, although there are no pylons present.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>The landscape has a rural character emphasised by its traditional land uses including orchards, and it contains dark night skies, particularly in the north. The west is affected by the proximity to the edge of Rainham.</p> <p>The caravan park and wharf in the west are more modern influences on the landscape, although these are largely screened from public view. Noise disturbance from the railway and A2 in the far south are also noticeable.</p> <p>There is good access by PRoWs throughout the area, including the regionally promoted Saxon Shore Way.</p>
Character and setting of settlement	<p>The Upchurch Conservation Area extends to the settlement edge in the northeast. However, the Conservation Area is contained by vegetation and therefore does not have a visual relationship with the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>The eastern settlement edge of Upchurch has extended from its original extent, and there is little vernacular beyond the use of brick. However, the rising topography on Horsham Hill combined with mature hedgerows means that the settlement edge is integrated into the landscape. This is also true in the south along Wallbridge Lane and Oak Lane. Woodruff Close, outside of the settlement boundary, is less well integrated into the landscape as is the modern development at Horsham Farm.</p> <p>This landscape contributes a rural setting to Upchurch, and provides an important settlement gap between Upchurch and Rainham and the Medway Towns to the west.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2 ha)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Class Use B, light industrial)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
<p>The landscape has an undulating landform, moderate sense of rural character with a few modern human influences, low-moderate time-depth and heritage assets, limited valued natural features and semi-natural habitats, a reasonably well-integrated settlement edge and is visually contained by mature vegetation. There is an opportunity to create a better settlement edge for Upchurch by small scale development. This should generally be not more than one field in depth and should avoid linear expansion along roads e.g. towards Horsham Farm, and should retain the distinction between Iwade and the Medway Towns (Rainham). These attributes, in combination with the absence of landscape</p>				

designations, indicate a moderate overall sensitivity to future change from residential development.

For the reasons noted above the landscape is considered to have moderate-high sensitivity to employment development. Any development of greater height or bulk than 2-3 storey residential development would have the potential to break the skyline, even in this enclosed and visually contained landscape.

Key spatial variations are found in the west of the area, which is affected by modern development and proximity to Rainham impacting on tranquillity and rural character. While this may be of lower sensitivity for these reasons it also raises the importance of this area as a rural gap. The area east of Oak Lane has a more rural character, and there are views up to Hurst Hill, increasing its sensitivity.

Guidance

Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost, for example the traditionally managed orchards. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Maintain and enhance the well-integrated edges of the village so that development is not generally visible from the surrounding rural landscape. Avoid urban style boundaries/fencing and use native tree and hedgerow planting to provide screening.
- Seek opportunities for landscape enhancement of the paddock/equestrian landscape through boundary restoration, sward management and sensitive location of associated buildings.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building styles, materials, scale and massing and includes sensitive lighting design in this rural area.
- New development should seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: Wallbridge Lane, Horsham Lane and Poot Lane.
- Any new development should not compromise the Important Local Countryside Gap between Upchurch and Rainham in the west.
- Any development on the western edge of Upchurch should create a more well-integrated settlement edge, through hedges/shelterbelts and community orchard planting.
- Maintain Upchurch as a distinct rural village and its separation from Rainham and Lower Halstow.
- Consider the relationship of any development in views to and from the marshes/estuary to the north.
- Consider the impact of any new development in relation to the sensitive landscapes of the Swale to the north (SSSI, SPA, Ramsar, Area of High Landscape Value (Kent Level)).

Settlement Area: Lower Halstow



Location and Description

The village of Lower Halstow is located in the west of Swale Borough, on the southern shore of the Medway estuary to the east of Upchurch. The original settlement consisted of St Margaret of Antioch church separated from a small number of houses along The Street. The majority of the residential development was built in the mid-late 20th century, and is predominantly one or two storey low density suburban development, built from brick.

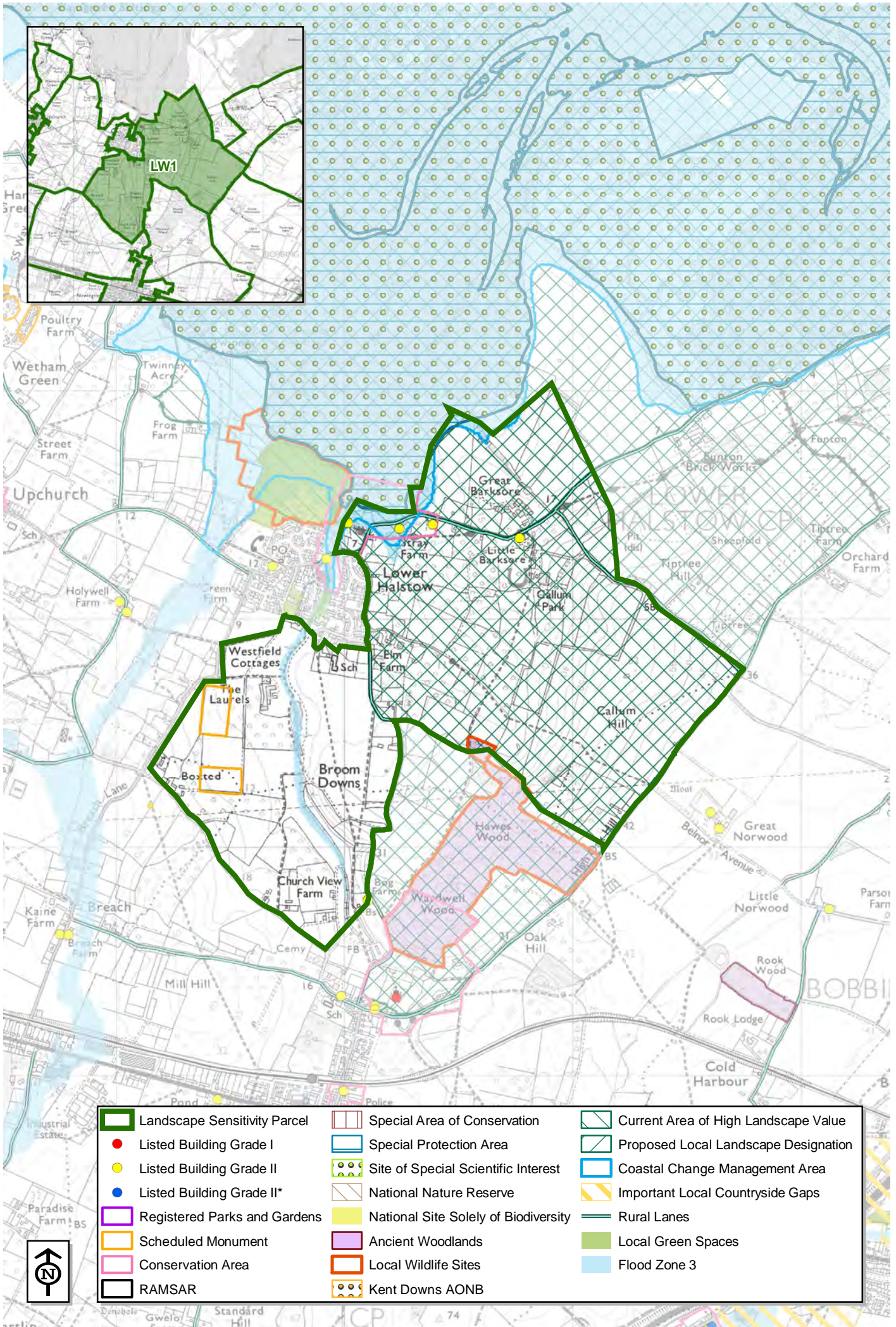
The settlement edge is divided into two areas for assessment of sensitivity to residential and employment development. These relate to the landscape character areas and physical boundaries such as roads and comprise:

LW1 - the enclosed farmlands and orchards to the east and south.

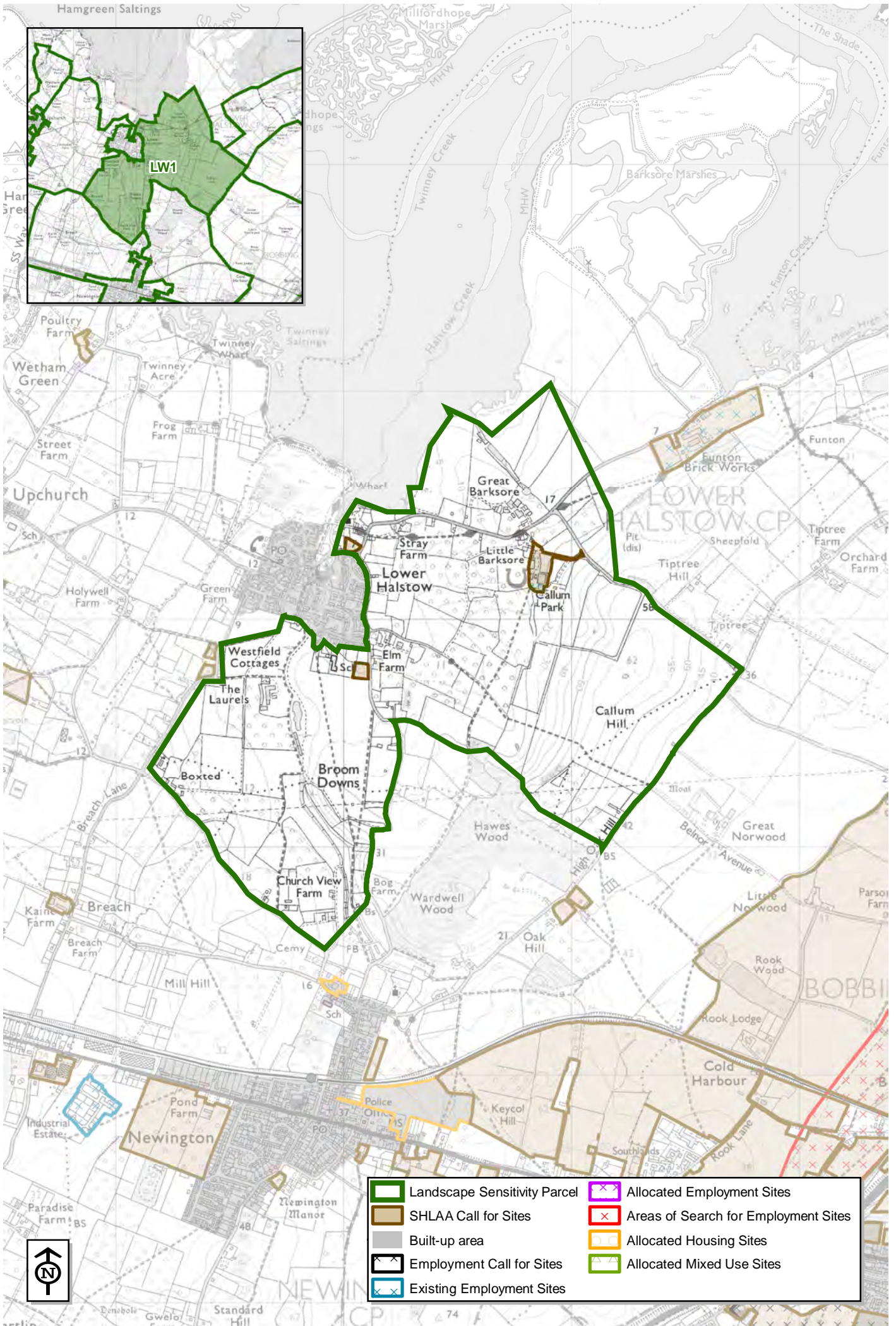
LW2 – the enclosed farmlands, orchards and scattered houses to the west and south (see also UH1).

Areas beyond the northern settlement edge have been scoped out of the assessment due to flood risk (Environment Agency Flood Zone 3) and nature conservation constraints (SSSI and SAC).

Lower Halstow Area LW1: Designations and Constraints



Lower Halstow Area LW1: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



Paddock on rising slopes east of edge Lower Halstow



Halstow Creek and southern edge of Lower Halstow including new urban fencing and paddocks

Location and landscape character

The landscape to the east and south-east of Lower Halstow lies within the Upchurch and Lower Halstow Fruit Belt landscape character area (No.32). It comprises a combination of predominantly arable fields and areas of commercial orchards and horticulture.

Landscape value

The area east of Vicarage Lane/Wardwell Lane is designated as an Area of High Landscape Value (Swale Level), and the marshes north of Raspberry Hill Lane are part of the North Kent Marshes Area of High Landscape Value (Kent Level).

The same areas are recommended in the 2018 study for designation as the Lower Halstow Iwade Ridge LLD and North Kent Marshes – Medway Marshes LLD respectively.

Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	<p>An undulating area ranging from near sea level in the north at the marshes to 30m AOD in the east, towards Callum Hill (outside of the area). The Halstow Creek cuts a steep sided valley to the west of Broom Downs running north to the estuary at Halstow.</p> <p>The area contains small-medium sized fields. The small scale is emphasised by the network of mature hedgerows, orchards and shelterbelts throughout the landscape which enclose the rural lanes (such as at Wardwell Lane). The landscape has been partially opened up with horse paddocks and is also more open in elevated area at Broom Downs and there are some long views out across the marshes and creeks.</p>
Natural character	<p>There are limited natural features/semi-natural habitats; these are restricted to priority habitat grazing marsh in the north and the hedgerow, mature tree and shelterbelt network. The area contains some areas of small-scale orchard, although some of these have been converted to grazing land or arable farmland/paddocks on slightly higher elevations. There is no woodland within the area.</p> <p>Wardwell Lane and Raspberry Hill Lane are designated as Rural Lanes.</p> <p>This landscape area provides an important setting/connection to the Medway Estuary and Marshes SSSI, which lies to the north.</p>
Sense of time depth / historic character	<p>The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by small-medium Parliamentary type enclosures with straight boundaries, with an area of small rectilinear with wavy boundaries in the south. Small areas of orchard are found to</p>

	<p>the east and south, although many have now been lost to a more open equestrian landscape.</p> <p>The Lower Halstow Conservation Area extends into this area alongside the creek and this area provides a rural setting for the historic settlement and waterside. It also includes Grade II listed buildings Stray House, Stray Cottages (timber-framed, characteristically Kentish) and Little Barksore Farmhouse. There are two Romano-British Scheduled Monuments around Boxted.</p>
Visual character	<p>Some of the narrow lanes are enclosed by mature hedgerows, which in places contain mature standard oaks and limit views within and across the landscape. Where there are no hedgerows lining the lanes there are open views to the east, limited by the wooded hills of Wardwell Wood/Hawes Wood and Callum Hill. There are a number of mature trees and areas of orchard, which provide further visual containment. In the north there is good visual inter-visibility with Lower Halstow wharf, Halstow Creek and the wider marshes.</p> <p>A line of electricity pylons runs east-west in the south of the area and form a visual feature on the skyline.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>The landscape has a rural character emphasised by its traditional land uses including orchards, and it contains dark night skies and is relatively tranquil particularly in association with long views out over the marshes and estuary, including the power station at the Isle of Grain. There has been some conversion of orchards to horse paddocks and grazing. The landscape contains few prominent modern developments, except for the electricity pylons in the south. There is good access by PRoWs throughout the area, including the regionally promoted Saxon Shore Way in the north.</p>
Character and setting of settlement	<p>Lower Halstow is a small nucleated village, and the eastern and southern settlement edges are generally well contained by the current road structure, with houses set back from the road. To the south a single line of properties and a school and playing fields form the boundary with arable farmland rising to Broom Downs with the narrow creek and right of way providing linkages into the wider landscape. The properties are low density and at low heights and generally well integrated.</p> <p>The landscape provides a rural setting to Lower Halstow linking it to the marshes and creeks to the north and contributing to the break and settlement gap between Lower Halstow and Newington to the south.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
<p>The landscape provides a rural area and setting to Lower Halstow and the creek/marshes with an undulating topography rising from and enclosing the lower lying nucleated creek side settlement including the setting for the Conservation Area. The area on the slopes east of the settlement is a locally designated landscape for these reasons. These attributes indicate a moderate-high overall sensitivity to residential development in relation to Lower Halstow. This sensitivity reduces to the west of the area in considering development in relation to the eastern edge of Upchurch (UH1).</p> <p>For the reasons noted above the landscape is considered to have a high sensitivity to employment development. Any development of greater height or bulk than 2-3 storey residential development would have an impact on the contained integrated small scale character of the settlement.</p>				

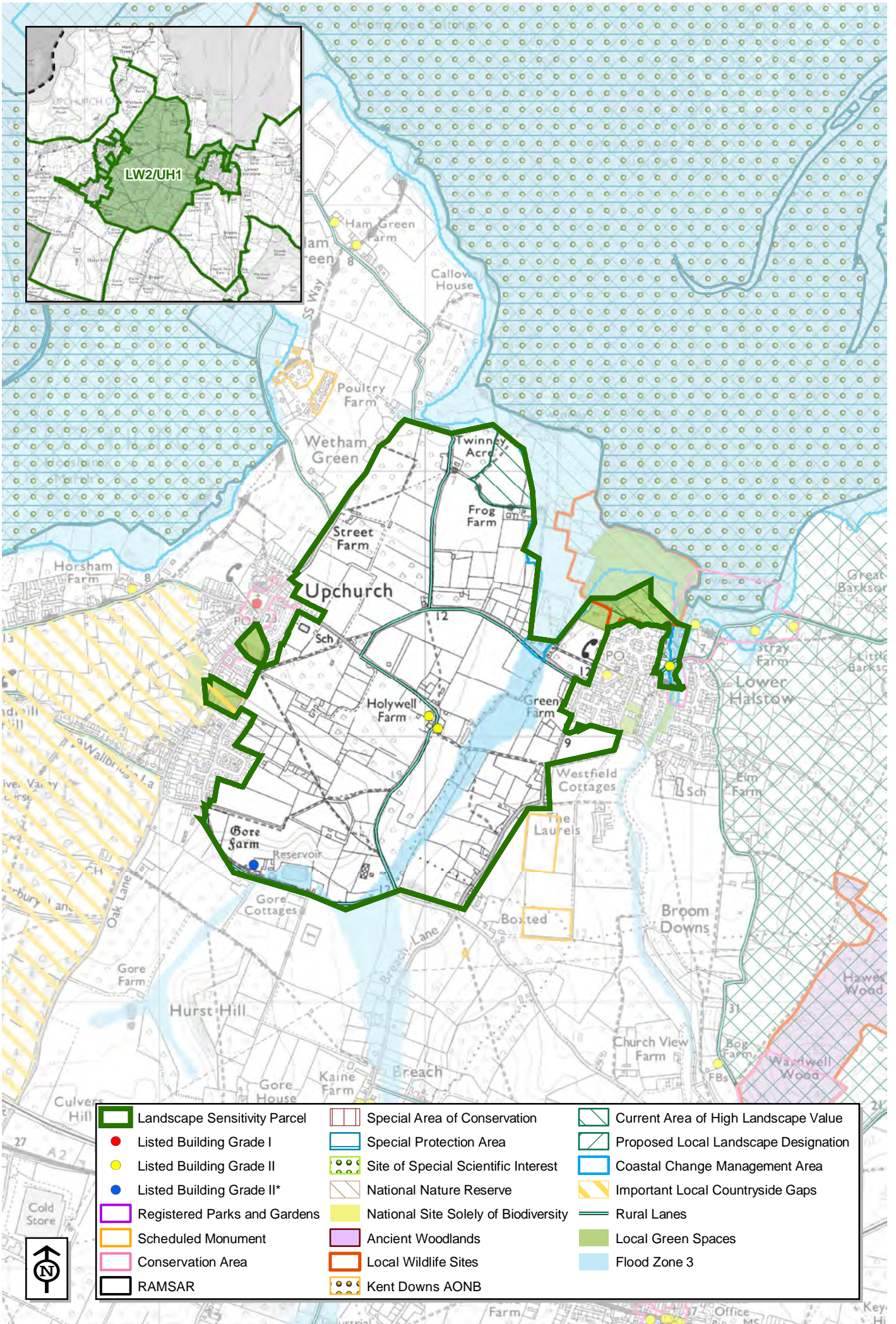
Key spatial variations are the area west of Wardwell Lane with the steep sided valley at Broom Downs which is of higher topographic sensitivity with potential for new development in this area to be very visible. The areas designated as Areas of High Landscape Value in the east and north are of higher value for their role in the setting of Lower Halstow and the marshes.

Guidance

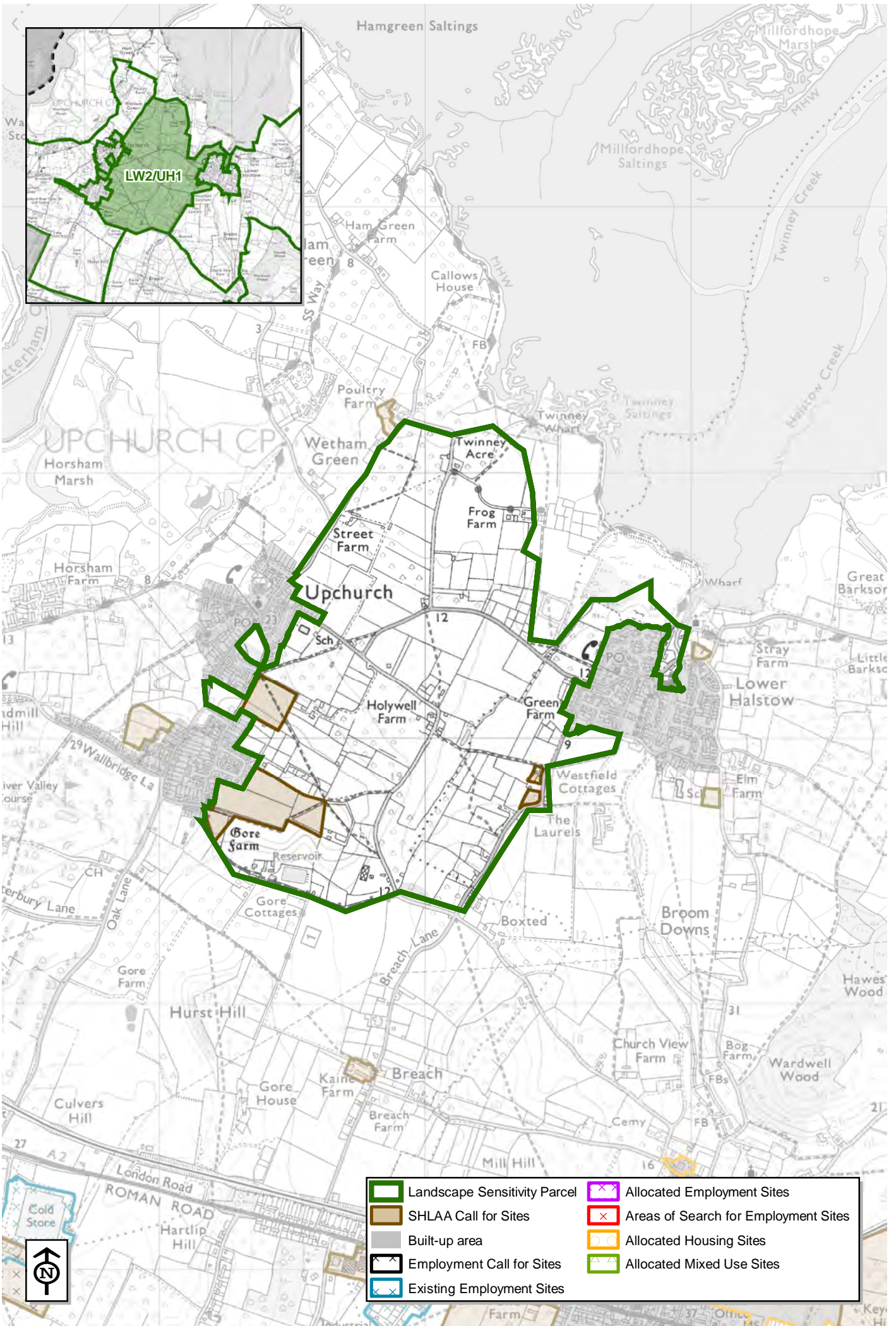
Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost, for example the traditionally managed orchards. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building styles, materials, scale and massing and includes sensitive lighting design in this rural area.
- Conserve the setting of the Lower Halstow Conservation Area including key buildings such as St Margaret of Antioch church and the relationship between the settlement and the creek/marshes.
- Maintain and enhance the well-integrated edges of the village so that development is not generally visible from the surrounding rural landscape. Avoid urban style boundaries/fencing and use native tree and hedgerow planting to provide screening.
- Seek to enhance the character of Halstow Creek as it runs southwards providing a link between the wider landscape, village and creek.
- New development should also seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: Wardwell Lane and Raspberry Hill Lane.
- Maintain Lower Halstow as a distinct small scale nucleated rural village and separate to Newington and Upchurch.
- Seek opportunities for landscape enhancement of the paddock/equestrian landscape through boundary restoration, sward management and sensitive location of associated buildings.
- Consider the impact of any new development in relation to the sensitive landscapes of the Swale to the north (SSSI, SPA, Ramsar, Area of High Landscape Value (Kent Level)) and the Area of High Landscape Value (Swale Level) in the east.

Lower Halstow Area LW2/UH1: Designations and Constraints



Lower Halstow Area LW2/UH1: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



	Landscape Sensitivity Parcel		Allocated Employment Sites
	SHLAA Call for Sites		Areas of Search for Employment Sites
	Built-up area		Allocated Housing Sites
	Employment Call for Sites		Allocated Mixed Use Sites
	Existing Employment Sites		

Representative photographs



View west from Breach Lane



View north east from Holywell Lane

Location and landscape character

The landscape to the west of Lower Halstow lies within the Upchurch and Lower Halstow Fruit Belt landscape character area (No.32). It comprises a small-scale pasture and arable fields and some areas of commercial orchard, mainly dwarf/half standard fruit trees.

The area is also considered as UH1 in relation to sensitivities east of Upchurch.

Landscape value

The marshes north of Susans Lane are designated as part of the North Kent Marshes Area of High Landscape Value (Kent Level). This area is included in the 2018 study for designation as an LLD.

Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	This is a low-lying, relatively flat landscape, although there is some undulation south of Holywell Lane and around Gore Farm. The landscape is generally small scale emphasised by the field pattern, hedgerows, shelterbelts and areas of orchard. The rows of fruit trees contained by shelterbelts provide a link to traditional Kent orchard landscapes.
Natural character	<p>The area contains limited valued natural features or semi-natural habitats; these being restricted to the hedgerow and shelterbelt network and small traditionally managed orchards around farmsteads. A small section of the Lower Halstow Brickworks LWS and Local Designated Site of Biodiversity is in the northeast. There is no woodland within the area. The absence of significant valued natural features indicates lower sensitivity to development.</p> <p>Twinney Lane, The Street and Holywell Lane are designated as Rural Lanes.</p> <p>The landscape is separate from the Medway Estuary and Marshes SSSI which lies to the north/north east, however the area provides an important setting to the marshes.</p>
Sense of time depth / historic character	<p>The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by small fields with straight boundaries. These are of irregular form south of Holywell Farm and of more regular Parliamentary origin in the east of the area. Orchards dominate in the west, closest to Upchurch.</p> <p>The time-depth of the landscape relates predominantly to the continuity of agriculture and fruit cultivation within the area, together with the presence of scattered historic houses and farmsteads (including Listed Buildings) in the local</p>

	vernacular styles (predominantly brick), pasture and traditional orchards. There has been some subdivision of fields since the 1898 OS six-inch map, particularly west of Breach Lane. Some caravans are present west of Holywell Lane which create a more modern intrusion.
Visual character	Some of the narrow lanes are enclosed by mature hedgerows, which in places contain mature standard oaks and limit views within and across the landscape. Where there are no hedgerows lining the lanes the open views are limited by shelterbelts, mature trees and areas of orchard, although there are some views east towards Callum Hill. There are also occasional views north to the marshes and Isle of Grain. There are few visually prominent features, and very little inter-visibility from outside of this area due to containment by vegetation.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	The landscape has a rural character emphasised by its traditional land uses including orchards, and it contains dark night skies. The landscape contains few prominent modern human/built influences, although there are occasional views to the power station on the Isle of Grain. There is good access by PRowS throughout the area.
Character and setting of settlement	Lower Halstow is a small nucleated village, and the western settlement edge is well contained by the existing road structure, with houses set back from the road and often hidden by mature hedgerows and other vegetation. The properties are low density and at low heights, and do not interrupt the skyline. This landscape provides a rural setting to Lower Halstow and contributes in providing a break and settlement gap between Lower Halstow, Upchurch and Newington to the south.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2 ha)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B, light industrial)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
<p>The landscape provides a rural setting to the small nucleated settlement of Lower Halstow and the creek/marshes plus separation from Upchurch. The west and south edge of Lower Halstow is well integrated and well contained within the rural landscape and any development here would be likely to be highly visible forming a stark new urban edge and closing the gap towards Upchurch. The landscape is therefore considered to have an overall moderate-high sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>For the reasons noted above the landscape is considered to have a high sensitivity to employment development. Any development of greater height or bulk than 2-3 storey residential development would have an impact on the contained integrated small scale character of the settlement.</p> <p>Key spatial variations are the area around Gore Farm in the south, which is of higher topographic sensitivity.</p>				

Guidance
<p><i>Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal

- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost, for example the traditionally managed orchards. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Maintain and enhance the well-integrated edges of the village so that development is not generally visible from the surrounding rural landscape. Avoid urban style boundaries/fencing and use native tree and hedgerow planting to provide screening.
- Seek opportunities for landscape enhancement of the paddock/equestrian landscape through boundary restoration, sward management and sensitive location of associated buildings.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building styles, materials, scale and massing and includes sensitive lighting design in this rural area.
- New development should seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: Twinney Lane, The Street and Holywell Lane.
- Maintain Lower Halstow as a distinct rural village, with landscape separation from Newington and Upchurch.
- Consider the relationship of any development in views to and from the marshes/estuary to the north.
- Consider the impact of any new development in relation to the sensitive landscapes of the Swale to the north (SSSI, SPA, Ramsar, Area of High Landscape Value (Kent Level)).

Settlement Area: Eastchurch



Location and Description

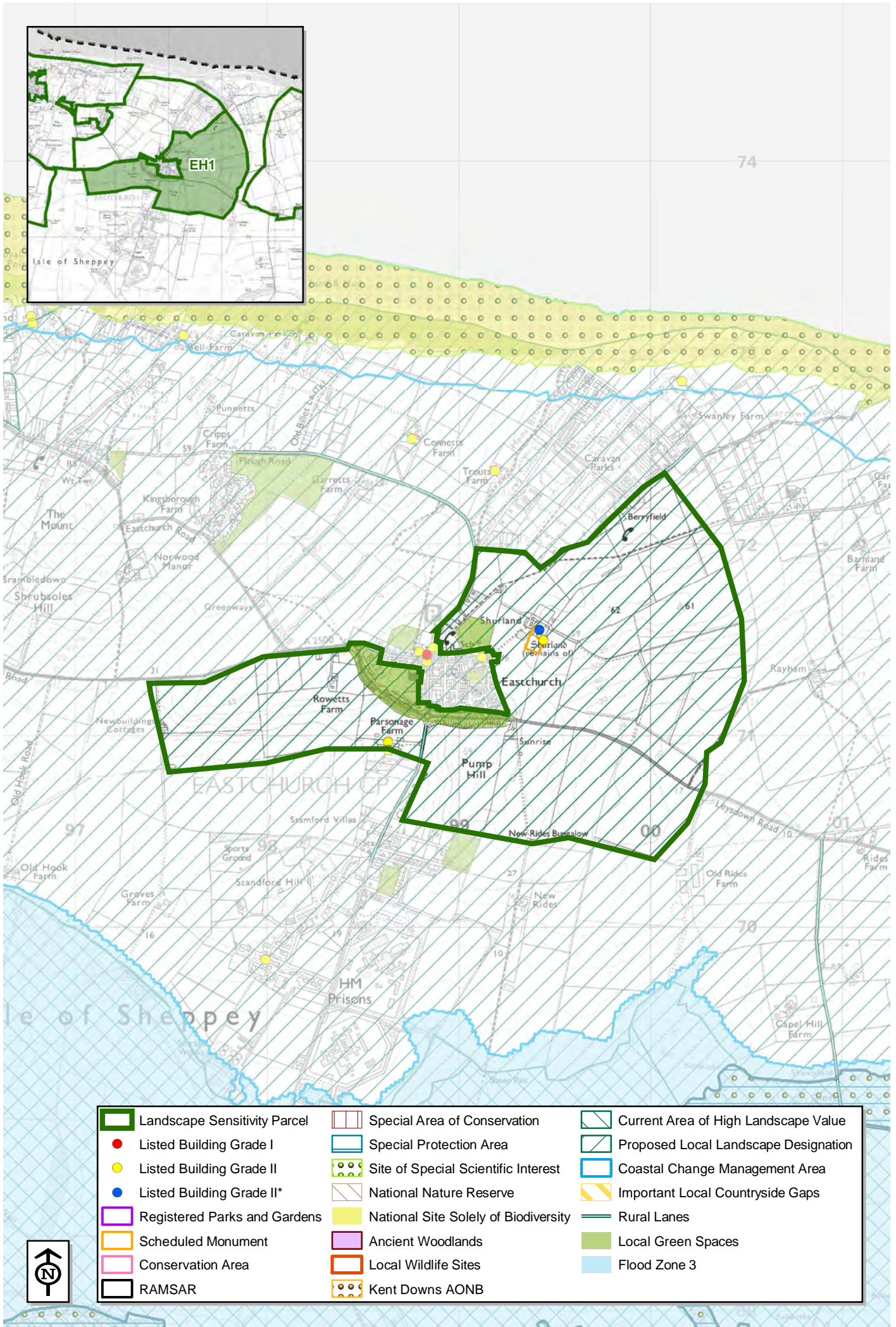
The large village of Eastchurch is located on the lower slopes of the clay ridge of central Sheppey. The settlement developed around the 'daughter' church east of Minster Abbey. Eastchurch has a long association with aviation, with Eastchurch airfield (now site of prison) the location of one of the first controlled flights in Britain. The village contains a historic core with a cluster of Listed Buildings centred around the church. It has expanded outwards with modern development including linear development along the A2500. The road to Leysdown now bypasses the village (B231) enclosing an area of open amenity land at Bunnybank which forms a setting to the village. The area to the west of the village is part of the Minster and Warden Farmlands (no. 16) and to the east the Central Sheppey Farmlands (no. 13)

The settlement edge is divided into two areas for assessment of sensitivity to residential and employment development. These relate to the landscape character areas and comprise:

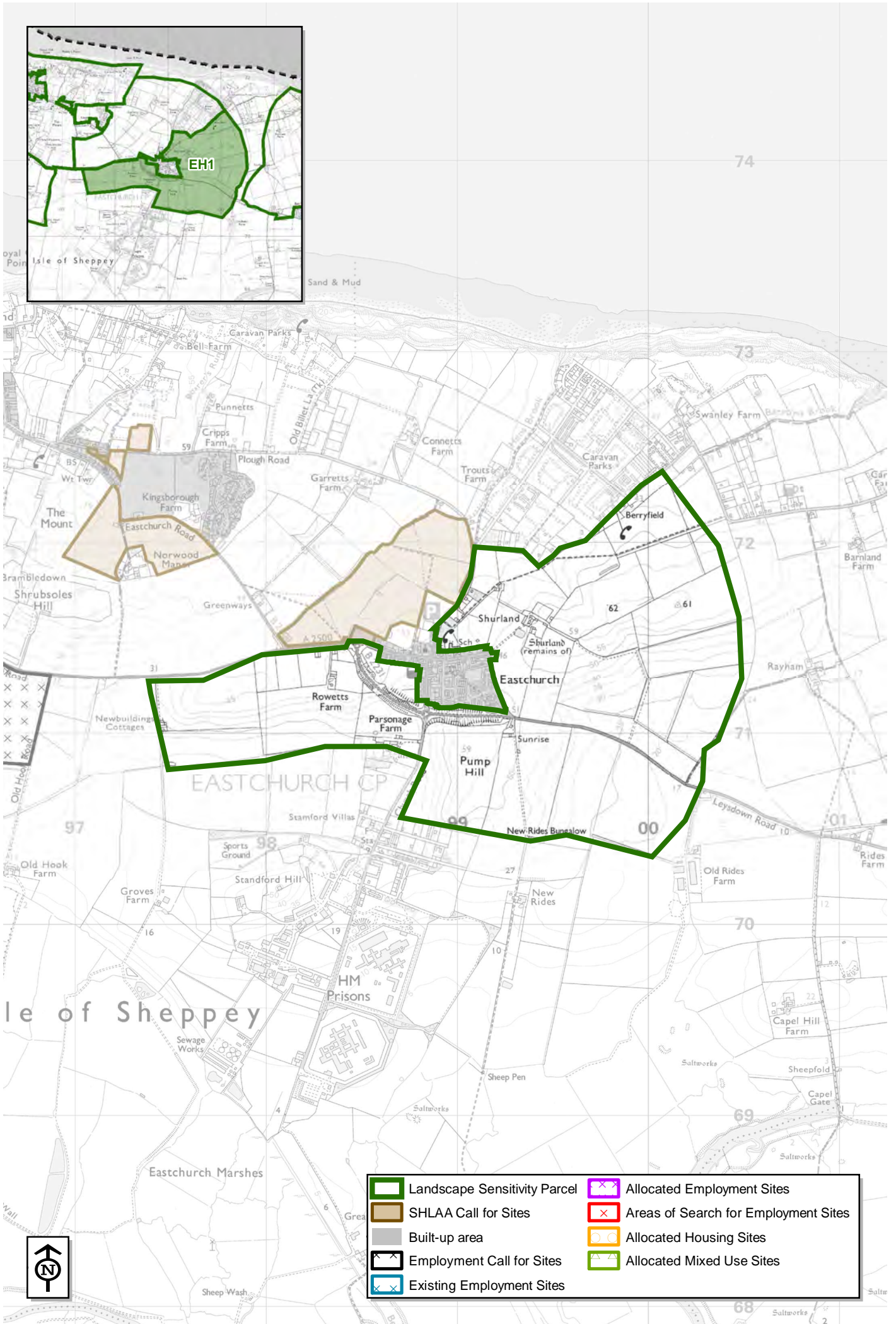
EH1 - the farmland on the ridge to the west.

EH2 - the farmland on the slopes to the south and east.

Eastchurch Area EH1: Designations and Constraints



Eastchurch Area EH1: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View from Bunny Bank of grazed open land forming setting to the village.



View of the abrupt eastern settlement edge at Eastchurch, including Shurland Hall.

Location and landscape character	
<p>The landscape area comprises the open arable slopes to the east and south of Eastchurch. It is within the Central Sheppey Farmlands landscape character area (No.13).</p>	
Landscape value	
<p>This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local).</p>	
Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	<p>The landscape has an elevated distinctive convoluted topography, forming part of the prominent clay ridge with slopes rising from the marshes in a series of hills with local high points of 60m and extending to the north coast cliffs. It is a medium scale landscape with regular fields, mainly in arable use.</p>
Natural character	<p>There is a limited network of valued natural features and semi-natural habitats with few hedgerow boundaries within the arable farmland. There are no nature conservation designations (national or local) present within the area, although the farmland is likely to have value for birds in relation to the marshland landscapes on the south of Sheppey.</p> <p>Church Road and Warden Road are designated as Rural Lanes.</p>
Sense of time depth / historic character	<p>The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by parliamentary type enclosures medium regular in size.</p> <p>Shurland Hall, Grade II* and a Scheduled Monument is a prominent building on the slopes at Eastchurch. It is part of the 16th century gatehouse of a medieval building lodge and has recently been restored. With its octagonal towers and battlements, Shurland is reminiscent of the great Tudor palace gatehouses at Hampton Court and St James's. It is known to have hosted Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn and associated with local myth and legend (Richard de Shurland and Grey Dolphin).</p> <p>Parsonage Farm is also Listed.</p>
Visual character	<p>The area has a distinctive visual character forming part of the clay ridge backbone across the northern part of Sheppey and containing an unusual convoluted topography. It forms part of the elevated backdrop to the marshes and the slopes</p>

	are visually prominent in views from the marshes and in wider views from Swale mainland.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	The area retains a relative rural character with a sense of tranquillity in places. The arable landscape is fragmented in parts and there are views to the more developed HM Prisons south of Eastchurch.
Character and setting of existing settlement	Eastchurch is relatively well contained within the landform. The eastern edge of Eastchurch is for the most part exposed with modern housing extending along the road joining open farmland, with school playing fields forming the northern edge and creating a more filtered buffer to farmland. To the south settlement is contained by the bypass. Here, an area known as Bunny Bank forms an area of informal open space sloping down from the village edge to the bypass and providing a well contained setting to Eastchurch.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The area has a complex landform which is visually prominent in relation to the lower lying marshes and in longer views, moderate sense of rural character with particular historic interest associated with Shurland (SM and Listed Building). For these reasons it is considered to have a moderate-high overall sensitivity to future change from residential development. It similarly has a moderate-high sensitivity to employment development. The settlement is currently well contained within the landform.

There is some spatial variation within the area. The south west edge of Eastchurch contains open land contained by the bypass- which serves as an open setting to the road and informal amenity space. The area east of Eastchurch is particularly sensitive in relation to the setting of the historic area at Shurland and the slopes to the south as at Pump Hill are more visually sensitive in relation to the marshes.

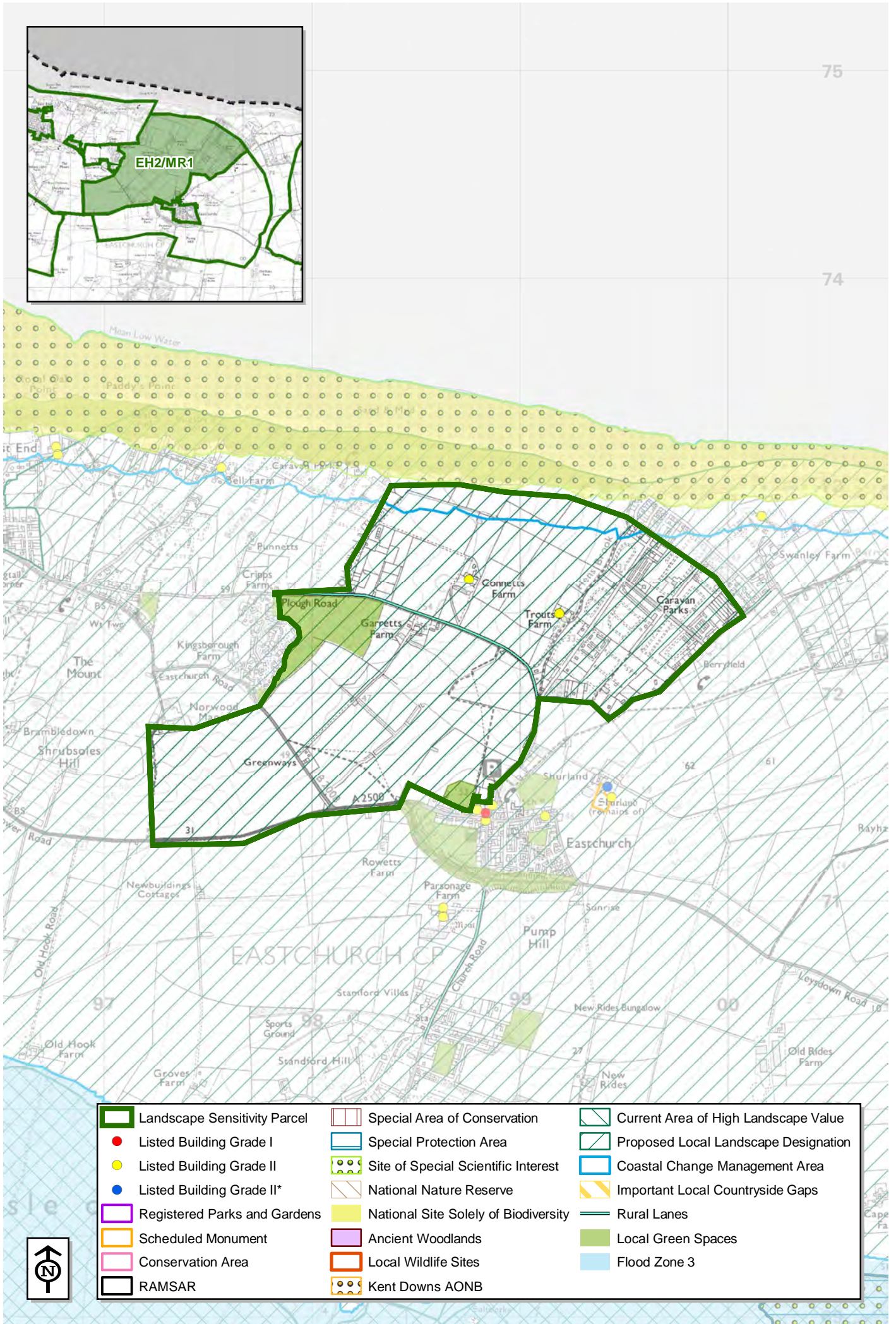
Guidance

Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

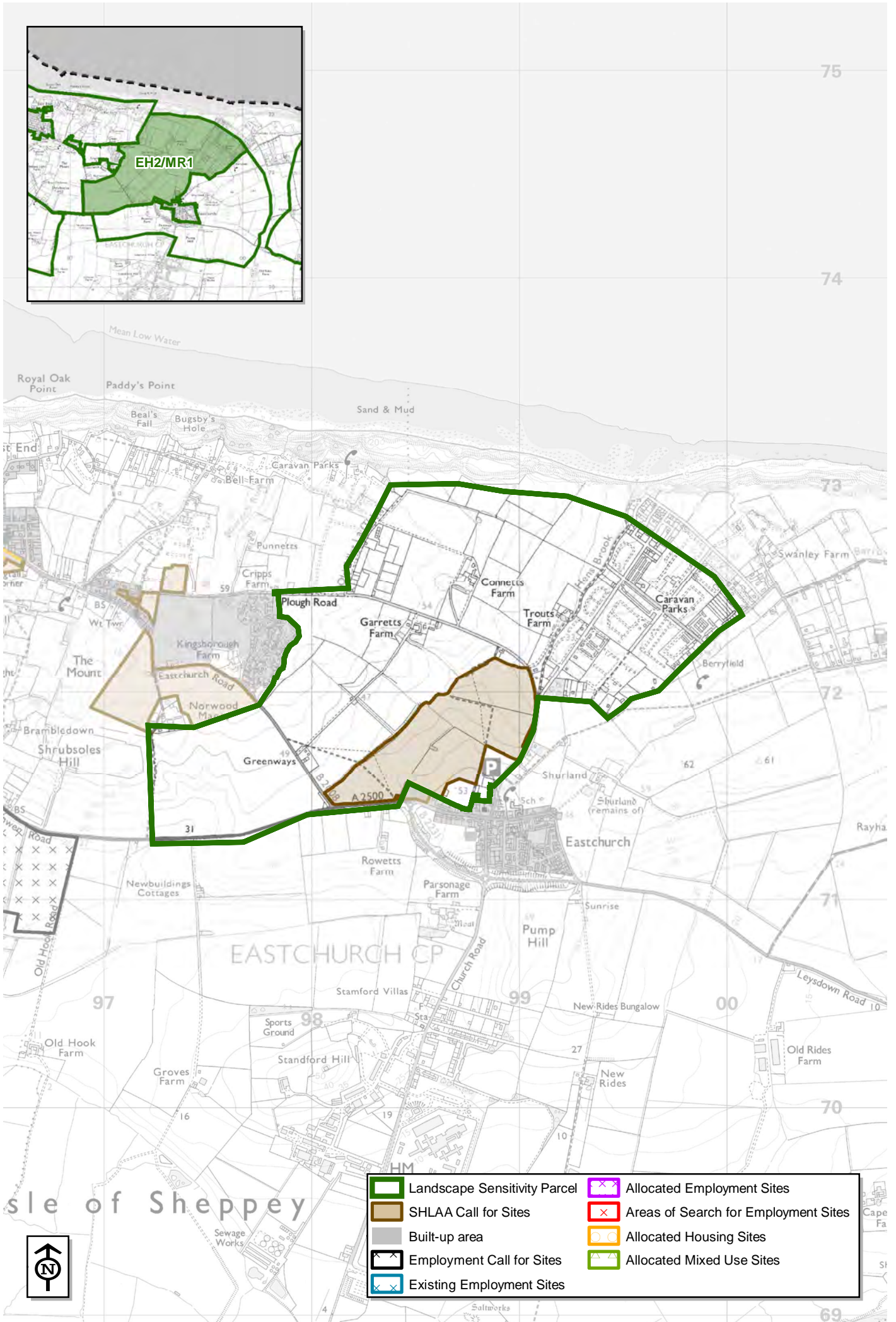
- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of hedgerows which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Conserve the open rural setting along the bypass and avoid any development spilling over the lower slopes to the south beyond the bypass (Pump Hill, Rowetts Farm) where it would be visually prominent.

- Any new development should conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of Church Road and Warden Road.
- Conserve the rural character and sense of openness of this ridge which forms a setting to the existing settlement of Eastchurch and to the marshes to the south and in longer views.
- Maintain the sense of Minster and Eastchurch as distinct rural settlements and avoid further linear development which would link the two areas including any linear expansion along the A2500.
- Conserve and reinforce/restore the network of hedgerows and seek to create a stronger landscape structure to integrate development using native woodland planting of copses and shelterbelts.
- Enhance the role of the arable farmland for birds in relation to adjacent marshland habitats including use of field margins and recreation of acid grassland where appropriate.
- Avoid tall structures on the visually prominent ridgeline.
- Conserve and respect the settings of the Scheduled Monument at Shurland Hall and Listed Buildings (farmhouses).
- Minimise the effect of night time lighting on more sensitive marshland landscapes to the south (albeit noting the lit prison developments in this area).
- Conserve and enhance the minor field ditches and brooks which cross this area.

Eastchurch Area EH2: Designations and Constraints



Eastchurch Area EH2: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View of paddocks along western edge of Eastchurch.



View of community woodland which has effectively enclosed new development at Kingsborough Manor.

Location and landscape character

The landscape area comprises the open arable slopes to the west of Eastchurch. It is within the Minster and Warden Farmlands landscape character area (No.16). It forms only a small edge of Eastchurch to the north west of the settlement. It is a medium-large scale open arable landscape and includes an extensive area of caravan park.

It is also considered as MR1 in relation to sensitivities east of Minster.

Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local).

Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	The landscape has an elevated undulating topography, forming prominent clay ridge with slopes rising from the A2500 and extending to the north coast cliffs. It is a medium scale landscape with regular fields, with some smaller scale paddocks. In some areas there is a strong sense of openness and long views.
Natural character	There is a limited network of valued natural features and semi-natural habitats with few hedgerow boundaries within the arable farmland. The northern boundary is formed by the Sheppey Cliffs and Foreshore SSSI. There are no nature conservation designations (national or local) present within the area, although the farmland is likely to have value for birds in relation to the marshland landscapes on the south of Sheppey. Plough Road is designated as a Rural Lane.
Sense of time depth / historic character	The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by parliamentary type enclosures medium regular in size. Connets Farm and Trouts Farm are both Grade II Listed Buildings.
Visual character	The area has a distinctive visual character forming part of the clay ridge backbone across the northern part of Sheppey. There is generally a very open character with long views, including north of Plough Road to the Thames Estuary and south to the Swale and mainland Kent. It forms part of the elevated backdrop to the marshes and the slopes are visually prominent in views from the marshes. Some areas along lanes are enclosed by higher hedgerows/shelterbelts.

Perceptual and experiential qualities	The area retains a relative rural character with long ranging and open views creating a sense of tranquillity in places. The arable landscape is fragmented in parts and there are some urban fringe elements.
Character and setting of existing settlement	The area adjoins the eastern edge of Eastchurch. It forms the rural setting of the small settlement with a relatively quick transition from the rural farmland to the historic settlement core around the church with limited peripheral suburban development to the west. Further to the west is the modern relatively isolated residential development at Cripps Farm/Kingsborough Manor, which is well contained by a tree and shrub buffer (Community Woodland) along the eastern edge. There are several large scale caravan parks which are generally well integrated in the landscape.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The area has an elevated landform which is visually prominent, moderate sense of rural character with some development influences. It forms the rural setting to Eastchurch and separation between Eastchurch and Minster. For these reasons it is considered to have a moderate-high overall sensitivity to future change from residential development.

For the reasons noted above – elevation, rural character and visual prominence the area is considered to have moderate-high sensitivity to employment development. The rural character, detachment from existing settlement and relatively narrow lanes means that the majority of this area is not easily accessible for employment.

There is some spatial variation within the area for example in relation to the northern edge of Eastchurch. The area is sensitive to further eastwards expansion of Minster along the ridge due to the openness and gap between Minster and Eastchurch.

Guidance

Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of hedgerows, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Conserve the rural character and sense of openness of this ridge which forms a setting to the existing settlement of Eastchurch and to the marshes to the south.
- Any new development should conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of Plough Road.

- Maintain the open undeveloped character of the north coast cliffs between Minster and Warden.
- Maintain the sense of Minster and Eastchurch as distinct rural settlements and avoid further linear development along the ridge.
- Conserve and reinforce the network of hedgerows and seek to create a stronger landscape structure to integrate development using native woodland planting of copses and shelterbelts.
- Enhance the role of the arable farmland for birds in relation to adjacent marshland habitats including use of field margins and recreation of acid grassland where appropriate.
- Avoid tall structures on the visually prominent ridgeline.
- Conserve and respect the settings of the Listed Buildings (farmhouses).
- Minimise the effect of night time lighting on more sensitive marshland landscapes to the south.
- Conserve and enhance the minor waterways, field ditches and brooks which run to the north coast.



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Location and Description

The village of Bredgar is located in the south of Swale Borough, south west of Sittingbourne on the dip slope of the Kent Downs. The village and the area south of the M2 is within the AONB. The historic linear core runs alongside the Sittingbourne-Hollingbourne road and contains the 14th century flint church of St John and village pond in the centre. Post war development has extended Bredgar further north and west towards Silver Street. The settlement contains a variety of building styles and periods, predominantly of residential use. There are many Listed Buildings, which display the Kentish vernacular including timber-framing.

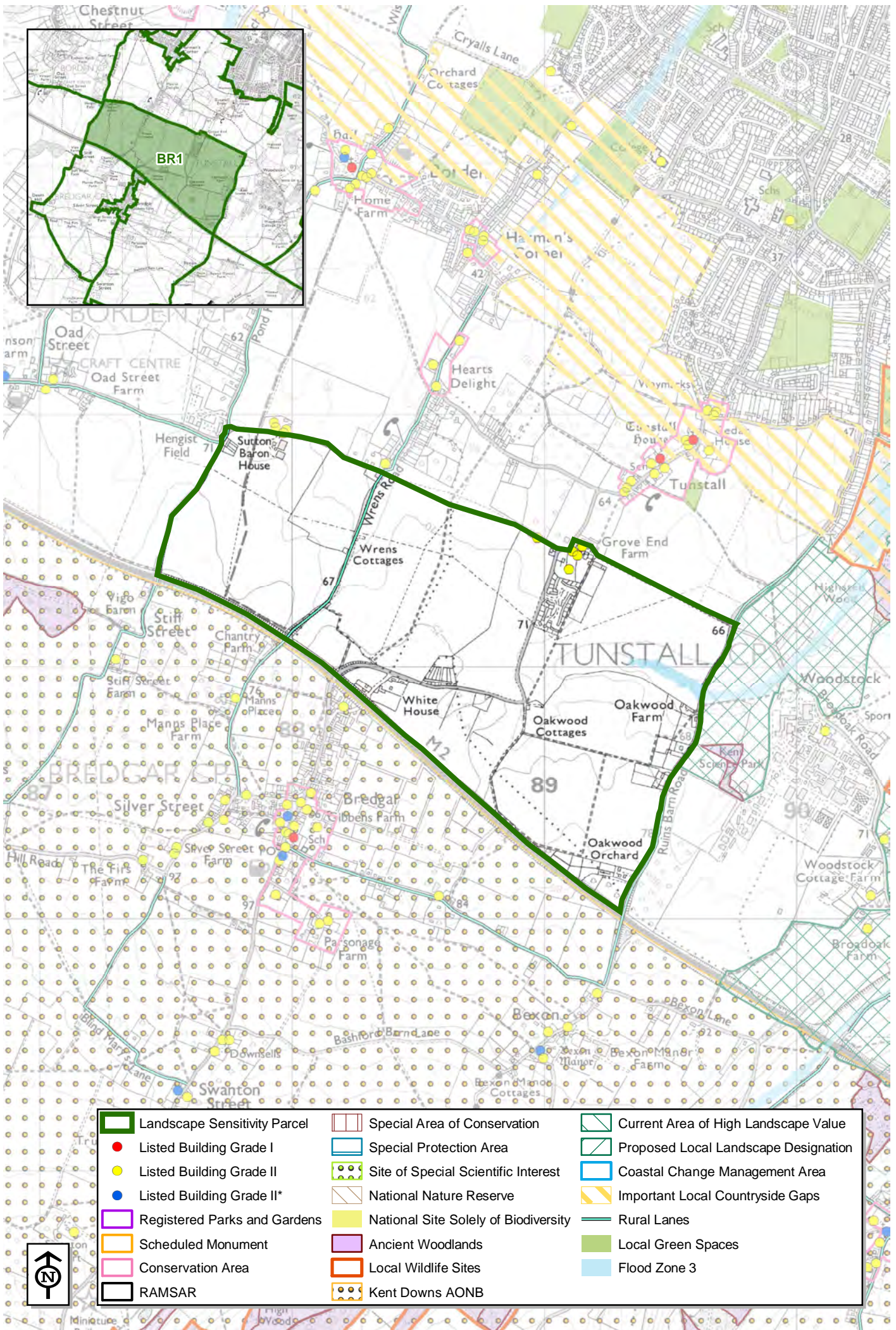
The settlement edge is divided into three areas for assessment of sensitivity to residential and employment development. These are all within the Tunstall Farmlands landscape character area, and boundaries are formed by roads:

BR1 - the open arable farmlands north of the M2, which are outside the AONB.

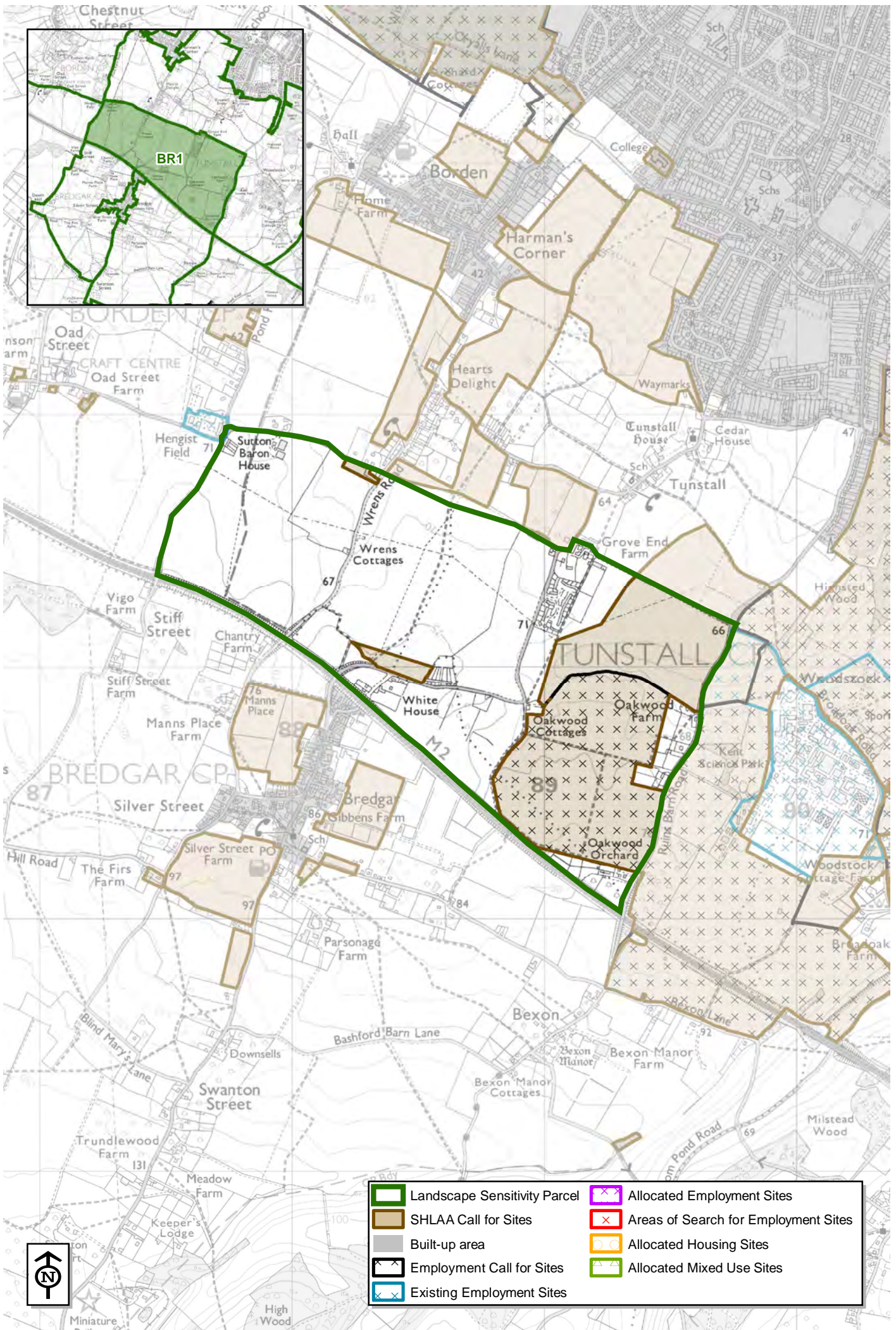
BR2 - the mixed farmlands and orchards to the east and south east, within the AONB.

BR3 – the mixed farmlands and orchards to the west and south west, within the AONB.

Bredgar Area BR1: Designations and Constraints



Bredgar Area BR1: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View north from Primrose Lane to Dove's Croft



View from footpath south of Hearts Delight looking south towards Bredgar.

Location and landscape character

The landscape to the north of Bredgar lies within the Tunstall Farmlands landscape character area (No.42). It comprises a combination of predominantly arable fields and occasional areas of commercial orchards and horticulture.

Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local).

The Kent Downs AONB lies to the south of the M2. An Area of High Landscape Value – Kent level, lies to the east. The area to the east is recommended in the 2018 study for designation as the Kent Downs - Rodmersham, Millstead and Highsted Dry Valley LLD.

Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	The landscape is gently undulating, ranging from 65m to 80m AOD on the lower dip slope. The eastern area is connected to the dry valleys east of Ruins Barn Road and includes a minor dry valley between Oakwood cottages and Oakwood orchard. Fields are predominantly large scale and lacking in boundaries or bound by post and rail or low hedges. The presence of some commercial orchards south of Primrose Lane and associated shelterbelts reduces the apparent scale of the landscape in this area.
Natural character	There are limited valued natural features and semi-natural habitats within the area. Remnant priority habitat traditional orchard is present at Oakwood Orchard in the south east. Low hedgerows and shelterbelts provide further habitats. These features exist within and alongside areas of intensive arable farmland which does not exhibit a natural character. There are no nature conservation designations (national or local) present. Ruins Barn Road, Wrens Road and Vigo Lane are all designated as Rural Lanes.
Sense of time depth / historic character	The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by fields predominantly bounded by tracks, roads and other rights of way. A small amount of orchard is present in the centre south, and there is some ribbon development along Primrose Lane. The time depth of the landscape relates predominantly to the presence of listed buildings as part of the Grove End Farm complex. Traditional orchard and field boundaries have been lost from much of the area.

Visual character	<p>Vegetation along the roads occasionally limits views, but in general this is an open landscape. Shelterbelts, remnant hedgerows and changes in topography terminate longer distance views, particularly along Primrose Lane. Planting along the M2 limits views to the south. Ruins Barn Road on the eastern boundary is sunken and well lined by vegetation, restricting views into and out of the landscape.</p> <p>The skyline is undeveloped, and only broken by electricity pylons both within and outside of the area. The landscape does not form a visually prominent skyline in external views.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>This is a rural landscape, as evidenced by the relatively good experience of dark skies. Although the M2 in the south does impact on the tranquillity of the area, its influence is reduced as it is within a cutting. There is modern development in the east with views to the Kent Science Park, and by the isolated Dove's Croft development on Primrose Lane. Some large agricultural buildings are present along the rural roads.</p> <p>The majority of the landscape is now large intensively farmed arable fields, and field boundaries have been removed, and sometimes replaced by post and rail fencing. Electricity transmission lines run through the area.</p> <p>There is good access by PRoW throughout the area providing links into the AONB, with some views to and from the AONB.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	<p>The M2 and associated planting forms a very strong settlement edge to the north of Bredgar. Any development north of the M2 would not relate to the existing linear settlement pattern of Bredgar.</p> <p>The Dove's Croft development along Primrose Lane is not well integrated into the landscape, and does not relate to any existing settlement. There may be opportunities to soften the settlement edge of Dove's Croft. The rural and visual separation with Bredgar should be maintained.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
<p>The landscape has a gently undulating landform on the dipslope of the Kent Downs, forming part of the setting of the AONB although separated from it by the M2. There is a sense of rural character with some modern human influences (M2), limited visual prominence and enclosure, limited time depth with few heritage assets and limited valued natural features and semi-natural habitats. These attributes indicate a moderate overall sensitivity to future change from residential development. However it should be borne in mind that any development in this area would have no relationship with Bredgar which is well contained on the south side of the M2 so any development would effectively be a new settlement in the countryside. The area is similarly detached from the edge of Sittingbourne and has no relationship with this settlement. Although an overall moderate sensitivity rating is given – this would only relate to a small scale/extent of residential development.</p> <p>For the reasons listed above, the landscape is considered to have a moderate-high overall sensitivity to future change from employment development. The skyline is currently undeveloped and the foreground of the AONB, and any taller development would interrupt this.</p> <p>Key spatial variations are Ruins Barn Road, which is a sunken lane enclosed by hedgerows and is of higher sensitivity.</p>				

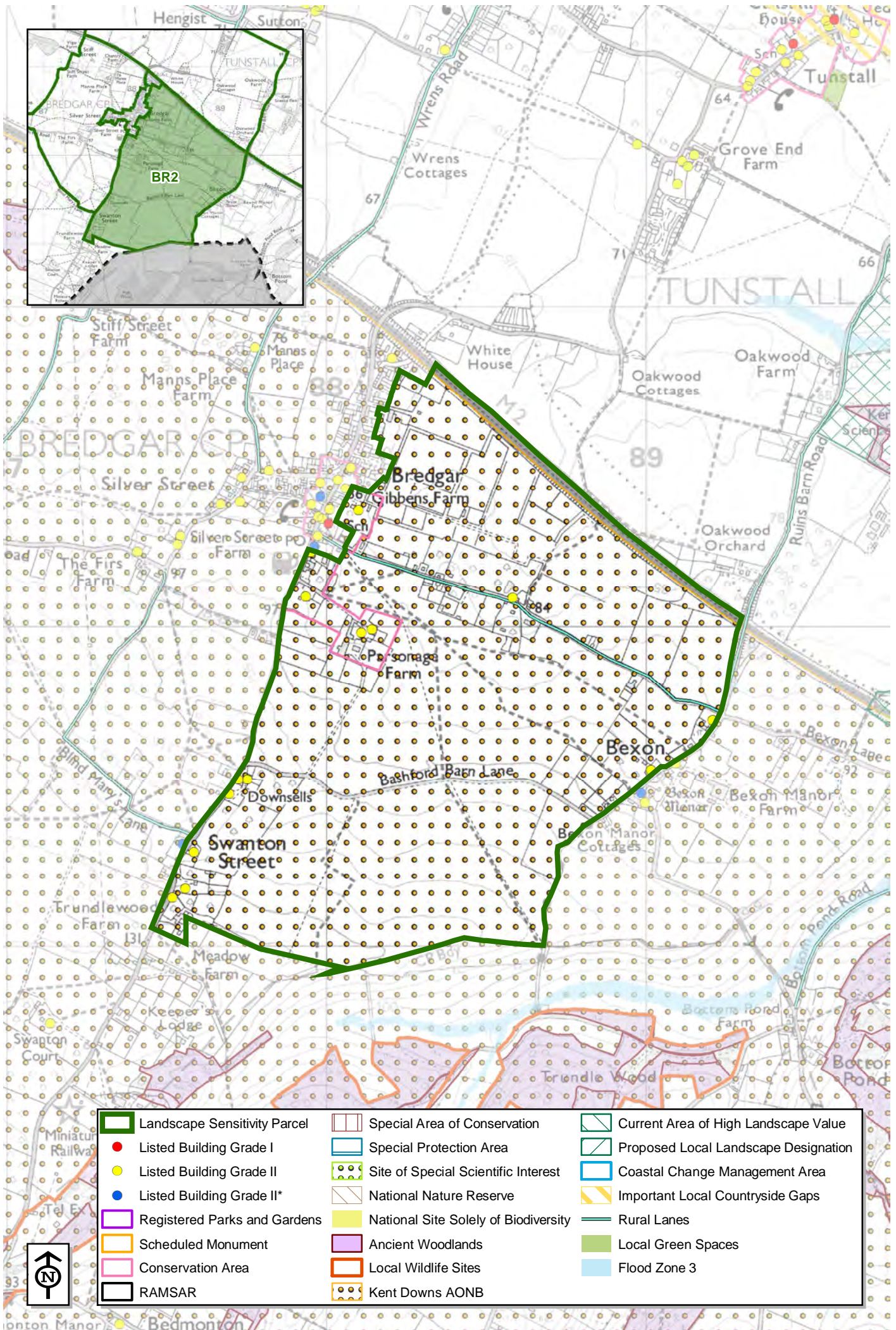
The area immediately surrounding Dove's Croft is of slightly lower sensitivity as the edge of the development is not well integrated into the landscape. Small scale additional development in this area could improve the settlement edge of Dove's Croft, as long as it does not impinge on the rural approach to Bredgar or create a continuous developed character from Sittingbourne and Tunstall in the north.

Guidance

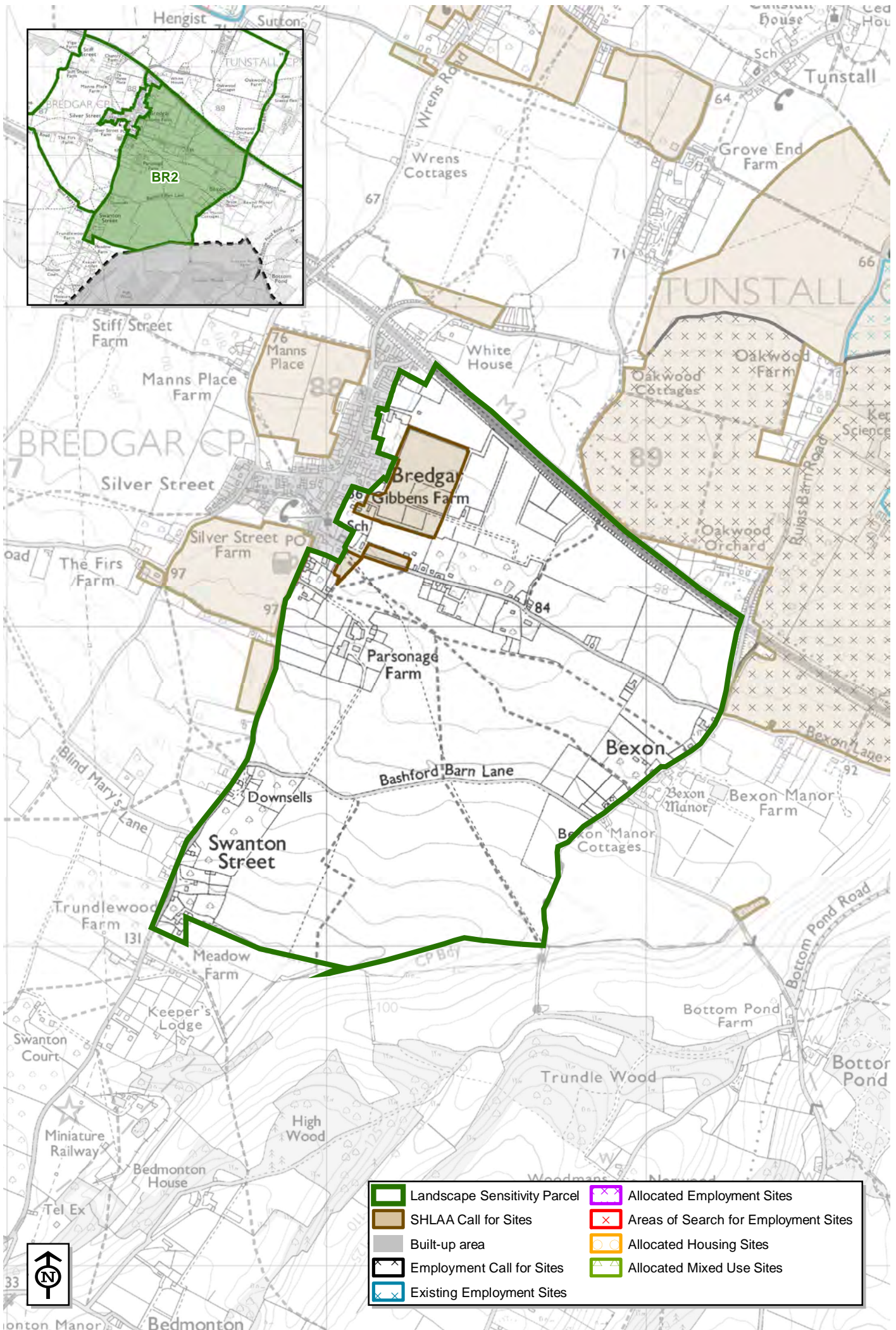
Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost and where they can help integrate development within the landscape. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building styles, materials, scale and massing and includes sensitive lighting design in this rural area.
- New development should seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: Ruins Barn Road, Wrens Road and Vigo Lane.
- Conserve the setting of the Kent Downs AONB and protect the special qualities of the AONB avoiding any development that would negatively intrude on the AONB or impact on qualities such as tranquillity for example by generating greater traffic on the rural lanes.
- Conserve rights of way and enhance access links across the M2 to provide connectivity between Sittingbourne and the AONB.
- Maintain the sense of Bredgar as a distinct rural settlement and avoid linear development extending across the M2. Tunstall to the north should also be retained as a distinct village entity. Scale of growth should respect the existing small village scale of Bredgar.
- Consider opportunities to create a more well-integrated settlement edge at Dove's Croft, through hedges/shelterbelts and community orchard planting. Consider opportunities for wider hedgerow restoration to provide integration and landscape and biodiversity connectivity.

Bredgar Area BR2: Designations and Constraints



Bredgar Area BR2: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View north from Bashford Barn Lane



View west from Bexon Lane

Location and landscape character

The landscape to the east and south east of Bredgar lies within the Tunstall Farmlands landscape character area (No.42). It comprises a combination of predominantly arable fields and areas of commercial orchards and horticulture. It also includes the hamlets of Bexon and Swanton Street.

Landscape value

The area is within the Kent Downs AONB.

Assessment Criterion

Sensitivity description

Topography and scale

The landscape gently rises to the south, from 85m to 130m AOD forming the lower dip slope of the AONB. Fields in the centre of the area are large, with few field boundaries. Around the settlements the fields are smaller scale, often in use as commercial small scale orchards and paddocks. These smaller fields are enclosed by shelterbelts, reducing the scale of the landscape further.

Natural character

There is scattered priority habitat traditional orchard on the edges of Bredgar, Swanton Street and Bexon. Low hedgerows and shelterbelts provide further habitats. These features exist within and alongside areas of intensive arable farmland which does not exhibit a natural character. There are no nature conservation designations (national or local) present.

Bexon Lane and Ruins Barn Road are designated as Rural Lanes.

Sense of time depth / historic character

The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by orchards in the north and fields predominantly bounded by tracks, roads and other rights of way in the south, although many of the field boundaries have been altered since the 1898 six-inch OS map.

The time depth of the landscape relates to the continuation of orchards. However, these have been lost between Bexon Lane and Bashford Barn Lane. There are a number of Grade II listed buildings within Bredgar, Bexon and Swanton Street, and the Bredgar Conservation Area extends into the area, and includes the vicarage and Parsonage Farmhouse. There is limited ribbon development along Bexon Lane.

Visual character

Vegetation along the rural lanes limits views. Where there are views, shelterbelts and hedgerows terminate any longer distance views. There are more open views along Bashford Barn Lane, including over the Swale to the north. Views to the south are terminated by the rising topography. There are some views to the church of St

	<p>John the Baptist, Bredgar.</p> <p>The skyline is undeveloped. The landscape does not form a visually prominent skyline in external views, often due to vegetation along roads.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>This is a rural and tranquil landscape, with a good experience of dark skies, particularly south of Bexon Lane. Although the M2 in the north does impact on the tranquillity of the area, its influence is reduced as it is within a cutting. Properties in Bredgar do not break the skyline, and there are no large obtrusive buildings within the area or on the skyline.</p> <p>There are two large intensively farmed arable fields either side of Bashford Barn Lane. Electricity transmission lines run through the area.</p> <p>There is good access by PRoW throughout the area.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	<p>Bredgar is a linear settlement developing along a former drove road. The hedgerows and vegetation along the lanes provides a soft edge to the settlements, and Bredgar is well integrated into the surrounding landscape. There is some residential development along Bexon Lane; however this is geographically and visually separate from Bredgar.</p> <p>This landscape provides a rural approach and setting to Bredgar (Conservation Area) with views to the church, although the loss of some orchards reduces the historic relationship between the landscape and village. The settlement is distinct from the adjacent small settlements of Swanton Street and Bexon.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The landscape is within the AONB, has a rising landform, strong sense of rural character albeit with some modern human influences, strong enclosure and limited visual prominence, strong time depth with heritage assets including the Conservation Area in the west of the area and some valued natural features and semi-natural habitats within an arable landscape. There is a strong settlement edge to the east of Bredgar maintaining its traditional linear form. These attributes indicate a moderate-high overall sensitivity to future change from residential development.

For the reasons listed above, the landscape is considered to have a high overall sensitivity to future change from employment development. The skyline is currently undeveloped, and any taller development would interrupt this.

Key spatial variations include the Bredgar Conservation Area and role of the landscape in its rural setting, and surviving orchards, which are of higher sensitivity due to their historic and biodiversity value.

Guidance

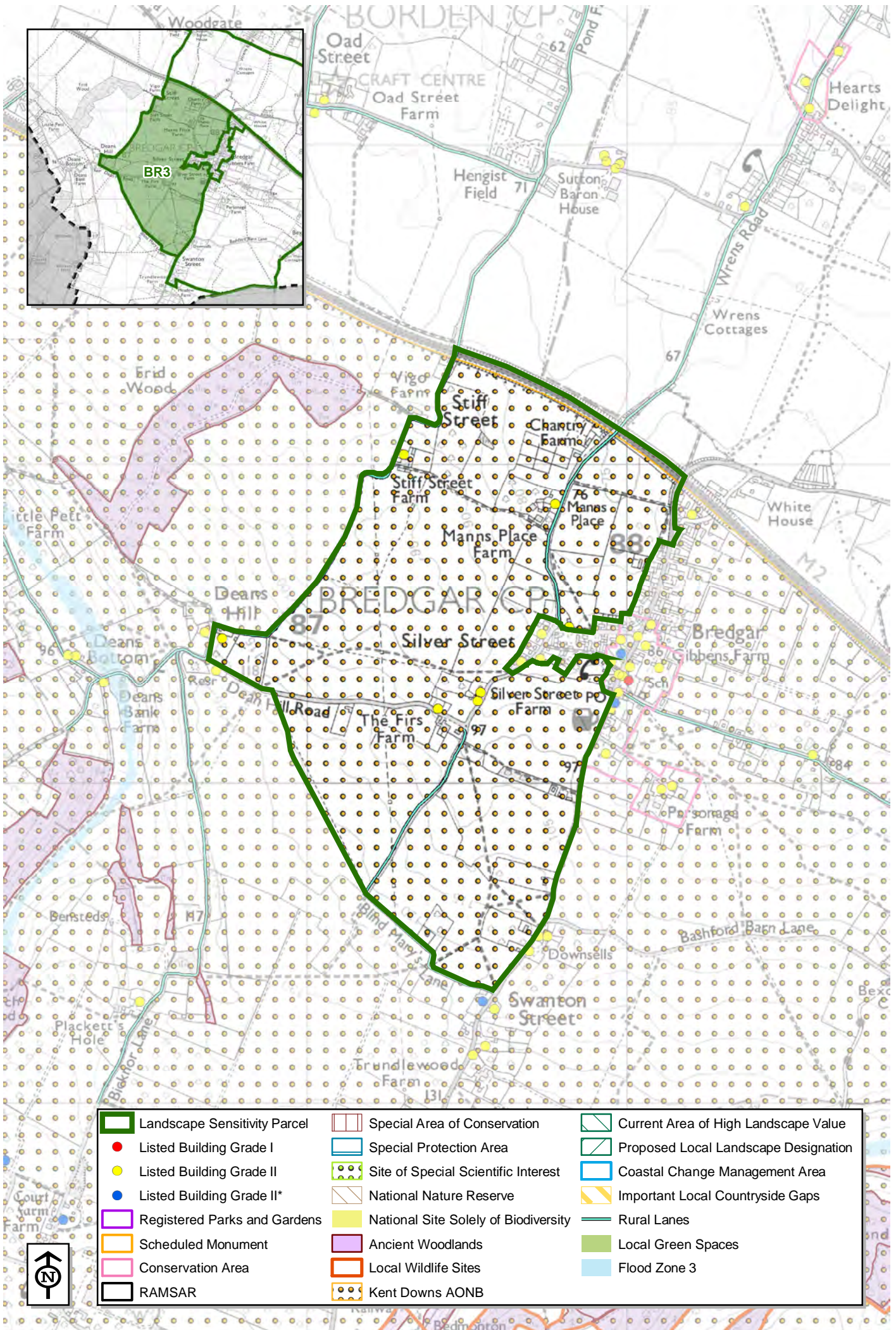
Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan, Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to

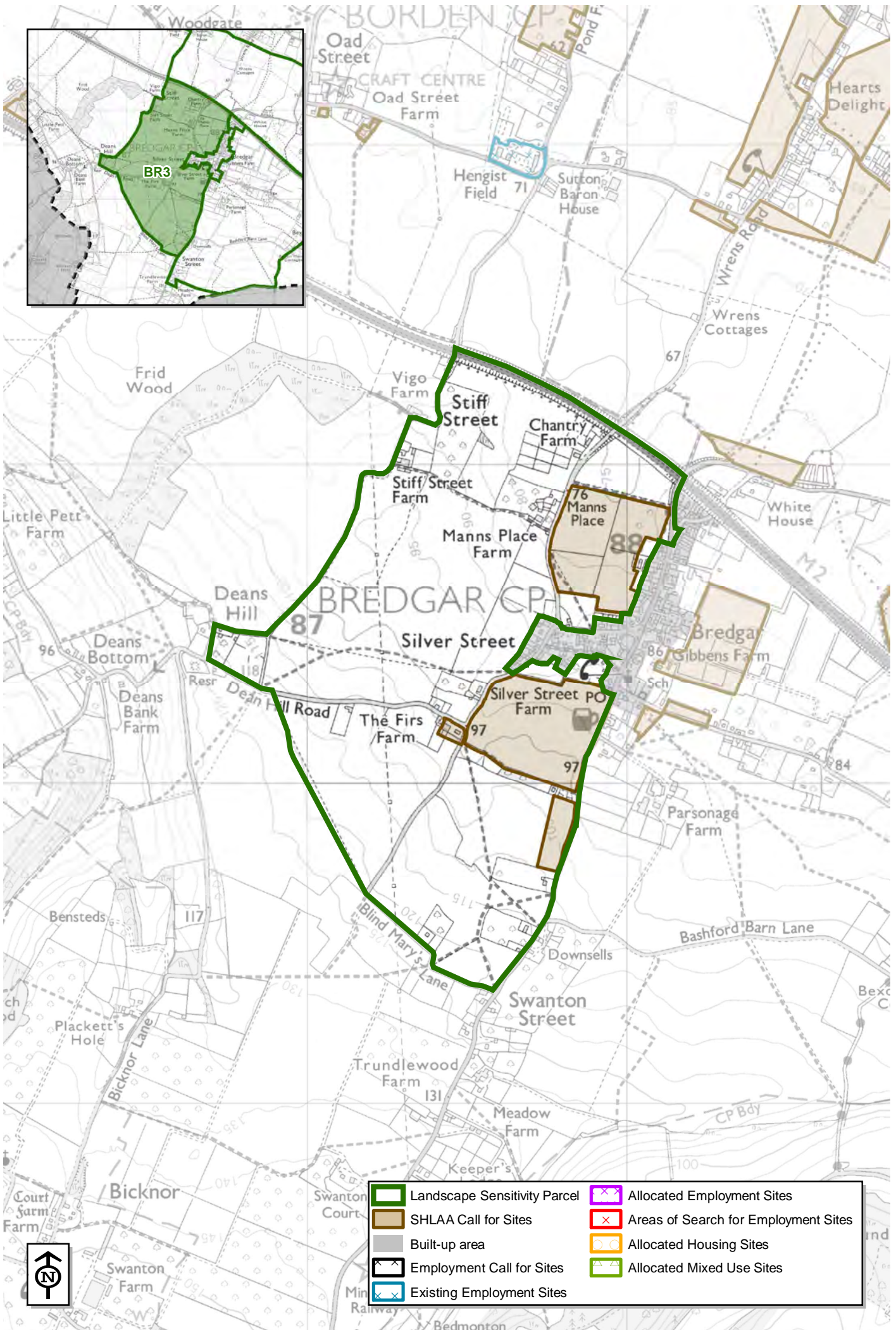
sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost, for example the traditionally managed orchards. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

- Conserve and enhance the Kent Downs AONB and protect the special qualities of the AONB avoiding any development that would negatively intrude on the AONB or impact on qualities such as tranquillity for example by generating greater traffic on the rural lanes.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building styles, materials, scale and massing and includes sensitive lighting design in this rural area.
- Maintain and enhance the well-integrated edges of Bredgar so that any new development is not generally visible from the surrounding rural landscape. Avoid urban style boundaries/fencing and use native tree and hedgerow planting to provide screening. Consider opportunities for wider hedgerow restoration to enhance landscape and biodiversity connectivity.
- New development should conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: Ruins Barn Road and Bexon Lane.
- Conserve the rural setting of the Bredgar Conservation Area.
- Maintain the sense of Bredgar as a distinct linear rural settlement and avoid convergence with Swanton Street to the south, and avoid development extending onto Bexon Lane. Any development at Bredgar should be proportionate to the small village scale of the settlement.

Bredgar Area BR3: Designations and Constraints



Bredgar Area BR3: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View from Deans Hill looking north-east.



View from Blind Mary's Lane towards Bredgar, with the church of St John visible.

Location and landscape character	
<p>The landscape to the south and south west of Bredgar lies within the Tunstall Farmlands landscape character area (No.42). It comprises a combination of predominantly arable fields, and a small area of commercial orchard.</p>	
Landscape value	
<p>This landscape is within the Kent Downs AONB.</p>	
Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	<p>The landscape is gently rising to the south west, rising from 75m at Chantry Farm to 120m AOD forming part of the Kent Downs dipslope. Fields are medium scale, with a few remaining hedgerow boundaries. Elsewhere boundaries are either lost, or replaced by post and wire fencing.</p> <p>Where hedgerows occur these reduce the perceived scale of the landscape.</p>
Natural character	<p>There is a limited network of valued natural features and semi-natural habitats within the area. Low hedgerows, shelterbelts and remnant orchard at Stiff Street Farm provide potential habitats. These features exist within and alongside areas of intensive arable farmland which does not exhibit a natural character. There are no nature conservation designations (national or local) present.</p> <p>Blind Mary's Lane, Deans Hill and Stiff Street are all designated as Rural Lanes.</p>
Sense of time depth / historic character	<p>The Swale HLC indicates that the majority of the area is characterised by fields predominantly bounded by tracks, roads and other rights of way, with small areas of orchard around Silver Street and Bredgar. Development within the area consists of farms, most of which are Grade II Listed buildings.</p> <p>The time depth of the landscape relates predominantly to the presence of listed farm buildings, and the small amount of remnant orchard at Stiff Street Farm. Traditional orchard and field boundaries have been lost from much of the area.</p>
Visual character	<p>This is an open landscape with few hedgerows or vegetation along roads. There are long views to the north to Sheppey and beyond. Views to the south are limited by topography and some shelterbelts. The church of St John the Baptist is a prominent feature in views from Blind Mary's Lane in the south. There is a prominent</p>

	electricity pylon line through the area, however in general the skyline is undeveloped. The landscape does not form a visually prominent skyline in external views.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>This is a rural and tranquil landscape, with a good experience of 'dark skies'. Although the M2 in the north does impact on the tranquillity of the area, its influence is reduced as it is within a cutting.</p> <p>The majority of the landscape is now in use as intensively farmed arable fields, with some use for horse grazing. Some field boundaries have been either totally removed or replaced by post and wire fencing. Electricity pylons run through the area.</p> <p>There is good access by PRoW throughout the area, particularly in the south.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	The area provides a rural setting and backdrop to Silver Street/Bredgar, particularly along Silver Street and The Street. The historic linear form of Bredgar has been altered by the convergence of Silver Street and Bredgar along Gore Road, although mature trees in this area integrate the 20 th century development into the landscape. Wrens Road to the north of Silver Street is slightly sunken and has mature vegetation and hedgerows along much of its route, screening Silver Street from any long distance views from the north.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The landscape is within the AONB, has a rising landform, good sense of rural character with limited modern human influences. These attributes, in combination with the well-integrated settlement edge, indicate a moderate-high overall sensitivity to future change from residential development. This area has already experienced some 20th century infill between Silver Street and Bredgar.

For the reasons listed above, the landscape is considered to have a high overall sensitivity to future change from employment development. The skyline is currently undeveloped except for electricity pylons, and any taller development would interrupt this.

There are no spatial variations within the area.

Guidance

Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan, Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost, for example the traditionally managed orchards. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI),

and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

- Conserve and enhance the Kent Downs AONB and protect the special qualities of the AONB avoiding any development that would negatively intrude on the AONB or impact on qualities such as tranquillity for example by generating greater traffic on the rural lanes.
- Maintain and enhance the well-integrated edges of Bredgar so that any new development is not generally visible from the surrounding rural landscape. Avoid urban style boundaries/fencing and use native tree and hedgerow planting to provide screening.
- Consider incorporating important and locally distinct skyline features of the church of St John in any new development.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building styles, materials, scale and massing and includes sensitive lighting design in this rural area.
- New development should conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: Blind Mary's Lane, Deans Hill and Stiff Street.
- Maintain the sense of Silver Street/Bredgar as a distinct rural settlement and maintain the linear development form of Bredgar where possible.

Settlement Area: Newington



Newington

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

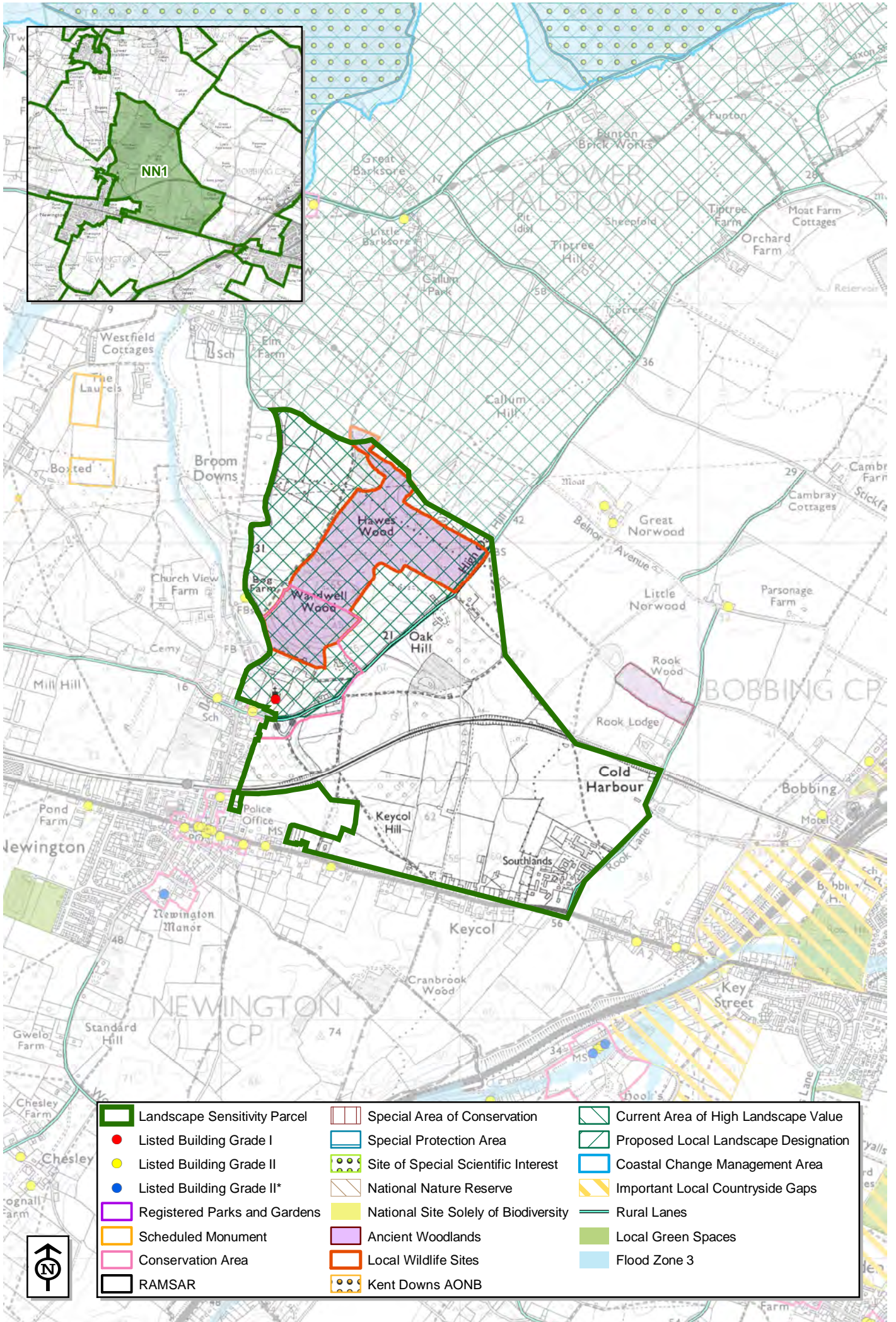
Location and Description

The large village of Newington is located in the west of Swale Borough between Sittingbourne and Rainham, and is characterised by a linear historic settlement core running alongside the Roman Watling Street, now the route of the A2, and north to St Mary's church which is located within the Libbet valley running to Halstow Creek. More modern development extends north of the railway line and south of the A2. The settlement contains a variety of building styles and periods, predominantly of residential use, including listed timber framed buildings and larger Victorian brick residences along Newington High Street/A2.

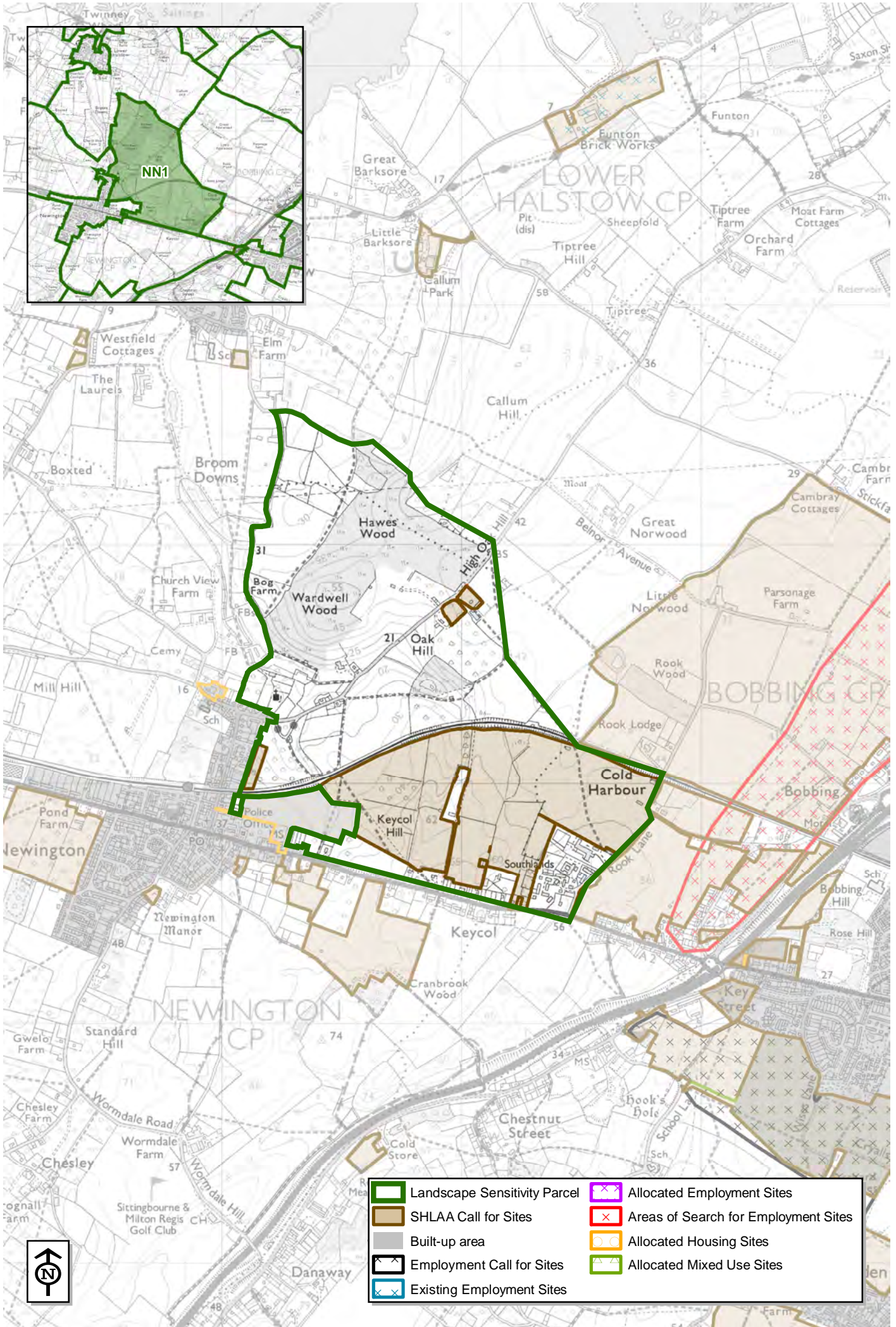
The settlement edge is divided into four areas for assessment of sensitivity to residential and employment development. These relate to the four landscape character areas, fruitbelt landscapes to the west and arable farmlands to the east, and comprise:

- NN1 – the rising slopes of farmlands and woodland to the north east.
- NN2 - the undulating arable farmlands to the south east.
- NN3 – the orchards and farmlands to the south west.
- NN4 – the orchards and farmlands to the north west.

Newington Area NN1: Designations and Constraints



Newington Area NN1: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



	Landscape Sensitivity Parcel		Allocated Employment Sites
	SHLAA Call for Sites		Areas of Search for Employment Sites
	Built-up area		Allocated Housing Sites
	Employment Call for Sites		Allocated Mixed Use Sites
	Existing Employment Sites		



Representative photographs



View from Wardwell Lane to St Mary's church.



View north from footpath south of railway line showing solar farm in the distance.

Location and landscape character

The landscape to the north east of Newington lies within the Iwade Arable Farmlands landscape character area (No.24) and lies north of the A2. It comprises rising slopes with a combination of arable fields, paddocks and extensive areas of woodland.

Landscape value

The area west of High Oak Hill is designated as an Area of High Landscape Value – Swale Level.

This area, west of High Oak Hill, is recommended in the 2018 study for designation as part of the Lower Halstow Iwade Ridge LLD.

Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	The landscape has an undulating topography, with Hawes and Wardwell Woods perched on a hill, looking over the valley where the north of Newington is located. Keycol Hill is another high point at 62m AOD. The landscape has medium-scale predominantly arable fields, interspersed with areas of woodland. These in combination with the network of shelterbelts and hedgerows throughout the area provide enclosure and reduce the apparent scale of the landscape.
Natural character	Hawes Wood and Wardwell Wood are designated as a Local Wildlife Site and Local Designated Site of Biodiversity, and contain a significant area of ancient woodland and priority habitat deciduous woodland. These are further valued as one of the few wooded areas within Swale Borough. There are significant areas of remnant priority habitat traditional orchard, particularly east of Newington, north of the railway line and around Keycol. The hedgerows, shelterbelt and other small areas of woodland provide further semi-natural habitats within this landscape. These features exist within and alongside areas of intensive arable farmland character, where hedgerows have been lost creating extensive open areas. Wardwell Lane, High Oak Hill and Rook Lane are all designated as Rural Lanes.
Sense of time depth / historic character	The Swale HLC indicates that west of Wardwell Wood and south of the railway line around Keycol Hill the area is characterised by parliamentary type enclosures (small, regular); while east of St Mary's church and north of Southlands in the east fields are predominantly bounded by tracks, roads and other rights of way. Fields around St Mary's church are small and rectilinear with wavy boundaries while Wardwell Wood and Hawes Wood are of ancient origin. This area also includes the small

	<p>settlements at Keycol and Southlands which are more modern in character.</p> <p>The time-depth of the landscape relates predominantly to the continuity of agriculture within the area, together with the presence of the Grade I listed St Mary's church. Areas of woodland and traditional orchard have been lost in recent decades, although there is a small overgrown orchard between the railway line and High Oak Hill and a traditional orchard north of the church.</p>
Visual character	<p>The A2 and narrow lanes are largely enclosed by mature hedgerows and vegetation, enclosing any views. Where there are gaps in the roadside vegetation views are curtailed by topography and shelterbelts. The railway line is within a cutting and is well integrated into the landscape. From High Oak Hill there are views south to the Kent Downs AONB, while from the north of Wardwell Lane there are longer distance views to the west and out to the marshes and estuary. A short section of the south of High Oak Hill has a good view of St Mary's church with Wardwell Wood as a backdrop. The Grade II listed oast house, within the settlement boundary, can also be seen from this location.</p> <p>There are no visually prominent skyline features beyond a line of electricity pylons which can be seen east of Rook Lane, where topography and vegetation allow.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>The area on the hill at Wardwell and Hawes Woods is rural and tranquil. The south is more affected by the railway and A2, as well as the small settlements of Keycol and Southlands. One overhead power line runs in the north of the area, although its influence is limited by topography, roadside vegetation and Hawes Wood. Enclosing vegetation results in little visual evidence of modern development.</p> <p>There is good access by PRoW out of Newington and Keycol, and surrounding Hawes Wood and Wardwell Wood.</p>
Character and setting of settlement	<p>The settlement edge of Newington is relatively enclosed by vegetation, particularly between the railway line and High Oak Hill, which provides a more integrated settlement edge. The area surrounding St Mary's church and extending to High Oak Hill in the east and Wardwell Lane in the west forms the Newington Church Conservation Area. The rural setting to St Mary's church is of greater sensitivity, including the rising landform and backdrop of Wardwell Wood and Hawes Wood.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2 ha)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use class B, light industrial)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
<p>The landscape has an undulating landform including some relatively prominent high points, a large area of ancient woodland and forms a rural wooded backdrop and setting to the historic part of Newington associated with St Mary's Church. It is also important as part of the rural gap between Newington and Keycol/Sittingbourne along the A2. These attributes indicate a moderate-high overall sensitivity to future change from residential development.</p> <p>The area has an overall moderate-high sensitivity to employment development. Any building of greater height and scale than 2-3 storey residential development has potential to be very prominent and visible. The area does include some large scale modern industrial units/farm buildings north of High Oak Hill Lane and these sit uncomfortably within the rising landform and are highly visible.</p> <p>Key spatial variations are the area west of High Oak Hill, which is within an Area of High Landscape Value – Swale Level and contains Hawes Wood and Wardwell Wood, ancient woodland designated as a Local Wildlife Site and is of higher sensitivity. The higher area of Keycol Hill is also of higher sensitivity. Small-scale development may be</p>				

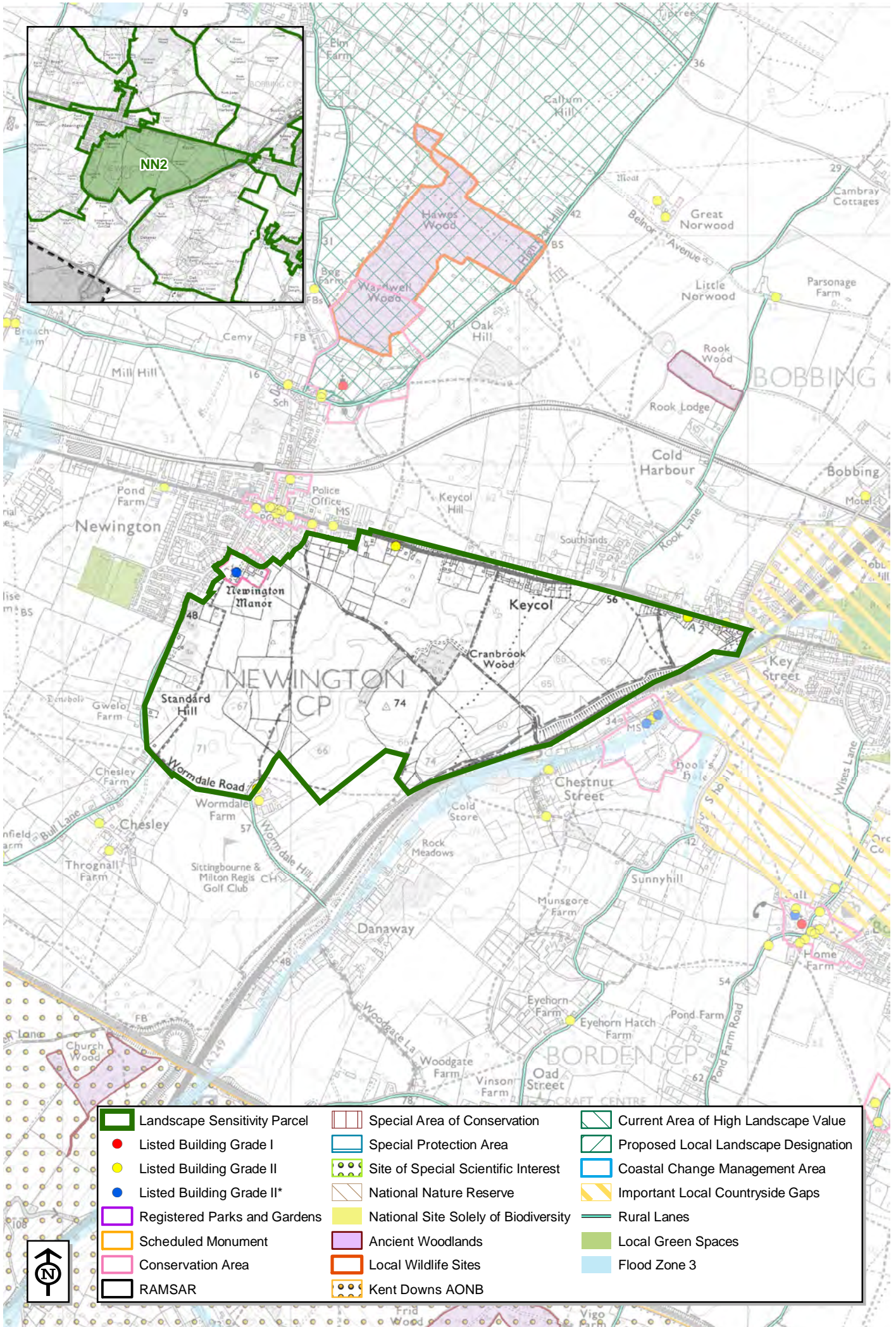
appropriate at Keycol and Southlands, providing that it does not further impinge on the settlement gap between Keycol and Newington or create a more continuous urban frontage along the A2.

Guidance

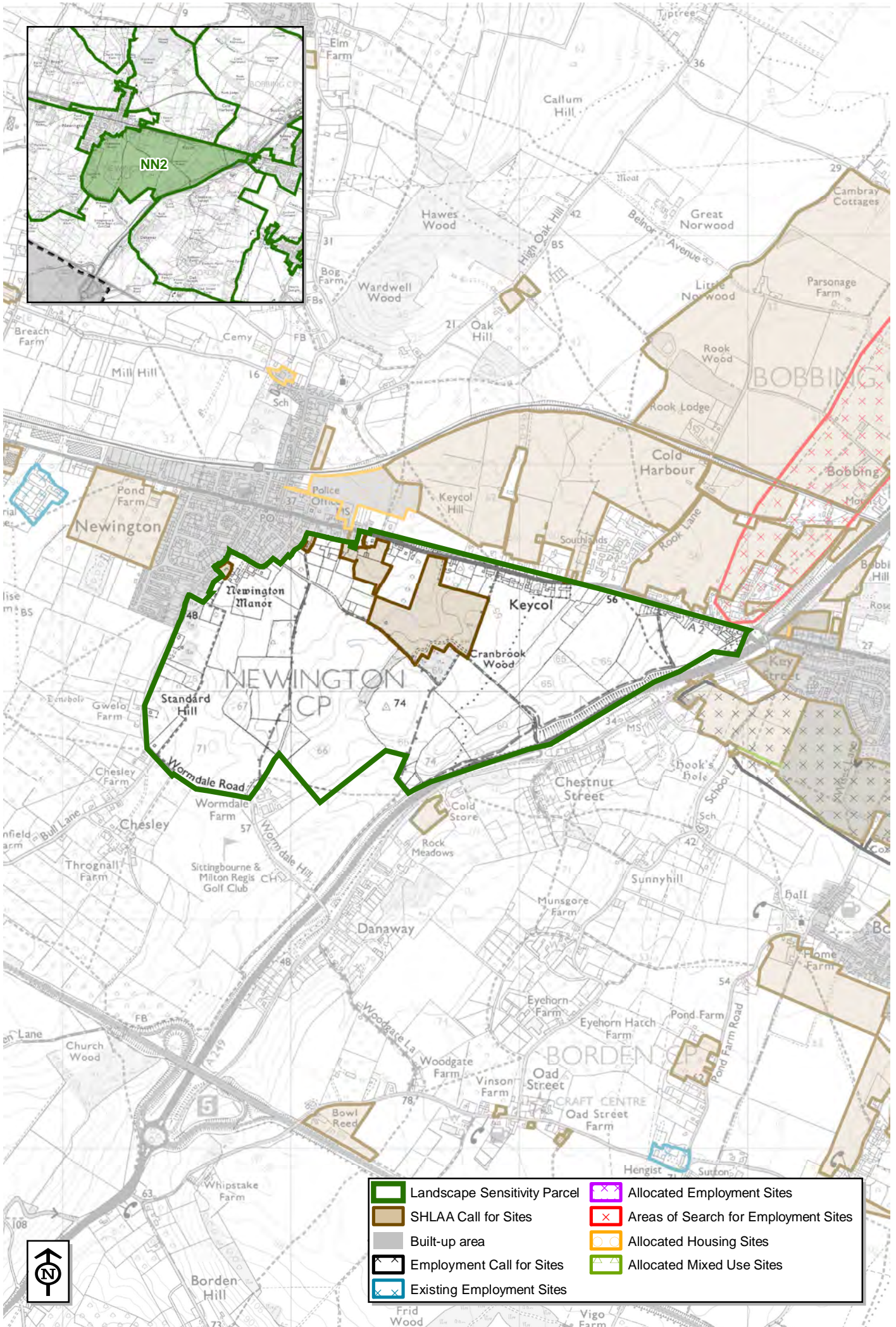
Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Conserve, manage and consider the re-creation and restoration of traditionally managed orchards, where these have been lost.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building styles, materials, scale and massing. Sensitive lighting design should be considered.
- New development should seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: Wardwell Lane, High Oak Hill and Rook Lane.
- Maintain Newington as a distinct settlement and avoid the visual impression of a continuous suburban character linking Sittingbourne, Keycol and Newington.
- Provide guidance to promote the retention of traditional rural boundaries and hedges to rural properties and avoid urban and suburban features.
- Maintain the rural setting to the church of St Mary, including the views from the edge of Newington up to the church and the backdrop of a traditional orchard and Wardwell Wood.
- Consider any new development in relation to the sensitive landscapes of Hawes Wood and Wardwell Wood (Local Wildlife Site and Area of High Landscape Value – Swale Level) and seek to instigate appropriate woodland management of ancient woodlands including provision of buffers and opportunities to extend and link habitats to enhance woodland connectivity.

Newington Area NN2: Designations and Constraints



Newington Area NN2: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development





View north west from footpath off Callaways Lane



View east from footpath off Callaways Lane

Location and landscape character	
<p>The landscape to the south and east of Newington lies south of the A2 and is within the Newington Arable Farmlands landscape character area (No.27). It comprises medium arable and grazing fields/paddocks with small areas of commercial orchard.</p>	
Landscape value	
<p>This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local).</p>	
Assessment Criterion	Sensitivity description
Topography and scale	<p>The landscape here has an intricate rolling topography from 45m AOD next to the A249 on the eastern boundary to small hills of 65-74m AOD in the south of the area. The area contains medium scale fields, which have either totally lost their hedgerows and field boundaries, or have been replaced with post and wire fencing, which increases the internal sense of scale throughout the area. This is balanced by the enclosure created by topography and small areas of woodland.</p>
Natural character	<p>The landscape contains relatively few areas of remnant semi-natural habitats. Cranbrook Wood is priority habitat deciduous woodland. There are other small areas of deciduous woodland throughout the area, including east of Keycol. Small areas of priority habitat traditional orchard are also present west of Keycol and east of Bull Lane. Shelterbelts, mature trees and trees and areas of woodland including within the Sittingbourne and Milton Regis Golf Club provide further habitats. These features exist within and alongside areas of intensive arable farmland and grazing. Wormdale Road, Wormdale Hill and Bull Lane are designated as Rural Lanes.</p>
Sense of time depth / historic character	<p>The Swale HLC indicates that the majority of the area consists of Parliamentary type small regular fields with straight boundaries, while the centre of the area around Cranbrook Wood has Prairie type fields of 19th century enclosure with extensive boundary loss. A small amount of orchard is present in the west around Standard Hill. There are a few listed buildings associated with Keycol including Little Chequers, buildings on Keycol Hill, and Ellen's Place. The rest of Keycol consists of detached and semi-detached modern brick houses. Newington Manor in the west is Grade II* listed, and forms the centre of the Newington Manor Conservation Area.</p> <p>The time depth of the landscape relates predominantly to the presence of listed buildings and Newington Manor. Traditional orchard and field boundaries have been lost from much of the area.</p>

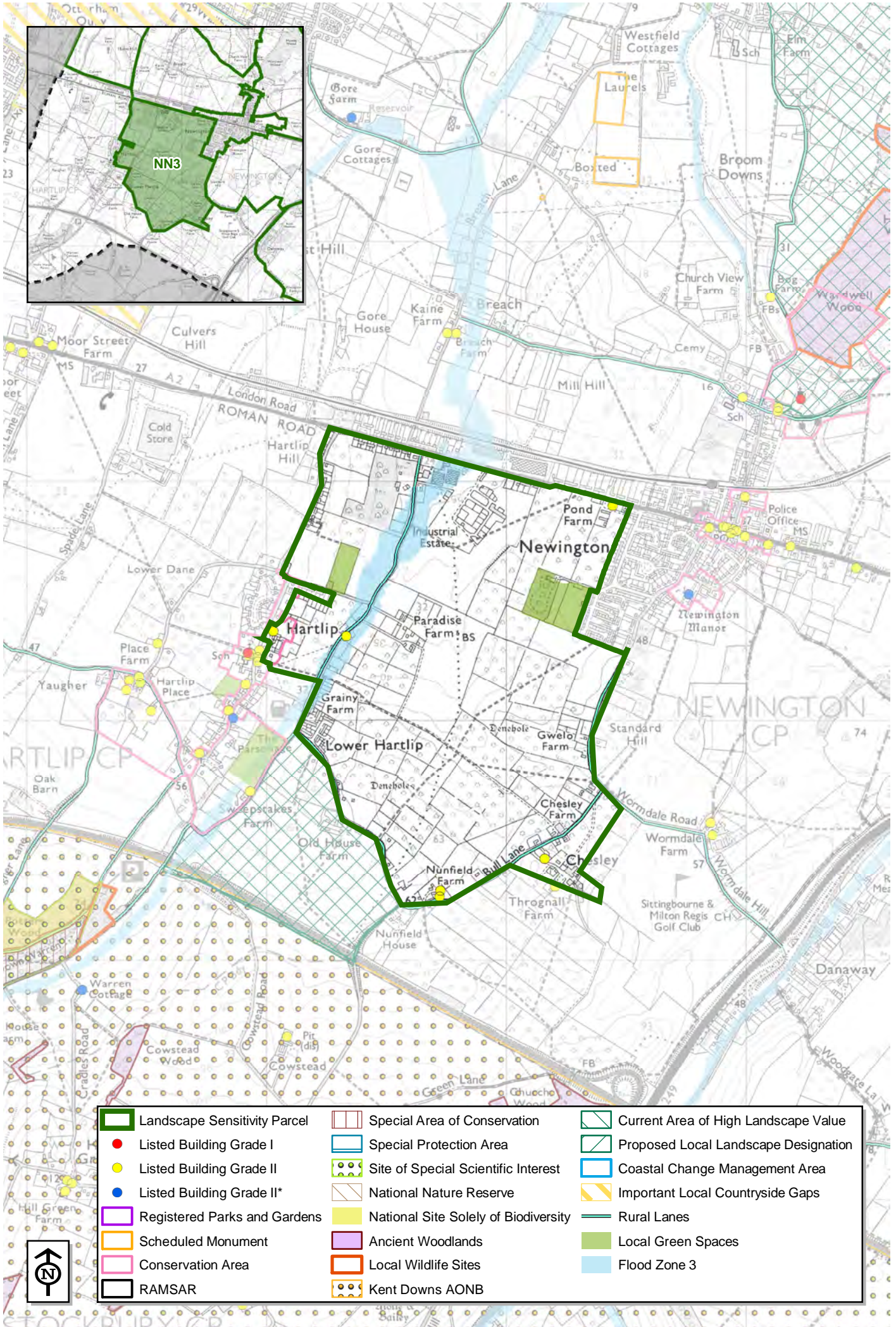
<p>Visual character</p>	<p>Bull Lane on the western boundary is enclosed by mature hedgerows and vegetation. Views along Wormdale Road/Wormdale Hill are more open due to a lack of hedgerows, including views to Wardwell Wood/Hawes Wood and Keycol Hill to the north. Undulating topography within the area limits further views from the south. The A249 which forms the eastern boundary is in a deep valley limiting views into the wider landscape. The A2 along the northern boundary is also at a lower elevation and offers few views out over this area with views are restricted by mature vegetation and residential properties. Despite the landscape being at a higher elevation than much of the surrounding landscape, it does not generally form a visually prominent skyline in views, although there are some long views out over Stockbury Valley, Chestnut Street and Keycol Hill.</p>
<p>Perceptual and experiential qualities</p>	<p>Despite the presence of the A429 to the east, this is a rural and tranquil landscape, with a good experience of dark skies. There is more disturbance by modern development close to Newington in the north west, and at the A2/A249 junction in the north east. The landscape appears unmanaged and has a neglected character on the edge of Newington.</p> <p>The Sittingbourne and Milton Regis Golf Club and paintballing in the south east are not rural land uses. There has also been some replacement of hedgerows with post and wire fencing, creating a more open character.</p> <p>There is good access by PRoW throughout the area.</p>
<p>Character and setting of settlement</p>	<p>The settlement edge of Newington is enclosed by vegetation and residential properties are inward facing. Occasional glimpses of the landscape are visible behind properties, and these provide an open and rural setting to Newington particularly on the approach along the A2. The Newington Manor Conservation Area is within this area. The landscape provides some contribution as a rural and open back drop to this Conservation Area; however views into the landscape are often obscured by mature roadside vegetation.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
<p>The landscape has a very undulating topography, a moderate sense of rural character with limited modern human influences, limited time depth with some heritage assets, limited valued natural features and semi-natural habitats, is visually enclosed and acts as an important rural gap between Sittingbourne and Newington. These attributes, in combination with the absence of landscape designations, indicate a moderate overall sensitivity to future change from residential development.</p> <p>The landscape is considered to have a moderate overall sensitivity to future change from employment development.</p> <p>Key spatial variations are the areas immediately adjacent to the A2/A249 junction, which have low tranquillity and rural character, and therefore have a lower sensitivity. There may be an area of slightly lower sensitivity in association with the A2 and existing development on the lower land at Keycol providing any further development does not further impinge on the settlement gap between Keycol and Newington or create a more continuous urban frontage along the A2. There are higher sensitivities associated with the undulating topography, high points and more rural areas to the south.</p>				

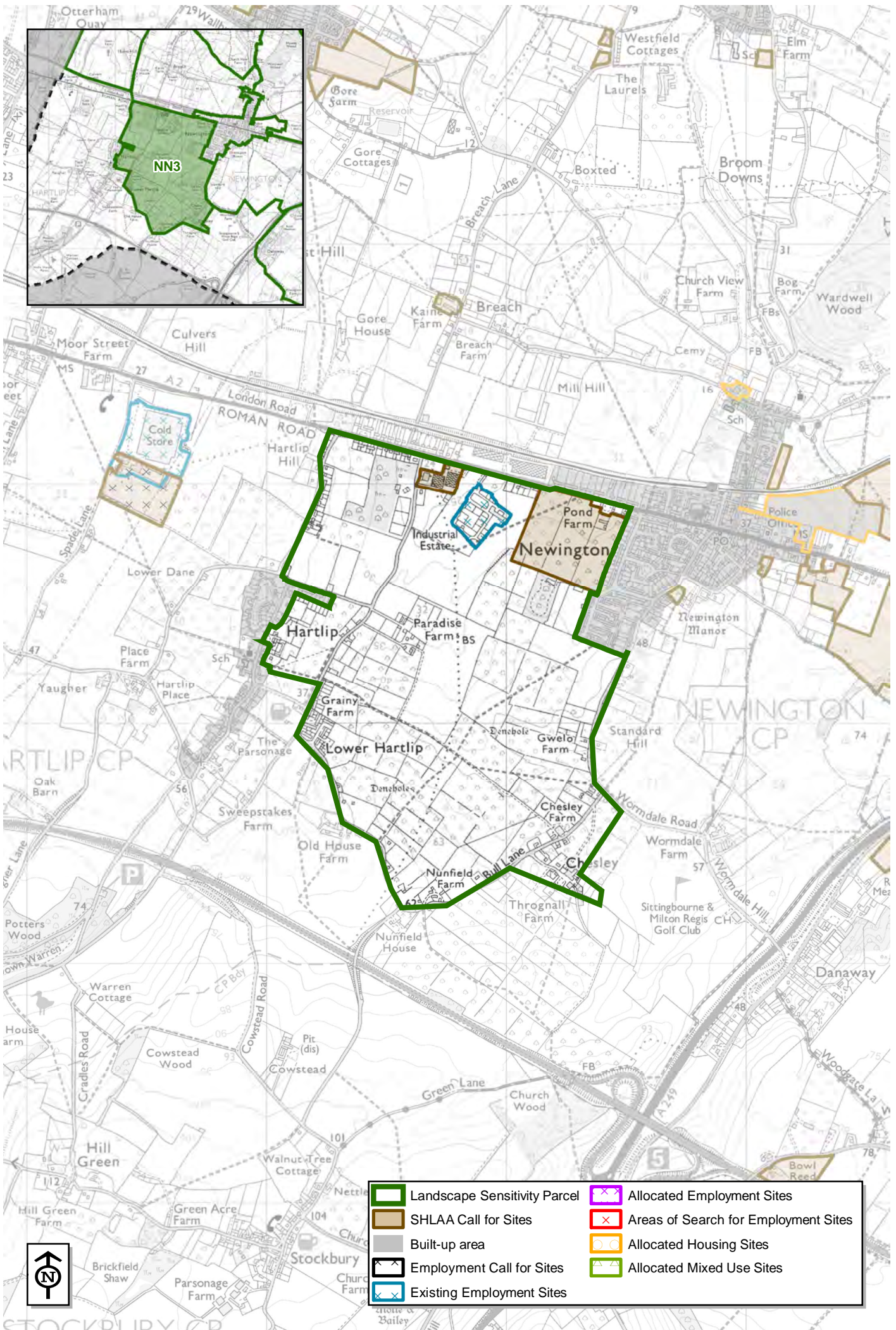
Guidance

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost, for example the traditionally managed orchards. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building styles, materials, scale and massing. Sensitive lighting design should be considered.
- New development should seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: Wormdale Road, Wormdale Hill and Bull Lane.
- Conserve the rural setting of the Newington Manor Conservation Area.
- Maintain and enhance the well-integrated edges of the settlement so that development is not generally visible from the surrounding rural landscape. Provide guidance to promote the retention of traditional rural boundaries and hedges including the use of native plants and avoid urban style boundaries/fencing.
- Maintain Newington as a distinct settlement and avoid the visual impression of a continuous suburban character linking Sittingbourne, Keycol and Newington.
- Conserve and manage remaining areas of traditional orchards.

Newington Area NN3: Designations and Constraints



Newington Area NN3: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View north from footpath south of Orchard Drive



View west from footpath east of Lower Hartlip

Location and landscape character

The landscape to the west and south-west of Newington lies within the Newington Fruit Belt landscape character area (No.28). It comprises a combination of orchards and farmland, as well as part of the small settlements of Lower Hartlip and Hartlip. It is noted that a planning application has been granted for brick earth extraction in the centre of this area.

Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local). An Area of High Landscape Value – Kent Level is adjacent to the south of the area, south of Old House Lane.

Assessment Criterion

Sensitivity description

Topography and scale

A gently undulating landscape, sloping southwards from 24m AOD at the A2 to 62m AOD forming part of the lower dip slope of the Kent Downs. At Hartlip it includes part of a wide dry valley extending from the downs. This is a small scale landscape, dominated by commercial orchards which are largely still enclosed by mature hedgerows. On the edge of Hartlip and Newington, and close to the lanes, some fields have been converted to horse grazing and subdivided by post and rail fencing. Loss of hedgerows increases the sense of scale but as some field have also been subdivided into smaller scale paddocks, the perception of an overall small scale landscape prevails.

Natural character

The landscape contains small areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland to the west of Lower Hartlip Road and in the east of the area. There are also small areas of priority habitat traditional orchard. Other habitats present within the landscape include mature hedgerows, shelterbelts, commercial orchards and grassy road verges. There are also a number of mature trees throughout the area. Bull Lane, Old House Lane and Lower Hartlip Road are all designated as Rural Lanes.

Sense of time depth / historic character

The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by orchards, with an area of Parliamentary small regular fields with straight boundaries in the north and around Nunfield Farm in the south. There is a modern industrial complex south of the A2.

The time-depth of the landscape relates predominantly to the continuity of fruit cultivation within the area, together with the presence of scattered timber-framed historic farmsteads, some of which are Listed Buildings. The Hartlip Conservation Area extends into the assessment area in the west, encompassing the Grade II listed Pope's Hall.

Some areas of traditionally managed orchards have been lost in recent years, and have been subdivided by post and rail fencing to facilitate horse grazing/paddocks which create a more cluttered smaller scale landscape, and opens up some views.

Visual character	Views within and into the landscape are largely restricted by mature vegetation along roads, although there are some open views in the north west from the industrial estate and garden centre. There are some long distance views into the areas from the Kent Downs south of the M2, and north east to Wardwell Wood/Hawes Wood. Internal views are limited by hedgerows, the orchards, and shelterbelts. This results in a low level of inter-visibility and therefore a reduced sensitivity.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	The landscape has a good sense of rural character due to the presence of traditional orchards. This is reduced in the north by the industrial estate and on the edges of Newington and Hartlip where orchards have been converted for horse grazing. The area is increasingly tranquil towards the south away from the A2 and edge of Newington, and experiences dark skies. The M2 south of the area does not visually impact on the landscape due to intervening topography, and screening by earth banks and vegetation. There is good access by PRoW between Newington and Lower Hartlip.
Character and setting of settlement	The landscape provides a rural back drop to the western edge of Newington, although this is glimpsed between residential properties. The current settlement edge is relatively well screened by shelterbelts and garden vegetation and much of the A2 is lined by mature hedgerows and vegetation. The industrial estate east of Lower Hartlip Road is well screened by vegetation along roads, and does not impact on the approach to Newington.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The landscape has a gently undulating landform, strong rural character with some modern human influences particularly in the north, moderate time depth with some heritage assets, some valued natural features and semi-natural habitats, and is visually enclosed. There are no landscape designations. It has a moderate overall sensitivity to future change from residential development, and a moderate overall sensitivity to future change from employment sensitivity.

Key spatial variations are the south of the landscape, which has a more rural character and is more tranquil, indicating higher sensitivity. In the east the dry valley running through Hartlip is a further distinctive and sensitive feature. The area around the existing industrial estate is well enclosed by vegetation and therefore is less sensitive to expanded commercial development.

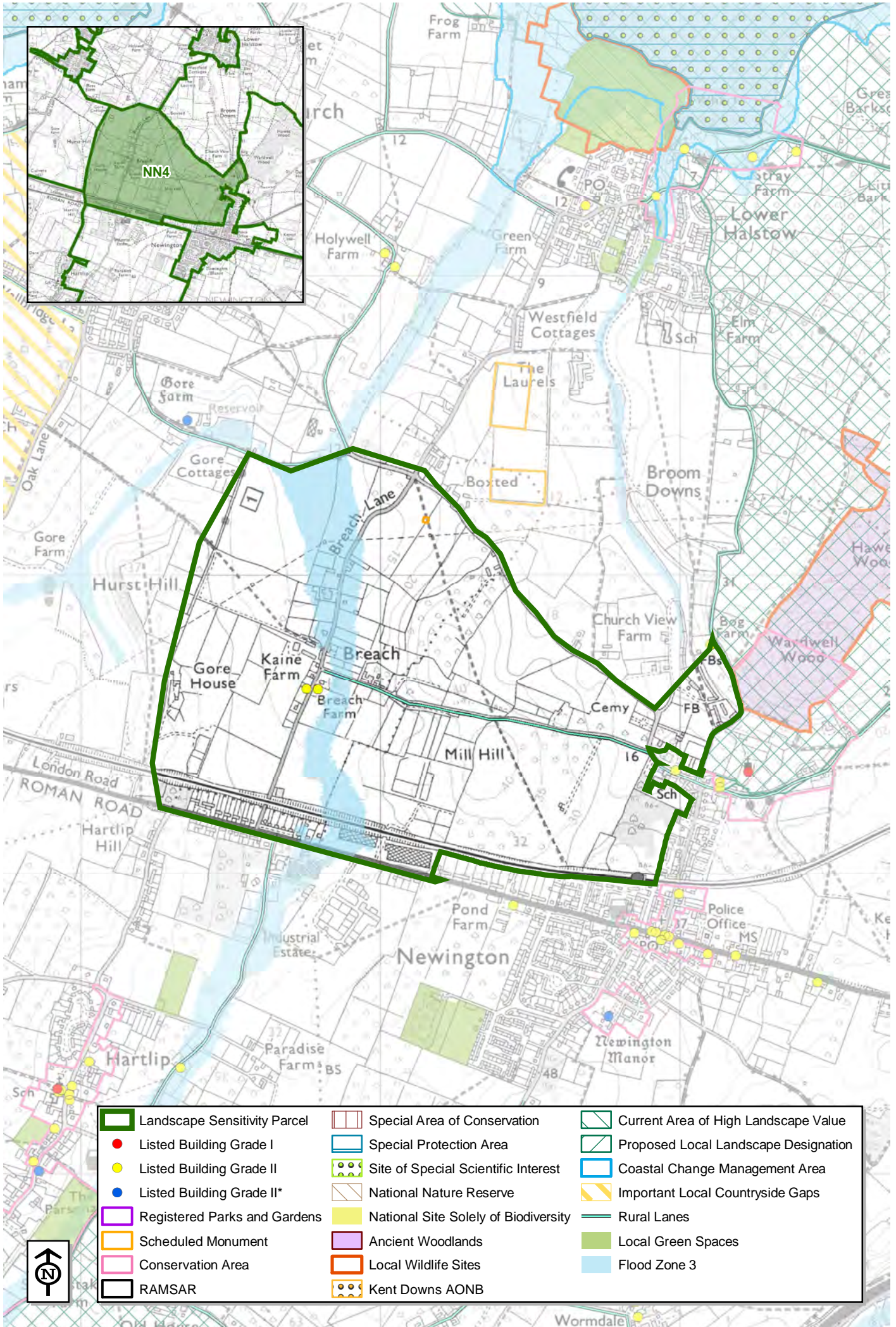
Guidance

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost, for example the traditionally managed orchards. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI),

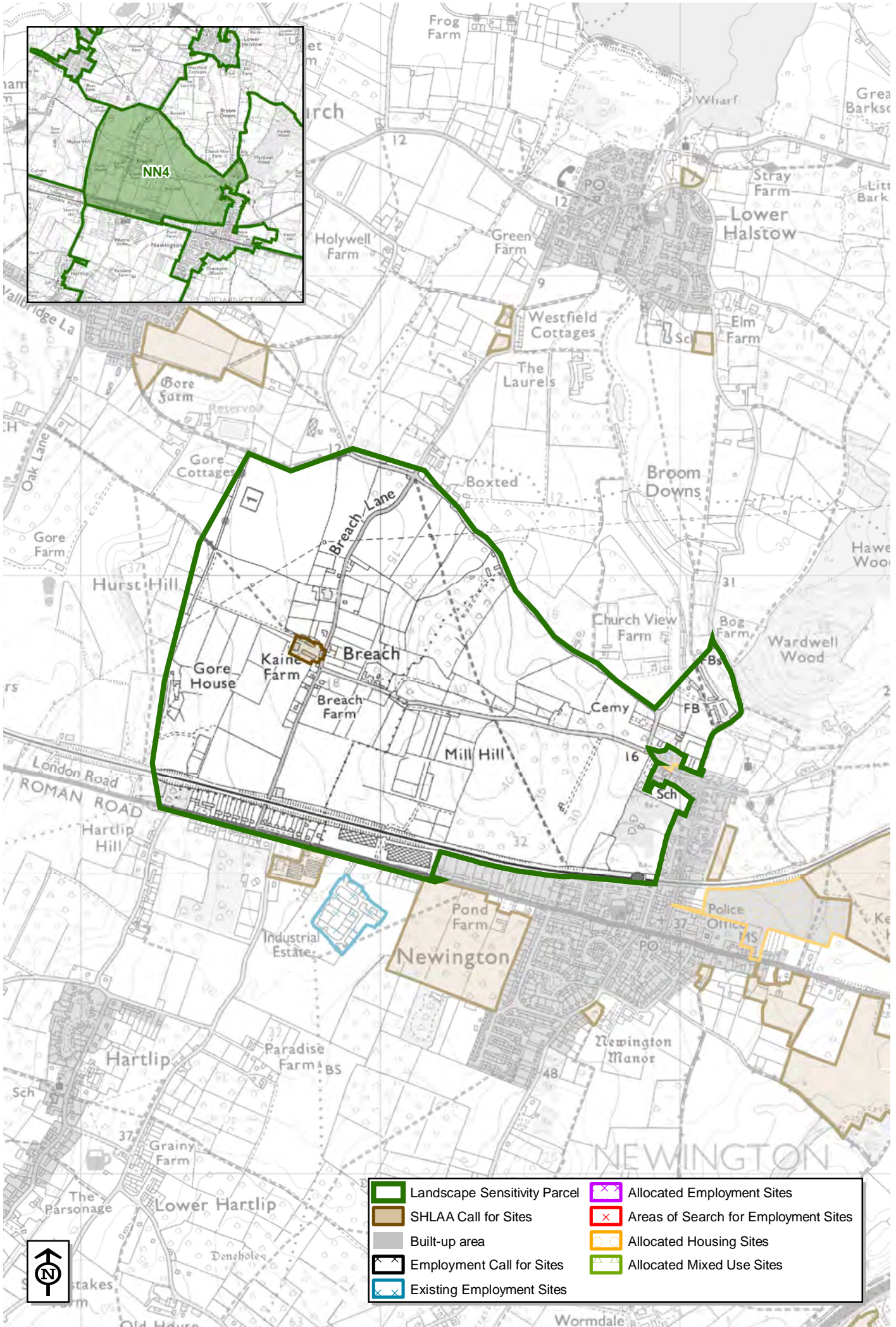
and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

- Provide guidance to promote the retention of traditional rural boundaries and hedges to rural properties and avoid urban and suburban features.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building styles, materials, scale and massing. Sensitive lighting design should be considered.
- New development should seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: Bull Lane, Old House Lane and Lower Hartlip Road.
- Conserve the rural setting of the Hartlip Conservation Area, including Pope's Hall.
- Maintain Newington as a distinct settlement and avoid the visual impression of a continuous suburban character linking Sittingbourne, Keycol, Newington and Rainham.
- Consider the impact of any new development in relation to the sensitive landscapes of Area of High Landscape Value - Kent Level to the south.

Newington Area NN4: Designations and Constraints



Newington Area NN4: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



	Landscape Sensitivity Parcel		Allocated Employment Sites
	SHLAA Call for Sites		Areas of Search for Employment Sites
	Built-up area		Allocated Housing Sites
	Employment Call for Sites		Allocated Mixed Use Sites
	Existing Employment Sites		

Representative photographs



View north west from Wardwell Lane towards Broom Downs.



View east from Mill Hill towards Wardwell Wood and Newington church

Location and landscape character

The landscape to the west and north-west of Newington lies within the Upchurch and Lower Halstow Fruit Belt landscape character area (No.32). It comprises small to medium scale arable farmland and pasture/paddocks and small areas of commercial orchards.

Landscape value

The area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local). It is adjacent to the Iwade Ridge Area of High Landscape Value – Swale Level, and confirmed in the recent Local Landscape Designations study.

Assessment Criterion

Sensitivity description

Topography and scale

An undulating topography, rising to 40m AOD at Mill Hill. The landscape west of Breach Lane is flatter. The landscape scale is generally small to moderate, with fragmented mature hedgerows and shelterbelts surrounding the pasture and arable fields. On the edge of the settlement and close to roads there has been some subdivision of fields for horse grazing. Loss of vegetation increases the sense of scale but some fields have also been subdivided into smaller scale paddocks.

Natural character

The landscape contains small areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland in the south west of the area, south of the railway line. There are also small areas of priority habitat traditional orchard south of Gore House. Other habitats present within the landscape include mature hedgerows, shelterbelts and trees lining the railway line. The lane running east of Breach Lane, and Holywell Lane on the northern border are both designated as Rural Lanes.

Sense of time depth / historic character

The Swale HLC indicates that the area is varied, with orchards in the north west, north east of Boxted Lane and in the centre. The landscape is formed of fields predominantly bounded by tracks, roads and other rights of way, while the centre contains small rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries. There are scattered farmsteads along Breach Lane and Boxted Lane, including the Grade II listed Breach House, Breach farmhouse and Bog Farmhouse. There are two Scheduled Monuments either side of Boxted Lane – a Romano-Celtic temple and a Romano-British villa. Other development includes the London-Dover railway line, and south of the railway there is residential ribbon development and greenhouses along the A2.

Some areas of traditionally managed orchards have been lost in recent years, and have been subdivided by post and rail fencing to facilitate horse grazing/paddocks which create a more cluttered smaller scale landscape.

Visual character	There are open views from Breach Lane and Boxted Lane and from Mill Hill, including north to Otterham Creek, south to the Kent Downs AONB and north east to Wardwell Wood/Hawes Wood and Callum Hill. There are also good views to St Mary, Newington and oast houses in the north of Newington. Some shelterbelts and fragmented hedgerows restrict long internal views, and vegetation along the railway line and A2 restrict views to the south. Views from the A2 into the landscape are largely restricted by mature vegetation.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	The landscape has a mixture of rural character and more rural fringe character due to the presence of horse grazing and ribbon development along the A2 in the south. The area is increasingly tranquil towards the north, away from Newington, the A2 and railway line and experiences dark skies. Signs of modern development which decrease the sensitivity are the prominent line of electricity pylons running east-west through the area, and a solar farm west of Breach Lane. The replacement of hedgerows with post and rail fencing and subdivision of fields for horse grazing also decreases the rural character of the area. There is access by PRow throughout the area.
Character and setting of settlement	This area provides some contribution as a rural back drop to the northern and north western edge of Newington, and the Newington Church Conservation Area. The current settlement edge is well screened by shelterbelts and garden vegetation and much of the A2 is lined by mature hedgerows and vegetation. The railway and woodland to the west of north Newington form strong settlement boundaries. Beyond this is a rising landform to Mill Hill.

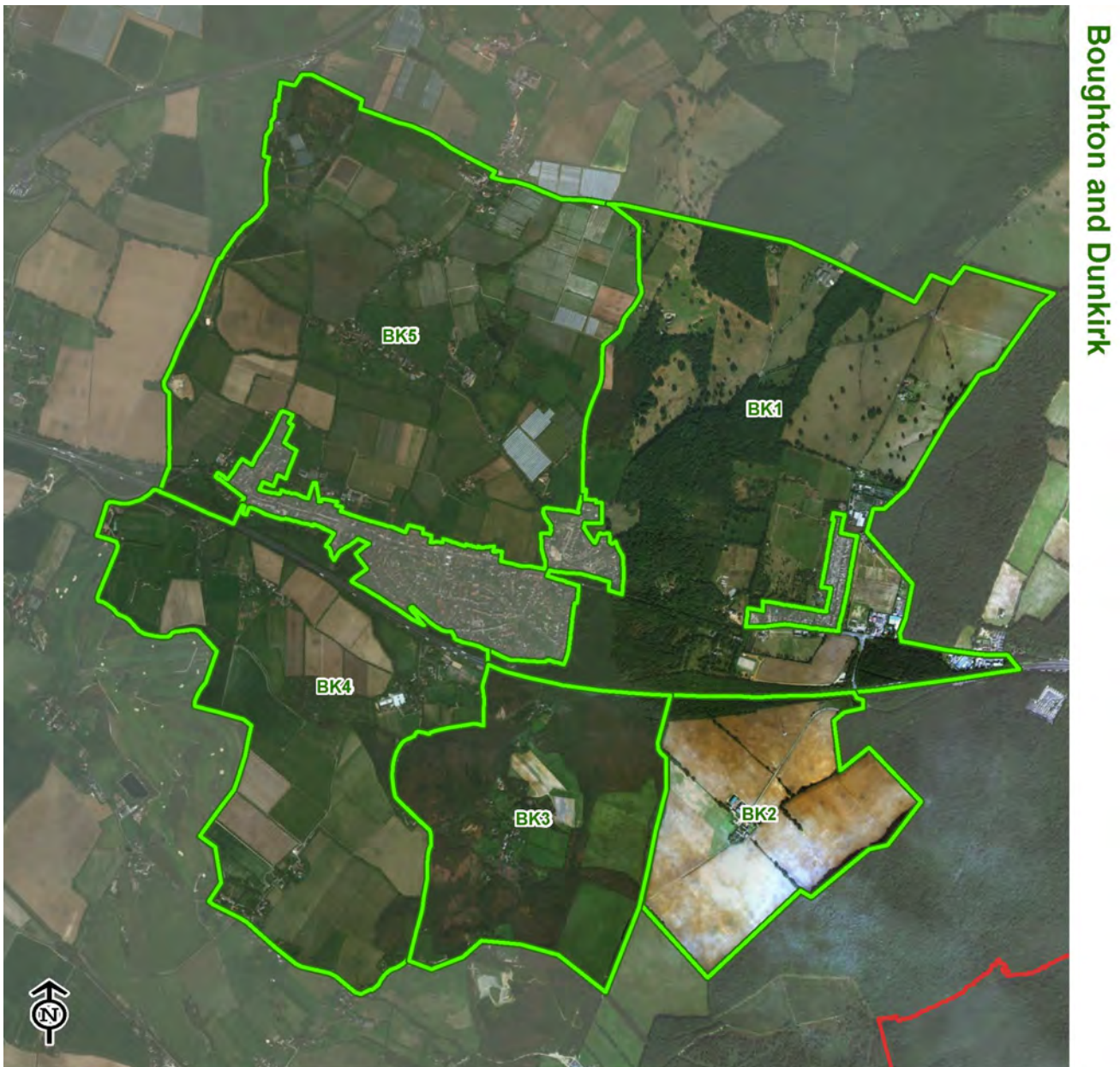
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B, light industrial)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
<p>The landscape has an undulating landform, moderate sense of rural character with limited modern human influences, moderate time depth with some heritage assets and semi-natural habitats and has some visual prominence. The very strong settlement edge formed by the railway and woodland, in combination with the above attributes including the rising landform at Mill Hill, indicate a moderate-high overall sensitivity to future change from residential development.</p> <p>The landscape is considered to have a moderate-high overall sensitivity to future change from employment development. Development of greater height or bulk than residential development would be more visually prominent within the landscape and could not be easily integrated.</p> <p>Key spatial variations between Boxted Lane and Wardwell Lane which have a higher tranquillity and strong rural character, indicating higher sensitivity. The area to the west has lower landscape sensitivity but is unconnected to the settlement edge.</p>				

Guidance

Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost, for example the traditionally managed orchards. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building styles, materials, scale and massing. Sensitive lighting design should be considered in this rural area.
- Seek opportunities for landscape enhancement of the paddock/equestrian landscape through boundary restoration, sward management and sensitive location of associated buildings.
- Conserve the rural setting of the Newington Church Conservation Area including views to St Mary's church and the Listed oast houses.
- New development should seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: Holywell Lane and the lane between Breach Lane and School Lane.
- Maintain Newington as a distinct settlement, and avoid development crossing the railway line.
- Maintain and enhance the well-integrated edges of the settlement so that development is not generally visible from the surrounding rural landscape. Avoid urban style boundaries/fencing and use native tree and hedgerow planting to provide screening.

Settlement Area: Boughton-under-Blean and Dunkirk



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Location and Description

The settlement area comprises the two distinct villages of Boughton-under-Blean and Dunkirk, located in the far east of Swale Borough, in close proximity to its boundary with the City of Canterbury District. Boughton is by far the larger village, characterised by a linear historic settlement core (designated as a Conservation Area) running alongside the Roman Road of Watling Street, now the route of the A2. The settlement is characterised by a rich diversity of building styles and periods, with many listed buildings, including a number of timber framed properties, alongside Georgian, Victorian and 20th century buildings.

Dunkirk is a smaller linear village, situated on the higher ground to the east of Boughton-under-Blean, enclosed by ancient woodland within the Blean Woodland complex. It is characterised by a predominance of mid-20th century housing, and is dominated by a large telecommunications mast.

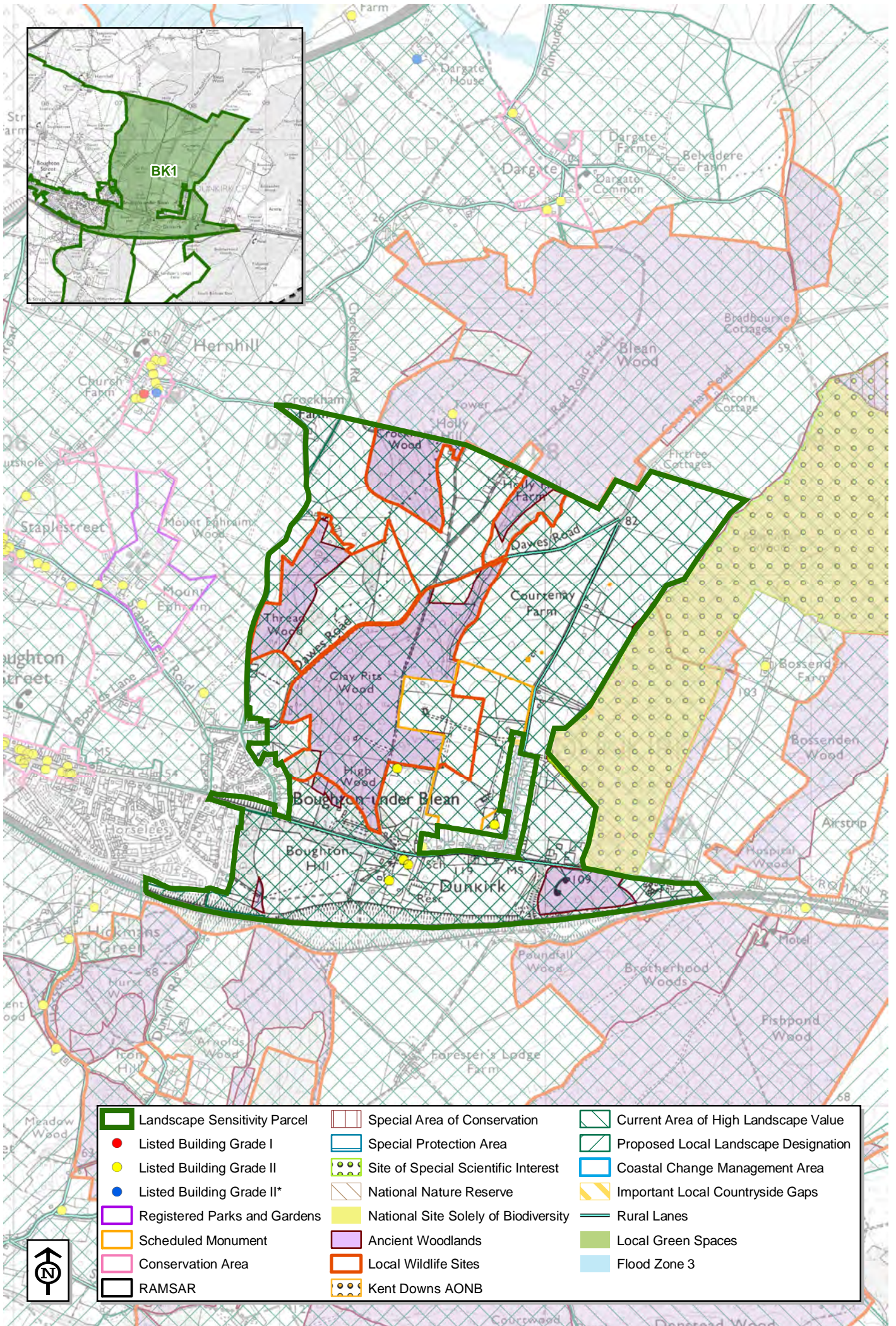
The settlement edges are divided into five areas for assessment of sensitivity to residential and employment development. These largely relate to the landscape character areas, together with physical boundaries such as roads, and comprise:

BK1 – 3 - the enclosed, sloping and wooded areas to the east of Boughton, within the Blean Woods West landscape character area.

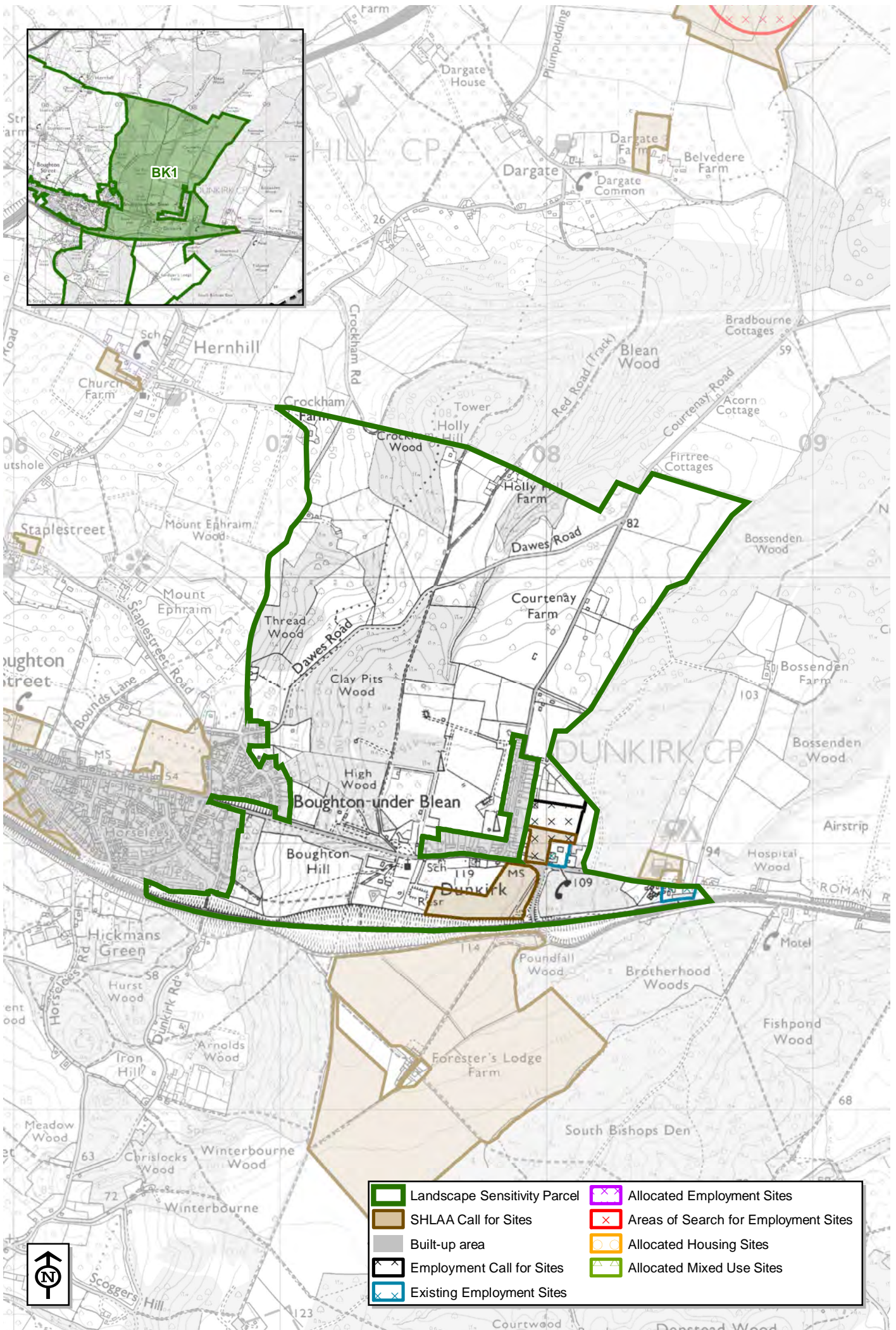
BK4 - 5 - the rolling, enclosed farmed areas to the north and south of Boughton, within the Hernhill and Boughton Fruit Belt landscape character area.

Areas scoped out of the assessment include those to the east of Dunkirk due to the ecological constraints of the Blean Woodland complex (designated ancient woodland, SSSI, SAC and NNR); and to the west of Boughton due to flood risk (Environment Agency Flood Zone 3); and because the Council received no housing or employment site submissions for these areas in the 2018 SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment) call for sites.

Boughton and Dunkirk Area BK1: Designations and Constraints



Boughton and Dunkirk Area BK1: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



	Landscape Sensitivity Parcel		Allocated Employment Sites
	SHLAA Call for Sites		Areas of Search for Employment Sites
	Built-up area		Allocated Housing Sites
	Employment Call for Sites		Allocated Mixed Use Sites
	Existing Employment Sites		



Representative photographs



View north-west from high point on Dawes Road over Hernhill fruit belt and marshes beyond



View south-west from Courtenay Road towards radio transmitter tower and Dunkirk village

Location and landscape character

The area of the landscape to the east of Boughton and surrounding Dunkirk lies within the Blean Woods West landscape character area (No.33). It comprises a combination of extensive semi-natural ancient woodland, pasture with scattered trees, and occasional grassland and arable.

Landscape value

The area lies almost wholly within the Blean Woods West Area of High Landscape Value (AHLV) – Kent Level, with the exception of a small wedge of land west of Crockham Road, which is within the neighbouring Blean Edge Fruit Belt AHLV – Swale Level.

The whole area is recommended in the 2018 study for designation as The Blean LLD.

Assessment Criterion

Sensitivity description

Topography and scale

Steeply rising landform from c.40m AOD in the west along Thread Lane, which reaches c.115m in the south-east of the area around the Dunkirk radio mast, where it levels off. The continuous belts of dense deciduous woodland clothing the slopes create strong enclosure and insularity, limiting the perceived scale of the landscape. In more open elevated areas, e.g. along parts of Courtenay Road and Dawes Road, the scale becomes more expansive with longer range views opening up, although the woodland backdrop remains.

Natural character

A significant proportion of the area is designated ancient woodland, a highly valued semi-natural habitat (as well as a locally designated site of biodiversity). It lies adjacent to the nationally designated Church Woods, Blean SSSI and NNR, to the east, with the Blean Complex SAC slightly further to the north-east. Extensive areas of grazed pasture, scattered with mature trees, have a natural parkland character. An area of land west of the housing on Courtenay Road is identified as Priority Habitat good quality semi-improved grassland. Alongside the predominant semi-natural character of the area are smaller tracts of more intensively managed land, including arable south of the A2, horse paddocks and orchards around Dunkirk village.

Canterbury Road, Courtenay Road and Dawes Road are locally designated Rural Lanes.

The prevalence of significant valued natural features indicates higher sensitivity to development, compared with areas of the Borough where such features are rarer or

	absent.
Sense of time depth / historic character	<p>The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by a combination of pre-19th Century coppices (corresponding with the designated ancient woodland), small and medium regular parliamentary type enclosures (open pasture with scattered field trees), 19th century plantations (around Boughton Hill in the south-west), post-1801 settlement and scattered settlement with paddocks (post 1801 extent).</p> <p>The field pattern and land divisions present today are very similar to those shown on the OS Six-inch map (1898) (resulting from parliamentary enclosures), which together with the continuity of ancient woodland cover, providing a living record of past woodland management practices, with historic features including hedgebanks and extant coppice, and surrounding pastoral land use with parkland character, indicates a strong time-depth to the landscape.</p> <p>There is a group of Victorian Grade II listed buildings on the Canterbury Road, Dunkirk, comprising a primary school, Christ Church and the old vicarage, all built in the 1840s to serve the newly formed Dunkirk Parish after the Courtenay riots of 1838.</p> <p>The principal historic built features within the area relate to a World War II Chain Home Radar station, west of Courtenay Road, recognised as one of the most important largely intact radar complexes in Britain, and a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The radar transmitter tower is listed Grade II, together with a surviving Bofors light anti-aircraft gun tower, also Grade II.</p>
Visual character	<p>The continuous expanses of woodland create strong enclosure; however, in more open elevated areas e.g. along parts of Courtenay Road and Dawes Road, long views north-west over the neighbouring fruit belt areas to the Thames Estuary provide a contrasting scenic quality to the densely wooded landscape. To the east views are curtailed by the unbroken woodland.</p> <p>The A2 forms the southern boundary of the area, however, this runs in cutting and therefore is not visually prominent within the wider landscape.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>A strong sense of tranquillity and relative remoteness/insularity created by the continuous expanses of woodland linked to the wider Blean Woods complex extending beyond the Borough boundary. Much of the area is only accessible on foot with just two minor rural lanes (apart from the A2), with limited built development and consequently dark skies. There is one PRoW running north-south through the centre of the area.</p> <p>Road noise is noticeable in close proximity to the A2, reducing tranquillity.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	<p>Dunkirk is characterised by linear development of predominantly mid-20th century, single and two-storey brick built housing in single linear rows along Canterbury and Courtenay Roads. Only isolated farmhouses are present beyond the settlement core. There is a concentration of listed Victorian buildings (church, vicarage and school) in the south-west of the area along Canterbury Road, together with weatherboarded and tile-hung cottages further east on Canterbury Road. The settlement setting is characterised by the rural surroundings of enclosing woodland, which is prominent in many views, and some open fields and paddocks, including the unique Chain Home Radar station with dominant radar transmitter tower, which all contribute to a distinctive sense of place. The settlement edge of Dunkirk is fairly well-defined, tending to be only one property deep along the road.</p> <p>Whilst situated in fairly close proximity, the settlements of Dunkirk and Boughton remain visually separate, due to the distinct drop in elevation along Canterbury Road leading into Boughton, and the woodland on either side of this road, which in combination with the landform provides strong screening between the two villages.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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This is part of a highly distinctive, unique and scenic wooded landscape within Swale, whose value is recognised through its designation as an Area of High Landscape Value (Kent Level). The combination of landscape value, ecological sensitivities and natural character, intimacy of scale of some parts, strong time depth, perceptual and experiential qualities, relatively compact settlement form and the historical significance of the Chain Home Radar station complex indicate a high overall sensitivity to future change from residential and employment development.

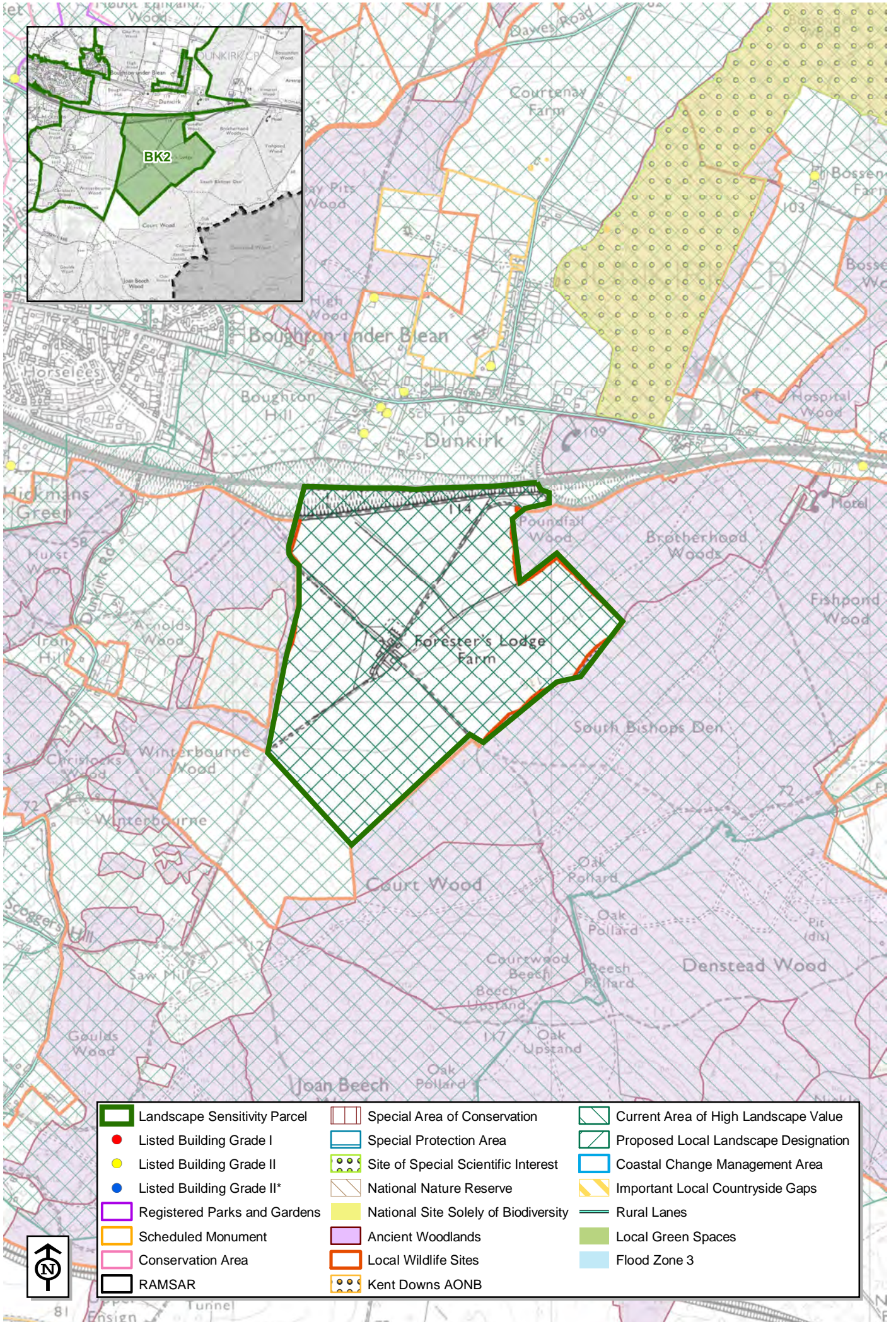
Spatial variations in sensitivity within the area: There are small, discrete areas of open fields/paddocks and detracting modern sheds/warehouses around the settlement core, immediately south of Canterbury Road and east of Courtenay Road that display fewer of the aforementioned distinctive and valued landscape qualities. Whilst these have a moderate degree of openness, and are in proximity to the designated Blean Woods, they are considered to have a slightly lower sensitivity than is typical for the remainder of BK1.

Guidance

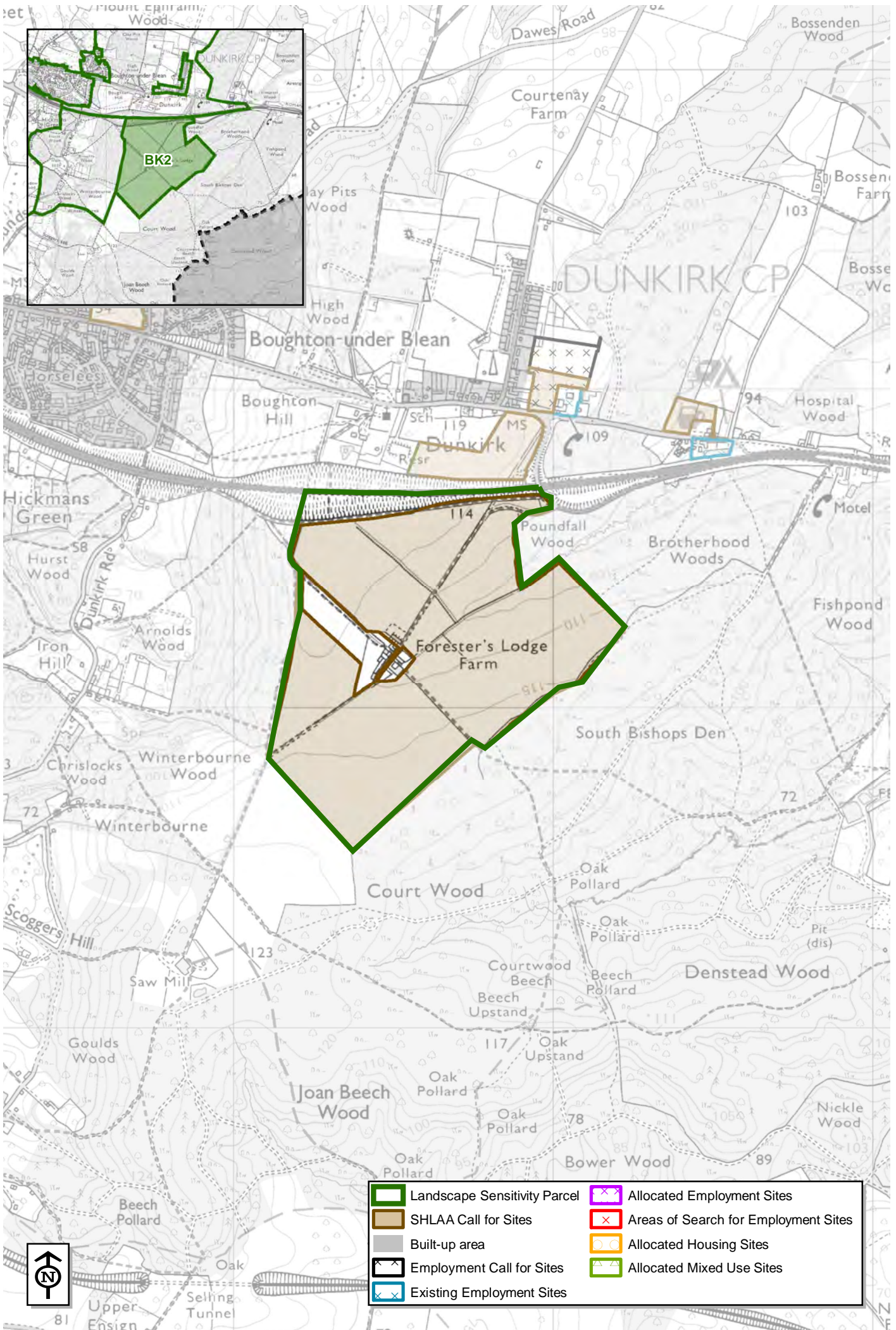
Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Consider any new development in relation to the sensitive landscape character and value of the AHLV, designated ancient woodland and the statutory designations of the neighbouring Blean Woods complex (SSSI, NNR, SPA).
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure consideration is given to sensitive heritage assets including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and their settings.
- Incorporate and conserve views to local landmarks in conjunction with any new development, e.g. the surviving built features of the Chain Home radar complex.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building scale, massing, style and materials, incorporating sensitive lighting design and native plant species of local provenance.
- New development should seek to conserve and enhance the special rural qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: Canterbury Road, Courtenay Road and Dawes Road.
- Maintain the sense of Dunkirk as a distinct small rural village, and avoid extensive linear development along the Canterbury Road giving the impression of a more continuous urban/suburban area with neighbouring Boughton.

Boughton and Dunkirk Area BK2: Designations and Constraints



Boughton and Dunkirk Area BK2: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View from footpath in the north looking south to Forester's Lodge Farm.



View from footpath in the north-west of the area looking south.

Location and landscape character

The area of the landscape to the south of Dunkirk lies within the Blean Woods West landscape character area (No.33). It relates to a discrete area of open, predominantly arable farmland around Forester's Lodge Farm, immediately south of the A2.

Landscape value

This area lies wholly within the Blean Woods Area of High Landscape Value (Kent Level).

The whole area is recommended in the 2018 study for designation as part of The Blean LLD.

Assessment Criterion

Sensitivity description

Topography and scale

An elevated, plateau-like area of gently undulating topography, at an elevation of c.105-115m AOD, immediately east of the steep and wooded western slopes of the Blean. The landscape scale is generally medium, due to the predominance of expansive medium to large arable fields with low managed hedgerows, but with significant enclosure due to the prominent wooded backdrop.

Natural character

Whilst the area is enclosed to the immediate east and west by semi-natural ancient woodland, valued natural features within the site are restricted to the fragmented hedgerow network with some mature hedgerow trees, together with woodland screening planting along the slopes of the A2 cutting.

The absence of significant valued natural features indicates lower sensitivity to development; however, this is counterbalanced to an extent by the adjacent highly valued ancient woodland.

Sense of time depth / historic character

The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by medium regular parliamentary type enclosures, with a small area of 19th Century plantation along the cutting of the A2.

The field pattern, land divisions and historic (unlisted) Forester's Lodge farmstead present today are very similar to those shown on the OS Six-inch map (1898) (resulting from parliamentary enclosures), and suggest that, with the exception of the construction of the A2 trunk road (bypassing Boughton and Dunkirk), the landscape has remained relatively unchanged since at least the late 19th century. The presence of the surrounding ancient woodland, which although located outside BK2 is a visually prominent feature from within it, also adds time depth to the

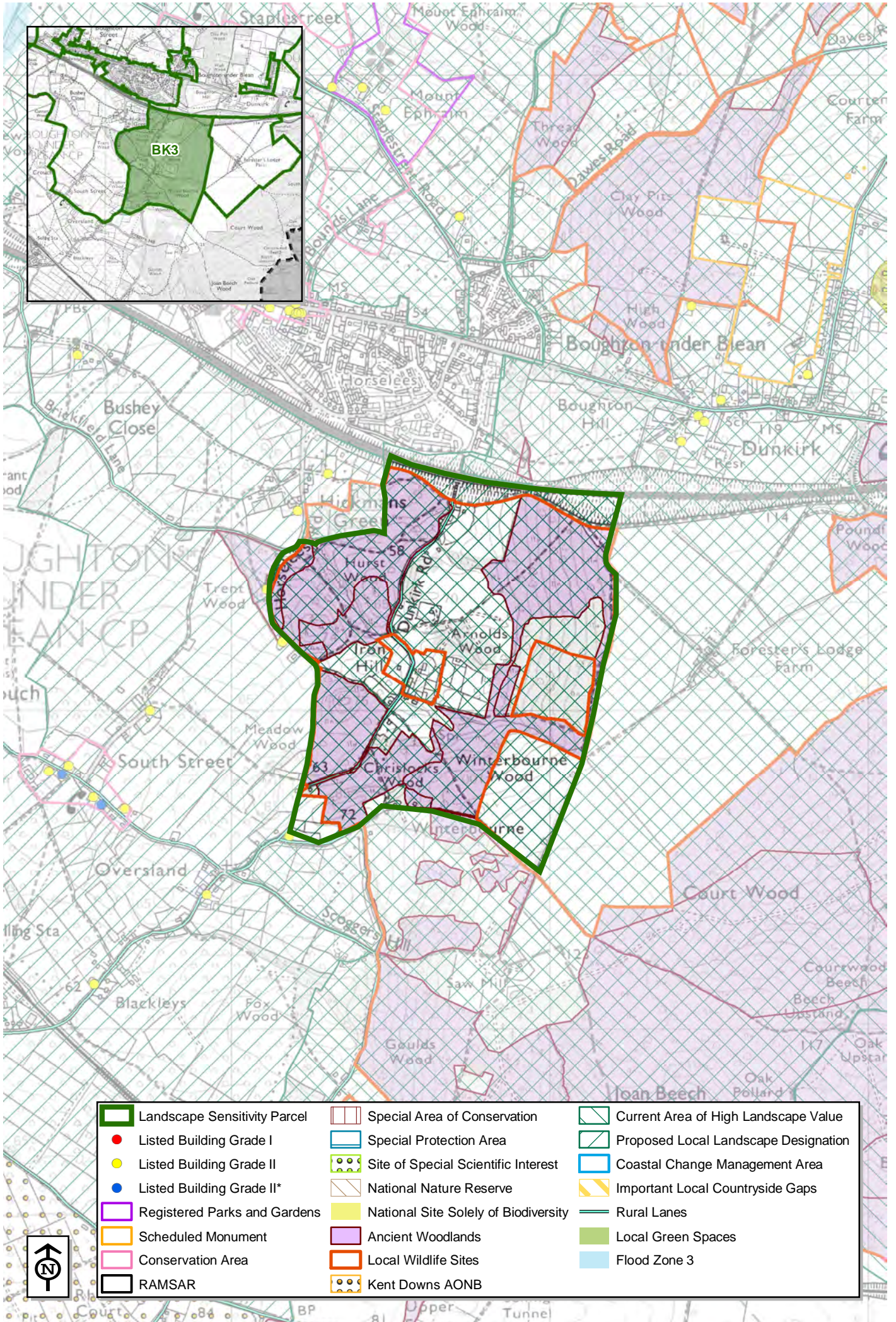
	landscape.
Visual character	The area is visually well-contained from its surroundings, including settlements, by the combination of enclosing woodland and relatively flat landform, which reduces sensitivity.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	The landscape has a relatively strong sense of rural character, albeit with some modern elements and human influences, such as large silos within the farmstead, a wind turbine within one of the arable fields, and road noise from the A2, although these features are not considered visually intrusive. Public access is possible via several PRoWs which traverse the farmland and adjacent woodland.
Character and setting of settlement	The only built features present are the historic farm buildings and more modern agricultural storage structures at Forester's Lodge farm, a discrete cluster in the centre of the area. The presence of neighbouring settlements is not apparent from within this area, due to the visual containment created by the woodland, landform and the A2 corridor. Therefore, this area is not considered to influence or fall within the immediate setting of the neighbouring villages of Dunkirk or Boughton. It is, however, visible in longer range views south from Canterbury Road, Dunkirk, from where the arable farmland contributes positively as a rural backdrop to the village, with the enclosing woodland visible on the skyline immediately beyond.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
<p>The landscape has a broadly flat or gently undulating plateau-like landform, relatively strong sense of rural character with some minor modern human influences, moderate time depth, limited valued natural features and semi-natural habitats (although the surrounding ancient woodland makes a strong visual contribution), and is visually well-contained from some neighbouring areas. Whilst some of these attributes are atypical of the Blean Woods West character area, and suggest a moderate sensitivity, taken in combination with the location of area BK2 wholly within the Blean Woods Area of High Landscape Value (Kent Level), this indicates a moderate-high overall sensitivity to future change from residential and employment development. The open farmland areas need to be seen within their wider landscape context.</p> <p>Spatial variations in sensitivity within the area: There are no notable variations in overall sensitivity within this landscape area, although the sense of tranquillity and remoteness increases with increasing distance from the A2.</p>				

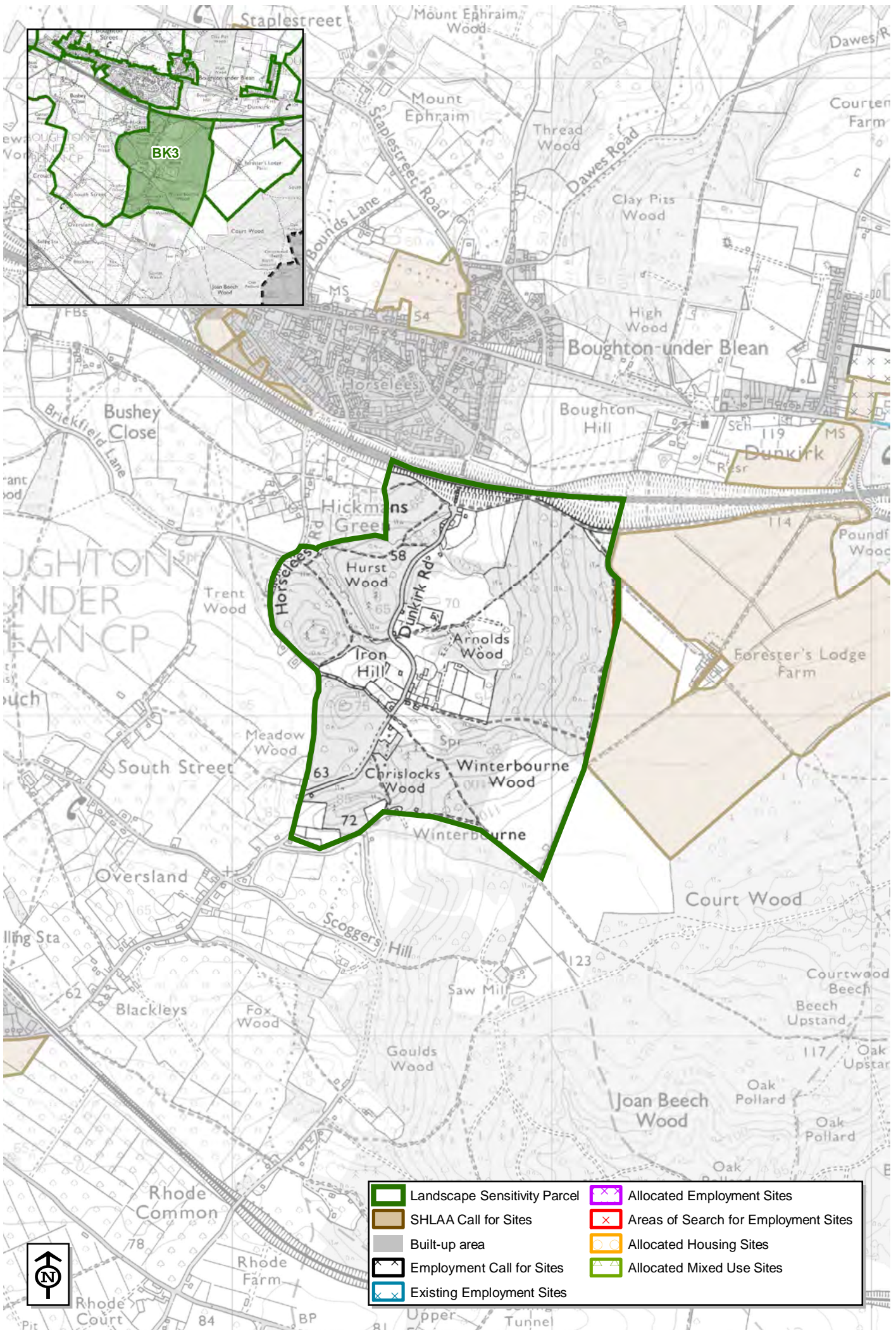
Guidance
<p><i>Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal. • Consider any new development in relation to the sensitive landscape character and value of the AHLV, designated ancient woodland and the statutory designations of the neighbouring Blean Woods complex (SSSI, NNR, SPA).

- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of woodland, shelterbelts and hedgerows, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure consideration is given to sensitive heritage assets including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and their settings.
- Incorporate and conserve views to local landmarks in conjunction with any new development, e.g. the surviving built features of the Chain Home radar complex.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building scale, massing, style and materials, incorporating sensitive lighting design and native plant species of local provenance. New development should also seek to maintain a rural character along the Canterbury Road.
- Maintain the sense of Dunkirk as a distinct small rural village, and avoid extensive linear development along the Canterbury Road giving the impression of a more continuous urban/suburban area with neighbouring Boughton.

Boughton and Dunkirk Area BK3: Designations and Constraints



Boughton and Dunkirk Area BK3: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View looking north-east from within Arnolds Wood.



View looking north from footpath along the eastern boundary.

Location and landscape character

The area of the landscape to the south-east of Boughton lies within the Blean Woods West landscape character area (No.33). It comprises a combination of extensive semi-natural deciduous woodland interspersed with scattered settlement and open farmed areas on strongly undulating and sloping ground.

Landscape value

This area lies almost wholly within the Blean Woods Area of High Landscape Value (Kent Level).

Assessment Criterion

Sensitivity description

Topography and scale

This is an area of varied and often steep topography, incorporating discrete small hills (c.75m AOD) immediately east of Horselees Road, together with central flatter areas corresponding with settlement and further east, the main steep western slope of the Blean Woods, rising to c.115m AOD. The scale of the landscape is typically small and intimate, with significant enclosure due to the landform and woodland. Field size is varied, with small/very small pasture fields, paddocks and orchards around the properties along Dunkirk Road, and a few larger fields (arable and pasture), including some cut directly out of the ancient woodland post 1960.

Natural character

A significant proportion of the area is designated ancient woodland, a highly valued semi-natural habitat (as well as a Local Wildlife Site). Priority Habitats present include the ancient deciduous woodland and some traditional orchards along Dunkirk Road. It is evident that some of the woodland is actively managed by coppicing. Horselees Road and Dunkirk Road are locally designated Rural Lanes. The prevalence of significant valued natural features indicates higher sensitivity to development.

Sense of time depth / historic character

The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by a combination of pre-19th Century coppices (corresponding with the designated ancient woodland), scattered settlement with paddocks (post 1800 extent) (corresponding with isolated properties along Dunkirk Road), and in the south, a medium regular field and a small area of disused chalk quarry.

The landscape pattern present today is similar to that shown on the First Edition OS map; namely, a predominance of woodland with farmed areas having been cut out of this in the 19th and 20th centuries. The continuity of ancient woodland cover, providing a living record of past woodland management practices, with historic features including hedgebanks and extant coppice, limited scattered settlement with

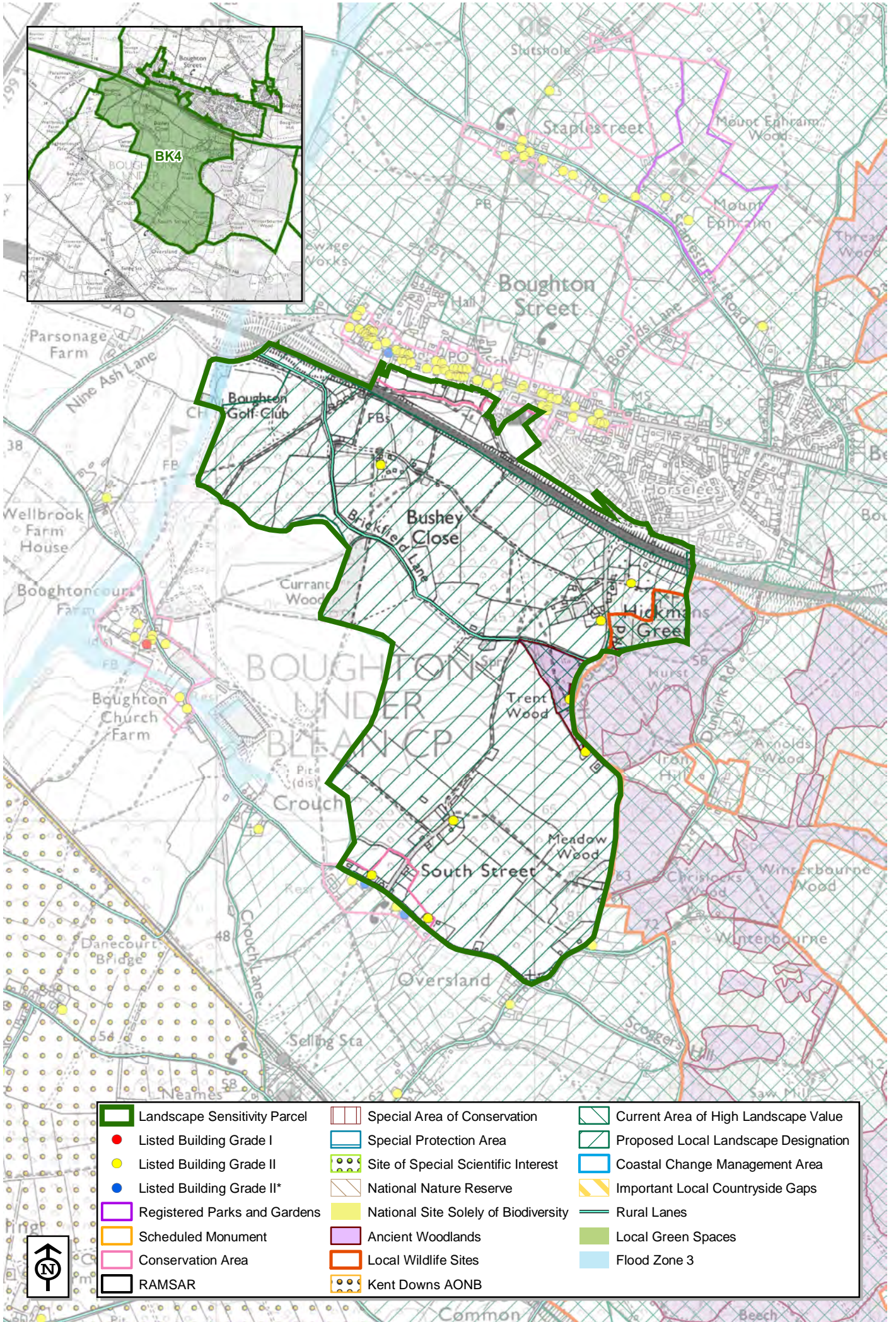
	<p>some traditional orchards and pasture, indicates a strong time-depth to the landscape.</p> <p>Historic built features within the area relate to the scattered cottages along Dunkirk Road, which are unlisted.</p>
Visual character	The landform and continuous expanses of woodland create a strongly enclosed landscape, particularly along Dunkirk Road. Along the western boundary of the area, formed by Horselees Road, views open out slightly over the neighbouring Hernhill and Boughton Fruit Belt.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	A strong sense of rural character, tranquillity and relative remoteness/insularity created by the continuous expanses of woodland linked to the wider Blean Woods complex which extends beyond the Borough boundary. With the exception of Dunkirk Road (a no-through road), much of the area is only accessible on foot, with limited built development and consequently dark skies. Public access is possible via the network of public rights of way which cross the area.
Character and setting of existing settlement	Settlement within this area is limited to scattered dwellings along Dunkirk Road and Horselees Lane. Their setting is characterised by the rural surroundings of enclosing woodland and some orchards, open fields and paddocks. The area is not prominent in views from Boughton under Blean or Dunkirk, partly due to the screening provided by the A2 (running on embankment at this point), although the wooded tops of hills within BK3 would form part of the wider/long distance rural backdrop to these villages in views south over the A2 (where possible).

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
<p>This is a highly distinctive, unique and scenic wooded landscape within Swale, whose value is recognised through its designation as an Area of High Landscape Value (Kent Level). The combination of landscape value, ecological sensitivities and natural character, intimacy of scale of most parts, strong time depth, perceptual and experiential qualities, and strongly rural character with little settlement, indicate a high overall sensitivity to future change from residential and employment development.</p> <p>Spatial variations in sensitivity within the area: There are no notable variations in overall sensitivity within this landscape area, although the sense of tranquillity and remoteness increases with increasing distance from the A2.</p>				

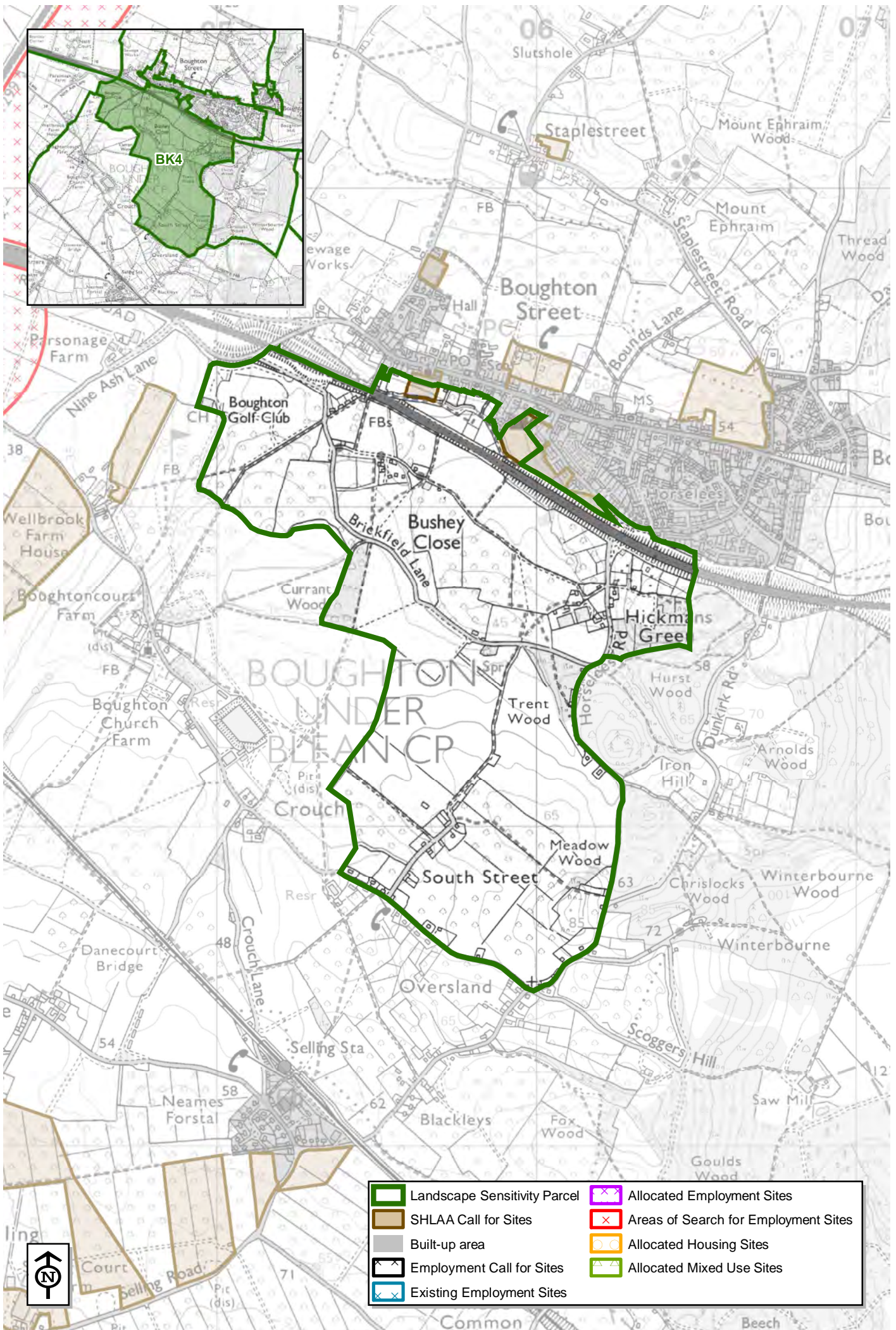
Guidance
<p><i>Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal. • Consider any new development in relation to the sensitive landscape character and value of the AHLV, designated ancient woodland and the statutory designations of the neighbouring Blean Woods complex (SSSI, NNR, SPA).

- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure consideration is given to sensitive heritage assets including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and their settings.
- Incorporate and conserve views to local landmarks in conjunction with any new development, e.g. church tower of St. Peter and St. Paul, Boughton under Blean (Grade I listed).
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building scale, massing, style and materials, incorporating sensitive lighting design and native plant species of local provenance. New development should also seek to maintain a rural character along the A2, and seek to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the designated Rural Lanes: Horselees Road and Dunkirk Road.

Boughton and Dunkirk Area BK4: Designations and Constraints



Boughton and Dunkirk Area BK4: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View from Brickfield Lane looking east/south-east towards Hurst Wood.



View from South Street looking east towards Meadow Wood/Iron Hill

Location and landscape character

The area of the landscape to the south of Boughton lies within the Hernhill and Boughton Fruit Belt landscape character area (No.23). It comprises a predominance of commercial fruit production, hop fields and occasional arable on open, rolling and undulating farmland.

Landscape value

The majority of this area has no landscape designations (local or national). Along Horselees Road in the east, the edge of the Blean Woods West Area of High Landscape Value – Kent Level extends into BK4 at Trent Wood and Hickman's Green.

The Kent Downs AONB is situated in fairly close proximity to this area (c.600m to the south-west at its closest).

The 2018 study recommends that the existing Blean Edge Fruit Belt AHLV – Swale Level be extended south of the A2 to incorporate the whole of area BK4, designated as The Blean LLD.

Assessment Criterion

Sensitivity description

Topography and scale

The area has an undulating and occasionally rolling topography in the foothills of the Blean, with an elevation ranging from c.25m AOD in the north up to c.85m AOD at the isolated hill of Meadow Wood in the south. The landscape scale varies from small to medium, contained by the landform and presence of frequent shelterbelts, hedgerows, orchards and the wider wooded backdrop of the Blean to the east.

Natural character

This is a farmed landscape dominated by fruit and hop cultivation, where Priority Habitats are restricted to minor blocks of deciduous woodland (at Trent Wood and Meadow Wood in the east, and Currant Wood in the west), together with a relatively large remnant traditional orchard along Brickfield Lane. Notwithstanding this, there are frequent valued natural features in the form of the network of hedgerows and poplar and alder shelterbelts. The Blean Woods South Local Wildlife Site also extends slightly into BK4 at Hickman's Green.

Brickfield Lane, South Street and Horselees Road are locally designated Rural Lanes.

Sense of time depth / historic character

The Swale HLC indicates that the area is characterised by a predominance of orchards, with scattered settlement and paddocks, small regular fields, and a small wedge of pre-19th century coppice at Trent Wood.

A comparison of field pattern, land cover and settlement today with the Six-inch map (1898) and historical aerial photographs indicates a strong continuity of these

	<p>features, and consequently a strong time depth to the landscape. The main differences are a significant loss of traditional orchards post-1940 to commercial scale fruit and hop production, and the development of the shelterbelt network.</p> <p>Built heritage features comprise the Conservation Areas at South Street, along the southern boundary of the area, and in the far north at Boughton Street, Boughton under Blean (largely restricted to residential gardens). The area benefits from a distinctive 'textbook' Kentish vernacular of oasts, red brick, timber framed, tile-hung and weatherboarded cottages, farmhouses and other properties, a number of which are Grade II listed.</p> <p>The only substantial modern built form within the area (other than the A2) relates to agricultural storage sheds off Horselees Road; however these are not visually prominent features.</p> <p>The largely traditional rural character of the area increases sensitivity to new built development.</p>
Visual character	<p>Due to the enclosure provided by the undulating and rolling landform and the network of shelterbelts, orchards, hedgerows/hedgebanks, woodland and sunken lanes, which act to contain views, the area has limited visual prominence within the wider landscape. More open areas are present, such as along parts of Brickfield Lane, where longer views are possible to linear settlement along Boughton Road, to the immediate north of the A2 (which runs in cutting at this point), and to the Blean woodland in the background beyond.</p> <p>The skyline within the area is generally non-prominent and undeveloped. Although some small-scale electricity transmission lines cross this landscape, they are not intrusive.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>A strongly rural character, with the area infiltrated only by minor rural lanes. Relatively strong sense of tranquillity and seclusion, with limited built development and consequently dark skies.</p> <p>Road noise is noticeable in close proximity to the A2, reducing tranquillity.</p> <p>There is good public access to this landscape via an extensive network of PRowS.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	<p>The area is within the wider rural backdrop to Boughton under Blean, although the majority is visually separated from the village by the screening effect of the A2 bypass. A small, narrow part of this landscape area extends north of the A2 and adjoins Boughton's settlement boundary along Boughton Street and Colonel's Lane, which incorporate part of the historic village core and an enclave of low-rise, 20th century housing between Canterbury Road and the A2 bypass. Here, the settlement edge is well contained between these two roads and Boughton Hill, and is screened to an extent by landform and established planting along the A2.</p> <p>As noted above, aside from the Boughton settlement edge, other settlement within the area is limited to scattered isolated dwellings and groups, as at South Street and Hickmans Green. These all have a strongly rural character, utilising vernacular materials, are non-prominent and well integrated within the surrounding landscape.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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This is a strongly rural area, adjacent to the AHLV – Kent Level and which displays some of the special qualities of the nearby AONB. The combination of tranquil areas of traditional fruit and hop cultivation which overlay a scenic rolling landform, with a textbook Kentish built character, create a distinctive and valued sense of place, indicating a high overall sensitivity to future change from residential and employment development.

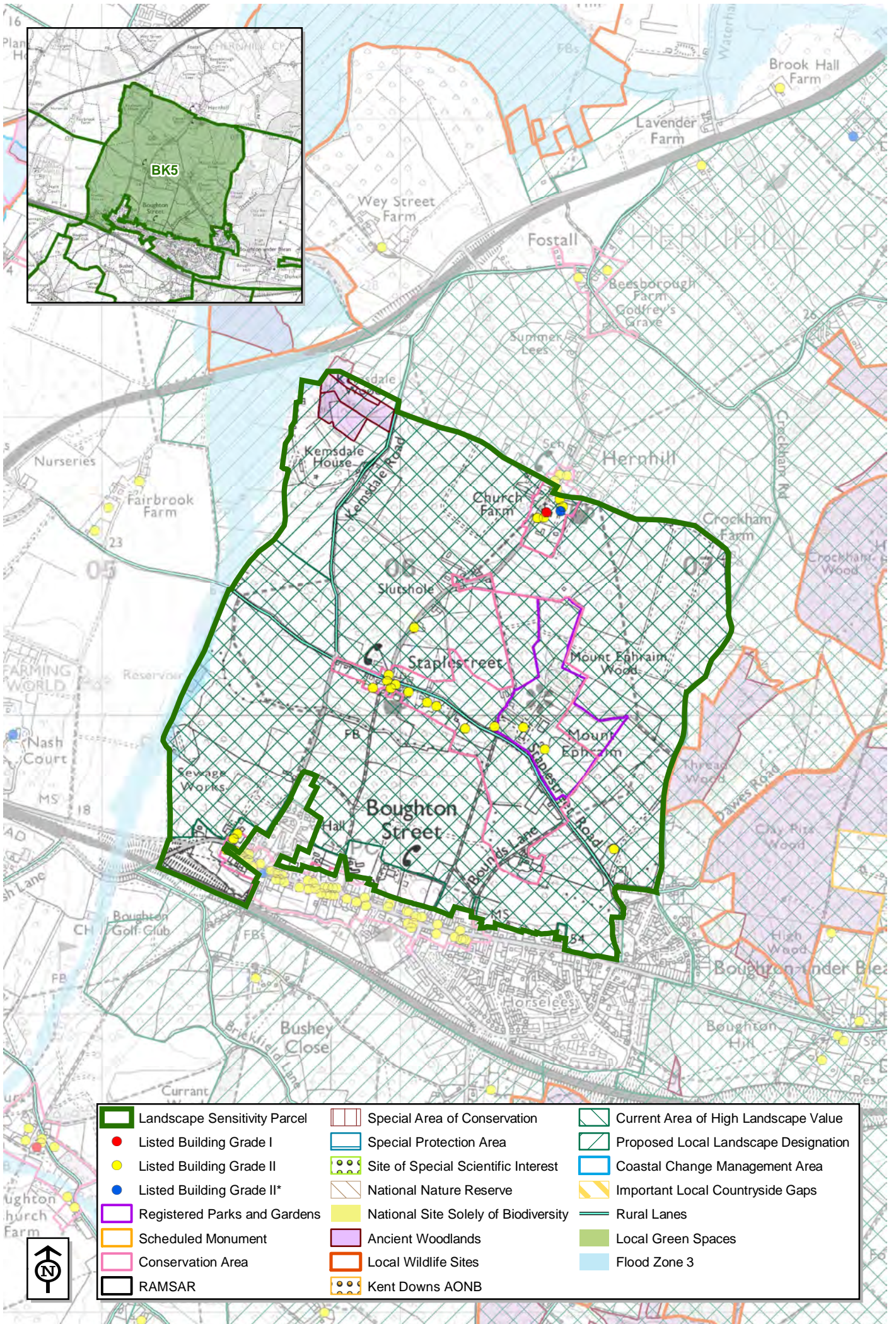
Spatial variations in sensitivity within the area: There are no notable variations in overall sensitivity within this landscape area, although the sense of tranquillity and remoteness increases with increasing distance from the A2.

Guidance

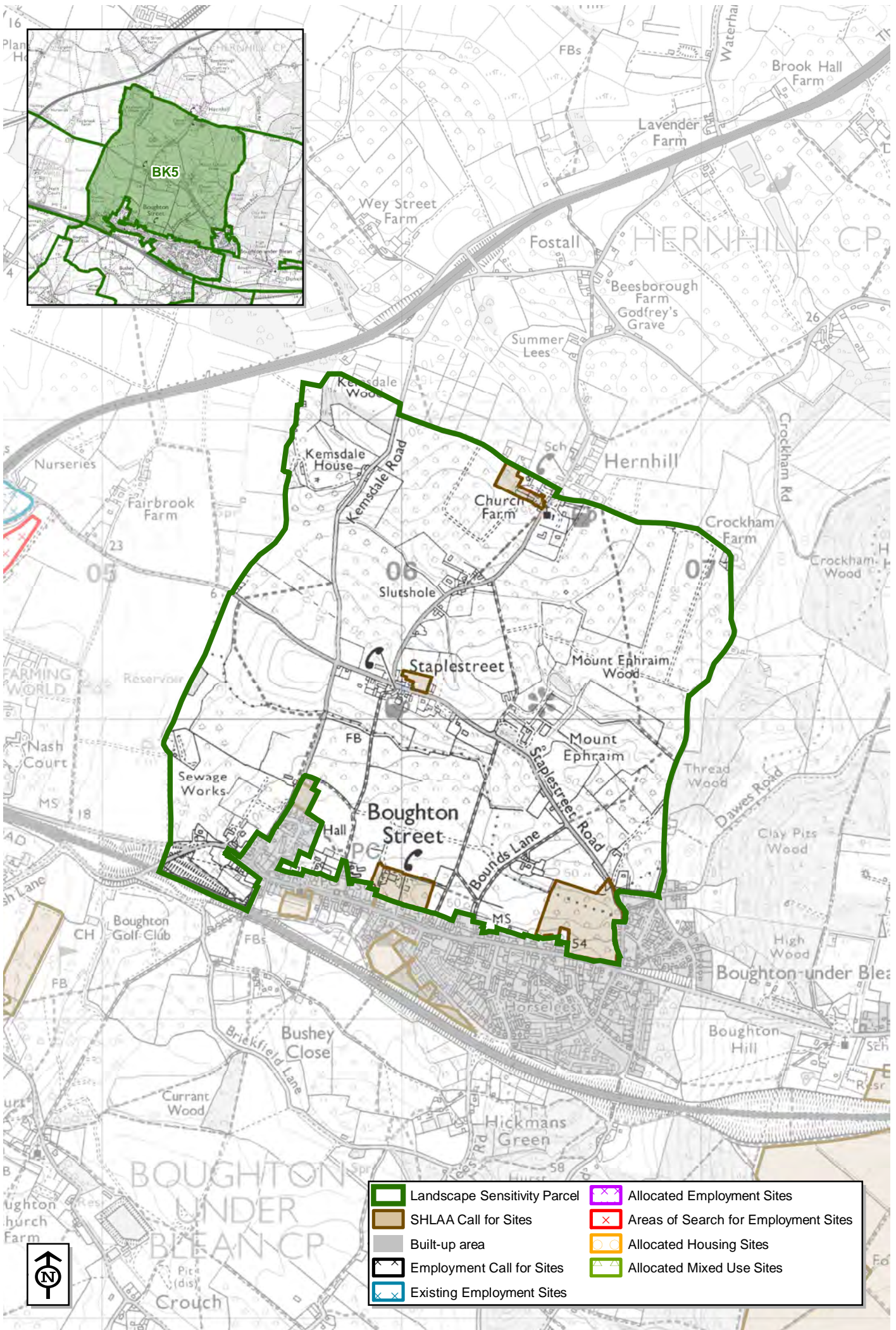
Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide, the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal and the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan (where relevant).
- Consider any new development in relation to the sensitive landscape character and value of the AHLV and nearby AONB, designated ancient woodland and the statutory designations of the neighbouring Blean Woods complex (SSSI, NNR, SPA).
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure consideration is given to sensitive heritage assets including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and their settings.
- Incorporate and conserve views to local landmarks in conjunction with any new development, e.g. church tower of St. Peter and St. Paul, Boughton under Blean (Grade I listed).
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building scale, massing, style and materials, incorporating sensitive lighting design and native plant species of local provenance. New development should also seek to maintain a rural character along the network of lanes, in particular by conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the locally designated Rural Lanes: Brickfield Lane, South Street and Horselees Road.
- Maintain the sense of South Street and Hickmans Green as distinct hamlets / groups of properties with their own character and landscape setting.

Boughton and Dunkirk Area BK5: Designations and Constraints



Boughton and Dunkirk Area BK5: Allocations and Possible Areas for Development



Representative photographs



View north-west over BK5 area including St. Michael's Church, Hernhill



View of oasts and hop growing apparatus along Bull Lane

Location and landscape character

The area of the landscape to the north of Boughton under Blean lies within the Hernhill and Boughton Fruit Belt landscape character area (No.23). It comprises a predominance of commercial fruit production, with hop fields, pasture and occasional arable on rolling and undulating farmland enclosed by a strong network of shelterbelts and hedgerows.

Landscape value

The majority of this area lies within the Blean Fruit Belt AHLV – Swale Level. Exceptions to this are the northern and western settlement edge of Boughton and the far north-west beyond Kemsdale Road.

The adjoining area to the east is within the Blean Woods West AHLV – Kent Level.

The whole area is recommended in the 2018 study for designation as The Blean Edge LLD.

Assessment Criterion

Sensitivity description

Topography and scale

The area has an irregular undulating and occasionally rolling topography in the foothills of the Blean, which provides a significant contribution to its scenic landscape character. There is a general fall in elevation from east to west, from c.50m AOD to as low as c.5m AOD, with a number of streams flowing west from the Blean. The landscape scale varies from small to medium, contained by the landform and presence of frequent shelterbelts, hedgerows, orchards and the wider wooded backdrop to the east.

Natural character

This is a farmed landscape dominated by fruit and hop cultivation, where Priority Habitats are restricted to minor blocks of deciduous woodland (including designated ancient woodland at Mount Ephraim Wood and Kemsdale Wood), and remnant traditional orchards alongside the stream south of Staplestreet. Notwithstanding this, there are frequent valued natural features in the form of the network of hedgerows and poplar and alder shelterbelts.

Staplestreet Road, Kemsdale Road and Crockham Lane are locally designated Rural Lanes.

Sense of time depth / historic character

The Swale HLC indicates that the area is dominated by orchards, with an area of prairie fields (19th Century enclosure with extensive boundary loss) in the west, small regular fields north of Boughton, other pre-1810 woodland (at Kemsdale Wood), village/hamlet 1810 extent (at Hernhill and Boughton), post-1810 settlement (at Staplestreet and around Hernhill and Boughton), scattered settlement

	<p>with paddocks (post 1800 extent) at Slutshole, and isolated small vineyards within/around the Mount Ephraim estate.</p> <p>A comparison of field pattern, land cover/use and settlement today with the First Edition OS map (post-1888) and historical aerial photographs indicates a strong continuity of these features, and consequently a strong time depth to the landscape. The main differences are a significant loss of traditional orchards post-1940 to commercial scale fruit and hop production, and the development of the shelterbelt network.</p> <p>Built heritage features include the large, central Conservation Area at Staplestreet, with a concentration of listed buildings, and incorporating part of the Mount Ephraim estate, a Grade II Registered Park & Garden. The area also includes the majority of the Hernhill Conservation Area, south of Kays Lane/Crockham Lane. This includes the Grade I listed St. Michael's Church, Hernhill, which occupies a prominent elevated position and whose tower forms a local landmark. The neighbouring Manor House is Grade II* listed.</p> <p>The area benefits from a distinctive 'textbook' Kentish vernacular of oasts, red brick, timber framed, tile-hung and weatherboarded cottages, farmhouses and other properties, a number of which are listed.</p> <p>The largely traditional rural character of the area increases sensitivity to new built development.</p>
Visual character	<p>The elevated and undulating topography offers a contrasting sense of enclosure, enhanced by the backdrop of the Blean, and long views north out over the marshlands and the Swale. This is a strongly rural, secluded and tranquil landscape enclosed by, but not adversely impacted by, the main roads of the A2 and A299.</p> <p>There are no intrusive elements on the largely undeveloped skyline.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>A strongly rural character, with the area infiltrated only by minor rural lanes. Relatively strong sense of tranquillity and seclusion, with limited built development and consequently dark skies.</p> <p>There is good public access to this landscape via an extensive network of PRowS.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	<p>Along this northern edge Boughton has expanded out from its historic linear form with small residential estates.</p> <p>The area forms a strongly rural and scenic backdrop and immediate setting to Boughton, which is apparent in views from Bull Lane, Staplestreet Road and Boughton Street, with rolling orchards adjoining these routes, which are characterised by low-rise housing one plot deep. It makes a distinctive and positive contribution to the character of the settlement and its sense of place.</p> <p>Beyond Boughton, other settlement within the area is limited to small nucleated villages/hamlets, as at Hernhill, Staplestreet and Slutshole, and isolated farmsteads, including oasts. These all have a strongly rural character, utilising vernacular materials, are non-prominent and well integrated within the surrounding landscape.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development (2-3 storey housing, over 2ha)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment development (Use Class B light industrial)

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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This is a strongly rural area, whose value is recognised through local designation as the Blean Fruit Belt AHLV – Swale Level. The combination of tranquil areas of traditional fruit and hop cultivation which overlay a scenic rolling landform, with a textbook Kentish built character, including a range of designated heritage assets which contribute positively to landscape character, create a distinctive and valued sense of place, indicating a high overall sensitivity to future change from residential and employment development.

Spatial variations in sensitivity within the area: There are no notable variations in overall sensitivity within this landscape area.

Guidance

Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following represents general guidance and should not be interpreted to the effect that residential and employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Ensure reference is made to relevant published guidance, including the Kent Design Guide and the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.
- Consider any new development in relation to the sensitive landscape character and value of the AHLV, designated ancient woodland and the statutory designations of the neighbouring Blean Woods complex (SSSI, NNR, SPA).
- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost. This landscape-led approach should extend to the consideration of green infrastructure (GI), and opportunities to incorporate existing valued landscape features within a network of multi-functional, accessible green and blue spaces and routes, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- Ensure consideration is given to sensitive heritage assets including Conservation Areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and their settings.
- Incorporate and conserve views to local landmarks in conjunction with any new development, e.g. St. Michael's Church, Hernhill.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building scale, massing, style and materials, incorporating sensitive lighting design and native plant species of local provenance.
- Seek to maintain a rural character along minor roads within the area, in particular by conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the locally designated Rural Lanes: Staplestreet Road, Kemsdale Road and Crockham Lane.
- Maintain the sense of Boughton as a distinct rural village and maintain essential linear form, avoiding expansion of development northwards and further linear development along the Canterbury Road. Similarly, maintain the sense of Staplestreet and Hernhill as distinct, nucleated hamlets.