



# Land east of West Horndon

Representation

Urban Design, LVIA and Green Belt Assessment  
12 February 2015



**COUNTRYSIDE**  
Places People Love

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Introduction



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# 1 Introduction

# Section 1: Introduction

## 1.1 General

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### 1.1 General

This report has been prepared by Rummey Design (RD) on behalf of Countryside Properties Ltd. (CPL) to provide background and evidence in support of CPL's proposals for a mixed use development at West Horndon.

The assessment forms part of a response to an invitation for formal representations in regard to Brentwood Borough Council Local Plan Strategic Growth Options Consultation. It also responds to the Dunton Garden Suburb Consultation which is being undertaken jointly by Brentwood and Basildon Borough Councils, as part of formal public consultations that run in parallel from 6 January 2015 until 17 February 2015.

### 1.2 Location of the sites

The two sites are located to the west of the town of Basildon in south central Essex, as illustrated by Figure 1. The boundaries of the proposed sites are within 1km of each other: Dunton Garden Suburb is directly contiguous with the western periphery of Basildon and the CPL site is to the east of the village of West Horndon.

### 1.3 Purpose of the report

The purpose of this document is to highlight the deliverability of the CPL's site, which is identified within an opportunity area for growth in Brentwood Borough Council's Local Plan Strategic Growth Options Consultation document (January 2015). The benefits of developing the West Horndon site is set in the context of an alternative proposal to focus such future development in the neighbouring Dunton Garden Suburb site. The report forms an appendix to representations made by Andrew Martin Associates on behalf of CPL.

Relevant issues pertinent to assessing the qualities of each site are:

- compliance with planning policy
- transport and access
- urban and landscape design principles
- landscape and visual impacts
- compliance with Green Belt statutory purposes

In this context a case can be made for the release of land such as that to the east of West Horndon which is privately owned Green Belt without any real environmental or amenity treasures. The land has been intensively farmed and has limited access and relatively little amenity value. Years of intensive farming could even be said to have had a negative environmental value by removal, for example, of key features such as hedgerows and hedgerow trees, and the increase in field sizes, with a consequential reduction in habitat and landscape value.

This document will discuss the potential significance for residential development at CPL's West Horndon site in comparison to the Dunton Garden Suburb site in terms of urban design considerations; potential landscape and visual effects; and Green Belt impacts.

For the purposes of brevity, from henceforth the land east of West Horndon is referred to as 'the CPL site' and land west of West Horndon is referenced to as 'the Icen Homes site'. Dunton Garden Suburb is referred to as its full name to reduce confusion.

### 1.4 Summary of content

The document is structured as follows:

- Section 1: introduction
- Section 2 approach and issue identification: outline of how the report studies have been undertaken and what are the key issues raised
- Section 3 baseline and background: general information regarding each of the West Horndon and Dunton Garden Suburb sites, including landscape character baseline, viewpoints, and scheme descriptions. Key differences and similarities are highlighted
- Section 4 urban design assessment: using a schedule of questions that address key factors that ensure design quality, the CPL and Dunton Garden Suburb sites are evaluated in turn and compared
- Section 5 landscape and visual appraisal: using the baseline and scheme descriptions included in Sections 3 and 4, the impacts and effects of each of the sites appraised
- Section 6 Green Belt assessment: the landscape character and visual effects of each scheme with regards to the five statutory purposes of the Green Belt evaluated and compared in terms of significance
- Section 7 conclusions: summarising the relative differences in terms of urban design, landscape and visual impact, and Green Belt impacts

# Section 1: Introduction

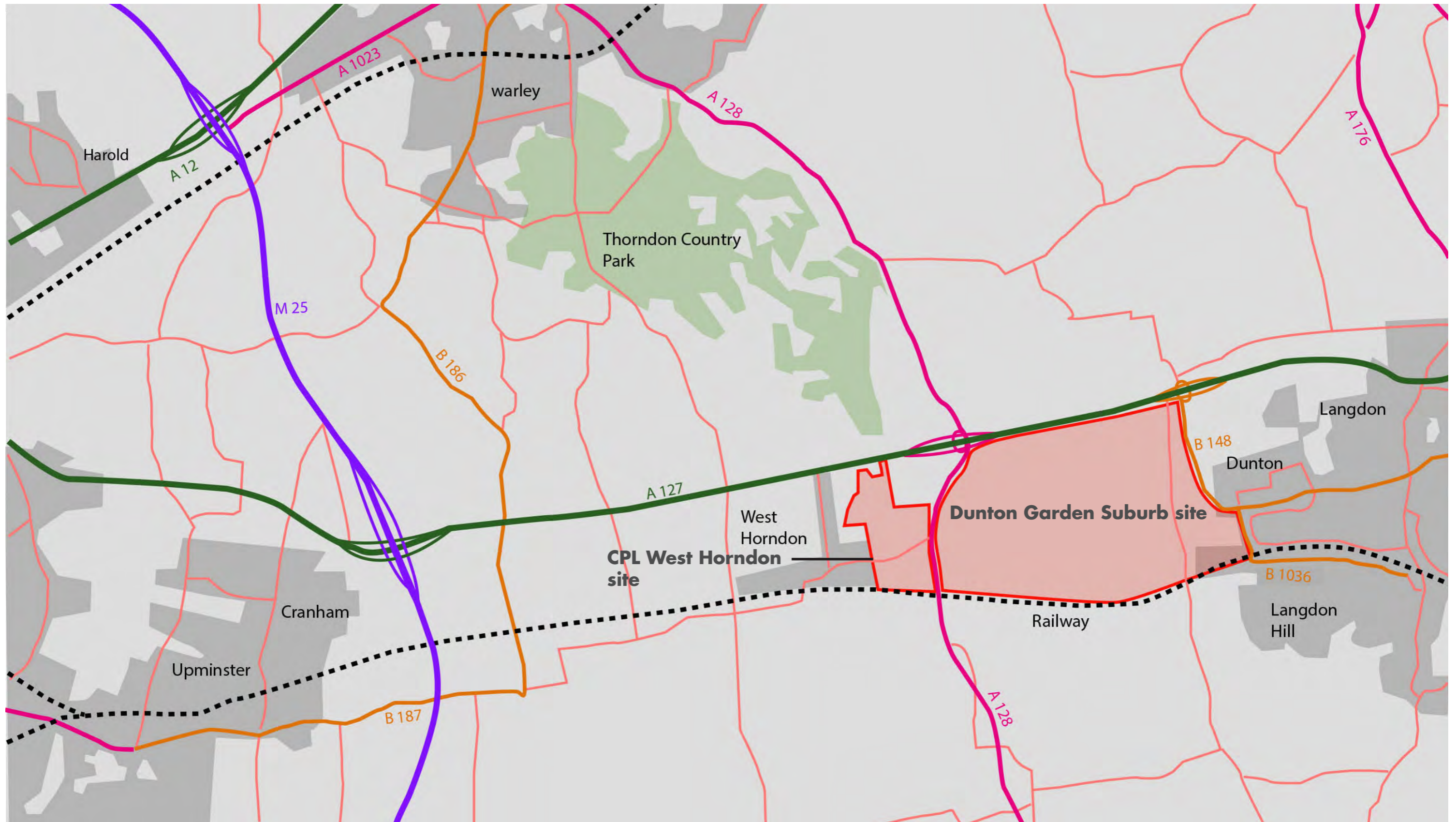


Figure 1 Location plan  
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# 2 Approach & issues identification

## Section 2: Approach & methodology

### 2.1 General approach

### 2.2 Review of background & evidence

### 2.3 Methodology

### 2.4 Landscape and visual impact assessment approach and methodology

### 2.5 Green Belt review approach

#### 2.1 General approach

This section provides an explanation of the approach and methods used to undertake this assessment. It also outlines key issues in more detail, providing an explanation of the assessments direction and focus.

The report does not set out the definitive answers to issues that comparisons raise: it does, however, highlight concerns and implications regarding the application of urban design criteria, the landscape and visual environment, and the Green Belt relative to each site. In regard to urban design, it evaluates how desirable a place in which each site would be to live; how accessible and buildable they would be, and how deliverable in terms of sustainability and desirability. In terms of landscape and visual impacts, the assessment reviews how acceptable each site would be in terms of magnitude of changes to character and views. Finally, in regards to the Green Belt, the assessment weighs up the relative impacts on its statutory purposes of each site.

The following steps have been taken to carry out a comparison for each of the West Horndon and Dunton Garden Suburb opportunity sites:

- review of background and evidence
- urban design audit
- landscape character and visual appraisal
- Green Belt assessment

The topics examined by this report raise a number of issues that should be addressed for successful implementation of new residential development. The report will identify the issues and state if the answers are believed to be self-evident, or if further study to assess, or resolve them is required.

#### 2.2 Review of background & evidence

In order to enable a comparison of landscape and visual factors, Rummey Design has undertaken a summary baseline assessment of the Dunton Garden Suburb proposals in the absence of other readily available material. Documents used in the preparation of this report

are listed in Section

#### 2.3 Methodology

Full methodology is explained in Section 8, Appendices

##### **Urban design & masterplan assessment criteria & approach**

New design guidance is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework web portal, which states a range of best practice design objectives which collectively embody that promoted by the above. These are located online at:

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/design/>

##### **Landscape and visual impact assessment approach and methodology**

The comparison of relative landscape and visual impacts is indicative of:

- how each proposed area of development might sit with the existing character and views;
- what the major impacts might be;
- what mitigation measures are proposed to be used to reduce or eliminate these impacts; and
- residual impacts.

The assessment of the landscape character areas surrounding the two sites has been carried out as follows:

- desktop review of relevant local landscape character studies and designations as well as consideration of the existing topography and vegetation pattern;
- undertaking of site visits to assess the key landscape qualities of the area surrounding the CPL and Dunton Garden Suburb sites.

Assessments are then undertaken as follows:

- sensitivity of each landscape character area with regards to accommodating change within the development site;
- quality of each landscape character area;
- magnitude of effect of the development proposals on landscape character areas (or perception of landscape character areas for those areas the development proposal does not sit within);
- significance, nature and duration of the effect.

This assessment follows the principles contained within the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (Institute of Environmental Assessment and Landscape Institute 2013).

##### **Green Belt review approach**

Assessment of the impact of both proposals on statutory Green Belt policies and their functions at local level examines how each scheme would affect the 5 key policies in NPPF clauses in Section 9 – Protecting Green Belt land:

*'79 The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.*

*80 Green Belt serves five purposes:*

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

# 3 Background & baseline

## Section 3: Background & baseline

### 3.1 General

### 3.2 Landscape Character Baseline

### 3.3 Site Local Landscape Character

### 3.4 Visual Receptors

### 3.5 Site Visibility

### 3.5 Baseline Summary

### 3.1 General

Detailed descriptions of the landscape character at national, county local and site level are given below. All but the site level descriptions are sourced from peer-reviewed publicly available documentation. Viewpoints have been selected to approximate 'worst case' instances of views by potentially sensitive receptors located in publicly accessible areas such as roads, public rights of way (PRoWs), Byways open to all traffic, (BOATS) and public parks. Designations are taken from OS and on-line sources including [www.magic.gov](http://www.magic.gov). For the purposes of brevity, the landscape appraisal does not undertake a repetition of description where more than one sensitive receptor site is covered by a single viewpoint or character area.

### 3.2 Landscape Character Baseline

#### **National Character Areas - Combined Sites**

The CPL and Dunton Garden Suburb sties lie within National Character Area NCA111 Northern Thames Basin (Natural England, July 2013). This is a diverse area, which extends from Hertfordshire in the west to the Essex coast in the east. This NCA includes the suburbs of North London, historic towns and cities such as St. Albans and Colchester, as well as new and planned towns such as Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield and Basildon.

Arable agriculture is a large industry in the area although the soil quality ranges from good to poor. The London Clay provides a poor quality soil that becomes waterlogged in winter and cracks and shrinks in summer. Better quality alluvial soils are found in areas where the Thames and other rivers in the area formed and changed position over time.

The Northern Thames Basin is an area rich in geodiversity, archaeology and history with landscapes ranging from the wooded Hertfordshire plateaux and river valleys, to the open, predominantly arable, landscapes of the Essex heathlands. Urban expansion has been a feature of this area since the 16th century and this trend increased dramatically from the mid-19th century, mainly as commuting to London from the surrounding areas became possible. This has resulted in many areas losing their rural tranquility, although this remains in parts of Essex where there is a more dispersed settlement pattern within the arable and semi-natural habitats.

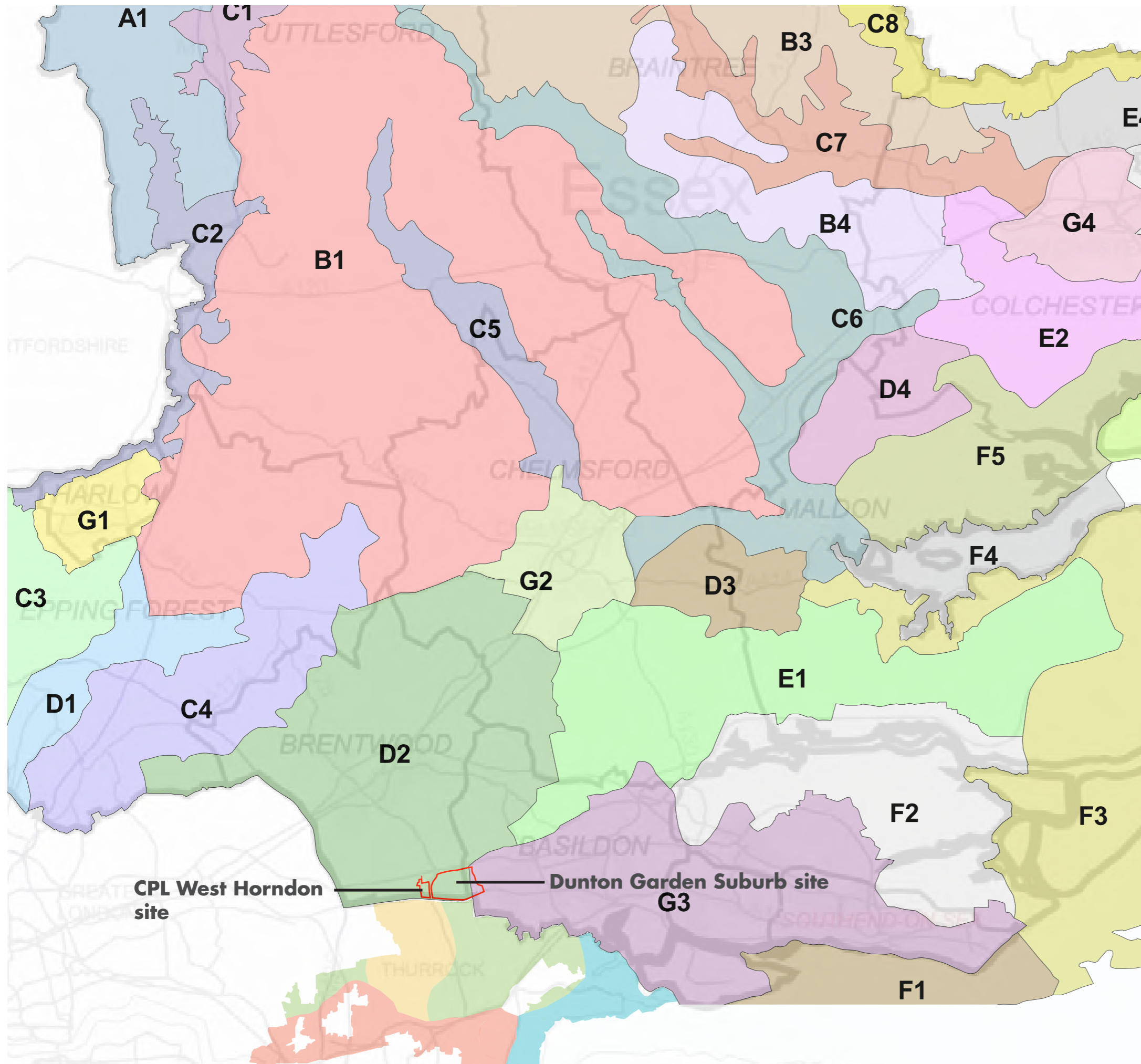
#### **County Character Areas - Combined Sites**

As illustrated by Figure 2: *Regional Landscape Character Areas*, The Essex Landscape Character Assessment, 2003 places both sites on the southern edge of LCA D2, Brentwood Hills. This area lies mainly on the London clay with soils varying. This area is characterised by gently undulating ridges and hills, and a semi-enclosed character due to a network of small woodlands, hedgerows and hedgerow trees. There is an irregular patchwork of pasture and arable and the assessment notes the dense linear settlement pattern along main roads.

Overall the assessment evaluates the landscape condition as good with Moderate sensitivity both to large-scale development and smaller-scale urban extensions. This is mainly attributed to the low to moderate intervisibility within the area although the assessment comments on the visual exposure of some hillsides and ridgetops as well as concerns over coalescence.

#### **District Character Areas - combined sites**

As illustrated by Figure 3: *District Landscape Character Areas*, West Horndon lies solely within the Horndon Fenlands LCA whilst the Dunton Garden suburb straddles administrative boundaries and so falls partly within the Horndon Fenlands LCA and partly within the Dunton Settled Claylands LCA.



### Essex Landscape Character Area

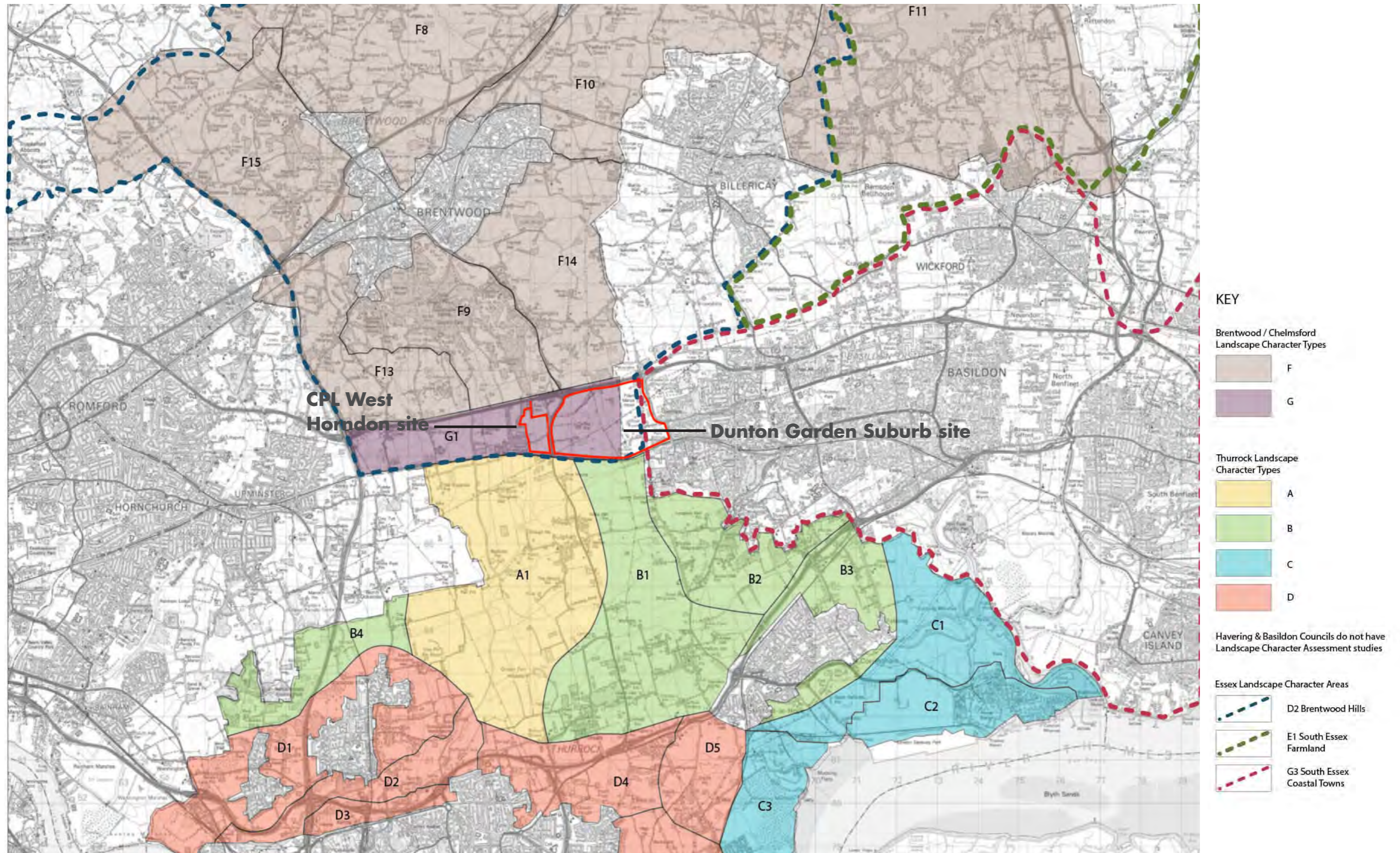
- F4: BLACKWATER ESTUARY
- C6: BLACKWATER&BRAIN VALLEY
- B3: BLACKWATER/STOUR FARMLAND
- D2: BRENTWOOD HILLS
- F7: BRIGHTLINGSEA-CLACTON-FRINTON COAST
- C1: CAM VALLEY
- B1: CENTRAL ESSEX FARMLAND
- C5: CHELMER VALLEY
- G2: CHELMSFORD & ENVIRONS
- G4: COLCHESTER & ENVIRONS
- C7: COLNE VALLEY
- F2: CROUCH&ROACH FARMLAND
- D3: DANBURY HILLS
- F3: DENGIE & FOULNESS COAST
- D1: EPPING FOREST & RIDGES
- B4: GOSFIELD WOODED FARMLAND
- F8: HAMFORD WATER
- G1: HARLOW & ENVIRONS
- C3: LEE VALLEY
- F6: MERSEA ISLAND
- F5: NORTH BLACKWATER & COLNE COASTAL FARMLANDS
- E4: NORTH COLCHESTER FARMLANDS
- B2: NORTH ESSEX FARMLAND
- C4: RODING VALLEY
- E2: SOUTH COLCHESTER FARMLANDS
- G3: SOUTH ESSEX COASTAL TOWNS
- E1: SOUTH ESSEX FARMLANDS
- C2: STORT VALLEY
- F10: STOUR ESTUARY
- F9: STOUR ESTUARY SLOPES
- C8: STOUR VALLEY
- E3: TENDRING PLAIN
- F1: THAMES ESTUARY
- D4: TIPTREE RIDGE

### Thurrock Landscape Character Types

- A
- B
- C
- D
- SITE BOUNDARIES
- WH : WEST HORNDON
- DGS: DUNTON GARDEN SUBURB

Figure 2 Regional Landscape Character Types

## Section 3: Background & baseline



### Section 3: Background & baseline

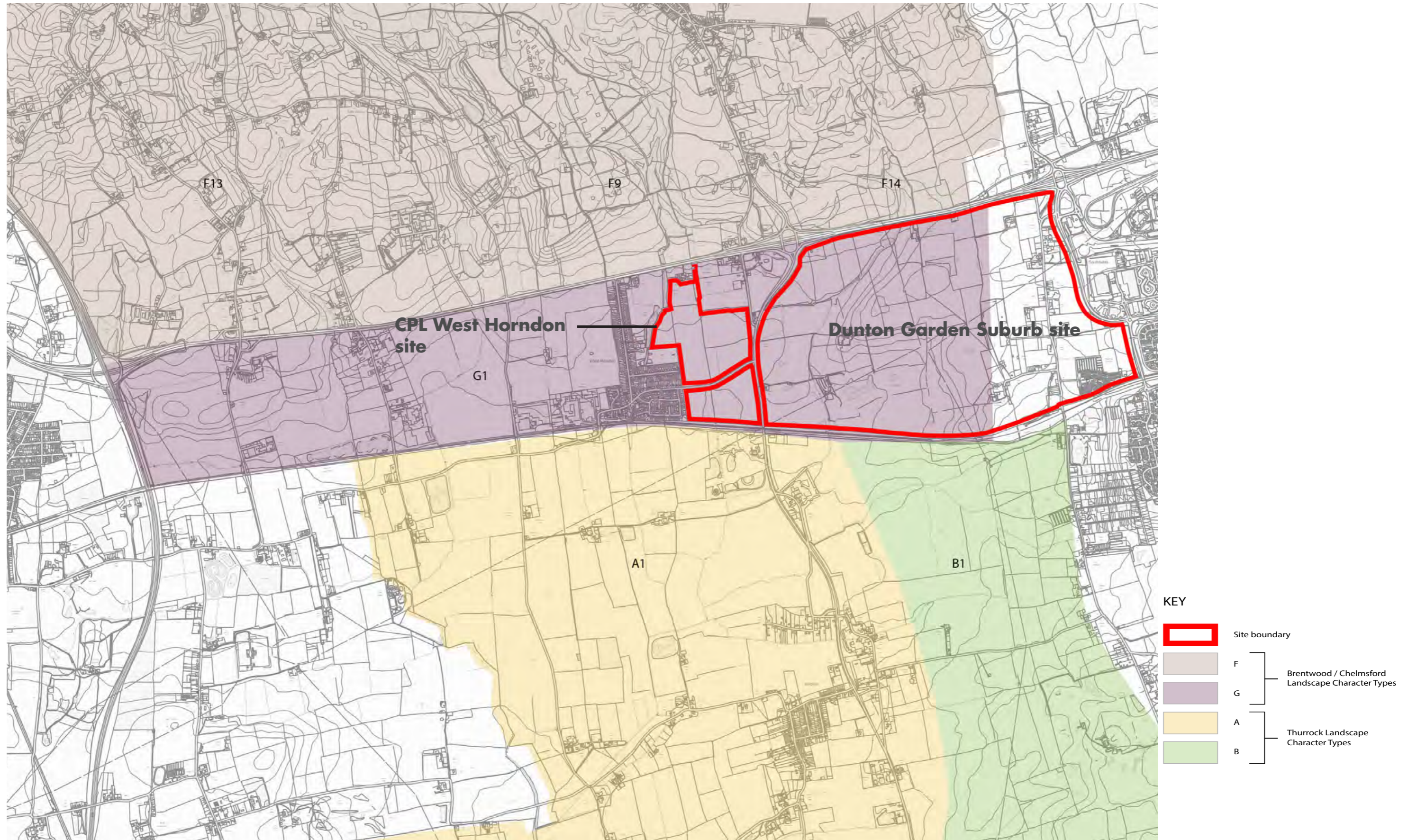


Figure 4 Local Landscape Character plan  
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## Section 3: Background & baseline

### 3.1 General

### 3.2 Landscape Character Baseline

### 3.3 Site Local Landscape Character

### 3.4 Visual Receptors

### 3.5 Site Visibility

### 3.6 Baseline Summary

## 3.3 Site Local Landscape Character

### **CPL Site Local Landscape Character**

As illustrated by Figure 4, Local Landscape Character, at a Borough scale, identified by Brentwood Borough Council, the landscape character around West Horndon the site has been designated G1 Horndon Fenland. The characteristics include:

- large, arable pasture fields
- predominantly flat topography
- mature hedgerow field boundaries
- relatively sparse settlement pattern
- views to surrounding wooded hills to the north
- long distance views to pylons and Tilbury Power Station

The assessment notes the disturbed tranquility of this area, largely as a result of road noise. It also notes a general sense of enclosure to the north and east due to low wooded hills, but the more open views southwards to power lines and Tilbury. Landmarks include Little Warley and East Horndon churches to the north.

The historic character is one of a distinctive grid-like grain of fields, thought to be of ancient origin. Settlements tend to be nucleated. There are smaller ponds scattered in the area and some medieval moated sites.

Due to its open, flat nature, the fact that it is overlooked from the wooded hills to the north and east, and the sense of historic integrity, the assessment concludes the area to be of Moderate sensitivity to change. The Landscape Planning Guidelines suggest that any appropriate new development responds to the existing settlement pattern and uses materials which are appropriate to the local landscape character. The assessment also suggests that the setting of West Horndon needs to be conserved through careful consideration of the existing landscape structure. It identifies the need to screen visual detractors such as the industrial estate in West Horndon and recommends that the existing hedgerow network is conserved and enhanced and new woodland planting introduced in the form of shaws, copses and hedgerow trees.

At a site-specific level, the district is gridded with roads, settlement, hedges and ditches as the lower fenland has been artificially drained, occupied and farmed. Important east – west routes, either rail or road, run perpendicular to north - south drainage, settlement and hedgerow lines that mirror linear parish boundaries. The local area has largely been shaped by the natural geography; the Thames, Mar Dyke and Hole Craven Creek to the south and the Langdon/Horndon Hills to the north.

The east site comprises eight fields lying within a low-lying, level landscape, sloping imperceptibly to the north from 10-20m AOD. There is a large belt of trees associated with its northwestern flank, close to the village of West Horndon. The east site's fields are rectilinear in shape, lined by hedgerows and watercourses which follow a broadly north-south and east-west orientation. Station Road, which runs broadly in an east-west direction, splits the east site. The early field pattern system appears broadly intact. The east site backs onto a number of houses within West Horndon. The east site is bound on its northern and eastern flanks by large roads; the A127 and A128 respectively. These two roads are bounded by strong belts of vegetation which enclose the site.

The land to the west of West Horndon (the west site) comprises a mix of brownfield industrial land to the south, with an area of greenbelt arable farmland to the north. The three arable fields have a relatively weak hedgerow pattern. Its northern edge is open and marked by a low ridgeline. Its eastern boundary is marked by housing at West Horndon whilst its western edge is marked by Dunning Lane which is lined by hedgerows. The A127 lies north of the site beyond the ridgeline; a dense hedgerow and trees line the road. The site lacks an obvious northern edge to it.

### **Dunton Garden Suburb Site Setting and History**

The study area is located directly to the west of Basildon and about 1km east of West Horndon (see Figure 2). It is accessed via the A127 and A128 and connects in to the existing village and its key community facilities of the primary school and Local Park. It comprises low-grade agricultural land which is contained and parceled by a strong and intact structure of hedgerows. The site lies to either side of the main access into West Horndon, Station Road.

The history of the land within the Dunton Garden Suburb is that typical of an agricultural landscape dating back many hundreds of years.

### **Dunton Garden Suburb Site Landscape Character**

The Dunton Garden suburb lies within the Greenbelt on the western edge of Basildon. The site lies partly within Basildon Borough and partly within Brentwood Borough and, as a result straddles 2 character areas: the edge adjacent to the west edge of Basildon is known as Character Area 13 Dunton Settled Claylands whilst the western parts are within the Horndon Fenlands LCA which is described above.

#### Area 13 Dunton Settled Claylands

The Basildon Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment and Green Belt Landscape Capacity Study (BBC LCA) describes the area as follows:

*'The area gently rises in the south culminating with a low hillock south west of Dunton Hall. The western boundary is marked by the Borough boundary although the same character extends further into Brentwood Borough. The southern boundary follows the railway. The northern part of the character area encompasses grazed pastures and the small settlement of Dunton Wayletts north of the A127. The urban edge of Laindon is largely well enclosed from view by dense vegetation to the east of the B148, but the A127, B148 and railway line heavily affects the tranquillity of the area. The area retains a distinctive grid-like grain to its layout, derived*



## Section 3: Background & baseline

### 3.1 General

*from its medieval or earlier rectilinear field system. Built development is sporadic with dispersed lines of residential properties.'*

### 3.2 Landscape Character Baseline

The field pattern is thought to be of Middle Saxon origin and there are medieval relics in the area including the site of a medieval church and hall complex at Dunton Hall and a former medieval moated site at the Old Rectory. The Church spire at Dunton is a local landmark.

### 3.3 Site Local Landscape Character

Key characteristics according to the BBC LCA are:

- *Predominantly flat landform with gentle slopes in the south towards the railway*
- *Typically medium to large sized arable fields. Medium sized paddocks are subdivided with post and barbed wire fencing*
- *Predominantly open farmland with occasional tall hedgerows forming fragmented enclosure*
- *Field boundaries delineated with some tall hedgerows, post and wire fencing and mature tree rows without hedgerows*
- *Narrow rural lanes connect dispersed roadside settlement and agricultural barns*
- *Dunton Park static caravan park occupies the south east corner of the character area*
- *Small area of mature Oak and Birch woodland north of the caravan park*
- *Church and hall complex at Dunton Hall are local landmarks*
- *Houses are predominantly 20th century with some Victorian gault brick buildings including the Old Rectory and Friern Manor*

Whilst the landscape condition is considered to be moderate to poor, the historic field pattern is intact so that the long term management prescription for this LCA is to Improve and Conserve. The management guidelines note the visual relationship of this area to the Langdon Hills that lie to the south of Basildon and that key views need to be retained.

### 3.4 Visual Receptors

### 3.5 Site Visibility

### 3.6 Baseline Summary

### **Basildon Borough Council Green Belt Study 2013**

In October 2013 Basildon Borough Council undertook a Landscape Character Assessment of Greenbelt around Basildon and a Landscape Capacity Study. This further subdivided the Area 13 LCA into two areas, which were assessed for their landscape capacity to accommodate different development including residential, commercial and recreational.

Area 66 is described as:

*'an area of gently sloping open farmland located west of Laindon/Basildon. The land use is a mix of predominantly rectilinear grazed pastures and arable fields divided by fragmented hedgerows, and post and wire fencing. There are areas of semi-mature woodland to the southwest adjacent to the Laindon West neighbourhood and some areas of young woodland. The B148 forms the eastern boundary separating the land area from the urban edge of Laindon/Basildon. A busy road junction lies to the north where the B148 meets the A127 and the railway line forms the southern boundary. The western boundary follows Lower Dunton Road, which divides the area from the more historic side of Dunton village within Area 67. Built development comprises Dunton Park Residential Caravan Park occupying a large site in the southeast corner and scattered roadside properties mainly to the north and agricultural barns, predominantly from the 20th century. There are no ecological designations in the area. Field boundaries are in decline resulting in the area looking in a poor condition'.*

The assessment suggested that there was scope to combine areas 66 and 67 for a coordinated western extension to Basildon. However the subsequent capacity assessment yielded a final landscape capacity rating score of Low capacity, with one of the key issues affecting this rating being openness to public view.

Area 67 is described as:

*'an area of predominantly open farmland located west of Laindon/ Basildon. The land slopes gently to the south, culminating with a low hillock south west of Dunton Hall. The land area's boundaries follow*

*the railway line to the south, the A127 to the north, the Borough boundary to the west and Lower Dunton Road to the east. Land use is predominantly rectilinear grazed pastures and arable fields divided by fragmented hedgerows, tree lines without hedgerows or post and wire fencing. Field boundaries have been lost in parts and much of the land is in a poor condition. There are no ecological designations in the area. Modern development is limited to a small amount of sporadic roadside housing. Historic buildings include the medieval church and hall complex at Dunton Hall, Friern Manor and The Old Rectory, which occupied a medieval moated site. There is also a small private fishing lake in the northern part of the area'.*

There is a consented 500kw wind turbine located north of Dunton Hills Golf Course within the Dunton Garden Suburb site. This is 44m to the hub and 72m to the blade tips. When constructed, it would be the only feature of its kind within the visual envelope.

## Section 3: Background & baseline

3.1 General

3.2 Landscape Character Baseline

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3.4 Visual Receptors

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3.6 Baseline Summary

### 3.4 Visual Receptors

The following viewpoints are located as shown in Figure 5 and panoramic photographs of each viewpoint are shown in Figure 6, viewpoints 1 - 22.

#### **Viewpoint 1:**

View westwards from Childerditch Lane south of the A127, distance from west site approx. 500m; distance from east site approx. 1100m; distance from nearest Dunton Garden Suburb development approx. 2750m; 20m AOD.

#### **Viewpoint 2:**

View westwards from the Church of All Saints, north of the junction of the A127 and A128, distance from the CPL site approx. 600m; distance from nearest Dunton Garden Suburb development approx. 1,200m; 45m AOD.

#### **Viewpoint 3:**

View westwards from Station Road west of the junction with the A128, distance from the CPL site approx. 0m; distance from nearest Dunton Garden Suburb development approx. 860m; 14m AOD.

#### **Viewpoint 4:**

Two panoramic views: north eastwards and south eastwards from Station Road east of West Horndon with the A128, distance from the CPL site approx. 0; 10m AOD.

#### **Viewpoint 5:**

View from north western edge of the community park looking northeast, distance from the CPL site approx. 0m; distance from nearest Dunton Garden Suburb development approx. 1,700m; 12m AOD.

#### **Viewpoint 6:**

A 180 degree panorama stretching southeast to south west from Octagon Plantation Country Park, distance from the CPL site approx. 700m; distance from nearest Dunton Garden Suburb development approx. 1590m; 50m AOD.

#### **Viewpoint 7:**

View southwards from public footpath within Thorndon Country Park South, distance from the CPL site approx. 600m; distance from nearest Dunton Garden Suburb development approx. 2000m; 40m AOD.

#### **Viewpoint 8:**

View southwards from public footpath within Thorndon Country Park South, distance from the CPL site approx. 800m; distance from nearest Dunton Garden Suburb development approx. 2400m; 55m AOD.

#### **Viewpoint 9:**

View northwards from Dunning Lane, distance from the CPL site approx. 2000m; distance from nearest Dunton Garden Suburb development is more than 3km; 6m AOD.

#### **Viewpoint 10:**

View westwards from the junction of the entrance of Nuttys Farm and Childerditch Lane; distance from the CPL site approx. 1100m; distance from nearest Dunton Garden Suburb development approx. 2800m; 15m AOD.

#### **Viewpoint 11:**

Southwards from the PRoW northeast of the South Essex Golf Centre, distance from west site approx. 1000m; distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site approx. 1000m; 47m AOD.

#### **Viewpoint 12:**

View eastwards from the junction of the A128 and Station Road, east of West Horndon; distance from Dunton Garden Suburb developed area: approx. 850m; 11m AOD.

#### **Viewpoint 13:**

View eastwards from Dunton Hills Golf Club entrance, distance to Dunton Garden Suburb development approx. 870m; 15m AOD.

#### **Viewpoint 14:**

Byway to the south of A127 near Green Meadows Nursery, distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site nearest development approx. 50m; 31m AOD.

#### **Viewpoint 15:**

PRoW to the south of A127 near Green Meadows Nursery, distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site nearest development approx. 0m; 37m AOD.

#### **Viewpoint 16:**

North-south aligned PRoW traversing Dunton Hill on the hilltop towards Dunton Hall. Distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site nearest development approx. 0m; 41m AOD.

#### **Viewpoint 17:**

Access drive to Friern Farm, off of old alignment Lower Dunton Road to the south of the A127, near Brookman's Farm; distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site nearest development approx. 0m; distance from CPL site approx. 2320m; 33m AOD.

#### **Viewpoint 18:**

PRoW to the south of Church Lane near Dunton Hall and Church, distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site nearest development approx. distance from CPL site approx. 1880m; 0m; 37m AOD.

#### **Viewpoint 19:**

From Church Lane south over Dukes Farm to the rail line; distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site nearest development approx. 0m; 33m AOD.

#### **Viewpoint 20:**

View westwards from car park of Dunton Park Static Caravan Park; distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site nearest development approx. 0m; distance from CPL site approx. 2460m; 34m AOD.

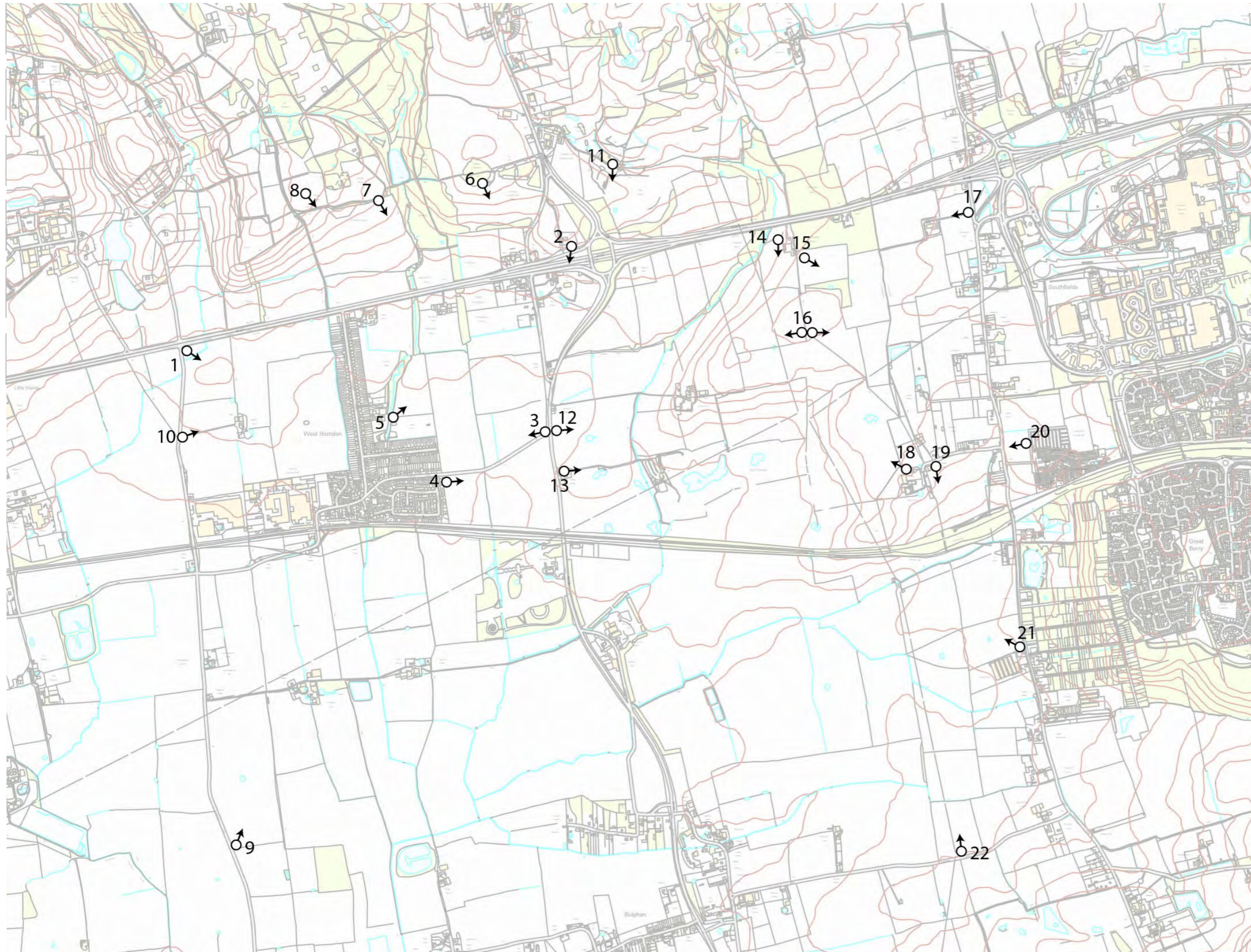
#### **Viewpoint 21:**

View westwards from car park of Dunton Plotlands Nature Reserve, distance from Dunton Garden Suburb Site approx. 150m; distance from CPL site approx. 2400m; 25m AOD.

#### **Viewpoint 22:**

View northwards from Doesgate Lane toward the Southend railway line and Dunton Garden Suburb site; distance from nearest development approx. 1,500m; 21m AOD.

### Section 3: Background & baseline



### Section 3: Background & baseline



Viewpoint 1: View westwards from Childeritch Lane south of the A127, distance from west site approx. 500m; distance from east site approx. 1100m; distance from nearest Dunton Garden Suburb development approx. 2750m; 20m AOD.

A relatively narrow gap in the roadside hedge affords a glimpsed view of a sloping arable field. Nuttys Farm appears just above the low ridge which blocks views to the west site. The Dunton and Langdon Hills are just visible in the mid- to far-distance above the ridgeline. Views to the east site are blocked by the vegetation associated with properties in West Horndon. The Dunton and Langdon Hills are just visible in the mid- to far-distance above the ridgeline. Views to the east site are blocked by the vegetation associated with properties in West Horndon.



Viewpoint 2: View westwards from the Church of All Saints, north of the junction of the A127 and A128, distance from the CPL site approx. 600m; distance from nearest Dunton Garden Suburb development approx. 1,200m; 45m AOD.

The view westwards from near the Church of All Saints looking towards West Horndon affords a partial view of the east site and the industrial sheds west of West Horndon. The view is open and panoramic in character and includes Canary Wharf, the Shard and a power station in the far distance. The rolling hills of the Thorndon Country Park South frame the view to the north. The view is typically semi-rural in character. It is dominated by the A127 and the Halfway House services. The noise of the A127 detracts from the quality of the view. A dense network of vegetation dominates the mid ground of the view. The vegetation partially screens the CPL site; the high ground of the Dunton Garden Suburb site is visible over mid-distant screening trees.

The high ground of the Dunton Garden Suburb site is visible over mid-distant screening trees the view eastwards from near the Church of All Saints.

### Section 3: Background & baseline



Viewpoint 3: View westwards from Station Road west of the junction with the A128, distance from the CPL site approx. 0m; distance from nearest Dunton Garden Suburb development approx. 860m; 14m AOD.

The view looking westwards along Station Road is dominated by the road and a low clipped hedge to the south and a taller hedgerow to the north. The hedgerows blocks views of the fields of the CPL site.

The Dunton Garden Suburb site is not visible.



Viewpoint 4: Panoramic view eastwards from Station Road east of West Horndon with the A128, distance from the CPL site approx. 0; distance from nearest Dunton Garden Suburb development approx. 1,700m; 11m AOD.

The view to the north side of Station Road is glimpsed between fencing for new housing and the existing hedgerow. It is open in character; the foreground is dominated by a level, open field surrounded by a low hedgerow to the south and a taller one to the north. The Dunton and Langdon Hills are just visible in the mid to far distance. The row of pylons that traverse the Dunton Garden Suburb site and the railway embankment intersecting Lower Dunton Road (B1007) cross the view in the mid-distance. The southern portion of the CPL site is clearly visible in the view to the south side of the station road. The fields within the northern portion of the CPL site are blocked by a tall hedgerow. Pylons and hilltops within the Dunton Garden Suburb site are visible to the east.

### Section 3: Background & baseline



Viewpoint 5: View from north western edge of the community park looking northeast, distance from the CPL site approx. 0m; distance from nearest Dunton Garden Suburb development approx. 1,700m; 12m AOD.

The view looking northeast affords open views of the east site. The view comprises an open, level arable field which is framed by trees to the east and a hedgerow in the far distance. The high ground of the Dunton Garden Suburb site is visible over mid-distant screening trees the view eastwards



Viewpoint 6: A 180 degree panorama stretching southeast to south west from Octagon Plantation Country Park, distance from the CPL site approx. 700m; 50m AOD.

Pylons and hilltops within the Dunton Garden Suburb site are visible to the east.

The view features a characteristic mix of both rural and urban elements encompassing the Kent Hills, Langdon Hills as well as a number of power stations, factories and the Dartford Crossing. West Horndon is clearly visible in the mid ground of the view. The foreground of the view comprises a large area of amenity grassland enclosed by hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees. The CPL site can be seen in the mid-ground of the view but only appears as a relatively small element within the overall view and is visually broken up by existing vegetation within the site and off-site. The West Horndon Industrial Park sheds are visible. Pylons and hilltops within the Dunton Garden Suburb site are visible to the east.

### Section 3: Background & baseline



Viewpoint 7: View southwards from public footpath within Thorndon Country Park South, distance from the CPL site approx. 600m; 40m AOD.

An open, panoramic view, it encompasses the hills of Kent and the chimney and towers of the Thames Estuary. Both sites are just visible in the mid ground of the view amidst a network of trees. However roadside planting on the A127 screens a large proportion of both sites. The foreground of the view is dominated by a large arable field. Pylons and hilltops within the Dunton Garden Suburb site are visible to the east.



Viewpoint 8: View southwards from public footpath within Thorndon Country Park South, distance from the CPL site approx. 800m; distance from nearest Dunton Garden Suburb development approx. 2400m; 55m AOD.

The open, panoramic view encompasses the hills of Kent and the factories and power stations of the Thames estuary. The house within West Horndon and their associated vegetation appears at the centre of the view. Portions of the east site are visible however these appear as relatively insignificant elements of the view. The west site by contrast appears as an open, large field in the centre of view. The lack of vegetation, associated with the west site's northern flank, renders the site particularly open and visible.

### Section 3: Background & baseline



Viewpoint 9: View northeast from Dunnings Lane, distance from the CPL site approx. 2000m; distance from nearest Dunton Garden Suburb development is more than 3km; 6m AOD.

This northward looking view encompasses the hill ridge of the Thorndon Country Park South to the north. The foreground of the view is dominated by Dunnings Lane which is enclosed by hedgerows on either side which restrict the openness of the view. Neither site can be seen.



Viewpoint 10: View westwards from the junction of the entrance of Nuttys Farm and Childerditch Lane; distance from the CPL site approx. 1100m; distance from nearest Dunton Garden Suburb development approx. 2800m; 15m AOD.

This view is an open semi-rural view. Views to Jury's Hill are possible to the north, whilst the industrial sheds of West Horndon can be seen to the south. Views of the tops of Dunton Hills and the associated power line pylons are possible just below the horizon; Langdon Hills are also visible in the far distance. Views to the CPL site are not possible. Mid-distant views of the tops of Dunton Hills and the associated power line pylons are possible to the east. Langdon Hills are also visible in the far distance. Views to the CPL site are not possible.



### Section 3: Background & baseline



Viewpoint 11: Southwards from the PRoW northeast of the South Essex Golf Centre, distance from west site approx. 1000m; distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site approx. 1000m; 47m AOD.

The panoramic view sweeps south towards Dunton Garden Suburb site over Eastlands Spring and the tree-lined and screened A127 towards East Horndon, Thorndon Park South and Dunton Hills. Basildon/Langdon Hills is visible in the distance. Dunton Hills Farm is visible to the west. The CPL site is not visible and is screened by landform and vegetation.



Viewpoint 12: View eastwards from the junction of the A128 and Station Road, east of West Horndon; distance from Dunton Garden Suburb developed area: approx. 850m; 11m AOD.

The view comprises open arable fields in the foreground. Dunton Hill Farm is visible on the skyline in the mid-distance. Dunton Hill ridgelines lie behind the farmhouse and this runs through to the Dunton Hills Golf Club the south. The view is cumulative with CPL site 180 degree to the west (see viewpoint 3 above). The view is cumulative with CPL site 180 degrees to the west (see viewpoint 3 above).

### Section 3: Background & baseline



Viewpoint 13: View eastwards from Dunton Hills Golf Club entrance, distance to Dunton Garden Suburb development approx. 870m; 15m AOD.

The view is of open well maintained golf fairways and greens without hedgerows or trees in the near to mid-distance; the south the golf club driveway leads to a group trees in which the club house is just visible. The view is cumulative with CPL site 180 degrees to the west.



Viewpoint 14: Byway to the south of A127 near Green Meadows Nursery, distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site nearest development approx. 50m; 31m AOD.

The view is up hill toward Dunton Hill ridge, framed by substantial hedgerow trees. A substantial over grown hedgerow follows the north-south alignment of the PRoW to the east of the view, south of Green Meadows Nursery. There is no view of the CPL site from this location.

### Section 3: Background & baseline



Viewpoint 15: PRoW to the south of A127 near Green Meadows Nursery, distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site nearest development approx. 0m; 37m AOD.

The view to the southeast affords open views of the northernmost area of the Dunton Garden Suburb site; an open field surrounded by mature hedgerows on all sides, this is an attractive area that is relatively contained from the otherwise wide and open farmland landscape. It helps to buffer the A127 to the north, screening views of the busy traffic. Views are therefore connected with the wooded upland to the north of the A127. There is no view of the CPL site from this location.



Viewpoint 16a: North-south aligned PRoW traversing Dunton Hill, diverting northwest-southeast on the hilltop towards Dunton Hall. Distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site nearest development approx. 0m; 41m AOD.

From a high point within the Dunton Garden Suburb site, the PRoW affords 360 degree panoramic views that encompass views of the South Essex Golf Club driving range and wooded fairways to the north, the urban fringe and factories of Basildon to the east, extensive and open fields to the south with the church and building of Dunton Hall visible amongst woodland, and beyond that the tree-lined Southend railway embankment and Langdon Hills.

### Section 3: Background & baseline



Viewpoint 16b: North-south aligned PRoW traversing Dunton Hill, diverting northwest-southeast on the hilltop towards Dunton Hall. Distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site nearest development approx. 0m; 41m AOD.

To the west, pylons and power lines dominate the near view as well as leading the eye to the distant Thorndon Country Park to the north. Although there is a further slight rise in ground, Dunton Hills farmhouse is visible within the mid-distance woodland and hedgerows, the CPL site and West Horndon can be glimpsed in the far-distance.



Viewpoint 17: Access drive to Friern Farm, off of old alignment Lower Dunton Road to the south of the A127, near Brookman's Farm; distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site nearest development approx. 0m; distance from CPL site approx. 2320m; 33m AOD.

The foreground view is of open arable farmland; farm buildings surrounded by mature trees and hedgerows; and a distant low wooded skyline to the west. To the north, the fast moving traffic of the A127 can be glimpsed between trees lining the route, together with the southern section of the Thorndon Country Park; beyond that is the rise in ground on which the South Essex Golf Centre is located, overlooking the Dunton Garden Suburb site from the north. There is no view of the CPL site from this location.

### Section 3: Background & baseline



Viewpoint 18: PRoW to the north of Church Lane near Dunton Hall and Church, distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site nearest development approx. distance from CPL site approx. 1880m; 0m; 37m AOD.

The view is of an open field surrounded by substantial/overgrown hedgerows. To the west is the listed Dunton church, which is possibly of medieval origin. To the east, the fine contemporary Dukes Farm farmhouse and farm buildings are visible. Dunton Hills are visible in the mid-distance, and beyond these, the wooded upland of Thorndon Country Park can be seen on the horizon. The Church of All Saints at East Horndon and the Octagon are also just visible.



Viewpoint 19: From Church Lane south over Dukes Farm to the rail line; distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site nearest development approx. 0m; 33m AOD.

The view from Church Lane to the south is of farm fencing and hard standing in the foreground, with an open arable field leading down hill towards the wooded embankment of the Southend railway. Encompassing Dunton Plotlands Nature Reserve, the wooded flanks of Langdon Hills can be seen beyond, intermingled with urban development of Great Berry.

### Section 3: Background & baseline



Viewpoint 20: View westwards from car park of Dunton Park Static Caravan Park; distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site nearest development approx. 0m; distance from CPL site approx. 2460m; 34m AOD.

The view westward from the visitors' car park of the Caravan Park is of an open arable field, woodland and hedgerow trees, terraced cottages/Rectory on Church Lane, and glimpses of Dukes Farm sheds. Beyond can be seen the ridgeline of the Dunton Hills and the Old Rectory can also be glimpsed to the northwest amongst trees.



Viewpoint 21: View westwards from car park of Dunton Plotlands Nature Reserve, distance from Dunton Garden Suburb Site approx. 150m; distance from CPL site approx. 2400m; 25m AOD.

This view looking west features both level and rolling arable fields which are dissected by the London to Southend Railway. Views to the CPL site are blocked by a low ridgeline running through the Dunton Hills Golf Club. The Dunton Garden Suburb site, including Dunton Hall, the church, Dukes Farmhouse and associated farm building sand sheds, and Dunton Hill Farmhouse are visible beyond the railway embankment in the mid- and far-distance.

## Section 3: Background & baseline



Viewpoint 22: View northwards from Doesgate Lane toward the Southend railway line and Dunton Garden Suburb site; distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site nearest development approx. 1,500m; 21m AOD.

A panoramic view, it illustrates the level of visibility of the Dunton Garden Suburb site from flat areas to the south. The foreground to mid-distance is comprised of arable fields with two lines of hedgerows and hedgerow trees traversing east to west in front of the wooded railway embankment; these are below the line of sight of Dunton Hall, the church and Dukes Farm buildings which are visible on the shallow ridgeline in the mid-distance beyond. A line of high voltage power line pylons leads the eye towards the Thorndon Country Park hills and woodland visible to the north in the far distance.

## Section 3: Background & baseline

3.1 General

3.2 Landscape Character Baseline

3.3 Site Local Landscape Character

3.4 Visual Receptors

3.5 Site Visibility

3.6 Baseline Summary

### 3.5 Site Visibility

#### **CPL Site Visibility Summary**

The combination of a well established network of hedgerows and hedgerow trees with the low level topography of the land causes a significant limitation to views of the east site from the surrounding land to the south, east and west. The west site is more visible because the network of hedgerows is less established and there is little definition of the northern edge.

Open views of both the CPL and Dunton Garden Suburb sites are possible from the footpaths and public access land associated with the Thorndon County Park South. These views are sensitive and frequented by many visitors. Nonetheless a mix of both rural and urban elements defines the expansive views experienced from Thorndon Country Park South. Industrial elements such as chimneys and factories and infrastructure elements such as bridges and large roads define the character of the views from the park.

Existing vegetation within the CPL site and the Thorndon Country Park South limits the visibility of the CPL site from western sections of the Country Park.

#### **Dunton Garden Suburb Site Visibility Summary**

The scale of the Dunton Garden Suburb site inevitably means there is a variety of characteristics and character throughout the site, although it is dominated by a series of shallow hills, most of which are agricultural fields uncovered by woodland and unscreened by hedgerows. The site is visible from Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) within 1km to the north of the A127, one of which that passes by the South Essex Golf Centre at height of 55m AOD. The topography rises from 30m AOD on the A127 to a high point of 41m AOD on a shallow hill to the northeast of Dunton Hills Farm. There are views of the site from the PRoW that traverses the site south from Green Meadows Nursery on the A127. In a landscape that is generally level, such a rise in land is visually significant. Views from the A128 are limited by a swathe of woodland that follows a Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT) and a small stream that eventually discharges into Mar Dyke some 2

km to the south. However, the views from the PROW at 40m AOD northeast of Dunton Hills Farm are extensive: the Octagon and open fields within the Thornton Country Park to the northwest are clearly visible, as is the Church of All Saints north of the A127 and A128 junction. Views to the south are also extensive, with much of the land between the site and the Thames Estuary open to view. The cranes and warehouse of Thurrock, Grays and Southend are also visible. The wooded Dunton Plotlands Nature Reserve and residential area further east are visible due to the rise in land; Lincewood Nature Reserve, sitting at a height of 90m AOD, and woodland around the transmission mast on Westly Heights at 99m is also clearly visible from the PRoW.

To the east, there are relatively fewer impediments to the view from B1007 running north south from the A127 to A13, some 5km to the south. Dunton Hall church and the vicinity of the hills northeast of Dunton Hills Farm, are extensively visible from Dunton Plotlands Nature Reserve entrance which is south of the railway, despite the 8m high intervening railway embankment.

To the south, again there are few screening hedgerows impeding views from either the railway, which runs east-west forming the southern boundary of the site, or from Doesgate Lane 1.6km to the south.

Views from the A128 to the west of the Dunton Garden Suburb site are constrained by hedgerows of much of its route between the junction with the A127 and the village of Bulphan to the south. However, there are panoramic views from the entrance of Dunton Hills Golf Club and the Old Mill Cottages to the east across the open farmland and fairways towards Dunton Hills Farm and the shallow hill and ridgeline beyond. North of the railway land combines to significantly limit visibility of the CPL site from the surrounding land to the south, east and west. The west site is more visible due to a less well-established network of hedgerows and no defined northern edge.

Open views of both sites are possible from the footpaths and public access land associated with the Thorndon Country Park South. These views are sensitive and frequented by many visitors. Nonetheless the expansive views experienced from Thorndon Country Park South

are defined by a mix of both rural and urban elements. Industrial elements such as chimneys and factories and infrastructure elements such as bridges and large roads define the character of the views from the park.

There are two high voltage power transmission lines traversing the site that are clearly visible within most of the key viewpoints of the site. While the Dunton hills present an outlying northern edge to the fenland of the northern Thames basin, acting as a significant demarcation of a change of landscape character, the pylons introduce an equally powerful feature that overlies and impact upon the natural landscape character and views at distance. They affect the Dunton Garden Suburb site to a much greater extent than the West Horndon site.

### 3.6 Baseline Summary

- CPL site has a moderate landscape character sensitivity because of moderate quality, and moderate to low visibility.
- Dunton Garden Suburb site has a high landscape character sensitivity with key issues affecting this rating being openness to public view and the juxtaposition to a Special Landscape Area.



# 4 Urban design assessment

## Section 4: Urban Design Assessment

### 4.1 General

### 4.2 CPL Site Description

### 4.3 CPL Site Urban Design Audit

### 4.4 Dunton Garden Suburb Site Description

### 4.5 Dunton Garden Suburb Site Urban Design Audit

### 4.6 Urban Design Assessment Summary

#### 4.1 General

The planning of the site has evolved from an understanding of the needs of the existing village of West Horndon both by assessing its physical form, testing proposals in terms of needs and reviewing response to public consultation. Its function as a local urban centre would be strengthened whilst the core area of activity would be shifted slightly westwards to focus on the station area.

In line with the initial recommendations of the SHLAA, by providing an equal quantum of development to either side of the village, a balanced extension would be created, thereby justifying enhancements to the commercial and civic core ensuring measured accessibility to the village centre from east and west by pedestrian traffic, as well as access by rail from the south and vehicles from all directions. CPL's proposal for development to the east side of the village would therefore be an initial step towards enabling development to take place to the west once access and land availability issues have been resolved. The need for a balanced centre would, indeed, propel the resolution of obstacles to the westward expansion of the village.

The provision of some development to the east of West Horndon will enable the entrance to the village to be properly addressed as well as the 'capturing' of traffic before it passes through the centre causing undue congestion to reach the site to the west. The proximity of the eastern site to the primary school and local park would enable easy and logical expansion of each as well as providing further, more varied facilities within the same location.

#### 4.2 CPL Site Description

##### **CPL site Elements of the scheme**

The CPL site concept design is illustrated in Figure 7 opposite. The masterplan is shown in Figure 8. It is proposed that a mixed density development of between 550 and 650 residential dwellings is to be located within the site. A majority of higher density development would be located towards the centre of the site and lower density

individual unit towards the edges. A proportion of the housing will be provided as affordable housing. This will be integrated within the development. The scheme would have accompanying roads, hard standing, parking, informal public open space, footpaths and informal amenity areas including locally equipped areas of play (LEAPs), and extended and private gardens. Landscape works would be incorporated into the proposals to both enhance existing and introduce new green and blue infrastructure to mitigate visual landscape and visual impacts and assist in managing drainage. It is proposed that in conjunction with the neighbouring development put forward by Icen Homes to the west of West Horndon, there will also be a number of provisions for upgrading or supporting the existing West Horndon urban core, possibly including the rail station, commercial premises, primary school, GP surgery, civic amenities and enhancement of exiting open spaces and streetscape.

The provision of residential development to the east of West Horndon will enable the entrance to the village to be properly addressed as well as the 'capturing' of traffic before it passes through the centre causing undue congestion to reach the site to the west. The proximity of the eastern site to the primary school and Local Park would enable easy and logical expansion of each as well as providing further, more varied facilities within the same location.

##### **CPL Site masterplan drivers**

The document 'Land East of West Horndon – Landscape and Design Report' (Rumme Design/Countryside Properties), which forms Appendix I to this report, sets out the basis upon which the development would be created.

Key drivers behind the current masterplan as stated in the Rumme Design report are outlined in the following section:

##### **site history**

- enhancing green infrastructure based on the existing geometric and gridded field patterns
- mitigating discordant industrial and cultural patterns through significant buffer planting

- interpreting the local linear pattern within development
- incorporating focused farmstead patterns into development hamlets

##### **topography and geology**

- making best use of the shallow topography regarding access and its southerly aspect; the relatively level land enables relatively easy screening - something that may be difficult on rising ground. The site is relatively flat but what slope there is has an ideal southerly aspect with easy access
- although the site is broadly enclosed and sheltered by upland to the north and east, a driver would be to enhance this by planting and bunding if necessary to extend this characteristic at smaller scale within the development

##### **hydrology**

- introducing attenuation basins and wetlands to reduce flood risk
- using wetland habitat to increase biodiversity and habitats
- using wetland landscape to incorporate a variety of public access to improve amenity

##### **landscape character**

- using the development as a characteristic, the existing east/west hedgerow and north/south woodland grid would be repeated and enhanced

##### **site characteristics**

- the green grid – a key landscape feature – would be enhanced
- West Horndon Park would be used as a public open space hub, enhanced and connected to new high quality spaces throughout the site
- Thorndon Country Park could potentially be linked to the open space within the development, particularly the section of the listed Grade II park south of the A127

# Section 4: Urban Design Assessment

4.1 General

4.2 CPL Site Description

4.3 CPL Site Urban Design Audit

4.4 Dunton Garden Suburb Site Description

4.5 Dunton Garden Suburb Site Urban Design Audit

4.6 Urban Design Assessment Summary

## site designations and technical features

- buffering to the southern edge of the Thorndon Country Park would be considered using new woodland
- connecting new woodland into the ancient woodland to the west and north to increase local ecological biodiversity
- using the opportunity to create a higher proportion of land as public open space by designating constrained areas

## local settlement character

- creation of a pronounced east/west and north/south grid of streets and spaces arranged within the existing landscape structure

## site visibility

- using the existing landscape structure and green network to screen views of development from high ground to the north
- using the gridded pattern within the development to add additional hedgerows to further assist in mitigating visual and landscape impact.

## Strengthening of N/S woodland character in fenlands

This principle draws from the strong landscape character of the fenlands and proposes the strengthening of existing hedgerows to create woodland opportunities as well as utilising the drainage corridors



## Connected woodland protecting heritage

To create a new woodland along the northern edge of the site to protect the Conservation Area and minimise visual impact from local listed buildings and the Country Park



## Create connected E/W landscape structure

This will improve ecological biodiversity across the site and beyond whilst reducing exposure of the site to the south westerlies off the Thames Estuary and mitigating any visual impact from the north



## Surface water strategy

Utilise the drainage corridors on the site and adjacent to it to create a series of connected wetlands that mitigate any local flooding whilst creating a rich and diverse ecological habitat and varied quality of open space



## Create a positive entrance to the village

The positive, planned entrance to the village directly off the A128 will both improve the sense of arrival by creating a setting whilst also resolving traffic speeds off the A128.



## Connected and varied public open space

The development to the east of the village enables the direct connection to existing community open space with varied landscape treatments, footpaths, natural play and improved pedestrian access to the Country Park.



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Figure 7a CPL West Horndon Site Concept Diagrams

## Section 4: Urban Design Assessment

4.1 General

4.2 CPL Site Description

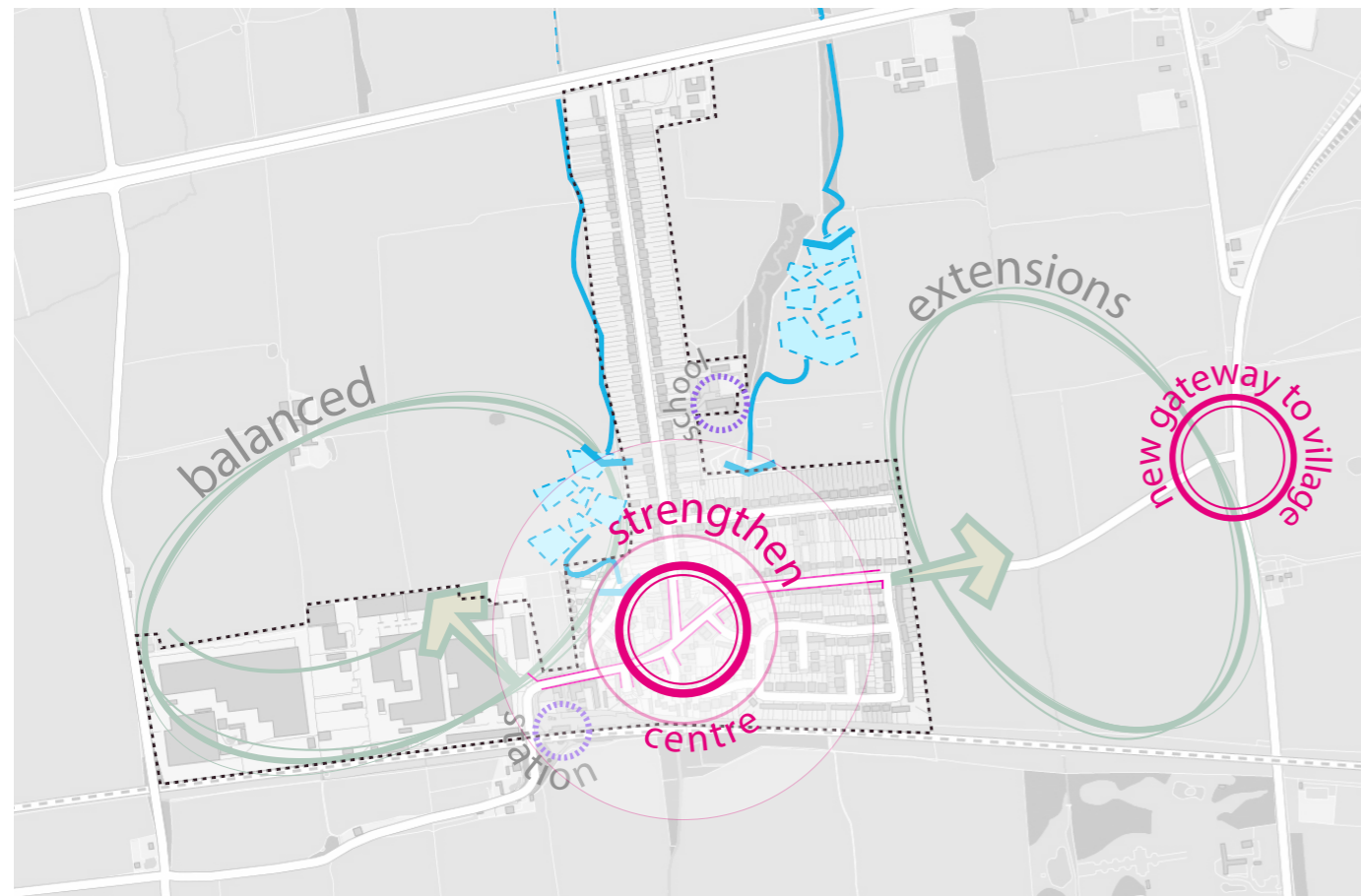
4.3 CPL Site Urban Design Audit

4.4 Dunton Garden Suburb Site Description

4.5 Dunton Garden Suburb Site Urban Design Audit

4.6 Urban Design Assessment Summary

- site boundary
- settlement
- ... boundary to E&A Strategic Land site
- ... boundary to 2 industrial sites



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Figure 7b the balanced settlement concept

### 4.3 CPL Site Urban Design Audit

The following evaluation examines the quality of urban environment each site could potentially offer. It follows a series of questions devised as explained in section 2.4/ Appendix I.

#### CPL Site Character

1. Does the proposal conserve and enhance the diverse natural and urban landscape, countryside and green space? (see SA object 1).

*Yes; the proposal retains as much of the existing hedgerow and woodland planting as possible and enhances it with extensive new planting that will provide structure and screening as well as extension to the existing green infrastructure and green space. West Horndon Park (a registered Doorstep Green scheme) is to be integrated into the site, with the benefit of further investment in its facilities.*

2. Does the proposal create or enhance a distinctive sense of place and identity?

*The West Horndon masterplan stems from an understanding of the existing village as an urban form; the existing village is weakly balanced around a small urban core. The CPL proposal strengthens the structure of the village by building out from the core as part of a proposed balanced expansion, the corresponding part being the Icen Homes proposal to the west of the village that would provide a nearly equal quantum of development. This would ensure equal accessibility to the village centre, strengthening its current location. In close proximity to West Horndon Primary School and the local park, the CPL proposal would enable a logical expansion of both as well as providing further, more varied facilities within the same location.*

3. How have the scale, massing and height of the proposed development been considered in relation to its context?

*There is insufficient detail to answer this fully, but the proposed development would all be of a suitable residential scale, similar in mass and height to much of the existing built environment of West Horndon.*

#### CPL Site Public Realm

4. Is there a convincing hierarchy and variety of public spaces within the scheme?

*Yes; although only outline in form, the masterplan identifies a structured hierarchy based around creation of public open space at the heart of the development linked by arterial green and transport routes, indicating highly legible, walkable neighbourhoods served by new streets and parks. The distance from any part to the urban core is a short walk.*

5. Does the scheme allow for legibility, reinforcing distinctiveness of the site and consider existing views from and of the site?

*As above, the short distances and routes make the scheme legible; the shape of the neighbourhoods is varied, if unified by the existing green grid structure. Views from the site are generally short, internal, but predominantly of green space; views of the site from outside would be screened by both existing woodland and hedgerows and new infrastructural planting.*

#### CPL Site Conservation and Natural Environment

6. Does the proposal protect, conserve and enhance biodiversity and the habitats which support it?

*Nearly all existing hedgerow and tree planting are to be retained; a considerable amount of new planting is indicated to reinforce the existing structure and create sufficient screening in those areas where it is inadequate at the moment.*

7. Does the proposal improve efficiency of land use, through the reuse of previously developed (brownfield) land and existing building?

*There is no existing brown field land within the east site. The west site, however, will reuse existing commercial and business premises extensively.*

## Section 4: Urban Design Assessment

### 4.1 General

### 4.2 CPL Site Description

### 4.3 CPL Site Urban Design Audit

### 4.4 Dunton Garden Suburb Site Description

### 4.5 Dunton Garden Suburb Site Urban Design Audit

### 4.6 Urban Design Assessment Summary

#### **CPL Site Community, Diversity and Social Structure**

8. Does the proposal protect and enhance the cultural heritage and local distinctiveness? (see SA object 2)

*All existing open space is to be protected or enhanced through the site. Boundary protection afforded for Thorndon Country Park Conservation Area, grade II listed park and garden as well as ancient woodland, to the north of the site.*

9. Does the proposal promote neighbouring town centres as sustainable locations for living, retail, leisure and related commercial development? (see SA object 5)

*Yes; the enhancement of the commercial/civic core of West Horndon is a fundamental element of the proposal concept.*

10. Is the proposal improve educational attainment and social inclusion especially in the most deprived areas? (see SA object 6)

*Yes; West Horndon is one of the regions most deprived areas; the masterplan indicates that it would provide support to the existing primary school, as more places are likely to be required for families of the new residents.*

11. Does the proposal provide for and/or enhance existing formal sports opportunities?

*Yes; the existing facilities at West Horndon Park would be supplemented by additional playing fields within the central open space of the site.*

12. Does the proposal ensure that a mix of use and tenure is achievable, specifically in regard to affordable housing?

*This will be a matter of detail design, but in general, CPL is committed to ensuring a social balance is maintained within their residential sites, and West Horndon is likely to be the beneficiary of this socially responsible attitude.*

13. Does the proposal ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent home and increase affordable provision to help those in most need locally?

(see SA object 7)

*This will be a matter of detail design, but in general CPL are committed to provision of affordable housing according to the local requirements.*

14. Does the proposal improve the health and wellbeing of the Boroughs' residents and reduce inequalities in health related to development and the environment? (see SA object 8)

*This will be a matter of detail design, but in general CPL are committed to supporting local health services according to the local requirements.*

15. Does the proposal regenerate and renew disadvantaged areas where people live and work? (see SA object 10)

*Yes; West Horndon is a relatively deprived area of Essex, and shops and commercial premises within the village core are in a poor state of repair; there are derelict buildings near the station, and inefficiently used space in this area. The basic premise of the proposal is to strengthen the existing village core in order to make the new properties a more attractive to buyers.*

#### **CPL Site Transport, climate and CO2 footprint**

16. Does the proposal improve accessibility to/enhance local services and facilities? (see SA object 11)

*The proposal promotes the enhancement of access to the railway station, including potentially up-grading the DDA standards by providing access for disabled people. There a clear, connected movement network for pedestrian, cyclists and vehicles which is integrated and extended with the existing network enhancing the existing Public Right of Way and footpath network.*

17. Does the proposal minimise the risk of flooding to domestic and commercial property? (see SA object 13)

*Surface water strategy utilises drainage corridors on the site and adjacent to it to create a series of connected wetlands that mitigate any potential local flooding. Existing flooding would be resolved by introduction of a new regime of maintenance of culverts*

*and drainage ditches of site.*

18. Does the development reduce the contribution to climate change by reduction of greenhouse gases? (see SA object 14)

*Yes; by providing opportunities for a rail and bus interchange, improved access to the railway, short walking distances from any part of the new neighbourhood to shops and facilities, and potentially local employment on existing business park premises.*

19. Does the proposal reduce traffic congestion and related pollution levels by improving travel choice and channelling development to sustainable locations? (see SA object 19)

*Yes; as 18 above, the access to the station would be enhanced, including better parking and interchange with buses; access onto the A127 and A128 would not require significant interventions. Pedestrian access for shopping and school would be catered for and enhanced.*

#### **Other issues**

Issues currently not addressed by either West Horndon or Dunton Garden Suburb proposals include:

- energy
- water use
- waste
- process of implementation, whole-life asset management, design quality and planning control
- density rates

## Section 4: Urban Design Assessment

4.1 General

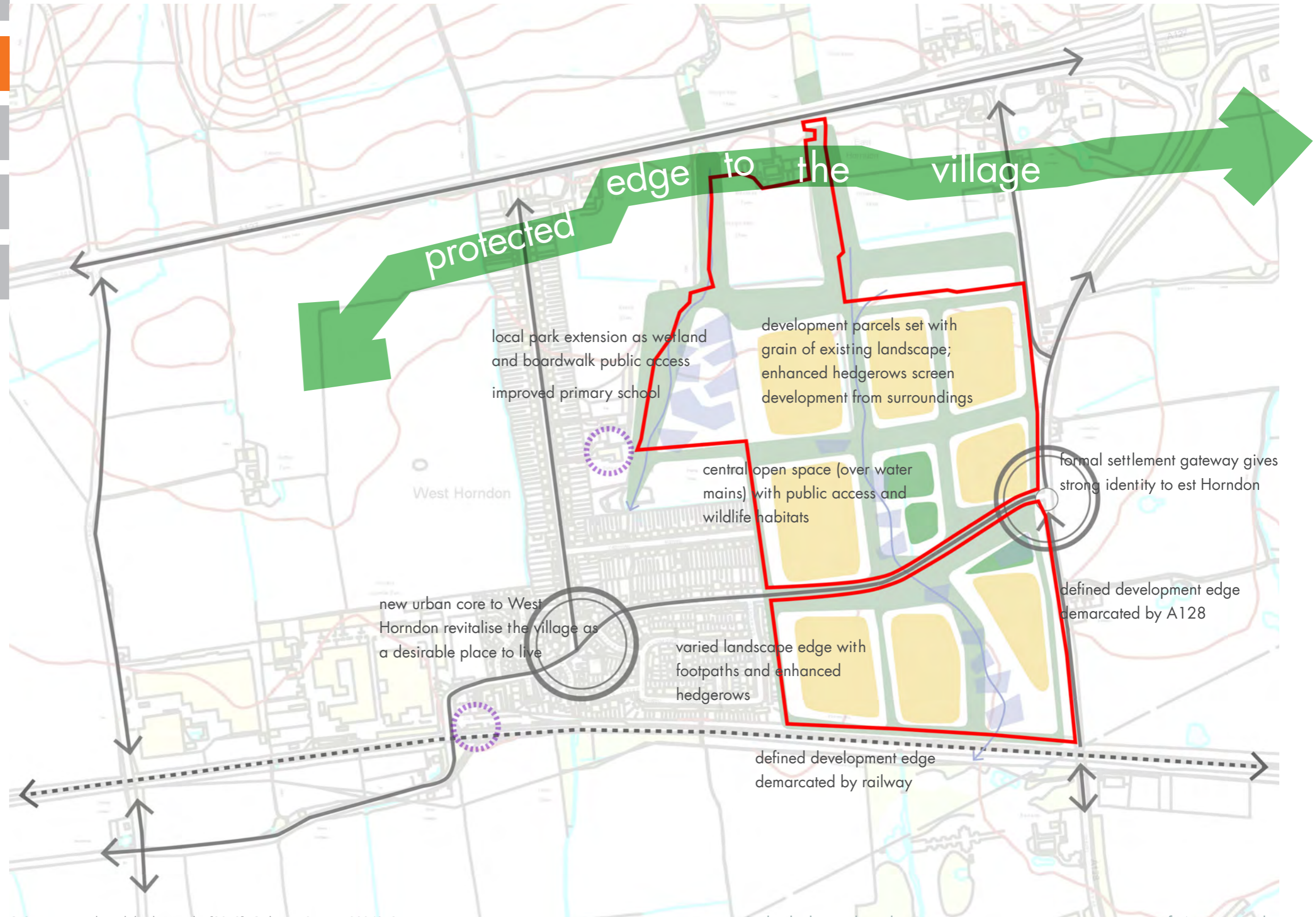
4.2 CPL Site Description

4.3 CPL Site Urban Design Audit

4.4 Dunton Garden Suburb Site Description

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Figure 8 The balanced settlement concept: east extension area of West Horndon

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### 4.4 Dunton Garden Suburb Site Description

#### **Dunton Garden Suburb Site Elements**

According to the consultation literature, Dunton Garden Suburb would be an extension of Basildon to the west of the local urban centre of Laindon, 'creating a place where people want to live, work and relax'. It is proposed that a mixed density development of between 4000 and 6000 residential dwellings is to be located within the site. The scheme would include commercial/industrial land and create job opportunities. It will contribute towards regeneration of and be integrated with Laindon town centre. A new rail station and 'other integrated transport improvements' may be considered. The scheme would be based on 'walkable neighbourhoods' with local cultural, social and community facilities. Green space would include a surrounding belt e.g. countryside to the west following Eastland Spring, 'connecting Thorndon Country Park to Langdon Hills Country Park'. Land would be set aside for biodiversity areas, and there would be 'well-connected and bio-diversity-rich public parks'. There would be pitches for Gypsy and Travellers, and community ownership, self-build plots and 'long-term stewardship of assets' as options. The consultation publication highlights constraints via the diagram shown in Figure 9; the only issues that fall directly within the site boundary are a Flood Zone 2 and 3a/b to the west of the proposed developed area, 3 listed buildings.

#### **Dunton Garden Suburb Site Masterplan Drivers**

Figure 10 shows the Dunton Garden Suburb Masterplan. It is acknowledged that much of the information needed to make a complete evaluation and comparison to the West Horndon proposals is not presented in detail within this document, but as of the time of writing no other information is available within the public domain. To facilitate a comparison, the same format and headings have been used as the Rummey Design West Horndon masterplan report. Key drivers behind the current masterplan are extrapolated from the Dunton Garden Suburb Consultation report of January 2015 (Appendix II), extrapolated in the following section:

#### site history

- some existing field boundaries appear to be used to define areas of development, but other boundaries do not respect existing landscape features
- development boundaries appear to follow High Voltage power line corridors

#### topography and geology

- area of development appear to avoid the highest ground to the north but not to the south
- the proposed rail station would be located on a 5m high embankment; presumably extensive earthworks would be required to facilitate this proposal

#### hydrology

- using wetland habitat to increase biodiversity and habitats
- using wetland landscape to incorporate a variety of public access to improve amenity

#### landscape character

- the development layout appears to respond to High Voltage power line corridors, the railway alignment to the south, the Basildon/Brentwood Borough Council political boundaries, existing A127 and A128 corridors, Lower Dunton Road, the and some existing field boundaries

#### site characteristics

- the 'surrounding belt' includes countryside to the west following Eastland Spring
- the proposal states that Thorndon Country Park would be connected to Langdon Hills Country Park, despite significant intervening infrastructure, including the A127, the A128, and the c2c railway line
- the Old Rectory access road and Church Lane (leading to Dunton Hall) would connect Lower Dunton Road to an area of 'potential open space' to be located centrally within the housing /employment areas

#### site designations and technical features

- biodiversity areas (presumably within the 'surrounding belt')
- 'well-connected and bio-diversity-rich public parks'

#### local settlement character

- the scheme would be based on 'walkable neighbourhoods' with local cultural, social and community facilities

#### site visibility

- new landscape structure appears to be proposed to edges of housing/employment areas

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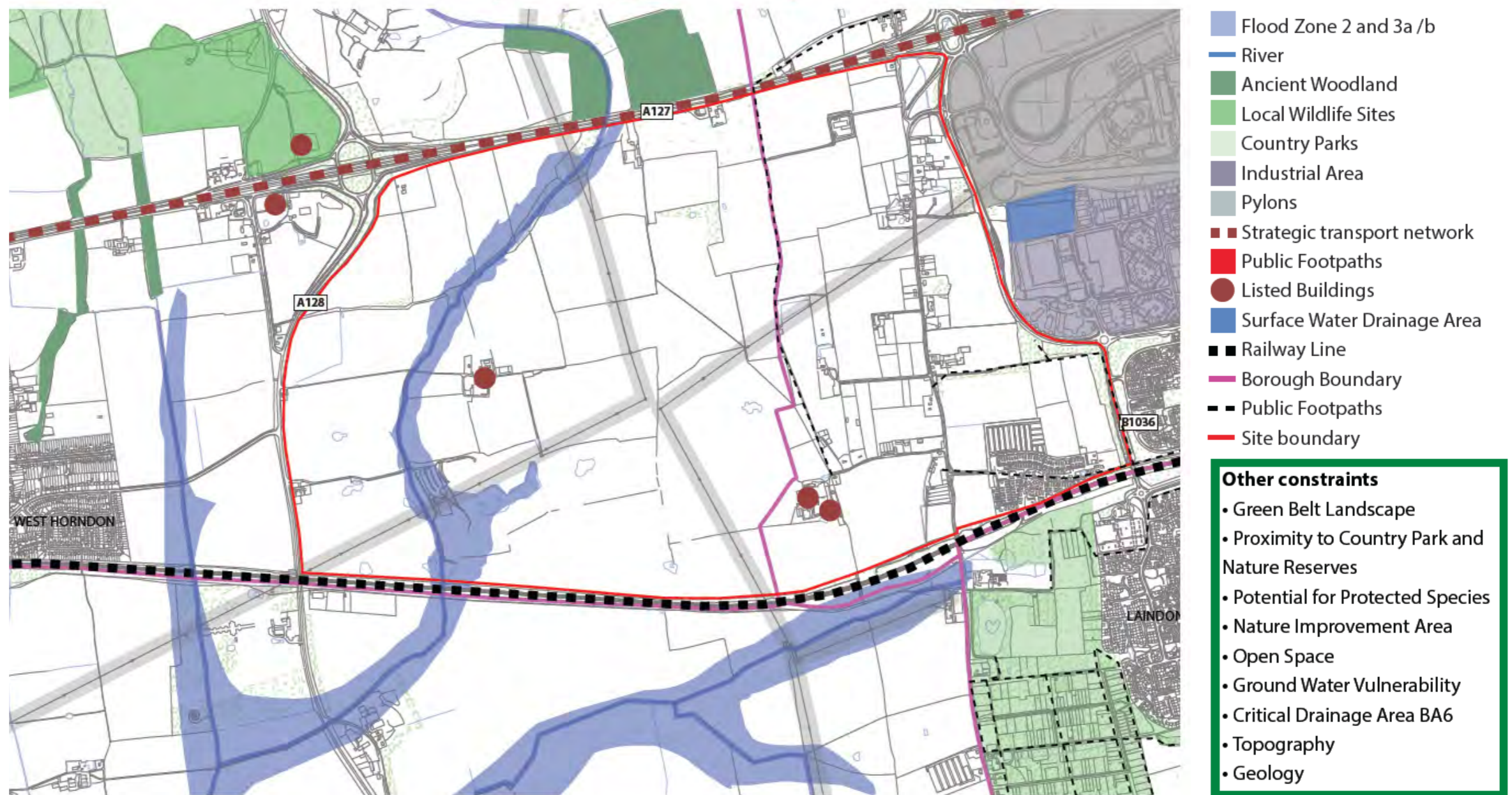
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Figure 9: Dunton Garden Suburb constraints



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#### 4.5 Dunton Garden Suburb Urban Design Audit

The following evaluation examines the quality of urban environment Dunton Garden Suburb could potentially offer as presented in the consultation document, by questioning how key urban design objectives have been applied within the proposed site. It overlaps with many of the objectives assessed in the SA consultation commentary and therefore they are re-evaluated using the same scoring method. Where no direct answer is given or implied by the Consultation material a neutral score is allocated. The original assessment scoring and new scores are compared in section 6 of this report and any differences in opinion are highlighted.

##### **Dunton Garden Suburb Site Character**

1. Does the proposal conserve and enhance the diverse natural and urban landscape, countryside and green space? (see SA object 1)

*The 'Green Belt landscape Capacity Study of Basildon Borough' (2013) states that the area has a 'low relative capacity to accommodate development without adverse landscape impacts, compared with other areas in the borough.' The site extends to the west to include 'Horndon Fenland (area G1, Brentwood Landscape Character Assessment), which has a moderate sensitivity to change, the development footprint does not extend into landscape typical of this character area. It is unclear if the 3 PRow crossing the site would be retained. It appears significant parts of the Dunton Hills Golf Club would be developed, changing the open, parkland character of the countryside. The overhead power lines would remain as they are (a significant existing detractor, and therefore retaining these is not an enhancement), forming linear breaks sub-boundaries within the site. Dunton Park Residential Caravan Park would be retained.*

*The Dunton Garden Suburb site is visually exposed (particularly to the north), has an open landscape structure with relatively few hedgerows and screening vegetation, and is therefore sensitive to change.*

*Published landscape character assessments state the area has a low capacity to absorb development, and would have a significant negative effect in regard to the question.*

2. Does the proposal create or enhance a distinctive sense of place and identity?

*Creating a distinctive sense of place and identity is fundamental to NPPF guidance. Description of the element of Dunton Garden Suburb is generic. The consultation document states generically it would be a 'place where people want to live, work and relax' and that it would have 4,000 – 6,000 different sizes [of homes] for rent including affordable homes and would be integrated with the existing community, with 'local cultural, social and community facilities in walkable neighbourhoods', with 'generous green space' and 'well-connected and biodiversity-rich public parks'. The quality or style of the community, what would make it special or different to any other that contains these same elements, existing or proposed, is not explained. The existing adjacent communities are amongst the "20-40% most deprived in England", a statistic that does not make integration sound attractive: what would the basis of integration be? Hence there is doubt about how Dunton Garden Suburb would deliver a distinctive sense of place and identity.*

3. Have the scale, massing and height of the proposed development been considered in relation to its context?

*There would be significant areas of development footprint on hillsides to all sides, particularly from the north. Any massed development would rise above the skylines within the proposed development area, owing to the shallow inclines and lack of backcloth. This would inevitably lead to a highly apparent change in character, and significant negative effect.*

##### **Dunton Garden Suburb Site Public Realm**

4. Is there a convincing hierarchy and variety of public spaces within the scheme?

*Although only outline in form, the masterplan identifies a structured hierarchy based around creation of*

*public open space at the heart of the development linked by arterial green and transport routes. The scheme description includes reference to walkable neighbourhoods. However, the distances to existing urban centres (Laindon, Great Berry, Langdon Hills) should not be walkable to a majority of people.*

5. Does the scheme allow for legibility, reinforcing distinctiveness of the site and consider existing views from and of the site?

*As above, the long distances and routes make the legibility of the scheme questionable; the shape of the neighbourhoods is varied, but linear breaks following over head power lines create a linear grid that does not follow the existing green landscape structure and is currently highly visible particularly from long distance (up to 2km) to north and south. How these breaks or screened to views from outside would be integrated is not answered.*

*This would potentially not be possible to resolve, and a significant negative effect.*

##### **Dunton Garden Suburb Site Conservation and Natural Environment**

6. Does the proposal protect, conserve and enhance biodiversity and the habitats which support it? (see SA object 3)

*The proposal states there would include 'generous green space connecting Thorndon Country Park to Langdon Hills Country Park', and 'land set aside for biodiversity areas', but is this feasible considering the scale and number of infrastructural barriers? The proposals indicate the area of 'open space' is significant in relation to the developed area, but much of this is existing farmland. There may not be an opportunity to enhance the biodiversity, already poor. Additionally, increased use in adjacent areas might preclude use of otherwise suitable habitat to a range of sensitive birds, mammals and reptiles. The existing segregated parcels of habitat would be further separated by development and infrastructure. What would be the practical way of enhancing the link between Thorndon SSSI and areas to the south?*

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7. Does the proposal improve efficiency of land use, through the reuse of previously developed (brownfield) land and existing building? (see SA object 12)

*Brown field land within the Dunton Garden Suburb site boundary is limited; other than roads, it comprises farmyards and buildings around the listed Dunton Hills Farm and Dunton Hall and church, Dukes Farm, and areas of hard standing around Green Meadows Nurseries and Bookman's Farm to the north. There is no stated intent to reuse existing farm building footprints, nor is the land ownership for these areas indicated as a secured element of the proposal.*

#### **Dunton Garden Suburb Site Community, Diversity and Social Structure**

8. Does the proposal protect and enhance the cultural heritage and local distinctiveness? (see SA object 2)

*As the Dunton Garden Suburb SA commentary states, "The eastern part of the area within Basildon Borough is a Historic Environment Zone considered to be 'Sensitive to Change', with Saxon and medieval archaeological value. Although it is apparent that the existing listed property and church at Dunton Hall and Dunton Hills Farm are to be protected, the setting of these structures is likely to be negatively impacted by the large scale of adjacent development. Due to the separation of these from the proposed site to the north there is no opportunity to protect the boundaries of Thorndon Country Park Conservation Area, the grade II listed park and garden, or ancient woodland. Local distinctiveness will be lost.*

9. Does the proposal promote neighbouring town centres as sustainable locations for living, retail, leisure and related commercial development? (see SA object 5)

*The enhancement of the commercial/civic core of Laindon, Great Berry, and West Horndon is a fundamental element of the proposal concept. There is a reliance on the existing urban centres but there are significant physical barriers due to the distances and the level of traffic on the A 128 to the west and Lower Dunton Hall to the east. Access from the new development would be likely to require vehicular. There are currently weak pedestrian linkages, few bus routes,*

*and no rail link from the site to either Basildon or West Horndon.*

*In contrast, were these issues to be overcome, reliance on the existing centres might potentially lead to lack of focal activity in the urbanised areas the proposal, creating a series of large scale residential dormitories which lack opportunities to fuse into communities.*

10. Does the proposal improve educational attainment and social inclusion especially in the most deprived areas? (see SA object 6)

*The proposal is reliant on using 'over capacity' in existing Basildon secondary schools and primary schools, including that in West Horndon. Apart from the uncomfortable physical distances involved that would lead to increased peak flows of traffic within the existing communities, there is a potential for uncomfortable social tensions as the demographic balance is abruptly and artificially altered. Has the impact of dispersing the large numbers of students that would be generated by the new community into existing schools been considered? If new schools were to be provided to serve Dunton Garden Suburb, how would these be procured and at what stage of the growth of Dunton Garden Suburb would they become viable?*

11. Does the proposal provide for and/or enhance existing formal sports opportunities?

*Dunton Garden Suburb consultation literature states these will be catered for in the proposal.*

12. Does the proposal ensure that a mix of use and tenure is achievable, specifically in regard to affordable housing?

*This is a stated objective of the Dunton Garden Suburb proposal.*

13. Does the proposal ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent home and increase affordable provision to help those in most need locally? (see SA object 7)

*The SA commentary cites the provision of 4,000-6,000 new homes and that the development description*

*refers to 'well designed, mix tenure homes'. There is no specific explanation as to what this means (i.e., is this a commitment to affordable homes?), there is no suggestion what percentage affordable housing would constitute.*

14. Does the proposal improve the health and wellbeing of the Boroughs' residents and reduce inequalities in health related to development and the environment? (see SA object 8)

*The Consultation SA commentary states: 'the location of residential development is not considered to directly influence health inequality...' but it would support primary health care, local sports facilities, new formal and informal open space provision through financial contributes. The detail of this information appears to supplementary to the consultation brochure itself. It is questionable if this is the opinion the SA assessors or information provided separately to the Consultation brochure. Overall, the lack of specific commitment to physical development of facilities needed to answer this question leads to doubt about how they would be delivered.*

15. Does the proposal regenerate and renew disadvantaged areas where people live and work? (see SA object 10)

*The SA commentary states 'development would be required to provide "local culture, social and community facilities' and provide new job and apprenticeship opportunities'; many of these would be to support the construction itself which are not locally sustainable, and thus of questionable long term value. As the development is intended to provide homes for a population without a commensurate supply of employment, the balance of work places for the new residents would be assumed to be elsewhere. Without a detailed and evidenced strategy, it is unsure what impact Dunton Garden Suburb would have on the clearly disadvantaged areas of Basildon or south Brentwood, would it result in direct physical regeneration and renewal of existing areas of Brentwood?*

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#### **Dunton Garden Suburb Site Transport, climate and CO2 footprint**

16. Does the proposal improve accessibility to and enhance local services and facilities? (see SA object 11)

*As the SA commentary points out, the proposed area is potentially isolated, and that local centres are separated by busy roads (the B148 and A128 and by a wide belt of open space. Within much of the development, people without cars would be dependant on public transport. The distances to adjacent communities cannot be described as 'walkable' to a majority of people – more than 500m. The proposal to build a new station would not be accessible to the northern half of the development. Feasibility of the latter is not indicated; the location shown has physical constraints, including its embankment location, and close proximity to a wildlife reserve (Dunton Plotlands Nature Reserve) and extensive existing photovoltaic facility.*

17. Does the proposal minimise the risk of flooding to domestic and commercial property? (see SA object 13)

*The SA commentary states that parts of the site lie within Critical Drainage Area BAS6, the northern part being vulnerable to surface water flooding, and the area within Brentwood is in a flood Zone 3 subject to high alluvial flood risk, giving it a 'significant negative effect on this objective'.*

18. Does the development reduce the contribution to climate change by reduction of greenhouse gases? (see SA object 14)

*There is a clear concern that the development as a whole would be likely to require reliance on private cars both for access to places of work, essential services and for access to conveniences for a significant number of residents, placing a burden on the local transport network and increasing CO2 imbalance. The dwellings would also create significant greenhouse gas emissions due to construction processes and heating requirements.*

19. Does the proposal reduce traffic congestion and related pollution levels by improving travel choice and channelling development to sustainable locations? (see SA object 19)

*As above, the dependence on private cars is likely to cause increased traffic and therefore congestion; extensive infrastructure interventions are likely to be needed, which will create negative landscape and visual impacts. The rail station is considered to be both physically constrained and would also have a negative visual impact.*

#### **4.6 Urban design assessment summary**

##### **CPL site overall assessment**

- There are 14 beneficial versus one adverse issue and two that cannot be answered with current information.
- The CPL site proposals have responded successfully to most of the key urban design issues, and would integrate well into its setting and urban community.
- There are social and economic challenges that can be resolved by balanced, accessible, affordable and socially and environmentally responsible residential design based on sustainable urban design principles.
- The retention and enhancement of landscape features, particularly hedgerows, provides a strong setting and sense of place.
- A new centrally placed main access point improves sense of place.
- Balancing the east West Horndon development with the neighbouring Icen Homes proposal to the west allows for a cooperative regeneration of the village urban core in cooperation with the local community.
- The CPL site presents an opportunity to successfully locate a well-designed new neighbourhood within a Green Belt, integrated into an existing close-knit community.

##### **Dunton Garden Suburb overall assessment**

- There are 9 negative and two positive assessments in answer to the 17 questions; 6 issues cannot be answered with current information.
- *The Dunton Garden Suburb site is visually exposed, has an open landscape structure with relatively few hedgerows and screening vegetation, and is therefore sensitive to change.*
- *Published landscape character assessments state the area has a low capacity to absorb development, and would have a significant negative effect in regard to the question.*
- While assessment of the Dunton Garden Suburb site raises further issues, it is clear that there are many potentially adverse outcomes that would result from the Dunton Garden Suburb proposal in this location.
- There is a lack of detail in the consultation proposals which clearly makes many of the issues and discussion a matter of conjecture.
- The central issue is the scale and scope of the proposal, which, while intending to resolve pressing needs to supply new housing for a growing population, does not seem to pay heed to fundamental considerations of urban design principles, landscape and visual impacts and Green Belt policy compliance.

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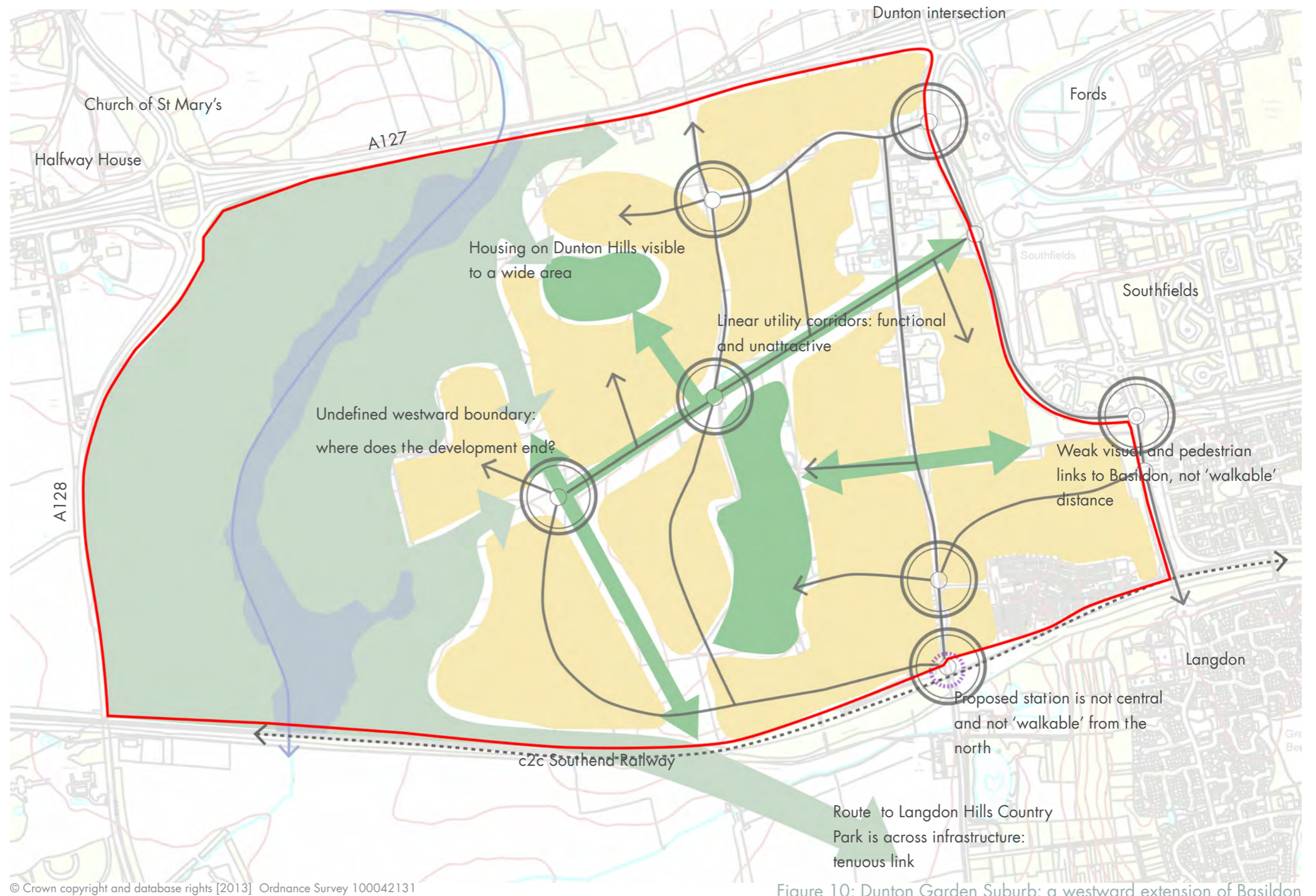


Figure 10: Dunton Garden Suburb: a westward extension of Basildon

# 5 Landscape & visual appraisal

## Section 5: Landscape & Visual Appraisal

### 5.1 General

### 5.2 The CPL Site Landscape and Visual Effects

### 5.3 Dunton Garden Suburb Landscape and Visual Effects

#### 5.1 General

The proposed developments are described in section 4. Land east of West Horndon and the proposed Dunton Garden Suburb, west of Basildon, lie within National Character Area NCA111 Northern Thames Basin (Natural England, July 2013). This is a diverse area, which extends from Hertfordshire in the west to the Essex coast in the east. This NCA includes the suburbs of North London, historic towns and cities such as St. Albans and Colchester, as well as new and planned towns such as Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield and Basildon.

Arable agriculture is a large industry in the area although the soil quality ranges from good to poor. The London Clay provides a poor quality soil that becomes waterlogged in winter and cracks and shrinks in summer. Better quality alluvial soils are found in areas where the Thames and other rivers in the area formed and changed position over time.

The Northern Thames Basin is an area rich in geodiversity, archaeology and history with landscapes ranging from the wooded Hertfordshire plateaux and river valleys, to the open, predominantly arable, landscapes of the Essex heathlands. Urban expansion has been a feature of this area since the 16th century and this trend increased dramatically from the mid-19th century, mainly as commuting to London from the surrounding areas became possible. This has resulted in many areas losing their rural tranquility, although this remains in parts of Essex where there is a more dispersed settlement pattern within the arable and semi-natural habitats.

#### 5.2 The CPL Site Landscape and Visual Effects

##### ***CPL Site: effects on views***

A strong network of landscape structure planting would integrate the development of the east site into the wider landscape in time. The existing hedgerow network should be retained and bolstered with new tree planting. New hedgerows and tree planting would help to integrate the development into the landscape and reduce its visibility from the Thorndon Country Park South. Visual impact resulting from the development of the east site could be limited through mitigation planting. The west site would be harder to assimilate into the landscape because it is exposed to clear views from the western sections of the Thorndon Country Park South and lacks a clear northern boundary.

Residential development on the east site will not give rise to any significant landscape and visual effects and will enhance landscape character and restore lost landscape features typical of the area. Assimilation of Icenii Homes development on the west side of West Horndon would be more challenging due to the lack of an established network of vegetation and of an obvious northern edge to the site.

The effects on the viewpoints would be as follows:

##### ***Viewpoint 1:***

View westwards from Childerditch Lane south of the A127, distance from west site approx. 500m; distance from east site approx. 1100m; 20m AOD.

Views to the east site are blocked by the vegetation associated with properties in West Horndon. The roofs of houses within west site would be visible. The effect in the view would be minor.

##### ***Viewpoint 2:***

View westwards from the Church of All Saints, north of the junction of the A127 and A128, distance from the CPL site approx. 600m; 45m AOD.

New houses within the east site would appear within the existing, dense network of vegetation which partially screens portions of both the east site and west site. The houses would appear within the mid ground of the view.

A small number of houses within the west site would be visible. The changes in view would be relatively minor. The essential character of the view would not change. The effect in the view would be minor.

##### ***Viewpoint 3:***

View westwards from Station Road west of the junction with the A128, distance from the CPL site approx. 0m; 12m AOD.

The view looking westwards along Station Road is dominated by the road and a low clipped hedge. New housing would appear above the existing hedgerows on either side of the road. This would represent a moderate change in view. A strong landscape structure of additional woodland planting would maintain a rural approach to West Horndon. The effect in the view would be minor.

##### ***Viewpoint 4:***

Two panoramic views: north eastwards and south eastwards from Station Road east of West Horndon with the A128, distance from the CPL site approx. 0; 10m AOD.

The view looking eastwards along Station Road would undergo major change. New housing would appear above the existing hedgerows and block views to the Langdon Hills. A strong landscape structure of additional woodland planting would maintain a rural approach to West Horndon and would benefit from judiciously positioned additional hedgerows and trees. The effect in the view would be moderate to major, however.

##### ***Viewpoint 5:***

View from north western edge of the community park looking northeast, distance from the CPL site approx. 0m; 12m AOD.

The view looking northwards affords open views of the east site. Housing will be clearly visible in the foreground of the view. The effect in the view would be major.

##### ***Viewpoint 6:***

Split into two overlapping panoramas southeast to south west from Octagon Plantation Country Park, distance from the CPL site approx. 700m; 50m AOD.

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### 5.3 Dunton Garden Suburb Landscape and Visual Effects

The east site can be seen in the mid-ground of the view. However the site forms only a small proportion of the overall view and is visually broken up by existing vegetation within the site. New houses would be visible however they would appear as a natural extension to West Horndon. In order to reduce the visual impact of the development, existing hedgerows should be maintained.

Housing within the west site would be largely screened from view. The effect in the view would be minor.

#### **Viewpoint 7:**

View southwards from public footpath within Thorndon Country Park South, distance from the CPL site approx. 600m; 40m AOD.

An open, panoramic view that encompasses the hills of Kent and the chimney and towers of the Thames Estuary. Both sites are just visible in the mid ground of the view amidst a network of trees. However roadside planting on the A127 screens a large proportion of both sites. The effect in the view would be minor.

#### **Viewpoint 8:**

View southwards from public footpath within Thorndon Country Park South, distance from the CPL site: approx. 800m; 55m AOD.

An open, panoramic view, it takes in the hills of Kent and the towers of London. However roadside planting on the A127 screens a large proportion of both sites. The roofs of houses at both sites would be visible in the mid-ground of the view. The effect in the view would be minor.

#### **Viewpoint 9:**

View northwards from Dunnings Lane, distance from the CPL site approx. 2000m; 6m AOD.

This northward looking view encompasses the hill ridge of the Thorndon Country Park South to the north. The foreground of the view is dominated by Dunnings Lane which is enclosed by hedgerows on either side which restrict the openness of the view. The effect in the view would be negligible.

#### **Viewpoint 10:**

View westwards from the junction of the entrance of

Nuttys Farm and Childerditch Lane; distance from the CPL site approx. 1100m; 15m AOD.

No housing within the CPL site would be visible. The addition of new housing on the Icen Homes site would significantly change this view.

#### **CPL Site: effects on landscape character**

The CPL site does not affect the overall National NCA111 Northern Thames Basin or County Character Area LCA D2, Brentwood Hills. It is likely to marginally alter the District Character by removing a small percentage of the Horndon Fenlands LCA. It would result in changes to 8 arable pasture fields, some to housing and some to open space and enhancement of mature hedgerow field boundaries; and an increase in woodland locally around West Horndon. There would be no change to the largely flat topography except in the area of proposed balancing ponds, where hills and depressions of natural appearance, clad in native vegetation, would be created. Pylons and Tilbury Power Station would be screened in many places.

#### **Quality**

The site is conserved to be of moderate quality because with the flat topography, open fields and hedgerow trees, and adjacent ancient woodland to the north combining to produce areas of distinctive and well-contained countryside. Screening provided by tree and hedgerow vegetation assists to lessen the effects of adverse features within or near the site, such as the arterial roads, railway and nearby overhead power lines.

#### **Sensitivity**

The sensitivity of the site to the proposed development is moderate to low due in part to the strong landscape characteristics, including the rectilinear field pattern, and corresponding hedgerows which would remain as features following development. Adjacent existing development also influences the perception of the site as being an urban edge location, not open countryside, as does the arterial roads the north and east and railway line to the south. The sensitivity of is raised to the north of the site where there are direct views into the site from the Thorndon Country Park, in conjunction to the presence of a

stand of ancient woodland.

#### **Magnitude of effect**

The magnitude of effect of the proposed development on the CPL site is considered to be moderate, as the proposals will add a perception of an urban edge to local views only, apart from limited locations within the Thorndon Country Park the north of the A127. This would be mitigated by intervening vegetation and enhancement by supplementary infrastructural planting. The magnitude of effect to the south of the site would be considered minor due to a lack of intervisibility between the wider character area and the CPL site, due to vegetation, both existing and proposed, and topography. The key change would be the presence of 550-650 mixed density new dwellings of a range of type, style and size, designed to fit appropriately within the urban and rural context. There would be associated hard standing, roads, open space and leisure facilities, landscape works and structure planting, new public footpaths and woodland. The increase in blue-green infrastructure would, however, be conspicuously noticeable; there would be a series of ponds and depressions associated with SUDS and flood attenuation, some potentially with standing water. These would lie within open meadows and the marginal wetland and meadow habitats, and along with the enhanced and new hedgerows and woodland would support rich native bio-diversity.

#### **Cumulative Effects**

There is a Draft Allocation for up to 1,500 dwellings to the west of West Horndon; there is a proposal currently being promoted by Icen Homes included in the Brentwood Borough Council January 2015 Strategic Growth Options Consultation. According to the Rummey Design Landscape and design report (Appendix I), the net impact of the cumulative sites was as follows:

'the development of the east site will not give rise to any significant landscape and visual effects and will enhance landscape character and restore lost landscape features typical of the area. The lack of an established network of vegetation associated with the west site and the lack of an obvious northern edge to the site means it will be harder to assimilate new housing at the west site into the

## Section 5: Landscape & Visual Appraisal

### 5.1 General

development.'

### 5.2 The CPL Site Landscape and Visual Effects

However, an approach that includes both the east and west sites as a single balanced masterplan would be more likely to accommodate the development to the west. This is in part due to the increased land available to mitigate both sites, particularly to view from the high ground to the north within the Thorndon Country Park. The combined masterplan would also deliver a scheme that fully supports the principles of urban design promoted by the NPPF guidance set out in section 4.

### 5.3 Dunton Garden Suburb Site Landscape and Visual Effects

#### **Mitigation**

For the most part, mitigation is designed into the masterplan proposals for the east site. This would also be the case for the neighboring proposal assuming it follows the same landscape-led approach.

#### **Residual effects**

The residual effects would include visibility of rooftops of residential development over the landscape infrastructure and screen planting, which would remain an impact within the first 1-15 years. New road infrastructure and access roads would remain an impact by their nature. The landscape-led approach to the development would not give rise to any significant landscape and visual effects, however, and would enhance the landscape character and restore landscape features that have been lost that are typical of the area.

#### **CPL Site Landscape capacity**

There is no landscape capacity study for Brentwood Borough but Thurrock undertook a landscape capacity study in 2005, which assesses the West Horndon settlement edge landscapes. The assessment included land to the south and north of the railway, with land to the east and west of Horndon described as the northeast and northwest quadrants respectively. The capacity assessment evaluated sites according to a scale as follows:

Limited – capacity for 0-149 dwellings

Low - capacity for 150-399 dwellings

Moderate – capacity for 400-999 dwellings

High – more than 1000 dwellings

The assessment identified the land to the north of the railway as predominantly open and prairie like with deteriorating hedgerows. It confirmed that there would be capacity for urban expansion within the northeast quadrant, both to the south and north of Station Road, offering Low-Moderate capacity. Land north of Cadogan Avenue was assessed as having Limited capacity. Land in the northwest quadrant, to the west of West Horndon, was assessed as having Moderate to High capacity.

### 5.3 Dunton Garden Suburb Site Landscape and Visual Effects

#### **Dunton Garden Suburb site: effects on views**

The scale of the Dunton Garden Suburb site inevitably means there would be major change to many views, described as follows:

#### **Viewpoint 11**

Southwards from the PRoW northeast of the South Essex Golf Centre, distance from west site approx. 1000m; distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site approx. 1000m; 47m AOD.

The panoramic view south towards Dunton Garden Suburb site; view over Eastlands Spring and the tree-lined and screened A127 towards East Horndon, Thorndon Park South and Dunton Hills. Basildon/Langdon Hills is visible in the distance. Dunton Hills Farm is visible to the west. The east site is not visible and is screened by landform and vegetation. There would be visibility of rooftops of residential development along the ridgeline from the eastern-most pylon to Dunton Hill Farmhouse. The CPL site would not create any effects within this view. The effect in the view would be moderate adverse.

#### **Viewpoint 12:**

View eastwards from the junction of the A128 and Station Road, east of West Horndon; distance from Dunton Garden Suburb developed area: approx. 850m; 11m AOD.

The rooflines of proposed residential development would be visible on the ridgeline from behind the farmhouse through to the Dunton Hills Golf Club the south. The view is cumulative with CPL site 180 degree to the west

(see viewpoint 3 above). The low, level landscape in combination with the existing vegetation network would reduce view of development. The effect in the view would be minor to moderate adverse.

#### **Viewpoint 13:**

View eastwards from Dunton Hills Golf Club entrance, distance to Dunton Garden Suburb development approx. 870m; 15m AOD.

There would be residential development within and behind the mid-distant trees and on the shallow ridge to the east, visible from the A128. The distance from the A128 would help reduce the visual impact. The view would be cumulative with the CPL site (see Viewpoint 3 above). The effect would be minor to moderate adverse.

#### **Viewpoint 14:**

Byway to the south of A127 near Green Meadows Nursery, distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site nearest development approx. 50m; 31m AOD.

Rooftops of residential development would be visible stretching along the ridgeline for east to west. Rooftops of residential development would also be visible to the east over existing hedgerow south of Green Meadows Nursery. The CPL site would not create any effects within this view. The effect would be minor to moderate adverse.

#### **Viewpoint 15:**

PRoW to the south of A127 near Green Meadows Nursery, distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site nearest development approx. 0m; 37m AOD.

There are open views of the Dunton Garden Suburb site from this viewpoint; development will be clearly visible in the foreground of the view. The CPL site would not be visible. The CPL site would not create any effects within this view. The effect would be major adverse.

#### **Viewpoint 16:**

North-south aligned PRoW traversing Dunton Hill, diverting northwest-southeast on the hilltop towards Dunton Hall. Distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site nearest development approx. 0m; 41m AOD.



## Section 5: Landscape & Visual Appraisal

### 5.1 General

### 5.2 CPL Site Landscape and Visual Effects

### 5.3 Dunton Garden Suburb Site Landscape and Visual Effects

Views to the east, south and west would be of new development. To the north there would open space on the plateau of the Dunton Hills ridgeline. The CPL site may just be visible over the intervening landform and woodland to the west, but it would be an insignificant element in the wider landscape. Glimpses of development at CPL would be possible to the west. The effect in the view would be major adverse.

#### **Viewpoint 17:**

Access drive to Friern Farm, off of old alignment Lower Dunton Road to the south of the A127, near Brookman's Farm; distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site nearest development approx. 0m; 33m AOD.

The view to the all directions would be of new development. The CPL site would not create any effects within this view. The effect in the view would be major adverse.

#### **Viewpoint 18:**

PRoW to the south of Church Lane near Dunton Hall and Church, distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site nearest development approx. 0m; 37m AOD.

The view to the north would possibly be of open space with new development within the Dunton Garden Suburb site visible beyond and to the east, west and south. The CPL site would not create any effects within this view. The setting of the church and existing pond would undergo major change. The effect in the view would be major adverse.

#### **Viewpoint 19:**

From Church Lane south over Dukes Farm to the rail line; distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site nearest development approx. 0m; 33m AOD.

The view would be of new development within the Dunton Garden Suburb site to the south; the existing Dukes Farm farmhouse and yard appears to be located in what would be open space according to the consultation diagram. The CPL site would not create any effects within this view. The effect in the view would be major adverse.

#### **Viewpoint 20:**

View westwards from car park of Dunton Park Static Caravan Park; distance from Dunton Garden Suburb site nearest development approx. 0m; distance from CPL site approx. 2460m; 34m AOD.

The view would be of new development with the Dunton Garden Suburb site. The CPL site would not create any effects within this view. The effect in the view would be major adverse.

#### **Viewpoint 21:**

View westwards from car park of Dunton Plotlands Nature Reserve, distance from Dunton Garden Suburb Site approx. 150m; distance from CPL site approx. 2400m; 25m AOD.

The foreground view would remain as it is; the proposed rail station would be visible in the mid-distance, as would associated car parking and access to the elevated platform and station structure. New development located on the low ridgeline running from Dunton Hall through Dunton Hill Golf Club to the west would be visible beyond the railway embankment. The CPL site would not create any effects within this view. The effect in the view would be major adverse.

#### **Viewpoint 22:**

View northwards from Doesgate Lane toward the Southend railway line and Dunton Garden Suburb; distance from site nearest development approx. 1,500m; 21m AOD.

The foreground of this view would remain unchanged. The proposed rail station would be visible in the mid-distance, and new development within the Dunton Garden Suburb site would be clearly visible from the far eastern extremity of the panorama to the west as far as Dunton Hill Farmhouse, and northward to the Dunton Hill ridgeline. The CPL site would not create any effects within this view. Despite the distance, because of the extent of development that would be visible from this location; the effect in the view would be major adverse.

#### **Dunton Garden Suburb site: effects on landscape character**

The Dunton Garden Suburb site might have a Moderate

affect the overall National NCA111 Northern Thames Basin or County Character Area LCA D2 Brentwood Hills. The proposals would have a Major effect on Character Area 13 Dunton Settled Claylands and the western parts are within the Horndon Fenlands LCA because of the scale of the development and the likely major infrastructural works required to implement it, which would alter the underlying topography in places. It would result in changes to arable pasture fields, some to housing and some to open space and enhancement of mature hedgerow field boundaries. There would be potentially major change to the gently rolling topography. Pylons would remain highly visible, particularly as they would be set in service corridors that run diagonally through the development footprint. The effect would be major adverse.

#### **Quality**

There is relatively little screening provided by tree and hedgerow vegetation which would exacerbate the adverse effects of features within or near the site, such as the arterial roads, railway and nearby overhead power lines, in addition to the large areas of residential housing and employment sites. There would be a profound affect on the gently rolling topography, open fields and relatively sparse hedgerow trees, wide visibility, and adjacent ancient woodland to the north that combine to produce areas of distinctive and well-contained countryside. The site would have a major adverse effect on quality.

#### **Sensitivity**

The sensitivity of the site to the proposed development is high due in part to the vulnerable landscape characteristics, including the open field pattern, and relatively sparse hedgerows which allow wide visibility of the uplands within the site. The sensitivity is considered to be minor towards the east of the site, where adjacent existing development to the east also influences the perception of the site as being an urban edge location, not open countryside, as does the arterial roads the north and east and railway line to the south. The sensitivity of is raised to the west of the site where there are direct views into the site from the Thorndon Country Park and A128, and to the north central area of uplands to the northeast of Dunton Hill Farm.

## Section 5: Landscape & Visual Appraisal

### 5.1 General

### 5.2 CPL Site Landscape and Visual Effects

### 5.3 Dunton Garden Suburb Site Landscape and Visual Effects

#### **Magnitude of effect**

Although mitigated to the north by intervening vegetation, this area appears not to be within the developable area on the consultation masterplan. The magnitude of effect to the south of the site would be considered major adverse due to intervisibility between the wider character area and the Dunton Garden Suburb site, due to its raised topography. The key change would be the presence of 4,000-6,000 mixed density new dwellings of a range of type, style and size, set within a mostly rural context. There would be associated hard standing, roads, open space and leisure facilities, landscape works and structure planting, new public footpaths and woodland. While there would in all likelihood be an increase in blue-green infrastructure there would be a dramatic increase in services and run-off from hard standing. The character of the area would change extensively and permanently. Extensive infrastructural works would alter the landform in places to accommodate building platforms, road embankments and drainage works; the arable fields to the eastern half of the site would be replaced by housing sub-divisions; the fields and open farmland to the west would possibly be replaced by parkland or 'bio-diverse habitat'; it is likely that there would be changes the existing hedgerows to accommodate housing to avoid the high ground if configured according to the preliminary proposals.

Due to the visibility of the Dunton hills, the landscape character of the Dunton Garden Suburb site would inevitably change to that of an extensive housing subdivision visible from high ground to the north, from neighbouring residential areas to in Basildon to the east, over flat land and from the railway to the south and likewise over flat land to the west. Dispersed roadside development would be replaced by extensive frontages or roadside landscape infrastructure. Narrow lanes would be bordered by housing frontages or roadside landscape infrastructure. The setting of the listed Dunton Hall and Dunton Church would be changed to include either extended open space with extensive areas of housing within existing views.

There would also be changes to the appearance of the

railway embankment in the area of the proposed rail station; earthworks and new access roads would be required, as well as parking and steps, ramps and a pedestrian rail crossing. The scale and alignment of arterial roads, including the A127, A128, B1007 Lower Dunton Road and other access roads would be changed to accommodate substantial increases in traffic demand.

#### **Cumulative Effects**

The cumulative viewpoints of both the Dunton Garden Suburb and CPL sites tend to be the same as those of the CPL site alone. This is by coincidence rather than intent, but indicates that Dunton Garden Suburb is likely to be visible in views of West Horndon but not necessarily the reverse, i.e., it site is more visible. This is not surprising given the larger geographic footprint and higher elevation of the latter scheme.

#### **Mitigation**

There would be a presumption that screening of the most prominent new development could be undertaken, to be planted in advance in order to maximize effectiveness. However, the scale of the development would preclude mitigation of much of the landscape and visual impact of the scheme.

#### **Dunton Garden Suburb Residual effects**

Screening vegetation would be unlikely to be higher than roof ridgelines and upper most elevation of the tallest structures height for several years, leaving views within the sight line of elevated viewpoints, such as from the railway line and PRow to the north of the A128 to be effective. New road and rail infrastructure works that the scheme description promotes are unlikely to be readily mitigable, either in terms of change to landscape character or views, as they will be elevated and visible from the routes they serve. Overall the Dunton Garden Suburb proposal would result in a significant adverse effect on landscape character and views.

#### **Dunton Garden Suburb Site Landscape capacity**

There is no landscape capacity study for Brentwood Borough but Thurrock undertook a landscape capacity

study in 2005, which assesses the West Horndon settlement edge landscapes. The assessment included land to the south and north of the railway, with land to the east and west of Horndon described as the northeast and northwest quadrants respectively. The capacity assessment evaluated sites according to a scale as follows:

- Limited – capacity for 0-149 dwellings
- Low - capacity for 150-399 dwellings
- Moderate – capacity for 400-999 dwellings
- High – more than 1000 dwellings

The assessment of final landscape capacity was also assessed as Low, a conclusion fully supported by the appraisal undertaken above.

Areas with low capacity for development are defined as those areas in the Borough 'that are generally of high landscape sensitivity and are generally unlikely to be able to accommodate development without adverse landscape and visual impacts'. The assessment recognises 'that there may however be some small sites within these areas where local conditions are different and which could be suitable for small scale development'.

#### **5.4 Landscape and Visual Effects -Summary**

- The effect of the proposed development on the Dunton Garden Suburb site is considered to be significant adverse and permanent as the proposals will change a perception of open countryside with gently rolling hills to an urban edge character to a wide visual zone of influence, which will remain visible permanently to many viewpoints.
- The effect of the proposed development on the CPL site is considered be limited adverse significance and semi-permanent as the proposals will change a perception of open countryside an urban edge character to a wide visual zone of influence, which will be partially or completely screened to many viewpoints.

# 6 Green belt assessment

## Section 6: Green Belt Assessment

### 6.1 General

### 6.2 Assessment

### 6.3 Green Belt Visual Assessment

### 6.4 Overall Green Belt Assessment

#### 6.1 General

The 2013 Basildon Borough Council Green Belt Study undertook an in-depth evaluation of the potential of the Green Belt within the Borough to accommodate new residential and other development. Although the 2013 SHLAA reviewed the likelihood of Green Belt land being required for development in meeting the Borough's housing needs, there has been no equivalent Green Belt capacity study undertaken for Brentwood Borough Council to date.

The Basildon study methodology is not repeated here, but in order to provide an objective comparison between the relative suitability for the CPL and Dunton Garden Suburb site, appraisal of the landscape impacts on the Green Belt in context of the statutory purpose is undertaken. The potential impact of development on the Green Belt is evaluated in regard to the sensitivity of the receptors, the magnitude of impact of the proposed developments, and their significance and nature of effects. Each aspect is assessed as conforming to a high medium or low level, and a similar value assessment system is used, i.e., Major, Moderate, Minor or Negligible. The audit process involves the following stages:

##### **Landscape appraisal:**

desktop review of the extents of the footprint of each site within the Green Belt; these are shown by Figure 11.

- review of the landscape character appraisal as assessed in sections 3 and 5;
- assessment of constraints;
- landscape impact of the site against the 5 purposes of the Green Belt; to consider how the proposed sites conform to policy before and after development.
- comparison between the landscape effects of the CPL and Dunton Garden Suburb sites.

##### **Visual appraisal:**

- review of the representative viewpoints locations and panoramas as assessed in sections 3 and 5;

- appraise the views against four of the five key purposes of the Green Belt to consider how the proposed sites described in section 4 conform to policy before and after development.
- comparison between the visual effects of the CPL and Dunton Garden Suburb sites.

##### **Summary and Conclusions:**

- determination the level to which the respective sites are suitable for development as referenced in section

#### 6.2 Assessment

Section 9 of the NPPF clearly sets out the importance of Green Belt land and identifies the main characteristics of Green Belts as being their permanence and openness. The Green Belt serves five purposes:

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

While it is understood that the NPPF states that residential development and associated infrastructure would be 'inappropriate development' unless there are 'very special circumstances'. In this regard, the NPPF states:

*"Very special circumstances" will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and other harm, is clearly outweighed by other consideration.'*

The landscape and visual assessment indicates the significance of landscape and visual effects due to the development proposals in comparison between the two sites. This can be interpreted directly as effect on the character and appearance of the countryside and powerfully connects with the notion of the openness of the Green Belt. Using landscape approach to assessing the 5 purposes of the Green Belt is a useful means of assessing how each site contributes towards the purpose of the Green Belt in its current state, and then how it would do so as a residential site. The latter considers the residual impacts of each site identified by the landscape and visual appraisal in section 6.

The following section assesses each Green Belt purpose in turn, first in regard to the CPL site and then Dunton Garden Suburb.

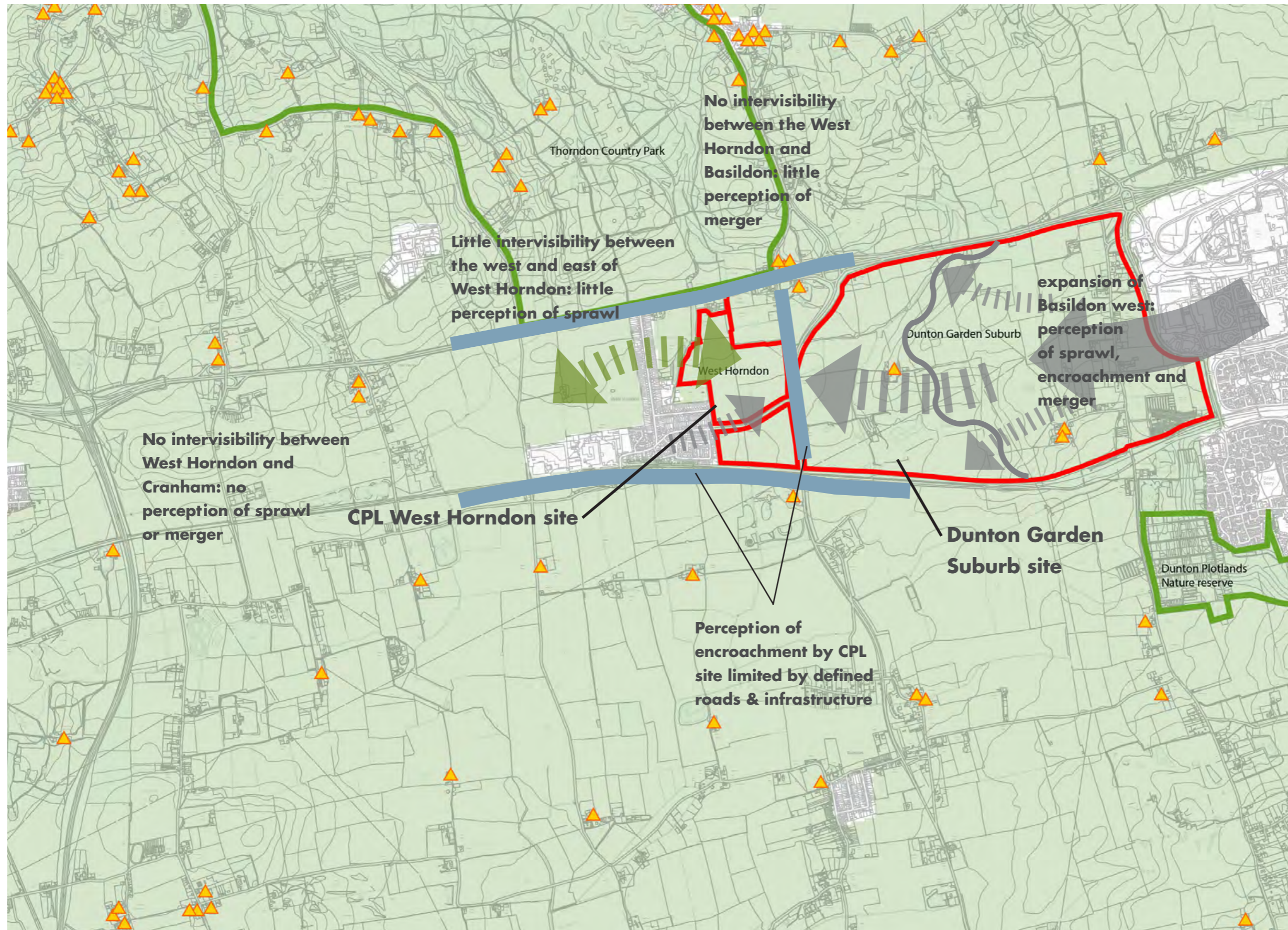


Figure 11 Green Belt and Designations 53

## Section 6: Green Belt Assessment

### 6.1 General

### 6.2 Assessment

### 6.3 Green Belt Visual Assessment

### 6.4 Overall Green Belt Assessment

#### **a. checking sprawl of large built-up areas**

##### i) West Horndon site:

- before development: the site currently fulfils the role of checking urban sprawl by providing a tract within a much greater area of land that restricts sprawl westward from Basildon and eastwards from West Horndon.
- after development: because the site occupies a fractional area of the land between these two built up areas, and therefore it is not critical to preventing sprawl in itself. Development would contribute to a perception of urban sprawl albeit as an extension to the existing village; the full extent of development would not be visible following mitigation and would be largely concealed by existing vegetation, existing housing and the outer frontage of houses themselves.
- effect: Removal a relatively small part of the Green Belt in this area would result in little perception of sprawl and would have a Low adverse impact on this objective.

##### ii) Dunton Garden Suburb site

- before development: the site currently fulfils the role of checking urban sprawl by providing a tract of open countryside that contributes the restriction of sprawl westward from Basildon and eastwards from West Horndon.
- after development: because the site occupies a significant area of the land between these two built up areas, the Dunton Garden Suburb site boundary is large in comparison to the developed area, and perceived as urban sprawl as an extension to the built-up urban area of west Basildon. As much of the development would be sited on raised ground, it would be exposed to views from the surrounding level landscape to the south and west, as well as to the higher ground to the north. It would be visible from the extensive transport network surrounding the site. Due to its sensitivity, changes to landscape character and views would be a challenge to integrate into the

existing landscape and mitigate successfully due to the scale and scope of the proposed development. Additionally impacts on long distant views from the east, south and west that currently wash over existing intervening mature vegetation and the raised railway embankment would be difficult to screen; the screening itself would create an effect of changing views.

- effect: Removal a relatively significant part of the Green Belt in this area resulting a perception of sprawl due to the extension of Basildon westward would have a High adverse impact on this objective.

#### **b. preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another**

##### i) West Horndon site

- before development: the site currently fulfils the role of preventing West Horndon from merging with Basildon, due to the wide areas of open land, mature hedgerow trees and woodlands that lie within and to the east of the site.
- after development: the site would not affect the extent of conurbations of Brentwood or Basildon; there would be new, well defined boundaries to the development that create a green zone or 'wall' that is itself defined by the existing roads, railway and village of Horndon. There would be little perception of merger.
- effect: Removal a small part of the Green Belt relative to the Dunton Garden Suburb site in this area for the purpose of extending West Horndon eastwards toward Basildon would have a Low adverse impact on this objective.

##### ii) Dunton Garden Suburb site

- before development: the site currently fulfils the role of preventing Basildon from merging with West Horndon, due to the wide areas of open land, mature hedgerow trees and woodlands that lie within and to the east of the site.
- after development: because the site occupies a

significant area of the land between these two built up areas, and would follow the east-west orientation of existing arterial roads and the Southend c2c railway, there would be a clear perception of merger. This would be exacerbated by the undefined western edge of the development proposal. The full extent of development would be visible following mitigation and could not be effectively concealed by existing vegetation because of a lack of structure. New vegetation would require several years to mature sufficiently to screen the full height of new two-story homes, and would need to be planted on locations that have no existing planting and therefore the planting would cause change and be an impact itself.

- effect: Removal a relatively significant part of the Green Belt in this area for the purpose of extending Basildon westwards towards West Horndon would have a High adverse impact on this objective.

#### **c. assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment**

##### i) West Horndon site

- before development: the site is currently countryside, albeit urban fringe and bordered by the A127 and A128 and the c2c railway to the south. It is also bisected by Station Road, and therefore well defined by development and infrastructure corridors: not really 'open' countryside.
- after development: because the vast majority of existing hedgerows that run both north-to-south and east-to-west would remain, enhanced by structure planting, the development would be contained in cells that effectively screen views from outside, at grade and from elevated locations to the north (from within the Thornton Country Park). Existing woodland the north would also be retained and be enhanced. The development would create a barrier to encroachment, having in-filled a defined area and redefined the existing edges of it.
- effect: removal a relatively insignificant part of the Green Belt in this area would create little perception of encroachment on the countryside relative to the

## Section 6: Green Belt Assessment

### 6.1 General

### 6.2 Assessment

### 6.3 Green Belt Visual Assessment

### 6.4 Overall Green Belt Assessment

Dunton Garden Suburb site; it would none-the-less have a Moderate adverse impact on this objective.

- ii) Dunton Garden Suburb site
  - before development: the site is open and unrestricted countryside to the west as far as the A128, to the south as far as the c2c railway, and to the north as far as the A127. These infrastructural barriers, however, are not perceptible from views within or out with the site, being largely set in gently rolling hills or screened by trees which are viewed from the elevated Dunton Hills, the Thorndon Country Park and the South Essex Golf Course. Long distance views to/ from the south are also unconfined due the flatness of the landscape; hence, the perception of countryside flows over and beyond.
  - after development: the large scale and spread of the proposed area of development would form a clear perception of encroachment within the uncontained countryside. The lack of a well-defined edge to the west again would further this perception - development appears poised to extend further west between the railway and the A127, to meet with West Horndon.
  - effect: removal a relatively significant part of the Green Belt in this area for the purpose of new residential and employment development would have a High adverse impact on this objective.

#### ***d. preserving the setting and special character of historic towns***

- i) West Horndon site
  - before development: the village is of recent (post war) origin and is not considered historic; this purpose of the Green Belt might not applicable. There is a listed property and listed Park and Garden to the north of the site, which although not a town would lend an element of historic or cultural significance to the northern part of the site.
  - after development: the boundaries with Thorndon Country Park and the Grade II\* listed Thorndon Hall Park and Garden would be protected and enhanced

by a buffer of open space and planting; their existing setting would be unaffected.. Otherwise there would be no change.

- effect: there would be no impact on this purpose of the Green Belt.
- ii) Dunton Garden Suburb site
  - before development: the nearest adjacent town of Basildon is of recent (post war) origin and is not considered historic; this purpose of the Green Belt might not applicable. There are two grade II listed properties within the site, including Dunton Hall and the church and Dunton Hills Farm, of historic significance and visible from a wide area.
  - after development: there would be no change in terms of the policy objective, but the setting of the listed properties would largely have been permanently and significantly changed by the new development, which is indicated to be in close proximity to them.
  - effect: there would be no impact on this purpose of the Green Belt.

#### ***e. assisting in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land***

- i) West Horndon site
  - before development: there is little derelict or brown field land within the CPL site. The objective is not relevant to the assessment.
  - after development: no change.
  - effect: there would be no impact on this purpose e of the Green Belt.
- ii) Dunton Garden Suburb site
  - before development: there is again little derelict or brown field land within the Dunton Garden Suburb site. The objective is not relevant to the assessment.
  - after development: no change.
  - effect: there would be no impact on this purpose e of the Green Belt.

## Section 6: Green Belt Assessment

### 6.1 General

### 6.2 Assessment

### 6.3 Green Belt Visual Assessment

### 6.4 Overall Green Belt Assessment

#### 6.3 Green Belt Visual Assessment

Based on the understanding that this assessment is of a general nature owing to the preliminary status of the proposals for both West Horndon and Dunton Garden Suburb, only a limited number of viewpoints have been selected for assessment and comparison. It is felt that these do, however, provide a clear enough indication of the potential impacts of each site on the Green Belt. There are 3 viewpoints in which both the CPL and Dunton Garden Suburb sites are clearly visible and therefore the comparative effects of development on the baseline viewpoints can be directly compared. The viewpoints roughly equate to views from the north and south and centrally to the west of Dunton Garden Suburb and to the east of West Horndon. Additional viewpoints of each site include two views from the east of Dunton Garden Suburb and a 360 panorama from the highest point of the site. Additional views of West Horndon include a wide panorama of the site from the east of the village on Station Road looking north, northeast southeast and south. An additional viewpoint from the northwest corner of the Icen Homes site, to the northwest of West Horndon, is also included in order to assess the wider Green Belt effects of development on both sides of West Horndon.

#### 6.4 Overall Green Belt Assessment

- Only 3 of the 5 Green Belt objectives are affected by either of the proposed developments.
- The CPL site does have some adverse impacts on the remaining three purposes of the Green Belt in the vicinity of the proposed development, but relative to those of the Dunton Garden Suburb site these are low. Moreover, the landscape-led approach taken by the development proposal would result in an overall low perception of change or effect in both landscape and visual terms, without considering the Green Belt purposes. There would be little adverse impact on the character or views; the existing Green Belt functions would continue directly adjacent to the site without being effected, as there would be little perception of the new development from beyond the site boundary. Overall, the CPL site would have a Low Adverse impact on Green Belt objective.
- The Dunton Garden Suburb site would result in High Adverse impacts on three of the purposes of the Green Belt. There would be a High adverse impact on land adjacent to the site as indicated by the high adverse level of effect that the development would have on landscape character and views beyond the Dunton Garden Suburb site boundary.



# 7 Summary and conclusion

## Section 7: Summary and Conclusion

### 7.1 Urban Design

### 7.2 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

### 7.3 Green Belt Assessment Summary

### 7.4 Conclusion

#### 7.1 Urban Design

The urban design audit shows that the concept and principles of the CPL site masterplan are considered to be successful because:

- the CPL site, due to both its lesser scale and scope and to the landscape-led approach to setting it into context, has responded successfully to the urban design audit
- the proposal's commitment to sustainability is evident through the design process as documented
- clear effort has been made to enhance the site's connectivity to its surroundings which intrinsically contribute to reducing potential impacts on the Green Belt objectives

The Dunton Garden Suburb site proposals are far less convincing in terms of urban design because:

- the scale and scope of Dunton Garden Suburb would result in a number of issues that need independent re-evaluation, particularly in regard to the scale and form of the layout, transport and access links, and visual/pedestrian links to existing communities and the surrounding landscape.
- The 'fit' of the proposal in its landscape context has not been demonstrated
- the site would be visually exposed to sensitive views and receptors from high ground to the north,
- pedestrian links to existing communities and the surrounding landscape are to extended to be 'walkable'
- on close evaluation the SA undertaken by the joint Boroughs appears to considerably underestimate potential environmental issues and impacts particularly in regard to the scale and form of the layout, transport and access links.
- Part of the site that lies within Basildon Borough is designated as a Historic Environment Zone and considered to be 'Sensitive to Change'.

#### 7.2 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

At County and District level, the landscape character of the two LCAs within which both site are located are similar - they both seem to suffer from visual intrusion, noise and urban edge issues, but they also have good historic integrity. However, at a local level, the Dunton Garden Suburb site is clearly more visually exposed than the CPL site, located on a rise of ground that, although shallow, forms the northern edge of the Thames Valley Basin. This therefore demarcates a distinct change in character that is not acknowledged within the more generic LCA at County and District level.

The landscape capacity studies indicate that the West Horndon site has greater landscape capacity for development (Low to Moderate) whilst the Dunton Garden suburb is assessed as Low. In this respect the Dunton garden suburb appears to have little landscape capacity for development. West Horndon appears to have much greater capacity.

The Basildon Green Belt capacity study for this area specifically focused on suitable Green Belt areas for development – and the Basildon section of Dunton Garden Suburb scored poorly in comparison to others around Basildon. It should be noted that while the Thurrock landscape capacity study indicated that there was a low capacity around West Horndon, it is now 10 years old, did not consider the area in any detail does not make a comparison to the land west of Basildon. The land and visual appraisal undertaken by Rummey Design for this report indicates that higher capacity can be justified in landscape character and visual terms because the poor quality of the existing character and the site's visual containment. This suggests that harm to the landscape character caused by development would be limited and this would be inconspicuous from surrounding areas.

#### 7.3 Green Belt

Only three Green Belt statutory objectives would be affected by either of the two proposals. Neither site would bring about harm to the 'setting or special character of any nearby historic towns' nor would they offset any other 'recycling or recycling of urban land'.

Regarding the Dunton Garden Suburb site:

- Dunton Garden Suburb would contribute to a perception of urban sprawl because the site occupies a significant area of the land between two built up areas, and the expanse of land delineated by its site boundary is large in comparison to the developed area. Because of its unfocused and dispersed layout the Dunton Garden Suburb site could give rise to concerns that it would continue to extend westwards and eventually join up with West Horndon. Additionally, the extensive transport infrastructure, raised ground on which much of the development would be sited and high ground to the north, it is exposed to views from surrounding areas which would be difficult to screen.
- The Dunton Garden Suburb site would appear to contribute to the merger of Basildon towards West Horndon, because the site occupies a significant area of the land between these two built up areas, the westward alignment of existing the A127 and the c2c railway. This would be exacerbated by the undefined western edge of the development proposal. The full extent of development would be visible following mitigation and could not be effectively concealed by existing vegetation because of a lack of structure.
- The large scale and spread of the proposed area of development would form a clear perception of encroachment within the unconfined countryside. The lack of a well-defined edge to the west again would further this perception, that the development appears to be poised to extend further west between the railway and the A127, to meet with West Horndon.

## Section 7: Summary and Conclusion

### 7.1 Urban Design Summary

### 7.2 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Summary

### 7.3 Green Belt Assessment Summary

### 7.4 Conclusion

Regarding the West Horndon site, the significance of impacts of the CPL site are limited:

- In regards to 'unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas', the CPL site extends the village of West Horndon to a limit that is logical and contained, occupying a small extent of land between West Horndon and Basildon. It would appear as a balanced and well-planned layout, of aesthetically high quality; this would not constitute sprawl.
- The CPL site would not affect the extent of conurbations of Brentwood or Basildon, nor give rise to a sense that it contributes to their spread across the landscape. The proposal would be perceived as an integral part of the village of West Horndon, not a new town or extension of an existing one. It would therefore not appear to cause 'merging of nearby towns into one another'.
- The CPL site would perhaps appear as an encroachment on the countryside, but because it is less visible it would not appear to do so to the degree of Dunton Garden Suburb. Development would be screened to views from outside of West Horndon. The CPL site proposals go to great lengths to integrate the new development into the grain and structure of the existing landscape, adding positively to existing features and introducing new ones that contribute strongly to the quality of the landscape around West Horndon and resolve issues such as folding that create wider problems for both human and natural habitats.

### 7.4 Conclusion

As much of the Dunton Garden Suburb development would be sited on raised ground, it would be exposed to views from the surrounding level landscape to the south and west, as well as to the higher ground to the north. It would be visible from the extensive transport network surrounding the site. Due to its sensitivity, changes to landscape character and views would be a challenge to integrate into the existing landscape and mitigate successfully due to the scale and scope of the proposed development.

The Dunton Garden Suburb site has a considerable number of obstacles to overcome before it could be considered to be ready for further consideration as a viable development option. Amongst these are: a potential conflict with nationally promoted urban design guidance; landscape and visual impacts; and the lack of any discernible effort to address the objectives of the Green Belt, all of which result in significant adverse impacts and effects.

By comparison, as evidenced above, the CPL site is readily deliverable with few further considerations required in regards to its conceptual format, in terms of application of urban design principles, landscape and visual impacts, and consideration of amendment to the Green Belt. It is a landscape-led approach that seeks to redefine the Green Belt boundary by consideration not just of the visibility of the development parcels, but of the context and value of adjacent landscape.



# 8 Appendices

## Section 8: Appendices

### 8.1 Methodology

### 8.2 References

### 8.3 Land east of West Horndon: Landscape-led Masterplan

## 8.1 Methodology

### 8.1.1 Urban design & masterplan assessment criteria & approach

Dunton Garden Suburb has been subject to the 'Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment Commentary' as a part of the Draft Local Plan strategic assessment, carried out jointly by Basildon and Brentwood Borough Councils under the Localism Act 2011 'Duty to Cooperate' provisions. This provides a readily available source of criteria for comparison with CPL's site.

Urban design and masterplan principles have been set out by CABE and other government affiliated bodies and printed and on-line publications including 'Creating Successful Masterplans', 'Large scale urban design' and 'By Design' (CABE) and the 'Urban Design Compendium 2' (Homes and Communities Agency) and 'Manual for Streets' (DfT). New design guidance is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework web portal, which states a range of best practice design objectives which collectively embody that promoted by the above. These are located online at:

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/design/>

Bringing together the criteria of the NPPF guidance, SA commentary and stated approach of the Rummey Design 2013 masterplan report, therefore, the following key headings are used to evaluate urban design elements of the Dunton Garden Suburb and CPL sites:

- character
- public realm
- conservation and natural environment
- community, diversity and social structure
- transport and CO2 footprint

Each of these factors is considered as appropriate according to the scale and purpose of the development in order to test the project deliverability. The objectives that are not relevant because of the preliminary level of masterplan proposals have been highlighted by an information 'gap identification' exercise.

### 8.1.2 Landscape and visual impact assessment approach and methodology

The comparison of relative landscape and visual impacts is indicative of:

- how each proposed area of development might sit with the existing character and views;
- what the major impacts might be;
- what mitigation measures are proposed to be used to reduce or eliminate these impacts; and
- residual impacts.

The assessment of the landscape character areas surrounding the two sites has been carried out as follows:

- desktop review of relevant local landscape character studies and designations as well as consideration of the existing topography and vegetation pattern;
- undertaking of site visits to assess the key landscape qualities of the area surrounding the CPL and Dunton Garden Suburb sites.

Assessments are then undertaken as follows:

- sensitivity of each landscape character area with regards to accommodating change within the development site;
- quality of each landscape character area;
- magnitude of effect of the development proposals on landscape character areas (or perception of landscape character areas for those areas the development proposal does not sit within);
- significance, nature and duration of the effect.

This assessment follows the principles contained within the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (Institute of Environmental Assessment and Landscape Institute 2013).

#### Capacity of the character area

The baseline assessment considers the capacity of the character area for physical change on its key characteristics. Capacity is defined as being high, medium or low.

#### Quality of the character area

The quality of the respective character areas of each site is also considered at the baseline stage. Key factors influencing the determination of quality include:

- designations relating to quality;
- aesthetics and appearance of the character area; and
- how well used the area is.

Quality is defined as being high, medium or low.

#### Magnitude of development proposals effect

Each character area is evaluated in respect to the magnitude of effect the proposed development has upon it. This is influenced by:

- visibility of the development proposals;
- physical accessibility of the development proposals, and;
- contrast between the development proposal and the character area it sits within.

Magnitude is defined as being negligible, minor, moderate or major.

#### Significance, nature and duration of effect

Significance, nature and duration of the effect the proposed development has upon each character area are assessed. This involves the consideration of:

- sensitivity and magnitude of effect (resulting in 'significance');
- beneficial or adverse effects caused by components of the development (nature of effect);
- longer term planning ambitions and change, and;
- duration of effect

Significance is defined as being not significant, of limited significance or significant.

Nature is defined as being beneficial, adverse or neutral.

Duration is defined as being temporary or permanent.

## Section 8: Appendices

### 8.1 Methodology

### 8.2 Review of Background and Evidence

### 8.3 Land east of West Horndon: Landscape-led Masterplan

#### 8.1.3 Green Belt review approach

Assessment of the impact of both proposals on statutory Green Belt policies and their functions at local level examines how each scheme would affect the 5 key policies. Because it is clear that both sites would breach the policy tests, this assessment is undertaken as a comparison of the relative level of impact each might have. In the context of the National Planning and Policy Framework, reference is made to Brentwood Borough Council's Green Belt policies for both the Replacement Local Plan (2005) and Draft Local Development Plan 2015-2030 (currently in consultation).

Rather than duplication of essentially similar policy statements or both Basildon and Brentwood Borough Councils, reference is made to the NPPF clauses in Section 9 – Protecting Green Belt land:

*'79 The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.'*

*80 Green Belt serves five purposes:*

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

Clause 81 states that:

*'...local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.'*

Clause 83 states that:

*'Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan. At that time, authorities should consider the Green Belt boundaries having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period.'*

The comparison comments in general terms on impacts on Green Belt uses and exceptional circumstances, both of which would to varying degrees breach the NPPF guidance, but focuses on the 5 policy tests.

#### 8.2 Review of background & evidence

In order to enable a comparison of landscape and visual factors, Rummey Design has undertaken a summary baseline assessment of the Dunton Garden Suburb proposals in the absence of other readily available material. Documents used in the preparation of this report include:

- Land east of West Horndon: an opportunity for an enhanced landscape-led urban extension Appendix 1: landscape and design report for Countryside Properties Ltd, Rummey Design (October 2013, updated February 2015)*
- Land East of Thorndon Avenue, West Horndon: Transport Appraisal for Countryside Properties Ltd, Odyssey Markides (September 2013)*
- Strategic Growth Options Consultation Brentwood, Borough Council Local Plan (January 2015)*
- Dunton Garden Suburb Consultation, Basildon Borough Council (January 2015)*
- Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment Commentary' for Basildon Borough Council, LUC (November 2014)*
- Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Brentwood Borough Local Plan – Interim SA Report, URS (January 2015)*
- Natural England, National Character Area Profile 111, Northern Thames Basin*
- Essex Landscape Character Assessment for Essex County Council and Southend on Sea Borough Council, CBA (2003)*
- Thurrock Landscape Capacity Study for Thurrock Council, CBA (2005)*
- Landscape Character and Green Belt Landscape Capacity Study for Basildon Borough Council Volume One Landscape Character Assessment of Basildon Borough, The Landscape Partnership (October 2013)*
- Basildon Borough Council Green Belt Study (October 2013)*
- The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and accompanying planning practice guidance, Department for Communities and Local Government*



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