



5. VISUAL CONTEXT

5.1 General visual amenity

- 5.1.1 Views of the landscape within The Salings are from a mixture of rural country roads and ancient byways where tall hedgerows often restrict views and from footpaths which cross arable fields providing open views to the countryside and towards settlement edges. Views are generally a mixture of open arable farmland contained by boundary vegetation and/or woodland blocks; panoramic views across the valley of Pods Brook towards the neighboring parishes of Shalford and Panfield; and more enclosed, channeled views within the valley of Pods Brook and Willow Brook where topography and vegetation restrict views.
- 5.1.2 The landscape contributes to the distinctive character and sense of place of the villages of Great Saling and Bardfield Saling, providing a valuable rural setting to the villages, to the Great Saling Conservation Area (CA) and to its two key registered Parks and Gardens. The mature evergreen trees within both Salings Grove and Salings Hall are a feature of many views towards Great Saling and are particularly visible in winter providing a varied skyline.
- 5.1.3 There is an extensive network of footpaths and ancient lanes, especially within the parish of Bardfield Saling. The lanes (byways) are often lined with hedgerow trees restricting views to the landscape while footpaths often cross arable fields where fairly open views are contained by boundary vegetation on the skyline. There is a noticeable absence of public rights of way in the south of the project area.
- 5.1.4 The two parish churches are set amongst trees and are not a prominent feature of the landscape. Views to the churches are often from footpaths, across large open arable fields where they are nestled into the landscape, seldom breaking the skyline. The visual contribution of the surrounding landscape to the church in Great Saling is notably greater in views from the west.
- 5.1.5 To the south, near Blake End the landscape is less rural and there is a noticeable absence of Public Rights of Way. Views from Blake End Road are restricted by a combination of travel speed, roadside vegetation, as well as residential and commercial buildings. Surrounding Muchmores Farm and Blake End Farm, large arable fields are interspersed with rectilinear blocks of coniferous tree belts and small woodlands.
- 5.1.6 To the east the topography falls gently towards Pods Brook. Views across the valley are afforded from higher ground along Pods Lane and Bardfield Road towards Shalford and Panfield. A distinctive row of trees on the ridge line in Panfield are visible in many views from the southern part of the study area. The valley slopes are predominantly arable allowing open views across the valley while areas of semi natural woodland along the brook provide channeled and filtered views from within the valley to the surrounding landscape.
- 5.1.7 Willow Brook, a tributary of Pods Brook, forms an attractive shallow valley or vale which drains eastwards through the project area. A combination of topography and vegetation provide an intimate character. Public Rights of Way provide access where there are channeled and filtered views along the valley and more open views where arable farmland abuts.

5.1.8 To the west, around the WWII Andrewsfield Airfield there are expansive panoramic views across a flat, open plateau landscape. Public access is restricted to the boundaries of the area. On the edges of the area, two WWII hangers strongly relate to surrounding coniferous tree belts, sharing their dark colour, shape and form and are surprisingly not incongruous within the landscape.

5.1.9 To the north, the land rises to the relatively flat plateau where large arable fields allow for some open panoramic views of the wider landscape, There is a strong sense of an unseen landscape beyond the parish boundary which contrasts with the linear settlement of Bardfield Saling. Its strong pattern of vegetation associated with large properties and garden curtilages and small paddocks, form a distinct visual break to the open plateau landscape to the north.

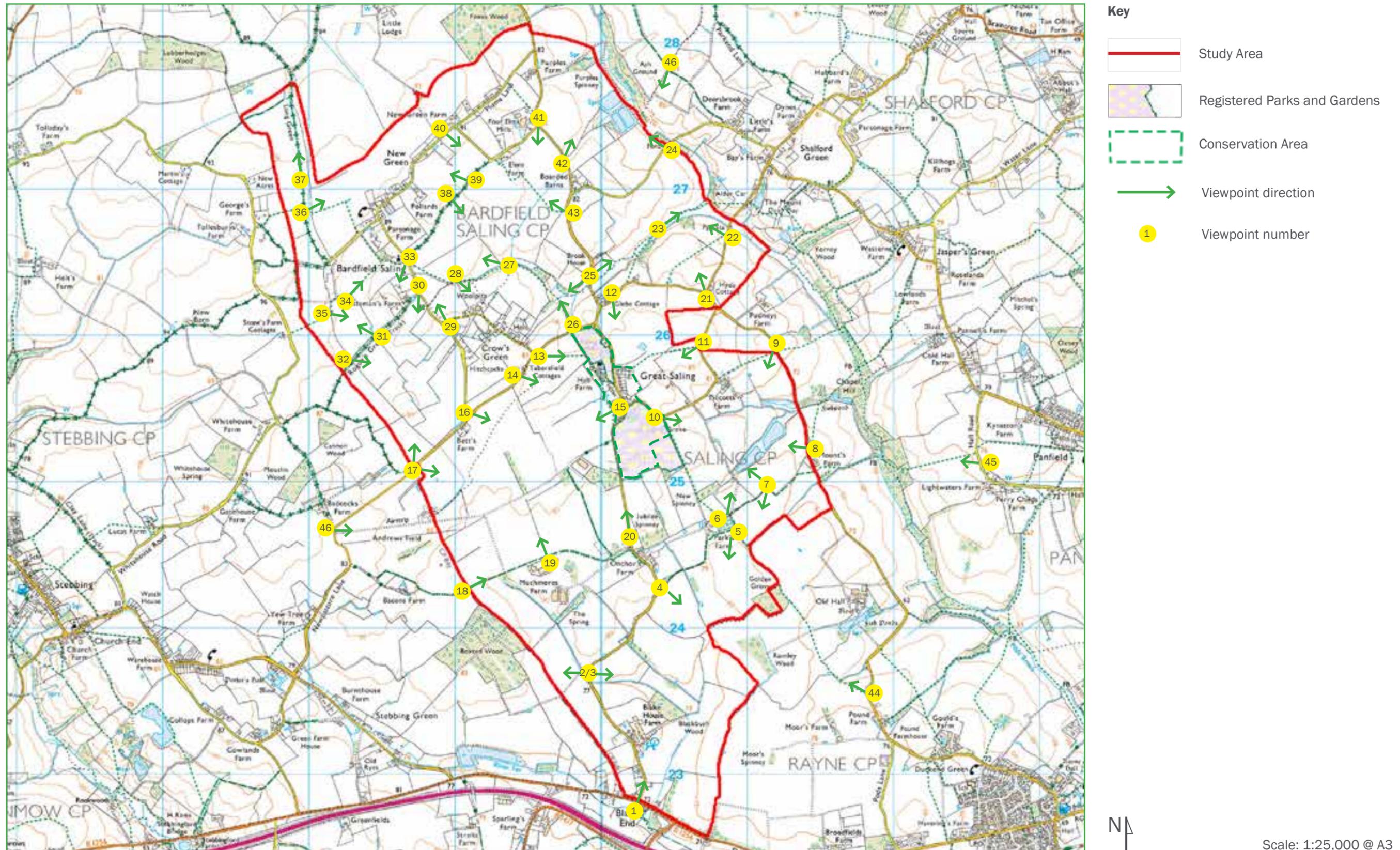
5.2 Visual analysis

5.2.1 The visual context of the landscape within The Salings has been analysed and a number of key views are noted on **Figure 9** on p34. These views have been chosen to represent the visual character of the landscape and references key views identified by local residents as part of the Neighbourhood Plan public consultation. Views are all from roads and Public Rights of Way.

5.2.2 Views are divided into the following groups and described below:

- Views in the south from Blake End Road
 - Views in countryside to the east of Great Saling
 - Views in countryside to the west of Great Saling
 - Views within and across the valley of Pods Brook
 - Views within Willow Brook
 - Views to the west of Crow's Green and Bardfield Saling
 - Views in countryside around Bardfield Saling
 - Long distance views from outside the project area.
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Figure 9
Views and photograph locations



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5.3 Views in the south from Blake End Road

- 5.3.1 Within the southern part of the project area of The Salings, there is limited public access. Views are afforded from Blake End Road, where a combination of travel speed and roadside vegetation restrict the general appreciation of the landscape.
- 5.3.2 Blake End Road is lined by clipped hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees restricting views into the countryside. Gaps in the hedgerows and field entrances allow fleeting views to large arable fields which are interspersed with rectilinear blocks of coniferous tree belts and the small woodlands of Golden Grove, Rumley Wood and Blackbush Wood.
- 5.3.3 Outside of the hamlet of Blake End, settlement is limited. Farm holdings at Muchmores Farm and Blake End Farm are surrounded by vegetation contributing to the rural character.

5.3.4 The landscape is relatively flat and associated with minor tributaries of the River Ter along the southern boundary of the parish. The land rises to the north and west where Boxted Wood on the western edge of the parish boundary is a prominent feature on high ground often enclosing views to the west.

5.3.5 From bridleway (PRoW 86/7) looking to the south, views are predominantly quite open, across gently undulating plateau farmland. Large scale arable fields are interspersed with rectilinear blocks of coniferous tree belts which break the skyline and provide containment to views. The broadleaved woodlands of Golden Grove and Rumley Wood combine with gappy hedgerows and occasional hedgerow trees, combining to enclose the skyline and provide a sense of containment to the views.

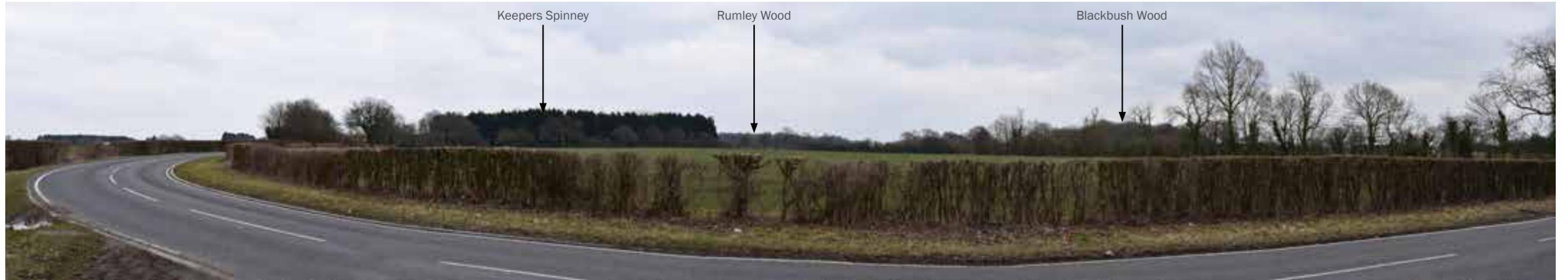
View 1 - From Blake End Road/Dunmow Road looking north



View 2 - From Blake End Road looking west



View 3 - From Blake End Road looking east



View 4- From Blake End Road at junction with PRoW 86/7 looking south east



View 5 - From PRoW 86/7 at junction with 86/5 looking south



5.4 Views in countryside to the east of Great Saling

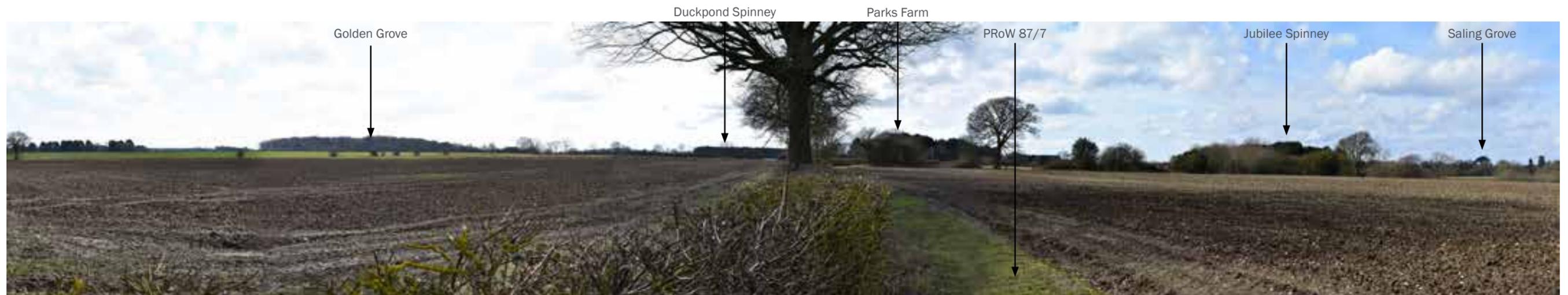
- 5.4.1 Great Saling is situated on an area of flat plateau, in the center of the project area. The landscape to the east falls away from the village towards Pods Brook. To the south of Piccotts Farm a small tributary of the Brook provides an area of gently rolling landscape with a series of small ponds flanked by semi natural vegetation. This more intimate area is surrounded by larger arable fields lined with hedges with mature hedgerow trees. Views are afforded from higher ground along Bridleway 86/7 across this area, with distant Shalford on the horizon.
- 5.4.2 Pods Lane (Protected Lane) follows part of the eastern boundary of the parish of Great Saling. It forms a relatively distinct boundary between the valley landscape of Pods Brook to the west and higher ground rising up to the plateau to the east. The valley slopes are dissected by a number of small tributaries/ditches which drain to Pods Brook, creating an undulating landscape. Pods Lane which is relatively straight, dips and rises through the landscape.
- 5.4.3 Pods Lane, which is often sunken, is enclosed by clipped hedges with occasional mature oak trees which restrict views; while in places there are open views across the valley towards

- 5.4.4 Shalford and Panfield and there are occasional panoramic views south, along the valley towards Braintree in the distance. In views towards Bardfield Saling from (PRoW 86/12) there are fairly close up views towards the settlement edge. The village is predominantly seen as a wooded skyline with the built form nestled within. The mature evergreen trees within Salings Grove are a feature of many of the views contrasting with the broadleaved trees and providing a varied skyline. This is especially evident in winter.
- 5.4.5 A row of poplar trees along the village playing fields also form a prominent feature of the skyline. The red brick buildings associated with Saling Grove and The Millenium Hall on the edge of the village are visible while the backs of residential properties along The Street are predominantly screened by vegetation. The water tower does not break the skyline and its white colour blends with the grey winter sky.

View 6 - From PRoW 86/7 and 86/5 looking north



View 7A- From PRoW 86/7 looking south west



View 7B- From PRoW 86/7 looking north east



View 8 From Pods Lane looking east



View 9 From Pods Lane and PRoW 86/3 looking south east



View 10- From PRoW 86/5 looking east



View 11 - From PRoW 86/12 looking west



View 12 - From road near Glebe Cottage looking south west



5.5 Views in countryside to the west of Great Saling

- 5.5.1 Views from the west towards Great Saling are from Public Rights of Way and roads across open arable farmland. In these views the Church is visible nestled amongst trees associated with both Saling Hall and Saling Grove which form a prominent skyline feature. The agricultural landscape provides the setting for the Conservation Area and is largely unspoilt by modern development.
- 5.5.2 Views out from the edge of Great Saling from PRoW 86/8 are contained by vegetation along field boundaries and strong coniferous tree belts in the middle distance. These form a separation to Andrewsfield airfield beyond. The WWII hanger relates to the surrounding coniferous tree belts, sharing their dark colour, shape and form and are surprisingly not incongruous within the landscape.
- 5.5.3 Views to the north from Newpasture Lane are relatively contained by strong vegetation

- 5.5.4 This contrasts with views south from Newpasture Lane where there are expansive views across Andrewsfield airfield. Isolated, rectilinear tree belts provide height in an otherwise flat landscape. Apart from the clubhouse, public access is restricted to the perimeter of the area. From FP 86/10 to the south of the airfield, similar expansive views are gained. At times vegetation in the wider landscape such as Boxted Wood provides some containment on the skyline.
- 5.5.5 In views from Blake End Road on the rural approach to Great Saling there are sequential views towards the pastoral fields and wooded skyline of Saling Grove on one side of the road and the arable fields and tree belts on the other.

View 13 - From PRoW 86/4



View 14 - From Newpasture Lane near Taborsfield Cottages



View 15 - From PRow 8 looking west towards Andrewsfield



View16 - From Stebbing Road near Betts Farm



View 17A - From Stebbing Road at junction with PRow 37 looking east



View 17B - From Stebbing Road at junction with PRoW 37 looking north east



View 18 - From PRoW 86/10



View 19- From PRoW 86/10



View 20 - From Blake End Road, near Onchors Farm on approach to Great Saling



5.6 Views within and across the valley of Pods Brook

5.6.1 In the north of the study area, the parish boundary of Bardfield Saling extends to Pods Brook. It is crossed by Littles Lane (Protected Lane) and an un-named lane which both lead to Shalford to the east. These ancient narrow lanes are winding and occasionally sunken with tall vegetation on either side which restricts views of the valley.

5.6.2 A thin band of vegetation, including areas of semi natural vegetation containing willow and alder and meadow pasture, follows the brook which is flanked on either side by large arable

fields on the slopes. Loss of field boundaries on the slopes provide more open views towards the arable valley slopes but these are contained by the gentle ridges on the edge of the plateau. From this transitional edge there are more open views across the valley towards the Shalford and Panfield ; occasional panoramic views south, along the valley towards Braintree in the distance; and views north where Foxes Wood can be seen on the distant skyline.

5.6.3 PRowS 86/11 allows public access in the valley along Willow Brook. Otherwise there is little public access in the valley itself.

View 21 - From road junction near Hyde cottage looking north west



View 22 - From Lane to Shalford looking north west



View 23- From PRow 86/11- Willow Brook to Pods Brook



View 24 - From Protected Lane to Shalford looking north across the Splash



5.7 Views within the valley of Willow Brook

- 5.7.1 A tributary of Pods Brook, the Willow Brook meanders east to west across the project area and for much of its course it forms the boundary between the two parishes in the project area. The brook itself is a small stream/ditch within a shallow valley rising up to slightly higher ground near Bardfield Saling Church.
- 5.7.2 PRoW 86/11 and 86/1/60/7 follow the course of the brook but do not link together. Bardfield Road crosses the Brook on the parish boundary where there are channeled views along the valley in both directions.
- 5.7.3 Near Pods Brook, the topography of the valley is well defined with some steep sided slopes covered in vegetation which separates the valley from the abutting arable fields. This provides channeled views along the valleys with filtered views to the wider landscape on either side. To the west of Bardfield Road, the valley widens out, with gentle slopes rising up towards surrounding roads where vegetation and occasional houses form the skyline.

- 5.7.4 The hamlet of Crow's Green sits on the edge of the valley where properties along Woolpit's Road overlook the valley. At the road junction, near Woolpits Cottage there is an attractive view over the valley to Bardfield Saling Church. From the valley, the properties along Woolpit's Road form the skyline further enclosing the valley. Vegetation within their garden curtilages provide a soft edge to the settlement.
- 5.7.5 In comparison to the surrounding plateau landscape the valley is intimate with more enclosed views. As the brook peters out, the landscape widens and the surrounding arable fields adjoin the ditch where mature trees form a field boundary. There are more open views across arable farmland towards Bardfield Saling and its church. The ancient Green Lane (PRoW 60/5), with its strong vegetation forms a strong linear feature in the landscape to the north west of the brook.

View 25 A- From Bardfield Road looking north east



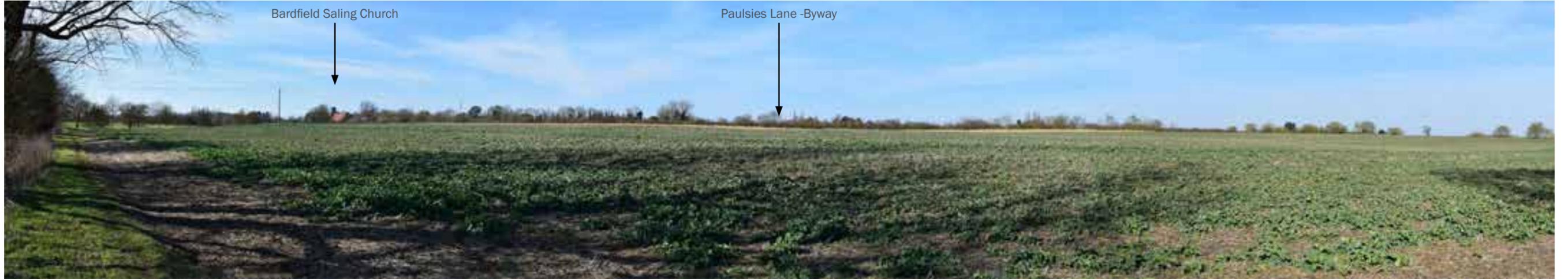
View 25 B - From Bardfield Road looking South west



View 26 - From Newpasture Lane and junction with PRoW 86/10 looking north west



View 27 - From PRoW 60/7 towards Bardfield Saling church



View 28 - From PRoW 86/10 looking south towards Crow's Green



View 29 - From junction of Woolpits Road looking north



5.8 Views to the west of Crow's Green and Bardfield Saling

5.8.1 To the west of Crow's Green the relatively flat plateau landscape gently rises to the parish boundary in the west. The area has a predominantly unsettled, rural character with occasional farmsteads/properties on the periphery.

5.8.2 Rogues Green (PROW 60/10) and footpath 60/3 cross the area providing a variety of different views. Rogues Green is generally well vegetated limiting views out but there are occasional views to the north and south at field entrances. In contrast, footpath 60/3 crosses arable fields providing open views of the landscape including views to Bardfield Saling church. In both cases, the area's strong vegetation framework associated with an irregular pattern of small to medium sized fields, restrict views to vegetation on the boundaries of fields. There are some longer distance views from higher ground near Lubberhedges Lane (outside of the project area).

5.8.3 Further north the landscape widens out to a high plateau where field boundaries have been lost allowing longer distance, more open views across arable fields. Field boundary vegetation often forms the skyline in the middle distance with occasional trees providing vertical features. Foxes Wood and the settlement edge of Bardfield Saling form linear features on the skyline providing some containment to the views.

5.8.4 Along the route of Long Green there is a strong linear pattern of narrow, arable fields on either side of the track. The nature of the topography and hedgerows restrict views to the middle distance but the wider plateau landscape is evident, forming a distant horizon beyond.

View 30 - From Plums Lane near Rogues Green looking south



View 31 - From PRoW 60/10 Rogues Green looking north



View 32 - From PRoW 60/10 Rogues Green looking south



View 33 - From junction of road and footpath 60/4 looking south



View 34 - From PRoW 60/3 looking east



View 35 - From PRoW 60/3 looking south east



View 36 - From PRoW 60/3 looking east



View 37 - From Long Green (60/1) looking north



5.9 Views in countryside around Bardfield Saling

5.9.1 To the south of Bardfield Saling there are occasional open views from Paulsies Lane across a relatively flat open landscape which slopes south towards Willow Brook. Views over large arable fields with fragmented hedgerows and occasional mature trees are contained by vegetation along Bardfield Road, within Saling Hall and Woolpit's Road on the horizon.

5.9.2 Strong vegetation along Paulsies Lane separates/contains views from this area of open arable farmland. In views from the south, the linear settlement of Bardfield Saling is visible on higher ground, beyond this strong line of vegetation. Occasional filtered views are available from Paulsies Lane to the north which has a very different character of smaller fields with a

more regular pattern, which flank the linear settlement of Bardfield Saling along Plums Lane. Vegetation within garden curtilages and around small paddocks enclose the settlement but there are occasional views to both the north and south between properties. This character extends eastwards along the length of Plums Lane to Bardfield Road. At the eastern end of Plums Lane, properties become more dispersed and there are more open views south towards the distinctive trees of Saling Grove in the distance.

5.9.3 At the junction with Bardfield Road the landscape opens out with long distance views over Pods Brook towards Shalford. In these views, Pods Brook and its associated vegetation becomes a linear feature separating the parishes so that the presence of the valley is lost.

View 38 - From Paulsies Lane (PRoW 60/5) looking south east



View 39 - From Paulsies Lane (PRoW 60/5) looking south east



View 40 - From Plums Lane looking south east



View 41 - From Bardfield Road near Four Elms cottages looking south west



View 41 - From Bardfield Road near Boarded Barns looking north east



View 42 - From junction of Bardfield Road and PRoW 60/8 looking west



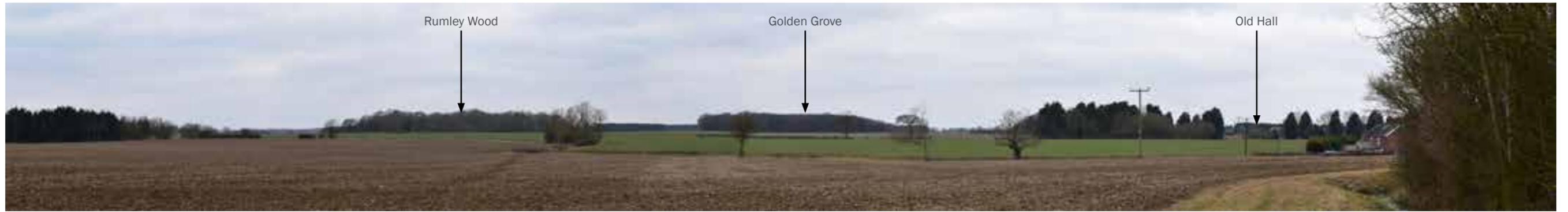
5.10 Long distance views from outside the project area

- 5.10.1 In addition to the viewpoints above a number of views from outside the parish have been considered.
- 5.10.2 Footpath 86/5 follows the parish boundary south past Golden Grove to join with Pods Lane in the parish of Rayne. Views from the footpath show some of the southern area of The Salings which is not visible from elsewhere. Large arable fields with few hedgerow features provide open views towards Rumley Wood and Golden Grove (on the parish boundary). These are prominent features on the skyline and combine with coniferous tree belts in the distance to contain the view.
- 5.10.3 Shalford and Panfield are located on high ground to the east of The Salings where there are long distance panoramic views towards The Salings over Pods Brook. From Hall Road in Panfield there is a particularly open long distance panoramic view towards The Salings over

Pods Brook (view 45). Rumley Wood and Golden Grove are prominent features on the distant skyline above vegetation along Pods Brook. Further north, near the boundary with Great Bardfield there are views across the valley towards Great Saling, Saling Bardfield and Foxes Wood.

- 5.10.4 In addition to the views noted above, there are occasional filtered views across the valley from the ridge between Shalford and Panfield. In these views from the east, Pods Brook and its associated vegetation becomes a linear feature, so that its presence is almost lost.
- 5.10.5 To the west of The Salings, long distance views are attained from Newpasture Lane (within Stebbing CP) across the open landscape associated with Andrewsfield. From here the nature of the plateau topography restricts views to lower lying land beyond, in the central area of The Salings. There are also open, panoramic views from here, to the west across the parish of Stebbing.

View 44 - From junction of PRoW 86/5 and Pods Lane looking north.



View 45 - From Hall Road, Panfield looking west



View 46 - From Bridleway 32 on boundary of Shalford and Bardfield Saling looking south west

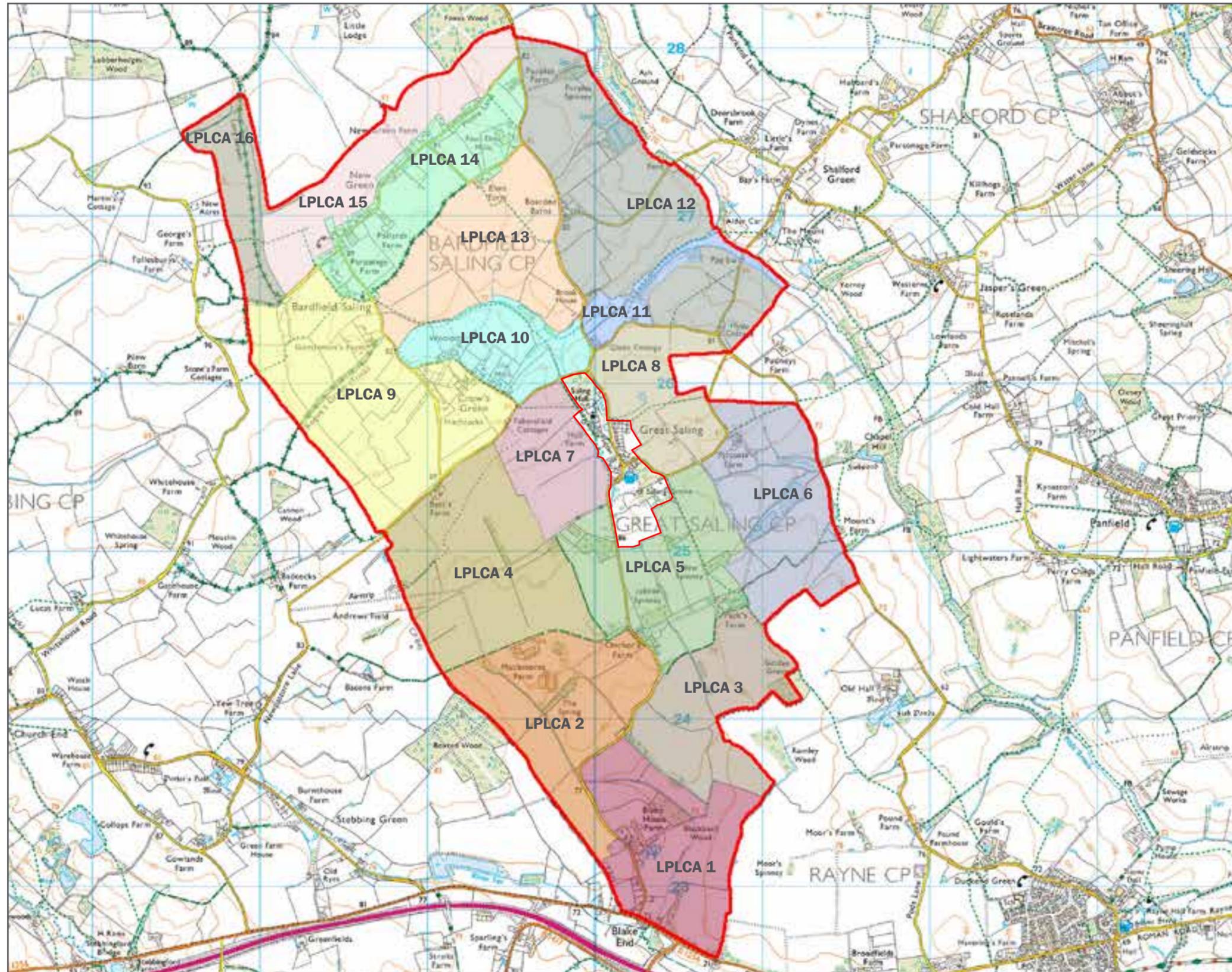


View 47 - From Newpasture Lane looking east



Figure 10

Local Parish Landscape Character Areas



Key

-  Study Area
-  Great Saling Conservation Area
-  Local Parish LCAs
- LPLCA no.1 - Area surrounding Blake End
- LPLCA no.2 - Muchmores Farm & surrounds
- LPLCA no.3 - Area west of Golden Grove
- LPLCA no.4 - Andrewsfield
- LPLCA no.5 - Saling Grove & surrounds
- LPLCA no.6 - South of Piccotts Farm
- LPLCA no.7 - Land to the west of Great Saling
- LPLCA no.8 - Land to east of Great Saling
- LPLCA no.9 - Area west of Crow's Green
- LPLCA no.10 - Willow Brook and Crow's Green
- LPLCA no.11 - Pods Book and Willow Brook
- LPLCA no.12 - Valley Slopes
- LPLCA no.13 - Area to south of Bardfield Saling
- LPLCA no.14 - Bardfield Saling and surrounds
- LPLCA No.15 - New Green Plateau
- LPLCA no.16 - Long Green Plateau



Scale: 1:25,000 @ A3

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6. IDENTIFICATION OF LOCAL PARISH LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS (LPLCAS)

6.1 Identification of LPLCAs

6.1.1 A combination of landscape baseline desktop study, fieldwork and stakeholder consultation (Section 3.2 'Information sources' above refers) was used to divide the landscape of The Salings into 16. broad parcels of land with common characteristics, hereafter referred to as Local Parish Landscape Character Areas (LPLCAs).

6.1.2 The parcels were defined initially by desktop research, and then adjusted and refined subsequently in the light of findings in the field and through consultation, as necessary. Analysis is typically at the field level grain/scale, with some aggregation of field and landscape units where appropriate.

6.2 Arrangement of LPLCAs

6.2.1 **Figure 10 - Local Parish Landscape Character Areas** (LPLCAs) depicts the arrangement of the various Landscape Character Areas at a scale of 1:25,000.

6.2.2 It should be noted that following initial research and fieldwork, it was decided to omit the area within the Great Saling Conservation Area from the Landscape Character Assessment for the following reasons:

- Great Saling is a nucleated village with a strong boundary defined by both The Conservation Area (Policy RLP 95) and its Village Envelope (Policy RLP 2); and
 - Views of the village are of a predominantly wooded area associated with Saling Hall and Saling Grove and is perceived as a discrete element within the wider landscape.
-

6.3 LPLCA analysis

6.3.1 A range of landscape and visual criteria were identified and assessed in order to evaluate both the landscape and visual sensitivity of the landscape, parcel by parcel (refer to Appendix B - proformas). These were combined to provide an overall landscape sensitivity where "Existing Landscape Character Sensitivity + Visual Sensitivity = Overall Landscape Sensitivity" and are defined as high, medium or low (Section 3.6.8 'Assessment of Overall Sensitivity' refers).

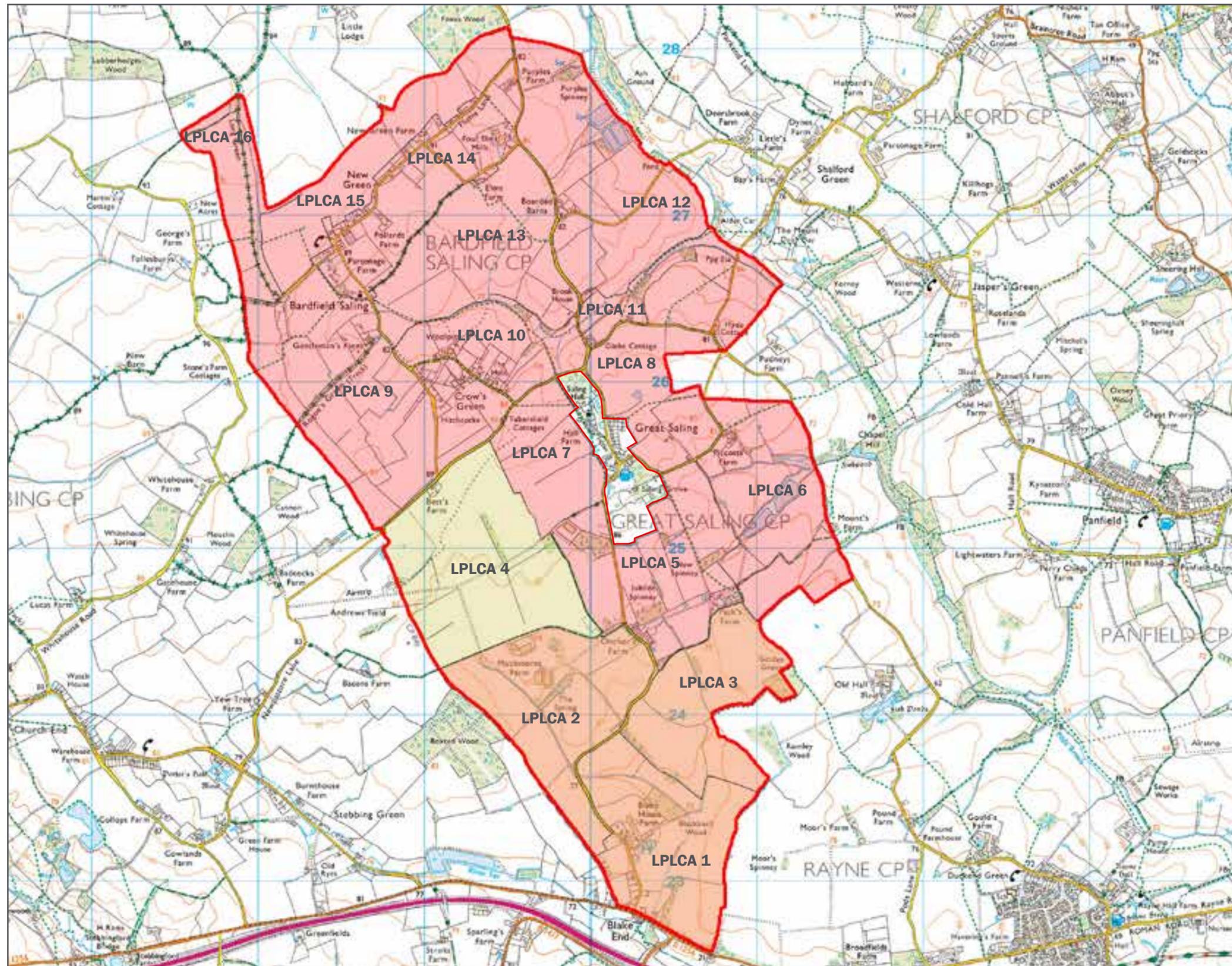
6.4 Local Parish Landscape Character Areas

6.4.1 Descriptions of each Local Parish Landscape Character Areas are provided in **Appendix A**.

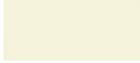


The wooded skyline of Great Saling from the east

Figure 11
Landscape Sensitivity



Key

-  Study Area
-  Great Saling Conservation Area
-  High Sensitivity
-  Medium Sensitivity
-  Low Sensitivity

Local Parish LCAs

- LPLCA no.1 - Area surrounding Blake End
- LPLCA no.2 - Muchmores Farm & surrounds
- LPLCA no.3 - Area west of Golden Grove
- LPLCA no.4 - Andrewsfield
- LPLCA no.5 - Saling Grove & surrounds
- LPLCA no.6 - South of Piccotts Farm
- LPLCA no.7 - Land to the west of Great Saling
- LPLCA no.8 - Land to east of Great Saling
- LPLCA no.9 - Area west of Crow's Green
- LPLCA no.10 - Willow Brook and Crow's Green
- LPLCA no.11 - Pods Book and Willow Brook
- LPLCA no.12 - Valley Slopes
- LPLCA no.13 - Area to south of Bardfield Saling
- LPLCA no.14 - Bardfield Saling and surrounds
- LPLCA No.15 - New Green Plateau
- LPLCA no.16 - Long Green Plateau



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7. LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

7.1 Landscape Sensitivity

7.1.1 The overall landscape sensitivity for each LPLCA is shown in the descriptions for each parcel in Appendix A and are depicted in **Figure 11 - Landscape Sensitivity** and summarised below:

High overall landscape sensitivity

7.1.2 Evaluation of the landscape and visual factors revealed that the following parcels have a High overall landscape sensitivity:

LPLCA no 5 - Saling Grove and surrounds

LPLCA no 6 - South of Piccotts Farm

LPLCA no 7 - Land to the west of Great Saling

LPLCA no 8 - Land to east of Great Saling

LPLCA no 9 - Area west of Crow's Green

LPLCA no 10 - Willow Brook and Crow's Green

LPLCA no 11 - Pods Book and Willow Brook

LPLCA no 12 - Valley Slopes

LPLCA no 13 - Area to south of Bardfield Saling

LPLCA no 14 - Bardfield Saling and surrounds

LPLCA no 15 - New Green Plateau

LPLCA no 16 - Long Green Plateau

Medium overall landscape sensitivity

7.1.3 Evaluation of the landscape and visual factors revealed that the following parcels have a Medium overall landscape sensitivity:

LPLCA no.1 - Area surrounding Blake End

LPLCA no 2 - Area surrounding Muchmores Farm

LPLCA no 3 - Area to west of Golden Grove

Low overall landscape sensitivity

7.1.4 Evaluation of the landscapes and visual factors, revealed that the following parcels have a have an overall Low Sensitivity.

LPLCA no 4 - Andrewsfield

7.2 Landscape strategy objectives

7.2.1 The assessment of Landscape Sensitivity shows that the majority of The Salings has an overall High sensitivity which reflects its rural landscape character and historic integrity. LPLCAs in the southern part of the project area have a Medium overall sensitivity, while LPLCA 4 - Andrewsfield has a Low sensitivity due to the complete loss of its landscape features and low visual amenity.

7.2.2 General landscape strategy objectives which relate to the overall landscape sensitivity of each LPLCA are to conserve, enhance or restore the landscape through effective planning and positive land management measures, as follows:

High overall landscape sensitivity

- **Conserve** – seek to protect and enhance the positive landscape features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place.

Medium overall landscape sensitivity

- **Enhance** – seek to improve and enhance the integrity of the landscape, and reinforce its character, by introducing new and/or enhanced elements where distinctive features are absent or landscape characteristics are weak.

Low overall landscape sensitivity

- **Restore** – seek opportunities to restore or create new landscapes for multiple benefits of nature conservation, recreation and landscape interests in areas where landscape character has been degraded or lost.
-

7.3 Suggested land management guidelines

7.3.1 The land management suggestions for each Landscape Character Area are based, on a consideration of both the inherent characteristics of Landscape and the general concerns regarding the challenges to the condition of those characteristics in the landscape today.

7.3.2 Suggested land management guidelines (LPLCA-specific) are shown in the descriptions for each parcel in Appendix A.

General land management guidelines – applicable to all areas

- Conserve and manage the ecological structure of woodland, copses, orchards and hedgerows within the study area;
 - Conserve and enhance the existing hedgerow pattern where appropriate to local landscape character, and strengthen through planting with hawthorn where gappy and depleted;
 - Conserve and manage the ecological structure of pasture and meadows;
 - Conserve historic lanes and unimproved roadside verges; and
 - Use traditional management practices where possible.
 - Establish arable field margins as important nature conservation habitats.
 - Narrow, single track roads could be designated as Quiet Lanes.
-

8. LANDSCAPE PLANNING ISSUES AND DEVELOPMENT PRESSURE

8.1 Background

8.1.1 This chapter is intended to assist the Parish Councils in making informed decisions as to whether any future residential development(s) can be appropriately absorbed into the landscape surrounding The Salings, and, if so, where, at what scale and with what associated mitigation measures, to ensure that no unacceptable effects on the landscape result and its special qualities are maintained and, where opportunities exist, enhanced.

8.1.2 Within The Salings there are three specific types of potential development pressure (Figure 12 refers) as follows:

- Limited development, within the defined village envelope of Great Saling - Policy RLP 2
- Development within hamlets and previously developed sites such as farm buildings within the countryside. In these areas there is a presumption against development; Policy CS 5 - The Countryside (the area encompasses the whole of The Salings outside of the defined village envelope above); and
- The proposed West of Braintree Garden Community - (Policy SP10 - Braintree Local Plan Publication Draft for Consultation, June2017 and SP8 - Uttlesford draft Local plan submission, 2017).

8.2 Landscape planning issues

8.2.1 The potential to alleviate the effects of any potential built development on each parcel was considered, based on the ability of the landscape to provide effective mitigation across the short – medium – long term. The consideration of mitigation was undertaken as part of the fieldwork, and is based on factors such as scale, enclosure, pattern, type and maturity of

vegetation, movement and visibility of each parcel.

8.2.2 Specific Landscape planning and management issues for each LPLCA are shown in the descriptions for each parcel in Appendix A and are summarised below for the three different potential development pressures identified above:

Limited development, within the defined village envelope of Great Saling

8.2.3 Consider the visual impact of small scale residential development within the village envelope on:

- views to Great Saling Conservation Area, especially from the east where development is more likely.
- the setting of listed buildings within Great Saling Conservation Area.
- rural views from public rights of way especially views towards heritage assets such as the church to the west of the village.

Development in hamlets and the countryside

8.2.4 Hamlets and countryside equate to the whole project area outside of the defined village envelope of Great Saling. Although there is a presumption against development in hamlets and the countryside there is potential for small scale infill development within hamlets and barn conversions within farmsteads for both residential and commercial purposes. Considerations should include:

- the effect of development on the undeveloped open rural landscape character.
- the visual impact of new residential development upon the farmland plateau and its rural character.
- the potential loss of small pastoral fields associated with farmsteads.
- the setting of listed buildings within the countryside.
- rural views from public rights of way, especially views towards heritage assets such as Bardfield Saling church.
- the pressure of increased traffic on rural lanes and protected lanes.



The settlement edge of Great Saling from Piccotts Lane

The proposed West of Braintree Garden Community

8.2.5 Consider the visual impact of new residential development upon the farmland plateau with specific reference to:

- its proximity to Great Saling Conservation Area.
- its proximity to Saling Grove Registered Parks and Gardens and its borrowed views of the rural landscape to the south (refer to Section 10)
- the landscape setting of Listed buildings.
- the effect on ancient woodlands at Boxted Wood and Golden Grove which are vulnerable to change.
- the visual effect on cross valley views across Pods Brook from Panfield.
- the effect on rural views from public rights of way.
- the pressure of increased traffic on protected lanes and other rural lanes.

8.3 Suggested landscape planning guidelines

8.3.1 Suggested landscape planning guidelines (LPLCA- specific) are shown in the descriptions for each parcel in Appendix A and are summarised below:

General landscape planning guidelines – applicable to all areas

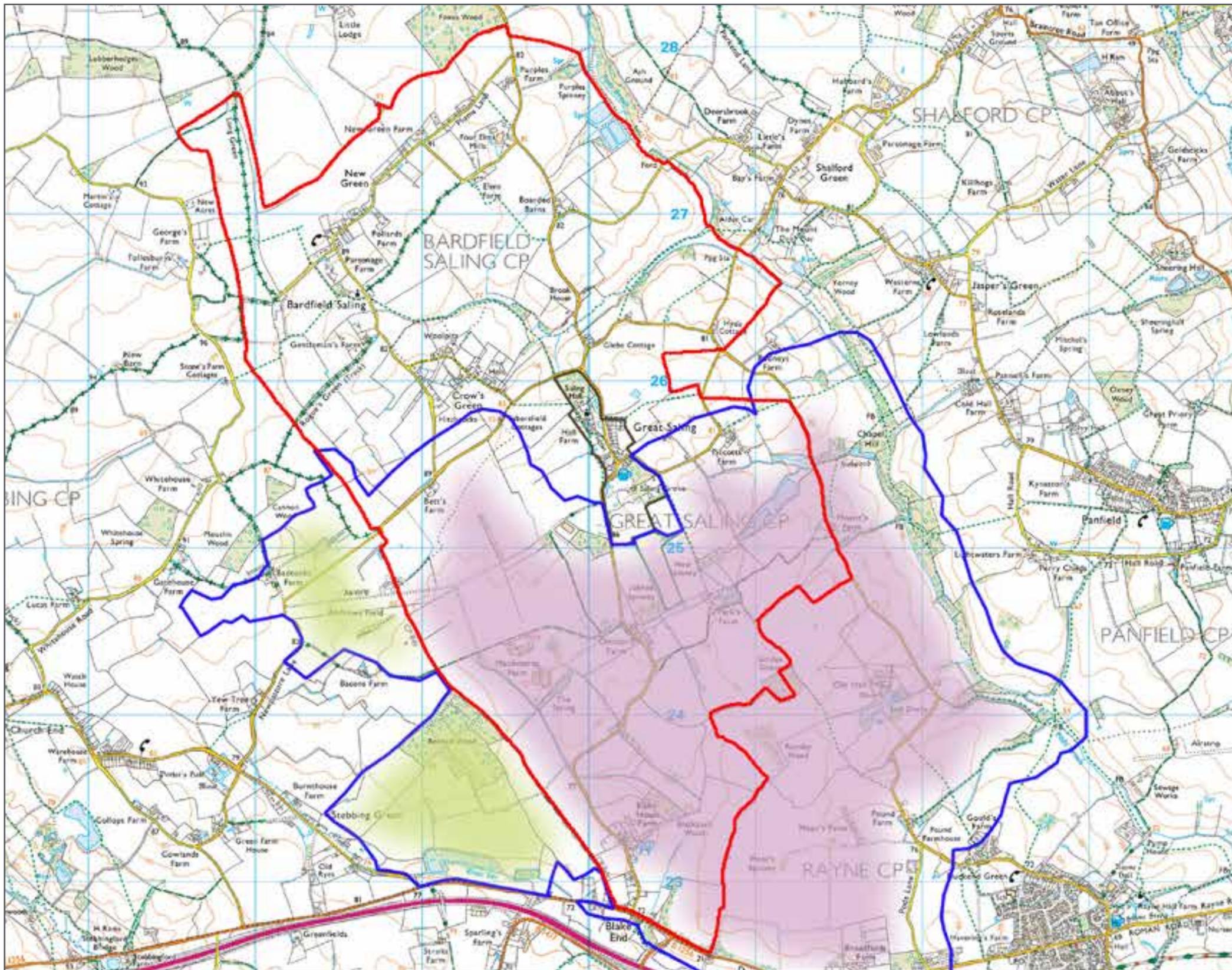
- Conserve and protect the rural and undeveloped character of the landscape within The Salings.
- Conserve the strongly nucleated character of Great Saling by encouraging new development to take place within the existing settlement boundary where possible.
- Any development on the edge or approaches to the village needs to protect important views to the village and its rural landscape setting and the Registered Parks and Gardens.
- Explore possible opportunities to improve some existing visually poor urban edges.

- Provide traditional locally sensitive boundary treatments, to integrate potential development into the local context.
- Protect the traditional dispersed rural settlement pattern.
- Conserve and enhance the historic field patterns and existing hedgerows.
- Protect small pastoral fields, paddocks and meadows associated with peripheral farmsteads.
- Small scale development should be carefully sited in relation to existing farm buildings.
- Consider cumulative effects of developments on landscape character and visual amenity.
- Ensure that new development is sympathetic, complementary and responds to the intrinsic local character of The Salings in terms of its location, scale, density, design layout/settlement pattern and use of traditional materials (for example the use of colour-washed render and pegtiles).
- Consider the vulnerability of the visually prominent valley landscapes to insensitive development.
- Consider the visual impact of new residential development upon the farmland plateau, utilising existing or new native buffer planting as a screen.
- Incorporate green infrastructure that provides opportunities for wildlife, public access and climate change adaptation which screens intrusive urban influence (especially on the periphery of settlements), with the use of substantial and appropriate landscaping, such as native woodland planting, earthworks and green roofs.
- Raise the design quality of new development.



Figure 12

Areas of Potential Development



Key

-  Study Area
-  RLP 2 - Village Envelope
-  Policy CS 5 - The Countryside

West of Braitree Garden Community

-  Option 1 - Combined Areas of Search in Braitree District Council's and Uttlesford District Council's emerging Local Plans as shown in the Braitree Issues and Options Consultation
-  Policy SP10 - Braitree Local Plan Publication Draft for Consultation
-  Policy SP8 - Uttlesford Local Plan Submission 2017



Scale: 1:25,000 @ A3

9. WEST OF BRAINTREE GARDEN COMMUNITY

9.1 Overview

9.1.1 Given the scale of the West of Braintree New Garden Community, and the fact that it lies within countryside, where there is a presumption against development; a more detailed assessment of the policy was undertaken to consider the potential effect on the Local Parish Landscape Character Areas, Great Saling Conservation Area and Saling Grove Registered Park and Garden.

9.1.2 The West of Braintree garden community straddles the District boundaries of Braintree and Uttlesford District Councils. The whole garden community, within both districts, will comprise in the region of 10,000 new dwellings. This equates to a total of 7500 new homes within the parishes of The Salings and Rayne (Braintree District) and 2,500 homes within the Plan period to 2033.

9.1.3 The combined areas of search in Braintree District Council's and Uttlesford District Council's emerging Local Plans as shown in Option 1 of the Braintree Issues and Options Consultation is shown in **Figure 12** as well as the individual emerging policies for Uttlesford - Policy SP8 and Braintree - Policy SP10.

Uttlesford - Policy SP8.

9.1.4 The Uttlesford Regulation 18 local plan states that Policy SP 8 will “*deliver 3,500 new dwellings in Uttlesford, of which 970 will be delivered by 2033. A mix of housing sizes and types of housing will be delivered in accordance with housing needs including affordable homes and homes for older people*”.

Braintree - Policy SP10

9.1.5 The Braintree District Council Local Plan Publication Draft for Consultation (June 2017), identifies a “*strategic area for development of a new garden community of which the details and final number of homes will be set out in a Strategic Growth Development Plan Document to be prepared jointly between Braintree DC and Uttlesford DC if applicable and which will incorporate provision of around 2,500 homes within the Plan period (as part of an overall total of between 7,000 – 10,000 homes)*”.

9.1.6 Principles and requirements in the design, development and delivery of the new garden community set out in the policy include:

- “*High standards of design and layout drawing on its context and the assets within and close to its boundaries including Boxted Wood, Golden Grove, Rumley Wood, Pods Brook and the historic airfield;*
- *The gently sloping topography to the south of the site also affords opportunities for long distance views. These key assets will provide a context to build a new green-grid upon to provide an attractive setting for the new community and linking to the wider countryside;*
- *The new community will address the relationship with existing communities close to its boundaries and maintain a separation between them including Great Saling, Stebbing Green and Rayne; and*

- *The garden community will be designed and developed to have its own identity and be as self-sustaining as possible.”*

9.1.7 In addition to the above, further requirements of particular relevance to landscape include:

- *“Landscape buffers between the site and Great Saling, Stebbing, Stebbing Green and Rayne;*
- *Protection and/or enhancement of heritage and biodiversity assets within and surrounding the site, including Great Saling Conservation Area and areas of deciduous woodland within and adjoining the site; and*
- *Provision of appropriate buffers along strategic road infrastructure to protect new development.”*

9.1.8 At the time of writing, the outcome of the Public Examination by the Inspector on The Braintree New Local Plan is awaited.

9.2 West of Braintree Garden Community and its Landscape Context

9.2.1 **Figure 13** shows the sensitivity of the local parish landscape character areas which are situated close to or within the boundary of the West of Braintree Garden Community.

9.2.2 LPLCA with a High overall sensitivity include:

- LPLCA no.5 - Saling Grove & surrounds
- LPLCA no.6 - South of Piccotts Farm
- LPLCA no.7 - Land to the west of Great Saling
- LPLCA no.8 - Land to east of Great Saling

9.2.3 The landscapes in these LPLCAs are all considered to have a High overall sensitivity, primarily because of their contribution to the landscape setting of Great Saling Conservation Area and Saling Grove Registered Park and Gardens; as well as specific views to them from the surrounding network of public rights of Way.

9.2.4 The landscape strategy in these areas are to conserve and protect and as such new development in these areas would not be appropriate.

9.2.5 LPLCAs with a Medium Sensitivity include:

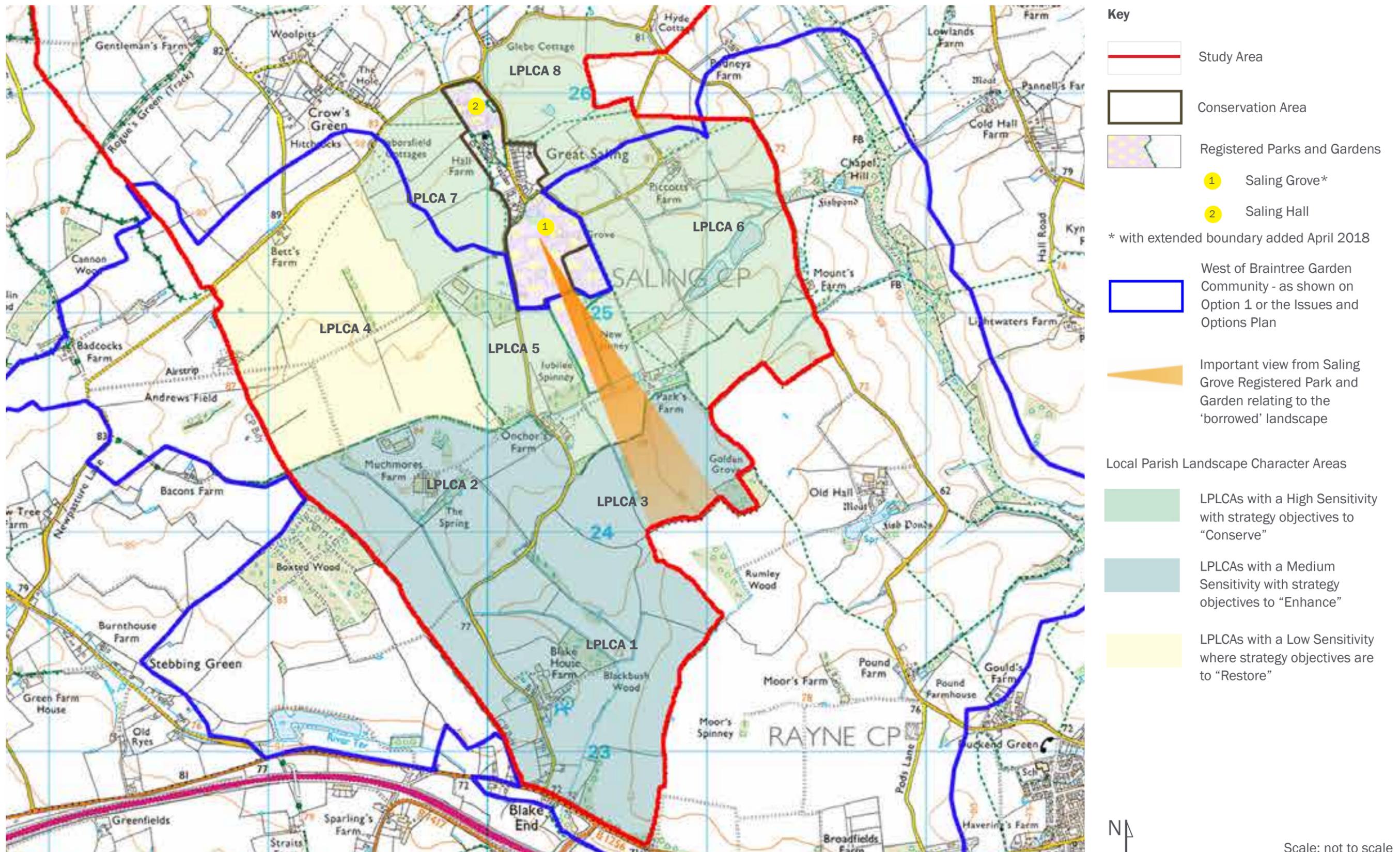
- LPLCA no.1 - Area surrounding Blake End
- LPLCA no.2 - Munchmores Farm & surrounds
- LPLCA no.3 - Area west of Golden Grove

9.2.6 The strength of landscape character in these areas is weaker, with the loss of hedgerows and field pattern and the addition of coniferous tree belts; but it also retains some of its original features such as the ancient woodland at Golden Grove and the listed buildings at Blake House Farm.

9.2.7 The landscape strategy in these LPLCAs is to enhance the integrity of the landscape, and reinforce its character, by introducing new and/or enhanced elements. As such, there could be opportunities for some development which respects the local character and provides wider landscape benefits.

Figure 13

West of Braintree Garden Community and its Landscape Context



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9.2.8 LPLCAs with a Low Sensitivity include:

- LPLCA no.4 - Andrewsfield

9.2.9 LPLCA no.4 - Andrewsfield is the only LPLCA in The Salings with a Low overall Sensitivity because of its complete loss of landscape features. In this area the landscape strategy objectives are to restore and create. As such new development in this area could provide an opportunity to create a new landscape of mixed development with a strong green infrastructure of woodland, hedgerows and wildlife areas with new landscape, recreational and ecological benefits.

9.3 Saling Grove

9.3.1 An analysis of the parkland landscape within Saling Grove has been undertaken to determine the visual extent of views along the principal vista to the south from Saling Grove to the wider countryside. This central strip of meadow pasture was recently added to the Park and Garden designation.

9.3.2 New Spinney and Jubilee Spinney are blocks of woodland strongly associated with the (borrowed) landscape which frames views from the hall on either side of the lawn which forms the principal vista in the designed Repton landscape.

9.3.3 In between these two strong features a coniferous tree belt (known locally as Duckpond Spinney) is visible to the south of bridleway 86/7. Hedgerow trees line the southern side of the bridleway and there is a direct sight line back towards the hall over arable fields where it is seen at distance and framed by vegetation.

9.3.4 The extent of the vista reaches as far as Rumley Wood (ancient semi natural woodland just outside the parish boundary) where it forms the distant horizon in views from the house. The combined layers of vegetation provides a sense of depth and accentuated scale to the view (Refer to Figure 13 and Figure A below).

9.4 The West of Braintree Concept Framework

9.4.1 Following a series of evidence base documents and interim reports, AECOM was commissioned by Braintree District, Colchester Borough, Tendring District, Uttlesford District and Essex County Councils to produce a Concept Framework for the proposed Garden Community for West of Braintree.

9.4.2 The West of Braintree Concept Framework, May 2017 “supports the Councils in the preparation of a sound evidence base and informs the ongoing preparation of Local Plans in respect of the Garden Communities and their defense at Examination in Public in 2018.”

9.4.3 The Concept Framework has been formulated through an iterative process in which three alternative options were prepared within the context of the integrated structure. Each option resulted in a different spatial configuration with implications for setting, land take, green infrastructure, movement and utilities.

9.4.4 Option 3 (refer to Figure B below) illustrates a ‘Southern scheme’ (delivering 9,300 dwellings across a land take of 489 ha, develops the mineral extraction site such that ‘a more consolidated new community is formed around a central key centre’) performed most positively against selection criteria based upon the Sustainability Objectives for Colchester, Tendring and Braintree and TCPA Garden City Principles. It is therefore established as the preferred option for the site and has been based on a number of factors including:

- “The need to preserve historic assets, including villages and gardens, and their setting,
- The desire to maintain an element of rural openness and agriculture,
- The need to protect designated habitats and links between them.....”

Figure A- Analysis of view extent from Saling Grove

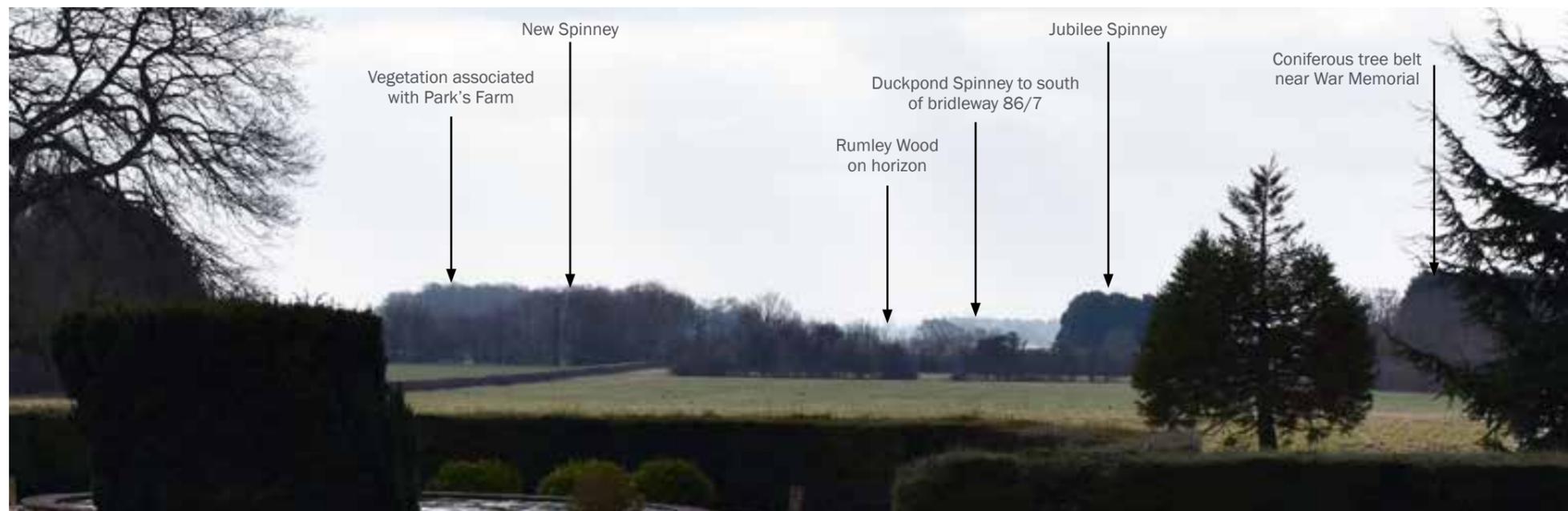


Figure B - Option 3 - Preferred spatial strategy



9.5 Summary of the Analysis

- 9.5.1 The analysis of the Local Parish Landscape Character Areas within the Council's defined areas of search for the West of Braintree Garden Community has revealed that:
- A. New development in LPLCA's 5, 6, 7 and 8 which have a High overall landscape sensitivity and important features to conserve and protect would not be appropriate;
 - B. In LPLCA's 1, 2 and 3 which have a Medium overall sensitivity and the potential for landscape enhancement, there could be opportunities for some development which respects the local character and provides wider landscape benefits; and
 - C. In LPLCA 4 – Andrewsfield, the only LPLCA in The Salings with a Low overall sensitivity, if the existing airfield were to close, new development on the boundaries of the Parish could provide an opportunity to restore the historic landscape features lost when the airfield was built in 1942 and provide a strong green infrastructure of woodland, hedgerows and wildlife areas with recreation and ecological benefits.
- 9.5.2 As part of the supporting evidence base, the North Essex Garden Communities Concept Framework, proposes three options which were prepared within the context of an integrated structure, with each option resulting in a different spatial configuration with implications for setting, land take, green infrastructure, movement and utilities.
- 9.5.3 With reference to this Landscape Character Assessment and the analysis of the parkland landscape within Saling Grove, Option 3 of the Concept framework- the preferred spatial strategy, demonstrates how this landscape led approach could reduce the effects of the proposed West of Braintree Garden Community by:
- reducing the scale of the development;
 - integrating green infrastructure to protect key landscape features and the view from Saling Grove towards Rumley Wood; and
 - conserving LPLCA areas 5, 6, 7 and 8 as existing to protect the setting and views to Great Saling Conservation Area and its heritage assets.
- 9.5.4 It is noted that Option 3 does not include the land around Andrewsfield (LPLCA 4) and in all three options, a buffer of open space/ green infrastructure between the bridleway and Saling Grove is indicated as well as a green corridor to retain the site line from Saling Hall to Rumley Wood.
-

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1.1 The Salings have a strongly undeveloped rural character, with some areas of considerable time depth; historic field patterns and enclosed meadow pastures. There is an extensive network of narrow, winding lanes, ancient byways and foot paths with mature trees and hedgerows which all provide a strong sense of historic continuity, cultural value and visual amenity. The vast majority of the land is productive agricultural farmland within a gently undulating landscape which falls from higher ground towards Pods Brook to the east. There are some attractive panoramic views across the countryside as well as more intimate, enclosed views within the valleys. Medium to large fields are divided by hedgerows and there are some areas of ancient woodland copse and mature woodland blocks.
- 10.1.2 The rural landscape of the parishes provides the setting for the nucleated village of Great Saling and its two Registered Parks and Gardens within the Conservation Area; the more linear settlement of Bardfield Saling; and over 60 Listed Buildings including the Church of St James in Great Saling and the Church of St Peter and St Paul at Bardfield Saling which are a feature of many views. The historic settlement pattern survives well with greens, halls, moats, farms and manors dispersed throughout the landscape. The landscape's biodiversity and agricultural values also contribute towards its special qualities.
- 10.1.3 Although locally generated development pressure is relatively small compared to other parts of the District, the emerging Braintree and Uttlesford Draft Local Plans propose a West of Braintree Garden Community. The broad area of search for the proposed development lies within the Parishes of Stebbing (Uttlesford), The Salings and Rayne. The proposed development has the potential to deliver up to 10000 homes within the districts, comprising a total of 2500 new homes within the plan period to 2033, of which 970 will be in the parish of Stebbing. The scale of the development has the potential to have a major impact on the rural character of The Salings and adversely affect the setting of Great Saling Conservation Area and its two registered parks and gardens.
- 10.1.4 In January 2018, The Salings Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group commissioned Liz Lake Associates to undertake a locally based Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) and Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, of the landscape of the two parishes, referred to as The Salings, which forms the project area for the Neighbourhood Plan. The study will provide a clear and concise evaluation of various parcels of land to determine their overall landscape sensitivity. The results of this assessment are to form part of the evidence base that The Salings will use when compiling its Joint Neighbourhood Development Plan
- 10.1.5 This study has considered only criteria relating to landscape character and visual amenity. It takes into account the locations of ecological, heritage and recreational assets in the parishes but does not include detailed studies of these topics. A review of the existing Landscape Character Assessments and historic settlement character was undertaken as well as an assessment of landscape change using historic maps.
- 10.1.6 A combination of desktop study, fieldwork and stakeholder consultation was used to identify parcels of land with common characteristics, known as Local Parish Landscape Character Areas (LPLCAs), within the identified study area of the two parishes which make up The Salings.

- 10.1.7 A range of landscape character and visual amenity criteria were identified and assessed, in order to evaluate the overall sensitivity of the landscape, parcel by parcel. Each parcel was rated as having Low, Medium, or High overall landscape sensitivity, based on the criteria set out in Section 3 Methodology for the study and general landscape strategy objectives are proposed.
- 10.1.8 The Landscape Character Assessment found that there were 16 Local Parish Landscape Character Areas with common characteristics within The Salings. The areas are broadly defined as being plateau or valley landscapes due to the topographical differences within the project area. In some places, the boundary lines for parcels mark more of a watershed of character, where the balance of the defining elements has shifted from one landscape character to another. For practical purposes, boundaries were aligned where possible on landscape features or elements that could be identified on the ground. Analysis was typically at the field level grain/scale, with some aggregation of field and landscape units where appropriate.
- 10.1.9 A description of the key landscape and visual characteristics were provided for each LPLCA and key landscape planning and management issues were identified as well as 'Suggested landscape planning guidelines' and 'Suggested land management guidelines'. These are presented in Appendix A.
- 10.1.10 The evaluation of the landscape and visual factors which were analysed for each parcel revealed that LPLCA 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 have a High overall landscape sensitivity; LPLCA 1, 2, and 3 were identified as having a Medium overall landscape sensitivity; and LPLCA 4 is the only area within The Salings with a Low overall landscape sensitivity. The proposed general landscape strategy objective for areas of **High sensitivity is to Conserve; Medium sensitivity is to Enhance; and Low sensitivity is to Restore.**
- 10.1.11 Landscape planning issues within The Salings point to three main types of development pressure: development within the defined village envelope of Great Saling (Policy RLP2); within hamlets and previously developed sites such as farm buildings in the countryside (outside of the defined village envelope) where there is a presumption against development (Policy CS5); and within the proposed West of Braintree Garden Community. A summary of general landscape planning guidelines for these different types of potential development are provided in Section 9.
- 10.1.12 In view of the potential impact of the proposed West of Braintree Garden Community, an analysis of the Local Parish Landscape Character Areas within the Council's defined areas of search was undertaken. This revealed that
- A. New development in LPLCA's 5, 6, 7 and 8 which have a High overall landscape sensitivity and important features to conserve and protect would not be appropriate;
 - B. In LPLCA's 1, 2 and 3 which have a Medium overall sensitivity and the potential for landscape enhancement, there could be opportunities for some development which respects the local character and provides wider landscape benefits; and
 - C. In LPLCA 4 – Andrewsfield, the only LPLCA in The Salings with a Low overall sensitivity, if the existing airfield were to close, new development on the boundaries of the Parish could provide an opportunity to restore the historic landscape features lost when the airfield was built and provide a strong green infrastructure of woodland, hedgerows and wildlife areas with new recreation and ecological benefits.
- 10.1.13 An analysis of the parkland landscape within Saling Grove to determine the visual extent of views along the principal vista to the south from Saling Grove Hall to the wider countryside, identified that the extent of the 'borrowed' landscape in views to the south reached to Rumley Wood outside of the parish.
- 10.1.14 In conclusion, the landscape and visual character of The Salings has been assessed to have a High overall landscape sensitivity in most areas where a policy of conserving and protecting the rural and undeveloped character of the landscape is required.
- 10.1.15 With regard to the West of Braintree Garden Community, as long as a) LPLCA 5, 6, 7 and 8 are conserved to protect the setting and key views to Great Saling Conservation Area and its heritage assets; and b) the key view from Saling Grove Hall towards Rumley Wood is maintained within green infrastructure, the visual and landscape effects will be minimised.
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