

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan

Environmental Report (submission version)

March 2024

Quality information

Prepared by	Checked by	Verified by	Approved by
CB: Principal Environmental Planner	RC: Senior Environmental Planner	NCB: Technical Director	NCB: Technical Director

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Revision	Revision date	Details	Name	Position
V1	March 2024	Draft for QB review	Cheryl Beattie	Principal Environmental Planner
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Prepared for:

Danbury Parish Council

Prepared by:

AECOM Limited
 3rd Floor, Portwall Place
 Portwall Lane
 Bristol BS1 6NA
 United Kingdom

T: +44 117 901 7000
 aecom.com

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Non-Technical Summary (NTS)

Introduction

AECOM is commissioned to lead on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Danbury Neighbourhood Plan (DNP). The DNP is being prepared under the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 and in the context of the adopted Chelmsford Local Plan (CLP) (2020). Once 'made' the DNP will have material weight when deciding on planning applications within the defined neighbourhood area.

SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely significant effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative effects and maximising the potential for positive effects. SEA of the DNP is a legal requirement.¹

This SEA Environmental Report, including this NTS, accompanies the submission version DNP in formal (Regulation 16) consultation.

Structure of the Environmental Report/ this NTS

SEA reporting essentially involves answering the following questions in turn:

1) What has plan-making / SEA involved **up to this point?**

- including in relation to 'reasonable alternatives'.

2) What are the SEA findings **at this stage?**

- i.e., in relation to the draft plan.

3) What happens **next?**

Each of these questions is answered in turn within a discrete 'part' of the Environmental Report and summarised within this NTS. However, firstly there is a need to set the scene further by answering the questions 'What is the Plan seeking to achieve?' and 'What is the scope of the SEA?'

What is the Plan seeking to achieve?

The following vision has been established for the DNP:

"Danbury in 2036 will be a flourishing village, separate from Chelmsford, with a strong community spirit, where people of all ages will be able to enjoy Danbury's unique character and identity. Its countryside, woods, multifunctional green infrastructure, and green spaces will be protected, as will its heritage and distinguishing features of local character."

¹ Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended) requires that each Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to the Local Authority alongside either: A) an environmental report; or, B) a statement of reasons why SEA is not required, prepared following a 'screening' process completed in accordance with Regulation 9(1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations ('the SEA Regulations'). The Danbury Neighbourhood Plan was subject to formal screening in February 2019, at which time it was determined that SEA is required.

Any development will be sympathetic to, and not detract from, the character of the village, will be sustainable and appropriate to its scale and nature and be integrated with the landscape and existing housing.

Opportunities will be taken to improve leisure, recreation, and retail facilities for residents. Danbury's geographical position within the area's road network is likely to continue to be a challenge and ways to improve this will be actively sought with other agencies over the plan period."

What is the scope of the SEA?

The scope of the SEA is reflected in a list of themes, objectives, and assessment questions, which, taken together indicate the parameters of the SEA and provide a methodological 'framework' for assessment. A summary framework is presented here, and a full framework which includes assessment questions is provided within **Appendix B** of the main Environmental Report.

SEA theme	SEA objective
Air quality	Improve air quality in the neighbourhood area and minimise and/ or mitigate all sources of environmental pollution
Biodiversity	Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geodiversity.
Climate change (mitigation and adaptation)	Continue to decrease GHG emissions and increase the resilience of the neighbourhood area to the effects of climate change.
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes.
Historic environment	Protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment within the neighbourhood area
Land, soil, and water resources	Ensure the efficient and effective use of land, protect soil quality, and avoid the loss of high-quality agricultural land.
	Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner.
Population and community	Cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community, and improve access to local, high-quality community services and facilities.
	Reduce deprivation and promote a more inclusive and self-contained community.
	Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types, and tenures.
Health and wellbeing	Improve the health and wellbeing residents within the neighbourhood area.
Transportation	Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.

Plan-making/ SEA up to this point

An important element of the required SEA process involves assessing 'reasonable alternatives' in time to inform development of the draft proposals, and then publishing information on reasonable alternatives for consultation alongside the draft proposals.

As such, Part 1 of the Environmental Report explains how work was undertaken to develop and assess a 'reasonable' range of alternative approaches for the DNP.

Specifically, Part 1 of the report –

1. Explains the process of establishing the reasonable alternatives.
2. Presents the outcomes of assessing the reasonable alternatives; and
3. Explains reasons for developing a preferred option, considering the assessment.

Establishing the reasonable alternatives

Part 1 of the Environmental Report explores both the strategic parameters provided by the Local Plan and the available site options to establish alternatives to the preferred approach for housing development. Six alternative site options are established for housing development and taken forward for assessment. The options are:

- D5: Sandpit Field (proposals of 50 or 10 homes)
- D7: Land at Tyndales Farm West (proposals of 200, 100 or 65 homes)
- D9: Land at Millfields/ Mill Lane (proposals of 80 or 30 homes)
- D14: Danecroft, Woodhill Road (proposals of 25 and 14 homes)
- D20: Land north of Elm Green Lane (proposals of 300, 100, 30, and 6 homes)
- D21: Land at Mayes Lane (proposals of 20, 10, and 2 homes)

Assessing the reasonable alternatives

The six options above were each assessed against the SEA themes and objectives established through scoping, and the findings are presented in assessment tables 6.1 – 6.6, on **pages 13 to 35** of the main Environmental Report.

Developing the preferred approach

The DNP Steering Group's reasons for developing the preferred approach (Sites D5, D7, D11, D14, and D21) in light of the alternatives assessment are identified below.

“The following criteria were developed and used to select sites for allocation in the DNP:

- *Be Sustainable, based on AECOM's November 2021 Report on the Partial Sites, and ongoing SEA work.*
- *Is within or adjacent to the Defined Settlement Boundary.*
- *Available for development and meets Chelmsford City Council's housing need where appropriate.*
- *Use previously developed and infill sites.*
- *Keep separation between settlements/parishes.*
- *Has satisfactory highway access.*
- *Has minimal impact on local highway network, having direct access from Priority 1 or Priority 2 Roads.*
- *Not cause harm to the setting of SSSIs, Heritage Assets, and Conservation Area.*

- *Not cause harm to the environment, including important views, designated open green spaces, valued landscapes, residential amenities, or habitats.*
- *Is well-connected to existing village amenities.*
- *Not at high risk of flooding.*
- *Over 500m from AQMA (recently revoked); and*
- *Excluded from Minerals consultation.*

Sites D9 and D20 were rejected on the following basis:

- *At Site D9, whilst Essex County Council Highways Authority have agreed a suitable access from Millfields, this is not a Priority 1 or Priority 2 road which hinders progression of the site as an opportunity for development to come forward over the plan period.*
- *At Site D20 highways evidence has limited development to a maximum of 5 dwellings and access will not be from a Priority 1 or Priority 2 road. There are also concerns over the potential impact on nearby heritage assets. Schemes to date indicate a small development of large homes which are less likely to serve local housing needs.*

Sites D5, D7, D11, D14, and D21 have been progressed as options which will combined meet the housing need for around 100 homes over the plan period and deliver new open spaces and accessibility improvements.

Site D11 is included as a small brownfield site that has access from a local road, where the impact from this very small development will be minimal, incorporating mitigation to reduce the significance of effects identified through the SEA.

The largest site progressed is Site D7, where a scheme of 65 dwellings is proposed subject to significant mitigation as an integral part of any development (including a landscape buffer on all boundaries of the site and provision of new green infrastructure). The Steering Group have concluded that the benefit from this larger allocation in terms of the housing mix, affordable housing, provision of community facilities, and retention of the character of Danbury outweighs the harm caused by development.”

Assessment findings at this stage

Part 2 of the Environmental Report presents an assessment of the submission version DNP. Assessment findings are presented as a series of narratives under the SEA themes established through scoping. The following overall conclusions are reached:

The appraisal considers that significant positive effects are likely to arise in implementation of the DNP in relation to the SEA theme of population and communities. This reflects the main plan objective to coordinate the anticipated future growth in the neighbourhood area and maximise the potential benefits it can bring for both existing and future residents. This includes by delivering development that targets locally identified housing needs and the delivery of new open space in development.

Residual neutral effects are concluded in relation to many of the SEA themes, reflecting the Plan's avoidance and mitigation measures which should ensure that new development integrates without causing significant deviations from the baseline situation.

Negative effects are predicted in relation to the SEA theme of historic environment, but these effects are not considered likely to be significant. Notably, the previous objection from Historic England has since been withdrawn based on updated policy mitigation.

Negative effects are also predicted in relation to the SEA themes of landscape, and land, soil, and water resources. This predominantly reflects greenfield development, resulting in the permanent loss of high-quality agricultural land (likely best and most versatile). However, once mitigation is considered, residual negative effects are not likely to be of significance.

Next steps

Part 3 of the report explains the next steps that will be taken as part of plan-making and SEA.

Plan finalisation

Following submission, the plan and supporting evidence (including this SEA) will be published for further (Regulation 16) consultation, and then subjected to Independent Examination. At Independent Examination, the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with the Local Plan.

If the examination leads to a favourable outcome, the Neighbourhood Plan will then be subject to a referendum, organised by Chelmsford City Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be 'made'. Once 'made', the DNP will become part of the Development Plan for Chelmsford, covering the defined neighbourhood area.

Monitoring

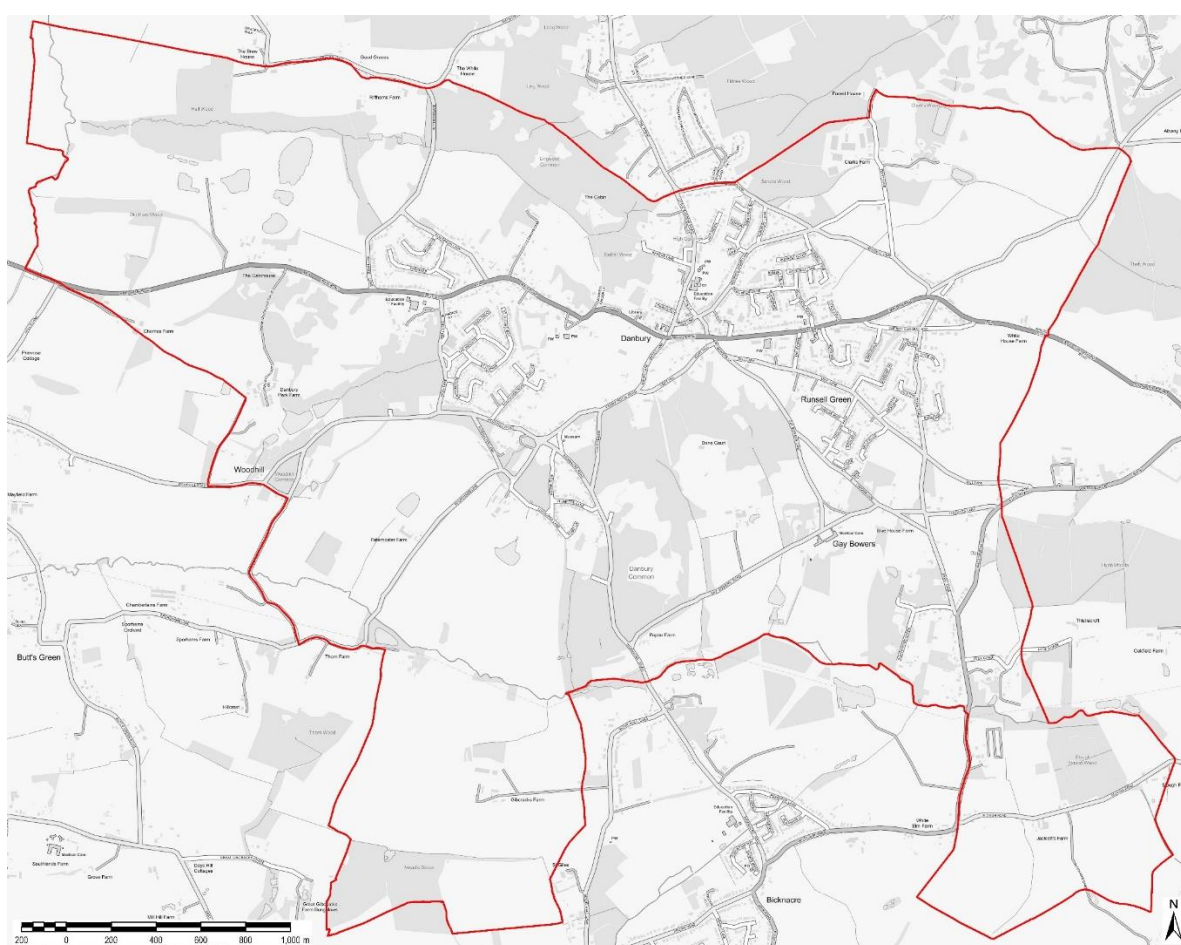
The SEA regulations require 'measures envisaged concerning monitoring' to be outlined in this report. This refers to the monitoring of likely significant effects of the Neighbourhood Plan to identify any unforeseen effects early and take remedial action as appropriate.

It is anticipated that monitoring of effects of the Neighbourhood Plan will be undertaken by Chelmsford City Council as part of the process of preparing its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). No significant negative effects are considered likely in the implementation of the DNP that would warrant more stringent monitoring over and above that already undertaken by the City Council.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 AECOM is commissioned to lead on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Danbury Neighbourhood Plan (DNP). The DNP is being prepared under the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 and in the context of the adopted Chelmsford Local Plan (CLP) (2020). Once 'made' the DNP will have material weight when deciding on planning applications within the defined neighbourhood area (see **Figure 1.1**).
- 1.2 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely significant effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative effects and maximising the potential for positive effects. SEA of the DNP is a legal requirement.²

Figure 1.1: Danbury neighbourhood area, designated 2016



² Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended) requires that each Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to the Local Authority alongside either: A) an environmental report; or, B) a statement of reasons why SEA is not required, prepared following a 'screening' process completed in accordance with Regulation 9(1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations ('the SEA Regulations'). The Danbury Neighbourhood Plan was subject to formal screening in February 2019, at which time it was determined that SEA *is* required.

SEA explained

- 1.3 It is a requirement that the SEA process is undertaken in-line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
- 1.4 In-line with the Regulations, a report (known as the Environmental Report) must be published for consultation alongside the draft plan that “*identifies, describes and evaluates*” the likely significant effects of implementing “*the plan, and reasonable alternatives*”.³ The report must then be considered, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.
- 1.5 More specifically, the report must answer the following three questions:
 4. What has plan-making/ SEA involved up to this point?
 - including in relation to 'reasonable alternatives'.
 5. What are the SEA findings at this stage?
 - i.e., in relation to the draft plan.
 6. What happens next?

This Environmental Report

- 1.6 This report is the Environmental Report for the DNP. It is published alongside the submission version of the Plan, under Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended).
- 1.7 This report answers questions 1, 2 and 3 above in turn, to provide the required information.⁴ Each question is answered within a discrete ‘part’ of the report (Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3).
- 1.8 However, before answering the first question, two further introductory sections are presented to further set the scene.

³ Regulation 12(2) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

⁴ See **Appendix A** for further explanation of the report structure including its regulatory basis.

2. What is the DNP seeking to achieve?

Introduction

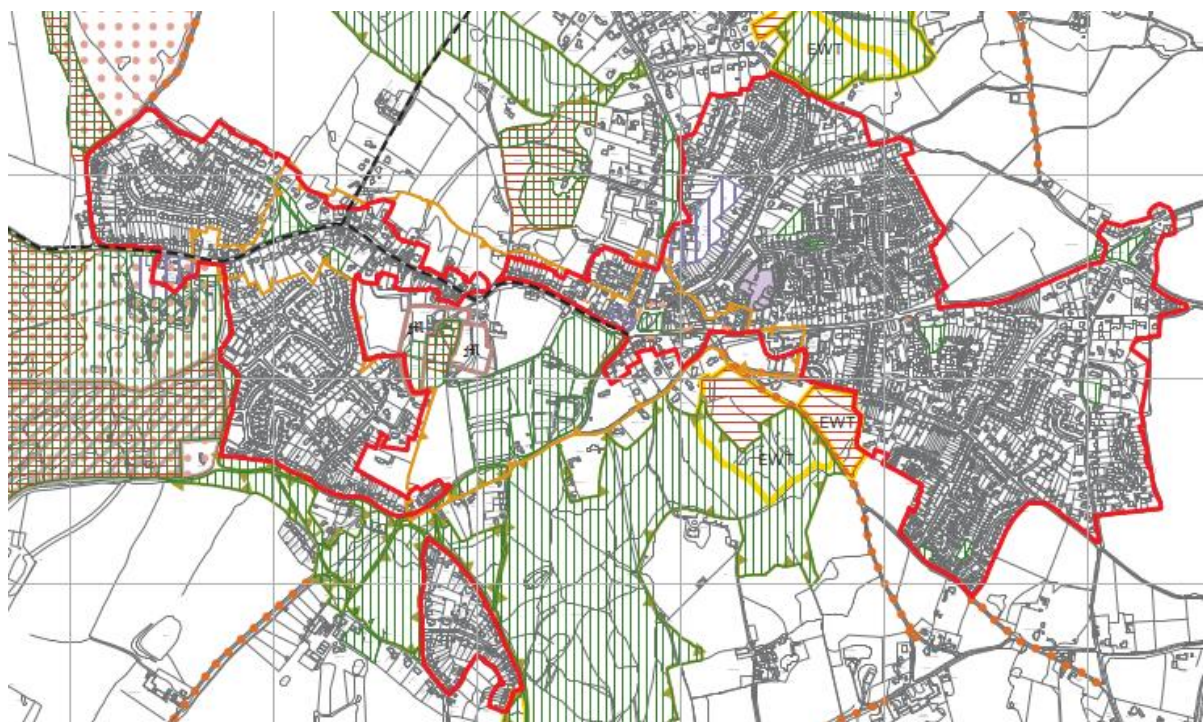
2.1 This section considers the context provided by the Chelmsford Local Plan (CLP), before setting out the established DNP vision.

Strategic policy context

2.2 The CLP was adopted in 2020 and covers the plan period 2013 to 2036. It identifies Danbury as a 'Key Service Settlement outside of the Green Belt', second in the settlement hierarchy, below the first tier of City/ Town.

2.3 Policy S7 identifies that Danbury falls within 'Growth Area 3' (South and East Chelmsford). Whilst most development in this area is focused within an urban extension north of South Woodham Ferrers, the policy identifies a requirement for around 100 new homes at Danbury. Strategic Growth Site Policy 13 expects these 100 new homes to be accommodated within or adjoining the settlement boundary and notes that the sites to accommodate this level of growth will be identified through the DNP. **Figure 2.1** identifies the Danbury settlement boundary.

Figure 2.1: Danbury settlement boundary (red outline)⁵



⁵ CLP Policy Map 12

DNP vision

2.4 The vision for the DNP, which was developed in earlier stages of plan-making, is as follows:

“Danbury in 2036 will be a flourishing village, separate from Chelmsford, with a strong community spirit, where people of all ages will be able to enjoy Danbury’s unique character and identity. Its countryside, woods, multifunctional green infrastructure, and green spaces will be protected, as will its heritage and distinguishing features of local character.

Any development will be sympathetic to, and not detract from, the character of the village, will be sustainable and appropriate to its scale and nature and be integrated with the landscape and existing housing.

Opportunities will be taken to improve leisure, recreation, and retail facilities for residents. Danbury’s geographical position within the area’s road network is likely to continue to be a challenge and ways to improve this will be actively sought with other agencies over the plan period.”

2.5 Seven objectives have been developed to assist in achieving this vision, as follows:

- **Housing and development:** To ensure there is a mix of house types, sizes, and high-quality housing provision for all ages, which meets the housing needs of Danbury. It will also be appropriate to the scale and nature of the Parish, with the distinct and separate identity of Danbury retained. Green energy in new developments will be encouraged.
- **Environment:** To seek protection, conservation, and enhancement of this significant element of Danbury’s character, open spaces, multifunctional green infrastructure, and local lanes.
- **Transport and movement:** To promote clear, attractive, safe streets and spaces, seeking creative solutions to the traffic issues that currently affect Danbury, encouraging active and sustainable transport modes, addressing parking issues and improvements to footways where possible.
- **Recreation and leisure:** To improve Danbury’s recreation and leisure facilities and increase provision where a shortfall exists.
- **Business and economy:** To maintain existing businesses and encourage new economic growth and local employment opportunities, including working from home, to meet and support village needs.
- **Heritage:** Conserve and enhance Danbury’s historic environment which contributes to the village. Development should respond positively to and contribute to the special character and qualities that help define Danbury.
- **Amenities:** To ensure that important amenities are retained and sufficient for the future needs of residents.

3. What is the scope of the SEA?

- 3.1 The aim of this chapter is to introduce the reader to the scope of the SEA, i.e., the sustainability issues and objectives that should be a focus of (and provide a methodological framework for) SEA.
- 3.2 The SEA Scoping Report (October 2019) set out the policy context and baseline information that has informed the development of key issues and the sustainability objectives. However, it is recognised that the policy context has evolved since 2019, and so too has new or updated information been made available to inform the baseline situation. Reflecting this, updated scoping information is presented in **Appendix B**.

Consultation

- 3.3 The SEA Regulation require that “*when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies*”. In England, the consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England.⁶ As such these authorities, alongside Chelmsford City Council, were consulted over the period 11th October to 15th November 2019. Consultation responses are provided in **Appendix B**.

The SEA framework

- 3.4 The SEA framework presents a list of themes, objectives, and assessment questions that together comprise a framework to guide the assessment. A summary framework identifying the themes and objectives is presented in **Table 3.1**, and the full SEA framework is presented in **Appendix B**.

⁶ These consultation bodies were selected “*by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programmes*” (SEA Directive, Article 6(3)).

Table 3.1: SEA framework (summary)

SEA theme	SEA objective
Air quality	Improve air quality in the neighbourhood area and minimise and/or mitigate all sources of environmental pollution
Biodiversity	Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geodiversity.
Climate change (mitigation and adaptation)	Continue to decrease GHG emissions and increase the resilience of the neighbourhood area to the effects of climate change.
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes.
Historic environment	Protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment within the neighbourhood area
Land, soil, and water resources	Ensure the efficient and effective use of land, protect soil quality, and avoid the loss of high-quality agricultural land.
	Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner.
Population and community	Cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community, and improve access to local, high-quality community services and facilities.
	Reduce deprivation and promote a more inclusive and self-contained community.
	Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types, and tenures.
Health and wellbeing	Improve the health and wellbeing residents within the neighbourhood area.
Transportation	Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.

Part 1: What has plan-making/ SEA involved to this point?

4. Introduction (to Part 1)

Overview

- 4.1 A key element of the SEA process is the appraisal of ‘reasonable alternatives’ for the DNP. The SEA Regulations⁷ are not prescriptive as to what constitutes a reasonable alternative but does state that the objectives and geographical scope of the plan should be considered.
- 4.2 Whilst work on the DNP has been underway for some time, the aim here is not to provide a comprehensive explanation of work to date, but rather to explain work undertaken to develop and appraise reasonable alternatives. Reasonable alternative options were presented to the public at Regulation 14 consultation, and these are being reconsidered now at this submission stage.
- 4.3 More specifically, this part of the report presents information on the consideration given to reasonable alternative approaches to addressing a particular issue that is of central importance to the Plan, namely the allocation of land for housing, or alternative sites. Available development sites are being explored for their potential to contribute additional homes and community benefits.

Why focus on sites?

- 4.4 The decision was taken to develop and assess reasonable alternatives in relation to the matter of allocating land for housing, given the following considerations:
 - The core plan objective to understand housing needs and allocate sites for development.
 - Housing growth is known to be a matter of key interest amongst residents and other stakeholders; and
 - The delivery of new homes is most likely to have a significant effect compared to other proposals within the Plan. National Planning Practice is clear that SEA should focus on matters likely to give rise to significant effects.

Structure of this part of the report

- 4.5 Part 1 of the report is structured as follows:
 - **Chapter 5** explains the process of establishing reasonable alternatives.
 - **Chapter 6** presents the outcomes of appraising reasonable alternatives; and
 - **Chapter 7** explains the Steering Group’s reasons for selecting the preferred option considering the alternatives.

⁷ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

5. Establishing alternatives

Introduction

- 5.1 The aim of this chapter is to explain the process that led to the establishment of alternative sites/ options and thereby present “*an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with*”.⁸
- 5.2 Specifically, there is a need to explain the strategic parameters that have a bearing on the establishment of options (in relation to the level and distribution of growth) and the work that has been undertaken to date to examine site options (i.e., sites potentially in contention for allocation in the DNP). These parameters are then drawn together in order to arrive at ‘reasonable alternatives’.

How much growth?

- 5.3 As identified, the level of growth is strategically set by the Chelmsford Local Plan (CLP) Policy S7 which identifies a requirement to allocate enough land through the DNP to deliver around 100 new homes. With windfall development calculated as a separate housing supply source, no additional housing development has been committed or completed since the adoption of the CLP which could contribute to meeting this identified need.

Where could growth be located?

- 5.4 Following consideration of both the 2018 Chelmsford Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) and a local ‘call for sites’ undertaken by Danbury Parish Council in 2017, a Site Options Assessment Report was produced in May 2019. Of the 21 sites assessed in this report, 9 were discounted following an initial sift, deemed too remote from the defined Settlement Boundary and on this basis contrary to CLP policies.
- 5.5 The remaining 12 sites are identified in **Table 5.1** below. Of these sites, none were found to be completely ‘constraint free’ and notably four sites (D4, D7, D8, and D20) were deemed to have significant constraints making the sites unsuitable for allocation in the DNP.
- 5.6 Further of note, Site D10 is dependent upon the adjacent small site (Site D11) to provide suitable access.

Table 5.1: Potentially viable site options following Site Options Assessment

Site reference	Site name	Site size (ha)	Estimated dwellings*	Greenfield/ brownfield	Planning history
D4	Land off Runsell Lane	6.7	151	Greenfield	16/01810/OUT – outline application for up to 140 dwellings refused and appeal dismissed.
D5	Sandpit Field, east of Little Fields	2.3	51	Greenfield	None.

⁸ Schedule 2(8) of the SEA Regulations.

Site reference	Site name	Site size (ha)	Estimated dwellings*	Greenfield/ brownfield	Planning history
D7	Land at Tyndales Farm West	9.0	201	Greenfield	17/00089/OUT – outline application for up to 100 dwellings with public open space refused.
D8	Land at Tyndales Farm East	2.5	52	Greenfield	None.
D9	Land at Millfields/ Mill Lane	3.4	75	Greenfield	None.
D10	Field south of Jubilee Rise	1.6	37	Greenfield	None.
D11	Play Area, Jubilee Rise	0.02	1	Brownfield	None.
D12	Bay Meadow, Land adjacent to the Medical Centre	0.7	18	Greenfield	16/01770/FUL – full application for 72-bed care home and car parking refused and appeal dismissed.
D14	Danecroft, Woodhill Road	1.0	24	Mixed	10/00102/OUT – refused and appeal dismissed. Planning permission granted for upgraded access
D15	Well Lane Industrial Area	0.5	12	Brownfield	12/01414/FUL – permitted retrospective change of use. 82/1482 – permitted change of use.
D20	Land north of Elm Green Lane	12.0	270	Greenfield	None.
D21	Land at Mayes Lane	0.9	22	Mixed	08/00091/FUL – permitted application for swimming pool and enclosure

*standard density assumption of 30 dwellings per hectare (taken from Site Options Assessment Report).

5.7 Following the Site Options Assessment Report, landowners were presented with interim findings and provided an opportunity to resubmit site boundaries or schemes that could demonstrate potential avoidance of the key impacts arising and where possible demonstrate the community preference for a smaller scale scheme of up to 30 homes. The submissions received were considered through a Site Options Assessment Report Addendum in 2020. Notably, this changed the findings for both Sites D8 and D20 from unsuitable for allocation to potentially suitable for allocation. Nothing was resubmitted in relation to Site D7, which alongside Site D4 continued to be identified as unsuitable for allocation in the DNP.

5.8 Following the 2020 Addendum, additional highways and landscape evidence has been gathered and considered, alongside the updated Chelmsford City Council Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) 2021, in a new Sites Options Assessment Report in November

2021. This report considers Site D7 as potentially suitable for allocation (alongside Sites D5, D9, D11, D14, D15, D20, and D21), whilst notably finding Sites D4, D8, D10, and D12 as not suitable for allocation with significant constraints present.

Regulation 14 consultation feedback

5.9 Following Regulation 14 consultation, two further sites have been brought to the Steering Group's attention:

- Land North East of Little Fields (21SHELAA43)
- Land West of Twitty Fee (21SHELAA50)

5.10 The Steering Group have, in consultation with Chelmsford City Council, identified that both sites should be discounted. This is given that they were submitted after the local 'call for sites' and have therefore not been subject to the same assessment process as submitted sites. In the absence of this evidence no assumption can be made about their suitability. Furthermore, the Land West of Twitty Fee is removed from the settlement boundary and therefore does not conform with local plan policy.

5.11 In light of these considerations, neither site is considered a reasonable alternative option to progress for assessment.

Establishing alternatives

5.12 Rejecting the four sites found unsuitable for allocation (Sites D4, D8, D10 and D12) and late submission sites (Sites 21SHELAA43 and 21SHELAA50), the remaining eight sites present alternative options for allocation in the DNP.

5.13 However, Site D15 'Well Lane Industrial Area' is an existing employment area and is intended to be retained for employment use. The site is therefore not progressed as a housing option.

5.14 As a very small brownfield site with an estimated capacity for one to two dwellings, Site D11 is also not taken forward for assessment. This is given a low potential for significant effects, and the likelihood that as a brownfield site it will form part of any future growth strategy, being either allocated or counted as 'windfall' development.

5.15 Six greenfield sites are therefore identified as alternative housing development options in contention for allocation in the DNP. These six sites are listed below, and each are being considered in relation to the original and re-submission proposals:

- D5: Sandpit Field (proposals of 50 or 10 homes)
- D7: Land at Tyndales Farm West (proposals of 200, 100 or 65 homes)
- D9: Land at Millfields/ Mill Lane (proposals of 80 or 30 homes)
- D14: Danecroft, Woodhill Road (proposals of 25 and 14 homes)
- D20: Land north of Elm Green Lane (proposals of 300, 100, 30, and 6 homes)
- D21: Land at Mayes Lane (proposals of 20, 10, and 2 homes)

6. Appraising alternatives

6.1 This chapter provides the appraisal findings for the six alternative options established in the previous chapter and each are being considered in relation to the original and re-submission proposals. To reiterate, the options are:

- D5: Sandpit Field (proposals of 50 or 10 homes)
- D7: Land at Tyndales Farm West (proposals of 200, 100 or 65 homes)
- D9: Land at Millfields/ Mill Lane (proposals of 80 or 30 homes)
- D14: Danecroft, Woodhill Road (proposals of 25 and 14 homes)
- D20: Land north of Elm Green Lane (proposals of 300, 100, 30, and 6 homes)
- D21: Land at Mayes Lane (proposals of 20, 10, and 2 homes)

Methodology

6.2 **Tables 6.1 to 6.6** provide details of the likely effects of each site, assessed against each SEA theme. Where appropriate, neutral effects or uncertain effects will be noted.

6.3 Every effort is made to predict effects accurately, however where there is a need to rely on local knowledge or assumptions to reach a conclusion on the likely effects of a site, this is made explicit in the appraisal text.

Appraisal findings

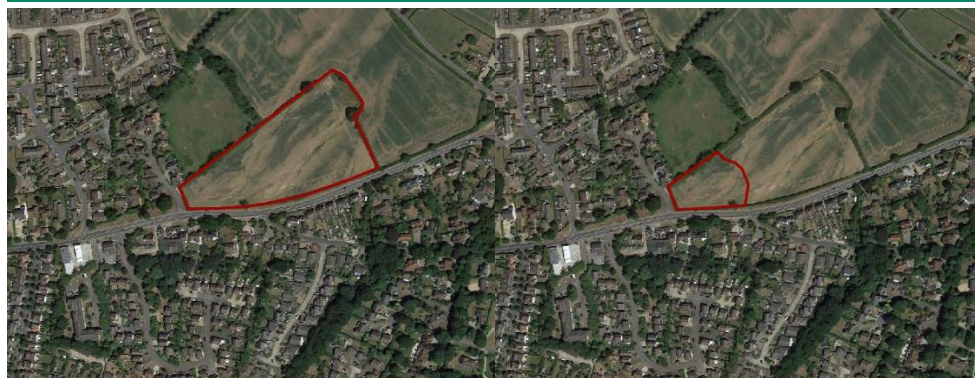
Table 6.1: Appraisal findings for Site D5

Site reference: D5

Site size: 0.35ha

Site name: Sandpit Field, East of Little Fields

Site capacity: Schemes of 50 dwellings and 10 dwellings are being considered. Different site boundaries apply to the different capacities.



(50 dwelling scheme)

(10 dwelling scheme)

Key:	Significant negative	Significant positive	Neutral effect
	Minor negative	Minor positive	Uncertain
Air quality	<p>Site D5 borders Maldon Road to the east of the recently revoked AQMA and inevitably any development here is likely to increase vehicular traffic along this main route through the settlement, particularly when considering that main employment centres at Chelmsford are likely to pull traffic westbound. This can add to congestion and stationary traffic and affect air quality objectives in this area. Whilst the overall effects are considered likely to be minor (given the overall scale of growth), these effects are considered likely to be more pronounced under the 50-dwelling scheme (and larger site) than the 10-dwelling scheme.</p>		
Biodiversity	<p>The site is greenfield arable land and does not contain any land designated by virtue of its biodiversity. Features on-site that are likely to contribute to biodiversity are limited to trees and hedgerows that border the site boundaries and which should be retained in development schemes where possible.</p> <p>In the wider area the Woodham Walter Common SSSI and Danbury Common SSSI both lie within around 500m of the site. As a result, development at the site would be located within the associated SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZ). As an area outside of the existing settlement, development within the larger site (50 dwelling scheme) may require further consultation with Natural England with regards to the potential impacts of development on SSSIs, in comparison to the smaller scale scheme which is unlikely to trigger this requirement. As woodland areas the potential impacts and sensitivities relating to the SSSI include; an increase in recreational pressures, changes to groundwater quality, and increased disturbance, cat predation, noise, light, and air pollution.</p> <p>The larger scheme for 50 dwellings may be able to provide larger recreational spaces on site that could contribute to reducing recreational pressures at the SSSIs. The larger scheme is also considered for a greater potential for minor long-term negative effects associated with cat predation, noise, light, and air pollution. Under a</p>		

Site reference: D5

Site size: 0.35ha

Site name: Sandpit Field, East of Little Fields

Site capacity: Schemes of 50 dwellings and 10 dwellings are being considered. Different site boundaries apply to the different capacities.

10-dwelling scheme new open space is still proposed and the effects in terms of cat predation, noise, light, and air pollution are also likely to be less significant.

Conversely, development could also provide an opportunity to create or enhance existing habitats and contribute to the vitality of wider habitat corridors in the area to achieve a net gain in biodiversity.

At this stage of assessment, the potential for minor long-term negative effects is identified, though it is recognised that mitigation could reduce the extent of these effects, and new recreational space could provide benefits for biodiversity in the long-term.

Climate change (mitigation and adaptation)

In terms of climate change adaptation, the site under both schemes is not located within an area of high fluvial flood risk, however, an area of surface water flood risk is located within the larger site under consideration here, and surface water flood risk is also present along the A414. Development under the larger scheme will need to consider the effective application of SUDs and measures to improve drainage on site. Whilst the reduced site size excludes the high-risk area, application of SUDs should still be considered given the proximity and potential for increases in the extent of flood risk areas as forecasted impacts of climate change.

In terms of climate change mitigation, the discussion under the transport topic has identified that development under both schemes is likely to affect congestion and thus emissions along the main route through the settlement, and negative effects in this respect are likely to become more significant as the level of growth increases. The site is recognised for relatively good accessibility to the existing bus services supporting access to more sustainable transport modes, as well as day-to-day service and facility needs supporting a reduced need to travel. Despite this the likelihood is that development at the site will increase private car usage, particularly as residents are likely to continue trends in travelling further/ outside of the settlement to access a wider range of goods, services, and employment opportunities. On this basis, minor long-term negative effects are anticipated overall in relation to climate change mitigation, and these effects are considered likely to be more pronounced under the higher growth scheme.

Landscape

Development at the site has implications for the overall character of the rural setting. Development at the site would extend the residential area in the east and result in greenfield loss. The extent of greenfield loss under the higher growth scenario is recognised for its potential negative effects in this respect. Under the lower growth scenario, the extent of loss is minimised and so too are the likely negative effects arising.

A well-designed low-density scheme is more likely to be accommodated without significant effects for landscape, particularly given its location on the settlement edge adjacent to existing housing.

Overall, the potential for minor long-term negative effects is identified at this stage, however, it is recognised that a well-designed low-density scheme could also reduce the extent and significance of these effects.

Site reference: D5

Site size: 0.35ha

Site name: Sandpit Field, East of Little Fields

Site capacity: Schemes of 50 dwellings and 10 dwellings are being considered. Different site boundaries apply to the different capacities.

Historic environment	<p>The site is not known to contain any designated heritage assets, and the closest Listed Building is located some 150m away. Development at the site could affect the setting of the Listed Building given the topography of the land, and minor negative effects are recognised in this respect. However, it is recognised that Chelmsford Council Heritage Officers have advised that negative effects are likely to be avoided under the 10-dwelling scheme.</p>	
Land, soil, and water resources	<p>The site is wholly greenfield and arable land and the Site Options Assessment has identified the potential presence of Grade 2 ‘best and most versatile’ agricultural land. On this basis, development may result in the permanent loss of high-quality soils with the potential for minor long-term negative effects with regards to the efficient use of land and soil resources. The extent of the potential loss is obviously reduced under the lower growth scheme (10 dwellings) making this scenario preferable in relation to this SEA objective.</p> <p>The larger site (50 dwelling scheme) contains an area of surface water flood risk and under both schemes the site lies wholly within both a Drinking Water Protected Area and Drinking Water Safeguard Zone for surface water. Polluted water run-off at the site has the potential for negative effects on both soil quality and water quality, and the appropriate consideration and application of SUDs to combat this should be required in any development at the site.</p>	
Population and community	<p>Development at the site could contribute to meeting the identified local housing needs to support minor long-term positive effects in relation to housing objectives.</p> <p>The site’s far eastern location positions it moderately close to some key services and facilities, such as the local shops, pubs, bus stops and the local primary school, but much further from other services (including the key employment centre). Residents will therefore be well located to meet many of their day-to-day needs, but it is likely they continue trends in travelling further/ outside of the settlement to access a wider range of goods, services, and employment opportunities.</p>	
Health and wellbeing	<p>The site is located just beyond reasonable walking distance (around 850m) from the closest healthcare facilities (Danbury Medical Centre). This distance may affect certain groups in accessing medical services, such as the elderly and disabled, and the type of housing promoted at the site should consider future resident needs in this respect.</p> <p>Despite this, the site benefits from relatively good access to recreational areas (Scrubs Wood north of the site) and the surrounding countryside, though it is noted that PRow and countryside access is more predominant in the western half of the settlement.</p> <p>On this basis, the larger site is considered for its potential to provide new recreational opportunities, including new green space, that could contribute to improved access in the eastern half of the settlement and provide positive effects in this respect.</p> <p>On balance, the site performs relatively well with regards to health and wellbeing, and minor long-term positive effects are anticipated overall.</p>	

Site reference: D5

Site size: 0.35ha

Site name: Sandpit Field, East of Little Fields

Site capacity: Schemes of 50 dwellings and 10 dwellings are being considered. Different site boundaries apply to the different capacities.

	<p>These effects could be significantly enhanced through new provisions that support health and wellbeing.</p>	
<p>Transportation</p>	<p>The site is well connected (adjacent) to the A414 as the main route passing through the Parish and connecting the settlement with Chelmsford and Maldon and the access assessment identifies achievable access via the A414. Whilst this creates ease of access for new residents, it is also likely that it will increase congestion pressures on the main road (where an AQMA was recently revoked) and the capacity to absorb this increase is unknown at this stage. As the main road through the settlement, potential increases in congestion can also have indirect negative effects for pedestrians and cyclists, by potentially reducing the overall quality and safety along main routes for these users. It is also considered that the higher the level of growth at the site, the more pronounced the negative effects are likely to be.</p> <p>The site performs relatively well in terms of accessibility to the existing bus services, which will provide minor support in mitigating the effects discussed. The site is within walking distance of key day-to-day services (such as local shops and primary school) which will support a reduced need to travel, however, it is still considered likely that new residents will continue trends in travelling outside of the settlement area to access a wider range of goods, services, and employment opportunities.</p> <p>On this basis, under both schemes, minor long-term negative effects are anticipated overall, however these minor negative effects are considered likely to be more pronounced under the larger growth scenario.</p>	

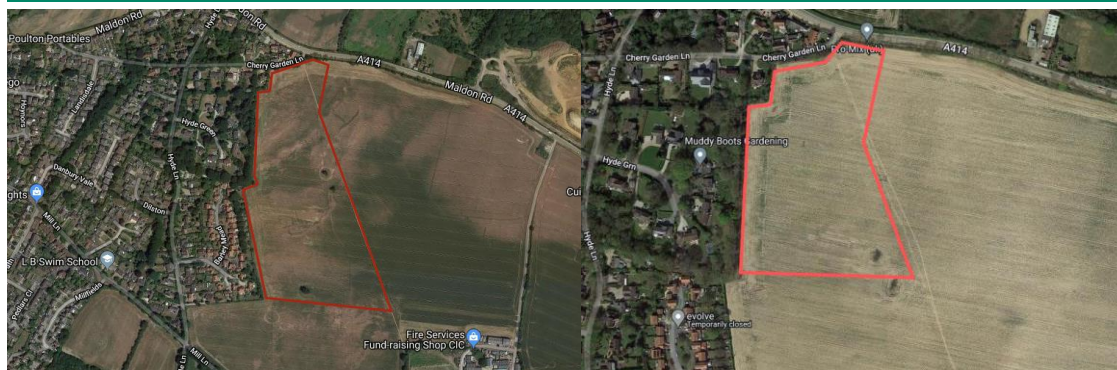
Table 6.2: Appraisal findings for Site D7

Site reference: D7

Site size: 9ha

Site name: Land at Tyndales Farm West

Site capacity: Capacities of 65 dwellings, 100 dwellings, and 200 dwellings are being considered.



(100/ 200 dwelling schemes)

(65 dwelling scheme)

Key:	Significant negative		Significant positive		Neutral effect	
	Minor negative		Minor positive		Uncertain	

Air quality	<p>Site D7 adjoins Maldon Road to the east of the settlement area and inevitably any development here is likely to increase vehicular traffic along this main route through the settlement, particularly when considering that main employment centres at Chelmsford are likely to pull traffic westbound. This can add to congestion and stationary traffic and affect air quality objectives in this area.</p> <p>Significant negative effects are anticipated under the larger scale schemes (100/ 200 dwellings), but may be of less significance under the 65-dwelling scheme, and these effects are also considered likely to be more pronounced (of greater significance) under the higher growth scenario.</p> <p>It should also be noted that the site is located on the eastern edge of the settlement, beyond reasonable walking distance from the key services and facilities in the Plan area which may compound private vehicle use and lead to greater potential for minor long-term negative effects for air quality.</p>
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Biodiversity	<p>The site is greenfield arable land and does not contain any land designated by virtue of its biodiversity. Features on-site that are likely to contribute to biodiversity are limited to trees and hedgerows that border the site in the west and which should be retained in development schemes where possible.</p> <p>In the wider area the Danbury Common SSSI lies within around 750m of the site and Woodham Walter Common SSSI lies within around 850m. As a result, development at the site would be located within the associated SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZ). As an area outside of the existing settlement, development under both schemes is likely to require further consultation with Natural England with regards to the potential impacts of development on SSSIs. As woodland areas the potential impacts and sensitivities relating to the SSSI include an increase in recreational pressures, changes to groundwater quality, and increased disturbance, cat predation, noise, light, and air pollution.</p>
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Site reference: D7

Site size: 9ha

Site name: Land at Tyndales Farm West

Site capacity: Capacities of 65 dwellings, 100 dwellings, and 200 dwellings are being considered.

The larger scale schemes (100/ 200 dwellings) are recognised as having the potential to deliver new on-site recreational areas that could contribute to reducing recreational pressures at the aforementioned SSSIs and lead to positive effects. The smaller scale scheme (65 dwellings) offers the same potential but at a lowered rate due to lowered quantities of development, therefore it is expected to not have as much of a positive impact. It is also considered that there is a greater potential under the higher growth scenarios than the smaller growth scenario for minor long-term negative effects associated with cat predation, noise, light, and air pollution.

At this stage of assessment, the potential for minor long-term negative effects is identified, though it is recognised that mitigation could reduce the extent of these effects, and new recreational space could provide benefits for biodiversity in the long-term.

Climate change (mitigation and adaptation)

In terms of climate change adaptation, the site is not located within an area of high fluvial flood risk, however, areas of surface water flood risk are located across and around the site. Development will need to consider the effective application of SUDs and measures to improve drainage on site.

In terms of climate change mitigation, the discussion under the transport topic has identified that development under all three schemes is likely to significantly affect congestion and thus emissions along the main route through the settlement, and negative effects in this respect are likely to be more pronounced under the higher growth scenarios (100/ 200 dwellings). The site is also considered to have relatively poor accessibility to services and facilities which, in the absence of significant new provisions, is likely to mean that residents will need to travel to meet their day-to-day needs. It is also likely that residents will continue trends in travelling further/ outside of the settlement to access a wider range of goods, services, and employment opportunities.

The likelihood is that development at the site will increase private car usage and development in this location would rely on technological advances to improve the sustainability performance of private vehicles. On this basis, minor long-term negative effects are anticipated overall in relation to climate change mitigation, and these effects are considered likely to be more pronounced under the higher growth schemes.

Landscape

Development at the site has implications for the overall character of the area; the landscape is identified as having a medium capacity and a high visual sensitivity. In this respect development at the site would extend the residential area in the east and result in significant greenfield loss under both schemes which will result in changes to the character, nature, and visual appearance in this area to some degree. On this basis, the potential for significant negative effects is identified at this stage. It is also recognised that the extent of greenfield loss and thus the significance of the effects is likely to increase under the higher growth scenarios (100/ 200 dwellings) as opposed to the smaller growth scenario (65 dwellings), due to amplified land use.

Site reference: D7

Site size: 9ha

Site name: Land at Tyndales Farm West

Site capacity: Capacities of 65 dwellings, 100 dwellings, and 200 dwellings are being considered.

Historic environment	<p>Whilst the site is not known to contain any designated heritage assets (a heritage officer has advised that there are no built heritage constraints for this site), development would result in significant greenfield loss at the settlement edge which may affect the setting of the Listed Buildings at Tyndales Farm by virtue of residential encroachment.</p> <p>It is likely the smaller growth scheme (65 dwellings) will have a lesser effect than the larger growth schemes (100/ 200 dwellings) due to a smaller built footprint size and less greenfield loss. Moreover, a well-designed scheme and lower housing densities may potentially mitigate negative effects in this respect for any of the three growth scenarios. However, this may be more difficult to achieve with the larger growth schemes and on this basis minor negative effects are anticipated at this stage.</p>
Land, soil and water resources	<p>The site is wholly greenfield and arable land and the Site Options Assessment has identified the potential presence of Grade 3a 'best and most versatile' agricultural land. On this basis, any of the three growth scenarios may result in the permanent loss of high-quality soils with the potential for minor long-term negative effects with regards to the efficient use of land and soil resources. It is also considered that the extent of the negative effects increases as the scale of development increases, therefore the smaller scale proposal (65 dwellings) is expected to have less of an impact than the larger scale proposals (100/ 200 dwellings).</p> <p>The site contains areas at risk of surface water flooding and under all three schemes the site lies wholly within both a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone for surface water. Polluted water run-off at the site has the potential for negative effects on both soil quality and water quality, and the appropriate consideration and application of SUDs to combat this should be required in any development at the site.</p>
Population and community	<p>Development at the site could deliver in full (and potentially in excess of) the identified local housing needs to support significant long-term positive effects in relation to housing objectives. The large scale growth scenarios (100/ 200 dwellings) have greater potential to deliver benefits for both new and existing residents than the smaller growth scenario (65 dwellings), including in terms of new on-site provisions, and accessibility and green infrastructure improvements and the potential for enhanced positive effects in this respect are recognised.</p> <p>However, the site's far eastern location positions it beyond reasonable walking distance to the key services and facilities within the settlement, which places increased pressure on development in this area to deliver new provisions. Whilst the larger scales of growth makes new provisions more viable, it is questionable whether development could provide sufficient new provisions to fully mitigate these effects. On this basis, it is considered at this stage likely that residents will need to travel to access some of their daily needs no matter the growth scenario taken forward, and likely that they will continue trends in travelling further/ outside of the settlement to access a wider range of</p>

Site reference: D7

Site size: 9ha

Site name: Land at Tyndales Farm West

Site capacity: Capacities of 65 dwellings, 100 dwellings, and 200 dwellings are being considered.

	<p>goods, services, and employment opportunities. Minor long-term negative effects are anticipated in this respect.</p> <p>To conclude, the site is recognised for its significant housing contribution potential, however, the overall positive effects are considered likely to be minor on the basis that development may not be located in the most accessible of locations in the settlement and will place a strong reliance on new provisions in development proposals.</p>	
<p>Health and wellbeing</p>	<p>The site is located beyond reasonable walking distance to the existing healthcare facilities, and development would have implications for resident health in this respect, particularly those less able to travel. On this basis, potential minor long-term negative effects for health are recognised, however, it is also recognised that under the larger growth schemes (100/ 200 dwellings) the scale of development proposed has the potential to deliver new healthcare facilities, mitigate these effects and alternatively deliver positive effects for both existing and new residents.</p> <p>The site benefits from relatively good access to the surrounding countryside and contains a protected lane that should be retained and enhanced in development.</p> <p>On this basis, whilst an overall potential for minor negative effects is identified at this stage, the potential to mitigate these effects should also be recognised.</p>	
<p>Transportation</p>	<p>Suitable access to the site has been identified but the scale of development at the site is considered likely to increase pressure and congestion on local roads, particularly under the larger growth scenarios (100/ 200 dwellings) and the capacity of the road network to absorb this growth is unknown. The proposed access to this site is directly on the A414 and includes a diversion from Cherry Garden Lane eastwards into the access road – this may relieve some of the expected pressure.</p> <p>The potential increases in congestion can also have indirect negative effects for pedestrians and cyclists, by potentially reducing the overall quality and safety along main routes for these users. It is also considered that the higher the level of growth at the site, the more pronounced the negative effects are likely to be. In this case, the lower growth scenario (65 dwellings) is expected to have less of a negative effect.</p> <p>The site performs relatively well in terms of accessibility to the existing bus services, which will provide minor support in mitigating the effects discussed. However, the site lies beyond reasonable walking distance to other key services and facilities and residents are likely to need to travel to access their day-to-day needs. Given the nature of the Plan area it is also considered likely that new residents will continue trends in travelling outside of the settlement area to access a wider range of goods, services, and employment opportunities.</p> <p>On this basis, under all three schemes, significant long-term negative effects are anticipated overall, and the significance of these effects are</p>	

Site reference: D7

Site size: 9ha

Site name: Land at Tyndales Farm West

Site capacity: Capacities of 65 dwellings, 100 dwellings, and 200 dwellings are being considered.

likely to increase as the scale of development on site increases from the lower growth scenario to the larger growth scenarios.

Table 6.3: Appraisal findings for Site D9

Site reference: D9

Site size: 1.55ha

Site name: Land at Millfields/ Mill Lane

Site capacity: Schemes of between 30 and 80 dwellings are being considered. Different site boundaries apply to the different capacities.



(80 dwelling scheme)

(30 dwelling scheme)

Key:	Significant negative	Significant positive	Neutral effect
	Minor negative	Minor positive	Uncertain
Air quality	<p>Development at the site is considered likely to increase vehicular traffic on local roads, including the main route through the settlement (A414) and particularly when considering that main employment centres at Chelmsford are likely to pull traffic westbound. Additionally, traffic from the site will likely access the A414 through Mill Lane and The Avenue, both of which are close to the eastern edge of the recently revoked AQMA and result in increased pollution levels, especially during busy times and congestion.</p> <p>Under the lower growth scenario (30 dwellings) no significant negative effects are anticipated; however, negative effects are likely to be more pronounced under the higher growth scenario (80 dwellings) where a potential for significant negative effects is identified at this stage.</p> <p>It should also be noted that the site is located on the eastern edge of the settlement, beyond reasonable walking distance to bus stops and key services and facilities in the Plan area which may compound private vehicle use and lead to greater potential for minor long-term negative effects for air quality.</p>		
Biodiversity	<p>The site is greenfield arable land and does not contain any land designated by virtue of its biodiversity. Features on-site that are likely to contribute to biodiversity include trees and hedgerows that extend from the woodland coverage south of the site.</p> <p>In the wider area the Danbury Common SSSI lies within 500m of the site and development at the site would be located within the associated SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZ). As an area outside of the existing settlement, development under the larger scale scheme (80 dwellings) is likely to require further consultation with Natural England with regards to the potential impacts of development on SSSIs. As woodland areas the potential impacts and sensitivities relating to the SSSI include an increase in recreational pressures, changes to groundwater quality, and increased disturbance, cat predation, noise, light and air pollution.</p> <p>Development at the larger site could deliver new on-site recreational areas that could contribute to reducing recreational pressures at the SSSIs and lead to positive effects. However, this is also considered</p>		

Site reference: D9

Site size: 1.55ha

Site name: Land at Millfields/ Mill Lane

Site capacity: Schemes of between 30 and 80 dwellings are being considered. Different site boundaries apply to the different capacities.

	<p>alongside a greater potential for minor long-term negative effects associated with cat predation, noise, light, and air pollution.</p> <p>Development could also provide an opportunity to create or enhance existing habitats and contribute to the vitality of wider habitat corridors in the area to achieve a net gain in biodiversity, particularly as the site is identified as part of the National Habitat Network Expansion Zone.</p> <p>At this stage of assessment, the potential for minor long-term negative effects is identified, though it is recognised that mitigation could reduce the extent of these effects, and new recreational space could provide benefits for biodiversity in the long-term.</p>
<p>Climate change (mitigation and adaptation)</p>	<p>In terms of climate change adaptation, the site is not located within an area of high fluvial flood risk, however, the site contains and borders areas of surface water flood risk and to a much greater extent under the larger site option. Development will need to consider the effective application of SUDs and measures to improve drainage on site.</p> <p>In terms of climate change mitigation, the discussion under the transport topic has identified that development under both schemes is likely to affect congestion on the local road network, and minor negative effects are anticipated in this respect (the significance of which are likely to increase under the higher growth scenario). The site is also considered for relatively poor accessibility to key services and facilities which, in the absence of significant new provisions, is likely to mean that residents will need to travel to meet their day-to-day needs. It is also likely that residents will continue trends in travelling further/ outside of the settlement to access a wider range of goods, services, and employment opportunities.</p> <p>The likelihood is that development at the site will increase private car usage and development in this location would rely on technological advances to improve the sustainability performance of private vehicles. On this basis, minor long-term negative effects are anticipated overall in relation to climate change mitigation, and these effects are considered likely to be more pronounced under the higher growth scheme.</p>
<p>Landscape</p>	<p>Development at the site would result in greenfield loss at the settlement edge, though this area has a relatively enclosed character at the settlement edge. On this basis no significant negative effects are anticipated.</p> <p>A higher-density scheme (80 dwellings) is considered more likely to lead to negative effects in comparison to the lower-density scheme (30 dwellings) which is more likely to accommodate low-rise development. Whilst minor long-term negative effects are identified overall because of development in a previously undeveloped area, the benefits of the lower-density scheme in terms of reduced landscape impact are recognised.</p>
<p>Historic environment</p>	<p>Whilst the site is not known to contain any designated heritage assets, development at the site would result in greenfield loss in the vicinity of the Listed Buildings at Gay Bowers (and to a greater extent under the larger scale scheme). Development could affect the setting of</p>

Site reference: D9

Site size: 1.55ha

Site name: Land at Millfields/ Mill Lane

Site capacity: Schemes of between 30 and 80 dwellings are being considered. Different site boundaries apply to the different capacities.

	<p>designated heritage assets however, given the existing woodland coverage at Gay Bowers House a good level of natural screening is provided, and negative effects are considered unlikely. On this basis, overall neutral effects are anticipated under both schemes and site sizes achievable on-site, particularly within the reduced size site.</p>	
<p>Land, soil and water resources</p>	<p>The site is wholly greenfield and arable land and the Site Options Assessment has identified the potential presence of Grade 2 'best and most versatile' agricultural land. On this basis, development has the potential to result in the permanent loss of high-quality soils and lead to minor long-term negative effects with regards to the efficient use of land and soil resources.</p> <p>The site contains and borders areas of surface water flood risk and to a much greater extent under the larger site option. Under both schemes the site lies wholly within a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone for surface water. Polluted water run-off at the site has the potential for negative effects on both soil quality and water quality, and the appropriate consideration and application of SUDs to combat this should be required in any development at the site.</p>	
<p>Population and community</p>	<p>Development at the site could contribute to meeting the identified local housing needs to support minor long-term positive effects in relation to housing objectives.</p> <p>The site's far eastern location positions it beyond reasonable walking distance to key services and facilities (including shops and schools) and residents are likely to need to travel to access their day-to-day needs. Given the nature of the Plan area it is also considered likely that new residents will continue trends in travelling outside of the settlement area to access a wider range of goods, services, and employment opportunities. The scale of development under both scenarios is considered unlikely to provide significant new provisions to combat these effects.</p> <p>Overall, whilst the site can support housing objectives development may not be in the most accessible of locations in the settlement and overall minor negative effects are anticipated in this respect.</p>	
<p>Health and wellbeing</p>	<p>The site is located beyond reasonable walking distance (around 1km) from the closest healthcare facilities (Danbury Medical Centre). This distance may affect certain groups in accessing medical services, such as the elderly and disabled, and the type of housing promoted at the site should consider future resident needs in this respect. The scale of development under both scenarios is considered unlikely to provide significant new provisions to combat accessibility constraints, and on this basis, minor long-term negative effects are anticipated with regards to health and wellbeing.</p> <p>The site benefits from relatively good access to the surrounding countryside, though it is noted that PRoW and countryside access is more predominant in the western half of the settlement. Development at the site under the larger scale scheme could deliver new green space to enhance the potential for minor positive effects, however given</p>	

Site reference: D9

Site size: 1.55ha

Site name: Land at Millfields/ Mill Lane

Site capacity: Schemes of between 30 and 80 dwellings are being considered. Different site boundaries apply to the different capacities.

	<p>the distance from existing health facilities residual minor negative effects are still anticipated overall.</p>	
<p>Transportation</p>	<p>It is unknown at this stage whether the site will be able to provide satisfactory access to the road network and further 3rd party land may be required. Should this barrier be overcome, the scale of development at site is considered likely to increase pressure and congestion on local roads, particularly under the higher growth scenario, and the capacity of the road network to absorb this growth is unknown. The potential increases in congestion can also have indirect negative effects for pedestrians and cyclists, by potentially reducing the overall quality and safety along main routes for these users. It is also considered that the higher the level of growth at the site, the more pronounced the negative effects are likely to be.</p> <p>The site also lies beyond reasonable walking distance to bus stops and key services and facilities and residents are likely to need to travel to access their day-to-day needs. Given the nature of the Plan area it is also considered likely that new residents will continue trends in travelling outside of the settlement area to access a wider range of goods, services, and employment opportunities.</p> <p>On this basis, under both schemes, minor long-term negative effects are anticipated at a minimum, with the higher growth scenario having the potential for negative effects of greater significance.</p>	

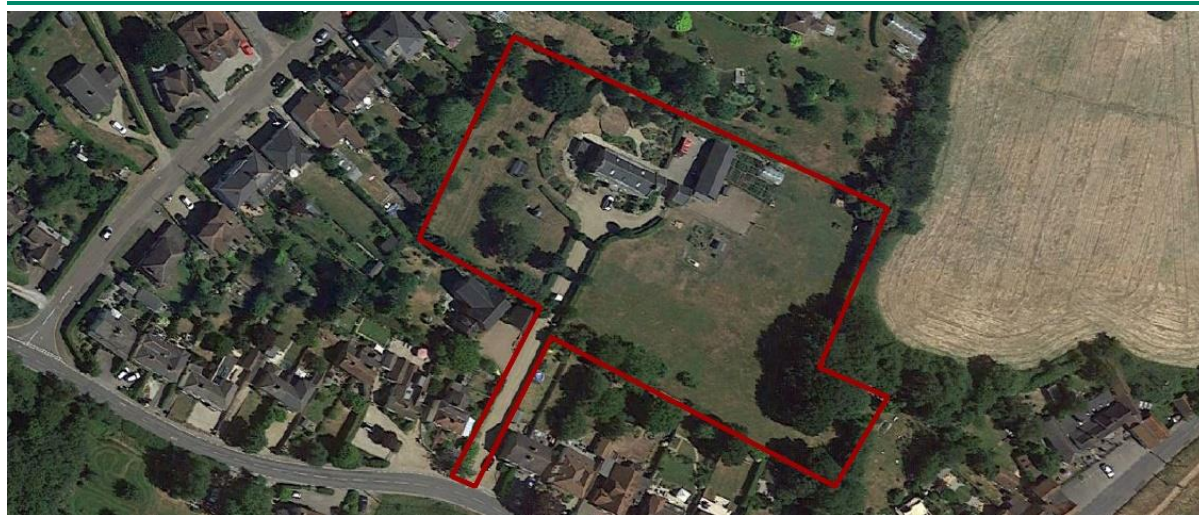
Table 6.4: Appraisal findings for Site D14

Site reference: D14

Site size: 1ha

Site name: Danecroft, Woodhill Road

Site capacity: Schemes of between 10 and 25 dwellings are being considered.



Key:	Significant negative	Significant positive	Neutral effect
	Minor negative	Minor positive	Uncertain
Air quality	<p>There are no inherent air quality issues at Site D14 and development under either growth scenario of 10 or 25 dwellings is considered to have little potential for appreciable effects on air quality at the site itself. However, northbound traffic from the site could ultimately contribute to traffic flows through the recently revoked Danbury AQMA around a mile to the north. In this context there could be potential for minor negative effects on the plan area as a whole; though it is recognised that growth under either scenario would not generate significant numbers of new road users.</p>		
Biodiversity	<p>The site is greenfield arable land and does not contain any land designated by virtue of its biodiversity. The site does however contain traditional orchard Priority Habitat and is part of the National Habitat Network Enhancement Zone 2 – suitable for new habitat creation. Features on-site that are likely to contribute to biodiversity include trees and hedgerows that border the site which should be retained in development where possible.</p> <p>The site is within a few metres of the Danbury Common SSSI, giving rise to the potential for effects on biodiversity from development. Much of the SSSI is woodland, and potential impacts and sensitivities in this context include an increase in recreational pressures, changes to groundwater quality, increased disturbance, cat predation, noise, light and air pollution. The Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) of the SSSI extends across the entire site, where development under either scheme is likely to require further consultation with Natural England with regards to the potential impacts of development on SSSIs. Development at the site is not at a scale to provide sufficient new recreational facilities to mitigate the likely increase in recreational pressures as a result of development at the site.</p>		

Site reference: D14

Site size: 1ha

Site name: Danecroft, Woodhill Road

Site capacity: Schemes of between 10 and 25 dwellings are being considered.

Development could also provide an opportunity to create or enhance existing habitats and contribute to the vitality of wider habitat corridors in the area in order to achieve a net gain in biodiversity.

Whilst a potential for positive effects (through effective mitigation and biodiversity enhancement) is recognised, at this stage of assessment, the potential for minor long-term negative effects is identified overall. Consideration should be given to policy mitigation, including a requirement for biodiversity net gain/ new provisions where possible, which could reduce the potential for negative effects if the site is progressed.

Conversely, development could also provide an opportunity to create or enhance existing habitats and contribute to the vitality of wider habitat corridors in the area in order to achieve a net gain in biodiversity.

Climate change (mitigation and adaptation)

In terms of climate change adaptation, Site D14 would deliver growth at a location with no notable flood risk. The site has no fluvial flood risk or surface water flood risk, and it is not considered that development would appreciably contribute to surface water runoff to surrounding dwellings, subject to the incorporation of SUDS, which is a notable positive. Surface water flood risk exists in the property adjacent to the south east corner of the site, indicating an appropriate location for SUDS on site.

In terms of climate change mitigation, the discussion under the transport topic has identified that development under both schemes is likely to affect congestion on the local road network, and minor negative effects are anticipated in this respect (the significance of which are likely to slightly increase under the higher growth scenario). The site is also considered for poor accessibility to key services and facilities which, in the absence of significant new provisions, is likely to mean that residents will need to travel to meet their day-to-day needs. It is also likely that residents will continue trends in travelling further/ outside of the settlement to access a wider range of goods, services and employment opportunities.

The likelihood is that development at the site will increase private car usage and development in this location would rely on technological advances to improve the sustainability performance of private vehicles. On this basis, minor long-term negative effects are anticipated overall in relation to climate change mitigation, and these effects are considered likely to be more pronounced under the higher growth scheme.

Landscape

The site is a mixture of both greenfield and brownfield land. By virtue of its location to the rear of existing dwellings on Woodhill Road to the south and Southview Road to the west the site occupies a relatively discrete setting within the landscape, from which views in are limited from the south, west and north by existing development. The eastern boundary of the site is the only one which is free of development and consequently there is potential for views into and across the site from the public right of way which crosses the open field to the east. The site's current openness contributes to the landscape context of the south of the village and the wider setting and character of the area, particularly in terms of how this is enjoyed by footpath users through the adjacent field, could potentially be adversely affected by development.

Site reference: D14

Site size: 1ha

Site name: Danecroft, Woodhill Road

Site capacity: Schemes of between 10 and 25 dwellings are being considered.

	<p>However, given the site has limited sensitivity to views from other directions it is not considered to have potential for significant negative effects under either the 10 or 25 dwelling growth scenarios. In townscape terms it is considered that a discrete development on the site could integrate with the surrounding pattern and grain of development without significant negative effects. Overall, however, it is appropriate to identify potential minor negative effects based on the urbanising effect on views and amenity from the adjacent field to the east of the site, particularly in light of the fact the field is a well-used public right of way.</p>	
<p>Historic environment</p>	<p>The site is adjacent to the Danbury Conservation Area, though the site boundary is mostly with open fields which fall within the broadly defined Conservation Area rather than with historic built form. However, the openness of these fields contributes to the wider setting and historic character of the village's built heritage, including the Grade II listed Cricketers Arms just to the east of the site and the Grade II-listed house, Poplars, whose property boundary directly abuts the south east corner of the site. There could be potential for development on site to adversely affect the setting and character of these two heritage assets in particular, through the introduction of a greater sense of enclosure and loss of setting. It is considered that there could be potential to mitigate these effects through high-quality design, layout and massing and overall effects but the potential for minor negative effects is recognised at this stage.</p>	
<p>Land, soil, and water resources</p>	<p>The site forms part of an extensive private garden and would not result in the loss of productive agricultural land under any of the three growth scenarios though minor negative effects are anticipated because of greenfield loss.</p> <p>The site lies wholly within a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone for surface water. Polluted water run-off at the site has the potential for negative effects on both soil quality and water quality, and the appropriate consideration and application of SUDs to combat this should be required in any development at the site.</p>	
<p>Population and community</p>	<p>Development at the site could contribute to meeting identified local housing needs to support long-term positive effects in relation to housing objectives. As a relatively small site there are unlikely to be new community facilities delivered on-site and little opportunity to enhance connectivity with existing facilities. However, the site is proximate to Danbury's existing range of community infrastructure assets. Residents will be located close to many of their day-to-day services and facilities, but it is likely they will continue trends in travelling further/ outside of the settlement to access a wider range of goods, services and employment opportunities. Also, it may not be possible to access some of these services entirely on foot in the absence of car-free footpaths all the way to the village centre. However, in principle minor positive effects are predicted in relation to population and community.</p>	
<p>Health and wellbeing</p>	<p>The site is located within reasonable walking distance (around 750m) to Danbury Medical Centre and will support new residents with good access to healthcare facilities in this respect. The site also benefits</p>	

Site reference: D14

Site size: 1ha

Site name: Danecroft, Woodhill Road

Site capacity: Schemes of between 10 and 25 dwellings are being considered.

	<p>from good access to recreational areas (Danbury Common) and the surrounding countryside, including the network of PRowS/ protected lanes.</p> <p>On this basis, the site is considered for its potential to support new resident health and wellbeing and long-term minor positive effects are anticipated overall in relation to this SEA objective.</p>	
<p>Transportation</p>	<p>Suitable access to the site has been identified but there does not appear to be segregated pedestrian access for the full extent of the route to the village centre, particularly along Penny Royal Road. In this context the site is unlikely to be a location which reduces car dependency and supports walking and cycling as a viable means of transport for meeting day-to-day needs. Whilst there is good access to bus services, when considered alongside the potential safety issues associated with the site it is considered that there could be potential for significant negative effects in relation to transport (pre-mitigation).</p>	

Table 6.5: Appraisal findings for Site D20

Site reference: D20

Site size: 1.21ha

Site name: Land North of Elm Green Lane

Site capacity: Schemes of 300 dwellings, 100 dwellings, and 30 dwellings (or less) are being considered. Different site boundaries apply to the different capacities.



(100 dwelling and 300 dwelling schemes)

(30 dwelling (or less) scheme)

Key:	Significant negative	Significant positive	Neutral effect
	Minor negative	Minor positive	Uncertain
Air quality	<p>There are no inherent air quality issues at Site D20 and development under the low growth scenario of 30 dwellings is considered likely to have minimal effects. However, in the context of narrow and constrained roads which serve the site, growth of either 100 or 300 dwellings could have potential to introduce additional stationary or queuing traffic which could have a negative effect on localised emissions along Elm Green Lane. At this scale of growth, significant negative effects are anticipated overall.</p>		
Biodiversity	<p>The larger site option is directly adjacent to Blake's Wood & Lingwood Common SSSI which forms the entire northern boundary of the site and this gives rise to potential concerns about adverse effects from development on site. Much of the SSSI is woodland, and potential impacts and sensitivities in this context include an increase in recreational pressures, changes to groundwater quality, increased disturbance, cat predation, noise, light and air pollution. The Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) of the SSSI extends across much of the larger site, identifying potential harmful effects from development greater than 50 dwellings at all but the southern third of the site. In this context development of either 100 or 300 dwellings is considered to have potential to result in minor negative effects in relation to the SSSI.</p> <p>The larger site has a range of priority habitats near its boundaries, including expansive areas of deciduous woodland to the north, a broad area of wood pasture and parkland to the west and scattered instances of lowland heathland to the north within the SSSI, though no notable habitats are identified within the site itself which is in arable agricultural use. The area is also recognised as a National Habitat Network Fragmentation Action Zone alongside Network Enhancement Zones 1 and 2. There could be opportunities to seek habitat creation or enhancement through the development process, including new recreational space to combat recreational pressures on the SSSI, with potential for minor positive effects as a result. If the smaller configuration of the site was allocated, opportunities for habitat enhancement would still exist, though the inherent potential for harm to the SSSI would likely be significantly reduced. Therefore, it is considered that minor positive effects could result from development of</p>		

Site reference: D20

Site size: 1.21ha

Site name: Land North of Elm Green Lane

Site capacity: Schemes of 300 dwellings, 100 dwellings, and 30 dwellings (or less) are being considered. Different site boundaries apply to the different capacities.

	<p>the smaller site, though minor negative effects could result from development of 100 or 300 dwellings on the larger site.</p>	
<p>Climate change (mitigation and adaptation)</p>	<p>In terms of climate change adaptation Site D20 would deliver growth at a location with no no fluvial flood risk, as per much of the settlement as a whole. Two narrow ribbons of low surface water flood risk intersect the site, which should be incorporated into the future design and layout of any scheme on site, alongside the application of SUDs.</p> <p>In terms of climate change mitigation, the discussion under the transport topic has identified that development under both schemes is likely to affect congestion on the local road network, and negative effects are anticipated in this respect (the significance of which are likely to increase under the higher growth scenarios). However, the site is recognised for relatively good accessibility to the existing bus services supporting access to more sustainable transport modes, as well as day-to-day service and facility needs supporting a reduced need to travel. Despite this footpath connections are limited and the likelihood is that development at the site will increase private car usage, particularly as residents are likely to continue trends in travelling further/ outside of the settlement to access a wider range of goods, services and employment opportunities.</p> <p>The likelihood is that development at the site will increase private car usage and development in this location would rely on technological advances to improve the sustainability performance of private vehicles. On this basis, minor long-term negative effects are anticipated overall in relation to climate change mitigation, and these effects are considered likely to be slightly more pronounced under the higher growth scheme.</p>	
<p>Landscape</p>	<p>The larger site is greenfield land and the site's openness makes a strong contribution to the rural setting and character of the village and this could be substantially altered through the higher growth scenarios on site. The landform of the site drops away slightly from the existing built area, giving the site a degree of additional exposure within the landscape for views in from the north, particularly from the approach to the village along Riffhams Lane. The attractive woodland setting and rural-fringe character of the area would likely be significantly urbanised under growth of 300 dwellings which would give rise to potential for significant negative effects. Growth of 100 dwellings may have more scope to incorporate landscaping and planted screening into the development which could help soften its landscape impact, though this scale of development would be out of character for the established pattern and grain of surrounding development and may result in negative effects in terms of townscape character. Growth of around 30 dwellings on the smaller parcel of land in the south west corner of the overall site would likely have more limited potential for negative effects on landscape setting and character, though would still deliver a much higher density of development than is evident in the immediate vicinity of the site at present.</p> <p>Overall, the nature of effects will be substantially informed by detailed matters of design, layout, landscaping and materials, though the potential for significant negative effects is recognised under the higher</p>	

Site reference: D20

Site size: 1.21ha

Site name: Land North of Elm Green Lane

Site capacity: Schemes of 300 dwellings, 100 dwellings, and 30 dwellings (or less) are being considered. Different site boundaries apply to the different capacities.

	<p>growth scenarios. The reduced site has greater potential to be accommodated with minor residual negative effects.</p>	
<p>Historic environment</p>	<p>The site is free of sensitivity in relation to most designated historic assets as there are no listed buildings on or adjacent to the site and none with direct sightlines of the site. The site is outside the Danbury Conservation Area and development at the site would not directly affect the Conservation Area itself or its setting. However, the Grade II-listed Riffhams Registered Park and Garden (RPG), an early 19th century house surrounded by parkland, is immediately west of the site across Riffhams Lane and it is likely that the site's current openness and rural character make a contribution to the setting and character of the RPG. Development, particularly high-density development of the full site, would have potential for significant negative effects in relation to the RPG as a result. More limited development of around 30 dwellings on the smaller parcel of land would naturally reduce the magnitude of these effects and could potentially be designed and laid out in such a way that the direct sight lines between the site and the RPG are screened to avoid urbanising the setting of the RPG.</p> <p>Overall there could be potential for minor negative effects in relation to the historic environment, though the precise nature of effects will be determined by quantum of development and design and layout. It is considered that development of any quantum would not present opportunities to enhance the setting of the RPG.</p>	
<p>Land, soil and water resources</p>	<p>The site is wholly greenfield and arable land and the Site Options Assessment has identified the potential presence of Grade 2 'best and most versatile' agricultural land. On this basis, development has the potential to result in the permanent loss of high-quality soils and lead to minor long-term negative effects with regards to the efficient use of land and soil resources. The significance of these effects are ultimately reduced under the 30-dwelling scheme.</p> <p>Under all schemes the site lies wholly within a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone for surface water. Polluted water run-off at the site has the potential for negative effects on both soil quality and water quality, and the appropriate consideration and application of SUDs to combat this should be required in any development at the site.</p>	
<p>Population and community</p>	<p>Development at the site could deliver against (and potentially in excess of) identified local housing needs to support significant long-term positive effects in relation to housing objectives. As a large growth site the economies of scale have greater potential to deliver benefits for both new and existing residents, including in terms of new on-site provisions, and accessibility and green infrastructure improvements and the potential for enhanced positive effects in this respect are recognised.</p> <p>However, access to existing services and facilities is constrained by the limited road capacity and lack of separate car-free pedestrian access to the village centre. Although the distance to services is not great, the lack of safe pedestrian access is a notable constraint. However, the</p>	

Site reference: D20

Site size: 1.21ha

Site name: Land North of Elm Green Lane

Site capacity: Schemes of 300 dwellings, 100 dwellings, and 30 dwellings (or less) are being considered. Different site boundaries apply to the different capacities.

	<p>potential of the site to make a significant contribution to housing growth is considered to result in an overall minor positive performance.</p>	
<p>Health and wellbeing</p>	<p>The site is located just beyond reasonable walking distance (around 1km) to Danbury Medical Centre. This distance may affect certain groups in accessing medical services, such as the elderly and disabled, and the type of housing promoted at the site should consider future resident needs in this respect.</p> <p>However, it is also recognised that under the higher-growth schemes the scale of development proposed has the potential to deliver new healthcare facilities and mitigate these effects and alternatively deliver positive effects for both existing and new residents.</p> <p>The site benefits from good access to recreational areas (Lingwood Common) and the surrounding countryside, including the network of PRoWs/ protected lanes and minor long-term positive effects are anticipated in this respect.</p>	
<p>Transportation</p>	<p>Access to the site appears challenging under any growth scenario for more than 5 homes as the site is served by the narrow roads of Riffhams Lane, which forms the site's western boundary, and Elm Green Lane which forms the southern boundary. Both roads are of limited capacity and would likely be challenging to enhance given the placement of existing properties and roadside infrastructure such as powerlines. It is considered that negative effects would be likely in relation to vehicular traffic and congestion under the two higher growth scenarios. There could be potential for limited development in the south western corner of the site to come forward with more limited negative effects as the scale of growth would be much smaller.</p> <p>In terms of other means of access, the site is within reasonable walking and cycling distance of bus services and a range of services at the village centre, though there is no segregated car-free footpath for much of the route. This could disincentivise travel to services by foot under all growth scenarios. In the context of the above, significant negative effects in relation to transport are anticipated.</p>	

Table 6.6: Appraisal findings for Site D21**Site reference:** D21**Site size:** 0.9ha**Site name:** Land at Mayes Lane**Site capacity:** Schemes of 20 dwellings, 10 dwellings, and 2 dwellings are being considered

(10 dwelling and 20 dwelling scheme)

(2 dwelling scheme)

Key:	Significant negative	Significant positive	Neutral effect	
	Minor negative	Minor positive	Uncertain	
Air quality	<p>Site D21 is located at the confluence of two roads which each flow directly to the recently revoked Danbury Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), with Mayes Lane joining the A414 at the west of the revoked area and Copt Hill joining the A414 at the east of the revoked area. Northbound traffic from development at the site is therefore highly likely to contribute to traffic flows, or to stationary traffic at junctions. Whilst it is recognised that low growth at the site would have minimal effects, the principle of generating additional traffic at any scale in such close proximity to the recently revoked AQMA is considered negative. Therefore, overall minor long-term negative effects are anticipated.</p>			
Biodiversity	<p>The site is adjacent to the Danbury Common SSSI, giving rise to potential concerns about effects from development. Much of the Danbury Common SSSI is woodland, and potential impacts and sensitivities in this context include an increase in recreational pressures, changes to groundwater quality, increased disturbance, cat predation, noise, light and air pollution. However, the SSSI Impact Risk Zone identifies the development threshold above which there could be potential for harm as being 50 dwellings. None of the potential growth scenarios would deliver growth of this scale and it is therefore considered that risk of direct harm to the SSSI is relatively low despite its proximity to the site.</p> <p>The site lies within the National Habitat Network Enhancement Zone 2 and it is bounded by established hedgerows, the loss of which could have minor negative effects on local habitat networks. Higher growth on site could necessitate greater hedgerow removal to provide enhanced access. Opportunities to enhance biodiversity on-site could deliver minor long-term positive effects.</p>			
Climate change (mitigation and adaptation)	<p>In terms of climate change adaptation, the site is not located within an area of high fluvial flood risk, however, the site contains a small area of surface water flood risk under all growth scenarios, and further areas at risk also exist along Mayes Lane and Copt Hill. Development will need to consider the effective application of SUDs and measures to improve drainage on site.</p> <p>In terms of climate change mitigation, development under all schemes is likely to affect congestion on the local road network, and minor negative effects are anticipated in this respect (the significance of which</p>			

Site reference: D21

Site size: 0.9ha

Site name: Land at Mayes Lane

Site capacity: Schemes of 20 dwellings, 10 dwellings, and 2 dwellings are being considered

	<p>are likely to increase under the higher growth scenarios). However, the site is recognised for relatively good accessibility to the existing bus services supporting access to more sustainable transport modes, as well as day-to-day service and facility needs supporting a reduced need to travel. Despite this the likelihood is that development at the site will increase private car usage, particularly as residents are likely to continue trends in travelling further/ outside of the settlement to access a wider range of goods, services and employment opportunities.</p> <p>The likelihood is that development at the site will increase private car usage and development in this location would rely on technological advances to improve the sustainability performance of private vehicles. On this basis, minor long-term negative effects are anticipated overall in relation to climate change mitigation, and these effects are considered likely to be slightly more pronounced under the higher growth scheme.</p>
<p>Landscape</p>	<p>As a mixture of greenfield and brownfield land, the site occupies a prominent position at southern approach to the east of the village along Penny Royal Road / Mayes Lane. The landform of the site is highest in the north and falls away to the south as it tapers to a point at the junction of Mayes Lane and Copt Hill. This gives it notable potential for exposure to the south, though the existing planted screening prevents direct lines of site from Mayes Lane. The site's openness currently contributes to a rural fringe character and of the wider southern approach to the village, which could be lost or diluted through development of 10 or 20 dwellings. The low growth option of two dwellings could likely be more sympathetically incorporated into the site through design, layout and landscaping and effects would have potential to be neutral under a low growth scheme, though effects in relation to landscape are predicted to be minor negative under medium and high growth scenarios.</p>
<p>Historic environment</p>	<p>There are no listed buildings within the immediate vicinity of Site D21, though the site is within the Conservation Area and it is appropriate to identify potential for effects as a result. The Danbury Conservation Area is large and captures large areas of open space as well as a variety of character areas, typologies, and architectural styles. This provides an eclectic historic context for the site which presents both opportunities and challenges in terms of delivering development which responds sympathetically to its wider historic setting. As such the nature of potential effects under any of the growth scenarios is likely to be substantially informed by detailed matters of design, layout and materials and in this context effects are considered to be uncertain at this stage.</p>
<p>Land, soil, and water resources</p>	<p>The site forms part of an extensive private garden and would not result in the loss of productive agricultural land under any of the three growth scenarios. Minor negative effects are anticipated as a result of greenfield loss however.</p> <p>Under all schemes the site lies wholly within a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone for surface water. Polluted water run-off at the site has the potential for negative effects on both soil quality and water quality,</p>

Site reference: D21

Site size: 0.9ha

Site name: Land at Mayes Lane

Site capacity: Schemes of 20 dwellings, 10 dwellings, and 2 dwellings are being considered

	<p>and the appropriate consideration and application of SUDs to combat this should be required in any development at the site.</p> <p>The site does not appear to have any notable sensitivity in relation to water resources.</p>	
<p>Population and community</p>	<p>Development at the site could contribute to meeting identified local housing needs to support long-term positive effects in relation to housing objectives, though under the low growth scenario of 2 dwellings this contribution would be minimal. As a small site there are unlikely to be new community facilities delivered on-site and little opportunity to enhance connectivity with existing facilities. However, the site is well placed to access Danbury's existing range of community infrastructure assets. Residents will be well located to meet many of their day-to-day needs, but it is likely that they will continue trends in travelling further/ outside of the settlement to access a wider range of goods, services and employment opportunities. Positive effects are predicted in relation to population and community, though the site does not give rise to the potential for these effects to be significant.</p>	
<p>Health and wellbeing</p>	<p>The site is located within excellent walking distance (around 250m) to Danbury Medical Centre and will support new residents with good access to healthcare facilities in this respect. The site also benefits from good access to recreational areas (Danbury Common) and the surrounding countryside, including the network of PRoWs/ protected lanes.</p> <p>On this basis, the site is considered for its potential to support new resident health and wellbeing and long-term minor positive effects are anticipated overall in relation to this SEA objective.</p>	
<p>Transportation</p>	<p>Suitable access to the site cannot be identified at this stage, which has significant implications for the progression of this site. A speed survey assessment would be required to establish whether access could be achieved at Mayes Lane. The site's location offers potential to reduce car dependency and support sustainable transport options as it benefits from good access to bus services and key local services and facilities. This will help ensure that many day-to-day needs can be met via walking and cycling access. However, overall significant negative effects are anticipated in respect of a lack of suitable access to the site.</p>	

7. Developing the preferred approach

7.1 The DNP Steering Group's reasons for developing the preferred approach (Sites D5, D7, D11, D14, and D21) considering the alternatives assessment are identified below.

"The following criteria were developed and used to select sites for allocation in the DNP:

- *Be Sustainable, based on AECOM's November 2021 Report on the Partial Sites, and ongoing SEA work.*
- *Is within or adjacent to the Defined Settlement Boundary.*
- *Available for development and meets Chelmsford City Council's housing need where appropriate.*
- *Use previously developed and infill sites.*
- *Keep separation between settlements/parishes.*
- *Has satisfactory highway access.*
- *Has minimal impact on local highway network, having direct access from Priority 1 or Priority 2 Roads.*
- *Not cause harm to the setting of SSSIs, Heritage Assets, and Conservation Area.*
- *Not cause harm to the environment, including important views, designated open green spaces, valued landscapes, residential amenities, or habitats.*
- *Is well-connected to existing village amenities.*
- *Not at high risk of flooding.*
- *Over 500m from AQMA (recently revoked); and*
- *Excluded from Minerals consultation.*

Sites D9 and D20 were rejected on the following basis:

- *At Site D9, whilst Essex County Council Highways Authority have agreed a suitable access from Millfields, this is not a Priority 1 or Priority 2 road which hinders progression of the site as an opportunity for development to come forward over the plan period.*
- *At Site D20 highways evidence has limited development to a maximum of 5 dwellings and access will not be from a Priority 1 or Priority 2 road. There are also concerns over the potential impact on nearby heritage assets. Schemes to date indicate a small development of large homes which are less likely to serve local housing needs.*

Sites D5, D7, D11, D14, and D21 have been progressed as options which will combined meet the housing need for around 100 homes over the plan period and deliver new open spaces and accessibility improvements.

Site D11 is included as a small brownfield site that has access from a local road, where the impact from this very small development will be minimal,

incorporating mitigation to reduce the significance of effects identified through the SEA.

The largest site progressed is Site D7, where a scheme of 65 dwellings is proposed subject to significant mitigation as an integral part of any development (including a landscape buffer on all boundaries of the site and provision of new green infrastructure). The Steering Group have concluded that the benefit from this larger allocation in terms of the housing mix, affordable housing, provision of community facilities, and retention of the character of Danbury outweighs the harm caused by development.”

Part 2: What are the SEA findings at this stage?

8. Introduction (to Part 2)

8.1 The aim of Part 2 is to present appraisal findings and recommendations in relation to the current submission version of the DNP. This part of the report presents:

- An outline of the Plan contents, aims, and objectives.
- An appraisal of the Plan under the nine SEA theme headings.
- Consideration of cumulative effects; and
- The overall conclusions at this stage and recommendations for the next stage of plan-making.

DNP Policies

8.2 The DNP proposes 17 policies including five site specific policies to guide future development in the neighbourhood area, the policy list is presented in **Table 8.1**.

Table 8.1: DNP policies

Policy reference	Policy name
DNP1	Housing Site Allocations
Site Specific Policy A	Land at Sand Pit Field, East of Little Fields
Site Specific Policy B	Land at Tyndales Farm West
Site Specific Policy C	Ex Play Area, South of Jubilee Rise
Site Specific Policy D	Danecroft, Woodhill Road
Site Specific Policy E	Land at Mayes Lane/ Copt Hill
DNP2	Housing type, mix, and tenure
DNP3	Sustainable Housing Design
DNP4	Built Form
DNP5	Street Scene
DNP6	Environment and Biodiversity
DNP7	Wildlife Corridors
DNP8	Open Spaces
DNP9	Recreational Pressure on Sites of Special Scientific Interest
DNP10	Light Pollution and Night Skies
DNP11	Trees and Hedges
DNP12	Danbury Key Views Identified
DNP13	Connection to Sustainable Transport and Village Amenities

Policy reference

Policy name

Policy reference	Policy name
DNP14	Provision of Recreational Facilities
DNP15	Proposals for new or improved amenities
DNP16	New Employment Development
DNP17	Protected Lanes

Methodology

- 8.3 The assessment identifies and evaluates 'likely significant effects' on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability objectives identified through scoping (see **Table 3.1**) as a methodological framework.
- 8.4 Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the strategic nature of the policies under consideration and understanding of the baseline (now and in the future under a 'no plan' scenario) that is inevitably limited. Given uncertainties there is a need to make assumptions, e.g., in relation to plan implementation and aspects of the baseline that might be impacted. Assumptions are made cautiously and explained within the text (with the aim of striking a balance between comprehensiveness and conciseness). In many instances, given reasonable assumptions, it is not possible to predict 'significant effects', but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) of the draft plan in more general terms.
- 8.5 Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted taking account of the criteria presented within Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of effects as far as possible. Cumulative effects are also considered, i.e., the potential for the Neighbourhood Plan to impact an aspect of the baseline when implemented alongside other plans, programmes, and projects. These effect 'characteristics' are described within the assessment as appropriate.

9. Appraisal of the DNP

Plan contents, aims, and objectives

- 9.1 Danbury is a large village along the route of the A414. The A414 connects Danbury with Chelmsford in the west and Maldon in the east. This road also connects with the A12 in the west, providing access north east to Colchester and south west into London. Beyond Maldon, Danbury connects well with the Dengie Peninsula.
- 9.2 The village is set within wooded hills and surrounded by countryside providing a valued and sensitive local landscape. There are a range of heritage assets and archaeological deposits in the village, which is centred around the historic hill fort, housing the Church of St. John the Baptist at its summit. Views are far reaching and uninterrupted from this hilltop, extending across the Chelmer Valley in the north/ north-west, the Blackwater Estuary in the east, and the countryside and extensive woodland across the south. This central area, including its extensive green and open spaces, form the Danbury Conservation Area. Much of the landscape in the west of the settlement forms (historic) Registered Parks and Gardens. Nationally designated biodiversity sites also surround the settlement in the north and south.
- 9.3 Whilst a highly sensitive settlement area, it provides residents with access to a good range of services, facilities, and local employment opportunities. The highway network provides good connections with surrounding areas; however, congestion and poor air quality are known issues associated with the A414.
- 9.4 The DNP seeks to identify the community's aspirations for Danbury over the period to 2036. It recognises that Danbury is entering a period of growth, with 100 new homes anticipated by the Chelmsford Local Plan (CLP) over this period. Alongside planning policies to guide this future development in the neighbourhood area, the DNP also seeks to identify community projects where positive community actions and improvements can be made and funded from the development that is occurring (e.g., through the Community Infrastructure Levy).
- 9.5 The DNP proposes development across 5 allocation sites within the DNP1: Housing Site Allocations:
 - DNP1 Site Specific Policy A: Sandpit Field (10 homes);
 - DNP1 Site Specific Policy B: Land at Tyndales Farm West (65 homes);
 - DNP1 Site Specific Policy C: Land at Jubilee Rise (2 homes);
 - DNP1 Site Specific Policy D: Danecroft, Woodhill Road (14 homes); and
 - DNP1 Site Specific Policy E: Land off Mayes Lane (2 homes).
- 9.6 These sites form the spatial strategy to largely meet the identified need for 100 new homes (within a 10% flexibility bracket as agreed with Chelmsford City Council). Each allocated site is supported by a site-specific policy. Wider housing policies seek to influence the range of housing types, tenures, and sizes being delivered at allocation sites, as well as housing design. Policy DNP16: New Employment Development also provides support for further small-

scale business development or further development within designated employment areas, though no site-specific allocations are made. All new development is expected to be supported by high speed and reliable mobile and broadband connections recognising the increase in homeworking over recent years.

- 9.7 Natural environment policies are proposed, which notably support biodiversity net gains, conserve, and enhance identified wildlife corridors, and provide detailed guidance for any development of new open spaces. Policy DNP9 has been introduced prior to submission which provides detailed policy mitigation for recreational pressure on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Protection is also provided for key views, trees, and hedges in the neighbourhood area, and the policy framework seeks to conserve dark skies, with detailed guidance relating to external lighting in both Policy DNP10: Light Pollution and Night Skies and the site-specific allocation policies.
- 9.8 The policy framework places an emphasis on high-quality design and provides the supporting Danbury Design Guide. This includes design that minimises impacts in relation to sensitive heritage settings, with four heritage specific policies.
- 9.9 Further proposed policies seek to retain and enhance community infrastructure, including amenities and the network of open spaces. Policy DNP13: Connection to sustainable transport and village amenities is proposed to ensure development integrates and connects well with existing services and facilities, and sustainable transport options.

Appraisal of the DNP

Air Quality

- 9.10 The A414 at the heart of the village was a declared Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) until recently when it was revoked due to continued improvements in air quality. Whilst negative effects could be anticipated in relation to air quality because of growth in the neighbourhood area, it is recognised that this level of growth is set by the CLP rather than the DNP. Coordinating and planning for this level of growth through the DNP will not lead to negative effects, especially as the DNP does not propose exceeding the target for 100 new homes.
- 9.11 Given resident dependence upon the A414 as the main route through the settlement, there is no identified opportunity to avoid impacts through an appropriate spatial strategy. The main effects in relation to this SEA theme therefore relate to opportunities to reduce the need to travel by private car. In this respect the Plan seeks to ensure that development connects well with existing services, facilities, and sustainable transport options, to provide residents with active travel opportunities, or sustainable transport options as far as they are available.
- 9.12 Considering the above, implementation of the DNP is not considered likely to lead to any significant deviations from the baseline, and broadly **neutral effects** are concluded as most likely.

Biodiversity

- 9.13 Danbury is located within the established 'zone of influence' (Zol) of the Blackwater Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site. Similarly, Danbury also lies within a 10km zone of influence of the Crouch and Roach Estuaries SPA, Ramsar site and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) near South Woodham Ferrers. These European designated sites are particularly sensitive to increased visitor pressure, which may be caused by new residential development within the zone of influence.
- 9.14 An Essex-wide Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) has been prepared and supported by Chelmsford City Council which seeks to address impacts arising for these designated sites along the Essex coast. The RAMS identifies the types of mitigation that will be required in development in the Zol. In Danbury, this equates to a financial contribution from any new development which results in a net increase in homes (developers can also agree bespoke mitigation with Natural England and Chelmsford City Council). The DNP notes this requirement for development.
- 9.15 More locally, the proposed allocation sites all lie within the Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) of the SSSIs surrounding the settlement, however, only the site under DNP1 Site Specific Policy B is of a scale that will trigger a requirement to consult with Natural England. The site is recognised in the Living England Habitat Map⁹ as acid, calcareous, neutral grassland, but it does not connect with the National Habitat Network.¹⁰ Consultation with Natural England through Regulation 14 consultation has introduced the new Policy DNP9 which provides mitigation for recreational pressures at SSSIs. In line with this policy, development applications are expected to assess the potential impacts of increased recreational pressures on SSSIs and provide an appropriate mitigation strategy.
- 9.16 DNP1 Site Specific Policy B has additional criteria that should be met relating to the theme of biodiversity:
- Provision of green infrastructure linking hedgerows and trees;
 - Strengthening of existing roadside hedgerows and hedgerow trees;
 - Habitat enhancements;
 - Natural hedging on dwelling boundaries to allow free flow for wildlife corridors; and
 - Space that is not developed on will be allocated for tree planting, biodiversity net gain, outdoor activities or allotments.
- 9.17 The site under DNP1 Site Specific Policy D is identified as containing the BAP Priority Habitat 'Traditional Orchards' and lies within 100m of Danbury Common SSSI. Any planning application at this site is expected to consult with Natural England (given its proximity to the SSSI). The site allocation policy identifies the site as a "*formerly biodiverse area*" thus recognising a potential for habitat restoration. The policy also seeks on-site replacement of any trees lost in development and the facilitation of wildlife movements. Whilst minor negative effects could arise in the short-term (e.g., during construction phases), in the

⁹ DEFRA's [Magic Map application](#)

¹⁰ Ibid.

longer-term, habitat restoration, replacement, and net gain could deliver positive effects overall.

9.18 DNP1 Site Specific Policy A has additional criteria that should be met for the theme of biodiversity:

- Hedgerows and trees on site and in the site margins should be retained and supplemented with native species.

9.19 DNP1 Site Specific Policy C has additional criteria that should be met for the theme of biodiversity:

- Protection for existing trees and hedges within the site.
- Existing planting of boundaries to be retained once an access point has been established.

9.20 DNP1 Site Specific Policy E has additional criteria that should be met for the theme of biodiversity:

- Hedging affected by the new access point must be replaced with suitable native planting on the boundary.

9.21 Additional policies relating to the natural environment also provide protection for existing habitats, alongside a premise for net gain, **broadly neutral effects** are considered most likely (no significant deviation from baseline conditions are expected).

Climate change (mitigation and adaptation)

9.22 Chelmsford City Council declared a 'Climate and Ecology Emergency' in 2019 pledging to reduce its own carbon emissions to net zero by 2030. Notable actions being promoted by the council to achieve this aspiration include promoting more sustainable forms of development, promoting active travel, and protecting and planting new woodland.

9.23 Policy DNP3: Sustainable Housing Design is the main policy providing development guidance relating to this theme. Notably the policy seeks high levels of energy efficiency (targeting zero carbon emissions), sustainable design and construction, innovative approaches, and renewables. Furthermore, the spatial strategy and policies seek to ensure that development integrates and connects well with existing services and facilities, and sustainable transport options. Additional policy provisions also require that development delivers biodiversity net gains and where applicable guides the development of new open spaces.

9.24 In relation to flood risk, none of the options lie within a fluvial flood risk zone and only the larger site allocation under (Policy DNP1 Site Specific Policy B) is affected by surface water flood risk. A small area of predominantly low surface water food risk intersects this same site, but the provisions of the site allocation policy, which requires suitable flood risk management and sustainable drainage systems, should ensure negative effects are avoided or minimised.

9.25 Overall, by recognising that the level of growth in Danbury has been set by the CLP, the increase in the built footprint of the neighbourhood area and absolute emissions are not considered a consequence of the DNP. Rather the DNP seeks to influence per capita emissions through high quality and efficient new

development that is well connected to the settlement's offer. Furthermore, there are no significant concerns in relation to flood risk. On this basis, no significant deviations from the baseline are anticipated, and broadly **neutral effects** are concluded.

Landscape

9.26 As discussed previously, the quality and character of the local landscape, the topography, and valued long-distance views are key constraints for growth in Danbury. The village began as scattered hamlets and the open fields and common land between them continues to provide green spaces which are integral to character. Ponds also remain a landscape feature and legacy of the local brick making industry.

9.27 The allocation of sites under Policy DNP1 Site Specific Policies C, D and E ensures the use of all available brownfield land (with the only other brownfield site identified being promoted for continued employment development as part of an existing employment area).

9.28 Policy DNP1 Site Specific Policy A has additional criteria that should be met for the theme of landscape:

- Hedgerows and trees on the site and its margins should be retained and supplemented with native species to ensure the residents are buffered from road noise and pollution and to reduce the visual impact of the development.

9.29 Policy DNP1 Site Specific Policy B has additional criteria that should be met for the theme of landscape:

- A strong landscape buffer is required to provide a new settlement edge on both the open eastern boundary immediately west of the PRow and the southern boundary of the site, with provision of multifunctional green infrastructure linking hedgerows and trees. This is also required on the northern boundary alongside the A414. On the north-western edge of the site, the rapid establishment of a landscape buffer is required to provide filtered views and soften the development edge. To reduce the impact on residents' views on the western edge of the site the existing landscape buffer should be reinforced by maximising the introduction of characteristic landscape, visual and habitat enhancements.
- Street lighting should be kept to a minimum consistent with road and pedestrian safety and be at a low height and with low light levels, as must other external lighting on the development; and
- Land within the site but beyond the developed area is to be designated as open space. This open space will be allocated for tree planting, biodiversity net gain, outdoor activities, or allotments.

9.30 Policy DNP1 Site Specific Policy D has additional criteria that should be met for the theme of landscape:

- Existing trees are to be protected or replaced with trees of the same value (or better) elsewhere onsite.

9.31 Policy DNP1 Site Specific Policy E has additional criteria that should be met for the theme of landscape:

- Existing natural screen between the site and house, Mayesfield, should be retained to protect the spacious character and landscape setting of the existing building; and
- Existing trees are to protected or replaced with trees of the same value (or better) elsewhere onsite.

9.32 The main impacts arising in relation to the local landscape are thought likely to relate predominantly to the sites under Policy DNP1 Site Specific Policies A and B, where most development is directed (around 75 homes across both sites). The sites lie in an area of lower topography, falling from the hilltop found centrally in the settlement area. Development will expand the settlement edge in the east, though if in-keeping with local design and building heights there is good opportunities to integrate with the existing settlement form.

9.33 Notably, the policy framework places much emphasis on high-quality design in development, including with the supporting Danbury Design Guide. Detailed guidance is provided in relation to the built form (Policy DNP4), the street scene (Policy DNP5), green infrastructure (Policies DNP6, 7, 8, and 11), and protecting night skies (Policy DNP10). Also, of note, the DNP identifies and provides protection for identified key views which contribute to the character of the settlement as a hilltop village (Policy DNP12).

9.34 Whilst the spatial strategy avoids significant impacts arising, and the policy framework provides good mitigation to reduce the impacts of development and retain key landscape features which contribute to landscape character, the greenfield expansion in the east of the settlement particularly is considered likely to lead to **residual negative effects**, but these **will not be significant**.

Historic environment

9.35 As discussed previously, Danbury has a rich heritage that is still evident in its form and function today. There are numerous designated and non-designated assets, including archaeology and the conservation area, which are sensitive to new development. Danbury's heritage is also steeped in the landscape, with landscape features such as ponds identifying the legacy of the brick making industry in Danbury.

9.36 The proposed spatial strategy has implications for the historic environment. Notably:

- The site under Policy DNP1 Site Specific Policy E lies within the designated conservation area.
- The site under Policy DNP1 Site Specific Policy D lies adjacent to the conservation area, situated opposite two Grade II Listed Buildings (The Poplars, and the Cricketers Public House) and in proximity of the scheduled Danbury Camp Hillfort to the north.
- The site under Policy DNP1 Site Specific Policy A lies within the setting of another Grade II Listed Building (Garlands Farm).

9.37 The site allocations policies identify the constraints alongside proposed mitigation. Notably at the site allocated under Policy DNP1 Site Specific Policy D, development is to be avoided in the vicinity of the nearby Listed Buildings

and edge of the conservation area. Policy DNP1 Site Specific Policy D has additional criteria that should be met for the theme of historic environment:

- Consultation is required with Historic England early in the master-planning stage as it falls adjacent to the conservation area and is close to listed buildings.

9.38 Whilst located within the conservation area, the site under Policy DNP1 Site Specific Policy E only proposes two new 'low-level' homes. Policy DNP1 Site Specific Policy E includes additional criteria that should be met for the theme of historic environment:

- The design and materials should be sympathetic to the host house Mayefield; and
- Existing natural screen between the site and house, Mayesfield, should be retained to protect the spacious character of the existing building.

9.39 It is noted that Historic England objected to the allocation of Site E through Regulation 14 consultation. This related to the contribution of the site to the garden setting of an Arts and Crafts style house which is considered to contribute positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Continued consultation with Historic England since this time has sought to improve mitigation provided through the site specific policy, which now includes the provision of alternative access that does not impact upon hedgerows. Historic England have since withdrawn their objection.

9.40 The land under Policy DNP1 Site Specific Policy A lies on slightly higher ground in sight of Garlands Farm where development is required to avoid detracting from the historic curtilage and buildings.

9.41 Additionally, the Danbury Design Guide has sought to identify key features that contribute to historic character. Supporting text in the Plan also provides a list of locally identified and valued non-designated heritage assets which have been suggested to Chelmsford City Council for inclusion on the Local List. Policy DNP17 also seeks to avoid development affecting the historic character and setting of Protected Lanes.

9.42 Whilst the proposed policy framework seeks to minimise the impacts of the spatial strategy in relation to the historic environment, there remains a potential for residual negative effects, but these are not likely to be significant. With most growth directed to an area of less sensitivity; it is judged that significant effects will be avoided.

Land, soil, and water resources

9.43 The allocation of land under Policy DNP1 Site Specific Policies C, D and E ensures the use of all available brownfield land (with the only other brownfield site identified being promoted for continued employment development as part of an existing employment area) and the spatial strategy performs well in this respect.

9.44 Further greenfield development is proposed, and both sites under Policy DNP1 Site Specific Policies A and B could reasonably support arable uses and are thought to contain high-quality soils (best and most versatile agricultural land). On this basis, the potential for permanent negative effects is identified. Policy

DNP1 Site Specific Policy B has additional criteria that should be met for the theme of land, soil, and water resources:

- Consultation is required with ECC Minerals and Waste Planning Authority early in the master-planning stage as the very northern portion of the site is within the 250m boundary of Royal Oak Quarry.

9.45 With the level of growth already planned for in Danbury through the CLP, no significant effects are anticipated in relation to water resources. Furthermore, the spatial strategy is not deemed likely to affect the water quality, particularly when considering the spatial strategy which avoids development near waterbodies, and the promoted application of sustainable drainage systems (within the site allocation policies).

9.46 Overall, despite inevitable **permanent negative effects** arising from greenfield development and loss of high-quality agricultural land, the **residual effects are not likely to be significant** and the spatial strategy and plan policies perform well in relation to this theme, particularly through avoidance measures.

Population and community

9.47 By identifying suitable land to deliver an additional around 100 homes and meeting the forecasted needs of the population over the plan period, long-term positive effects are anticipated. These effects are enhanced by the additional policy provisions which seek to ensure development delivers a range of housing types, tenures, and sizes (Policy DNP2). Significant emphasis is also placed on housing design through the policy framework (e.g., Policy DNP3) and supporting Danbury Design Guide. High sustainability standards are sought in connected homes, which integrate with the existing settlement and provide for a high standard of living.

9.48 Further of note, the DNP outlines community projects where positive community actions and improvements can be made and funded from the development that is occurring (e.g., through the Community Infrastructure Levy). The projects highlight the potential benefits of development for existing and future residents, as well as local community actions that support community cohesion.

9.49 Policy DNP1 Site Specific Policy A has additional criteria that should be met for the theme of population and community:

- Should be low rise, single storey 1 or 2 bedroom almshouses, which will be 100% affordable housing for people of Danbury, suitable for people with physical disabilities and older people as well as young people of the village. Almshouses are provided in perpetuity and are not able to be sold under right to buy legislation. Almshouses are allocated under specific criteria, the main one being that residents must have been born in Danbury or have lived in the village for 10 years. They are let under a Licence to Occupy and at affordable rents.

9.50 Policy DNP1 Site Specific Policy B has additional criteria that should be met for the theme of population and community:

- The provision of pedestrian and cycle connections;

- Contributions to improving the road network, educational capacity, library facilities, and healthcare provisions; and
 - The delivery of new open space.
- 9.51 Policy DNP1 Site Specific Policy D has additional criteria that should be met for the theme of population and community:
- New houses will be maximum 2 storeys high to match the surrounding street scene and in consideration of the site's slope.
- 9.52 On this basis, **significant long-term positive effects** are considered likely overall.

Health and wellbeing

- 9.53 Most residents of the neighbourhood area report generally good health, there are low levels of deprivation, and access is provided to multiple open and natural green spaces within the settlement as well as the surrounding countryside. Future residents will be supported by local services, facilities, and open space (with no loss of designated open space anticipated through development) and continued positive health outcomes are considered likely in this respect.
- 9.54 The spatial strategy places some development in the vicinity of the A414, where there are known air quality issues, however, the policy emphasis on planting and landscaping are likely to minimise any impacts arising.
- 9.55 Policy DNP1 Site Specific Policy A has additional criteria that should be met for the theme of health and wellbeing:
- Residents should have access to a private or communal garden space for health and wellbeing.
- 9.56 Policy DNP1 Site Specific Policy B has additional criteria that should be met for the theme of health and wellbeing:
- Provision of pedestrian and cycle connections;
 - Financial contributions towards appropriate improvements to the road network, educational capacity, library facilities, and healthcare provision; and
 - A landscape buffer immediately west of the existing public right of way (Public footpath 38).
- 9.57 On this basis, no significant deviations from the baseline are considered likely, and broadly **neutral effects** are concluded.

Transportation

- 9.58 No railway serves Danbury directly, largely due to landscape constraints and topography. The steep hills in the village also restrict active travel opportunities to some degree. Despite this, active travel routes are generally scenic, and the village is supported by a Park and Ride providing direct connections with Chelmsford City Centre and bus and railway stations. All proposed site allocations connect well with the settlement area, and most growth is directed east with good connections to the A414.

- 9.59 Congestion along the A414 and 'rat-running' through rural lanes has been highlighted as a key concern for existing residents through community consultation. This recognises the wider growth, particularly that planned within Maldon District which is likely to impact capacity on the A414. Notably in response, the DNP identifies interventions that will be necessary to accommodate the proposed growth, including a new junction from the A414 with an associated diversion of Cherry Garden Lane east into the proposed access road, and the provision of bus stops and associated crossing points on the A414 (Policy DNP1 Site Specific Policy B).
- 9.60 A lack of parking has also been highlighted as a key concern for existing residents through community consultation to date. There is limited parking in the village centre, and on-street parking notably reduces pedestrian safety. Design policy seeks on-plot parking in new development, alongside integrated cycle parking, and community projects seek to improve pedestrian safety.
- 9.61 With the level of growth already set by the CLP, the DNP seeks to distribute this growth to accessible locations, supported by the settlement's offer. Specific interventions are identified to accommodate the growth planned for, alongside identified aspirations to improve parking and pedestrian safety. On this basis, no significant deviations from the baseline are considered likely, and broadly **neutral effects** are concluded.

Cumulative effects

- 9.62 Alongside the provisions of the CLP and NPPF, the DNP seeks to support housing delivery in line with forecasted needs over the Plan period. **Positive cumulative effects** are anticipated in this respect.

10. Conclusions and recommendations

- 10.1 The appraisal considers that significant positive effects are likely to arise in implementation of the DNP in relation to the SEA theme of population and communities. This reflects the main plan objective to coordinate the anticipated future growth in the neighbourhood area and maximise the potential benefits it can bring for both existing and future residents. This includes by delivering development that targets locally identified housing needs and the delivery of new open space in development.
- 10.2 Residual neutral effects are concluded in relation to many of the SEA themes, reflecting the Plan's avoidance and mitigation measures which should ensure that new development integrates without causing significant deviations from the baseline situation.
- 10.3 Negative effects are predicted in relation to the SEA theme of historic environment, but these effects are not considered likely to be significant. Notably, the previous objection from Historic England has since been withdrawn based on updated policy mitigation.
- 10.4 Negative effects are also predicted in relation to the SEA themes of landscape, and land, soil, and water resources. This predominantly reflects greenfield development, resulting in the permanent loss of high-quality agricultural land (likely best and most versatile). However, once mitigation is considered, residual negative effects are not likely to be of significance.

Part 3: What are the next steps?

11. Next steps and monitoring

11.1 This part of the report explains the next steps that will be taken as part of plan-making and SEA.

Plan finalisation

11.2 Following submission, the plan and supporting evidence (including this SEA) will be published for further (Regulation 16) consultation, and then subjected to Independent Examination. At Independent Examination, the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with the Local Plan.

11.3 If the examination leads to a favourable outcome, the Neighbourhood Plan will then be subject to a referendum, organised by Chelmsford City Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be 'made'. Once 'made', the DNP will become part of the Development Plan for Chelmsford, covering the defined neighbourhood area.

Monitoring

11.4 The SEA regulations require 'measures envisaged concerning monitoring' to be outlined in this report. This refers to the monitoring of likely significant effects of the Neighbourhood Plan to identify any unforeseen effects early and take remedial action as appropriate.

11.5 It is anticipated that monitoring of effects of the Neighbourhood Plan will be undertaken by Chelmsford City Council as part of the process of preparing its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). No significant negative effects are considered likely in the implementation of the DNP that would warrant more stringent monitoring over and above that already undertaken by the City Council.

Appendices

Appendix A Regulatory requirements

As discussed in **Chapter 1**, Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans Regulations 2004 (the Regulations) explains the information that must be contained in the Environmental Report; however, interpretation of Schedule 2 is not straightforward. **Table AA.1** overleaf links the structure of this report to an interpretation of Schedule 2 requirements, whilst **Table AA.2** explains this interpretation. **Table AA.3** identifies how and where within the Environmental Report the regulatory requirements have/ will be met.

Table AA.1: Questions answered by this Environmental Report, in-line with an interpretation of regulatory requirements

		Questions answered	As per regulations... the Environmental Report must include...
Introduction	What's the plan seeking to achieve?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes
	What's the SEA scope?	What's the sustainability 'context'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
		What's the sustainability 'baseline'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
		What are the key issues and objectives that should be a focus?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e. provide a 'framework' for) assessment
Part 1	What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (and thus an explanation of the 'reasonableness' of the approach) The likely significant effects associated with alternatives Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives assessment / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan
Part 2	What are the SEA findings at this current stage?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan
Part 3	What happens next?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A description of the monitoring measures envisaged

Table AA.2: Questions answered by this Environmental Report, in-line with regulatory requirements

<u>Schedule 2</u>	<u>Interpretation of Schedule 2</u>	
<i>The report must include...</i>	<i>The report must include...</i>	
(a) an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	i.e. answer - <i>What's the plan seeking to achieve?</i>
(b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan	Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'context'?</i>
(c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;		
(d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;	The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'baseline'?</i>
(e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan'	
(f) the likely significant effects on the environment including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors;	The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	
(g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan;	Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance	i.e. answer - <i>What are the key issues & objectives?</i>
(h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information	Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of appraisal	
(i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring.	An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (i.e. an explanation of the 'reasonableness of the approach)	i.e. answer - <i>What has Plan-making / SA involved up to this point?</i> [Part 1 of the Report]
	The likely significant effects associated with alternatives, including on issues such as... ... and an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of the alternatives considered / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan.	
	The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan	i.e. answer - <i>What are the assessment findings at this current stage?</i> [Part 2 of the Report]
	The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan	
	A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring	i.e. answer - <i>What happens next?</i> [Part 3 of the Report]

Table AA.3: ‘Checklist’ of how (throughout the SA process) and where (within this report) regulatory requirements have been, are and will be met.

Regulatory requirement	Discussion of how requirement is met
Schedule 2 of the regulations lists the information to be provided within the SA Report	
1. An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	Chapter 2 (‘What is the plan seeking to achieve’) presents this information.
2. The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	These matters have been considered in detail through scoping work, which has involved dedicated consultation on a Scoping Report. The ‘SEA framework’ – the outcome of scoping – is presented within Chapter 3 (‘What is the scope of the SEA?’).
3. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	
4. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.;	
5. The environmental protection, objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental, considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	The SEA framework is presented within Chapter 3 (‘What is the scope of the SEA’). Also, the SEA Scoping Report presents key messages from the context review. With regards to explaining “ <i>how...considerations have been taken into account</i> ”, Chapter 7 explains the Steering Group’s ‘reasons for supporting the preferred approach’, i.e., explains how/ why the preferred approach is justified in light of alternatives appraisal.
6. The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. (Footnote: These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects);	Chapter 6 presents alternatives appraisal findings (in relation to housing growth, which is a ‘stand-out’ plan policy area). Chapters 9 presents an appraisal of the plan. With regards to assessment methodology, Chapter 8 explains the role of the SEA framework/scope, and the need to consider the potential for various effect characteristics/ dimensions, e.g., timescale.
7. The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;	The assessment highlights certain tensions between competing objectives, which might potentially be actioned by the Examiner, when finalising the plan. Specific recommendations are also made in Chapter 10.
8. An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	Chapters 4 and 5 deal with ‘Reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with’, in that there is an explanation of the reasons for focusing on particular issues and options. Also, Chapter 7 explains the Parish Council’s ‘reasons for selecting the preferred option’ (in-light of alternatives assessment).

Regulatory requirement	Discussion of how requirement is met
9. Description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Art. 10;	Chapter 11 presents measures envisaged concerning monitoring.
10. A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings	The NTS is provided at the beginning of this Environmental Report.
The SA Report must be published alongside the Draft Plan, in accordance with the following regulations	
authorities with environmental responsibility and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the Draft Plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Art. 6.1, 6.2)	At the current time, this Environmental Report is published alongside the Regulation 16 submission version of the DNP, with a view to informing consultation.
The SA must be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.	
The environmental report prepared pursuant to Article 5, the opinions expressed pursuant to Article 6 and the results of any transboundary consultations entered into pursuant to Article 7 shall be taken into account during the preparation of the plan or programme and before its adoption or submission to the legislative procedure.	Assessment findings presented within this Environmental Report, and consultation responses received, have been, and will continue to be, fed back to the Steering Group and have informed plan finalisation.

Appendix B Scoping information

As detailed in **Chapter 3** of the main report, this appendix provides the scoping information. Scoping consultation was undertaken during the period Friday 11th October 2019 to Friday 15th November 2019 and the responses received from the statutory consultees are provided in **Table AB.1**. No response was received from Chelmsford City Council, who were also consulted on the scoping report.

Following scoping responses, this appendix goes on to present the detailed scoping information and established key issues under each SEA topic, alongside the detailed SEA framework, as broadly agreed in 2019.

Scoping consultation

Table AB.1 Scoping consultation responses

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
Natural England	
Jonathan Bustard, Casework Manager, West Anglia	
Natural England is not able to fully assess the potential impacts of this proposal on statutory nature conservation sites or protected landscapes or, provide detailed advice on the neighbourhood plan. If you consider there are significant risks to statutory nature conservation sites or protected landscapes, please set out the specific areas on which you require advice.	Noted, with thanks.
The lack of detailed advice from Natural England does not imply that there are no impacts on the natural environment. It is for the local planning authority to determine whether or not the proposal is consistent with national and local environmental policies. Other bodies and individuals may provide information and advice on the environmental value of this site and the impacts of the proposal on the natural environment to assist the decision-making process.	Noted, with thanks.
Generic advice is provided.	Noted, with thanks.
The Environment Agency,	
Natalie Kermath, Planning Advisor	
Thank you for consulting us on your Neighbourhood Plan. We are a statutory consultee in the planning process providing advice to Local Authorities and developers on strategic plans.	Noted, with thanks.
We recommend an objective is included to protect and enhance the environment. Indicators should relate to the environmental constraints in your local area. This will include flood risk, water quality, and biodiversity.	The drafted SEA framework has sought to include a number of objectives which all seek to protect and enhance the environment. The drafted indicators include flood risk, water quality and biodiversity.
We also recommend your SA takes account of relevant policies, plans and strategies including	The plans and programmes review includes this information where available.

Consultation response

How the response was considered and addressed

your local Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, flood risk strategies

Historic England

Edward James, Historic Places Advisor, East of England

Thank you for your email requesting a scoping/screening opinion for the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Noted, with thanks.

We would refer you to the guidance in Historic England Advice Note 8: *Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment*, which can be found here:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/> This advice sets out the historic environment factors which need to be considered during the Strategic Environmental Assessment or Sustainability Appraisal process, and our recommendations for information you should include.

We would also refer you to our Good Practice Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets, which sets out our recommended best practice for assessing the significance of heritage assets, the contribution of their setting to that significance, and the potential effects of any development on that significance. It also includes consideration of the need to avoid, or where this is not possible, minimise any harm through appropriate mitigation.

Noted, with thanks.

We are pleased to note the inclusion of the reference to below ground archaeological potential, as derived from a review of the Heritage Gateway, but recommend that the SEA would be strengthened by using a more up-to-date source of information that will be available from the Essex County Council Historic Environment Record. This record should be used to undertake an assessment of archaeological potential, with a view to identifying any particular areas of sensitivity or significance, and again establishing the need for avoiding or mitigating the effects of any development on that significance.

Noted, with thanks. Information has been accessed where available.

With reference to NPPF paragraphs 127 and 192, c), we would suggest that an additional question is considered under the SA Objectives section on page 34: Will the proposal... "help to make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness, using design that is sympathetic to local character and history, and maintaining or enhancing Danbury's sense of place?"

Noted, with thanks. This question has been added to the decision-aiding questions supporting the SA objective relating to the historic environment.

Air quality

Policy context

Table AB.2 (below) presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the DNP SEA.

Table AB.2 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to air quality

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2023
Air quality strategy: framework for local authority delivery	2023
Chelmsford City Council 2023 Air Quality Annual Status Report	2023
The Clean Air Strategy	2019
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018
UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations	2017
Greener and Safer Chelmsford: Air Quality Strategy	2022
Chelmsford City Council Air Quality Monitoring Plan	2022
Chelmsford Local Plan (2013 to 2036)	2020
Chelmsford Borough Council Air Quality Action Plan Army and Navy AQMA	2008

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The DNP will need to have regard to the NPPF, which predominantly seeks early planning to reduce / mitigate air quality impacts in development and to take advantage of opportunities to improve air quality. Measures to improve air quality include traffic and travel management and green infrastructure provision. Strategic development is expected to be focused on locations that have or will be provided with high levels of accessibility; supporting both a reduced need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. Smaller-scale development should consider the potential for cumulative effects in relation to air quality.
- To improve air quality across the UK, national strategies have in the last few decades focused on regulatory frameworks, investment by industry in cleaner processes, and a shift in the fuel mix towards cleaner forms of energy (largely at point sources). Whilst there are dedicated strategies to reducing roadside emissions (as a significant source of nitrogen dioxide emissions), recent objectives outlined in the Clean Air Strategy seek to recognise wider sources (including smaller contributors and diffuse sources) that contribute to poor air quality.
- Chelmsford City Council is required to monitor air quality across the borough under Section 82 of the Environment Act (1995), report regularly to Defra and act where nationally set levels are likely to be exceeded. Monitoring is undertaken to assess levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), sulphur dioxide, ozone, benzene and particulates. Where exceedances exist, areas are declared as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and local authorities are required to produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) to improve air quality in the area.

- In this context, Chelmsford City Council published its most recent Annual Status Report (ASR) in September 2021, and an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) has been published for the AQMA at the Army and Navy Roundabout. The Air Quality Strategy sets out the policies and actions being taken by Chelmsford City Council to improve air quality, how monitoring of air quality is undertaken, and outlines targets to be achieved across the strategy period. This is reiterated through the Air Quality Monitoring Report.
- The following policies in the Chelmsford Local Plan, adopted in May 2020 and covering the period 2013 to 2036, relate to the air quality SEA topic:
 - Policy DM30 – Contamination and Pollution

Baseline summary

The 2023 ASR identifies that the main source of pollution in the area is road traffic emissions from major roads. Specifically, nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) from vehicle emissions is the primary pollutant identified from traffic emissions. Other pollutants, such as particulates, have been previously assessed – and monitoring also occurs for PM_{2.5}; this pollutant has been monitored since 2019. No exceedances in annual air quality objectives have been reported, and it is noted that there is a steady trend of improvement in measured air quality in the Chelmsford City Council area.

There was previously one AQMA within the neighbourhood area, Maldon Road, Danbury AQMA, which was designated in 2018 for exceedances in the annual mean concentration of NO₂. The Maldon Road, Danbury AQMA incorporated the stretch of road between Gay Bowers Lane and Danbury village green and adjacent properties. It has recently been revoked.

In addition to the Maldon Road, Danbury AQMA, there is only one other AQMA within Chelmsford, which is the Chelmsford Army and Navy AQMA, declared in 2012 due to its exceedances in annual mean concentrations of NO₂. However, this AQMA is not situated near the neighbourhood area.

Future baseline

New housing and employment provision in the parish and the surrounding area has the potential to negatively impact air quality through increasing traffic flows and associated pollutants, including NO₂, particularly along the main routes through the neighbourhood area. More specifically, the recently revoked AQMA on Maldon Road, Danbury, is an area of high sensitivity to increased traffic flows and consequent pollution.

New development may also present opportunities to place increased focus on sustainable means of transport, particularly development in more sustainable locations such as near transport hubs or links. New development in Danbury and in the wider Chelmsford area, may provide opportunities to enhance the sustainable transport offer, both through new or improved access to existing public transport hubs and / or active travel opportunities.

Key issues

The following key issues emerge from the context and baseline review:

- Emissions associated with road transport (primarily NO₂) are the main concern in Chelmsford.

- The Maldon Road, Danbury AQMA located within the neighbourhood area was designated in 2018 for exceedances in NO₂ but has recently been revoked.
- In addition to the Maldon Road, Danbury AQMA, the Chelmsford Army and Navy AQMA is the only other AQMA within the wider Chelmsford area and this is not near to the neighbourhood area.
- Traffic and congestion arising from planned new development within and surrounding the area, which includes significant new developments planned in the Maldon District Council area, have the potential to increase emissions and reduce air quality in the neighbourhood area.

Biodiversity

Policy context

Table AB.3 (below) presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the DNP SEA.

Table AB.3 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to biodiversity

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2023
Green Infrastructure Planning and Design Guide: Designing nature-rich, healthy, climate-resilient, and thriving places	2023
Changes to the Habitats Regulations 2017	2021
Environment Act 2021	2021
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018
Biodiversity 2020 Strategy	2011
UK Biodiversity Action Plan	2007
The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act	2006
Chelmsford Local Plan (2013 to 2036)	2020
Chelmsford Biodiversity Action Plan (2013 to 2017)	2013

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The DNP will need to have regard to the NPPF, which highlights that opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity. This includes using a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure at the wider catchment or landscape scale.
- Support is given through the NPPF to establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures. Trees notably make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, and that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards).

- Over the past decade, policy (e.g., The Natural Environment White Paper and Biodiversity 2020) has demonstrated a move away from the traditional approach of protecting biodiversity, to a wider landscape approach to enhancing biodiversity, as part of the overall aims to halt biodiversity loss. The 25 Year Environment Plan places emphasis on improvements to the natural environment, identifying the need to “replenish depleted soil, plant trees, support wetlands and peatlands, rid seas and rivers of rubbish, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, cleanse the air of pollutants, develop cleaner, sustainable energy and protect threatened species and habitats.” Working at a landscape scale transformation is expected to connect habitats into larger corridors for wildlife.
- The Environment Act 2021 sets parameters for biodiversity gain as a condition of planning permission, as well as biodiversity gain site registers and biodiversity credits. The Act identifies a general duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity, including through biodiversity reports and local nature recovery strategies. Local nature recovery strategies will identify biodiversity priorities for the strategy area as well as a local habitat map. Habitat maps are expected to include recovery and enhancement areas which are or could become of importance for biodiversity.
- The Chelmsford Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) sets out the plan for biodiversity in the City of Chelmsford for the five-year period from 2013 to 2017. The Chelmsford BAP focuses on the key habitats that occur within the City, identifying projects that will help deliver the County BAP targets. The main areas of focus for the plan period are:
 - Delivering BAP targets for the city.
 - Integrating biodiversity into wider Green Infrastructure initiatives.
 - Urban sites, centring on parks and river corridors and how to engage local communities.
 - Delivering landscape-scale projects e.g., through Living Landscape visions.
 - Delivering Water Framework Directive objectives principally through the Catchment Restoration Fund and other funding opportunities; and
 - Exploring opportunities for improvements to be delivered as part of the Biodiversity Offsetting project.
- The following policies in the Chelmsford Local Plan, adopted in May 2020 and covering the period 2013 to 2036, relate to the biodiversity SEA topic:
 - Strategic Policy S4: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment
 - Policy DM16: Ecology and Biodiversity
 - Policy DM17 – Trees, Woodland and Landscape Features

Baseline summary

European designated sites

There are no European protected sites for biodiversity located within the neighbourhood area.

Nationally designated sites

There are three Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) that fall within the neighbourhood area, as detailed below:

- Danbury Common SSSI is located in the centre of the southern half of the neighbourhood area. It was notified June 1986 and is approximately 80 ha in size. Based on the most recent condition assessment, 48.26% of the SSSI is classified as 'Favourable' and 51.74% of the SSSI is classified as 'Unfavourable - Recovering'. The citation statement for the SSSI states¹¹:

“Danbury Common is one of the largest areas of heathland remaining in Essex and shows various stages in the succession from open heath, through bracken and gorse scrub, to birch and oak woodland. The upper parts of the site are located on the glacial gravels capping Danbury Ridge. Lower down, spring lines and flushes at the junction between the gravels and the underlying clay give rise to boggy areas of heath and moist woodlands. Unimproved meadows adjacent to the Common support a rich grassland flora including a number of uncommon species.”

- A small section of the Woodham Walter Common SSSI is located in the north of the neighbourhood area. This SSSI has a total size of 80 ha and was notified in August 1986. Based on the most recent condition assessment, 100% of the SSSI is classified as 'Favourable'. The citation statement for the SSSI states¹²:

“The Woodham Walter Common SSSI comprises several areas of ancient Pedunculate Oak – Hornbeam woodland which cover the lower slopes of a north-eastern spur of the Danbury Ridge. The ground rises to a plateau over which Sessile Oak woodland has developed on former heathland. Along the two dissecting stream valleys, botanically rich flushes are found. This range of habitats supports a diverse flora and fauna, including a number of uncommon species.”

- Part of the Blake's Wood and Lingwood Common SSSI falls within the North of the neighbourhood area. Based on the most recent condition assessment, 100% of the SSSI is classified as 'Favourable'. Notified in July 1986, the Blakes Wood and Lingwood Common SSSI has an area of approximately 87 ha. The citation statement for the SSSI states¹³:

“Blake's Wood and Lingwood Common are located on the Danbury Ridge, south-east of Chelmsford. The soils are derived from glacial sands and gravels overlying London Clay, and this gives rise to a mosaic of woodland, heath and bog habitats. Four of the woodland types are considered to be rare in Britain.”

SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) are a GIS tool / dataset which maps zones around each SSSI according to the sensitivities of the features for which it is notified. They specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts at a given location, including residential, rural-residential and rural non-residential. Natural England is a statutory consultee on development proposals that might impact on SSSIs. In this context, the whole of the neighbourhood area overlaps with SSSI IRZs for development types which are likely to be taken forward through the DNP (i.e., residential and rural residential development types). However, it is useful to note that the scale of the development proposals likely to come forward through the DNP are less likely to meet or exceed the SSSI IRZ thresholds.

¹¹ Natural England (no date): Danbury Common SSSI [online] available to access via [this link](#)

¹² Natural England (no date): Woodham Water Common SSSI [online] available via [this link](#)

¹³ Natural England (no date): Blake's Wood and Lingwood Common SSSI [online] available to access via [this link](#)

Locally important sites

Local Wildlife Sites are areas of land selected by Essex County with substantive nature conservation value based on important, distinctive and threatened habitats and species. These Local Wildlife Sites are protected in the local planning system; however, they aim to complement nationally designated sites for biodiversity, by creating links between these sites.

There is currently one active Local Wildlife Site within the neighbourhood area: Ch136 Overshot Complex¹⁴. The Overshot Complex is situated adjacent to the Danbury Common SSSI and consists of streamside meadows in a variety of habitat types.

In addition to Local Wildlife Sites, there are three Local Nature Reserves situated within the neighbourhood area, as detailed below¹⁵:

- Danbury Ridge Nature Reserves: a mosaic of woodland common, heathland, streams and bogs located in the North of the neighbourhood area.
- Hitchcock's Meadow Nature Reserve: a mix of flower-rich ancient pasture, secondary woodland, scrubland and marsh located in the West of the neighbourhood area.
- Backwarden Nature Reserve: an area of woodland and heathland located in the South of the neighbourhood area.

Hitchcock's Meadow and Backwarden both form part of the Danbury Common SSSI.

There are a range of Biodiversity Action Plan Priority (BAP) Habitats within and surrounding the neighbourhood area, including, but not limited to:

- Lowland dry acid grassland.
- Good quality semi-improved grassland.
- Lowland heathland.
- Lowland ferns.
- Deciduous woodland; and
- Woodpasture and parkland.

Figure AB.1 (overleaf) shows the nationally designated ecological sites within the neighbourhood area as well as the BAP Priority Habitats.

¹⁴ Essex Wildlife Trust (no date) Ch136 Overshot Complex [online] available to access via [this link](#)

¹⁵ Essex Wildlife Trust (no date) Nature Reserves [online] available to access via [this link](#)

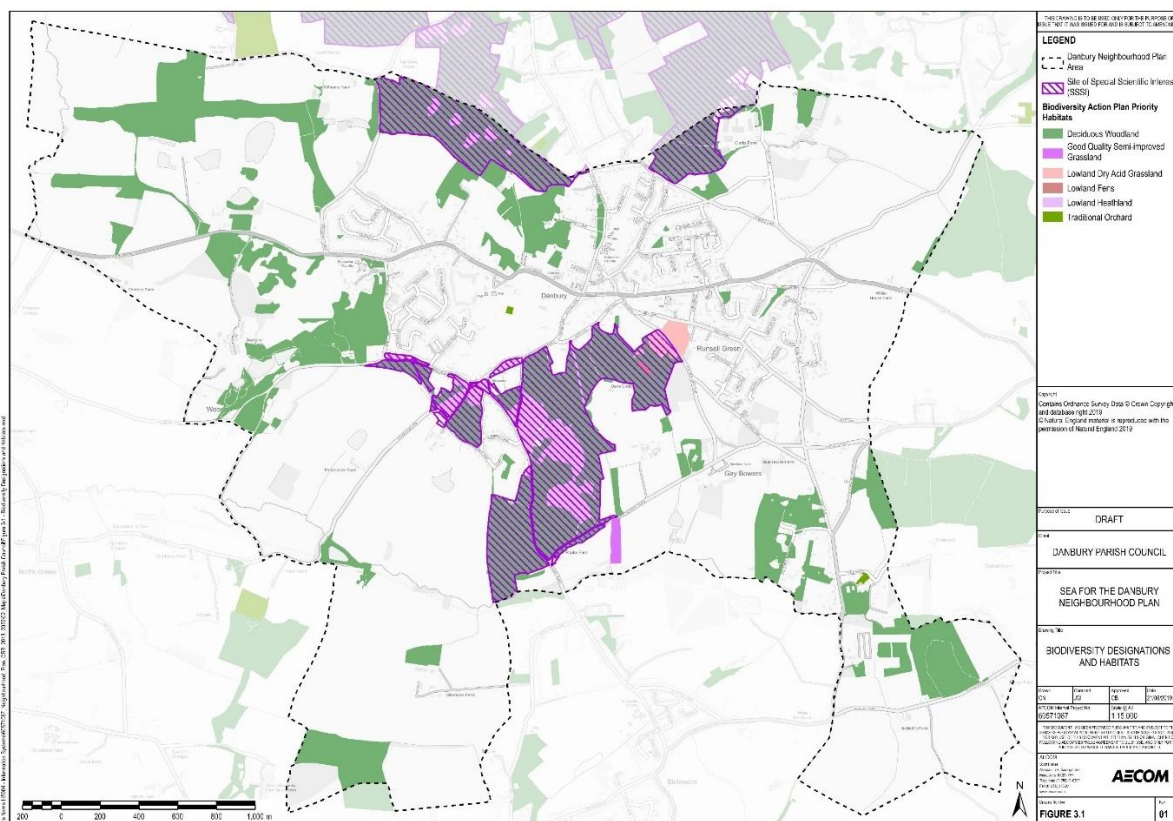


Figure AB.1 Nationally designated ecological sites and BAP priority habitats within the neighbourhood area

Future baseline

Habitats and species will potentially face increasing pressures from future development within the neighbourhood area, with the potential for negative impacts on the wider ecological network. This may include a loss of habitats and impacts on biodiversity networks, which may be exacerbated by the effects of climate change, with the potential to lead to changes in the distribution and abundance of species and changes to the composition of habitats.

Local Wildlife Sites act as wildlife corridors and have the potential to be impacted by new development which can remove the connection between habitats for species such as birds. Ecological sites can also be impacted by poor air quality and water quality, and factors such as noise and lighting can disturb vulnerable species.

The DNP presents an opportunity to maximise benefits for biodiversity by including consideration of important habitats, species and designated sites at an early stage of planning for future growth. To maintain and improve the condition of biodiversity in the future, it will be important to not only protect and enhance important habitats but the connections between them. It will be crucial to effectively coordinate the delivery of housing, employment and infrastructure to ensure that opportunities to improve green infrastructure and ecological corridors are maximised both within the neighbourhood area and in the surrounding areas.

Key issues

The following key issues emerge from the context and baseline review:

- There are no European protected sites for biodiversity within the neighbourhood area. However, there are three nationally designated SSSIs located within the

neighbourhood area: Danbury Common SSSI, Woodham Walter Common SSSI, and Blake's Wood and Lingwood Common SSSI. The integrity of these sites is protected in development through the provisions of the NPPF.

- The whole of the neighbourhood area is located within SSSI IRZs for residential and rural-residential development types. However, the scale of any development proposal is unlikely to meet the threshold stated within the SSSI IRZs.
- There is one Local Wildlife Site (Overshot Complex) and three Local Nature Reserves (Danbury Ridge, Hitchcock's Meadow and Backwarden) situated within the neighbourhood area. This is alongside a range of Biodiversity Action Plan Priority (BAP) Habitats within and surrounding the neighbourhood area, including large areas of deciduous woodland, and woodpasture and parkland. It will be important to ensure that habitats and the connections between them are supported and enhanced in development of the neighbourhood area, particularly considering expected climate change impacts.

Climate change

Policy context

Table AB.4 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan SEA.

Table AB.4 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to climate change

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2023
UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022	2022
Third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3)	2023
Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener	2021
UK Sixth Carbon Budget	2020
National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy	2020
The Clean Air Strategy	2019
Clean Growth Strategy	2019
25-Year Environment Plan	2019
National Infrastructure Assessment	2018
UK Climate Change Risk Assessment	2017
Flood and Water Management Act	2010
UK Climate Change Act	2008
Chelmsford Surface Water Management Plan	2014
Chelmsford Level 1 and Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	2018
Chelmsford City Water Cycle Study Update	2018
Chelmsford Local Plan (2013 to 2036)	2020

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The DNP will need to have regard to the NPPF, which requires proactive planning to both mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies are expected to improve the resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, avoid inappropriate development in the flood plain, and support the move to a low carbon economy. The NPPF recognises the potential for planning to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and deliver long-term resilience, including through reuse, regeneration, and conversion.
- The Clean Air Strategy, Clean Growth Strategy, Net Zero Strategy, and the 25-Year Environment Plan are a suite of documents which seek to progress the government's commitment under the UK Climate Change Act to becoming net zero by 2050. The documents set out detailed proposals on how the government will tackle all sources of air pollution, whilst maintaining an affordable energy supply and increasing economic growth. This parallels with the 25-year Environment Plan, which further seeks to manage land resources sustainably, recover and reinstate nature, protect soils and habitats, increase resource efficiency, improve water quality, and connect people with the environment. The documents also interlink with the government's commitment to decarbonising transport, a recognised challenge that needs more work in a timely manner if government are to achieve net zero targets. Furthermore, the decarbonisation plan recognises the twinned need to undertake action to adapt the transport sector and increase resilience to climate change risks; and this challenge is more directly addressed through the UK's National Adaptation Programme.
- The Chelmsford Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) outlines the preferred surface water management strategy for Chelmsford. A four-phase approach has been undertaken in line with Defra's SWMP technical guidance (2010). These are: Phase 1 – Preparation, Phase 2 – Risk Assessment, Phase 3 – Options and Phase 4 – Implementation and Review. Phase 4 establishes a long-term Action Plan for Essex County Council and other Risk Management Authorities to assist in delivery of their respective roles under the FWMA 2010 to lead in the management of surface water flood risk across the study area. The purpose of the Action Plan is to:
 - Outline the actions required to implement the preferred options identified in Phase 3.
 - Identify the partners or stakeholders responsible for implementing the action.
 - Provide an indication of the priority of the actions and a timescale for delivery; and
 - Outline actions required to meet the requirements of Risk Management Authorities as delegated by Essex County Council (LLFA) under the FWMA 2010.
- The Chelmsford Level 1 and Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been developed to inform a selection of options for Local Plan allocations and support determination of planning applications. The assessment provides supporting evidence to the Local Plan, allowing the application of the Sequential Test in the allocation of future development sites. It also provides guidance and information for developers preparing site specific flood risk assessments, including information on Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

The Chelmsford City Water Cycle Study Update forms an important part of the Local Plan evidence base that will help the Council determine the most appropriate options for development within the City area with respect to water infrastructure and the water environment.

- The following policies in the Chelmsford Local Plan, adopted in May 2020 and covering the period 2013 to 2036, relate to the climate change SEA topic:
 - Strategic Policy S2: Addressing Climate Change and Flood Risk
 - Policy DM18 – Flooding / SuDS
 - Policy DM19 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
 - Policy DM25 – Sustainable Buildings

Baseline summary

In relation to greenhouse gas emissions, data indicates that Chelmsford and Essex have lower per capita emissions than the East of England region and the whole of England.

Table AB.5: Per capita emissions (tCO₂e – tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent) for Chelmsford in comparison to Essex, the East of England region, and England¹⁶

	Chelmsford	Essex	East of England	England
2005	8.3	8.8	10.3	10.0
2006	8.2	8.6	10.1	9.9
2007	8.0	8.3	9.8	9.6
2008	7.9	8.1	9.4	9.2
2009	7.1	7.5	8.7	8.4
2010	7.3	7.6	8.9	8.5
2011	7.0	7.0	8.2	7.8
2012	7.2	7.3	8.5	8.0
2013	7.1	7.0	8.2	7.8
2014	6.7	6.4	7.6	7.1
2015	6.3	6.2	7.2	6.8
2016	5.8	5.8	6.8	6.3
2017	5.5	5.7	6.6	6.1
2018	5.5	5.7	6.5	6.0

¹⁶ GOV.UK (2023): 'UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics' [online] is available to access via [this link](#)

2019	5.6	5.7	6.3	5.7
2020	5.0	5.3	5.8	5.2
2021	5.3	5.4	6.0	5.5

Potential effects of climate change

Research on the probable effects of climate change in the UK was released in 2018 by the UK Climate Projections (UKCP18) team¹⁷. UKCP18 gives climate information for the UK up to the end of this century and projections of future changes to the climate are provided, based on simulations from climate models. Projections are broken down to a regional level across the UK and are shown in probabilistic form, which illustrate the potential range of changes and the level of confidence in each prediction.

As highlighted by the research, the effects of climate change (under medium emissions scenarios 50th percentile) for the East of England during the period 2040-2059 compared to the period 1981-2000 are likely to be as follows¹⁸:

- The central estimate of increase in annual mean temperatures of between 1°C and 2°C; and
- The central estimate of change in annual mean precipitation of 0 to +20% in winter and -10% to -20% in summer.

Resulting from these changes, a range of risks may exist for the neighbourhood area, including:

- Increased incidence of heat related illnesses and deaths during the summer.
- Increased incidence of illnesses and deaths related to exposure to sunlight (e.g., skin cancer, cataracts).
- Increased incidence of pathogen related diseases (e.g., legionella and salmonella).
- Increase in health problems related to rise in local ozone levels during summer.
- Increased risk of injuries and deaths due to increased number of storm events.
- Effects on water resources from climate change.
- Reduction in availability of groundwater for abstraction.
- Adverse effect on water quality from low stream levels and turbulent stream flow after heavy rain.
- Increased risk of flooding, including increased vulnerability to 1:100-year floods.
- Changes in insurance provisions for flood damage.
- A need to increase the capacity of wastewater treatment plants and sewers.
- A need to upgrade flood defences.
- Soil erosion due to flash flooding.
- Loss of species that are at the edge of their southerly distribution.

¹⁷ The data was released on 26th November 2018: Available to access via [this link](#)

¹⁸ Met Office (2018): 'Land Projection Maps: Probabilistic Projections', [online map] available to access via [this link](#)

- Spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution.
- Deterioration in working conditions due to increased temperatures.
- Changes to global supply chain.
- Increased difficulty of food preparation, handling and storage due to higher temperatures.
- An increased move by the insurance industry towards a more risk-based approach to insurance underwriting, leading to higher cost premiums for business.
- Increased demand for air-conditioning.
- Increased drought and flood related problems such as soil shrinkages and subsidence.
- Risk of road surfaces melting more frequently due to increased temperature; and
- Flooding of roads.

Flood risk

The areas at highest risk of flooding within the Parish are towards the south of the boundary, immediately surrounding Sandon Brook and the Erme Drain. The Erme Drain is a small watercourse which flows into the Sandon Brook (east arm). **Figure AB.2** (overleaf) shows the areas at risk from flooding are mainly along four roads which are partly submerged in Flood Zone 3, representing areas that have a 1% (1 in 100) or greater annual flood risk. From east to west these roads are Slough Lane, Hyde Lane, Bicknacre Road and Sporehams Lane. The Chelmsford City Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment¹⁹ (SFRA), published in 2018, highlights there is no fluvial flood risk to Danbury town centre.

The 2009 'North Essex Catchment Flood Management Plan'²⁰ (CFMP) gives an overview of current and future flood risk in the North Essex catchment area. The report identifies Chelmsford as a district with approximately 366 properties at risk from a 1% annual probability fluvial flood risk event.

Surface water flooding is a risk within the neighbourhood area (**Figure AB.3** overleaf) with a medium-to-high risk associated with areas immediately surrounding Sandon Brook, where water collects in the flat-lying fields and in the drainage ditches surrounding the agricultural fields.

¹⁹ JBA Consulting (2018) Chelmsford City Council Level 1 and Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – Examination Submission Document EB106A [online] available to access via [this link](#)

²⁰ Environment Agency (2009) North Essex Flood Catchment Management Plan Summary Report' [online] available to access via [this link](#)

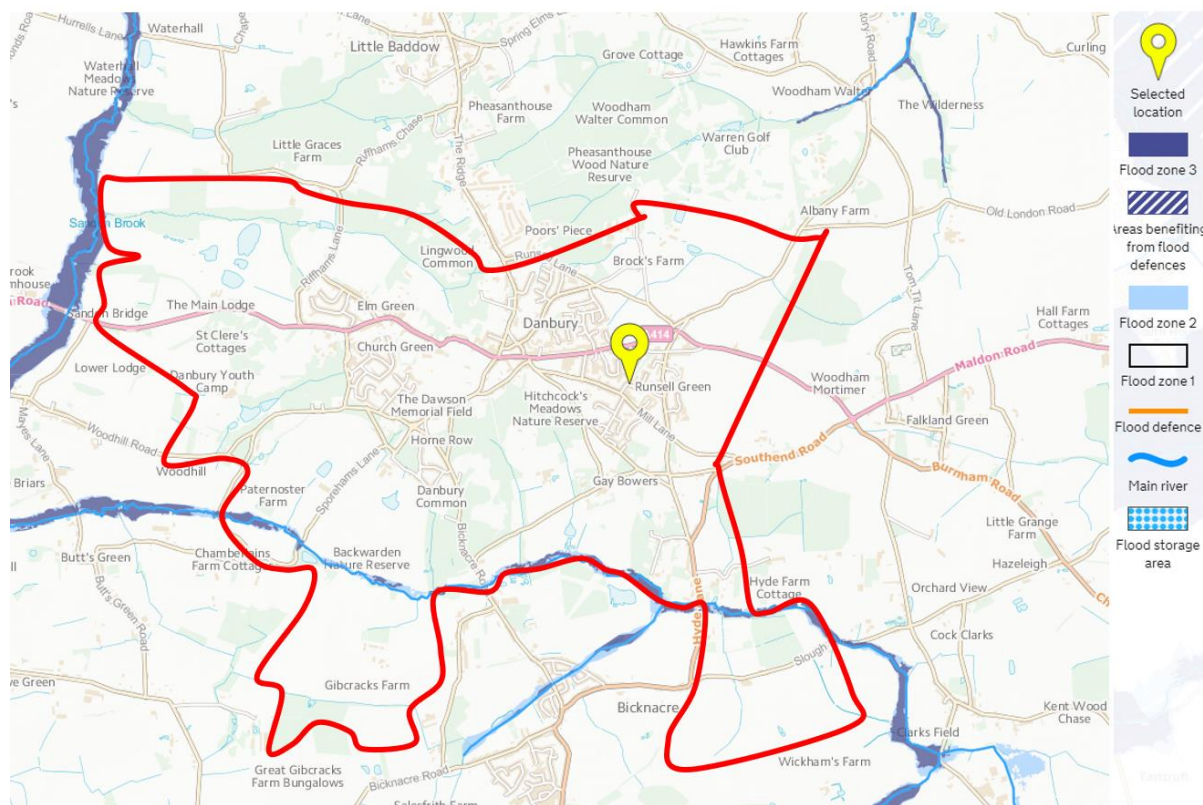


Figure AB.2 Fluvial flood risk within the neighbourhood area²¹

²¹ GOV UK (2019): 'Flood Map for Planning' [online] available to access via [this link](#)

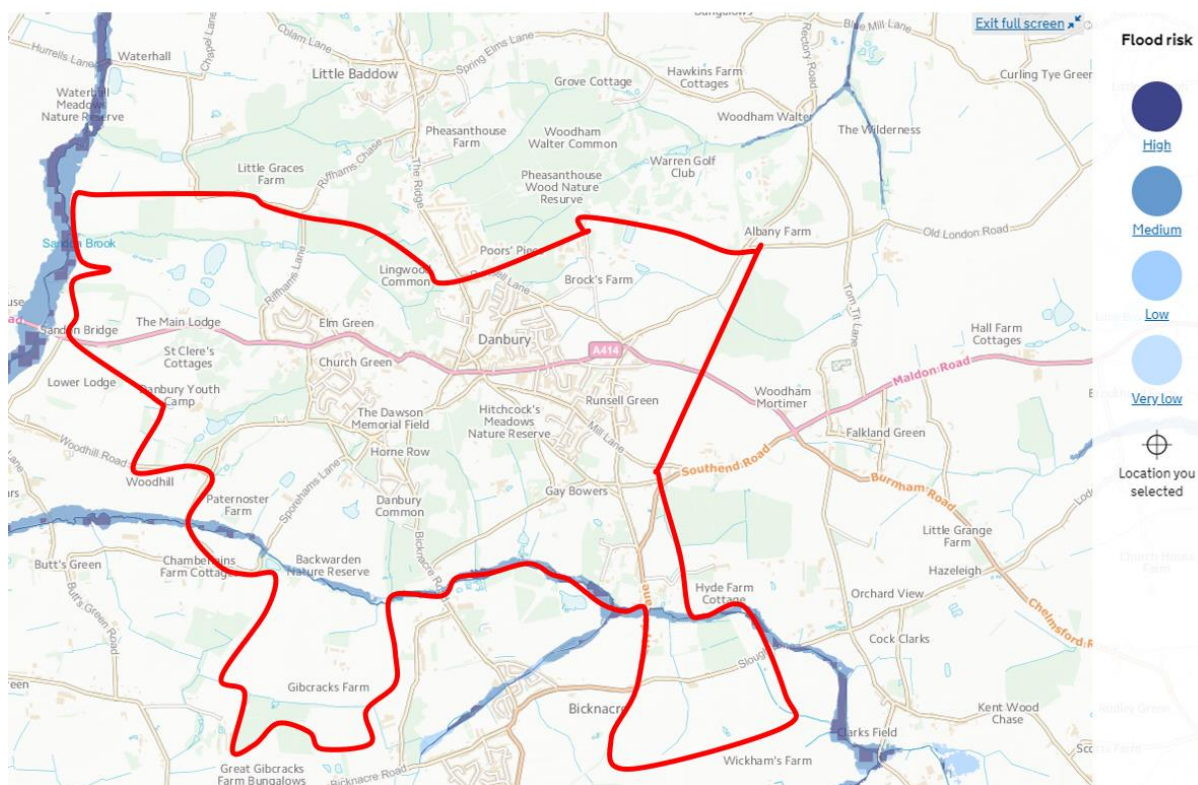


Figure AB.3 Surface water flood risk within the neighbourhood area²²

Future baseline

Climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events in the neighbourhood area, with increases in mean summer and winter temperatures, increases in mean precipitation in winter and decreases in mean precipitation in summer. This is likely to increase the risks associated with climate change, with an increased need for resilience and adaptation.

Chelmsford City Council calculated estimates as to how sea level rise from climate change may impact the watercourse flow and volume in the district up to the year 2115, relative to a 1990 baseline. The central estimate (50th) predicts an increase in peak river flow allowance of 10% for 2015-2039, rising to 15% for 2040-2069, and 25% for 2070 to 2115²³. For Danbury, the main concern from increasing flood risks is for the road network in the neighbourhood area. No additional properties are at risk; however, with an increase in precipitation and peak river flow allowances associated with climate change, the Sandon Brook floodplain may encroach on the settlement, putting residents, property and development at risk.

Per capita greenhouse gas emissions generated in the neighbourhood area are likely to continue to decrease with wider adoption of energy efficiency measures, renewable energy production and new technologies; however, increases in the built environment and carbon footprint of the DNP would contribute to an increase in the total levels of greenhouse gas emissions.

²² GOV UK (2017): 'Long term flood risk assessment for locations in England' [online] available to access via [this link](#)

²³ JBA Consulting (2018) Chelmsford City Council Level 1 and Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – Examination Submission Document EB106A [online] available to access via [this link](#)

Key issues

The following key issues emerge from the context and baseline review:

- Development of new housing and infrastructure within the neighbourhood area has the potential to increase the local carbon footprint and overall greenhouse gas emissions in Danbury.
- The areas immediately surrounding the Sandon Brook are situated in Flood Zone 2, meaning these areas have a medium risk from fluvial flooding. Danbury village settlement itself is not currently at risk from fluvial flooding; however, the increase in precipitation and peak river flow allowances associated with climate change may result in the floodplain encroaching on settlement areas in the future.
- Surface water flooding is a risk within the neighbourhood area with a medium-to-high risk associated with areas immediately surrounding Sandon Brook where water collects in the surrounding the fields.
- The DNP should seek to increase the resilience of the neighbourhood area to the effects of climate change by supporting and encouraging adaptation strategies.

Landscape

Policy context

Table AB.6 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan SEA.

Table AB.6 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to landscape

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2023
National Model Design Code	2021
The National Design Guide	2019
The 25 Year Environment Plan	2018
Chelmsford Local Plan (2013 to 2036)	2020

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The DNP will need to have regard to the NPPF which gives great weight to conserving and enhancing protected landscapes, as well as landscape character and scenic beauty. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.
- The NPPF recognises the role of green infrastructure in landscape settings, as well as the importance of designated biodiversity sites, habitats, woodland, historic features, agricultural land, and cultural landscapes. The positive contribution that land remediation can make in terms of addressing despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land is also recognised.

- The 25-year Environment Plan and National Design Guide complement each other with their aims for a cleaner, greener country which puts the environment first and celebrates the variety of natural landscapes and habitats. Design is focused on beautiful, enduring, and successful places, which respond to local character and provide a network of high quality green open spaces.
- The following policies in the Chelmsford Local Plan, adopted in May 2020 and covering the period 2013 to 2036, relate to the landscape SEA topic:
 - Strategic Policy S4 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment
 - Policy DM6 – New Buildings in the Green Belt
 - Policy DM7 – New Buildings and Structures in the Green Wedge
 - Policy DM8 – New Buildings and Structures in the Rural Area
 - Policy DM17 – Trees, Woodland and Landscape Features

Baseline summary

The neighbourhood area is not within or adjacent to any Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB, now updated to be National Landscapes) or National Park and does not contain any areas of Green Belt land. The Danbury Lakes Country Park is situated just outside the Danbury settlement boundary, and is an invaluable local asset featuring traditional broad leaved and coppiced woodland which complement the natural appearance of ornamental lakes and formal gardens.²⁴ This is further discussed under the health and wellbeing topic.

According to Strategic Policy S7 (The Spatial Strategy) of the Local Plan, Danbury is defined as a key service settlement in the settlement hierarchy, located outside of the Green Belt. Notably, the Local Plan states that “*future development in Danbury is restricted by significant landscape constraints*”. This includes Danbury Ridge, which comprises significant tracts of protected woodland and commons, and which represent important valued landscapes.

National Character Areas (NCAs) are landscape areas which share similar characteristics, following natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries. Developed by Natural England, NCA profiles describe the natural and cultural features that shape each of these landscapes, providing a broad context to its character. The neighbourhood area is located within the Northern Thames Basin NCA just bordering the South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland NCA. The NCA profile for the ‘Northern Thames Basin’²⁵ lists several key characteristics, with the following of particular relevance to the neighbourhood area:

- Elevation in the NCA ranges from 0.02 metres below sea level to a maximum of 155 metres above sea level. The average elevation of the landscape is 47 metres. The ‘Bagshot Hills’ are prominent features of the Essex part of the NCA, rising to a high point of 116 m at Danbury Hill.
- The wooded hills and ridges of the Northern Thames Basin are dissected by the valleys of the Rivers Roding, Wid and Chelmer. River Chelmer is located north of Danbury Parish.

²⁴ Chelmsford Borough Council (2011) Danbury Planning Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) [online] available to access via [this link](#)

²⁵ Natural England (2013): ‘NCA Profile: 111 Northern Thames Basin (NE466)’, available to access via [this link](#)

- The woodland found on the prominent hills and ridges of Epping Forest, Hainault, Thorndon, Galleywood and the Danbury to Tiptree ridge, exists on a belt of sand often referred to as the 'Bagshot Hills' stretching through Essex from Epping Forest to Tiptree. Many are ancient but there are also some large areas of secondary woodland on former common land.

As noted in the Northern Thames Basin NCA, *"Recent reductions in heathland extent and quality in the NCA have been caused by development pressure, a lack of active management (including traditional grazing practices) resulting in succession to woodland, over management by amenity cutting, and recreational pressure."* The NCA report states that major heath restoration and recreation works are underway in Essex (concentrated in Epping, Danbury and Tiptree) with the aim of creating new habitat areas and restoring 75 per cent of the existing resource.

The Little Baddow and Danbury Wooded Farmland Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)²⁶ describes the variations in character between different areas and types of landscape in the county. It provides an evidence base for local development frameworks and plans, articulating what people perceive as distinctive and special about all landscapes in Danbury. Additionally, it also sets out strategies and guidelines for the protection, management and planning of the landscape.

Some of the key characteristics of the Little Baddow and Danbury area, according to the LCA, include:

- Wooded hill and ridge housing the linear settlements of Little Baddow and Danbury.
- Sense of enclosure provided by large areas of dense deciduous and mixed woodland.
- Intricate landscape pattern consisting of commons, pasture, heathland and woodland habitats.
- Arable farmland fringing the outer edges of patches of woodland.
- Series of narrow lanes winding down the hillsides and facilitation views into and across the Chelmer/Blackwater valley to the north and east.
- Views to wooded horizons within adjacent wooded farmland to the south.
- Predominantly linear settlement pattern.

Historically, the settlement was dispersed around various commons and greens with a central congregation of houses around the Church at Danbury. The main historic landscape features include a prominent Iron Age hill fort, covering an area of 25 hectares, and plots of ancient woodland, surrounding Danbury.

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area (Little Baddow and Danbury Wooded Farmland) include large areas of dense deciduous and mixed woodland, an intricate mosaic of commons, pasture and heathland spread throughout the area and several mature field boundaries (containing several mature trees). These key characteristics are all sensitive to changes in land management. The network of quiet rural lanes is also sensitive to change, or increased traffic associated with new development. There is a strong sense of historic integrity, resulting from patches of ancient woodland and a

²⁶ Landscape Character Areas of Chelmsford Borough (2006): 'F5 Little Baddow and Danbury Wooded Farmland', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

prominent Iron Age hill fort (as mentioned above). There are also several important wildlife habitats within the area (including 20 sites of importance for nature conservation, comprising ancient woodland, grassland and commons), which are sensitive to changes in land management. Overall, this character area has relatively high sensitivity to change. Some of the key planning and land management issues include:

- Pressure of increasing traffic on minor rural roads.
- Management of common land and heathland for nature conservation and recreational purposes.
- Noise and visual intrusion associated with the A414 road corridor.
- Potential loss of mature field boundaries as a result of lack of management or further intensification of agricultural practices.
- Management and maintenance of patches of mature deciduous and mixed woodland.
- Potential new development at the fringes of Little Baddow or Danbury, or on the slopes of the hill, which may be highly visible from surrounding character areas, including the Chelmer/ Blackwater valley to the north.

Future baseline

New development, including infrastructure development, has the potential to lead to incremental changes in landscape quality in and around the neighbourhood area. This could include the loss of landscape features, visual impact on existing features, loss of tranquillity, and the potential for incremental coalescence between settlements.

New development also has the potential to support landscape character through regeneration and brownfield development that improves urban settings, delivering green infrastructure improvements and new recreational opportunities and enhanced framing of key views.

Key issues

The following key issues emerge from the context and baseline review:

- Development pressure and a lack of active management, which could result in a loss of wooded areas is a major concern. There is also the need to be considerate of ancient, forested areas within Danbury as these woodlands take hundreds of years to establish and is an important habitat for rare and threatened wildlife species, as well as important recreational, cultural and historical value.
- The dense deciduous and mixed woodland, the intricate mosaic of commons, and pasture / heathlands and several mature field boundaries are all highly sensitive to changes in the area, including increases in traffic, noise and visual intrusion, intensified agricultural practices and more.

Historic environment

Policy context

Table AB.7 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan SEA.

Table AB.7 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to the historic environment

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2023
Historic England Advice Note 11 (Second Edition): Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment	2022
Heritage England: Heritage and Climate Change	2022
National Model Design Code	2021
The National Design Guide	2019
Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management	2019
The 25 Year Environment Plan	2018
Historic England Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets	2017
Historic England Advice Note 8: Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	2016
Historic England Advice Note 3: The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans	2015
Chelmsford Local Plan (2013 to 2036)	2020

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The key high-level principles for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment are as follows:
 - The historic environment is a shared resource.
 - Everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment.
 - Understanding the significance of places is vital.
 - Significant places should be managed to sustain their values.
 - Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent, and consistent; and
 - Documenting and learning from decisions is essential.
- The significance of places is the key element which underpins the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Significance is a collective term for the sum of all the heritage values attached to a place, be it a building, an archaeological site, or a larger historic area such as a whole village or landscape.
- The DNP will need to have regard to the NPPF, which seeks to conserve and enhance historic environment assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. The NPPF seeks planning policies and decisions which are

sympathetic to local character and history without preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation of change. The NPPF supports the use of area-based character assessments, design guides and codes and masterplans to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places.

- As set out in the NPPF, it should be ensured that the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements, and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. Design Codes can set out a necessary level of detail in sensitive locations (e.g., with heritage considerations) and specific ways to maintain local character.
- Planning Practice Guidance expands on the NPPF recognising the proactive rather than passive nature of conservation.
- The role of the historic environment, as part of healthy and thriving ecosystems, landscapes, and cultural values, including settlement identity, is reiterated through the key messages of the 25 Year Environment Plan and National Design Guide.
- Historic England's Advice Notes provide further guidance in relation to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Of relevance for the DNP is the emphasis on the importance of:
 - Understanding the different types of special architectural and historic interest which underpin designations, as well as how settings and / or views contribute to the significance of heritage assets.
 - Recognising the value of implementing controls through neighbourhood plans, conservation area appraisals, and management plans; and
 - Appropriate evidence gathering, including clearly identifying those issues that threaten an area or assets character or appearance, and that merit the introduction of management measures.
- In addition to conserving the historic environment, the DNP should seek to identify opportunities to enhance the fabric and setting of the historic environment. It should also seek to rejuvenate features and areas which are at risk of neglect and decay.
- The following policies in the Chelmsford Local Plan, adopted in May 2020 and covering the period 2013 to 2036, relate to the historic environment SEA topic:
 - Strategic Policy S3 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment
 - Policy DM13 – Designated Heritage Assets
 - Policy DM14 – Non-Designated Heritage Assets
 - Policy DM15 - Archaeology

Baseline summary

Local character

Danbury is situated on one of the highest points in Essex and with this dominance assumes a special importance in the geopolitical map of the local area, and indeed the whole county of Essex. The spire of the Parish Church of St. John The Baptist is

a pre-eminent feature on the local skyline and still dominates despite the intrusive and incongruous presence of two communications towers which take advantage of the elevation.²⁷

The towers, although of lattice work construction, are noticeable and detract from the visual amenity of the Danbury Ridge, a geographical feature which is of recognised regional significance.

Eves Corner, with its traditional village green and duck pond, is seen by many as the village centre but Danbury is not compact and does not display a single visual or architectural identity. The village radiates from Eves Corner along the highways that have traditionally served the village, east and west along the A414 (Main Road/ Maldon Road) and northwards along Little Baddow Road.

The village architecture takes several forms and is not dominated by one style; however, there are many fine examples of architectural styles that range from the 16th century to the present day. These include the Old Post Office (late 16th century) at one end of the scale and the various modern residential developments scattered throughout the village at the other.

Notwithstanding the various styles and blending of old and new, the generally observed perception is one of a village with a distinctly traditional feel.

A notable feature, characteristic of the way the village has developed, are the identifiable neighbourhoods consequent on its evolution along the highways, infilling, absorption of smaller hamlets and block developments such as Belvedere, Beaumont Park, The Heights, St. Cleres, Daen Ingas, Hoynors and Baxters.

It is only in such 'newer' developments that any uniformity of architectural styles is evident, and which can be said to universally describe the essential feel and character of the neighbourhood.

Designated heritage assets

Within the Danbury Parish there are large number of historic assets, including:

- Three scheduled monuments.
- One conservation area.
- Two registered parks and gardens; and
- Over 50 listed buildings.

There are 53 listed buildings located within Danbury Parish. There is one Grade I listed building, the Church of St. John the Baptist, which is a stone church possibly originating from the 12th century. Within the church, there are effigies of Knights in armour, a castellated wall plate carved with effigies of Kings and Queens of the 14th century and other notable historic artefacts. There is one Grade II* building, called Slough house, a picturesque timber framed and plastered house of 15th or 16th century origin. The remaining 51 Grade II listed buildings are located throughout Danbury Parish, with a high density of the listed buildings located along the Main Road. The Grade II listed buildings consist of churches, cottages, inns, farmhouses and more.

²⁷ Chelmsford Borough Council (2011): 'Danbury Planning Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

There are three Scheduled Monuments located within Danbury Parish. There is the Danbury camp hill fort, which is located in the centre of the Parish and a “medieval tile kiln north of Eves Corner” which is located in close proximity to the Danbury camp hill fort. The icehouse in Danbury Country Park, 130m south of Home Farm, is another scheduled monument which is in good condition and has been sympathetically restored.

The Danbury Parish Conservation Area (CA) (**Figure AB.4** overleaf) was first designated in 1973 and has been revised a number of times since. Danbury has grown along the old main road as an elongated settlement; there is no defined tightly knit historical core and ‘old village’ around which there has been modern expansion. The Danbury Conservation Area is therefore of irregular shape within a continuous boundary within the village. The Conservation Area encloses most of the de-facto village centre and open land separating the developed Eastern and Northern ends of the village from the developed block to the West.

In accordance with the Danbury Planning Framework, *“Any building work should be sympathetic to and respect the architecture and environmental setting of existing buildings by way of materials used, aesthetic appearance, style, size and grain. These considerations are of particular relevance and importance to development proposals in the village Conservation Area.”*²⁸

There are several buildings of architectural and historic interest included within the Conservation Area. These include:

- 58 & 60 Main Road.
- The Old Post Office.
- The BT Telephone Exchange.
- The Griffin Inn.
- The Chantry.
- The Old Rectory.
- Parish Church of St. John the Baptist; and
- Danbury Palace.

At present there is not an up to date Conservation Area Appraisal/ Management Plan produced for the Conservation Area. However, Chelmsford Borough Council is reviewing its Conservation Areas via preparation of Conservation Area character appraisals and reviews; the outcome of the review will form a basis for future enhancement and protection of a Conservation Area’s character and landscape.²⁹

The Danbury Planning Framework will help to inform the review and re-appraisal of the Danbury Conservation Area.

It is also noted that buildings of historic interest also lie outside of the Conservation Area, including The Cricketers Arms which is Listed and thought to be the oldest public house in Danbury.

²⁸ Chelmsford Borough Council (2011) Danbury Planning Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) [online] available to access via [this link](#)

²⁹ Ibid.

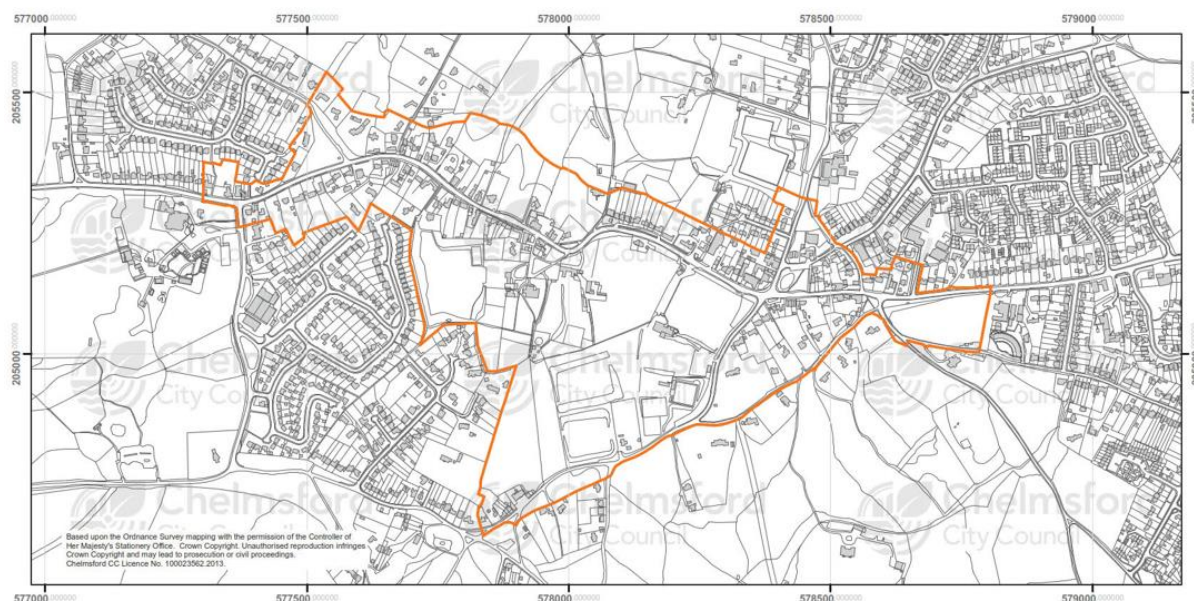


Figure AB.4 Danbury Parish Conservation Area³⁰

There are two registered parks and gardens (both grade II) located within Danbury Parish, Danbury Park and Riffhams. Danbury Park was established in the 16th century and contains gardens, brick paths, mature conifers, a pool garden, tennis court and the land surrounds a red brick country mansion. Riffhams, located in the north-west edge of the town of Danbury town, is an early 19th century house surrounded by park land with mature oak and horse chestnut trees.

Since 2008, Historic England has released an annual Heritage at Risk Register. The Heritage at Risk Register highlights the Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings, scheduled monuments, historic parks and gardens, registered battlefields, wreck sites and conservation areas deemed to be 'at risk'. Danbury Park is considered to be highly vulnerable with a declining trend, as stated on the Heritage-at-risk register, it is "generally unsatisfactory with major localised problems."

Figure AB.5 (overleaf) shows the location of the scheduled monuments, listed buildings and conservation area within the neighbourhood area.

³⁰ Chelmsford City Council (2013) Conservation Areas in Chelmsford [online] available to access via [this link](#)

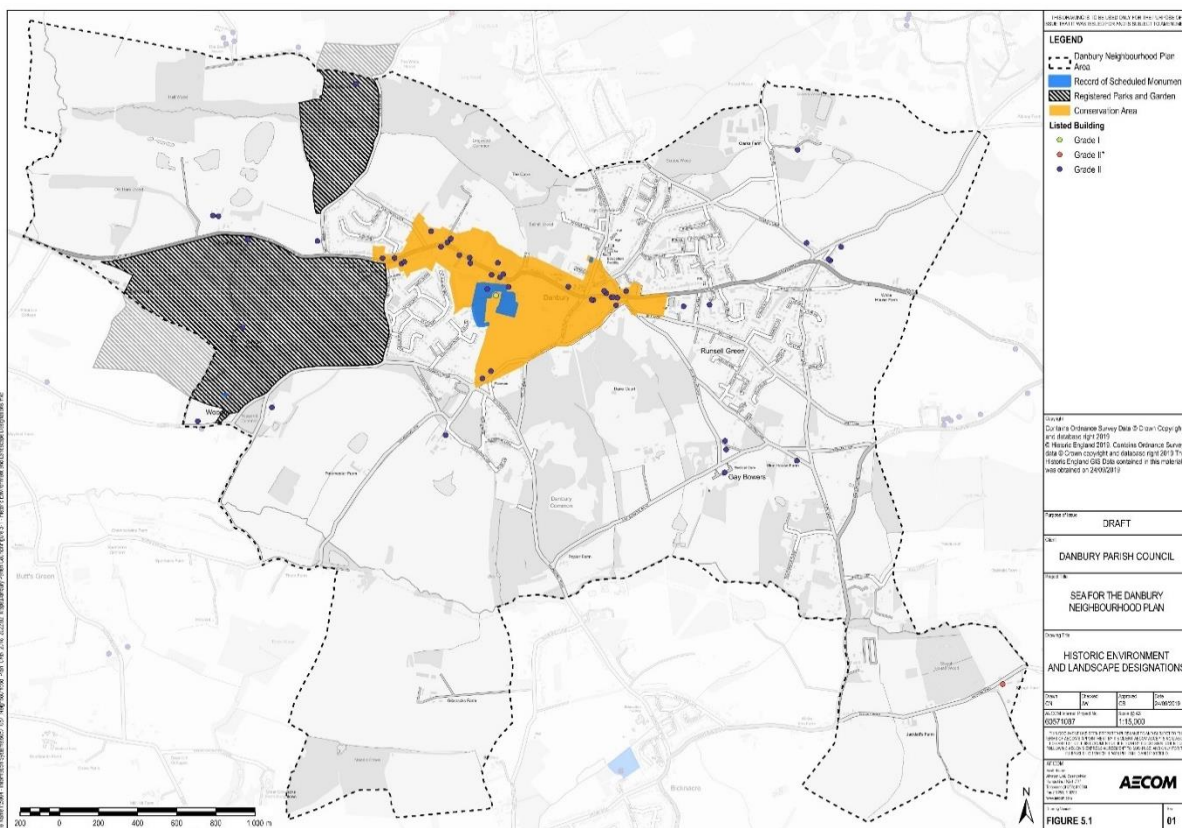


Figure AB.5 Scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas, and listed buildings within the neighbourhood area

Locally important heritage features

It should be noted that not all of the area’s historic environment features are subject to statutory designations, and non-designated features comprise a large part of what people have contact with as part of daily life – whether at home, work or leisure. Although not designated, many buildings and areas are of historic interest and are seen as important by local communities. For example, open spaces and key distinctive buildings in the area are likely to be of value for local people.

Following a high-level review of the Historic Environmental Record (HER) for Essex (accessed via the Heritage Gateway)³¹, there are 97 records within Danbury Parish including the church and churchyard, Danbury Park, The Rectory, pits, and pillboxes.

Future baseline

New development within the neighbourhood area has the potential to impact heritage assets and their settings through inappropriate design and layout. The neighbourhood area has a wide range of built heritage, and the range of historic contexts presents potential for a variety of negative effects from inappropriate development.

Equally, however, new development will offer opportunities for enhancing the quality of the district’s historic environment, either through regeneration of a specific asset or through improvements to an asset’s setting and wider environment. Development can also offer opportunities to improve access to or better reveal the significance of a heritage asset.

³¹ Heritage Gateway (2019): ‘Historic Environmental Record for Essex’, [online] available to access via [this link](#)

Whilst existing historic environment designations and the policies of the NPPF will continue to offer a degree of protection to heritage assets and their settings, non-designated or locally designated assets can be provided greater protection through the Local Plan. Whilst there are a relatively small number of historic assets at risk, these could potentially deteriorate further without intervention or as a result of inappropriate development.

Key issues

The following key issues emerge from the context and baseline review:

- The neighbourhood area contains three scheduled monuments, one Conservation Area, two registered parks and gardens, and over 50 listed buildings.
- Danbury contains a designated Conservation Area; however, no Conservation Area Appraisal has been prepared for Danbury. It is however noted that Chelmsford City Council are in the process of preparing Conservation Area character appraisals and reviews; and that the Danbury Planning Framework will help to inform the review and re-appraisal of the Danbury Conservation Area.
- The historic park and garden, Danbury Park, is considered to be highly vulnerable with a declining trend, according to the Heritage-at-risk register. This area of the Parish would require specialised attention to ensure that the area does not deteriorate further as a result of new development.
- The village architecture takes a number of forms and is not dominated by one style; however, there are many fine examples of architectural styles that range from the 16th century to the present day.
- There is a rich variety and distribution of designated and non-designated heritage assets present within the neighbourhood area; the significance and setting of which should be considered in, and positively impacted upon by, new development.

Land, soil, and water resources

Policy context

Table AB.8 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan SEA.

Table AB.8 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to land, soil and water resources

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2023
Waste Management Plan for England	2021
The 25 Year Environment Plan	2018
The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017	2017
The National Waste Management Plan	2013
Future Water: The government's water strategy for England	2011

Water for Life	2011
Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England	2009
Chelmsford City Council Brownfield Register	No date
Chelmsford Local Plan (2013 to 2036)	2020

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The DNP will need to have regard to the NPPF, which seeks to protect high quality soil resources and improve the water environment, recognising the wider benefits of natural capital, and derived from ecosystem services. Furthermore, the NPPF recognises the need to take account of the long-term implications of climate change and build resilience in this respect. The NPPF encourages efficient land use, utilising brownfield land opportunities and land remediation schemes where appropriate and delivering environmental gains.
- The 25-year Environment Plan presents a focus for environmental improvement in the next couple decades, with aims to achieve clean air, clean and plentiful water, and reduced risk from environmental hazards. This includes measures to improve soil quality, restore and protect peatlands, use water more sustainably, reduce pollution, maximise resource efficiency, and minimise environmental impacts. This leads on from and supports the soil strategy for England (Safeguarding our Soils) which seeks to ensure that all England's soils will be managed sustainably, and degradation threats tackled successfully by 2030, as well as the national water strategies which seek to secure sustainable and resilient water resources and improve the quality of waterbodies, and the national waste plan which seeks to identify measures being taken to move towards a zero-waste economy.
- The Chelmsford Brownfield Register comprises all brownfield sites that have been assessed as appropriate for residential development after meeting initial conditions such as being capable of supporting development of five or more dwellings and being suitable and available for housing development.
- The following policies in the Chelmsford Local Plan, adopted in May 2020 and covering the period 2013 to 2036, relate to the landscape SEA topic:
 - Strategic Policy S4 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment
 - Policy DM10 – Change of Use (Land and Buildings) and Engineering
 - Policy DM18 – Flooding / SuDS
 - Policy DM30 – Contamination and Pollution

Baseline summary

Soil resources

The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) classifies land into six grades (plus 'non-agricultural' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are recognised as being the 'best and most versatile' (BMV) land.

In terms of the location of the best and most versatile agricultural land, no detailed classification specifying the subset of Grade 3a or 3b of the neighbourhood area has been undertaken to date.

The Provisional Agricultural Land Quality dataset³² shows that the neighbourhood area is identified as having a mix of Grade 2 ‘best and most versatile land’ in the east of the neighbourhood area, Grade 4 in the western side of the neighbourhood area and Grade 3 in the south; however, without the subset grading (3a or 3b) it is not possible to tell at this stage whether the Grade 3 agricultural land is considered to be ‘best and most versatile’. It is also important to note that the national dataset is of very low resolution and may not necessarily provide an accurate reflection of the agricultural land quality within the neighbourhood area.

The Predictive Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile Land map³³ for the Eastern Region identifies the settlement as urban land and the surrounding land as having a ‘moderate’ likelihood of best and most versatile agricultural land.

The high-level review of the British Geological Survey (BGS) maps shows the bedrock geology is Thames Group, made up of clay, silt, sand and gravel.³⁴ The soil parent material for Danbury is made up of pre-quadernary marine sand and silt and glaciofluvial deposits where the topsoil is freely draining slightly acid loamy soils.³⁵

Water resources and quality

The main watercourse flowing through the neighbourhood area is the Sandon Brook, which flows through the southern end of the plan, south of Danbury and later drains into the River Chelmer. In addition, Erme Drain runs in a northern direction into the Sandon Brook to the east of Hyde Lane.

Danbury is located within the Anglian River Basin District, with the neighbourhood area falling under the ‘Essex Combined’ Management Catchment and the ‘Sandon Brook’ Operational Catchment.

Based on the most recently completed water quality assessments undertaken in 2016, the Environment Agency’s Catchment Data Explorer³⁶ classifies the Sandon Brook catchment as having a ‘Moderate’ ecological status and a ‘Good’ chemical status. The ‘reasons for not achieving good status’ (RNAGs) are primarily attributed to the following activities: poor nutrient management, livestock, sewage discharge and transport drainage.

The Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) requires Member States to identify areas where groundwater has nitrate concentrations of more than 50 mg/l nitrate or are thought to be at risk of nitrate contamination. Areas associated with such groundwater are designated as Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) within which, Member States are required to establish Action Programmes to reduce and prevent further nitrate contamination. In this regard, the neighbourhood area is within the ‘River Chelmer’ Surface Water NVZ. However, it is useful to note that as the DNP is likely to allocate land for residential/ employment development and such uses are not considered likely to increase the risk of pollution to the NVZ.

Mineral resources

Mineral resources are defined as natural concentrations of minerals or, in the case of aggregates, bodies of rock that are, or may become, of potential economic interest due to their inherent properties. They make an essential contribution to the country’s

³² Natural England (2018): ‘Agricultural Land Classification Map Eastern Region (ALC008)’, [online] available to access via [this link](#)

³³ Natural England (2017): ‘Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land’, [online] available to access via [this link](#)

³⁴ British Geological Survey (2019): ‘Geology of Britain Map’, [online] available to access via [this link](#)

³⁵ British Geological Survey (2019): ‘UK Soil Observatory (UKSO) Map’, [online] available to access via [this link](#)

³⁶ Environment Agency (2019): ‘Blackwater (Combined Essex) Overview, Catchment Data Explorer’, [online] available to access via [this link](#)

prosperity and quality of life. Since minerals are a non-renewable resource, minerals safeguarding is the process of ensuring that non-minerals development does not needlessly prevent the future extraction of mineral resources, of local and national importance.³⁷

Adopted in July 2014, the Essex Minerals Local Plan³⁸ covers the period to 2029 and provides the basis for making consistent decisions about planning applications for mineral activities throughout the county. Appendix One lists Preferred and Reserve sites in Chelmsford District, however none of these are within the Danbury Plan area. The Policies Map identifies that the neighbourhood area does not fall within any safeguarded areas; however, in the east and west – outside of the neighbourhood area – lie existing extraction sites within Minerals Consultation Areas.

Future baseline

Future development has the potential to affect water quality through increased consumption, diffuse pollution, wastewater discharges, water run-off, and modification. Water companies are likely to maintain adequate water supply and wastewater management over the plan period, and the requirements of the Water Framework Directive are likely to lead to continued improvements to water quality within the neighbourhood area and wider area. However, it will be important for new development to avoid impacts on water quality and support the objectives of the Water Resource Management Plan in reducing consumption and improving efficiency.

In the absence of a detailed Agricultural Land Classification assessment for Danbury, it remains uncertain whether new development in the neighbourhood area will lead to losses of higher quality (best and most versatile) agricultural land.

Key issues

The following key issues emerge from the context and baseline review:

- National provisional quality datasets indicate Grade 2, Grade 3 and Grade 4 land and a 'moderate' likelihood of best and most versatile agricultural land.
- The Sandon Brook catchment is classified as having a 'moderate' ecological status and a 'good' chemical status. The reasons for not achieving good status are primarily attributed to poor nutrient management, livestock, sewage discharge and transport drainage and new development has the potential to affect both sewage discharge and transport drainage.
- The neighbourhood area is within the 'River Chelmer' Surface Water Nitrate Vulnerable Zone. New residential or employment development is unlikely to increase the risk of nitrate pollution which is more closely associated with agricultural land uses.

³⁷ GOV.UK (2014): 'Minerals Guidance', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

³⁸ Essex County Council (2014): 'Essex Minerals Local Plan', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

Population and community

Table AB.9 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan SEA.

Table AB.9 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to population and communities

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2023
Chelmsford Local Plan (2013 to 2036)	2020

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The DNP will be required to be in general conformity with the NPPF, which on the whole seeks to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.
- The framework seeks to protect settlement and community identities, ensuring that appropriate tools such as masterplans and design guides or codes are used to secure a variety of well-designed and beautiful homes to meet the needs of different groups in the community. Furthermore, the NPPF recognises the benefits of creating cohesive communities, in safe environments where crime and the fear of crime do not undermine the quality of life of residents.
- As set out in the NPPF, it should be ensured that the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. The Design Guide and Model code illustrate how well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice.
- The following policies in the Chelmsford Local Plan, adopted in May 2020 and covering the period 2013 to 2036, relate to the landscape SEA topic:
 - Strategic Policy S5 – Protecting and Enhancing Community Assets
 - Policy DM1 – Size and Type of Housing
 - Policy DM2 – Affordable Housing and Rural Exception Sites
 - Policy DM20 – Delivering Community Facilities
 - Policy DM21 – Protecting Community Facilities
 - Policy DM22 – Education Establishments
 - Policy DM23 – High Quality and Inclusive Design
 - Policy DM29 – Protecting Living and Working Environments

Baseline summary

Population

As shown in **Table AB.10**, the population of Danbury has remained relatively stable, increasing only slightly in the decade from 2001. This population change is considerably lower than that seen for Chelmsford, the East of England, and England.

Table AB.10 Population growth 2001 to 2011³⁹

Date	Danbury	Chelmsford	East of England	England
2001	4,991	132,179	5,388,140	49,138,831
2011	5,087	168,310	5,846,965	53,012,456
Population Change 2001-2011	1.9%	7.2%	8.5%	7.8%

According to the 2021 Census, there are approximately 5,200 people living in Danbury – showing an increase from the 2011 Census. The wider Chelmsford area has also increased, to approximately 181,500 people⁴⁰.

In 2011, generally there was a higher proportion of residents within the 60+ age category in the neighbourhood area in comparison to the percentages for Chelmsford, the East of England and England. The youngest age category (0-15) is broadly similar in all the above regions. In contrast, there are considerably fewer residents within the 25-44 age category, and marginally fewer residents within the 16-24 age category in the neighbourhood area in comparison to the regional and national trends. In 2021, 8.1% of the population of Danbury were aged between 55 and 59 years old – this is the largest age group, followed by ages 70 to 74 at 7.3% of the population. The 55 to 59 age group is the largest for Chelmsford (7.1% of the population), followed by the 45 to 49 age group (6.9%)⁴¹.

Household deprivation

Census statistics measure deprivation across four ‘dimensions’ of deprivation, summarised below:

- **Employment:** Any person in the household (not a full-time student) that is either unemployed or long-term sick.
- **Education:** No person in the household has at least a level 2 qualification and no person aged 16-18 is a full-time student.
- **Health and Disability:** Any person in the household that has generally ‘bad’ or ‘very bad’ health or has a long-term health problem.
- **Housing:** The household accommodation is either overcrowded (with an occupancy rating of -1 or less), in a shared dwelling or has no central heating.

Based on the information presented in **Table AB.11** (overleaf), a lower percentage of households in the neighbourhood area (46.5%) are deprived in at least 1 dimension, in comparison to the totals for Chelmsford (49.8%), the East of England (55.2%) and England (57.5%).

³⁹ ONS (no date): Census 2011: Population Density 2011 (Table UV102EW); Population Density 2001 (Table UV02)

⁴⁰ ONS (no date): ‘Census 2021: Build a custom area profile’ [online], available to access via [this link](#).

⁴¹ Ibid.

Out of the 46.5% of households which are deprived in the neighbourhood area, the majority are deprived in either one or two dimensions, similar to the regional and national trends.

Table AB.11 Relative household deprivation dimensions⁴²

	Danbury	Chelmsford	East of England	England
Household not deprived	53.5%	50.2%	44.8%	42.5%
Deprived in 1 dimension	32.2%	31.5%	33.0%	32.7%
Deprived in 2 dimensions	12.2%	15%	17.9%	19.1%
Deprived in 3 dimensions	1.9%	3%	4.0%	5.1%
Deprived in 4 dimensions	0.2%	0.3%	0.4%	0.5%

Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation constructed by combining seven domains of deprivation according to their respective weights, as described below. The seven deprivation domains are as follows:

- **Income:** The proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income, including those individuals that are out-of-work and those that are in work but who have low earnings (satisfying the respective means tests).
- **Employment:** The proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market, including those individuals who would like to work but are unable to do so due to unemployment, sickness or disability, or caring responsibilities.
- **Education, Skills and Training:** The lack of attainment and skills in the local population.
- **Health Deprivation and Disability:** The risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. Morbidity, disability and premature mortality are also considered, excluding the aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.
- **Crime:** The risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.
- **Barriers to Housing and Services:** The physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services, with indicators categorised in two sub-domains.
 - a. 'Geographical Barriers': relating to the physical proximity of local services.
 - b. 'Wider Barriers': relating to access to housing, such as affordability.
- **Living Environment:** The quality of the local environment, with indicators falling categorised in two sub-domains.

⁴² ONS (no date): Census 2011: 'Households by Deprivation Dimensions 2011 (Table QS119EW)

- c. 'Indoors Living Environment' measures the quality of housing.
- d. 'Outdoors Living Environment' measures air quality and road traffic accidents.
- Two supplementary indices (subsets of the Income deprivation domains), are also included:
 1. **Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index:** The proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families.
 2. **Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index:** The proportion of all those aged 60 or over who experience income deprivation.

Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs)⁴³ are a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. They are standardized geographies designed to be as consistent in population as possible, with each LSOA containing approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. In relation to the IMD 2015, LSOAs are ranked out of the 32,844 in England and Wales, with 1 being the most deprived. Ranks are normalized into deciles, with a value of 1 reflecting the top 10% most deprived LSOAs in England and Wales.

The neighbourhood area falls within three LSOAs: 'Chelmsford 016C' (which comprises the urban centre) and 'Chelmsford 016D' and 'Chelmsford 016E' (which includes the rural areas of the Parish). There are therefore noticeable differences between the LSOAs; with Chelmsford 016E and 016D being amongst the 10% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country, and Chelmsford 016C being amongst the 50% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country.

Table AB.12 sets out the level of deprivation by domain. It shows that with the exception for 'Barriers to Housing and Services' Chelmsford 016C and 016d (the rural LSOAs within the Parish) are amongst the 30% least deprived neighbourhoods for all domains. In terms of the rural area of Chelmsford 016E, this LSOA is most deprived in terms of Income Deprivation and Employment Deprivation; being amongst the 40% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country for these domains.

Table AB.12 Indices of Deprivation for the three LSOAs covering the neighbourhood area⁴⁴

Domain	Chelmsford 016C	Chelmsford 016D	Chelmsford 016E
Overall IMD	10% least deprived	10% least deprived	50% most deprived
Income Deprivation	10% least deprived	20% least deprived	40% most deprived
Employment Deprivation	20% least deprived	20% least deprived	40% most deprived
Education, Skills and Training	10% least deprived	20% least deprived	50% least deprived
Health Deprivation and Disability	10% least deprived	10% least deprived	50% least deprived
Crime	30% least deprived	30% least deprived	30% least deprived

⁴³ DCLG (2015): Indices of Deprivation Explorer', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

⁴⁴ DCLG (2015): Indices of Deprivation Explorer', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

Domain	Chelmsford 016C	Chelmsford 016D	Chelmsford 016E
Barriers to Housing and Services	50% most deprived	50% least deprived	50% least deprived
Living Environment Deprivation	30% least deprived	40% least deprived	50% least deprived
Income Deprivation Affecting Children	20% least deprived	20% least deprived	50% most deprived
Income Deprivation Affecting Older People	10% least deprived	10% least deprived	50% most deprived

Housing tenure

Within the neighbourhood area, in 2011 74.1% of residents either owned their home outright or with a mortgage, higher than all other comparators (**Figure AB.6**). This rose to 81% in the 2021 Census⁴⁵. There were fewer residents within privately rented and socially rented accommodation in the neighbourhood area in comparison to the regional and national totals. Comparatively, the total percentage of residents within shared ownership accommodation or living rent free within the neighbourhood area (1.6%) was comparable to the total for Chelmsford (1.8%), East of England (2.0%) and England (2.1%) in 2011.

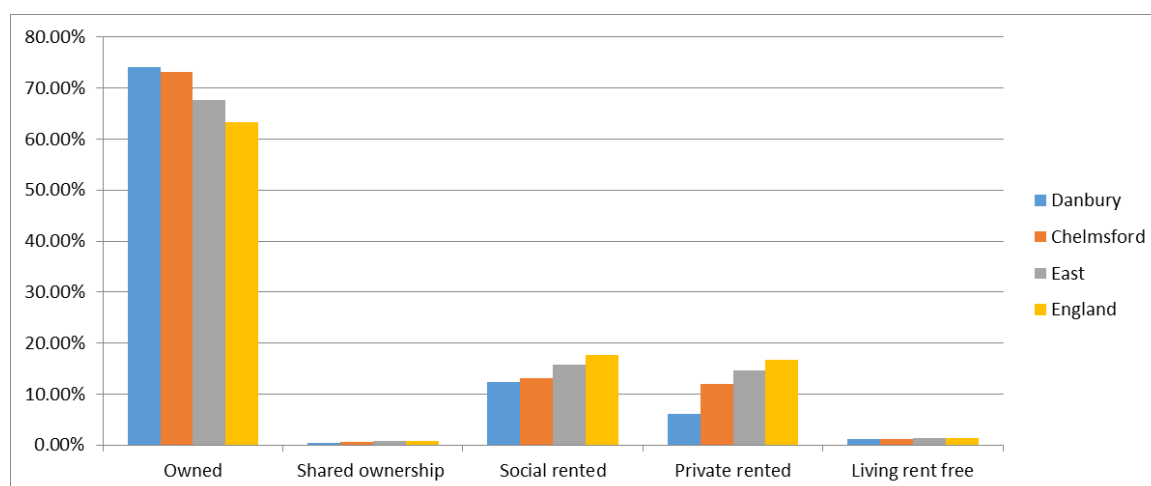


Figure AB.6 Tenure by household⁴⁶

Education

Based on the 2011 census data, 17.4% of residents in the neighbourhood area have no qualifications (**Figure AB.7**), lower than the totals for Chelmsford (18.9%), the East of England (22.5%) and England (22.5%). Comparatively, a higher percentage of residents in the neighbourhood area have a Level 4 qualification and above (36.5%) in comparison to Chelmsford, (28.8%), the East of England (25.7%) and England (27.4%). Therefore, the neighbourhood area has a highly qualified working population.

⁴⁵ ONS (no date): 'Census 2021: Build a custom area profile' [online], available to access via [this link](#).

⁴⁶ ONS (no date): Census 2011: Tenure-Households 2011 (Table QS405EW)

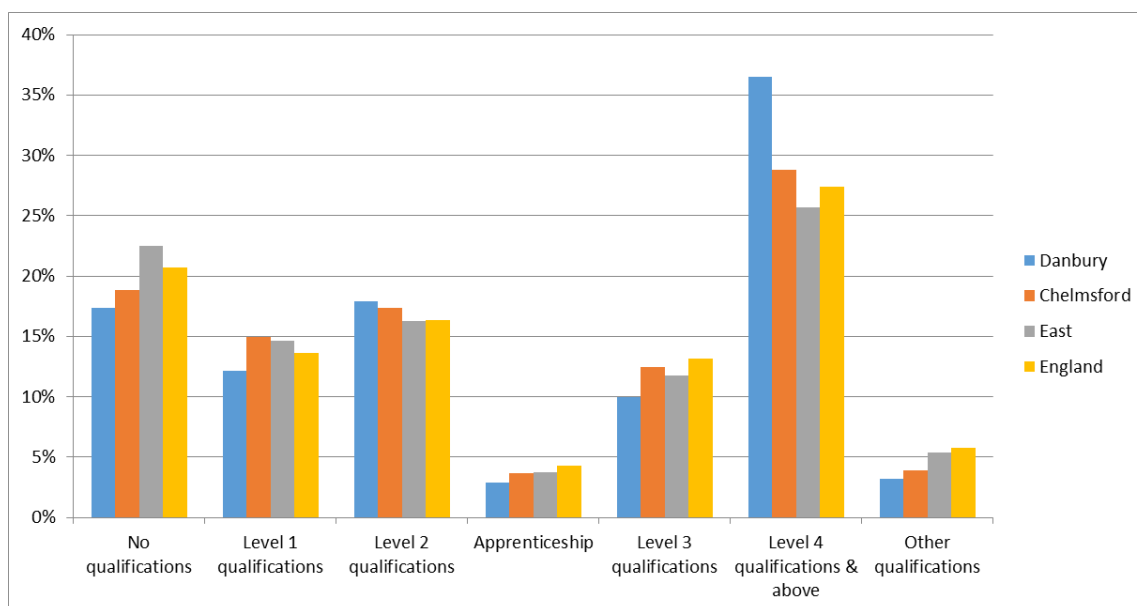


Figure AB.7 Highest level of qualification⁴⁷

Employment

As shown in **Figure AB.8**, regarding employment within the neighbourhood area, the following three occupation categories support the most residents:

- Professional occupations (22.1%).
- Managers, directors and senior officials (16.7%).
- Associate professional and technical occupations (14.3%).

According to the 2011 Census, 53.1% of residents within the neighbourhood area are employed in one of the above three occupation categories, markedly higher than the totals for Chelmsford (46.2%), the East of England (42.0%) and England (41.3%).

According to the 2021 Census⁴⁸, 47% of Danbury residents are currently economically inactive, which is greater than the figures for Chelmsford (36.5%).

⁴⁷ ONS (no date): Census 2011: Highest Level of Qualification 2011 (Table QS501EW)

⁴⁸ ONS (no date): 'Census 2021: Build a custom area profile' [online], available to access via [this link](#).

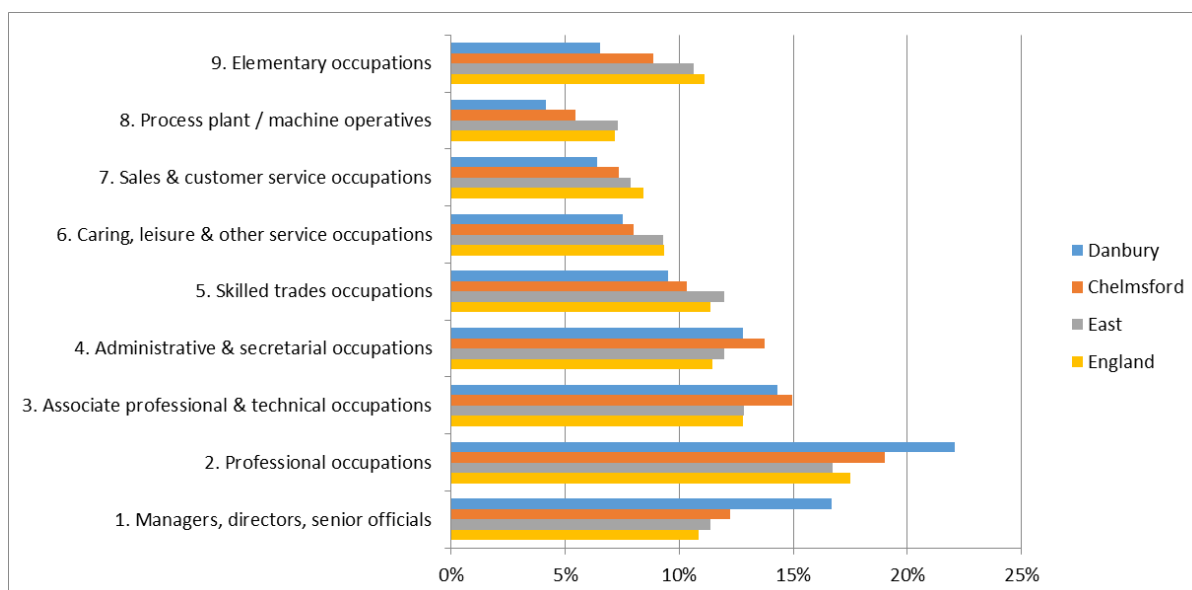


Figure AB.8 Occupation of usual residents aged 16 to 74 in employment⁴⁹

Future baseline

As the population of the neighbourhood area continues to increase and age, this could potentially negatively impact upon the future vitality of the local community and economy of certain parts of the neighbourhood area, whilst also placing additional pressures to existing services and facilities.

The suitability (e.g., size and design) and affordability of housing for local requirements depends on the implementation of appropriate housing policies through the Local Plan and DNP. Unplanned development may have wider implications in terms of transport and access to infrastructure, or the natural environment.

Key issues

The following key issues emerge from the context and baseline review:

- The population of Danbury has remained relatively stable, increasing only slightly.
- In 2011, 33.1% of residents within the neighbourhood area were within the 60+ age category, with slightly fewer residents within the age categories 16-24 and 25-44 in Danbury in comparison to the regional and national trends.
- The neighbourhood area is formed of three LSOAs, which hold very different characteristics. Chelmsford 016E and 016D make up the rural areas of the Parish and are amongst the 10% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country, while Chelmsford 016C comprises the more urban centre and is amongst the 50% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country.
- In 2011, 74.1% of residents either owned their home outright or with a mortgage, which is higher than the figures for Chelmsford, the East of England, and England. This rose to 81% in 2021.
- In 2011, 33.2% of Danbury residents were economically inactive, which is greater than the figures for Chelmsford (26.2%), East of England (28.4%) and England (30.0%). This rose to 47% in 2021.

⁴⁹ ONS (no date): Census 2011: 'Occupation 2011' (Table KS608EW)

Health and wellbeing

Policy context

Table AB.14 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan SEA.

Table AB.14 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to health and wellbeing

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2023
Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On	2020
National Planning Practice Guidance – Healthy and Safe Communities	2019
Planning for Sport Guidance	2019
The 25 Year Environment Plan	2018
Essex Children and Young People's Plan (2016 onwards)	2020
Chelmsford Local Plan (2013 to 2036)	2020

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The DNP will need to have regard to the NPPF, which overall seeks to retain and enhance access to community services and facilities, including health facilities, educational facilities, and open space. The NPPF recognises the benefits of a range of local provisions supporting community needs, including in rural areas. The framework seeks to protect settlement and community identities. Furthermore, the NPPF recognises the benefits of creating cohesive communities, in safe environments where crime and the fear of crime do not undermine the quality of life of residents.
- The NPPF recognises the role of development plans in helping to deliver access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity which contribute to the health and wellbeing of communities. The health benefits of access to nature, green spaces and green infrastructure are further reiterated through the 25-year Environment Plan.
- The 2020 Health Equity in England Report identifies that the health gap between less and more deprived areas has grown in the last decade, where more people can expect to spend more of their lives in poor health, and where improvements to life expectancy have stalled, or even declined.
- The Planning for Sport Guidance seeks to help the planning system provide formal and informal opportunities for everyone to take part in sport and be physically active. The Guidance outlines 12 'planning-for-sport' principles.

The Essex Children and Young People's Strategic Plan sets out Essex County Council's ambitions to reduce health inequalities and promote positive outcomes for children and young people in the county. The Strategic Plan has six system objectives, which are to:

- Protect the most vulnerable.
- Close the gap for the most vulnerable.

- Promote resilience and positive choices.
 - Achieve better from the use of collective resources.
 - Maximise the use of community assets; and
 - Develop the system's workforce and culture.
- The following policies in the Chelmsford Local Plan, adopted in May 2020 and covering the period 2013 to 2036, relate to the landscape SEA topic:
 - Strategic Policy S5 – Protecting and Enhancing Community Assets
 - Policy DM20 – Delivering Community Facilities
 - Policy DM21 – Protecting Community Facilities
 - Policy DM23 – High Quality and Inclusive Design

Baseline summary

Chelmsford Local Authority Profile

The 'Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026' (JHWS)⁵⁰ sets out key priorities identified through the Essex JSNA to improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities. The Strategy notes key challenges to tackle, including a reduction in life expectancy in Essex, an ageing population, a large proportion of overweight residents, and common mental health issues, and it has produced five key strategic priorities, which are:

- Improving mental health and wellbeing.
- Physical activity and healthy weight.
- Supporting long-term independence.
- Alcohol and substance misuse; and
- Health inequalities and the wider determinants of health.

Essex Mental Health Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

The Essex Mental Health JSNA⁵¹, published in 2016, provides an overview of the state of mental health wellbeing across the county of Essex, and offers recommendations to improve the mental health of residents through the prioritisation of resources. Some of the key statistics are provided below:

- 136,053 adults aged 18-64 experience a common mental illness in Essex (16.2% of the population). This figure is expected to increase by 3% in the next 10-15 years.
- 25,284 people aged over 65 suffer from depression in Essex. Rates of depression and severe depression amongst this age group are expected to increase by 37% and 41%, respectively, in the next 15 years; and
- Around one-third of individuals with mental health issues are currently receiving mental health support.

⁵⁰ Essex County Council (2022) 'Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

⁵¹ Essex County Council (2016) 'Essex Mental Health Joint Strategic Needs Assessment', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

Sports and Physical Activity Profile Chelmsford

At the regional level, the Chelmsford Sports and Physical Activity Profile⁵² is a product of the Essex JSNA and provides an insight into the physical activity and sporting landscape of Greater Essex. It combines information on demographics, health data, physical and sport data, facilities, education and the economic value of sport. A summary of the key statistics/ information relating to the health and wellbeing of Chelmsford residents is provided below:

- Between 2015 and 2025, the total population is estimated to increase from 172,638 to 180,106 (+4.33%).
- 19.4% of children in reception (age 5) children are obese, compared to 29.7% of children in year 6 (age 11). Chelmsford is below the national average for childhood obesity. 64.9% of adults (age 16+) are obese, which is above the national average.
- In 2016, 16,714 Chelmsford residents aged 18-64 were predicted to have a common mental disorder. This is estimated to increase to 16,835 by 2020 (0.72%). Estimated prevalence of mental health disorders in young people within Chelmsford (aged 5-16) is 8.3%.
- 22.1% of adults (16+) are inactive. 41.2% of adults (16+) are active once a week and 26.5% are active 3x30 minutes a week. 77.9% of residents have taken part in sport and activity at least twice in the last 28 days.
- There are 71 schools in Chelmsford: 51 primary schools and 10 secondary schools, educating 27,031 pupils. 66 of these schools (93%) are achieving 'healthy school status'.
- 62% of primary school pupils walk to school, while 47% of secondary school pupils walk to school.
- There are 491 parks, open spaces, sporting and leisure facilities within Chelmsford:
 - 16 artificial pitches.
 - 267 grass pitches.
 - 19 swimming pools.
 - 54 sports halls; and
 - 57 tennis courts
 - 24 parks and open spaces

Of note is the Danbury Lakes Country Park, which is situated outside Danbury's settlement boundary, but is nonetheless an invaluable local asset. The Country Park features traditional broad leaved and coppiced woodland which complement the natural appearance of ornamental lakes and formal gardens. Originally part of the grounds to the palace of the Bishop of Rochester, the park attracts thousands of visitors every year from within the region and nationally. The Country Park is a 'green lung' in an already green village and provides a haven to a variety of wildlife.⁵³

⁵² Active Essex (2017) Sports and Physical Activity Profile Chelmsford [online] available to access via [this link](#)

⁵³ Chelmsford Borough Council (2011) Danbury Planning Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) [online] available to access via [this link](#)

Health indicators and deprivation

Deprivation is a significant contributor to poor health and can have adverse effects on wellbeing, with elements related to poor housing quality, living environment, income and employment previously discussed in detail in the population and community SEA topic. As highlighted in **Figure AB.9**, 84.7% of residents in the neighbourhood area consider themselves as having 'very good health' or 'good health', which is comparable with the totals for Chelmsford (84.9%), and higher than the East of England (82.4%) and England (81.4%). The number of residents in the neighbourhood area considering themselves to have 'bad health' or 'very bad health' is 3.6%, again equivalent to the totals for Chelmsford (3.7%) and lower the East of England (4.6%) and England (5.4%). In the 2021 Census, 85% of the population of Danbury reported 'very good health' or 'good health' – demonstrating a slight increase⁵⁴.

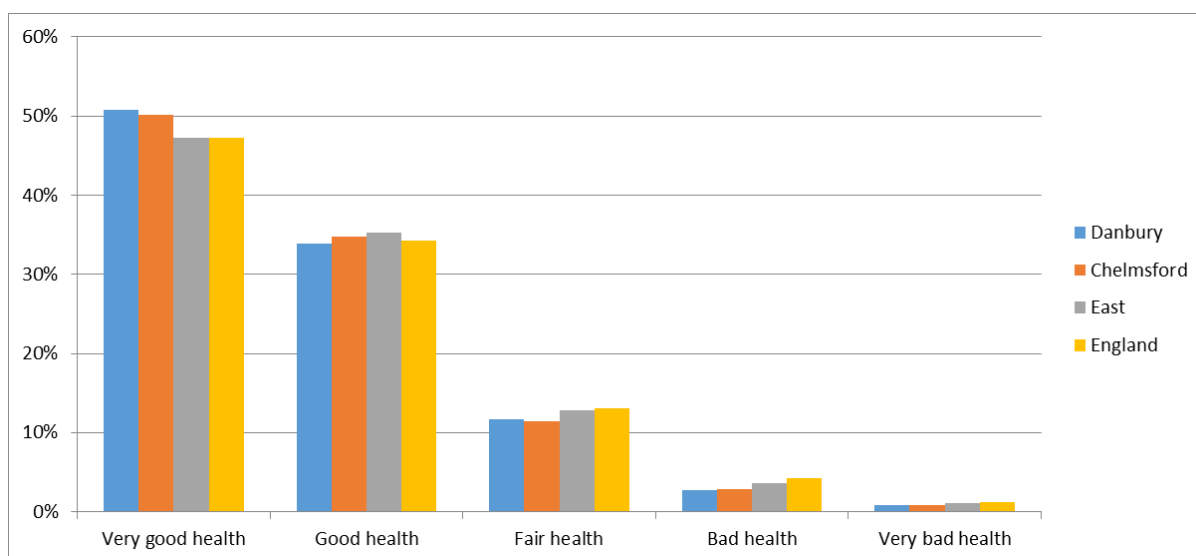


Figure AB.9 General health⁵⁵

Based on the 2011 census data, the total number of residents within the neighbourhood area who report that their activities are limited 'a lot' is lower than the regional and national trends observed in **Figure AB.10** overleaf. Overall, 84.8% of residents within the neighbourhood area report that their activities are not limited, which is broadly in line with the trends for Chelmsford, the East of England, and England.

⁵⁴ ONS (no date): 'Census 2021: Build a custom area profile' [online], available to access via [this link](#).

⁵⁵ ONS (no date): Census 2011: 'Health and Provision of unpaid Care 2011' (Table KS301EW)

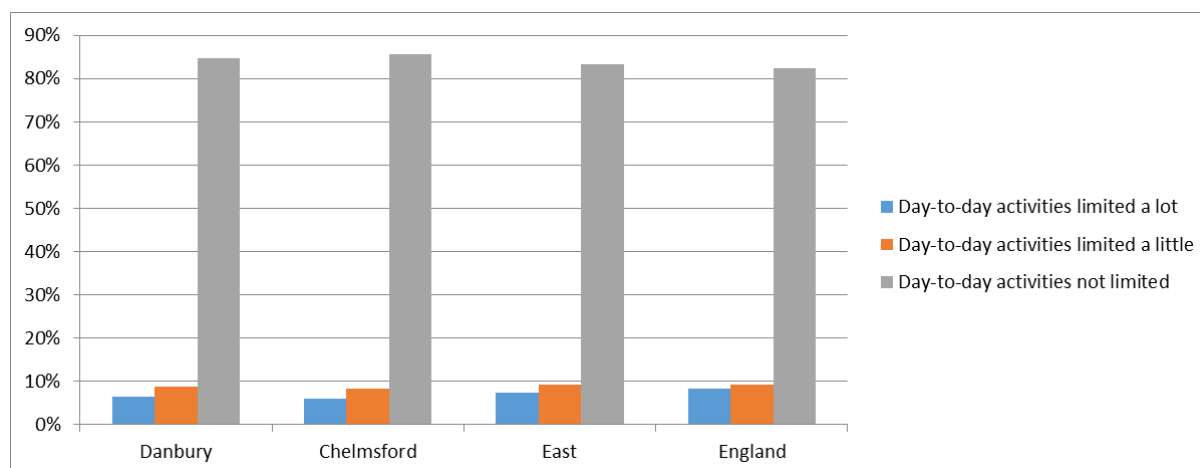


Figure AB.10 Disability⁵⁶

Future baseline

Health and wellbeing levels within the neighbourhood area are generally good, with a higher percentage of residents reporting 'good' or 'very good' health compared to regional and national trends, and a low percentage of residents reporting that their activities are limited in some way. 93% of the schools within Chelmsford are achieving 'healthy status', while 41.2% of adults (16+) are reported to be active once a week.

An ageing population within the neighbourhood area might place future pressures on health services in the area. Similarly, ongoing cuts to community services have the potential to lead to effects on health and wellbeing over the long term. In 2016, 16,714 Chelmsford residents aged 18-64 were predicted to have a common mental disorder. This is estimated to increase to 16,835 by 2020 (0.72%). Across Essex, only a third of individuals with mental health illness are receiving support at present. Additionally, 64.9% of adults (age 16+) are obese, which is above the national average.

Key issues

The following key issues emerge from the context and baseline review:

- In 2011, 84.7% of residents in the neighbourhood area considered themselves as having 'very good health' or 'good health', which is comparable with the totals for Chelmsford (84.9%), and higher than the East of England (82.4%) and England (81.4%). This increased to 85% in the 2021 Census.
- The total number of residents within the neighbourhood area who report that their activities are limited 'a lot' (6.3%) is lower than the trends for Chelmsford (6.1%), East of England (7.4%) and England (8.3%), according to 2011 data.
- There are 491 parks, open spaces, sporting and leisure facilities within Chelmsford.
- Chelmsford is below the national average for childhood obesity, but above the national average for obesity in adults (16+).
- 22.1% of adults in Chelmsford (16+) are inactive. 41.2% of adults (16+) are active once a week and 26.5% are active 3x30 minutes a week.

⁵⁶ ONS (no date): Census 2011: 'Long-term Health Problem or Disability 2011' (Table QS303EW)

- Rates of depression and severe depression amongst Essex residents aged 65+ is expected to increase by 37% and 41%, respectively, in the next 15 years. The percentage of Chelmsford residents aged 18-64 predicted to have a common mental disorder is estimated to increase to by 0.72% between 2016 and 2020.

Transportation

Policy context

Table AB.15 presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the Danbury Neighbourhood Plan SEA.

Table AB.15 Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to transportation

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2023
Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge	2020
The Transport Investment Strategy – Moving Britain Ahead	2017
Essex County Council's Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy	2020
Essex Transport Strategy: The Local Transport Plan for Essex	2011
Chelmsford Local Plan (2013 to 2036)	2020
Chelmsford's Future Transport Network	2017

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The DNP will need to have regard to the NPPF, which seeks the consideration of transport issues from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals to address any known issues and maximise opportunities to increase accessibility, particularly by walking, cycling and public transport. Larger developments are expected to be delivered in areas which are or can be made sustainable by limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. However, it is recognised that sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural environments.
- National transport strategies set out investment priorities which ultimately all seek to improve the connectivity, effectiveness and reliability of transport networks, whilst reducing impacts on the natural environment (including through decarbonisation). Furthermore, they place great emphasis on making cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journeys. This includes investment in new and upgraded infrastructure, changing perceptions, and increasing safety.
- Essex County Council's 'Sustainable Modes of Transport Strategy' (SMoTS) sets out the Council's aims to facilitate more sustainable transport and to manage car travel demand more effectively. Travel plans, which are 'long term management strategies providing a framework for managing transport issues and promoting travel choice', are a core part of the SMoTS, forming four of the five key Strategic Elements identified in the Strategy. Travel plans for Workplace (SE1), Residential (SE2), School (SE3), and Hospital and Airport (SE4) have been identified in the Strategy.

- Each Local Transport Authority in England and Wales has a statutory duty to produce and adopt a Local Transport Plan through the Local Transport Act 2000, as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008. In this regard, the Essex Transport Strategy: The Local transport Plan for Essex is a strategic policy tool through which the council exercises its responsibilities for planning, management and the development of transport in the county. The vision for the Plan is *“for a transport system that supports sustainable economic growth and helps deliver the best quality of life for the residents of Essex”*, the Plan is supported by five primary outcomes that guide the Council’s approach to maintaining, managing and investing in transport, including: providing greater connectivity for Essex communities to support economic growth and regeneration; reducing CO₂ emissions and improving air quality; improving transport safety; maintaining transport assets; and, providing sustainable access and travel choice for Essex residents.
- In 2019, a proposal for Chelmsford’s Future Transport Network was published, presenting the following vision for 2036: “For Chelmsford’s transport system to become ‘best in class’ - rivalling similar cities across the UK - offering enhanced connectivity, and access to opportunities for residents, visitors and businesses to support the sustainable economic growth of the city”. To achieve this vision, the proposal identified seven key objectives to judge all potential transport schemes against, as detailed below:
 - Sustainable and economic growth.
 - Improved transport network reliability.
 - Improved connectivity.
 - Sustainable transport.
 - Attractive environment.
 - Healthier environment; and
 - Safe transport network and environment.
- The following policies in the Chelmsford Local Plan, adopted in May 2020 and covering the period 2013 to 2036, relate to the landscape SEA topic:
 - Strategic Policy S9 – Infrastructure Requirements
 - Strategic Policy S10 – Securing Infrastructure and Impact Mitigation
 - Policy DM27 – Parking Standards

Baseline summary

Rail network

There are no railways stations within the neighbourhood area. The nearest station is Chelmsford, located approximately 6 miles west of Danbury parish. The Great Eastern Main Line station, served by Greater Anglia, runs regular services to Colchester, Ipswich Braintree, Clacton-on-Sea, Norwich and London.

Bus network

There are several bus services providing residents with regular access to close by cities, towns and villages, including Chelmsford, South Woodham, Southminster, Latchingdon, and Maldon, with the majority of services running throughout the day,

seven days a week. It is noted however that bus services to Colchester are not direct, taking around 1 hour 20 minutes as opposed to a 30-minute drive by car.

Road network and congestion

The A414 is the main road running through the neighbourhood area providing residents with access to St. Albans, Watford, Hatfield, Hertford, Harlow, and Stansted Airport, as well as connections to several main roads, including the M11 and M1. The A414 is also the main route between Chelmsford and the A12, and Maldon and the Dengie Peninsula. Additionally, there is a network of smaller 'B' roads, country roads and lanes which pass through the neighbourhood area, connecting residents to nearby settlements.

Flight network

There are no airports in the neighbourhood area; however, the nearest international airport is Stansted Airport, located approximately 30 km North West of Danbury Parish, and directly accessible via the A414.

Cycle and footpath network

While there are no National Trail routes near the neighbourhood area, there are several Public Rights of Way (PRoW) footpaths, bridleways and walking trails running through Danbury Parish, including Grace's walk and Saffron Trail.

In terms of cycle trails, the National Cycle Network Route 1 runs adjacent to the northern border of the neighbourhood area. The route is a long-distance cycle route, connecting Dover and the Shetland islands, via the east coast of England and Scotland. Residents are able to access nearby cities, towns and villages via this cycle route, including Chelmsford, Colchester and Harlow.

Availability of cars and vans

Based on the 2011 census data, 90.7% of households in the neighbourhood area had access to at least one car or van, which is higher than the totals for Chelmsford (84.3%), the East of England (81.4%) and England (74.0%) (**Figure AB.11**). This rose to 91.2% in 2021⁵⁷. The total proportion of households in the neighbourhood area with access to two cars or vans (44.2%) was higher than the borough (31.7%), regional (29.1%) and national (25.0%) percentages, while the percentage of Danbury households with no cars or vans (9.3%) was lower than the borough (15.7%), regional (18.6%) and national (26.0%) averages in 2011. In 2021, 39.2% of the households in Danbury had access to two or more cars or van, indicating a decrease in the number of vehicles on the road.

⁵⁷ ONS (no date): 'Census 2021: Build a custom area profile' [online], available to access via [this link](#).

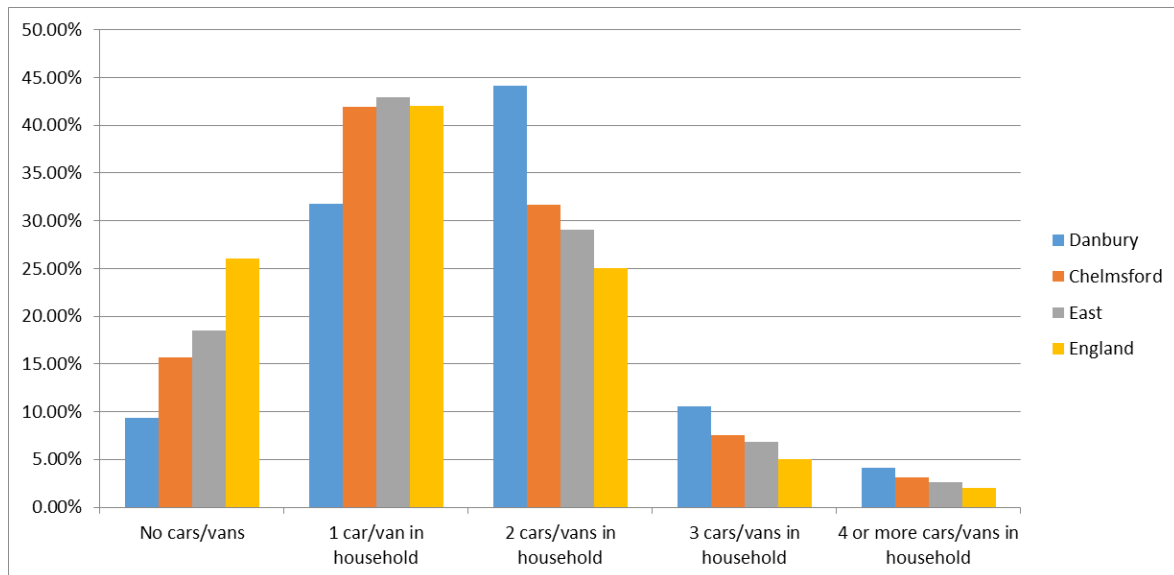


Figure AB.11 Car and van ownership

Travel to work

As shown in **Figure AB.12**, in 2011 the most popular mode of transport to travel to work in the neighbourhood area was driving via a car or van (40.6%) which was in line with the totals for Chelmsford, lower than the totals for the East of England (45.4%), but higher than the totals for the whole of England (37.0%). Comparatively, in 2011 a higher percentage of economically active residents in the neighbourhood area chose to work from home (6.3%) in comparison to the borough (3.8%), regional (3.8%) and national (3.0%) trends. In 2021, 44.3% of Danbury residents worked from home, showing a marked increase from 2011 data and reflecting changes in working patterns.

In 2011, the total percentage of the working population in the neighbourhood area choosing to walk, cycle or catch a bus, minibuss or coach to work (5.9%) was substantially lower than the totals for Chelmsford (12.0%), the East of England (11.7%), and the whole of England (14.0%). In 2021, this dropped very slightly to 5.8%.

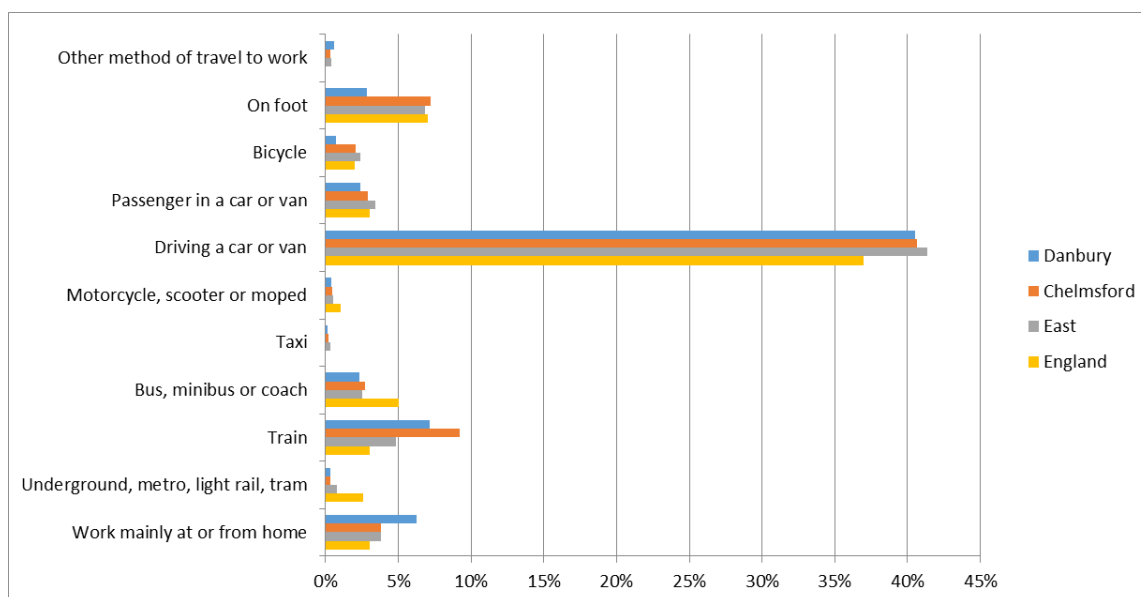


Figure AB.12 Method of travel to work

Future baseline

A greater proportion of Danbury residents choose to work from home compared to regional and national trends, reflecting a national shift towards more flexible working practices. Additional residents choosing to work from home could reduce traffic and congestion on the local network.

New development has the potential to increase traffic and lead to additional congestion issues within the neighbourhood area. Additionally, public transport use is likely to remain low compared with private car use. This is due to the relative inaccessibility of the neighbourhood area via public transport, particularly as the nearest train station is over 7 km away. Maintenance and expansion of the current community bus service could allow additional residents to access local transport services.

Whilst negative effects of new development on the transport network are likely to be mitigated in part by the Essex Local Travel Plan, there will be a continuing need for development to be situated in accessible locations.

Given the scale of development likely to come forward through the neighbourhood area, it is unlikely that this development will contribute to any significant improvements in public transport provision.

Key issues

The following key issues emerge from the context and baseline review:

- There are no railways stations within the neighbourhood area. The nearest station is Chelmsford, located approximately 7 km west of Danbury parish.
- There are several bus services providing residents with regular access to close by cities, towns and villages.
- The A414 is the main road running through the neighbourhood area providing residents with access to several other main roads, including the M11, M1 and A12.

- There are no airports in the neighbourhood area, however Stansted Airport is located approximately 30 km away.
- There are several Public Right of Way (PRoW) footpaths, bridleways and walking trails running through Danbury Parish.
- The National Cycle Network Route 1 runs adjacent to the northern border of the neighbourhood area.
- Over 90% of households in the neighbourhood area have access to at least one car or van.
- The most popular mode of transport to work in the neighbourhood area is driving via a car or van. However, working from home is a key contributor to travel patterns – the proportion has markedly increased since 2011.
- The total percentage of the working population in the neighbourhood area choosing to walk, cycle or catch a bus, minibuss or coach to work was substantially lower than the totals for Chelmsford, the East of England, and England in 2011. From 2021 Census data it appears this has not changed.

SEA framework

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment Questions
Air quality	Improve air quality in the neighbourhood area and minimise and/ or mitigate all sources of environmental pollution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the key objectives within the Chelmsford Local Transport Plan to encourage more sustainable transport? • Enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements? • Reduce the need to travel outside of the neighbourhood area? • Locate and design development so that current and future residents will not regularly be exposed to poor air quality? • Implement measures (such as appropriate planting and provision of green infrastructure) which will help support air quality in the neighbourhood area?
Biodiversity	Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geodiversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the status of the nationally and/or locally designated sites within and/or adjacent to the neighbourhood area? • Protect and enhance priority habitats and species? • Achieve a net gain in biodiversity? • Support enhancements to multifunctional green infrastructure networks? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?
Climate change (mitigation and adaptation)	Continue to decrease GHG emissions and increase the resilience of the neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote sustainable development, including sustainable construction and operation of new housing and employment land? • Protect green spaces and the environment? • Increase resilience by improving green infrastructure networks

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment Questions
	area to the effects of climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote energy efficiency and renewable energy generation including solar panels, energy efficient buildings and recycled water and materials? Ensure that development avoids areas of highest flood risk? Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks and biological connectivity?
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and villagescapes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conserve and enhance locally important landscape and villagescape features within the neighbourhood area as defined by the Little Baddow and Danbury Wooded Farmland LCA and supporting evidence base? Conserve and enhance local diversity and character? Protect locally important viewpoints contributing to the sense of place and visual amenity of the neighbourhood area?
Historic environment	Protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment within the neighbourhood area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conserve and enhance the significance of buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their setting? Conserve and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of locally important features and their settings? Support the integrity of the historic setting of key buildings of cultural heritage interest as listed on the Essex HER? Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the environment? Conserve and enhance archaeological remains, including historic landscapes? Support the undertaking of archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies? Help to make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness, using design that is sympathetic to local character and history, and maintaining or enhancing Danbury's sense of place?
Land, soil and water resources	Ensure the efficient and effective use of land, protect soil quality and avoid the loss of high-quality agricultural land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the use of vacant & derelict brownfield land? Protect areas of 'Best and Most Versatile' agricultural land? Reduce/ avoid surface water run-off that may affect soil quality both during construction and operation?
	Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support improvements to water quality? Minimise water consumption? Protect surface water and groundwater resources? Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside transport interventions and new

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment Questions
		infrastructure, which minimises impacts on water quality?
Population and community	<p>Cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community, and improve access to local, high-quality community services and facilities.</p> <hr/> <p>Reduce deprivation and promote a more inclusive and self-contained community.</p> <hr/> <p>Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and promote social cohesion and encourage active involvement of local people in community activities? • Minimise fuel poverty? • Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing residents? • Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities? <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes? • Support enhancements to the current housing stock? • Meet the needs of all sectors of the community? • Provide quality and flexible homes that meet people's needs? • Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction? • Provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities? • Support a reduction in the proportion of second homes?
Health and wellbeing	<p>Improve the health and wellbeing residents within the neighbourhood area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all age groups? • Address the key priorities identified in the Essex JHWS? • Ensure that those reporting mental health illness receive support and adequate resources, as highlighted in the Essex Mental Health JSNA? • Enhance the provision of community access to green infrastructure in accordance with Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards? • Protect and enhance access to nature via greenspace and footpaths? • Promote the use of healthier modes of travel? • Improve access to the countryside for recreational use? • Avoiding any negative impacts to the quality and extent of existing recreational assets, such as formal or informal footpaths?

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment Questions
Transportation	Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the key objectives within the Essex Local Transport Plan, Essex Sustainable Modes of Transport Strategy and Chelmsford's Future Transport Network proposal to encourage more sustainable transport?• Enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements?• Facilitate the maintenance and expansion of community-driven schemes such as the community bus service?• Facilitate home and remote working?• Improve road safety?• Reduce the impact on residents from the road network?
